

豪州尺八会

AUSTRALIAN SHAKUHACHI SOCIETY

Nr 39 Sept 2010

ASS P.O Box 63 Woodford NSW 2778



Greetings and at last spring is here!

Following the passing of Yokoyam Katsuya sensei we have more significant losses.

Tom Deaver shakuhachi maker passed away 12 July

Some emails about him and some reminiscings

With great sadness I must pass on the information that Tom Deaver died in the early hours of this Monday morning.

Tom was diagnosed with cancer a year ago, rather too late. He died in hospital surrounded by his family.

Tom was many things to many people; he was a very good friend to me.

Tom had an incisive intellect and a consuming passion for Shakuhachi. He was always willing to help those with a genuine interest, and was generous in giving advice even if perhaps this generosity seemed veiled to some. I'm going to miss him!

As per Tom's wishes there will not be a funeral as such, just a fond farewell. [This was very well attended Ed.]

If you knew him, please remember him in your own way and think of his family as they come to terms with their loss.

Bill O'Connor

first met Tom when I went to work for him for a summer several years ago. I had the feeling he treated me perhaps how Tamai had treated him as an apprentice! A strange mixture of friendliness and severity. An image that comes to mind was like a hardy mountain goat, if you know what I mean. So it was tough sometimes, but also Tom shared many stories, and through our discussions I learned a lot. Tom also "taught" me shakuhachi making. I say "taught" - those who knew Tom might know what I mean, as his ways of imparting knowledge were not always conventional. But as Bill said, he did have a generosity and kindness about teaching. So I'm ever grateful for him giving me those first steps on my making path. Tom also had some interesting books on shakuhachi history, and so it was at Tom's that I really started my journey into shakuhachi history too.

Since then we stayed in touch by mail and phone, and met up now and then, most recently this spring up in Nagano. Although not physically strong, and in some pain, it was a real pleasure to see Tom as he was in very high spirits. It was the happiest and relaxed I've seen him. Something had changed, as if his big heart had softened some of that hard exterior! So even though Tom was sick, it felt like something wonderful had happened.

We had much to catch up on and chatted about shakuhachi things all night. It means a lot to me that this last memory of Tom is so happy. Many thanks Tom.

Justin Senryu 泉龍

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Some memories of Tom:

I stayed with Tom and his family in 1975 in their house in the countryside outside Osaka. He had recently opened his own flute making shop after a long shakuhachi-making apprenticeship. The story he told me was that he asked Chikusen if he could be his apprentice.

He was told no. Tom then went and got all his stuff and came back. Chikusen didn't know what to do with him as this was NOT culturally correct behaviour. He stayed for 7 years.

In those days I had this naïve, romantic image of how

it was to study from a master maker or player. So, I was shocked when Tom told me that when Chikusen went to town once a week for supplies some of the apprentices looked at each other and said "today's the day he dies in a car crash and then we can open our own workshops".

Tom took me around to meet Sakai Chikuho and others. He was a gracious host. My last night there he took me out for a special broiled eel dinner and lots of saki.

A few years later I was teaching a shakuhachi class at a community college in Hawaii and Tom rushed me 10 student flutes. I think they cost a \$100 each back then. I can still smell the fresh urushi. Now, I can't get near the stuff.

Last time I saw him was at the Boulder Shakuhachi Festival in '97 or ('98?) He looked like an old beach bum but still had that crusty sense of humor.

I know not everyone liked him. He was a real character, but we hit it off for some reason and kept in touch. Last year he told me he was sick and trying Qigong and herbal remedies. I was thinking of emailing him last week to see how he was doing.

Adios...

- Peter Ross

### Tom's workshop



## Yokoyama Katsuya: Recollections by three European students.

**Horacio Curti, Jim Franklin, Véronique Piron**



On 21st April 2010, Yokoyama Katsuya, one of the great shakuhachi players of the 20th century and a central figure in the recent development of the shakuhachi in Japan and overseas, passed away in his seventy-sixth year.

Yokoyama-sensei was renowned for his propagation of the line of shakuhachi honkyoku derived from Watazumi Do, as well as for his championing of contemporary composition for the shakuhachi. He was a principal interpreter of the music of Fukuda Rando. and came to prominence through his premiere performance of Toru Takemitsu's "November Steps" in 1967. His legacy as a teacher is seen in the Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshukan (International Shakuhachi Institute), the school of teaching and performing which he called into being especially to strengthen the position of the shakuhachi outside Japan as well as in its homeland. Furthermore, it was in this spirit that he instigated the World Shakuhachi Festivals in 1994.

