



Australian Shakuhachi Society

豪州尺八協会

No. 53, February 2017

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From the Editor:

Greetings all,

First of all, I wish all members of the Australian Shakuhachi Society a happy and prosperous 2017.

This issue has been an extremely long time coming, for which I must apologise. From the next issue a new editor, Tom Sapountsis, will be taking over. I will remain on board to contribute and assist, and am looking forward to working with Tom.

Finally, there is a lot of shakuhachi news. Most significant perhaps is that the next Australian Shakuhachi Festival date has been decided. Also, there is a workshop led by Riley Lee coming up on February 12th, and from March onwards, monthly ASS workshops in Melbourne.

Regards,
Lindsay Dugan



ASF18
January 25-28, 2018
Melbourne



The date for the next Australian Shakuhachi Festival has been set for the Australia Day long weekend 2018, January 25th to 28th. The original plan was to hold the next ASF in 2017, but for various reasons the date has been moved into 2018.

The committee is currently considering venues and accommodation options, but it will be held in Melbourne at University College (TBC). More to come.

-ASS Committee



Melbourne Honkyoku Workshop
with Riley Lee
 February 12th 2017
 10.00 am - 2.30 pm

Registrations are now open.
www.shakuhachi.org.au

Australian Shakuhachi Society

Photo: Rudi Van Stamox

ASS Honkyoku Workshop with Riley Lee

The February ASS Honkyoku Workshop in Melbourne is taking place on Sunday 12th. Any and all are welcome! Visit www.shakuhachi.org.au for details and registration.

Following the February workshop, there will be monthly ASS workshops in Melbourne taught by Lindsay Dugan, commencing in April. The workshops will focus on various genres (Yokoyama style honkyoku, and Kinkoryū honkyoku and gaikyoku) and pertinent technical aspects (meri technique, ornamentation, sound, and more). Information will be updated through various Australian Shakuhachi Society channels.

Paintings of Bamboo Flutes

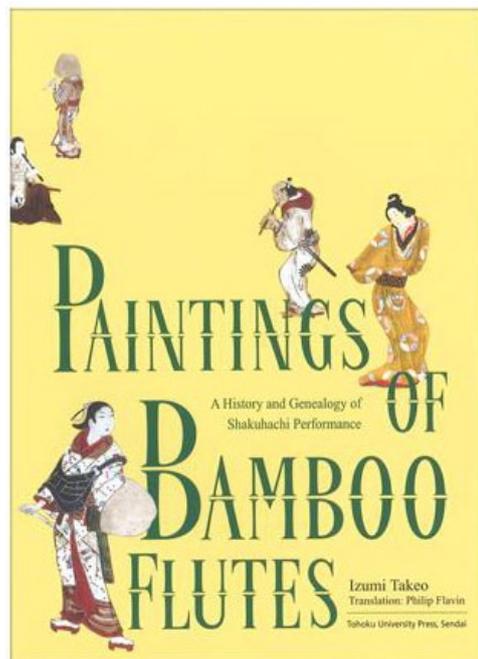
Author: Takeo Izumi

Takeo Izumi is both a highly accomplished shakuhachi player, and an academic specialising in Eastern and Japanese Art History. He studied shakuhachi with Katsuya Yokoyama, and has a number of solo shakuhachi recordings available.

In 2013, he published *Take o fuku hitobito: egakareta shakuhachi sōsha no rekishi to keifu* ('Paintings of bamboo flutes: history and genealogy of people blowing the shakuhachi', ISBN 4861632277). Rather than tracing the development of shakuhachi through historical texts, which are often forgeries or fabrications, Izumi has taken an iconographical approach, examining how the shakuhachi and the people who played them have been depicted in paintings, from ancient times, through the middle ages, up until the early modern period.

Paintings of Bamboo Flutes has recently been translated into English by Philip Flavin. The ASS has a small stock of the English version for sale for \$38 each (plus postage).

