

Path from India

Path from Japan

Lecture Series on India-Japan Relations

Compiled by
Sengaku Mayeda



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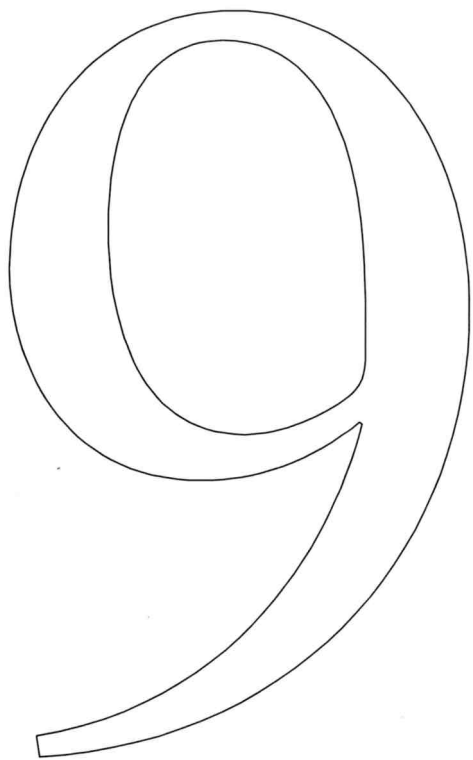
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**The Indian Impacts on
Japanese Traditional Performing Arts**

Takako Inoue

1. Two International Phases in the History of Japanese Performing Arts

When we review the history of Japanese traditional performing arts, we can find two phases of internationalization. The first phase is around the Nara period (710-794) when several types of performing arts were brought from China, Korea and other Asian countries along with Buddhism, which originated in India. The second phase is from the Meiji period until the present, (1867 onward) when the Western culture came to be adopted along with Imperialism. The common feature of these two phases is that it was regarded as an important policy for the Government to adapt to foreign cultures for the betterment of state governance. In both periods, exchange programs were conducted by the Government; Japanese scholars were sent to foreign countries to learn the advanced culture, and foreign scholars were invited to train them. The first phase is more prominent to study the Indian impacts on Japanese traditional performing arts.

The Japanese scholars had continuously been sent to China to study Chinese culture from 607 (the Asuka period) till 894 (the Early Heian period). They are called Kenzuishi and Kentōshi (Japanese envoy to the Sui and the Tang Dynasty of China). Their purposes were to learn advanced technologies and knowledge, to collect Buddhist sūtras, and to gather the information of foreign countries. After the suspension of sending scholars in the Heian period, the imported foreign cultures have been gradually transformed according to the Japanese taste intermingling with indigenous culture. Some of the imported performing arts died out, but some are still preserved in Japan. My paper focuses on the performing arts of the first phase, particularly on Gagaku, the court music and dance. I will also refer to some other traditional performing arts such as Shōmyō, Mōsō-biwa and Gigaku.

2. Gagaku

2-1 The Brief History of Gagaku

Gagaku is one of the oldest performing arts preserved for more than 1,400 years in Buddhist temples, Shintō shrines, and the Imperial Court. 80 musicians and dancers from Shiragi (Silla) in the Korean Peninsula visited Japan and gave the performance of their dance and music in 453. That is the earliest record of importation of the foreign performing arts. The Imperial Music Bureau (Utamainotsukasa, or Gagakuryō) was first established within the Imperial Court in 701, and from then Gagaku has been officially reorganized as one of the Imperial music and dance repertoires.

When the military class was in ascendance in the 12th century, the imperial court lost its power and could not maintain to patronize Gagaku, though large temples and shrines continued to support Gagaku. Since then, the number of musicians has gradually decreased and many pieces have been lost. The three main music bureaus called Sanpō-gakuso played an important role for preserving the tradition in the medieval times. They are the Tennōji-gakuso at the Shitennōji temple in Osaka, the Ōuchi-gakuso at the Imperial Court in Kyoto, and the Nanto-gakuso at the Kasugataisha shrine in Nara. Later, the musicians and dancers of these three groups were called together to Edo (present Tokyo) in the days of the Third Shogun Iemitsu of Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1867), and the Momijiyama Music Bureau was newly established.

