

TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE CHORAL TRADITION, AND THE
INFLUENCE OF BUDDHISM AND WESTERN MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

This research deals with the origin and development of Japanese choral music emphasizing Japanese folk tunes. The process of how modern styles of Japanese choral music evolved is rather complicated, and has been greatly influenced by the paralleled development of society, tradition, culture, language, politics, and religion. In order to truly understand the essence and evolution of traditional Japanese music, it is crucial to recognize the cultural influences that make up Japanese history.

In the late fifth century, Japan started to absorb new music from mainland Asia into its own culture. This led to the development of new musical ideas, laying the groundwork for musical traditions that defined Japanese culture for years to come. Both mainland Asia and Europe introduced strong religious influences (Buddhism and Christianity, respectively). However, it was not until the radical influence of European music in the 19th century merged with traditional Japanese folk song and created the modern synthesis of the form.

This research aims to discuss how the different aspects of both Eastern and Western music, more specifically their unique rhythms, scales, chords and harmonies, evolved and now coexist within Japanese culture and music. Choral works based on Japanese folk tunes are used to assess specific developmental influences.

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CHAPTER 1. ORIGINS OF JAPANESE MUSIC

Traditional Japanese music, especially folksong is very diverse, stemming from centuries of foreign influences. The richness of Japanese choral music is a result of intertwining Western culture and Buddhism. Modernization is surely a threat; but the sense of tradition in Japan is so strong that their traditional music will continue to thrive and, to a small extent, with the help of the West.

Although many methods are used to distinguish the time periods of Japanese music history, composer and musicologist Minao Shibata's approach proves most effective when dealing with the course of cultural development. His *Timeline of Japanese Music Culture* divides Japanese music history into four separate cycles.¹

1. "Joumon Era" B.C. 10,000 – 300 (Mesolithic)
2. "Yayoi Era" B.C. 300 – A.D. 300
3. "Music of Buddhist culture" A.D. 453 – 1400
4. "Music of western culture and Christianity" A.D. 1549 – 1980

This particular timeline aims to distinguish the periods that are related only to the development of choral music. The missing years in between are the time periods that had significantly less impact on choral music, and presumably have more influence on other genres.

¹ Keiko Tsuji, "My Jomon music," http://www.wooji.jp/new/report_jomon.html, [accessed 1 Feb 2012].

1.1 Joumon Era (B.C. 10,000-300)

Although the true origin of Japanese music remains unknown, ancient scriptures and historic documents lead us to believe that daily stone tools were used percussively to create simple rhythms during the Joumon Era; this was the beginning of Japanese music traditions. Around the same time, simple flutes and bell-like instruments were also created. Percussionist Toshiyuki Tsuchitori, is a recognized authority in Joumon era instruments specializing in recreating and performing Joumon-Daikos (literally, Joumon Drums). Tsuchitori states that “Musical performances of the Joumon Era seem to have consisted of one, or very few tones, repeating specific rhythmic and tonal patterns.”² and that “people of the Joumon Era held strong admirations for the simple beauty of tone colors and acoustic resonance.”³ Joumon flute specialist Uji states “Joumon flutes are believed to have been simple monotone instruments. Rather than providing scales or specific melodies, they lend variety within single sustained notes, signifying the importance of the mere purity of sound.”⁴

The concept of song emerged during the Joumon Era. A song that has survived from this era, called “Awa no Uta”, recites the Japanese alphabet from “A” to “Wa” using syllabic patterns of five and seven, which is common in written Japanese art (e.g., Haiku)⁵. This song was created for two purposes: as a restoration prayer to the dwindling farmlands, and to re-educate peasants whose literacy rate had been in constant decline. At this time, the song itself did not yet fulfill an artistic or academic role within the culture. This was unlike Europe around the same time, whose

² KeikoTsuji, “My Jomon music,” http://www.wooji.jp/new/report_jomon.html, [accessed 1 Feb 2012].

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

culture was experiencing a different development in music.

To perform these early songs, singers would draw a circle on the ground and bow to each direction of the compass (the directions of east, west, south, and north, in this specific order, have always been regarded with a certain sacredness in Asian cultures) before singing with their hands flat and together in front of their chest, just like a prayer.⁶ Melodies may have been sung at very slow tempi. Only two different notes were used, in a monophonic style, and were sung as alternating long notes on two pitches.⁷ This sound may seem to resemble the singing of modern Buddhist ceremonies; however, it was not until many years later that Buddhism emerged in Japanese culture.

1.2 Yayoi Era (B.C. 300 - A.D. 300)

An abundance of cultural influences from mainland Asia began to flow into Japan during this era. Small villages began to develop, along with organized group activities such as *Inasaku*, a traditional method of harvesting rice that had strong connections with Japanese musical culture.⁸ Choreographed like a dance number, *Inasaku* required men to form a straight line and plant rice by hand, moving simultaneously to downbeats as they sang songs in unison.⁹ Lifestyles centered on religious thankfulness as people began to worship God in their daily lives. Within a variety of worship rituals unique to each region, melodies were being sung in large groups, despite the sound greatly differing from music today. Entering the Yayoi Era, polytonal

⁶ KeikoTsuji, "My Jomon music," http://www.wooji.jp/new/report_jomon.html, [accessed 1 Feb 2012].

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Gunma state Archaeological Research Foundation Online, <http://www.gunmaibun.org/>, [accessed 1 Feb 2012].

⁹ Ibid.

flutes began to appear. Bells were also found in a variety of sizes, suggesting the possibility that these instruments were consciously used with musical intentions (although they were mostly recognized as “tools to create sound” rather than the sophisticated implications of a “musical instrument”).¹⁰

Moreover, the instrumental tradition passed down from this era greatly impacted the development of Japanese music traditions for future generations, making the Yayoi Era an important age of transition. Choral traditions still had not developed.¹¹

1.3 Music of Buddhist Culture (A.D. 453 - 1400)

From the fifth century onward, Japan saw a constant increase of traffic from mainland Asia, spreading a variety of new cultures to the Japanese. New ideas that greatly influenced Japanese music culture were *Rinyugaku*, Indian dance songs introduced by Brahman priests, and *Shoumyou*, Buddhist chants.¹² *Shoumyou* will be discussed in chapter 2.1, as its impact on future Japanese music culture is rather grand, especially regarding the development of new choral traditions and genres.

From these new imports, mixed with the existing Japanese culture, the dance suite *Azuma-Asobi* develops. In ancient Japan, traditional songs were passed down in different regions around the country. These traditional songs were collected by the royal court for amusement and

¹⁰ Gunma state Archaeological Research Foundation Online, <http://www.gunmaibun.org/english/excavations/index.html>, [accessed 1 Feb].

¹¹ National Museum of Japanese History Online, <http://www.rekihaku.ac.jp/index.html>, [accessed 1 Feb 2012].

¹² Tukitani Tuneko, “*Japanese Music History and Theory*,” (Tokyo; Tkyodo Syuppan, 2010), 32.

yielded a unique type of dance music.¹³ *Azuma-Asobi* is a song accompaniments by continental instruments such as *koto* and wooden flutes. Also regarded as a possible origin of modern folk songs, *Azuma-Asobi* sprang up in Japan during the mid-eighth century.¹⁴ Moreover, an ancient folk song genre originating from China called *Saibara* was also born around the same period. *Saibara* is a genre of vocal Japanese court music accompanied by instruments. *Saibara* was born from within the very lives of common peasants and farmers, as if a musical epitome of their daily activities.¹⁵

Due to the lack of established scales and notation, melodies in the beginning forms were approximate. It was not until the royal court adapted and implemented two borrowed pentatonic scales (a major pentatonic and another that started on the second scale degree of the same scale) from the mainland in the early ninth century, that the basic groundwork formed into what eventually became the modern form of Japanese folk songs. Most ancient songs in Japan were ritualistic in nature, and thus did not have notions of “lyrics”.¹⁶ After entering the eighth century, many genres (especially *Saibara*) began to use words to tell simple love stories. With words came the notion of rhythm and, finally a sense of phrasing.¹⁷

1.4 Western Christian Culture and Christianity A.D. 1549 – 1980

The year 1549 was an important turning point for Japanese music. The Spanish Roman

¹³ Shimonaka Hiroshi, “*Japanese Music Dictionary*,” Hei bon Sya, 1998, 20.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 242-243.

¹⁵ Tougi Hideki, “*Gagaku*,” Syuei sya, 2005, 114.

¹⁶ Shimonaka Hiroshi, “*Japanese Music Dictionary*,” Hei bon Sya, 1998, 242-242.

¹⁷ Tukitani Tuneko, “*Jananese Music History and Theory*,” Tokyo; Tkyodo Syuppan, 2010, 67-68.

Catholic missionary Francisco Xavier arrived on the shore of Japan to spread Christianity. The Bible and Christian music, such as Gregorian chant, began to flourish on the island. This was when the notion of “choral music” appeared in Japanese music traditions.¹⁸ There is a monument in Ooita City (Kyushu), erected in commemoration of the first choral performance in Japanese history, which occurred in the sixteenth century.¹⁹ Xavier introduced numerous musical instruments such as the violin, viola, and portable organ; he actively hosted performances with these new instruments and relayed their performance techniques to the native Japanese.²⁰ One particular figure strongly influenced by Xavier’s Christian teachings was Mancio Ito. Ito became a Catholic priest, and in 1582 was chosen as the first Japanese emissary to Europe (Rome), representing the Tensho Christian Embassy. Upon traveling to Italy, Ito submerged himself in the countless choral masterpieces of European composers and brought them back to Japan to share with his people. Among these pieces were works by Palestrina, Victoria, Josquin Des Prez, and Monteverdi. In 1591, Ito was given the honor to perform Josquin Des Prez’s *Mille Regretz* in front of Shogun Hideyoshi Toyotomi, the highest authority in Japan next to the Emperor.²¹ For a commoner to perform for the Shogun was extremely rare, as traditionally the law forbade anyone to even be in the presence of royalty or high officials.

