
Shakuhachi in Transition: a Transcultural Perspective



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Abstract: The shakuhachi, the Japanese end-blown bamboo flute frequently associated with Zen Buddhism, has a long tradition of migration, from its origins in China, via Japan, and on to the rest of the world. During its extended period of development in Japan, the tradition lines of the instrument became increasingly fragmented, to the point that no current school of performing can lay claim to primacy or exclusive authenticity. In this pluralistic setting, the next stage in the development of the instrument lies in its export outside of the Japanese cultural sphere. The pluralism of the traditions and the processes of export and transculturation raise questions about the possibilities of intercultural transmission and integration both of the musical characteristics of the shakuhachi and of the spirituality of its music. Of particular interest is the question as to whether there is a spiritual basis which is capable of being transmitted through and along with the music.

Keywords: shakuhachi, transculturation, transmission, spirituality

I

The shakuhachi is, at least in its appearance, a simple musical instrument: a piece of bamboo (traditionally, the species *madake*, lt. *phyllostachys bambusoides*) with (in its modern form) a standardised length of about 54 cm, in which the nodes have been bored through in order to create a continuous tube, five finger holes have been drilled and a slanted blowing edge cut at the upper end. The visual simplicity of this traditional Japanese flute belies the complexity of the musical traditions which have arisen around it in the course of centuries. The oldest of these to survive in the modern world is that of the *honkyoku* (“original pieces”), solo works which, according to historical sources, were developed not as concert music but as a form of meditation by the Fuke sect of Zen Buddhism in Japan.

Briefly summarised, one can identify six main phases in the development and transmission of the instrument:¹

- 1) origins on the Asian mainland (pre-7th century AD);
- 2) early shakuhachi in Japan (c. 7th to 11th centuries AD);
- 3) shakuhachi as folk instrument (c. 11th to 16th centuries AD);
- 4) shakuhachi of the Edo period (17th to 19th centuries AD);
- 5) modern shakuhachi in Japan (mid-19th century to the present);
- 6) shakuhachi outside of Japan (mid-20th century to the present).

The last of these phases is the least documented, and in terms of contemporary cultural studies the most interesting.

Generally, the shakuhachi is considered to be a development of a Chinese end-blown flute, which arrived in Japan presumably in the 7th century AD via Korea as part of the imperial court orchestra (Lee 1993:62ff.). The form of this instrument was different to the flute now known as “shakuhachi” – shorter, and with six finger holes instead of five. The flute persisted as part of this so-called *gagaku* ensemble for several centuries, but ultimately faded from view. Several theories have been proposed to explain this demise, ranging from the musical (the instrument was not loud enough) to the economic (reduction in the size of the orchestra). In any event, it disappeared, only to reappear outside of the context of the imperial court, albeit with a number of changes: five finger holes, and construction often from a bamboo tube with a single node (in the form known as *hitoyogiri*), possibly under the influence of the Chinese flute *hsiao* (Lee 1993:87, Kishibe 1984:79). The shakuhachi of this period seems to have been employed in a variety of contexts, ranging from purely secular to religious, the latter documented by the mention of the instrument in various

¹ Historical overviews of the shakuhachi and its music can be found in Blasdell (2008), Gutzwiller (1983) and Lee (1993). In the presentation here I refer in particular to the latter work.

literary sources describing the music within a religious attitude or practice in the circles of Zen Buddhism (Lee 1993:77ff.).

This religious aspect could be said to have paved the way for the specific development of the instrument which has taken primacy in the history of the shakuhachi and particularly in its perception outside of Japan: the rise (and ultimate demise) of the Fuke sect of Zen Buddhism. This sect existed more or less in parallel with the time span of the Edo period (17th to 19th centuries AD), and was linked by a system of privileges and duties to the government. Its members consisted of 'retired' samurai, who had effectively exchanged their swords for bamboo flutes. The alleged intricacies and espionage of the Fuke sect are well-documented (e.g. Lee 1993:102-153). Stated briefly, there arose numerous temples of this sect, scattered throughout Japan. The monks were mendicants, whose (official) primary activity was the playing of the shakuhachi, in what had become something like its modern form. The pieces they performed, the honkyoku, were considered, in the sect's self-representation, to be a form of meditation. Of fundamental importance is the fact that this was an oral tradition and transmission, involving exchange of pieces between itinerant players from different home temples. This resulted in a broad divergence of the transmissions, as errors, personal styles, lapses of memory and so forth came into play – despite the fact that one ostensibly attempted to reproduce entirely accurately the material one had learned, without modification.² There is no exact count of the number of honkyoku which came into existence. The codification by KUROSAWA Kinko I in the 18th century lists 36 pieces, now the basis of the honkyoku tradition of the Kinko school; informed modern estimates list up to 180 pieces (Lee 1993:159). This divergence in itself suggests a marked plurality in the tradition(s) of the shakuhachi.

