



European  
Shakuhachi  
Society  
Newsletter

**2015 - Vol 2**

Grateful thanks for the translations in this number to:

*Hélène Codjo, Maris (Hawwa) Morales*

Grateful thanks for the pictures in this number to:

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Welcome to the autumn edition of the ESS Newsletter which is again full of original and informative articles on a wide variety of topics related to shakuhachi that range from reviews of events and recordings to the origin of pieces, the shakuhachi in other artistic expressions, tools for shakuhachi practice and contemporary expressions of the shakuhachi.

The young virtuoso shakuhachi performer, Daisuke Kaminaga, and his eclectic “Wagakki” band of tsugaru jamisen, koto, shakuhachi, electric guitar, drums and much more is featured in an article by Clive Bell highlighting their huge following and popularity in Japan. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Chris Blasdel traces the geographical origin of the Kinko-ryu honkyoku ‘Taki otoshi no kyoku’ with a visit to the temple from where it comes and shares with us some thoughts on how to approach this sacred evocation. In line with the early history of shakuhachi, Jose Vargas has provided some very interesting observations on the representation of shakuhachi in Japanese Ukiyo-e prints raising pertinent questions on why the instrument has been shrouded since early times in so much opaqueness.

We also feature reviews of two newly released CD’s. Furuya Teruo has produced the next recording in his series of KSK honkyoku pieces to much acclaim, all played on 1.8 shakuhachi, and our own Veronique Piron’s latest CD, ‘Sillage’, is reviewed, which explores the soundscape of shakuhachi, koto and piano in a very original and interesting guise.

In the ‘Practice’ section, Gunnar Linder reflects on some of the components which have helped him in his own shakuhachi learning journey while Ruud Baanders outlines, in our new ‘Miscellany’ section, a new digital resource which may be of significant value when practicing pieces which include other instruments.

The Newsletter also includes reviews of three recent well-attended and successful shakuhachi events; the inaugural workshop of KSK-Europe which was held in Barcelona in May, the annual ESS Summer School which was held in Paris in July, and the Prague Shakuhachi Festival which took place as usual in August.

As you can see in the revised ‘Guidelines’ for articles towards the end, the Newsletter now welcomes longer articles up to around 5,000 words in order to provide a space for more in-depth articles exploring specific issues and we also encourage contributors to include multi-media links which further illuminate the topics under discussion.

We look forward to hearing about topics which you would like to see included in future editions and welcome articles which you would like to contribute. Please contact us at [newsletter@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto:newsletter@shakuhachisociety.eu)

Wishing you all the very best of shakuhachi,

**Michael & Horacio - Editors**

**B**ienvenidos a la edición de otoño de la ESS Newsletter que una vez más viene cargada de artículos informativos y originales sobre una gran variedad de temas relacionados con el shakuhachi. Estos incluyen desde reseñas de eventos y discos, al origen de algunas piezas, el shakuhachi en otras expresiones artísticas, herramientas para la práctica del shakuhachi y expresiones contemporáneas del instrumento.

El joven virtuoso Daisuke Kaminaga, y su ecléctica banda “Wagakki” integrada por tsugaru shamisen, koto, shakuhachi, guitarra eléctrica, batería (y mucho más) es presentada en un artículo de Clive Bell en el que se puede observar su popularidad en Japón. En el otro extremo del espectro, Chris Blasdel, rastrea el origen geográfico del honkyoku de kinko-ryu ‘Taki otoshi no kyoku’ con una visita al templo del cual proviene y comparte con nosotros algunas reflexiones sobre como acercarse a esta evocación sacra. Alineada con la historia temprana del shakuhachi, José Vargas, acerca interesantes observaciones sobre la representación del shakuhachi en los grabados japoneses conocidos como Ukiyo-e, planteando preguntas pertinentes sobre las razones por las que el instrumento ha estado envuelto en una cierta oscuridad desde sus inicios.

También os presentamos reseñas de dos nuevos discos. Furuya Teruo ha lanzado una nueva grabación de su aclamada serie de honkyoku del KSK, donde todas sus piezas están interpretadas en un shakuhachi 1.8, y otra en la que se reseña el nuevo disco de Veronique Piron, ‘Sillage’, en el que explora un territorio de encuentro entre el shakuhachi, el koto y el piano de una forma muy original e interesante.

En la sección sobre la práctica (shakuhachi practice), Gunnar Linder, reflexiona sobre algunos de los elementos que le han ayudado en su propio camino de aprendizaje del instrumento y Ruud Baanders describe, en nuestra nueva sección de miscelánea (Miscellany) un nuevo recurso digital que puede ser valioso en la práctica de piezas que incluyen otros instrumentos. La Newsletter también incluye reseñas de tres exitosos eventos recientes: el taller inaugural del KSK-Europe que tuvo lugar en Barcelona en mayo, la escuela de verano anual del ESS (ESS Summer School) que tuvo lugar en Paris en julio y el Prague Shakuhachi Festival que sucedió como de costumbre en agosto.

Como podréis observar en la sección revisada de “Guidelines”, donde se describen las guías para las contribuciones a la ESS Newsletter que podréis encontrar hacia el final de cada número, a partir de ahora se aceptan algunos artículos mas extensos de hasta aproximadamente 5.000 palabras, para poder ofrecer textos que exploren en mayor profundidad temas específicos. También queremos reiterar a nuestros colaboradores la utilidad de incluir enlaces a materiales multimedia que permitan ilustrar de forma más potente los temas tratados en los textos. Esperamos que nos digáis que temas os interesaría ver incluidos en próximas ediciones y como siempre, recordad que vuestras contribuciones son necesarias y muy bienvenidas. Podéis contactarnos en: [newsletter@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto:newsletter@shakuhachisociety.eu)

Deseamos a todos lo mejor del shakuhachi

**Michael & Horacio - Editores**

After a wonderful summer with a highly successful European Shakuhachi Summer School 2015 in Paris, it is now time to settle into the quieter and more introverted winter season – a good time for some serious shakuhachi practice.

It is really a joy to see the support and interest the ESS receives from the shakuhachi community in Europe. The Summer School at the conservatory in Le Kremlin-Bicêtre, Paris, had a waiting list after the conservatory decided that the maximum possible number of participants was 60. Apart from the Japanese guests, Kawamura Taizan, his son Kizan and wife Toshimi, the Summer School made the most out of the thriving shakuhachi community in Paris and the surrounding area by having many local teachers. Also, new European teachers were present – a phenomenon the ESS has to support wholeheartedly as those teachers are the future of the shakuhachi in Europe. It is one of the important tasks of the ESS to encourage new players and create a vibrant and inspiring shakuhachi environment.

Next year, the ESS will co-host the 7<sup>th</sup> World Shakuhachi Festival with 108Hz in Prague, Czech Republic. The festival, which will include many of the very top players from Japan as well as others from all over the world, will take place 2nd-6th June 2016. Please keep an eye on the website [www.wsf2016.com](http://www.wsf2016.com), which will be continuously updated until the event opens.

The World Shakuhachi Festival is something very special. Each year the ESS holds Summer Schools with a few invited teachers which normally attract around 60 participants, mainly from Europe. The World Shakuhachi Festival by contrast is a truly 'world event'. It is the largest gathering of its kind of shakuhachi aficionados from around the world and is organised by volunteers, mainly in Europe, who give their time and energy entirely for free. It is not a 'breadwinning' event for the professionals as no fees are paid apart from a very small token for a handful of the top players from Japan. It is simply a space created every 4 years for all shakuhachi enthusiasts from around the world to share their love of the instrument and the music played on it – whether it is traditional, contemporary, improvised or composed. Dozens of top performers are being invited to play and teach and we expect around 300 participants will come to listen to and learn from a wide range of world-renowned professionals and this is a space for all of us, professionals, amateurs, beginners, scholars, and enthusiasts, to be together. The festival consists of master classes, workshops, concerts, lectures, panel discussions, symposiums, shakuhachi sales and much more. It is also a rare opportunity for people to meet, learn from and spend time with some of the best players in the world – and make friends, meeting equally minded people. The event also promotes international awareness and understanding of the shakuhachi, both in a traditional context and in its

wide-ranging applications of contemporary music. And, last but not least, it celebrates the fact that Europe has become a firmly established territory for the shakuhachi, with substantial representation of various schools, styles and approaches to the performance of the instrument and its music. The festival began with an international gathering in Bisei, Japan in 1994 – a vision of Yokoyama Katsuya – and has so far taken place in Japan, USA, and Australia. This is the first time such an event will take place on European soil and we encourage every shakuhachi lover to try to participate one way or another.

Please keep checking the WSF16 website and I hope to see you all in Prague in June 2016!

**Kiku Day**  
**ESS, chairperson**

Luego de un fantástico verano con una exitosa European Shakuhachi Summer School 2015 en París (escuela de verano del ESS), se aproxima el momento de entrar en la estación invernal. Esta, con su carácter más introvertido y tranquilo, se presenta como un buen momento para realizar una práctica del shakuhachi en mayor profundidad.

Es realmente un placer ver el grado de interés y apoyo que el ESS recibe de la comunidad del shakuhachi en Europa. La escuela de verano en el conservatorio parisino de Le Kremlin-Bicêtre, llegó con una lista de espera debido a la decisión de esta institución de que el número de participantes no podía superar las 60 personas. Allí, además de los invitados japoneses Kawamura Taizan, su hijo Kizan y su esposa Toshimi, se aprovechó al máximo la exultante comunidad de shakuhachi de la zona que aportó muchos de los profesores. También es interesante notar que nuevos profesores europeos estuvieron presentes, un fenómeno que el ESS tiene que apoyar de todo corazón ya que ellos representan el futuro del shakuhachi en Europa. Una de las tareas importantes del ESS es la de incentivar a nuevos intérpretes y crear un ambiente de shakuhachi que sea a la vez inspirador y vibrante.

El año próximo el ESS organiza junto a 108Hz el séptimo festival mundial de shakuhachi (7<sup>th</sup> World Shakuhachi Festival) en Praga (república Checa). El festival, que incluirá muchos de los más importantes intérpretes tanto de Japón como del resto del mundo, tendrá lugar entre el 2 y el 6 de Junio de 2016. Estad atentos a la información mediante el sitio web [www.wsf2016.com](http://www.wsf2016.com), que será actualizado frecuentemente hasta la fecha del evento.

El World Shakuhachi Festival es un evento muy especial. Cada año el ESS organiza sus escuelas de verano con algunos profesores invitados atrayendo aproximadamente unos 60 participantes del mundo, pero principalmente europeos. El World Shakuhachi Festival en cambio es realmente un evento mundial. Es el encuentro más grande que existe en el mundo de amantes del shakuhachi y es organizado por voluntarios principalmente europeos. Estos voluntarios ofrecen su tiempo y energía de forma altruista. No se trata de un evento que los profesionales puedan considerar de aquellos de “ganarse la vida” dado que no se pagan cachés sino que simplemente se destina una pequeña y simbólica cantidad a los intérpretes más importantes provenientes del Japón.

Se trata más bien de un espacio, creado cada cuatro años, para que todos los amantes del shakuhachi de todo el mundo puedan compartir su amor por el instrumento y las músicas creadas con él –tanto si son tradicionales, como contemporáneas, improvisadas o compuestas.



Docenas de intérpretes de primer nivel son invitados a tocar y enseñar y se estima que aproximadamente unos 300 participantes vengán a escuchar a, y aprender de, un gran rango de reconocidos profesionales. Es este un espacio para todos nosotros: profesionales, amateurs, investigadores, aquellos que recién comienzan y los amantes del instrumento en general.

El festival consiste en clases magistrales, talleres, conciertos, conferencias, paneles, mesas redondas, venta de instrumentos y mucho más. Es también una rara oportunidad para que la gente se encuentre (y aprenda) con los mejores intérpretes del mundo y que a la vez haga nuevos amigos y encuentre personas con intereses similares. El evento promueve también la percepción y comprensión del shakuhachi tanto en sus formas tradicionales como en aquellas más contemporáneas.

Finalmente, y no menos importante, es una celebración de que Europa ha llegado a establecerse como un territorio firme y fértil para el shakuhachi, con una presencia sustancial de diversas escuelas, estilos y aproximaciones al instrumento y sus músicas. El festival nace como un encuentro internacional en Bisei, Japón en 1994 – fruto de la visión de Yokoyama Katsuya – y hasta el momento ha tenido lugar en Japón, USA y Australia. Es esta la primera vez que un evento como este tendrá lugar en suelo europeo e invitamos a todos y cada uno de los amantes del shakuhachi a tratar de participar de alguna forma.

Por favor visitad el sitio web de WSF16 y espero veros a todos en Praga en junio de 2016!

**Kiku Day**  
**ESS, chairperson**

## **World Shakuhachi Festival 2016 in Prague, Czech Republic**

The World Shakuhachi Festival 2016 is the seventh large-scale international shakuhachi congress to be held since its inception in Bisei, Japan, in 1994 and is the first to be held in Europe.

