

prerequisite for the existence of art music. According to Kikkawa/Gamō, this, in turn, results in the fact that classical Japanese art music places not so much emphasis on the aspect of artistic creation as on "performing (art) inside an organizational framework and in a systematized way".

3. *kyōshū* 教習 - "training, instruction"

The use of the word *geijutsu* ["art"] when speaking of types of music that were embedded in an organizational framework for passing on may appear - depending on what one's concept of "art" is - somewhat arbitrary. The above citations of Japanese scholars seem to imply that music not possessing such a framework cannot be called "artistic". This, however, is certainly not the case, and Hirano himself has often pointed out that the great "artistic" development of Japanese music in the course of the Tokugawa period took place in genres that were not embedded in a systematized framework (Hirano 1976b). Instead of focusing on the aspect "art" it may be preferable to view the question from the angle of "instruction". That is, there are pieces in the repertoire of classical Japanese music that are consciously and systematically taught - and thus form the core of the "art" - and others that are not.

Even if we concede that some not systematically taught pieces may sound "artistic", it is probable that pieces used for instruction have something particularly valuable about them, contain in a particularly concentrated way something that must be understood and mastered. Also, pieces used for instruction will very likely have been either composed, arranged or chosen with care and deliberation. Moreover, given the context mentioned above of the close-knit social unit with powerful means of control over the activity of its members, such pieces can be expected to be carefully handed down from generation to generation and retain their "correct" form over a long period of time. In a narrow sense, "art music" refers to this particular part of the overall repertoire.

A further aspect that characterizes Japanese "art music" is the emphasis laid on "self-training". Under the risk of exaggeration

one might even venture to say that music and art for "show" is little more than the showing of a highly perfected exercise in self-training - and not the result of self-training in order to perform a perfected show. (The content of the songs discussed below may be taken as evidence for this assumption.)

Self-training is done in an artistic way within the framework of *o-keiko*; *o-keiko* may be translated as "lessons", but in fact it stands closer to "training of all one's faculties in order to internalize one specific Way of art, following the guidance of one's master". As Kikkawa/Gamô point out (*Ōgaku daijiten* 1981-1983: 1742/3), in the Tokugawa period interest in music was not so much a matter of [doing] *kanshō* ["watching/listening in a relatively passive way and enjoying"] than far more a matter [of doing] something in the framework of *o-keiko*. This is especially true of the arts taught by blind masters that were performed within the context of a small gathering of people but were not designed to attract the masses.

Seen from the point of view of the master, passing on of his particular form of art and his particular tradition was (and is) as much a matter of serving an ideal as it was a matter of earning his living. To attract pupils and to permit them to enter step by step into the Way of the art in return for a certain sum of money were two basic aspects of the framework within which instruction took place. "Tradition" is thus inextricably tied up with the idea of steps a pupil is permitted to take and a sum of money - or some duty - he is obliged to offer the master and the group to which the master belongs, i.e. the "school".

4. The *Matsu no ha*, reflection of an established school of *shamisen* art

The theories concerning the origin of the *shamisen kumiuta* are, as discussed above, contradictory. It may be that the first *kumiuta* - the *Ryūkyū-gumi* - actually was composed by the legendary Ishimura Kengyō (died 1642), possibly the "inventor" of the *shamisen* as we know it today. Torazawa Kengyō (died 1654), his pupil, was in all probability a major contributor to the art of *shamisen kumiuta*, i.e. the composer of the majority

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of *honte-gumi*, and of the *hade-gumi*. However, the *Matsu no ha* gives the name of Yanagawa Kengyô (died 1680) as the composer of the 7 *hade-gumi*. (Yanagawa Kengyô might have been either a direct pupil of Ishimura Kengyô, together with Torazawa and Yamanoi Kengyô, or pupil of a certain Yamano Kengyô, he being pupil of Torazawa Kengyô, and he in turn of Ishimura Kengyô; Hirano 1982b: 10.)

