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**Situating the Myōan Kyōkai:  
A Study of Suizen and the Fuke Shakuhachi**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Ethnomusicology

2014

Department of Music  
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## Declaration for PhD Thesis

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the activities of the Myōan Kyōkai, which is based at Myōan Temple in Kyoto Japan. It identifies the Myōan Kyōkai as a community and examines the contexts in which members pursue their activities, which are all centred around the shakuhachi, a Japanese end-blown bamboo flute. The shakuhachi itself is most often associated with the Fuke sect of Zen Buddhism and its monks/priests of ‘emptiness and nothingness’ (*Komusō*). After almost two centuries of holding a virtual monopoly of the instrument, the sect was proscribed by the Japanese government in 1871. Of the sect’s three main temples, only one (Myōan Temple) survives, albeit by necessity in a somewhat modified form. Research questions revolve around the theme of community. What factors contribute to forming the Myōan Kyōkai into a community and then what sustains it as a community? This study identifies three interdependent components that each play some part in defining the Myōan Kyōkai as a community: music, history, and religion. Given that the shakuhachi continues to have such strong links to Zen Buddhism, it has seen contextual changes that often include the concert stage or see it performed in recital-type situations. This thesis seeks to situate the shakuhachi within this larger context back into its original settings in order to illuminate the use of the shakuhachi in an organised and institutionalised form as currently practiced in a Zen temple.

## Table of Contents

Declaration for PhD Thesis.....	2
Abstract.....	3
List of Illustrations.....	6
Contents of Accompanying CD.....	6
Conventions Used in this Thesis.....	7
Acknowledgments.....	8
CHAPTER 1	
Introduction: Purpose of this Thesis and Context of this Research.....	10
1.1 Preamble: A flute with multiple identities.....	10
1.2 Purpose of this thesis.....	14
1.3 Context of this research.....	17
1.3.1 Performance contexts.....	18
1.4 This researcher's position within the context.....	21
1.5 Context and Scope: The Myōan Shakuhachi in the Present.....	30
1.6 Methodology.....	33
1.7 Outline.....	37
CHAPTER 2	
Literature Review.....	41
2.1 Overview of the Literature.....	41
2.2 Historical Treatments.....	45
2.3 Musicological Treatments.....	57
2.4 Ethnographic Treatments.....	69
2.5 Religious Treatments.....	71
2.6 Conclusion.....	77
CHAPTER 3	
The shakuhachi and the Fuke Sect: A history overshadowed by doubts.....	79
3.1 The Shakuhachi.....	80
3.2 Brief History of the Fuke-shū and Komusō leading to Myōan Kyōkai.....	82
3.3 The downfall and proscription of the Fuke sect.....	93
3.4 Crossing Class Lines: Path to Defeat or a Type of Victory?.....	95
3.5 Reemergence: Founding of the Myōan Kyōkai and Resurrection of Myōan Temple.....	98
3.6 Conclusion: The Fuke sect re-invented and perpetuated as Myōan Kyōkai	103
CHAPTER 4	
Musical Praxis I: Blowing Zen.....	111
4.1 Contexts of Blowing Zen.....	113
4.2 Blowing Zen: A Look at the Suizen-kai (Blowing Zen Gathering).....	115
4.2.1 Suizen-kai.....	119
4.2.2 Benkyō-kai.....	127
4.3 Kaiden-shiki.....	130
4.4 Tai-kai.....	134
4.5 Unpacking Performance.....	136
4.6 Combining Practice and Performance.....	144

4.7 Conclusion: From solitude to gathering and forming communities.....	145
CHAPTER 5	
Musical Praxis II: Introduction to the Repertoire.....	151
5.1 Overview of the Repertoire.....	151
5.2 Core Repertoire.....	154
5.3 Levels and Steps leading to Kaiden/Dōshu.....	160
5.3.1 Additional Repertoire.....	168
5.4 Transmission: Textual and Oral Considerations.....	170
5.5 Notational system.....	174
5.6 Conclusion.....	181
CHAPTER 6	
Musical Praxis III: A Closer Look at the Repertoire.....	183
6.1 Musical and Stylistic Tendencies.....	183
6.2 ‘Transcriptions’ of Honte Jōshi and Azuma Jishi.....	193
6.2.1 Honte Jōshi.....	194
6.2.2 Azuma Jishi.....	195
6.3 Conclusion.....	196
CHAPTER 7	
Situating the Myōan Kyōkai.....	198
7.1 Myōan Kyōkai: Religious sect, club, society (or what)?.....	198
7.2 Who becomes a member?.....	209
CHAPTER 8	
Conclusion.....	213
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	219
DISCOGRAPHY.....	230
APPENDIX 1 Roman to Japanese Transliteration of Key Words and Names.....	232
APPENDIX 2 Fingering Charts and Score Examples.....	238
APPENDIX 3 Distribution of the membership.....	246

## List of Illustrations

Photo 1.1: Gate to Myōan Temple, Kyoto.....	9
Photo 1.2: Contemporary Komusō.....	20
Photo 3.1: Suizen Monument (suizen-hi).....	104
Photo 3.2: Fukezuka (Fuke’s Grave).....	109
Photo 4.1: Members of the Myōan Dōshukai at the World Shakuhachi Festival in Kyoto (WSF2012).....	114
Photo 8.1: Leaving Myōan-ji.....	218
Table 4.1: Summary and Order of Segments of the Suizen-kai.....	122
Table 5.1: Myōan Kyōkai: Classification of Core Repertoire.....	159
Table 5.2: Myōan Kyōkai: Core Repertoire by Level.....	167
Table 5.3: Myōan Kyōkai core repertoire: ‘Overlay’ of Tables 6.1 & 6.2.....	169
Table 5.4: Comparison of ‘New’ and ‘Old’ shakuhachi tablature systems.....	177
Example 6.1: “Kyoto” tsu-re.....	191
Example 6.2: ‘Transcription’ of Honte Jōshi.....	195
Example 6.3: ‘Transcription’ of Azuma Jishi.....	197
Appendix 2(a): Fingering Chart/Explanation (Rochiku).....	238
Appendix 2(b): Fingering Chart/Explanation (Myōan-ji).....	239
Appendix 2(c): Fingering Chart with western notational equivalents.....	240
Appendix 2(d): Chōshi score (Myōan).....	241
Appendix 2(e): Honte jōshi score (Rochiku).....	242
Appendix 2(f): Azuma jishi score (Rochiku).....	243
Appendix 2(g): Azuma jishi score (Myōan).....	245
Appendix 3(a): Distribution of Myōan Kyōkai Membership.....	247
Appendix 3(b): Myōan Kyōkai Membership by Prefecture (Excluding central detail and Okinawa).....	248
Appendix 3(c): Myōan Kyōkai Membership by Prefecture (Central detail).....	248

## Contents of Accompanying CD

The CD that accompanies this thesis is presented as a data CD in order to accommodate both audio files and the one video file included.

<u>Filename</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<b>1 Yao_tsu-re.wav</b>	Field recording made 26 September, 2010 in Itami (close to Osaka). Here Yao Byakuren teaches the author about tsu-re and its execution (see Chapter 6).
<b>2 Kojima_Koku.mpeg</b>	Video taken by members of Byakuren-kai at Dainenbutsu Temple, Osaka on 18 October, 2008. Here the current <i>kansu</i> , Kojima Issui, plays <i>Koku</i> . Notice that his execution of tsu-re (the first motif, but heard many times throughout) clearly shows his upper hand’s index finger opening and then closing the 4th (uppermost) hole,

but in most cases it is barely, if at all, audible.

- 3 *Yoshimura\_Choshi.wav*** This and the next file are recordings made by the current *kansu*'s predecessor, Yoshimura Fuan. Refer to musical features discussed in Chapter 6, also see the transcription at the end of the same chapter.
- 4 *Yoshimura\_Kyorei.wav*** This recording is mentioned several times throughout the text and is one of the three most venerated pieces, the *San Kyorei*. It is invariably played immediately following Chōshi (contained in the preceding file) at *suizen-kai* (see Chapter 4).
- 5 *Muchiku\_Azuma.wav*** This and the next file are recordings of the same piece and is heard here played by the 37th *Kansu*, Tanikita Muchiku. A discussion and transcription appear in Chapter 6.
- 6 *Yao\_Azuma.wav*** This field recording was made during a *benkyō-kai* held at Myōan Temple on 16 December, 2012. Yao Byakuren is mentioned several times throughout the text and also currently heads the Myōan Dōshu Kai. As with the previous file, please refer to Chapter 6.
- 7 *Hannya.wav*** The head priest, Hirazumi Gyozan, leads participants in chanting *Hannya Shingyō* at the start of a *Zenkoku Myōan Shakuhachi Kensō Tai-kai*. This field recording was made at Dairyū Temple in Gifu City on 18 October, 2008. *Hannya Shingyō* (The Heart Sutra) appears in Chapter 4.

## Conventions Used in this Thesis

Japanese words are given following the Hepburn system of romanisation, except in rare cases when authors have preferred to represent their romanised names, as well as their work, using the Kunreisiki method. Diacritical marks, indicating long vowels, are missing for some words that commonly eliminate them (e.g. Tōkyō becomes Tokyo). Japanese names follow the Japanese order of Family name first. In many cases throughout this text the first (or given) name is not the one received at birth, but rather their *chikumei*, or 'bamboo name' given to them by the Myōan Kyōkai. With the intention of improving readability, Japanese characters (kanji and kana) are provided within the text only when needed to illustrate certain points. A Roman to Japanese transliteration is provided in Appendix 1.

## Acknowledgments

Having so many people to thank could, one would think, be cause for embarrassment. In my case, however, it is with a certain amount of pride (along with a sufficient measure of humility, I hope) that so many supported me in various ways with the research leading to this thesis and then its writing. I am truly indebted to all of them, far too many to include by name. Thanks go to my shakuhachi teacher, Kosugi Chikugen, without whom I could quite possibly never have encountered the Myōan Fuke shakuhachi. He was fully supportive through all phases of this research. David Hughes of SOAS, my initial PhD supervisor, retired somewhat suddenly very near the beginning of the project, but continued his support and often referred to me as his “last PhD student.” It is my hope that he will now be able to more fully enjoy his ‘retirement’. Nick Gray took over as official supervisor after him and deserves special credit for this. Then there were friends who put me up (and more importantly put up with me) during my stays in (or near) London. Even though it may have put friendships to the test, I am eternally grateful: Mary and Clarie; (another) Mary, James and Alexander. Thanks also to literally all at Myōan Temple in Kyoto, not only for their support, but also for what I’m sure will be lasting friendships. Far too many to list, but among these are Hirazumi Gyozan, head priest; Kojima Issui, *Kansu*; Yao Byakuren, who provided especially valuable insights into the repertoire and technique and who, during the course of this project became appointed head teacher (*rijichō* of the Myōan *dōshukai*). Many fellow members who also provided support and friendship include: Ishihara, Mizui (sadly now deceased), Hayashi, Kobayashi, etc., etc... The list really could (and should) go on and on. To those whose names are not listed, please accept not only my apologies, but also my sincere gratitude. My mother-in-law, Hisako Shiobara, provided not only unending moral support, but financial as well. Thanks go also to Saori-san at Mejiro, Ltd., who supported me by entrusting the loan of several difficult to find and out of print materials. While the order of names just listed was meant to be random to give more or less equal treatment to all, last and by no means least (she insisted on being acknowledged last), my wife, and life-partner Mari Shiobara deserves immeasurable thanks for her support, encouragement and above all her patience (and really so much more). This project would not have been possible or worthwhile without her.



**Photo 1.1: Entrance gate to Myōan Temple, Kyoto**  
(Photo by author)

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction: Purpose of this Thesis and Context of this Research

### 1.1 Preamble: A flute with multiple identities

This section is a brief introduction to the shakuhachi, describing the instrument for those unfamiliar with it. More importantly, at the outset, it attempts to lay out the boundaries set out for this project and explain why certain aspects and styles are not part of this research. In other words, this thesis makes no pretense at being a comprehensive resource about the shakuhachi in general, but rather limits itself to the instrument in the hands of the Myōan Kyōkai.

At its most basic level, the shakuhachi, as it is known today, is an end-blown notched flute made of bamboo. Part of the root end forms a bell at the bottom of the instrument, usually seven of the bamboo nodes are visible and there are five finger holes.<sup>1</sup> Variations on this basic form can be considered to be governed by two factors: the overall style of playing and the manufacturing process. The name ‘shakuhachi’ refers to the ‘standard’ length of the instrument: one *shaku* and eight (*hachi*) *sun* (1 *sun* =  $\frac{1}{10}$  *shaku*; 1.8 *shaku* = approximately 54.5cm). Various lengths of instrument are also common, but they all retain the generic name of ‘shakuhachi’.

Even though played in a solo unaccompanied context, the shakuhachi today often also joins an ensemble. When used as a member of an ensemble,

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1 The 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen experimental instruments with seven and also nine finger holes. These are by no means mainstream, although the former (7 holes) is used by some members of the Tozan style (a school of playing founded by Nakao Tozan (1876–1956)) as well as by some *min’yō* (Japanese folk song) players.

considerations of tuning play a more important part and for this reason, many instruments are made in two sections. This simplifies the manufacturing process considerably, making it possible to retain the overall shape as mentioned above, while also making it possible to adjust the length. Furthermore, it eases working on the inner bore, as now the craftsman can work with two shorter lengths rather than one long pipe. For tuning considerations, an additional innovation was introduced, probably in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whereby the inside was lined with a paste known as *ji*.<sup>2</sup> This made it possible to have complete control over the inner walls of the instrument, meaning the maker was no longer at the mercy of the inner shape of the bamboo that nature had provided.

The shakuhachi's connection to Zen Buddhism is commonly observed. Even though this has been seen as somewhat contentious by some, it can also at times seem exaggerated and overplayed. These representations can apply to all forms of the instrument, whether or not they are lined with *ji*, come apart into two (occasionally more) sections or have undergone any other modifications.

The repertoire associated with Zen priests/monks of the Fuke sect<sup>3</sup> is known generically as *koten* (classic) *honkyoku* (original pieces), sometimes shortened simply to *honkyoku*.<sup>4</sup> These pieces can be heard today played on the different types of the instrument and in varying contexts that often include the concert stage.

The various styles of shakuhachi playing can be divided into two groups based

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2 *Ji* is a mixture of *tonoko* (gypsum, whetstone or clay powder) mixed with water and *urushi* (lacquer). Mixing dry substances with lacquer, known as *kanshitsu* ("dry lacquer" technique) has been used as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Its use for the shakuhachi is not well documented, but probably became common practice towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the shakuhachi went from being an exclusively solo instrument to becoming accepted as part of an ensemble (Singer 2001; see also Mau 2007:12).

3 These mendicant priests/monks were known as *Komusō* and were prevalent especially during Japan's Edo period (1600–1868)—see Chapter 3.

4 The *honkyoku* repertoire as well as the term are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

on their repertoire: those that include the *koten honkyoku*, and those whose repertoire does not, but rather consists entirely of separately composed pieces (sometimes referred to as *gaikyoku*—outside pieces) that may be for unaccompanied solo shakuhachi, several shakuhachi or include other instruments. In some styles, the repertoire combines *koten honkyoku* with additional repertoire.

This thesis looks at the shakuhachi in its ‘less refined’ form: *ji-nashi* (literally ‘without *ji*’, i.e., not lined with the *ji* compound), an inseparable one-pieced instrument (often referred to as *kokan*—literally ‘old pipe’) and usually—in this case almost invariably—the standard length of 1.8 *shaku*.<sup>5</sup> The context of this study is the instrument as used at the Zen Temple, Myōan-ji<sup>6</sup> in Kyoto, Japan and, for the sake of this research, the overall style can be called the *Myōan Fuke shakuhachi*, as it is often referred to by its proponents, members of the Myōan Kyōkai. While this can be considered the full name of the instrument, for considerations of readability it will more often be shortened simply to “shakuhachi” throughout the text. Furthermore, this thesis confines itself to what is most often referred to as *koten honkyoku*, a term further unpacked in Chapter 5. This solo unaccompanied repertoire is the only one practiced by the Myōan<sup>7</sup> Kyōkai today.

Because the repertoire of the Myōan Kyōkai consists exclusively of *koten honkyoku*, other styles or schools begin to lose relevance for the current study as

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5 Tanikita Muchiku, 37<sup>th</sup> *kansu* (abbot) of Myōan Temple limited the length used to 1.9 *shaku*.

6 In Japanese the ‘-*ji*’ suffix is added to denote temple. It will appear both ways throughout the remainder of the text.

7 An alternate pronunciation of “Myōan” is “Meian.” Thus, Myōan Kyōkai and Meian Kyōkai both refer to the same group of people; Myōan Temple and Meian Temple are the same place. This can be confusing, especially to non-Japanese speakers and arises from two different readings of the same kanji (明) as either “myō” or “mei”. The former (*myō*) will be used throughout the remainder of this thesis. Other than for consistency sake, there are two reasons for this. First of all, during fieldwork, Myōan was by far more prevalently heard. More importantly, the present *kansu* gave me the most plausible justification for Myōan being the more correct and preferred appellation: the *Myōan Shidanoge* (Fuke’s essential poem—see Chapter 3, section 3.2) uses precisely this pronunciation (Kojima, Personal Communication 22 April, 2012).

their repertoire moves away from the *koten honkyoku*. Thus, for example, the Tozan school of playing, which consists entirely of newly composed pieces, is completely immaterial and therefore does not find a place in this thesis.

There are, however, as just mentioned, some styles that include *koten honkyoku*, but also supplement their repertoire with other compositions. These would include, among others, the Kinko, Chikuhō and Ueda styles, but again here, pieces outside of the *koten honkyoku* are of no real interest to the current study, even though the shared repertoire may begin to get closer in relevance. Yet at the same time, while there are some commonalities musically, the purpose here is not to undertake a comparative survey in any full sense. While certainly possible, it would have to be confined to only the music, since, generally speaking, the contexts differ in that these other styles normally do not include a temple setting. Furthermore, as we will see, even when not laying any claim to the repertoire, many of the styles affirm at least a historical connection to the *Komusō* if only by virtue of an organological relationship. In this sense, they look outward from their own tradition by tracing the historical origins of the instrument. Perhaps a stronger bond is created with the inclusion of the *koten honkyoku* and even further reinforced when that is the exclusive collection of pieces played. The same cannot be said, however, from the perspective of the Myōan Kyōkai, whose interests do not at all include other styles, even when some of those other styles do share at least some of the repertoire. In this sense, the gaze is completely inward and it is for this reason that other styles or schools of playing lose relevance to the study being undertaken here. It should be stressed therefore, that this thesis is not a general work about the shakuhachi, but rather specifically focuses on the instrument as used by one specific group: members

of the Myōan Kyōkai in Kyoto, Japan.

## 1.2 Purpose of this thesis

This thesis explores the performance contexts of the Myōan Kyōkai and its proponents. Much of the literature about the *Komusō* and Fuke sect already emphasises that the repertoire is not ‘music’ per se and that the instrument is not considered to be a musical one, but rather a religious, Buddhist or spiritual tool (*hōki*—literally tool of the Dharma) (cf. Tukitani, Seyama, and Simura 1994:11; Tokita and Hughes 2008:6; Gutzwiller 1984:55–56; Keister 2005:48). Whether this is the attitude of current practitioners is also examined. Certainly Blacking’s (1974) definition of music as “humanly organised sound” can be applied without much objection, but the use of a common Japanese translation of the word ‘music’ becomes more problematic. *Ongaku*, whose two ideograms (音楽) combine ‘sound’ plus ‘comfort’, ‘ease’ or perhaps even ‘enjoyment’, would seem to express comfortable or perhaps comforting sound and therefore has entertainment implications. In fact, we will find that *ongaku* as a term finds little relevance to this study and will make only a couple of brief appearances (see, for example, Chapter 5, section 5.2). In fact, as a word, it rarely—if ever—is applied to traditional Japanese music, but rather has been used in reference to foreign music or sometimes Western style music by Japanese composers. It did not even really gain much currency until the late nineteenth century with the introduction of Western music into public education (Hosokawa 2012:2, 4).

It would then seem to follow that a very common notion that music as goal-

oriented towards performance in the sense of entertainment or display for an audience becomes impossible to maintain. In the context examined here, although the Myōan Kyōkai may appear to be organised along similar lines to the hierarchical pseudo-kinship *iemoto* system common to many other Japanese arts and musical genres, this system also implies various stages or levels of proficiency, leading to a standard of ‘performance competence’. While it is true that the repertoire of the Myōan Kyōkai is organised into graded stages, reaching a certain standard of technical skill is by no means stressed, but rather it is attitude and approach that are emphasised.<sup>8</sup> These few aspects are just some examples challenging some frequently held perceptions of music and performance. They are perhaps most conveniently explained by subsuming this particular tradition under the rubric of ‘religious’ or ‘sacred’ music and considering its practice a spiritual one. However, these labels also carry with them no light load and cannot (or at least should not) be so glibly applied. This problem will be addressed in Chapter 7.

The *honkyoku* repertoire appears to have withstood some of the tests of time by remaining relatively static, with very little, if any, interest in expanding it.<sup>9</sup> This constant, it would seem, is one factor that could enable one to identify and more strongly link today’s Myōan tradition with an older one, namely the shakuhachi of the *Komusō* and the Fuke sect. Additionally, when compared to some other styles, the instrument also remains relatively unchanged; this apparent lack of motivation to innovate, both musically and organologically, can indeed be viewed as an endeavour to maintain a tradition, even if there have been needs to change—or perhaps adapt—

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<sup>8</sup> The various grades and stages are examined in Chapter 5, section 5.3.

<sup>9</sup> This is not so much the case in some of the more popular or well known shakuhachi styles, where if not entirely replaced (as is the case of the Tozan style), these pieces have been supplemented by additional ones (e.g. Kinko, Ueda and Chikuho styles).

in some other ways.

This thesis, therefore, focuses on the living tradition of the shakuhachi as practiced by the Myōan Kyōkai and emphasises the present (rather than dwelling on the past). It seeks to discover the ways that members engage with the shakuhachi and some of the reasons they choose to do so by joining the Myōan Kyōkai in particular. We have already seen in the opening section that the shakuhachi has been tied to Zen in a sometimes loosely defined and personal way. This was even largely my own case before embarking on this research, where my encounters with the instrument were by far mostly situated in a solitary context. This study is a move away from ‘holicipation’ (Killick 2006) to participation and seeks to illuminate the use of the shakuhachi in an organised and institutionalised form, in particular a Zen temple setting. To this end, only one group of people at one temple were chosen: the Myōan Kyōkai based in Myōan Temple in Kyoto, Japan.

Research questions revolve around the theme of community. What factors contribute to forming the Myōan Kyōkai into a community and then what sustains it as a community? One answer that immediately presents itself would point to the shakuhachi and the repertoire associated with this particular group of people. Yet this does not explain fully how and why music may play such a central rôle in binding this group together; nor does it consider the extent to which these factors may be rooted in the past and take on more contemporary qualities that go beyond music. If there are historical connections to explain the existence of this coterie, would it then be logical to also consider religion as playing a part in shaping and holding it together? To this thesis, all three of these (music, history, religion) are, beyond doubt, interdependent components that could play a part in defining the

Myōan Kyōkai. As this study reveals, however, each one also has its own set of problems and difficulties, demanding that each be reappraised if not for their own sake, certainly for the Zen associations of the shakuhachi and the *Komusō*.

### 1.3 Context of this research

As touched upon already several times in the preceding sections, the *shakuhachi* bamboo flute is almost invariably associated with Zen Buddhism and the monks/priests of ‘emptiness and nothingness’ (*Komusō*)<sup>10</sup> of the Fuke sect. So frequent is the Zen connection made that at times it begins to appear quite exaggerated, causing the instrument sometimes to be referred to simply as a “Zen flute,” regardless of the context in which it appears. Occasionally there is even the perception that the longer the flute, the more ‘Zen’ it is. Yet the Zen or ‘religious’ aspects, while appearing to be omnipresent, can at the same time seem ill defined and vague. This, no doubt, is partly due to a confusing and somewhat obscure history, but also because of the concert contexts in which the shakuhachi so often appears today. In contrast to staged performances of Christian choral music, for example, a concert of shakuhachi *honkyoku* may include players in full *Komusō* attire, thereby adding an extra ‘costumed’ dimension to the performance. That the performance contexts often take place in ‘non-religious’ venues or settings is certainly testimony to the value of the repertoire from a musical standpoint and also, it should be added, a reason that the repertoire has endured. Yet at the same time, the music likely loses its original intent and meaning, in much the same way that any religious or sacred music does when removed from its original setting. This is not to

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Ko’ translates as emptiness and ‘mu’ means nothingness; in Japanese, the *sō* suffix does not make a distinction between priest and monk.

invalidate some of the new meanings that may be taken on by some of its practitioners. Jay Keister has suggested that a “shift in *shakuhachi* practice from religious tradition to spiritual discourse allows for claims of personal ownership on the part of the consumer outside of the culture of origin” (Keister 2005:48—italics in original). This, as the title of his article indicates, is an appropriation of the instrument, but it does not explain the extent to which (or whether) the displacement and change in context is conscious. Keister (2004:122) also suggests that “meditation, spirituality, and to a certain extent, religion, play a much greater role in the explicit discourse about *shakuhachi* for Western players than for Japanese players.” This could very well be true, but it does not fully take into account possible cultural differences in the way the subjects of meditation, religion and spirituality are verbalised.

In any case, this thesis does not look at the *shakuhachi* with any of these newer meanings in mind, for that would entail an entirely different research problem altogether; nor does it approach it with a ‘secular’ frame of reference in mind. Rather it considers the instrument in a ‘religious’ environment. Although the term ‘religion’ (and its derivatives) can impart possible misunderstandings (and the same applies to its apparent antonym ‘secular’), that discussion will be delayed until Chapter 7. Suffice it to say for now that the aim is to examine the topic in what could be considered an organised and institutionalised environment, in this case the Rinzai Zen Buddhist temple, Myōan-ji.

### **1.3.1 Performance contexts**

The *shakuhachi*—and likely other instruments—can be seen ‘performed’ in four basic contexts:

1. Personal/private in a ‘non-rehearsal’ mode
2. Public in a ritual or ceremonial context
3. Public as mendicancy
4. Public in a concert/recital context

The first context has also been called “holicipation” by Killick (2006) and would aptly describe my own primary relationship with the shakuhachi for the period leading up to the fieldwork for this research. In essence, the situation associated with this context is that one ‘performs’ in the absence of any other observers or audience. The ‘performer’ and ‘listener’ are thus the same person and no sense of taking part (participating) exists (hence Killick’s coinage of the term ‘holicipation’<sup>11</sup>). The points to emphasise here are the private, solitary nature of this context and especially the non-rehearsal or non-propaedeutic nature of this setting. (Many, if not most, musicians practice as a way of preparation.)

The next three contexts require little elucidation. From Christian church services to sporting events and scholastic graduation ceremonies, music plays a large part in many social functions and rituals (religious and otherwise). What this research shows is that the shakuhachi in this context is different perhaps only in that music is in fact the prime focus. Rather than acting in a more supportive rôle or as an accessory to any proceedings, it takes ‘centre stage’ and actually seems to become the *raison d’être* for the activities themselves.

When musical sound is used in religious mendicancy, there is to some degree a departure from both the solitary and ritual contexts. In a sense it could be seen as

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11 “[I]f taking/taking part’ is ‘participation’, then ‘taking the whole’ (dropping the ‘w’ by analogy with ‘holistic’ and flouting the rules of etymology somewhat) should be ‘holicipation’” (2006:274).

approaching the domain of the completely public performance context of concert or recital and is almost indistinguishable from it, except that it carries with it ‘religious’ meaning and purpose. In fact, for the *Komusō* of the Edo era (1600–1868) mendicancy was a sort of trademark. Easily recognisable by their outfit, especially their distinctive hive-shaped basket headgear (known as a *tengai*), *Komusō* can occasionally still be seen, including concerts or other public displays, where they may not be affiliated with a particular temple or even begging for alms (see Photo 1.2). In fact, the figure of *Komusō* can be viewed as a type of ‘mascot’ symbolising the shakuhachi itself and a full outfit can be purchased by anyone. The *Komusō* rôle looked at in this research, however, carries the function of mendicancy, albeit in a slightly modified form (see Chapter 4, section 4.4).



**Photo 1.2: Contemporary *Komusō***  
Shown here in a less than usual context  
(Sydney Opera House can be seen in the background).  
Taken at the World Shakuhachi Festival (WSF 2008).  
(Photo by author)

Finally, we turn very briefly to the public display mode of concert or recital. This context is quite prevalent in the shakuhachi world, but due to its usual non religious nature, it is considered only briefly in this thesis in order to juxtapose it to

the other public contexts, for in the case under consideration here, concertising is close to nonexistent (some rare occasions are discussed in the Chapter 4, section 4.1).

#### **1.4 This researcher's position within the context**

My first encounter with the shakuhachi was at a concert shortly after my 1998 arrival in Japan, but a more intimate experience with the instrument would have to wait until about three years later. During these intervening years, and indeed since my arrival in Japan, I had always wanted to immerse myself in some form of the culture and feel a sense of belonging; I also wanted to be able to feel that I had acquired something 'cultural' that I could take away when/if I left. Without knowing exactly what this 'something' might be, an opportunity to study the shakuhachi actually presented itself before I had even started to seek it out.

Some masters' students at the university where my wife was teaching had given presentations on their topics and I was invited to attend the party that was held afterwards. I struck up a conversation with another guest when one of the dishes came served on a bamboo dish. I remarked how bamboo had become a favourite material of mine ever since I had arrived in Japan. From there, the exchange quickly progressed onto the shakuhachi (also made of bamboo) and he mentioned that he was learning how to play at a small club in the university. He invited me to join the following Friday afternoon and I eagerly accepted. The club in question was led by a teacher, who was teaching *shinobue*<sup>12</sup> part-time at the university. As far as the shakuhachi was concerned, he just happened to be of the Myōan style. In fact, at the

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<sup>12</sup> The *shinobue* is a transverse bamboo flute.

time, I was completely unaware of there being any divisions along stylistic or school lines, and completely ignorant about the possibility of any ‘religious’ connections. At that first meeting the teacher told me that this style of shakuhachi had a strong association with Zen Buddhism and he seemed concerned whether this would bother me or otherwise in any way be in conflict with any of my beliefs. This did not, in fact, worry me and I can’t recall giving very much thought to the matter: I just wanted to learn how to play the instrument. The idea of different styles or schools was not sinking in; a shakuhachi was just a shakuhachi I thought and in retrospect, I was really being very naïve. Nevertheless, I embarked on learning the shakuhachi with this teacher and shortly thereafter joined the Myōan Kyōkai, the group associated with Myōan Temple in Kyoto, Japan.

It would seem that simply being a member could automatically make me a ‘participant-observer’ to the following study, or even position me as an ‘insider’ from the very beginning. In my case, this can only be partly true, however. First of all, my decision to pursue any sort of academic research came a good time later. My motivation to undertake any sort of formal research stemmed from the interest that I had already developed in this particular style of shakuhachi and a desire to learn more about it. Having earned a Bachelor of Music degree in classical guitar performance a good many years earlier, I found that knowledge difficult to satisfactorily apply to what I was experiencing with the shakuhachi.

As I set out on this project, there was still another reason that I did not really qualify as an insider: even though I belonged to the Myōan Kyōkai, it was based at a temple that I had never visited, simply because it was located quite a distance away and I did not know anyone there. I was also to find out during the first phase of my

fieldwork, that my relatively junior rank may not have accorded me full insider status from the outset of this project, demonstrating that—at least in this context—there were varying degrees of insider-ness.

Nevertheless, at first glance, it would seem self evident that there are distinct advantages to being any kind of ‘insider’, a designation that, as researcher (rather than member), I wore with some hesitation as I embarked on fieldwork. Perhaps the primary advantage, it would appear, is that I already had some knowledge of the repertoire of the Myōan Kyōkai before this research was even conceived. On the surface it would also seem, as a member, access to resources and other members would probably be more readily available to me and perhaps it is thus fair to say that I already had a ‘head start’ on the research presented here. However, in the course of more formal fieldwork, this was to come with more than just a few qualifications.

Among these was that, strangely enough, I had never actually visited Myōan Temple in Kyoto, the home, or headquarters of the Myōan Kyōkai. I live just west of Tokyo and Kyoto is some 400 kilometres away. All membership transactions, such as induction into the organisation, attainment of the various levels or grades of repertoire, etc. were conducted by my teacher, Kosugi Chikugen, from Tokyo using the postal system. One would assume that, given my membership, access to the temple, its activities and members would be a relatively trivial matter. From the outset, however, I discovered that this was not quite the case, even though eventually, it was indeed my membership that ultimately provided me admittance.

This access, however, was somewhat limited up to the very end of the first phase of my fieldwork by my status as a member with a comparatively low rank, not

having yet attained the highest level of *dōshu*.<sup>13</sup> This would affirm the existence of different levels or grades of ‘insiderness’. Another factor not to be overlooked is that of familiarity: the more I attended various gatherings, the more accepted I became, even though there was no doubt that some situations were reserved exclusively for senior members. Other special events were undoubtedly by invitation from the organiser(s) concerned. Not surprisingly, I was also to become aware that my associated activities in Tokyo were not at all comparable to what I was to discover during fieldwork. Rather, they were more isolated and simply a one-on-one relationship between learner and teacher in a private lesson environment. In this sense it differed little with my previous experiences of music lessons in the West. The isolation, coupled with the geographical distance, were factors that to no insignificant extent initially made me an outsider, also perhaps not forgetting that I was a foreigner to Japan.

Even though, for the purposes of this research, access to Myōan Temple seemed to be a given, I still thought it prudent—and proper—to have my teacher provide me with an introduction. I asked him if he would be willing to contact the head priest to introduce me so that I could arrange a time to meet with him. Although I thought I had explained sufficiently to my teacher that I was very specifically and especially *not* interested in learning about some of the history going back some centuries, it became obvious that I hadn’t been clear, since he wrote to the priest that this was in fact my main focus. The priest answered that he would not be able to help me: if I wanted to learn more about the history from the Edo period (1600–1868), I should contact someone else. He supplied a list of names, most of them familiar, but none of them directly affiliated with the temple. When my teacher delivered this news to

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<sup>13</sup> *Dōshu* is the rank of certified teacher (see Chapter 4, section 4.3).

me, it was difficult to contain my disappointment, and I probably did not really manage to completely conceal it. He seemed to sense this by suggesting that maybe “someday” we could travel to Kyoto to visit Myōan Temple together.

In view of this and to avoid any further delays in starting my fieldwork, it seemed that my only option was to simply go to Kyoto and find the temple on my own. So, a few days later, I took an early morning *shinkansen* (‘bullet’ train) and planned to spend the day in Kyoto. I found my way to Myōan Temple in the early afternoon with only a few minor difficulties. It was quiet and really peaceful there; in fact there didn’t seem to be anything going on, no activity at all. I hadn’t really known what to expect, but I had anticipated at least the possibility of hearing some shakuhachi sounds. There was a groundskeeper sweeping the temple’s curtilage and, after walking and looking around a bit, I mustered the courage to approach him and attempt a conversation:

“Do you play the shakuhachi?” I asked.

A simple and unelaborated “No,” was his reply.

“There sure doesn’t seem to be much going on here,” I said, trying to keep some sort of dialogue going. “Is it usually like this?”

“Pretty much, although I think there’s some kind of gathering in a few weeks.” He gave me a date.

Although the whole exchange felt somewhat awkward, as I left through the temple gate, I was feeling quite satisfied with my little reconnaissance mission: I had found out how to get to the temple and had even managed to get a date for when a gathering of some sort was going to occur. Even though I had not managed to meet a

fellow shakuhachi-ist or the priest, the groundskeeper seemed quite pleasant, and for my purposes at the time, certainly very helpful.

The gathering that the groundskeeper had so kindly clued me in on lasted a few hours and, being December, there was an end-of-year party (*bōnenkai*) afterwards, which I was invited to join. After the party, on the way out, I met the groundskeeper, who was coming to clean up the remnants of the festivities. Of course, I thanked him profusely, for I felt that it was entirely thanks to him that I had managed to penetrate ‘the field’. My next encounter with the groundskeeper was to come about three weeks later, on Christmas day, when my teacher had finally arranged a meeting and an opportunity to interview the head priest. For some reason, the priest now seemed willing to meet me. The priest/groundskeeper (yes, the groundskeeper and the priest are the same person) also told my teacher that he had met me a couple of times already...

This encounter shows that successfully entering the field means to be fully accepted and, in this case not simply as a member, but also as a researcher. Equally important to recognise is that neither automatically guarantees entry. It should be acknowledged that the very act of researching itself automatically positions one, at least to some degree, on the ‘outside’: in my own case, it is highly doubtful that the ‘shakuhachi-playing-I’ would be asking (or bothering to ask) many of the questions that the ‘researcher-I’ would ask. Regardless, I become situated both inside and outside; not necessarily straddling the two, but also definitely *not* somewhere in between, in the “gap” or “theoretical ‘no place’” that Timothy Rice (2008:51) describes as neither being inside nor outside, for he considers himself as “neither an insider nor an outsider” (Rice 2008:51). This differs from my own position in that

while, as intimated earlier, there may be different degrees of insider-ness, I ultimately came to be accepted as a fully equal participant and it is really only my alter ego of researcher that may at times place me outside or somewhere on the periphery.

Riley Lee accords significant importance to what he refers to as the ‘insider/outsider paradigm’ by declaring it to be a crucial factor to his own study (Lee 1998:14). He sets up criteria specifically relating to the ‘shakuhachi tradition’ and then, after narrowing his focus to the various schools or styles of playing, he locates himself within this overall system. The reason for doing this is what he claims to be the value placed by members of the shakuhachi tradition (presumably ‘at large’) on situating its (the overall tradition’s) members (Lee 1998:24) and hence there also seems to be an element of validation for the purposes of doing the research.

While this may have suited Lee’s purposes, such a scheme does not really seem to be a realistic portrayal of the shakuhachi world as it actually exists, if not within Japan, certainly within the circle of practitioners being studied here. When the scope is narrowed down to the taxon of repertoire that is shared between several styles of playing,<sup>14</sup> we may seem to come closer to a single tradition. But this can only serve in studies that are comparative in nature and that cross the boundaries of particular styles, as is the case with Lee’s examination.<sup>15</sup> Even here, however, a comparison of styles immediately evinces the existence of not one, but several traditions, thus not leaving even the possibility of there being just one. That a more encompassing

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14 The repertoire in question here is known as *koten* (classic) *honkyoku* and is described in more detail in Chapter 5.

15 As an aside, it may be worth remarking that Lee describes himself as having belonged to several different shakuhachi coteries along the way (Lee 1998:21–23). This may help explain his wider perspective.

orientation does not work here could be exemplified in the episode that I recount in Chapter 4 (section 4.2), where admittance to a particular gathering within the physical space of the temple clearly depended upon my membership to the organisation and not whether I played the shakuhachi or not. So, even though there may at times be some overlap between shakuhachi traditions (most easily seen by at least some shared repertoire), there really cannot be a singular *tradition*. What does seem to manifest itself, however, is what could be considered an overall shakuhachi *community*. Viewed this way, there can also be several overlapping shakuhachi sub-communities comprising it (this will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4, section 4.7).

Since I was already a member of the Myōan Kyōkai before any sort of research project was in the works, I was already an ‘insider’ to this particular tradition simply by virtue of my membership. Chou Chiener (2002) describes her own experiences as a learner of Taiwanese *nanguan* ensemble music prior to becoming a researcher of the genre and observes that “[her] earlier knowledge, gained as a musical learner, seemed more difficult to deploy in academic writing than [her] later observations as a researcher.” She recommends that “those of us who have learnt music outside formal fieldwork contexts, need to reflect further on the special nature of our position and experience” (Chou 2002:457). Indeed, there are distinct parallels to be drawn between her position and my own.

Like Chou, my own studies of the shakuhachi began well before any scholarly pursuits were even in the picture. As a researcher, my rôle of learner expands beyond simply student of the instrument: I become ‘preserver’, ‘memorializer’ and ‘mediator’ (Shelemay 2008:149–52) as well as a bearer of the tradition, whether I

ever “perform” or become a teacher of the instrument (as practiced by the Myōan Kyōkai). The act of researching (and writing) makes this so. I am a full-fledged participant as well as observer and not a non-participating or non-playing researcher (Lee 1998:18). From my perspective, therefore, it probably becomes more difficult (if not impossible) to detach or exclude myself from the resultant ethnography. Michelle Kisliuk aptly points out that “the emergent identity of a fieldworker depends ... on the quality and depth of research relationships and *ultimately on the way we intend to re-present our experiences*” (2008:192–93—emphasis added).

It would seem that the obvious danger of reflexive writing is injecting too much of the ‘self’ at the expense of the ‘other’. Indeed, this pitfall caused me to initially avoid this approach altogether at the earliest stages of this research. What has become known as a “self-indulgent” or “confessional” style seems to bring about different responses. Cooley, for example, suggests that it should be avoided (2008:20) and Beaudry (2008:225) explicitly shuns Van Maanen’s (1988) term, “confessional tales,” as “flippant irony.” The point to consider here is whose ‘tale’ is being told and to remain on guard against simply producing an autobiography. Indeed, Van Maanen (1988:93) points to a “need for [a] balance between introspection and objectification,” noting that “[w]hen only the former is involved, a sort of ‘vanity ethnography’ results.” Kisliuk suggests that there is often a lack of awareness, on the part of ethnographers, between “self-indulgence” and “ethnographically relevant experience” and advises us to evaluate “whether an experience changed us in a way that significantly affected how we viewed, reacted to, or interpreted the ethnographic material (and to write with those connections in mind)” (2008:199).

Thus, an awareness of the position one holds as researcher needs to be constantly developed and continuously evaluated and then re-evaluated, *based on the individual experiences being re-presented*. It must be acknowledged that there really is no way to detach the narrator, by putting him/her in the third person simply as bystander, for to do so completely eliminates him/her not only as participant, but as mediator. By the same token, the risk of over-interpreting remains ever present and needs to be tempered by yielding to the voice of the observed. It also must be recognised here that being an ‘insider’ and member privileges me to participate far more actively than would be a non-playing researcher and even more so than a playing non-member, who would doubtfully gain admittance to some of the gatherings (see Chapter 4, especially Section 4.2).

### **1.5 Context and Scope: The Myōan Shakuhachi in the Present**

Chronicling the history of the shakuhachi, the *Komusō* priests/monks, who played it or the Fuke sect that they belonged to, presents numerous difficulties, many (and perhaps even most) of which are irreconcilable. The emphasis of this study, therefore, is on the present. The reason for this is twofold: on the one hand, historical details have already been examined at some length by others, as we shall see in the literature survey in the next chapter; on the other, any such treatment can only meet with rather limited success. Due to the very nature of some aspects of the history, there remain not only some gaps, but also enough questions that can really only be answered with a high degree of conjecture and uncertainty. Indeed, for this reason, some scholars (c.f. Eliot 1935; Malm 1959, 2000; Sanford 1977; Deeg 2007) have been led in various degrees towards either completely discrediting the *Komusō*

movement as a whole or the Fuke sect and its ties to the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism.<sup>16</sup> They also seem able to offer only somewhat tenuous explanations or theories to reconcile some of the mysteries surrounding the history, not only of the instrument, but also its connections to Zen Buddhism and even its identification as a sect (see especially Linder 2012).