The demise of the Fuke sect paved the way for further division and pluralisation of traditions. A number of factors contributed to this. Apart from the general collapse of the feudal governmental system and its dependent social structures in Japan towards the end of the Edo period, destructive ambivalences also arose within the Fuke sect itself. One can surmise that many members (the *komuso*, "priests of emptiness") were genuine religious (or at least intellectual and artistic) practitioners, otherwise the development of such a rich musical tradition would not have been possible. But beyond surmise is the

² This diversity resulting from the oral nature of the transmission of the honkyoku and the concomitant scarcity of written records leads necessarily to the fact that all traditions, and especially those of the present day, are speculative reconstructions of the pieces. The few written descriptions are *a priori* incapable of rendering the actual sound of the music as performed in eras before the advent of recorded media. Thus all current traditions which incorporate honkyoku are attempts to represent the music as it might have sounded. This in no way negates the value of this music, but it calls into question the assertion of exclusive correctness of transmission raised by some of the schools.

internal corruption of the sect: its members, clothed or perhaps disguised as monastics, had the right of unhindered travel, which was a rare privilege at the time. They also carried an effective weapon – the bamboo flute. This made them ideal as spies, and it seems certain that at least some members and temples enjoyed the earnings from such activities. After the cancellation of the sect's privileges in the early 1800s, the repertoires of individual temples were forced to develop as individual lines of transmission with much less cross-fertilization. At the same time, the temples and Fuke players were obliged to seek other forms of employment and income. One obvious source was teaching, which led in two directions:

1) The greater availability of the shakuhachi to musicians outside of religious contexts, resulting in the shakuhachi's increasing insinuation into secular music forms such as the repertoire now known as *sankyoku*, usually now performed by shamisen, koto and shakuhachi (with sung parts by shamisen and koto players). This came to represent a parallel tradition to the honkyoku, one which has received less attention and interest outside of Japan than the older honkyoku repertoire.

2) The passing of the honkyoku into the hands of non-religious professional musicians, who in the period after the Meiji Restoration (1868) gradually became the primary bearers of this tradition. Understandably, different regions and temples gave rise to different lines of transmission with different repertoires and musical conceptions.

II

As a result of these factors, a large number of schools or guilds (*ryu* or *ryuha*) of playing arose, often focussing on the repertoire and instruction of a single teacher. As may be expected, some of these were short-lived, and others have survived until the present. The largest of the *ryu* with traditional honkyoku in its repertoire, Kinko, derives from the legacy of Kurosawa Kinko I, but has diversified into many sub-branches. The Tozan *ryu*, which has the greatest number of members in Japan, is effectively a modern development, originating with TOZAN Nakao, who in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was instrumental in creating a repertoire of new material for shakuhachi, including newly-composed "honkyoku". This drive to rejuvenate the tradition(s) through the infusion of new material is by no means limited to the Tozan *ryu*; other schools have also taken, by accident or design, a hybrid or pluralistic path of conserving and transmitting what is considered to be an old tradition or aspect thereof, as well as actively supporting the composition of new music for shakuhachi. Common to all of the schools which purport to incorporate old material is, negatively expressed, the fact that they attempt to revive or reconstruct a tradition which was fundamentally broken and for which reliable records are diminishingly scarce. Conversely, none of these rejuvenated traditions can lay claim to exclusive authenticity; within a diversified shakuhachi landscape, all can lay claim, if not to exclusiveness, then at least to validity.

