

Spring/Summer 2022

BAMBOO

Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society

DAI FUJIKURA

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SHABAKA HUTCHINGS

SHAKUHACHI RESOURCES

CD REVIEWS

MUSIC AND RELIGION IN THE PRE-WWII
JAPANESE SHAKUHACHI COMMUNITY



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BAMBOO – The Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society – Spring/Summer 2022

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INDEX

BAMBOO – The Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society Spring/Summer 2022

Letter from the editors	4
Letter from the chairperson	5
ESS Event Announcement	6
Dai Fujikura's New Shakuhachi Concerto Shines Deep Under The Surface <i>by ESS NL</i>	7
Discourses of Music and Religion in the Pre-WWII Japanese Shakuhachi Community <i>by Matt Gillan</i>	18
Shakuhachi Interview – In Conversation with Mizuno Kohmei <i>by Kiku Day</i>	28
Shabaka Hutchings –The Shakuhachi Comet is Coming <i>by Clive Bell</i>	40
The Bigger Picture – Images from Japan	44
Shakuhachi Resources:	
- How to approach learning a Vox/Shakuhachi piece <i>by Anne Norman</i>	56
- Min'yō Music <i>with Akihisa Kominato</i>	64
CD Reviews <i>by Brian Tairaku Ritchie</i>	70
Ha-Ha-Ro – Shakuhachi Humour & Art	74
ESS Members' Area – What's New?	80
Shakuhachi Terminology: Glossary N – Y	84
ESS Membership	86
ESS – Ways to get In touch	87
ESS Newsletter guidelines for contributions	88

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear ESS members & shakuhachi people,

We hope you are all well.

We are happy to present to you the Spring/Summer 2022 edition of BAMBOO, the Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society, and we hope that our mixture of articles, interviews, resources and reviews in this issue will be to your liking.

In the first part of this edition we have we believe thrown our thematic net extremely wide and caught insights and contributions ranging from the world premiere of the Shakuhachi Concerto by Dai Fujikura, to a major contribution by writer Matt Gillan with a precise examination about some neglected part of early 20th shakuhachi history, a comprehensive interview with Chikumeisha chairperson Mizuno Kohmei by Kiku Day, all the way to Clive Bell's portrait of Shakuhachi Comet Shabaka Hutchings.

In the Resources section Anne Norman shares with us her exploration of combining shakuhachi and voice with a specially for the ESS adapted version of her piece Whispered Shadows. Furthermore we are presenting another min'yō song, this time we are particular pleased to have Kominato Akihisa, coming from a long family line of Japanese min'yō performers, to share the story and techniques of Hakuro-bushi.

In our Review pages, we have Brian Tairaku Ritchie tackling a mixture of new releases and re-releases which makes like always fascinating reading.

Of course the lighter side of the shakuhachi cannot be absence either, and in our HA-HA-RO/more merry pages, an area which mixes the superficial with the profound, we find again some visual puns and cartoons, as well as an introduction to some handy sculpting by Julien Richard.

As for the ESS members' website, in the absence of online workshop material for this issue (the recent May event will be added later in the year) we opted for the already ready to go video clips from a New Horizons concert of the WSF2018 in London. Enjoy!

Happy reading & thanks again for all your contributions!

ESS Newsletter publishing team
Thorsten Knaub / Emmanuelle Rouaud

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear ESS members and shakuhachi enthusiasts,

A new issue of BAMBOO, our ESS newsletter, is here thanks to the effort of Emmanuelle and Thorsten, our great publications team. Please consider this a way to support all our practices and keep us connected in these challenging times.

Phil Horan and his team are already working towards making our next Summer School a face to face one. This would take place during the summer of 2023 in Dublin.

Meanwhile we have just finished the first of the three online events that act as a bridge towards it. Maybe you could enjoy it with us last weekend (May 28 and 29), but if you could not, you still have two more chances coming up. To know more about this, check: <http://roadtodublin.shakuhachisociety.eu/>

As members of the ESS we also hope to be meeting with you at our next Annual General Meeting (AGM) that will take place this year online as will be announced as soon as the details are clear.

For those of you who are still not members: please consider becoming one, and for those of you who are: remember the importance of keeping up with the membership. Membership will give you access to the 'members area' and discounts in all activities organized by the society. This is what allows for the society to function.

As usual, we encourage you to contact us with any suggestions, ideas or questions by using the email info@shakuhachisociety.eu

Thank you very much for all your support during these challenging times.

With my best regards

Horacio Curti
ESS Chairperson

ESS ANNOUNCEMENT

We are happy to announce the Road to Dublin – a series of weekend online events taking place between May 2022 and March 2023.

As it was still not possible due to the pandemic to organise the Dublin ESS Summer School in time for this year, we put forward an extended series of online events to give us all the opportunity to be in touch virtually and move together step by step towards the ESS Summer School 2023 in Dublin, Ireland, where we finally can meet up again in person.

‘The Road to Dublin 2023’ timeline:

28/29 May 2022 – 1. Online Event

November 2022 – 2. Online Event

December 2022 – ESS Online Concert

March 2023 – 3. Online Event

Generally the programme will have around ten sessions covering traditional and modern pieces, tips and technique and of course there will be moment to *ro-buki* together.

As this edition is published we just had our first successful Online Event on 28 May + Sunday 29 May 202 featuring Araki Kodō VI, Shiori Tanabe, Horacio Curti, Nina Haarer and Philip Horan and with more than 45 participants joining us from all over the globe.

Stay tuned as the other event dates and details will be announced in due time and check-out the ESS ‘Road to Dublin’ website for changes and updates:

<http://roadtodublin.shakuhachisociety.eu>

Hope to see you there!



SHAKUHACHI PREMIERE

DAI FUJIKURA'S NEW SHAKUHACHI CONCERTO SHINES DEEP UNDER THE SURFACE

Dai Fujikura, prolific Japanese born, London based classical composer only encountered the traditional Japanese instruments in his twenties while attending a course at the Darmstadt Music Institute, Germany. Writing composition for a wide spectrum of instruments and performance contexts, ranging from opera, orchestras, chamber ensembles, duets, solo, film and electronic works, BAMBOO editors Emmanuelle Rouaud and Thorsten Knaub caught up with him by email after experiencing the recent world premier of Shakuhachi Concerto in Rennes, France.



Shakuhachi Concerto world premiere, Rennes, France. © Nicholas Floc'h

SHAKUHACHI CONCERTO – IMPRESSIONS

We were happy to hear, particularly after the long pandemic induced absence of live performance, that a major shakuhachi premiere was happening just down the road. (well almost). The setting was the Couvent des Jacobins in Rennes, France and on the menu was the world premiere of Dai Fujikura's concerto for shakuhachi commissioned by the Orchestre National de Bretagne (ONB) with the magnificent player Dozan Fujiwara as soloist flown in just for this performance.

The Shakuhachi Concerto was part of the concert *Journal de Bord – Les Alizés* [Logbook - To the Trade Winds] which in turn is part of the vast *Ponant** project, a project, lead by the ONB, which explores the relations between our knowledge of the world of the sea, its representations and music. The ONB has been already working for several years on the *Ponant* project, curating and performing concerts dedicated to all the oceans of the world and the way they embody a crossing of cultures and scientific knowledge. The 2022 manifestation was dedicated to *Les Alizés*, and other concerts will follow in the coming years.

Les Alizés, the Trade Winds, or 'easterlies', are the major winds from East to West and therefore quite naturally the Shakuhachi Concerto by Japanese composer Dai Fujikura opened the concert during which we could also hear works by Felix Mendelssohn, Grace Williams and Jean Cras. All works relate to the universe of the ocean, performed by the ONB and conducted magnificently on this occasion by Rémi Durupt.

The writing and performance of the concerto was conceived to be along side the projected photographs of the contemporary photographer Nicolas Floc'h. Floc'h's striking black and white imagery of the sea bed near the Brittany and Japanese coasts takes us to the submerged part of the ocean where we discover a whole new world where imagination and perception intermingle and shift organically.

The concerto written for shakuhachi 1.6 and 1.8 and performed by the Japanese shakuhachi master Dozan Fujiwara, encapsulates this mysterious underworld from the first upper register swelling opening sounds of the orchestra, which soon shifts to the lower range of the woodwinds, to then organically leave an opening for Dozan's first sound, a delicate *dai-kan* note, to slowly but unstoppable plunging us deeper into the organic discourse of the evolving concerto.

As the concerto proceeds the soloist and the orchestra feed each other and develop ample, dense phrases of great intensity which are in constant transformation, mutation and expansion and playing on the contrasts and the amplitude of the melodic lines. The use of extreme register may be evoking the light on the surface of the water and its reaching to the depth of the sea.

Further on we also encounter sections where the intermingling and crossfading of sounds and textures becomes so dense that the breathed sounds, bowed sounds and instruments become almost indistinguishable, as if we reached the dark depths of the ocean where only a scatter of light remains to identify and separate ones' surroundings.

In the six minute *cadenza* (solo part), near the end of the piece and performed on a 1.6 shakuhachi, Dozan expresses his great mastery of the instrument, taking in big steps on the scale and exploring dynamically the widest possible range of the shakuhachi, its tonality and colours, to finally submerge again with a *Korokoro*-esque section while the orchestra is already sweeping back into the mix.

A magnificent energy emerges from these 28 minutes of music composed by Dai Fujikura, and flawlessly brought to life by the virtuosity and masterful expressiveness of Dozan Fujiwara and the musicians of the ONB. Bravo!

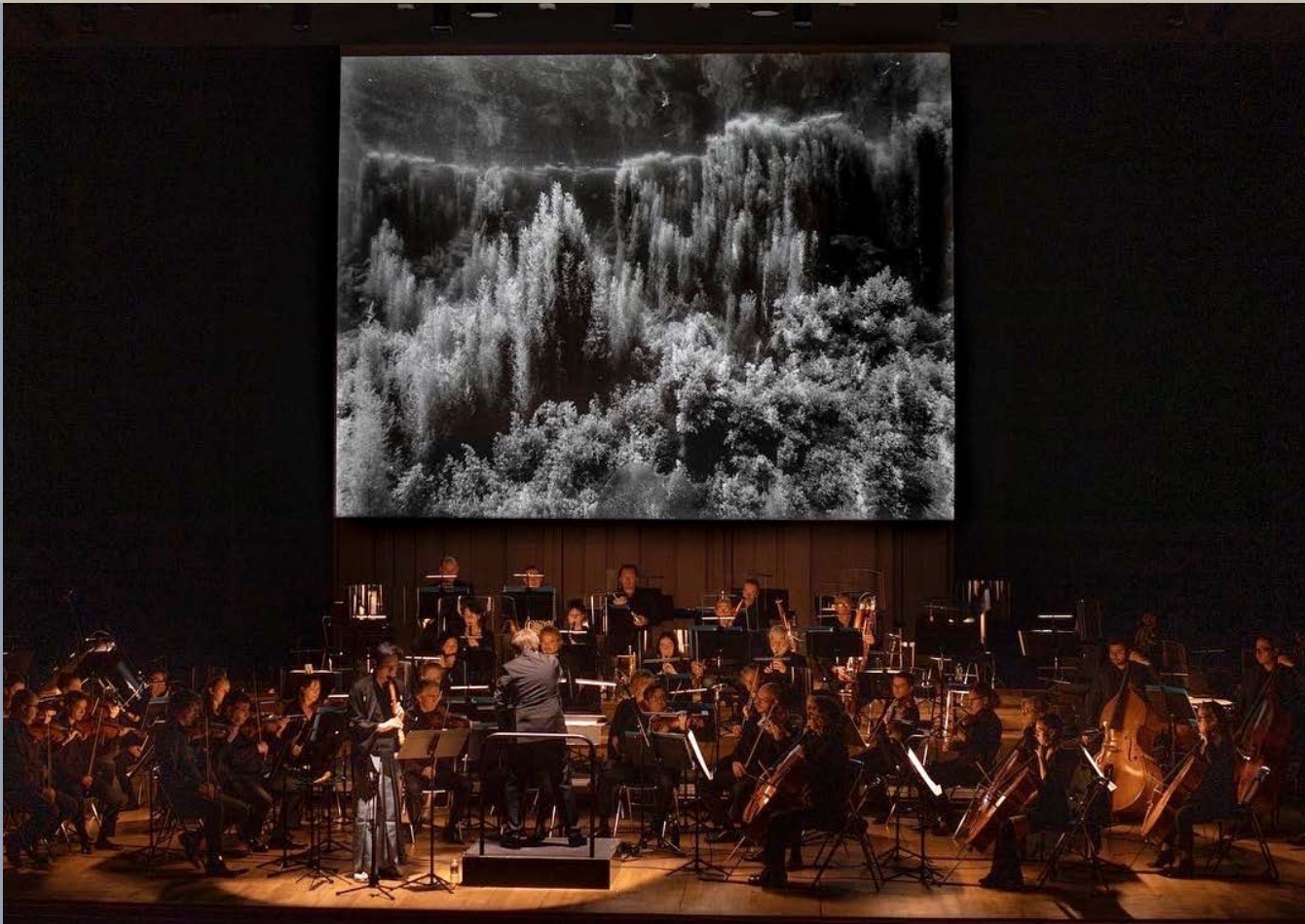
**an archaic French naval term for "Wind" or "West"*



Shakuhachi Concerto by Dai Fujikura (World Premiere), 28. April 2022, Couvent des Jacobins in Rennes, France.
Orchestre National de Bretagne
Dozan Fujiwara, shakuhachi
Rémi Durupt, conductor

Performance photographs © Nicolas Floc'h

Short extracts of the Shakuhachi Concerto can be heard here:
<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cc4lxOnNZtt/> [Dozan Fujiwara Instagram]
<https://www.instagram.com/tv/Cc3eEALDyF6/> [Dai Fujikura Instagram]



Q & A WITH DAI FUJIKURA

ESS NL: For some years now you have been composing regularly for traditional Japanese instruments such as the koto, the shakuhachi, the shamisen and the sho. Is this a direction you wish to explore further or have these compositions been prompted by meeting traditional Japanese performers who ask you for new works?

DF: These are just because all of a sudden, since some years ago, Japanese traditional instruments players started commissioning me to write music for them. I grew up in Japan and lived in Japan until age 15, but I have never encountered any Japanese traditional instruments until I saw one concert in Darmstadt when I was 21 years old. So these Japanese traditional instruments were completely “new” instruments to me.

I love discovering and studying new instruments, and I get inspired by musicians who dedicate their lives to those instruments. I do a lot of sessions over Skype, Zoom etc. with musicians while I am writing music.

My life in music is a strange one to me, as these “waves” come all of a sudden. For instance, for the past two years, I have been asked to write music for period instruments: natural horn, harpsichord, forte-piano, Traverso Flute concerto, viola da gamba, and baroque ensemble. All these projects come together from various countries (and they don’t know that others are asking me to write as well).

For me, just because my passport is Japanese (which I feel not emotional about. It’s kind of a “membership card” I came with when I was born, I guess. Is it a good membership to have? I don’t know. All I care about is if I can get in shorter queues at airports or not!), I guess I get more requests from Japanese traditional instrumentalists, for which I am grateful. Though I am extremely happy to have been asked in 2020 to write for Chinese traditional instruments, sheng, and also Korean traditional instruments, daegeum and haegeum. It is so fascinating for me to learn these new instruments.

(I also have been studying Tai-Chi for years, having one-to-one lessons every week. I even composed music inspired by Tai Chi, a solo cello work called “Tsutsumu” for Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, a great cellist. So you can see, emotionally I don’t have a particular interest nor connection to just one country).

ESS NL: You moved to Europe at a very young age to study in London. What musical education did you have in Japan before this trip and what knowledge of traditional music and Japanese instruments did you have before composing for them?

DF: I had a typical music education (with an Asian tiger mom!) in Japan. Piano, composition, dictation, solfège, at the junior department of the music college in Osaka, then Yamaha. I had no experience playing or even listening to Japanese traditional instruments. I don’t know anyone around me who I went school who did, my parents neither.

ESS NL: This new concerto for shakuhachi follows two other concertos for Japanese instruments, one for shamisen written in 2019 and the other for koto written in 2020-21. Could you tell us how this creation project with the Orchestre National de Bretagne (ONB) came about?

DF: I can’t remember what it was, but I posted something, probably silly, on Facebook (that’s where you post something silly and maybe funny!). Marc Feldman, the general manager of the Orchestre National de Bretagne (ONB), commented “Shakuhachi concerto, if you want!” or something like that. I sent him a private message to ask “Are you serious? I have a solo shakuhachi work [Korokoro] which was commissioned by and written for the superstar shakuhachi player, Dozan Fujiwara. We always spoke about one day developing Korokoro into a concerto....” Some conversations and a pandemic later, here we are. I am very grateful to Marc and the ONB for making it happen.

DAI FUJIKURA – BIO

Born in 1977 in Osaka Japan, Dai was fifteen when he moved to UK. The recipient of many composition prizes, he has received numerous international co-commissions from the Salzburg Festival, Lucerne Festival, BBC Proms, Bamberg Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra and more. He has been Composer-in-Residence of Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra since 2014 and held the same post at the Orchestre national d’Île-de-France in 2017/18. Dai’s first opera Solaris, co-commissioned by the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Opéra de Lausanne and the Opéra de Lille, had its world premiere in Paris in 2015 and has since gained a worldwide reputation. A new production of Solaris was created and performed at the Theatre Augsburg in 2018, and the opera received a subsequent staging in 2020.

