

## Suizen – ‘Blowing Zen’: Spirituality as Music and Music as Spirituality

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Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the *shakuhachi* bamboo flute, nowadays something of a symbol of the Japanese musical tradition, functioned not as a musical instrument but primarily as a religious tool exclusive to the Zen Buddhist Fuke sect<sup>1</sup>.

Whilst the sect’s *komusō* – or ‘monks of nothingness’ – spent most of their time playing, they did not regard themselves as musicians, for the musical activity which they engaged in, and which the uninitiated observer would surely term ‘playing the flute’, was actually just a form of Zen – meditation in which esoterically transmitted pieces of music now referred to collectively as *honkyoku* (lit. ‘basic pieces’) were performed on the instrument.

This manner of playing the *shakuhachi* (known as the Fuke style), as has come down to us primarily through the traditions of the Myōan-ji (‘light and darkness’) temple in Kyoto, is first and foremost a manifestation of Zen, of its emphasis on the real and true, its focus on the essence, its rejection of that which is external, superficial. Its ideal in sound is ‘the murmuring of the wind through the bamboo grove’, and its basic principle is that of *ichi on jōbutsu*, or one sound-Buddhahood.

Within the walls of the Fuke temples the ‘monks of nothingness’ observed an everyday routine of discipline similar to that in other Buddhist sects, although there was greater emphasis on *shakuhachi*-playing as a means of practising *suizen*, or ‘blowing meditation’<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The members of the Fuke sect have left us with very little written material elucidating the philosophy which underlay their playing *shakuhachi* as a *suizen*, the blowing Zen, the *honkyoku* presumably speaking for themselves’ (Lee 1992:132).

<sup>2</sup> The Fuke Sect was dissolved in the framework of the Meiji reform of 1871, the monks had to enter other sects, or return to secular life. Many of them then functioned as outstanding musicians and teachers. Some of them managed to preserve and pass on the unique characteristics and richness of performance to the next generation, which is without doubt not only spiritual practice, ‘blowing meditation’, but at the same time eminent music, unlike any other. The world’s few hundred ‘shakuhachists’ still follow this traditional fuke style today, mainly as personal meditation practice. Their ‘lay association’ Kyōchiku Zenji Hōsan Kai organises meetings twice a year, as a kind of ‘festival’ in the renescent ‘Temple of Light and Darkness’ in Kyoto, on the site of the temple complex of Tofukuji. All participate in solo, or in groups which successively step forward in front of the statue of the temple’s founder Kyōchiku Zenji (just the one who received the Mukaiji and Kokū in a ‘dream’, other of the ‘Three Classical Pieces’), take up a strictly formal *seiza* position and dedicate some of the *honkyoku* compositions to his spirit. Participation in the meeting of 3.11.1996 was one of my strongest experiences from Japan and retrospectively it seems to be one of the key moments of my further existence in our world of illusions and transience.

## 1. *Kyorei*, or Empty Bell

During esoteric night practice in sect temples the most important and longest compositions were said to be played, among which belong in particular the so-called ‘Three Classical Masterpieces’, *Sankyorei*.

Fascinating legends are tied to these three compositions: the first of them is related to the conception of the allegedly oldest Fuke *honkyoku* composition, which in its ascetically simple structure differs from all others. It is called the *Kyorei* (also *Kyōtaku*) – „The Empty Bell”.

I have also used the notation of the piece during study under the supervision of the master Kifu Mitsuhashi, created by the prestigious master of traditional Fuke style (of Myōan-ji Taizan ryū school, and others, including Kinko ryū) Jin Nyōdo (1891–1966), who has an inscription at the end – a kind of Zen essay, which is construed even by the sect as officially proclaimed, though it is a quite improbable and historically unfounded birth for the Fuke tradition and its ‘transmission’ to Japan:

„... there is a tale written that Fukezenji (Chinese Pu-Hua), founder of the Fuke sect, and Rinzaizenji (Chinese Lin-ti), founder of the Rinzai sect, had their first spiritual meeting in Chōinshu in Northern China more than 1100 years ago. Fukezenji in the poem *Shida no Ge* („Four Strokes”) manifested his spiritual enlightenment. It is a poem which was transmitted as a secret of classical models of musical composition from olden times.

