

# Kikuo Saito and the Children of Nishijin: The Soundscape of a Weaving District and Sound Education in an Elementary School in 1960s Kyoto

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## Abstract

Kikuo Saito, an elementary school teacher at a school in the Nishijin area of Kyoto, self-published some original research in the 1960s on soundscapes and the use of sound in education. The Nishijin area is well known for its association with its local industry of traditional silk textiles, so it was filled with the noise of the many workshops' looms. Saito's report provided information about the sonic environment that pervaded the lives of his pupils, including the spatial distribution of sound levels. Saito developed original use of the noise environment in his teaching, encouraging his class to compose essays and poems around those factory noises, which he compiled into publications. Thus, Saito provided excellent and rare evidence regarding the past soundscape in Nishijin from both physical and cognitive viewpoints. Moreover, his practices as a teacher could be regarded as a pioneering case of sound education.

**Keywords:** Nishijin textile industry, past soundscape, sound education, writings by pupils

## 1. Introduction

In the 1960s, an elementary school teacher named Kikuo Saito (1929–2000) found that the pupils in his school, located within the Nishijin area of Kyoto, Japan, were subjected to sustained high levels of noise, both in the classroom and in their everyday lives at home.

The Nishijin area is quite well known in Japan for its traditional textile industry. The area used to be filled with loud weaving noises made by the power looms of the many small factories, especially in the 1960s and 70s. Thus, the Nishijin residents were living their everyday lives within the soundscape of weaving noises (Minoura 2006, 2007).

Saito sought to use these experiences of noise within his teaching, and in doing so, he developed an interesting and useful body of original writings on his educational practices and his research on soundscapes. The book he compiled included two significant implications in relation to the soundscape studies.

First, he provided detailed information of a case of the past soundscape including sound levels and people's responses. Second, he left his original ideas of education in his texts focusing on his use of factory noise as a medium for his pupils' education. Thus, he can be regarded as an unknown pioneer in soundscape research and sound education.

This paper introduces the soundscape in Nishijin in the 1960s as it is presented in the materials researched, taught, and compiled in Kikuo Saito's book. This case provides a sample of the residents' experiences living with the factory noises resulting from the local textile industry. Furthermore, the paper discusses a methodology with regard to soundscape case studies and sound education.

## 2. The Industry and the District Studied

### 2.1. Nishijin Textile Industry

The production of textiles in the Nishijin area has a long history, with origins dating back to the eighth century. A remarkable development of the textile industry in Nishijin occurred in the seventeenth century, and from that time onwards, it was the most important centre

for Japanese textiles. During the modernization period, which started in the late nineteenth century, the area played a role as one of the industrial centres of Kyoto. After a temporary decline in production due to the controlled economy during World War II, Nishijin boomed again during the post-war period of economic growth. In the late 1970s, however, textile manufacturers started moving their production to other places where they could make use of cheaper labour. In addition to this, the textile industry itself began to decline from the 1980s onwards. As a result, although the Nishijin textile industry is still one of the important industries in Kyoto, the current scale of production inside the Nishijin area is greatly reduced from how it was in the 1960s and 70s, when weaving noises could be heard everywhere.

The Nishijin textile industry has been largely centred on the production of silk fabrics that are mainly used for Japanese traditional costumes, kimonos, and obis (the Japanese sash used for the kimono). They also produce textiles for other uses, such as neckties or interior decoration. The weavers in Nishijin use power looms as well as hand looms, and since the latter half of the 1960s, power looms have made up around 80% of the looms in the area.

The textile industry in Nishijin consists mainly of small businesses, and there have been numerous small weaving workshops mingled in with residences. Typically, the workshops in the area are situated either within or adjacent to the traditional wooden houses of the residents, and in each of these workshops there would be one or more power looms in operation.

