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Medieval Buddhism and Music: Musical Notation and the Recordability of the Voice

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Music, which in the very moment of its making must vanish, is ultimately a poignant pursuit. The singing voices of people in ancient times, and the sounds of their instruments, are themselves forever beyond our ability to hear. In the latter 12th century, retired emperor Go-Shirakawa-in 後白河院 (1127–1192; r. 1155–1158), himself a passionate devotee of the musical art known as *imayō* 今様, left the following famous saying in his collection of *imayō* musical lore, the *Ryōjin hishō kudenshū* 梁塵秘抄口伝集:

こゑわざの悲しきことは、我が身隠れぬるのち、とどまることのなきなり。¹

Tragic are the works of the voice, for after the body itself perishes, nothing of them remains behind.

He laments here that after he himself has passed away “the works of the voice”—in this particular instance the sounds and melodies of *imayō*—will not be able to survive. Yet in fact there were those working actively, and in the same period, to pass on this intangible inheritance of music to later generations, through various methods such as musical notation, or the written records of oral teachings known as *kuden* 口伝.

In this article, I examine the attempts made by such figures to thus record and express the human voice, with a particular focus on the Buddhist chanting genre

¹ For text see: *Kaguranta, Saibara, Ryōjin hishō, Kanginshū* 神楽歌・催馬楽・梁塵秘抄・閑吟集, vol. 42 of *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2000), p. 380.

Note: In quotations from original sources here and below, where voicing marks and punctuation marks were lacking in the cited text, I have undertaken to supply them.

known as *shōmyō* 声明 and its notation in writing, tracing the course of these efforts from the latter 12th to the early 14th century.²

1. Collections of the Voice: Fujiwara no Moronaga

The first of these figures to examine for his achievements in making such written records of the intangible voice is Fujiwara no Moronaga 藤原師長 (1138–1192). As explained below, Moronaga is credited for his attempts to preserve the human voice and the sound of instruments in the form of musical notation.³

太政大臣師長、琵琶の譜にて作らむとてありしほどに、のちには習ひて、大曲の様はみなうたはれにき。⁴

When the Chancellor Moronaga would make transcripts [of *imayo*] in *biva*-notation, people later followed these, and the great songs (*taikyoku* 大曲) could be sung in all their fullness.

—*Ryōjin hishō kudenshū*

妙音院殿はかゝるいみじき御跡をうけ給はらせ給ひて、しかも又孝博候ひければ、道の御ふそくはなかりけれども、なを諸道の奥をあまねくさぐり、ひろくもとめさせ給ふ。絃管のたぐひは申すにをよばず、うち物・音曲・催馬楽・風俗・らうゑい・ごうげい・声明などまでも、ながれ／＼家々の説をつくしもとめさせ給ふ。⁵

Lord Myōon-in 妙音院 [=Moronaga] was heir to these august [*biva*] traditions. And because [his teacher] was [Fujiwara no] Takahiro 孝博, he was in that art without defect. Yet he also explored various other arts broadly and deeply, seeking instruction far and wide. To say nothing of music on string or wind instruments, he made exhaustive study of many traditions and lineages concerning, for example, instruments of percussion, *ongyoku* 音曲 song, *saibara* 催馬楽 song, *fuzoku* 風俗 song, *roei* [朗詠] chanting, *zōgei* [雑芸] song, *shōmyō* 声明 chanting, and so on.

—*Bunkidan* 文机談, vol. 2

Moronaga is known as the author of the *biva*-notation collection *Sango yōroku* 三五要録 (12 vols., with also a supplemental volume—sometimes counted as the 13th—of notation for *fuzoku* 風俗 songs), as well as of the *Jinchi yōroku* 仁智要録

² This article draws heavily on the following research of Shimizu Masumi 清水眞澄, who has already considered the question of the *Lotus Sutra* hymns, noted connections with the Kanazawa Bunko-bon 金沢文庫本 manuscript, and so on. See Shimizu Masumi, “Hōe to ka’ei: Minamoto no Tsunenobu kara Fujiwara no Toshinari e” 法会と歌詠：源経信から藤原俊成へ, in *Sei naru koe: waka ni hisomu chikara* 聖なる声：和歌にひそむ力 (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 2011).

