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Sumiyoshi, Enoshima and Yoshino – On the function of *meisho* in traditional Japanese music

1. Introduction

The majority of songs composed in the late 18th and early 19th century in Edo in order to establish a tradition of music for the thirteen-stringed cithern (*koto*) there take the player – who is at the same time also the singer of a text – on an imaginary journey, as a rule to some famous place. The *koto* had been known in Edo already long before the composition of these songs, but the pieces played and sung were mostly shorter or more fragmentary in style, reflecting the taste of the Kyôto/Ôsaka region. It was only after the blind musician Yamada Kengyô (1757–1817) created a relatively large repertoire of pieces to be used as a basis for the issue of certificates that Edo established its own proper tradition of *koto* music.¹

With regard to the various styles of *koto* music found in Japan we may quickly remark how elaborate the majority of pieces by Yamada Kengyô are, particularly his 7 compositions for the training of mastership on the intermediate level, and 4 compositions for training of mastership on the highest level. As I said, these works take us – in a way that not infrequently reminds us of a *Nô* play – on a journey, often to a specific temple or shrine. However, what still today puzzles both players as well as scholars who have endeavored to explain and comment upon the song text, is the fact that the songs do not move smoothly from a beginning to an end, from the first mentioning of a famous place as a goal to the point where the text implies that the goal has been reached. Rather, the pieces are structured in the form of a sequence of short episodes, a sequence whose inner logic at first sight appears inexplicable.

Not only the text, but also the music (rhythm, speed, style, tonal range etc.) is characterized by jumps and ruptures. This fact leads us to speculate on the deeper implications of the famous and beautiful place we arrive at the end of the song. Why is this place reached only after so many jumps and apparently quite unre-

¹ See for instance: Ackermann, Peter: *Studien zur Koto-Musik von Edo*. Kassel, Basel etc. (Bärenreiter). *Studien zur traditionellen Musik Japans*, Vol. 6, 1986. Relatively detailed studies on the *koto* music of Edo are: Hirano, Kenji: *Yamada-ryû sôkyoku – Nakanoshima Kin'ichi zenshû. Kotenben*. Tokyo (Victor) SJL 1–6, 1972. Hirano, Kenji: *Yamada Kengyô-shû*. Tokyo (CBS Sony) OOAG 384–388, 1978.

lated and haphazard episodes? In what way is the goal really of importance for the whole piece? How are the individual episodes related to each other and to a possible overall meaning of the piece? Is there anything that might give us a clue as to how movement through nature and reaching the goal may have been understood by those who created and played the pieces some 150–200 years ago?

It is impossible in this short paper to even attempt a detailed discussion of the form and content of the *koto* music of Edo as it took shape under the influence of Yamada Kengyô. Bearing in mind the questions posed above I will therefore limit my discussion to the presentation and a short discussion of possible deeper meanings of three pieces by Yamada Kengyô, namely, *Sumiyoshi*, *Sakuragari* and *Enoshima no kyoku*. (Concerning the translation I must stress that I have, in view of a discussion of the pieces, intentionally retained the jumps and the apparently strange logic of the original.)

2. Examples

Sumiyoshi

(Text first published in 1800)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 <i>Issen-nen no iro wa yuki no uchi ni</i> | the colour of the pine, that lasts a thousand years, in snow it is especially deep, today we come with a deep-felt wish |
| 2 <i>fukaki negai mo kyô koso wa</i> | from far away in traveller's robes |
| 3 <i>harubaru kinuru tabigoromo</i> | the sun is shining brightly, clear the sky |
| 4 <i>hi mo uraraka ni yomo no sora</i> | as the mists rise up around, till yesterday |
| 5 <i>kasumi ni keru na kinô made</i> | it could be seen above the waves, Awajishima |
| 6 <i>namima ni mieshi Awajishima</i> | Aokigahara we remember too |
| 7 <i>Aokigahara mo omoiyaru</i> | and then: the shrine – what a refreshing sight |
| 8 <i>ge ni hiromae no sugasugashi</i> | where the beams on the gable cross |
| 9 <i>katasogi no</i> | frost has settled many times |
| 10 <i>yukiai no shimo no ikukaeri</i> | the Sumiyoshi deity, it ties the knot between man and woman |
| 11 <i>chigiri ya musubu Sumiyoshi no</i> | but that its pines consider me I doubt |
| 12 <i>matsu no omowamu koto no ha no</i> | |

