DAZAI ON JAPANESE MUSIC

I propose to give you a few extracts from the Keizai Boku, a work on Political Economy written by Dazai Jun.

This work was one among two or three suggested at a Council Meeting of this Society as a suitable subject for a paper to read at one of its meetings, by our Chairman Sir Ernest Satow, K.C.M.G. It was pointed out to him by one of the council that such a subject as Political Economy should be treated by a member with a special knowledge of the subject, but as Sir Ernest did not consider that the Political Economy of Dazai's time required as an exponent, a student of John Stuart Mill, or any other authority on the Modern Science, I have ventured to undertake the work myself.

The Preface states that Dazai came from Iida in Shinshu, and in his youth with his father visited Yeddo on a pleasure trip. When nearly full grown he took service with the Daimyo of Idzushi. For many years he was ill, and thrice begged to be excused from further service, but as his request was not granted, he left without permission, and in punishment was condemned to confinement, that is to say he was prohibited from taking service elsewhere, upon which he went to Kyoto.

For about ten years or so he drifted about the five provinces, until the ban was taken off, when he returned to Yeddo, and studied under the famous Sorai, until his teacher's death. His chief studies were the works of Confucius, and other Chinese sages. He in turn became a teacher himself with Daimyos and people of all ranks as pupils who it is said were as much afraid of him as if he were the Tycoon. But though mingling with the highest of the land he never sought for personal aggrandizement.
The following story is related of him, when he was tutor to the son of the Daimyo Iwamura. On Dazai's first visit to his pupil the young man did not come to meet or see him off. Dazai was vexed and said "A lowly samurai ought to have no pride in connection with a high personage, but I teach the learning of the Sages. If a person, even though he be a king or Daimyo, honours the teachings he must not neglect the ceremonies. Your reception of me was very casual. This is not treating me uncourteously, but it is dishonouring the teaching. I have no wish to see any one who does not honour the teaching."

Dazai was born 220 years ago, and died when 68 years old. He was author of a very large number of books. His Keizai Riku might perhaps be better called "Social" than "Political Economy." It treats of Music; Etiquette; Public Office; Astronomy; Calendars; Geography; Food and Riches; Worship; Learning; Ceremonial Dress; Ceremonial Processions; The Army; Law; Punishment; Divination, etc. To give some idea of the author and his writings I have translated part of the Essay on Music.

Music originated in man's pleasure. Music is called pleasure because it causes pleasure in man's heart. Music and pleasure are the same Chinese character. As men are living things they need something with which to pass the time. If they have nothing to do for even a short time they are sure to become selfish and bad. If men have any occupation for passing the time they will use it and be pleased in their hearts. But if it is difficult to pass the time in an ordinary way then the heart becomes sad and lonely. According to the occupation of the heart it is dull or otherwise. Then (at that time) to sing and lift up the voice eases the mind. To sound strings or reeds drives away dullness and causes joy. This is the ordinary state of man's mind. Again at banquets and such like if there is only eating and drinking while day turns to
dark and night to light this is not enough to cause rejoicing. There must be songs, dances and music to please the host and guest and to pass the time pleasantly. This trait in man's heart always exists.

Music calms the heart of man. Etiquette originates in severe respect. If etiquette is pure then the relations of mankind between lord and retainer, parent and child, husband and wife, brothers and friends are only severe and respectful, and kindness of heart is easily lost. Music has its origin in peace. Its use causes peace in lord and retainer, high and low, parent and children, and among relations. In ancient times because music was always used in ceremonies peace was honoured. It was because in music etiquette was always considered that respect was upheld. Some times again in entertaining a guest ceremonial bow shooting was performed, or perhaps the pastime of throwing arrows into a jar. Here again music was used to increase the pleasure and balance the etiquette. To balance etiquette is to beat time. In grand ceremonies the advancing, receding, slowness or quickness were all according to time, and this beating of time was all to the sound of music. The same as for instance if in a priest's house a rite of Buddhism is being performed the time for advancing, standing up, and stopping is set by the striking of gongs or drums. Therefore in all important ceremonies music must be used. Mankind generally must have some kind of amusement. By amusement gloom is driven away and the spirit moved. For this purpose nothing equals music. In all heaven and earth, from the Middle Kingdom to every foreign country there is no country without music. 'But barbarians are influenced by their local environment. In all places where man's mind is not quite upright the majority of the songs and music is not good. Even in the middle kingdom in Tei; Ei; Sōkan and Bokujo the music is of a very vulgar type. Only from the refined music of the former
kings has come the pure music of heaven and earth. This is the true note of peace. Music generally affects the heart of man in a peculiar way. For instance, hearing vulgar music makes the heart of man fall and become lazy and wicked.

