

reigakusha

sukeyasu shiba

gagakusuites

一真

真

celestial harmonies



管絃 三臺塩 一具
平調調子

序

破

急

舞楽 春鶯囀 一具
老越調調子

遊声

序

颯踏

入破

鳥声

急声

1 to 4 *Kangen: Sandaien Ichigu*

1 *Hyōjō no Chōshi* 3'23"

DE-A74-02-11973

2 *Jo* 8'20"

DE-A74-02-11974

3 *Ha* 16'05"

DE-A74-02-11975

4 *Kyū* 6'19"

DE-A74-02-11976

5 to 11 *Bugaku: Shunnōden Ichigu*

5 *Ichikotsuchō no Chōshi* 2'18"

DE-A74-02-11977

6 *Yūsei* 5'39"

DE-A74-02-11978

7 *Jo* 7'43"

DE-A74-02-11979

8 *Sattō* 9'50"

DE-A74-02-11980

9 *Juha* 5'14"

DE-A74-02-11981

10 *Tesshō* 6'24"

DE-A74-02-11982

11 *Kisshō* 5'30"

DE-A74-02-11983

Total Time

77'34"

Gagaku Suites

Introduction

Gagaku is the oldest of Japan's performing arts, with a history of more than one thousand years. In its contemporary sense the term *gagaku* signifies the whole body of classical Japanese music and dance performed by the musicians of the Kunaichō Gakubu (Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency, Tōkyō). It is classified by origin into three categories: 1. accompanied vocal music and dance of indigenous origin employed in Imperial and Shintō ceremony; 2. instrumental music and dance deriving from the Asian mainland, imported during the fifth through ninth centuries; and 3. *saibara* and *rōei*, genres of accompanied vocal music which developed at the Japanese court of the ninth through twelfth centuries. The second category is sub-divided into two classes according to the region of its origin: *tōgaku*, music of Chinese origin, is performed both as dance with accompaniment (*bugaku*) and as instrumental music without dance (*kangen*); *komagaku*, music of Korean origin, is generally performed only as dance. *Tōgaku* dance is also referred to as Dance of the Left (*sa-no-mai*), and *komagaku* dance as Dance of the Right (*u-no-mai*).

It is the music of the second of the three categories, music deriving from the Asian mainland, that is most often performed. The central body of this is made up of *tōgaku*,

court music from the Chinese Tang dynasty (618–907). During the eighth and ninth centuries, the ancient music culture of China was at its most developed, and included instrumental music, song and dance, all of which was strongly influenced by the cosmopolitan nature of Tang culture. This music, performed at Imperial banquets and at Buddhist religious ceremonies, was transmitted to Japan as part of the large-scale adoption of the political and social apparatus of Tang-period China. The centuries following its introduction saw a simplification and reorganization of the various musics imported from the continent, as well as the composition of new dances and instrumental pieces in similar style by Japanese musicians. The performance traditions of several instruments imported from the continent were lost as the Japanese adapted the music to their own tastes, while the complex nature of Chinese music theory found a simplified form in Japan.

From the tenth century, *gagaku* instrumental music and dance began to be practiced by the Emperors and other members of the Imperial court, both as a part of their governmental duties and as private musical expression. In addition, large-scale Buddhist ceremonies employing *gagaku* and *shōmyō* (Buddhist chant) were celebrated. Particularly elaborate ceremonies in which *gagaku* was seen as an earthly representation of the music of the Buddhist paradises developed from the

eleventh century, especially in connection with belief in the Western Paradise of Amitābha. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the musical traditions of *gagaku* came together in their richest and most lively forms. The repertoire of *gagaku* as a whole was as its broadest, and the increasing 'Japanization' of the music entailed the restructuring of music theory and led to the development of a uniquely Japanese music cosmology. In addition to the continuing performance traditions of the noble classes, a number of families of lower rank became established as hereditary clans of professional musicians, responsible for the transmission of certain parts of the *gagaku* performance tradition. Descendants of some of these families are still involved in the performance of *gagaku* at the Imperial court today; SHIBA Sukeyasu, founder and musical director of Reigakusha, belongs to a branch of the Koma clan, which can be traced back to at least the late tenth century.

