

Autumn/Winter 2021

BAMBOO

Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society

MIN'YŌ TAKEMONO & HONKYOKU

SHAKUHACHI HISTORY: TENPUKU

SHAKUHACHI EXERCISES TO RELAX MUSCLE & MIND

CD REVIEWS / SHAKUHACHI RESOURCES

ESS SUMMER SCHOOL 2021 VIDEOS



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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear ESS members & shakuhachi people!

We hope you are all well.

We are happy to present to you the Autumn/Winter 2021 edition of BAMBOO, the Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society, and hope that our mixture of articles and practical exercises in this issue will get you through the colder winter season upon us.

The articles range from Christian Mau's exploration of connections between min'yō and honkyoku, Christopher Yohmei Blasdel's Aikido inspired shakuhachi exercises to Rafael Hiroshi Fuchigami's journey into shakuhachi history illuminating the origins of one of its predecessors.

In the Resources section Ramon Humet continues his exploration of shakuhachi techniques with a comprehensive Timbral Thrill Fingering Chart and we are presenting another min'yō song, this time performed by Rodrigo Rodriguez.

In our Review pages, we have Clive Bell and Brian Tairaku Ritchie giving us their thoughts on some recent releases, and we are presenting Andreas Gutzwiller and Christoph Wegmann's new (german language) book publication.

For the lighter side of the shakuhachi you can visit our HA-HA-RO/more merry pages, an area which gives ample space for shakuhachi musings and this time also for some fine brushwork by Hawwa Morales.

Last but not least we are happy to say that the video materials from the ESS Online Summer School 2021 are now available on the members' website. This is an extensive resource which covers about 30+ hours of teaching and talks as well as four one-hour concerts. 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,

I hope that this new issue of our ESS Newsletter finds you all well and that 2022 which is nearly upon us moves us closer to meeting face to face.

Until such a time comes, I would like to let you know that we are working on holding an online event before summer 2022 and hopefully another for winter 2022-23. Should everything progress favorably we could maybe finally meet face to face during the Summer of 2023 (counting seasons as to the northern hemisphere).

2022 is a World Shakuhachi Festival year and for the first time it will take place in China in an event that we know is going to be both face to face and virtual, allowing people to relate to it regardless of location. It will take place in the city of Shenzhen from August 17th to 22nd 2022 and more information can be found at www.wsf2022.com. This Newsletter also includes a statement by the ESS committee and advisory board regarding this event.

For those of you who are still not members, please consider the importance of supporting the ESS by becoming a member. Membership allows the society to function and to program activities and offers discounts on event's registrations as well as access to the 'members area'.

As usual, we encourage you to contact us by using the email: info@shakuhachisociety.eu

Thank you very much for all your support during this challenging year.

With my best regards

Horacio Curti
ESS Chairperson

STATEMENT

Regarding the World Shakuhachi Festival (WSF2022) which will take place 17-22 August 2022 in Shenzhen, China, several members have raised concerns to the ESS Board referring to issues of human rights violations in China. Although the ESS is neither a funding, nor an organising member of the event, the ESS Board has made enquiries regarding the organisational structures and the goals of the event. We have come to the conclusion that the organisation is in the hands of individuals who are – as we are – shakuhachi lovers, engaged in celebrating the instrument, its musical practices and working for the dissemination of the knowledge of and the playing of the shakuhachi. We believe that WSFs provide important contributions to cultural exchange and contribute positively to human relations. The ESS Board and advisors believe that WSF2022 is organised in line with these principles which are important for us to uphold.

ESS Committee & advisory board

SHAKUHACHI RESEARCH

INTERSECTING TRADITIONS: SHAKUHACHI HONKYOKU AND MIN'YŌ TAKEMONO

Christian Mau presents us with a fascinating account on how real world trading routes and encounters between travelling komuso and shopkeepers contributed to the meeting of min'yō and honkyoku worlds and how that in turn may have shaped each other repertoires.

At one point quite early in my shakuhachi journey, my teacher introduced me to the *min'yō* piece, *Esashi Oiwake*. Up to that point we had not deviated at all from the Myōan (Taizan ha) pieces that he had been teaching me. “It’s okay,” he reassured me, “we’re allowed to play just this one particular piece in addition to the prescribed *honkyoku* repertoire.” I did not fully understand the reasons at the time, but appreciated the diversion from our usual routine and he proceeded to teach it to me, phrase by phrase, having me repeat each one as we went along. This presented me with new challenges: learning by rote meant that there was no written notation as had always been our custom, so I struggled not only learning it, but retaining what I had learned between our weekly lessons. Discussing pedagogical strategies merits its own article(s), so I won’t digress further here.

Esashi Oiwake (“Esashi Crossroads”) is arguably one of the most famous and popular among Japanese folk songs (*min'yō*) and has been dubbed the king of Japanese folk song. It – or more properly part of it – is sung accompanied only by shakuhachi, which follows the singer, lagging slightly behind the voice. It has also become known as a solo shakuhachi piece in its own right and could be mistaken by an uneducated ear for *honkyoku*, due no doubt to its characteristic unmetered free rhythm, not to mention its instrumentation. Many other such songs exist within the *min'yō* repertoire and are known as *takemono* (bamboo songs). Here too, the shakuhachi provides the only instrumental accompaniment and can be played either accompanying a singer or solo.

Although it may seem counter-intuitive, the song, *Esashi Oiwake* does not actually originate in the town of Esashi, which is located on the southwestern coast of Hokkaido (the northernmost of Japan’s main islands). Yet this is where the song was shaped and molded, becoming the song as we know it today, making Esashi the

birthplace of a major folk song tradition that spread throughout Japan based solely on this one song, leading David Hughes to consider it the beginning of the modern Japanese folk song movement. The actual origins of the song are difficult to trace, but he proposes the town of Oiwake in Shinano Province (present day Nagano Prefecture). Other possibilities are that the song originated as a *magouta* (pack-horse driver song) from present-day Nagano and the more distant Matsusaka in what is now Mie prefecture. These two songs were combined in Echigo (today’s Niigata Prefecture) and transformed into a sea chantey, becoming known as *Echigo Oiwake*. It subsequently made its way to Esashi, where it was initially known as *Oiwake Bushi* (“Oiwake Tune”), eventually taking root as *Esashi Oiwake*. Regardless of its origins, the song known today as *Esashi Oiwake* is proudly claimed (and possessively guarded) by the city of Esashi. It is most certainly plausible that it traveled through Echigo, given that Echigo Province had seaports along the *Kitamae* shipping route that connected Osaka with Hokkaido. Thus, the components that became *Esashi Oiwake* traveled by land, then sea, taking on various new characteristics along the way, eventually landing in the port of Esashi, where it was all mixed together, no doubt with a few of that region’s elements added to the mix.

There can be no doubt that the shipping routes established during the Edo period (1603–1867), in this particular case the *Kitamae*, carried far more than physical goods and commodities. We have just explored how a song likely made the voyage over land and sea. It stands to reason that not just songs, but other cultural heritage – both tangible and intangible – made similar journeys. One case in point is a *komusō* from Echigo that virtually duplicated the last part of the same itinerary just discussed, although the actual details of his trip are not known.



Kitamae-bune (merchant ships) connecting Osaka and Hokkaido along the Sea of Japan





山海見立古撰
越後新撰

Niigata in Echigo Province, (1858) by Utagawa Hiroshige

The *komusō* in question played shakuhachi around town, making frequent visits to a pawn shop in Esashi. That pawn shop was owned by the Kōji family, where a young lad, Toyotaro, spent time with his father, the shopkeeper. Whether – or how much – he was actually helping his father is not clear, but at the age of 13, he became a practicing Buddhist. The young Toyotaro became fascinated with the visitor and was especially intrigued by the shakuhachi. Wishing to learn it, he eventually managed to become the student of the *komusō*, who was none other than Jimbo Masanosuke (1841–1914), whose version of Sanya bears his name (*Jimbo Sanya*). After studying some *honkyoku* under the *komusō*, Toyotaro Kōji (1867–1938) adapted *Esashi Oiwake* on the shakuhachi, hitherto accompanied on *shamisen*. This made him the acknowledged originator not only of the shakuhachi version of *Esashi Oiwake*, but also the father of *min'yō* shakuhachi. In 1989, a commemorative stone was erected on Kamome Island in Esashi by members of *Ōtōken*, the school established by Kōji, to memorialise his contribution to *min'yō* shakuhachi.



Commemorative stone on Kamome Island in Esashi, erected by members of Toyotaro Kōji's Ōtōken school; *Esashi Oiwake* vocal score.

A second 'Oiwake' piece, *Matsumae Oiwake*, also can be shown to have a relationship to *honkyoku*. *Matsumae* is located near the southern tip of Hokkaido, putting it closer to Japan's main island of Honshu than Esashi. Kikuchi Tansui, a master shakuhachi player of *min'yō* is said to have learned this piece from Hikichi Kozan of the Fudaiken lineage. Interestingly, Hikichi had also studied with Jimbo Masanosuke and the melody of this piece bears a striking resemblance to *Esashi Oiwake*, begging the question of whether the song "disembarked" in Akita, where the *komusō* temple Fudaiken was located; Akita also would have been a port of call on the *Kitamae* route between Echigo and Esashi, with *Matsumae* in between. However interesting, this is of course

rather speculative. In any case, *Matsumae Oiwake* was eventually renamed to *Yoshitsune Reibo*, probably to give it a more legitimate *honkyoku* identity. It has been played by Yoshimura Fuan, the 40th *kansu* of Kyoto's Myōan Temple.

As described here, these two examples do seem to establish a connection between *honkyoku* and *min'yō*. They certainly serve as illustrations of a bridge between the *komusō* and *min'yō* worlds. But aren't folk songs a bit too profane to be accepted into the *honkyoku* repertoire? This could be debatable: secular tunes have been known to creep into "religious" music, with an abundance of examples to be found in Christian hymns and doubtless other traditions as well. There are a group of pieces within the Myōan Taizan repertoire that have been set aside by Tominomori as *geinō*, meaning "artsy" or "entertaining." Perhaps the *oiwake* pieces discussed here go further than that, crossing a line. This could explain why my being taught *Esashi Oiwake* was "off the record" and *Yoshitsune Reibo* has never been accepted into the corpus of Myōan Taizan-ha pieces.

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Esashi Oiwake Singing Competition with shakuhachi accompanimen:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOzjGpYXemATCMeXFvH0zA/videos>

Christian Mau began his shakuhachi journey studying the Myōan Taizan repertoire. He earned both his MMus and PhD in ethnomusicology from SOAS, University of London. During his doctoral fieldwork, he attained the level of *dōshu* (master/teacher) of shakuhachi at Myōan Temple in Kyoto. He currently resides in Seattle, USA, where he teaches shakuhachi and is active in the region's Native American Flute circles.

SHAKUHACHI PERFORMANCE

AGING WITH THE SHAKUHACHI—EASING THE PAINS WHILE ENHANCING THE MUSIC

In our last issue we looked at the preparation practices leading up to a performance, in this issue we asked shakuhachi performer and Aikidō practitioner Christopher Yohmei Blasdel to demonstrate exercises which help to keep our bodies healthily relaxed and our muscles agile to get the most out of our shakuhachi practice in general.

Next year (2022), I will celebrate my fiftieth year of shakuhachi playing. Along with a sense of accomplishment comes the realization that my body doesn't quite work the same as it did in former decades. Even though in my mind I imagine myself as a much younger person, the reality of ageing faces me every day in the mirror, and I am reminded of Shakespeare's famous quote from *Henry IV*: "Have you not a white beard, a decreasing leg, an increasing belly? Is not your voice broken, your wind short, your chin double, your wit single, and every part about you blasted with antiquity?"

Though I don't yet feel quite "blasted with antiquity," I do notice a decline of fine muscle and breath control when playing the shakuhachi. Sometimes when playing I also feel increased tension to already tired shoulders and arms and a sluggishness in execution of technique. As much as I would like to blame the shakuhachi, I know it is my body and mind that needs adjusting. The shakuhachi just points this out to me. It is, after all, an instrument of awareness, right?

Modifying one's techniques and aspirations to the reality of the body is necessary at any level or age and is a positive step toward a healthier realization of our bodies and situation. With this short article, I will introduce some methods I use to relax, conserve energy and adjust myself to the realities of a changing body. Those of you who have taken the various body awareness workshops I've done throughout the years will recognize some of these exercises, which have been taken from my long years of practicing Aikido and other Japanese style body relaxation methods like *katsugen undō* and Noguchi Michizō's body awareness classes.

I think the most important lesson we can apply – at any stage of life – to playing the shakuhachi is to embrace the concept of minimalism: how do we create the maximum effect with the minimum of effort? In other words, how do we get away with as little muscular effort as possible?

The shakuhachi embodies minimalism at its best. The instrument consists of just a simple, hollowed out piece of bamboo with a notched mouthpiece and five holes. It may or may not have lacquer applied to the insides. From this basic flute come wondrous and enchanting sounds. Like the sparsity of *haiku* poetry, where just a few lines open up new worlds to the reader, the single notes of the shakuhachi work their magic on both the player and listener.

The reason for this is that the shakuhachi, when properly played, becomes an extension of the body. The shakuhachi in essence becomes our "voice," and the *utaguchi* mouth-piece acts as an extension of the vocal chords. Since the goal in music is always revolves around the body and our relationship to it, blowing the shakuhachi is, literally, minimalism personified.

For the shakuhachi to become an extension of the body, we must first reduce barriers between us and the instrument, get rid of unnecessary muscle tension and return to the basics of movement. We all tend to use more energy and muscles than actually needed when we undertake an action, and therefore we must continually ask ourselves, is this movement absolutely necessary and, if so, how much muscle energy do I really need to expend to make this action? In other words, just be aware of any extraneous and unnecessary exertion of energy.

For example, I see many shakuhachi players raise or angle their shoulders and torso to follow the contour of the music, or, during technically difficult passages, tighten the jaw and neck, as if that would help us get through the difficult notes. Such tension and movement are actually counter-productive. In fact, the tightening of the body – arms, hands, neck, jaws, etc. – impedes the music, and if you don't break these bad habits, they will continue to haunt you, getting worse with age.

But again, awareness is the first step toward solving the problem. Take stock of yourself during practicing and performing. Continually ask yourself if there are areas of your body that are overly tense. As you play (or during any activity) scan your body and look for places where the flow of energy (気: *ki* in Japanese, *qi* in Chinese) may be blocked. If you feel tension, it is a good sign that the energy is blocked. The good news is that once you become aware, the problem is fixable.

A simple exercise (this and the other exercises I write about here are demonstrated in the accompanying videos) you can do utilizes the sound of the shakuhachi itself to help relaxation of the whole body. First, play a steady note – any of the five basic shakuhachi fingerings will do: *ro*, *tsu*, *re*, *chi* or *ri*. The purpose of this exercise is not to practice shakuhachi music per se but to use the vibrations of the sound to help release tension.

Before playing, ground yourself by taking several deep breaths and then intone the note while feeling the vibration of the sound in your fingertips. If you can't feel it, it means you are using too much force in the fingers to cover the holes. Lighten up, relax your fingers, hands and arms and you'll soon experience a wonderful tingling of sound in the soft pads of your fingertips. Focus on this tactile sensation and see how far up your arm you can feel the vibrations. The more relaxed your arms are, the more you can feel these sonic vibrations. After a point (usually around the elbows) you may no longer actually feel the vibrations, but they are still there. Imagine them coursing throughout your whole body, giving you a magic massage and breaking down the walls of tension. At the quantum level all matter consists of vibration, so we are essentially beings of sound. Allowing the shakuhachi tones to permeate our bodies is an affirmation of this.