If refined music is used then the heart will become good and in accord with the centre of peace. This is a mystery of heaven. In the works of Confucius we find "In the change of customs, for making a change from the vulgar nothing is better than music." Today it is just the same as in ancient times.

Vulgar music makes vulgar people, refined music makes the customs of the people pure. Music changes customs and music guards and retains them. Therefore when establishing a government it is first necessary to create good music and have it performed at large, stop vulgar music and not let the people use it. Confucius in his advice to Ganyea about governing a country said "the refined Sho dance is most important. Prohibit the vulgar music Teisei." Though in the Jin dynasty books of the sages were burnt, Confucians and disciples of the sages killed, and all music and ceremonies stopped, yet in the Kan dynasty scholars were ordered by Imperial decree to study the old books and revert to the ancient learning, and music and ceremonies once more flourished. Though it has never reached the excellence of the three ancient dynasties (Ka, In and Shiu) yet from the time of Kan every emperor encouraged music and ceremonies, and music has been used by the people. If there is ceremony there is sure to be music. In worshipping the gods of heaven and earth, and the country and family shrines, music is always used. This is because it is impossible to govern the world without music and ceremony. Though the music of the times subsequent to the Kan dynasty is not equal to that of ancient times it is the music of suburban temples and palaces, and vulgar music is not to be mentioned in the same breath.
In Japan Shotoku Taishi, having acquired the music of the middle kingdom, had it taught to several musicians and through its use in the palace, it has come down to the present time. The music used in this country now is that of the dynasties of Kan to To. The Biwa; Yokofuye; Sō; Tesho; Shakuhachi, and Kakuko are all musical instruments of a later date than the Kan dynasty, but of the string instruments the Koto, and of the wind instruments the Shō are the most ancient of instruments which have come to this country.

The Sō is used at Festivals, and has been in use since the Kan dynasty. It is evolved from the Koto, which has 25 strings while the Sō has half the number, or 18. The Wagoto is a very old instrument and said to date from the Kami no Yo, or time of the Gods. It is something like the Chiku of the Middle Kingdom. In the Middle Kingdom up to the time of the To dynasty music was after the ancient style, but with the So dynasty there was a great change. The music of our country came from the people of To, therefore it is said to be mostly ancient and not to exist at present in the Middle Kingdom. We have also Korean music, but it is said there is no ancient Korean music in Korea itself, or Chōsen as it is now called.

In all countries throughout every generation music and ceremonies have been connected with Government, therefore when any changes in Government arise the old music is overthrown and lost and the new comes into existence. In Japan there is no new music.

At the time of Shotoku Taishi musicians were chosen who made music their profession, and guarded it, therefore for over 1000 years music has come down to us undisturbed, and has been neither changed nor lost. This is truly a wonderful and important thing.

In the Genji Monogatari is found the statement that in
ancient times the Koto was chiefly used. At some period this
teaching was lost, and has never been recovered. The teaching
of the Biwa, Sō, and Japanese Koto have come to us. The
Shakuhachi was a great favorite of the Emperor Genso of To. It
was entirely used in Classical music. At some time this was
changed and it now is the music of the lower classes. In the
Horinji at Nara there is said to be the Shakuhachi upon which
Shotoku Taishi played. The length is one foot and eight bu. It
was because it is of these dimensions that it was called Shaku-
hachi, but it is now called Issetsudan, because it includes one
knot of bamboo. The instrument used by the begging priests of
to-day is wrongly called a Shakuhachi. It is really a kind of
Dosho called a Sansetsudan and includes three knots. The
Dosho was formerly used for classic music. The way of making
it has come down through musicians, but no one of to-day can
play upon it. The musical instruments of to-day are the three
string instruments, Biwa, Sō and Japanese Koto, the three pipes;
Sho, Hichiriki, and Yokofuye, and the three drums; Kakko, Taiko
and Shoko.

Amongst the ancient songs are the Imayo and Royei. Though
the Imayo is a song used by the people its language is almost
classical. The Wakakan Royei is a collection of songs made by
the Dainagon Kinto. It goes with both Pipes and Strings, and is
used by the highest and lowest classes of people. The vulgar
sang and composed songs and even the daughters of hotel-keepers
played and sang to these instruments.

When Shiga Hira of the Taira was a prisoner at Kamakura
the Geisha Senju came and played the Gojoraku and the Dose-
kocho music to him on the Sō for at that time there was no other
music. High and low alike amused themselves with classical music.
But only songs and dances of Japanese origin named Shirabyoshi
were liked by Kiyomori of the Taira. If this music be examined
it will be found different from the music of to-day and to have a classical foundation. The dance known as the Daito and used by the people at present is similar to the ancient Shirabyoši, but the music now used is not the original.

