

Autumn/Winter 2022

BAMBOO

Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society

TRADITION

TRANSMISSION

TRANSPROPRIATION

ESS / WINTER CONCERT 2022 / THE ROAD TO DUBLIN 2023

SHAKUHACHI RESOURCES, CD REVIEWS & more

ISFP 2023

SHAKUHACHI IN SOUTH AMERICA: BRAZIL



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BAMBOO – The Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society – Autumn/Winter 2022

ESS publication team
 Thorsten Knaub, Emmanuelle Rouaud

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear ESS members & shakuhachi people,

We hope you are all well.

We are happy to present to you the Autumn/Winter 2022 edition of BAMBOO, the Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society.

With this issue of BAMBOO we wanted to tackle the vast area of transmission of honkyoku music, transmission here the nexus where tradition, authenticity, teaching method, individuality, style, school, intermix and collide. For this purpose we reached out to Western and Japanese shakuhachi performers and teachers to offer us their thoughts on this subject. Additionally we have Gunnar Jinmei Linder and Bruno Deschênes presenting their research regarding our thematic focus. We also have a longer extract of Yokoyama Katsuya remembering his time as a student of Watazumi Dōso. To complete the transmission pages we also have included lesson experiences by some of our ESS members.

Shedding some light on shakuhachi presence and history in South America, we asked Rafael Hiroshi Fuchigami to share with us his research of shakuhachi developments in Brazil. This look at Brazil is complemented by an interview of Akio Yamaoka by Daniel Ryugen and a portrait of composer Luigi Antonio Irlandini by BAMBOO.

In the Resources section Ramon Humet presents to us his overtone chart for shakuhachi, and we are introduced to another min'yō song, this time by Véronique Piron.

In our Review pages, we have Clive Bell examining a rich mix of shakuhachi recordings ranging from ambient shakuhachi blues pop to some spiritual yearnings from 12th century Germany.

Of course the lighter side of the shakuhachi cannot be absent either, and in our HA-HA-RO/more merry pages, an area which mixes the superficial with the profound, we find again some visual puns and cartoons, as well as more serious artistic contributions from ESS members.

As for the ESS members' website, we added now the video material of the first of the 'Road to Dublin' online workshops, Dublin 1, to the members' area. Enjoy!

Lastly, this is our final issue as editors of BAMBOO. We enjoyed immensely to work on these last five issues we made and we hope that we to some extent satisfied the wish to know and understand more about this instrument we all hold so dear.

Happy reading & thanks again for all your contributions!

ESS Newsletter publishing team
Thorsten Knaub / Emmanuelle Rouaud

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear ESS members & shakuhachi friends,

As we are now moving into the last month of this year, we still have two stops left on our Road to Dublin event series and our next stop will be the ESS Winter Concert 2022, and after that the March Dublin 3 online workshop. (also see *announcements on pages 6 to 11*)

For the end of the year concert we have invited the teachers from the three Dublin workshops, our honorary members and opened a call for contribution from our members. We now have more than 2.5 hours of shakuhachi music ready to be presented, naturally encompassing a range of styles and approaches ranging from traditional to contemporary. This is the first time the ESS staged such a concert and we hope it will become a fixture in the ESS online calendar as it is also a moment to socialise and mingle with otherwise distance friends and fellow shakuhachi enthusiasts.

As for the yet to be held workshop of Dublin 3 in March 2023, we will have a schedule and detailed information up by 15 January (<http://roadtodublin/shakuhachisociety.eu/event-3>). Registrations are scheduled to open on 1. February.

Although the online events gave us something to hold onto during this time of separation due to the pandemic, and we will continue to provide this online presence post-pandemic too, it is clearly the actual meeting in person and experiencing shakuhachi sound face to face with your fellow shakuhachi player that makes it a proper shared communal event. So with great pleasure I can announce that the dates for the next ESS Summer School are now confirmed. Please take note and be there:

20 to 23 July, the ESS Summer School 2023

As for any other details of the Summer School 2023, Philip Horan, the main organiser of Dublin 2023, will make an announcement during the Winter Concert to present venue and guests. Don't miss it.

Taking a step aside for one moment from these exciting news, I would also like to take this opportunity here to thank you, the ESS members, for my recent election to the position of the ESS Chairperson and I will endeavour to take the trust you put into me to steer the ESS forward.

And as this is the ESS Newsletter, there is no better place to welcome our new publication team of Cesar Viana and Ramon Humet, who will from today work on BAMBOO and we wish them all the best for their forthcoming work.

The complete ESS Board now:
Chairperson – Thorsten Knaub; Treasurer – Emmanuelle Rouaud; Secretary – Nina Haarer
Media & Communication Officer – Markus Guhe; Publication Officers – Cesar Viana & Ramon Humet

And as always, please feel free to contact us at info@shakuhachisociety.eu with any suggestions, comments or questions.

Take care and hope to see at the Winter Concert!

Best wishes
Thorsten Knaub, ESS chairperson



ESS WINTER CONCERT 11 DECEMBER 2022



ESS WINTER CONCERT

Road to Dublin

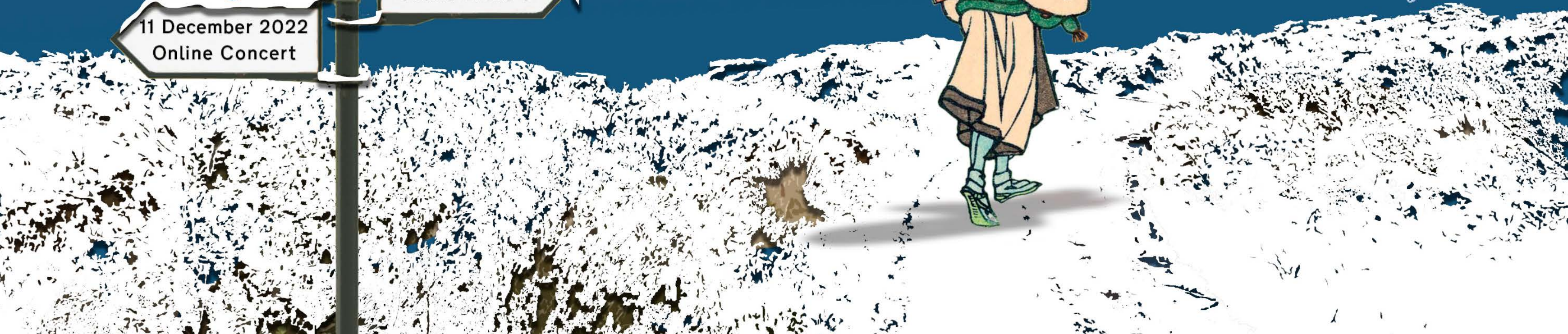
28/29 May 2022
Online Event 1

20-23 July
Dublin 2023

5/6 November 2022
Online Event 2

4/5 March 2023
Online Event 3

11 December 2022
Online Concert



ESS WINTER CONCERT 11 DECEMBER 2022

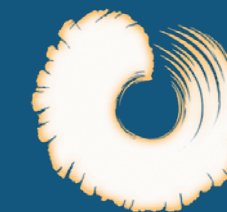
14h00 - 17h00 CET
ON ZOOM

FREE ATTENDANCE
registration from 23 Nov

roadtodublin.shakuhachisociety.eu/registration

In May 2022 we started our 'Road to Dublin' series of online events to travel together to our destination of the ESS Summer School in the Summer 2023. Now we coming to our next stop – the ESS Winter Concert 2022.

We invited all of the teachers of the three online Dublin events and our honorary members. Furthermore we had an open call for ESS members to be part of the online concert by submitting a video too. We think the concert will be a great opportunity to listen to a mixture of performances from traditional to avantgarde as well as an end of the year gathering to socialise online. We are looking forward to see you there!



Concert Performers:

Dublin 1 Invitees:

Araki Kodo VI, Shiori Tanabe, Nina Haarer

Dublin 2 Invitees:

Akihito Obama, Véronique Piron
Christophe Kazan Gaston & Akari Sagara, Cesar Viana

Dublin 3 Invitees:

Seian Genshin, Marco Lienhard
Adrian Freedman, Tsujimoto Yoshimi

Honorary ESS Members:

Kaoru Kakizakai, Atsuya Okuda
Clive Bell, Richard Stagg, Brian Ritchie

ESS Members:

Hélène Seiyu Codjo, Markus Guhe, Bryan Jardim
Damon Rawnsley, Tamara Rogozina, Ursula Fuyūmi Schmidiger
Laonikos Psimikakis Chalkokondylis

ONLINE EVENT DUBLIN 3 4/5 MARCH 2023

Seian Genshin
Marco Lienhard
Adrian Freedman
Tsujimoto Yoshimi

Schedule to be announced 15 January 2023
Registration opens 1. February 2023



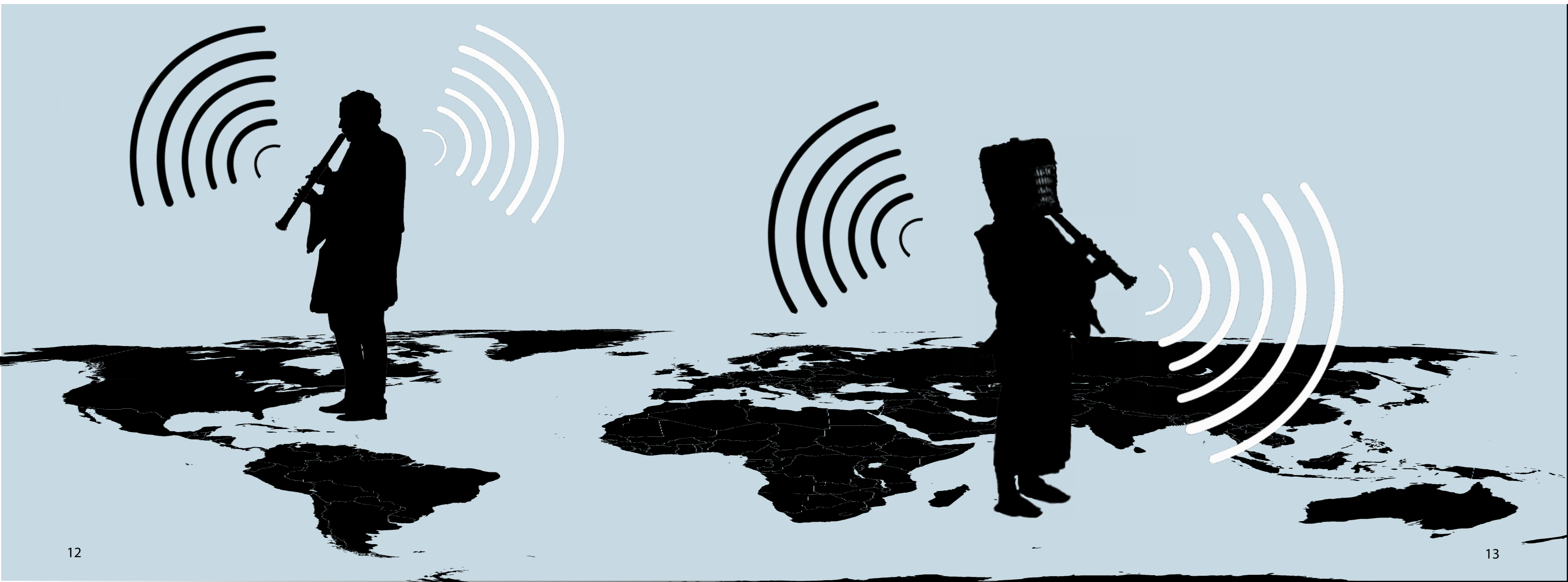
<http://roadtodublin.shakuhachisociety.eu>

In this issue of BAMBOO we devoting a large part to the 'Transmission' aspect of shakuhachi music. 'Transmission' we understand here as the nexus where tradition, authenticity, teaching method, individuality, style, school, natural evolution, etc... mingle, collide and transform. Here we wanted to explore in particular the passing on of *honkyoku* music through the teacher/student framework within the lesson context.

We will hear from leading and experienced Japanese shakuhachi players/teachers like Seian Genshin, Mizuno Khomei, Maekawa Kōgetsu, Dan Shinku, Tanabe Shozan and Furuya Teruo reflecting on teaching routine, authenticity and the way technological developments (CD, YouTube, etc..) may influence the process of transmission. In the same context we have 'Westerners' like Hanz Araki VI, Clive Bell, Elizabeth Reian Bennett, Christopher Yohmei Blasdel, Riley Lee, Marco Leinhard, Daniel Seisoku Lifermann and Larry Tyrrell to offer their deliberations. These eye and ear-witness accounts are bookended by more theoretical research texts by Gunnar Jinmei Linder and Bruno Deschênes.

As a middle part we have Yokoyama Katsuya who through his recollections of being taught by Rando Fukuda and Watazumi Doso, offers his insights on *honkyoku* teaching and transmission.

TRADITION TRANSMISSION TRANSPROPRIATION



SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PROCESS OF TRANSMISSION

Gunnar Jinmei Linder reflects on the time being taught by Yamaguchi Gorō in Japan and how the ‘traditional’ transmission model may be seen as a process of cognitive communication to internalise body movements and auditory information.

Introduction

I studied with Yamaguchi Gorō from 1985 to his untimely parting from this world in 1999. During this time, up to when I received my *shihan* license, I studied the seventy-two *gaikyoku* (the ensemble pieces with *koto*, *shamisen*, and vocals) and the thirty-six honkyoku of the Kinko School, in the curriculum decided by Yamaguchi. That took me some thirteen years, including some three years spent in Sweden around 1989–92. In Japan you are not supposed to perform, or even less so, to teach until you have received your *shihan*.¹

From a Western viewpoint it may seem too long, too cumbersome, and too meaningless to study an instrument for some ten years without being able to perform or teach; if I learn to play fairly well in say six years, why should I then not perform or give instruction to others? I once met a non-Japanese student of shakuhachi in Japan. He had a problem with the way his teacher, another teacher of the Kinko School, taught the instrument, or rather, the way his teacher – according to him – did not teach the instrument: “He just plays along with me. That’s no way to teach music. It just takes a lot of time.” I asked him if he was in a hurry, and he was affirmative on that point: “Yes, I am!” So, one can wonder why the teacher is “not teaching,” and why it takes such long time. I discuss these aspects below.

¹ As a side-track, but still worth noting here, is that the common English translation of the word *shihan* is a bit misleading; often it is rendered as “master” – a translation I myself have used as well – but what it actually means is that you have achieved a level of understanding of the repertoire that makes it possible for you to give instruction to others. It is not a given that you become a master performer even after twenty or thirty years of study, with or without a *shihan* license. The word denotes a teacher or an instructor, and in my view, a master performer is something completely different. There are many fine players of shakuhachi in the world – both in Japan and other parts of the world – but very few real masters. Some lineages of shakuhachi as well as *koto*/*shamisen* issue *dai-shihan* diplomas or similar “inflational” titles, then rendered into English as “Grand Master”. Within the Kinko School no such titles are used. I presume that the point is that a licensed teacher is a licensed teacher, and that no further grading is deemed necessary, but that the sheer number of *shihan* licenses issued has urged the head of such schools to add a “grand teacher” level. There are however no correlations between *shihan* licenses and university degrees such as BA, MA, and PhD.

Performing and Transmitting Music

I think that there is a change ongoing in Japan, as far as transmission of shakuhachi music is concerned, partly maybe due to external influences. More people outside of Japan study the shakuhachi, and more Japanese performers and teachers visit other countries both to perform and to teach. Since the beginning of the World Shakuhachi Festivals (the first one in 1994) the exchange has been ever-increasing. The use of more “efficient” methods – meaning instruction on a meta level – and fixed lesson hours are two aspects that I believe have influenced the younger generation of performers and teachers in Japan, and with “younger” I refer to people born in the 1980s and 1990s. In opposition to what I – in a rather unspecified and slightly careless way would call “Western methods” – in this article I expound what I refer to as “traditional Japanese methods,” well aware of that such methods are not uniquely Japanese and I would normally not even agree to the use of the word “traditional.” In this context it means the methods used by a generation of transmitters that were born before the WWII and has had an influence on teaching methods up to recently. To exemplify the mind-set, I quote my teacher, whose teaching methods constitute the main material for this article.

My father’s way of thinking was that if it is the natural cause to start walking for a child when it can stand up, pursuing beauty and wishing to become better are also part of our human nature, and so he wouldn’t give any detailed technical instruction. I would say that his way of teaching was to try to pull out whatever the student [in front of him] had within him- or herself. To let each person’s individuality develop along its natural path, but he would also cut off branches that expanded too much, so to speak. In a way it was a very strict way of teaching. If I asked him something, his reply would be “Use your ears!” and that would be the end of the question.²

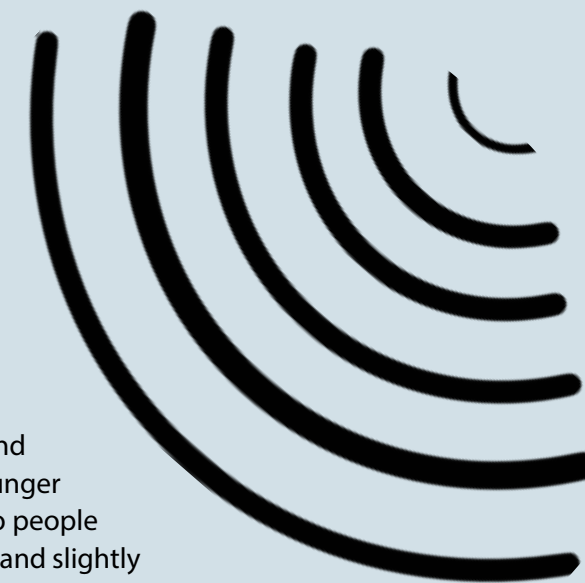
At several other occasions, Yamaguchi clearly stated that he was following his father’s way of teaching.³ Even though he never struck me as a harsh person (he was always very gentle), you could feel his severeness, and that would also motivate you to do better. At least that was my impression. Without so many words, he implored you to study more, to practice, to follow what he was doing, how he was playing.

Generally speaking, during the actual acts of transmission of shakuhachi music in Japan – in the “traditional” way loosely defined above – the most central aspects are the audial elements, the actual sounds produced by the transmitter.⁴ The sounds relate to the notated scores, even though the notated scores are simplified symbolic representations of what the actual sounds produced should sound like, and the sounds the transmitter emits during the act of transmission or in a performance override any discrepancies between audial elements and notated elements. In my experience, Yamaguchi would at times add some verbal explanations when required, for example when I had misunderstood a specific technique. In the later part of my studies with Yamaguchi, I remember that if I played in a way that was not represented in the notation, he would stop me and ask if I had intended to play that way. If I said that it had been my intention to play the way I did, he would just continue. On the other hand, if I said it was not intended, he would correct me and ask me to play that part again, by myself. Then we would continue. Regarding the verbal elements of transmission, Christopher Yohmei Blasdel gives the following description: “Words were never an important part of [Yamaguchi’s] teaching method . . . , and he never attempted to analyse or critically examine the music. . . . [Yamaguchi’s

² Nihon Sankyoku Kyōkai, *Ningen Kokuhō Kiroku Bideo*, 1997.

³ For example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCzZFUV6w08>. Accessed on November 7, 2022.

⁴ For a more thorough description of the process of transmission of shakuhachi please refer to my PhD thesis *Deconstructing Tradition in Japanese Music: A Study of Shakuhachi, Historical Authenticity and Transmission of Tradition*, which is also available as a free pdf at su.diva-portal.org (Search: Gunnar Jinmei Linder).



generation of musicians] were trained by rote from childhood, and the music remains deeply connected with their bodies, internalized and fluent as their native tongue.”⁵



Yamaguchi Shirō teaching his son Yamuguchi Gorō

The form of transmission may thus be better understood as a mainly aural, semi-notated, and only partly an oral type of transmission. Blasdel's connection between the musical activity and the body, that is, a physical dimension of music as somatic activity, is close to Nishiyama Matsunosuke's definition of the Way of Art, *geidō*. Nishiyama argues that the way of art is defined in terms of the somatic activity, *karada no hataraki*, by which art is created. For Nishiyama, the Way of Art is art put into practice; art is using the physical body to dance, act, paint, speak, pull strings, or whatever activity the art form in question requires. The things that are created through the somatic activities are works of art, but for Nishiyama, "a completed product or an objectivized artistic object has no relation to *geidō*."⁶ The art is the activity, but the result of the activity is not related to the Way of Art. This viewpoint is closely related to an Event in a theory put forward by the folklore scholar Robert A. Georges, who defines an Event as "the message of complex communicative events";⁷ and includes the interaction (which could be kinetic, aural, paralinguistic, and so on) between sender and receiver in a social context, where all parties participating in the Event have assumed their respective roles. If we can perceive an act of transmission as an Event it opens up for a variety of aspects at work in this act, which then would not be limited to verbal or meta-linguistic elements.

Transmitting a piece of music is akin to – but at the same time different from – a performance of the same piece. A performance affects us, it talks to us, it makes us feel a certain way (happy, sad, weary, angry, and so on), or it makes us understand something, completely regardless of whether the performer of the music intended to affect us in any way. We may say that we need the performance to have the experience, but the performance is maybe not that which

⁵ Blasdel, *The Single Tone: A Personal Journey into Shakuhachi Music*, 2008, 19.

⁶ Nishiyama, *Geidō to dentō*, 1984, 142. Nishiyama is one of the great scholars on Edo-period culture.

⁷ Robert A. Georges, "Toward an Understanding of Storytelling Events," 1969, 316. Earlier drafts of the paper were presented at the Folklore and Social Science Conference in NYC in November 1967.

we experience. It could well be that we realize something that was within ourselves from the very beginning, but the performance brought it out, so to speak. It is a kind of communicative happening, which is not necessarily so far from other types of communication, for example, reading a book or talking to a friend. I will then assume that: A musical performance is an act of artistic communication.

That a performance constitutes an act of communication – in a broad sense of the word – is maybe not such a bold statement, but it does hold important implications. In a communicative act between two people, we find one person dispatching some kind of message, and one person who receives the message. The message itself can of course be aural (as in music or a conversation) or visible (as in a musical notation, in a book, or sign language), that is, it is in normal cases either heard or seen. In turn, this implies the existence of a physical entity between the psychological state of mind – or processes – leading to the creation of the message in the first place, and the psychological or cognitive state of mind – or processes – leading to the receiver's perception of the physical entity. The perception leads to an emotional or cognitive experience of or because of the perceived physical entity. Thus, we have two intangible states or processes in each far end of the communicative act, and a physical entity in-between.

When it comes to transmission, the aim is not to affect the student in the same way, as a performer would like to affect an audience. Other aspects take precedence, such as correct execution of technique. As has been noted in various research conducted by Japanese scholars (for example Kikkawa 1980, and Tsukitani 2000), the pre-Meiji forms of music consist of fixed forms of sound clusters, or *kata*, which are rearranged to create new pieces. Kikkawa mentions some forty to fifty different kinds of *kata* in the epic genre *Gidayū-bushi*,⁸ and Tsukitani counts the number of *kata* in Kinko School of *honkyoku* to 356.⁹ The point seems to be to master these patterns by acting out the proper bodily movements, and even though the number is vast in Kinko *honkyoku*, it does not seem impossible. Thus, the easiest and quickest way of learning the tradition of, for example shakuhachi *honkyoku*, would be to have the correct way of executing these fixed forms explained. As Nishiyama points out, the art is the somatic activity, or rather, the somatic activity constitutes the art.

On the other hand, Nishiyama holds that an advantage with *kata* is that anyone will be able to bring forth a minimum requirement of a fair reproduction of the piece by learning the patterns. This is however not the full story, because he also says that in great art, such art that affects us deeply, the *kata* also contain heart, spirituality, and mindfulness (*kokoro*), which makes the art come alive.¹⁰ Kikkawa has a similar idea. He says that the performer should attempt to blend him- or herself with the *kata*, and "what should be respected is not the outer form, but the spirit of the *kata*."¹¹

In transmission, correct execution of technique is at the centre. This includes technique to control the pitch, play in right time, apply dynamics, change intensity, and so on. If the *kata* are fixed forms, these aspects should be easy enough to understand by verbal explanations. From my own experience I would however conclude that this is not the case. As I

⁸ Kikkawa, *Nihon ongaku no seikaku*, 1980, 155–60.

⁹ Tsukitani, *Shakuhachi koten honkyoku no kenkyū*, 2000, 133–34.

¹⁰ Nishiyama, *Geidō to dentō*, 1984, 46–7.

¹¹ Kikkawa, *Nihon ongaku no seikaku*, 1980, 167.

“Thus, the easiest and quickest way of learning the tradition of, for example shakuhachi honkyoku, would be to have the correct way of executing these fixed forms explained.”

have indicated in an article, in which I analyse the concept of *kata*, there are great variations in how the patterns are executed, and these variations seem to be very much up to the individual performer,¹² but not without having the necessary credentials, that is, a *shihan* license.

Transmitting Music

Contrary to a performance, in the act of transmission how the music affects the receiver should be less important; several other aspects become central instead. If we regard a performance as an act of artistic communication, I believe that an act of transmission should be viewed as an act of cognitive communication. A student should learn the bodily movements that constitute the art, and therefore, what a student learns, is a somatic understanding, and not necessarily an intellectual one. The intellectual understanding of the piece can, and maybe should be, a later product of the somatic understanding: the student should know what movements result in what sound, but why it does so may be a later revelation.

As I have indicated in the above-mentioned article on *kata*, a fixed set of sounds, a phrase, a fixed form, a *kata*, may sound differently from time to time: different ornamentation, different dynamics, different tone colour, different blowing technique ... A student should learn to adapt to these subtle variations of the same notated pattern. And I believe that this is what takes a long time. As I mentioned above, I studied more than one hundred pieces before I received my *shihan*, and the pace was one piece a month. In reality, due to Yamaguchi's absence for concerts and so on, I did on an average nine to ten pieces a year. Each piece was divided in three parts, and Yamaguchi taught each part by first singing the notation and clapping the beats indicating the time intervals while I was playing, and then he would play the same part together with me. No explanations, just playing and listening to his voice. A lesson was therefore a moment of total concentration in order to be able to grasp the subtleties of the music. Yamaguchi never required that the students had the pieces memorized for a lesson. But, needless to say, you needed to be well prepared. The fourth time on the same piece, Yamaguchi would ask the student to play the whole piece, from the beginning to the end. Normally he would play along, but sometimes he would take down his instrument for a little while, and listen. If he was

satisfied you would 'receive' the piece. Sometimes, for me it happened once, Yamaguchi would tell the student to play the same piece through once more, the week after. That indicated that he was not satisfied with the way the student was playing. After you had 'received' a piece Yamaguchi would not teach this piece again. With teaching I then refer to dividing the piece in parts,

and him singing it. The first ten or so *gaikyoku* pieces are about seven to twelve minutes. Later pieces could be twenty or twenty-five minutes, and the longest *honkyoku* of the Kinko School is one hour. There is of course no way you could learn a piece of that duration in a month, and that was not the purpose.

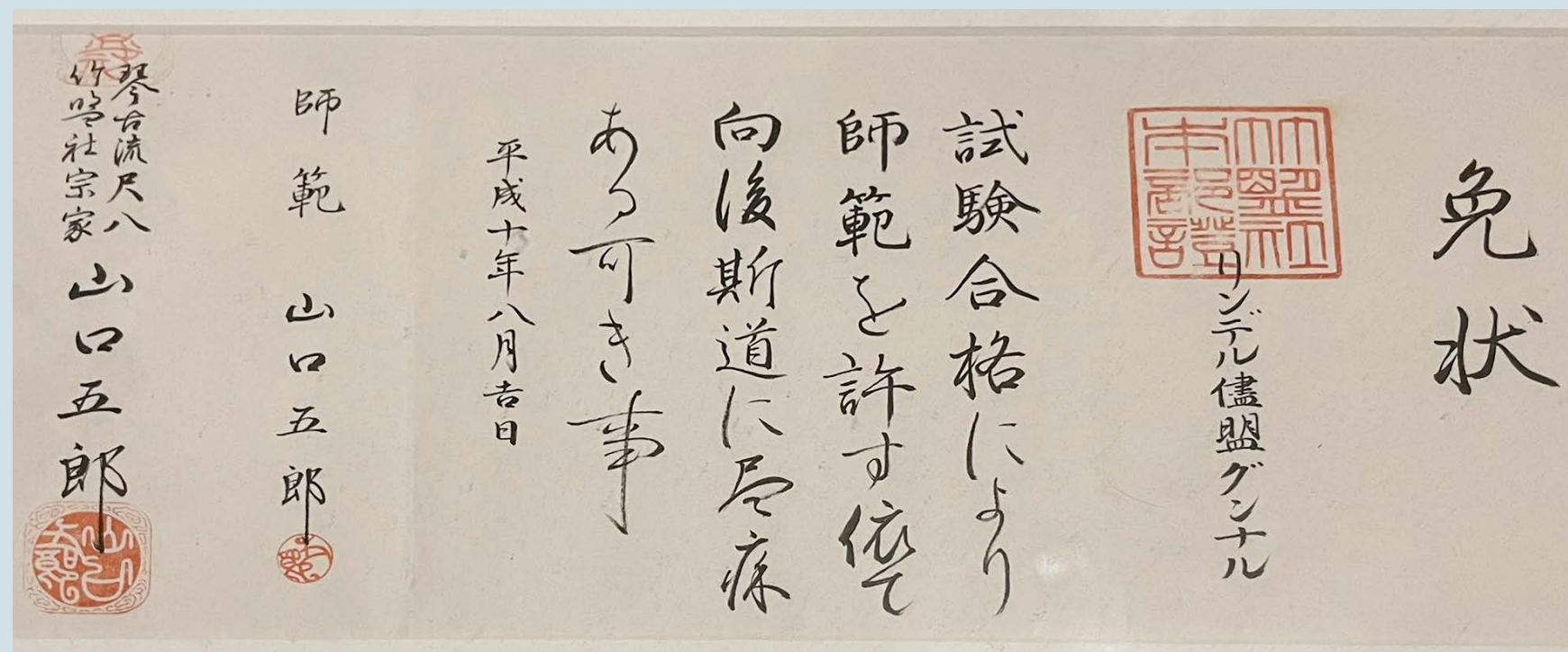
What then is the purpose? What could the intention be behind such a mode of transmission? Before giving my views on these questions, I would like to comment on a statement I heard from Kakizakai Kaoru during the Barcelona Shakuhachi Summer School in July 2013.¹³ He mentioned that at some time during his studies with Yokoyama Katsuya he had had lessons with his teacher on the same piece for a full year. Yokoyama Katsuya, so I hear, required that the students had the piece they did for a lesson memorized. That means, of course, that the student had already put ample time to study the piece before the lesson. The pieces taught within Yokoyama's Chikushinkai guild are maybe not as long as the Kinko pieces taught within Yamaguchi's Chikumeisha guild, but still, to memorize a piece of music does require that

¹² Linder, "An Analysis of Form: The Concept of *kata* in Traditional Japanese Music," in *Živá hudba* (Living Music. Review for the Study of Music and Dance), Nr. 4, 2013. Prague: NAMU, 70–93.

¹³ During Kakizakai's talk on "sound improvement" on July 27 at ESMUC, Barcelona.



you practice a lot. To play the same piece of say around ten minutes of duration each lesson for a full year is something quite different from having three lessons in a month on a piece of 20, 30 or even 60 minutes of duration. Even if these examples may seem to be a bit extreme cases, a comparison between these two aspects of transmission gives rise to an interesting thought, which I think is a possible and maybe slightly extreme way of providing an answer to the questions I posed above: Yokoyama taught quantity by means of quality, because the qualitative aspects of the learning (as with Kakizakai) would be useful in learning other pieces; it could make the learning process of other pieces quicker, and thereby increase the number of pieces in a shorter period of time. Yamaguchi taught quality by means of quantity, because by playing a vast number of pieces in which the same or similar patterns appear in different contexts would make the student more able to adapt, and more able to realize the possibilities of making slight differences to the patterns depending on the piece and the place in the piece. The end result is probably the same, but the ways to get there are quite different.¹⁴ As stated in the Blasdel quote above not so much about words, but a lot about playing many long pieces. To implement this aspect of the transmission, there are other witnesses to the 'lack' of verbal teaching by Yamaguchi Gorō, that he would play rather than enter into the realms of explanations, or that both himself and his father, Yamaguchi Shirō, were people of a reticent nature.¹⁵



The author's *shihan* license

The idea of "wordless" teaching is also reflected upon in a very interesting article by Kiku Day. In the article she says that the method of mimesis – in short, imitating what your teachers does – felt "protracted or ineffective" at the beginning. She continues by saying that she later realized the potential of the method and noted how "the shakuhachi techniques – flow, and means of expression – had, to my surprise, entered my body at a deeper level than I had expected."¹⁶

The *gaikyoku* pieces taught within the Yamaguchi's Chikumeisha guild are divided in four grades: *shoden*, *chūden*,

¹⁴ I do not know the details of how Yokoyama conducted the lessons, and this example is by no means meant as an evaluation of others or a comparison of different modes of transmission, but simply meant to contrast the way in which Yamaguchi would teach.

¹⁵ Gunnar Jinmei Linder and Mizuno Kōmei in Tokumaru Yoshihiko, et.al., ed., *Yūgen naru hibiki: ningen kokuhō Yamaguchi Gorō no shakuhachi to shōgai*, 2008, 221, 258.

¹⁶ Kiku Day, "Learning music aesthetics through imperfection", 94.

okuden, and *jun-shihan*, covering seventy-two ensemble pieces. After that you would do the thirty-six *honkyoku* in order to finally receive a *shihan*. When you began with the *honkyoku*, you learned techniques that could be applied when playing the *gaikyoku* ensemble pieces, and you could more clearly hear what Yamaguchi did in his performances of *sankyoku* pieces after you had learned the *honkyoku* techniques. Several of the other students around Yamaguchi would say the same thing: it was not until they began playing the *honkyoku* that they really understood the *gaikyoku*, and thanks to all the *gaikyoku*, they felt that they had more stamina to play through the *honkyoku*. Each of these two repertoires function in some ways as a kind of “set of etudes” for the other. By internalizing the music, not necessarily memorizing all the pieces, a freedom of application suddenly appears. The pedagogic idea may not be explicitly postulated but it is still at work: only by understanding the music at the level of sounds can you really say that you have learned it.