In 1890, the Meiji government reorganized these music bureaus to restore Gagaku and established the Gagaku Bureau, the present Music Department, Board of the Ceremonies of the Imperial Household Agency. Today, Gagaku is not only one of the regular repertoires of the Music Department performed in the ceremonies and functions held at the Imperial Palace and the other places, but also widely performed at temples and shrines.

2-2 Gagaku: The Tonal Theory

The tonal theory of Gagaku originated in the Chinese musical theory called 7 *chō* 5 *tan*; total 60 modes resulted by the modal-shift of tonic of 5 main notes selected from 12 heptatonic scales derived from the chromatic scale of 12 notes in an octave. While in China this theory was developed into the 84 modes system, in Japan it was later reorganized into 6 modes based on two scales, Ritsu and Ryo, according to Japanese taste. Though Ritsu and Ryo are theoretically heptatonic scales, the practical melody is constructed on pentatonic scales; the name of each note is Kyū, Shō, Kaku, Chi and U in the ascending order. The 6 *chōs* (modes) used in the present Gagaku are derived from two scales by the modal shift of tonic: Ichikotsu-*chō*, Sōjō, and Taishiki-*chō* from Ryo scale, and Hyōjō, Ōshiki-*chō* and Banshiki-*chō* from Ritsu scale.

We can find theoretical similarities in the Indian classical music; Ritsu scale is equal to Kharaharapriya of present Karnataka / Carnatic music, and Ryo scale to Harikāmbhoji. When we refer to the ancient Indian musical treatise *Nāṭya-śāstra*, we can find the tonal theory called the *grāma-jāti* system. There are two main modes, *sa-grāma* and *ma-grāma*; the former is almost equal to the modern Kharaharapriya, and Harikāmbhoji is supposed to be a basic scale of the ancient Tamil music. According to the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, *jātis* used in the practical music were derived from two *grāmas* and constructed by selecting notes from each mode which was formed by *mūrcchana*, the modal-shift of tonic of each *grāma*. It means that the ancient Japanese music and Indian music shared not only the basic scales but also theoretical techniques.

The Chinese tonal theory is said to have been taught by Sogiba (Sujiva), a musician from Kiji (Kucha), a kingdom of central Asia, where Buddhism flourished when the Central Asia and North India was under the rule of Kuśāna Dynasty (the 1st - 3rd centuries AD). Sogiba (Sujiva) was an expert of the *gogen-biwa*, a five stringed lute that originated in India, which will be explained later. He visited China in 568 and taught the Indian tonal theory to Chinese musicians. Thus, the Chinese tonal theory is supposed

to have originated in that of Indian music. We can find similar pronunciations between the names used for *chōs* of Gagaku and Indian *jātis* mentioned in chapter 28 of the *Nāṭya-śāstra*: Sada-*chō* is similar to Śadjī, Taishiki-*chō* or Kotsujiki-*chō* to Kaisikī, and Banshiki-*chō* to Pañcamī. Śadjī is a *jāti* derived from *sa-grāma*, and Kaisikī and Pañcamī from *ma-grāma*. Sada-*chō* was later absorbed into Ichikotsu-*chō*. These *chōs* and *jātis* do not always have common pitches, though their names may share similar pronunciations. We can find traces of Indian tonal theory only in their names.

2-3 Gagaku: The Rhythmic Theory

Traces of the international characteristics can also be found in the rhythmic theory of Gagaku. Though the Japanese traditional music is usually based either on free rhythm or on two beats, several kinds of time cycles are available in Gagaku. Its basic time cycles are such as Nobe-byōshi (8/4, slow tempo), Haya-byōshi (4/4, quick tempo), Tada-byōshi (2 + 4, slow and quick), and Yatara-byōshi (2 + 3, quick tempo). Particularly, we cannot find any trace of Yatara-byōshi, neither in Chinese music nor in that of Korean Peninsula, though this type of rhythmic cycle is quite popular in Indian music and in that of West Asia. The word '*tara*' of Yatara-byōshi is said to have been derived from the word '*tāla*' which denotes the rhythmic cycle of Indian music.

