SHAKUHACHI IN THE UNITED STATES: TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES AND
DICHOTOMIES

SARAH RENATA STROTHERS

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

August 2010

Committee:

David Harnish, Advisor

Katherine Meizel
ABSTRACT

David Harnish, Advisor

The shakuhachi is a bamboo flute that came to Japan from China during the Nara Period (646-794 CE) and has since been affiliated with traditional Japanese culture. Thanks to the processes of globalization, the shakuhachi and other indigenous Japanese traditions have flourished in other parts of the world, especially in the United States. In the U.S., a shakuhachi subculture has developed in recent decades, consisting of shakuhachi camps, online and in-person forums, lessons with licensed teachers, and performances/concerts. This shakuhachi subculture is flourishing and growing intensely; however, there is very little ethnomusicological research on this growing phenomenon that is making its mark in the United States. Within the past two years, I have been investigating this subculture by joining the community as a student shakuhachi player, as a member of the shakuhachi web forums, and by attending shakuhachi camps and performances. This ethnomusicological project explores the dynamics of the shakuhachi subculture by tracing the shakuhachi’s history to and practices within the United States. It also provides an explanation of the instrument’s transnationality by highlighting the different dichotomies and boundaries that are transcended, “landscaped,” and “glocalized.”
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. David Harnish and Dr. Katherine Meizel for their unrelenting support, patience, and inspiring suggestions; they are vital ingredients for my passion for ethnomusicology. I would also like to thank the shakuhachi camp participants that graciously answered my questions and allowed me to record the endless amounts of audio/video. A special thank you goes to Micheal Chikuzen Gould and Ronnie Nyogetsu Reinshin Seldin who have been extremely generous in sharing their knowledge with me and being tremendously helpful by allowing me to conduct fieldwork at their camps. Last but not least, a Dai-Shihan thank you goes to Sensei Gould for his contagious attitude, excellent teaching skills, and much needed friendship.
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For this project, I immersed myself in the *shakuhachi* community in the United States in order to gain a deeper understanding of the end-blown Japanese bamboo flute, shakuhachi, and the unique social relationships that surround it. My decision to start playing shakuhachi was born out of a deeply rooted passion for the repertoire, an admiration of all aspects of Japanese culture, and due to my overall captivation with the shakuhachi community in the United States. I bought a student model shakuhachi (a Shakuhachi Yuu flute), took private lessons with *Dai-Shihan* (grand master) Micheal Chikuzen Gould, joined various shakuhachi forums, and attended shakuhachi camps. This thesis relies heavily on the ethnographies completed during my lessons with Sensei Gould and Sensei Seldin and my attendance at the Chikuzen Ro Camp and KiSuiAn Shakuhachi Camp. Library and archival examinations were other methodologies used to supplement the research on this project. The data gathered from fieldwork was collected on audio/video devices and consist of lesson instruction, shakuhachi camp instruction, live performances, interviews, and photographs. It is my desire that this musical ethnography will promote and encourage more ethnographies about shakuhachi communities in the United States, not only within shakuhachi camps but also at shakuhachi festivals, performances, and studios. Ultimately, I hope that this thesis will help the reader gain an understanding of the shakuhachi’s growing presence and importance in the United States without disregarding its Japanese roots.

It is important to note that different resources on the history of Japanese music use different dates for the historical periods of Japan. For this thesis, I have decided to use the dates provided in Riley Lee’s dissertation, “Yearning For the Bell: A Study of Transmission in the Shakuhachi Honkyoku Tradition” (1992), because of the careful detail in his work, which
included thorough study of Japanese archives, and his commitment to the instrument that led to his becoming a Dai Shihan. In addition to the many discrepancies about the dates of historical periods, different sources use different diacritic spellings for the words *komosō* and *komusō* (two slightly different monks of past centuries). To keep consistent, I use the following diacritic realizations of the words throughout the thesis: komosō and komusō. Finally, all foreign words are italicized until they are defined. Once they are defined, these words appear in standard type.

**About this Project**

The shakuhachi is a bamboo flute that originated in China during the T’ang Dynasty (early 7th century CE). The instrument was imported to Japan during the Nara period (646-794) and was initially included in the early *gagaku* court ensemble. While in Japan, the shakuhachi went from being a court instrument, to a religious tool utilized by Buddhist monks of the Fuke sect, and eventually to a secular musical instrument that performed solo and ensemble music. Since then, through the results of transculturation, popularization, and globalization, the shakuhachi (and other indigenous Japanese instruments) has become, or is becoming, a transnational phenomenon by finding “homes” in other countries like Australia, Denmark, and the United States. The transnationality of the shakuhachi “subcultures” can further be noted by the development outside of Japan of shakuhachi societies (The International Shakuhachi Society, The European Shakuhachi Society, The Australian Shakuhachi Society, and The Seattle Shakuhachi Society just to name a few), shakuhachi festivals (for example, the World Shakuhachi Festival, European Shakuhachi Festival, and the New York Shakuhachi Festival), online web forums (Mujitsu and Tairaku’s Shakuhachi BBQ and The International Shakuhachi
For this project, I was able to complete fieldwork at the KiSuiAn Shakuhachi Camp and at the Chikuzen Ro Camp. The sensei that organized the KiSuiAn Shakuhachi Camp is Ronnie Nyogetsu Reinshin Seldin and Micheal Chikuzen Gould ran the Chikuzen Ro Camp. Both Sensei Gould and Sensei Seldin are well-accomplished players that have performed and taught shakuhachi all over world. Their experiences with Japanese culture and music make them exceptional teachers and good candidates for ethnomusicological study.

The purpose of this project is to: 1) present a brief history of the shakuhachi, 2) explain how the shakuhachi became popular in the United States, and 3) establish a theoretical framework that provides an explanation of the shakuhachi’s popularization abroad. The questions this thesis attempts to answer are: 1) How much does traditional shakuhachi repertoire shape today's shakuhachi player? And, 2) How has shakuhachi pedagogy changed over the years?

Chapter one of this thesis provides a brief history of the shakuhachi that starts from the instrument’s inception into gagaku and ends with the dissolution of the Fuke sect. Significant events and persons involved in the tradition are also discussed. Much information is drawn from The Shakuhachi A Manual for Learning by Christopher Yohmei Blasdel and Kamisangō Yūkō (2008, Printed Matter Press) and the dissertation “Yearning For the Bell: A Study of

\^ There are other shakuhachi forums but these appear to be the most popular.
Transmission in the Shakuhachi Honkyoku” by Riley Lee (1992, University of Sydney); readers may consult these texts for further historic details.

Chapter two discusses the shakuhachi’s prevalence in the secular music genre after the Fuke sect was completely dissolved. This section gives a brief overview of the different types of secular music that the shakuhachi played and highlights major figures that were important to the shakuhachi’s “new” function in the secular music genre. Overall, chapter one and chapter two are meant to present the reader with sufficient background information on the histories linked to the shakuhachi in order to establish an important foundation for the following chapters in this thesis.

Chapter three traces the shakuhachi's proliferation to the West, mainly to the United States. This section discusses the movements and major figures that were influential to the popularization of the shakuhachi. In addition, I survey some of the different activities and people who create and define the shakuhachi subculture in the U.S.

Chapter four describes some of the traditional repertoire that was attached to the shakuhachi in Japan. This section provides the reader with a basic groundwork about the different types of traditional music for the shakuhachi that will be helpful for chapter five’s discussion on pedagogy. Chapter four also explores the different genres of music played by shakuhachi musicians that have served to expand the traditional repertoire.

In chapter five, the different aspects of shakuhachi pedagogy that are utilized in Japan and in the United States are presented. Through the analysis of ethnographic data, I provide the reader with a perspective of how the shakuhachi is taught in both countries via the repertoires that are available for the instrument. In this section, I also evaluate the methodologies of shakuhachi pedagogy (traditional and present) and analyze the integration of Western techniques and new technologies that are utilized in the teaching of shakuhachi.
The Conclusion explores my involvement with the shakuhachi, summarizes the findings of this music ethnography, and discusses areas for future research.

**Literature Review**

One of the earliest published musicological studies on indigenous Japanese music and musical instruments is Katsumi Sanaga’s *Japanese Music* (1936). Many other materials have emerged since then to expand the catalog of Japanese music research and most of these sources cover different perspectives of traditional Japanese music and its association with culture. For example, Harich-Schneider (1973) and Malm (1959 and 2000) provide detailed histories of the canon of indigenous Japanese music and musical instruments. These works have allowed me to construct a solid foundation of the history of indigenous Japanese music. Gutzwiller (1974), Lee (1992), and Blasdel (2008) mainly concentrate on the history of the shakuhachi. Their accounts of the shakuhachi’s histories are very comprehensive partially because they focus only on one instrument. These sources were helpful in tracing the evolution of the instrument and illuminating the different cultural contexts surrounding the shakuhachi. In addition, Brooks (2000) discusses his experiences studying shakuhachi in Japan, which supplied me with a personal perspective about learning the shakuhachi overseas, and Olsen (2004) includes an ethnographic analysis of the Asian diaspora in South America that furnished me with a model of how to approach the shakuhachi subculture in the United States. For theoretical framework, Appadurai (1996), Mathews (2002), Befu (2002), and Guichard-Anguis (2002) provided me with different theories of globalization that allowed me to form an understanding of how the shakuhachi was popularized in different cultures.
Christopher Yohmei Blasdel’s book, *The Single Tone: A Personal Journey into Shakuhachi Music* (2005), is written from a unique perspective that discusses his experiences as a shakuhachi student, teacher, and ethnomusicologist living in Japan. Even though the book is mostly an autobiographical account, Blasdel does write about certain aspects of shakuhachi history, issues of ethnicity vs. identity, and the internationalization of the shakuhachi. This book serves as a good starting point for those who want to quickly learn about a variety of issues in Japanese culture and shakuhachi history.

For a detailed chronological account that specifically discusses the history of the shakuhachi and its music, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Japanese Music* (2008) contains an article written by Tsukitani Tsuneko (translated by Charles Rowe). Some of the issues addressed by Tsunkeo are the instrument’s function in the gagaku ensemble, the different instruments that precede the modern-day shakuhachi, the religious aspects attached to the shakuhachi, and the types of music within the shakuhachi repertoire. For me, this book served as a point of departure when discussing the history of the shakuhachi.

Jay Keister, a professor of ethnomusicology at the University of Colorado at Boulder, wrote an article titled “The Shakuhachi as Spiritual Tool: A Japanese Buddhist Instrument in the West” in *Asian Music* (v. 35, 2004). This article “examines some of the ways in which the shakuhachi is recontextualized in the west” (Keister 2004, 100). Through historical research and ethnographic analysis of “popular discourses on shakuhachi in the west” (ibid.), the author traces the instrument’s recontextualization into a different cultural setting by surveying non-Japanese shakuhachi musicians (my sensei included) and examining the market of shakuhachi paraphernalia. Overall, the article provided me with an outline that guided me to develop a theoretical approach on the issues in my own shakuhachi project.
When studying the history of the shakuhachi in relation to the komusô monks, different portions of the historical accounts can be extremely confusing due to the existence of several falsified documents. In volume thirty-two in the journal of *Monumenta Nipponica*, James H. Sanford wrote an article—"Shakuhachi Zen. The Fuke-shû and Komusô" (1977)—that sorts out the histories linked to the Fuke sect and komusô monks. Specifically, Sanford discusses the Fuke sect’s connections with Zen Buddhism, the different social features that surrounded the komusô, and a variety of documents issued by the Tokugawa government that were important to the history of the Fuke sect. In addition, Sanford also clarifies the differences between the komosô and komusô; for me, this was one of the most confusing aspects of the history of the Fuke sect.
INTRODUCTION. GLOBALIZING SHAKUHACHI

Evidence of the shakuhachi’s popularization in the United States is seen through the rise of shakuhachi students, performers, and teachers resulting in the development of a subculture dedicated to the instrument and its imagery. A number of technologies have played a role in bringing the shakuhachi to the attention of citizens and sustaining or expanding its popularity, an example of this is the Apple iPhone. In 2008, Apple débuted a new application for its smartphone. Amid hundreds of other programs that turn the iPhone into a navigator, a library, or an arcade, iShakuhachi offers something different—a virtual bamboo flute from Japan and an example of mobile culture in the twenty-first century. Produced by the Japanese-based GCue, Inc., and sold by a corporation headquartered in the United States, it is only one indication of an increasing global interest in the shakuhachi. From my fieldwork experience at shakuhachi instructional camps, I have heard the shakuhachi played in jazz combo pieces, to realize the aria to the opera Porgy and Bess, and on the Apple iPhone. One of the camp participants had an iPhone application called iShakuhachi. On their website, Apple describes the iShakuhachi application this way:

“The bamboo flute is a Japanese traditional woodwind instrument that is called Shakuhachi in Japanese. You may have heard tones of Shakuhachi when you listened to the Eastern image music. In order to play Shakuhachi, you should touch four finger holes (five finger holes for professional mode). Auto-breath mode, without blowing into the microphone, is also installed. Three prerecorded tunes can be played to follow the guide as tutorial. In addition, three other tunes can be recorded.”

Figure 1: Two sample screen shots of the iShakuhachi application from Apple iPhone’s website. The left screenshot shows where the reader would place their fingers on the iPhone screen; the right screenshot is the start up screen when the player first runs the application.

To play the iShakuhachi, one’s fingers cover the holes on the iPhone and then one blows into the microphone of the iPhone to produce a tone. At the shakuhachi camp, I was actually impressed by the sound quality that the iShakuhachi could produce. The camp participant I observed pursed his lips and began the exercise called “blowing ro” and a full “bamboo” tone was produced through this electronic device. As I was watching this person play iShakuhachi, I

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3 This is a common warm-up exercise for shakuhachi. Ro is the note produced when all of the holes are covered. “Blowing ro” is when you play ro and hold it for as long as you can, concentrating on the beginning and ending of each breath. Shakuhachi teachers place heavy importance on this warm-up and require that the student “blow ro” for at least ten minutes a day before they practice any other music.
was struck by the visual juxtaposition of the virtual device and his bamboo shakuhachi lying next to him.

It is interesting to try and trace the different modes of how the shakuhachi moves through different parts of culture. According to the theory of global processes, a series of different “landscapes” put forward by Arjun Appadurai, the iShakuhachi would fall under processes called technoscape and ethnoscape (Appadurai 1990, 33-34). Technoscape refers to the global flow of mechanical and informational technology (Ibid, 34). The iShakuhachi contributes to this global flow of information because it is a part of a successful popular technology— the iPhone. Anyone who has an iPhone can browse the many different applications that the iPhone offers. It just takes one person who is intrigued or remotely interested in iShakuhachi to download the software and put it in the process to play, and the program only costs $.99. Whether or not they know anything about the instrument, Japanese culture, or music in general is irrelevant. Ethnoscape refers to the global streams of people “who constitute the shifting world in which we live” (Ibid, 33). In the United States, a nation built on discourses of motion, the iShakuhachi highlights the fluidity—the continuous renegotiation—of ethnic identity and cultural practices. Thus, the iPhone by definition and application falls into a technoscape but through its convenience and mobility, it is also part of the ethnoscape.

The shakuhachi’s cultural existence in the United States is dependent on the global processes, or “landscapes,” that Appadurai discusses (Appadurai 1990, 33-35). These are not just limited to the ethnoscape and technoscape (a contemporary example would be the iPod), but also include financescape (the global flow of capital), mediascape (the global flow of information disseminated through the media), and ideoscape (the global flow of political and ideological thought); the internet, television, and migration are all implicated in these processes (Ibid, 33-
All five of Appadurai’s “landscapes” provide insight as to why the shakuhachi is so prevalent in different parts of the United States; however, I would like to present a counter globalization theory that helps explain the shakuhachi’s transnationalism. Cultural anthropologist Harumi Befu, co-editor of the book *Globalizing Japan: Ethnography of the Japanese Presence in Asia, Europe, and America*, finds Appadurai’s theory flawed and suggests a different view of the globalization theory (Befu and Guichard-Anguis 2001, 3-4). Befu believes that:

“One is left with a strong impression that there is only one center of globalization and that this center is the west. It is safe to say that these and many other authors of globalization see globalization either as a transformed end product (or consequence) of modernization or simply a continuation thereof. Whatever the position, inasmuch as modernization is and has been a project of western civilization, globalization as its outcome must emanate from the West” (Befu and Guichard-Anguis 2001, 3-4).