³ Abe Yasurō 阿部泰郎, *Seija no suisan: chūsei no koe to woko naru mono* 聖者の推参：中世の声とヲコなるもの (Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2001), pp. 14–16. Okimoto Yukiko 沖本幸子, *Imayo no jidai* 今様の時代 (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2006), pp. 189–193.

⁴ *Kaguranta, Saibara, Ryōjin hishō, Kanginsbū* (op. cit.), p. 380.

⁵ For text see: *Bunkidan: zenchūshaku* 文机談：全注釈, ed. Iwasa Miyoko 岩佐美代子 (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2007), p. 114.

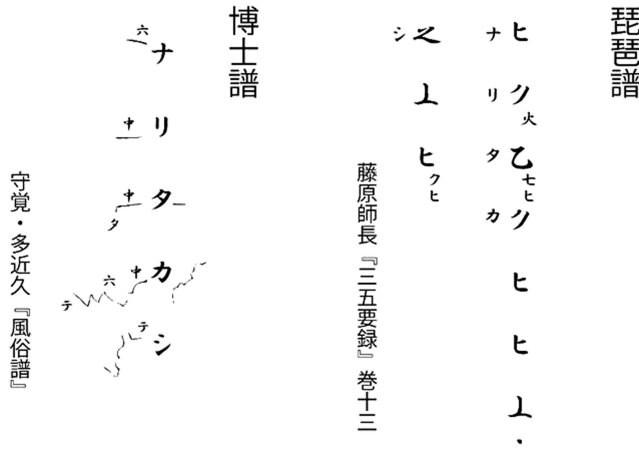


Figure 1. A comparison of notation systems. While in (left) *hakase*-notation 博士譜 the *fuzoku*-song lyric “*nari takashi*” ナリタカシ is centered with interlinear notation, in (right) *bima*-notation 琵琶譜 the lyric itself is interlinear and instead the notation is centered. (Prepared by author).

(12 vols.), a collection of musical notation for the *sō* 箏. Yet the research of recent years has shown that various examples of musical notation found in texts like *Bunkidan* 文机談 were also scored by Moronaga originally.

Moronaga’s scoring method made use of *bima*-notation (*bima-fu* 琵琶譜). At the time, the two main systems of notation used to record the voice were *bima*-notation and what is called “academic” or *hakase*-notation (*hakase-fu* 博士譜, after *hakase*, or “academician”). The *bima* system was based on a set of specialized characters for indicating notation, with these being centered in the line while the music’s lyrics themselves were written to their left and right. Each character in this set pointed to a specific arpeggio, and given a sequence of such characters, taking in succession the highest note of each arpeggio thus indicated would produce the underlying melody. In contrast to this, in the case of *hakase*-notation, as seen in **Figure 1**, the lyrics themselves were centered, with instead the notation being written to either side. Here the notation consisted of lines, whose starting points and angles served to indicate the melody. One feature of the *hakase* system is that embellishing these notational lines with oscillations or other curves allowed them to additionally express pitch-changes of a more subtle nature. As a general rule, *bima*-notation was used in scores prepared by the nobility, while *hakase*-notation was used in scores prepared by monks, though this was not always the case.

A list of the various scores Moronaga transcribed into *bima*-notation would include the following:

<i>saibara</i> 催馬楽	<i>Sango yōroku</i> 三五要録 (<i>hima</i> scores), <i>Jinchi yōroku</i> 仁智要録 (<i>sō</i> scores)
<i>fuzoku</i> 風俗	<i>Sango yōroku</i> , supplemental volume (also as vol. 13)
<i>waka</i> 和歌 (<i>kami-uta</i> 神歌)	<i>Koma-kyōku nado no fu</i> 高麗曲等譜 ⁶
<i>imayō</i> 今様	<i>Sho-chōshi hon kakiamase no fu</i> 諸調子品撥合譜 ⁷
<i>shōmyō</i> 声明	<i>Shōmyō-fu</i> 声明譜 ⁸

In this grouping, *waka* signifies something like the following:

神歌

ヤ アラタマノ トシタチカヘル アシタヨリ
ヤ アシタヨリ マタルルモノハ ウグキスノコエ

Song to the Gods (*kami-uta*)

Oh! When rough gem-renewed / yet again the year turns round, /
from the break of dawn—
Oh! From the break of dawn / one waits, in longing already, /
for the warbler's song.

