

Shakuhachi Zen

The *Fukeshū* and *Komusō*

by JAMES H. SANFORD

PRACTICALLY every evening on Japanese television, viewers are offered a variety of costume dramas, usually set in the Edo period, in which an intrepid samurai, fighting against truly astonishing odds, cuts down a host of evil foes with his sharp sword and then manfully strides away from the corpse-strewn scene. In quite a number of these colorful *chambara*, there appears a strange and solitary figure, playing a long Japanese flute and wearing an odd beehive-shaped basket hat which completely conceals his face. His dress and demeanor indicate that he is some sort of traveling priest, and indeed the haunting melody of his flute has a religious quality about it. Yet in the final scene, when he is attacked by a band of wicked swordsmen, the 'monk' wades into his assailants fearlessly, wielding his heavy flute to such effect that the ruffians are either bludgeoned to the ground or put to ignominious flight.

Most Japanese are able to identify the martial flute-player correctly enough as a *komusō*,¹ but will be at a loss when asked for further information about these strange monks. It is therefore not altogether surprising that pertinent English-language material on this subject is so meager as to be almost non-existent. Although Sir Charles Eliot's account is one of the most extended Western-language descriptions of this unique social group, it is brief enough to quote in full.

In many Japanese sects there is a small but extravagant sub-section. In Zen this is the *Fukeshū*, started as early as 1254 by the priest Kakushin. He visited China and learnt there not only theology but music. On his return he wandered about Japan preaching and playing the flute. The sect thus formed is often called *Komusō*, from the name of one of his successors, and the custom grew up for wandering Samurai and outlaws to join it. It became so much a method of evading justice that Ieyasu subjected it to strict regulations and it was entirely suppressed in 1871. But in springtime strolling

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¹ 虚無僧, lit. 'Monks of Emptiness'.

flute-players may still be seen in various country districts (for instance, at Nara) wearing large hats shaped like beehives which entirely cover the upper part of the face and are part of the traditional costume of the Fukeshū. But I believe that these modern minstrels claim no connection with Buddhism.²

Taken together, the *chambara* legend and Eliot's account contain almost all of the major elements of the standard understanding, Japanese or Western, of the *komusō*. The basic features of this understanding are so central to our study that I will list them here at the outset.

1. The *Fukeshū*³ was a subset of Zen that could be traced back to the thirteenth century. (More specifically, it was usually considered as a subset of the Rinzaï school, although in practice the Fuke temples maintained a position quite independent of Rinzaï authority.)
2. The members of the *Fukeshū* were called *komusō*.
3. Like all other Zen sects, the *Fukeshū* was originally a Chinese school with a long history on the mainland prior to its arrival in Japan.
4. Two of the most obvious social features of the *komusō* were: a reputation for extreme belligerency, and the practice of playing the flute as these 'monks' wandered about Japan on 'Zen pilgrimages'. (The Zen aspect of this custom was found in the *komusō* claim that their music was a vocal, though non-verbal, expression of the ineffable essence of Zen enlightenment.)

In spite of its widespread acceptance, this picture of the *komusō* as an ancient sect of Zen Buddhism with roots in China and a long subsequent history in Japan is in reality almost wholly false. The *komusō* movement was actually a purely Japanese product that began in or just prior to the Tokugawa era as a 'little tradition' phenomenon with no discernible Zen connections whatsoever. The traditional history of the Fuke sect was, in fact, a fantasy forged and disseminated in the middle of the Tokugawa period by *komusō* leaders who were engaged in a quite conscious program of self-legitimization. Prior to this process of rationalization, the *komusō* had been no more than a guild of begging musicians whose only connection with religion was a very nominal claim to the status of

² Sir Charles Eliot, *Japanese Buddhism*, London, 1964 ed., p. 285. The overall bibliography on the *komusō* fraternity is, in fact, not very extensive. The major source of primary documents is *Koji Rui'en* [=KR] 古事類苑, *Koji Rui'en Kankōkai*, 1931, vol. 33, pp. 1113–46. The best secondary sources are Yamashita Yajūrō 山下弥十郎, *Komusō: Fukeshū Reihōji no Kenkyū* 虚無僧普化宗鈴法寺の研究, Tama Kyōdo no Kenkyūkai, 1972; Nishiyama Matsunosuke 西山松之助, *Iemoto Monogatari* [=IM] 家元ものがたり, Shūei Shuppansha, 1971, pp. 177–

200; Nishiyama Matsunosuke, *Iemoto no Kenkyū* [=IK] 家元の研究, Azekura Shobō, 1956, pp. 539–83; Koide Kōhei 小出浩平, *Nihon no Dentō Ongaku* 日本の伝統音楽, Ongaku no Tomosha, 1970, pp. 151–63; Tanabe Hisao 田辺尚雄, *Nihon no Ongaku* 日本の音楽, Bunka Kenkyūsha, 1954, pp. 209–43; Mikami Sanji 三上参次, 'Fukeshū ni tsuite' 普化宗について, in *Shigaku Zasshi* 史学雑誌, 13: 4 (April 1902), pp. 61–76, & 13: 5 (May 1902), pp. 64–82.

³ 普化宗

Buddhist lay-brother,⁴ a status that functioned primarily to justify their practice of begging for alms.

There was, however, a pre-*komusō* guild of semi-religious beggar musicians who were called *komosō*,⁵ or 'mat monks' after the bedrolls they carried on their wanderings. They seem to have first appeared in late Ashikaga times and, like the later *komusō*, they attracted alms-givers by playing the flute, specifically the *hitoyogiri*⁶ type of flute. These *komosō* were seen as quite low-class itinerants and not as Zen musicians. 'Komusō' and 'komosō' are, of course, virtual homophones, and it is probable that the *komosō* 'mat monks' were actually nothing but early *komusō* 'emptiness monks' and that the latter name, with its heavy Buddhist overtones, is simply a Zennicised version of the older term. A still earlier possible prototype of the *komusō* fraternity is the *boroboro* or *boronji*,⁷ first mentioned in the fourteenth-century work *Tsurezuregusa* by Yoshida Kenkō.⁸ These sword-carrying lay monks were noted ruffians and have often been seen as proto-*komusō* by Japanese scholars; however, they did not play the flute and the connection between the two groups may be no more than a coincidence of style.⁹

The Early Stages

THE transformation of the *komusō* from a loosely organized fraternity of wandering beggar-minstrels into a subset of Rinzai Zen occurred early in the Tokugawa period. *Komusō* membership appears to have greatly increased in this period, and a major element in this rapid growth was the entry of large numbers of *rōnin* into the ranks of the movement.¹⁰ Many of these fugitives from the political upheavals that ushered in the Tokugawa period were proud, relatively well-educated men who after long, responsible careers as the vassals of powerful lords, suddenly found themselves masterless and living lives of little purpose. They were men who, for one reason or another, were left with nothing useful to do and no place to do it. Some felt themselves forced into a life of roadside begging or banditry; still others were drawn to the time-honored option of religious retirement. For many, the early *komusō* (or late *komosō*) fraternity must have been an especially attractive choice, combining, as it did, elements of all three options.

⁴ *Ubasoku* 優婆塞, from the Sanskrit term *upāsaka*. Status intermediate between laity and religious is not unusual in Japanese religion, especially at the popular level; in a Buddhist context the implication is that the person has a true vocation but has not taken any formal priestly vows. The best study in English on the *ubasoku* movements is Ichiro Hori, 'On the Concept of *Hijiri* (Holy-Man)', in *Numen*, 5: 2 (April 1958), pp. 128-60, & 5: 3 (Sept 1958), pp. 199-232.

⁵ 菰僧

⁶ 一節切; see p. 428, below.

⁷ ぼろぼろ; 梵論字 (numerous variations are found).

⁸ 吉田兼好 (1282-1350), 徒然草. Translation: Donald Keene, tr., *Essays in Idleness*, Columbia U.P., 1967; see esp. pp. 98-99.

⁹ The continuity/discontinuity of *boronji*, *komosō* and *komusō* is discussed in Nishiyama, Ⅱ, pp. 182-88; Mikami, (2) pp. 74-79; & Yamashita, pp. 21-27.

¹⁰ This period of development is discussed in Nishiyama, Ⅱ, pp. 187-92, and Yamashita, pp. 27-35.

It was, first of all, a religious vocation, although not necessarily a very demanding one—a feature that was notable even in the later and more institutionalized phase of the sect's development. A man needed to learn to play the *shakuhachi*¹¹ flute and to wear the rather odd *komusō* garb, but perhaps only a tune or two would suffice for the first requirement, and in the case of anyone with prior legal problems the standard *komusō* costume could go a long way toward providing a secure state of anonymity. As a *komusō*, a man might have to beg for a living, but this could be done without any sacrifice of pride since living by alms within a religious context was a custom that could be traced all the way back to the Buddha himself. Further, as more and more *rōnin* poured into the *komusō* ranks, a certain direct, gruff lifestyle became the familiar norm. If this development, comfortable enough for former warriors, eventually made it difficult for the populace to distinguish requests for Buddhist charity from downright extortion, that was the problem of the populace, not of the ex-samurai.

Although not a few rootless men found an attraction in the free-and-easy role of a wandering *komusō* monk, others who entered the fraternity were sincerely drawn by its developing Zen theology and perhaps specifically by its utilization of music as a means to enlightenment. Some of the more capable of these serious-minded men apparently conceived the desire to turn the ever-growing number of 'komusō temples' from mere fraternal rest stops into true religious centers. Thus, they hoped, the whole movement might eventually be made to take on the serious purpose which they themselves had already embraced. It would be necessary to reform or possibly even weed out the increasing number of insincere or patently counterfeit *komusō* who were using the distinctive garb for primarily personal ends, but this elimination of excesses within or peripheral to the movement would in the long run only serve to enhance the respect and freedom of the genuine pilgrims. That such a process would also give a meaningful, in fact a decisive, position to those monks who had ceased to wander and had come to settle rather permanently in one or another of the genuine *komusō* temples was also seen as being all to the good. Thus the leadership of the major temples worked toward placing overall legal control of the movement into the hands of a stable ecclesiastical body (themselves) upon which all smaller temples and all individual *komusō* would subsequently have to depend.

