PARALLEL TRACES OF THE JEWEL VOICE

dj sniff (Takuro Mizuta Lippit)

Introduction

Parallel Traces of the Jewel Voice (2019-2021) is a project that examines how various memories and historical narratives are constructed through common experiences of sound reproduction technology. Gyokuon Hoso, or "The Jewel Voice Broadcast" in English, that announced the surrender of Japan and the end of World War II on August 15 of 1945, serves as the central reference for this project. Two tracks were composed with sonic materials that range from interviews and field recordings collected in Taiwan, samples extracted from 78 rpm phonograph discs, and recordings made by sound artists and improvising musicians. These tracks are paired differently depending on their distribution format. The vinyl release is a multi-sided record with two parallel grooves cut on one side. As a result, a different composition will play depending on where the stylus is cued. For the digital release, each track is independently assigned to the left/right channel and heard simultaneously.

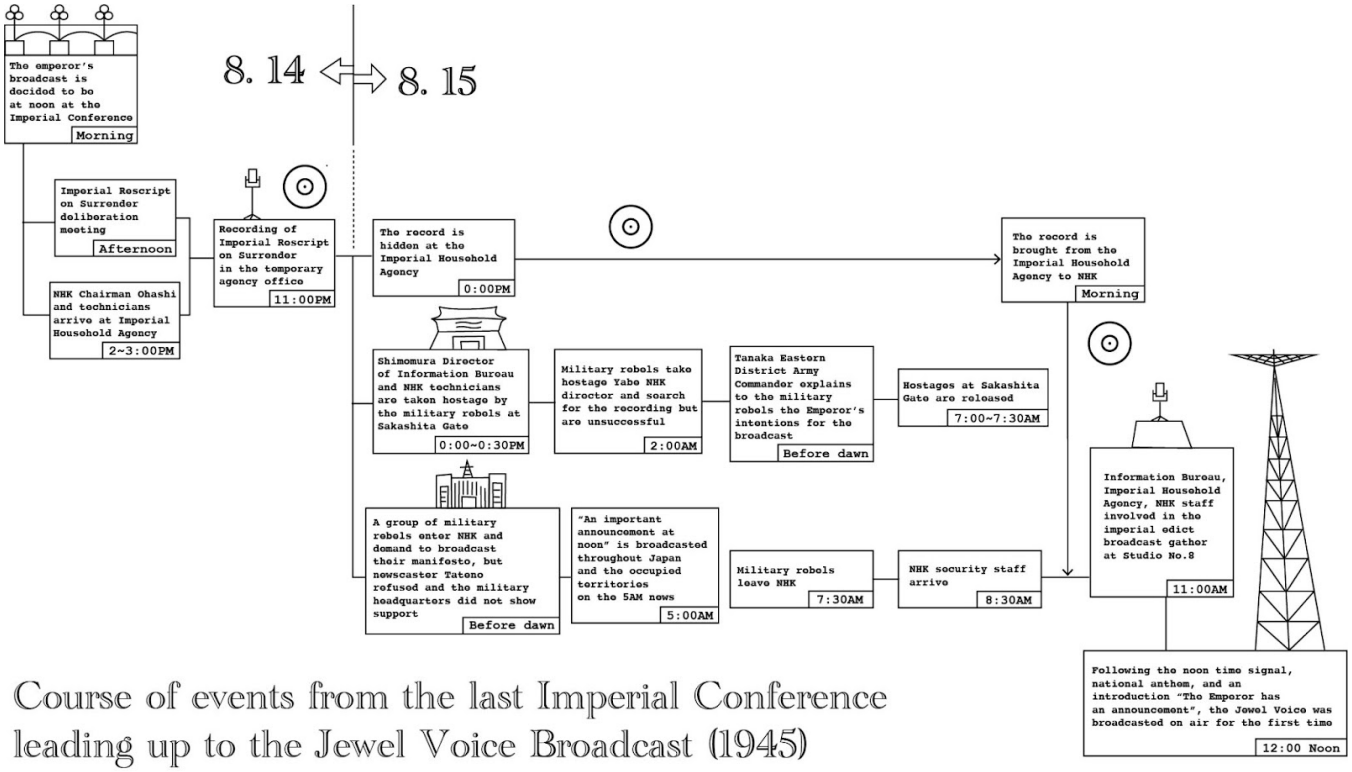
The Narratives

In 2015, the restoration of the Imperial Rescript on Surrender read by Emperor Hirohito from the original discs made Japanese national news. The 10-inch acetate records that were used for the recording were heavily damaged because of poor storage after the war. A bootleg derived from a copy made during the U.S. occupation had circulated for decades, but the recording released in 2015 was the "official" digitally mastered version. When I saw the pictures of the multiple vinyl records that were restored, it occurred to me that 70 years ago someone had seamlessly mixed these live on air. The most significant moment in Japan's modern history was choreographed by a proto-DJ/turntablist – that must have been a stressful gig!