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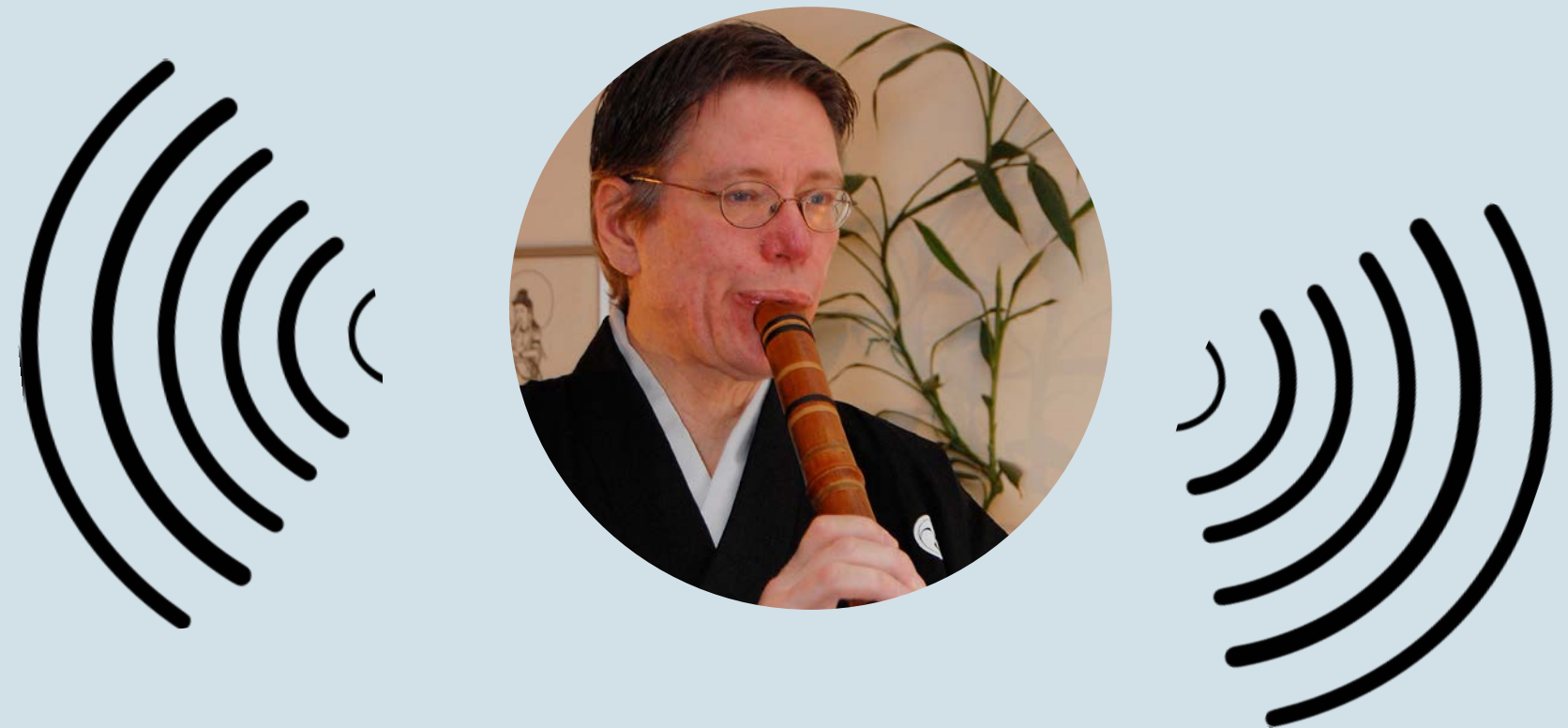
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Conventions

Japanese personal names are given as they are used in Japan, with family name first. Long vowels in Japanese names and words are indicated with a macron, except in the case of words for which there exist conventional spellings in English, for example, Tokyo instead of Tōkyō. Japanese words are italicized, except for the names of instruments, such as shakuhachi, shamisen, and koto. For romanization, I use the modified Hepburn system. All translations are mine unless otherwise specified.

Gunnar Jinmei Linder is a scholar, shakuhachi performer and teacher. He holds a PhD in Japanology from Stockholm University, a Master’s degree of shakuhachi as performing art from Tokyo National University of the Arts, and a shakuhachi shihan license from Yamaguchi Gorō (1933–99). At present he occupies the position of Associate Professor of Japanese Studies at Stockholm University, and also teaches shakuhachi at the Royal Music College (KMH) in Stockholm. www.nipponicom.com/shakuhachi/

MAEKAWA KŌGETSU

Tsugaru Kinpū-ryū and Myōan-ryū

We had lessons at Mr. Chikugai Okamoto's house three times a month on Sundays. Six of us would gather around our teacher, at the table in a Japanese-style room, and one at a time we would receive instruction. Those who could not enter the room would wait their turn in an adjoining Western-style room. It took me five years of uninterrupted lessons to learn the 130 classical *honkyoku* collected by Mr. Okamoto, and after that we repeated the sequence. That was the general style. But as I was the only student to study *jinashi* shakuhachi, and because I lived nearby, I would sometimes receive a call from Mr. Okamoto on Saturday afternoons to return to his home for individual lessons. Those lessons focused on the *jinashi* technique of "double reverse breathing" below the navel (*tanden* breathing). At the same time, I started learning how to make a *jinashi* flute, and Mr. Okamoto would offer his opinion of my work. I am the only student to receive the Okamoto Method for *jinashi*.

There are professional players who studied under Mr. Okamoto, but they were all trained in modern shakuhachi. A key point regarding classical *honkyoku* is that unless you perform on Edo-period *jinashi* with its contrast of soft and loud, the music is completely changed. For this reason I collected old shakuhachi, and researched what kind of structure was used in the instruments played by *komusō* in various parts of Japan. Now I have made about 500 of my own *jinashi* shakuhachi, and I start my students on slender *jinashi* for the first 10 years or so. From that point, they start learning *tanden* breathing, and only after they master the breathing do they switch to a larger *jinashi*. By mastering the larger *jinashi* with *tanden* breathing, they are finally able to approach the classical style handed down by Chikugai Okamoto. Of course, my lessons are one-on-one.



While our schedule is currently on hold due to coronavirus, normally we hold *kogetsukai* workshops in the spring and fall which serve as performance opportunities. More importantly, these workshops allow us to focus on each player's delivery, which is difficult to address in lessons. We use the *kogetsukai* to watch and learn from each other's performances.

In terms of classical *honkyoku*, young players are proudly performing this music on stage, but unfortunately the tradition is being lost. I learned that in Tsugaru in Aomori Prefecture, there were many performers who spent their entire lives mastering the Kinpū-ryū *Shirabe* and *Kudari-ha* pieces. Compared to the decades those players invested in a single song, today's players mistakenly believe they can master the same song in the time it takes to make instant noodles. They would do better to play newly composed, modern *honkyoku*. Real tradition is not so easy.

Unfortunately, the only recordings we have of Mr. Okamoto's *honkyoku* are a series of cassette tapes. I give those tapes to my students to copy to CD for their study.



DAN SHINKU

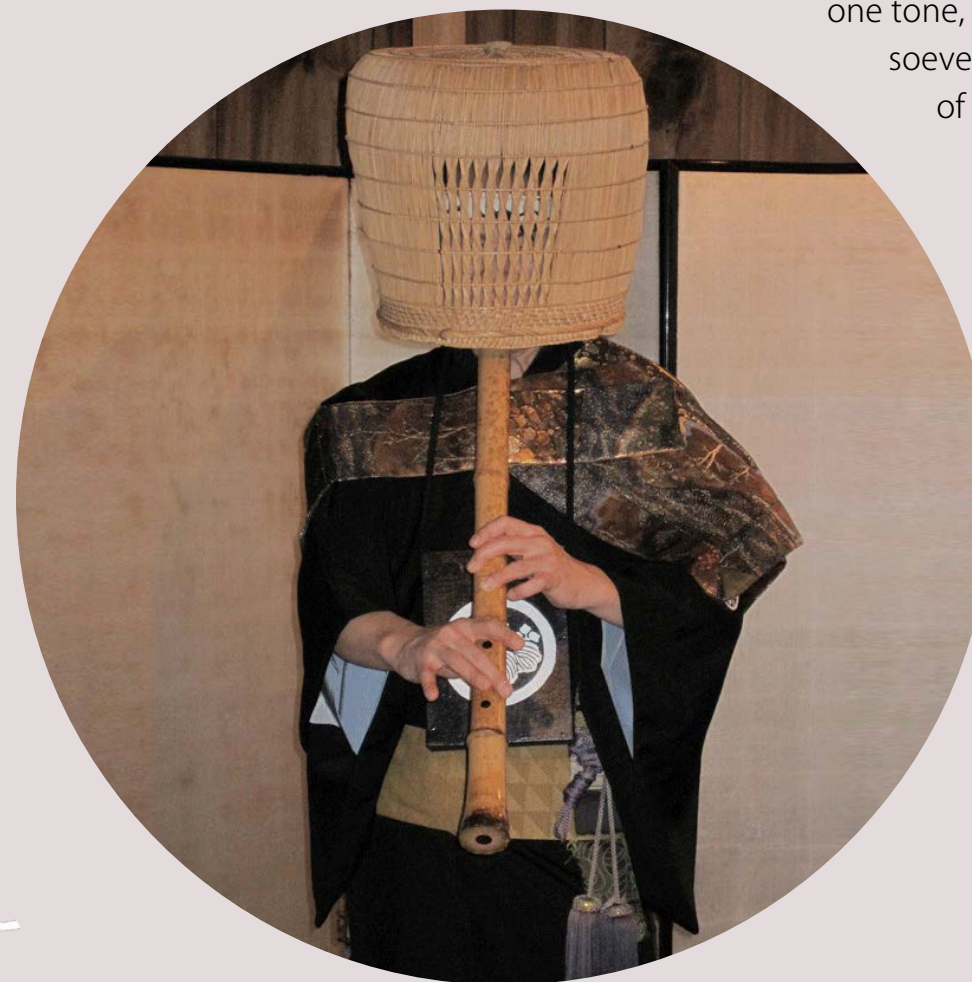
Fuke-shū

When I began as a student of Fuke-shū shakuhachi, my teacher would play for me as a model. With my six senses [my mind plus the five senses], I was fully absorbed in observing him. When he finished, I would receive his explanation regarding the piece's composition and technique, as well as a history of its transmission and alterations, while looking at the score. Here with regard to the spiritual or religious context of Fuke, which represents a unique development in solo music of the mid-Edo Period, these lessons proved an education in "training the mind," by way of devoted shakuhachi playing and without Buddhist doctrine or scripture.

Because the classical *honkyoku* in circulation today were simplified for commercial use and include many showy ornamentations, I am working to return this music to its original, ideal form. So what I teach is not classical *honkyoku*, but a revival of "Fuke-gaku."



Historically, the shakuhachi has experienced great change: with its disappearance from *gaga-ku*, with the Fuke-sō (*komosō*) establishing themselves as an association of *komusō*, with the Meiji Restoration and the Pacific War to the present day. Through these historical markers, we can trace shakuhachi back to its origins and clarify what has continued unbroken and what has changed. I teach my students in a way they may "experience" this history and thus create their own "authenticity."



The underlying principle of Fuke-gaku is *ichi-on jō-butsu* or "with one tone, Buddha." There are no social considerations whatsoever. As such, rather than adjusting to the vicissitudes of society, the Fuke tradition has continued without interruption. So I would recommend to everyone learning shakuhachi that they get a taste of this unique tradition.

As recordings on the internet make it easier to watch and listen to traditional *honkyoku*, it is now possible to learn *honkyoku* without face-to-face instruction, to some extent. The downside is the imperfect sound – never equal to live sound – which is transmitted so hastily and absolutely along with a score. This prevents the natural variations which were born over time from a more flexible dissemination of the music between regions and individuals.



SEIAN GENSHIN

42nd kansu of Myōanji Temple

My teacher was Fuan Yoshimura Sōshin, the 40th *kansu* (head) of Myōan-ji. I studied with him for 25 years, from the time he was 70 until he passed away at the age of 95. I learned a lot – not just about shakuhachi, but about life and how to live – and his influence continued to affect me. Now I am the age he was when I started studying under him, and I think it was at this age that he was at the top of his game. His shakuhachi skills were at a zenith, and mentally we might say he had reached a point of *satori*, or enlightenment. It was at this point with shakuhachi he felt most determined in his sense of duty to the next generation, releasing the complete LP recordings of Myōan repertory, just as I was taking office as the 42nd *kansu*.

Regarding his teaching of the 33 pieces of the Myōan Dōshukai: we were taught each of the pieces in turn, according to its rank in the sequence of *shoden*, *chūden*, *okuden*, *betsuden* and *kaiden* levels. Upon mastering all of the pieces we would receive a *kaiden* license, and were then able to teach students as a *dōshu* — known as *shihan* in other schools. In my case, even after reaching this rank I continued to visit my teacher for lessons, until he passed away. There was simply no limit to what he had to teach. Even now 25 years after his death, as I continue to listen to his recordings on CD and DVD, I feel like he continues to teach me. In this way, actually I have studied with him for 50 years.

My goal, now that I am 74, is to delve into Myōan shakuhachi, to make CDs and DVDs, and to share this music both inside and outside of Japan, as thoroughly as my teacher did in his 70s. Then I hope to savor that experience of the Myōan shakuhachi through my 80s, and carry to the age of 95 what I learned from my teacher's playing until the age of 94! I will continue to teach my students, and will hope to live to 100!

Fundamentally I teach my students in the same way I was taught by my teacher, though I do actively seek to add my own methods including online teaching. First I have them record my example playing, so they can use the recording to prepare for the next lesson (our lessons are once a month, so that is one month's practice). We learn a few lines at a time, first returning to my example of playing. Next I ask the student to play as I sing, or we play together. But online it is difficult for us to hear each other, so I have students play after I play. Then it is a process of pointing out the mistakes I notice and fine-tuning. Working through a few lines in this way, the student and I then play together, and the lesson continues



Shakuhachi Focus – Tradition, Transmission & Transpropiation

as we take turns. I refer to this as *kōgosō*, or “alternating playing.” Finally I ask the student to play alone, or *agaru*, and when I am satisfied, I will stamp on the score “Myōan” above the title and “Genshin” at the end as proof I taught this. I too have all my pieces stamped with “Myōan” and “Sōshin” by my teacher.

Is there authenticity? Whether or not a piece is “authentic,” I focus on teaching my students to perform in a way consistent with their feelings, by examining and savoring each piece many times over, even while placing maximum emphasis on what they were taught by their teacher. Although the score must be studied precisely, Myōan is a tradition in which players can relate their own feelings and background to some degree, after thorough practice and mastery. This is my hope for what students can achieve. To this end, students also observe lessons and participate in student recitals twice a year (online in January and September, or in-person with regional gatherings), as a key part of their work. There is much to be gained from this sort of experience.



The shakuhachi started out with classical *honkyoku* in the context of Zen philosophy. But its use spread to *sankyoku* ensembles and Western idioms, and continues to expand in a variety of fields. I think people who are interested in shakuhachi should pursue that interest wherever it leads them. When I was young, I started with three years of Tozan-ryū and modern-style shakuhachi. Then as fate would have it, I happened into the Fuke-

shū Myōan shakuhachi for these 50 years. This is the Myōan Shoden tradition, known as Myōan Taizan-ryū, whose beauty I have experienced and now wish to teach others. People who like it should study it, but I am also happy to help those active in multiple disciplines who would like to try traditional *honkyoku* for the sake of the experience.

There was a time without printed scores, when the only method of teaching was oral transmission. Then as teachers began sharing their handwritten notes with students one-by-one, we progressed to an era when everyone can access scores, and now a variety of media, for learning. Isn't that a good thing? The past is past, and with changes in the present and more to come in the future, I see no problem with adapting to various means of transmission.



MIZUNO KOHMEI

Kinko-ryū Chikumeisha

Thank you for contacting me. I studied shakuhachi under Yamaguchi Gorō from 1968 until his death in 1999, so exactly 30 years. For that duration I devoted a great amount of time to learning *honkyoku*. The following answers are related to studying *honkyoku*.

Studying with Mr. Yamaguchi, we would finish short *honkyoku* in one or two lessons. But long *honkyoku* would be divided into multiple lessons, with a run-through of the piece in the last lesson. During lessons, he would play together with each student. Rarely did he offer verbal explanations. We learned by playing with him and studying his sound. I don't know if he thought there was no point in explaining to students who couldn't learn by ear, or if he thought that such students wouldn't understand even with explanations. I suspect the latter. We would learn using sheet music, based on the scores of Kindō Miura. Actually, I used a rewritten version of Miura's scores.

To some extent, I explain technique to my students. But generally we do not go into spiritual or religious questions.

I think it was meaningful to learn from my teacher in the way I describe above. Although it was difficult to study his technique or feeling while playing together with him, I learned a lot by listening to other students' lessons, which provided me great perspective. With this in mind, I advise students to observe others' lessons.



There are different ways of looking at this. For me, since the Kinko-ryū *honkyoku* were created in Japan, they should be inherited as they are. If for example a foreign shakuhachi player were to simplify or shorten the *honkyoku*, so be it. But my preference would be for *honkyoku* in Japan to continue to be handed down without that influence or alteration.

Now that recordings are available and traditional music can be preserved, it protects the art from changing with the times. I think we should make good use of recordings. But there is the danger of simply imitating those recordings, and I believe we must go further than that in order to master the music. So in my view it is essential to learn from shakuhachi professionals, not just from recordings.



TANABE SHOZAN

Tozan-ryū

First of all, I belong to the Tozan-ryū and have not been taught the so-called “classical *honkyoku*” in detail. So my answers pertain to “Tozan-ryū *honkyoku*.”

I started receiving instruction in Tozan-ryū *honkyoku* from Hōzan Yamamoto I, around the time I took my *jun-shihan* exam in 1980.

As the performance style of Tozan-ryū *honkyoku* – passed down orally from the founder of our school – had diversified over time, this was the period when our repertory was unified and consolidated under Dōzan Takahira.



On one occasion, Mr. Yamamoto lent me a tape recording of a *honkyoku* lesson he had with Dōzan Takahira. By listening to the tape, I gained an explanation of and technical nuances for the piece.

Subsequently, when I started to aspire to becoming a performer, the lessons changed completely from our earlier focus on exams. Even as I continued to work on the fundamentals, we re-focused to larger questions of *honkyoku* structure and flow — those elements which are not notated, such as pacing and *ma*, dynamics and *yuri*.

Also by listening to Mr. Yamamoto perform in different venues with varying acoustics, I learned that rather than developing a single performance style, one must be able to improvise and adapt to each musical space.

Therefore, I can say I learned two styles of playing: the performance style which adheres to the fundamentals for teaching students, as well as a style for my own performance on stage.

I teach my students in the same way.



In preparation for *jun-shihan* and *shihan* examinations, we were taught with a strict approach to techniques like *yuri*, *ori* and *atari*, in accordance with the fundamentals of our repertory, including dynamics and tempo. At that time, such details were not written into the score. So for my study, I would copy the notes and notations from sheet music which accompanied the collected LP recordings of the repertory.



Hōzan Yamamoto

FURUYA TERUO

Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan

When I started learning *honkyoku* under Yokoyama Katsuya, I had to rely on notes taken by Mr. Yokoyama or by someone else. But scores were completed several years later, and from that point on we used scores in our lessons. For the first lesson on a new piece, Mr. Yokoyama would play together with us several times, focusing on the progression, the fingerings, and the pitch. He would repeat particularly difficult passages for us many times. And from start to finish, he would say almost nothing.

Then after several lessons when we were able to play a bit, he would have us play alone and would join in only to point out discrepancies. Only when he felt we were not able to notice our own mistakes would he caution us verbally. It took a long time before he would say "That's good, next week please bring the next piece."

He did not offer much historical explanation. I think he believed the essential information was contained in the sound itself. But now and then he would talk about the mental foundation (or resolve) on which to base that sound, about the feeling for a song, or the nuance of various fingerings.

Regarding [teaching] *honkyoku*, I feel the subtle nuances I wish to convey are best communicated by playing music together in person. So as much as possible, I try to maintain the style of teaching I received from Mr. Yokoyama.

Regarding students "discovering their own way," Mr. Yokoyama was typical in just telling us "wrong" without explaining what was wrong. Often we waited a long time to discover what was wrong. If in a subsequent lesson he no longer said "wrong," I would feel satisfied that I had managed to find the

right answer — a sort of milestone. I use the same method now when I teach. But because everyone is unique, if I feel a student is unable to discover the right answer on their own, I will give a hint.

Today there is internationalization and a diversity of cultural backgrounds, but as far as *honkyoku*, I would like to continue with the same tradition I studied, which I think is best. However, I am not sure if my style is completely traditional, or if it has become a "Furuya style".

The scores are complete and recordings are available, so I think the starting point for learning this music has become a lot easier. With regard to "knowing" the music, I myself have benefited from the convenience of having these scores and recordings. But since transmission is a question of "mastering," I do think the scores and recordings have had little influence on the music.



TWO TEACHERS: FREE AS THE WIND, UNTETHERED FROM THE WORLD

Yokoyama Katsuya, founder of the Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan and one of the undisputed master shakuhachi players of the second half of the 20th Century remembering his teachers Rando Fukuda and Watazumi-Dōso. Originally published in the Japanese Hōgaku Journal as a series of transcribed conversations between December 1998 and March 1999, we are delighted to present as part of our look at ideas of transmission the (to our knowledge) first English translation of the February and March texts where Yokoyama talks freely about his student/teacher relationship with Watazumi-sensei. Special thanks to Nick Bellando for taking on the translation task.

Watazumi Doso - The Man Who Cut Ties With the Shakuhachi World

For people, even if we live a quiet life, we end up feeling the strength of the world's wind that comes our way. Since Fukuda Rando-sensei and Watazumi Doso-sensei lived their lives in the spotlight, they must have felt that wind almost excruciatingly. Considered by the shakuhachi world to be an insignificant or illegitimate school, Rando-sensei created his own path in life as a writer, a renowned fisherman, and proprietor of the Sangyodo restaurant. For Watazumi-sensei, I think that facing similar criticism aroused in him a desire to stand and fight, so that he took ground to stand on as one who had cut ties with the shakuhachi world. He even wrote things in his records' liner notes like "Many in the shakuhachi world are musically blind," and came to emphasize the psychological side of his playing: "My sound is not shakuhachi. I play a *hōki* [dharma tool], *hocchiku* [dharma bamboo]." His attitude was such that his shakuhachi world was one that was completely separate from the shakuhachi world of the time.

However, as Watazumi-sensei continued to criticize the shakuhachi world, the more he continued to separate himself, even though I was his student, and considered him to be the founder of a shakuhachi renaissance, I couldn't help but think, "He says these things, but isn't he playing traditional classical *honkyoku* on a traditional five-holed shakuhachi?" I was being told that ultimately, even music isn't necessary, but in truth I wondered if that was really the case.

He would show us these ostensibly "detached" ways of thinking that would make you wonder: if he was truly expressing the attainment of ultimate [spiritual] liberation, why does he care so much about these things? Even

so, he was like some sort of fearsome mythical creature. On the one hand, he would let off a fearful aura that made you feel like he'd eat you if you got too close; on the other hand, he had a sort of childlike innocence that made it impossible to hate him. He was extremely popular with women - apparently appallingly so. When my father first stayed over at his house, Watazumi-sensei was there laid out like the character for "river" (川), with his wife on one side and a girlfriend on the other - and so my father crawled into bed and "slept in the [metaphorical] mosquito net." This is a story I most fondly remember.

The first time I visited Watazumi-sensei was around the time that I started studying with Rando-sensei. Rando-sensei used shakuhachi to express a Western appreciation for beauty and romanticism - but can romanticism alone adequately address the human psyche? I don't think so. I sought what was lacking in Watazumi-sensei's shakuhachi.

When I announced my presence at his door, a voice replied, "Enter." I was taken aback by his classical-era way of speaking. He always wore a *haori* [traditional Japanese outerwear], and would take it off with practiced finesse, undoing the cord and letting it slip off his shoulders. It was almost theatrical - he made me think I was watching Kouchiyama Soshun [an Edo-era imperial Samurai] in a Kabuki theatre.

Naming "Watazumi Dō"

I think we can say that the shakuhachi world at the time depended much on the *koto*, and focused on ensemble performances of *jiuta* and *sō kyoku*. The time had passed when *komusō* of the Fuke Zen sect could make their living just by playing *honkyoku*. In contrast to the direction of this shakuhachi world, Watazumi-sensei was thoroughly devoted to *honkyoku*.

He didn't simply tout the revival of the mentality that the *komusō* were seeking through playing shakuhachi. He lived it, fully and without compromise. These days, it's unimaginable that someone would break away from schools like Kinko-ryū and Tozan-ryū to create a new faction, but Watazumi-sensei parted from these old schools to announce the "Watazumi Way" (Watazumi-Dō), combining music with philosophy.

He named himself Shu-so [the sect's founder]. Afterward this became Dō-so [the way's founder], the name change apparently influenced by something my mother said. I was in fear and awe of my teacher, but she spoke to him quite casually: "If you're calling it a Dō [way], then you're the Dō-so [way-founder]. It doesn't make sense to be the Shu-so [sect-founder]." I don't think he knew what to say in reply. Eventually, he became the Watazumi-Dō Dō-so, and then finally took out the Dō so that he was just So [founder]. I suppose he was always trying to make it more concise.

Shakuhachi originally has about 700 years of tradition in the Fuke sect, taking Priest Fuke's teachings as their ideal and motto. So what were the *komusō* trying to express through their shakuhachi playing? Priest Fuke would ring his bell in the town square, chanting the words *Myō tō rai ya myō tō da, an tō rai ya an tō da, shihō hachi-men rai ya sen pu da, koku rai ya ren ka da*. [Come bright, and I'm bright; come dark, and I'm dark; come from all sides, and I'm a whirlwind; come free and untethered, and I crack the shell off the grain!] Today, shakuhachi players will have various interpretations, but exactly what are these words that the *komusō* chanted as their golden rule expressing? To me, through playing with Watazumi-sensei, and through continually playing traditional *honkyoku*, I came to understand them to mean "Play free, just as you are, and live free, just as you are."

It's something that's easy to say - the answer just comes right out - but when it comes to putting it into practice, you can't play freely, and what's more, living freely in this world with its many barriers is quite the difficult task.



For us humans, if we're able to live that way, we might just find our reason for living there. Since the ideal is so noble and sublime, you can't obtain it through ordinary means, nor can you reject it. And the fact that the undeniable harsh reality lies right there makes this all the more an ultimate ideal, something we should be aiming for.

I'm not such a strict practitioner, but through shakuhachi, I think I've come closer to the ideal, bit by bit. The path still lies far ahead, but the road I've taken was not a mistake. Watazumi-sensei walked it first; he was a good teacher, a beacon shining to light the way.

He wanted to spread the Way of Watazumi. I think he was counting on his students to spread his Way. He liked the word *tetsuri* [the philosophically correct way to live], using it often. Indeed, he approached music philosophically, and practiced a way of living that was philosophical as well. Considering health to be the foundation of shakuhachi playing, he conceived *bōjutsu*, training right up until the day of his passing at 81 years old. He would continually forge and refine himself, with a particular focus on his mind - he was truly a pragmatic philosopher.

Pragmatic Philosophy

If you're going to proclaim the "Watazumi Way," then in order to pass on the way of living that you've attained so that others can easily understand it, you'll need to systematize your philosophy. Watazumi was a man of intuition who lived like a hermit, and as such wasn't quite able to complete this task. He took the position of one who had no connection with the conventional or traditional shakuhachi, but it's not like he created something that was completely divorced from shakuhachi tradition; I think his thinking was a little over the top on some points. Even so, not only with the mental side of things but also with his technique – his breathing methods and his "artless art" – he imbued his sound with a sense of the eternal, expressing something majestic, far beyond that which is merely energetic or flashy. This is what makes me consider him to be the founder of a restoration within shakuhachi music.

Watazumi-sensei had three times the breath that I did. I would run out and take a deep breath, and he would still be playing on one breath. When I first started out, he was observing with one eye shut. He watched me as I struggled and trembled, then took my second breath. It was like his eye was saying, "What's up, you can't do it?" It was hard to acknowledge, but I thought I just couldn't match him. He was built for breathing. He would take one breath and his whole body was filled. Sometimes he'd even breathe in too much, and let some of it out. In contrast to that, I had allergic nasal congestion, and wasn't built to be a shakuhachi player. I would work to build up my body by running and such. "Do *bojutsu*," he commanded – but I already had my plate full to overflowing just playing *honkyoku*, so I wanted to shout back, "[I'm struggling this much, and] you think I can do *bojutsu*!?"

I went to the practice sessions, but after two or three times, that was it. There's not much I can say. In practice, you can't teach or be taught breathing techniques and the like. This is what's difficult about the arts. You have to hear one thing, and understand ten. You almost have to be telepathic in some respects - it's not easy. If you teach, and you say something, what your student understands isn't the real thing. You think, "Can't you just 'get it'?" as you have them practice over and over. If you have someone who "gets it" on their own, eventually there will also be those who need to be told. What they are told, expressed in words, for them loses much of its value. The things that they obtain for themselves are of much greater value. You work, you struggle, and then

"that's it!" – you get it. It's at that point that you finally own it for yourself.

In that sense, whether it's Watazumi-sensei or Rando-sensei, I'm very grateful for them. Rather than telling me using words, they showed me with their actions.



The Change of *San'an*

Since I was a boy, I've listened to all sorts of music – especially Araki Kodo III's *Nanakomachi*, which [record] I listened to so much I practically wore it smooth. Though it was with the mind of a child, the more I listened the more I sensed that this was the epitome of *sankyoku* ensemble music – and yet, what was being expressed there was of a world that was slightly different from the one that I was seeking. When I was in Jr. High School,

I happened to pick up one of Watazumi-sensei's records that my mother had been collecting, and fell in love with *San'an*. I was taken aback that such an amazing form of music existed. Since that time, I stopped being content with merely listening and enjoying the music; the desire to play it myself began to grow.

It wasn't easy to muster up the courage to say it, but after three years of studying under Watazumi-sensei I finally asked him: "I'd love it if you could teach me *San'an*." He folded his arms and let out a low grunt - "not just yet." Since I'd already come this far, I decided to push it just one step further: "Even if I only ever learn this one piece, it's enough. You don't have to teach me anything else." And I really meant it. With that, he finally consented to teach it to me. His teaching method was to pursue a single piece until his student was able to play it to his satisfaction, so from that point on every practice session was *San'an*.

However, even after three and a half years of practice, it didn't meet his satisfaction. I wasn't making much progress, so Watazumi-sensei must have been getting tired of it as well. On top of that, I wasn't really "all there" when practicing - but for that I had a reason.

"This punk says he doesn't care even if he has to spend his whole life learning it [*San'an*], but here he is not even trying to take it seriously."

Sensei's sound was moving. From the piece he had recorded ten years ago, his sound morphed and changed until you might think it had become a completely different piece. That didn't jive with me. The way he had played it before was good; I didn't put all I had into our practice because I was stuck wondering things like why he used that decoration there, and so on. He had even changed the name by that point; he wanted to teach me the morphed-and-changed *Shun-sa*, because that was the piece that he'd arrived at after pouring himself into it day after day. He wanted me to play it, but I didn't want to. For three and a half years, that was our struggle. I think Watazumi-sensei must have been thinking, "This punk says he doesn't care even if he has to spend his whole life learning it, but here he is not even trying to take it seriously."

To Change, or to Be Changed?

If you think about it, it must have been that *honkyoku* pieces morph by nature. If the original composer were to listen to today's version, it would probably make him think, "Good piece... I wonder whose it is? It sounds kind of like the one I wrote, but maybe not..." I don't think *honkyoku* pieces are something that we intentionally change. Of course there are some who want to change a piece, going as far as to try this and try that, and so on until they don't want to play it any other way than what they've come up with. Or someone might intend to play the piece as it is, but lack the skill, so that the piece ends up changing even though they never necessarily thought to themselves, "this is the only way I can play this part, so I'll just change it to fit." This sort of thing happens over several generations, resulting in the piece we have today. Shakuhachi scores are like skeletons, lacking the precision of modern 5-line staff notation. They sprout leaves and branches, so that we get pieces like *Sanya* and *Tsuru no Sugomori* that have spread throughout Japan, leaving us with a plurality of pieces having identical titles, probably because of the process I just described. Take my own students, for that matter -- even though I teach them in the same way, I can almost predict how the piece might change. A piece changes in different ways with different students.

I don't think that we should feel free to insert our own ideas into traditional pieces. It's enough if we just play

up to the point of "this is the only way I can play it." Knead it, work it, study it until you've got it to a point where that's just how you have to play it - I think this is what constitutes *honkyoku*. That's why the fundamental idea is not to have a mindset where you fiddle with a piece, changing it here and there to make it sound cool. Even so, these pieces morph over time.

What about exceptionally skilled players like Watazumi-sensei – are they consciously trying to change the pieces they play? *San'an* was originally *Sanya*, and later became *Shun-sa*. With such a teacher, rather than wanting to resist him, I gradually came to a distinct awareness of the difference in our ways of thinking. I don't think that traditional things should be changed based on the efforts of one individual. I thought that if he wanted to change a piece, it would be an original composition; he could just create something new, even better than the traditional piece.

At that time it was a given, and even now I have absolutely no desire to criticize Watazumi-sensei. It's just that our ways of living were different. I think he was hoping that I'd help to spread the "way" [J. Do] of Watazumi, but that wasn't really my style. I wanted to bring the music that he had improved on back to Fuke shakuhachi, to return shakuhachi to its origins. The latter half of my time spent studying under him, I neither drew closer nor turned away. If I got too close I'd get cut [i.e., figuratively, with a sword], so I just continued without drawing near or turning away.

Within that teacher-student relationship, if you were to ask me what it was that I received from Watazumi-sensei, I think I'd have to answer "lifelong practice." *Sensei* was a practical philosopher, and often used the term *Tai-tatsu*, meaning "Obtain (*tatsu*) it in your body (*tai*)." Now, I don't go as far as to include *bojutsu* in my daily practice as he did, but in terms of embodying an art, I feel satisfied that I've at least kept a good practice, in my own way. There aren't many who can play five *honkyoku* pieces from memory in a performance, but for the most part that's how I play.

If you use a music score, I don't think it counts as *honkyoku*. There are many skilled players. There are also many who, at a concert, will take out a score and use it to play *honkyoku*. If the audience is ok with it, then I guess it's ok, but as for me I can't count it as *honkyoku*. *Honkyoku* originally belongs to shakuhachi; the *hon* 本 of *honkyoku* 本曲 refers to *hon-nin* 本人 *no shirabe* [the person, or player's own tune], to play *hon-ne* 本音 [a term that suggests telling the truth about what one is thinking, rather than putting on a facade] – this awareness was pounded into me by Watazumi-sensei. So for me, playing while looking at a score is like taking something from outside of you and momentarily taking it in to send it out again. It's reasonable not to consider that *honkyoku*. Yourself, as it is - when you can claim it as your own, that's when you first begin to actually play.

This is partly Watazumi-sensei's influence, but my work from here on is to take shakuhachi's psychological aspects, along with their philosophical background, and systematically present them to the world. I'm hoping I can do this by the time I'm 70 years old. To that aim, I'm working to redo my studies from philosophy, but it's proving quite difficult to logically explain things that I came to understand intuitively. This actually ends up being a situation where. I'm finishing the work that my teacher left undone; I want to systematize the philosophy of shakuhachi *honkyoku*.

Again, speaking as his student, I want to communicate the world sought by my teacher to as many people as I can.



“I Have Nothing to do with Shakuhachi.”

About thirty years ago, I had been planning an event at Koen-ji Temple’s Hikawa Shrine for people to hear Watazumi-sensei’s shakuhachi. I had gathered about forty people, and raised the funds needed. Watazumi said, “Since it’s the teacher Fusetsu asking me, I’ll do it.” Fusetsu was the shakuhachi name he had given me. It was nice that he accepted my invitation, but when I said “I’ll come to pick you up on the day,” he said, “It’s not necessary for the teacher Fusetsu to come; send one of your students.” I interpreted this to mean that he didn’t intend on bringing his shakuhachi with him, so on the day of the event, I went to pick him up. As expected, he came out holding nothing but a *kinchaku* [a small bag to hold money, etc.]. “Good thing I didn’t send one of my students,” I thought to myself. Had I sent a student, they would have brought him along as-is, without his bamboo.