The WSF2016 will provide a musical and academic focus for performers, students and fans of Japan's vertical bamboo flute. The enchanting sounds of this instrument will reverberate through the beautiful old streets of Prague, Czech Republic, for five days of playing, listening to the world's top performers and studying the shakuhachi while meeting like-minded people from around the world.

### **DATES**

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June – Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Opening Concert Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016

### **MAIN VENUE**

HAMU – Music & Dance Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts, Malostranské náměstí 259/12, 118 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

### **SPONSORS/ORGANISERS**

European Shakuhachi Society + 108 Hz + Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan (Japan Affiliated Coordinating Body) + HAMU – Music & Dance Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts

## MISSION STATEMENT

The World Shakuhachi Festival 2016 continues the 'tradition' established in 1994 of gathering world-renowned professional and amateur performers, scholars, and lovers of the shakuhachi from around the globe for a festival in the style of an international musical congress which will also include top Japanese performers of the koto and the shamisen. Concerts, workshops, lectures, symposiums, exhibitions, study sessions and informal gatherings will be held over a period of five days in June 2016.

The main purpose of this festival is to promote international awareness and understanding of the shakuhachi both in a traditional context and in its wide-ranging applications in contemporary music. It also celebrates the fact that Europe has become firmly-established shakuhachi territory with a broad representation of various schools, styles and approaches to the performance of the instrument.

This festival will contribute to a deepening international understanding of the shakuhachi for both players and non-specialist participants, as well as for the general public. Genres often not represented at international gatherings have also found their way to these events and the shakuhachi in min'yo, folk music, will be represented for the first time at this festival. Opportunities for participation will be multiple and varied including master classes aimed at beginning, intermediate and advanced students, concerts for musical enjoyment and for the discovery of new genres, schools and approaches, performance opportunities, receptions, lectures and discussions on a wide variety of aspects of the shakuhachi, plus gatherings and informal interactions on an individual level.

Don't miss it!

The Executive Committee for the World Shakuhachi Festival 2016

[www.wsf2016.com](http://www.wsf2016.com)

&

[info@wsf2016.com](mailto:info@wsf2016.com)

## Asahi Falls

### Mendicant Shakuhachi Monks and the Izu Peninsula



Asahi Falls

The anfractuons road from Shûzen-ji to the Amagi Pass winds through the middle of the mountainous Izu Peninsula. It cuts across small villages, traverses deep rivers filled with fresh, running waters and traces hairpin curves that straddle exquisitely terraced rice paddies. Every turn offers a stunning vista of towering mountains and verdant slopes. These views are juxtaposed with glimpses of local daily life as village residents make their way back and forth from school, shopping or their work in the fields and forests.

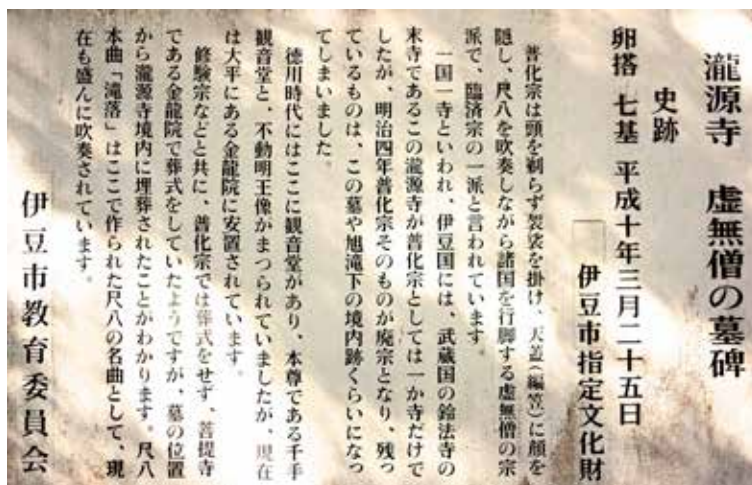
One of the local communities the road passes along the way is Ôdaira. From the center of this settlement, a small lane leaves the road and makes its way up westward to the edge of the mountain, where is situated the remains of an old temple, a shrine and a magnificent waterfall that cascades from on high out of the forested hillside. This eastward-facing waterfall is named Asahi Daki (“Morning-sun waterfall”), and the name of temple—or the empty space where it once stood—is Rôgen-ji (literally, “origin of the waterfall”).

A sign at the entrance to the area tells the visitor that Rôgen-ji was a *komusô* temple. *Komusô*, the sign informs us, were a band of itinerant monks who covered their heads with deep basket hats, called *tengai*, and wandered the Japanese countryside playing the shakuhachi bamboo flute and begging for alms. These monks belonged to the Fuke Sect, which was loosely connected to the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, and Rôgen-ji was an affiliate temple of Reihô-ji Temple in Ôme, now a municipality of Tokyo in the western mountainous region. Reihô-ji was the most important of all the *komusô* temples in the Kanto Plain.

Rôgen-ji was the only *komusô* temple in Izu. Now, the only thing remaining of the temple

are some weathered graves and the empty site itself. Closer to the road, however, is Ryûsen-ji temple that still appears to host activity. It was formerly the host temple to Rôgen-ji.<sup>1</sup>

The sign also points out that the Asahi Daki waterfall inspired the famous shakuhachi piece, *Taki Otoshi no Kyoku*; appropriately named the “Water-Falling Piece.”



Historical sign

As far as information signs go in Japan it is accurate, though of course it leaves a lot unsaid. According to local documents, Rôgen-ji was originally built as a temple of the Shingon sect in the late Muromachi period. It was abandoned and then, around the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, became attached to Ryûsen-ji as an independent inner sanctuary. Its secretive location right next to the waterfall was perfect for spiritual contemplation.

The shrine, Ôdaira Jinja, was built much later, in 1860, to the side of the waterfall and has little to do with the history of Rôgen-ji.

The Fuke sect of shakuhachi playing Zen monks was officially established in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Their mission in Edo Japan was to strive for enlightenment through playing the shakuhachi and learn various set pieces known as *honkyoku*. Before the sect became officially organized, however, its members consisted mostly of a motley mob of beggars who played the shakuhachi and wandered the country. They needed a place to gather, sleep, and practice shakuhachi, so convincing local temples to become Fuke sect related temples (*fuke-dera*) was an obvious solution.

Since Rôgen-ji had been long abandoned, it was easy for the wandering *komusô* monks of the time to use it as a residence, much like a present day squatter might inhabit a derelict building. The location was ideal, as the temple was set apart from the main road by a waterfall but close enough to the surrounding villages to get support from the locals. Soon, other *komusô* monks joined in to create a small community. They were in need of leadership and direction, however, and records show that Rôgen-ji's first permanent abbot, Ippû Ôshô, came to live there sometime around 1716. After that, there was a succession of abbots, but there were also periods when Rôgen-ji had no resident priest. Even today, there are temples and shrines, especially in rural Japan, that cannot afford to support a full-time priest, and these temples lie

fallow for years with just the bare minimum of upkeep.

Next to the Rôgen-ji temple ruins are a set of seven gravestones, shaped like elongated bird's eggs sticking out of the ground. From the inscription on these stones, together with records kept in the nearby affiliate temple Kinryû-ji, it seems that Rôgen-ji had a total of ten abbots over a period of 160 years. These records also indicate that the last abbot, Kaiga, had to contend with the enormous upheaval in society and the demise of the Fuke Sect occasioned by the Meiji Restoration in 1868, but more about that later.

According to one account, by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century there were supposedly over 120 Fuke Temples throughout Japan, although there are no precise records of individual names. Once the Fuke sect became organized, it tended toward exclusiveness, aimed for respectability and weeded out the riff-raff. This would have been necessary in order for the Fuke sect to be recognized as an official religion by the Tokugawa government, which it did in 1677.

Edo Period documents are not always accurate, and the early twentieth century scholar, Nakatsuka Chikuzen, compiled all the information regarding *komosô* temples which ever existed and came up with a list of 77, which he sorted according to the sects listed in the archives at Myôan-ji temple in Kyoto, which was the head Fuke Temple. Rôgen-ji is on that list.

It is difficult to know for sure what occurred in the *komosô* temples during their heyday—and Rôgen-ji did seem to be an important one—but there is some indication from historical sources. The daily life for monks in Zen temples—then and now—is very structured and revolves around a schedule of ritual: the intonation of prayers according to the time of day, meal-taking, work-related activities, sutra chanting, long sitting sessions of *zazen* and lectures or individual sessions by the head priest.

It was the same for the *komosô* temples, except instead of sitting meditation, the shakuhachi became the focus of the monks' attention. Prayers were replaced by shakuhachi meditative *honkyoku* pieces, and *zazen*, which literally means just "sitting Zen," was replaced by *suizen*, which indicates "blowing Zen," or the attainment of enlightenment through breath and sound. Again at night, after their daily training finished, the monks played *honkyoku* to mark the time and occasion.

Zen meditation is something one can practice through any activity, but blowing the shakuhachi, with its need to concentrate on the body, breath and posture, is particularly conducive to meditative awareness.

The *komusô* monks were required to go begging periodically. This meant going out into the community to gather alms, either food or money, from the townspeople. This is common in Buddhist countries and, although now relatively rare in Japan, the practice is still widely followed in other such Buddhist countries as Thailand or Sri Lanka. Begging is thought to be a sacred activity and provides 'merit' for both the beggar and the person giving alms.<sup>2</sup> It was also a way for the *komusô* to make a living.



komuso by abe tomio

The *komusô* had a very elaborate uniform that consisted of kimono, a brocade sash, arm guards and leggings and, most importantly, the deep, *tengai*, straw hat that covered their whole head. The *tengai* assured anonymity, but it also provided a sense of a powerful and mysterious other-worldliness to the monks and, I suspect, exerted a kind psychological pressure on the simple country folk to force them to provide alms.

There is a phenomena in present day Japan, *kosu-purei*, where men and woman wear the costume and mien of various characters: school girls, waitresses, samurai, etc. Like donning a mask, it allows the individual to subsume the identity (and hence, power or sexuality) of something other than themselves. Nowadays, it is done as divertissement and distraction, but one can see the impetus of this desire in such activities as the ancient masked drama and *komusô* monks.

During their pilgrimages, the *komusô* monks obviously couldn't hold a begging bowl since they had to use their hands to play the shakuhachi. So instead of using a bowl, they hung a wooden box for alms around their neck written with the *kanji* "Myôan" ("light-dark"). This was in reference to the head Fuke temple, Myôan-ji, in Kyoto. *Myôan* refers to a shibboleth, found in the 17<sup>th</sup> century *Kyotaku Denki Kokuji-tai*, that all *komusô* monks held dear: *Myôtô rai, myôtô da. Antô rai, Antô da.* This passage, originally from the *Annals of Rinzai*—the teachings of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese monk, Linji Yixuan (Rinzai in Japanese)—literally translates as "If light comes I will strike it. If dark comes I will strike it." It is an admonition not to be deceived by duality or differences.

As within the temple, the monks played certain pieces outside according to the situation. Like the urban ice cream truck that plays its distinctive melody when entering a neighborhood, the *komusô* monks informed the locals of their presence in the area by performing a piece called *Tôri* as they walked along the paths or *Kadozuke* at street corners. *Hachigaeshi* ("Returning the Bowl") was performed as a kind of thank-you piece when the monk was given alms. When two *komusô* met while begging, it was customary to play the piece *Yobi Take* ("Bamboo Call") or *Uke Take* ("Bamboo Answer"). When on the road and wishing to stay in a *komusô* temple, they played *Hirakimon* or *Monbiraki* ("Open the Gate") to gain entrance. Practice and etiquette probably differed from temple to temple but were basically the same.

There was also a business aspect to their activities, and the *komusô* monks could be quite territorial. Official edicts called *tomeba seisatsu*—complete with the official seal of the head Myôan Temple in Kyoto—posted at village entrances outlawed unauthorized begging and made clear whose territory it was. Only *komusô* monks of a certain affiliation were allowed to beg there. Beware the rogue monk who might decide to butt into another’s territory. The *komusô* ranks consisted of disenfranchised samurai who knew how to wield a shakuhachi as if it were a sword.



Seisatsu

Not surprisingly, the *komusô* monks required a license, called *honsoku*, to beg. It was, after all, a money-making activity and the period bureaucrats needed to keep tabs on them.

There is a *honsoku* for a *komusô* monk named Yûryû who lived at Rôgen-ji, dated the 2nd year of Kyôho (1717), affixed with the seal by Bokusui, the temple’s fourth Abbot (d. 1750).

Apparently the *honsoku*, like present day driver’s licenses, had to be renewed periodically, especially when the abbot changed. We can also see Yûryû’s renewal certificate, called *zokuin*, which was stamped by Rôgen-ji’s successive abbots, ending with Tôkai Shikei around 1758. Although we have proof of his existence, whatever happened to Yûryû—where his pilgrimages led him, what pieces he learned, how he played the shakuhachi and when he died—unfortunately we will never know.

