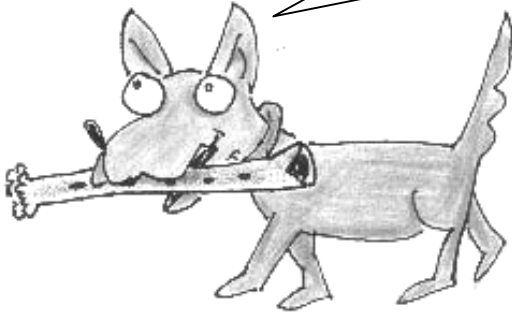

AUSTRALIAN SHAKUHACHI SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Nr. 11 Nov - Dec 2002

P.O. Box 63. Woodford, NSW. 2778

*Is this the world's oldest
Shakuhachi - no its just smells
that way*



This edition has a substantial contribution from Andrew MacGregor about his recent visit to both the **Tokyo International Shakuhachi Summit 2002** and **International Shakuhachi Training Centre Workshop at Bisei** plus - yes there is more! - up and coming events in **Melbourne in 2003**.

The above cartoon [but not the captions] and the one at the end of the newsletter is by Marieke Lee, submitted by Patricia & Riley Lee.

Contributions long, medium or short are always welcome as is calligraphy etc, pictures and anything interesting pertaining to the shakuhachi! You can always email me: ranftg@webone.com.au

Graham Ranft News Editor

Zen saki ni suzume naku nari haru no ame

*before the table
the sparrow chirps...
spring rain*

Issa 1803

From the President

Performance at the Cowra Japanese Gardens by "Blowing Zen" Oct 2002

This experience was wonderful. Cowra is a town not too distant from Sydney for the weekend to be relaxing and enjoyable, with the added enjoyment of being with friends and having fun playing music. On Sat we performed at the Japanese Gardens being lead by Bronwyn. We had been practising for a few months. Were they practises or an excuse to enjoy food and playing shakuhachi?

Anyway it was enjoyable, and Bronwyn lead us very capably to a special experience. Although the pressure was there, the gardens are a very peaceful, tranquil and special place. John, Sarah and I were the backup line, with Lockie taking all the photos. We played 10am -5pm. Sat. Unfortunately they wanted us to perform on Sun and as we only found out on the Sat we were not able to do so.

Bronwyn performed at the reconciliation ceremony at the cemetery on Sun. It was very moving. We were all prepared to leave when John was asked if he would break the sake barrel. He was almost in tears as he was unable to, as at 12noon he would be on the road home. We all left a little sad, but very humbled to have experienced such a lovely weekend spent in the company of friends and playing the shakuhachi.

Blowing Zen is our performing group. If you wish to participate contact Cathy at: kevlock@bigpond.com

We have no upcoming performances as yet for 2003.

Notice Regarding 2003 Canberra Folk Festival

Blowing Zen has been unsuccessful with our application for the Canberra Folk Festival 2003. There were apparently over 600 applications for this year's Festival.

We have been asked to apply again in 2004. We will talk about this next time we meet but I feel these performances encourage us to practise and meet with members, thus offering an opportunity to play shakuhachi.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

President of Shakuhachi Australia.

Sydney Festival

East Meets West

Australian Chamber Orchestra
Roland Peelman conductor

Riley Lee - Shakuhachi

Satsuke Odamura & Shoko Ono - Kotos

Anthony Chesterman - Oboe

East Meets West journeys via the court music of Purcell and Bach to the ancient spiritual sounds of the shakuhachi and koto in the Aust premieres of "To the Cherry Blossom" and "Glass Tears".

Verbruggen Hall, Conservatorium of Music

24 Jan 7:30pm

Book on line www.sydneyfestival.org.au



MELBOURNE 2002 3rd AUSTRALIAN SHAKUHACHI FESTIVAL

Here are some statistics of our festival. Numbers of people attending, especially by overseas visitors, were significantly affected by world events.

