

THREE POEMS FROM  
THE KANSHINKŌ 欠伸稿

HITOYOGIRI: FLUTE OF  
PRIESTS AND POETS

MEETING THE MAKERS  
IN MEMORY – MIURA RYUHO

# BAMBOO

Autumn/Winter 2025

Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society



法橋洞秀藤原

KŌGETSU-IN – THE STORY  
OF A KOMUSŌ TEMPLE

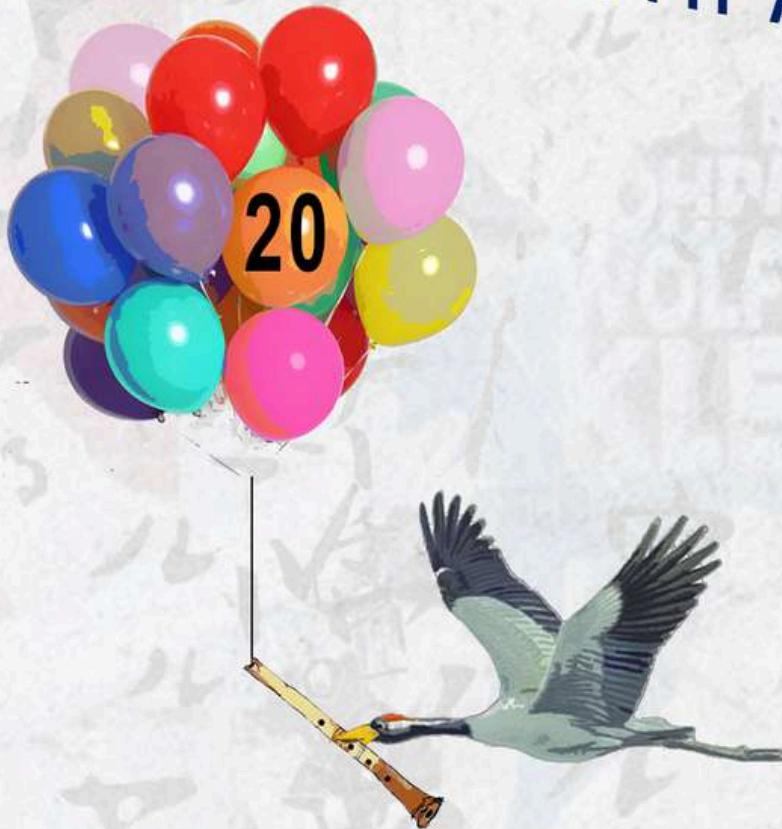
IGNITION COMMISSION  
JIM FRANKLIN

HANNSPETER  
KUNZ PRINTS

GUNNAR JINMEI LINDER  
CONGRATULATIONS!

# ESS ONLINE 2025-26

2006 - 2026 ESS 20TH ANNIVERSARY



#1 2 Nov 2025  
ESS Sunday Brunch  
Daniel Lifermann

#2 7 Dec 2025  
ESS Sunday Brunch  
Kiku Day

**#3 18 Jan 2025**   
**ESS New Year's Concert**  
**ESS Members & Guests**

**#4 14+15 Feb 2026**  
**Honkyoku/Modern**

Kawamura Kizan • Véronique Piron  
Gunnar Jinmei Linder • Cornelius Boots

**#5 3 May 2026**   
**ESS Sunday Brunch**  
**tba**

Registration for all events at:  
<https://events.shakuhachisociety.eu>



## 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 autumn/winter edition of BAMBOO! Another packed issue to accompany us through the darker season here in the Northern hemisphere, illuminating past and present cultural surroundings of our beloved shakuhachi, as well as giving future players original materials to study with the now regular Ignition Commission.

Looking further ahead, it is a great pleasure to announce already our next Summer School. Next year we will meet in Athens, Greece. The ESS is working currently with local organiser, Yerasimos Dimovasilis, on the details of next year's event. What we can say already is that the dates are **Thursday 23. To Sunday 26. July 2026**. We will be hosted at the **New York College in Kalithea, Athens**, who so generously welcome us and provide their facilities for our shakuhachi gathering.

As we are in the progress of finalising the teaching programme, for now we can only say that there will be a special Kinko-ryū Chikumeisha flavour to this event, but naturally we will have many different styles and schools represented too as is common at ESS Summer Schools.

2026 is of course also the year which marks 20 years of ESS shakuhachi activities. Starting with the summer event in London 2006, we came a long way. Numerous events and of course the WSF in London 2018 mark a trajectory which at its core has the ever growing shakuhachi community in Europe and beyond. As this would not have happened without the dedication of many people over the years we are aiming that next year's anniversary programming also reflects this. More to be announced in due time :-)

Additionally, we're having again an online workshop series (see the two page spreads for details) which offers opportunities to meet and learn virtually while we wait for July to come. And don't forget our annual New Year's concert on the 18. January, we are looking forward to your contributions.

November brought also some sad news – Miura Ryuho, a much celebrated shakuhachi maker, passed away. Besides being a great loss for family and friends, and for the wider shakuhachi world, it was a personal rupture for me too, cutting abruptly a familiar voice which advised me on *jiari-shakuhachi* making over many years so generously.

Let's draw strength from sadness and promise to make his and all other shakuhachi sound to the best of our abilities.

As always any comments or suggestions please contact us on [info@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto:info@shakuhachisociety.eu).

Best wishes  
Thorsten Knaub, ESS Chairperson

### And Breathe... A Word From Your Editors

Dartington College in Devon, UK, was a pioneer in music teaching. Already in 1970, the Indian tabla was being studied, soon followed by the arrival of Yoshikazu Iwamoto to teach shakuhachi. For several decades Iwamoto set scores of his students on a path that included playing the Japanese flute.

One of his pupils was Clive Joseph Dunkley, who has enjoyed a long career in instrument making and still lives in a Devon village. In this issue Joseph looks back at Iwamoto's debut album in our "Rear View Mirror" column, and also writes about his experience of building shakuhachi.

There are more "Meetings with Makers" in Ramon Humet's interview with Madrid based José Vargas.

We have more delightful images from Hannspeter Kunz's prints collection and Christoph Wagner's postcards, and fresh haiku with their own special illustrations by Kazuko Hohki and Tamara Rogozina.

Pushing positively into poetry, Matt Gillan contributes a fascinating article about *hitoyogiri* poems from four centuries ago. The *hitoyogiri* type of shakuhachi, with its single bamboo node, appeared in the fifteenth century. Nick Bellando gives us the second episode of his three-part examination of this ancient flute, still played today by Nick and others.

Jim Franklin has sent us his new beginners' piece for our current Ignition Commission - in fact, whatever your level, Jim's piece will intrigue you.

And there's news of shakuhachi activities in Finland, Barcelona and Switzerland.

So it's another packed issue of Bamboo. Don't read it all at once!

The Editors



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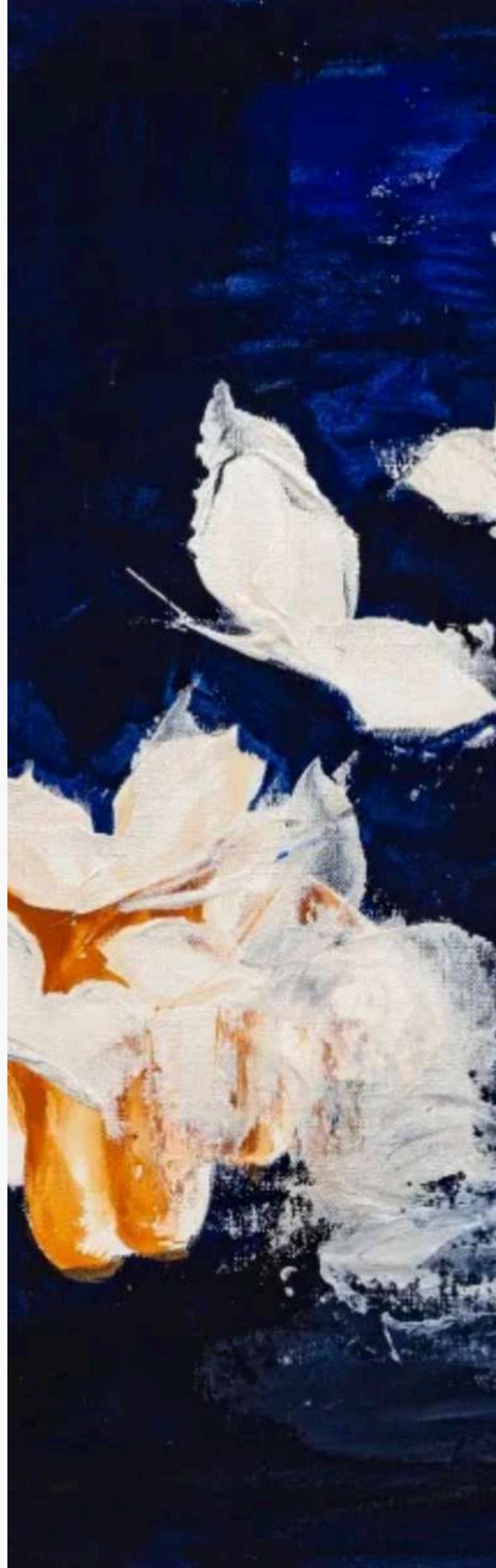


Clive Bell and Ramon Humet working on the current edition of BAMBOO  
Barcelona, November 2025 (Photo: Penny Simpson)

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# THREE POEMS ABOUT THE SHAKUHACHI FROM THE KANSHINKŌ 欠伸稿

Translated with notes by Matt Gillan

2025 marks the 400th anniversary of the death of the *hitoyogiri* shakuhachi performer Ōmori Sōkun (大森宗勲 1570-1625). Sōkun is the most celebrated performer of this instrument in Japanese history and was responsible for producing the earliest surviving notation collections as well as other theoretical works about *hitoyogiri* music. Not much is known about Sōkun's life, but we know that he operated within the elite realms of Kyoto society in a social network that encompassed the Emperors Go-Yōzei and Go-Mizunoo, priests from the major Rinzai Zen temples of Kyoto, daimyō and other samurai from around Japan, tea masters, and other prominent figures in Japanese society.

Sōkun studied Zen practice at Daitokuji with Tenshuku Sōgan (天叔宗眼 1532-1620), before retreating from the world to concentrate on the shakuhachi.

According to Sōkun's gravestone inscription in the Konkai Kōmyōji temple in Kyoto, written by his student Hara Zesai, a priest at Shōkokuji temple, Sōkun studied Zen practice at Daitokuji with Tenshuku Sōgan (天叔宗眼 1532-1620), before retreating from the world to concentrate on the shakuhachi. Another important source of information about Sōkun comes from the writings of Kōgetsu Sōgan (1574-1643). Kōgetsu was head priest of Daitokuji from 1610, and was an influential patron of the tea ceremony and the arts, facilitating the construction of the Kohōan hermitage in the Daitokuji precincts for the tea master Kobori Enshū (1579-1647). Kōgetsu's writings are compiled in a collection titled *Kanshinkō* 欠伸稿 (Kanshin 欠伸 was Kōgetsu's *nom de plume*), from which the poems below are taken.

The *Kanshinkō* contains a total of five entries about the *hitoyogiri* shakuhachi (which Kōgetsu simply calls 'shakuhachi'), all of which commemorate individual instruments in a mixture of poetry and prose. Many of these entries also contain earlier poems in Japanese or Chinese by other authors, which provide the inspiration for Kōgetsu's text. The two instruments commemorated in the entries below were both made by Ōmori Sōkun and named, respectively, Bakuon (roar of the waterfall) and Utsutsu-nashi (without reality). Prominent Buddhist priests were often called upon to write texts commemorating musical

instruments, tea utensils, and other items. In some cases, they provided calligraphy to be inscribed in gold lacquer (*makie*) onto the commemorated objects. These poems, and the names they commemorate, give us a fascinating glimpse into the sensual aesthetics with which the *hitoyogiri* shakuhachi was perceived by elite Japanese society in the early-Edo period. These poems also reveal the Zen-infused poetic imagination with which the *hitoyogiri* shakuhachi was described by Kōgetsu and other members of his social circle.

The first entry appears as number 737 in the *Kanshinkō*:

瀑音記 尺八名 小堀遠江守請

吹まよふ深山をろしに夢さめて涙もよおす瀑の音かな

不住齋主一生吹尺八、從朝到暮、浮世穿鑿不相干。是故、或時吹落關西之月、或時吹起江東之雲矣。于茲京師大森、於此曲調得佳名於扶桑者、兒童走卒知之。此人運郢斤尺八傳不住。不住因右之和歌、目曰瀑音。便就于村僧、需述其記。野偈一章、以塞厥請、爲他笑具云。

尺八聲高驚幾人、松風太雅棄如塵。聰奇耳處看佳境、呈示廬山真面目。

The shakuhachi named Bakuon (roar of the waterfall) - written at the request of Kobori Tōtōmi no kami [Kobori Enshū].

*The wind blowing aimlessly from the mountain wakes me from my illusory dreams,  
The roar of the waterfall brings forth a deluge of tears.*

The master of the Fujūsai hermitage spent his life blowing the shakuhachi. From morning to night, he had no concern for the trivial matters of the world. In the west, he would blow at the moon, making it disappear behind the hills. In Edo, he would blow the clouds into existence. In Kyoto there is a musician named Ōmori [Sōkun] whose name is revered throughout Japan. A shakuhachi made by Sōkun came into the hands of the Fujūsai hermit, who named it Bakuon after the poem above. I was asked to write a Chinese poem explaining the name, which I present here for your amusement:

*How many people have been moved by the magnificent sound of this shakuhachi?  
Even the exquisite elegance of the pining wind falls like dust in comparison.  
If you listen beyond sound, you will begin to see deeply,  
And the true shape of Mount Lu is revealed.*

## Notes

The poem was solicited from Kōgetsu by the famous tea master Kobori Enshū, who, as is clear from another entry in the *Kanshinkō*, was a shakuhachi student of Ōmori Sōkun. Kobori and the Fujūsai hermit seem to be two separate people, although Kobori was known to have travelled often between Kyoto and Edo. The *waka* poem at the beginning is taken directly from the fifth chapter of *The Tale Of Genji*, in which the protagonist hears the dawn chanting in a mountain temple drifting on the breeze from above the retreat at which he is staying.

The final line about the 'true shape of Mount Lu' is a reference to a famous poem titled *Written On The Wall Of West Forest Temple* (題西林壁) by the Song-era Chinese poet Su Shi (蘇軾, also known as Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, 1037-1101). Mount Lu had long been a spiritual centre of China with many Buddhist and Daoist temples and hermitages (the character *Lu* 廬 denotes a 'hermitage'). Su Shi's famous poem is as follows:

橫看成嶺側成峰，遠近高低各不同。不識廬山真面目，只緣身在此山中。

*Seen from the side it looks like a mountain range; from the front like a single peak.  
From near and far, from low and high, things appear differently.  
We cannot make out the true shape of Mount Lushan,  
Since we ourselves are lost within the mountain.*

The protagonist hears the dawn chanting in a mountain temple drifting on the breeze from above the retreat at which he is staying.