In the succeeding centuries, *gagaku* has been transmitted as ceremonial music at Buddhist temples and Shintō shrines, as well as at the Imperial court. During that time it has come close to extinction during periods of warfare, and certain of its genres have been reconstructed long after the original forms died out. Perhaps the period which has had the greatest effect on the musical and extra-musical qualities of *gagaku* as a performing art is the 130 or so years since the Meiji

Restoration (1868), soon after which musicians from Kyōto, Nara and Ōsaka were gathered in Tōkyō and appointed to work towards the reconciliation and standardization of their traditions. What they helped produce was a sanitized and sanctified version of *gagaku* that became one of the symbols of an immutable Japanese Imperial line, a tradition purportedly unchanged and unchanging since ancient times. Although this nationalistic propaganda was thoroughly discredited with the defeat of the country in World War II, it is only in the last two or three decades that the Japanese themselves have begun to think of *gagaku* in any other way. Until the 1960s, composition of new pieces for the genre was often seen as an affront to the dignity of the tradition. The situation is changing, however; since its establishment in 1966, the National Theatre in Tōkyō has contributed significantly towards developing new possibilities for *gagaku* performance, and the emergence of new performing groups like Reigakusha, less bound to the official version of the art, has made it easier for new possibilities to be explored.

The repertoire of *tōgaku*, Chinese-derived instrumental and dance music, includes a number of pieces classed as *taikyoku* (literally 'great pieces'). The four central *taikyoku* of the ancient repertoire were the pieces *Ōdai Hajinraku* ('The Emperor Destroys the Military Formations'), *Toraden* ('The Whirl Dance'), *Shunnōden* ('The Singing of Spring

Warblers'), and *Sokō* ('Liquidamber Incense'). The extinction of the first two during the long history of the art, however, means that two other pieces are now added to make up the modern set of four: *Manjūroku* ('Ten Thousand Autumns') and *Ōjō* ('The Royal Deer'). *Taikyoku* are extensive suites in multiple movements, often including the three movement-types thought to be typical of the form, namely *Jo*, *Ha*, and *Kyū*. *Jo* ('prelude' or 'introduction') refers to an large-scale slow movement in free rhythm, *Ha* ('broaching' or 'breaking away') to a movement in a slightly faster, fixed rhythm, and *Kyū* ('rushing' or 'fast') to a faster final movement, again in fixed rhythm. The performance of all of the movements of a particular *taikyoku* is referred to with the term *ichigu*, meaning 'set' or, in a musical context, 'suite'.

Recorded on this compact disc are two *taikyoku* in *ichigu* form, the first a suite that was a *taikyoku* only at the very beginning of its history in Japan (*Sandaien*), and the second a suite belonging to both the ancient and modern class of the central four (*Shunnōden*). The first is performed in *kangen* style, that is, as instrumental music with winds, strings and percussion. Lost parts of the suite have been recomposed by SHIBA Sukeyasu according to a method of reconstruction that he outlines in his notes. The second is performed in classical *bugaku* style, that is, as music to accompany dance, with winds and percussion.

Steven G. NELSON

The pieces

Sandaien Ichigu

(with reconstruction by SHIBA Sukeyasu)

Sandaien, the name of which is commonly abbreviated to *Sandai*, survives in the modern repertoire of Japanese *gagaku* as only a single piece, *Sandai no Kyū*. It belongs to the class known as *tōgaku* (literally 'Tang music'), and is in the mode *hyōjō* (roughly equivalent to church dorian on E, namely E–F sharp–G–A–B–C sharp–D–E). It is a comparatively subdued piece, lacking the showy melodies of many popular pieces in the same class and mode, like *Goshōroku no Kyū*, *Etenraku*, *Bairo*, or *Ringa*. It was originally a larger work, with two more movements preceding the *Kyū* movement, namely *Jo* and *Ha*. The first became extinct at a comparatively early stage, while the second, though still passed down, was not included in the official modern repertoire as represented by the *Meiji Senteifu* part scores compiled in 1876 and 1888, and is now largely forgotten. The third section, *Kyū*, was included in these part scores as a *shōkyoku* ('small piece') in the mode *hyōjō*, but is performed only rarely today.

The origin of the piece

The various old part scores and treatises that I used in reconstructing lost parts of the piece cite interesting anecdotes about its origin.

First, the ancient *gagaku* compendium *Kyōkun-shō*, compiled in 1233 by the

musician and dancer Koma no Chikazane (1177–1242), cites an otherwise unknown Chinese source (*Zuiqing Riyue*, ‘Suns and Moons of a Drunken Noble’).