This is based on Monk Sosei's 素性法師 poem, found in the imperial anthology *Shūi wakashū* 拾遺和歌集 as:

あらたまの年たちかへるあしたより待たるものは鶯の声⁹

When rough gem-renewed
yet again the year turns round,
from the break of dawn
one waits, in longing already,
for the warbler's song.

In this context, however, it was not as *waka* that it was included in Moronaga's collection, but rather as *kami-uta*, or "song to the gods." Accordingly, *kami-uta* being as a rule composed of an even number of verses, the poem has been modified from its original *waka* structure in five verses to produce a structure of six. In other words, by repeating the third verse *ashita yori* ("from the break of dawn"), the

⁶ *Koma-kyōku nado no fu* 高麗曲等譜 (Imperial Household Archives), MS 伏-978. From the colophon: 文永七年 [1270] 十一月三十日書写之 / 同十二月十二日付拍子写点畢 / 此本孝頼所献孝時自筆也 / 但空神歌者妙音院太政大臣 [=Fujiwara no Moronaga] 自 / 筆也、依為最秘物為不及外 / 見不交他筆自書写之。

⁷ *Sho-chōshi hon kakiamase no fu* 諸調子品撥合譜 (Imperial Household Archives), MS 伏-1083.

⁸ *Shōmyō-fu* 声明譜 (Imperial Household Archives), MS 伏-980. From the colophon: 建曆元年 [1211] 四月十二日書写了 / 右京権大夫藤原光俊 / 一校了。In other words, the manuscript was copied out by someone unidentified in Kenryaku 建曆 1/1211, then later collated by Hamuro Mitsutoshi 葉室光俊 (1203–1276). Fujiwara no Moronaga's original authorship of the text is inferred solely on the basis of an outer title (*gedai* 外題) inscribed directly on a front cover itself of later date, which reads: "*Shōmyō-fu* (by Myōon-in)" 声明譜 (妙音院御作). Nonetheless, the attribution is a reasonable one, and not inconsistent with Moronaga's other work as a whole.

⁹ *Shūi wakashū* 拾遺和歌集, vol. 7 of *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 新日本古典文学大系 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), poem 5.

whole has been reformatted to fit a six-verse rhythm. Coming next in the list above, the *imayō* pieces in *biwa*-notation are a discovery of recent years, and consist of three *ashigara* 足柄 pieces identified as “great songs” (*taikyōku* 大曲)—the most secret and venerated rank of song—and one *imayō* piece identified as being of the *mono-no-yō* 物様 genre.¹⁰

Having thus briefly summarized *biwa*-notation scores by Moronaga in other genres, below I turn to consider his collection the *Shōmyō-fu* 声明譜 in greater depth. Starting with a group of pieces in the *bai* 唄 genre, the *Shōmyō-fu* comprises *biwa*-notation scores across ten genres all told, several pieces within which betray later additions by Saionji Sanekane 西園寺実兼 (1249–1322). The collection’s scores are atypical for pieces of *biwa*-notation in various ways, e.g. with some lyrics being recorded in Chinese characters, but in this article I want to highlight three of its songs in particular. The first of these is what can be called a “hymn to Mañjuśrī” 文殊讚,¹¹ having the following lyrics:

文殊讚
 文殊菩薩出^キツ化清凉ウ神通力応現他方ウ
 身座金毛獅子徽放珠光
 衆ウ生イ仰ウ待宝蓋絶名香ウ
 我今発願虔誠イ帰命不求富貴不恋榮イ花
 願当来世イ生 浄土法王家
 願当来世イ生 浄土法王家¹²

Hymn to Mañjuśrī

Mañjuśrī comes forth, pure, his godly power answers the call;
 Riding gold-coated lion, jewel-radiant, he casts his glow.
 Living souls his canopy attend, with incenses sublime.
 Now I pray, sincere on life, to seek not wealth, to love not fame—
 Longing for future birth in the Pure Land, in Dharma-King’s home,
 Longing for future birth in the Pure Land, in Dharma-King’s home.

The poem itself is said to be the work of Bai Juyi 白居易. According to Kien’s 喜淵 (b. 1254) work *Ongyoku sōjō shidai* 音曲相承次第,¹³ having earlier been brought

¹⁰ See Inose Chihiro 猪瀬千尋, “Shinshutsu imayō biwa-fu ashigara san-shu mononoyō isshu: *Seki no kami, Taki no mizu, Koiseba*, oyobi *Gongen ni tsuite*” 新出今様琵琶譜 足柄三首 物様一首: 「関神」「瀧水」「恋者」および「権現」について, *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 国語と国文学 96-10 (2019).