As he was putting on his straw sandals in the doorway, I asked, “Sensei, please bring your shakuhachi.” He just stood there, let out a grunt, and cocked his head. And a long, uncomfortable pause. During that long silence, I considered just canceling the whole thing if he didn’t bring his flute. I even went as far as planning to say “You can go ahead and disown me, that’s fine.” At long last he reluctantly climbed up to the second floor and brought back two shakuhachi. Somehow we made it to the point of his recital, but he only gave a breath-meditation (that is, performed) of *Hon Shirabe* (a very short piece, the first one that I learned) - at least he played this one in its entirety - and then half of *Sagari-ha*. Then he talked about *bojutsu*. “Oh, bother,” I thought to myself.

Around that time, Watazumi-sensei had been living like a recluse; it was the period where he would say, “I have nothing to do with shakuhachi.” It felt like you couldn’t even say the “sha” of “shakuhachi” when you were around him. However, I wanted more people - even one more - to hear his incredible music. Of course this was for the sake of my own study as well. So, when talk of making recordings would flutter in, I put all my effort into making it happen.

Eccentricities

From that time, there arose some ardent believers in Watazumi-sensei in countries such as the United States and France; he even went to the U.S. for the Woodstock rock festival in August, 1969. One of his “believers” was a director at France’s national broadcast center, who invited Watazumi-sensei to perform. He didn’t do anything at all with shakuhachi; instead, he said “I can fart at will.” and proceeded to give a demonstration, right in front of the audience. Unfortunately, I heard that that particular director was let go.

I guess you can call this “eccentric.” Watazumi-sensei had plenty of such anecdotes. Since Fuke Zenji, the founder of Fuke shakuhachi, was also an eccentric individual, we can surmise that Watazumi-sensei was acting with an awareness of himself as a “second coming” of Priest Fuke.

“Around that time, Watazumi-sensei had been living like a recluse; it was the period where he would say, “I have nothing to do with shakuhachi.”

There’s a well-known story from when he was younger, which takes place during a tea ceremony held in Hakone by Soen Nakagawa-roshi of Ryutaku-ji, an important Sōtō Zen temple located in Mishima, Shizuoka. Watazumi-sensei was invited as the guest of honor. When he was given a bowl of tea that Sōen-rōshi prepared, he gently put his member into the bowl, stirred it around, took a sip, and passed it on to the woman seated next to him - “here you go.” Needless to say, she didn’t drink it. The woman on the receiving end of the bowl must have had quite the shock, but Sōen-rōshi simply washed the bowl out and made another cup of tea without saying a word.

Watazumi-sensei was by his own admission a strategist*; his behavior at the tea ceremony might have been him testing his own skill, i.e. how well he can freely adapt his behavior to his circumstances. “Strategize!” was always in the forefront of his thinking. He would even test a room to find the most resonant spot for someone playing *honkyoku*, and he taught me to do the same.

[*The word translated “strategist” is difficult to represent with only one word; the sense here is that Watazumi considers everything to be an opportunity for training, or for honing one’s skills.]

A Lifelong Project

Samurai threw away their *katana* and established shakuhachi music, so their concept of *ma* [the space between things] was probably very well honed and tempered. The space between swords was one of life and death; this certainly would have flowed into their music. Some say “just add some space in there however you want, it’s free rhythm!” – but we should understand freedom to be something extraordinarily difficult. Again, if it’s not seen this way, the music ends up being quite bland. The space players take between sounds can be just a single moment’s difference, but Watazumi-*sensei*’s sound would come with the expectation that that moment would be matched precisely. We would pause to insert a breath, and then come in late. Right there, *sensei*’s sound comes out in a flash, leaving us behind. “Oh, that again,” I would think to myself.

What he showed us through his sound was actually quite a big deal. It’s not something that you can teach or be taught. The only way to acquire a command of that space in between is by your own skill and effort - this was etched into my mind. However, there came a point when I often wanted to throw up my hands and give up. However hard I tried, it was about as effective as a guppy’s rage*. I even had a certain defiance, such that if I couldn’t do it well, then I’d just have to do it as someone who can’t do it well. Besides, there must be some things that I can do but *sensei* can’t – this way of thinking was the best I could do. However you play them, *honkyoku* are a lifelong project.

(*The image here is employed to suggest a person trying to do something that is simply beyond their abilities, no matter how hard they try).

Whether it’s Rando-*sensei* or Watazumi-*sensei*, I have a strong feeling that I chose some remarkable people as my teachers. They were superhuman, yet full of human charm. And they were truly good teachers. Through their words, my eyes were opened to shakuhachi music, and I learned about how to live, and that with freedom comes responsibility.

I very fondly remember a scene during Rando-*sensei*’s later years when I visited the restaurant he ran, Sangyodo. He was sitting crouched over his desk, flicking beads back and forth on a *soroban* [Japanese abacus]. My teacher’s face reflected one who was living a life pursuing the romantic, marching to the beat of a different drum. Watazumi-*sensei*, too - he single-mindedly pursued, and strictly stuck to his own ideals, sometimes displaying an almost childish way of being particular about this or that. I’d say that these two aspects joined together to form a uniquely attractive sort of music and humanity.

Rando-*sensei* passed away while I was on an international tour. It was just a half year after he had said, “Let’s compose another piece together.” Watazumi-*sensei*, right after I had told my mother that I wanted to arrange another performance for his shakuhachi, died in a traffic accident. Both of them suddenly vanished from my life. I guess that’s what it’s like when people part ways.

Acknowledgements

Yokoyama Katsuya: Remembering my teacher and my practice

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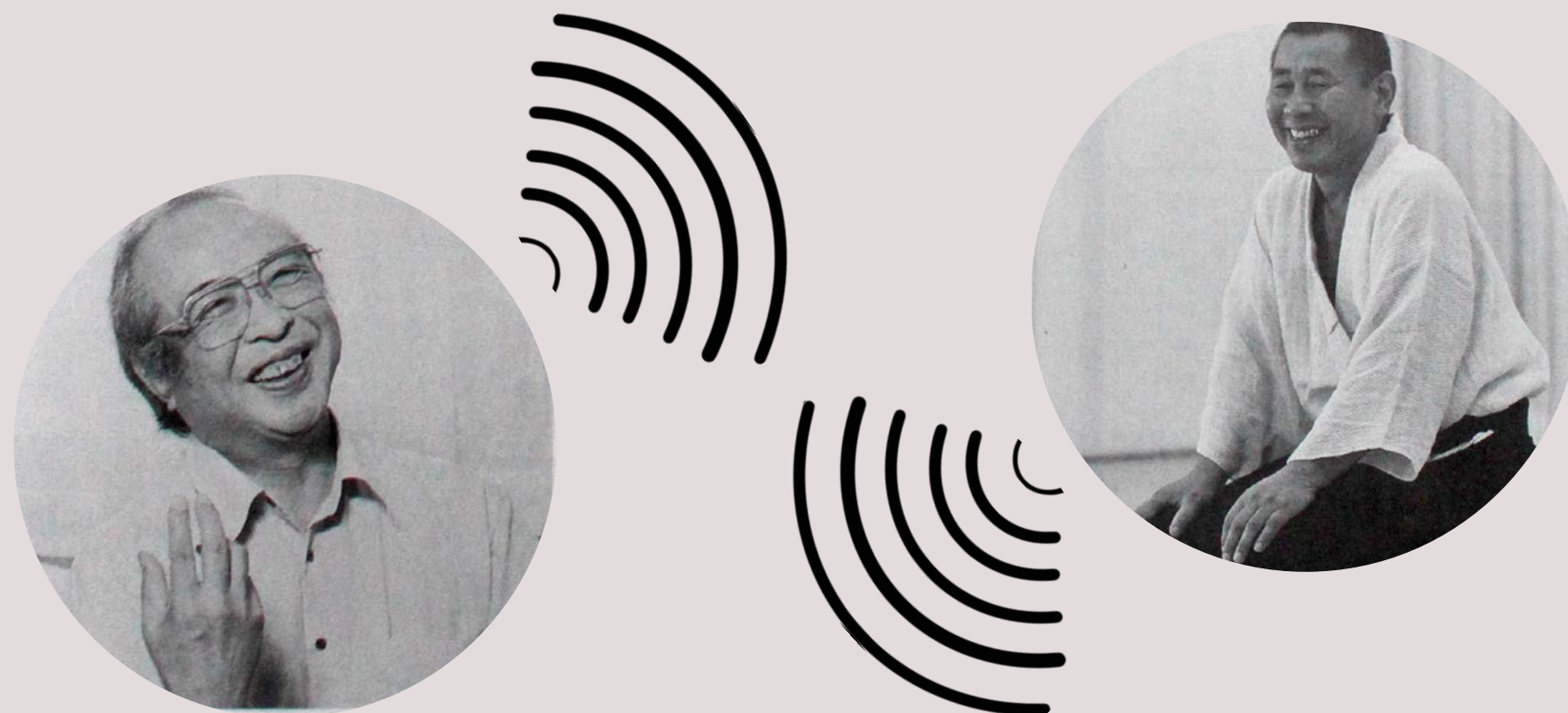
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Watazumi Dōso (Real name TANAKA Kendō)

Born in 1911, Fukuoka prefecture. Starting in Hakata Itchō-ken, he studied under Tsunoda Rōgetsu and Nakamura Kikufū. He created his own original philosophy based on Zen, and devoted himself to practice that often led to fainting and loss of consciousness in order to attain mastery of his chosen path. He held workshops in Japan as well as various locations in the United States, extending his influence even to the world of modern music. He died in a traffic accident on 14 December, 1992, at age 81.



Yokoyama Katsuya

Yokoyama was born in Shizuoka Prefecture in 1934 and studied Kinko-ryū and Azuma styles of music with his father, Rampo Yokoyama, and grandfather, Koson Yokoyama.

At the age of 25, Yokoyama began to study with Fukuda Rando, founder of the Azuma School and with Watazumi Doso. Guided by these two eminent masters, Yokoyama was able to combine the modernism of Rando with the traditional spirit of Watazumido in his playing. With this foundation, he came to develop a remarkably powerful and creative style that embodied both ends of the continuum.

In 1963, he founded the Nihon Ongaku Shudan (Japanese Music Group) and Shakuhachi Sanbon-kai (Group of Three Shakuhachi) with Kinko master Aoki Reibo and Tozan master Hozan Yamamoto. The group helped to establish a new genre of music for the shakuhachi in trio.

In 1988, Yokoyama founded the Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan (International Shakuhachi Training Center) located in Bisei-cho, Okayama, Japan where he hosted the first International Shakuhachi Festival in 1994.

Yokoyama died on April 21, 2010.

ARAKI KODO VI

There had been no real discussion of my learning the instrument. Just one day, when my father handed me a shakuhachi that unbeknownst to me was made by my namesake, Hanzaburō Araki, (Kodō Araki II, Chikuō Araki). He didn't offer me any guidance in that moment, but I was loosely familiar with how to hold it from the occasional time I'd seen him play. I put it to my lips as I had seen him do and managed a pure, clear tone. There was no fanfare, no outward reaction. With a quick nod he said, "we'll start tomorrow. Don't be late."

I was never tempted to think of myself as "gifted," or special in any way. Over the course of my time playing with my father, he would reinforce this by never offering compliments, only criticism. He was never cruel, or mean-spirited, but I grew to appreciate that criticism and even rely on it. It was simply the response which I was conditioned to receive. Indeed, to this day, when anyone compliments my playing, I assume they weren't paying attention. I assumed my ability to play from the earliest days was more a function of genetic predisposition.

At my first lesson, he showed me each note in the scale, what it was called, and how it was fingered. He said each note should be its own piece of music, and no note was of greater or lesser importance than any other.

I didn't speak Japanese at the time. Sitting seiza across a small writing desk from him, my father wrote down the unfamiliar *ro-tsu-re katakana* letters that constitute shakuhachi notation; this he did to the tune of Simon and Garfunkel's *Scarborough Fair*, and *El Cóndor Pasa*, songs which he knew to be familiar to me. This became a method I would use with my own students (although not *Scarborough Fair*).

Once he was comfortable with my grasp of these songs, he wrote out *Kimi Ga Yo* (the Japanese National Anthem) before moving on to something more traditional. He took out an orihon of my grandfather's arrangement of E Ten Raku. All of this—the notation, the "dots" for measuring time—made sense to me in a way western notation never did. Most of the notation I used at that point was from either his father or grandfather (Kodō IV and III) from their personal hand-written books that he had inherited. In those early lessons, I appreciated the notation of Satō Seibi for its clarity, but once my eyes had gotten used to reading the shakuhachi scores, I grew to prefer my family's notation which allowed for more expression while still offering structure.

Given that breathing method and embouchure came naturally to me, he was able to focus his instruction on the music. He could demonstrate the fingering for *tsu meri* for example, and I would mirror it exactly. Same for more complicated technique (*tsu meri-ru*, for example). Over that first two weeks, he taught me *Sanya Sugagaki*, *Kumoi Jishi*, as well as *sankyoku* pieces *Kuro Kami* and *Rokudan*.

We would play together until he was sure I had it, then I'd play it alone into a tape recorder which we would listen back to together for him to critique. He had an old Sony reel-to-reel tape machine with many old recordings that we would listen to as well. All in all, my lessons would be at least six hours, every day.

Once I was in Japan, it was a great experience to watch him teach his other students. Because so much of what I did



was based on intuition, I didn't have many tools for how to transmit information, so it was invaluable to see what language or methods he used to communicate the music and technique. What I'll always remember is my father's use of humor during his lessons. Even with me, if I had reached a particularly challenging aspect of a piece, he would do something to make me laugh to break the tension. He was endlessly patient with his students and never raised his voice.

I would do my best to mimic him down to the most minute nuance of his playing. Consistently, he was most critical of my tendency to play too quietly. My father sent me for a lesson with his close friend and colleague, Inoue Shigeshi whose playing could get prodigiously loud. Mr. Inoue told me he used to practice on the roof of his school, and never in rooms with any acoustic quality. He also gave me beautiful descriptions of each note: Ro is the sound of a sleeping dragon; chi is the laughter of a little girl, etc.

While my father would tell me the meaning of each piece and explain the story if there was one, he never spoke of spirituality at all. In fact, he seemed to deliberately ignore the subject. It was very difficult for me to manage expectations of spiritual guidance from my own students until very recently.

In the past four or five years, I have decided to take a more active role in upholding my family's tradition. This has meant making teaching more of a priority. In order to do so, I have looked back at my years studying with my father. He kept up a furious pace with me, but it was only because he felt I could manage it. To me, understanding the pace that your student learns is crucial. Also, not every method will work for every player, and sometimes a non-traditional (or non-Araki) workaround will be the best way to achieve an enjoyable musical experience.

To play shakuhachi, I don't believe it's necessary to learn Japanese, but I do think it's important to learn at least the terminology of shakuhachi music. And while I may commend someone for their own exploration in Japanese music by way of recordings and the endless hours of YouTube content available to them, it is a disservice to the music and tradition to eschew having a teacher. There are far too many subtle elements that comprise this music to get from a book or a video.

I am not a staunch traditionalist—that is to say I don't believe that the shakuhachi can only be played by Japanese people, or that it can only be used for Japanese music. I believe that for the sake of its survival, exploration and collaboration is vital. However, I do think that fundamental shakuhachi technique and repertoire is essential before taking the instrument in a different direction (I believe this to be true for any traditional musical instrument). Because without that, there is very simply no reason to play the shakuhachi versus a Western concert flute.

But most importantly, one must have impeccable foundational knowledge of traditional shakuhachi technique if they intend to present themselves as a teacher and transmit their version of shakuhachi. Play whatever you want, but if you want to teach, do it properly. To do otherwise has grave consequences for a proud musical history.

I've read many essays wishing to address the question what can be done to preserve the shakuhachi? I don't believe the shakuhachi is in danger. Rather, it is the tradition that faces extinction. Most anyone with access to a library and an internet connection can teach themselves how to play just about anything, shakuhachi included. But what are the things that make that music unique? What drew you to that music in the first place? If your first exposure to shakuhachi was a video game or a *samurai* movie, I salute your desire to dive deeper. But consider why this instrument was used in that game or that film, and be mindful of the generations of musicians who kept the tradition alive through the upheaval of history and ravages of time.

My Experience of Transmission of the Shakuhachi in Reibo-kai

In 1978 I began to study the shakuhachi with the Reibo-kai branch of the Kinko School under Sano Reihi, a senior disciple of Aoki Reibo, at Wesleyan University in the US. It was a 45- minute bus ride from Yale, where I was a graduate student in Chinese art history. At the time, Wesleyan had a flourishing and well-known Japanese music program in which Namino Tori taught the *koto*, and the ethnomusicologist Tsuge Gen'ichi taught the subject of Japanese music, and arranged for shakuhachi teachers to come and teach.

I did not meet the head of the school, Aoki-sensei, until the following year, when he came on a US tour, and I heard him play for the first time. I had been interested in the shakuhachi before, but now I was totally smitten. Aoki-sensei arranged for me to stay with a koto accompanist of his in the summer of 1979, and I spent the summer in Tokyo playing the shakuhachi, taking two lessons a week, one each with Sano-sensei and Aoki-sensei. This system continued for years, which allowed me to improve at a good pace.

In fact, I was very lucky to have started with Sano-sensei, who was of a younger generation, and had just spent two years interacting with American students. Thus he was a kind of a buffer between me and Aoki-sensei in the beginning, as I was totally ignorant of certain matters of etiquette towards the head of a school, for which Aoki-sensei was a stickler. Sano-sensei's lessons were longer, and I could ask questions. Aoki-sensei did not allow them. I was to play, and that was it. I was not to make mistakes, and I was to keep up with him. (All unsaid!) I had to have a kind of fierce concentration - it was completely different from Sano Sensei. With Aoki-sensei, I was always on my mettle.

Which brings me to what we were playing. Not *honkyoku*, but *sankyoku*, ensemble music. I did not play *honkyoku* with Aoki-sensei until preparing for my *shihan* or master's concert in 1984. So for about three years I only played *sankyoku*. But lessons were the same, just play! There were occasional pauses when Aoki-sensei modified the music, and played the parts he was changing. The notation was typical Kinko style notation which he gave me or I bought from shakuhachi music shops at the time. There were also Meian scores in his hand, and Nezasa-ha notation which he had collected and passed on. The only indirect reference to the spiritual side of things was a huge calligraphy: "Sit in silence", on the wall of our lesson space, which I assumed was an allusion to meditation. There was certainly no discussion of it.

As I began to improve, there were many opportunities to perform honkyoku solos, at the regularly scheduled concerts at a favorite concert hall in Nihonbashi, for example, or at small concert spaces Aoki-sensei appeared at. A particular patron of Aoki-sensei would also invite us to perform at his house, for example, when I visited Japan, which gave me another chance to play in front of an audience.

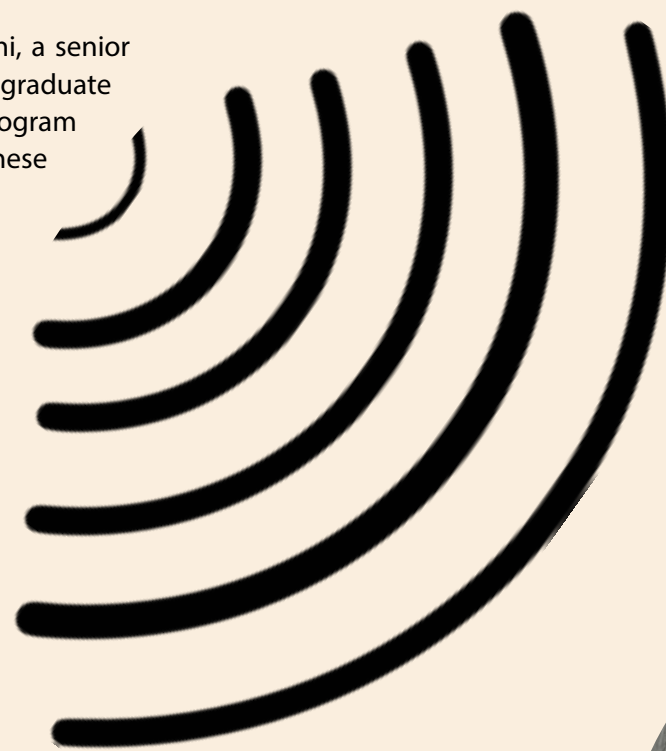
When I went to Japan in 1998, I knew that I was getting close to my Grand Master certificate, as all the young men of the school of my age had already received theirs. I was working on *Koku* (Emptiness) and set out for my first lesson of the summer. The advantage of Aoki-sensei's adherence to just playing and following him in the music without any chat was that the lesson could become a kind of mental fusion. That day I received my *dai-shihan*.

The rough treatment of students in the traditional Japanese arts is famous, and still used. It gets results. But I could not use this technique on my American students. A teacher who didn't answer questions? Not likely. As for material available on Youtube, if you have a student industrious enough to start playing along with recordings found online - the shakuhachi embouchure is so difficult at the start - the more practice the better. At a certain point, a student may have to decide which direction to take, so there is a chance the student might

break off and develop in a different direction. On the plus side is that there are many of Aoki-sensei's recordings, as well as the whole Kinko-ryū *honkyoku* repertory, recorded by Yamaguchi Gōro, which students can study.

Based on my studies with Aoki-sensei, I aim to pass on a certain kind of shakuhachi sound, and a certain approach to timing, emphasis and ornamentation in the pieces. Beyond that, it's up to the students to incorporate, or not, as they wish.

The situation in Japan now in shakuhachi music is that younger players prefer western style pieces to the old classical ones, or are simply not interested in traditional music at all. The interest in the many different branches of traditional shakuhachi from all over Japan represented by the shakuhachi players in the ESS gives hope that there are others who will keep these ancient musical styles alive.



ELIZABETH REIAN
BENNETT



When I was 18 years old, I moved to Japan and spent the next 18 years as a member of the Taiko group Ondekoza that connected me with Yokoyama Katsuya. Very limited information was to be found on Shakuhachi, even in Japanese, as we did not have internet yet.

I lived in Nagasaki prefecture and would travel to Tokyo once a month to take shakuhachi lessons. I was not allowed to practice indoors in Ondekoza, I needed to be able to project and play without amplification when we played in large concert halls. I practiced daily for hours on end outdoors in all seasons rain (snow) or shine.

Yokoyama-sensei had about 4 days per month set for lessons – students would come for a lesson on those days and would wait their turn. It allowed students to hear different songs being played by others and that was part of the learning process.

Furuya-sensei would teach me earlier on, as Yokoyama-sensei was busy. The lessons were done kneeling (*seiza*). We would also talk about different subjects at the lesson. I was already playing shakuhachi professionally after a year with Ondekoza, and I was hungry for any extra information that would help me. Yokoyama was very helpful in giving me hints about Japanese arts and recommending what artists to check out that would help with my study of the *honkyoku* repertoire. I had heard of Watazumi-sensei, who was still alive at the time (but I never got to meet him). I did find some recordings and listened to his music to help me better understand the *honkyoku*. I was surprised to hear the differences between Watazumi's and Yokoyama's rendition of the songs. I liked Yokoyama's interpretation. I spent many hours with Yokoyama-sensei and Furuya-sensei talking about shakuhachi, books, art, etc. Hints about playing could be found everywhere. The study of the shakuhachi did not simply end with playing and learning songs. In Japan, there is an "interconnection" of religions (Shintoism, Buddhism, and Christianity) that has permeated daily life, I think that is why not so much was explained about the *honkyoku* except the general idea of the *honkyoku* without giving much information.

I was never given any music from Yokoyama, but Furuya-sensei had transcribed a lot of the *honkyoku*, which I got when I studied with him. Memorizing the songs was encouraged, but having a score was helpful to take notes during the lesson. I usually warmed up with Yokoyama-sensei and then I would play the song on my own and he would give me some pointers. We would then play the song together. I would try to get as much as I could during that time to understand the *honkyoku*. He would encourage you to make the *honkyoku* your own, as long as it made sense the way you played it. He would point out the mistakes in phrasing, tuning, etc. In Japan, you are first taught to copy the teacher until you grasp the song.

You will only start to understand the *honkyoku* after playing it hundreds of times (with some guidance from the teacher), little by little it reveals itself when played over and over. It might be a long process, but I find it is the most effective way. Each time, I would come back to a *honkyoku* after a year, Yokoyama had made some adjustments. That made me understand that a *honkyoku* is a living song, it changes with time through the process of playing it. As to the techniques and details of the song, I learned the most from Furuya-sensei. Yokoyama-sensei would play phrases and segments of the songs that were difficult but never gave too much info. It was really up to you to pay attention and try to recreate what you heard and saw being played.

My teaching is similar to the way the *honkyoku* is taught, I do give a little more information on technical passages of a



song. I also start with a warm-up and then have the student play the *honkyoku*. I give a few pointers on the song and corrections and go over some passages. At times, find that singing or chanting the passages (as Yokoyama-sensei did) helps me better understand the phrasing. I play the *honkyoku* once or twice together, so the student gets a better idea of the flow of the *honkyoku*. I also try to open the students to other aspects of Japanese culture or give them info on some books that might help them in the *honkyoku* study.

Yokoyama talked about similar points, that *honkyoku* is not only what you hear. The interpretation of it is just the tip of the iceberg. There is all the work that goes behind it, that gives it its depth and beauty. The study or understanding of *honkyoku* does not end on the page, it's the whole work behind it, your lifestyle, your daily practice, etc. I complemented my study by seeing Kabuki, Noh theater, Kyogen, and Japanese art, which helped me a lot in understanding some of the Japanese concepts such as *ma*, *Kyōjaku* (strong and soft), *wabi sabi*, etc. Being able to speak Japanese did help me tremendously in the study. *honkyoku* came originally from older forms of songs or religious chants. I find the rhythms in the *honkyoku* similar to speech patterns. Japanese language has a flow and the intonation becomes very useful in the study (for example Kabuki or Noh actor's speech pattern).

Yokoyama had an openness that went beyond the limitations of the traditional *iemoto* system. He was very open to having students check out other *honkyoku* styles. He was a protagonist of more freedom of learning and collaborating in traditional music.

A lot of changes have occurred with the internet, but not always for the better. Videos of all levels of playing are being uploaded on the internet. In a way, it has become more confusing for new students to weed through it all and I feel it is mostly a disservice to their studies.

Yokoyama told me that it was my duty as an ambassador of the *honkyoku* to pass it on to new generations of players. I have since shared my knowledge and Yokoyama's passion with others worldwide. I try to go teach in areas that usually don't get much exposure to his music and try to be supportive of dedicated musicians that sometimes don't have the means to study.

It took me 14 years before I felt I was ready to do a solo recording and still felt unsure. Your whole life is dedicated to the study of *honkyoku*. A recording is an interpretation of yourself at the time. Yokoyama taught me that it is a living art form. Your interpretation changes and will evolve in the course of your life. I feel very blessed to have been able to experience his music and his energy and which has fueled my passion for *honkyoku*.

Yokoyama at one point moved to Okayama. It was a beautiful setting in a very remote town. I went a few times for lessons there, and he showed me his recording studio and the Shakuhachi Kenshūkan. A few years later the first shakuhachi festival was held there and I was invited to perform and had the honor to share the stage with Yokoyama-sensei.



MARCO LIENHARD

CHRISTOPHER YOHMEI BLASDEL

Lessons with Yamaguchi Gorō – My journey into shakuhachi music began in 1972—exactly fifty years ago this fall—when I was a college student in Tokyo and introduced to Yamaguchi Gorō. Only thirty-eight years old at the time, Yamaguchi was already one of Japan’s leading young performers, especially in the field of traditional music. He had recently returned from a year of teaching at Wesleyan College and was considered progressive and internationally-minded in his teachings, however in essence his instructional method was based on the old, pre-war styles of his father and other *hōgaku* players of the early twentieth century. In that sense, he was one of the first generation of shakuhachi players who straddled both pre and post-war sensibilities.

Yamaguchi’s lessons were done on a first-come first-served basis—there were no appointments. On lesson day students arrived, sat down in the *tatami*-matted lesson room and waited their turn before playing in front of the teacher. Depending on how many students were already there, one might have a lesson right away or have to wait their turn. Although the wait could be long, the upside of this system was that it allowed even beginners like myself to listen to the other students and become familiar with the pieces.

Yamaguchi required his students to study the entire *gaikyoku* (*sankyoku*) repertory before beginning the Kinko Style *honkyoku*. This was done, I was told, to make sure that the student acquired the necessary technical skills in order to advance into the highly demanding *honkyoku*.

Beginners started with basic *koto* and *shamisen* works like *Rokudan no Shirabe*, *Kurokami* and through the years progressed to the more demanding compositions like *Yaegoromo*, *Aoyagi*, and *Zangetsu*. Although I was eager to begin the *honkyoku* as soon as possible, in retrospect it was good to work exclusively on the *gaikyoku* for so long. It prepared me for an effortless transition into the *honkyoku* while teaching me the beauty of song.

We usually worked up one piece in three or four lessons per month. The actual instruction consisted of the student playing a section of the piece together with Yamaguchi, then alone (while Yamaguchi sang the shakuhachi part), then together again. The last lesson of the month was for playing the entire piece without stopping.

Yamaguchi’s mother was a well-known *shamisen* and *koto* master of the Ikuta-ryū. Before she passed away, she often sat nearby and sang, in her exquisite voice, the lyrics of the pieces we played during the lessons.

Though Yamaguchi did his best to answer any questions I had, few words were exchanged during the lessons, which mostly relied on repetition and following the teacher’s lead. Unlike my western music teachers in the U.S., Yamaguchi’s generation of *hōgaku* players did not possess particular verbal skills to explain the music. However, this non-verbal approach to learning music was a revelation to me, since it forced me to rely on the act of listening, mimicry and other non-intellectual perceptions to experience the music.



The Chikumei-sha repertory consist of seventy-three *gaikyoku* followed by thirty-six *honkyoku*. Completing all these pieces meant the student must spend up to nine years for a *shihan* teaching license. Attaining the *shihan* rank was arduous and required a significant commitment of time and money, and Yamaguchi made sure that those who achieved *shihan* status were competent and skilled players, ready to continue the transmission of his musical guild (Chikumei-sha). The contemporaneous *dai-shihan* ranking, which is often seen in the bios of shakuhachi players today, was not necessary and simply did not exist back then—at least not in the Kinko style.

Like many young Americans at the time, I was attracted to the spiritual aspects of the shakuhachi and its relationship to Zen Buddhism. Yamaguchi was respectful and knowledgeable of this aspect of the shakuhachi, yet whenever I asked questions regarding spirituality, his answers were succinct, and in response he usually just handed me another piece to play, as if to say, “master the basics of the music first.” When I pressed him for a discussion, he gave the pithy but wise answer, “Work on yourself.” At first, I wasn’t quite sure what he meant, though it slowly became clear to me.

I would love to teach today the same way Yamaguchi did—with an abundance of relaxed time for all my students to gather and spend hours playing and listening to each other (I also took lessons from Myōan-ryū teacher Okamoto Chikugai. The social aspects of those gatherings were similar to Yamaguchi’s lessons, though with much more chatting and tea drinking...). However, social conventions have changed dramatically in the ensuing years and one must adhere to the times. Like a doctor’s appointment, I schedule lesson times for each student to fit our respective schedules. I also have come to recognize the value of remote lessons through such platforms as Zoom, however unfulfilling they may seem. Like Yamaguchi, I also prefer not to dwell too much on the so-called spiritual aspects of the shakuhachi and when asked, I usually answer by giving the student a difficult passage to work on. This is because the technical discipline one must undergo in order to perfect the shakuhachi—or any instrument—is precisely the kind of training one needs to heighten one’s awareness of the supersensible aspects of the world we live in.

Aware of the shakuhachi’s relationship to Zen, people often ask me if I do *zazen* meditation. My answer is always no. Instead, I work on perfecting my tones, pitch, musicality and the memorization of pieces. Music is my spiritual training, and it is as deep and meaningful as any sort of austerity discipline a dedicate Zen monk may undergo. In other words, music is the Way. Animating and informing this realization is the knowledge that music is undertaken not for the sake of oneself, but ultimately for the sake of others. I know of no greater joy than pleasing an audience through a fine performance. We are just the vessel for the music, and the more we work to improve the vessel the greater is our gift of music.

Humility, hard work, reverence and morality are the building blocks of spirituality. This is what Yamaguchi meant when he told me, a half-century ago, to “work on myself.” It is also the message that I wish to pass down to my students.

For a more detailed account of lessons with Yamaguchi in the early 1970’s, please refer to *The Single Tone—A Personal Journey into Shakuhachi Music* on Amazon Kindle books.

LARRY TYRRELL

Thoughts about shakuhachi oral transmission

The oral tradition is the original conduit for musical transmission. The process is as simple as it gets. Listen, watch, imitate, emulate, commit to memory. 習うより慣れよ。 *Narau yori nareyo* (Rather than learn, acculturate.) Simple...but time consuming.

All musical traditions retain aspects of oral transmission and oral transmission takes many forms. My grounding in music came from learning music from recordings of popular and folk music as a child, thanks to the great recording boom of the 50's, 60's and 70's. I began by singing along with records and becoming attached to that magical process of not just listening to music but making it a part of me.

Records were effectively a new form of the oral tradition. I embraced the chance to listen to any music I could and brought home dozens and dozens of LPs from the public library. To me World Music meant all the music in the world. Then came shakuhachi.

The first shakuhachi recording I heard was Yamaguchi Gōro playing *Hifumi Hachigaeshi no Shirabe* from the first of a set of LPs released in the 1970's. Here was playing of beauty so exquisite, simple and moving. I remember a sense of recognition, wonder and displacement. I had found a tradition expressing a sonic world I aspired to, using only a bamboo flute.

I heard Yoneya Iwao next. His groundbreaking recordings of solo shakuhachi *min'yō* were exotic and soulful to me. It reinforced my sense of the shakuhachi being an instrument of great affective range and depth and drove me to learn to play it.

The oral tradition in the shakuhachi world

I have been blessed with the rich experience and great gift of the opportunity to study with five teachers on my path of shakuhachi. Although each teacher had a distinct approach, the common thread was teaching by example. Not only that—every teacher I have had could sing from memory or sight-sing any shakuhachi score. I think this is an essential thing to understand about oral transmission—the importance of developing your inner voice.

Masayuki Koga was my first teacher, starting in 1981, and influenced me enormously with the purity of his vision and commitment to shakuhachi. He emphasized playing every single day. His lessons were very much in the oral tradition model—listen, imitate, listen again, emulate, absorb. He trained his students' perception.

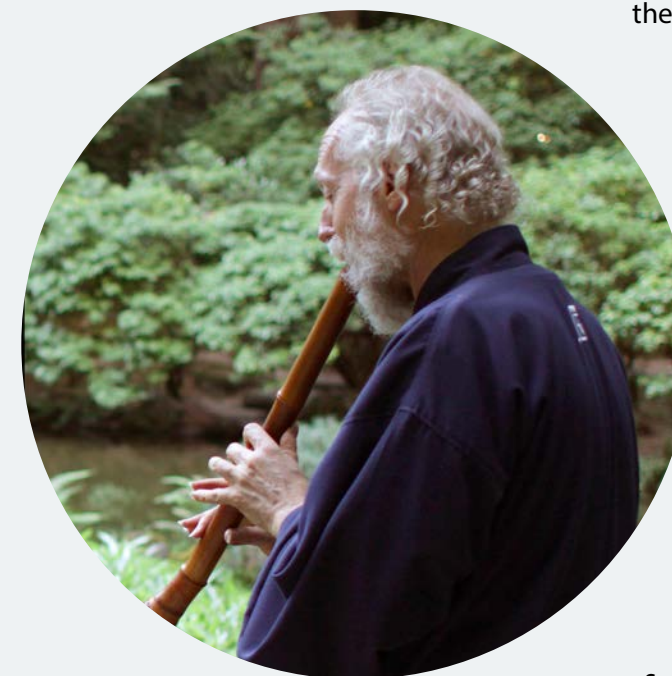
Takenawa Jakuzan was my first teacher in Japan in 1983 in the city of Okayama. It was he who inculcated in me the ethic of *narau yori nareyo* – rather than learn, acculturate – mentioned above. To study with him was to not only learn to play and sing the music but to become a family member with lessons mixed with social time.