Exercise Video 1: Finger sensitivity



Exercise Video 2: Aikido wrist stretching techniques No. 1



Major stress point in playing the shakuhachi are the wrists and hands. The shakuhachi, although simple and relatively light, is not really very ergonomic. In order to properly play we have to endure unhealthy hand positions, especially when utilizing long or heavy flutes. I know many players who suffer carpal tunnel syndrome or the pain of repetitive stress when playing shakuhachi. This only gets worse with age, so it is important to come up with effective methods to ameliorate the problems.

Some wrist-strengthening exercises I use are right out of the Aikido handbook, and anyone who has studied Aikido will be familiar with them. First of all, hold your right hand in front of your face, bent at the elbow, palm level and facing down. With your left hand, grasp the back of the right hand from above (refer to the video). Slowly let your elbows fall, keeping your left hand tightly grasping the right. Allow gravity to naturally pull your elbows down, stretching the numerous muscle groups that connect the hand, wrist and lower arm. Repeat this a few times then change hands.

Another effective wrist strengthening exercise is to hold your right hand vertically in front of your face, thumb pointed at your nose. Rotate the thumb to the right as far as it will go while keeping the hand vertical, so that your little finger now faces you. Grasp the right hand with the left, placing your little, ring and index finger under the thumb, right where the wrist and hand connect. Place the thumb of your left hand right below the knuckle in the trough between the little and ring finger of the right hand. Again, allow your elbows and hand to drop and let the gravitational weight stretch out the wrist and arm muscles. Switch hands and do the same movement.

Exercise Video 3: Aikido wrist stretching techniques No. 2



Exercise Video 3: Aikido wrist stretching techniques No. 3



The third exercise for wrist strengthening involves extending your right arm straight out in front of you, palm up. With your left hand grab the tips of your fingers and slowly bend them out, away from the palm. Keep your elbow and arm extended and push down with the arm while bending the fingers back. This stretches out the muscle groups in the underside of your arm.

The stress of holding the shakuhachi can also be lessened if you keep in mind the idea of extension – something also very important in Aikido moves. The body's physical power tends to be more powerful and effective when the shoulders, neck, arm, torso and legs are extended and lengthened. However, many players, when holding the shakuhachi, let their arms and hands crumple up, impeding the natural flow of energy. Although we must curl our fingers a bit in order to properly cover the holes, it is best to try to keep the fingers and arms as extended as possible. I have found that holding the instrument in front of you with arms extended, then slowly raising it up to your lips while keeping the arms extended (similar to how we raise a wooden sword in basic Aikido weapons exercises) helps us to better understand the dynamics of holding the instrument in a relaxing and effective way (see exercise video 4).

The jaw is another part of the body where tension seems to collect. It is no coincidence that when we become determined to do something we “set our jaw,” as if hardening the jaw muscles demonstrates a strong will and actually helps us achieve our goals. However, I’ve found that the best way to create a relaxed, beautiful and persuasive tone color is to continually work on relaxing the jaw and while micro-controlling the *obicularis oris* muscles around our lips and mouth.

Exercise Video 4: Body, arm and finger extension



Exercise Video 5: Jaw loosening



The jaw is fixed with the rest of the skull only by certain muscles, like the masseter muscles with which it connects (hangs) to the skull. Like any muscles, these can be relaxed, yet it is actually very difficult to consciously relax them, so used are we to the tension they carry.

The next exercise to help jaw relaxation is rather fun. Stand up straight and try to totally relax your jaw muscles, allowing your lower jaw to hang down, like it was connected to the skull not with muscles but just hanging on by threads. Move your head quickly back and forth, as if indicating a “no.” Your lower jaw should move back and forth freely, like the clapper in a bell.

This is easy to describe, and easy to do if you get the hang of it. However, most people find it almost impossible to completely relax the masseter and other jaw muscles in order to let the jaw freely swing. The next step in this exercise is to work to maintain the loose jaw sensation while playing shakuhachi. Try playing a familiar piece while relaxing your jaw and opening it up. You will probably hear a definite change in tone color. You might even want to imagine yourself yawning, since that action also tends to extend and open up the jaw and throat.

The final exercise is called in Japanese *kakato otoshi*, or “heel bounce.” In this simple movement, you rise up on your tiptoes, stretching your ankle muscles and tendons. Then you simply let go and allow yourself to “fall” a few centimeters until your heels hit the floor (it’s best to do this on a carpet or pad). The trick is to not try to control this “free fall,” but to allow gravity to totally take over as you descend. When you hit the floor, naturally your body will shake a bit on impact.

Exercise Video 6: *Kakato otoshi* heel bounce



This shaking is what is important. If your body is in a relaxed state, you should be able to feel the vibrations of the impact course through your body unimpeded by muscle tension or energy blockage.

We tend to work against the forces of gravity, but using it to make our own movements and gestures more effective is a much better idea. The *kakato otoshi* exercise illustrates this on a corporeal level.

Even as the body ages, the shakuhachi has much to offer ourselves and our listeners. The important thing is to keep working towards relaxation and lightness. Partly due to the physical limitations brought on by age, I find myself not so interested anymore in exhibiting flashy technical prowess or playing difficult musical passages to impress an audience. But this is okay. I’m much more interested in creating sounds infused with wisdom, relaxation and awareness, hoping to help others to achieve the same.

To view the exercise videos please visit: <http://members.shakuhachisociety.eu/>

Christopher Yohmei Blasdel began the shakuhachi in 1972 under the tutelage of Yamaguchi Goro and continued with Yamaguchi until his death in 1999. Blasdel began Aikidō with Kobayashi Yasuo in 1976 and presently is ranked as a fifth degree black-belt. He teaches both shakuhachi and Aikidō in Honolulu and is an adjunct lecturer at the University of Hawai’i, Mānoa. Blasdel was one of the main organizers of the 1998 World Shakuhachi Festival in Boulder, Colorado and has been an important advisor and featured participant in all the subsequent world shakuhachi festivals. www.yohmei.com

SHAKUHACHI HISTORY

THE MYSTERIOUS TENPUKU FLUTE: CULTURAL HERITAGE OF KAGOSHIMA

Rafael Hiroshi Fuchigami takes on a journey south to Kagoshima to discover more of the history of the *tenpuku* – one of the shakuhachi predecessors. Samurai legends, educational systems and ideas of tradition shaped and are still shaping the approach to this instrument today.

The *tenpuku* is a bamboo flute, similar to the shakuhachi, which is a part of ancient traditions of the Satsuma region, or modern-day Kagoshima, located in the Kyushu Islands in the south of Japan. Its practices have been passed down for centuries without interruption through oral tradition. The instrument was part of aristocratic samurai education in Satsuma until the Meiji era (1868-1912), and it is presently preserved through the activities of the Tenpuku Dōkō-kai (The Tenpuku Association of Kagoshima), founded in 1981. In March of 1990, the instrument was granted the designation of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Kagoshima.

The word *tenpuku* is written with two ideograms: *ten* 天, which means “sky” and *fuku* 吹, which means “breath” or “to blow.” According to some legends, the name *tenpuku* was created from the following phrase in a Shinto prayer: “It is with a breath that the thick layers of clouds in the sky dissipate” (天の八重雲を吹き放つが如く云々).

Although its origins are unknown, the first reliable record of the word *tenpuku*, spelled “tenpucu” at the time, was in the Nippo Jisho, published in 1603 in Nagasaki. The Nippo Jisho is the first Portuguese/Japanese dictionary, written by Jesuits with the intention of using it to propagate the Christian faith in Japan. The *Oie-hyouhou-junsui* writings 御家兵法純粋 from 1780, there is mention of an article by Tadayoshi Shimazu (1492-1568), who lived before Nippo Jisho was published, encouraging the practice of *biwa* and *tenpuku*. However, there is no proof of the veracity of this document’s content.

The use of the *tenpuku* by the samurais in Kagoshima was described in a legendary story, illustrating the relationship between the instrument and the warrior class. According to the third volume of the series *Shin-Sappan* 新薩藩 in the *Shoumyouboshi* 称名墓誌 (1815) text, there was a samurai by the name of Kamon-no-suke Kitahara, whose life was saved by the *tenpuku* during the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600. Troops from the East captured Kitahara, and he was about to be executed. He asked to play *tenpuku* before his impending death, and when the people heard the sound of the instrument, everyone was profoundly moved that they decided to spare the life of the prisoner.

The *tenpuku* is constructed from the *Phyllostachys Aurea* plant, commonly known in Japan as *hoteichiku*, and in Kagoshima as *kosandake*. The instrument’s tube is approximately 30 centimetres long, with five holes for the fingers, and three knots on the body of the bamboo. Its scale is pentatonic: A, C, D, F, G, or other variations that are transposed to different keys, but always attempting to maintain the same interval proportion between notes. Its tessitura is approximately one and a half octaves. Just as with the shakuhachi, one uses the technique of *meri kari*. The orifices for the fingers measure about 4 to 5 millimetres in diameter. There is no other material used besides bamboo; it is a *jinashi* instrument.



The tenpuku

The first and second holes are located between the first and second joints, and the third, fourth and fifth are located between and second and third joints. An internal membrane of the joint located in the lower portion of the flute is not removed completely, maintaining only one small hole open (about 3 millimeters). This way, there is a tapering effect in the internal part of the tube of the *tenpuku*, similar to that of the shakuhachi. This is different from the *hitoyogiri*, which consists of a cylindrical tube.

The traditional *tenpuku* repertory consists of the following seven short solo pieces: *Shirabe*, *Takane*, *Tsutsune*, *Anoyama*, *Ichiyana*, *Senpesan* and *Tennoshiyama*. These seven pieces were transmitted by Ryōichi Ōta (1887-1959) to Kunitoshi Shirao (1920-2006), during a period in which *tenpuku* practice almost disappeared. The three first pieces are purely instrumental, like the *honkyoku* repertory for the shakuhachi. The last four melodies are based on children's songs. In a recording from 1953 by Ōta, the duration of these pieces varies between 24 seconds and 4 minutes.

Originally, these pieces were transmitted through oral tradition because there was no sheet music nor musical notation, and notes did not have specific names, as in the case of shakuhachi (*ro*, *tsu*, *re*, *chi*...). Later, Shirao systematised the musical notation for these seven pieces, based on Tozan-ryū notation. Shirao also organised the Tenpuku Dōkō-kai in order to preserve *tenpuku* traditions. Currently, Kunihide Shirao, the son of the founder, is the representative of the group, and this year it completes its 40th anniversary.

Because it is conceived of as a tradition and not as a simple musical instrument, the *tenpuku* cannot be used to play new pieces or any other repertory different from these seven original pieces. Technically, it would be possible to perform other kinds of music, but in order to respect the tradition, the practice of *tenpuku* is exclusive to the heritage transmitted by Ōta to Shirao.

There are a few hypotheses about the origins of the *tenpuku*, including that it developed through *miyogiri* or that it originated from the *tanso* flute from Korea, but there is no proof for either of these hypotheses. Furthermore, the word *tenpuku* cannot be found in Korea or China, which indicates that the word likely emerged in Kagoshima.

The region around Kagoshima was part of a commercial route and a strong node of cultural exchange with Europe, the Asian continent, and the Ryūkyū kingdom (modern day Okinawa). Even today, there are monuments in the area paying homage to the Catholic missionary Saint Frances Xavier (1506-1552), who docked in Satsuma in the year 1549, as well as the Xavier church. These are symbols of a cultural flourishing in those times.

The Kingdom of Satsuma was governed by the Shimazu family, whose lineage can be traced to the patriarch Tadahisa Shimazu (1179-1227). The educational foundation this clan established for the warrior class included martial arts practice (*jigen-ryū*), and reading the Four Books and Five Classics 四書五經 of Confucianism. In addition, students learned music (*satsuma biwa* and *tenpuku*) from their mentors, cultivating their aesthetic sensibility.

During the Edo period (1603-1868), the practice of *satsuma biwa* and *tenpuku* was part of a specific educational system of the samurai of Satsuma, called *Gōjū* 郷中. When the *Gōjū* system was replaced by the school system of the Meiji era, students still maintained the practice of *tenpuku*. However, around the 30th year of the Meiji era (1897), *tenpuku* was banned because of the claim that it was disrupting children's studies. For this reason, the *tenpuku* tradition has almost disappeared. During this period, the only person who kept the *tenpuku* tradition alive was Ryōichi Ōta, who was responsible for protecting and transmitting the tradition.

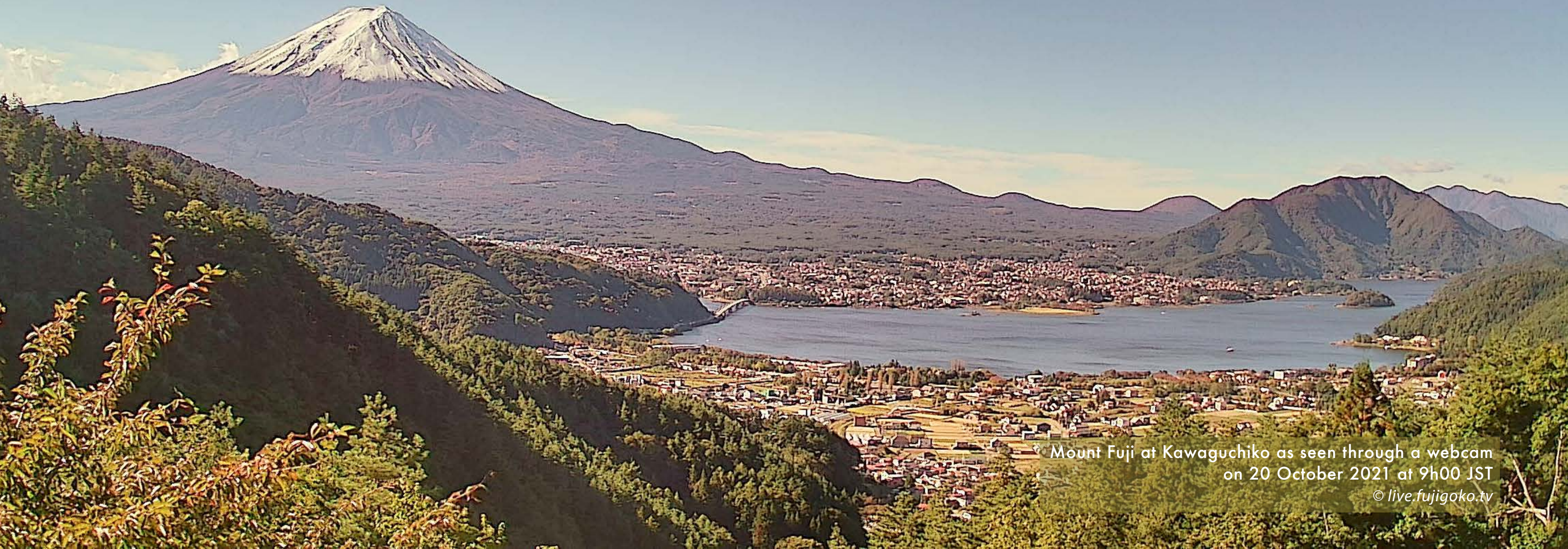


The image depicts a samurai of Satsuma. The sword represents martial arts, and the *tenpuku* and *biwa* represent music. (Picture from the book *Tenpuku*, 2018, p. xiii).

IMAGES OF JAPAN

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 at Kawaguchiko as seen through a webcam
on 20 October 2021 at 9h00 JST

© live.fujigoko.tv



The *kitamae-bune* photographed by Iida Yonezō (1887~1968).
End of the Meiji/Taishō era (pre-1926)



Group of miniature replicas of buildings from the Meiji to Taisho periods (1868 – 1926)
Otemon Gate Square, Hirosaki, 25th August, 2019



The Sanbon no Kai - Aoki Reibo, Hozan Yamamoto and Yokoyama Katsuya -
performing at WSF1998 in Boulder, USA.

