

ACTA ASIATICA VARSOVIENSIA
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Professor Roman Sławiński
(1932–2014)

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Introduction

Dear Readers!

We are presenting you yet another, already the 28th, issue of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia* devoted to the countries and culture of Asia. Over the years of its activity the journal started to be issued in English and it has hosted on its pages many eminent experts on Asia, yet still it remained faithful to its formula which was proposed thirty years ago by Professor Roman Sławiński, the founder of the journal and its permanent editor in chief. This formula stipulated that the Asian cultures should present themselves in the journal and talk directly with their own voice. The idea was both: to include in the group of authors and editors of the magazine scientists who grew up in Asian cultures, as well as to publish materials based on or referring to the texts – philosophical, linguistic, historical, sociological, religious studies or political studies – which were created by the Asian culture. These could be proper names as an object of linguistic research, religious texts, political documents, ideological declarations, but also biographical materials, historiographical elaborations, experience of meeting other cultures and mutual acculturation phenomenon resulting from the relations.

Professor Roman Sławiński left us in November 2014. The more time passes from his death, the more I feel his absence and the more I realize how unique a character he was in the world of research on China. Professor Marianne Bastid-Bruguière, a prominent French scholar from Institut de France in Paris, who met Roman Sławiński in the times of his studies in Beijing, writes about that fact. Most striking is the variety of interests and multidimensionality of research on China which he ran. He was trained as a linguist, and he knew perfectly well not only the classical language, but also many dialects. There was even a time it was appreciated by Mao Zedong himself. Roman Sławiński was interpreting a conversation of the Chinese leader with the Polish state authorities. During the conversation Mao Zedong changed as usual from the classical language to the dialect of Hunan province, which was his place of origin. When he realized he was using the dialect, he noticed that it was not a slightest problem for the interpreter to understand his statements. Then he asked: „Who is that young man who understands the Hunan dialect?” It was known that many Chinese from the surroundings of the Chairman did not understand him when he spoke in the native dialect. It so happened, that Roman Sławiński knew the dialect.

He was interested not only in the language. History, politics, culture as well as China's economy were the subject of his interest and research. His views, opinions and insights on these matters were the inspiration for many researchers of China, some of which are the authors of the materials contained in this issue. Of the many research interests of Professor Sławiński in recent years at least two may be mentioned. First one became Confucianism, especially its latest colours and shades. Professor persistently sought and discovered them in the texts of Chinese scientists, government documents, archives and everyday citizens of China. In this regard he was a dedicated explorer and a keen observer. Even the slightest detail was important to him. Minor personnel changes on the bureaucratic ladder were important for the formation

of general conclusions. From my conversations with him, I got the impression that he was rather skeptical about the possibility of a revival of Confucianism under the supervision of the communist authorities. So he concluded after examining many texts of the so-called new wave of Confucianism in China. His works on the latest Chinese historiography constitute an invaluable contribution to global research on contemporary China. His second passion was the research on the minorities of China Southern. The field research among the peoples of Miao and Tujia that he ran and in which I had the opportunity to participate assumed getting to know the nature of change in the cultural identity of these minorities in the era of globalization and accelerated socio-economic transformation in China. These studies had not been completed, and we can only hope that one of the students of Professor will continue them in the near future.

