

Historical Research in Music without Oral Tradition, with Regard to the Music of the T'ang Dyansty

Shigeo Kishibe

In the case of music without oral tradition, the features of which can be figured only by literal and archaeological materials, the study would be admittedly started with the social background of music or circumstances of performance or the basic theory of the tone system or musical instruments. Since to explain the process of such historical studies would take a great deal of time, I would point out some important and specific views of the process by taking an example, a study on the music of the Tang Dynasty (619-907) which is discussed in my book (1961-62).

Fortunately Japanese orientology and sinology have developed a great deal in the direction in which the method of the critical treatment of literary and archeological materials and the synthesizing of criticized materials have been done. As a historian, I adapted this method to my work on T'ang music.

- 1) First of all, we have to know that for the music of such an ancient time as the T'ang Dynasty, we have poor materials in quantity as well as quality. In the next period, the Sung Dynasty (960-1279) the condition changed to a great extent. Literal materials increased to a great deal and notations began to appear.
- 2) Secondly, most of the literary materials on T'ang music are fragmental and spread out in many kinds of books. I even had to look at books on medicine, in which I found small fragments, which were very important.
- 3) The next problem is the reliability of literary materials. The main materials are found in the, so to speak, orthodox histories written by historians belonging to the court and

government. This means they are not always reliable because they were not necessarily written in the period the historical fact occurred, but very often in the next dynasty by the emperor's historian who had to change the real facts for the emperor. In addition, most of them were not specialized in music.

- 4) Also, very often the materials are not firsthand materials. The main materials, that is the orthodox history of T'ang Dynasty,



were written based on older records. There are literary relationships of father and son or grandfather and grandson or more remote. In the process of transition, mistaken copies often happen. Even mistakes in subsequent editions occur. We have to find the original material, which presents challenges. In my study on the date of the establishment of the twenty tonalities system of the T'ang Dynasty, I had to survey books in

subjects outside of music printed in the Sung Dynasty to find the name of the original material that is quoted. This work took almost half a year.

- 5) Because of the above-mentioned relationship between materials that refers to the same historical fact, I needed to be able to find at least two independent original sources. This was often terribly difficult.
- 6) Because writers or historians of these main materials were not specialized in music, even

the firsthand material does not describe the real fact. For instance, an important organization for classifying musical instruments in the court was not mentioned in the orthodox history, except in a fragmental reference of one line included in a chapter of a biography of a minister. Of course, many errors in re-editing and copying happen because of lack of musical knowledge.

- 7) As a result of the unreliability of the main material, other fragmental sources scattered in many kinds of books of the date and following periods play a very important role. In the study of the date of the establishment of the twenty-eight tonalities system, a small line in the introductory sentence for a poem by a famous poet gives the biggest hint to determine the date.

As an example of the process of historical study in the music of the T'ang Dynasty, a short extract from my article on the date of the establishment of the twenty-eight tonalities system would be mentioned here.

Chinese scholars discussed the system in the subsequent Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties (16-19th centuries), but the date and the process of establishment have never been discussed.

Let me begin with a short explanation on the system.

The basic tonality in the T'ang Dynasty was "mathematical"—a mathematical combination of seven notes as scale tones, which corresponded to two scales, major and minor in Western music, and twelve tones with absolute pitch which correspond to the Western chromatic scale. Although these seven scale notes and twelve semitones are called by Chinese names, I will use here Western solmization for the seven notes and the numbers from 1 to 12 for the twelve semitones. (See Table 1). Differences between East and West here are that Chinese *fa* is one half tone higher than that of the Western *fa* and that the twelve tones are not the Western "well-tempered twelve tones." (In this paper, *fi* is used instead of *fa*).