Three students of Yokoyama who received teaching licenses from him are now living on the European mainland. They present their recollections and thoughts about this great master of the instrument.

### Horacio Curti: **Presence**

Yokoyama sensei has been a very strong presence in my life since I started playing the shakuhachi. As a disciple of Kakizakai Kaoru-sensei I would consider myself his “grandson student” and it was from his hand and brush that my shakuhachi Shihan license originated in 2004.

I remember receiving advice from him on several occasions during the workshops of Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshukan held in Bisei, Japan. He was always clear, to the point, strict but encouraging, and knowing that even such a great player was always thinking about how to get better was a great motivation to me.

Besides these occasions of direct contact with him, he was, is and surely will be very present in so many of my sensei’s teachings. Through anecdotes, stories, images and ways of understanding shakuhachi music he was present at my shakuhachi breakthroughs, in the fun side of the learning process and also in the hard parts of it.

I feel grateful to him for his sound, his teaching, playing and also for the way he conceived his *Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshukan* and the people he formed and brought together. It is not by chance that the great qualities embodied in people like Matama-sensei, Furuya-sensei and Kakizakai-sensei among many others, coalesced around him.

It is a great inspiration to listen to his recordings and look into the many different shakuhachi paths he followed, from Koten Honkyoku to Takemitsu’s pieces, through his own and personal “Sangai Rinten”.

I feel sad knowing that he is not among us any more, but at the same time happy and grateful for his sound and all the things he presented to the shakuhachi players that had the fortune to cross paths with him in one way or another.

### Jim Franklin: **Blowing the human spirit**

My association with Yokoyama-sensei was not terribly long, but was highly intense. It is no exaggeration to say that learning with Yokoyama-sensei changed my life. As a student of Riley Lee in the 1980s and early 1990s, I decided soon after starting with shakuhachi that the musical repertoire that interested me in particular was the set of honkyoku transmitted by Yokoyama-sensei, and that my ideal (by no means achieved by me!) for playing the instrument was the sound and spirit that Yokoyama-sensei produced. It was therefore a clear decision that, when finances, employment and personal circumstances allowed, I

would go to Japan to study with him (and with Furuya Teruo-sensei, his most senior student, whom I met on my first trip to Japan in 1990). My recollections are thus derived from a short period, rather than from an extended period of development lasting decades, which some of the senior KSK players have had the good fortune to experience.

Apart from the Yokoyama-sensei's musical gift and skill, which are obvious from his performances and recordings, what touched me most was his generosity. The nature of teaching is to give of oneself to one's students, and Yokoyama held nothing back. In my experience, he was always prepared to give of his time, his resources and his insights, in support of (comparatively) young players such as myself. This support placed demands on the student: Yokoyama called forth the best that one could offer. There were no half measures, and no compromises; exactness was demanded, and one did one's best to give it. And there was no end to the pathway: Yokoyama taught that one should never rest with what one had already achieved, but should keep on improving and working. After receiving my shihan-license from him, I was subjected in lessons to the same incisive (and simultaneously supportive) criticism as before - something for which I am perpetually grateful.

Although my Japanese is very limited, and Yokoyama's English was mediocre, communication was never a problem. Above and beyond the mish-mash of languages, which we employed in personal conversations as well as in lessons, communication was always clear on a musical level. And it was often non-verbal: one of the peak experiences of my life so far was the day in 1996 when I finally felt ready to work on the honkyoku *San An* with him. I had prepared for this highly demanding piece well in advance, having first learned it with Riley Lee and then reworking it intensively with Furuya-sensei. In playing the piece with Yokoyama-sensei, he stopped at a couple of points and let me play on alone. When we reached the end of the piece, we both spontaneously burst out laughing - an outburst of pure joy and freedom within the music, a communication without words but full of energy and intensity. The sense of this freedom, and the spirit of humanity from which it ensued, is a great gift, which I received particularly through Yokoyama-sensei.