Befu believes that globalization can come from many centers and not just stem from the west. He also advocates that globalization can be called “glocalization…whereby globalizing

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4 All five of these processes or “landscapes” are what Appadurai calls “building blocks of *imagined worlds*, that is, multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (Appadurai 1990, 33).
elements modify themselves to adapt to local, social, and cultural conditions” (Befu and Guichard-Anguis 2001, xx). Befu emphasizes that Japan is one of the centers of modernization and globalization because of how different elements of Japanese culture or the “Japanese presence” is infused in the daily life of American citizens (Befu and Guichard-Anguis 2001, xix).

In other words, people in the United States “localize” the global Japanese presence by incorporating different aspects of Japanese culture into their everyday lives, inevitably creating a fan base for many different things that are Japanese. Examples of this include American citizens driving Japanese cars (Toyota, Honda, Mitsubishi), eating at Japanese food restaurants (sushi), watching Japanese shows (Pokemon and Naruto—just some of the successful anime), using technology from Japan (Sanyo, Sony, and Wii), practicing Japanese religions (Zen Buddhism), and by listening to Japanese music (techno, taiko groups, and shakuhachi).

The shakuhachi’s popularization in the United States is unmistakable. Appadurai’s theory of globalization and modernization explains the emergence of the shakuhachi through different aspects of culture in the United States. On the other hand, Befu’s “Japanese” (cultural) application of the glocalization theory confirms that Japan is a viable center of modernization and globalization. Aspects of the cultural and ethnic Japanese presence in the United States is constantly adapting to its social and cultural surroundings. In general, each of the theories provides a useful model for analyzing the shakuhachi’s popularization in the United States. After conducting my ethnography and experiencing life as a shakuhachi student, it is my belief that certain ingredients from both of the globalization theories offer insight to the shakuhachi’s

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5 The term, glocalization, was traditionally used in Japan when referring to businesses that adapt to local circumstances. The expression was eventually applied in the social science disciplines and used frequently to describe globalization in local contexts. An early example of the word glocalization being applied in the social science context is in the article, “Living Network On and Offline” in *Contemporary Sociology* (v. 28 1999) by Barry Wellman and Keith Hampton.
popularity in the west. My experience with the iShakuhachi and the iPod at shakuhachi camps are two definite elements of Appadurai’s theory.

Turning to Befu’s application of glocalization, the shakuhachi was brought to the U.S. by Japanese emigrants, but it was popularized by Americans once it arrived. This phenomenon—the shakuhachi being popularized by Americans in the U.S.—is one demonstration of Befu’s glocalization. This Japanese presence is adapting to the cultural and social conditions of the United States through shakuhachi camps, web-forums, and societies. In this thesis, I use elements of both globalization theories—Appadurai’s “landscapes” and Befu’s application of “glocalization” of the Japanese presence.

In chapter one, we encounter the infamous komusô Zen monks who were crucial to the early popularization of the shakuhachi. These monks used the instrument as a tool of meditation and as a path toward spiritual enlightenment. The idea of the komusô and their image has travelled through a series of Appaduraian “landscapes” and is in the process of being glocalized in the United States. Evidence of this is seen in the many different works of art that portray komusô; there are even komusô action figures available for purchase, demonstrating a level of recognition and popularity.

Figure 2: Examples of some komusô action figures that can be purchased on the internet, from Keister (2004, 121).
More evidence of this “landscape glocalization” is seen in the many different anime, movies, and television programs that portray Japanese culture. For example, in the movie *The Last Samurai* (directed by Edward Zick in 2003) the sound of the shakuhachi is used to “represent a scene related to samurai and its spirit represented by the word *Mushin* (No Mind)” (Kitamora 2009, 65).

The following chapters will further demonstrate that Appadurai’s globalization processes and Befu’s use of glocalization apply to the evolution of the shakuhachi. As the komusō image traveled, the shakuhachi sound was associated with the monk through the ethnoscape and mediascape, then eventually went through a series of glocalizations that lead to increased popularization in the U.S. As we trace the history of the shakuhachi to the U.S., both theories reveal how the boundaries of American and Japanese cultures are transcended and how the shakuhachi became a transnational phenomenon.
CHAPTER I. SHAKUHACHI EVOLUTION: FROM GAGAKU TO RELIGIOUS TOOL

“Amidst spring flowers who should care
That the wind blows?
It is not the wind, but the shakuhachi
of the komo.”

The early history of the shakuhachi is contentious, but the uncertainty of its origins serves to underline its roots in the globalizing processes of more than a millennium ago. Many scholars agree that the shakuhachi was brought over from China from the T’ang Dynasty during the Nara period (early 7th century CE). Other scholars, like Dai-Shihan (grand master) Ray Brooks, assert that “the origins of the shakuhachi can be traced back to antiquity. From ancient Egypt, this woodwind instrument presumably traveled through Mesopotamia to India and then China, before crossing the sea of Japan in the sixth century” (Brooks 2000, xi). Regardless of the disputes about the instrument’s original area of origin, it is agreed that via the Silk Road the shakuhachi was in China first before it was appropriated by Japan and used in the early gagaku court ensemble. Ethnomusicologist Bonnie Wade writes:

“As with other aspects of T’ang court life in China, the musical culture was cosmopolitan and international…A primary reason was the tremendous flow of peoples and goods along what we call now the ‘Silk Road’ that began in the Mediterranean region and ended in Chang-an. Instruments now taken for granted by many people as being indigenously Chinese were being newly imported there - not the instrument as exotic objects traded along with other artifacts, but as living culture, with foreign musicians playing them. Thus it was a variety of instruments and styles of music that musicians in the Japanese embassies encountered, studied and transported back home. Foreign musicians immigrated to Japan as well” (Wade 2005, 23).

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6This poem was found in the 16th century. Shakuhachi scholar Christopher Yohmei Blasdel writes “In a collection of waka poetry called Sanjūniban Shokunin Uta Awase (believed to be written before 1537, this is a collection of songs from uta-awase poetry contests regularly convened by professional poets), there is an entry titled Komosō [see poem]…The accompanying commentary explains that ‘the komosō are absorbed in visiting the houses of both rich and poor, begging and playing shakuhachi – that is all they can do’” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 82).
Wade’s passage identifies the early signs of globalization along the Silk Road and suggests a fusion of “landscapes” and glocalization theories. The shakuhachi being passed along the Silk Road falls into an Appaduraian ethnoscape and arguably into a mediascape. When the shakuhachi was introduced in Japan in the Nara period (646-794), it “glocalized” and was used in the gagaku ensemble. Since its inception in gagaku, the shakuhachi went through a series of evolutions before it became the popularized instrument with which many residents of the United States are familiar.

Gagaku is known as the imperial court music of Japan. The word gagaku means “elegant, correct, or refined music” (Malm 1959, 77). According to Japanese music scholar Kamisangō Yūkō and shakuhachi grand master Christopher Yohmei Blasdel, gagaku was introduced to Japan around the end of the seventh century (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 72). The shakuhachi instrument used in the early gagaku ensemble serves as the starting point of the instrument’s development. This six-holed version of the instrument flourished in the gagaku ensemble until it fell out of use sometime during the late Heian period (794-1185). The tempuku and the hitoyogiri are shakuhachi predecessors that are referenced in codified Japanese documents; however, there is some dispute as to which one of these instruments appears first. In the first edition of his book, Japanese Music and Musical Instruments, Malm does not acknowledge the tempuku and maintains that the hitoyogiri is the second main type of instrument after the gagaku shakuhachi, which appears in the Muromachi period (1469-1487) (Malm 1959). In the second edition, Traditional Japanese Music and Musical Instruments (Malm 2000), Malm only describes the tempuku as one of the four types of flutes of Japan. Coming from a different point of view, musicologist Tsukitani Tsuneko agrees that the gagaku shakuhachi came first but only speculates that the hitoyogiri is the second type of shakuhachi mentioned in records. He writes:
“The next record of a shakuhachi-like instrument is in the Kyōkunshō (1233): ‘The short flute is called shakuhachi. It is now played by mekura hōshi [blind monks] and performers of sarugaku [early nō]’…We cannot date it emergence precisely, but the word ‘short’ in Kyōkunshō is a clue. The hitoyogiri uniquely contains a single bamboo node, with the root-end providing the blowing end…It is not suited to very complicated techniques or large volume, thus leading to its replacement by the fuke shakuhachi’” (Tokita and Hughes 2008, 148).

Tsuneko states that the origins of the tempuku are unknown—thus he cannot state which model developed first. The earliest documentation of the instrument is seen in records from the Satsuma province (present-day Kagoshima) where General Shimazu Tadayoshi (1492-1568) “encouraged the playing of the (satsuma-)biwa and tempuku. A later family head, Yoshihisa (1533-1611), was a tempuku master” (Tokita and Hughes 2008, 148).

Blasdel and Kamisangō certify the existence of the tempuku in what is today the present-day Kagoshima Prefecture; however, these shakuhachi scholars state that this instrument flourished “during Japan’s Middle Ages (12th-15th centuries)” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 69). Unlike Malm and Tsuneko, Blasdel and Kamisangō claim that the tempuku came first in the middle ages and the hitoyogiri came later in the Muromachi period (1392-1568) (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 69-70). Although it seems relatively uncertain as to which instrument came first after the gagaku shakuhachi, scholars do agree on the construction of the instruments and the type of music these instruments played. Both the tempuku and the hitoyogiri were made strictly from bamboo and had five holes with one hole in back and four in the front of the instrument. The difference in construction between the two instruments was that the tempuku was made from a very light piece of bamboo while the hitoyogiri was “constructed from a single node section (hito – one, yo – node, giri – cut) of the bamboo” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 69).
Riley Lee, ethnomusicologist and shakuhachi Dai-Shihan, states that the tempuku is the “least discussed of all of the end-blown bamboo flutes of Japan” (Lee 1992). Because of this, finding any documentation about the instrument and the type of music it played is difficult. Since the tempuku was based on oral tradition, little is known about the instrument’s music. In his dissertation, Lee states that the music available for the instrument was either categorized as solo or ensemble music (Lee 1992). Knowledge of what type of people played the instrument is also miniscule. Lee found drawings of the samurai class playing the tempuku in a book titled Tempuku in Japanese:

![Figure 3: A drawing of a tempuku performance by members of the samurai class. Riley Lee found this and other shakuhachi-related drawings in the book Tempuku (天吹 1986), a “collection of essays and articles by various authors” from (Lee 1992).](image)

Unfortunately, the book offers no reference or further information about the drawings chosen to represent the instrument.

The hitoyogiri was commonly played by “Buddhist priests and hermits of samurai birth” (Lee 1992). Like the tempuku, the hitoyogiri would play either solo or ensemble music, but
unlike the tempuku, the hitoyogiri was a popular instrument. During its prime in the Muromachi period, there were different music schools or sects that were devoted to hitoyogiri playing.

Scholars and Japanese documentation indicate that a person by the name of Sōsa was the founder of hitoyogiri playing (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 86). Pedagogical books for the instrument existed and were written by Sōsa’s students. These books stated that “Sōsa is the source of their pieces” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 86). In the 16th century, a “hitoyogiri-like” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 83) instrument was used by mendicant monks called komosō, which means “straw mat monk” (Lee 1992). Blasdel states that “it is hard to determine exactly what kind of instrument the earlier komosō used. Judging from the fact that they were primarily individual wandering beggars who played alone, their flutes were probably entirely handmade and non-standard, with little regard to length, pitch, or shape” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 82-83).

To further the instrument’s mystery, there is a legend perpetuated in Japanese manuscripts that claims a foreign monk named Rōan “played a major role in legends concerning the origins of the hitoyogiri …One legend mentions that the foreign monk Rōan brought the hitoyogiri from overseas” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 79). The playing of the hitoyogiri lasted until the beginning of the Edo period (1600-1868), when the instrument fell out of use and the Fuke shakuhachi took its place. The Fuke shakuhachi is the predecessor to the modern-day shakuhachi. This instrument was preferred over the hitoyogiri because of the hitoyogiri’s inability to meri ⁷ and produce the different scales that were developing during the Edo period.

Blasdel confirms that:

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⁷ Blasdel writes the word meri “comes from the verb meru, to lessen or decrease…in a meri tone the pitch is lowered as much as a minor third” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 39). Since the mouthpiece of the hitoyogiri is very small, executing the meri technique on this instrument is very difficult.
“Entering the Edo period, the hitoyogiri quickly died out while the Fuke shakuhachi flourished. Differences between the two instruments’ tone color, versatility and range were some of the contributing factors, but the overriding factor was the hitoyogiri’s inability to make the switch from the ritsu scale to the miyako bushi scale” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 90).

As hitoyogiri practice died out and the Fuke shakuhachi took over, the tradition of the shakuhachi continued to develop, along with the construction of the instrument.

Figure 4: A picture of Rōan. Legend states that he is the first komusō. This drawing comes from the book of waka poetry, Sanjūniban Shokunin Uta Awase. Lee includes this picture from an all-Japanese source on shakuhachi history (Ueno 1984, 161).

The begging komosō life-style began to attract a number of rōnin (masterless samurai or ex-samurai) from the “consolidation of power through the wars of the [Edo-period] Tokugawa military government” (Lee 1992). 8 The construction of the Fuke shakuhachi consisted of heavier

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8 Expanding on this, Lee writes that “the Tokugawa military government consolidated its control over most of the country in the beginning of the 17th century, at the expense of a number of
and thicker bamboo that incorporated the root end of the natural material. The root end of the bamboo became the shakuhachi bell that is commonly seen on today’s typical shakuhachi. Other than having a possible acoustic purpose, the shakuhachi bell also functioned as a weapon. There is documentation of komosō (most likely ex-samurai) using the shakuhachi as a bludgeon on their opponent (Lee 1992).

As their numbers grew, the name of the wandering mendicants (komosō) changed to the Zen Buddhist-influenced word komusō—which means “priests of nothingness”—because of the wandering monks’ association with Zen Buddhism (Lee 1992). These komosō/komusō decided to gather together as a religious organization called the Fuke-shū—hence the name of the next shakuhachi noted in historical documents called the Fuke shakuhachi. As a part of their lifestyle, these monks went on pilgrimages and begged for alms while they played shakuhachi. The monks saw their playing of the shakuhachi as a form of meditation called suizen, which means “to blow Zen” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 93). For the komusō, the playing of the shakuhachi was not a recreational activity, but seen as tool for practicing Zen Buddhism. As the monks went on these pilgrimages playing shakuhachi, they were practicing suizen and trying to attain enlightenment through meditative performance. These musical meditations that the komusō played are called honkyoku. Blasdel refers to these pieces as “meditations in sound” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 93).

Other than knowing that a group of monks decided to gather and create a religious organization, scholars are mystified by the many different details that allude to the creation of the defeated clans and lords. The professional soldiers of the defeated armies frequently became ‘masterless samurai’ (rōnin). As educated members of the highest social class in Japan, for whom work in any other profession but their own would have been unacceptable, the rōnin were suddenly without employment and without a purpose to live” (Lee 1992).

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9 This is similar to the Zen Buddhist zazen, which means “sitting mediation.” Instead of sitting, these monks tried to attain enlightenment through the playing of their shakuhachi.

> “The origins of the *Fuke-shû* are somewhat clouded in the mist of history and their own historical writings. The main source about their history is in the *Kyotaku denki kokujikai* (History of the shakuhachi [kyotaku = empty or false bell, i.e. shakuhachi]) by Yamamoto Morihide, written in 1779, published in 1795. The source is usually considered unreliable” (Gutzwiller 1974, 15).