- 13 *waga mi ni hazuru shikishima no* I am ashamed at being so poor at poetry
 14 *Michi o mamori no kami nareba* – the Sumiyoshi deity is guardian of this Way –
 15 *shiki no nagame no sono ue ni* the four seasons are already hard
 16 *koi wa kotosara nandai gachi ni* not to speak of poems of love
 17 *yometa yô demo yomi-ôsurezu* you think you have succeeded and yet this is not so
 18 *teniha chigai ni kokoro o tsukushi* I try so hard to get the rules of grammar right
 19 *takai mo hikui mo ayumi o bakobu* high and low the ranks of those who make their way
 20 *naka oshiteru ya naniwame no* to shining Naniwa where maidens
 21 *yoshiashi to naku karisome ni* of all kinds lightheartedly
 22 *utô hitofushi miyabi naru* sing a tune with graceful charm
 23 *wasuregai to no na wa soragoto yo* the forgetting-shell – it's just illusion
 24 *ôte wakarete sono nochi wa* meeting, parting, and after that
 25 *mata no hanami o tanoshimi ni* looking forward to blossom viewing once again
 26 *hikazu kazoete omoidasu* one counts the days, remembering
 27 *wasuregusa to no na wa itsuwari* the forgetting-grass – it's just a cheat
 yo
 28 *shigerite karete sorekara wa* sprouting, withering, and after that
 29 *nochi no tsukimi o tanoshimi ni* looking forward to moon viewing once again
 30 *yowa o tsumitsutsu omoidasu* night for night, remembering
 31 *haru ya aki* spring and autumn
 32 *sono kami-yo ni hikaru kimi* in ancient times the Shining Prince came in thankfulness
 33 *go-gan hatashi no yosooi no* to the shrine that had fulfilled his wishes
 34 *ima ni taesezu oku wa nao* still today the people come, beautifully adorned, to the interior precincts
 35 *fukamidori naru sono naka ni* where the green is of an even deeper colour
 36 *hana ya momiji o hitotoki ni* cherry blossom, autumn foliage, all at once
 37 *kokichirashitaru nigiwai wa* all intermixed, a bustling scene
 38 *fude mo kotoba mo oyobinaki* that neither brush nor words can ever render

39	<i>orishimo tsuki no ideshio ni</i>	just at this time the moon appears the tide comes flowing in
40	<i>tsurete fukikuru matsukaze no</i>	and with it the wind starts blowing through the pines
41	<i>tsurete fukikuru matsukaze no</i>	and with it the wind starts blowing through the pines
42	<i>kayô wa koto no negai mo mitsu ya</i>	what we can hear are koto-sounds, the wish that they express will be fulfilled
43	<i>yotsu no yashiro no on-megumi</i>	the blessings of the sanctuaries of the Sumiyoshi shrine
44	<i>nao iku-chiyo mo kagiri naki</i>	will never cease for endless gener- ations
45	<i>michi no sakae to shuku-shikeri</i>	and so this Way shall always flourish
46	<i>michi no sakae to shuku-shikeri</i>	and so this Way shall always flourish

Line 7: Aokigahara is a place-name referring to where, according to legend, the Sumiyoshi deities originated; line 9: *katasogi* refers to a special form of the beams on the (shrine) gable; the element *kata* in this word can probably be associated with the meaning „one-sided“, „only one, where there should be two“; line 15: probably „the four seasons“ implies a reference to the first category of poems in a collection with a classical structure; after poems on the four seasons follow poems on other topics such as love etc.; line 32: the Shining Prince is, of course, Prince Genji; this passage refers to Genji's return from banishment, and to the fact that he can take the Lady of Akashi to the palace as his concubine; the name of the piece itself and the goal reached at the end, Sumiyoshi, implies „living in a happy state“; *Sumiyoshi* can be associated with the two famous pines of Takasago and Sumiyoshi, i. e. with the idea of two separate entities forming one whole.