The initial stages of this conversion of the *komusō* from a fraternity of itinerant beggars into a recognized sect of Zen Buddhism is a process that took place primarily under the auspices of two of the early *komusō* temples. These were Ichigetsuji and Reihōji,¹² both of which were located on the outskirts of the shogunal capital, Edo.¹³ Prior to the emergence of these two temples, the rapid

¹¹ 尺八; see pp. 427–9, below.

¹² 一月寺, 鈴法寺. The site of the former temple is in Shōnan-machi, Higashi-Katsushika, Chiba-ken, while that of the latter is in Nogami, Ōme-shi, Tokyo.

¹³ The role of the third Fuke 'mother-temple', Myōanji 明暗寺 in Kyoto, which was a good deal less political and came somewhat later, is discussed below on pp. 431–3.

growth of the movement had already led to the appearance of a number of small *komusō* temples. Later *Fukeshū* records assert that by the early Tokugawa period there were as many as six subsets of the *Fukeshū* and more than a hundred Fuke temples scattered throughout the country. This claim, however, is a goodly exaggeration, for a maximum figure of about forty *komusō* temples by about 1860 would be nearer the truth.¹⁴ Further, a great many of the so-called *komusō* temples did not, in fact, even belong to the *Fukeshū*, but were rather branch houses of the Myōshinji¹⁵ line of Rinzai Zen. Most of them, moreover, were of *muin*¹⁶ rank and not full-fledged Zen temples at all. Their status as *komusō* temples in many cases probably meant no more than that they would temporarily accommodate wandering *komusō* whom they recognized as legitimate Buddhist ascetics. Thus, when a traditional source, the *Shakuhachishi-kō*,¹⁷ notes with sadness that by the end of the Tokugawa period the former 120 *komusō* temples had been reduced in number to ninety-two, it is unwittingly pointing to evidence of considerable growth, since its figure for the latter part of the period is probably substantially accurate.¹⁸

The factors that led to the emergence of Ichigetsuji, Reihōji and also Myōanji in Kyoto as the cathedrals of the Fuke sect are not entirely evident. However, in the case of Ichigetsuji and Reihōji, it is reasonable to argue that their close proximity to Edo was a major cause. (The fact that the *komusō* were especially numerous in the Kantō and Tōhoku regions was probably also an important contributing factor.)¹⁹ Some researchers have even wondered whether the emergence of these two temples was not the direct result of governmental support.²⁰ But this suggestion is a little too conspiratorial to accept without further evidence. However, that there existed a cozy arrangement in later times between the Tokugawa *bakufu* and the two nearby Fuke temples is clear enough, and the curious arrangement of shared power whereby both Ichigetsuji and Reihōji were denominated 'mother temples' is perhaps best explained in terms of governmental patronage. At any rate, the political or at least quasi-political extension of ecclesiastical privileges and the recognition of *komusō* claims to respectability that were extended by the *bakufu* in the late 1600s demonstrate clearly enough the existence of a *Fukeshū* policy of cooperation with government authorities.

Rationalization by Forgery

As part of their program of legitimization, the leaders of the settled *komusō* found it necessary both to document their 'long past' with a written history of their sect that connected it by direct lineage to recognized figures of Chinese and Japanese

¹⁴ Koide, p. 157.

¹⁵ 妙心寺

¹⁶ 無院

¹⁷ 尺八史考, a late Edo-period work.

¹⁸ Nishiyama, Ⅰ, p. 577.

¹⁹ A province-by-province listing of temples

shows that in the nineteenth century about 57% of all *komusō* temples were located in the Kantō and 18% in the Tōhoku. Nishiyama, Ⅰ, p. 578.

²⁰ Tanabe, pp. 224–8.

Zen, and also to provide plausible explanations for a number of quasi-military customs and practices introduced into the fraternity by the influx of large numbers of refugee samurai.

The primary text in which the recital of the history of the Fuke sect was undertaken is a surprisingly lyrical work called *Kyotaku Denki*.²¹ Although this text was created almost entirely out of whole cloth, it was granted prompt recognition by the shogunal authorities and, soon thereafter, the unwavering faith of the *komusō* themselves. It is, in fact, a prime source of the traditional self-understanding of the Fuke sect and the modern misunderstanding of its history. We must therefore digress from the world of fact to that of fancy to summarize the four major 'events' recorded in this pivotal work.

1. According to *Kyotaku Denki*, the founder of the Fuke sect was the famous Zen eccentric of T'ang China, Chen-chou P'u-k'o,²² who, we are told, 'was one of the wisest men of his times; when he lived in Chen-chou he liked to play the role of a madman and run through the streets ringing a bell.'²³
2. Toward the end of P'u-k'o's life, a Zen-oriented admirer, Chang Po,²⁴ managed to 'capture' the ineffable, non-verbal, transforming essence of P'u-k'o's hand-bell and play it on the flute. He called this flute tune the 'Hollow Bell' or 'Empty Bell',²⁵ since the flute was hollow; but the sound was still, in principle, that of P'u-k'o's bell.
3. Chang Po passed this melody down as a secret, mind-to-mind Zen transmission through a series of sixteen later Changs to one Chang Ts'an²⁶ in the thirteenth century. Chang Ts'an was a student not only of the 'Empty Bell' flute transmission but also of regular meditative Zen. In the Hu-kuo temple²⁷ in Chen-chou he met the important (and quite historical) Japanese monk, Kakushin Hattō Zenji,²⁸ and passed the 'Empty Bell'

²¹ 虚鐸伝記. The Zen flutist Mufū 無風 is listed as the author in *Kokusho Sōmoku-roku* 国書総目録, Iwanami Shoten, 1963-76, II, p. 564, but KR, vol. 33, pp. 1131-3, makes it apparent that the work was written by Mufū's master, Ton'ō 遁翁; nothing substantial is known of either man. The exact date of composition is unknown, but since there is a Japanese redaction dating from 1779 (*Kyotaku Denki Kokuji Kai* 虚鐸伝記国字解), it can be assumed that the original text dates probably no earlier than 1765 or 1770.

²² 鎮州普化. P'u-k'o can also be read P'u-hua; the name is read as Fuke in Japanese.

²³ There is very little concrete information about P'u-k'o, who died in the ninth century. Stories about him are to be found in several Chinese collections, such as *Tsu-t'ang chi* (J. *Sodō-shū*) 祖堂集, *chūan* 17; *Sung kao-seng ch'üan* (J. *Sō Kōsō-den*) 宋高僧伝, *chūan* 20; and

Ch'uan-teng lu (J. *Dentō-roku*) 伝灯録, *chūan* 10. The *locus classicus*, the primary source of the *komusō* tradition, is the handful of tales in *Li-i-chi lu* (J. *Rinzai-roku*), chapters 26-29, 47 & 55. Chapters 29 & 47 are so important to the *Fukeshū* that they are quoted in full in Appendix A at the end of this article, p. 493.

²⁴ 張伯, almost certainly not a historical figure.

²⁵ *Kyotaku* 虚鐸

²⁶ 張參; like Chang Po, he is a literary creation.

²⁷ Ling-t'ung Hu-kuo ssu 靈洞護国寺

²⁸ 覺心法灯禪師, 1207-98. His Buddhist name was Muhon Kakushin 無本覺心, but he is best known by the honorific title Hattō (also read Hottō) Enmyō Kokushi 法灯円明国師. In his youth he was a member of the Shingon sect, but he later went deeply into Zen. In 1247 he traveled to China, where he studied with

transmission on to him. Although he was not actually a flutist and although his supposed connections with Chang Ts'an and Chang Po are quite mythical,²⁹ Kakushin was nevertheless considered by virtually all wings of the *komusō* movement to have been the first Japanese patriarch of the Fuke school of Zen. He was not unaided in the propagation of this teaching, for *Kyotaku Denki* relates that four flute-playing Chinese lay-disciples³⁰ came back to Japan with him; in addition, Kakushin had one direct Japanese heir to the teaching in his follower, Kichiku.³¹

4. The final major figure in the supposed Fuke lineage was the warrior Kusunoki Masakatsu.³² Again, Masakatsu was a historical figure, an outstanding warrior who ended up on the losing side of the Imperial Succession dispute in the late fourteenth century. In *Kyotaku Denki* he is depicted as the prototypical samurai convert to the fraternity.³³

The production of the *Kyotaku Denki* text served three functions in the legitimization of the *komusō* as the Fuke sect: it provided the fraternity with a long and somewhat plausible history as a sub-school of Zen; it showed that the military habits and half-beggar, half-samurai costume of the Tokugawa *komusō* (including the occasional use of swords and light armor) were a coherent part of that history; and it traced each of these features to men of respectable station—the Zen aspects through Hattō Kokushi and the *rōnin* characteristics through the worthy imperial loyalist, Kusunoki Masakatsu.

The second, equally important, Fuke document that was used to legitimate the fraternity *cum* sect was also a deliberate forgery. This was the so-called *Charter of*

Wu-men Hui-k'ai (J. Mumon Ekai) 無門慧開, the author of the famous *Wu-men kuan* (J. *Mumonkan*) 無門関. In 1254 Kakushin returned to Japan and founded Saihōji 西方寺 (later called Kōkokuji 興国寺) in the Yura domain in Kii province. Hayashi Taiun 林岱雲, *Nihon Zenshū-shi* 日本禅宗史, Daitō Shuppansha, 1938, pp. 677–9; Ōno Tatsunosuke 大野達之助, *Shinkō Nihon Bukkyō Shisō-shi* 新稿日本仏教思想史, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1933, pp. 312–24.

²⁹ None of Hattō's published works mentions P'u-k'o, the flute, or Hattō's supposed flute disciples. In the 1930s Nakazuka Chikuzen 中塚竹禅 managed to gain access to the internal records of Kōkokuji, including Hattō's diaries written in China and Japan, but he found no mention of Chang Ts'an, any P'u-k'o tradition, or the *shakuhachi*. Tanabe, pp. 224–30.

³⁰ *Kyotaku Denki* gives their names as Kuo Tso (J. Kokusa) 国作, Li Cheng (J. Rishō) 理正, Fa P'u (J. Hafu) 法普, and Tsung Nu (J. Shōjo) 宗恕. 卍, 33, p. 1131. In later sources Fa P'u is often called Pao Fu (J. Hōfuku) 宝伏, and Tsung Nu is sometimes referred to as

Seng Nu (J. Sōjo) 僧恕.

³¹ Kichiku Ryōen 寄竹了円; historicity doubtful.

³² 楠木正勝, fl. c. 1400.