The musical form of Gagaku basically consists of three parts, Jo (introduction), Ha (development), and Kyū (climax). All of the Gagaku compositions do not always include all these three parts. Jo-ha-kyū are also widely used as the words denoting tempos in Japanese traditional music: Jo is equal to slow tempo, Ha to medium, and Kyū to fast, which are equal to three *lavas* of Indian music: *vilambita*, *madhya*, and *druta*. In Gagaku, 1 beat of Nobe-byōshi and 2 beats of Haya-byōshi are regarded as equal in length. Such a way of time-measurement is similar to the relation between the first *kāla* and the second *kāla*. Before the commencement of a composition, a brief introduction in free rhythm, called Netori in case of Bugaku (with dance) or Chōshi in case of Kangen (instrumental), is performed for tuning musical instruments. The

entrance music of dancers in Bugaku, called Ranjō, is also an introduction or prelude rendered in free rhythm before the commencement of an actual Bugaku composition. These introductory parts share the characteristics of *rāga ālāpaṇa* in Indian music.

2-4 Gagaku: Musical Instruments

Gagaku is orchestra music in which different types of wind, stringed, and percussion instruments are used. Several musical instruments used in the Nara period are preserved in the Shōsōin Imperial Repository near the Tōdaiji temple. Among them, the most interesting collections include lute-type stringed instruments called the *biwa*. There are two types of *biwa* preserved there, one is called the *yongen-biwa*,

the four-stringed lute with a curved neck, and the other is the *gogen-biwa*, the five-stringed lute with a straight neck. The former belongs to the same family of the present Japanese *biwa* and the Chinese *pipa*, and is said to have originated from the *barbat* of the Sasan Dynasty of Persia (224-651). The latter is said to have originated from the Indian *kaccapi vīṇā*. The *gogen-biwa* called 'Raden-shitan-nogogen-biwa' is preserved in the Shōsōin, which is the only existing instrument



Fig. 1

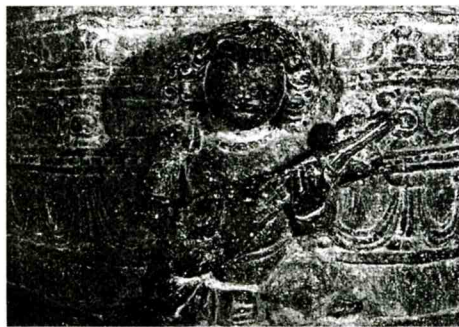


Fig. 2

of this type in the world and is even obsolete in China, India, and around the Silk Road. Interestingly, there is a mother-of-pearl work depicting a man on a camel holding the *yongen-biwa* or the *barbat* on the body of the *gogen-biwa* preserved in the Shōsōin. This fact shows us how active the international cultural exchange was in those days and people differentiated these two different types of lutes.

Those who study Japanese traditional music frequently ask me whether the *gogen-biwa* originated in India or not. Though the five-stringed lute with a straight neck or the *kaccapi vīṇā* is practically obsolete in India, there exist ancient reliefs and paintings of the musician holding the five-stringed lute at Buddhist remains such as Ajanta in Maharashtra, Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh, and other places in the Central and South India (Figure 1-6). The reliefs and paintings of Kinnara holding the five-stringed lute are available in the Ajanta caves famous for their wall paintings, which were constructed from the 1st century to the 7th century. Various sculptures in relief of musicians and dancers are excavated from the Buddhist remains at Amaravati, constructed from the 1st century to the mid 3rd century. Both harp-type and lute-type stringed instruments can be found among them. It is also worth mentioning that one musician with the harp and another with the five-stringed lute are depicted on both sides of a dancer of the panel excavated at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh. It is important that the four-stringed lute with a curved neck cannot be found in above mentioned sculptures and paintings in relief. On the other hand, musicians depicted in the Gandhāra art that flourished under the rule of Kuśāna Dynasty are holding the lute with a curved neck, the Persian *barbat*, or the harp, but not the lute with a straight neck. There are flying celestials holding the five-stringed lute in