Table 1

<i>do</i>	<i>kung</i>	1. <i>huang-chung</i>
		2. <i>tai-lu</i>
<i>re</i>	<i>shang</i>	3. <i>t'ai-tsu</i>
		4. <i>chia-chung</i>
<i>mi</i>	<i>chiao</i>	5. <i>ku-hsi</i>
		6. <i>chung-lü</i>
<i>fi</i>	<i>p'ien-cheng</i>	7. <i>jui-p'in</i>
<i>sol</i>	<i>cheng</i>	8. <i>lin-chung</i>
		9. <i>i-tse</i>
<i>la</i>	<i>yü</i>	10. <i>nan-lü</i>
		11. <i>wu-she</i>
<i>si</i>	<i>p'ien-kung</i>	12. <i>ying-chung</i>

In China each of the seven notes can function as a tonic. This creates seven scales (*do* scale, *re* scale...). Each tonic can be put on each one of the twelve tones. This results in eighty-four tonalities. Of course, all of these eighty-four tonalities were not in actual use. The number of tonalities in actual use was thirteen or fourteen (one of the fourteen is vaguely known). The system of these

eighty-four tonalities can be illustrated in such a table as Table 2. Each name of these eighty-four tonalities in the table, shown here by the combination of numbers and solmization instead of the proper Chinese name, can be interpreted in two ways as follows:

Table 2

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
do	<u>1-do</u>	2-do	3-do	4-do	5-do	6-do	7-do	8-do	9-do	10-do	11-do	12-do
re	1-re	2-re	<u>3-re</u>	4-re	5-re	6-re	7-re	8-re	9-re	10-re	11-re	12-re
mi	1-mi	2-mi	3-mi	4-mi	<u>5-mi</u>	6-mi	7-mi	8-mi	9-mi	10-mi	11-mi	12-mi
fi	1-fi	2-fi	3-fi	4-fi	5-fi	6-fi	<u>7-fi</u>	8-fi	9-fi	10-fi	11-fi	12-fi
sol	1-sol	2-sol	3-sol	4-sol	5-sol	6-sol	7-sol	<u>8-sol</u>	9-sol	10-sol	11-sol	12-sol
la	1-la	2-la	3-la	4-la	5-la	6-la	7-la	8-la	9-la	<u>10-la</u>	11-la	12-la
si	1-si	2-si	3-si	4-si	5-si	6-si	7-si	8-si	9-si	10-si	11-si	<u>12-si</u>

- 1) For instance, 3-re can be the tonality in which re is tonic and the tonic is on the tone 3 of the twelve tones. This is expressed in a Chinese source as “3 becomes *re*.” So I name this interpretation “become tonality” (in Chinese *wei-chao*). (See table 3, *Wei-chao* row.)
- 2) 3-re can also be interpreted as the tonality in which 3 means the tone of twelve tones to which do, as the first, basic beginning note of the seven notes, is attached so that do-si

corresponds 3-5-7-9-10-12-2, but the scale of the tonality is re scale, that is starting from re. The Chinese source expressed it “re scale of 3.” So I would name the system under this interpretation “of tonality” (*chih-chao*). (See Table 3, Chih-chao Line).
Please compare both lines, with particular attention to the different position of re.

Table 3

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Wei-chao</i>	3-re	<u>do</u>	<u>re</u>	<u>mi</u>	<u>fi</u>	<u>sol</u>	<u>la</u>	<u>si</u>				
<i>Chih-chao</i>	3-re	<u>si</u>	<u>do</u>	<u>re</u>	<u>mi</u>	<u>fi</u>	<u>sol</u>	<u>la</u>				

To distinguish the two ways of interpretation and consequently the two systems of arranging eighty-four tonalities, another for of table can be drawn as follows. (Table 4).