There were amusing moments in my encounter with him, and I close my contribution with one of them. In late 1996, Yokoyama-sensei had his teaching studio in Tokyo converted into a small private recording studio. The apartment was a building site for some weeks, and it was in this period that Yokoyama-sensei issued me with my teaching license. So, in the middle of dust, mess, plasterboard and so on, he took out his writing set, and in the presence of myself and several of the

senior KSK teachers, wrote a superb piece of calligraphy. It was for me a sign of Yokoyama-sensei's deep humanity that the ceremonial nature of the occasion and of the piece of calligraphy involved was played out in such unlikely circumstances - without the least sense of incongruity. His generosity and openness of spirit made the circumstances irrelevant - the spirit was what mattered.

It is my hope that all those who came into contact with Yokoyama-sensei will be able to pass on such vision and human richness.

**OKAGE SAMA DESHITA, thoughts and a tribute,**  
by Véronique Piron

As a flautist, it was first at the end of 1980s that I discovered through recordings the shakuhachi, and more especially Katsuya Yokoyama's way of playing, being myself then in search of a deeper tone and of a more sober way of playing for my flute. It was a big discovery, although nothing at that moment gave a premonition of the course which was going to start for me in 1992.

" All those who are concerned by the questions of life and death are concerned by the shakuhachi."

This was the way that my first meeting with the master commenced, in Paris in 1997 together with Yoshikazu Iwamoto with whom I had started learning. The scenery was set, in the manner of the strength of character (the comments of a samurai?): the impression was vast and the desire was awakened to go and look further.

**A STRENGTH OF LIFE**

In August 2000 (almost 10 years ago now), finally my first face-to-face lesson took place in Tokyo. The anticipated meeting was intense. As an involved musician it all my conviction and my desire not to waste a single morsel of these 2 years that had been given to me, thanks to him and the obtaining of my scholarship, in order to work with him and his school, that I appeared, playing frankly and openly.

"Conquered...", he said clearly and loudly with his strongly marked character, and after my interpretation of *Kumoi Jishi*, suddenly he stood up and started dancing: a demonstration of the sliding steps of the Japanese classical dance, even in that year when his legs had already started to abandon him. Everyone present held their breath: it was his incredible strength of life and the demonstration of the overcoming of oneself, one of his banners.

**A SOUND, A GENEROSITY**

In October 2000, at last I got one of my first Katsuyakan, a shakuhachi made completely by his own hands, and furthermore, a 1.6 cut from magnificent black bamboo that he had chosen meticulously - an impression of wabi-sabi - with a sound of the same quality as the long instruments, his sonic signature: the generous, wide sound, in his likeness and also just like the work of famous classical musicians, and it is to this rank that he had obviously been elevated by his desire and by his realizations.

During one of my last lessons in 2002, just a short time before I received from him my shihan license, Yokoyama-sensei confided to me with the small voice which he also commanded and which marked his attachment to humankind: " it is love which urged me to do - all of that - "... of course..., we've heard it!

To blow in this instrument marked with this sound signature is a gift but sometimes something disturbing: he is thus imprinted there forever.

**SPEAKING: A HUMAN LESSON**

As is generally the case, the lessons are collective, running from 13:00 to 21:00, the atmosphere is especially convivial and always welcoming with a cup of tea. The student, or perhaps a teacher, interprets by memory the chosen piece in front of everyone present. At the end of the rendition, Yokoyama-sensei opens a "round table" where everyone reacts in turn to what he has just heard, the student still sitting in front of them: impressions, dislikes, comments, critics, eulogies, even some poetic quotations ... simply to "say" without discussing, for the student to "listen" simply without reacting, Yokoyama-sensei is the last one to comment.

What a brilliant lesson of pedagogy and life! ...giving each and everyone a free space for expression, but also a good opportunity to become aware of our duality and our own internal conflicts, to learn how to let go, and finally to live an incredible human experience! Unique and unforgettable...

In that way we understand that he has been able to open the way of the shakuhachi to the greatest possible number, that he knew how to gather diverging horizons and built a large family around himself who accompanied him until his last breath.

But as with the rhythm of the breath of the komibuki, he will still resound for a long time and far away.



Yokoyama-sensei's contribution to the world of the shakuhachi was immense, and his broader contribution went far beyond the boundaries of the instrument. The world is indebted to this great musician, whose life work remains a milestone and a foundation for the future. He will be sorely missed, and gladly remembered. HC, JF, VP

[Used with permission- Ed.]