The approach taken here, rather, is to accept at face value that there truly is a link between the shakuhachi and Rinzai Zen Buddhism *as practised today by the Myōan Kyōkai and its membership*. This is totally beyond dispute even if, as boldly suggested by Deeg (2007), the connection came much later than originally thought or previously reported. Eliot’s assertion that the *Komusō* were simply “modern minstrels [who] claim no connection with Buddhism” (1935:285), or Malm’s (1959, 2000) and Sanford’s (1977) references to the forgery of the Fuke sect, also pale in significance. Even if the intent is to discredit the movement as a whole, they also help to illustrate why this history becomes so problematic.

However, if there are indeed what one of my informants refers to as “lies” (*uso* —Yao Personal Interview 2009) associated with the history of the Fuke sect, what would also lead this same informant to be an active member and proponent of the tradition as practiced by the Myōan Kyōkai of today? Obviously in this case, these “lies” do not serve to discredit; nor do they act as a deterrent, but actually seem to become irrelevant. The simple fact that Myōan Temple, where the Myōan Kyōkai is based, is itself in a sub-temple of Tōfuku-ji, a genuine Rinzai Zen temple, also safely assures its connection to the Rinzai school of Zen. In this light, these ‘historical problems’ can be ignored, if not relegated to the distant background. Or can they?

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<sup>16</sup> Zen Buddhism in Japan is divided into three main schools: Rinzai, Sōtō and Ōbaku.

In much of its own literature, the Myōan Kyōkai effectively declares itself to be continuing the legacy of the Fuke sect, thus maintaining a tie to the past. Is history not simply an interpretation or representation of the past and by no means the past itself? Glassie, for example, states that “[h]istory is not the past; it is an artful assembly of materials from the past, designed for usefulness in the future” (1995:395). While I wholeheartedly subscribe to this view, I would suggest that Glassie’s “future” may more usefully read as “non-past” in order to include the present. One may look to the past in an attempt to reach an understanding of a present condition, but in so doing, one is bound not only by the restraints of what is known currently about the particular past under scrutiny, but also by the choices one makes in depicting it. This becomes a compounded problem when taking into account how history was represented in the past, the *Kyotaku Denki* (“History of the False Bell”)<sup>17</sup> being a case in point, as we will see in the third chapter.

Furthermore, the reasons for the breakup and criminalisation of the Fuke sect in 1871—a mere three years after the ultimate demise of the Tokugawa Shogunate and reinstatement of imperial rule—have often been treated in a rather isolated manner, without fully taking into account some of the trends of what was undoubtedly a turbulent time in Japan’s history. By no means was the Fuke sect alone in being a victim of that change, for Japanese Buddhism found its very survival severely threatened, with thousands of Buddhist temples of all sects being razed and their priests forced into the laity.<sup>18</sup> It should also be observed that the *samurai* (warrior)

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17 *Kyotaku* has also been translated as “empty bell.” Two different but related *kanji* have been used for *kyo*: 虚, meaning ‘empty’ and 嘘 meaning ‘lie’ or ‘false’. I have chosen the latter out of preference since the shakuhachi cannot really be considered a bell, but rather only symbolises one.

18 In Satsuma (present day Kagoshima prefecture), which could be considered a model region for a campaign to eradicate Buddhism from the country, Ketelaar (1990:61) reports that Buddhism was “almost extinct” there by the end of 1869. Between 1871 and 1876, the total number of Buddhist temples in Japan dropped from 465,049 to 71,962 and the number of priests was reduced from

class, from which the Fuke sect had drawn its entire membership, was also radically redefined during this period. It is far beyond the scope of this research to give a thorough analysis of the various historical trends just alluded to. Suffice it to remark here that, regarding the shakuhachi of the *Komusō* and the Fuke sect, for the instrument and its tradition to survive the proscription at all would require, to embellish slightly upon Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) term, re-inventing its tradition in one way or another.

Tradition is the crafting of the future from the past in a “continuous process situated in the nothingness of the present” (Glassie 1995:395), a “consensus through time” (Shils 1971:126). In other words, tradition itself acts as a nexus, linking the past to the future through the present. Obviously, tradition never spontaneously appears from nowhere: it is created (invented) at some—not always determinable—point in time and elaborated thereafter. It thus follows that, if a given tradition is to survive changes thrust upon it by time, it needs to be adaptable to them. Such certainly seems to be the case with the Myōan Kyōkai and its continuance of the legacy of the *Komusō*'s shakuhachi tradition. Yet its perpetuation, by necessity, exists in a considerably modified form today despite the “lies” that Yao mentioned earlier in this section and also notwithstanding some of the Fuke sect's historical inconsistencies.

## 1.6 Methodology

This study relies most heavily on participant observation and from the outset I was very open about the fact that I was conducting research. This can be

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75,972 in 1872 to 19,490 in 1876 (Collcutt 1986:162; Hane 1986:108).

demonstrated in the letter of introduction from my teacher to the head priest (see above, section 1.4). Although that letter did not initially produce the desired effect, it did signal to the priest my intentions. The word apparently soon spread because when prefacing some questions to—or discussions with—some members about my position as researcher, I discovered that many already knew.

From the beginning, however, there was somewhat of a struggle within me. I was a beginner at being a participant as well as being an observer; both were new to me and sometimes one seemed to take precedence over the other. For starters, there was a need to feel accepted by the group as a fully equal participant. As has already been mentioned, my membership provided admittance to the group, but I was still a newcomer. As such, I also felt an added pressure of being an observer/researcher, especially since that was clear to most everyone from the beginning.

Buford Junker identifies four rôles of the fieldworker: complete participant, complete observer, participant as observer and observer as participant (Junker 1960:35–40). Since I had already declared myself a researcher, it would seem that being a ‘complete participant’ would not apply in my case, for in that persona the research is completely concealed to the subjects. Yet there were times, especially at the beginning, I was so self-conscious of my activities that I almost wished I could hide my researcher identity (and even almost succeeded in hiding it from myself at times). Sometimes, for example, I had the feeling that I was being given the ‘evil eye’ while making recordings. While this might have been a sort of paranoia on my part, it also seemed clear that I too was being observed. In retrospect, although undoubtedly insecure as a novice fieldworker, I was also still conscious of my desire to be accepted into the group as a full-fledged insider. Not completely shedding my

position as observer, I would become a ‘participant as observer’, where my participant self dominated, subordinate to my observations (see Junker 1960:36).

An ‘observer as participant’, according to Junker, would aptly describe my ideal prior to entering the field, as this refers to the researcher that is completely overt in her/his activities prior to embarking on any fieldwork. Being a ‘complete observer’, however, appears irrelevant as a methodology because it completely precludes the possibility of taking an active part. Here too, however, there were times that part of me wanted to assume that position, if only for the simple reason that it might afford me the possibility of being a better observer and also improve my chances of documenting some of the proceedings. As an active participant, video recording, for instance, was often impossible, although it was not problematic during *tai-kai*, where participation was sequential (Turino 2008).<sup>19</sup>

Clearly these four perspectives find a place in this project, although to varying degrees. Given that I was open about my position as researcher my ‘observer as participant’ and ‘participant as observer’ selves predominated, yet all four rôles still had to be negotiated at various times along the way. Being a complete observer was by far the most difficult, largely due to circumstances (as noted in the previous paragraph).

The participant-observation model in any of its forms requires various tools to aid in data collection. Recording has already been touched on briefly, but extends beyond the use of electronic audio and/or video equipment to include written note taking, often difficult or impossible during the act of participating in much the same way as filming can be. While never intending to be covert in any way, I also felt

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<sup>19</sup> The *tai-kai* gathering is explained in Chapter 4, section 4.4; Turino’s concept of sequential participation is discussed in section 4.7.

uncomfortable about being very conspicuous. Some discomfort was somewhat alleviated when it became clear that many of the other members also had devices and openly recorded in certain situations, which seemed mostly to include particular pieces of the repertoire and therefore likely for self-study purposes.

Other contexts, especially the *suizen-kai*<sup>20</sup> posed a different sort of problem due to its very closed nature. No other recorders were evident, seeming to reinforce the private—and perhaps even secret—nature of the event and possibly an indication that recording would be taboo. This type of situation, especially to a newcomer, goes beyond being a simple matter of asking for permission, for that could open up the possibility of misunderstandings and might even cause offense. As time passed, however, I became more comfortable asking for permission, especially in what I considered to be special circumstances, but still avoided it at times that I considered potentially delicate.

The discussion in this section thus far has revolved around the main methodology of participant-observation and then examined data collection strategies under conditions that are conducive to that particular methodology. The types of data in these cases involve any group activities that may include discussions. These exchanges were sometimes, but not always, planned or solicited—all cited in the text as “Group Discussion.” These can take place in study-group gatherings, meetings of the membership involving items of a more business nature, but can also include informal and impromptu situations where conversations take place between more than two persons such as parties, smaller groups going out for drinks or even walking between the train station and the temple, etc. Not all instances are recorded

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<sup>20</sup> This, the most frequent of the various gatherings, is discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.2.

electronically, given their spontaneity. Obviously, similar situations occurred on a one-to-one basis between a member and myself, or even in private lessons (cited as “Personal Communication” in the text).

Despite the many data that can be collected using participant-observation as a method in any of its forms, it cannot quite stand alone as a sole research methodology. Of course it is the preferred, if not main, methodology to employ in situations that are not organised or planned by the researcher. In circumstances that were pre-planned and initiated by me, both structured and semi-structured interviewing took place (cited as “Personal Interview” within the text). Especially in the case of structured interviews, a useful strategy (accidentally discovered) was to provide the subject with a list of the questions that tried to be predominantly open-ended. Recordings were made of almost all interviews.

## **1.7 Outline**

The next chapter is a literature review, considering some of the key works about the shakuhachi, most of which usually make at least some mention of the *Komusō* and the Fuke sect, even when that is not their main thrust. More importantly, it evaluates any treatment or mention of Myōan Temple or the Myōan Kyōkai that occurs in any of them. Dividing the chapter into four main categories of literature functions as a guide to determine their relevance to this study. It finds, for example, that most ethnographic dealings are quite individualised, most likely due to the sparsity of writings on matters of ideology and religious aspects, but also due to a spotty history with so many unverifiable details. Furthermore they most often look

at individual persons, very often the author him/herself rather than collectives of players, thereby largely ignoring any communal possibilities that may seem more likely to result in a temple setting, but could come about in other situations as well. Overall, the survey of literature yields very little in terms of dedicated writings about the Myōan Kyōkai, since they focus on other styles.

What follows in Chapter 3 is devoted to highlighting many of the historical problems, not as much for purposes of providing a background to the shakuhachi or the Fuke sect, but rather to lead the focus to the present and the events that followed the sect's proscription in 1871. It considers how a constant re-invention of a tradition throughout the Fuke sect's history led to its re-emergence as the Myōan Kyōkai in 1890. The purpose here is to set the stage for what comes in later chapters to evaluate whether—and the extent to which—history continues to play a rôle in defining much of the tradition as it is today.

Next come three chapters detailing the Kyōkai's musical praxis. The first of these looks at various events at which members gather and seeks meaningful ways of characterising performance contexts as they apply to this study. By carefully deconstructing the notion of performance as it so often applies to music, it also looks at the interrelationship between performance and practice and proposes adopting the term 'praxis' to subsume both. Chapter 5 hones in on the repertoire by discussing the various ways that the core repertoire can be categorised: the 'pedagogical steps' in learning it and another way of grouping the pieces based on melodic type or origin that was proposed by Tominori (1979). The chapter also examines the repertoire's various representations in notation and other areas surrounding its transmission. It argues that both the written text (notation) and orality/aurality are symbiotic

components to teaching and learning it. The final of the three chapters on musical praxis continues with more specific musical observations on tendencies and characteristics of the repertoire as a whole and seeks to unravel questions of ‘free rhythm’ and ‘pulse’ as applied to it. The chapter concludes by examining two pieces selected from the repertoire in order to demonstrate a contrast between what may be characterised as rhythmically or metrically free and what may be considered more metred and ‘rhythmical’.

Before closing with a chapter to present the conclusions of the study, the penultimate chapter begins to narrow the scope and searches for ways of situating the shakuhachi within the context of Myōan Kyōkai. It appraises not only how (or whether) the Kyōkai fits into the organisational scheme of other Japanese music and art organisations (known as *iemoto*), but also considers the usefulness and applicability of many key terms often associated with the shakuhachi, such as spirituality and the sacred/profane dichotomy. Its main purpose is to address the question of how to categorise or label (should one want to) the Myōan Kyōkai and to evaluate the usefulness, or indeed the plausibility, of providing a single umbrella under which to place the Myōan Kyōkai.

Before proceeding to the next chapter, one final remark is in order here, as it applies significantly throughout the rest of the text. Some Western languages (here I am thinking of the ones with which I am at least somewhat familiar: English, French and German) usually assign the verb to play (and its derivatives) when referring to the act of producing (‘musical’ or organised) sounds on musical instruments. This is somewhat unfortunate, especially in the context of this research, as ‘playing’ the

shakuhachi here is not intended for amusement or entertainment. Likewise, the word ‘perform’ (and its derivatives) potentially poses the same problem as well as others of its own, as we will see in Chapter 4. Therefore, although both may appear throughout the rest of the text in reference to sounding or blowing the shakuhachi, they are really used only with some hesitation and for lack of a more suitable term in English. In contrast to the Western concept of ‘playing’ an instrument, the Japanese language does have a sort of generic word, *kanaderu*, but it more commonly uses three other words: to blow (*fuku*) in the case of wind instruments and to pluck (*hiku*) for strings and to hit or strike (*tataku*) in the case of percussion. The verb to play (*asobu*) is never applied to music, even though a Japanese rough equivalent to perform, *ensō*, with *sō* sharing the same character as *kanaderu* above, is sometimes used in reference to producing sounds on musical instruments.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Overview of the Literature

Literature relating in any way to the shakuhachi can be examined from four basic orientations: historical, musicological, ethnographic and religious. Some works may emphasise one of the four aspects over the others or may combine several or even all of them. From an historical perspective, one feature stands out: all historical accounts devote some attention to the *Komusō* and the Fuke sect. Following this, all historical treatments also make mention of a connection to Zen Buddhism, even though some question the strength of that association. One would expect this aspect to be absent—or at least diminish in emphasis—in works that deal with the more modern styles, such as the Tozan style or its offshoot, the Ueda style. This is because the repertoires of both include—or as is the case with Tozan, consist entirely of—newly composed pieces. The Zen or ‘religious’ aspects really do not have much, if any, bearing on the current practice of these groups, but rather they are more ‘art’ oriented and the ‘religious’ aspects, therefore, do not emerge at all in the course of their usual activities. This is not only due to repertoire considerations, but also because their performance context is basically that of a concert or recital-type setting or, failing that, certainly is not normally to be found within the backdrop of a temple or other ‘religious’ environment.

Some of the traditions that maintained the old *honkyoku* repertoire also

increased their repertoires by adding other pieces, as is the case with the Kinko school. The Ueda and Chikuho schools also supplement their ‘secular’ repertoires with the *koten honkyoku*, but in the case of the Kinko style, the situation seems reversed: the *honkyoku* is supplemented by secular pieces. The Myōan style is thus a notable exception since its repertoire is considered to consist entirely of *koten honkyoku*, as already mentioned in the previous chapter. The degree to which this is true (i.e., *how old*), however, could be argued, but the important point is that it is a fixed repertoire, to which no new pieces are added.

Even if some of the literature considered in this chapter does not specifically focus on Myōan Temple or the Myōan Kyōkai, they could acquire some relevance to the current study, if only because some mention is made about them. However, this is usually only from an historical standpoint and its mention is usually brief. The same applies only to a degree when taking some of the religious aspects into consideration, since these may not be directly related to the activities at Myōan Temple. The pertinence begins to decrease gradually as the focus shifts away from Myōan Temple, the Myōan style, *koten honkyoku* in general and finally, it totally loses all significance when dealing with a different repertoire altogether (i.e., one that does not include *koten honkyoku*). Thus, current practice of the Tozan school in particular really has no relevance here as already pointed out in the first section of Chapter 1. Likewise, literature about the shakuhachi that considers—or whose emphasis is about—repertoire that falls outside the realm of *koten honkyoku* also has no bearing on the present work, even if some of the historical aspects they report seem to be shared. Yet, where the history of the shakuhachi is concerned, as we shall start to see in the next section and then more in the next chapter, it is at best

problematic on many fronts.

Because considerations of performance context or milieu play a principal role in this study, common repertoire can really only be of interest from a musicological standpoint as already pointed out in Chapter 1, section 1.1, where differences of styles and associated repertoires were discussed. Reiterating the point made there, the purpose here is not to provide any sort of comparative musicological appraisal of stylistic differences of a shared repertoire, but rather to examine this repertoire as practiced by members of the Myōan Kyōkai.

Looking at the literature in English, we see that the output of materials exclusively dealing with the shakuhachi seems to really start in the late 1960s with articles by Weisgarber (1968) and Berger (1969), followed by a considerable amount of materials being added during the next decade, with the trend continuing up through the present. Of course, William Malm's (1959) groundbreaking text on Japanese music includes a chapter on shakuhachi, but is by necessity rather limited in scope, given that the book covers so many aspects of Japanese music in general.

Monographs have primarily been doctoral theses/dissertations starting with Gutzwiller's (1974) "Shakuhachi: Aspects of History, Practice and Teaching." Falling outside of the "scholarly" designation are other volumes that are how-to-play booklets, such as John Kaizan Neptune's (1978), which focuses on the Tozan style and Christopher Yohmei Blasdel's (1988), which is basically geared towards the Kinko style. While Neptune gives a very brief history, Blasdel's book stands out by giving a translation/adaptation of Kamisangō Yūkō's lengthy liner notes that first accompanied a 1974 recording, then were republished later by the author in a collection of his own articles (Kamisangō 1974, 1995b). Several do-it-yourself

learning guides do exist in English and are valuable for enthusiasts wanting to learn the shakuhachi, but live outside of Japan and otherwise geographically distant from a qualified teacher. None of these manuals, however, focus on the Myōan style and furthermore, neither does this thesis intend to serve such a function.<sup>1</sup> Other monographs could be considered autobiographical and deal with the authors' personal journeys with the instrument (cf. Blasdel 1988; Brooks 2000; Ida 1987; Yokoyama 1985). These would fall under the ethnographic orientation mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (if only loosely, for they make no claims to being scholarly).

Other writings to consider are shorter pieces appearing as articles for the most part in scholarly journals, but also in general books about Japanese music as well as entries in encyclopaedias. While these latter two types may seem too broad and perhaps also too imprecise to consider in a doctoral thesis, they will be briefly covered here, their importance lying in the fact that they are often the first port of call for anyone who wants to find out more about the shakuhachi.

Mention should be made here about two volumes published by the International Shakuhachi Society (1993, 2005) that contain a wealth of materials covering many aspects of the shakuhachi. One slight problem with these is that much of their content has been published elsewhere, not always clearly acknowledging or crediting the publications where they originally appeared. Some of the articles are not relevant to the present work for the same reasons outlined above, and where possible and known, the original publications will be cited.

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1 As will be pointed out in chapter 5, section 5.4 a teacher is not only indispensable, but learning the Myōan style is based largely on oral transmission, written notation being only adjunct to the learning process.

Finally, there are a few types of literature of relevance that fall outside those already touched on. These include program notes and liner notes accompanying recordings and an example in the Japanese language of the latter has already been mentioned (Kamisangō 1974).

Four works in English stand out as offering a considerable amount of insight into the background of the Fuke sect (Gutzwiller 1974; Kamisangō 1988; Lee 1998; Takahashi 1990). Three of these are doctoral theses written by players, while Kamisangō's contribution is Christopher Yohmei Blasdel's translation/adaptation of Kamisangō's Japanese work originally written in 1974. These four works are offered in different contexts: Gutzwiller as a player in the Kinko tradition, Takahashi from the Tozan style and Lee from the Chikuho tradition, even though that is not the focus of his thesis (this rather vague distinction in Lee's case will hopefully become clear below). Blasdel, also a Kinko player, has included the historical section as part of a book, primarily directed at self-learners of the instrument.

Whereas it almost seems feasible to cover the majority of writings in English about any aspect of the shakuhachi, published materials in Japanese (not surprisingly) are far more plentiful. Of course they also can be viewed from the four perspectives already mentioned (historical, musicological, ethnographic, religious).

## **2.2 Historical Treatments**

We had a hint in the last chapter of difficulties involved in chronicling the origins of the Fuke sect and the same applies to the organological history of the shakuhachi: some of the questions raised can only be answered with a certain (or sometimes appreciable) degree of speculation. These somewhat vague assertions

will wait to be more fully addressed in the following chapter.

As far as the Fuke sect is concerned, it is important to recognise the groundbreaking work of Nakatsuka (1936–39[1975]). Prior to its publication in installments over four years<sup>2</sup> in the now defunct periodical *Sankyoku*, the history of the sect had been accepted as reported in the *Kyotaku denki*, or ‘History of the False Bell’.<sup>3</sup> Apparently, Nakatsuka had not set out to discredit the purported origins of the Fuke sect, but rather had simply wanted to learn more about the origins of the Kinko tradition with which he was involved.

Nakatsuka was not able to verify much of the *Kyotaku denki*’s account, especially any evidence connecting the shakuhachi to Kakushin (1207–1298), a Japanese monk who studied in China and allegedly brought the shakuhachi in its ‘Zenicised’ form back with him on his return to Japan in 1254. This raised serious doubts as to the purported reintroduction of the instrument into Japan from China a second time—at least certainly not by Kakushin. Research following Nakatsuka’s important findings generally acknowledges this, and it really is quite astonishing when it does not. Two conspicuous examples in English are Harich-Schneider’s (1973) large volume on Japanese music and Gutzwiller’s (1974) doctoral dissertation that approached the shakuhachi from a Kinko perspective.

Other than these exceptions, it is almost safe to expect literature predating Nakatsuka’s work to be more accepting of the history as reported in the *Kyotaku denki*, which was shown to be more a work of fiction than a report of historical reality. Edgar Pope (2000) divides the two historical camps into revisionists (not accepting the *Kyotaku denki* as fact) and traditionalists, who do subscribe to it.

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<sup>2</sup> These articles were assembled into one volume and published in 1975.

<sup>3</sup> The *Kyotaku denki* will be looked at in the next chapter.

While it is convenient to view these works as pre- and post- Nakatsuka, Pope's labels seem only fitting to the latter group and it is not always clear when those who endorse the traditionalist stance do so out of personal conviction or are simply ignorant of Nakatsuka's work and the possibilities of a revisionist position.

Looking at some work preceding Nakatsuka, we turn first to Takamatsu (1922). His focus is on a modern style that grew out of the Tozan tradition. The Ueda School began due to a parting of ways between Nakao Tozan (1876–1956) and Ueda Hōdō (1892–1974) after being expelled by Tozan from his guild in 1917. The various reasons for this are, of course, discussed in Takamatsu's book, but not before presenting the history of the instrument from its initial introduction to Japan from China as a member of the *gagaku* (imperial court music) ensemble. He continues to provide historical details of the Fuke sect up through its proscription in 1871. Given that the Ueda style—like the Tozan style—is a modern one, providing an historical account would appear mainly to be organological, by showing the development of the instrument. Yet the interest likely extends beyond this, considering Tozan's connection to the Myōan Kyōkai (see Takahashi below). Furthermore, the Ueda repertoire does include some of the *koten honkyoku*, thus making an association to that part of the history viable. In any case, in terms of specifics to the Ueda-ryū, this work can only be limited to chronicling the first years, since it was published a mere five years after the split between Ueda and Tozan and it focuses on the reasons for the rift. Understandably, since it appeared in print prior to the work of Nakatsuka, it is quite accepting some of the more legendary aspects of the Fuke sect's history.

Kurihara's 'Historical Examination of the Shakuhachi' (1918) likewise could not benefit from Nakatsuka's work. Like Takamatsu's book just discussed, it begins

with the shakuhachi's introduction from China as a member of the *gagaku* ensemble. It traces the history up through the proscription of the Fuke sect in 1871. What it does not mention, however, are the events in Kyoto that led to the founding of the Myōan Kyōkai and eventual re-establishment of Myōan Temple. Instead it focuses on the sect's two main temples near Edo (present day Tokyo), Reiho and Ichigetsu Temples. It thus concerns itself more with providing historical background to the Kinko style that developed there, which is of no real interest to the current study.

It has already been indicated that Gutzwiller (1974) ignores the work of Nakatsuka. Even though Gutzwiller's dissertation is probably the first work in English to attempt to give any sort of extended treatment to the shakuhachi, the short history he presents appears, by his own admission from the outset, to rely chiefly on one source, Kurihara's *Shakuhachi shikō (Historical Examination of the Shakuhachi)* of 1918 (see preceding paragraph). On this point alone, it is difficult to put much credence in his presentation of the history, even though he quite boldly declares that "[Kurihara's work] is generally considered reliable" (Gutzwiller 1974:1).

This appears to set the stage for what is to follow in other arguments proposed by Gutzwiller. Thus for example, in order to explain how the earliest extant instruments<sup>4</sup> went from six finger holes to five (the 'standard' instrument of today), he proposes that the original *ch'ih pa'* in China originally had five finger holes and that a sixth was added for *gagaku*. Later the original instrument (with five finger holes) was reintroduced in a religious context (Gutzwiller 1974:13–14). By his own admission, he does not have much to support his hypothesis and only offers that "it

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<sup>4</sup> These are preserved in the Shōsō-in Imperial repository in Nara. All authors in this section mention this, but for an especially detailed description, see Harich-Schneider (1973:54–61), who visited the site.

is ‘more likely’ to have happened this way”; this he bases on a claim that no later Japanese sources “genuine or fake” connect the shakuhachi in its religious context to *gagaku* (Gutzwiller 1974:15). This does little to validate the possibility that the instrument was reintroduced. In fact, this particular mystery has vexed other researchers, many of whom give very compelling arguments for considering the modern shakuhachi in fact to have descended from the *gagaku* instrument (see especially Tukitani et al. 1994:104). While other examples of somewhat unsubstantiated reasoning could be given, it is not worth dwelling on the history offered by Gutzwiller; it occupies a relatively small portion—not quite a quarter—of the book and does not draw on enough sources, especially ones that would have been more current at the time of its writing.

Gutzwiller devotes only a single paragraph to the Myōan Kyōkai, stating only (apparently in error) that it was founded in 1883 and, by implication, at the original location of Myōan Temple in Shirakawa rather than its current location (Gutzwiller 1974:23). As we will see in the next chapter (section 3.5—see especially footnote 23), Gutzwiller is not alone on confusing the year of the Kyōkai’s establishment. In fact, the Myōan Kyōkai’s official booklet reports that it was founded 1890 (Kyoreizan Myōan-ji 2003:10) and it established itself at a different location in Kyoto—in a building on the compound of Tōfuku-ji. He corrects the date several years later when he points to the “reestablishment of the Kyoto branch of the sect” as the Myōan Kyōkai in 1890 due to Myōan Temple being a “stronghold of imperial loyalists [which] had occasionally been used as a center of anti-*bakufu*<sup>5</sup> operations” (Gutzwiller 1983:240–241). This is undoubtedly a very plausible explanation as

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5 *Bakufu* is the term used to designate the shōgunal government.

witnessed in the attempted coup by some members in 1864.<sup>6</sup> This underscores not only Gutzwiller's main interest lying in the Kinko tradition that grew out of the main Fuke temples near present day Tokyo, but also highlights the dissociation of the traditions between Kyoto and Tokyo. Of course it also follows Kurihara's treatment of Kyoto's Myōan Temple, but takes it a small step further by mentioning it at all.

We have seen that Harich-Schneider also seems to subscribe to the theory that the shakuhachi was re-introduced to Japan in 1255 by Kakushin (Harich-Schneider 1973:415, 512). Of minor interest here is that the date given elsewhere is usually 1254, but in any case, the doubts of Kakushin not only reintroducing the instrument, but even having any connection to it were already brought to light by Nakatsuka.

Takahashi Tone (1990), in contrast to Gutzwiller (1974), gives a very rigorous and thorough history of the Fuke sect and draws on a far greater range of sources. He offers complete English translations of some primary sources, most notably the various versions of the surviving *Keichō no okitegaki*, statutes from the Tokugawa *bakufu* addressed to the Fuke sect (Takahashi 1990:54–74).

Others have noted the association of Ikkyū, the fifteenth century Rinzai Zen monk, with the shakuhachi as well as with the monk, Fuke. References to both are to be found in Ikkyū's poetry (cf. Kamisangō 1988:79–80, 106; Lee 1998:77–78). Takahashi carries this further, by providing evidence of Ikkyū's association not only with the shakuhachi and Fuke, but also with the *Komosō* ('straw-mat monks/priests'), often considered forerunners of the *Komusō* (Takahashi 1990:44–48).

It may seem curious that Takahashi would devote so much to this part of his

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<sup>6</sup> This particular incident is mentioned elsewhere (Sanford 1977:432—Sanford does not give any dates; cf. Takahashi 1990:118–119).

research in view of his focus on the more modern Tozan style of playing. The importance of the *Komusō* tradition with reference to Nakao Tozan (1876–1956), founder of the school, can be demonstrated by the simple fact that Tozan spent two years as a member of the Myōan Kyōkai in Kyoto. He also maintained a tie to Myōan Temple by serving as the first president of the Kyochiku Zenji Hōsankai.<sup>7</sup> This provides Takahashi with the motivation to further explore Myōan Temple and some of the activities associated with it.

The portions specifically relating to the Tozan style are really of no interest here, as this has no bearing on this research. It must be remarked, however, that this work proves to be a valuable resource, especially from an historical point of view, and probably provides more historical details about Myōan Temple than any other of the English sources reviewed here.

Like Takahashi (1990), Riley Kelly Lee's 1993 doctoral dissertation devotes a major portion to detailing the history of the shakuhachi. He chronicles the organological history of the instrument from its initial appearance in Japan as a member of the *gagaku* ensemble through to its function within the Fuke sect and as an essential implement of the *Komusō*. He also includes some details of what happened after the prohibition of the Fuke sect in 1871, especially in terms of (*koten*) *honkyoku*, given that the main thrust of his thesis is its transmission. Not much information is given about the eventual establishment of the Myōan Kyōkai after the proscription and he implies the wrong year, 1881 instead of 1890 (or 1883 like Gutzwiller above), perhaps confusing it as the year that a ten-year ban on mendicancy (*takuhatsu*) was lifted (Lee 1998:151). This, however, is really of little

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<sup>7</sup> The Hōsankai is a separate committee that helps support the temple and also assists in the organisation of some of its activities, most notably the biannual *Zenkoku Shakuhachi Honkyoku Kenso Taikai*. See Chapter 4, section 4.4 for more details.

consequence to Lee's work as the various lineages of the piece he examines does not have any relationship to any players ever belonging to the Myōan Kyōkai.

Kamisangō's article—and Christopher Yohmei Blasdel's 1988 translation/adaptation of it—comprehensively outlines the history of the shakuhachi on several fronts. As far as Blasdel's translation (Kamisangō 1988) of it is concerned, several errors have already been pointed out in Hughes's (1992), and Lee's (1990) reviews, so need not be enumerated again here.

There are, however, some inconsistencies within the article itself and when compared to Kamisangō's original (Kamisangō 1995a), these all seem to be editorial errors. One example of this is the contradiction between the mention of the “Fuke sect [being] formally established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century” (Kamisangō 1988:97) with the government's first issuance of a document in 1677 being “seen as the final proof that the Edo government recognized the Fuke sect” and that the “sect officially started . . . probably sometime before this directive was issued (1988:107).<sup>8</sup> Another discrepancy is the dating of the *Boro no techō* (also known as *Boro no shuki*—Handbook of Boro Monks) both as 1618 (1988:83) and 1628 (1988:101). 1628 is, in fact given both times in Kamisangō's original (he calls the document *Boro no shuki*—暮露の手記) (Kamisangō 1995a:75,90). Other than these few errors, the translation seems quite true to the original Japanese.

One drawback of this article is the absence of bibliographic references. It should be remarked that Kamisangō (both 1974, 1995a), as seems quite common in Japanese scholarship, also does not include citations. Of course here it should be remembered that the 1974 original appeared as liner notes for a recording, so

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<sup>8</sup> 1677 is, incidentally, the date of first official recognition of the Fuke sect by all authors reviewed here.

bibliographical information would not likely be included in that circumstance. On this point, Blasdel has included a general bibliography in the appendix of works in Western languages. It must also be acknowledged here that the target audience is not necessarily a scholarly one. Kamisangō does acknowledge the important work of Nakatsuka Chikuzen published between 1936 and 1939 (Kamisangō 1988:102), and there is no difficulty in tracking these works down as they were republished in a single volume (see footnote 2, above). Yet, not including sources creates a particular problem that could have had bearing on this project: Kamisangō includes a passage that describes the day-to-day activities of *Komusō* at a temple (Kamisangō 1995a:99, 1988:110). Until this account can be verified with earlier sources, it can really only be viewed as anecdotal. We will revisit this passage later in this chapter (section 2.5), where it is quoted in full.

Thus, this work is not without some problems and it is worth underlining here that none of the work presented in this chapter is. This applies not only to the history of the instrument, but that of the Fuke sect as well: both histories are full of difficulties, inconsistencies and contradictions.

Linder's (2012) recent PhD thesis is primarily historical in focus and mainly argues against the Fuke sect and *Komusō* continuing an already existing tradition, but rather created an entirely new one in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. While most other historical studies (basically all the ones mentioned in this review, among others) have accepted the notion that the *Komusō* movement developed and emerged from other movements, most notably the *komosō* ('straw-mat priests/monks'), Linder's work goes a long way toward disproving those connections. He also points out that the "shakuhachi is not one solid tradition of music transmitted from old times in an

unbroken line” (Linder 2012:59), a similar issue to the one that I raised in the last chapter (section 1.4). Another question he raises concerns the Fuke being recognised as a sect: most of the correspondence between the *bakufu* and the (alleged) sect never used that wording, but rather addressed the *Komusō* and temples. This is a point also raised by Deeg (2007), as we shall shortly see. A final observation to note is that, like so many others as we will see in Chapter 3 and elsewhere in this chapter, Linder dates the Myōan Kyōkai’s establishment as being 1883 rather than 1890 (Linder 2012:22, 124, 236). This is an issue that we have encountered a few times already and it will be taken up in the next chapter (section 3.5).

A collection of Tsukamoto articles that dealt with both *koten* shakuhachi and *sankyoku* (trio comprised of koto, shamisen and shakuhachi, which generally came to replace the *kokyū*—a spiked fiddle) devotes a good amount of space to the history of the Myōan Kyōkai. Interestingly though, Tsukamoto does not specify the date of the Kyōkai’s establishment, but only gives “mid Meiji” (the Meiji period is from 1868–1912) (Tsukamoto 1994:38). Of considerable interest and perhaps some surprise, is the fact that he claims that the *Komusō* of the early Myōan Kyōkai were not familiar with *honkyoku*, but rather played *Esashi Owaike* and *Hakata bushi*, both *min’yō* (Japanese folk songs) (Tsukamoto 1994:38). This could help explain why much of the core repertoire appears to have profane origins according to Tominori’s (1979) classification scheme.

Tominori provides a book entirely devoted to Myōan shakuhachi, which he divides into four sections: history, shakuhachi ‘description’, playing and self-learning. The historical section completely ignores Nakatsuka’s work (making him a traditionalist—i.e., accepting that Kakushin brought the shakuhachi to Japan from

China), but goes so far as discussing Kakushin's philosophy towards playing the instrument (Tominomori 1979:9)! On this point alone, any of his historical treatment becomes highly questionable. Rather than revisiting this work in subsequent sections below, his classification of the repertoire will be looked at in more detail in Chapter 5 (see especially section 5.2).

James Sanford's 1977 article, "Shakuhachi Zen: The Fukeshū and *Komusō*," is among the first articles in English to attempt to give a comprehensive history of the Fuke sect and some of the problems associated with reporting it. Perhaps worthy of note is that Sanford, being a religious studies scholar, may bring a different perspective to the subject than the majority of authors looked at here, since they have more direct contact with the shakuhachi.

This article is mainly historical and several errors in Sanford's reporting of it have been brought to light by later scholars and need not be repeated here. One inconsistency within the article, however, bears mentioning. Sanford states that the original text of the *Kyotaku denki kokujikai* probably dates no earlier than 1765 (Sanford 1977:416), but later goes on to refer to the *Kyotaku denki* in the 1670s (a difference of one hundred years). This earlier date would correspond closely with the sect's recognition in 1677, but there is some dispute whether an earlier version existed (see next chapter, section 3.2).

Max Deeg, (2007), like Sanford, approaches the subject from a religious studies orientation and also provides a mainly historical treatment. He traces the purported origins of the Fuke sect through the *Kyotaku denki kokujikai* and like others, also questions the veracity by exposing the many inconsistencies. In this regard, he does little to further the deconstruction of the legend than those who have gone before

and most surprising is his apparent ignorance of Nakatsuka's (1936[1975]) important work in this area. One important point raised, however, is that the communications between *bakufu* and the Fuke sect are regarding "privileges and duties of the *Komusō*—not of the institution *Fuke-shū*" (Deeg 2007:27—emphasis added). This would seem to imply that, certainly in the early years of Edo period (i.e. 17<sup>th</sup> century) the *Komusō* either may have yet to have organised themselves into a sect or that a sect was not officially recognised. This same point was underlined by Linder (2012)—see earlier in this section. Yet Deeg's main argument, it seems, is that the Fuke shakuhachi's 'Zennicisation' did not really occur until after the 1871 proscription of the Fuke sect, an argument that is difficult to follow or accept, as will be touched on later.

Turning towards items in larger works that do not specifically concentrate on the shakuhachi, we start with *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*. In a short space, Simura's article gives a good overview of the shakuhachi, from the etymology of the instrument's name, its introduction into Japan from China and finally up to modern times. One point that seems questionable is the mention that the *Komusō*, especially *rōnin* (masterless samurai), were hired by the government as spies in the mid-nineteenth century and that it was at this point that the shape of their headgear was changed to the characteristic *tengai* that covers their face (Simura 2002a:703). Simura mentions this as due to the political instability of the time, but the very fact alone that the *bakufu* issued an edict in 1847 opening the sect to all (i.e. not just the samurai class) makes it seem doubtful that this practice would have been initiated at this time.

*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* presents an entry about the

shakuhachi that is a quite thorough and complete resource. Only a few observations, some of them quite minor, will be made here. First of all, the coverage of the *Myōan* (*Meian*) tradition is minimal and quite disappointing. It is not clear here whether the authors are claiming that all “non-Kinko Fuke traditions” are not organised into one singular unity (which would be true), or whether there are no organised units (Hughes and Berger 2001:834). Here mention of the *Myōan* *Kyōkai* as an organised unit would have helped solve this ambiguity. A somewhat curious inclusion is that of a photograph of *Komusō* in a contemporary context: it is used anachronistically to illustrate the *Komusō* of the late seventeenth century (2001:834(fig.12),833), but it clearly more than only just implies the existence of *Komusō* in contemporary Japan, even though no mention is made of a more modern context.

Although Malm seems to tone down some of the rather colourful assertions made about the *Komusō* in his original book on Japanese music (1959), they are still referred to as “stool pigeons” in the revised edition (1959:154, 2000:169). The possibility that the *Komusō* did act as spies for the government has been reported elsewhere, but as we shall see in the next chapter (section 3.5), adherents of the Fuke sect were by no means alone in serving this function. In this sense, Malm gives a somewhat stilted and negative view of the *Komusō*, causing Gutzwiller (1974:24–25) to so strongly object.

### 2.3 Musicological Treatments

From a musicological standpoint, the literature that gives attention to the more musical aspects relating to the shakuhachi can be seen as either mainly organological in nature or else may deal specifically with repertoire. For the purposes here, the

discussion is confined to the older style of instruments (*jinashi*—unlined) and, as to questions of repertoire, the limit is set to works that deal with the ‘classical’ solo works (*koten honkyoku*<sup>9</sup>). This means that newer repertoire as well as music intended for ensemble (e.g. *gaikyoku*—outside repertoire) will be omitted as irrelevant throughout the remainder of this thesis, to reiterate the point made in Chapter 1, section 1.1.

Gutzwiller’s (1974) section on *honkyoku*, for example, seems somewhat abstracted, with virtually no musical examples put into the context of an actual piece from the repertoire. Rather, Gutzwiller provides some phrases from a piece or pieces not specified and points to what he sees as the deficiencies of two analyses undertaken on a piece, “Hifumi hachigaeshi” by Malm (1959) and Weisgarber (1968).<sup>10</sup> He chooses not to provide his own analysis of the piece (or any piece, as just mentioned). Instead he expresses his reluctance to transcribe any piece and concludes the chapter by insisting that transcription in the case of *honkyoku* would be impossible, declaring that “[e]very transcription is based upon the sounding result of the playing process [and that] it can be successfully done only if the result can be separated from the process” (1974:138). Even if he could have built a strong case against transcription, he weakens his position with phrases such as “[t]he process is a rather cumbersome one” (1974:90) “an attempt at a transcription of *honkyoku* is a

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9 Here, this term is still used in a rather wide, generic sense to denote older works for solo shakuhachi that have its origins with the *Komusō*. Chapter 5, section 5.2 will narrow the range down by looking at the ways that the *Myōan* repertoire is classified.

10 Here it must be interjected that Gutzwiller unfairly criticises both Malm and Weisgarber for not knowing that the piece in question is actually two pieces (Gutzwiller 1974:122,124). He states that “[s]trictly speaking such a piece does not exist” (1974:122). In defense of Malm (1959) and Weisgarber (1968) (and for that matter Hughes & Berger (2001)), I argue that it is in fact one single piece *as represented and played in the Kinko-ryū* and have never heard it performed otherwise by representatives of that style. It is true that the title is a concatenation of the titles of two other pieces, “Hifumi chō” and “Hachigaeshi” and that both of these pieces are contained (not simply concatenated) within the *Kinko* version. Furthermore, there is a third unrelated piece or section inserted, which I have yet to satisfactorily identify. For a discussion of this, see Mau (2007:23–31).

hard task indeed” (1974:138). What becomes the “tonal material of honkyoku” (1974:119) forces us to take him at his word that this can apply to the entire repertoire, since he only provides exceptions where this theory does not fit (1974:120–121). Another problem here is that Gutzwiller also boldly asserts that “something that could be called ‘Japanese music theory’ is nonexistent” (1974:87), but betrays this pronouncement with a later discussion about “the note *banshiki* in traditional Japanese scale theory [as] correspond[ing] with the pitch *c* [on the standard shakuhachi]” (Gutzwiller 1974:121—emphasis added). His choice of terminology alone, such as the modal terms *in* and *insenpō*, also betray this claim.

