

### ***Shomyo*, Stories, and Song**

*Shomyo* Buddhist chanting, as a religious practice, is not an everyday experience for most people in Japan. However, various forms of *shomyo* have had a significant influence on Japanese music and culture. In medieval Japan, performers practiced telling stories using techniques such as flat song (*heikyoku*) and narratives (*sekkyobushi*).

Another example of the influence of *shomyo* is in recitations of *The Tale of the Heike*, a thirteenth-century literary epic that takes place partly in Ohara; it was also recited to *biwa* accompaniment by *biwa hoshi* entertainers. Their melodies and song styles are all thought to have been influenced by *shomyo*.

Even today, Japanese *enka* songs incorporate a unique way of singing known as *kobushi*, which is influenced by *shomyo* chanting.