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Changing adult learning in Japan: the shift from traditional singing to karaoke

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Pages 257-267 | Published online: 11 Aug 2006

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370500134982>

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Hideo Watanabe is Assistant Professor of Languages and Cultures at William Paterson University. He is a cultural anthropologist. His research interests include education, music, and religion in Japan and Korea. He can be contacted at William Paterson University, Wayne, NJ 07470-2103, USA; e-mail: watanabeh@wpunj.edu

Culture Centres are commercially operated adult education centres built in the period 1980-1984. They offer courses in a wide variety of subjects for a fee.

Karaoke is singing to recorded background music and was invented in Japan in the 1970s.

Kata is the stylized gestures or movements observed in Japanese arts and martial arts.

Iemoto is a hierarchical social structure of classical arts under which various disciples are interlinked with other disciples through their masters.

According to Japan's Statistics Bureau, the entire Japanese population was 8,320,000 in 1950, 11,706,000 in 1980, 12,693,000 in 2000 and 12,769,000 in 2003.

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Kabuki is a stylized traditional Japanese play with singing and dancing created in the 17th century for the common people.

Shigin usually has no musical accompaniment. It developed at the end of the Edo period and was loved by samurai. Nowadays shigin is widely studied by elderly people and housewives.

Min'yô differs from other forms of traditional singing created by composers in the sense that it originated in local areas and was passed down from generation to generation. There was a min'yô boom some years ago, but that has now past.

Additional information

Notes on contributors

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