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

a wall painting of the 8th cave of Kyzyl Buddhist caves constructed from the 3rd century to the 8th century in Kucha, which supports the legend of Sogiba, a lute player from Kucha. Accordingly, the harp-type stringed instruments were quite common those days, and the lute had been developed into several different shapes in different districts of Asia in the ancient times.

Nāṭya-śāstra mentions four types of *vīṇā*: *vipāñcī*, *citra*, *kaccapī* and *ghosaka*. The stringed instruments in general were commonly called '*vīṇā*' in ancient India. Among them, the *vipāñcī* with 9 strings and the *citra* with 7 strings are supposed to be harp-type *vīṇās* plucked by plectrums explained in Chapter 29. The *yāl*, appearing in ancient Tamil epics such as *Cilappatikāram*, is also said to be a harp-type. This type is called *Hōshu* (a neck of a mythological bird) – *kugo* in Japan, which is not preserved today. On the other hand, shapes and playing techniques of the *kaccapī* and the *ghosaka* are not clearly mentioned in *Nāṭya-śāstra* and only their names appear in Chapter 33. It is said that the lute-type *vīṇā* held by the



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Goddess *Sarasvatī* is called the *kaccapī* in ancient India. On the other hand, in Japan, the Goddess *Sarasvatī* is called *Benzaiten*, holding the *biwa* as same as *Sarasvatī* does. Though no references of the number of strings and the shape of *kaccapī* are available in any ancient treatises on music, it is quite certain that the most common stringed instruments were harp-type *vīṇās* at the time of *Nāṭya-śāstra*. In the 6th – 7th century, this type had gradually declined and instead, the stick zither-type *vīṇā* with one or more resonators under the stick type fingerboard became popular. This type had been widely used till the lute-type *vīṇās* such as the today's *sarasvatī-vīṇā* and *sitār* appeared as a main trend. Even today, this type such as the *rudra-vīṇā* is used occasionally.

Among percussion instruments, the Japanese word 'tsuzumi' is said to be a derivative of the Indian *dundubi*, a drum appearing in *Vedas*. The *dundubi* is praised in *Atharva-veda*, which is supposed to be a large kettle drum with big sound and beaten at the time of war between *devas* and *asuras*. On the other hand, the Japanese *tsuzumi* is a small hourglass drum; the *kakko* and the *sannotuzumi* in the Gagaku orchestra are good examples. Though several varieties of drums are mentioned in the Chapter 33 of *Nāṭya-śāstra*, their names only are available and there is no clear reference on their shapes and playing techniques. At that time, *mṛdaṅga*, *panava* and *dardara* were popular names of drums. Among the different types of drums found in the Amaravati reliefs, there are hourglass drums called *aṅkya* (lap) *mṛdaṅga* placed on a lap during the performance. *Nāṭya-śāstra* refers to this type of *mṛdaṅga*. The well-known hourglass drum used in modern India is the *edakka* which is often played for the accompaniment of Kathakali performance in Kerala. The *damaru* held in Śiva's hand is played by shaking. These hourglass drums have different playing techniques.

2-5 Gagaku: Repertoires

In the early times, there was no clear distinction between indigenous music (Kuniburi-no-utamai) and imported repertoires. In the 9th century, the imported repertoires were separately reorganized into two divisions according to which country the music was brought from: Tōgaku (music of the Tang Dynasty, the music originated in China, Vietnam, India, Persia and so on) as the Left, and Komagaku (Korean and Manchurian music) as the Right. Thereafter, the narrow sense of Gagaku has denoted imported repertoires, though the indigenous music and songs can be included in the wide sense of Gagaku. The narrow sense of Gagaku is also divided into two genres: Bugaku (with dance) and Kangen (instrumental music). The stringed instruments are played only in Kangen but not in Bugaku, and Komagaku includes Bugaku repertoires only.