The Jewel Voice Broadcast marks a pivotal moment in Japan's national narrative in which a defeated imperial power restarts as a democracy and redeems itself as the most prosperous country in the region. Until this event, contact between the emperor and his subjects were restricted, and for most Japanese it was the first time they would hear his voice, which was referred to as gyokuon (Jewel Voice). The emperor's disembodied voice that was broadcast, represented the blade that divides the two eras between the empire and the modern nation while his flesh served as a constant that embodied the transformation. The day of the broadcast has been dramatised through works like Hondo Kazutoshi's non-fiction novel Nihon no Ichiban Nagai Hi (Japan's Longest Day) from 1965 and its film adaptation by Okamoto Kihachi (1967), and recent remake by Harada Masato (2015). In Nihon no Ichiban Nagai Hi, the last 24 hours of the empire is depicted through intense negotiations between the cabinet members and the military followed by the recording session with the emperor. The drama accelerates with various attempts to sabotage the broadcast by soldiers who plan a coup d'état and climaxes with bloody seppuku (a ritual suicide by cutting one's own stomach with a knife). In contrast to the detailed portrayal for the recording of the Jewel Voice, descriptions of its playback were omitted.

The voices on the receiving end of the broadcast also played an important role in constructing a collective memory around this defining moment. Countless stories are collected and recited every year on television to commemorate the event, packaged together with the same photographic images of crowds facing the radio receiver as if the emperor was present or students falling to the ground after hearing the broadcast. "Sounds of cicadas on a hot summer day," "static noise from the radio," and a soundbite from the Imperial Rescript that reads "I will endure the unendurable and suffer what is insufferable" are sonic tropes that are commonly used to set up these stories.

Growing up in Japan, I was familiar with these stories depicting the lead-up and the aftermath of the Jewel Voice Broadcast, but I was unaware of how the broadcast itself was executed. It excited me to think that this was accomplished with records and turntables and I wanted to find out how it was done and who was behind the operation. Several months after reading the news report about the discs, I came to realize there was another aspect of the broadcast that I wasn't familiar with. In 2016, I made a family trip to Taipei and was introduced to Chen Chin-Jung, a relative of my partner. With a warm smile Mr. Chen spoke to me in perfect Japanese – his first words to me were "I was Japanese 70 years ago." Born in 1922, Mr. Chen grew up in Taipei under Japanese rule and trained to become a ship's crewman for the Japanese army. He was 23 when he heard the Jewel Voice Broadcast, while working on a ship that was docked at Ujina port, just south of Hiroshima where the atomic bomb had been dropped. It took him more than a year to return to Taiwan amidst the chaos that followed



Course of events from the last Imperial Conference leading up to the Jewel Voice Broadcast (1945)

Japan's surrender. Several years later he married a Japanese woman and they raised their family in Taipei. While talking to Mr. Chen, I was unsure if it was appropriate to talk to him in Japanese. It reminded me that the emperor's voice was also broadcast to the Japanese occupied territories, including Taiwan, and made me wonder how it was received by the local residents who had been under Japanese rule for 50 years. The narratives that I heard every summer on August 15th since I was a child, did not include such stories.

In recent years, however, rightwing nationalists have perpetuated another take on the event. Their version focuses on the seidan (the imperial decision), an executive order of sorts, which they believe Hirohito took to protect the Japanese people and maintain Japan's kokutai (national sovereignty). Some even claim that he was the protector, from foreign forces, of the mythical Sanshu no Jingi or "Three Sacred Treasures" that are hidden in unknown locations in Japan (Kobayashi 2010, Chiba 2017). The emperor's role during the war has been a contested issue and the "tormented royal leader" storyline has always been subtly embedded in the main narrative. What is problematic is that these stories are used for constructing a new kind of worship of the emperor, which is typically paired with historical revisionism that denies the imperial army's war crimes in Asia. Nationalist groups are usually most vocal on social media platforms, but as we have seen all around the world, their actions have spilled over to the non-virtual with dire consequences. One example is the protest against the After 'Freedom of Expression' exhibition at the Aichi Triennale 2019. The exhibition was forced to close due to a flood of complaints and threats that that took issue with Kim Seokyung and Kim Eun-sung's sculpture Statue of a Girl of Peace which was themed on Korean comfort women and Oura Nobuyuki's video piece Enkin wo Kakaete Part II (Holding Perspective Part II) that dealt with self-identity through Japan's emperor system. In Oura's work, there is a scene of the artist burning one of his previous collage artworks that includes a magazine cutout with an image of Hirohito. The nationalists claimed that this was an act of disrespect to the emperor and deemed it hannichi (anti-Japanese). These forms of harassment have always existed but it is alarming to see this rhetoric gain such momentum in the public sphere.

Parallel Traces of the Jewel Voice builds upon a fascination of the skillful execution of the Jewel Voice Broadcast by the technicians who worked behind the scenes and a desire to bring this little known story to light. At the same time, it was an opportunity for me to understand the consequences of Japan's colonial past through unexpected encounters in

Taiwan. As memories fade away and historical events are at risk of being co-opted by revisionist narratives, I believe that artistic research and its output can play a role in countering these attempts and continue to ask questions about the past that are relevant to us today.

The Recording

On August 14 of 1945, four engineers of NHK (Nippon Broadcasting Corporation), Tamamushi Kazuo, Murakami Seigo, Nagatomo Shunichi, and Haruna Shizuto, were tasked with recording Emperor Hirohito's reading of the Imperial Rescript on Surrender. The team arrived at the Imperial Household Agency at 3pm and had set up their recording rig in the Political Affairs Room. The recording setup consisted of two sets of two Denon DP-17-K disc recorders and amplifiers, and a double turntable playback desk and a speaker was prepared for playback. On one set, Nagatomo was operating the amplifier and Haruna was in charge of the cutting. On the other set, Murakami was on the amplifier and Tamamushi on the cut. Haruna and Tamamushi each had to operate two cutting lathes and start recording simultaneously, with one as a backup in case something went wrong with the other. The set up was redundant, but extra precautions were taken to avoid any chance of failure. The disc used was a Denon 10-inch disc that had a recording time of up to 3 minutes at 78 rpm. The cutting of sound would start from the center of the disc and spiral outwards. A Matsuda Type-A ribbon microphone was placed in front of an impressive Japanese folding screen in the adjacent Audience Room.