Iwami Baiyoku V was a very elegant, accomplished man—engineer, composer, musician and holder of the *iemoto* seal of Baiyoku bequeathed on him by Araki Kodo IV. I met him in 1984 in São Paulo, Brazil. He had an acute ear



and modeled each piece clearly and patiently both with his flute and his voice. He also had a remarkable memory. I'll never forget the day he took some hotel stationery from a Brazilian hotel out of a drawer and with two different pens wrote out a beautiful score of *Hifumi Hachigaeshi* completely from memory including all the annotations.

Miyata Kohachiro had been a presence in my life from the time of his 1977 recording on Nonesuch incidentally, the best selling shakuhachi recording of all time. An accomplished composer and capable *koto* player as well, his studio also had many *koto* players eager to study his music. He was able to sing all the parts of often complicated pieces during their lessons.



His playing was masterful, elegant, lyrical and compelling. I studied with him in Tokyo from 1985-87. He was a very exacting teacher who modeled precision, nuance and command. His musicianship and beautiful tone had an enormous influence on me. I still often hear his sound in my head.

Yokoyama Katsuya was a force of nature—passionate, charismatic and grand. He embodied the the music he played to the utmost. Every time he played, he created the music anew. I never heard him play the same piece exactly the same way twice. Studying with him gave me a different sense of the oral tradition, a sense in which each piece is a living, evolving thing.

I was privileged to study with him in Bisei-cho, Okayama-ken from 1991 to 1994. When I once asked him whether I should use the first hole or the second hole to repeat a *ro* in the classical *honkyoku*, *Koku*, his simple answer was yes... adding that, ultimately, the music itself will teach you how to play it.

The teaching path

From my experience as a student, as a teacher my goal has always been to bring students directly to sound as it is. I encourage students to catalogue how each note feels to play, so as to begin to embody each sound, not just produce it. I try to provide a framework for integrating breath and body awareness with sonic sensitivity so that the sound they hear, or remember in their inner ear, is that sound they play.

What are those qualities each sound has? The fingering x,Tsu no meri (Kinko-ryū), on a 1.8 flute has a nominal pitch of E-flat. But E- flat is not a quality—it's a measurement. (Incidentally, Masayuki Koga once told me, teasingly, that using a pitch meter was, "Very good training – for your eyes!")

The qualities are what we feel when we play. To me *tsu no meri* is shadowy, yearning, complicit, recessive and *yin*. So, how do we find and register those qualities in our bodies, in our breaths? Rather than pitch discrimination, it's more like affective discrimination. Each nuance of affective expression has a distinct kinesthetic signature as unique as the faces of each of our friends. In this way the path of oral transmission must lead students to both increased sensitivity and to embodiment of these signatures.

The essence, then, of embodiment is that the music itself resides in the body, immanent, until the music calls on you to play it. This runs counter to the idea of perfecting technique. The body, mind and memory are imperfect things that grow, decline, change and evolve such that your instrument, your embodiment, is not fixed. The goal of training is to achieve consistency but it is impossible to avoid the paradox of the oral tradition—the tradition, like ourselves, is always forming, always evolving.

More about contemporary oral tradition

The shakuhachi path, like the other paths of traditional Japanese culture, is fundamentally based on in-situ oral transmission. But while direct experience with a teacher is irreplaceable, the skills and experience gained apply well to other, virtual, informants. For example, although I regrettably never met Yoneya Iwao, I have made numerous transcriptions of his recordings by listening until I could sing the piece, then playing until I could play it, including the nuances and ornaments, and only then transcribing it.

While many of us have taken advantage of on-line resources like YouTube and on-line lessons it's important to note the limitations of these technology-driven pathways. Using Zoom or Skype is not the same as an in-person lesson. I've learned that lesson the hard way. Due to the built-in automatic level control in Skype, I once taught a student on-line for months not realizing that he was playing at too low a volume. I also was sad to discover, when I resumed teaching in-person lessons recently, that even my long-time students had lost rather than maintained ground despite continuous on-line lessons during the pandemic.

Yokoyama's Dream

Transmission is only the beginning of the journey. Embodiment is the destination. It is that ideal combination of experience, immersion, deep, intuitive and conscious understanding that you seek recognizing yourself as the instrument and finally arriving at a place where you neither recall the music nor beckon it come to you—it is you.

The shakuhachi takes your breath and reflects it back to you with clarity and honesty. It gives you a mirror of your mood, emotions, intentions and aspirations. It provides your spirit a musical vehicle and idiom.

Yokoyama Katsuya told me a story, also published in his first autobiography, of a dream that he had as a young man in his twenties in which he heard the most astounding and perfect shakuhachi sound. I remember thinking that it was a good description of his sound at that time. However, he concluded the story by saying that he, then at the peak of his career, was still searching for that sound. Twenty years later, I only truly understand the story now.

CLIVE BELL

My Lesson Experience

We all gathered on Thursday evenings at our teacher's house in Tokyo. The atmosphere was loose and informal, but the setup was clear: all students together in a waiting room, then one by one summoned through the sliding door into the teacher's presence.

The essence of the teaching was the moment when the teacher demonstrated a passage. This was the model to copy, and my failure to do so was my problem. Any analysis of poor playing was thin on the ground. I recall my teacher asking another student to come and try to explain why my playing was so bad. Heads were shaken and sympathy offered.

I soon realised that almost no one did any practice. A student would perform a piece that he clearly had not looked at since last week. The students loved the teacher and the social occasion. Their laziness was a tribute to the teacher's brilliance - just being present would surely improve matters. I was in a hurry to learn and practiced furiously, randomly. I was the only foreigner present - this was 1976 and I was a rare bird. My teacher was reluctant to accept me as a student, fearing that I was a dilettante, about to flit off to study koto or ikebana.

Love for the teacher was expressed in gift bottles of whiskey. These might be shared. "Would you like a cup of tea?" I was asked mid-lesson. The delicate blue and white teacup held spirits, but I was confused; maybe this was a special tea, served cold. After a few sips my playing disintegrated into a feeble gasping. My teacher was mightily amused.

The approach to the repertoire was pragmatic. First we learned folk tunes, to get the notes straight. Then a lot of *sankyoku* chamber music, good for rapid reading and stamina. I could play along with a cassette tape containing *koto* and *shamisen* parts. Finally the pinnacle of solo *honkyoku* appeared on the skyline. These were approached in the same direct manner as the folk tunes. It's all music. New age spirituality and associations with yoga had not yet been invented, or imported. Perhaps my teacher was unusually informal and down to earth. But it was hard to test this theory, as the one thing you could never do was take lessons from someone else.



DANIEL SEISOKU LIFERMANN 聖息

The first time I heard the sound of a shakuhachi was forty years ago on the radio. It fascinated me. I thought that only Japanese people, born in Japan, could play such an instrument. At that time it was very rare to hear traditional music from the Far East. But life had many surprises in store for me, because I had the opportunity to go to Japan in 1983 and to finally cross the path of the shakuhachi.

Back in France, I met a Frenchman who had spent a long time in Japan and studied shakuhachi with Yokoyama-sensei. Franck Noël (a high level *aikidoka*) was my first teacher. We were a very small group around him. He spoke little and his teaching was essentially based on direct imitation. After five years of learning I was beginning to manage and it was then that he suddenly decided to stop teaching shakuhachi, too busy with his activities in his *aikido dojo*. Being the most advanced, he told the other students that if they wanted to continue studying, they could do so with me. So here I was, becoming a teacher in spite of myself. However, I took up the challenge and formed a new small group of students. But I was far from finished with my apprenticeship and was desperate to find a teacher with whom I could continue to study.

As luck would have it, I came across Iwamoto sensei. This was doubly fortunate as he was himself a disciple of Yokoyama-sensei and he lived in nearby England. I had the opportunity to organize master classes for seven years under his direction within a group of about ten students that would later become the association La Voie du Bambou. Iwamoto-sensei was a musician of extreme refinement and a rather introverted, very discreet temperament. In his teaching, he could talk about spirituality, Japanese aesthetics or philosophy even before starting to study pieces. The *honkyoku* were studied phrase by phrase with great precision, each ornament seen in detail. He also explained the Buddhist context. Once, working one-to-one with him, I came up against a difficult section, and there he said to me in a stern, almost angry tone: "It's a matter of life and death!" and he wasn't kidding! During the master classes we alternated between group work and private lessons. Sometimes during a break we would hear him playing in the distance and these were magical moments. Once I got up early and found him outside, playing alone in the early morning mists. I walked up to him and he told me he was going to teach me a new piece. He played, I repeated and so on. I will remember for the rest of my life that hour when, just out of sleep, I received the most extraordinary lesson ("mind to mind" as they say in Zen). The last time I met him was at the WSF in Boulder, Colorado (1998). And then, overnight, he disappeared.

Here I am for the second time in search of a master and in charge of an association dedicated to shakuhachi. New students joined our group. I passed on in turn what I had received from Iwamoto-sensei.

Time passed until one day I attended a concert in Paris in which Fukuda-sensei was participating. I was very impressed by the virtuoso and brilliant playing of this musician. I asked him if he would agree to come to France to teach a small group of French people who were passionate about shakuhachi. He answered that he would think about it...

In 1999 he informed me that he was coming for a concert at UNESCO in Paris. He agreed to come and teach for a weekend on this occasion. For this first master class we were about ten students and, although he had not met us before, he made us play with him on the UNESCO stage. What a proof of confidence! This was the beginning of a partnership that continues to this day. After more than twenty years of collaboration, La Voie du Bambou has become the French branch of the HijiriKai school, founded by Fukuda-sensei (the Dutch branch having been created by Hélène Seiyu Codjo and the Italian branch by Fiore Seichiku De Mattia).

Like all traditional musicians, Fukuda-sensei teaches through direct imitation, but he does not hesitate to give many explanations on the spirit of the pieces as well as on the technique. He insists on the quality of the sound, its colour. For him, the whole body participates in the production of sound. This is the beginning of a vibratory quest pushed to its paroxysm. It is a global body-mind approach that requires extreme concentration and presence to oneself.

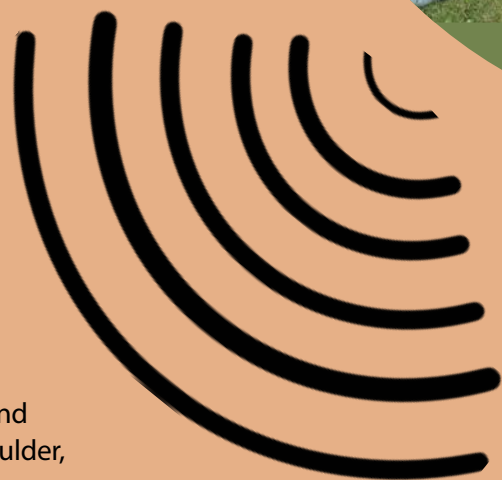
As a teacher, my goal is to bring a student to discover his own sound. To do this, I do not hesitate to give a lot of explanations, especially on the physiology of breathing. I have seen how little we know about our anatomy and how our bodies work. From my own experience, I was able to measure that it was the body that learned to play and not the mind. The first contacts with the instrument are very important. I remember this person who, during his first lesson, burst into tears when he produced his first sound. It was amazing!

I usually start my lessons with a warm-up in the form of spun sounds and then come the study of the *honkyoku*. The *honkyoku* has a very constrained form and the disciple must try to play like the master. This leaves little room for freedom. However, it is in this tiny space of freedom that the disciple will be able to blossom and find his own way, thus enriching the tradition. Technique is important, but the spirit must guide the playing. Each piece, each phrase, each note tells a particular story, which is why I leave the student free to interpret it as long as the piece is not distorted.

The majority of my students are attracted by the meditative character of the shakuhachi and often have no musical training. It is therefore necessary to propose a teaching that combines the study of *honkyoku* and the basics of music (reading, intonation, rhythm, etc.)

To conclude, I would say that the key word in the transmission of shakuhachi is "wonder". I remember my amazement the first times I heard this flute. And it is this wonder that I wish to transmit to my students whom I thank for all that they have taught me.

Photo: Masterclass of the Bamboo Way 1998 conducted by Fukuda-sensei and Kineya-sensei (shamisen) at Moulin de Flée, France.



RILEY LEE – SHAKUHACHI PRESENCE / BEING WITH A BAMBOO FLUTE



Listening

I remember a spell of lessons in the 1980s in Tokyo I had with Katsuya Yokoyama, my shakuhachi teacher. Yokoyama was teaching me a traditional piece called *San'an* (Safe Delivery). I couldn't seem to get it right. Using typical shakuhachi methods, Yokoyama would play a phrase or two. We would play them together, and then I'd play them on my own.

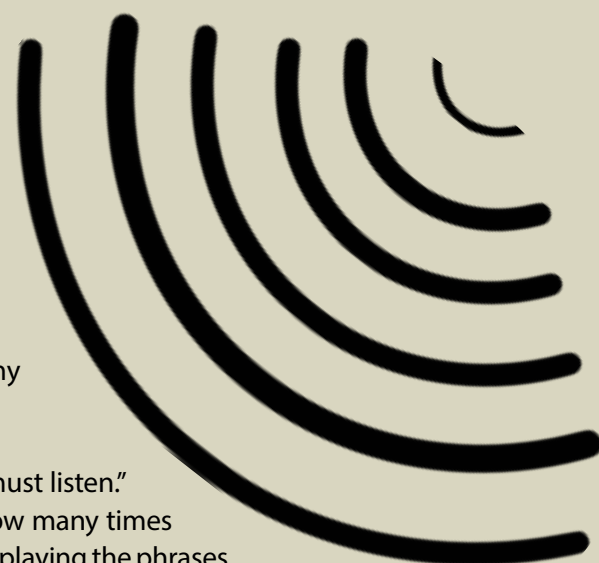
"Fine," he said, possibly after deciding that, though I couldn't really play the phrases yet, intellectually I probably understood how they should be played. "Now, go practice and play them for me in our next lesson." And so I did.

At the next lesson, after considerable practice in between and with some confidence, I played the phrases on my own. "No," he said patiently, "that's not how they go. Please listen more carefully."

Sure enough, I was able to hear some subtle differences, bits I might have missed previously, but which I now could hear, perhaps because I had played the phrases many times already. Great, I thought. I went home for more practice. The same thing happened at the next lesson. "No, that's not correct. Please listen more carefully."

I tried ever more earnestly to pay attention to how he played the phrase during our lesson. I was totally in the present, attempting to identify what I wasn't hearing in his playing that made my playing not 'right'. As always, I immediately went home and began practicing while Yokoyama's notes were still fresh in my mind's ear. Next time, surely I would get it right.

At the next lesson: "No, you're not listening. I'll play it again for you. This time, you must listen." Not yet despairing, I became more determined to get it 'right'. I don't remember how many times Yokoyama admonished me for not listening before sending me home yet again to try playing the phrases 'correctly'. At each lesson, I was certainly hearing ever more subtle dynamic and tonal changes, embellishments and emphases, and especially variations in timings. But I never seemed to succeed in playing the phrases correctly. I decided that I needed external help.



I brought a portable cassette recorder to the next lesson. I asked Yokoyama if he minded if I tape-recorded his playing of the phrases in question. "Of course! Good idea!", he immediately replied.

Going home after the lesson, I thought that I might finally have a chance of success. I had the music on tape. I could listen to Yokoyama's playing over and over again. Surely I would get it right this time. I listened to and played along with the cassette recording many times leading up to our next lesson. I was quite confident as I played the phrases for Yokoyama. As I played, he leaned his head to one side, eyes shut, as if going to sleep.

Almost before I had finished, he sprang to life, exclaiming, "No, that's not right!". What? How could this be? At the risk of being impatient and possibly sounding like a disrespectful *gaijin* (foreigner), I asked if we could please listen to the recording of his playing the same phrases, from our last lesson. "Good idea, let's hear it." Once again, while the recording was played Yokoyama shut his eyes, appearing to concentrate on the recording of his own playing. To my astonishment, as soon as I turned off the cassette player, he nearly jumped up, pointed triumphantly at the cassette player and declared, "NO! That's still not correct. Now, listen while I play it for you again!" At that point, I gave up expecting to get it 'right', or expecting to gain Yokoyama's approval, though I never stopped trying. All I could do was listen to his playing as intently as possible. I began to learn to listen carefully to my own playing. If I couldn't hear objectively what was going on in my own playing, I would never know if I was playing my phrases as I heard Yokoyama play them.

Yokoyama's playing, which I was trying so hard to imitate, subtly changed from lesson to lesson, yet it always sounded 'just right'. I tried to stop analysing what was happening. I accepted that I would most probably never 'get it'. How could I ever replicate with my shakuhachi all of the subtleties of Yokoyama's 'right' way of playing, when the 'right' way constantly changed, yet always seemed to sound 'just right'?

I realised that I was basically trying to accomplish the impossible. Yet, I still enjoyed the process, even more so once I realised that I was striving to do the impossible. I did my best at replicating Yokoyama's playing. Knowing that I never could made me less anxious. I always expected to be shown how I wasn't playing correctly, and was seldom disappointed. I wasn't just learning how to play the shakuhachi. I was learning to be completely and totally in the present. I was learning to listen.

Years later, I realised that the 'right way' of playing the piece encompassed more than what could be recorded on a cassette tape. It required an awareness of more than what one could hear with one's ears. It required insight, a sensitivity and an ability to respond appropriately to the unique circumstances and environment existing at each specific moment of the playing, I also realised, much later, the benefits of Yokoyama having set a goal for me that was basically impossible. Had the goal been possible and had I finally achieved it, what then? I realised that the fact that a goal is impossible does not diminish its value as a goal. Yokoyama might have put it this way, "A goal that is anything less than impossible is not worth striving for." He would have been talking about big goals, lifetime goals, which by definition take one's entire lifetime trying to achieve. On the way towards these lifetime goals, one can and probably should have numerous achievable goals, but like rest stops on a long road trip, they are not final destinations.

What was the goal that Yokoyama set for me? It was, depending on your definition, the goal of being consciously aware of my essence and everything around me, using my shakuhachi as a focal point. Yokoyama set for me the goal of 'presence.'

Listening for Absolute Timing - *Zettai no Ma*

Thomas Hoover¹ reminds us that Zen arts taunts our logical mind and toys with our perception. The art of playing shakuhachi *honkyoku* is no exception. Zen messes with your mind, though for a good cause. As with other 'Zen arts', the shakuhachi *honkyoku* attempts to put us in touch with our non-rational, non-verbal side. In doing so, and irrespective of the insights gained by the player, it makes for good music. Rhythm in *honkyoku* illustrates this.

In western musical terms, pieces that do not have beats or pulses have 'free rhythm.' As mentioned above, shakuhachi *honkyoku* typically do not have beats, but neither do they have 'free rhythm.' *Honkyoku* may sound freely or rhythmically improvised, the rhythm or rather the timing of every musical event in *honkyoku* is anything but 'free'. I was taught to play close attention to my timing when playing *honkyoku*. I had to play every note, embellishment and phrase, and take every breath with what is described by the Japanese term, *zettai no ma*.

The word, *ma* translates as 'space' both physical and temporal. *Ma* is the empty space between the black ink on a stark Japanese brush painting, and it also the space that the black brush strokes inhabit. *Ma* also translates as 'timing'. Each phrase, note, embellishment, inhalation and pause between the end of one exhalation and the beginning of the next inhalation, that is, every musical event in a piece, all have *ma*. Entire pieces also have their own *ma*. This concept is central to much of the Zen Buddhist-inspired art forms in Japan.

The Japanese word, *zettai* means 'absolute'. Therefore, *zettai no ma* means 'absolute timing'. *Honkyoku* should be played with 'absolute timing'. All of the notes, rests, breaths, etc., must all be played with the absolutely correct timing. How can this be done, when the pieces have no pulse or beat? The short answer is that the player has to be absolutely present, to pay attention with absolute concentration.

How does one learn to do that? Do I just listen to my teacher perform a piece so many times (easy to do now with recordings) that I eventually memorise how many seconds or fractions of seconds he gives each musical event? This would imply that ideally every performance of a *honkyoku* is always played exactly the same length, with the absolutely right *ma*.

If 'absolute timing' is the same thing as 'one single correct timing' or 'the single best timing', then you should be able to measure that timing. If there was a single 'best' timing for a particular note in a particular phrase of a particular *honkyoku*, it could, for example, be measured as being exactly 4 seconds long. Add up the one and only correct timings of all of the musical events in a piece and you get the single correct length of the entire piece, for example, 8 minutes. Any deviation, say 8 minutes and 3 seconds, would mean the piece had been played incorrectly. Fortunately, *honkyoku* does not work in that extremely mechanical, non-musical way, as Yokoyama amply demonstrated to me while teaching me the piece, *San'an*.

'Absolute' implies infinite or universal. In this sense, *zettai no ma* suggests that there are an infinite number of 'right' timings or durations when playing shakuhachi *honkyoku*. This is, I now believe, what Katsuya



Yokoyama so patiently tried to encourage me to understand in my story of lessons with him, related at the beginning of this essay. There is an absolute right way to perform *San'an* today, but that won't be the absolute right way to play it tomorrow or next week. Each performance has a uniquely 'right' *ma*. The 'presence' of each performance is determined by its environment.

Traditionally, lessons are one to one, though they are not private lessons, per se. Anyone can sit through anyone else's lesson. Lesson times are not booked. Students show up on lesson day and wait their turn, listening to the lessons before theirs, and frequently staying on after their lesson. This method allows everyone the valuable opportunity to either preview pieces they haven't learned yet or review pieces already learned. Eventually, experienced students, some teachers in their own right, learn by watching and listening to their teacher teach the same piece to different people.

My lessons usually started with my playing a piece for my teachers (Chikuho Sakai II and from 1984 Katsuya Yokoyama), which I had previously learned. As is appropriate for a largely oral/aural musical tradition, I was not allowed to leave a piece until I could play it, without notation, to my teacher's satisfaction. This could take quite some weeks/months; I would often be playing the same piece for a number of lessons. Then, we would begin the piece being worked on at the moment.

I learned the *honkyoku* mainly through imitation, or more precisely, though listening. We used notation, but primarily as a mnemonic tool. The notes on the page were there only to remind me what I learned by previously listening to my teacher. I learned the music by using my ears, never with my eyes, looking at the score. The scores frequently did not correspond to what I was hearing. Because of the inconsequential or peripheral nature of the notation, most teachers have little incentive to edit or correct ambiguous or incorrect scores, which they might have inherited from their own equally disinterested teacher. Needless to say, sight-reading was not practiced; it does not even exist as a concept in the *honkyoku* tradition.

Pieces are learned phrase by phrase. It might take months to get through an entire piece. For a set of ten advanced pieces, at the beginning of each lesson Sakai wrote out the phrases he would teach me that day. This was far more elaborate a task than you might imagine. Traditional shakuhachi notation is based on Japanese characters developed when all writing was done with brush and ink. Itself a lesson in 'being present,' Sakai would first rub the ink-stick meditatively on the ink-stone, up, down, up, down, until the water turned into jet-black ink, with just the right consistency.

Only then would Sakai lay down the ink stick and pick up his brush. He would write out two or three lines of the piece that we would go through during the lesson. By the time he had finished, there was little time left to work on the music, but I was not complaining! After the concentrated silence while Sakai made the ink, and wrote down the notes of the phrases, my ears were all the more attuned to Sakai's playing once we picked up our shakuhachi. The hand-written set of ten pieces is now one of my most prized possessions.

When *honkyoku* are taught traditionally, the shakuhachi teacher plays each phrase before the student is even allowed to try. How could a student play anything without hearing it first? As mentioned earlier, learning the *honkyoku* is learning how to listen.

My teacher would play a phrase while I listened intently, trying to make sense of the inconsistent, often vague and sometimes inaccurate and incomplete score. Then I would try to play the phrase together with my teacher. Finally, if the teacher thought there was a minor chance of success, I was allowed to play the phrase on my own. I would then be corrected, or more often just told that I hadn't played it correctly, but not why or where, and the



process would be repeated. Yokoyama and I were going through this process in my story, above. It suddenly occurred to me, over a decade later, after I had taught numerous students of my own, that Yokoyama might have been trying, amongst other things, to encourage me to hear and experience *zettai no ma* for myself. *Zettai* or absolute also means 'infinite'. The absolutely correct timing for a phrase implies an infinite number of right ways to play it, depending on the situation.

Honkyoku and Honnin no Kyoku

Honkyoku, the term for traditional shakuhachi pieces associated with Zen Buddhism, is made up of two characters or words. The first part of this compound word, *hon* means 'main' or 'original'. The second part, *kyoku* means 'piece'. *Honkyoku* are the main or original pieces for the shakuhachi. They date from the fifteenth century or earlier, and are largely aurally transmitted.

There is an implied meaning of *honkyoku* which relates to the notion of presence, that of *honnin no kyoku*. *Honnin* can be translated as the 'main person', the 'person in question', so *honnin no kyoku* can mean, 'the piece of the person in question', that is the piece of the performer. When I play a *honkyoku*, I must make it my own piece, not by changing the notes or the rhythm or by playing it with my own musical interpretation, but by imbuing the piece with my presence. In order to play a *honkyoku* as *honnin no kyoku*, and with *zettai no ma* (absolute timing), I need to know who I am and what my 'presence' is.

While playing a piece with my teacher during a lesson, my 'presence' is that of a student, and I express my 'student essence' by playing, or trying to play the piece exactly like my teacher is playing it. For me at that moment during the lesson, playing the piece as *honnin no kyoku*, as 'my own piece' paradoxically means mimicking my teacher's way of playing it to as subtle a level of sound and nuances as possible. Conversely, while playing a *honkyoku* with his student during a lesson, the teacher plays the piece as *honnin no kyoku* by playing it in a way that is most likely to encourage the student to learn the piece.

If both student and teacher are playing *honnin no kyoku*, they will be playing the piece differently because student and teacher are different *honnin*. Yet, the actual sounds they make with their flutes are, ideally exactly the same. Theoretically, this is possible, but in practice, this never happens. Even if it did, each would be playing different *honnin no kyoku*, because one is playing it as a student and the other as teacher. Their intent is different, and therefore so is their 'presence'.

When playing a piece with an intention to play it in a way that is most conducive to the student's learning the piece, the teacher must listen with all of his being to how the student is playing and must constantly adjust his own playing accordingly, though these adjustments may be inaudible to a casual listener. The student, of course is required to listen as carefully as possible to his teacher's playing and adjust his playing accordingly too. As the student becomes better at playing the *honkyoku*, he doesn't have to try so much at being a student. As concentration, awareness and technical ability increase, less effort is spent trying to play exactly like teacher and more effort is directed to just playing the piece.

Eventually, the teacher doesn't have to adjust for the student as much either. The teacher can also concentrate more on the piece itself and less on the student's rendition of it. As teacher and student begin to drop their 'teacher essence' and 'student essence', the differences between the *honnin no kyoku* of the student and that of the teacher decrease until ideally, they disappear. At that point, the student is no longer student and the teacher is no longer teacher. Both now have the same intent. Their 'presence' or 'essence' has merged.

The notion of *honnin no kyoku* implies that in order to play *honkyoku* I have to make it mine. While this is useful for a shakuhachi player whose interests are limited to the musical element of the *honkyoku*, for those players who are also attracted to the Zen Buddhist aspect of this repertoire, there is more to it than that. As James H. Austin² explains, the concept of I, me and mine, in which I am the subject, object and/or the owner of virtually everything in my universe, is something that people spend literally years of meditation attempting to break down.

The above description of the final stages in learning a *honkyoku* alludes to a not-I, not-me, not-mine state of being, when the teacher and student disappear, and consequently, the differences between their playing does too. What remains is just the piece, just the playing.

Footnotes

- 1 Hoover, Thomas *Zen Culture* (1977) Randon House NY, (Kindle version), chap 17, par. 1
- 2 Austin, James *Zen-Brain Reflections* (2006) MIT Press Cambridge (Kindle version), chapters 5 and 7

Extract from the longer article *Shakuhachi Presence: Being with a Bamboo Flute*.
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MY LESSON EXPERIENCE

ESS Members



" I n
2016, I met my current
teacher via the Internet and asked him to
teach me. He built me a flute and the lessons began.
After I could play the first piece (Kyorei) to some extent, he started
with the second. And so it went on. I asked him if I shouldn't play a
piece correctly first, he told me: "That's not important. You will never be able
to play a piece "correctly". What matters is that you keep starting over." And
when I asked about finger exercises or beginner exercises, he told me, "Every piece
you play is a finger exercise, a beginner exercise. You don't need anything extra."

And so I played piece after piece from our temple repertoire. And when we had gone
through all of them, it started all over again. This time more subtleties were added. Here
a little more *meri*, there a little more *kari*, here a little more radiant and there a little less
punchy, and so on.

In our notation, such hints are hardly to be found.

Everything takes place in direct exchange from teacher to student.

And I also got hints to the pieces, from where they came and which situations
and or feelings should be expressed. I was virtually introduced to the "world
of images" of these pieces. And so this teaching continues to this day.

Over the years, my game has changed."

Alf Bartholdy

What do
Shakuhachi sounds mean to me?

From the moment I first heard the sound of shakuhachi, I have been
inseparable with my flutes. They gave me an opportunity to explore, which
gives energy and fills me with meaning.

For me, the sounds of shakuhachi are the eternal love of nature to everything that has been created.
It is the strength of wind in the mountains, the leaves in an autumn forest, the sea breeze, the beauty
of the storm... It is the communication of animals and birds, the smells that bring about audio memories...

I have noticed that playing shakuhachi changes the diapason of colors you see in the world. The practice of
concentrating on a sound vibration when you play this magical nature instrument gives an opportunity to hold
concentration overall and be in the moment. That gives a chance to be ready for changing and moving forward,
transforming.

I feel that the world of shakuhachi holds a few directions. One of them is the connection with teachers that you develop
through music, and for me it has always been a priority. That is the spiritual part of sharing wisdom. My teacher Serhii
Maksymenko has been playing in Zensabo tradition, and our mutual practice has been going on for over 10 years. My
world of shakuhachi is a circle of friends and connections with interesting people. It is an opportunity to give magical
sounds to other people. And by giving joy to others you enrich yourself too.

Another important direction is my own practice, learning and following the sound, how it changes. To advance the
practice, I have been trying to play every day for 1-1,5 hour. Even now I feel I have a lot to learn. It's interesting
to explore how different the vibration of the sound gets in different places in nature. Up in the mountains,
shakuhachi is always especially magical. I have seen and will always see shakuhachi as an opportunity
to improve myself.

This year I had to leave Ukraine. But despite current distance between me and my
teacher, shakuhachi practice is and will always be an important part of my life.

Tamara Rogozina





My First teacher.

In the beginning, somehow, I discovered Darlington Hall was holding a summer school for beginners playing the shakuhachi, led by Yoshikazu Iwamoto, who recently had taken up a post in residence, His teaching manual, luckily seemed straightforward. (I was a complete novice). Those five days changed my life. Yoshikazu played those elementary pieces so meaningfully. The first impressions of his sound have stayed with me, engraved in the feelings.

I was so lucky !
 Later in London, a handful of us clubbed together; including, Richard Stagg, to pay for Yoshikazu to come to London for a day of lessons.
 He would begin by playing a piece all through, i.e. *Kuro Kami*, Then he played phrase by phrase, He would play, I repeat and so on, Culminating in us both playing through together. (SOMEHOW !)

He was so kind and patient.
 I remember being present while students of different abilities, took their lessons too.
 In the beginning, The personal struggle, going through the fire. Really helps teach compassion for others. Passing through the same struggle.
 I feel this struggle; unites us.
 I was so lucky.

Damon Rawsley



Honkyoku
 / lesson experience and memories

Already a first, single self-blown, successful note on the shakuhachi gives the student an idea of what could eventually become a melody some day. That's motivation.

I was taught traditionally. This didn't seem strange to me, even familiar after ten years of Kyudo practice. In the end it was a different parallel instead. The student of shakuhachi is busy on different levels. Breath out, breath in. Blow until a sound is heard. The student's eyes move back and forth between sheet music – if such is already available – and the teacher observing and imitating. Listening to the *sensei's* flute and his/her own.

First there are musical fragments, sentences, then a whole piece. An introduction that seems to be a long way away from the goal of learning *honkyoku*. Being at this point my modest desire arose to being able to play at least one piece of *honkyoku* completely.

But it turned out differently than assumed. Before I really «wholy» and reliably felt the first played piece, I went on to the next and again to the next one. This was repeated again and again - until finally, after a few years all 36 pieces on my certificate bear the teacher's stamp (*hanko, inkan*).

Now it's diving into the depths of *honkyoku*. Concentration, no thinking, «being there» every split second and playing the shakuhachi. Is that Zen? Only after so many years? No, even before there had been moments full of harmony. These moments made me long for more and kept me going and going. There were hardly any verbal explanations from the teacher as I was used to from western music lessons. It was always played in unison. Only later on, when I was more advanced, I was allowed to play a passage on my own from time to time.

Playing *honkyoku* and practicing Kyudo are closely related. The technique must be practiced and refined over and over again. Depending on one's state of mind, this "deep" existence in the «here and now», this "resting in oneself" arises - or not - which is to be accepted.

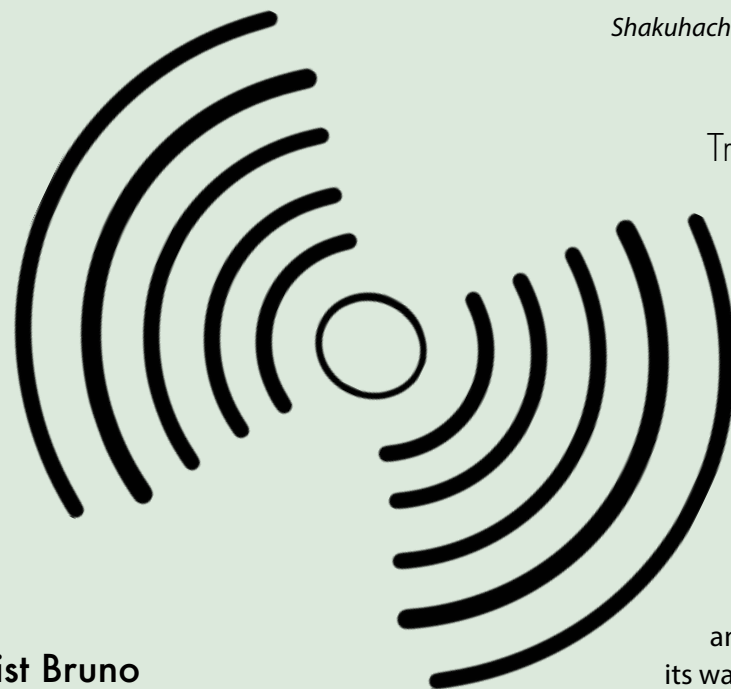
Honkyoku is a kind of "mirror of the soul". Every emotion is often expressed through the Shakuhachi.
 In the arts, there is the expression "*shin-gyô-sô*", which in its content also accompanies playing the shakuhachi.

shin 真 (form with truth, fact), should be correct
gyô 行 (form with action), following the principles
sô 草 (form as nature), integration into one's personality, in harmony with all things
shin-gyô-sô is only partially consciously striving for. In order to attain *sô*, a natural development is required, which describes the following wisdom:
 You cannot pull blades of grass to make them grow faster.