This piece is from China. *Zuiqing Riyue* states that it was written by Empress Wu [Zetian, 624?–705, r. 690–705], wife [and later successor] of the Gaozong emperor [628–83, r. 649–83]. In China, there was a handsome, amorous man by the name of Zhang Wencheng. The Empress, somehow or other, met with him. After that, her feelings for him were strong day and night, but, finding no time to see him, she made the piece as a consolation for her heart.

The entry for *Sandaien* in *Gakkaroku*, an encyclopaedic work on *gagaku* compiled by Abe no Suehisa (1622–1708) in 1690, cites multiple versions of its origin, some in more detail, without acknowledging any sources.

One version [of its origin] states that the piece comes from Tang China. At a banquet in the third lunar month, the Emperor [Taizong, 598–649, r. 626–49] was with his ladies and ministers at the Santai [‘three platform’] pavilion. This was the first time this piece was danced. For this reason it was called *Santaiyan* [Jp. *Sandaien*]. It was made by the Taizong emperor. Another version says

that it was made by Empress Wu, wife of the Gaozong emperor. One of Gaozong’s ministers was called Zhang Wencheng. He was a handsome man, of an amorous nature. The Empress heard of his beauty, and longed for him for many years. At one time, he wrote a novel and presented it to the Empress. It was called *Youxianku* [‘Playing in an Enchanted Cave’]. The Empress read the novel, and thinking of him [it?] finally made this piece to express her feelings.

May it be that the distinctive melody of *Sandai no Kyū* as it is passed down today reflects the rather amorous nature of the story of Empress Wu and Zhang Wencheng? He must have been quite an attractive man to have caused Empress Wu, known for her strong nature and political machinations, to write what amounts to a love song for him.

The title of the piece

The Chinese term *santai* (Jp. *sandai*, ‘three platforms’) originally refers to a constellation close to the Big Dipper, which is made up of three parts referred to as the upper, middle, and lower platforms. These three names were later used metaphorically as honorific terms to refer to the three highest ranking government ministers. In another meaning, *santai* also refers to a tall building with a good view in all four directions.

Old dictionaries tell us that in a musical

context the suffix *-yan* (Jp. *en*, ‘salt’) indicates a type of processional, that is, a piece of music designed to be played as dancers or musicians walk in line or formation. It is evidently related closely to the musical form indicated by another suffix, *-yin* (Jp. *in*, ‘pull’). This second suffix was used to refer to a performance style at the ancient Chinese Yue-fu, a music bureau established in 120 BCE as part of the Han dynasty bureaucracy, to provide music and songs for state rituals and imperial entertainments. The names of pieces from this and later times include a variety of suffixes that indicate musical form and performance styles.

The suffix *-yan* shares its pronunciation with a different character meaning ‘sensual’ or ‘sexually attractive’, and this may also be an important nuance in the sound of the piece’s name. One can picture a disconsolate Empress Wu shutting herself up in a tall pavilion and writing a piece expressing her yearning for the handsome minister.

The reconstruction

Ancient records quoting a Japanese source by the name of *Ryūgin-shō* (‘Notes on the Cry of the Dragon’) state that the original opening movement of the piece, *Jo*, was lost at an early stage of the history of the piece in Japan. According to this, the ninth-century Japanese musician Inugami no Korenari learnt it in China, but kept the opening movement secret after his return to Japan, so that it was

lost when he died. There are no surviving examples of notation of the movement. I had no choice but to compose a new version of the *Jo* in the fashion of the *Jo* of the piece *Goshōraku*, with eight long phrases, including melodic fragments from the surviving *Kyū* movement of *Sandaien*.

There are many examples of notation for the second movement, *Ha*. I used a variety of old part scores, for mouthorgan *shō*, reedpipe *hichiriki*, flute *ryūteki*, lute *biwa*, and zither *koto*, to make a preliminary reconstruction. The result was an extensive piece that would take up to thirty minutes to perform. It lacked, however, anything like the distinctive melodic movement to be found in the third movement, being made up of no more than a rather uninteresting string of melodic figures typical of *tōgaku*. Its mediocrity and extreme length may be reasons why it was left out of the Meiji part scores in the nineteenth century, despite there being no lack of surviving notations.