The textile industry has for a long time been a symbol and source of identity for the people living in Nishijin. This was due in part to the economic importance of the industry to the area, and the dependence that the people had on the industry for their livelihoods. It was also, however, a proudly emotional attachment to the long historic association between Nishijin and textiles, and in particular the high quality of production associated with Nishijin textiles.

## 2.2. Nishijin Area and Kashiwano District

Although the name of Nishijin has been widely used to call the area, the actual geographic area is not clear, because the name is not formal but conventional. Taniguchi et al. (1993) defined the areas of “Old Nishijin” and “Large Nishijin,” as shown in Figure 1. “Old Nishijin” meant the area where the industry had been historically conducted, and “Large Nishijin” was where the industry was densely located. The area of Large Nishijin stretches over the Kami-gyo and Kita Wards of Kyoto City.

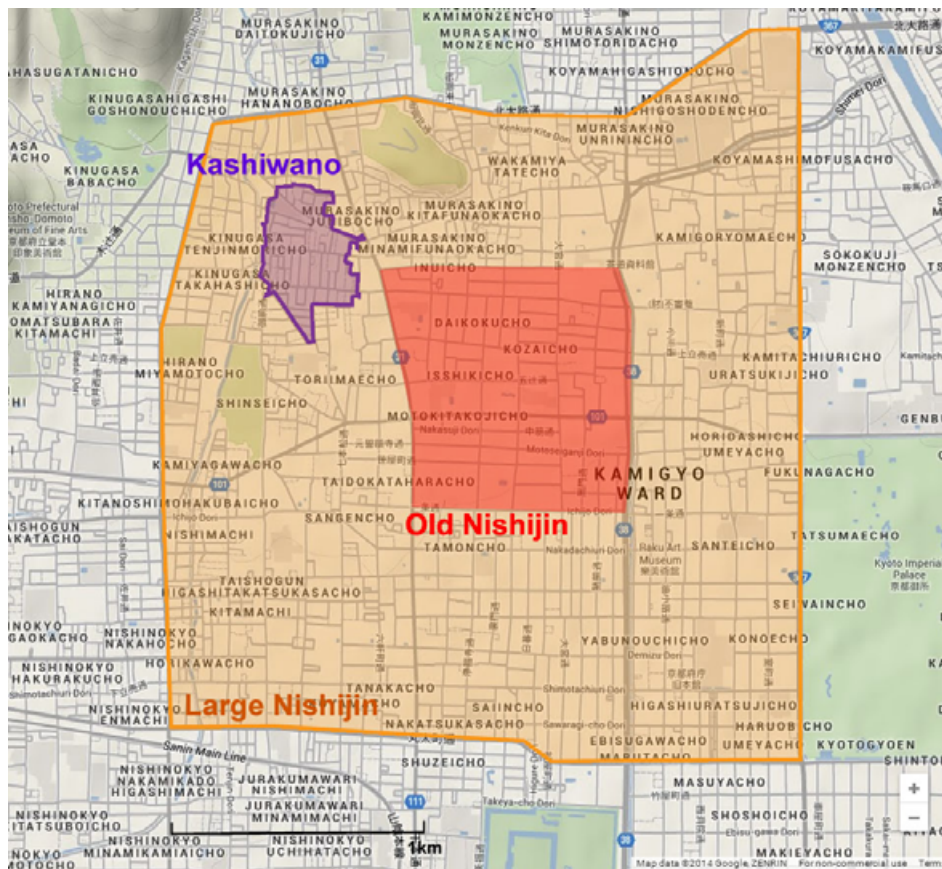


Figure 1. Locations of Old and Large Nishijin and Kashiwano District.

Kashiwano is a formal district that lies in the Kita Ward of Kyoto City. It is situated on the north-western part of Large Nishijin, as shown in Figure 1. It is also a school district for the Kashiwano Elementary School. The district had developed in the earlier half of the twentieth century as a new place for workshops and weavers' residences. Most of the weavers had started their own businesses in the area after learning their skills as employed weavers nearby. Many of them conducted subcontracted work that was provided from larger companies.