Table 4

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
do	<u>1-do</u>	2-do	3-do	4-do	5-do	6-do	7-do	8-do	9-do	10-do	11-do	12-do
re	11-re	12-re	<u>1-re</u>	2-re	3-re	4-re	5-re	6-re	7-re	8-re	9-re	10-re
mi	9-mi	10-mi	11-mi	12-mi	<u>1-mi</u>	2-mi	3-mi	4-mi	5-mi	6-mi	7-mi	8-mi
fi	7-fi	8-fi	9-fi	10-fi	11-fi	12-fi	<u>1-fi</u>	2-fi	3-fi	4-fi	5-fi	6-fi
sol	6-sol	7-sol	8-sol	9-sol	10-sol	11-sol	12-sol	<u>1-sol</u>	2-sol	3-sol	4-sol	5-sol
la	4-la	5-la	6-la	7-la	8-la	9-la	10-la	11-la	12-la	<u>1-la</u>	2-la	3-la
si	2-si	3-si	4-si	5-si	6-si	7-si	8-si	9-si	10-si	11-si	12-si	<u>1-si</u>

In Table 4 you see 1-do, 1-re, 1-mi, 1-fa, 1-sol, 1-la, and 1-si (all underlined), which are lined up in the first column of Table 2, are here located in an oblique line and in order of columns 1-3-5-7-9-10-12, respectively. The order of these seven tones corresponds to the solmization do-si when do is put on 2.

Those systems of naming tonalities and systems of ordering them are not described clearly

in Chinese sources. By reading over ten sources referring to eighty-four tonalities with particular attention to the order of names, and by hard work of interpretation together with careful criticism of these sources which often contain misprints and miscopy, I found the above mentioned two methods of ordering names. This is the basic key for resolving the question of the establishment of the twenty-eight tonalities system of the T’ang

dynasty that was the bases of thirteen or fourteen tonalities in actual use.

are arranged in the system of *chih-chao* (“of tonality”).

The system of twenty-eight tonalities is the part of the system of eighty-four tonalities as shown on Table 5 in which twenty-eight tonalities

Table 5

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
do	x		x		x		x	x		x		x
re	x		x		x		x	x		x		x
mi	x		x		x		x	x		x		x
fi												
sol												
la	x		x		x		x	x		x		x
si												

Here the method of section of twenty-four tonalities from eighty-four tonalities. Among twelve columns of twelve tones seven columns (1-3-5-7-8-10-12) are used, while among seven lines of solmization four lines (*do*, *re*, *mi*, and *la*) are used. The seven tones correspond to the *do* scale, having *doh* on tone 1. The *fi* scale and *si* scale are omitted

because they are based on the secondary scale notes called *pien* while the other five notes are main scale notes called *cheng*. This reason is half mechanically logical and half musical. In ancient times, the Chinese thought the two *piens* could not be tonics. The reason *sol* is omitted seems to be more musical, that is, *sol* is dominant of *do* scale.

Table 6

c	si	do		re		mi		fi	sol		la	
b	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
do	<u>x</u>	x		x		<u>x</u>		x	x		<u>x</u>	
re	<u>x</u>	x		<u>x</u>		<u>x</u>		<u>x</u>	x		<u>x</u>	
mi	<u>x</u>	x		x		<u>x</u>		x	x		x	
la	<u>x</u>	x		x		<u>x</u>		x	x		<u>x</u>	

The actual reason that the seven columns and four lines were selected was that they provide enough slots to hold thirteen of the fourteen tonalities that were actually used in the T'ang Dynasty. The actual method of adaption of the twenty-eight tonalities was further complicated as shown in Table 6.

Above the line (a) 1-12, another line (b) 12-11 is drawn, while in the highest line (c) solmization is put in the way *do* corresponds to 1. This means twenty-eight tonalities are located on the solmization of columns that correspond to the line (b) instead of the line (a). Tonalities marked with X are the thirteen tonalities in actual use.

Before giving an explanation of the strange look of the table in comparison to the former table (Table 5), another point must be mentioned. The names of these tonalities vary in three ways.