Shakuhachi scholars agree that the *Kyotaku denki kokujikai* is a falsified document that was presented to the Tokugawa government in efforts to legitimize the foundation of the Fuke sect. Lee, citing religious studies professor James Sanford, explains this further:

> “By some accounts, it would seem remarkable that the Fuke sect was ever conceived or allowed to exist…the tendency towards less than lofty aspirations by some of the komosô (straw mat priest) and early komusô (priest of nothingness) made it at times difficult for the general populace to differentiate their method of begging for alms from the act of extortion. As a whole, the mendicant *shakuhachi* players, even the most sincere of them, were not looked upon with respect. Until the Fuke sect was granted official status, writes Sanford (1977:413), the *komusô* (priest of nothingness) were merely ‘a loosely organized fraternity of wandering beggar-minstrels…whose only connection with religion was a very nominal claim to the status of Buddhist lay-brother…a status that functioned primarily to justify their practice of begging for alms’” (Lee 1992).

The Fuke sect had a difficult time convincing the general public that there were members of their organization who were sincerely trying to attain enlightenment instead of “earning a living.” The *Kyotaku denki kokujikai* (also known as just *Kyotaku Denki*) was an attempt to document the komusô’s “long past” and tradition. The forgery contained detailed “information” about who founded the Fuke-shû sect,¹⁰ how the flute was first used in the transmission of Buddhism,¹¹ and

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¹⁰ Gutzwiller assures that the document says it is a Chinese monk named P’u Hua; in Japanese this translates to “Fuke.”

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how the monks got the “komusô” title. When the government asked the members of the sect for this “original” document, the sect provided the government with a copy, stating that the original document was burnt in a temple fire. Even though the document was a forgery, Sanford states that “it was granted prompt recognition by the shogunal authorities and, soon thereafter, the unwavering faith of the komusô themselves” (Sanford 1977, 416). It is possible that the Tokugawa shogunate knew that the Kyotaku Denki was not genuine, however. Sanford states:

“That the Kyotaku Denki…was not so much a case of gullibility as a realization that the governmental moves taken in early days of the Tokugawa regime to suppress or control rônin had not been altogether successful and that it might be more effective in the long run to create or at least encourage a well-regulated and easily monitored niche into which such men might settle of their own accord” (Sanford 1977, 420).

The government allowed the komusô to exist because it would be easier for them to watch the movements of certain members of the group, mainly the ex-samurai.

After the group was legitimized, a list of requirements was drafted for all those who were aspiring to become komusô. These requirements were 1) proof of warrior status, 2) proof of non-Christian belief, 3) a statement of purpose, 4) a letter of recommendation, 5) take a written oath stating that they would follow all of the komusô rules, and 6) pay an initiation fee. Once these requirements were met, the new komusô monk would receive a “Buddhist name, the ‘three seals’ and the ‘three implements’, and a long and short sword. Finally, he was abjured to study the

11 Blasdel translates the Kyotaku Denki in his book *The Shakuhachi: A Manual for Learning* (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008), and it is in this section of the Japanese document where there is the first idea of playing the shakuhachi as a form of meditation. See Blasdel’s book to read the entire legend. “In China, there was a monk of high learning known as Fuke, who always walked around the city with a bell in his hand, ringing it, and chanting….A disciple named Chôhaku heard Fuke and yearned to be his disciple, but Fuke refused him. Chôhaku had a knack with flutes, so he quickly fashioned a flute from bamboo and created a song that imitated the sound of Fuke’s bell ringing” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 94).
regulations of the Fuke temples” (Sanford 1977, 421). The “three seals” (called honsoku)\(^\text{12}\) of the komusô were essentially the monks’ form of identification and a way for them to travel freely across the country. One seal contained the list of the sect’s rules and regulations, the second seal proved that person to be certified komusô, and the third seal was a travel permit allowing the komusô to pilgrimage freely from one prefecture to another.

The “three implements” the komusô were given after they met the requirements were the shakuhachi, the kesa (a “Buddhist priest’s stole worn over the kimono”) and a tengai (meaning basket hat) (Lee 1992). Many scholars agree that the tengai was the most distinctive feature of the komusô attire. The tengai was essentially a “reed basket” (Sandford, 1977, 423) that the komusô would wear over their entire face. Sanford states that “the reeds were tightly woven everywhere except just in front of the eyes so that the wearer could view the outside world while remaining himself quite unidentifiable” (Sanford 1977, 423). In the komusô’s honsoku, there is a section of the document that discusses the Fuke sect’s philosophy and mentions the use of the tengai hat. Thanks to Lee’s translation of this document, that section states “The tengai (basket hat) is a thing that is endowed with the sublime Body of the Buddha. Therefore our sect is modeled with that in mind” (Lee 1992). Several documents claim that the rônin favored the komusô lifestyle because of the ease of hiding their identity with the use of the tengai. The original use of the tengai was for religious purposes; the historical Fuke philosophy states that the tengai is used as tool to help portray the body of Buddha.

Once the Fuke sect was legitimized, the organization grew in large numbers and many more other komusô temples and sects developed. As more men joined the sect, the organization grew rapidly and the komusô rules were treated more like guidelines for many members. Some

\(^\text{12}\) Honsoku means original rules (Lee 1992).
rules that were often broken were 1) the enrollment of men who did not belong to the *bushi* (warrior or samurai) class—those particular people paid the “right” price, 2) the composing of popular “unspiritual” pieces (the playing and composing of popular or *gaikyoku* [outside] pieces were forbidden), and 3) teaching shakuhachi outside of the komusô tradition for those who were willing to pay (the playing of the shakuhachi by anyone other than a komusô was also forbidden). Unfortunately, the Fuke sect and its subsidiaries became what Sanford calls “a refuge for social misfits and dropouts” (Sanford 1977, 436). The different sect leaders who strictly followed the rules appointed other komusô to police different temples and popular areas that komusô traveled to in order to find members who were contributing to the organization’s conspiracy. With all the negative press the Fuke sect was receiving, the public began to identify the komusô idea as “popular,…vulgar, and musical entertainment” (Sanford 1977, 435).

Even though the leaders of the Fuke sect made several attempts to fix many of the issues within their organization, once Japan entered the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) the government of that period abolished the Fuke sect in 1871 and the komusô monks and their basket-wearing image slowly disappeared. Lee states that the government issued a decree stating that “all of the komusô temples were closed and the priests became lay persons. A year later, begging for alms became illegal, as was playing the *shakuhachi* as a spiritual tool (*hoki*)” (Lee 1992). Aside from having no use for the sect, scholars speculate that the government of the Meiji era felt that abolishing the Fuke organization was a necessary step to modernize Japan. During this time period, shakuhachi playing as a spiritual tool was forbidden but it never fell out use like its

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13 Sanford states that “…komusô had the special privilege of wearing the identity-obscuring basket hat and a monopoly over the playing of the shakuhachi. The only corresponding obligations placed on the komusô were that they had to take a minimal religious vow, agree to obey their superiors (who were ultimately responsible to the shogunate), and not admit peasants or townspeople to their ranks” (Sanford 1977, 420).

14 These “komusô police” were known as the *Kenbun Yaku*. 
tempuku and hitoyogiri predecessors. The abolishment of the komusô tradition was the first step on the shakuhachi’s path to the United States.
CHAPTER II. THE RISE OF THE SECULAR SHAKUHACHI

Figure 5: “Pictures from In and Around the Capital” (1521-1532), komosō playing shakuhachi. Courtesy of Torten Olafsson’s website. © The National Museum of Japanese History, Sakura City, Chiba Pref.¹⁵

Though the Fuke sect dissolved, the playing of the shakuhachi did not. Before the sect’s abolishment, secular playing of the shakuhachi did exist even though it was against Fuke sect policy. Blasdel notes that “the shakuhachi was increasingly being used as an accompanying instrument to the koto and shamisen, which means more and more laymen were playing it” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 108). In addition to those monks who did not adhere to Fuke rules, there were many komusō who were very skilled at the shakuhachi and started teaching other komusō (and eventually non-komusō) how to play the instrument. This fuki awase (playing together or blowing together) initially was done on temple grounds; however, as the rules continued to be broken (and more laymen were being taught shakuhachi) there was an increase of teaching studios that operated outside of temple grounds.¹⁶ Those Kenbun Yaku (“komusō

¹⁶ These teaching studios were referred to as fuki awase sho (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 109).
police”), who were involved in teaching shakuhachi, circulated a notice that stated “‘keep in mind that the *fuki awase sho* studio is an extension of the temple. Disorderly pieces other than the correct pieces for transmission are not to be taught’” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 109). As certain komusô were teaching laymen and bestowing professional names to outside people, the idea of secular shakuhachi playing was cultivated and eventually blossomed in popularity once the Fuke sect was dissolved.

An important figure who was fundamental in the development of shakuhachi music and shakuhachi studios was Kurasawa Kinko (1710-1771), who is credited with starting the Kinko style of shakuhachi playing during the Edo period. Kurasawa was a talented shakuhachi player who placed heavy emphasis on studying honkyoku and the associated Zen concepts of shakuhachi playing. During his time with the Fuke sect, he was in charge of teaching other komusô the shakuhachi and starting *fuki awase*. Thanks to his period of influence, Kurasawa developed at least five different shakuhachi studios throughout Edo (modern-day Tokyo). At each school, Kurasawa placed an advanced shakuhachi student in charge of teaching the instrument to other people. Kurasawa’s shakuhachi studios attracted not just Fuke monks but also potential monks, local townspeople, and other members of the non-samurai class. As time progressed, students of Kurasawa’s disciples would be inspired to start their own *fuki awase*, inevitably breaking free from Kurasawa’s teaching ideas to start their own independent studios. Sanford states that by developing shakuhachi studios and having advance students teach shakuhachi, Kurasawa

> “Established a hereditary line of succession that eventually made leadership of the Kinko school quite independent of Fuke authority, Fuke interests, and even the need for musical competence. Although the leaders of these schools were, in the beginning at least, formally initiated komusô, the very secondary importance attached to this aspect of Fuke training in Edo
inevitably led in time to a secularization of the Fuke *shakuhachi* from its position as in ‘instrument of the dharma’ into an instrument of popular entertainment” (Sanford 1977, 431).

Once the Fuke sect was eradicated and the komusō became laymen in 1871, those men who set up their own fuki awase continued to teach shakuhachi because it was a form of employment. In 1872, the government prohibited the begging for alms and the playing of secular shakuhachi music became more appealing. Lee writes:

> “Two men in particular were instrumental in this transition. Both Araki Kodō (1832-1908) and Yoshida Itchô (1812-1881) were students of Hisamatsu Fuyō, belonging to a lineage of *shakuhachi* players who traced themselves back to Kurosawa Kinko I (1710-1771), himself a teacher at *fuki awase jo* outside the temple grounds…The institution of the *fuki awase jo* gave them and their successors a superbly suitable foundations from which to continue transmitting their style of *shakuhachi* playing even after the destruction of the Fuke organization” (Lee 1992).

In addition to popularizing secular shakuhachi playing, Araki and Yoshida were able to persuade the Meiji government to not completely forbid the totality of shakuhachi playing. Both musicians stressed that the shakuhachi was a necessary instrument in ensemble playing with koto and shamisen (known as *sankyoku* and/or *gaikyoku*) and that banishing the instrument was not a desirable solution for ensemble music.\(^\text{17}\) Blasdel states that “Yoshida and Araki convinced them [the government] to allow the shakuhachi to be played as an instrument, thus making it available to anyone” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 115). Thanks to Araki and Yoshida, shakuhachi teachers were able to keep their students and studios, enabling the secularization of shakuhachi music and the legacy of the Kinko style of shakuhachi playing. The efforts of Araki and Yoshida

\(^\text{17}\) Araki was also known for developing the current shakuhachi notation system. Lee states that “Araki also devised the *ro tsu re* (ロツレ) notation system, after the three *kana* symbolizing the first three open-hole finger positions, which was suitable for notating *sankyoku* pieces. The *ro tsu re* notation system became the basis for the present-day Kinko notation, as well as for the notation system of today’s largest shakuhachi school, Tozan *ryū*” (Lee 1992).
paved the way for the shakuhachi to play in ensemble settings with shamisen and/or koto and to borrow new ideas. For example, many shakuhachi solos from the 19th century were “based on famous shamisen pieces” (Malm 2000, 175). Blasdel asserts that “this marked the beginning of the modern shakuhachi and its music” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 115).

Another figure who was critical to the popularization of secular shakuhachi is Nakao Tozan (1876-1956), who founded the Tozan-ryū style of shakuhachi playing. Tozan opened his own shakuhachi studio in Osaka when he was twenty-one years old. In 1904, he used his knowledge of Western music to compose new music for shakuhachi that included duets, trios, ensemble pieces, and compositions with Western instruments. Lee claims that Tozan’s “pieces were in part based upon Western musical harmonies and appealed to the Japanese public, which was, after two hundred years of isolation, highly appreciative of things somewhat Western in flavor yet still reassuringly Japanese” (Lee 1992). Like the Kinko-ryū style of shakuhachi playing, the Tozan-ryū attracted a great number of students that helped expand the rise of secular shakuhachi music.

As the shakuhachi was now being used overwhelmingly as a musical instrument, its use in the practice of Zen Buddhism sharply declined but did not completely disappear. Lee states

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18 The word ryū in Japanese means school. In a conversation with Riley Lee, he stated that “the English translation of the Japanese word ryū means lineage, or stream…literally it [ryū] means flow… When I was there [in Hawai‘i] I was teaching the notation and the repertoire of the Chikuho lineage. Now there are a couple of students there [in Hawai‘i] that still do it…I still teach it and likewise I teach it here in Australia…but there is no school, in a sense there is no building…there is no structure” (Personal Communication, 2010). When I was just beginning to learn about shakuhachi and Japanese culture, other musicians often talked about a particular school or ryū; I would then often think of a building with a tangible location and title (I also made this mistake when I interviewed Lee—you can call it a force of “western” habit). Clearly, the word ryū is meant to indicate the continuation of a lineage and not an actual location, building, or place that one can go visit.
that “instead of becoming extinct, the shakuhachi continued being taught and performed not only in the secular musical context…but also as a spiritual tool, albeit on a smaller scale” (Lee 1992). Thanks to the beseeching efforts of Buddhist monks, in 1881 the practice of begging for alms was reinstated for those who were komusô. After this petition was granted, komusô gathered together to form the Myōan-ji Kyōkai, the Myōan Society. Komusô of the Myōan Society resumed the suizen tradition by wandering the countryside and begging for alms. Blasdel expands on this:

“These societies acted together as a co-operative association and decided upon rules for dress, distributed licenses and identification papers (like the ‘three seals’ of the Fuke sect), and established rules and time schedules for begging. Unlike the Fuke sect, however, anyone could pay a set fee and receive a license. As a result, there grew a tendency among members to become ‘professional’ komusô beggars. Transmission of the music and development of an artistic style became secondary” (Blasdel and Kamisangô 2008, 117).

Although Blasdel states that the “transmission of the music and development of an artistic style” was secondary, it is evident that the suizen tradition was revived through the efforts of the komusô monks. Before the eradication of the Fuke sect, those who practiced the suizen tradition at the Myōan-ji temple were known to take the Zen elements of their shakuhachi playing with great seriousness and pride. The combination of the monks at the Myōan-ji temple, the general influence of honkyoku, and the desire to revive the komusô tradition are all factors of how honkyoku, suizen, and Zen philosophy were a preserved repertoire of shakuhachi practice at a time when the secular shakuhachi was dominant.

Whether it is sankyoku or honkyoku, the fact that I am discussing the histories of these musics can be credited to those teachers and students who continued the tradition in Japan and
across the Pacific. And, there is additional evidence of “landscapes” and glocalization. Malm explains further:

“Shakuhachi music today rests primarily in the hands of professional teachers and their secular pupils. It is still used by some as a means of meditation…As long as there are teachers and a sufficient number of amateurs to support them through lessons, these finer products will continue to survive. European and American shakuhachi musicians and instrument makers exist in Japan as well as abroad, and foreign societies and newsletters add to its contemporary vitality” (Malm 2000, 176).