Bugaku is usually divided into 4 styles: Bun-no-mai (or Hira-mai) for the graceful dance, Bu-no-mai for the sword dance,

Hasiri-mai for the active dance with masks. Besides them, there are Warabe-mai, children's dance, and Onna-mai, women's dance, that are performed without masks but with makeup. The dance techniques used in Bugaku are mainly based on pure dance (*nṛtta*), but some repertoires include dramatic movements or mime (*abhinaya*), which suggests us the connection to Gigaku, a dance drama to be explained later.

There is a group of Bugaku compositions called Rinyū-hachigaku (eight musical compositions of Rinyū or Champa, the ancient kingdom of Vietnam) among the Tōgaku repertoires. Two Buddhist monks, Bodaisenna (Bōdhisēna) from India and Buttetsu (Fattriet) from Vietnam, are said to have brought these compositions in 736, and taught them to musicians and dancers belonging to the Shitennōji temple in Osaka. Bōdhisēna was one of the most famous Indian priests at that time who was invited to lead the Daibutsu-kaigen-hōyō, the celebration of a newly made great Buddha image at the Tōdaiji temple in Nara in 752. On this occasion, not only Gagaku but also Gigaku, Shōmyō (to be explained later) and the other indigenous performing arts were performed.

The titles included in Rinyū-hachigaku are as follows: Ama, Bairo, Batō, Bosatsu, Genjōraku, Karyōbin, Konju, and Ranryō'ō. As they were brought by the priest from Vietnam, they had been called Rinyūgaku (music of Champa). According to the recent studies, most of them originated in India so that today they are called Tenjikugaku (Tenjiku is the ancient name of India in Japanese). In addition to them, Seigaiha and Sokōkō are also said to have originated in India. Hereinafter, I will give outlines of these compositions and indicate the Indian elements.

a. Ama-Ninomai

The word 'Ama' is said to have been derived from Indian 'Ammā', the Mother Goddess. The Ama dancer wears a mask called Zōmen, an abstract human face painted on the silk covered thick paper. Soon after the two Ama dancers finish dancing, Ninomai starts. Ninomai literally means the second dance. The two dancers wearing the masks of an old man and a woman with their brown skin and ugly faces try to imitate the Ama dance but cannot

do it properly. Thus, Ninomai is characterized by their comical movements. Some scholars say that its dramatic elements symbolize the Āryans' conquest over the Dravidians; Ama is an Āryan goddess, while an old man and a woman are Dravidians. The dramatic character of 'Ama-Ninomai' is supposed to be developed from Gigaku. A pair of compositions performed as a set is called Tsugai-mai.

The music of 'Ama' was originally composed in Sada-chō (Indian Śadjī?), but today it is played in Ichikotsu-chō. The main part of the composition is called 'Ama-Ranjō', in which the main melody is played by wind instruments not in unison but in free canon.

b. Genjōraku

The title 'Genjōraku' is derived from Kenjaraku, which means the music for finding a serpent. It is said to be a description of the ancient Indian king Pedu's (Batō in Japanese) dance for joy finding a serpent. This is basically a solo dance, though the serpent carrier appears during the performance. Pedu is a Vedic *rājarsi* who appears in the hymn for Aśvins of *Rig Veda* and in the charm against serpents, invoking the horse of Pedu slaying serpents in *Atharva-veda*. This is one of the repertoires of the Hashiri-mai with active movements. The dancer wears a mask with red skin, a big nose and big eyes. The masks made in a similar manner are usually said to indicate the Āryans. Pedu takes up the snake model and slays its head during the performance. Thus, the expression of this dance is also dramatic as I mentioned above 'Ama-Ninomai'. The music of 'Genjōraku' is composed in Taishiki-chō (Indian Kaisikī?).