Explanatory notes:

The most conspicuous jumps and changes of atmosphere in *Sumiyoshi* occur at the end of line 8, in the course of lines 18 to 22, and at the end of line 31. These positions are also marked by purely instrumental passages („intermezzos“).

If we take these intermezzos to be subdividing and thus structuring the text, then the last, and by far the most elaborate, intermezzo obviously has another function, being inserted between the words *tsurete* (translated as „with it“) and *fukikuru* („comes/starts blowing“) in line 41. Here I just wish to point to this fact, a discussion will follow when comparing the other two songs with *Sumiyoshi*.

Style and tone colour are further – interrelated – aspects I wish to draw attention to: After what can be classified as an introduction there follows, in line 9, a very tense style of singing, centering on tones that, on the instrument, are higher than „normal“ ones and must be produced by means of a special technique of pressing down the strings. This technique leads to a more muffled, somewhat

strained colour. From line 23 onwards we come to the rather surprising style of something like a folk song, characterized by a playful melody and by a kind of „rondo“ form of the text (lines 23 to 26 correspond to lines 27 to 30).

After line 31 the style changes very abruptly and – on the musical level – becomes something close to recitation. Then we have further change as the piece approaches both a musical and textual climax in lines 35 to 41. The recitational style loses itself again as we return to a more musical atmosphere, but now the rhythm becomes extremely free as the text deals more and more with images of a mystic nature. Moreover, the melody suddenly begins to revolve around a tone that has not yet appeared in the piece so far, namely the fifth above the ground note, a tone that has a very sonorous and impressive quality when plucked on the instrument. As mentioned, this part of the piece also contains the long intermezzo that does not have a subdividing function but is certainly a very elaborate illustration of the wind in the pines (and all that this image stands for). Finally, lines 42 onwards constitute the end of the piece, the sonorous, vibrating fifth appearing once again on the word *sakae* („flourish, prosper“).

Though we still may not understand why a piece like *Sumiyoshi* is composed the way it is, what role is played by the Sumiyoshi shrine, and what relationship may exist between this shrine and the contents referred to in the other parts of the same song, it is important to note here that other pieces of the same repertoire are composed in largely the same fashion and possess the same idiosyncrasies. This, of course, implies that there is a specific plan underlying these pieces.

Let us therefore take a look at a second piece in the same repertoire, *Sakuragari*. No concrete place name is mentioned in this song, but the allusions in the center part of the piece (lines 16 to 23) to both the *Ise monogatari* (Episode no. 99/*Kokin Waka-shū* poem no. 476/477) and the *Nô* play *Ukon* suggest a journey to the Tenmangû shrine in Kitano, Kyôto. Moreover, the closeness of this center part to the *Nô* play *Yoshino Tennin*, as well as the atmosphere towards the end of *Sakuragari*, strongly suggests also an association with Yoshino as a place for some mystic experience.

Sakuragari

(„Cherry-blossom viewing“, text first published in 1800)

1 <i>nodoka naru</i>	peaceful
2 <i>koromo kisaragi oshinabete</i>	this time of year, still cold, the Second Month

