

FINLAND
SUMMER SCHOOL 2024

ZEN AND SHAKUHACHI: MIZUNO KOHMEI, MAEKAWA KŌGETSU,
TERUHISA FUKUDA, KAZUKO HOHKI, MARCIO MATTOS

BAMBOO

Spring/Summer 2024

Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society



IGNITION COMMISSION
"TWILIGHT" BY BRONWYN KIRKPATRICK

WATAZUMI DO
SHIMURA ZENPO

NOVEMBER STEPS
REAR VIEW MIRROR

Cover artwork: Kazuko Hohki

竹吹けば
宇宙に穴が
開きました

Take hukeba,
uchuu ni ana ga,
akimashita

Blowing a bamboo,
I have made a hole
in the universe.



Credits

Cover, and *sumi-e* artwork: Kazuko Hohki

Photo p. 35: Chester Ong. With courtesy from WSF18
Other photos: Marcio Mattos, Kiku Day, Heikki Räisänen

BAMBOO – The Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society –
Spring / Summer 2024

Special collaborators

Zen and shakuhachi

Maekawa Kōgetsu, Fukuda Teruhisa, Mizuno Kohmei,
Marcio Mattos

Sumi-e

Kazuko Hohki

Watazumi Dō

Christopher Yohmei Blasdel

Ignition Commission

Bronwyn Kirkpatrick

That's a good mouth for shakuhachi

Kiku Day

November Steps

Josep Maria Guix

Rear View Mirror

Adrian Freedman

*Thanks to Etsuko san, Yukiko Akagi and Hèlène Seiju Codjo for
the help with the translations between Japanese and English*

*A very special thanks to Masako Coxall for the work of
translating the texts from Japanese to English*

*Thanks to Markus Guhe, to Damon Rawnsley, and to the
special collaborators*

ESS Newsletter Team

**Editor, CD reviews, style,
coordination**
Clive Bell

**Editor, design, layout,
coordination**
Ramon Humet

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A Deep Breath, Relax... A Word From Your Chairperson

Dear ESS Members and shakuhachi friends,

Hope you are all well!

Let me welcome you to the spring/summer issue of BAMBOO, an inspiring read, highlighting again the diversity of our shakuhachi community, and the historical breadth which this humble piece of bamboo has already accumulated through its diverse usages.

And as springtime teases us with sunshine and thoughts of summer, our efforts intensify on the organisation of this year's ESS Summer School. We are immensely proud and happy to have the opportunity of collaborating with the Finnish Shakuhachi Association to present to you Finland 2024, commencing on 29. July and ending on 1. August.

A 'Summer School' in Scandinavia is in many ways new ground for the ESS and as the European shakuhachi landscape takes shape more and more, it feels like the perfect time to reach out further north to this vibrant shakuhachi community and try to connect to shakuhachi players from elsewhere.

As usual, ESS Finland 2024 will present a wide variety of styles, schools and individual approaches. The ESS summer event, like the ESS itself, is a place to meet, exchange and value and treasure each other's take on the instrument which put that spell on us from its first sound.

As the ESS is not only committed to fostering understanding for existing shakuhachi music and traditions, it is also actively engaged in facilitating new repertoire for shakuhachi; and this year we asked composer Marty Regan to create a new 'group piece' for shakuhachi to be premiered at the concert at the Museum Sibelius in Turku as part of the Summer School in Finland. The concert will also feature a further World Premiere by composer Henri Algañafe. Overall the concert programming, to be announced shortly, will embrace a wide spectrum from *honkyoku* traditions and ensemble music to contemporary works.

We are aware of potential geographical or economical restraints for some of our members travelling to the 'far north', so we have tried to negotiate the best package deal we could with the venue, the Friendship Inn, and we've kept participation fees as low as possible too. We hope you will join us at the Friendship Inn in Finland.

Last but not least I would like to thank all of you who made the ESS Online Season such a successful and memorable series of events. We started last October and more than 50 hours of sessions later we close this year's proceedings with our final event on 2. June (Shakuhachi & Improvisation). Thank you and hope to see you next season!

As always: any comments or suggestions, please contact us on info@shakuhachisociety.eu.

Best wishes
Thorsten Knaub, ESS Chairperson

And Breathe... A Word From Your Editors

Dear ESS Members and shakuhachi people,

The *kyosaku*, or "encouragement stick" is the wooden slat that slaps you on the shoulder, a means of reinvigorating you during your Zen meditation session. Eighteenth century churches in England employed a man called a "sluggard waker" to administer a sharp tap on the head with a stout pole, for the benefit of anyone falling asleep during the church service. And the *kyosaku* name has now been adopted by a Stockholm based power trio - Kyosaku - who deliver a torrent of euphoric, squalling rock on guitar, bass and drums.

There's a Zen theme running through much of this issue of the ESS Newsletter. Marcio Mattos writes of his experiences in Zazen and music - he encountered the *kyosaku* stick as a young man in the Japanese quarter of São Paulo, Brazil. Christopher Yohmei Blasdel recounts a fraught encounter with the Zen priest and shakuhachi virtuoso Watazumido. And Adrian Freedman takes a "Rear View Mirror" listen to Tony Scott's 1964 collaboration with Hozan Yamamoto, *Music For Zen Meditation And Other Joys*. Three Japanese shakuhachi masters share their thoughts about Zen, and London based artist and Frank Chickens singer Kazuko Hohki dips her toe - and her brush - into *sumi-e* ink painting with poetry.

Elsewhere, Bronwyn Kirkpatrick continues our "Ignition Commission" series with a brand new shakuhachi composition aimed at beginners. Josep Maria Guix looks back to 1967 and Toru Takemitsu's vital *November Steps* for shakuhachi, biwa and orchestra. Jim Franklin's new book on shakuhachi, composition and electronics is reviewed by Markus Guhe. And Kiku Day contributes a lengthy, fascinating interview with Shimura Zenpo, who is an Osaka based music professor with a shakuhachi museum in his flat.

Like the shakuhachi, Zen was something originating in China, then moving across to Japan and becoming very different. Kamakura, a seaside town one hour south of Tokyo, used to be the capital of Japan - centuries ago, when Zen was the dominant form of Buddhism in the country. It's a great pleasure to walk around Kamakura today, with its glorious, bamboo-draped temples and its vibrant surfing scene, and think about what a Zen government might look like.

So, no more holding your breath. Welcome to your latest issue of the ESS Newsletter!

The Editors

FINLAND 2024 ESS SUMMER SCHOOL

29.7. - 1.8 Friendship Inn, Kruusila

GUESTS

INTERNATIONAL & ESS

TANI YASUNORI

RILEY LEE

GUNNAR JINMEI LINDER

KIKU DAY

HÉLÈNE SEIYU CODJO

EMMANUELLE ROUAUD

THORSTEN KNAUB

SPECIAL GUEST KOTO/SHAMISEN

NAOKO KIKUCHI

FINNISH SHAKUHACHI ASSOCIATION

OTTO ESKELINEN

AARO HAAVISTO

SAKARI HEIKKA

SANGEN SALO

WORLD PREMIERE OF 2024 ESS COMMISSION

MARTY REGAN



Registration: finland2024.shakuhachisociety.eu

FINLAND 2024! The ESS Summer School travels north this year!

The ESS is very excited to collaborate with the Finnish Shakuhachi Association to present to you Finland 2024.

Thanks to the efforts of the local organisers this year's ESS Summer School will take place at the beautifully situated Friendship Inn in Kruusila (roughly half-way between Turku and Helsinki), where we will be surrounded by tranquil lakes and forests. There are also plenty of communal spaces to just sit back and relax.

Dates are from **29. July to 1. August 2024.**

Like every Summer School, we will offer a range of workshops, concerts, talks and lessons from established teachers and shakuhachi practitioners. This year we have for the first time a major Ueda-ryū player as guest. Another special ingredient in this year's event will be a hitoyogiri-making workshop. And did I mention the special ESS commission yet?:)

Our guests

From Japan we welcome **Tani Yasunori**, Iemoto Daihyō* Dai-Shihan of Ueda-ryū, who will present Ueda-ryū *honkyoku* and *sankyoku*; from Australia, **Riley Lee** will be teaching Chikuho-ryū *honkyoku* and contemporary pieces; **Gunnar Jinmei Linder** from Chikumeisha will teach *sōkyoku* and *honkyoku*; **Hélène Seiyu Codjo** will present Hijiri-Kai pieces and her own compositions; **Kiku Day** will present Zensabo and Myoan *honkyoku*; **Emmanuelle Rouaud** will teach KSK *honkyoku*, *shinkyoku* and a moving image improvisation session with **Thorsten Knaub**, who will also present jiri-shakuhachi making and a shakuhachi clinic.

Our special guests and co-organisers from the Finnish Shakuhachi Association: **Aaro Haavisto** will teach Ueda-ryū basics and lead the hitoyogiri-making workshop; **Otto Eskelinen** introduces us to Finnish folk music played on shakuhachi; and **Sakari Heikka** will present a workshop on how to play and improvise with scales and modes on shakuhachi. Last but not least **Sangen Salo** will give us a taste of Zazen and his take on shakuhachi & Zen.

And we are particularly grateful that **Naoko Kikuchi** (koto and shamisen) will also join us for the workshops and concerts.

ESS commission by Marty Regan

The ESS is thrilled to announce a special commission for this year's Summer School in Finland: We have asked world renowned composer Marty Regan to create a special 'group piece' for Finland 2024, which will have its World Premiere in the Sibelius Museum in Turku. This 'group piece' will be performed by teachers and participants of the Summer School and welcomes players of all levels.

Marty Regan will be there to oversee rehearsals and the premiere. The concert in Turku is on the third evening of the Summer School, so there is time to rehearse for everyone who will participate.

He will also present a talk, and being the main organiser of the World Shakuhachi Festival in Texas in 2025, he will present more details about this major shakuhachi event coming up next April.

30. July – Concert 1: Salo Church

Kirkkokatu 7, 24100 Salo, Finland

Performances from Teachers from the Summer School.

31. July – Concert 2: Sibelius Museum

Piispankatu 17, 20500 Turku, Finland

Besides performances from Teachers from the Summer School, and the World Premiere of the **special ESS commission** 'group piece' by composer **Marty Regan**, there is also another World Premiere lined up... a new work for shakuhachi, electric guitar and electronics by composer **Henri Algadafe**.... exciting times.

29. July – Open Mic Concert

The Friendship Inn, Kalkkilantie 74, 25110 Kruusila, Finland

The participants' concert with open programme and reflecting our community with great variety too – sign up on the day!

01. August – Student Concert

The Friendship Inn, Kalkkilantie 74, 25110 Kruusila, Finland

Your concert – after 4 days of intense study we all meet and share the new skills and experiences we gathered from workshops and lessons.

Pre-Summer School Concert, Helsinki

Anybody who is thinking of arriving early in Finland for the ESS Summer School: **Riley Lee** is playing a solo concert on **Wednesday 24. July** at 18.00 at Östersundom Church at Kappelintie 65, 00890 Helsinki, Finland.

Post-Summer School Concert, Helsinki

Last but not least... some of our Summer School guests will give a final performance in Helsinki on **Friday 2. August** at 18.00 at Roihuvuori Church, which is a cultural hot spot in eastern Helsinki. Tulisuntie 2, 00820 Helsinki, Finland.