Registrants for workshops: (48 Australia, 20 Japan)	68
Accompanying Persons (3 Australia, 3 Japan)	6
Total attendees: (51 Australia, 23 Japan)	74

SHAKUHACHI

Total:	53
(14 female, 39 male)	
From Australia	37
(13 female, 24 male, 2 can speak Japanese)	
From Japan	16
(1 female, 15 male)(1 American)	
From France	1
Teachers	8
(4 Australia, 4 Japan)	
VIC	14
NSW	11
QLD	4
ACT	2
SA	2
WA	2
TAS	1

KOTO

Total	16
(13 female, 3 male)	
From Australia	11
(8 female, 3 male, 3 can speak Japanese)	
From Japan	5
(5 female)(1 American)	
Teachers	1
(Japan)	
Assistant Teachers	4
(2 Australia, 2 Japan)	
Born in Japan	6
VIC	9
NSW	1
ACT	1

ASS NEWS

Wendy Shore (a past pres.) and partner Phil Merriman, celebrated the birth of their child Greta in October. Congrats to all.

After a long absence Ian Scott has returned to the fold.....good to see you again Ian.

New members (or old ones renewing) since the start of September; Ian Scott, Wendy Shore, Charles McNee, David Kotlowy, Anne Norman, Kym Mobbs, Rupert Summerson, Janusz Sysak, Fiona Dawes, David Morgan, Ian Cullen, David Dixon, Jim Franklin, Graham Ranft, Adam Simmons.

The ASS performing group "**Blowing Zen**" was at Cowra for the Sakura Festival. They played in the Japanese gardens on the Saturday. The four performances were well attended, and the odd piece that drifted over the gardens emanating from hidden places within the shrubbery during the breaks between the gigs had many people entranced (or maybe puzzled), but many commented that it gave extra enjoyment to the lovely display. Then on the Sunday Bronwyn Kirkpatrick played at the morning cemetery services for the Australian and Japanese lost at Cowra. This was a very moving experience, as firstly the fine morning mist muted colours and then a little gentle rain and the beautiful sound of a single shakuhachi gave the occasion a solemn feel and made the hairs rise on some of our necks. Thank you Bronwyn - well done.

John was asked to crack open the sake barrel on the Sunday but had to decline because Sydney commitments dictated leaving straight after the ceremony. By the way, if Lockie (Cathy's partner) ever gives you a "quick" way home.....be careful.

All arrived home safely, and a gig well done as we were asked to attend next year.

Cheers for now.....John Holmes

New Arrival



Phil and Wendy Shore are pleased to announce the safe arrival of a beautiful baby girl, Greta Elizabeth Merriman, on 26 September 2002. She is gorgeous and a real 'G.E.M'. She weighed 3820 gms (8 lbs. 7 oz.) and was 52 cm long and has a nice crop of dark hair.

Love Wendy, Phil & Greta



Riley & Marshal at the end of their recent concert at Mt Stromlo Observatory in Canberra where they played pieces from their CD's - Spring Sea, Floating World, Awakening and Deep Night.



Tokyo International Shakuhachi Summit 2002

Andrew MacGregor

The Tokyo Shakuhachi Summit was a truly magnificent experience. It is held every four years and I would strongly recommend students of shakuhachi to make the effort and attend. Like our Australian Festivals, the main benefit is to mix with the community of shakuhachi players rather than to specifically learn music in such a short time. Mostly you will find that it is such a friendly and warm community.

The "Australian" contingent of four at the festival comprised Riley Lee, Jim Franklin and Stuart Ransom. About 20 "international" players attended from countries such as America, Germany and France. Overall, there were some 250 registrants.

The Sunday concert was a blast and went for at least 7 hours, with three 5 minute breaks! For everything at the festival, there was no provision for non-Japanese speakers/readers, the program being solely in Japanese. I had the unfortunate experience of leaving the concert hall for a few minutes, and returning just as Aoki Reibo, Living National Treasure, was taking his bows.

At this concert there were some major personal highlights. Firstly, there was the playing of "Saji" by Shirt Koko, from Kyushu who is still living as a Komusho. He played a very long (maybe 3.2) shakuhachi with the root-end resting on the floor. The piece was played with a rapidly pulsating komi buki and with extreme tenderness. The strength of spirit in the playing enveloped the concert hall and left the audience in a seemingly trance-like state. It was quite an amazing experience.

