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Comparative Aspects of Christian Music in India, China, and Russia: Missionaries and Natives as Intermediary Actors in the Contact Zone

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1. Introduction: A New Methodological Approach

Carrying out a proper comparative study of diverse musical traditions of India, China, and Russia is methodologically difficult.¹ It does not make any sense to say that India's musical tradition is like this, China's is like that, and Russia's is like the other. We should not apply the method of comparative musicology developed in the early twentieth century when Western musicologists analyzed non-Western music by adapting the theory of European classical music, which they regarded as something higher or something universal, to "Other" musical traditions. While I have been in pursuit of the common musical experiences of these three countries, it is important to focus on the encounter with Western music, which might be a key factor for a proper comparison. It is certain that the music cultures of non-Western countries have been more or less influenced by Western music in the process of the expansion of European Imperialism.

Bruno Nettl, an American ethnomusicologist, says that on the first encounter with Western music, Christian missionaries, soldiers, and diplomats were important actors in introducing Western music to non-Western countries.² Christian hymns and military band music were learnt by native converts to Christianity or those soldiers hired by European settlers or colonizers. The Western impact on the music culture of these three countries can also be studied properly through this point of view, though it is quite natural that their experiences are diverse according to what happened on the occasion of their first encounters, how they approached the new cultural phenomena, what perception of Western music was constructed, how they differentiated their own musical traditions from Western music, how they identified and reconstructed their own musical traditions, and what music culture has been produced since then.

The Western impact on the music of India, Russia, and China was prominently visible and substantially significant from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. This period is characterized by Europe's expansion: the Age of Colonialism and Imperialism. In my previous two papers "The Reception of Western Music in South India around 1800" and "Interactions between Missionaries and Native Christians on Music in South India: Constructing Hindu-Christian Identity," I focused on the reception of Western music in south India and the role

¹ I have been thinking over this problem in the project "Comparative Research on Major Regional Powers in Eurasia" since 2009.

² Bruno Nettl, *The Western Impact on World Music: Change, Adaptation, and Survival* (Farmington Hills: Schirmer Books, 1985), pp. 7-12.

of native Christians in this process by considering a few examples of this period.³

I would like to propose a new methodological approach for a comparative study of diverse music cultures. I will analyze missionaries and natives as “intermediary actors.” I define this analytical device, “intermediary actors,” as “those who transmit diverse cultures from one person or place to another through various media and modify them in various ways through media in this process.” In my case study, religion can be regarded as a medium for transmitting music cultures though music might be a medium for transmitting religious ideas in other studies. The concept of a “contact zone” is defined by Mary Louise Pratt as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.”⁴ In this paper, missionaries and natives in accepting Western music, constructing their perceptions, and modifying this new music culture according to their necessity and taste in the process of spreading Christianity are described as “intermediary actors in the contact zone.” For this purpose, I will briefly discuss two countries, Russia and China, before discussing Christian music in India, and I present my analytical points for further comparison. I then proceed to a detailed description of how the music culture of India has been transformed through contact with Christian missionaries.

2. The Western Impact on the Music of Russia

Broadly speaking, Russia’s attitude to European classical music seems to be the most ambivalent among these three countries, since Russia has its own history of classical music innovation. Until the nineteenth century, Russian art music had been dominated by foreign musicians. Peter the Great (Pyotr Alexeyevich Romanov, 1672-1725, reigned 1689-1725) began this trend by inviting foreign musicians to modernize his kingdom. The Russian Imperial Court attracted many prominent musicians from Europe, particularly from Italy where a number of Russian composers received training and composed choral music, operas, chamber works, and symphonic works. These Russian compositions existing in the European classical music tradition had never attracted a European audience. Thus, Russia remained a periphery of the European classical music tradition in its conventional historiography of music till the eighteenth century despite the efforts towards “Westernization” carried by the Imperial Court as an official policy.

The first famous Russian composer who attracted a wide European audience was Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857), who exploited the native Russian music traditions in the realm of European classical music and composed the early Russian-language operas such as *Ivan Susanin* and *Ruslan*

³ Takako Inoue, “The Reception of Western Music in South India around 1800,” unpublished paper, Summer International Symposium on “Orient on Orient: Images of Asia in Eurasian Countries,” July 7-9, 2010, Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University; Takako Inoue, “Interactions between Missionaries and Native Christians on Music in South India: Constructing Hindu-Christian Identity,” unpublished paper, International Conference on “Religion and Media: Transcultural Perspective,” November 2-3, 2010, Friedrich-Alexander University, Erlangen-Nurnberg.

⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession 91* (New York: MLA, 1991), p. 33.

and *Lyudmila*. They gained fame for relying on distinctively Russian tunes and themes. He is said to have been the first Russian composer of musical nationalism, a musical phenomenon emerging as a part of the Romantic era.⁵ It initially began as a reaction against the dominance of the mainstream European classical tradition (German, Italian, and French music) and later developed alongside the growing nationalist movements spreading over the non-European regions. Thereafter, Russian folk music became the primary source for the younger generation of composers.

A group called the Mighty Five, headed by Balakirev (1837-1910) and including Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908), Mussorgsky (1839-81), Borodin (1833-87), and César Cui (1835-1918), proclaimed its purpose to compose and popularize Russian national traditions in the realm of European classical music. Many of the works by Glinka and the Mighty Five were based on Russian history, folk tales, and literature, and are regarded as masterpieces of romantic nationalism in music even today. The reason that their compositions attracted European audiences is that they sounded exotic and new to the European ear since they were composed in using different elements such as Russian folk tune from mainstream classical music.

