

# European Shakuhachi Society Newsletter 2017-Volume I



Grateful thanks for the photos in this number to:  
Philip Flavin and Andrew Chester Ong (Ronnie Nyogetsu article).

Cover photo (thanks to Izumi Takeo): Nihon-ga Taisei vol 3 (Touhou Shoshain,  
1931)

2017 - Vol. 1  
July 2017

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## Letter from the editors

### Jose Vargas-Zuñiga & Philip Horan

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Dear shakuhachi friends,

Here we are again, facing a nice summer full of interesting shakuhachi activities. We have the ESS summer school in Vejle, Denmark from July 27-30. The International Shakuhachi Festival Prague takes place this year from September 14-18 and includes artists such as Pro Musica Nipponica, Nomura Hozan and Obama Akihito.

This edition of the newsletter is based around fascinating interviews with leading performers and researchers by Kiku and Jose during recent visits to Japan. There are also reviews of recent publications and CD releases.

We ask again for more translators into French, German and Spanish. This time we will publish the newsletter in English first and another

document including the received translations in a month's time.

We would like to remind our readers that this newsletter is the place to tell other shakuhachi people about your activities. Please feel free to send any contribution while consulting the Guidelines for Contributors at the end of this number. Please also tell us your opinions, suggestions, likes and dislikes.

Many thanks for reading and we wish you happy blowing.

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# Letter from the chairperson

## Kiku Day

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Dear members of the ESS,

We are now getting closer to summer and the feeling that the next European Shakuhachi Society Summer School is also coming closer.

As many of you know, the next ESS Summer School will take place July 27-30 in Denmark, the first one to be

located in  
Scandinavia.

Scandinavia has not been the quickest area of Europe to develop a shakuhachi scene. That means hosting

the summer school here is a slight gamble. But we hope many of you will support the annual gathering of shakuhachi aficionados.

Vejele, the town that will host the summer school, is not a major city. It is quietly situated at the end of a fjord and gives us the perfect environment for the event this year. As the ESS will host the World Shakuhachi Festival in London next year, this year's summer school is meant to be a more intimate one, at which the members of the European shakuhachi scene will have a chance to meet and discuss our dreams for this large event next year. It is also meant to be a gathering at which we can bond together as a shakuhachi-loving community. This will be enabled by the choice of venue



which is a boarding school. We can all stay and have our meals together under the same roof and therefore we will have more time to spend together as a group.

The summer school in Vejle will not only be intimate and inward-facing. It will also be part of the celebration of 150 Years of Japanese and Danish diplomatic relations which has various events in Denmark and Japan. Nothing could be more appropriate than making our ESS Summer School and the two teachers' concerts, which is an expression of Japanese and European cultural exchange, a part of the big event. The teachers' concert in Aarhus is furthermore a part of the festivities in Aarhus as it is European Cultural Capital in 2017.

On the teaching front, we have many of the major shakuhachi teachers in Europe represented. These will include Wolfgang Fuyūgen Heßler from Switzerland, who will teach Kinko Ryū Chikuyūsha and Itchōken pieces and Hélène Seiyu Codjo, who lives in the Netherlands. She will teach Hijiri Kai pieces, including

some group pieces which can be played by a group of players at different levels. David Hughes and Gina Barnes will be here to teach min'yō pieces at different levels. Min'yō or Japanese folk songs is like party music. Perhaps one evening, we can sing, dance and play min'yō together. Otherwise, we also have our good and stable staff of the ESS: Véronique Piron, Jim Franklin, Jean-Francois Suizan Lagrost, Gunnar Jinmei Linder and ok... I am there too (I am stable but I don't like to call myself good).

From Japan, we will have Maekawa Kogetsu sensei, who is an exceptional player of Fuke sect shakuhachi. He is in particular going to focus on Nezasa-ha Kinpū Ryū, Echigo Ryū and Myōan Ryū pieces. We are very honoured to have a representative of Fuke style shakuhachi with us for the first time as the main teacher. He will also give a talk about the history of Kinpū Ryū and share his knowledge which he has gathered over decades of study. As the Fuke shakuhachi players do not get as much attention internationally as the professional players, it is the first time for Kogetsu

sensei to be invited abroad. I am delighted to tell you that he is indeed looking forward to meeting and playing with you all!

Now I think there is only one thing left to say: see you in Vejle! Let's make it a great event together!

More information here:

<http://vejle2017.shakuhachisociety.eu>

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**Paintings of Bamboo Flutes: A  
History and Genealogy of  
Shakuhachi Performance by  
Izumi Takeo**

**(Tōhoku University Press)**

**by Philip Flavin**

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While undoubtedly unusual for translators to write reviews of their own translations, I have nevertheless been asked to do so and do so with the greatest of pleasure. I will not laud the quality of the translation but rather call attention to a work of extremely fine research. Izumi has provided the West with a much needed and extremely refreshing approach to the history of the shakuhachi. Instead of basing his study solely on historical documents, most of which are questionable in terms of authenticity, he has drawn upon his expertise as a former curator at the Kyoto National Museum of Art, and based his



research on representations of the shakuhachi in Japanese paintings, the provenance for which can be verified with greater accuracy.

The book is divided into three large sections: Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Early Modern Period. In the first section comprising the first two chapters, Izumi briefly surveys the earliest representations of the shakuhachi in the Dunhuang Cave murals through depictions in *setsuwa*, an extremely broad literary genre consisting of myths, tales and legends. Scholars believe *setsuwa*



were originally orally transmitted and then committed to writing during the Heian and Kamakura periods (a period stretching from the 8<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup> centuries). He clearly explains the problematic nature of relying upon any of the early sources as definitive but nonetheless notes their importance in building a plausible historical narrative. Many of the sources, particularly the Dunhuang murals to which he turns in his discussion of the early history of the shakuhachi, have been noted by earlier scholars such as Kishibe in his *Kodai shiruku ro-do no ongaku: Shōsō-in, Tonkon, Koma o tadotte* 古代シルクロードの音楽 正倉院・敦煌・高麗をたどって (Kōdan-sha, 1982). At the same time, Izumi has provided invaluable photographs of the murals and other sources which are difficult to obtain in the West.

The second section shifts to the appearance of the medieval shakuhachi, a five-holed instrument that clearly differs from the earlier six-holed shakuhachi. Turning to both literary and iconographic representations, Izumi traces the

early social history of the shakuhachi and its early connection with the Buddhist clergy and aristocracy. He also provides a discussion of the medieval schools of shakuhachi performance and the presence of the instrument in banquets where it was also used to accompany a popular verse form known as *sōka*, which in turn, marks a divergence from the purely religious aspects of the instrument. The various forms of the early instrument are also discussed as well as the origins of the *komusō* and *boro*. Izumi's profound knowledge of art history, particularly painting, is evident in the following sections in which he presents extremely valuable insights into the development of the shakuhachi as a popular instrument rather than a vehicle for Buddhist training by turning to depictions of the instrument in *rakuchū rakugai-zu*. This genre of screen painting depicts the fashions and pleasures of Kyoto during the late Muromachi period, the 1520s through the 1530s, a time when the city had recovered from the ravages of the Ōnin War (1467-1477). What renders these paintings so important as documentary evidence is that most of

them can be dated. Izumi justly notes that it is impossible to claim that these paintings represent reality but there is also no reason to question their plausibility as historical sources. His position as a curator allowed him to conduct in-depth research on many of the finest examples of these paintings. In doing so, he arrived at a new interpretation of shakuhachi history that shows that the instrument was also enjoyed by the upper classes as a form of pleasure. Izumi also traces its simultaneous use by mendicant monks. In chapter twelve, Izumi proffers a discussion of the early Fuke shakuhachi by again turning to iconographic and textual sources.