We can speculate about one piece he must have learned, however. In addition to the ceremonial pieces that all *komusô* knew, each temple had their specialty piece, and monks traveled from temple to temple throughout the land to learn these pieces.

Rôgen-ji’s specialty piece, purportedly composed by one of its abbots, was the aforementioned *Taki Otoshi no Kyoku*—the “Water-Falling Piece.”<sup>3</sup>

It is not known which abbot at Rôgen-ji “composed” this piece, but it is important to realize that none of the shakuhachi *honkyoku* were actually composed. Rather, they are a collection of accepted and already known melodic fragments put together in new combinations. As is true with almost all Japanese traditional music, shakuhachi *honkyoku* consist of set forms, called *kata* (or in Japanese musical parlance, *onkei*), and these pieces, regardless of lineage or style, sound, at the molecular level, pretty much the same. It is the imagination and life experience of the player that brings life to the piece. The *honkyoku* are often inspired by natural phenomena, religious ceremony and imagery or animals.

Presently, there exist multiple versions of *Taki Otoshi no Kyoku*, from the highly refined version of the Kinko School to the plaintive, soulful renditions handed down through the Myôan Temple lineages (Shinpo, Taizan and Seian styles; where it is called *Takiochi*). In all



lineages except the Shinpô style, the piece maintains basically the same structure and melody. The Shinpô version has a similar structure but a significantly different melody.

For all except dedicated scholars and performers, however, this is splitting hairs. What is important is how the piece sounds to us today and conveys the essence of the waterfall.

The Asahi Falls pours forth from a steep, high mountain right behind Rôgen-ji ruins. It doesn't "fall" as much as it cascades in about six clearly definable sections. The rock in these mountains consists of extremely hard columnar basalt that originated from the numerous volcanoes that form the backbone of the Izu Peninsula.

The water slowly follows the contours of the stream above. As it approaches the falls, the pitch of the slope steepens and the flow picks up speed. Flying over the nick point, the waters bounce and splash upon the descending flat surfaces of the basalt, making very distinctive sounds. Gurgling and ripping, tinkling and chiming—the water on the rock explodes into an array of natural tones as it makes its way downhill. If the tones were visible, I suspect they would appear as a very subtle but quick and lively rainbow against the lush green of the verdant mountainside.



Honsoku - fragment

The structure of this piece begins like the waterfall: slowly, with simple, melodic fragments. It builds in intensity and suddenly, in the second half of the piece, the melody jumps up to the higher octave. The music mirrors the rushing waters as they gain speed and force, tearing away relentlessly at the unyielding rocks. Finally, the piece fades away in a subtle silence.

I learned both the simpler Myôan version and the more complex Kinko versions of this piece. I first visited the falls in 1976 and was awed by the natural beauty of the surroundings, but I had no idea (or technique) on how to actually make the piece sound like a waterfall. My Myôan teacher, Okamoto Chikugai, offered a very succinct and descriptive metaphor on how to interpret the piece. He told me that the piece must begin with high and powerful sounds, while pointing out that this waterfall was a "male" waterfall, and the shakuhachi must capture this masculine essence. But, near the end, the tones must naturally die down, and the final notes must "gurggle" like the water itself, ending, as he put it, in a very feminine way.

Yamaguchi Goro, my Kinko teacher, on the other hand, did not usually give instructions on how to interpret pieces, but in the liner notes to a CD compilation of the Kinko *honkyoku*, he describes his interpretive approach. "The gentle flow of the water suddenly changes as it goes over the waterfall. It splashes against the rocks and sprays, flows downward through the crevices and into the pool below, foaming in whirlpools. Then the waters continue on as a

gentle stream. I think of those thousands of manifestations of water as I approach this piece. I also think how this could also be a metaphor describing the life of a human.”<sup>4</sup>

These two very different approaches epitomize the stylistic differences between the Myôan and Kinko schools as well as the differences in interpretation by the individual player. I felt that with the Myôan version (*Takiochi*), I needed to become one with the waterfall and imagine myself as the waters falling, while with the Kinko version (*Takiotoshi*), it was all about executing the beautifully complex and subtle ornamentations that adorn the piece in a musical paean to the waterfall’s natural beauty.

These interpretive differences in approach became much clearer to me when I made another visit to the Asahi Falls almost four decades later in 2014. It is easy to lose oneself in the beauty of magnificent natural phenomena, like a waterfall. Standing in awe in front of it induces a kind of bliss bordering on the ecstatic and leads us into other worlds and new possibilities. But, at the same time, we realize the need to discipline ourselves, to in order to share this experience. One interpretation of the piece leads us inward to the essence of the waterfall while the other leads us back out where we create (or attempt to create) something that can stand alone as one artist’s response to the phenomena.<sup>5</sup>

As a composition, *Taki Otoshi no Kyoku* traveled westward from Izu to Hamamatsu—where there was a larger, more established Fuke temple called Futai-ken—on to Ise, Kyoto and further west to Kyushu. It also made its way to northern Japan and became part of the repertory of the Kinpû style of shakuhachi playing in Aomori. This piece is presently one of the mainstays of traditional shakuhachi music and one of the first *honkyoku* taught to students.

Although the waterfall and the music lives on, Rôgen-ji itself is long gone. The last abbot of Rôgen-ji, Kaiga, arrived in Rôgen-ji around 1860 after a fifty-year hiatus with no head priest. The temple had fallen into disarray and its monks become unruly, but Kaiga restored order to the temple and discipline to its *komusô*. Their new abbot was young, but as the son of one of the feared Shôgun’s *hatamoto* elite vassals, he commanded respect. Kaiga also was held in esteem as the abbot of the main Kantô *komusô* temple, Reihô-ji in Ome. After arriving at Rôgen-ji around 1860, he began working to put it back in order.

Rôgen-ji’s renewal was short lived, however. In 1868, the Tokugawa government fell and the Meiji Restoration began. The Meiji leaders took quick action to dismantle the old Tokugawa institutions, and Kaiga could see the writing on the wall. Without the protection of the Tokugawa *shôgun*, the Fuke sect and its mendicant *komusô* monks could no longer go about their activities. To the new Meiji reformers, they were outlaws and unwanted reminders of the feudal past.

In 1871, the new Meiji government officially outlawed the Fuke sect and the *komusô*, but before the law could be applied, Kaiga dismantled Rôgen-ji and safely stored its treasures (consisting of two Buddhist statues, Kan’ôn and Fudô) at the nearby Kinryû-ji temple. His work finished at Rôgen-ji, Kaiga then took off on the winding roads leading back to Tokyo, the

city once known as Edo. He was never heard from again.

### References:

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- TOMINOMORI Kyozan, *Myôan Shakuhachi Tsûkai* [An Explanation of Myôan Shakuhachi] (Tokyo Myôankyozan Bô Dôyûkai, 1974).
- NAKATSUKA Chikuzen, *Konki-ryû Shakuhachi Shikan* [A Personal View of the Kinko Shakuhachi] (Nihon Ongaku-sha, Tokyo, 1979).
- BLASDEL Christopher Yohmei & KAMISANGÔ Yûkô, *The Shakuhachi—A Manual for Learning*. (Printed Matter Press, Tokyo, 2008).
- Reproduction of *komusô honsoku* license courtesy of Gekikai Bunkô, Hosshin-ji Temple, Tokyo.
- YAMAGUCHI Goro, *Shakuhachi no Shinzui, Shakuhachi Honkyoku* [Honkyoku: The Soul of the Shakuhachi] (liner notes, VZCG 8066-8077, Victor Zaidan, Tokyo, 1999).

### Notes:

- 1 Some contemporary shakuhachi scholars (Tsukitani, Kamisangô, Kojima) mention Ryûsen-ji as Izu's *komusô* temple. In fact, it was Rôgen-ji. The confusion arises in part from the similarities in the *kanji* rendition of their names (Ryûsen-ji 龍泉寺 and Rôgen-ji 龍源寺). Furthermore, these same sources mistakenly combine *kanji* from both temple names and call it Ryûgen-ji (龍源寺), further obfuscating the issue.
- 2 Another name for Rôgen-ji is Kudoku-zan, or “Merit-making Temple.”
- 3 There is another Izu-related piece found in the Kinko Style shakuhachi *honkyoku* repertory, *Izu Reibo*. This piece, also associated with Rôgen-ji Temple, belongs to a series of numerous *Reibo* (鈴慕, “yearning for the bell”) pieces, all associated with a specific locale (*Kyûshû Reibo*, *Kyô Reibo*, *Yoshino Reibo*, *Igusa Reibo*, etc). The yearning aspect refers to an 8<sup>th</sup> century T'ang period monk and the Fuke Sect's namesake, Fuke, who wandered the city streets of Chang'An, ringing a bell to urge instant enlightenment. The Fuke Sect followers yearned for and tried to imitate the sound of the bell with the shakuhachi.
- 4 YAMAGUCHI Goro, *Shakuhachi no Shinzui, Shakuhachi Honkyoku*, pg.20.
- 5 In Japanese, there is a significant difference in the nuance of the two words *taki otoshi* and *taki ochi*. *Taki* of course refers to the waterfall, but *otoshi* is the nominative of the verb *otosu*, “to drop,” i.e. as in the active tense “to drop” something. *Ochi*, on the other hand, is from *ochiru*, denoting a passive sense in which “something falls.” Something so obscure as whether the title is in the active or passive voice would normally make no difference, but, some performers/scholars, like Tominomori Kyozan, claim that, on the contrary, it makes all the difference because it determines the method of musical interpretation: whether the performer should try to present or merely represent the experience of the waterfall.

## Daisuke Kaminaga



**D**aisuke Kaminaga is a young shakuhachi player from Fukushima. Beginning to play at age 18, he holds a master's licence from the Tozan school and the master's title of YoZan. He teaches shakuhachi around Tokyo, as well as back home in Iwaki City, on Japan's east coast. Clearly he wants to push out beyond Japanese traditional music, and writes in his website profile that he sees the shakuhachi as "a musical instrument with a global universality", capable of genre-ranging between Celtic music, heavy rock and R&B; also "from game music to Vocaloid songs". This may sound like musicians' armchair speculation that we've heard many times before, but Kaminaga is testing his theories to destruction out there in the front line of Japanese performance, as a member of a bizarre but insanely successful project titled Wagakki Band.

"Wagakki" simply means Japanese instruments, and the eight members of Wagakki Band fill the stage with them: Tsugaru jamisen, koto and shakuhachi are joined by taiko drums, boosted by rock guitar, bass and drum kit. Singer Yuko Suzuhana flails fans as she spins across the stage, but everyone involved is hyperactive. Kaminaga, his face half covered in kanji tattoos, raises his flute to the heavens like an ecstatic trumpeter in Duke Ellington's orchestra. When not being blown, the shakuhachi spins around his black-varnished fingernails as if morphing into a martial arts weapon. At one point Kaminaga executes a trill by manically quivering his whole right hand, before shooting his arm skywards as the phrase climaxes. It's a shock to see the shakuhachi, that tool of spiritual exploration and inner calm, employed in showboating heroics associated with V-shaped electric guitars.

Kaminaga is almost certainly the shakuhachi player who is currently reaching the widest audience. As I write (September 2015) Wagakki are on their first Japanese tour, ten sold-out dates in fairly large venues. But their online presence is also crucial. The video for "Ikusa" finds them in a field of tall grass, a location familiar from samurai movies, where shadowy fighters hold severed heads aloft in tasteful silhouette. However, their recent "Akatsukino Ito" turbocharges the imagery up several levels: Wagakki are playing inside a huge wooden temple, suspended, *Lord Of The Rings*-style, in the clouds. As the tune lurches from metal epic ballad into sugar-rush prog rock, a colossal dragon swoops down upon the group. Whether friend or foe, dragons that size don't come cheap, and the production budget surely leaves everyone else's video cowering in fear. Wagakki's dragon went online in July 2015, and by September had been viewed well over a million times.

Yet even this level of attention may be disappointing for a group whose previous offering – a cover version of “Senbonzakura” (One Thousand Cherry Blossoms) – went live in January 2014, and has since been viewed some 26 million times. Opening with a stirring blast of Tsugaru jamisen rhythm from Beni Ninagawa, the song writhes under a hail of pelting notes from Kiyoshi Ibukuro’s koto, while Kaminaga launches pentatonic improvisations like rockets. All of Wagakki’s work is overblown and flashy, but “Senbonzakura” (rather like Kabuki theatre) renders hectic showing off into an art form. In fact, the song’s title is borrowed from a Kabuki drama about the warrior Yoshitsune. The song was written a few years ago as a vehicle for Vocaloid software, and was sung by Hatsune Miku. Hatsune has turquoise pigtails and long, long legs, and she is a singing synthesiser application developed in 2007 by Crypton Future Media. The point of Vocaloid songs is that they encourage fan art and remixes, and Wagakki’s cover of this extremely popular song is the latest in a long line.