In 2017, Dai received the Silver Lion Award from the Venice Biennale. In the same year, he was named the Artistic Director of the Tokyo Metropolitan Theater’s Born Creative Festival. In 2019, his Shamisen Concerto was premiered at Mostly Mozart festival in New York Lincoln Center and there have so far been 9 performances of this work by various orchestras. 2020 sees the premiere of his fourth piano concerto Akiko’s Piano, dedicated to Hiroshima Symphony’s Peace and Music Ambassador, Martha Argerich and performed as part of their “Music for Peace” project. His third opera “A Dream of Armageddon” was premiered in New National Theatre Tokyo in the same year.

His works are recorded by and released mainly on his own label Minabel Records in collaboration with SONY Music and his compositions are published by Ricordi Berlin.

Dai is currently focusing his attention on upcoming works including an opera on the life of Hokusai, a concerto for two orchestras, and a double concerto for flute and violin.

Other/ collaboration beyond genre/ producer/ curator

Dai works with artists from other many music genres such as experimental pop and improvisation including with Norwegian improvisers Jan Bang and Sidsel Endresen and those tracks are released under Jazzland Recordings.

Since 2017 he has been the Artistic Director of the Born Creative Festival at Tokyo Metropolitan Theater. He also curated concerts at La Folle Journée au Japon in 2016 and 2019.

Since 2015, Dai has been leading composition classes for children from 4 to 14 years old in Soma, Fukushima, as a part of El Sistema Japan and sponsored by LVMH Japan.

<https://daifujikura.com>



ESS NL: *And is the writing of the concerto the result of a close collaboration with Dozan Fujiwara? A performer for whom you had already written the piece Korokoro for solo shakuhachi in 2015.*

DF: For me every piece which has soloists becomes a close collaboration with the musicians. I first do a Zoom/Skype meeting (even long before the pandemic), then I write a few bars, send those as screenshots, the musicians play and send a video recording back to me... and I write more... etc. etc.

So when the score is completed, the soloists have seen their parts pretty much every week, if not every day, for months and months. There is nothing they can tell me “Oh, this is unplayable”. I probably have those bits as video files, to prove that they can do it!

ESS NL: *We read on your website that for the writing of the shamisen concerto composed in 2019 you were inspired by a first composition for solo shamisen (Neo) written before. What was your source of inspiration for the shakuhachi concerto and the stages of writing?*

DF: I always make “sister” pieces. Sometimes a solo piece first, then the concerto, sometimes the concerto first, then the solo work. For the Shakuhachi Concerto, Korokoro, as I said above, the solo shakuhachi piece came first and was then developed into Shakuhachi Concerto.

ESS NL: *In the project, Aux Alizés (the trade winds, the permanent east-to-west winds), we follow an imaginary journey into the depths of the ocean, the waters and the winds where the sound fuses with the image of photographer Nicolas Floc’h. When listening to the premiere performance in Rennes, We had the feeling of the instrument groups flowing into each other, building up soundscapes organically almost symbiotically before dispersing again. Could you describe the structure of the concerto and tell us more about how you imagined the role of each family of instruments in the orchestra and that of the soloist in the unfolding of the musical narrative? And in addition, what would you say about your relationship with the image in the creative process?*

DF: First of all, the idea of me getting in touch with Nicolas Floc’h was from Marc Feldman and Florence Drouhet. Marc is the orchestra’s general manager and Florence works in the photography and art world, and often worked closely with Nicolas, as far as I know. They “matched” us - and I am so grateful.

Nicolas and I spoke many times over Zoom. If there wasn’t a pandemic, he might have taken me to a sea, to swim, dive or do whatever together! His photographs were so inspiring for me. I was just surrounded myself with his photos while composing the concerto.

When I think of a concerto I write, I always think that the solo part is the main “cast” and the orchestra is the “aura” of the soloist’s character. I can never think that the soloist and the orchestra are in engaging in a “battle” - a historian I know once told me that this is the traditional classical music thought of a “concerto”. I never think that way.

So for Shakuhachi Concerto, the orchestra passes on the elements, then the shakuhachi produces its own materials and passed it back to the orchestra, it expands and comes back to the shakuhachi.... A sense of togetherness, to create a sound world. That was my aim.

ESS NL: *What specific shakuhachi playing techniques did you use in your writing?*

DF: Pretty much all of the traditional shakuhachi playing techniques I think. The score also said that everything is notated, though the soloist is welcome to add the shakuhachi technique on top. As when and where and how you do this, is the big contribution of the shakuhachi player, isn’t it? (And we had Dozan, the superstar shakuhachi player.

I wouldn’t want to dictate when he must do *nayashi* or *muraiki!*).

ESS NL: *When will it be possible to listen to the recording of the concert on your site? Or on CD?*

DF: I hope we can, one day. It is always tricky to gain the permission from a symphony orchestra, but the extremely clean, multitrack, edited, mixed recording is here, living in my hard drive.

ESS NL: *The shakuhachi concerto is part of a project reflecting on the sea, Projet Ponant-Aux Alizés, evoking the calm and mysterious depths of oceans and waters. Could you tell us something about your relationship with the sea and the maritime life, which may have fed into the creation of the work, and in general about the wider idea of the representation of nature, and our relationship to it, in your works?*

DF: It’s a big topic. As I already said, I had no experience of Japanese traditional instruments when growing up, but I knew that Japanese instruments, the performance practices are very much coming from nature, the sound of nature and being a part of nature.

I liked the photos of Nicolas’ very much, because they didn’t look like anywhere on earth. I knew the photos are from the ocean, but they were not the kind of ocean photos I ever seen before... I even felt some breeze, some winds in the sea, which is obviously not possible.

Though, given the fact that I am Japanese and I’m writing for shakuhachi, I definitely wanted to avoid writing music which literally has something to do with ‘winds’, or ‘blowing’, or any of these clichés of shakuhachi music which is written in modern times.

Hence what I saw in Nicolas’ photos – the out-of-the-world imagery, this otherworldly sense – was a perfect source to draw my inspiration from for my shakuhachi concerto.

ESS NL: *To discover more and better understand your musical universe, which of your works would you advise our readers to listen to first?*

DF: Since this is a Shakuhachi world (wonderful), *Korokoro*, and *Shakuhachi Five?* And also *Longing from Afar* - Shakuhachi versions (there are two! - the score is free to download from my website, so please have a go with an online or live performance, or a hybrid performance, anything is possible!).

ESS NL: *And finally, do you have any other writing project in progress for the shakuhachi?*

Not at the moment - though I am wondering if I can make the cadenza part of the Shakuhachi Concerto as a stand alone solo work. (it became one, it is called *Yuragi*. Dozan told me he will play it sometime in June, in one of his concerts.)

ESS NL: *Thank you very much for this interview and insights in your work.*

DF: Thank you!

SHAKUHACHI RESEARCH

DISCOURSES OF MUSIC AND RELIGION IN THE PRE-WWII JAPANESE SHAKUHACHI COMMUNITY

Matt Gillan’s 2021 article *Sankyoku Magazine and the Invention of the Shakuhachi as Religious Instrument in Early 20th-Century Japan* shone new light on some aspects of shakuhachi history. For this issue of BAMBOO Matt Gillan summarises some of his article main ideas and provides us with additional material and research examining how the shakuhachi instrument and its practice was used to shape ideas of religion and national identity in pre-second world war Japan.

The *honkyoku* repertoire for the shakuhachi developed during the Edo period (1600-1868) at the hands and breath of the *komusō*, who would play the shakuhachi while collecting alms on the streets of Japan. These *komusō* claimed a lineage to Fuke (普化 Ch. Puhua), an eccentric character who appears in one of the central texts of Rinzai Zen Buddhism, the *Rinzairoku* (臨濟錄), a record of the sayings and activities of the 9th century monk Línjì Yìxuán (臨濟義玄 J. Rinzai Gigen). The *komusō* belonged to a network of temples located throughout Japan which were affiliated to what came to be known as the Fuke sect (普化宗 Fuke-shū). The Fuke sect is sometimes described both inside and outside Japan as a lineage within the Zen Buddhist tradition, and the shakuhachi as an instrument of ‘Zen meditation’. Unfortunately, detailed descriptions and records of the ‘Fuke sect’ during the Edo period are scarce, and information on the position and use of the shakuhachi in the context of Edo-era Buddhism are almost non-existent (see Deeg 2007 for an overview of the available historical information). There is at present no firm evidence confirming that the shakuhachi was used in ‘meditation’ practices or ritual events.

What we do have is a very rich discourse from shortly after the end of the Edo period concerning the religious nature of the shakuhachi. Beginning in the last two decades of the 19th century, only 10-or-so years after the abolishment of the Fuke sect by government proclamation in 1871, articles began to emerge in Japanese newspapers, magazines and books that attempted to frame the shakuhachi within the rapidly changing religious landscape of modern Japan. This discourse referenced earlier Edo-era understandings of the instrument, but also incorporated the new language and terminology of the time. My recent research (Gillan 2022) has revealed a vigorous discourse in Japanese newspapers from as early as 1880 concerning the re-establishment of the Fuke sect, a discourse that eventually led to the re-establishment of Myōanji temple within the Tōfukuji complex in Kyoto in 1890. This early discourse centred largely around gaining permission for the practice of alms gathering (*takuhatsu*) while playing the shakuhachi, but the influence of new Western-influenced religious terminology that had begun to be used in press by this time is also strongly apparent.

In another recent article (Gillan 2021), I looked at the many ways that musicians and writers portrayed the shakuhachi as a religious instrument in the music magazine *Sankyoku*, published from 1921 to 1944. The magazine was edited by Fujita Rerō, who was himself a shakuhachi player and was involved in a movement to reinstate the Fuke sect in the pre-WWII years. Largely due to Fujita’s influence, *Sankyoku* included a huge number of articles dealing with the religious aspects of the shakuhachi. In my 2021 article I analyzed more than 200 over a 20-year period (although there were more that I had to omit).

My use of the word ‘invention’ in the 2021 article to describe the portrayal of the shakuhachi as a religious instrument in the modern period refers to a well-known book titled *The Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). This book makes clear that many traditions from around the world that we assume to be ‘ancient’ in their origins were in fact constructed comparatively recently, and often in response to particular societal developments. The idea does not imply that there is no historical truth in invented traditions, or that they are necessarily based on fabrications. Rather, it suggests that there is value in thinking about how ‘traditions’ are constructed in the relatively recent past, and what they tell us about the society at that time. In a similar way, Talal Asad (1993) and many others have described in detail how modern understandings of ‘religion’ around the world have been influenced by European modernity, whether through processes of colonialism or through more indirect means. My main purpose in writing the 2021 article was to explore how (whatever the truth about the Edo-period Fuke sect might have been) the early 20th century discourse on the religious nature of the shakuhachi tells us something about the nature of religion and music in early 20th century Japan, and how these concepts were influenced by other political and cultural developments of the time.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the religious discourse surrounding the shakuhachi in these articles was that it addressed not simply issues of personal faith or practices such as ‘meditation’, but that it was deeply embedded and invested in the society, morals, and human relationships of early 20th-century Japan. In my 2021 article I gave an example from 1933 in which the well-known player Nomura Kagehisa was arrested and subsequently executed for the murder of a family of four. The event sparked much soul-searching among the shakuhachi community, inspiring discussions about the religious role of the shakuhachi in nurturing and developing public and personal moral behaviour. I also discussed at length the mendicant pilgrimages of the player Tani Kyōchiku (see photo), who achieved celebrity status for his extended pilgrimage to the Buddhist sites of Asia, playing the shakuhachi as he travelled through China, Southeast Asia and India. In the article I hinted that his travels not only had a personal religious meaning for Tani himself but were also of great interest to many in Japan as the country developed new colonial ambitions over parts of the Asian mainland.



Fig. 1 Tani Kyōchiku during his travels through Asia (from *Sankyoku*, Jan 1931, p98)

In this short article, I offer some ‘out-takes’ from my 2021 article, to explore in more detail how the religious discourse surrounding the shakuhachi intersected with political developments in Japan in the 1930s. The years leading up to WWII saw a rapidly increasing nationalism sweep through Japanese society, and this nationalistic fervour profoundly affected the way the religious aspects of the shakuhachi were constructed. I look first at the writings of the shakuhachi player and essayist Takeshita Sumito (??-1936). Takeshita was one of the most explicitly Buddhist writers on the shakuhachi, but also one whose writings go beyond simply historical understandings of the instrument, portraying it in the context of Zen Buddhism in the pre-WWII years in Japan. I also give two examples of how the Buddhist nature of the shakuhachi was portrayed in the context of the second Sino Japanese war that began in 1937.

Takeshita Sumito’s theories of music and religion

Takeshita Sumito (birth year unknown) was born in Kyushu and studied in the early 1890s at Kumamoto Eigakkō 熊本英学校, a progressive Christian school where two of the most famous Meiji-era Japanese Christians, Ebina Danjō and Uchimura Kanzō were both teachers. Takeshita would have learned English at this school, and his writings show that he was at least proficient in the language. He would also have received instruction in Christianity, giving him a grounding in the study of comparative religion which infused much of his later writing. He subsequently studied at medical schools in Kumamoto and Nagasaki, before spending his working years as a physician at Osaka Medical College between 1899 and 1929 (Takeshita 1937:2-3). Takeshita’s shakuhachi lineage is unclear, but his writings and the only photograph of him that I have found (see below) indicate that he was a performer in the Myōan Taizan tradition.

Takeshita’s career as a writer began after his retirement as a doctor and his return to Nagasaki in 1929. He wrote regularly for the Nagasaki Nichinichi Shinbun newspaper on a variety of topics including the shakuhachi (these articles were posthumously published as a book in 1937), and for *Sankyoku* magazine between 1932 and his early death from illness in 1936 (all of Takeshita’s publications in *Sankyoku* are referenced in the appendix to my 2021 article). In these articles, Takeshita seems to be exploring new ways and possibilities of framing the shakuhachi in a religious context, and he draws heavily on contemporary developments in the position of Buddhism in early-Shōwa Japan. His early articles touch on issues of spiritual development, using terms such as *chikudō* 竹道 (‘the way of bamboo’ - see my 2021 article). By the end, his writings become more explicitly religious, more dogmatic, and more socially aware, as he works out his own distinctive Buddhist musical theology.

Takeshita’s contributions to *Sankyoku* magazine begin in June 1932 with a report on shakuhachi activities in Kumamoto. This first article describes Takeshita’s hosting of a visit by Tani Kyōchiku, who had recently returned from his extended tour of the Buddhist sites of Asia, where he had made an offertory shakuhachi performance at Bodhgaya, site of the Buddha’s enlightenment (Gillan 2021:29-33). This early article by Takeshita does not make heavy use of Buddhist or religious terminology, although he describes the shakuhachi using the neologisms ‘sonic philosophy’ (音声哲学) and ‘sonic religion’ (音声宗教), both of which terms he seems to have coined himself. (The Japanese words ‘*tetsugaku*’ (philosophy) and ‘*shūkyō*’ (religion) were both Meiji-era inventions used to translate imported Western concepts.)