Chōhaku, who was a pupil of master Fukezenji, was a talented player on the *dōsho* flute, the original model of *shakuhachi*. He realised that he could practice Zen by means of flute play instead of *zazen*, sitting meditation. He composed the composition *Kyorei* for this aim, and tradition has it that it is the oldest of the 150 *honkyoku* pieces.

704 years ago the Japanese high cleric Hotto Kokushi visited China in order to study Buddhism and Chosan, who was a descendant of Chōhaku in the 16<sup>th</sup> generation, taught him this piece before his return to Japan. From that time *shakuhachi* spread over the whole of Japan as a tool of the Fuke sect and thus for a long time mutually joined religion with art and the tradition developed to its current form”. (From Japanese translated by Izan Ogawa.)

The *Kyorei* composition is really unique in the *honkyoku* repertory. Only a few basic compositional elements are used in it from the many used in *honkyoku*, and all are here always in quite disengaged, almost archetypal-embryonic form. It is possible to well imagine that just this is the kind of original model and inspiration of all the other Fuke *honkyoku* compositions and the *Kyorei*, especially, is a sort of an authentic embodiment of the ‘blowing zen’.

There are many different versions of the piece but always composed from nearly the same three thematic components.

## 2. The Fuke Style and its Characteristics

The Fuke style, in contrast to other schools, strictly emphasises the original, above all, spiritual purpose of *shakuhachi* playing. Every piece is essentially coded breathing and concentration exercise, in actual fact *suizen* – blowing meditation.

The compositions (there is nearly no improvisation in Japanese traditional music!) – always composed and respectful and faithful to fixed traditions – are known as *honkyoku* (original, basic pieces)<sup>3</sup>, *koten honkyoku* (ancient, time-honoured pieces), as well as Fuke *honkyoku*, and sometimes even *Fukezen honkyoku* (from the Fuke sect, *Myōan honkyoku* from the Myōanji Temple in Kyoto etc.), to differentiate them from the compositions of other schools of *shakuhachi* playing, who, of course, refer to their basic pieces as *honkyoku* also.

It is necessary to emphasise the verbalised and deeply truthful characteristic of the style as being *ichi on jōbutsu*, or one-sound Buddhahood. (Kurosawa Kinko I.) Fuke style really recalls most of all ‘the murmuring of the wind blowing through the bamboo grove’.

Although *honkyoku* pieces are essentially coded breath exercises and instructions for meditation, all such compositions are in addition, nevertheless, exceedingly beautiful and sophisticated music! They represent unique musical phenomena and specific and ultimate musical language, which can be investigated by means of musical theory, as any other kind of music.

Some musical aspects are determined and given by the ascetic, exclusively solo playing of the wind instrument (in the case of participation at a religious ritual, all the players try to perform in unison!), thus eliminating the possibility of using chords, harmony, polyphony etc.

Other limitations are the dominant role of spirituality in the pieces (the principle of *suidan* – phrase of one full breath), which eliminates time-measured pulses and rhythmitisation, where the use of easily remembered lyrical melodies is unsuitable, and so on.

The musical projection of those pieces, despite such constraints, is demonstrated on the level of musical thought (ideas), notably tectonics, which are often interesting, highly organised structures with surprisingly subtle and complex internal relationships.

Such sophisticated structures cannot be created by chance or even improvised (it has to be accentuated again that improvisation is practically non-existent in traditional Japanese music!).

In case of *Kyorei* those tectonic structures are even very extremely concentrated and limited at only few (3!) elementary subjects.

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<sup>3</sup> To differentiate them from *shakuhachi* compositions occurring later, or transferred from other genres of JP traditional music, which are known as *gaikyoku* (literally ‘outside’ composition).