Mention of Hatsune Miku Wagakki Band’s music and their first concerts outside in Los Angeles (in July 2015), a female Vocaloid anime actors strove to imitate their puppets of Bunraku theatre, conduct themselves as if cartoon or manga book. player with solid traditional sound, but he professes a While learning to play, he his leisure between flute You feel that the musicians outside the mythical world persona – engaging with sense they might have a life



underlines the link between Japanese anime. One of Japan was at Anime Expo where the support act was named IA. If Edo-period more popular rivals, the so groups like Wagakki living inside an animated Kaminaga is a shakuhachi technique and a strong love for video game music. almost certainly divided practice and console time. of Wagakki barely exist of their videos and onstage their music, there is little outside the group, any more

than Hulk has activities outside The Avengers. In that sense, it feels appropriate that my request to Kaminaga for an interview produced no response. 2D musicians don’t talk to journalists, and the Japanese audience are comfortable with that.

Anime acts may be thick on the ground in Japan, but placing traditional instruments centre stage the way Wagakki do is still rare. An earlier example is a group called Crow x Class, with an almost identical line-up: Tsugaru jamisen, koto, taiko and a shakuhachi player called Mikage. Their song “Gekkocho” even features two shakuhachi players in close harmony. As far as I can tell, their male singer, Kurona, is Wagakki’s taiko drummer. The musical approach is again hell-for-leather, but Crow x Class feel slightly different: less J-pop, more old school progressive rock. Their half-masked shakuhachi player tackles tricky chromatic melodies and chord shifts, whereas Wagakki’s Kaminaga sticks largely to muraiki sound effects and pentatonic improv – arguably this suits the instrument better. In videos Crow x Class go for

a hooded, shuffling look, scowling beneath their cowls - more Hobbit theatre than Wagakki's superhero comic book.

A final comparison with a Korean group helps put Wagakki in context. Jambinai are a trio of traditional instruments formed in 2010 – this year they have played in London and are expected at WOMAD in 2016. Using Korean zither, fiddle and oboe, they build a gritty, atmospheric sound from repetitive phrases, sometimes looped with pedals and software. Later in a show, they may add bass and drums to expand the music into a trance groove, always centred on the trad instruments. Jambinai are an intriguing and original project, combining a contemporary sound with the fascination of musicians playing unfamiliar instruments. The result is accessible and warmly received, but clearly artistic rather than hyper-commercial. Seated in t-shirts and jeans, Jambinai are not dazzling speed metal merchants, nor do they gyrate and pose like animated demigods. Bringing Korean instruments into 21st century music is one thing, but what Wagakki are attempting is at the same time more conservative and more crazy: launching fragile Japanese instruments into the white heat of the Asian commercial pop machine. Who will survive?

#### Links:

Daisuke Kaminaga website: <http://www.daisukekaminaga.com/>

Wagakki Band website: <http://wagakkiband.jp/wagae/>

#### Wagakki Band videos:

1. Live: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=1&v=GzzaCr8Bv4E>
2. "Ikusa": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5zj3dwNxJw>
3. "Akatsukino Ito": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcucbhJ-Orc>
4. "Senbonzakura": [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K\\_xTet06SUo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_xTet06SUo)

#### Crow x Class videos:

1. "Rinne-tensei": [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPkO3jvG\\_P8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPkO3jvG_P8)
2. "Gekkocho": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lu4qygPhwYE#t=178>

Jambinai: "Time Of Extinction": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6ABpjyc1Gs>

*Guardian* review of Jambinai show, Sept 2015: <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/sep/17/jambinai-review-bringing-traditional-korean-music-into-the-21st-century>

**Clive Bell**

## Some thoughts on learning and practicing the shakuhachi

I have been asked to provide some advice on practicing but when I learned the shakuhachi in Japan there was no meta-level discussion or instruction on how to play, or at least, almost none. Sometimes the older students of my teacher would give some advice to the younger students, but my teacher, Yamaguchi Gorō (hereafter referred to as Yamaguchi without intending any disrespect), is widely known for not talking much during lessons. Christopher Yohmei Blasdel writes about these aspects in his book *The Single Tone* (2005), and I also discuss it in one chapter of my PhD thesis *Deconstructing 'Tradition' in Japanese Music* (2012) in my analysis of the process of transmission. How then did Yamaguchi teach and what impacts does this have on practice?

Firstly, the teaching of Yamaguchi consisted of him singing the notation and clapping the beats on his lap. This aspect has proven very useful for me in practicing shakuhachi. It is very helpful in learning sections with fast tempo and more complicated rhythmical patterns. By singing along with a recording while clapping the beats, you internalize the phrases. By doing this while listening to a recording that includes shakuhachi, it is easier to discern the details of the shakuhachi line; the sound of your own voice is different from the sound of the shakuhachi. This is, of course, especially helpful in the practice of sankyoku, but it is also a very efficient tool in the learning process of honkyoku. By singing and clapping you can more easily understand the perfect timing of the phrases, the extended time intervals, the 'absolute *ma*' that Riley Lee talks about in his PhD thesis. It is easy to get lost in your own sound if you only play your instrument. The intense, concentrated listening that is required in following a recording with voice and clapping supports your understanding of the movement in the phrases.

Secondly, I believe that sankyoku and honkyoku complement each other. In order to reach *shihan* level, a student of Yamaguchi would have to learn more than 70 sankyoku pieces. The curriculum is the same today, and these sankyoku pieces are divided in four grades (*sho-den*, *chū-den*, *oku-den*, and *jun-shihan*). After that you study the 36 honkyoku. Even if you are entirely devoted to honkyoku, I believe that learning some sankyoku pieces helps you in four ways: (1) Pitch control: playing in ensembles forces you to think about your pitch. (2) Fingering technique: even in fast sections you want to have a clear expression of each single note. (3) Phrasing and breath control: the phrasing will differ depending on the string player; the singing is different as is the tempo. You have to adjust to the string player, and therefore be flexible in how you phrase and where you take a breath. (4) An understanding of how to apply ornaments: depending on how you phrase, where you take a breath, etc., you may want to add an ornament, or leave one out. On the other hand, if you mostly want to learn sankyoku, learning some honkyoku pieces helps you in three ways: (1) Tone control, especially in subtle ornamentations: in honkyoku it is essential that you keep control of your tone, dynamics and sound pressure (intensity of the tone). (2) Air stream control: to control the tone you need to control your air stream which helps when you play long phrases in a sankyoku piece as

well. (3) Expressiveness: maybe one of the most important aspects which means control of the character of your own tone, the quality of your sound. Honkyoku lives, or dies, with the character of your sound.

Thirdly, in order to get a sound that fills the room, I was told to imagine how my tone, or the piece, sounded at the back of the hall: 'Position your tone at the very back of the hall where you are playing'. This does by no means imply that you have to blow stronger. The idea is to let the sound flow, to let it reverberate. Try to hear your sound at a distant position, even when you play a *tsu no meri* (*ō-meri*) in the low register.

Finally, one thing that helped me a lot in memorizing pieces was to practice in a noisy environment. When I studied at university in Tokyo (Tokyo Geidai), we were often 5-6 people in a small room, practicing widely different pieces (honkyoku, sankyoku, shinkyoku, etc) on a variety of shakuhachi. It was very difficult to hear your own sound, but this helped me a lot in learning how to concentrate without being distracted by the surroundings. I think it can be helpful even if you are not attempting to memorize the piece, but just to concentrate on your sound among many other sounds.

I hope that some of my advice may prove useful! Happy blowing!!

**Gunnar Jinmei Linder**



## Algunas ideas sobre el aprendizaje y la práctica del shakuhachi

Me han pedido que de algunos consejos sobre la práctica, pero cuando aprendí a tocar el shakuhachi en Japón no habían discusiones o instrucciones sobre cómo tocar, o al menos, casi ninguna. Algunas veces los antiguos alumnos de mi maestro daban algún consejo a los estudiantes que comenzaban, pero mi maestro, Yamaguchi Gorō (a quien me referiré a partir de ahora como Yamaguchi, sin intensión de falta de respeto), era ampliamente conocido por no hablar mucho durante las lecciones. Christopher Yohmei Blasdel escribe sobre estos aspecto en su obra *El Único Tono* (2005), y también hablo de ello en un capítulo de mi tesis doctoral *Deconstruyendo la 'Tradición' en la Música Japonesa* (2012) en mi análisis del proceso de transmisión. Entonces ¿cómo enseñaba Yamaguchi y qué impacto tiene en la práctica?

En primer lugar, la enseñanza de Yamaguchi consistía en que él cantaba la notación y marcaba con palmadas en su regazo los ritmos. Este aspecto me resultó muy provechoso en la práctica del shakuhachi. Es muy útil para aprender las secciones con un *tempo* rápido y patrones rítmicos mas complicados. Al cantar junto con una grabación mientras marcas los ritmos, internalizas las frases. Cuando haces esto, mientras escuchas la grabación que incluye el shakuhachi, es mas fácil discernir los detalles de la línea del shakuhachi aunque tu voz suene muy diferente del instrumento. Esto es, naturalmente, especialmente útil en la práctica del *sankyoku*, pero también es una herramienta eficaz para el proceso de aprendizaje del *honkyoku*. Al cantar y marcar los ritmos puedes comprender con mayor facilidad la cadencia exacta de las frases, los intervalos de tiempo extendidos, el “*ma absoluto*” sobre el que Riley Lee habla en su tesis doctoral. Es fácil perderse en tu propio sonido si solo tocas tu instrumento. La escucha intensa y concentrada necesaria para seguir una grabación con la voz y marcar los ritmos te ayudará a comprender el movimiento de las frases.

En segundo lugar, creo que *sankyoku* y *honkyoku* se complementan uno al otro. Para alcanzar el nivel de *shihan*, un estudiante de Yamaguchi tenía que aprender mas de 70 piezas de *sankyoku*. El *curriculum* es el mismo hoy, y estas piezas de *sankyoku* están divididas en cuatro grados (*sho-den*, *chū-den*, *oku-den*, and *jun-shihan*). Tras ello, estudias los 36 *honkyoku*. Aunque estés entregado por completo al *honkyoku*, creo que aprender algunas piezas *sankyoku* te pueden ayudar de cuatro formas: (1) Control de la afinación: cuando se toca en *ensembles* te ves obligado a pensar en tu afinación. (2) Técnica de digitación: incluso en las secciones rápidas necesitas tener una expresión clara de cada nota. (3) Fraseo y control de la respiración: el fraseo será diferente dependiendo del intérprete de cuerda y el canto será diferente así como lo será el *tempo*. Debes ajustarte al intérprete de cuerda y por lo tanto ser flexible en como frases y como respiras. (4) Una comprensión de como emplear los ornamentos: dependiendo de cómo sea tu fraseo, de donde tomas el aire, etc., puede que quieras añadir un ornamento o eliminarlo.

Por otra parte, si lo que quieres es aprender principalmente *sankyoku*, el conocer algunas piezas *honkyoku* te ayudará de tres formas: (1) Control del sonido, especialmente en ornamentaciones sutiles: en *honkyoku* es esencial que mantengas el control de tu sonido, las dinámicas y presión del sonido (intensidad del tono). (2) Control de la columna de aire: para controlar el tono, necesitas controlar tu columna o transmisión de aire lo que te ayudará cuando toques largas frases también en una pieza *sankyoku*. (3) La expresividad: quizá uno de los aspectos más importantes que se refiere al control del carácter de tu propio tono, la calidad del sonido. El *Honkyoku* vive, o muere, con el carácter de tu sonido.

Tercero, para conseguir un sonido que llene la sala se me pedía que imaginara cómo mi nota, o la pieza, sonaba al fondo de la sala: “sitúa tu tono al fondo mismo de la sala en la que estás tocando”. Esto no quiere decir en absoluto que tengas que soplar más fuerte. La idea es dejar fluir el sonido, dejarlo reverberar. Intentar escuchar tu sonido desde una posición distante, incluso cuando tocas un *tsu no meri* (*ō-meri*) en el registro bajo.

Finalmente, algo que me ayudó mucho a memorizar las piezas era la práctica en un ambiente ruidoso. Cuando estudiaba en la universidad de Tokyo (*Tokyo Geidai*), a menudo estábamos 5-6 personas en una habitación pequeña, practicando piezas completamente diferentes (*honkyoku*, *sankyoku*, *shinkyoku*, etc) con una variedad de shakuhachi. Era muy difícil escuchar tu propio sonido pero me ayudó mucho para aprender como concentrarme sin distracción alguna por mi entorno. Creo que puede ser útil aunque no intentes memorizar la pieza, pero simplemente para concentrarte en tu sonido entre otros muchos.

¡Espero que algunos de estos consejos puedan seros útiles! ¡¡Feliz soplo!!