During the 1960s, Kashiwano was one of the most densely populated districts in Kyoto City. According to the 1965 Population Census of Japan, the population of the district was 6,914, living in an area of 0.166km<sup>2</sup>, which means that the density was over 40,000 residents/km<sup>2</sup>. In the 1966 Establishment and Enterprise Census of Japan, there were 613 manufacturers in the district, most of which were connected with the textile industry. In recent years, the number of residents and manufactures has significantly declined: in 2010, there were 3,347 residents, and only 83 manufacturers in 2009.

### 3. Saito's Profile and His Education

Kikuo Saito was born on 21 August 1929 in Kyoto. He began his career as a school teacher in 1953 just after graduating from university. Except for his first two years in a junior high school, he was consistently engaged in primary education until his retirement in 1990. He passed away on 15 January 2000.<sup>1</sup> In 1995, Saito self-published a book titled *Ookina Ki no Shita no Kodomotachi* (Children beneath big trees) after he had retired from teaching (Saito 1995). The book was a collection of writings in relation to his activities as a school teacher mainly in the three elementary schools, including articles on education, poems, and essays written by the pupils. He was especially interested in using writing in his educational practice, so he often made his pupils write essays and poems. He was active in research, and he was a member of a research community for elementary school teachers.

Saito worked at Kashiwano Elementary School between 1963 and 1971 (when he was between 33 and 41 years old), and at the end of this time he compiled a book titled *Nishijin no Ko* (Children in Nishijin), which included his writings in relation to his teaching experiences at the Kashiwano school (Saito 1971). The book was 175 pages; the first half of it consisted of the pupils' work, and in the second half, he included his research reports, as shown in Table 1.

In the book, the chapters *Nishijin no Uta* (#2), *Nishijin no Uta 2* (#6), and *Nishijin no Ko to Hata no Oto* (#12) detail Saito's interests in and research on the sonic environment of Kashiwano in Nishijin, which at that time was full of the noises of weaving. It is these chapters that are of most interest from the point of view of soundscape, and which we will discuss in particular in this paper.

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1. Based on Saito (1995) and an interview with Hiroko Saito, Saito's wife, and Tomoko Saito, Saito's daughter (2009/5/24).

Table 1. The Contents of the book *Nishijin no Ko* (Saito 1971)

No.	Title	Year	Number of Pages	Explanation
	Preface		1	
1	Tale: <i>Nishijin no Uta</i> (Poetry of Nihijin)	1970	11	A story illustrating the lives of the children in Nishijin, quoting from the pupil's poems.
2	Collection of Writings <i>Nishijin no Uta</i> (Poetry of Nishijin)	1964	9	A collection of writings of the fourth grade pupils of his first class at Kashiwano school.
3	Collection of Writings <i>Tenjin san</i> (Kitano Temmangu Shrine)	1964	9	A collection of writings of the fifth grade pupils of his class, including poems focusing on Kitano Temmangu Shrine.
4	Radio Programme Scenario <i>Ennichi to Kyoto no Kodomo</i> (A festival of Children in Kyoto)	1964	9	On air on 28 December 1964, produced by NHK Kyoto station.
5	Collection of Writings <i>Kinkakuji</i>	1965	5	A collection of the pupils' poems focusing on Kinkakuji Temple, which is close to the school.
6	Collection of Poems <i>Nishijin no Uta 2</i> (Poetry of Nihijin)	1965	16	A collection of writings by the fifth grade pupils of his class.
7	Radio Drama <i>Nishijin no Uta to Kodomo</i> (Poetry and Children in Nishijin)	1965	6	On air on 23 May 1965, produced by NHK Kyoto station.
8	Songs "Ojizo-san" and two others	1966	3	A composer made a melody for his pupils' poems.
9	Essays <i>Watashi no Okasan</i> (My Mother) and one other	1969	6	Two comparatively long essays by his pupils.
10	<i>Nishijin no chiiki oyobi sangyo no gaikan</i> (Outline of Nishijin area and industry) by Yasoya Matsumura.	1966	8	Reprint of a paper from "Study on understandings of modern children" (Bulletin of Kyoto City Institute for Educational Research, 129, 1966)
11	<i>Honko Jido no Kogai Seikatsu</i> (Life outside the school of the pupils)	1964	21	A report on the lives of the pupils in relation to pocket money, places to go, contents of play, etc.
12	<i>Nishijin no Ko to Hata no Oto</i> (Children in Nishijin and the Sounds of the Looms)	1966	24	A research report consisting of measurements of noise levels and experiments on the effects of noise on learning.
13	<i>Nishijin no Ko to Terebi</i> (Children in Nishijin and Televisions)	1967	24	A research report about pupils' experiences of watching TV.
14	<i>Tsuchihyo no Mondaiten</i> (Problems in a grade report)	1969	22	A research report about grading.
	Postface		1	