After everything was set up and tested, they nervously waited for the emperor to arrive. At some point they were served a meal of dried fish and black rice on plates with an imperial crest. At 11pm, Hirohito, wearing a military outfit, arrived with cabinet members. Without any rehearsals, they started recording right away. In an interview with Takeyama Akiko, Haruna described the recording process as follows:

1. The start of the recording was the most important. Discs A1 and B1 were prepared on each cutting lathe.

2. To start the recording, the cutting head was lowered on both turntables at the same time and observed for about 20 seconds to see if any problem occurred. Everything seemed to be ok, so the recording on B1 was stopped and disc B2 was placed on that turntable to prepare for the transition when A1 ran out of recording space.

3. Each disc recorded up to three minutes, but to be safe, the second recorder was started with one minute left of recording. Therefore, the end of disc A1 and the beginning of disc B2 have an overlap of the same audio content.

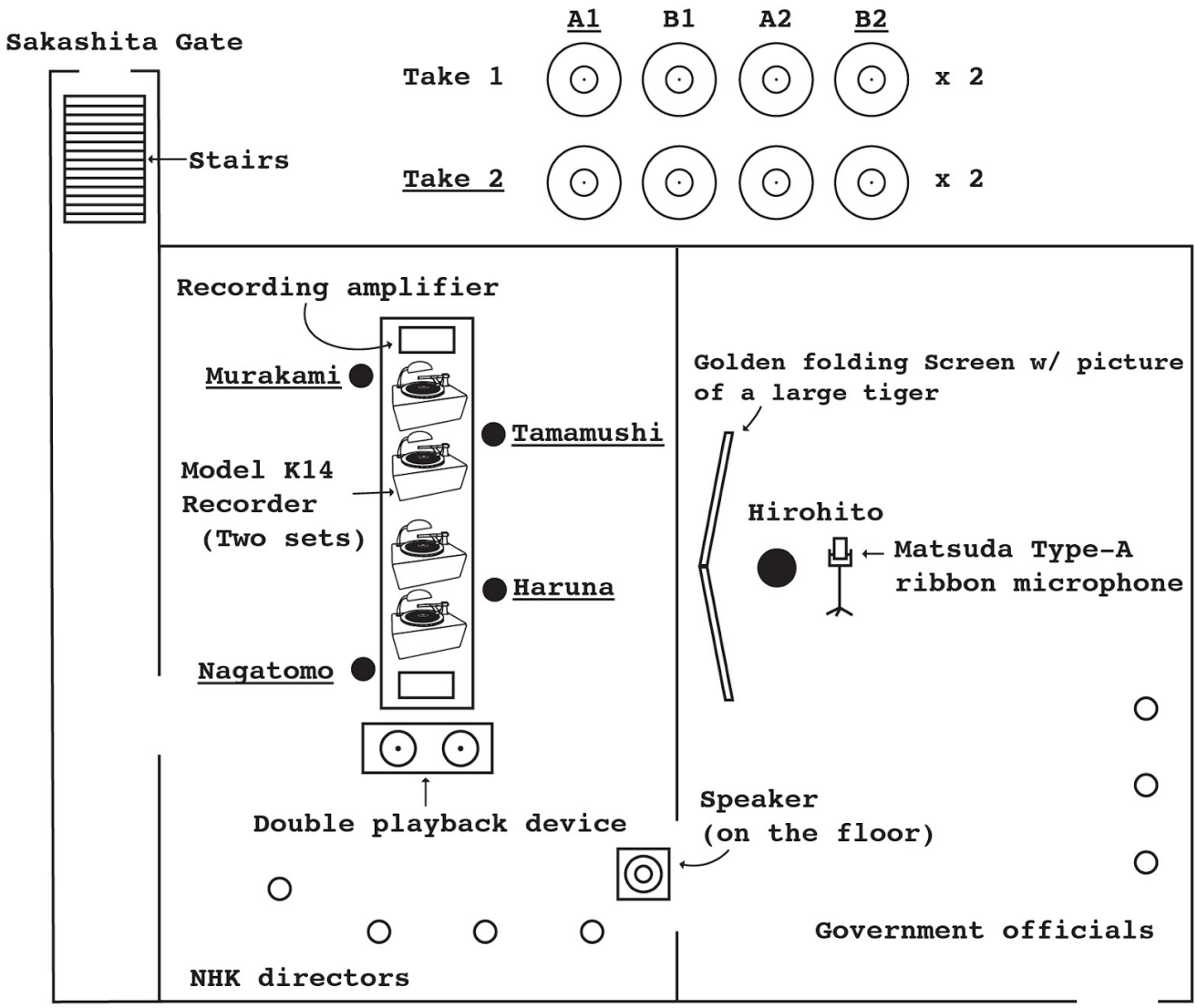
4. We did not know the duration of the speech, so after the transition from A1 to B2, disc A2 was placed on the first cutting lathe and with one minute left of B2, the recording on A2 was started. The speech lasted for about five minutes.

5. The total number of discs used on each recording rig was four, but everything was able to fit on the two discs A1 and B2. The other two discs, B1 that contained the beginning and A2 that had a small portion of the end, were not necessary.

