



## Amazing Musical Instruments of Uzbekistan and the Middle East

Gavkhar Rakhimova; Sayfuddin Rakhimov; Manzura Abdurakhmonova

Lecturer, Andijan State University, Uzbekistan

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### Abstract

Each nation has its own national art, traditions and literature, which are valued from generation to generation as a national treasure. As part of the article, we tried to show the similarity of the Far Eastern countries such as Chinese and Japanese national musical instruments with Uzbek national musical instruments.

**Keywords:** *Musical Culture; Oriental Flute; Gidjak, D'izi; P'ipá; Banhu; Gakubiwa; Shakuhachi; Shamisen*

### Introduction

Surprising and often unusual instruments gave the music of the region its unique sound and allowed the musicians to experiment with melodies, rhythms and timbres. Thanks to the globalization of culture and the resulting music scene, many traditional instruments have been replaced by guitars, keyboards, etc., and are now used by only a handful of folklore groups or on display in museums. In our article, we decided to highlight several unique and unusual musical instruments from the Middle East and Uzbekistan.

Sunny Uzbekistan is one of the most colorful and original Central Asian republics. A rich heritage was left by the Great Silk Road, the road linking Europe and Asia. The constant communication of merchants, travelers and slaves from Europe, Asia, China, India and local residents left a deep imprint on the development of the culture of Uzbekistan. Cultural interchange took place over many centuries.



The musical culture of Uzbekistan is diverse and unique in its originality and originality. Uzbek musical instruments resemble traditional tambourine, drum, pipes of different lengths, two –stringed guitar, but they are completely different in sound from these instruments.

The musical culture of Uzbekistan is diverse and unique in its originality. *Nai* (flute) is an Uzbek national wind instrument in the form of a flute with six holes for the musician's fingers. It made from bamboo. Modern models of improved nai can be with brass elements. The sounds change depending on the position of the fingers. Nai is called the Uzbek flute, although the sound is very different. The blown air stream creates beautiful solo compositions. A stringed plucked musical instrument is akin to a lute – tanbur. It resembles a rubab, but exceeds it in length, about one and a half meters and has

three strings of different thicknesses. When performing, the musician holds the tanbur at chest level with his head slightly tilted.



*Gidjak* is a stringed national instrument of the peoples of Asia. The round case resembles a ball made of pumpkin or coconut and covered with leather. Four silk strings and a bow, this is how the gidjak looked many centuries ago. The improved instrument has horsehair strings and a violin bow. Under the hands of gidjak masters, the instrument gives out bright melodies. When playing, the gidjak is held strictly vertically so that the leg rests on the leg or other flat surface.

Uzbeks are known for their musicality and poetry. In almost every house you can find a *dutar* or a tambourine of the Uzbek doira, which speaks of the musicality of the people. Oriental musical instruments still sound on all holidays. The music of Uzbekistan is a combination of ancient bow, wind, string and percussion instruments. Oriental music is characterized by playing several instruments simultaneously in unison.

The music of Chinese songs is monophonic in structure. It is dominated by a five-step non-semitone system. But melodies of a different, more varied and complex structure are not uncommon. Folk songs are usually composed for high voices, light in sound. Their melody, clear, patterned, graceful in pattern, moves strictly rhythmically. The tunes of lyrical songs are especially melodic, they are full of great, restrained feeling. The Chinese people are the leaders in the creation of rhymed verse and song, in the development of the theoretical foundations of musical art (IX–IV centuries BC). Many beautiful pieces of music were composed in ancient times by the Chinese people. The famous book “Shijing” contains labor, always, ritual, lyrical songs of the II–I millennium BCE. The folk song in ancient China was such a powerful social force that the kings and emperors established special “musical chambers” for studying songs: after all, one could guess the mood of the people from them. Many songs directed against the arbitrariness of the rich and the oppression of officials have been banned for centuries. The song about the folk hero Nie Zhen, who killed the cruel king, was so hated by the rulers of China that even an instrumental performance of its melody threatened the performer. The music of Chinese songs is monophonic in structure. It is dominated by a five-step non-semitone system.

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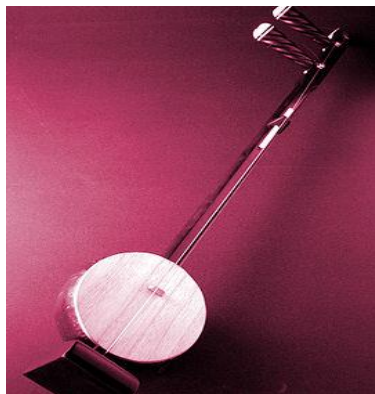
*Dizi* (笛子) *dízi* is a Chinese transverse flute with six playing holes, one of the most common wind instruments in China. It was supposedly brought from Central Asia between 140 and 87 BCE, according to legend, it was brought by the ambassador Zhang Qian during the reign of the Han emperor Wudi. Di exists in two genders:

*quidi* (in the *kunqu* musical drama orchestra) and *bandi* (in the *bangzi* musical drama orchestra in the northern provinces).