### 3. *Koten Honkyoku*

About 150 compositions are preserved. Most of them are actually variations and derivatives of some tens of compositions, which, through the long period of oral transmission in various localities, have, in many cases, admitted significant changes<sup>4</sup>. Those of the Myōan-ji temple *honkyoku* make up just 33 compositions. If we take into account the existing recordings of the abbots, then Tanikita Muchiku, abbot no. 37, represents 28 pieces, Yoshimura Sōshin, abbot no. 40, 32 pieces, the Kinko school has 36 and 3 secret etc.

In *honkyoku* 4 basic functional levels of the repertoire are very clearly differentiated, which can, of course, to a certain extent interpenetrate:

**3.1.** Solo performance – play is primarily focused on interpretation itself, it is a form of personal spiritual practice (during lessons under the control of a master), during practice it is, above all, mental and breathing exercise (the person-self relationship), during actual play (‘performances’) the compositions are meditation (the mind concentrates – is moulded – the concurrent realisation and, at the same time, the reverse operation of *honkyoku* compositions – specifically structured breathing (! – *suidan*) and sound clusters interacting with mental processes – (meditation = personal relationship: person – God, the person ‘listens’ – God ‘speaks’).

**3.2.** Collective playing during services – this is collective (spiritual) meditation practice within the framework of liturgical rites. It represents an enhancement of the mentioned process of meditation by the ‘combining’ of the mental-energetic potential of the participating individuals with the aim of communication with the universe (collective relationship: a group of people – God).

**3.3.** Playing as interpersonal communication (relationship: person – people) – instead of verbal expression during interaction with surroundings, during *takuhatsu* – religious mendicancy (it is said that the traditional thanksgiving by means of the *Hachi Gaeshi* – Returning of the bowl – was never amiss), at meetings outside the monastery (whoever met another *komusō* monk would play *Yobi Take* – Calling of the Bamboo, to which the monk concerned would reply with the *Uke Take* – Answer of the Bamboo, then followed by *Gutai kyoku* – Face-to-face Meeting etc.). Compare also the compositions for various situations (e.g. Opening the Gate – *Monbiraki* etc.).

**3.4.** Playing of the *shakuhachi* as a supplementary recreational activity, the special *gikyoku* repertoire was played – compositions for rest and gladness. Needless to say *komusō* were only allowed to play such in the afternoon.

To transcribe such complex structures simply as ‘melodies’ (a succession of intonation steps in an undefined rhythm – similarly to the way the Gregorian Chant is transcribed) is quite inadequate for the purposes of analysis. The result is simply inadequate and gives a misleading orientation in the composition. It is similarly non-functional as orientation in one’s surroundings according to a map without contours – the determining of altitude, without differentiation of mountains, water, forests, routes and rivers etc.

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<sup>4</sup> In the period of the greatest flowering of the Fuke sect in the Edo period (1603 to 1868) 77 temples in the most varied places in Japan were purportedly under their control (Blasdel 1988:108).

## 4. Notation

*Honkyoku* notation probably appeared at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and is said to have originally served as a ‘testimonial’. The master wrote in calligraphy and confirmed it with his personal seal (stamp), as a certification of the hand-over and acceptance of the composition after recognising that the student has mastered it.

Today the notation is above all a mnemonic aid, fixing the order of fingering, and the rising or falling of the tone. It does not determine the extent to which, in principle, it is necessary to listen and memorise<sup>5</sup>, above all, the detailed (often micro-interval) intonation flexion, intonation oscillations (*furi*), timbre elements, special ‘techniques’, often of a sonic character (*atari*, *iki atari*, *muraiki*, vibrato *yuri*, *yuri komi* etc.), that are not possible to be written down.

Some of the *honkyoku* compositions, similarly to the transcription of the originally Zen compositions in the notation of *Kinko ryū*, commonly use characters for diapa-son rhythmitisation taken mostly from *sankyoku* (literally ‘music three’), of chamber genre, which is unthinkable without the rhythmic co-ordination of the players.