If we now jump to the year 1703 we find a Yanagawa school of *shamisen* music and the publication of a very carefully arranged collection of song texts for this very school in form of the *Matsu no ha*. In other words, by the early 18th century *shamisen* music is organized into a repertoire for *kyôshû* ["training, instruction"], and the pieces are passed on as *dentô*, within "an organizational framework and in a systematized way".

Between this important publication and the date of composition of the first pieces for the *shamisen* lies a period where *shamisen* music fanned out across the country and became ever more diverse. This early *shamisen* music of course included *kumiuta*, but also various types of accompaniment for dance and story telling. In the latter field it soon came to be connected with *jôruri*, in which the stories were enacted by puppets. A large collection of texts of *jôruri* pieces can, by the way, be found in the *Matsu no ha*, while the *honte-gumi* themselves - especially their texts - show very clear traces of the connection between *shamisen* and dance. Furthermore, publications like the *Shichiku shoshin-shû* and *Shichiku taizen* make it seem very probable that the *shamisen* was also used in ensemble music, together with the *koto* and the flute *hitoyogiri* (32).

Of all this *shamisen* music, however, only the *kumiuta* (together with *nagauta*; see below) were meant for systematic instruction; whatever else someone may have taken pleasure in playing, the way of the art of proper - professional - *shamisen* music was the way of the *kumiuta*, taught only by the professional blind musician.

Already the *Ônusa* (1685) reflected this importance of the *kumiuta* for the tradition of *shamisen* music by classing them as follows (33):

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honte-gumi: *Ryūkyū-gumi, Shinobi-gumi, Ukiyo-gumi, Hinda-gumi, Fushō-gumi, Koshi-gumi, Tori-gumi* (=7 pieces)

hade-gumi: *Matsu ni gozare, Nagasaki, Fuji Gorō, Joya, Kuzu no ha, Kyō-ganoko, Kurofune, Hira ya Komatsu, Ishibiki, Hachimoji, Kanebiki, Hosori, Taki* (=13 pieces)

Secret pieces (whose texts are not presented): *Rangoya, Yurikan, Hayafune, Nayose-gumi, Sakai-gumi, Nakajima-gumi, Nanatsu ni naru ko* (=7 pieces).

In contrast to this early document the neat and balanced presentation of shamisen kumiuta in the *Matsu no ha* (1703) strongly suggests that at this stage the system of tradition was already, or just about to be, fully developed (Hirano 1983b). The repertoire of shamisen kumiuta presented in the *Matsu no ha* is as follows:

shamisen honte (compositions by Ishimura/Torazawa Kengyō (34)):
Ryūkyū-gumi (a), Tori-gumi (a), Koshi-gumi (a), Fushō-gumi (a), Hinda-gumi (b), Shinobi-gumi (a), Ukiyo-gumi (a) (=7 pieces)

hade (compositions by Yanagawa Kengyō (34)): *Matsu ni gozare (c), Kuzu no ha (c), Hira ya Komatsu (c), Nagasaki (c), Shimosa Hosori (c), Kyō-ganoko (c), Hade Katabachi* (=7 pieces)

ura-gumi (compositions by Yanagawa Kengyō):
Shizu, Nishikigi, Aoyagi, Hayafune (d), Yawata, Mitsu, Nayoshi (=7 pieces)

Secret pieces (text not given, but with indications at what point in the course of instruction they are to be inserted):

Yurikan (d), Rangoya (d), Nanatsu-go (d), Matsumushi, Asagi, Chawan, Sakai (d), Nakajima (d) (=8 pieces).

