Creating and Recreating Musical Identity : Performance Style and the Role of Ryûha in the Transmission of Jiuta-sôkyoku

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Creating and Recreating Musical Identity:

Performance Style and the Role of *Ryûha* in the Transmission of *Jiuta-sôkyoku*

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Introduction

Within the traditional music of Japan, *ryûha* (school) is the artistic home of musicians who associate their identity with a particular musical lineage. Performances of different *ryûha* are considered to have different styles, and musicians; therefore, often refer to the *ryûha* with which they associate themselves in order to clarify their own musical heritage and distinguish themselves from other musicians. Their musical identities are constructed largely by their *ryûha*, which in turn denote the historical background of previous musicians and their artistic accomplishments. However, *ryûha* as tradition is an ambiguous concept, containing various aspects such as performance styles, repertories, and the whole history of musical transmission. These elements are continuously re-interpreted, altered and even created by contemporary musicians, in order to highlight the ideal artistic lineage, which celebrates tradition and continuity.

This paper will look at how musical identities are created and recreated in relation to performance styles associated with the *ryûha* in the *jiuta-sôkyoku* chamber music of *shamisen*, *koto*, and voice. This musical genre originated from the 17th century in the areas around Kyoto and was exclusively handed down by blind men until 1872 when the Meiji government abolished the blind musicians' organisation known as Tôdô.[i] Through the transmission of music, various lineages have been developed into many *ryûha* within this tradition. Due to the modernisation and the consequent urbanisation since the late 19th century, an increasing number of *jiuta-sôkyoku* musicians have moved to Tokyo from various areas across Japan in order to seek their new musical careers and performance/teaching opportunities. As a result, new classifications and divisions within major *ryûha* were created in order to highlight distinctions between musical traditions which originated from different geographical areas. The modernisation of technology today which enabled music to be broadcast on radio or TV, or copied onto CD meaning that anyone could easily access performances which took place in other geographical areas: this further highlights the differences between *ryûha*. The increasing awareness of these "other" musicians through such media meant that members of a *ryûha* were even more aware of their own and other styles, which in turn led them to consider the best way of shaping their musical identities. As such, *ryûha* functioned as a further reinforcement of the distinctiveness of their musical tradition from the others in a competitive musical world.

In this paper, I will focus on variations in performance practice of contemporary *jiuta-sôkyoku* musicians associated with different *ryûha*. For this study, I carried out field research between 2003 and 2006 where I received lessons from these four musicians and conducted interviews regarding their ideas about *ryûha* and musical transmission. *Ryûha* as lineage or tradition is carried on by musicians who represent the tradition by performing and teaching what has been handed down (or what they wish to hand down) within the *ryûha*. As is the case with many traditional performing arts spheres, *jiuta-sôkyoku* musicians form institutional groups which operate by the hierarchical system known as the *iemoto* (house-head) system

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where a powerful *iemoto* has the authority to interpret and alter their tradition. Therefore, *ryûha* can be seen to have two sides; tradition and organisation. [ii]

The four musicians represent different *ryûha* as a head (*iemoto*) or an acting head, and so are seen as authorities who can interpret and alter their musical styles and create or recreate their musical identities. The main focus of this paper is to investigate how the musicians themselves consider the performance practices and styles associated with their *ryûha*, and to examine how their comments given during my lessons and interviews are used to distinguish their *ryûha* from others. In so doing, I will discuss how they construct their musical identities through their performances as well as their discourses surrounding *ryûha*.

Musical Lineages and *Ryûha*

The four musicians to be focused upon are: Kikuhara Koji (b.1948), Tomiyama Seikin the 2nd (b. 1950), Yonekawa Hiroe[iii] (b.1950), and Fujii Akiko (b.1963). Figure 1 shows the *ryûha* with which the four musicians are associated and the organisations they represent as head or acting head. They are all associated with the *ryûha* known as Ikuta-ryû (Ikuta School) in its broader sense within the *jiuta-sôkyoku* tradition. The Ikuta-ryû originating from the musician Ikuta *kengyô*[iv] in Kyoto is seen as the counterpart of the Yamada-ryû originating from Yamada *kengyô* in Edo (currently Tokyo). These two *ryûha* are considered the major groups which have survived until today. However, within these two *ryûha*, there are a number of branch *ryûha* which have developed out of the main *ryûha* of the Ikuta-ryû and Yamada-ryû. Branch *ryûha* continue to occur when musicians disperse into different areas across Japan, or to establish their own *ryûha* becoming independent from their original groups. Within this paper, I will focus on the musicians who associated themselves with the Ikuta-ryû in its broad sense but who are also associated with different branch schools shown in Figure 1.

Musician	*Ryûha*	Organisation
Kikuhara Koji	Kiku-suji group	Kinyû-kai
Tomiyama Seikin the 2nd	Tomi-suji group	Seion-kai
Yonekawa Hiroe	Chugoku-kei	Kensô-kai
Fujii Akiko	Kyushu-kei	Ginmei-kai

Figure 1 : The four musicians, their *ryûha* and organisations

The Kiku-suji group and Tomi-suji group in Figure 1 originated in Osaka, while the Chugoku-kei group originated in the Chugoku area and the Kyushu-kei group in the Kyushu area as mentioned above. The suffix *suji* defines a narrower and subordinate *ryûha* while the suffix *ryû* defines a larger category. Here, Kiku-suji and the Tomi-suji groups are associated with musicians' names, which are Kikuhara and Tomiyama. These two *ryûha* were originally based in the northern part of Osaka for the Kiku-suji and the southern part for the Tomi-suji.