These days it is starting to be often even used for play ‘from a score’(!) on the podium, which is perhaps logical for the Tozan school and does not encroach, but, for the 36 *honkyoku* compositions of the Kinko school and particularly in the case of the Myōan school and repertoire, influences excessively – where it manifestly collides with the *honkyoku* Zen essence.

## 5. Tectonic Structure in the *Honkyoku*

**Tectonic structure** – term of Karel Risinger – clearly differentiated formal components of the musical piece (Risinger 1969:12).

### 5.1 Tectonic Structures on the 1<sup>st</sup> Hierarchic Level: Elements and Formulae

**5.1.1 Elements** – tones produced by the flute, basic tonal range and fingering – Ro(d1), Tsu(f1), Re(g1), Chi(a1), Ri(c2), U(as), I(d2), A(c2), sannoU(b2), nishigonoHa(c2) etc., equivalent to speech sounds in speech. Even the elements themselves can come into play during the construction of phrases, though quite exceptionally (e.g. the 1<sup>st</sup> phrase in the *Kyorei* etc.)

### 5.1.2 Formulae

– these always have 2 components:

a) intonation – each has a concrete tonal pitch, which can change in time due to various types of inflection (intonation oscillations – *furi*, temporary lowering of ca 1/4 of tone – *merikomi* etc.) – equivalent to vowels (a,e,i,o,u) in speech.

b) sonic (or timbral!) – various ‘sounds’ as *iki atari* aspirations (accent of breath), over-blow, finger articulation by stroking of the finger over the tone hole – *atari* etc. – equivalent to consonants.

<sup>5</sup> Primary obligation of the student is above all the most exact emulation of his teacher’s own version. The use of his own ideas, variations and personality is quite ruled out in the student stage of playing!

Both of the components together form the characteristic compounded construction elements:

**5.1.3** Archetypes – elements and the simplest, embryonic forms of some formulae, occurring particularly in *Kyorei* composition.

**5.1.2.1** Simple Formula – from 2 or 3 elements with pertinent sonic components, such as HaRo, TsuRe, TsuTsuRe, HaI, ChiU, HiU etc., equivalent to syllables in speech.

**5.1.2.2** Structured Formula – composed from more elements and sonic components concretely organised, e.g. *Reon* – progressively with quickening alternation of 2 tones, HoRoRo, HaRaRo, closing formulae daimeruRoRofuriRofuri – analogous to the ‘Amen’ formulae in Gregorian chants etc., equivalent to words with meaning beyond that of standard sentences, e.g. ‘Raining!’, ‘End!’, ‘Let’s go!’, ‘Enough!’ etc.

**5.1.2.3** Rhythmic Formula – with concrete rhythmic development (occurring only rarely), e.g. KoRoKoRo etc.

**5.2.** Tectonic Structure on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hierarchic Level: Phrase

**5.2.1** Phrase – sections lasting one breath in fuke *honkyoku* (according to the principle of *suidan*, phrase of 1 full breath), composed of elements and formulae. Each phrase can have 1 or more elements or formulae, depending on whether they can be played in 1 breath(!), in *Kokū*, for example, one phrase is made up of 19(!) tones, whilst the beginning of *Kyorei* is a pure *Tsu* element-archetype – 1 long straight fl tone. A phrase is roughly equivalent to a short musical sentence, sometimes it is only a part-component (‘half sentence’) of a higher component to the extent of a short musical sentence.

Phrase in *Koku*, *Yobi Take* – *Uke Take* etc.

**5.3.** Tectonic Structure on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hierarchic Level: Section or ‘Theme’ or ‘Subject’.

**5.3.1** Section - ‘Theme’ – usually formed by a chain of at least two phrases. Introductory ‘theme’ of the composition *Takiochi* – The Falling Waterfall has 6 phrases, for example.

**5.3.2** Characteristic Theme – typical for a given specific composition, mostly used more times as it is usually with the Theme-Subject in European music (e.g. the well-known ‘*Kokū* theme’ – 3 times phrase formed of TsuRe etc.) – equivalent of compounded musical sentences, e.g. one part of binary, ternary or little rondo form etc.