**Table 2.** Contents of Nishijin no Ko to Hata no Oto (1966)

I Introduction
II Measurements of noise levels in Nishijin <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Classrooms in Kashiwano school</li><li>2. Children's rooms in their residences</li><li>3. On the streets in Kashiwano district</li><li>4. Summary of the results</li></ol>
III Children in Nishijin and sounds of looms <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sounds of looms and fraction calculation (calculation, efficiency)</li><li>2. Sounds of looms and Uchida-Kraepelin test (efficiency, personality)</li><li>3. Sounds of looms and memory (memory)</li><li>4. Sounds of looms and test on annoyance of noise (sense)</li><li>5. Summary of results</li></ol>
IV Countermeasure against sounds of looms and guidance to pupils
V Conclusion

## 4. Saito's Research on the Sounds of the Looms and Their Effects on Children

The article Nishijin no Ko to Hata no Oto (Children in Nishijin and Sounds of Looms) was written in 1965 to report the results of his research on the relationship between the local industrial noise and children's learning. He submitted this report to a competition for educational research by elementary school teachers of the Kyoto City Board of Education, and it was awarded for one of the ten best papers in 1966 (Kyoto City Board of Education et al. 1966). The contents were the results of measurements of noise levels in classrooms, residences, and on streets, along with his experiments on the effects of noise on learning, as shown in Table 2.

In the introduction to the report, Saito described his motivation for the research as follows:

With the children of Kashiwano school, who always live within the sounds of the looms from morning till night, I came to feel that those intense sounds of looms have affected their problems in learning, life, physical development, etc. So I

started to research whether Kashiwano children can study and live their lives well with that loud noise.<sup>2</sup>

Further, he wrote, “This research would contribute to happier lives of the children, not only in Kashiwano but also in the whole of Nishijin (weaving districts)” and “Expanding to the noise made by traffic, construction, and other industries, this is one of problems for most children in the present day.”

In the school context, he measured the noise levels in 13 classrooms with the windows open in two conditions: with and without pupils inside. He determined accepted values with medians calculated from 50 measurements with intervals of five seconds using Rion’s Sound Level Meter NA-02.

In the context of pupils’ homes, he measured sound levels in the pupils’ rooms and in the rooms for weaving, in 11 residences that had operating looms. The average levels were 89 dB in the weaving rooms, 61 dB in the children’s rooms with the doors and windows closed, and 69 dB with the doors open.

In the Kashiwano district, he measured sound levels at 305 public points, with intervals of 25 steps. He read the level meter needle and wrote down the approximated values in 5 dB units. Figure 1 is a copy of the map showing the sound level measurements. He also plotted the locations of the houses from which the sounds of looms could be heard with dots on the map. Table 3 shows the distribution of the sound levels. From his data, the most frequent value was 65 dB and the average was 64 dB.