As described earlier, the Ikuta-ryû originated in the areas around Kyoto, and later musicians dispersed into various areas of Japan, such as those around Kyushu and Chugoku. It was around the late 19th century that many musicians from the Ikuta-ryû started moving to Tokyo to explore their new professional careers in the emerging capital, where the Ikuta-ryû was not yet fully recognised by the people, as the Yamada-ryû was still the dominant *ryûha* there. Some of the new classifications in the Ikuta-ryû, such as the Kyushu-kei (originating in Kyushu area) and Chugoku-kei (originating in Chugoku area), are thought to have been created after this period. For example, the Kyushu-kei came to be used after Nagatani *kengyô* from Kyushu popularised his tradition in Tokyo around the late 19th and early 20th century. [v] The musician Yonekawa Hiroe stated that it would probably have been the Japanese music scholar Hirano Kenji who introduced such terms, to describe further divisions between the geographical origins of the Ikuta-ryû.[vi] Nakai Takeshi, a *jiuta-sôkyoku* musician and researcher, also argued that these were newly created concepts.[vii] According to my research on the Japanese scholarship of *jiuta-sôkyoku*, the literature in which this term first appeared was written by the influential scholar Fujita Tonan (1930), who stated that "many master *shamisen* musicians from the Kyushu-kei moved into Tokyo".[viii]

Although these four *ryûha* originated from different areas of Japan, three musicians except Kikuhara are currently based in Tokyo. However, these geographical origins play a significant role for the musicians to construct their musical identities as I will discuss later.

Distinguishing *Ryûha* in Performance

In the following sections, I will look at various aspects in performance and musical transmission across four *ryûha*. I will first analyse differences in melody and rhythm, and will then discuss further variations of performance styles of *shamisen*, *koto*, and singing. Comparing performances can be problematic, as one musician's performance can occasionally vary. Melody, rhythm, tempo, and many other aspects of performance are subject to change depending on the time, place, audience, and his or her mood. Therefore, in order to discuss overall use of melody and rhythm across *ryûha*, I will first look at musical notations written by head musicians of these four groups, which can be seen as the authorised teaching tools largely used in these *ryûha*. However, in later sections I will focus on the musicians' actual performances, and their discourses about styles, in order to discuss how various aspects of performance are used by them to create musical identities.

Melody and rhythm

Figure 2 gives trans-notations of the opening vocal part from *Kurokami* (Black Hair) which I adapted from the notations currently used by the four groups.[ix] Some of the notations are published in the authors' names and sold in music shops, while some are handwritten and given to students in lessons. Within the trans-notations above, each group is indicated by the family name of the successive head musicians. For example, "Kikuhara" seen at the top describes the group of Kikuhara Koji.

Figure 2 : Vocal part in *Kurokami*, opening[x]

The overall melodic contour among the five groups can be seen as largely the same. Minor differences can be found in melody and rhythm throughout the piece. These differences can often be seen on sustained syllables. For example, in the first two trans-notations (Kikuhara and Tomiyama), the boxed section across bar 1 and 2 is played with a slightly different rhythm. Such differences are often seen on sustained vowels rather than at the beginning of each syllable. While these notes on the sustained vowels are often seen as less important notes, some differences in pitch of the beginning of a syllable may create more of a marked difference. For example, the boxed notes in bar 1 and 3 in the third trans-notation (Yonekawa) create slightly more noticeable variations. Although differences in the trans-notations seem to be minor variations, the four musicians were often very strict about these differences. During my lessons with these teachers, I was often corrected when I made a mistake in singing melodies, even when my error was as minor one to me. I will discuss this aspect again later in this paper with my experience of learning this piece.

Differences in the *shamisen* part with regard to its melody and rhythm were hardly found across *ryûha*. Even several playing styles, such as the *hajiki* (plucking) technique and *sukui* (scooping) technique, were almost the same across the five groups. Minor differences, but very few of them can be found across these groups. For example, in the middle section of the same piece *Kurokami*, the first beat in bar 7 in Figure 3 is shown as a rest in Fujii's group. Other differences can be found in the trans-notation, such as on the 1st beat in bar 7 of Kikuhara, the *suri* (sliding) technique is applied while the others do not. These are stylistic differences rather than differences in the main melody, and I will discuss, in later sections, how these features play a significant role in distinguishing *ryûha* and musicians' identities.
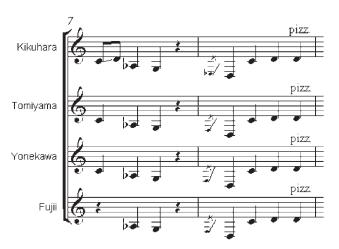

Figure 3 : *Shamisen* part in *Kurokami* [xi]

Shamisen techniques

Technique (a) *: suri*

The *suri* technique used with the index finger of the left hand creates a sliding note and is used in a relatively flexible fashion even in performances by the same musician. This explains why the *suri* technique is used to add ornamentation rather than to construct a main melodic contour. This technique is frequently omitted from written notations and the four musicians often suggested that I could add *suri* even though they were not indicated in their notations. Therefore, although only the Kikuhara's group clearly indicates the *suri* technique on the first beat of bar 7, as in Figure 3, the other three could also apply this technique in their actual performances.

