

# AUSTRALIAN SHAKUHACHI SOCIETY



GOSHU SHAKUHACHI KAI 豪州尺八

Nr. 18 Sept 2004

ASS P.O Box 63 Woodford NSW 2770



Ass retro look by graham

## AUSTRALIAN SHAKUHACHI FESTIVAL 2004

The time is fast approaching for you to get those registration forms in.

This ASF promises to be every bit as intensive as the Olympic Games only better! More details and registration forms at :

[www.rileylee.net/ass/festival.htm](http://www.rileylee.net/ass/festival.htm)

***So get yourself booked in!***

**Registration and ASS renewal-join forms  
are at the end of the Newsletter.**

### **STOP PRESS!!**

*The 2008 International Shakuhachi Festival will be held in Sydney, with concerts at the Sydney Opera House.*

*So, start preparing for the Sydney festival. Be certain not to miss it and help to make it the best festival ever.*

**Bronwyn Kirkpatrick** successfully completed all of the requirements for her teaching licence (jun shihan). Congratulations!



It's spring again at last!

This issue contains a continuation of Dr. Riley Lee's "The Shakuhachi in Australia", two reports of New York and Bisei. There are articles by Alvin Takegawa Ramos and Yoshinobu Taniguchi as well as pictures and poems. I hope to meet you at ASF 2004!



Black Bamboo

## The Shakuhachi in Australia.

### The Media

Australian musicians, especially those who perform ‘non-mainstream’ genres are very fortunate to have the support of our public broadcasters, ABC and SBS television and radio. In my case, ABC radio, including ABC Classic FM, Radio National, and the local metropolitan radio stations, have aired my music from the first year of my arrival in Australia.

The policy of broadcasting music with local content, that is, either composed and/of performed by musicians living in Australia has contributed significantly to the overall increase in the recognition in Australia of the shakuhachi in general and my performances on it specifically. I cannot count the number of times that people have come up to me before or after a performance to tell me how much they enjoyed hearing me on ABC radio.

Besides frequent and generous airplay of pre-recorded material such as commercially released CDs, ABC radio has also given me the opportunity to be interviewed by numerous presenters such as Christopher Lawrence and Clive Robertson (ABC Classic FM Breakfast Show), Margaret Throsby (ABC Classic FM Margaret Throsby Show), Lucky Oceans (Radio National Daily Planet), Caroline Jones and Rachael Kahn (Radio National The Spirit of Things), Jaslyn Hall (ABC’s Triple J), John Crawford (Radio National New Music in Australia) and Andrew Ford (Radio National The Music Show).

In addition, I have been given the opportunity to perform both live to air and in pre-recorded segments, on a number of programmes on both ABC Classic FM and its numerous AM stations. For example, in 2000, harpist Marshall McGuire and I performed in one of the regularly scheduled performances which are broadcast live to air before a live audience. In another instance, Marshall and I recorded the piece “Goldfish Through Summer Rain” by Australian composer Anne Boyd for the popular Radio National programme “The Music Show”. This recording was so popular that it was given repeat broadcast time on other programmes such as ABC-FM’s ‘Morning Show’, and was eventually included one of the CDs in the best selling series, the “Swoon Collection”, produced by ABC Classics, and released in 1997.

Television coverage in Australia has also made a contribution to the overall awareness of the shakuhachi in Australia. As mentioned above, most of the major television appearances have been as a result of being involved in a major music festival or concert. Television, in particular the commercial channels, reaches, albeit fleetingly and superficially, a huge audience, the majority of which will not have heard of the shakuhachi. I have been given the opportunity to appear on a number of television’s popular current affairs shows, daytime talk shows and morning shows, including the Today Show (Channel 9), the Bert Newton Show (Channel 10), Sunday Sunrise (Channel 7).

In addition, small documentaries on my music have been presented on ABC-TV and Channel 7.

The Australian press has been both frequent and generous in its publication of reviews of both live performances and recordings of mine. As mentioned above, my very first concert in Australia in 1986 was attended by only a hundred people or so. To my complete surprise, it was given a conspicuous and highly favourable review in the Sydney Morning Herald, the equivalent in Australia of the New York Times, by Fred Blanks, one of its regular music critics at that time. Since that first article, I have been reviewed by the majority of music critics in Australia in most major newspapers and many magazines.