It is important to point out that the Russian Musical Society (RMS) was founded in 1859, led by composer-pianists Anton (1829-94) and Nikolay Rubinstein (1835-81). It is usually described as a period of the two rival groups: the Mighty Five embracing their Russian national identity and the RMS being musically more conservative. The RMS founded Russia's first Conservatories in St Petersburg and in Moscow, where Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-93) who remains Russia's best-known composer outside Russia and his successor Sergey Rakhmaninov (1873-1943) received formal training. The relationship between the two rival groups in Russian musical nationalism can apparently be analyzed as a period of cultural conflict between Westernization and nationalization; however, it would be a better interpretation to say that the European attention to Russian composers is a result of Glinka's entrance into the European mainstream scene. Both the music of the RMS's line and that of the Mighty Five were substantially composed on the basis of romantic musical texture. Their composition technique that directly appropriates Russian national elements might be inspired by the national spirit, or might be adopted as a means of expressing the composers' originality. It is a typical phenomenon in parts of the romantic era at any rate.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century is usually characterized by the third wave of Russian classics led by Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915), Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953), and Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975). They were experimental in style and musical language. Some of them emigrated after the Russian Revolution though Prokofiev eventually returned and contributed to Soviet music as well. Romance songs also became very popular. Singers of romance songs not only sang in operas but also composed music and wrote lyrics. It can be interpreted that composers of the third wave transformed their positionality, which

⁵ Maes, however, said in chapter 2 on Glinka entitled "I'm Finished with Russian Music" of his book that Glinka was an eclectic composer who drew on all the Western styles he knew and that the Russian element in his music has been given far too much emphasis by nineteenth-century Russian historiographers. See Francis Maes, *A History of Russian Music: From Kamarinskaya to BabiYar*, originally published in 1996, translated by Arnold J. Pomerans and Erica Pomerans (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 28-29.

had been constructed between Russia and the West, into a positionality constructed among Russia, Soviet, and the West. In other words, the positionality of the third wave can be regarded as a struggle between universality and originality.

What musical elements are more Russian and non-European? Whether music expressions of Russian identity were constructed between Europe and Asia or between non-European and non-Asian remains a question. Basically, folk music and the sacred chants of the Russian Orthodox Church are regarded as pure Russian to the exclusion of the above-mentioned history of classical music innovation. Nevertheless, composers belonging to the RMS also left not only secular music but also choral music for the Russian Orthodox Choir (Plate 1).

The official acceptance of Christianity in Russia and the establishment of the Russian Orthodox Church date back to 988, when Vladimir I of Kiev officially adopted the Byzantine Rite. Russian Orthodox chants, however, seem to be more Westernized than Byzantine chants (more precisely, the medieval sacred chants of the Orthodox Church following the Constantinopolitan Rite) though they share the characteristic of a cappella male choir. The former is characterized by polyphonic choral music whose musical texture is in common with the other church music of both the Catholic and Protestant Churches. The latter is characterized by monophonic chanting with drone-singing (sustained tone) called *ison* in Byzantine chanting. This typical characteristic is very similar to the music of the Orient; for example, Indian music is often called “drone music.” Accordingly the characteristics of Russian Orthodox chanting should be described as being between the Occident and the Orient. Thus, the history of Russian music cannot be described without referring to the ambivalent relationship with European classical music.



Plate 1. St. Basil's Cathedral, Moscow

3. The Western Impact on the Music of China

The history of Western music in China is said to have begun with the encounter with Jesuit missionaries in the sixteenth century.⁶ Until then, there had been no reliable information about any Christian rites remaining to be practiced in China though there were several records referring to Christians. In the seventh century, the Nestorian Church (Church of the East) entered China and was allowed to establish a place of worship in Xian, the capital city of the Tang Dynasty.⁷ As Emperor Wuzong (reigned 840-846) suppressed all foreign religions, Christianity declined rapidly.

⁶ Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China: Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 4; Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2004), pp. 45-64.

⁷ But there is another view that the first religious contact between Christianity and China was in the first century AD.

In the thirteenth century, when the Yuan Dynasty of the Mongols started, Christianity was a major influence under the rule of the Mongols. But the next dynasty, the Ming Dynasty, again rejected all foreign influences and adopted Confucian ideology. Competition with Roman Catholicism and Islam were also factors in the Nestorian Church disappearing from China.

In the sixteenth century, Jesuit missionaries became active not only in their mission but also in the field of music. I give some basic information on Jesuit missionaries in this section since the first Jesuit headquarters in Asia was founded in 1542 in Goa, the capital of Portuguese India, by Francis Xavier (1506-1552) who also created the Society of Jesus along with Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556). Xavier was invited to head St. Paul's College in Goa, a pioneering seminary for the education of priests. In 1546, one of two Chinese boys who enrolled at St. Paul's College, known as Antonio, accompanied Xavier when he decided to start missionary work in China. Xavier was unable to enter the Chinese mainland and died in 1552. Thus, China and India share the common experience of an encounter with Jesuit missionaries.

The first European to reach China with a musical instrument was said to be Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) (Plate 2). He applied to be a member of a mission to India in 1577 and arrived in Goa the next year. He then proceeded to China and arrived in Macau⁸ in 1582. After his long struggle to enter Beijing, Ricci was finally invited by the Wanli Emperor (1563-1620) of the Ming Dynasty to become an advisor to the Imperial Court in 1601. He met the Emperor to receive permission to establish a Jesuit mission in the capital city. At this meeting, he presented a clavichord (harpsichord)⁹ to the Emperor and trained four eunuchs attached to the Imperial Court to play it. The Jesuit missionaries seem to have regarded musical instruments and their music as a useful and perfect gift.