*Photographer: Heikki Räisänen*

Teaching spaces at the Friendship Inn



The Venue - Friendship Inn (Ystavyyden Majatalo)



Communal space at the Friendship Inn



The Friendship Inn with lake



Accommodation at the Friendship Inn



Registration & Website

Please see our draft schedule on the website for the current timetable, and other sessions and talks happening. You will also find all the different registration options (accommodation/meals packages or summer school participation only), and you can complete our new online registration.

Please make sure to register soon to secure your spot. There is of course a discounted rate for ESS members. All the details, info and registration can be found here:

ESS Finland 2024: <https://finland2024.shakuhachisociety.eu>

More LINKS: **Finnish Shakuhachi Association:** <https://shakuhachi.fi/aanitteita/>
The Friendship Inn, Kruusila, Finland: <https://ystavyydenmajatalo.fi>
Sibelius Museum: <https://sibeliusmuseum.fi/en/>
ESS main: <https://www.shakuhachisociety.eu>

Enquiries: info@shakuhachisociety.eu

We would like to thank Aaro Haavisto, Otto Eskelinen and Sakari Heikka from the Finnish Shakuhachi Association for their proposal, their contributions and their willingness to stage the ESS summer event this year. We are also grateful to the supporting organisers Kiku Day and Gunnar Jinmei Linder for lending us their expertise and comments.

We hope to see you in Finland!

Thorsten Knaub, ESS Chairperson, on behalf of the organising teams and the ESS Board.



finland2024.shakuhachisociety.eu

**REGISTRATION
NOW OPEN**

29.7. - 1.8 Friendship Inn, Kruusila

FINLAND 2024



ESS SUMMER SCHOOL

Zen and shakuhachi

The link between shakuhachi and Zen is notorious - and notoriously difficult to discuss. In this issue of BAMBOO we circle around this fascinating topic.

We have five perspectives: from three Japanese shakuhachi masters, one Japanese artist, and one Brazilian improviser on double bass who loves playing with shakuhachi.

Maekawa Kōgetsu taught at the 2017 Vejle Summer School in Denmark. He is a teacher of Kinpū-ryū and Myoan-ryū, and is famous for a special breathing technique called Gyakufukushiki-tanden-kokyūhō (reverse-arm breathing).

Fukuda Teruhisa studied with Baizan Nakamura and Kohachiro Miyata. His solo album of *honkyoku*, and his Ensemble Hijiri-kai collection of Edo chamber music are both on the Ocora label.

Mizuno Kohmei began studying shakuhachi with Yamaguchi Gorō in 1968. Upon the passing of Yamaguchi Gorō in 1999, he was appointed director of Chikumeisha. His 2022 interview with Kiku Day is on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iT8vi9_Jic8

Long time London resident Marcio Mattos grew up in Brazil and plays improvised music on double bass and cello. He has a strong interest in eclipses, and this is reflected in his work in ceramics. He also has long experience as a practitioner of Zen meditation. He has a performing partnership with the Zen priest and shakuhachi player Shiku Yano.

Kazuko Hohki is an artist, singer and theatre maker based in London. She's best known as leader of the (largely) female pop collective Frank Chickens. Since 2016 their annual festival Ura Matsuri celebrates the hybrid culture of immigrants who mix their heritage with UK culture.



竹吹葉が
宇宙を
覆う
風が舞う

竹吹けば
宇宙を覆う
風が舞う

Take hukeba,
uchuu o ou,
kaze ga mau

The bamboo blown,
the wind covers the universe,
dancing

Zen and shakuhachi

by Maekawa Kōgetsu

In the Edo era, priests called 'komuso' (mendicant Zen priests with flutes) 虚無僧 of the Fuke sect 普化宗, which is one of the Zen sects 禅宗, played shakuhachi *honkyoku* and went from house to house begging for alms. In 1871, the fourth year of the Meiji era, the newly founded Meiji government ordered the abolition of the Fuke sect and of the *komuso*'s temples, and banned the shakuhachi which had been the Buddhist tool of the *komuso*.

However, Yoshida Itcho 吉田一調 who was a retainer 旗本 of a Shogun during the Edo era and a shakuhachi master, petitioned the Meiji government, arguing that the shakuhachi was not a tool of the *komuso* but simply an instrument for playing music. Consequently, the government accepted his opinion and allowed the shakuhachi to be used as a musical instrument. Since then, the shakuhachi has been widely used in both *komuso*'s *honkyoku* pieces as well as in *sankyoku* music with the koto and the shamisen. At that point in time, the shakuhachi ceased to be a part of the history of the Zen sect (Fuke sect). In the Meiji era, a new Myoan-ji temple 明暗寺 was established in the precincts of Tofuku-ji temple 東福寺 in Kyoto and, in its garden, there is a large stone monument inscribed with the words 'Sui Zen' 吹禅. The then head of the Myoan-ji temple, the master Higuchi Taizan 樋口対山 played Meian *honkyoku* and ensemble music with the koto. Since then, some performers have been claiming that their style is 'Sui Zen' and playing with *hotchiku* 法竹 and *jinashi* 地無し shakuhachi, but I would say that they have nothing to do with the Zen sect but merely concerned with musical performance.

When I was 28 years old, I became a pupil of master Okamoto Chikugai 岡本竹外 of the Meian shakuhachi school 明暗尺八家. For ten years before that, I had been active as a Kinko-ryu 琴古流 shakuhachi player. Master Okamoto was also an authority on Zen teaching and studied under Roshi Furukawa Karyo 古川華陵老師 of Kokoku-ji temple 興国寺 in Yura-machi, Wakayama-ken, which was said to be the headquarters of the *komuso*. After being accepted as a pupil of Okamoto Chikugai, I was given a textbook on Zen entitled "Sword and Zen" 剣と禅 written by Roshi Omori Sogen 森曹玄老師.

In terms of playing shakuhachi *honkyoku* of the Fuke Zen, this textbook describes in its section on 'Breathing and Posture' 呼吸と姿勢, that regulating breathing is very important not only for swordsmanship and Zen, but also for all forms of art, as the expression 'kokyu wo shiru' (to understand breathing) goes to the heart of all arts. However, it seems that such an importance is no longer placed on breathing.

The frequency of human breathing is said to be 18 times per minute on average, whereas by sitting in the *seiza* position and employing the *tanden* 丹田 (a point under one's navel) breathing method by using mainly the abdominal muscles through abdominal pressure, the frequency can be reduced to five or six times per minute; and with more practice down to two or three times per minute. The less your breathing frequency, the longer each breath becomes and thus the longer your longevity! Consequently, a focus on breathing is of paramount importance.

Okamoto Chikugai taught me that the breathing method similar to that used in Zazen is important for Fuke shakuhachi. Contemporary shakuhachi performers tend to play the shakuhachi with their lips and with shallow breathing, with the breath coming out of the mouth very quickly. In Fuke Zen, in other words Zen shakuhachi, very slow breath is pushed out with the power of the abdominal *tanden* to generate the sound of the shakuhachi. After practising the *tanden* breathing method, I finally mastered it at the age of fifty. Once you manage to learn this method of playing, you can understand why it is far easier to play a thick and long shakuhachi than a small-bored one.

Maekawa Kōgetsu

Nezasaha Kinpū Ryū, Okamoto Chikugai lineage



Zen and shakuhachi

by Fukuda Teruhisa

It should not be denied that shakuhachi music has been hand in hand with Zen ideology in the course of history up to the present time.

The original shakuhachi (with six holes) was an instrument of court music in China, but due to the reform of the court music system which took place around 840 AD, the shakuhachi became available as a musical instrument outside the court. In Japan, in the Kamakura era, many Japanese Zen priests who had studied in China, as well as Chinese Zen priests who became naturalized Japanese citizens, brought Zen ideology and the shakuhachi (the shape of which is unknown) to Japan. Since then, the connection between Zen and the shakuhachi has been made.

The Fuke sect system was born in the latter part of the war-torn Muromachi era and was then authorized by the Edo government in 1614 as a means of managing wandering samurai warriors. The relationship between the Fuke sect system and the five holed shakuhachi also became part of shakuhachi legend. *Komuso*, wandering Zen monks carrying shakuhachi, expressed in sound the spirit of Ichion Nyukon 一音入魂 (one sound, your soul) and handed down the heritage of the shakuhachi and *honkyoku* to us.

My understanding of the connection between Zen ideology and the shakuhachi is:

- Zen = shakuhachi and that which comes from shakuhachi
- Zazen (Zen meditation) = the act of blowing shakuhachi, thoughts and struggle on performance during practice
- Suizen (*Suisou*, playing shakuhachi; *Enso*, performance) = from thoughts and struggle on practice, to creating a light/spiritual attitude towards musical issues such as sound and musical pieces, as well as an awareness of the satisfaction obtained during the process of overcoming such issues. However, I think that there is no such thing as perfection in music.

When considering how shakuhachi *honkyoku* was established, I assume the following:

I have a text written in classical Chinese, *wen-yan-wen*. I do not think this text could be translated into modern Chinese, probably because a single word functions as one phrase, and a single phrase functions as one sentence or even one paragraph in classical writing. When I hear Chinese poems being recited, I have a strong impression, from the intonation of each word, and the length and the direction of the sound, that Chinese is based on a single word principle or a series of scattered expressions. The sense of lyricism within one word and one sound is clearly expressed, rather than a focus on continuity or melody.

On the other hand, many shakuhachi *honkyoku* are constructed with one, two or three sounds per breath. Even a one-sound construction can depict in detail the player's inner character, through using *meri*, *kari*, *yuri* and grace notes in contrast to phrasing in Western music. Aristocrats, priests, academics and samurai who were exposed to Chinese continental civilization must have been touched by the imported culture, which might in turn have spread among the general public and performing artist groups. This kind of expression might have been conducive to and harmonized well with the nature of Japanese traditional culture at that time.

Starting from the Heian period with its Japanese national-style culture; and the Muromachi period when Zen culture spread; and through the samurai dominated government in the Kamakura era; and then the development and influence of urban commercial culture in Kyoto, Osaka and Edo - which generated many changes in music, for instance, the shape of the shakuhachi to suit the Japanese climate and sensibility, as well as the pentatonic scale - all these periods have led to the formation of a beautiful Japanese authentic musical style.

It is a matter of fact that the shakuhachi was closely linked to Zen ideology. For me, shakuhachi performance is an act of expressing my admiration towards the music. Although it is important to have an understanding of history and religion, the priority in performing and teaching the shakuhachi should be placed on the instrument itself because mastering the technique of the instrument can enhance that level of understanding of the music and one's own notion of the music can be expanded. After that, I think that it would be up to each player to break new ground in terms of self-expression.

Nowadays, there are a variety of expressions of music available. Although the shakuhachi still has many uncertain factors, through also acquiring knowledge and skill in Western music, I would like to express and hand down my own music-heart.