**Gunnar Jinmei Linder**

## Some questions about Shakuhachi in Ukiyo-e

In Japanese prints, known as Ukiyo-e or images of the floating world, objects are depicted with a high precision, including the most delicate details.

Usually, we can see musical instruments drawn with accuracy, and when shown, realistic. Shamisen are pictured with stings, bridges and knot used to tie up the body



imagen 1-Gekko 1897 [detail]

When they appear being played, the hands and the fingers positions, including, the way the plectrum (bachi) is held, is just right.

This verisimilitude also occurs with other instruments, such as the koto, tsuzumi, and shinobue.



title image - Kunisada 1857

However, representations of the shakuhachi are usually partial, showing only part of the instrument, normally the root end (see the title image).



imagen 2 - Kunisada [detail]



imagen 3 - Kunisada 1858 [detail]

When shakuhachi are depicted complete, they usually show no utaguchi, (see image 2), the holes are in the wrong positions (see image 3) and even appear with more than five holes. (see image 1)

Engravings showing people playing the instrument are rare and more often than not they appear hanging on someone's back, or inside a bag, or being used as a weapon. (see image 4)

imagen 4 -  
Yoshitaki  
Osaka School  
[detail]



And when they are shown being played, the positions of the hands and the fingers are not correct.

There are many examples, such as of komuso monks sometimes wearing a tengai, or basket shaped hat, with all the accessories, but the shakuhachi are usually inside a bag. (see image 5)



imagen 5 - Eisen circa 1835

Shakuhachi do often appear in the prints depicting kabuki theatre plays, especially in the hands of otokodate characters, legendary knights who protected villagers. Another common group of prints showing shakuhachi are found in those depicting Prince Genji in the Genji Monogatari, a novel written in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century.

It appears that the painted shakuhachi are not actually real flutes, but “atrezzo” instruments, used in kabuki plays, where shakuhachi frequently appear, but are nearly never played; are just part of a character's costume.

It is remarkable that even after looking at over 100 prints, I could find only a few examples of the details of shakuhachi being correctly portrayed.

There are several engravings which were made by Kiyonaga Torii in the 19<sup>th</sup> century depicting shakuhachi being played by komuso in which the instruments look realistic with the hands and the



imagen 6 - Kiyonaga1700s [detail]

fingers being in the right positions although the utaguchi are obscured. (see images 6 & 7)



imagen 7 - Kiyonaga1778 [detail]

The last examples are the only ones I could find of shakuhachi possibly copied from real models, the first is by Toyokuni I (XIX C.) but it is a five nodes bamboo. (see image 9)

The other image (see image 11) was made by Gosei, a disciple of Hokusai



imagen 8 - Utamaro1798 [detail]

There are also two prints by Utamaro, where the shakuhachi, although only partially depicted, does include an utaguchi. The instrument in the print on the left (see image 8) has an utaguchi inlay and the holes look to be in the correct position. In the other example (see image 10) there is an utaguchi with no inlay. Only the upper part is drawn, so we cannot see the holes of the flute.



imagen 10 - Utamaro 1793 Shakuhachi [detail]

The shakuhachi was not a popular instrument in Japan and, although many people have heard of it, I have met many people from Japan who have never actually seen or listened to the real instrument. This might be the case of another disappearing tradition, as is happening all over the world, but a close examination of these old images suggests that in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the shakuhachi was also rather rare, as evinced

by the very few faithful representations which were made at that time. Was it, I wonder, because none of these artists over a period of more than two hundred years had a real model to copy .

meditation, cults, and ceremonial purposes. The traditional repertoire, *Koten kyoku*, suggests an individual, inward interpretation of the music which was made to be played, rather than to be listened to, as in the case of Western plainchant.

**Jose Seizan Vargas**



imagen 9 -  
Toyokuni  
Shakuhachi  
[detail]

Perhaps the legendary origins of the shakuhachi being played in *komuso* temples and the influence of *Bushido*, the samurai code, may have resulted in the shakuhachi not being seen to be an instrument which was played in public, just one related to



imagen 11 - Gosei Shakuhachi

## Algunas cuestiones sobre el shakuhachi en el ukiyo-e

En los grabados japoneses conocidos como Ukiyo-e, término que se suele traducir como “dibujos del mundo flotante”, es notoria la precisión con la que son representados los objetos, con mucha atención a los detalles más delicados.



imagen 1-Gekko 1897 [detail]

Así podemos ver los instrumentos musicales fielmente dibujados, y cuando los detalles aparecen, suele ser de forma correcta. En los shamisen aparece incluso el nudo con el que se sujetan las cuerdas al cuerpo, las clavijas, el puente, y cuando aparece alguien tocando el instrumento, la manera en la que se sujeta, la posición de las manos, la forma repulsar las cuerdas con el bachi, o plectro,



imagen inicial - Kunisada 1857

todo está minuciosamente descrito como es en la realidad.

Sucede lo mismo con otros instrumentos, como los koto, tsuzumi (tambores de mano), shinobue etc.



imagen 2 - Kunisada [detail]



imagen 3 - Kunisada 1858 [detail]

Pero no es así en el caso de los shakuhachi. Normalmente aparecen dibujados parcialmente, de forma que vemos solo la raíz del instrumento, y cuando están representados completos, no parecen instrumentos reales. No tienen utaguchi, la posición de los agujeros es errónea, incluso aparecen con más de cinco agujeros, y cuando se representan siendo tocados, la posición de las manos y los dedos no son correctos (ver imágenes 1, 2 y 3)

imagen 4 -  
Yoshitaki  
Osaka School  
[detail]



Además, son muy escasas las ocasiones en las que el shakuhachi aparece siendo tocado, mucho más frecuentemente se le ve colgado a la espalda de los personajes, incluso es más común verlo utilizado como garrote en una pelea (ver imágenes 1, 4 e imagen título)

Existen numerosos ejemplos. Las representaciones más comunes son las de los monjes Komuso, a menudo dibujados fielmente, con el Tengai, o sombrero en forma de cesta y sus demás accesorios, pero con los shakuhachi en su funda (ver imagen 5)



imagen 5 - Eisen circa 1835

Más habitualmente, el shakuhachi aparece en los grabados que describen las obras del teatro Kabuki, como en las que aparecen los Otokodate, legendarios caballeros que ejercían labores de protección a la población. El tercer grupo más frecuente en el que aparecen es el conjunto de grabados que describen las historias del príncipe Genji, novela escrita a comienzos del S.XI.

Da la impresión de que a menudo lo que representan no son shakuhachi reales, sino instrumentos de “atrezzo” utilizados para las obras del teatro Kabuki, en los que el shakuhachi aparece con frecuencia, pero no es tocado nunca, solo forma parte del vestuario de los personajes.





imagen 6 - Kiyonaga1700s [detail]



imagen 7 - Kiyonaga1778 [detail]

Llama la atención que el número de ejemplos con representación detallada y verosímil es muy escaso. Entre los cientos de grabados que he podido examinar, solo he podido encontrar unos pocos.

En el S.XVIII hay varios grabados de Kiyonaga representando komuso tocando shakuhachi de forma realista. Aunque no se distinguen los utaguchi, los instrumentos, la posición de los agujeros, las manos, todo es correcto (ver imágenes 6 y 7)

utaguchi. En el ejemplo de la foto, se ve un utaguchi incrustado, y los agujeros parecen bien colocados. En el otro ejemplo se aprecia el bisel del utaguchi sin incrustación, y no se ven los agujeros (ver imágenes 8 y 10)



imagen 8 - Utamaro1798 [detail]



imagen 10 - Utamaro 1793 Shakuhachi [detail]

También encontré dos grabados de Utamaro en los que los shakuhachi, aunque no se ven enteros, son representados con

Por último, incluyo una imagen de Toyokuni I en la que aparece un shakuhachi que pudiera haber sido copiado del natural, aunque es un bambú de solo cinco nodos (ver imagen 9)



imagen 9 -  
Toyokuni  
Shakuhachi  
[detail]

iconografía sugiere que durante los Siglos XVIII y XIX el shakuhachi era escaso hasta el punto de no ser representado de forma fiel salvo en alguna ocasión, y da que pensar el porqué casi ninguno de los abundantes artistas del género, a lo largo de doscientos años, dispusiera de un modelo real que copiar.

Solo he encontrado otro ejemplo de shakuhachi bien dibujado, de Gosei, en la siguiente imagen (ver imagen 11)

El shakuhachi no ha sido un instrumento popular en Japón. Aunque todos han oído hablar del instrumento, y es un término muy conocido, a menudo me ha sorprendido lo frecuente que es encontrarme con personas del Japón que no han visto ni escuchado nunca un shakuhachi.

Podría ser que se tratara de otro caso más de desvanecimiento de una tradición, como sucede con tantas otras artes y técnicas en todo el mundo. Pero la observación de la

Quizás, el legendario origen del shakuhachi en los monasterios de los monjes Komuso, y la aportación del bushido, el código samurai, puedan explicar los hechos. Pudiera ser que el shakuhachi no fuera un instrumento para tocar en público, fuera de las labores de meditación, culto, o ceremonia. El repertorio tradicional Kōten Kyoku sugiere una interpretación individual, interna, y puede ser una música que, mas que para ser oída, sobre todo está hecha para ser interpretada, como el canto Gregoriano occidental.

**Jose Seizan Vargas**



imagen 11 - Gosei Shakuhachi

## App and PC-based Training tools for musicians

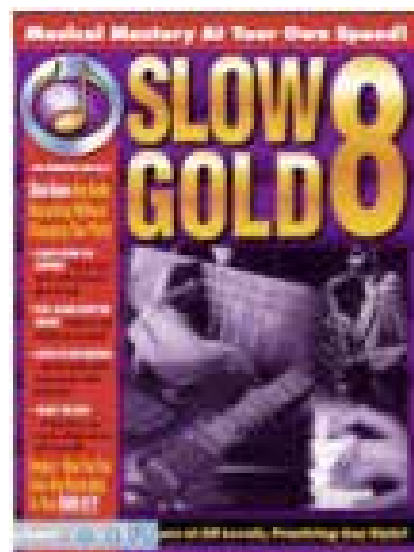
A couple of years ago, my shakuhachi lessons with Michael Soumei Coxall took me into serious sankyoku pieces. As many of you will know, it is really important to play along with recordings to learn tempo, pitch, and especially listening skills. While doing so, it is essential to be able to slow down the music, change the pitch, play segments and play loops. Some dvc/cd players offer some of these options but mine was complicated to operate and not very mobile in the house. That is why I started my search, first for PC-based tools and then later for Apps.



In 2014, I downloaded SlowGold, available for Windows 7™, Windows Vista™, Windows XP™ - and now Mac OS/X™ at a price of £25.

It is very easy to import any CD, MP3 file, or Wave file. It enables you to play along with a loop of any phrase at any speed and at the original pitch. Any changes you make in the recording can be saved in a new file.

Initially, I had some problems with locating the files. The information about the loops that you create is stored in a separate loop file in which a link is made to the location of the music file. Hence, if you move the music file to another directory, the loop file cannot find the related music file anymore. When I contacted the developer, Tom Swirly, I received very useful support, and it appeared that I was the first user to discover this issue. He told me that he would try to solve this minor issue in a new release of Slowgold. I have been using Slowgold with much satisfaction for about 6 months now and can highly recommend it as it is excellent value for money. You can download a free demo first. More details about its features are available at: <http://www.worldwidewoodshed.com/>



The only drawback that I experienced was that I had to carry my laptop around the house and I could not have this training tool with me when travelling without a laptop.

That is when I discovered Anytune which is available for IOS and Mac although not currently available for Windows or Android yet.

It helps you learn, transcribe or practice songs by slowing down the tempo, adjusting the pitch, repeating loops, setting navigation marks, sharing timed comments and much more. I bought the Anytune Pro+ for my Iphone which I have been using now for the last 6 months. It is not as easy to use as Slowgold, as it has more features, and you need to put some time into understanding all the options. A small drawback for me of having it on an Iphone is that the touch buttons are rather small for my fingers. However, the sound gets even better when I connect it via Bluetooth to my external mini Bluetooth speaker.

Again, it is excellent value for money.

Their website says the following:

“The first app to offer features normally found on expensive desktop software, Anytune Pro+ is consistently ranked as the highest-rated music practice app on the Apple Appstore”.

You can download a free version, with has limits on the number of markers and loops you can create, or buy the Anytune Pro+ for \$14.99 or the Mac version for \$29.99.

See their website at <http://anytune.us/>.

I also checked with the Anytune Support desk whether it would be possible to isolate a channel in order to listen to, and to play along with, specific instruments such as listening to the koto line whilst playing the shakuhachi part, as in karaoke.