6. Two sets of engineers performed the process of 1~5 simultaneously. The second take was also in the same manner (Takeyama 1989).

Tamamushi was surprised to hear the emperor's voice for the first time: "It was different from ours. It was like listening to the voice of god" (Asahi Shimbun 2008). After the first take was finished, Nagatomo thought that some parts of the speech were unclear and played back the recording for Hirohito to listen to. The emperor said "My voice seemed to be too low, so let's do another take." (Nippon Hoso Kyokai 1977). A second take was made, and the emperor offered to do another but they felt they had what they needed and humbly declined the offer. Hirohito left the room by 11:55 pm. The engineers listened to the second take, then carefully placed the eight discs (two discs each with backup for two takes) into a tin can and packed up their gear.

On their way back to the NHK studio, they were stopped by a group of soldiers. These soldiers revolted against their command and had come to sabotage the broadcast of the Imperial Rescript on Surrender. They took the NHK staff and cabinet members back to the Imperial Household Agency and held them hostage at gunpoint while searching for the discs. However, the discs were hidden by Agency staff member Tokunaga Yoshihiro who suspected such a thing may happen, and the discs miraculously survived the raid. Everyone was released unharmed early the next morning.



Recording setup for the Imperial Rescript on Surrender

The Playback

While the recording team was kept hostage at the Imperial Household Agency, another group of soldiers came to NHK demanding their manifesto be put on air, but staff on site quick-wittedly turned them away. With so much at stake, on the morning of August 15 of 1945 NHK engineers took various precautions in preparing for the broadcast at noon. It would take place from Daihachi (No. 8) studio, a small conference room-like studio on the second floor of the main building. In case of more sabotage attempts, another studio in the basement of the building next to NHK was prepared as a backup. In Daihachi studio Kimura Ryuzo on master control, Kojima Isamu on sub control, and Haruna on playback were assigned for the operations. Tamamushi was stationed in the basement studio with the backup discs. Typically the playback was operated by the same engineer who cut the records because they would be the most familiar with what kind of conditions the delicate discs would be in (Hososhi Hennshuushitsu Zadankai 1962). Kimura, the most senior engineer, remembers how he was confident because of who he was working with and their experience: “Kojima was an experienced veteran and Haruna was young but was careful and precise, and I trusted his skills” (Kimura 1985). Haruna was only 23 years old and had recently returned from Korea but had a reputation among his colleagues as the best turntable operator.

The discs arrived 15 minutes before airtime. With many bystanders in the studio, Kimura, Kojima, and Haruna had to start by preparing the discs:

As usual, Haruna placed the records on the double turntable playback desk and started marking the discs. The starting location had to be identified because the discs had 7 to 8 seconds of silence cut at the beginning. A yellow pencil was used to mark this position while the discs were still rotating – this left a yellow circle. Next, the transition points were marked by another yellow line to indicate where the overlapping audio began on both discs. The transition between the two discs was made by Haruna listening to the next record through an earphone and adjusting its playback until it perfectly matched the currently playing record. The mark to indicate the ending of the sound was made very simply. Haruna carefully marked the last location and the preparations were finished. Now the discs were "ready for live." The yellow line beautifully contrasted the black surface of the disc and could be seen clearly (Kimura 1985).

The broadcast started with a time signal to announce noon, then announcements were made by newscaster Wada Nobukata followed by Shimomura Hiroshi, minister and director of the Information Bureau. Afterwards, the national anthem was played and then the emperor's discs. Kimura describes the moment of the playback as follows:

The start of the Jewel Voice went well, then the transition. The pickup of the left turntable was placed on the marking of the second disc. Haruna's left hand made some adjustments to the spinning disc. When his hand left the disc, it was a sign that the sounds were perfectly matched. In the next moment the switch was made to the second turntable. The transition was seamless. Now everything was going to be all right (Kimura 1985).

The national anthem was played again afterwards followed by Shimomura announcing the end of the Jewel Voice. The broadcast itself continued for another 30 minutes containing a re-reading of the rescript, and news reports that included the Cairo Declaration, Potsdam Declaration, and Japan's acceptance to terms of surrender.

Hara Hiroo, an NHK staff who witnessed the broadcast in Daihachi studio, remembers Haruna's mastery on the turntables:

Haruna in the recording department was a master at playback. On the double turntable that played at 78 rpm, were the internally used acetate discs which had reverse grooves that started from the inside and played outward with a recording time of 3 minutes. For the playback, the overlapping section on each disc had to be skillfully adjusted by hand on the fly. On top of everything, prior to the Jewel Voice discs, the national anthem had to be played from a regular disc that played from the outside toward the inside. Therefore, he had to operate 3 records that played from different directions on two turntables. The national anthem was played, then he moved on to the first disc of the Jewel Voice, and without anyone noticing he transitioned to the second disc…(Hara 1980)

Afterwards, Kimura approached Kojima and Haruna and thanked them for their work with the usual phrase that he used after every broadcast: "Otsukaresama (good job)." Although they had just completed one of the most significant sound events in history, he remembers that his younger colleagues showed no special emotions. "Probably for them it was just another standard operation that didn't feel like anything special" (Kimura 1985).