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- (a = text basically in the same form as in the *Ônusa*;
occasional variance in the subdivision of the text may
reflect a variance in the musical rendering
b = text differs slightly from the *Ônusa*
c = text differs strongly from the *Ônusa*
d = only the name given in the *Ônusa*)

By and large the arrangement found in the *Matsu no ha* proved to be the definite order and (textual) shape in which *shamisen kumiuta* were taught ever after in one of the two lines of tradition. In 1782 the *Uta Keizu* 歌系図 (35) shows us the following possible structures of the repertoire:

honte-gumi: same as *Matsu no ha*

hade: *Matsu ni gozare, Nagasaki, Hira ya Komatsu, Kyô-ganoko, Shimosa, Kurenai, Katabachi*

ura-gumi: the first 3 pieces of the *ura-gumi* in *Matsu no ha*

naka-yurushi ["middle certificate"]: *Hayafune, Yawata, Rangoya, Yurikan, Nayoshi, Rô sai*

ô-yurushi ["great certificate"]: *Nanatsu-go, Asagi, Chawan, Matsumushi, Seiran, Sakai, Nakajima.*

At the end of this list the *Uta keizu* points out that "the foregoing shows the sequence of *honte-gumi* (here used as a synonym for *kumiuta* in general) of the Nogawa school, the sequence of *kumiuta* of the Hayasaki school (36) being as indicated in the *Matsu no ha* (sic.)".

Before turning to the question of "schools" brought up by the quotation above a few remarks are necessary on the contents of the *Matsu no ha* as a whole and the relationship between the *shamisen kumiuta* and the other songs found in it.

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The *Matsu no ha* consists of five volumes with the following contents:

1. a) Foreword, b) the *shamisen kumiuta* texts, c) a list of the secret pieces
2. 50 *nagauta* song texts
3. 73 *hauta* song texts
4. 21 *azuma-jôruri* song texts
5. a) The texts of 100 *nagebushi*, b) a short account on the technique of singing to the play of the *shamisen* and the performance of *nagebushi*, c) a postscript.

nagauta and *hauta* require a more detailed discussion; *azuma-jôruri* and *nagebushi* are genres of songs for entertainment rooms (most likely in the pleasure district of Kyoto) en vogue in the second half of the 17th century, played and taught by the blind musicians as required.

5. *nagauta*

(Note: What is here called *nagauta* is not the well-known *nagauta* tradition of singing and *shamisen* playing that developed in conjunction with the *kabuki* theatre in Edo; the *nagauta* discussed here may be referred to as *Kamigata nagauta*, the *nagauta* of Kamigata, i.e. of the Kyoto/Osaka region.)

Considering the proportion of the various genres documented in the *Matsu no ha* it becomes clear that the *shamisen kumiuta* were not a type of song required and enjoyed by the music lover of the early 18th century. Other genres had developed and proliferated, no doubt principally in the entertainment saloons of the flourishing licensed quarters. There is no evidence, however, that any of these were used for training in the Way of the *shamisen* - that is, with the exception of *nagauta*.

As already noted previously, *nagauta* ["long songs"] derive their designation from their structure, not being an addition of "short songs" taken from various sources as is the case with *kumiuta*. To say that all *nagauta* possessed a clear, linear structure with a text running smoothly from beginning to end

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would, however, be an exaggeration. Many *nagauta* are structurally, and as regards content, just as heterogenous as the *kumiuta* and clearly show how pervasive the *kumiuta* principle was for the creation of song and music. Nevertheless, the inclusion of a fairly large number of songs that do have at least a relatively smooth and uniform structure, and above all only one distinct topic, results in the *nagauta* part of the *Matsu no ha* differing quite markedly in character from the *kumiuta* part.

The *Matsu no ha* contains 50 *nagauta*, of which 16 had already appeared in the *Ônusa* under the heading *shinkyoku* ["New Pieces"]. As Hirano points out (1975: 12-13 and 1984: 4) (37), mastery of the whole repertoire of *nagauta* was just as much a prerequisite for the professional blind musicians as mastery of the *kumiuta*. In contrast to the *kumiuta*, however, which constituted a body of music that by 1703 can be considered complete and at the same time formed the basis for instruction of all *shamisen* masters, the *nagauta* repertoire was continuously expanded throughout the 18th century (*Uta keizu*, 1782, lists already 110 pieces) and always showed major divergencies from school to school. Also, it is not without interest to note that whereas the *shamisen kumiuta* all originated in the Kyoto/Osaka region, the composers of *nagauta* were in part masters in Edo.