- 3 *miwatasu yama mo uchikeburi* looking round we see the hills all
veiled in mist
- 4 *yanagi no ito no asamidori* the light green threads of willow trees
5 *haru no nishiki ka ayanaku mo* are a part of springtime's brocade
which knows no sharp contours
- 6 *miyako ni shiranu shirakumo no* unknown in the capital, the white
clouds
- 7 *tateru ya shirube sakuragari* rising high, where they are we want to
go, to cherry-blossom viewing
- 8 *bito no kokoro mo akogaruru* also a human heart is drawn
9 *sora o misutete koshiji ni wa* leaving these skies and flying north
10 *matsuramu mono o yuku kari no* where someone is awaiting them, the
geese
- 11 *kaoru* their fragrant
12 *kaoru tsubasa wa kumo ni kie* fragrant wings, in the clouds they van-
ish
- 13 *koe wa aware ni kikoyu nari* their cries sound plaintive to my ear
14 *yukue shitaite tachidomari* I watch them go, stand still
15 *nagori wa shibashi wasurenedo* while memories still linger on, one
can't forget
- 16 *hatsuhana-guruma meguru hi no* the carriages for viewing the first
cherry-blossoms go around
- 17 *nagae tsuranete mizu mo arazu* the day going by is long, as the long
shafts one by one, pass by, not hidden
and yet not disclosed
- 18 *mi mo senu hito ya hana no tomo* friends of the cherry-blossom viewing
19 *shiru mo shiranu mo hana no kage* not acquainted and yet not unac-
quainted
- 20 *aiyadori shite suga no ne no* under the blossoms, passing time to-
gether
- 21 *nagaki haruhi mo itazura ni* one whole long day in spring – long
like the root of sedge –
- 22 *hikazu sugoshite hanagoromo* being idle, letting time go by, all
dressed in blossoms
- 23 *nareshi tamoto mo ka ni somite* the sleeve I'm used to now is fragrant
through and through
- 24 *nobe mo yamabe mo hana yue ni* the fields, the hills, all full of blossoms
25 *itaranu kuma wa nakeredomo* not a corner that they have not re-
ached
- 26 *yama no* down the mountain

- 27 *yama no iwane o tomete otsuru* down the mountain's rocky slopes the
waterfall comes rushing
- 28 *chisuji momosuji Saohime no* in a hundred, in a thousand threads,
guided by the spring goddess, by
Saohime's hands
- 29 *tebiki no ito no taki nakuba* were it not there
- 30 *taorite yukamu iriai no* one would pick a twig and take it
home before
- 31 *kane yori saki ni haru-gasumi* the evening bell had sounded, you
mists of spring
- 32 *tachi na kakushi so kaze wa fuku* do not rise and hide the blossoms,
to mo even though the wind will blow

Explanatory notes:

Like *Sumiyoshi*, *Sakuragari* too is characterized by several abrupt changes of atmosphere. The first such change occurs after the introduction at the end of line 8. Again there follows a passage with a very tense atmosphere, dealing with a hard-to-bear situation. In accordance with the contents of the text, and by making use of the same techniques as *Sumiyoshi*, the tone-colour becomes clearly less „round“ and more strained than in the introduction.

Again like in *Sumiyoshi*, there then follows a passage that may be termed „playful“, lines 16 to 23 being quickly recognizable as referring to poems in the *Ise Monogatari* and the description of an enjoyable day out as found in the *Nô* pieces *Ukon* and *Yoshino Tennin* (both drawing upon passages taken from the *Ise monogatari*).

This „playful“ part soon leads into a section characterized – as in *Sumiyoshi* – by a mystic atmosphere created by forces of nature. These forces appear in *Sakuragari* both in form of textual passages as well as in form of an extremely long purely instrumental intermezzo at the end of line 27.

Turning now to the third example, *Enoshima no kyoku*, it seems quite possible that this song will give us a key to understand what constitutes the basic aim of the tradition of *koto* music in Edo as it was established by Yamada Kengyô. Apart from the fact that the existence of *Enoshima no kyoku* can be traced back as far as the 1770s, the topics touched upon in this piece, as well as the implications of a visit to Myôon Bosatsu (the Bodhisattva of Beautiful Sound) on the Island of Enoshima², could easily indicate fundamental aspects of the life and

2 See also: Fritsch, Ingrid: *Japans blinde Sânger*. München (Iudicium) 1996.

work of a *kengyô* (a blind master of the highest rank), and of what a *kengyô* had to teach and transmit in society. Accordingly, Japanese scholars tend to look upon *Enoshima no kyoku* as the prototype piece of Edo *koto* music.