Yet, despite these difficulties, Gutzwiller’s ‘shakuhachi scale’ and ‘tonal material of honkyoku’ seem plausible and applicable to the repertoire of the Kinko style. Surprisingly enough, this scale is in fact based on two conjunct tetrachords as pointed out by Weisgarber (1968:331), even though Weisgarber’s explanation “strikes [Gutzwiller] as somewhat strange” (Gutzwiller 1974:122).<sup>11</sup> Here again Gutzwiller may have benefited from later work, most notably Koizumi Fumio’s 1977 article, an English translation of an earlier Japanese version released in 1974 (the same year as Gutzwiller’s thesis) (Koizumi 1977). The concept of tetrachords and their application to Japanese music, however, is not at all new (cf. Peri 1934).

Almost a decade later Gutzwiller considers the repertoire of the Kinko *honkyoku* in his book about the Kinko school (1983). Here, he makes a clear departure from his 1974 stance in that he provides transnotations of three different scores of “Shin kyorei” by Araki Kodō, Miura Kindō and Kawase Junsuke (Gutzwiller 1983:205–213). True, this does not address what was earlier the

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<sup>11</sup> Weisgarber does not identify the tetrachords (they are *in*, also known as *miyakobushi*). He also mislabels the upper tetrachord of the pair.

impossibility of transcription, but does show a willingness to put *honkyoku* into Western notation. Here the obvious danger is that it does not necessarily represent a *performance*; we can only assume that this would be reflected in the transnotations through Gutzwiller's experience as performer of Kinko *honkyoku*.

The instrument used by many if not most proponents of the Kinko style, is usually *jinuri* (lined with *ji* compound—see Chapter 1, section 1.1) and separates into two sections. In this connection, one point deserves special mention here. In what Gutzwiller says to be an instrument made by Kinko I before 1770, he shows that this shakuhachi is in four sections (Gutzwiller 1983:50–51, 243). This is important in that it possibly represents the earliest evidence of when the instrument went from one to multiple sections.

We have already witnessed what may seem as an irony that Takahashi (1990) devoted not only so much to the history of the *Komusō* and Fuke sect, given that his focus is on the more modern Tozan style. It is equally surprising, therefore, that he devotes an entire chapter to an analysis of the Myōan-Taizan-ryū piece, 'Honte chōshi' (1990:295–309). It is not made quite clear, however, how he arrives at his conclusion on the differences in the construction of the instruments between the Kantō (basically Tokyo, in this case) and Kansai (the area around Kyoto and Osaka) regions. These differences have to do with the method used in calculating the distances between the finger holes of the shakuhachi;<sup>12</sup> the point Takahashi makes is that the Kantō method was devised in order to make the instrument more suitable in an ensemble context by “improving” the tuning (1990:307).

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<sup>12</sup> These two methods, *to-wari* 'divided by 10' in the case of the Kantō and *kyu-wari* 'divided by 9' in the case of Kansai will not be elaborated here, but are explained succinctly by Takahashi (1990:306).

It would seem that Takahashi's motive here is to lead into what he calls "improvements" to the Tozan instrument, especially regarding tuning (1990:308). Not only is such an evaluation very subjective, but "improvements" to the shakuhachi had already been introduced in the Kinko style, especially by Araki Chikuo (1823–1908) (cf. Tokumaru 1994:71; Yamaguchi 2005:253). By ignoring this stage in the instrument's evolution, and given that Tozan moved to Tokyo in 1922 (Takahashi 1990:184) and was enjoying increasing success there, it seems unlikely that Tozan would have been isolated from the influences of that region. Another problem is that Takahashi does not provide any basis for Higuchi Taizan's having "probably played a shakuhachi tuned in the to-wari [i.e. Kantō] system (1990:307–308). In fact, this would detract from, rather than add to, his argument: Taizan was the first head of the Myōan Kyōkai when it was established in 1890 (in Kyoto). Furthermore, that he uses a piece that finds no place within the Tozan repertoire to demonstrate this still seems a bit curious, but interesting nevertheless, as that is one of the pieces that will be examined in Chapter 6, section 6.2.1.

A final point regarding this chapter of Takahashi's thesis needs to be interjected: he makes an oversimplification in his statement regarding the 'pitch' *tsu* (ツ). Takahashi states that it has two "derivative notes," implying  $e^{\sharp}$  and  $e^{\flat}$  *only* (1990:298). In the Myōan-Taizan style there are actually three derivatives.<sup>13</sup> This oversimplification may seem forgivable, given Takahashi's extensive background as a (Western) flute performer and his involvement with the Tozan style, where this is probably not an issue, but it still misrepresents the style he is describing.

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<sup>13</sup> This is based on the author's own experience as a student of the Myōan-Taizan tradition. The three derivatives are all notated differently in the scores used by the author and written by Takahashi Rochiku (Takahashi n.d.). It is true, however, that these were not always notated. For example, in facsimiles of the scores written by both Higuchi Taizan and Tanikita Muchiku's hand in possession of the author, derivatives never seem to be indicated and certainly are not for "Honte chōshi," the piece used by Takahashi, as recorded by Muchiku.

While Takahashi includes Myōan repertoire in his doctoral dissertation that is not really about *honkyoku*, the main thrust of Lee's (1998) thesis centres around the transmission of *honkyoku*, which he argues is (still) a largely oral process. This is an important point, as *honkyoku* scores are in fact mnemonic devices that, to varying degrees (depending not only on school, but also scribe), serve only as an aid in performance. In this sense, they could definitely not function as completely prescriptive since a teacher is indispensable to orally supplement the textual transmission of any given piece. These points will be reiterated in Chapter 5.

As mentioned in the previous section, Lee's (1998) study also crosses any stylistic boundaries, but is expressly not 'ryū-specific' except in the sense that the Kinko and Tozan styles are excluded from his study (but he fails to mention the omission of Myōan representation). This presents no problem as he designs his study around a particular piece, or should we say family of pieces, known as *Reibo* and a set group of players, for which he has managed to determine a lineage that shows how the pieces were transmitted. It so happens that representatives from either the Kinko or Tozan styles are absent; in the case of the latter, he points out that there are no *koten honkyoku*<sup>14</sup> within the Tozan repertoire, a point that seems belaboured, as we are continually reminded of this throughout.<sup>15</sup>

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14 Incidentally, Lee attributes Tukitani for coining this phrase, 'classic' honkyoku in order to distinguish it "from others of the shakuhachi tradition" (Lee 1998:2). He cites (Tukitani 1990a:32), but there, Tukitani credits Jin Nyōdo. This is not really of consequential importance, but it is somewhat interesting that Lee is listed as co-translator of the article.

15 This might not be entirely true: Fritsch (2005:67) lists the piece *Tsuru no sugomori* (Nesting of the Cranes), one of the pieces also included in the Tozan solo *honkyoku*, as an adaptation from the Myōan piece. In fact Lee points to a 1976 article by Tukitani in which she compares Kinko and Tozan versions of this piece (Lee 1998:328). In a later article by Tukitani, Seyama, and Simura that briefly considers the transmission of this piece, the authors state that the Tozan version is an arrangement of a piece originating in Osaka for *kokyū* (spiked three-stringed fiddle) and underline the historical significance of this piece as "an example that shows the interchange between the shakuhachi and other genres" (Tukitani et al. 1994:125). Adding to the confusion here is a footnote in Takahashi in which he states that the Tozan version was written for two shakuhachi by Tozan in 1905 and that he simply adopted the title. He adds simply that it "differs from the classical *honkyoku* with the same title" (Takahashi 1990:264). Fritsch lists *Tsuru no sugomori* as a

Lee takes a dual approach to the analysis of the performances chosen for his study: transcription and what he calls a tradition-based approach. The reluctance of transcription for shakuhachi on the part of other scholars, including Gutzwiller (already discussed above), is evaluated (Lee 1998:310–315) and Lee rightfully insists that “transcriptions are analogues, like maps and words,” in other words, mere *representations* of something real that can in no way become the thing itself. Furthermore, he observes that recordings of performance are also analogues (1998:313).

The tradition-based method, as described by Lee, uses observations of how “people within the tradition talk and write about honkyoku in an analytical way.” This method, however, is a complement to the first, its drawback being that it would be “unlikely in detecting many of the formal structures that might exist” (Lee 1998:310).

Thus these two methods are merged and comprise what he describes as both ‘etic’ (musicological) and ‘emic’ (tradition-based) approaches (1998:305–306). While these two modes form the basis of his analysis of the ten recordings, Lee discusses a third possibility: analyses based on scores (Lee 1998:326–330). The disadvantages of this as *a sole methodology* are obvious, in that they are only adjuncts to what is transmitted orally. A transnotation would therefore be fraught with problems if it were to be considered a written recording of the music. It is, however, a bit surprising that Lee even mentions this, given that he claims that they have little bearing on his study (1998:326) and in fact he does rely on scores to determine the section headings as indicated in them as ‘signposts’ and also discusses

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solo honkyoku (2005:67) while Tukitani lists it as both solo and duet (Tukitani 2008:161).

their meaning in some detail (Lee 1998:360–362). Furthermore, considering not only that the central theme of his thesis is *transmission*, scores and the notation contained therein are nevertheless still an important component in the transmission process.

The work of Tuneko Tukitani stands out because of the extent of her published output since the 1970s, all related to the shakuhachi, but this is indeed fortunate, even though few are available in English. Two different articles (Tukitani 1990a, 1990b) first appeared in a booklet published by the *Syakuhati Kenkyūkai*, who released another one in 1992. A bit surprising is that the same two articles were included in the later publication as modified, but with no significant differences between versions (i.e., no added paragraphs or sections—only some slightly different wordings and Romanisations). The later versions of these articles will be examined here.

In “An Introduction to the Study of Classical Syakuhati Honkyoku” (1992a), Tukitani gives a comprehensive history of the repertoire, and includes a brief history of the shakuhachi from its introduction into Japan. She also traces the etymology of the term *koten honkyoku*, pointing out that this designation was a later development in order to distinguish the solo repertoire of the *Komusō* from *gaikyoku* (‘outside’ pieces), as well as the newer *honkyoku* composed by Tozan and Chikuho I in the early twentieth century. Thus, according to this, both of these terms were adopted after the proscription of the Fuke sect in 1871. Whether this is really the case will be taken up in Chapter 5.

One thing that makes this article, and Tukitani’s work in general, stand out is that she seems to transcend any boundaries of school or style. The reasons for this

are most likely that she was not herself a shakuhachi player, but purely a researcher. Thus there are no allegiances to impede or colour her investigations. This makes this article an in-depth and very detailed treatment of *koten honkyoku* in general, including lineages of transmission and grouping pieces by type according to title, form and melodic content. The last criteria, however, would have benefited with the inclusion of some transcribed extracts.

The second article, “Syōganken Reibo, a Classical Syakuhati Honkyoku Composition,” concentrates on the transmission of honkyoku, the ‘*reibo*’ family of pieces and *Syōganken Reibo* in particular. Here it is difficult to follow a description of a piece as “magnificently ornamented, detailed performance practices, a melancholic meri scale, [and] a melodic contour overflowing with emotion” (Tukitani 1992b:112). This is obviously a subjective impression of the piece, but a “meri scale” is a term not defined and unfamiliar to me, at least: “meri” refers to the technique used to lower a pitch by partially covering a finger-hole and/or changing the blowing angle, so I cannot quite imagine how this is used to build a scale. Other emotional adjectives are interspersed throughout adding to the subjectivity. Its main value, therefore, is that it rigorously traces the lineage of transmission of the piece.

A 1994 article appeared in *Contemporary Music Review*, this time co-authored by Tukitani, Seyama, and Simura. Here a thorough history of the instrument is presented, along with the theory explaining why the authors, along with other scholars, doubt that the shakuhachi was re-introduced a second time from China. Modern developments to the modern instrument are also discussed, as well as an explanation of the various notation systems.

This article traces lineage of transmission, using four pieces as examples, based

on “documents, music scores, recordings of performances, and writings and interviews” (Tukitani et al. 1994:121). Here, the basis upon which the lines of transmission are traced is made clearer than in the previous article.

Tukitani’s most recent offering, “The Shakuhachi and its Music” forms a chapter of a general book on Japanese music (Tokita and Hughes 2008). Here again, a general historical overview is given, with attention also given to developments related to the instrument. What sets this article apart from the others by Tukitani reviewed here is the inclusiveness given to all facets of the shakuhachi, no doubt in consideration of the intended audience. There is also considerably more clarity in the musical explanations given, including examples in Western staff notation to illustrate some of the points made.

Tukitani’s (2000) book, *Shakuhachi koten honkyoku no kenkyū* is a publication of her PhD thesis. Although it does provide some historical background, it is really more an extensive treatment of *koten honkyoku*. She uses the Kinko style as a model because of what she views as a wealth of extant sources surrounding the style (Tukitani 2000:59), but she also brings in Higuchi Taizan (first *kansu* of the Myōan Kyōkai) and compares him to Kurosawa Kinko in that both men established a core repertoire of *koten honkyoku* and were the only two to have done so (2000:103). She thinks, however, that Taizan made drastic changes to the melodies, but considers this under the light that Kinko may have done likewise. This could lead to possible parallels in helping to understand how changes come about in the transmission process, including how pieces may branch out or may merge with others and also may help explain title changes (Tukitani 2000:103–104). She even thinks that some of Taizan’s *honkyoku* are likely to be his own compositions, since many of the

musical elements are untraceable. The possibilities that this opens are that it may shed light on the ways that *honkyoku* were likely to have been originally composed (2000:106).

Simura, a colleague of Tukitani has done extensive research confined exclusively to the organology of the *jinashi*<sup>16</sup> shakuhachi. In Garland, his differentiation of the types of instruments is concise as far as modern vs. old, but fails to differentiate the two types of modern instruments. He ends with the statement that the modern “instruments are no longer suitable for *koten honkyoku*, a style in which subtle discrepancies in intonation and dynamics are crucial” (2002a:704). This is a completely subjective view (which I happen to share), rather than factual and therefore could mislead some readers. The publication of his PhD thesis, is an extensive treatment of the organology of the instrument, but also reiterates this point even more strongly (Simura 2002b).

As far as organological considerations are concerned, some clarifications regarding the modern instrument could be added to Hughes and Berger’s entries in Grove (Hughes and Berger 2001:832,835). The inlay at the blowing edge most likely was inserted primarily to add strength rather than simply to provide a sharper blowing edge; the modern instrument with holes of the same size generally occurs only on flutes of the Tozan style, the usual practice with Kinko flutes is to purposely make the third hole smaller, a change most likely introduced by Araki Chikuo (see earlier, this section; also Chapter 1, section 1.1). Finally, the number of coats to line a *jinuri* flute can be an indeterminate number, as the maker usually has to rework the interior by sanding and re-adding as necessary. These, however, are very minor

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<sup>16</sup> *Jinashi*, meaning the absence of the *ji* compound is explained in the opening section of Chapter 1.

points, and on the whole, except for the unbalanced view regarding Myōan style(s) as already noted in the previous section, this article gives a good overall representation to the average reader interested in learning more about the shakuhachi.

Malm's two books on Japanese Music have already been mentioned in the previous section. The later of the two is a considerably revised edition of his 1959 work, but both are probably the most consulted books in English dealing with Japanese music and are remarkable in their coverage of such a wide subject. Because of the reliance by authors discussed earlier here, it was necessary to compare his more recent edition with the first one (Malm 1959). While no big changes in the text have been made, most of the objections and errors that have been noted, especially by Gutzwiller (1974) and Lee (1998), have been addressed. Most noteworthy of these are: the partial transcription (of the same piece, "Hifumi Hachigaeshi") has completely been revised and is no longer metred, as it was in the first edition. In fact, the melody is completely different, the later one far more plausibly corresponding to the piece (Malm 1959: 160, 2000:173). Missing from the appendix on notation is a table that in the 1959 edition completely misrepresented Myōan notation (1959: 271, 2000: 293–294). It is still difficult, however, to see how Malm's use of the *in* "scale" as disjunct tetrachords fits the example (Malm 2000:173).

Overall, he is quite dismissive of the Myōan style musically and chooses to base his example on the Kinko style as "indicative of what is considered to be the typical playing style of the shakuhachi" (Malm 2000:173). This also fails to take into account *any* of the many other shakuhachi styles that exist, so what he

represents is a very narrow look at the instrument.

Like Malm, Harich-Schneider also considers the “*in-scale*” of two disjunct tetrachords the basic mode of shakuhachi honkyoku. She also mistakenly explains the *meri-keri* as a “combination of half-holding [*sic*] and by a very complicated and difficult breathing technique” (1973:513).

## 2.4 Ethnographic Treatments

For the purposes here, ethnographic treatments are taken with a fairly wide meaning in that so many often come closer to being more autobiographical (or autoethnographical) and should be examined with that in mind. For example, the final chapter of Gutzwiller’s dissertation, and one of the appendices, deal with teaching and learning the shakuhachi. Here he presents a view about how the process of teaching and learning takes place in Japan as generally representative, but he is actually only describing the process *as he experienced it*. Viewed from this perspective, its chief value lies only in what is to be gained from it as autobiographical/ethnographic material and can only take on wider ethnographic value when other similar situations are taken into account.

Lee extends the ethnographic orientation by also bringing in elements of a religious/philosophical nature. He identifies three different ideologies involved in the transmission of honkyoku: honkyoku as sacred object, as music, and as both transcending object and music (Lee 1998:288–304). It is not immediately clear how he has come up with these delineations, or why, as they do not seem to play an active part in his study. Each of the first two categories is solely based on interviews with a single player, Inoue Shōei and Aoki Reibo II, respectively. Lee acknowledges

that both of these players, *and the ideologies they represent*, are not included in the study; rather all belong to the third ideology (honkyoku as transcending object and music) (1998:295).

In the case of Inoue, nothing is verbalised about ‘honkyoku as sacred object’. Rather we are presented with the fact that Inoue considers himself, as *iemoto* (head) of the *Kimpū-ryū*, the *only person* able to play honkyoku of his lineage. We are also told that he has a low opinion of “almost all of the well-known shakuhachi players, both living and dead” (Lee 1998:289–290). Reinforcing Inoue’s position as *iemoto*, is the fact that he possesses an heirloom shakuhachi (Lee 1998:289,290). Perhaps this is the ‘sacred object’ in question? Certainly it is a symbol of power and can be seen as confirmation of Inoue’s claim to his position. This does not in itself necessarily denote sacredness, but it does show exclusive ownership, which in Inoue’s case includes not only the instrument, but also the repertoire and the way in which he thinks it should be performed.

The views of Aoki Reibo II, head of the *Reibo kai*, a sub-school of the *Kinko-ryū*, are succinctly expressed in his belief that honkyoku is not necessarily any more spiritual than any other music and that “shakuhachi performers who stress the connection between honkyoku and Zen Buddhism are little more than spiritual charlatans” (Lee 1998:292). Aoki insists that his students perform exactly as he teaches them (1998:292,293). This again, as in Inoue’s case—although perhaps with less exclusivity—dictates the way in which it is thought that the repertoire should be performed. Both imply a relatively low rate of variability or change in the transmission process. This Lee acknowledges (1998:295) and the real difference between the two lies in the fact that *in theory*, Aoki would be open to a change in

interpretation of the repertoire *if a player surpasses his own ability*, a prospect doubtful ever to occur (Lee 1998:293–294).

It seems that the purpose of the discussing Inoue and Aoki is to set up the third category of ideology, honkyoku as transcending object *or* music. Actually this finally does become clear in the closing pages, where the ‘sacred’ part is dropped and only ‘object’ remains (Lee 1998:418), suggesting that, in Inoue’s case, the original meaning was simply ‘object’ (not ‘sacred object’). The traits that all the players in this section share, other than being the subjects of Lee’s subsequent analysis, are that none of them came from any sort of strict *iemoto* background and that most would acknowledge more than one teacher, not necessarily from the same lineage. The notable exception to this is Watazumi, who laid claim to no lineage and acknowledged no teacher (Lee 1998:302). Here again, as mentioned in the previous section about ‘trying to put the shakuhachi into a Zen perspective’, this information is most useful only from an (auto)ethnographic standpoint.

## 2.5 Religious Treatments

Lee goes to great pains also to build on the Zen aspects and approaches in not only the performing, but also the transmission of *honkyoku*. By necessity, this is an area that needs to draw extensively on Zen literature not specifically relating to any shakuhachi tradition in particular and then applying it as seen fit. Precious little, in terms of documentation, seems to exist regarding the ideology or practices of the (early) *Komusō*. Lee also cites a passage, which seems to have been brought to light by Kamisangō (1974: 17, also in Kamisangō 1988:110), without any attributions of source, but often quoted by many authors dealing with this subject matter (cf. Lee

1986:54, 1998:129–130; Takahashi 1990:112–113; Shingūji Hōsankai 1996:91).<sup>17</sup>

Here the activities of a typical ‘day in the life’ of a Fuke temple are described:

Daily activity centered around playing the shakuhachi. In the morning, the managing priest would play “Kakuseirei,” an awakening piece which started the day. The monks would gather in front of the altar and perform the piece “Chōka” to begin their daily services, followed by a [Za]Zen session. During the day the monks practiced shakuhachi, underwent training in the martial arts, and went begging. In the evening, they played the ritual piece “Banka” before sitting Zen again. Esoteric practices at night included playing the pieces “Shin’ya” and “Reibō.” In addition, each monk was required to go begging three days a month. During their mendicant wanderings, they played pieces such as “Tōri” (“Passing”), “Kadozuke” (“Street Corners”) and “Hachigaeshi” (“Returning the [Begging]<sup>18</sup> Bowl”). When two *Komusō* met while begging, it was customary to play the pieces “Yobi Take” (“Shakuhachi’s Call”) or “Uke Take” (“Shakuhachi’s Answer”). When on the road and wishing to stay in a *Komusō* temple, they played “Hirakimon” or “Monbiraki” (“Open the Gate”) to gain entrance. Practice and etiquette differed from temple to temple but remained basically the same.

(Kamisanō 1988:110—translation by Blasdel)

The difficulties with this tract are not confined to its unknown source, but also raise other questions. Of the eleven pieces listed (*Kakuseirei*, *Chōka*, *Banka*, *Shin’ya*, *Reibo*, *Tōri*, *Kadozuke*, *Hachigaeshi*, *Yobi Take*, *Uke Take*, *Hirakimon* or *Monbiraki*), it seems that only four appear to have survived: *Shin’ya*, *Reibō* (more properly characterised as a family of pieces), *Hachigaeshi* and *Monbiraki*. *Yobitake*, rather than naming a specific piece, was more likely associated with individual temples, being their identifying call or theme (*yobi* means ‘call’, *take* means ‘bamboo’, referring to the shakuhachi) (Yao, Group Discussion 24 July, 2011). Kamisanō’s source is never given

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17 Lee both times cites Kamisanō 1974, as does the Shingūji Hōsankai (the latter by implication, as Kamisanō’s work appears in the bibliography). Takahashi (like Kamisanō) provides no citation.

18 This addition appears in Blasdel’s translation. As an aside, I submit the possibility that the reference may not be to a begging bowl, but could instead relate to Tokusan’s bowl in Case 13 of the book of koans, *Mumon* (*The Gateless Barrier*) (see Aitken 1991:88–94). There seems little doubt that members of the Fuke sect would have been acquainted with this work, given the association to Kakushin and the fact that he returned with a copy of it.

and so, as important as such information could be, it would really first need to be verified with less recent sources. Given the shortage of documentation on *Komusō* ideology and practice, and as painstakingly as Lee and others have attempted to put shakuhachi practice into a Zen perspective, such endeavors can really only be viewed as personal interpretation.

While so little has been written (or has survived) about early activities of the Fuke sect or their ideology, there are three essays written between 1823 and 1838 by Hisamatsu Fūyō (1791–1871). Two of these (“Hitori mondo” and “Kaisei hōdo”) are provided in full by Kurihara (1918:209ff). All three (including “Hitori kotoba”) are summarised by (Gutzwiller 1983:249–250), with German translations being provided in three separate appendices, along with the original Japanese text (1983:164–198). Gutzwiller places great value on these and touts them as representing “virtually the only sources for the spiritual background of the musical practices of the Fuke-Sect” (Gutzwiller 1984:57). Yet here it is possible to over-represent these essays as typifying the ideology of the whole sect, rather than one person’s interpretation of it, in much the same manner as we saw in the preceding paragraph. The main difference to note in the case of Hisamatsu’s texts are that they were indeed written prior to the proscription of the Fuke sect in 1871 by an actual member. At the same time, however, it should also be acknowledged that these essays came very late (about a century and a half after the Fuke sect’s recognition) and a relatively short time before the prohibition. What is more, their author was the *de facto* head of the Kinko school of shakuhachi, which was already showing signs of being organised along *iemoto*<sup>19</sup> lines and was also starting to see the *honkyoku*

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19 Literally meaning “house-head,” *iemoto* refers also to the pseudo-kinship system of organising artistic schools in Japan (see Chapter 7, section 7.1).

repertoire being supplemented with secular ensemble music. This last point alone more than suggests a shift of institutional settings away from the confines of temples.

In “The Shakuhachi of the Fuke-sect: Instrument of Zen,” Gutzwiller writes exclusively about the religious aspects of the shakuhachi, this time without an emphasis on the Kinko style and with no musical analysis. As to some of the points made in this article, which could have been very relevant to this research, one in particular begs further elucidation and substantiation. He cites a Masters thesis by Araki Tatsuya (1971) claiming that the “[three] *Kyorei* . . . were played on ceremonial occasions, where they replaced the singing of sutras” (Gutzwiller 1984:56).<sup>20</sup> To my knowledge, no such ceremonies have been described elsewhere and as we will see in Chapter 4, certainly at Myōan Temple today, sutra chanting has most definitely not been supplanted by the shakuhachi. Without giving any citations, Gutzwiller also claims that the pieces performed during mendicancy formed a distinct group and “were regarded as the second most important pieces within the repertoire of the Fuke sect” (1984:57). It would have been extremely useful to corroborate this by grouping these with lists.

In the same article, Gutzwiller returns to a discussion based on the writings of Hisamatsu Fūyō (1984:57–62), further building on his translation of those in his 1983 book. However, he closes the article by suggesting that in the years leading to the Fuke sect’s prohibition in 1871, “*honkyoku* became more and more a music which was free of specifically religious ideas” and sees secularisation as a necessary condition for the repertoire’s survival (Gutzwiller 1984:63). This would seem more

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<sup>20</sup> The three *Kyorei* are the pieces, *Kyorei*, *Koku* and *Mukaiji*—see Chapter 5 (sections 5.2 and 5.3).

to detract rather than reinforce the Zen religious aspects that he sets out to describe.

This could help explain the position taken by Sanford who, as we saw earlier, is a religious studies scholar. His stance towards the Fuke sect is made clear from the outset by declaring that “the *Komusō* movement was actually a . . . ‘little tradition’ phenomenon with no discernible Zen connections whatsoever” (Sanford 1977:412). This does not, however, seem to fully concur with later statements such as referring to the sects “developing Zen theology” (1977:414) and later pointing out that Kurosawa Kinko (1710–1771) was “quite serious about the Zen aspects of the flute” (1977:429). The inclusion of an appendix with excerpts from the *Lin-chi lu* clearly indicate not only a Zen connection, but also a tie to Rinzai. (Rinzai is the Japanese pronunciation of Lin-chi.) This makes his original stance seem weak and it is hard to accept his statement that “[t]he original claims . . . to Zen status were quite artificial [and] . . . a process of actual Zen assimilation took place” (Sanford 1977:429). This would seem to indicate that in the end, he is more accepting of any religious connections than when he started out. Malm is not quite as generous: he is completely dismissive of the possibilities of their being any religious connections. He declares that “[o]bviously the *shakuhachi* music of the [seventeenth and eighteenth centuries] was not very Buddhist” (Malm 2000:169–170). We saw the same sentiment expressed by Eliot in the last chapter (section 1.5).

Takahashi Kūzan (1979) presents a history of the Fuke sect, but it is included in this section, mainly because it also deals with many of the more religious aspects. For example, here too we are given a glimpse into a ‘day in the life’ of a *Komusō* (1979:49ff), although a different day than the one presented by Kamisangō above. Also given are repercussions given out to errant *Komusō*, which could include

amputation of the right hand's middle finger or even a nose or ear (Takahashi 1979:85). Unfortunately his sources are not clear and one informant even told me that he did not consider it to be reliable (Takahashi Rochiku, Personal Interview 28 December, 2007).

An article by Gregg Howard (1991) concludes this section and is of interest here in that it deals exclusively with religious aspects of the shakuhachi, although on quite a theoretical level. Howard sets out to “seek further for some doctrinal or philosophical connection between what we know of the practice of the . . . Fuke sect . . . and the Zen of the eighth and ninth centuries” (Howard 1991:95). This does not work on the premise that the early origins of the Fuke sect go back that far: Howard's aim is simply to provide a *possibility* that some of the Fuke sect's ideology *may* be able to be explained with regards to the *śūrangama sūtra*. This is highly speculative, as he admits at the outset (Howard 1991:95), but all the same, he proposes a very good argument for the sutra's applicability to *Komusō* practice and also points to this particular sutra's wide use in other Zen traditions and thus arrives at quite a plausible connection between the *śūrangama sūtra* and Fuke practice.

There are no grand claims made by Howard, he never tries to prove a connection, except to “suggest that the *śūrangama sūtra* provides a conceptual context within the Zen tradition consistent with Fuke philosophy” and posits the possibility that the sutra “expands our limited understanding of the religious content of the Fuke tradition” (Howard 1991:100). It is in this light that the article deserves attention, but at the same time also reinforces the reality that, since there is such a paucity of documentation on past practice, anything pertaining to it or questions of ideology must remain confined to conjecture.

## 2.6 Conclusion

The literature surveyed here drew attention to the many difficulties that are encountered when reporting many of the aspects about the shakuhachi, the Fuke sect and the *Komusō* from an historical perspective. We have also seen that coverage of Myōan temple and the Myōan Kyōkai is quite minimal and when it is mentioned, it usually does not go much beyond reporting its founding after the proscription of the Fuke sect. This is certainly understandable, given that the Myōan Kyōkai has not been their main topic, with the notable exception of Tominomori (1979).

Examining the literature from four perspectives (historical, musicological, ethnographic, religious) evaluated their relevance to this study, which also includes all four orientations, although to varying degrees. Even though the emphasis of this project is not historical, a background in the roots of the tradition serves to help position it within the present. Here, however, we see many problems with the reporting of history and these difficulties spill over into the other areas as well. Religious aspects related to practice as well ideology see very little coverage and when they do, they—like so many of the historical details—become difficult to substantiate. Where ethnography is concerned, the focus is centred around individuals rather than a group, much of the reporting is contemporary and involves the authors as subjects. As far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century (but reportedly longer), we know of the existence of a group (whether or not identified specifically as a sect), yet we know very little regarding group activities except the tract provided by *Kamisangō*, where no source is given. It seems that we can only turn to present-day practice, not as an explanation for, reconstruction or authentication of the past, but in

order to understand the present. Furthermore, as more than just implied thus far, so many details remain so open to conjecture that attempts at detailing it cannot be met with complete success. Yet, that assertion deserves further substantiation before abandoning history altogether. The next chapter will expand on some of the historical perplexities related to the shakuhachi and the Fuke sect in order to help place the Myōan Kyōkai in a historical context, since it is at least inspired by the past and therefore has ties to it.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **The shakuhachi and the Fuke Sect: A history overshadowed by doubts**

Modern man is to an unprecedented degree self-conscious and therefore conscious of history. He peers eagerly back into the twilight out of which he has come, in the hope that its faint beams will illuminate where he is going; and, conversely, his aspirations and anxieties about the path that lies ahead quicken his insight into what lies behind. Past, present, and future are linked together in the endless chain of history.

(Carr 1987:134)

The introductory and last chapters pointed to some historical ‘problems’ or inconsistencies associated with the *Komusō* and the Fuke Sect. This chapter will elaborate on some of these, but rather than attempt to fully chronicle a problematic history, the main purpose here will be to look at developments that led to the Myōan Kyōkai’s establishment even after the Fuke sect had just been outlawed. What stands out in the historical elements is a fairly constant invention of events and details that led to the creation of a tradition and then the subsequent re-invention and recasting of the past to not only perpetuate that tradition, but perhaps also to reconcile some of the more irreconcilable facets of a doubtful history.

If some of the uses or associations of the shakuhachi and the Fuke sect’s historical details are problematic, it can also be said that the history of the instrument provides riddles of its own. The next section provides a very brief overview of the shakuhachi and instruments related to it, by giving a very basic outline of these instruments’ evolution since their earliest known examples in Japan. Where the

opening section of Chapter 1 put an emphasis on uses and contexts of the instrument, the purpose here is to look at historical aspects related to it. We will find that, much like the Fuke sect who appropriated and virtually monopolised the use of the shakuhachi, they both share an uncertain and problematic history.

### 3.1 The Shakuhachi

What is generally accepted as the shakuhachi's prototype came into Japan from China probably sometime in the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. This somewhat vague dating is due to the fact that there seems to be some disagreement as to when exactly this took place, and we find a range of possibilities spanning about one-hundred years. Gutzwiller, for example, first dates it between the late 6<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, then later puts it at sometime in the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Gutzwiller 1974:6, 1984:53). Kamisangō (1988:72) puts it at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and Lee (Lee 1998:62) almost agrees by reporting it as during the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, Tukitani (2008:145) gives the range of late 7<sup>th</sup> to early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Regardless of exactly when, it arrived on the shores of Japan, along with several other instruments, as a member of the *gagaku*<sup>1</sup> ensemble and there are eight specimens of these ancient instruments preserved in the Shōsō-in Imperial repository in Nara. When compared with the contemporary versions of the instrument, the most notable of the features on these early flutes is that there are six finger-holes and that they are not all made of bamboo, even though the three non-bamboo instruments are all carved in such a way as to mimic bamboo, thus emphasising the original—or perhaps ideal—material used to create these early specimens. This instrument is

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1 *Gagaku* literally means 'elegant music' and refers to ensemble music of the imperial court.

generally referred to as the *gagaku shakuhachi* and was dropped from the court orchestra sometime in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Thereafter, there seems to be no trace of it or any related instrument for about three centuries, when it appears to have enjoyed a brief revival only to disappear again from historical records for almost a century.

The next documentary evidence, this time iconic, comes in Toyohara's (1450–1524) *Taigen Shō*, a musical treatise written in 1512, where it enigmatically re-emerges as a five (finger) holed instrument (i.e., minus one hole) and it is in this form that we closely approach the standard instrument we have today. In essence, two lines of reasoning have been put forth to explain this change. The first is that the modified form was re-introduced from China, which is the view held by the early proponents of the Fuke sect as exemplified in the *Kyotaku Denki* (History of the False Bell—discussed later in this chapter). This particular mystery has vexed other researchers, many of whom consider the modern shakuhachi to have descended from the *gagaku* instrument and evolved independently within Japan to acquire its present configuration of five holes. There are very compelling arguments to support this view, especially given that the obliquely cut mouthpiece is unique to Japan (see especially Tukitani et al. 1994:104). As we will see in the next section, however, according to the *Kyotaku denki* ('History of the False Bell'), the shakuhachi returned to Japan when Kakushin brought it back from China in 1254. Although not really part of the present study, one Myōan Kyōkai member was adamant that this really was the case, even though he offered no explanations to support this, nor did he apparently feel any need to (Tsukamoto Personal Communication 11 April, 2009). As we saw in the last chapter (section 2.2), Edgar Pope (2000) quite usefully divides

the two camps into ‘traditionalists’ and ‘revisionists’, the former believing in the reintroduction as set forth in the *Kyotaku denki* and the latter not subscribing to this view. However, as noted in Chapter 1 (section 1.5), being a believer or nonbeliever in this particular detail has little, if any, bearing on whether or not one decides to become a member of the Myōan Kyōkai. Furthermore, not subscribing to this view underlines the value that current practice can have for the present study and also perhaps how much weight should be given to the veracity some of these historical details.

### 3.2 Brief History of the Fuke-shū and *Komusō* leading to Myōan Kyōkai

Several detailed historical treatments of the *Fuke-shū* and the *Komusō* have already been written<sup>2</sup> and most also examine, to varying degrees, the evolution of the instrument. The previous section took a very brief look at some of the perplexities of the shakuhachi from a more organological perspective; this section takes a look at some of the historical aspects of the shakuhachi in its “religious” context, namely the connection to Zen Buddhism, an important and inevitable association, as pointed out in the introductory chapter. More specifically, by “religious” here, the discussion concentrates on the Fuke sect and its ‘monks/priests of nothingness and emptiness’, the *Komusō*, who by all accounts held a virtual monopoly on the instrument for the better part of two centuries. (A more thorough treatment and discussion of the “religious” label appears in the next-to-last chapter, hence its framing in quotation marks at this stage.)

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<sup>2</sup> For works in English, of special interest would be these authors as listed in the bibliography: Gutzwiller (1974); Kamisangō (1988); Lee (1998); Sanford (1977); Takahashi (1990); Linder (2012)—see also the literature review in Chapter 2.

If the physical development of the instrument provides a few difficult to answer riddles, the history of the Fuke sect itself can be downright confusing. This could be partly due to the profusion of primary documents (“rather too many, in fact,” remarks Sanford (1977:418)<sup>3</sup>). It also manifests itself in various discrepancies within some of the texts reporting the early history of the sect, some of which were highlighted in the Literature Review (Chapter 2, section 2.2).

As far as any concrete documentary evidence regarding the Fuke sect is concerned, one cannot fail but notice that the rather exiguous amount of written materials do not really seem to predate the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, thus raising doubts that the sect even existed in any organised form very much prior to this time. One document in particular, the *Kyotaku denki* (‘History of the False Bell’),<sup>4</sup> not only outlined the Fuke sect’s putative beginnings and early history, but perhaps more importantly may have helped serve as the basis for gaining official recognition of the sect by the government. The *Kyotaku Denki* thus described both the history and tenets on which the Fuke sect was founded. Whether the former should be viewed more as fable than fact is really of less import than the possibility that it could very well have also served to validate the sect’s existence.

The *Kyotaku Denki* can therefore be viewed from two perspectives: a written record outlining the beliefs of a group of people (the Fuke sect), as well as a document that may have given official recognition to the group. This does not, however, address questions about the veracity of the legend it portrays, for in all likelihood that was fabricated (see especially Nakatsuka 1936–39[1975]). Where

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3 Actually here, Sanford was only referring to different versions of one particular document, the *Keichō no okitegaki*, which had several iterations and may be seen as a dialogue between the government authorities and the Fuke sect—see below.

4 The *Kyotaku Denki Kokujiikai* has been republished (Yamamoto 1981). For an English translation and discussion, see Tsuge (1977).

forged aspects really come into play is with the problems of dating the original. Forgery also comes into the picture as it relates to subsequent documents, collectively known as the *keichō no okitegaki*, 'Keichō Era (1596–1615) Statutes'.<sup>5</sup> These legislative acts dealt with the various special privileges granted to the Fuke sect, including a monopoly on the shakuhachi and a membership to the *bushi* (warrior) class. The earliest of these was said to have been presented in 1614 to the first Tokugawa Shōgun, Ieyasu (1542–1616) and it is especially this document whose authenticity is questionable. The sect elders provided a copy to the authorities and, when asked to produce the original, claimed that it had been destroyed in a fire. However, no copies of it existed within the *bakufu*'s own records (Kamisanō 1988:103–4) and some doubt has also been expressed that Ieyasu would have signed such a document (Takahashi 1990:69). The reasons for this as well as the authenticity need not concern us very much here, for the reality is that the sect was officially recognised by the authorities in 1677. Likewise, the content of these statutes is of no great interest to our purposes here: they simply outline legal aspects of the sect and its members, the *Komusō*. It is a code of conduct that has very little to do with any matters of ideology, which are really only to be found in the *Kyotaku Denki*.

The first confusion arises in understanding that two supposed separate documents are often either mixed up or treated as one single document: what I shall call the *Kyotaku Denki* 'proper' and what is known as the *Kyotaku Denki Kokujiikai*. When treated as one single document, it is typically the latter of the two, while often denying or ignoring an existence of an earlier one. There is little disagreement about

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<sup>5</sup> The entire set of these documents has been translated into English and analysed by Takahashi (1990:54–74).

the later document as having probably been translated and perhaps even entirely written by Yamamoto Morihide in 1779 and then published in 1795 (cf. Gutzwiller 1974:15; Kamisangō 1988:101; Sanford 1977:416; Takahashi 1990:25; Tsuge 1977:47). The reasons that so many authors have paid greater attention to this latter document come as no surprise, given the simple fact that it provides a translation and therefore is obviously easier to work with. Establishing the date of the earlier document upon which the redaction is based, however, appears quite problematic. Sanford estimates the date as “no earlier that [sic] 1765 or 1770” (1977:416) and it is difficult to see how he arrives at these dates, as he doesn’t really elaborate. One could take them to be a misprint and read it as one century earlier, since, as we saw in the last chapter (section 2.2), he also provides the decade of 1670s for the original (Sanford 1977:420). This would seem reasonable, if the Fuke sect had attained official recognition by the Tokugawa government in 1677, largely based on its contents. Furthermore, Sanford connects the *Kyotaku Denki* original with Ton’ō as author along with his disciple Mufū without questioning their historicity, but also without providing any further information about either of these two personages. In fact, Ton’ō, whose dates cannot be ascertained, appeared to have existed and according to Takahashi, lived sometime during the Kan’ei period (1624–1644) (Takahashi 1990:25).<sup>6</sup> Takahashi (1990:4–5) also suggests that the *Kyotaku Denki* was “presented to the fourth shōgun of the Tokugawa family,” who was Ietsuna (r.1651–1680) (Sansom 1973:528). This, of course would coincide with the official approval of the Fuke sect’s existence in 1677. If this were the case, it would seem that the later *Kokujikai* (redacted) version acknowledges the original document’s

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6 Ton’ō’s birth and death dates cannot be ascertained. Takahashi simply states that “it is believed that he lived sometime during the Kan’ei period (1624–1644)” (Takahashi 1990:25). Incidentally, he dates the end the Kan’ei period one year earlier in 1643; Deeg (2007:17) dates the document (and by extension Ton’ō) during the Kan’ei period, but assigns a mere 5 years to it (1624–29).

authenticity, not to mention the ease of use a more vernacular rendering provides. It has also been proposed that the redacted version was published at a time that the Fuke sect was losing favour with the shōgunate and was thus an attempt at garnering support, perhaps also with the general public (see Lee 1998:136–37). The question remains, however, whether the earlier document ever really existed.

Ignoring for now the document’s origins and just considering its content, the *Kyotaku Denki*’s overall credibility has been questioned on several counts by many scholars. It seems that at least part of this is due to the fact that all documentary evidence points to the sect’s having been established much later than when its namesake, the Chinese Zen monk Fuke,<sup>7</sup> lived during the T’ang dynasty (618–907). As Malm (2000:167) puts it, “faking documents was a favorite pastime of Edo writers.” Weisgarber (1968:314) echoes Malm when he writes: “The beginnings are clouded in doubt. Indeed, it is hard to separate myth from fact as many Edo writers had a propensity for faking historical documents.”

