

"Oppekepē bushi" (The Oppekepē Song)⁴⁷

1. To all those who scorn human rights and happiness:
I want you to drink the warm waters of freedom
Oppekepeppo peppoppō
You've abandoned all your fine, stiff Japanese clothes,
To wear capes and trousers and ride in a ricksha,
Decked out in chic Western hairdos and bonnets
Your fine ladies dress up and look like gentlemen
From afar your ornamentation seems splendid but
Your political ideas are defective;
You don't understand the truths of the universe.
You must sow the seeds of freedom in your hearts.
Oppēkepeppo, peppoppō.
2. You ladies don't know what business your husbands are in
Yet you've got modern hairdos on top of your heads.
You utter fancy "Enlightenment" foreign words
Putting off bills 'til month's end; hugging foreign dogs—
It's so unbecoming. Stop what you are doing!
You men know nothing but put on such knowing faces,
Brazenly turning your noses only toward the West.
You can't stand Japanese saké at any time
But along with beer you swallow brandy and vermouth
Then with that foreign food that your belly can't hold
You devour it but can't admit you can't stand it
Soon you throw up—uh-gh!—in some place out of sight
And follow by drinking coffee with a straight face.
How ri-di-cu-lous! Oppekepē,
Oppekepeppo, peppoppō.
3. As you speculate on rising rice prices today,
You turn your backs on the misery of the poor
And you cover your eyes below those fine high hats.
You put on golden rings and golden watches as you
Grovel before the powerful and influential.
You throw money at geisha and at brothel clowns
While back at home you're hoarding rice in your storehouses;
Will you just look on as fellow countrymen die?
What a lack of compassion and what selfishness;
You're...

So that when you meet Emma, Master of Hades,
And slip him a bribe, he'll get you into Paradise?
It won't work—you won't get in that way, no!
Oppekepē, oppekepeppo, peppoppō.

4. Meeting with your mistresses and your concubines,
And taking them to plays, that's not "Enlightenment";
You've missed the moral: "Reward good, punish evil."
Your eyes are fixed on scenes of sexual passion
While your wives give cold shoulders to dear husband
As sure as anything, you men are screwing around.
It's not good for you. Give up what you are doing.
At this dawn when our National Diet has opened
Give up your fooling around with entertainers.
You must protect Japan with everything you've got.
If you crave married women and their shaved eyebrow
Go get a decent sweetheart and make her your own;
But if you really want your eyes to pop open,
Jump into a bed with a passionate badger
Oppekepē, oppekepeppo peppoppō.

5. Using foreign words, pretending you're enlightened,
Eating only bread, these are not ways to reform.
Expanding the rights of Imperial Japan,⁴⁸
Boosting our nation's glory are the urgent tasks.
Because knowledge must compete with more knowledge
We can't look around aimlessly and do nothing;
We must transcend with science and technology.
We're not inferior to foreign lands; let's beat them!