

**4 WHAT THE *Manuale ad Sacramenta*  
(*Sakaramenta Teiyō*) TELLS US:  
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S INHERITANCE\***

By Takei Shigemi

As the 450th anniversary of the first visit to Japan of St. Francis Xavier (1506-52) comes to an end, I encountered his holy arm unveiled for the first time in fifty years at Oita Catholic Church. There was indeed an inheritance of Xavier.

Here I would like to discuss what Xavier conveyed and left us 450 years ago from a musical point of view through the surviving music, while summarizing the circumstances of the Western music which came along with the Christianity that Xavier brought to Japan.

A liturgical book called *Manuale ad Sacramenta* was compiled and published in 1605 by newly appointed bishop, Luís Cerqueira (1552-1614), who arrived in Japan about a half century after Xavier's visit. This book was printed with a Gutenberg-type letterpress (type-printing) machine which Itō Mancio (c. 1569-1612) and the Tenshō Mission brought back from Europe; it contains the written music of 19 Gregorian Chants.<sup>1</sup> This is the only material that indicates the actual Western music handed down along with Xavier's propagation of Christianity.

In order to clarify how the plainchants and instrumental music

---

\* The English text of Prof. Takei's paper reproduced below is an abridged version of the original Japanese text. The former half of the original has been translated in full. For a summary of the latter half, see the supplement at the end of this article.

were practiced in Japan at that time, we induce from hints in the letters of the missionaries to their countries, or from related sources such as *Historia de Japam* (History of Japan) by the Portuguese missionary Luís Frois (c. 1532-97). Even when some chants are mentioned with names, however, it is hard to specify the specific chants since several different melodies have appeared under the same names in different periods. So it is for the instruments : in the sources the often-mentioned *viola d'arco* simply means 'bowed string instrument' and the words do not distinguish between *viola da gamba* (placed between one's legs) and *viola da braccio* (placed on one's arm). If one reads *Tratado em que se contem muito susinta e abreviadamente algumas contradições e diferenças de costumes antre a gente de Europa e esta provincia de Japão* (Cultural Comparison between Europe and Japan) by Frois, the *canto d'orgão* which is occasionally found with monophonic hymns in some sources can be presumed to be a form of chorus (of two or more parts), but it is difficult to specify the choral practice and any attempt is nothing more than speculation.

In order to describe the 'invisible' music in detail from no less than 400 years ago, we need certain kinds of musical sources. The music of 19 plainchants in the *Manuale ad Sacramenta* prove that they were undoubtedly sung in Japan in the later sixteenth to the early seventeenth centuries.

There are two sources regarding musical matters during Xavier's stay in Japan for two years and three months. One is a description about a "13 string-koto making five modes (notes) without plucking the strings", one of the gifts to Ōuchi Yoshitaka of Yamaguchi (1507-51) from Xavier when he visited him in the autumn of 1551. Among several interpretations of this description, the most accepted guess is a keyboard instrument called a *cravo* at that time. The other is 'flauto and charumera' which Portuguese merchants played in order to welcome Xavier and his men invited by Ōtomo Yoshi-

By Takei Shigemi

shige (later Sōrin, 1530-87) in Funai in Bungo (now Oita City); They probably indicate a recorder and a reed instrument called chalumeau. Unfortunately no record tells how the Japanese reacted to the Western music, whether they found it pleasing or strange.

Frois' *Tratado em que se contem...* tells how the missionaries to Japan reacted to the Japanese music. The book clearly shows the differences between Western and Japanese cultures through a Westerner's eyes, and we can assume, though indirectly, how the Japanese reacted to the Western music from his bitter description of Japanese music in chapter thirteen, "Japanese theater, improvisational play, dance, singing and playing of instruments."

For instance: "our music is pleasing and resonates beautifully; Japanese music which consists of single part, is so disgusting that nothing would be worse than it." "People of European countries always vibrate their voices [when they sing]; Japanese people never vibrate their voices." "In Europe, boys sing an octave higher than adults; in Japan, everybody sings in the same octave; 'tiple' (soprano) is silent there." The words describe his surprise at a unique way of Japanese vocalization in Noh or Kyōgen, much different from the natural way of singing in Europe, which implies vice versa: Such Western music with harmonies and their vocalization might have sounded odd to Japanese ears. Another sentence supports this conception: "We appreciate harmony and consonance of music with *canto d'orgão*. The Japanese consider it noisy and do not like it at all."