Shizuto Haruna

However, Haruna remembers that day differently:

The technical side was nothing different from what we usually do, but it was extremely stressful. The speech was about 5 minutes, but I had a difficult time transitioning between the discs. From previous experiences, I knew that small things could cause disruption in the playback, so I was testing the discs beforehand. This probably made my superiors looking over my shoulder anxious and they started to say; "you should do this" or "how about doing that." Normally, I would never speak up against them, but this time I told them "I will do it like this so please leave everything up to me!" I remember the chairman of NHK who heard this said: "We should let him do what he needs to do." I was young and was probably on the edge without realizing it. I believe that I firmly executed the broadcast without mistakes to all Japanese citizens including the seven million soldiers abroad and to the rest of the world. During my 38 years of working at NHK, I have been involved with the broadcasting of the Tokyo Olympics and setting up the new NHK facilities in Shibuya, but nothing compared to this experience (Haruna 1995).

The entirety of the 37 minute broadcast was recorded onto multiple discs in another studio, but the executives at NHK ordered that every record related to the war be discarded before the arrival of the U.S. military. The surface of each disc was damaged with a screwdriver and thrown away. Haruna felt that these sounds were precious, but he couldn't go against his orders. The Jewel Voice discs were returned and stored away at the Imperial Household Agency.

Rendered image of *Parallel Traces of the Jewel Voice* disc. One side has no sound but a silk screen print that is based on marking that Haruna made on original discs. The other side is with parallel grooves and the label design references the acetate disc labels used for the original discs.

When these discs were taken out of storage in 1962, the surface layer which contained the sound engravings were cracked and they were unplayable. This had to do with the low-grade quality of the acetate discs used during the war and the poor storage conditions. NHK was tasked with restoring the discs and making a transfer, but there were rumors that additional copies were made after the war. It turns out that during the U.S.-led occupation, Haruna was assigned to the media department of the GHQ and they had requested a copy. The discs were still intact then and Haruna transferred the content to a 16-inch disc that was sent to the United States. Haruna took this opportunity to secretly make copies on his own and carefully kept them in his house, casually telling friends about them once the occupation was over. Seventeen years later, when the NHK team were scratching their heads on how to extract the audio from the damaged disc, someone tipped them off that they should just go down the hall and talk to Haruna. He happily handed the records to his colleagues and a magnetic tape transfer was made. Since then this version of the Jewel Voice has been used widely for various programs and has been heard by Japanese people for decades (Asahi Shimbun 1985). The newly restored audio from the original discs that were released in 2015 were 10 seconds shorter than the version made earlier. This means that the previous transfer played the emperor's voice at a different pitch, and because there is no record of the original broadcast, we will never accurately know what the nation heard on that day.

The Jewel Voice Broadcast was a carefully orchestrated event that was written, produced, and performed by professionals in the field. Perhaps many don't know about the playback of the emperor's discs because it emphasizes this fact which doesn't sit well with other narratives. However, as a turntablist, the story of Haruna highlights a body of knowledge around record and turntable manipulation that accumulated amongst broadcasting engineers. This opens a field of investigation that can possibly uncover a lineage between the practical operations of broadcasters and creative use of turntables such as Pierre Schaeffer's early musique concrète and later innovative playing styles by disco and hip hop DJs. While this inquiry is beyond the scope of this project, I imagine Haruna to be one of the first turntablists to play on the biggest stage imaginable. Haruna Shizuto passed away on March 25 of 1989, at the age of 67.

The Traces

While the recording and the playback of the Jewel Voice was nearly perfect, the content of the broadcast was unintelligible to most Japanese citizens due to its cryptic language and noise in the transmission. The prime minister's chief secretary Sakomizu Hisatsune was assigned to draft the emperor's speech. Initially, it was planned to be written in spoken language, but there had never been an instance of an emperor directly addressing the public and Sakomizu could not think of how the emperor would refer to himself in first-person (Hoso Yowa 1968). His solution was to write the speech in the form of an imperial edict which would be recited. This would be written in Kanbun, a form of classical Chinese text read in Japanese syntax, and Hirohito would refer to himself as "chin," which ancient Chinese emperors used. For most Japanese, this would be the equivalent to English speakers listening to Latin. Additionally, in order to deliver the emperor's speech not only throughout Japan, but to occupied territories in China, Korea, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, all radio networks had to be used with a signal that was boosted to six times the usual strength. This is the reason why many who listened to the broadcast remember the static noise that made it even harder to understand.

However, neither the content nor the sound quality really mattered that much. Takeyama Akiko argues that the radio receiver served as an altar for a ritual that took place on a national scale. This was performed by Japanese citizens who held the notion that they were being directly addressed by the sacred voice of a living god (Takeyama 1989). Yamahuchi Fumitaka points out that during the modernization of Japan, Kanbun and its Japanese reading was established as a political-public space with authority and dignity: "With its emphasis on sound, kundokutai (Chinese written with additional characters that rearranged the text into Japanese syntax) maintained a constant distance from vernacular speech due to its unique pronunciation not only when reading but also in its recitation" (Yamauchi 2014). This led to government announcements and legislations written in a style that mixed Chinese words and sounds that were incomprehensible in both reading and listening, but nevertheless sounded impressive. In quoting Lee Younsuk, Yamauchi attributes this to a mystical language that numbs reason and demands unconditional obedience over a clear understanding of what is being said. The content of the Imperial Rescript on Surrender that Sakomizu wrote with several revisions made from the military and language specialists is controversial, consisting of a long list of excuses for why Japan started the war and criticizing the cruelty of the Allied Forces. But because of its language and sound, it reached the Japanese public on an emotional level.