¹¹ For research on such hymns to Mañjuśrī, see the following: Nakata Yūjirō 中田勇次郎, *Tokushi sōkō* 讀詞叢考 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1998; 1st ed. 1949); Kawaguchi Hisao 川口久雄, “Tonkō henbun ni okeru shōfu to ongyoku e no tenkai: Nihon bungaku to no kakawari ni oite” 敦煌変文における唱符と音曲への展開: 日本文学とのかかわりにおいて, *Chūgoku koten kenkyū* 中国古典研究 13 (1965).

¹² *Shōmyō-fu* (op. cit.).

¹³ Text from *Hōgi (1): Shōmyō hyōbyaku ruijū* 法儀 1: 声明表白類聚, in *Zoku Tendai-shū zensho* 続天台宗全書 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1996).

over from Wutai Mountain 五台山 in China by the Tendai 天台 monk Kaien 快円, the poem was transmitted in the year Kyūan 久安 4/1148 to Gyōunbō Rairyū 堯雲房頼隆. The line-breaks in the above excerpt, it is worth noting, follow punctuation marks given in the manuscript, yet these are not the breaks one would expect from the poem's actual rhyme scheme.¹⁴ This indicates that, despite being based upon a Chinese poem, it was ultimately as a piece of *shōmyō* chant that it was performed.

The second song involves what is called a “firewood hymn” (*takigi-san* 薪讚):

法華経讚歎 〈光明皇后作／風香調〉

法華経ヲ ワガエシコトハ
 タキギコリ ナツミミヅクミ
 ツカエテゾエシ
 ツカエテゾエシ¹⁵

Hymn on the *Lotus Sutra* (by Empress Kōmyō 光明, in *fugōchō* 風香調 key)

The *Lotus Sutra* / I came to receive only /
 by cutting firewood, / by gathering herbs and water—
 only by serving I received,
 only by serving I received.

The genre of “firewood hymns” or “firewood verses” (*takigi-ku* 薪句) represented by this poem were chanted primarily in the course of a *Hokke hakeō* 法華八講—a performance of the canonical “Eight Lectures of the *Lotus [Sutra]*.” These “Eight Lectures” events involved holding, over four days, a series of eight meetings for lectures on the *Lotus Sutra*'s eight volumes (comprising twenty-eight chapters). Of particular importance was the “fifth-volume day” on which the lecture sequence reached the “Devadatta” chapter (Jp. *Daibadatta-bon* 提婆達多品), contained within the sutra's fifth volume. It was on this day that such “firewood” hymns and verses were chanted, as commemorations of the story told in that chapter, of how in a previous life Śākyamuni had served Devadatta's own previous incarnation, the seer Asita (*Asbi-sen* 阿私仙), performing various menial tasks for the sage, among them the gathering of firewood. As a poem, the above verse is included in the imperial anthology *Shūi wakashū*, yet through credited there to Gyōki 行基 (668–749), a tradition attributing its authorship to Empress Kōmyō 光明 (701–760) gained widespread currency in the medieval period, as can be seen in the excerpt from Moronaga's *Shōmyō-fu* above.¹⁶ Here too, a five-verse

¹⁴ Cf. Nakata 1998 (note 11 above).

¹⁵ *Shōmyō-fu* (op. cit.).

¹⁶ E.g., in *Sanbō-e* 三宝絵, “This poem is said by some to have been composed by Empress Kōmyō, while others say it was transmitted by Gyōki Bodhisattva 行基菩薩.” See *Sanbō-e, Chūkōsen* 三宝絵・注好選, vol. 31 of *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 新日本古典文学大系 (Iwanami Shoten, 1997), p. 130.

waka poem has been given a six-verse structure through repetition, this time of the original fifth and final verse. Similar to the case of Chinese poetry above, its shape as assumed here is not that of a *waka* poem, but rather that of a *shōmyō* chant.

Thus could the borrowed lyrics of *waka* and Chinese poetry be repurposed, through musical performance, to function as paeans to Buddhism. In the third example to be considered, the following *ge* 偈 verse, music is used to demonstrate the Buddhistic merits of music itself.