I ended up composing a piece in the metric type *nobetada-yahyōshi* (i.e. made up of cycles of eight measures, with alternating 2/2 and 4/2 measures), with a total of sixteen rhythmic cycles. I retained some of the melodies to be found in the old notations, but also added distinctive melodic movement from the surviving third movement.

With a modal prelude performed before pieces in this mode, the complete structure of the reconstructed *Sandaien* is as follows:

1 (Track 1). *Hyōjō no Chōshi* ('Modal Prelude for *Hyōjō*'), a longish free-rhythm prelude, with *omeribuki* (free rhythm canon) in the parts for the mouthorgan *shō* and reedpipe *hichiriki*.

2 (Track 2). *Jo* ('Prelude'), a reconstruction in free-rhythm, with eight rhythmic cycles delineated by strong strokes on the drum *taiko*.

3 (Track 3). *Ha* ('Broaching'), a reconstruction with sixteen cycles of *nobetada-yahyōshi* metre (eight measures, 2/2 and 4/2 alternating), a broad rhythmic type with a suitable degree of tension.

4 (Track 4). *Kyū* ('Rushing'), a piece in the current repertoire with sixteen cycles of *haya yohyōshi* metre (four measures of 4/4), a comparatively lively rhythmic type.

When reconstructing a lost movement of a *Jo-Ha-Kyū* set, one has the choice of being completely faithful to the old notations (when they exist), or of recomposing the movement making as much as one can of any distinctive melodies to be found in the surviving movement or movements. If, in the former case, you end up with an interesting piece of music, then there is no problem, but it often happens that a piece that has been lost from the repertoire is nothing more than an uninteresting string of typical melodic figures,

with nothing to recommend it. The choice of which method to use has to be made in consideration of what the reconstruction is being done for, that is, whether it is for the academic study of old notations, or for concert use. I made the second choice in my reconstruction of the *Ha* movement of *Sandaien*, sacrificing the *Ha* movement of the old notations for a new version that made more of the melodic movement of the *Kyū*. If the resulting piece, with a new *Jo* and reworked *Ha*, does justice to the anecdote of Empress Wu and her love for the handsome Zhang Wencheng, then I will have made the right choice.

SHIBA Sukeyasu



Shunnōden Ichigu

Shunnōden Ichigu is a full performance of the *tōgaku* ('Tang music') piece *Shunnōden* as it is played to accompany dance, that is, in *bugaku* style. The title of the piece literally means 'singing of the spring warblers'. There are various accounts of its origin, including the following two recorded in the Japanese *gagaku* compendia. *Taigen-shō*, completed in 1512 by Toyohara no Muneaki (1450–1524), states that the Gaozhong emperor (628–83, r. 649–83) of the Chinese Tang dynasty heard the songs of the bush warblers and commanded a musician, Bo Mingda, to turn them into a piece of music. In contrast, the 1233 *Kyōkun-shō* of Koma no Chikazane (1177–1242) attributes the piece to He Guanqing (otherwise unknown), adding that when performed on the day of the investiture of a Crown Prince, it would attract a crowd of bush warblers who would sing together in celebration. One of the ancient Japanese histories, the *Shoku Nihon Kōki*, records that in the year 854 the famous dancer Owari no Hamanushi danced it at the age of 113. It possesses a variety of alternative names, many of which express the idea of longevity, and it has been danced throughout history on celebratory occasions. It is mentioned at the beginning of the chapter '*Hana no En*' (Banquet of Cherry Blossoms) in the famous Heian-period novel *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji Monogatari*). Genji dances it on the entreaty of the Crown Prince as sunset approaches

towards the end of the second lunar month, at a celebration held in the garden south of the central building of the imperial enclosure, the Shishinden. It was also evidently a favourite of Sei Shōnagon, who included 'the melody called the warbler's song' in a list of beautiful pieces in her *Pillow Book* (*Makura no Sōshi*).