Entry 747 of the *Kanshinkō* consists of two poems dedicated to another of Ōmori Sōkun's shakuhachi, carrying the name Utsutsu-nashi (無現), which I have translated 'without reality'. The first, with an introduction, was composed by Karasumaru Mitsuhiro (烏丸光広 1579-1638), a poet, noh scholar, and high-ranking *Kugyō* official in the Imperial household. Karasumaru was also ranked as one of the most celebrated calligraphers in early-Edo Japan, and his hand-written calligraphy of this poem is shown in fig.1. Karasumaru's text is remarkable for the way it addresses the instrument directly, imbuing it with human qualities, as well as for the elaborate wordplay in the final lines. To Karasumaru's *waka* poem, Kōgetsu adds his own poem in Chinese.

The complete text of entry no.747 is as follows:

尺八銘 烏丸大納言殿作

尺八よ尺八よ、なれをよびてうつゝなしといはむ。月の夜、花の春、紅葉の陰にいたる、さて推參せずといふ事なく、あまた人に手なるゝもうたかた、うつゝなしにあらずや。時にうなづく。いで一曲吹て卑懷をのべむ。黄。夢もなしうつゝなしとは河竹の一よのほどをね入てぞしる

予加筆 栗山大膳亮請

尺八向虚空高聲云、正宮商角徵羽之音、依什麼惹虛名。虛空不言笑吟々。管城子突出云、一曲兩曲無人會、雨過夜塘秋水深。

元和五己未八月日 欠伸子戯書

Naming A Shakuhachi, by Karasumaru Mitsuhiro

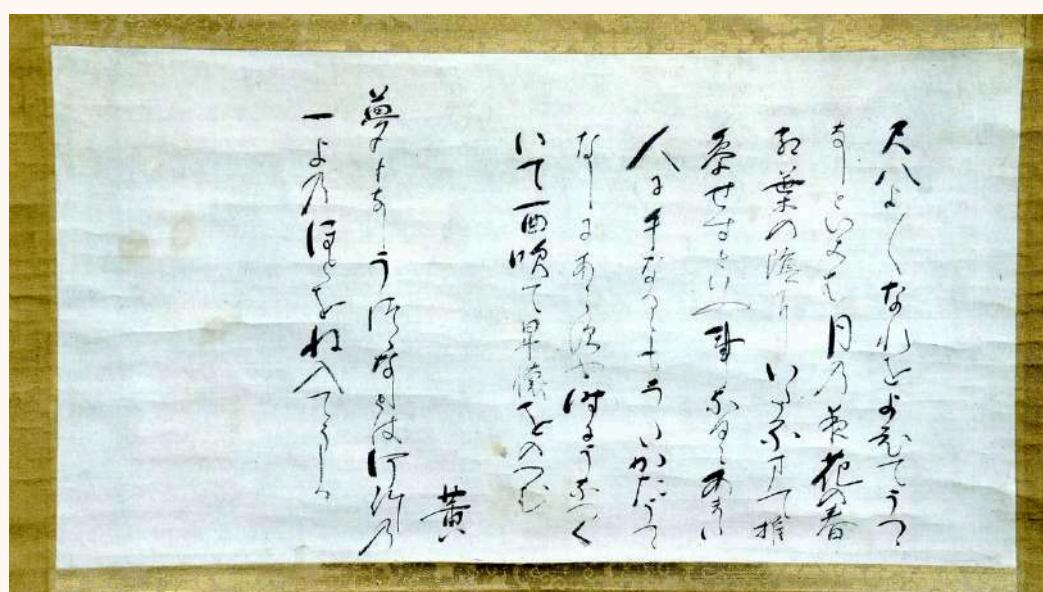
Shakuhachi, oh shakuhachi! I will call you Utsutsu-nashi [無現 without reality].

Under the light of the moon, the blossoms of spring, or in the shade of the red autumn leaves, you never fail to make yourself known. You have passed through so many hands, but all have been ephemeral relationships. You are without reality, aren't you? The shakuhachi nods in agreement, expressing itself through a single melody, which inspired in me the following *waka*:

*Without dreams, without reality.*

*Like the bamboo on the riverbank, which understands the truth*

*Only through entering a single night's sleep.*



Calligraphy by Karasumaru Mitsuhiro of his shakuhachi poem. Property of the author.

I [Kōgetsu Sōgan] added the following words at the request of Kuriyama Daizen:  
 The shakuhachi cries into the void [虛空], declaiming, "My five pitches are in perfect tuning, so  
 why have I been given such an empty name?" The void says nothing but bursts out laughing.  
 My brush spontaneously writes the poem:

*"One melody, two melodies; nobody understands.  
 After the rain, the autumn water is deep in the evening pond."*  
 Genna 19 (1619), eighth month

## Notes

"The bamboo on the riverbank" (河竹) is of course a reference to the material used to make a shakuhachi, but it also invokes the Japanese poetic expression *uki fushi shigeki kawatake* (憂節繁き河竹). Bamboo growing by the riverbank has prominent nodes (*fushi*), while *uki-fushi* 憂き節 is also a poetic term denoting 'sadness'. Additionally, Karasumaru's use of *hitoyo* (一よ) can be interpreted both as 'one night' (一夜) or the 'one node' (一節) of the *hitoyogiri* shakuhachi.

Kōgetsu states here that his text was commissioned by Kuriyama Daizen (栗山大膳, 1591-1652). Kuriyama was a prominent samurai of the Fukuoka domain and was known to be a performer of the *hitoyogiri* shakuhachi. A painting of Kuriyama held by the Enseiji temple in Fukuoka prefecture shows him with sword and shakuhachi at his side (fig. 2). It is unclear whether this instrument is the *Utsutsu-nashi* of the above poems, but a 17th-century collection of famous shakuhachi titled *Dōshōsho* 洞簫書, held by the library of Tenri University library lists Kuriyama as the owner of *Utsutsu-nashi*. The current whereabouts of the instrument are unknown.

The text "*One melody, two melodies; nobody understands. After the rain, the autumn water is deep in the evening pond*", is a direct quotation from chapter 37 of the *Hekiganroku* (碧巖録, the Blue Cliff Record), a collection of 100 Zen koans attributed to Xuedou Chonxian 雪竇重顕 (980-1052) that were compiled and annotated by Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (1063-1135). Case 37 introduces Panshan Baoji's (720-814) koan: "*There is nothing in the triple world; so where can mind be found?*" (三界無法、何處求心) and is also the source of Kōgetsu's reference to the 'five pitches'—*kyū shō kaku chi u* (宮商角徵羽).

In translating these poems, I have referenced the following annotated transcriptions of the *Kanshinkō* by Kosuge Daitetsu (2009) and by Yoshizawa Katsuhiro (2010).

小菅大徹. 2009. 「欠伸稿 (カンシンコウ)」、『一音成仏』第39号、140～148。  
 芳澤勝弘. 2010. 『江月宗玩欠伸稿訳注坤』、京都：思文閣。



Portrait of Kuriyama Daizen by Hokkyō Dōshū. Property of Ensei-ji. Photo by the author.

Ed: Matt Gillan is professor of music at International Christian University in Tokyo.

Readers who would like to see the Daitokuji temple in Kyoto can watch this YouTube video - which also shows famous Japanese percussionist Stomu Yamashita performing on stone instruments made from volcanic rock:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EzVXxHbs7o>

# FLUTE OF PRIESTS AND POETS

## *Hitoyogiri* Shakuhachi Part 2

by Nick Bellando

**This is the second of a planned series of three articles by Nick Bellando introducing the *hitoyogiri* flute.**

*Hitoyogiri* shakuhachi (in its time referred to simply as 'shakuhachi') pieces were birthed, it seems, in a context of religion / philosophy and poetry. Friends (usually of the elite class, somewhat in contrast to the *Fuke* shakuhachi, whose players, though samurai, were often outcasts or of ill repute) would gather at various temples to share drinks, poetry, and often shakuhachi playing as well. Take this record from *Rokuon Nichiroku*, the temple manager's diary from a Rinzai Zen temple:

"21 August, 1596: Just after noon, Nanbo and Joei-ji, along with two priests and ten other people came. Sokun played shakuhachi. Our ears were fully satisfied with its unhurried, boundless sound. In the evening we started drinking sake. We ate chicken eggs. Yuzo came. He brought ten *matsutake* mushrooms."

The 'Sokun' above refers to Omori Sokun, who is responsible for organizing and revitalizing the (*hitoyogiri*) shakuhachi. Without Sokun we would have virtually no information about how to play. Thanks to his score collections and commentary, we can go quite far in bringing these pieces back to life.

One of his teachers, Yasuda Jocho, was a Pure Land priest, who not only wrote the piece "Yasuda", but also taught Sokun concerning much of the connection between *hitoyogiri* and Yin / Yang philosophy. The repertoire is distributed over five modes, which are all played on a single flute (the standard being *Oshiki* / A); each mode is classified as Yin or Yang, and the characteristics of its tones and techniques change according to the yin and yang aspects of the seasons. Similar to the way haiku poems came to incorporate a 'season' word, these pieces reflect a poet's mindset, paying attention to the changing colours and activities of the seasons, and reflecting these in the flow between the five tones of each mode.



*Edo era hitoyogiri*

Sokun's school of shakuhachi was one of several. Some other Pure Land Buddhist priests seem to have had their own ways to play the classical pieces, but Sokun was the inheritor of *Sosa-ryu*, started a few generations before his time by a man named Sosa. We know little about him, but Sosa left behind a small collection of tanka poems that convey his shakuhachi teaching philosophy. For example:

尺八と  
太刀の手立の  
心持  
ひかえてくるに  
その利有りけり

*The way to wield your mind  
when playing shakuhachi  
is the same as when using a tachi:  
“Not too much.”  
This is indeed beneficial.*

The *tachi* is a type of *katana* [sword]; wielding it requires one to be attentive yet relaxed. If you tense up and try too hard, you end up being on the losing end. It's not a performance; and besides, if you really want to hold on to your life, paradoxically, if you grasp it too tightly, you end up losing it. Sosa's approach to shakuhachi is the same.

We can see this attitude again reflected in the next poem:

音のなまる  
ことを心に  
思へただ  
息押し付けて  
吹し故なり

*You get distracted  
with your sound  
being off-  
because you're playing  
by forcing in your breath.*



Priest and Samurai playing hitoyogiri, from Dosho Kyoku (1669)

Playing shakuhachi requires listening. If you try too hard to be in control, your sound will lack depth and soul. Listen, and find where the bamboo wants to resonate - then you can play a rich sound with very little breath and almost no effort. On the other hand, if you force in your breath in a one-sided attempt to make the bamboo obey your commands, you'll find that the shakuhachi responds weakly, like one acting under compulsion.

There were players before Sosa as well, as far back as the 1400s and perhaps even a little earlier. We know of Ikkyū Sōjun [1394-1481], of course, and also players like Mon-ami (a Pure Land priest who wrote Kochigo - see the YouTube link below) and Ton-ami. Many sources identify the latter as the famous poet Ton'a, as I wrote in the last article; but this may be a mistake for a shakuhachi player and maker of the same name, who lived a bit later on. One of Ton-ami's flutes was acquired by a samurai / poet named Socho, who wrote about it in his diaries in the early 1500s. Socho also writes about other shakuhachi encounters - for example, in 1524, he writes about an 80 year old priest leaving a lasting impression by playing only two brief Hyojo (Autumn mode) pieces. He later writes again about the same priest: "While composing *renga* [collaborative poems], he told us stories late into the night, then played shakuhachi in a way that made both joy and longing sink deeply into me."

And so we see again that the *hitoyogiri* shakuhachi was not so much used for public entertainment as it was for contemplation or sonic poetry, as an aspect of deeper communication between friends. I'll leave you with a final poem by Ikkyu, quoted in Omori Sokun's treatises:

なかなかに、  
我に如かざる  
人よりも、  
ただ尺八の  
音こそ友なれ。

*The only friend  
who really seems  
to understand me  
is the sound  
of my shakuhachi.*

And finally, a shameless plug. I'd be delighted to have you join me to learn Shin Sosa-ryu Shakuhachi (*hitoyogiri*). You can get in touch with me at <https://www.hon-on.com/lessons.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ro9YwsPy5oY>

Nick Bellando plays "Kochigo" on *hitoyogiri* - a love song by Mon-ami, who lived in the 1500s. ☺

# CHRISTOPH WAGNER: POSTCARD COLLECTION

by Clive Bell

We are delighted to present two more images from Christoph's collection of postcards. The first two can be found in our last issue, *Bamboo* Summer 2025.

Christoph Wagner is a music writer from south Germany, now based in Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire in the UK. His latest book (in German) is *Lichtwärts!* (Towards The Light!), about the birth of the first eco-movements in south-west Germany, 1880-1940.

For many years he collected postcards of musicians in junk shops and flea markets. In his own words, "Each card is its own little world, and its secrets can never be disclosed. Even the simplest questions turn out to be embarrassingly difficult to answer: Who were those people? How did they live? ... Above all, what did this world sound like?"