The arrangement of contents offered to you in the 28th issue of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia* refers to the research passions of Professor Sławiński. The first article, written by Stanisław Tokarski – Indologist and long-time associate of Professor Sławiński, concerns dialogue between the East and the West and the possibility of mutual understanding and agreement. Understanding another culture is also the ability to read the symbols contained in the letters and that aspect of the intercultural dialogue interested Professor Sławiński in particular. The question of so-called Asian values – presented in the articles written by Adam Jelonek, Adam Raszewski, Artur Kościański and Larisa Zabrowskaia – was very close to Professor Sławiński and he dealt with it for many years as part of his research on the so-called new Confucianism. The issue of Chinese migration in the world was also in the interests of Professor – mainly in the context of global economic and social phenomena. This part of the research on China is presented in the article on the Chinese migration to France by Nicolas Levi. The issue of Chinese language was obviously important for Professor Sławiński as a linguist and he always welcomed in the columns of *Acta* the authors writing about language and linguistic issues. This area of research is presented in the current issue in the article on Chinese names written by Irena Kałużyńska. On the other hand, the artistic part of the culture is referred to in the articles by Izabella Łabędzka, Lidia Kasarełło, Ewa Chmielowska, Fu-sheng Shih and Diana Wolańska. The first three of these articles relate to Taiwan, where Professor conducted research for many years which resulted among others in a monograph *History of Taiwan*. The further three articles penned by Waldemar Dziak, Iwona Grabowska-Lipińska and Anna Mrozek-Dumanowska refer to the political sphere. Political sphere is inextricably linked with the ideology which was also the case of China. Confucianism and the new Confucianism emerged and developed in the shadow of the emperors, presidents and chairmen of the Chinese Communist Party. Researching them without the analysis of the political scene was not possible. The part of articles is closed by two texts unrelated with China, but with the Middle East. Their authors – Dorota Rudnicka-Kassem and Marcin Styszyński present materials based on the Middle Eastern sources and thus relate to the traditions of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia*. The issue is closed by the report from field research in southern China by Professor Sławiński and me. For me it was a unique opportunity to get to know at least a little piece of China – a unique one, because my guide was Professor Sławiński – such a great scholar and such a seasoned expert on Asia.

I would like to thank the authors – students, colleagues and friends – for participation in the preparation of the issue, and the Directorate of the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences for the possibility to dedicate the anniversary issue of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia* to Professor Sławiński.

Jerzy Zdanowski

DIANA WOLAŃSKA

Musical Inspirations in Japanese Culture

Abstract

The aim of this article is to picture how Japanese music evolved across the centuries, and how it influenced cultural development in that region. It is a small compendium of knowledge about musical inspirations in Japanese culture from ancient to modern times. It explores fantastic nooks and crannies of the art., full of traditional forms and incredible symbolism. Starting with traditional music, which initiated *gagaku* court music, a most characteristic form for the region, and ending on modern music, this article shows individual stages of Japanese musical development. The reader learns about how the philosophical and religious systems are connected to the incredibly diverse, exotic culture. We discover the strong impact of Confucianism in how the musical forms emerged. Yet despite significant influences of Chinese music, the Land of the Rising Sun developed its own, individual music style, rich with originality, diversity, and despite such great advances and interest in European music, the cult of the past and traditional music lives on. That makes the Land of the Rising Sun one of a kind.

Key words: music, culture, Japan, tradition, *gagaku*, Confucianism

Musical culture development in Japan can be divided into six or seven periods, beginning with the *Choyey* culture period, dated around 250 BC. The sources are scarce and not much is known about those times. The only sources mention instruments like stone whistles, bells, gongs and plates meant to be hit against each other. The amount of sources increased greatly between the 3rd and 7th century AD when figurines and instruments like the zither and drums with sticks became more common. The main sources were the chronicles in which customs, musical culture and the specific Japanese symbolism were written. The next period saw the emergence of the main musical directions Japan has taken, and also the distinct influence of Chinese music between 671 and 794 AD.¹ At that time the first documented songs appear and the stratum of society responsible for social music emerged. As in China or Vietnam, music was divided into a few types, depending on who played it. Japanese music encompasses a wide set of styles and streams which can be grouped into secular, sacral, court (including *gagaku*), folk, theatrical and popular solo music. Music for grand instrumental groups was called *bugaku* and music for a small band of instruments with flutes and drums was called *gigaku*.² Regarding

¹ E. Schneider, *A History of Japanese Music*, London: Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 55.