Ursula Fuyûmi Schmidiger

WORLD MUSIC: APPROPRIATION OR TRANSPROPRIATION?



Canadian shakuhachi performer and independent ethnomusicologist Bruno Deschênes looks at the question of cultural appropriation within the field of world music with a focus on shakuhachi playing and performing.

Appropriation

Appropriation is generally defined as the act of attributing something to oneself. It is about acquiring or taking possession of something for one's exclusive use or aims. From a cultural or artistic viewpoint, it is about adapting something for a particular use, aim or objective, or making a particular knowledge one's own. This definition implies that it takes place without necessarily asking and/or getting consent from those being appropriated. It can even be at times taking or withholding something without the authority or the right to do so. In world music, musicians can at times show a high degree of complacency in taking a song, an instrument, a genre from a particular culture without consent, this without studying with the people from which this music originated, and without having a native from that culture in the group.¹ It is as if any music is there "for the taking," without considering if that person or culture consents of such taking. This occurs especially when a music is considered traditional, outside the bounds of copyright laws.² Appropriation is about taking to suit one's needs, wants, assumptions, presuppositions, even prejudices, for example, without considering the people from which one is taking. As philosopher James O. Young indicates, originally that word referred to taking something from nature without any moral stigma attached to it,³ a mindset that, to a large extent, appears to be maintained today in world music.

According to Simon Frith, the scholarly discourse on authenticity in world music played and still play a role in exoticizing non-Western musics, as much from scholars, musicians, and public alike, though for the industry these musics are mainly raw materials to be commodified.⁴ Connell and Gibson note that music is both global and distant, local and deterritorialized, being attached to a place,⁵ as if culture and place are closely linked. This is not always the case if we consider the diasporas found all around the world, some of which created genres of music outside their places of origin (e.g., Andes music created in Paris, or the salsa created in New York). For these two authors, world music exemplified a »fetishi- zation of marginality« and an essentialist identification of cultural practices distant from one's own.⁶ For Marjorie Kibby, appropriation ignores and even deni- grate the cultural autonomy of the cultures being appropriated by reifying and essentializing them. As well, appropriation can be a critique of our contemporary social world, a desire to go beyond its constraints.⁷ As for Steven Feld, appropria- tion is as much a homage, a source of connectedness, creativity and innovation, as a mean of domination and of maintaining asymmetries and divisiveness. Appropria- tion can be direct, subtle, arrogant, dominating, complex and contradictory.^{8,9}

Transpropriation

How about when a master musician from an Asian culture willingly and intentionally agrees to teach his traditional music to foreigners, as has been doing Japanese shakuhachi master Kurahashi Yōdo II, who has been teaching that bamboo flute yearly in the US for close to 30 years, and with whom I am still studying today. Are his non-Japanese students appropriating his music that he intentionally share with them? In other words, is he handing purposefully his knowledge as a shakuhachi master for non-Japanese to appropriate? Is it really a question of appropriation? I want to propose here a possible way out of this "conundrum."

A rarely used, and relatively unknown term that gives a contrasting viewpoint on appropriation for our understanding of cultural encounters, is transpropriation.¹² This term is used in diverse scholarly fields such as philosophy, philosophy of law, environment, though surprisingly not in music, ethnomusicology, anthropology, social sciences, fields studying cultural and social encounters. In fact, this term has not yet found its way into current English and French dictionaries.

In Europe, the term transpropriation has been used regularly since the 1990s to refer to common goods that can be used in multiple situations by multiple holders, as proposed in particular by Belgium philosopher of law and jurist François Ost,¹³ about the collective ownership of heritage lands or properties, or for environmental questions, for example. Transpropriation in this context refers, among others, to managing collective heritage sites, monuments, places, lands, natural environments, regarding the cultural and/or historical meaning it may have for a community. Earlier, American philosopher Edward S. Casey in a 1971 article defines transpropriation as a way to make something one's own through one's relationship with other people. In his view, it transcends confrontation, since it does not create a dialectical identification between people.¹⁴ Transpropriation thus refers to reciprocal relations between human beings regarding something, though it appears that his call for the use of this term remained unheeded.¹⁵

My reason for proposing to use transpropriation in ethnomusicology concerning world music is that appropriation appears to be interpreted as a natural and all-encompassing state of affairs of cultural and social communications and encounters between people, as if it does not have, or "does not need" to have an opposite. I do not believe that all human encounters either social, political, cultural or otherwise can be viewed and understood solely from the viewpoint of appropriation and its underlying usurpation. There are encounters that, though they might appear oppositional or antagonistic on the surface, they would make better sense if one takes the viewpoint of transpropriation.

"I do not believe that all human encounters either social, political, cultural or otherwise can be viewed and understood solely from the viewpoint of appropriation and its underlying usurpation."

Surprisingly, the anthropological field of transculturality does not use that term, yet the meaning of transculturality clearly applies to transpropriation. Anthropologist Afef Bessenaieh defines transculturality as the creation of relational webs and flows of shared significance and reciprocity woven by human practices and representations, between communities, either ethnic, political, ideological or otherwise. Transculturality is not about distinction and polarization, it is about relatedness, commonality and mixedness of shared and coherent cultural practices and meanings.¹⁶ According to German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch, in transcultural situations, abstract understanding matters less than pragmatic interactions between people, either in real-time or virtually through social media. It is what allows for a commonsensical and multi-meshed transition between the polarity of cultural viewpoints, thus going from what

distinguishes and distances to what binds people together. According to Welsch, transculturality, contrary to what it may seem, does not create homogeneity. The permeation of boundaries grows into more diversity; different layers of communication are created for the needs of each group thus formed. These webs of shared practices do not have to be delineated by geographical, territorial, ethnic, cultural, social or even national exigencies, but follow instead individual, practical or common cultural interests, among others, as can be found in the everyday use of social media (e.g., we find virtual communities about martial arts, of orchid lovers, of fans of a pop star, among so many). For Welsch, transculturality is about relatedness and entanglement in the reality of a pluralistic, hybridized and complex modern world, in which personal interests interpenetrate to form virtual communities through social media, or real communities in daily multi-cultural social encounters, beyond national or cultural boundaries.¹⁷

Transculturality goes hand in hand with transpropriation, although that field does not use that term, at least the authors I cite here. I suggest that transculturality is possible because of transpropriation. In “transpropriative” situations there must be an intersubjective awareness that during an encounter a group of people is involved in is harbouring a shared form of identity through which everyone can have a commonsensical communication and entanglement, thus everyone can understand each other sensibly, not only ideologically or socially, as suggested by Wolfgang Welsch. Such a shared form of identity does not mean everyone behaves and/or thinks the same, but that a form of mimesis and intermeshing shapes the encounters.¹⁸ The prefix “trans-” in both transculturality and transpropriation thus refers to a transfer of reciprocal and pragmatic experiences, a sharing which could be cultural, ideological, social, political, artistic, personal or otherwise, in the sense that when two or more persons are intermingling, they are all mutually in an experiential and sensible state of receptivity and sharing toward each other. The most important is not necessarily what is shared, but more how and why it is shared. Transpropriation, I would suggest, occurs at an individual level, between two or more persons, while transculturality, as it is defined by Bessenaieh and Welsch, is more about an intermingling from which a community can take form. Everyone is individually involved to put into place a sense of commonality, even though it might be just a few persons. In other words, transpropriation determines one’s involvement in the collective aspect of creating transculturality. Although transpropriation between few individuals or groups of people can never be even-handed, and that there are obviously differences, disagreements, expectations as well as power struggles, one thing to consider is that everyone participating is willing to relate to the others through an intentional and mutual interrelatedness, beyond each one’s positions and differences.

“A musician who wants to master a music from a culture in which he was not born in, transpropriation is “bidirectional,” not one-sided. ”

In this sense, in particular, concerning a musician who wants to master a music from a culture in which he was not born in, transpropriation is “bidirectional,” not one-sided. It is not about blindly and self-consciously fulfilling oneself as appropriation is usually defined, but is about crossing over one’s cultural boundaries toward this other culture, and in the end, giving back in return for what has been intentionally shared with us. It is about showing a willingness to learn something from another culture by getting down from one’s cultural ivory tower, so to get a reciprocal willingness of a master to teach us. We must show respect right from the start, not only a hunger to “grab” anything that passes by for “the taking.” As importantly, there must be an equal willingness to give back in one way or another. At times we might not be able to give back, but we must at least show reverence to the person who shares her or his art with us. The intentions are not solely on satisfying our own personal interests or curiosity, it is as much about paying respect to these persons who are willing to share something of themselves and their culture with us.

To a large extent, appropriation maintains a distance between oneself and those who are being appropriated, paying basically attention to differences. It is also about presumptuously taking what corroborates and substantiates the assumptions, the presuppositions, the orientalist views and the myths we have about what is viewed as Other. In

transpropriation, these prior assumptions, presuppositions, myths, including orientalist beliefs we may have are of course conspicuously active in the background. They are in fact what entices us to go beyond one’s cultural boundaries to appropriate what cater to them. However, if with appropriation we impose on an Other our presuppositions and myths, with transpropriation we have to accept to confront them. Through transpropriation, we might be forced to acknowledge that there is a reciprocal misinterpretation about what we want to appropriate from the other, a respectful acknowledgement which could gradually transform into a new understanding. In this regard, I would suggest that my learning of Japanese music showed me that I received more from my teacher by taking an attitude of transpropriation, than one of appropriation. He is more willing to share his knowledge if I show a transpropriative attitude than an appropriative one.

One ethnomusicologist who raised a few issues that could help validate the use of transpropriation in ethnomusicology is Veit Erlmann, though he does not use that term. One of the key points of Erlmann’s work is about uncovering a new modern aesthetic, one that reconfigures not only all the musics of the world, but everyone’s musical space, cultural identity and viewpoint about music.¹⁹ Especially, as he suggests, world music is not the music of the non-Western world, but is a historical moment of our globalized world, in which time and space become undefined, imagined, dispersed and cut loose, and that is based on some fetishized, mythologized, orientalized and deterritorialized local traditions, in large part thanks to the music industry.²⁰ As one result of this convoluted situation, a musician can identify and thus can play a music from a particular culture, from a particular historical time, from a specific place, from which they are detached, yet one that defines her or his identity as much musically, culturally as socially in today’s modern world and time, within her or his society or culture. In Erlmann’s view, essentialization, differences, romanticization and mythologization, to which can be added reification, play a crucial role in any musician’s desires to master a music from a culture in which he was not born. The aims are to create more opened identities, as well as new aesthetics beyond one’s own culture, an aesthetics that mix modernity and essentialized traditions that deserved to be uncovered. In this line of thoughts, transpropriation could be viewed as transversality, to use one of Erlmann’s terms, from which the play with differences is a way to create one’s differences within one’s social and cultural space, including creating a tradition within the current modernity that one could call one’s own. The transversal play with differences is a way to define and thus individualize one’s identity in the face of a social space that has become too restrained, too complexed and too hybrid.²¹

One crucial question must however be asked: Can all cultural encounters, no matter the arts and no matter the situation, be solely appropriation or transpropriation? Right from the start, my interest in Japanese traditional music and the shakuhachi primarily took the form of appropriation, a music not much known outside of Japan in the 1990s. Over the years, my appropriative attitude had to be reshaped to take the form of transpropriation, the reason being that I gradually recognize that simply appropriating that music (i.e., learning to play that instrument, its repertoire and its theoretical



The author with his Matsu Take Ensemble, performing in Montréal.

underpinnings) was insufficient, especially that I aim to play that bamboo flute and its repertoire like a Japanese musician, which I am fully aware will never be attainable. With today's unavoidable transcultural and entanglement of cultures and individual interests, no cultural encounters can be purely or solely appropriation, at least in world music. When musicians dig deeper into learning a music from a culture in which they are not born, their appropriative attitude almost invariably leads to some forms of transpropriation. If appropriation is about the surface of thing that please our presuppositions and assumptions, transpropriation is about what is under and beyond that surface, which implies

crossing over one's cultural boundaries and attenuating at times the hold one's native culture has on us, so that we do not simply appropriate, but we "transappropriate" with the music of that "Other" respectfully.

Appropriation vs. Transpropriation

To world musicians like myself whose hope is to master a music from a culture in which I was not born, am I doing solely appropriation? As well, are Asian musicians taking on Western classical music appropriating it? Where does appropriation "start" and "end"? At which point does appropriation become transpropriation? Are they distinct viewpoints or do they overlap? If they do lap over one another, at which point does this happen? Are they both social

or cultural states, or should they be viewed more like processes of socio-cultural encounters that define and delimit these encounters but at different degrees, depending on who appropriate or "transappropriate" what, as well as why and how it occurs?

I propose here a possible answer to these questions (though many more could, of course, be raised) about transpropriation by presenting very succinctly how I became a shakuhachi player. To start with, I received my shihan, master licence, in shakuhachi in 2016. Interestingly enough, I did not get it from a Japanese master, but from a Canadian player living near Vancouver, Alcvin Ryūzen Ramos, who has received his *shihan* and *dai-shihan* (great master title), both from Japanese masters.²² Can getting such titles from a culture from which one was not born in be considered a form of appropriation? The discipline that is involved in learning such a difficult instrument,²³ as much technically as aesthetically, shows that getting such licence or title must imply more transpropriation than appropriation. Learning simply a technique is not sufficient, one must embody what it is to play that music properly.

I was trained as a classical musician. Around 1988, my Japanese wife started to learn the *koto*, the Japanese table zither. Since she never studied music before to learn the *koto*, I helped her decipher that music, the notation of which is different from Western notation. Though with major differences, there were some similarities (influenced by European notation) I could rely on. I discovered a music that was almost unknown in Canada at the time. I also discovered along the way that there existed a large repertoire of duet pieces for *koto* and shakuhachi. I saw an opportunity that would allow me to play

with her. I started to learn that bamboo flute in 1995 with a retired Japanese man living in Montreal. My growing interest in that music and in particular a traditional music that is so distinct from European classical music incited me to dig deeper into that music, its history as well as its aesthetics. From the start, I was appropriating that music for my self-interest, combing the Internet, libraries, journals and bookstores in search of anything I could put my hands on about traditional Japanese music. Aesthetically, this proved totally insufficient. I had to learn from a Japanese musician.

In 1998, I got in touch with an American shakuhachi player based in New York, Ronnie Nyōgetsu Seldin, with whom I took few lessons. Thanks to him, I was able to take a lesson in 1999 with a Japanese master from Kyōto, Yoshio Kurahashi (known today as Kurahashi Yodo II) who has been visiting the U.S. twice a year since the beginning of the 1990s. My meeting with Mr Kurahashi radically changed my perspective on learning that bamboo flute. What I found on the Internet and in books, and what he taught me did not entirely match. After few lessons with him (including inviting him to give classes and concerts in Montreal on three occasions from 2000 to 2003), I was forced to realize that technical, historical or theoretical questions were obviously inadequate to grasp what it means to properly play the solo repertoires for that bamboo flute as it was composed by a sect of zen Buddhist monks during Japan's Edo era (1603-1868). Since the aesthetics of that particular music differs largely from European classical music, solely appropriating a technique and a repertoire was insufficient. It was obvious to me that making one's own the Japanese aesthetics could only be done beyond and over the technique of that instrument and the theory of its music, and especially beyond my scholarly training in classical music, since I was trying to learn that music from the standpoint of my classical training.

Going "beyond" my appropriation of this music, which was and still is coloured by my enculturation in European classical music, meant and still means basically this: to make my own the Japanese sense of aesthetics, I had to give up something of this enculturation. I could not learn that aesthetics by solely relying on my Western music training and way of making sense of music. I realized early on that that prior training was interfering right from the start with my learning of that particular Japanese music. I was confronted with a different way of not only thinking but feeling, making sense of and embodying music. I could not simply grab for myself what was taught to me and appropriate it, and then impose my Western way of thinking upon it. Mr Kurahashi became for me a role model to emulate. I had no choice but going beyond my personal and native cultural enculturation to take on, even if only partially, the Japanese traditional aesthetic way of thinking, which is not an easy task, since it involved de-identifying with ingrained cultural and musical enculturation, and re-identify with a different way of making sense of that particular music.²⁴ I, of course, do not play today the solo pieces for the shakuhachi like a Japanese musician, far from it. I will surely never do, no matter how hard I try. But I try my best to be as faithful as possible to that aesthetics. However, an unsuspected outcome of my transpropriation into Japanese music has been that my appreciation of any music, in particular Western music, has changed. I can no longer enjoy any music solely as I have been initially trained as a classical musician. Japanese music forced me to have a different grasped on all musics, not only Japanese music.

This is to a large extent what transpropriation is about, as I define it here: a willingness to go beyond one's way of thinking and making sense of music, as well as cultural boundaries and enculturation to intermesh with the one of another culture, no one way of thinking dominating the other, no one way is better than the other, no one way imposing itself. This means losing some of the grips one's cultural way of thinking has on me, to give space for that other one to reach me. If we view the other solely from our native enculturation, as is typically the case with appropriation, we look at any music from a distance, we see only what we want to see, i.e., from the viewpoint of our presuppositions, prejudices, assumptions, romanticization, myths, reification and essentialization of that culture. By partially de-identifying with our enculturation to allow that other culture to get "in," so to speak, we have no choice but to change, something that is often refused or ignored through appropriation. I would even suggest that one aim of appropriation is to avoid being changed by those we judge as "Other," while transpropriation is the reverse, an intentional willingness to be changed by it.



The author performing with shamisen and koto players in a church (with a baroque ensemble in the back).





To Conclude

Much more could be said on the matter. My hope here has been to show that by taking the stance of transpropriation, we can discover that there is “life” beyond appropriation. In other words, cultural encounters of any kind do not have to be viewed purely from that particular viewpoint. The transnational and transcultural encounters in today’s modern world show, I strongly believe, that appropriation is an inappropriate viewpoint to make sense of them. I humbly suggest that, in today’s world, transpropriation is a much more fair, honest and unbiased one.

Footnotes:

- 1 For example, there are a good number of Roma music groups in Canada, none of the musicians being from the Roma culture.
- 2 One is reminded here of Herbie Hancock’s use of a pigmy song in his piece »Watermelon Man«, recorded by French ethnomusicologist Simha Arom in an album released in the 1960s. Hancock has been criticized for one thing in particular: After the release of his album at end of the 1970s, several artists wanted to use that pigmy song. Hancock received rights on that song from these artists, without giving back anything to the pigmies who are singing it, or to the ethnomusicologist who recorded it (Cf., Steven FELD, Pygmy POP. A Genealogy of Schizophonic Mimesis, *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 28 (1996), 1-35).
- 3 James O. YOUNG, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 18.
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- 5 James O. YOUNG, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 18.
- 6 Simon FRITH, The Discourse of World Music, in Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (eds.), *Western Music and Its Others* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 308.
- 7 John CORNELL and Chris GIBSON, World Music: Deterritorializing Place and Identity, *Progress in Human Geography* 28/3 (2004), 344.
- 8 Ibid., 356.
- 9 Marjorie D. KIBBY, The Didj and the Web: Networks of Articulation and Appropriation, *Convergence* 5/59 (1999), 62.
- 10 Steven FELD, Notes on World Beat, *Public Culture Bulletin* 1/1 (1988), 31, 35.
- 11 As much in ethnomusicology, in cultural studies as in anthropology, among others, appropriation implies questions of political power. My aim here is to present appropriation and transpropriation from the practical viewpoint of musicians, not the scholarly one.
- 12 The terms »trans-appropriation«, »transappropriation«, or »trans appropriation« are also used. My preference for »transpropriation« over the other terms is that the »ap« of appropriation is replaced by »trans«.
- 13 François OST, *La Nature hors la loi, l’écologie à l’épreuve du droit* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1995).
- 14 Edward S. CASEY, Man, Self, and Truth, *The Monist* 55/2 (1971), 247-49.
- 15 It has also been used by such philosophers as Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas and Gianni Vattimo (following Heidegger’s), though their use of that term implies differences and at time antagonism.
- 16 Afef BENESSAIEH, Multiculturalism, Interculturality, Transculturality, in Afef Benessaieh (ed.), *Amériques*

transculturelles — *Transcultural Americas* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010), 19-24.

- 17 Wolfgang WELSCH, Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today, in Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (eds.), *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World* (London: Sage, 1999), 194-213. Also available on-line: <http://www2.uni-jena.de/welsch/Papers/transcultSociety.html>. Accessed 12 January 2018.
- 18 The question of mimesis can be quite complex in transcultural situations. Space does not allow to develop that aspect of cultural encounters regarding appropriation and transpropriation. My use of the term mimesis here refers to Merlin DONALD, *Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) for whom mimesis is a form of communication and relatedness.
- 19 The question of identity, including authenticity, also plays a crucial role in transpropriation. For a question of space, I must also leave it aside. For a discussion on my views regarding identity, see Bruno DESCHÈNES, The Interest of Westerners in Non-Western Music, *The World of Music* 52/1-3 (2010), 69-79; Bi-musicality or Transmusicality: The Viewpoint of a Non-Japanese Shakuhachi Player, *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 49/2 (2018), 275-94.
- 20 Veit ERLMANN, The Aesthetics of the Global Imagination: Reflections on World Music in the 1990s, *Public Culture* 8 (1996), 468, 475-79.
- 21 Veit ERLMANN, The Politics and Aesthetics of Transnational Musics, *The World of Music* 35/2 (1993), 5-7, 13.
- 22 Shakuhachi players can receive three titles: *jun-shihan*, teaching licence; *shihan*, master licence; *dai-shihan*, great master title. Both *jun-shihan* and *shihan* are granted when an apprentice has reached determine levels of proficiency. Dai shihan is an honorary title for career accomplishments.
- 23 The shakuhachi is considered by a large number of musicians as quite possibly the hardest flute to play in the world.
- 24 Cf. Bruno DESCHÈNES, Bi-musicality or Transmusicality: The Viewpoint of a Non-Japanese Shakuhachi Player, *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 49(2), 275-94.

Acknowledgements:

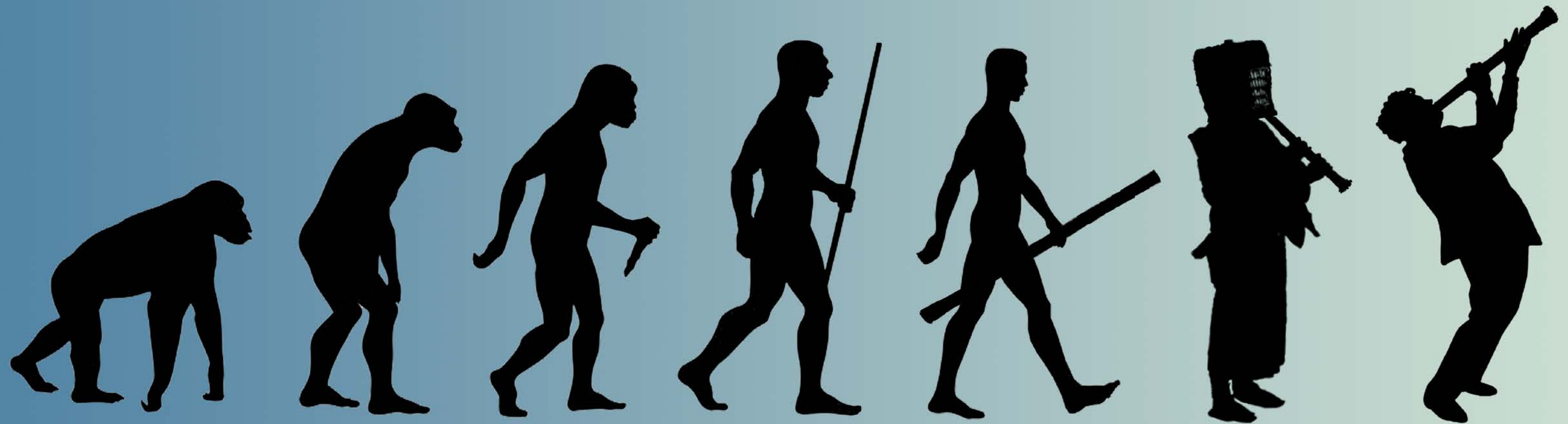
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SHAKUHACHI, QUO VADIS?

Illustration by Thorsten Knaub



SHAKUHACHI IN SOUTH AMERICA: BRAZIL

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE SHAKUHACHI IN BRAZIL

Rafael Hiroshi Fuchigami traces for us how the shakuhachi came to Brazil with the first wave of Japanese immigrants and took hold in their community, and how in the last decades the shakuhachi spread beyond the Japanese community in Brazil.



First Immigrants

The shakuhachi was first brought to Brazil in 1908, the year in which the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the country. Evidence suggests that genres such as *min'yō*, *shigin*, *kaeuta*, etc., were performed on the *Kasato Maru*, the first ship of immigrants, with the use of the shakuhachi, *shamisen*, and *sanshin*. Although no additional information is available regarding the people who brought these instruments with them, clearly the shakuhachi was already a part of the earliest immigrant voyages.

The earliest detailed information about the shakuhachi in Brazil dates to 1922, with the arrival Midori Kobayashi (1891-1961). He was of the Meian-ryū and Kinko-ryū schools, and went by the artist name Ryokufū. Kobayashi was born in the Fukushima Prefecture and studied at the Doushisha Theology School in Kyoto, the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, and at the Auburn Theological Seminary in New York. He came to Brazil from the United States as a Protestant missionary. In addition, he was also an educator and practitioner of *kendō*.

Fig.1 Kobayashi playing shakuhachi for an unknown man, in 1957.

In Brazil, the focus of Kobayashi's musical activities was *min'yō*, a genre widely practiced by Nikkeis¹. Together with the singer Tadami Chiba, he recorded an LP with the song *Esashi Oiwake*. His Brazilian-born son Julio Kobayashi became a prominent student of Tsuna Iwami (1923-2012), who will later be discussed at length in the section titled "Iwami Baikyoku and Kinko-ryū."

Brazil's Tozan-ryū

The practice of Tozan-ryū in Brazil began with the arrival of Yoshimi² and Miwa Miyoshi, in 1931. After four years living in the interior of State of São Paulo, where they worked on coffee plantations, the couple moved to the state capital (São Paulo) and began engaging in musical activities. In 1936, they performed publicly for the first time, playing shakuhachi, *koto*, and *shamisen*, at an event called "Noite da Música Japonesa" (A Night of Japanese Music). They founded the Grupo de Estudos da Música e Dança Japonesa (Group for the Study of Japanese Music and Dance), which performed for the first time in 1939. Between 1941 and 1948 their performances were interrupted by World War II. Nevertheless, the group still exists today, now called Wagaku Kenkyū Miwa-kai.

In 1952, Yoshimi entrusted five students with teaching the shakuhachi: Suzuki Setsuzan, Miyashita Hōzan, Sagara Yōzan, Yamachika Tanzan, and his son Toshimi Miyoshi. In 1967, Yoshimi received the title of *dai-shihan* and established a Brazilian branch of Tozan-ryū. Currently the group is in the hands of its fourth leader, Saito Shinzan.

In the 1970s, with a growth in the number of shakuhachi students and teachers, three Tozan-ryū sub-groups emerged: Gakuyū-kai, Shinsen-kai, and Academia Tozan. Today, however, given the fact that many of its older members have died and the number of new participants is decreasing, the Tozan-ryū school has very few members and runs the risk of extinction. Only one of the three sub-groups still exists, the Gakuyū-kai, which, around the year 2000, changed its name to Shinzan-kai.

Currently, the most active Tozan-ryū member is *jun-shihan* Akio Yamaoka (Yamaoka Yoyū). However, he teaches shakuhachi independently, and his repertoire includes Tozan-ryū, *Koten honkyoku*, *min'yō*, and popular *kayō* pieces.

Iwami Baikyoku and Kinko-ryū

In 1956, *iemoto* (Grand Master) Tsuna Iwami, a disciple of Araki Kodō III (1879-1935) and Kodō IV (1901-1943), relocated to Brazil with his mother Tomii, who played *koto* of the Yamada-ryū school.

Born in Tokyo, Iwami got degrees in Chemical Engineering and Industrial Management from the University of Kyoto. In 1941 he received the title of Baikyoku V. Living in São Paulo, he worked extensively as an educator and performer, playing mainly *sankyoku* pieces. He was a composer and played an important part in founding the Associação Brasileira de Música Clássica Japonesa (Brazilian Association of Japanese Classical Music), of which he served as president for many years. Founded in the 1980s, this association brought together shakuhachi, *shamisen*, and *koto* players of the Tozan-ryū, Kinko-ryū, Ikuta-ryū, and Yamada-ryū schools. Iwami bestowed artist names (*nattori*) upon his most prominent students, including Kuniji Baiō Natori, Júlio Baiko Kobayashi, Dale Bai-ō Olsen, and Danilo Baikyo Tomic.

In addition to his enormous contributions within the Nikkei community, Iwami also worked to promote traditional music in the broader Brazilian society. On February 9, 1981, he received the "Medalha Carlos Gomes" (Carlos Gomes Medal) from the Sociedade Brasileira de Artes, Cultura e Ensino (Brazilian Arts, Culture, and Education Society), of the Municipal Government of Campinas. Iwami passed away in August 2012, at 89 years old, ending his journey dedicated to the dissemination of the shakuhachi in Brazil.



Fig.2 First public appearance of the Group for the Study of Japanese Music and Dance, in 1939.



Fig.3 Shinsen-kai group playing shakuhachi, during the 1st Concert of the Koto-no-kai group, in 1983. Later, Koto-no-kai became Grupo Seiha do Brasil (Seiha of Brazil Group).

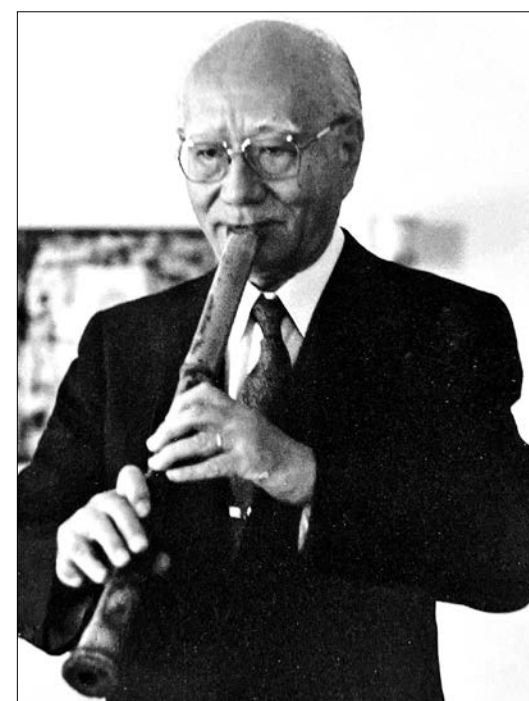


Fig.4 Tsuna Iwami.



Fig.5 Iwami playing the piece *Sue-no-chigiri* with Reiko Nagase (*koto*) and Yuko Ogura (*Shamisen*) during the 12th Concert of the Miyagi-kai of Brazil group in 1994.

1 The term "Nikkei" refers to Japanese immigrants and their descendants who permanently reside outside of Japan.
 2 Miyoshi Juzan.

The Shakuhachi in Min'yō Folk Song

Among immigrants, *min'yō* was first performed for festive occasions such as, for example, New Year's celebrations and the Emperor's birthday, often without instrumental accompaniment.

In the post-WWII era in Japan, *min'yō* became part of mass entertainment, earning a place on stages and in the media. This shift also influenced the practice of *min'yō* in Brazil. Due to the touring in Brazil of professional singers, shakuhachi players, and shamisen players, etc., not to mention the emergence of a market for the sale of *min'yō* records, the Nikkei community went through important changes that led, for instance, to the creation of significant *min'yō* associations and events.

The first known Brazilian *min'yō* group was Nihon Min'yō Kenkyu-kai. The group was created in 1952, and the following year it sponsored its first Taikai (Competition). Three years later came the founding of Nihon Min'yō Hozon-kai and from that moment on countless groups and sub-groups have been established in different parts of Brazil, especially in the states of São Paulo and Paraná. In addition, Brazilian branches of major Japanese associations were founded, such as Brasil Nihon Min'yō Kyōkai (1968) and Brasil Kyōdo Min'yō Kyōkai (1988). Although the number of people singing *min'yō* today is significantly smaller than in the past, many important *min'yō* institutions continue to be active. Furthermore, there is a new movement of young Nikkeis who promote *min'yō* performance. This is the case with Grupo Min, for example, which was created in 2014.



Fig.6 Kōji-ryū of Brasil, 2014. The group is led by Toshimi Shinohara (fourth person from left), Akira Shiono (fifth person), and Tsukasa Kaito (sixth person).



Fig.7 Kaito Shamidaiko *min'yō*'s group is led by Tsukasa Kaito (Shakuhachi), with the participation of his family and friends, and has been active for almost 30 years.

Countless shakuhachi players, especially the first generation of immigrants, have been a part of the Nikkei community from the earliest days up to creation of large *min'yō* associations. There was a constant flux of *min'yō* teachers coming from Japan, such as, for example, Matsumoto Chōshō, the third *iemoto* of the Kōji-ryū lineage, who was in Brazil roughly nine times. Currently one of his students, Tsukasa Kaitō, who has resided in Brazil since 1972, has sung, taught, and played *min'yō* shakuhachi. In addition, he teaches and makes *shamisens* and *taikos*, working with his family to maintain and disseminate *min'yō* in Brazil.

The Emergence of Non-Nikkei Shakuhachi Players

Up until the 1980s, the shakuhachi was practically isolated to the Nikkei community, understood then as the "colônia japonesa" (Japanese colony). However, with the end of immigration and significant transformations in the Brazilian political-cultural landscape, Japanese music began to spread. Interethnic marriages between Nikkeis and non-Nikkeis began to increase. Moreover, just as Japanese people began to open up to the rest of Brazilian society, many Brazilians grew interested in Japanese culture, in an increasing trend that still continues to this day. Since then there has been an emergence of non-Nikkeis, such as Shen Ribeiro and Danilo Tomic, of the Kinko-ryū school, who have learned shakuhachi with Nikkei teachers, such as Julio Kobayashi and Tsuna Iwami; or Márcio Valério, who studied with Shojiro Saeki and Sagara Yōzan of the Tozan-ryū school.

The earliest non-Nikkei shakuhachi students in Brazil overwhelmingly lived in São Paulo and, at first, did not operate independently, for they were in many ways directly connected with the Nikkei community. Since 2008, however, because of the wide reach of the internet and of social media, there has been a growth of non-Nikkei shakuhachi players who have no direct relationship with the Nikkei community. Using Skype and other online tools, they began to study with teachers who reside in the US, such as Marco Lienhard and Michael Gould, or even in Japan, such as Kaoru Kakizakai. Some of these non-Nikkei players include Henrique Sulzbacher, from Rio Grande do Sul, and Luigi Irlandini, from Santa Catarina.



Fig.8 Nishaku-kai group, led by Akio Yamaoka, who the members are mostly non-Nikkeis.



Fig.9 Online Workshop led by Rafael Fuchigami, organized by Henrique Sulzbacher.