As an example of such internal pluralism, I would cite the school in which I trained in Japan, the Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshukan (abbr. KSK; International Shakuhachi Research Centre). The KSK is the brainchild and ultimately the life work of YOKOYAMA Katsuya (1934–2010). Its repertoire is derived from several sources:

1) Yokoyama studied and mastered the Kinko syllabus. Elements of this have found their way into the KSK repertoire, especially the *sankyoku* ensemble pieces, as well as some honkyoku clearly of Kinko derivation (e.g. *Shika no Tōne*, “Call of the Deer”).

2) Yokoyama was also exposed in his formative years to the works of shakuhachi performer and composer RANDO Fukuda, who in the first half of the 20th century penned a range of pieces for shakuhachi solo and ensemble, including pieces for shakuhachi and other instruments.

3) Yokoyama also incorporated a body of honkyoku transmitted by WATAZUMI Dō. Watazumi in turn derived much of his material from Itchoken, a temple with its own honkyoku repertoire and style of playing on Kyūshū.³

4) Yokoyama himself was an active promoter of composition of new material for shakuhachi, and attracted and supported composer/performers in their efforts at creating new music for shakuhachi. An example of one such contemporary composer/performer is SEKI Ichirō; as a non-Japanese composer/performer, I also had the honour of receiving Yokoyama’s support, encouragement and critique. Non-performing composers, such as TAKEMITSU Toru, also worked closely with Yokoyama, creating pieces which are now standard works (e.g. *Eclipse* and *November Steps*).

Such a broad repertoire, in which KSK performers must become adept, reveals a pluralism between the retention of traditional material, or at least its reconstruction after the upheavals of the second half of the 19th century, and new music with a traditional as well as non-traditional basis.

As its name implies, the KSK understands itself as acting on an international stage, beyond the boundaries of the Japanese cultural sphere. Its attitude is highly tolerant, and in fact encouraging, of non-Japanese shakuhachi players. Indeed, one of Yokoyama’s primary concerns in establishing this institution was his wish that non-Japanese players should have access to tuition at a high level and on equal footing with Japanese players – something which was not necessarily to be taken for granted in Japan during the 20th century, despite its openness towards and assimilation of a range of Western social concepts and technologies.⁴

³ At the time of writing, the Itchoken temple is still active as a small guild, one of several laying claim to close relationship to the Fuke sect.

⁴ For example, Lee (1993:290) describes his encounter with the head (*iemoto*) of a small traditional ryu, who expressed the opinion that a non-Japanese player is incapable of performing honkyoku correctly.

The opening of the shakuhachi world in Japan to Western practitioners leads directly to the question of the relationship between the shakuhachi in its culture of origin and the cultures of its non-Japanese players. Simply stated: what do the Western players who have trained in Japan (or even primarily in the West, in later generations of transmission) do? A small number remain in or migrate to Japan, assimilating themselves into Japanese culture and society. The majority, however, return to or remain in their culture of origin, presumably with their musical experience and ability enriched by the music and aesthetics of the shakuhachi. In this way, an intercultural encounter resulting in transculturation of the shakuhachi is pre-programmed.⁵ Numerous teachers of the shakuhachi outside of Japan have either hinted at this, or discussed it explicitly. Gutzwiller (1987:10) asserts that "Japan received the shakuhachi from China a long time ago. She has held this instrument for many centuries and created a remarkable music. She is now reluctantly releasing it into the modern world. It is a moment not without danger and not without promise." Lee (1987:115-116) comments: "In only the past four years, I personally know of about thirty foreigners who have studied the shakuhachi in Japan.... Quite a few people are now actively working toward developing the shakuhachi outside of Japan... I look forward to seeing the shakuhachi transplanted, alive and growing in America in the near future. The result may almost ultimately differ from the shakuhachi of Japan today. But then, even Japan is only the adopted home of the shakuhachi, having come from China long before. And now, centuries later, the shakuhachi is travelling once again."⁶

The migration of the shakuhachi outside of Japan takes place in a field of tension between interest in and transmission of the traditional repertoire, and creation of new music. Regarding the traditional music, my own experience as player, teacher and (occasionally) festival organiser suggests that many Western students of the shakuhachi are drawn to it primarily through the honkyoku, often as part of a search for a personal spirituality outside of Western spiritual institutions. This interest implies a desire to learn this material in a form as close as possible to that in which it exists in its culture of origin, and in which the perceived spiritual tradition is rendered intact across cultural boundaries. Whether this is possible remains an open question, which I consider below.