Malm’s comment implies that the shakuhachi is constantly glocalizing and traveling through “landscapes.” The shakuhachi community in the United States consists of many different types of teachers and students who study different genres. Some of these people eventually pass on what they study to others around the world—I, myself, am evidence of this transmission process. Let us now take closer look at the “American” shakuhachi subculture, what types of repertoire is played in the community, and how the instrument is taught in the United States.
CHAPTER III. SHAKUHACHI ROAD TRIP

“In discussing the future of shakuhachi (traditional music of Buddhist priests) at the 1997 World Shakuhachi Festival, the presiding masters expressed their concern over the waning number of shakuhachi practitioners within Japan: Yokoyama Katsuya\(^{19}\) half-jokingly predicted that ‘the tradition will migrate to America’ due to its popularity abroad. In fact, a strong faction of European and American male disciples, now licensed as shakuhachi masters, have worked to preserve the practice as a tool for healing and meditation outside of Japan, notably within New Age communities in the West” (Everett and Lau 2004, 9).

The shakuhachi’s “popularity abroad” and the migration to America that soon came to pass (via the Silk Road) form the very foundation of this chapter and of this thesis. Music theorist Yayoi Uno Everett points out that there are many non-Japanese shakuhachi teachers who preserve the shakuhachi tradition outside of Japan by opening shakuhachi dojos\(^{20}\) and disseminating the practice of Japanese music—this is another example of glocalizing “landscapes.” It is important for the reader to note that globalization and even glocalization have been a part of culture since the beginning of time. As culture changes, new “landscapes” are created and global ideas are adapted and localized. Chapter one discusses this by tracing the shakuhachi’s presence on the Silk Road; the shakuhachi was first in China before it was brought to Japan. A phenomenon remaining to be traced is this: How did the knowledge of the shakuhachi reach the west? And, more importantly, why do people from the west find the

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19 Yokoyama Katsuya was an internationally renowned shakuhachi artist who recently passed away on April 21, 2010. He was my sensei’s sensei as well as Riley Lee’s sensei. The shakuhachi community mourns his passing.

20 “Dojo” in this context indicates a place to practice shakuhachi. It could also be called a modern-day fuki awase (blowing together) studio.
shakuhachi attractive? It’s time for a shakuhachi road trip. It’s migration on the Silk Road paves a route to the United States.

Before discussing important movements and figures that contributed to the shakuhachi’s glocalized pathway from Japan to the U.S., it is necessary to address the different things that were happening in the west that facilitated the embrace, acceptance, and even adoration of Japanese culture. For many years, Japan had very little contact with other countries from the west because of the Japanese government’s insistence on isolation. Traders who completed their business in Japan were mostly of Dutch or Chinese descent. It was not until 1853 when Japan decided to finally open their ports to other countries starting with the United States. The U.S. military sent Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry over to Japan to negotiate a treaty with the Emperor. After several months of deliberation a treaty was finally agreed upon between the two countries. According to the Naval History and Heritage Command Website, the terms of the treaty were:

“Peace and friendship between the United States and Japan, opening of two ports for American ships at Shimoda and Hakodate, help for any American ships wrecked on the Japanese coast and protection for shipwrecked persons, and permission for American ships to buy supplies, coal, water, and other necessary provisions in Japanese ports.”

After the treaty was signed, Professor of Japanese Studies at Tufts University, Susan Napier, states that the Japanese presence in the U.S.:

“Would spread from bohemian artists and intellectuals, who became fascinated by the new vision that Japanese culture seemed to present, to upper-class women wearing the latest kimono-inspired fashions, to the newly emergent middle class, who would decorate their parlors with Japanese curios and fans” (Napier 2007, 24).

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This sudden interest and spread of Japanese culture that Napier refers to is called *Japonisme*. In her book, *Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West* (2007), Napier discusses how the term *Japonisme* was coined in 1872 by an art critic named Phillip Burty who wrote several articles about the movement in the magazine *La Renaissance Litteraire* (Napier 2007, 32). Scholar Gabriel Weisberg states that by the time the term *Japonisme* was used to describe the west’s fascination with Japan, there had already existed many well established writers, art and artifact collectors, and other enthusiasts enamored with and influenced by Japanese culture (Weisberg 2005, 52). Once the shakuhachi reached the United States, there was already an allure for “things that are Japanese” (*Japonisme*) that greatly facilitated the shakuhachi’s popularity.

Turning to Japan, as the Meiji Period (1868-1912) ended and the country was pushing forward into the race to modernize, Japanese instruments (shakuhachi, koto, shamisen) and their musics flourished with new influences from western music. More public concerts were being advertised, there was a demand for new Japanese music (this gave rise to new Japanese composers), and shakuhachi studios (as well as other instrumental studios) continued to attract more people. Musicologist Steven Casano states that during this period “the title *Shin Nihon Ongaku* [New Japanese Music Movement] generally points to the period from the 1920s to the 1930s, when many traditional Japanese musicians began creating musical works that incorporated Japanese musical instruments in European-style compositions” (Casano 2001, 29). *Shin Nihon Ongaku* was started by koto player/composer Miyagi Michio and Kinko-ryû shakuhachi player/composer Yoshida Seifū. Blasdel states that these contemporary musicians were “actively preserving the tradition while exploring new styles of music” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 120). With other members of the movement, Michio and Seifū coordinated concerts in Japan and Korea, essentially creating one of the first tours of Japanese instrumental
music. Scholar Christopher Andrew Ayers comments on the significance of one of these recitals where there was a “charge of admission at the door…this was the first concert in [Japanese] history to charge a fee for attendance” (Ayer 1997, 40).

In 1923, there was a major earthquake in Tokyo that measured 7.9 on the Richter scale and “approximately 7,300 people were killed in four prefectures, tens of thousands injured, and over a hundred thousand made homeless” (Clancey 2006, 113). In an effort to aid Japan, many countries (including the U.S.) provided assistance of some sort to the Japanese government and the Japanese people. In response, Seifū wanted to express his gratitude by performing a series of recitals in the United States. Masayuki Koga, director of the Japanese Music Institute of America (JMIA), writes on the JMIA website that Seifū “believed that Japanese music was unique and well worth sharing with westerners. He toured the U.S. playing shakuhachi and koto music with his wife, Yoshida Kyoko, starting from each island of Hawai‘i then to California.” 22

Since many Japanese immigrants had come to live in the United States before 1923 (particularly in Hawai‘i and California), it is unlikely that Seifū was the first Japanese person to introduce Japanese music and the shakuhachi to others in the United States. On the contrary, the notable point about Seifū’s tour is that it was the first known advertisement of public Japanese music. Casano states “this may be the earliest recorded event of a professional shakuhachi musician coming to the U.S. specifically for the purpose of performing the shakuhachi” (Casano 2001, 31). In addition, Casano discusses a 1936 book by Sunaga Katsumi titled Japanese Music. In the book, Sunaga shows a picture of Seifū with a foreign shakuhachi student.

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It is unknown what nationality the student in the picture was or if the student was a serious student of shakuhachi. Either way, this picture is further confirmation of the shakuhachi glocalizing within a series of “landscapes” (ethnoscape, technoscape) and becoming popularized in an entirely new setting.

During WWII, many young Americans were sent over to Japan to participate in the U.S.’s military cause and several of them served during the post-war occupation. When they finished serving their country, Napier states that many of the soldiers “came home with curios and swords, sometimes with wives and always with recollections of a culture deeply different from their own” (Napier 2007, 80). While stationed in Japan, many of the U.S. soldiers experienced and began to study Japanese martial arts such as karate. According to the International Shuri-ryû Association Website, Grand Master (also known as dai-shihan) Robert A. Trias was the first American to introduce Karate to the United States in 1945. Soon after,

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23 Shuri-ryû is a style of karate.
Grand Master Trias opened his own martial arts dojo in Phoenix, Arizona which inevitably planted the seed for other martial art studios to develop in the United States. In addition to martial arts, U.S. soldiers also brought back Japanese religious practices such as Zen Buddhism.

Sociologist Henry Finney explains:

“Since WWII, the growth of Zen Buddhism in the United States has been dramatic, involving the establishment of hundreds of different centers…The founding histories of America’s, new Zen centers, and monasteries make it abundantly clear that their emergence is the result of the cross cultural diffusion of an established religion” (Finney 1991, 380).

In the 1950’s, Zen Buddhism flourished in the U.S. with the rise of religious centers, Zen Buddhist retreats, and literature inspired by the religion. Many American writers became heavily influenced by the different aspects that Eastern religions had to offer, especially Zen Buddhism. Many of these Zen influenced people were also known as members of the “Beat” generation. The Beat generation refers to a particular group of people who rejected conformity, materialism, and were attracted to Eastern religions. The term was coined by famous American writer Jack Kerouac, “the voice of the Beat generation” (Napier 2007, 13), in an effort to describe the rising subculture. Kerouac is considered to be one of the most important and influential writers of the Beat generation. His writings emphasize elements of Zen Buddhism and that the “middle class affluence was something to be avoided, escaped from, and critiqued” (Ibid, 83). Napier explains that “in Kerouac’s vision, the road was both the concrete road that took him on his journeys across America and also the ‘eight-fold path’ that he hoped would bring him Buddhist enlightenment” (Ibid, 83). With the help of the Beat generation, the influence of Zen Buddhism continued to spread quickly. In 1987, the United States witnessed the confirmation of its first American Zen Buddhist priest. Finney writes:
“An American Zen Buddhist priest of European ancestry traveled to Japan for official confirmation as a ‘teacher’ at the head temples of the Soto School of Zen Buddhism. He had devoted eleven years to the arduous training required for this role. It was a rare event - fewer than half-a-dozen Americans had preceded him, all in the previous decade” (Finney 1991, 379).

The influence of Zen Buddhism, Japanese music, and, more importantly shakuhachi, becomes further glocalized through American composers like Henry Cowell and Gerald Sprang. Cowell and Sprang studied with shakuhachi teacher Tamada Kitarō, who immigrated to Los Angeles sometime in the 1930s. In 1946, Cowell wrote a piece titled *The Universal Flute*, which Blasdel calls “the first piece for shakuhachi by a non-Japanese composer” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 130). *The Universal Flute* was written in dedication to Cowell’s shakuhachi teacher, Tamada. The composition is meant to be played on either the western flute or the shakuhachi, hence the title of the piece, *The Universal Flute*. Cowell’s substantial Japanese music influence was contagious and his student, John Cage, also wrote music that reflected Japanese musical aesthetics, style, religious philosophy, and instrumentation.

Today, through a series of Appaduraian “landscapes” and glocalizing elements, Japanese culture and the shakuhachi’s popularity have developed into rather large subcultures in the United States. For example, the Convention for Otaku Generation (Otakon for short) is one of the largest Anime Conventions in America. Napier describes it as “a three-day extravaganza where fans of Japanese animation congregate to watch anime, buy anime and manga comics, take part in costume shows, hear Japanese pop music, and see their favorite *seiyyu* (voice actors)” (Napier 2007, 2). The convention started in 1993 at State College in Pennsylvania with a group of students who were interested in anime and wanted to share their enthusiasm with others. In terms of the shakuhachi in the United States, there are many Dai-Shihan non-Japanese teachers
that have opened up their own dojos. For instance, Micheal Chikuzen\textsuperscript{25} Gould (my sensei) manages his shakuhachi studio in Cleveland, Ohio where he conducts online\textsuperscript{26} and in-person lessons. Riley Lee discusses his journey with the shakuhachi on his website and indicates that he was one of the “first non-Japanese to attain the rank of dai shihan.”\textsuperscript{27} Lee founded the Chikuho school of shakuhachi in Hawai‘i and lectured about shakuhachi at the University of Hawai‘i until 1986. In 1986, Lee was offered a PhD fellowship at the University of Sydney in Australia and he has since then resided in that country, teaching and performing shakuhachi. Lee comes to the U.S. in the summer to serve as a faculty member at The Rockies Shakuhachi Camp in Boulder, Colorado. Ronnie Nyogetsu Reinshin Seldin is another non-Japanese Dai-Shihan shakuhachi teacher, who manages his main dojo in New York, NY called KiSuiAn Dojo.\textsuperscript{28} Many credit Sensei Seldin as one of the first non-Japanese shakuhachi musician to start teaching on the east coast of the United States. Sensei Seldin travels to different locations to conduct lessons as well as conducting online and in-person sessions. All three of these teachers are committed to the shakuhachi full-time and are just a small sample of the many teachers that came from or reside in the United States.

In order to advertise for events and converse about the shakuhachi, members of the community post their events and general inquires on the Mujitsu and Tairaku's Shakuhachi BBQ shakuhachi web-forum. This forum is open to all those who are serious and have a genuine

\textsuperscript{25} “Chikuzen” was a professional name given to Gould in 1987 when he earned his shihan or master license in shakuhachi.
\textsuperscript{26} Online lessons are conducted using Skype; this will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.
\textsuperscript{27} Riley Lee. Sound of Bamboo. Biography. \url{http://www.rileylee.net/biography.html} (accessed April 18th, 2010).
\textsuperscript{28} In e-mail conversation, Sensei Seldin states that “my teacher [Kurahashi Yodo] gave my Dojo the name KiSuiAn. It means ‘House of Blowing Nothing-ness’ (or emptiness)” (Personal Communication, 2010).
interest in the instrument and Japanese culture. The forum is free to join and contains over 1,500 members. The web-forum is a major aspect of shakuhachi subculture because it is a vital form of communication between members of the shakuhachi community who reside in all parts of the United States and the world. The forum thus allows members to quickly mass communicate with a large number of people within the shakuhachi community and to converse and stay in touch about many current issues regarding Japanese music, religion, and culture. For example, the forum contains over ten different shakuhachi related topics. If I have some inquiries about the history of the instrument, I can click on the link titled “History” and view the different topics related to the history of the instrument. The forum also contains topics on shakuhachi technique, notation, repertoire, and/or buying a shakuhachi all within the ease of clicking a mouse. To make things even more convenient, if I am looking for a very specific topic I can complete a keyword search that will list all of the relevant discussions about the searched phrase. As a member of this forum, I am able to post a question and receive valuable comments from various people who are involved with the shakuhachi on many different levels.

The International Shakuhachi Society (ISS) is another organization that is a valuable means for the vitality of the shakuhachi community. The ISS website describes the organization this way:

“The International Shakuhachi Society is a world forum for people interested in the Japanese bamboo flute. It enables various players, schools, composers, ethnomusicologists, and hobbyists to share information with a wide and sympathetic audience. At present we have over one hundred full time members.”

Unlike Mujitsu and Tairaku’s Shakuhachi BBQ, the ISS charges a small fee to become a member of the organization. Members of the ISS have the privilege of viewing contact

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information of other ISS members as well as sampling available shakuhachi scores. If the reader is not a member of ISS, it is still possible to view several helpful items on the ISS website. For example, one can read about the histories of different shakuhachi schools (such as Kinko-ryû and Dokyoku-ryû) and obtain a list of the shakuhachi repertoire that belongs to that school. The website also contains an inventory of the important names that are pertinent to all aspects of shakuhachi study and includes a record of all their published materials (articles, books, and CDs). In addition, ISS provides a discography of shakuhachi recordings (most recordings include a sample listening from the CD), a lineage chart that provides a visual representation of “who studied with whom” of the Kinko-ryû and Dokyoku-ryû schools, and a directory of well-established shakuhachi teachers.

The shakuhachi professionals who make their living in the United States contribute to the subculture by holding events like shakuhachi camps. These camps attract people from all walks of life; their proficiency on the shakuhachi could range from beginner to advanced. Students in the shakuhachi community maintain web-blogs of their daily activities that involve their shakuhachi learning process. For example, Brian Purdy (my senpai\textsuperscript{30}), blogs frequently about his shakuhachi lessons, visits to Japan, and his experience at shakuhachi camps. Brian resides in Ocala, Florida and has been playing shakuhachi since 2006. He has been integral in helping Sensei Gould organize shakuhachi camps in Gainesville, Florida and he has even designed a shakuhachi t-shirt that advertises Sensei Gould’s dojo, Chikuzen Studios.