To order a copy, email Lindsay:
lindsay@lindsaydugan.com



Japan Festival in Melbourne

Ken McArthur

At the recent Japanese festival held at Box Hill town, Shakuhachi Melbourne members Adam, Richard, Joe, Janusz & Johnny performed the following music to an appreciative audience: *Bamboo Autumn* (Adam's original piece from his shakuhachi cd), about the concept of wabi sabi - imperfections & appreciation. Adam then performed a solo improvisation, based on a suite that he wrote for a Chinese art display held a few years at the National Gallery of Victoria. Adam & Richard then performed *Shika no Tone*, and then all the group performed Adam's original tune, *Koyo*. Later in the day Lindsay Dugan performed *Shika no Tone* by himself purely by memory, without reading any notation, which was very impressive. I have previously seen shihans Tadashi Tajima & Andrew MacGregor perform this piece as a solo.

After Lindsay's performance I was talking with Joe, who learnt about Shakuhachi Melbourne & Adam from Richard while they are both working at Melbourne University. Joe also studied at the School of Asian & Oriental Studies in London; it sounded like he also knows Kiku Day & Korean flute musician Hye Lim Kim (who have both taught at S.O.A.S.). So we are all connected with different people via shakuhachi (is that the 6 degrees of shakuhachi separation?)

Here's a link to ABC Radio National program about arts & music funding.

Also, I saw the NGV Bamboo Tradition in Contemporary Form exhibition.

There was a 1.8 Kinko shakuhachi included in the exhibition.

ABC Radio National music show - music in arts funding, listen to program download podcast:

[ABC Radio National podcast](#)

-Ken McArthur

Shakuhachi study camp in Taipei

Margaret Tung

Would you be surprised to learn that there're many enthusiastic and competent shakuhachi players in Taiwan? Probably not, if you knew Japan colonised Taiwan for 50 years from 1895 to 1945, and left many cultural influences behind.

However, I was surprised to see contestants from Taiwan who were at the shakuhachi competition run as part of the Kyoto International Shakuhachi Festival in 2012. There were also other Taiwanese participants at the Rockies Camp in Kyoto where I met Michael Wong, a shakuhachi teacher.

Michael started organising Japanese teachers to go to Taipei to teach about four years ago. I heard about it two years ago. It so happened that the teaching schedules Michael organised for Kaoru Kakizakai sensei coincided with my trips there to see my mother. Therefore I started taking part in the shakuhachi study camp in Taipei last year.

The camp took place in April, at a venue for the study of Chinese traditional instruments in central Taipei. The format has been similar in the last two years: it starts on Friday, private lessons and rehearsals during the day and a concert at night open to the public. This year the small hall was packed with over 60 attendees. The first half provided a chance for students to perform. Michael Wong started the concert by explaining how important it is for students to perform and the difficulties of doing so. He asked the audience to show their appreciation, and it was very heartening to see how supportive and encouraging the audience was. They were also very responsive to the teachers' performance in the second half. Two Taiwanese teachers performed alongside Kakizakai sensei.

Saturday was a big day for study from 9am-6pm. There were 30 participants, a mix of age and ability but most seemed to be able to play. I'm told there're an estimated 200-300+ shakuhachi players in Taiwan. However most players play Japanese songs (pop/folk). The minority interested in honkyoku tend to learn by themselves and attend the occasional study camps. A small number study with local or Japanese teachers on a regular basis. The Tainan National University of the Arts is the only institution offering shakuhachi in formal study. The teacher, Ms Lui Ying Rong, was at the study camp, and said she currently has about 10 students at the university.

The day started with a session on sound production techniques, followed by techniques in playing modern composition, and we studied one of Fukuda Rando's pieces. The afternoon was devoted to honkyoku playing, demonstrated with two pieces: Nezasa Shirabe and Sagari Ha.

There were only 4 female players out of the 30 participants. I asked Ms. Lui why there's such a gender imbalance (she has only 2 female shakuhachi students at the university). She said traditionally female players tend to study the koto.

I was impressed by the participants' enthusiasm and active participants on the big day. They asked many questions to drill down on the techniques and all of them stayed to the exhausting end. For the next four days sensei was fully occupied by giving private lessons which started early in the morning and went to late in the evening.

After the end of the study camp in Taiwan, sensei was heading to Shanghai with Michael to do another study camp. I was told students in mainland China are very keen in learning shakuhachi. A number of Japanese teachers go there to teach regularly, and Michael Wong does so too. I hope ASS will be able to make links with the teachers and students in both mainland China and Taiwan, and soon we might see

some of them participating in the Aussie study camps.