Photo courtesy of the International Shakuhachi Society

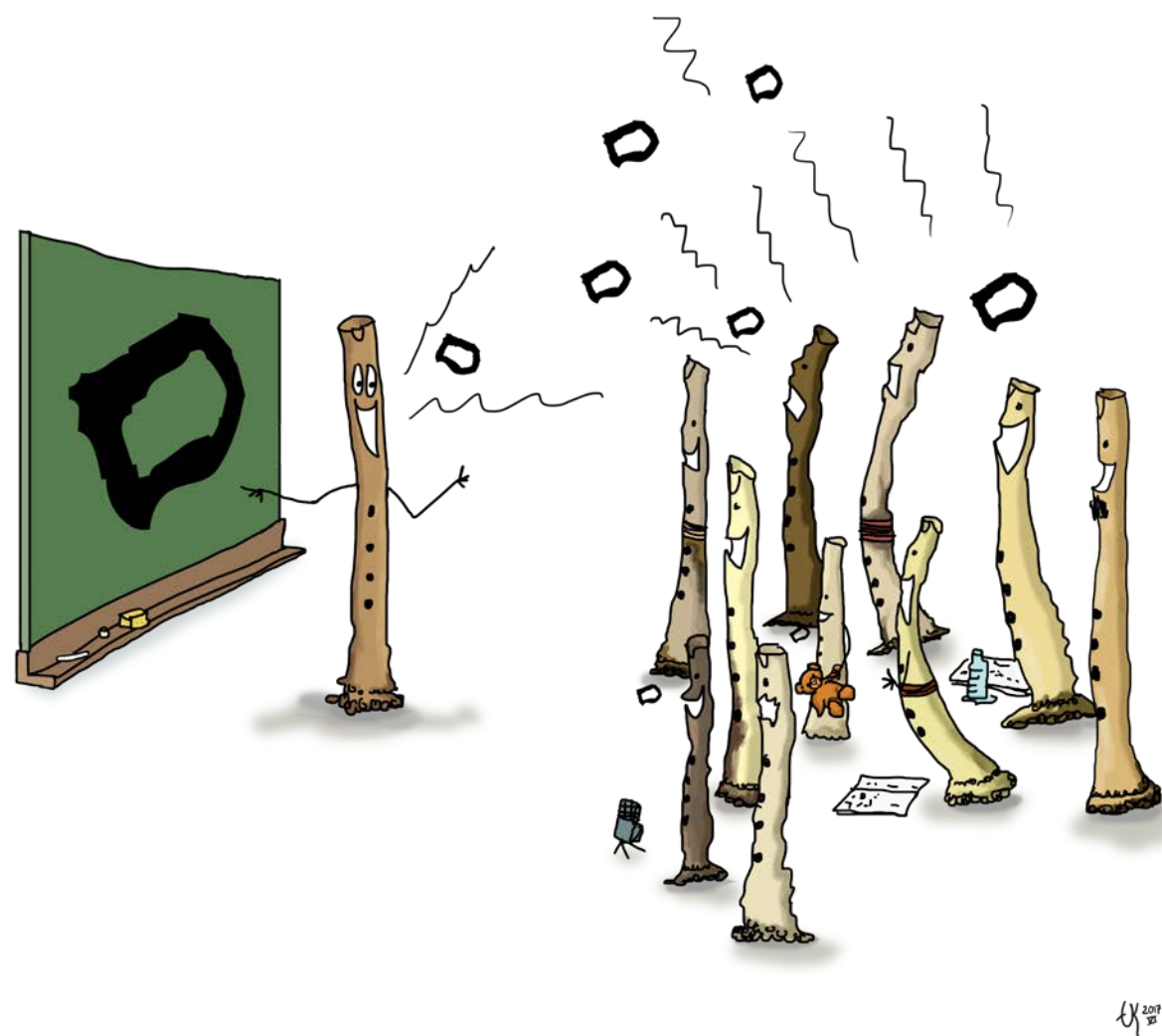


Kōmokuten, one of the four heavenly kings, guardian at Tōdai-ji,
東大寺 Eastern Great Temple, Nara, 10th April 2017



Shakuhachi shop ca.1926

Photo courtesy of the International Shakuhachi Society



SHAKUHACHI RESOURCES

The techniques of the shakuhachi: 1.8 shakuhachi timbral trill chart

After the comprehensive 1.8 fingering chart and the specialised 1.8 shakuhachi quarter tone fingering chart in the previous two issues, Ramon Humet explores trills and shakuhachi. He presents this next instalment, part of a wider project of creating an in-depth study of the instrumental techniques of shakuhachi, below.

Introduction

The timbral trill chart is a part of a deeper study of the techniques of the shakuhachi that includes a general fingering chart¹, a quarter tone fingering chart², and in the future will continue with harmonics, multiphonics, and other extended techniques. This study is intended for the use of composers and performers who wish to explore the techniques of contemporary music for shakuhachi.

Timbral trill, often called *bisbigliando*³, is a trill between two fingerings that produce the same pitch. It is called "timbral trill" due to the change in the tone colour of the note produced by the different fingerings⁴. The result is a long, sustained sound, but with an irregularity due to the activity of the fingers.

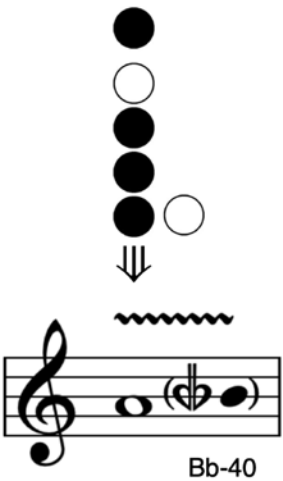
The speed of a trill is directly related to the interval between the main and the auxiliary note. The larger the interval, the slower the trill will be. Thus, a timbral trill —characterized by a unison interval— will be able to gain a fast speed. This means that, energetically speaking, a timbral trill generates more sound energy than a simple long note⁵.

Accidentals

Microtonal accidentals are notated according to this chart⁶:

##	3/4 tone sharp
#	5/8 tone sharp
#	1/2 tone sharp
#	3/8 tone sharp
+	1/4 tone sharp
↑	1/8 tone sharp
♮	natural
↓	1/8 tone flat
∂	1/2 tone flat
♭	3/8 tone flat
♭	1/2 tone flat
♭	5/8 tone flat
♭♭	3/4 tone flat

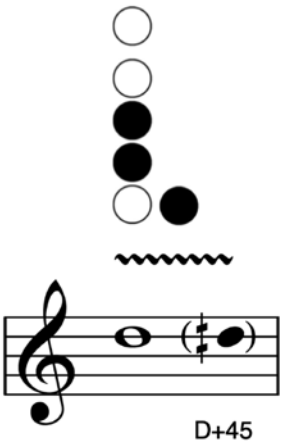
Accidentals indicate an approximation to the exact tuning, which is marked with cents. Thus, in example 1, the accidental indicates an approximation of 3/4 tone flat, but, in fact, the exact tuning is Bb-40 cents, or A+60 cents. To simplify the table, the pitch of the auxiliary note has been approximated at intervals of 5 cents..⁷



Example 1: Approximation of 3/4 tone flat with an exact tuning of Bb-40 cents

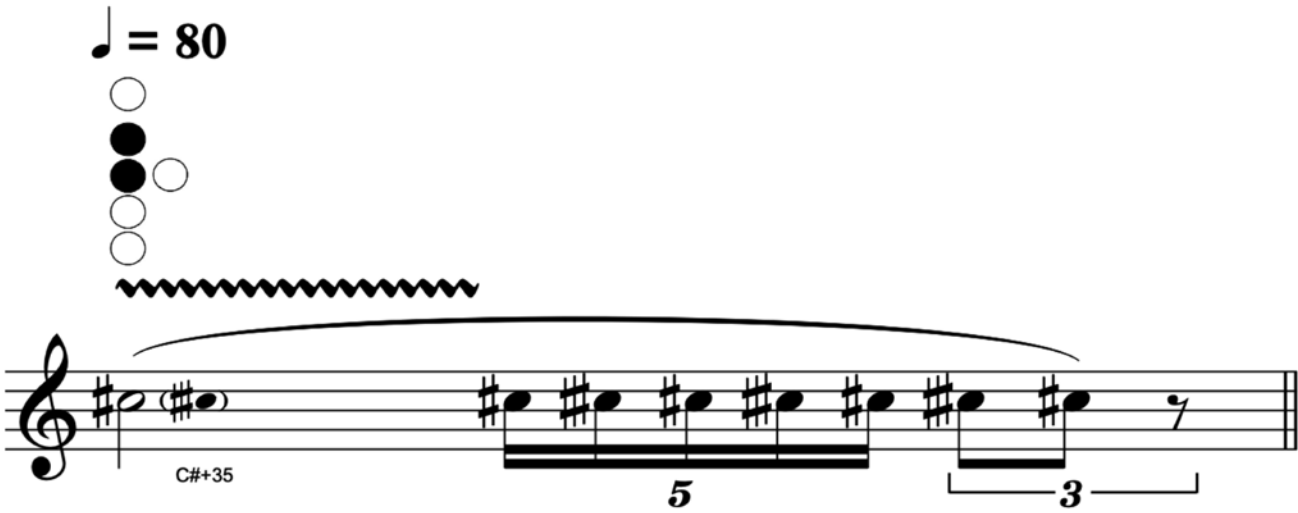
Timbral trill vs. microtonal trill

In many cases, the auxiliary note does not have exactly the same pitch as the main note. If the interval is smaller than a semitone, but larger than the unison, it can be considered a microtonal trill⁷. A change in pitch smaller than the semitone and played at high speed is perceived as a timbre change. The tuning deviation is indicated with cents below the auxiliary note. Although the true timbral trill would be one in which the auxiliary note has exactly the same pitch as the main note, for practical purposes the microtonal trill can be considered a particular case of the timbral trill.



Example 2: Microtonal trill with +45 cents deviation

When the auxiliary note has a pitch deviation and the trill runs slowly, the microtonal interval is perceptible. The trill becomes a microtonal melody⁸.

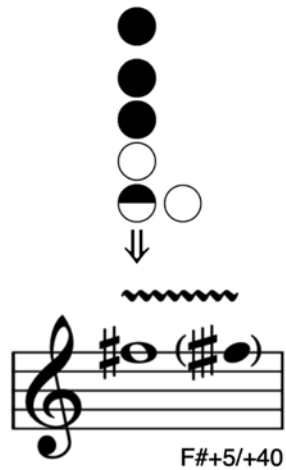


Example 3: Microtonal trill that becomes a microtonal melody

Special cases

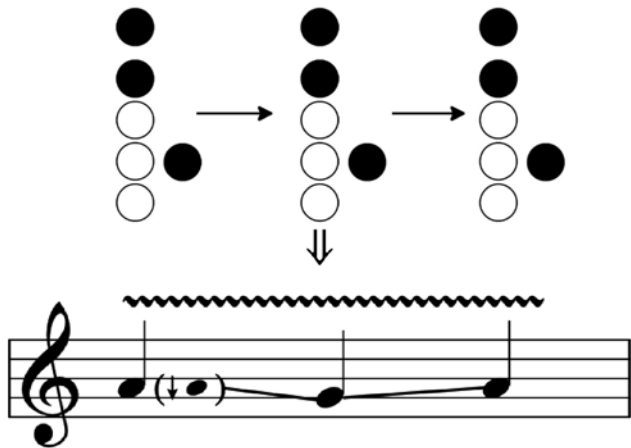
Fingerings that include half-open holes and *meri* angles have a variable auxiliary note. The wider the opening of the hole is, the more angle the *meri* will need. This has consequences on the auxiliary note. In example 4, the auxiliary note G quarter tone flat will range from +5 cents to +40 cents, depending on the half-open hole and the *meri* angle.

This case has a peculiarity: the trill is played in hole 1 alternating open hole and half-open hole. This unique fingering is due to the fact that no other fingering is available without half-open holes to produce a timbral trill in F#. However, possible irregularities in the pitch of the auxiliary note can be easily hidden and become imperceptible due to the speed of the trill.



Example 4: Variable auxiliary note produced by half-open hole and meri position

The trill can be combined with pitch bending by varying the *meri* position. In many cases, the interval between the main note and the auxiliary note varies depending on the *meri* position. Bending can be indicated by a line joining the initial main note with the final main note, as in example 5.



Example 5: Trill combined with pitch bending

This chapter has explained the timbral trill with a single auxiliary note. There is also the double and triple trills, that is, trills with two or more auxiliary notes. Within the family of the double trill, *koro-koro* stands out, as it comes from the traditional repertoire, and it will be discussed in a later chapter⁹.

Notes

- ¹ Humet, Ramon: *1.8 shakuhachi fingering chart*. Bamboo – Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society. Autumn / Winter 2020, pp. 33-35
- ² Humet, Ramon: *1.8 shakuhachi quarter tone fingering chart*. Bamboo – Newsletter of the European Shakuhachi Society. Spring / Summer 2021, pp. 63-67
- ³ *Bisbigliando* is an effect used on the harp consisting of repeating a note on “adjacent strings set to same pitch with the pedals” (*The Oxford Dictionary of Music*). This technique was originally associated with the harp, but now it has been adopted by the majority of wind instruments.
- ⁴ Rehfeldt says that changing the tone colour in timbral trill is based “on the acoustical qualities of the altered finger combinations” (Philp Rehfeldt: *New Directions for Clarinet*. The Scarecrow Press).
- ⁵ As Levine & Mitropoulos-Bott state about the timbral trill, “this technique is used by composers to give a tone an additional timbral dynamism” (Carin Levine & Christina Mitropoulos-Bott: *The Techniques of Flute Playing*. Bärenreiter).
- ⁶ Microtonal accidentals do not have a standard notation. As stated by Gould: “No pitches other than twelve chromatic degrees of the octave have standard notation” (Gould, Eliane: *Behind Bars*. Faber Music. p. 94). Quarter-tone sharp and flat signs are quite common. Arrows can have various meanings depending on the composer. In this study, the arrows change the pitch an octave-tone.
- ⁷ When the distance of the auxiliary note is a semitone, it is considered a classic trill. For a detailed trill fingering chart, see the study by Lagrost (Lagrost, Jean-François: *Trill tablatures for contemporary music*. ESS Journal. Volume 1: The Shakuhachi in the European Diaspora. July, 2011). Another trill chart is available at Lependorf (Lependorf, Jeffrey: *Contemporary Notation for the Shakuhachi: A Primer for Composers Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Summer, 1989), pp. 232-251). A guide for ordinary trills and an explanation of diverse related techniques can be found in Iwamoto (Iwamoto, Yoshikazu: *The Potential of the Shakuhachi in the Contemporary Music*. Contemporary Music Review, 1994, Vol. 8, Part 2, p. 22).
- ⁸ Denyer postulates that human perception of microintervals is altered when we listen to notes linearly, that is, in melodic succession (Denyer, Frank: *Some Thoughts on Linear Microtonality*. The Journal of the Huygens-Fokker Foundation. Amsterdam, 2009).
- ⁹ Iwamoto goes further and presents some examples of complex double trills that incorporate other techniques, such as variations in the opening of the half-open holes, changes in the *meri* position, and irregularity in the alternation of fingerings (Iwamoto, op. cit., p. 23).

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Kakizakai Kaoru Sensei for his teaching. I also want to express my special gratitude to Horacio Curti, for his encouragement and generous support.

⇓ very meri
↓ meri
↓ little meri
↑ little kari
↑ kari

Optional cents indications may be placed next to the respective accidentals and are always understood in reference to Equal Tempered semitones.
If the cents exceed ±50, the closest pitch as indicated on a tuner may be written as text, e.g. F#+25

Sheet music for page 46, featuring seven measures of music with corresponding fingerings. The measures are labeled with notes and intervals: C#-10, C#+35, D+45, D+40, D+40, Eb-5, Eb-40, Eb-35, Eb-35, F+5, Gb-40, F#+5/+40, G+20/+60, Ab-20, A+45, Bb-45, and Bb+30. Fingerings are indicated by black and white circles and arrows.