Whether or not counterfeiting documents was really a usual practice during the Edo period (1600–1867) is not at all elaborated or substantiated by either of these authors, nor is it of great relevance to the present study. What is pertinent, however, is that it does fit with what is generally agreed about the early written records of the Fuke sect: the overall account of how the sect came into existence was in most probability a rather fanciful fabrication. Fanciful on the one hand, yet cleverly creative: the chronicle mixes historically verifiable figures and events with fictitious or, let us allow, *as yet unconfirmable*, characters and facts.

To return to Glassie’s observation (1995:395—see Chapter 1, section 1.5), the

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<sup>7</sup> Fuke is the Japanese reading of 普化—it can be read both as Puko, Puhua in Chinese (Gutzwiller 1974:15; Sanford 1977:416; Tsuge 1977:49).

origins of the *Fuke* sect as set forth in the early documents are indeed brilliantly crafted in order to have become useful in both justifying its very existence among its membership and, at least equally important, in gaining official recognition by the government. It should be noted that the Tokugawa military government that ruled Japan during the entire Edo period did not at all approve the formation of new sects and it was forbidden to build new temples from about 1630 onwards (Wigmore 1969:33). These points alone, it would seem, serve to raise doubts of the sect's existence—at least as a legally recognised entity—very much earlier than its acceptance in 1677, but certainly thereafter it can hardly be disputed.

Yet at the same time, one may wonder just how organised or unified it was. Both Deeg and Linder point out that the words “Fuke” and “sect” (*shū*—宗) were not coupled in documents issued by the government, but rather just referred to the *Komusō* (Deeg 2007:27; Linder 2012:21,58). It could follow, then, that the word “sect” (or “denomination”) was later added by the *Komusō* themselves in these early self-defining stages (see Tukitani 2000:30; also Deeg 2007:16). While this may seem a technicality, it also seems to add to any evidence against the sect's existence very much before the 17<sup>th</sup> century. But it also does not deny that an organised unit existed, whether called sect or not.

Regardless, even if the Fuke sect's professed roots seem less than believable, they served as a basis for a group's belief system. Moreover, even though legitimating a sect in order to overcome any legal restrictions imposed by the Tokugawa government could be reason enough, it also is worth considering self-legitimization as a worthy motive. In fact Deeg (2007:7–8) suggests that such a practice was also common among the Chan (Zen in Japanese) sects in China, where

“constructing a continuous, and thus legitimate, transmission of the *dharma* . . . . through historiographical-narrative” appears not to have been uncommon.

The *Kyotaku Denki*'s account of the origins of the sect can be summarised as follows. If we start with Fuke (d. 860),<sup>8</sup> after whom the sect was named, we find no argument that he indeed existed, although little seems to be known about him, other than his mention in the *Lin-chi lu* (Japanese: *Rinzai-roku*, Record of Rinzai—see Sanford (1977:416, 439)), where he is characterised as an eccentric known for ringing a bell and proclaiming,

If attacked in the light, I will strike back in the light. If attacked in the dark, I will strike in the dark. If attacked<sup>9</sup> from all quarters, I will strike as a whirlwind does. If attacked from the empty sky, I will thrash with a flail.<sup>10</sup>

(transl. Tsuge 1977:49)<sup>11</sup>

According to the *Kyotaku Denki*, Chang Po (Japanese, Chō Haku), an admirer of Fuke, desired to become his disciple. He made a bamboo flute in order to imitate Fuke's bell and named it the 'False Bell'. Although Fuke rejected him, his composition was transmitted through sixteen generations of the Chang (Chō) family. The sixteenth generation recipient, Chang T'san (Chō San) taught it to the visiting Japanese Zen student Kakushin (1207–98). Kakushin returned to Japan in 1254 after spending 5 years in China and studied Rinzai school Zen under Wumen Huikai (Japanese: Mumon Ekai (1183–1260)).

Kakushin then brought the False Bell transmission back with him to Japan and

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8 Fuke's birth date is unknown. Girard dates his death as 860 (Girard 2007:54); Sanford is not specific other than writing that he died in the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Sanford 1977:416).

9 Here, Tsuge's text reads “attached”—treated as a typographical error.

10 Undoubtedly another typographical error: “frail” in Tsuge's translation.

11 This poem is known as Fuke's *shida no ge* ('Four Hits Gatha') and maintains strong ties to the shakuhachi.

imparted it to his own disciples. Of these, one stands out, namely Kyomu, who is considered to be the founder of Myōan Temple in Kyoto. He is also credited with founding the Fuke sect in Japan, this being officially declared by the Myōan Kyōkai in 1951 (Kyoreizan Myōan-ji 2003:13). This could be seen as being reinforced by the fact that his grave in Kyoto is now referred to as “Fuke Zuka” (Fuke’s Grave). The word *Komusō*, which translates as ‘monks/priests<sup>12</sup> of emptiness and nothingness’ is derived from his name, “Kyomu” bearing the same two ideograms as “Komu” (虚無—meaning ‘emptiness’<sup>13</sup> or ‘void’ and ‘nothingness’, respectively).

According to Sanford (1977:416), the Changs (Chōs) were a “literary creation.” However, Kakushin was definitely not an imaginary character: it is well documented that he traveled to China and studied Zen there.<sup>14</sup> However, as Nakatsuka (1936–39[1975]) discovered, there is absolutely nothing to tie him to the shakuhachi. Try as one might, it seems quite futile to guess what rationale the founders had with the choice of Kakushin. Sanford (1977), for example, posits that it was mainly because of the historical veracity and his connection to Rinzai Zen, along with his travels to China, as well as perhaps his generally high profile and being associated with the establishment of two temples, Myōkō-ji in Kyoto and Kōkoku-ji in present day Wakayama prefecture. Deeg offers a ‘musical’ reason for his inclusion in the *Kyotaku Denki*, whereby one of Kakushin’s disciples was sent to recite the *Nenbutsu* “while using drums and bells” (Deeg 2007:22). However, this relationship is rather tenuous given that the disciple in question was also called Kakushin and

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12 As a reminder, the Japanese word *sō* (僧) is not specific and can be taken to mean either priest or monk.

13 Howard (1992:32) points out that the use of ‘nothingness’, while the most generally accepted English translation, conveys an absence of meaning. The original sanskrit, *śūnyatā* carries no such connotations.

14 For biographical information on Kakushin see (Brinker, Kanazawa, and Leisinger 1996:93–94; Dumoulin 2005:29–31; Girard 2007:49–54; Yampolsky 1993:249).

furthermore, there is no mention of a flute of any type to make a solid connection. It would seem that Deeg is relying on the mere mention of bells as significant, given the shakuhachi's moniker of False Bell.

Even though the origins of the sect may be a rather fanciful mixture of fact and fiction, it may be useful to pause here to consider some important points. First of all, the historically verifiable figure of Fuke is indeed tied to Rinzai, thus forming an association with the Rinzai branch of Zen Buddhism from the outset. That several scholars deny—or are suspicious of—this link seems very curious in this light. For example, a main thrust of Deeg's (2007) article is that the shakuhachi/*Komusō* tradition's connection to Zen is a relatively recent phenomenon and that it was “integrated in the *late Edo period* into the existing system of Zen denominations” (Deeg 2007:9—emphasis added). If the original *Kyotaku Denki* was composed—and Deeg doesn't seem to deny this—sometime in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (i.e., the early Edo period), it would therefore have been uncannily well suited or, even ‘ready-made’ for the purpose of creating a link to Rinzai Zen later on—a bit too coincidental to consider it as a later development.

Another portion of some authors' scepticism seems to stem from the fact that there is no evidence to suggest that Fuke himself ever founded his own sect, so they add this to their arguments in discrediting sect. On this point it can only be remarked that there really was never anything in the *Kyotaku Denki* to suggest that this was the case, nor anything to give the impression that the sect wasn't originally formed and launched in Japan. Indeed, it is always emphasised that there are no records of any Fuke sect in China associated with flute playing. The sixteenth generation of Changs, Chang T'san, is only said to have played the flute while studying with

Mumon (Chinese, Wumen (1183–1260)), who was also Kakushin’s preceptor just prior to his return to Japan (Brinker, Kanazawa, and Leisinger 1996:94; Girard 2007:52). Although the flute-playing Changs may well have been contrived, again there is nothing remotely pretending to suggest that there was anything that could be seen as constituting a sect or larger movement in China beyond several generations of one family. It seems highly plausible that the early members of the Fuke sect and early chroniclers simply admired and were inspired enough by Fuke to start a movement in his name. This reverence can also be attested to by the fact that Fuke’s gatha (poetic verse), *Shida no ge* (see Tsuge’s translation earlier in this section), as we shall see later (Chapter 4), is still recited at Myōan Temple today.

As already noted several times, Nakatsuka (1936–39[1975]) is credited for the discovery of the fact that there is absolutely no documentary evidence to associate Kakushin with the shakuhachi. This provides yet another obstacle in making the putative origins of the Fuke sect believable. It could be that indeed he was used to help add credence to the tradition being a long and well established one, as has been suggested by several authors (cf. Sanford 1977; Deeg 2007). By using the personage of Fuke, it also reinforces the link to the Rinzai school, as we have already seen. That Kakushin is often technically credited with establishing the temples of Myōkō-ji in Kyoto and perhaps more importantly Kōkoku-ji in Wakayama undoubtedly also played a rôle by enabling the founders of the sect to name a sponsoring temple, an essential requirement in gaining approval from the Tokugawa government.

The important figure of Kakushin, however, offers other possibilities worth exploring and may be viewed as indicating a certain wisdom on the part of the founders in choosing him. First of all, although on the surface Kakushin’s name

appears to provide a convenient link to the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism, it must be pointed out that such an easy and clear-cut delineation did not really exist in the case of Kakushin and quite possibly, this statement could be considered a truism, at least during the period in which he lived. Kakushin himself was first ordained as a monk in the Kegon sect temple, Todai-ji in Nara. He was also known as a Nenbutsu follower, studied Shingon, Tendai Esoterism, received the transmission of the *Bodhisattva* rules from Dōgen, the founder of Sōtō school of Zen in Japan and studied Rinzai Zen in China before going on to establish the Hattō branch of Rinzai Zen (Girard 2007:49–52).

One could argue, of course, that Kakushin sampled several forms of Buddhism before finally settling on Rinzai Zen towards the end of his life. However, other examples of this sort of sectarian hybridisation can be found. For instance, Gyōyū (1163–1241), with whom Kakushin studied, was himself a Shingon monk versed in Rinzai Zen as well as Tendai Esoterism (Girard 2007:51–52). It is also worth noting that another student of Gyōyū, Enni Bennen (1202–80), founded Tōfuku Temple<sup>15</sup> in Kyoto with the intention of providing a “comprehensive center for the study and practice of Shingon, Tendai and Zen” (Imaeda 2001:229). Thus there is indeed a tie to Rinzai, although it may not necessarily be a completely steadfast one.

Given the ‘sectarian hybridisation’ just described, it is therefore difficult to ignore—and important to recognise—that it is present and indeed existed from the very beginning. Even today, of the Myōan Kyōkai gatherings that do not take place at Myōan Temple, many do not occur in a Rinzai Zen temple, nor out of necessity always a Zen temple, but may be held in a Buddhist temple of a different

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<sup>15</sup> Tōfuku Temple is the head temple of present-day Myōan Temple, the focus of this study.

denomination altogether. This demonstrates not so much a hybridisation in the sense just mentioned, but certainly a degree of openness by all concerned.

Moreover, as we have already seen, the Tokugawa shōgunate forbade the formation of new sects or the construction of any new temples. Therefore, in order for the Fuke sect to become legally recognised, it had to create a connection to—and align itself with—an already established sect and temple, regardless of how loose these links may have been during the period.

### **3.3 The downfall and proscription of the Fuke sect**

The preceding section explored the beginnings of the Fuke sect, which have often been characterised as somewhat dubious, given what appears to be a rather fanciful mixture of history and fable. The sect's eventual decline, leading finally to its proscription in 1871, has often been cast in a light that suggests the sect was ultimately responsible for its own undoing. This view bases its argument on a premise that the Fuke sect set the stage for its own demise through some of its unauthorised practices, especially through its programmes allowing commoners (i.e. non-members of the *bushi* class) access to the shakuhachi through its *fukiawase-dokoro*, shakuhachi teaching studios affiliated with Fuke temples—see next section.<sup>16</sup>

The next two sections propose that one—if not the—major contributing factor was the intense anti-Buddhist climate during the period surrounding the restoration of Japan to imperial rule. However, Sanford (1977:436), for example, while

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<sup>16</sup> *Fukiawase* means 'blowing together', *dokoro* simply means place.

suggesting that *haibutsu kishaku*<sup>17</sup> was probably a factor in the sect's final stages, treats this possibility rather minimally and he in no way suggests that this was the final blow. Rather, he evinces the *Komusō*'s unruly nature by stating that the "general charge of 'Buddhist decadence' would not have been difficult to substantiate" in their case (Sanford 1977:436). Lee (1998:138), while paying the matter a bit more attention, likewise writes in a somewhat allusive manner about the topic.

The *haibutsu kishaku* movement itself was apparently starting to wane in 1871, leading Deeg (2007:33) to suggest that this was not really worth considering as a major factor impacting the decision of the authorities to abolish the Fuke sect. Quite to the contrary: he considers that the Fuke sect may have gotten off relatively easily when compared to other Buddhist sects. He suggests that they were almost spared, their termination coming at the very end of the *haibutsu kishaku* campaign. However, even though anti-Buddhist sentiment was showing signs of diminishing at the time of the proscription, this period is also considered to be campaign's peak (Ketelaar 1990:78–79; see also Matsutani and Undō 1956:116–117). If in fact *haibutsu kishaku* really did have a relatively minor impact (or possibly none at all) on finishing off the Fuke sect, an examination of the other factors given by several authors may help to understand how much weight should be given to the *haibutsu kishaku* movement as well as the impact of other potential causes. We therefore backtrack a bit from the proscription of 1871 in order to assess other possible reasons.

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<sup>17</sup> *Haibutsu kishaku* can be translated as "do away with Buddhism, demolish Shākyamuni" and is the label given to this anti-Buddhist movement.

### 3.4 Crossing Class Lines: Path to Defeat or a Type of Victory?

It should be remembered that Japan during the Edo period was in many ways still considered a feudal society with four distinct classes: landowners, military, townspeople and peasants. These were officially defined by Hideyoshi in 1586 and were upheld when he Ieyasu succeeded him in 1598 as the Edo period was ushered in. However, these class distinctions began to slur and eventually disintegrate toward the end of the Edo era (Sansom 1973:525ff; see also Blomberg 1994:49).

Several admonishments were issued by the *bakufu* to the Fuke sect regarding the shakuhachi falling into the hands of commoners. As we saw in section 3.2, the shakuhachi had been (or at least was *meant* to have been) the exclusive domain of the *Komusō*, and being a *Komusō*, in turn, was reserved to the military class. That the Fuke sect was beginning to lose favour with the *bakufu* is hardly beyond doubt. Whether or not some sort of misconduct on the part of the sect caused—or at least contributed significantly—to its own unraveling, however, is questionable. In fact, the opposite could hold true: allowing the shakuhachi a wider following not only helped contribute towards the sect's economic survival, but could also be seen as a sort of triumph for the non-bushi, who were heretofore officially prohibited from experiencing the shakuhachi for themselves. It also set the stage for what was to come; it was a sort of self-defining period that really would contribute more to the sect's survival in some form. So, quite to the contrary: rather than actually being the 'beginning of the end' of the Fuke sect, it starts to take on a shape that begins to resemble the Myōan Kyōkai of today. Put differently, the sect was starting to re-invent itself, although it is doubtful that they were purposeful or even conscious of this.

The reprimands in question concerned the practice of teaching the shakuhachi to the general public through shakuhachi studios (*fukiawase-dokoro*) that were attached to some of the Fuke temples. Inquiries by the government into this practice appear to have started in the last half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and could be the motivation behind translating and publishing the *Kyotaku Denki* in the form of the *Kyotaku Denki Kokujikai* in 1795, as was touched upon in section 3.2 and has been intimated by Kamisangō (1988:118). By publicising the Fuke sect and its (purported) origins, the hope was perhaps that not only would it raise awareness and sympathies in the general public, but also among the ranks of the *Komusō*, for there were other far more serious misdeeds to confront. There had also been instances reported of members diverging from the officially prescribed repertoire as well as engaging with ensemble activities with other instruments. Finally, and a far more grave type of infraction, were occasions where some *Komusō* had been accused of extorting various donations from the general public. This last accusation would, of course, provide fuel for making the sect a target of *haibutsu kishaku*.

There is good reason to believe that these offenses were of concern to the sect elders as well as government officials. Both would see a degradation of discipline as undesirable, the former more likely in terms of a violation of the general principles and tenets upon which the sect was founded. The *bakufu* for their part would see the *Komusō* more and more as an uncontrollable lot. It must also be remembered that the Tokugawa régime was in essence a dictatorship that, above all, wanted to keep the populace under control. Aside from the somewhat vague reason of simply maintaining control over the populace, the government had every good reason to be concerned: “The Bakufu, true to its name, was essentially a military dictatorship

under which the military class was supreme and all other classes, whether farmer or artisan or merchant or labourer, were held to subserve its interests” (Sansom 1973:448). It should also be pointed out that among the special privileges originally granted to the *Komusō* in 1677, they had the “right to arrest [a suspicious individual] and deliver him to the local authorities” (Takahashi 1990:56). Thus the *bakufu* had every good reason to be concerned. The Fuke sect was meant to be made up entirely of members drawn from the military class, and as such had privileges over the lower classes. For the same reasons, they also had a duty to the *bakufu*. There are obvious ramifications to extending the membership beyond the military class and it was precisely this that must have worried the governmental officials.

Because of these types of infractions perpetrated by some adherents of the Fuke sect, and the failures to curb them, in 1847 the government finally made a public announcement (*furegaki*), declaring that it was revoking all the special privileges that had been granted (and to some extent had accumulated) over the years since its official recognition in 1677 (cf. Gutzwiller 1974:22; Kamisangō 1988:118; Lee 1998:137; Takahashi 1990:120–121). Sansom also details the mounting economic strain of the times and gives this as a major contributing factor to the Tokugawa régime’s ultimate downfall (Sansom 1973:517–528). The Fuke sect, by opening shakuhachi teaching schools and also becoming lax about membership rules, could very well have been taking their own measures to cope with the economic stresses of the times. It seems reasonable to consider that the unrest among the ranks of the *Komusō* could also be seen as a manifestation of a much wider problem and the Fuke sect was not necessarily in its own decline as much as the *shōgunate* was showing signs that it was in its waning years.

So, was the loss of privileges really such a shocking blow to the sect? In many ways it probably was, but it also signaled the approval by the government of some practices already underway, namely allowing wider access to the shakuhachi by lifting prior prohibitions. The Fuke sect was thus permitted to continue the activities related to the *fukiawase* and, more importantly, to enjoy some of the economic benefits that accompanied them. If anything, they were better positioned to withstand not only the economic challenges of the times, but also to achieve some distance from a régime already starting to show signs of crumbling, even though ultimately, that couldn't help them withstand the forces accompanying the *haibutsu kishaku* movement. Above all, as already mentioned, it foreshadowed some of the principles of organisation that can be seen in today's Myōan Kyōkai, where we see a more open membership as well as the *fukiawase-dokoro*, now in the form of the *bun-dōjō*, 'adjunct training hall', in this case adjunct to (or a subsidiary of) Myōan Temple.<sup>18</sup> These relationships will be more thoroughly explored in the penultimate chapter, where we try to establish a meaningful categorisation of the Myōan Kyōkai.

### **3.5 Reemergence: Founding of the Myōan Kyōkai and Resurrection of Myōan Temple**

As we have seen (section 3.3), the Fuke sect was completely shut down by the Meiji government in 1871, the fourth year after coming to power. It was also suggested there that the *haibutsu kishaku* movement played no small rôle in its demise and ultimate prohibition. The previous section also questioned whether its

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<sup>18</sup> The word 'dojo' has found its way into the English language usually with martial arts associations. In Japan it is sometimes also, but not always, used in this context. It frequently carries with it more of a Buddhist connotation of ashram, or special 'retreat' centre or place.

divergence from some of the original principles that the sect set out for itself—or the ones negotiated with the *bakufu*—was as consequential to its downfall as has been suggested by other scholars. Mere association with an unpopular dictatorship that had just fallen could also be seen as another consideration for the causes effectuating the ban and, as we’ve already seen, the relationship between the sect and the *shōgunal* government was by no means a trivial one.

Indeed, it should be noted that Buddhist temples in general, along with their priests, were tools used by the *bakufu* to retain its power over the populace. Under Iemitsu (3<sup>rd</sup> Shōgun, 1622–1651), citizens had to avow membership to a Buddhist sect as well as “register as parishioners of a [Buddhist] church” (Sansom 1973:505).<sup>19</sup> This measure, besides being a way of curbing Christianity, also served the purpose of census keeping and also provided citizens with a sort of passport or identity card. Temples thus became a government office, with priests acting in two capacities: one relating to religious functions and the other as government officials (Matsutani and Undō 1956:104–105). Kazuo Kasahara lists two additional rôles: “they helped mold public thought cooperating with the government to create a compliant populace . . . [and] they undertook public surveillance, acting as government agents” (Kasahara 2001:334).

William Malm, among others (cf. Sanford 1977), emphasises this point by writing that the Fuke sect had been granted their special prerogatives “on condition that they act as spies for the government.” He even goes so far as to suggest that after the sect was abolished, “the tradition of the ‘stool pigeon’ lived on at least in fiction if not in fact” (Malm 2000:168–69). As just noted above, however, the utility

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<sup>19</sup> Usage of the word ‘church’ should not really come as a surprise. It should be borne in mind that churches need not always be associated with Christianity. In fact, the *kyōkai* of Myōan Kyōkai translates as ‘church’ and not ‘society’ even though both are homonyms in Japanese—see below.

of spy was by no means the exclusive domain of the *Komusō*, but was a tactic employed in other Buddhist sects as well, thus creating an alliance between the *shōgunate* and Buddhism in general. This could help explain part of the incitement behind the *haibutsu kishaku* movement, although there are undoubtedly other reasons too numerous (not to mention irrelevant to the current study) for inclusion here.

In fact, Gutzwiller (1983:240) quite logically sees this partnership between the Fuke sect and the *shōgunate* as reason enough for the interdiction of the sect, and while not invoking the *haibutsu kishaku* movement itself, does imply it by writing that “abuses which were prevalent in [the Fuke sect] were no worse than in other sects” (Gutzwiller 1984:63). This can be confirmed, as already mentioned, by the fact that the *bakufu* used Buddhist temples and their priests as one of the ways of maintaining its power over the general populace. It then follows that it is likely also to have been one of the reasons for the *haibutsu kishaku* movement, which saw the institution of Buddhism *as a whole* to come under attack. Just as the *Komusō* were not singled out to be functionaries of the Tokugawa government, the Fuke sect was not an isolated sect of Buddhism being persecuted. Nor could the Fuke sect and *Komusō* really have been “the last remnants of the Tokugawa system” as Takahashi (1990:125) so boldly proposes.

What does seem likely, however, is that quite a different *modus operandi* existed between the three main Fuke temples, the two near Edo (present-day Tokyo), Reihō-ji and Ichigetsu-ji<sup>20</sup> vis-à-vis Myōan Temple in Kyoto. In fact Sanford (1977:431–32) even proposes that there was a rivalry between them which could

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<sup>20</sup> As a reminder, ‘ji’ appearing as a suffix is the Japanese word to designate a temple.

lead one to wonder why Myōan-ji survived in one form, while the other two did not. It would seem that the two temples in Edo did not have the will to continue, considering that two main figures there at the time of the Fuke proscription devoted their attentions to secularising the shakuhachi.

Araki Kodō II (1832–1908) and Yoshida Itchō (1812–1881) seemed more interested in ensemble music for shakuhachi (*gaikyoku*) and focused their energies there rather than continuing the *honkyoku* tradition in a temple context (Kamisanō 1988:123–24; see also Kurihara 1918:209–10; Lee 1998:146).<sup>21</sup> The Kinko style of shakuhachi thrived in Edo, even though both Reihō-ji and Ichigetsu-ji were destroyed along with Myōan-ji and most other Fuke temples. It did not seem that there was any attempt to revive the two temples in Edo and if one visits either site today, all that is left is a reminder of what once stood there. Reihō-ji in the city of Ōme, west of Tokyo, is now a playground with some stone statues and markers as mementos. Down the street, the Rinzai Zen temple, Tōzen-ji houses some relics. A stone marker commemorating Ichigetsu-ji in the city of Matsudo, Chiba Prefecture is not quite as easy to find. One does exist on the street outside of what now is a Sōka Gakkai Temple. There is, however, a permanent exhibition dedicated to the *Komusō* in the city's museum, which also includes a small library with materials related to the *Komusō* and Fuke sect.

The situation in Kyoto, on the other hand, is quite different: not very long after the tensions of *haibutsu kishaku* had simmered and finally quieted, the Myōan Kyōkai was established in Kyoto in July of 1890<sup>22</sup> (Kyoreizan Myōan-ji 2003:10;

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21 The terms *gaikyoku* ('outside' pieces) and *honkyoku* ('original' pieces) have already appeared in the first two chapters and are further explained in Chapter 5.

22 There seems to be some confusion over the year in which the *Myōan Kyōkai* was established. 1883 is reported by Gutzwiller, Kamisanō, Harich-Schneider and Linder (Gutzwiller 1974:23; Kamisanō 1988:125; Harich-Schneider 1973:591; Linder 2012:22, 124, 236). Lee implies that it

Tominomori 1979:18). Myōan Kyōkai is often translated as ‘Myōan Society’, but it is important to recognise that, given the ideographs used, a more proper rendering would be ‘Myōan Church’ since Kyōkai here, depicted as 教会, normally translates as church (rather than 協会, meaning association). This difference will be elaborated further in Chapter 7, when we consider how best to characterise the Myōan Kyōkai as an organisation.

The Kyōkai’s headquarters are currently located on the compound of the Rinzai Temple, Tōfuku-ji in Kyoto. Prior to the Fuke sect’s dissolution in 1871 and ultimate destruction of the original Kyoto Myōan Temple in the Shirakawa district of Kyoto, the last priest, Jishō Sakuhi had put some of the important relics in the care of Zenne-in’s chief priest, Sono Keirin (Takahashi 1990:126). Zenne-in was later to become today’s Myōan Temple.

March 1950 saw the establishment of Myōan-ji as a religious corporation enabling it to operate as a temple (see esp. Abe 1968:272ff regarding GHQ’s changes to interpretation of constitution). The current building housing the temple’s main hall was completed in 1969 (Kamisanō 1988:126; Kyoreizan Myōan-ji 2003:13), just 3 years after the large stone *suizen*<sup>23</sup> monument (*suizen hi*—see photo 3.1) was put into place on the grounds. Today’s Myōan Kyōkai has an active

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was started in 1881 (Lee 1998:155), possibly confusing it with the year that begging for alms (*takuhatsu*) by Buddhist monks and priests was once again legalised following an eleven year prohibition of the practice (c.f. Kamisanō 1988:124; Takahashi 1990:127). Takahashi initially gives 1887, but then corrects it to 1890 (Takahashi 1990:7,128). 1890 (Meiji 23), however, is given in Myōan-ji’s own official booklet, which would seem to make this year to be the correct one. Furthermore, even though Japan’s new constitution was being formulated during the decade leading up to this and religious freedom was included in it, the constitution itself was not promulgated until 1889, thus making it seem doubtful that the organisation could have officially (or legally) declared itself, even if it was already loosely organised. 1890 is also the year that Higuchi Taizan (1856–1914) arrived at Kyoto’s Myōan Temple (Kamisanō 1988:125). He was appointed posthumously the first *kansu* of the Myōan Kyōkai, which could also explain the Kyōkai’s decision of choosing that year as its official founding.

23 *Suizen* literally means “blowing Zen” The term, including its origins, is taken up in the next chapter (see especially section 4.2).

membership of just over four-hundred (438 as of the end of 2012), of which about half (220) are members of the *Dōshū-kai* (association of certified teachers).<sup>24</sup> The current *kansu* (41<sup>st</sup> overall of Myōan Temple) is Kojima Hōan (serving since 1991), preceded by Yoshimura Fuan (1976–1991), Fukumoto Kyoan (served 1972–1976), Koizumi Shizan (served 1957–1972), Tanikita Muchiku (served 1948–1957—note the post was vacant for ten years), Kobayashi Shizan (served 1914–1938) and Higuchi Taizan, who was named posthumously as the first *kansu* of the Myōan Kyōkai (35<sup>th</sup> overall of Myōan Temple) (Kyoreizan Myōan-ji 2003:11–14). It is also important to note that the usual translation for *kansu* is ‘abbot’. However, in the case of Myōan Temple and the Myōan Kyōkai, this can really be somewhat misleading, as it really signifies the chief shakuhachi-ist or culture bearer and is a lay-person. The main teaching functions are carried out by the *rijichō* (head) of the *dōshukai* and priestly functions are carried out by a resident priest (*jūshoku*), who is trained and tonsured. When the new religious corporation of Myōan Temple was established in 1950, Yasuda Tenzan from the mother temple, Tōfuku-ji became the first *jūshoku*, followed by the father of the current *jūshoku*, Hirazumi Gyozan.

### **3.6 Conclusion: The Fuke sect re-invented and perpetuated as Myōan Kyōkai**

Some traditions are invented, some just evolve, but in reality all traditions undoubtedly do both. As we trace the development of the shakuhachi, along with its associations to the Fuke sect and its early proponents, the *Komusō*, then as we move closer to the present, it certainly seems rich ground for approaching it through the lens of ‘invented tradition’. From the early history as reported in the *History of the False Bell*, one sees a crafting of origins that seem most likely to be a conflation of

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<sup>24</sup> A brief look at the demographics of the membership appears in the penultimate chapter; for geographical distribution of the membership. See Appendix 3.



**Photo 3.1: Suizen Monument (*suizen-hi*)**  
(photo by author)

fact and fiction, as seen especially in section 3.2. Even while considering the possibility of historically unaccountable figures on the one hand, we find historically real figures such as Kakushin, but whose connection to the shakuhachi is highly doubtful at best. Questionable too is the re-introduction of the instrument from China a second time in a form more closely resembling that of today's shakuhachi after its disappearance from the *gagaku* ensemble.

Yet, it seems undeniable that a tradition did in fact manage to manifest itself from this curious mixture of fact and fiction, or even that an already extant tradition was justified by writing a history not only legitimising it, but serving as a basis to further define it. What makes this area especially fascinating is the inability to completely prove (or refute) many of these historical perplexities. At the same time, it makes any attempt at presenting the history of the shakuhachi and the Fuke sect destined to rather limited success, if not doomed to a good degree of failure.

The notion that traditions can be (and sometimes are) invented was brought to light by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) and since their co-edited volume appeared, their idea has spawned a new area of academic inquiry. According to Hobsbawm,

‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.

(Hobsbawm 1983:1)

According to Hobsbawm’s criteria, it would certainly seem that the Fuke sect, as set forth in the *Kyotaku Denki* would qualify as an invented tradition in that it ‘attempted to establish continuity with a suitable historic past’, even though it appears that the past in question was itself invented (made suitable) with so few historically verifiable personages. Yet one must ask whether the Fuke sect and the shakuhachi in this context just spontaneously sprouted forth from this apparent legend or whether it was simply a legitimisation of an already established practice. The latter would really seem more likely to be the case, and on this count, there certainly is evidence to suggest the employment of the shakuhachi in a Zen context as far back as Ikkyū (1394–1481), who was not only familiar with Fuke, but also demonstrated a predisposition towards the shakuhachi (cf. Nakajima 1988:145–149; Kamisangō 1988:79–80, 105, 106; Takahashi 1990:44–45; Lee 1998:77, 80–81). However, as Deeg (2007:25) observes, in Ikkyū’s case, nothing seems to connect Fuke to the shakuhachi (or vice versa). An association between the shakuhachi and the *yamabushi*, who were mountain ascetics that supposedly had loose ties to Zen as

well as the *komosō*<sup>25</sup> has also been proposed. They used the *hitoyogiri*,<sup>26</sup> which is considered to be a precursor to today's shakuhachi.

The *komosō* are often considered the harbingers to the *Komosō*, partly because of their use of an instrument related to the shakuhachi, but also (and perhaps above all) due to the fact that their name is so closely homophonous with the later *Komosō*. Here, even though Sanford (1977:413) suggests that the *komosō* had no Zen connections, he similarly indicates there was no association with the later *Komosō* and Zen (1977:412). However, in this light, he also rather contradictorily posits that the term *komosō* is a “Zennicized version of the older term” (Sanford 1977:413). This, it would seem, clearly demonstrates at the very least a desire for an association with Zen and if there really was no connection between the *komosō* and Zen, then they would have likely been *re*-inventing themselves to incorporate that aspect into their ideology, besides legitimating themselves in the eyes of the authorities. Indeed, we see allusions to both Fuke and Kakushin in a *komosō* document entitled the *Kaidō Honsoku* (Regulations of the Coastal Highway), which was dated 1628 (Olafsson 1988). It would thus seem that the *komosō* cum *Komosō*, rather than inventing a whole new tradition, were redefining an already existing one. This all, of course, assuming that there truly was a connection between the *komosō* and the *Komosō*, an association strongly refuted by Linder (2012).

A given tradition's origins are often difficult and may be impossible to trace with complete certainty. Nevertheless, by providing a link between the past and the future, tradition becomes malleable, for if too resistant to change, it would likely

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25 *Komosō* translates as “straw mat monks/priests.” The straw mat refers to the bedroll they carried on their backs.

26 *Hitoyogiri* literally means ‘one node cut’ and refers to one node of the bamboo that is visible somewhere near the center of the instrument. By contrast, the *fuke shakuhachi* typically has seven discernible nodes.

perish. In this view, traditions are constantly evolving just in order to keep up with the times. It is here that the concept of ‘invented tradition’ begins to pale in its applicability to the current study: the real origins are impossible to trace with a sufficient degree of certainty and purported ones seem historically so unverifiable as to render them too close to fiction, thus qualifying them more as invented *history*. It is this invented *history* that served the founders of the Fuke sect in legitimising an *already established* tradition. If some shakuhachi playing tradition by monks or priests had not yet already existed, then we could be dealing with an entirely invented tradition.

Put another way, the early proponents were simply building upon an already existing tradition and refining it for themselves as well as the authorities in order to be recognised as a legally accepted sect. It is in such cases that Hobsbawm himself cautioned against confusing invented traditions “with the strength and adaptability of genuine” ones (Hobsbawm 1983:8) and also differentiated invented tradition with custom, the latter being more variable and adaptable. Furthermore, he also considered one of invented traditions’ distinguishing characteristics to be continuity with a “factitious” historical past (1983:2). Again, this is impossible to substantiate for the shakuhachi of the Fuke sect as we have seen.

However, as has been revealed in looking at the history of the *Komusō* and the Fuke sect presented here, there are several features that are certainly able to demonstrate that the Fuke sect has been “variable and adaptable,” starting with the *Kyotaku Denki*, which sought to take what was likely an existing tradition and validate it not only for the government, but most likely for its membership as well. When faced with what were undoubtedly economic hardships in the waning years of

the Tokugawa régime, we saw the creation of the *fukiawase* teaching studios by the Fuke sect (see sections 3.4 and 3.5, above). Here, whether or not conscious, we see the sect not only redefining itself, but we see also a prelude of what was to come with the establishment of the Myōan Kyōkai after the sect's ultimate downfall, which came with the proscription of 1871. Even though abolished, it was nurtured back to life by the founders of the Myōan Kyōkai and the eventual revival of Myōan Temple. Here, not calling itself a sect, it did identify itself as a church, and also identified itself as successor to the Fuke Sect.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 1951, the Myōan Kyōkai effectively removed Kakushin from the history by declaring Kyochiku Zenji (who, it may be recalled in section 3.2, was also known as Kyomu) the founder of the Fuke sect as well as the way of shakuhachi in Japan (Kyoreizan Myōan-ji 2003:13). In a sense, this position is reinforced by naming Kyochiku's grave 'Fuke Zuka', translated as Fuke's grave. Every spring, Kyōkai members gather there in honour of him and to attend to the grave (see photo 3.2). This is significant in two ways: in the context under discussion here, it shows the Myōan Kyōkai re-inventing itself by seeming to distance itself—or ignore—the importation from China of the sect and tradition by Kakushin in 1254. Secondly, it shows that the historical doubts first raised by Nakatsuka (1936–39[1975]) are acknowledged. At the same time, this does not deny the existence or relevance of Fuke, nor the importance of him as attested to by the naming of Myōan Temple as well as the reciting of the *Shidanoge*; in effect it bypasses—perhaps even ignores—the historical questions raised by how the Fuke shakuhachi tradition came to Japan (or if it actually did *come to*—rather than *start in*—Japan).



**Photo 3.2: Fukezuka (Fuke's Grave)**

(photo by author)

Could *Komusō* have roamed around the country in the same way as before the proscription? It was mentioned that the proscription came at the heels of the strong anti-Buddhist movement, *haibutsu kishaku* (see above—section 3.4), which also resulted in a ten year hiatus of mendicancy (*takuhatsu*). Even once this ban was lifted, it seems highly doubtful that the *Komusō* of yesteryear could have continued as before. First of all, the Fuke sect was already re-defined in 1847 prior to the 1871 proscription, by being ordered to accept *anyone* (not just the *bushi* class). Since its beginnings, the sect accepted lay people in that its membership was not tonsured like monks and priests of other sects. This remains the case today where, as we will see in the next-to-last chapter, *Kyōkai* members are considered “semi” or “quasi” monks/priests. However, even though today’s membership sees the *shakuhachi* and *suizen* as a strong avocation, it seeks subsistence elsewhere and any sort of *takuhatsu* becomes less frequent and even a sort of anomaly to some, who choose not to participate in this particular activity. Thus, while a connection to the *Komusō*

is maintained, it is not fully embraced by all and is certainly not the ‘prerequisite’ it probably was during the sect’s heyday, but rather now is relegated somewhat to the periphery of the practice.

These points show that, ultimately, the tradition of Myōan Fuke shakuhachi as practiced by the Myōan Kyōkai has been flexible enough to withstand the tests of time. In upholding a tradition rooted in the past, there seems to be very little in the way of deceit: mendacities regarding both the origins of the tradition and its repertoire have been duly acknowledged. Vlastos’s paradox, whereby there is a “disjuncture between the rhetorical posture of invariance—the strong claim at the heart of every tradition to represent ‘time-honored’ beliefs and practices—and their historicity” (Vlastos 1998:7) also seems, for the most part, absent. *Suizen* can be seen as the hallmark of Zen shakuhachi and in the next chapter we will consider how the concepts of invented and re-invented traditions may apply to it. We will also explore *suizen* along with the various other contexts in which Myōan Kyōkai members engage with the shakuhachi.

## CHAPTER 4

### Musical Praxis I: Blowing Zen

Recalling the introductory chapter, it is important to underscore again here that the *honkyoku* repertoire was never intended either for entertainment or the concert stage. In general, the same can be said of ‘sacred’ music as a whole and the fact that it often does find its way into situations where it is presented for its own sake as just ‘music’ before an audience is really testimony to its value from a plainly musical perspective.

Yet any of these completely subjective possibilities are well outside the scope of this thesis. It is, however, essential to take some care with the term ‘performance’ when coupled with music (i.e., ‘musical performance’), for this most often tends to imply (or at least conjure up) a public display of music-making before an audience to which the musical performance is directed. These types of situations are not the contexts in which the repertoire of the Myōan Kyōkai is in fact ‘performed’ and it must be understood that members are not at all inclined to go public with their activities in any professional sense; even though some situations are more public in that outsiders are welcome to observe the proceedings, they do not seek external recognition or reward for their engagement with the shakuhachi. In a similar manner, applying the word ‘practice’ to music often leads to an understanding of preparation or rehearsal, culminating in some event yet to take place, both imparting goal-driven meanings.

With these caveats in mind, this chapter examines some of the contexts in which Myōan Kyōkai members as a group engage with the repertoire. These contexts range from lone, solitary, personal situations to group settings involving only other members and finally to more public events that may involve shakuhachists of other styles and may also include the general public as observers. These three contexts form a continuum, each adding a layer onto the preceding one. Thus, even though the third layer is the most public, it can still be said that members are in ‘solitary mode’ because they are really not *intending* their ‘performance’ for the non-participating onlookers. This is not to deny their existence, but simply to state that this group of others is in fact quite incidental or unintended: the performer is not playing to or for an audience. To some degree, this can be easily demonstrated by the fact that any observer’s position is compromised because their view is that of the active shakuhachi player’s back or profile, since they play facing the altar. Furthermore, they are in no way active participants to any of the proceedings, but rather are just witnesses.

There is a fourth context, which falls outside the continuum just described. As we will see later in this chapter, there are occasions when members dress as *Komusō* and play for donations, in similar fashion to the *Komusō* of old. This occurs generally twice a year as a group activity and falls out of the continuum because in this situation, an audience of listeners *is* intended. However, in this context the member does not assume the rôle of professional musician or ‘busker’ and any proceeds usually go to some civic cause or back to the temple.

After examining the various gatherings of the Myōan Kyōkai, therefore, this chapter will analyse them based on the caveats described concerning ‘musical

performance’ and ‘musical practice’. It argues for the need to adjust some of the common notions surrounding these concepts.

#### 4.1 Contexts of Blowing Zen

We will consider possible reasons why *active* members do not concertise in more detail later in this chapter, but before doing so there are two known exceptions to this principle that bear mentioning. A concert entitled *Shūkyō Shakuhachi no Shinpi* (‘The Mystery of Religious Shakuhachi’)<sup>1</sup> was held in December of 1996 at Kioi Hall in Tokyo. The programme consisted entirely of *koten honkyoku* pieces and involved the current *kansu*, Kojima and other members of the Myōan Dōshu Kai,<sup>2</sup> as well as some players from other shakuhachi schools or styles, who also participated in the event. I asked the present *kansu*, Kojima Hōan to explain how he felt about performing before an audience in general, citing this example. He several times emphasised that he does not perform (“*ensō shimasen*”), but rather offers or dedicates (“*kensō shimasu*”) (Kojima, Personal Interview 25 October, 2009). The word *kensō* itself would seem to be an interesting play on words as it is almost homonymous with *ensō*, which usually translates as ‘perform’ and is normally the term used when referring to musical performance in a recital, concert or otherwise public sense. Indeed, *kensō* is the term used to designate the various ‘large gatherings’ (*tai-kai* see—section 4.4, below), and when employed as a verb (*kensō suru*) serves to describe the act of ‘playing’ the shakuhachi.