-Margaret Tung



My Instrument

Riley Lee

I play the shakuhachi, a simple, end blown flute made of bamboo.

The shaku, a unit of measurement used before Japan adopted the metric system, is equal to about 30 centimetres. The standard length of a shakuhachi, because of arbitrary, historical reasons, is exactly 1.8 shaku. 'Eight' in Japanese is hachi. Thus, shaku-hachi literally means "one point eight feet." The translation of the name of my instrument is not at all elegant, but for me everything else about it is pure poetry.

Being made of the root end of stalks or culms of bamboo, all shakuhachi have unique diameters, node placement and other physical features. Many shakuhachi have various discolourations, spots and markings. No instrument looks or sounds like another; every one is unique.

I first started playing the shakuhachi in 1970. I began acquiring my many flutes soon thereafter. They come in numerous lengths, both longer and shorter than 1.8 shaku. The generic term for all lengths however, is still 'shakuhachi'.

One of my oldest flutes is a 2.4 shaku length instrument, a kind of 'bass' shakuhachi, crafted by the famous maker Gyokusui Kōno I. This flute has a peculiar pattern of parallel, seemingly overlapping, black streaks on a small part of its upper section. It looks as if a master calligrapher applied a single, wide,

very rough brush stroke of ink to the surface of the bamboo.

When the first of my two main teachers, Chikuho Sakai II, chose this flute for me over four decades ago, the bamboo was light yellow or gold in colour. Over time, the bamboo has developed a very dark brown patina. The intricate black streaks remains visible, if less striking than it was forty-five years ago.

Gyokusui told me that he didn't know what caused this distinctive marking on the flute he made for me, though he did offer to speculate. He guessed that while the bamboo was still in the ground, it had partially fallen or leaned over. Over a number of winters, snow may have piled up on the top side of the almost horizontal-leaning bamboo, always at the same spot, creating a kind of bamboo frost bite, a water mark caused by repeated accumulation of snow, winter after winter.

Near the middle of this flute, there is a small, smooth depression on the surface of the bamboo. It looks as if something has gently rubbed all the way through the strong, outer skin. Indeed, this is probably what happened. Another bamboo culm was touching my bamboo at this location. Whenever the wind blew strongly enough, the two culms would sway, gently rubbing together, possibly for years, at the spot that I now see and feel on my shakuhachi.



Mark resulting from constant rubbing of two culms

Closer to the bottom of my shakuhachi, the bamboo is very black and mottled. In places, a thin layer of the surface of the tough, smooth outer skin of the bamboo seems to

have rotted away. The result is a beautiful, embossed work of art.

Shakuhachi flutes are made using the root end of the bamboo, and incorporate some of the root that grows well beneath the soil. The cause for the discolouration and imperfection at the base of my shakuhachi, according to Gyokusui, was easy to guess. Fungus in the soil had done the artwork, something only nature could create.



Mottling caused by fungus

If you look very closely at the shakuhachi, very near the still visible roots, you will notice what looks like small saw marks, tiny parallel scratches. These were made by the person who harvested the bamboo. Suitable bamboo destined for the workshops of Gyokusui and other shakuhachi makers are always harvested in the winter, when the sap is not flowing. One can easily imagine the saw slipping in the numb hands of the harvester trying to free the bamboo roots from the frozen, snow-covered ground.

For the shakuhachi player, these blemishes conjure up the original bamboo culm, still alive in the earth within its bamboo grove. Whenever I pick up this bamboo flute, I picture it being bent over by strong autumn winds, enduring the snows of long winters, thriving on the monsoonal rains in late spring, and swaying and brushing up against neighbouring culms in summer breezes.

The small cuts or scrapes remind me of the

bamboo cutter who individually chose my instrument out of thousands in the grove and then painstakingly, though possibly forcefully harvested it from the frozen soil. I am grateful that the bamboo harvester found such a beautiful piece of bamboo for Gyokusui. I am grateful to Gyokusui for transforming that piece of bamboo into a flute that plays such sublime music.

