

# From Silent Heritage to Amaterasu Kagura Secret Songs at Ise Jingū and the Imperial Palace Shrine in Modern and Pre-modern Japan



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## Abstract

This dissertation explores the essence and resilience of the most sacred and secret ritual music of the Japanese imperial court—kagura taikyoku and kagura hikyoku—by examining ways in which these two songs have survived since their formation in the twelfth century. Kagura taikyoku and kagura hikyoku together are the jewel of Shinto ceremonial vocal music of gagaku, the imperial court music and dances. Kagura secret songs are the emperor's foremost prayer offering to the imperial ancestral deity, Amaterasu, and other Shinto deities for the well-being of the people and Japan. I aim to provide an understanding of reasons for the continued and uninterrupted performance of kagura secret songs, despite two major crises within Japan's history. While foreign origin style of gagaku was interrupted during the Warring States period (1467-1615), the performance and transmission of kagura secret songs were protected and sustained. In the face of the second crisis during the Meiji period (1868-1912), which was marked by a threat of foreign invasion and the re-organization of governance, most secret repertoire of gagaku lost their secrecy or were threatened by changes to their traditional system of transmissions, but kagura secret songs survived and were sustained without losing their secrecy, sacredness, and silent performance. This research addresses why and how kagura taikyoku and kagura hikyoku have persisted in the face of political and societal upheavals, and builds upon the pioneering work of Carl Folke and Jeff Todd Titon on resilience theory in the socio-ecological systems and ethnomusicology, respectively. Historical narrative is foundational to the thesis, which I have developed from examination of archived manuscripts that include the musical notations of kagura secret songs, housed in the National Archives and the Imperial Household Archives, as well as the musical manuscripts formerly owned by the Ayanokōji family, housed at the Tenri University Library in Japan. My analysis has been informed by the ethnographic method, while in residence and in interactions with the priests at Ise Jingū during periods of my field research between 2008 and 2016. Whereas contemporary priests' voices are not heard other than in the "Prelude," their voices echo the ideas and sentiments of historical figures whose work I have examined. Hence, this dissertation can be viewed as a documentary history with ethnographic components that combine in offering an understanding of the continuity of Shinto ritual music and the unique religious affect that is associated with Shinto practices at Ise Jingū and in the imperial household. In sum, this research contributes to historical ethnomusicology, Japanese religious studies, and the advancement of gagaku.

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Sometimes called "Ise Jingu (Ise Shrine)," it is also simply called "Jingu (the Shrine)," an indication of its pre-eminence. Ise Jingu consists of two parts, Naiku and Geku: Naiku (the Inner Shrine) is dedicated to Amaterasu Omikami, ancestral deity of the Imperial Family, and Geku (the Outer Shrine) is dedicated to the deity of food, clothing, shelter and industry. The main sanctuary buildings of both Naiku and Geku are built in Japan's oldest architectural style, called "Yuiitsu shinmei-zukuri." Continuous Worship Of Amaterasu - Only In Japan. Amaterasu is the culture-hero goddess of Japan and the most prominent member of the Shinto Pantheon. She is worshiped both as a spiritual divinity and as a sacred ancestor of the imperial family of Japan. She was once worshiped in the imperial palace but later a shrine was erected to her. The main shrine to Amaterasu is at Ise, in Mie Prefecture on Honshu Island. Although traditionally, she probably was worshiped widely throughout Asia, only in Japan, there is a continuous worship of Amaterasu as a central figure, but several other religious movements. Ise Shrine, Japanese Ise-jingū, also called Grand Shrine of Ise, Japanese Ise-daijingū, one of the principal shrines of Shintō (the indigenous religion of Japan). It is located near the city of Ise in Mie ken (prefecture), central Honshu. It is dedicated to Amaterasu Ōmikami, the sun goddess and traditional progenitor of the Japanese imperial family. The Sacred Mirror, one of the Three Sacred Treasures of Japan (Sanshu no Jingi), is preserved there. ...place of worship is the Grand Shrine of Ise, the foremost Shintō shrine in Japan. She is manifested there in a mirror that is one of the three Imperial Treasures of Japan (the other two being a jeweled necklace and a sword). The genders of Amaterasu and her brother the... shinshoku.