² L. Zielińska, *Gagaku – muzyka dworska Japonii* [Gagaku – Courtly Music of Japan], Vol. 16–17, Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 1997, p. 42.

norms, measurements and particular rules, as well as cosmological properties, the Japanese have taken these values from the Chinese. The case was similar with the tonal system (this of course refers to the Chinese pentatonic system), dance and even the shade of lipstick used by the dancers. Faith had a great role in Japanese musical culture. What they did not borrow from the Chinese, they filled up with various forms of shamanism, especially Shintoism, the faith norms (*kagira*) of which established a base for music of that period.³

Japanese music, much like in China, can be divided into 'genres' such as cult, court, folk, chamber and drama. *Gagaku* court music was the most important though, and it has survived into our age. It would be impossible not to mention the very diverse cult music for Shinto and Buddhist ceremonies.

Traditional Japanese music preserved its originality despite a strong Chinese influence, especially in the Heian period and the years preceding it. These influences greatly affected cult forms of music such as 'court' and 'drama'. Japanese musical culture is very rich and diverse, and apart from elementary Chinese music characteristics we can find traces of the old Tunguska and pre-Mongolian culture, even some paleo-Asiatic (Ainu). One should also notice some similarities to Korean, Mongolian, Tibetan and more recent Indian music.⁴

Despite such great diversity, Japan created its own individual music style which can not be mistaken with any other region, and which will become increasingly familiar, the more this article is read.

Traditional Japanese music

Traditional Japanese music is called *hōgaku*, which literally means land music, and spans a plethora of styles and musical directions which emerged on the Japanese archipelago in the two millenia. This rich musical tradition appeared as early as neo-lithic times, during the ceramic *jōmon* period, which is around the 12th – 4th century B.C. We know about this from ceramic crafts made by the people of this time, and also *dōgu* figurines, which depict people and animals. Regarding the musical culture of the time, sources refer to stone whistles and round flutes, and later on *yayoi*, or 'metallophones', and *dōtaku* bells. All evidence points towards the shamanic and cult ritual utilization of said instruments. During the *kofun* period the mid 3rd – 7th century A.D, when great barrows were built and the Yamato country blossomed, clay *honiwa* figurines were made. They are especially interesting, because they were magical ornaments for burial places, and now serve as a source of knowledge about how these people lived, what they did and what they believed in.⁵

One of the most important sources about traditional Japanese music are the poetic descriptions in the *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* chronicles, dated between the 5th and 6th century A.D. *Kojiki* is a book of old events and *Nihonshoki* is a work led by *Toneri Shinnō*, and it is a collection of thirty one scrolls about Japanese mythology and the imperial dynasty, beginning with the legendary emperor Jimmu and ending with the days of the empress Jitō.⁶ Since ancient times music has accompanied Shinto and Buddhist rituals, especially during religious celebrations called *matsuri*, organized by temples to gain favour with the gods.

³ Schneider, *A History of Japanese Music...*, p. 82.

⁴ A. Czekanowska, *Kultury muzyczne Azji* [Asian Music Culture], Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1981, p. 49.

⁵ M. Wesołowska M., *Gagaku. Dzieje i symbolika japońskiej muzyki dworskiej* [Gagaku. The History and Symbolism of Japanese Court Music], Warszawa: Trio, 2012, p. 19.

⁶ Shigeo Kishibe, *The Traditional Music of Japan*, Tokyo: Ongaki No Tomo Sha, 1984, p. 40.

An indispensable element of *matsuri* was the *kagura* show, which literally means ‘God’s music’. The first mention of this kind of show can be observed in the *Kojiki* chronicles, in the cosmologic myth about the goddess Ame no Uzume and the sun goddess Amaterasu. After some time, as well as the religious *kagura*, two more types of this show emerged⁷. The first is the ‘court’ *kagura* performed during imperial court celebrations. The other is the ‘folk’ *kagura*, also called *satokagura*, is performed in the provinces. This type of *kagura* played a huge role in the development of other musical forms and genres, *gagaku* among others. The core element of *kagura* were songs which, depending on purpose, were divided into *tormino* and *saibara*. *Tormino* were hymns for praise and prayers to the gods, and *saibara* were songs to encourage horses to get moving. *Kagura* is reminiscent of the oldest prayer invocations, *norito*, which were performed *a capella*, in a way resembling recitatives. The orchestra was situated depending on cult requirements, much like in ancient China. The ancient Chinese musical culture contributed holy number cults, measurements, norms, tonal systems and scales.⁸