In the third section, or Early Modern Period (chapters fourteen through twenty-three), Izumi pursues both the ensuing development of the Fuke shakuhachi and the continued pursuit of the instrument as a source of pleasure. He also introduces the shifts in the construction of the shakuhachi that occurred during the Edo period, notably from a one-node instrument to a three-node instrument. Many of the paintings from this period depict

what appear to be komusō. They reveal with closer examination to be figures posing as these monks which in turn attests to their position as romantic figures in the popular imagination. Also discussed are teaching materials published during this period which provide invaluable insights to both historical and contemporary pedagogy.

Izumi's book is a fascinating work that I highly recommend as it recovers the vibrant history of the shakuhachi as an instrument consumed by the Edo period populace. In doing so, he provides a clearer and more complete history of the instrument than has hitherto been available in English. Of equal value are the engrossing illustrations through which the performers convey the irrepressible pleasure humanity takes in music.

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# Izumi Takeo Interview

by Kiku Day

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KD: What was your purpose when you started out the research looking for depictions of the shakuhachi in art?

IT: I wanted to find out how well one could follow shakuhachi history and see what I could find out through pictures. And as I began studying the history of shakuhachi, I realised when reading books about the history of komusō that quite a few of the historical documents were forgeries. In many cases, we have the documents but it is very hard to determine when they were made and to which degree we can trust the content. For example, we have permit certificates issued by komusō temples and very often we cannot trust the credibility of these documents. So I decided to leave



behind the written documents and make an effort to collect and bring together the history of shakuhachi through the depiction of the instrument. This led to the creation of this book. As my own speciality is Buddhist paintings and not this kind of genre paintings, I made good use of my senpai and other colleagues in order to gather information about when the paintings were from, etc. I accumulated paintings from various eras by asking experts who ensured me the authenticity of the paintings

and that they were indeed painted in the era concerned.

KD: That is very interesting. Many people are very excited about your book in Europe. Can you explain why the accuracy of the depiction of the shakuhachi is so bad?

IT: The people who paint were people who did not play shakuhachi themselves as they were painters. So they don't know the details. So if you look at this painting (figure 1) the hands are too close to the player's face. There are many examples like this one although we also now and then find paintings where the balance is good. But I think it is best to think that painters cannot play and thus they paint the action of shakuhachi playing roughly. Some painters depict the action of playing very accurately while others depict it more roughly. So as an art historian we have to think of the accuracy and about how we interpret the painting. For example, this painter has depicted the playing very accurately

but the player has his left hand lowest and not the right hand. However, perhaps this way of playing did exist but it is impossible for us to conclude whether it is an exact depiction or not.

KD: I see. And I suppose the paintings show that there were shakuhachi players around at the time.

IT: Yes indeed, and we can see how they were dressed and in what context or situation they played.



Figure 1: Sanjūni-ban shokunin uta-awase: komusō. Suntory Museum of Art.

KD: Thanks to these paintings we can follow the development of the shape of the *tengai*.

IT: Yes, that is much easier to see through paintings.

KD: You write something on the ambiguity of whether they are female or male players.

them – that this person played both *hitoyogiri* and shakuhachi. It is also described that the person played both very well so in a way there is no doubt that the person played.

KD: Do you have a favourite painting of a shakuhachi player?

IT: The one that has stayed with me is



Figure 2: Shimabara yūroku-zu screen

IT: If you look at this painting (figure 2), you can't see whether it is a woman or a man. It is written down in documents, not particularly shakuhachi documents but normal documents so I think we can trust

this painting (plate 24 in Izumi's book) because this is the only painting of a person playing shakuhachi in which the person playing is the only motif. The player's name is Fukyūrōjin (不及老人) and he has got a flute that either is a

*hitoyogiri* or a shakuhachi – a shorter flute. The painting is from the beginning of the Edo period and is unique, the only one in which only the shakuhachi player is the sole motif and large. So I am very fond of this person.

KD: Do you know who this person is?

IT: No, we don't know his identity. But he did frequent a Zen Buddhist temple. He was an acquaintance of a famous Zen Buddhist monk at the time from Daitokuji temple. This we can understand from the text above this painting. He was probably not an amateur but a connoisseur or devotee. But there is no text that explains what he was doing so we do not know.

KD: But he was not a komusō.

IT: No. We know he was not a komusō.

KD: Have you seen the original?

IT: Yes, I have. It is wonderful. It is at Kenninji temple in Kyoto.

KD: Is it a painting that is not exhibited?

IT: It is not exhibited because it cannot be unfolded. The top end of the *kakejyuku* has come off thus it needs restoration before it can be exhibited.

And then there is Kano Eitoku, the famous painter from the Momoyama era (1573-1615). He painted the Uji no Byoudouin Shūhen (not included in the book), a landscape painting and in here, there are shakuhachi players. This one was very interesting. It was discovered when I went to Kyoto National Museum (京都国立博物館), so it is a new discovery.

KD: Where in the painting are the players?

IT: In front of a building but the painting is so large with so many details that it is hard to see them.

KD: This painting is early as well?

IT: Yes, it is. As you can see, they are still not wearing *tengai*.

KD: You can see there are several walking and playing together.

IT: Yes, with paintings you can see how they went about. Here there are several players together. It is before the Fuke sect's foundation. I find it very interesting what we can learn about this early era from the paintings. Thereby paintings become very important data as you can see how the landscape was at the time.



Figure 3: Rakuchū rakugai-zu screen by Kanō Eitoku. Detail of Shimogyō screen.

And then there is this one (figure 3), which is also a painting by Kano

Eitoku. And the shakuhachi players are in a little corner of the painting. Here they are still komosō. We don't know whether they are monks or not. That is one thing we can't tell from paintings.

KD: I find it incredible how much you can learn about how life was for people at the time by looking at paintings. Are you still looking for unknown paintings of shakuhachi players? And can you find more?

IT: There are many new examples to be found. There are especially many paintings from the middle of the Edo era. I am of course paying attention to those paintings but it is especially the earlier eras whose paintings can help us in our understanding of shakuhachi players. And I am always hoping to discover new paintings from the early eras but they are rare and I have not found that many new ones.

And the biggest enigma is whether the shakuhachi came from China or it developed in Japan. That we cannot

be sure of. Of course, the legend is that it was brought over from China. But some scholars believe it developed in Japan from the 6-holed shakuhachi used in the gagaku ensemble. However, some shakuhachi aficionados still believe it was brought over from China.

KD: I guess it is even today still an important narrative for shakuhachi players. Would this mean you are looking for paintings that could for example prove this to be true or untrue for that matter?