During the Edo Era (1603-1868), Christianity’s role underwent a drastic change in Japan. As Christianity and other foreign cultures became increasingly prominent, the Japanese government felt uncertain of the radical changes the country was experiencing; moreover, they

¹⁸ Ebisawa Arimichi, “*Introduction of the Western Music from Kirishitan to Edo Era*,” Japan Christian Publisher, 2005, 10.

¹⁹ Tonoshita Tastuya, “*Japanese Choral History*,” Seikyusya, 2011, 13-14.

²⁰ Ebisawa Arimichi, “*Introduction of the Western Music from Kirishitan to Edo Era*,” Japan Christian Publisher, 2005, 11.

²¹ Minagawa Tatsuo, “*Kirishitan Music, the Glory and Discouragement*,” Japan Christian Publisher, 2004, 5.

saw movements by foreign officials hinting at the possibility of colonization. The result was a law in 1613 prohibiting Christianity, and a foreign relations policy in 1633 under which no foreigners were allowed access to Japanese ports, and no Japanese were allowed to leave the country. This policy, known as *Sakoku* (literally, “chained nation”), had left Japan completely isolated from the rest of the world until the forced entry by Commodore Perry in 1853. Those who stayed loyal to Christianity were forced underground; these hidden Christians lived in deception as Buddhist monks, secretly practicing their loyalty to Christianity.

The next transitional period came between 1850 and 1910. As mentioned earlier, 1853 was the year Matthew C. Perry arrived on the shore of Edo (modern Tokyo) and threatened violence in order to negotiate a treaty. A treaty, later known as the *Convention of Kanagawa*, was officially signed in 1854 and two Japanese ports opened to the United States for trade. More importantly, Perry’s army as well as the Russian Navy led by E.V. Putyantín, also visiting Japan to make trading treaties introduced the concept of army bands to Japan.²² These bright and energetic sounds of new instruments were likely a shock to the Japanese. Freedom of religion was finally established during this time and paralleled the growing popularity of Christian chants and hymns.

In order to provide a modernized music education for the people, the Japanese government established the first music research institute, *Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari*, in 1879.²³ This government-funded project sought to research all known musical influences in the country, and to produce adequate music teachers knowledgeable in both eastern and western traditions. Foreign music was absorbed into Japanese educational systems and was now considered a part of

²² Ebisawa Arimichi, “*Introduction of the Western Music from Kirishitan to Edo Era*,” Japan Christian Publisher, 2005, 20.

²³ Ebisawa Arimichi, “*Introduction of the Western Music from Kirishitan to Edo Era*,” Japan Christian Publisher, 2005, 22.

its evolving culture. Shuji Izawa was appointed head of the institute *Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari* upon his return from studying in the United States.²⁴ There were three main objectives at hand: to combine both western and eastern traditions for the creation of a completely new genre of music, to raise and educate talented musicians that would lead the country in the near future; and to create a standardized form of music education for schools across the nation. Unfortunately, the vast difference in eastern and western music (especially the sense of pulse) made the first objective immensely difficult to achieve. In order to deal with this problem, *Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari* invited American music educator L.W. Mason to teach them harmony, music theory, and education methods.²⁵ The institute continued to work for eight years and soon transformed into an academy now known as the famous Tokyo National Academy of Arts.²⁶

Songs and choral music had significant influence on popular culture during this time, and it was common to hear the vocal performances of accompanied by dancers in traditional Japanese costumes. The concept of harmony was still absent; music was typically sung in melismatic unisons with unique vocal nuances, a characteristic which is still observed in Japanese music. It was not until the twentieth century that the structure of a cappella choirs of today.

Known as the leading musicologist who brought musical tradition from the German to Japan, Rentarou Taki went abroad to study piano and counterpoint at the Leipzig Conservatory of Music in Germany. One year before he left the country for Germany, Taki composed “Four Seasons”, the first Japanese choral suite in history.²⁷ The first piece “Flower” is written for a

²⁴ Ibid., 22.

²⁵ Ibid., 23.

²⁶ Ibid., 23

²⁷ Ebisawa Arimichi, “*Introduction of the Western Music from Kirishitan to Edo Era*,” Japan Christian Publisher, 2005, 28.

female duet (Example 1).

Example 1. Rentarou Taki, *Hana*, mm. 1-8.

The musical score for Example 1, Rentarou Taki's *Hana* (mm. 1-8), is presented in two systems. The first system shows the piano introduction (p) in 2/4 time, key of D major, with a tempo of quarter note = 60-66. The second system shows the vocal melody (mf) with Japanese lyrics: 'はるのうららのすみだがわ' (Haru no urara no sumida ga wa). The piano accompaniment is marked 'mf dolce'.

The second piece “Summer Breeze” is for solo voice; the third and fourth pieces “Moon” and “Snow” are for a mixed voice quartet or choir. Again, this piece was written prior to Taki’s experience in Germany. However, Taki’s studies at the Tokyo National Academy of Arts, along with an abundance of talent, gave birth to this unique piece. Rentarou Taki and his works were evidence that the development of modern music education the Japanese government had long sought after had finally come to fruition. Taki’s choral works are still highly valued by music educators today, and some of his works are among the songs required for studies in public schools. “Four Seasons” was written approximately the same time Puccini finished his popular operas (e.g., “Tosca” and “Madama Butterfly”). As the modernization of Japanese music progressed, the amount of Western music flooding into Japan increased.

CHAPTER 2. INFLUENCES OF EASTERN AND WESTERN MUSIC

2.1 Buddhism and the Origins of Japanese Music

Buddhism originated in fifth century B.C. in northern India. By sixth century A.D., when Buddhism reached the islands of Japan, the religion had branched out into numerous factions.²⁸ Buddhism is currently the most popular religion in modern Japan with over 96,000,000 followers. Japan is one of the largest Buddhist countries in the world, with almost a quarter of the 400,000,000 Buddhists in the world. Moreover, the sheer number of Buddhist monuments in Japan, over 75,000 Buddhist temples and 350,000 Buddhist statues is remarkably high, even in comparison with the rest of the world.²⁹

Along with their religious practices and teachings, Buddhists also brought their musical traditions to Japan. Although it is difficult to say that Buddhist music had any direct connection to the development of folk songs, it is believed the Buddhist chant *Shoumyou* (literally “voice enlightenment”) had a great deal of influence on musical developments.³⁰ *Shoumyou* is commonly compared to western Gregorian Chant, as they share common characteristics such as a long history of functional use in prayer and worship, a foundation on specific scales, abundance uses of unisons, performance practices using only male voices, etc.³¹ *Tendai – Syoumyou* is an example of Buddhist chant (Example 2).

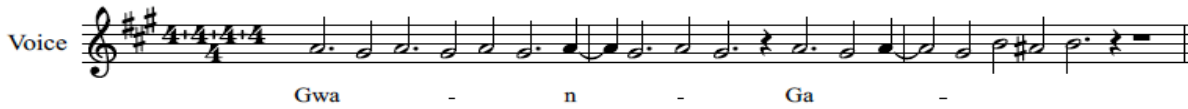
²⁸ Tukitani Tuneko, “*Japanese Music History and Theory*,” Tokyo; Tkyodo Syuppan, 2010, 78.

²⁹ Investigation by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan, http://www.mxt.go.jp/b_menu/toukei/chousa07/shuukyoku/1262852.hm., [accessed 2 Feb 2012].

³⁰ Shimonaka Hiroshi, “*Japanese Music Dictionary*,” Hei bon Sya, 1998, 430.

³¹ Shimonaka Hiroshi, “*Japanese Music Dictionary*,” Hei bon Sya, 1998, 430.

Example 2. Collected by Kouzou Yoshida, *Tendai - Syoumyou*, mm. 1-2.



Shoumyou is a type of monophonic choral music sung by monks during ritualistic events. Unlike ancient Japanese songs, *Shoumyou* boasted a strong musicality unprecedented in Japanese history. These songs were either sung with a strong sense of pulse or in an improvisatory style with no definite rhythm, and were categorized accordingly. All *Shoumyou* were vaguely set with a story line, and melodies were based on scales rhythm and scales will be discussed in detail in chapter three.³² These characteristics were definitive steps of evolution from ancient songs into the folk songs of today. In the Toudai Temple in Kyoto there is a *Shoumyou* that has been sung every year in rituals since the dawn of the eighth century. Considered to be the oldest *Shoumyou* in Japanese history, *Hougou* is sung as a call-and-response between a soloist and choir, chanting the name of Buddha in repetition.³³ Traditional Buddhist Japanese performance practice does not utilize a conductor, but rather the singers listen to each breath, communicating much like a modern chamber ensemble. Comparatively, a Western church choir usually defines a leader to provide specific cues and other signals throughout a performance, and also places significant emphasis on the unity of intonation. The Japanese tradition of Buddhist chant greatly embraces differences of intonation (pitch being inaccurate, but relatively precise on the same unison) as a powerful aural effect. Horizontal movements, regarding pulse and rhythmic accuracy, are strictly in unison. It is believed that *Hougou* has remained in this same style and performance practice

³² Ibid., 430-431.

³³ Ibid., 431.

for over 1200 years.