The only complete sentence that most Japanese could grasp was: “Taegataki wo tae, shinobi gataki wo shinobi (I will endure the unendurable and suffer what is insufferable).” For many, this was interpreted as the emperor’s empathy toward the strife of his subjects and the sacrifices they made for the war. Kerim Yasar argues that the emperor’s voice functioned as an auditory Rorschach test for the listeners in which they could project their own individual reactions: “What they heard through the crackling static, in the end, was whatever they wanted to hear” (Yasar 2018). Takeyama points out that the Jewel Voice Broadcast could be performed as a national ritual because it spoke to a nation that had been educated under the imperial educational system, which combined a cultish warship of the emperor with modern Western education (Takeyama 1989).

During my conversation with Mr. Chen in Taipei, he also told me that his Japanese name was Fujimura Kenji. He grew up under the colonial Japanese educational system that was meant to instill Japanese values in the local population. In reality, it seemed like it was more complex. When I asked Mr. Chen what he remembers from his childhood, he told me it was the discriminatory treatment from the Japanese towards the Taiwanese. But he also told me that he felt both Chinese and Japanese while growing up and that he believed Japan would win the war. These conversations with Mr. Chen made me want to understand the traces that Japan's colonial rule and the Jewel Voice Broadcast had left on the Taiwanese people. The only way I knew how to pursue this was through records.

In 2019, Alice Hui-Sheng Chang and Nigel Brown hosted me at their artist-run-space Ting Shuo Studio in Tainan to research records that were released in Taiwan prior to 1945. As early as 1910, Nippon Columbia’s predecessor Nippon Chikuonki Shokai had set up their branches in Japanese occupied territories of Shanghai, Korea, and Taiwan. The business model in Taiwan started with imports from Japan, but from around the 1920s the company established various sub labels that catered toward the local Chinese-speaking population. From 1920 to 1939 there were more than a thousand records produced for the Taiwanese market (Liou 2007). The National Museum of Taiwan History has an extended collection of locally-released records that can be listened to from their website. While the archive includes various popular songs from Japan and early works of prolific Taiwanese composer Chiang Wen-Yeh (also known as Koh Bunya), I was interested in finding “non-musical” records such as speeches, dramas, and field recordings. Taiwan was an important site for linguistic and ethnomusicology studies and many non-commercial records were made during this period as well (Liou 2014). One series that was particularly interesting consisted of recordings of the sounds of warplanes. These records were released during the height of the war and each release was dedicated to a different type of plane. Sounds of these planes flying at different altitudes such as 1000m, 3000m, and 5000m were recorded from the ground and there was an accompanying voice track that attempted to describe characteristics of the engine sounds in musical terms. Suzuki Shinichiro points out that chokaku kunren (ear training) was an important aspect of the modernized musical education of Japan and that by the 1940s it was considered “a skill in very close relationship to the needs of national security and industry” (Suzuki 2006).

With the help of Alice and Nigel, in early 2019 I visited Haung Yu-Yuan, the head archivist and researcher at the National Museum of Taiwan History. He told me that part of the museum's online audio archive was provided from the catalog at the National Museum of Ethnology in Japan and that his museum does not have all of the original discs or permissions for secondary use. He did however generously give me contacts of local record collectors who often collaborated with the museum on events and in the sharing of knowledge. One of them was Sam Huang. Over phone conversations with Alice, Sam had agreed to not only meet us and show his collection, but also to let us make recordings on the condition that we wouldn’t publish or share the entirety of songs with others. He also offered to bring us to a nursing home where he hosts phonograph listening events with the elders.

In late November of 2019, we visited Sam’s home in the suburbs of Tainan. He and his brown poodle welcomed us and showed us to a small room that was filled with antique furniture, gramophones, and cabinets containing vintage records. After Nigel had set up a recording rig with condenser microphones (yes, gramophones are acoustic!) I told Sam that I was looking for non-music discs such as the warplane records. Unfortunately, he did not have these records, but he did have a disc made in 1938 with a speech by Kobayashi Seizo, the 17th governor-general of Taiwan. The disc bears the title Tomin ni Tsugu (Addressing the Citizens of the Island) and Kobayashi preaches the importance of frugality in daily life to save natural resources such as cotton and coal for the war. Sam also played several Taiwanese records that documented local entertainment such as comedic theater performances and music played at seasonal festivities. After making recordings of these discs, I asked Sam to bring them with us to the nursing home, so that we could play them for the elderly. I was curious if such discs that were made for local audiences had left any impression with them as children. Sam said he would also bring along discs of Japanese Doyo (children's songs) and Gunka (military music).

Residents of New Shine Nursing Home in the back and in front from left to right: Alice, Sam, and dj sniff

The following day Sam gave us a ride to the New Shine Nursing Home in his car with fully-padded leather seats and a very impressive audio system. It turns out that while he works the night shift at a factory, he is also a DIY car audio competition winner. Sam also told us that he was a former member of a popular breakdancing crew that has danced with the biggest pop stars in Taiwan, which explained his head to toe FILA swagger. At the nursing home we were greeted by the staff who explained to us that this event was part of the residents' afternoon activities. After Sam had set up a portable gramophone, the recreation room started to fill up with elders in wheelchairs. I introduced myself and explained that I wanted to listen to some records with them and ask about memories of their childhood. I spoke in English, which Alice translated to Mandarin and Sam translated into Taiwanese. We first played the speech record, but there was hardly any reaction. Then the comedic theater record, again to no reaction. I was starting to have flashbacks of my worst DJ gigs when Sam suggested playing some of the military songs. I was resistant to the idea because in Japan one only hears these songs from the loud speakers of ultranationalist far-right group propaganda vehicles called gaisensha. These groups drive around town playing military songs and gather to harass any organization or individual they consider a threat to their nationalistic ideology, which is a mixture of emperor worship, denial of Japanese WW2 war crimes, and regarding Koreans and Chinese as enemies of the state.