During my lessons and interviews, many told me that the *suri* technique used by musicians in the *ryûha* known as the Kyushu-kei had a distinctive style. For example, Tomiyama Seikin the 2nd mentioned that in the Kyushu-kei, musicians apply more *suri* techniques than in his, and this tendency had become even stronger since they moved to Tokyo. [xii] Kikuhara Koji also emphasised the difference in the style of *suri* and said that "our *suri* is soft (*yanwari*) while the Kyushu-kei's is like this…". He then demonstrated his *ryûha*'s style in a subtle way followed by what he thought was the Kyushu-kei's style, which contained an exaggerated and wide movement of the index finger of the left hand. [xiii] Fujii Akiko, who associates

herself with the Kyushu-kei, also admitted that the style of the *suri* technique in the Kyushu-kei was very distinctive in the way that it was applied more frequently than other *ryûha* and also performed with wider movements. [xiv]

According to my own observation, Fujii Akiko and her mother and brother used many *suri*, and theirs were generally very wide movement. However, when compared to other musicians who were associated with the same *ryûha*, Kyushu-kei, such as Fukuda Eika (1887-1961), both Fujii Kunie and Akiko's style of applying the *suri* technique is much more exaggerated and more frequent than it was with the musicians of the past. This example shows that Fujii Kunie was a very successful musician who was designated as a Living National Treasure (*ningen kokuhô*), and an iconic person among musicians associated with this *ryûha*, Kyushu-kei. Therefore, her personal performance style became regarded as representative of the *ryûha*. As a result, this style was legitimised or seen as a symbol of the Kyushu-kei style, and therefore consciously emphasised by later musicians.

Technique (b): *tsu-ton*

Another distinctive feature which differs across *ryûha* and which was often emphasised by the four musicians, is a technique called *tsu-ton*. For example, the first beat of bar 8 in Figure 3 is performed using this technique. It is a sharp upward glissando made after a very short plucked grace note. Differences can be seen across the four groups in the pitch of the grace note. Some groups such as Kikuhara apply E ♭, while the others use F. As their notations are tablature, these are indicated as the second position (for E ♭) and the fourth position (for F) on the 1st (bass) string of the *shamisen*. Such differences on grace notes appear as minor variations in the actual performances. However, during my lessons these differences were often pointed out to me; for example, they often said: "our style is from the second position, while others are from the fourth". This had the effect of distinguishing their style from that of other *ryûha*.

Interestingly, Kikuhara Koji also explained that his predecessor Hatsuko had told him that this technique had some variation in its application. According to Koji, Hatsuko taught him that generally the *tsu-ton* technique should be made from the second position, but that the fourth position could also be used when the *shamisen* was tuned to the *niagari* (second raised) tuning. This is one of the alterative tunings in which the second string is raised by a whole-tone from the *hon-chôshi* (basic tuning), which is the most frequently used tuning. Koji explained that such a variation was used to create a more "beautiful sound" even when the *shamisen* was tuned differently, though he could not explain why the fourth position in the *niagari* tuning could create a better sound. [xv] Without knowing the exact reason why this style would be better than the other, it seemed that Koji faithfully followed his predecessor's teaching. Such variations are recognised as stemming from their own musical style and as such have been maintained by successive heads of the group.

Technique(c): *sukui-bachi*

The *sukui-bachi* (scooping plectrum) is a right-hand technique in which the plectrum is used to pluck a string in an upward direction. In my lessons with the four main teachers, this technique was used in slightly different ways between Fujii Akiko and the other three teachers. While in the three other teachers' styles, the motion of the plectrum was almost perpendicular to the string to be plucked, Fujii's plectrum was slightly tilted so that the string was plucked with a stroking motion. Fujii told me that by applying this style, the plucking sound would become clearer. She said that the style of plucking in some other *ryûha* was rather "noisy" because they did not use her style, which she called *mawashi-bachi* or "rounding plectrum". [xvi]

During my lessons with Tomiyama Seikin the 2nd, he pointed out my style of using the *sukui-bachi* technique. He commented that I held and used the plectrum at a tilted angle and suggested that I should not do so. He then mentioned that such a style could be found in some other *ryûhas*, and within those groups the plectrum tended to have different shapes. As such, some of the playing styles could be affected by the shape or size of the instruments and their accessories: these differences were also associated with different *ryûha*.