³³ *Kyotaku Denki* anachronously makes him out to be the originator of the distinctive costume of the itinerant Tokugawa *komusō* (described below, pp. 423 & 424). He is also made the source of the fraternity's name. When he became a Fuke monk, Masakatsu was given the Buddhist name Kyomu 虚無. Later, he 'wandered throughout the five home provinces and the seven districts playing the "Empty Bell". When people asked him, "Who are you?", he would reply, "Is Monk Emptiness [Kyomu] here?" So people came to call his followers *kyomu* monks [or in the more common reading, *komu-sō*]. Many persons in various parts of Japan adopted his costume. Some even went so far as to put on iron helmets and visors, and to carry swords and daggers. Kyomu himself returned to Ōmi and resided for a long time in the region of Shiga.' 卍, 33, p. 1132.

1614.³⁴ According to the *komusō* interpretation of their history, the publication of this document heralded the first major secular recognition of the worth of the Fuke sect after its long and rather obscure religious past. This long-standing pattern of obscurity was broken in 1614 when Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, bestowed a special charter upon the *komusō*. Several versions of the *Charter of 1614* (rather too many, in fact) have survived.³⁵ However, although they vary greatly in length and content, all versions state that the *Fukeshū* is an institution of great importance and one worthy of considerable respect. They further agree in granting a number of unique privileges to the sect.

The first article of the 'Eleven-Article' version of the *Charter* establishes a special role for the *Fukeshū* in contradistinction to all other Buddhist sects. The *komusō* fraternity is singled out as a religious group specifically designed to serve the needs of *rōnin* who wish to become temporary hermits. The succeeding articles then spell out various privileges bestowed upon the *komusō* in logical pursuance of the rationale stated in the initial article. Foremost of these benefits is a form of 'extraterritoriality' which placed the *komusō* beyond the authority of all local jurisdictions and made them responsible only to the shogunate itself through the *jisha-bugyō*.³⁶ Furthermore, the document states that, since the *komusō* were at times employed by the shogunate on 'expeditions of an investigatory nature' (i.e., as spies),³⁷ they were to be granted unlimited freedom of travel throughout the country, the right to carry singlesticks and daggers, exemption from toll fees or boat fares, and free admission to plays, *sumō* matches, etc. In addition, although *komusō* might choose to beg for food, they were, as Buddhist monks, to be treated with respect and consideration by all.

³⁴ *Gonyūkoku no Watasaseraresōrō Osadamegaki* 御入国之被渡候掟書 is the full, formal title of the work. The best study is found in Mikami, (1) pp. 68–76, & (2) pp. 74–82; also helpful are Nishiyama, Ⅱ, pp. 188–90, & Ⅲ, pp. 568–74, and Yamashita, pp. 27–34.

³⁵ The various versions include the 9-article text of *Tokugawa Kinrei-kō* 徳川禁令考, Book 5, reproduced in Nishiyama, Ⅲ, p. 569; the 11-article version sent to the shogunate in the second month of 1792 by Ichigetsuji and Reihōji, reproduced in Ⅱ, 33, pp. 1115–6; a 17-article version dating from 1825; a 20-article version sent by the above-mentioned temples to the shogunal officers in 1831; and a 21-article version of uncertain date. None of these versions claims to be the actual original text, which was supposed to have been destroyed by fire in the early 1600s.

The existence of numerous disparate texts but no credible original, the excessively advantageous benefits the texts allow the *komusō* fraternity, and numerous linguistic and historical anomalies make it clear that the

Charter of 1614 was a forgery of the late seventeenth century. These objections are detailed in Mikami, (2) pp. 74–82, but their roots go back to the doubts expressed by eighteenth-century scholars such as Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, 1656–1725.

³⁶ 寺社奉行, the shogunal office that oversaw the affairs of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. The practical importance of placing the *Fukeshū* directly under the authority of the *jisha-bugyō* was made evident in the famous Sengoku Sōdō 仙石騒動 (Sengoku Disturbance) trial of 1835, described below in Appendix B, p. 440.

³⁷ It is quite possible, and was popularly supposed, that the *bakufu* employed *komusō* pilgrims as informal spies. William Malm, *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*, Tuttle, 1959, p. 154, allows that even the secularized *komusō* who survived the legal abolition of the *Fukeshū* into the present era tended to 'have many acquaintances on the police force' and to act as 'stool pigeons'.



Tokyo National Museum

'Water Mirror' (*Mizu-kagami*), by Harunobu.

A courtesan catches sight of a *komusō*'s handsome features reflected in the water on the veranda—a titillating theme repeated in various *ukiyo*e by Harunobu and Koryūsai.

Some versions of the charter go on to give the *komusō* 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 *komusō* 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 townsmen to their ranks.³⁸

While *Kyotaku Denki* had sought primarily to legitimize the *komusō* as a Zen tradition with significant pre-Tokugawa roots, the *Charter of 1614* served a different but complementary function. It attempted to explain and rationalize the actual state of the *komusō* movement, to enumerate and justify certain widespread *komusō* practices, and to locate this process of rationalization within a certain credible framework of traditional practices long recognized by the political authorities; finally, it aimed at placing all responsibility for the regulation of the sect in the hands of the major *komusō* temples subject to the direct authority of the *bakufu* through its religious arm, the *jisha-bugyō*.

That the Tokugawa shogunate of the 1670s did not object to the self-aggrandizement represented by *Kyotaku Denki* and the *Charter of 1614* was not so much a case of gullibility as a realization that the governmental moves taken in the early days of the Tokugawa regime to suppress or control *rōnin* 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. Thus the *bakufu* was quite willing, initially at least, to grant the special privileges claimed by the *komusō* (which largely reflected existing practices anyway) in exchange for the opportunity to oversee the movement and its members.

The overall arrangement would benefit all parties concerned. Sincere mendicant *komusō* were allowed certain legal privileges and recognized status; the major *komusō* temples gained official recognition and legal command of the fraternity; and the shogunate was enabled to direct the energies of a potentially disruptive group into a relatively well-regulated channel. By the 1840s, when it became obvious that the accommodations made toward the *komusō* had, in fact, led not to regulation but only to repeated uncontrolled abuses of the privileges granted, the government 'suddenly' discovered that the *Charter of 1614* was actually a

³⁸ More solid documentation for official approval of the secondary practices can be found in other *bakufu* documents, especially in an edict (sixth month, 1677) appointing Ichigetsumi and Reihōji as twin mother-temples (*honzan* 本山) of the movement and authorizing *komusō* to carry swords, to wear basket hats and white cloaks, and to travel freely throughout the country. Imaeda Aishin 今枝愛真, *Zenshū no Rekishi* 禅宗の歴史, Shibundō, 1962, p. 249; Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助, *Nihon Bukkyō-shi: Kinsei Hen* 日本仏教史近世篇, Iwanami Shoten,

1952, II, pp. 280–81.

This and other later edicts are essentially unlike the *Charter* in that they insist on responsibilities in exchange for the privileges they give the *komusō*. The 1677 edict, for example, forbids the enrollment of non-samurai 'no matter how serious their desire to enter'; it also calls for all initiates to take a solemn vow to uphold the rules of the sect. A second edict issued in the twelfth month of the same year likewise insists on the observance of vows as a necessary form of *komusō* discipline.

forgery that authorized nothing and so withdrew its previous recognition of the document—a discovery and withdrawal that meant very little, however, since by that time the privileges of the Fuke sect were too well entrenched for the debilitated *bakufu* to abrogate.

This failure to control the pilgrim *komusō* was not simply that of the shogunal authorities; clearly the primary responsibility must be attributed to the major Fuke temples. Not that these temples did not want to oversee the *komusō*, for such control was a necessary *quid pro quo* for continued government patronage, but in fact they were unable to maintain the legal authority that had been granted them in trust. That this was a failure not of intention or program, but one of capacity, can best be seen by examining the complex and well-thought-out set of interlocking regulations that the governmentally recognized Fuke establishments attempted to force onto their wandering pilgrim brethren.

Regulating the Sect

As soon as the main Fuke temples gained a measurable degree of authority over the movement, they began to regulate who was or was not a legitimate *komusō*. Eventually a number of characteristics and qualifications became definitive marks of the fraternity. Some of these were informal elements of a general lifestyle, such as expected habits of behavior and thought; others were formal legal requirements.

In order to legally enter the Fuke sect, the aspiring *komusō* had first of all to present himself at either Reihōji or Ichigetsuji. The first requirement enjoined on him there was proof of his warrior status. In addition, he had to present certification of non-Christian belief, a statement outlining his reasons for wishing to become a member of the *Fukeshū*, a letter of support from a guarantor, and a written oath that he would uphold the sect's regulations.

Once these requirements were met, he was obliged to pay an initiation fee. In return, the new *komusō* received a Buddhist name, the 'three seals' and the 'three implements', and a long and a short sword. Finally, he was abjured to study the regulations of the Fuke temples. Although no explicit doctrinal demands were made, he was expected to know, at least in outline, the history of the transmission of P'o-k'o's line of Zen to Japan and to have faith in the idea that playing the *shakuhachi* would, at minimum, temper his disposition and might, further, eventually lead him to meditative ecstasy and Zen enlightenment.³⁹

The 'three seals'⁴⁰ and 'three implements'⁴¹ were formal proofs of *komusō* mem-

³⁹ Koide, pp. 155–6; Nishiyama, Ⅰ, pp. 574–7; Imaeda, p. 251.

Since the aspiring *komusō* was already supposed to be of samurai status, one wonders whether he may not have simply been re-invested with his own weapons. It is questionable just how many *komusō* actually availed themselves of the supposed right to carry long swords in any case; one suspects that they often

settled for a short sword and the heavy *shakuhachi* for self-defense; this may explain why the term *shakuhachi* is at times applied to both their swords and their flutes. Tokugawa illustrations seldom, if ever, depict the *komusō* with a recognizable long sword.