IT: I have a painting I am planning to write a paper about (figure 4). It is a painting that I cannot yet be sure about because it is not the original but a painting that is a copy of the original. There is no original painting. It is a painting we believe is by Shōkei (祥啓), a famous late Muromachi era painter. We have a theory that the player in this painting is the well-known shakuhachi player Rōanzō (朗庵像) and he is playing a very large bored shakuhachi which in itself is very interesting. However, since we have only copies of this

painting [several copies of this painting exist but not as well painted



Figure 4: Nihon-ga Taisei vol 3 (Touhou Shoshain, 1931).

as the one Izumi is researching], it is very difficult to conclude anything. It



is hard to say what it means and what information it carries with it. This painting has been well known since the Taisho era (1912-1926) but no one knows how to interpret it.

KD: So there are many different interpretations of it?

IT: Yes. One of the traditional viewpoints is that the Fuke shakuhachi was brought over from China. And in the case of the painting, this is supposed to be Rōan, who is a disciple of the monk who is believed to have brought the shakuhachi into Japan from China. His name is Kishi but Rōan is his other name. So he is basically the same generation of disciples as the monk who composed 'Mukaiji.' It is that era. And there seem to be several generations of Rōan, such as Rōan I, Rōan II and Rōan III, etc. So let's say we do conclude it is Rōan playing but it looks like the shakuhachi he is playing is a Chinese instrument. There seems to be a hole on the front side of the instrument [an aperture that is covered by a reed membrane in order to create a buzzing effect].

[He shows me a painting] Up here above the painting is the year it is made from the Muromachi era and it says Rōan. If you look at the bamboo he is playing, you can see there is a hole. Beneath it, it looks like he is playing shakuhachi. The discussion among several scholars is that it is likely to be the Chinese instrument dōshō (洞簫) [dong xiao].

KD: This is an incredibly detailed painting of the instrument.

IT: Yes, indeed. And when we then go to the Edo era, there are painters who paint copies of this painting without really knowing the instrument. And in those cases, the instrument changes to the shakuhachi we know today. However, this painter seem to have known what he was doing and depicting very carefully what we think was the original painting. Of course the other paintings have value as Edo period paintings but we believe this one is different. So I am collecting these kind of paintings and hoping I am doing it right by trying to write a paper. But it is just so hard to conclude anything.

KD: I wonder if you can at least conclude that there was also this kind of instrument around?

IT: There is no doubt since there is a copy of an original picture made in the early Edo period. So I don't think there are any doubts that there were instruments like this at that time. But the real question is whether this is a flute from which the Fuke shakuhachi originates.

KD: So one option is that this is an instrument that came to Japan from China and was played in Japan. The other option is that the shakuhachi came in with the gagaku ensemble but the question is which one developed into the shakuhachi we know today or did they both do so?

IT: Yes. I would really like to know but it is very hard. But the way I look at it is that we don't have to know right now. I would like to publish what we know today. Then someone else in the future can perhaps find out more as research progresses. Today, I can't even imagine what kind of painting could function as proof.

However, if we can prove that such a large shakuhachi as depicted here really existed in medieval times (pre-Edo period), it would be revolutionary in the way we look at shakuhachi history.

KD: You write in your conclusion that the shakuhachi is the only musical instrument used as a religious practice. Is it really so?

IT: At least in Japan, the shakuhachi is the only instrument that was connected directly to the way to *satori* (enlightenment). Of course there are other musical instruments used in religious ceremonies. But these instruments are used as embellishments in a ritual. I don't think there are other instruments than the shakuhachi that were used as the tool that was directly associated with the way to enlightenment. We have of course the Yamabushi (Ascetic hermits living in the mountains playing on a trumpet shell) but their playing was not linked to enlightenment.

KD: We can conclude the shakuhachi is a magnificent instrument!

IT: Yes, I agree (laughs).

KD: But as you have written, there is no description of anyone who did reach enlightenment through the practice of shakuhachi.

IT: Yes, unfortunately we do not know of anybody...

KD: You write in your book about your interest in jinashi shakuhachi. Tell me more about that. How did this come about?

IT: It is a wishful thought... but my personal opinion is that jinuri shakuhachi is more a musical instrument and I suppose it is better suited when it comes to ensemble music. But when it comes to the natural quality of sound or if one wishes to connect it to spiritual practice, I have the feeling the jinashi shakuhachi is hiding within it more possibilities. Personally, I was attracted to my teacher Yokoyama Katsuya's teacher, Watazumi Dōsō, and had the wish to produce a sound like him. But when playing jinuri shakuhachi, it was just impossible to

come anyway near that sound quality. One day I met a person at the Mejiro Shop and tried his bamboo... and I thought to myself: "Wow! This is it!" I immediately felt I could get closer to Watazumi's sound when playing a jinashi. That is not to say jinashi is better than jinuri, which has its own qualities. While I was writing this book, I began to learn Myōan ryū honkyoku pieces from Kōrikawa Naotatsu in Sendai. He was a bearer of the tradition of Kinpū ryū. It was a very different experience for me to play the Myōan pieces in comparison with what I have played before. However, when I had finished the Myōan-ryū pieces and was about to begin the Kinpū - ryū pieces, Kōrikawa sensei suddenly died. So I never learned to play Kinpū ryū, which is the style of Tōhoku (northern Honshū).

KD: I didn't expect you to be a jinashi shakuhachi player... I must admit (laughing).

IT: (laughing) There are more and more players of jinashi shakuhachi now. Also in Japan. However, there

are only very few here that would play jinashi on stage.

KD: Is there something you'd like to say to European shakuhachi players?

IT: I'd say that the shakuhachi is a wonderful instrument that... despite the fact that it only consists of one piece of bamboo, can produce many different timbres. So I hope you will dive deep into it and explore its possibilities.

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# Keisuke Zenyoji

## Interview

by Jose Vargas-Zuñiga

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JV: First of all, thank you very much for your time and your effort in speaking English. I know it is not easy. I appreciate it. How did you meet shakuhachi?

KZ: My father was an amateur shakuhachi player. He liked komusō music, so I listened to shakuhachi since I was a baby. And I began playing when I was six years old, around 1970. My father gave me the first lessons and when I was around ten years old, I started learning from Okazaki Jishu, a student of Jin Nyodo. So, my first school was Nezasaha Kimpu ryū which was the main style of Jin Nyodo. I studied with him until I was 20 years old. Later, I began to learn from Goro Yamaguchi, both Kinko ryū honkyoku and sankyoku at the University of Fine Arts in Tokyo for 10 years.



JV: Did you find differences between Nezasaha and Kinko style's ways of playing?

KZ: Though they use the same instrument, they are very different.

[He takes his shakuhachi and plays, first in Nezasaha *komibuki* style, then in Kinko style]. The tone colours and sounds are very different indeed.

KZ: I'm sorry. Unfortunately I cannot express it well with words but only demonstrate by making you listen to it.

JV: Did you learn with more masters or play different music than honkyoku and sankyoku in the styles you mentioned? Do you play contemporary music too?

KZ: No, I play those two styles only. I attended a workshop in Chikuho ryū once and that was all.

JV: Can you tell me something about your masters' way of teaching?

KZ: Okazaki sensei gave me very small detailed technical hints. Yamaguchi Goro sensei didn't give any hints at all. We played along together and he recommended me to watch, listen and copy him.