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More recently another occasion again saw members of the Myōan Dōshu Kai

- 1 This information is based on a programme for the event found at <http://www2a.biglobe.ne.jp/~village/d1996.htm>. Retrieved 26 October, 2008 (Anon n.d.).
- 2 The Dōshu Kai consists only of active Myōan Kyōkai members who have attained the level of *dōshu*.

on stage as part of a concert at the World Shakuhachi Festival (WSF2012). Held in Kyoto on the 2nd of June 2012, this concert included the staging of *suizen-kai*<sup>3</sup> with chanting and playing the piece *Kyorei* as a group. The participants, rather than facing the audience, chanted and played toward a portable altar with a statue of Kyochiku Zenji, backgrounded by large banners of the *shidanoge*<sup>4</sup> (see photo 4.1). It was the first time that *suizen* was staged and was described as being a rare opportunity for the spectators, perhaps never to occur again.

Other than these two rare, but notable exceptions, there are basically three types of meetings in which members gather and among these, by far the most frequent is known as the *suizen-kai* (‘blowing Zen gathering’), which is completely closed to the non-membership. The *kaiden shiki* (‘everything transmitted ceremony’), an important initiation ritual, is also relatively closed, with immediate family members of the new initiates being permitted to attend as well as fellow students of those being initiated. All other gatherings are generally open to observers from the public



**Photo 4.1: Members of the Myōan Dōshukai  
at the World Shakuhachi Festival in Kyoto (WSF2012)**  
(The author is 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left—photo courtesy of Tanibayashi)

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3 The typical *suizen-kai* held at the temple is described in the next section.

4 The *Myōan Shidanoge* (Fuke’s ‘Four hits’ Gatha) is mentioned below (section 4.2.1; a translation appears in Chapter 3, section 3.2).

and some are also open to the participation of non-member shakuhachi players. To these three, the *benkyō-kai* (‘study group gathering’) could be added as a fourth, but will be considered here as part of the *suizen-kai*.

#### 4.2 Blowing Zen: A Look at the *Suizen-kai* (Blowing Zen Gathering)

*Suizen* means ‘blowing Zen’ and *kai* signifies ‘meeting’, ‘assembly’ or ‘gathering’ and is certainly the most frequent of the Myōan Kyōkai’s gatherings. As a term, *suizen* is only used in reference to the shakuhachi and was originally created with the intention of finding a comparable term to *zazen*, or ‘seated’ Zen, probably the most common form of meditation practiced by most Zen sects. ‘Zen’ itself simply means ‘meditation’ or ‘contemplation’ (cf. Ogasawara 1978:95–96). Thus, *suizen*, very fundamentally means blowing (the shakuhachi) meditation. As an activity and concept, it is not only inextricably linked to the shakuhachi in general, but especially to Myōan Temple, as the large stone marker on the grounds bears testimony to.<sup>5</sup> As surprising as it may sound to those already familiar with the expression, however, the word’s coinage is less than a century old, thus often rendering its usage somewhat anachronistic when applying it in connection with pre-20<sup>th</sup> century practice. Thus it is frequently used indiscriminately—apparently without knowledge of its origins—leading De Ferranti, as one example, to report that “[b]y the seventeenth century the Fuke sect of Zen had institutionalized the practice of *suizen*” (De Ferranti 2000:71; see also Kamisangō 1988:97,125; Lee 1998:149–150).

The problem here is that, while the manner of using the shakuhachi may well

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<sup>5</sup> A photograph of the *suizen-hi* appears in the previous chapter (photo 3.1).

have been institutionalised and identified with the *Komusō* of the Fuke sect, there certainly does not seem to have been a dedicated term applied to the instrument's usage in this context. Nor does there seem to have been anything surviving to document past practice or the sect's ideology, unless we are to accept, for example, Kamisangō's 'day in the life' quote described in Chapter 2, section 2.5).

In fact, Yasuda Tenzan, who served as chief priest of Myōan Temple between 1950 and 1953 is credited with coining the term (Kojima, Personal Interview 25 October, 2009). This coincides with Myōan Temple's revival as a religious corporation in 1950 (see Chapter 3, section 3.5) and can certainly be viewed as contributing to the notion of 'invented tradition', even though one still might argue that this is simply giving a name to an already established practice. There appears to be no evidence, however, showing that such a practice in this form actually did exist and furthermore, naming a practice also implies further defining and codifying it, taking it a step further than its current (or previous) status, providing that it already had one.<sup>6</sup> The fact is that two of the main texts relied so heavily upon by those reporting the history of the shakuhachi of the Fuke sect (Kurihara 1918; Nakatsuka 1936–39[1975]) fail to mention the word *suizen* at all. Nakatsuka, for example used the terms *shuzen* (master Zen) and *suishō* (blowing flute), sometimes appending Zen to the latter term (*suishō* is sometimes still currently used). This goes a long way in confirming the emergence of the term during the mid twentieth century.

Blowing Zen gatherings (hereinafter referred to as *suizen-kai*) occur quite

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6 Incidentally, the *zazen-kai* (seated Zen gathering) is said to have been started in the early Meiji period by Kōsen (1816–92) (see Borup 2008:26; Sharf 1993:8). The important difference to note between these two types of gatherings is their openness: while both are receptive of lay persons, the *zazen-kai* is usually open to the general public, while the *suizen-kai* is an entirely members-only affair. Additionally, the practice of 'zazen' is by no means as new as 'suizen', at least certainly in terms of terminology.

regularly and are open exclusively to members. The fact that these sessions are closed became abundantly clear to me when I attended my first one: the proverbial (and in this case quite literal) gatekeeper was not going to allow a stranger in. Once I produced my membership card, however, I was welcomed. This welcome was accompanied by a certain degree of surprise by the fact that I had traveled all the way from Tokyo, since most attendees come from the Kansai area—the region around Kyoto and Osaka (and therefore more easily accessible to Myōan Temple). It seemed quite evident that he was about to close the gate, which was usually kept open during the day, allowing passersby to visit the grounds. This made it apparent that outsiders are not only unwelcome to these gatherings, but they simply cannot gain admission to the temple when a *suizen-kai* is taking place, nor can they during certain other proceedings.

As just observed, this was clear from the outset by the fact that as I arrived at the gate and asked if I could join, the response was unmistakably negative: “*sore wa chotto...*”—“well, I’m not sure...”—the Japanese way of politely being disconfirming, without the rather blatant or too direct utterance of “no.” There is also no doubt that, certainly in this case, a simple “no” would have left little or no room for negotiation; in this instance it left open the possibility that I might be able to legitimise myself as a member, thus becoming welcomed into the group, not merely as guest (which would have doubtfully been possible anyway), but as a peer.

This brings up the question about my lack of knowledge regarding the details of the event that first time. The ‘groundskeeper’<sup>7</sup> had merely given me the date of when there was to be a gathering and I had failed to ask about what time it would be

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<sup>7</sup> The details about my initial meeting with the ‘groundskeeper’ were presented in Chapter 1, section 1.4.

taking place. This was partly oversight on my part, but I had also assumed that I could find the details about the meeting within the materials that, as a member, I received regularly in the mail from the temple. I was later to learn that this wasn't the case: dates and details about *suizen-kai* were only mailed to *dōshu*, those that had reached the rank of qualified teacher. While this may indicate that it is privileged information, it by no means affected whether or not I was allowed to attend; it was more of an indication of how certain information was meant to be circulated amongst the membership. This is not to suggest that my teacher was deliberately withholding information from me, but rather highlights the isolation from Myōan Temple that results from the geographical distance between Tokyo and Kyoto. It is also another way of reinforcing the student-teacher relationship as will be discussed in the next chapter (see especially section 5.3).

The very exclusivity—almost secrecy—of *suizen-kai* was, of course, foremost in my mind, prompting me to ask for permission to write about it, fearing that my 'leaking' this sort of information would lead to an onslaught of uninvited guests, given the popularity the shakuhachi enjoys and the prominent position held by Myōan Temple within the overall shakuhachi community. I was assured by the head priest that he foresaw no problems: would-be onlookers or hopeful joiners simply would not be able to get in (Hirazumi, Personal Interview 25 December, 2008) (as I had already witnessed when attending my first one). So, although not appearing to raise any major concerns, I have, out of personal choice, decided not to reveal the dates of the *suizen-kai* that I observed during fieldwork and without being too vague—or too precise—will only specify their frequency as occurring 'about monthly'.

In the many *suizen-kai* in which I have participated, I have observed a general

pattern that divides them into two component and quite independent parts. The reason for their treatment here as an entity is that during the course of my observations, they occurred on the same day and were attended by the same participants (with the exception of the head priest who usually did not remain for the second part, for the obvious reason that he does not play the shakuhachi—see below, next section). The *suizen-kai* ‘proper’ is (almost)<sup>8</sup> invariably followed by a *benkyō-kai* (‘study group’ or ‘study meeting’). *Benkyō-kai*, unlike *suizen-kai*, is not a specialised term and occurs frequently in various facets of Japanese life. Here, ‘musically’ speaking, it can almost be taken in the general meaning of masterclass, where participants concentrate on learning a particular—or sometimes several—pieces, which are announced prior to the gathering. Where it may differ from a masterclass in the usual (Western) sense is that it is the whole group that learns, rather than a group observing an individual being taught by a master. In this sense, ‘study-group’ or ‘seminar’ may be more apt parallels to make. The *benkyō-kai* is always officiated and led by the *kansu*, Kojima-sensei, who sometimes solicits assistance from other of the more advanced members.

#### 4.2.1 *Suizen-kai*

Participants of the *suizen-kai* do not arrive at the temple simultaneously, but generally all within a few minutes prior to the scheduled start of the event. This with the exception, of course of the head priest (*jūshoku*), who lives within the temple grounds. There is a general feeling of comfortable and informal camaraderie: everyone seems to know one another. People either gather in a small room just off

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<sup>8</sup> One exception to this pattern was observed when each participant played a piece of their own choosing before the altar.

the entrance or else go into the main area before the altar and chat or warm up before the proceedings begin. Perhaps this congenial atmosphere isn't very different from some church services that I have attended, for example, but the private and exclusive nature of the event precludes the possibility of any guests attending (see above, preceding section). This means that there are no 'tasters', no trying it out beforehand in order to see if it suits you before joining: everyone has already joined and become a member, thus already assuring a sense of community, camaraderie and common purpose from the outset by all present.

The first part of the *suizen-kai* takes place with all the participants sitting facing the altar with the *kansu* and *rijichō* (head teacher and leader of the *Dōshukai*) always seated in front. The *jūshoku*, who acts as officiator is seated perpendicularly to the altar, in front and to the right of the participants. The meeting is 'called to order' by a navigator, who also announces each part of the ceremony. This of course signposts each segment, but really seems quite unnecessary, given that the overall format of the ritual never changes. It could be seen, therefore, as a way of adding to the formality—or perhaps even the legitimacy—of the proceedings.

The 'call to order' is followed by chanting *Hannya shingyō* (the Heart Sūtra) in unison, led by the *jūshoku*, who accompanies himself on two *keisu* (bowl-shaped gongs, one large and one small) and a *mokugyo* (fish-shaped wooden block). The chant is on a single tone, with members either following along with text or chanting by heart.<sup>9</sup> This is followed by a heightened speech recitation in unison by all participants of the *Myōan Shidanoge* (Fuke's 'Four hits' Gatha). It is repeated for a total of three times. Again, as with the chanting of *Hannya shingyō*, it is recited by

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<sup>9</sup> A field recording of the *Hannya shingyō* is provided on the accompanying CD (7 *Hannya.wav*).

heart or with the aid of the text, which is usually hanging on a banner to the left of the altar. After this, all participants play shakuhachi, in unison, starting with *Chōshi*, which is initiated by the *kansu*, immediately after which all participants join in. This is followed without a break by three iterations of (the piece) *Kyorei*, each repetition following the other without pauses. The *suizen-kai* comes to a close with the *kansu*, who is followed by each participant in turn, going to the altar for *shōkō* (offering powdered incense) before the statue of Kyochiku Zenji. This overall pattern is outlined in Table 4.1.

The chanting of the *Hannya Shingyō* should not come as any surprise, for this sūtra is said to encapsulate the teachings of the Buddha and is considered to be “Buddhism in a nutshell” (Pine 2004:5). Even less unexpected is the recitation of the *Myōan Shidanoge*,<sup>10</sup> as this stanza forms the basis of Fuke’s sayings and was the core philosophy upon which the Fuke sect was originally founded, not forgetting that Myōan Temple takes its name from it (‘myō’ and ‘an’ meaning ‘lightness’ and ‘darkness’, respectively). Thus, it is very natural that it is used today in Myōan Temple (it is usually recited again at the closing of the *benkyō-kai*—see next section).

Out of all the *suizen-kai* that I attended, there was never any deviation from the overall format or sequence of events just described. Although I certainly would not characterise it as solemn, the ceremony itself is in fact quite formal. This is informed by not only the undeviating structure, but also the formal signposting and signaling of each segment. Certainly my first few times—especially the first—I was a bit uneasy and nervous, which I would attribute to the newness of the situation and the

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<sup>10</sup> Tsuge’s (1977) translation of the *Myōan Shidanoge* appears in Chapter 3 (section 3.2).

	<b>Segment</b>	<b>Who?</b>
1.	‘Call to order’/announcement of next segment	Navigator
2.	Chanting of <i>Hannya Shingyō</i>	All participants, initiated and led by jūshoku; ‘coda’ solo by jūshoku
3.	Announcement of next segment	Jūshoku
4.	Recitation of the <i>Myōan Shidanoge</i> (3 times)	All participants
5.	Announcement of next segment	Navigator
6.	<i>Chōshi</i> , followed immediately by three iterations of <i>Kyorei</i> on shakuhachi	All participants, initiated by the Kansu
7.	Announcement of next segment	Navigator
8.	Closing/ <i>shōkō</i>	All participants go to the altar in turn

**Table 4.1: Summary and Order of Segments of the *suizen-kai***

unfamiliar people. Yet even that first time, I did feel welcome and this was undoubtedly in no small part due to the fact that I had ‘earned’ my admission simply by virtue of my membership. No doubt too, that first time also brought with it the excitement of ‘penetrating’ the field and signaled the official start of my fieldwork.

Taking into account the sequence of events of the *suizen-kai* described above leads to the following observations. In my own case, I initially got my bearings from previous experiences, which chiefly included my upbringing in Christian-church-going circumstances. My own position has been touched upon already in the introductory chapter, so suffice it to mention here that the starting point morphed

gradually into a different perspective with the passing of time. In other words, my innate comparisons that were conditioned by my experiences as a churchgoer gradually faded as I became more accustomed to my surroundings and fellow members at the temple. If at first I was somewhat surprised at the ‘ritualistic’ nature of the event, this was shaped largely by a preconception (really a misconception) that Zen was inherently non-ritualistic. By the same token, I was led to believe that the ‘*suizen* tradition’ completely supplanted any form of actual sūtra chanting (cf. Kamisangō 1988:97; Gutzwiller 1984:56). Thus, my readings about the shakuhachi in general were also undoubtedly responsible for these false impressions. We have seen that, in effect, there has been precious little written (in English or Japanese) not only about the goings-on both historically and currently, but also a surprisingly meager amount about the overall ideology of the Fuke sect (recall again, for example the ‘day in the life’ tract discussed in the Literature Review (section 2.5).

Of course, with regard to documented ideology, we have the *Kyotaku Denki* (see Chapter 3, section 3.2) and, appearing quite later, three essays by Hisamatsu Fūyō (ca. 1790–1845)<sup>11</sup> (see esp. Gutzwiller 1983, where he provides facsimiles of the original Japanese along with German translations and English summaries). This has led to—and perhaps necessitated—those inclined to interpret the ‘Zen aspects’ as they have seen fit. This tendency seems quite natural given the situation and is also what gives meaning to those who choose this approach, quite possibly also including the Myōan Kyōkai to some extent. It may also contribute to spawning other newly invented traditions that are based on the shakuhachi and Zen. More importantly, however, it could also be at least partly responsible for the scepticism expressed by those doubting an actual Zen or ‘religious’ connection and then add to

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<sup>11</sup> These are also discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5

some of the misconceptions, distortions and possibly even myths surrounding shakuhachi praxis past and present. Furthermore, it certainly seems significant that none of the available sources, however meager, never came up during fieldwork. Since past practice, especially in the temple or monastery setting is so difficult to ascertain, we can only turn to the present to consider current practice, which may be viewed in terms of ‘invented traditions’ as was already touched on at the conclusion of the last chapter and with the newly coined word, *suizen*.

With the exception the *jūshoku* (head priest), who does not play the shakuhachi, but can be viewed as celebrant, ritual specialist or even facilitator, all other participants play the shakuhachi, which needless to say, is the most, important item in their gear. This, however, is not their only equipment: even though in general, each member basically wears ‘street clothes’, each also dons a *kesa*, (sanskrit: *kasaya*, a sort of apron-like Buddhist stole), everyone wears a *juzu* bracelet (Buddhist rosary beads) around their left wrist and each member rests their shakuhachi on a *shusen* (a cinnabar-coloured folded fan). In addition, some members wear a special Buddhist black robe (called a *koromo*). This is especially true of the *kansu*, but others may wear one as well. (This differs with *tai-kai*, which are generally more formal and participants may wear one over their clothing or may wear a special kimono, with or without a *koromo* over it, but always a *kesa*.)

I arrived at my first *suizen-kai* equipped only with my shakuhachi (in addition to my various fieldwork-related items, of course). After discussing the experience with my teacher, who told me that these items are received at the *kaiden-shiki* (initiation ceremony—see the next section), it seemed to me that, at least in the case of the *juzu* and *shusen*, these items were earned and I therefore hesitated to possess

them until I deserved them. The *kesa* was a slightly different situation. When it came time for my first time to play solo at a temple, in a gathering to commemorate the death of Tanikita Muchiku (1878–1950—37<sup>th</sup> *kansu* of Myōan Temple),<sup>12</sup> my teacher lent me a *kesa* as well as *juzu* and a folded fan.<sup>13</sup>

What the preceding meant to demonstrate is that to a newcomer wishing to become a full fledged participant, it would seem that what happens during a ceremony of almost any type is mainly to be observed and then carefully imitated. As a general policy, this seems to work most of the time and I doubt that other members have all scenarios carefully scripted by someone beforehand, in order to know precisely how to proceed and exactly how to behave in all situations. It would seem rather, that much of the learning takes place through observation and example, from lifting and raising the shakuhachi towards the altar, bowing, then playing and repeating these three steps in reverse once finished. A similar process occurs at the end of the *suizen-kai* when going to the altar and performing *shōkō*. It seemed to me, however, that some of this culture and etiquette was also something to be instilled in the student by the teacher, or at least when things go wrong, it is the teacher who bears the main responsibility when mistakes are made.

One such occurrence happened when asked to change places just prior to the start of a *suizen-kai*. Incidentally, all events within the temple take place seated

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12 What is described here took place at Myōkō-ji on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March, 2009 and this memorial event is held annually.

13 At this early stage in the project, I was uncertain about whether these items should be in my possession since I had not yet earned them. I was especially concerned about displaying the latter two items, especially the fan, which was not cinnabar-coloured, but rather a “Five Cloud” fan of the Hōshō School of Noh theatre, which for that reason also did not seem appropriate. This last point seemed to be in good judgment as I had never observed anything but the cinnabar-coloured fans during all of my fieldwork. I discussed this after one *suizen-kai* with two fellow members, both of whom were *dōshu* (Ishihara and Mizui, Personal Communication 19 July, 2009). They both confirmed that the *shusen* were given at the *kaiden-shiki*, but the *juzu* was not distributed as part of the ceremony.

*seiza*-style (kneeling position, sitting on the soles of one's feet) on cushions (*zabuton*) on a *tatami* (straw mat) floor. Shakuhachi rest perpendicularly on *shusen* in front of each participant. As I moved to a different cushion, I caused a stir and apparently angered one of the other members. Another member seemed concerned and came over apparently in an effort to defuse the situation. The offended member insisted that I should know that the shakuhachi is a *hōki* (usually translated as 'spiritual tool'). Wanting to understand exactly what I had done wrong and how I had offended him, I came to learn that I had stepped over his shakuhachi, rather than going around it (quite literally a *faux pas*). It is doubtful that the lesson learned here would have been learned otherwise, so in that sense—and really from my point of view not only as newcomer, but especially as researcher—it was both fortuitous and instructive.

There is more than that to be gleaned from this incident, however. First of all, the offended party and I came to be on quite friendly terms after I had sincerely apologised and thanked him for teaching me this lesson. I learned later that he ostensibly held my teacher responsible, suggesting perhaps the possibility that this incident may have simply been an example of a 'foreigner getting off easy'. However, it also really suggests the level of responsibility borne by a teacher. Furthermore, from a cultural standpoint as I later learned, there is far more to straddling (*matagu*) in general, including a correct way of stepping over the threshold of a Japanese room with a sliding door. It is therefore an item of etiquette not relegated only to the shakuhachi or even to musical instruments in general.

As can be seen from the foregoing, there is a fixed and set ritual associated with *suizen*, or 'blowing Zen'. Where the literature really fails to document any rituals or

ceremonies revolving around the shakuhachi, we see here that although it may be centred around the shakuhachi, there are elements that exclude it, those being chanting and recitation before the shakuhachi is played. It is significant here that these are led by a ritual specialist (the *jūshoku*—priest), who does not play the instrument, as if to add legitimacy to the proceedings, but also demonstrating that there is more involved than simply blowing a flute: we see matters of ideology being expressed through the Heart Sūtra (*Hannya shingyō*) and, importantly, the *Myōan Shidanoge*, thus tracing the origins of the tradition back to Fuke. Finally, offering incense at the altar on which the statue of Kyochiku Zenji rests, acknowledges the founder of the temple and the tradition in Japan.

#### 4.2.2 *Benkyō-kai*

After the conclusion of the *suizen-kai* ‘proper’ there is a short break (10–15 minutes) before proceeding on to the *benkyō-kai*. The atmosphere here is less formal, with most members removing their *kesa* and in some cases also their *juzu*. There are, however some ‘ritualistic’ elements, especially at the opening and closing of the session. The *benkyō-kai* is always brought to order by the *kansu*, Kojima, who strikes an *inkin* (small handbell) while he announces the start and end of *sanzen*, a brief period of silent meditation, that lasts a few minutes. In fact *sanzen* bookends the lesson, occurring both at the beginning of the session and concluding it and this is, in fact, along with another recitation of the *Myōan Shidanoge* just prior to the closing *sanzen*, the only real common elements between the various *benkyō-kai*. Actually, the only real differences are the particular piece chosen to study. As we will see in the next chapter (section 5.4), the musical score can be considered to be

scriptural, so by extension the music itself would also be. In this vein, the *benkyō-kai* could almost be compared to the Bible studies held in some churches. The chosen text also varies with each session and, aside from the ritualistic elements of the *sanzen* and recitation of the *shidanoge*, the atmosphere takes on the rather informal character of a group of musicians learning a piece of music together.

Aside from the variability in pieces studied, a general pattern of the *benkyō-kai* can be observed. Prior to the session, scores of the piece in question are distributed to each participant. Since the piece has been announced prior to the gathering and also because it generally falls within the core repertoire, members usually bring their own scores. As we will also see in the next chapter (section 5.4), however, textual variations abound and therefore how a piece has been transmitted prior the meeting also varies accordingly. Working from common notation has the obvious benefit of cohesiveness, but since variations in execution do exist, personal scores are often referred to, compared and discussed with the group. Discussion is not only frequent, but encouraged by the *kansu*, who continually solicits questions.

The *kansu* always presides and most often presents a history and some other observations about the piece, before demonstrating it before the group. There are occasions, however, when he hands this function to another member, often the head teacher (*rijichō*—leader—of the *dōshukai*) or occasionally another member. After playing through the piece, he usually solicits questions before having the whole group play the piece together. Then sometimes, all participants are divided into smaller groups to play through the piece or sections of it. All the while, the floor is open to questions and comments. Many of these revolve around technical aspects about passages within the piece, but often too about variations in textual

representations and lineages of transmission. The *benkyō-kai* usually concludes with all participants playing it again prior to the recitation of the *Shidanoge* and final *sanzen*. Occasionally participants are asked to volunteer to play solo or sometimes certain individuals are called upon to do so; often too the head teacher will demonstrate the piece that had been studied.

Other than simply studying the repertoire, the *benkyō-kai* can be viewed as serving other functions beyond simply learning ‘music’. Where the more musical aspects are concerned, it is important to realise that in general, the pieces covered in the ‘average’ *benkyō-kai* are ones with which all participants already are (or should be) familiar and in this sense can be viewed not merely as learning, but furthering or building on something already acquired prior to gathering as a group.

Even if it is ultimately less formal than the *suizen-kai* that precedes it, it should be remarked that the *benkyō-kai* takes place in the same space of the temple and in the area where the altar is located. This could be seen as creating a special atmosphere and purpose, even given the space limitations of a small temple. Now, however, rather than facing the altar, participants are seated in sort of squared horseshoe formation, with the altar at the open end. This marks off the altar as a special, dedicated region, because no one has their back to it, but also serves the same function that sitting in a circle would, since everyone more or less faces each other. This also seems to accord at least an almost equal status to those participating, also demonstrated by the openness to discussion and frequent solicitation of questions and comments by the *kansu*. Yet at the same time the *kansu* is still acknowledged as leader and it is he who opens and closes the session, even though he may hand over the main teaching functions to the *rijichō* or another member.

### 4.3 *Kaiden-shiki*

*Kaiden* literally translates as ‘everything transmitted’, and with the addition of the suffix *shiki* (translating as ‘ceremony’), becomes the ceremony whereby a member is conferred the title of *dōshu*, or certified teacher. In many other traditions, the highest rank is *shihan*, designating someone who has attained the level of teacher or instructor, with *shihan* carrying the meaning of both master and instructor. *Dōshu* would appear to be virtually synonymous with *shihan*, since it also signifies master along with connotations of enabler or guide. There are, however also ‘religious’ overtones in the term: while the character for *dō* on its own (導) can be translated as ‘guide’, ‘leader’ or ‘usher’, but when combined with another to form *dōshi* (導師) it means ‘officiating monk’.

The *kaiden-shiki* has a fixed format and has within it some of the same elements as the *suizen-kai*, although not necessarily in the same order. The new initiates sit in front facing the altar; in front of them, seated perpendicularly to their left and the altar sit their teachers. Facing the teachers are the *kansu* closest to the altar and to his left the *rijichō* (head of the *dōshukai*). The priest sits directly behind the *kansu*, occupying the same place as in the *suizen-kai*. Again, one person serves as navigator to guide the ceremony by announcing each section or segment, as well as calling out the names of the new graduates as the need arises.

The ceremony starts with everyone, including the new initiates, playing *Chōshi* in unison and started, as in the *suizen-kai*, by the *kansu*. This is followed by chanting *Hannya Shingyō*, led by the *jūshoku*. As can be recalled, these two segments are also

a part of the *suizen-kai* (see section 4.2.1, above), this time in a different order and without *Kyorei* following *Chōshi*.

Next comes the awarding of certificates. Two certificates are given to initiates, the first one being presented by the *kansu* and the other by the *jūshoku*. These certificates are kept on the altar and then taken down by the priest and placed on a small round tray-table. When presented, each new initiate is called, in turn, to come forward. The first certificate is the *kyojō* (license), which the *jūshoku* places on a small tray-table placed to the right of the *kansu*, who is seated *seiza*-style facing away from the altar (i.e., his back to the altar). As each new initiate is called, he/she comes forward and also assumes a *seiza* position facing the *kansu*. The *kyojō* for the approaching student is placed on a second identical tray-table in front of the *kansu*, who carefully opens the folded document that has been wrapped in a separate piece of paper and reads it out. It is then re-folded carefully, re-inserted back into its wrapping, returned to the tray-table, which he lifts and turns so that the document is in reading position for the awaiting licensee. Both bow as the table itself is passed and the initiate repeats the process of opening the document, then examines it, refolds and wraps it again in its cover. The empty table is again turned and handed back to the *kansu* and the new licensee returns to his seat with the certificate. This process is repeated for each of the graduates and once completed, the *kansu* also returns to his seat.

In the same manner, the *jūshoku* distributes the second document, the *kaiden-shō*. It should be noted here that the “den” carries with it a slightly different nuance than simply transmission, with its different ideogram (here 傳 instead of 伝): rather than meaning “everything transmitted,” it now takes on the meaning of ‘tutor’ or

‘transmitter’. So, these two certificates signify two slightly different, but related things: first that the student has learned the repertoire (had it transmitted to her/him) and secondly that he/she is authorised to teach it. After receiving this second credential, each initiate resumes their original seat and the ceremony continues.

The next item in the ceremony may seem to be misplaced in the proceedings, for even though the initiates had already just received a certificate that they had mastered the final pieces of the prescribed repertoire, it seems that it is only now that they are called upon to prove it. At this point, each one goes to the altar, in turn, to play one of the three *kyorei* (the three venerated pieces, *Kyorei*, *Koku* or *Mukaiji*—see next chapter, section 5.2). It is up to each individual student to decide which one they will present to the elders and all present at the ceremony, which would include other *dōshu*, other *Kyōkai* members as well as perhaps the graduates’ immediate family or fellow students. After each one plays their chosen piece, they go to the altar for *shōkō* (offering incense at the altar), followed by signing a registration book of all *dōshu*. As each finishes this procedure, they return to their seat and once all have completed the task, we reach the last segment of the ceremony: the *oiwai*.

*Oiwai* means both ‘congratulations’ and ‘celebration’, but also carries with it a nuance of being “welcomed into the fold.” The *kansu* gives a very brief speech, which is perhaps the closest to a sermon (or really sermonette) that I observed in the course of my fieldwork. After this, all *dōshu* collectively add their congratulations and welcome by playing an excerpt from *Sakae-jishi* in unison. It is initiated and led by one senior member of the *Dōshu-kai*. This piece is part of the core repertoire (see Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 next chapter) and its place here cannot be accidental, for *sakae* has congratulatory connotations, literally meaning ‘flourish’ or ‘prosper’.

Once finished, the ceremony is also over, awaiting the celebratory party to be held afterwards in the same space of the temple. In the meantime, just like most any graduation ceremony, several photographs are taken. This involves at first all the newly initiated along with their teachers and the elders, then each teacher with their graduate(s) and finally all participants in the ceremony. All are taken with the subjects posing in front of the altar.

In a sense, this ceremony could be viewed as a mere formality, since the initiates have essentially already passed the task before them, which is to play one of the three *Kyorei* before the altar and their soon-to-be peers. It is of course up to the teacher to determine a student's readiness to undergo what still can be considered a task or test. This was demonstrated after one *kaiden-shiki* when the *rijichō* appeared to be reprimand one of the teachers for the way in which one of the students played. The discussion revolved more around transmission than execution, since the piece in question had additions to it not included in what the *rijichō* viewed as the accepted version. This shows the responsibility borne by the teacher in a similar manner to my 'faux pas' that was described in the previous section. This also points to differences of lineage and variations in the repertoire and its transmission (a subject to be taken up in the next chapter) that can also have to do with geographical distance from Kyoto and therefore less contact with Myōan Temple. At the same time, however, there is the overriding element of unity demonstrated by the temple: it is the space where not only events and gatherings take place, but is also the ultimate issuing authority of all certificates along the way to becoming recognised as a *dōshu*.

#### 4.4 *Tai-kai*

Turning away from closed to increasingly open gatherings, we come to a more occasional assembly, the *tai-kai*. It takes various forms and, unlike the *suizen-kai*, these gatherings are open for the general public to observe. In this sense they most closely approach what could be considered a ‘musical performance’ in that there is an audience present, even though often it is mostly comprised of participants.

*Tai-kai* always take place within a temple setting, and are often preceded on the previous day by an afternoon in *Komusō* attire performing *takuhatsu* in the city or town where the *tai-kai* is to take place the following day.<sup>14</sup> The first of these in which I participated was a community fundraiser event that was to take place in various locations around Gifu city (due to inclement weather, we separated into small groups and played under cover close to the train station).

Two main types of these *tai-kai* exist, both held semiannually, with both also usually preceded by the afternoon of *takuhatsu*. One is open to participation by Myōan Kyōkai members only (*Zenkoku Myōan Shakuhachi Kensō Tai-kai*—Nationwide Myōan Shakuhachi Dedication Mass Meeting). The other type is open also to the participation of shakuhachi-ists of other affiliations (i.e., non Kyōkai members) to take part and is known as the *Shakuhachi Honkyoku Zenkoku Kensō Tai-kai* (Shakuhachi Honkyoku Nationwide Dedication Performance Mass Meeting). Those of the latter type are co-organised with the *Hōsankai*, the voluntary organisation supporting Myōan Temple and its activities. When any of these gatherings take place in a temple other than Myōan-ji (affiliated with the Rinzai Zen temple, Tōfuku-ji), the venue’s affiliation may not necessarily be Rinzai, but may be

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<sup>14</sup> Participation in the *takuhatsu* event is completely voluntary and optional; not everyone chooses to take part and some even choose purposely not to, equating it to a sort of ‘costume play’.

another Zen school or even another Buddhist sect altogether.<sup>15</sup> The first of these was held on 17 October, 1952 at Myōan Temple, which since then generally hosts the autumn gatherings. The spring *Shakuhachi Honkyoku Zenkoku Kensō Tai-kai* is normally held at other temples<sup>16</sup> and organised along with local shakuhachi-ists in the hosting temple location.

Ultimately, what differentiates these two types of *tai-kai* are, along with the degrees of openness to participation, is that the latter type involves a wider variety of music, even though the word ‘honkyoku’ appears in the title. Nevertheless, instruments other than shakuhachi are not to be heard (i.e., no other accompanying instruments are included in these events). Duly noted, of course, are the instruments that accompany *Hannya Shingyō* (*keisu* and *mokugyo*—see section 4.2.1, above), which is sometimes, but not always, chanted.<sup>17</sup>

Regardless whether or not there is chanting, a *tai-kai* will always commence with participants playing *Chōshi* together, and only occasionally followed by *Kyorei*, as is the case in the *suizen-kai*. Following this, there is a verbal greeting by the *kansu* or event organiser after which all participants play their chosen piece in turn before the altar. Invariably, the *kansu* is the first to play. These events are organised several months in advance, programmes are printed and also distributed to all participants and Kyōkai members well in advance. There is thus never any deviation from the pre-planned programme, except when a participant is absent and I only witnessed a last minute change twice: once when I was inserted after the scheduled

15 ‘Sectarian hybridisation’ was discussed from an historical perspective in the last chapter, section 3.2.

16 An exception to the spring location occurred in 2012 when it was held at Myōan Temple to coincide with the World Shakuhachi Festival (WSF 2012), which was held in Kyoto that year.

17 Whether or not there is chanting at these events seems to be governed by the presence of a priest. When held at Myōan Temple, the *jūshoku* (head priest) leads the chant. He sometimes travels along to events held at other temples, but when that is not the case a priest at the hosting temple may serve as cantor. Otherwise, quite frequently, no chanting will occur.

programme had already been set and another time when a participant chose to play a different piece than the one they had chosen when signing up for the event.

Adding to the formality of this gathering, along with the printed programmes, the title of each piece is usually written on a separate piece of large paper mounted on an easel and flipped as each participant plays. Each piece and player is also announced by an MC, a function performed usually by several participants in turn.

The main observations to be made here is that these are formal occasions as witnessed not only by the care taken in planning them, but the fact that they are held in the special space of a temple. It comes close to what may be considered a ‘musical performance’ in that non-playing observers are permitted to attend, even though without their presence the event would certainly still take place. There is also not meant to be any demonstrations of appreciation or approval in the form of applause, demonstrating that the performance is not directed at them and that the ‘performer’ is not seeking recognition. This is reinforced by the fact that, since players face the altar, an onlooker’s view is of their back, or else their profile. We turn now to discussing issues of performance as they apply to the contexts of the Myōan Kyōkai.

#### **4.5 Unpacking Performance**

“Performance always intends an audience,” proclaims Bruce Kapferer (1986:192). Even more boldly, Alan Merriam, in his seminal work *The Anthropology of Music* declared, “Music[al] sound cannot be produced except by people *for other people*, and although we can separate the two aspects conceptually,

one is not complete without the other” (Merriam 1964:6—emphasis added).

Assuming a public audience of onlookers tends to suggest that the real purpose behind making music is so that one can display their efforts in front of other(s).

Quite often this group of others—or audience—is considered somewhat outside of the event in that they are often non-specialists (i.e. not performers themselves) and are the targets or beneficiaries of the performance. (This contrasts with most contexts of the Myōan Kyōkai where most—often all—participants are specialists.)

It is also frequently assumed that the purpose of the performance event is for entertainment, especially in the case of music, which very often conjures up notions of concerts, recitals or other *public displays* of music making. Indeed, to many, this seems to be the goal or purpose behind making music in the first place and without it, it is often presumed, music making would be entirely pointless. This view implies that it really is not quite fully music until it is displayed visually and/or audibly (in the case of recordings) in front of some listeners or audience and this emphasises product or commodity over process (see Small 1996:4–5; see also Ramnarine 2009:222).

According to Erving Goffman performance is “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his [*sic*]<sup>18</sup> continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (Goffman 1990:32). Included in his definition—and apparently crucial to it—is the presence of observers without whom presumably the performance either could not take place or even be considered a performance. In this way of thinking, a performance must be a public display of some sort before an audience. Add to all

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<sup>18</sup> Goffman probably would allow this concept to also apply to any group of performers—including female.

these orientations Richard Bauman's (1986:3) understanding of performance as "a mode of communication . . . the essence of which resides in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative skill." The emphasis on audience is echoed by Tina Ramnarine: "[performance] is often understood as standing apart from everyday life and *it involves presentation to an 'audience.'*" (2009:221—emphasis added). Underlying all of these views is not simply an assumption of other or audience, they all express this presence quite explicitly and unequivocally.

One cannot argue against performance as some sort of public display in front of spectators or observers, nor can one deny that it can also be, in John Rink's words, a "highly social experience" (Rink 2002:xii). (It may even be entertaining sometimes.) However, this rather limited view is by no means complete and needs to be expanded in at least two ways. First of all, one must consider that a performance can also take place without the presence of observers, suggesting that there are actually two types of performance: public (in front of witnesses) and personal<sup>19</sup> (in solitude). Thus in the case of the latter, one would need to acknowledge that the audience, or observers is in fact one and the same as the observed (the 'performer'). The second point to consider is the makeup of—and type of—audience and also contemplate the possibility that its very existence could in fact be quite incidental and inconsequential to the event itself. This would negate Goffman's call for the goal of influencing the observers, as that too would become completely peripheral. This speaking from the vantage of the 'performer' in this context, for as we will shortly see, outside observers (as opposed to participants) are not to whom the

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<sup>19</sup> Note here that I have avoided the term 'private' as that could include gatherings of invited guests as observers/witnesses.

‘performance’ is directed<sup>20</sup> and the open events of the Myōan Kyōkai would still definitely take place without their presence.

As a starting point, in order to widen our perception of performance, Marvin Carlson offers what seems to be a far more inclusive view:

The recognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behavior raises the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as “performance,” or at least all activities carried out with a consciousness of itself.

(Carlson 1996:4–5).

In this sense, while we are social beings, any voluntary act can be viewed as performance, especially those activities that are repeated. In terms of musical performance, repeated behaviour can be seen not only in the act of performing, but in practice and rehearsal as well. In fact, both of the latter can be considered not only as repeated behaviour, but also as preparatory activities leading to performance of some sort. Rink contrasts practice with (the “highly social,” as previously noted) performance as a “usually solitary act” (Rink 2002:xii). One way of looking at practice is training, in much the same way as an athlete may train for a competition. According to Edward Schieffelin, there is a close relationship between practice and performance and he characterises practice as focusing on “that aspect of human life and activity which is structured largely through unquestioned, unthought habit.” He clarifies the relationship by stating that “performance embodies the expressive dimension of the strategic articulation of practice” (Schieffelin 1998:199).

As we shall see in the next section, this either could be true or it could be that both practice and performance could be seen as in fact far closer to each other than

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<sup>20</sup> We will, however, encounter a possible exception to this when discussing an annual event at Tōfuku Temple involving the Hōsankai (see section 4.7, below). Yet in this connection, it should be remarked that the event would certainly not be canceled if no observers turned up.

even Schieffelin suggests. It should also be added that the term practice here can become problematic and is taken here in a training or preparing sense as is usually the case when referring to activities relating to music. This contrasts with the expression ‘current practice’ that has come up frequently throughout this thesis and, for example, a doctor *practising* medicine or being a *practising* Catholic, etc.

Rehearsal, as opposed to practice, connotes a stage closer to the event at which a performance takes place, perhaps a ‘mock’ performance or dress-rehearsal in preparation for the final event. Schechner characterises this stage as “the process of building up specific blocks of proto-performance materials into larger and larger sequences of actions that are assembled into a whole finished message” (Schechner 2006:237). Of importance here is the idea of proto-performance leading to the finished product of performance, in much the same way as a prototype of a given product becomes manufactured into a commodity that can be sold or at least used (and presumably useful in some way). From this perspective, a rather simple continuum emerges: preparation in two stages (practice followed by rehearsal) leading to and culminating in performance.

In terms of what a performance achieves, Schechner proposes seven functions:

1. to entertain
  2. to make something that is beautiful
  3. to mark or change identity
  4. to make or foster community
  5. to heal
  6. to teach, persuade, or convince
  7. to deal with the sacred and/or the demonic
- (Schechner 2006:46)

He explains that “few if any performances accomplish all of these functions,

but many performances emphasize more than one” (Schechner 2006:46). Here, he doesn’t specify whether performance is public (meaning completely open), private (less open to the public at large) or personal/solitary. Whether or not he intends to include any solitary contexts, it is interesting to observe that all the functions that he lists could just as well be applied to them, with the notable exception of “making or fostering community.” Since the *honkyoku* pieces were never intended for public performance *in the entertainment sense*, but rather were to be used for meditation or *takuhatsu* (mendicancy) by the player, Schechner’s first two criteria are difficult to apply here, especially the first, although an argument could probably be made against this in the case of mendicancy. Certainly, “marking or changing identity” (no. 3) is relevant if the act of meditation is seen as inducing a different state of consciousness and thereby alter identity. As we will see later, there is no doubt that the fourth function (to make/foster community) is especially relevant to the contexts under consideration in this thesis. One might have to stretch the meaning of “healing” somewhat in order to offer the candidacy of his fifth function for our purposes here, unless perhaps we take it to entail general well-being/feeling better.<sup>21</sup> “To teach, persuade or convince” (no. 6) is fitting if we take into account some of the quotations attributed to Kurosawa Kinko (1710–1771) (after whom the Kinko School of shakuhachi is named). Himself a *Komusō*, he referred to the repertoire as

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21 There really doesn’t appear to be any historical evidence to support the commentary provided on the cover of one of Ronnie Nyogetsu Seldin’s CDs (even though there is probably nothing to reproach the sentiment of wanting to use the shakuhachi or *honkyoku* for healing purposes): “The Komuso were priests of the Fuke-Shu sect of Zen Buddhism who wandered Japan during the Edo period (1600–1868). These priests would take the problems and illnesses of people upon themselves, attempting to help them by playing a particular style of shakuhachi flute music called Sui-Zen. They sought to have their ‘patients’ become completely embraced by their music, allowing them to let go of all distractions, worries, problems, and stresses. The ‘ko’ in komuso means ‘emptiness’ or ‘nothingness’; this concept of quieting the mind was the aim of these healing priests. Government reforms lead to abolishing the Fuke sect and abandoning all of its temples. It was only by good fortune that the healing repertoire of the Zen shakuhachi survived” (Seldin 2000).