He conducted an experiment on the effect of noise on the pupil’s efficiency at engaging in tasks. The subjects were exposed to recorded sounds of looms with three different conditions; 50, 70, and 90 dB, and they were requested to do several kinds of tasks. From this experiment, Saito reached the four following conclusions:

1. no effect was observed on efficiency in simple study tasks, such as computational problems;
2. no effect was observed in short-term memorizing tasks;
3. however, he found some effects on personality caused by the heavy noises; and
4. levels of antipathy increased as the noise levels increased.

Based on the results of his measurements and experiments, his paper discussed methods of teaching, and he suggested useful ways to assign homework and to improve the study environment at home. On the other hand, he wrote, “Turn the bad of the loud noises of looms to something good.” He pointed out that certain educational practices, especially those fo-

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2. This quote, and all subsequent quotes, is translated from the original Japanese by the author.



cused on writing, that made the loom sounds into a learning feature could be beneficial for the pupils, particularly as they emphasized and made use of a point of distinction related to the area. He suggested the possibility that pupils could be encouraged to think about the local industry and its sounds in a range of subjects, such as science, social science, arts and crafts, and so forth.



**Figure 2.** Measurements of sound levels and locations of the weaving noises (September 1965) in Nishijin no Ko to Hata no Oto (1966). The numerical values show sound levels (in dB), and the dots show the locations of the residential houses from which weaving noises were audible.

**Table 3.** Measurements of sound levels in Kashiwano district (September 1965) in Nishijin no Ko to Hata no Oto (1966)

dB	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	Total	64
Count	16	40	61	124	41	19	4	305	Mean

## 5. The Soundscape Depicted in the Pupils' Writings

### 5.1. Observation of the Sounds of Looms

Saito put together two compilations of the poems and essays written by the pupils in his classes focusing on sounds of looms. The collection *Nishijin no Uta (Poetry of Nishijin)* in 1964 consisted of the writings made by pupils in the fourth grade (ages 9-10), and the following year (1965) he compiled *Nishijin no Uta 2* with writings of fifth graders (ages 10-11). Saito submitted the collection *Nishijin no Uta* for the *Nihon Sakubun no Kai* (Japanese Association of Writing Education) to a competition for classroom collections of writings, and the volume won a prize.

In the first half of *Nishijin no Uta*, the fourth grade pupils wrote descriptions of how they heard the sounds of the looms. Saito wrote in the preamble to this volume of how he had instructed the pupils to listen to the sounds carefully, as follows.

I woke up to the sounds of the looms, like *Chon Gachon Chon Gachon*, in the morning after I had night duty for the first time.

In the bed, I came up with the idea that you pupils in Kashiwano School are so closely connected to the sounds of the looms. If you write poems about your life, there should be the sounds of the looms in your words.

But when I asked you, “what are sounds of the looms like?” you said *Gacchan Gacchan* or *Doshin Doshin*.

You hear the sound of the looms day after day – and you described the sound just like that – I felt a little sad about it.

[...]

Today, I'd like you to listen very carefully to the sounds of the looms when you go back home. Please write down the sounds exactly as you hear them. Saying it like that, I got the pupils to write the following sounds.

Following this instruction, the pupils wrote the onomatopoeic phrases shown in Table 4. Compared to hand looms, the onomatopoeias for the power looms were quite simple in their descriptions of mechanical sounds.

Table 4. Pupils' descriptions of weaving sounds in *Nishijin no Uta* (1964)

Sounds of hand looms	Sounds of power looms
Sūshadon Sūshadon Kikku Kikku	Tsuruttan Tsuruttan Tsuruttan Tsuruttan
Bacchan Gacha Gacha Tsuru Tsuru Gacchan	Gudassha Gudassha Gudassha Gudassha
Kikkon Surasura Kikkon Surasura	Shakka Shakka Shakka Shakka
Bacchin Kassha Bacchin Kassha	Chantanka Chantanka Chantanka Chantanka
Basha Ku Ku Ku Ku Kachin Basha	Kyurudon Kyurudon Kyurudon Kyurudon
Httan Kyurukyuru Happattan	Chogachanko Chogachanko Chogachanko
Batton Batton Koro Koro Batton	Patatan Patatan Patatan Patatan
	Chachon Chachon Chachon Chachon

In addition to description by means of onomatopoeia, Saito gave them another instruction: “What do you come up with by hearing sounds of looms? You probably sometimes feel like the looms speak to you. What do they say?” In response, the pupils wrote as shown in Table 5.