簫笛琴箏篪 琵琶鏡銅 []
如是衆妙音 尽持以供養¹⁷

Reed-pipe and flute, the *kin* then and harp, /
the *biva*, the gong, and the cym[bal]:
Thus shall myriad marvels of sound /
all serve as offerings sacred.

This *ge* versicle is based on the *ge* of the “Expedients” (Skt. *upāya*) chapter (Jp. *Hōben-bon* 方便品) in the *Lotus Sutra* that runs: 簫笛琴箏篪 琵琶鏡銅 如是衆妙音 尽持以供養. The reed-pipe (*shō* 簫, Ch. *xiao*) and the flute are wind instruments, while the *kin* 琴 (Ch. *qin*), the harp (*kyō* 箏篪, Ch. *konghou*), and the *biva* are string instruments, and the gong (*nyō* 鏡, Ch. *nao*) and cymbal (*dōbatsu* 銅鈸, Ch. *tongbo*) instruments of percussion. In other words, all the musical instruments used to make instrumental music can, the *ge* shows, become sources themselves of Buddhistic merit. Moreover, as a verse arguing the merits of musical *hōraku* 法樂 offerings, this *ge* would have broad ripple effects, its influence spanning across many different fields of art.¹⁸

As we have seen above, therefore, whether in the domains of Chinese poetry, *waka*, or string and wind music—three central elements in the tapestry of court culture—there were, within each genre, works for which hymnal *shōmyō* chants on Buddhism both existed, and were later also scored by Moronaga using musical notation. As to the ultimate reason for his attempts using *biva*-notation to record all these various pieces, the explanation may lie in some uniqueness of their melodies, or it may lie, alternatively, in the frequent chanting of these *shōmyō* at many scenes of Buddhist ceremonial.

2. Inheriting and Rearranging the Voice: Saionji Sanekane and Enjubō Kien

In the previous section I examined Moronaga’s attempts to record voice in musical notation, with a particular focus on scores for the genre of *shōmyō* chant.

¹⁷ *Shōmyō-fu* (op. cit.).

¹⁸ Cf. Inose Chihito, *Chūsei ōken no ongaku to girei* 中世王権の音楽と儀礼 (Kasama Shoin, 2018), Ch. 13.

Here I will consider how notation was used to record the voice in periods after Moronaga, focusing on two individuals: Saionji Sanekane and Kien.

Consideration of Saionji Sanekane begins with reference to the post-Moronaga inheritance of *biwa* musical expertise itself. The three major schools of *biwa* lore that inherited Moronaga's own *biwa* lineage were (1) that of the imperial household, (2) that of the Saionji clan, and (3) the Nishi school (*Nishi-ryū* 西流) of the Fujiwara clan. Among these it was the Saionji clan that continued the practice begun by Moronaga himself of ceremonially transmitting certain "secret" songs (*hikyoku* 秘曲). Moronaga, who had made his dwelling at Myōon-in Temple 妙音院, had a great hall constructed there and installed therein an image of Myōonten 妙音天 (Benzaiten 弁財天), using that same room as the setting for transmissions of those secret songs. Following suit, the Saionji clan erected their own Myōon Hall at the mansion in Kitayama 北山 where they themselves resided, thereby inheriting the practice of conducting such ceremonies before an image of Myōonten.

Among his clan, Saionji Sanekane worked more than any other towards the prosperity of his house, attempting rearrangements of music and the production of manuals of ceremony. There are several musical scores that were either supplemented by him, or which he himself had composed anew. Of these, the *Sango chūroku* 三五中録 deserves attention as a score collection Sanekane copied out personally.¹⁹ Though originally a collection of musical notation by Fujiwara no Takatoki 藤原孝時, from the Fujiwara Nishi school mentioned above, throughout Sanekane's copying of the *Sango chūroku*, he made notational additions of his own. The following song is one of those thought to belong among such added material:

琵琶平調 〈笛盤涉調〉

敬礼諸仏及法宝 菩薩独覚声聞衆
次礼妙音并諸天 悉可至誠慙重敬²⁰

biwa in *hyōjō* 平調 key (flute in *banshikichō* 盤涉調 key)

Honor and reverence for all buddhas and the Law's treasure,
To bodhisattvas, lone buddhas, and disciple buddhas;
Honor too for Myōon[ten] and all the many devas,
Worthy all of showing heartfelt esteem and piled honors

A *ge*-verse based on the *Most Victorious Kings Sutra* (*Saishō-kyō* 最勝王經), it is also the concluding generalized paean to the ceremonial manual *Myōon kōshiki* 妙音講式. As mentioned, the Saionji clan had constructed a Myōon Hall at the Kitayama mansion where they themselves lived. In that Myōon Hall, a Myōonten

¹⁹ *Sango chūroku* 三五中録 (Imperial Household Archives), MS 伏-2009.