JV: Do you teach the same way your masters did?

KZ: I teach in a very different way. I not only show the techniques but I also verbalise the movements of the body as much as I can manage.

JV: Could you give some advice for improving the sound?

KZ: Keep the vertebral column straight. Be careful the hip bone is not pushed towards the back. Keep the shoulders relaxed and align the centre of the head and the hips as if there was a vertical line between them.

Inhale so the chest will expand in all directions. The image is your lungs expanding like a big balloon. Be aware of the flow from the abdomen to the top of the head when exhaling.

Widen your mouth cavity by imagining a ball inside the mouth stuffing out your cheeks with your upper and lower lips gently meeting while wrapping around that. The delicate movements around the area of the upper lip will stabilise if it lightly sticks against the teeth on the

inside. It is important that the space of the mouth cavity is in the back of your mouth towards the throat.

As a practice method, I recommend *sasabuki*. Start



with a quiet sound without any accentuation, play crescendo (increase gradually the volume) and thereafter play diminuendo (decrease gradually the volume). While playing diminuendo, change into *kan* (upper register). Be careful the sound does not become hoarse or less clear and make it disappear.

JV: I think our readers will appreciate your instructions. Thank you very much. Through all these years, did you see any changes in the shakuhachi world?

KZ: When I started, shakuhachi was considered a Japanese classical traditional instrument. Now it is, more and more, becoming a world music instrument. Also, in the 1970s, shakuhachi was very popular when we had four very well known masters at the same time: Yamaguchi Goro, Yokoyama Katsuya, Aoki Reibo and Yamamoto Hozan. Sometimes they performed together and they were very successful. From that time, interest in shakuhachi, maybe also in other traditional arts and crafts, has declined in Japan. But at the same time, there are more and more people interested in the shakuhachi

from outside Japan. For example, I have five foreign students studying with me at the moment.

JV: For many people, shakuhachi is more than a beautiful musical instrument. Could you please tell me something about your experience?

KZ: My father used to play shakuhachi and did zazen (sitting meditation) so I was introduced to shakuhachi as more than a musical instrument. Unlike other children or any of my friends, I practiced meditation. But my other shakuhachi teachers never mentioned the issue; the instructions were always about musical aspects only.

JV: Is there anything else you would like to say before ending this interview?

KZ: Yes, shakuhachi is a wonderful instrument, both to your body and to your spirit.

JV: Many thanks again. It's been a pleasure to speak with you.

<http://zenyoji.jp/>

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**The Japanese Shakuhachi, A  
Reinvented Tradition  
(Le shakuhachi japonais, une  
tradition réinventée)**

**Bruno Chikushin Deschênes,  
(L'Harmattan, 2017)**

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This book is the first work in French entirely dedicated to the shakuhachi. A good number of books and theses are available in English, but none in French. The subtitle refers to the fact that this flute is not played, made and understood as it was during the Edo era (1603-1868). Following the banishment of the Fuke sect in the Fall of 1871 by the Meiji government, the shakuhachi started to be 'reinvented' to take it into the modern era, a reinvention that was subsequently heightened following WWII, in particular since the 1970s with the growing interests of non-Japanese about this flute all around the world.

My aim with this article is to give an overview of the content of this book by providing the non-French speaking reader a summary of each of the chapters. Although my objective was to present the shakuhachi in a historical as well as from an ethnomusicological perspective, the viewpoint of the musician guided my discussions, not the scholarly one.

As well, I did not want solely to present the shakuhachi, its history, its technique or its repertoire as many books and articles have already done. I wanted to discuss aspects of it that are rarely discussed, in particular the self-discipline it requires from everyone to learn, its ritualistic aspects in its transmission, as well as the aesthetics of honkyoku music, in particular in regards to the notion of *ma* (間).

My primary aim was to discover how a non-Japanese person can learn to perform that music from a native perspective, if it is at all possible since there is more to this instrument and its music than learning a repertoire or a technique. How this music and its aesthetic differs largely



from our Western views about music as a whole is something I wanted to grasp and hopefully the reader can have a grasp as well.

The introduction tries to show what I mean by 'reinventing' a tradition. My main example before tackling the shakuhachi is taken from the advent of the modern taiko ensembles that appeared in the 1950s. These flashy and somewhat exuberant ensembles did not exist prior to that time, though they are obviously an outcome of the existing taiko tradition in Japan. It was a jazz musician who came up with the idea of using a large number of players to revive an old Shinto ritual around Lake Suwa. It was such a success that it gradually became what we know today of these taiko ensembles. Since these ensembles were created more than 60 years ago, can we consider them a tradition or a new tradition? Or should it be more appropriate to call it a reinvented tradition? There is a controversy in scholarly writings about the notion of invention of traditions, an expression coined at the beginning of 1983 by two British

historians<sup>1</sup>. Some authors say it exists, while others say that a tradition cannot be invented, especially in the West, where invention refers to creating something out of nothing. One thing that is sure is any tradition can be reinterpreted and revisited to fit a new social, cultural and even political context and order, which is exactly what has been going on with the Japanese taiko, as well as the shakuhachi from the end of the 19th century on.

The first chapter is in two parts. The first one gives an overview of some aspects of the traditional Japanese way of thinking that have aesthetic overtones. Japanese philosopher and historian, Katō Shūichi, suggests that the Japanese way of thinking is based on a view of aesthetics deeply rooted and embedded into the fabric of everyday life. The second part is about a myth disseminated outside of Japan that the Japanese way of thinking is Zen. This myth has been promulgated mainly by the monk D.T. Suzuki at the beginning of the 20th century, Eugen Herrigel (who is famous for his book *Zen and The Art*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf., Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger (1983). *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

of Archery) and philosopher Allan Watts, among others. The reason why Zen was accepted when it came to Japan in the 13th century is because it was in line with the native way of thinking of the time among the warrior class, the artisans and artists, although over time it gradually had an influence over the entire population when it comes to the question of aesthetics. To say that the Japanese way of thinking is Zen is not totally false, yet it is inaccurate; it is more a melting pot of Shintoism, first of all, Confucianism and Taoism than purely Zen or Buddhism, to which can be added today the influence of Christianity. Also, one thing that is not much known is that the two main Zen sects, Sōtō and Rinzai, at the beginning of the 20th century, supported the war efforts of Japan in the first half of the century. It must be said that these two sects feared that they might be banished with the creation of a Shintoist national religion by the government at the end of the 19th century. Even D.T. Suzuki contradicted himself by agreeing with these war efforts in his Japanese writings, while claiming in

the West that it was a religion and a philosophy of peace.

In the second chapter, I present a history of the shakuhachi from its beginning to today, how it is made, its technical aspects, its notation and some aspects of the melodic structures of its repertoire. It is a condensed presentation of what can be found in a large number of writings on the shakuhachi.