In the first part of the latter compilation (*Nishijin no Uta 2*), the fifth-grade pupils used words to describe what they saw and experienced in two different situations related to the looms: first, during the times when the looms were operating, and second, when the looms were stopped. These descriptions by the pupils are shown in Tables 6 and 7. These descriptions convey some part of the local soundscape at that time. Moreover, they illustrate how Saito would give his pupils instructions to carefully observe their situations at home and in their neighbourhood.

Table 5. Content that pupils imagined the weaving sounds said to them, in *Nishijin no Uta* (1964)

Wake up soon, or you'll be late for school
Have you washed your face? Eaten some bread?
Take care not to forget anything. Are you prepared?
Don't forget your homework often
Try to write neatly in your notebooks
Your test score was bad, you'll be scolded
Try to eat all of your school lunch
Don't waste your money
You'll lose your snack to your younger brother if you are slow to eat

Don't go to play too far away, play with your sister
Make sure to study
Run an errand without complaining
Don't bring your friends home often
Don't quarrel with your brother, or the elder will be scolded
Did you finish your homework? Don't be always watching TV
Did you sharpen your pencils and prepare for tomorrow?
Have you prepared for tomorrow?
How did you play today? Don't do anything dangerous
You'll catch a cold if you do such things
Don't stay out late
Don't stay up late, go to bed early

**Table 6.** Description of the times when the looms were operating, in *Nishijin no Uta 2* (1965)

The market is empty	Only a mouth moves
Mice don't run	Hard to hear the telephone
The TV doesn't speak	
Turn the TV louder	A laughing face becomes serious
Voices become louder	Many kids are on the road
Have to call time and time again	Have to call for mom many times
A front door is almost coming off	A cutting board and knife drop together
A spider web shakes	A normal talk seems a quarrel
Pattern papers dance	Talks become shorter

**Table 7.** Description of the times when the looms were stopped, in *Nishijin no Uta 2* (1965)

The far church bells are heard	Feels like the earth is stopping
Finally start studying	Can hear footsteps
A baby cries	Have a noise in my ear
Voices of an easygoing comedy came up	The cat comes home
Weavers sitting in the sun are seen	Don't have to yell
<i>Kotatsu*</i> is full of people (*Japanese heating table)	Quiet like the blackout
The market is crowded	Suddenly feel hungry
The TV seem louder	Feel relaxed
Yarn waste, screwed like cotton candy, is thrown away	Automobiles are heard
Feel scary	Mice run
Feel awkward	

## 5.2. Poems

These two collections both included poems that had been composed by the pupils. In these poems, the pupils lively expressed their feelings about the weaving sounds. *Nishijin no Uta* included nineteen pupils' poems, twelve of which depicted the pupils' lives alongside the production of Nishijin textiles. *Nishijin no Uta 2* included fifteen poems, and all of them were related to their lives with the industry.

Seven of these poems are reproduced, in translation, in the Appendix of the present paper, and all of these have been selected from the viewpoint of how they contribute to our understanding of the soundscape. The poems often included the onomatopoeias and the words shown in Tables 4 to 7. This suggests Saito led the pupils to compose these poems in a process of steps, moving from the onomatopoeic words to the experiences, and then to the poems.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. The Soundscape Depicted through Saito's Practices

As introduced above, Saito's research and the pupils' writings depicted the soundscape of the Kashiwano district in 1960s from multiple sides. Thus, the book is valuable as an important historical record of the local soundscape.