As such, with the use of the internet, Japanese culture has spread to different parts of Brazil in a way that does not necessarily coincide with where Japanese populations reside (as was the case during the period of immigration). Among the new generations of non-Nikkei shakuhachi players, the preferred repertoire is the *Koten honkyoku*, disseminated by Katsuya Yokoyama.

Conclusion

The shakuhachi, which has been in Brazil for over a century, was first brought by Japanese immigrants and planted its roots within the Nikkei community, being performed mainly in the *sankyoku* chamber music of the Kinko-ryū and Tozan-ryū styles, or else as an accompaniment for *min'yō* music. The information on the history of the shakuhachi within the Nikkei community comes from research conducted by Olsen, Hosokawa, Satomi, and myself in my own fieldwork.

Since the 1980s there has been an increasing number of non-Nikkei shakuhachi players. This movement has steadily intensified and at present non-Nikkei shakuhachi players outnumber Nikkeis. This is chiefly due to the widespread reach of the internet and the internationalization of the shakuhachi more generally. For Nikkeis, the preferred repertoire has been chamber music, while non-Nikkeis favor the Koten *honkyoku*, a solo repertoire. The history of the shakuhachi in Brazil, the dynamic between Nikkeis and non-Nikkeis, issues of identity and spirituality, and many other topics are discussed in my PhD dissertation “The process of learning shakuhachi in Brazil as a construction of Japonésidades,” defended and published at the Tokyo College of Music.

I wish to express my sincere hope that the shakuhachi traditions of Brazil and in every part of the world continue to flourish, and that more and more people can gain access to the wonderful sound of this instrument.

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<http://rafaelfuchigami.blogspot.com/>

AKIO YAMAOKA: A JAPANESE TEACHER OF SHAKUHACHI IN BRAZIL

Daniel Ryugen conducted interviews on June 29 and August 21, 2022 with shakuhachi player Akio Yamaoka, below Daniel gives us his impressions of shakuhachi activities in Brazil.

Over the past year I've become friends with a Brazilian maker of shakuhachi named Luis Lepre who currently lives in Argentina. He told me about his shakuhachi teacher in Brazil, a player named Akio Yamaoka. I was interested to know about Yamaoka sensei's history of shakuhachi playing and teaching in Brazil so I contacted Yamaoka-sensei and asked if it would be okay to interview him over Skype. Over several days in the summer of 2022 I talked with him about shakuhachi and put together a short account which I'd like to share with the European Shakuhachi Society Newsletter as those of us who live in the Northern Hemisphere may not know much about shakuhachi activities in South America.

Akio Yamaoka was born in Akita prefecture in 1941. After his father returned from the battlegrounds of World War II, Akio moved to Sao Paulo in 1955 with his family; they left on a ship from Kobe, crossed the Pacific Ocean and eventually sailed through the Panama Canal, but not before encountering serious weather on their route - a typhoon forced the ship captain to sail up to Alaska before heading down to the Panama Canal. The sea voyage took 45 days. At the time Akio arrived in his new homeland of Brazil, he was 13 years old.

As a child he often saw his father play the shakuhachi; his father played *min'yō* on a 2.4 shakuhachi, but he wouldn't teach it to his son, though Yamaoka eventually inherited the flute when he was 30 years of age. Yamaoka-sensei ended up breaking the 2.4 apart as he found it too long to play; paradoxically, this event sparked his interest in making flutes and also in playing the shakuhachi. In his early thirties, Akio began studying under a shakuhachi teacher in Brazil named Sagara Yozan. Like Akio's father, Yozan had been in the Japanese military during World War II, and had been a prisoner of war in Siberia for eight years before leaving Japan for Sao Paulo. When Yozan taught Yamaoka-san the Tozan repertoire, he did not charge anything for his lessons, a tradition that Yamaoka-sensei continues today. When learning Tozan pieces for the next 14 years, Yamaoka-san did a weekly lesson, learning solo shakuhachi pieces and *gaikyoku* pieces with *koto* and *shamisen*. Several decades ago, Yamaoka-san began teaching his own group of students.

Today Yamaoka-sensei uses a combination of Japanese scores of Kinko, Tozan, and Myōan pieces, and adds what he terms secret instruction to the written notation he gives to his students. As an adult he has returned to Japan a number of times and from 2007-2009 he lived in Saitama, Japan and studied shakuhachi with Maezono Fushou, a teacher of Myōan shakuhachi. Currently Yamaoka-sensei teaches all of his students in Portuguese. Instead of *robuki*, he begins his lessons with something he calls *sankie*, which is based on the ancient chanting of Japanese monks known as *shomyō*;



Yamaoka-sensei with his students



Yamaoka trying out a new shakuhachi

Below: Yamaoka with his students playing at the Peace Bell Park in Santa Catarina



Yamaoka-sensei plays a shakuhachi melody based on an ancient chant for three times as long as the original monk's chant for his students' warm up on the shakuhachi. According to Yamaoka-sensei, his *sankie* incorporates phrases of several notes and it is also a good exercise for developing *meri*. Yamaoka-sensei has compiled a kind of a dictionary in Portuguese of Japanese shakuhachi terms such as *nayashi*, for example, to help his students decipher the Japanese shakuhachi notation.

According to Yamaoka-sensei, many Brazilians who now play shakuhachi were attracted by the sound of the flute and also the ideas of Zen Buddhism. As to the question of what kind of people are studying shakuhachi in Brazil today, Yamaoka-sensei explained that he has both male and female students and that his students include musicians who already play musical instruments such as saxophone, transverse flute, Indian flute, and guitar, two members of classical music orchestras who play flute and clarinet, a 50 year old *nisou*, (female Buddhist priest), an industrial engineer, a college student, a public school teacher, a master of both *aikido*, *kendo*, and *sado*, a mechanical engineer, a professor of oceanography, a piano instructor, an architect, a graphic designer and painter, an agricultural engineer, an auto mechanic, and an administrator of a Tibetan Buddhist temple. Most of Yamaoka's students are Brazilian, with just one student of both Brazilian and Japanese heritage and two *nikkei* among them; the two second generation Japanese students are doctors, one of whom continues to practice shakuhachi at age 89. Yamaoka-sensei teaches ten students in Sao Paulo and another ten students in the adjoining prefecture of Minas Geraes. He says that many students play for therapeutic reasons, and there are also some who are interested in expanding their sonic vocabulary.

This summer, in the Brazilian winter, Yamaoka-sensei collected *madake* bamboo in the Brazilian rainforest with several of his students, *phyllostachys bambusoides* originally having been brought by Japanese immigrants to Brazil more than a century ago. When he attempted to shorten his father's shakuhachi a half century back, Yamaoka-sensei became fascinated by the rudiments of making flutes and now he has three students who are so skilled at that work that he says that he no longer feels compelled to make shakuhachi though he will repair them if necessary. One of Yamaoka's students, a 27 year old industrial engineer, recently presented him with expertly crafted 2.0 and 3.0 shakuhachi, which Yamaoka-sensei plays frequently. Akio uses *madake* not only for shakuhachi but also for other items, such as a bedframe he recently constructed from bamboo.

Yamaoka-sensei feels called upon to teach shakuhachi to those who want to learn how to play or make the bamboo flute; the sensei teaches on a voluntary basis and does not charge fees for his instruction, though he will accept donations, as the Edo Period *komusō* did on their shakuhachi pilgrimages across Japan. He does no advertising so all his students hear of him through other students or those who have heard of his connection with the shakuhachi. Yamaoka keeps a very active schedule for someone of his 80 years. This past June he took part in the 55th Festival de Musica E Danca Foclorica Japonesa in Sao Paulo where he played together with the Miyagi Michio Society of *koto* players in Brazil and with shakuhachi masters Danilo Tomik Baiyou and Shen Ribiero Kyomei. Yamaoka-sensei performed this August with three of his Brazilian students at a ceremony paying respects to the victims of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki at the Peace Bell Park in Brazil's state of Santa Catarina where there stands a bell that was cast 400 years ago and given to the Japanese immigrants in Brazil by the Japanese government more recently in memory of that terrible tragedy, thereby performing shakuhachi in the context of the bell sound that inspired the legendary creation of the bamboo flute and for world peace. I was impressed by Yamaoka's account of his activities of making and teaching shakuhachi to people of many different ages and occupations in Brazil and hope that he will continue to inspire the people of his new homeland with his work with the bamboo flute.

www.facebook.com/people/Shakuhachi-Nishakukai-Brasil/ (Akio Yamaoka's shakuhachi group)

Daniel Ryugen, a player and teacher of shakuhachi who received *menkyo kaiden* in Myōan shakuhachi in May 2022.

LUIGI ANTONIO IRLANDINI

As part of our look at Shakuhachi in Brazil we talked to Brazilian composer Luigi Antonio Irlandini. Below is a short introduction to him and his work with shakuhachi.

BAMBOO: Tell us something about how you started your career as a composer, your attraction to different styles, instrumentation, concepts?

Luigi Antonio Irlandini: I was born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and my interests have always been very international and intercultural, including music, philosophy, and spiritual traditions such as Vedanta and Zen Buddhism. I was trained both as a concert pianist and a composer. The shakuhachi came later. As a music professor at the State University of Santa Catarina in the city of Florianópolis in Southern Brazil, I develop research activities dealing with circular, cyclic and spiral musical time and the issue of the presence of non-Western and ancient contents in 20th- and 21st- century music composition. I write orchestral, choral, and chamber music, as well as music that I can perform on the piano and the shakuhachi.

BAMBOO: How did you discover the shakuhachi? Do you have a teacher? What shakuhachi school/style you are/were following?

LAI: I discovered the shakuhachi sometime in the beginning of the 1980s, but real access to the shakuhachi only happened in 2006, when I was living in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA, and read, in the Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, that the shakuhachi had been very much alive outside Japan for at least the mid-1990s! I found out about the nearby Shakucamp of the Rockies and that was when I decided that the shakuhachi would be my second instrument. I was 48 years old, then. I attended Shakucamp both in 2006 and 2007, and there I had

lessons with David Wheeler and Kakizakai Kaoru, and workshops with all the other teachers. I composed two pieces for the shakuhachi in 2008: *Ho-oo* and *Metagon*, and decided to learn to play them. It took me four years to be able to play my second composition, *Metagon* (which is not an easy piece), in public! It was only in 2013 that I started to learn *honkyoku* privately with Kakizakai Sensei on Skype. In 2019, I attended the KSK shakuhachi workshop in Chichibu. Honkyoku repertoire is now a part of my research and performing work.

BAMBOO: You started to compose in 2008 for shakuhachi (Metagon) - what was it that you draw to the shakuhachi to be used in your compositions?

LAI: *Metagon* is a spiral-like figure created by Swiss designer Max Bill. It starts in the center with a triangle, then grows outwards by adding polygons around the previous ones, by adding one side to each: square, pentagon, hexagon, etc. The music is a non-tonal *monody* that grows in a similar way, adding one note at a time while its phrases grow longer and longer, like an expanding spiral. I have several compositions that work the idea of spiral time.

BAMBOO: In 2018 you composed the work Akasa, an electroacoustic piece in three movements for solo shakuhachi, amplified and with reverberation, and fixed media. Tell us a bit about the process of developing this composition?

LAI: *Akasa* (pronounced Akasha) has elements of North Indian music and cosmology. Most of the time it uses the same pitch collection as the mother scale (that) of *raga Purvi*, but it does not follow the melodic rules of that *raga*. Initially, I meant the piece to be performed in a cave with lots of natural reverberation, but later decided that it would be more practical to make it with digital reverberation. Reverberation evokes *Akasa* because it is, according to Vedanta, Samkhya and Vaisheshika philosophies, the first and subtlest element (space, ether), and can only be perceived through our perception of sound, since sound is its specific quality. The acousmatic portion of the music is made of nature and instrumental sounds, with a minimum of digital processing.

BAMBOO: For Ho-oo Bestiarium vol. 1 no. 1 you re-worked the 2008 arrangement for shakuhachi, guitar, two violins, viola, violoncello into a solo-shakuhachi version in 2021. What was your inspiration here to re-arrange the composition in this way?

LAI: In 2020, I decided to perform *Ho-oo* again and, while practicing alone, I started hearing the piece as an unaccompanied solo. I found out that the shakuhachi line does stand by itself as a solo piece, so I embraced the idea. The ensemble version is for D shakuhachi, but the solo may be performed on any size; I've played it on my C shakuhachi.

BAMBOO: What are future compositions projects / what are you working on in the moment (shakuhachi or otherwise)?

LAI: I have recently finished *Roar of Tiger Causing Wind*, a piece for D shakuhachi and *koto*, written and dedicated for Rafael Hiroshi Fuchigami (see article page), and inspired by a tiger painting of the same title by Maruyama Okyo. My current composition project will have two originals, since they are both being written at the same time: one for symphonic orchestra and the other for shakuhachi solo.



<https://sites.google.com/view/luigi-antonio-irlandini/home> (Luigi Antonio Irlandini's website)
https://youtu.be/ts2AB_mezhs (CD track *Ākāsa*)
<https://youtu.be/6K8XaP4B4Oo> (Solo version of *HO-OO (Bestiarium, Book 1, #1)*)

IMAGES OF JAPAN

THE BIGGER PICTURE



Mount Fuji near Lake Yamanakako Nagaike as seen through a webcam on 18 November 2022 at 08h00 JST

© live.fujigoko.tv



Fuan Yoshimura Sōshin, the 40th *kansu* (head) of Myōan-ji, Kyoto. Photograph taken in December 1970.
Photo courtesy of Seian Genshin



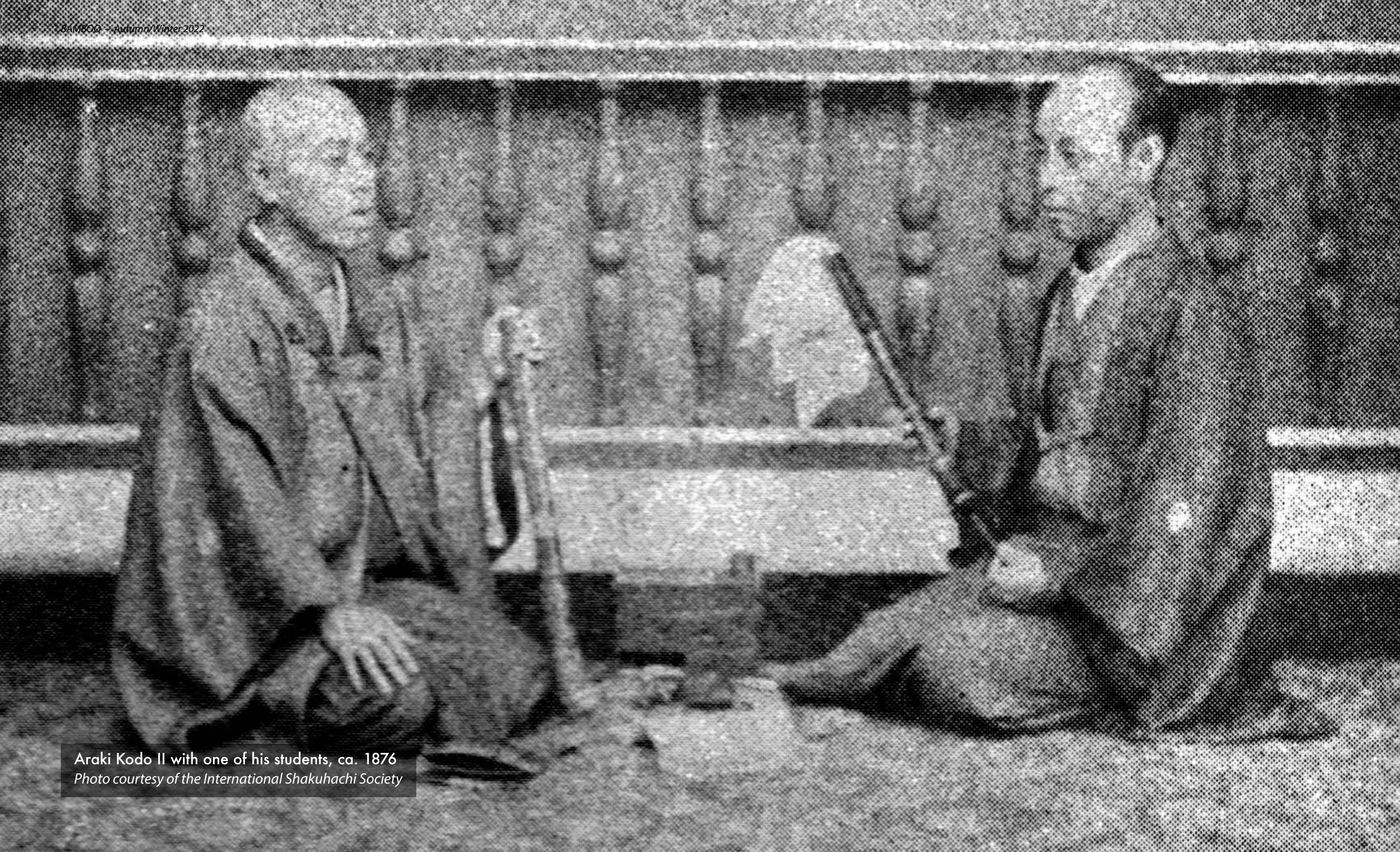
Gyokusui I, Gyokuzan (left) and Gyokusui II (right) and Sakai Chikuho II (back)
Photo taken early 1970s at Gyokusui workshop, Osaka.
Photo courtesy of Riley Lee



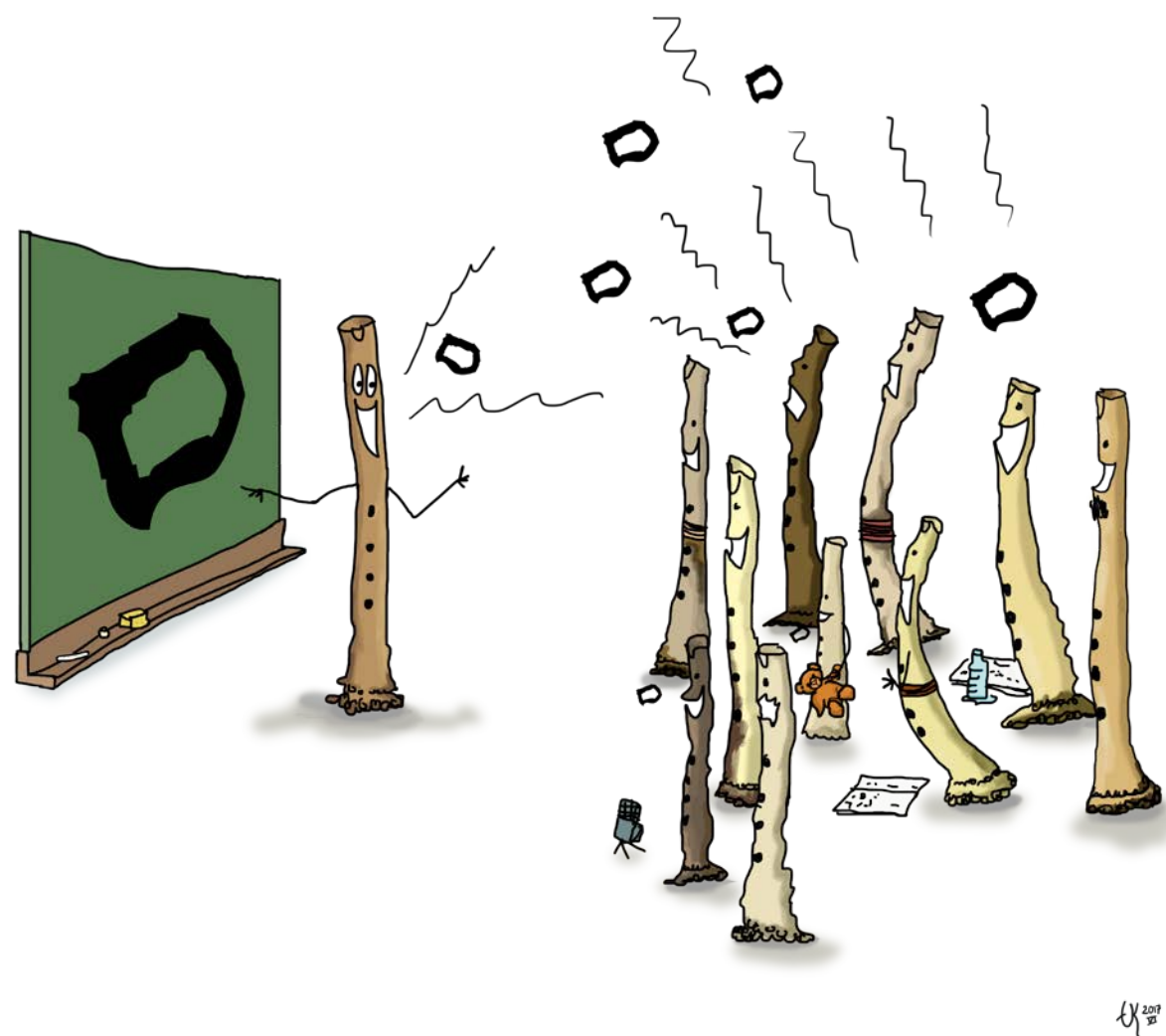
Cover illustration from a booklet of Kinko-ryū
Shakuhachi children's songs, 1920.
Photo courtesy of the International Shakuhachi Society



A young Yokoyama Katsuya practicing
with a Watzumi score in his room in Tokyo
Photo courtesy of the International Shakuhachi Society



Araki Kodo II with one of his students, ca. 1876
Photo courtesy of the International Shakuhachi Society



SHAKUHACHI RESOURCES

The techniques of the shakuhachi: 1.8 shakuhachi overtones chart

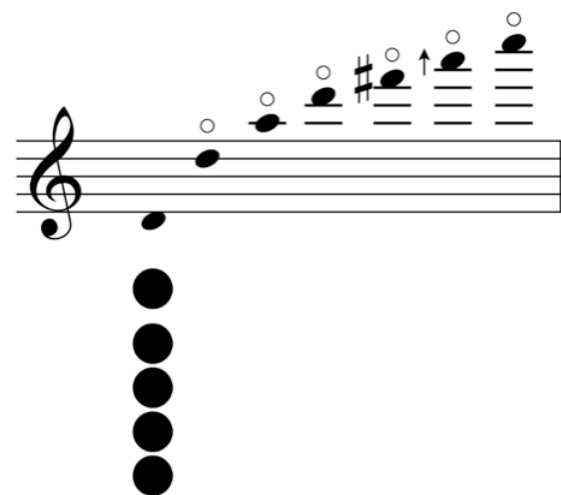
The ongoing project by Ramon Humet to provide a comprehensive guide and reference to expanded techniques on the shakuhachi continues. In this issue we are introduced to Humet's classification of shakuhachi and its overtones.

Introduction

The overtones chart is part of a deeper study of the techniques of the shakuhachi, which includes a general fingering chart, a quarter tone fingering chart, a timbral trill chart¹, and in the future will continue with multiphonics, and other extended techniques. This study is intended to be used by composers and performers who wish to explore the techniques of contemporary music for shakuhachi.

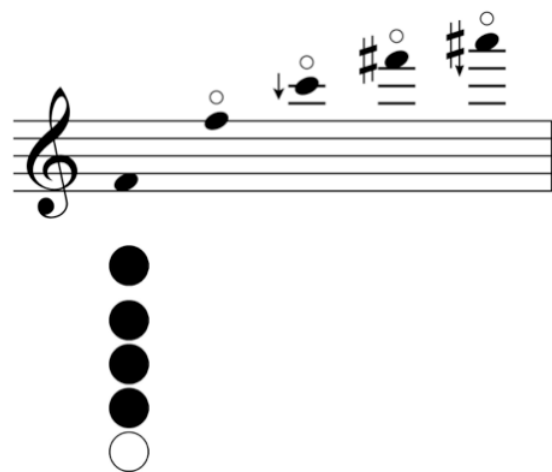
Fourier's theorem states that 'any periodic wave, however complicated, can be described in terms of an infinite number of simple tones added together'. These simple tones can be 'partial', 'harmonic', or 'overtone', all of which are different concepts related to the sound spectrum. The spectral analysis of a complex waveform graphically represents the simple frequencies that make it up, called 'partials'. The fundamental is the lowest partial of the waveform, and the overtones are any frequency above the fundamental. Overtones can be harmonic or inharmonic. A harmonic is an integer multiple of the fundamental frequency, while the frequency of an overtone with inharmonicity bears no integer relation to the fundamental.

The tonal richness of the shakuhachi is based, especially, on the inharmonicity of its spectrum. According to Castellengo and Fabre, the western transverse flute has a harmonic sound spectrum, while the shakuhachi stands out for its peculiar inharmonicity, due to the ratio of the dimensions of the holes and the length of the instrument². For this reason, the *ro* note in the *otsu* register is a fingering with exceptionally harmonic overtones: all of the holes are covered, thus eliminating one of the physical reasons that generate inharmonicity.



Example 1: Ro with a quite harmonic overtone series

The rest of the fingerings have a higher level of inharmonicity. A notable example is the overtone series of the *tsu* note, which generates an interesting inharmonicity in the upper overtones. The 3rd overtone (partial 4th) stands out, with a high pitch. This is why there is no conventional fingering for the F of the *dai-kan* register and unorthodox subterfuges must be resorted to, such as covering the lower hole with the knee, or very forced *meri* angles.



Example 2: Tsu with inharmonicity on the upper overtones

The color of the overtone and the fundamental tone are spectrally different, both in the shakuhachi and in the other woodwind instruments. According to some authors, the overtones of the oboe are 'ethereal and hollow'³. The transverse flute has overtones paler than the fundamental tone⁴. And all authors agree that in order to make the overtones sound, it is necessary to overblow or increase the pressure of the lips⁵. In the shakuhachi, you also need a combination of lip pressure and overblowing to activate the overtones⁶.

Accidentals

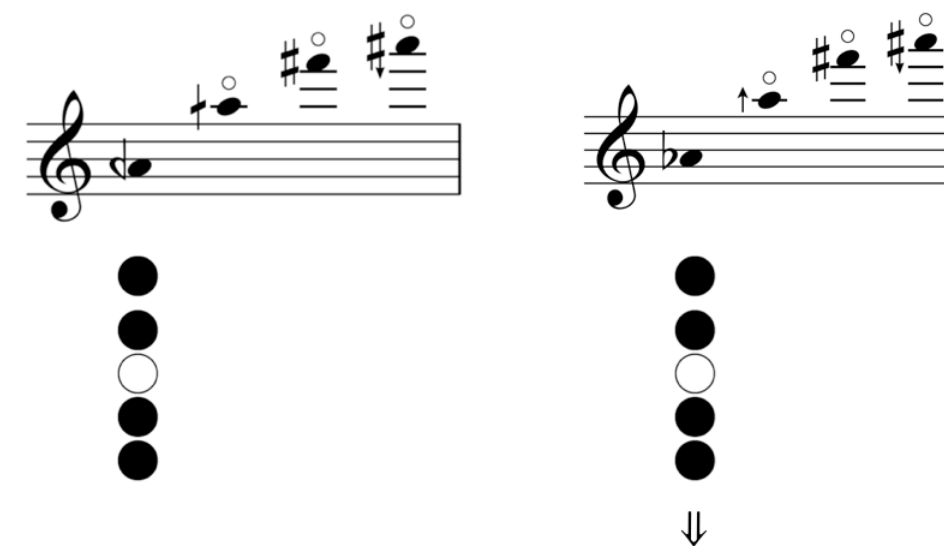
Microtonal accidentals are notated according to this chart⁷:

#	5/8 tone sharp	♮	natural
##	1/2 tone sharp	↓	1/8 tone flat
###	3/8 tone sharp	♭	1/4 tone flat
♯	1/4 tone sharp	♮	3/8 tone flat
↑	1/8 tone sharp	♭	1/2 tone flat
♮	natural	♭	5/8 tone flat

Meri / kari

All fingerings refer to a normal embouchure position. When the *meri / kari* angle changes, the harmonic structure changes. However, the change in tuning depends on the partial. The lower partials and the fundamental can change the tuning a lot with a *meri* angle. In contrast, the upper partials practically do not change the tuning with a *meri* angle.

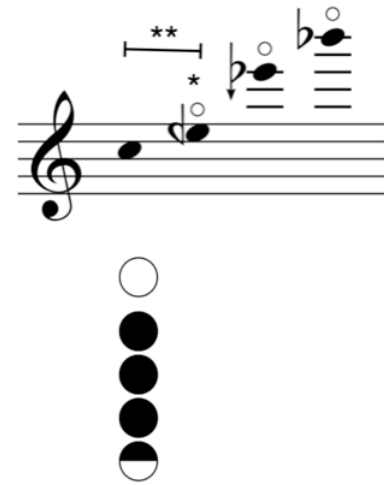
In example 3, fingering in normal position generates an interval A - A between the fundamental and the second partial. With a *meri* angle equivalent to the traditional "U" note, the interval is A - A. The upper partials remain unchanged.



Example 3: different tuning changes of the lower partials between the normal and meri position. The upper partials remain unchanged

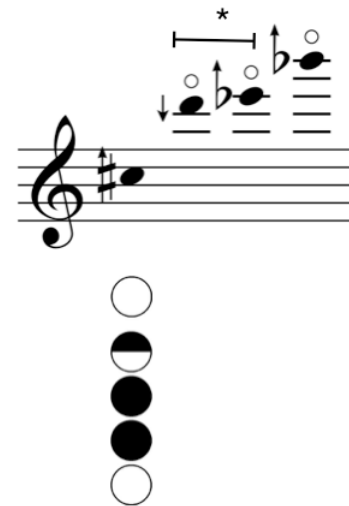
Study of some particular cases

Some fingerings with half-holes can alter the structure of the partials depending on the opening of the half-hole. In example 4, opening the first hole a little causes the fundamental C, while closing the hole causes the partial E.



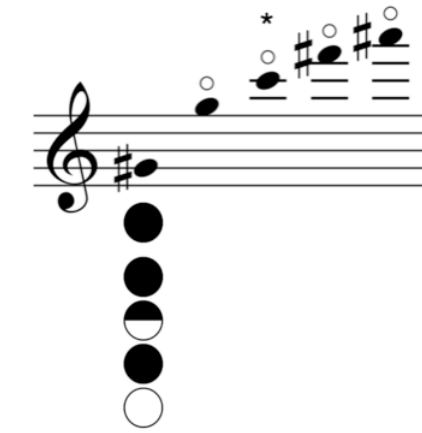
Example 4: change of harmonic structure depending on the degree of opening of a half-hole

Another parameter that modifies the tuning is the type of air flow. A change in the air flow direction or pressure can change the partial structure. In example 5, partials D and Eb appear and disappear depending on the type of air flow applied.

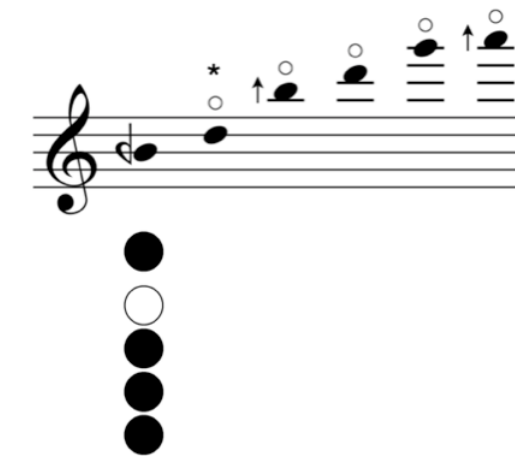


Example 5: change of harmonic structure depending on the direction and pressure of the air flow

The higher partials can be difficult to execute due to the increased air pressure and mouthpiece change that is needed. In some cases, the partial can be excited with special fingerings. You can do 'shading', that is, bringing your finger closer to the hole without covering it. You can also open a closed hole a little, and immediately close the hole the moment the partial is excited and starts to sound.



Example 6: by opening the fourth hole a little, partial C appears



Example 7: partial D appears when shading the fourth hole

1.8 Shakuhachi Overtone Chart

The chart displays 24 overtone positions for the shakuhachi, each with a musical staff and a corresponding hole diagram. The diagrams use black circles to indicate closed holes and white circles for open holes. Annotations provide specific fingering and technique instructions for each position:

- Position 1:** Standard fingering.
- Position 2:** * opening the fifth hole
- Position 3:** Standard fingering.
- Position 4:** * F opening the second hole, A closing the second hole
- Position 5:** Standard fingering.
- Position 6:** Standard fingering.
- Position 7:** Standard fingering.
- Position 8:** Standard fingering.
- Position 9:** * slightly opening the fourth hole
- Position 10:** Standard fingering.
- Position 11:** * G#-50 opening the first hole, Bb closing the first hole
- Position 12:** * opening slightly the second hole
- Position 13:** in meri position the structure of partials changes
- Position 14:** Standard fingering.
- Position 15:** Standard fingering.
- Position 16:** * opening slightly the fourth hole
- Position 17:** Standard fingering.
- Position 18:** Standard fingering.
- Position 19:** * piano dynamics
- Position 20:** * shading the fourth hole
- Position 21:** Standard fingering.
- Position 22:** Standard fingering.
- Position 23:** Standard fingering.
- Position 24:** Standard fingering.

25 

● * opening slightly the fifth hole
○
●
●
●

26 

● * slightly opening the fifth hole
○
●
○
●

27 

● * B: opening the second hole, C#: closing the second hole
○
○
○
○

37 

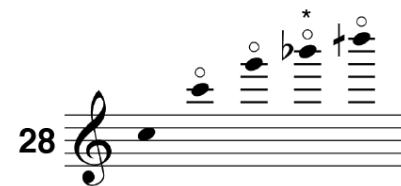
●
○
○
○
○

38 

○ * closing the fifth hole
○
○
○
● ** opening the fifth hole

39 

○
○
○
○
○

28 

● * shading the fourth hole
○
○
○
○

29 

● * shading the fourth hole
○
○
○
○

30 

●
○
○
○
○

40 

○ * D: it depends on the angle of the air flow and the air pressure
○
○
○
○

41 

○
○
○
○
○

42 

○
○
○
○
○

31 

●
○
○
○
○

32 

○ * a lot of room for pitch variation depending on the meri/kari angle and the opening of the first hole
●
●
●
○ ** C: opening the first hole, E: closing the first hole

33 

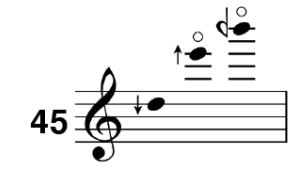
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○ * shading the fifth hole
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36 

○ * C#: opening slightly the third hole, D#: closing slightly the third hole
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50

* D: opening the third hole, E: closing the third hole

51

* C#: opening the fourth hole, E: closing the fourth hole

52

* closing slightly the fifth hole excites overtone F#
** opening slightly the second hole excites overtone A#

53

* a lot of room for pitch variation depending on the meri / kari angle

Notes

- Humet, Ramon: 1.8 shakuhachi fingering chart. *BAMBOO*, European Shakuhachi Society Newsletter. Autumn / Winter 2020, pp. 33-35. Humet, Ramon: 1.8 shakuhachi quarter tone fingering chart. *BAMBOO*, European Shakuhachi Society Newsletter. Spring / Summer 2021, pp. 63-67. Humet, Ramon: 1.8 shakuhachi timbral trill chart. *BAMBOO*, European Shakuhachi Society Newsletter. Autumn / Winter 2021, pp. 39-49
- Castellengo, Michèle and Fabre, Benoît: The Contemporary Transverse Flute and the Shakuhachi: Convergences. *Contemporary Music Review*, 1994, Vol. 8, Part 2, pp. 217-237
- van Cleve, Libby: *Oboe Unbound*. The Scarecrow Press, 2004
- Levine, Carin & Mitropoulos-Bott, Christina: *The Techniques of Flute Playing*. Bärenreiter, p. 18
- Pascal Gallois' expression of 'even more lip pressure' to achieve the harmonics of the bassoon is remarkable (Gallois, Pascal: *The Techniques of Bassoon Playing*. Bärenreiter, 2012). Rossing also states that 'to sound the second register, the player moves the lips...' (Rossing, Thomas D.: *The Science of Sound*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1982, p. 227). Minoru Miki says that 'in the second overtone series, the tension in the lips increases and the sound is extremely bright and piercing.' (Miki, Minoru: *Composing for Japanese Instruments*. University of Rochester Press, p. 42)
- A particular case of overtones that are produced in a different way to regular overtones are the so-called 'whistle-tones', characterized by a much more relaxed embouchure and subdued dynamics. Whistle-tones are not the subject of this study.
- Microtonal accidentals do not have a standard notation. As stated by Gould: 'No pitches other than twelve chromatic degrees of the octave have standard notation' (Gould, Eliane: *Behind Bars*. Faber Music. p. 94). Quarter-tone sharp and flat signs are quite common. Arrows can have various meanings depending on the composer. In this study, the arrows change the pitch an octave-tone.