## **EVEN MORE NEWS**

Dear all shakuhachi enthusiasts

Some of you surely know of one of the greatest - if not the greatest - shakuhachi researcher of all times Tsukitani Tsuneko. She has done a life time of research on the history of shakuhachi and its music.

She passed away last night on the 23rd September after a long battle with cancer.

She will be greatly missed by colleagues, friends and shakuhachi players.

She was my supervisor during my field research in Japan in 2007 on instruments. She close contacts she has with all her research students was amazing. She not only supported and encouraged us all but was a great inspiration to us.

Her book: Shakuhachi Koten Honkyoku no Kenkyu (Research on Shakuhachi koten honkyoku is a testimony of her amazing knowledge. It's published by Shuppan Geijutsusha.

## **A recent item:**

...”Shakuhachi master Riley Lee playing in the 1933 Japanese movie Passing Fancy - Dekigokoro”

Article at:

[www.smh.com.au/entertainment/movies/silent-classic-finds-exotic-new-sounds-20100906-14xvm.html](http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/movies/silent-classic-finds-exotic-new-sounds-20100906-14xvm.html)

Last but not least:

David Jobst has completed his Graduate Diploma in Music (Performance) Shakuhachi with Distinction at The Sydney Conservatorium of Music. [Congrats! Ed.]

David says “I wish to give many thanks to Riley for making it possible. I also gave a lecture and workshop at The University of the South Pacific (U.S.P) in Fiji, as well as a concert in Fiji with Tom Royce-Hampton (A Taiko member) playing Taiko. I also performed with a guitarist for the Classical Guitar Society of Sydney a piece I arranged. The Guitar Society posted two videos on YouTube of my performance (which can be viewed by searching David Jobst on Google or YouTube)”.

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Canberra BIG BLOW

October 17th at Calvary Hospital 10-4 pm

In the Function Seminar room

There is a cafeteria at the hospital

Program

Riley will give a repeat of his Brisbane talk.

He suggests we look at Hachi Gaeshi and Hi Fu Mi en masse.

There will be a talk and demo on Gagaku by
Mr. Doi Yukihiro –
an exponent of Hichiriki and Sho.

The *hichiriki* (箏篳 is a double reed Japanese fue (flute) used as one of two main melodic instruments in Japanese gagaku music, the other being the ryūteki. The hichiriki is difficult to play, due in part to its double reed configuration. Although a double reed instrument like the oboe, the hichiriki has a cylindrical bore and thus its sound is similar to that of a clarinet. Pitch and ornamentation (most notably bending tones) are controlled largely with the embouchure. The hichiriki is one of the "sacred" instruments and is often heard being played at Shinto weddings in Japan. Its sound is often described as haunting.

The *shō* (笙) is a Japanese free reed musical instrument that was introduced from China during the Nara period (AD 710 to 794). It is modeled on the Chinese sheng, although the shō tends to be smaller in size. It consists of 17 slender bamboo pipes, each of which is fitted in its base with a metal free reed. Two of the pipes are silent, although research suggests that they were used in some music during the Heian period.

The rest as per usual - performance practice and possibly some more ensemble focussed stuff. And some solos.

From the main entrance follow the sign to the Lewisham Building; past Zouki cafe, down the ramp until there is a sign and a right turn to the Sunken Lounge and the Function Room

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## Report on Brisbane Big Blow 2010

-- Ralf Muhlberger

After reading about the Sydney Big Blow earlier in the year, we decided that Brisbane shouldn't miss out. A few emails to Riley and we had him pencil in the weekend of the 21st and 22nd of August for a visit -- well before the elections were called. The Saturday was filled with the opportunity of having private lessons with Riley, and a group of nearly 20 of us going to an excellent Indian restaurant for dinner.

On the Sunday we had around 30 attendees. The players kicked off at 10am with the traditional Ro Buki, and a group focus on getting stronger notes.

Then we broke into four groups: a sound production class for absolute beginners, and Hi Fu Mi Cho, Tamuke, and Ryuhei for the more advanced players. After lunch Koji Matsunobu from The University of Queensland spoke about Jinashi flutes and philosophy, and Riley Lee went through his and Tom Hare's translation of Hisamatsu Fuyo's "Hitori Mondo / Solo Dialogue on the Shakuhachi" (1853).