Another form of traditional Japanese music, which stems from the Buddhist religion and was brought into the Yamato country by Korean missionaries in the 6th century A.D, is the *shōmyō*. They are sacral songs which, content wise, resemble Buddhist hymns and sutras. Despite being reminiscent of *norito* songs they are more mature, which has manifested itself in a more ‘crystallized’ music theory based on Chinese scales and known as *ritsu* and *ryo* in Japan. Ceremonial *gigaku* dance music was inspired by many, stylistically different Buddhist folk songs, among which the most attention should be paid to *bushi* hymns, *goeika* pilgrimage songs and folk *ondo* songs, often used to accompany dances during the Buddhist all saints ceremony.⁹

Kagura, *shōmyō* and *gigaku* are forms which played a great role in the creation of the traditional Japanese culture, and most importantly started court *gagaku* music. Equally popular was solo music for the four string lute or *biwa*, which led to the creation of the *biwa gaku* musical genre. Singing with an accompanying lute spans back to ancient times, when it was performed by nomadic monks. The oldest form of this kind is *gakubiwa*, meant for court music *gagaku*.¹⁰

Development of courtly music – *gagaku* history

The first stage of *gagaku* started in the 5th century. It was a time of extensive contact with the mainland, during which many shows from the Korean peninsula, China and southeast Asia made their way to Japan. They were gradually adopted in accordance with indigenous tastes and incorporated into vocal and dance traditions, which in turn created its own style. Such combinations of song and dance were later called *kuniburi no utamai* and were strongly connected to the cult of gods¹¹.

Continental music brought into Yamato stemmed from the Korean kingdom of Silla, with which they had longstanding relations. According to the *Nihonshoki* chronicle, when

⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

⁸ R. Garfias, ‘Gradual Modifications of the Gagaku Tradition’, *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1960, p. 16–19.

⁹ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰ N. Jofan, *Dawna kultura Japonii* [The Old Culture of Japan], Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1977, p. 168.

¹¹ Schneider, *A History of Japanese Music...*, p. 78.

emperor *Ingyō* died king Silli paid tribute by sending eighty well-dressed musicians to honour the mourning ceremonies. They were most likely the primary source of continental instruments making their way to Japan. Among them were flutes, four string lutes *biwa* and a few wooden *shakubyōshi* clappers. The chronicles state that the saying of farewell to the dead in the form of song and music goes back many thousands of years. This leads us to believe that *gagaku* is rooted in funeral music.¹²

The next century saw the introduction of Buddhism and the adoption of many Chinese philosophies, as well as medicine, astronomy and music. Along with Buddhism which came from Korea, *shōmyō* (sung and recited sutras), Korean Paekche and Silla kingdom courtly music was introduced into Japanese music. Despite contradicting territorial claims, Korean and Japanese relations were friendly. This allowed cultural exchange and many valuable items like *hichiriki* oboes, Chinese *konghou* harps and various zithers were introduced. Both Buddhism and the musical cultures of Korea and China gained importance in the imperial court of Yamato. A testament to this is the building of the *Shitennōji* temple. The initiator of this endeavour was prince Umayado, who became a great supporter of the Chinese way of thinking and an ardent Buddhist. He claimed that every Buddhist's true virtue is the knowledge of music, not just books and sutras. This is why he initiated the import of musical traditions from the mainland. He is attributed to many pieces from *gagaku*, like the *Bairo* composition, with which the prince tried to predict success or failure in battle. One of the legends says: "Prince *Shōtōku* decided to climb the Shigi mountain, close to Nara. Suddenly he was enchanted by his surroundings and started playing the flute. As he played the first few notes the mountain god Yamagami appeared and started doing a beautiful dance to the rhythm of the flute, and when the prince, frightened by the rare sight, decided to turn back the mountain god became cross and showed him its tongue".¹³ From that day until now *Somakusha* dancers perform in yellow masks with tongues painted on them. The scenes also require a flute player to resemble the prince.¹⁴