On the other hand, some Japanese terms related to music were found in the *Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam* (*Nippo jisho* or Japanese-Portuguese Dictionary) published in Japan in 1603-4, such as "Biva (biwa) is Viola", "Fuye (fue) is Flauta (flute)" and "Xamixen (shamisen) is *Certa viola de tres cordas* (viola with tree strings)". These may suggest that important genres of Japanese traditional music today, such as Noh and Kyōgen, as well as Gagaku

(court music), Biwa, Shamisen and Shoh, were flourishing and had matured in the same period as the arrival of Western music.

While Western music had harmony consisting of soprano, alto, tenor and bass with natural voices according to each one's range, everyone sings in unison in the lower range of voices in Japanese music. It was quite reasonable that such 'foreign' music sounded strange to each other. In Europe music history it was transitional period from "Renaissance" to "Baroque", and Japanese culture was also in transition from Azuchi-Momoyama period to brilliant Edo period. In a sense it was a very appropriate time for the music of the West to encounter the Japanese music.

Though very foreign in the beginning, some sources suggested the Western music had gradually spread among Japanese Christians. When Father Cosme de Torres (1510-70), who replaced Xavier after his leaving Japan, celebrated a "missa cantada" (sung mass or high mass) at "Natala" (Christmas) in Yamaguchi, "Torres sang Mass and Gago read the Gospel and the Epistle. The Christians were all touched and grateful to have the Mass", as a letter of Alcaçova in 1552 reported. A letter of Gaspar Vilela (1525-72), an important piece of evidence from the birthplace of Western music, describes a situation of Bungo in 1557, saying "WE sang at various liturgies after Ash Wednesday and the two choirs... include some Portuguese. They sang '*Miserere mei, Deus* [Have mercy on me, Lord, Psalm 50 (51)]', and many Christians in the chapel wept and showed their faith", which shows how Japanese Christians were moved by the atmosphere made by Western music.

Shortly after that Japanese Christians started not only to listen to but to make music themselves. Boys in Bungo started singing hymns, or went to Hizen (now Nagasaki prefecture) to play the *viola d'arco*, as reported in the letters of the missionaries. But it was after the arrival of Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606) and establishment of an educational institution by the Jesuits that proper

By Takei Shigemi

music education had sprouted borne fruits.

At the *Seminario* (a minor seminary designed for boys aging from about six to eighteen years old) founded in Azuchi and Arima, there were music classes from two to three o'clock in the afternoon. According to the *Seminario* regulations, "Those who are talented shall learn singing and playing the *cravo*, *viola*, and other instruments, which may benefit their cultivation and solemn liturgies at church..." They seemed to have received a complete music education such as we can rarely have today. The classes were taught not by music teacher but by missionaries with musical talent and the older students of *seminario* might have been helping them.

In spite of such intensive education, not everything was fitting and adaptable to the Japanese. *Regimento que se ha de guardar nos semynarios* (Regulations for the Jesuit schools) says "Their performance of string instruments such as *viola d'arco* was terrible; you must not teach string instruments except keyboards to those who are not talented" or "their *canto d'orgão* (simple polyphony of harmonized chant?) is disgusting as well; from now on, they should concentrate on *canto chan* (plainchant)", which suggests that the Japanese rarely do well in playing string instruments or choir singing.

Itō Mancio and other boys selected to join the Tenshō Mission to Europe from the *seminario* in Arima seemed to have musical talent, according to *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium* (On Japanese Missionary) by Duarte de Sande, which mentions a musical performance by them during their stay in Europe.