In 2004 Wagner published a book of his postcards, each image accompanied by a short essay by a musician: *Ear & Eye: Encounters With World Music*. The date of these cards is the early twentieth century. •

More info: <https://christophwagnermusic.blogspot.com/>



Japanese Dance Musicians  
Collection Christoph Wagner



Japanese Female Musicians Orchestra  
Collection Christoph Wagner



Japanese Female Musicians Orchestra. Detail of a koto  
Collection Christoph Wagner

# JAPANESE PRINTS WITH FLUTES (II)

by Hannspeter Kunz

## Introduction by Clive Bell

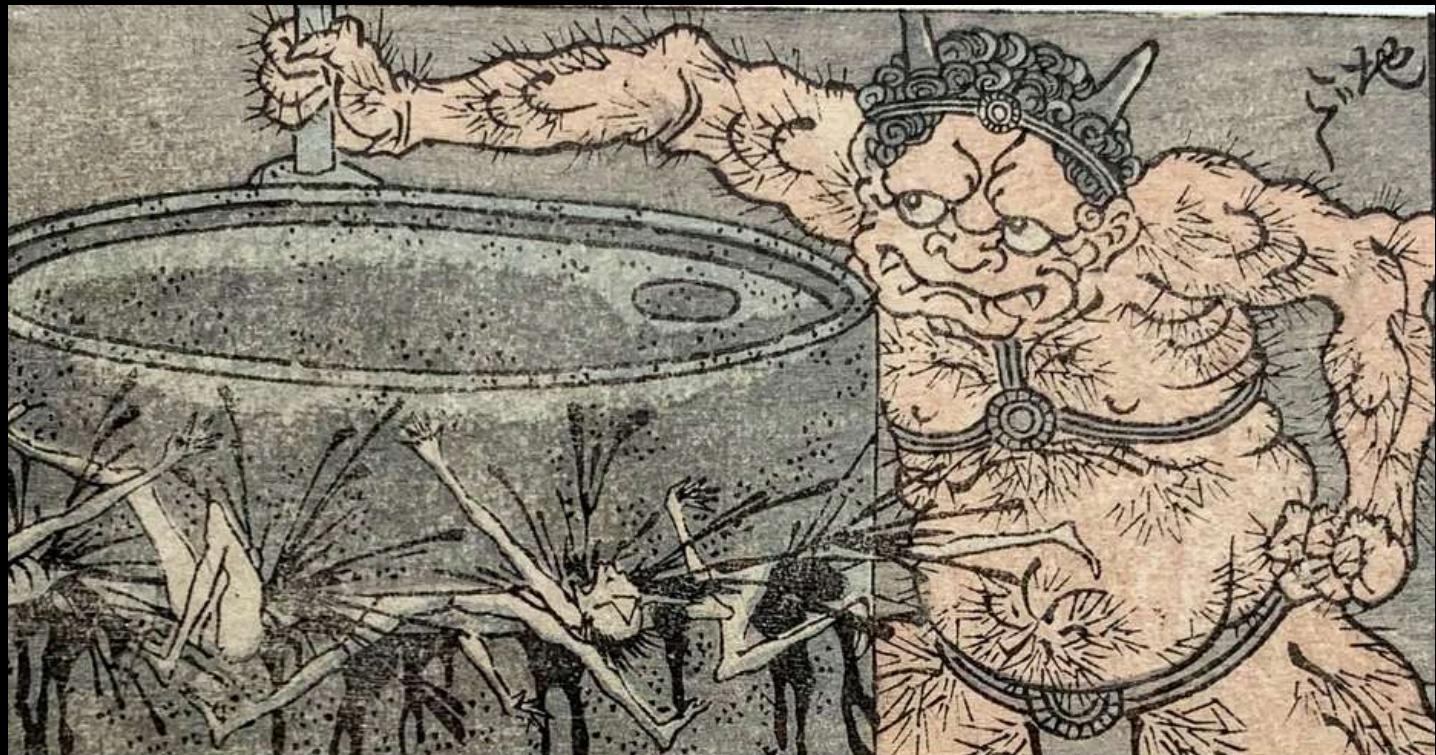
Hannspeter Kunz, a German collector of Japanese prints, has generously allowed *Bamboo* to present a selection from his collection: prints featuring shakuhachi. Our thanks also to Christoph Wagner for the contact.



In the previous issue we began this series of prints from the Hannspeter Kunz collection related to shakuhachi and traditional Japanese arts. In this issue, we continue our review of this remarkable collection.

More images can be seen at his website:  
<https://www.ukiyo-e-gallery.de>

This Japanese print by Toyohara Kunichika (1835-1900) shows another portrait of a kabuki actor in the role of a so-called *otokodate*, whose shakuhachi flute is sticking out of his *obi* in the back as if equivalent to his sword in front. Both 'weapons' are forming a V-shape pointing downwards into hell. Between these two items the decoration of the *kimono* unfolds a hellish scene: *Enma*, the king of hell, is not amused, staring and screaming at a group of *oni*, who seem to be engaged in a dispute. As Wardens of Hell (*Jigoku*), *oni* torment sinners, putting sentences into practice which were passed down by the king of the underworld.



The kabuki fan of Edo enjoyed such picturesque spectacles displayed on the actors' exquisite *kimonos*. These not only reflected much of the protagonist's character but were also used as a kind of provocation against the ruling class. At the time it was for the kabuki goer to know - today it is for us to find out.



Until the 1760s woodblock printing was mainly done in black-and-white for the production of books. Thus, one could even say that the colored single-sheet was a result of the flourishing book trade of the time.

Nishikawa Sukenobu's double page from his 1740 book *Ehon Chiomi-gusa* (Scenes of the lives of women) reflects the mood of *ukiyo-e*.

It shows three young women (*bijin*) picnicking in a garden under a curtain while enjoying cherry blossoms. One is holding a *shamisen*, a three-stringed lute, in her right hand. The *shamisen* was frequently employed to accompany popular songs, but also in theatre performances. Apart from that they were usually associated with *geisha*. In *ukiyo-e*'s *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women), the subject of a *shamisen* playing female became immensely popular in the late Tokugawa period.

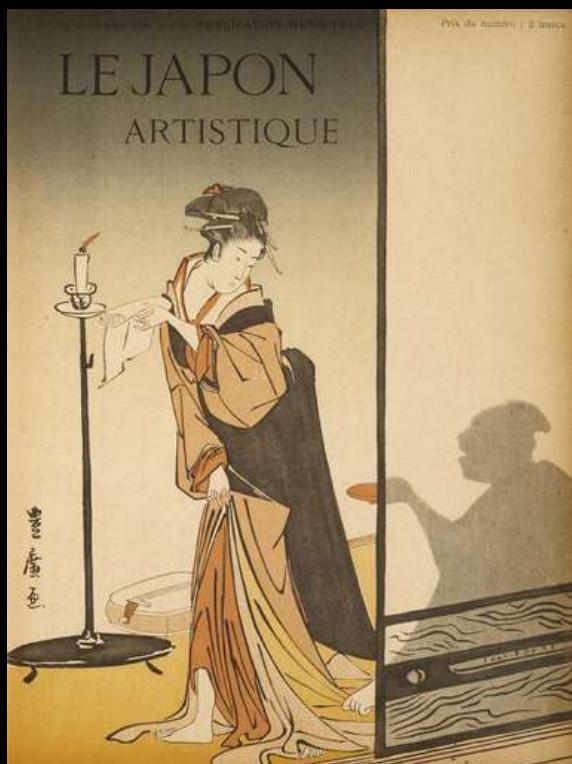


In this picture Utagawa Toyohiro's geisha is not playing her *shamisen*, but turning away from a customer who wants her to drink more sake. Instead she is turning her head towards her instrument in order to protect it.

"Three strings are stretched over a bridge, which is clearly positioned on the lower part of the catskin front. The print additionally shows an extra preformed cover strapped to the side of the body of the instrument so as to prevent perspiration from the player's right forearm dulling the magnificent cherry wood and impeding the player's efforts." Positioned between the strings and the catskin is her plectrum.

(Gemeentemuseum Den Haag: *The Ear Catches The Eye*, p.18)

[Ed: This is a Dutch exhibition catalogue, in English, from 2000. It deals with Japanese prints featuring musical instruments.]



In 1890 a variation of the same image was used as a front cover for the monthly magazine *LE JAPON ARTISTIQUE*, documenting the increasing western interest not only in the rather unknown Japanese prints but also in the cultural aspects of everyday life in Edo period Japan. ☺

# KŌGETSU-IN – THE STORY OF A KOMUSŌ TEMPLE IN KYUSHU, AND AN APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

Takei Toru and Hagio Seikan are interviewed by Kiku Day

Kiku Day: For many years I have heard about activities concerning Kōgetsu-in *komusō* temple grounds in Kyushu. I studied with Shimura Zenpo while I was a research student at Osaka University of Fine Arts, and he was very excited about the potential of Kōgetsu-in. The dream was to use this site, relatively untouched since the abolition of the *komusō* and their temples, and build an international shakuhachi centre.

Several years later I saw an online fundraising flyer for Kōgetsu-in. This time it was not to purchase the land and build something. It was a fundraiser to collect enough funds to move the *komusō* graves at Kōgetsu-in to another temple, called Tensō-ji. The flyer said the grounds of Kōgetsu-in were sold two years ago for residential development. I was moved and disappointed by this news when I remembered the excitement and enthusiasm I had felt from the people involved. It meant they had not been successful in raising funds to purchase the land and create a shakuhachi centre.

So I decided to interview Takei Toru, who is an abbot for a Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land School) temple, and also Hagio Seikan, who works as a creative director, to learn more about what happened. Both are shakuhachi aficionados. Hagio-san is a *dōshū* (corresponds to *shihan*) in Fuke Myōan Shakuhachi. Several players have come together and formed a society called: Yanagawa Kōgetsu-in Memorial Association. And it is this society that is fundraising.

KD: Hello Takei *jūshoku* and Hagio-san, thank you for agreeing to speak with me. Can you tell me a little about the presence of *komusō* in Kyushu during the Edo period, so we can know more about the background?

Hagio Seikan: There were quite a lot of *komusō* activities in Kyushu during the Edo period. And there were four *komusō* temples in Kyushu:

- Icchōken in Hakata. It belonged to the religious group Kichiku-ha, which is a subgroup of Kyoto Myōan-ji.
- Kōgetsu-in in Yanagawa. Their religious grouping was Kinsen-ha, a subgroup of Ichigetsu-ji near Tokyo.
- Rinsei-ken in Kurume; Kinsen-ha subgroup of Ichigetsu-ji.
- Shōjyu-ken in Nagasaki, which is a branch of Reihō-ji, also near Tokyo.

This means there were sub-temples of Myōan-ji, Ichigetsu-ji and Reihō-ji – the three main *komusō* temples in Edo period Japan (1603-1868).

KD: That's very interesting! Kyushu must have been a stronghold of shakuhachi during the Edo period. We should know of course, because some quite significant pieces in our repertoire come from Kyushu. Tell us more about Kōgetsu-in itself.

Takei Toru: Kōgetsu-in was - as were all other *komusō* temples - closed down in 1871 and the place was left in ruins in 1876. It is located in Yanagawa, which is famous for its waterways. There are waterways surrounding Kōgetsu-in on all sides. It is very possible the land remained unchanged, without being eroded or altered until recently, due to these waterways. On the temple grounds many have tried to start up businesses. Even a drivers license practice school with an area to practice driving was established there. But all attempts to do business there failed or something bad happened. The locals in the town believed that this was a cursed place.



Grounds of Kōgetsu-in

KD: A cursed place! That's really something. How come the Kōgetsu-in site got this reputation?

TT: Historically, Kōgetsu-in held a special status even among the other *komusō* temples, and possessed privileges as a temple under the direct jurisdiction of the Tokugawa shogunate's Jisha Bugeyō (Magistrate of Temples and Shrines). This meant that the local authorities and governments had no say in what was happening on the grounds of Kōgetsu-in. They couldn't arrest criminals who took refuge there, or punish the *komusō* if they

had committed crimes. Such issues may have contributed to the factors why *komusō* and the *komusō* temples were disliked when the transition from the Edo period to the Meiji period occurred, leading to their sudden abolition. We also suspect that the Kōgetsu-in sites were used by the feudal government for some very unpleasant aspects of the autocracy, such as punishing its enemies or criminals.

KD: Ohh - that doesn't sound like the way to earn respect. What about the music? Do we know any pieces that come out of Kōgetsu-in?

HS: Two pieces from Kōgetsu-in, "Nerisashi" and "Takasashi" are still preserved and played today.

KD: Oh wow! "Nerisashi" is one of my favourite pieces! I don't know "Takasashi" at all.

HS: I play it. It's still around.

KD: Fantastic. Do we know the lineage through whom this piece was transmitted?

HS: The transmission we know of (and I am part of) begins with one of the *komusō* of Kōgetsu-in teaching it to Miyagawa Nyozan (1868-1946), who taught it to Shimokawa Jyogai (the last *kansu* of Kōgetsu-in). Yoshimura Sōshin (1904-1988), who was the 40th *kansu* of Myōan-ji, learned it from Shimokawa and passed it on to Ikuta Isshin, who is now 85 years old. He participated in the World Shakuhachi Day 2025 (8th October 2025). I learned it from Ikuta Isshin. Miyagawa Nyozan was also the teacher of Tani Kyochiku, who is the teacher of Nishimura Koku. So who knows if they also play it in their repertoire.

KD: I'd better learn it too! What else can you say about Kōgetsu-in?

TT: One of the things that makes Kōgetsu-in stand out, as Kanda Kayū (famous shakuhachi researcher) notes, is that it has many original documents left from the Edo period. Even something like Icchōken's *honsoku* (rules) still remains in the Kōgetsu-in collection. These documents are presently located at the county facility called the Komonjyo-kan (Old Documents Hall). Abbot Kosuge from Hōsshin-ji in Tokyo, who is also the head of the Komusō Research Association, has written a whole book on Kōgetsu-in, because there are an unusual amount of documents from there.

KD: You mention in the flyer a shakuhachi that was unearthed from the Kōgetsu site. Can you tell us a little more about this?

TT: As mentioned in the flyer, this is a shakuhachi that was unearthed from the soil near the tomb of a *komusō* at the Kōgetsu-in Temple. It is not very clear when the shakuhachi in the *komusō* grave was found. We know Nakagawa Kinryū owned it. When he gave it to Kobayashi Shōmei (a shakuhachi maker who lives in Kokubunji, Tokyo, and is well-known for his long shakuhachi) in order for him to restore it, it was still full of dirt. It took Shōmei a year to clear the dirt off and to do *fuki-urushi*, which means rubbing diluted *urushi* into the bamboo grain by wiping it many, many times. This technique leaves the *urushi* to be absorbed by the fibres till they are saturated with *urushi*.

KD: That is fascinating! Do you have an idea of the age of the shakuhachi?

TT: Not really. But we believe it is from before the abolition of the temple.



*Shakuhachi discovered at Kōgetsu-in*

KD: Have there been any initiatives taken to change the image of this place that is so important to shakuhachi history?

TT: In the beginning of the 1960s, efforts were made to change the image of this unpopular piece of land. A monument was erected in memory of the *komusō*, and a ceremony was held there to which Jin Nyodo came to perform in 1960 and 1961. They wanted to show that this is not such a scary place. But this initiative was discontinued. Decades after Jin's performances, activities began to happen again. About six or seven years ago a gathering was held, where Abbot Kosuge (head of the Komusō Research Association) and other executives were present to appeal for the importance of this place. Two years prior to that, Kosuge, along with members of the Komusō Research Association, appealed to the former mayor about the significance of this place and even submitted a petition. We all dreamed of preserving the place in some form and creating a shakuhachi centre. But the city's response was extremely negative, saying this should be done privately and they would not provide any assistance. If someone could have bought the grounds of Kōgetsu-in, which would then enable us to create a facility for shakuhachi aficionados, that would obviously have been the best solution. The idea of someone buying and doing something has come up several times over the years. But it was never realised. For several decades the land of Kōgetsu-in was owned by an elderly medical doctor - he may have inherited it from his parents. He finally decided to somehow deal with the place during his own lifetime. Two years ago he reached an agreement with a real estate agent, and it was decided to develop the land into a residential area.