\textsuperscript{30} This Japanese word is used to designate a person either as a mentor or a senior student. For me, Brian is my mentor. He has an unconditional passion for the shakuhachi that is contagious to those who are around him.
Figure 7: Brian Purdy modeling the Chikuzen Studio’s shakuhachi shirt. Photo courtesy of Brian Purdy (Personal Communication, 2009).

Figure 8: Brian Purdy performing shakuhachi in Japan. Photo courtesy of Brian Purdy (Personal Communication, 2010).  

Pictured in the foreground of the t-shirt (figure 6) is a komusô monk playing shakuhachi. The background of the t-shirt consists of the notation for the honkyoku *Tamuke*  

(one can actually “play” the t-shirt). On the side of the t-shirt, right before the first line of *katakana* script to the honkyoku *Tamuke*, is “Chikuzen Studios” written vertically. This t-shirt is another

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31 To learn more about Brian Purdy, please visit his shakuhachi blog at http://gaijinkomuso.blogspot.com/.
32 *Tamuke* is a honkyoku requiem piece from the Dokyoku School.
example of paraphernalia that is available for purchase, not only in the U.S. shakuhachi community, but also to shakuhachi communities throughout the world. The idea that a shakuhachi student in Japan can wear a t-shirt that was designed by a U.S. resident further propagates the notion that the shakuhachi is continuously glocalizing through “landscapes.”

The remaining question that needs to be answered is why exactly is the shakuhachi attractive to those who reside in the United States? In her studies on the Japanese anime community in the U.S., Napier theorizes that the large interest in the Japanese cartoons is due to what she calls:

“The ‘phenomenology of enjoyment’ [in which] is an essential part of human life and human interaction…Pleasure, then, is something that is often experienced in relation to learning about or creating new things, thereby stimulating new emotional experience including a sense of mastery. In this regard, it seems to me that many Japan booms fit very well as manifestations of the phenomenology of enjoyment. From the Impressionists onward, the degree of active involvement with, inspiration from, and even identification with Japanese culture exhibited by many westerners is surprisingly intense” (Napier 2007, 10-11).

In conjunction with the “phenomenology of enjoyment,” Napier utilizes Appadurai’s globalization framework to develop an additional “landscape” process that hypothesizes why Japanese culture (shakuhachi included) can be attractive to some people. Napier writes:

“In the fantasyscape, play and setting are the two most important elements, creating a plethora of forms of virtual reality such as the densely constructed entertainment worlds of Disneyland and other theme parks, the intense involvements of video or online gaming, or the short-term but highly engaged gatherings of fan conventions. Fantasyscapes are inherently luminal worlds, temporary alternative lifestyle that exist parallel to the mundane, which people enter and exit when they please” (Ibid, 11).

Napier’s fantasiescape offers an explanation as to why people in the United States want to play shakuhachi. In a conversation with Brian Purdy, I asked what makes the shakuhachi attractive to
him. I chose to ask this question to Brian because he is studying shakuhachi in America with an American teacher (Sensei Gould). He recently went to Japan with our sensei to experience shakuhachi from the perspective of the culture that cultivated it. His response:

**Brian:** The shakuhachi is attractive because it lends itself to our natural desire to find beauty in nature…I would also say that man has been using nature to create music for a long time, and often times the instruments we use are make shift and lack physical beauty but are effective …the shakuhachi is not only effective but it is beautiful and it makes use of one of nature’s beautiful gifts, bamboo. The sight of aged golden bamboo with its gentle curve as well as the feel of bamboo lends itself to allow you to feel the history that is associated with a once living organism…an organism that gave itself to us…that essentially sacrificed itself to our pleasure. Of course beauty is in the eye of the beholder and for those who behold the shakuhachi is beautiful…there is almost nothing more satisfying than the sight and feel…as well as the sound that is offered by the shakuhachi” (Personal Communication, 2010).

Overall, the shakuhachi subculture is growing rapidly, thanks to the combined efforts of “landscapes” (fantasyscape included) and glocalization. These two theories will continue to help clarify why we see the shakuhachi played in jazz combos, modern-day orchestras, and on movie soundtracks. As shown in the chapters ahead, shakuhachi musicians play in a variety of styles. Currently, it is hard to say what style is most prevalent or popular. There are those who mainly study the Zen aspects of shakuhachi (honkyoku), concentrate on ensemble playing (sankyoku and/or gaikyoku), explore contemporary shakuhachi music (such as jazz shakuhachi or compositions written after the 19th century), and those who study a little bit of everything—taking a sample of all that the shakuhachi “buffet” has to offer.³³ Despite the differences that exist between the shakuhachi practice of today and earlier centuries, the preserved and spiritual

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³³ The issues regarding what repertoire teachers emphasize (i.e., Tozan-ryû or Kinko-ryû) is discussed in chapter four.
elements of its music, ideals, and philosophy will continue to travel through “landscapes” and
glocalize as the popularity of the shakuhachi grows.
CHAPTER IV. THE EVER EXPANDING SHAKUHACHI REPERTOIRE

“I blow you while I wait
I blow you later in my disappointment too
Worthless Shakuhachi!”34

The glocalizing shakuhachi has certainly made its mark in the United States. The evidence of the instrument’s popularity is unmistakable; however, the reader may be asking him or herself the following questions: How does one find a shakuhachi teacher in the United States? Where do you buy an instrument? How do I find music?

I asked myself the very same questions when I first experienced the sound of the shakuhachi. I initially thought that this task might be rather difficult; I could not go to the music school at my University and ask an applied shakuhachi teacher. To get an idea of where I would find a sensei, I used Google and searched for the phrase “shakuhachi teachers.” The first ten hits directed me to websites of shakuhachi teachers and shakuhachi forums that provided a list of well established senseis (one of the forums included Mujitsu and Tairaku’s Shakuhachi BBQ). The Information Super Highway (technoscape) made the beginning of my initial shakuhachi experience quite simple; however, when I started to play the instrument my experience turned into a shakuhachi journey that allowed me to familiarize myself with the instrument’s repertoire and different teaching philosophies. Through historical and ethnographic research, this chapter

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34 This poem is from the Kangin-shū (1518), which is a “collection of poetry consisting of kouta songs: songs from the performing arts of the Middle Ages” (Blasdel 2008, 81). The translation of this poem and other poems about shakuhachi can be found in Song, Dance, and Storytelling: Aspects of the Performing Arts in Japan by Frank Hoff (1978: Cornell University). This song/poem was chosen for personal reasons in response to my take-no-michi (the path of bamboo or as I like to call it – my shakuhachi journey). Despite the various difficulties the instrument presented to me, I would always end up “blowing ro” despite my frustration with a particular exercise or song. In general, the poem seems to express the difficulty of learning the instrument, yet also the satisfaction received when a goal is accomplished. I find playing the shakuhachi to be both challenging and rewarding.
addresses the shakuhachi’s canon of musical repertoire. I first discuss the historical aspects of the shakuhachi repertoire and then address how different genres of music, such as jazz, are incorporated in the canon of shakuhachi music.

In chapters one and two, I briefly mentioned some of the music to which shakuhachi players are accustomed. Overall, the music that is available for the shakuhachi is almost endless and still growing. Each of the different shakuhachi schools (such as Kinko-ryû and Tozan-ryû) has its own curriculum, and it seems that no two styles share the same repertoire—each school’s music shares similarities as well as differences. For the purposes of this thesis, a general description of the different music for the instrument is provided below.35

The Music of the Shakuhachi: A Historical Overview

Honkyoku

One of the main stables of shakuhachi repertoire is honkyoku. Honkyoku music designates the “original pieces for the shakuhachi, performed only on that instrument” (Tokita and Hughes 2008, 155). The English translation of honkyoku is “original piece” (Micheal Chikuzen Gould Personal Communication, 2010). In chapter one, I mentioned that honkyoku are a form of musical meditation (suizen) practiced in Zen Buddhism. Originally, the komusô monks would play (some scholars would say “meditate”) honkyoku as they went on pilgrimages and begged for alms. The honkyoku of the Fuke sect were mostly religious in nature. Today, “honkyoku performance exists in two parallel traditions: one maintaining the context of religious ceremony, the other supported by a new art music context” (Tokita and Hughes 2008, 155). Due

35 Scholars and shakuhachi enthusiasts are still debating what comprised the principle repertoire. The data presented here may seem extremely general for those who are well versed in the discourses surrounding the music of the shakuhachi.
to the combination of divided traditions and the process of oral transmission, there are over 150 honkyoku pieces that exist. Some of these honkyoku pieces indicate who the composer is while others only give an un-credited skeletal outline of the music. To further complicate the honkyoku repertoire, scholar Tsukitani Tsuneko explains that:

“This Throughout Japan honkyoku pieces with the same name but different melodies survive. It has long been said that each temple has its own melodies and playing style (ichiji ichiritsu—‘one temple, one melody’). A classic example is seen in pieces with the title Reibo. The word means to yearn for (bo) the sound of the bell (rei) shaken by Fuke/Puhua, the T’ang founder. Many pieces called ‘Reibo’ existed around Japan, distinguished by adding the name of the region or the temple. Thus Kyō reibo is the ‘Reibo’ passed down in Kyoto, Kyūshū reibo comes from the Hakata area of Kyūshū, Echigo reibo was found in Echigo Province (Niigata Prefecture), while Futaiken reibo belonged to Futaiken temple in Sendai (Miyagi Prefecture)” (Tokita and Hughes 2008, 155).

An important “musical” characteristic that exists in most honkyoku (and the general canon of indigenous Japanese music) is the concept of ma. Japanese music scholar Luciano Galliano defines ma as “the perception of space and time in Japanese aesthetics” (Galliano 2002, 14). Galliano expands on this concept further:

“Ma might be translated as ‘a between,’ that is, between treated as a noun and not as a preposition. It is the time between events, the space between objects, the relationship between people, or that moment in a person’s mind between thoughts. It is the white space in a pen-and-ink drawing and the pause between the thoughts…And so space defined by ma becomes not a moment of division but a moment of union that lends character to what would otherwise remain nondescript and colorless…Indeed one of the greatest compliments for a performance of a piece of music is to say that it is ‘full of ma.’ What is meant by this compliment is that the individual sounds of music did not occur in an empty vacuum and that the silences in the music were full of a sense of ‘betweeness,’ or ma, for ma reflects aesthetic sensitivity” (Galliano 2002, 14-15).
This explanation of ma is an important facet in the performance of honkyoku because most honkyoku are composed with free rhythm and no time signature to indicate tempo.\textsuperscript{36} Honkyoku consist of a series of phrases that are meant to be played in one breath. How long a phrase lasts depends on the breath of the individual (beginner/advanced) and the style in which the honkyoku should be played. For a visual reference, I have attached the first three lines of the honkyoku \textit{Soo Kyorei}. The highlighted areas in each line are breath marks. The breath marks are there to designate the end of the phrase and to remind the player to take a breath before they begin the next phrase.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{suyorei.png}
\caption{An excerpt from honkyoku \textit{Soo Kyorei}. The shaded areas indicate breath marks. (Personal Communication, Micheal Chikuzen Gould 2010).}
\end{figure}

Reading from right to left, the first item is the title of the piece that is presented in large \textit{kanji} (Chinese characters) script. The next three phrases follow consecutively in the \textit{katakana}

\textsuperscript{36} There are some honkyoku that have some sort of a meter or a rhythmic pulsation. This category of honkyoku is called \textit{hyōshi-buki} (Tokita and Hughes 2008, 156).
The katakana script provides the melody of the honkyoku. What is notable here is that there are no dynamic markings, key signatures, or any indication of how each phrase should be played. Although what is written in katakana does indicate pitch, Gutzwiller writes that “in honkyoku the player is as much concerned with producing the right timbre as he is concerned with playing the correct pitch. In extreme cases the timbre is more important than the pitch on which it is executed” (Gutzwiller 1974, 51). The shakuhachi teacher (and to some extent listening to shakuhachi music) is a major factor in the transmission of the timbre, microtones, dynamics, and phrasing. There are some honkyoku that do have some of these musical characteristics indicated in the music; however, in order to understand the music, the learning process of honkyoku and other shakuhachi music is aided by the process of oral transmission from teacher to student. This oral tradition will be discussed in chapter five when pedagogy is addressed.

**Gaikyoku**

*Gaikyoku* in Japanese means “outside music.” Gutzwiller carefully translates the words and states that “it is made up by the two parts *gai* and *kyoku*. *Gai* literally means outside, foreign as in *gairaigo* (foreign word) or *gaijin* (foreigner); *kyoku* means piece, pieces, repertoire, or music. Thus, the term gaikyoku can be rendered as “music of the outside” or “music from the outside” (Gutzwiller 1974, 36). In other words, it refers to any music that was not traditionally written for shakuhachi. This includes folk songs, ensemble repertoire, and contemporary pieces that are arranged for the instrument. Scholar Donald Paul Berger states that originally gaikyoku “was used to make the distinction between solo shakuhachi music and borrowings of koto

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37 This is another form of the Japanese writing system.
music” (Berger 1969, 35). There are many other different sub-genres of gaikyoku, but, for the purposes of this project, I will focus on sankyoku and min’yo (folk) music.38

Sankyoku

_Sankyoku_ music generally refers to ensemble music (or secular music) that involves the shakuhachi. The term sankyoku literally means “three instruments.” The koto, shamisen, and shakuhachi are the most familiar instrumentation for sankyoku; however, there are occasions where there is a replacement or an addition of voices and other instruments in the ensemble. Chapter two mentioned how the secular shakuhachi was used in the sankyoku ensemble; however, historically, the ensemble consisted of shamisen, koto, and the _kokyū_. The _kokyū_ is a three or four stringed lute-shaped instrument that uses a bow to produce sound.

Ethnomusicologist Philip Flavin states that “the _kokyū_ was also performed by blind musicians, and once had a significant solo repertoire. Most of these works; however, vanished during the Meiji period and today the _kokyū_ is overwhelmingly replaced by the shakuhachi in the sankyoku ensemble” (Tokita and Hughes 2008, 173).

Much of sankyoku’s repertoire originates from the many different types of music that the koto or shamisen traditionally play. For example, _danmono_ were originally solo koto pieces. Willem Adriaansz writes that “In the 19th century…many _danmono_, especially _Rokudan_,39 were adapted to other instruments, and it is possible to hear these pieces played on shamisen and shakuhachi as well as performed by a sankyoku ensemble” (Adriaansz 1973, 65). A common characteristic of _danmono_ music is the number of _dan_ (or sections) the music contains.

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38 I chose these two genres because I have the most experience with them as a shakuhachi student. They are also widespread in the U.S.
39 _Rokudan_ is a well-known sankyoku piece in the shakuhachi repertoire.
Gutzwiller claims that a danmono can have anywhere between five or twelve dan—certain sections are meant to feature a particular instrument while other sections have all of the instruments play together (Gutzwiller 1974, 39).

Jiuta is another type of music that was adapted for shakuhachi. The term jiuta means “regional pieces.” These jiuta were traditionally played on the shamisen and were eventually integrated into the koto music canon in the 17th century (Adriaansz 1973, 12). Jiuta pieces typically have a tripartite form that consists of a maeuta (the beginning song), a taegoto (an instrumental interlude), and an atouta (the “after song”). Gutzwiller reports that “as time went on the tegoto, the part where the performers could show their skills as players, became longer and more elaborate. Because of the importance of the tegoto the whole genre is sometimes called tegoto-mono (tegoto pieces)” (Gutzwiller 1974, 39). In a typical jiuta ensemble, the instrumentation consists of shamisen, koto, and shakuhachi. It is the koto or shamisen players’ job to sing the vocal parts in the ensemble. Each instrument in the jiuta ensemble has a primary function: the shamisen typically plays the main melody, the shakuhachi generally follows the outline of the shamisen melody, and the koto plays the main melody with the addition of embellishments. Malm comments that “the Japanese say that the shamisen is the bone, the koto the flesh, and the shakuhachi the skin of a jiuta composition” (Malm 2000, 18).