Enoshima no kyoku

(Composed approx. 1777, text first published in 1800)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 <i>haru sugite</i> | spring has passed |
| 2 <i>ima zo hajime no natsugoromo</i> | the time is here to put on summer wear |
| 3 <i>karoki tamoto ga ura-kaze ni</i> | light sleeves, turned by the seabreeze |
| 4 <i>shinado no oite soyo-soyo to</i> | favourable winds, gently blowing |
| 5 <i>fukuju en'man kagiri naki</i> | may life be long and happy without |
| | bounds, just like the sea |
| 6 <i>chikai no umi no sore narade</i> | so limitless is Buddha's vow not <i>that</i> |
| | but this sea here: |
| 7 <i>hikata to nareba ito yasuku</i> | when the tide is low we easily |
| 8 <i>ayumi o hakobu Enoshima no</i> | can make our way to Enoshima |
| 9 <i>e ni mo oyobanu nagame kana</i> | what a lovely sight, surpassing any- |
| | thing, that we can picture |
| 10 <i>mizu wa yama no kage o fukumi</i> | water contains the image of the moun- |
| | tain |
| 11 <i>yama wa mizu no kokoro ni</i> | the mountain gives itself to the will of |
| makasu | the water |
| 12 <i>shinsen no iwaya</i> | the mountain hermit's cave |
| 13 <i>na ni kikoetaru Hôraidô</i> | is that of famous Hôrai, the isle of |
| | neverending youth |
| 14 <i>sobadatsu iwane gaga toshite</i> | rocks rising majestically |
| 15 <i>zui'en shinnyo no nami no koe</i> | waves that speak of Eternal Truth |
| 16 <i>kokoro mo sumeru orikara ni</i> | the heart feels clear, and then |
| 17 <i>ama no kodomo no uchi-murete</i> | the fisher-maiden gather |
| 18 <i>sonare kouta mo kai-zukushi</i> | used to life upon the beach they sing |
| | the song of sea-shells |
| 19 <i>kimi ga sugata o misomete somete</i> | when first I saw you, I fell, I fell in love |
| 20 <i>hiku sodegai o furiharô</i> | pulling your sleeve – the sleeve-shell – |
| | I shook you off |
| 21 <i>koi wa awabi no kata-omoi</i> | love is like the ear-shell, is one-sided |
| 22 <i>adashi adanami sakuragai</i> | fickle, false waves – the cherry-blos- |
| | som-shell |
| 23 <i>ume no hanagai sono mi wa sui na</i> | plum-blossom-shells, their flesh is |
| | sour |

- 24 *sui na sugai wa otoko no kokoro* smart and stylish the vinegar-shell the
young lad's heart
- 25 *kochi wa himegai hitosuji na* but here's a princess-shell, intent and
earnest
- 26 *onna-gokoro wa sô ja nai wai na* a young girl's heart, yes, surely! to
meet and spend a night of love
- 27 *itsuka ôse no tokofushi ni* we come together, cannot part, just
like the clam-shell
- 28 *ôte hanarenu hamaguri no*
29 *sono tsuki-hi-gai mate-gai to* waiting for its thrust, the shell of
moon and sun, do wait! – a waiting-
shell
- 30 *iu o tanomi no imosegai* these are its hopes: a man-and-
woman-shell
- 31 *utô hitofushi koi no umi* the little song, a sea of longing
- 32 *ka no Fukazawa no akuryô mo* that wicked dragon of Fukazawa, it
too was helped
- 33 *tae naru tennyo no shintoku ni* and through the virtue of the heavenly
maiden
- 34 *tachimachi ichinen hokki shite* instantly, with firm determination,
entered upon Buddha's path
- 35 *nagaku chikai o Tatsu-no-Guchi* it vowed to do no harm henceforth
and turned into the deity of Tatsu-no-
Guchi
- 36 *mukashi no ato o zo todomekeru* thus still before us we can see what
happened here in days long past
- 37 *iku chiyo mo* eternally, ten thousand generations
- 38 *tsukiseji tsukiji kono shima no* never will it cease to blow, upon this
island
- 39 *isoyama matsu o fuku kaze* with its shores and rocks, the wind in
the pines
- 40 *iwane o yosuru nami made mo* even the waves that pound the cliffs
- 41 *sanagara Kafûraku* sound like the ancient piece Kafû-
raku – the piece of winds in harmony
- 42 *Seigaiha o sô-su nari* they play the music of Seigaiha – the
piece of Waves in the Blue Sea –
- 43 *kotowari nareya na ni shi ô* of course that's so: as Myôon Bosatsu
- 44 *Myôon Bosatsu no shirabe no ito* – the Bodhisattva of the Art of Music –
plucks her lute
- 45 *nagaku tsutaete fuki jizai* its tune is carried on forever, be-
stowing riches, honours, inner free-
dom