c. Batō

'Batō' is an Indian king Pedu found in the Vedas, the same character as I mentioned above, 'Genjōraku'. The mask with red skin, a big nose and big eyes worn by a dancer is also similar to that of 'Genjōraku'. This dance is said to be a description of the angry father whose son was killed by a beast, otherwise that of the

mad Queen of Tang dynasty blinded by jealousy, though its origin is not clear. The music of 'Batō' is composed in Taishiki-chō as well as 'Genjōraku'. Thus, since 'Genjōraku' and 'Batō' share the common characteristics, they are usually performed as a set (Tsugai-mai). The peculiar rhythmic cycle called Yatara-byōshi, 2 + 3 beats as one cycle, which might have originated in the Indian music, is used in the music of 'Batō'.

d. Karyōbin

'Karyōbin' or 'Karyōbinga' is an Indian Kalaviṅka bird appearing in Buddhist sūtras. Originally a sparrow-like bird living in snowy mountains of the Himālayas, reputed to possess a melodious voice, and later Buddhist sūtras stated that it lived in the paradise of Amitābha Buddha. In a pictorial representation, Karyōbinga is a celestial musician with a head of Bodhisattva and a winged body of a bird, and often holds a musical instrument. Kalaviṅka was a very popular figure in the ancient Buddhist arts in Japan, China, and the other South-east Asian countries. In the Indian myth, a celestial musician with a human head and a bird body is usually called Kinnara (sometimes with a horse head and a human body) or Gandharva. It is not clear whether Kinnara, Gandharva and Kalaviṅka share the same origin or not. 'Karyōbin' is a Warabemai dance by the children who set wings on their back and dance with beating small cymbals.

e. Seigaiha

Seigai is today's Qinghai in West China. 'Seigaiha' means a cloth pattern in the shape of a wave of the Lake Qinghai used for its dance costumes. It is said that an Indian Brāhmaṇa priest once listened to the music of 'Seigaiha' and brought it to China, and then the Chinese court musicians and dancers arranged it. The music is composed in Banshiki-chō (Indian Pañcamī ?).

f. Sokōkō

Sokōkō (also called Sogōkō) means herbal essence of styrax, one of the popular herbs mentioned in *Āyurveda*. It is said that the

Mauryan King Aśoka (bc 272-232) once fell sick. His servants were looking for styrax for a week and found it, and then taking the essence of styrax, the King Aśoka recovered from illness. He ordered his Minister Ikuge (?) to compose music for celebrating his recovery. Since the dancers put styrax on their heads, his Court was filled with its fragrance. This dance describes the preparation of herbal essence of styrax and 6 dancers put headgears shaped as styrax leaves. Though styrax leaves of this headgear resemble iris leaves, iris is practically not used for the preparation of Sokōkō.

g. Bairo

The meaning of 'Bairo' and its origin is not clear. The word is said to be derived from the ancient Indian king Bairocikāna who converted to Buddhism and ruled the people wisely. As this composition is performed on the Buddha Jayanti day (8th April) festival held at the Tōshōdaiji temple in Nara, the festival is called 'Heroe' (assembly for 'Bairo'). This is a Bu-no-mai, a war-dance, also called Hajingaku (music for breaking the battle camp) which used to be performed for praying for victory in the Tang Dynasty. Four men dance with swords and shields. The music is composed in Yatarabyōshi, 2 + 3 beats in one cycle which suggests us its Indian origin.

h. Bosatsu

'Bosatsu' is an Indian Bodhisattva, a Buddhist saint seeking spiritual awakening at the higher stage. The dance choreography for 'Bosatsu' is unknown as it was abolished in the Heian period. The reason of its abolishment by the Imperial Music Bureau might be its religion-oriented content, but it had been performed in temples. Since the musical notation is available, its music has been restored recently. This composition is a description of the old man and woman, one is blind and the other is crippled, recovering from their physical handicaps owing to the mercy of Bodhisattva.