Two very interesting talks opening new insights into the history of our instrument. We closed the day with a number of performances.

First everyone played Hi Fu Mi Cho and Tamuke together. Todd Christianssen played Kyushu Kyoku for us. We were treated to a composition by Oscar Williams, played by him on piano and his mother Karen on Shakuhachi. David Jobst, visiting from Sydney, closed the day with a notation-free performance of Sanya on his long David Brown. It was an excellent weekend, and we're all looking forward to more Brisbane events to follow.



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Monty Levenson's new Flute Saver

A Remarkable Breakthrough in Shakuhachi Care

The FLUTE SAVER is an innovative new approach in caring for your shakuhachi or any other wooden flute. It incorporates a two-way moisture control system that maintains a constant relative humidity (RH) level of 45% to 55%, the optimum for musical instruments. Best of all, it does so automatically without guess work or adjustments based on climate, temperature, season or geographical location. There is absolutely no maintenance or intervention required.

Unlike the Dampit or other fill-type humidifiers, water never has to be added. When stored in a sealed environment the FLUTE SAVER guarantees that your shakuhachi will experience virtually no fluctuations in relative humidity that can damage the instrument. It's as easy as placing a single control system packet inside the acrylic tube, flute case adapter unit or vapor barrier flute bag and closing the lid. That's all there is to it.

A digital temperature/humidity meter comes with the FLUTE SAVER kit allowing you to keep an eye on the system and help determine when it is time to put in a new packet. The control packets are designed to last from two to four months before having to be replaced.

During the course of its life, a shakuhachi, transverse bamboo or wooden flute will spend far more time in storage than actually being played. In the vast majority of cases, cracking occurs during this period of respite. Since the physical space required for storage barely exceeds the size of the flute itself, temperature and relative humidity inside this environment can be effectively controlled and monitored with the use of the FLUTE SAVER. This virtually eliminates the possibility of cracking during the time when an instrument is most vulnerable.

FLUTE SAVER kits come in four sizes to accommodate the complete range of shakuhachi lengths—from 1.3' to 3.1'. These photos show the classical 1.8' kit as well as other longer shakuhachi. (Not shown are kits designed for shorter flutes.) In fact, the FLUTE SAVER system can be used in any type of sealable enclosure that you presently have.



For the full article go to:

<http://www.shakuhachi.com/Q-AcFluteSaver.html>

On the lighter side..

10 signs you have a Terminal Case of Beginner's Shakuhachiitis.

1. The number of flutes that you own far exceeds the number of pieces you can play.
2. You have acquired a flute with a hanko that you have deciphered to the best of your ability, which you now refer to as your Kuwamoto, your Hondo or your Manchiko, even though you of course know nothing of the maker, who is in all probability a happy amateur who took a wood shop course in the outskirts of Asakusa.
3. You have bought at least one flute over eBay. Although you bought it for 150 dollars from someone who not only has an extensive shakuhachi experience, but also deals professionally in shakuhachi, you have convinced yourself the flute in question is severely undervalued and actually worth at the very least 2 000 dollars.
4. You practice by blowing a lot of long notes. If you were to play violin it would never occur to you to sit down cross-legged and just drag the bow across the open strings for hours on end. You won't see the similarity of this comparison. This is because of "zen".
5. You make shakuhachi yourself. The principal upside of this is that it makes your piece of firewood from eBay sound like a million dollars.
6. You play only to people who have never heard shakuhachi before. It almost always turns out you are the best player they ever heard.
7. You put more emphasis on dogma, lineage, titles and minute differences between different schools than any Japanese master ever has. This in spite of the fact that the only clean note in kan you ever produced

happened by accident when you sneezed into the flute.

8. Your shakuhachi is, more than anything else, a lifestyle accessory, which makes training a secondary priority. First priority is photographing yourself in a serene environment with a flute, and posting the pic on your Facebook, Myspace and blog.

9. You found a teacher, but decided to “follow your own path” instead after a few lessons. The reason was that your teacher turned out to be the only person you ever met who actually heard a shakuhachi before, and your sound did not come off well from the encounter. Also, he would not sign your shihan diploma based on your previous experience, and kept horsing around with technique and stuff. The experience has not deterred you from name-dropping him and, more importantly, his title and lineage, to friend and stranger alike. You refer to him as your sensei. He is also a lifestyle accessory.