²⁰ Ibid.

eneration was held the 18th of every month in commemoration of Moronaga's death anniversary, as a manual for which the *Myōon kōshiki* had been composed. From this it can be understood that Sanekane also made use of *bima*-notation to record the music of ceremonies important to his clan.

Here I will move on to discuss the figure of Kien, who was a monk of the Ōhara 大原 branch of the Tendai sect. In the late 12th century, the monk Ryōnin 良忍 (1073–1132) established the school of chant known as Ōhara *shōmyō* 大原声明, or Gyozan 魚山 *shōmyō*. After failing for a period, the school was revived in the Kamakura era by the monk Sōkai 宗快. Kien was the student of this Sōkai. He moreover, partly with the purpose of increasing exchanges with monks at Mt. Kōya, was active in copying and producing large numbers of *shōmyō* texts. Regarding Kien's own origins, the late 14th-century text *Shōketsusbo* 声決書 by the monk Jikyō 慈鏡 records him as being “the child of Lord Kitayama” (*Kitayama-dono* [no] *on-ko* 北山殿御子). This “Lord Kitayama” has been identified with Saionji Kinsuke 西園寺公相 (1223–1267), which if accurate would make Sanekane and Kien brothers by different mothers. The following *kada* 伽陀-verse is one of Sanekane's additions to the *Shōmyō-fu* text discussed in the article's previous section:

七言 〈円珠房声明作之〉

願我生生見諸仏 仏世世恒聞法花
恒修不退菩薩行 疾証無上大菩提²¹

seven-character meter (composed as *shōmyō* by Enjubō 円珠房 [=Kien])

Life after life may I meet all the many buddhas,
In buddhic world after world ever hear the Law's flower;
Practice ever without fail the bodhisattva's way,
With quickness to realize the great awakening supreme.

As one can see, this *ge*, a verse read on occasions of “ten-kind offerings” (*jūshū kuyō* 十種供養) for the *Lotus Sutra*, had been adapted for *shōmyō* chant by Kien himself. In other words, after Kien (=Enjubō) had composed the music, Sanekane must have gone back and set it into *bima*-notation.

Another aspect of Kien's activity can be seen in his *Gokuraku shōka* 極樂声歌. In this work, Kien extracted all sung passages from Shōshinbō Shingen's 勝深房真源 ceremonial manual *Junji ōjō kōshiki* 順次往生講式 (manual for a “Subsequent Rebirth in the Pure Land” ceremony), and scored them using *hakase*-notation. The songs found in the *Junji ōjō kōshiki* had essentially taken *shōka* 唱歌-chanted versions of *saibara* pieces and supplied them with lyrics on Buddhist themes. Regarding the fate of these songs, in Fujiwara no Takamichi's 藤原孝道 work of music lore *Chikoku hishō* 知国秘鈔 (late 13th century), we read:

²¹ *Shōmyō-fu* (op. cit.).

なかごろ、山崎に浄土谷に、たうとき聖人をはしけり。名は勝□聖人（真源）と申ける人、やうこつなき道心者の笛吹、すべて管絃あいしすき人をはしけり。順次往生講試とて、七段の試に、樂の唱歌に法文をつくり、催馬樂ことくなどをつくりをき給へる。このごろもする人やあるらむ、ちかごろまでは、天王寺住僧なども、その唱歌しけるとかや。いまはいとする人なし。²²

In the not-too-distant past, in Yamazaki 山崎, in Jōdo-dani 浄土谷, there lived a venerable sage. Called Shō[] the Sage 勝□聖人 [=Shingen], he was a great adept at the art of the flute, and a lover of string and wind music of all kinds. In a work called *Junji ōjō kōshiki*, in a seven-stage ceremony, he made Buddhist lyrics for *shōka*-chant versions of [court] music, producing pieces like *saibara* songs. Is there anyone today who does such things? Until even recently one heard rumors that monks around Tennō-ji Temple 天王寺 were also doing such *shōka* chanting. Now, however, there is no one who does.