When Sam played the most iconic military song Aikoku Koshinkyoku (Patriotic March) from 1937, everyone's eyes lit up. Bodies started to move and even some started to pump their fists. Eventually a grand chorus erupted. I was in shock to say the least, and didn't really know how to comprehend the situation. Sam proceeded with Momotaro (Peach Boy), a song based on popular children's folklore that tells the story of a boy born from a giant peach who, accompanied by animals, goes on a conquest to defeat oni (demons). The song had obvious wartime patriotic connotations with the demons representing the Americans, and Momotaro representing the Japanese male that fights with loyal animal friends, implying the colonized population of Asia. This was another crowd pleaser and an encore followed. Sam's set was an absolute hit. As a result, it broke the ice, and allowed me to talk to some elders about their childhood memories.

Some were eager to talk to me in Japanese. One elder, whose Japanese name used to be Ko Hideko, told me that her parents were school teachers and her family was economically well off during Japanese rule. She remembers listening to the Momotaro record at home. Hideko-san told me that the occupation ended when she was in second grade of elementary school and the transition to becoming Chinese was difficult. Another elder whose name used to be Cho Sumiko, told me that she remembers strict Japanese teachers at school who would punish children if they did not have good manners. One of the attendees who sang Momotaro the most enthusiastically, whose name used to be Ko Tsurumatsu, told me that he remembers the sirens

going off before the air raids. I talked to some of the Mandarin speaking participants with the help of Alice and they told me stories of fleeing the Japanese army through the mainland before arriving in Taiwan. One elder said: "I'm too old to remember anything so I am going to sing some Japanese songs" and she proceeded to sin1013g another iconic song from 1938, Aikoku no Hana (Flower of Patriotism). The session ended with a group photo and the participants were rolled back to their living quarters. I thanked Sam for this amazing experience and promised to send him a copy of this record.

In March of 2020, I had planned to visit Taipei to conduct one last interview with Mr. Chen. However, the panic of Covid-19 was rapidly spreading, and although there were still no strict travel regulations set in place, it didn't seem like a good idea to visit someone who might be at high risk. With the help of his family, I talked to Mr. Chen over Facetime. It had been four years since we last talked, but at 99 years old Mr. Chen was still clear with his recollections. At the end of our conversation I asked him how it felt to listen to the emperor's voice on the radio. He said: "I was extremely disappointed (that the war ended), but I didn't have any special feeling about the voice itself."

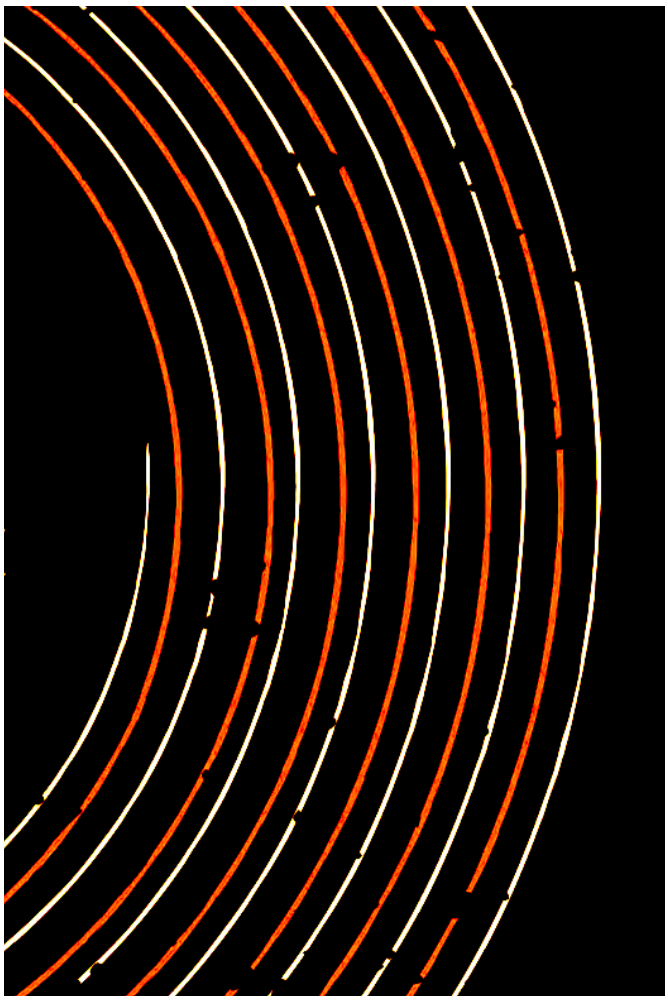
The burst of singing I experienced at the nursing home were traces of the educational system during Japan's rule of Taiwan. Music provided an important platform for experimenting with Western influences combined with traditional themes, which was the basic idea for many of Japan's reforms that took place since the Meiji era. The central program in music was shouka, where pupils sang songs composed in Western styles but accompanying Japanese lyrics that instructed about seasons, traditions, and patriotism. The Japanese implemented an assimilation educational policy in Taiwan, also known as douka kyoiku, which ran parallel to the education system in Japan.