Shunnōden Ichigu is a *bugaku* (dance) piece in the mode *ichikotsuchō*, which according to ancient modal theory is roughly equivalent to church mixolydian on D (namely D–E–F sharp–G–A–B–C–D). It has been passed down to the present as one of the four *taikyoku* ('great pieces'), and is made up of a total of six movements: *Yūsei*, *Jo*, *Sattō*, *Juha*, *Tesshō*, and *Kisshō*. In *bugaku* suites, the usual names for movements are *Jo*, *Ha*, and *Kyū*, and the five other movement names used in *Shunnōden* (*Yūsei*, *Sattō*, *Juha*, *Tesshō*, and *Kisshō*) are distinctive in these terms. In the present repertoire these names can only be found in this piece, although they were also used in other large-scale suites that are no longer part of the performance repertoire. As a suite, it mixes movements in free rhythm (*jobuki*) and fixed rhythm (*gakubyōshi*), and there are certain melodic figures used throughout that may reflect the warbler's song. Each movement is constructed carefully, and we can say that it is a masterpiece that fulfils the promise of the label 'great piece'.

Shunnōden is generally danced by six (or four) dancers in the elegant *hiramai*

(‘ordinary dance’) style. The dancers wear costumes in the *kasane-shōzoku* style, the origins of which can be traced back to Tang China. In a special effect used only in ‘great pieces’, the costume is worn with the red outer robe (*hō*) removed from the upper half of the dancers’ bodies and tucked in at the waist, exposing the colourful layers of clothing underneath. The *torikabuto* (‘bird-helmet’) used for this piece is distinctive, and used in no other piece. (See the illustration on the reverse of the back cover.)

Because of its length, it is unusual for a full performance of *Shunnōden* to be mounted today; abbreviated performances often include the *Sattō* and *Juha* movements only. These two popular pieces are also performed without dance as *kangen* (‘pipes and strings’), both in the original mode *ichikotsuchō* and transposed to the mode *sōjō* (mixolydian on G, namely G–A–B–C–D–E–F–G).

1. (Track 5) *Ichikotsuchō no Chōshi* (‘Modal Prelude for *Ichikotsu-chō*’). This is a free-rhythm prelude in the mode *ichikotsuchō*, used by the musicians to check the sounds of their instruments, and also to prepare the venue for a performance of a dance in this mode. Here, the mouthorgan *shō* players perform the first three sections of their part, and the reedpipe *hichiriki* players the opening section of their part, in the free-rhythm canon style known as *omeribuki*. The piece comes to a conclusion with the flute *ryūteki* and barrel

drum *kakko*, playing as they would in the shorter modal prelude form known as *netori*. In the great majority of dance pieces, the dancers make their entrance during the *chōshi*, but in the case of *Shunnōden* the following movement, *Yūsei*, fulfils this function.

2. (Track 6) *Yūsei* (‘Processional’). This is a piece in free rhythm performed by players of the three wind instruments and the barrel drum *kakko*. It accompanies the entrance of the dancers. The opening solo *ryūteki* is joined by soloists on *shō* and *hichiriki*, and then by all the other wind players. The drum *taiko* and gong *shōko* are not used in this movement.

3. (Track 7) *Jo* (‘Prelude’). The dancers begin the dance proper from this movement. All of the instruments join the opening solo *ryūteki* at the first strong beat on the *taiko*, and in the succeeding free-rhythm (*jobuki*) performance the *taiko* and *shōko* are struck at the end of long phrases. With the exception of the movement *Tesshō*, all of the movements of *Shunnōden* possess the melodic structure A–B–C–B, with the repetition of the B section bringing a two-part form to them. Because of the length of this individual movement, only the first eight of the complete total of sixteen long phrases are recorded, that is, the opening A–B only.

4. (Track 8) *Sattō* ('Stamping'). A regular rhythm (*gakubyōshi*) is established from the beginning of the piece. The metre is *haya-yohyōshi*, with cycles of four measures of 4/4. This cycle is repeated a total of sixteen times. In many other pieces with multiple movements, the metrical type *nobe* (with longer measures and rhythmic elongation at phrase points) is generally used in a *Ha* movement following the *Jo*, but *Shunnōden*, exceptionally, lacks a movement in the *nobe* metre. Following as it does on the *Jo*, however, care is taken in performance to play this movement a little more heavily than the usual *haya-yohyōshi* piece. Since the next movement begins almost immediately, the end of the *Sattō* is not performed with the *tomede* cadential pattern normally used in pieces in this mode, but rather in what is called *fuki-nagashi* (literally 'blow away') style.