- 1) Some of them are named by using names of twelve tones and solmization, like 1-*do*, 3-*mi*, etc. This is the older naming method that used to be applied to the theory of *yayüeh* (Confucian ceremonial music).
- 2) Some are named by using names of tonalities in Sanskrit that were brought by a musicians named Su T'i-pa from Kutscha of Chinese Turkestan in the Northern Chu Dynasty (557-580 AD). Su T'i-pa's seven tonalities

correspond exactly to the system of seven ragas described on the stone relief of Kudimiyamalai, north of Madras, dated 7th century. Of course these Sanskrit names are translated phonetically into Chinese characters, for instance, Sanskrit *sadarita* becomes Chinese *so-t'o-li*, *pancama* becomes *pan-chan*, etc. *So-t'o-li* (later in the T'ang Dynasty called *sha-t'o*) is on 1-*do* (of row "a"). And *pan-chan* (*pan-che* in the T'ang Dynasty) is for 1-*la*.

- 3) Some are named using names of tonalities or modes which were used for older Chinese secular music. For instance, *ping-chao* for 6-*mi*.

The above mentioned two, *sha-t'o* and *pan-che* (1-*doh* and 1 *la* respectively), are most fundamental because *sha-t'o* is the first tonality of the seven ragas and *Pan-che* is the fifth, while the first solmization is *do* and the fifth is *la*. This means *sha-t'o* represents the seven tonalities of the *do* scale and *pan-che* represents that of the *la* scale. This is the reason these two are located in the first column of 1.

Despite these above-mentioned explanations, still another question remains unsolved, that is, why there is a difference of one half tone between the rows "a" and "b." It would take many pages to explain the reason completely. Here I would point out simply that it comes from the three half-tone difference between the standard pitch of the court secular music to which the twenty-eight tonalities system belongs, and the standard pitch of *ya-yüeh*, and also from a difference of four half tones between the basic tone of *ya-yüeh*, that is 1, and the basic tone of the secular music, that is, 4. Consequently, there is the difference of one half tone between the former three, four, and latter for half tones. This causes the difference of one half tone between line "a" and line "b."

As the result of the above mentioned analysis of the twenty-eight tonalities, the most important points for the determination of the twenty-eight tonalities system and its date were cleared up.

- 1) When the system was established, it was in the style of "of tonality" (*chih-chao*).
- 2) The date of the establishment is the time when names of thirteen tonalities like *sha-t'o*,

pan-cha, *ping-chao*, etc., were determined. The determination was pronounced by the Department of Music of the Ministry of Rites and Music (Education) through a stone relief on which these new names were carved. The announcement was made on July 10th of the 13th era of T'ien-pao (754). The source that mentions this announcement, T'ang-hui-yao [唐會要], but does not give the name of the original source. I had to work hard for many days to check reliability of this material by surveying numerous books from the T'ang and Sung dynasties. Finally, I succeeded and found the name of the original source, which is reliable.

The 13th era of Tsien-pao proved to be the most important year in regard to a big change in music compositions too. In a small sentence in the introductory comment to a poem by a famous poet, the big change is described as follows: "(In this year) Chinese secular music and foreign music were combined." This sentence reflects the establishment of the system of twenty-eight tonalities, in which foreign (Indian) theory is combined with Chinese theory.

In the process of analysis of the twenty-eight tonalities system described in several sources of the T'ang and Sung dynasties, another important fact emerges. That is, *chih-chao* was used in the middle of the T'ang Dynasty when the system was established, while in the end of T'ang, *wei-chao* took the place of *chih-chao*. In the early half of the Sung Dynasty, Northern Sung, *wei-chao* continued to be used, while in the later half of the Sung Dynasty, Southern Sung, *chih-chao* came back. After that, people became ignorant of difference between *chih-chao* and *wei-chao*, except for a theorist of the Ming Dynasty who mentioned it vaguely. (See Kishibe 1937-1938.)

Besides the above-mentioned discussion on the method of historical study, I had intended to refer to the importance of the combination of archaeological and literal material and also of the combination of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean materials by taking an example of a musical instrument, but I don't have time enough to do that.