Sheet music for page 47, featuring seven measures of music with corresponding fingerings. The measures are labeled with notes and intervals: Bb+5, Bb+15, B+25, C-45, C-45, C+15, C+15, C#+35, D+25, D+5, D+40, D+40, D+30, D+10, D+35, Eb+50, and Eb+50. Fingerings are indicated by black and white circles and arrows.

This page contains musical notation and fingering charts for nine shakuhachi techniques. Each technique is represented by a musical staff with a treble clef and a wavy line above the staff. Below each staff is a fingering chart consisting of a vertical column of five circles representing the finger holes. The circles are filled with black or white, and some have arrows indicating finger movement. The techniques and their corresponding fingering charts are:

- Eb+25:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). An upward arrow is below the first hole.
- Eb+35:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Eb+15:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Eb+30:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- E-35:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- E-10:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- E-20:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- G-5:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Ab-10:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.

(1) shading the root hole

This page contains musical notation and fingering charts for sixteen shakuhachi techniques. Each technique is represented by a musical staff with a treble clef and a wavy line above the staff. Below each staff is a fingering chart consisting of a vertical column of five circles representing the finger holes. The circles are filled with black or white, and some have arrows indicating finger movement. The techniques and their corresponding fingering charts are:

- Ab+25:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Ab+15:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Bb-40:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Bb+10:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Bb+25:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Bb+5:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- B-45:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Bb+30:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Bb+5:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- Bb+40:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- B-40:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- B-20:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- B-20:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- B+5:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- C-15:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.
- C#+30:** Fingering chart shows the first four holes filled (black) and the fifth hole empty (white). A downward arrow is below the first hole.

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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 asked shakuhachi performer Rodrigo Rodriguez to suggest and perform a piece. Hence we stop off at Aomori Prefecture and discover *Tsugaru Yama Uta*.

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://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Min'yō)]

Aomori Prefecture

Aomori Prefecture (青森県, *Aomori-ken*) is a prefecture of Japan in the Tōhoku region. The prefecture's capital, largest city, and namesake is the city of Aomori. Aomori is the northernmost prefecture on Japan's main island, Honshu, and is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the east, Iwate Prefecture to the southeast, Akita Prefecture to the southwest, the Sea of Japan to the west, and Hokkaido across the Tsugaru Strait to the north.

The Tsugaru region of Aomori Prefecture is the birthplace of the traditional Tsugaru-jamisen, a virtuosic style of playing shamisen that is deeply intertwined with the region's identity and history. A notable player of the style was Takahashi Chikuzan, a blind musician from Hiranai who wandered around the country and eventually gained nationwide appeal.

[Source: [wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aomori_Prefecture)]

Aomori (青森市, *Aomori-shi*) is the capital city of Aomori Prefecture, in the Tōhoku region of Japan. As of 1 April 2020, the city had an estimated population of 278,964 in 136,457 households, and a population density of 340 people per square kilometer spread over the city's total area of 824.61 square kilometers.

Aomori literally means blue forest, although it could possibly be translated as "green forest". The name is generally considered to refer to a small forest on a hill which existed near the town. This forest was often used by fishermen as a landmark. A different theory suggests the name might have been derived from the Ainu language.

[Source: [wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aomori)]



Tsugaru Yama Uta (津軽山唄)

10 × 20

米谷会

(ロー)で吹く

津軽山唄

Tsugaru Yama Uta (lyrics)

ヤーイデヤー 十五 十五ヤ七はヤエー 十五になるから 山 山登リヤエー 山を登るに 笛 笛吹けばーヤエー 峰の小松も 皆 皆なびくヤエー	yāide~yā jū go jū go ~ya nana wa yaē jūgo ni narukara yama yamanobori yaē yama o noboru ni fue fue fukeba yaē hō no Komatsu mo mina mina nabiku yaē	Yaedeya fifteen Fifteen and seven is yay To climb the mountain, you need a whistle. To climb the mountain, whistle, whistle... The pine trees on the peak will all be fluttering.
ヤーイデヤー 津軽 津軽富士ヤエー 冬は真白く 春 春青くヤエー 夏はすみ染め 秋 秋錦ヤエー 衣替える あざ あざやかにヤエー	yāide~yā Tsugaru tsugaru fuji yaē fuyu wa masshiroku haru haru aoku yaē natsu wa sumi-zome aki aki nishiki yaē koromogae suru aza azayaka ni yaē	Yaedeya Tsugaru Tsugaru Fuji Winter is white and spring is blue. Summer is violet, autumn is brocade. A change of clothes, azure and bright.
ヤーイデヤー 浪岡 浪岡ヤエー 源如林の 銀杏 銀杏ヤエー 枝は浪岡 葉は 葉は黒岩ヤエー 花は門下の 城 城に咲くヤエー 実はお城の 御典 御典役ヤエー	yāide~yā Namioka Namioka yaē No gin'nan gin'nan yaē eda wa yaē Namioka Yō wa ha wa Kuroiwa yaē hana wa monka no shiro-jō ni saku yaē jitsuwa o-jō no o Tsukasa o Nori-yaku yaē	Yaedeya Namioka, Namioka Ginkgo trees in the Gennyō forest. The branches are Namioka, the leaves are Kuroiwa. The flowers bloom in the gate of the castle. In fact, they are the sacred books of the castle.

www.DeepL.com

About Tsugaru Yama Uta

Yama uta, or “mountain songs” were work songs that lumberjacks sang while felling trees and sending the logs downriver. These songs are especially prevalent in Aomori, Akita and Iwate Prefectures, with Aomori’s *Tsugaru Yama Uta* now being arguably the most well known. Lumberjacks in the region usually worked alone and this song describes the solitude and loneliness of being in the forest and the dangers and difficulties of the work that not only involved chopping down the trees and getting the logs into the river, but sometimes making charcoal from the wood. Some verses go beyond just the work and atmosphere to depict a sense of longing for companionship, etc.

Although sometimes accompanied by shamisen, it is most often performed as a *takemono* piece, meaning it is free metrically and rhythmically with a highly melismatic vocal style usually accompanied only by shakuhachi.

Song explanation: Christian Mau

<http://members.shakuhachisociety.eu/> takemono shakuhachi performance by Rodrigo Rodriguez

Vocal performances: (lyrics may differ)

<https://youtu.be/hmDvDgImqX0> Kenichi Kudo (voice), Kazuaki Kimura (shakuhachi)

<https://youtu.be/JLHOuve64wA> Nobuo Sato (voice), winner 2009 Aomori Prefecture Cultural Award

Rodrigo Rodriguez is a shakuhachi performer, teacher and music producer. Rodriguez studied with Kōhachirō Miyata as well as Kaoru Kakizakai. He founded the The Mu-Ryu International Shakuhachi Online School. He is based in Spain and the Philippines. www.rodrigo-rodriguez.info

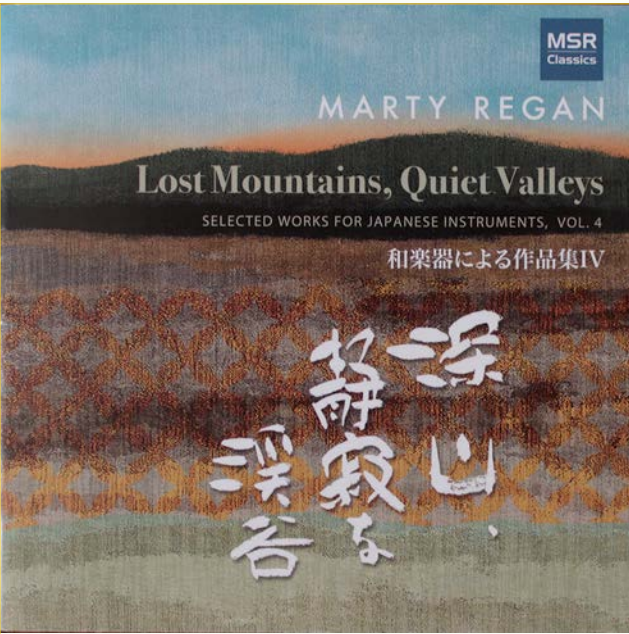
REVIEWS

CD REVIEWS

In this issue Clive Bell gives us his thoughts on new releases by American composer Marty Regan, Yukihiro Atsumi’s Hogaku 2.0 project and Wu Man’s chinese pipa meets japanese shakuhachi release – Brian Tairaku Ritchie meanwhile examines the jinashi Fuke-shu explorations of Dan Shinku as well as Rodrigo Rodriguez latest collection of min’yō and new age inspired tunes.

Lost Mountains, Quiet Valleys: Selected Works For Japanese Instruments Vol 4
by Marty Regan (MSR Classics CD)

Now in his early fifties, Texas based composer and shakuhachi player Marty Regan is remarkably prolific, and the number of his works for Japanese instruments has passed 70. A prof in Texas, he has studied in Tokyo, Cambridge UK and Shanghai. He has translated Minoru Miki’s composing manual into English. Since 2010 he has released a series of albums showcasing pieces that feature Japanese instruments, including orchestral works, and *Lost Mountains, Quiet Valleys* is the fourth of these. This time around Regan’s scale is more modest and his mood more contemplative: there are solos for koto (*Withering Chrysanthemum*) and shakuhachi (*Still*), and the largest (*Silence*) is for a small ensemble of seven musicians. Four shakuhachi players are heard across the album: Seizan Sakata, Daisuke Abe, Akihisa Kominato and the truly excellent Shozan Tanabe.



Regan says that these compositions “are more austere and contemplative than those featured on previous recordings of mine” – this is certainly true – “and could offer an opportunity for listeners to consider the importance of silence and stillness in our lives.” Here I disagree. I find even Regan’s most minimal moments too hectic, too devoted to the build-up

and the crescendo. There’s too much unvaried medium pace, too much sturdy, firm writing, and not enough fragility or mystery. That straightforwardness is both the music’s strength and its weakness.

<http://martyregan.com/>

Kachofugetsu by Yukihiro Atsumi (Bandcamp DL)

Kyoto-based guitarist Yukihiro Atsumi has assembled a very talented quartet for his “Hogaku 2.0” project: shakuhachi (Akihito Obama), Tsugaru jamisen (Yutaka Oyama), and koto (Ko Kakinokihara), plus Atsumi’s own warm-voiced Spanish guitar. Together they tackle a series of original tunes, interspersed with traditional Japanese repertoire – *Kumojijishi*, *Chidori*, *Jonkara Bushi* – all given Atsumi’s special treatment. In his own words, he aims “to celebrate the past and future of Japanese music, and to create music that could not exist until after 150 years of Japan opening its ports to the west.” The title *Kachofugetsu* – literally flower, bird, wind, moon – means the beauty of nature.

The end result is a clever and agile album, beautifully played. The recording by Motoki Tanizawa is intimate and a joy to listen to. It has to be said that adding guitar to Japanese pieces is an odd ambition, and not everyone will be seduced by Atsumi’s jazz-tinged chords and gentle way of inserting a groove, but I found it witty and sparkling throughout.

Take *Izomi*, one of Atsumi’s originals: shamisen, koto and guitar embrace in a friendly rhythm reminiscent of a Haruomi Hosono song, while Obama’s shakuhachi improvises delicately overhead. The arrangement moves smoothly through contrasting episodes. *Jonkara Bushi* is led by shamisen – Atsumi’s guitar joins in the melody and underpins shamisen excursions with his characteristic, tastefully chromatic rhythmic movement. Would a touch of Brazilian percussion help? Possibly.

Obama has taken his shakuhachi into small clubs, concert halls and the temples of Shikoku, and he seems well at home here. His *Honshirabe*, on a 2.4 flute, has a great sense of freedom. Atsumi boldly adds chords here too. The effect is slightly mad if you’re familiar with the trad piece, but Atsumi’s clear affection for this music helps him get away with it. If some of these Japanese pieces are like a cold glass of spring water, Atsumi’s harmonic experiments create more of a low-lit cocktail, complete with olive and paper umbrella. But there’s a logic at play: the Japanese have largely lost contact with their own traditional music, and feel more at home with, say, Claude Debussy harmonies, so Atsumi’s Hogaku 2.0 should offer comfort to modern ears. For me at least, he pulls it off.



<https://hogaku2point0.bandcamp.com/album/kachofugetsu>

Flow by Wu Man & Kojiro Umezaki (In A Circle Records CD/DL)

Wu Man (pipa) and Kojiro Umezaki (shakuhachi) are both members of Yo-Yo Ma's 18 strong Silkroad Ensemble, based in New York. This duo album is the result of a commission celebrating the expansion and reopening of the 15-acre Chinese Garden at the Huntington Museum in Los Angeles. Tang Qingnian, Visiting Artist in the garden, has created a forty minute video in which he deftly juxtaposes Chinese paintings of plants with footage shot within the garden, and *Flow* originated as this video's soundtrack.

So this is largely a Chinese project, but in the Silkroad spirit of global cooperation, a role has been found for the Japanese flute. What is that role? It's a shame to report that neither musician seems quite sure.



Winter and *Summer* are simply pipa solos. Wu Man performs, as ever, with great authority. She moves steadily but firmly from a slow build to a furious strum, towards a perfectly timed harmonic or an exquisite pitch bend. The general mood is meditative and calm.

Spring and *Autumn* are duos with an improvised feel. The shakuhachi drifts pleasantly through some solo moments, but the pipa tends to dominate and occupy the available space. Is the problem that Umezaki feels constrained by the four-square, strictly pentatonic nature of the music? The two musicians rarely engage with each other, more treading water in separate pools. It's not until the closing *Bamboo* that Umezaki spreads out and plays with freedom (this is a shakuhachi solo).

Flow maintains a cool, enjoyable ambience. But as an encounter between these two fine players this is a missed opportunity, in which neither musician really gets stretched.

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

Tang Qingnian's video is titled *Fragrant Rhythms: The Seasons Of Liu Fang Yuan* can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/I_UL6q4qgQM

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.

Blowing Zen –Shakuhachi Meditation Music by Rodrigo Rodriguez (DL)

Rodrigo Rodriguez is an Argentinian born, Spanish raised and Japanese educated shakuhachi player of some distinction. He has the fat, clear, solid tone and attention to pitch that can be expected of a student of Kaoru Kakizakai and Kōhachirō Miyata.

Blowing Zen, his latest release is a sprawling and extensive document of material Rodrigo has composed and/or developed during the Covid period. This is not so much a conventional shakuhachi recording as a testimony of Rodrigo's compositional and technical focus during this period.

The album starts with Miyata's *Fantasy of Oiwake*, a reworking of the familiar melodic motifs of Hokkaido *min'yō* piece *Esashi Oiwake*. Rodrigo's playing is fluid and sweet on the 1.6. After this light and uplifting opening Rodrigo introduces contrast with his own composition *Gone to the Unseen*, performed on a deep 2.3 flute. This is a requiem piece in honour of his mentor Megumi Shiozawa. She was a Japanese lady resident in Spain, who passed away of Covid. The piece proceeds deliberately and unpretentiously through a mournful but not melodramatic series of phrases, each developing out of the other.