⁵ "Transculturation" is used here in the sense suggested by philosopher Wolfgang Welsch (cf. Welsch 2010): an interpenetration of one culture with another, whereby clear differentiations between the "home" culture and the "foreign" culture become obscured, and emphasis shifts from cultural encounter to complementary cultural enhancement.

⁶ In the more than twenty years since Lee wrote these words, the number of shakuhachi players outside Japan has increased exponentially, and since 1992, the so-called World Shakuhachi Festivals have become a regular event, generally in intervals of four years. The latest was held in Sydney in 2008. I can also offer a personal and anecdotal perspective here: in 1987, at the time of publication of Lee's article, I was taking my first steps as a shakuhachi player (as a student of Lee in Australia). Now, decades later, I am one of those teachers of a second generation who have studied the instrument initially outside of and then in Japan (in my case with FURUYA Teruo and Yokoyama Katsuya), and who are now actively transmitting the instrument and its music outside of Japan (in my case, primarily in Germany).

III

The employment of the shakuhachi in the development of new musical material, takes place in many forms – in effect, as many as there are diverse musical genres. While a complete catalogue of approaches is beyond the scope of this article, the following is an indicative selection:

- Shakuhachi in contemporary art music composition. Numerous Western composers have written for shakuhachi. A recent and popular example is Karl Jenkins' *Requiem* for choir, orchestra and shakuhachi (2005). Even in the 1980s, the shakuhachi enjoyed such a level of popularity amongst contemporary composers, that in 1989 the journal *Perspectives of New Music* published a seminal article about its techniques and notations,⁷ and a few years later, *Contemporary Music Review* devoted almost an entire issue to it (1994, Vol. 8, Part 2).
- Shakuhachi and electronic music. Various composers have combined the shakuhachi with electronic music; notable is Richard Teitelbaum's *Blends* (2002), with shakuhachi recorded by Yokoyama. Additionally, various performers of the shakuhachi are actively engaged in the integration of the shakuhachi with live electronics. As examples I cite my own work as a composer (e.g. the series of pieces *Songs for the Not-Born*), as well as players such as Phil Gelb in the USA.
- Shakuhachi and intermedia arts. This is a small but growing area, in which shakuhachi composers and performers act in collaboration with media artists of various persuasions to create works bridging sonic and visual media. A significant example of this direction lies in the creative workshops associated since 2009 with the annual Prague Shakuhachi Summer Schools.
- Shakuhachi and jazz. Amongst various forms of improvisation, jazz has attracted shakuhachi performers either as an extension of the range of tone colours available, or as a primary solo instrument. Perhaps the best-known proponent of this direction is John Neptune, originally a drummer, who discovered the shakuhachi in the 1970s and turned it into a jazz flute, including modifying slightly its construction to adapt its timbre and playability to his requirements.⁸
- Shakuhachi and New Age music. This is one of the largest branches of non-traditional shakuhachi music. A notable performer who is active in this direction is Riley Lee, whose popular album *Oriental Sunrise* (originally released in 1972, re-released on CD in 1996) was one of the first in a long series of records, cassettes and CDs.
- Shakuhachi and pop or rock music. Apart from samples of the shakuhachi integrated into a recorded multitrack pop or rock music texture, there are also performers in this

⁷ Lependorf (1989): "Contemporary Notation for the Shakuhachi: a Primer for Composers".

⁸ Coxall (1987) provides a description of Neptune's formative experiences with shakuhachi.

area who are accomplished shakuhachi players – for example, Brian Ritchie, bass player with the punk-rock indie band Violent Femmes, who has played shakuhachi on a number of the band's tracks (Ritchie 2009).

