

44. Cultural movements

44.1 Regional cultural movements in Santama region

From the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 (Meiji 38) to the Taisho Period, democratic and liberal tendencies increased in political, social and cultural fields. A Taisho Period pro-democracy movement influencing regional arts, literature and cultural activities developed also in the Tama region through youths and schoolteachers. Art and literature groups such as Yoshinofuesha and Kochosha were established in Tadao Village of Minamitama-gun (Machida City). The Kyojinsha was established in Higashiakiru Village (Akiruno City) issuing the literary magazine "Kyojin"(means Giant). Group magazines, "Ranjatai", "Shonenbunrinfu", "Ningenha" and other magazines were issued also in Hachioji City.

In the postwar confusion after August 15, 1945 (Showa 20), regional art and literature movements sprang up nationwide. This postwar movement linked to the Taisho Democracy movement of the Tama region sums up the cultural trend of the 20th century. An unaided movement valuing independence and self-reliance aimed at complete relief of the human condition through personal effort. A self-educational movement placed value on personal expressions. In the 1880s (roughly the Meiji 10s) the Movement for Civic Rights and Freedom; seeking rights, freedoms, equality, a national assembly, reduction of land and other taxes, local autonomy, etc., flourished particularly in the Santama region. Comparing regional cultural movements this can be considered the first, the Taisho Democracy period as the second, and the postwar period as the third.

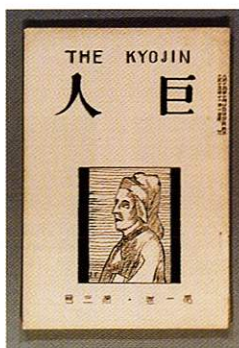


Fig.279 "Kyojin", No.3, vol. 1. issued on November 1, 1926 (Taisho 15). Mimeograph, published by Kyojin-sha (Higashiakiru Village Nishitama-gun, Akiruno City).

44.2 Reconstruction of the Fussa Youth Association and other regional cultural movements

The youth in Fussa promptly sought a new movement after the Pacific War defeat. In autumn 1945 (Showa 20), HASHIMOTO Kozo, YAMAZAKI Ryonosuke and INOUE Shigeo reestablished the Fussa Youth Association. They declared at the ceremony to found their new association "The youth of Fussa wish to establish a new organization, free of constraint, organized only by youth to rebuild Japan as a unique power". So the "News of Fussa Youth Association" started. The next year, 1946 (Showa 21), saw the Youth Association magazine, "Tama-no-ishizue", issued.

Meanwhile, the youth in Kumagawa established the Furusato-kai under NAMIKI Shimao, vice-principal of Fussa Daini Kokumin Gakko and issued the coterie magazine "Furusato". The Furusato-kai strongly appealed that members "discover the deeper meanings of youth, youth association and home province and consider the role as youth, farmer or worker."

The membership of the Furusato-kai mainly consisted of Kumagawa and Fussa youth but expanding into the Nishitama region including Ome, Itsukaichi (Akiruno city), Higashiakiru Village (Akiruno City), Mizuho Town, Oguno Village (Hinode Town) and Nishitama Village (Hamura City). Concurrently HAMANAKA Banzo (Present IWASHITA Banzo) joined Furusato-kai, to publish a joint magazine "Fussa", and participate in the magazine's compilation. This merger is a basis for Fussa's subsequent cultural activity.

44.3 The "Akaza" movement

In summer 1946 (Showa 21), more than a dozen interested members started a new association, aiming to expand the cultural development



Fig.280 Michishibakai reading circle, Culture Group of Fussa Youth Association (about 1940s (early Showa 20s)).

of Fussa Town in various fields such as literature, theater, music, public speaking, etc. Its name "Akazasha" springs from the word for "weed" (akaza) symbolizing tenacious growth in association with a people's recovery from their defeat in war. The first volume of the coterie magazine "Akaza" was published in February the following year. It continued until 1948 (Showa 23).

Akaza's main purpose was literary creativity and research, its secondary aim included regional democratization. One of the members mentioned that the Akaza's aim was cultural development at both spiritual and material levels, in recognition of culture's centrality in social life. The color red dominating covers of "Akaza" indicated burning vigor and ambition.

44.4 Nishitama Free University and others

In November, 1946 (Showa 2), Tama Free University was launched in Motohachioji Village, Minamitama-gun (Hachioji City). Tokyo University's professor ARISAWA Hiromi, a former air raid evacuee, was appointed honorary president and lectured continuously. His students ran "Nishitama Free University" lectures at Fussa Daiichi Kokumin Gakko in July the following year. The main body of the lecture was the Nishitama Free Konwakai (association gathering for discussion). A total of 3 thousand people attended the 8 lectures and a big cultural movement developed. This type of cultural learning activity spread over time, involving not only Fussa and Hachioji citizens, but also those of Musashino, Tachikawa, Hamura and other Tama districts.



Fig.281 Coterie magazine "Akaza", vol. 19, issued on November 1948 (Showa 23).

Theatrical performances by youth associations flourished amid post war confusion. In 1946 and 1947, the local youth association staged skilled performances in Fussa Daiichi Kokumin Gakko's ground. In 1952 (Showa 27), they formed a theatrical company "Hikobae", performing the program "Genshokunomachi" (means Primary colored town) as their launching project. The company broke up after its first season.

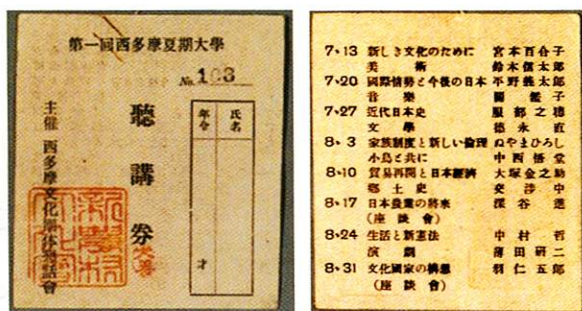


Fig.282 The Nishitama Summer School attendance ticket for the first lecture, surface and back side (1947 (Showa 22)). This lecture ran at Fussa Daiichi Kokumin Gakko's lecture hall in July 1947 (Showa 22) filling the lecture hall to capacity.



Fig.283 Commemorative picture of Youth association theatrical competition first prize-winners. The Fussa Youth Association won the first prize playing the ENDO Yorio's program "Kappa". YUGI Seiichi won the first prize for acting. They performed at the Hatsune-za (Ome City). July 8, 1948 (Showa 23).



Fig.284 Fussa Youth Association bulletin, "Riso", No. 9, 1950 (Showa 25).