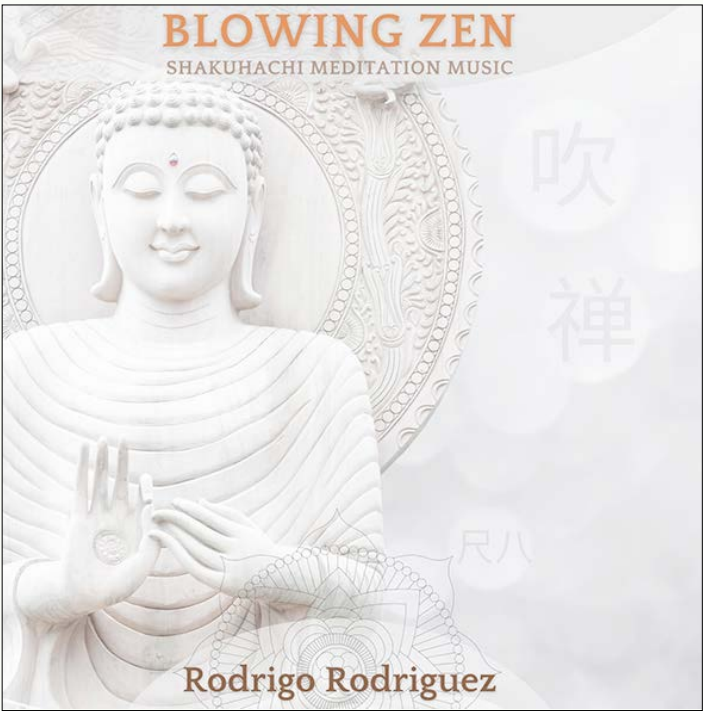
The rest of the album also features Rodrigo's own compositions. Most of them reflect a semi-improvisational *min'yō* or alternately New Age approach. *The Path to Liberation* features a drone and bell sounds laying a bed which Rodrigo overlaps with Indian *raga* inflected playing using *ro* as the base note. *A Thousand Miles Between Us* is dedicated to Rodrigo's wife Jocelyn and conveys the sense of longing implied in the title. *Buddha's Flute 432 Hz.* delivers what it says on the box, performed on a shakuhachi of 432Hz rather than the 440-442 standard of Western music. There is a fashionable idea that the 432 standard is somehow more in tune with the universe. Whether or not you buy this concept, the piece is enjoyable.

The traditional *Marriage Procession Song* and Rodriguez composition *Summer Mountain Song* are repeated using different length shakuhachi both in live settings (at a church and in a temple) as well as studio renditions. *The Sacredness of Tears* is recorded in a live space. The varying acoustics and ambient noises of the live settings (rain, dogs howling) creates sonic variety even in a sound world of solo shakuhachi.

The title *Blowing Zen*, usually associated with a specific set of *honkyoku*, is a bit misleading for this collection of material. Although Rodrigo is trained in *honkyoku* there aren't any on this recording. It's all *min'yō* derived or contemporary material. The repetition of songs and focus on *min'yo* modes suggests that the album could have benefited from some editing. But one suspects that the recording exists to depict a specific time in Rodrigo's life and is not a definitive musical statement.

The album concludes with *My Eyes Pour Out Tears*, which is reminiscent of both *Tamuke* and *Ichijo* in its pensive expression. It is executed with strong technical facility which sends the album home with aplomb.

<https://www.kkbox.com/jp/ja/album/FluYoyFHitYj00F72ayJ009H-index.html>



Pure Bamboo: Seven Fuke-Style Shakuhachi Pieces Bequeathed to the Future by Dan Shinku (ALM Records)

Dan Shinku is an idiosyncratic and fervent *jinashi* propagandist. *Pure Bamboo* (subtitled *Seven Fuke-Style Shakuhachi Pieces Bequeathed to the Future*) is his most diverse and focused album to date. It is the culmination of decades of inquiry into Fuke-shu shakuhachi and its precursor instrument the *hitoyogiri*. This is all seen through the dual lenses of Dan's background in avant-garde improvisation and various metaphysical pursuits.

Dan was a multi-instrumentalist and student of pioneering Japanese free improvising guitarist Takayanagi Masayuki when he encountered Takahashi Kūzan's recording *Také no Hibiki* (Sound of Bamboo), which caused Dan to drop tools,

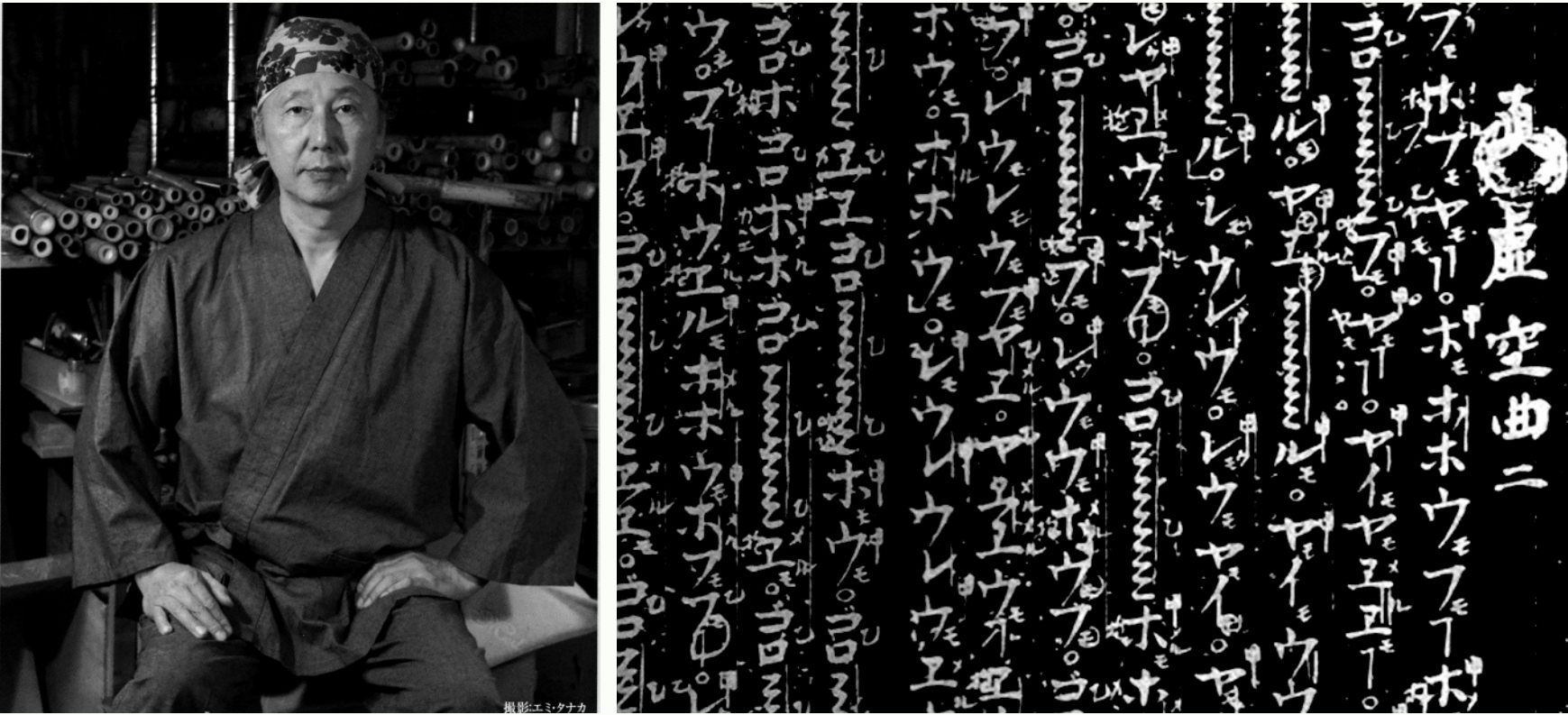
leave his practice behind and move towards becoming a Fuke shakuhachi player and *jinashi* maker. Initially he was an auto-didact. Likewise his making of *jinashi* was experimental. This self-taught approach is still apparent in his playing and general DIY approach to the shakuhachi lifestyle, including his own shakuhachi workshop/venue.

After this initial phase of auto-experimental playing Dan studied for a time with Fujiyoshi Etsuzan and started to combine traditional *honkyoku* with his previous improv tendencies. Which brings us to the music itself.

Dan's playing is characterised by free interpretations of *honkyoku* themes interpreted with elaborate use of vibrato and frequent shifts between *otsu* and *kan*, sometimes in the middle of notes and phrases. This is a technique which exists in traditional *honkyoku* but Dan freely applies it throughout his playing. This is perhaps part of his research into breathing techniques. The effect is eerie and bizarre, even within the already strange world of *honkyoku*. Dan lays down this gauntlet on the first album track, an amorphous slab of extrapolations on the themes of *Kokū*.

Previous recordings of Dan's have exhibited sameness and repetition as well as a limited dynamic range. Dan breaks with this approach with the second piece, *Daimotsu*. This and another piece, *Shote*, are performed on *hitoyogiri*, which brings us different modes or scales and a lighter, higher pitch than the bulk of the album. *Hitoyogiri* is the shorter precursor to shakuhachi and has only one bamboo node, compared to seven on a standard shakuhachi.

I have been listening to Dan Shinku's recordings for many years and have been intrigued by his sound and approach. I was curious about the sound production aspect because his sound is very controlled, with a soft attack and perpetual shifts of pitch. I had the opportunity to try some of the shakuhachi he made and was selling at World Shakuhachi Festival 2012. I am a very experienced *jinashi* player with a collection of *jinashi* ranging from Kinko 1, to historic Myōan shakuhachi to contemporary makers like Yamaguchi Shugetsu and of course Ken LaCosse (Taimu). I was surprised to find that Dan's shakuhachi were quite thin bored and with an almost punitively sharp *utaguchi* angle. They require a lot of control and when you hit the sweet spot, not a lot of sound happens. I would not be able to do most of my approach on them, so I didn't get one. But of course Dan is making for his own tastes, not mine, and they work for him.



Tamuke has become well known through the efforts of Watazumido, and codified in the line represented by Yokoyama Katsuya and followers. Dan's version is refreshingly sweet and with a soft intensity. The origins of this piece are vague but some people assert that it was adapted and composed by Takahashi Kūzan from Myōan Shinpo-ryu materials. Dan's version thus gives us a glimpse into the origins of this common piece shared by a number of lineages.

Dan's version of *Takiochi* is the closest to a straight orthodox rendition of a standard *honkyoku* in his recorded oeuvre. His *Ajikan* is relatively dramatic, with ample use of *takeyuri* (shaking the bamboo). Dan is also currently working on transcribing from recordings, and the version of *Kyorei* on this recording resembles Kūzan's prototype enough to make one think that was part of the process here.

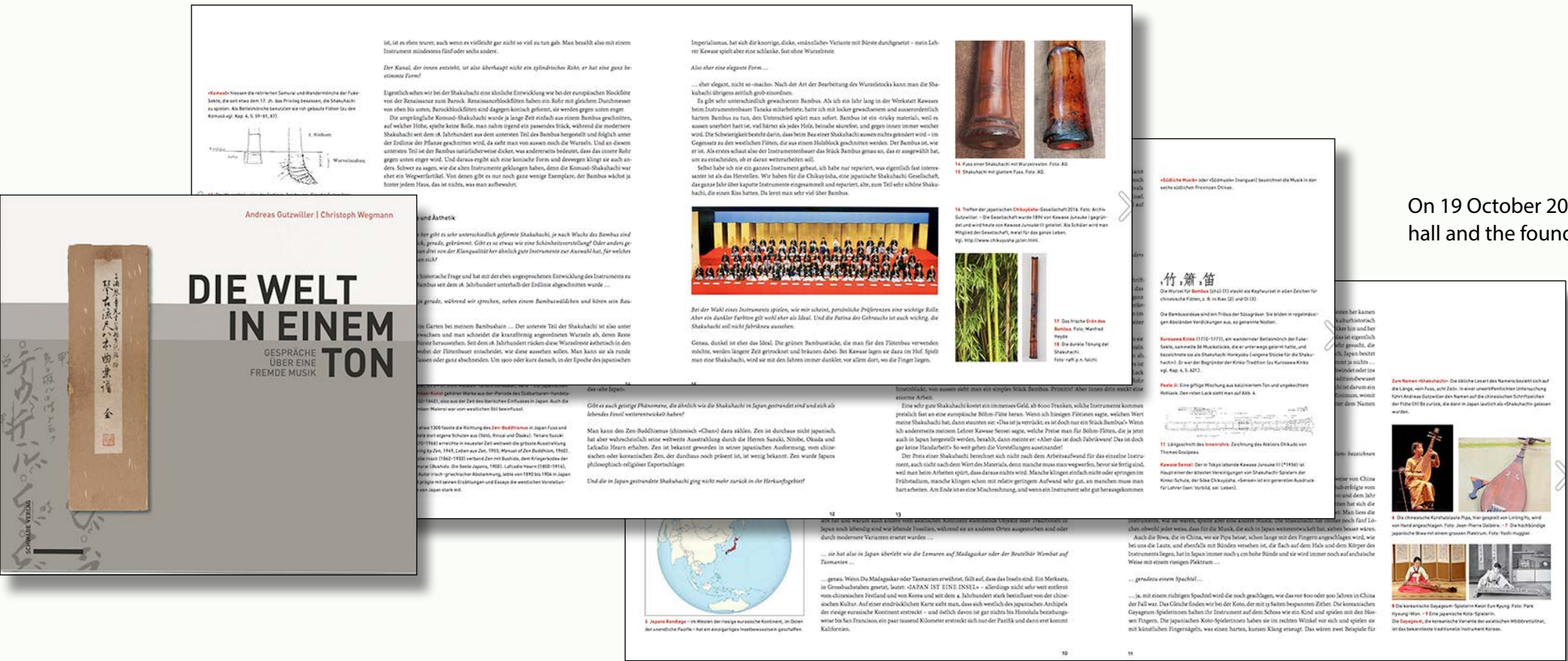
Myōan and Fuke playing is a big tent, with numerous branches, sects and stylistic approaches. There is also enough room for personal expression that outliers can exist and still be exemplars of the tradition. Dan Shinku is avowedly trying to advance Fuke playing and thought. Simultaneously he is recreating and evoking the music of the distant past. He does so with solid musicianship and a holistic approach that includes making his own instruments and controlling the environment the music is performed within. *Pure Bamboo: Seven Fuke-Style Shakuhachi Pieces Bequeathed to the Future* is a solid, diverse and interesting document of Dan's quest.

<http://www.kojimarokuon.com/disc/EBISU21.html>

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.

BOOK PRE-VIEW

Die Welt in einem Ton, a new german language publication about the shakuhachi by Andreas Gutzwiller and Christoph Wegmann, is part biographical journey but also looks at the journey of the shakuhachi and its music by examining its wider social-cultural context in Japan, Europe and elsewhere. We present a short preview below.



Die Welt in einem Ton – Experiences of a Music Exchange between East and West

Our ears are culturally predetermined. Those who are willing to open their ears to other forms of music will discover unknown musical worlds.

This book is dedicated to music for the Japanese flute shakuhachi. Included are conversations with professional shakuhachi player Andreas Gutzwiller - the man who brought the shakuhachi to Europe and made it famous as a teacher, speaker and stage performer. The focus is primarily on the instrument shakuhachi with its intricate history, its extraordinary music and its own teaching method. However, the view expands again and again to larger cultural-historical constellations, to musical and social images of time, to aesthetic phenomena and to other arts, artists. Important terms and names are explained in a commentary column.

“It is more than fifty years ago that I began to study shakuhachi, so Christoph Wegmann and me thought it would perhaps be a good idea to write down ideas about the instrument, its history in Japan and the West, and my commitment to its music. The book originated in long conversations throughout 2020. Sometimes these dialogues were a bit meandering resulting in a book more biographical than transporting real “key ideas”.

However, there are a few prominent themes: the instrument itself, Ethnomusicology (lately: Cultural Anthropology of Music) versus the Wesleyan World Music program’s idea of “Immersion”, tonal cells in honkyoku, honkyoku on Japanese and European stages.”