2.2 Influence of Christianity *Orasho*

Christians first set foot in Japan during the sixteenth century and have influenced the course of Japanese culture ever since. At times the practice of Christianity has caused violence, death and war; however, the impact of Christianity on Japanese music is undeniable. As Japanese musicians began to encounter Western music through Christianity, the country saw an unprecedented evolution of its musical culture. *Orasho* is one result of combining the two cultures.

Orasho derives from the Latin word *oratio* and refers to Gregorian chant (and other prayers) originally introduced to Japan by Francisco Xavier in 1549. The Gregorian chant passed on to Japan was never written down, but was relayed orally for generations by the so-called hidden Christians.³⁴ Consequently, the Gregorian chant practiced by Japanese Christians evolved over time, resonating more with the Japanese culture by transforming melodies to sound similar to that of Buddhist *sutras*.

Hidden Christians lived in isolation on a small island away from mainland Japan, protecting their faith and singing *Orasho* for the glory of their God. For subsequent generations, original Latin texts and music did not exist in their lives; heavy Japanese accents, the lack of manuscripts (music was passed down orally), and the flow of time changed and stabilized the music, arguably giving birth to “original” Japanese choral music such as *Orasho* (Oratio) and

³⁴ Minagawa Tatsuo, “*Kirishitan Music, the Glory and Discouragement*,” Japan Christian Publisher, 2004, 15.

Guruiyoza (Gloriosa).³⁵ Numerous modern choral pieces also use the transformed (heavily accented) texts such as *Orasho* and *Guluiyoza*.³⁶

Examples of Latin words transformed by the hidden Christians include:³⁷

- Oratio : Orasho
- Kyrie Eleison : Kiriya Renzu
- Gloriosa Domina : Guluriyoza Dominu
- Excelsa Super Sidera : Ikiensa Sudera Sidera
- Ave Maria : Ame Maria
- Credo : Keredo

Today, modern choral works by Japanese composers implement both Gregorian chant and *Orasho* as two distinct styles of music, which convey very different emotions and stories that are congruent with their unique origins. Composer Hideki Chihara's piece entitled *Orasho* was written with the concept of "universality" in mind. His aim was to compose music that transcends cultural differences and would be understood by all people. He sought to convey the true stories of hidden Christians and their lives that resulted from the unity of Western and Eastern cultures.³⁸ The first movement begins with an introduction reminiscent of Gregorian

³⁵ Minagawa Tatsuo, "*Kirishitan Music, the Glory and Discouragement*," Japan Christian Publisher, 2004, 16.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁷ Chihara, Hideki, "*Orasio for the Mixed Chorus*," Zenon, 1999, 30-33.

³⁸ Reprinted from Chihara, Hideki, "*Orasio for the Mixed Chorus*," Zenon, 1999, 35, with permission from Hideki Chihara: Graduated Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. Awarded and honorable mention: Japan Music Competition, Premio Citta di Trieste (Italy), Carl Maria von Weber Preis (Germany), Guido d'Arezzo (Italy), and so on. His music, written in variety up to now, is primarily based on Japanese classical literatures, traditional art forms and Asian thought or religions. His choral music : *SHOGA* by Solmization used with the Japanese traditional instruments, *ACHIME no Waza* by ancient Shinto requiems, *Dochirina Kirishitan* (Doctrina

chant, and this melody is heard in the transition as well as the coda (Example 3).

Example 3. Hideki Chihara, *Orasho*, Movement 1, mm. 1-4.



The work *Orasho* contains a section based on two Gregorian chants *O Gloriosa Domina* (Example 4) and *Alleluia, Vidimus Stellam* (Example 5),³⁹ but quickly unfolds into the melodies in the style reminiscent of traditional Japanese folk tunes.

In another example of the use of both Western chant and Japanese music, the composer Chiara uses a chant melody (Example 6) and a traditional folk song (*Haiya Bushi*) which originated in Hirado, Nagasaki, where Xavier had visited. This text describes the lives of those who were forced to flee their home due to their new found faith for Christianity, vividly expressing the agonizing years of Japanese Christians in hiding.

Christam) by Japanese medieval Christian texts and Latin sacred songs, and *Maria Orientalis* - 5 songs in praise of Virgin Mary, crossing over the border of Eastern and Western world of prayers, *etc.* and <SYMPHONIA for Strings No.1 "Ten-Chi MONYO"> are published from ZEN-ON Music Co.,Ltd.

³⁹ Chihara, Hideki, "*Orasio for the Mixed Chorus*," Zenon, 1999, 33.

Example 4. Hymn collection of original and modern score, *O Gloriosa Domina*, Spain National Library, 1553.

In festo purificationis

Hymnus. **O** Glo ri o sa

Do mi na ex celsa su pra

sy de ra que te crea vit

pro ut de lac ta sti sa

The image shows the original manuscript notation for the hymn 'O Gloriosa Domina'. It consists of four staves of music in square neumes on a four-line red staff. The text is written in a Gothic script below the notes. The first staff begins with a large decorated initial 'O' and the text 'Glo ri o sa'. The subsequent staves continue the text: 'Do mi na ex celsa su pra', 'sy de ra que te crea vit', and 'pro ut de lac ta sti sa'.

beate ~~Marie~~ **Marie**. Fol. 121.

cro u be re.

The image shows the original manuscript notation for the hymn 'O Gloriosa Domina'. It consists of one staff of music in square neumes on a four-line red staff. The text is written in a Gothic script below the notes. The text reads 'beate Marie. Fol. 121.' and 'cro u be re.'.

Quod Eva tristes abstulit
tu reddis almo germine
intrent ut astra siebiles
caeli fenestra facta es.

Tu Regis altis ianua
et porta lucis fulgida
vitam datam per virginem
gentes redempte plaudite

Maria mater gratie
mater misericordie
tu nos ab hoste protege
et bona mortis suscipe.

Voice

O glo - ri - o - sa Do - mi - na, Ex - cal sa - su - per si - de - ra, Que te cre-

The image shows the modern score notation for the hymn 'O Gloriosa Domina'. It consists of one staff of music in a treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The notes are in a simple, modern style. The text is written below the notes: 'O glo - ri - o - sa Do - mi - na, Ex - cal sa - su - per si - de - ra, Que te cre-'.

Vo.

a - vit pro - vi - de, La - cta - sti - sa - cro u - be - re.

The image shows the modern score notation for the hymn 'O Gloriosa Domina'. It consists of one staff of music in a treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The notes are in a simple, modern style. The text is written below the notes: 'a - vit pro - vi - de, La - cta - sti - sa - cro u - be - re.'.

Example 5. Original and modern score, Liber Usualis, 460, mm. 1-3.

2.

A Lle-lú-ia. * *ij.* V. Vi- di-

mus stéllam é- jus in Ori-én-

Voice Soloist Choir

Ale-le - ia.

Vo. Soloists

Vi - di - mus stel - lam

The image displays a musical score for the 'Alleluia' from the Liber Usualis. It features two systems of original notation (square neumes on a four-line staff) and two systems of modern notation (standard staff notation). The lyrics are: 'Lle-lú-ia. * ij. V. Vi- di- mus stéllam é- jus in Ori-én-'. The modern notation includes a 'Voice' part with a 'Soloist' section (measures 1-4) and a 'Choir' section (measures 5-17), and a 'Vo.' (Soloists) part (measures 1-7). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4.

Example 6. Hideki Chihara, *Orasho*, Movement 1, mm. 5-12.

riten. a tempo 1

ひとつ うたいましょ はばかり
hi to tsu u tai ma sho ha ba ka ri

Al-le-lu-ia m

ながら ヨ うたの あやまりゃ サアマエ
na ga ra yo u ta no a ya ma rya sa a ma e

ア マ エ
a ma e

The second movement also starts with a melody imitating the style of Gregorian chant, in a responsorial technique between male and female voices (Example 7).

Example 7. Hideki Chihara, *Orasho*, Movement 2, mm. 1-11.

Sostenuto ♩ = ca. 58

Soprano
 きりや れん ず - -
 ki ri ya ren zu

Alto
 きりや - れん ず - -
 ki ri ya ren zu

Tenor
 きりすて れん ず - -
 ki ri su te ren zu

Bass
 きりすて れん ず - -
 ki ri su te ren zu

rit. 1 Allegretto ♩ = ca. 96

Soprano
 きりや - - - - れ - - - - ん ず ぐる り よ - - ざ - ど み
 ki ri ya re n zu gu ru ri yo za do mi

Alto
 m re - - - - ん ず ぐる り よ - - ざ - ど み
 re n zu gu ru ri yo za do mi

Tenor
 きりや - - - -
 ki - ri - ya

Bass
 m re - - - - ん ず ぐる り よ - - ざ - ど み ぬ
 re n zu gu ru ri yo za do mi nu

After the initial presentation of the chant material, the melody, along with the text from

Guluriyoza, expands with syncopated rhythms common in Japanese folk songs. The lyrics, beginning in measure 21 is from the medieval hymn *O Glorioso Domina* (Example 8) again.

Example 8. Hideki Chihara, *Orasho*, Zenon, 2010, 11, mm. 21-24.

3 Adagio estatico ♩ - ca. 52

f O glo-ri - o - sa Do-mi - na ex-cel-sa su-per si - de - ra

f O glo-ri - o - sa Do-mi - na ex-cel-sa su-per si - de - ra

f O glo-ri - o - sa Do-mi - na ex-cel-sa su-per si - de - ra

f O glo-ri - o - sa Do-mi - na ex-cel-sa su-per si - de - ra

Although this hymn was commonly sung in the Iberian Peninsula at the time where Xavier was trained, this tradition is no longer seen today. This beautiful hymn was passed on to the Japanese people and has become the only surviving song by the hidden Christians that withstood change and is still performed today, after 400 years.⁴⁰

The melody starting in measure 103, set in imitative polyphony on the text *Amen* (Example 9), transforms into a beautiful harmonic showcase in measure 137 (Example 10).⁴¹ The abrupt appearance of a Western chorale, along with massive unison lines (which hold

⁴⁰ Chihara, Hideki, “*Orasio for the Mixed Chorus*,” Zenon, 1999, 33.