Min’yo

Min’yo music in the shakuhachi repertoire has been scarcely researched. The scholarship that does exist tells us that the word min’yo translates to “folk song” music. Other scholarship about min’yo is centered on the preservation of min’yo pieces and the history of its transmission. The word min’yo was applied to folk music sometime in the 19th century. Scholar Felicia Bock
explains:

“In Japanese, the generic term, min’yo, which is an old Chinese compound, has been selected to cover all types of folk songs to distinguish them from formal literally styles and traditional musical forms performed in salon or stage entertainment. The term is a literal translation of das Volkslied and is roughly equivalent to ‘folk song’...min’yo is the term applied by the scholar to what may in earlier times have been referred to as hayari-uta (current songs); riyō (rustic songs); zokuyō (common songs); and kouta (village songs)” (Bock 1948, 356).

In other words, the min’yo that were originally sung or played by the komusō was originally referred to as one of the genres described by Bock.

Unfortunately, there is little written on the min’yo genre in the shakuhachi repertoire.40 The International Shakuhachi Society’s (ISS) website does contain a small article about the history of min’yo pieces and their relationship with shakuhachi. The author of the article, Shigeo Kishibe, states that “folk songs in Japan can be classified according to their categories as follows: a) works songs...b) Bon Dance Songs ...c) songs for entertainment at feasts or parties d) songs for weddings and funerals and e) children’s songs and cradle songs” (International Shakuhachi Society).41 When the komusō went on pilgrimages begging for alms, some of the pieces they would play (although technically forbidden) would be min’yo of the region that they were travelling. Scholars speculate that even though it was against the rules to play non-religious music, the monks would perform these min’yo pieces as a way to attract townspeople. On the ISS website, Kishibe claims that “folk music or songs brings nostalgia to the man whose

40 There are a few academic articles that discuss the canon of min’yo music as a vocal repertoire and its implicating social and cultural contexts. Please refer to either David W. Hughes article titled “Japanese ‘New Folk Songs,’ Old and New” in the journal of Asian Music (vol. 22, 1990-91) and/or Gerald Groemer’s article titled “Fifteen Years of Folk Song Collection in Japan: Reports and Recordings of the ‘Emergency Folk Song Survey’” in the journal of Asian Folklore Studies (vol. 53, 1994) if you wish to read more about the history of min’yo music.

province or village has produced the particular music or song” (International Shakuhachi Society). The komusō hoped that by playing the regional min’yo piece, they would have better luck in receiving alms from the townspeople.

The musical characteristics of min’yo pieces differ greatly from honkyoku and other music in the shakuhachi repertoire. Scholars have discovered that the bulk of the min’yo repertoire consists primarily of vocal music. Hughes states that the vocal parts “were accompanied by at least shakuhachi (bamboo vertical flute) and, for metered songs, shamisen” (Hughes 17, 1990-91). Today, most min’yo pieces are arrangements or adaptations of the original regional melody. For shakuhachi, min’yo have a tendency to be short, melodic (by western music standards), and rhythmic.

Overall, the gaikyoku genre of the shakuhachi repertoire greatly contributes to the seemingly endless amounts of compositions available to the musician. This secular format of playing required those who played the shakuhachi to learn how to tune to other instruments, observe the pulse, and monitor their volume in relation to the other instruments. Playing min’yo music and in sankyoku ensembles offered new learning experiences for shakuhachi musicians that drastically differed from the world of solo honkyoku shakuhachi music.

Shakuhachi Repertoire: “Landscaping” and Glocalizing

In the shakuhachi community, the senseis teach different aspects of the “standard” shakuhachi repertories. The style in which the shakuhachi teacher was taught most likely influences how he or she will teach their students the shakuhachi music (discussed in more detail in chapter five). During my fieldwork, I had the luxury of meeting all types of people who

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played shakuhachi. Many of these people come from different musical backgrounds. Some of these camp participants studied western art music, played the didgeridoo, performed in jazz bands, taught high school band, or had no previous experience with musical instruments until they started playing the shakuhachi. In my ethnographic observations of the U.S. shakuhachi community, other musical genres and new musical compositions were played on the instrument that, in a glocalizing sense, expanded the music available for shakuhachi.

The very first shakuhachi camp that I attended was Sensei Gould’s Chikuzen Ro Camp in La Rue, Ohio. This camp was geared towards intermediate to advanced shakuhachi students. Since I was a beginner on the shakuhachi, I did more observing than actual playing and participating. While I was packing up to get ready for lunch, my attention was drawn to some jazz playing that was happening nearby. Brian Purdy was playing a walking bass line on the harmonica while another camp participant, Larry Mullins, was improvising on the shakuhachi.

**Figure 10:** Larry Mullins (left) playing shakuhachi and Brian Purdy (right) playing harmonica in an impromptu jam session. Notice Larry is wearing a Chikuzen Studios komusô t-shirt. Photo by author in 2009.
I also heard jazz and shakuhachi at the KiSuiAn Shakuhachi Camp where a group of camp participants asked me to join them so they could cover all of the parts to an arrangement of a jazz combo piece that required five shakuhachis. Needless to say, at that moment, I realized how much jazz expanded the shakuhachi repertoire.

At every shakuhachi camp that I have participated in, some form of jazz music has been performed at some point. My most interesting experience with jazz and shakuhachi was at the KiSuiAn shakuhachi camp. The camp program stated that Dai-Shihan Allen Nyoshin Steir was teaching a workshop on an intermediate honkyoku piece; however, as he was passing out the music, I was surprised to find out that the title of this “honkyoku” was “Summertime” from George Gershwin’s opera *Porgy and Bess*. To make the situation even more interesting, the music for this particular “jazz” workshop was transcribed in katakana script.

**Figure 11:** A sample of Allen Nyoshin Steir’s transcription of “Watermelon Man” by Herbie Hancock at the KiSuiAn Shakuhachi Camp (Personal Communication, 2009).
In addition to teaching the melody, Sensei Steir also provided chord changes for those who wanted to improvise and for those who wanted to play the supporting chords. Once he felt that the class was comfortable with the music, Sensei Steir would play a CD that performed the prerecorded drum, bass, and keyboard parts in juxtaposition with the shakuhachi part. Other jazz pieces that were taught in this workshop were “Watermelon Man” by Herbie Hancock (figure 10), “I Cover the Waterfront” composed by Johnny Green with lyrics by Edward Heyman, and “Manhattan” composed by Richard Rodgers with lyrics by Lorenz Hart.

Jazz shakuhachi is becoming a popular and growing style of playing. Many shakuhachi musicians credit Hozan Yamamoto (1937) with “electrifying the conservative traditional scene by applying his talents to a variety of crossover collaborations beginning with the jazz idiom in 1967” (International Shakuhachi Society). In fact, Hozan was the first shakuhachi player that Riley Lee listened to that got him interested in the shakuhachi. Lee’s website states that he first heard the shakuhachi on a 1967 LP that was brought home by his brother (Lee, The Sound of Bamboo). In an interview, I asked Lee what was the name of the LP he listened to that was the predecessor to his shakuhachi journey. He stated that the record was called *Music for Zen Meditation* and consisted of new age music written by Tony Scott, a respected jazz soloist in the 1960s. The album consisted of a small ensemble that included the clarinet played by Scott, koto played by Shinichi Yuize (a respected koto player in Japan), and shakuhachi played by Hozan (Personal Communication, 2010).

Hozan is a Japanese native who still manages his own branch of Tozan-ryū in Japan called Hozan-kai. In 1967, he appeared at the Newport Jazz Festival in Newport, Rhode Island where he played shakuhachi with an all Japanese big-band called the Sharps and Flats. He is

considered to be the pioneering force in the fusion of shakuhachi, jazz, and western instruments. Thanks to Hozan’s groundbreaking efforts, other shakuhachi musicians across the world followed in his footsteps. Today, students who are interested in the jazz shakuhachi genre can supplement their learning by purchasing Bruce Huebner’s and Jonathon Katz’s DVD titled *Jazz Shakuhachi*. The DVD comes with a twenty-page booklet that provides the student with a glossary of terms and sheet music to all of the pieces performed on the recording. Tai-hei Shakuhachi, one of the websites that sells the DVD, states:

> “*Jazz Shakuhachi* could be for you if you are a traditional shakuhachi veteran looking for ideas for a new musical outlet, a western-trained musician, but shakuhachi beginner, hoping to exploit your chops in a new and creative way, a composer or back-up player looking for hints on bringing out the best of this traditional instrument, or an educator introducing new trends in non-western music, aesthetic issues in modern fusion music, or Japanese studies” (Tai-hei Shakuhachi).  

My research led me to discover that the shakuhachi was also utilized in other musical genres aside from jazz. There are many contemporary composers that are starting to orchestrate the shakuhachi into modern-day orchestra or wind ensemble. For example, Australian composer Sean O’Boyle composed “End of the Day” and “The Death of Atsumori San” for shakuhachi and orchestra. Both of these pieces (and other contemporary shakuhachi pieces) can be heard on O’Boyle’s CD *Dreams are Forever* and feature Riley Lee as the shakuhachi soloist.  

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45 Buywell Just Classical, Australia’s Classical Music Store. Buywell Just Classical – *Dreams are Forever* CD. [http://www.buywell.com/cgi-bin/buywellic2/flypage.html?mv_arg=10373](http://www.buywell.com/cgi-bin/buywellic2/flypage.html?mv_arg=10373) (accessed April 12, 2010). One of the few places that the reader may purchase this CD is from an online music store called Buywell that is based in Australia. This website provides a brief description about how O’Boyle decided to compose for orchestra and shakuhachi: “This disc of music for shakuhachi and orchestra is the result of a chance meeting between the composer Sean O’Boyle and the shakuhachi Grand Master Riley Lee at a festival in 1997. Struck by Riley Lee’s complete command of the instrument, Sean O’Boyle immediately embarked on a series of
The increasing popularity of jazz shakuhachi and shakuhachi in western ensembles are further evidence of “landscapes,” glocalization, and the expansion of the shakuhachi repertories. Lee states that he teaches his students modern pieces because “there are so many good pieces, great pieces that are not traditionally Japanese…by learning these pieces that work with piano, harp, guitar or other instruments you’re [the shakuhachi musician] more likely to play music with other people outside of Japan” (Personal Communication, 2010).

An interesting question for further study in this particular area is this: Did jazz glocalize to shakuhachi or did shakuhachi glocalize to jazz? To elaborate, Hozan, a Japanese native, is considered to be the first pioneer in the jazz shakuhachi idiom. He came over with an all Japanese big-band, The Sharps and Flats, to perform at the Newport Jazz Festival. Residents of the United States popularized the shakuhachi; however, it seems that the popularization of jazz shakuhachi started in Japan. It would be interesting to trace the particular “landscapes” of glocalization involved with jazz shakuhachi and even shakuhachi in western art music.

It appears that the shakuhachi and its repertories (honkyoku, gaikyoku) serve as a point of departure for many shakuhachi enthusiasts to explore the instrument outside of its traditional framework. This situation raises some important questions: 1) How was this repertoire taught in Japan, and 2) How is this repertoire taught in the United States? We shall soon discover that shakuhachi pedagogy has also glocalized through “landscapes.”

compositions that would feature the shakuhachi as a solo instrument with orchestra.” (Buywell under “Dreams are Forever”).
CHAPTER V. TEACHING SHAKUHACHI AND LEARNING SHAKUHACHI

“The essence of bamboo is firmness; by means of this firmness, virtue is established.

The character of bamboo is honesty; by means of this honesty, fortune is established.

The heart of bamboo is hollow; by means of this emptiness, the path is maintained.

The joints of bamboo are fidelity; by means of this fidelity, ambition is established.”

– Kurahashi Yodo (1909-1980)\(^46\)

In chapters one and two, I discussed the evolution of the shakuhachi from its inception in the gagaku ensemble to its secularization in the Meiji era. On a parallel path, the way in which the shakuhachi was taught also evolved as culture and society changed. While it was used in gagaku, a directive written in historical Japanese documents insisted “that there be a ‘shakuhachi teacher’ among the twelve official gagaku musicians” (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 72). As we read in chapter two, after the Fuke sect was organized, certain komusô were appointed the task of teaching other komusô the honkyoku of that particular temple’s repertoire. Following the abolition of the Fuke sect centuries later, there was an increase of independent shakuhachi studios (fuki awase) where anyone of any class could learn how to play the instrument. As instrumental music began to flourish in the Meiji era with the influence of Western music, shakuhachi pedagogy became more standardized among all of the different schools.

\(^46\) Mujitsu and Tairaku’s Shakuhachi BBQ. [http://shakuhachiforum.com/viewtopic.php?id=3921](http://shakuhachiforum.com/viewtopic.php?id=3921) (accessed on May 5\(^{th}\), 2010). Kurahashi Yodo is a legendary shakuhachi player who studied with a branch of Kinko-ryû called Shodo Ueda. Ronnie Nyogetsu Reinshin Seldin studied with him in Japan. This excerpt is from an article that Kurahashi wrote that was published in *The Zen Practitioner’s Journal* (vol. xiii, Winter 1994). Since the article is rare to find, the member who posted the article to the shakuhachi forum received permission from the author and the editor of the journal.
The Meiji Era, in contrast to previous periods, was a time where people of all races could travel freely in and out of Japan. As the global current of information expanded and intensifed through glocalized ethnoscapes, people from the United States went to Japan and people from Japan went to the U.S. Those who went to Japan to study shakuhachi have very detailed accounts of their experiences learning the instrument. Their experiences greatly differ from my shakuhachi experience and my training in Western music. With the shakuhachi being introduced to Americans by Japanese immigrants and Americans going to Japan to study shakuhachi, the teaching methods for the instrument in Japan glocalized into the various pedagogical techniques that currently exist in the United States.

**Teaching Shakuhachi in Japan**

There are a few books published that discuss the shakuhachi learning process in Japan. Ray Brooks and Christopher Yohmei Blasdel have written autobiographical accounts of their experiences both as “outsiders” in the Japanese culture and as shakuhachi students in Japan. As a shakuhachi student, I was able to converse with other shakuhachi teachers about their experiences in Japan studying shakuhachi and learning different aspects of Japanese culture. The compilation of ethnographic and autobiographical accounts presents a general idea of what it was like to learn shakuhachi in Japan. Reviewing how shakuhachi was taught in Japan will bring insight to how it is glocalized and taught in the United States.

Blasdel states that “unlike the Unites States, learning traditional music in Japan is not considered a scholastic endeavor. The teacher is to be copied and the music to be absorbed through the body, not the head” (Blasdel 2005, 19). Learning shakuhachi in a traditional context primarily consists of the student modeling the teacher; there is very little conversation about how
to play the music. Data from ethnographic and autobiographic accounts indicate that there may be some conversations between teacher and student about the history of a certain piece, but no true explanations on how to execute a certain technique or play a particular phrase. Even the correct posture and holding position of the shakuhachi is not explained. In an e-mail conversation with my teacher, he stated that his lessons with his sensei, Taniguchi Yoshinobu, consisted of lots of playing and hardly any talking (Personal Communication, 2010). The student is expected to observe and model the teacher in many different dynamics that incorporate more than visual and perceived senses. In a typical traditional lesson, the student will go between playing with the teacher and listening/watching the teacher. On his website, Lee describes a typical lesson with his sensei:

“My teacher would first play a phrase of the music, for example…then we would play it together…after I played we played it together, I would be asked to play it on my own. Usually, the teacher would tell me that I was not playing it right, and the process would be repeated. Eventually, we would proceed to the next phrase, and the next, until I had played all of the phrases in the piece by myself” (Lee, The Sound of Bamboo).47

Below is a picture of Blasdel and his shakuhachi teacher, Yamaguchi Gorō, at a typical shakuhachi lesson in Japan.

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The reader may be noting the manner in which the musicians are sitting in the picture. Sitting in this style is called seiza and is the “customary and most formal way of sitting on the floor in Japan” (Lee 1992). Another interesting dynamic is the location in which the lessons take place. In Japan, shakuhachi lessons are conducted in the teacher’s studio while other students are present, who are either waiting for their turn or just hanging out. Blasdel mentions:

“Unlike music lessons in the west, shakuhachi lessons were not by appointment, but on a first-come, first-taught basis. One came, stayed as long as one liked and then left. Arriving at the teacher’s house in the morning meant fewer people, less waiting and more time with the master. Arriving after work hours, when most people came, meant a longer wait but the opportunity to hear many other students play” (Blasdel 1995, 17).