In October 1932 Takeshita published a long article describing a pilgrimage around the Nagasaki region in Kyushu during which he played the shakuhachi at several Zen temples. The article, written in a casual and entertaining style, is obviously influenced by Tani Kyōchiku’s descriptions of his *angya* travels in Japan and Asia that had been published in *Sankyoku* over many years. In this article, Takeshita describes with enthusiasm his interactions (in

English) with a group of European journalists following a performance he gave dressed in full *komusō* costume. Beginning in 1932, Takeshita's articles begin to exhibit a much more overtly Buddhist tone, often taking a didactic approach where he urges his readers to adopt his theories into their shakuhachi practices. His November 1932 article titled 'Music needs to be (taken) serious(ly)' (音楽には真剣味が必要である), for example, begins to outline Takeshita's theories of the connections between Buddhism, the shakuhachi, and wider Japanese society. These ideas are more explicitly stated in an article from the following year, titled 'Destroyed in form but living in spirit - shakuhachi blowing Zen' (形に滅び霊に生きる吹簫禅), in which Takeshita writes:

At the centre of the Fuke-Zen-blowing tradition is the concept of 'attaining Buddhahood through a single breath' (一息成仏 *issoku jōbutsu*). By imparting all of one's power and spirit [into blowing the shakuhachi], the sound becomes the self and the self becomes the sound (*On soku ga, ga soku on* 音即我、我即音). Following this, the self and sound both disappear, becoming one with the spirit of the cosmos (天地の大霊と一致合流する), leading to the ultimate truth of Buddhahood (成仏の真諦).
Sankyoku 1933/9/13

The phrase 'Buddhahood through a single breath' (*issoku jōbutsu*) in Takeshita's article is closely related to the more widely known 'Buddhahood through a single sound' (*ichion/itton jōbutsu*), while the following phrases (the sound becomes the self....) are of unknown providence. The phrase 'shakuhachi-blowing-Zen' (*suishōzen*, literally 'blowing flute Zen') in the title is interesting as a precursor of 'suizen' (blowing Zen), which seems to have come into use around the middle of the 20th century. Takeshita mentions in this article the existence of an organization at the time called the Suishōzen Kyochiku Sect (吹簫禅虚竹宗) headed by the Kumamoto player Tsunoda Rogetsu (himself a Buddhist priest in the Jōdo Shin sect). I have seen no further information regarding this organization, but it seems that the term *suishōzen* was in use from at least the late 1920s. The earliest example of the term that I have found is an article by the shakuhachi player and scholar Tomimori Kyozan (Tsunoda's son-in-law) in the shakuhachi magazine Dai-Myōan大明暗 (February 1928) titled Suishōzen Mango (吹簫禅漫語 random remarks on *suishōzen*). Tomimori begins the article by stating "*suishōzen* - what a stiff-sounding [固苦しい] expression" (Tomimori 1928:21), before explaining that the 'Zen' of *suishōzen* refers not to a particular sect or lineage of 'Zen' Buddhism, but to a spiritual approach to the instrument that can be achieved by all players. The tone of the article suggests strongly that Tomimori invented the term *suishōzen* himself (or at-least that it was largely unknown at the time).¹

The continuation of the article sees Takeshita developing an increasingly innovative understanding of *suishōzen*:

Seen in this way, it might appear that *suishōzen* is a purely subjective activity that aims to train or cultivate the individual - in other words a kind of Hinayana (小乗 small vehicle) Buddhist practice. But this is far from the truth. The blowing of Fuke Zen pieces causes a Zen-infused state of no-self (無我三昧) that, in turn, instills awakening or bodhicitta (菩提心) leading to a realization of the Buddha nature (仏性) in the minds of all those who listen. In other words, as well as being a method of self-cultivation, *suishōzen* is a path for the salvation of all sentient beings (衆生済度) that is representative of the Mahayana (大乘 great vehicle) tradition. While the Fuke sect has been destroyed in form through religious legislation, the spiritual elements of *suishōzen* have been preserved faithfully and vigorously from the past, and will continue to contribute to the betterment of public morals (世道人心) through its religious efficacy.
Sankyoku 1933/9/14

¹ See Thorsten Mukuteki Olafsson's excellent website for more details on the development of the term *suishōzen* (尺八本流明暗吹簫法基階, accessed 17 May 2021). Olafsson states that the term was proposed around 1928 by Tomimori Kyozan and Kobayashi Shizan.



Fig. 2 Takeshita Sumito (from Takeshita 1937)

Takeshita’s referencing of the word *daijō* (the great vehicle=Mahayana) is notable in the context of early 20th century Japanese religious politics. Mahayana often refers to a major strand of Buddhism that developed from around the beginning of the Common Era, becoming the predominant form of Buddhism in East Asia (all traditional Japanese Buddhist sects belong to the Mahayana tradition). The Hinayana tradition, which is often seen as older, remains the predominant form in much of Southeast Asia today.²

But Takeshita’s use of the term here is not simply referring to religious lineage but is referencing contemporary Japanese political understandings of ‘Mahayana’ that emphasized the social agency of Buddhism within Japanese society. The influential Sōtō-sect priest and university professor Harada Sokaku原田祖岳, for example, founded a magazine titled Daijō-Zen (Mahayana Zen) in 1924, and wrote regularly on the role of ‘Mahayana Zen’ as a foundation for the Japanese spirit (*seishin*) and as central to the political life of the Japanese nation. From the early 1930s, Harada’s arguments became increasingly militaristic in tone. In a 1934 article, he wrote:

The spirit of Japan is the Great Way of the [Shinto] gods. It is the substance of the universe, the essence of the Truth... Politics conducted on the basis of a constitution are premature, and therefore fascist politics should be implemented for the next ten years... Similarly, education makes for shallow, cosmopolitan-minded persons. All of the people of this country should do Zen. That is to say, they should all awake to the Great Way of the gods. This is Mahayana Zen.
(quoted in Victoria 2006:137)

Similarly, the well-known Japanese playwright and religious essayist Kurata Hyakuzō wrote a 1934 book titled The political development of the Mahayanistic spirit (大乘精神の政治的展開), in which he outlines his vision for the relationship between Buddhism, religion and public life. As with many of the shakuhachi writers I mentioned in my 2021 article, Kurata references (negatively) the influence of communist ‘anti-religion’ movements which had become influential in Japan a few years earlier.

Takeshita’s shakuhachi writings seem to be profoundly influenced by these kinds of theories of the connection between Zen and the Japanese ‘spirit’. In a 1934 article titled ‘Do not throw away the religious value of *chikudō* (竹道の宗教的価値を棄てるな, (Sankyoku 1934/3/4-6), he writes:

I do not believe that it is possible for religions or philosophies to exist in separation from the real events of daily life. If they become disconnected from real lives, then they automatically become useless to human society. In the unfortunate instance where [religion] becomes disconnected from human lives, then it should be regarded not as an earthly study but as an esoteric game that has no application to the real world. Many people seem to regard terms such as ‘shakuhachi blowing zen’ (*suishō zen* 吹簫禅) or ‘sonic philosophy’ (*onsei tetsugaku* 音聲哲学) in this way, as being far removed from their lives, or as having no artistic value, but it must be said that these (views) are both false and extreme.

There is currently a trend sweeping across shakuhachi players throughout Japan to abandon the religious value of the shakuhachi and devote themselves entirely to *gaikyoku* (pieces outside the *honkyoku* repertoire). It should be said that this trend makes it impossible for shakuhachi-dō - in other words the religious value inherent in the sound of the shakuhachi - to play a part in the cultivation of the Japanese spirit or in the simple and strong nature of the Japanese people... it must be appreciated

² This distinction is not watertight. See, for example, Yasutani Haku’un’s distinction between Hinayana and Mahayana in the context of Japanese zazen practice (Kapleau 1967:41-46).

that the fundamental significance (*konpongi* 根本義) of the (sound of the) shakuhachi is its religious essence (宗教的存在).
Sankyoku 1934/3/4

In this passage, we get a clear sense of Takeshita’s view that the the shakuhachi is not simply a politically neutral musical pastime, but that it has a direct and profound influence on Japanese society and the Japanese ‘spirit’ (*seishin*) and, by extension, the political state of the Japanese nation. He develops this view more specifically later in the same article:

Conventional definitions of religion usually reference some kind of ‘faith in salvation by a greater power’ (*tariki shinshin* 他力信心). It is true to say that Fuke Zen, however, which has a history in this country of about 700 years, is in no way a religion of faith in salvation by a greater power. As I have written many times in this magazine, it is the sound of the shakuhachi itself which represents the ultimate truth (*shintai* 真諦), and it is this which gives the shakuhachi its strong religious authority. Following this way of thinking, there may be some who argue that it is the sound of the shakuhachi which is the object of faith or contains the essence of the religion, but this is not correct. The real meaning of *suishōzen* is that, through devoting oneself to blowing ‘Fuke Zen’ pieces, the practitioner can attain a ‘state of no-self’ (*muga zanmai* 無我三昧). Many people might believe that ‘no-self’ implies that the self disappears along with all people and things, showing the emptiness of the universe and negating the self, but this would also be a mistake. On the contrary, ‘no-self’ is actually a thorough affirmation of the self and an emphasis on the individual. In addition, the affirmation of the individual leads to an urge for self-perfection. The development of individual character, in turn, leads to an affirmation of the nation state and a nurturing of the Japanese spirit, causing a desire to create an upstanding spirit of nationalism.
Sankyoku 1934/3/5

Takeshita’s discussion in this article of ‘faith in salvation by a greater power’ (*tariki shinshin*) references a distinction in Japanese Buddhism between sects that emphasize a dependence on particular Buddhist deities (e.g. the Pure Land sects’ emphasis on Amida/Amitābha) and those which emphasize enlightenment as an autonomous activity (*jiriki*). To my knowledge, Takeshita’s discussion here of the shakuhachi in relation to this *tariki/jiriki* distinction is the first of its kind, and again demonstrates his original thinking on the religious nature of the shakuhachi.

Zen shakuhachi and the War effort

The discussion of the Buddhist shakuhachi in relation to Japanese nationalism in Takeshita’s articles was echoed by many other writers as Japan’s colonial incursions in Asia increased through the 1930s. Brian Daizen Victoria has outlined in great detail the extent to which Buddhist sects were actively involved in Japan’s colonial expansion from the Meiji period, culminating in the events of WWII. From the outbreak of the Sino Japanese war in 1937, Sankyoku magazine featured regular columns written by shakuhachi musicians fighting on the front line, several of whom referenced the Buddhist aspects of the instrument. I include two quotes here to show, at least, that the shakuhachi held an explicitly religious meaning for some Japanese soldiers, and that this meaning was referenced in discourse about conflict and battle. In an evocative article in November 1937, accompanied by a picture of himself in Buddhist robes, the Myōan player Koyama Hōshō reported:

If we should die gloriously in battle, I hope that we can cross the Sanzu river to the Buddhist heaven (Gokuraku Jōdo) dressed in Komusō robes... If you listen, you can hear the clamour of our brave army pushing forward. It is an excitement, a thrill, a great joy, so that my flesh begins to dance, and my blood becomes hot. It is impossible to sit still. The feeling is incomparable. This is the true religious ecstasy (法悦 *hōetsu*). I am so excited to be able to experience the true state of *muga* (無我 no-self); of emptiness (虚空 *kokū*); the absolute state of mind that is encapsulated within the Myōan shakuhachi tradition. I am thankful. There is no greater joy!
Sankyoku 1937/11/66

In at least one case, the shakuhachi is described as having magical powers that may protect the holder against injury or death. In a 1938 letter from China entitled 'Faith in the shakuhachi on the front line' (陣中の尺八信念 *Jinchū no shakuhachi shinnen*), Ide Yōdō writes:

Every day this beloved shakuhachi strengthens my resolve as an imperial soldier, and I am keenly aware of its power to ease my predicament, balanced between life and death. I have faith, of course, that the shakuhachi is not a mere musical instrument, but represents a religious national music (宗教なりと國粹音楽たる尺八) with the power to enable us to surge forward ceaselessly... the Company Commander once commented to me, 'Ide, as long as you have your shakuhachi you will never die'. Indeed, although I have been engaged in combat on several occasions, I have never suffered so much as an injury' (1938/2/66).



Fig. 3 Koyama Hōshō (from *Sankyoku* Nov. 1937, p67

On the home front too, players such as Tanaka Yūhi (Watazumi) were active in playing the shakuhachi in Buddhist memorial services for fallen soldiers (see e.g. *Sankyoku* April 1938, p72; Aug. 1938, p60).

Conclusions

If there was any doubt as to whether the shakuhachi has held religious meanings in Japanese society, the articles published in *Sankyoku* magazine from the 1920s to 1940s give a very clear answer. The religious discourse relating specifically to the shakuhachi demonstrate the unique Buddhist/religious meanings that the instrument held (articles from the same magazine dealing with the koto or shamisen, for example, do not exhibit anything like the same kind of discourse). Yet the answer is perhaps not what we might have expected or wished for. The connections between the shakuhachi, Zen, and a growing spirit of nationalism in 1930s Japan make uncomfortable reading nearly 100 years later, in a world where the threats of fascism and nationalism are still apparent in many countries. The vigorous and detailed discussion of the religious nature of the shakuhachi in *Sankyoku* magazine is clouded by the fact that this discourse was embedded in the political movements of pre-WWII Japan. It is not my intention to glorify or justify the nationalistic or colonial movements that were one aspect of early 20th century Japanese society. At the same time, it would be dishonest to ignore the position of the shakuhachi within these political movements. The passionate and energetic religious theorizing of the shakuhachi in these years gives a fascinating insight into the instrument that has been unfortunately overlooked up to the present. The truth is not always easy to digest but can only give us a more complete picture of the rich history of the shakuhachi.

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SHAKUHACHI INTERVIEW

IN CONVERSATION WITH MIZUNO KOHMEI

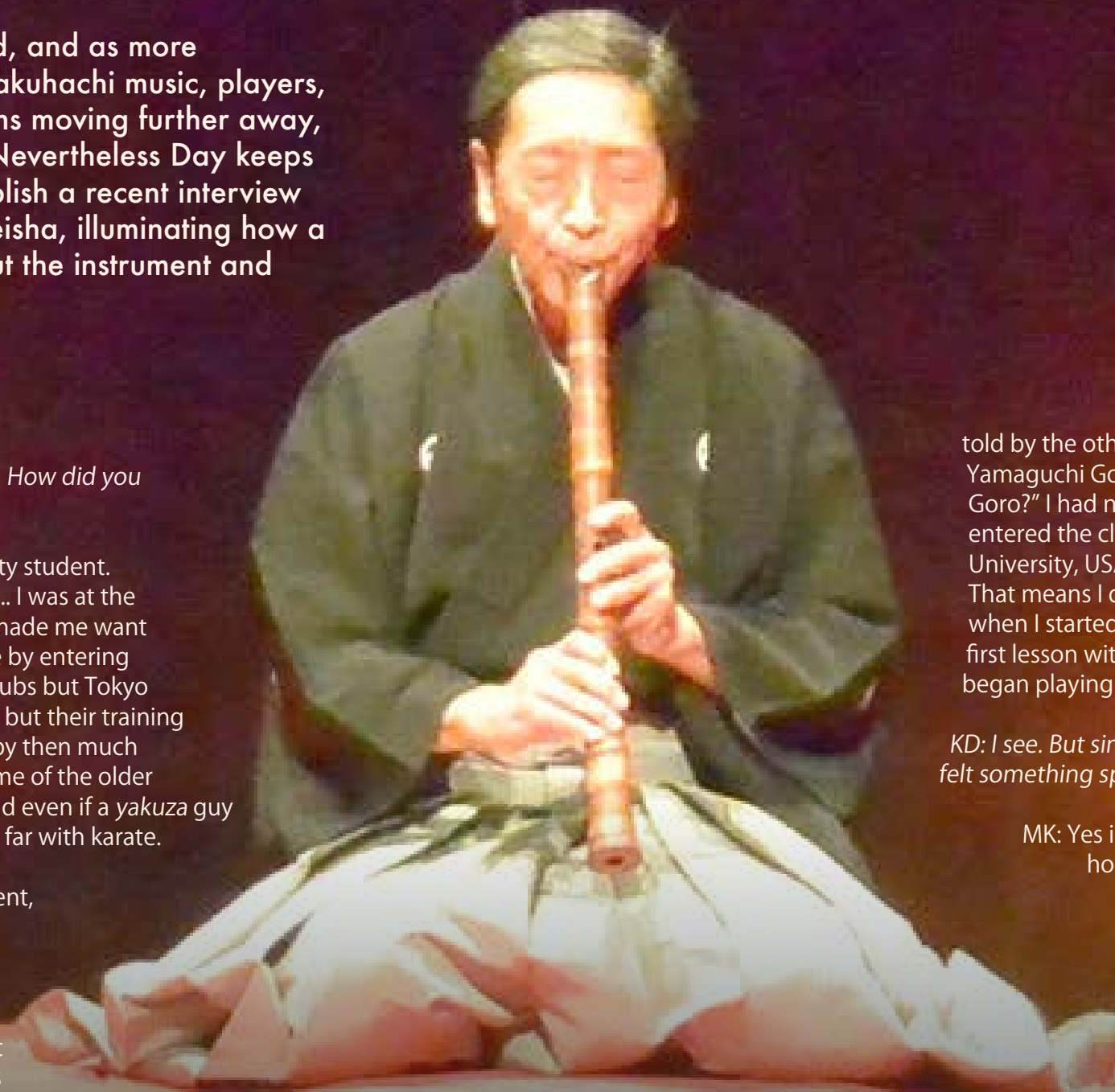
Kiku Day continues her exploration of the shakuhachi world, and as more information is accumulated, Day says, a meta-theory on shakuhachi music, players, the aesthetics, score or even the structure of honkyoku seems moving further away, so varied are the approaches and the school of thoughts. Nevertheless Day keeps on asking questions and we are fortunate to be able to publish a recent interview with Mizuno Kohmei, chairperson of the Kinko-ryū Chikumeisha, illuminating how a group like theirs actually functions and how they think about the instrument and the music.

Kiku Day: Mizuno sensei, thank you for letting me interview you!

Firstly, I would like to ask you to tell us about your personal shakuhachi story. How did you encounter the shakuhachi? And what attracted you to it?

Mizuno Kohmei: I began playing shakuhachi when I was a third-year university student. When I entered university, I was pondering upon what I could do as a hobby... I was at the time very skinny and physically I was not strong – actually, I was weak. That made me want to do something I that would made me stronger, and I began learning karate by entering the Tokyo University Karate Club. Many universities have very good Karate Clubs but Tokyo University Karate Club was very weak, so I thought it wouldn't be a big deal... but their training was very hard. I managed to go through this, training hard for 2 years. I was by then much stronger and no longer afraid if there was a stranger coming close to me. Some of the older students received their 2nd dan when they were in graduate school. They said even if a *yakuza* guy approach them threatening with a knife, they were not afraid. I didn't go this far with karate.