“musical sermons” (*onsei seppō*) and “Buddhahood in a single note” (*itton jōbutsu*<sup>22</sup>). He also spoke of the shakuhachi being played “with human development from the limited to the limitless as its goal” (Sanford 1977:430; see also Gutzwiller 1983, 1984). Given that we are using this example in connection with Zen Buddhism, one could also apply number 7 in that it pertains to the ‘religious’ or sacred realm (although more on the somewhat awkward ‘religious’ label will be addressed in Chapter 7). Viewed purely from the Schechnerian perspective of the functions of performance, solitary or personal performance could certainly be viewed as constituting a performance, whether or not this was Schechner’s original intent. Using Schechner’s scheme does not quite serve as an end-all explanation, however.

To begin, how do we handle cases where there is a conscious and purposeful decision on the part of a performer not to display for others? Are they in a perpetual state of preparation? Also, what happens when the act of performing is also done without any intent to receive any sort of recognition, either financial or including other psychological/external factors? For example, a very common and probably the most basic of rewards for performance in the usual sense is applause. This precedes all other forms of reward if they exist and can be seen simply as a demonstration of approval for the performance. This is totally absent in the context of the Myōan Kyōkai and can be explained by the fact that here the performance is not really intended as a display, even in cases where outsiders are present. The aim is not to please or communicate or seek any form of recognition from outside observers or otherwise solicit comments or judgments from them. It is in this sense that they seem to become inconsequential to the event.

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<sup>22</sup> Sometimes pronounced “*ichion jōbutsu*.”

Certainly, in the absence of a need or desire for recognition, there must be other factors driving the motivation to ‘perform’ (or for that matter to ‘practice’). Jane Davidson (2002) proposes an ‘expectancy-value theory’ to explain what she identifies as four types of motivation:

- extrinsic (when tasks are carried out because of some external reward potential such as passing an examination)
- social (a wish to please or fit in with others)
- achievement (for enhancement of the ego, to do better than others)
- intrinsic (interest in the activity itself, engagement for simple personal enjoyment).

(Davidson 2002:95)

By extension, the consequences of not being rewarded in any of these would decrease motivation and possibly lead to less practice and perhaps mean abandoning the practice altogether. Roland Persson (2001) offers a somewhat similar view, with some differences. His typology of motivation as it relates to performance has three components, which he lists in order of significance: hedonic motive, which he describes as “the search for positive emotional experience;” social motive, which like Davidson, he identifies as “the significance of group identity and belonging;” and finally achievement motives. The most important difference to note between Davidson and Persson is the former’s emphasis on ego enhancement and competition as a motivation of achievement. A competitive stance is not at all fitting with the ethos of the Myōan Kyōkai, where exhibitionism (a desire to display one’s efforts) (Persson 2001:277) seems to be virtually absent, as is any sort of ‘ego enhancement’ or spirit of competition.

The fact that there are steps leading to the highest level of *dōshu*, and that it takes a minimum of five years to attain it, would seem to imply that a certain

*standard of performance* is required. Although this is true, the measurement of this standard is not what one might expect in that it is not so much a matter of good or ‘correct’ execution of the notes themselves. For example, in my own case, it was emphasised by my teacher and some of the other members prior to my *kaiden shiki*<sup>23</sup> that the actual execution of my playing, in terms of skill or technique was of relatively little importance when compared with my demeanour and attitude, which took precedence. This was the measure, which also included a level of commitment to the group, its ways and also to the instrument. In the course of my fieldwork and activities with the Myōan Kyōkai, on countless occasions I witnessed what may seem to be errors of execution, sometimes even resulting in the absence of notes or pitches when only the player’s breath may be audible. In a normal concert/recital situation, one might view such events as “substandard performances.” Here, in writing specifically about *Komusō* shakuhachi, Toya (1984:21) insists that the goal is not to show off technique or to make other people listen through technique, but rather to underscore the importance of attitude and training.

#### **4.6 Combining Practice and Performance**

The preceding discussion was meant to debunk some of the preconceptions about performance and lead to viewing it more as simply an *act* or *action*, with less of an emphasis on some resulting event or focusing on any particular outcome. It was also emphasised that the motivational elements do not necessarily include some other entity in terms of an audience. In the case of the Kyōkai’s activities, non-participating onlookers, if present, are also subsidiary and totally inconsequential to

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<sup>23</sup> The *kaiden shiki* was covered in section 4.3, above.

the proceedings: they are simply observers allowed to witness an event and to whom the activities are not at all directed. Nor is the occasion intended for their benefit, for the event would still take place without their presence. Without a clear demarcation indicating differences of what goes on between private and more public activities, we arrive at less of a need to differentiate between performance and practice and indeed Ramnarine goes so far as to say that these two concepts are the same (Ramnarine 2009:221).

Despite this, as we have seen, both of these terms carry with them other connotations that detract from their usefulness in the context of the present study. In view of these considerations, I have chosen to adopt the term ‘praxis’ to refer to the shakuhachi-related activities of the Myōan Kyōkai members. For the purposes of this thesis, this term really subsumes both concepts of practice and performance, without leading to some of the various confusions and misunderstandings that these two concepts seem to carry with them, as outlined in the previous section. Of course, words can often take on different nuances and ‘praxis’ is no exception. Rather than going into the various shades of meanings that date at least as far back as Aristotle, let us just take the meaning as an active noun, with the emphasis on *doing*, in this case ‘playing’ the shakuhachi in the contexts pursued by the Myōan Kyōkai.

#### **4.7 Conclusion: From solitude to gathering and forming communities**

It should be clear from the events described in this chapter that the shakuhachi, as practiced by the Myōan Kyōkai is above all social and participatory. Yet at the same time there are various shades of inclusiveness.

My own initial circumstances have already been mentioned several times during the course of this thesis. For the most part, prior to traveling to Myōan Temple in Kyoto, the context in Tokyo was for the most part a solitary and ‘holicipatory’ one (Killick 2006), except for the lessons with my teacher and occasional meetings with fellow students. On the other hand, as soon as I became involved with the proceedings and events at—or associated with—Myōan Temple, more participatory and communal aspects began to emerge. This, of course, should not be at all surprising: the mere fact that some sort of membership organisation exists, along with a systematised way of learning that includes not only a prescribed repertoire, but also a certification process precludes any notion of complete solitude or alone-ness. Yet, in my own case, the community was initially a completely unknown and mysterious entity.

Thomas Turino (2008) offers some interesting ways of looking at some of the social aspects of music making. Although not tailor made for the current study, they nevertheless can be applied and also help clarify some of the points being considered here. Participation, as we have already seen, means to take part in something and to Turino, quite understandably, musical participation involves actively taking part in the music-making process, by playing (or singing) within a group, or dancing. In other words passively observing the music (as audience member) does not qualify: in a fully participatory context, “there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role” (Turino 2008:26).

As can be seen from the earlier discussion, this definition does not quite fit the

circumstances under consideration here. Depending on the situation, all members who go to the events are already participants and that is already their intention: there is no coaxing them into taking part. Nor, importantly, is there any encouragement for others to spontaneously join in. Except during times in which everyone plays together, as in the *suizen-kai* or at the beginning of each of the other gatherings when all participants usually play *Chōshi* together, there is no active involvement except listening and/or waiting one's turn. Here, Turino usefully distinguishes between *simultaneous* and *sequential* participation (Turino 2008:48–51). Thus, we have a blending of both types except in the case of the *suizen-kai*, where only simultaneous participation occurs.

What is missing from this schema, however, is a way of accounting for onlookers, when invited to attend. Here, I would strongly hesitate to use the word 'audience' as they are not the intended beneficiaries of the performance, but are really only witnesses or onlookers. Not only is their presence ancillary to the event (for the event would definitely still take place without them), the performance is not at all directed at them; active participants *are not displaying* for them, and they really cannot be considered to be participants in any full sense.

To illustrate this point, it seems that performing without the intention of displaying for others probably applies more to Myōan Kyōkai than to *Hōsankai* members. One annual event held at Tōfuku Temple also involves Kyōkai along with *Hōsankai* members. Held over two days in May during the Japanese Golden Week holiday, the first day's session involves only Myōan Kyōkai members, while on the second day, participation is open to both groups. I took part in both of these in 2011 when we played to commemorate the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami that struck in

March of that same year.

The event took place on both days in the same large tatami room that overlooked a garden and allowed tourists visiting the temple to listen. On the first (Myōan Kyōkai members-only) day, we faced a wooden commemorative obelisk (*ihai*) to play, meaning that we had our backs to the wide open sliding door that enabled passers-by to see in. Onlookers could also enter the room and sit on the floor or sit on chairs that were placed perpendicularly to the *ihai* and to the right of the player. On the second day, headed by the chairperson of the *Hōsan-kai*, Sakai Shodo,<sup>24</sup> the playing area was moved so that the *ihai* was diagonally in front and to the left of the player, permitting passers-by to get a clearer view of the player. The chairs also now faced the playing area, which meant that the sounds of the shakuhachi were not aimed at the memorial, but were really more directed to an audience. To confirm this intention, the same arrangements occurred the following year, when I also participated on both days of the same event.

In any case, when open to the general public and whether or not directed to a group of others, one needs to acknowledge their presence, whether or not incidental to the event itself. Likewise, members of the *Hōsankai* and shakuhachi-ists of other styles would comprise their own group. Not forgetting the Myōan Kyōkai and its members, there would be three potential groups involved in events (even though not all events, as already noted). These three groups (or “communities”)<sup>25</sup> come together to form one community at these events. So, we start from a solitary flute player, who may play in situations that involve others who share not only the same avocation,

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24 Sakai Shodo is also the current head (*iemoto*) of the Chikuho school/style of shakuhachi.

25 It is recognised here that the general public in this case may not form a cohesive group in that they may not know each other and may or may not go to events for the same reasons. In this sense, they are really no different from a concert’s audience.

but membership to a particular community (the Myōan Kyōkai). Then, extending outwards to other shakuhachi-ists and then even further by including the general public, a single community emerges: the shakuhachi community (as opposed to shakuhachi tradition—see Chapter 1, section 1.3).

One can visualise this single community as telescopic and incorporating several sub-communities as concentric circles coming together with their boundaries more or less permeable, depending upon the situation. For the purposes of the discussion here, at the center would be the Myōan Kyōkai, which manifests itself as a community in various ways and on several levels that go further than simply belonging to the same organisation. Members are united by a single instrument (the shakuhachi), study and learn a unified repertoire, sometimes together as a unit in the form of the *benkyō-kai*. Beyond this, however, it shares other uniting elements that can be considered extra-musical, which also contribute to defining it as a community. Jorgensen's (1995) model, where she identifies four attributes of community (*place, time, process, end*) can usefully be expanded a bit (and she makes no claims that her list is "exhaustive" (Jorgensen 1995:72)) to suit our purposes here. We find a clear and important sharing of *place* in the form of a specially dedicated space, in this case a temple. All of the events for which members gather and share this space assist in further defining the community through *time* and *process*, also being united in the *end* by ritual. Another defining characteristic shared by members is that they can be identified through *attire* in that there is a special way of dressing for gatherings. Finally, of course, the coming together of a group of people automatically qualifies it as a community, regardless of the degree of exclusivity, for communities have boundaries or limits (cf. Higgins 2007:284;

Jorgensen 1995:78), which also aid in defining them.

The gatherings that include outside participants formally receive help in their organisation as well as participation by the *Hōsankai*.<sup>26</sup> In the case of Myōan Temple, it is a separate association, but nevertheless is related to the Myōan Kyōkai, even though its members do not take part in any of the other activities, such as *suizen-kai*, *benkyō-kai* or *kaiden-shiki*. Since boundaries are not always impermeable, this community, along with other shakuhachi-ists of other styles would form the second concentric circle. Finally, moving further outward to the third and widest of our concentric circles, we have the wider public at large as another community joining in the activities. In this way, three somewhat separate and autonomous communities come together, if only temporarily, to form a single cohesive community.

We have also seen in this chapter a need for adjusting common views associated with performance in order to better understand the contexts that the Myōan Kyōkai operates. While it is certainly beyond doubt that other “religious” traditions would share the views of musical performance presented here, music in those contexts most often acts in a supportive rôle, rather than taking centre stage as is the case with the shakuhachi of the Myōan Kyōkai.

<sup>26</sup> In Japan, support is given to temples and shrines by groups known as *hōsankai*.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Musical Praxis II: Introduction to the Repertoire**

This chapter begins to move the focus away from the situations and contexts in which members engage with the shakuhachi and goes on to look at the repertoire itself and the various ways that it is organised, both musically and pedagogically. On the first count, we encounter the possibility that all of the pieces might not necessarily have ‘sacred’ origins. The argument presented here is that other religious traditions also find inspiration from vernacular sources and therefore need not come as a surprise. Furthermore, aspects from the Myōan Kyōkai’s shared history with the Fuke sect can be seen as supporting this apparent duality.

In terms of how the repertoire is learned and taught, we will find that even though it relies heavily on oral/aural transmission, the notated text is equally important to the process. Moving beyond repertoire and its transmission, we will see how the teacher-student and intra-student relationships can be viewed as being organised along familial lines, thus helping to create and reinforce the community.

#### **5.1 Overview of the Repertoire**

The term *honkyoku*, meaning ‘main’ or ‘original piece(s)’, is used as a general term to designate solo music for unaccompanied shakuhachi. As we saw briefly in the opening section of the first chapter, this, as a generic all-encompassing term, would also include modern pieces, such as some of the works of the Tozan

repertoire, that are not confined to solo pieces, but may include works for more than one shakuhachi. It should be recalled that all of the Tozan works were newly composed and do not include any of the Fuke repertoire. In order to exclude newer solo works, thereby confining the discussion to the repertoire of the *Komusō* and the Fuke sect, the qualifier *koten* (meaning ‘classical’) is added as a prefix to make the distinction. Determining an exact total of such pieces is not really possible. Tukitani estimates that there are probably between 150 to 200 *koten honkyoku*, but “the actual figure and in fact even the tradition in general remain obscure” (Tukitani 1990b:46). Undoubtedly the circumstances involved in the chiefly oral nature of these pieces’ transmission is one of the main reasons for this ambiguity. Additionally, the difficulty in arriving at a precise number of pieces is compounded by the fact that there are variations of some of the same pieces and even entirely different (sounding) pieces with the same name. This too can be attributed to the oral nature involved in the transmission of these compositions. Another possibility is that a single piece can become separated into more than one, as is the case with *Kyorei*, which was separated into ‘Chōshi’ (or ‘Honte Jōshi’—same piece see section 5.3 below) and *Kyorei*. ‘Kokū’ also became divided into two pieces by Koizumi Shizan, 38th Kansu of Myōan Temple.<sup>1</sup>

It has been suggested that the term *honkyoku* was probably not coined until after the 1871 proscription of the Fuke sect when Araki Kōdō II (1832–1908) and Yoshida Itchō (1812–1881) devoted a large part of their efforts to *sankyoku* (ensemble music for *shamisen*, *koto* and shakuhachi, which replaced the spiked 3-stringed fiddle, *kokyū*). A term was therefore needed in order to differentiate this ensemble music from the solo repertoire of the *Komusō* and the Fuke sect.

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<sup>1</sup> These became *Kokū* and *Hōkyō kokū*.

According to Tukitani (1990a:29, 1992a:93) the probable first appearance in print can be found in *Ikkan ryū shakuhachi honkyoku fu* [Notations of Ikkan ryū *shakuhachi* honkyoku]. Although originally written by Tansui in 1847, since it was not published until 1897 she expresses some doubts as to the term being used prior to the dissolution of the Fuke sect (in 1871).

The same could also apply to the term *gaiyoku*, or ‘outside pieces’, i.e., music not belonging to the *honkyoku* solo tradition (Tukitani 1992a:93) as is the case of *sankyoku*, mentioned above. Here it must be remarked, however, that even if not explicitly by name or designation, there certainly must have been some sort of recognition by adherents of the Fuke sect as to what their “official” repertoire consisted of (and what was excluded from it). This can be demonstrated by the efforts to curtail errant *Komusō* from playing improper or more popularised music not belonging to the repertoire—other than *gaiyoku* (outside pieces), they were also known as *rankyoku* (disorderly pieces) during the Edo period (1600–1868) (see Linder 2012:98–99). Remembering the supposed monopoly that the *Komusō* held on the instrument and also not forgetting that it was forbidden to use the shakuhachi in contexts not relating to the activities of the sect would reinforce that such an awareness surely existed. It would thus seem somewhat surprising that there was not some term or designation prior to this time. In fact, according to Linder (2012:238) the term actually appeared in 1694 in a regulation issued by Kyoto Myōan-ji to its *Komusō*. Consider too that Kurosawa Kinko I (1710–1771) made it his task to ‘purify’ the repertoire (cf. Sanford 1977:433; Gutzwiller 1984:56), thus also demonstrating an awareness of what was considered ‘proper’. We must therefore accept it as a relatively old term that was intended to designate the repertoire of the

*Komusō* and as noted in the opening of this chapter, *honkyoku* has taken on a wider meaning by referring to *any* piece for shakuhachi (singular or plural) that has no other accompanying instruments. This would also include those of the various newer styles of playing, which were newly composed, such as the Tozan and Ueda schools.<sup>2</sup>

Thus additional qualifiers have been added to the term, such as *Myōan honkyoku*, *Fuke-shū honkyoku*, *Tozan honkyoku*, *Kinko honkyoku*, etc. (Tukitani 1992a:95). As we will see below, however, there is good reason to classify the Myōan repertoire along more precise lines, even though the term *honkyoku* can still serve as a very convenient (but slightly ambiguous) canopy to cover all of it. It also operates as an abbreviation of the expression *koten honkyoku* and, given that the scope of this thesis concentrates mostly on the repertoire of the *Komusō* and the Fuke sect in general, the shortened term will predominate, even though here, however, the focus is on the Myōan Kyōkai's core repertoire in particular, much (but not necessarily all) of which is considered to have its origins in the *Komusō* tradition.

## 5.2 Core Repertoire

As we saw in Chapter 3 (section 3.5), after the dissolution of the Fuke sect came the emergence of the Myōan Kyōkai with the eventual re-establishment of Myōan Temple. The Kyōkai's first *kansu* (although given this honorary title posthumously) was Higuchi Taizan (1856–1914), who is credited for choosing and

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<sup>2</sup> The Ueda school, founded in 1917 includes both the older *koten honkyoku* and newly composed pieces also called *honkyoku*.

canonising most of the core repertoire<sup>3</sup> that is currently practiced by members of the Myōan Kyōkai. “Core repertoire” here means simply the pieces that members must master before attaining the level of *dōshu* (see the following section for an explanation of the various levels and steps).

Up to this point, *koten* (classical) *honkyoku* has been used as an all-encompassing term for the repertoire of the *Komusō* and also for that of the Myōan Kyōkai. As already mentioned in the last section, *honkyoku* without any qualifier will refer to *koten honkyoku* in general, since the newer compositions of other schools or styles are completely dismissed as irrelevant to the current study. This, in fact, is the position taken by many authors and indeed many shakuhachi-ists that play the repertoire left behind by the *Komusō*. Actually as a general term, however, *honkyoku* (or even *koten honkyoku*) is not entirely fitting to encompass the core repertoire of the Myōan Kyōkai, even if it can be useful a very all-purpose designation. In fact, it is often used by the membership as a generic term to refer to the entire *Komusō koten honkyoku* (not just core) repertoire.

It has already been observed by others that Taizan brought with him into the repertoire outside influences, especially from the *Seien-ryū*, of which he had been a member. He incorporated eleven *Seien Honkyoku* into the Myōan Kyōkai repertoire (cf. Kamisangō 1988:125,126; Tukitani 1992a:96). In actuality, however, within the core repertoire as practiced by Myōan Kyōkai today, only three pieces (the *san kyorei*: *Kyorei*, *Kokū* and *Mukaiji*)<sup>4</sup> are now really considered to be *honkyoku* within

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3 Some alterations, as noted in Table 5.2, were made by Higuchi’s successor, Kobayashi Shizan, 36<sup>th</sup> *Kansu* of Myōan Temple.

4 Notice that *Honte Jōshi* is also included in the *honkyoku* category (Table 5.1, below). Rather than being considered a fourth and separate piece, it is considered part of *Kyorei* (Yao, Personal Communication 17 July, 2011) and is often played as an opening to it, notably for example in the *suizen-kai*—see previous chapter, section 4.2.1. Even though it also serves as a general warm-up piece or prelude, it never really stands alone as a separate or independent piece.

a scheme that was proposed by Tominomori (1979). The rest fall into one of four other categories: *honte*, *jun-honte*, *hade* and *hade zakkyoku*, as shown in Table 5.1. Tominomori places the three *kyorei* (including Honte Jōshi—see footnote 4) at the top as the most venerable and important pieces. This is, of course, in line with the *Kyotaku denki*, in which Kyochiku was said to have received two of these three important pieces in a dream (*Mukaiji and Kokū*—*Kyorei* was supposedly brought from China along with the tradition).

Accepting this, while also bearing in mind that the ‘hon’ of *honkyoku* can be translated as ‘main,’ ‘genuine,’ ‘original’ or ‘foundation’, these three pieces could be considered the ones from which all the others sprang. Looking at some of the latter category headings’ meanings may lead to some doubts, however. After *honkyoku*, the next two aggregations, *honte* and *jun-honte*, accord a slightly lesser status. *Honte* can be translated as “true way” and adding ‘*jun*’ demotes it, just as prefixing ‘semi’ or ‘quasi’ in English would. *Hade*, however, moves quickly towards an opposite extreme, as it can translate into “torn” or “violated hand” and carries also with it connotations of destruction. This implies that the pieces falling into this group bear outside influences, perhaps having strayed from the ‘true way’.

Although as a term *hade* may seem rather strongly negative, it nevertheless acknowledges that their source may be ‘pagan’ and it is important to recognise here that this group of pieces is, in fact, accepted into the repertoire. Finally, *zakkyoku* translates simply as ‘other/various pieces’. When Tominomori was developing criteria for his categorisation, he decided upon describing the first three (*honkyoku*, *honte*, *jun-honte*) as encompassing the Myōan and Zen spirit, while the *hade* categories he distinguished as *geinō*, denoting art or entertainment music, with

*zakkyoku hade* being musically superb or refined, but failing to convey the true Myōan spirit (Tominomori 1979:43–44). Looking at all of the *hade* pieces from a more musical standpoint, one is likely to discern a difference in character, which caused Yao (Personal Communication 17 July, 2011) to describe these last two categories as “musical” or “music-like” (*ongakuteki*).<sup>5</sup> I was not only a bit taken aback by Yao’s remark, but also thought that I detected a slight sense of negativity; even if a hint of disdain was not intended, I could not fail to take notice of this as quite a rare pronouncement. When pressing him on this point, he suggested that these pieces sounded like Western music (*yōgaku*) and he characterised them as more rhythmical (Yao, Personal Communication 17 July, 2011).

To continue on the significance of *ongaku*, it is really no trivial point as the word itself, as already mentioned in Chapter 1 (section 1.2), has meanings of comfortable (or comforting) sounds associated with it. It was not elaborated upon then, other than invoking Blacking’s concept of music as “humanly organised sound.” While this is still the overall premise here, it is important to take note of the fact that the word ‘music’ (*ongaku*) was used originally to designate foreign (i.e. imported) music. Hosokawa reports that even though it might have entered the Japanese language as early as the eighth century, it really did not really acquire currency until the Meiji government initiated its school curriculum in the 1870s, when Western music was also introduced into the schools (Hosokawa 2012:2, 5).<sup>6</sup> It is thus not surprising that the Kyōkai membership never uses this word in conjunction with its repertoire. Rather, the word *kyoku*, meaning ‘tune’ or

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5 Incidentally, Yao doesn’t differentiate between the two *hade* categories, but rather considers them together.

6 Eppstein (1985, 1994) are resources in English that provide details about the introduction of music education into the Japanese school curriculum.

‘composition’ in the ‘musical’ sense, is the term that is applied.

If the *hade* pieces (both groups) in fact do seem to have ‘pagan’ characteristics, this could immediately suggest that the tunes have outside origins. *Tsuru no sugomori*, for example, is considered to be a case in point as “an example that shows the interchange between the *shakuhachi* and other genres” (Tukitani et al. 1994:125).

Borrowing profane melodies for ‘religious’ use can perhaps most clearly be seen in the Christian and Jewish traditions:

We cannot on *a priori* principles reject the supposition that many psalms were sung to secular melodies, for we shall find, as we trace the history of music in the Christian era, that musicians have over and over again borrowed profane airs for the hymns of the Church. In fact, there is hardly a branch of the Christian Church that has not at some time done so, and even the rigid Jews in modern times have employed the same means to increase their store of religious melodies.

(Dickinson 1970:31–32—italics in original)

While using already popular melodies can perhaps be most easily and widely documented in the Christian church, there are likely other examples or at least instances that demonstrate an interchange between the ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ realms.<sup>7</sup>

As far as profane melodies entering the repertoire of the *Komusō* is concerned,

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<sup>7</sup> There seem to be plenty of documented Christian and Jewish examples of vernacularly derived melodies. Documented cases in other religious traditions, however, appear to be far more sparse. Petrović (1988) suggests some secular interactions in Muslim music of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Buddhist example is when I witnessed the singing of *Ue O Muite Arukō* (known outside Japan as the *Sukiyaki Song*) as a hymn at the Seattle Buddhist Church (Jodo Shinshu sect) during a memorial service held on 11 March, 2012 for the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami that occurred in 2011. This, however, does not quite fit the Christian examples mentioned, since the original lyrics were sung unaltered. It should also be acknowledged that the ‘secular’ lyrics may have been fitting for the occasion. It exceeds the bounds of this thesis to go into more detail or to determine whether this song is used regularly in other of this or other Buddhist church services.

there is another factor to ponder. Although it may seem to go counter to the performance contexts and reasons discussed in the last chapter, consider the mendicant situations when the *Komusō* were playing for alms. It does not seem unreasonable to suppose that this context could have come closer to entertainment or busking and that the monks/priests may have chosen to present something more familiar to their—in this context—paying audience. In any case, the main point to be observed here is that a ‘sacred’ repertoire’s bearing outside (non-religious) origins really need not come as a surprise and the ways in which *any* piece entered the repertoire does little to explain its acceptance into the corpus. Another possibility is that the Myōan Kyōkai’s original members may not have known any *honkyoku* around the time that the Kyōkai was founded. According to Tsukamoto (1994:38), they played *Esashi Oiwake*, *Hakata bushi*, *Isobushi* (all *min’yō*—Japanese folk songs) and “various other popular songs.”

<b><u>Honkyoku</u></b>	<i>Kyorei, Kokū, Mukaiji, Honte jōshi</i>
<b><u>Honte</u></b>	<i>Hifumi chō, Hachigaeshi no kyoku, Yoshiya no kyoku, San’ya no kyoku, Monbiraki, Shinya no kyoku, Hōtaku, Hōkyō kokū</i>
<b><u>Jun-honte</u></b>	<i>Kyushu reibo, Shizu no kyoku, Akita no kyoku, Koro sugagaki, Renbo nagashi, Yamato chōshi</i>
<b><u>Hade</u></b>	<i>Takiochi no kyoku, Ōshu nagashi, Uchinami no kyoku, Tsukushi reibo, Mutsu reibo, Aji no kyoku, Akebono chō, Ryugin kokū, Koshō kokū</i>
<b><u>Hade zakkyoku</u></b>	<i>Kumoi no kyoku, Azuma no kyoku, Sakae jishi, Koden sōkaku, Shika no tone, Tsuru no sugomori</i>

**Table 5.1: Myōan Kyōkai: Classification of Core Repertoire**  
(based on Tominomori 1979:45–46)

### 5.3 Levels and Steps leading to Kaiden/Dōshu

A brief consideration of how the transmission of the repertoire is standardised could at first glance make the Myōan Kyōkai appear to be organised along similar lines to a *ryūha* following the *iemoto* system. ‘Ryūha’ is typically translated simply as ‘school’, but the first ideogram, *ryū* refers to ‘stream’ or ‘flow’ (with stylistic implications), while it is the ‘*ha*’ that carries more the meaning of school, sect or faction. A more thorough discussion on whether or not this nomenclature is really fitting in the case of the Myōan Kyōkai will wait to be addressed in the penultimate chapter.

Before taking a closer look at the steps or levels in question and how they pertain to learning the repertoire, let us first look at the teacher-student relationship, which has considerable importance attached to it within the Myōan Kyōkai. Obviously this is (or probably should be) a truism in general terms across cultures and disciplines, but its specific pertinence here was illustrated to me in several ways. Certain information is filtered through the teacher. The reasons for this are significant in that it appears one of its functions is to reinforce the teacher-student relationship. This is a feature that is not confined to the Myōan Kyōkai, but can be seen elsewhere in Japanese learning and is not limited only music.

One example of this type of ‘filtered’ information is the announcements about *suizen-kai*, or ‘blowing Zen gatherings’. Unlike various other general information, such as newsletters sent to all active members,<sup>8</sup> announcements about *suizen* gatherings, are only sent to *dōshu*, or the highest ranking members (i.e., certified

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<sup>8</sup> Although perhaps self-evident, active members are those who have kept current with their membership fees. (As of this writing, full annual fees for a *dōshu* member is 18,000 Japanese Yen.)

teachers). It is then up to the teacher to decide whether to disseminate this knowledge amongst his/her students.

There are other mechanisms that seem designed to strengthen the student-teacher bond. On one occasion, I decided I wanted to purchase the “official” scores of the repertoire published by Myōan Temple, since the ones that I had been learning from were self-published by my teacher’s teacher, Takahashi Rochiku (Takahashi n.d.). I was told that I should ask my teacher back in Tokyo, to which I responded with certainty that he would approve. After briefly discussing the matter with Hayashi and Ishihara, two senior members, they arranged for the head priest, Hirazumi to get me a set. When I went to pay for and collect them, the priest expressed some uneasiness about my getting them this way (i.e., directly from the temple without my teacher’s involvement). Not wanting to cause any more discomfort to anyone (including myself), I explained that I would be happy to conduct the transaction through my teacher, which I subsequently did. This is another example that demonstrates that, while I was a full-fledged member of the Myōan Kyōkai, I had yet to reach the higher and more senior level of *dōshu*. Even though during the course of this research I saw no evidence to mark the individual steps (discussed later in this section) leading to that status in terms of privilege (in this case being unable to procure scores of the repertoire), there was a clear demarcation between *dōshu* and non-*dōshu* and nothing really to distinguish the various levels or steps of the latter.

The fact that the repertoire’s notation is distributed by the teacher is of course not at all surprising: my own copy of the volume written and edited by Rochiku was also purchased directly from my teacher. However, it should be noted that scores of

the Kyōkai's core repertoire are not generally available to the non-membership (or as we just saw, neither is it directly available to the non-*dōshu* membership). Other transactions, especially regarding the achievements of the levels and their certification are handled strictly between teacher and the temple, including the associated fees. The teacher then presents them to the student. The reasons for this should be self-evident: it is of course up to the teacher to decide whether the student has successfully reached a certain step or level. Mention is made here, however, because unlike the *kaiden-shiki* (the ceremony whereby a member is initiated into the rank of *dōshu*, the most advanced level), there are no ceremonies associated with each stage. Instead, a paper certificate attesting that the student has reached a given level by having mastered the repertoire associated with it is awarded. Eligibility is determined by the teacher, who then personally gives the certificate to the student. This explains the fact that during the first years of my shakuhachi study, Myōan Temple remained such an unknown entity and mystery to me and is yet another reminder of the geographic distance that separates Tokyo and Kyoto.

Another feature regarding relationships extends beyond that of student-teacher. One cannot fail to notice the bonds of a familial nature that exist between members. In a sense, this starts with what is known as the *chikumei* or 'bamboo name', where a student takes part of the teacher's name, thus contributing to a sense of lineage or 'family tree'. Not quite identical with the practice of other schools that have a system known as *natori* (meaning 'name taking'), where the full name of a teacher is given to a student, the *chikumei* is a practice that appears to have originated in the *fukiawase-dokoro* (shakuhachi teaching studios—see Chapter 3). It involves taking one of the two ideograms (*kanji*) from one's teacher's *chikumei* ('bamboo name') to

which another is added.<sup>9</sup> In this manner, not only can one's teacher be surmised from the bamboo name, but the overall lineage as well.

The teacher thus becomes a sort of parental figure, the student his/her child and fellow students enter into a sibling-relationship. This is actually verbalised in the Japanese way, where siblings are referred to in terms of their age relationship, such as older (or younger) brother (or sister).<sup>10</sup> Of course, as might be expected in this case, however, the pecking order of age is determined by length of study with the teacher rather than chronological age. In the same manner the teacher of one's teacher is also referred to as a grandparent. The Myōan Kyōkai thus becomes a large family more than in a merely figurative sense: it is actually verbalised as such.<sup>11</sup> To carry the familial point a bit further, after I had become a *dōshu*, my teacher asked me on several occasions whether I had any students yet, suggesting perhaps further procreation of the family. However, the word he used in this case was *deshi*,<sup>12</sup> a word used for pupil, but with 'disciple' overtones, serving as reminder that the relationship is after all still a teacher-student or master-disciple one and not merely confined to relationships of a familial nature.

Yet a sort of family model still pervades many areas of Japanese life, and as we have just seen, the Myōan Kyōkai is no exception. Perhaps most easily understood

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9 For example, my *chikumei* is *Ginchiku* (吟竹), my teacher's is *Chikugen* (竹玄), his teacher's is *Rochiku* (呂竹), who was taught by *Muchiku* (無竹).

10 The use of non-sexist language is not merely an effort to be "politically correct" as there are indeed both male and female members in the Myōan Kyōkai, even though women are without doubt a minority (ascertaining an exact number based on membership lists is next to impossible, thanks to the ambiguity in the *chikumei*—during fieldwork I encountered only four women and there are only seven female *dōshu* members).

11 In the more literal sense of family, it should also be observed that one's immediate family is welcome to attend certain events not otherwise normally open to outsiders. In my case, this was evidenced by my wife's being allowed to attend my *kaiden-shiki* initiation ceremony as well as being invited to a party after a one of the gatherings, in the latter instance, the only outsider in attendance.

12 Another commonly used expression is *monka*, which carries basically the same meaning.

as a ‘simulated family’ (Matsumoto 1960), it is really not only confined to the arts.

Hsu uses the term ‘kin-tract’, by which he means

. . . a fixed and unalterable hierarchical arrangement voluntarily entered into among a group of human beings who follow a common code of behavior under a common ideology for a set of common objectives.

(Hsu 1975:62)

Typically at the top of this hierarchical arrangement is the *iemoto* (‘household head’), which is also the name of the overall system (*iemoto seido*). A slightly more detailed discussion of the *iemoto* system and its applicability to this study will wait until the penultimate chapter, but the reason to take a quick look at it now is to underline that some parts of it are visible here too. Related to this, especially in the arts, is the taking of names (*natori*) and as we just saw, this is manifested in the Myōan Kyōkai with the bamboo name (*chikumei*). A similar method of name passing, where one character of the teacher’s given name, exists elsewhere. A key difference, however, is that in addition to the given name, the school’s name is also included. This is the case, for example, in Kineya school of *nagauta* (songs from the Kabuki theatre) and Hanayagi school of dance (see respectively Malm 1998:37; Hsu 1975:63). The important difference in the case of the Myōan Kyōkai is that there is nothing that would clearly or obviously identify its members within the *chikumei* itself and in this sense it could be viewed as only a partial *natori*. Another difference is that I received my name quite early in my membership, whereas in other schools ‘professional’ names are usually conferred only upon mastery or *shihan* status.

In the Myōan Kyōkai, there are six steps leading to a final (seventh) step known as *kaiden*, after which the student undergoes an initiation ceremony (*kaiden-shiki*) at Myōan Temple. For the ceremony, he/she chooses one of the three *Kyorei* to play

before the altar. Each step, with the exception of the first (*nyūmon*) has prescribed repertoire associated with it, as shown in Table 5.2.

The contents of Table 5.2 were taken from the official booklet representing Myōan Temple and reproduced in the same order given there. While it seems quite understandable that the first step (induction/*nyūmon*) does not actually have any pieces associated with it, Takahata (2005:51) places the piece, Chōshi (also known as Honte jōshi) within this first level. This may be a fairly minor point and is perhaps simply more a matter of whether one is admitted into the organisation before learning this (or any) piece or whether Chōshi is learned in order to be accepted into the membership. In any case, this is normally the first piece learned and serves as a warm-up piece (or prelude) for all activities, including lessons and various other gatherings, including some of the *benkyō-kai*.<sup>13</sup>

My teacher's teacher, Takahashi Rochiku, whose volume served as the basis for my own learning, presents the pieces in a different order as does Takahata (2005). This leads to an important point regarding the ordering of the pieces: they do not necessarily seem to be arranged in an increasing order of difficulty. Although this view may be a rather subjective one, it should be remarked that no single piece should be considered easy, even though some (or parts) of them may be more challenging to master technically than others. Riley Lee once remarked during one of his performances (Sydney, 12 January, 2010) that in *honkyoku* there is no beginner's piece. Obviously one needs to begin somewhere and in the case of the Myōan Kyōkai, this is the piece Chōshi (or Honte jōshi—same piece, as already mentioned). However, I believe the meaning here is that no piece is meant to be

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<sup>13</sup> The *benkyō-kai* was covered in the last chapter as part of the *suizen-kai* (section 4.2.2). Here the reference is to independent *benkyō-kai* that are held separately from the *suizen-kai*.

considered easy or beginner's level. Nor are there, it must be added, anything akin to études or exercises such as scales like there is, for example, in the Western classical music tradition.

There can also be some variation in terms of which pieces fall into which category. Takhashi Rochiku (n.d.), for example, places *Honte jōshi* (again, same as *Chōshi*) in the second (*hirayurushi*) level along with *Uchinami no kyoku*. *Tsukushi reibo* he lists as *shoden*, *Mutsu reibo* as *chūden* (rather than *betsuden* as in Table 5.2). *Aji no kyoku* and *Akebono chō* are put into the *okuden* category along with the three *kyorei*, there being no separate aggregation called *kaiden*. The explanation for this is simple: Rochiku came from a separate lineage and places the pieces according to Tanikita Muchiku's<sup>14</sup> scheme. The point here is to demonstrate the somewhat subjective nature of categorising the pieces as well as to show differences in transmission, which not only includes the order in which the pieces are taught, but also some slight differences in some of the pieces' titles as well as some variability in how the pieces themselves are played. These and other considerations related to transmission will be taken up after a very short discussion on repertoire falling outside of what is considered to be the core group. In any case, even though variation does exist in the categorisation as well as the ordering of the pieces, it should be noted that at least there is almost no disagreement about the actual contents of the core repertoire, with just one exception. *Hōtaku*, as listed above (Table 5.2), is within the officially prescribed and recognised repertoire, while *Kyotaku* was taught instead within my lineage. These pieces are remarkably similar, yet different enough to be considered different pieces in their own right. Another observation is that *Hōkyō kokū*, which had been separated from *Kokū* by Kobayashi

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<sup>14</sup> Tanikita Muchiku was the 37<sup>th</sup> *kansu* of Myōan Temple—see Chapter 3, section 3.5.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Pieces</b>	<b>Number of pieces</b>
<i>Nyūmon</i> (‘entering the gate’)		–
<i>Hirayurushi</i> (‘regular permit’)	<i>Hifumi chō, Kyushu reibo, Hachigaeshi no kyoku, Shizu no kyoku, Takiochi no kyoku, Yoshiya no kyoku, San’ya no kyoku, Ōshu nagashi</i>	8
<i>Shoden</i> (‘beginning transmission’)	<i>Akita no kyoku, Koro sugagaki, Monbiraki, Azuma no kyoku</i>	4
<i>Chūden</i> (‘intermediate transmission’)	<i>Renbo nagashi, Koden sukaku, Shinya no kyoku, Kumoi no kyoku</i>	4
<i>Okuden</i> (‘deep transmission’)	<i>Shika no tone, Tsuru no sugomori, Sakae jishi</i>	3
<i>Betsuden</i> (‘separate transmission’)	<i>Mutsu reibo, Kosho kokū, Uchinami no kyoku, Hōtaku,* Tsukushi reibo, Aji no kyoku, Hōkyo kokū,† Akebono chō, Ryugin kokū, Yamato chōshi†</i>	10
<i>Kaiden</i> (‘all/everything transmission’)	<i>San (‘three’) Kyorei: Kyorei, Kokū, Mukaiji, with Honte jōshi attached</i>	4
<b>Total:</b>		33
<p>* Kobayashi Shizan replaced <i>Kyotaku</i> with <i>Hōtaku</i>.  † Inserted by Kobayashi Shizan.  ‡ Separated from <i>Kokū</i> by Kobayashi Shizan.</p>		

**Table 5.2: Myōan Kyōkai core repertoire**  
(taken from Kyoreizan Myōan-ji 2003:15).

Shizan (see footnote 1 and Table 5.2, above), but then re-concatenated by Muchiku (and retained by Rochiku).

Before proceeding to a discussion of repertoire that falls outside the core group, one may wonder whether a relationship exists between the two categorisation systems. Here it should be remarked that it seems evident that Tominori’s criteria

were based on what he saw as the *musical character* of the pieces and were not made according to any *pedagogical implications*. This could be seen by overlaying the two tables as shown in Table 5.3, where it can be seen that there are representative pieces from several of Tominomori's categories within each of the levels of the Kyōkai. The exception to this is that all pieces in the *okuden* aggregate happen to be *hade zakkyoku*. This would seem significant if none of the *hade zakkyoku* fell into any of the other categories, but they do: one in *shoden* and two in *chūden*. It should also be noticed that this category has only six pieces, but also if one considers that it is not unreasonable to unite both of the *hade* groups into one category (like Yao does—see footnote 5, above).

### 5.3.1 Additional Repertoire

In addition to the core repertoire mentioned above, any piece from the collection of *koten honkyoku* may be played. This is mainly evidenced by what can be heard at the *tai-kai* ('big gatherings') and what is studied during the regular *benkyōkai* ('study meetings'), even though the core repertoire predominates in the case of the latter. As mentioned in the opening section of this chapter, according to Tsukitani, there are close to 200 pieces considered to be *koten honkyoku*.<sup>15</sup>

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15 Although not directly part of the repertoire per se, *Myōan Doshō Goeika*, a *shōmyō* (Buddhist chant) is used at some gatherings. It is used on special occasions, notably for example, at Tanikita Muchiku's memorial gathering, which is held annually in March. It has been transnotated into shakuhachi notation that accompanies the chanting. The words are taken from Muchiku's death *tanka* poem.

