



(LAS 7395)

## VENERATED PATTERNS OF CHINA AND JAPAN

The word pattern is derived from the Medieval Latin *patronus*, which meant something to imitate (i.e., to pattern after). In Asia, imitation is not only a form of flattery, but also an expression of respect (the Chinese character on the record cover) for those around you as well as those who have gone before you.

Patterns of China and Japan not only reiterates Japan's well-known historical role as cultural imitator, but also notes that foreign musical influences have similarly passed through China and the West (sometimes voluntarily, sometimes forcibly) leaving their mark on the indigenous music traditions. The fact that borrowing may not only be of a spatial nature but also have a chronological dimension may be seen in selections performed here, which trace their roots back to musical/dramatic forms of earlier historical periods. Not disregarded are examples of spontaneous occurrence whereby musical phenomena recur without any known cultural exchange or contact (e.g., music performed by persons traveling for religious reasons, utilization of onstage dramatic action as rhythm for musical accompaniment).

## INSTRUMENTS AND PERFORMERS:

### Shakuhachi - Yukio Nyosei Hyakuda

This Japanese end-blown flute derives its name from its length of 1.8 shaku (shaku is a standard unit of measurement of approximately 1 foot, hachi refers to .8 of 1 shaku). Like many Japanese traditions which originated in China, it is a descendant of the Chinese end-blown flute, the Xiao, which is still played today. However, over succeeding centuries, the Shakuhachi went on to evolve its own identity (as did many traditions imported from China) and developed a repertoire completely different from that of the Xiao.

A student of the late Kurahashi Yodo Sensei, Yukio Nyosei Hyakuda received his shi-han (master's license) in Japan in 1978. His artistry and extensive concert appearances throughout the United States have given wide audience exposure to a kind of experience that can only be described as spiritual.

### Di-Tim Liu

Di (also referred to as Di Zi) is the generic name for the transverse flutes of China. Of varying lengths, their most unique characteristic (shared by transverse flutes in Mongolia) is the production of a tone color tinged with a buzzing sound created when air blown into the flute vibrates a thin membrane covering an unused finger hole.

A graduate of the Department of Music of the Chinese Culture University of Taiwan, Tim Liu taught at schools and colleges and appeared as a soloist with the Taipei Municipal Chinese Orchestra, and received many awards for outstanding performance. Following his recent arrival in the United States, numerous invitations from cultural organizations and institutions such as the Asia Society and the China Institute In America have given countless audiences a chance to listen to and marvel at the indescribably expressive sound of the Di performed by a virtuoso.

### Nagauto Shamisen - C. Ikehara, Lorie Brau

Shamisen is the Tokyo pronunciation of San Xian (san means three xian means string) a lute-like instrument that came to Japan from late sixteenth-century China via the Ryukyu Islands. After its arrival in Edo (present-day Tokyo), its physical construction and playing technique were modified to enable it to accompany Kabuki, the emerging entertainment form that was to grow and develop into the major musical theater of the Edo plebian society. The musical repertoire was called Nagauta (long song) and it is the Nagauta Shamisen (to differentiate it from other forms of shamisen used to accompany puppet plays, or the zither-like koto, etc.) that is featured here. With regard to its tone color, the buzzing sawari emanating when certain notes are played is deliberate and a result of a modification made on the San Xian after it left the Ryukyus.

After studying Nagauta Shamisen in Japan, at the University of Michigan, and at the University of Hawaii (where he performed in an English language production of a

Kabuki play), C. Ikehara became interested in experimenting with Asian instruments performing Western music (Mariam, matrem is one of his arrangements). Lorie Brau received a degree in ethnomusicology from Radcliff College and then went to Japan to study under Sugiura Hirokazu Sensei, a leading Nagaura Shamisen concert artist and a member of Ensemble Nipponia. She then attended the University of Michigan and performed with the Music Department's Nagauta ensemble while working on her master's degree in Japanese literature.

## TRACKS:

### 1. Lan Hua Hua (Blue Flower) Di - 3:56

Because it served as the eastern terminus of the Silk Route on which goods and ideas were exchanged between east and West, the city of Chang-An (present-day Xian, located in northwestern China in Shaanxi province) prospered and became the largest and richest in the world during the Tang dynasty (618-907 A.D.). By the time the dynasty ended, the province's former glory had faded. During the Mongol invasion in the late thirteenth century and the subsequent Yuan dynasty, which lasted until the middle of the fourteenth, northern Shaanxi became one of China's poorest regions. Throughout the country a general decline of culture occurred during Mongol rule with the exception of one particular art form - musical drama. Among the instruments performing in the ensemble accompanying the plays of this time were the three-stringed lute (introduced into China for the first time, and ancestor of the Japanese Shamisen) and the transverse (horizontal) flute, the probable forerunner of the Di. The Di went on to become a mainstay of Chinese music and its repertoire grew to include folk tunes, one of which is this song from northern Shaanxi.

### 2. Mariam, matrem Di, Shakuhachi - 6:50

The fourteenth century was also a significant period in the development of Western music; among the new musical forms, which appeared, was the canon. This importance is reflected in the introduction and use of the terms *Ars Nova* and *Ars Antiqua*, which respectively refer to and differentiate the music traditions of fourteenth and thirteenth-century Europe. The earliest Spanish canons (*caca*) are compiled in the *Llibre Vermell* (Red Book), a fourteenth-century manuscript written and preserved at the monastery of Montserrat near Barcelona. They are included among the ten pieces that pilgrims sang while visiting the monastery; the majority are devoted to the Virgin Mary.