I'm an abbot at a Buddhist temple too, but my sect is different, so having something like that facility connected to my temple wasn't possible. So strictly speaking, I could only do something based on my personal interest in playing the shakuhachi, with my own money. However, I missed that chance and we have ended up in this situation. Of course I was disappointed, but what was left was the memorial monument, in front of which Jin Nyodo played, and about five ancient *komusō* tombstones. So we decided that these need to be relocated somewhere. As for the selection of the location, Abbot Kosuge suggested a temple from the Edo period of the same religious group. So this is why we are moving the tombstones and the monument to a temple called Tensō-ji, also in Yanagawa. There were already five *komusō* graves at Tensō-ji, so we will be adding those from Kōgetsu-in to already existing graves.

KD: It's really hard when there is so much money involved. Moving forward, what are your plans for Yanagawa and the graves at Tensō-ji?

TT: Firstly, we have to move the tombstones and the monument. We would like to have the names of all the people who donated and helped this preservation inscribed on a plaque on site. The people who donated will also be invited to the commemoration concert. Jin Rei, the grandson of Jin Nyodo will come and play in front of the stone his grandfather played in front of. We hope to make this an annual event.



Jin Nyodo playing at Kōgetsu-in graves in 1960



Gravestones

Our dream is for this place to become a hosting location for events. Why not a festival like the World Shakuhachi Festival one day? If we can welcome shakuhachi people from all over the world, our dreams for this place will come true.

HS: In Japan, Kyoto and Tokyo tend to get the spotlight, but there are also great places in Hakata and Fukuoka. We don't have Myōan-ji like Kyoto has. But we believe this will be an important testimony to a rural *komusō* temples and its activities.

KD: Well, we have to work together to make your dreams come true! Is there anything else you would like to say to our readers?

TT: I would like to get feedback from the perspective of foreigners interested in shakuhachi: What kind of place would be interesting for you to come to? Should there be a roofed place to sit so you can play? Or is just the cemetery with the *komusō* graves enough? Is it important to offer more than what can be seen within the temple grounds?

HS: Yes, we were wondering about that. Yanagawa is a major tourist attraction for Fukuoka Prefecture because of its waterways. You can take boat rides along the waterways. Yanagawa is only an hour by train from Hakata, where there is a Shinkansen station. We were wondering if sites of interest for tourists would be important too. We will, as a minimum, make English or Chinese language guidebooks and leaflets, but I wonder what else is needed?

TT: I also have a great collection of old shakuhachi. Maybe people could come and try these. A space where we can play together would be the best. Playing the unearthed shakuhachi could be part of the experience to come. We hope people will find the story of Kōgetsu-in interesting, and maybe consider coming down here.

We hope the shakuhachi community can come together and create something like a festival here. If you can, please support our effort to collect funds for moving the tombs and please support us. Thank you very much.

KD: Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. ☺

*Ed: more on Icchoken temple:*  
[https://www.icchoken.jp/eng\\_index.html](https://www.icchoken.jp/eng_index.html)

# Join Us in Creating a New Sacred Ground for Shakuhachi Lovers

The komusō shakuhachi "Kogetsu" unearthed from the Kogetsuin site

A Heartfelt Invitation from the Yanagawa Kogetsuin Commemoration Society

## Reviving the Shakuhachi Legacy in Yanagawa

In the historic city of Yanagawa, Fukuoka Prefecture, stood Kogetsuin Temple, a sanctuary for komuso monks during the Edo period. Sadly, two years ago, this sacred land was sold for residential development. The Yanagawa Kogetsuin Commemoration Society is dedicated to preserving its legacy by relocating the commemorative monument and the gravestones of the komuso monks to Tensoji Temple, a historic site deeply connected to this heritage.



The Kogetsuin site before it was developed into residential land

The shakuhachi, an instrument embodying the spirit of Zen Buddhism, has captivated hearts worldwide with its profound history and versatile expressiveness. We envision Yanagawa as a global gathering place a new sacred ground for shakuhachi enthusiasts. By relocating the monument, we aim to honor its legacy and create a space where lovers of this timeless instrument can connect and celebrate.

## Your Support Brings This Vision to Life

We humbly invite you to join us in this meaningful endeavor. Your generous donations will support the relocation of the monument, the unveiling ceremony, and a dedicatory concert. As a token of our gratitude, the names of all donors will be inscribed on a commemorative plaque at the site, and you will be invited to attend the unveiling ceremony and its accompanying concert.

Please spread the word to fellow shakuhachi enthusiasts. With your support and the collective efforts of many, we can create a new chapter for the shakuhachi in Yanagawa a place where its spirit will resonate for generations to come.

## How to Contribute

Donations are 5,000 yen per unit, and multiple units are welcome. Please contact:

### Japan Contact:

Representative: Toru Takei

Yanagawa Kogetsuin Memorial Association

Address: 81 Yoshitomi-machi, Yanagawa City, Fukuoka Prefecture

Email: take1fuyou@icloud.com



### International Contact:

Seikan Hagi

Email: hagiograph@icloud.com



**PayPal Donations:** hagiograph@icloud.com

For the latest updates, please visit

### Instagram:

[https://www.instagram.com/yanagawa\\_kogetsuin\\_kenshokai](https://www.instagram.com/yanagawa_kogetsuin_kenshokai)



*The sound of the shakuhachi is the soul's resonance, echoing through time. Please join us in preserving its legacy.*

# HARVESTING THE HOLLOW: THE ART OF MAKING SHAKUHACHI (PART I)

An Interview with José Vargas, by Ramon Humet

## Terminology:

*urushi* - Japanese lacquer

*ji* - Plaster made with clay powder, *urushi* and water, used to shape the bore of the flute

*jiari* - a flute with *ji*

*jinashi* - a flute without *ji*

*utaguchi* - mouthpiece

*ikigaeshi* - a small ledge where the chin rests

Ramon Humet: Tell us about your beginnings.

José Vargas: I listened to shakuhachi for the first time in the 1980s and began to play it in the late 1990s. There were two reasons I started making flutes. One, instruments were expensive and hard to find. The second was that I wanted to play long flutes. Someone told me that with my hands I couldn't play a 2.6. So I started experimenting with PVC pipes, and I realized I could play a 2.6 because, being a guitarist, I can stretch my hand much further. In fact, I've reached 3.3 and, probably with effort, I could get to 3.4.

RH You started with PVC. How does the material affect the sound of the shakuhachi? How important is the material compared to the morphology?.

JV Actually, what you're building is a hollow space, a container where the air vibrates. So the material has a subjective influence. At the London World Shakuhachi Festival, there was a workshop where the *sensei* made us listen to a PVC shakuhachi and a bamboo one, blindfolded...

RH Could you tell the difference?

JV It depends on how he played - he could trick you! He could play the PVC shakuhachi with so much air that it sounded like a *jinashi*.



José Vargas

RH But at a certain level, a great performer would notice the difference, right?

JV They say that even the oscilloscopes can't distinguish the material, if the bore has the same shape. But the feeling, that's another story. The point is, you don't relate to plastic the same way you do to bamboo. Bamboo is a living material, it has character, which PVC or metal doesn't. But what matters is the inside of the bamboo, not the outside. *Jiari* allows for a certain control over the process that you don't have with *jinashi*. Keep in mind that, at certain points, a tenth of a millimeter can make a huge difference. That's why a *jiari* instrument has two parts, so you can work the interior more precisely.

RH Isn't that for easier transport?

JV There's no problem transporting a 55 cm flute. Even the 1.6, which is smaller, is made in two pieces. It's because when applying the *ji*, you have more control than if it's one piece. But, of course, in a *jiari*, the air doesn't touch the bamboo. Paradoxically, it's still considered a bamboo instrument.

## *Jinashi* making is thrilling. Sometimes the bamboo doesn't want to be a flute

RH When you come across bad bamboo, do you discard it? Can it be corrected?

JV For us here in Europe, getting bamboo is very difficult, so we have to make use of what we have. But until the construction process is fairly advanced, you can't really know the quality of the bamboo. It's like a melon—you don't know what it's like until you open it.

RH Of course, of course, it's like a melon!

JV *Jinashi* making is thrilling. Sometimes it goes well from the start, and you can tell it will be good, but other times the bamboo doesn't want to be a flute. Each bamboo is different.

RH Okay, before we dive into technical construction aspects, tell us about your teachers: Tanaka Koumei, Atsuya Okuda...

JV I started with the basics with Antonio Olías in Madrid. I also took a few classes with Horacio Curti at a workshop in Gredos. Later in Japan, I had lessons with Tanaka Koumei *sensei* (*Chiku Mei Sha*), and Okuda *sensei*. I keep great memories of all of them.

RH But you learned construction with Kodama...

JV There came a point when I realized that to learn construction, I had to go to Japan. I tried contacting some makers. At that time, the only thing I found was a course John Neptune offered in Mejiro [a shakuhachi shop in Tokyo], a two-day workshop. Later, through Kiku Day, I managed to contact Kodama Hiroyuki.

RH Chiku Za?

JV Yes, he was also known as Chiku Za. I contacted him by email. Then he saw that we could communicate and I went to his place for five days. I went there with the initial idea of learning construction, but he also gave me lessons in playing.



*Kodama Hiroyuki sensei and José Vargas*

RH Did you study in his workshop?

JV Yes, at his home. For several years, I would go to his home, which was very important. Because it's not only about learning an instrument; it's also about living with people, living with a Japanese family. It's a way of connecting with Japan on another level.

RH And what memories do you have of that experience?

JV The personal treatment. Kodama *sensei* is a very exceptional person. He opened a very important door for me.

## When you play the shakuhachi, your breathing changes, and thus life changes.

RH In 2014, Etsuzan Fujiyoshi gave you the name Seizan, 'The Western Mountain'. What does this naming mean to you?

JV The third time I went to Japan, I came into contact with Fujiyoshi *sensei*, whom I'd heard in his recordings, and I started taking lessons from him. After four years, I constructed a *jinashi* flute for him, also I wrote some transcriptions of Spanish popular music for shakuhachi. I tried to be a diligent student.

RH And he gave you the name 'The Western Mountain'.

JV Well you see, the *kanji* for 'West' also means 'Spain'.

RH Ah, that's wonderful!

JV I didn't expect it, honestly. When I arrived, he held a ceremony, gave me papers, the whole process. For the first time, I felt a sense of belonging to a school, and the responsibility. But, as a maker, I tried to receive lessons from as many teachers as possible, to know about the different schools and their needs.

RH Some schools approach the shakuhachi purely spiritually, while others emphasize its musical value. How do you experience the shakuhachi?

JV When you play the shakuhachi, your breathing changes, and thus life changes. It's a very simple practice that directly affects life.

RH Let's talk about construction techniques. In my village [in Spain], there's a bamboo forest, and as an experiment, I harvested some bamboo and made this shakuhachi [shows a *jinashi*], which is very poor quality, by the way [laughs]. Is this Madaké type?

JV Let's take a closer look at the node... Hmm... well, it seems like a *Phyllostachys*.

RH What is *Phyllostachys*?

JV There are more than two hundred species of bamboo, and several families, and *Phyllostachys* is one of them.

RH Why is *Madaké* so prized for making shakuhachi?

JV Mainly because of the spacing of the nodes.

RH Ah, and that probably affects the hole placement?

JV That's one reason, but not the only one. The inside of the shakuhachi has a reverse conical shape—it narrows to a certain point, up to the node below the first hole. Then it widens, and you have to file it with a rasp to achieve a double-cone shape.



Harvested *Madaké* bamboo

RH So the node spacing in *Madaké*?

JV There are two aspects of *Madaké*: it's very hard and durable, and it has a proper proportion of nodes.

RH And the thickness—how does that affect it?

JV There's an ideal ratio between length and inner diameter. When the proportion is wider relative to length, we call it a wide bore; it favours the first octave but makes the second octave more difficult. The opposite is narrow bore. The proportion ranges between roughly 1:28 and 1:32.

RH But 1:28 or 1:32—ratio of what?

JV It's the ratio of inner diameter to length.

RH So, the longer the instrument, the ratio will vary!

JV Ideally, long instruments tend to be wider, of course.

RH You live in Madrid - you don't have bamboo forests in Retiro Park [laughs]. How do you get bamboo? Do you go to Japan? Buy it?

JV Either I go to Japan and buy or harvest it, or I order it from another maker who sells bamboo and ships it to me. Years ago, I planted bamboo on a plot in the Sierra de Gredos [mountain range in central Spain].

RH Ah, that's beautiful.

JV It's ideal. This year, a few have grown enough to make a 2.6 or 2.7. But I'll have to wait. When harvesting bamboo, you don't harvest first-year shoots. Ideal bamboo is two years old. RH Because first-year bamboo is too tender...

JV Exactly. You can tell immediately from its bright emerald green colour. It's better to wait until it's two years old. More stable.

RH And how do you harvest it?

*Next two pages: José Vargas working in his studio*





JV It's hard to remove the roots; it's a very hard root ball. The connection point to the rhizome is fairly thick. I use a chisel with a long handle, seven cm wide, and hit it with a mallet to cut exactly where I want. Then after harvesting, each bamboo has a root ball with soil, which you have to carry to the car, maybe a kilometre away. You're lucky if you harvest ten in one day.

RH When do you clean it, before or after drying?

JV First, I clean it with a pressure hose to remove the dirt and mud and expose the roots. Then I trim the roots, leaving just a little around.

RH Do you cut the roots with a saw?

JV An electric saw and pliers for the individual roots. It's laborious; harvesting takes around twenty minutes, cleaning one to two hours.

RH So the next step is drying the bamboo?

JV No. First, there's a process called *abura nuki*, which means 'removing oil'. [*abura* = oil, *nuki* = out.] You pass the bamboo near embers and wipe off the oil with a cloth. This is done with freshly harvested bamboo. The green grass-like colour of the plant turns pale green. It speeds up drying. Then it goes out to the winter sun—never Spanish summer sun.

RH The Spanish sun is brutal!



*Removing the oil [abura nuki]*

JV Autumn or winter sun. Rotate it a little every day, cover at night or when it rains. About fifteen days later, it turns yellow and drying is done. Then it needs a curing period of one to two years.

## When a bamboo cracks... the sound is incredible!

RH Is curing different from drying?

JV Yes, curing for two years gives more stability. Especially because Madrid is bamboo's number one enemy - the climate here is so dry! One in twenty will crack. Sure, it can be repaired, but it's a lot of work. The bamboo has different tensions and moisture in different parts. When it dries, the various thicknesses dry at different speeds. That creates tensions, and when a bamboo cracks... the sound is incredible! 

## End of Part I

Here ends the 1st part of this interview. In the next issue we will publish the 2nd part, where José Vargas will explain technical aspects of the construction: the nodes, the placement of the holes, modifying the shape of the bamboo, the tools, the *utaguchi*, the workshops...

Stay tuned!

# CONTRASTING APPROACHES TO MAKING SHAKUHACHI

by Clive Joseph Dunkley

When I started playing shakuhachi in the 1980s it was inevitable that I would want to try making something similar. Until then I had been making harpsichords and clavichords, which are essentially mechanical instruments using levers, pivots and fine cabinet making skills. Shakuhachi are completely different and follow the universal behaviour of air vibrating in tubes, though all woodwind vary according to their bore design and reed type.