- Shakuhachi may also be found occasionally in transcultural contexts outside of the sphere of Western music. Tim Hoffman, an American shakuhachi player resident in Japan, has been instrumental in bringing the shakuhachi together with Indian music, developing techniques for performance of ragas on the shakuhachi. His Indo-Japanese Music Exchange Association represents a transcultural endeavour across multiple cultural interfaces.⁹

Notably, most of the practitioners within such cultural encounters tend to be non-Japanese. It remains an open question, how such transcultural or hybrid forms are viewed by Japanese players. As implied above, Japanese attitudes to Western players (and implicitly their endeavours) range over a spectrum from highly dismissive to highly tolerant and supportive. The KSK again illustrates the most open of the possible attitudes. Although a Japanese school, a part of its intention is, as stated above, to provide non-Japanese players with access to a solid training in shakuhachi. The attitude of the school, however, goes beyond this. While wishing that the Japanese traditional material be transmitted to the West, there is a recognition that the music will change in the process. Far from viewing this with a sense of regret or criticism of implicit loss, there is rather a feeling of interested anticipation. I here paraphrase remarks which were made by senior KSK teacher KAKIZAKAI Kaoru in 2007 during the European Shakuhachi Summer School in Munster, France, in discussions with the organisers (Véronique Piron and myself): the shakuhachi is fundamentally a migratory instrument. The first major migration took place from China to Japan. After a long period of development in Japan, the second major migration is underway – from Japan to Western cultures as found in the countries of Europe, the USA, and Australia (amongst others). This migration, and the associated changes in the music, are inherent in the instrument's history, and should be greeted as a positive development, an enhancement of the existing traditions.¹⁰

The above list of musical genres into which the shakuhachi has positioned itself could easily be construed to suggest that the shakuhachi, taken outside of its traditional context, is a universal instrument, applicable everywhere and in all genres. This perception,

⁹ The Association's website may be found at <http://www.ijmea.com/eng/index.html>.

¹⁰ KSK teachers Kakizakai Kaoru and Furuya Teruo were the invited Japanese teachers at the 2007 European Summer School, 4th-7th August 2007, in Munster, France. Apart from the events on the official programme, Véronique Piron and I, both KSK teachers, had numerous opportunities to discuss with Kakizakai and Furuya the current and future development of the shakuhachi. These informal discussions were not recorded or minuted; I cite their content here from my recollections.

however, is in need of relativisation. The shakuhachi comes equipped, as it were, with two sets of 'baggage'. One of these is technical: through its development within a specific culture, and thus within a specific cultural aesthetic, the shakuhachi (like all instruments) embodies a particular set of musical possibilities, strengths and weaknesses. As a composer, I would nominate the following strengths:

1) Great flexibility in the shaping of pitch, timbre and dynamics of individual tones, with the possibility of very rapid transitions between extremes.

2) A range of tone colours which allows it to fit within many instrumental contexts, imitating, blending or contrasting with diverse instrument families (winds, strings, brass, reeds, percussion, electronics). In the hands of a skilled performer, the shakuhachi can thus find its place without difficulty within the instrumental canon of Western music.

Distinctive characteristics of the shakuhachi, which could be perceived as limitations within a Western acculturated context, include:

1) The division of the tones of the instrument into two categories: *kari* (the tones played in normal position, essentially a pentatonic scale which, in the standard-length instrument, is based on D: D-F-G-A-C-D), and *meri* (bent notes, representing all pitches, including microtonal shadings, between the tones of the basic pentatonic set). These two sets have fundamentally different timbral and dynamic spectra, a characteristic which is structurally exploited within the traditional music of the shakuhachi, especially the honkyoku. In the latter, the cyclic interplay between *kari* and *meri* tones is an important formal device.¹¹ Within a musical aesthetic which assumes an equality of all tones of an instrument in terms of timbral and dynamic spectra, however, this characteristic becomes a limitation. Arguably, it is precisely this assumption which underlies the harmonic structures of Western music as it has developed over the centuries. In this system, all twelve semitones of the equal-tempered octave can take on any function (such as tonic or leading note) within chords or melodies, allowing for fluent modulation between tonalities. This is only possible if all notes can be treated equally both in the abstract act of composition and in the concrete activity of performance on an instrument. The requirement of equality applies even more to the extensions or negations of chromatic harmony in twelve-tone music, microtonality and other genres which emerged during the 20th century.¹²

¹¹ This assertion derives from my own analyses of honkyoku. The results of these were presented in a series of lectures which I gave as guest lecturer at Charles University, Prague, 20th-22nd October 2008. Publication in written form is planned for the near future.