46 <i>jumyô chôkyû han'ei o</i>	longevity, prosperity
47 <i>mamorase-tamô on-kami no</i>	the goddess will protect
48 <i>hiroki megumi zo arigataki</i>	for her bounteous favours we are grateful
49 <i>hiroki megumi zo arigataki</i>	for her bounteous favours we are grateful

Explanatory notes:

The separate parts that make up *Enoshima no kyoku* are distinguished to an even higher degree than in *Sumiyoshi* and *Sakuragari* by very abrupt changes of atmosphere and singing style, the latter becoming more or less spoken recitation where facts and legends are recounted. Like in the other two pieces, we again have a „playful“ center part, this time two verses of a *kai-zukushi* (sea-shell enumerating) song. Also the sudden switch from the recounting of an event or legend (lines 32 to 36) to a mystic scene marked by a show of nature's forces (lines 37 to 42) is in line with the other pieces. Though *Enoshima no kyoku* does not include a lengthy intermezzo towards the end, it does have a stylistically very marked instrumental illustration of what the two ancient Chinese pieces *Kafû-raku* and *Seigaiha* might have sounded like.

In this „prototype“ piece *Enoshima no kyoku* it seems to me particularly important to stress the careful use made of the sonorous tone a fifth above the ground note. Here this tone may be said to illustrate key concepts in the song, namely: *shinsen* – the (Taoist) adept, who has gained a certain „superior“ physical and mental state; *tae naru* – exquisite, charming, „heavenly“ (line 33); *fuku kaze* – wind blowing (line 39); and the terms *nagaku tsutaete* – carried on forever (line 45); *jumyô chôkyû* – longevity (line 46) and *hiroki* – wide, bounteous (line 49).

3. Conclusions

At this point I must make it clear that we have neither any documented discussions of the principles that underlie the specific structure of pieces like *Sumiyoshi*, *Sakuragari* or *Enoshima no kyoku*, nor has it ever been possible for me to obtain any information on this matter in direct conversation with Japanese musicians or scholars. As a rule, scholarly editions of the song texts concentrate merely on giving references to where this or that textual element within a song was presumably taken from.³

³ I have discussed this point in more detail in: *Die ‚innige‘ Beziehung der Japaner zur Natur.*

If we look at the three songs together it appears to me possible to see in them a sequence of steps a singer/player – in some way following teachings or principles of a *shinsen* – undertakes, thereby going through a clear-cut set of differing emotions. Basically, this emotional progress moves from worry and lament to a „playful“ atmosphere, and then on to a deeper level, where mystic forces of nature are experienced. This succession of steps finally leads to a state where „riches, honours, inner freedom, longevity and prosperity“ (*Enoshima no kyoku*, lines 45–46) can be enjoyed.

Externally, these steps are visualized by means of a concrete journey to places that are often clearly identifiable, such as Sumiyoshi or Enoshima. There is reason to believe, though it cannot be proved, that at these clearly identifiable places a person could actually expect to be helped to overcome problems and negative feelings.