A great influence on courtly music was the Paekche – Mimashi kingdom, which created the musical dance show *gigaku*, which translates to 'masterful music'¹⁵. It was quite unheard of in that it contained humour, grotesque, masked ritual dances, acrobatic performances and pantomime, which were meant to illustrate Buddhist truths. Tied to Buddhist philosophy, the shows were staged in temples affording gravitas to ceremonies and celebrations. The main part of the show was the parade (*gyōdō*), which was meant to praise Buddha through dance and music. The front of the parade was made up of dancers in long nosed masks (*tendu*), after them came the musicians (with flutes, metal percussion instruments and drums), the singers and then the *shishi no mai* performers (lion dance). The end of the parade was made up of musicians and monks. Their performances were as splendid as their colourful appearance.¹⁶

It was thanks to *gagaku* that Japan took on the continental music fashion, which introduced an influx of musicians from Korea, Vietnam, China and India to teach their trade and show their instruments, some of which made their way to trade from the furthest reaches of Asia via 'the Silk Road'. It was a similar scenario for musical forms which were imported from the Korean country of Palhae, situated in Manchuria (7th–10th century), in which a splendid

¹² Wesołowska, *Gagaku...*, pp. 32–33.

¹³ Y. Torrimoto, *Gagaku. Jikū wo koeta harukana shirabe*, Tokio, 2007, p. 15.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33.

¹⁵ Wesołowska, *Gagaku...*, p. 34.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.

musical culture had risen. After a while the Japanese decided to select which genres they imported and change them to suit their needs. Apart from *gagaku*, secular shows of Chinese origin *sarugaku* were popular. This form was a syncretic blend of dance, acrobatics, juggling, comedy, duels and songs with accompanying instruments. In spite of many genres and forms being imported from the mainland, Japan kept its indigenous folk music and the Korean court music too (*sankangaku*), as well as music of Chinese origin (*tōgaku*).¹⁷

Without doubt *gagaku* had its roots in the Confucian and Taoist philosophies of the Tang dynasty. The cult of Heaven, the ancient belief of China, had a big impact on music. It must be mentioned that during the Tang dynasty in China, the Chinese emperor made *gagaku* the most important form and decided to collect all the songs and dances from China, ordering them according to origin and purpose. The Chinese used *gagaku* as banquet music and in that form it made its way to Japan.¹⁸

It was not only the Chinese *togaku* that formed the basis of *gagaku*. Other forms like *rin'yugaku*, *toragaku* or *kaigaku* had their influence as well. The emergence of many musical forms and styles cannot be easily categorized by region of origin. There were obviously too many of them and some are simply not known. Japan's musical culture can be called a collection, because it copied other styles and changed them to suit Japanese needs, but it would not be fair to call them copies. They are their own forms. By selecting what they perceived as beautiful and getting rid of what they did not like, the Japanese have created something unique – the courtly music *gagaku*.¹⁹

Gagaku styles and genres

Currently, traditional Japanese music genres are often presented instrumentally. They were a syncretic element of ceremonial art however, and its elements are song, dance and pantomime. Such was the case with *gagaku*, which grew and has survived through to modern times. This music can be divided into four main genres; orchestra music *kangen*, instrumental dance music *bugaku*, indigenous song and dance – *kuniburi no utamai*, and the Heian period *utaimono* songs.²⁰