¹² As a shakuhachi performer, I am occasionally engaged to play pieces by other composers. As a shakuhachi composer, I frequently encounter in such works the erroneous assumption that because the shakuhachi can play all pitches and dynamics, it can play all notes equally. Non-shakuhachi-player composers are often surprised and disappointed, for example, that the timbre and projection of *d'* and *e-flat* are totally different.

2) Because most of the pitches playable on the shakuhachi involve a change of blowing angle and relationship between lips and blowing edge, as well as usually the partial coverage or shading of one or more finger holes, the action times involved in playing all but the *kari* notes are relatively long. This makes precise, rapid sequences of tones outside of the basic *kari* pitches difficult if not impossible. A compositional assumption that rapid chromatic sequences may be played accurately and fluently (as is possible, for example, with a Western Boehm-keyed flute) is thus a mistake.

In effect, the shakuhachi is adapted to its traditional musical genres which tend to focus on subtle shadings of pitch, timbre and dynamics within single tones or tone sequences; this is especially the case in the honkyoku repertoire. Its migration into the music of another culture assumes that at least some genres within the new culture share an aesthetic basis which can be fulfilled by the technical possibilities of the instrument. Amongst the genres listed above, one can note, for example, that it is certainly feasible to improvise a jazz shakuhachi line which fits the instrument, and that the shadings possible on the shakuhachi can link seamlessly with the shadings of sound available through electronic sound synthesis – but that the dexterity required to play convincingly a Western flute concerto is not within its range of possibilities. In this sense, then, the shakuhachi is not a universal flute, but one which finds a niche within diverse genres of Western music.

IV

The second set of “baggage” associated with the shakuhachi lies in the fact that the aesthetic basis of the shakuhachi within its Japanese cultural context and especially within the honkyoku, tends to be linked to religious or spiritual orientation. As discussed above, the honkyoku are generally asserted to have originated within the Fuke sect of Zen Buddhism as a form of meditation. Numerous authors (both Japanese and Western) have written about the spiritual basis of the honkyoku, commencing with the anonymous *Kyotaku denki kokujikai* (*History of the Shakuhachi in Japanese Language*, 1779), which purports to document the historical development of the shakuhachi as well as its development as a spiritual discipline. This writing is now musicologically discredited as history, although Gutzwiller (1987:7), while asserting that “it is an undisputably unreliable source”, also observes that “even today, it represents the self-understanding of all traditional shakuhachi players”. Exemplifying this self-understanding, Gregg Howard (1991) develops a metaphysical conception of sound and focussed hearing as a path to enlightenment, supporting his argumentation through references to passages from the *Surangama Sutra*, a Buddhist scripture of presumably Chinese origin dating most likely from the 7th century AD. He then applies this conception to the playing of the shakuhachi, thus underpinning the perception of the shakuhachi as a spiritual path.

If one accepts a spiritual nature of the shakuhachi, a number of questions arise; I will not attempt here to provide definitive answers to these. Nevertheless, they constellate issues which are highly relevant in the ongoing process of transculturation of the shakuhachi.

Firstly, if there is something innately spiritual in the music of the shakuhachi, then it must be possible to identify its expression in that instrument's sound and music. What constitutes a "spiritual" music is an ongoing debate, including within the Western cultural context – as exemplified, for instance, in the diverse (and sometimes conflicting) contributions within the issue of the journal *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 2010:6, entitled "Transzendent?" and devoted to the examination of the concept of transcendence in contemporary Western art music. In his article "Sinnliche Erfahrung des Transzendenten" ("Sensory Experience of the Transcendent"), Jörn Peter Hiekel suggests termini which could easily be applied to perceptions of the honkyoku: "undisturbed hearing into sound" ("ungestörtes Hineinhören in den Klang") (22) and "resonance of silence" ("Resonanz der Stille") (24). Accepting the validity of such termini as traces of musicalised spirituality, one can find them in the honkyoku, for instance in the silence between (unmetered) phrases, or in the importance of moment-to-moment shaping of sound, which invites the performer (as well as the listener) to hear "into" it in a focused fashion.