It is said that Itō Mancio and Chijiwa Miguel (c. 1569-?) played the great organ at the Cathedral of Evora in Portugal and received enthusiastic applause, and in Pisa in Italy they experienced some dancing with music, which should be ascribed to intense music education in Goa, India, the center of the Eastern mission then. They might also have listened to the real performances of some of the

greatest musicians in Europe such as Victoria (1548-1611) or Palestrina (c. 1525-94) at the Investiture Mass of the Crown Prince of Philip II (reigned 1556-98) of Spain, the Funeral Mass of Gregory XIII (reigned 1572-85) in Italy and the following Coronation Mass of Sixtus V (reigned 1585-90). Chijiwa Miguel wrote about his musical experience in *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium*, "Unlike our music in which everybody always sings on the some notes, (in Western music) some sing high voice and some sing with low, while others sing between those, and all of the sounds are uttered at the same time, which makes a beautiful harmony with great subtlety".

After their journey to Europe by a sailing ship, which took two years and a half, and their twenty-month stay in Europe, by the time they left Lisbon in April 1586 their luggage was filled with many souvenirs. Among them were several kinds of instruments and a Gutenberg's type of letterpress machine, which was to print the first music in Japan.

Among the souvenirs the Tenshō Mission brought to Japan, there were some instruments : an *arpa* (harp), a *rebec* (3-string bowed instrument), a *lute* and a *cravo* (small keyboard) inlaid with gold and pearls, specially ordered from an Italian maker for them by Cardinal Ascanio Colonna of Alcala, Spain. In 1591, the following year of their return, the mission and Valignano went to the *Jurakudai*, a palace of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, formally messengers bringing a letter from viceroy of India, they also attempted to resolve the difficult situations and tendency to ban Christianity by Japanese authorities. They brought gifts from European kings and princes as well, and performed some European music. Hideyoshi listened to them with great interest, played the instruments by himself and asked them to repeat the piece three times. The piece(s) which they played then are unknown; Japanese music historian Minagawa Tatsuo assumed that it was *La Cancion del emperador* (The song of the emperor), an arrangement of a famous chanson

By Takei Shigemi

“Mille regretz (Thousand regrets)” by Josquin de Pres (c. 1440-1521).

Valignano, who actually planned to send the Tenshō mission to Europe, felt the necessity of printing textbooks and dictionaries for the students when he founded Jesuit educational institutes (*seminarios* etc.) in 1580's. He then decided to send two other Japanese boys with the mission, a Constantino Dourado (c. 1567-1620) and Augustino, to study printing and bring printing machines. In Lisbon, where they stayed just before leaving Europe, they attended the printing of a doctrinal book by Valignano, *Catechismus Christianae Fidei* (Japanese Christian's Faith); Dourado joined in the printing of *Oratio habita a Fara D. Martino Japonio* (Gratitude of Don Martino of Japan) in Goa, India; on the bottom of its title page, it reads 'Goae, excudebat Constantinus Douratus Iaponius in aedibus Societatis Jesu (Constantino Dourado of Iapan engraved it at the Jesuit Residence in Goa).'

Both Xavier and Valignano highly rated the capacities of the Japanese and appreciated Japanese people and their culture. Xavier's incompleting task, to take Japanese boys, Bernardo and Matteo, to Europe with him and have them study was indeed passed on to Valignano, who planned and executed the Tenshō Mission. The dreams of Valignano, who brought in type-printing machine for efficient cultivation of Japanese priests at Jesuit educational institutions in Japan, did succeed and came true with Cerqueira, who compiled and published *Manuale ad Sacramenta* for the future Japanese priests. The *Manuale ad Sacramenta* was indeed the joint fruit of the three men.

In 1999, the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Xavier's visit, I had two chances to perform from the printed sources with many music lovers and shared feelings of the people from 450 years ago. The revived music flowed over time and distance, and touched many hearts, and then disappeared. I believe that Xavier's affection was also indirectly revived along with the music across 450 years.