Andreas Gutzwiller, 21.11.2021

*Book Launch event: Conversations about a foreign music
a short report by Ursula Fuyûmi Schmidiger*

On 19 October 2021, the book presentation of *Die Welt in einem Ton* took place in the Ackermannshof (the old printing hall and the founding site of the Schwabe Verlag).

André Baltensperger, musicologist and former rector of the Musik Akademie Basel, Arlette Neumann, editor of Schwabe Verlag and the authors, Andreas Gutzwiller and Christoph Wegmann, were present in person.

The evening was very interesting and entertaining. After speeches by the former rector of the Music Academy Basel and the editor of Schwabe-Verlag, Christoph Wegmann - himself a shakuhachi player and student of Andreas Gutzwiller - took over and asked questions to his teacher, exactly in the way they are included in the new book. The great Shakuhachi master answered with much charm and humour. In between, how could it be otherwise, fascinating tones sounded from the shakuhachi. Ueli Derendinger and Jürg Zurmühle played traditional pieces.

The book launch was a great success: all 50 copies brought by the publisher were sold out on the same evening.

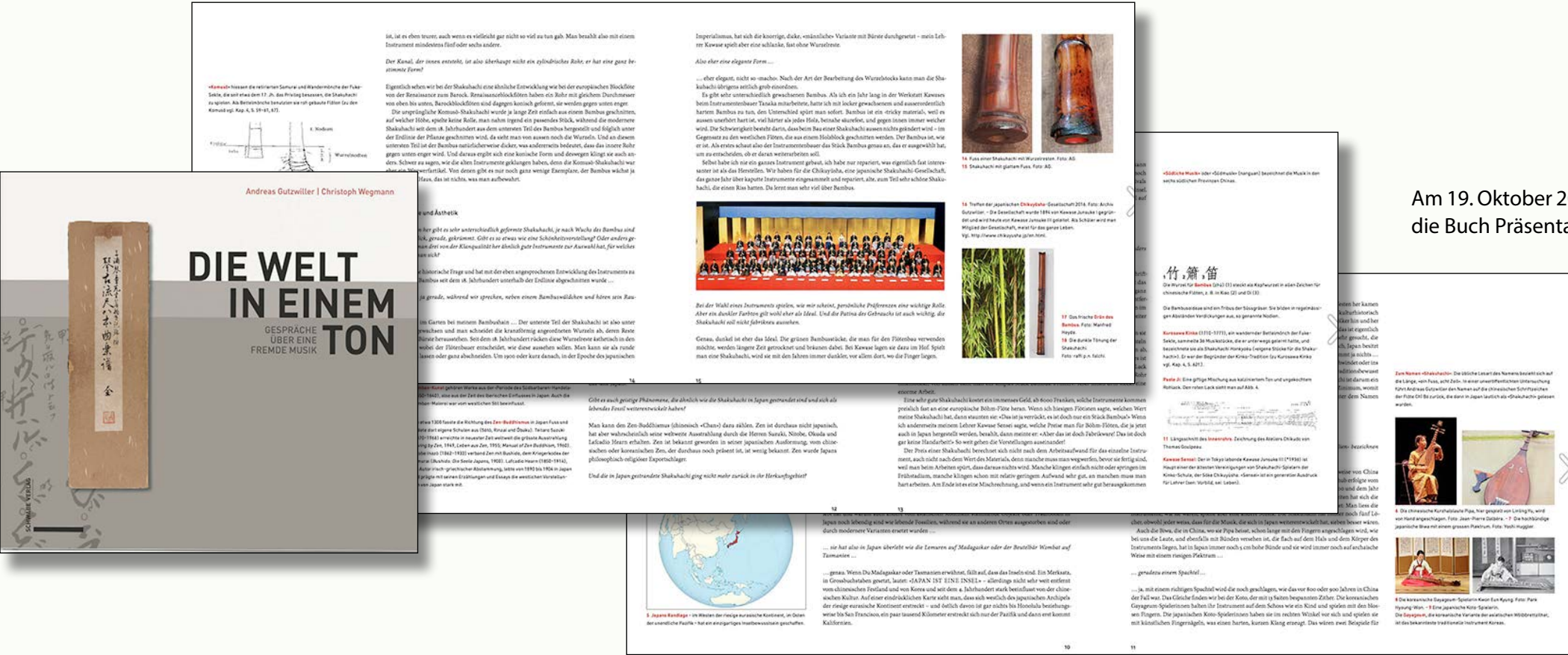
Die Welt in einem Ton by Andreas Gutzwiller and Christoph Wegmann is a volume of conversations, wonderful and diverse in the best sense of the word. At the centre is the shakuhachi with its tangled history and extraordinary sound world. The beautiful and careful design of the book with over 100 illustrations and reader-friendly commentary column has a very appealing effect. With the help of the audio links listed, it is even possible to dive directly into the world of shakuhachi music.

Die Welt in einem Ton, Andreas Gutzwiller and Christoph Wegmann, 124 pages, 104 illustrations in colour, hardcover. Published in German by Schwabe Verlag Basel Berlin.
Schwabe Verlag website: [schwabe.ch/Die-Welt-in-einem-Ton-978-3-7965-4417-0](https://www.schwabe.ch/Die-Welt-in-einem-Ton-978-3-7965-4417-0)



BUCH VORSTELLUNG

Die Welt in einem Ton, eine neue deutschsprachige Publikation über die Shakuhachi von Andreas Gutzwiller und Christoph Wegmann, ist zum Teil eine biografische Reise, betrachtet aber auch den Weg der Shakuhachi und ihrer Musik, indem sie ihren weiteren soziokulturellen Kontext in Japan, Europa und anderswo untersucht. Wir präsentieren einen kurzen Einblick.



Die Welt in einem Ton – Erfahrungen eines west-östlichen Musikaustauschs

Unsere Ohren sind kulturell vorgeprägt. Wer sich darauf einlässt, sie für andere Formen der Musik zu öffnen, wird unbekannte musikalische Welten entdecken.

Dieses Buch widmet sich der Musik für die japanische Flöte Shakuhachi. Enthalten sind Gespräche mit dem professionellen Shakuhachi-Spieler Andreas Gutzwiller – mit dem Mann, der die Shakuhachi nach Europa gebracht und als Lehrer, Referent und Bühnenkünstler bekannt gemacht hat. Im Fokus stehen in erster Linie das Instrument Shakuhachi mit seiner verworrenen Ge- schichte, seiner ausserordentlichen Musik und der eigenen Lehr- methode. Der Blick weitet sich aber immer wieder auf grössere kulturgeschichtliche Konstellationen, auf musikalische und sozia- le Zeitbilder, auf ästhetische Phänomene und auf andere Künste, Künstlerinnen und Künstler. In einer Kommentarspalte werden wichtige Begriffe und Namen erläutert.

“Es ist nun mehr als fünfzig Jahre her, dass ich begann die Shakuhachi zu studieren, also dachten Christoph Wegmann und ich, es wäre vielleicht eine gute Moment, Ideen über das Instrument, seine Geschichte in Japan und im Westen, und mein eigenes Engagement für diese Musik niederzuschreiben. Das Buch entstand aus langen Gesprächen im Jahr 2020. Manchmal schlängelten sich diese Dialoge etwas hin und forth, was zu einem Buch führte, das eher biografisch ist, als dass es nur auf einige “Kernideen” konzentriert.

Dennoch gibt es ein paar hervorstechende Themen: das Instrument selbst, die Ethnomusikologie (neuerdings: Kulturanthropologie der Musik) gegenüber der “Immersions” Idee des Wesleyan World Music Programms, die tonalen Zellen des honkyoku und honkyoku auf japanischen und europäischen Bühnen”.

Andreas Gutzwiller, 21.11.2021

Buch Präsentation: Gespräche über eine fremde Musik
ein kurzer Bericht von Ursula Fuyûmi Schmidiger

Am 19. Oktober 2021 fand im Ackermannshof (in der alten Druckereihalle und dem Gründungsort des Schwabe Verlags) die Buch Präsentation von *Die Welt in einem Ton* statt.

André Baltensperger, Musikwissenschaftler und ehemaliger Rektor der Musik Akademie Basel, Arlette Neumann, Lektorin des Schwabe-Verlags und die Autoren, Andreas Gutzwiller und Christoph Wegmann, waren persönlich anwesend.

Der Abend gestaltete sich sehr interessant und kurzweilig. Nach Ansprachen des ehemaligen Rektors der Musik Akademie Basel und der Lektorin des Schwabe-Verlags übernahm Christoph Wegmann - der selber Shakuhachi Spieler und Schüler von Andreas Gutzwiller ist – und stellte Fragen an seinen Lehrer, genau in jener Art, wie sie im neuen Buch beinhaltet sind. Der grosse Shakuhachi Meister antwortete mit viel Charme und Humor. Zwischendurch erklangen, wie kann es anders sein, faszinierende Töne aus der Shakuhachi. Ueli Derendinger und Jürg Zurmühle spielten traditionelle Stücke.

Die Buchvorstellung war ein voller Erfolg: alle vom Verlag mitgebrachten ca. 50 Exemplare waren am selben Abend ausverkauft.

Die Welt in einem Ton von Andreas Gutzwiller und Christoph Wegmann ist ein Gesprächsband, wunderbar und vielfältig im besten Sinn. Im Zentrum steht die Shakuhachi mit ihrer verworrenen Geschichte und ihrer ausserordentlichen Klangwelt. Die schöne und sorgfältige Gestaltung des Buches mit über 100 Abbildungen und leserfreundlicher Kommentarspalte wirkt sehr ansprechend. Mit Hilfe der aufgeführten Audiolinks ist es sogar möglich, direkt in die Welt der Shakuhachi Musik einzutauchen.

Die Welt in einem Ton, Andreas Gutzwiller und Christoph Wegmann, 120 Seiten, 104 Abbildungen in Farbe, 24,5 x 29 cm, gebunden. Deutschsprachige Publikation von Schwabe Verlag Basel Berlin.
Schwabe Verlag Webseite: schwabe.ch/Die-Welt-in-einem-Ton-978-3-7965-4417-0

EVENT REVIEWS

In our previous issue we published the application for this year’s International Shakuhachi Competition in Tanabe, Japan. Now all the votes were cast and points awarded and we have a quick glance at the final results...

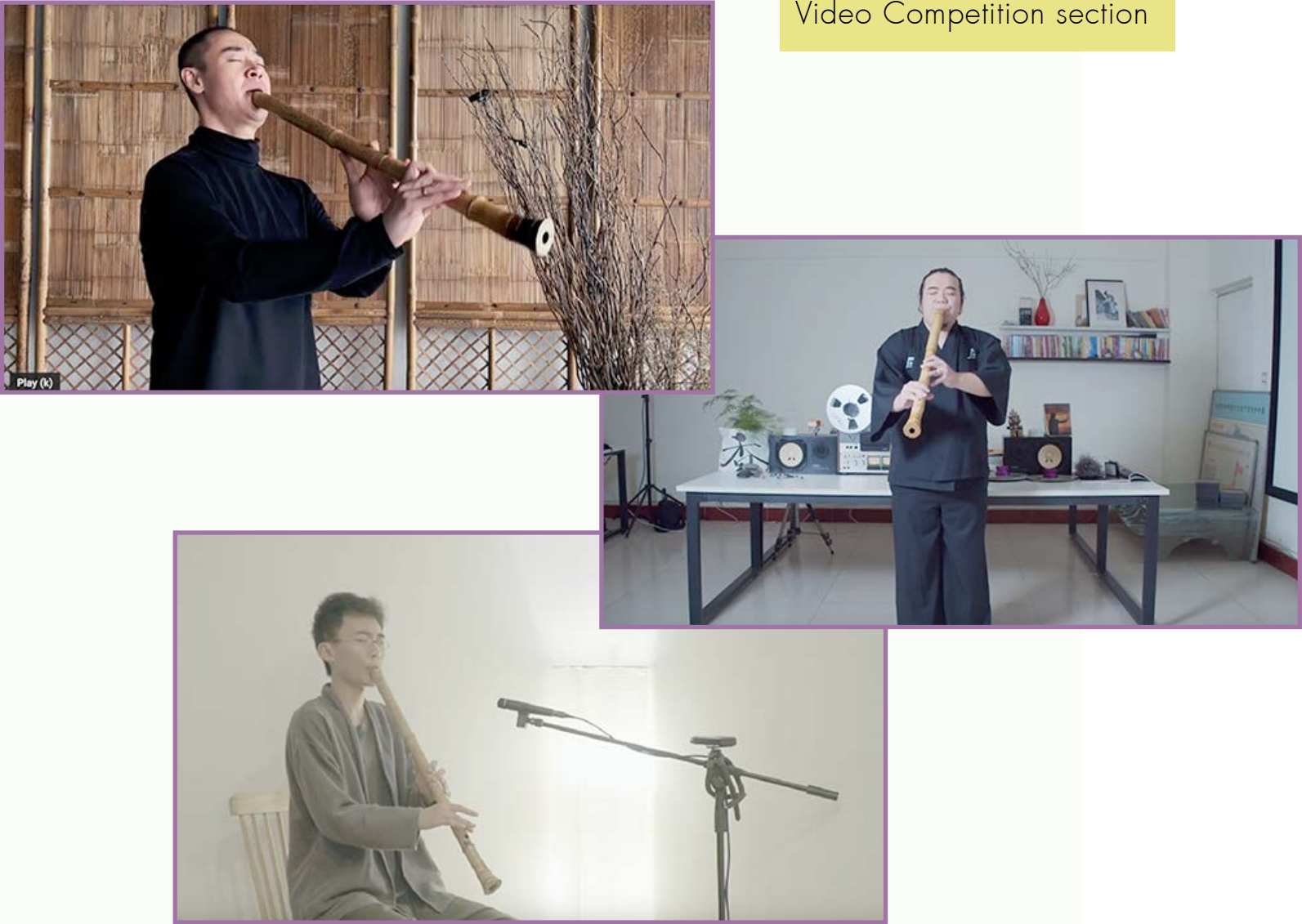
Venue Competition section



- 1. Gold medal: Takuro Kawamiya *Shika no Tone* (honkyoku / Kinko-ryu)
- 2. Silver prize: Hirasawa Shingo *The Lascaux Murals* (composed by Nomura Hozan)
- 3. Bronze Prize: Nishimura Tekiryuzan *Tokiwagi* composed by Shingo Edo)

- 1. 金賞:河宮 拓郎 琴古流本曲 鹿の遠音
- 2. 銀賞:平澤 真悟 野村峰山 作曲 ラスコアの壁画
- 3. 銅賞:西村 的龍山 江戸信吾 作曲 ときわぎ

Video Competition section



- 1. Gold Prize: Yang Hirofumi, *Kan Otsu* (composed by Hozan Yamamoto)
- 1. Gold Prize: Liu Yong *Yamagoe* (honkyoku)
- 3. Bronze Prize: Yao Bo-lien *Taki Ochi* (honkyoku)

- 1. 金賞:楊 博文 山本邦山 作曲 甲乙
- 1. 銀賞:劉 暢 古典本曲 山越
- 3. 銅賞:姚 伯漸 古典本曲 瀧落

<https://www.shakuhachicon.com/> Website Tanabe 2021 with complete results and information