Fingering on *shamisen*

Some of the four musicians emphasised that fingering on the *shamisen* was important as this is also maintained in a

specific way within the *ryûha*. For example, Kikuhara Koji pointed out that I should use the middle finger instead of the fourth finger to play certain notes. Within performances of traditional repertoires for the *shamisen*, only three fingers (index, middle, and fourth fingers) are used. Among these, the index finger is the primary finger which is used most frequently. The middle and the fourth fingers are secondary fingers, and are used differently depending on the relationship between two adjacent notes. Among the four teachers, Kikuhara Koji and Fujii Akiko told me to use the middle finger to play semitones, and these were also described in their notations. Within their styles, the fourth finger was only used to play two notes which were a whole tone apart.

On the other hand, Tomiyama Seikin the 2nd chose fingerings in more flexible ways. He mainly used the fourth finger for semitones in lower positions and shifted to the middle finger when the left hand position was higher. He explained that, as for many other string instruments such as the violin, when the left hand position was higher, the relationship between the fingers had to be narrower in comparison with the lower positions. He therefore used different fingers depending on the position of the left hand. He also shifted from the fourth to the middle finger to allow him to use a *hajiki* (plucking) technique at the lower position on the second string, as using the middle finger, for him, was more convenient for this technique. What is remarkable here is not only that he used different fingering than other teachers, but also that his idea about the fingering was itself different to those of the other teachers. He was more relaxed than Kikuhara on this subject and emphasised that it did not matter which finger was used, as long as the pitch was correct. During our lessons he did not correct me even when I used different fingerings from his.

Intervals

The differences described above relating to fingering on the *shamisen* across *ryûha* are thought to have been created as a result of the differences between the intervals between adjacent steps of the scale. It is generally thought that Tomiyama's *ryûha* applies wider intervals in comparison to his counterpart, the Kikuhara's *ryûha*. For example, when the music is based on the following pentatonic mode, C-D♭-F-G-A♭, then D♭ and A♭ are thought to be played slightly sharper in Tomiyama's group compared to Kikuhara's. However, this does not mean that the notes applied in Tomiyama's group are sharper than D♭ or A♭ in equal temperament since the intervals between these steps of the scale in *jiuta-sôkyoku* tend to be narrower than 100 cents. [xvii] Therefore, differences in the intervals between these two *ryûha*, if there are any, are very minor in their performance.

The above two *ryûha* are considered to be the two main groups originating from Osaka. As described earlier, Tomiyama's lineage is associated with the Tomi-suji group based in the southern area, while Kikuhara's is with the Kiku-suji group in the northern area. Being associated with different areas, their performance styles have been seen as being distinctly different. However, judging from the current performances of my teachers, Kikuhara and Tomiyama, no such distinct differences in the intervals of the scale can be found. Pitch can vary amongst musicians in the same group, and can also be influenced by the feelings aroused by the piece to be played. Also, as Tomiyama confided to me, he currently does not consider interval differences to be a distinctive musical characteristic of any *ryûha*. [xviii] Therefore, the different fingering on the *shamisen* described earlier has lost its original rationale in which different pitches between intervals were created. Even the four musicians who taught me to use specific fingering techniques did not comment on the musical reasons why these fingerings should be applied. This suggests that these musicians have an extremely prescriptive way of teaching, even when some of these styles no longer represent any musical differences in performances. However, many musicians regard such technical details as important factors in maintaining their differences from other *ryûha*.

Vocal style

In addition to the main melody and rhythm, styles in vocal ornamentation are also associated with *ryûha*, and thus teachers often emphasise to their students that these styles should not be altered or mixed with different styles of different *ryûha*. There are various types of vocal ornamentations which can differ between *ryûha*. It was generally thought by the

musicians that the Kyushu-kei group applied various different vocal ornamentations more frequently than other *ryûha*. For example, Yonekawa Hiroe described the vocal style of her group as being different to the Kyushu-kei's style, saying: "we do not use as much vocal ornamentation as the Kyushu-kei musicians do… Ours is rather simple and somewhat pared down (*sogiotoshita*)". [xix] Fujii Akiko herself, who is currently seen as the representative musician of the Kyushu-kei, explained the various ways of singing the vocal ornamentation, such as *atari*, *furikiri*, *furisage*, and *shiori*. She then emphasised how important these were, commenting that "singing is vital (*inochi*) in the Kyushu-kei tradition…Our previous musicians, such as Kawase Satoko, were all experts in singing". [xx] As such, musicians often highlight differences in vocal styles between different *ryûha*.

Kaete variation

Although I have previously described how the instrumental part had minor variations across *ryûha*, more distinct variations can be found in the form of *kaete* style compositions. *Kaete* (alternative [*kae*] hand [*te*]) is a composed or arranged part to accompany an original part called *honte* (original [*hon*] hand [*te*]). These *kaete* parts were created either by the original composers, or arranged later by other musicians who wished to add more variety to the ensemble performances. For example, if the original piece was composed only for a solo *koto*, a *kaete* part for the 2nd *koto* might be composed so that two *koto* could be performed together. Similarly, if the original composer wrote only one *shamisen* part, a 2nd *shamisen* part might often be created for an ensemble of two *shamisen*. It was also often the case that a *koto* part was composed in order to be performed with the original *shamisen* part in an ensemble. These *kaete* variations were created by musicians in different *ryûha* at different times. Therefore, when compared to the original *honte*, considerable differences can be found in the *kaete* variations across *ryûha*. Even today, musicians continue to create new variations of the existing parts; therefore changes continue to occur within and between *ryûha*.