The Sarugaku and Dengaku music followed that of the Hojo period. It was vulgar music written by the musicians of the time, but not performed by people of rank. The upper ten of that time took pleasure in classical music only. Nitta Yoshisada played the flute, Ashikaga Takauji the Shō, Kusunoki Masashige the Biwa and all were far from mean players.

When the Muromachi house came to an end the Sarugaku flourished. It was used at banquets in the palace and was the music of the Shōguns and its reign lasted within the seas of Japan for over 200 years.

The Sarugaku was the kind of music used by the actors of the Middle Kingdom. Its tones were the ancient war cries of the northern barbarians, not at all peaceful or quiet.

Nearly every kind of music harmonizes with either strings or bamboos, but the songs of the Sarugaku do not. The notes of the flute used in the Sarugaku do not agree with rules, nor harmonize with strings. The shouts of the singer accompanying the Taüzumi resemble the cries of criminals. All music is for creating a peaceful mind, but the Sarugaku is not of this nature, it is the yell of the fighter, and people who find pleasure in it unknowingly injure the peacefulness of their minds. There is also a dance called Sachiwaka which was composed by a man named Sachiwaka. It is not known when it was first published, but it is said to be modern. Although called a dance it is really not one, but consists in holding a fan and striking the hand with it to time and singing of the deeds of the ancients. This like the Sarugaku does not harmonize with music, and is not peaceful but warlike.

In the Monogatari of the Biwaoshi the story of the house of
Taira is sung to the playing of the Biwa. Yukinaga, a former lord of Shinano, taught this to a blind man named Shobutsu and made him sing it. This is said to be the origin of the song. It is older and though the music cannot be said to be peaceful, it is quieter than the Saruzaku.

With regard to the Sekkyo (that is the exposition of Buddhist Scriptures) its teachers were amongst the followers of Shakka, and the history of the rise of Buddhism was added to the Shomyonembuta. It was composed for the purpose of persuading people to join the Buddhist sect. Later on it told the stories of the loves and sorrows of the ancients of this and foreign countries. Again to incline people to Buddha it took the story of some famous priest to show the shortness of man’s life. The language used is for the most part that of the people, but there are parts which do not belong to the vulgar music of this time. At one time it was accompanied by the beating of gongs but now uneducated musicians use the samisen. The Sekkyo has grief and pity as its subject, and honours man’s tears. Too much pity in music is the beginning of lewdness, though the Sekkyo cannot be called lewd.

Jorori is very similar to Sekkyo. Its origin is not quite clear, people say that it originated in the daughter of one named Ono who lived in modern times. It is said to have been at first a piece of music called Jorori, consisting of an account of ancient history in 12 chapters made and sung by the daughter of a former headman of Yahagi, a post town of the province of Mikawa. This music after a time became very popular, and to it was added an account of the doings of ancient foreigners and Japanese. It was not the same all over the country. The tunes differed in the east and west. It was sung chiefly by low class musicians and the blind. At first, as it contained an account of the famous ancients, its language was classic, but as it became popular with the people it told the stories of their loves, their jealousies, and loss of lives or
property through profligate living. Hence its language became commonplace. Though the ancient language of the Jorori came from a poor village it was the amusement of the governing class. It was not a very long piece of music, and it is no more used by the governing classes.

In all countries where evil music is not prohibited the people compose all kinds of low songs, and men's hearts are made evil.

In the "Duties of a King" as written in the Reiki it is said that in the times of the Former Kings any person making an immoral song was punished by death. Though the tunes of the people used always to be bad their words were for the most part classical. At present they are very low, provincial and noisy, and it is better for the hearers to cover their ears. The So was originally only used in classical music, but now it is not so and a different kind of music has been made for it, which is mostly used by the people.

It was first used in Tsukushi which is the old name for Kiushiu, and is called Tsukushisō. The music for this came down to us as an adaptation of the classical Yettengaku. It is now used with all kinds of songs. Though it is not classical it has very few bad tones in it. The Samisen and Kokiu are musical instruments used by the people. It is said that both of these have come over in modern times from the Loochoo islands, where they are used for classical music, but in Japan for the vulgar music of the people. The Samisen is very like the Kokiu of the Middle Kingdom. The Kokiu is similar to the Kukō. Though the time of the Kokiu is slightly provincial, yet it has classical parts. The Samisen is extremely pleasing to the evil. The slightest tone from the Samisen immediately sets the evil heart in motion, in a way which no other musical instrument can. In shape it is something like the Biwa, but the playing of the Biwa is simple, while Samisen playing is very quick and con-
plex, and it accords with the voice of man better than any other musical instrument, and for making men joyful is much thought of by the people. Therefore unless the Sekkyo, Jorori and other songs used by the people are played to the music of Samisen, their beauties cannot be fully shewn.

All the evil music of the people is played by quick movements of the hands. This is specially noticed in the Samisen and thus are the ears of the people made glad and their hearts rejoice.