Fukuda Teruhisa
Hijiri-Kai

Zen and shakuhachi

by Mizuno Kohmei

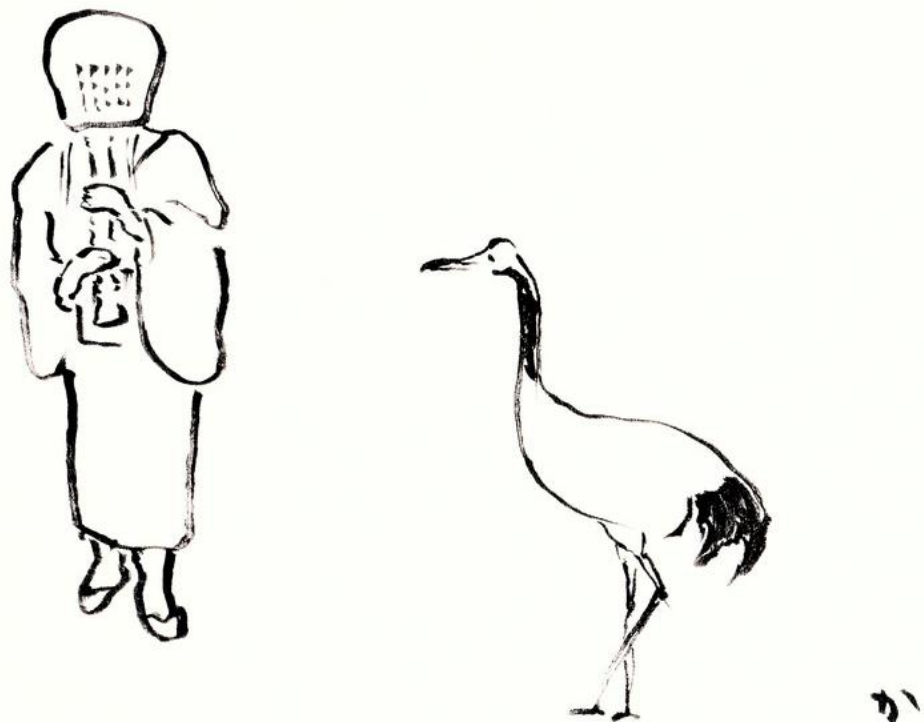
Do you think there is a connection between Zen sects and shakuhachi? What connection could that be?

My understanding is that one of the Zen sects known as the Fuke sect plays shakuhachi. The Fuke sect is a very small part of the whole Zen sect and was abolished in the Meiji era, but presently the Myoan-ji temple has been revived as its centre.

How has the Zen sect influenced how shakuhachi is being performed or being taught?

I understand that the Fuke shakuhachi has been handed down by the Myoan-ji temple as its centre, but at present the Fuke shakuhachi does not seem to be very influential, as the main players of shakuhachi belong to the Kinko and Tozan schools.

Mizuno Kohmei
Kinko Ryū



Zen and Music - A Personal Journey

by Marcio Mattos

DEPARTURE

As a young lad whilst living in Rio de Janeiro I took up the double bass in order to play in a burgeoning jazz group. At the time, the Duke Ellington Orchestra was playing in São Paulo so, together with my partner and some members of the band, we headed there to hear the Duke. São Paulo is home to the largest Japanese immigrant community in the world and, as I had an interest in oriental culture, especially Japanese, we decided to spend an extra day to see the Japanese quarters of the city. As it happens, I had just read through one of Daisetz Suzuki's classic books on Zen Buddhism (without understanding a good part of it) so having stumbled across a Buddhist temple there, we decided to visit.

We entered a hall where a small group of people was sitting cross-legged on black cushions with their noses facing a blank wall. The resident monk pointed to the remaining free cushions on the floor and made us sit there quietly. A large brass temple bowl was sounded and a quiet atmosphere descended. After a few what seemed like interminable moments I heard a loud 'thwack' sound which jolted me out of my then idle day-dreaming - it was the sound of the *kyosaku* stick. This is used to keep sitters from becoming too sleepy: a not-so-gentle blow given by the chief monk to the shoulder of the deserving sitter... the zen-do became quiet again and concentration ensued. This first experience of Zazen made me aware of the power of meditation.

TRAVELS

Many years later, after arriving in London, we joined a group of Zazen sitters under the guidance of Sochu Suzuki Roshi, the Abbot of Ryotakuji monastery in Mishima. Regular *sesshin* retreats were held whenever the Roshi was in London to give teachings.

Following his example throughout the years I gradually learned from practice the importance of concentration and being completely absorbed in the present moment. Slowly that feeling became an integral part of making music for me. This integrated awareness of the present moment is specially relevant in Improvised Music. To be totally immersed in the sounds around you - the feelings, emotions, and of course aware of your instrument as an extension of yourself. To become one with the other performers in an intense listening awareness, letting a kind of 'musical intuition' lead the way.

My interest in Japanese culture was not limited to Zen Buddhism, it extended to music, especially that of Noh theatre and of course the shakuhachi and *biwa*. It also included a long-standing interest in ceramics which led me to apply for a pottery symposium in Japan. This was an opportunity to finally travel there and make some work in Tokoname, one of the important historic centres for pottery. Participants in this event would be lodged with a local family, the 'Home-Stay' system. A slight problem for me there: a recent portrait photo was required in the application pack - the only good one I had to hand was a publicity photo with me playing the double bass. Japanese homes tend to be small - a photo of a bearded 'gaijin' with a very large instrument proved not to be very popular with the local families... Thus on arrival I was met by the event organiser who apologised, rather embarrassed, for having failed to find a 'typical' Japanese family to to be my host. But he said he could offer a place for me, although with the caveat that it would not be in a 'normal' home...

It turned out I would be staying in a Buddhist temple and, coincidentally or not, the resident monk in charge was also a musician! This is how I met my friend Shiku Yano - a fine shakuhachi master and great performer. It was a perfect 'meeting of minds'; Yano-san and I quickly understood each other musically and went on to perform together at several venues during my stays in Japan. He later came to the UK where we were recorded by BBC Radio3 in a live concert in London. His many subsequent visits to Europe gave us the opportunity to play together in France, Spain and England many times. A video of one of our concerts in London can be seen on the YouTube link below. Also included is another link to a very short talk of Yano-san on Zen Buddhism followed by a performance of "Yamagoe" in Germany.

All the above experiences and practice consolidated in me the importance of the little I have learned following the path before me. Awareness of the moment and of the space around you - practice of Zazen with a straight back concentrating on the 'HARA' - the centre of one's body. From there we can muster the energy to play an instrument. And breathing. Even though I play bowed instruments - the double bass and the cello - breath plays an important role. The flowing movements of the 'inhaling' up-bow and 'exhaling' down-bow reflect this and help concentration. Breath and posture grounded in space and sound.



Marcio Mattos and the double bass



Shiku Yano

Improvised Music has its nature in impermanence, constantly changing and never the same. In the best performances it finds its own way, unfettered by judgmental thoughts.

When the best musical moments happen there are no more thoughts, only the sound of the present 'Here and Now'.

In the words of the famous Spanish poet and writer, Antonio Machado:

"Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar."

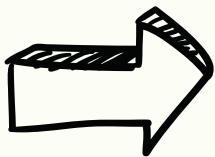
Which roughly translates as:

"Wayfarer, there is no path, the path is made by walking."

Video references:

"Tsui"- Concert at St. Mary's Church, Stoke Newington, London

Shiku Yano talks about Zen practice and plays the Shakuhachi piece "Yamagoe"



竹
眼
エ
カラ
ツ
立
目
聴
ハ
コ
エ
カ

竹選ぶ
目から聞こえる
音の張り

Take erabu,
me kara kikoeru,
oto no hari

From the eyes
choosing a bamboo,
I hear the swell of sound

禅宗と尺八について

前川 耕月

1. 禅宗と尺八の間にはつながりがあると思いますか? このつながりは何でしょうか?

江戸時代に、虚無僧たちは、普化宗という、禅宗の一つとして尺八本曲を吹いて托鉢していましたが、明治4年に、新しい明治政府から、普化宗や虚無僧寺は廃止しなさいと命令が出て、虚無僧の法器であった尺八も禁止になりました。しかし、江戸時代に旗本の侍で、尺八の名人であった、吉田一調先生は、明治政府に、尺八は虚無僧の法器ではなく、音楽を演奏する楽器だと申し出て、明治政府から尺八は楽器だと許可が出て、音楽の楽器として、使用できるようになりました。そのため、虚無僧本曲から、お琴、三味線と合奏する道具として尺八は広く使用されるようになりました。そのため、禅宗(普化宗)としての歴史は終わりました。明治時代に、新しく京都(東福寺境内)

に明暗寺が出来て、庭には吹禅と書かれた、大きな石碑がありますが、新しく出来た明暗寺の看首・樋口対山師は明暗本曲や、お琴の合奏もしていました。それから今日まで、一部の人たちは、吹禅だと言い、法竹や地無し尺八を吹いていますが、まったく禅宗とは関係のない、音楽のパフォーマンスだと言えるでしょう。

2. 禅宗は尺八の演奏方法や教え方に影響を与えていますか? 私は28歳の時に、明暗尺八家の岡本竹外先生に入門しました。それまでは、10年間 琴古流尺八家として活動していました。岡本竹外先生は、禅の道も大家であり、虚無僧の本山と言われる、和歌山県由良町にあります、由良・興国寺の古川華陵老師に参禅しました。岡本竹外先生に入門すると禅のテキストとして、大森曹玄老師の書かれた「剣と禅」をいただきました。普化禅の尺八本曲を吹くには、このテキストの中に

書いてあります「呼吸と姿勢」の文章の中に、一体、呼吸を整えるということは、剣、禅はもちろんのこと、あらゆる芸道においてその容量を、のみこむことを「呼吸を知る」という言葉もあるくらいの大事であるが、その割に案外重要視されていないのではない

だろうか。人間の普通の呼吸回数は1分間におよそ18回だそうだが、主として腹筋を利用し、腹圧を媒介とする、いわゆる丹田呼吸法を行って静坐すると、早い人で1分間に5~6回、少し長くつとめれば2~3回ぐらいになる。呼吸回数の少ないことは、1回の呼吸の長いことだから、それだけ長息—長生きするとうわけであろう。このように、呼吸は大切であると書かれていて、坐禅と同じような呼吸法が、普化尺八にも大切であると岡本竹外先生から指導を受けました。現代の尺八演奏家は、浅い呼吸で、日先で尺八を演奏しています。すなわち、日から吐き出す息の速度は非常に速いですが、これを腹の丹田の力を使い、非常に遅い速度の息を吐きだし、それで尺八を鳴らす

ことが、普化禅すなわち禅の尺八だと言えるでしょう。私が岡本竹外先生から、丹田呼吸法の指導を受けて、これが完成したのは50歳の時でした。この奏法が白一十十十十 細い口ハよりも、太くて長い尺八を鳴らすことの方が、はるかに楽で

前川耕月



禅宗と尺八について

福田輝久

確かに尺八音楽が今日に至る過程において禅思想と同行して来たことは否定されるべきではありません。中国宮廷音楽雅楽の一楽器であった尺八（6孔）は雅楽の制度改革（840年頃）により在野に下り、鎌倉時代禅宗を学ぶため入唐した多くの日本禅僧や帰化中国禅僧がもたらしたとされる禅と尺八（形態は不明）、そしてそれ以後の彼らとの繋がりを伝える歴史、室町時代後期の戦乱期生まれた流浪武士対策として江戸幕府公認の普化宗制度（1614年）と尺八（5孔）、などが伝説を伴いながらも禅と尺八は関わり合い、虚無僧たちは一音入魂の精神を音に表し私たちに尺八と本曲を音楽遺産として残している。

