

The *Go* Game Board of Red Sandalwood with Marquetry and its Box with Hexagonal Design

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The *Go* game board of red sandalwood with marquetry 木画紫檀碁局 (North section 36) and its box with hexagonal design 金銀亀甲碁局龕 (North section 36) are the two of the treasures dedicated to the Great Buddha in Todai-ji Temple in the 8th year of the *Tenpyo Shoho* era 天平勝宝 8 歳 (756). This paper reports on the materials, constructions and techniques revealed through the utilization of stereoscopic microscope, fiberscope and X-ray transmission device for analysis of these two treasures.

There are two drawers on the side of the *Go* game board. Each of the two drawers has a tray of game pieces. One tray is shaped like a turtle and the other like a soft-shelled turtle. A crank mechanism inside the game board opens or closes one of the drawers according to the opening or closing of the other. It was confirmed that this mechanism was repeatedly remade during construction and was completed after trial and error.

Various decorations are inlaid on the surface of the *Go* game board and its box so that the game board base material structure is unexposed. However, it was deduced through the portion slightly visible from the side of the drawer and X-ray photographs that pine was used. In ancient times in Japan, pine was not utilized in crafts due to the large amount of resin contained and the difficulty to split the wood straight. However, pine was the most readily available wood in ancient Korea and in much use for various items.

It has been pointed out that there are 17 *kagans*, flower shaped decorations on intersection-points, on the *Go* game board rather than the usual nine, making it an equivalent of the ancient Korean style of the game played until the Joseon period. Furthermore, the technique used to inlay the keratinous matter is similar to the *kakaku-bari* 華角貼, decorative inlay using thin sheets of buffalo horn, which was a technique actively carried out in Korea.

Although it is not easy to determine where Shosoin treasures were produced from the standpoint of craft techniques, it is especially difficult to discern those made in Korea. The reason is that it remains only few examples in Korea from the 8th century with which comparisons may be made. Moreover, like Japan, the crafts made in Korea have been influenced in no small measure by Chinese Tang Dynasty crafts. However, regarding the *Go* game board of red sandalwood with marquetry and its box with hexagonal design, there have been recognized several factors, including the aforementioned, that indicate a relationship with Korea, suggesting that they were made there.

Observation to Restore the Head Costumes for the Court Theater Similar to the *Torikabuto*

Yukako Yamagata

The *torikabuto*, bird-shaped head costume, represents the head of a phoenix. This type of head costume was used in court music and dance. Among the Shosoin treasures, there are two head costumes similar in shape to the *torikabuto*, catalogued with the surviving portion of bird-shaped head costume of red *ashiginu* silk 緋絶鳥兜残欠其 1 (South section 3, no.1) and pendent ornaments 幢幡鉸具 (South section 165). The profile of these head costumes look like the letter “X”, and strictly speaking are different from the *torikabuto*. Today, they are damaged and only one side remains for each head costume. Here, the author reports to restore the original shapes and detailed structures of the head costumes worn by musicians or dancers by finding separately stored parts and detached metal ornaments.

As a result, it was found that the two head costumes had the following points in common: silk textile on the surface was decorated with gilt copper openworks, there was a textile of different color visible through the openworks. Their silhouettes are also similar in shape, and it is thought that they were made using some kind of common model. However, in one, framework made of thin strips of woven *hinoki*, Japanese cypress, is covered with textile, with ancient-style openworks attached. In the other, a linen cloth core is covered with textile, with the whole surface decorated with elaborate openworks. The edges of the linen cloth core have a gilt copper frame for maintaining the head costume’s shape. The result of weaving density of the textiles and the fluorescent X-ray analysis of the openworks supported that the former was made in the provinces while the latter was made in the center of the State.

On the Folding Screen Panels Mentioned in the *List of Rare Treasures of the State*

Yusuke Yoneda

On June 21 in the 8th year of the *Tenpyo Shoho* era 天平勝宝8歳 (756), the day of the ritual for the 49th day posthumously of Emperor *Shomu*, Empress *Komyo* dedicated offerings that had been cherished by the departed emperor to the Great Buddha of Todai-ji Temple. A catalogue of these objects can be found in the *List of Rare Treasures of the State* 国家珍宝帳 and included 100 folding screen panels consisting of 596 screens. This article reveals the period of creation of these folding screen panels and its origins.