The FineTouch EQ (available in Anytune Pro+ or Anytune with Studio Pack In-App purchase) allows you to adjust the gain for specific frequency ranges. The Isolate EQ presets attempt to boost the frequencies used by a specific instrument and suppress the others. However, all songs are different and many instruments share many of the same frequencies. Hence, it will not be able to achieve complete instrument isolation but the EQ presets will enable you to save the EQ settings for each song. You can also use Anytune's Pan/Balance controls to help locate audio in a stereo channel by tapping the 'microphone' icon to reveal the livemix controls. It is then possible to select the music playback pan by swiping the slider. By pressing and holding the pan button, there will be additional options for controlling how the pan behaves.

I wouldn't be able to practice my shakuhachi playing without these tools anymore. It makes a huge difference not only in learning to play together with others but also in improving my listening skills. I am predominantly using it for my sankyoku music but nothing stops you from using it with honkyoku or any other type of music.



## Japanese music in Paris, it's hot!

ESS Summer School 2015  
July 2nd-5th  
Paris

**Y**ou are lucky living in the Paris area when you are passionate about Japanese music.

The French are often intrigued and quite fascinated by Japan and when a Frenchman is asked about the traditional arts of the “land of the Rising Sun”, you often hear him talking of poetry, sophistication, beauty, elegance

... This warm response has probably something to do with the good health of the traditional Japanese music schools here. In Paris, you can learn sanshin, shamisen, koto, taiko, and shakuhachi of course! If you play shakuhachi, you can learn Tozan style, KSK style, the style of the Hijiri Kai School of Teruhisha Fukuda and Kinko style is also beginning to become available. We owe all this to people like Mieko Miyazaki, Fumie Hihara, Etsuko Chida for the koto and the



shamisen, and are fortunate to have in Paris people like Sōzan Kariya, Jean-François Lagrost, Daniel Lifermann and Véronique Piron for the shakuhachi and, of course, Gunnar Linder who

comes more and more regularly to Paris as well as visits by Teruhisa Fukuda.

The latest European Shakuhachi Society Summer School, organized by Véronique Piron and Jean-François Lagrost, reflected this

diversity very well by making room for these people who have supported Japanese music in France for many years, and by allowing the community of European students and beyond to meet them.

Many aspects of this event linger on in my memory, including working as a roadie koto carrier! First, I'd like to make a few observations on how, as it seems to me, the traditions of shakuhachi work. Traditional music is based on

a repertoire transmitted from generation to generation and reinvented through that transmission. However, it is sometimes difficult to see the effect of this reinvention when learning a specific style and having very little other references, except those from your own teacher. A way to notice the effect of this reinvention is to have the chance to hear musicians from different schools sharing the same repertoire.

The ESS Summer School in Paris gave us this opportunity at least twice. A first striking example for me was to hear Gunnar Linder and Wolfgang Heßler play together. They are both Kinko musicians, sharing the same music and very similar scores, but with very different ways of playing, transmitted respectively by Yamaguchi Goro and Kawase Junsuke III. Similarly, and even more striking for me as a musician from the Shin Tozan-ryū school, I had the opportunity to study again the piece *Kōgetsu chō*, which I had previously studied with Sōzan Kariya, in a significantly different interpretation with Taizan and Kizan Kawamura who are masters of the Gakkai Tozan school. Even if the piece remains fundamentally the same in both schools, the ornaments, grace notes, vibrato and timing may be different. The Summer School

made me think about the fact that the schisms which can be seen in the Japanese shakuhachi schools can actually play a rather important role in the evolution, and therefore the vitality, of the repertoire. It also gave me the occasion to put into perspective the importance of being respectfully in line with a repertoire's style, in order to ensure the transmission needed for the establishment of a traditional music, and the fact of keeping the repertoire alive by putting a little of yourself into it which is a difficult and subtle balance.

In another vein, I particularly enjoyed the focus provided for music ensembles. Regarding music involving only shakuhachi, Daniel Lifermann led a class about the piece *Sange*, Sōzan Kariya taught *Asa no umi* and *Yuzuki*, and of course Taizan and Kizan Kawamura had us study *Yachiyo*. All these pieces are written for two voices which allowed large groups of players to share good moments on stage during the students' concerts! This practice is very traditional in Japan and I think we were lucky to experience it in Paris. Moreover, the koto and shamisen players, Mieko Miyazaki, Fumie Hihara, Etsuko Chida and of course Toshimi Kawamura, rewarded us with wonderful moments of music which allowed us to hear the subtle differences in the playing of the schools they represent. Together with the shakuhachi teachers, they formed





various ensembles to let us discover the *jiuta*, *sōkyoku* and contemporary repertoires. I cannot forget the trio of Jean-François Lagrost with Taizan and Kizan Kawamura, the pieces played by Daniel Lifermann, Hélène Codjo and Fiore De Mattia, the duet of Sōzan Kariya and Jean-François Lagrost, and a fantastic duet played by Taizan and Kizan Kawamura about which I will talk more of later. It was wonderful to hear these performances in the city hall of Le Kremlin-Bicêtre, the auditorium of the Echo and the Parc Pinel in which the only open-air concert of the Summer School was held.

When we think of the 2015 Summer School, we also conjure the image of the crane! This emblematic bird of Japan is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for *honkyoku*. The theme of the crane was the main thread of the event and a large number of pieces inspired by this bird were highlighted during the concerts, including the intense KSK version of *Tsuru no sugomori* interpreted by Véronique Piron, the masterful, meditative and abstract version of the *Kinko Sokaku Reibo* performed by Gunnar Linder, the profound interpretation of the piece *Tsuru no sugomori* written by Kohachiro Miyata and performed by Daniel Lifermann, as transmitted to him by Teruhisa Fukuda, and the Tozan duet *Tsuru*

*no sugomori* interpreted by Taizan and Kizan Kawamura. I really find this last piece epic and the interpretation by these two Tozan musicians still evokes in me a thrill; sensitivity, technical and text mastery, poetry, formal beauty, and intensity. These are some of the words that still rush into my mind when I think back to it and it could be a lifelong project to study variations of this piece from all the schools; they are all so different but have so much in common. It is not just technical issues, such as the use of 'koro koro', but also the structure which evokes the movement of the wings or the calls of the bird and the melodic themes used to tell the story. In fact, the "nest of the crane" is almost a style in itself.

This was the first time that I had met Taizan, Kizan and Toshimi Kawamura, and as primarily a Tozan musician, I welcomed the opportunity to follow all their lessons. I was struck by the deep knowledge they have of their repertoire, by their control and the intelligence of their teaching, and beyond these purely musical aspects, by their availability and kindness. I sincerely hope to have the pleasure of meeting them again in the future.





Well, was there anything not to like in this Summer School? Well, it's a matter of preference but if you are keen on extreme saunas or hammams, then the answer is no; everything was just perfect. For others, if you had forgotten to pack your sweater, you would not have missed it; it was at least 45° C in the classrooms! However, we all survived the record heat wave so thank you to the ESS and especially to Véronique and Jean-François for organizing this beautiful event and making it such a real success. The ESS summer schools are really important for the vitality of the shakuhachi in Europe and I sincerely hope that the rhythm will remain an annual one as they play an important social role in making acquaintances and friends throughout Europe and beyond who share the same passion as you. Little by little, these events help to form a shakuhachi 'nation' in Europe. Well, perhaps that is a bit grandiloquent but we do need to see each other because as we say "Out of sight, out of mind"!

**Christophe Gaston**





## La musique japonaise à Paris, c'est chaud comme la braise!

ESS Summer School 2015  
Paris

Vivre aux alentours de Paris lorsque l'on est passionné de musique japonaise est une grande chance. Les Français sont souvent intrigués et un peu fascinés par le Japon. Lorsqu'un Français est confronté aux arts traditionnels du « pays du Soleil levant » on entend souvent dans ses commentaires

parler de poésie, de raffinement, de beauté, d'élégance...

Cet accueil souvent plus que bienveillant a sans doute quelque chose à voir avec la bonne santé des écoles de musiques traditionnelles. A

Paris, vous pouvez apprendre le sanshin, le shamisen, le koto, le taiko et le shakuhachi bien sûr! Si vous jouez du shakuhachi vous pourrez apprendre le style Tozan, le style KSK, le style de l'école Hijiri Kai de Teruhisha Fukuda et le style Kinko commence à devenir accessible (désolé si j'en oublie!). Tout cela, on le doit à des gens comme Mieko Miyazaki, Fumie Hihara, Etsuko Chida pour le koto et le shamisen. Pour le shakuhachi nous avons la chance d'avoir à



Paris de gens comme Sōzan Kariya, Jean-François Lagrost, Daniel Lifermann, Véronique Piron... Je n'oublierai pas non plus Gunnar Linder qui vient de plus en plus régulièrement à Paris et les passages de Teruhisa Fukuda. La dernière édition de la Rencontre européenne de shakuhachi, organisée par Véronique

Piron et Jean-François

Lagrost, a eu comme premier mérite de formidablement bien refléter toute cette diversité en faisant une place à ces gens qui soutiennent la musique japonaise en France depuis bien des années, et en permettant à la communauté

des étudiants européens (et au-delà!) de les rencontrer.

Il me reste beaucoup de choses de cette édition (je passerai sur ma découverte du métier de roadie porteur de koto ☺). Tout d'abord quelques observations relatives à comment, me semble-t-il, fonctionnent les traditions du shakuhachi. Les musiques traditionnelles sont basées sur des répertoires transmis de génération en génération et réinventés au

travers de la transmission. Mais il est parfois difficile de constater l'effet de cette réinvention lorsqu'on travaille dans une école avec peu de références autres que son professeur. Un moyen qui permet de constater l'effet de cette réinvention est d'avoir la chance d'entendre des musiciens de plusieurs écoles partageant un même répertoire. Le festival de Paris nous a donné au moins deux fois cette chance. Un premier exemple frappant pour moi est d'avoir entendu Gunnar Linder et Wolfgang Heßler jouer ensemble. Tous deux musiciens Kinko, partageant le même répertoire, des partitions très proches, mais ayant des styles de jeux très différents issus respectivement des transmissions de Goro Yamaguchi et Kawase Junsuke III. Dans le même ordre d'idée, et encore plus frappant pour moi en tant que musicien issu de l'école Shin Tozan Ryū, j'ai eu l'occasion de travailler la pièce *Kōgetsu chō*, que j'avais étudiée avec Sōzan Kariya, dans une interprétation significativement différente en l'étudiant avec Taizan et Kizan Kawamura (qui eux sont des maîtres de l'école Tozan Gakkai). Même si la pièce reste fondamentalement la même dans les deux écoles, la manière d'orner, les appoggiatures, les vibratos, le timing, peuvent être différents. Le festival de Paris m'a fait réfléchir sur le fait que les scissions que l'on observe dans les écoles de shakuhachi japonaises peuvent jouer un rôle non-anecdotique dans l'évolution et donc la vitalité du répertoire. Ce fut aussi un moment pour remettre en perspective le fait de s'inscrire dans une



lignée respectueuse du style du répertoire, sans laquelle il n'y a pas la transmission nécessaire à l'établissement d'une musique traditionnelle, et le fait de faire vivre le répertoire en y mettant un peu de soi... Difficile et subtil équilibre... J'imagine qu'en avançant dans sa pratique le curseur se positionne peu à peu.

Dans un autre ordre d'idée, j'ai particulièrement apprécié la place qui a été faite aux musiques d'ensembles. Pour les musiques impliquant uniquement des shakuhachi, on le doit à Daniel Lifermann qui a animé une classe autour de la pièce *Sange*, à Sōzan Kariya qui a enseigné *Asa no umi* et *Yūzuki*, et bien sûr à Taizan et Kizan Kawamura qui nous ont fait étudier *Yachiyo*. Toutes ces pièces sont écrites à deux voix et ont permis à de grands groupes de joueurs de partager de bons moments sur scène pendant les concerts des étudiants ! Cette pratique est très classique au Japon (en tous cas, pour ce que j'en sais, au moins dans les écoles Tozan) et je pense que c'est une chance que nous ayons pu vivre cela à Paris. Par ailleurs les joueuses de koto et de shamisen (Mieko Miyazaki, Fumie Hihara, Etsuko Chida et bien sûr Toshimi Kawamura) nous ont gratifiés de magnifiques moments

de musique en nous permettant d'entendre les subtiles différences de jeu des écoles qu'elles représentent. Avec les enseignants de shakuhachi elles ont formé des ensembles pour nous faire parcourir les répertoires *jiuta*, *sōkyoku* et

contemporain. Je n'oublie pas non plus le trio formé par Jean-François Lagrost, Taizan et Kizan Kawamura ainsi que les pièces jouées par Daniel Lifermann, Hélène Codjo et Fiore di Mattia, le duo formé par Sōzan Kariya et

Jean-François Lagrost... et un fantastique duo de Taizan et Kizan Kawamura sur lequel je reviendrai plus tard.... De magnifiques programmes de concerts que nous avons eu la chance d'entendre dans des lieux tels que la mairie du Kremlin-Bicêtre, l'auditorium de l'Echo et le parc Pinel dans lequel a eu lieu le seul concert en plein air du festival.