*Pipa* is another Chinese musical instrument. Pipa (琵琶, pípá) is a Chinese 4-string lute-like plucked musical instrument. One of the most widespread and famous Chinese musical instruments. The first mention of pipa in literature dates back to the 3rd century, the first image of pipa to the 5th century. However, prototypes of the pipa existed in China already at the end of the 3rd century BCE. The name “pipa” is associated with the way the instrument is played: “pi” means moving the fingers down the strings, and “pa” means the opposite movement up.



*Banhu* is a Chinese bowed string instrument, a type of huqin. The traditional banhu was used primarily as an accompaniment instrument in northern Chinese musical drama. In the 20th century, it began to be used as an orchestral instrument. Banhu makes an unusually loud sound. The voice of the banhu is sonorous, tense. It is ideal for playing lively, energetic melodies. In addition, in different parts of the country, “banhu” has its own distinct local characteristics. In appearance, “banhu” resembles “erhu”. The main difference is in the timbre: “banhu” is more sonorous than “erhu”.



The formation of Japanese national music dates back to the 6th–7th centuries. An important role in its formation was played by the penetration from the mainland along with Buddhism of cult music. Since the sixteenth century European music appears in Japan, but the influence of Western art on Japanese musical life becomes especially strong in the second half of the 19th century. Traditional Japanese musical instruments include shamisen and koto stringed instruments. When playing music on the Japanese fue flute, the holes in the instrument are closed not with the fingertips, but with the phalanges.

National musical instruments in Japan are widely known and loved. Popularity is due not only to the respect of the Japanese for their culture and history, but also to the use of national instruments in traditional Japanese theater—primarily in the Kabuki and Bunraku theaters, and even in contemporary art.



*Biwa* is the national Japanese instrument. The term biwa combines a number of Japanese musical instruments of the lute family. In Japan, two varieties of biwa have long been widespread (mentioned in written sources of the 8th century) – gakubiwa and gogenbiwa.

*Gakubiwa* is a pear-shaped instrument with a short neck, on which there are 4 frets, and a head bent back, equipped with four tuning pegs for tuning four silk strings. The tuning is consistent with the six keys of classical Japanese music gagaku. Length – 122 cm, width – 41 cm. The sound is extracted using a plectrum (18 cm), to protect the deck from plectrum strikes, a wide leather tape, usually black, is glued across its central part.

Subsequently, a number of new varieties of biwa (sasabiwa, heikebiwa, satsumabiwa) arose, which are used to accompany the singing of Buddhist parables and military legends. In the 19th century, the last variety of this type of instrument appeared—chikuzenbiwa.

*Shakuhachi* (Jap. 尺八) is a longitudinal bamboo flute that came to Japan from China during the Nara period. The Chinese name of the flute is called xiao (dongxiao).

Today there are about twenty varieties of shakuhachi. This determined the very Japanese name of the instrument, since “shaku” means “foot”, and “hachi” means “eight”. The instrument has a special, unique sound, which can largely change at the request of the player playing the melody. This property was used by Zen masters to perform meditative melodies (suizen practice). In addition, the flute was widespread among the peasants, as it was an easy-to-make instrument and suitable for playing folk melodies.



The shakuhachi is similar in design and sound production to the Andean kena: to extract sound, the musician puts the upper end of the flute to his lips and directs the air flow to the wedge.



*Shasen* (Jap. 三味線 “three strings”), also *sangen*), is a Japanese plucked three-string musical instrument. The closest European analogue of the shamisen is the lute. The shamisen, along with the hayashi and shakuhachi flutes, the tsuzumi drum and the koto zither, is one of the traditional Japanese musical instruments. Shamisen appeared in Japan around the 15th–16th centuries. The forerunner of the shamisen is the sanshin (三線), which was played in the Ryukyu kingdom, which at that time became a prefecture. Sanshin, in turn, comes from the Chinese sanxian instrument, which originated from Central Asian instruments. Unlike Europe, where traditional/antique instruments do not receive much attention, shamisen and other national instruments in Japan are widely known and loved.

The variety of musical instruments of the countries of the world creates a unique cultural heritage and favorably contributes to international integration. It is pleasant to realize that many countries are related to culture (performance on stringed instruments in particular).

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