

Sounding Out! Podcast #50: Yoshiwara Soundwalk: Taking the Underground to the Floating World

Gretchen Jude

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Abstract

<https://soundstudiesblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/g-jude-podcast.mp3> **CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD : Yoshiwara Soundwalk: Taking the Underground to the Floating World** **SUBSCRIBE TO THE SERIES VIA ITUNES ADD OUR PODCASTS TO YOUR STITCHER FAVORITES PLAYLIST** Join Gretchen Jude as she performs a soundwalk of the Yoshiwara district in Tokyo.

Keywords

Music (Subfield), Field Recording, Listening, Place And Space, Podcast, Soundscapes

Author's translation of selected verses of *Ume wa saita ka*

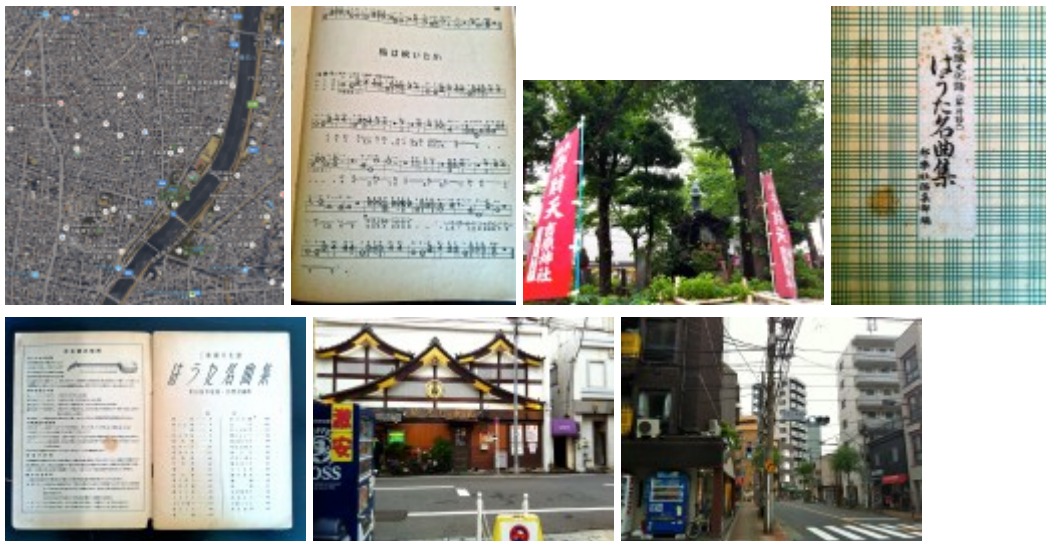
梅は咲いたか	Has the plum blossomed?	<i>Has Ume blossomed?</i>
桜はまだかいな	Have the cherry blossoms opened?	<i>How about Sakura?</i>
柳やなよなよ風次第	The willow sways back and forth, depending on the wind	
山吹や浮気で	The golden <u>kerria</u> -rose, through fickleness,	
色ばかり	is nothing but color	OR
	[Since <u>iro</u> also signifies <i>sensual pleasure and allure</i>]	
	<i>Love is gilded by venal desire</i>	OR
	<i>Cash and flirtation show the true colors of sensual desire</i>	
ションガイナ	Oh well, it can't be helped	
柳橋から小舟で急がせ	Hurry in the little boat from <u>Yanagi</u> [Willow] Bridge	
舟はゆらゆら棹次第	The boat sways back and forth depending on the oars	OR
	[Since <u>sao</u> also signifies <i>the neck of a shamisen</i>]	
	<i>The boat sways lyrically, at the whim of the pole</i>	
舟から上って土堤八丁	Disembark on the causeway at 8 th and	
吉原へ御案内	We'll/They'll show you around the <u>Yoshiwara</u>	OR
	<i>You'll be taken care of in the <u>Yoshiwara</u></i>	

Recommended citation

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Join Gretchen Jude as she performs a soundwalk of the Yoshiwara district in Tokyo. Throughout this soundwalk, Jude offers her thoughts on the history, materiality, and culture of the Yoshiwara, Tokyo's red-light district. An itinerary is provided below for the curious, as well as a translation of the *Ume wa saiti ka*, intended to help orient listeners to the history of the Yoshiwara. What stories do the sounds of this district help to tell and can they help us to navigate its sordid history?

Itinerary:

From the outer regions of the capital's northwestern suburban sprawl to Ikebukuro Station (Tobu Tojo Line), transferring from Ikebukuro to Iidabashi (Yurakucho Line), from Iidabashi to Ueno-okachimachi (Oedo Line), from Naka-okachimachi to Minowa (Hibiya Line), then by foot from Minowa to Asakusa:

Due east, past Tōsen Elementary School

South on a nameless narrow lane parallel to Edomachi Street, with a short stop at Yoshiwara Park

Turning from Edomachi Street west onto Nakanomachi Street

Curving around to the south, just past the Kuritsu-taito Hospital and Senzoku Nursery School, with a long stop at Benzaiten Yoshiwara Shrine

Due south toward the throngs of tourists at the Sensō-ji Temple grounds, then across the Sumida River to my *hauta* teacher's studio in a quiet residential neighborhood south of the Tokyo Sky Tree

Author's translation of selected verses of *Ume wa saita ka*

梅は咲いたか	Has the plum blossomed?	<i>Has Ume blossomed?</i>
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Gretchen Jude is a PhD candidate in Performance Studies at the University of California Davis and a performing artist/composer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her doctoral research explores the intersections of voice and electronics in transcultural performance contexts, delving into such topics as presence and embodiment in computer music, language and cultural difference in vocal genres, and collaborative electroacoustic improvisation. Interaction with her immediate environment forms the core of Gretchen's musical practice. Gretchen has been studying Japanese music since 2001 and holds multiple certifications in *koto* performance from the Sawai Koto Institute in Tokyo, as well as an MFA in Electronic Music and Recording Media from Mills College in Oakland, California. In the spring of 2015, a generous grant from the Pacific Rim Research Program supported Gretchen's intensive study of *hauta* and *jiuta* singing styles in Tokyo. This podcast (as well as a chapter of her dissertation) are direct results of that support. Infinite thanks also to the gracious and generous assistance of Shibahime-sensei, Mako-chan and my many other friends and teachers in Japan.

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