5. (Track 9) *Juha* ('Entering and Broaching'). The movement begins with the same melody as the previous movement in the solo *ryūteki* part, but this piece is in the unusual metre of *haya-muhyōshi*, with six measures of 4/4 in each cycle. This rhythmic cycle is again repeated a total of sixteen times. The piece finishes in the *fuki-nagashi* fashion.

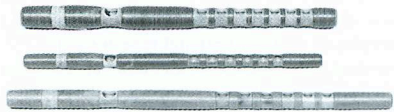
6. (Track 10) *Tesshō* ('Bird Tune'). This movement is in *jobuki* free rhythm, and is

made up of sixteen long phrases. The interval between each strong beat on the *taiko* is shorter than it is in the *Jo* movement, however, and this brings quite a different feeling to the movement.

7. (Track 11) *Kisshō* ('Quick Tune'). This is essentially a repetition of the *Juha* movement, with the final rhythmic cycle in *jobuki* free rhythm. It continues on from the previous piece without a solo *ryūteki* opening, in a style known as *tsurane-buki* ('joined blowing'). At the midway point (that is, at the conclusion of the first B in the A–B–C–B melodic structure), the percussion instruments shift to an elaborated pattern in a practice known as *kuwae-byōshi* ('added beats'), with a greater number of *taiko* strikes per rhythmic cycle. Adding beats in this way is a regular part of *tōgaku* performance practice, and in the majority of pieces with fixed rhythms the place where the shift to the *kuwae-byōshi* pattern occurs is fixed. For instance, when the *Sattō* or *Juha* movements are performed without dance in *kangen* ('pipes and strings') style, the *kuwae-byōshi* shift is made at the same place as it is here, that is, midway through the piece. In *bugaku* suite performance, however, the *kuwae-byōshi* effect is held back until this, the final movement, perhaps with a view to making the change more striking. The use of *jobuki* free-rhythm in the final rhythmic cycle brings the dance as a whole to an effective close. (It

should be noted that in actual performance, the *Ichikotsuchō no Chōshi* performed at the opening is performed again at the close, in a slightly different way, as accompaniment for the dancers as they leave the stage. Time considerations have forced us to abbreviate it on this disc.)

MIYAMARU Naoko



The three flutes used in *gagaku*: *ryūteki* (above), the six-holed *komabue*, and the six-holed *kagurabue* (below)



hichiriki

The instruments

The regular instrumental ensemble of *tōgaku* is made up of wind, string, and percussion instruments. Traditionally, these have been referred to respectively as *fukimono* ('blown things'), *hikimono* ('played things') and *uchimono* ('struck things'). Today the string instruments are generally not used to accompany dance, and can thus be heard only in the first four tracks of this disc.

1 The winds

The *ryūteki* (or *ōteki*) is one of the three transverse flutes of *gagaku*, seven-holed and made of bamboo, approximately 40 cm in length. The inside of the bamboo is hollowed out and lacquered, and the outside is wrapped with strands of bark. The fingerholes of the instruments are rather large; these, together with the wide bore of the instrument, facilitate the microtonal inflections which are characteristic of the flute part in *tōgaku*. The range of the instrument is approximately two octaves, and octave leaps are a feature of its style.

The *hichiriki* is a double-reed pipe which, like the *ryūteki*, is made of bamboo. It has seven fingerholes on the front and a hole for each thumb on the back. The pipe itself is surprisingly short, only about 18 cm in length. The reed is relatively large and because of this can easily influence the pitch of the pipe, so sliding notes and tonal variation obtained by producing the same pitch on different

fingerings are features of its style, which is generally less florid than that of the *ryūteki*. The range of the instrument is comparatively narrow, being only slightly larger than one octave. Unlike double-reed instruments like the oboe, which has a conical bore, this instrument has a cylindrical bore (that is, the width of the bore stays the same from the top to the bottom of its length) and sounds an octave lower than a conical instrument of the same length would. This small instrument thus surprises us with its low pitch and piercing tone, which dominates the sound of the *gagaku* ensemble.

The *shō* is a free-reed mouthorgan consisting of seventeen bamboo pipes inserted into a wind chamber, approximately 47 cm in length from the bottom of the wind chamber to the top of the longest pipes. At the lower end of fifteen of the pipes are added free-reeds made of metal; the remaining two pipes are mute. The instrument can be sounded either by inhaling or exhaling. Before and after playing, the *shō* is heated. This serves two purposes: first it makes the reeds sound more easily, and secondly it evaporates any moisture left in the instrument from the player's breath. In the performance of most pieces in the *tōgaku* repertoire, the instrument plays cluster chords called *aitake*, which are made up of six (sometimes five) tones. The technique for finger changes between *aitake* is rather complex, and is an important feature of *shō* performance, especially in the *kangen*

(‘pipes and strings’) performance style.