⁴¹ Chihara, Hideki, “*Orasio for the Mixed Chorus*,” Zenon, 1999, 33.

important roles in both Christian and Buddhist music), is perhaps a historical reference to how *Orasho* came to fruition. This piece is a fine example of how Western and Eastern music coexists within modern Japanese music.

Example 9. Hideki Chihara, *Orasho*, Movement 2, mm. 120-130.

Meno mosso Senza misura 14 Alla breve ♩-ca. 56

たてま - つ - る a
 ta te ma tsu ru

たてま - つ - る a
 ta te ma tsu ru

たてま - つ - る a
 ta te ma tsu ru

たてま - つ - る あん - め - あんめ
 ta te ma tsu ru an me an me

あん - め - あんめ
 an me an me

あん - め - あんめ
 an me an me

いえ - ぞ す
 ie zo su

いえ - ぞ す
 ie zo su

Example 10. Hideki Chihara, *Orasho*, Movement 2, mm. 137-142.

The musical score is presented in four staves. The top two staves are for vocal parts, and the bottom two are for piano accompaniment. The vocal staves show long, continuous lines with lyrics 'ri ni ya' and 'A'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and melodic lines in both hands.

CHAPTER 3. JAPANESE CULTURE AND MUSIC STYLE

3.1 Instrumental Music

The vast majority of Japanese traditional music is vocal. As for instrumental music, the only professional ensemble in Japan that performs traditional Japanese music is the Imperial Household Agency Music Ensemble. This ensemble is comprised of family members chosen (and supported) by the Japanese government; specifically, these chosen family members are the only ones allowed to perform traditional instrumental Japanese music. The performance practice by this ensemble is considered to be the oldest surviving art form of its kind in the world, and lives on to this day in a form similar to that of traditional African music, rather than Western music. The vast majority of traditional Japanese music has been passed down from each member of the ensemble to a new member in the same family (from one generation to the next). *Gagaku*, which is an instrumental music/dance performed only within the palace and temples (never publically), is one of the most significant art forms in the genre that has survived through government support. When the sons of these individual households reach the age of fifteen, they are required to attend a school under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Household Agency to begin formal training in traditional music arts.⁴² Each student goes through rigorous training every day, along with duties such as cleaning, maintaining the practice halls, and taking care of their master's daily needs. These boys have extremely restricted personal lives under their masters to cultivate mental strength and personalities worthy of such an honor as to perform for the Imperial Household.

As reflected in the country's educational system, Japanese traditional music has no

⁴² Tougi Hideki, "Gagaku," Syu-ei-sya, 2005, 50.

tolerance for creativity or individuality. There is only one correct method of sounding notes, creating rhythm, creating tempi, and body movements during performances; each is passed down and imitated perfectly from master to apprentice. The penalty for disobedience, a lack of skill, a lack of mental ability, or a lack of spirit is to be unable to become the master and take the original full name of the first-generation performer. As a result, Japanese traditional arts, especially instrumental music and dances, have never been influenced by foreign ideas and practices. For over 1300 years, these art forms have sustained their original style and beauty.

3.2 Vocal Music

Comparatively, vocal music far more diverse. Vocal music is usually separated into two categories: the traditional music passed down (much like instrumental music mentioned above), and the music that spread across cities and villages (going through unique transformations by geographical, cultural, and foreign influences). Japanese vocal music has always originated within the strong bonds of diverse culture, language, religion, faith, and of course, people.

In *Hokkaido*, the northern-most region of Japan, winters are extremely cold and share a similar geographical position as Russia. The southern-most group of islands, called *Okinawa* is very close to the equator and stays warm all year. In the warm and peaceful southern *Okinawa* area, many songs used long, slow phrases and colorful scales. Japanese dialects have been established in different parts of the country, and some are almost considered to be completely different languages compared to the primary Japanese language. Cuisines, from the type of fish and vegetables to subtle spices, also differ between regions.

In the harsh oceans of the northern regions, fishers used durable, heavy nets to catch

their prey, which required a great deal of teamwork between fishermen. From this strong teamwork, folksongs developed that particularly emphasized heavy downbeats in unison (influenced by the *Shoumyou*). The following example represents a fisherman's song with heavy downbeats (Example 11). In the warm and peaceful south *Okinawa* area, many songs used long, slow phrases and colorful scales (Example 12).

Example 11. Arr. Osamu Shimizu, *Soran-Bushi*, 1, m. 1-4.

Vigorous $\text{♩} = 80$ arranged by Osamu Shimizu

S
Yah - re, Soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, Soh - ran!

A
Yah - re, Soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, Soh - ran!

T
8 Yah - re, Soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, Soh - ran!

B
Yah - re, Soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, soh - ra - n, Soh - ran!

Example 12 arr. Takatomi Nobubaga, *Tinsagu nu Hana*, Kawai, 2011, 32, mm.1-6.

Tinsagu nu hana/Touch me not flowers

Okinawa district folk song

arr. Takatomi Nobunaga

p Andante

Soprano
Ti n sa gu - nu Ha - na ya chi mi sa - chi ni su mi ti,

Alto
p

Tenor
8

Bass
8

5

S.
u ya nu yu - shi gu - to ya

A.
p

T.
8

B.
8

From ancient times, Japan has always been a country built on fishing and *inasaku*

farming, as people gathered together in small villages to support each other's needs. Songs were sung by groups at bonfires during daily work at a farm or out at sea. Songs were passed down by rote from one generation to the next through daily gatherings. Japanese music has a strong emphasis on unison passages, and the culture itself emphasizes the importance of the whole, rather than the individual. This unique focus on unison passages is likely influenced by the *Shoumyou*; in this way, strength in teamwork is represented by monophony, rather than harmony.

CHAPTER 4. JAPANESE FOLK SONGS

Though difficult to generalize, traditional Japanese music tends to be monophonic. Variety is achieved through the use of several different pentatonic scales. Great emphasis is placed on timbre, and often features free rhythm. Of course, there are many exceptions to these characteristics, in part due to the significant influence of western music. Here, we will discuss the two types of rhythms and five most common scales used in folk songs, as well as the various types of songs seen across the country.

4.1 Rhythms

Japanese folk songs have two distinct rhythm types: a systematically metered regular meter and a non-metered free rhythm. In Japan most folk songs are regional, so that songs are recognized by the town name in their title. For example, the popular folk song *Yagi Bushi* is the song (bushi) from *Yagi*, *Oiwake Bushi* is the song (bushi) from *Oiwake*. *Yagi Bushi* and *Oiwake Bushi* are good examples of a regularly metered piece and a non-metered free rhythmic piece.

4.1.1 Yagi Bushi (Song from *Yagi*)

Yagi Bushi (Example 13) uses a strict and pulse, usually associated with tunes sung by groups. When being sung by a large group, the beat is often clapped. The range is rather constricted and the melody is syllabic. *Kometsuki Madara* example 24, p37, is another good example of this style.

Example 13. Unknown, *Yagi Bushi*, mm. 1-16.

yagi bushi

Voice

Ha - ko-ro-wa ko u ka no san ne n

8

Vo. ku ga - tsu A ki no na ka ba ni - o o go ya ka ke te -

13

Vo. Yo ru mo - hi ru ma mo wa ka cjo wa na ku te

4.1.2 Oiwake Bushi (Song from *Oiwake*)

Oiwake Bushi was originally a horseman's song (*Mago-Uta*) from the village of Oiwake, but spread throughout Japan during the Edo period (1603-1868 A.D.).

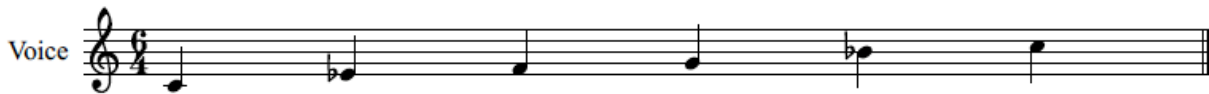
Oiwake Bushi does not restrict notes in the melody to any specific rhythm; the song is sung in a free manner, usually stretched out (Example 14). The range is rather wide, and the melody is reminiscent of Western melismatic style. The lyrics of the song describe the plaintive feelings of a woman who wants to accompany her husband and begs him to allow her to go with.

4.2 Five Scales

Pentatonic scales were introduced from mainland Asia when Buddhism reached the islands of Japan. The scales (*onkai*), *Minyou Onkai*, *Ritsu Onakai*, *Miyako Bushi Onkai*, *Ryukyu Onkai*, and *Yona-nuki Onkai* are based on Fumio Koizumi's scale theory.⁴³

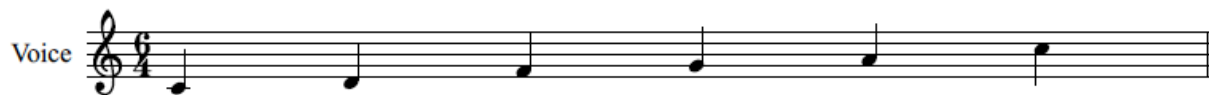
Minyou Onkai (Example 15) is a common folksong scale comprised of 'do – ma – fa – so – ta – do.'