i. Konju, Ranryō'ō

Though 'Konju' and 'Ranryō'ō' are classified into Rinyūgaku originating in Champa, the masks worn by dancers of these items suggest us their Indian and West Asian influences. A drunken man of the Kingdom Ko (Hu in Chinese, denoting Persia or Central Asia) is described in Konju, and a dancer wears a mask with red skin, a big nose and big eyes. The mask of Ranryō'ō has a figure of Garuḍa on his head.

3. Shōmyō

The word 'Shōmyō' is derived from *śabda-vidyā* (the knowledge of sound syllables). Shōmyō is the Buddhist chant which is said to have originated in the Vedic chant brought to China and transformed, and then it was brought to Japan along with the introduction of Buddhism. Indian and Chinese Buddhist monks taught Shōmyō to Japanese. All kinds of Buddhists chants or hymns are included in the wide sense of Shōmyō, while in its narrow sense, Bonsan in Sanskrit and Kansan in Chinese brought at that time only are included. The basic form of Shōmyō in the narrow sense is called Hōe (assembly for *dharma*), a dramatic presentation of the Buddhist doctrine. There are two main types as follows: the Shika-hōe consists of Bai (praising Buddha's beauty), Sange (pouring flowers), Bonnon (praising Buddha's voice) and Shakujō (crosier), and the Nika-hōe consists of Bai and Sange only.

There are two main sects of the esoteric Buddhism in which Shōmyō is widely performed; one is the Tendai sect founded by a Japanese monk Saichō (767-822), and the other is the Shingon sect founded by Kūkai (774-853). Both of them studied Buddhism in China and started their own sects. The typical hoe of the Shingon Shōmyō is 'Daihannya-tendokoe', the reading of *Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra* (600 volumes), the greatest sūtra of Mahāyāna Buddhism brought from India and translated into Chinese by Tripiṭaka Master Hsuan Tsang (602-664) of the Tang Dynasty. Holding sūtra books in their hands and chanting the title

and optative sentences of the sūtra together in a loud voice, a number of monks are glancing over sūtra books from the top to the bottom. At this time, it is said that the pure wind of *prajñā* rises.

4. Mōsō-biwa and Heike-biwa

Mōsō-biwa is the chanting of sūtras by a blind monk (Mōsō) playing the four-stringed *biwa* with a curved neck. It is said that Buddha himself taught his blind disciple how to sing sūtras with playing the *vīṇā*, and also that a blind son of King Aśoka became a *vīṇā* player.

Heike-biwa is the chanting of *Heike-monogatari*, the historic romance of the Taira family defeated by the Genji family, sung by a blind monk, similar to Mōsō-biwa. As they were singing and playing the *biwa* not only for the religious purpose but also for the entertainment for the masses, blind monks have taken up not only sūtras but also *Heike-monogatari*. Gionshōja (a short form of Gijugikkodokuonshōja) appearing at its opening paragraph is derived from the words Jetavana-anāthapindāsya-ārāma, a temple in Śrāvasti where Buddha preached a sermon according to *Jātaka* tales.

5. Gigaku

Finally, I will focus on Gigaku, a mask dance drama which consists of a procession called Gyōdō and a pantomime with comical elements. It was once performed as a religious service conducted mainly on the Buddha Jayanti day at Buddhist temples. It declined around the 16th century and died out. Today, only the masks, costumes, and a few documents are preserved in the Shōsōin, the Hōryūji temples and a few other places. Because of the lack of detailed information, it is very difficult to reconstruct its music and performance. It is, however, obvious that Gigaku has international characteristics whose origin can be traced to West Asia, India, as well as China. Gigaku is said to be performed when the Daibutsu-kaigen-hōyō was held at the Tōdaiji temple in 752.

