SAIBARA

JAPANESE COURT SONGS OF THE HEIAN PERIOD

Volume One
TO MY TEACHER

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St. Catharine’s College, Cambridge.

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NOTE ON ROMANISATION

The basic system of romanisation used in the body of this study and for transliterating the modernised Saibara-texts in Appendix I is the Hepburn system. For transliteration of the twelfth-century texts in musical transcriptions and in Chapter III, the following emendations to the Hepburn system have been made in an attempt to compromise between a fully modernised transliteration suitable for the reader of modern Japanese and a transliteration that shows details of syllabic underlay expected by the Western musicologist.

(1) Combinations of syllables today pronounced as lengthened vowels are transliterated as written, each syllable placed beneath the note to which it is sung. That is to say,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ア} & \text{ナ} & \text{タ} & \text{フ} \\
A & n & a & t & f & u & t & o
\end{align*}
\]

is transliterated as \textit{Ana tafuto}

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ア} & \text{ナ} & \text{ト} & \text{オ} \\
A & n & a & t & f & o & t & o
\end{align*}
\]

rather than as \textit{Ana toto}

and

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ア} & \text{ミ} & \text{ジ} \\
A & m & i & j & i
\end{align*}
\]

as \textit{Aumiji}

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{オ} & \text{ミ} & \text{ジ} \\
O & m & i & j & i
\end{align*}
\]

rather than as \textit{Omiji}

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(2) Combinations of syllables today pronounced in an 'allegro' fashion are transliterated as written when they are set to two or more notes in the musical sources, but according to the Hepburn system when set to one note only. Thus,

\[ \text{Hiyausai} \]

is transliterated as \( \text{Hiyausai} \)

but

\[ \text{Shakimudachi} \]

is transliterated as \( \text{Shakimudachi} \)

It is to be emphasised that these emendations are conventions adopted for the special case of a preliminary, musical study of twelfth-century \textit{Saibara}. A study of textual sources for \textit{Saibara} in relation to text-underlay in musical sources is in progress. The results of this study may eventually permit a more consistent solution to the problems of transliterating classical \textit{kana} orthography in a musical setting.
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PLATE 1: FRAGMENT OF LUTE-TABLATURE OF LATE HEIAN OR EARLY KAMAKURA DATE CONTAINING SECTION 5 OF THE RITSU-SAIBARA, TAKASAGO

For transcription, see Volume Two, Appendix V.
INTRODUCTION
The term Saibara 崇卑楽 a refers to a genre of measured Japanese Court Song, traditionally believed to derive from native folk-song, and known to have existed as part of the Court Repertory at least since 859 A.D. b when the death of Princess Hiroi, a singer of Saibara is recorded.

Songs of this kind appear to have been sung both by men and women, and served - in late Heian (782–1184) times - as entertainment music, practised by noble amateurs (Prince Genji, as well as the much earlier Princess Hiroi - for example). Surviving string-parts (zither and lute) suggest a maximal pace of \( \text{MM} \) 60 – 80, and the longest individual song will not have lasted more than about four minutes; a majority of the songs will not have exceeded one minute.

The texts may be strophic, commonly consisting of one or two strophes (dan段 'section') only, but occasionally of up to seven such. According to Brower and Miner and others c, the verse-form is to be regarded as fundamentally irregular, consisting principally of lines of five and seven syllables, but subject to distortion by the insertion of meaningless filler-syllables.