Example 15. *Minyou Onkai*.



Ritsu Onkai (Example 16) uses 'do – re – fa – so – la – do.' The distances between scale degrees are major seconds and minor thirds. This scale became the basis for the *Miyako Bushi Onkai*.

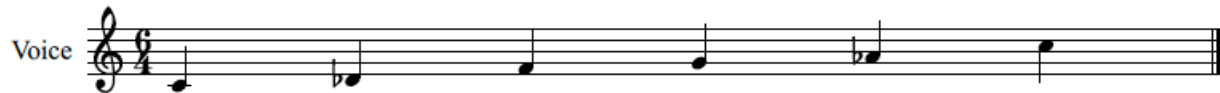
Example 16. *Ritsu Onkai*.



⁴³ Koizumi, Humio, "The Research of Japanese Traditional Music," Ongaku No Tomo Sya, 2009, 90-198.

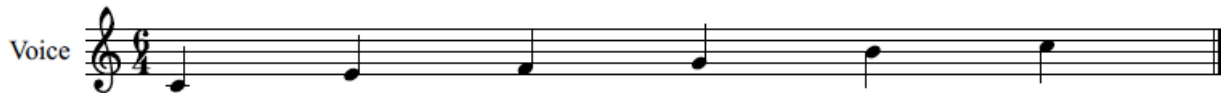
Miyako Bushi Onkai (Example 17) is used in music for the *Shamisen* and *Sou* (both traditional string instruments). This pentatonic scale utilizes ‘do – ra – fa – so – lo – do.’ (The sonority produced from this scale is rather dark.

Example 17. *Miyako Bushi Onkai*.



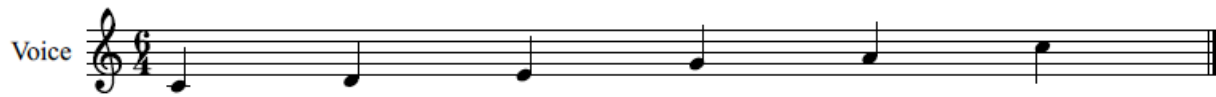
Ryukyu Onkai (Example 18) utilizes ‘do – mi – fa – so – ti – do’ an alternation between major thirds and minor seconds. This scale is popular in traditional Okinawa songs, and is found in other countries such as Taiwan, Indonesia, India, and Bhutan.

Example 18. *Ryukyu Onkai*.



Yona-nuki Onkai (Example 19), which literally means “scale without 4 (yon) and 7 (na)”, utilizes ‘do – re – mi – so – la – do.’ One example being *Akatonbo*, were written after the Meiji Era.

Example 19. *Yona-nuki Onkai*.



4.3 Characteristics and Classifications

Japanese folk songs are often classified in different categories depending on their characteristics and functions. When categorizing folk songs, the most common classification method used is the one proposed by Kunio Yanagida,⁴⁴ which will be used in this document.

4.3.1 Ta Uta (Farm songs)

Ta Uta (farm songs) encompass all songs used for farming and harvesting. Of these, *Hayashida* (Rice farming song with a rhythmic pulse) is perhaps the most famous. *Inasaku Uta* (rice farming song), is also a part of this category, and *Ta Uta* existed in different forms all over the country.⁴⁵ Almost ritualistic in nature, these songs have common structures; a *Sanbai* (music leader) sings the song, *Hayashite* (Drummer) use taiko drums to keep the pulse, and *saotomes* (literally, “early females”, indicating young girls) plant rice in rhythmic unison. Even today, in the mountainous regions of the Chugoku District, these *Ta Utas* can still be found in original,

⁴⁴ Koizumi, Humio, “*The Research of Japanese Traditional Music*,” Ongaku No Tomo Sya, 2009, 76-81.

⁴⁵ Shimonaka Hiroshi, “*Japanese Music Dictionary*,” Hei bon Sya, 54-55.

complete forms after centuries. The structures, forms, and choreography of these *Ta Uta* farming songs seem to be almost identical to those of the Heian Era (794~1185 A.D.)⁴⁶

Most of these songs use modest tempi in duple meter, as farmers move their arms and legs in alternation while planting rice in a rhythmic manner. In small villages, walking was one of the primary actions that consisted of daily rhythm. The combination of the cultural values of discretion and modesty naturally resulted in the use of a familiar duple meter in a slow tempo, which diminished chances of attracting attention from others. Other examples of *Ta Uta* include: *Tatake Uta*, *Ttauchi Uta* (Tilling a paddy field song), *Ttaue Uta* (Planting song), and *Kusatori Uta* (Weeding song).⁴⁷ *Ta no Kusatori Uta* (Weeding song) is a good example of the *Ta Uta* (Farm Song) arranged for female chorus (Example 20).

Example 20. arr. Michio Mamiya, *Ta no Kusatori Uta*, mm. 1-5.

Ta no Kusatori Uta
Akita district folk song

Mamiya Michio

Andante *f*

Soprano
Ta no na - ka - ni - na - I ya

Mezzosoprano

Alto

⁴⁶ Shimonaka Hiroshi, “*Japanese Music Dictionary*,” Hei bon Sya, 54-55.

⁴⁷ Koizumi, Humio, “*The Research of Japanese Traditional Music*,” Ongaku No Tomo Sya, 2009, 76.

This is a translation of example 20.

“In a paddy field you see a grass named *wasure-gusa*. It is worn to convey a sense of healing the sorrow of separations.”

4.3.2 Niwa Uta (Garden songs)

Niwa Uta (Garden songs) are used for working within a mansion or residence (For indoor work such as gardening, grinding wheat, cooking, etc.). Like *Ta Uta* (Farm songs), they are in a work-friendly duple meter, and usually use bright and happy lyrics (Example 21). Other examples of *Niwa Uta* include: *Mugiuchi Uta* (Flailing barley Song), *Hietsuki Uta* (Millet hulling song), *Mugitsuki Uta* (polishing wheat song).⁴⁸

Example 21. Unknown, *Niwa Uta*, mm. 1-5.

o o - ya ma - hu do o - da ga

4.3.3 Yama Uta (Mountain songs)

Songs sung in the wilderness are called *Yama Uta* (Mountain songs). These were sung while riding a horse, cutting trees, harvesting natural crops. Some songs were used in a call and response form. These songs are usually much more lively and fitting for people living in the

⁴⁸ Koizumi, Humio, “*The Research of Japanese Traditional Music*,” Ongaku No Tomo Sya, 2009, 77.

mountains. *Kagura* (God-entertainment song) is one such song that represents the nature of *Yama Uta* (Example 22). *Kagura* is a Japanese word referring to a specific type of *Shinto* theatrical dance. "Shinto gods" are called *kami*. They are sacred spirits which take the form of things and concepts important to life, such as wind, rain, mountains, trees, rivers and fertility. Various types of *Kagura* can be found throughout the other mountainous regions of Japan.⁴⁹ The movements attached to these songs vary significantly, usually reflective of the terrain in which villagers live and flexibly use their knees and ankles, resulting in and use surprisingly good breathing techniques. Other examples of *Yama Uta* include: *Sankou Uta* (Hiking song).⁵⁰

Example 22. Unknown, *Yama Uta*, mm. 1-4.



4.3.4 Umi Uta (Ocean Songs)

Songs used on water, or during any activity related to bodies of water, are called *Umi Uta* (Ocean songs). Historically, the vast majority of Japanese people sustained themselves by fishing, and these songs played an important role in their daily lives; as a result, *Umi Uta* are mostly

⁴⁹ Shimonaka Hiroshi, "Japanese Music Dictionary," Hei bon Sya, 54-55.

⁵⁰ Koizumi, Humio, "The Research of Japanese Traditional Music," Ongaku No Tomo Sya, 2009, 77.

comprised of songs used on boats.⁵¹ Fitting for fishermen, these songs use rhythmic and melodic motifs that depict the constant rise and fall of ocean waves. In many parts of Japan, however, villagers invest their time in more than one lifestyle, and can result in hybrid songs. In the *Seto* district, the culture of *Inasaku* (Rice farming) was also very strong, and with it a dance embodying *Inasaku* called *Awa-odori* (Dance from *Awa* district). It is said that their *Umi Uta* is a hybrid that portrays the lifestyle of both fishermen and farmers.⁵² A very popular example of *Umi Uta* is the *Soran Bushi* (fisherman's song) from Hokkaido (Example 23). This is a song sung while fishing for herring and is characterized by strong beats and shouted chants. It embodies the exhausting task of scooping daunting amounts of herring from a large boat. The rhythm is written in *Yagi Bushi* pattern and the melody is based on the *Minyou Onkai*. Other examples of *Umi Uta* include *Amiokoshi Uta* (Catching net song), *Funa Uta* (Boat song), and *Amihiki Uta* (Tugging net song).⁵³

Example 23. Unknown, *Soran Bushi*, mm. 1-6.



⁵¹ Koizumi, Humio, "The Research of Japanese Traditional Music," *Ongaku No Tomo Sya*, 2009, 338-339.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 338-339.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 77.

This is a translation of example 23.

“Oh!!! Soran, soran, soran soran, soran, soran. (Oh, yeah!)