The main core of the book starts with the third chapter, in which I discuss one aspect of learning the shakuhachi that has rarely been discussed thoroughly in writing: the almost ascetic discipline that is necessary to properly learn to play this flute. The Japanese Zen Buddhist concept of *shūgyō* is translated in English as self-cultivation. Few authors have talked about it but no one discusses it in regard to music, and more to the shakuhachi, when we know that the Fuke sect was a Zen Buddhist sect affiliated to the Rinzai sect and that some were playing this flute to replace meditation. How was *shūgyō* implemented by the komusō? How is

it implemented today by shakuhachi sensei in their transmission of this unique repertoire? Since it was part of Zen training, I strongly believe that it had some influence on the music these monks were composing and playing. I was forced to a certain extent to speculate since I could not find any author discussing Japanese self-discipline as it pertains to music. Zen and *shūgyō* had an influence on all Japanese arts. It is called *keiko*, but without the ascetic aspect.

The fourth chapter is about rituals and *kata*. Here too, these aspects of Japanese life and arts are rarely discussed in regards to the learning and playing of the shakuhachi, though we find some writings about the learning of the shamisen and *nagauta*, the long songs of Kabuki theatre<sup>2</sup>. It is surprising we do not find anything (at least in French and English) when we know that rituals and *kata* are crucial in Japanese life as a whole, not only in martial arts. For my discussion, I had to rely on writings about the shamisen and *nihon buyō* (Japanese traditional

dance), and other anthropological writings to propose how it applies to my learning and playing of the shakuhachi. The last section of this chapter is about the transmission of traditional arts in Japan. In the West, learning is an intellectual endeavour, while in Japan, learning as it pertains to traditional arts is embodied. The body must learn first. From a Zen point of view, if the body learns first, the mind learns as well; if the mind learns first, there is no guarantee the body will. This is one of the most difficult things to do for non-Japanese; intellectual thinking and rationalism is so much ingrained in our way of thinking that rarely a non-Japanese can learn first from one's body. We have the tendency to intellectualise everything we put our mind to as if the body is peripheral, which is not the case at all in Japanese arts.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to one of the most known and most important Japanese aesthetic notions: *ma* (間). Most writings about this notion are about architecture, garden

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jay Keister, *Shaped by Japanese Music, Kikuoka Hiroaki and Nagauta Shamisen in Tokyo*, New York, London, Routledge, 2004.

design, dance or theatre, rarely about music. Yet, a lot of non-Japanese shakuhachi players talk about it, while most Japanese sensei do not say much. They even elude it when we ask them. This term can be translated as space and interval of time. Generally, non-Japanese think of it in quantitative and intellectual terms, while *ma* is a space or an interval of time that must be first of all felt, not calculated or pondered intellectually. For example, the length of time between phrases in honkyoku pieces is secondary. What is most important is how the *ma* or the silence it creates is felt. In Buddhism, *mu* (無), vacuity or nothingness, refers to a void in which everything is possible. Similarly, silence in Japanese music, at least in honkyoku, does not mean absence of sound as is current in Western music, but a place from which sound emanates and to which it returns. It is from silence that sound is possible. In this sense, the silence that *ma* creates is as important as the phrase to come since it is where we find the source of the phrase to come.

In the last chapter, I tackled the aesthetics of honkyoku music as well as the notion of *honnin no kyoku*. Not an easy endeavor, since I did not have as much writing to rely on in regard to the aesthetics of this music. Most discussions about traditional Japanese aesthetics are usually about such notions as *wabi-sabi*, *yūgen*, *ma*, *mono no aware* and others. Since numerous authors have presented these aesthetic principles, I was more interested to get a sense of the way of thinking underlying such notions. I thus suggest in this chapter that aesthetics in traditional Japanese arts is basically metaphorical, as Japanese gardens are metaphors of nature. In European poetry, a metaphor is a play with words that creates an image, while in Japanese poetry, it is the other way around: it starts from a perception, then an image, followed by a feeling or an emotion that the poet wants to put into words. Words are thus an outcome of what is aesthetically experienced. With honkyoku for example, the title of a piece, let's say 'Tamuke', which is usually translated as 'Offering' (though it literally means 'hands in prayer'), is not

about describing in music what it represents but how it is felt and experienced by the musician. The performance is about expressing metaphorically the experience of being in prayer. The last section of this chapter discusses the notion of *honnin no kyoku* that non-Japanese musicians have appropriated for the modern and current reinvention of the shakuhachi, especially following the trend that is growing among musicians to bring back the *jinashi shakuhachi*, when we very well know that in Japan, there is hardly anyone playing it. This discussion includes some comments from well-known Japanese shakuhachi players who agreed to answer my questions in this regard.

Finally, in the epilogue, I give a critical assessment of my discussions. I am fully aware that I am looking at this musical instrument from a Western viewpoint. In the West, we have the tendency to view Japan from an exotic and even essentialist point of view. Zen attracts non-Japanese because it is exotic. Paradoxically, we rationalise it from our Western point of view, when it is

a known fact that Zen has a distrust of intellectualism and rationalisation. One of the aims of Zen is to break down the hold that intellectualism has on our grasp and our experiences of life, while we non-Japanese, do exactly the opposite. Zen is about experience beyond the mind. We may have the tendency to rationalise our experiences before understanding how we experienced them.

I also included three annexes. The first is a short overview of how traditional Japanese aesthetics were modernised. In particular, at the end of the 19th century, there were no words meaning beauty and aesthetic as we define these two terms in the West. Two new words had to be forged in this regard. The second annex gives an overview of Japanese historical eras, as well as a few important historical musical events and developments. And the third annex is a glossary of the Japanese terms mentioned in the book.

This book may be ordered at : <http://editions-harmattan.fr> (site in French)

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# Obituary for Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin (1947-2017)

by Kiku Day

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On May 30, 2017, Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin suddenly passed away. He was a central figure in the transmission of the shakuhachi in the United States and has taught many students. If you were part of the international shakuhachi world, it would have been almost impossible not to hear about him. He was probably the most successful shakuhachi teacher and educator so far outside Japan.

Nyogetsu studied shakuhachi with Kurahashi Yōdō I and received his *jun-shihan* license in 1975. He received his *shihan* only three years later, such were his efforts of disseminating the shakuhachi in the USA. He impressed his teacher with how he was able to gather people



around him and transmit not only shakuhachi playing techniques but also his respect of and insights into Japanese culture. In 1980, he received a *dai-shihan* and in 2001, he received *kyū dan koku-an dai-shihan* from Aoki Reibo.

There is no doubt that part of Nyogetsu's success came from his constant occupation with the shakuhachi. He was always teaching an incredibly large amount of students; first of all face-to-face lessons locally, via tape or later mp3 and he traveled around the US to teach. He often gave concerts, took

people to Japan on tours and showed them the places he loved so much himself and sold flutes. He was basically tireless.

Nyogetsu will be remembered for the way he made contact with people. He was always friendly and supportive. When I met him and he heard me play for the first time in 2002 at the Shakuhachi Symposium in Tokyo, he took me to the side and started immediately to think about how I could make a living with my shakuhachi. I was impressed with his enthusiasm and the support he displayed on behalf of others.

No doubt Nyogetsu must have been a good teacher. He has many students and *magodeshi* (students of students), who have been licensed by Kurahashi Yōdō II, the son and heir of Nyogetsu's own teacher. Several of

his students are good musicians performing and teaching across the world. Only posterity will show how big an influence Nyogetsu had when coming to the dissemination of, the playing of, the love of the sound of, and the knowledge of the shakuhachi.