Shakuhachi makers and players appreciate all of the serendipitous marks on a shakuhachi, the discolourations and blemishes, even the scratches of a harvester's saw. Consequently these marks and 'imperfections' can add to the final value of the instrument.

Can you imagine a piano sales person telling a potential buyer that a beautifully made grand piano is more expensive because of imperfections caused by fungus stains and rough saw or chisel marks, which are clearly visible on various surfaces of the instrument?

Gyokusui Kōno I was in his eighties, with at least sixty years of experience, when he made my flute. He is still considered one of the best shakuhachi makers of the 20th century. He died in 1986. One day in the early 1980s, he invited me to his workshop, where probably thousands of bamboo were curing, waiting their turn to be made into shakuhachi. They would all have to wait at least three or four years before even being considered.

After passing a pleasant time in his workshop, Gyokusui and I walked back to his house through his modest Japanese-style garden. He suddenly stopped and turned to look up at me for a few moments. "You know, Riley," he finally admitted, "I really don't know how to make shakuhachi. All of my good ones are just flukes."

I think Gyokusui's definition of a 'good' shakuhachi differs considerably from mine. In my opinion, all of his flutes are 'good.' His flukes are beyond words. I think I have one!

The shakuhachi delights me in so many ways that have nothing to do with the music. Nevertheless, I was initially bewitched by its sound. The shakuhachi mesmerises me more than any other musical instrument. One day, I may attempt to explain why I think this is so.

Riley Lee, Los Angeles September 2016

First published on October 6, 2016, in the e-zine called Loud Mouth, for the series, INSIDE THE MUSICIAN, in the section called The Growing Edge, Loud Mouth is for and about Australian music and musicians.

<http://musictrust.com.au/loudmouth/>



Prague International Shakuhachi Festival

Lindsay Dugan

I was invited as a guest artist to the Prague International Shakuhachi Festival, held from June 2-6 2016, at HAMU (Academy of Performing Arts, Music Faculty) in Prague, Czech Republic. I had attended a number of festivals in Australia and Japan, but this was the first festival in Europe I've attended.

Senior shakuhachi performers included Chris Blasdel, Jim Franklin, Yodo Kurahashi, Gunnar Linder, Kifu Mitsushashi, and John Neptune, who all gave a number of performances, workshops and lectures. One notable highlight for me was Gunnar Linder's presentation on Edo Period song lyrics, a very interesting examination of the use of double entendre in songs and poems.

I performed a one hour concert/lecture of honkyoku in The Tower, an intimate and reverberant three-storey space with a stair case spiralling upwards against the walls. Among the listeners was Jim Franklin, whose playing first drew me into the world

of shakuhachi more than a decade ago. I also gave a twenty minute presentation summarising the research results of my masters thesis from 2013, a study of pitch and intonation tendencies in recorded honkyoku and gaikyoku performances of Katsuya Yokoyama and Goro Yamaguchi.

David Neptune was also at the festival with a small production crew, filming performances and conducting interviews for a documentary he is making about his father, John Kaizan Neptune. Some details about the project can be seen at: www.facebook.com/kaizanmovie

Following Prague, I went to Japan for a few weeks to conduct research for my current project, examining change and interpretation within Katsuya Yokoyama's lineage. I was lucky enough with my timing to be able to attend a commemorative concert for the 20th anniversary of the passing of renowned composer Takemitsu Tōru, which included the duet Eclipse performed by Kakizakai Kaoru and Nakamura Kakujo (biwa).

-Lindsay Dugan



John Neptune performing with band in Prague

Tea ceremony, koto, and shakuhachi

Bronwyn Kirkpatrick

Here are some photos from a recent concert with Satsuki Odamura and her koto ensemble at Wentworth Falls in the Blue Mountains. It was a beautiful warm Sunday afternoon in May and the audience was treated to a tea ceremony demonstration by members of Chado Urasenke Tankokai Sydney and a programme of koto ensemble, shakuhachi and koto and solo pieces.

A more recent performance was at a Japanese Language and Culture Workshop on June 25th at the Japan Foundation Sydney. See below for more details.