Instead of giving an incomplete talk on the subject, I would prefer to refer to something that was discussed yesterday. Among the many points in which I was interested, one matter Dr. Merriam pointed out impressed me most. Dr. Merriam said, "We don't know African music," when he emphasized the difficulty of our study in ethnomusicology. I guessed that in the term "know" used by Dr. Merriam, the concept of "feel" was involved too. However, we had less discussion on how to feel. This leads me to thinking about the difference of study or method of study between the native musicologist and foreign musicologist, which I pointed out in my speech at the beginning of our meeting yesterday.¹

Let us listen to an example. [Demonstration by record.]² This music is from a genre of shamisen music called *Kiyomoto*. The text refers to the lament of a courtesan who is going to be separated from her sweetheart. The story is concerned with the feudal period at the end of the 18th century, the social circumstances of which are quite different from modern one. Musicians, critics, and even amateur lovers of traditional music discuss techniques of performance, as well as aesthetics, of musical expression in this performance. Opinion differs according to personal taste and because of the subjectiveness of music. However, there is a standard of the style of expression too. This standard can be taught best or better by older musicians. The case of appreciation of traditional music is the same. I can appreciate or evaluate performance of a traditional music, for instance, shamisen music, less exactly than older people, say Mr. Kasho Machida, a scholar and critic of traditional music, who was born in the middle of the era of Meiji, when the feeling and atmosphere of the Edo period, in which shamisen music appeared, were maintained to a fairly large extent. I was born in the end of Meiji.

Thus even in Japan, we have today great difficulty in knowing how we should and can appreciate or understand musical expression from around one hundred years ago. Consequently, the question leads us to the possibility or capacity of foreigners or foreign musicologists to know and to feel the real value of expression of another nation's music. I have to confess that the only music I can understand and feel in its deepest aesthetics and highest techniques is Japanese music.

Of course, I don't deny the merit of foreign musicologists. They often find what we Japanese miss. What I wish to say is that we have to recognize the limitation of study in foreign music. When we aim for the highest degree of study, it is necessary that native and foreign musicologists cooperate in their studies.

Sources

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———. 1961-1962. *Todai Ongaku no Rekishiteki Kenkyu* (Historical Studies on Chinese Music of the Tang Dynasty). Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1961 and 1962. [English Summary, 46 pages in the second volume.]

¹ This is apparently in reference to some comments made by Kishibe at the beginning of the symposium but unfortunately these comments have not been preserved.

² No record of which composition was played remains. However, given that it was from the Kiyomoto tradition and given the general meaning of the text, we can assume that it was the Kiyomoto composition, "Michitose" [三千歳].

Discussion Following Shigeo Kishibe's Paper

I. Use of Historical Documents

Powers: I have a technical question if there is time.

You referred in your discussion of the T'ang tonalities to the eight names of Indian ragas, which were brought in by this Kutshan musician. What is the equivalent in the source for the word that you used—"raga"? I was curious because I thought there might be a Chinese term which sounded something like raga, which would be evidence that the word was used at that time in India.

Kishibe: We don't have a concept in China and Japan comparable to raga.

Powers: There is no word for mode? Or anything like that?

Kishibe: Just the word *Tiao*. It means tonality, mode, or scale sometimes.

Powers: Is *tiao* a conceivable phonetic equivalent for a Sanskrit or Pali word?

Kishibe: No, I don't think so. A more important point for you is that in the *Sul-shu*, seven names of tonalities are mentioned, and even the order of the seven notes corresponds to the seven names of the *Kudiyamalai*.

Powers: Yes, but there is no generic term for these things in the *Kudiyamalai* inscription.

Kishibe: I know. In the *Sangita Ratnakara* we have this.

Powers: Yes, but you can't use the *Sangita Ratnakara* to explain the *Kudiyamalai* inscription.

Kishibe: Why?