Kangen – instrumental music – has foreign, mostly Chinese instruments. Despite being presented in Chinese (*togaku*) and Korean (*komagaku*) styles, the only remaining style is *togaku*. The orchestra is comprised of three wind instruments (*shō*, *hichiriki*, *ryuteki*), which play the main melodic line, creating harmony. Next are two string instruments (*gakusō*, *biwa*), and three percussion instruments (*skōko*, *kakko*, *taiko*). Musicians who played the percussion instruments had a great responsibility. They were conductors and it was them who signalled changes in tempo in rhythmic pieces.²¹

Bugaku instrumental dance music was centered around ceremonial dances accompanied by an instrumental orchestra. Performers were masked depicting humans, animals and demons. The origin of this genre allows a division into *samai* and *umai*. *Samai* were Indian-Chinese dances of 'the left side' performed with Chinese *tōgaku* music, whereas *umai* were dances on 'the right side', of Japanese, Korean and Manchurian origin. The orchestra was a little

¹⁷ Zielińska, *Gagaku – muzyka dworska Japonii...*, p. 25.

¹⁸ E. Schneider, *The Rhythmical Patterns in Gagaku and Bugaku*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954, p. 15.

¹⁹ Zielińska, *Gagaku – muzyka dworska Japonii...*, p. 38.

²⁰ Kishibe, *The Traditional...*, p. 50.

²¹ W. Deal, *Handbook to Life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan*, New York: Fast and File, 2006, pp. 275–276.

different than in *samai*. The *ryuteki* flute is replaced with the *kamabue*, and the percussion section has a Korean *tsuzumi* drum.²²

Bugaku dances are varied in terms of the meaning and symbolism of the choreography. They are divided into court dances – simple and fluent, military dances – and fast, energetic, children’s dances. The former are performed without any extra props and are very fluid in motion. The dance of five Confucian virtues (*goshōraku* and *seigaiha*) can be assigned to this group.

The military dances are the most spectacular though. They are performed in decorative armor and with various props. With regards to the children’s dances there are the *kocho*, or butterfly dance, and *karyōbin*. The costumes were very important. Every performer had a different one and all were highly embellished and made from the finest materials in a wide range of colors.

Kuniburi no utamai is the only genre of dance which represents traditional Japanese music. With strong ties to Shinto traditions, this genre consists of old songs and dances which were performed with accompanying traditional Japanese instruments, along with instruments from China, Korea or India. Compared to *bugaku* costumes, the attire of *kuniburi no utamai* was somewhat frugal in ornamentation and embroidery and the style was very simple. This genre has a somewhat ascetic choreography compared to the dynamic, motion-rich *tōgaku*, which gives a feeling of a lack of complexity. The form is very dignified and classy, which makes it look highly refined. This is why it is the most valuable genre of *gagaku*. The content of *kaniburi no utamai* was borrowed from Japanese mythology written down in the *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* chronicles, and hence is closely tied to the beliefs and views of the Japanese people.

This genre includes the following songs and dances: ceremonial Shinto *kagurauta* songs, ancient songs and dances known as *kumeuta* and games from the eastern provinces called *azuma asobi*, performed by four dancers in military costumes, a choir and an orchestra. The choir sang Yamato songs or mourning songs *ruika* of Shinto origin, which praised the dead and were only performed during appropriate events; *yuki* and *suki* songs, which were sung during the first harvest of rice after the enthronement of the new emperor.²³

Utaimono songs are popular Japanese songs partially inspired by continental music, and are divided into two types: *saibara* and *rōei*. The first stems from old Japanese folk songs and the melic poetry *waka*. They were customary songs which eventually made their way into the court. They were accompanied by the *biwa*, *gagusō*, *ryuuteki*, *hichiriki*, *shō* and *shakubyōshi*,²⁴

Sung recitations *rōei* which emerged in the Heian period, were based on Chinese literature recited in Japanese with accompanying instruments. In time, they were adapted to court music.²⁵

The differences between different styles of *gagaku* were embellished by the colour of the dancer’s clothes as well as the musician’s. The Korean brand is predominantly green which refers to prosperity, whereas the Chinese version is in red which symbolizes the hero’s happy life.