Plate 2. Matteo Ricci
(1552-1610)

Keyboard instruments were particularly favorable because they were uncommon in Asian countries and only one instrument was able to produce perfect music. He established a cathedral in Beijing and converted a number of Chinese officials to Christianity. He died in Beijing in 1610 at the age of fifty-eight.

Ricci is also famous as a pioneering Jesuit priest who adopted a new strategy of their mission of “indigenization” whereby he spoke and wrote Chinese and dressed like a Confucian literati. At the time, Christian missionary work in China was almost exclusively limited to Macau, where quite a few local Chinese Christians adapted themselves to Portuguese ways. It was the late 1570s that a Jesuit missionary Alessandro Valignano insisted on the “indigenization” approach and Ricci started learning the Chinese language and customs. A Portuguese-Chinese dictionary compiled by Ricci is the first-ever European-Chinese dictionary. Melvin says that instead of “Portugalizing” the

⁸ Portuguese traders first settled at Macau in the sixteenth century and subsequently administered the region until the handover in 1999.

⁹ Kraus says it was a harpsichord (Kraus, p. 4) and Melvin says it was a clavichord (Melvin et al., pp. 46-47).

Chinese by making converts assimilate Portuguese customs and language, the Jesuits should “Sinicize” themselves.¹⁰ I call this approach an “indigenization strategy,” which can be applied to other cases in the other regions, for example, “Indianization” in India and “Japanization” in Japan.

As Chinese culture was strongly intertwined with Confucian values, Ricci decided to use Chinese concepts to explain Christianity. But the Dominican and Franciscan missionaries opposed Ricci’s strategy of “indigenization” and convinced the Vatican to outlaw Ricci’s approach and to adopt an approach of identifying European culture with Christianity. The opposition to “indigenization” was related to larger controversies between the Dominicans and Jesuits over the adoption of local practices of other regions, for example, the ascetic brahman practices of India, which I will take up later. Because of this controversy, the reception of Western music was limited to the court and churches and it remained as mere entertainment for the princely classes. It also caused the Chinese Rites Controversy, a dispute within the Roman Catholic Church, in the early eighteenth century. It was about whether Chinese folk religious rites and offerings to the Emperor constituted idolatry, and was raised mainly by the Dominicans. Pope Clement XI decided in favor of the Dominicans, which greatly reduced Catholic missionary activity in China.¹¹

After the Jesuit missionaries, it is an important fact that Protestant missionaries began entering China in 1807. Robert Morrison of the London Missionary Society produced a Chinese translation of the Bible and also compiled a Chinese dictionary for Westerners. Protestant missionary activities increased after China lost the First Opium War (1840-1842). Under the protection of the Western powers, they went on to play a major role in the Westernization of China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The post Opium War era is said to mark the true start of the spread of Western music through the secular channel.¹² Shanghai became a flourishing city of Western culture in China with its foreign settlements. In the nineteenth century, international attention on Shanghai grew due to its economic and trade potential. According to treaties after the end of the First Opium War, treaty ports including Shanghai were opened for international trade and foreign countries were allowed to visit and trade. In 1854, the Shanghai Municipal Council was created to manage the foreign settlements.

The Shanghai Symphony Orchestra is influential in China till today. It was founded in 1879 as the Shanghai Public Band, one of the earliest orchestras in East Asia. It was renamed the Shanghai Municipal Council Symphony Orchestra (SMO) in 1922. An Italian pianist Mario Paci, who served as conductor for twenty-three years from 1919, expanded the ensemble into a full-scale orchestra. At first, the members of the SMO were foreigners only, and Tan Shuzhen became the first Chinese who served as a violinist for the SMO in 1927.¹³ After the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, the SMO adopted its current name in 1956.

¹⁰ Melvin et al., p. 46.

¹¹ Pope XII modified his predecessor’s decision in 1939.

¹² Melvin et al., p. 84. For the Western music in Shanghai, see Yasuko Enomoto, *Gakujin no Miyako, Shanghai: Kindai Chugoku niokeru Seiyō Ongaku no Jūyō* (Kenbunshuppan, 1998), (榎本泰子『楽人の都・上海—近代中国における西洋音楽の受容—』研文出版).

¹³ Ibid., pp. 89-106.

Another important institution is the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. It grew out of the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music established by Cai Yuanpei in 1927. Xiao Youmei who graduated from the Leipzig Conservatory of Music was a director of the new school and curriculum. It was one of the first institutions for higher learning of Western music in China where many teaching staff came from Russia and France. It was renamed several times: the National Training School of Music (1929), Branch of the National Conservatory of Music (1943), Shanghai National Training School of Music (1945), and Shanghai and Huadong Branches of the Chinese Conservatory of Music (early 1950s). It adopted its current name in 1956.

The New Culture Movement of the 1910s and 1920s to lead a revolt against Confucian culture evoked a lasting interest in Western music. The followers of this movement called for the creation of a new Chinese culture based on Western standards, especially democracy and science. A number of Chinese musicians returned from studying abroad to perform Western classical music and to compose new works. Symphony orchestras were formed in major cities. It is worth mentioning that Indian Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) delivered lectures in China in 1924 and discussed the detrimental effects of China integrating much more Western civilization into Chinese society. Despite Tagore's lectures, Western ideals rapidly gained support throughout China.