Yokoyama Katsuya sensei conducted a great number of performers of "Takuma" who circled the audience. Afterwards, Yokoyama sensei was overcome with emotion. This was a truly treasured occasion.

Fukuda Teruhisa, the player who usually plays in Yoshizaki's CD's that I really like, played a modern piece "Kyōchiku" by Izumi Kōji on 7 hole shakuhachi. This was a performance of mesmerizing brilliance with "metaphysical" displays of technique, sensitivity and power.

Yamamoto Hōzan, recently awarded National Living Treasure status, played one of his own compositions, "Take no Gunzō", in four parts together with his solo part. He sat in the center with eight superb players surrounding him. This performance, with such a high level of playing and perfection of ensemble technique was in itself worth traveling to Japan to witness.

Having mentioned these performances it is difficult to not mention others, like Takemitsu's "Eclipse" by Kakizakai Kaoru and Nakamura Kakujō (Biwa), or "Bamboo Metamorphoses", for mass shakuhachi choir. The daunting prospect of sitting through such a long concert evaporated in a state of sheer delight.

There were other concerts and so many workshops given by great musicians: Jiuta, Randō duets with piano, Haru no Umi, honkyoku, komusō presentations, Enka “karaoke”, “How to Play”, “How to Make”, “How to harvest Bamboo”, computer programming, Min’yō, and much more, and an interesting shakuhachi competition.

It was rewarding to meet so many of our “friends” from previous Australian Shakuhachi Festivals, and the realization of the importance and status of our own Australian Shakuhachi Festivals struck home.

One salient point was the small audience (about 350) at the main Sunday concert. Apart from the registrants at the festival, of which there were in the order of 250, there was very little attendance from the general public, and this must have been disappointing for the organizers.

Videos and DVD’s of all aspects of the festival, including the concerts, may be ordered by contacting:
Tokyo International Shakuhachi Summit 2002 Organising Committee
Email: summit@shaku8.com

Our heartfelt thanks go to the sponsors, supporters, organizers and attendees.
Please make every effort to attend future International Shakuhachi Festivals.

Andrew MacGregor

SHAKUHACHI IN MELBOURNE 2003

There will be three major events in Melbourne during 2003, and they are:

January 24th - February 10th: Tour to Australia by koto player **Haruko Watanabe**. Haruko has performed with Ensemble Nipponia and Miyata Kōhachirō, and plays 20 string koto.

May/June: Visit to Melbourne by **Tajima Tadashi** (Head of Jikishō School) and his students. The highlight will be a concert at the beautiful St Michael’s Church in Collins Street, Sunday 1st June at 12.30pm. All students are encouraged to join the performance of **Sanya** (Three Valleys) using 2.55 shakuhachi.

August: Tour by koto/shamisen player **Miho Yamaji** who many will remember from our last festival. Performances will include a concert at Melba Hall on Saturday 30th August where “**Double Concerto**” by Toshio Funakawa will be performed with Concordia Mandolin and Guitar Ensemble, Yukari Echo, Japanese Women’s Chorus, and as many shakuhachi players as we can muster.

LOOKING FOR PERFORMERS IN MELBOURNE, AUGUST 30TH 2003

On Saturday 30th August 2003, there will be a concert at Melba Hall and we are looking for shakuhachi players willing to perform. The pieces proposed are:

Hito Omo U Uta (comp. Bondai Fujii)
Double Concerto (comp. Toshio Funakawa)

Both will be joint performances with:

Concordia Mandolin & Guitar Ensemble and **Yukari Echo**, Japanese Women’s Chorus.

This will be a unique (probably once in a lifetime) opportunity to perform these challenging and inspiring pieces. We hope to have more than 12 shakuhachi players. It will require a major commitment from each performer. Interstate performers must be available for rehearsals on at least the Wednesday prior to the concert.

We would especially like to welcome players from interstate (esp. with 2.4 shaku) to join us in Melbourne. Please contact Andrew MacGregor on 03 9739 7340 or info@japanworldmusic.com.



International Shakuhachi Training Centre Workshop Bisei

Friday 30th September – Sunday 1st October

Teachers: Yokoyama Katsuya, Iwahashi Yōichi, Kakizakai Kaoru, Furuya Teruo, Matama Kazushi,

This weekend-workshop was held in Bisei, the home town of Yokoyama Katsuya, in the mountains near Okayama city. These workshops are held twice a year. Two similar workshops are held in the Tokyo region each year.