<u>Level</u>	<u>Pieces</u>	<u>Number of pieces</u>
Tominomori Categories	(a) <u>Honkyoku</u> (b) <u>Honte</u> (c) <u>Jun honte</u> (d) <u>Hade</u> (e) <u>Hade zakkyoku</u>	<u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>9</u> <u>6</u>
Hirayurushi (‘regular permit’)	<u>Hifumi chō</u> , <u>Kyushu reibo</u> , <u>Hachigaeshi no kyoku</u> , <u>Shizu no kyoku</u> , <u>Takiochi no kyoku</u> , <u>Yoshiya no kyoku</u> , <u>San’ya no kyoku</u> , <u>Ōshu nagashi</u>	(a) <u>-</u> (b) <u>4</u> (c) <u>2</u> (d) <u>2</u> (e) <u>...</u> Total: 8
Shoden (‘beginning transmission’)	<u>Akita no kyoku</u> , <u>Koro sugagaki</u> , <u>Monbiraki</u> , <u>Azuma no kyoku</u>	(a) <u>-</u> (b) <u>1</u> (c) <u>2</u> (d) <u>-</u> (e) <u>1</u> Total: 4
Chūden (‘intermediate transmission’)	<u>Renbo nagashi</u> , <u>Koden sukaku</u> , <u>Shinya no kyoku</u> , <u>Kumoi no kyoku</u>	(a) <u>-</u> (b) <u>1</u> (c) <u>1</u> (d) <u>-</u> (e) <u>2</u> Total: 4
Okuden (‘deep transmission’)	<u>Shika no tone</u> , <u>Tsuru no sugomori</u> , <u>Sakae jishi</u>	(a) <u>-</u> (b) <u>-</u> (c) <u>-</u> (d) <u>-</u> (e) <u>3</u> Total: 3
Betsuden (‘separate transmission’)	<u>Mutsu reibo</u> , <u>Koshō kokū</u> , <u>Uchinami no kyoku</u> , <u>Hōtaku</u> , <u>Tsukushi reibo</u> , <u>Aji no kyoku</u> , <u>Hōkyo kokū</u> , <u>Akebōno chō</u> , <u>Ryugin kokū</u> , <u>Yamato chōshi</u>	(a) <u>-</u> (b) <u>2</u> (c) <u>1</u> (d) <u>7</u> (e) <u>...</u> Total: 10
Kaiden (‘all/everything transmission’)	<i>San</i> (‘three’) <i>Kyorei</i> : <i>Kyorei</i> , <i>Kokū</i> , <i>Mukaiji</i> , with <i>Honte jōshi</i> attached	(a) <u>4</u> (b) <u>-</u> (c) <u>-</u> (d) <u>-</u> (e) <u>...</u> Total: 4
<b>Total:</b>		33

**Table 5.3: Myōan Kyōkai core repertoire:  
‘Overlay’ of Tables 5.1 & 5.2**

#### 5.4 Transmission: Textual and Oral Considerations

While considering notation (or text) as either ‘prescriptive’ or ‘descriptive’ would seem very straight forward, certain confusions may still arise when adding these qualifiers. Recalling, for example, Seeger’s distinction between the two, the former being a “blue-print of how a specific piece shall be made to sound,” while descriptive notation is simply “a report of how a specific performance of [a piece] actually did sound” (Seeger 1958:184), one can simply draw a differentiation between performer and listener. While the repertoire of the Myōan Kyōkai does have written notation, it serves more in a supportive capacity to the still mainly oral (and aural) nature of transmission process. Furthermore, the degree to which the Kyōkai’s notation can be considered prescriptive can vary, depending on scribe and therefore ultimately serves rather as a mnemonic device. In this sense the text may be seen as somewhat secondary in importance as far as actual learning, since a teacher is indispensable in providing a ‘correct’ transmission. Yet my own experience has shown that both aspects of transmission process (textual and oral/aural) are in many ways equally important and inseparable. Furthermore, it would definitely be a mistake to consider the notated score of lesser importance, or even relegate it completely to a position of simple memorandum for it truly is far more than that.

To begin to illustrate the textual side of this point, I once asked my teacher, Kosugi Chikugen, about something that had nagged at me for most of the time that I had been studying with him: apart from one piece (*Honte jōshi*), he never played anything without using the notation. As a musician steeped in the Western classical tradition, I had always felt strongly that music had to be memorised to be truly

mastered. Near the beginning of my fieldwork, my teacher and I traveled together to Myōan Temple and played *Honte jōshi* before the altar there. He insisted that we both use notation, even though we always played this particular piece from memory at the beginning of every lesson. On the return trip to Tokyo, I asked him about this and he explained that even though we may know this piece by heart, it was especially important in this case to ensure that we play it properly and correctly. He illustrated this by pointing out that, even though one may have memorised a particular *sūtra*, one still uses the text when chanting or reciting it in order to ensure that no mistakes are made (Kosugi, Personal Communication 25 December, 2008). Following this line of reasoning, the musical text could thus perhaps be regarded as scripture and it is very commonly used when playing at any of the various gatherings, as well as often being accorded some respect in treatment and handling.

If viewed from this perspective, i.e., elevating the text and according it at least some sort of scriptural status, one may begin to understand the absence of any motivation to add newly composed pieces to the repertoire, for that would be like adding verses, books or even chapters to the Bible (or some other sacred text). What can and does happen, of course, is that like a reading of scripture, which can carry the different inflections of different readers, so can the nuances vary between renditions or interpretations of the same piece by different shakuhachi-ists. Indeed, the very skeletal nature of the notation itself guarantees that this will occur not only with different players, but even when the same player executes the same piece on different occasions.

Because the text (notation) does not seem completely prescriptive, this means that it does carry with it certain trappings. Certain elements are very often simply not

notated, but learned and instilled in the learner, eventually becoming second-nature and automatic. This became clear to me at a *benkyō-kai* (study group meeting), when I was singled out to play on my own the piece that we were studying at the time (*Renbo Nagashi*). The group in question met as part of *Byakurenkai*, a group based just outside of Osaka, in Itami, and led by Yao Byakuren. I had done some preparation of the piece before the meeting, but when asked to play, thought that I should play from the distributed score handed out at the gathering. I treated the notation quite literally, failing to add the *furi* (a technique whereby a slight vibrato or shake is produced by making a slight jerk with the head—discussed in more detail in the next chapter). Even though without fully understanding why at the time, I was not completely at ease in omitting them, I did so simply because they were not explicitly notated, whereas they were always indicated in the Rochiku scores that I was accustomed to. Through my hesitation on this point (the *furi*), this incident demonstrates that (perhaps on some unconscious level), this stylistic feature had successfully been transmitted to me, but more importantly that not all details are indicated within the score, meaning that it cannot be fully treated as prescriptively as, for example, many Western musical scores can; it is but one example of the difference that one could attribute to the scribe of the score and also highlights the fact that much in the transmission process is simply not written down, nor is it probably meant to be.

This leads us to consider issues surrounding matters confined only to the textual (as opposed to musical) side of the transmission and the decisions that the scribe makes when presenting the notated piece. In the case of Takahashi Rochiku's scores that have already been mentioned, substantial details and instructions are

included as compared with the official Myōan scores, for example. This should be immediately evident even on a cursory visual examination (see Appendices 2d, 2e, 2f and 2g). Rochiku at times also includes an indication that a particular passage should be orally imparted (*kuden*) from teacher to student. This could imply, on the one hand, secrecy of the section concerned, but it might also suggest the possibility that it is either not possible or else too difficult to convey in writing.

Yet why the discrepancy in style and presentation and why is there not one single official and authorised edition of the corpus? Even though one might assume the scores sold by Myōan Temple to be the definitive issue of the repertoire, the fact that I bought them several years after my initial lessons, is but one attestation to their being *ex gratia*. Ultimately, it is the teacher who decides how to transmit the repertoire to his/her students. Thus in my case, my teacher, Kosugi Chikugen, chose to use his teacher's (Takahashi Rochiku's) scores; Yao Byakuren continues to use the ones of his teacher, Koizumi Shizan. One participant in a *benkyō-kai* claimed that the first thing he had to do with his copy of the Myōan scores was to fix or repair (*naosu*) them (Tanibayashi, Group Discussion 9 September, 2012). Yao (Personal Communication 5 May, 2012) once remarked to me that Takahashi Rochiku simply tried to notate as best he could remember what Tanikita Muchiku taught him. These few examples would bring into question the textual authority of any (and probably all) scores of the Myōan repertoire. Here it must be reiterated that the very nature of the score—and indeed the whole transmission process—relies completely upon the teacher, without whom a student cannot execute a proper realisation of the notation, thus placing the ultimate authority in the hands of the teacher. Given that there are several separate lineages rather than just one within the *Kyōkai* also assures a good

deal of variability in interpretation and execution of the repertoire, whether or not this is the intention.

## 5.5 Notational system

A look at how the notation itself works—and a few remarks about it—is worthwhile here in order to expand on some of the points from the previous section as well as an aid to the ensuing discussion about some of the musical characteristics of the repertoire that follows in the next chapter. At the outset it must be remarked that at no time during my fieldwork—nor at any time during my (shakuhachi-related) experience prior to it—was anything ‘translated’ into Western musical terms. This demonstrates what could be called the truly independent nature of the notation itself, for it does not rely at all on any other system. If one were to look, for example, at fingering charts of most Western wind instruments, not only is the fingering given but the resulting note is also represented in Western staff notation. This is often the case for some of the fingering charts for shakuhachi too: the fingerings are of course given, but they are accompanied with a Western notational equivalent (or in actuality, most often only an approximation), using Western staff notation. This would enable a novice who is already familiar with Western musical notation to approach their learning of the shakuhachi with perhaps more ease and comfort, assuming enough of the musical literature has been transcribed or transnotated.

On the other hand, in the fingering charts published by the Myōan Kyōkai—or those within the Takahashi Rochiku volume, which were the ones that I initially used—this same method of presenting a sort of key to deciphering the notation (i.e., presenting a translation into Western terms) is not used: they simply indicate the

fingering and the symbol (in this case a *katakana*<sup>16</sup> character denoting a syllable) representing it.<sup>17</sup> In my view, the significance of this cannot be overstated: a non-reliance on Western equivalents contributes immeasurably to maintaining what may be considered the ‘purity’ of the repertoire. Moreover, at least in this author’s case, the absence of translation into Western terms possibly provides a stronger hope of achieving Mantle Hood’s (1960) ideal of bi-musicality.

According to Riley Lee, written notation for the shakuhachi is a relatively recent development most probably dating from 1608 with the *Tanteki Hiden Fu*, the earliest documented evidence of notation for the *hitoyogiri*, a precursor to today’s shakuhachi (Lee 1988:71). This system, the so called *Fu-ho-u* system derives its name from the names given to the first three tones that are produced by starting with all finger holes covered, then successively opening them from the bottom. It has been replaced by most shakuhachi styles today with some variant of what is known as the *Ro-tsu-re* system (again referring to the first three tones). Both systems use the *katakana* syllabic script to represent the fingerings and the older (*fu-ho-u*) system (or a variant of it) is still used by the Chikuho and Shimpo styles of shakuhachi, while the newer system is used in some form by the two major shakuhachi styles, Kinko and Tozan as well as the Myōan Kyōkai. This latter system, of course, will be the one mainly considered here. A comparison of the basic syllables used in each system is given in Table 5.4, with the approximate Western notational equivalents given for a 1.8 length shakuhachi in the lower (*otsu*—乙) register.

The reason for looking at these two systems side by side is not so much for the

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<sup>16</sup> *Katakana* is one of the two written syllabaries used in Japanese.

<sup>17</sup> See appendices 2a and 2b for the charts from Rochiku and the Myōan Kyōkai, respectively. Appendix 2c gives an example of a chart with Western notational equivalents.

purposes of undertaking a thorough comparison of them, for that is well outside the purpose and scope of this thesis. Rather, the rationale here is to entertain a possible reason for the change, which should serve to highlight the importance as well as relative ease that the new *Ro-tsu-re* system provides in the transmission process.

In fact, a common transmission strategy employed in teaching and learning many, if not most, Japanese traditional musical instruments makes use of a sort of solmization known as *shōga* (but often referred to with a qualifier, making it *kuchi-shōga*).<sup>18</sup> Singing musical phrases using specific syllables facilitates the learning process and may also serve as a mnemonic device. The actual *shōga* syllables vary by instrument and are often onomatopoeic, further aiding the learning process. Moreover, they are not always written and are therefore very well suited as a completely oral notation system. It should also be observed that, since the indigenous Japanese writing system (as opposed to the adapted Chinese character set) is based entirely on representing syllables, these oral mnemonics can be conveniently written down with one symbol per tone and of the two Japanese syllabaries, *hiragana* and *katakana*, it is usually the latter that is used when these are written.

Several authors (cf. Kamisangō 1986:289; Motegi 1992:104) have pointed out that, strictly speaking, it is inappropriate to equate *kuchi-shōga* with solmization. The main reason for this is that the syllables do not really refer to fixed pitches or even relationships between pitches in the same manner that Western solfège does (both as a fixed, as well as a moveable system). In the case of the shakuhachi,

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<sup>18</sup> The chief reason for adding this modifier is to distinguish these oral mnemonics from school songs from the Meiji period (1869–1912) known collectively as *shōka*, which share the same two ideographs (唱歌). By prefixing ‘mouth’ (*kuchi*—口), this confusion is avoided.

Fu-ho-u (‘old’) System		Myōan Ro-tsu-re (‘new’) System		Approximate Western notational equivalent for the lower ( <i>otsu</i> —乙) register
Katakana	Romanization	Katakana	Romanization	
フ	fu	□	ro	
ホ	ho	ツ	tsu	
ウ	u	レ	re	
ル	ru	ウ	u	
エ	e	チ	chi	
ヤ	ya	ハ	ha	
イ(甲フ)	i (same pitch as upper fu, but different fingering)	イ(甲□)	i (same pitch as upper ro, but different fingering)	

**Table 5.4: Comparison of ‘New’ and ‘Old’ shakuhachi tablature systems**

however, Kamisangō (1986:298) suggests that since each symbol represents a singular fingering, *shōga* for the shakuhachi may indeed come closer to qualifying as solmization. This is not quite the case here: indeed each symbol in Table 5.4 represents a unique fingering, but as we can see from just the very basic fingerings shown here, the last note, in both cases ‘i’ (イ), corresponds in pitch to an upper register ‘ro’ (□—or ‘fu’ (フ) in the old system). This is because the fingerings are

different, so while it is true that we have unique fingerings, we do not have unique pitch correspondences with each notational symbol. Yet additionally, however, there is not always a unique pitch or fingering correspondence with one symbol. A notable example is the motif ‘ha-ro’ (ハロ). If the two motifs, ‘ha-i’ (ハイ) and ‘ha-ro’ are compared, the former produces C-D as expected from Table 5.4. ‘Ha-ro’, on the other hand produces pitches closer to C#-D, respectively. This is due to a different fingering for ‘ha’ in this specific context. So this one example points to the fact that, contrary to Kamisangō’s suggestion that each symbol represents a unique fingering, in this case, the ha (ハ) doesn’t even correspond to one pitch! Certainly in the case of the shakuhachi—and one of its distinguishing features—alternate fingerings are more than just a convenience in producing a particular pitch, but also yield a difference in tone colour. Furthermore, it is not just a case of fingering, but sometimes one lowers or raises a pitch by changing the blowing angle (known as *meri* when lowering, *kari* when raising), thereby opening or closing the hole at the very top. Other times this is accomplished by a combination of fingering and changing the blowing angle. For alternate fingerings, this includes not fully covering hole(s), as the fingerholes on a shakuhachi can be large enough to vary the degree to which one covers them.

This leads to another factor disqualifying the shakuhachi’s *kuchi-shoga* from consideration as a bona fide solmization system. A *meri* (flattened pitch) is normally written with the symbol ‘×’. Thus, for example, a *tsu-meri* (ツ×) would still be vocalised as ‘tsu’ even though the actual pitch is a flattened ‘tsu’. We thus have closer to what could be considered a tablature system that indicates fingerings more than representing absolute or relative pitches.

Even though *shōga* syllables for the shakuhachi are also written (thereby becoming written notation, more specifically tablature), there is considerable pedagogical value in singing, or even simply pronouncing the syllables. This point was unforgettably illustrated to me after one of my first solo ‘performances’ at Myōan Temple. I had just finished playing *Kokū* when I was approached by one of the members, Hongō, who seemed anxious to talk to me about my *tsu-re*’s. “Why do you think the *tsu* is usually written smaller or often not even notated at all?” he asked (Hongō, Personal Communication 11 October, 2009). He was referring to the fact that I was giving too much emphasis or accent to the *tsu*, making it sound more like ***TSU-RE*** (or even almost ***TSU-re***), when it really should sound more like *tsu-RE*. As I reflected on this later, I realised that simply uttering these two syllables to myself would make an accented ‘tsu’ sound very unnatural and that even though the Japanese language is thought of as highly syllabic, it would almost come out more naturally as “tsray”, thus demonstrating how carefully these syllables must have been chosen and also the relative unimportance of ‘tsu’ in this particular context.

In addition to informing articulation and accent, it is important to notice then, that these syllables also serve to give some indication of relative duration, something completely lacking in the Western do-re-mi solfège scheme. It is clear that using the old *Fu-ho-u* system for the same motif (making it *ho-u* instead of *tsu-re*) would definitely not yield the same or desired effect, at least when the syllables are verbalised or sung. The importance of this cannot be overstated, especially where ‘tsu-re’ is concerned, for this figure is endemic to the repertoire, occurring not just frequently, but is actually present in every piece of the core repertoire. The reason that the *fu-ho-u* system does not even seem to come close to indicating articulation

or perhaps even melodic direction is undoubtedly due to the fact that the choice of these syllables is symbolic and is based on Chinese music theory.<sup>19</sup> In this sense they are musically arbitrary in much the same way that the syllables in the Western solfège system (*do (ut), re, mi, etc.*) were derived by Guido d'Arezzo (c. 990–1050) from a hymn.

The origins of the *ro-tsu-re* system are not completely clear, but Araki Kodō II (1832–1908) is credited as its originator (Stanfield 1977:87; Lee 1988:71, 1998:146). Chika Jundō is less specific, stating only that it came from Ichigetsu-ji, Kinsen-ha, Ichigetsu-ji being one of the two main Fuke temples near Edo (Kinsen-ha, simply refers to the temple's founder, Kinsen). He continues by adding that this is the source from which it was adapted by Higuchi Taizan (Chika 1998:157). For the purposes here, the exact origin of the *ro-tsu-re* system is not important. I have suggested in the previous paragraphs that the syllables may not have been randomly or symbolically assigned as is the case with the *fu-ho-u* system. This is an area that merits more research, but won't be pursued here in much detail.

Of all the variegated systems of *kuchi-shōga* in use in Japan, as well as oral mnemonics in general, David Hughes (1989, 2000) has presented strong evidence to suggest that the syllables employed in these systems are not at all arbitrarily chosen (but also perhaps not consciously or systematically designed). Although he did not look at the *shōga* for shakuhachi, nor did he pay as much attention to consonants as to vowels, his findings strongly suggest that a logical system does exist, for which he gave examples from widely dispersed world regions. His hypothesis is based on

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<sup>19</sup> The *fu-ho-u* system is used here for illustration purposes only and not germane to this thesis, given that it is not the system used by the Myōan Kyōkai. Sagara (2007:47) discusses the Chinese origins of these syllables and gives a complete explanation of the ideographs' meanings. A basic English translation of these meanings can be found at <http://www.chikuhoryu.jp/English01.html>. Retrieved 27 November, 2010 (Anon n.d.).

the frequencies of the vowels produced in the second formant (mouth cavity) in which the Japanese vowels rise in pitch from *o*, *u*, *a*, *e* and *i* (Hughes 2000:99). His findings could be applied here. For example, *tsu-re* has a rise in pitch (F-G), using the vowels *u* and *e*, which follows Hughes' *Intrinsic Pitches* given for the second formant for these two vowels. He also suggested that the consonant *t* (or in this case followed by *s* making it *ts*) could indicate the type of attack (Hughes 2000:97). If we return to this figure as in the old (*fu-ho-u*) system (*ho-u* instead of *tsu-re*), we also find a rise in pitch based on the syllables' *Intrinsic Pitches*, however the *Intrinsic Duration* produce the undesired effect mentioned earlier: the vowel *o* is stronger or longer than *u* (Hughes 2000:105–106).

## 5.6 Conclusion

This background to the repertoire examined the pieces from within a larger corpus (*honkyoku* overall), then focused in on ways to categorise it within the Myōan Kyōkai's own set canon. In discussing the repertoire's transmission, both written and non-textual components to teaching and learning it were presented. Yet beyond these somewhat pedantic details of the repertoire and its transmission, I tried to show that elements of its organisation did not follow a particular pedagogical strategy in terms either related to relative difficulty or the ways that the pieces were categorised that suggested a continuum from sacred to profane origins or types. Furthermore, the process of transmission exhibits various ways to strengthen the student-teacher relationship in two ways. The first was a musical element that combined notation/text supplemented by oral/aural methods by the teacher (and vice versa) making them mutually dependent. The second saw how name taking in the

form of the *chikumei* created bonds of a familial nature that extended to parental and sibling relationships, thus creating a type of microcosm within the larger community of the Myōan Kyōkai. From repertoire and its transmission, we now turn to some of the more musical aspects, the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### Musical Praxis III: A Closer Look at the Repertoire

#### 6.1 Musical and Stylistic Tendencies

Describing music in words is not usually an easy task and some observations made about it can be somewhat subjective and therefore any descriptions must be considered under this light. To those with some familiarity of—or at least some exposure to—shakuhachi *koten honkyoku*, it bears remarking here that this repertoire, as played by the Myōan Kyōkai, for reasons which should have hopefully been made clear up to now, can only be heard by a limited number of outsiders. In other words, it is normally not heard in contexts in which one is usually exposed to music, such as the concert stage or electronic media. There is very little in terms of available recordings made by Kyōkai members. This should have been clear from the performance contexts that were examined in Chapter 4, where it was also mentioned that Myōan Kyōkai members tend not to go very public or professional with their activities (see especially the introductory section of that chapter and 4.1). This puts an emphasis on process over product (see Small 1996:4) and explains why any tangible commodities in the form of recordings—although there are some—are not really commercially sold.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, some privately available recordings that come in the form of both audio and video recordings made by and

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1 To my knowledge the only recordings that are fairly easy to obtain are a set of three cassettes of Tanikita Muchiku (Myōan Temple's 37<sup>th</sup> *kansu*). These recordings were made by one of his students, Inagaki Ihaku, between 1953–56. There is also a three CD set of the Yoshimura Fuan, 40<sup>th</sup> *kansu*. The cassettes I bought at a shop in Tokyo; the CDs are available from Myōan Temple.

shared amongst the membership. Arrangements are also made for professional recording (audio and video) for the *tai-kai* that involve the *Hōsankai*<sup>2</sup> and these are made available to the participants of these events for a fee. Members also freely make their own recordings, especially during the *benkyō-kai*.

Another observation by those already with some familiarity of shakuhachi *honkyoku* might tend to suggest that overall, the repertoire as practiced by Myōan Kyōkai, may seem to be more melodic than that of some of the other styles. For example, some of the techniques found in other styles are either somewhat more subtle sounding or completely absent in the Myōan style. Most notable among these are some of the very breathy or strong ‘breath bursts’ (*muraiki*), which are almost never heard and in this sense may make the repertoire seem more melodic. This is, of course, a somewhat vague and subjective comment, but Toya suggests that Taizan’s way of playing was not to use *muraiki* (even though sometimes a rough sound would come out). Toya also emphasises the ‘simplicity’ of the overall style and cautions against pursuing technique for its own sake and not playing for emotional discharge (Toya 1984:256–257). While this may, of course, simply be another person’s subjective opinion, it certainly seems fitting with the ideas discussed in chapter 4 (see especially section 4.5), where performance is not seen as an act to display, in this case to demonstrate technique.

That the Myōan Kyōkai’s repertoire is an unaccompanied solo tradition immediately suggests at least a possibility for some freedom in interpretation. This could be due to the simple fact that there is usually no reliance or need to play along with others. Exceptions to this are duly noted: when playing together as in the

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2 See Chapter 4, section 4.4 for a description of the various *tai-kai*.

*suizen-kai* or *benkyō-kai*, it is in unison but even here, the overall effect is (unintended) heterophony rather than actual unison playing. That there really is no attempt at correcting this or rehearsing in order to achieve full unity of sound, also attests to this. In fact, characteristic of much of the *koten honkyoku* across styles is that it either seems to lack rhythm or at the very least is free rhythmically, which beyond doubt is a reason for the heterophonic sound. Some pieces—or sections in some of the pieces—are meant to be executed rhythmically, however. These, rather than being explicitly notated, are transmitted directly to the student by the teacher (*kuden*—meaning literally “mouth transmission”).

Stanfield, referring to *honkyoku* performed in the Kinko style, declares that “the tempo is sub-consciously determined by the heart-beat of the performer” (Stanfield 1977:115). While he offers nothing to substantiate this claim, it does seem plausible, but more important here is that any sort of tempo is in fact set by the player as is also the case with rhythm. The written notation does, however, offer guidelines in this regard in that there is some indication of the relative duration of notes. In my own case, having first learned from the scores of my teacher’s teacher, Takahashi Rochiku, these durations are represented visually by lines extending from the *shōga* syllable (see the notations provided in Appendices 2e and 2f). Although this can be somewhat vague and imprecise in that it simply shows this in terms of long and short durations, it would seem that the player would almost subconsciously execute these temporal properties automatically (but also approximately) based on the visual cues given. Furthermore, it leaves a good part of the decision up to the player, giving her/him considerable freedom. The scores issued by the Myōan Kyōkai, on the other hand, attempt to be more precise and the fingering chart includes explanations on

how durations are notated and how they are to be carried out<sup>3</sup> (see Appendices 2b, 2d and 2g). On the surface, this would appear to offer less freedom in execution. As one senior member explained to me, however, it serves more as a guideline and is “not precise” (“*seikaku janai*”) (Yao, Personal Communication 4 July, 2010).

This lack of precision could be characterised as “free rhythm,” a term that would not seem to need much qualification or explanation. Both Frigyesi and Clayton treat the subject of free rhythm at some length, with both also offering quite acceptable and workable definitions (Clayton 1996; Frigyesi 1993, 1994). These two authors’ titles even suggest good enough solutions to what they seem to view as a definitional problem, with Frigyesi (1993) proffering “music without clear beat” and Clayton (1996) proposing “music without metre.” Clayton also quite rightly points out that many authors tend to bandy the concept around without ever attempting to give any explanation of what exactly the term intends (Clayton 1996:325). It therefore seems prudent to give some attention to the subject here, given that the concept of ‘free rhythm’ is so often associated with shakuhachi *koten honkyoku* across styles.

It is quite surprising that neither *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, nor *Grove Music Online* (containing the *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *Oxford Companion to Music* and *Oxford Dictionary of Music*) include an entry dedicated to “free rhythm.” Yet, in the case of Grove, many entries do make mention of the term and the closest we come to finding a definition is quite incidental as it is in reference to the Indian *ālāp*, which “presents the constituent parts of the *rāga* without a metrical structure, in what might be termed ‘free rhythm’” (Nettl et al. n.d.

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<sup>3</sup> There is, however, no contingency for the notation of complex rhythms, there being no symbols for anything beyond one, two, or one-half beat(s).

—emphasis added). Thus we are without metrical structure, but this does not address the question of pulse, even though it might imply at least some degree of stability in pulse rate (and we will see below that one performer at least insisted that there was a pulse in the *ālāp*). Because, as already mentioned, the notation under consideration here contains some guidelines to note duration, it should follow that a certain amount of rhythmic stability should result, otherwise the same piece interpreted by different players would doubtfully be entirely recognisable. Add to this the framework of the Myōan Kyōkai that transmits a fixed core repertoire within the group by certified teachers helps to ensure that the pieces remain identifiable at least to its membership. This would mean that really there is only a degree of personal freedom in rhythmic interpretation, but the skeletal nature of the notation nevertheless guarantees some variation. Perhaps the term *free rhythm* could be replaced with *personal rhythm*. Likewise questions of metre might be handled by applying the term *variable metre* or even *personal metre*, but both of these really produce oxymora by implying the existence of metre, where there really could be none, especially given the supplied adjectives.

Certainly, the absence of a regular, discernible meter would be a far more apt descriptor, as it really cannot be argued that *any* music lacks rhythm. Equally doubtful would be an absence of any sort of pulse, whether or not discernible by the listener, or even if the performer might not be consciously aware of its presence while performing. This, of course, can be a point so subjective that it would be difficult to prove. Widdess (1994), however, demonstrated quite clearly that even when he was unable to ascertain a pulse when transcribing an Indian *ālāp*, the performer insisted that he was conscious of a pulse while performing. Thus, with the

aid of the performer, Widdess was able to indicate a pulse in the transcription, where otherwise he might have thought one was absent.

Better to recognise, as Malm has, an absence of metre, or “nonmetre,” for which he describes two possible contexts:

. . . the succession of metronomic beats freed from the necessity of constant division into regular small groupings, and a fluctuating distance between the beats themselves, as in a *parlando* or elastic style, that negates the power of any notational divisions into temporal units. (Malm 1972:97)

He eventually settles on the rather apt term “elastic rhythm” (Malm 1972:99). A final remark to make on this subject is what appears to be a preoccupation, especially by Clayton (1996), with what could be seen as a frustration from the listener’s perspective in trying to make some sort of sense of and/or detecting a pulse. On this issue, let it be reiterated that there certainly is an inattentiveness to the listener on the part of the performer, a point germane to this thesis (this was treated in some detail in Chapter 4 (see especially section 4.5). Furthermore, we already saw how Widdess (1994) ‘found’ a pulse by involving the performer in the transcription process.

Breath, of course, also plays a vitally important rôle. Beyond the all too obvious function of being the vehicle for producing the shakuhachi’s sound, it also determines the phrasing: each breath basically constitutes one phrase and conversely, each phrase governs one breath. The breath thus assumes the rôle of temporal unit and the expression *breath rhythm* could also perfectly suit our purposes here. Malm (1972:98) uses this concept in association with *gagaku* ensemble music, where the performers manage to play together as an ensemble without the benefit of a

conductor or any possibility of either eye contact or even the ability to view bodily cues or gestures between performers. In this context, the importance of breath is reinforced and applicable to situations when *Kyōkai* members play collectively in gatherings such as the *suizen-kai*, as well as one-on-one lessons when student and teacher play the pieces together.<sup>4</sup>

Before focusing in on some of the more melodic facets of the repertoire, let us look at a “non-melodic cadential” feature that figures prominently throughout the repertoire. I credit Stanfield for introducing the term “breath cadence” (1977:115–116),<sup>5</sup> which he applies to the caesurae, or pauses, between phrases. In fact, this may be somewhat of a misnomer, for the word cadence (and its derivatives) carry more the meaning of an ending or conclusion, be this a stopping point (i.e., temporary) or a final one at the end of a piece (cf. Apel 1974:118). In Western music, for example, it is generally viewed as a formula—either melodic or harmonic—that *provides the means of arriving*. The word ‘arriving’ itself implies a destination or stopping point (either transitory or some degree of permanency) and I would therefore prefer to reserve its use to that sense, rather than what actually *comes immediately after* the cadence (pause, break, breath, whatever). Yet, the concept has great relevance to the current study and indeed shakuhachi *koten honkyoku* in general. The term “breath caesura” therefore may be more à propos here.

Music that is either sung or intended for wind instruments usually requires interruptions during which one takes a breath in order to be able to physically

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4 Remember that the “*sui*” of “*suizen*” (see Chapter 4, section 4.2) means to blow, thus further reinforcing the importance of breath, not just in order to produce a sound, but also emphasizing its importance to the tradition.

5 Actually, on this point, Stanfield credits the same Malm article previously cited here (Malm 1972). However, Malm never uses the term “breath cadence,” but rather “breath rhythm.” Nor does he really discuss pauses or caesurae, even though extending the “breath rhythm” concept to include these seems entirely logical.

continue.<sup>6</sup> What makes the case under study here less usual than many others is the type—or really the length—of the pause. These are in fact notated in the case of Rochiku, not by indicating rests in terms of beats or pulses,<sup>7</sup> but instead by the relative durational length of each pause, a dash (–) indicating a shorter pause than a circle (○). As might be expected by the latter, a long pause comes at the end of every piece (in this case being very long and indeterminate indeed). The official explanatory key supplied by the Myōan Kyōkai (already mentioned above and given in Appendix 2b), however, does list these in terms of beats (*hyōshi*).

The last chapter (section 5.5) called attention to an abundance of the *tsu-re* motif within the repertoire. This could really be considered an understatement and, to begin to qualify it, one has only to choose any piece to find not just one occurrence of this motif, but usually several. Not only is the *tsu-re* motif very common, but its importance was already implied by my incident with Hongō described in that same section (5.5). The importance was further made clear to me during a private lesson with Yao Byakuren, in which we spent considerable time working on my execution of it, as well as discussing it.<sup>8</sup> In fact, there are several ways to execute this motif, by altering the initial grace note leading to the *tsu*; the most common—and only one considered here—is what my teacher called the “Kyoto *tsu-re*.”<sup>9</sup> This is executed by starting with the fourth finger-hole open and

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6 Of course, exceptions to this do exist, most notably bagpipes and the use of circular breathing techniques. The latter, although used by some shakuhachi players, is perhaps a contentious issue. I would maintain that the use of circular breathing in shakuhachi, certainly in *koten honkyoku*, is unnecessary and unnatural. In any case, I did not encounter the use of circular breathing by any Myōan Kyōkai member.

7 Two exceptions to this come to mind: in *Chizu* and *Takiochi* as taught by Takahashi Rochiku, the player is to count (silently to him/herself) three beats (*hi, fu, mi* in Japanese) between two of the sections in each piece. These are not, however, notated but rather are transmitted verbally (*kuden*) from teacher to student.

8 This discussion is provided on the accompanying CD (*1 Yao\_tsure.wav*). Even though the verbal part is, of course, in Japanese, it is hoped that some meaning can be gleaned from the non-spoken sections.

9 Other *tsu-re*'s include the “Kanto *tsu-re*” and “Kyushu *tsu-re*” distinguished by the initial

quickly closing it, which produces a sort of acciaccatura or grace note on the upper *c* (*c''*):



**Example 6.1: “Kyoto” *tsu-re***

Whether or not, or the degree to which, this initial *c* is audible varies, as can hopefully be gathered from the aforementioned example on the CD, as well as the video provided on the CD (2 *Kojima\_Koku.mpeg*), which shows the current *kansu*, Kojima Hōan, executing it quite clearly with the uppermost (4<sup>th</sup>) finger-hole first visibly open prior to being closed. However, this visible cue is barely, if at all, audible.

All occurrences of repeated pitches are articulated with a grace note when the pitch is repeated. This can be said of Japanese wind instruments in general, where repeated pitches are not simply repeated by tonguing as with Western wind instruments. Christopher Yohmei Blasdel quite aptly applies the term ‘finger tonguing’ to describe this (Blasdel 1988:35). To elaborate also on another earlier point, a general convention concerning the *furi* is that it almost invariably follows repeated notes and when it occurs, usually comes at the end of a phrase, thereby serving a quasi-cadential function.

The final feature to mention is *kusabi buki*, which like the *tsu-re* motif, overarches throughout the repertoire, but here has less to do with execution or articulation of individual notes than their endings. *Kusabi* literally means wedge and

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appoggiatura leading to the *tsu*.

can (rather conveniently) not only represent the shape of a crescendo or diminuendo, but here it only refers to the latter: phrases, especially the final notes, are meant to fade away, not to swell.

These general observations are characteristics that can be found throughout the repertoire. There are few exceptions other than the ones already noted, but there are additional special techniques to be found in some pieces. The preceding remarks, however, are general enough to apply to the whole repertoire stylistically, or at least to the core repertoire with some certainty. Expanding the scope to include these other features could comprise an entire thesis in its own right and indeed, any thorough treatment of just the core repertoire, even though only consisting of thirty-three pieces, could also most likely fill an entire volume.

Choosing piece(s) from this relatively small collection that best demonstrate these features *as well as* fitting the overall theme presented within this thesis is not so easy a task. In looking at the collective activities of Kyōkai members, we find that any piece from the entire *koten honkyoku* repertoire can be heard at gatherings. This means that, even though the core repertoire dominates, what is played certainly does stretch beyond the core group of pieces.<sup>10</sup> Pieces also falling outside the core group are sometimes collectively studied by members at *benkyō-kai*. Of course, the three most revered pieces, the *Three Kyorei*, (*Kokū*, *Kyorei* and *Mukaiji*), figure quite prominently, as could be expected. The first piece played at all gatherings, including individual lessons, is *Chōshi* (*Honte Jōshi*) and most of the stylistic properties

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<sup>10</sup> One notable exception: in large gatherings (*taikai*) involving the *Hōsankai* (see Chapter 4, section 4.4), the range of what can be heard goes well beyond the *koten honkyoku*, even including modern pieces as well as, at times, ensembles of several shakuhachi. The reasons for this is that these events are open to a wider range of shakuhachi participants. In any case, instruments other than the shakuhachi are never to be heard (except for *keisu* and *mokugyo* when chanting is included—see also Chapter 4, section 4.4).

previously discussed are contained therein and can therefore be demonstrated with it. The most frequent collective gathering involving only members is the *suizen-kai* and, as we already saw in the Chapter 4, the ceremony during the first half of this particular gathering invariably consists of just *Chōshi* followed by *Kyorei*. Although *Kyorei* also exhibits some of the general characteristics discussed here, it also has a noteworthy exception, in that it is played ‘straight’, i.e., without any *furi*. This is the only piece where this is the case and the reason is that *Kyorei* is considered the germinal piece of the repertoire that is supposed to have imitated Fuke’s bell (Yao, Personal Communication 5 May, 2012).

## **6.2 ‘Transcriptions’ of *Honte Jōshi* and *Azuma Jishi***

A few points regarding the examples found at the end of this section are in order. First of all, a disclaimer common to our discipline (if not common, it probably should be) applies equally here as in all transcriptions of non-western musics into Western staff notation. It is far from perfect in so many ways, yet at the same time really seems to be the only way of providing a common ground on which we can engage in any discussion about music in general, certainly when the medium is the written word. Here the approach has been to provide a very basic representation to illustrate some of the points touched on earlier and in many ways is maybe even more skeletal than the notation discussed near the end of the last chapter (section 5.5).

### 6.2.1 *Honte Jōshi*

The accompanying transcription of *Honte Jōshi*, then, is first of all non metrical. Even though there appear to be bar lines, a closer look should reveal full (long) and shortened bar lines, indicating the longer and shorter pauses discussed in the previous section. These *divisiones* are borrowed from Gregorian Chant notation as *divisio maxima* and *divisio maior*, respectively and seemed appropriate, given that their original intent was to indicate rests or pauses, rather than demarcate metrical units. These pauses can also be read as breath marks. Note stems are also absent, in order not to give any impression that conveying strict rhythms is being attempted. For similar reasons, filled note heads are two sizes, the smaller one serving an analogous function to a grace-note, while the larger indicates a note of lesser than the longer unfilled notes. Finally, the ‘squiggles’ ( *λ* ) indicate *furi* as discussed above. This symbol was chosen because it closely resembles Takahashi Rochiku’s representation of the *furi* and also comes close to conveying the slight shake of the head to produce the effect.

While the opening section of this chapter endeavoured to point out and describe some of the salient features of the repertoire, *Honte Jōshi*, as a short piece, serves to exemplify most of them. A recording of the piece is on the accompanying CD (with the filename of *3 Yoshimura\_Choshi.wav*). Note the *furi* on the repeated notes (and remember repeated notes are preceded by a grace note—see ‘finger tonguing’ above, section 6.1).

## Honte Jōshi

本手調子

(A.K.A. Chōshi - 調子)



### Example 6.2: 'Transcription' of *Honte Jōshi*

Based on Yoshimura Fuan's recording provided on the accompanying CD—2 *Yoshimura.wav* as played on a 'standard' 1 shaku 8 sun instrument.

#### 6.2.2 *Azuma Jishi*

*Azuma Jishi*, as presented here, may come closer to providing what could be considered a 'prescriptive' score, mostly due to the fact that it is in fact metred. It would probably be more proper not to call it a strict transcription, however. It is actually a combination of four input sources. Two recorded examples are provided (as 5 *Muchiku\_Azuma.wav* and 6 *Yao\_Azuma.wav*) in order to provide examples of two different interpretations of the piece. Two original scores are also provided (Appendices 2f and 2g). The notation given in Example 6.3 combines these, and so would more properly be thought of as a combination of transnotation and transcription. The main contrast to observe here is the different characteristics of these two pieces, *Honte jōshi* being quite 'metrically free', while *Azuma jishi* is far less so. Even here, however, the recordings show a degree of rubato on the part of both players.

### 6.3 Conclusion

This chapter tried to suggest ways of looking at—or rather listening to—the core repertoire of the Myōan Kyōkai by pointing out some of its features. It found a surprising deficiency in the literature on matters concerning “free rhythm” and tried to clarify this situation, since *koten honkyoku* is so often characterised as being “free rhythmically.” While this is often the case and also applies to the core repertoire of the Myōan Kyōkai, it was pointed out that this cannot apply as a general rule across the corpus and that there are indeed pieces—and sections of pieces—that are in fact “rhythmical.” Finally, two pieces (*Honte Jōshi* and *Azuma Jishi*) were chosen in order to juxtapose and demonstrate these two characteristics. We found, however, that “rhythmical” included some freedom. This is not so surprising, considering the solo and unaccompanied nature of the context.

If we are to accept that *honkyoku*, as played by the Myōan Kyōkai, can be characterised as “melodic,” in contrast to other styles that share much of the repertoire, it may follow that it is also less decorated or embellished. This too can be explained by context. Recalling the discussion in Chapter 4 (see especially sections 4.5 and 4.6), it was argued that the aim of ‘performance’ did not aspire to be a display, or directed toward an other (or group of others). This purposeful ‘not showing’ would be perfectly in keeping with the musical characteristics discussed here. Furthermore, we see the exclusive setting of a temple and the context of unintended audience seem designed with this in mind, as if to safeguard against it.

## Azuma Jishi

吾妻獅子

(A.K.A. Azuma no kyoku - 吾妻の曲)

14

27

40

52

66

78 *rit*

90

102

Example 6.3: 'Transcription' of Azuma Jishi

## CHAPTER 7

# Situating the Myōan Kyōkai

### 7.1 Myōan Kyōkai: Religious sect, club, society (or what)?

A need (or desire) to label things, in this case the observed, is probably natural, but may also lead more to misunderstandings than illumination, unless approached with caution. This research, for example, was at first premised on surveying the shakuhachi in a religious context, the ‘R’ word figuring prominently in the original title. At that time, I was hesitant to apply the label ‘religion’ without first reaching some sort of understanding of exactly what this term really means or, failing that, setting the parameters for its meaning in the context of this research. As we shall see, I am now even more hesitant to do either. The category ‘religion’ especially can be most problematic. In Fitzgerald’s words:

Working with the blurred and yet ideologically loaded concept of ‘religion’ and ‘religions’ as a starting point can confuse and impoverish analysis, conceal fruitful connections that might otherwise be made, encourage the uncritical imposition of Judaeo-Christian assumptions on non-western data, and generally maximize our chances of misunderstanding.