6. *hauta*

(Note: What is here called *hauta* is not to be confused with the tradition of short songs that flourished in Edo during the 19th century known by the same name.)

The third of the 5 parts of the *Matsu no ha* is a collection of *hauta*, mainly short songs popular at the time in entertainment quarters, pleasure districts, "restaurants" and places of gathering. In contrast to the *kumiuta* and *nagauta*, *hauta* are not necessarily compositions by blind professional masters, and they never formed part of the systematic process of instruction in the Way of the *shamisen*. Hirano (1975: 13 and 1967b: 138) takes the word *hauta* - which appears for the first time in a song

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collection around 1660 - to be derived from *ha* 端 in the sense of "odds and ends" + *uta* ["song"], i.e. "various other little songs (for the *shamisen*)".

The *Matsu no ha* contains a total of 73 *hauta*, divided into three groups according to the three basic tunings of the *shamisen*; moreover, from the arrangement of the texts it can be seen that nearly all of these *hauta* have two or more alternate wordings that could be sung to the same melody.

A more detailed discussion of the *hauta* must be left for another occasion. Suffice it to say that the various kinds of song in the *Matsu no ha* clearly show how formation was taking place of types of *shamisen* music which differed considerably from the *kumiuta*, a genre that by 1700 must have had a classical aura and almost certainly did not form part of the musical "hit-parades" of the time.

In spite of the proliferation of other genres the *shamisen kumiuta* retained their position as the "old testament" of *shamisen* music throughout the Tokugawa period. Our understanding of how this was possible may be furthered if we consider the activities of the blind masters as taking place in three spheres (Hirano 1967b: 141-142): 1) entertainment saloon, 2) theatre, and 3) "passing on of the proper tradition from professional master to professional master". Concerning the first and second spheres, both numerous illustrations as well as references in contemporary literature prove that the blind masters served as teachers of entertainment girls. In addition, the *Matsu no ha* itself contains songs of the theatre world that formed part of the repertoire of the blind musicians; in fact, Genroku era theatre music today survives entirely thanks to its having been integrated into the repertoire of blind masters who passed it on in the form of "by the way" pieces.

The *shamisen kumiuta* were almost certainly taught also to entertainment girls, but their principle function may be described as the backbone of the third sphere, that is, the steps to be climbed in order to become a master of the Way, this Way being represented and controlled by a specific group of persons linked within a strict ranking system.

7. *ryū-ha* 流派 - "school and faction"

The correct procedure for advancing on the Way of Japanese music is to learn a certain repertoire in a fixed sequence and receive at regular intervals a certificate stating that a certain level of mastery has been achieved and therefore the next step may be undertaken. In other words, "proper" music is embedded in a system of control from masters who are ahead on the Way, are empowered to issue the sought certificates, and grant insight into secrets that must be known if one aspires to true mastership. This system of control has the idealistic aspect of guiding the neophyte along a path of enlightenment and enabling him or her to gain insight into the spiritual values contained within the art.

The other aspect of such a system of control is of course a materialistic one, that is, the certificates must be issued, names must be conferred upon new masters, money must be collected and savings administered. The importance of this last point cannot be underestimated if we remember that in the Tokugawa period the blind musicians were required to earn their living while making use of their traditional, centuries-old guild structure as the framework that guaranteed and controlled proper distribution of wealth (38).

Such an organization of artistic activity, based in part on spiritual, in part on distinctly materialistic guidelines and forming a channel for the exertion of influence as well as intake of money to be used for and within the Guild of Blind Persons, is referred to as a (musical) *ryū*. *ryū* literally means "flowing", hence also "a mode, way, fashion, manner, style", and it is normally, for want of a better term and when used in the context of the arts, translated as "school" (39).

In present-day Japanese, when speaking of the system of "schools" in the above sense, the term *ryū-ha* is common, *ha* standing for "group, faction". In other words, it is taken as a natural development that every "school" is in itself again structured and divided into separate arms caring in part for themselves, and in part for the organization of which it forms one element. According to Hirano (1983a: 4) the existence of

ryū-ha is concomittant with the existence of art music in Japan, art music being - as explained above - dependent on an organizational framework, this appearing as a *ryū* ["school"], and this again splitting into *ha* ["groups, factions"].