*When we hear the jabbering of seagulls on the high seas,
we know we can't give up our fishing lives on the ocean.”*

4.3.5 Waza Uta (Songs for work)

Waza Uta (Song for work) are sung by workers in specialized fields such as tea masters, liquor store owners, cooks, blacksmiths, architects, miners, etc. Of these, the most common song throughout the country is sung by lumberjacks called *Kobiki Uta* (Cutting tree song); this song uses simple, strong, long, and free melodies throughout, conveying the lifestyles of the workers.⁵⁴ The famous *Kometsuki Madara* (Rice hulling song) from Nagasaki is sung by many workers while grinding rice with a mortar (Example 24). This particularly rhythmic song portrays bombastic actions required for mortaring, has been transformed into an effective four-part mixed choir by Michio Mamiya. Other examples of *Waza Uta* include: *Kobiki Uta* (Cutting tree song), *Watauchi Uta* (Willowing cotton song), *Sumiyaki Uta* (Charcoal making song), and *Daiku Uta* (Carpentering song).⁵⁵

This example of *Kometsuki Madara* (a rice hulling song) consists a strict and distinguished rhythm and sung by the group such as *Yagi Bushi* rhythmic pattern. The melody is based on the *Minyou Onkai*.

⁵⁴ Koizumi, Humio, “*The Research of Japanese Traditional Music*,” Ongaku No Tomo Sya, 2009, 390.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

Example 24. arr. Michio Mamiya, *Kometsuki Madara*, mm. 1-7.

Kometsuki Madara

Gyouka-Nagasaki district

Michio Mamiya

Musical score for *Kometsuki Madara*, mm. 1-7. The score is for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. It features a 2/4 time signature and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: Soprano: A ra chok-kon, kat-tan kat-tan kat-tan; Alto: (no lyrics); Tenor: So ko ya re, A-ra; Bass: So ko ya re. Dynamics include *ff* and *p*.

This is a translation of example 24.

“Let’s hull rice in a cheerful rhythm and load it on a boat”

4.3.6 Douka (Songs of the path)

Douka (Songs of the path) are sung while people lead the horses or caws to carry heavy materials. Many of these *Douka* are still being sung today, with *Mago Uta* (Leading horse song) likely being the most popular. The melody of this song consists of milismatic lines that are similar to the *Oiwake Bushi* rhythmic pattern. *Mago Uta* consists numerous other horse songs

such as *Umakata Bushi* (Horse song) (Example 25) and *Umakui Uta*.⁵⁶ *Douka* have two different origins. One song type formed as tunes sung by traveling merchants who made trips from ports to villages transporting salt, fish, and other goods.⁵⁷ The other song type originated as tunes sung by stable boys tending to cows. *Kiyari Uta* (Lifting song) was used to heighten the spirits of workers when pulling and transporting large materials of wood or rock, working and shouting together in rhythm. Therefore the rhythm is written in the *Yagi Bushi* pattern. Other examples of *Douka* include: *Ushikata Uta* (Leading cow song), and *Douchuu Uta* (Road song).⁵⁸

Example 25. Unknown, *Umakata Bushi*, mm. 5-10.



4.3.7 Iwai Uta (Celebration songs)

Iwai Uta (Celebration songs) are also known as *Shukugi Uta*, and were meant for prayers and showing gratitude to the gods. This gratitude can include any theme ranging from the safety of the villagers to wishes for better fortune.⁵⁹ These songs are used for annual events (which

⁵⁶ Koizumi, Humio, “*The Research of Japanese Traditional Music*,” Ongaku No Tomo Sya, 2009, 335-337.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 335-337.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 77.

⁵⁹ Nippon Hoso Kyokai, “*Japanese Folkson dictionary*,” Nippon Hoso Syuppan Kyokai, 1990, 25.

usually involve praying to the gods) or any celebratory occasion such as moving to a new home, weddings, or wine celebrations. The lyrics reflect this happy nature; however, if the lyrics fit the occasion, any type of folksong previously mentioned were also used as *Iwai Uta*.⁶⁰ Songs such as *Shougatsu Kotohajime Iwai Uta* (New year celebration song) and *Shukufukugei Iwai Uta* (Good luck celebration song) are considered celebration songs used in specific holidays on the Japanese calendar. Others are more general celebration songs such as *Kaishi Iwai Uta* (Opening celebration song), which is a prayer for a good beginning of a celebration, and *Shuuryou Iwai Uta* (Completing celebration song), which offers gratitude for the celebration and marks the end of festivities. This prompted the beginning of *Shuukaku Kigan Iwai Uta* (Praying harvest song) and *Shuukaku Iwai Uta* (Harvest celebration song), which are songs offering prayer for a good harvest and gratitude for a good harvest, respectively. As time went on, fishers also adopted the use of *Iwai Uta*; moreover, people started incorporating celebration songs into other events such as the celebration of birth (typically on the seventh day after birth, called *Nanaya Iwai Uta* (seventh night celebration song), adulthood (fifteen years of age was typically the line of adulthood, called *Genpuku*), marriage, and even the age of misfortune (in Japan, there are superstitious beliefs about certain ages that bring misfortune). Even *Makura-nenbutsu* (Pillow song), songs for the dead, are considered a type of *Iwai Uta*.⁶¹

There is an interesting story behind one *Iwai Uta* called *Nagamochi Uta*, which was the song used for a marriage parade. There was a law in Japan that forced peasants to help nobility and royalty carry their possessions when they didn't have enough manpower. During these sessions the peasants learned a song called *Nagamochi Katsugi Uta* in which the carriers sang as they walked in a long line that almost resembled a parade (the line was truly extensive). These

⁶⁰ Koizumi, Humio, "The Research of Japanese Traditional Music," *Ongaku No Tomo Sya*, 2009, 396-400.

⁶¹ Nippon Hoso Kyokai, "Japanese Folkson dictionary," Nippon Hoso Syuppan Kyokai, 1990, 25.

peasants took the song they learned and adapted the song into a celebration song for marriage festivities. This song proliferated across the country, except for Hokkaido and Okinawa. The two islands most north and south of the country were not under the jurisdiction of the Edo government and were never affected by the presentation of nobility/royalty or their laws.⁶² This is an example of *Iwai Uta* arranged by Michio Mamiya for mixed choir. *Oboko Iwai Uta* (Example 26) is a celebration song for a newborn. The song would be sung at the celebrating ceremony seven days after the baby’s birth. The melody is based on the *Minyou Onkai* and the rhythm is *Yagi Bushi* pattern.

Example 26. arr, Michio Mamiya, *Oboko Iwai Uta*, mm 1-5.

Oboko Iwai Uta
Aomori district folk song Michio Mamiya

Moderato

Soprano *f* Kyo - no o bo - ko wa - yo i o - bo ko

Alto *f*

Tenor *f*

Bass *f*

This is a translation of example 26.

“Today’s baby is pretty. Put the ebis bukuro on it’s neck.”

⁶² Ibid., 25.

4.3.8 Matsuri Uta (Festival songs)

Also known as *Shuukyō Uta* which means “Spiritual Song”, *Matsuri Uta* (Festival songs) consist of tunes directed toward God or religious figures. Examples include *Kami Mukae Uta* (God welcoming song) and *Kami Okuri Uta* (God sending song).

Eisa (a refrain in Buddhist prayers for the dead) originates from Buddhist monks, who created prayers in the Ryukyu tongue (distinct languages/dialects native to the southwest islands of Japan). These monks applied movements to festival songs and attempted to spread beliefs. After some time, other ideas fused into the original song, adding secular texts (about good fortune or even love songs), accompanied by changed choreography.⁶³ *Eisa* is considered one of the *Nenbutsu Uta* (Prayer songs) and is the most famous Spiritual song in *Okinawa*.⁶⁴

4.3.9 Asobi Uta (Play songs)

Asobi Uta (Play songs) include songs such as *Bon Uta* (Festival of the Dead song) and *Odori Uta* (Dance song), *Torioi Uta* (Bird Chasing Song) (Example 27), and *Shougatsu Uta* (New year holiday song). Of these songs, the *Bon Uta* has spread across the country and is still very familiar to people today. In Western Japan the music leader repeats particular rhythm numerous times while people dance and sing to the music. Eastern Japan uses a different rhythmic pattern, and people take turns dancing without a music leader.⁶⁵ As expected, Central

⁶³ Okinawa City Tourism Association, http://www.koza.ne.jp/info/kankoukyou_kai/index.htm, [accessed 25 February 2012].

⁶⁴ Nippon Hoso Kyokai, “*Japanese Folkson dictionary*,” Nippon Hoso Syuppan Kyokai, 1990, 7-13.

⁶⁵ Koizumi, Humio, “*The Research of Japanese Traditional Music*,” Ongaku No Tomo Sya, 2009, 293-297.

Japan uses a hybrid of these two styles in their *Bon Uta*.⁶⁶ The example of *Asobi Uta* is a *Torioi Uta* (Driving off birds song) that is based on *Yagi Bushi* rhythmic pattern and *Ritsui Onkai*.

Example 27. Unknown, *Torioi Uta*, mm. 1-8.

Voice

na na gu ro wa ta ri no sa to ga ra su ka go ka i re te ka ra da i te

4.3.10 Warabe Uta (Children Songs)

Warabe Uta (Children's song) are songs passed down to children, and usually associated with some kind of game or dance. They include songs such as *Kazoe Uta* (Counting Song), *Temari Uta* (Ball Bouncing Song), and *Komori Uta* (Child Protecting Song, the equivalent of a Western lullaby). The topics for these songs vary, and can include holidays, nature, animals, plants, etc. The Japanese traditional lullabies *Komori Uta* significantly differ from that of the Western world. *Komori Uta* sang of dark times in the world of feudalism, which was the beginning of the Kamakura Era (1185) to the end of Keiou Era (1868); hence, a good majority of these pieces were dark in tonality with sad lyrics. The folk song *Itsuki no Komori Uta* (Example 28) is a well-known lullaby in *Itsuki Village*, *Kumamoto* district and the melody line is based on *Miyako Bushi Onkai*

⁶⁶ Ibid., 295.