Following the Yan'an Talks on Literature and Art, a work by Mao Zedong (1893-1976) on the role of literature and art in the communist state in 1942, a large-scale campaign was launched to adopt folk music for the creation revolutionary songs for educating the illiterate rural population on the goals of the Chinese Communist Party towards the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. One such example is *The East Is Red*, a folksong from northern Shaanxi that was the de facto anthem of the People's Republic of China during the Cultural Revolution.¹⁴ Xian Xinghai (1905-1945), who was active during this period, composed the *Yellow River Cantata*, which became the most well known of all of his works.¹⁵

4. Some Comparative Aspects: Russia, China, and India

The Chinese experiences with Western music seem to be similar to the Indian experiences from the encounter with Jesuit missionaries to colonial rule. The first encounter with Western music was brought by Jesuit missionaries and its substantial reception started under European rule in China and India. Nevertheless, several differences can be pointed out when we compare their experiences in the history of Christianity. Christian communities have continuously existed for more than a thousand years in India; on the other hand, there was a historical gap between ancient Nestorianism and medieval Jesuitism in China. Moreover, the Jesuit mission was finally broken up after the Chinese Rites Controversy that weakened Christianity in China.

¹⁴ The Chinese film *East Is Red* (1965) is directed by Wang Ping. It is a "song and dance epic" promoting Communism, especially the Maoism prevalent in the Communist Party of China in the early 1960s.

¹⁵ In the late 1960s, it was adapted into a piano concerto entitled the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* by the pianist Yin Chengzong.

Based on the above descriptions on the reception of Christianity and Western music in Russia and China, we can propose the following comparative aspects. First, Christianity has continuously existed in India and Russia. China, however, does not share this experience of its long existence; instead, Christianity has been weakened or even disappeared several times and there have been historical gaps in between. Second, most emperors or kings were generous to heathens and foreigners in India and Russia. Chinese rulers, however, sometimes suppressed Christianity.

It is also worth using terms such as modernization, Westernization, and nationalism in order to explain the differences. India's case can be explained as the Indian nationalist movement adopting modernization but avoiding Westernization since there was no trend in India such as the New Culture Movement in China adopting Westernization. India was rather selective in accepting the merits of modernization and was more critical of accepting Western ideology as we can know from Tagore's lectures delivered in China. Indian composers did not adopt eclectic methods of integrating Western music into Indian music. Indian classical music was regarded as a national heritage in terms of preserving tradition though popular music has been continuously influenced by Western pop music.¹⁶ Accordingly, Chinese eclectic methods in music can be analyzed better by a comparison with the case of Russian musical nationalism.

So, what is the cause of such different consequences despite the similarities in the process of social transformation? I will explore this issue in the following sections by focusing on the Indian experience.

5. St. Thomas Christians in India

India has a long history of Christianity that started from the legendary apostle, Thomas.¹⁷ According to the Indian Christian tradition, the Apostle Thomas arrived in Kodungallur, Kerala in 52 AD to spread the gospel amongst Jewish settlements, and established seven churches in present-day Kerala and Tamil Nadu. According to legend, San Thome Basilica in Chennai was built on the site where St. Thomas is believed to have been buried (Plate 3). Followers of St. Thomas are called St. Thomas Christians, Syrian Malabar Christians, or Nasranis.¹⁸

¹⁶ Few musicians were trained in Western music seriously before Independence.

¹⁷ References on the legend and story of St. Thomas in India are as follows: S. J. Anthonysamy, *A Saga of Faith: St. Thomas, the Apostle of India* (Chennai: National Shrine of St. Thomas Basilica, 2004); Herman D'Souza, *In the Steps of St. Thomas*, 1st edition in 1952, 5th edition (Madras: Disciples of St. Thomas, 2009).

¹⁸ References on the history and communities of St. Thomas Christians are as follows: Books LLC, ed., *Christian Communities of India: Mangalorean Catholics, Goan Catholics, Syrian Malabar Nasrani, East Indians, Roman Catholic Brahmin, Marathi Christians, List of Syro-Malabar Catholics, Karwari Catholics, Mangalorean Protestants* (Tennessee, 2010); Books LLC, ed., *Christian Denominations in India: Mar Thoma Church, Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Syro-Malabar Cholic Church, Malankara Church, Timeline of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Church of South India, Malabar Independent Syrian Church, Jacobite Syrian Christian Church* (Tennessee, 2010); Antony Kariyil, *Church and Society in Kerala: A Sociological Study* (New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 1995); Antony George Pattaparambil, *The Failed Rebellion of Syro-Malabar Christians: A Historiographical Analysis of the Contributions of Paulinus of St. Bartholomew* (Roma: Pattaparambil, 2007). The following brief historical sketch was written by referring to these books and articles.

According to historians, Bishop David of Basra was sent as a missionary to India around 300 AD. Thomas of Cana (Knai Thomman), a Mesopotamian merchant and missionary, brought a mission to India in 345 AD. He brought four hundred Christians from Baghdad to Kodungallur and asked for refuge under the Chera (today's Kerala) King from persecution of Christians by the Persian king, Shapur II. The colony of Syrian Christians established at Kodungallur may be the first Christian community in South India for which there is a continuous written record. Accordingly, Thomas of Cana might have been confused with the Apostle Thomas by Syrian Christians in India.



Plate 3. St. Thomas Basilika. Chennai

The Syrian Malabar Nasrani community was further strengthened by various Persian immigrants who settled there. Local rulers in Kerala gave the St. Thomas Christians various rights and privileges. The group living in Kerala peacefully for more than one thousand years started to suffer persecution by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century.