To return to the *shamisen kumiuta*, these (and eventually also *shamisen nagauta*) are the means by which a *ryū* of *shamisen* playing confers the secrets of the art upon those who wish to learn them, and by which it in return earns money for the favour of doing so.

Concerning the *Matsu no ha*, Hirano is certain that this so carefully edited collection of song texts was published in order to establish the authority of a *ryū* of *shamisen* playing in the face of competition from another *ryū* (Hirano 1983a: 5-8, Hirano 1984: 4-5). The two *ryū* involved are the *Nogawa-ryū* in Osaka and the *Yanagawa-ryū* in Kyoto, the only two *ryū* of *shamisen* playing that can be termed "authentic", i.e. passed on within the framework of the Guild of Blind Persons. (This does not mean, however, that later traditions, both in the context of chamber music as well as theatrical performances in entertainment districts, did not achieve the highest degree of artistic perfection and also develop their own *ryū-ha*). Both the *Nogawa-ryū* and the *Yanagawa-ryū* still exist today, though no longer as part of the Guild of Blind Persons, which was abolished in 1871. Thanks to the rigid structure of the tradition of these 2 *ryū*, however, the *shamisen kumiuta* (and a few *nagauta*) have survived for us to savour some 300 years or more after they were composed. Unfortunately, the full *kumiuta* repertoire is only known to masters of the *Nogawa-ryū*, while in the *Yanagawa-ryū* merely 6 *kumiuta* have survived (40).

At the time the *Matsu no ha* was published Yanagawa Kengyō, after whom the *Yanagawa-ryū* is named, had already been dead for 23 years; Yanagawa Kengyō is usually credited with the composition of two thirds of the *shamisen kumiuta* and, according to the *Genkyoku taishin-shō* (41), may have played a decisive role in transforming the *kumiuta* into what they are known to be today. It was Nogawa Kengyō (died 1717), however, a grand-pupil of Yanagawa Kengyō, who must have spread the young tradition with particular fervour throughout Osaka during the late 17th century. In the face of this development the appearance of the

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Matsu no ha, which clearly states that it wishes to reflect the tradition of Yanagawa Kengyô, substantiates the hypothesis that its author is trying to emphasize a tradition different from the one flourishing in Osaka. Hirano (1984: 4) maintains that this tradition of Yanagawa Kengyô, which at the time was centered around Hayazaki Kôtô (died 1717) (42), presumably saw itself as nothing less than the orthodox tradition.

Hirano substantiates his contention by pointing out that already the *Shichiku shoshin-shû* and the *Ônusa* refer to the art of *shamisen* music as *Yanagawa-ryû* (43). In other words, the Kyoto tradition possessed or assumed for itself the traditional *ryû* name of *shamisen* music. In this connection it is interesting to note that the *Nogawa-ryû*, perhaps so as not to feel belittled, refused to call the Kyoto tradition *Yanagawa-ryû* and instead spoke of *Hayasaki-ryû*. Moreover, the *Nogawa-ryû* naturally teaches several compositions by Nogawa Kengyô, while on the other hand the *Matsu no ha*, trying to reflect a tradition of its own, includes only one single work by Nogawa Kengyô.

Some final evidence for the fact that the *Matsu no ha* was intent on establishing an orthodox tradition may be gleaned from its foreword. This gives a careful and detailed account of the masters involved in creating the art of *shamisen* playing and handing it down to the present times. However, the existence of Nogawa Kengyô is not mentioned with a single word.

8. List of *shamisen kumiuta* compositions

(Note: = indicates both identity as well as correspondence with some variations)

<i>Yanagawa-ryû</i>	<i>Nogawa-ryû</i>
* <i>Ryûkyû-gumi</i>	=
<i>Tori-gumi</i>	=
<i>Koshi-gumi</i>	=