



# 聖 HIJIRI

## Hijiri Nagomi X-DCH20

Nowadays, a good power cable constitutes an indispensable part of any audiophile's playback chain

Having tested the amazing Hijiri HGP-15R signal cables, now it's time for another product from the same brand, namely, the power cable. Just like the previously tested analogue interconnect, Nagomi H-DCH20 belongs to the latest products of Japanese Combak Corporation, which owns the well-known audiophile brands, Reimyo and Harmonix. Mister Kazuo Kiuchi's decided to introduce Hijiri as a completely new brand, which is supposed to have a higher rank than Harmonix, and is addressed to clients, who, for various reasons, don't choose these products.

Even though Nagomi looks similar to Harmonix power cable, when you take it into your hands, you can immediately tell that it is much more elastic than the latter. I don't think the Japanese ever had such a flexible and elastic power cable in their offer, so in this respect, the difference is particularly noticeable. Although I haven't dismantled it – to do that I would have to irreversibly damage some of the pieces – I think what causes this quality is the noise filter, more particularly, the braided shield, or rather lack of it, which is more probable. Usually, it is the thick-braided copper shield, together with fairly rigid insulation wound around the conductors, that have the influence on the cord's poor flexibility, sometimes making it inconvenient to connect, for example when an equipment stand is close to a wall. I think the Japanese cable uses some entirely different type of filtering, or a specific braid that treats the ground conductor as an elementary component of filtering. Just like in the case of Harmonix cables, the manufacturer doesn't give information about technical details or used materials (many other manufacturers of audio cables don't do that either), so many aspects remain just speculations.

In general, Nagomi looks neat – the outer insulation is realized through a decorative woven cotton sleeving. The connectors are hi-end Wattgate models.

Hear more!

Many discussions about power cables argue whether they make any difference in an audio system. High-class power cables, which are very expensive, have become the favorite "whipping boy" on different discussion boards. The ignorant, who often take the floor in such debates, provide cables as an example of sheer stupidity of audiophiles who spend a fortune on cables, when, allegedly, they can't even hear any difference. I promised myself long ago not to get involved in such discussions, but I know that the opinion that cables are useless and make no sonic difference is still shared by some music lovers. Therefore now, I would like to take this opportunity to list a few undeniable facts about audio cables. Some 20-30 years ago, they constituted an indispensable supplement to any audio system, because, after all, individual components have to be connected somehow. But back then nobody took them seriously. However, over time their importance systematically increased, until at some point it went too far, and some people started perceiving cables as full-fledged components of audio systems. The way I see it, common sense is the key in this matter, and the two extreme views definitely should be disregarded. From my long experience, I know for sure that cables do have an influence on the quality of sound, but it's not that tremendous. Apart from that, it's a good idea to follow a simple rule of thumb that the more expensive and better system you have, the higher class cables you need – not because that's customary, but in order not to degrade the high quality of sound, which can be achieved with a carefully selected audio system. Let's be clear, buying hyper-expensive cables to go with a cheap system is completely pointless, it definitely won't make any spectacular sonic improvement. If you want to improve a budget system, investing in a new amp or better speakers would be a better idea than spending money on cables that cost as much as an amplifier. Whereas when it comes to expensive, perfected systems, where the struggle is to improve the already exorbitant sound quality, if only by little, that's another story. Replacing cables can give positive results – don't expect miracles, but still, a well matched wiring should bring about what's best in a given audio system.

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I've been dealing with audio stuff for years, and such situations are nothing uncommon, and I can assure you that improved sound quality really takes place after replacing cables. It's not my wild imagination or the effect of having too much booze. Often I've achieved most spectacular effects when using Harmonix cables, that's why they are one of my favorites. I think that once I've tested Hijiri from the same manufacturer, they will win over my heart as well.

Most of all, Nagomi offers perfectly balanced sound, with well distributed bass, without any boost in this range, and with high tones harmoniously integrating with middles, which in turn delight with smoothness and refined quality. As much as in the case of speaker cables or even interconnects the sonic difference is rather subtle, when it comes to Hijiri Nagomi power cables, the difference is more noticeable, no matter in what system it's been used. During several listening sessions, I was trying to use the cable in a few different ways – one time I plugged it to the source only, another time to the amp. However, the best result was achieved when I connected X-DCH20 directly to the mains, with the other end plugged to Gigawatt power conditioner. As a result, the sound quality was close to what you can hear when listening to a philharmonic orchestra in a concert hall. When it comes to transparency and the way the energy is built, Hijiri surprised me in a very positive sense.

Most of all, this cable proved to be absolutely flawless. I would say it is a perfect combination of all elements of a sonic characteristic, united so it is not one bit mechanical, free from any unnatural traces or distortions. Music was effortlessly coming out of the whole system – in this case, sound reproduction potential of speakers of my own design, paired with Accuphase E-470, has been upgraded in almost every respect. In comparison to other Harmonix power cables I know, Nagomi proved to be better when it comes to dynamics and its processing. The coherence and harmony of sound offered by the tested power cable is also supreme, and I don't think that any of the known cable manufacturers will match Nagomi anytime soon. I have to admit that it constitutes a crown of a well-matched stereo system, giving the reproduced music live-like quality. It doesn't color or emphasize anything, nothing is veiled or boosted. The perfect tonal balance definitely constitutes its positive aspect and a characteristic feature, but it's also a message to a future user – Nagomi will help bring about additional reserves from your system, especially when it comes to overall sound quality, not to mention very clear treble.

## Good to know

Hijiri Nagomi, just like power cables from Harmonix, has marking indicating the hot wire. It's advisable to pay attention to it, because although audio devices are supplied with alternating current, connecting them in a correct way will improve the sound, and will allow you to make maximum use of your power cable. Such marking can often be found also on electrical devices – their manufacturers emphasize that the best sonic effect is achieved when the power cable is connected correctly, according to the hot wire marking. Some manufacturers, like Ayon, take this even further and equip their devices with a diode indicating when the power cable is connected according to phases in a 230 V power outlet. It is definitely a plus when it comes to comfort of use, because there's no need to perform additional measurements to specify the correct phase of alternating current on input.

## Summary

Nagomi will sound as good as a given stereo system will allow, which is the manifestation of its perfection. Undeniably, it is one of the best power cables I've ever come across, and I've dealt with quite a lot of cables. This Japanese power cord lets the music flow, regardless of its type or genre. However, what's most important is the fact that in this case, naturalness and realism are paired with accurate dynamics and freedom – the sound seems to come out of the speakers effortlessly, with liveliness characteristic of a given type of music. The Japanese craftsmanship has reached its top, and the tested power cable is the best proof of that. Definitely, it's worth all the money spent.

## Verdict: Hijiri Nagomi X-DCH20

★★★★★ Charmingly coherent and harmonious sound. Its phenomenal tonal balance makes it perfect for well-balanced systems, complementing the sound with lots of life and naturalness

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