²² Wesołowska, *Gagaku...*, p. 56.

²³ R. Tennyson, *Gagaku, the Music and Dances of the Japanese Imperial Household*, New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1959, p. 66.

²⁴ Wesołowska, *Gagaku...*, pp. 58–59.

²⁵ R. Tennyson, *Gagaku...*, p. 69.

The meaning of Confucianism in *gagaku* court music

Confucianism, whose creator was Confucius, is one of the philosophical belief systems that shaped the progress of spiritual and social consciousness in China and the south-east Asian countries. This system showed a love of tradition and humanitarianism in the world, taking a permanent place in the thought systems of east Asian people, giving them examples of how to conduct their lives. The master himself said, that only by fulfilling one's responsibilities and following tradition can society be saved and spread peace in the world. This led Confucius to create an ethics system based on ancestor worship, respect for the elderly, loyalty and humanitarian virtues. He paid special attention to the relationship to ancient Heaven and ancestor cult ceremonies and rituals. They were given excellent music, etiquette and spiritual conditioning for the people. The effect was a highly polished ceremony with a rich form and grand atmosphere, all created by Confucius.²⁶

As it turns out, by reading *Analects*, Confucius gave the highest esteem to music. He saw it as an incredible art, beautiful and full of grandeur, with a magical power of affecting humans and the world around them – it was a source of aesthetic experiences. He said that music is the link between the *sacrum* and the *profanum*, and believed it to be therapeutic and moving, which allowed a harmony and inner peace of both soul and mind²⁷. Confucius was also a music critic and a strict one to boot. He was severely critical of folk-party music and valued dignified, serious, majestic court music. The role music played in Confucius' life can be seen in this part of *Analects*:

When the Master was in Ch'i, he heard the Shao, and for three months did not know the taste of flesh.

"I did not think" he said, "that music could have been made so excellent as this".²⁸

According to Confucius music was part of the Tao way and one concept of the five elements that make up the world, assigning a five note pentatonic scale. As far as numbers are concerned, they are of great importance in Confucian rituals. This is why the ceremony was performed by a set number of people and items for the ceremony, as well as a specific repertoire. The master's main goal was to cleanse the music of simple, ridiculous and refined forms to give it a lofty, perfect character. Confucius' reforms in court music led to perfecting those forms and gave them strict rules as well. These rules constricted full formal development. As for straying from the norm, Confucius considered this to be a breach of the ethic system and an affront to the ancestors.²⁹ The rules created by the great philosopher Confucius also played a part in Japanese court music – *gagaku*. Its development was based on the imported Chinese *togaku* music. This can be seen primarily in a very precisely set repertoire, method of playing and placement of musicians in the orchestra³⁰. Confucian conservatism can also be observed in etiquette and mutual relations in the musician world, where the set role was not based on skill but rather on age. We could find a couple more

²⁶ Liu Wu-Chi, *A Short History of Confucian Philosophy*, New York: A Penguin Books, 1955, p. 582.

²⁷ R. Tennyson, *A Dictionary of Traditional Japanese Musical Instruments: From Prehistory to the Edo Period*, Tokyo: Eideru, 2012, p. 75.

²⁸ K. Czyżewska-Madajewicz, M.J. Künstler, Z. Tłumski, *Dialogi konfucjańskie* (Lun Yu, The Analects, attrib. to Confucius), Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1976, p. 80.

²⁹ Liu Wu-Chi, *A Short History...*, pp. 581–582.

³⁰ Wesolowska, *Gagaku...*, p. 9.

characteristics of Confucianism in traditional Japanese music, but we should not be surprised that Chinese influences were so strong in that region.