My major was mechanical engineering and when I became a third-year student, I was very busy with experiments and making drafts for technical drawings. My university obligations took a lot of time, so I stopped karate for some time. I still wanted to do something besides university work, and I wanted to do something Japanese. So, from autumn in my third year, I went to the Shakuhachi Club. They had some shakuhachi lying there and I tried one. I got a sound fairly quickly, so I joined the club. The Japanese academic year spans from April to March, and I began shakuhachi in January of my third year. I was



told by the other members of the club that an amazing teacher and player Yamaguchi Goro comes to teach here... but I was like “Who is Yamaguchi Goro?” I had not even heard his name before. On top of that, when I entered the club Yamaguchi Goro sensei was teaching at Wesleyan University, USA. He was at Wesleyan from summer 1967 till summer 1968. That means I did not meet Yamaguchi Goro sensei for about half a year when I started to play shakuhachi. After he returned to Japan, I had my first lesson with Goro sensei in July. The rest is history and that is how I began playing shakuhachi.

KD: I see. But since you continued even without Goro sensei, you must have felt something special about the shakuhachi?

MK: Yes indeed. There were two aspects: I had so far had many hobbies. As a child I collected insects, collected stamps, I collected many different cacti and grew them, I had tropical fish etc. I had many hobbies but after a few years I got bored and stopped. When I began playing shakuhachi, I thought perhaps this will also be something I do for a few years and stop when I feel I know enough about it. But I couldn't stop and became obsessed with it. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, I must have had a disposition for

shakuhachi – or one can say there was a match between the shakuhachi and myself. I felt strongly that the more I played the more fun it was. The shakuhachi is also a profound instrument, and just because you have played 2-3 years and can get a good sound, you will not be satisfied. One must go deeper! I think the fact that the shakuhachi is such an instrument had a large influence on me. Secondly, the fact that I studied with Yamaguchi Goro sensei was very important. So, as I said before I had my first lesson with Yamaguchi sensei after he came back to Japan in 1968. I had in 6 months already gone through more than 10 pieces, and was playing *Keshi no hana*, so my first lesson was *Keshi no hana*. But despite the fact that everybody around me were hyping Yamaguchi Goro sensei saying he was amazing, I wasn't that impressed. I realized more and more the magnificence of Goro sensei over the next couple of years. My own techniques ought to be getting better the more years I played, but the distance between his playing and my playing seemed to get bigger and bigger. That is because Goro sensei continued – during the 30 years I knew him – to go further and deeper. My abilities to follow him were limited. I continued lessons all these years while feeling the distance between our playing enlarged.

Because of these two reasons there was no way I could stop playing shakuhachi. The only time I might have ceased playing, was during the week I was a honeymoon. But that is all!

KD. Please tell us what kind of teacher Yamaguchi Goro was. How did he teach, how did he proceed with pieces?

**Yamaguchi Goro sensei was a teacher
who did not speak. He didn't say
things such as “do more like this, your
tsu-no-meri is too sharp, ...**

MK: There are 60-70 *kokyoku* (ensemble pieces with *koto* and *shamisen* but not contemporary pieces) and then there are the 36 *honkyoku* that Kurosaka Kinko compiled. There is a sequence to follow. But usually if it was a short *kokyoku* you will go through and learn the *maeuta* (first section which includes singing), then the following week you will do *tegoto* (instrumental interlude), then the following week *atouta* (final section which includes singing). When you have finished that, the next lesson will be a *tōshi-geiko*, which means playing through the whole piece from start to finish. For example, when you are learning *maeuta*, sensei will show *hyōshi* –the pulse with his hands while you yourself – so the student – plays. The 2nd time you do the lesson, you play together. At the 3rd lesson he would either show *hyōshi* pulse or play with you again together. It was therefore standard that we used 3 lessons on one part.

KD: The length of the lessons, was that fixed, or did it depend on the length of the piece?

MK: Yes, it depended on the piece, for example when we did the *bubun-geiko* (lesson of a part of a piece), it often took about 20-30 minutes. And the same for when we did *tōshi-geiko* where we played through the whole piece with sensei. Some pieces lasted 20 min., others 30.

Yamaguchi Goro sensei was a teacher who did not speak. He didn't say things such as “do more like this, your *tsu-no-meri* is too sharp, if you play here with a more solid tone it will be better, or you have to play more softly here. So, students can't know how they should play. Yamaguchi Goro sensei was like this, but it is also said that Yamaguchi Shiro sensei was exactly like this. I often heard stories about Yamaguchi Shiro sensei from Goro sensei's mother. Even when Shiro sensei's students were trying hard to imitate Shiro sensei' playing he continued saying nothing. One student claimed that sensei was a thief of monthly fees for the non-teaching. But the playing together is an important instruction. Speaking from my own experience, when playing together and there were parts I would like to find out how sensei played, I played deliberately softly so I could hear sensei more clearly. I would then imitate his playing the next time. That was my way of doing

it. He was a very distinctive teacher.

KD: I often hear about teachers teaching without verbalizing what they do. But when thinking of what you describe, does it mean you only play together twice or three times?

MK: That is right. Twice during the study of the section and then one more time when playing through the whole piece.

KD: Then you must become good at ‘stealing the art’ (*Gei o nusumu* – the meaning is to learn by listening or playing with to your teacher).

MK: Indeed. And it is very difficult to ‘steal the art’. So, the ability to ‘steal the art’ is the key to whether you can improve or not.

KD: I see. Now, Mizuno sensei you are at present the chairperson of the Chikumeisha Board. And I am sure it has been a long road to get to here. But tell us a little more about you. After you finished university, you have been employed as a mechanical engineer?

MK. Yes, after I finished my Masters, I was employed for 4 years in a company called Osaka Gas in Osaka. After that I returned to the same university to do a doctoral course. After I finished, I was employed at Kōgakuin University of Technology & Engineering. I worked there for a long time and stopped 6 years ago. I played shakuhachi alongside my employment at the university.

KD. That sounds great. But in my imagination I can't help wondering if there is time enough to play if you have a busy job? Did it work out for you?

MK: During the 36 years I was at Kōgakuin University, there were various waves. One good thing about being a university teacher is, that there are times we must be at a certain place but much of the time we are fairly free. I used this to my advantage and kept on playing. I obtained the *shihan* (masters) certificate after 12 years of playing. During that period, I also received playing jobs from Yamaguchi sensei. I, for example, played in Suzuki Seijyu sensei's concert annually for many years to play alongside his student on stage. I went to several teachers' concerts like this. Half of the time we received a fee. That encouraged me to strive to take the responsibility of playing professionally.

KD. Now I would like to ask you question about Chikumeisha. Yamaguchi Goro was such a famous teacher, there are Chikumeisha shihan both in the US and Europe. So, I think people know Chikumeisha. But for many people I think they get confused how it is all connected within Kinko-ryū. There are many groupings within Kinko-ryū. Was Chikumeisha founded by Yamaguchi Shiro?

MK: I wanted to talk about this aspect and did some research. It goes back to the Taishō era (1912-26). This era was important, and the turning point is Taishō 10 (1921) when Chikumeisha was established. Yamaguchi Shiro was at the centre of the creation of Chikumeisha – I have seen it on the back side of a Chikumeisha notation, beside where the year of publication is usually written. It stated that: Chikuyusha (the group that the first Kawase Junsuke established) – for one reason or another – from the previous year no longer functioned. The publication of scores was not working as desired. Together with 43 associates and professionals Yamaguchi Shiro created a new group, which was called Chikumeisha. Until recently, Chikumeisha was a group of students of Yamaguchi Shiro and Goro, but - in the beginning after the launch of the group - it was professional players who got together and made a league. The *mei* in Chikumeisha means league.

Chikuyusha existed already and both Yamaguchi Shiro and also the first Aoki Reibo were members. But probably around Taishō 9 (1920) there must have been some kind of organisational trouble and it seems like something like a “mid-air breakage” situation happened. I don’t know what happened and all the people I have asked do not know. That is when Yamaguchi Shiro sensei and 43 others established Chikumeisha. This is exactly about 100 years ago from now.



A young Mizuno Kohmei performing

If I should say something about the background back then, it is important to mention that shakuhachi was very popular among young people. Many students at big universities – such as Waseda and Tokyo University – wanted to study shakuhachi. Several teachers made *keikoba* (study places) nearby these universities. Yamaguchi Shiro sensei were in Hongō and therefore taught many students from Tokyo University or Teikoku University (Imperial University) – as it was called then. At Teikoku University there were 4 large shakuhachi groups: 2 Kinko groups and 2 Tozan groups. All these groups held concerts and were competing with each other. It seems as if among students the shakuhachi was extremely popular among the cultural activities offered. This is why teachers of various lineages are present at universities still today. For example, at Waseda, there are teachers of the Jin Nyodo group and the Kawase group (Chikuyusha). At Tokyo University only the Yamaguchi Shiro group remains. It is said that the group at Tokyo University taught by Yamaguchi Shiro was established in 1919, around 2 years before the foundation of Chikumeisha.

During that time there were many teachers who could make a living just by teaching shakuhachi. It is a situation that is very different from today, and I can at times feel a little jealous when I think of such a shakuhachi environment.

KD: Yamaguchi Goro sensei learned shakuhachi playing from his father, Yamaguchi Shiro?

MK: It is said that he first began studying with other students of Yamaguchi Shiro. But then from some point he learned from Shiro sensei.

KD: I see. So how is it with Chikumeisha, was it meant to be *iemoto* system or how is that?

MK: Hmm yes... but the word *iemoto*. In Japan the *iemoto* system is very established... I think in case of koto players, the *iemoto* system was already established during the Meiji period. But in the case of shakuhachi, it still wasn't that well established even during the Taishō era when Chikumeisha was founded. Yamaguchi Shiro apparently did not say that he was a student of Kawase Junsuke. He learned *kokyoku* from Kawase Junsuke. Then he learned *honkyoku* from Miura Kindō. When Shiro sensei wanted to learn *honkyoku*, he decided which teacher he wanted to learn from and approached the teacher. It seems like the loyalty to the teacher was not so strong at the time.

KD: Does this mean that in the first half of the 20th century, the players freely decided if he or she liked the sound of one teacher's *sankyoku* to learn from that teacher, and then go and learn *honkyoku* from another? Changes like this was possible?

MK: Yes, I believe so. I don't know for sure if everybody could do this, or Yamaguchi Shiro had already a high status and was able to do so.

KD: Ahh you mean there might be more details to the story.

MK: Yes indeed.

KD: Yamaguchi Goro passed away in 1999. After that the organisation of Chikumeisha has changed, hasn't it?

MK: Yes. Yamaguchi Goro sensei became the representative of Chikumeisha after Yamaguchi Shiro passed away, but Chikumeisha at the time only consisted of students of Yamaguchi Shiro and Yamaguchi Goro. So that was how it was organised. So, when sensei passed away, we got together in Chikumeisha and agreed on that we had to continue administrating the group. But Yamaguchi Goro, about whom one can say was the *iemoto* was no longer among us... so we asked ourselves, who should then become the next *iemoto*... but that didn't seem right. Yamaguchi Goro sensei did not have a son. His daughter did play a little but not enough to take on such a role. We decided that we, the students, had to support the continuation of Chikumeisha. At the time, the person who was the most senior among us and had the skills was Matsumura Hōmei. We decided he was the most suited to be our representative even though he lived far away in Nara. So soon after Goro sensei passed away, we got together and founded a board of trustees consisting of about 10 people and Matsumura Hohmei became our chairperson. That was what we agreed and here we are. Matsumura sensei was a very lively and energetic person, so he came to Tokyo for all board meetings. He led Chikumeisha very well for a long time. Unfortunately, he passed away suddenly. He came to a board meeting in January and died end of February when he was 83... so it went really fast. It is now 6-7 years ago and he was the chair for almost 20 years. After that Tanaka Kohmei, a person a little older than I, became the chair person. He was the chair for about 5 years, and seen – from our point of view – as he was still healthy and



*Mizuno Kohmei playing with
his mother and father in 1972*

actively playing concerts etc. But he expressed the wish to stop being the chair. He said he was tired. So, he asked me to do it. I had stopped working at the Kōgakuin University, and since I did have the time, I accepted. That means I have been the chairperson of Chikumeisha since 2018.

KD: What kind of work do you have as the chairperson of Chikumeisha?

MK: It is not because I am doing so much work! The biggest task is to issue licenses. There are *shihan* holders from across the world who recommend us to issue students licenses. There are the following: *shoden*, *chūden*, *okuden*, *jun-shihan*, *shihan*. We assess these licenses at board meetings and that is where we approve them. Normally we don't really have to discuss much, and the approval goes smoothly. So, issuing licenses is a part of the work. Then there are the memorial concerts every 5-6 years. We have to decide how these memorial concerts should be organised. After Goro sensei passed away, we did the *sankaiki* which is the second anniversary of his death. We then invited many of the famous teachers Goro sensei had an association with. The expenses were extremely high – although many performers covered the expenses – and since it was just after the death of sensei – many came and performed, we still thought we could not continue paying this amount of fees. So, we began to ask younger teachers to substitute. We have tried to make efforts like that over time. On 26th January 2020 – just before Covid-19 crisis began - we did such a concert. We were extremely lucky and just avoided Covid. We rented the National Theatre and did our concert there. Many teachers helped and it was a good concert. To debate about and organise these concerts is one of the duties of the board.

Apart from that... there are many things... for example, if one person, who has the power and skills, want to become independent and create their own branch of sub-group, we discuss whether we will accept the branch. That happens now and then.



Mizuno Kohmei at the WSF2018 in London: taking part in the group piece "A Thousand Bamboo in a Dancing Wind"; leading a workshop session.

KD: Shibu (Branch) is of course created by people with shihan. Can they themselves come and express they want to create a branch?

MK: Yes. In the old days when there were less *shihan* in the world, it was almost like: "You now have a *shihan* and you live in this part of the city. Why don't you make a branch with the name of your area?" That means, there was a phase where you almost automatically created a branch when you received a *shihan*. After that many more people have received *shihan* so we changed it so you needed to do shakuhachi activities before you could become the director for a branch. Before it was Goro sensei who decided if he thought a person should become the director of a branch. But now it is of course the board. We try to make a fair discussion about what is required to become the director of a branch. There are many opinions about this subject, and we often have discussions.

KD: There are all the different levels, shihan, okuden – I am not very good with this. Can you explain these levels to us? And also, can you tell us what material – what do you see and hear – in order to judge the students?

MK: *Shoden*, *chūden* and *okuden* is constructed so if you have passed the pieces required (20 for *shoden* and 20 for *chūden* etc) we can issue the license. If the teacher with a *shihan* endorses this student for a higher level licence, we accept 90 % of the time. Sometimes, there are players we have some doubt whether they are qualified or not. In these kinds of cases we – in the board – may have to discuss whether they will be ok or if it is better to wait a little bit more. This is rare but it does happen now and then.

"You now have a shihan and you live in this part of the city. Why don't you make a branch with the name of your area?"

KD: If you decide that it is better to wait, will they just do the shihan challenge again later?

MK: Yes, that can happen. But there are only a limited number of *shihan* players, who have students. This means we somehow know the students. Some teachers have many students, others have a few but students who study eagerly. We see the students at concerts and other events. So, when a teacher, that we know well and trust, endorse a student – most of the time they will be accepted unconditionally.

KD: I see. There are a few branches outside Japan, isn't there?

MK: Yes, that is right.

KD: There are in England, Scandinavia, and in the USA.

MK: Yes. The *shihan* players in Europe and the USA have lived in Japan for a long time and have also absorbed Japanese culture. They are also players, who learned directly from Yamaguchi Goro sensei, and they are highly trustworthy people. If any of those players recommend a *shihan* license for a student, we will recognise that without any problems.

KD: I see. Do you also look at the students on a personality or human level?

MK: When a student is about to pass his/her *shoden*, *chūden*, we often can't see the student's skills or the person on a human level. It is more our relationship with the teacher. If the teacher is a person who on equal terms work hard and does his/her best, then we will recognise this teacher's recommendations.

KD: I see. That is interesting. Do you listen to the student's playing and also see them in a teaching situation or the like?

MK: No, normally we don't do that. If, for example, there is a request to issue a *shihan* license, then often we haven't heard the playing of the student at all. We ask the teacher to write the reason for this recommendation of the student. We like to hear about the student's activities, how eagerly he/she has been studying the shakuhachi, his/her motivation. We then decide based on that.

KD: I see. That is really interesting to know how you do it.

When you do a Chikumeisha concert, how do players choose the string players to play with? I suppose you have players you have a relation to and have collaborated with. But can you choose depending on who you like the sound of? Are you free to choose?

MK: The big concerts we host once every few years, we would – most of the time – like to collaborate with the players with whom Yamaguchi Goro played and collaborated with – or their successors. Apart from that we have twice a year a study meeting or concert. This is an event within one branch. We invite the teacher and the students from that branch. We then play about 20 pieces from morning to evening. We have done this for a long time. In these cases, we choose and ask for collaboration of three players from Yamada school and three from Ikuta school. Then we rotate the pieces so there is one Yamada piece followed by an Ikuta piece etc. But this is not a rule, and people may ask string players they like to collaborate with.

KD: I see. I have learned a lot today. I would not like to ask how you see the future of Chikumeisha. Does your membership increase or how does it look?