As an example of this phenomenon, Figure 4 shows some examples of the *kaete* part for *Zangetsu* (The Moon at Dawn) which are currently performed in different *ryûha*. This piece was originally composed by Minezaki *kôtô* [xxi] in Osaka around the late 18th century, initially for voice and *shamisen*. The following examples show the beginning of the instrumental interlude, which is currently performed differently across *ryûha* as they created their own versions of *kaete* to be performed with the *honte* part.

In the notations in Figure 4, the first line indicates the original *honte* part while the other two are *kaete* variations. The second part indicated as Tomiyama (*shamisen*) is the *kaete* for the *shamisen* created by Kikuyoshi *kengyô* in Osaka. His version was later arranged by Sakamoto Jin'noichi (1856-1925), who adopted the *shamisen* interlude of *Yuki* (Snow) to the beginning of the *kaete* variation. This version has been handed down within the lineage of Tomiyama through Tomizaki Shunshô and Tomiyama Seikin the 1st. [xxii] While generally *kaete* variations are created to follow the main melody and rhythm of the original *honte*, the *kaete* variation handed down Tomiyama's *ryûha* which is very different from the original *honte* as it was adapted from another piece of music. As the interlude of *Yuki* became very popular when it was composed in the late 18th century, it was adapted by other musical genres such as *nagauta* used in the *kabuki* theatre. However, there is no other example of pieces that have adapted this interlude to be performed as the *kaete* variation within the repertoire of *jiuta-sôkyoku*. Therefore, the example seen in Tomiyama's *ryûha* can be seen as very distinctive in comparison with other *ryûha*'s versions of the same piece.

Some of the *koto* parts were also created by several musicians in order to develop ensemble performances on the *shamisen* and *koto*. The third part, Yonekawa (*koto*), describes the *koto* part composed by Yonekawa Kin'ô (1883-1969), who is known to have introduced a very flamboyant and complex style of *kaete* variation on the *koto*. Although the beginning of the instrumental interlude in the above transcription is simple, it becomes much more complex towards the end of the interlude. He wrote a number of *kaete* for the *koto*, and these are mostly very complex and require technical virtuosity for their performance. [xxiii] Within the institutional organisation founded by the above Yonekawa, his versions of the *kaete* parts have been handed down through two generations. His successors are also known to have created complex styles of *kaete* variations. Consequently, such a virtuosic style of *kaete* variations has become seen as one of the main characteristics

Figure 4 : Instrumental interlude for the *honte* and *kaete* in *Zangestu* [xxiv]

associated with their lineage.

As illustrated above, the *kaete* variations across *ryûha* tend to vary significantly, while the *honte* parts composed by the original composers are handed down with minor variations (regarding main melody) between *ryûha*. This is due to the fact that musicians seek to express their own styles in the creation of the *kaete* variations, so that their art becomes distinct from other *ryûha*. As such, among "traditional" *ryûha*, where only minor variations in the existing repertoires can be found, the *kaete* variations can be a device to distinguish themselves from others in the performance of traditional repertoires.

Creating and Recreating Identity

The prominent scholar of *jiuta-sôkyoku*, Fujita Tonan, defines three elements which distinguish differences between *ryûha*: i. repertoire, ii. performance style, and iii. the type of instrument. He then points out that recently these differences across *ryûha* are becoming standardised; for example, musicians within the *ryûha* in Kyoto nowadays use the same type of *shamisen* and plectrum which are used among musicians associated with the Kyushu-kei tradition. [xxv] However, elements such as repertories, styles, and instruments, continue to be reinterpreted, modified, and handed down by musicians in different forms from generation to generation. [xxvi]

The modern phenomenon of musicians from different geographical areas moving to urban cities, resulted in more frequent interaction between musicians across *ryûha*. This in turn has impacted on changes in the repertoire, performance style, and the type of instrument associated with *ryûha*. At the same time, such interactions between *ryûha* resulted in musicians

becoming more aware of their musical identity in contrast to those of other *ryûha*. Consequently, musicians started to highlight their own styles even more, to distinguish themselves from other *ryûha*, and in so doing, their musical identities were continuously reconstructed in changing social circumstances.

Ryûha, as traditions, are often associated with geographical areas where their lineages originated. For example, the Tomi-suji group and the Kiku-suji group were also called the Minami-ha (southern group) and the Kita-ha (northern group), as these groups were dominant either in the southern or the northern areas of Osaka. The above-mentioned scholar, Fujita, describes how the musicians in the Tomi-suji group "were based in the areas which were close to the Shimanouchi area, the red light district … the reason why their performances are flamboyant … is that they were close to the red light district". xxvii By living close to the red light district, it is possible that the musicians visited these districts in order to give performances and to teach *geishas* how to play the *shamisen* and to sing.