The venue was a community center which is an old school complex, ideal for this purpose having many classrooms, lounges, kitchen/dining room. Accommodation is generally dormitory style. This was the location for the First International Shakuhachi Festival. The Japanese baths (ofuro) could be accessed any time of the day or night.

We were picked up from Shin Kurashiki station and driven by bus to Bisei. There were about 40 registrants, from all walks of life and from mainly west Japan. Some were experienced players and some rank beginners. For some, this was their first experience playing honkyoku. For example, we met one player who had only played Min’yō and who came out of curiosity. There were 8 female players and I was the only non-Japanese.

We met many “friends” who had come to Australia for past festivals and many wore T-shirts from these festivals.

First Day

2.00 Registration
 3.00 – 6.00 Reibo workshop
 6.00 – 7.15 Dinner (beautiful sashimi)
 7.15 – 8.30 Student Mini-concert (open to all)
 8.30 – 9.00 “Shakuhachi in Australia” by Kyoko Ogawa and Andrew MacGregor
 (with many plugs for the next Gold Coast Festival!)
 9.00 - ??? Many private groups playing, rehearsing, talking, etc. Lively discussions and general partying proceeded in the notorious “Dormitory 4” and elsewhere. My last recollection was of a beautiful rendition on Haru no Umi (Furuya sensei I believe, with piano accompaniment) at about 3.00am as I floated between sleep and consciousness.

Second Day

8.00 – 9.00 Breakfast
 9.00 – 12.00 Tabibito no Uta, Gekkō Rōteki (both Fukuda Randō)
 12.00 – 1.30 Lunch
 1.20 – 4.00 Individual Lessons. Each could choose to have a short lesson (15 min) with the teacher of their choice for whatever music they liked. Or just to ask advice about playing in general.
 4.00 – 5.30 Concert Practice (at the Local Concert Hall)
 6.00 - 7.30 O’Bentō dinner
 8.00 – 10.00 Concert.

CONCERT PROGRAMME

1. San’ya honkyoku, with many shakuhachi around the theater.

2. Jōgen no Kyoku comp. Sawai Tadao.
 Miho Yamaji (koto), Andrew MacGregor

3. Shiki no nihon koyō Miho Yamaji koto students together with many shakuhachi players.
 Our own Saeko Kitai (Sawai koto teacher from Melbourne who next year will reside in Brisbane), and Peter Head, koto player from Melbourne currently studying composition at a University in Kyoto, both joined in this performance as well as some others. This music was work-shopped at the Melbourne Festival.

4. Kikyo gensōkyoku Fukuda Randō played by Mr. Nishijima.
 This was in celebration of his recent recognition award. Some of you may remember Mr. Nishijima, over 80 years old, and who has attended all three Australia Shakuhachi Festivals.

5. Tōginuta Miyagi Michio. Miho Yamaji koto students with many shakuhachi players.

6. Ajikan Honkyoku played by Nakamori Akihiko. This was also in celebration of his recent recognition award.

7. Ryūkyū Minyō ni yoru kumikyoku Makino Yutaka
 International Shakuhachi Training Centre teachers with Nakatsuka koto players.

8. Yumeginga Shakuhachi Trio played by (Kakizakai Kaoru, Furuya Teruo, Matama Kazushi), International Shakuhachi Training Centre teachers.

9. Fushigi kenbunroku Yoshizaki Katsuhiko
 Many shakuhachi with Yamaji koto players. All soloists wore Melbourne Shakuhachi Festival Polo-shirts! This music was played at the Melbourne Shakuhachi Festival earlier this year.

This was a varied and interesting program.

9.50 - ??? Party. What more can one say other than some of my greatest impressions and memories of Shakuhachi in Japan seem to surround after-concert parties. “Dormitory 4” in full-swing at 2.00am when I retired.

Third Day (Sunday)

8.30 – 9.30 Breakfast
 9.30 – 11.30 Review all music
 12.00 – 12.30 Lunch
 12.35 Sayonara.