MK: Within Chikumeisha, there are two kinds of people. If I simplify it, then there are the professionals and the amateurs. When Yamaguchi Goro was the head, there were his students, who were all amateurs. Then there were a few players, including myself, who played professionally at events organized by for example koto teachers.

When the study of shakuhachi at Tokyo University of Arts was created, students who graduated from there were of course aiming at careers as professional shakuhachi players. In Chikumeisha, there are not that many – but there are players who are professional. I don't think we are quite 20 professional players. So, on the one hand what is Chikumeisha for those players, and what is Chikumeisha for players who have for example played many years as amateurs? I believe Chikumeisha for those 2 groups is quite different. It is something we haven't been discussing so much. But since I became the chairperson, we have started to discuss these issues more openly. I would like to discuss if Chikumeisha itself have enough *raison d'être* for the professional players to belong to the group, and are they happy belonging to the group? And then there is the majority, the amateur players. Is Chikumeisha good for them? Is it comfortable for them to belong to the group? When, for example, we are organising concerts we have to think about both groups. Should we organise a quality of concerts worth paying money to listen to by professional players? We can do this as well as organising concerts for only amateurs. We probably wouldn't be able to charge for the amateur concerts, which means the players will pay a fee to perform. We are thinking about separating concerts like this soon and see how that will be. I believe that depending on how we manage Chikumeisha, it will influence the future. If we manage well, the proportion of professionals will increase and those are the people who will support Chikumeisha together with the amateurs, who also belong to the group. The interaction between the different members is important. My hope is to shape Chikumeisha in that direction. But I have to admit that I cannot say I have a very clear vision about the future.

KD: But it sounds very exciting how the future will be. It seems like the process has already begun.

MK: It is. At the same time there are professionals and amateurs among the Japanese members, there are also non-Japanese members in Chikumeisha. I wasn't so conscious about this but when I participated in the World Shakuhachi Festival 2018 in London, it felt like my eyes were opened. I met very young, energetic players, studying very eagerly – and I was astonished! In Japan only grandfathers are playing and there are very few young people. Yes, there are young people among the professionals but not many young amateurs. There are not so many who begin playing shakuhachi while studying at university. The shakuhachi group at Tokyo University still survives, but most people stop playing when they graduate and begin working. Thus, only very few players continue to play beyond university time. I felt that in Europe and America, there are so many keen players. I am thinking about how to make Chikumeisha better place for both players in Japan and outside Japan. I discuss this with Gunnar Jinmei Linder but we haven't yet found a clear direction yet. But this is something that is important for me. But I also feel that the majority of the members of the board in Chikumeisha do not know about this. Even if I talk about it, they do not think about cherishing players abroad or reinforcing collaborative relationships. It can be hard to make them understand. I think I will need patience and continue to bring up these issues at our board meetings again and again.

KD: We need to make them all come and see for themselves.

MK: Yes, that is right. But because of London, we did a small concert in Paris in 2019. I have also taught online in one of the ESS online workshops. When-ever I can be of use, I would like to stay available.

KD: Thank you so much! That is so great to know! And I learned a lot! Is there anything you would like to say to the shakuhachi lovers across the world?

MK: Well... I am very grateful that so many people play shakuhachi. Normally one will learn with a teacher face-to-face. But because of Covid-19, many things have moved online. Lessons, meetings etc. We could perhaps increase the weight of online lessons and teach people in Europe. These kinds of changing environment will have an influence on the activities in the future. We also must be more proactive and contact people. But players from Europe, USA and the rest of the world – you can contact us and let's play shakuhachi together. That is what I would like to tell them.

KD: Let's do that! Thank you, Mizuno sensei for letting me interview you.

MK: You are welcome!

ESSNL Note: Interview will be available at www.youtube.com/kikuday in the near future.

<http://www7a.biglobe.ne.jp/~mizushaku/> [Mizuno Kohmei Homepage, jap/eng]

<http://www.chikumeisha.org/> [Chikumeisha Japan, jap only]

http://www.chikumeisha.org/sibu_eng.html [Chikumeisha Branches]

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SHAKUHACHI INTERVIEW

SHABAKA HUTCHINGS – THE SHAKUHACHI COMET IS COMING

Clive Bell catches up with the tenor sax multi-project jazz comet Shabaka Hutchings, who after his recent discovery of the shakuhachi while gigging in Japan, became entranced by the instrument and is now flavouring his new solo recording *African Culture* for Impulse label with shakuhachi sounds.

Anyone who follows UK saxophonist Shabaka Hutchings on Instagram (and he has close to 50,000 followers) has recently heard a whole lot of shakuhachi. Since early 2021 Hutchings has been regularly posting short clips of himself playing a variety of flutes in a variety of situations: on a train, in an art gallery, in front of graffiti, under the moon - even jamming with a hip-hop record, wearing gloves on a wintry beach, or deep inside reverberating tunnels. Those flutes are pink, brass, or see-through, sometimes even bamboo.

"I love talking about the shakuhachi - it really has taken over my life," Hutchings tells me. We meet up at a cafe in Crouch End, London, opposite the recording studio where he's working on a new solo album. "I've just become entranced by this whole thing. It's the most unforgiving instrument I've ever come across, if you don't play it daily." Hutchings is mainly known for his tenor sax: *Sons Of Kemet* and *The Comet Is Coming* are two of his projects, while *Shabaka & The Ancestors* is his occasional collaboration with South African jazz players. But when we meet he's also preparing to play Aaron Copland's clarinet concerto in the US.

Hutchings explains that posting on Instagram has become part of his practice routine: "From the very beginning it was an archive - instead of feeding the public something, I'm feeding myself chunks of my own practice. The minute I choose to put up is reflective of where I think I've gone to in the practice. Recently I've been pushing them up because I've been more satisfied. Within the last six months Instagram have lengthened the amount of time you can have. Before it was just a minute and I liked the minute format. Now it's five minutes - it's great, I can actually present a piece."

When Hutchings and *The Comet* played at Japan's Fuji Rock festival in 2019, he took the opportunity to visit the Mejiro shakuhachi shop and buy a professional instrument (when I visited later the same year, they still remembered that he'd walked right across Tokyo in summer heat). Since then he's acquired several other shakuhachi in assorted keys. Flutes of plastic enable playing in flat keys that are home territory for sax and brass players, and they're also easily transportable onto a freezing, wind-swept beach, or if you want to play on a train. So far the only Hutchings shakuhachi recordings have been on Instagram, but people have noticed. The Impulse label has commissioned that solo album, the magazine *Sound American* has asked him for an essay (to be published in summer 2022), and *Downbeat* magazine nominated him flute newcomer of the year. Hutchings is amused by that: "Really I've just been playing around with it, but consistently, every day. You've got to be tense and relaxed at the same time, and it's good for me in general. I feel



"As far as I can see the tradition is a tradition of mental awareness and relationships to breath, using the tool of the shakuhachi."

more relaxed, especially in my sax playing. Now when I go back to the saxophone I notice those moments where, in the intensity, I would normally just tense up completely. But on the shakuhachi, if you have that tension then you get the opposite of what you want to get.” In his essay Hutchings sums this up: “I remember a quote from a 90s American action film that’s stayed with me throughout the years and seems applicable to the shakuhachi’s demands: ‘The hotter the situation, the cooler the response.’”

Hutchings listens to shakuhachi recordings, but deeply rather than widely: “Only Goro Yamaguchi, Watazumi and Mamino Yorita: she has this video on YouTube that I basically listen to all the time. (see blue box with links at end) There’s an interview with her teacher and he also plays. I’m trying to check out less but check it out more, so just those three recordings. She blows a lot of air through it, but she’s not getting tense in her body. What I’ve found, if the airstream is smaller the resonance gets bigger.”

I also ask Hutchings the question maybe every non-Japanese shakuhachi player has to confront: where do you position yourself as regards the Japanese tradition? “I consider it to be the same issue as jazz, in terms of dealing with the music of another culture. And as far as I can see the tradition is a tradition of mental awareness and relationships to breath, using the tool of the shakuhachi. The music, for me, is what’s being used to express those elements as opposed to the music being the tradition itself. Watazumi himself says it’s not about playing music.”

On Instagram Hutchings presents lively improvisations, whirling loops of phrases, but in private he believes in the long note, the robuki beloved of adepts. “My favourite video is when I spent a month in Margate - I rented a place and I was just practising by the sea - where I’m in a tunnel and I’m just playing a really long note. The ideal is the single note, but it’s the journey towards that point. So it might be that in a couple of years all you see on my social media is like various notes in different spaces (laughter). But at the moment this is what comes up, and its better to be truthful. I’ve been trying to toughen myself up and not use gloves, but sometimes it gets unbearable and I put the gloves on.” In another glance at the future, Hutchings refers to Watazumi’s on-stage displays of martial arts, exercising with long poles: “My next stage, from what Watazumi said, is to integrate the shakuhachi with strenuous exercise.”

The new solo album, *Afrikan Culture*, is due on Impulse in summer 2022. It’s an intimate half hour of music, featuring shakuhachi and Hutchings’s bass clarinet, occasionally in the company of *kora* played by Kadialy (based in the UK, originally from Senegal), or guitar by Dave Okumu, who fronts The Invisible. Sometimes the shakuhachi is front and centre, dancing in a thoughtful, introvert manner recalling Jimmy Giuffre’s clarinet. Elsewhere the flutes cluster in a



Brass shakuhachi flute (previous page) & porcelain shakuhachi made by Ian Warrick. (above)

cloud of texture while bass clarinet sings a slow melody. The first single from the EP, *Black Meditation*, can be heard on YouTube already. (see blue box with links at end)

Finally Hutchings shows me several extraordinary flutes. Over several years he has got to know Ian “Zen” Warrick, a retired research engineer in Brighton, UK, who has devoted himself to making shakuhachi and other flutes. Over the phone Ian tells me about his career making equipment such as infra-red gun sights for Rank film, Rank Xerox and several other companies. Later he discovered a love of flutes from both Japan and Peru, and has spent years investigating the properties of unusual materials in their construction. He has ground up volcanic sand or material from aquarium shops to mix with epoxy resin. Currently he’s busy adapting a thistle stem from his garden: “Harder than cane,” he says.

These flutes in Hutchings’s collection, purchased from Warrick, are unlike anything I’ve encountered. One is heavy polished brass, like a stair rod; another is made from iron ore, with a mouthpiece of Tufnol, a synthetic composite used by engineers to replace cast iron or steel: “You can take a knife to it and nothing would happen.” The most startling instrument is largely pink. It’s porcelain cast over bamboo, with glittering sections of tungsten carbide. Warrick worked on it for ten years, and his selling it to Hutchings seems a statement of trust, and of the strength of their friendship. Although it can’t be denied, it’s the most Instagrammable flute I’ve ever seen.

- <https://youtu.be/TSCagxxGMM0> (*Black Meditation* from Shabaka Hutchings’s new EP, *Afrikan Culture*)
- <https://www.instagram.com/shabakahutchings/> (Shabaka Hutchings’s Instagram feed)
- <https://youtu.be/mlmDdS-EclM> (Mamino Norita)
- <https://soundamerican.org/> (*My Shakuhachi Journey*, an essay by Shabaka Hutchings, will appear in Sound American 28, The Mapping Issue, in summer 2022: Sound American magazine.)

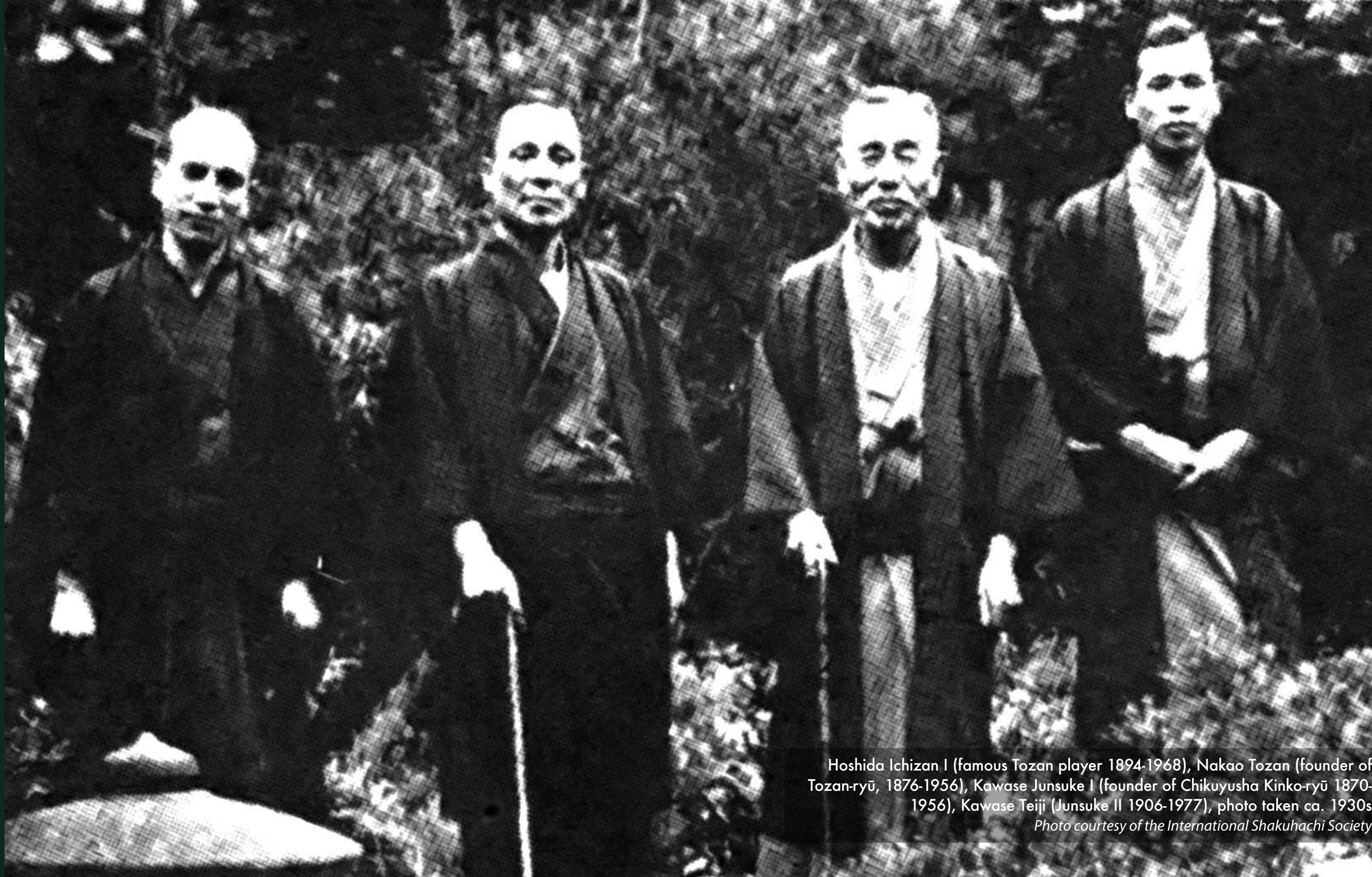
Clive Bell is a musician and composer specialising in Far Eastern music. He studied the shakuhachi in Tokyo with Kohachiro Miyata. Bell is based in London, UK.



THE BIGGER PICTURE

The Bigger Picture is an attempt of a visual essay assembled from images taken from archives, personal collections and contemporary sources to give us a snapshot of the past and present of shakuhachi's homeland, and in turn to flavour and energise our memories and imagination.

Mount Fuji near Oshino Hakkei, as seen through a webcam
on 18 May 2022 at 08h00 JST
© live.fujigoko.tv



Hoshida Ichizan I (famous Tozan player 1894-1968), Nakao Tozan (founder of Tozan-ryū, 1876-1956), Kawase Junsuke I (founder of Chikuyusha Kinko-ryū 1870-1956), Kawase Teiji (Junsuke II 1906-1977), photo taken ca. 1930s
Photo courtesy of the International Shakuhachi Society



Cherry blossoms at Ueno Park, Tokyo,
afternoon, 22 April 2017



A grand celebration featuring the famous schools of Sankyoku (Koto, Shamisen, and Shakuhachi), Hibiya Town Hall, Tokyo, March 6, 1960.
Photo courtesy of the International Shakuhachi Society



Komine Castle (小峰城, Komine-jō) in the city of Shirakawa on 5 April 2007.
Throughout the middle to later Edo period, Komine Castle was home to the Abe clan.