禅思想と尺八のかかわりを私なりに表すと、

- ・ 禅＝尺八と尺八から生まれ出るもの
- ・ 座禅＝吹く行い、稽古における演奏への思案や迷い
- ・ 吹奏（吹禅・演奏）＝迷いから光明へ／音など音楽的な問題と楽曲に対する精神的態度そしてそれらが克服されていく過程での充足認識、しかし自己の音楽表現に完結はない。

と私は捉えています。

尺八本曲の成り立ちを考えると私は最近以下のように想像を巡らせています。

中国古典文を文言文Wen-yan-wenと言いますが、たまたま手持ちの漢文が現代中国語では訳すことが出来ぬ文でありました。考えますとこれは一語が一語句であったり、一語句が一節や一文章の役割を表していることでしょうか。又中国漢詩朗読を耳にするとき、一語一語の抑揚、音長、音の方向など一語主義的又は点描的表現で成り立っていると強く感じます。継続的、旋律的よりも一語一音に内包される抒情観が明確に表現されています。一方尺八本曲構成は、一息が一音、二音、あるいは三音で成り立っている曲が多く、例えば一音構成にしてもメリ、カリ、ユリ、装飾音などを入れることにより奏者の内面を微細に表すことが出来ています。これについては皆様も認識していることでしょう。ヨーロッパ音楽における楽節の概念とは異なるのです。

大陸文化を摂取してきた貴族、僧侶、学者、武士階級は移入された教養に触れていたはずであり、また庶民や芸能集団への波及もあったことでしょう。このような表現法は古代日本文化体質とも合い融合しあったに違いありません。平安期の日本国風文化、禅文化が行き渡った室町期、鎌倉時代以後の武家政治そして京都、大阪、江戸の都市商業文化の発展とその影響は、例えば日本風土や嗜好に合った尺八の形や五音階陰旋律への音楽進化をも促し日本独自の音楽様式美を形成するに至ったと考えております。

第二問にお応えし禅思想とのかかわりがあったことは事実とし、私におきましては、演奏は曲に対する讃美者としての表現行為であります。歴史や宗教知識を持つことは大切ですが、あくまでも音楽の、楽器の一つとして捉えしっかりと技術を身に付け曲への解釈度を上げ、自身の音楽観を拡げることを優先し、この立場に立ち指導し、その後は各人が自身の表現境地を開いていけばよいのではと考えます。

今日では様々な表現の形の音楽があります。不確定要素が強い尺八ではありますが客観的な西洋音楽の知識や技術も身につけ総合的な見地に立ち自らの音楽一心を表し伝えたいと私は思っております。

福田輝久



禅宗と尺八について

水野香盟（みずのこうめい）

1. 禅宗と尺八の間にはつながりがあると思いますか? このつながりは何でしょうか?

禅宗の一部である普化宗（ふけしゅう）という宗派が尺八を吹いていると認識しています。普化宗は禅宗全体のごく一部であり、明治時代に廃止されました。現在では明暗寺が再興されています。

2. 禅宗は尺八の演奏方法や教え方に影響を与えていますか?

明暗寺を中心に普化尺八が伝承されていると思いますが、現在の尺八は琴古流と都山流がほとんどで、現在では普化尺八の影響力は大きくないと思っています。

水野香盟（みずのこうめい）



“THAT’S A GOOD MOUTH FOR SHAKUHACHI”

An interview with Shimura Zenpo, by Kiku Day

Shimura Zenpo is professor in music at Osaka University of Fine Arts. He has created the Jinashi Shakuhachi Museum in a small flat in downtown Osaka. Shimura’s research on Edo period masterpiece shakuhachi is well-known. In this interview he tells about his discoveries as a performer playing these old masterpieces. He is in fact a pioneer in practice research.

Kiku Day: Good afternoon, thank you very much for allowing me to do this interview, it is an honour and a pleasure.

Shimura Zenpo: It’s been a long time, Kiku. Since WSF18 in London and the Shakuhachi Symposium.

KD: Indeed. Shimura-sensei, can you tell us how you first met the shakuhachi?

SZ: My uncle, Nomura Yutaka, was a shakuhachi researcher. It was before the boom of modern Japanese music, so maybe it was just after WWII. At that time, if a shakuhachi was played at the same angle and overblown, it didn’t play an octave above. I myself also did similar research, and there are many shakuhachi from different eras here in the Jinashi Shakuhachi Museum. Those shakuhachi were from the era of *shin nihon ongaku* (New Japanese Music), the era of Miyagi Michio, when a blending of western and Japanese music took place.

Most shakuhachi performers today would prefer to be able to play octaves without changing the blowing angle. My uncle did research on the construction of shakuhachi that enabled that. I later found out that he made a specific design for such a shakuhachi and it was patented in Japan.

When I was little and I went to my grandparents’ house, my uncle often sat at the piano and played the shakuhachi, while checking the pitch with the piano.

At home where I grew up, a lot of western music was played, so the sound of the shakuhachi was a bit strange. But my uncle looked at my lips and said, ‘That’s a good mouth for shakuhachi!’ I told him the sound of the shakuhachi made me feel ill. I then went on playing western instruments, piano, trumpet, drums. I went to Osaka University of Arts, where I majored in music engineering because I wanted to study acoustics and sound engineering for recording. At the university I took composition classes, using synthesizers. It was the age of the analogue synthesizer, so I was composing with new sounds. It felt like I had endless possibilities. Of course there was already a lot of synthesizer music out there, so I thought it was a bad idea to imitate that. I felt I had to own my own music to make it coherent.

There was a shakuhachi teacher at the university, the head of Chikuho-ryū, called Sakai Chikuho I. My friend invited me to come along to take his class, when I was 18. But Chikuho I was already quite old then, so he retired, and the classes were given to a teacher of Tozan-ryū. The students were divided between Chikuho I's two sons: Sakai Shōdō, now the third *iemoto* of Chikuho-ryū, and Sakai Chikuho II. I lived in south Osaka, and Sakai Shōdō's house was close by. About three of us from university went to Shōdō sensei's house to study.

Another connection with Chikuho-ryū was that my composition teacher was Moroi Makoto. The reason why the shakuhachi teacher was from Chikuho-ryū was due to Moroi Makoto's composition "Chikurai Goshō" from 1964, which he composed for Sakai Chikuho.

One more thing, my teacher in *solfège* was Tsukitani Tsuneko. People in the shakuhachi world would know her. Tsukitani was one of the leading scholars of the shakuhachi in Japan. She knew that I practised the shakuhachi, so she let me help with her fieldwork, and then we continued researching together for many years on joint projects.

I played *honkyoku* of specific *ryūha*, some *sankyoku* ensemble music, and also pieces of *shin nihon ongaku* and easier contemporary music. But there were also other types of shakuhachi music that were not related to the so-called *iemoto* system that exists in Japan today. We can call it Fuke shakuhachi, or in Kyoto it's Myōan shakuhachi. I received a lot of advice from shakuhachi teachers from these styles.

KD: That's an amazing lot of different approaches and uses of shakuhachi! Normally the *solfege* teacher doesn't have to have anything to do with the shakuhachi.

SZ: I just wanted to play the shakuhachi. But in order to survive, to be able to live socially, you need a job, right? So I tried very hard to find a job that would justify me playing the shakuhachi. Of course that includes being a performer or a composer. When I was not able to get enough work on the shakuhachi, I performed on the piano. It was the period just after the high economic growth. And it was a time when Japan was relatively free in many ways. In the 1970s there were lots of part-time jobs, so even if you could not play the piano very well, there were jobs, and even if you could not play the shakuhachi very well, there were jobs.

But it was hard to keep doing that. For example, FM radio was a medium for listening to music for students in Japan, and the music played on the radio was by the world's top musicians, such as Vladimir Horowitz and Glenn Gould, and the shakuhachi teachers of the Shakuhachi Sanbonkai: Yokoyama Katsuya, Yamamoto Hozan and Aoki Reibo. When I heard the music of those top musicians, I thought that what I was doing was different. I realised I had to do some research. I just went to concerts and studied the way each teacher played.

KD: Was that the top players?

SZ: Yes, I researched how the top players played. I watched them from the front row, and I watched how they moved their mouths and the way they moved their bodies. I memorised the sound that came with these movements. I found they all had different ways of blowing, and that's why you can't imitate them. One in particular, that you could not imitate was Chikuho II. It was impossible to figure out what was going on. He had a sharp sound, like a sharp cut, like the music disappearing in an instant.

I had been learning from Sakai Shōdō, so I researched his way of playing. The way he played was different from his brother Chikuho II, and I wondered why. Many shakuhachi players think that the difference between players is just the individuality of the person. But I thought it was the difference in the instruments they used. Everyone used an instrument made by a different maker. Of course it's rare for me to borrow the shakuhachi that these top players play. But if you try to play a shakuhachi made by the same maker, you find you have to play it in a completely different way than what you are used to, in order to make it sound good.

Today there are people who say they have surpassed what the top players did in the 1970s in playing ability. I think there was a smaller repertoire at the time. Because they specialised in a certain repertoire, they were able to master it to the point they did.

KD: Do you mean within a *ryūha*, for example?

SZ: There were *ryūha* that focused on a specific repertoire, such as *honkyoku*, or on a particular genre of traditional Japanese music, or contemporary music. Today there are so many kinds of music. So today you will need to have an instrument that allows you to play all these various styles. So whatever job you get, your shakuhachi needs to be able to play above average in all of them. Otherwise you are in trouble. But players fifty years ago did not have to play that many genres. They may have specialised in *sankyoku* ensemble playing, which could be Kinko-ryū, or *koten honkyoku*, modern music, for example jazz.

I also did fieldwork to see the instruments of the people who have passed down the old classical shakuhachi music, from all over Japan and not only the urban traditions. I was kindly shown their instruments. When I researched *kokan* - old shakuhachi from the Edo and Meiji periods - I found that the instruments restrict or limit the player even more than the shakuhachi used by the top players of the 70s. In other words I believe the instruments make the music.

I thought that this would be a good research topic. Such as how the shakuhachi was played in the past, or what kind of instrument was used to play a particular style of music? The instruments of the past are still here and most people today don't use the instruments that were used for *honkyoku* in the past. And no maker could make these kinds of shakuhachi any more either. The more I played these instruments, the more I began to enjoy it also. I guess I'm just not cut out to be a performer.

KD: But you've done a lot of performing too. So because you had this experience playing the different instruments, you researched into instruments?

SZ: I guess... but maybe I couldn't do anything else. I am a person who didn't study a lot. But I've always tried hard to find out what I wanted to know. I needed some kind of scientific method, or something I could evaluate. So here I studied very hard, but I was jumping from one thing to another, huge leaps. I was able to conclude that this type of instrument needs this type of blowing. Once I began to see a coherent pattern, I felt it was necessary to let other people listen to my findings when I was blowing specific instruments in the way that worked for them.