In a typical music program in the United States, the thought of having other people attend one’s applied lesson may make the student feel subconscious, uncomfortable, and apprehensive. In addition, having others present may make the student feel that their lessons are no longer private. Blasdel points out that “music lessons in the Unites States are strictly timed, and the students came in and out of the teacher’s studio like clockwork” (Blasdel 1995, 17).

48 Sometimes the shakuhachi studio is also the shakuhachi teacher’s home.
University level music students and even recreational music students have a rigid schedule to adhere to because of life’s obligations; having an “uncertain” time and length of a lesson may seem unorganized and difficult to schedule. In an interview with Lee, he describes taking shakuhachi lessons in Japan and the reasons why he uses a fusion of both the “Japanese” style and the “western” style when teaching shakuhachi:

“In Japan [shakuhachi lessons], you don’t make appointments, teachers just have teaching days and you show up when you show up…I guess it’s like going to the emergency room in the hospital…it’s just first come and first serve and you wait as long as you need to wait in order to see the teacher. That has tremendous advantages if you have the time to do that because you get to watch other people having lessons. I would be the first one there often times…and the last to leave. My own lesson may have been anywhere between twenty minutes to an hour, usually between thirty and forty minutes or sometimes as short as fifteen minutes…but I would stay there for four to six hours. I have a whole day of watching other people, learning pieces either that I already knew so it was a good review or pieces that I was going to learn so it was a good preview. Later on, as I became more advanced, I came to appreciate the opportunity to watch my teacher teach…even though he was teaching beginners pieces that I didn’t need to listen to again. It was very informative to watch
him teach these beginner people. In Australia, I have set times and people come at those times and so forth… but I still make it very clear that anybody that wants to can come earlier and stay later and listen to those lessons. Once you’re watching beginner students it’s learning how to teach but before that…when you’re watching advanced students it’s still learning how to play…it’s also good for the person whose having the lesson… it’s a very good experience to have other people listen anyway…you know the Japanese way of doing it. People are listening in on your lesson from the word ‘go’…from your very first lesson when you’re still trying to make a sound. Eventually you become used to it… you get use to having people listen to you, it’s not a big deal; it’s not like over here [the west/the U.S.]” (Personal Communication, 2010).

Many of those who went to Japan to study shakuhachi have brought back their knowledge to share with the shakuhachi community. A lot of these teachers have studied with different shakuhachi schools that emphasized different shakuhachi repertories. In chapter four, I was very general about the types of music that are included in the repertoire for this very reason. Each ryû has their own set of shakuhachi music and, in some cases, their own set of definitions for existing terms. For example, Lee writes that

“It was probably during this period [Meiji period] that the term honkyoku (‘original piece’) was coined to differentiate the spiritually grounded pieces of the old Fuke tradition from the ever increasing number of shakuhachi pieces played in ensemble with secular musical instruments such as koto and shamisen. From the turn of the century the term honkyoku was appropriated, usually by iemoto [guilds] of various schools of shakuhachi formed after the Meiji period, to mean solo shakuhachi pieces which they had composed, e.g., Tozan 'honkyoku’” (Lee 1992).

The International Shakuhachi Society website has a list of most of the shakuhachi schools; they record seventeen different ryû. One can visit the site and click on any of the schools to be directed to a page that will give a brief history of the ryû and a list of the pieces that are in that

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49 The reader should note that Riley Lee is half American and half Chinese. He lived in Texas until he was six and from there he lived in Oklahoma and then in Hawai‘i before he moved to Australia. Lee comes back every year to teach at The Rockies Shakuhachi Camp in Colorado.
school’s repertoire. The Chikuho-ryū has thirty-two pieces of honkyoku listed in their repertoire while the Myoan Shinpo-ryū contains fifty-six pieces of honkyoku music. Traditionally, the shakuhachi student will primarily study the music of a particular ryū. If that student progresses to obtain a teaching license, how they manage their own studio will be greatly influenced by the school in which they studied. Blasdel’s shakuhachi teacher, Yamaguchi Gorō, studied with the Kinko-ryû. When he obtained his license, he started his own branch of Kinko-ryû called Chikumeisha. As a student of the Chikumeisha branch of Kinko-ryû, Blasdel writes that “the beginner is expected to learn seventy-four gaikyoku, a commitment of about six years. It is only after the student has mastered these pieces before he or she can proceed to the heart of shakuhachi music: the lofty Zen-inspired solo honkyoku pieces” (Blasdel 2005, 21).

Traditionally, it is important for one to follow the different sets of guidelines and hierarchy that their guild sets forth. Once a student has completed the necessary process put forward by their teacher and their guild, they can become a licensed teacher and start their own shakuhachi studio. The shakuhachi ryū in which a teacher trains typically dictates how and in what order they will teach the music. Those who traveled to Japan and reside in the United States studied shakuhachi with a particular ryû or independent teacher. There are U.S. shakuhachi professionals that uphold many of the traditions passed down from their ryû; however, there are also those professionals who manage their studio in a different manner from the “Japanese tradition.” Let’s explore the shakuhachi pedagogy in the U.S. shakuhachi community to survey how the pedagogy has glocalized.
Teaching Shakuhachi in the United States

Some of the U.S. shakuhachi teachers educate their students in the same format that they were taught—i.e., passing down the tradition of their teacher and/or ryû. Other U.S. shakuhachi professionals adapt what they teach depending on the interests of the individual student. In other words, they use what they learned from their shakuhachi teacher and mold it into a system of trial and error—if it works for one student, it does not necessarily work for another student. The shakuhachi teachers that reside in the United States do not all come from the same school. For me, this adds to the confusion of the differences within the music for the shakuhachi. As I was interviewing different shakuhachi teachers, I put myself in a hypothetical situation: I am a shakuhachi teacher who recently got licensed in the United States. How do I know what to teach my students? I asked my Sensei this similar question:

Strothers: How do you determine what you want to teach your students? I’ve been reading so much about the "set" shakuhachi repertoire that it is confusing to understand what the "set" repertoire is because of the several different descriptions of the "set" repertoire. So traditionally, what is the set repertoire and do you "adapt" it to teach or keep it the same?

Sensei Gould: Good questions. I teach a variety of songs because it helps the students’ progress. Each style has certain things that make you emphasize this or that. These vary from song to song but more so from genre to genre. I want the students to learn by "compare & contrast." I think they will become well rounded by having these different experiences and then they will gravitate towards what kind of music they like most. (Personal Communication).

I also asked Sensei Seldin this question and he stated that he teaches the same music in the same order that his teacher taught him to all of his students. When conversing with Riley Lee, I asked him similar questions:

Strothers: Do you teach the music in order or do you adapt it or create your own way of teaching it?
Lee: I do a bit of both. In Japan, when I was there, some teachers wouldn’t teach the honkyoku which is what I was most interested in until I learned a whole lot of the sankyoku. My own teacher eventually started kind of teaching me both repertoires together so I didn’t have to wait to get through all of the sankyoku…I was learning them both at the same time, and here [Australia] I don’t do that because there is very little opportunity to play sankyoku with the other instruments and probably more importantly people here are not as interested in learning the sankyoku as they are in the honkyoku…

Strothers: Do you think that is because of the spiritual aspects linked to the honkyoku?

Lee: No I don’t… I think just musically the honkyoku appeals to people more than the sankyoku…I just think it appeals to more people…the reason why it appeals to more people…who knows?

Strothers: Do you teach music outside of the Chikuho repertoire?

Lee: I always teach other things besides the Chikuho repertoire. One of the advantages of learning the Chikuho repertoire is the similar sort of advantages living in Australia, or probably a better analogy would be someone living in Switzerland… what I mean by that is the number of people who play Chikuho are very, very small…it’s a minority lineage and so… just like if your mother tongue is Romansh or Swiss German you’re more likely to learn other languages so you become multilingual…I think it’s very important for all shakuhachi players to do the same … My students first learn Chikuho because that’s just what I’m comfortable with and I think the notation is the easiest skill for what one needs to know to play shakuhachi… then very soon they go on to learning a modified version of the Kinko repertoire and Kinko notation in order to learn the repertoire that I learned from Yokoyama who was my teacher for as long as my first Chikuho teacher [Sakai Chikuho II]…Yokoyama’s pieces are as much a part of me as the Chikuho ones. I then encourage the students, and certainly the more advanced students, to also learn how to read staff notation… and of course by the time you learn Kinko it’s very easy to pick up Tozan as well…there are so many good pieces in many different styles” (Personal Communication, 2010).
All three of these senseis have numerous students even though their methodologies of teaching shakuhachi are different. We may categorize Sensei Seldin’s teaching method as a “traditional” approach while Sensei Gould and Lee apply a more customized teaching method. With the variety of pedagogical approaches to teaching the instrument, new methods of how to reach other members of the shakuhachi community are continuously developing.

**Distant and Intensive Shakuhachi Learning**

The people in the shakuhachi community are very supportive of new students finding teachers. The community also provides an inventory of shakuhachi teachers so that students can conveniently access the information. Despite this flow of knowledge, the act of taking lessons with shakuhachi teachers can be quite a daunting task. Sensei Seldin manages a rather large studio in New York City (the KiSuiAn Dojo) and has additional studios in other parts of the state. On his website, Sensei Seldin writes that having a consistent lesson schedule “is the best way to study shakuhachi but it is not an alternative that is available to everybody” (Nyogetsu Official Website). In spite of the prevalent population of the shakuhachi community, taking lessons can be a rather difficult, frustrating, complicated, and time-consuming process for some people. Depending on where the student lives, a shakuhachi teacher may not be within driving distance. I personally think of myself as lucky; my Sensei is approximately two hours and fifteen minutes away from my university. Although my lesson schedule may not be consistent due to my academic obligations, I try to have a lesson with Sensei at least once a month if not twice a week. There are many other people in the shakuhachi community who are willing to make the drive or

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take the extra time to have a lesson. Unfortunately, there are equally as many other shakuhachi enthusiasts who do not have the time or funds to travel to take weekly or monthly lessons.

Thanks to the efforts of technology (technoscape), shakuhachi teachers began to give “remote” shakuhachi lessons for those students who wanted to learn shakuhachi but could not travel to the teacher’s location and vice versa (glocalized technoscape). In 1976, Sensei Seldin started to teach remote shakuhachi lessons through cassette tape. His website indicates that the cassette tape program proved to be “quite successful for those shakuhachi students who live far from New York City” (Nyogetsu Official Website). I asked Sensei Seldin how he came up with the idea of having these remote lessons. He responded by saying:

“My decision to start ‘remote’ teaching, and beginning with cassette lessons, was also, in a way, responding to a need. I felt that students (or perspective students) who were not near teachers, had no way to study Shakuhachi. And there were hardly any teachers in those days. Remember, I was one of the first persons in this hemisphere to do Shakuhachi full-time in 1975… Since the internet became popular, I have all but ‘switched over’ to online lessons in the past 15 years. I still have one or two ‘cassette’ students!” (Personal Communication, 2010).

One of the online lessons that Sensei Seldin refers to is called “Lesson by MP3.” This approach requires that the students exchange MP3 files of completed lessons with the shakuhachi teacher. This method is explained further on Sensei Seldin’s “Lesson by MP3” website:

“To those of us who do not have the fortune, (or misfortune), to live near NYC, Ronnie Seldin offers remote lessons. You begin by downloading the first instructional lessons from his server. After you have practiced and are ready to go onto the next lesson, you record your play, convert it to an MP3, upload the file back to the server, and alert Ronnie. He listens to the MP3, and then prepares a new file with comments on your play and instructions for the next lesson, and posts this new file to his server. He alerts you, and the cycle repeats” (Shakuhachi and MP3).51

This concept of the remote lessons or online lessons has become an important facet of ethnography in ethnomusicology. The idea of having lessons by cassette tape or on the internet (Lesson by MP3) describes the term virtuality, which is “the technological mediation of human interaction” (Barz and Cooley 2008, 90). Ethnomusicologists Gregory Barz and Timothy Cooley go on to write that the internet has become a part of peoples’ everyday lives and it has become a “socially embedded phenomenon…the virtuality of the internet is not separated from reality” (Barz and Cooley 2008, 91). In their book, *Shadows of the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (2008), Ethnomusicologist Nasir Syed describes his experiences learning sitar by using the internet to “support and supplement my study with Khan Sahab [his sitar teacher]” (Syed 2008, 103). Syed discusses how his virtual fieldwork expanded his own studies with the sitar by watching many different (and mostly free) online lessons and utilizing the features and forums of many different websites related to the sitar. In his assessment of his virtual ethnography, Syed states:

“The internet is changing the pedagogical landscape for both students and teachers within the Hindustani music tradition. The master-apprentice relationship, a traditional hallmark of the pedagogical structure within Hindustani music, is being renegotiated as internet users alter the way people teach and learn instrumental and vocal music. As direct participant in the changes occurring through the internet, I have come to realize that aspects of my experiences with these changes are shared by many teachers, students, and fans of Hindustani music in India, North American, and elsewhere…I do not suggest that this format of transmission has replaced or could replace the traditional master-apprentice relationship. Rather, this digitally encoded resource for knowledge exists alongside within the larger cultural practices that today make up the life of Hindustani music” (Ibid, 104-106).
Even though Syed is describing how he studied sitar, his learning experiences are very similar to how I and other members of the shakuhachi community utilize the internet and other digital information to supplement our shakuhachi education and training.

Another format of “distant” shakuhachi learning is taking “applied” lessons through Skype. Skype is an online service that allows one to communicate over the internet via video, voice, or chat. Although there is a paid service, the free version will more than accommodate video and audio for shakuhachi lessons. This is a remote but interactive way for students and teachers to work together “face to face.” My sensei (as well as other shakuhachi teachers) takes advantage of this method and has successfully recruited students that otherwise could not have studied without services like Skype.

Sensei Gould also adds to the list of accommodating teaching methods by offering what he calls a “Bed and Breakfast Home Intensive Study.” With this process, Sensei Gould provides the student with room, board, and transportation for the allotted times the student requests.52 On his website, he describes the home intensive shakuhachi study as:

“One or two Home Intensives a year is like six months worth of lessons! …We will be eating, sleeping and drinking shakuhachi. When we’re not playing, we’ll be talking about various aspects of shakuhachi (e.g., history, songs and composers, flutes and makers, and the Buddhist influences on shakuhachi) as well as about Japanese culture and my experiences in Japan. If you become saturated you can lie on the couch and just listen to shakuhachi… Hearing and playing along with your teacher raises your own level of playing. In an immersion setting, this higher level of focus and playing becomes part of you and stays with you; when you return home and play in your usual conditions, you’ll immediately notice the difference” (Chikuzen Studios).53

52 This can be held for one day or up to one week. The student makes the request and the sensei figures out when he can fit the student in his schedule.
Even though this method requires the student to plan ahead and be flexible with Sensei’s schedule, many students find this teaching technique a useful alternative way to learn shakuhachi.

An additional intensive method and a popular means of teaching shakuhachi can be found at shakuhachi camps. Camps for shakuhachi study have become one of the most important forms of instruction aside from having an “applied” teacher. On one hand, there are those who play shakuhachi who do not have a teacher or cannot find the time to study consistently with a shakuhachi teacher, so these shakuhachi camps provide those people with intensive instruction. On the other hand, there are those who are able to seek consistent instruction from a sensei and attend the shakuhachi camps as a supplement to their shakuhachi education/training. In addition, shakuhachi camps offer a meeting place for shakuhachi players to get to know each other (finding a sense of camaraderie and exchanging different viewpoints) and learn or re-familiarize themselves with different music, technique, playing style, and/or philosophy. These camps take place all over the world; however – for the purposes of this project – I have only focused on shakuhachi camps that take place in the United States.