10. You stopped playing with any focus after about two years, when the realization started to grow that it is not possible to learn shakuhachi without putting in a ridiculous amount of hours of practice. Hours that you would rather spend talking about shakuhachi, and giving advice to beginners on the Shakuhachi Forum.

With Acknowledgement to:
www.shakuhachiforum.com/

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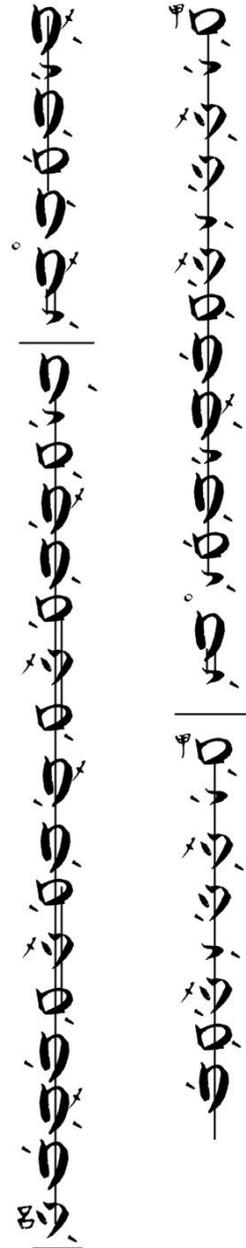
Editor playing in NGA recently  
 [Pix copyright NGA]

**The Practical Shakuhachi** is a **new** book of practice etudes and exercises for shakuhachi.

by  
 James 如樂 Nyoraku Schlefer

Sample: Ode to Joy

Bb Major



Details: <http://www.shakuhachi.com/>

No linked page so go to Playing guides etc  
 Of main menu – [Ed.]

## Shak for sale

Riley has passed this one on to me..I don't know if it is still for sale

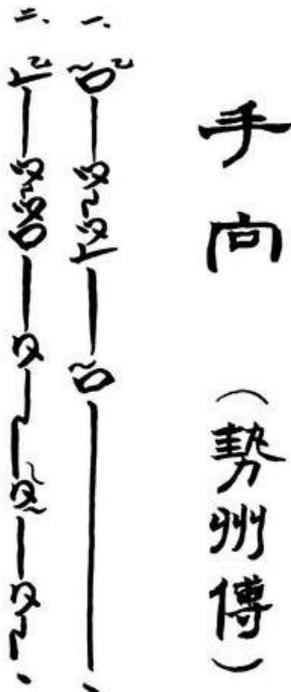
Hello! I was one of your students at last summer's Shakuachi Summer Camp June 25-29. I was a beginning student playing an advanced shakuachi.

I found a shakuachi that was easier for me to play. So, I would like to sell my first shakuachi. I was wondering if you might let your students know, who might be interested in it. I would like to relist it on Ebay, and be sure that serious students are looking at it. The first listing attracted only collectors, and it did not sell. This is its description:

This is a nokeban (one-piece) flute, kinko-ryu, precision cast bore made by Monty Levenson. It is made from madake bamboo harvested in Chiba, Japan. Perfect uncut piece of madake conforms to idea aesthetic for shakuachi. Goma (sesame seed) pattern on bamboo. 24k gold utaguchi. Hairline crack at root and some minor cracks repaired. Regular price: \$3,000. Discount price: \$2,500. Nine inlaid rattan bindings added at \$45 each for a total of \$2,905.

Find the original listing at:  
<http://www.shakuachi.com/A-18-36.html>

Respectfully, Vidya Cicchini, Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico Contact [vidyac@earthlink.net](mailto:vidyac@earthlink.net)



## Your committee

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## Websites:

[www.rileylee.com](http://www.rileylee.com)

[www.shakuachi.com](http://www.shakuachi.com)

[www.komuso.com](http://www.komuso.com)

<http://flutedojo.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.hosetsu.com/>

<http://www.nyoraku.com/>



Hon Treasurer  
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**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,**

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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 2009 – Jun 2010)**  
**For new members:**

**Enclosed is \$30.00, being dues for one year (Jul 2010 – Jun 2011)**

**Enclosed is \$60.00, being dues for two years (Jul 2010 – Jun 2012)**

Name.....

Address.....

Suburb.....

State..... Postcode.....

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

Email .....