If we take *Enoshima no kyoku* to be a kind of „prototype“ song, then we may assume that the emotional steps the singer/player is made to take on his or her inward journey (and probably also stimulated to take in reality) are roughly as follows:

Step 1:

Visualization of a journey, as a rule to some famous place noted for a positive atmosphere that can cure physical and mental problems.

Step 2:

Enoshima no kyoku brings up the idea of opposites becoming one, and refers to basic elements of belief in attaining longevity. In the other two pieces this principle of opposites merging into one is probably presumed, the actual text limiting itself to the problem that the merging of opposites is in reality often not possible. Accordingly, step 2 in these pieces makes use of stylistic devices that create a tense, „problematic“ mood, contrasting sharply with the positive mood of step 1.

Step 3:

The mood of this step again stands in contrast to that of step 2. In all three songs this is the most „playful“ step, dealing with this-worldly enjoyment. In *Sakuragari* the textual style at this point remains classical, whereas in the other two pieces we find a sharp switch also of textual style, from classical to a kind of „folk song style“. Among the particularly striking features of step 3 are also a

pronounced erotic atmosphere, as well as realism with regard to the cycle of growth and decay (meeting and parting, spring and autumn). I would go so far as to maintain that in this part of the song the singer is confronted with a basic principle of real life, that is, transitoriness and evanescence.

Step 4:

The atmosphere of step 3 is, at least in *Sumiyoshi* and *Enoshima no kyoku*, very abruptly swept away. These two songs specifically mention the fact that, as we can learn from past events and legends connected with the famous place the song is dealing with, human beings can indeed be led to a state of inner happiness and freedom beyond the transitory pleasures described in step 3. Step 4 thus appears as the start of a journey into a dimension hitherto unknown to the singer/player.

Step 5:

This step sings of the forces of nature, particularly the wind in the pines. It is the step at which the use of the sonorous tone a fifth above the ground note asserts itself, and also the step where an increasingly mystic atmosphere is created. This mystic atmosphere is first developed by means of a descriptive text (deep green, cherry blossom and autumn foliage all at once, moon and tide, wind in the pines, waves pounding the cliffs, blossoms and waterfall), then, however, becoming a purely musical (instrumental) experience, so to speak „beyond what words can tell“. I regard it important to note here that in this part of the song mention is made of a dimension beyond the limitations of time and space. We can probably take this to mean that the player/singer has been made conscious of the fact that the problems of reality shown up earlier in the song can be dissolved.

Enoshima no kyoku makes clear that this solution has become possible thanks to music; *Sumiyoshi* states the same thing in step 6, while *Sakuragari* presumably implies the same fact by bringing up the image of „strings“, referring as much to the waterfall as to the strings of an instrument.

Step 6:

This step brings the song to an end by relating what has been dealt with to an actual, present situation: the playing of a musical instrument, and the fact that some deity or Bodhisattva (in *Sumiyoshi* and *Enoshima no kyoku* at some concrete shrine or temple) will actually give guidance and show the way to longevity and prosperity.

Musical pieces (regardless whether they are related or unrelated to theatrical performances) are interesting and revealing contexts for the mention of famous places. In music (songs) we may not only see a specific famous place in a static condition, as in a picture or illustration, but are also made to think about the deeper meaning some famous place may have as the goal of journey. This journey is, as I have tried to show, not only a journey in a geographical, but also in a spiritual sense, a journey leading step for step from one emotional condition to the next. To mark these individual steps the *koto* pieces in the tradition of Edo make use of many kinds of devices on the textual, but particularly also on the musical level.

It is to be hoped that further research will shed more light upon the true meaning and implications both of famous places as elements – or goals – of a journey, as well as of musical and theatrical pieces that may superficially look somewhat incoherent, but, if we take a closer look, reveal themselves to be based on a clear structural principle.

Informationssystem und kulturelles Leben in den Städten der Edo-Zeit

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