He will be sorely missed by all in the shakuhachi world.



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## CD Review by Véronique Piron

### Furuya Teruo: Shakuhachi Koten Honkyoku 3 - Takiochi

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Oushu-den Tsuru no Sugomori 7:30

Sanya Sugagaki 3:03

Shingetsu 4:40

Mukaiji 7:26

Nezasa Shirabe 2:55

Shouganken Reibo 10:10

Sokkan 4:11

Takiochi 7:43

This is the third and second last of this series of CDs, started in 2014, of koten honkyoku entirely interpreted on the 1.8 standard size of shakuhachi.

The music starts at sunrise with the beginning of 'Tsuru no Sugomori', one of the most representative pieces



of Furuya Teruo's repertoire for which he has a very particular affection. This concludes the series of 'Tsuru' pieces dear to the master, after 'Nanadan no Sugomori' recorded in the first volume and 'Koden Sugomori' in the second. Next is a solo version of 'Sanya Sugagaki', even though the Ksk has just published the notation of this piece as a duet for 1.8 and 2.7. This interpretation of 'Sanya Sugagaki' reminds me of the last recording made by Yokoyama Katsuya of this piece in 1997 in a duet with Iwamoto Yoshikazu, released by Ocora Radio France during his last stay in France.

On this CD, we can hear a new piece re-introduced into the Ksk repertoire. 'Mukaiji', considered as one of the



oldest shakuhachi pieces is interpreted here in the melodic style dear to the master and with a lot of simplicity. It is quite interesting to note the reintroduction of pieces which Furuya Teruo is interpreting or re-interpreting. One can feel his search at each moment for the right gesture, with nothing left to chance and the ability to justify each decision to appropriate this new repertoire and still remain faithful to the characteristic homogeneous sound of the Ksk style. It is living proof that this school and its style is alive and constantly evolving.

The set ends with 'Takiuchi' which gave the title to this CD. There is a recording of this honkyoku on the solo CD of the master in 1994, released by Bamboo, together with the honkyoku 'Tsuru no Sugomori' and 'Shingetsu' which are also present here.

The strength of the recording is the loyalty to a natural sound without excessive use of reverb. This is particularly true in this new recording with mic placement very close to the player, made this time by Hiroshi

Goto and the Studio Sound Valley. We get into direct contact with the breath, the manufacture of the sound on the edge of the mouthpiece and interference sounds which occur naturally. We can follow the speed of the air stream and then the process of inhalation and thereby easily identify ourselves with the process.

Once again, it is a daring risk to record all of these pieces using only the standard length of the shakuhachi, while keeping the original spirit of each piece, as disparate as each is. And it is thus with impatience that we wait for volume four of this series!

Recorded and mixed by Hiroshi Goto, Studio Sound Valley

Kangensha 2016 KGCD-003

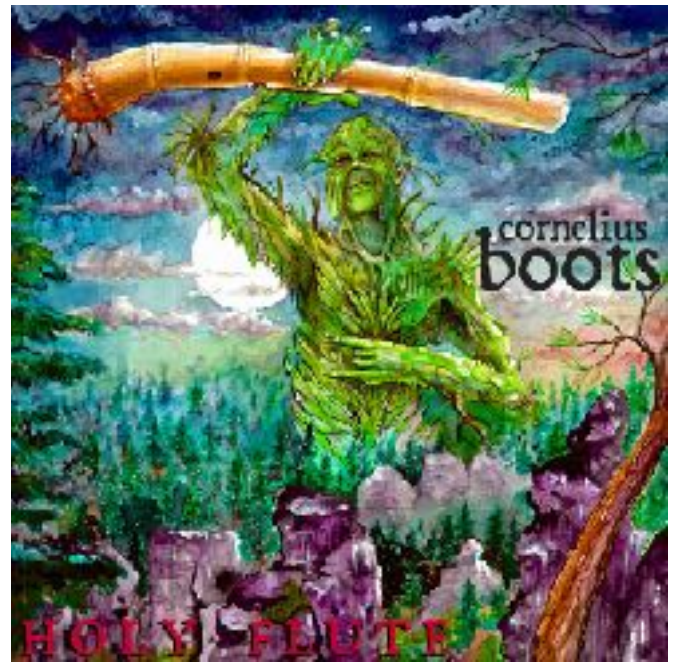
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## CD Review by Joe Browning

### Cornelius Boots: Holy Flute

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Cornelius Boots' new album *Holy Flute* is an unusual beast, a kind of musical chimera, hard to classify yet fascinating as a result. Released in May this year, the album grows out of Boots' similarly hard-to-categorise experiences as a shakuhachi player, bass clarinetist and composer with a background in rock, metal and jazz as well as honkyoku. Its twelve tracks focus exclusively on solo shakuhachi and Taimu (except for some cat purrs, rain sounds and foot stomping) and combine Boots' original compositions with versions of rock and heavy metal classics by famous bands such as Black Sabbath, Danzig and Led Zeppelin. American vocalist, songwriter and musician Ronnie James Dio (member of Elf, Rainbow, Black Sabbath and Dio) looms especially large in the album,



reflecting Boots' appreciation of his "incredible voice, presence, creativity and loyalty to music".

This profile of *Holy Flute* is part interview with Boots, part review of the album, combining my thoughts with Boots' reflections on what he describes as "music that is outside the most diffuse edges of even today's eclectic musical multiverse". I should state up front that I'm not a typical, disinterested reviewer and have been following the project from the beginning (including contributing to the album's crowd funding campaign). Although this means I lack supposed objectivity, it also means I have connections with the album and the stories behind it. This

sense of connection and storytelling are some of the features of *Holy Flute* that I think might make it interesting to ESS readers. And the album's collision of genres, sounds and ideas – “where bamboo meets metal” as the press release puts it – is what makes the album a compelling listen. More than this, while its influences may fall outside the typical shakuhachi enthusiast's comfort zone, *Holy Flute* demonstrates the instrument's potential for exploring new musical territory.

One of the most striking features of the album is its virtuosity. Many tracks include extended, fast-paced passages, demanding both quick fingers and elaborate double or triple tonguing. In ‘Blacken the Cursed Sun’, notes cascade and tumble over each other, occasionally interrupted by pulsing rhythms on a single pitch. Then a full-throated sighing note leads into a recapitulation of the same melodies, this time intensified with the addition of foot stomping. In some tracks, Boots leaps between the shakuhachi's high and low registers to provide melody and accompaniment at the same time,

attempting the seemingly impossible task of condensing the original vocal, guitar, bass and drum parts within one voice. Elsewhere, pulsing breath sounds, slightly reminiscent of *komibuki*, give a rhythmic drive that likewise recalls the textures of the original rock and metal songs. Because so many tracks are so high energy, the album is not easy listening, but demands full attention. And where the music slows and softens, this provides welcome contrast. Some of my favourite moments come in these lulls or changes of pace and texture – the unstable multiphonics in ‘Purgatory’ or the slowly throbbing melody that closes ‘Hymn to the She-Dragon of the Deep. Boots explains that *Holy Flute* “leans very heavily on my ability to circular breathe through all kinds of passages, active and quiet” and this technique is evident in both fast passagework where there is no time for in-breaths and in endlessly extended notes that make the most of the Taimu's rich tone colours. The fluency of Boots' playing is testimony not only to hours of practice, but to considerable invention and experimentation in working out how

to translate the complex multi-instrumental and often very rhythmic textures of rock and metal for solo shakuhachi. Working on Black Sabbath and Dio's 'Heaven and Hell', for example, presented him with the dilemma:

"Can the essence of this piece survive this dissolution/distillation/re-coagulation process? The power and polyphony of one of the most classic metal songs of all time, played in a single-line, no overdubs, 2.5-octave range, 5-holes, no mouthpiece/reed, no moving parts - empty stick of bamboo? It's ridiculous. But it worked in this case, and it feels great to play it, literally like Ronnie [Dio] was smiling onto me the whole time I was creating the arrangement and every time I perform it. Sure, the timbral palette is completely altered but the spirit, the mojo and all the key musical components are represented in a way that generates its own flow and structural balance."