Despite the fact that musicians who are now based in Tokyo are the second or the third generations following the original musicians who moved from various areas of Japan, their art is still strongly associated with their original geographical areas. For example, Yonekawa Hiroe described how the musical characteristics of her lineage were "rustic (*soboku*)", "peaceful (*odayaka*)", and "easygoing (*nonbiri*)". She then associated these qualities with the climate and scenery of the Chugoku area from where her lineage originated. As described earlier, she thought that the performance style in her lineage was simpler than others. For example, she pointed out how their vocal ornamentations, such as the *atari* technique, were much less decorative than other groups. In my experience of learning with her and observing her performances, I did not consider her style to be especially simple in comparison with the others. What is interesting here is that she associated her style with her image drawn from a geographical area, which she highlighted as being the roots of her artistic identity.

Although the picture of a *ryûha* is largely created by its historical continuity which is associated with a certain geographical area, musical identities are often constructed by their direct teachers and other familiar musicians within their institutional boundaries. The musicians often described the performance styles of their predecessors or their teachings. For example, Fujii Akiko argued the distinctive characteristic of her Kyushu-kei tradition was its "resonance (*hibiki*)" created from the *shamisen*. One of the elements crucial to obtaining a good resonance, she said, was making a good *sawari*, which can be described as a buzzing sound. xxviii On the *shamisen*, this buzzing *sawari* sound can be created when the lowest open string and any notes which are in the relation of octaves from the lowest string are plucked. Other notes such as the perfect 4th (11th) or the 5th (12th) from the lowest string also resonate with the lowest string and create the *sawari* sound. The quality of the buzzing sound can be adjusted by a player pushing down the lowest string against the neck or pulling the string from it. Therefore, musicians coordinate it each time they play the *shamisen*, and even during a performance, they keep pushing and pulling the lowest string to create the best *sawari* quality. Fujii emphasised that the *sawari* in the Kyushu-kei tradition was very important; so much so that once her grandmother, Abe Keiko, took a whole lesson to teach her how to create a good *sawari* sound. As described previously, Abe Keiko was the founder of their institutional group, and was also the initial main teacher of Fujii. For Fujii, the styles and philosophies of her grandmother and mother, who were the successive heads of the group, played significant roles in constructing her musical identity.

In comparison to other musicians, Kikuhara Koji did not initially explain to me precisely about the performance styles associated with his Kiku-suji tradition. At the first interview, I asked him how he would describe the "style of art (*geifû*)" of his *ryûha*. He then told me that the characteristics of the Kiku-suji were "elegant (*jôhin*) and "elegant and bright (*han'nari*)", born and cherished in the Kansai area (the areas around Kyoto and Osaka). However, he did not go into further details to exemplify or explain the precise performance style, in contrast to the other three musicians who gave details of plucking style, tempo, style of ornamentations and so forth. He told me that the main differences across *ryûha* were vocal melodies, because these were handed down through different musicians' lineages. Kikuhara then explained to me that performance was not based on logic but depends on the mood, such as whether you are hungry or not, and it also depends on the musicians you are playing with. His opinion is that if one teaches too precisely about how to pluck, no one can play. He told me that one's performance should be "natural (*shizen*)". xxix However, when I started learning with him about a month after the first interview, he showed me several performance styles, and commented that those were distinctive styles associated with his *ryûha*. This contradicted his previous statement which I had interpreted as meaning that performance styles were not the

factors defining *ryûha*. For example, he demonstrated how to make the *atari* vocal ornamentation, and commented that this was the style within the Kiku-suji tradition. On another occasion, he showed me a new plucking technique on the *koto*, and stated, "ours is like this".

The following event, which made me realise that I might have been influencing the creation of his musical identity, happened at one of the lessons. While I was learning a vocal piece and singing in front of him, he slapped his hand on the table between us and shouted "that's not our melody!" I was quite horrified at being told off in such a way. But after calming down, I considered why he said "that's not our melody" instead of saying "that's a wrong melody", or simply saying "you sang incorrectly". I understood that there was a nuance in his statement which underlined the boundaries between *ryûha* which one should not cross.

It can be argued that Kikuhara started highlighting the distinctive character of his *ryûha* because I did not initially explain to him that I was looking at differences across *ryûha*. Therefore, when I told him later that I was investigating aspects in performances associated with various *ryûha*, my statement may have influenced his way of thinking. Such influence of a field researcher on his or her interviewees can be found in other examples, such as Gregory Barz (1997) who looked at popular music in Tanzania raising some questions if he might have forced his correspondents a judgement and evaluation on their musical tradition. [xxx] Due to my research questions which highlighted differences across *ryûha*, Kikuhara's conception of his own musical identity may have been stimulated and, as a result, he may have started to re-create his identity in ways differently from what he would have previously done. Musical identities are changed or affected for a number of reasons, not only by researchers, but also by the experience of participating in competitions with other musicians. Differences across *ryûha* are thus highlighted or even created by the musicians themselves through self-reflection and through practising with others. Such examples can be found in the following remark of Tomizaki Shunsho who was associated with the Tomi-suji group.