(Fitzgerald 2000:6)

Yet, at the same time, one might create labels as a sort of reference point for oneself. This seems entirely natural as well as inevitable: in order to find meaning in the unknown or not-so-familiar, one might start by translating the observed into terminology already understood, or concepts with which one is already acquainted. This approach has been more eloquently expressed by Barbara Ward:

There is no reason why anyone attempting an outsider's analysis of another culture—or his own as if from the outside—should not erect whatever categories seem to him to be the most useful; but if one is to interpret the native insiders' understanding of their own culture one must try to comprehend—and use—their categories, not impose one's own.

(Ward 1979:36)

Starting out this project by approaching it through a “religious” lens, and having been raised in a rather strong Christian environment, I could see the temple as a church, the priest as a pastor and myself along with my fellow shakuhachi-ists as the congregation. To what extent this was helpful and fair, or distorted and inappropriate, is probably difficult to gauge, but it is also unnecessary to do so provided that any labeling beyond what one does for oneself is not carried so far as to provide an absolute and unquestionable truth for others, in this case the reader. This holds true perhaps more so for ‘religion’, its derivatives and related terms like secular, spiritual, sacred, etc. What might make this seem especially difficult in this case is the strong associations that link these to the shakuhachi. Indeed, so strong are these connections at times that the shakuhachi becomes more simply the ‘Zen flute’ mentioned at the very beginning of this thesis, whether or not it is being used in the context of a ‘meditation flute’. In a similar fashion, the association of shakuhachi practice with spiritual practice also at times seems inescapable. Utmost care, therefore, should be taken when applying some of these labels, and even more care when doing so cross-culturally.

Approaching the subject as music may not prove as problematic. It is well beyond doubt that the shakuhachi is indeed central to the Myōan Kyōkai (and this study) so, by extension then, music also plays more than just an important rôle in the activities of the Myōan Kyōkai, but is actually fundamental, for everything revolves

around the shakuhachi. Yet, the usual word for music in Japanese (*ongaku*) never came up during the course of this research (except Yao's remark in the Chapter 5, section 5.2). In its place the word was often *honkyoku* was often used, which as we saw (also Chapter 5), is used generically to denote the repertoire as a whole, even though it has a more narrow meaning to the Myōan Kyōkai. Bruno Nettl reminds us that "the languages of other cultures often do not have a term to encompass music as a total phenomenon" (1983:19). Indeed, *honkyoku*, as originally intended, emphatically would not be considered by many of its practitioners to be music at all. (This is why a distinction is often made between the shakuhachi as a religious or spiritual tool vis-à-vis a musical instrument.) It only becomes 'music' when we study it as such and are thus able to apply John Blacking's oft quoted "humanly organised sound." This point was made clear in an interview with the current *kansu*, who at first seemed hesitant to characterise the repertoire as music (Kojima, Personal Interview 25 October, 2009), but later phoned me to qualify his original answer, putting it under the classification often used to denote traditional Japanese music, *hōgaku*<sup>1</sup> (Kojima, Personal Communication 27 October 2009). This was done, seemingly, as if under some kind of pressure to categorise the repertoire, when perhaps no classification was really necessary (until some researcher came along, wanting to study the phenomena under the general rubric of ethnomusicology).

If we can accept that music as 'organised sound' can be quite safely applied to the current study (although with some of the reservations and qualifications about musical performance noted in Chapter 4), the concept of religion, on the other hand, cannot be as glibly employed. Beckford views "'religion' [as] a social and cultural

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1 *Hōgaku* can be translated as 'national music' and is used to designate traditional Japanese genres and to differentiate these from Western-style music created by Japanese composers.

construct with highly variable meaning” (2003:5) and also observes that determining what qualifies as ‘religion’ “is a *modern and originally Western disposition*” (Beckford 2003:20—emphasis added). Certainly in the context of this research (and may I suggest that the same would apply to other research), our problems start with the connotations that are attached to the very word “religion.” Above all, it should be noted that ‘religion’ as a category may have the danger of bringing with it Judaeo-Christian theological connotations.

The appropriateness of this immediately raises problems when dealing with Buddhism in any of its forms, because Buddhism is essentially non-theistic. In fact, this was probably my first barrier to understanding whilst trying to view what I was observing with my preconceived notions of religion and from a Christian upbringing and background. It should also be recognised that, in the case of Japan, a separate category labeled ‘religion’ did not really appear until the late nineteenth century and was brought about by pressures to join Western thought and concepts during Japan’s modernisation drive (Hardacre 1988:294–295; Isomae 2005:243). (This is also redolent of the situation with music (*ongaku*) mentioned in Chapter 1 and discussed further in Chapter 5, section 5.2.)

‘Religion’ has been used and defined in so many variegated ways as to render it virtually meaningless, leaving one faced with the choice to choose one of these, a collage of several or simply redefine the term to suit one’s purposes. In fact, Horton suggests that when facing such a definitional difficulty, one strategy might be simply to ask the reader to “accept as ‘religious’ any phenomena which the author happens to select for treatment under this heading” (Horton 1960:201). Indeed this presumptive approach has been taken by many, and could have been taken here.

Dropping the term entirely, however, should pose no problems if we follow

Beckford's reasoning that

uncertainty about what religion really is does not pose a problem to social scientists: it merely challenges them to understand how so many human beings still manage to navigate life without achieving certainty about religion or religious issues

(Beckford 2003:21)

Before abandoning religion entirely, we have to decide what may set the shakuhachi apart in the hands of the Myōan Kyōkai, and perhaps this is what makes this particular context special, assuming that it is not only somehow just a sort of musical body or club. Hopefully by now, it has become clear that this is not the case, that even though 'musical' sound is the main and essential component, the contexts are different from the often expected circumstances of concert or recital hall, competition, or whatever: all take place privately (to various degrees as noted in Chapter 4), within the bounds of a temple or occasionally for mendicancy. This begins to sound 'religious', if only superficially, and leads us to taking a brief look at one of religion's complements, 'secular', which is often considered either religion's opposite, or its absence. Here again, this would really seem to be a misconception: the two are not mutually exclusive, but form a continuum, with secularism being a move away from the religious, *but not its elimination*. In other words, they are co-dependent and cannot exist one without the other, "the boundary between [them] is by no means clear, fixed or impermeable" (Beckford 2003:33). Again, as with religion, we may be entering the realm of indeterminacy, but let us consider briefly a characterisation of the Myōan Kyōkai by Sanford as "a nominally secular organization" (1977:438). His meaning becomes clear in the closing sentence of his seminal article, where he mentions that the Myōan Kyōkai "preserve[s] into the

twentieth century the musical forms, if not *the overtly religious forms* of the *Fukeshū*” (Sanford 1977:438—emphasis added). Sanford thus goes a bit further than merely intimating a ‘religious’ character, even though he also makes the common mistake of translating *Kyōkai* as “Association” (hence “nominally secular organization”, quoted above), when in fact the characters used (and which he correctly cites) are the same as the Japanese word used for “church” (教会) and not “association” (協会). The choice of ideograms could not have been an accident and would certainly indicate that the *Myōan Kyōkai* defines itself as some kind of church and its founding in 1890 enabled it to do so thanks to religious freedom under the Meiji Constitution, which had been newly promulgated just the previous year as we saw in Chapter, 3 section 3.5.

If religion as a concept was somewhat new to Meiji Japan, however, the word chosen to designate it was not an entirely new one. The word *shūkyō*, and the two kanji comprising it, were in use in China as far back as the late sixth century, where it was used as an overall term referring to Buddhist Teachings. The word was then adopted later in nineteenth century Japan to translate the Western notion of religion (see also Hardacre 1988:300–301; Ketelaar 1990:41,240). Hardacre writes that “. . . complex dispositions about religion took nineteenth century Japan by surprise.” She continues:

When Euro-American ideas about religion came to Japan, they entered a society that had no equivalent concept, no idea of a distinct sphere of life that can be called ‘religion’ nor did it have the idea of ‘generic religion’ of which there are local variants like Christianity, Buddhism, and so on.

(Hardacre 1988:300)

Davis considers that *shūkyō* as a term implies both doctrines and public

commitment to them, neither of which make up the character or spirit of Japanese religion (Davis 1992:313–314). It seems obvious that the attempts to introduce the word and concept into Japan could only meet with a very limited success (if any) for, as Horton observes, “a culture-bound label is of no use in cross-cultural comparisons” (Horton 1960:211). Indeed, if the notion of religion was inappropriate and somewhat bewildering when introduced into Japan just over one-hundred years ago, it seems to have been assimilated into the culture. This is the case at least, for the present *kansu*, Kojima Hōan, who flatly said that Myōan shakuhachi indeed was religious because of its connection to the Fuke sect, Zen and also because it has regulations (Kojima Personal Interview 25 October 2009). Here, as with the question of music mentioned above, making the connection was perhaps precipitated by my asking him whether such a link existed and maybe he was, in this sense cornered. It could be that he was trying to communicate with me in ways I might understand or maybe he has been conditioned into accepting the concept of religion since its introduction at the end of the nineteenth century.

We do see in any case, the association of the Myōan shakuhachi with Zen, which has been pointed out from the outset of this thesis and argued for in the face of some scepticism. If the shakuhachi—generically speaking—is connected with Zen, it is hard also to miss the spiritual connotations. Here again, we are faced with potential difficulties by yet another problematic word, prompting Martin (2009:164) to characterise spirituality as “a vague term easily abused on account of its vagueness.” It has often also been treated as synonymous with ‘religion’ (not to mention ‘ritual’—all three being sometimes handled virtually interchangeably) (Fitzgerald 2000:4,131,195; Goody 1961:143).

One convenient way to differentiate the two (i.e., spirituality vs. religion) is offered by Heelas and Woodhead, who first distinguish between what they identify as ‘life-as’ and ‘subjective-life’. In the case of the former, social forces come into play in the form of the expectations and duties imposed externally by society, whereas the latter takes a more introspective stance and deals with one’s *own* experiences (Heelas and Woodhead 2005:3). They thus characterise the religious sphere more in social terms and the spiritual as more subjective in nature (2005:5), perhaps summed up most succinctly by a quote of one of the subjects of their study in the rural English town of Kendal: “Religion asks you to learn from the experience of others. Spirituality urges you to seek your own” (Heelas and Woodhead 2005:12). However, this may simply be an indication of a trend that separates the fulfillment by an institution of an individual’s spiritual needs and making it more a matter of personal choice. Yet, this need would still require something external to satisfy it and one still has the choice to turn to an institution of some sort to fulfill this need. In fact, while the 1960s and 70s saw many Westerners losing faith in the usual institutions (e.g. the Christian Church), they simply turned to alternative ones and joined different ‘religious’ groups (cf. Roof 1999). Here it would seem that spirituality, while being a personal quest, still may look outward for a way to satiate some need on a social level.

Whatever the case, we are still faced with a definitional dilemma (actually, several). It would seem that the shakuhachi (again in the most generic sense) could have, without too much argument, religious, spiritual as well as ritualistic qualities associated with it, and this is undoubtedly due to its early Zen connotations. So, even when the context may be entirely performative in the concert sense, one may choose

to maintain (or even play up) the Zen aspects. One's approach to *absolutely any* music or instrument, however, could carry the same or at least similar personal meanings.

If we return to the shakuhachi as practiced by the members of the Myōan Kyōkai, however, we are faced with a different picture. From a more 'musical' perspective, it has already been observed in Chapter 4 that the performative aspects preclude entertainment or mere display for an other (or group of others). Additionally, we have nothing that could be considered 'professional'. In other words, practitioners view their relationship to the shakuhachi as purely avocational and not a career choice. In their context the instrument is still considered very much a spiritual tool (*hōki*) and not a simply musical instrument (*gakki*).

In terms of how the Myōan shakuhachi fits in with the overall Japanese traditional music state of affairs, however, one other possibility needs to be addressed. As noted above, the current *kansu* posited that it could be subsumed under the general category of *hōgaku*, the Japanese word used to designate Japanese traditional music. That being the case, it may be worth considering whether it fits into the *iemoto ryū-ha* mould like so many, if not most, genres of *hōgaku* does. While many of the *iemoto* features appear to be present, there are also important differences, not least of which is the fact that the Myōan Kyōkai does not view itself as such. This can be attested to by Weisgarber (1968:314), who was told this by the previous *jūshoku*, Hirazumi Eun (the current *jūshoku*'s father). Yet the current style practiced at Myōan Temple is often referred to as 'Myōan *ryū* Taizan-*ha*, the latter part referring to the repertoire chosen and canonised by Higuchi Taizan (1856–1914). This is done more out of convenience, however, to distinguish this style of

playing from some of the other shakuhachi styles, such as Kinko-ryū or Tozan-ryū, which do in fact more closely follow the *iemoto* structure (cf. Kikkawa 1984:958).

It is important to note here that it is not so much the appellation that distinguishes structure or type of organisation. While the English rendering of *ryū* is often ‘school’ and often leads to an assumption of an *iemoto*-like structure, it is more apt to consider its meaning more in the sense of a (particular) style, for the literal translation is ‘flow’ or ‘manner’ and really need not carry any organisational or factional implications. Thus, even though the Myōan Kyōkai has referred to itself as a *ryū* in the past, the organisational similarities, in terms of hereditary (pseudo or otherwise) passing on of head stop there.<sup>2</sup> We see, for example, that the Additional Regulations of the Myōan Kyōkai, dated 11 June, the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Taishō (1915), clearly professes itself as “Myōan Ryū” in the 2nd regulation (Tanikita 1981:135). This self identification as a *ryū*, as Kikkawa (1984:958) points out, occurred after the death of Higuchi Taizan, the Myōan Kyōkai’s first *kansu*. Here, it would seem that the *ryū* label, appended by Taizan-*ha* was to help distinguish it from other Myōan styles (Kikkawa 1984:958). Myōan Ryū as a designation would therefore seem to carry a rather empty—or at least incomplete—meaning. Interestingly though, this identification never came up during fieldwork, but this could really be seen as the absence of any need to self-identify amongst the membership. Its use, however, does crop up from time to time and does not seem to serve much as a clarification, certainly in the case of the Myōan Kyōkai and its members. The preference, therefore, is to refer to it rather as Myōan-ji Dōshūkai, or as I have throughout this thesis as Myōan Kyōkai. Also, within this thesis, when given simply

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<sup>2</sup> This with the quite incidental exception of the head priest’s position, which, as is common practice in Japan, very often passes from father to son.

as “Myōan style,” the same direct association has been implied and intended. Consider the following example (which incidentally uses Myōan’s alternate pronunciation, Meian—see the explanation given in the opening of this thesis). Stan Richardson, a shakuhachi performer, in the liner notes to his 2 CD set, *Shakuhachi Meditation Music* includes within a glossary, “*Meiân [sic] School (Ryû)*—a term that applies to a wide collection of ancient meditative temple music. The name is derived from one of the head temples of the Fuke-shu Zen sect Meiân-ji” (Richardson 1997).<sup>3</sup> Finally, as suggested by Nishiyama (1997:206), not a person, but rather the temple itself would be considered the *iemoto*, or house-head, thus not really fitting with what is the generally accepted notion of *iemoto/ryû-ha*.

It is hoped that by now, there should be no argument regarding the Zen associations with the shakuhachi as practiced by the Myōan Kyōkai, if only supported by the fact that Myōan Temple is a sub-temple of the Rinzai Zen temple, Tōfuku-ji. However, a view of Zen as a religion is not always supportable as can be attested by the president of the Hanazonokai’s words to Borup (2008:108): “Zen is not religion, at least not traditional religion. It is a matter of the mind and the spirit.”

Perhaps the question should be examined in terms of what Myōan Kyōkai members are or what they represent. We have already seen that the *Komusō* of the Edo period (1600–1868) were apparently both monks and priests (or either of the two), with the *sō* (僧) translating as both. They were of the *samurai*, or warrior class, and were not ordained, but rather were of the laity. This is also the case for Kyōkai members, but as one put it, we are basically half priest and half civilian (Hayashi,

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3 By way of illustration, it should be remarked that Richardson himself is not a member of the Myōan Kyōkai, even though he devotes one full CD of the double set to “*Meiân Ryû*.” The use of Myōan (or its derivatives) has also been used by others, who have no affiliation with Myōan Temple or the Myōan Kyōkai, so it is not my intention to single Richardson out on this point.

Personal Communication 3 May, 2011). This can be evidenced most easily by the attire of members as described in Chapter 4, section 4.2.1. The fact that members have some specific attire of course contributes to group identity and cohesion in much the same way that any uniform would. It actually goes somewhat further, however. For example, a full *Komusō* outfit can be quite readily purchased by anyone. An officially approved one as well as a *kesa* with the Myōan-ji emblem, however, can only be purchased from a Buddhist supply shop in Kyoto (Takei) after proving membership to the Myōan Kyōkai. Likewise the black robe (*koromo*) is only available at Buddhist specialty supply houses and, attesting to the not quite full priestly (or monk) status of Myōan Kyōkai members, it is only to be worn within the premises of a temple (i.e., to be removed when leaving the temple grounds).

So how does all of this help to answer the questions posed as the title of this section? In a sense, it could be all (religious sect, club, society). In very basic terms, it could be called a group of shakuhachi ‘enthusiasts’ brought together into an organised community, whose activities are centered within a specific space, which also happens to be a temple. By now, we have hopefully seen that while the motivation behind their activities seems on the surface musical, they go beyond being simply a musical club; if there are seemingly religious underpinnings, these also are transcended. Ultimately, it seems that perhaps this question best be left open, given some of the trappings already identified, within this thesis and especially this chapter, or leave it to the reader to decide. A closer look at some of the reasons that some members join may help to clarify.

## **7.2 Who becomes a member?**

It was already pointed out at the beginning of this thesis that my involvement in

the Myōan Kyōkai came quite by accident: I simply wanted to learn the shakuhachi and the teacher that I was introduced to just happened to be of the Myōan style. I also mentioned a sort of naïvete on my part as far as the instrument was concerned, but it was really more simply complete ignorance about not only the shakuhachi, but Japanese music in general and some of the ways in which it was organised.

Reasons for becoming a member of the Myōan Kyōkai vary. Similar to my own situation, another member also told me that he too encountered the Myōan shakuhachi by accident: he had originally wanted to learn *min'yō* (Japanese folksong) shakuhachi, but as it turned out he found a Myōan teacher (Omura, Personal Communication 8 May, 2011). Although unintended as in my own case, it was also different in that he already had a 'stylistic preference' in mind. Nevertheless he stayed with it, has been an active member for over thirty years and never subsequently sought out a *min'yō* teacher. Other 'accidental' joiners included two members that happened to live within close proximity to Myōan Temple and decided to learn on that basis.

Yet, a great many of the players that I met had joined the Kyōkai after having experienced another style of playing, making shakuhachi novitiates to the Myōan style seem rare. This initially came as a bit of a surprise to me and I started to think of them as defectors in a positive sense: it seemed to imply that the Myōan style was in some way superior to the styles and schools they were leaving. To me this demonstrated the possibility that it possessed a certain power, either simply from a musical perspective, but possible also some in relation to the extra-musical components, such as the communal aspects, or even it was the 'religious' elements that drew them. To the former, two of the members with a Tozan background

indicated that they didn't like playing with other instruments in an ensemble (Kotani, Personal Communication 15 January, 2012; Kishimoto, Personal Communication 13 May, 2012). Another former Tozan player had given up for many years (he couldn't seem to remember how many) and said that when he decided to take up shakuhachi again, he just wasn't interested in the Tozan style anymore (Hayashi, Personal Communication 12 September, 2009).

Yet while these 'apostates' initially seemed to validate possible superior qualities about the Myōan style, I was far more surprised to find several that had not completely renounced their former affiliations, and while they were open about it, I hesitate to use their names here in order to avoid embarrassment (or any other repercussions) from either or any of their affiliations. One Tozan player mentioned that he just wanted to trace some of Nakao Tozan's roots (Tozan having been a member prior to founding his own school—see Chapter 2, section 2.2). Another saw no conflicts between the two styles and stated that he had no problems separating them because they were different, both musically and contextually. He also had a penchant for aspects relating to the *Komusō*, which could be seen as religious and/or communal reasons for joining and also could explain the ease with which he managed to separate the two.

Another member held *shihan* in both Kinko and Tozan styles and was also an accomplished *min'yō* singer. While he didn't stay active in the other two styles, he actively pursued his *min'yō* interests, and on several occasions he and another former Tozan member accompanied him on shakuhachi to sing the folksong *Esashi Oiwake*, even within the temple's premises. Sometimes they were joined by other members who sang the chorus (*hayashi*) or played *shamisen* (3-stringed plucked

lute). This would certainly suggest an openness on the part of Myōan Temple and its membership, along with the ability to operate in different contexts and may help validate Tsukamoto's claim that the earliest members of the Myōan Kyōkai did not know *honkyoku*, but played Japanese folk songs (*min'yō*) (Tsukamoto 1994:38—see also sections 2.2 and 5.2). It also suggests other factors of a more social nature than the contexts examined in Chapter 4 contribute to forming the community.

The reasons for joining the Myōan Kyōkai are thus variegated, but ultimately people join because they want to, whatever their reasons. There really does not seem to be anything in the way of active recruitment of new members, or proselytising as in some religions, another reason to hesitate applying the 'religious' label.

## CHAPTER 8

### Conclusion

This thesis sought to explore the living tradition of the shakuhachi as practiced by the Myōan Kyōkai and illuminate the ways that members engage with the instrument. Going deep into its past, the shakuhachi's links to Zen sometimes seem to be vague and ill-defined, but we find this to be a characteristic also of its present. We have seen that there are irreconcilable problems in its history, from its association with the Fuke sect and its members, the *Komusō*, but also from an organological point of view. While most details of the Fuke sect's origins are no doubt false, I have argued that a tie to Rinzai Zen was present and purposeful from as far back as the *Kyotaku Denki*, even though the actual dating of that document's original is difficult to ascertain.

Any connection between the shakuhachi and Kakushin, who was alleged to have brought both the instrument and a tradition steeped in Zen, were already proven to be very doubtful by Nakatsuka in the 1930s. Even if there is no evidence of any organised sect to have ever existed in China, I have tried to show that there was never such a claim as set forth in the *Kyotaku Denki*. That Fuke never founded his own sect should not be difficult to accept and neither should the possibility that he provided the inspiration to start one in his name be out of the question. None of the falsehoods or difficulties in the Fuke sect's history do anything to deny the existence of an organised group or sect, regardless of the tenets on which it was

founded. Nor does it act as deterrent to the Myōan Kyōkai and its members, who acknowledge many of the discrepancies in this perplexing history. I have suggested that by naming Kyochiku Zenji as the founder of the sect in Japan, any ties to both China and Kakushin are effectively severed, thereby, if not completely resolving these discrepancies, then certainly going a long way towards sidestepping them.

As we move closer to the present, it would seem that chronicling events in the Fuke sect's history should become less difficult. Even here, however, where others have suggested that the sect was ultimately responsible for its own demise, I have posited that there was a far greater force at play in the form of the anti-buddhist movement, known as *haibutsu kishaku*, that swept Japan at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This meant that the Fuke sect was certainly not alone, since Buddhism as a whole was threatened and suffered the campaign's backlash. Even the accusations of spy or stoolpigeon in the service of the shōgunal government should not have singled out the *Komusō* and the Fuke sect, given that it was commonplace in all Japanese sects of Buddhism. Where the Fuke sect did stand alone, however, was in its practice of teaching commoners in its *fukiawase-dokoro* (shakuhachi teaching studios). While this was likely to have met with some disapproval by the authorities, I argued that it foretold current practice in the form of the Myōan Kyōkai's *bun-dōjō* ('adjunct training hall'). Even if it resulted in revoking special privileges that had previously been granted to the *Komusō*, it also signaled the approval of practices already underway.

Although I have declared several times that this study's emphasis is not historical (and I still uphold that claim), there is no doubt that history does play a part, not only in defining the Myōan Kyōkai, but also as a factor in bringing it

together as a community. We have seen that the entire history can be seen as a succession of inventions, both of history and tradition, with the latter being perhaps better viewed as a series of *re*-inventions and adaptations. Even the tradition of *suizen*, represented as deeply rooted in the past by so many, is claimed by the Myōan Kyōkai as a new part of a *re*-invented tradition, or if one prefers, a tradition reinterpreted.

Placing this study within the context of a temple was intended as an escape from many of the problems just mentioned: a vague and troublesome history and an often equally ill-defined and individualistic present. By looking at the use of the shakuhachi in an organised and institutionalised form, within the present-day setting of a Zen temple, many of these issues would at least be relegated to the background. Rather than looking at individualistic approaches to the shakuhachi, focus could then be turned toward a group that identifies itself with the instrument and gathers regularly to engage with it.

Beyond seeing history as a force that helped shape the Myōan Kyōkai, the shakuhachi itself is a major contributing factor. While this may seem all too self-evident, it is important to recognise that without it, the Myōan Kyōkai simply would not exist. We do not find it serving in the subsidiary or supportive capacity that music so often does in other “religious” traditions or even “secular” rituals. Indeed, this may be one of the factors leading to the difficulties encountered when trying to locate it within the rubric of religion. By the same token, as we saw, there were also some obstacles in placing it within a purely musical sphere.

In this regard, I pointed to an unchanging and canonised repertoire that also showed signs of being relatively unadorned and ‘melodic’. There are no new pieces

being composed to add to the repertoire, implying that there is no motivation or desire to innovate and leading to my proposal for a need to adjust perceptions of performance, arguing that the act of *displaying* for others did not fit the contexts being investigated. There should be little contention that sessions such as the *suizen-kai*, and to some extent the *kaiden-shiki*, would not require this special consideration, given their closed nature and the absence of non-participating onlookers (the latter usually providing an exception to this). Where other events, such as the *tai-kai*, may have seemed to qualify as ‘musical performances’, I pointed out that what, under ‘normal’ circumstances, could have been considered an audience were really just witnesses to an event for whom the ‘performance’ was not intended, reasoning that it would still take place without their presence. If these gatherings were not planned for the benefit of onlookers, it follows that these events were one way that members could come together. Here it should be remembered that, as an unaccompanied solo tradition, there would be no overriding musical needs to assemble as a group.

The act of gathering itself immediately implies the existence of some sort of community. This study has suggested other factors that are neither historical nor musical, which contribute to identifying the Myōan Kyōkai as a community and, at the same time, act as binding agents. Foremost among these would be the dedicated space of a temple, followed by special attire and equipment in the form of the *shusen* upon which members rest their instruments. We saw that members usually wore a *kesa* during activities held at the temple and sometimes wore gowns (*koromo*). Wearing these within the confines of the temple grounds reinforce the special nature of that dedicated space, while also identifying its members.

Can that dedicated space be considered ‘religious’? The simple answer to this would be affirmative. On this point however, without wanting to discard the possibility, I chose to use caution when applying it as a label. Foremost amongst my reasons for this were the automatic links between Zen and the shakuhachi; spirituality and the shakuhachi; secularisation of the shakuhachi, etc. Furthermore, I suggested that the term religious (and its derivatives) risked bringing theistic implications to an essentially non-theistic tradition.

Essentially, elements that can be considered historical, musical and even religious can all be seen as factors that contribute to creating, identifying and maintaining the Myōan Kyōkai as a community. Beyond the scope of one single and unified community, however, this study revealed additional layers of sub-communities to be included and combined into a unified whole. But these were also seen as separate entities that were only manifested under certain circumstances and therefore could be considered temporary when viewed in relation to the Myōan Kyōkai. Still, being united by the shakuhachi under the roof of a temple, repertoire extended beyond the Myōan Kyōkai core repertoire and even the *koten honkyoku* repertoire to include other pieces and playing styles. This opens the possibilities of viewing one single shakuhachi *community* comprised of several shakuhachi *traditions*.



**Photo 8.1: Leaving Myōan-ji**  
(photo by author)

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# **APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX 1

## Roman to Japanese Transliteration of Key Words and Names

bakufu	幕府
benkyō-kai	勉強会
Betsuden	別伝
bōnenkai	忘年会
bun-dōjō	分道場
bushi	武士
Chikuho-ryū	竹保流
chikumei	竹名
Chōshi	調子
Chūden	中伝
deshi	弟子
dōshu	導主
Dōshu-kai	導主会
ensō	演奏
Fuke (shū)	普化(宗)
fukiawase-dokoro	吹き合わせ所
fuku	吹く
Fukumoto Kyoan	福本虚庵
furegaki	触れ書き
furi	振り
gagaku	雅楽
gaikyoku	外曲
gakki	楽器
geinō	芸能
hade	破手
haibutsu kishaku	廃仏毀釈
Hannya shingyo	般若心経
hayashi	囃子

Higuchi Taizan	樋口対山
hiku	弾く
Hirazumi Gyozan	平住仰山
Hirazumi Eun	平住恵雲
hitoyogiri	一節切
hōgaku	邦楽
hōki	法器
honkyoku	本曲
honte	本手
Hōsankai	法讃会
hyōshi	拍子
Ichigetsu-ji	一月寺
iemoto	家元
insenpō	陰旋法
itton jōbutsu	一音成仏
ji (lacquer and tonoko mixture)	地
-ji (temple)	寺
jinashi	地無
jinuri	地塗
jun-honte	准本手
jūshoku	住職
juzu	数珠
Kaiden	皆伝
kaiden-shiki	皆伝式
kaiden-shō	皆伝書
Kaidō Honsoku	海道本則
Kakushin	覚心
kanaderu	奏でる
kanbun	漢文
Kanshitsu	乾漆
kansu	看守
kari	力
Kegon (sect)	華嚴宗
Keichō no okitegaki	慶長の置手書

kensō	献奏会
kesa	袈裟
kimono	着物
Kinko Kurosawa	琴古黒沢
Kobayashi Shizan	小林紫
Koizumi Shizan	小泉止山
Kojima Issui	児島一吹
kokan	古管
Kōkoku-ji	興国寺
kokyū	胡弓
komosō	菰僧
Komusō	虚無僧
koromo	衲
Kosugi Chikugen	小杉竹玄
koten honkyoku	古典本曲
kuchi shōga	口唱歌
kuden	口伝
kusabi	楔
Kyochiku Zenji	虚竹禅師
Kyōkai (association)	協会
Kyōkai (church)	教会
kyoku	曲
Kyomu	虚無
Kyoreizan Myōan-ji	虚靈山明暗寺
Kyotaku Denki	嘘鐸伝記
Kyotaku denki kokujikai	嘘鐸伝記国字解
matagu	跨ぐ
Meian (see Myōan)	
meri	メ
mokugyo	木魚
Monbiraki	門開
monka	門下
Mumon	無門
Myōan	明暗

Myōan Doshō Goeika	明暗洞簫御詠歌
Myōan Kyōkai	明暗教会
Myōan Shidanoge	明暗四打偈
Myōan-ji	明暗寺
Nakao Tozan	中尾都山
Nenbutsu	念仏
Noh	能
Nyūmon	入門
Ōbaku	黄檗
oiwai	お祝い
Okuden	奥伝
ongaku	音楽
otsu	乙
Reihō-ji	鈴法寺
rijichō	理事長
Rinzai	臨濟
Rochiku Takahashi	呂竹高橋
ryū-ha	流派
samurai	侍
sankyoku	三曲
Seien-ryū	西園流
shaku	尺
shakuhachi	尺八
shihan	師範
Shingon	真言
Shirakawa	白川
shōkō	焼香
shōmyō	声明
shūkyō	宗教
Sokka Gakai	創価学会
Sōtō	曹洞
suishō	吹簫
suizen	吹禪
suizen hi	吹禪碑

suizen-kai	吹禅会
sun	寸
tai-kai	大会
Takahashi Rochiku	高橋呂竹
takuhatsu	托鉢
Tanikita Muchiku	谷北無竹
tataku	叩く
Tendai	天台
tengai	天盖
Tōfuku-ji	東福寺
urushi	漆
uso	嘘
Yao Byakuren	八尾白蓮
Yasuda Tenzan	安田天山
yōgaku	洋楽
Yoshimura Sōshin	芳村宗心
zakkyoku	雑曲
zazen	座禅
zazen-kai	座禅会
Zenkoku Kensō Tai-kai	全国献奏大会
Zuka (tsuka)	塚

### Myōan Kyōkai Core Repertoire

<i>Aji no kyoku</i>	阿字曲
<i>Akebonochō</i>	曙調
<i>Akita no kyoku</i>	秋田曲
<i>Azuma no kyoku/Azuma jishi</i>	吾妻/吾妻獅子
<i>Hachigaeshi no kyoku</i>	鉢返曲
<i>Hifumi chō</i>	一二三調
<i>Hōkyōkoku</i>	鳳叫虚空
<i>Hontejōshi</i>	本手調子
<i>Hōtaku</i>	鳳鐸

<i>Koden sōkaku</i>	古伝巢鶴
<i>Koku</i>	虚空
<i>Koro sugaki</i>	轉管搔
<i>Kosho koku</i>	虎嘯虚空
<i>Kumoinokyoku</i>	雲井曲
<i>Kyorei</i>	噓鈴
<i>Kyūshū reibo</i>	九州鈴慕
<i>Mon biraki</i>	門開
<i>Mukaiji</i>	霧海箏篳
<i>Mutsu reibo</i>	陸奥鈴慕
<i>Ōshu nagashi</i>	奥州流
<i>Renbo nagashi</i>	恋慕流
<i>Ryugin koku</i>	竜吟虚空
<i>Sakae jishi</i>	栄獅子
<i>Sanya no kyoku</i>	三谷曲
<i>Shika no tone</i>	鹿遠音
<i>Shinya no kyoku</i>	深夜曲
<i>Shizu no kyoku</i>	志図曲
<i>Takiochi no kyoku</i>	滝落曲
<i>Tsukushi reibo</i>	筑紫鈴慕
<i>Tsuru no sugomori</i>	鶴之巢箏
<i>Uchinami no kyoku</i>	打波曲
<i>Yamato chōshi</i>	大和調子
<i>Yoshiya no kyoku</i>	善哉曲

## APPENDIX 2

### Fingering Charts and Score Examples

譜解

口、全閉、連音ニ刻（孔は下より、二、三、四、五）  
ツ、一開、（カリ、半メリ、メリ、連音ニ刻）  
レ、一ニ閉、連音、三刻  
チ、一ニ三閉、カリ、半メリ、メリ、連音四刻  
ウ、一三閉、チより一段低く、連音四刻  
ハ、三三閉、五刻  
イ、三三閉、五打

ヒ、二四五閉、通常カリ、三刻  
フ、四五閉、通常メリ、三刻  
井、三開、まははニ三閉、四刻  
ウ（まははウ）、三閉  
五開、イ（まはこ）、ヒ（まは甲）、まはキ  
ツル、ツ二打  
レエ、レ二打  
チリ、チ一打（ときた三打）  
ウル、ウ三打（もとウウ、對山先生の晩年譜はウノ）

ハラ、ハ四打  
ヤラヤラ、一三四、二三四、五（打替）  
カラ、一ニ三四閉一打  
ハラ口、二四五スリ、次メリたニ打、次カリにマ全閉  
ホーコ口、一五の次に、二五、一五打替  
コロく、二五、五打替  
ホーロ、二五、三打  
ホロイ、まははホロ口、一五、二五、五  
〇、（赤）原本にある印れ目  
〇、（黒）一、原本にない印れ目  
①、ユル（フル）  
②、ユル（四用までは實數）  
③、メル  
④、メル  
⑤、微たきる  
ウキ、指をあげ、顎のみにて強くメル  
抱、指をめてメル  
⑥、スリ氣味  
⑦、メリ氣味  
⑧、メル、カル（ノ、カル）

123

Appendix 2(a): Fingering Chart/Explanation  
from Rochiku (n.d.: 123)

明暗尺八経譜解説 尊吉

ホイ	ハ	手打	四	二	三	四	五	五	四	三	二	二	同音連続
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	五
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	四
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	三
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	二
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	一
イ	ホ	ロ	ハ	ハ	ハ	ハ	ハ	ハ	ハ	ハ	ハ	ハ	表
乙	甲	乙	甲	乙	甲	乙	甲	乙	甲	乙	甲	乙	裏

**拍子符記号**

大口 一拍子  
 小口 半拍子  
 細口 拍子外

一拍子  
 二拍子  
 半拍子  
 二拍子

連続  
 息継  
 止  
 休

**附録記号**

指をきく  
 カリ吹く  
 指を全用して  
 カリ吹く

拍子全部外  
 カリ吹く  
 拍子全部用いて  
 カリ吹く

指をきく  
 カリ吹く  
 指を全用して  
 カリ吹く

拍子全部外  
 カリ吹く  
 拍子全部用いて  
 カリ吹く

Appendix 2(b): Fingering Chart/Explanation from Myōan Temple Official Score set (1981)

SHAKUHACHI FINGERING CHART for 5- and 7-hole flutes

RANGE OF 18 (D) SHAKUHACHI		LIP TENSION: LOOSE																	
SLINE OF 18 (D) WESTERN		C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	B#	C	C#	D	D#	E
TOZAN	ロ	ロ	ロ	ツ	ツ	ツ	レ	レ	ウ	チ	バ	バ	バ	バ	バ	バ	バ	バ	バ
KINKO	ロ	ロ	ロ	ツ	ツ	ツ	レ	レ	ウ	チ	バ	バ	バ	バ	バ	バ	バ	バ	バ
ANCIENT HOGAKU NOTATION	神 仙	上 無	心 越	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余	断 余
FINGER																			
THUMB	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
INDEX	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
MIDDLE	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
RING	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
PINKY	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
NOTES:	SHAKUHACHI WITH 5 HOLES	SHAKUHACHI WITH 6 HOLES	SHAKUHACHI WITH 7 HOLES						FULL SIZE TUBE COLOR TYPICAL OF SHAKUHACHI					SHAKUHACHI WITH 5 HOLES		SHAKUHACHI WITH 6 HOLES			

● CLOSED ○ OPEN ○ ◐ HALF-HOLE QUARTER-HOLE ○ ◑ OPEN ○ ◒ OPEN ↓ MERI ↓ MERI ↑ K.ARI ↑ K.ARI

FIG 1

Appendix 2(c): Fingering Chart with Western notational equivalents (1<sup>st</sup> of 2 pages. Used here for illustration purposes: page 2 intentionally omitted) from Monty Levenson/Tai Hei Shakuhachi (<http://www.shakuhachi.com/Y-FingeringChart-p1.html>)

調子

ビーンーウウービーン。ハハハハウー<sup>甲</sup>ロロ<sup>甲</sup>ー<sup>乙</sup>ビ<sup>乙</sup>。

チ<sup>乙</sup>チウ<sup>乙</sup>。ツ<sup>乙</sup>ツ<sup>乙</sup>。ロロ<sup>乙</sup>ー<sup>甲</sup>只<sup>甲</sup>ロロ<sup>乙</sup>ー<sup>乙</sup>ツ<sup>乙</sup>ロ<sup>乙</sup>ー<sup>乙</sup>只<sup>乙</sup>ウ<sup>乙</sup>ウ<sup>乙</sup>。

マ<sup>乙</sup>ー<sup>乙</sup>ウ<sup>乙</sup>ー<sup>乙</sup>ミ<sup>乙</sup>ロ<sup>乙</sup>ー<sup>乙</sup>ロ<sup>乙</sup>ー<sup>乙</sup>ズ<sup>乙</sup>ー<sup>乙</sup>。ロ<sup>乙</sup>ロ<sup>乙</sup>＝<sup>乙</sup>止

Appendix 2(d): Chōshi score  
from Myōan Temple Official Score set (1981)

本曲  
本手調子

レロ、レのときニエ  
ラカ、口弱め(息  
の弱まると  
自然に)

②  
ヅレ〜。ウ〜。ヅレ〜。ハ〜ハ〜  
ハイ〜。ハ〜。ヅレ〜。チ〜チ〜ウ〜  
①  
ツ〜ツ〜ツ〜。ハ〜ロ〜ロ〜ハ〜ハ〜ロ〜。ヅレ〜  
ツ〜。ハ〜ロ〜ハ〜ウ〜ウ〜ツ〜レ〜レ〜レ〜ロ〜  
③  
ツロ〜。ヅレ〜。ロ〜ロ〜。止

Appendix 2(e): Honte jōshi score  
from Rochiku (n.d.:1)

▽終  
稍メ  
ル

初傳  
吾妻獅子一

ハーウレーーハーウレツレチハチハイハチ  
 レツイー(一)ハウレハーレツレチハツレ  
 ホ(五打)ロロハーハーイハイハチハイハツレ  
 ハーツレツイハツレ、ツレチーハハチ  
 チレツバツレ、ツイハハチ、チレツレツイ  
 ハウレハーレ、ツレチハツレレ  
 ホ(五打)ロロハーハーイハイハチハイハツレ  
 ハーツレツイハツレ、ツレチーハハチハ

Appendix 2(f): Azuma jishi score (page 1 of 2)  
from Rochiku (n.d.:35)



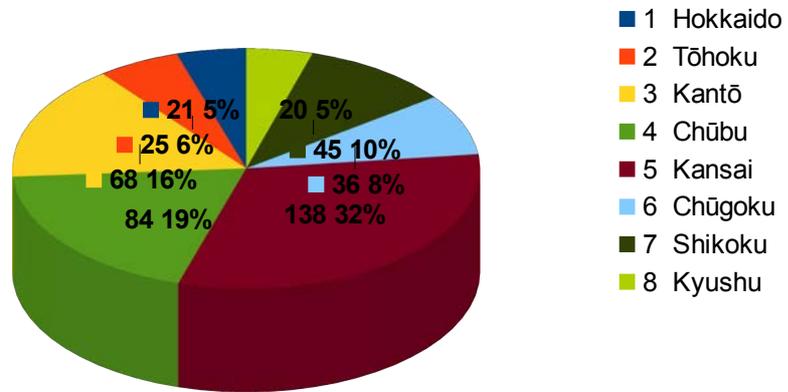


## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Distribution of the membership**

Certainly, the membership is more concentrated in the Kansai area (the region around Kyoto and Osaka (see appendix 3a for a chart and appendices 3b–3c for maps showing how the membership is distributed). There are no other affiliated temples or satellites, so Myōan Temple is really more than just the headquarters, since all regular events take place there. Of the total membership of 438 people (as of the end of 2012), all but five of the forty-seven Japanese prefectures are represented. This includes a member in Okinawa and even another one in Poland. Of these 438 members of the Myōan Kyōkai, 220 are also members of the *dōshu kai*, the association of certified teachers.

### Distribution of Membership by Region



**Appendix 3(a): Distribution of Myōan Kyōkai Membership  
(excluding 1 member in Okinawa and 1 member in Poland)  
(as of 31 December, 2012)**

(Sources: Myōan Dōshu-kai 2013; Myōan Kyōkai 2013)



**Appendix 3(b) Myōan Kyōkai Membership by Prefecture (Excluding central detail and Okinawa)**  
 (Sources: Myōan Dōshu-kai 2013; Myōan Kyōkai 2013)



**Appendix 3(c) Myōan Kyōkai Membership by Prefecture (Central detail)**  
 (Sources: Myōan Dōshu-kai 2013; Myōan Kyōkai 2013)