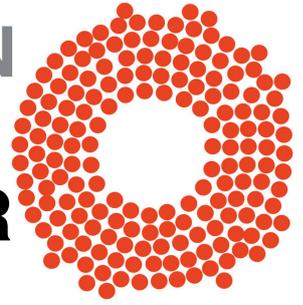


# AUSTRALIAN SHAKUHACHI SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



No. 54, Nov 2018

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## From the Editor:

Finally, the newsletter is available!

In this issue, we have plenty of write-ups and photos from ASF18, a few reports from WSF18 and the Shakuhachi Symposium in London, member's stories, and more.

Enjoy!

Regards,  
Lindsay Dugan



ASF18 teachers (S. Tregillis)



## **My reflections on ASF18**

Richard Chenhall

Australian Shakuhachi Festival 2018 was a great experience. I'd been anticipating the festival for months. The four days of intensive training with seven different teachers was a rare opportunity to attend. It was good to meet up with new Australian Shakuhachi Society members, and to see the old ones again.

Having a private lesson with one of the teachers was an excellent experience, and I'm grateful to have been able to have another lesson with Kakizakai. Having previously taken lessons with him in Japan, I was glad to get his feedback, and have him evaluate my playing again.

The public concert was a major highlight, especially playing with everyone in a large ensemble.

The four days went by all too quickly, but I hear that the concerts in Sydney and the Blue Mountains also went very well.

I am already looking forward to the next Festival, and getting involved again!

## **ASF18 Report**

Bronwyn Kirkpatrick

I think that ASF 2018 was very successful. As shakuhachi players we often feel isolated and having a get together like this is a great way of sharing experiences and feeling connected to a broader community. Not to mention receiving expert tuition and hearing world class performances at the same time! I loved helping each student on their shakuhachi journey and sharing something that I'm very passionate about.

After ASF18 there were concerts in Sydney and the Blue Mountains, both well attended. The obligatory bush walk in the mountains was partaken on the final day with Kakizakai, Matama, Furuya, my husband

Gary and Lindsay. We actually met a lady on the walk who had attended the Sydney concert two days before and had then come up for the Blue Mountains concert the previous night!

A big thank you to Lindsay and Richard for organising it and I look forward to catching up with everyone again at the next ASF.

## **ASF18 Report**

Laurie Gaffney

The Brisbane contingent returned from the ASF18 pretty tired after a very demanding four days - but with a renewed sense of enthusiasm, optimism on the part of some (and grim determination on the part of others). Oh, and a lot of new repertoire.

Hearty thanks to all the administrative team, and all the teachers for your work!

Something that became very clear in the course of the Festival was how fortunate we, Carl's students, are, to benefit from regular face to face lessons with our teacher, and from the collegiality that comes from getting together quite often for workshops, informal gatherings, rehearsals and concerts. Thanks Carl!

For those who were not at the AGM, our "Blow-Ins" are informal gatherings of Carl's students, and shakuhachi playing friends. We meet every couple of months at one of our places for a Sunday afternoon of playing (solos, duets, ensembles, new pieces, old favourites) and, of course, conviviality.

## **Australian Shakuhachi Festival 2018**

Lindsay Dugan

For ASF18, we selected the University College venue, where a previous ASF was held in the early 2000s. This proved to be an excellent venue, with many breakout spaces, well-equipped teaching rooms, cafeteria, and reasonably priced

accommodation. Having everything at the one venue was not only very convenient, but also great for socialising. The participants not only got to know each other well, but also had many chances to speak to the professional teachers.

As always, the invited shakuhachi performers were gracious and skilled in their teaching, and gave fantastic performances in each of the concerts. We were also very grateful to have been joined by Satsuki Odamura and Brandon Lee on koto.

Australian Shakuhachi Festivals and associated concerts contribute to the overall vitality of shakuhachi activity in Australia, by supporting ongoing activities of both student and professional shakuhachi players. The workshops and concerts both entice new students, and inspire current students.

I look forward to continuing my role as President of the Australian Shakuhachi Society, and being involved in workshops and the next ASF. I would like to express my personal gratitude to the performers and participants who attended ASF18, and also to the Japan Foundation for financial contribution, which was much appreciated, and essential in having our invited performers from Japan be able to attend.

I hope to see everyone again at the next festival!

### **ASF18**

Shane Tregillis

I arrived for the start of Australian Shakuhachi Festival for 2018 in Melbourne with great trepidation, having enrolled in the Absolute Beginner (AB) program a few months beforehand. I had checked the emailed program a few times to reassure myself that there was a stream clearly marked for Absolute Beginners.