The Portuguese refused to accept the legitimate authority of the Indian caste hierarchy and its relation with the East Syrians. The Jesuit missionary, Francis Xavier, is responsible for his role in initiating the Goa Inquisition and the persecution of heathens, as well as the destruction of native idols and temples. He noticed that the newly converted Christians were practicing their old customs and traditions. He requested that the King of Portugal should establish an Inquisition in Goa in 1545 and said that there were many who lived according to Jewish Law and according to the Mohammedan Sect, without any fear of God or bearing any shame of the world.

The Portuguese succeeded in appointing a Latin bishop to govern the Thomas Christians, and the local Christians' customs were officially anathematized. The Archbishop of Goa imposed Latinizations in 1599. As all the texts of the Syrian Liturgy and traditions were burnt, no record of their early rites and customs following the East Syrian Rite has been available since then. The oppressive rule of the Portuguese provoked a violent reaction on the part of the indigenous Christian community.

The first protest took place in 1653, known as the Koonan Kurishu Satyam. As a result, the St. Thomas Christians were divided in two: The majority of the St. Thomas Christians who accepted the Latin Rite are known as Syro-Malabar Christians (Syro-Malabar Catholic Church) and the minority who refused to serve under the Jesuits established the Syro-Malankara Rite (West Syrian Jacobite and Orthodox). Further divisions took place in the eighteenth century onwards, and the present Nasranis are roughly divided into the following groups (Plate 4):

both Indian and Western musical instruments (violin, keyboard, tabla, sitar, and so on); some songs are highly Westernized and others are not.¹⁹ Such musical and linguistic diversity observed in the Liturgy of St. Thomas Christians can be more or less recognized in the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches that I consider in the following sections.

6. Jesuit Missionaries and Music

Goa had been a Portuguese overseas territory in India that existed for about four hundred and fifty years until it was annexed by India in 1961. The Portuguese first reached the west coast of India when Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut in 1498. Afonso de Albuquerque conquered Goa in 1510 and made it a headquarters in 1530. Catholic missionary activities soon followed. Under Portuguese rule, the indigenous Goan population converted to Christianity on a large scale. The locals were usually granted Portuguese citizenship after conversion. As a result, Goa became the center of Christian missionary activity in the East. Contemporary Goan Catholics are mainly descendants of those who belonged to upper castes such as Brahmans and Kshatryas who converted from Hinduism and belong to an ethno-religious community of Roman Catholics who speak the Konkani language.²⁰

The Portuguese missionaries who accompanied the conquerors were the Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans, and Augustinians. They first reached the Malabar Coast in the late fifteenth century. They made contact with the St. Thomas Christians and sought to introduce Catholicism among



Plate 5. Basilica of Bom Jesus, Goa



Plate 6. The Body of Xavier, Basilica of Bom Jesus, Goa

¹⁹ I carried out my field work on the Liturgy of the Syro-Malabar Church in 2010 in Bangalore. Father Mathew Chandrankunnel of Dharmaram College, Bangalore helped me in my research and imparted a lot of knowledge on their liturgy. The description of their music here relies on this field work and the music books and CDs acquired at that time.

²⁰ References on the history of Portuguese and Jesuit missionaries in India are as follows: Robert Erick Frykenberg, ed., *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross-Cultural Communication since 1500* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003); Frederick Charles Danvers, *The Portuguese in India: Being a History of the Rise and Decline of Their Eastern Empire*, Vol.I-II (New Delhi and Madras: Asian Educational Services, 1992, first published in 1894); Joseph Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India Volume II: From the Middle of the Sixteenth to the End of the Seventeenth Century (1542-1700)* (Bangalore: The Church History Association of India, 1982).

and the keyboard.²³

On the other hand, Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656) (Plate 10), an Italian Jesuit missionary sent to Southern India, adopted another strategy of accommodating local Hindu customs, that is, “indigenization,” to preach Christianity, which was in his view not contrary to Christianity. He arrived in Goa in 1605 and then settled in Madurai in 1606. Studying Sanskrit and Tamil literature through a Hindu scholar, he approached high-caste people and engaged in dialogue with Hindu scholars on the truths of Christianity. He called himself a “Tattuva Bhodini (teacher of wisdom)” and began to conduct himself like a Sannyāsīn (an ascetic). Adopting the Hindu custom of shaving his head and keeping only a tiny tuft, he wore a white dhoti and wooden sandals, and a three-stringed thread across the chest that he interpreted as representing the Holy Trinity, namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He was certainly one of the early Europeans to gain a deeper understanding of Sanskrit and Tamil.

His strategy raised fierce controversy among his fellow Jesuits and with the Archbishop of Goa. The dispute was settled by Pope Gregory XV in 1623. The customs of the three-stringed thread, the tuft, the use of sandalwood paste on the forehead, and baths were allowed as far as they did not imply any superstitious conduct. The Pope also invited the Indian neophytes to overcome their caste sensitivity and their discrimination against the Pariahs.²⁴

Contrary to Xavier who initiated “Latinization,” de Nobili’s approach was apparently similar to that of Matteo Rich who adopted an “indigenization” strategy in China. In fact, there had been indigenized St. Thomas Christians long before the arrival of the Portuguese in India. The controversy over the strategy of “indigenization” was first raised as a question against the St. Thomas Christians and then among Jesuit missionaries, that is to say, the controversy between Xavier’s Latinization and de Nobili’s indigenization. On the other hand, the Chinese Rites Controversy occurred mainly between the Dominicans and the Jesuits, that is, the Dominicans’ Latinization versus Matteo Rich’s indigenization.