⁴⁰ *San'in* 三印

⁴¹ *Sangu* 三具

bership. They were issued initially by Reihōji and Ichigetsuji (from around 1675) and later by certain designated branch temples. The three seals consisted of the *honsoku*,⁴² a summary of the sect's basic principles; the *kaiin*,⁴³ a certificate of sect membership; and the *tsūin*,⁴⁴ a travel permit. The *honsoku* was a fairly brief document which explained the connection between P'u-k'o and the Fuke *shakuhachi*, and gave a justification of the sect's use of the basket hat. The text of the *honsoku* varied somewhat, but a standard version issued at Ichigetsuji takes the following form.⁴⁵ It begins with the full text of Chapter 29 of *Lin-chi lu*⁴⁶ and then continues as follows:

The *shakuhachi* is an instrument of the Dharma and there are numerous meanings to be found in it. The *shakuhachi* is made of three joints of bamboo and is divided into two sections.⁴⁷ Each of these elements symbolizes something. The three joints are the Three Powers [Heaven, Earth and Man]. The [differentiation between the four] upper and [one] lower fingerholes represents the sun and the moon. The five holes are also the Five Elements [Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Space]. Taken as a whole, the *shakuhachi* is the profound wellspring of all phenomenal things. If a man plays the *shakuhachi*, all things will come to him. His mind and the realm of light and dark will become one.⁴⁸

The *tengai* hat is an implement of adornment of the *Buddha-kāya*.⁴⁹ It is an item of clothing authorized to our sect [alone].

Above the holy mountain, a singular moon,
Its light reflected in myriad streams.
P'u-k'o was a solitary wind
Whose virtue still perfumes the three kingdoms.⁵⁰

⁴² 本則

⁴³ 会印, also read *e'in*.

⁴⁴ 通印

⁴⁵ Translated from the *honsoku* quoted in full in Nishiyama, 11, pp. 574–5.

⁴⁶ For this text, see p. 439, below.

⁴⁷ A fuller description of the Fuke *shakuhachi* is provided below, pp. 427–9.

⁴⁸ The text is full of Buddhist symbolism. Especially notable are the various microcosm/macrocosm equivalences which, while originally more typical of tantric Buddhism, are a constant feature of Japanese Zen. These particular equivalences are somewhat forced at one point, however, when the flute's four upper holes are made to represent collectively the archetypically unitary sun. The further identification of the fingerholes with Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Space is not quite certain. The text says that the holes are *wu hsing* (J. *go-gyō*) 五行, normally signifying the five elements of early Chinese cosmology—Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water; but in a Zen or Zennicized context the five elements of Indian

Buddhism seem more likely. According to Koide, p. 159, the holes, from bottom up, represent either Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Space, or else Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter and Midsummer. 'The profound wellspring of all phenomenal things' recalls the Taoist roots of Zen.

The realm of light and dark which will merge with the *komusō*'s (original) mind represents the dualistically perceived phenomenal world, but the choice of words surely reflects P'u-k'o's 'bright-head' and 'dark-head' (see p. 439, below).

⁴⁹ 夫天蓋者莊嚴仏身之具也. *Busshin* 仏身 is a cover term for *Trikāya* (*sambutsu* 三仏 or *sanshin* 三身), the Triple Body of the Buddha.

⁵⁰ The poem begins with the standard Buddhist metaphor of the moon as a Noumenal Reality which reflects its image in numberless phenomenal realities, though 'myriad streams' no doubt also refers to the sub-temples and sub-sects of the 'Single Moon Temple' (Ichigetsu-ji). P'u-k'o, like the moon, is presented as a figure of solitary purity whose essence

Shimōsa province, Katsushika county, Kazahaya hamlet, Kogane.
Kinryū-zan, Bairin-in,⁵¹ Ichigetsuji [temple seal]

[Bearer's] Religious name
[Seal]

[Bearer's] Name
[Seal]

The second of the 'three seals' was the *kaiin*, a simple document of identification that certified actual membership in the *Fukeshū*. Since it had to be renewed twice yearly in the first and seventh months, the *kaiin* was an extremely important source of institutional power for the major temples.

The *tsūin*, or travel permit, was the third legal document needed by every *komusō*. Although couched in courteously humble language, it made quite clear to all local authorities that the bearer was authorized freedom of travel.⁵²

The 'three implements' given to the new *komusō* consisted of the *shakuhachi*, the *kesa*,⁵³ and the *tengai* hat.⁵⁴ The hat was the most distinctive item of clothing worn by a *komusō* pilgrim, although prior to about 1700 it was no more than a fairly shallow sedge hat of no special note. In later years, from about 1720 on, the *tengai* was transformed into its more familiar form, a sort of inverted reed basket which covered the wearer's entire face. 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. According to the rules of the late Tokugawa Fuke sect, the *komusō* monk was never supposed to remove his *tengai* except within the precincts of a Fuke temple; if caught outside in a rainstorm, he was not to open an umbrella over the *tengai*.⁵⁵ In theory, use of the developed *tengai* was restricted to full-fledged members of the fraternity and unauthorized use was a punishable offense. As time went on, the enforcement of this monopoly relaxed somewhat, and samurai traveling incognito took to wearing this type of headgear; it was eventually even affected by destitute warriors and their wives who had been reduced to roadside begging. Nevertheless, the legal restriction remained. When the kabuki play *Kura*⁵⁶ was staged in the early 1800s, one of the cast had to appear wearing a *komusō tengai*; since such a hat could not be legally purchased, the producers were obliged to borrow one directly from Ichigetsuji after paying a deposit of 300 *ryō*.⁵⁷

Like the three seals, the three implements could be obtained only from one of the major Fuke temples. This naturally helped to centralize control of the movement and also helped to guarantee that virtually anyone carrying the three seals and the three implements could be taken as a bona fide *komusō* and was not simply a dressed-up beggar or a disguised bandit.

permeates the world (*san-chou* [J. *sanshū*] 三州). A further possible reference for the moon imagery is Kichiku's dream discussed on p. 430–1 below.

⁵¹ 金龍山梅林院

⁵² Koide, pp. 155–6; Nishiyama, Ⅰκ, pp. 575–6; Yamashita, pp. 46–7.

⁵³ 袈裟

⁵⁴ 天蓋

⁵⁵ Yamashita, p. 47. Both the early and developed forms of *tengai* are illustrated in Nishiyama, ⅠM, pp. 192–3.

⁵⁶ 藏

⁵⁷ Nishiyama, Ⅰκ, p. 576.

Ranks and Lifestyles

ONCE a man had been accepted into the *komusō* fraternity and given his Buddhist name, the three seals and the three implements, he would normally become a *kyōgai*,⁵⁸ or wandering monk. The first two ranks to evolve in the institutionalized movement were those of *kyōgai* and *jūjishoku*, or *kanju*.⁵⁹ The *jūjishoku*, or senior priests, were the resident heads of the *komusō* temples scattered throughout the country. They were supposed to be fully ordained Buddhist priests who had taken the tonsure and possessed at least a moderate grasp of Buddhist doctrine. The rank of *kyōgai* was, by contrast, only half-clerical. *Kyōgai* wore their hair long, put on garments that, although formulaic, were not formal monk's robes,⁶⁰ and wandered about the country with swords and *shakuhachi* tucked in their belts. It is the picture of these men that constitutes the standard Japanese image of a *komusō*.

Initially it was not necessary to specify more ranks than these two, but with the growth and evolution of the *komusō* new terms came into being. As the large temples began to gather groups of permanent residents to themselves, the term *jūjishoku* came to be supplemented by the ranks *jizume*⁶¹ and *tsumeai*,⁶² which designated lesser resident monks. Monks attached to a temple but not living in the main precincts were given the title *honsoku* after the first 'seal'. Eventually two other groups differentiated out of the main body of the *komusō*. The more important of these were the 'temporary *komusō*', called *shūen josui*⁶³ or 'assistant flute players with sect connections'. This status was actually prohibited by Tokugawa law, but by the end of the Edo period there were many of these temporary *komusō*. Primarily, this rank or status was used to incorporate non-samurai

⁵⁸ 境界. The term is drawn from the technical vocabulary of Buddhist philosophy, where its most common meaning is 'the realm of objective reality'.

⁵⁹ 住持職, 看主. Imaeda, p. 251, makes *kanju* the equivalent of *kyōgai*, but in exact use it is synonymous with *jūjishoku*. Either the terms were confused in common usage or else at the large urban temples *kanju* came to denote resident monks of lower rank than the *jūjishoku*.

The division between the *kyōgai*, wandering monks, and the settled temple-monks was never fully bridged, and the inability of the temples to regulate adequately the *kyōgai* faction was a major factor in the sect's eventual downfall.

⁶⁰ The problem of *komusō* costume is rather complex. Not only did the items of dress apparently vary according to status as a *kyōgai* or *jūjishoku*, but also the *kyōgai* costume went through several evolutionary states. The matter is further confused by the adaptation of

komusō-type garb by various unauthorized groups in the closing decades of the Tokugawa period.

⁶¹ 寺詰, also read *tera-zamurai*. The term was often used for both the monk residents of a temple and the 'certified' *shakuhachi* players connected with it. In the urban setting of Edo, monkly *jizume* practiced a modified form of the door-to-door flute begging of their *kyōgai* brethren, and were assigned specific begging sites (called *ba* 場) along the streets. As they hustled passersby for alms, the *jizume* were to go no further than the edge of their assigned *ba*, to which they could try to draw 'customers' over with high-pitched calls. Begging outside the limits of the *ba* was forbidden. Since the *ba* were named after the *machi* in which they were located, they were presumably restricted in number. Koide, p. 157; Imaeda, p. 251.

⁶² 詰合

⁶³ 宗縁助吹

who wished to study the *shakuhachi*. Although such men could not officially become *komusō*, they were granted limited Fuke membership permits with specific expiration dates. Another rank, also forbidden but occasionally found, was that of *kaidō*,⁶⁴ the personal disciples of a particular *komusō*. As a final end-product, or possibly degeneration, of the movement, mention can be made of the appearance in late Tokugawa times of dandies known as *Santo komusō*,⁶⁵ who dressed in a flashy modification



'Three *Komusō* Dandies', by Kiyonaga, 1780.

The *kyōgai* pilgrim was, however, the typical and familiar *komusō*. The costume and several peculiar customs of the *kyōgai* were, as mentioned above, fixed by a tradition that traced its origin back to the *Kyotaku Denki* biography of Kusunoki Masakatsu. The developed costume of the *kyōgai* pilgrim consisted as much in secondary paraphernalia as in his actual clothing.⁶⁶ His main outer garments might be either a shirt and trousers or else a long belted gown with wide sleeves. Usually these were dark blue in color.⁶⁷ In addition, he wore gloves and either

⁶⁴ 海道

⁶⁵ 三都虚無僧; also known as *date* 伊達 *komusō*, or 'dandy *komusō*'. Shimonaka Yasaburō 下中弥三郎, *Ongaku Jiten* 音楽事典, Heibonsha, 1955, p. 105.