### 3. Ifu Sashi Shakuhachi - 13:48

The phenomenon of music performed by persons traveling for religious reasons also appears in Japan during the Edo period (1603-1867) in the form of the *komuso*, wandering Buddhist priests who began playing the *Shakuhachi* in the seventeenth century as a form of mendicancy. As the repertoire grew over the succeeding centuries, the term *honkyoku* came to be used for the solo pieces, most of which are Zen-inspired. *Ifu Sashi* is from Hakata in Kyushu.

### 4. Kokaji (The Little Sword smith) Shamisen Duet - 3:23

The Edo period saw the rise of another musical instrument and its respective repertoire - the *Shamisen* and *Nagauta*. *Nagauta* pieces generally alternate between vocal passages accompanied by the *Shamisen* (and sometimes flute and drums) and instrumental interludes.

Two interludes from *Kokaji* (1821) are performed here. The first creates the eerie atmosphere of the master sword smith's dwelling in the mountains remote from the rest of the world. The second

is not unlike the Anvil Chorus in Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (1853); the rhythm of the hammering of the hot metal, which will be made into a sword by the master and his helper, is incorporated into the Shamisen accompaniment. The Shamisen tuning for this piece is called honchoshi (the basic tuning from which two others are derived) and although there is no harmony in Japanese music, this interlude (as the majority of the other interludes in the repertoire) is arranged as a duet.

#### 5. Song of Gu Su Di - 5:24

After a century of Mongol subjugation the Chinese overthrew their conquerors and founded the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). During this period musical drama continued to develop, especially in Gu Su (present-day Suzhou) where Kunqu, a refined form of poetic expression and subtlety of melody reached its zenith. The lead instrument of the Kunqu music ensemble was the Di; in Song of Gu Su the singing style of Kunqu is imitated. Although Kunqu declined during the succeeding Ching dynasty (1644-1912), Jing Xi (referred to today as Peking Opera), which became the leading theatrical form of this period, was never able to break away completely from the traditions established in Kunqu.

#### 6. Tsurukame (The Crane and the Tortoise) Di and Shamisen - 5:48

The Nagauta piece Tsurukame (1851) celebrates imperial longevity (the crane and tortoise are symbols of long life) and like many other Nagauta pieces (e.g., Kokaji, Musume Dojoji), it is derived from a play from the Noh theater, the aristocratic drama form that originated and developed during the Muromachi period (133-1573). In its entirety, Tsurukame is comprised of eight movements which can be grouped into three major sections corresponding to the jo-hakyu (introduction-exposition-denouement) structure found throughout the performing arts of Japan. The Di (playing the vocal line) is accompanied by the Shamisen (in honchoshi tuning) and performed here is the opening movement, a movement from the exposition section (an instrumental duet), and the concluding movement.

#### 7. Korean Folk Music Medley Di, Shakuhachi, Shamisen - 2:00

Despite a history of invasions by the Mongols, Chinese, and Japanese, Korean folk music has survived and preserved many of its characteristic features, perhaps most unique being its triple meter rhythm found nowhere else in Asia. The melodies of the two most famous folk songs Arirang and Doraji (Gathering Bluebell Flowers in the Mountains) are played by the Shakuhachi and Di to a Shamisen accompaniment imitating the pulsing sensation of the unique triple meter.

#### 8. Aida (Verdi, Evening Nile Temple Chorus) - 2:18

Di, Shakuhachi, Shamisen

The chronological span separating us from the musicians of the ancient world, as well as the cultural changes which have taken place over the centuries, complicate the search for authentic sound and performance technique. In spite of these obstacles Verdi composed a score for Aida that evokes the exotic mood and atmosphere of ancient Egypt so convincingly that it has been remarked that if ancient Egyptian music did not sound anything like Aida (as in fact it did not), then it should have. Among the facts known about the music of ancient Egypt is that lutes and flutes were employed. The three instruments in this recording are constructed from non-synthetic materials (both the Di and Shakuhachi from bamboo, Shamisen strings from silk), and the resulting subdued and subtle tone colors produced may not be so different from anything the ancient Egyptians may have experienced and enjoyed.

#### 9. Echigo Jishi (Lion of Echigo) Shamisen - :55

Among the snatches of Japanese melodies (e.g., the folksong Oedo Nihombashi, the national anthem Kimi Ga Yo) incorporated into the score of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* (1904) is this

Shamisen accompaniment for voice from a middle section of the Nagauta piece Echigo Jishi (1811). It is played in a Shamisen tuning called san sagari (lowered third string) and the piece depicts seasonal street entertainers at work in the urban centers of the time. The lion refers to the headgear in the design of a lion's face worn by these migrants who traveled each winter from Echigo (former name of northeastern Japan) when the short growing season there ended. This section of Echigo Jishi is used by Puccini more than once in his opera - in Act I when Goro sings of the approaching crowd of girls from which Butterfly makes her initial onstage entrance, in the same act when she sings of the circumstances which led her to the life of a geisha (professional entertainer), in the ensuing dialogue after Yamadori's entrance in Act II, as well as the opening notes of the intermezzo between Acts II and III.

10. Musume Dojoji (Maiden at the Dojo Temple) Di and Shamisen - 5:05

The fury of a woman spurned by her lover is portrayed in China in the Peking Opera play White Snake, which is based on an earlier Kunqu play of the same name. In Japan, similar plots can be found in the Noh play Dojoji, which became the basis of the 1753 Kabuki play Musume Dojoji. On this recording, selected movements are performed with the Di playing the voice part and the Shamisen accompanying in ni agari raised second string) tuning. An arrangement of the music typically performed at the end of a Kabuki play comprises the final movement.

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