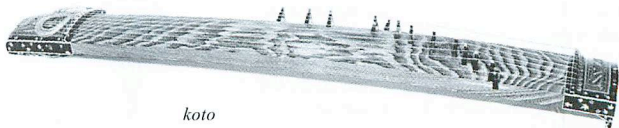
2 The strings

The *koto* (also *sō-no-koto* or simply *sō*) is a long zither (approximately 190 cm long and 25 cm wide) with 13 strings of wound silk stretched over a body of *kiri* (princess tree or paulownia) wood. Two sound holes underneath the instrument also facilitate stringing the instrument. Tuning is accomplished by placing small movable bridges under each of the strings. The strings are plucked with plectra placed on the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand. Although in former times the left hand was used to press or pull the strings to the left of the bridges and thus to change the pitch of the sounds produced, this technique is no longer employed in the traditional repertoire. In modern performance of instrumental *gagaku*, the technique of the instrument is limited to a very few stereotyped patterns, which gives it a rhythmic rather than melodic role, but this would seem to be the result of a significant loss of the performance tradition of the instrument.

The *biwa* is a lute up to 106 cm in length which, like the European instrument, has its origins in West Asia. It is shaped like its Western counterpart, although the back of the instrument is flat and its body shallow. The relatively short neck provides space for only four raised frets. There are four strings, of differing thickness, and a number of different



shō



koto

almost inaudible in ensemble performance, but would have been much more significant in the early history of *gagaku*, when there was a large body of pieces for solo performance on the instrument.

biwa



tunings are used. The strings are struck with a hand-held wooden plectrum. In the modern performance practice of *tōgaku*, each downstroke with the plectrum is made so that each string below the string with the notated tablature sign is struck in percussive drone-like fashion, on or just before the first beat of the measure. Some notes are also sounded with the fingers of the left hand; these are

3 The percussion

The percussion section for *tōgaku* is made up of three instruments. The *shōko*, a small brass gong 15 cm in diameter, is suspended in a lacquered stand and hit with two long sticks tied together at the handle end with a silk cord. There are only two strokes: a single stroke with either right or left hand, and a double stroke in which the left hand strikes the gong just before the right. The *taiko* (also *tsuri-daiko*, 'suspended drum,' or *gaku-daiko*, 'gagaku drum') is a large shallow barrel drum, approximately 55 cm in diameter, with heads of oxhide. It has a deep non-pitched tone. The sticks are of wood covered with leather. There are two strokes: *mebachi*, the 'female stroke,' a weak stroke with the left

hand made just below and to the left of the centre of the drumhead, and *obachi*, the ‘male stroke,’ a strong stroke with the right hand, made directly at its centre. The *kakko* is a small barrel drum, approximately 15 cm in diameter and 30 cm in length, played by the leader of the ensemble. Two heads of deerskin are stretched over circular frames, 23 cm in diameter, which are attached to the body with a lace that also suspends the body on its stand. It is struck with two sticks, one in each hand. There are three types of stroke: *sei*, a single stroke with the right stick; *katarai*, a slow accelerating roll played with one stick; and *mororai*, a roll played with both sticks.

The different stroke types of the three percussion instruments are combined in *tōgaku* performance to form rhythmic patterns of fixed lengths, four, eight, or occasionally six measures. These patterns are repeated to form rhythmic cycles that are sustained throughout each piece and often elaborated in the final few cycles, a convention of performance known as *kuwae-byōshi* (‘added beats’). In the performance of *bugaku*, especially large versions of the *shōko* and *taiko* are used when available at the venue. The *ōshōko* is approximately 24 cm in diameter, while the *dadaiko* is covered with heads sometimes over 2 meters in diameter.