Having seen Japanese shakuhachi which were produced on a lathe like European woodwind, I made several of the smaller sizes from boxwood, a beautiful hardwood much used in the eighteenth century (see the top five flutes in the photo and the close-up). My teacher was Shozan Kimura and with measurements taken from his instruments and my own Tom Deaver 1.8 shaku, I drew up bore profiles to understand their design concept. Steel reamers were made for the bore of the upper and lower joints and the different instruments were scaled accordingly.

The question arose of how to shape the outside, which is not relevant when using bamboo. There's a long tradition of copying the form of a product when using a new material: think of the early use of plastics, copying the colour and texture of leather or wood. For one of my instruments I turned wooden nodes on the lathe as a tribute to bamboo, then made narrow longitudinal facets or striations with a cabinet scraper (see the photos). This one has a Tozan/Meian style *utaguchi* inlay and was acid stained to a dark brown.

My more usual design was to leave the body smooth and polished to show the natural grain and colour of the wood, with a gentle flare towards the foot. This shape can be seen with some Renaissance recorders so it is not an original idea. I could have experimented with many more elaborate design ideas, but would that align with the ethos of the shakuhachi?

Why did I bother when I could have bought traditional bamboo ones from Japan? Firstly, it would have been very expensive, but also makers want to understand how instruments function and to have the engaging experience of construction, with all the many variables and choices that need to be made. Root-end *madaké* stock was not easily available and living in Japan to learn shakuhachi making was not an option for me. Those boxwood instruments are decades old now, free of splits and I still enjoy playing them.

Parallel with those lathe turned instruments I became interested in making larger one-piece bamboo ones called *hotchiku* (literally dharma bamboo, also *hochiku*, *hocchiku*) or *ji-nashi* (without filler). These are made with a different philosophical intention, where we want the bamboo to speak for itself, to hear its native voice with minimal intervention, though some makers do use small amounts of filler to tune particular notes. So the nodes are removed from the inside and the bore is smoothed to some degree, then the outside is cleaned up and the *utaguchi* is cut. For making the finger holes I like the immediacy and drama of burning them with a very hot iron. If they are made undersized most of the char is removed in the tuning process. As you can see from the bottom seven instruments in the photo and the close-up, the *utaguchi* are mostly left without inlay, following the idea of simplicity. I used thin coloured lacquer to seal the inside, or linseed oil on some occasions. Because there is no filler in the bore they can expand and contract with the seasons and after several decades they have not split.

When looking at a likely piece of bamboo stock one needs to consider the nodes in relation to the finger hole positions and also the ratio of the internal diameter to the total length. Very thin instruments have a weak lower register and conversely, the upper register is more difficult with a larger bore diameter. With care regarding the above, two or three instruments of different sizes can be made from one length of bamboo.



When the instrument is tuned the process begins of getting to know its character and capabilities and we can expect more variability than in the more standardised (*ji-ari*, filler shaped or caste bore) instruments. How does each note in the first register respond? What is the dynamic range? Are there tuning anomalies in the second register? With longer instruments the third register may have interesting potential. Be prepared to modify standard fingerings.

Inspired by photos of Watazumi's heroically large instruments I found a piece of bamboo 1.2m long with an internal diameter of 50 to 60mm. After cutting the *utaguchi* the *Ro* sounded a low C, reminiscent of a distant foghorn, but when I calculated the finger hole positions they were too wide to reach, though I did briefly consider alternative fingers and even toes! As I didn't want to spoil the bamboo with failed experiments I decided to keep it as a *Robuki* instrument [Ed: a flute for just playing low *Ro* notes]. Later I found it made an interesting didjeridoo with the addition of a beeswax mouthpiece.





In conclusion, though not a professional maker of shakuhachi, I have found the experience has added to my enjoyment of playing them. It has also increased my understanding of making Baroque flutes and recorders. They have a similar bore profile that is parallel for the top fifth, tapering to the first finger hole at the bottom then flaring to the end, sometimes called a chambered bore. One can learn about 'bore perturbation curves' and 'end correction', but it is a fascinating thought that long before modern technology, makers all over the world were using practical, empirical methods to make fine instruments. ☺

# “YŪKI” (COURAGE)

for solo *shakuhachi*

by Jim Franklin



## Explanatory notes

(Please note that the title is ‘Yūki’, 勇氣, ‘courage’; not ‘yuki’, 雪, ‘snow’)

I encourage you to find the courage to engage with deep *meri* tones...

## Notation

Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshukan (KSK) *katakana* fingering designations are employed in the score. Alternative fingerings applicable to some other schools (e.g. Chikuho) are given; the performer may choose freely which variant to use. A transcription in western notation, but including the *katakana* symbols, is also provided.

The columns of the *katakana* score correspond to the systems of the western score. The western score assumes an instrument of length 1.8 *shaku*. The reference recording was also recorded with a 1.8 instrument.

## Pedagogical aspects

The melodic line of this piece is fairly simple and approachable, making it suitable for early-training students who can already produce a good range of sounds on the instrument. The differentiation within this melodic line, with multiple *kari* and *meri* versions of the same pitches but with differing timbres, and with alternative articulations of various tones, makes this piece more challenging than it may initially seem. It is thus potentially of interest also to intermediate and advanced players.

## Assumed skills:

- Ability to play all *kari* tones in *otsu*, and up to *re* in *kan*;
- Some ability to play *meri* tones in *otsu* and the lower half of *kan*;
- Familiarity with the *katakana* syllabary in general for naming of tones, and in particular with the symbols used by KSK.

**Aims:**

- to develop and deepen the ability to play *meri* tones, especially deep *meri* tones (see below).
- to gain a deeper appreciation of the differing timbres between *kari* and *meri* variants of the same pitches, and of the timbral qualities of diverse finger articulations on various tones.

**Background**

While the pitches of *meri* tones are inherently variable, within KSK there is a tendency for 'simple' or 'single'-*meri* tones to be played deeper than their nearest corresponding western equal-tempered pitch equivalent (indicated in the fingering chart). Despite this variability, Yokoyama-*sensei* insisted on accuracy of what he termed the 'double-*meri* tones' (often also called *dai meri*), which should match up with the pitch of next-lower *kari* tone. For instance, *tsu dai meri* should match the pitch of *ro*, and *ro dai meri* should match the pitch of *ri*. These correspondences can be seen in the fingering chart, where multiple fingerings (*meri* and *kari*) produce the same pitch.

While not every school insists on such correspondences, if they are incorporated into one's playing, especially of *honkyoku*, they have a significant effect on the development of a formal line through a piece. (I discuss this in detail in Chapter 3 of my book, *Densokugaku: Shakuhachi, Composition, Electronics*, Vision Edition 2024, demonstrating the concept through analyses of pieces from the KSK and Chikuho repertoires. I believe that the idea can be applied to other schools as well.)

Accordingly, "Yūki" is offered as a training ground for discovering and developing one's technique for such pitch correspondences involving deep *meri* tones, including for players whose schools do not insist on these correspondences.

**Playing suggestions**

- In this piece, it is not necessary to attempt to produce a huge, voluminous sound. A middle dynamic is best, and the intention should be to create a clear, stable sound, rather than a loud one.
- The *meri* tones will always be much softer than the *kari* tones. Never attempt to force the volume of the *meri* tones; play them in a very relaxed fashion, allowing them to be soft (and sometimes very soft). If you attempt, even unconsciously, to play them loudly, you will push their pitches upwards or blow them away totally. This is counterproductive for this piece, and for almost all other pieces.
- If you find certain tones or combinations difficult, isolate them as small tone cells, and practice these cells very slowly, possibly with extended glides between the tones, until you have found the required pitch. You can also try playing these cells backwards. After gaining facility with the difficult cells, you can speed up the glides as necessary, and play the entire phrases.

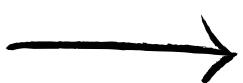
- In this piece, in almost all cases a *kari* tone with the intended pitch of a deep *meri* tone occurs just before that *meri* tone (possibly in the previous phrase). Attempt to identify these *kari* tones; they are the 'reference' tones which you should attempt to remember aurally as the pitch for which you are aiming in the *meri* tone. If you can read western notation, the western score will help you to find these 'reference' *kari* tones.

- The phrases at the end of columns/systems 5 and 8 incorporate *ro dai meri* in the *kan* octave. This is one of the most difficult of all the *meri* tones of the shakuhachi. If you have trouble with this tone (and *everyone* has trouble with it!), try to relax and gradually let the pitch wander down until you meet the pitch of *ri*. As a stepping-stone, it is also possible initially to play these two phrases in *otsu* rather than *kan*. But if you do this, don't be satisfied with *otsu*; as soon as you manage them in that octave, shift to playing them in *kan*.

-In general, please avoid the temptation to replace a potentially difficult *meri* tone with an easier *kari* one. The point of this piece is to engage with the difficult, deep *meri* tones, and with the variety of timbres which they offer. (Don't forget that a tone on the shakuhachi is more than simply a pitch; it is a complex, tangled combination and interaction of pitch, inflection, articulation, timbre, dynamics and texture.)

In conclusion: please be courageous! Perseverance will bear fruit.

Jim Franklin, August 2025



## Audio link

YÜKİ (courage) for Shakuhanchi © Jim Franklin 2025

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Yūki (Courage) for shakuhachi

© Jim Franklin

2025

# Kyoku

Araki Kodo VI

BAMBOO  
Autumn/Winter 2023



# Twilight

Bronwyn Kirkpatrick

BAMBOO  
Spring/Summer 2024



# Alone

Elizabeth Brown

BAMBOO  
Autumn/Winter 2024



# Kame no shirabe

Hélène Seiyu Codjo

BAMBOO  
Spring/Summer 2025



# GUNNAR JINMEI LINDER, CONGRATULATIONS!

We are happy to say Gunnar *Jinmei* Linder, performer and teacher of Kinko-ryū/Chikumeisha style of shakuhachi, guest in many of our ESS events and highly appreciated advisor to our society since 2008, was awarded by the Japanese government in November 2025 the...

## **Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette**



Gunnar *Jinmei* Linder, is associate professor at Stockholm University's Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

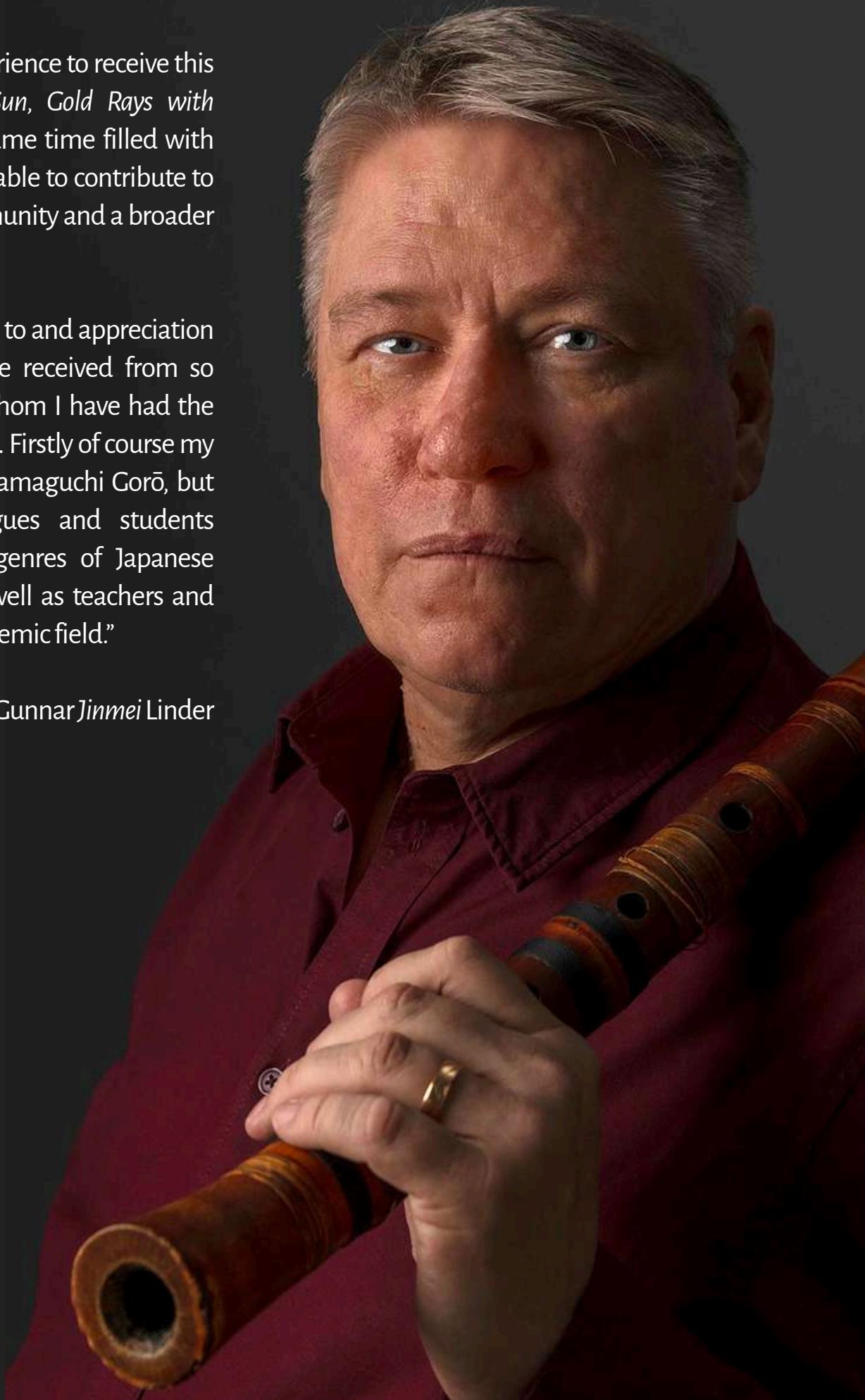
Award received for his contributions to promoting academic and cultural exchange between Japan and Sweden. His work includes promoting Japanese music and culture through research, teaching, and performances as a shakuhachi player.

*Next page: Gunnar Jinmei Linder*

“It is a humbling experience to receive this *Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette*. I am at the same time filled with joy over having been able to contribute to the shakuhachi community and a broader public.

I feel a deep gratitude to and appreciation of the support I have received from so many people, with whom I have had the fortune to be involved. Firstly of course my shakuhachi teacher Yamaguchi Gorō, but also friends, colleagues and students involved in various genres of Japanese performative art, as well as teachers and colleagues in the academic field.”

—Gunnar *Jinmei* Linder



# IN MEMORY – MIURA RYUHO

by Thorsten Knaub



With great sadness we announce the loss of Miura Ryuho, who was one of the great shakuhachi craftsmen of the last 40 years. Miura pioneered and perfected a new approach to *jiari* shakuhachi making and can be credited with developing a contemporary *jiari* flute.