⁶⁶ The following description of *kyōgai*

costume and practices is based primarily on Koide, pp. 156–7.

⁶⁷ Although the texts usually specify dark blue or black as the proper color, Edo woodblock prints often show the *komusō* wearing white gowns (see n. 60, above).

straw sandals or high *geta*, the latter footwear becoming typical in the late Edo period. On his chest the pilgrim carried a *kenkon-bari*,⁶⁸ or 'Heaven and Earth placard'. This moderate-sized wooden signboard had the slogan 'Non-born, non-dying'⁶⁹ printed on its outer side and the pilgrim's Buddhist name on the inner side. On his back he carried a bedroll called a *fusu*.⁷⁰ Strung from a cord attached to his cloak were his *san'ya-fukuro*,⁷¹ or 'three-valley bags'. These were a begging bag,⁷² a signboard bag,⁷³ and a small box called a *gebako*.⁷⁴ In addition he bore his *shakuhachi* and swords. His face was, of course, hidden under the *tengai* basket hat.

After a few weeks on the open road a *komusō* must have seemed like a pilgrim long gone on a journey to the next world. And indeed, the fact that his connections with the world of men had been severed would be made quite clear should he die on the road. In such an event, in accordance with the ritual supposedly initiated by Kusunoki Masakatsu, his corpse, together with his *shakuhachi* and *gebako*, would be rolled up in his bedroll. The *kenkon-bari* would be set up as a grave marker and his *tengai* placed over it. These would be left to weather away naturally. No funeral service was necessary since the wind blowing above his now silent *shakuhachi* would play an ever-repeated funeral song.

While on his wanderings, the *komusō* pilgrim was expected to talk as little as possible. Whether he sought lodging or was about to depart was shown by the way he carried his *shakuhachi* and wore his *tengai*. If asked where he was going, the *komusō* was to reply, 'There is no place wherein to dwell,'⁷⁵ or 'Whatever direction or quarter.'⁷⁶ If he were asked who he was, he was to give only his temple's name and his own religious name. If pressed further on this point, he was to respond, 'What can you ask of one who consists of voidness wrapped up in the form of a body, and who carries the *shakuhachi* of infinite emptiness?' Then he was to back off a little and wave his flute at the questioners.

If a *komusō* happened to meet one of his fellows along the highway, they were to greet each other with prescribed high-pitched calls.⁷⁷ When they came to about two yards of each other, each man was to hold his *shakuhachi* in front of himself,

⁶⁸ 乾坤張り

⁶⁹ 不生不滅. In the early schools of Buddhism this phrase could be applied only to nirvana itself since all worldly things were impermanent, with a beginning and subject to annihilation. In the Zen school, however, 'non-born, non-dying' refers more often to the internal psychological state of the enlightened man or to his eternally pure buddha-nature.

⁷⁰ 副子, also read *fukusu*.

⁷¹ 三谷袋

⁷² *Takuhatsu-bukuro* 托鉢袋

⁷³ *Kanban-bukuro* 看板袋

⁷⁴ 偈箱. The term is derived from *gāthā*,

meaning short Buddhist hymns, but the *komusō gebako* were most often used to collect tips. Shimonaka, p. 105.

⁷⁵ *Issho fujū* 一所不住; less literally translated, the phrase refers to the Buddhist state of non-attachment to any sensory, intellectual or emotional object.

⁷⁶ A quotation from P'u-k'o's remarks in *Lin-chi lu*, Ch. 29 (see p. 439 below), here used in a cryptic but fairly prosaic sense.

⁷⁷ *Neshirabe* 音調. Since *shirabe* is often used in the sense of 'tune' or 'variation', it is possible that these 'calls' were made with the *shakuhachi* rather than verbally, although Koide, p. 157, implies that they were done vocally.

pointing it to the ground. Then he momentarily lifted his *tengai* above eye level and quickly dropped it back into place.

This knightly salute between comrades was matched by an equally specific code of conduct to be followed when encountering enemies. In such a situation, a *komusō* was not simply to rush forward to slay his foe. Before any combat could take place, each man had to have seconds. Only then could the *komusō* draw his 'short *shakuhachi*' (actually a short sword), and even this was to be done with prescribed ceremony. The bag in which his sword was carried was tied up with a cord that ended in two tassels, symbolizing *yin* and *yang*. These had to be undone and the sword drawn out with appropriate fluid motions. Finally, the battle proper could begin. This codification of military etiquette need not be taken as an indication that the *komusō* were involved in constant dueling with old enemies, although their widespread reputation for arrogant rowdiness continued to the end of the Tokugawa period in spite of the efforts of the main temples to regulate the sect and curb its members. Rather, such ritualization seems to have been part and parcel of the *komusō* claim to samurai status and of the usually only half-expressed claim that abused *rōnin* had a quasi-legal right to enter the *Fukeshū* while preparing a justified vendetta.

The Komusō and the Shakuhachi

THE close connection between the *komusō* fraternity and the playing of the *shakuhachi* has been mentioned in passing more than once in this article, and it is now time to take a closer look at this aspect of *Fukeshū* practice.

The oldest extant flutes in Japan are apparently four instruments found in the Shōsōin collection in Nara.⁷⁸ According to surviving records, these flutes were the gifts of the King of Kudara, an ancient Korean state which served as an early conduit of Chinese culture into Japan. Three of these instruments are made of bamboo, while the fourth is a stone flute carved in imitation of the bamboo pattern. The largest of the three bamboo flutes measures one *shaku*, four *sun*, five *bu*, five *rin*⁷⁹ in length (43.78 cm), but by the usage of T'ang China this would have been exactly one *shaku*, eight *sun*⁸⁰ long—or, abbreviated, *shakuhachi*. Thus the standard etymology of the instrument's name as deriving from its length appears to be correct and also supports the usual assumption of continental origin.

It has been argued that, prior to its introduction from the Asian mainland, the flute in any form was unknown to the Japanese. The *gagaku shakuhachi*,⁸¹ the earliest important form of the *shakuhachi*, was certainly an import. *Gagaku*, literally

⁷⁸ The following discussion is based largely upon Tanabe, pp. 209–15, & Nishiyama, *IM*, pp. 179–80. The best general study of the *shakuhachi* in English is the appropriate chapter in Malm, pp. 151–64; a more detailed account is given in Andres Gutzwiller, 'Shakuhachi; Aspects of History, Practice and Teaching',

unpublished dissertation, Wesleyan University, 1974.

⁷⁹ 1尺, 4寸, 5分, 5厘.

⁸⁰ *Isshaku hassun* (Chinese: *yi-ch'ih pa-ts'un*) 一尺八寸

⁸¹ 雅樂尺八

'elegant music', was the name given in the Nara period to the orchestral music played at the Japanese court. Imported from the mainland, this music included forms derived not only from China but also from Korea, India and Central Asia as well. The *gagaku* flute fell into disuse in the late Heian period, but some authorities see it as the progenitor or at least one ancestor of the later Fuke *shakuhachi*. But a more likely forerunner of this flute was the medieval instrument called the *hitoyogiri*,⁸² which seems to have first appeared in Japan in the Ashikaga period. Since an equivalent flute is not found in China and since the *hitoyogiri* resembles quite closely certain Southeast-Asian forms, it is possible that this instrument entered Japan via a line of diffusion that bypassed China altogether.⁸³ Like the later Fuke *shakuhachi*, it had four upper fingerholes and a thumbhole below (standard Chinese flutes had six fingerholes). A further similarity lies in the fact that prior to the development of the Fuke *shakuhachi* in Tokugawa times, the *hitoyogiri* was the favored instrument of the beggar-priest traditions which are the probable prototypes of the *komusō* fraternity.

The Fuke *shakuhachi* has the same general structure as the *hitoyogiri*, but is much heavier. Typically, it is made from the stalk of a large bamboo and usually incorporates three major segments of the cane. The stalk is cut off just below ground level so that a portion of the root forms the bell of the instrument. The stem is then reamed out and the holes precisely placed in relation to the nodal joints and to each other. The necessity of an accurate relationship between the positions of the second and third holes and their combined relationship to the second node normally requires that the instrument be made in two sections with either a cut or a splice to adjust the distances. Once the stem has been reamed and the fingerholes drilled, a mouthpiece is notched in (and in some cases strengthened with a piece of horn or ivory), and the bore is lacquered to allow a smoother flow of air.⁸⁴

The Fuke *shakuhachi* has, in fact, been 'the' *shakuhachi* from about 1600 up to the twentieth century. The exact reasons for its dominating emergence in the seventeenth century are not entirely clear, although the qualifying appellation 'Fuke' certainly suggests a direct connection with the *komusō*. Two hypotheses are usually suggested. One is that as ex-warriors flocked into the ranks of the *komusō* in the early 1600s, they tended to favor a thick, heavy *shakuhachi*—not so much for its musical value as for its utility as a weapon. The second, and not necessarily contradictory, theory supposes that the early developers of the Fuke sect devised and propagated the new instrument in order to disassociate their followers from the low-class beggar-musicians, who traditionally played the *hitoyogiri*. Whatever the reasons, sociological or musicological, the Fuke *shakuhachi*

⁸² 一節切

⁸³ Imaeda, pp. 249–50, & Tanabe, pp. 215–20.

⁸⁴ Malm, pp. 153–4 & 158–9; Donald Paul Berger, 'The Shakuhachi and the Kinko

Ryū Notation', in *Asian Music*, 1, No. 2 (Fall, 1969), pp. 32–72. The 'original' Fuke *shakuhachi* that were—or could be—used as clubs must have been made in one piece. In most cases this would have led to a slight mistuning.



Myōanji, Kyoto

Two members of the Myōan Kyōkai at Myōanji, Kyoto.



Myōanji, Kyoto

Kyochiku Ryōen Zenji, founder of Myōanji

superseded and eventually totally replaced the older, smaller instrument in all contexts.⁸⁵ This replacement of the *hitoyogiri* and of virtually all the other flute forms is especially notable in view of the fact that the legal monopoly granted to the *Fukeshū* applied only to their instrument and not to the *hitoyogiri* or other flutes.