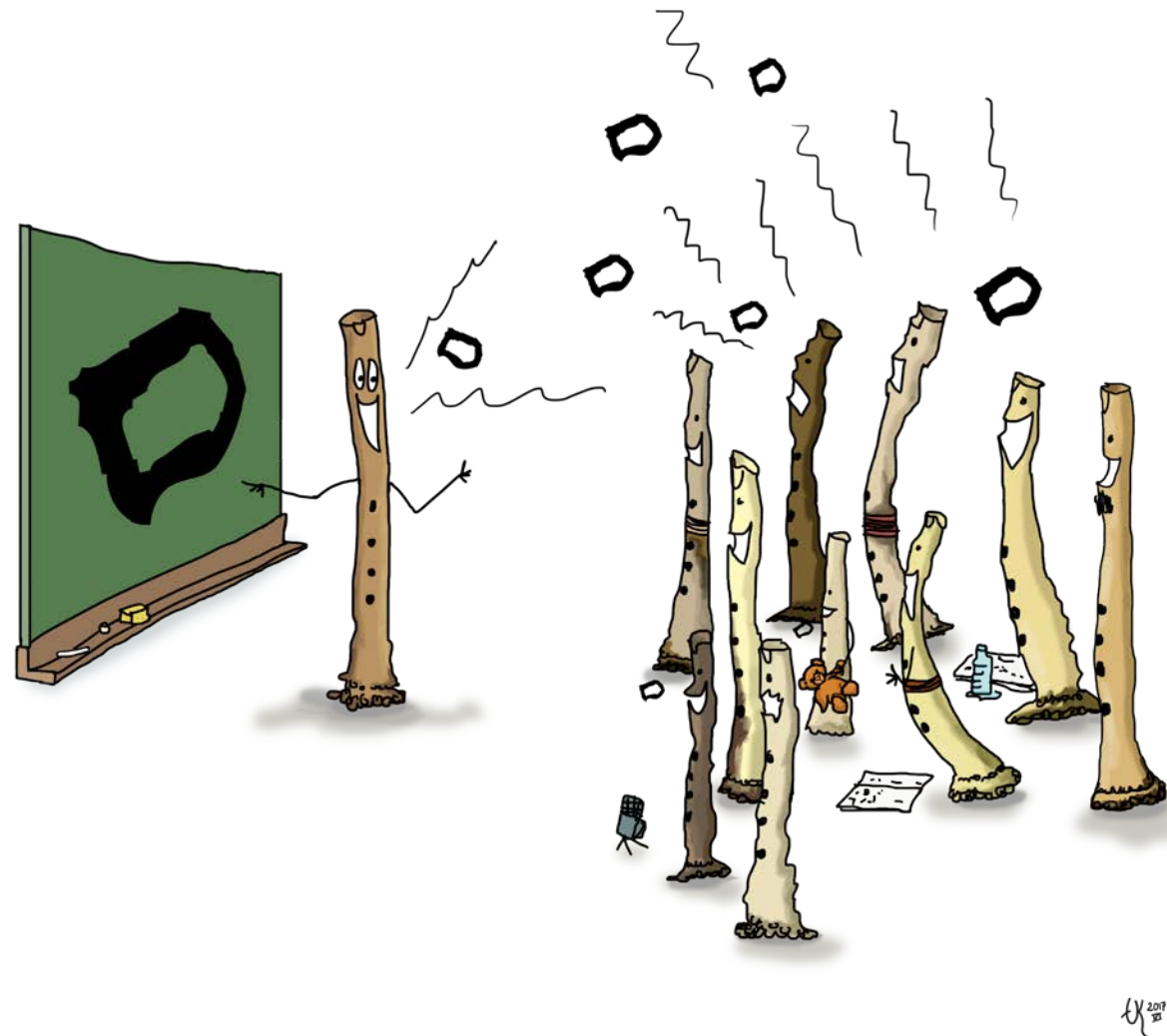
尺八教授

帝國尺八研究會

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A Shakuhachi lesson book published by the Imperial
Shakuhachi Research dept in 1916 featuring Tozan notation
Photo courtesy of the International Shakuhachi Society



SHAKUHACHI RESOURCES

Whispered Shadows: How to approach learning a Vox/Shakuhachi piece

We asked Australian shakuhachi player Anne Norman to present to us her explorations of singing and playing shakuhachi simultaneously. In this resource article Anne will talk us through her special adaptation of *Whispered Shadows* – Wandering around a wetland... ambling along a beach... I see echoes of repeated patterns; whispered shadows of ideals; spirals, circles, lines, curves. No two waves break with the same ripples or sound, and no two birds are identical. Yet all are perfect.

Ways to approach conquering basic vox/shakuhachi techniques:

Greetings from Australia to friends in the ESS. This article and accompanying video look at a composition from my vox/shakuhachi oeuvre, *Whispered Shadows*, to illustrate the basics of singing and playing shakuhachi simultaneously and also alternating blown with sung passages.

If you are not accustomed to singing and playing at the same time, you may find that you sing out of tune in polyphonic sections. Practice shakuhachi in unison with the sung part to overcome this, as well as solo singing practice. Recording yourself is always instructive in tweaking where you go out of tune and helps you to find the trigger note(s) that made you trip up. Fix the problem duo passage by practicing a sequence of only three notes. Once that becomes simple, gradually extend it to a full phrase of the music. I like to walk when practicing a passage over and over. If you can perfect it while walking (without running into an obstacle or tripping over) then you are ready to extend the passage a little further and loop that while walking until you are confident.

I find how I “think”, or rather what I focus my mind on, makes a huge difference when learning to get both the shakuhachi and voice in balance and in tune. I practice the shakuhachi part until it is automatic and requires no thought, then I focus solely on the singing while allowing muscle memory to play the shakuhachi. In other passages the desired timbre I want from the shakuhachi requires that I first get the vocal part automated through repeated practice. Then when playing both parts together I am able to focus on my embouchure, timbral inflection & dynamics on the shakuhachi. Note: blowing strongly might destroy your shakuhachi tone while singing; and singing too loudly might dissolve the shakuhachi sound as well. Experiment.

Performer notes to accompany Whispered Shadows / 影のささやき
Solo for shakuhachi and voice by Anne M Norman

骨 葉 石 響 貝 種 羽 小 枝

a bone, a leaf, a stone, an echo, a shell, a seed, a twig, a feather... a shadow

Elements of this piece began in 2012 within the echoey walls of La Chapelle Sainte Philomène, a crumbling 11th century stone chapel perched on a hill in an encroaching forest in Provence. The composition was completed amidst mountain woodlands and windswept beaches on Flinders Island, Bass Strait, in 2014. It departs from traditional shakuhachi performance techniques.

Notes for the performer

The diamond shaped notes are to be sung. They are usually sustained for the full bar or phrase. It is scored for a 1.8 shakuhachi in D. (D = □). That is the shakuhachi I use, but please choose the length of shakuhachi that matches the range of your voice. 2.1, 2.4 or 2.6... totally up to you. If you need a score with shakuhachi tablature markings above the stave, or transposed to the concert pitch of your chosen instrument, please contact me. An integral feature of this piece is the timbral differences between alternative fingerings for the fundamental note of the shakuhachi. Unless otherwise indicated with a ヒ or an イ,

all Ds in the 2nd octave are performed using the □ fingering.

These fingerings & timbres are super important.

In **Section D** there are many ス symbols. Slide your finger off the hole to create a quick portamento to the next note. In this case (notes A to C) slide finger 4 off the hole.

The slashes in **Section D** // are points of hesitation. It is up to you how long you wait. Shape it!

Section E, from bar 97, the shakuhachi sound dissolves leaving the voice as the main body of sound with the fingers modifying the colour of the voice rather than the shakuhachi sound. This is what is meant by the instructions “voice dominates” & “wispy shakuhachi”.

Section K, bar 186 is 玉音 *tamane* – literally “balled sound” (flutter tongue). I highly recommend you do not use your tongue to create the fluttering. I find that quite destructive of the subtle nuances of the embouchure. It is best to make the fluttering in the soft palette at the back of the throat – the place where a German or Dutch person would roll an R when speaking (a tough technique to learn for this Australian – it took me years!) I acknowledge that some players are able to get a smooth flutter with their tongue, so it is up to you.

Section L, distant burbling sound: Sing through the bamboo while sealing the lips over the top of the instrument; move right hand fingers as if playing □□□□ *koro-koro*; sing various vowel shapes within the mouth to change the colour of the voice. Sometimes you may choose to break seal to allow your voice to “leak”

out of the top of the shakuhachi rather than solely directing it through the body of the instrument. In this way you are able to alter the blend of your natural voice with your affected voice.

On the very last two-note breath, include a shift in vowel sounds as well as a slowing down of the koro-koro fingers with the possible addition of other fingers opening as well. Leave the piece in a place of mystery – a “whispered shadow” of reality.

Use as much *rubato* as you find aesthetically pleasing throughout the piece. Likewise, feel free to modify the tempi, breathiness and timbral colour. Metronome numbers are just a guide. I perform it differently every time. Music is for expressing who you are and where you are NOW.

Feel free to substitute your own language for the lyrics. I have performed this piece in German and Swiss German. I originally wrote it in English and added the Japanese lyrics in the dressing room just before my premier performance in Japan, only to discover it is so much easier to sing and blow in Japanese – not so many final consonants. Make this your own piece, find your own meaning. I usually recite a short poem to evoke the mood and use the imagery and sound of waves breaking on the shore to shape my phrases. Choose or write your own poem if you wish. It helps set the mood for the audience as well.

Note: The accompanying specially recorded video resource for this version of *Whispered Shadow* will be added to the ESS members’ area as soon as possible. Due to Covid there was a delay to finish the recording session, but we decided to include the score and explanations as planned. Apologies for the delay. In addition Anne provided some existing references to be included below, also of course you can contact Anne directly and she will be happy to answer your questions.

Reference links:

<https://annemnorman.bandcamp.com/track/whispered-shadows>
[Whispered Shadows recorded in 2015 in a tunnel beneath Darwin. Playing time 9:30]

<https://annemnorman.bandcamp.com/track/far-below-me> [Elements of *Whispered Shadows* also feature in *Far Below Me* for viola & shakuhachi with both players singing. Link to the recording, with a link to the score.]

<https://youtu.be/-9LCnnG05SA> [Edited version of *Far Below Me* on video in live performance with Emily Sheppard is here]

Ann Norman is a shakuhachi performer, teacher, improviser and composer, working as a soloist and collaborating with musicians, dancers, actors, poets, visual artists, installation artists and tea masters. Anne learnt shakuhachi in Japan in the 1980s and 90s, studying three lineages under Nakamura Shindo, Tajima Tadashi and Yamaguchi Goro. She is based in Melbourne, Australia. <https://annenorman.com>

Whispered Shadows

影のささやき

Wandering around a wetland... ambling along a beach... I see echoes of repeated patterns;
whispered shadows of ideals; spirals, circles, lines, curves.
No two waves break with the same ripples or sound, and no two birds are identical. Yet all are perfect.

Solo for shakuhachi and voice (2021 edit) Anne M Norman

A ♩ = 108 *freely*

mf *mp* *mf*

8 ♩ = 78 *ヒ sing* *legato*

14 *mp* *mf* *p* *lyrical* ♩ = 82

19 *mp* *uu...* ♩ = 110 *sing*

26 *mf* *B* ♩ = 140

34 *f* *f* *♯ tongued*

40 *become breathy* *f* *fade away to breath only* *C* *f* *legato*

48 *p* *f*

53 *p* *f* *breathy becoming clean* *f* *ditto*

59 *p* *sweetly* *D*

65 *rit*

70 *mp* ♩ = 136

76 *f* *E* ♩ = 180 *rall...*

82 *mf* *breathy* *rit*

88 *a tempo sing* *mf* *flute dominates*

94 *wispy shakuhachi* *voice dominates*

100 *voice & flute equal* *rall...*

108 **F** ♩ = 142
f *mp*

113 flutter

119 legato

123 , rall. *waggle RH across holes*

129 **G** ♩ = 80
p *rubato* rall.

133 **H** ♩ = 140
detaché *accelerando poco a poco*

138 **I** *lyrically legato*

143 *breathy like a breaking wave* *same*

148 *same*

152 tongue gasp!

4 155 **J** sing
uu...

159

163 ♩ = 120
voice takes over voice dominates
"awe"

172 **K** ♩ = 60
p hesitant *rubato* rit

176 *rubato* sing *breathy*

180
ho-ne hap-pa i-shi hi-bi-ki ka-i ta-ne ha-ne ko-e-da

184 sing in unison , no vox flutter -----
I found a

188 スイ ♩ = 36
bone a leaf a stone an e-cho and a shell a seed a twig a fea-ther
rall.

Freely
193 **L** sing thru tube & move RH fingers as for use various vowel shapes within the mouth □□□□
distant burbling sound

195
rall

Min'yō

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

This time we welcome shakuhachi performer Kominato Akihisa who comes from a long tradition of min'yō players in his family to suggest and perform a piece for the ESS. Kominato chose a song of his home prefecture and so we stop off at Fukushima Prefecture and discover the sound and story behind *Shirakawa Hakuro-bushi*.

About min'yō

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

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

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

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

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

[Source: [wikipedia.org](https://www.wikipedia.org)]



Fukushima Prefecture

Fukushima Prefecture (福島県) is both the southernmost prefecture of Tōhoku region and the prefecture of Tōhoku region that is closest to Tokyo. With an area size of 13,784 km² (5,322 sq mi) it is the third-largest prefecture of Japan, behind Hokkaido and Iwate Prefecture, and has a population of 1,810,286 (as of 1 May 2021). It is divided by mountain ranges into three regions called (from west to east) Aizu, Nakadōri, and Hamadōri and is home to Lake Inawashiro, the fourth-largest lake in Japan. Fukushima is the capital and Iwaki is the largest city of Fukushima Prefecture.

Until the Meiji Restoration, the area of Fukushima prefecture was part of what was known as Mutsu Province. The Shirakawa Barrier and the Nakoso Barrier were built around the 5th century to protect 'the heathens' from the 'barbarians' to the north. Fukushima became a Province of Mutsu after the Taika Reforms were established in 646.

{Source: [wikipedia.org](https://www.wikipedia.org)}

Shirakawa

Shirakawa (白河市, Shirakawa-shi) is a city located in south-central Fukushima prefecture facing the Nasu plateau, and extending to the lowland Shirakawa Basin.

The area of present-day Shirakawa was part of ancient Mutsu Province and was the location of a barrier gate on the Ōshū Kaidō connecting the capital at Kyoto with the northern provinces. In the Heian period, the Buddhist monk and waka poet Nōin composed the following poem about the region:

都をば霞とともに立ちしかど秋風ぞ吹く白河の関
Miyako wo ba kasumi to tomo ni tachishikado akikaze zo fuku Shirakawa no seki.
 (English: I left the capital with the spring haze, but at the barrier of Shirakawa the autumn wind blows.)

In the Edo period the area prospered as a castle town Shirakawa Domain, and was the site of a major battle in the Boshin War during the Meiji restoration. In the Meiji period, it was organized as part of Nakadōri region of Iwaki Province.

The town of Shirakawa was formed on April 1, 1889 with the creation of the modern municipalities system

Komine Castle (小峰城, Komine-jō) is a Japanese castle located in what is now the city of Shirakawa. Throughout the middle to later Edo period, Komine Castle was home to the Abe clan, daimyō of Shirakawa Domain. The castle is one of the 100 Fine Castles of Japan, and in 2007 was designated a National Historic Site. The castle grounds are also a noted venue for viewing sakura in spring.

[Source: [wikipedia.org](https://www.wikipedia.org)]



Shirakawa’s Hakuro-bushi – The horse-fairing festival originated in the Shirakawa region of Fukushima Prefecture.

Horse markets were held in various parts of Fukushima, including Shirakawa City, Miharu-cho, Tamura-gun, and Furudonocho, Higashi-Shirakawa-gun, but the Shirakawa horse market was the most famous. It is said to have started in 1629, shortly after the castle lord Niwa Nagashige moved to Shirakawa, when he bought an excellent two-year-old colt.

The horse market continued to change and evolve over time, and moved to Akedo in the early Showa period (1926-1989). In Yokomachi, Tamachi, Nengomachi and other towns, there arose fourteen bed-and-breakfast establishments for horse merchants, complete with over ten stables at each residence - people say that they were quite the lively affair. A horse merchant who bought horses at the market would take the reins of all of them, waiting until dusk to lead them home. This was to avoid inconveniencing wagons and travellers during the daytime. This song was sung to help the travelers shake off the sleepiness as they went on their way, which is why it is also called a “night-leading song.”

Many of the horse merchants who visited Fukushima Prefecture were from the Kanto region, but others came from all over Japan. Thus Fukushima also provided a place for bakuro-bushi (horse merchant songs) to interact with one another, so that they are melodically and lyrically quite similar. The songs have especially strong origins in present-day Iwate Prefecture (Southern region).



With the post-war modernisation of agricultural machinery and the rapid development of transport, horse markets in various regions began to decline, and the Shirakawa horse market finally ended its more than 300-year history in 1964. However, the people of the Shirakawa region formed a preservation society for the songs, which have been faithfully handed down to the next generation.