Shimura Zenpo at 2018 World Shakuhachi Festival (Photo: Chester Ong)

I finished my PhD and published my research in 1999. My supervisor told me I had to write the book so any reader could understand it. But I wasn't satisfied. So I stopped researching, and from 2000 until yesterday - 17th October 2021 - I focused on performing. Back in the day I researched *jinashi* shakuhachi – but I did not own a *jinashi* myself. Of course I bought some cheap, broken *jinashi* in antique shops. But I was able to play many *jinashi* shakuhachi while on fieldwork. I only had a normal shakuhachi - a modern shakuhachi made for ensemble playing, a *jinuri* shakuhachi. Unless I learn to play and perform and thereby convince myself, it was not interesting. That's when I began to collect various kinds of shakuhachi – as you can see here in the museum behind me.

I played all kinds of shakuhachi, from a replica of the *Shōsōin* shakuhachi to modern and long *chōkan* shakuhachi. Last week I also played the instruments at the Hamamatsu Museum of Musical Instruments. Yesterday I performed *Kyorei* on a shakuhachi from the Meiji era. I believe I have benefitted so much from these experiences. The past 20 years, my playing has changed completely from the music I played when I was younger and went on a European tour with my *jinuri* shakuhachi. It is like another dimension. The reason for that is not that I play *jinashi* shakuhachi. It is more that it's an instrument that someone else has already mastered with certain techniques. The flute seems to carry that with it. I am not a collector, so I don't go out to find instruments but shakuhachi came to me. So I realised how different the shakuhachi from Meiji and before were. I understood how they should be played and maybe there is some revival in the playing style. I felt like I was taught this by the old shakuhachi.

The next 20 years - although I may not have 20 years left - I would like to pass on what I have learned from the old shakuhachi.

KD: You said before it wasn't because it was *jinashi* shakuhachi but rather that the playing method needed to fit the instrument?

SZ: Yes, if you don't adapt to the characteristics of the instrument, it just won't let you express a particular piece of music. If it's an instrument that someone else has mastered, it will invite you to go that way. In other words, if you don't control your mouth this specific way, this instrument will not sound good.

When you play a new instrument, it's made with an intent from the maker. But when you play, something changes. It becomes more suited to you. Instruments that are called *meikan* or 'masterpiece', some master player of the past has already 'brought up the flute', so to speak, to its very best state. Therefore you can't make the flute adapt to you any more, on the contrary, you shouldn't try. You have to play while asking the instrument how it is best played. After doing that for some years, you start to understand it.

KD: Many players may not have seen what you call *meikan* – masterpiece shakuhachi. So could you explain one of the instruments in the Hamamatsu Museum? What kind of person made it, what kind of person played it?

SZ: On the 9th of October 2021, at the National Theatre, there was a concert called *Fueshakuhachi*. I wrote a few lines in the programme of this concert.

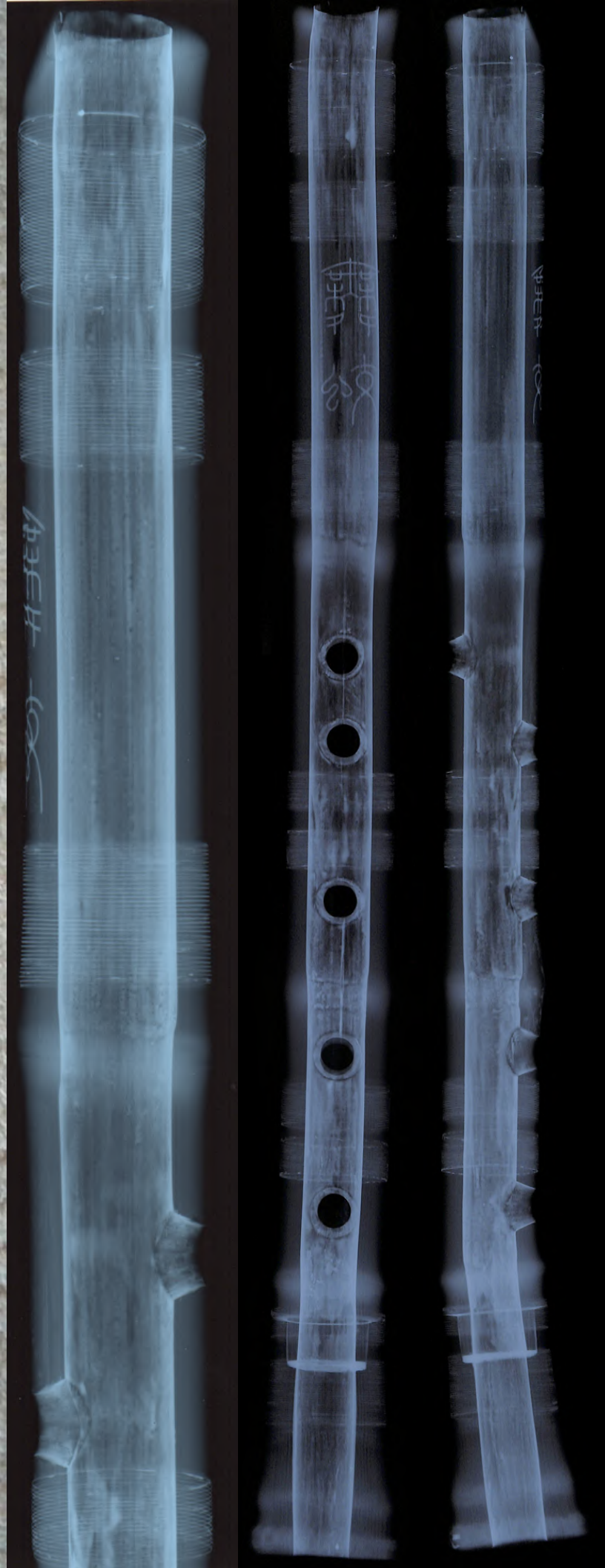
There's a famous instrument called Bukō that was owned by Kondō Sōetsu. Kondō was a famous shakuhachi player from the Kansai region at the end of the Edo period (1603-1868). I have lined up an x-ray photograph of Bukō, and an x-ray of my modern *jinuri* shakuhachi. I practised a piece in Myōan Shinpo-ryū for about three years on Bukō. That is of course a *jinashi* shakuhachi, but when you x-ray it or analyse the sound, there are several unexplainable elements. I have had several discussions at conferences on instrument acoustics. Why did they make the instrument this way? I write down the parts I understand in words and analyse them with a basic theory of acoustics. But for the parts I do not understand, I provide data, such as x-rays, photos or more recently, CT scans. But the part we don't understand, that's a matter of debate even in the shakuhachi world. It is actually the part we don't understand that has the attraction.

Someone wrote a short explanation on shakuhachi for the programme, and asked me if there were any special features of the instruments I use. I told him that the finger-holes of old masterpiece shakuhachi are not opened straight like the cylinder. They are undercut and quite open on the inside. For a long time I couldn't control the pitch when playing on a flute like this. I think I may - from a modern point of view - have done a lot of bad performing. But there is something fascinating about its resonance. People today worry a lot about pitch. This has made me ponder how I can match the pitch to modern day expectations. Little by little I have learned how to do it, so that the audience at the National Theatre don't feel any discomfort when I play.

The big difference is this undercutting of finger-holes. The shakuhachi is tuned to an anhemitonic pentatonic scale: we call it *ro tsu re chi*, and if it is Chikuho-ryū, it's called *fu ho u e*. On a modern shakuhachi, if you just blow straight without changing the angle, the five notes can be produced accurately. That is not the case on an old shakuhachi. If you play straight, the pitch goes slightly high or low. However, if the player has a good sense of pitch and the ability to control with his/her breath, any scale can be played.

I found out when playing *honkyoku* on old flutes, you can more freely control the timbre of various notes according to the image you have inside you. It is not just the pitch, but the perfect fitting sound. The sound that fits perfectly to that moment - the strength or weakness of the sound, and the kind of image expressed can be freely controlled by the player on an old shakuhachi with very subtle and refined colouring.

(Next page, from left to right: (1) the flute made by Kondo Soetsu with a 3-D printing of it, (2) the x-ray of Kondo Soetsu, (3) Kondō Sōetsu (with the correct macrons) x-ray whole flute front, (4) Kondō Sōetsu x-ray whole flute side



If we measure the absolute volume in decibels of the modern 'super shakuhachi', of course it has a much higher level, but in terms of the range of intensity, the old shakuhachi has a much wider range. In other words, if you speak about extremities, you can hear silence. Even inaudible sounds can be heard on an old shakuhachi. Shakuhachi today play the music of sounds that can be heard. The concept of inaudible sounds is the way of the old days. One of the interesting things about playing *honkyoku* on old shakuhachi is that you do not know or realise when the sound has disappeared. You think it's gone but it's still there. I believe it's a sound of another dimension.

That will be what I'm looking into during my last 20 years.

KD: Oh yes, you said you changed yesterday from your second 20 year period till the next.

SZ: Up until yesterday, yes. Yesterday I played a shakuhachi made by the third *Mato no Shinryū*, from the Meiji era. That means from the time of *Myōan Taizan-ha*. I played *Kyorei* on it. The myth behind *Kyorei* has no historical evidence – but why did people call it *Kyorei*? I think I was able to grasp the image of the piece. And again, I believe it is because of the way the finger-holes are undercut, the control of the fingering is very delicate. Depending on how you hold it or how your fingers close the hole, you can change the pitch. I have come to the conclusion that this kind of construction is good for music such as *Kyorei*.

I have been doing it for a few years now, but I want to use current technology to make an almost identical copy of these masterpiece flutes, using a 3D printer with data taken from CT scans, and then make a copy for a maker, who can make a modern version of it for me. But makers are not very willing to make what could be considered as shakuhachi that are hard to play. It takes three to five years to really play a piece well on such a flute.

KD: I see. There is no time for such contemplation in modern times, I guess. I'd like to ask you about the Jinashi Shakuhachi Museum. That's where you are right now.

SZ: Yes, I'm here and it's correct that the popular name is Jinashi Shakuhachi Museum, but its real name is Jinashi Shakuhachi Kenkyūkai Fuzoku Shakuhachi Hakubutsukan (Shakuhachi Museum affiliated to the Jinashi Shakuhachi Research Group). There are not only *jinashi* here because I do not think that *jinashi* shakuhachi is the only important instrument. Recently I have been doing some work in the digital world. Here I use the *jinashi*, the so-called super shakuhachi and the cyber shakuhachi separately.

KD: Is 'super shakuhachi' a modern instrument?

SZ: Yes, it is a modern shakuhachi of the kind where you can't use techniques of *koten* or classical music.

KD: I see, so made very much for the modern way of playing music. And the cyber shakuhachi is digital?

SZ: Yes, but if I begin to talk about this, I will talk forever... The research on shakuhachi became my work too – at this stage in my life. It has been a slow build-up but now I can say that I also teach shakuhachi at university. I explain clearly what the limits of the shakuhachi are. The simple examples are for example, how wide the widest shakuhachi bore can be. I would play the *ōkuraulo* and explain their limitations [the *okuraulo* is an end-blown western flute with a shakuhachi mouthpiece, developed by Baron Okura Kishichiro in the 1930s]. I also explain the limits of *jinashi* shakuhachi. I bought up quite a few flutes when I was still working and quite a few shakuhachi have been donated to the museum. I then had to categorise them all, which has led to me writing articles in magazines where I present my idea about the existence of different types of shakuhachi.