According to Saito's measurements, weaving noises were distributed throughout almost the entire district, and in many places the noise levels were 65 dB or above. This indicates that the residents lived their everyday lives with the sounds of these remarkable noises, particularly considering that the current noise regulation in this area for during the daytime is no more than 65 dB.

Saito's book also provided information about the times when they heard the noises. Some poems mentioned the starting and ending times of weaving. For example, Poem (5) mentioned that weaving noises made him wake up, and Poem (7) illustrated that the noises could be heard from when it was dark in the morning until late at night. Poem (6) concerns a woman who wove from seven in the morning to nine at night. Through these illustrations,

it is clear that the residents were used to hearing the weaving noises from the early morning until late at night.

Other than the physical situation, the pupils' writings painted a rich picture of the ways in which the residents heard and listened to the noises. What was particularly prominent was that the pupils described the weaving sounds like a personality. The expressions shown in Table 5 suggested that many of the pupils felt that the weaving sounds could be like family members. Poems such as Poem (2) and Poem (6) also described the weaving sounds as sounds made by a specific person, not as an anonymous industrial noise.

Another feature of the pupils' attitudes was to regard the weaving noises as normal and usual. When they were asked to describe the situation of when the looms were stopped, they used language such as "scary," "awkward," and "like the earth stopping." These descriptions suggest that they regarded the weaving noise as usual, and in contrast, the soundscape without the weaving noise was unusual for them. The commonplaceness was also found in the onomatopoeias of the weaving noise that appeared in the poems. For example, the onomatopoeia "takatta" was used in Poem (1) repeatedly, like background music. It clearly showed that there were always continuous weaving sounds in the pupils' lives, and they considered it normal.

While industrial noises are usually described negatively, only a few of the descriptions showed displeasure with the weaving sounds, using such words as "annoying" or "noisy." However, this does not necessarily indicate that the pupils did not feel annoyed by the noise; it could instead be interpreted as a result of Saito's coaching on how to express what they heard. He encouraged them to avoid easy and stereotypical expressions like 'noisy'. Instead, he tried to make them develop their own original words by carefully listening to the sounds.

## 6.2. Saito's Practice as a Pioneering Case of Sound Education

Saito's practice can be regarded as a kind of sound education, even though he did not intend it. He was four years older than R. Murray Schafer, who was born in 1933. Schafer taught at a music summer school in 1965 and later wrote a series of booklets based on his experiences in music education (Schafer 2012: 91). Thus, it is quite a coincidence that Saito did his practice in Nishijin during almost the same period as Schafer developed his educational theory.

Saito's practice can be regarded as an attempt to develop a form of sound education in the field of literary education, with a particular focus upon writing, while Schafer's education was aimed mainly at music education. It is very interesting that Saito established a process for pupils of carefully listening to sounds before expressing them in writing. In *Nishijin no Uta*, for example, he instructed them to first listen carefully and then express in writing what

they felt the sounds were like; this was an initial step before the composition a poem. As a result, the pupils' words shown in Table 4 were descriptive and realistic, and avoided the use of stereotypical expressions. Also in *Nishijin no Uta 2*, he led them to describe their experiences of the different times when the looms were operating and when they were stopped. It is coincidental, and quite interesting, that these methods are similar to some of Schafer's exercises. Thus, Saito's work should be regarded as significant pioneering work in sound education.

Saito's motivation was to develop the pupils' ability to study. He was concerned that their sonic environment might be bad for their studies. On the basis of what we can see from the publications of his pupils' writings, his attempts were successful to some extent. This suggests that the use of sound in education could be incorporated into an integrated programme for the development of pupils' general abilities.