No matter how experienced as a CEO or professional, the thought of trying to learn a

new instrument in front of others still creates terror in the adult psyche - or it did so in mine.

I had purchased a Shakuhachi Yuu online on a whim a few years ago. As my attempts to get a sound had been singularly unsuccessful, I had put it aside. When by chance I saw that the ASF18 was being held in my home town of Melbourne, I figured that as a very late adult beginner it was now or never to make a proper attempt to learn how to play.

My interest in the Shakuhachi goes back a number of years. I have always liked its complex sound rich in overtones, wide range of colours and remarkable flexibility of expression. I am not sure when I first heard the shakuhachi played. Perhaps, more than the forty odd years ago when I practised Aikido in Melbourne with Aiki Kai Australia. One of my teachers at the time, David Brown, is now a maker of fine Shakuhachi here in Melbourne. I find it interesting to see how some connections remain.

As an adult clarinet learner many years later, I had come across Hozan Yamamoto playing improvised duets with the jazz clarinettist, Tony Scott. I was also lucky enough to see him performing with his son Shinzan Yamamoto in concert at the Japanese Cultural Centre when living in Singapore in the early 2000s. Before he retired, I managed to hear Andrew McGregor a few times in concert when I returned to Melbourne to live. While still struggling to get a reliable sound from my instrument over the whole weekend, ASF18 proved to be a masterclass in playing the shakuhachi.

I was privileged to have a who's who of Australian Shakuhachi players (Riley Lee, Bronwyn Kirkpatrick, Carl Rathus and Lindsay Dugan) combined with Teruo Furuya, Kaoru Kakizaki and Kazushi Matama sensei from Japan as the ASF18 teachers.

Our Japanese and Australian teachers were generous with their time and incredibly patient as they sought to coax a sound from those of us in our very small AB class (mostly just the two of us). For such masters of the shakuhachi, the willingness of our Australian and Japanese teachers to spend their time with us patiently passing on their craft with such good humour was quite remarkable.

Over the course of the weekend in the AB stream we learned the basics of good sound production, the art of breathing, how to read the basic notation systems for the shakuhachi, sing the basic scale and play some folk tunes.

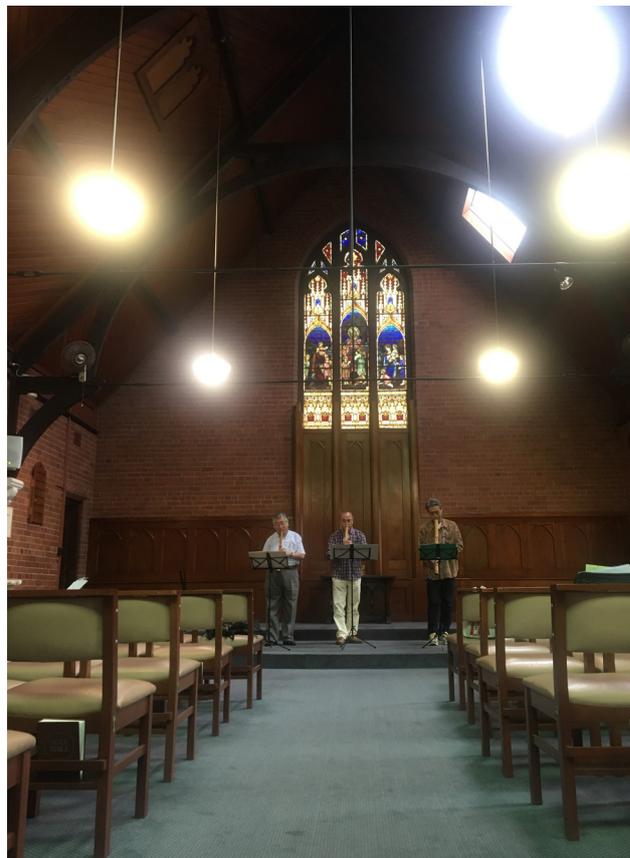
Even more valuable from my perspective, I was able to observe and listen as the teachers demonstrated more advanced concepts, played a range of traditional pieces and performed for us at the Saturday night concert and again at the closing student concert.

As part of the ensemble piece Tamuke for the Saturday concert, I had to play the *ro* part. Luckily, there were many others also doing so.

Once this was out of the way, I enjoyed a concert that demonstrated the versatility of the Shakuhachi played by masters in pieces ranging from a delightful modern duet with the flute, a couple of duets with the koto, to a range of more traditional solo performances.