The institution of the *shakuhachi* as a legally restricted, *komusō*-only instrument made it necessary for the established Fuke sect to insist that every *komusō* have at least a nominal ability to play this flute. Furthermore, since issuance of 'seals and implements' was limited to the major temples (and, as time went by, to a few selected branch temples), the obligation to see to the musical training of the *komusō* membership also fell logically to these major temples. But the ways in which this necessary concern was effected at Reihōji and Ichigetsuji in Edo, at their important Kyoto counterpart, Myōanji, and then later at still other temples were quite different.

In spite of—more likely, because of—their central concern with the political aspirations of the Fuke sect, neither Ichigetsuji nor Reihōji paid any great attention to the *shakuhachi*. Musical ability in these two temples was never an important qualification for resident status or even for succession to the post of abbot. In fact, these two temples soon elaborated a method of farming out *shakuhachi* instruction so as to avoid being bothered with this chore any more than was absolutely necessary. This was done by setting up subsidiary institutions located at or near the major temples' 'branch offices'⁸⁶ in Edo. These new subsidiaries, usually called *fukiawase*,⁸⁷ were virtually *Fukeshū*-franchised *shakuhachi* academies.

The most important figure in the development of the *shakuhachi* music under the Edo *fukiawase* system was the gifted player and composer, Kurosawa Kinko.⁸⁸ In 1768, when he was already fifty-nine years old, Kurosawa was given charge of Ichigetsuji's Edo *fukiawase*. He was allowed an extremely free hand in this project, and he had soon established additional branch schools in five separate places in Edo, each school being under the more or less direct charge of one of his advanced pupils. These institutions attracted not only Fuke monks and prospective monks but also a number of townsmen and other non-samurai, although in strict legal terms the training of non-warrior members was forbidden and should not have been undertaken.⁸⁹ Kurosawa himself was quite serious about the Zen aspects of the flute⁹⁰ and had taken great pains to study the many variations of the *komusō shakuhachi* repertoire and to reconstruct the most accurate possible

⁸⁵ Nishiyama, IM, pp. 192–3, & IK, pp. 580–1. Tanabe, p. 220, indicates that the *hitoyogiri* reached its peak of popularity around the Genroku era, 1688–1704, and declined rapidly thereafter.

⁸⁶ *Shutchō-jo* 出張所 were the political subsidiaries of the two outlying mother temples and had been established in Edo for the sake of easy communication with the *bakufu*.

⁸⁷ 吹合

⁸⁸ 黒沢琴古, 1710–71.

⁸⁹ Nishiyama, IM, pp. 192–3.

⁹⁰ The original claims of the *komusō* to Zen status were quite artificial, but as many of the *komusō* began to accept and absorb Zen attitudes and ideals, a process of actual Zen assimilation took place.

versions of the classical religious pieces or *honkyoku*.⁹¹ He constantly used terms such as *onsei seppō* ('musical sermons') and *ichi-on jōbutsu*⁹² ('Buddhahood in a single note'), and he spoke of the *shakuhachi* being played 'with human development from the limited to the limitless as its goal'.⁹³

The Fuke repertoire was divided into two basic categories. There were first of all the *honkyoku* classics, which were considered to possess real spiritual essence. The second part of the repertoire consisted of the *gaikyoku*,⁹⁴ or 'external pieces'. These were mostly adaptations of popular songs that were used by the wandering *komusō* in their begging. Although their use was explicitly forbidden by the major temples, the number of *gaikyoku* played by the itinerant wing of the *Fukeshū* grew throughout the late Tokugawa period.

First and foremost of the *honkyoku* was, naturally, Chang Po's *Kyotaku*, or 'Empty Bell'. Two other classics were nearly as important—*Mukaiji* ('Flute in a Misty Sea') and *Kokūji*⁹⁵ ('Flute in an Empty Sky'), both attributed to Hattō Kokushi's heir, Kichiku. As in the case of the 'Empty Bell', these classics were considered more products of revelation than of composition. Their discovery is related in *Kyotaku Denki* as follows:

In later years, Kichiku conceived a desire to go on a pilgrimage. So he asked leave to seek the roads, to pass by every door playing the 'Empty Bell' so that everybody could hear its wondrous quality. Kakushin agreed to this 'very fine idea' and Kichiku departed immediately from Kii. He climbed to the top of Mt Asakuma in Ise province. There, beside an empty sutra storehouse, he spent a night's vigil. He rolled himself up into a tight ball and prayed earnestly until near dawn when, as he was about to drift off into sleep, he had a mysterious dream.

Kichiku was rowing a small boat in the ocean. He was there alone, admiring the bright moon above. Suddenly a thick mist rose up and enveloped the moon. Then from the depths of the mist the melody of a flute burst forth, a remote, mysterious melody, beyond the power of speech to describe. After a moment the music stopped. The obscuring mist gradually began to congeal until at last it froze into a solid lump. From this lump issued forth a second melody—a strange, wondrous melody unlike any ever heard on this earth. In the dream Kichiku was deeply moved and wanted to capture these melodies on his own 'empty-bell' flute. Just at that moment, he awoke from his dream. The mist, the lump, the boat, the oars, all vanished. Yet the sound of the flute still lingered in his ears. Kichiku marveled at this. He took up his flute and tried to play the two melodies from his dream. When he discovered that their essence was still with him, he set off directly back to Kii, where he told Kakushin of his dream and the melodies he had received.

⁹¹ 本曲

⁹² 音声説法, 一音成仏

⁹³ Nishiyama, *IM*, p. 193.

⁹⁴ 外曲

⁹⁵ 霧海篳, 虚空篳

Kakushin had him play the melodies and then said, ‘These are truly gifts from the Buddha. The first we will call “Flute in a Misty Sea” and the second “Flute in an Empty Sky”.’

Thereafter Kichiku wandered the highways and byways. He would first play the ‘Empty Bell’ when he met people. If they strongly pressed him about the magical qualities of his music, he would go on to play the other two melodies.⁹⁶

Kurosawa Kinko’s personal commitment to the Zen or *honkyoku* aspect of the Fuke repertoire was continued by his main line of disciples. Attributed to Kinko III (Hisamatsu Fūyō),⁹⁷ for example, are statements such as, ‘In firmness of breathing is found the inner [essence] of mist’, a clear reference to Kichiku’s dream of the misted ocean, and ‘The fruit of the melody is [attainment of] Empty Space far beyond Self.’⁹⁸ Nonetheless, the establishment in Edo of music schools separate from the temples led eventually to spiritual debility. Aside from the manifest lack of interest on the part of the mother temples, at least two internal factors contributed to this decline. One was the tendency of the sub-schools set up by Kurosawa to break free of the Kinko line and become independent music schools with only the most tenuous connections to the *Fukeshū*. The second was the establishment of 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 *komusō*, 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 an ‘instrument of the dharma’ into an instrument of popular entertainment.⁹⁹ The developed system of leadership was structurally the same as that in all the entertainment arts of the Edo period, and this only served to reinforce the idea that the *shakuhachi* players were not really a religious fraternity but merely one of a number of secular musical guilds.

The pattern of development of the third major Fuke temple, Myōanji, was somewhat different. Although often called ‘the mother temple of the Kansai *Fukeshū*’ and thus presented as the western equivalent of Ichigetsuji and Reihōji, Myōanji differed essentially from the two Kantō temples as regards both its development and role. Originally Myōanji was a sub-temple of Reihōji, but in 1767 it managed to have itself redesignated as a branch temple of Kōkokuji.¹⁰⁰ In this way the Kyoto temple was able to connect itself directly to the lineage of the alleged first Japanese proponent of the Fuke sect, Hattō Kokushi, who was also the founder of Kōkokuji—although by the 1700s Kōkokuji had itself become a

⁹⁶ KR, 33, p. 1132. In the late Edo period other flute pieces were added to the *honkyoku*, and the various ‘schools’ of Fuke *shakuhachi* came to develop separate *honkyoku* repertoires.

⁹⁷ 久松風陽

⁹⁸ Nishiyama, IM, p. 193.

⁹⁹ Nishiyama, IK, pp. 580–1.

¹⁰⁰ 興國寺. Major sources for the following discussion are Koide, pp. 155–6; Imaeda, p. 251; and Nishiyama, IK, pp. 574–6.

branch temple of the Myōshinji line of Rinzai Zen.¹⁰¹ Since Kinsen,¹⁰² the traditional founder of Ichigetsuji, had supposedly been a disciple of the Chinese flutist Pao Fu and since Pao Fu had in turn been a disciple of Hattō, Myōanji was thus able to push its spiritual foundation back to two generations earlier than that of Ichigetsuji. Reihōji was out of the running from the outset since its supposed foundation went back only to Kusunoki Masakatsu.

One suspects that there were some serious issues underlying Myōanji's 'genealogical coup'. A primary consideration may well have been that while some small temples and individual *komusō* might be willing to let themselves be overshadowed by the spreading umbrella of Ichigetsuji and Reihōji, a near-equal like Myōanji was not. A second probable factor was an already evident sense of special mission felt by the Kansai temple. A chief feature differentiating the later history of Myōanji from that of the Kantō temples is the greater seriousness with which the Kyoto temple took the *shakuhachi* and the Zen elements of the Fuke tradition. In the later decades of the Tokugawa era, as the Edo temples generally allowed their *shakuhachi* tradition to follow a course of increasing secularization, Myōanji made serious attempts to keep its music on a high spiritual and artistic plane. The differentiation of roles—politics in Edo and art/religion in Kyoto—was probably at base the virtually inevitable outcome of the geo-political realities of the Edo era, but it is important to note that it was at Myōanji that the process of Zen assimilation of the *komusō* movement went deepest and lasted longest.

At any rate, after its reclassification as a branch temple of Kōkokuji in 1767, Myōanji quickly rose to prominence as an influential center of *shakuhachi* musicianship. The factors prompting Myōanji to concentrate on music (and by extension the Zen philosophy that might inform such an interest) were, in addition to the political impotence of the temple, the high-culture tradition of Kyoto and the conservative perspectives of Myōanji's leaders vis-à-vis art, religion and politics.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ The enlistment of Myōanji under its banner was apparently not altogether to the tastes of Kōkokuji, for the latter temple sent a letter to Myōshinji complaining, 'It creates a problem to have some strange, unknown temple placed willynilly on the list of branch houses without a word of consultation.' Tanabe, p. 227.