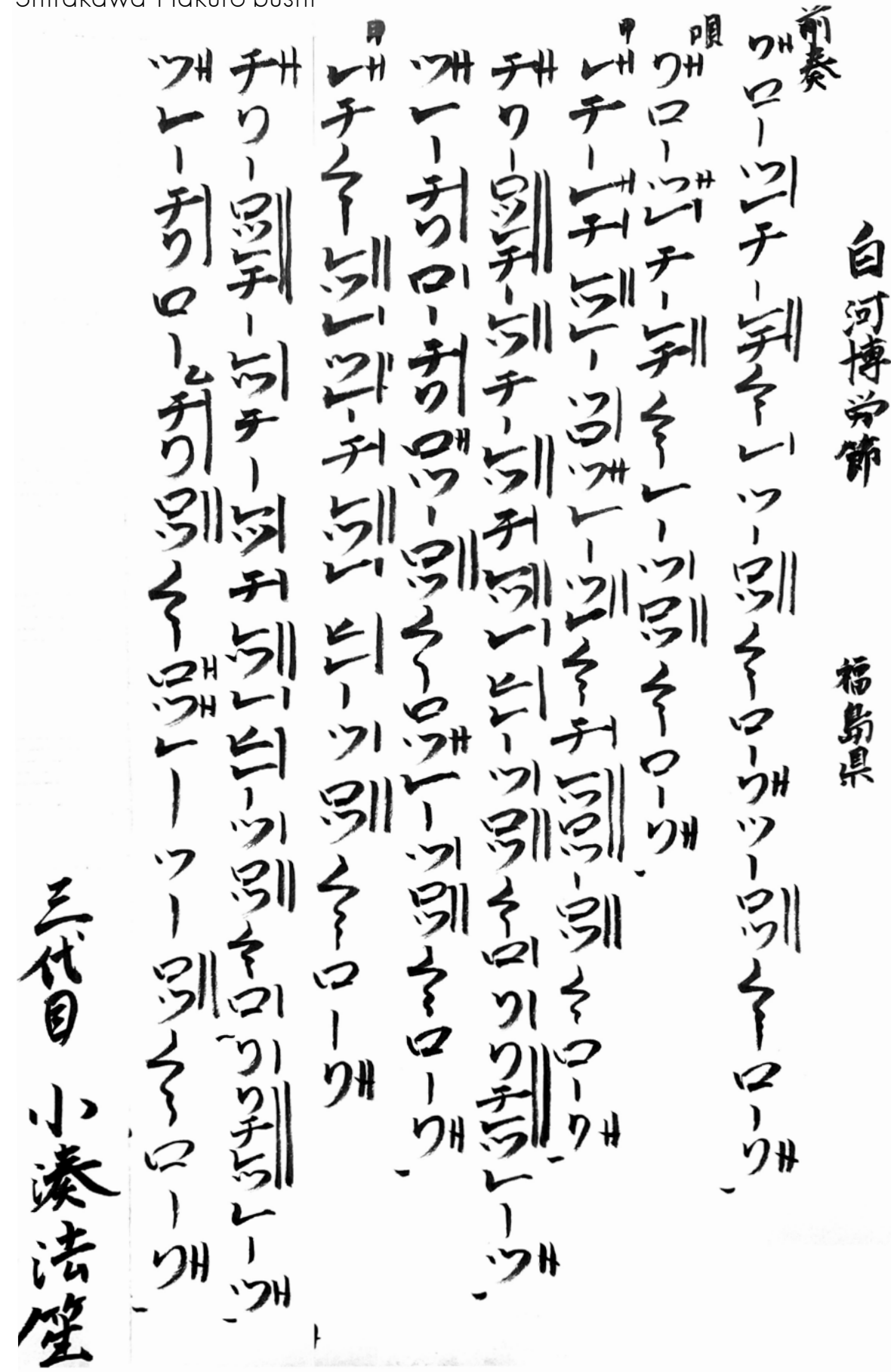
In the 1960s, Hosho Kominato I released an album on the Teichiku Records, on which he and Hosho Tanii I compiled and edited melodies from various people who had inherited the songs.

Bakuro (translated “horse merchant”) is a word that is derived from hakuraku, which comes from the Chinese Zhou dynasty. A *hakuraku* (伯樂) was a connoisseur of horses, skilled in perceiving and evaluating their various qualities; the meaning then expanded to include those who facilitated or engaged in trading cows and horses, and the pronunciation of the same characters morphed into *bakuro*. This more recent pronunciation, in turn, led people to express it with different characters: 馬喰 (*bakuro*, “horse-eater”) and 博勞 (*bakuro*, “hard-working wise person”).

About the music scores:

The way the folk songs are sung differs according to the singer (phrasing, sections, length of notes, etc.), so please use the sheet music only as a reference. Please also refer to the video for *atari*, *uchiuchi* and *nayashi*, etc.

Shirakawa Hakuro-bushi



Shirakawa Hakuro-bushi / 白河博労節: (lyrics)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. 七つ八つ引く馬方よりも
一つ手引きの主が良い | Nanatsu, yatsu hiku umakata yorimo,
hitotsu tebiki no nushi ga yoi | Rather than seven or eight Umakata,
It's better that one master lead them. |
| 2. 小峰城から市場を見れば
駒の嘶き競りの声 | Komine-jo kara ichiba wo mireba
Koma no inanaki-seri no koe | Viewing the market from Komine Castle -
The sound of colts neighing and bargaining |

An umakata* song from the Shirakawa region of Fukushima Prefecture.

*Umakata refers to a person whose profession it is to lead horses carrying luggage, people, etc.



For the PDF score and a video of Kominato Akihisa playing Hakuro-bushi visit the ESS Members' Area at:
<http://members.shakuhachisociety.eu>

Kominato Akihisa is the eldest son of a family of master musicians in the Kominato *min'yō* folk ballad tradition, he was initiated by his parents at an early age and first appeared on stage at the age of five. In 1995 he began studying the shakuhachi under the late Yamaguchi Gorō, a living national treasure. In 2001, he graduated from the Department of Traditional Japanese Music at the Tokyo University of the Arts. Today he is a prominent performer who appears frequently on TV and radio and at concerts and events in Japan and overseas. In addition to Japanese classical music, his work encompasses a broad range of genres, including folk ballads, pop, and jazz.
www.facebook.com/kominatoakihisa

REVIEWS

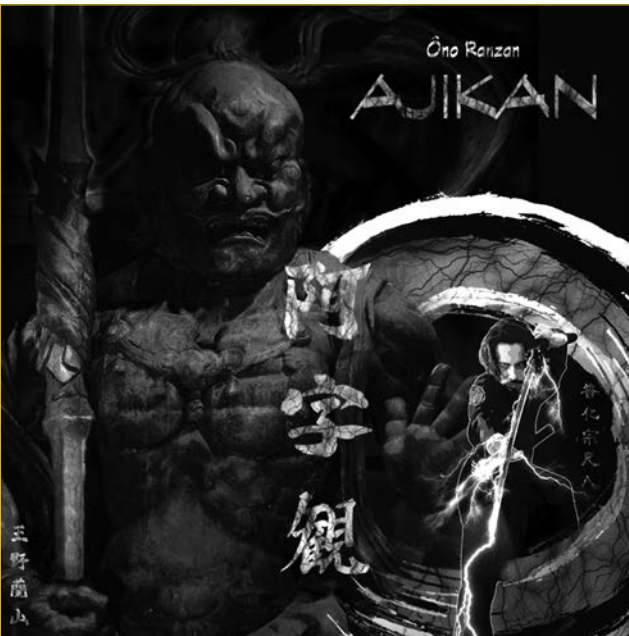
CD REVIEWS

For this issue of BAMBOO we selected two recent releases along-side two re-issues and asked Brian Ritchie to examine the wide spectrum of ideas about shakuhachi playing approaches present – ranging from tradition, new age spirituality, jazz-funk fusion all the way to contemporary music melting pots.

Most players start out on shakuhachi hoping to play respectable traditional Japanese music, but then inevitably veer off into explorations of other styles and genres. This is one of the challenges of playing a traditional instrument. Sometimes it’s from outside the player’s culture to begin with and let’s face it, Japanese traditional shakuhachi does not originate in our century, or even the previous one. Nevertheless traditional training proves of great value when tackling other styles, as we shall see with this edition’s crop of releases. This kind of cross-genre and inter-cultural collaboration has been going on for some time, as evidenced by the fact reissues are now happening.

Ajikan by Ranzan Ôno

Ranzan Ôno is a French master in the Fuke-shû lineage of Takahashi Kûzan and Etsuzan Fujiyoshi. This style is characterised by such things as a subtle vibrato, emphasis on martial arts training and use of the precursor of shakuhachi, the *hitoyogiri*.



Ranzan has learned well from Fujiyoshi. He has absorbed the style and embodies it in his ethereal playing. His tone is peaceful, rich and mellow in the extreme. This album is particularly well thought out, featuring material from various temples, several ryu, different lengths of shakuhachi, hitoyogiri.

The title track is *Ajikan* of Miyakawa Nyozan, a tricky piece that is studied and performed in many shakuhachi ryu and is derived from *Aji no Kyoku* of Myōan Taizan Ha. Ranzan performs the piece with restraint and fine attention to detail. The album is bookended by this and another piece *Fantasia on Aji*, with nature sounds.

There are a number of relatively common honkyoku, such as *Hi Fu Mi*, *Shirabe*, *Takiochi* and *Kyorei*, all performed in the style of Etsuzan Fujiyoshi. Three simple pieces from the obscure Shinobu-ryu of the Ninjas of Koga are featured, including a lovely duet (created through

over-dubbing) on the piece *Takasago*. Shinobu-ryu features the *yo* mode, at least on the pieces featured here, and eschews *meri* notes for the most part.

Hitoyogiri is a non-root and short ancestor of shakuhachi and treacherously difficult to make music on. Ranzan acquits himself well on *Mushi no Ne*. The recording is rounded out by several contemporary compositions by Ranzan and others.

This album is a good insight into a particular approach to shakuhachi which is more held back and less histrionic than most of what we hear. Within those limitations it explores a wide variety of material and creates a relaxing and philosophical impression.

<http://fuke-shakuhachi.com>

Wamono Groove by Kiyoshi Yamayo, Toshiko Yonekawa, Mitsuhashi Kifu (Label 180g)

Now we hop into the Way-Back Machine for a fantasy trip into a world of polyester leisure suits, hair pomade, plush carpets, sipping cognac and of course koto and shakuhachi. Huh? This is a world that never existed, or did it? Wamano Groove is a compilation of re-issued tracks from 1976 where the cream of Japan’s jazz-funk fusioneers attempt to grapple with two of Japan’s great traditional instrumentalists, Toshiko Yonekawa on koto and Mitsuhashi Kifu on the shakuhachi.

Kifu approached me at the New York World Shakuhachi Festival and pronounced gleefully: I also play rock music! This enthusiasm is evident in his playing here. The album starts with a masterful solo introduction by Kifu until it slips into a semi-cheesy groove reminiscent of a soft-porn soundtrack. The next track is a melange of funk, dignified and refined koto from Yonekawa, screaming rock guitar and jazzy vibraphone. The album proceeds along these lines with a variety of grooves, Japanese modes careening into fusion cliches, total disregard for musical boundaries, bizarre instrumentation, wah-wah guitars and other tropes of the fabulous 70’s.

Perhaps most hilarious is *Soma Nagareyama*, which is a rip-off of Stevie Wonder’s *Superstition*. The backing track is identical but Mitsuhashi Kifu spins a totally different melody on top of the familiar groove. It is quite disorienting.

This album is a must-listen just to hear the exemplary playing of Kifu and Yonekawa in an unusual setting. I would have liked to be a fly on the wall during these sessions just to see how they came up with some of the concepts. Yamayo and his backing musicians are quite proficient in a workmanlike fashion. Some of the superimpositions of Japanese traditional music atop jazz fusion are jarring but it all adds up to a lot of fun. Retro in a good way.

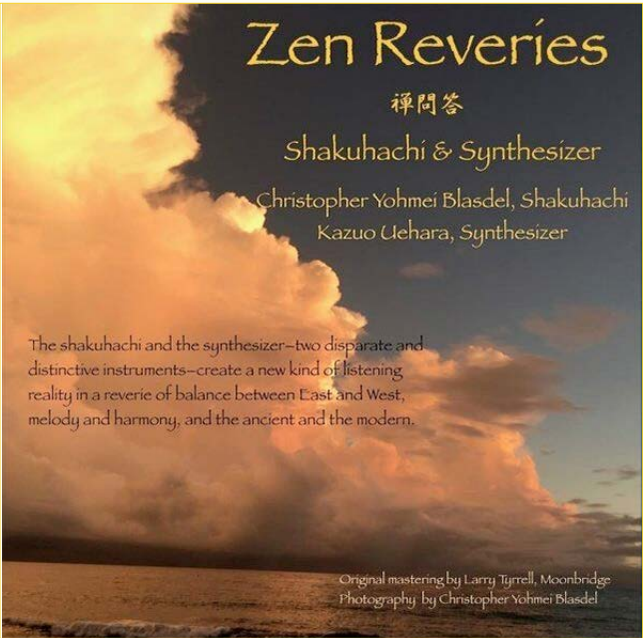
<https://wamono.bandcamp.com/>



Zen Reveries (Shakuhachi and Synthesizer) by Christopher Yohmei Blasdel and Kazuo Uehara

This reissue of a 1996 release likewise captures a particular musical moment, the heyday of the then-unstoppable New Age movement in music. The album was recorded in the era of music created for massage, yoga, meditation and other wholesome activities.

In 1996 Blasdel was on the cusp of running numerous shakuhachi festivals and writing a popular book about shakuhachi. Here we find him flexing his shakuhachi playing muscles. The album title uses the Z Word which afflicts most shakuhachi albums but we'll forgive him because he was early to the party.



The album basically gives you what it says on the box. There's shakuhachi. There's synthesizer. When I popped the tracks into my computer it came up as New Age in the genre field. But Chris gives the game away already on the first track *Another Kind of Dream* by engaging in shakuhachi pyrotechnics that would make someone get St. Vitus Dance on the massage table or tie oneself in knots on the yoga mat. It's kind of too interesting for New Age. Maybe a bit more like a Spiritual Jazz improv.

Gendai Choshi is a solo piece on a long shakuhachi. Blasdel's rich Kinko tone is featured to good effect here. On the remaining two songs, *Pale Lights* and *Replay*, Kazuo Uehara lays down lush electronic beds for Blasdel to improvise spacious and winding melodies and textures. The synth never attempts to be percussive or propulsive. Instead it's a wash of deep tones. Blasdel's more animated playing acts as the rocks to Kazuo's sand in this musical Zen garden.

<https://www.yohmei.com/news/zen-reveries-uploaded-to-cd-baby-pro/>

Betamax vs. Clive Bell

Multi-reed and wind man Clive Bell has a habit of popping up in a multitude of interesting musical situations. Besides being a good Kinko player, Clive is a stalwart of the UK free jazz and improv scene. He also hangs with some heavy hitters such as Jeff Beck and Jah Wobble. Perhaps it's unsurprising that he has spawned another formidable musician in Maxwell Hallet AKA Betamax, drummer for The Comet is Coming, and Clive's son.

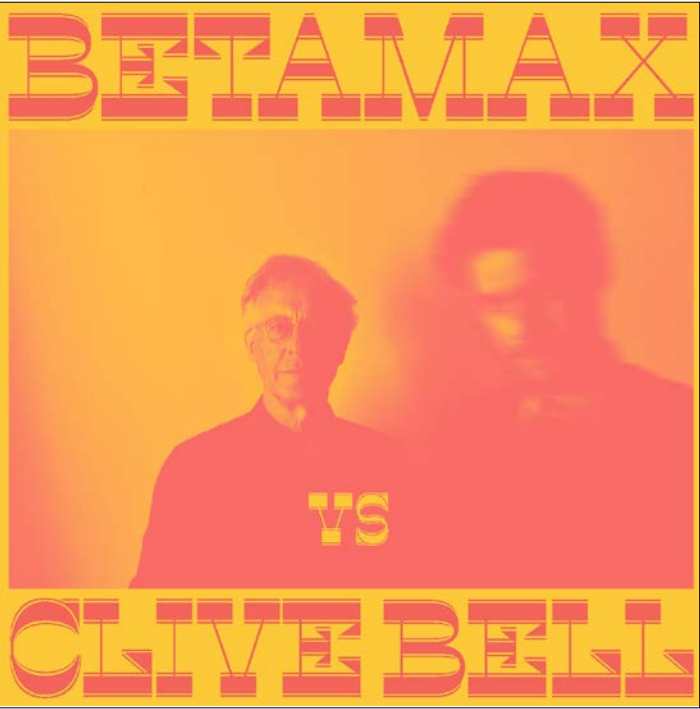
The Comet Is Coming are at the forefront of a UK movement combining jazz, electronica, punk, dub and funk. This recording has some of the same hallmarks but a bit more atmospheric. *Luminosity Cuffs* kicks things off with a repetitive groove and electronic bursts. On top of this framework Clive Bell puts out an Eric Satie-esque melody so electronically effected that it's difficult to say it's shakuhachi or what the original instrument is.

Throughout the album this is the basic formula. Betamax creates an astonishing number of hypnotic rhythms with his drums, bass, electronics and other percussion. Bell avoids obvious attempts at displaying virtuosity in favour of simple and catchy melodies as well as random flourishes on a variety of winds and reeds. The use of what sounds like and maybe is a melodica reminds of Jamaican music. The percussion shows elements of both electronica and African music. This combination of western and non-western music is in a similar vein as *African Head Charge* and equally satisfying.

The shakuhachi content on this album is not upfront most of the time, but when you can discern it, Bell is obviously skilled. There has been a lot of shakuhachi jazz circulating, but most of it looks back and transposes sax or trumpet ideas onto the shakuhachi. This recording is perhaps unique in its utter contemporaneity and bringing the shakuhachi into modern music successfully.