As part of the final student concert, I did a repeat performance playing the *ro* part in Tamuke. One of the players dedicated Tamuke to a relative who had recently passed away making involvement in the performance of this requiem piece quite moving and a fitting end to my first Shakuhachi Festival.

Having survived ASF18, I am planning on being a participant again when it is next held in a few years time.



Rehearsals for Sydney Concert





Student concert (S. Tregillis)



Kanae (S. Tregillis)



ASF18 Official Staff, Takashi and Ari



Melbourne Concert (A. Moraitis)

## London 2018 World Shakuhachi Festival

Riley Kōho Lee

The London World Shakuhachi Festival (WSF2018) was held in London during the first week of August this year. It was, in a word, unbelievable.

And yet, I can say this even though I only experienced a fraction of the Festival, because as many as four or five events — workshops, lectures, and performances — were happening at any given time.

What I did notice, was the excitement, exhilaration and anticipation on the faces of the participants and invited teachers and performers in the halls of Goldsmith University as we all rushed from one event to the next.

I have attended all but one of the seven World Shakuhachi Festivals (the first one, in 1994 in Okayama Japan, was organised by Yokoyama Katsuya. I was also the executive producer and artistic director of the 5th Festival, Sydney WSF2008. All of the Festivals have been different and in that sense, all were unbelievably wonderful experiences.

So what was different or special about WSF18? Firstly, a few things that anyone could see, and a few more personal observations or experiences.

London WSF18 was the first Festival to include representatives of the min'yō or Japanese Folksong tradition. There are many shakuhachi players both in Japan and in other countries who mainly play min'yō, so this was an important step to make WSF events ever more inclusive. I personally would have liked to have seen more min'yō shakuhachi players; there was only one, who was with a group of min'yō musicians, including a singer, shamisen players, etc. Likewise, WSF18 included a number of shakuhachi players from some of the lesser-known ryūha particularly with Myōan orientation such as Kinpū-ryū from Hiroasaki,

Ichōken style from Fukuoka and Myōan Taizan-ha style centred around Kyoto.

I would hazard to guess that WSF18 had more events, and more invited teachers and performers than any other previous WSF. There was just too much for me describe. Of course, quantity and quality are not the same thing, but the quality was of a high standard, at least amongst the events I attended, including of course, the workshops that I led :-). The level of performance and the variety of styles of playing and types of pieces made me proud to belong to the shakuhachi tradition. For example, I had never heard Atsuya Okuda perform before, Okuda is the teacher of Kiku Day, one of the main organisers of WSF18. His rendition of a special version of Nesting of the Cranes was refreshingly different. There were too many superb performances to mention here.

Highlights for me was performing in the both nearly sold-out, open-to-the-public Gala Opening Concert and the Grand Finale Concert. What an honour to be on stage with such talented musicians, playing such great pieces! Another highlight was helping to judge the Hogaku Journal Competition. Such talented people from around the world (though in this case, still mostly from Japan)! Of course, seeing old shakuhachi friends, some of whom I've known for decades and who I've not seen for years, is always wonderful. Also, meeting new shakuhachi people, especially so many from Europe (especially Germany) was a tremendous pleasure. This all sounds like one big cliché, but it's impossible for me to describe my experience. For those of you who didn't attend, I am so very very sorry that you missed it!

I have received permission by the WSF18 organisers to give ASS members an opportunity to download the entire programme book (nearly 100 pages!). See link below.

<http://www.files.wsf2018.com/schedule/WSF2018-Festival-Programme.pdf>

Sydney, Nova Scotia Canada  
28 September 2018



## **London Shakuhachi Symposium**

Lindsay Dugan

The Shakuhachi Symposium took place on July 31st, the day before WSF18 commenced. I went to London specifically to take part in this symposium - there are virtually no other opportunities to hear from, and present to such a specific audience.

Among the many excellent presentations given, one highlight of the symposium for me was Matt Gillan's 'Sankyoku magazine and the representation of the shakuhachi as ritual instrument in early 20th century Japan'. In this presentation, Gillan showed how he examined shakuhachi-related articles in the magazine *Sankyoku*, revealing a concerted effort by the magazine to promote the shakuhachi as a Buddhist instrument. Notably, Gillan shows how the magazine supported Watazumi, bolstering his standing as a shakuhachi practitioner, and supporting his efforts to have the *Fuke-shū* formally recognised by the Japanese government in 1940.