As de Nobili was carrying on his mission not in Goa under Portuguese rule but in Madurai under tolerant native rule, it might have been necessary for the Catholic Rite in Madurai to be more indigenized than the Rite in Goa.



Plate 10. Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656)

²³ For the music of Goa, see José Pereira and Martins Micael, *Song of Goa: Mandos of Yearning* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2000).

²⁴ References on the Jesuit missionaries in Madurai are as follows: R. Satyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura* (Oxford University Press, 1924); J. H. Nelson, *The Madura Country: A Manual in Five Parts* (Asian Educational Services, 1989, first published in 1868, Part 3).

7. Christian Music under the British Raj

The interactions between Europeans and natives around music from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, Protestant missionaries, British residents and officials, native Christians, and Hindu rulers and musicians have already been described in my previous two papers as I said in Introduction. Therefore, I will summarize these papers.

In my first paper, “The Reception of Western Music in South India around 1800,” I focused on the Western music appreciated by natives in South India around 1800. I particularly concentrated on analyzing the contribution of Serfoji II (reigned 1798-1832), then Maratha King of Thanjavur (in present Tamil Nadu), who is said to have been the first Indian composer appropriating Western music. He collected sheet music of popular works published in England. As the informants on music around him were British officials, residents, missionaries, and musicians belonging to the Governor’s band, Serfoji II became more familiar with military band music. He established the Tanjore (Thanjavur) Band attached to his palace and composed music for the band.

Serfoji II had a close friendship with the Christian missionaries who introduced him to Western learning and culture, which nurtured his knowledge of Western music. Friedrich Schwartz (1726-1798), a German Protestant missionary, was the most important personality among them. Having learnt Tamil to assist in a translation of the Bible, Schwartz decided to be a missionary to India. He taught Prince Serfoji along with another pupil, Vedanayakam Sastiriyar (1774-1864), a Tamil Christian. Vedanayakam was a proficient poet/lyricist who left over five hundred lyrics and a hundred and thirty-three books on Christianity.

I also refer to other examples of the Western impact on Indian music of the same period: *Noṭṭusvara Sāhitya*, a collection of Western-style songs with Sanskrit lyrics composed by Muttusvami Diksitar (1775-1835), is an example of an Indian reconstruction of Western music. As we can see through these songs, the Western major scale and simple beats (three or four beats) can be regarded as a typical Indian understanding of Western music, which might strengthen the Indian perception of the complexity of their own music. I also discuss the adoption of the violin as an indispensable instrument for Carnatic music (South Indian classical music) today. The violin had been totally indigenized by its tuning, playing techniques, and the way of holding it.

There are questions that should be answered: What is the implication of Serfoji II’s positive approach to Western music? Why did he show a keen interest in Western culture and learning? And how can we interpret his ambiguous attitude between the native Indians and the British? Serfoji II lived in a transitional period from native rule to the British Raj. He lost his political power and seems to have acted as a good friend to the British. While he did not convert to Christianity but remained a staunch Hindu, he was a generous patron of both native and Western culture as his ancestral rulers were.

Serfoji II’s ambiguous attitude can be interpreted as neither a simple reaction to the colonial discourse nor a negotiation with the colonial policy of “divide and rule.” It is rather better interpreted that the native constructed the British as the exotic “Other” in the period of the first colonial encounter. Serfoji II tried to obtain Western knowledge similar to Orientalists’ pursuit of

indigenous knowledge. Both the native and colonial ways of practice were empirical and experimental in their collecting of original texts and depending on the knowledge of either native or colonial informants as the “Other.”

In my second paper, “Interactions between Missionaries and Native Christians on Music in South India: Constructing Hindu-Christian Identity,” I tried to reconstruct an alternative history of Carnatic music in which non-Brahman, Tamil-speaking native Christians were active. The conventional historiography of Carnatic music is usually constructed along with the Hindu religious tradition in the nationalist line promoted by dominant Hindu leaders against British rule. According to this kind of historiography, the period in which Carnatic music flourished under Thanjavur Maratha rule is regarded as the golden era. Tyagaraja (1767-1847), Muttuswami Dikshitar (1775-1835), and Syama Sastri (1762-1827), the so-called Trinity of Carnatic Music, belong to this period. They were all Brahmans who composed either in Telugu, the official language of the Nayakas (local rulers after the Vijayanagara Empire before the Marathas) or in Sanskrit, a literary language used by the Brahmans. They hardly composed in Tamil, a local language of this region, since then. The lack of a Tamil repertoire in Carnatic music prompted the Tamil Isai (music) movement, propagating Tamil songs at the beginning of the 1940s.

For reconstructing an alternative historiography of Carnatic music, I describe four distinguished native Christians: Vedanayagam (Pillai) Sastiriyar (1774-1864), Mayuram Vedanayagam Pillai (1826-89), A. M. Chinnaswami Mudaliyar (1813-1901), and Abraham Pandithar (1859-1919). It is important to point out that their activities were the result of interactions with Christian missionaries, British residents, and officials, while the musical Trinity of Carnatic Music was closely related with native rulers.

I interpret the differences in their approach to music as follows. Vedanayagam Sastiriyar’s purpose was to promote evangelical thought through music. Vedanayagam Pillai intended to be secular by not addressing any personal god. Chinnaswami Mudaliyar tried preserving and promoting the music of his time. And Abraham Pandithar constructed a great history of the Tamils and Tamil Isai (music). Though their approaches and intentions varied, their strategic use of dichotomous categories, that is, Hindu/Christian, Indian/European, Brahman/Non-Brahman, upper/lower caste etc., were common to all of them. Thus, they were expressing themselves through music as a powerful cultural medium and constructing their identities between the colonizer and the colonized in the transitional period from native rule to the British Raj.