The nature of these reviews could, in itself sustain a comprehensive discussion. It would be interesting to describe and compare at length the reviews of different writers all of whom have different specialties, for example, ‘classical’, rock, world, jazz, etc. and who represent up to three generations of music critics. The reviews differ in emphasis and detail. One of the ‘classical’ reviewers seems to comment more on overall form or structure than other critics who specialise in ‘world music’. In contrast, the latter tend to write of tone colours, timbre, and especially the success or failure of collaborations with other musicians.

Writers for the Australian press have, until recently, gone to some length in describing the shakuhachi in a way that assumes the reader has no prior knowledge of the instrument. Often, more than half of the review or article was a general introduction to and description of the instrument. I have noticed with satisfaction that in recent years, articles and reviews published in the mainstream Australian press frequently assume that at least some of the readership are familiar with the shakuhachi and its music.

To be continued.



*A flute with no holes?*

## Two reports from New York and Bisei Bronwyn Kirkpatrick and Andrew Mc Gregor

### Shakuhachi Festivals in New York and Bisei

I've recently returned from two shakuhachi festivals. The first was the World Shakuhachi Festival in New York City and the second in Bisei - Japan - the Ken-shukan's annual festival. Both festivals were invaluable educational experiences. Most valuable for me was the high level of exposure to skillfull shakuhachi players, both male and female, from around the world. I learnt so much just through listening to others.

Hearing Yokoyama sensei sharing his shakuhachi experiences with depth and humour was also a very moving experience for me. I performed Miyama Higurashi(Rando)in New York and Shika no Tone with Christopher Yomei Blasdel,in Bisei. It was daunting to perform with players with 30+ years of experience and controlling nerves while playing in front of Yokoyama sensei was a challenge. Even Furuya, Matama and Kakizakai have difficulty with this! The great news is that the next World Shakuhachi Festival will be held in Sydney in 2008! I will be returning to Japan in October on a Churchill Fellowship to study with Kakizakai sensei for 10 weeks - an experience that I'm very much looking forward to.

See you at ASF 2004 and I hope to see some of you at my Shihan recital on September 12th, 2pm at the Carrington Ballroom, Katoomba  
[bronwyn.kirkpatrick@bigpond.com](mailto:bronwyn.kirkpatrick@bigpond.com) for more details.



### 2004 NEW YORK SHAKUHACHI FESTIVAL 29<sup>th</sup> JULY – 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2004

This fourth International Shakuhachi Festival was a continuation of the earlier shakuhachi festivals; "International Shakuhachi Festival in Bisei" (Okayama, Japan, 1994), the "World Shakuhachi Festival, 1998" (Boulder, Colorado) and "The Tokyo Shakuhachi summit 2002".

The goal of these festivals is to deepen understanding and appreciation of shakuhachi music from an international perspective for players at all levels. The festivals are usually held every four years. This New York festival was organized by Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin, together with a small group of hard-working associates. We give sincere thanks to Ronnie Seldin who organized a wonderful programme and, in the face of rising costs and falling registrations, remained a most gracious host.

And what a cornucopia of delights was in store for us.

The festival opened with a video address by YOKOYAMA Katsuya, the driving force behind these festivals. One point he stressed was that shakuhachi players should earnestly practice the production of single notes; striving for clarity, depth and strength of sound and constant pitch. How can one expect to play music if we cannot produce a single note of quality?

This was followed by a "*Chirashi – Mixed Flavours of the Shakuhachi*" concert where a wide range of styles and genres were displayed. During the festival there were another eight concerts where the large list of invited players from around the world performed. This, I am sure, satisfied the interest and the stamina of the registrants.

There was a panel discussion on "*Shakuhachi Construction and repair*". A major highlight and success turned out to be the "*Women Shakuhachi Masters*" panel discussion where the assembled panel and audience spoke, sometimes with great depth of emotion of their personal experiences, struggles and achievements.

The workshops offered a wide range of interesting topics, from workshops on specific pieces to more wide-ranging areas such as philosophy, breathing technique, sound production, fingering, avoiding injury. Talks by National Living Treasure Aoki Reibo, Kawase Junsuke and Araki Kodo V were rich with personal anecdotes about their shakuhachi life and contemporaries.