I was honoured to have been selected to present, and gave an overview of my doctoral research project, examining variations in honkyoku between Watazumi, Yokoyama, and Yokoyama's students. I focused firstly on the quantitative methods I'm using to analyse honkyoku, and secondly on some preliminary results of the analysis, mainly regarding the timing of specific types of notes.

I'm very grateful to the organisers of the Symposium, and I look forward to the next one.

## **Celebrating Canberra's Four Seasons, Shakuhachi-style**

Rupert Summerson

Canberra celebrated its centenary in 2013 with many programs and projects through the year. One of these programs was "The Musical Offering" whereby Canberra's musicians presented a free concert or performance on every day of the year. When I got to hear about it I immediately volunteered and found myself performing in spaces as diverse as the National Library, a city square, several nursing homes and a shopping centre. One of the features of The Musical Offering was that the organising committee had access almost every space in Canberra so for my last performance I asked to play in the James Turrell SkySpace at the National Gallery of Australia – at dawn on the summer solstice. The SkySpace is the most wonderful place. It is a dome within a circular pillar set in a moat within a grass-covered pyramid set within an outer moat. The inner dome is open to the sky and lined with heated seats. The upper half of the dome is painted white on which a chain of LEDs project slowly changing colours during the dawn and dusk light shows. The contrast between the changing colours and the colours of the sky produce optical illusions in the brain!

I decided to improvise rather than playing set pieces, partly because having just submitted my PhD I had had not time to prepare any and I thought that playing off a music stand would destroy the atmosphere, and partly because I wanted to respond spontaneously to the changing light and the sounds of the water and the birds. I think it worked really well – as did the not very large audience of my friends. I did the same in 2014 – playing at dawn on the summer solstice but in 2015 I included playing on the winter solstice. It was an interesting experience playing with the temperature well below zero but I was surprised that 18 – 20 people got out of bed in what seemed like the middle of the night to come and hear me play! I have continued to mark both summer



© Peter Hislop, Canberra

Inside the James Turrell SkySpace at the National Gallery of Australia. Evening equinoctial performance, 23 September 2018. (Photo: Peter Hislop).



David Dixon performs Wuthering Heights for World Kate Bush Day at Bega Big Groove with Stonewave Taiko and YuNiOn in September.



and winter solstice since then and, because a number of people complained about having to get up so early, in September 2017, I started to celebrate the equinoxes with an evening performance. The audience numbers have varied over the years with a fairly consistent number between about 18 – 24, which is about as many as the SkySpace can seat. One winter solstice 40 people turned up, which was a bit awkward because a lot of people had to stand outside so they missed the feeling of immersion when inside the dome. There have been other “incidents”, such as when the light show failed to operate and last month when it started to rain.

The light show runs for about 40 minutes, though it seems to vary and the sequence of light colours seems to vary also. I usually play with my eyes closed, opening them periodically to check on the colour of the light. Although I improvise, I go prepared with two or three phrases that I can build on. As I start to play I imagine a scene, such as the long grass near the SkySpace being stirred by a light breeze before dawn or ripples on the lake and then just go where my mood takes me, responding to bird calls, the sound of the wind, the reverberation of my sound around the dome and my imagination. At the end of the light show, the light returns to white which means it is time to wrap up. I sometimes take two instruments and swap over at some point. At the last September equinox I started with my 1.8 and about halfway through swapped for my 2.4 – the deeper softer sound going well with the darkening sky and approach of night.

This coming summer solstice will be the fifth anniversary of my celebrating the changing seasons, I plan to try something special for that event – but haven’t decided yet what that will be. Come along and find out!



## Esashi Oiwake - a song of Hokkaido

Paul Sheehan

On a recent trip to northern Japan, I traveled to a small fishing town on the west coast of Hokkaido, Esashi, which is about four hours south of the capital city, Sapporo. Esashi is one of the oldest towns in Hokkaido, said to be the birthplace of Hokkaido culture, a fishing port famous for catching herrings. It is surrounded by historic Japanese shrines and temples, such as Hokkeji Temple and Ubagami Grand Shrine on the historic Esashi Inishie Road.

As a student learning to play the shakuhachi, I became interested in a song I heard on a CD, called *Esashi Oiwake* ('Esashi Crossroads'). This traditional Japanese folk song originated from Esashi.

The song has a long and interesting history. It was first called The Horseman's Song, which originally come from Nagano prefecture area and spread throughout Japan as a popular song during the Edo period. It was later called the Boatman's Song or Fisherman's Song, telling of the hardships in the life of a fisherman. It was brought to Esashi roughly 200 years ago, and eventually became the unique folk song, Esashi Oiwake.