Example 28. arr. Takatomi Nobubaga, *Itsuki no Komori Uta*, mm. 1-7.

Itsuki no Komori Uta/ Lullaby of Itsuki

Lullaby - Kumamoto district

Takatomi Nobunaga

Musical score for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, measures 1-3. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The Soprano and Alto parts are mostly rests. The Tenor part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the lyrics "O - do - ma bon gi ri bon o do ma bon ka ra sa kya -". The Bass part also begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and follows the Tenor's melody.

Musical score for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, measures 4-7. The Soprano and Alto parts are mostly rests. The Tenor part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the lyrics "o ra n do - bon gi ri bon bon ka ra sa - kya". The Bass part follows the Tenor's melody.

This is a translation of example 28.⁶⁷

The end of summer marks a full year of service as a caregiver,
And I long for the day I can go home to my parents I miss so dearly.
Being sold to a distant land to become a caregiver,
No one will weep if I were to die here and now.
Cicadas will certainly cry, but will just add to the sadness.
No one will visit my tombstone if I die,
If so, I would rather be buried on the side of a street.
Maybe then, those walking past just might lay some flowers for me.
My father must be working on that mountain I see in the distance,
And as I gaze, my yearning for home grows tenfold.
For us komori, children who do not cease to weep or cry are daunting.
No matter what I do they won't cease their crying
And I am scolded for being a bad komori.

Itsuki no Komori Uta (Lullaby of *Itsuki*) originated in the depths of slavery and was sung by children separated from their homes. Children were often sold to rich families as slaves to ease the financial burden of peasant households. Unlike other children's songs, the lyrics of these songs were aimed to criticize the world and spill their undying hatred to society. Interestingly enough, most of these songs were sung by children who were specifically sold to households to work as *komori boukou*, caregivers for other children (a rough equivalent of modern babysitters).

⁶⁷ Itsuki Village website, http://www.vill.itsuki.lg.jp/komoriuta_kashi_mi.html, [accessed 25 February 2012].

However, the number of these songs (both composed and sung) diminished as the country went through rapid modernization. By the time World War II ended, the business of slavery was almost gone. The folk song *Akatonbo* (Example 28), which is one of the most well-known folksongs in Japan, is a good example of *Komori Uta*.

This is a translation of example 28.⁶⁸

Dragonflies, as red as sunset,
Back when I was young
In twilight skies, there on her back I'd ride. When the day was done
Mountain fields, in late November. Long ago it seems
Mulberry trees and treasures we would gather. Was it only just a dream?
Just fifteen, she went away one day. Married then so young
Like a sister, lost, I loved and missed her. Letters never seemed to come
Dragonflies, as red as sunset,
Back when I was young
Now in my eyes, when I see dragonflies. Tears are always sure to come

⁶⁸ Greg Irwin, http://www.edu.dhc.co.jp/fun_study/kotooha/kotonoh_a_vol._19_dragonflies/, [accessed 25 February 2012].

Example 28. Kousaku Yamada, arr Akira Miyoshi, *Akatonbo / Red Dragonfly*, mm. 1-9.

Akatonbo

Folk song

Kousaku Yamada
arr. Akira Miyoshi

The musical score is arranged for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 6. Dynamic markings include *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p* (piano), and *pp* (pianissimo). The lyrics are written below the vocal staves.

System 1 (Measures 1-5):

- Soprano:** *mp* yu - ya ke ko ya ke - mo
- Alto:** *mp* yu - ya ke ko ya ke - no
- Tenor:** *p* B.F. B.O.
- Bass:** *p* B.F.

System 2 (Measures 6-9):

- Soprano (S.):** *p* a ka ton n bo - *pp* o wa re te mi ta no - wa
- Alto (A.):** *p* a ka yo n bo - *pp* o wa re te mi ta no wa
- Tenor (T.):** *p* A ka to n bo - *pp* o wa re te mi ta no wa
- Bass (B.):** *p* a ka to n bo o wa re te o wa re te mi ta no wa

Warabe Uta (Children's songs) refer to songs passed down through children, and are usually defined as "songs sung while playing." Since these songs were passed to children by parents, many of these songs can (and were) used to learn how to count, pray, solve mathematical equations, learn proper grammar, or learn about culture. As such, most melodies use pentatonic scales and are quite simple to sing and learn. Most *Warabe Uta* seem to originate from 1603 – 1868, during the Tokugawa Period;⁶⁹ however, it is nearly impossible to identify specific composers for any of these tunes. *Warabe Uta* became popular and were often written or composed by common peasants across the country. As a result, many songs vanished with the decline of their popularity, while others survived and are still sung by children today in Japan.

Antagata Dokosa (Example 30) is a type of children's song, sung while playing with a *temari*, a rubber ball. This song was written sometime between the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate rule and the Meiji Era (roughly 1853 – 1912).⁷⁰ Although this song was initially thought to originate from the Kumamoto prefecture, modern researchers discovered evidence of the origin being in the Kanto area, the city of *Kawagoshi* in Saitama prefecture.⁷¹ It is believed that this song was born when the Revolutionary Army stopped by *Kawagoshi* city on their way to defeat the shogunate and kids struck a conversation with the soldiers.⁷²

⁶⁹ Koizumi, Humio, "The Research of Japanese Traditional Music," Ongaku No Tomo Sya, 2009, 325.

⁷⁰ Shimonaka Hiroshi, "Japanese Music Dictionary," Hei bon Sya, 1998, 56.

⁷¹ Ota Shinichirou, "Warabeuta," Fuji-syuppan, 1988. 10.

⁷² Ibid. 10.

This is a translation of example 30.

Where are you from?

From Higo

Where in Higo?

From Kumamoto

Where in Kumamoto?

From Senba

In the mountains of Senba

There is a raccoon

It was shot with a gun by a hunter

Who cooked it

Then roasted it

And ate it,

With leaves from a tree

He covered it.

Example 30. arr. Takatomi Nobubaga, *Antagata Dokosa*, mm. 1-6.

Antagata dokosa/ where are you from?

Children's song

Takatomi Nobunaga

The musical score is arranged in four systems. The first system includes Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass staves. The second system continues with Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass staves. The lyrics are: Soprano: Hi go sa; Alto: An ta ga ta do ko sa, hi go do ko sa; Tenor: (no lyrics); Bass: (no lyrics). Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) above the Soprano and Alto staves. The score uses a 4/4 time signature with a 2/4 and 3/4 time signature change in the second measure of each system. The Soprano part has a fermata over the first measure. The Alto part has a fermata over the first measure. The Tenor part has a fermata over the first measure. The Bass part has a fermata over the first measure. The Soprano part has a fermata over the first measure. The Alto part has a fermata over the first measure. The Tenor part has a fermata over the first measure. The Bass part has a fermata over the first measure.

As result Japanese folk songs were structured with either a regularly metered rhythm or a free rhythm and used one of five pentatonic scales. These musical patterns spread across the

island and were absorbed by people around the country, creating unique music that is sometimes difficult to explain in words, and even more difficult to translate its lyrics and musical aspects into English. Nevertheless, these folksongs lived on with the country's culture, surviving alongside foreign music as a definitive part of Japanese musical traditions.

CHAPTER 5. JAPANESE TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHORAL ART

The Japanese Choral Federation was established after World War II in 1948⁷³, and has made many contributions to Japanese choral music and its development. Although much of the resources and data prior to 1980 have been lost, the number of organizations has steadily increased.⁷⁴ The federation is made up of more than 5,000 organizations, each categorized into the following groups: junior, grades 1-12, university, workplace, general, and mothers.⁷⁵ Music plays a significant role in the lives of Japanese people, and choirs as well as wind bands make up the majority of musical activities, especially for elementary, junior high, and high school students. In Japan, general music is a part of mandatory education; however, wind band and extended choral activities are considered specialized music and part of extra curricular activities. Unlike the American extra curricular system where the choices for sports change with the seasons, the Japanese system usually allows a student to choose one activity for the entire academic year, including extended holidays. As a result, music remains an important part of its curriculum. Schools offer the choices of wind band, choir, orchestra, theater, and many other music ensembles outside of the school day for students wishing to pursue a deeper experience.

Perhaps the most significant contributor to the development of new choral music, and the steady rise in the quality/skills of choirs throughout the country, are the *concours* (competitions). Currently, the *All Japan Choir Concours* (sponsored by the Japanese Choral Federation) and the *Nippon Hosokai Choral Concours* exist as the two largest annual music functions in the country. Over 5,000 choirs from across the nation gather to compete in the *All Japan Choir*

⁷³ Tonoshita Tastuya, “*Japanese Choral History*,” Seikyusya, 2011, 126.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 126-127.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 126-127.

Concours. Although the *NHK Concours* started in 1948 as a competition for elementary school students, it currently holds divisions for all three school levels, with more than 2,300 schools competing every year.⁷⁶ Another contributor to the development of choral music is the abundance of commissions. In post-World War II Japan, a steady number of commissions for new choral music made by *concours* and numerous university choirs allowed Japanese composers to explore new possibilities of choral music while continuously pushing ensembles to attain a higher level of performance and artistry. Furthermore, recording companies began to take part in the classical music industry, bringing high quality recordings of choral music through televisions and records. In 1944, the Tokyo Broadcast Choir took form as an exclusive professional choir for a radio station, spreading high quality choral music throughout the country. In 1956, a professional choir comprised solely of voice students from the Tokyo National University of Arts was established, and is known today as the Tokyo Philharmonic Choral Ensemble, which boasts the highest level of choral tradition.⁷⁷ The Tokyo Philharmonic Choir Ensemble is recognized as the premiere choir in Japan, and commissions many pieces every year. This ensemble travels to numerous schools across the nation to spread the tradition of choral music and perform new pieces.