> …they were creating antagonism against each other … therefore the cohesion was made between the Kiku-suji and the Naka-suji to create the Kita-ha (northern group), and they collided with the Tomi-suji which was called the Minami-ha (southern group). They came to be opposed to each other on musical matters. For example, musicians in the southern group changed some of the *suri* techniques into the *hajiki* technique on purpose, in order to make them different from their counterpart, the northern group. [xxxi]

In this way, performance styles within the same *ryûha* continue to be altered and developed to create and recreate musical identities to distinguish their tradition from others. Ethnomusicologists have commonly discussed this phenomenon on a larger scale when it relates to questions of national or ethnic identity. The ethnomusicologist Ruth Katz (1970), for example, looked at the case of Jewish migrants from Aleppo in Syria to Israel, and discussed how a musical image of the "self" may reflect the picture stereotyped by its counterpart in the West:

> Since Western thinking considers the ornateness of the melodic line a stereotyped feature of Oriental music, the data implied that this stereotype *per se* may have been adopted by the younger generation of the Oriental groups themselves. In fact, when asked to describe the difference between their music and Western music, the younger people invariably pointed to the greater degree of "ornateness" in their music, while the older people did not even seem to comprehend the question. It seems that the very eagerness of the younger people to identify with this aspect of the culture of their group and to resist the encroachment of Western culture led them to a kind of over-adherence to that which symbolises their musical tradition for the outsider. [xxxii]

As Katz argues, this case illustrates how the thinking of a minority group is influenced by the musical attitudes of the majority group. In the above case, the image of "the least Western and most `Oriental` ", in other words, "the hallmark of the East in the eyes of the West" is emphasised by people in the minority group who uphold their own musical style. [xxxiii] In this respect, *jiuta-sôkyoku* musicians are also concerned with their own "image" which may be perceived by outsiders, and thus

highlight this style in their performances, teaching, and in their narratives.

Conclusion

While *ryûha* symbolise historical continuity, the actual musical styles associated with a *ryûha* are, in many cases, introduced only a couple of generations before, or even by the current head musician himself or herself. Through the constructions of musical identity, musicians often select styles and highlight them as being distinctly different from other *ryûha*. During this process, their counterparts, from whom they want to be different, are central to this process, as musical identities can often be created through differences and oppositions to the "other". In this context other *ryûha* can be important entities against which they construct their own musical styles and identities.

Various aspects of performance, such as melody, rhythm, instrumental techniques, and singing style, are important for the musicians to distinguish themselves from others though these differences may appear as small variations to outsiders. Musicians who compete with each other within urban cities, geographical roots of their *ryûha* also play a significant role in creating and recreating musical identity even though their performance style may not maintain the "origin" but rather are newly invented in a new context.

Performance styles are often not associated with individual musician's own styles, but are rather seen as the continuous tradition of the *ryûha*. Musicians generally refer to their styles as "our" style or "their" style but not "my" style or "his/her" style. In so doing, musicians express themselves as part of the long lasting tradition. Neuman (1990) has pointed out an interesting aspect of North Indian art music where the notion of "style" is not applied to the performances of accompanists such as *sarangi* players, whose different kinds of techniques are seen more as idiosyncratic. [xxxiv] However, despite the fact that *jiuta-sôkyoku* musicians generally associate performance styles with the tradition of *ryûha*, some of the musicians commented that the musician's personality should be reflected in individual performances, and that this was important to keep the tradition fresh. Further research needs to be done in order to explore the complexity of musical identity which is constructed by the historical continuity of *ryûha*, by institutional attachment, and by the self.

Notes

i   For more information about the historical background of *jiuta-sôkyoku*, see Flavin (2008), Kikkawa (1997), Kubota (1990), and Tanigaito (1994).

ii   Arisawa, Shino. 2008. *Changes in the transmission of " traditional" music: The case of Japanese jiuta-sokyoku*. Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of London, Chapter 2.

iii   Yonekawa Hiroe inherited the name (*shumei*) of the predecessor, Yonekwa Toshiko in 2007. However, in this paper I use her original name, Hiroe, which was her name at the time of my fieldwork.

iv   Italic name, *kengyô*, here describes the title for the highest rank of *jiuta-sôkyoku* musicians who belonged to the Tôdô guild.

v   Fujii, Kunie. 2001. *Jiuta to tomoni*. Osaka: Tôhô Shuppansha. P 41.

vi   Interview, Yonekawa Hiroe, December 2003.

vii   Comment during our informal conversation in 2003.

viii   Fujita, Tonan. 1930. *Sôkyoku to jiuta no ajiwai kata*. Osaka: Maekawa Gômei-gaisha. P.188.

ix   The notations I used were written by either previous head musicians or current ones, except one notation, which was written by a student in Fujii Akiko's group. However, this student's notation is currently used by her group, and I was given a copy in my lesson with her. Therefore, these notations may all be considered to be authorised by the representative musicians in the four groups.

x   Trans-notation from the published notation: Kikuhara, Hatsuko. 1987. *Sangen gakufu; ryûkyûgumi*. Tokyo: Hakusuisha; and the notations given by Tomiyama Seikin the 2nd, Yonekawa Hiroe and Fujii Akiko at my lessons. As all the notations are written in tablature, none of them indicates the absolute pitches for the voice or *shamisen*. Therefore, I trans-notated all of them all assuming that the first (bass) string of the *shamisen* is tuned in D.