**5.4** Tectonic Structure on the 4<sup>th</sup> Hierarchic Level: Composition, Parts of Composition

**5.4.1** Composition – is formed from a number of such ‘themes’ of the 3<sup>rd</sup> hierarchic level, often very complexly mutually interconnected – by the exercise of known musical compositional processes, such as repetition, variation, ‘thematic and motivic work’, reprise-recapitulation, reminiscence, generic affinity etc. Shorter compositions are structured in this way, e.g. *Chōshi*, *Hifumichō* etc., which correspond to our categories of large forms and can be arranged, for example, like binary form, rondo, variations etc.

**5.4.2** Parts of composition – such a developed and arranged whole is still not necessarily a whole composition, but one of a number of parts, which are always connected attacca, e.g. 5 in *Kokū*, 3 in *Taki Ochi*, 2 in *Kyorei* etc. In that case it could

last more than 20 minutes and corresponds to our cyclic forms but in one movement and without any structural contrast.

## 6. *Kyorei* – key personalities

Jin Nyodo (10.5.1891–18.1.1966) student of Miura Kindo (1875–1940): Scores of *Fudai-ji* version of *Kyorei* and *Kinko Banshikicho* (History of the piece by Jin Nyodo: *Itcho-ken Banshiki*. Please refer to *Kinko-ryu: Banshiki-cho*<sup>6</sup>).

Higuchi Taizan (1856–1914) 35<sup>th</sup> Abbot (Head) of renewed Myōan-ji, connected with Fudai-ji temple in Nagoya, founder of the most important school of the Fuke style *shakuhachi* playing after abolishing Fuke sect in 1871 – Myōan-ji Taizan ryū.

Tanikita Muchiku (1878–1957) 37<sup>th</sup> Head, disciple of Higuchi Taizan (his recording of *Kyorei* is probably oldest known).

Sōshin Yoshimura (1904–?) 40<sup>th</sup> Head (Recorded 3 CDs complete of Myōan-ji *honkyoku* pieces).

Watazumi (12.1911–14.12.1992) Tanaka Yūhi, later known as Watazumi (Wadatsumi Fumon or Watazumi dōso) studied at Kyūshū, student of Rogetsu Tsunoda, founder of 9<sup>th</sup> line of Myōan – Itchōken Fukkō ha, also known Myōan Manshō ha (Lee 1992:157).

Kinko Kurosawa (1710–1771) Kinko *ryu* composition *Shin Kyorei* (Right-or Pure *Kyorei*) is Kinko’s version of Fuke *Kyotaku* and the piece *Banshikicho* is very similar to *Kyorei*.

Kawase II Junsuke (1906–1977) *Kinko ryū Banshikicho* and *Shin Kyorei*.

## 7. Comparison of the different versions of *Kyorei*

**7.1** Elements and Formulae used in *Kyorei* of Jin Nyodo (Hierarchic Level 1)

Tsu(1), TsuRe(2) sometimes only Re, U(3)merikomi sometimes just U, /sanno/URi(4), RiI(5), meriTsuRo(6), daimerRo(7)

**7.2** Phrase – always played on one full breath (Level 2)

Such as appended phrase no. 5: RiI-I-I-Ri-Ri-I-/

**7.3** Themes – subjects in the *Kyorei* (Level 3)

tectonic algorithm of the composition:

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<sup>6</sup> ‘In the past, this piece was used on ceremonial occasions at *Itcho-ken* temple of Fuke sect. Since the Ri-tone on a 1.9 flute corresponds to *banshiki* – b natural – and the principal tone of this piece is Ri, when this piece is played on a 1.9 flute it produces an exact *banshiki* tuning. Special features of the piece: The piece is played with *kyosui* without any embellishments. It has an overall feeling of simplicity and spaciousness but also certain mournfulness’ – from [www.komuso.com](http://www.komuso.com).