The characters appearing in Gigaku can be basically classified into the following four types:

5-1 Kojin (West Asians or Aryans)

Chidō is a street guardian leading the Gyōdō (procession). He has a long nose, finding and removing evil spirits on the street. Baramon is a *brāhmaṇa* who might have committed adultery. His gesture is called Mutsukiarai, washing nappies for his child. Suiko-ō and Suiko-jū are a drunken king and his follower from Ko (Hu). The comical elements found in Baramon and Suiko can be compared with that of an Indian Vidūśaka who is a buffoon indispensable to classical dramas referred in *Nāṭya-śāstra*.

5-2 Gojin (People of Wu)

Gōkō and Gojo, a king and his wife from Go (Wu in Chinese), a country in South China, are protected by Gōkō's servants, Kongō, a holder of Vajra and Rikishi, a wrestler. Konron is chastened by Kongō and Rikishi as Konron entices Gojo with obscene actions (Marafuri). It suggests both comical elements and a warning for sexual desire. Taiko-fu and Taiko-ji, an old man and a child who embrace the Buddhist faith pray to Buddha. We can find similar characters such as a pious old man and a child in the Tibetan mask dance.

5-3 Nankaijin (People from the Southern Sea)

Konron (Kuenlun in Chinese) is a name of the legendary mountain in the ancient China where hermits lived. However, it is uncertain whether it is related to Konron in Gigaku or not. With his large black face, he is said to be a villain from the south.

5-4 Iru (Beasts and Birds)

Karura is an Indian sacred bird, Garuḍa. He fights against serpents and eats them after his victory. He has a small red ball in his beak. According to Manjō Nomura, a famous Kyōgen (a farce presented between Noh plays) actor, this ball might be the Indian

Vāsuki (serpent) who lost a fight with Garuḍa. This story is similar to the following Indian myth. When Garuḍa was born, his mother was in enslavement by the family of Nāga-s (serpents). As Garuḍa asked them to set his mother free, the Nāga-s requested Garuḍa to get *amṛta*, nectar to conquer death and achieve immortality. Then Garuḍa went to the Vaikuṇṭh and fought against *devas* and the Nāga-s. Finally Viṣṇu came and fought against Garuḍa but the fight was not settled. Therefore Viṣṇu ordered Garuḍa to be his vehicle in return for giving *amṛta*. Thus, Garuḍa became Viṣṇu's vehicle.

Batō (a horse head different from 'Bato' in Gigaku) might have originated in the Indian Hayagrīva. Shishi and Shishi-ko are a lion (the Indian Siṃha) and his child. Shishi bites and destroys evil spirits found by Chidō. His child in a human form pacifies Shishi.

After the 1980s, temples and traditional performing artists have been trying to reconstruct Gigaku in various ways. Especially Shin-gigaku reconstructed by Manjō Nomura in 2000 was interesting. Inspired by Gigaku texts and masks, Manjō Nomura conducted his field research in several Asian countries. In his production, dancers and musicians were invited from Japan, Korea, China, Indonesia, India, Guinea, and Senegal. Kathakali actors were chosen among Indian performing artists. Thus, the international characteristics which the ancient Gigaku also had, are emphasized in Shin-gigaku.

6. Concluding Remarks

We can find a lot of Indian elements in the performing arts brought along with Buddhism in the first international phase of the history of Japanese traditional performing arts. Though they might have been transformed in China and Korea and then again modified in Japan with the times, the Japanese scholars have been trying to find a link between the traditional Japanese performing arts and those of India. Of course, as modern India cannot remain the same as the time when Buddhism flourished, the Buddhist performing arts which had been performed those days are now

obsolete. Today we cannot but search their trace in Buddhist remains, literature, and so on. Consequently, the Japanese have regarded India as the birthplace of Buddhism and a treasure house of the ancient Buddhist culture. Thus, the Japanese interests and affection for the ancient Indian culture co-existing with the traditional Japanese performing arts have been preserved for more than 1400 years.

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