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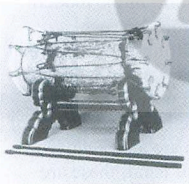


shōko



taiko

kakko



Reigakusha and SHIBA Sukeyasu

Reigakusha was established in 1985 as a group of professional *gagaku* performers dedicated to various types of ensemble performance. It is led by its founder and music director, SHIBA Sukeyasu. The group does not confine its activities to the performance of the classical *gagaku* repertoire, but also performs reconstructions of pieces lost from the traditional repertoire during the long history of the genre, as well as contemporary pieces written for the ensemble. On occasion, the performers play on reconstructed *gagaku* instruments of ancient times, which are based on models such as those preserved in the Shōsōin (the eighth-century imperial repository situated on the grounds of the Nara temple Tōdai-ji). Since its formation, Reigakusha has given regular concerts in Tōkyō and other cities in Japan, and has also travelled overseas, to the United States (1996), England (1998), and other European countries (1999). The name of the group, an abbreviation of Reirin Gakuyūsha, is a tribute to the ancient Chinese music master Ling Lun, Reirin being the Japanese pronunciation of his name. He is said to have tuned the first standard set of bamboo pitch-pipes on the order of the Yellow Emperor, the founder of the Chinese Han civilisation.

SHIBA Sukeyasu was born in 1935 into the Shiba family, a branch of the Koma clan of *gagaku* musicians associated with the temple-shrine complex of Kōfuku-ji/Kasuga Taisha in

Nara since more than one thousand years ago. He trained and performed as a *gagaku* musician at the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency, specialising in the *gagaku* flutes, the lute *biwa*, and dance of the Left (*tōgaku* dance). He has also been active as a composer and scholar, and has devoted much of his energies to reviving lost parts of the *gagaku* repertoire. After leaving the palace group in 1984, he taught at several universities in the Tōkyō area, and the majority of members of Reigakusha are musicians whom he has taught during his extensive teaching career.

Steven G. NELSON



The performers

Reigakusha, led by its Musical Director,
SHIBA Sukeyasu

Sandaien Ichigu (Tracks 1–4)

shō: ISHIKAWA Kō, MIYATA Mayumi, TŌNO
Tamami

hichiriki: YAOTANI Satoru, NAKAMURA Hitomi,
MOTOHASHI Aya

ryūteki: SHIBA Sukeyasu, YAGI Chiaki,
SASAMOTO Takeshi

biwa: NAKAMURA Kahoru, TABUCHI Katsuhiko

koto: NODA Mika, NAKAMURA Kanako

kakko: HIRAI Yūko

taiko: MIYAMARU Naoko

shōko: MIURA Remi

Shunnōden Ichigu (Tracks 5–11)

shō: ISHIKAWA Kō, MIYATA Mayumi, TŌNO
Tamami, MIURA Remi

hichiriki: YAOTANI Satoru, NAKAMURA Hitomi,
TABUCHI Katsuhiko, MOTOHASHI Aya

ryūteki: SHIBA Sukeyasu, YAGI Chiaki,
SASAMOTO Takeshi, NAKAMURA Kanako

kakko: HIRAI Yūko

taiko: MIYAMARU Naoko

shōko: NAKAMURA Kahoru

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and Eckart Rahn (Celestial Harmonies)

Balance Engineer: FUKUI Suenori

Mastered by Ulrich Kraus

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(Mitaka City Art and Culture Centre)
Concert Hall, Tōkyō

Notes on *Sandaien Ichigu*

by SHIBA Sukeyasu,

notes on *Shunnōden Ichigu*

by MIYAMARU Naoko,

translated and adapted by Steven G. NELSON

All other annotation by Steven G. NELSON

(Associate Professor, Research Centre

for Japanese Traditional Music,

Kyōto City University of Arts, Japan;

snelson@kcuu.ac.jp)

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P.O. Box 30122

Tucson, Arizona 85751-0122

E-Mail celestial@harmonies.com

Internet www.harmonies.com

Note on Japanese usage

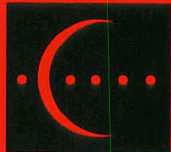
In the annotation for this disc, the translator/annotator has adopted the practice of citing Japanese names in Japanese order, that is, surname before given name or title. To avoid confusion, small capitals are used to indicate surnames when both are given. This usage is not followed on the CD cover, where Western order (surname after given name) is used.



Shunnōden as depicted in *Bugaku Zusetsu*, an illustrated volume on the dances of *gagaku*, by ŌTSUKI Joden (1845–1931)

produced by yoshinori nishiwaki

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