JPF Events: Sound of Japan

-Bronwyn Kirkpatrick



Tea ceremony



Brandon Lee (koto) and Bronwyn Kirkpatrick

Farewell from Graham Ranft

Due to various reasons I have decided to leave ASS but cannot do so with many thank yous for all the years of everything shakuhachi & c.

It's been a wonderful 20 years of shakuhachi friendships and sharing in the ASFs and WSFs but I am now moving on to other things musically - recorders and composing for one for the U3A Canberra Recorder orchestra.

Just the other day I had a world [?] premiere of a major new short work entitled Thiepval Requiem with me conducting the U3ACRO :-

I was inspired by my visit to Thiepval Cemetery in France in 2015.

The central arch was full of scaffolding for renovations, and the wind, gusty at times, blew through the enormous scaffolding-pipe filled space, making an eerie chorus like groaning - around a pedal F-F#.

The opening section is an attempt to recreate that sound which actually did work with all the tenors, basses great basses and contra bass all play their lowest F and raising and lowering breath pressure randomly and it actually sounded very much like what I heard!

The Requiem is then divided into 4 sections:

- (a) The beginning of the War (WWI)
- (b) War and devastated landscape
- (c) Coming to the end of the War
- (d) Victory!

-Graham Ranft



Fudaiji, and organs

Lindsay Dugan

Fudaiji was a komusō temple in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka Prefecture, known as the home temple for the piece *Chōshi*. After the Fuke sect was abolished in 1871, the temple was used as an elementary school. Around Meiji 18 (1885), an organ was purchased from America for the grand sum of 45 yen (modern equivalent of nearly \$500,000 AUD) and installed at the school. It broke after only six months, and remained unused until a watchmaker was asked to repair it. After inspecting the organ, the watchmaker found that the problem originated from several malfunctioning springs. While he went about the task of repairing the broken organ, he surmised that it would be possible to build another organ at a cost of only 3 yen (equivalent to nearly \$35,000 AUD).

An atelier in the school was set aside, and the watchmaker began building his organ from blueprints he had drawn up after examining the organ that he had repaired. He enlisted the help a local hotel owner, who supplied materials and tools. They were also assisted by several other people; in particular, a fish shop owner, who played shamisen as a hobby, advised them on tuning. When the organ was completed and presented to the teachers of the school in 1887, they mentioned that the organ sounded a bit strange. The tuning was fishy, shall we say.

So, with the disassembled components of the organ strapped to poles carried on their shoulders, the watchmaker and the hotel owner made the two hundred and seventy kilometre haul up to Tokyo, and dropped in unannounced to a music school (which would later become the music department at Tokyo Geidai). The principal confirmed that the tuning was indeed faulty, and offered to teach the two men music theory for a month so that they could understand why their instrument was out of tune, and correct the problem themselves.

Four months later, the re-tuning of the organ was successfully completed. Nowadays, it is on display at Hamamatsu Museum of Musical Instruments.

The watchmaker, Torakusu Yamaha, went on to found Nippon Gakki Kaisha, which would later become Yamaha, while it was a cousin of Kisaburo Kawai, the hotel owner, who founded Kawai Musical Instruments in 1927.

-Lindsay Dugan



The Yamaha organ



Variations of “Tsuru no Sugomori”, Part 4

Lindsay Dugan

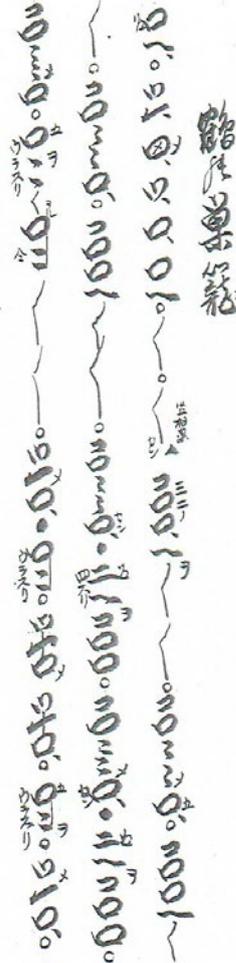
The information in this article is based on a translation of a series of articles titled “Shakuhachi koten honkyoku kaisetsu - Tsuru no Sugomori (Commentary on shakuhachi classical honkyoku - Nesting of Cranes)” featured in Hougaku Journal (issues 266-269) by Komuso Research Group member, Kanda Kayu.