a – 1<sup>st</sup> shape of ‘Cephalic Theme (subject)’ – 1/2/3/4/

a’ – 2<sup>nd</sup> shape of ‘Cephalic Theme (subject)’ – 1/2/3/2+/  
Transformation of the ‘Cephalic Theme’:

a1: 1/2/3/4/ a2: 1/23/4/ a3: 123/4/

a1’: 1/2/3/2+/ a2’: 1/23/2+/ a3’: 123/2+/  
Mathematical Algorithm of Work with the ‘Cephalic Theme’:

a1,a2,a3...,a2...,a1’, a2’,a3’..., a2, a1/: (1 part of the composition) phrase 1/2/3/  
1/23/ 123/ .../1/23/... /1/2/3/ 1/23/ 123/... /1/23/ – and transformation of numbers:

a2,a3...,a2,a3...,a2.../: (2<sup>nd</sup> part of composition) /1/23/ 123/... /1/23/ 123/... /1/23//

b – 2<sup>nd</sup> theme: 4+/5/

c – 3<sup>rd</sup> theme: 6/6/6/7/7-/  
7.4 Parts of the Composition (Level 4)

2 parts: A A’

7.5 Formal Schemes of the *Kyorei* (Hierarchic Level 5):  
*Kyorei* Composition, as well as part of the set of compositions called ‘Three Clas-

sical Masterpieces’ – *Sankyorei*

**A**

	a1	a2	a3	b1	a2	b1
otsu	1/2/3/4/	1/23/4/	123/4/	4+/5-/	1/23/4/	4+/5/
	a’1	a’2	a’3	c	a2	
	1/2/3/2+/	1/23/2+/	123/2+/	6/6/6/7/7-/	1/23/4’//	
<b>A’(dash)</b>						
	a3	b2	a’2	a’3	c	a2
	123/4’/	4+’/5’/	kan 1/23’/2+/	123’/2+/	6/6/6/7/7-/	otsu 1/23/4’//

*Kyorei* – *Fudaiji* version of **Jin Nyodo**

(Number of phrases = breaths: A 33+A’ 17 = 50)

**A**

**A’**

<b>Kan</b>		a’2 a’3 c
Otsu	a1 a2 a3 b1 a2 b1 a’1 a’2 a’3 c a2	a3 b2 a2

(*Otsu* – lower octave, *kan* – higher octave)

*Kyorei* – version of **Tanikita Muchiku**

(Number of phrases = breaths: A 33+A’ 21 = 54)

**A**

**A’**

<b>Kan</b>	a1 a2 a3 <b>b1</b> a2 <b>b2</b> a’1 a’2 a’3 c	
Otsu		a2 a3 <b>b3</b> a’2 a’3 c <b>a1</b>

*Kyorei* – version of **Yoshimura Sōshin**  
(Number of phrases = breaths: A 33+A' 22 = 55)

	A	A'
<b>Kan</b>	a1 a2 a3 <b>b1</b> a2 b' [?] a'1 a'2 a'3 c	
<b>Otsu</b>		a2 a2[a3?] <b>b1</b> a'2 a'3 c' [c?] a'2

*Kyorei* – manuscript version of **Higuchi Taizan**  
(Number of phrases = breaths: A 31+A' 20 = 51)

	A	A'
<b>Kan</b>	a3 a3 a3 b a3 b a'3 a'3 a'3 <b>c1</b>	
<b>Otsu</b>		a3 a3 b a'3 a'3 <b>c2</b> a3

*Kyorei* – printed version (1891) of **Higuchi Taizan**  
(Number of phrases = breaths: A 26+A' 16 = 42)

	A	A'
<b>Kan</b>	a3 a3 a3 b a3 b a'3 a'3 a'3 <b>c</b>	
<b>Otsu</b>		a3 a3 b a'3 a'3 <b>c</b> a3

*Kyorei* – 1<sup>st</sup> version of **Okamoto Chikugai**  
(Number of phrases = breaths: A 33+A' 23 = 56)  
Compare to version of Tanikita Muchiku!