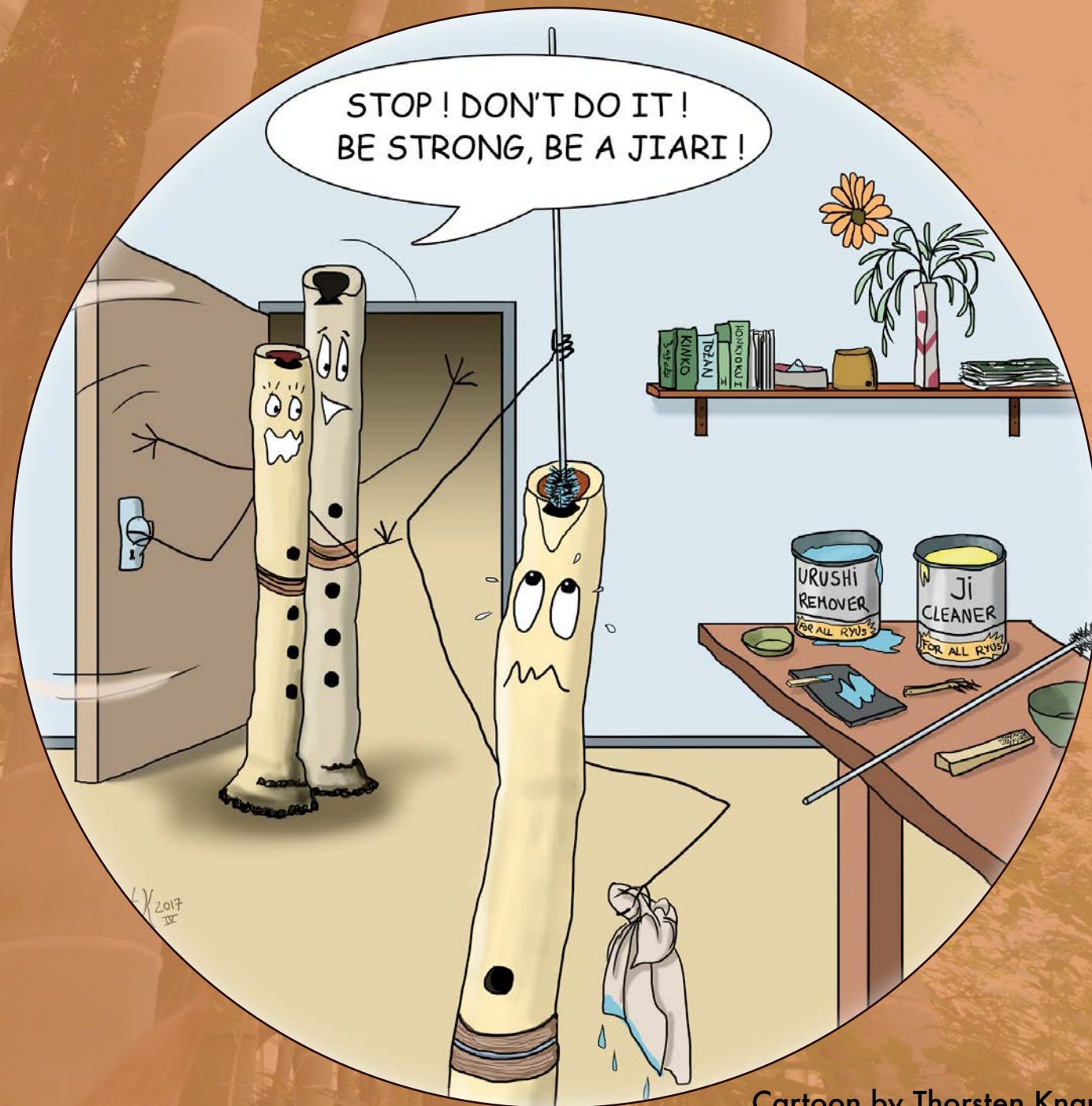
<https://youtu.be/WU3Aeiqws9E> Tanabe 2021 International Shakuhachi Competition, finals)

<https://youtu.be/EvZTUi2Nm04> Video section finals, Tanabe 2021 International Shakuhachi Competition

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

Affirming, Denying, Reconciliation.

Bamboo shoot
On its way to becoming bamboo
How honest of it.

This haiku by Taneda Santoka (1882-1940) is an example of such simplicity, graceful and yet conveys so much, and knowing a little of his life; he seemed to be very much in conflict within himself and his haiku was a distillation of much thought. So how is this relevant to the subject of playing Shakuhachi?

By practice, we are "preparing" to unite, body, feeling and thought; it is called 'Jumbi' in Japanese. Bringing together our scattered body and feelings. It helps to understand what is happening.

Affirming – starts with a wish, the solar plexus governs this, so from the tanden below the anvil our breath starts.
Denying – difficulties, ie, wrong effort.
Reconciliation – joy and progress on the journey

How to put this in to action?
To be grounded is to have sensation throughout the body and a sense of breathing from the belly. Just this simple act is the foundation for our practice. AMAZING.
This act of sincerity will be communicated in the simple sound. AMAZING
So stay in touch with the body, and trust the heart to reconcile, the sound will be AMAZING.

Sheath stripped away
Bamboo shoot shines
Green green.

From Damon
Sent from my iPad

Bamboo and Ink – An Inner Journey

by Hawwa Morales

The very first time that the “Four Treasures” (ink, brush, paper and stone) came into my life was during an atelier organised by my teacher and friend, the Spanish calligrapher Tere Vila Matas (disciple of the Korean calligrapher Ung No Lee).

My first “creation”, a paper full of vacillating strokes of different tones and a crashed brush. Anyway, I perceived that behind those poorly traced lines, there was a fantastic world to discover. Thus, I decided to continue studying with Tere.

I think that parallel to this new concept of expression, I had already met the shakuhachi. One day I asked my teacher if she could help me to paint my shakuhachi. She told me to bring her the instrument and when she saw it, she said: ok, let’s do it.

The excitement of calligraphing the shakuhachi waned suddenly when I saw her bringing a lot of folios with the drawings of small leaves, and branches. I was wondering which was the relation between the shakuhachi and all that stuff, and she said more or less: If you want to paint something, you need to know it very well, not only how it looks, but also its essence. So, you need to know first how a bamboo leave is, a bamboo branch, how it grows, how the leave originates from the branch, even its spirit if you want to paint the instrument.

During some months I painted leaf after leaf, branch after branch, then a trunk, then a trunk with a leaf until Tere decided that finally I could begin painting the shakuhachi.

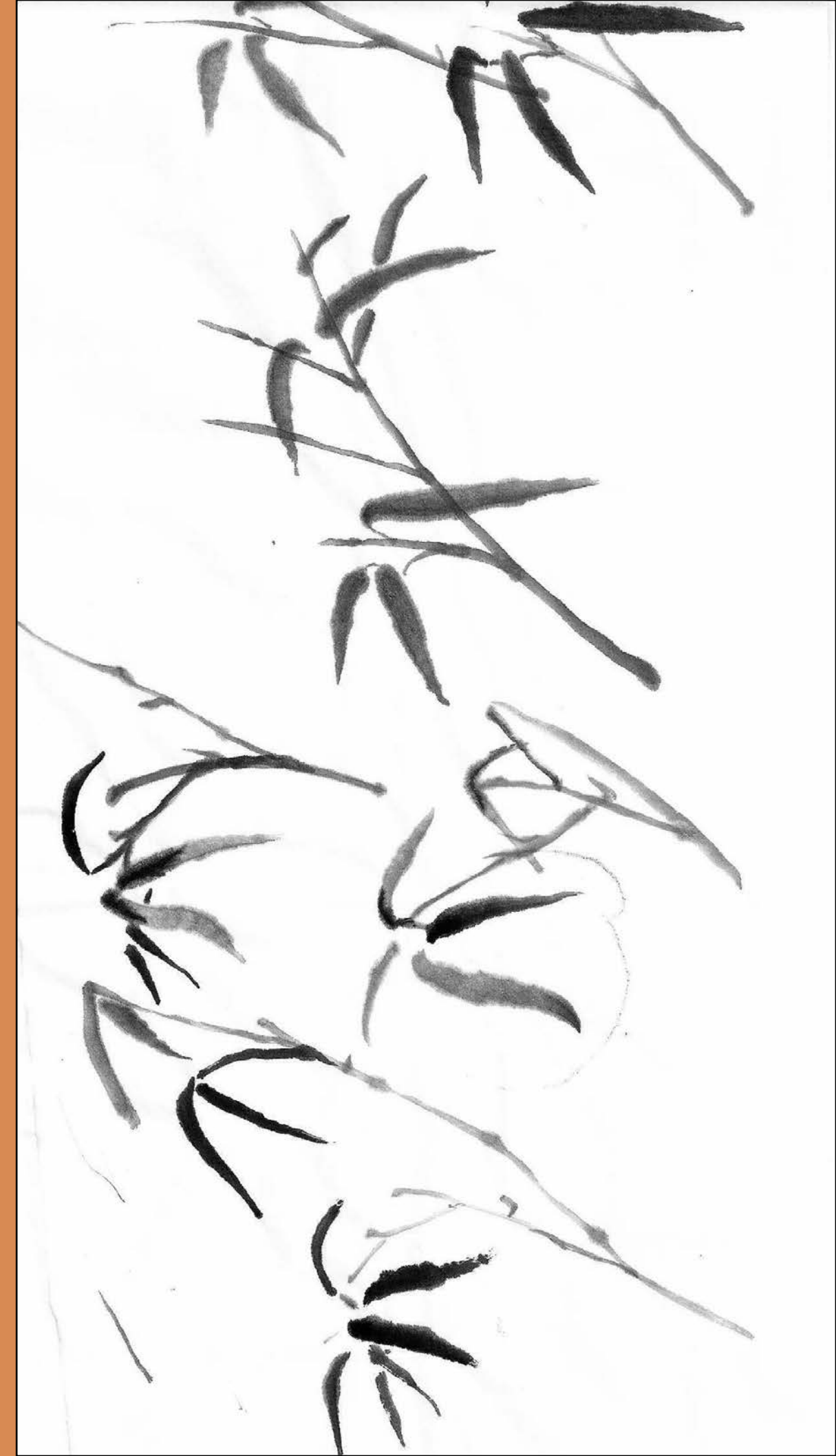
Within this process of “comprehension” of the bamboo I had to put into practice some basic rules and ideas that we can found while playing music or at least, ideas which sound to me very close to the Japanese terms.

Ich i on Jō Butsu

The Korean master Jang Seung-up (XIX century) said: a brushstroke is worth ten thousand, ten thousand brushstrokes in one! that is, a pictorial work is nothing more than the technical application of the calligraphic stroke to the painting. It is a “life in motion” imitation. From the first stroke in calligraphy all the images and words emerge and develop and furthermore only one simple stroke can contain all your real essence and nature imprinted in it.



Basic stroke



Bamboo leaves exercise

No sound does not mean nothingness

In the practice of calligraphy or painting the Void includes everything that the limitation of our senses does not allow us to capture as manifested.

The void in Chinese thought is not something vague and non-existent, but a dynamic and active element, linked to the idea of vital breaths, true fullness.

The void allows transformation precisely because in it converges “the whole”. The void is an “understanding” that proposes an art of living, a journey from the self to the being in fullness, from having to not having.

Ma

In calligraphy as well as in painting, a common feature maintained au fil du temps, over time: the “proportion” and “relationship” among the strokes, that is, the balance between Emptiness and Fullness, between Yin and Yang.

Breath

Also, in calligraphy the Void is what allows the stroke to “breathe” and in painting it can create distances and give continuity in a natural way.

Physiologically, breath is very important in calligraphy too, if you do not breathe correctly, in harmony with the movement of the brush, your hand, arm, shoulder, body in general and with your mind, the stroke will reflect mercilessly your errors and hesitations.

And finally, Awareness

I consider that every action that you can do may be a way to getting to know oneself and therefore, the practice of playing shakuhachi can be furthermore a process of “tuning” oneself, or so it should be in my opinion.

Painting in turn, must reflect the mind of the painter, paint the thoughts behind the appearance, see beyond the form and look for the meaning. Echoing the Korean master Su Dongpo (XI century): think before painting. Curiously the mind shares the same character with the words heart and spirit, xin (心) in Chinese, if we are allowed another play on words: it is the purified heart that knows how to reflect the true nature of things.

I am still pursuing this path, in an endless work in progress. No goal to reach, no rush, no material or personal interest to satisfy, although awkwardly but here I am.



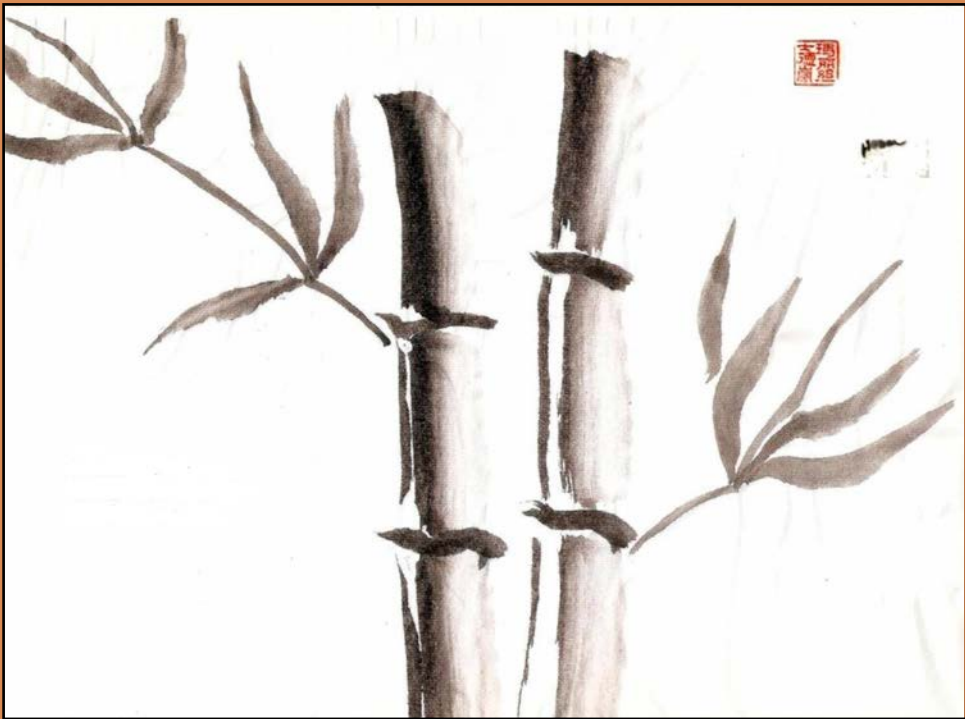
Beauty and simplicity
(ink on paper)



Bamboo essence
(ink on paper, 11 x 35 cm)



Two bamboos
(ink on paper, 24 x 33 cm)



Light on the lake
(ink on paper, 24 x 33 cm)

My gratitude to all my brush and shakuhachi colleagues and teachers. Their company during these years made me keep the flame of love for both arts, and specially my warmest thanks to Tere Villa Matas and Horacio Curti.



Shakuhachi
(ink on paper, 30 x 21 cm)

ESS MEMBERS' AREA - WHAT'S NEW?

ESS Online Summer School 2021 – Videos

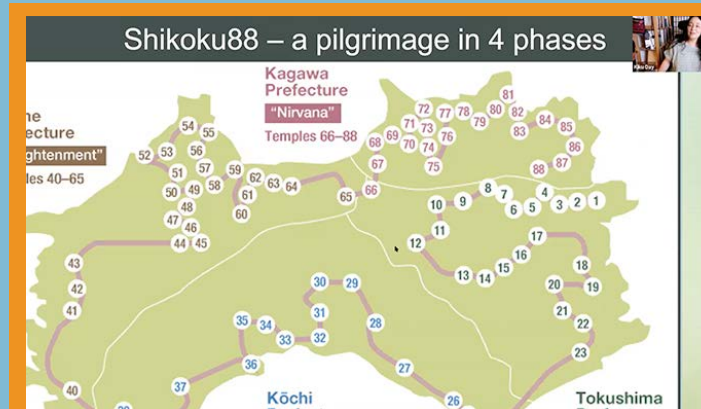
The ESS summer event, having to be held again online this year, was spread out over three weekends and covered workshops, talks and screenings. We are happy to announce that the available video recordings are now ready to view on the dedicated ESS members website. Enjoy!