This is the fourth and final part of this series. Kinpūryū and Jinbo Masanosuke/Hikichi Kozan transmissions will be presented, concluding Kanda’s series of articles on Tsuru no Sugomori.

Please note: any errors, especially potential mistakes in readings of names, are my own!

Tsuru no Sugomori (Onodera Genkichi transmission)

This version was probably transmitted by Onodera Genkichi, who hailed from Kannari, Miyagi Prefecture. He taught the piece in Hirosaki, Aomori Prefecture, and so it is considered an outside piece within the Kinpūryū repertoire. The structure of the second dan features many repeated motifs. The origin of this piece was Chōshi no kyoku, transmitted by Satō from Akita Prefecture, who played a *maebuki* (prelude) to each section. This is a very long piece, but Nyūi Getsuei, Yamaue Kagetaka, and Fukushi Kagesue created two shortened versions: *Kani Sugomori* and *Daisan Kousei Sugomori*, both of which omitted the *maebuki*.



Kinpūryū Tsuru no Sugomori notation

While the piece stems from Hikichi Kozan's version of Tsuru no Sugomori, which was later transmitted with a number of different titles, this version transmitted by Nyodō is very different from Kozan's version, and overall it feels like a different piece. The form, and corresponding imagery, is as follows:

Shirabe no te - Sanya (searching for a place to make a nest) - takane (joy of deciding on the location for the nest) - takane (laying eggs) - honte (love of the parent crane) - hachigaeshi (gratitude for heaven and earth) - ōmusubi (easing into old age)

This concludes the series of Tsuru no Sugomori articles. In the next issue, we will look at the piece Sagariha.

-Lindsay Dugan



Shakuhachi for sale

- 1.3 shakuhachi (Ichijou) (high G)
- 1.6 shakuhachi (Ichijou) (E)
- 2.1 shakuhachi (Tom Deaver) (B)
- 2.4 shakuhachi (Tom Deaver) (A)
- 2.6 shakuhachi (Yamaguchi Shugetsu) (G)

Anyone interested please contact me via email kevin.man@taikoz.com

Graham Ranft is selling a nearly new Ichijou 1.8 flute for sale. Price is A\$ equivalent of around ¥250,000 (just under A\$3000). Contact Graham at ranftg@iinet.net.au

David Brown 1.8 shakuhachi for sale. It's made from gidgee (a hard, heavy dense grained Queensland outback timber). David commented that he wished he was keeping it for himself. It has the typical David Brown joint and silver edge on the mouthpiece inlay. Bag, mouthpiece cover and pull through cloth, all made by David. Never actually been played. \$850 (plus shipping). Contact Cameron 0477077147



Shakuhachi for sale. Evaluated at \$2000. Good condition and plays well. Maker is Kōno Gyokuzan. Contact Geoff Dawson: geoffreydawson@bigpond.com or mobile 0419986494



ASS Committee and Newsletter Info

Your committee members as of November 2016 are:

ASS Founder: Riley Lee
President: Lindsay Dugan
Vice President: David Dixon
Secretary: Bronwyn Kirkpatrick
Treasurer: Richard Chenhall
Publicity and Media: (open)
Newsletter and web: Lindsay Dugan

AGM Minutes

The minutes from the last AGM, held on Monday November 14th, 2016, can be downloaded here: [AGM 2016 Minutes](#)

ASS Membership Info

Membership to the Australian Shakuhachi Society costs \$30 per year. Subscription funds are used to organise the Australian Shakuhachi Festival and other activities. Your membership is much appreciated!

Joining the Society also offers benefits, such as discounts to the Australian Shakuhachi Festival, and discounts to workshops.

Membership payments can be made online via Paypal, and are automatically deducted annually. Cancellation of this automated deduction can be made anytime from within Paypal.

shakuhachi.org.au/membership.html

Newsletter Contributions

Any contributions related to shakuhachi and Japanese music are welcome, from Australia or abroad.

Please send any info, queries, articles, photos, comments, items for sale, corrections, etc. to:

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