Each year the annual Esashi Oiwake Festival singing competition is held in September. It started in 1963, and up to 400 performers, young and old, travel from all over Japan to compete each year. Oiwake singers perform in front a panel of judges with a stop watch measuring the length of each phrase, with the accompaniment of the shakuhachi. Originally the Esashi Oiwake song consisted of three sections, but nowadays only the main or original section (hon-uta) is sung.

Esashi Oiwake has its own museum and concert hall, “Kaiken”, which was built in 1982, displaying the history of the town and the song. Throughout the year visitors can

see and hear a showcase of Esashi Oiwake Festival with performances twice daily, sung by past and present champions, and you can learn the Esashi Oiwake song before you go in to see the performance in the concert hall.

One of the Japanese local singers teaches how to sing, using a large music diagram on display for those interested. I was invited to join in and tried to sing the 26 phrases with the melody expressed by specific symbols.

After my first attempt at singing Oiwake following the pitch and harmony with the Japanese instructor, I now have a good appreciation for voice control and what is involved in singing the song.



The Japanese instructor also had a case full of shakuhachi on hand to try and handed me a 1.8 as he started to play. It was a great experience listening to the instructor playing the notation, moving quite fast, leaving me to play at my own pace, as he was surprised I could get a sound.

We then got to see the morning performance in the main concert hall, beautifully set out, sitting on traditional tatami mats, on the stage a gold and blue Japanese tapestry scenery on folding screens. The performance was sung by past champion Iso Kikuchi, the 25th winner, accompanied by a shakuhachi and shamisen performer. The song is sung in a sort of high pitched florid voice. Photos of past champions were displayed around the concert hall walls.

This cultural event was a very surreal experience, as we were the only westerners there, and with my interest in the shakuhachi, at the end of the performance we were invited up on stage to meet the performers and the champion singer.

I have experienced a few winter (Sapporo Snow festival) and summer festivals (Aomori Nebuta festival) and enjoy the natural beauty of northern Japan. While visiting Esashi, we attended one of the oldest festivals in Hokkaido, the Ubagami Grand Shrine Togyo Festival, held annually from 9th to 11th of August. Celebrated day and night with thirteen colourful floats called "Yama", each float has an energetic singer, shinobue flutes and taiko drums playing, and is pulled by hand through the streets by hundreds of local Japanese from surrounding areas. Dressed in traditional Japanese yukata style coats, individually tailored to showcase the communities they come from. As we followed the festival over a couple of days it was a great cultural experience, enjoying the event with a welcoming friendly local atmosphere.

Esashi was one of the best experiences I have had in all my many trips to Hokkaido,

and it's amazing where my interest in the shakuhachi has led me, after hearing the song on a CD.



## Sagariha

Lindsay Dugan

*This article is based on a translation of a series of articles titled "Shakuhachi koten honkyoku kaisetsu (Commentary on shakuhachi classical honkyoku)" featured in Hōgaku Journal by Komusō Research Group member, Kanda Kayu.*

*Sagariha* was originally a musical accompaniment in *nō* for a dance that represented nymphs descending from heaven. It was performed on *fue*, and was accompanied by taiko percussion in a calm *chōshi* called *wataribyoushi*. There are a number of different kanji characters that are used for the title *Sagariha*, such as 下り端, 下り破, 降葉, and 下り葉.

In Keicho 8-9 (1603-1604), Jesuit missionaries in Nagasaki published *Nippo Jisho* (Japanese-Portuguese Dictionary). The entry on *Sagariha* reads:

Sagariha is played during *nō* performances or in dances, when actors enter the stage.

Simultaneously, the title *Sagariha* may have been used for pieces outside the context of *nō* and *buyō* dance. A dance performed by Izumo no Okuni (born ca. 1572; died ca. 1613, originator of kabuki theatre) in Kitano Tenmangu Shrine in Izumo (Shimane prefecture) in 1603 was called *Sagariha*, and the title was also later used for other dances and songs, and in kabuki. In instrumental compositions, a similar structure to that used in *Nō* was used for shamisen, and the piece was played to create a solemn atmosphere for moments when characters of nobility

would leave the stage. Pieces titled Sagariha reached all corners of Japan and influenced the folk performance realm, appearing in *matsuribayashi*, *shishi* dances, *sato kagura*, and extending all the way to instruments such as the *kokyū* and shakuhachi. Sagariha is still used today as accompaniment in festivals, or during the introduction of scenes in other performance genres. *Hitoyogiri* notation is included in *Shichiku Shoshinshū*, where <hi - i - i - i> is a primary melody that recurs many times throughout the piece, with the ‘*hodayōshi* (an accented backbeat rhythm in *gagaku*) to be played the same way as a fue’. The rhythmical shakuhachi version of Sagariha also includes elements of the version that was performed at festivals.