In India under the British Raj, there has been no movement of Westernization that can be found in the New Culture Movement of China. As I said before, Rabindranath Tagore delivered lectures in China warning of the detrimental effects of rapid Westernization. Colonization by the British and the founding of the Indian Empire in the mid-nineteenth century and the rise soon after of the nationalist movement against British rule might have prevented the spread of Westernization. Consequently, Indian musicians and scholars hardly learned European classical music; instead, they adhered to the Indian musical tradition as being as spiritually and scientifically lofty as European classical music.

8. Christian Music after Independence

In this paper, I have tried to interpret the Western impacts on music in Russia, China, and India by describing both European missionaries and native Christians as intermediary actors in the contact zone. My final question is to ask what the most characteristic feature of the Christian music of India is in comparison with the Russian and Chinese experiences.

As we can see, while the Protestant missionaries had no restriction in using the native language and adopting indigenous customs, the Catholic missionaries sometimes imposed Latin on the natives. The Second Vatican Council was convoked by Pope John XXIII to “open up the windows and let the fresh air in.” The document issued in 1963 says that the Church approves of all art that can be best used for the Liturgy, allows the use of the vernacular in the Mass and the Sacraments, and even encourages the use of the vernacular in the readings and common prayer. Accordingly, the music of the native people is adapted for use in the Liturgy of Churches, and missionaries have been encouraged to learn indigenous musical traditions. Thereafter, no prohibition has been imposed upon the musical styles used in the Liturgy.²⁵

In India, this decision brought a great change to Christian music in Catholic churches. The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI) was established as a permanent association of the Catholic bishops of India. It was formally constituted in September 1944 at the Conference of Metropolitans held in Madras. In 1962, the CBCI headquarters were transferred from Bangalore to its present center in New Delhi. In October 1966, the CBCI decided to start a center to organize and induce liturgical and catechetical renewal in India and instituted the Commissions for Catechetics and Liturgy. The Liturgical Commission and the National Centre for Catechetics and Liturgy in Bangalore were established at the General Meeting held in October, 1966 at New Delhi. In 1971, the center’s area of service and research was broadened and became known as the National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre. It is an all-India institution set up in Bangalore to promote and co-ordinate the renewal of Christian life in the Church according to the principles outlined by the Second Vatican Council.²⁶

In 1968, a sub-commission for music discussed how vernacular language and indigenous music could be adapted to the liturgical process. It is worth pointing out that bishops did not enforce a particular style of music on any community, but rather allowed the use of indigenous

²⁵ Stephen F. Duncan, *A Genre in Hindusthani Music (Bhajans) as Used in the Catholic Church* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), pp. 5-7. The text of related provisions of the Second Vatican Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963 is available on the following website: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.

²⁶ Basic information on the Catholic Bishops’ Council is on the following website: <http://cbci.in/default.aspx>. There is another reference on the liturgical renewal in the Indian Catholic Church as follows: Jon Douglas Anderson, “Theology and Inculturation in India” (with Dr. Michael Sirilla), in *Sacrosanctum Concilium and Inculturation of Liturgy in the Post-Conciliar Indian Catholic Church*, THE 740 (Franciscan University, Steubenville, 2009) [http://cua.academia.edu/JonAnderson/Papers/237033/Sacrosanctum_Concilium_and_Inculturation_of_Liturgy_in_the_Post-Conciliar_Indian_Catholic_Church].

music and musical instruments to help the local community.²⁷ After the Second Vatican Council, a number of bishops started learning either Hindustani (North Indian classical) or Carnatic music intensively and composing devotional songs where the popular styles of Hindu devotional song called *bhajan* and *kirtana* are preferred. These songs were recorded and CDs and cassettes are sold widely.

Today, the Christian music of India greatly varies both in musical form and language. When we visit major churches in metropolitan cities such as Bangalore, Chennai, Panaji, and elsewhere, the Mass is held in various languages particularly on festival days: English, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi are used in Bangalore, while English, Portuguese, Konkani, Marathi, Hindi, and Kannada are used in Panaji and so on. The music performed by the choir and both prayers and hymns by the bishop and congregation vary in accordance with the language used, even from one church to another. The English devotional songs sung in the English Mass are famous even in Japan for their Japanese translations. This extreme variety can be observed neither in Russian Orthodoxy nor in China. I assume that this ultimate diversity of Christian music is the most characteristic feature of the Christian music of India.

I will briefly describe various examples based on my fieldwork.²⁸ Dharmaram College established in Bangalore is a major seminary for Syro-Malabar Christians.²⁹ As I have explained, they are very much indigenized not only in their rites but also their designs: the picture of Jesus on the chapel building looks like a yogin, a Hindu saint in meditation sitting cross-legged with a special hand gesture (Plate 11). Inside the chapel, we can find several pictures of similar Hindu design. Maria in their Christmas decorations in the garden before the chapel building greatly resembles an Indian woman (Plate 12). The devotional songs in Malayalam composed by Fr. Joy Kakkannattu, one of the staff members of the college (Plate 13), are sung by college students to the accompaniment of the tabla, the keyboard, the guitar, and the violin (Plate 14).



Plate 11. Jesus in meditation, a picture of the church building, Dharmaram College, Bangalore



Plate 12. The birth of Jesus, a Christmas decoration in the garden, Dharmaram College, Bangalore

²⁷ Duncan, pp. 9-11.