It was a genre that had, as we see, faded already by the early 13th century.

Scoring these songs with *hakase*-notation, and recording them in his *Gokuraku shōka*, in other words, was Kien's attempt at retrieving their music from just such an oblivion.

3. Development of the Voice: The Shōmyō-ji Religious Documents

Thus it is that the sounds captured in *bina*-notation by Moronaga would come to be reutilized, in the latter part of the 13th century, in a number of different ways. Representing part of this legacy, one of the larger accumulations of late-Kamakura musical-notation materials is to be found within the Shōmyō-ji Temple 称名寺 archives of “religious documents” (*shōgyō* 聖教), currently stored at Kanazawa Bunko 金沢文庫. Among the Shōmyō-ji religious documents are various *shōmyō* chanting texts, a collection centered on manuscripts personally used by Kenna 剣阿, the second abbot of Shōmyō-ji Temple.

Kenna is notable for his industry as a copyist, his output in complete works alone consisting of the following:

- Sango yōroku gaku mokuroku* 三五要録楽目録 (location unknown)
- Inritsu zasshō* 韻律雜抄 (location unknown)
- Ōngaku kongen shō* 音楽根源抄 (Tenri Central Library)
- Kangen ongi* 管絃音義 (ibid.)
- Bugaku yōroku* 舞樂要録 (Sonkeikaku Bunko)
- Onritsu gōkyōku shō* 音律合曲抄 (ibid.)
- Inritsu kanjin shū* 韻律肝心集 (Imperial Household Archives)

Eclectic as a group, the documents span both exoteric and esoteric traditions, and with the inclusion of texts like *Sango yōroku gaku mokuroku*—a work of

²² For text see: *Fushiminomiya kyūzō gaku shō sbūsei* 伏見宮旧蔵楽書集成, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Toshoryō Sōkan, 1998), p. 116.

Moronaga's own selection—they demonstrate that music catalogues compiled by court nobles were sometimes copied by monks.

This following document, too—copied by a monk belonging to Shōmyō-ji Temple, though not Kenna—is particularly valuable for considering the relationship between secular and sacred music:

倍〈秘〉又薪樂云々、(中略)

法華經ヲ ワガエシコトハ タキギコリ ナツミミツクミ ツカヘテゾエシ
ツカヘテゾエシ

To the tune of *bai[ro]* 倍[臚] (secret), also a song used in “firewood” music (*takigi-gaku* 薪樂) . . .

The *Lotus Sutra* / I came to receive only / by cutting firewood, /
by gathering herbs and water— / only by serving I received, /
only by serving I received.

—“Secret of secrets” (*hichūbi* 秘中秘), Shōmyō-ji Religious Documents
(*Lotus* hymns/“firewood verses”)²³

This is the hymnal verse on the *Lotus Sutra* we saw in our discussion of the *Shōmyō-fu* above. Here, as in the *Shōmyō-fu*, the originally final verse *tsukaete zo eshi* has been repeated, showing that this was sung not as a five-verse *waka* poem, but as a six-verse *shōmyō* chant. Of interest is the superscription “*bai[ro]* 倍[臚] (secret)”, which indicates that the string- and wind-music mode of *bairo* 倍臚 could be used for the chanting of hymns to the *Lotus Sutra* such as this one. The *bairo*, a string- and wind-music piece in the *hyōjō* 平調 key,²⁴ was also included in various collections of scores like the *Sango yōroku*. However, the melody of the *bairo* as indicated in these, and the melody found for it in the *Shōmyō-fu* collection we discussed in this article's first section, do not in fact match one another.

On this subject, the comment found in Saien's 宰円 work *Dangi hōshin shō* 彈偽褒真抄 (Kenji 建治 1/1275) is perfectly correct: “Also, it is said that within the traditions of the *Rengai* 蓮界 school, there are “firewood”-verses that have been adapted to the *bairo* tune. This too requires further study.” One must conclude that a new *Lotus Sutra* hymnal piece had been created, based on the music of the *bairo* mode.

The following document is also one of particular interest, not least with respect to its visual imagery:

²³ Text from *Kanazawa bunko shiryō zensho* 金沢文庫資料全書 (Yokohama: Kanazawa-kenritsu Kanazawa Bunko), vol. 7, p. 179.