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- Castellengo, Michèle and Fabre, Benoît: The Contemporary Transverse Flute and the Shakuhachi: Convergences. *Contemporary Music Review*, 1994, Vol. 8, Part 2, pp. 217-237
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- van Cleve, Libby: *Oboe Unbound*. The Scarecrow Press, 2004
- Gallois, Pascal: *The Techniques of Bassoon Playing*. Bärenreiter, 2012
- Miki, Minoru: *Composing for Japanese Instruments*. University of Rochester Press
- Rossing, Thomas D.: *The Science of Sound*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1982

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Kakizakai Kaoru *sensei* for his teaching. I also want to express my special gratitude to Horacio Curti, for his encouragement and generous support.

Ramon Humet is a composer and shakuhachi performer based in Barcelona, Spain.

www.ramonhumet.com

Min'yō

As part of our shakuhachi resources we travel around Japan to present a new min'yō song in each issue so you can practice, play along or simply enjoy the flavour of min'yō music.

This time we welcome shakuhachi performer Véronique Piron who leads us to Miyazaki Prefecture to tell the story behind *Kariboshi kiri uta*.

About min'yō

Min'yō (民謡) is a genre of traditional Japanese music. The term is a translation of the German word *Volkslied* (folk song) and has only been in use since the twentieth century.

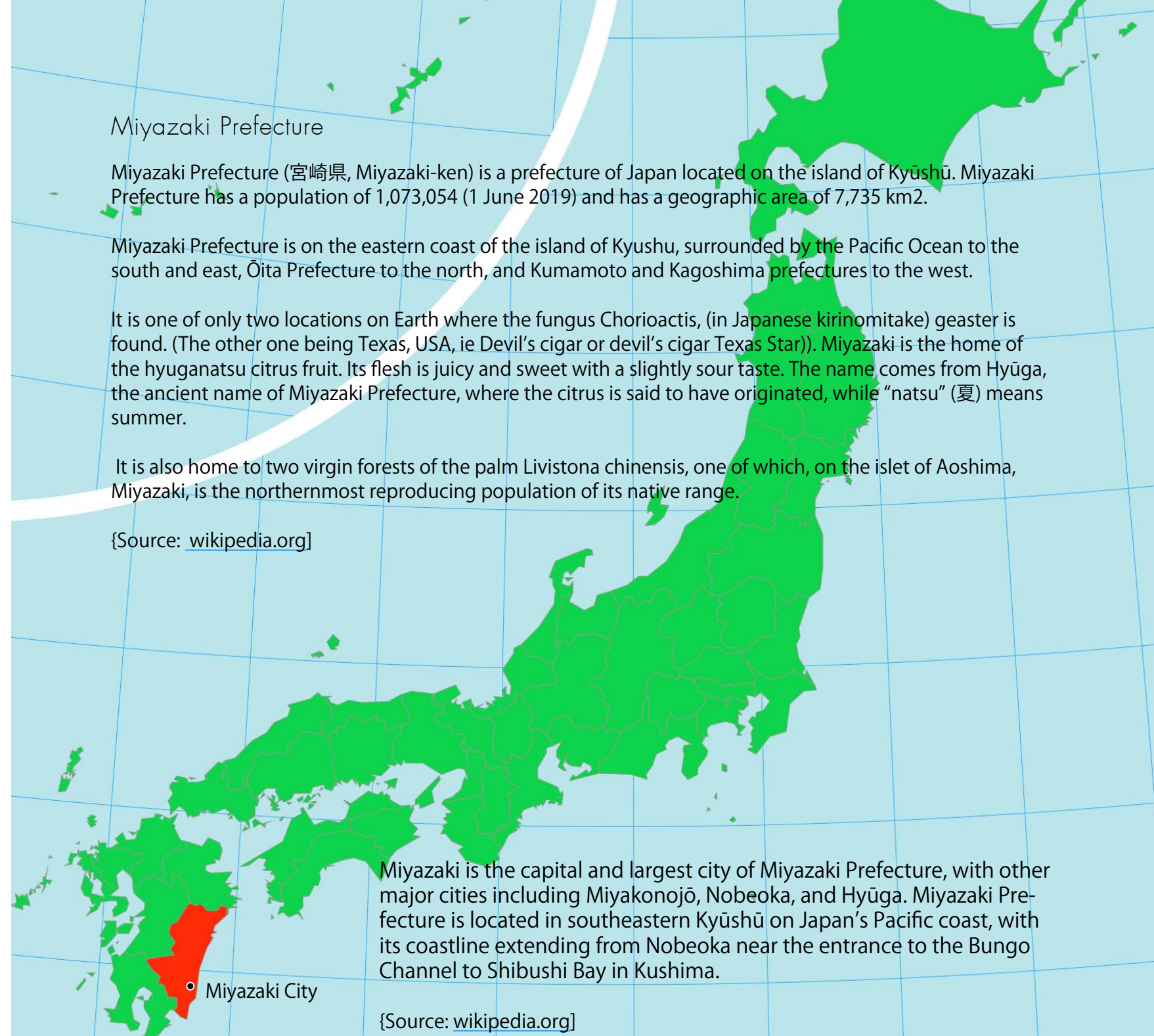
Japanese traditional designations referring to more or less the same genre include *inaka bushi* (country song) *inaka buri* (country tune), *hina uta* (rural song) and the like, but for most of the people who sang such songs they were simply *uta* (song).

The term *min'yō* is now sometimes also used to refer to traditional songs of other countries, though a preceding adjective is needed: *Furansu min'yō* = French folk song; for this reason, many sources in Japanese also feel the need to preface the term with *Nihon*: *Nihon min'yō* = Japanese [traditional] folk song.

Many *min'yō* are connected to forms of work or to specific trades and were originally sung between work or for specific jobs. Other *min'yō* function simply as entertainment, as dance accompaniment, or as a components of religious rituals.

Min'yō are also distinct depending on the area of Japan, with each area boasting its own favorite songs and styles. The songs found in the far northern island of Hokkaidō and sung by the Ainu people are usually excluded from the category of *min'yō*. In the far south, (especially Okinawa) distinct genres of *min'yō*, differing in scale structure, language and textual forms, have developed as well.

[Source: wikipedia.org]



Kariboshi kiri uta / 刈干切唄

This song belongs to the *min'yō* of the West part of Japan. We are here South-West, in Miyazaki prefecture on Kyūshū Island. This is the hot part of the country : many pieces have a slow tempo and a nonchalant feeling.

It has been programmed in a set of three *min'yō* pieces taught in middle schools in the 1970's : *Kokiriko bushi*, *Saitara bushi*, *Karobishi kiri uta*. They have been therefore songs widely diffused, great "classics" of that genre, with *Kariboshi kiri uta* being one of the first songs approached belonging to this region of Japan, including for *min'yō* contests programmes.

The context is agrarian: harvesting, drying and cutting. In the olden days farmers cut bamboo grass or *miscanthus* (silvergrass) in order to feed their cows and horses, and to thatch their roofs. They used to sing that working song while cutting, using a scythe.

Lyrics

Kokono yamano karibosha sundayo, Asuwa tambode ine karokayo.	We have finished mowing here in the mountains . We'll reap the rice in the paddy-fields tomorrow.
Ameka kirika togeno chayadeyo, Wakare tamotoga nurekakaruyo.	The rain, or maybe the mist, Soak the sleeves at the tea house

As it is originally a solo voice with no instrumental accompaniment, while played with a shakuhachi, the flute will follow the voice as accompaniment or just play as a solo piece, in a free rhythm style.

There are two versions of that song. One is using the classical *miyako bushi* scale, which has a minor atmosphere. Another version, more local, is using the *ritsu* scale, which has a major atmosphere. As the first version might produce a sensation of hard work, the second one might reflect a sunny bright atmosphere. But historically, it seems to be impossible to know which one arised first.

This kind of songs, subject to evolution, either by a change of mode (scale), or by a change of text induced for exemple by a displacement of the song of a region towards another can be classified in various categories. One can be considered as the "truthful one", which can either be the oldest version or oppositly the most recent one, and can even switch in the course of history. This is part of the evolution of traditional music wherever in the world.

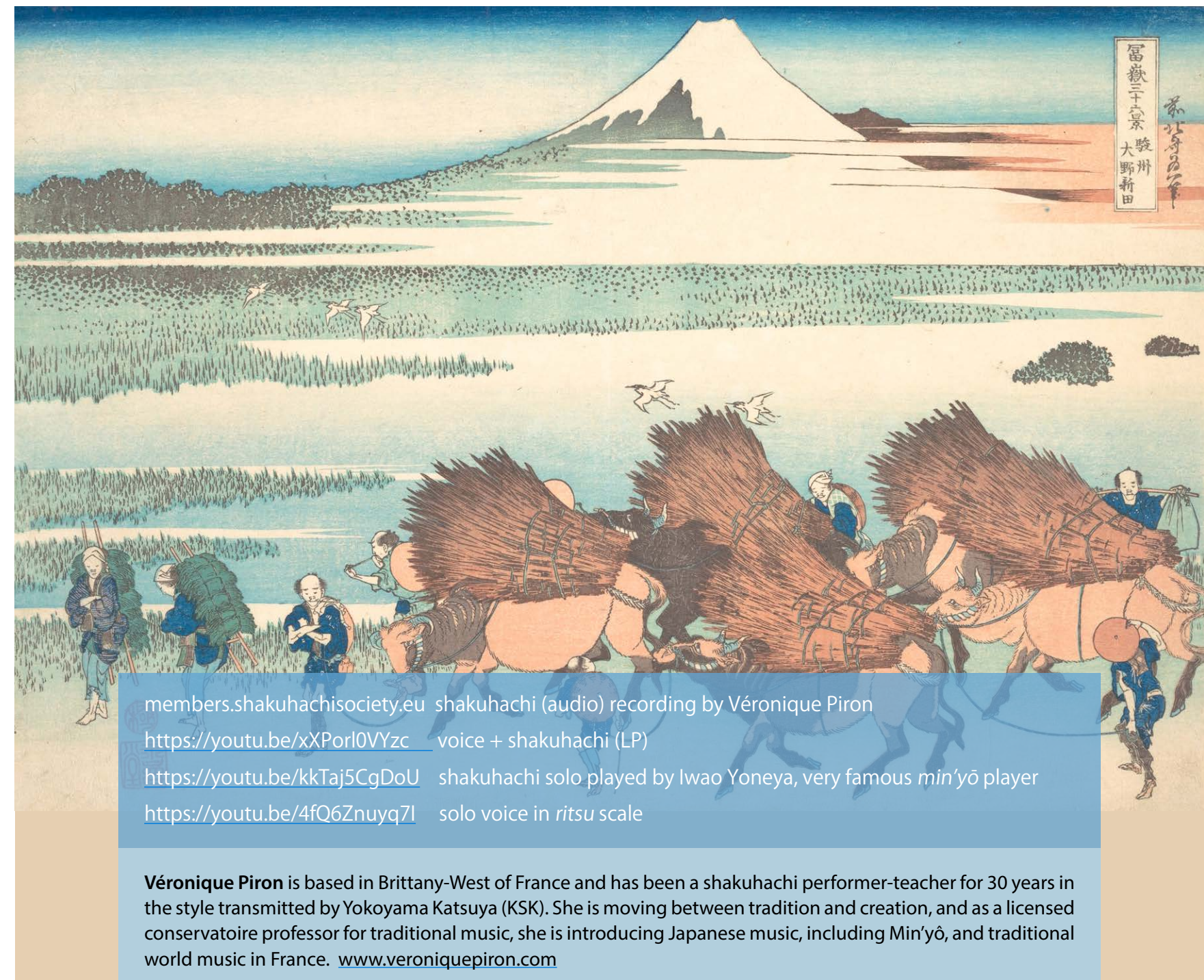
That's why while searching after that song you might find sometimes the designation *seichō/seichou* "authentic" coming with the title.

This piece is coming with two notations. One is a traditional shakuhachi notation, *gakufu*, and the second one, provided by the NHK (*shakuhachi no subesu*, 1981), is combining staff notation (for D shakuhachi) with *Kinko* and *Tōzan* notations. Both of them are using rhythm notation to indicate the flow of the melody, but is played in a free rhythm. There is one phrase as an instrumental introduction following by the 4 phrases of the song. Those phrases can have a long flow so that you need to pay intention to the breath to be able to manage long blowing.

The shakuhachi should played that piece as a simple melody, quite expressive, even *sabishiku* ("with sadness"), as notified on the notation, using *portamento* and *yuri* in some places. Playing the *miyako-bushi* scale version, the shakuhachi doesn't need to use *korone* ("double hitting") even if the singer, naturally, sings in an melismatic ornamental style.

The traditional notation proposes an additional solo shakuhachi phrase to be played in between the verses of the song, whereas the piece should stop at the end of the last phrase of the text.

In the recording I've been playing that notation all the way through. (see ESS members' area)



members.shakuhachisociety.eu shakuhachi (audio) recording by Véronique Piron

<https://youtu.be/xXPorl0VYzc> voice + shakuhachi (LP)

<https://youtu.be/kkTaj5CgDoU> shakuhachi solo played by Iwao Yoneya, very famous *min'yō* player

<https://youtu.be/4fQ6Znuyq7I> solo voice in *ritsu* scale

Véronique Piron is based in Brittany-West of France and has been a shakuhachi performer-teacher for 30 years in the style transmitted by Yokoyama Katsuya (KSK). She is moving between tradition and creation, and as a licensed conservatoire professor for traditional music, she is introducing Japanese music, including *Min'yō*, and traditional world music in France. www.veroniquepiron.com

SHAKUHACHI EVENTS – ANNOUNCEMENTS

14th INTERNATIONAL SHAKUHACHI FESTIVAL PRAGUE JUNE 1–5, 2023

Every two years Prague welcomes top shakuhachi players from Japan and around the world. Five days of workshops, focused study groups, lectures and concerts bring together traditional and new music for Japanese instruments.

From Kyoto Myoanji to Prague

The special guest of ISFP 2023 is the current *kansu*, main player, of the Kyoto Myoanji temple Sakai Seian Genshin. Kyoto Myoanji temple is one of the few places in Japan where spiritual shakuhachi playing is practised to this day. In two study groups open to five students only, Genshin will teach *Takiochi no Kyoku* and a special, very rare Myoanji version of *Shika no Tone*. In a dedicated concert ZEN: Sound and Silence (June 2nd), Genshin will perform the core pieces from his temple's tradition.

New sounds for the shakuhachi

The shakuhachi festival in Prague has a long successful tradition of presenting and commissioning new music from Czech and international composers. The ISFP 2023 will be adorned by a new piece for shakuhachi and orchestra by Jan Jonáš Starý (performed by Akihito Obama and the BERG Orchestra, June 5th). Another unquestionable highlight will be the European premiere of Dai Fujikura's *Shakuhachi Five*, which the ISFP had co-commissioned together with the Japanese all-star ensemble Shakuhachi 5 and James Schlefer (June 4th).

Jazz and improvised music are also represented at the festival in various forms from conventional to more outgoing. The festival aims to give spotlight to famous veterans as well as to the up and coming creative youngbloods that will shape the shakuhachi world in the years to come. If you want to share your music, you can apply to perform in one of three festival's Curated Open Mic concerts.

Learning & Understanding

It is a rule of the festival that the main guests teach as well as perform. The main guests of the ISFP 2023 are Kinya Sogawa, Naoko Kikuchi, Sakai Seian Genshin, Akihito Obama, John Kaizan Neptune, Ichiro Seki and Jean-François Suizan Lagrost (more to be confirmed). Don't miss out on this unique opportunity to learn from these world class players.

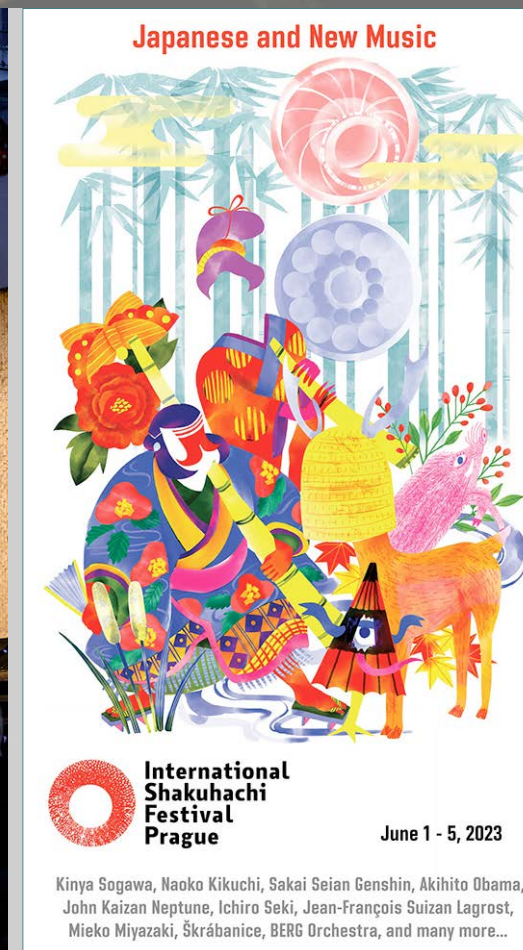
Furthermore, the festival features a symposium on June 1st focusing on the topic of Music and Altered States of Consciousness (see the Open Call at www.isfp.cz). Academics, composers, therapists and performers will present their research and experiences.

The Music faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (HAMU), is our festival center and official partner of the festival. All courses will, thus, take place in HAMU's renaissance palace in the historical Prague city center. The evening program of the festival will show you some of Prague's most beautiful concert venues, in ancient churches and modern architectural jewels.

Beyond the festival: shakuhachi making workshops

Three days before the festival and three days after the festival, you will have the outstanding opportunity to build your own shakuhachi under the guidance of professional shakuhachi makers, Kinya Sogawa and John Kaizan Neptune (respectively), at NEIRO Studio in Prague. Each workshop is open to six participants, bamboo and tools are provided.

Don't miss this unique event. The following International Shakuhachi Festival Prague will happen in June, 2025.



TIMELINE OF ISFP 2023

- May 29 – 31 Shakuhachi Making Workshop with John Kaizan Neptune (www.neiro.org)
- June 1 Symposium Music and Altered States of Consciousness & Opening concert of ISFP 2023
- June 2 – 5 ISFP 2023, teaching and concerts (www.isfp.cz)
- June 6 – 8 Shakuhachi Making Workshop with Kinya Sogawa (www.neiro.org)

<https://www.isfp.cz>

REVIEWS

CD REVIEWS

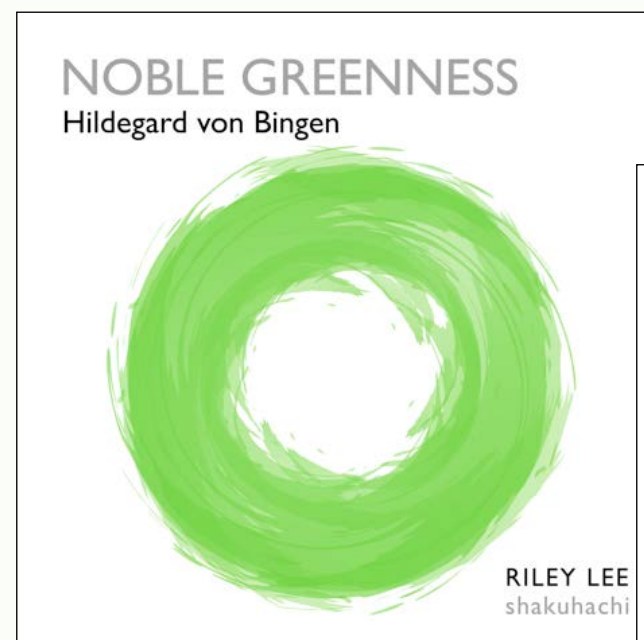
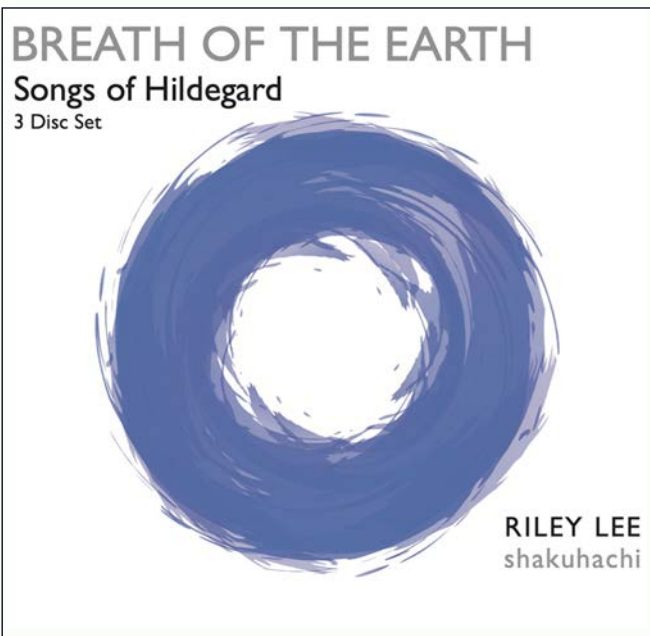
12th century liturgical melismatic hymns, ambient shakuhachi pop, blues-inspired jam coloured by gospel organ and thunderous electroacoustic cosmological compositions, Clive Bell is all ears to examine how the shakuhachi copes within these musical contexts.

Breath of the Earth / Songs of Hildegard by Riley Lee

Hildegard von Bingen is an extraordinary figure from 12th century Germany. She not only composed more music than anyone else in her day, she also travelled on preaching tours of Europe, wrote extensively on medicine and visionary theology and even invented her own alphabet. We know little about how exactly her music was performed, but it is monophonic and melismatic, with repeated use of melodic material, and so could be compared to *honkyoku*.

Riley Lee, originally from Texas but long resident in Australia, has for many years been acknowledged as a leading shakuhachi master. He studied with Katsuya Yokoyama, and continues Yokoyama's concern with a beautiful sound as the foundation of his playing. Lee has now recorded over three hours of Hildegard's music, available as a triple CD set. Many of these pieces are quite short, but some push up to the 13 minute mark.

Lee's approach is simple, almost ascetic. He plays these melodic lines gently, in a reverb which is long and warm but not intrusive. There's a hint of breath colour in the sound, which is never harsh nor too pure. Like a master electric guitarist he realises that first you sort out your sound, and this he has done. Everything comes in Western scales of course, but with some traditional shakuhachi ornamentation - again, it's not intrusive. There are no drones, no departure from the script, no experimental moments. Variety comes from different pitches and moods: *O Ignee Spiritus I* is on a lower flute, while version II is higher. *Item De Virginibus* is a lively song, about young girls maybe? This is less formal, and for a moment we step outside the cloister. On *O Clarissima* we can hear Hildegard's ecstatic joy. Everything is performed with Lee's impeccable musicality.



Noble Greenness		Divine Secrets	
1. Spiritus Sanctus Vivificans	03:54	1. O Ignee Spiritus	03:04
2. Caritas Abundat	02:37	2. Sed Diabolus	02:43
3. Ave Generosa	07:44	3. Item De virginibus	03:49
4. Cum Erubuerint	02:40	4. Hodie aperuit	02:17
5. Cum Processit Factus	04:23	5. Caritas	03:06
6. De Sancta Maria	02:34	6. O Ignee Spiritus II	13:06
7. O Clarissima	05:57	7. O quam magnum miraculum	07:00
8. O Cruror Sanguinis	01:53	8. O frondens virga	02:43
9. O Eterne Deus	03:17	9. O Pastor animarum	05:36
10. O Frondens Virga	03:57	10. O quam preciosa	03:14
11. O Ignis Spiritus Paracliti	11:24	11. O quam mirabilis	05:07
12. O Magne Pater	04:14	12. O splendidissima gemma	02:27
13. O Tu Suavissima Virga	09:43	13. Laus Trinitatis	
Wisdom			
1. O Ignee Spiritus III	13:14		
2. O Virga ac diadema	10:32		
3. O Virga mediatrix	04:44		
4. O Viridissima virga	07:43		
5. O Virtus Sapientie	03:15		
6. Quia Ergo Femina	03:05		
7. Spiritus Sanctus Vivificans II	03:38		
8. O Tu Illustrata	10:29		
9. O Vis Eternitatis	07:39		



in the shakuhachi tradition. Riley completed his PhD in Music in 1992. Breath of the Earth is his latest of more than sixty albums released during four decades of recording. Riley moved from Hawai'i to Australia in 1986, and presently lives in Manly NSW.

Lee is also a musician who has fully embraced new age-ism. His last release, in 2015, was Shakuhachi Sleep Music. A page on his website enquires "Would you like an hour of calm?" - the kind of question that makes me anxious. So this Hildegard set arrives from a musician steeped in new age for the past forty years. Other approaches are available: try Hildegard (2012) from Stevie Wishart (another Australian artist) for a quite different take. Medieval music is mysterious in its religiosity, and each generation finds there something that suits its current concerns. Whether Hildegard would have enjoyed 'an hour of calm' is an open question, but Lee has created a very beautiful record.

<https://rileylee.com/product/breath-of-the-earth-3cd-set/>

Shakuhachi And Electronics by Genkaizan (Frank Genkaizan Schäfer)

Genkaizan is Frank Schäfer, a German shakuhachi player now resident in the Nagoya area of Japan. He has released a seventy minute album on YouTube, a lively and often enchanting mix of assorted pieces, from honkyoku to ambient pop.

The opener is *Miyama Higurashi* a 1927 piece about cicadas by Fukuda Rando. Usually played solo, with an improvisatory feel, it's a throwaway bagatelle full of freedom, and Schäfer's gurgling synth maybe anchors the flute too much. Still, his playing is fine and it's an interesting attempt to push Fukuda into ambient pop. Better is *Genkai* which borrows a theme from Norwegian ambient specialist Geir Jenssen, aka Biosphere. This really is ambient pop, as the shakuhachi drapes melodic phrases across Jenssen's chords. Schäfer is trying out several ideas on this album, but for me the most successful are these lighter pop tracks, with their faint smell of Ryuichi Sakamoto. *Tai Kyoku*

Ken is another, a gentle *tai chi*-inspired dance. *Le Soleil? C'est Moi!* layers several shakuhachis over a beguiling rhythm, and even has a moment of French poetic rap. Later on there's an homage to soundtrack legend Maurice Jarre, flute across synth arpeggios. As Schäfer introduces his synthesised handclaps you can tell he's having fun.

Sazanami is more upbeat and tropical, with a kind of Okinawan gamelan effect. Shakuhachi carry the tune amidst swooping synths, perhaps illustrating the flying fish. A snarling electric guitar introduces *The Moon In My Mind*, a blues-inspired jam coloured by gospel organ.

Elsewhere Schäfer presents *Tamuke* as a solo on a larger flute (full disclosure: I may have taught him this piece long ago). I like his version here: we can hear freedom in the playing, and that the player has found his own voice.

The arrangement of Arvo Pärt's well known 1977 composition *Fratres* is a strange experiment. Schäfer writes that "the shakuhachi goes through a learning process", failing to match the expressive power of the violin (on Pärt's original) before returning to its meditative nature. Maybe this rather uncomfortable piece is itself a meditation on what music the shakuhachi should be playing. Schäfer also enjoys presenting Zen life advice on his YouTube channel, spiced with humour - elsewhere he has a video of slapstick flute players battling aboard a rural railway train. On this album too there's plenty to enjoy.

<https://youtu.be/HFxOf-xRLmA>

Ākāśa by Luigi Antonio Irlandini

Born in 1958 in Brazil, Luigi Antonio Irlandini is a shakuhachi player and contemporary composer, with a strong research interest in ancient and non-European content in contemporary composition. He has studied with British composer Brian Ferneyhough among others, and holds a teaching post at a Brazilian university. He has also taught music at several Steiner schools, and is trained in Steiner's anthroposophic pedagogy. Now he has a CD available, a kind of retrospective of his composing career, with three major pieces on it. The one we're concerned with here is *Ākāśa* (pronounced 'akasha'), a 22 minute electroacoustic piece featuring Irlandini's shakuhachi, which he performed at the Prague International Shakuhachi Festival in September 2021.

Like the poet TS Eliot and the atom bomb physicist Robert Oppenheimer, Irlandini is strongly drawn to the Vedic hymns of Sanskrit and Indian cosmology. In that cosmology, *Ākāśa* is the subtlest of the five elements - sometimes translated as ether, it is perceived via sound.

Ākāśa begins with simply Irlandini's shakuhachi (in C), bathed in a generous reverb. His initial impulse came from practising in reverberant stairwells. A pity maybe he didn't feature those stairwells, but he has opted for digital reverbs that give him more control. In fact, he tells us that this particular reverb corresponds to a subway tunnel in Amsterdam, while later in the piece he uses one that "reproduces the acoustic conditions of the Wembley Stadium in England." I love this kind of detail - it enables us to enter into the composer's excitement. The Vedic hymns might feel a little recondite, out of our grasp, but I can immediately relate to the guy in the studio trying out reverbs from a digital library, and thinking, okay, Wembley Stadium...

For the second part of *Ākāśa* Irlandini introduces an accompaniment of 'fixed media', or what we used to call tape. A tremendous thunderclap explodes - no distant rumbles, this is terrifying. Single brass notes, deep digeridoo notes and howling wolves build up a choir, over which the shakuhachi bravely perseveres. This is dramatic and great fun, though I confess I found it slightly comic book, with the fury of an anime soundtrack. The third section introduces dark twangs from a stringed tampo. Deep drones build a fierce and colourful soundscape. Meanwhile the shakuhachi proceeds at much the same pace as before, and is perhaps limited by sticking to one scale. More timbral exploration from the flute might have felt more responsive to the backing; as it is, there's a feeling that the flute is running out of ideas. But you can't argue with Irlandini's thunder, and everything ends with a mighty crash.

https://youtu.be/ts2AB_mezhs (CD track *Ākāśa*)

CD/Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/1bqyDcXRdXYxrbIPTvgL2>

Clive Bell is a musician and composer specialising in Far Eastern music. He studied the shakuhachi in Tokyo with Kohachiro Miyata. Bell is based in London, UK.



BOOK REVIEWS

Bruno Deschênes' new book *Transmusicality – Mastering a Music from Another Culture* explores issues of cultural appropriation, authenticity, identity and orientalism. By focusing his research on the musicians themselves, their motivations and individual stories, we are introduced to concepts of transpropiation and transmusicality, and what it might mean to 'master a music of culture one is not born into.

Certainly worth reading for shakuhachi players who wonder sometimes about question of authenticity, tradition, cultural appropriation and how to approach and understand a traditional instrument and its music being themselves from a different culture. Through the interviews with 'transmusical' musicians we glimpse also the practical reality and process of identifying and immersing oneself into the other musical culture.

As a shakuhachi player I had to learn to experience, embody and thus forge a frame of identity relevant to the Japanese way of thinking about the unique repertoires of solo pieces for that bamboo flute in order to perform these pieces as they were composed originally by a sect of Zen Buddhists monks between the 17th and the 19th centuries. This includes a distinct way of making sense of music, both aesthetically and physically, that differs significantly from my original academic classical musical training. For the first ten years or so, my Western training interfered with my learning of this music profoundly. I was trying to grasp the instrument from my western frame of identity. I was constantly coming up against a wall erected by my initial training. The most challenging element of this process was not to understand and grasp intellectually, technically or theoretically what the music was all about, but to dis-identify with my training so that it would stop interfering with my learning of Japanese music.

Bruno Deschênes, Extract of 'A process of Dis-identification and Re-identification', page 65.

Transmusicality – Mastering a Music from Another Culture

Transculturality

Multiculturality of our Modern World
Transculturality
Appropriation or Transpropiation

Bimusicality or Transmusicality

Bimusicality vs. Transmusicality
Transmusicality

Identity

A process of Dis-identification and Re-identification
Frames of Identity
Embodiment and Mimesis

Authenticity

Hybridity
Authenticity
Identity, Embodiment and Authenticity

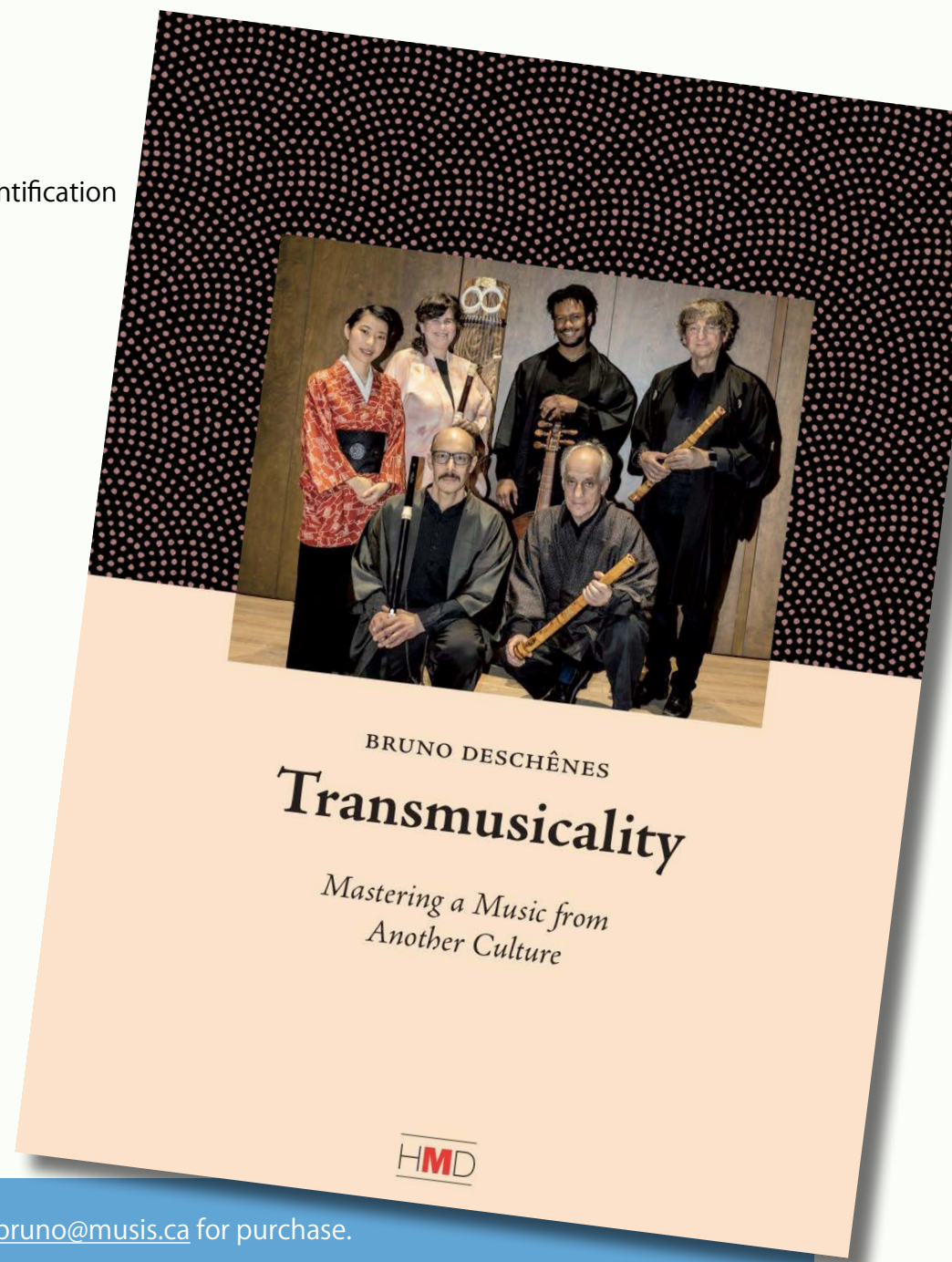
Orientalism, Exoticism and Essentialism

Appropriation and Transpropiation
A Misguided Authenticity?