It should be noted that there were always “other” workshops in progress to accommodate players with varying requirements and levels.

Yokoyama Katsuya sensei attended all workshops and concerts. Whilst he is more frail in body, his comments and advice were sharp and focused. He has not lost his ability to criticize his good students! He displayed serenity not present when we last visited some two years ago.

Some of his most valuable comments included:

- Shakuhachi playing can be thought of as similar to playing of strings (such as violin) and one can try to emulate that ‘continuous’ emission of sound/energy.
- As you reduce the sound (diminuendo) keep the energy level high. The player must have a strong image for ‘pianissimo’ and well as for ‘forte’. You must “wish” for that.
- If you do not know the music by heart it is not honkyoku.
- Playing posture must be ‘natural’ and relaxed. Inhale well, exhale well. Such simple but important things are easy to forget.
- Visualize the shakuhachi “tube” as extending into your body to make a very “long” shakuhachi.
- Vary the dynamics of your playing and as a result, natural phrasing and timing become ‘obvious’.

This weekend workshop was a wonderful experience and I encourage everyone to consider participating. The cost was ¥45,000 per player (about AUS\$675).

For information on future workshops, please contact Kakizakai Kaoru at:

Email: comso@ps.ksky.ne.jp

Andrew MacGregor

Pictures from Bisei



Workshops



Saturday concert playing "Fishing kenbunroku"



Left to right: Yuko Okada, Yokoyama Katsuya sensei, Miho Yamaji

Pictures: Andrew MacGregor



"Does a shakuhachi player have bone - nature?"

Won Chu Bono [Early shakuhachi master]



The Breath of Nature

Yu replied: I understand:
The music of the earth sings through a thousand holes.
The music of man is made on flutes and instruments.
What makes the music of heaven?

Master Ki said:
Something is blowing on a thousand holes.
Some power stands behind all this and makes the sounds die down.
What is this power?





This is a 3-day intensive offering a myriad of shakuhachi related workshops, presentations, tuition with Australian & Japanese teachers for all levels, cultural & social interaction, and the opportunity to perform in a concert to promote deeper understanding of the tradition that is Shakuhachi.

The Shakuhachi Festival will be held in conjunction with the Queensland Sacred Music Festival, to be held on the Gold Coast, which presents a series of concerts that explore the passage of spirituality through traditional cultural music. Teachers and participants will perform at this festival offering the instrument to a wider audience.

25 - 28TH APRIL 2003

The Aust. Shakuhachi Festival will be held at Kindilan Educatin Centre, Redland Bay between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. **Public Concert:** Gold Coast Arts Centre
25th.....3pm onRegistration, welcoming drinks and dinner. Informal concert
26th..... workshops/tuition 27th.....workshops/tuition, evening public concert
28th..... Workshops/tuition , Farewell Dinner

For enquiries: Carl (07) 3379 7859 / Stuart (07) 5441 6538
Or shakuhachi2003@yahoo.com.au

Fourth Australian Shakuhachi Festival

25-28 April 2003

Workshop: Kindilan Centre, Redland Bay,
between Brisbane and the Gold Coast

Concert: Gold Coast Arts Centre

The 4th Australian Shakuhachi Festival will be an intensive 3-days of shakuhachi, offering a myriad of shakuhachi related workshops, presentations, tuition with leading Japanese and Australian teachers for all levels and interests, cultural and social interaction, and the opportunity to perform in a public concert to promote a deeper understanding of the shakuhachi tradition.

The Festival will be held in conjunction with the Queensland Sacred Music Festival. The Queensland Sacred Music Festival presents a series of concerts that explore the passage of spirituality through traditional cultural music. ASF teachers and participants will give one of these concerts at the Gold Coast Arts Centre.

The cost and teacher line up will be similar to previous ASF's. The workshop venue is comfortable and spacious, with two levels of accommodation, dormitory style and twin share. There will be a small price difference. The festival is already being advertised in Japan on the Web site of the International Shakuhachi Research Centre (who have organised the previous Japanese groups).

Further information on registration fees and program details will be sent as soon as possible.

For enquiries or further information, please contact: Carl (07) 3379 7859 / Stuart (07) 5441 6538
or email: shakuhachi2003@yahoo.com.au