xi   Trans-notation from the sources mentioned above. "Pizz" in the trans-notation describes the left hand *hajiki* technique.

xii   Comment during a lesson, Tomiyama Seikin the 2nd, October 2003.

xiii   My observation and comment during a lesson, Kikuhara Koji, November 2003.

xiv   Comment during a lesson, Fujii Akiko, October 2003.

xv   Comment during a lesson, Kikuhara Koji, April 2004.

xvi   Interview, Fujii Akiko, October 2003.

xvii   Hughes, David W. (n.d., Japan I: General: Scales and modes, in Grove music online, edited by L. Macy <http://www.grovemusic.com> accessed 1 June 2004).

xviii   Comment during a lesson, Tomiyama Seikin the 2nd, November 2003.

xix   Comment during a lesson, Yonekawa Hiroe, December 2003.

xx   Comment during a lesson, Fujii Akiko, September 2003.

xxi   Italic name, *kôtô*, describes the title for the second highest rank of *jiuta-sôkyoku* musicians who belonged to the Tôdô guild. See note iv.

xxii   Hirano, Kenji; Tanigaito, Kazuko. 1980. Jiuta sôkyoku ka no kengyô toukan nen - môjin sho shorui, omotehikae, zagehikae ni mirareru môjin ongakuka no keifu. *Tôyô ongaku kenkyû* 45:59−69. Pp. 48−9.

xxiii   Fukuda, Chie. 2004. Kensôkai shôhi. In *Bunkakôrôsha kenshô kinen ningenkokuhô yonekawa toshiko to kensôkai no ayumi*, edited by Oshio, Satomi. Tokyo: Kensôkai honbu, 18−21. P.18.

xxiv   The trans-notation and transcription are based on the following sources: *honte*; trans-notation from Miyagi, Kiyoko and Miyagi, Kazue. 2002. *Sangen gakufu; zangetsu*. Tokyo:Hôgakusha. : Tomiyama (*shamisen*); Track 5, Disc 4, in *Tomiyama seikin jiuta no sekai* (1992, Nippon Columbia) COF-10013-18: Yonekawa (*koto*); Track 2, Disc 1, in *Yonekawa toshiko no sekai* (2000, Zaidan hôjin bikutâ dentô bunka shinkô zaidan VZCG-8105). In the *honte* part, "h" indicates the *hajiki* (plucking) technique, and "v" is for the *sukui-bachi* (scooping) technique. Within the transcription for Tomiyama (*shamisen*), I have omitted descriptions of some of the *shamisen* techniques, such as the *hajiki*. This is due to the fact that such subtle timbre is difficult to distinguish from ordinary plucking styles. For the same reason, in my transcription for Yonekawa (*koto*), I have omitted descriptions of some of the subtle techniques which are difficult to be heard from the recording. These include the left hand pizzicato and *hiki-iro* in which a string is slightly bent after being plucked.

xxv   Fujita, Tonan. 1930. *Sôkyoku to jiuta no ajiwai kata*. Osaka: Maekawa Gômei-gaisha. Pp.198−9.

xxvi   Arisawa, Shino. 2008. *Changes in the transmission of" traditional" music: The case of Japanese jiuta-sokyoku*. Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of London, Chapter 3, 4, and 5.

xxvii   Fujita, Tonan. 1930. *Sôkyoku to jiuta no ajiwai kata*. Osaka: Maekawa Gômei-gaisha.. Pp. 195−6.

xxviii   David Hughes and William Malm describe *sawari* as follows: "Two higher-pitched strings pass over a metal or ivory ridge at the pegbox, but the lowest string is set in a niche in the wooden edge of the box. Immediately below the upper bridge there is a slight cavity carved in the neck (the 'sawari valley'): the bass string will buzz against the edge of this trough (the '*sawari* mountain') when plucked or when resonating with notes a fifth or octave above it, producing a sound called *sawari*, which is of special value in *shamisen* music". Hughes, David W. and Malm, William P. (n.d.) Japan; II Instruments and instrumental genres; 6 Shamisen, in *Grove music online*, edited by L. Macy. <http://www.grovemusic.com> accessed 1 June 2004.

xxix   Interview, Kikuhara Koji, 27 April 2003.

xxx   Barz, Gregory. 1997. Confronting the field(note) in and out of the field: music, voices, texts, and experiences in dialogue. In *Shadows in the field: new perspectives for fieldwork in ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley. Oxford University Press, 45−62. Pp. 52−3.

xxxi   Tomizaki Shunsho, quoted in Fujita, Shun'ichi. 1968. *Tomizaki Shunshô geidan*. Tokyo: Nihon Ongakusha. Pp. 15−7.

xxxii   Katz, Ruth.1970. Mannerism and cultural change: an ethnomusicological example. *Current Anthropology* 11 (4−5):465−75. Pp 466−7.

xxxiii   Ibid. P.468.

xxxiv   Neuman, Daniel. 1990 [1980]. *The life of music in North India*. The University of Chicago Press. P.122.