The classification of the folding screen panels will be the following five types: folding screen panels with paintings 画屏風, those decorated with bird feathers 鳥毛屏風, those with *torisyo* 鳥書屏風 which is of unknown representation, those with the *kyokechi* 夾纈屏風, board-jammed dyeing, and those with the *rokechi* 臈纈屏風, batik dyeing. Within the objects on the List, all of the folding screen panels decorated with bird feathers have been preserved to the present day. However, none of the folding screen panels with paintings and those with *torisyo* remain, and there are only a few *kyokechi* and *rokechi* folding screens still in existence.

According to the examination, it became evident that three of the folding screen types — that is, with bird feather decorations, with *kyokechi* dyeing and with *rokechi* dyeing — were all produced in Japan. Regarding the period in which they were made, it became clear that these folding screens were produced between the opening ceremony of the Great Buddha in the 4th year and the 8th year of the *Tenpyo Shoho* era (752–756). This was evidenced by the year written on the documents used for the under support paper of the Folding screen panels with bird feathers decorating the paintings of a lady under a tree 鳥毛立女屏風, as well as by the years inscribed on the textile sent as tax payment used for the folding screen panels with *kyokechi* and *rokechi* dyeing.

Regarding the folding screen panels with paintings, the motifs are unknown as they no longer exist. However, there are some for which the themes can be revealed through the inscriptions on the sack of the folding screens or the documents written during the Heian Period when the folding screens were taken out of the treasure house. A hint to where and when these folding screens were made can be found in one of the titles of the folding screens with paintings, the Picture of the merriment in front of the Bureau of State Affairs in the Great Tang 大唐勤政樓前歡樂圖. The Bureau of state affairs was a main structure located within the Xingqing Palace 興慶宮, on the east block in the walled capital of the Tang and south of the Daming Palace 大明宮. It was here that the Emperor Xuanzong of Tang moved the seat of government affairs from Daming Palace in the 8th year of the *Kaigen* era 開元8年 (720). Furthermore, folding screens with paintings that include the words such as ancient style palace in the title possibly depict scenes from the Daming Palace, the palace before the Xingqing Palace. These folding screens with paintings were likely produced in Tang and brought over by ship. In the 7th year of the *Tenpyo* era 天平7年 (735), *Kibi no Makibi* 吉備真備, who studied overseas in Tang, brought huge numbers of books, musical instruments, weapons and other items back with him to Japan and offered them to Emperor *Shomu*. It is thought that these folding screens with paintings were among such items.

Investigation of the Instrument Body of the Five-stringed *Biwa* Lute of Red Sandalwood with Mother-of-Pearl Inlay for the Reproduction

Mitsune Yokoyama

Since 2002, the Imperial Household Agency's Office of the Shosoin Treasure House has been promoting a project for the reproduction of the *Radenshitani no gogen biwa* 螺鈿紫檀五絃琵琶 Five-stringed *biwa* lute of red sandalwood with mother-of-pearl inlay (North section 29). As part of this project, a preliminary survey of this instrument's body was carried out in the autumn of 2008. A five-year special survey of Shosoin instruments had already taken place between 1948 and 1952, and a detailed report, *Musical Instruments of the Shosoin* 正倉院の楽器 was published. However, in regards to *biwa*, it is primarily a record of measurements and observations, and descriptions regarding their internal structure are rarely seen. Information regarding this particular *biwa* was also insufficient for the creation of an exact reproduction. Traditionally, there has been a strong tendency for this *biwa* to be regarded as an artistically-crafted object rather than a musical instrument. There is no doubt that this is largely due to the magnificent mother-of-pearl inlay decoration. However, there was also a secondary reason—that is, there was not enough information behind its magnificence to evidence this *biwa*'s functionality as a musical instrument.

Upon briefly defining a musical instrument as an object for playing music, there are three indispensable conditions that can be raised when there is a question of whether an object is a musical instrument or an artistically-crafted object.

- Firstly, that it has the structure, function and strength appropriate for playing music
- Secondly, that it is possible to achieve the tone appropriate to musical theory
- Thirdly, that playing it results not simply in 'sounds' but in resonance befitting music.

Bringing together known information and the new knowledge obtained through this preliminary survey, here, the author discusses whether this *biwa* fulfills the aforementioned conditions in an effort to demonstrate that this object was produced as a musical instrument from the beginning.