Currently, there are three shakuhachi camps that take place in the country: the Rockies Shakuhachi Summer Camp in Loveland, Colorado, the KiSuiAn Shakuhachi Camp in West Chester, PA, and the Chikuzen Ro Camp (the location of the camp varies). I completed ethnographic fieldwork at two of Sensei Gould’s camps and at one of Sensei Seldin’s camps. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend The Rockies Shakuhachi Summer Camp, but by completing ethnographic fieldwork of the shakuhachi community I was able to obtain a general history of how the shakuhachi camps got started and what they consist of.
David Wheeler, ethnomusicologist and active shakuhachi musician, stated in an e-mail conversation that The Rockies Shakuhachi Summer Camp “was born out of the energy of the Boulder [Colorado] World Shakuhachi Festival in 1998….it was the largest shakuhachi related event in history” (Personal Communication). This event lasted for six days and had over 150 registered shakuhachi participants including:

**Attendance of Artist/Scholars:** Five of the great masters of the 20th century (including the late Living National Treasure Gorō Yamaguchi), sixty-plus shakuhachi performers, forty-plus accompanying musicians and dancers, and nine guest scholars.

**Concerts:** Three venues of 1300-1800 seats with full houses and almost thirty other concerts and lectures throughout the Boulder/Denver area” (Personal Communication David Wheeler, 2010).

The World Shakuhachi Festival in Boulder, Colorado inspired Wheeler, Blasdel, and Cory Sperry (another shakuhachi player) to organize a yearly shakuhachi camp. The Rockies Shakuhachi Camp (also known as “The Rockies Camp”) began in June of 1999. Wheeler states that the “first faculty roster was Kurahashi Yoshio, Riley Lee, Hiraoka Yoko [teaching koto, shamisen, and voice], and myself” (Personal Communication). Since then, The Rockies Camp has met annually in June and accommodates shakuhachi, koto, and shamisen musicians of all proficiency levels. It is hard to determine if The Rockies Camp was the first shakuhachi camp to start in the United States; however, it is noted that other shakuhachi musicians (like Sensei Seldin) were inspired to start their own camp because of the new “tradition” that started in Boulder, Colorado.

The KiSuiAn Shakuhachi Camp is organized by Sensei Seldin and started in 2001. Since then, the camp has been held every year in July at the Temenos Retreat Center in Westchester, Pennsylvania. On his website, Sensei Seldin describes the camp as:
“An idea that has grown out of the excellent work that has been done at the four International Shakuhachi conventions and the annual Shakuhachi Summer Camps held in Colorado. We sincerely hope to supplement this work, and to provide a learning experience on the Shakuhachi to people on the East Coast who may not be able to travel” (Nyogetsu Official Website).\(^\text{54}\)

The KiSuiAn Shakuhachi Camp is roughly four days long with each day containing at least three to four workshops. The faculty for the camp can vary from year to year, but some of the typical teachers include Sensei Seldin, Kurahashi Yoshio, Allen Nyoshin Steir, Daniel Nyohaku Soergel, Jorge Alfano, and Mutsumi Takamizu on koto and shamisen. The camp provides workshops on different styles of honkyoku, gaikyoku, and sankyoku. Other activities that the reader can participate in are zazen (sitting mediation), Tai Chi, and private lessons with a staff member of the participant’s choice.

Sensei Gould’s decision to hold a shakuhachi camp was inspired by his sensei, Yokoyama Katsuya. In an e-mail conversation he writes:

> “These kind of ‘retreats’[camps] were common in Japan in college clubs but also Yokoyama sensei used to them a few times a year. I thought it would give people a chance to get away and have intense shaku [shakuhachi] time, see others play, and build come momentum energy wise” (Personal Communication, 2010).

The Chikuzen Ro Camp is managed a bit differently from the other shakuhachi camps that I have attended. Instead of having different instructors, this camp has only one instructor, Sensei Gould. The Chikuzen Ro Camp occurs at least twice a year; however, the location varies depending on where Sensei would like to hold the camp. It is also an attempt to accommodate those people who have travelling restrictions. For example, Sensei has been holding shakuhachi camps in Cross Creek, Florida, because he has over a handful of students who live in that part of the

country. In addition, at least one Chikuzen Ro Camp is geared towards all levels of proficiency while another Chikuzen Ro Camp is primarily for intermediate to advanced players. Brian Purdy, my senpai (mentor), helps organize the Chikuzen Ro Camp in Florida by maintaining a separate website called the Florida Shakuhachi Camp. The website has information for those who are interested in learning more about the camp, what to expect from it, and the schedule of daily events. The website explains:

“We will post a full schedule and list of pieces as we get closer to the date. We are open to suggestions so please feel free to contact us with any requests. We cater to those students who feel lost when they take lessons. Do you have a Sensei who won't answer questions and tells you it will all come in time? You won't encounter that here. Chikuzen will ensure he does his best to give the best head start on tone and embouchure and refine your existing technique. Our goal is to take your playing to the next level so you leave the camp invigorated and hungry to play” (Florida Shakuhachi Camp).

From my experience, these camps are an excellent way to personally meet “face-to-face” other members in the community. In addition, going to these camps offers the opportunity to hear other students play at a variety of proficiency levels, practice different types of shakuhachi repertoire, meet different types of teachers, and try different types of shakuhachi. Many advanced students are very generous in discussing their knowledge about the instrument and are willing to help those who are just starting or are generally just curious about different aspect of “shakuhachi life.” Thanks to his kindness, Brian Purdy, my senpai, is “beyond” helpful in my development as a shakuhachi student and in my studies of Japanese culture. I greatly thank the existence of the shakuhachi camps that allowed this great relationship with my senpai to blossom.

In summary, the shakuhachi camps serve several different functions. According to Sensei Gould, attending shakuhachi camps accomplishes the following: “It allows people to have a concentrated time for study without outside distractions, it allows busy people to get all their lessons in at one time, and it allows the Skype students to get in-person lessons. Students need these camps for sure” (Personal Communication, 2010). In an interview with Lee, he states that:

“For people who don’t have teachers camps are very important… it’s their one and only chance in the year that they can have access to teachers… but even for my own students here who I see regularly because they get an opportunity to get taught by other teachers and no one teacher has it all and no one teacher can explain everything as well as other teachers… it’s important for me because I also learned from other teachers … it’s just so rewarding to meet other shakuhachi players. In fact one of the teachers at The Rockies Camp, a Japanese guy named Kaoru Kakizakai…he was encouraging a beginner to come because he said… and it’s so true… for teachers, beginners are treasures and I think that says it all….I think that they [camps] are very, very important… they are great things to do” (Personal Communication, 2010).56

The different philosophies in shakuhachi pedagogy and the various ways in which a student can take lessons contribute to the furthering of landscapes and glocalization. Through technology, teachers have been able to develop alternative methods to reach out to distant students in the shakuhachi community. This unique mix of distant education, camps, and intensive study has helped to create a subculture in the United States that differs from the traditional experience of learning shakuhachi in Japan. The world consists of ever-changing landscapes. As the landscape modifies, the shakuhachi continues to glocalize.

56 The reader should note that when learning shakuhachi in Japan, it is socially unacceptable to have different shakuhachi teachers. Traditionally, the student is supposed to be loyal to one ryû. Lee and many other shakuhachi teachers advocate learning shakuhachi from different types of teachers because “no one teacher has it all.”
A “SHAKUHACHI” CONCLUSION.

“The capacity of the shakuhachi is huge, not only as a musical instrument due to its variety of colors and special sounds, but, more so as a link or bridge between the essential nature (soul) of human beings and the essential nature (spirit) of the cosmos. The ability of the shakuhachi to reach into people and touch something deep inside, to stir up something in a place that is not often used, is evidenced by the large number of people attracted to it.”

— Micheal Chikuzen Gould (Personal Communication, 2010).

Figure 14: Michael Chikuzen Gould playing shakuhachi at the Canton Museum of Art. Photo by author, 2009.

When I discovered that Sensei Gould managed a shakuhachi studio in Cleveland, Ohio, I immediately contacted him through e-mail to arrange a first meeting. He invited me to come watch him at one of his performances. From there, we would discuss my interests in Japanese music and I would take private lessons and buy a student-model shakuhachi. Sensei’s performance was at the Canton Museum of Art in Canton, Ohio. At the time, there were a variety of Japanese exhibits being shown, and the museum booked a series of events to compliment the
Japanese theme – one of them being Sensei’s shakuhachi playing. I arrived at the museum early so I could introduce myself to Sensei. After that, I quickly found a seat; Sensei began to play a few notes and I was immediately captivated, not only by his sound, but also by the instrument. At first, there were only a few people (including myself) in the audience. After Sensei started to play, the chairs in the audience began to fill quickly and there were hardly any seats vacant.

After he performed, Sensei presented a small “question and answer” workshop that discussed the history of the instrument and the construction of the shakuhachi. He also brought some PVC shakuhachi prototypes for those members of the audience who were really curious about the instrument and wanted to try playing it. When Sensei finished playing, many audience members stayed after the performance to ask him some questions and converse with him. I observed in fascination by how much the audience wanted to talk to him, hear him play again, and thank him; they were very appreciative of his playing. Like the quote stated in the beginning of the Conclusion, Sensei’s performance “reached into people and touched something deep inside,” and worked “to stir up something in a place that is not often used” (Personal Communication, 2009).

Sensei’s comment exemplifies what happened at my first “ethnography” of Japanese music. As he played, many people came to listen. I’ll never know if those people were there to see the museum’s exhibits or to hear his performance. What I observed is that those people in attendance seemed to be attracted to the sound of the shakuhachi, intrigued by Sensei’s Japanese clothing, or curious about the process of shakuhachi construction—possibly offering them a new fantasyscape for them to experience. After I talked to Sensei and purchased my first flute from him, I wondered how the person who was in charge of booking the shakuhachi performance for the museum knew about Sensei Gould. Did they “google” like I did at first? Or, did they already know that there were shakuhachi musicians that reside in the United States?
Sensei’s performance at the museum is even more evidence of glocalization through “landscapes.” The crowd that gathered to watch Sensei will probably talk about their shakuhachi experience to others. It could also be that because of Sensei’s performance, someone in that audience may have purchased a shakuhachi and began to take lessons. I know for certain that quite a few people bought one of his CDs that were available for purchase at the museum gift shop. The notion of glocalization through “landscapes” (fantasyscape included) is portrayed in Sensei going to Japan, learning shakuhachi, teaching it in the United States, performing it in a small-town museum, and audience members attending his performance and buying his CD. My sensei’s performance, Americans studying shakuhachi, and the different virtual pedagogical tools are evidence of the shakuhachi tradition changing and not staying frozen in time—the tradition is alive in many different ways which furthers the concepts of glocalization and “landscapes.” A question that needs to be further explored is: Would today’s attraction to the shakuhachi (and other aspects of Japanese culture) be considered a fantasyscape or modern-day Japonisme?

Back then, I knew that I wanted to explore the phenomenon of the shakuhachi subculture and contribute an explanation as to why the instrument is so popular in a “foreign” context. Ever since the shakuhachi was introduced to Japan in the seventh century, the shakuhachi glocalized to its surroundings as it voyaged through “landscapes”; this thesis has traced the shakuhachi’s voyage describing the different “landscapes” and aspects of how the shakuhachi glocalized.

To summarize the instrument’s journey, scholars first documented the use of the shakuhachi in gagaku court music. Then, after a few transformations (tempoku/hitiyogiri), the playing of the shakuhachi was monopolized by monks of the Fuke sect. These komusô monks would play and teach honkyoku (“meditations in sound”) to many other people. After the dissolution of the organization, the shakuhachi was used primarily in secular music such as
sankyoku and jiuta. As Japan was modernizing, western music became a main influence in the performance of “traditional” Japanese arts. The Shin Nihon Ongaku (New Japanese Music Movement started by Miyagi Michio and Yoshida Seifū) was simultaneously preserving traditional musics while exploring new styles (Blasdel and Kamisangō 2008, 120). With this movement, there were tours of Japanese musics that took place in Japan, Korea, and eventually the United States. Seifū’s tour of shakuhachi and koto music in the U.S. may be the first known advertisement of public Japanese music. This is hard to determine because many Japanese people had immigrated to the U.S. well before Seifū’s tour. Japanese music could have been introduced to people in the United States previously, but scholars can only speculate because of the lack of verifying documentation.

The treaty in 1853 between Japan and the U.S. lifted Japan’s isolation policy and allowed people from other countries to freely travel there. Since then, the west’s adoration for Japanese culture cultivated into a large movement that some scholars refer to as a “love affair” or Japonisme. Those people who were under the spell of Japonisme collected Japanese things and were influenced by Japanese music and literature.

The U.S.’s WWII efforts and following occupation sent many soldiers to Japan. Many of these soldiers brought back with them Japanese items, weapons, and religion –primarily Zen Buddhism. As the soldier returned back to the States, the 1950’s witnessed a huge “boom” in martial arts and Zen Buddhism. Many Zen centers were built for those who wanted to practice religion and in 1987 saw the confirmation of its first American Zen Buddhist priest.

Due to the interactions and results of immigration and Seifū’s tour, many American composers like Henry Cowell, Gerald Sprang, and John Cage learned how to play traditional Japanese instruments and incorporated Japanese musical aesthetics into their compositions. Since
then, the shakuhachi community has grown in the United States. There are shakuhachi web forums, commercial paraphernalia (t-shirts/action figures), well-attended performances, remote lessons, dojos, private lessons, and specialized camps. I wonder how much the shakuhachi community will grow in next ten years because of “landscapes” and further glocalization. I also wonder how much the general public will know about the instrument in the next twenty years - it may be that the shakuhachi will become a household word by then. In an interview with Riley Lee, I asked what he thought about my prediction, if it was possible for the shakuhachi to become that popular. He stated:

“It’s very likely… in Australia we have a much smaller population base, really about 20 million people, about a tenth of the population in the U.S….and also we have a wonderful public broadcasting network…it’s like the equivalent the BBC network in England. It’s called the ABC Australian Broadcasting Corporation…and as a result the information reaches people more readily in Australia. But I can say that the shakuhachi is almost a “household” name in Australia. One of the things that really brought this down for me was a cartoon I found in a newspaper - you had to know what a shakuhachi was in order to get the joke. It proves that first of all, enough people knew what a shakuhachi was to get it [the joke] and secondly the editor of the newspaper obviously thought enough people out there would know what a shakuhachi was in order to get it [the joke]” (Personal Communication, 2010).
From the analysis of my ethnographic data of the shakuhachi community, I predict that the subculture will grow in larger numbers in the United States, creating a need for more than three U.S. shakuhachi camps and a motivation for many members of the community to become good shakuhachi teachers and great shakuhachi performers.

Future studies in shakuhachi that I plan to explore include the rise of female players. Since the shakuhachi is a male-dominated tradition (and I am a woman studying shakuhachi), I am curious as to how the boundaries of gender-roles have changed through “landscapes” and glocalization. I also plan to study how identity is negotiated, constructed, or deconstructed through membership with the shakuhachi community. Gordon Mathews, author of the book *Global Culture/Individual Identity: Searching for Home in the Cultural Supermarket* (Routledge, 2000), states that culture can be considered “the information and identities available from the
global cultural supermarket” (Mathews 2000, 5). Using Appadurai’s theory of globalization as a supporting framework, Mathews maintains that the formulation of identity is complicated by a variety of cultural “shapings”; how identity is formulated depends on what items people choose to adopt from the global cultural supermarket. Through his theory, I plan to explore how identity is formulated in conjunction with the shakuhachi community and the influence of Japanese culture.

Overall, this thesis discussed the transition of the shakuhachi from China, its early use in the gagaku ensemble, the later use among the komusô monks, its movement into secular music, and then the instrument’s transfer over to the U.S. and the development of applied lessons, shakuhachi camps, and a shakuhachi subculture here. As the shakuhachi changed environment (or “landscape”), part of its repertoire and pedagogy changed as well. In the U.S., shakuhachi teachers have had to make decisions on what repertoire to teach and how to teach it. Some teachers, for example Sensei Seldin, have opted to try to retain the strategies of their own teachers; others, such as Sensei Gould (and Riley Lee in Australia), have decided to adapt flexible methods to reach the variety of students in the country. This thesis is intended to contribute new data about the emerging shakuhachi community in the U.S., and to be useful in the fields of ethnomusicology and Asian studies.
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