## 7. Conclusions

This paper examined the soundscape of the past in Nishijin, Kyoto, focusing on the research and education conducted by Kikuo Saito, who worked for Kashiwano Elementary School in Kyoto from 1963 to 1971. Saito's research depicted the sonic environment of Kashiwano district, using measurements of sound levels and a mapping of the location of the weaving sounds throughout the area. Saito's work has shown clearly that the sonic environment of Kashiwano at that time was filled with loud weaving sounds. The pupils' writings represented their attitudes to the weaving sounds in their everyday lives. For them, the weaving sounds were something personal or commonplace.

Thus, Saito's work provides us with excellent and rare evidence regarding the past soundscape in Nishijin from both physical and cognitive viewpoints. This would suggest the utility of local documents in the field of education or others in studying local soundscapes. Moreover, his practices can be regarded as a pioneering case of sound education. His attempts are still good sources for people who are interested in sound education.

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## APPENDIX

Selected poems composed by the pupils.

Poems 1-4 are from *Nishijin no Uta* (1964) and 5-7 from *Nishijin no Uta 2* (1965). They were originally written in Japanese.

(1)

**They Help Me Only at Night** (*Ban shika oshiete kurenai*)

Takatta Takatta Takatta Takatta

“Mom, help me with my homework”

Takatta Takatta Takatta Takatta

“Ask Dad”

Takatta Takatta Takatta Takatta

“Ask Mom”

Takatta Takatta Takatta Takatta

“Hey Mom, please help me”

Takatta Takatta Takatta Takatta

“I’ll help you at night”

Takatta Takatta Takatta Takatta

“At night I have an abacus lesson

And go for a bath. Help now”

Takatta Takatta Takatta Takatta

“No”

Takatta Takatta Takatta Takatta

“They forget me

Weaving annoys children

When I grow up,

I will never be a weaver”

Takatta Takatta Takatta Takatta

(2)

**Sounds of the Looms** (*Hata no oto*)

Mom,

Kacha Kacha Kacha

Aunt,

Chao Chao Chao

Uncle,

Otsun Otsun Otsun

All are nice sounds

Without the sounds of looms,

I always feel awkward

(3)

**Mom's Morning** (*Okasan no asa*)

Cooking rice,

Burning briquette,

Mom weaves by a loom

Gutassha Gutassha Gutassha

Zu Zu Zu Zu Zuu

"Mom, money"

"Mom, tissues and a handkerchief"

"Mom, I don't have a scarf"

"So put this scarf on"

Gutassha Gutassha Gutassha

Gutassha Gutassha Gutassha

Gutassha Gutassha Gutassha

(4)

**He Can't Hear Me** (*Kikoenai*)

Dad!

Dad!

Dad!

Finally after calling three times

He looked at me

Trying to be given money

Noisy loom is disturbing

(5)

**Alarm Clock of Loom** (*Hata no mezamashidokei*)

Pogakku Pogakku. Get up Get up

It's half past seven!

Just shortly after

Saying good night

Pogakku Pogakku. Get up Get up

It is this early

To hear sounds

I'll get under the blanket

Pogakku Pogakku. Get up Get up

(6)

**A Greedy Lady** (*Gametsui obasan*)

From seven in the morning

Till nine at night she weaves

Though others have finished

Gachon Gachon Gachon

"Mom, why not finish?"

"It's not nine yet"

Is that lady

Going to weave

Until nine o'clock sharp?

She's trying to earn even a little

What a greedy lady!

(7)

**Trains in Nishijin** (*Nishijin no kisha*)

Po-oh!

Chaggin Chaggin Chaggin

Chaggin Chaggin Chaggin

When it is still dark

The first train in Nishijn

Starts to run

Trains of hundreds of cars

Run all together  
The trains in Nishijin  
Load a lot of textiles  
Like rainbows, the Milky Way, or lava  
Under the Eiffel Tower in Paris  
Or in the smog in London  
Chaggin Chaggin Chaggin  
Chaggin Chaggin Chaggin  
They go on running  
Until late at night  
Such as the sounds of far church bells reach