Contemporary *gagaku*

The last century saw a time of intensive European and American culture permeation into ‘the land of the rising sun’. Interest in classical western music rose so much, that indigenous, traditional court music lost its ‘pole position’.³¹ A breakthrough came at the end of the last century, when the Japanese went back to their traditional ways and discovered the beauty of their music and culture anew. It also caused the *gagaku* court music to gain grandeur and be played outside of the palace. Now the form was accessible to all, no matter how rich or poor and from what family of origin. This was possible thanks to the Shinto and Buddhist temples and various schools taking over concerts and education. One such institution was *Nihon Gagakuikai*, which comprised of a group of fifteen *gagaku* masters, the leader was called Oshida Yoshihisa. This man was an excellent expert on *gagaku*, his main premise was to spread the word of this musical form to children, youths and adults alike. He organized regular symposiums and invited the best musicians and teachers from the imperial office of *Kunaichō Gakubu*.³²

Interest in *gagaku* spread among classical music composers, who were enthralled by its unusual sound. They decided to use traditional Japanese instruments and the *ritsu ryo* scales and created great scores fit for modern times, at the same time preserving their old, individual style. This led to another form of modern *gagaku* – *gendai gagaku*.³³ One of the greatest Japanese composers was Takemitsu Tōru who, on commission from the Japanese National Theatre, composed *Shuteiga*, an orchestra piece, which was a testament to the creator’s supreme understanding of Japanese music. The old compositions, dating back centuries, are still at the core of the *gagaku* repertoire and are merely affirmed by contemporary music.³⁴

Tōgi Hideki – an outstanding *hichiriki* instrumentalist from the emperor’s *Kunaichō Gakubu*, was a descendant and keeper of the musical tradition of the 1,000 year old house *Tōgi*. He popularized *gagaku* both in his country and abroad by organizing concerts, recitals and by publishing many works on the subject. He was the first to attempt a fusion of classical courtly and popular music. This was done in the 90s and many beautiful arrangements were made, smashing the myth that *gagaku* is anachronistic and cannot be understood by the modern world. The effects were stunning and *gagaku* was at the center of attention once again, and not only in Japan. It became popular with music fans all around the world, and they too could appreciate the true beauty of its sound. This music enchanted with exotic sounds previously unheard of.³⁵

Since the beginning of its existence, *gagaku*, so praised and cared for by the emperor’s court, did not allow any innovation, because it was decided its current form was ideal and even perfect. This made it so popular around the world and is considered a cornerstone of human cultural heritage. It also served as an inspiration for many contemporary composers who use its tones, melodies and wide array of execution methods.³⁶

³¹ Kishibe, *The Traditional...*, pp. 27–33.

³² Y. Torrimoto, *Gagaku. Jikū wo koeta harukana shirabe*, Tokyo 2007, p. 50.

³³ Wesołowska, *Gagaku...*, p. 53.

³⁴ Kishibe, *The Traditional...*, p. 33.

³⁵ Tennyson, *Gagaku...*, p. 57.

³⁶ Czekanowska, *Kultury muzyczne...*, p. 49.

The European musical influence on Japanese music culture

The strong European influence on Japanese music which could be seen as early as the 19th century, did not however result in a loss of traditions. As previously mentioned, this period saw quite a large renaissance in courtly *gagaku* music, which was consolidated by tablature notation. As it turns out, apart from *gagaku*, other forms such as chamber music, virtuoso music and popular music emerged around that time in the land of the rising sun.³⁷

In 1878 the Music Academy was created. The style is modern and the organization resembles something more European. This is where European music was first played and where it started to appear in various concerts and plays. More students became virtuosos of both traditional Japanese and European instruments alike. A great symphonic orchestra was created in Tokyo which to this day takes part in the most prestigious international music festivals. If we listen to the Japanese playing European music, we can hear specific execution details and a great diversity in tone. The European music they play is most intimate and has some content from traditional Japanese music.³⁸

In spite of such great interest in European music, the cult of the past and traditional Japanese music lives on, which makes the musical culture of the Land of the Rising Sun one of a kind.

³⁷ R. Provine, *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol. 7: *East Asia: China, Japan and Korea*, Garland, 2001, p. 245.

³⁸ Czekanowska, *Kultury muzyczne...*, p. 49.

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