

On the Concepts of “Oneness” and “Mind Manipulation” in the Creation of Sesshu Kai (1938–78) around 1970: Focusing on the First Movement of his *Music for Mezzo Soprano and Flute*

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Sesshu Kai (1938–1978) is a Japanese composer who studied in Berlin, Germany, from 1966 to 1969 and explored for a unique style of composition after returning to Japan. According to one of the previously published studies, on Kai, he encouraged listeners to listen to music with extraordinary attentiveness, and his style is characterized by gradual change and repetitions of limited materials, such as pitch in combination with varying note duration.

This paper mainly focuses on Kai’s creation around 1970, when Kai returned to Japan from Germany, and tries to clarify the characteristics of his creation by examining his theoretical discourses and musical works. First, this paper considers the concept of “setting up a situation,” which is found in Kai’s writings, and points out that the "situation" proposed by Kai is not limited to the two aspects, gradual change and repetitions of limited materials, emphasized by the hitherto-published studies (Section 1). Rather than focusing on these two characteristics, this paper looks at the concept of “oneness (*Einheit*),” which Kai used when he was formulating his works, and “mind manipulation,” which Kai connected to “oneness.” This can be seen in his compositional notes from around 1970. Both concepts are important to understanding Kai's works. Nevertheless, at first glance, “oneness,” which means “unity,” and “mind manipulation,” which includes a sudden change, seem to be mutually incompatible (Section 2). However, when the first movement of Kai’s *Music for Mezzo Soprano and Flute* (1968 – 1969) is closely analyzed with a focus on the relationship between these two concepts and his compositional technique, it becomes clear that these ideas function in a complementary manner (Section 3).

This paper, which explicates Kai's compositional aesthetics and techniques around the time when he became aware of his own musical language, will promote further research on his later works.