²⁸ My field work was carried out in the following periods mainly from December 19th, 2010 to January 2nd, 2011 at Bangalore and Chennai. I express my gratitude to Fr. Mathew Cahndrakunnel of Syro-Malabar Catholic Church for his help of my research. I also visited Goa in 1984, 1986, 1996, and 2011.

²⁹ For details of this college, see the following website: <http://www.dharmaram.in/>.

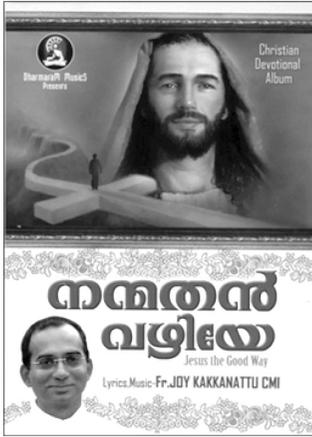


Plate 13. CD jacket of Christian devotional songs in Malayalam “Jesus the Good Way” in the call-and-response style, composed by Fr. Joy Kakkannattu CMI, Dharmaram College, Bangalore



Plate 14. Christmas songs in Malayalam composed by Fr. Joy Kakkannattu, performed by college students and staff, accompanied by the keyboard, the tabla, guitar, and violin, Dharmaram College, Bangalore

The Christmas Mass of the Syro-Malabar Christians is also held at other churches for the Malayalam-speaking congregation in Bangalore. A staff member of Dharmaram College is sent there. Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Bangalore (Plate 15) is a Catholic church where the Mass is held. Maria in the Christmas decoration in the garden may not resemble an Indian women compared to that of Syro-Malabar Church (Plate 16) but their devotional songs in Kannada composed by Fr. Chasara of this church are completely indigenized using conventional expressions of Hindu



Plate 15. Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Bangalore



Plate 16. The birth of Jesus, a Christmas decoration in the garden, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Bangalore

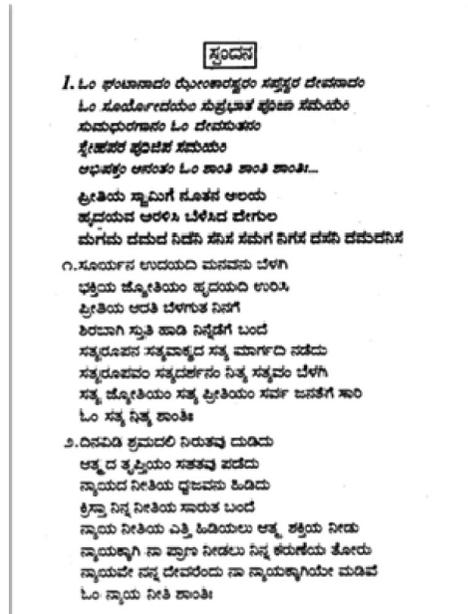


Plate 17. Lyric of a Christian devotional song in Kannada “Preethiyaswamige,” composed by Fr. Chasara, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Bangalore

first experiment of this kind but a fairly common method that Abraham Pandithar, mentioned in the previous chapter, also used in his book entitled *Karṇāmirṭta Cākarat Tiraṭṭu: A Practical Course in South Indian Music for Beginners*.³⁰

9. Concluding Remarks

I first briefly described the musical activities of missionaries and natives in the process of spreading Christianity in Russia and China, and I then proceeded to analyze the Indian case in more detail in this paper. Applying the analytical concept of intermediary actors in the contact zone, the reception and construction of Christian music in these three countries can be roughly summarized as the following framework of comparison: Westernization as opposed to indigenization and between them, an ambivalent group. Westernization is characterized by modernization, Latinization, Portugalization, universalism, and the emphasis on one's originality. The RMS in Russia, the Portuguese, the Dominicans, the anti-Confucian New Culture Movement, the SMO, and the SCM in China, and the Portuguese, Xavier, the Dominicans, and the Tanjore Band in India can be classified into this category. Indigenization is characterized by Sinicization, Indianization, musical nationalism, and modernization without Westernization. Glinka and the Mighty Five in Russia, Ricci, the Cultural Revolution, the *East is Red*, and *Yellow River Cantata* in China, the St. Thomas Christians, de Nobili, Tagore, and native Christian composers in India can be classified into this category. The ambivalent group is characterized by the in-betweenness of Europe, the West, or the Occident and Asia, the East, or the Orient. The Russian Orthodox Choir and probably Byzantine music can be classified into this category.

The above categorization is no more than a tentative assumption that should be examined in further detail. I have to point out a difficulty of the above categorization in its application. For example, musical nationalism in Russia and the music of the Cultural Revolution in China could not have existed without Westernization: the basic musical texture of Glinka and the Mighty Five in Russia and the *Yellow River Cantata* in China is nothing other than the European classical music of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Therefore, they may likely be categorized into the ambivalent group at a practical level. Nevertheless, the reason that I categorized them into the indigenization group is that I stressed the importance of the ideological level of nationalism. I believe however that applying “intermediary actors in the contact zone” as an analytical concept serves the comparative study of diverse culture to some extent.

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³⁰ This book published in 1907 is a notation book including not only his compositions but also famous songs with Christian lyrics. See Takako Inoue, *Kindai Indo niokeru Ongakugaku to Geino no Henyo* (Seikyusha, 2006), p. 192 (井上貴子『近代インドにおける音楽学と芸能の変容』青弓社).

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