¹⁰² 金先

¹⁰³ The conservative element of Myōanji can be seen in the lives of men such as Watanabe Kakuzan 渡辺鶴山, the temple's 24th abbot, who was both a noteworthy *shakuhachi* master and a staunch imperial loyalist. This political tendency was brought to its culmination by Watanabe's disciple Ozaki Shinryū 尾崎真竜, who as the 35th abbot used journeys to Edo and Kyushu to cover his role as secret

messenger for the loyalist cause. On one of these trips he was accompanied by his followers Kammyō Gendō 藁妙幻堂, Myōan Sogyō 明暗素行 and Kondō Sōetsu 近藤宗悦. Their true purpose was found out by *bakufu* agents and they were arrested. Gendō was decapitated and Sogyō was imprisoned; because of his status as a high retainer of the Kii domain, Ozaki was simply placed under house arrest. Only Sōetsu escaped punishment altogether, his good fortune in this regard being due to the intercession of the Edo *hatamoto* Toyoda Katsugorō 豊田勝五郎, who, as Kodō 1 古董創始 and an expert of the Kinko school of *shakuhachi*, held Sōetsu's musicianship in high respect. Sōetsu later became a major figure in the *shakuhachi* modernization movement. Tanabe, p. 229.

Thus, in general, as Edo gradually became the center of a movement of popularized *shakuhachi* music, Myōanji continued to explore and refine a much more metaphysical Zen style. This stronger commitment to the musical tradition at Myōanji did not prevent the eventual inclusion of townsmen as ‘temporary *komusō*’ or ‘musical helpers’, it is true, but it assured that the quality of the musicianship was first rate and that it followed fairly conventional lines. Several of the abbots of Myōanji were, in fact, extremely accomplished musicians who gathered around them coterie of master players.¹⁰⁴

As we have seen, the establishment of virtually autonomous schools in Edo did much to lead to the transformation of the *shakuhachi* into an instrument of popular entertainment. But attempts to simplify and popularize the *Fukeshū* repertoire for easier production and consumption were not limited to Edo. Eventually most of the medium-sized Fuke temples were allowed to teach the *shakuhachi* to their own *komusō* initiates and to ‘assistant players with sect connections’. Thus, in effect, a number of *Fukeshū* schools came into being all over the country. Kurosawa Kinko’s long-term project of collecting, collating and purifying the Fuke repertoire indicates clearly enough that some of these lesser schools had a long ‘unauthorized’ history by the 1770s. Many of the smaller schools did no more insult to the *honkyoku* classics than to insert a few rests¹⁰⁵ or add a melodic transition here and there. In other cases, however, second-rate melodies were composed or adapted, and then given titles resembling those of classical compositions. For example, ‘*Gyō no Kokū*’ and ‘*Sō no Kokū*’¹⁰⁶ are in obvious imitation of ‘*Kokūji*’, while ‘*Hannya Kokū*’, ‘*Darani Kokū*’ and ‘*Aji Kan*’¹⁰⁷ are Zen-sounding titles. This is not to say that all the new melodies were unspiritual or musically inferior. Some worthy and justly famous pieces were composed in later times, although within the Fuke tradition they could never claim the authority of the three classics. Examples of such ‘valid’ pieces would include ‘*Shishi*’, ‘*Sōkaku Reibo*’, ‘*Shika no Tōne*’ and ‘*Hōshōsū*’.¹⁰⁸

The overall problem of criticism of Fuke music has long been confused by multiple titles for one particular piece and multiple melodies for one title. Much of Kurosawa Kinko’s project of purifying the repertoire was concerned with sorting out just such issues. His efforts in this regard clearly show that he was seriously concerned with the spiritual qualities of *komusō* music. This concern was also evident at Myōanji, where the conservative leadership resisted making the ‘inner repertoire’ either easy to play or to listen to. Even the relatively pure Kinko line eventually developed a style that placed no little emphasis on smoothness of line and sweetness of melody, whereas the Myōan school continued to favor less

¹⁰⁴ In 1785, for instance, there was held at Myōanji a meeting of 19 *shakuhachi* masters, including such notables as Kyofū 去風, Kichō 起長, Ryōun 陵雲, Kokyō 古鏡 and Rozan 魯山. Kokyō was not only a master player but also an expert flute maker; his fame is incorporated in the Edo-period phrase, ‘In swords a Masa-

mune; in *shakuhachi* a Kokyō.’ Nishiyama, Ⅱ, p. 194, & Ⅲ, p. 581.

¹⁰⁵ The so-called *ikinuki* 息抜, or ‘breather songs’.

¹⁰⁶ 行虛空, 草虛空

¹⁰⁷ 般若虛空, 陀羅尼虛空, 阿字觀

¹⁰⁸ 獅子, 巢鶴鈴慕, 鹿遠音, 鳳將雛

accessible versions which involved technical difficulties requiring very disciplined, almost yogic, concentration and control of breathing.¹⁰⁹

The composition and playing of popular, unspiritual pieces was strictly forbidden by the major temples and such liberties were occasionally punished with severe beatings, expulsion from the fraternity, the removal of the offender's ears, nose or (most appropriate and effective in view of the offense) fingers.¹¹⁰ Yet once the individual monk was out of the temple on 'pilgrimage', he was quite free to play whatever he wanted to and call it anything he pleased. This was no new development in Fuke history and in fact the problem appears in the concluding section of *Kyotaku Denki*. It has already been noted above that Kichiku added his two dream-revealed melodies to Chang Po's 'Empty Bell', but not satisfied with this, his followers continued to increase the repertoire.

Thereafter Kichiku wandered the highways and byways. He would first play the 'Empty Bell' when he met people. If they strongly pressed him about the magical qualities of his music, he would go on to play the other two melodies. Kichiku's followers in later times failed to understand this. They did not realize that 'empty bell' was the name of the instrument, but thought that it was the title of the two songs. Worse yet, they created and played a false song. They changed *taku*¹¹¹ into *rei*¹¹² and called their tune 'Kyorei'.¹¹³

This was a great loss. The outcome was that later generations for the sake of novelty or interest continued to make up songs and attribute them to Kichiku. A thousand tunes played by ten thousand flutes, randomly producing any tune they pleased. Thus the will of Chang Po was cut short. Alas, how sad this is!

According to *Kyotaku Denki*, these abuses eventually led to the loss of the 'Empty Bell' itself, and even the direct heir of Ton'ō, the author of *Kyotaku Denki*, seems to have been spiritually compromised by this trend of events. The Fuke flute transmission passed from Kyomu (Kusunoki Masakatsu) through a line of nine masters.

Then it passed to Chirai.¹¹⁴ By this time no one even recalled the name 'Kyotaku'. They only knew the melody 'Kyorei'. Likewise no one in China or

¹⁰⁹ Although, as is pointed out in Eliott Weisgarber, 'The Honkyoku of the Kinko-Ryū: Some Principles of its Organization', in *Ethnomusicology*, xii, 3 (Sept 1968), p. 318, even in the Kinko-ryū *honkyoku*, 'What is often sought after is a quality of roughness—not crudity, but a roughness not unlike that which is desired in a valued piece of pottery such as a tea bowl. In other words, something which is old and faded. This is the famed aesthetic ideal known as *sabi*.' Although brief, Weisgarber's study of the Kinko *honkyoku* is extremely interesting.

This is perhaps the place to call the reader's attention to the Nonesuch record, 'A Bell Ringing in the Empty Sky' (H-72025, available from Nonesuch Records, 15 Columbus Circle, New York, NY 10023, U.S.A.). This fine recording features the *shakuhachi* of Yamaguchi Gorō, the hereditary head of the Chikumei-sha 竹明社 line of the Kinko school as he plays 'Sōkaku Reibo' and 'Kokū Reibo' 虚空鈴慕.

¹¹⁰ Koide, p. 158.

¹¹¹ 鐸, 'large hand-bell'.

¹¹² 鈴, 'small hand-bell'.

¹¹³ 虚鈴 ¹¹⁴ 知来

Japan knew the source of the name '*shakuhachi*'. Chirai passed the teachings on to me and I transmitted them to Mufū.¹¹⁵ Mufū also studied with another teacher and composed numberless tunes.¹¹⁶



'Kabuki Scene', by Kiyomitsu, 1763.

The actors Uzaemon and Kikunojō appear as male and female *komusō* in the kabuki play *Higashiyama Sakura-zōshi*.

If such abuses are recorded in the authorized official history of the *Fukeshū*, it is hardly surprising that the *komusō* movement gradually declined and became identified with popular, and even vulgar, musical entertainment. In the end, the fraternity was characterized far less by masters of the *honkyoku* 'inner melodies' than by mendicant 'cigar *komusō*'¹¹⁷ who for all intents and purposes were unable to produce even the simplest sort of tune and just stuck the *shakuhachi* in their mouths for visual effect.

¹¹⁵ 無風

¹¹⁶ KR, 33, p. 1132.

¹¹⁷ *Tabako komusō* 烟草虚無僧. Koide, p. 158.

The Decline and Suppression of the Fraternity

THE formal existence of the *komusō* fraternity came to an end when the *Fukeshū* was abolished in 1871. While this termination was merely one example of Meiji Japan's overall drive toward creating a truly modern society, it may also be seen as part of the anti Buddhist reaction¹¹⁸ that followed the collapse of the Tokugawa regime. In the case of the *komusō*, the general charge of 'Buddhist decadence' would not have been difficult to substantiate. As has been noted earlier in this article, the emergence of the institutionalized *Fukeshū* in the middle of the Tokugawa period was a process that was, if not governmentally sponsored, at least a governmentally encouraged effort to gain some control over the fraternity. In fact, it appears that the major Fuke temples, through their newly won legitimacy and their regulation of *komusō* certification, managed for a time to bring the previously undisciplined ranks of pilgrims into some semblance of order.