24-7-Kakizakai-Kaoru_Koku-2



24-7-Kakizakai-Kaoru_Koku_1



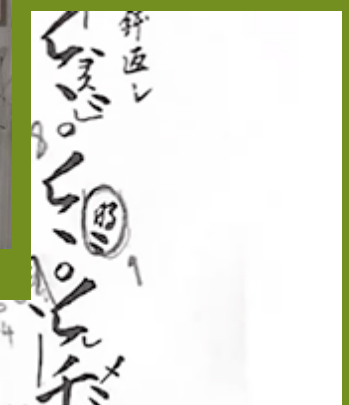
25-7-Kiku_Day_Talk Pilgrimage



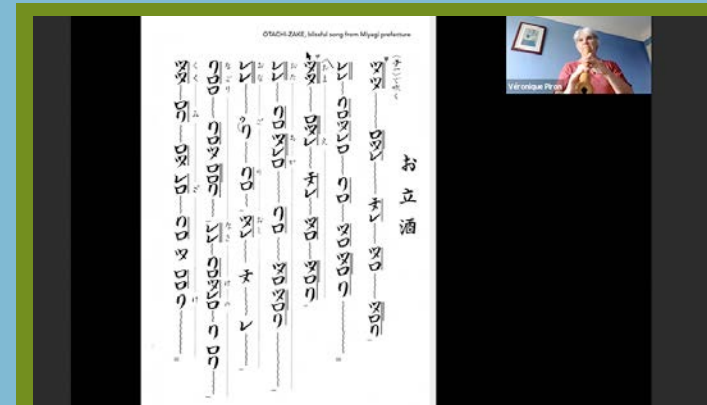
24-7_Kyle_Chomei_Helou_Welcome Tips



24-7_Kyle_Chomei_Helou_Hi-Fu-Mi_1



25-7_Kyle_Chomei_Helou_Hi-Fu-Mi_2



24-7-Veronique_Piron_min'yo_1



25-7-Veronique_Piron_minyo_2



25-7-Nagasu_Tomoka_Welcome Tips



24-7-Nagasu_Tomoka_Ryouyuu_no_Tsuki



25-7-Nagasu_Tomoka_KanOtsu



24-7-Thorsten_Knaub_nagatsuki-making



24-7-Perry_Yung_Shakuhachi Repair

jiuta sōkyoku 地歌箏曲

jiuta sōkyoku

local songs koto pieces

Zangeitsu (Lingering Moon)

The pines at the beach,
The moon hiding in the leaves
Out at the open sea
The moon sets
With its light, ah, all too soon,
Leaving this world of dreams.

Awaking to the truth of Shinnyo,
In the bright
Land of the Moon
Will you live forever.

Now, a message from you
In the misty night, yet

Only months and days
Are sure to come around again.

*iyobe no matsu ni
ha kakurete
oki no kata e to
iru tsuki no
hikari yo yume no
yo o hayou.*

*samete Shinnyo no
akikarakeki
tsuki no miyako ni
sumu ya ran.*

*ima wa tsute dani
oboro-yo no*

*tsuki-hi bakari wa
meguri-kite*

1-8_Gunnar_Linder_Talk: Song_Text_Edo_Period



24-7-Bruno_Deschenes_Talk: Tone_color_1



31-7-Nick_Bellando_Talk: Tone_colour_2



31-7-Fujiwara_Doan_Asakaze_1



1-8-Fujiwara_Doan_Asakaze_2



31-7-Michael_Coxall_Kinko_Kurokami (Kinko)



1-8_Fujiwara_Doan_Toan_Kurokami (Tozan)

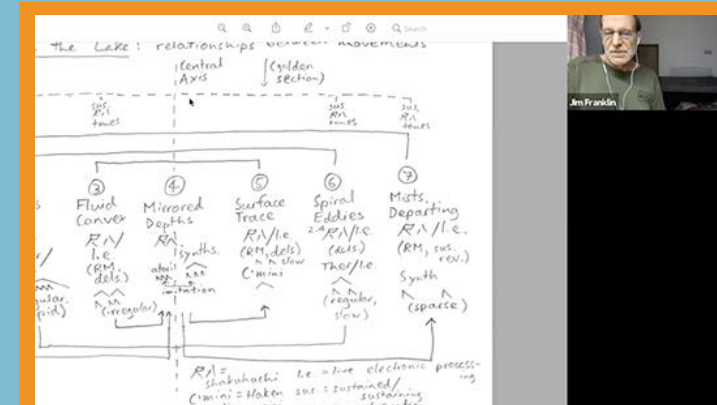


31-7_Christoph_Gaston_Welcome Tips



31-7_Daniel_Lifermann_Renbo_Nagashi_1

_Nagashi_2

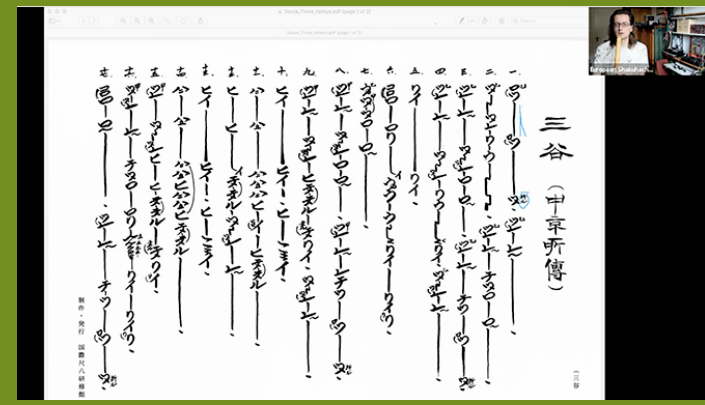


31-7_Jim_Franklin_Composition

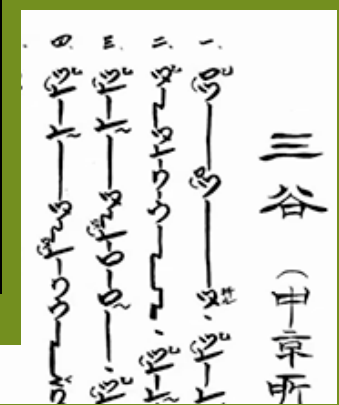
Analysis 2 : After the Rain

Ex 7: AtR 10.00ff – Tonal Sheet

1-8_Mike_McInerney_



31-7_Markus_Guhe_Sanya3V_1



1-8_Markus_Guhe_Sanya3V_2



1-8_Jim_Franklin_Welcome Tips



1-8_Composer_Panel



31-7_Composer/Performer Interaction

Videos: members.shakuhachisociety.eu/video-archive/teaching-talks-2021

CONCERT 1 (24 July)



Ryouyu no tsuki (Nagasu) – Nagasu Tomoka



Hifumi Hachigaeshi – Kyle Chōmei Kamal Helou



Komoromago-uta, Hanagasa-ondō, Otachizake –
Véronique Piron



Kokū – Kakizakai Kaoru



Sakura sakura (arrangement) – Chris Willms & Achim
Seip (harpsichord)

CONCERT 2 (25 July)



Songs from the Lake (J.Franklin) – Jim Franklin



Daha (KSK) – Thorsten Knaub



Inori (Yoshida Seifu) – Asai Seifu & Kojima Toufu



Shika no Tone – Seian Genshin



Three Haiku (John Palmer) – Jean-Francois Suizan
Lagrost

CONCERT 3 (31 July)



San'ya (三谷, KSK style) – Makus Guhe



Meisō (Ueda Ryu honkyoku; comp. by Ueda Hōdō) – Ueda Hōsei



Honte (Hitoyogiri classical piece) – Nick Bellando



Silent Cry of a Heron (Marty Regan) – Marty Regan (shakuhachi) & Thomas Piercy (clarinet)



Asakaze (Nakao Tozan) – Fujiwara Dozan

Videos: members.shakuhachisociety.eu/video-archive/concerts-2021/

Summer 2021 website: summerschool2021.shakuhachisociety.eu/

CONCERT 4 (1 August)



Kurokami ('Jet-black hair')
Michael Soumei Coxall & Keiko Kitamura



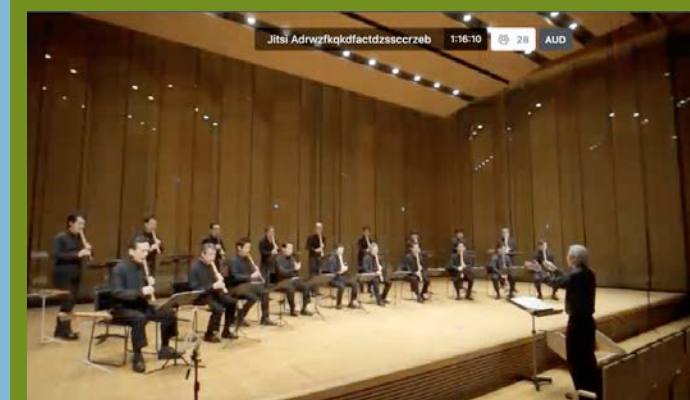
Kurokami ('Jet-black hair')
Fujiwara Dozan & Kikuō Yuji



Sinubi (Takahashi Yuji) performed by Kiku Day



Renbo Nagashi (Hijirikai honkyoku)
Daniel Liferman



Pentatonic Concerto for the Five Groups of Shakuhachi (Ichiro Seki) – Members of JSPN (Japan Shakuhachi Professional-players Network)

Performers:
尺八 1 Kizen Ouyama, Keisuke Zenyouji, Makoto Takei, Soh Tanomura
尺八 2 Takuya Iwata, Kizan Kawamura, Juumei Tokumaru, Washu Yoneya
尺八 3 Ryozan Sakata, Shozan Tanabe, Toyotaka Honma, Kohei Matsumoto
尺八 4 Junya Ohkochi, Akihito Obama, Kenichi Tajima, Kaizan Harago
尺八 5 Yuji Oga, Jun Kobayashi, Hiromu Motonaga
Conductor: Ichiro Seki

SHAKUHACHI TERMINOLOGY

GLOSSARY J-M

Shakuhachi terms and terminology can be confusing at the best of times. Jinuri, Jiari, Jinashi, Jimori... Here we introduce the section from letter J to letter M.

Ji (地) – A paste made of urushi, stone powder and water, which is used to build up the bore of the modern jinuri/jiari shakuhachi.
Jimori shakuhachi (地盛り尺八) – Shakuhachi where the tuning methods has been using ji in strategic places in the bore and not all over the bore as in jinuri shakuhachi. Jimori shakuhachi is also sometimes called spot-tuned shakuhachi.
Jinashi shakuhachi (地なし尺八) – Shakuhachi tuned without the use of ji, where only the natural bamboo remains. This was the traditional method of making shakuhachi during the Edo period.
Jiari shakuhachi (地有り尺八) – See jinuri shakuhachi.
Jinuri shakuhachi (地塗り尺八) – A shakuhachi with a mid-joint where the bore is built up with ji. This method of tuning and instrument making became the mainstream after the Fuke sect was abolished.
Jiuta (地歌) – Music originally composed for shamisen
Jiuta sōkyoku (地歌箏曲) – Music composed for shamisen and koto
Jun shihan (準師範) – Often translated as teacher’s license.

Karakara (カラカラ) – Shakuhachi playing technique where a percussive effect is achieved by hitting hole 1 (bottom finger hole).
Kaede (替手) – Secondary arrangement of a piece
Kan (甲) – Upper register
Keiko (稽古) – Practice, study.
Keikoba (稽古場) – Space in which one practice. This may be the room where one receives lessons.
Ki (気) – Spirit or mood. In this thesis as with martial arts and Japanese arts in general ki refers to a spiritual energy.
Kari (カリ) – One of the two main head positions in shakuhachi playing with raised chin. To be played on the open holed ro tsu re chi ri etc.
Kokyū (胡弓) – Three-string bowed spike fiddle. The only bowed fiddle in Japan.
Komi Buki (コミ吹き) – Big breath. Vibrato created by diaphragm. Representative for the repertoire of the Nezasaha.
Komusō (虚無僧) – Shakuhachi playing monks of the Fuke sect of Rinzai Zen. The komusō monks were wandering mendicant monks playing the shakuhachi for alms.
Korokoro (コロコロ) – Shakuhachi playing technique. A tremolo is created by alternatively opening and closing holes one and two.
Kota (枯淡) – Refined simplicity.
Koto (箏) – Japanese 13-string zither.
Kumiuta (組歌) – Pieces for Koto license

Kyotaku (虚鐸) – Lit., hollow bell or bell without substance (often translated as empty bell). Name for shaku-hachi used in the historical document Kyotaku Denki Kokujikai from 1795. Today a group of players formerly led by Nishimura Kokū (1915–2002) calls their instruments kyotaku.
Kyotaku Denki Kokujikai – [The legend of the empty bell translated to Japanese] from 1795 written by Yamamoto Morihide (山本守秀). It is claimed to be an annotation in Japanese of a 13th century Chinese book entitled Kyotaku Denki (虚鐸伝記). Nakatsuka Chikusen (1887–1944) was the first person to question its authenticity. The legend remains, however, the single most important work in the literature defining the identity of many shakuhachi honkyoku players.

Ma (間) – Lit., in between, space or interval. In musical terms it describes the silence between sound events. This is often described as vacuum plenum, and is an important part of Japanese musical aesthetics.
Madake (真竹) – [Latin: phyllostachys bambusoides] A common type of bamboo in Japan, from which the shakuhachi is made.
Mae-Uta (前歌) – Opening vocal section
Mekura hōshi (目闇法師) – blind monks.
Meri (メリ) – Blow by putting the chin down, to lower the tone Shakuhachi playing technique describing the head positioning. In meri, the head is lowered and the lips are closer to the mouthpiece (utaguchi). This technique produces a sound, which has less volume and is considered having a ‘darker’ character.
Min’yō (民謡) – Folk song. The shakuhachi is widely used as accompaniment to min’yō.
Miyogiri (三節切) – A three-node shakuhachi. Considered being the link between the gagaku shakuhachi and Fuke shakuhachi alongside the hitoyogiri.
Modes – Most Japanese traditional music use one of 3 pentatonic scale types:

Ritsu (律) is common in gagaku music and some min’yō:
Descending: D – e – G + A – b – D When ascending it may change to: D – f – G + A – c – D

In (陰) (from Chinese yin of yin-yang) or miyakobushi 都節 (urban melody/mode)
is common in music from the Edo period including shakuhachi music:
Descending: D – eb – G + A – bb – D Ascending (some times): D – f – G + A – c – D

Yō (陽) (yang of yin-yang) or inaka-bushi 田舎節 (countryside mode or folk song mode)
is most common in min’yō (folk song):
Descending: C – eb – F + G – bb – C Ascending: D – f – G + A – c – D

Another mode in Japan is the Ryūkyū mode from the Okinawa islands (south of mainland Japan):
Ryūkyū (琉球) C – e – F + G – b – C

Muraiki (ムライキ 斑息) – Lit., uneven breath. Shakuhachi playing technique producing a characteristic breathy sound.
Musubi (結) – Tying up, concluding. Final section of a piece.
Myōanji (明暗寺) – Myōan temple, established within the compound of the Tōfukuji temple in Kyoto. Myōan-ji was founded by Kyochiku Zenji and was throughout the Edo period a prominent and influential centre of shakuhachi musicianship especially in the Kansai region. Myōanji remained the centre for the Fuke style shakuhachi playing in which spirituality continued to have great importance in shakuhachi playing.

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.

ESS TWITTER

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 June 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.





STAY TUNED !

BAMBOO

THE NEXT EUROPEAN SHAKUHACHI SOCIETY NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED
JUNE 1, 2022