The "Silverstein Lounge" provided a meeting place for everyone. There was an impressive display of new and used shakuhachi together with a wide range of recordings and artifacts.

Upholding a festival "tradition", the final concert included a new composition "*Big Piece*" which was open to all players and which was conducted by the composer James Nyoraku Schlefer. The piece was well presented and received and gave everyone the opportunity to perform in the large auditorium.

A special mention should be made of the translation services during this festival. The translators were headed once again by the remarkable David Wheeler, who was also Emcee for the concerts. The translation was just fantastic. I am sure all participants would join me in congratulating David Wheeler and all the translators.

On a parochial level, the participants from Australia demonstrated a relatively high level of shakuhachi skills and development. Anne Norman played with harpsichordist Peter Hagen, including a polished performance of a flute concerto by G.F. Handel. Bronwyn Kirkpatrick gave a spirited performance of "Miyama Higurashi" by FUKUDA Randō. Other participants were from Melbourne, Andrew MacGregor, Adam Simmons, Janusz Sysak and Molly Choo, and from Sydney, Jim

Franklin and Margaret Tung.

Most of the registrants stayed at the New York University “dorms”, where low-priced accommodation was balanced by high energy activity. There were parties where shakuhachi “brothers” & “sisters” met and mingled. Many local restaurants were filled with shakuhachi groups trying to work out the difference between “Entrées” (main courses) and “Dinners” (starters).

On the Thursday night a group travelled to Yankee Stadium led by the shakuhachi-playing “piper” Daniel Soergel. There was a slight problem as the stadium had been “oversold” to the tune of some 3000 seats, but those who persisted and actually found seats, watched the Yankees go down big-time to the Baltimore Orioles.

At the end of the last concert, to gasps of surprise and delight from the audience and beaming smiles from the distinguished guests on stage, it was announced that the 2008 International Shakuhachi Festival will be held in Sydney, with concerts at the *Sydney Opera House*.

So, start preparing for the Sydney festival. Be certain not to miss it and help to make it the best festival ever.

Andrew MacGregor

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## Research Participants Wanted!

### For study during the Shakuhachi Festival

We are researching the relationship between emotional affect of music, composition, and the actual performance of a piece -- which necessarily includes a certain level of interpretation that modifies the piece being performed.

As part of this study we would like to record a number of players from all standards performing a piece on shakuhachi for comparative analysis, and also interview for commentary on that piece.

For more information, email Ralf Muhlberger [ralf@itee.uq.edu.au](mailto:ralf@itee.uq.edu.au) and you can also find out more at the festival.

Many thanks, Ralf



## The Importance of Japanese Language and Culture in Learning Shakuhachi

by Alvin Takegawa Ramos

As students of Shakuhachi we seek an understanding of the Japanese language and culture. We do this for the same reason we might read the writings of a sacred text in its original language--to get as close as we can to the original meaning of the text for better understanding.

This does not mean we should have a goal of becoming “Japanese”. This would not necessarily enhance our study of Shakuhachi. If however we find aspects of Japanese culture to be beautiful and desirable, we should feel free to enjoy them as one more beneficial aspect of our study.

Becoming familiar with a different culture is an exciting and rewarding adventure when it is approached with an open and accepting mind. A different language, different foods, different clothes, different customs, and often even a different perception of reality are all part of the experience. However, it is not the differences, but the similarities which are most enlightening. An arguable example may be that if we think of the well-known Japanese custom of bowing as akin to the western custom of handshaking we can then appreciate both actions as merely different manifestations of the same basic human need.

Each shakuhachi teacher has their own style of shakuhachi and way of teaching. Some stress language and customs more than others. Some stress spirituality while others stress musicality over everything else. One must find the right teacher that has the right balance for them.

Whether or not Japanese language and culture is stressed there will always be basic protocol practiced. Respect everything when you learn from one teacher and experience the Shakuhachi that is there. It is my opinion that the Japanese language and customs are important and conducive to learning of Shakuhachi.

If you can understand and use the basic language used in the Japanese learning environment, your access to the world of Shakuhachi and Japanese culture will be greatly enhanced.