However, in the waning years of the Tokugawa period, the wandering medicant wing of the *Fukeshū* became once again a refuge for social misfits and dropouts. While the process of certifying all members of the sect had afforded some control over the quality of membership, government recognition of traditional *komusō* 'rights' had the opposite effect of making it ever easier for unscrupulous 'pilgrims' to extort food, lodging, transportation and other privileges from the general populace and at times even from the local authorities. This in turn led to a rapid growth of membership that made it increasingly necessary to place more and more authority in the hands of local temples far from Edo and Kyoto.¹¹⁹ In the end a number of the smaller Fuke temples remote from central control became the hideaways of arrogant gangs of 'komusō' who were no more than dressed-up thugs.¹²⁰

A related sign of the decaying discipline within the movement was the acceleration of the practice of enrolling as *komusō* non-samurai who wished to study the *shakuhachi*, a practice which appears to have grown rapidly toward the end of the Edo period in spite of the repeated protests of the *bakufu*. While this may have brought substantial income to the major temples, the increasing number of 'secular *komusō*' can only have served to blunt the spiritual trends introduced into the fraternity as a result of its prior, somewhat artificial, assimilation of Zen thought. Nor, as we have seen, were the musical standards of the *komusō shakuhachi* repertoire unaffected by the intrusion of a large number of private players—whether *rōnin*, merchants or dandies of the entertainment quarters—into what

¹¹⁸ *Haibutsu kishaku* 排仏毀釈, 'Sweep aside the Buddha, smash Buddhism.'

¹¹⁹ Nishiyama, Ⅰ, pp. 579–81. The issuance of membership certificates provides one specific example of the general process of decentralization. Originally only Ichigetsuji and Reihōji issued *honsoku*, but by the 1750s this authority had been extended to Fudaiji 普大寺 in Hama-

matsu, Myōanji in Kyoto, another Myōanji in Echigo, and perhaps to other temples as well.

¹²⁰ Mikami, (2) pp. 78–9, notes one incident in which *komusō* came together to press their case at a *jisha-bugyō* hearing at Takeda in Bungo in such large numbers as to virtually clog every street and alley of the town.

had, for a time at least, been an arena of quite special music developed by and limited to an esoteric elite.¹²¹

Thus, the *komusō* movement in general was in deep trouble even before the Meiji Restoration. In spite of the survival of scattered centers of serious endeavor, it had already largely collapsed back into the popular milieu from which it had originally sprung. Although individual *komusō* continued to wander about Japan even after the 1871 abolition of the fraternity, neither Ichigetsuji nor Reihōji survived the storm. The monks of the latter institution were forced to leave the temple and responsibility for the precincts was placed in the hands of local laymen. The site quickly became an informal playground and the buildings were used as a temporary storage depot. The dilapidated remains of the temple were eventually destroyed by fire in 1893. For many years only the name and a few tombstones remained, and few residents of the area had any



*Commemorative stone
on the site of Reihōji*

¹²¹ One of the nicest literary portrayals of the interaction between the *komusō* and the culture of the entertainment quarters is the story given in Malm, p. 157, which relates that there was in Edo a 'gentleman-about-town by the name of Otori Ichibe. This man seems to have had no profession whatsoever and his only talent was an alacrity for telling "strange things to young people." He also had a flair for adventure and dangerous enterprises. On

one occasion he got into an argument with a *komusō* while enjoying the hospitality of a local wineshop. In the heat of the debate Ichibe grabbed the *komusō*'s *shakuhachi* and, his mouth being full of wine, played it with his most insulting orifice. In one of the great understatement of Japanese literature, the following sentence says that this is the first known instance of anyone of his class playing the *shakuhachi*.'

idea that the institution had once been a center of *komusō* activity. In recent years, however, local pride has led to some efforts to restore the site, although not as a functioning religious foundation.¹²² As regards Ichigetsuji, the former precincts were divided and sold off, the temple itself passing to the Shingon sect and the land eventually being owned by the Sōka Gakkai.¹²³

In a sense Myōanji survived the 1871 abolition. In 1890 a nominally secular organization calling itself Myōan Kyōkai¹²⁴ was formed in Kyoto with the worthy objective of reviving the nearly defunct Myōan *shakuhachi* tradition. The formal president of the society was Prince Kujō,¹²⁵ but the functional organizer was Koizumi Ryōan Shizan,¹²⁶ who had been the 38th abbot of Myōanji. He located the Myōan Kyōkai in a rented sub-temple of Tōfukuji. In time members of the group began not only to play Fuke music but to wear once more the *tengai* and *komusō* cloak, and to carry a signboard on which they emblazoned 'Myōan Kyōkai' in place of the 'Non-born, non-dying' of the former *komusō* costume. Thus the Myōan Kyōkai, and several similar groups, preserve into the twentieth century the musical tradition, if not the overtly religious forms, of the *Fukeshū*.¹²⁷

¹²² Yamashita, pp. 3–4 & 206–12; Nishiyama, ⅠM, p. 194.

¹²³ Yamashita, pp. 166–8; Fujita Rērō 藤田レロー, 'Shakuhachi no Rekishi' (2), in *Nihon Ongaku*, vol. 26: 3 (July–August 1970), p. 6.

¹²⁴ 明暗教会. Myōan Dōshukai 明暗導主会, ed., *Myōanji Shoden Koten Honkyoku Yōsetsu* 明暗寺所伝古典本曲要説, Kyoto, 1972, p. 9.

¹²⁵ 九条

¹²⁶ 小泉了庵止山. *Myōanji Shoden*, p. 11.

¹²⁷ Nishiyama, ⅠM, p. 194; Imaeda, p. 251.

Appendix A

P'u-k'o in the *Lin-chi lu*

CHAPTER 29

P'u-k'o was always going about the streets ringing a hand-bell and saying, 'If a bright-head comes, strike the bright-head. If a dark-head comes, strike the dark-head. Whatever direction or quarter it comes from, hit it like a whirlwind. And if it comes from emptiness, cut it down with a scythe.'

Lin-chi sent one of his attendants to have a little talk with P'u-k'o. When he arrived, the attendant spoke the lines he had been given [by Lin-chi], 'What do you do when absolutely nothing at all comes forth?'

P'u-k'o pushed the question aside saying, 'Tomorrow there's a maigre feast at the Ta-pei yüan.'¹²⁸

The attendant returned to Lin-chi and made his report. Lin-chi said, 'I've had my suspicions about that fellow for a long time.'¹²⁹

The exact meaning of 'bright-head' and 'dark-head'¹³⁰ in the above passage is not clear, although most commentators take the general sense to be an attack on all forms of conceptual discrimination. Possibly 'dark' and 'bright' here are equivalents of *yin* and *yang*, which taken together constitute phenomenality but are not to be seen as dualistic opposites. Or perhaps the message is that the distinction between *samsara* (the world of *yin* and *yang*) and nirvana (which 'comes from emptiness') is the dualism to be denied.

CHAPTER 47

One day P'u-k'o walked through the streets of the town begging for a monk's habit. But when anyone offered to provide the robes, P'u-k'o would refuse to accept them. Lin-chi ordered the temple manager to buy a coffin.

When P'u-k'o came back [to the temple], Lin-chi said, 'I've had a monk's habit made for you.' P'u-k'o shouldered the coffin all by himself and went out. Later he paraded around town shouting, 'Lin-chi has given me this monk's habit. I'm going to go out the East Gate and pass on.' The townspeople all fought with each other for the chance to follow P'u-k'o out [of the town] and watch him [die].

But [once there] P'u-k'o told them, 'No, I won't do it today. Tomorrow I'll go out the South Gate and pass on.'

He did the same thing three days running and the people no longer believed him. On the fourth day not a single person followed him to watch. P'u-k'o left the town all by himself, climbed into his coffin, and had some passing strangers nail it shut for him. News of this soon spread into the town. The townspeople all fought to be the first to go and open up the coffin. When they looked inside, P'u-k'o had vanished bodily. But they could hear the sound of a ringing bell fading into the sky.¹³¹

¹²⁸ J. Daihi'in 大悲院

¹²⁹ Translated from the text annotated by Akizuki Ryōmin 秋月竜珉, in *Zen no Goroku*

禪の語録, Chikuma Shobō, 1969, x, pp. 162-3.

¹³⁰ 明頭, 暗頭

¹³¹ *Zen no Goroku*, x, pp. 188-9.

Appendix B

The *Sengoku Sōdō* Trial, 1835

THE practical importance of placing the *Fukeshū* under the direct authority of the *jisha-bugyō* was made evident in the famous *Sengoku Sōdō*¹³² trial of 1835. The events that brought this case to court began when Sengoku Masayoshi,¹³³ lord of Izushi in Tajima province, died without an heir. The senior retainers of the domain called a conference and chose Michinosuke,¹³⁴ Masayoshi's younger brother, as his successor. This appointment was resisted, however, by Sengoku Sakyō,¹³⁵ the head of a branch house, who wanted his own son Kotarō¹³⁶ installed as lord of the senior line. Sakyō eventually won the support of the powerful retainer Matsudaira Yasutō¹³⁷ and was thus able to overturn the earlier decision regarding succession.

One of the loyal Izushi retainers, Kamiya Utata,¹³⁸ tried to expose Sakyō's machinations, but failed and was forced to flee for his life. Kamiya finally ended up in Shimōsa, where he became a *komusō* of the Ichigetsuji line and changed his name to Yūga.¹³⁹ But Sakyō was unable to rest easy so long as Kamiya lived, and he resorted to the stratagem of bribing officials of the Edo *machi-bugyō* to arrest the refugee monk. These officers were then to return Yūga to Izushi on the pretext that he was a runaway who had absconded without leave.

Unfortunately for Sakyō and his accomplices, Ichigetsuji protested the arrest and had the case brought before Wakizaka Yasutada,¹⁴⁰ a chief officer of the *jisha-bugyō*. As a result of the revelations made in the trial, a decision was handed down¹⁴¹ which ordered that Sengoku Sakyō's head be cut off and exposed to public view, forced Matsudaira Yasutō into religious retirement, and sentenced the other accomplices to death or banishment. Further, the revenues of the Izushi domain were reduced by a half (on the theory, no doubt, that such a situation could never have arisen in the first place in a well-ordered domain). Kamiya Utata's right to flee his nominal but evil master and become a *komusō* was upheld, as also was his (and Ichigetsuji's) claim of special legal status for *komusō* monks.¹⁴²

¹³² 仙石騒動, 'Sengoku Disturbance'.

¹³³ 仙石政美

¹³⁴ 道之助

¹³⁵ 仙石左京

¹³⁶ 仙石小太郎

¹³⁷ 松平康任

¹³⁸ 神谷転

¹³⁹ 友鷲

¹⁴⁰ 脇坂安董

¹⁴¹ On 9th day of the 12th month, 1835.

¹⁴² Mikami, (1) pp. 63–6; Nishiyama, 1M, pp. 177–9; Yamashita, pp. 105–10.