	A	A'
<b>Kan</b>	a1 a2 a3 b1 <b>a1</b> b2 a'1 a'2 a'3 c	
<b>Otsu</b>		a2 a3 <b>b1</b> a'2 a'3 c a1

*Kyorei* – 2<sup>nd</sup> version of **Okamoto Chikugai**  
(Number of phrases = breaths: A 32)

	A
<b>Kan</b>	
<b>Otsu</b>	a1 a2 a3 b a2 b a'1 a'2 a'3 c a2

*Kyorei* – version of **Watazumi**  
(Number of phrases = breaths: A 25)

	A
<b>Kan</b>	a'1 c
<b>Otsu</b>	a.4 <b>a2</b> b a'3 c a.4 a.4'

*Banshikicho* – version of **Jin Nyodo**  
(Number of phrases = breaths: A 29+A' 23 = 52)

	A	A'
<b>Kan</b>	a3 b a3 b a3 b a'3 a'3 a'3 c	c
Otsu	4.a	a3 b a3 b a3 b a'3 a'3 a'3 4.a

## Conclusion

The musical language of the *shakuhachi honkyoku* very closely corresponds to the primarily sacred – meditation focus of this tradition. Motion is completely subordinated to the principle of controlled breathing, and is always bordering on motion stagnation (under 40 beats-pulses in a minute). Static motion and the sacred context inhibit the possible formative function of melodic components, and it is really timbre that functions as the holder of important connections.

The analysis and subsequent systematisation of the elements of the musical language of fukezen *shakuhachi honkyoku* has also, I hope, shown that such compositions can function not only as means to very effective meditation practice, but also can simultaneously operate as highly refined and sophisticated musical artefacts, whose principles are surprisingly close to our own western musical thinking.

In that sense *Kyorei*, also known as *Kyotaku*, is a quite unique composition in the overall context of the *honkyoku*. It includes only a few of the many structural elements used in the *honkyoku*, using them always in an archetypal and rudimentary form devoid of surface glitter. And so the piece represents the embodiment of the pure essence of ‘blowing zen’.



1. *Kyorei* – Empty Bell of Higuchi Taizan, 35<sup>th</sup> Head of Myōan-ji temple



2. *Kyorei* – *Fudaiji* version of *Jin Nyodo* – phrases

1	2	3	4	1	23	4	123	4	4+
5	1	23	4	4+	5	1	2	3	2+
1	23	2+	123	2+	6	6	6	7	7-
1	23	4	123	4	4+	5	1	23	2+
123	2+	6	6	6	7	7-	1	23	4+

As a result of the structural analysis and comparison of different versions of the piece from the point of view of a music theory it would be quite reasonable to perceive this as a sort of prototype that inspired the creation of all the other compositions in the fuke *honkyoku* repertory. And so even if cannot be proved its origin in Tang dynasty China surely it is very probably the most ancient and seeds composition of the whole Fuke tradition.

## Discography for reference listening

(For research purpose only there is as well the demo-recording of Kifu Mitsuhashi available in the author's recording library).

Kifu Mitsuhashi, *The Art of the Shakuhachi vol.2* 2003, audio CD, Celestial Harmonies, 13225-2.

Shimura Satoshi, *Kokan-Shakuhachi 1 (Hamamatsu Museum of Musical Instruments)* 2005, audio CD, Kojima Rec., LMCD-1786.

Vlastislav Matoušek, *Calligraphy II* 2004, audio CD, Nextera, KMA s.r.o. LK 0146-2.

Vlastislav Matoušek, *Taki Ochi* 2003, audio CD, ARTA, F1 0119.

Watazumido, *Hotchiku* 2000, audio CD, Universal Music K.K., Polydor, UDC-499.

Yoshimura Sōshin, *The Anthology of Myōan-ji transmitted Shakuhachi Honkyoku* 1995, 3 audio CDs, KM-199501.

*Recordings of Jin Nyodo* 1998, 6 audio CDs, Teichiku Records Co., XL-70134-6, XL-70137-9.

Tanikita Muchiku, *Shakuhachi honkyoku of Myōan-ji XXXVII* Head HT-01, HT-02, HT-03, vol. I-III.

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