Cyber shakuhachi (front and side)

I have come to think that music is something that changes continuously and gradually, so I think it is better if I can explain it in terms of the types of instruments that are used. But the types of instruments also change continuously. It could be good if we could explain more precisely so people would understand. For example, we discuss sake, whether it is spicy or sweet and there are five grades. Maybe we could do something similar and say this shakuhachi is like this sake that tastes a bit sour.

This is one reason why we built this room. We would like people to come and experience for themselves. Many people from abroad who come to Japan on holiday come here. We also do workshops here. Of course, Japanese people come here too, and try to play themselves.

Ideally, I would like to collect all kinds of shakuhachi. Then people who are researching the *Shōsoin* shakuhachi can try the replica we have here. The same with *hitoyogiri* and *tenpuku*. Or Edo period shakuhachi, or Meiji shakuhachi such as *kinko-ryū* style with just a little *ji*, or *jimori* as they are also called. Old flutes made by famous makers can be expensive, and then I cannot buy them. If you don't experience the difference, you wouldn't know. Of course, if you practise hard with one shakuhachi, what you play becomes good music. But when you want to play a different style of music, you may not be able to express the style. And that is because the instrument does not fit the style. In a way it is not the fault of the player.

When I only had a *jinuri* shakuhachi, it really was not fun at all to learn and play *koten honkyoku*. However, when I got a *jinashi* shakuhachi with no root end, even though it was a cheap, broken shakuhachi with no maker stamp, I could suddenly enjoy it. I realised that it was not about how much I practised. I actually could not stop playing after I got a flute that fitted the music.

When I have to play concerts, I may have to change something. Depending on where it is, I may change the flute. Like when in 2018 you asked me to bring my one metre shakuhachi, the 3 *shaku* 3 *sun*... I don't want to play that so much any more because my body aches too much. But you said people in Europe would love to hear it!

KD. Hahaha! I am so sorry!

SZ: There is no value in length as such. So, there is no need to compete about who can play the longest shakuhachi... If you want to know the limits, then the longest one here is 6 *shaku* 1 *sun*. And I get jobs where I am asked to play these extremely long flutes. I feel I have to accept and play when I am given such an opportunity.

KD: I visited the museum once. It's a room in an apartment building in Osaka where there are many different shakuhachi everywhere. And it's a place where people can experience hands-on these different types of instruments.

SZ: I cannot stay here always. I will disappear again from here one day, so I would like to leave something behind that can continue. I do not know if I can call it knowledge... maybe experience fits better. There are things I want people to know. That is why there are a lot of cameras here. Cameras for showing movies, cameras for everyday use, projectors for showing old documents, copy machines and so on.

I think many things are going to get better in the near future, but I think there are limitations too. There is music that can and cannot be conveyed digitally. Digitalisation is not good for the sound of the shakuhachi in particular – maybe it is the same with the shamisen - but when shakuhachi sounds are digitised so much is lost. You have to exaggerate the important and subtle sounds - like the sound of the wind, because for example Zoom cuts out that kind of sound. That is the problem - the 6 *shaku* 1 *sun* has a lot of inaudible or almost inaudible sounds. 🌀



What you can see at the museum from Edo period till present day

REFLECTIONS ON TORU TAKEMITSU'S NOVEMBER STEPS (1967)

by Josep Maria Guix

Perhaps the key lies in the character played by Sean Connery in the 1993 film *Rising Sun*: a mediator between Japanese culture - represented by a powerful multinational corporation - and the Los Angeles police, who are investigating the murder of a woman in the corporation's new skyscraper. Crucial: understanding the codes to establish bridges that facilitate communication between two ways of conceiving the world. From the outset, nothing is as it seems, and one must find a way to grasp the true underlying context. The complex east-west relationship, here focused on a specific case.

The role of music is fundamental. The film's original soundtrack was devised by Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996), and it has nothing in common with the cliché-filled scores that abound in cinema. Deservedly, it was awarded a prize by ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers). The soundtrack significantly helps to situate both cultures and, at the same time, offers the composer's response to a personal challenge: what should be the path to integrating such different musics?

The movie begins with characteristic percussion, prominently featuring taiko drums. We immediately know where we are. On the other hand, the instrument representing the US will be a saxophone with jazz resonances playing a sensual, suggestive, explicit motif. Orient versus occident.

Between the ritualistic Asian timbres - taiko, biwa and shakuhachi - and the paradigm of north American light music - the saxophone - a symphony orchestra engages the viewer and acts as a unifying force. An orchestra in which some colours seem to act as bridges between cultures: clarinets replace the saxophone; harp, vibraphone and flutes substitute for Japanese instruments. And above all, a mysterious timbre that explains the affinities of our composer: the Ondes Martenot announce we are in the 20th century, immersed in the French tradition of modernity.

Indeed, this *Rising Sun* soundtrack seems to reveal the stylistic biography of the composer. From the traditional music of his home country to the discovery of the world of jazz and its harmonic relationships - crucially, the importance of the Lydian mode - all seasoned with French music that opens up a new path, with Debussy and Messiaen as references.

If this synthesis was possible in the cinematic musical testament of this Japanese composer, the question did not seem so obvious thirty years earlier, when he undertook the composition of *November Steps*.

Let's go step by step. In order to commemorate their 125th anniversary, in 1967 the New York Philharmonic commissioned this work from Takemitsu. Apparently it was Leonard Bernstein who suggested the use of shakuhachi and biwa alongside a symphony orchestra, after hearing a recording of *Eclipse* (1966), Takemitsu's chamber composition for these two traditional instruments. A year later, the NYP under the baton of Seiji Ozawa (who died in February 2024), premiered the score that was to make both the Japanese bamboo flute and this Asian plucked lute two of the best known exotic instruments in the Western world.

But what is *November Steps* really? A concerto for shakuhachi, biwa, and orchestra? Perhaps one more example of introducing traditional elements into so-called classical music?

The title of the work does not evoke, as one might suppose, the late autumn spirit so present in Japanese haiku, but has a much more pragmatic character. The piece was to be premiered during the month of November - the number eleven seems to play a significant role - and it marked a new compositional stage (step) in the composer's production. At the same time, one must consider the term 'danmono', a concept related to koto music, which implies the equivalent of variations or scene changes (dan = step). Above all, the form of the piece becomes a stream of sound, similar to those paper rolls fluidly unfurling Asian paintings before our eyes.

From the outset Toru Takemitsu was all too aware of the problems generated by the commission. Was it possible to combine the symphony orchestra with instruments of a particular tuning, belonging to a different tradition and often reverberating in our minds due to their markedly ritual tone? His solution was not to try to fuse the two worlds, but to contrast them even more, to make the listener aware of the profound differences between them, despite some connections.

The western symphonic universe would appear juxtaposed alongside the rich Japanese chamber microcosm. In this way, the rhythmic interventions of the biwa and the presence of the articulated air through the shakuhachi would stand out from the orchestral sound.

But are the orchestra and these soloists really irreconcilable sounds, or is it rather a different approach to traditions? I sense that the difficulty of integrating a score in which everything is written out, with a tradition that values the improvised nature of much of its music - this can't have made things any easier.

Was it possible to combine the symphony orchestra with instruments of a particular tuning, belonging to a different tradition and often reverberating in our minds due to their markedly ritual tone?

In the same vein, we should remember the use of some western instruments of a more popular or traditional character when combined with orchestral groups. I'm thinking of the guitar, which, beyond its association with flamenco, poses a strictly sonic balance problem. In fact Takemitsu, with his significant catalogue for solo guitar and chamber groups, also addressed the combination of this solo instrument with the orchestra in *To The Edge Of Dream* (1983).

Beyond the juxtaposition of elements, which is also a distinctive feature of some European composers of the last century (Janáček, Stravinsky), our composer tries to establish some kind of connection between the interventions of soloists and orchestra. An example: the harp often plays near the soundboard, an unusual sound evoking the biwa, while interpolating percussion accents that integrate well into the Japanese universe. Similarly, Takemitsu uses extended techniques on western instruments and thus expands the richness in the articulation of 'noisy' sounds by the soloists.

The presence of silence behind the musical gestures of the soloists is one of the aspects that stands out in this work. It's as if the pause underlines the importance of sound. Silence, note, noise: three elements that constitute three phases in the articulation of time. Again, a certain ritual character and, at the same time, an entire cosmogony.

The arrangement of the strings, in two balanced groups stereophonically on either side of each soloist, inevitably makes me think of the polychoral music of late 16th century Venice. And here Venice becomes again a symbol: that republic built upon the water, acting as a backbone between east and west, a threshold between two world views.

Fluidity, solitude, mystery, ritual, virtuosity, juxtaposition... some of the words suggested by this iconic work.

This wasn't the only time our composer decided to write for soloists and orchestra. We have mentioned the guitar, but we should add the clarinet, trombone, piano, flute, violin and percussion. Always, however, these spotlit instruments converse with the symphonic environment, integrating or emerging at different moments. Curiously, and within the realm of concert halls, when Takemitsu returns to Asian traditional instruments - the sho, in this case - and places them alongside the orchestra, he again separates the two worlds. *Ceremonial (An Autumn Ode)* (1992) presents an introduction and epilogue by the mouth organ, while the central part remains exclusively performed by the orchestra.

Who knows, perhaps integration is only possible in cinematic fictions?

LISTENING CORNER

[November Steps \(Audio + score\)](#)

[November Steps \(Kaoru Kakizakai, Kakujo Nakamura, Charles Dutoit\)](#)

WATAZUMI DŌ

by Christopher Yohmei Blasdel

Watazumi Dō, who passed away in 1992, was one of the most colourful and masterful shakuhachi players of the 20th century. He was especially known for his approach to the shakuhachi as a *hocchiku*, an instrument of the Dharma, as opposed to an instrument for making music. However, the music he made with the instrument was out of this world.

Watazumi studied both shakuhachi and Zen from numerous teachers and perfected a level of breath control that enabled him to do seemingly impossible techniques on the shakuhachi. For example, his sustained tones emanated from an incredible lung capacity and lulled the listener into a deep reverie, and just when an ordinary shakuhachi player would run out of breath, Watazumi suddenly interjected a furious and explosive burst of air-filled fury that startled the mind back into the present. He played tones as soft as the minute susurrations of a delicate tea-kettle or loud, piercing sounds that drove right through the heart. Few present-day shakuhachi players have that kind of technical prowess or sense of theatrics.

In spite of his mastery of musical technique, however, he always insisted that he was, above all, a Zen priest and not a shakuhachi player. This is not unusual in Japan, as the tradition of the shakuhachi-player-as-spiritual-adept can be traced at least as far back as the Edo Period, when shakuhachi-playing mendicant monks roamed the Japanese countryside seeking enlightenment instead of musical audiences. During the feudal period, this approach to the shakuhachi was normal and fit the social norms and milieu of the age. In the present day, however, such an approach is more of a quirky anomaly, and Watazumi stood out as an exceptional eccentric amongst his peers. His style influenced a generation of shakuhachi players—including such greats as Yokoyama Katsuya—and literally breathed new life into the genre of meditative *honkyoku* shakuhachi.

Through his numerous recordings during the 1960s and 70s, Watazumi also became well known in the west. His shakuhachi playing formed the background of the 1986 film *Sacrifice* by Andrei Tarkovsky: one of the first international films to utilize shakuhachi music.