Powers: It's five hundred years later, and the only source which has anything possible to do with the *Kudiyamalai* inscription is the *Nātya Shāstra*.

Kishibe: No, we can use it I think, because the *Sangita Ratnakara* is a collection of many theories of older times.

Powers: Precisely. And it falls exactly into the category which you yourself described as the father-son-grandson treatises. It is a grandson or a great-grandson treatise, and unfortunately the quotations are out of context. You can demonstrate in half a dozen places that it

doesn't know what it is talking about. It simply contradicts itself in purely philological terms.

Kishibe: Yes, I know the limitations of historical proof.

Powers: The *Sangita Ratnakara*, if you look at the thing critically in precisely the same terms in which you've been looking at the Chinese sources, is in fact about the most unreliable treatise in the whole bunch. It gives the impression of completeness and accuracy, but actually it is simply a compilation from a dozen or two-dozen old theoretical sources, none of which make particularly much sense in the treatise itself.

Kishibe: That's true, but you know these two sources are the only material we have on this matter, and historical research allows this assumption to some degree.

Powers: In this particular case, the assumption that the *Sangita Ratnakara* will help to explain the *kudiyamalai* inscription can demonstrably be shown to be a dangerous one. Try the *Nātya Shāstra*—there's much closer correspondence there.

II. Native vs. Foreign Musicologist

Seeger: You have spoken of the limitations of the foreign musicologist. Are there any limitations to the native musicologist?

Kishibe: Yes, I have already mentioned that there are some differences between the younger generation and older people.

Seeger: In other words, you think the best work should be by cooperation between the foreigner and the native?

Kishibe: Yes.

Seeger: Good! We have looked forward in vain for many years to the incursion of the oriental musicologist upon occidental music, and I wanted to be sure that that possibility was not ignored here.

Hood: Take a fellow like Harry Powers, who for my money has assimilated something in a very

thorough way. And let's take an Indian musician, born in the tradition, growing up with the tradition, and soaking up all the society around him. The two together make a beautifully complementary team. I think each brings to the problem of Indian music something unique. I think Harry has something to offer that the native musician will never have, by virtue of the fact that he is from the outside. On the other hand, the Indian musician will have, by his heritage, something that Harry will never have. But together, I think that ethnomusicology may really achieve something. I think that either one alone is going to give us a lopsided view, ultimately, of world music. I think we need both.

Malm: Do you feel that a Japanese musician can feel western music?

Kishibe: In a different way from you.

Malm: Do you feel that there is a mystique in oriental music, which the Westerner can never understand?

Kishibe: The deepest point of the real body of music.

Powers: I'm rather distressed about this. I met a Japanese composer in Paris who certainly felt western music.

Garfias: I think in this case the defense might be that the Japanese would say that he's not really Japanese at this point. I have had many discussions with people in Japan on this same point, and when you pursue it to its nth degree, you find that the point with which they defend themselves is that the experience, the associations, that a Japanese-born person has when he hears a piece of Japanese music are such that they simply cannot be reduplicated by a westerner with any degree of musical sensitivity or perception when he hears the same music.

Powers: But I would say that there are many people, even in this culture, who are far less acculturated to western music than many people in Japan and other places.

McKinnon: This is a point with which I am very much concerned. The native born person is certainly in a better position to respond to

certain feelings, certain modes, certain tones which someone coming in does not readily do. There are certain dimensions that may initially be missing. Certainly this is part of the problem of ethnomusicology. This is certainly a part of the quest that any poet, any musicologist has to concern himself with.

Malm: I would say that all this is to me simply extra-musical. I think the individual's reaction to the music is a problem for the ethnologist and for the psychologist. The reaction of a person, the associations he brings from his childhood, has really very little to do with where the notes come from.

McKinnon: But it contributes to his understanding, to his receptiveness to a particular form of music. I hope that we never see the day when the consideration of music gets that antiseptic.