Clive has written an amusing and self-effacing biography for the duo in which he describes his disillusionment with studying woodwinds around the globe and his determination to prevent his son from entering the harsh and harrowing world of the working musician. Luckily he failed. What could have been a heartwarming feel-good father and son album has taken on a life of its own as an intelligent and effective collaboration.

<https://byrdout.bandcamp.com/album/betamax-vs-clive-bell>

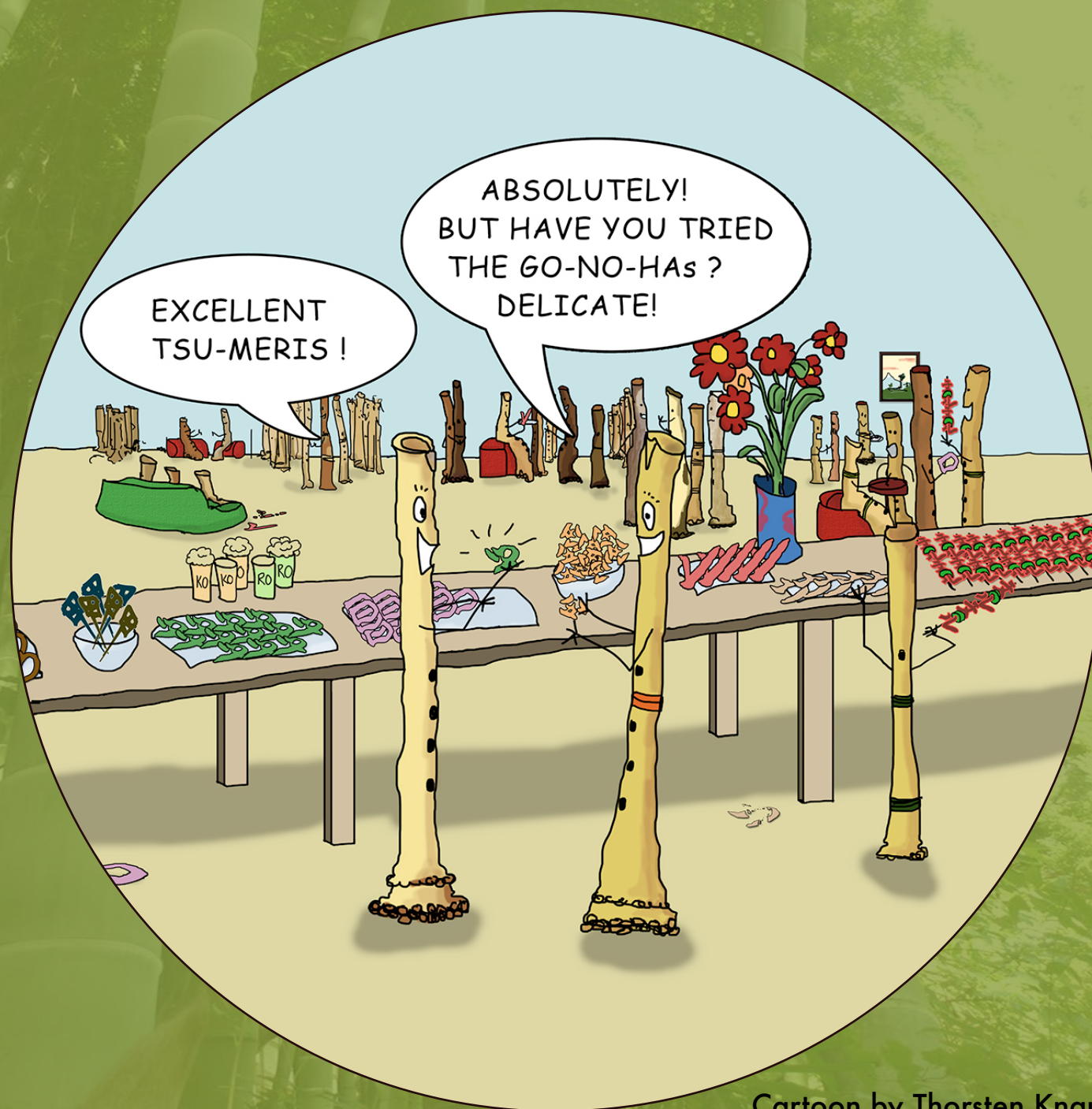


BRIAN TAIRAKU RITCHIE is a shakuhachi performer and teacher. He is the curator of MONA FOMA Music & Arts Festival since 2009, music curator at Mona, Museum of Old and New Art and the bassist of the Violent Femmes. He is based in Hobart, Tasmania.

SHAKUHACHI HUMOUR, POETRY & MORE

HA-HA-RO

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



Cartoon by Thorsten Knaub

It may be a bamboo forests spotted in a far away country, a familiar town name or whatever else somehow reminds you of that crazy obsession of yours of shakuhachi – here is the place to pin it down.



It seems in the Eastern Pyrenees of France RO is to be played on a 3.3 in D.



Sally playing her shakuhachi on Bamboo Avenue near Kingston, Jamaica.

Clay Komuso

by Julien Richard

I came to start learning sculpture a couple years back. At the time, I was interested in learning how to build mechatronics, and sculpting was the first thing I would have to get familiar in order to reach this goal. Fortunately I was able to keep practicing during the pandemics.

I needed to practice working on a standing character, and since I'm learning shakuhachi as well (I've been a student of Jean-François Suizan Lagrost for 5 years), I thought it would be fun to sculpt a *komusō*. The design is loosely based on a couple of old Japanese paintings I found on the Internet.

I started by sculpting the body naked, then added clothes. I had to add a long extension to the kimono to have a third point of contact with the ground and secure the balance.

The straw basket hat (*tengai* / 天蓋) was fun to make, and the shakuhachi too of course. It's always interesting to experiment ways of representing distinct textures and materials from the same clay. The trickiest part was adding the hands, because I had to position them on the flute in a realistic way.

I also added some wind movement on the monk's clothes to figurate the shakuhachi blowing.

Dimensions & materials

This *komusō* sculpture is about 50 cm tall.
It is made of clay. The patina is made with dry pigments, shellac and wax.

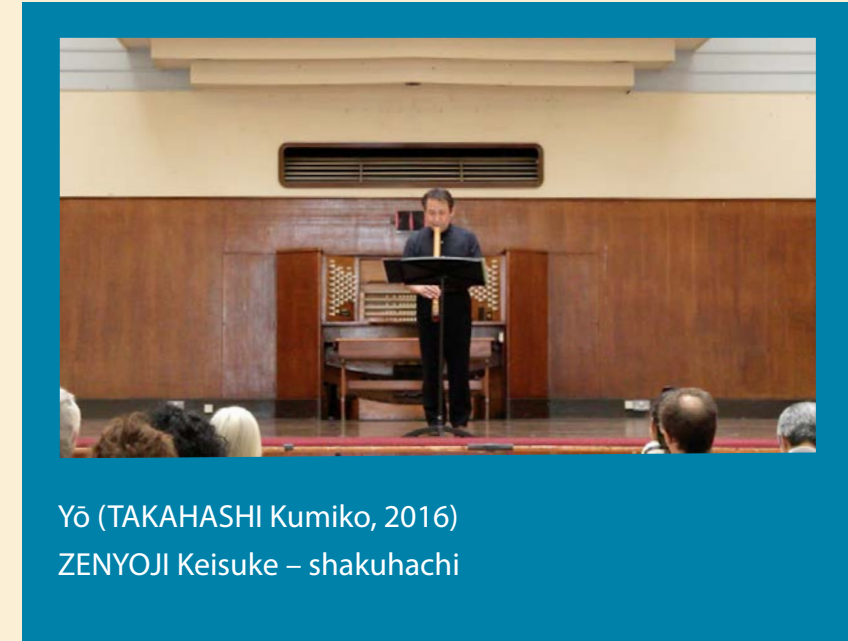
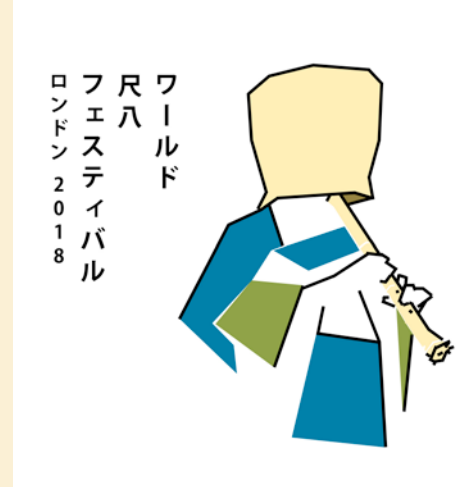




ESS MEMBERS' AREA - WHAT'S NEW?

ESS ARCHIVE – WSF2018 LONDON – VIDEOS

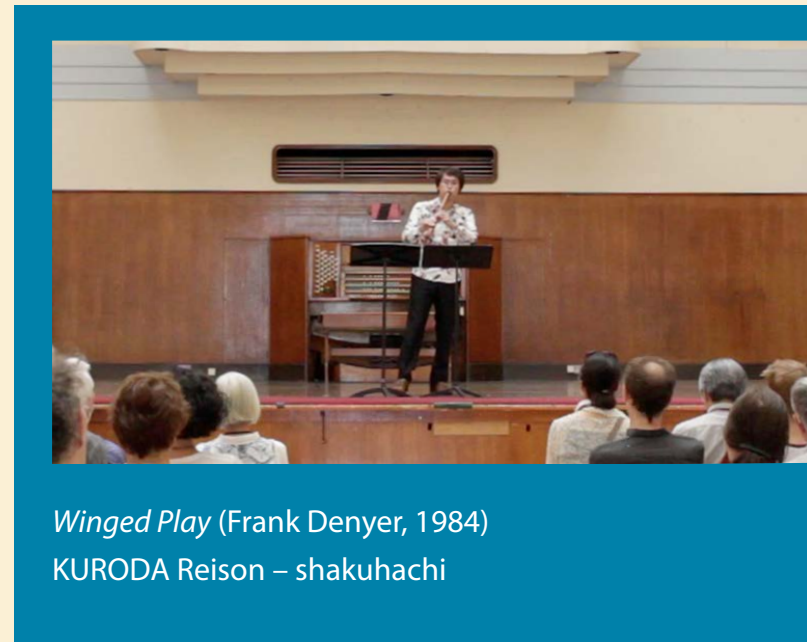
As the WSF 2022 in China is postponed let us travel back to the 2018 when the ESS had the honour to stage the World Shakuhachi Festival. There is still video to edit... for now let us revisit the new compositions/Frank Denyer focused New Horizon Concert of Friday 3 August 2018. Enjoy!



Yō (TAKAHASHI Kumiko, 2016)
ZENYOJI Keisuke – shakuhachi



World premiere
I Thought about Eva (Henri ALGADAFE, 2018)
Emmanuelle ROUAUD – shakuhachi
TAKAHASHI Gaho – koto



Winged Play (Frank Denyer, 1984)
KURODA Reison – shakuhachi



World premiere
Treizell (Footbridge) (L. Domancich / V. Piron, 2018)
Véronique PIRON – shakuhachi
Lydia DOMANCICH – piano

<http://members.shakuhachisociety.eu/video-archive/wsf2018-london/friday-3-08-18/>

SHAKUHACHI TERMINOLOGY

GLOSSARY N-Y

In this issue we conclude our overview of shakuhachi terms and terminology covering the letters N – Y. Finally you can discuss flowingly your *nayashi*, your *suriage* and your *tateyuri*. Enjoy!

Nagashi (流し) – Playing in the street
Naka-uta (中唄) – Middle vocal section
Nara period (奈良時代) – 710–94.
Nakatsugi (中継ぎ) – The attachable mid-joint on jinuri shakuhachi.
Nayashi (ナヤシ) – To begin pitch meri and rise to standard pitch Shakuhachi playing technique. A short bend in the beginning of a note, middle of a note most frequently produced by head movements. This can vary depending on the school.
Neaji (音味) – Lit: Taste of sound describing tone colour.
Neiro (音色) – Tone colour.
Nobekan (延べ管) – Shakuhachi made in one piece rather than in two attachable pieces, as is the norm to-day. There is thus no mid-joint.

Okitegaki Jūkikajō (掟書十基箇条) – Edict on the ten basic articles. Decree supposedly enacted by Tokugawa Iyasu.
Otsu (乙) – the low register on the shakuhachi

Ryū (流) – Refers to an artistic lineage and its accompanying style in an art form. In the case of shakuhachi, kinko ryū is the Kinko style of shakuhachi playing.
Ryūha (流派) – Refers to a school within a ryū.

Sankyoku (三曲) – lit. three pieces. Chamber music of Japan from the Edo period. The instrumentation is: koto (13-stringed zither), shamisen (three-stringed long-necked lute) and shakuhachi. The shakuhachi replaced the kokyū around the turn of the 20th century.
Sarugaku (猿楽) – Early nō theatre popular during the 11th to 14th centuries.
Shaku (尺) – Japanese measurement. 1 shaku = 30.30 cm
Shakuhachi Sanbonkai (尺八三本会) – Three Shakuhachi Group. A shakuhachi group founded in 1964 across different ryūha by top players, Aoki Reibo II (b. 1935), Yamamoto Hōzan (1937 – 2014) and Yokoyama Kat-suya (1934 – 2010).
Shamisen (三味線) – Japanese three-stringed long-necked lute.
Shihan (師範) – Often translated as a master licence.

Shin hōgaku (新邦楽) – New Japanese Music. A term that arose in the late 1920s, which included genres such as Miyagi Michio’s music for Japanese instruments influenced by Western music
Shinkyoku (新曲) – New pieces. This refers to 20th century pieces, thus neither honkyoku nor sankyoku.
Shin nihon ongaku (新日本音楽) – New Japanese Music. A term used interchangeably with shin hōgaku.
Shirabe 調 – To check the sounds and move into the proper frame of mind before performing Honkyoku.
Exploring / Investigating. Can also just be a piece or the beginning of a piece.
Shō (笙) – A Japanese mouth organ. Part of the gagaku ensemble.
Shugyō (修行) – Training, self-cultivation, ascetic practice or pursuit of knowledge.
Suizen (吹禅) – Lit: Blowing Zen. The act of playing the shakuhachi as an act of meditation. Although widely used, this word is, according to Tsukitani Tsuneko (conversation, 2007), a post-Edo period creation.
Suizen-kai (吹禅会) – Lit: meeting of the Suizen [blowing Zen] group. Myōan temple gatherings where each shakuhachi player play a piece in front of the altar.
Sokyoku 箏曲 – Music originally composed for Koto.
Sun (寸) – Japanese measurement. 1/10th of a shaku = 3.03 cm
Suri (スリ) – Slide. Shakuhachi playing technique. A passing note with a short portamento to an intermediate pitch.
Suriage (スリ上) – A slide upwards
Suri sage (スリ下) – A slide downwards

Takane (高音) – Section of a honkyoku piece usually played in the upper octave, often containing the climax of the piece.
Takuatsu (托鉢) – Pieces played by Komuso when begging.
Tamane (玉音) – Flutter tongue technique
Tegoto (手事) – Musical Interlude
Tegotomono (手事物) – Musical form with Tegoto

Utaguchi (歌口) – The sharp blowing edge of the shakuhachi

Yuri (ユリ) – Vibrato created by head movements
Tateyuri (立ユリ) – vibrato created by vertical head movements
Yokoyuri (横ユリ) – vibrato created by horizontal head movements
Mawashiyuri (回ユリ) – vibrato created by circular head movements
Takeyuri (竹ユリ) – vibrato created by moving the shakuhachi towards the chin
Kaeshiyuri (返ユリ) – vibrato created by moving from mawashiyuri to yokoyuri

More shakuhachi terminology at shakuhachisociety.eu/resources/glossary/

HOW TO BECOME AN ESS MEMBER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To join the ESS:

1) Visit the membership page on the ESS website and choose the membership subscription which suits you. <http://shakuhachisociety.eu/about-the-ess/ess-membership/>

2) Please send an email to member@shakuhachisociety.eu or info@shakuhachisociety.eu, giving your name and contact details, and if you wish, a little information about your interest in and experience with the shakuhachi.

3) If you cannot make payment using PayPal, please send an email to member@shakuhachisociety.eu and we will find a way to help you.

We are looking forward to welcome you!

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE ESS

ESS WEBSITE

You can find our website at www.shakuhachisociety.eu

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

General enquiries: info@shakuhachisociety.eu

For questions about membership: member@shakuhachisociety.eu

ESS newsletter: newsletter@shakuhachisociety.eu

The ESS will endeavour to respond quickly to any query.

ESS MEMBERS' AREA (MEMBERS' WEBSITE)

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

ESS FORUM

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

www.shakuhachiforum.eu

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

ESS FACEBOOKGROUP

[European Shakuhachi Society Facebook Group](https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanShakuhachiSociety)

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

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

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

ESS NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTOR’S GUIDELINES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please avoid self-promotion.

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

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

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

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

ESS publications office

The next ESS Newsletter is published on December 1, 2022
There will be a call for contributions nearer the publication date, but please do not hesitate to contact us in the meantime with any questions or suggestions.





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BAMBOO

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