By the time I had already lived in Japan a few decades, I had met most of the shakuhachi players whom I admired, but I had yet to meet the legendary Watazumi Dō. I yearned to meet him and learn about his sense of lineage, his approach to transmission and musical style. In the last few years of his life, however, he recused himself from the world, didn't perform in public and received very few visitors, so my chances of meeting this remarkable man, I thought, were practically nil.

One of the people Watazumi regularly met, however, was Dan Mayers. Dan was an independently wealthy collector of Japanese Ukiyo-e woodblock prints and vintage shakuhachi. Although he didn't play the shakuhachi, he loved the sound and snatched up as many valuable shakuhachi and shakuhachi notation as he could find.

Dan did not know the Japanese language or customs, so he sometimes asked me to interpret. Dan was an aggressive businessman who was used to getting his own way, either by insistence or, if that didn't work, through the brute power of money. Most Japanese do not appreciate such a direct approach, and I felt that his personality and *modus operandi* were not really suited to the subtle niceties of Japanese society. Because of this, I felt awkward interpreting for him and usually avoided him when he was in town.

One morning however, Dan called and asked me to come interpret for him on a visit to Watazumi. He explained that he periodically met and paid Watazumi several hundred dollars to write out shakuhachi *honkyoku* notation. Dan knew that eventually these manuscripts, written in the master's hand, would eventually increase in value. Dan also told me that Watazumi was always more than happy to oblige, since by scribbling a few pages of notation he would be paid a handsome fee.

Although the obvious transactional nature of the meeting didn't really interest me, I was eager to finally meet this much talked-about master and agreed to go along and interpret for Dan.

We arrived at Watazumi's house, nestled in the warren of narrow streets near Shibuya station. The master came out, greeted us and took us upstairs while his wife brought tea. After a short exchange of pleasantries, Watazumi began talking exclusively about himself.



Watazumi Dō

It soon became apparent that he was eagerly playing the role of the recluse high-priest shakuhachi master for his guests. He insisted, every few sentences, that he be called *rōshi* (venerable priest) rather than *sensei* (teacher). In secular Japanese society, *sensei* is an accepted form of address toward a master, even if not technically correct. I had never met someone who was so insistent on being called *rōshi* instead. Well, OK, I thought—it was a minor matter.

He insisted, every few sentences, that he be called *rōshi* rather than *sensei*.

In between Watazumi's rants about how he should be addressed, I tried to get in a few questions about his style of shakuhachi compared to other prominent Japanese players. His replies were not subtle.

"I am the undisputed shakuhachi master, all the others are 'sick.' I am the only true shakuhachi adept." He then went down the list of the most famous Japanese shakuhachi players at the time: Yokoyama, Aoki Reibo, Yamamoto Hōzan, etc. and let me know exactly what he thought of them. The only person spared his scathing was Yamaguchi Gorō, though I couldn't tell if this was because he truly respected Yamaguchi's style or just refrained comment because he knew I was Yamaguchi's student.

I interpreted as best I could for Dan, who seemed to love Watazumi's richly performative nature and nodded to his every utterance, realizing that such eccentricity would only increase the value of his investments in the *rōshi*'s hand-written notation.

Nonetheless, after a while listening to Watazumi's rants I became disillusioned. I already knew that Dan was there mostly to make money off Watazumi, but the legendary shakuhachi player himself—who had been like a shakuhachi deity to me—was sinking to an unbelievably immature and childish level.

Then I realized that these two men were actually quite evenly matched and were playing a game with each other, with me as the intermediary. Watazumi was purposely acting up, aiming to get as much money out of Dan as possible. Dan, for his part, played along, knowing that the resale value of Watazumi's notation would only increase. I was witnessing the clash of two very self-centric egos.

At this point in the conversation Watazumi suddenly stood up and invited us outside, where he would demonstrate his martial arts moves with the wooden *jō* stick. His house had no garden, so we were forced into the narrow street. He began demonstrating his attacks, defences, various swings and thrusts. So immersed was he in his movements that he didn't, or wouldn't, notice that all the pedestrians on the street had stopped and were looking at him with worried faces, too terrified to pass by.

Finally he stopped, and we returned to his house, took our bows and began our parting words. Dan then invited us all out to lunch. Watazumi wanted to come, but he could not decide where he might like to eat, so he simply declined the invitation and instead asked Dan for the money that he would have spent on the meal instead.

The visit had ended, and at this point I could have just said the normal pleasantries and taken my leave, but the disappointment I felt from the meeting caused something in me to suddenly snap. For the first time that morning a moment of pure clarity descended on me, and realizing I had absolutely nothing to lose, I decided to be blunt. I faced Watazumi squarely and frankly told him that although I thought him a great shakuhachi player, he was also a big, buffooning fake.

For a moment there was a stunned silence as he took this in. Then, slowly, a huge grin spread across his face. He locked eyes with me and said: “You! You are absolutely right! You have attained enlightenment!”

For a moment there was a stunned silence as he took this in. Then, slowly, a huge grin spread across his face. He locked eyes with me and said:

“You! You are absolutely right! You have attained enlightenment!”

He was ecstatic that someone had called his bluff, and, for the first time in the visit, he actually smiled and looked relaxed. I felt as if a fog had suddenly lifted and that indeed, I was in the presence of a special being.

In the meantime, Dan stood by, waiting impatiently, totally unaware of what had just transpired between us. He handed Watazumi the lunch money and, content that he had just scored something very valuable, set off to the station with his new notation.

As for Watazumi, a few months later he was tragically struck and killed by a motorcycle while practising his jō techniques in the street. 🍄



Ignition commission

In this issue, we continue the new section called *Ignition Commission*, original works for shakuhachi of all styles aimed especially at beginners.

Since each lineage has a specific notation and fingering, we attach a fingering chart as well as a world premiere recording of the piece performed by the same composer that you can download from the members' area.

Along with the score, you will also find a brief explanation of the work by the composer herself.

We would like to especially thank Bronwyn Kirkpatrick for her collaboration in this second edition of the "Ignition Commission" section. Thanks!

Enjoy!



"TWILIGHT"

by Bronwyn Kirkpatrick


Ignition
commission #2

Handwritten musical notation for "TWILIGHT" by Bronwyn Kirkpatrick, featuring nine staves numbered 1 through 9. The notation is written in a stylized, cursive script. The staves are arranged vertically, with the first staff at the top and the ninth at the bottom. The notation includes various symbols, including vertical lines, horizontal lines, and stylized characters, suggesting a form of musical shorthand or a specific notation system. The word "Twilight" is written vertically on the right side of the page, next to the staves.

(Twilight)

"TWILIGHT"

by Bronwyn Kirkpatrick



The melody for *Twilight* emerged from an improvisation and gradually evolved into a full piece. Most of my pieces are realised in this way. I used the D natural minor scale, which suits the shakuhachi very well and adds a western feel to the melody. I called the piece *Twilight* because that's my favourite time to play the shakuhachi. I hope that you enjoy playing the piece. You can find more of my compositions on my website bronwynkirkpatrick.com, including my new notation pack Pneuma, available in early June.

→ [Audio link](#)

2	Ro	Tsu chu meri	Tsu	Re	Chi	Ri meri	Ri	i
	D	+7	'7	⌊	フ	7	7	⌊
	D	E	F	G	A	Bb	C	D
甲	Ro	Tsu chu meri	Tsu	Re	Chi	Hi meri	Hi	i
	D	+7	'7	⌊	フ	ヒ	ヒ	⌊
	D	E	F	G	A	Bb	C	D



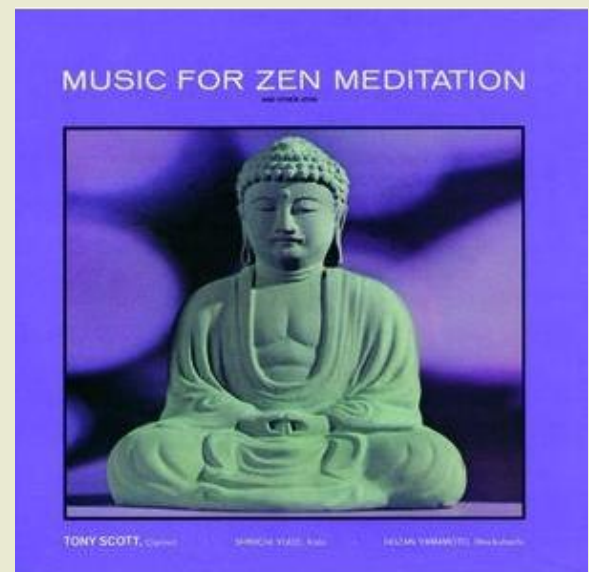
REAR VIEW MIRROR

by Adrian Freedman

Tony Scott, Yamamoto Hozan and Yuize Shinichi
**Music For Zen Meditation
 And Other Joys**

Verve, 1964

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_t-gFYUmo



A truly pioneering album from 1964 featuring a musical collaboration between an American jazz clarinetist and two Japanese music masters. Hugely influential in introducing the sounds of koto and shakuhachi to Western audiences, at a time when very little existed outside of Japan in the way of recordings or live performances. Also considered as a landmark recording in the genre of New Age music.

Tony Scott was well-known on the New York jazz scene in the 1950s. He shared an apartment with Charlie Parker, and played sessions with Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie and other luminaries of the time. In 1958 he met up with jazz writer Mata Sagawa, who invited him to come to Tokyo, and organised well-paying gigs on Japanese TV for him. Scott spent the next several years based in Japan, immersed in Japanese music and spirituality, as well as travelling to other Asian countries.

Therefore when he invited Yamamoto Hozan and Yuize Shinichi to join him to improvise in a recording studio, it was not the result of a random encounter or a momentary impulse. Rather it was the natural outcome of his deep engagement with the aesthetics of Japanese music - its pentatonic tonalities, spacious tempos and subtle phrasing. His choice of Japanese partners for the project was also not random. Yuize Shinichi studied composition with Henry Cowell at Columbia University in the 1950s, and went on to release many albums of contemporary koto music. Yamamoto Hozan was at the start of his career in 1964, but became known for the ways he expanded the boundaries of the traditional shakuhachi world, crossing over into contemporary, jazz, avant garde and world-fusion music.

One of the most radical aspects of this album is that it was recorded with no prepared musical material or rehearsal, at a time when improvisation was unheard-of in Japanese classical or traditional music.

One of the most radical aspects of this album is that it was recorded with no prepared musical material or rehearsal, at a time when improvisation was unheard-of in Japanese classical or traditional music. Each track reveals itself in a spontaneous melodic unfolding, without any definable musical structures or themes.

For Tony Scott improvisation was the bedrock of his musical life, but it would also have been a gateway to his understanding of the principles of Zen, due to the concept of *shoshin*, or beginner's mind. This state of open-minded, alert awareness could be interpreted by a jazz musician as the capacity to be inventive and expressive as well as to listen and respond, approaching each moment as full of fresh possibilities.

But the beauty and depth of this music is not to be found in any place of radical improvisation. The music is more restrained than that. Characteristic shakuhachi techniques such as multiphonics, microtones and *muraiki* (breathy tones) are absent, and the harmonic field stays within the safe limits of traditional Japanese pentatonic scales. The appeal of this album lies in the way it seeks to find

musical expression for certain attributes of Zen practice. The instruments intertwine lyrically around each other in ways that could be said to deepen the introspective mood, encourage gentle awareness and cultivate stillness. Moreover it feels apparent that the musicians are playing from an authentically meditative space within themselves. A heightened sense of musical responsiveness can be felt in the attentive shaping of phrases, and in the pacing of the musical flow.