Below are some details about versions transmitted within specific lineages.

Sagariha 下り葉 (Kinko ryū):

Kurosawa Kinko I learnt the piece at Myōanji in Kyoto from a komusō monk named Matsuyama, who had performed the piece at the Gion Festival. This is the fue version of Sagariha, substituting fue with shakuhachi; the melody is repeated twice, and is almost the same both times. The tempo at which it was played at that time is not known, but nowadays the piece is played at a relaxed, calm pace, even though there are many rhythmical and high-pitched sections. Generally, the atmosphere created by this piece is one of *yūga* (grace and refinement).

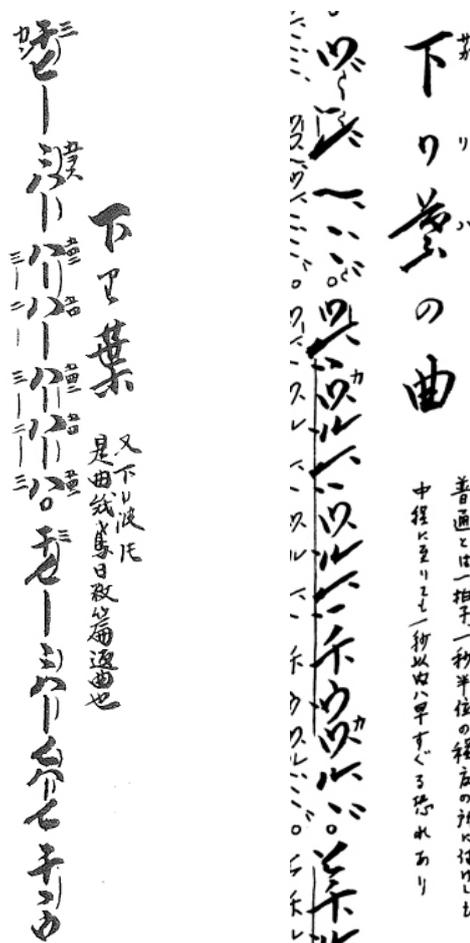
Sagariha 降葉之曲 (Myōan Shinpō ryū):

Yokoi Kinkoku (1761-1832), who became the head of Myōanji around 1782, was ‘taught, and became well versed in, many amusing pieces such as Sandan Jishi, Sagariha, etc.’ From this, we know that Sagariha was played for amusement. This version is a very rhythmical piece played in the tuning of *kumoijōshi*, and was also played at festivals in imitation of the fue. There was yet another very similar sounding version that was taught and performed, but that version omitted or abbreviated the prelude.

Sagariha 下り葉 (Kinpū ryū):

Among the ten pieces of the Kinpū repertoire, Sagariha is the most frequently played. Structurally, this version appears to be simple, and also features two repeats, but a large proportion of the piece is in the kan register, and is played vigorously. Kanda suspects that in this version, there is a melody from a *shishi* piece that originated in the Tōhoku area.

Orito Nyogetsu (1865-1947), whose students included Yamaue Getsuzan and Jin Nyodo, made a legacy recording at the age of 78, *Kumoichō Sagariha*, on the Columbia record label (TRS-5200).



Sagariha scores: Kinpū ryū score (left) and Kindo score (right)



## For Sale

1.6 Ichijou \$2887

Contact Kevin Man:

0400 390 969, kevin.man@taikoz.com

1.8 Chikuyu \$1200

Contact Tom Sapountsis:

tomsap@bigpond.net.au

## ASS Committee and Newsletter Info

Your committee members as of November 2018 are:

President: Lindsay Dugan

Vice President: Rupert Summerson

Secretary: Adrian Sherriff

Treasurer: Richard Chenhall

Newsletter and SNS admin: Lindsay Dugan

## ASS Membership Info

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

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

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

<http://shakuhachi.org.au/membership.html>

## Newsletter Contributions

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

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

[lindsay@lindsaydugan.com](mailto:lindsay@lindsaydugan.com)

ASS Website:

[shakuhachi.org.au](http://shakuhachi.org.au)

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Scrambled eggs, bacon, sourdough, tomatoes, and sauteed mushrooms at 1am