Regarding texts, no complete translation into a Western language of the repertory, as it survives in sources from the twelfth-century, exists; but translations of selected Saibara appear

---

a) A general account of Saibara is to be found in E. Harich-Schneider, A History of Japanese Music, London 1973, pp. 214 ff. This restates the contents of several earlier publications.

b) Sandai jitsuroku三代業録, Jōgan観覧 1st year (859), 10th month, 23rd day; see E. Harich-Schneider, Koromogae, One of the Saibara of Japanese Court Music, Monumenta Nipponica VIII, Tokyo 1952, p. 399. See also Morohashi Tetsuji 萩原定, Dai Kan-wa jiten大漢和辞典, Tokyo 1960, entry Saibara, no. 1005–72, vol. I, p. 898.

in several Western works:

(i) in translations of novels such as the *Genji Monogatari*, etc.
(ii) in histories of Japanese literature, for example, in that of Florenz,
(iii) along with transcriptions into staff-notation in the works of Harich-Schneider, Kanetune, and
(iv) in general studies, such as those of Blau, Eckhardt, Mueller, and Piggott.

In Japan, as might be anticipated, intensive literary study of *Saibara* has occurred, culminating in the impressive study by Usuda, which includes an account of views on the original development of *Saibara*, as well as an annotated edition of *Saibara*-texts in twelfth-century sources; but apart from Yamanoi's edited transcription of a manuscript for voice, possibly of Kamakura date (1192 – 1333), no other attempt to transcribe and analyse the earliest sources is known. Hayashi has made a partial examination of the relationships between certain *Saibara* and pieces from the *Toyaku* (music from Tang China) and *Komagaku* (music from Korea) repertories, ignoring mensural aspects of the scores,

To date, musical aspects of Saibara have received little attention from Western authors. With the exception of Harich-Schneider\textsuperscript{a,b} - who has discussed both musical and, to some extent, textual aspects of two of the six Saibara still performed, and who has attempted to reconstruct their early forms - Western authors have either limited their accounts to brief mention of the existence of the genre in general accounts of the Court Music (Gagaku) and its history\textsuperscript{k}, or have provided explanations and/or transcriptions of the neumatic notation of the vocal part-books, in use at least since the Saibara ryaku-fu\textsuperscript{h}. Neumatic notation is used today for all genres of Court Song: Azuma asobi 東遊, Rōei 魚吹, Kume-uta 久米歌, Yamanoto-uta 巻郷歌, Ruika 稲歌, and Kagura-uta 神楽歌.

Transcriptions into staff-notation, from performances of the six Saibara that remain in the Court repertory, have been made both by Western and by Japanese musicologists: Harich-Schneider\textsuperscript{a,b}, Kanetune\textsuperscript{g}, Shiba, and Tanabe\textsuperscript{1}.

This present study offers the results of a purely musical investigation of the Saibara repertory as preserved in two different tablatures (for lute and zither respectively) from the late twelfth-century. It has relevance not only for historical musicological studies in Japan, but also for the study of the musics of East Asia in general.

The arrangement of the 55 Saibara preserved in tablature in the two late twelfth-century musical sources has been discussed and compared with that in two collections of Saibara-texts without


\textsuperscript{1}) S. Shiba, 杉山, Gosentei ni yoru gagaku sō-su-hō and Shiba, 西村, Gesammelte Werke der Welt Musik, vol. 18, Tokyo 1931.
tablature from the early twelfth-century. The systems of notation
in the two musical sources have been examined in detail; the 55
Saibara have been transcribed in full; and principles for
reconstructing voice-parts - in the light of text-underlay in both -
have been established. Transcriptions of other early Saibara-sources
in tablature, including a fragment of lute-tablature of late Heian
or early Kamakura date, the flute-part for a single Saibara dated
1193, and lute-parts for 20 Saibara in a manuscript contemporary with
the large lute-compendium, are also provided. Metrical and rhythmical
values for signs associated with the song-texts, in the two sources
without tablature, have been suggested, based on comparisons between
these sources and the musical sources.

The relationships between Saibara-melodies and melodies
from the Togaku and Komagaku repertories have been examined, and
a broad classification of the 55 Saibara into their several melody-
types is provided.

Finally, the versions of the six Saibara still performed
today are compared with their twelfth-century originals. Text-
underlay, in both 'medieval' and modern versions, is discussed, but
translation of the song-texts has not been attempted.