Yamamoto plays with a constant vibrato that gives an almost regal quality to the shakuhachi as it makes its stately way with rich, warm tones and gorgeously rounded melodic phrases, while Yuize's koto playing has a shimmering, crystalline clarity combined with a deeply intuitive sense of rubato. However, although the impeccable musical mastery of Yamamoto and Yuize cannot be denied, it is through Scott's playing that moments of revelation occur.

Throughout the journey of the album Scott can be heard time and again to be influencing the other musicians with his instinctive grasp of slow, subtle aspects of musical phrasing, particularly in the several duets for koto and clarinet. His languorous style can shift the mood in a moment, bringing always a certain kind of gentle fluidity into the weave. Almost caressing the spaces between the notes, he seems to encourage Yuize to slow down and listen more deeply, softening his articulation and bringing more consideration into the details.

On the track "Za-zen (Meditation)", a duet for shakuhachi and clarinet, we can hear the respectful, almost cautious way that Scott seems to lean into the contours of Yamamoto's shakuhachi lines, finding his own gently swooning phrases whilst the colours of the instruments interweave like reflections of the same voice.

Some might question whether this is truly music for Zen meditation, given the richly expressive flow of melodic invention, which could be counter-productive to the quiet inner environment necessary for contemplative practice. But as music to evoke a simple mood of relaxation and calm, this album stands as a timeless, classic example of the New Age genre at its best.

All the musicians in this project started from a place outside their comfort zone. Scott because he was a jazz player discovering Japanese music, Yamamoto and Yuize because they were being asked to improvise. But it is the subtle originality of Scott's sensitive playing that seems to open up into new musical landscapes, as he captivates the listener with his nuanced awareness of shakuhachi phrasing and of the *Ma*, or 'negative space' between the notes. Remember he spent time in New York around Miles Davis, who famously said, "It's not the notes you play; it's the notes you don't play."

Adrian Freedman

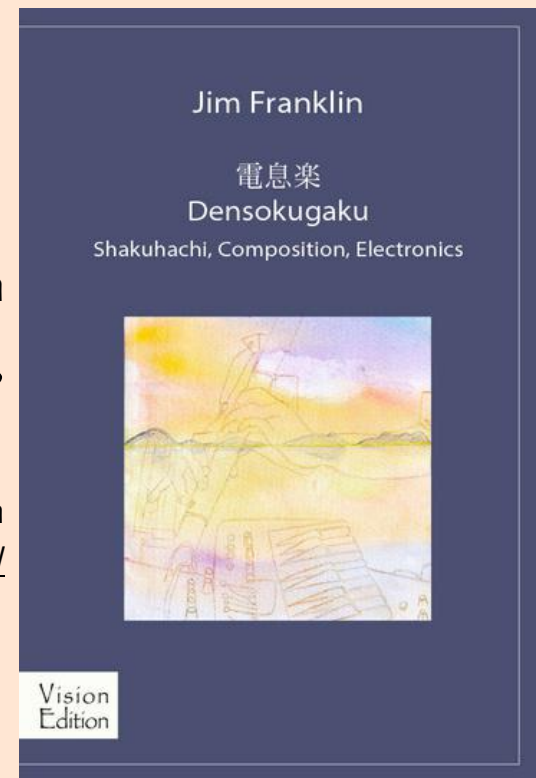
JIM FRANKLIN: DENSOKUGAKU (電息楽)

by Markus Guhe

Jim Franklin Densokugaku (電息楽): Shakuhachi, Composition, Electronics

Published 2024: Vision Edition

<https://www.visionedition.com/publication/densokugaku/>



In *Densokugaku* (電息楽) Jim Franklin takes his readers on a whirlwind tour through his creative life and work. The title *Densokugaku* can be loosely translated as electric (電) breath (息) music (楽), a reference to the core of his music consisting of shakuhachi and live electronics.

The person

Many readers of this newsletter will be familiar with Jim Franklin – he was the founding chairperson of the ESS from 2006 to 2009. Franklin grew up in Sydney, where he also studied composition and started working with live electronics, and started learning shakuhachi with Riley Lee in the Chikuho and KSK traditions. In Japan he studied with Furuya Teruo and Yokoyama Katsuya, who issued his teaching license in 1996. He then relocated to Germany (2004 to 2021) before moving to his current home in Japan. Among many other activities for the European shakuhachi community, Jim was a main organiser of the World Shakuhachi Festival 2018 in London.

Writing style

The book is neither purely autobiographical nor a musicological treatise but a mixture of both. Its subtitle 'Shakuhachi, Composition, Electronics' suggests three main themes, but throughout the book there are two more: Jim's personal development as performer and composer and his spiritual/philosophical world view, shaped by being a Zen practitioner for decades. With so many themes you may expect this to be a brick of a book, but Jim does it all in an engaging 141 pages.

The big themes: Cracks and Time

While shakuhachi and live electronics are Jim's chosen means of performing and composing music, underlying are two lifelong questions: *What is in the cracks between the keys?* and *What is time?*

Pitches: Jim started his musical life as a piano player, and early on he wondered what happens 'in the cracks between the keys' (also the title of one of the chapters) - his way of phrasing the question of what notes exist between the keys of a traditional keyboard tuned to the equal temperament pitches that dominate western music. Shakuhachi of course is supremely suited for exploring these cracks, eg the *meri* notes in *honkyoku* do not have a standardised pitch.

Time: The question on the nature of time can also be explored in shakuhachi *honkyoku* as well as live electronics but must remain elusive – this is simply the nature of time. There are two aspects however that make *honkyoku* a frugal way to explore the mysteries of time: Firstly, in *honkyoku* the basic unit of time is the breath and not a steady pulse. Secondly, there is a strong focus on the moment rather than the overall structure of a piece of music.

In addition to these major themes there are a few others:

Entanglements. One source of Jim's fascination with the shakuhachi is that pitch and timbre are inextricably linked, a property he calls 'entanglements'. Consider for example *dai-meri* notes (in the KSK style): a *dai-meri* note and its *kari* counterpart have the same pitch, eg *tsu-dai-meri* and *ro*; but they have a very different timbre because of the low blowing angle of the *meri* note.

Live electronics. Jim uses live electronics in two ways: (1) processing the sound of the shakuhachi with the usual arsenal, starting from filtering and time-based effects up to modifying the overtone structure of sounds, and (2) using electronics as a sound source. In "Songs From The Lake", one of his works discussed in some detail, some movements consist purely of processed shakuhachi while in others the electronics are also used as a sound source. Incidentally "Songs From The Lake" was his point of departure for writing the book, because he was asked to write an analysis of this piece by John Palmer.

Improvisation as part of composition. Often Jim uses improvisation as part of the composition process, as he describes in the analysis of his works: rather than writing pages of sheet music to be performed by other players, he is repeatedly playing and performing a piece of music and in this manner he gradually develops and refines it. Eventually one performance is recorded and becomes 'the piece'. This performance may then be slightly enhanced, analysed or transcribed for future performances or for publication as a recording.

Embodiment. One strong motivation for Jim Franklin is to perform his works himself and do so in an 'embodied' manner. When playing shakuhachi the instrument and the player become one, and equally the live electronics should not just be an instrument to be played, eg by pressing keys, but should also be played so that the body and instrument become one unit. For that reason he eventually settled on the theremin as a main instrument: like the shakuhachi it has to be played with a lot of body control. In the theremin the body actually becomes part of the instrument: By inserting your hands into the electric fields you become part of the circuitry rather than just controlling it. What is more, with some practice it even becomes possible to play both instruments simultaneously.

Work, life, Zen, *shugyō*. I am coming away from this book - as well as the interview we did before writing this review - with a sense that all the author's endeavours are just (to torture an old metaphor) different sides of the same coin. Work, life, performing, composing, shakuhachi, live electronics, Zen and meditation are all deeply intertwined. In our interview Jim claimed to 'have no hobbies' and I add to that: "It is all just *shugyō* (修行)" – training, practice, discipline, study (I'm using this term here a bit differently than the author himself in his final chapter.) And in this manner he is following the Zen path in the modern world in a way that includes but is not limited to the shakuhachi.

Conclusion. This is a short yet very rich book, and if you share the author's interests (as a surprisingly large number of shakuhachi players seem to do), then it is highly recommended reading. But even just the parts on his personal shakuhachi journey and the analysis of *honkyoku* pieces provided in the book make this recommended reading for every shakuhachi enthusiast.

Markus Guhe

CONDUIT

by Damon Rawnsley



"Bamboo", by Kazuko Hohki

A channel for conveying water or other liquid.

The idea I wish to convey in the practice of playing the shakuhachi, is the simple conclusion that much beauty can pass into the world. But the responsibility is through the musician and their mirror of understanding.

I will try to explain.

We receive impressions of all kinds through the senses and sensations. The act of blowing the shakuhachi creates sound vibrations in the lungs and nasal cavities, which in turn act directly on the thalamus in the mid-brain. The thalamus is the relay station to the whole body. This is a positive action for the person.

Now, the breath passes through us - we add the *Ki* [spirit, life energy]. The sound goes out into the world. Purposely, consciously, truly.

Miraculous.

The quality of that sound is the essence of player and instrument, animated by *Ki*. This can be a gift to the world.

Where does *Ki* come from?

"Sound of flute
has returned
to bamboo forest."

— Paul Reps



FINLAND 2024

ESS SUMMER SCHOOL

29.7. - 1.8 Friendship Inn, Kruusila

GUESTS
INTERNATIONAL & ESS
TANI YASUNORI
RILEY LEE
GUNNAR JINMEI LINDER
KIKU DAY
HÉLÈNE SEIYU CODJO
EMMANUELLE ROUAUD
THORSTEN KNAUB

MEMBER'S AREA

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, eg 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

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 YouTube CHANNEL

[<https://www.youtube.com/@europeanshakuhachisociety/>]

The ESS YouTube channel is where you can find the latest announcement videos, some old trailers and videos from the ESS archive. More to be added soon.

ESS FACEBOOK PAGE

[<https://www.facebook.com/europeanshakuhachisociety/>]

Visit the ESS Facebook page run by the ESS Board to get all the latest ESS news and re-discover items of the ESS archive or simply to ask a question or advice on shakuhachi.

ESS FACEBOOK COMMUNITY GROUP

[<https://www.facebook.com/groups/156126251071128/>]

Visit the community group looked after by ex-Board members and volunteers and join the discussions and benefit from the connections worldwide.

ESS FORUM

Looked after by ex-Board members and volunteers, the Forum "Practice, Culture and History of Japanese Bamboo Flute 尺八" is at : www.shakuhachiforum.eu

Visit the forum and take part in discussions with shakuhachi players, teachers and makers from all over Europe and beyond. Although less frequented than in the past, it is still a great resource for information to get you started on your shakuhachi questions.

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 includes 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 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, i.e. 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)

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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 December 1, 2024.
There will be a call for contributions nearer the publication date.
Please do not hesitate to contact us in the meantime
with any questions or suggestions.



BAMBOO

STAY TUNED!

THE NEXT EUROPEAN SHAKUHACHI SOCIETY NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED DECEMBER 1, 2024