During the early twenty-first century, the Japanese choral tradition has been profoundly influenced by innovative composers and music conservatories. As a result, Japanese choral music has now fully accepted Western music traditions as its own. However, by utilizing the unique aspects of rhythm, tone, pulse, and colors of the Japanese language, new compositions that made all of the long tradition of Japanese music.

The elite Western music education offered by the Tokyo National Academy of Arts

⁷⁶ Tonoshita Tastuya, “*Japanese Choral History*,” Seikyusya, 2011, 126.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 126

created a new generation of Japanese composers. Toshiro Mayuzumi was one such composer who represents this new era of musicians. Mayuzumi was born in 1929 in Yokohama, and died in 1997. He studied at the Tokyo School of Music (the present Tokyo National Academy of Arts) and the Paris Conservatory.⁷⁸ Mayuzumi's *Symphony Nirvana*, (also known as the *Buddhist Cantata*) composed in 1958, is a revolutionary masterpiece that combined Buddhist music and Western music into a single music work.⁷⁹ *Symphony Nirvana* requires a large orchestra in three sections and a twelve-part men's choir, including six soloists. Two orchestral groups surround the audience, and the other orchestral group joins the choir and soloists on the stage. This symphonic work consists of six movements.⁸⁰

Movement 1: Campanology I

Movement 2: Suramgamah

Movement 3: Campanology II

Movement 4: Mahaprajñāparamita

Movement 5: Campanology III

Movement 6: Finale

In movements 1, 3, and 5, Mayuzumi explores the sound of bells using spectrum analysis and the resulting data to imitate/create the harmonic series of large bells with the orchestra. Movements 2, 4, and 6 incorporate Buddhist scripture readings and chants with orchestral sounds. Mayuzumi traveled throughout Kyoto listening to Buddhist chant readings; impressed by their

⁷⁸ Shimonaka Hiroshi, "Music Dictionary," Heibon-sya, 1989.

⁷⁹ Shimizu Yoshihiko, "On the Chorus of Nirvana Symphony with Special Reference to the Relationship with Buddhist Chants," Harmonia, Vol. 37, 16.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 16.

beautiful voices, Mayuzumi decided to incorporate sutra into this piece.⁸¹

Of the numerous styles of Buddhist chants, the composer chose to convey authenticity in movements 2 and 4 by frequent use of soloists, and adopting single-tone repetitions by the choir, as Mayuzumi was drawn to that particular sound when visiting temples (Example 31).

Example 31. Toshirou Mayuzumi, *Nehan Symphony*, mm. 7-9.

The image shows a musical score for four Bass staves. At the top left, there is a box containing the letter 'B' and the number '7', followed by the dynamic marking 'mf' and the tempo instruction 'Un poco piu animato'. The score is in 5/4 time. The first staff has lyrics underneath: 'na - m sa tan do su gya to ya'. The music consists of a series of quarter notes and rests, with a final measure containing a fermata. The four staves are arranged vertically, with the first staff at the top and the fourth at the bottom.

Moreover, he was fascinated by the vitality of sound created by mass sutra readings, as each monk would read scriptures on different intonations (slightly “out of tune”). Mayuzumi portrays this intensity in movement 2 by the frequent use of twelve-note cluster chords (Example 32).

⁸¹ Shimizu Yoshihiko, “On the Chorus of Nirvana Symphony with Special Reference to the Relationship with Buddhist Chants,” *Harmonia*, Vol. 37, 18.

Example 32, Toshirou Mayuzumi, *Nehan Symphony*.

Soprano
Su gya nan

Alto

Baritone

Bass

Bass

Bass

In 1959, when *Symphony Nirvana* was composed, the use of cluster chords seemed extremely contemporary and futuristic.⁸² It was not until the 1960s that cluster chords became more common in Japan.

An important figure involved in the unification of faith and chorus was Michio Mamiya. He was born in Hokkaido in 1926, and is one of the leading choral composers in Japan. He studied composition at the Tokyo National University of Arts, and has worked in a variety of genres such as orchestra, opera, chamber music, and choral works. In order to broaden his musicality, He studied Schoenberg, Bartok, Penderecki, jazz, and even traditional African

⁸² Shimizu Yoshihiko, “On the Chorus of *Nirvana Symphony* with Special Reference to the Relationship with Buddhist Chants,” *Harmonia*, Vol. 37, 20.

tunes,⁸³ before focusing his passion on Japanese music and language.⁸⁴ His works are frequently based on traditional folk songs that boast strong dialects and traditional scales (many pentatonic motifs). However, Mamiya believes that “music is not just about sound”⁸⁵ and had always been fascinated with curses and rituals as a form of modern contemporary music. He sought to bring out the power of rituals that created intense bonds between people in his musical works.⁸⁶

Premiered in 1971, Mamiya’s “Composition for Chorus No. 8” is one such choral work that was intended to convey the rituals of an ancient Japanese faith. The work requires three groups of choirs, each with a separate conductor. Each group sings completely different songs with different tempi and meters, starting and stopping as commanded. An altar is positioned on the center stage, and the choirs sing toward it as if to praise the gods, using phrases that incorporate screams, screeches, and prayers. This piece is a powerful depiction of the era in which sound was not yet music. Using sounds and noise as tools to communicate with the gods, this work creates the illusion of being in the presence of a ritualistic altar. Mamiya is known today as the leading musicologist in Japanese folk tunes. Through his original and innovative ideas, Mamiya has transformed folk tunes into beautiful choral masterpieces.

Touru Takemitsu is an internationally-acclaimed Japanese composer of the twentieth century. His compositions saw few boundaries, boasting works for piano, voice, choir, chamber ensembles, and even exploring electro-acoustic music and film scoring. Although he used contemporary harmonies and styles, Takemitsu’s music reaches a broad to all audience.

Takemitsu’s abilities are especially profound when writing orchestra works, and his orchestral suite *November Step*, commissioned by Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic. This

⁸³ Meguro Sansaku, “*Choral Dictionary*,” Ongaku No Tomo Sha Corp., Tokyo Japan, 1967, 268.

⁸⁴ Mamiya Michio, “*Contemporary Music*,” Iwanami Syoten, 1990, 27, 59, 91.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 3-6.

work successfully combined the composer's modernism with Japanese traditional instruments, and still enjoys high popularity.

Within the vast library of Takemitsu's compositions, there is a piece that arranged the song *Sakura* for a full choir. The melody for *Sakura* (Japanese for "cherry blossoms") was first composed for a beginner's manual for the Japanese *koto* (a traditional Japanese string instrument). Later in 1941, a set of lyrics were added to the melody and published, which became one of the most well known songs in Japan. The cherry blossom has always played an important role in Japanese culture, and is often mistaken as the national flower of the country due to its popularity and frequent uses in stories, songs, and legends. For the Japanese people, *Sakura* is a familiar flower that symbolizes the arrival of spring and beauty. Even when the petals fall to their death, it is often used in poems to personify a woman's life. This choral piece was premiered in 1979 by the Tokyo Philharmonic Choral Ensemble, and uses the *Miyakobushi onkai* mentioned earlier. The tempo is kept rather modest, and the melody emphasizes the downbeats throughout; which maybe the most popular characteristic of Japanese traditional music.

The choral suite *Sakura* opens with dissonant chords, multiple modulations, and somewhat disjunct rhythmic motives to symbolize the moment of blossoming (Example 34). Overall structures of the composition rely heavily on both homorhythm and imitation. While keeping the simplicity of the original tune, Takemitsu fuses it with modern harmonies, resulting in a highly original piece of wonderful artistry.

Example 34 Takemitsu Toru, *Sakura*, Schott JAPAN, 1994, 4, mm.1-8.


Sakura (Cherry Blossoms)

日本古謡
 武満 徹 編曲
 Traditional
 Arranged by Toru Takemitsu

Slowly espressivo (♩ = about 60)
gradually
div. *mp*
gradually close a mouth
ff *p* *dim.*
smorzando



Sop. *div.* *mp* *gradually* U
 Alt. *div.* *p* *mp* U
 Ten. *div.* *pp* U *gradually* A *ff* *p* *dim.* falsetto
 Bass *pp* *div.* U *gradually* A *ff* *p* *dim.*

Japanese choral music of the twentieth and twenty-first century is a culminating result of vast changes that occurred in Japanese music traditions for hundred of years. Original Japanese melodies along with Buddhist and western music traditions merged with cultural elements, although the incorporation of western music traditions was undoubtedly the strongest turning point for Japanese music. However, entering the twentieth century, musicians began to look towards traditional music for inspiration; rather than holding preference over one, musicians sought for equality of Western and Eastern aspects, further blending Japanese music traditions.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

Through its long history, Japanese traditional music went through multiple transformations, fusing with foreign arts and other influences. The first of these foreign influences came about in the form of Buddhist music, providing the basis for all Japanese music with its distinct scales, rhythms, and unison singing. As the music spread across the nation, the country saw the birth of countless new tunes, each having distinct characteristics defined by their regions of origin. Different lifestyles, cultures, geography, accents, and even weather all played a part in the development of forms and genres. With Western influences Japan further enriched its cultural diversity and developed its traditional folk songs. Passed down from one generation to the next, these songs can be heard in classrooms, playgrounds, or arranged in grand choral symphonies today. The Japanese tradition, folksongs and modern traditions are blended. Thereby producing contemporary Japanese choral music, the result of the intertwining of both Western and Eastern cultures.

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