At first the Samisen was only used by the blind, and low class musicians but now even the best classes learn it and of course amongst the samurai and other classes there are a large number of skilled players. Were the language pure, both the Samisen and Koku could be used with classical music, and become classic, but they are used with only bad tunes and vulgar music, and are therefore altogether bad, just as such instruments as the Sô and Shakuhachi if they were used for evil music, would give out vulgar tones. Thus the evil tones are not the crimes of the instrument, but of the player.

Nearly all music is based upon the voice of man. If the voice of man be pure then the tones of strings and bamboos will be pure too, but if his voice be evil so will be the tones of the pipes and cords. All music is the heart set to the tunes of songs and played, unless the evil tones of the songs of the people are stopped, evil music cannot be put down. The songs of the vulgar do not tell of good, but of evil and profligate things.

It is because the people have been accustomed to profligate tones from childhood that they please the heart of man. In the Middle Kingdom there are the Haiyu (actor) which are the same as the Kyogenashi (a kind of actor) of this country. The Zatsugeki (theatrical play) of the Middle Kingdom is the same as the Kabuki (opera?) of this country. In the Middle Kingdom there is a law for the Haiyu which compels them to perform plays on
filial piety and the doings of loyal retainers, no evil or unlawful matter being permitted. This is because of the fear of evil destroying the customs of the people. The Kabuki and Kyogen of to-day panders to the present public taste, and act the profligate doings of the public of the present times. Nothing exceeds this for breaking the customs of the people. It is all evil which is sung to the people. When the customs become depraved it is a calamity for the country. The harm that evil music does to government is very far reaching.

In ancient times Classical Music was spread all over the world, and all people took their pleasure therefrom, because there was no vulgar music for the people. But later all kinds of vulgar music were made, which pleased the ears and eyes of the people and they seeing that it represented the vulgar heart of their times were amused and thought it funny, and thinking the Classical Music not so amusing finally would have it no more. Though the Sarugaku is provincial and vulgar, and is only the voice of fighters and killers and does not harmonize with pipes and strings yet there are no lewd tones in it, and therefore it does not move men's hearts to evil. All other vulgar music is of lewd tones, and starts the evil heart of man.

Of the popular tones there is a difference between the ancient and modern. Though the ancient music were bad, the classic language of Japan was used but it was easy language, then as the earth advanced in age the customs changed and the music became too low and disorderly to be allowed in people's houses or amongst relations. This is what is known as customs getting depraved. If classical music is not used by the state, and bad music is not prohibited, this is what happens. The saying that by hearing a person's music his virtues will be known originated from the belief that music comes from virtue. We can judge of the good or bad of the ancient world, by examining its music. As the
popular music is from the people, from it the morals of the people of that age can be judged. Just as vulgar music breaks down customs, so by a miracle of heaven classical music must make customs pure. The reason that it is said that there is nothing which equals music in causing change is that the power of classical music changes the impure into the pure, and the deterioration of the pure to the impure is the result of vulgar music. The reason that the sages made music to amuse the people was to uphold the ancient customs without change for ever.

It is truly a deep conception that the state is built up upon the foundation of music and ceremony placed side by side. The Military Laws of Sonbu and Goki, the plan of Rotan and Soshi of leaving everything to fate, the Punishments of Shinsugai and Kanpi, the Laws of Shoo and Rishi, and the hundreds of others, their principles of government were good, but because they dispensed with Music and Ceremony, though they might have kept the world governed in peace for a time, could not govern and civilize it for long. The two Emperors (Giyo and Shun) and three Kings (of Ka, In, and Shu dynasties) employed the Music and Ceremonies of the sages and therefore governed the world in peace.

Therefore in later times did any wish to learn from the government of former kings, they must uphold music and ceremony. Fortunately in Japan the ancient music has come down to us, and if used by the Emperor, the Samurai and others it will be a foundation to work upon, but the vulgar music and dances of the present must be put down, as much as possible, so a law ought to be made that the Sekkyo and Jorori shall only tell of the filial piety, brotherly love and duty of the ancients, and not of their depravity and disorder, and that all which hurts the life of man in the way of dances and theatricals shall be abolished. If all evil and disorder be banished from provincial songs and dances evil can be kept from men, and pure customs and long life to the
state can be established. This is the teaching of the Music and Ceremonies of the former kings.

In my attempt to translate an Essay from one of the writers suggested to this Society by Sir Ernest Satow I have not only to plead a very slight knowledge of Political Economy, but in choosing the Essay on Music, I have further to crave your pardon because of my absolute ignorance of the subject. The difficulty of putting into suitable English the equivalents of Dazai's technical terms has also been too much for me, as the words which I have translated Vulgar and Classical, Music and Songs, Tones and Words, have perhaps a deeper significance than I have given them.