Miura Tatsumi was born in Akita City, Northern Japan in 1952. He had his first encounter with the shakuhachi when about 10 years old, hearing someone playing *minyō* shakuhachi in the street. A few years later he heard the well-known shakuhachi player Minoru Muraoka accompanying Misora Hibari on the song “Yawara”. But it took one more meeting to finally discover his passion for making too – having bought a cheap shakuhachi and hearing shakuhachi sounds he knocked at the door and met his first teacher, Ōse Shōun of the Kinko school, who was also a shakuhachi maker. There he discovered the tools of the trade and although he was not taught making by Ōse, he began exploring the making process by himself.

After high-school Miura started working for Nippon Gakki (now Yamaha Cooperation) in Hamamatsu. He was introduced to Yokoyama Ranpo nearby living in Shimizu City, and continued studying playing with him and subsequently with Ranpo’s son Yokoyama Katsuya in Tokyo. Ranpo was of course a famous maker himself at that time, but he would not teach making. After some time Miura returned to Akita City, where he established his own shakuhachi teaching studio, and began performing and repairing shakuhachi. Receiving instruments from many different makers, he would study them and continue his experiments making longer shakuhachi.

Returning to Tokyo about seven years later, he dedicated most of his time to developing his unique way to craft shakuhachi and, working alongside Yokoyama Katsuya, he improved his methods and evolved his style of shakuhachi making further. Inspired by the saxophone family with its various different pitches and keys, he worked out bore profiles, making processes and specialised set of tools for the *jiari* shakuhachi to be able to craft instruments able to express the demanding needs of Yokoyama Katsuya’s dynamic playing style and interpretation of the *honkyoku* repertoire. In particular Miura was perfecting the way to make longer flutes (up to 3.1 or even 3.7) to have a similar response, attack and handling as the standard lengths (eg 1.8).

In the following years, working between his shakuhachi making studios in Noshiro (Akita) and Tokyo, he became arguably one of the most sought after craftsmen of shakuhachi of his generation. His order list was long and it was not uncommon to wait for several years to receive the finished instrument, let alone if one was ‘foolish’ enough to order the ‘high or highest level’, which for a perfectionist like Miura meant even higher attention to every detail of the making process, resulting in even longer delivery times.

Miura's shakuhachi are often characterised by having "that honkyoku sound" and at the same time a contemporary playability. Given the close working relationship, it is maybe no surprise that his flutes are widely appreciated and used by Yokoyama lineage players (Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan, Chikushinkai, Dokyoku), but his craft stretches beyond a particular school or style and his instruments are played by other contemporary performers too (eg Fujiwara Dozan).

Miura was also an accomplished *honkyoku* and *sankyo* player, and in recent years very active as both player and teacher. He was on the board of directors of the Akita Sankyo Society and a part-time instructor at Hirosaki University's Education department.

On a personal note – Miura Ryuho was also my shakuhachi making teacher whom I initially met in his Tokyo studio – a small flat full of tools and bamboo on the way to Haneda. I owe him a great debt for leading me through the shakuhachi making processes he had developed. I have a cherished memory, when later taking lessons in his Akita studio, of witnessing his dedication to shakuhachi making and also his happiness to share, albeit cautiously, some of the 'secrets' he developed. But also in the many years after he was generous with his advice, in particular when he felt I progressed in my understanding and asked the right questions.

He will be not only greatly missed by his family and friends, but by the shakuhachi community too. The sound of his flutes remains. It will stay with us as long as we are able to blow. ☺



Miura Ryuho in his Akita studio using the 'center tool' to check the *nakatsugi* cut. Summer 2019 (Photo: Thorsten Knaub)

# TRIBUTE TO KEISUKE ZENYOJI SENSEI

by César Viana

Keisuke Zenyoji *sensei* has recently been named a Living National Treasure of Japan. I have often wondered how this recognition had not come much earlier, for in my view he has long embodied the very spirit of that honour.

Zenyoji *sensei* is not merely a shakuhachi player — he is a complete musician. *Honkyoku* is written repertoire, comparable in its demands to Western classical music. It requires not only profound technical mastery but also an exceptional degree of musical intelligence and creativity to make it truly compelling. Only extraordinary interpreters can transcend its meditative dimension and reveal its artistic depth.

Zenyoji *sensei* is one of those rare performers who can create moments of sublime beauty, where technical challenges seem to vanish, giving way to pure spirituality and an intimate emotional connection with the listener. His art unites aesthetics, technique, and emotion — or, perhaps more aptly, beauty, intelligence, and spirituality. Even though he performs exclusively traditional repertoire, each of his performances is utterly unique, radiating freshness and depth.

At the same time, Zenyoji *sensei* devotes much of his life to teaching, guiding new generations of shakuhachi players. He does so not only as a profession but as a vocation — with patience, dedication, meticulous attention to detail, and a deep sense of friendship.

**Someone asked him for advice about pursuing a career as a shakuhachi soloist. His only answer was: “Gratitude — for everything you receive along your path.”**

I recall that once, during the ESS Summer School in Lisbon, someone asked him for advice about pursuing a career as a shakuhachi soloist. His only answer was: “Gratitude — for everything you receive along your path.”

And gratitude is precisely what I feel now: gratitude for having had the privilege of studying and working for so many years with such an extraordinary musician and human being. It is undoubtedly an honour for him to receive this distinction — yet, in truth, it is also the award itself that is honoured by being associated with his name.

**BIOGRAPHY:**

Mr Zenyoji is one of the most prominent shakuhachi performers both in Japan and around the world. Having been taught the art of *Komuso* shakuhachi by his father since age six, Zenyoji received his bachelor's and master's degree in shakuhachi from the Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music and acted as an assistant shakuhachi instructor at the University 1991 - 1996. He is also known as a performer preserving the *Nezasaha Kimpu-Ryu*, an original style of shakuhachi played in Hirosaki region of Aomori Prefecture. Mr Zenyoji has also written *Hajimete No Shakuhachi* (Shakuhachi Beginner's Manual) published by Ongaku No Tomosha in 2000. In July 2025 he was named as a Living National Treasure of Japan at the young age of 61.



Keisuke Zenyoji sensei

Lessons available:

<https://www.mejiro-japan.com/content/shakuhachi-playing-private-mr-zenyoji>

More on César Viana: <https://www.cesarviana.net/>

# KSK-EUROPE WORKSHOP IN BARCELONA

by Kakizakai Kaoru

I have a longstanding relationship with Barcelona - more than 25 years! - through my student Horacio Curti. He has invited me to that city for shakuhachi related events several times, from concerts to workshops and from recordings to European Shakuhachi Society summer schools.

My last visit was in May 2025, for a series of events organised by KSK Europe, L'Auditori-Barcelona Music Museum and ESMUC [Catalonia College of Music], and included a KSK-Europe workshop in Barcelona and two, almost entirely *honkyoku* music, concerts. One at the Fundació Toni Catany in Mallorca, and a second one at a beautiful location within Pedralbes monastery in Barcelona.

Before this visit, the last Barcelona event that I was part of took place nine years ago in pre-Covid times, and it felt wonderful to be able to go back to the same place, ESMUC, feeling almost the same as before Covid.

The two days of the KSK-EU event brought participants from Barcelona but also from different parts of Spain and Europe. People were extremely enthusiastic about the shakuhachi and its music. The other teachers present were Veronique Piron, Nina Haarer, Markus Guhe and Horacio Curti, and it felt wonderful to think that all of us were coming from the same line originating with Katsuya Yokoyama *sensei*.

I am very glad to know that Yokoyama *sensei*'s influence is now so widely spread to the world, and I am sure he would be delighted to know his music is loved by so many people. ☺



First row: Carlos Díez, Ariadna Torres, Kakizakai Kaoru, Hawwa Morales. Second row: Nina Haarer, Alexandra Krenzer, Veronique Piron, Rafael Castro, Diana Canqueiro. Third row: Horacio Curti (sitting), Ramon Humet, Miguel Venegas, Philippe Fontaine, Mathieu Robert, Gilbert Laudrin, José Grima, Markus Guhe.

Next page: photo collage of the KSK-Europe Workshop Barcelona 2025



## Experiences Of A Shakuhachi Student Chat Group

by Hawwa Morales

As a result of the workshop organized by KSK Europe at the ESMUC (Catalonia College Of Music) in Barcelona, several colleagues decided to keep in touch despite the distance, and we created an online chat group. As such, we are now a small but active community, with members spread between Spain and Germany, and with Spanish as the language of communication.

So far it has been a good experience; it allows us to share doubts, articles, information about activities, and recordings of our works, among other useful things. There is even one of us who has offered to act as a 'special reporter' and send us news of an event in which he was participating, and another colleague has organized an online meeting to practice a piece.

The good thing is that no one is obliged to do anything, we all contribute generously and it's a great way to maintain both study and friendship ties.

Contact: [hawwamorales@gmail.com](mailto:hawwamorales@gmail.com)

# WITH THE FINNISH UEDA RYU TO JAPAN | SEPTEMBER 2025

by Joke Verdoold

On a lousy day an announcement from Aaro Haavisto, for a trip to Japan with the Finnish *Ueda Ryu* group, caught my eye. Already for some years I'd been curious about *Ueda Ryu*. And missing out on the ESS Summer School in Finland, the decision was quickly made - let's find out if they will have not-Ueda-me along. And yes they did, my lousy day had ended. Now I've learned to love my unexpected rash decisions, because mostly they turn out right and very pleasant. But what to expect here? Aaro came quickly with a lot of information, all still subject to change. In the end it seemed it would be five Finnish guys and me making the whole trip, and two more participating in part of it. The schedule was nicely packed, but everything went along in a relaxed, flexible way.

When I arrived at Osaka Airport, they were already waiting and we went straight for our first shakuhachi lesson with Aaro's teacher, Tani *sensei*. Good that I had had a lesson with Aaro in advance, so I could participate without problems, already familiar with the specialities in notation and style.

Next morning started out with an ink painting workshop by Maruyama Koichi; a nice way to work at focus and concentration. Then our music experiences began for real; we were present at a rehearsal of the ensemble Koten Honkyoku Danpen and later had dinner with them. In spite of their different schools, the ensemble-players Tani Yasunori (*Ueda Ryu*), Kobayashi Reijun (student of Aoki Reibo), Kunimi Masanosuke (*Kinko Ryu*), Kawasaki Takahisa (student of Mitsuhashi Kifu) and Yamamoto Kanzan (*Ueda Ryu*) were excellent together, each using the strong points of their schools to enhance the total effect. For me that was a real surprise. I'd always been told that in Japan the different schools were not keen on intermixing. The result was stunning.



Rehearsal of Koten Honkyoku Danpen

After we'd had another lesson with Tani *sensei*, we went to visit the workshop of Kobayashi Ichijo. There we saw how his son, Reijun, who has now taken over his father's work, started the making of a shakuhachi from the very beginning. He showed us how to make the *utaguchi* and the *nakatsugi*, explaining what he was doing and why.

On our last day in Osaka, Shawn Head came to visit us at our apartment to show his flutes and give us a lesson. We visited an excellent four hour concert of the Ikuta koto school. Evening had fallen before we arrived at Ise, a magnificent house in traditional Japanese style, but fully modernized. Ise is a nice, touristy small town famous for its shrine, the Ise Jingu. It is the main shrine of Shinto and recognized as the most important cultural site in the whole of Japan. And in that shrine, we were going to perform a set of *Ueda-ryu* pieces, which we had so thoroughly rehearsed with Tani *sensei*.

But first we went on a hike up the mountain where the lore says that *Mukaiji* was created. And even if we didn't quite make it to the top (we'd started out too late), it felt good to play *Mukaiji* somewhere on that mountain.

At the shrine it was a real big event, with a lot of performances. We were very courteously received and accompanied to the inner shrine, to watch a private performance of *kagura* theater accompanied by *gagaku* music. We also were offered lunch, where we met with the *iemoto* of the *Ueda Ryu*, Tanabe Houei (a very nice man), with friendly words for everybody personally. We all played the *Ueda Ryu* pieces, together with a group of older *Ueda Ryu* students. It's quite an experience to sit all together on a big stage and play well, without even rehearsing once.



Conference room in Ise-shrine

Then it was time to relax at Yunoyama Onsen. I was staying at another hotel and had the *onsen* all to myself. I had excellent food, getting guidance in how to prepare and combine it in the best way. This was me doing my best to fit in as well as I could. And then I heard the guys were having fun taking their shakuhachi inside the *onsen* and playing in the water... they could well do that, as they had booked a private bath.

The next day we went to Nagoya. All our attention was now on the big concert. Six hours of the most beautiful music, traditional and modern, with so many excellent shakuhachi and koto musicians to enjoy that time flew.

And then off to Tokyo, this huge city, where it took some time to reach our apartment in Edogawa-ku. Tokyo never ceases to amaze me; just sitting in a corner and looking at passers-by is enough. But here too we had a full schedule. At Mejiro there were a lot of enticing shakuhachi and related things to look and try, so we all came away with something. And then there was the lesson with newly nominated national treasure Zenyoji Keisuke. Later we visited the Senshu workplace of shakuhachi maker Mitsuka Yukihiko, where not only could we try flutes at will, but all had a private lesson on technique with Fujiwara Dozan. My questions were about tone-colour, and I got some excellent suggestions about how to develop different shades of it. At the end he played a sublime *Kan Otsu* version for us.

At some point the group split up - some wanted to visit one of those huge shopping malls, but our photographer and I preferred to go to the Metropolitan Museum. Then we went on some old temple garden sightseeing, where I found a nice spot to improvise on my shakuhachi and be filmed. For some of the other visitors a treat to enjoy. We got together again in the evening at the family-house of Jin Rei, a beautiful house in traditional style, breathing shakuhachi. We played some shakuhachi together and then had a typical Japanese dinner. I came away refreshed by this relaxing environment. Full days - and for some of us full nights. With so many impressions we were all really tired, and decided to skip the last evening western-music concert.

The next day we should have rented a car and driven to Chichibu, but things didn't go as planned. With the international drivers license a passport has to be shown, but that was lost and now lay waiting to be picked up at Nagoya. Then a bag with shakuhachi's was forgotten in the metro.

So all we could do was go to Nagoya by train. The bag-owner luckily spoke Japanese and knew his way around, so he went off confidently to find the bag. Luckily the bag had a tracker and indeed was retrieved after some hours, at the same place where he had left it - nothing missing. For me, one of the miracles of Japan.

Our train trip became more beautiful by the minute, through green hills and mountains. After chaotic Tokyo I was breathing again. We arrived at a lovely little train station and walked to our apartment. Once more an old but state of the art refurbished house.

The next day we were picked up by a driver in a rented car. The driver was a cultural attaché in the friendship exchange between Finnish and Japanese cities, and also our tour guide. We started off to see a Buddhist temple in the Hakon mountains. During our visit there was a baptism ceremony.