Beyond the practice, arranging and composing, there's a lot of other work underlying this album. *Holy Flute* is one of several recent projects (alongside, for example, Anne Norman's album *Beneath the Surface*) that suggest that crowd funding represents an increasingly common and potentially productive

option for anyone hoping to get a shakuhachi-related project off the ground. Although the process is time consuming - full of emails, phone calls, videos, writing, editing and more - Boots explains that crowd funding "feels like a blessing", not only because it makes unusual projects possible but also because it involves "truly connecting with people that actually do care about what you are doing." He says that the particular method he followed "makes you look very closely at why you are doing a project and how to honestly communicate that to the people who already want to help you see your dreams come true, then set up the skeleton to carry this out and then slog through doing it!" Clearly the effort involved has not dissuaded Boots from using crowd funding in the future:

"*Holy Flute* is Volume I of the three-part series *Shakuhachi Unleashed*. Each title is derived from a classic Dio album and in this way the title also provides a thematic structure to the track list. In the case of *Holy Flute* (from *Holy Diver*), the theme became the Great Questions of Good v. Evil, general theological metaphysics and existential contemplations and scrutiny. We will be recording Volume II in July and

basically starting this whole process over again and hoping that even more people get turned on by this unlikely yet inevitable addition to the solo bamboo repertoire. Volume II is nature themed. It is a tribute to the classic album from Rainbow (with Dio), *Rainbow Rising*, and is called, naturally, *Bamboo Rising*.”

One pleasure of this album is the rich sense of philosophy and humour that Boots has worked into the promotional material, musical selections and album artwork. The cover illustration shows a benevolent-looking organic humanoid giant in a landscape of pine forests and rocky outcrops, one hand holding a shakuhachi aloft, the other hand making the “sign of the horns” associated with heavy metal and neopaganism. Like much of the album, this image is a slightly cryptic allusion and listeners with interests in, for example, DC comics or metal will notice different influences. Anyone who sponsored the crowd-funding campaign received a bonus 13<sup>th</sup> track titled ‘What is this?’ For those who couldn’t immediately identify the famous original, the album artwork contains clues to its identity through a short chain of references. Alongside these playful allusions, a deep

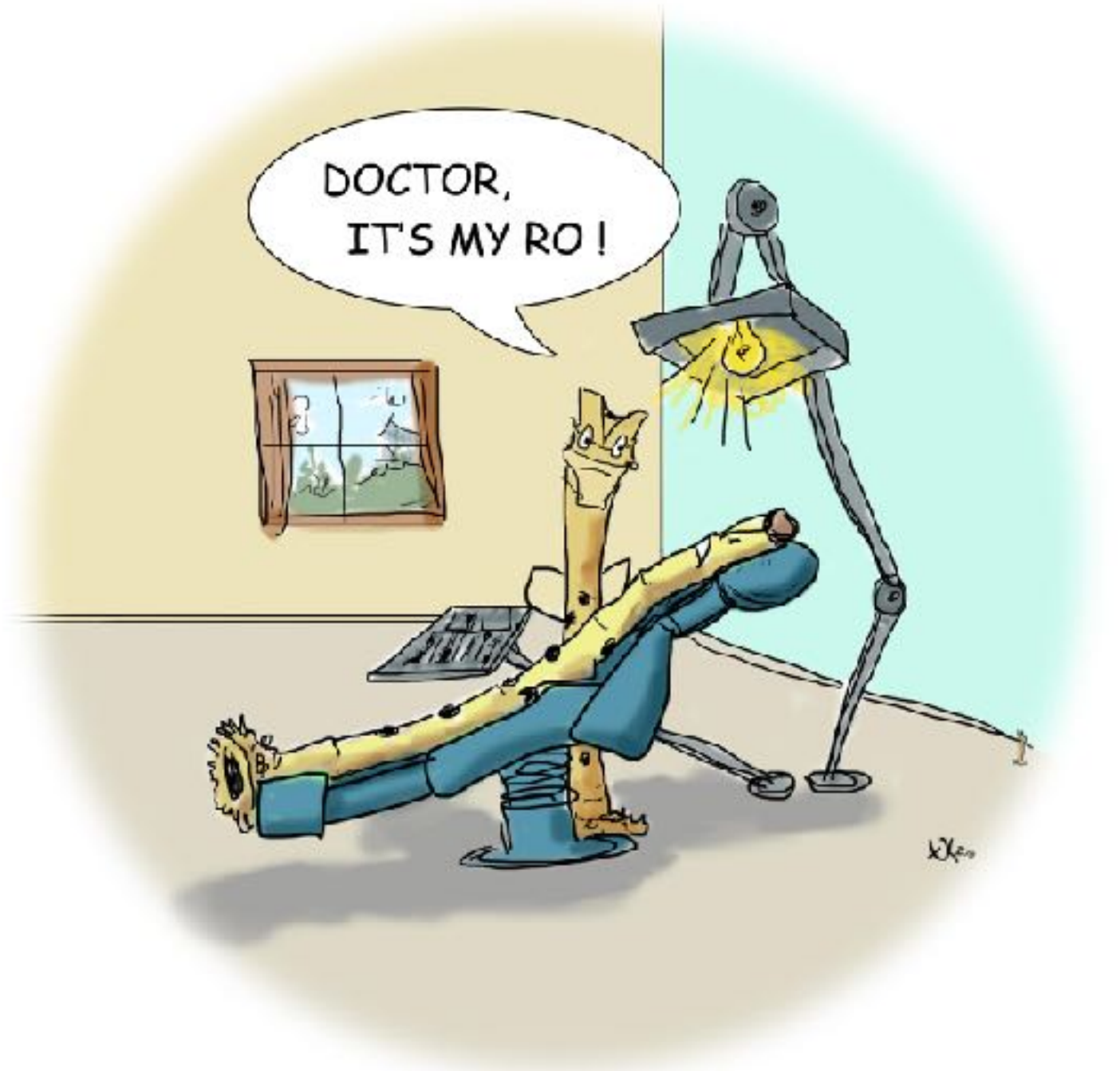
concern with spirituality is clearly woven into the album. Track titles like ‘Heaven and Hell’ or ‘Damaged Soul’, the neopagan imagery, and mentions of ‘light’ and ‘revelation’ in the sleeve notes: such references add up to make *Holy Flute* a musical exploration of the shakuhachi’s relationship not only with Zen, but with other religious and philosophical systems. For example, Boots sees Dio’s ‘Heaven and Hell’ (heard on track 2) as reflecting “the reconciliation of apparent opposites”: “both are here, right now, and where you find yourself hinges on your own state of consciousness.” There are many such opposites in this album: bamboo and metal, light and dark, Zen and European metaphysics, serious spirituality and playful humour. These juxtapositions make *Holy Flute* anything but a typical album. It is a window onto a personal philosophy, a musical and pictorial game, a strange beast from a planet at the edge of the shakuhachi’s expanding sonic and cultural universe.