²⁴ *Bairo* 陪臚 was originally a piece of dance music (*bugaku* 舞樂), but in the medieval period came largely to be performed as a string- and wind-music piece. Cf. in the court diary *Gyokuyō* 玉葉 the example of the “small [string and wind] music gathering” (*ko gyo-yū* 小御遊) in the entry for Angen 安元 2/1176.2.14; or in the diary *Sanemi-kyō ki* 実躬卿記, the example of Amida veneration (*Amida-kō* 阿弥陀講) in the entry of Kengen 建元 1/1302.3.8.



Figure 2. Myōon Benzaiten as a woman playing the *biva*. *Seiryū Myōon Benzaiten gazō* 青龍妙音弁財天画像 (Demachi Myōondō Temple 出町妙音堂).



Figure 3. Wang Zhaojun playing the *biva* on horseback. *Ō Shōkun zu* 王昭君図, Kusumi Morikage 久隈守景, 17c. (Tokyo National Museum).
<https://webarchives.tnm.jp/imgsearch/show/C0042808>

曩莫三曼多沒馱喃 蘇羅蘇婆帝曳 娑婆歌

此歌名馬上船中曲

– “Hymn to Myōonten” 妙音天讚, *Shōmyō-ji Religious Documents*²⁵

This is a phonetic realization in Chinese characters of a Sanskrit hymnal versicle to Myōonten, read out in Japanese as: *nōmakeu-sanmanda-bodanan sorasobatei-ei sonaka* (ultimately reflecting Skt. *nāmaḥ samanta-buddhānām, Sarasvatī aīm, svāhā*). The sequence *sorasobatei-ei* 蘇羅蘇婆帝曳 renders the name of the goddess Sarasvatī, in other words Myōonten 妙音天/Benzaiten 弁才天. Here, however, I want to focus on the annotation beneath, which would translate as:

²⁵ Text from *Kanazawa bunko shiryō zensho*, vol. 8, p. 177.

The title of this piece is: “Song on Horseback aboard a Boat” (*bajō senchū kyōku* 馬上船中曲).

Given a lack of parallel examples, this title likely represents a miscopying of 馬上胡中曲 (*bajō kochū kyōku*). Meaning “Song on Horseback in Barbarian Lands,” it would be a song sung on horseback by Wang Zhaojun 王昭君, while being sent on her way from Han China to the barbarian country—by tradition the first song ever composed for the *biwa*.²⁶

This, then, would represent a convergence of the image of Myōonten with that of Wang Zhaojun. And indeed, while Myōonten can be found depicted in the Boddhisatva manner, she can also be found depicted much along the lines of modern images of Benzaiten, in the guise of a woman strumming her *biwa*. As is clear from the above side-by-side comparison between images of (Figure 2) a two-armed female Myōonten and (Figure 3) Wang Zhaojun, by the time of the Kamakura period, at least on an iconographic level, the two had already become linked.

Conclusion

In the latter 12th century, what Fujiwara no Moronaga did with *biwa*-notation was to make the formlessness of the voice recordable. In his work we also recognize the music-mediated expression of court music and court poetry’s intrinsically Buddhist character. With the beginning of the Kamakura period, Moronaga’s *biwa* music was inherited by the Saionji clan, among whom Saionji Sanekane also made use of *biwa*-notation, to record the voice of court ceremonial after Moronaga’s time. Later Kien—likely Sanekane’s brother by a different mother—used *hakase*-notation for both the composition of new music and for the recension of ceremonial then in danger of being lost. After various such attempts to record the voice in writing, we find in the Shōmyō-ji collection of religious documents something like the pinnacle these developments eventually reached.

In addition to their function in capturing the fleeting formlessness of the voice, however, *biwa*-notation and *hakase*-notation should also be seen as a conduit for knowledge: shuttling back and forth, between the sacred and the secular, as they sought to convey forth music. Moreover, even as ceremonial and imagery were conveyed by means of such a conduit, they came also to be shaped by it themselves.

²⁶ See, e.g., Yamamoto Toshio 山本敏雄, “Ō Shōkun setsuwa to biwa” 王昭君説話と琵琶, *Aichi kyōiku daigaku kenkyū hōkokū: jinbun, shakai-ka* 愛知教育大学研究報告：人文・社会科 53 (2004).

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