Secondly, and in consequence, if one assumes that there are aspects of the music of the shakuhachi which are innately spiritual, the question arises as to how, if at all, such spiritual aspects can survive a process of transculturation. Hiekel (2010) leaves this question open. Nevertheless, as observed above, in my experience the majority of students are drawn to the music of the shakuhachi specifically as a result of its spiritual associations as expressed in the honkyoku. In general, at shakuhachi summer schools and festivals, as well as in the work of individual teachers, much (if not the most) emphasis is placed on the honkyoku repertoire (in its transmissions through various schools), which thus becomes the main technical and perceptual basis for the integration of the shakuhachi into Western musical works. In other words, the musical works arising in the West which incorporate the shakuhachi tend to be those which share musical characteristics with the honkyoku, and which are performed by players who have tended to absorb a technical grounding in these pieces. In my experience, this is often coupled with at least a sympathy for the metaphysics of this repertoire, and often a direct assertion of alliance with the spiritual tradition (players identifying as Zen Buddhists, and conceptualising their playing as form of meditation).

A putative answer to the question of spiritual transmissibility lies, perhaps, in the search for resonances between the spiritualities of diverse cultures, rather than in the grafting of spiritual credos from one culture onto another. In this sense, characteristics

of the honkyoku, such as the presence of stillness and the focus on the moment, can be brought into relationship with experiences of meditative disciplines within the Western cultural and spiritual canon – to practices of object-free meditation within Western mystical traditions, for instance.¹³ In this way, one may find spiritual resonances rather than spiritual appropriation, whereby it is not necessary for literal articles of belief from one culture to supplant those of another. In such a fashion, at least a sense of the putative spiritual dimension of the shakuhachi tradition may be viewed as transmissible within the instrument's cultural migration.

Hiekel argues further:

Können Musikwerke einen echten Dialog von Kulturen anregen? Im allgemeinen Bewusstsein heute ist spirituelle Musik wohl gerade das, was nicht allein auf funktionale Bindungen, sondern auch auf eine ausdrückliche Nähe zu einer bestimmten Religion und ihren Ritualen verzichtet. Vielleicht ist das Spirituelle mancher Musik gerade in dieser überkonfessionellen Perspektive in heutigen Zeiten, die immer wieder von religiös grundierten Auseinandersetzungen geprägt sind, ... von besonderem Wert. (2010:24-25)¹⁴

Necessarily, speculation about the results, in musical or metaphysical terms, of the migration of the shakuhachi, must remain just that – speculation. What is not speculative, however, is the fact that this migration is taking place, with many subdivisions and individual strands. For a shakuhachi-player in the West, to be a part (however small) of this process of migration is an adventure and a challenge. The shakuhachi, despite its old roots, is a living tradition, and change is a part of any living process. How change expresses itself in the music of the shakuhachi, must remain an open, and fascinating, question.

¹³ The works of mystics such as Heinrich Seuse, John of the Cross and Theresa of Avila, as well as more recent figures such as Thomas Merton, abound with references and resonances of such forms of meditation. In their monumental work *Buddhismus und Christentum*, Michael von Brück and Whalen Lai discuss in a number of passages the relationship between Buddhist and Christian approaches to non-objective meditation (von Brück and Lai, 1997). Also of interest is Ludwig Frambach's *Identität und Befreiung in Gestalttherapie, Zen und christlicher Spiritualität* (Frambach 1994).

¹⁴ „Can musical works instigate a genuine dialogue between cultures? In the general perception today, spiritual music is presumably precisely that which eschews not only functional connections to a specific religion and its rituals, but also an explicit proximity to these. That which is spiritual in certain music forms in this transconfessional perspective may be of especial value, particularly in times such as these which are characterised time and again by religious-based conflict.“ (Translation J.F.)

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Dr. Jim Franklin patří mezi mistrovské hráče na shakuhachi. Studoval skladbu a hudební vědu v Sydney, Stuttgartu a Amsterdamu. Během svých studií poznal shakuhachi a od té doby zůstává očarován jeho kouzlem. Studoval hru na tento nástroj u Dr. Riley Lee a v Japonsku u Furuyi Terua a Yokoyamy Katsuyi. Roku 1966 mu Yokoyama-sensei udělil titul Shihan („Mistr“, licenci k výuce a hře na nástroj). Jako skladatel se Jim Franklin věnuje také instrumentální a elektronické hudbě. Od roku 2004 žije v Německu.

Grafická partitura: Milan Adamčiak – For John Cage, 1967 →