Comment parler du festival 2015 sans parler de la grue ! Cet oiseau emblématique du Japon est une source d'inspiration inépuisable pour écrire des *honkyoku*. Le thème de la grue était le fil conducteur du festival et un grand nombre de pièces inspirées de cet oiseau ont été mises à l'honneur pendant les concerts, parmi lesquelles, l'intense version KSK de *Tsuru no sugomori* interprétée par Véronique Piron ; la magistrale, méditative et abstraite version Kinko de *Sōkaku reibo* réalisée par Gunnar Linder ; la profonde interprétation de la pièce *Tsuru no sugomori* écrite par Kohachiro Miyata et interprétée par Daniel Lifermann, telle qu'elle lui a été transmise par Teruhisa Fukuda (tiens... encore un moyen de constater la mécanique de la réinvention pour celui qui a eu la chance d'écouter les versions de ces trois personnes<sup>©</sup>) ; et le duo *Tsuru no sugomori* Tozan réalisé Taizan et Kizan Kawamura... Je trouve vraiment cette pièce épique et l'interprétation de ces deux musiciens évoque encore en moi des frissons ! Sensibilité, maîtrise technique, maîtrise du texte, poésie, beauté formelle, intensité... Voilà quelques mots qui se pressent dans ma tête quand j'y repense... Toutes ces pièces sont fascinantes et cela pourrait être le projet d'une vie que de les travailler toutes écoles confondues... Elles sont à la fois si différentes et ont tellement en commun : je pense bien sûr aux techniques « *koro koro* » mais aussi à cette structure alternant bruitages (évoquant les mouvements d'ailes ou les cris de l'oiseau) et thèmes mélodiques en charge de raconter l'histoire... Le « nid de la grue » est presque un style en soi...

C'est la première fois que je rencontrais Taizan et Kizan Kawamura ainsi que Toshimi Kawamura et étant principalement musicien Tozan, j'ai saisi cette chance pour suivre tous leurs cours. J'ai été frappé par la profonde connaissance qu'ils ont de leur répertoire, par leur maîtrise, par l'intelligence de leur enseignement, et au-delà de ces aspects purement musicaux par leur disponibilité et leur gentillesse. J'espère sincèrement avoir le plaisir de recroiser leur chemin à l'avenir.

Bon... Y-a-t-il eu quelque chose de désagréable dans ce festival ? Et bien c'est une question de point de vue... Si vous êtes adeptes du sauna ou hammam à haute dose alors la réponse est non... Tout était parfait... Pour les autres, si vous aviez oublié votre petite laine ce n'était pas bien grave... Il faisait environ 45°C dans les salles de cours (je soupçonne que

je minimise...)! Que du bonheur! ☺ Finalement nous avons survécu à la canicule et ça a rajouté un peu de sel (de sueur...) à l'évènement n'est-ce pas ? Pendant ces quelques jours je crois me souvenir que nous avons battu les records de chaleur connus pour Paris... Si c'était la première fois que vous veniez, n'ayez pas peur de revenir... En général c'est plus raisonnable en été...

Merci à l'ESS et tout particulièrement à Véronique et Jean-François d'avoir organisé cette belle édition. Je sais que vous vous êtes bien battus tous les deux pour faire de cet événement un succès. C'est franchement très réussi ! Les festivals de l'ESS sont vraiment importants pour la vitalité du shakuhachi en Europe... J'espère sincèrement que le rythme restera annuel. Si la fréquence diminuait cela voudrait dire que louper une édition vous couperait de la communauté pendant au moins 4 ans... Les festivals de l'ESS ont un rôle social important car c'est aussi tout simplement un moyen de se faire des connaissances/amis dans toute l'Europe (et au-delà) qui partagent la même passion que vous... Ces festivals servent ainsi à peu à peu constituer la « nation » du shakuhachi en Europe (humm... bon OK... peut-être un peu grandiloquent☺)... Mais pour ça il faut se voir, car comme on dit ici... « Loin des yeux loin du cœur ! »...



**Christophe Gaston**



## Prague Shakuhachi Festival August 21st-25th 2015

In 2014, I joined the Prague Shakuhachi Festival for the first time and had an incredibly free and happy time there. As soon as I got back home from that festival, I begged my wife to be sure to let me go back again in the following year. On 21<sup>st</sup> August, I arrived at the long-distance bus terminal in Prague and headed towards the Academy of Music Prague (HAMU), hoping to see people again from the previous year. In the middle of the holiday season, Prague was full of tourists so I had to plough my way through the crowd. Finally, I reached the big door of HAMU and opened it and there I saw people sitting and relaxing under sun umbrellas, peacefully drinking coffee. They were the 'shakuhachi family'.

In 2016, Prague will be the city for the World Shakuhachi Festival (WSF16) and because of this it seemed that some new ideas were tried out this time for next year's big event. For example, the opening concert took place not in HAMU but in the Czech Museum of Music. The participants enjoyed exploring the unfamiliar streets, map in hand, searching

for the museum and marveling at some of the beautiful architecture of Prague. The first piece of the opening concert was played by shamisen-player Kikuo Yuji which was very apt as this year the festival had invited koto and shamisen players so participants had the opportunity to play and listen to sankyoku. The opening concert mainly featured experimental and improvisational pieces and some tried to work three-dimensionally together with the beautiful architecture and space of the museum. Perhaps next year at WSF16, we will be able to hear the sounds of shakuhachi from every corner of the city, just like in that concert.

Last year's main guest player was Fujiwara Dozan who showed us the very wide range of possibilities which the shakuhachi has to offer as a musical instrument. This year the festival focused on 'Zen', which relates to the mentality and spirituality of the shakuhachi. As a guest, we had a monk from Hossin-ji temple in Tokyo who gave a lecture on zen and the komuso in the morning of the second day and we also had meditation every morning. It was surely a very special experience for us all to be hit with a stick by a zen monk! On the second day was a sound-walking event which no one knew what it would

be about although many imagined that we might be walking through the town playing shakuhachi and wearing a tengai like a komuso monk. However, it was not like that at all. We were blindfolded and guided to a viewpoint where we could then see the beauty of Prague, perhaps as a foretaste for next year's WSF16. In front of the Kampa Museum, Christopher Yohmei Blasdel, Gunnar Jinmei Linder and this year's main guest, Sugawara Kuniyoshi, played Shikano-Tone. Vlastislav Matoušek played a concert entitled 'Dialogue between East and West' at the hall of Judith Tower and also played in a pantomime in the Kampa Museum on the next day. These were obviously events which were not only for the festival participants but also aimed at the general public who had never heard the shakuhachi before. Through these events, I could feel the passion of the organizers for next year's WSF16 very well. In the second day's main concert, 'Zen: Sound and Silence', each festival guest who came from very different shakuhachi schools played a honkyoku piece. That was the true concert of shakuhachi! In the very beautiful and cozy atmosphere of the church of St. Vavřinec, the audience experienced many moments of magic which we will never forget.

On the third day, the lessons for the students finally began. On the first two days we had picnics, meditation, concerts and so forth but as students we didn't have many chances to actually play shakuhachi and many of us were somewhat frustrated and hoped that a better program would be provided in future years. This time, the composer Marty Regan composed a piece, 'Lost Mountains – Quiet Valleys', for the festival and interested teachers and students practiced it together for the

student concert on the last day. For me, it was a completely new experience to read western notation, to play with a conductor, to practice with professional musicians and to watch how they worked on a piece which was a very rich learning experience for me. I really hope that such lessons will be included again in future years. The main concert on the third day was, 'Japanese contemporary and traditional music', mainly with koto and shamisen and the high, clear male voice of Kikuo Yuji charmed the audience.

From about the fourth day, the participants started to feel the pressure of the following day's student concert but there were a number of interesting events still on offer; a 'listening session' with Marek Styczinski and a lecture about the famous Japanese monk, Ikkyu, by Gunnar Jinmei Linder, both of which unfortunately I had to miss because of my own practice. The PSF Website announced the names of the pieces we would study in advance but many new pieces were announced at registration for the first time. If we had known them all beforehand, we could have prepared at home and had a more relaxed time at the festival and joined in the interesting events more. Clearly, communication for the participants is a very important issue. The main concert of the 4th evening was 'Inner landscape, contemporary myths' which, I think, had a very typical flavour of Prague Shakuhachi Festivals; freedom, a big variety and a lot of humor. After the concert, Seizan Osako played with his band in the HAMU courtyard.

The first concert on the final day was 'Meet new players' in which each new player performed a single piece in the very beautiful stairwell of HAMU. The audience sat around the small stage and watched as each player performed a very different piece. However, there was a common beauty, an opening of hearts

and a simplicity which is maybe what the next generation of shakuhachi aficionados are looking for. At the end of the festival, the very tense and very blessed student's concert began slowly with Marty Regan's 'Lost Mountains – Quiet Valleys'.....

**Yusuke Yamasaki**





## First KSK-Europe Workshop May 22nd-23rd, 2015 Barcelona, Spain

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015, the *Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan Europe (KSK-Europe)* made its official introduction with a concert at Barcelona's *Museo Nacional de Arte de Catalunya* (Catalan National Art Museum) which is one of the most prestigious spaces for cultural life in the Catalan capital.

That same weekend, Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> and Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>, with the ESMUC as a venue (what memories of the Shakuhachi Summer School 2013!!!) took place the first Shakuhachi Workshop of the KSK-Europe led by two of the three certified European KSK teachers involved in the project, Jim Franklin and Horacio Curti (Veronique Piron being the third)

It was an intense weekend in which we could come to better know and work on two wonderful pieces: the honkyoku *Daha* and Fukuda Rando's piece *Kikyo Gensokyoku*. There was also time to work on technique and, what I found most difficult, on improvisation.

For me as a shakuhachi lover with little time to devote to practice, the possibility of being able to share this experience with two great teachers such as Horacio

and Jim is always a great incentive. Besides experiencing some moments of anxiety, sounds that are not appearing, new difficult techniques, a feeling that everyone is advancing in a piece while I am still trying to produce the first sounds, etc., I fall in love again with the instrument.

I think that I am not saying anything new here and many others might have felt similarly in other shakuhachi workshops.

Apart from the opportunity to practice and learn new things, to try to overcome 'stage fright' in front of the teacher and having the opportunity of getting different views on how to address and work on a piece and how to play it was an important part the workshop, as well as the pleasure of meeting up again with others whom I only meet at workshops from time to time and, of course, the pleasure of meeting new people from different countries in Europe.

Ending the workshop with a good beer and a more than generous Chinese dish at one of the few authentic *shifa's* in town, with all of us squeezed together around a table feeling the good 'tuning' among us all, was for me the best possible way of drawing the event to a close.



It was a wonderful and generous idea of Katsuya Yokoyama to create the “KSK” in order to enable overseas shakuhachi students to have the opportunity of learning in the same way as they could in Japan and I am sure that he would have applauded the result.

Thanks a lot to KSK-Europe for organizing this event!



**Stella Maris (Hawwa) Morales**



## Primer Taller del KSK-Europe 22 y 23 de Mayo de 2015 Barcelona

El 22 de mayo la *Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan Europe (KSK-Europe)* hizo su presentación oficial en Barcelona con un concierto en el Museo Nacional de Arte de Catalunya, uno de los espacios mas prestigiosos de la vida cultural de la capital catalana.

Aquel mismo fin de semana (22 y 23) en las instalaciones de la ESMUC (¡qué buenos recuerdos los de la Summer Shakuhachi School !!!) se desarrolló el primer Taller de Shakuhachi de la KSK-Europe organizado por dos de sus maestros europeos, Jim Franklin y Horacio Curti (mi profe).

Fue un fin de semana intenso en el cual pudimos conocer mejor y trabajar dos preciosas piezas: *Daha* y *Kikyo Genzokyoku*; hubo técnica y lo que personalmente me pareció mas difícil, improvisación.

Para una amante del *shakuhachi* con poco tiempo para dedicar a la práctica como es mi caso, el poder compartir esta experiencia con dos grandes maestros como Horacio y Jim es siempre un gran aliciente y a pesar de sentir en algunos momentos un cierto grado de ansiedad (notas que no salen, técnicas que nunca has visto, y esa sensación de que todo el mundo está avanzando en la pieza

mientras tú todavía estás intentando reproducir las primeras notas, etc) volví a enamorarme de este instrumento.

Pero no creo que diga nada nuevo a lo que puedan haber sentido otros compañeros en otros talleres de *shakuhachi*, ¿verdad?

Aparte de la oportunidad de practicar y aprender cosas nuevas, intentar superar el miedo escénico ante el profesor y tener la oportunidad de que te ofrezcan visiones diferentes de como enfocar una pieza y como interpretarla, para mí la segunda parte más importante del taller fue la del gustazo de volver a encontrarme con compañeros con los que solo coincido de taller en taller y conocer nuevos venidos desde otros países. Acabar el taller con una buena cerveza y un más que generoso plato de cocina china en uno de los pocos *shifa* auténticos de la ciudad, todos bien apretaditos alrededor de una mesa entre buen humor y con el espíritu en sintonía es el mejor acto de clausura que puedes tener.