Then we went to the only village in the region to visit a paper factory. Along the way I noted beautiful red flowers in full bloom between the trees. They were called spider-lilies. At the factory we could not only see how paper was made by hand, but we could also try it ourselves and all of us came home with a sheet.

Behind the factory was an open space surrounded by traditional samurai houses, where a village festival was going on: The Annual Festival Of The Spider Lilies. All kinds of performances, from Inca music to a Taiko group with *shinobue* and, very fitting, men in samurai costumes parading around. The festivities ended with the firing of a centuries-old cannon, with a huge amount of smoke at every shot. Then dinnertime again. Knowing Shabu-Shabu as a brand of sushi-restaurants in the Netherlands, I was surprised that *shabu-shabu* in Japan was a delicious fondue.

The next day we started with an interesting tour of a soy sauce factory, where we were invited to work the huge wooden barrels where the sauce was fermenting.

Then off to city hall, where we were received by the major and his officials. For the occasion I had arranged some Finnish folksongs in a *minyo* medley for four shakuhachi. Then off to a sake-brewery. We saw how sake was made and of course all bought some, to bring home as 'omiyage'.

Then we got a surprise: our tour-guide said we would have some tea with the sake-brewery owner's lady. He drove us up into the mountains, to the middle of nowhere. We ended up visiting a woman who owns and maintains a multitude of small cultural sites on the mountains in the neighborhood. Once inside we were spontaneously treated to a private concert by a *minyo* singer, plus traditional dancing. Afterwards, higher up at a stupendous site, an outdoor tea-ceremony was waiting for us. Aaro and I played the Finnish medley once more, while a video was made. It would be played on World Shakuhachi Day, October 8th.



Recording for World Shakuhachi Day

Then already the last day had come. Some of us still had their own things to do before flying back home, which left only two for the planned lesson with Kakizakai Kaoru *sensei*. ☺

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY SHAKUHACHI SOCIETY SWITZERLAND!

by Isabel *Unjakuryûgen* Lerchmüller

**Shakuhachi Gesellschaft Schweiz** – [chikuyusha.ch](http://chikuyusha.ch) – is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

With different workshops and events throughout the year, members and non-members have the opportunity to dive into various aspects of the shakuhachi. Shakuhachi Society Switzerland represents shakuhachi players in Switzerland. It is a section of the Japanese shakuhachi society *Zenkoku Chikuyûsha* and maintains ties with Japan.

The initiator of Shakuhachi Gesellschaft Schweiz was Andreas *Fuyû* Gutzwiller. After having studied shakuhachi with Araki Kodô V and Kawase Junsuke III at Wesleyan University and in Japan (*shihan* 1976), in 1980 he began teaching at the Musik-Akademie Basel, Switzerland. His students who have received a *shihan* from Zenkoku Chikuyûsha Tokyo are: Ueli *Fuyûru* Derendinger, Jürg *Fuyûzui* Zurmühle, Wolfgang *Fuyûgen* Hessler, Andrea *Fuyûan* Hofer and Ursula *Fuyûmi* Schmidiger. This is how the shakuhachi started to be taught also in Zürich, Luzern and Bern.

Meanwhile there are two 'younger' players who received a *shihan* from Zenkoku Chikuyûsha Tokyo: Maria Rosaria Marigen Visco, student of Wolfgang *Fuyûgen* Hessler; and Isabel *Unjakuryûgen* Lerchmüller, student of Ueli *Fuyûru* Derendinger. The Shakuhachi Society Switzerland is very happy that the tradition lives on. Events such as *Fukizome*, the annual concert, playing together and various *Robuki* are regularly featured on Shakuhachi Society Switzerland's programme.

We won't stop blowing and we hope for another twenty years! 🎉



Workshop in Switzerland with Yokota sensei

# EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCING IN SHAKUHACHI PRACTICE THROUGH TAE STEPS

by Yoshiki Ebisawa

## 1. Introduction: Encountering the Shakuhachi and TAE

My musical experience began entirely within Western classical traditions. From early childhood, I studied electone [electronic organ], then flute, piano, voice, trumpet and horn. At university, I specialized in music education and the interpretation of German Lieder. Until my mid-twenties, Japanese traditional music was nearly unknown to me.

In November 2019, however, I encountered the Shakuhachi, and almost simultaneously, **TAE (Thinking At the Edge)**. One day, I happened to hear a performance by the shakuhachi player Mamino Yorita on YouTube. The sound was unlike anything I had ever heard—raw, trembling, and alive. It was neither purely melodic nor purely noise; it seemed to breathe. That moment marked the beginning of my long engagement with the instrument, guided by the shakuhachi player, Akihiko Yamano.

The early period was full of bewilderment. Shakuhachi notation bears little resemblance to Western staff notation; rhythm and pitch are flexible, and interpretation depends heavily on the performer's sensibility.

This music breathes in silence and *ma* (間)—the temporal and spatial interval between sounds. Unlike Western rhythm, where time is counted, *ma* is deeply felt.

As I explored this world, I also began learning TAE, Eugene Gendlin's philosophical practice for generating thought from the edge of what is not yet known. TAE begins from **Felt Sense**—a bodily awareness of meaning before words. In this sense, shakuhachi playing and TAE share the same root: both seek to stay close to the living source of meaning.

This writing reflects on my shakuhachi experience through the sequence of TAE steps as a personal inquiry into how body, sound and language intertwine. The focus is on how a *Felt Sense* becomes audible as sound—how meaning carries forward through breath.

## 2. From Felt Sense to Expression (Steps 1–5)

TAE begins with the recognition of a vague, bodily sense of 'something'.

When I asked myself, "What is the bodily sense of playing shakuhachi?", a sentence arose almost on its own:

"The shakuhachi has an unfree freedom."

The paradox expresses the essence of my experience. The instrument is 'unfree' because of its physical simplicity: five finger holes, no mechanical keys, unstable pitch. Yet precisely through these constraints, an enormous field of 'freedom' opens up—through subtle variations of breath, embouchure, and finger motion.

In TAE, one distinguishes between ordinary meanings and felt meanings. The word *freedom*, in its ordinary sense, implies unrestricted movement; in its felt sense, it means *the space of responsiveness within limits*. Similarly, *noise* (雜音 / *zatsuon*) no longer means something to be eliminated, but the breath leakage, finger sounds, and imperfections that bring the tone to life.

Through these reflections, I began to sense that the shakuhachi sound is never perfectly stable. Its beauty lies in fluctuation (ゆらぎ / *yuragi*)—the gentle wavering where tone, air and silence intermingle. This fluctuation became the seed of the entire inquiry.

### 3. Seeing Patterns through Crossing (Steps 6–9)

The next step of TAE deepens the inquiry by gathering multiple sides of the Felt Sense and crossing them—placing them in dialogue to reveal hidden relations.

One side was my Western background: the body that counts, measures and controls. Another was the non-rational, fragile world of shakuhachi tone, where 'mistakes' become expressions. A third was the realization that the instrument's very *awkwardness* generates possibility.

From these crossings, several patterns emerged:

1. **Constraint and openness co-exist.** The tension between *unfreedom* and *freedom* is not a contradiction but a generative field.
2. **Non-rational beauty.** What Western logic might call imperfection—unstable pitch, breath noise—creates unique expressive depth.
3. **Freedom through difficulty.** The resistance of bamboo, the variability between bamboo flutes, and the struggle to produce tone all become sources of individuality.
4. **Fluctuation as a mode of knowing.** The in-between vibration—neither sound nor silence—holds implicit meaning.

Writing freely from these patterns, I realized that what I valued most was not mastery, but the moment when instability becomes alive. The sound breathes between order and disorder. The 'unfree freedom' is a dynamic balance, a living negotiation between control and release.

### 4. Concept Integration (Steps 10–12)

In later steps, TAE encourages forming concepts from within one's own lived process.

Out of my reflections, three central terms emerged:

- **O: Fluctuation (ゆらぎ / *yuragi*)**—the shimmering instability where new sound begins.
- **P: Sign (兆し / *kizashi*)**—the faint direction that appears within fluctuation; a subtle 'calling forward.'
- **Q: Impulse (衝動 / *shōdō*)**—the bodily response that acts before reasoning.

These three were not separate stages but co-arising movements.

**Fluctuation (O)** opens the field; within it, a **Sign (P)** becomes perceptible; following it, an **Impulse (Q)** moves toward realization.

Further reflection brought two additional concepts:

- **R: Deviation (逸脱 / itsudatsu)** — the intentional or spontaneous shift that breaks away from familiar patterns.
- **S: Order (秩序 / chitsujo)** — not an imposed rule but an emergent coherence arising from within the process.

Together, these formed a conceptual system expressed as:

**Fluctuation (ゆらぎ)** calls forth a **Sign (兆し)**, carries an **Impulse (衝動)**, expands through **Deviation (逸脱)**, and nurtures **Order (秩序)**.

This sequence describes how expression unfolds from the edge of bodily sensing.

It is not linear but cyclical: as soon as *Order* stabilizes, it dissolves again into *Fluctuation*.

This living cycle mirrors the act of breathing—the core rhythm of both playing and being.

## 5. Practising within the Cycle

These concepts gradually entered my daily practice as ways of attending, rather than as theories.

When I pick up the shakuhachi, I first listen for **Fluctuation (ゆらぎ)**—the soft trembling before tone.

Inside it, a **Sign (兆し)** emerges: a subtle leaning, an inner pull.

I respond with an **Impulse (衝動)**—a minimal movement of breath or angle.

Sometimes this creates a **Deviation (逸脱)**—an unexpected sound that breaks the frame.

Out of that deviation, **Order (秩序)** appears: a brief sense of coherence, like balance in motion.

Yet as soon as I grasp it, the order slips away, returning to fluctuation.

Each tone, each breath, passes through this same microcosmic cycle.

To play is to live in this rhythm of emergence, transformation, and return.

## 6. Conclusion: The Living Cycle

Through this long TAE dialogue, several key patterns emerged: The co-existence of constraint and openness (Unfree Freedom) creates a space for infinite subtlety. This process reveals an Aesthetic of the Non-Rational, where elements often labelled 'mistakes'—such as breath noise—are valued as traces of life. Here, Fluctuation is understood not as disorder but as the generative ground where a Hidden Order and new meaning quietly grow.

In this view, playing shakuhachi is not the execution of a pre-conceived structure but a continuous carrying forward of interaction. Sound is not produced; it *emerges*. The player's breath, the bamboo's resistance, and the surrounding air all participate in a joint process of meaning formation.

To live musically is to remain at that 'edge'—  
where *Felt Sense* becomes tone,  
where silence begins to shimmer,  
and where, in every breath, meaning is born anew. ☺



## REAR VIEW MIRROR

by Clive Joseph Dunkley

Yoshikazu Iwamoto  
*When The Brightness Comes*  
 Orchid Records LP (1984)  
[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?  
 list=OLAK5uy\\_mqL\\_In\\_8otOryLgVILH5yPPTO6OuHl5Wk](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_mqL_In_8otOryLgVILH5yPPTO6OuHl5Wk)



This was Iwamoto's first UK recording and was made by Orchid Records in Totnes.

It is available to hear on YouTube (see link below), but there it is called *Traditional Japanese Music*.

This isn't a detailed review of this recording, but more a recall of the time when I first discovered shakuhachi in the late 1970s, before the internet and YouTube made things much more accessible.

Listening to this recording took me back to that time, when I was avidly learning all I could about shakuhachi, and taking lessons. One of the tracks here, “Tamuke”, was the piece I heard late one night on BBC Radio 3. Fortunately I recorded it so was able to study the piece in detail. Katsuya Yokoyama was playing a large instrument (Ro=G) and I’d never heard anything like it before!

Up to that time I had been making harpsichords and clavichords so Japanese music was a very different sound world to discover. Tom Deaver sent me my first 1.8 shaku from Japan and through a circle of friends in London we found a visiting player, Shozan Kimura, and I had many inspiring lessons with him. It was my first experience of standing opposite the teacher and playing along with them; his powerful and focused tone seemed to embed itself right into my body. I regret that I have lost touch with Shozan Kimura since those years.

When Yoshikazu Iwamoto came to teach at Dartington my shaku-friends and I were very keen to know more about him and several of us signed up for a Summer School, I think in Oxford in the late '80s or early '90s.

I remember a few incidents from then – we were walking along a reverberant corridor when Iwamoto suddenly stopped and pointed to me. He played the first phrase of “Shika No Tone” and indicated I should respond. I hadn’t learnt the piece but I watched him carefully and things went quite well – until I came in too early and the spell was broken.

On another occasion I showed him a 1.3 shaku I had made and he surprised me by playing fluently a beautiful Andean folksong on it.

Later, when showing Iwamoto a photocopied score of “Honshirabe”, he said, “Oh, that is written by my teacher, Katsuya Yokoyama!” I think the score came from Dan Mayers and of course I treasure it still.

I have much enjoyed listening to this recording and have appreciated the subtle and expressive playing of Yoshikazu Iwamoto, especially in the three central pieces I am more familiar with. Also, it reminds me how grateful I am to those various Japanese musicians who came to Europe to teach us their music. ☺

# CD REVIEW: ECHOES OF THE VOID

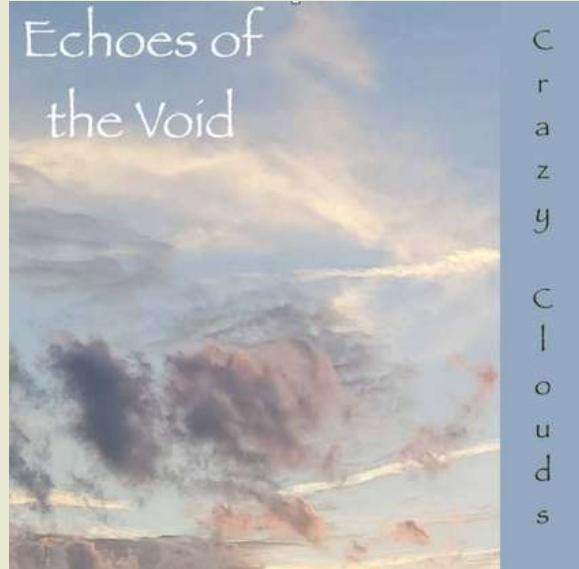
by Adam Robinson

Crazy Clouds (Christophe Gaston, Gunnar Jinmei Linder, Michel K.za Casabianca)

## Echoes Of The Void

Bandcamp DL

<https://crazyclouds1.bandcamp.com/album/echoes-of-the-void>



Christophe Kazan Gaston and Gunnar Jinmei Linder, along with their sound engineer, Michel K.za Casabianca, team up on this Bandcamp release, *Echoes Of The Void*. The work is a collection of traditional *Kinko Ryū Honkyoku* duets, elegantly and sensitively rendered by Gaston and Linder. These duets, here called *Renkan*, share a common theme. With the exception of the first and last track each piece references a different kind of mythical beast in the title. These titles informed the imagery of the pieces as I listened to them.