If you don't make an effort to learn the characters and terminology you will be forced to translate first, then train, thus losing valuable time in playing

### From Philip Gelb:

Please pass this along to any young people you know interested in shakuhachi! I have 2 teenage students and I imagine there are others out there.

Most of my students are older than me. :)

<http://www.shakuhachi.com/TOC-Scholarship.html>

Philip Gelb Bay Area Shakuhachi School

[phil@philipgelb.com](mailto:phil@philipgelb.com)

<http://www.philipgelb.com>

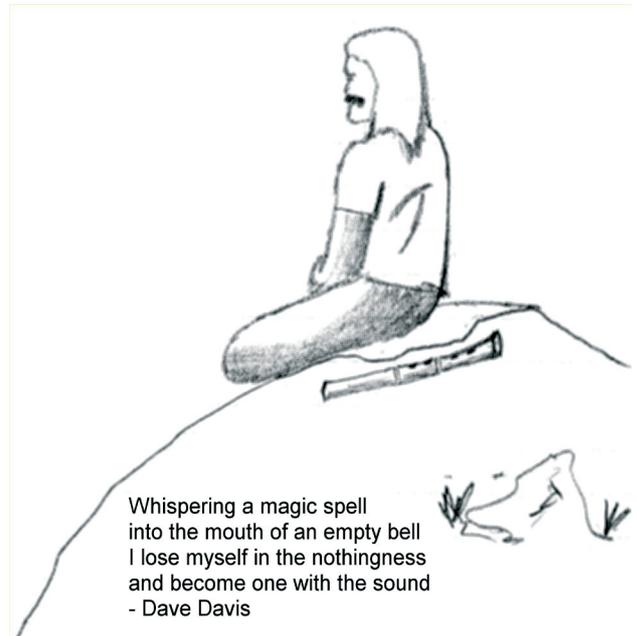
<http://www.bayareashakuhachi.com>



Which one is Riley?

The impossible note  
is not heard,  
only played.

Peter Smith  
submitted by Alcvin Takegawa Ramos



**The Core Spirit of Shakuhachi  
by Yoshinobu Taniguchi**

The spiritual core of shakuhachi manifests itself in what I will call the yureru oto, [Translator's note: a dynamic fluctuation of the tone] which also mirrors the essence of Zen. Nowadays, most sects of shakuhachi-Tozan, Kinko and current Meian, among others - have forgotten this exquisite yureru oto, which exists in the space between the notes and is what compromises the soulful sound of the shakuhachi.

One must not attempt to play the notes of a shakuhachi song "accurately" or "skillfully". Playing only the precise pitches prescribed by the notes on the score leads to boring, soulless playing that neither expresses the spirit of the music nor the heart of the player. Instead, the traditional lifeblood of the shakuhachi is to let each note vary subtly within its permissible scope. This expresses the soul of wabi, sabi, and ma, and leads to the yureru oto. [Translator's note: wabi can be thought of as an austere, refined beauty, sabi as a solitariness combined with age and tranquility, and ma as timing, or the delicate interval or emptiness which exists between the sounds.]

Playing only the average pitches will extinguish these elements, and the soulful sound of the shakuhachi will be lost. Expressing the sounds that exist between the notes is also the traditional lifeblood of the shakuhachi, and is what helps give rise to the yureru oto's exquisite reverberations. It takes a long time and much effort to develop these qualities in one's playing. During this time, trial, error, and original experimentation are the key to success.

Five or ten years may pass yielding little progress but much frustration and confusion. At the point your heart and soul become free, however, satori, or "enlightenment", is experienced, and you think "Ah! It was so simple all along!" At this moment, that which was hidden becomes obvious, and that which was difficult becomes easy. The player and the sound become one, resulting in a deep, profound sound that resonates in the spinal column and touches one's soul. Every sound of the shakuhachi can be expressed in a multitude of ways depending on the brilliance of the player's soul. Thus, all life is study, and this study is dynamic and alive.

Your experience of the shakuhachi's sound never stops evolving. Finally, gratitude towards all is at the center of the shakuhachi soul. The entire purpose of the shakuhachi is to foster a thankful heart.

Credits to Monty Levinson. From the Taniguchi CD and book. Translated by Zachary Braverman and quoted from Taniguchi's CD set and book, details of which may be viewed at:

***<http://www.shakuhachi.com/SM-Taniguchi.html>***

**From Zachary Braverman, used with permission.**

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Where have I seen that music stand before?