Fue una idea genial y generosa la del gran maestro Katsuya Yokoyama la de crear la "KSK" para facilitar a los estudiantes de *shakuhachi* de otros países aprender al mismo nivel que el de los estudiantes japoneses. Estoy segura de que su espíritu está aplaudiendo la idea de la KSK japonesa en animar a estos maestros a establecer

una rama de la escuela en Europa, es agradable sentir que la distancia física ya no es tanta... además, siempre es enriquecedor ver como profesores y alumnos con distintas comprensiones del tiempo y organización consiguen acabar creando una bella sinfonía única e irrepetible.

Muchas gracias!



**Stella Maris (Hawwa) Morales**

San-an  
shakuhachi koten-honkyoku vol.2  
Furuya Teruo



Out of this second edition of Furuya Teruo's koten honkyoku, a big homogeneity of sound and an inner quietness in the performance is clearly apparent with a space left for echo ('hibiki'). It is the expression of a will determined in its aesthetic choices with consummate control; a complete accomplishment.

The deliberate choice to play all the pieces on one single length of shakuhachi, the standard 1.8, strengthens the way of this direction by developing even more the internal listening especially for the deepest pieces usually played on long shakuhachi, which Furuya Teruo himself refers to as the 'dry method'.



The cover of this CD's series is just like one of the representations that we can make of the music: a human face with a smile, a look, more exactly a look in movement, looking maybe 'inwards', being also the most expressive part of our body which we cannot see ourselves. This is, surely, a part of our humanity and our belonging to humanity which is universal and in which we can see a common message with the spirit of honkyoku: expression, kindness, interiority; the qualities themselves of the maestro.

Recorded and mixed by Yukata Watanabe at Music inn Yamanakako Production Bamboo, 2015

The CD starts with two major pieces of the shakuhachi: 'Koku' starting with a very frank 'Tsu-Re' motive, followed by 'Tori, Kadozuke, Hachigaeshi', three short traditional pieces which are linked together to form a great classic of the spiritual repertoire of the itinerant komuso monks ("Passage, Door to door, Return the bowl"). This piece which Furuya-sensei has added to the conventional repertoire of the KSK school brings a certain freshness in its melody and the modes which are used.

This recording contains three of the main koten-honkyoku transmitted by Yokoyama Katsuya. 'San-An', which is also the title of the CD, is the final

piece on the recording. It took 10 years for Yokoyama Katsuya to get the essence of this piece from Watazumi, which, as the meaning of the title suggests, he had to 'give birth' to it. In this way, 'San-An' has a very special emotional attachment.

'Tamuke', which has become a key piece played at the biggest shakuhachi gatherings where all the shakuhachi community play together, in a single breath, is one of the most beautiful presents left by Yokoyama Katsuya. 'Sanya' (Mountain-Valley), chosen by Yokoyama-sensei himself to accompany his own burial, is a honkyoku just like life which flows into infinity, the mountain stream becoming a cascade and then a river flowing into the boundless sea.

Other pieces include 'Daha', a short piece full of spirit, rich in timbre with different moods and facets. 'Koden-Sugomori' which is the oldest version of all 'Tsuru no Sugomori' pieces, as well as two Kinko style pieces, 'Kumoi Jishi' in which Furuya-sensei expresses the beauty of the high pitched melody, and 'Shika no Tône' in which he is connecting here with a sentimental image of old Japan.

We can hear Buddhist sermons by the komuso monks searching for 'the' sound in order to reach nirvana. Here, breath after breath, sound after sound, note after note, the melody constructs, de-constructs and re-constructs itself, step by step; re-learned, re-created. Small or big, the song is there, and this is the real objective that Furuya-sensei focused on.

Veronique Piron

**San-an**  
**shakuhachi koten-honkyoku vol.2**  
**Furuya Teruo**



De ce 2ème volet de Furuya Teruo sur les koten honkyoku se dégage une grande homogénéité de son, un calme intérieur clairement apparent dans l’interprétation, avec un espace laissé pour la résonance (“hibiki”). C’est l’expression d’une volonté déterminée dans ses choix esthétiques avec une grande maîtrise: une réalisation pleinement accomplie.

Le choix délibéré de jouer l’ensemble des pièces sur une seule longueur de shakuhachi, le standard 1.8, renforce le chemin dans cette direction, en développant davantage encore l’écoute intérieure particulièrement pour les pièces les plus profondes habituellement jouées sur des shakuhachi longs, que Furuya Teruo appelle lui-même la “méthode sèche”.



La pochette de cette série de CD est à l’image d’une des représentations que l’on peut se faire de la musique: un visage humain avec un sourire, un regard, plus exactement un regard en mouvement, peut-être vers l’intérieur; soit la partie la plus expressive de notre corps, et pourtant celle que nous ne pouvons voir nous-mêmes. Cela représente certainement une part de notre humanité et notre appartenance à une humanité plus universelle, dans lequel on peut voir un message commun avec l’esprit du honkyoku: expressivité, bonté et intériorité, les qualités mêmes du maestro.

Enregistré et mixé par Yukata Watanabe à Music inn Yamanakako production Bamboo, 2015

Le CD démarre sur deux pièces maitresses du shakuhachi:

“Koku”, avec un motif Tsu-Re, joué bien franc au démarrage, suivi de “Tori, Kadozuke, Hachigaeshi”, trois pièces courtes traditionnellement enchaînées, un grand classique du répertoire spirituel des moines komuso itinérants (“Passage, Porte à porte, Retourne le bol”). Cette pièce ajoutée par Furuya-sensei au répertoire conventionnel de l’école KSK apporte une certaine fraîcheur par sa mélodie et les modes qu’elle utilise.

Cet enregistrement comporte trois des principaux koten-honkyoku transmis par Yokoyama-sensei.

“San-An”, qui est le titre du Cd, termine aussi l’enregistrement. Cela a pris 10 ans à Yokoyama Katsuya pour obtenir de Watazumi toute l’essence de cette pièce, devant ainsi comme le suggère le titre, lui “donner naissance”. De cette façon “San-An” produit un attachement émotionnel puissant.

“Tamuke”, devenue une pièce phare des grands rassemblements de shakuhachi où toute la communauté des joueurs de shakuhachi se rassemble dans un seul souffle, est un des plus beaux cadeaux laissés par Yokoyama Katsuya.

“Sanya” (Montagnes et Vallées), choisie par Yokoyama-sensei lui-même pour accompagner ses propres funérailles, est un honkyoku à l’image de la vie qui coule à l’infini, tel le cours d’eau de la montagne, qui devient cascade puis fleuve pour aller se jeter dans l’immensité de la mer. A cela s’ajoutent “Daha”, une pièce courte pleine d’esprit, riche en timbre et aux multiples facettes; “Koden-Sugomori” qui est la forme la plus ancienne de tous les “Tsuru no Sugomori”; ainsi que deux pièces du répertoire kinko, “Kumoi-Jishi” dans laquelle Furuya-sensei exprime la beauté d’une mélodie dans les aigus, et “Shika-no-Tône” qu’il relie ici à une image sentimentale du Japon ancien.

Il est dit des prêches bouddhistes par les moines komuso, recherchant “le” son pour atteindre le nirvana. Ici souffle après souffle, son après son, note après note, la mélodie se construit, se dé-construit et se re-construit pas à pas: ré-apprise, re-créée. Petit ou grand, le chant est là, et c’est bien le véritable objectif sur lequel s’est fixé Furuya-sensei.

## Sillage

Véronique Piron, Lydia Domancich, Fumie Hihara



Véronique Piron, shakuhachi  
Lydia Domancich, piano,  
Fumie Hihara, Koto

Gimini Music 1018

I have thought for a long time that a convincing pairing of piano and shakuhachi would be difficult to achieve - the one a child of the industrial revolution with its high tension steel-strung frame, the other distinctly agrarian by comparison. The piano's power and brilliance might easily overwhelm the sonic subtlety that is the hallmark of the shakuhachi's language.

From the outset, it is clear that this will not be the case with *Sillage*. Track 1, a version of the honkyoku classic, *Kumoi Jishi*, brings immediately to mind Lewis Rowell's lovely observation that Japanese music treasures the 'studied avoidance of simultaneity' for its 'illusion of multiple superimposed tonal images' - a beautiful effect, and one that sounds startlingly original on the piano. Such a stark beginning makes a statement about the album as a whole - that the shakuhachi is not going to fall over into a Western style folk code, and that the piano and its heritage are not going to dominate or lead the proceedings.

*Sillage* is an album of eight pieces that are neither fully through-composed nor completely improvised: a wise decision given the manifest tensions that exist between the two primary instruments. Instead, the three artists (the koto player Fumie Hihara joins Piron and Domancich on three of the eight tracks) have established a number of mutually credible sonic regions from which they have been able to build their varied collection of pieces.

Modality forms a key basis, sometimes providing a framework to kick against - adding chromatic density for extra expressive effect, for instance in the koto and shakuhachi duet *Moon Chariot* (track 6) and in track 3 *Juste Avant l'Aube* providing the much needed security beneath a shakuhachi solo so in love with its



own noisiness that it might otherwise have descended into absurdity (to my taste, one of the most attractive moments on the album).

The final track *Brise Legere, Plume au Vent* makes recurrent use of the Western translation of the Indonesian *Pelog* scale (a mode that also occurs in Okinawan folk melodies): semitone, tone, major third, semitone, major third. Numerous pianists have tried this - making a gamelan effect on the piano by running a rippling upper melody in this scale across a lower *Pokok* core melody - but I have never heard one pull it off as well as Domancich does here, possibly because, by focusing on providing the backdrop to Piron's foregrounded solo, she is able to concentrate on sustaining the mood while the shakuhachi carries the melodic interest.

Overall, the framework approach has been most effective when it allowed the musicians to revel in their spontaneity and skill. In the closing four minutes of track 4, *Calm Night, Rush the Waves*, for instance, one can hear in their use of nuance and sensitive timing, a genuine sense of exploration, presence in the moment and generosity running between the two principal performers.

*Sillage* has not proved that the incommensurability gap which exists between the piano and the shakuhachi has closed but it takes a different path. Throughout the album, the balance of force is by and large maintained by simply reining in the piano, which does leave an aftertaste - the image of a racehorse generously running with greyhounds. In the title track *Sillage* (track 6), Domancich more than makes up for this (one note, one string almost throughout) by her musical energy. *Sillage* is possibly the most exciting track on the album. There are, however, only two moments where the piano has truly been able to let rip. One is late on in *Brise Legere* as the spirit of the music expands, the other is at a similar point in *Calm Night, Rush the Waves*. These are the two longest tracks on the album: it is as if the pieces themselves have to attain a level of substance before the full might of the piano can be employed to provide the counterbalance.

What is clear, however, is the sympathy between the two lead performers - that they want to be in that room together, exploring. One can only hope that they continue to do so, working their way towards an unlikely goal that could be very compelling indeed.

**Michael McNerney**

## **ESS Newsletter Contributor's Guidelines**

The aim of the ESS 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, therefore, includes, among others, a diverse range of topics and new ideas, information, knowledge, materials and reflections on shakuhachi and the people who shape the musical scene. As far as is practical, the articles will be translated into some of the main languages used in the European shakuhachi context. All this is accomplished by the selfless effort of the authors, translators and editors.

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 articles' 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

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.

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. These articles of up to 5,000 words would normally only be published in English.

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.

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 (contact the editors if the size of the files makes them difficult to be sent by e-mail).

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

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

Please avoid self-promotion.

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 articles will then be translated when possible and the issue formatted.

This 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.

Reviews of materials, such as books and CD's, will appear in the first available issue of the NL after being received by the Editors. Reviews of events, such as Summer Schools, workshops, master classes and concerts, need to be submitted by the deadline for the next edition of the NL, ie. within a maximum of 3 months after the event. Any reviews of events received after that date will be published on the ESS website.

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

**Date / Period**

**Venue**

**Cost**

**Contact information**

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

If you decide on creating an image with all the above information, please make it to fit the following characteristics: 700 x 2000 pixel , @ 300dpi resolution , jpg image (6cm x 17cm equivalent)

**ESS publications office**

## ESS Membership

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The *European Shakuhachi Society* is a non-profit organization and a registered UK charity 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 organizing a range of events, such as the annual Summer Schools, and that 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 discounts at [www.shakuhachi.com](http://www.shakuhachi.com) and also fee reductions for the annual European Shakuhachi Summer Schools (discounts that are generally greater than the cost of the membership fee itself). The annual membership fee is €20.

To join the ESS:

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- Pay the membership fee via Pay-Pal. If you cannot make payment using this method, please send an email to [info@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto:info@shakuhachisociety.eu) and we will find a way to help you

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