<http://www.holyflute.com/>

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**Cartoon**  
**by Thorsten Knaub**

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## Documentary Review

by Clive Bell

### Katsuya Nonaka: Future Is Primitive

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"I think this modernisation has to stop, and get back to the old school ways," says Katsuya Nonaka, speaking of his new shakuhachi-meets-skateboarding documentary film, *Future Is Primitive*. Nonaka is discussing his title:

"The 'primitive' thing is like roots, you know? As for shakuhachi, the jinashi raw shakuhachi is a really primitive instrument. So I was putting my hope into the title, that hopefully in the future, the shakuhachi will go back to its roots."

There might seem to be no meeting point between Japan's bamboo flute, associated with Zen priests, and youth culture's skateboarding boom but Nonaka, a seasoned practitioner of both, has pinpointed problems that they share. As skateboarding evolves

FUTURE IS PRIMITIVE



from teenage craze into potential Olympic sport, corporations identify sponsoring and controlling opportunities. In the case of shakuhachi, the modern instrument is coated inside with lacquer to boost volume and reliability. But a minority of players are rejecting this western-influenced version of their instrument and turning back to the so-called jinashi flute: raw, untreated bamboo as employed by the basket-hatted komusō monks, who somehow created the solo shakuhachi repertoire in pre-modern Japan.

"Skate people say, 'Keep it real' all the time," continues Nonaka. "Many big companies are coming in, so for example there's a movement against Nike, the 'Don't Do It' campaign, twisting their slogan 'Just Do It'. I'm just worrying that skateboarding is going to take the same route as shakuhachi has done for some time. Shakuhachi has two types and jiari [lacquered] is in the majority. So in the future the sport aspect of skateboarding - people call it sportsboarding - is going to be the most popular thing and that's all most people will know. Then maybe street

skating is going to get banned by the government and it's going to be super hard for us to skate in the street. Street skating is our roots and that has to happen in the street, you know?"

*Future Is Primitive* is a twist on the title of Powell Peralta's seminal 1985 skate video, *Future Primitive*. Nonaka has interviewed big names from the skating and shakuhachi worlds to create a nuanced discussion of how both are evolving. "The skaters in the film are super famous - I was lucky," says Nonaka, and Japanese skateboarders have been flocking to screenings. In amongst the debate are plenty of shots of cool moves from both musicians and street skaters in which it's clear that elegance and timing are crucial to both. In terms of shakuhachi, we hear from jinashi master Atsuya Okuda, who switched from a career as jazz trumpeter to become one of the most respected players of the raw bamboo flute. Nonaka has studied with him for over a decade. Okuda stresses how the shakuhachi was a tool for pursuing enlightenment via playing. "Tradition has its good and bad sides," says Okuda, "but if the shakuhachi has evolved to become

simply an instrument, I think that's completely wrong." A younger player, Kohei Matsumoto, talks of the struggle of surviving as a professional in the face of widespread Japanese ignorance of their own musical traditions. He smiles as he recalls being asked to play tunes from Disney's *Frozen* but says he's okay with that as a route towards eventually hearing the ancient solo repertoire.

The skaters seem unused to talking about what they do. They insist repeatedly that it's fun but Nonaka draws them out. "It's pure freedom, you can just live your life," says Ryan Schekler. Hisashi Nakamura acknowledges that street skating is a tool to express your personality. They all agree there are problems with skating opening up to an ever-wider public. "There's nothing I can do if the world doesn't care," says one, "all I can do is stay true to my belief." And suddenly we're in the world of the samurai.

This is Nonaka's debut film. He's also a manga artist and a member of Seppuku Pistols, a punk collective



who dress as Edo period Japanese farmers and cover The Dead Kennedys' "Too Drunk To Fuck" with furious traditional drumming and amplified shamisen. He feels both of his twin topics are on the brink of crisis: "I was like, oh, I have to do something, otherwise the future is going to be totally different. I'm trying to say, please know about jinashi shakuhachi, then please make your choice. Now people only know jiari, so there's no choice. After skating gets into the Olympics, the majority of people will see skateboarding as a sport, so I'm worried people are going to forget that it was actually in the street. We have to let them know about it, that's the main point of this film."

But of course *Future Is Primitive* is about more than flutes and skates. Towards the close Nonaka shows us the ruined Fukushima nuclear plant and assorted images of globalisation: Macdonalds, Starbucks and fast fashion outlet Uniqlo. He talks about the tree as a metaphor for culture – a tree needs roots – while we see Japan's tallest tower, Tokyo Skytree. Nonaka: "They're a sign of the times,

showing how everything is going to look the same. I'm questioning modernisation. Somehow they named that tower for a tree, but the roots of that Skytree is a shopping mall."

## Guidelines for Contributors

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 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:

1. Please feel free to contact us on the topic you would like to write about beforehand and keep in mind that the ESS Newsletter does not publish information on future events (except those organised by the ESS), instead ESS calendar updates will be sent out periodically. These will aim to include all upcoming events across Europe.
2. 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.

3. Article length: the Newsletter includes articles of different lengths up to approximately 2,000 words.
4. 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.
5. Please use as many multi-media materials as possible including pictures and external links.
6. 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).
7. Please send your pictures in jpg, png or tiff format with a minimum resolution of 150 dpi.
8. Please provide acknowledgement/credit for the use of any other author's material.
9. 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.

ESS publications

## ESS Membership

The European Shakuhachi Society is a non-profit organisation 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 organising a range of events, such as the annual summer schools. This comes from the membership fees.

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

The benefits of membership include access to information about shakuhachi events and tuition throughout Europe and beyond, as well as 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:

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

The European Shakuhachi Society is a registered charity. Registered charity no. 1123060.

## Ways to get in touch



### Homepage

ESS homepage (including event calendar): <http://shakuhachisociety.eu>

Previous newsletters: <http://shakuhachisociety.eu/publications/newsletter/>



### Email

General enquiries: [info@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto:info@shakuhachisociety.eu)

ESS membership: [member@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto:member@shakuhachisociety.eu)

ESS newsletter: [newsletter@shakuhachisociety.eu](mailto:newsletter@shakuhachisociety.eu)



### Forum

[www.shakuhachiforum.eu](http://www.shakuhachiforum.eu)



### Facebook

[European Shakuhachi Society Facebook Group](#)



### Twitter

Follow us on twitter [@ESS\\_Events](#)

To announce an event on the Twitter account of the ESS, please send your message to this email address : [twitter@shakuhachiforum.eu](mailto:twitter@shakuhachiforum.eu)