# Australian Shakuhachi Festival

1 - 4 October 2004

Checkers Resort Terry Hills Sydney

## Registration Form

Please print your details clearly and circle info where required: **Date**.....

Name..... M  F

Address..... Town/city.....

State..... Postcode..... Phone..... Fax.....

Email..... ASS membership current? Y  N  \*

Player level -  Absolute beginner  Beginner  Intermediate  Advanced

Lineage -  Chikuho  Kinko  Tozan

### Costs

*For early-bird rates - payment must be postmarked on or before 31 July 2004)	Early-bird til 31/7/04*	Payment After 1/8/04	Totals \$
<b>Accommodation:</b> 4 nights twin share accom. 4 b/fast, 3 lunches, 4 dinners (Farewell Dinner Included)	<b>\$410</b>	<b>\$460</b>	
Single room room supplement per night	40	50	
Full board: twin share per day/night (dates: 1 2 3 4 OCT)	110	120	
<b>Tuition (with full board only):</b> approx. ten 90' workshops, student concert, Public Concert at Verbruggen Hall, Sydney Conservatorium of Music (general admission \$40).	<b>\$260</b>	<b>\$340</b>	
Accompanying person- non participant (full board, concerts)	390	440	
<b>Day rates</b> (circle desired days)			
Tuition only -per day: 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> OCT	150	180	
Morning/pm teas and lunch -per day: 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> OCT	60	70	
Dinner only -per day: 1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> OCT	30	35	
<b>Farewell Dinner 4<sup>th</sup> OCT</b>	40	45	
<b>3 day non residential package</b>			
3 days tuition and workshops (including Friday evening), public concert, 3 lunches, am/pm teas + 4 dinners (1-4 OCT)	480 120	530 140	
<b>Non-ASS members add \$25.00 surcharge (or join ASS)</b>	25	25	
<b>Festival shirt</b> <input type="checkbox"/> small <input type="checkbox"/> med <input type="checkbox"/> large <input type="checkbox"/> x-large <input type="checkbox"/> xx large	25	30	
<b>TOTAL (all GST inclusive)</b>			

\*Registration and membership inquiries: [johnholmes@ozemail.com.au](mailto:johnholmes@ozemail.com.au) or 02 47587206

Accommodation not required  required  number of nights.....

Arrival date ..... Departure date.....

Method of transport..... Some shuttles will be available.

Special requirements (eg diet, mobility).....

Details of accompanying persons, if any

Name..... M  F  Age.....

**Please make cheque /money order payable to Australian Shakuhachi Society.**

**Mail to: P.O. Box 63, Woodford. NSW 2778**

I have read and understood the terms and conditions concerning cancellations and refunds in the ASF04 details or on the website [www.shakuhachi.org.au](http://www.shakuhachi.org.au)



PO Box 63  
Woodford, NSW 2778

**Join the**

***AUSTRALIAN SHAKUHACHI SOCIETY (ASS)***

**Attention existing members** – Please renew your membership and support ASS!

**Other Shakuhachi enthusiasts** – You are cordially invited to join ASS

ASS promotes the shakuhachi and its music by:

- ◆ organising **activities** for people to practice or perform together, and share experiences relating to the shakuhachi
- ◆ publishing a **newsletter** four times a year to: publicise upcoming events, provide a forum for articles on shakuhachi, listing resources, reviewing shakuhachi CDs and offering flutes for sale, etc
- ◆ coordinating the **Australian Shakuhachi Festival** to celebrate the art of shakuhachi, workshops and performances are offered.

Please join ASS and help promote shakuhachi music.

Fill out the membership form below, enclose your payment and return to:

**The Secretary, Australian Shakuhachi Society, PO Box 63, WOODFORD, NSW, 2778**

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**Yes, I would like to join the Australian Shakuhachi Society**

**Yes, I would like to renew my membership.**

**Enclosed is \$25.00, being dues for one year (Jul 2004 – Jun 2005)**

**Enclosed is \$50.00, being dues for two years (Jul 2004 – Jun 2005)**

Name.....

Address.....

Suburb.....

State.....Country.....Zip/Postcode.....

Tel..... Fax: .....

Email .....