In general, listening to the album might be best understood by following along with the liner notes available on their Bandcamp page. The notes draw from Yamaguchi Goro's own notes about *Kinko Honkyoku*, and include additional information about the pieces hard to find in English.

“Koro Sugagaki” opens the album. *Sugagaki* pieces have a flowing, melodic character. This piece sets the tone for the more spare and intensive *Honkyoku* to follow. The melodies waver between *meri* and *kari* pitches and we can observe beautiful shifts in tone colour. Less like looking at a painting and more like a kaleidoscope, the sounds of the shakuhachi glide elegantly between stronger, bright *kari* sounds and the darkness of muted *meri* sounds. The effect is like sunlight peeking out from the clouds and retreating back. *Korokoro* is the featured technique of this piece and is delightfully passed between the players alongside the melodies.

“Ginryū Koku”, in the usual solo format, is one of the longest and most subtle of the Kinko style *Honkyoku*. The duet version retains a lot of that character. Listen for the special repetition of *Re* pattern first occurring at 00:38 at the end of the solo section. One of my personal favourites, “Ginryū Koku” communicates a special elegant feeling. I found myself closing my eyes and imagining two dragons dancing in the sky.

“Sakae-jishi” is a fiery crimson counterpart to the steely silver of “Ginryū Koku”. The Lion Dance Of Sakae starts in a dreamlike state, the lion slowly stirring from a snooze. After the introductory solos a full throated duet begins. Like the previous track’s conjured dragons, here we have a duet that recalls the father-son duo lion dance of the Kabuki piece *Renjishi*. Sharp *suri-agè* and forceful *atari* techniques create the image.

“Hōshōsu” is named after the phoenix. Specifically, a baby phoenix! This piece has many distinctive elements. Listen to the first phrase, a special way of moving between *Ū* and *Chi*. The players pass this phrase between them before eventually playing it together. I was struck by the way this track was captured by Casabianca. I felt a great symmetry between the flute sounds, and beheld a double image of the phoenix rising from the ashes of its previous life and growing up in stereo.

“Sugagaki” wraps up the album in the same mode it started in. A flowing melody played solo, the songs and cries of the mythic beasts fading back into the void. ☺

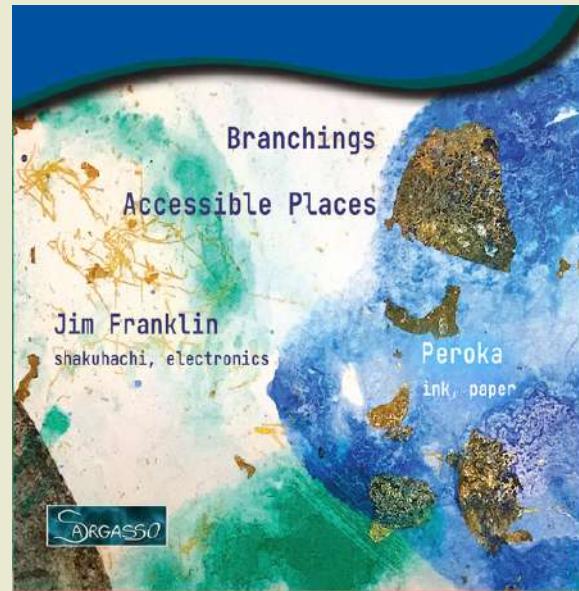
# CD REVIEW: BRANCHINGS / ACCESSIBLE PLACES

by Laonikos Psimikakis Chalkokondylis

Jim Franklin  
**Branchings / Accessible Places**

Sargasso SCD28092

<https://sargasso.com/product/jim-franklin-peroka-branchings-accessible-places/>



Listening to Jim Franklin's double album *Branchings / Accessible Places* is like following a mycorrhizal root system. Material surfaces and resurfaces at different angles, recombined, repurposed, always an extension of the root system.

This double album is a great presentation of Franklin's concept of *densokugaku* (electricity-breath-sound), where live electronics, the theremin, synthesizers are not add-ons or extras, but an integral part of the practice. This isn't 'shakuhachi with live electronics' but rather shakuhachi-electronics-synth-music, or 'hyper-shakuhachi' as Jim calls it.

In *Branchings*, we hear the shakuhachi sometimes inside-out: exposed, vulnerable, revealing hidden beauty beneath a more traditional sound. In "Interlude 1", we stand inside a Zen bell, the shakuhachi's natural 'bellness' amplified and explored, a motif continued in other Interludes, sometimes with evocations of bell-ringing patterns. In "Dream 4 (version 2)", the electronics unpeel layers of shakuhachi tone, making for some very delicate listening. One thing morphs into another, from individual sounds, to instruments, to bigger sonic structures.

The second album of the pair, *Accessible Places*, shifts flavour. Here Franklin responds to visual artist Peroka's evocative paintings of remembered locations, like Tottori Dunes or Takamatsu Pines. Jim follows and

responds to this with music that is equally evocative, and more on the melodic side than *Branchings*. Nothing repeats exactly, ideas return but always transformed: same-same-but-different.

Tracks are structured improvisations, often recorded as single takes with Jim sometimes juggling shakuhachi, theremin, synths and real-time processing simultaneously. Aside from an ambitious feat of coordination, this approach shines a light on the essential negotiation between discipline and spontaneity, the controlled and uncontrolled, and the natural limitations of the bamboo that, when embraced, give us the original richness of *honkyoku*.

Jim spends most of his time playing shakuhachi in the higher registers, which creates interesting spectral effects when processed through the live electronics. His playing is nimble and precise, and he enjoys bending and sliding the notes, often tiptoeing around a centre but never gravitating or staying fixed for too long. For me, this music occupies a space somewhere between whale song, French multi-instrumentalist and Magma composer Teddy Lasry, and the more experimental side of Sainkho Namtchylak, like the opening to “Old Melodie” (with Ned Rothenberg on shakuhachi).  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXloHcC1VRk&list=RDpXloHcC1VRk&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXloHcC1VRk&list=RDpXloHcC1VRk&start_radio=1)

Jim Franklin sits with the shakuhachi in prolonged meditation here. He listens deeply and invites us in to witness what the instrument reveals beneath its familiar voice. The result is ethereal and rooted, unified and endlessly branching, an embodied music. This is a music that exists not in an intellectual vacuum but in organic symbiosis with the physical world.

You can buy the album here: <https://sargasso.com/product/jim-franklin-peroka-branchings-accessible-places/>

Listen to an interview with Jim Franklin where he talks about Densokugaku:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLA9U9uBCzo> 

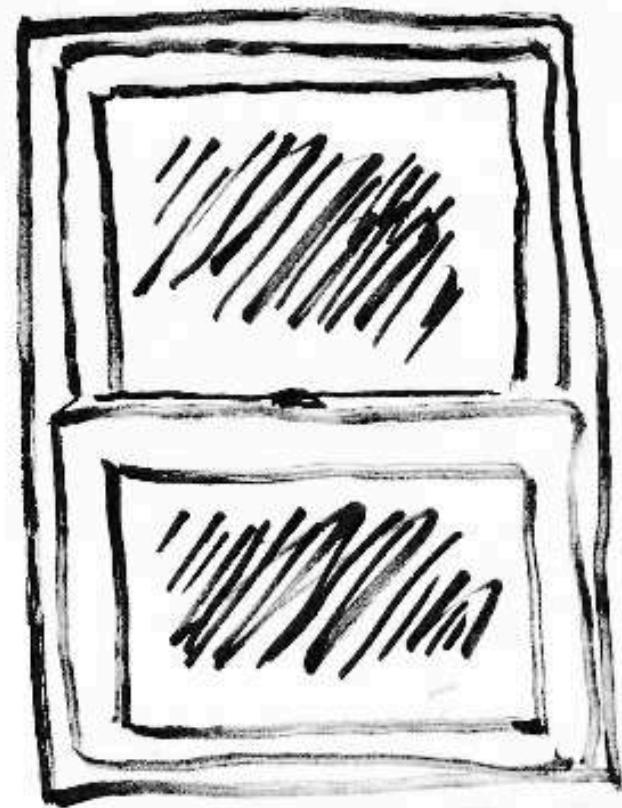


Open and close one by one  
holes in my shakuhachi  
healing the holes in my soul

尺八の  
穴をふさいで  
傷癒す

Shakuhachi no  
ana wo fusaide  
kizu iyasu

-Galina Sgonnik



The siren takes  
over shakuhachi,  
in the night of Tottenham

サイレンを  
尺八が継ぐ  
トテナムの夜

Sairen o,  
shakuhachi ga tsugu,  
totenamu no yo

-Kazuko Hohki

# PAINTINGS

by Tamara Rogozina

How ghostly she is  
Butterfly on my hand  
Like someone's soul!

-Buson



"Flight 2", 2015. Acrylic, paper, 40x30

Work chosen by Swedish Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for the official artwork of the new Swedish Government award in 2025 for voluntary Swedish efforts in support of Ukraine

"Butterfly, what are you doing?  
What are you doing there in the meadow?  
I'm looking for my shadow."

-Basho

Next page: "Flight 1", 2015. Acrylic, paper, 30x40



# ESS MEMBERS 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](http://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](mailto:member@shakuhachisociety.eu) or [info@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:info@shakuhachisociety.eu)

Online events enquiries: [online-events@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto:online-events@shakuhachisociety.eu)

For questions about membership: [member@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto:member@shakuhachisociety.eu)

ESS newsletter: [newsletter@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto: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](http://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.



*“Nenneko” (Japanese traditional short coat  
worn to protect the baby on one’s back)*  
Kazuko Hohki

## ESS BAMBOO NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTOR'S GUIDELINES

The aim of the ESS *Bamboo* Newsletter 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](mailto: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 newsletter 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 newsletter 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](https://wetransfer.com).

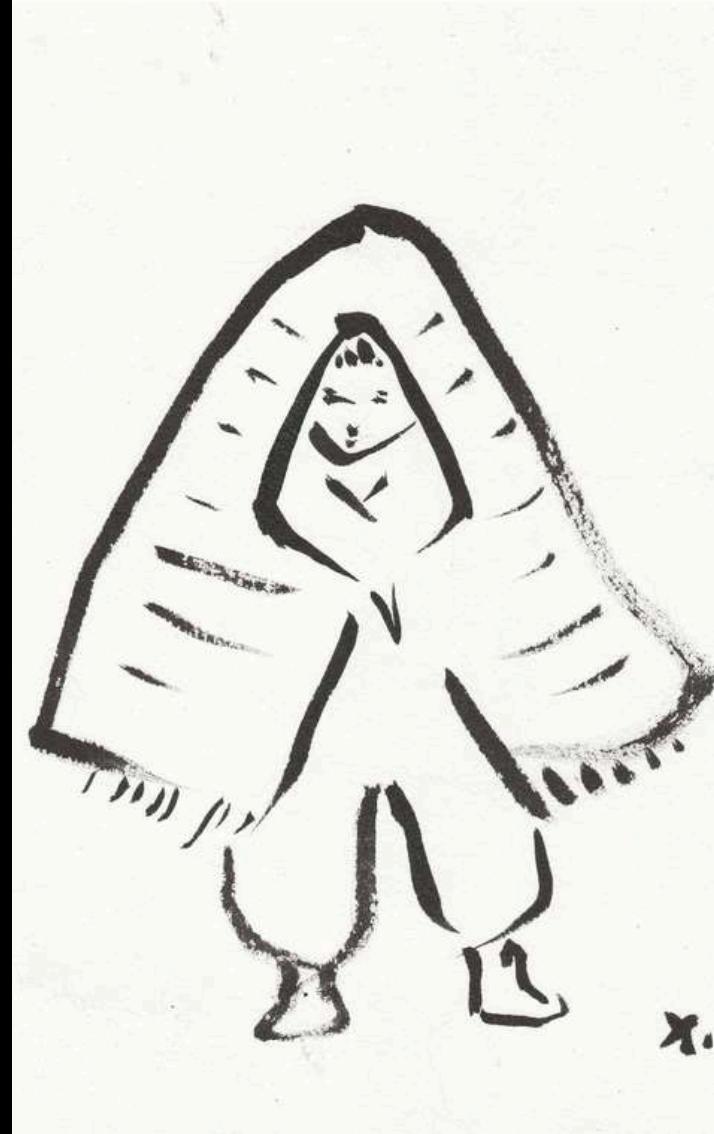
**Picture format:** Please send your pictures in jpg, png or tiff format with a minimum resolution of 150dpi.

**Reviews:** Should you wish for any shakuhachi material to be reviewed in the newsletter (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 newsletter 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 newsletter, 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.



*"Yukinko" (A child in the snow country)*  
Kazuko Hohki

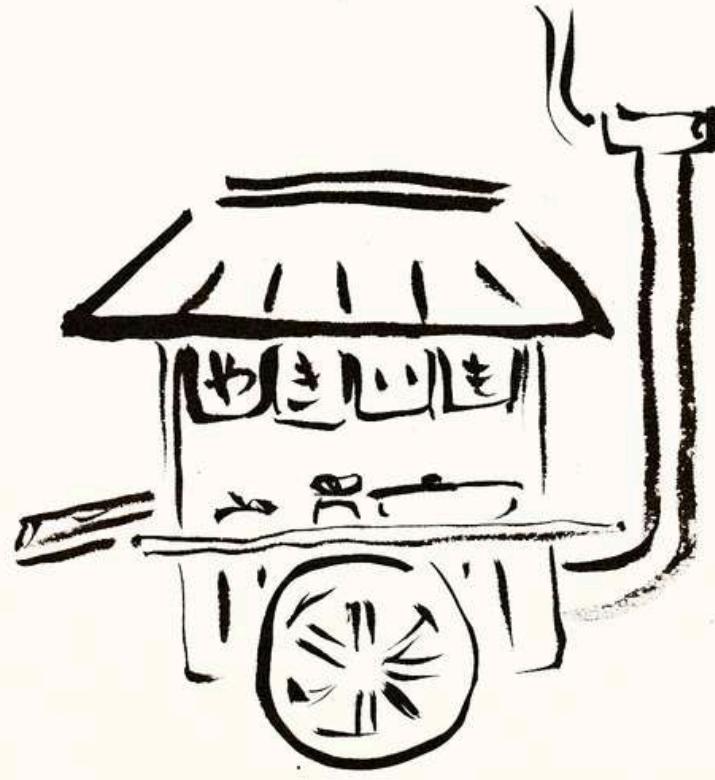
The newsletter includes announcements on non-ESS events. Should you want your event's information to be included, please note that these events should take place after the publication of the respective newsletter edition (please consult the editors for exact dates of issue) and you should send the following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

Date / Period  
Description of your event  
Venue  
Cost  
Contact information  
Picture (may be edited to fit the needs of the NL format)

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

The ESS Bamboo 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 Bamboo Newsletter is  
published on June 1, 2026.**

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.

*"Ishiyakiimo yatai" (Stone-roasted sweet potato stall)*  
Kazuko Hohki