## Notes

1 Listed below are the nineteen Gregorian chants in the *Sacramenta*.

1. Subvenite sancti Dei (pp. 239-41), 2. Subvenite sancti Dei (pp. 243-44), 3. Miserere mei Deus (p. 244), 4. Ne recorderis peccata mea (pp. 251-53), 5. Libera me Domine (pp. 254-57), 6. In paradisum (p. 258), 7. Chorus Angelorum (pp. 258-59), 8. Ego sum resurrectio (pp. 259-60), 9. Memento mei Deus (pp. 263-65), 10. Credo (pp. 287-90), 11. Qui Lazarum resuscitasti (pp. 291-93), 12. Domine quando veneris (pp. 294-96), 13. Libera me Domine (pp. 297-300), 14. Sacerdos et Pontifex (pp. 386-88), 15. Tantum ergo (pp. 393-94), 16. Sicut cervus (pp. 395-98), 17. Veni Creator Spiritus (p. 398), 18. Per signum Crucis (p. 400), 19. O quam gloriosum (p. 401).  
(Translated by Yoshimura Kō)

[Supplement]

## Kirishitan Music from the *Manuale ad Sacramenta*

[*Sakaramenta Teiyō*] of Luís Cerqueira

The *Manuale ad Sacramenta* [*Sakaramenta Teiyō*] illustrates the encounter between the work of Luís Cerqueira and the world of music in Japan ca. 1600. The *Manuale* was compiled by Cerqueira, the newly-appointed for Japan, who arrived in the country in 1598. This 400-page sacramentary was printed on the Jesuit Mission Press at the college in Nagasaki in 1605. As the title-page, printed in black and vermilion, clearly indicates, the purpose of the *Manuale ad sacramenta* was to serve as a handbook for the administration of five of the seven sacraments: Baptism, Confession, Eucharist, Marriage, and the Anointment of the Sick; the rites for Confirmation and Ordination, however, were not included. Moreover, the book provides detailed instructions on how to conduct the rite of Christian Burial.

The nineteen notated chants interspersed among the rites for 'Sacramentals' in the latter half of this liturgical book merit particular attention. The angular 'neumatic' notation of the melodies  $\blacksquare \blacklozenge \blacksquare$  is printed in black on the lines and in the spaces of vermilion-coloured five-line staves, with the text of the chant added below each staff. Printing music required much greater technical skill than printing simple text, and the *Manuale ad Sacramenta* affords a fine example of such technique, in which the vermilion lines of the staves

By Takei Shigemi

and the black notes (neums) of the chant melodies were printed separately in a two-stage process.

Of these nineteen Gregorian chants, thirteen were intended as hymns to be sung during burial rites, whereas the remaining six were intended for use during the official visitation of local churches by the bishop. Almost all of the chants used for burial rites present complex melodies which would have been very difficult for the Japanese Christians of the time to master. One exception to this rule is the third chant, the *Miserere mei Deus*, taken from the book of Psalms, which consists in a simple four-note melody and which presumably could have been easily sung by the whole congregation. It is possible that the same melody was used when intoning the *Miserere* during the early years of Christianity in Funai, Bungo (modern-day Oita city). Another example of a rich yet simple melody that would have touched the hearts of Japanese Christians was the refrain, *Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison*, which was inserted as the final chant in eight out of the thirteen burial hymns.

On the other hand, two of the chants sung during episcopal visitations, the *Veni Creator Spiritus* and the *Tantum ergo*, were more elaborate hymns divided into several verses. Although both of these chants presented a considerable musical challenge to the faithful, in comparison with the complexity of the remaining four chants, the latter two would still have been less difficult to master, provided that the congregation was afforded the opportunity to hear the hymns sung regularly.

As for the *Tantum ergo* found in the *Manuale*, it is thought to be a melody native to Portugal and Spain; in fact, it appears as the central theme in one of the works of the Spanish composer, Tomas Luis de Victoria (1548-1611). Introducing it first in the base and then repeating it in the alto, soprano, tenor, and finally again in the alto, Victoria employs this simple melody to beautiful effect and transforms it into a sublime polyphonic composition. These two surviving melodies of the *Tantum ergo* bear witness to the depth of the cultural exchange that took place at the time between East and West.

In the paper I am presenting at this symposium, I thus hope to gain insight into Xavier's heart and mind through the 'invisible medium' of music. Besides discussing the chants of the *Manuale* in Particular, I shall concentrate on more general characteristics of Japanese music during the *Kirishitan* period, which was indelibly marked by the Western musical tradition that accompanied Christianity on its journey to Japan.