

entially concerned with the secular world and the interests of the pleasure-loving city dwellers, and was far from concerned with religious sentiment. Thus Noh drama—originally performed to calm the resentment of the dead—was not originally accepted as a suitable subject for Ukiyoe woodblock prints. This changed with Yoshitoshi, who made such drama a major subject of his later works. While the images of his earlier prints were often bloody and frightening, those of his later ones were designed more to soothe the passions and reconcile present and past. “This suggests the desperate straits into which Japanese culture had been thrown by the impact of the West” (12), and can be seen as a loss by the Ukiyoe form of its original character as a secular art that stimulated the passions and subconsciousness. It became instead a retreat into the sameness of the Japanese identity, and the calmness of Yoshitoshi’s late work is a symptom of such a retreat. For example, Oiwa, the heroine of the bloody revenge of Tsuruya Nanboku’s *Tōkaidō Yotsuya Kaidan*, appears in a “scene of domestic tranquility” and the portrayal is “positively sympathetic” (88).

A small additional indication of Yoshitoshi’s turn to the past is the aged, worm-eaten appearance that he gave to the title page of *Shinkei sanjūroku kaisen*. Some interpreters relate this to Yoshitoshi’s nervous breakdown, but Stevenson sees it as an indication of “Yoshitoshi’s self-imposed role as guardian of the past, not a sign of mental deterioration” (15). It could also be interpreted as a statement by Yoshitoshi that the retreat into antiquity can heal the mental deterioration that Meiji Japan experienced when it encountered the West as a cultural other.

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#### CHINA

MYERS, JOHN E. *The Way of the Pipa: Structure and Imagery in Chinese Lute Music*. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1992. xvii+155 pages. Photographs, tables, music examples, glossary, bibliography, select discography, index. Hardcover US\$30.00; ISBN 0-87338-455-5.

Music for the *pipa* 琵琶 (a Chinese lute) constitutes one of the oldest and most interesting Asian musical traditions. Yet the *pipa* and its musical repertory have not as yet received sufficient scholarly attention from Western musicologists. In his *The Way of the Pipa*, John Myers seeks to fill this gap by addressing a large number of significant issues: the origin and development of the instrument; the history and aesthetics of *pipa* music; and the form and structure of certain pieces found in the *Hua shi pu* 華氏譜 (Hua family collection), an anthology of solo *pipa* music published in 1819.

In attempting both a historical and an analytical study of one of the world’s richest musical traditions (Chinese music) as well as a specific product of it (the music of the *Hua shi pu*)—and this in a mere 135 pages of text and musical examples—Myers has set himself a formidable, if not impossible, task. The results are, not surprisingly, disappointing.

Chapters 1 and 2, treating the history of the *pipa* and Chinese music aesthetics, are perhaps meant to be introductory, and may be excused for being superficial. The core of the book begins with chapter 3, the first of five chapters of music analysis.

Though the *Hua shi pu* is undoubtedly worthy of close scrutiny, Myers's analyses are frustrating throughout. To begin with, musical examples supplied are all "transnotations" of the *Hua shi pu*, mere skeletons of what was or is today actually performed. Ornamentation, which alone brings these skeletons to life, and which in traditional Chinese music theory is "highly differentiated in both theoretical and aesthetic terms" (47), is almost entirely ignored. One comparative score of a piece from the *Hua shi pu* and an actual performance (43-45) are given, but the performer's name, age, and background are not revealed.

Myers's analyses focus on the structure of the melodic skeletons found in the *Hua shi pu*. Tonal material, motives, phrase structure, and musical relations between pieces are described in some detail. Irritatingly, though, much of this description refers to musical examples that are entirely missing from the book. Examples that are provided are not given in order nor indexed by page number. Presumably the reader is to refer to the author's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, which appears to present a "transnotation" of the entire *Hua shi pu*. Those who do not have access to the dissertation will find reading *The Way of the Pipa* an exercise in frustration.

After some 75 pages of tedious description of selected melodic skeletons found in the *Hua shi pu*, the discussion shifts to the relationships between the musical characteristics of the skeletons and the titles of pieces, and the relationships between the titles themselves. Myers succeeds in showing that some titles evoke images of women or water, and that Chinese aesthetic categories such as *wen* 文 and *wu* 武 relate in various vague ways to such images and to modal or melodic features of the music.

The final chapter, entitled "Glimpses Beyond," informs the reader of various cosmic truths—that some Chinese music leads to "the phenomenon of 'entrainment', the matching of heartbeats, the affirmation of prenatal unity and the possibility of collective consciousness," and the like. Some may think such New Age mumbo jumbo profound. I would have preferred to know somewhat more mundane things: why the *Hua shi pu* was published in the first place; what effects its publication had; how much range and variety exists in *pipa* performance practice; or what principles underlie ornamentation.

Myers would have done a service to those whose knowledge of Chinese is limited by including Chinese ideographs after romanized Chinese terms and titles. Sino-Japanese ideographs are also missing for Japanese words, which also lack appropriate macrons in their romanized versions. Western languages fare little better: errors of spelling and grammar in English abound, and each and every German source cited contains a misprint. Obviously Kent State University Press did not supply a competent copy editor.

For readers who desire a sketch of the history of the *pipa* and seventy-five pages of description of melodies, *The Way of the Pipa* is a book worth having. But anyone who wishes to obtain significant insights into the music of the *pipa* or that of the *Hua shi pu* will have to wait for better publications on the subject in the future.

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