

Historical Memory of “Bloody Sunagawa” and *Akatombo* in the Sunagawa Struggle

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During the Sunagawa Struggle (a civil protest movement triggered by plans for the expansion of the American Base in Tachikawa, Tokyo, in 1955) , the participants sang many labor songs and children’s songs. Particularly famous of them is Kōsaku Yamada’s *Akatombo* [*Red Dragonfly*] , sung during the “Bloody Sunagawa [*ryūketsu no Sunagawa*] ,” which was clashes between demonstrators and police forces that took place on October 13, 1956.

The purpose of this paper is to clarify the historical memory associated with the song found in narratives and chronicles on the Struggle, in particular, the “Bloody Sunagawa.” As well as hitherto-published studies on related topics, I survey essays written by junior high school students, and magazine and newspaper articles to identify songs that were sung during the protest. I also analyze various published narratives, including various media pieces (reportage-style novels, recollections of participants, and children’s books) , that recount the Struggle and the “Bloody Sunagawa”.

Labor songs were referred to in contemporary collections of essays and magazine article reports. In contrast, *Akatombo* was found only in descriptions of the “Bloody Sunagawa” incident. The relationship between “Bloody Sunagawa” and *Akatombo*, and the emotional effects of the song, were also observed in reportage-style novels and recollection pieces on the Struggle. The number of references to *Akatombo* in these sources exceeded the number of labor songs. While some contemporary reports doubted the effect that the singing of *Akatombo* might have given to the police force in the Sunagawa Struggle, the song’s mass singing continued in other political movements in the 1960s (the Anpo Struggle). Furthermore, in children’s books, *Akatombo* symbolized calm, homeland, and peace amidst the bloody conflict of the “Bloody Sunagawa”. This insight may add another understanding for the role of music in post-war political movements and may further develop case studies in similar topics.