In theory, if education played a large role in the reception of the Jewel Voice Broadcast as Takeyama pointed out earlier, then the response of the local Taiwanese population would have been similar to that of the Japanese in Japan. However, the complexity in identities that I encountered seem to attest Yamauchi's point that assimilation was merely pressure placed on the colonized and was not something that completely exhausted their agency (Yamauchi 2020). I have come to realize that I shouldn't feel uncomfortable or some kind of "colonial guilt" when the elders spoke to me in Japanese, because it was part of what they have embraced among the many identity shaping moments that followed the liberation from Japan. They had chosen to talk to me in Japanese.

While there were no obvious intersections between my research on the execution of the Jewel Voice Broadcast by Shizuto Haruna and encounters in Taiwan that started with Mr. Chen, coincidentally they are both born in the same year. Their lives ran as parallel traces and it felt like I was trying to retrace this like a record needle following a groove.

The Compositions

The two compositions included in this work were constructed with the intention to be heard together as a double mono track (digital release) and as standalone stereo tracks (vinyl release). The compositions are titled "Taiwan" and "Japan."



Rendered image to represent how two compositions are cut on parallel grooves on one side of the disc

The central concept of the Taiwan track is the re-reading of the Imperial Rescript on Surrender in Chinese which was inspired by the fact that the original was written in Kanbun. Yamauchi claims that the act of recording subverts the relationship between its subject, empowering the recorded with a physical and material presence (Yamauchi 2014). While the main narratives of the Jewel Voice Broadcast are all centered around men arguing, tormenting, and making decisions, I wanted the re-read version of the Imperial Rescript on Surrender to represent an alternative. For the re-reading, I asked Tsai Wan Shuen, an artist working with mixed-media and poetry who is originally from the archipelago of Penghu in Taiwan. In addition to the original text, the script I prepared for Tsai also included parts of the Potsdam Declaration that was intentionally taken out from the news program that followed the Jewel Voice. The omitted text specifically mentions that war criminals, including those who had mistreated prisoners, would be severely punished, and that any decision made by Japanese that does not comply with the declaration will result in the swift destruction of Japan. As I write this text at a critical moment--when Japan is trying to steamroll through the hosting of the Olympics while the number of Covid cases are on the rise and sufficient amounts of vaccines have not been administered to citizens--dishonesty towards the general public and self-serving political motives seen at the very end of the Empire seem to prevail in today's government. The drone that appears during Tsai's reading is created by the Japanese national anthem that was featured in the original broadcast but slowed down on a turntable. Additional electronic textures are made with the Hawk HE-2250 5-Head Stereo Tape Delay. Voices and singing that appear at the beginning are from interviews at the nursing home.

The Japan track started from an idea to construct a rhythm track that featured gongs because Hirohito repeatedly uses the word "chin" to address himself, which is the same word used to describe the strike of a Buddhist bowl bell. The drum track is made from a combination of drum samples taken from a previous recording session with American percussionist Shane Aspegren and Swiss percussionist Julian Sartorius, played on my crossfrader-triggered sampler "Cut 'n' Play." Sounds of gongs and chimes used in the composition are taken from studio recordings with Vietnamese percussionist Son X and Indonesian musician Iman Jimbot. Samples taken from Jimbot's voice and Malaysian vocalist Kok Siew Wai are used in the track as well. The tribal percussion that appears at the midway point is a recording of Indonesian percussionist Tony Maryana playing for the Tsou tribe members in the mountainous Alishan area of Taiwan, which was part of our Asian Meeting Festival tour in 2019. Electronic sounds are made with Rob Hordijk's Blippoo Box and Tom Bugs' PT Delay. The composition ends with the voice of Mr. Chen and a field recording of frog sounds I made in the summer of 2004 at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

For the vinyl release, the two tracks are cut as parallel grooves on one side of the record. Ideas to cut multiple grooves on a single medium can be found in laboratory notes and patents as early as the late 1800s, but they were intended to be played by multiple pickups for creating a multitrack effect (Feaster 2011). This cutting technique later became a common way to make novelty records that had hidden tracks or different conclusions to a story depending on where the needle was placed. My first encounter with such a record was when I took part in Yann Leguay's project DRIFT (2012). Recordings of four turntablists (eRikm, Martin Tétreault, Arnaud Rivière, and myself) were engraved as overlapping grooves on the disc, resulting in a physical remix that was performed by the needle as it jumped between the grooves at every intersection. Leguay invited us to the cutting session for this project, and since then I have been fascinated with artists who apply creative vinyl cutting techniques such as Ron Murphy, Dieb 13, and James Kelly. The digital release has each composition assigned to the left/right channel. This was inspired by my memories listening to Public Enemy's Party For Your Right To Fight (1988) on my first walkman. I distinctly remember Chuck D and Flavor Flav rapping separately on each side of my headphones and how disorienting it felt.

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August 2021

Parallel Traces of the Jewel Voice vinyl release from Discrepant 2022. Recorded, performed, and composed by dj sniff (Takuro Mizuta Lippit). Voice narration by Tsai Wan Shuen. Additional recordings by Alice Hui-Sheng Chang, Nigel Brown, Yannick Dauby. Mastered by Makoto Oshiro, Booklet text by dj sniff, Copy-editing by Keir Neuringer. Cover title by Eihaku Nakada. Design by Rutger Zuydervelt.

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