Interviews with Transmusical Musicians

Nathalie Dussault
Pierre-Olivier Boldue
Michel Zenchiku Dubeau
Shawn Mativetsky
Katia Makdissi-Warren
Yuko Eguchi
Ziya Tabassian

Conclusion



Contact Bruno Deschênes directly at bruno@musis.ca for purchase.

An extract of Bruno Deschênes' article *World Music: Appropriation or Transpropiation* is on pages 70–77 of this issue of BAMBOO.

EVENT REVIEWS

Swiss Chikuyusha Annual Concert 2022 by Ursula Fuyûmi Schmidiger

After the annual concert of the Shakuhachi Society Switzerland (chikuyusha.ch) had to be cancelled due to the pandemic in 2020, it was possible to take place again this year.

Shakuhachi players from Basel, Bern, Zurich and Lucerne travelled to Olten to perform together in the Pauluskirche on 23 October 2022.

Compositions from different traditions were on the programme:

Ashi no Shirabe a *honkyoku* from the Kinko-ryû (Ashi = reed, cane) was performed by Ruedi Linder

Reibo Nagashi a *honkyoku* from the Kinko-ryû (Reibo = longing for the bell; Nagashi = to flow, to lead a wandering life) was performed by Ursula Fuyûmi Schmidiger

Akita no Kyoku a *honkyoku* from the Kyoto Myoan Temple (Akita = autumn field, a region in Japan) was performed by Isabel Lerchmüller.

Chidori no Kyoku a *gaiyoku* (secular piece); (Chidori = plover) was performed by Wolfgang Fuyûgen Hessler and Ursula Fuyûmi Schmidiger

Tabibito no Uta a composition by Fukuda Rando (Tabibito = traveller, wanderer) was performed by Isabel Lerchmüller.

Taizan a composition by Kawase Junsuke III (Tai = peaceful, calm, quiet / Zan = mountain) was performed by Wolfgang Fuyûgen Hessler, Helen Ingold, and Maria-Rosaria Visco.

During the welcome, the president of the Swiss Chikuyusha had pointed out that applause should only be given at the end. This made the mood among the audience during the concert particularly meditative and the applause at the end all the more powerful.

After the subsequent dinner together in the old town of Olten, the soloists travelled back to their homes, happy and satisfied about the successful concert.





SHAKUHACHI HUMOUR, POETRY & MORE

HA-HA-RO

Welcome to the lighter side of the shakuhachi world. Here we collect contributions from our members to offer personal reflections, share artworks, poetry, writings, musings, etcetera, etceteru...



Cartoon by Thorsten Knaub

WHAT IS A KOMUSO This priest of Emptiness.

In the beginning the search is vague, the mind is not quiet the movements are not coordinated. Through the years progress is made. With earnestness.

Have you ever played the shakuhachi, and then you become aware of another state appearing; the sensation of Ki. This appeared after long practice sessions
Why? and How ?

Once "correct breathing" establishes a relaxed rhythm; while playing with calm emotions, relaxed body and "no worries" . (This is not a formula, but just a suggestion).

Now these aspects of the inner world, "microcosm " can merge together "relate" and the natural energy Ki can flow freely in the whole body. This energy is sacred. So being conscious of Ki is a union.
But it is possible for all of us to experience. This synchronicity in the body with breathing, playing the shakuhachi and relaxation with an alert mind; one is present to receive this affirming life force. "When the brightness comes." "Is this emptiness?"

Unfortunately these Ki moments don't last but once discovered they can be found again. One needs to play a lot of honkyoku.

You must be thinking that I'm out of my mind. Your right. I'm talking of being in the body and not in the distracted thoughts that eclipse all that happens in the body.

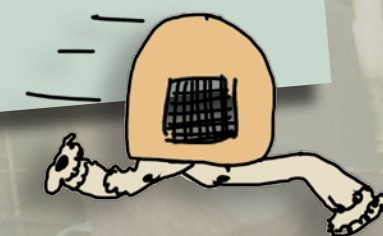
How do you explain the very real experience of the sensation of Ki which starts in the "Tan den", below the navel, and brings the whole body in to clear focus, as sensation unites with feelings. Like the sound of cicadas and the sensation of wind in the pine trees. A rich experience with lasting impressions.

"Thinking with the whole body". Comes to mind.
One of my earliest teachers, Takuan Soho, (1572- 1645) said:
"A skilled person never uses force".
And another teacher of mine Teneda Santoka wrote this Haiku:

Quietly, by itself
The bamboo shoot
becomes bamboo.

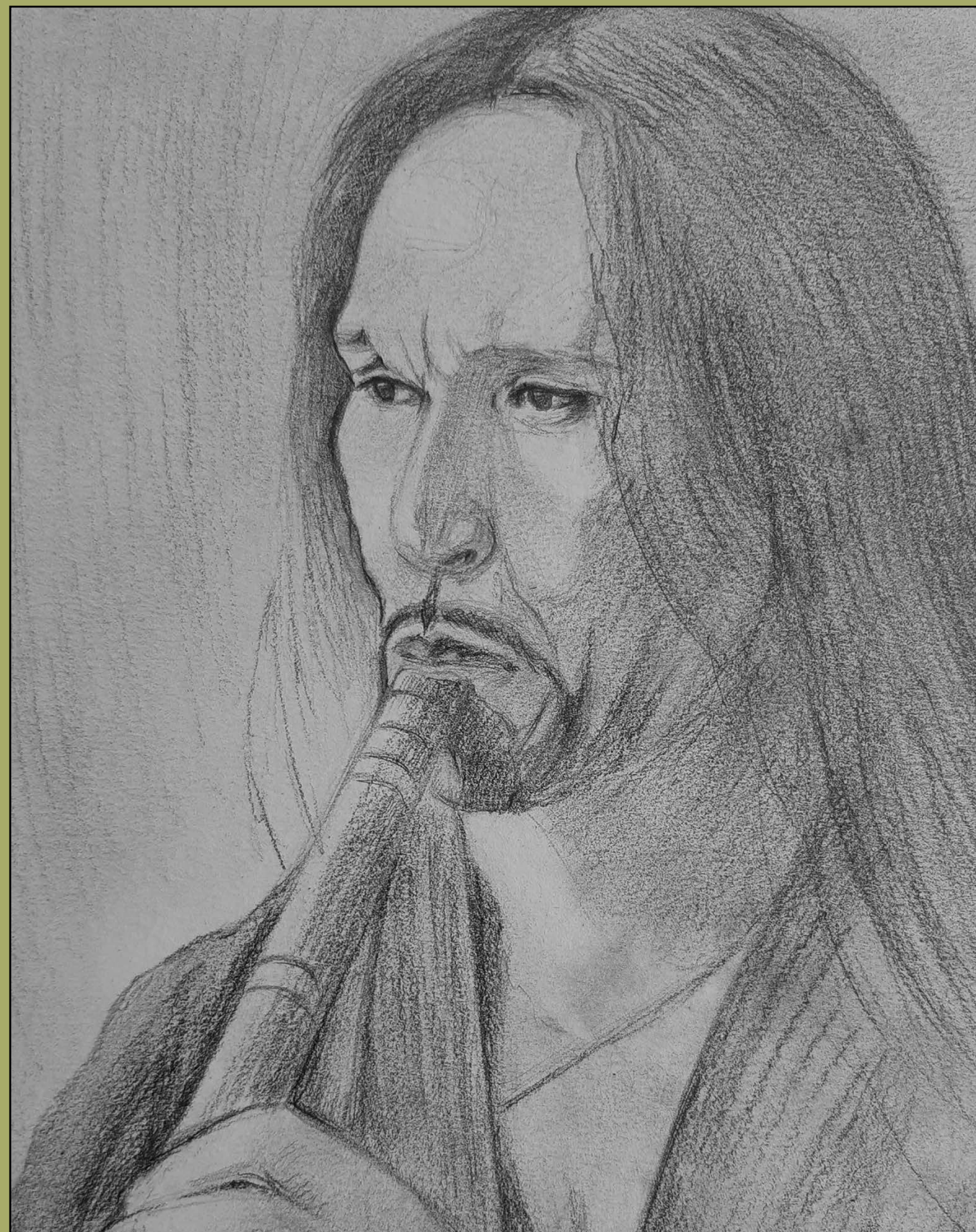
After playing with presence, maybe Ki is felt too? "Zan shin" can hold that suspense to be present to the inner world, microcosm, no thought, just sensation.

Damon Rawnsley
Sent from my iPad



Drawings

by Tamara Rogozina

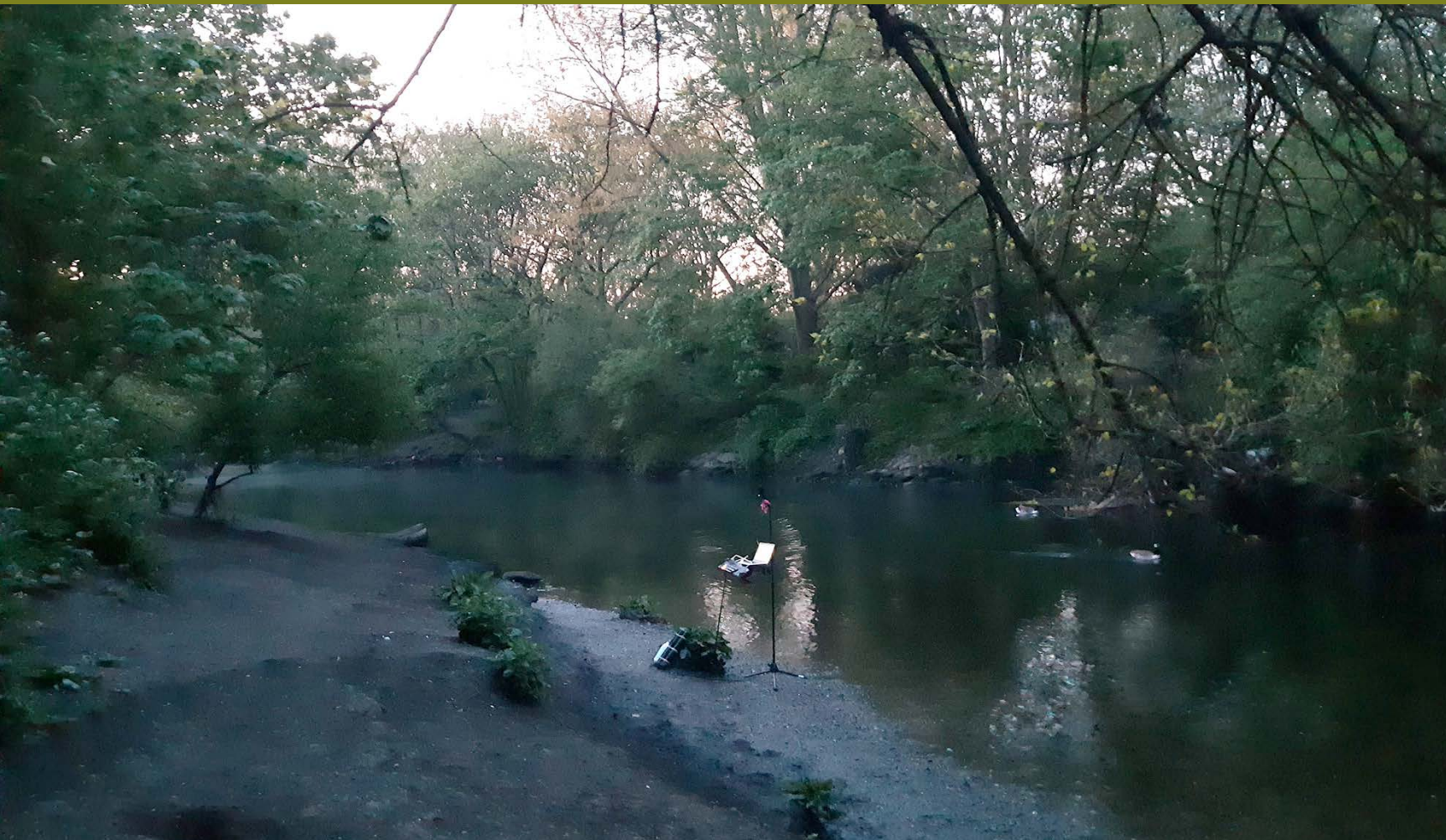


I double-check everything is connected. I exhale, take a deep breath and blow...

by Laonikos Psimikakis Chalkokondylis

What does it feel like to share the same air, water, and soil with all the animals and plants of this place? What does this land sound like, and how can we blend in, in a playful and creative manner, not as visitors but as residents too?

These are some of the thoughts in my mind as I walk to a nature spot in Hackney Marshes, east London, where I can safely cross the thicket of nettles and bramble and onto the northern banks of River Lea. It is 4am and this is a place of immense local beauty and serenity. In these early hours I seem to be alone—or, rather, the only human around, but in the company of many animals. I have come here to participate at Soundcamp Reveil (French for “awakening”), a 24-hour live broadcast of the sounds of dawn across the globe: I’m one of over 100 people setting up “soundcamps” globally, streaming the sounds of dawn from 4.53am and for about half an hour, the duration of sunrise on this day.



After the “clean” stream is finished, I pick up my shakuhachi and walk over to my laptop and microphone. I am about to be livestreaming an improvisation with shakuhachi and live electronics and birdsong to whoever is tuning in. I pause to listen—I can see and hear kingfishers, herons, gulls, blackbirds, wrens, blue tits, great tits, pied wagtails, chaffinches, turtle doves, ring-necked parakeets, robins, geese, coots and many others. Some mallards land in the water, ruffling the calm surface of the water; a heron spreads his wings dramatically to scare off a gull from his territory. But beyond these occasional foreground brushstrokes, there is just the distant sound of the motorway and the occasional train, or the footsteps of very eager dog walkers on the south banks of the river — a soft balance of sounds where human and the more-than-human coexist fairly peacefully, as residents of the land around River Lea.

I double-check everything is connected. I exhale, take a deep breath and blow, doing my best to blend in and offer my own sounds in this morning’s dawn chorus.

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/cXzcd9AWn0I>

Laonikos’ album ‘loess’ was released in October 2022 by the Netherlands-based Slow Tone Collages, and you can listen to it here: <https://slowntonecollages.bandcamp.com/album/loess>

Laonikos is happy to offer a free download code to the first ten ESS Newsletter readers who ask for one via email.

ESS MEMBERS' AREA - WHAT'S NEW?

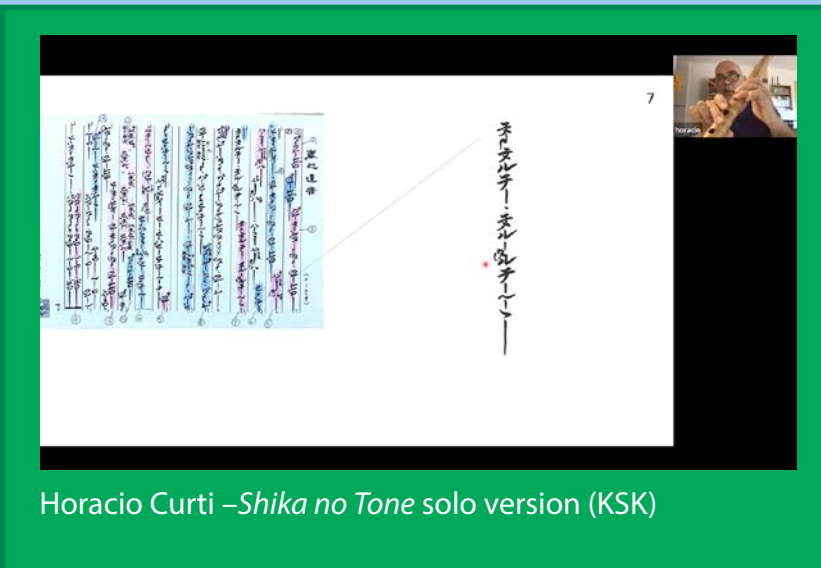
DUBLIN 1 on 28/29 MAY – VIDEOS

Dublin 1 was an exciting collection of pieces from classic honkyoku to modern compositions, as well as tips on technique, a talk, a musical taster of Dublin and of course some *ro-buki* sessions. The teachers Araki Kodo VI, Shiori Tanabe, Horacio Curti, Nina Haarer, Philip Horan represent a variety of schools/style ranging from Kodō-kai/Kinko-ryū, Tozan-ryū, Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan (KSK) to Chikuho-ryū. Videos are now uploaded for further study. Enjoy!

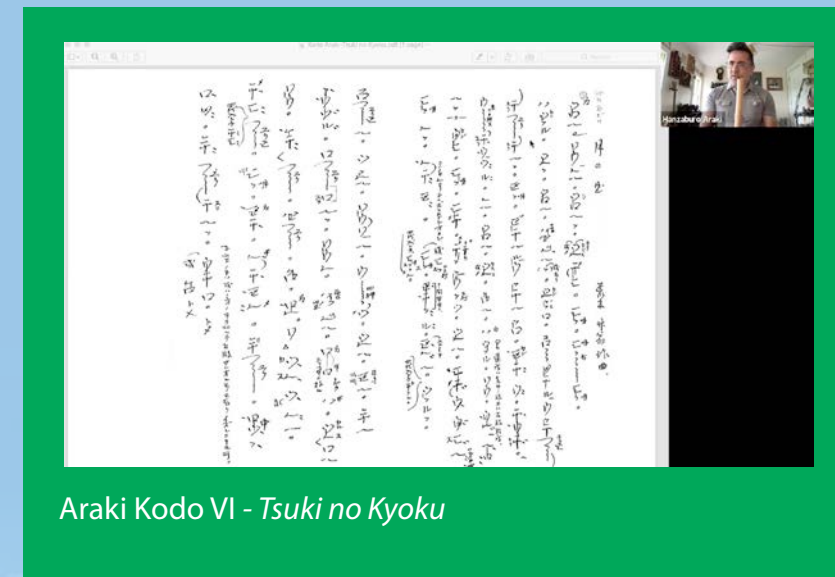
28/29 May 2022

Dublin Summer 2023

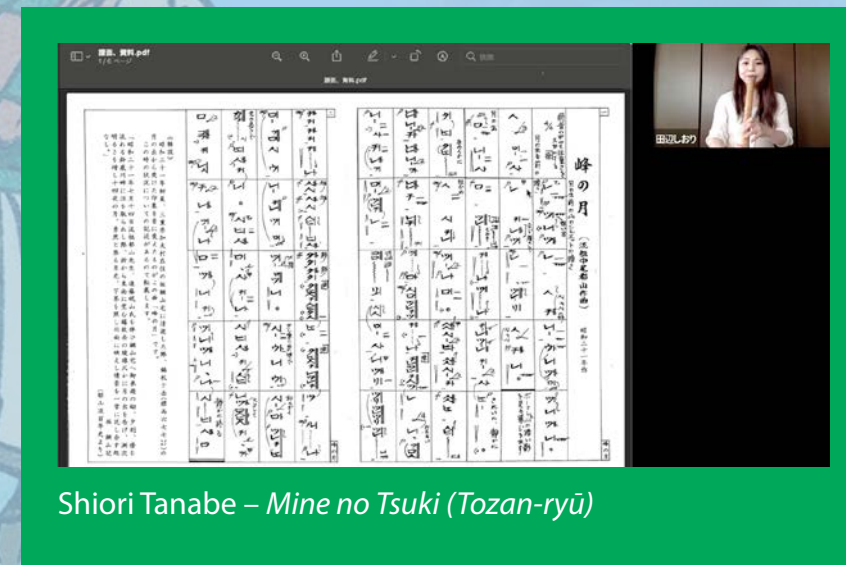
4/5 March 2023 Online Event 3



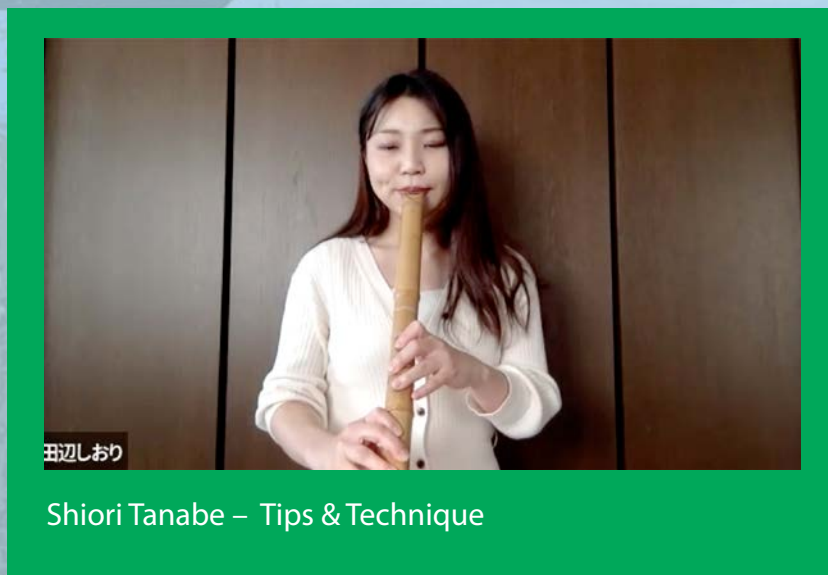
Horacio Curti – *Shika no Tone* solo version (KSK)



Araki Kodo VI - *Tsuki no Kyoku*



Shiori Tanabe – *Mine no Tsuki* (Tozan-ryū)



Shiori Tanabe – Tips & Technique

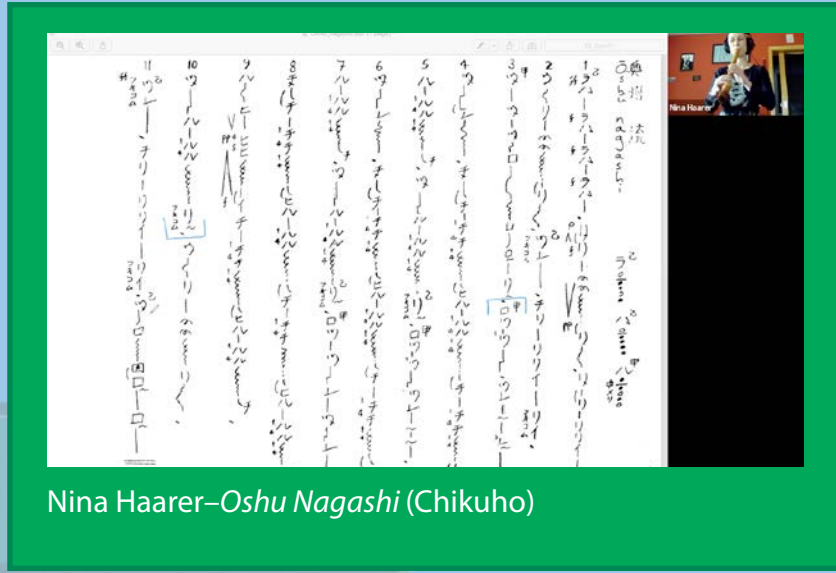
<http://members.shakuhachisociety.eu/video-archive/road-to-dublin-1>

Road

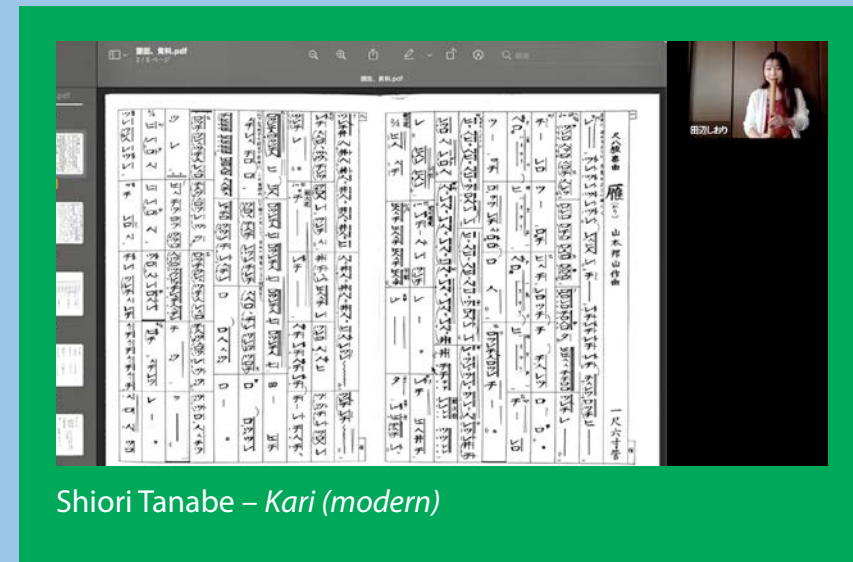
28/29 May 2022
Online Event 1

Dublin
Summer 2023

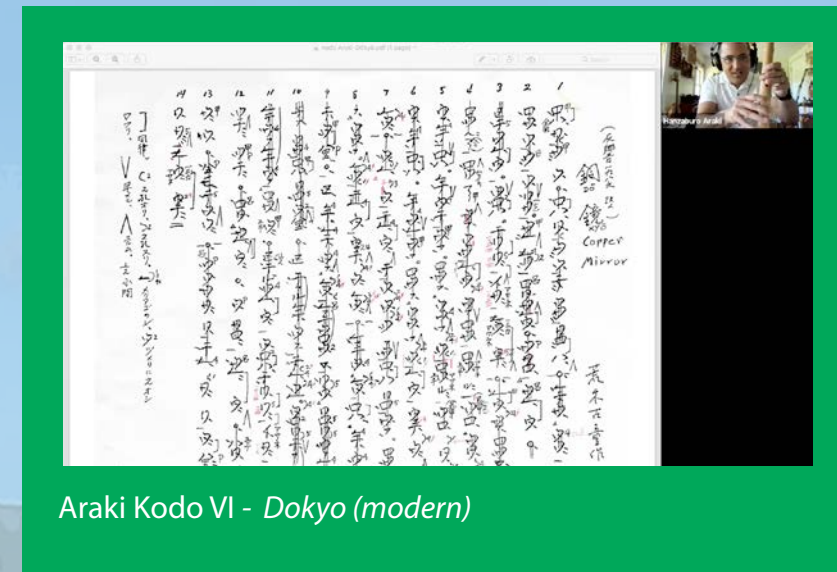
4/5 March 20
Online Event



Nina Haarer–Oshu Nagashi (Chikuho)



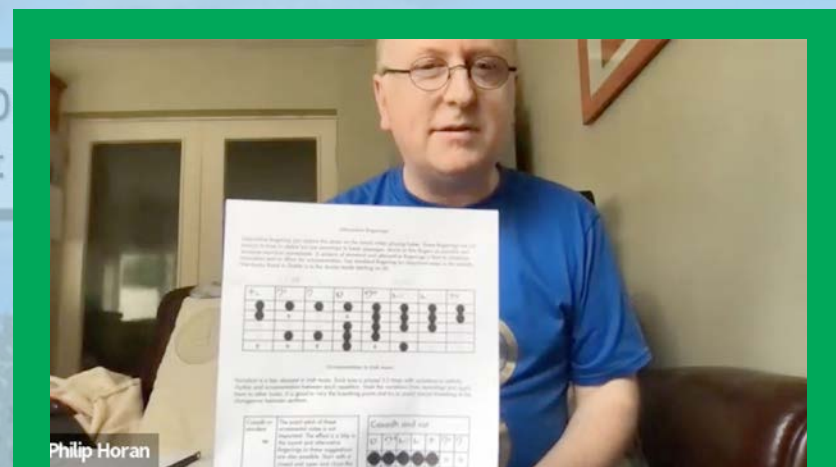
Shiori Tanabe – Kari (modern)



Araki Kodo VI - Dokyo (modern)



anzaburo Araki
Araki Kodo VI - Tips & Technique



Philip Horan
Philip Horan – Tips & Technique/Irish theme



<http://members.shakuhachisociety.eu/video-archive/road-to-dublin-1>

HOW TO BECOME AN ESS MEMBER

The European Shakuhachi Society is a non-profit organisation devoted to the dissemination of the shakuhachi in all its different aspects throughout Europe through a wide variety of events, publications and other activities.

All board members and helpers work on a volunteer basis and receive no financial benefit but the Society needs money for organising a range of events, such as the annual summer schools. This comes from the membership fees.

Membership of the ESS is open to any person, both players or non-players, interested in the music of the shakuhachi in all its forms. Since the ESS is not affiliated with any particular school or aesthetic direction, its members represent a broad cross-section of styles and genres of shakuhachi. Supporting the ESS through joining is a means of helping maintain a coordinating resource of the shakuhachi in Europe.

The benefits of membership include access to information about shakuhachi events and tuition throughout Europe and beyond, as well as discounted participation fees at events such as the European Shakuhachi Summer Schools. (discounts that are generally greater than the cost of the membership fee itself).

Furthermore there is the **ESS Members' Area** at members.shakuhachisociety.eu, which consists of exclusive online resources like e.g. concert and lesson recordings of past Summer Schools and online events, previous Summer School notations and the ESS Newsletter back-issues.

Once you have a valid membership subscription, our secretary will issue you with the relevant information on how you can access the online content.

The annual membership subscription fee is €20 or for a one-off payment of € 300 you can obtain Lifetime membership.

To join the ESS:

- 1) Visit the membership page on the ESS website and choose the membership subscription which suits you. <http://shakuhachisociety.eu/about-the-ess/ess-membership/>
- 2) Please send an email to member@shakuhachisociety.eu or info@shakuhachisociety.eu, giving your name and contact details, and if you wish, a little information about your interest in and experience with the shakuhachi.
- 3) If you cannot make payment using PayPal, please send an email to member@shakuhachisociety.eu and we will find a way to help you.

We are looking forward to welcome you!

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE ESS

ESS WEBSITE

You can find our website at www.shakuhachisociety.eu

There you will find information about shakuhachi, the ESS structure as well as past events and the ESS calendar of upcoming shakuhachi events in Europe.

General enquiries: info@shakuhachisociety.eu

NEW Online events enquiries: online-events@shakuhachisociety.eu

For questions about membership: member@shakuhachisociety.eu

ESS newsletter: newsletter@shakuhachisociety.eu

The ESS will endeavour to respond quickly to any query.

ESS MEMBERS' AREA (MEMBERS' WEBSITE)

Resources like video, audio and notation for registered ESS members : members.shakuhachisociety.eu

ESS FORUM

The ESS operate a forum: "Practice, Culture and History of Japanese Bamboo Flute 尺八"

www.shakuhachiforum.eu

Please visit the forum and take part in discussions with shakuhachi players, teachers and makers from all over Europe and beyond.

ESS FACEBOOKGROUP

[European Shakuhachi Society Facebook Group](#)

Please visit the ESS Facebook community group and join the discussions and benefit from the connections worldwide.

ESS TWITTER

Follow us on twitter [@ESS_Events](https://twitter.com/ESS_Events)

To announce an event on the Twitter account of the ESS, please send your message (less than 140 characters please!) to this email address : twitter@shakuhachiforum.eu

ESS NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTOR'S GUIDELINES

The aim of the ESS Newsletter (NL) is to create a platform for members and non-members to further develop an understanding of shakuhachi and place it in a wider context than just their own individual study and experience. It, therefore, includes, among others, a diverse range of topics and new ideas, information, knowledge, materials and reflections on shakuhachi and the people who shape the musical scene.

We encourage everyone to send in ideas for articles you would like to write or topics you would like to read about to the publications office by email at: newsletter@shakuhachisociety.eu

Before each new number, a 'call for contributions' will be issued and a deadline for submission will be set, but please feel free to send us your ideas on possible articles any time you want.

In order to assist the authors in their task and to ensure some consistency, the following brief guidelines have been drawn up:

Article length: The NL includes articles of different lengths up to approximately 2,000 words. In special cases, longer articles focusing on specific topics or issues, which require a more in-depth analysis may also be considered.

Text format: Please send your text in a text document (doc, docx, rtf). You can use any font and format since the text will be adjusted to the NL format.

Audiovisual materials/external links: We encourage the authors to include links to audiovisual materials that can enhance the experience of the reader in terms of material specifically and directly relating to the analysis or review of the topic of the article and avoiding self promotion.

Please send the pictures or other multi-media materials separately and contact the editors beforehand. If the size of the files makes them difficult to be sent by e-mail please use services like e.g. wetransfer.com.

Picture format: Please send your pictures in jpg, png or tiff format with a minimum resolution of 150dpi.

Reviews: Should you wish for any shakuhachi material to be reviewed in the NL (recordings, books, etc.), please contact us with the particulars and the editors will get back to you.

Reviews of materials, such as books and CD's, will appear in the first available issue of the NL after being received by the editors. Reviews of events, such as summer schools, workshops, master classes and concerts, need to be submitted by the deadline for the next edition of the NL, ie. within a maximum of 6 months after the event.

Please provide acknowledgement/credit for the use of any other author's material.

Please avoid self-promotion.

The NL includes announcements on non-ESS events. Should you want your event's information to be included, please note that these events should take place after the publication of the respective NL edition (please consult the editors for exact dates of issue) and you should send the following information:

Date / Period

Description of your event

Venue

Cost

Contact information

Picture (may be edited to fit the needs of the NL format)

After submission, the articles will be proofread and edited, if necessary, with permission of the authors when practically possible. Editors will always try their best to find agreement with the authors but you should note that eventually the editors decision will be final. The publication language is English, any material received in other languages will be translated into English and presented alongside the original language version.

The ESS Newsletter exists thanks to the authors, translators and illustrators who so generously offer their knowledge, time and energy to provide materials. Please, be one of them.

ESS publications office

**The next ESS Newsletter is published on June 1, 2023
There will be a call for contributions nearer the publication date, but please do not hesitate to contact us in the meantime with any questions or suggestions.**





STAY TUNED !

BAMBOO

THE NEXT EUROPEAN SHAKUHACHI SOCIETY NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED
JUNE 1, 2023