CHAPTER 7

FOLK IS COOL: THE DISSEMINATION OF *MIN'YŌ* SHAKUHACHI OUTSIDE JAPAN

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Introduction

According to the Japanese traditional music journal *Hōgaku Journal* (2002.5): 35-37), the largest group of shakuhachi players in Japan was found in the folk song genre *min'yō*. The estimated number of players was 32,000 in 1992. A decade later, *min'yō* shakuhachi were found to be the fastest declining group in Japan with 16,000 players. However, *min'yō* shakuhachi has, during the past few years, enjoyed increasing attention among non-Japanese shakuhachi players, who have released CDs or manual books in English on how to play *min'yō* melodies on shakuhachi.

This paper deals with the relatively new interest for *min'yō* by shakuhachi players outside Japan, here labelled as 'the international shakuhachi world'. This world consists firstly of Americans due to the fact that the first-generation non-Japanese shakuhachi players were mostly from the USA, studying in Japan during the 1960s and 70s. Riley LEE moved to Australia to pursue his PhD, and this stimulated an interest in shakuhachi within Australia. Europe has entered this world late – from around the millennium. South America followed its own path into shakuhachi due to Japanese immigration. In the past decade, the shakuhachi has increasingly become popular in China and surrounding countries in East and Southeast Asia.

In the following, I examine the backgrounds of players, their interest and training in the genre, and how their efforts help disseminate a musical genre which, until recently, was considered too difficult for non-Japanese to appreciate. I especially consider how a musical genre can be reinterpreted and appropriated across time and space in an age of global cultural

dissemination. The questions addressed here are how *min'yō* shakuhachi is understood, performed, and transmitted by shakuhachi players in what we call 'the West', and what consequences these have had for the dissemination of and development of *min'yō* shakuhachi practice over time among non-Japanese players of *min'yō* melodies in an environment where there are no singers available. I believe this project will help us gain an understanding of how music may migrate and change meaning across geographical as well as cultural borders.

Historical Notes

The shakuhachi is mostly known as the instrument of the *komusō* monks[1] of the Fuke sect of Zen Buddhism during the Edo period (1603–1868). Most shakuhachi players have learned from their teachers and fellow shakuhachi players that the *komusō* monks used the instrument as part of their spiritual practice and mendicancy, and that the Fuke sect was a subsect of Rinzai Zen Buddhism. However, as Max DEEG has described, there is little direct evidence that the Fuke sect was recognised as a religious sect during the Edo period (Deeg 2007: 35). Nevertheless, the religious aspect of the shakuhachi has had an impact on how the instrument was viewed by both players and listeners, and that aspect remains important for many. The Fuke sect was abolished by the Meiji government in 1871;[2] subsequently, their monopoly of the instrument led to a secularization process of the playing of the instrument (Tsukitani 2008: 152). This induced the first shakuhachi boom, which saw the rise of new shakuhachi guilds, and many amateur players joined these guilds (Tsukitani 2008: 160).

A less known aspect of the history of the shakuhachi is its entry into the *min'yō* (folk song) world. Since the academic world concerning the shakuhachi – both in Japan and elsewhere – has been preoccupied with the Fuke shakuhachi tradition or the styles that followed the abolition of the Fuke sect,[3] shakuhachi in *min'yō* is an area lacking research.

Local popular songs were called *hayariuta* (popular song) until the late 19th century and increasingly called *min'yō* – a term derived from the German *Volkslied* (folk song) (Hughes 2008:12). ASANO Kenji wrote in

[1] *Komusō* is often translated as 'monks of nothingness'; they were shakuhachi-playing Buddhist monks loosely organised into the Fuke sect – a sect that never gained official recognition as a Buddhist sect.
[2] The Meiji era was 1868–1912.
[3] See for example: Tsukitani 1994; Tsukitani et al. 1999; Takahashi 1990; Linder 2012.

1966: "[*Min'yō* are] songs which were originally born naturally within local folk communities and, as they have been transmitted, [have continued] to reflect naively the sentiments of daily life" (cited in Hughes 2008: 14). This is a common understanding which is even stated in the Japanese *Wikipedia*: that *min'yō* are songs that naturally took shape while being freely handed down by an unspecified number of people, that the songs have been transmitted orally for several generations and that commonly these songs are regarded to be distinct to a specific regional or occupational group.[4] By contrast in the twentieth century, *min'yō* pieces have been composed by professional composers and lyricists and often called *shin min'yō* (new folk songs).

In this paper I will be mostly concerned with *min'yō* as songs that originated as:

1. rural/village songs sung by farmers for themselves and not intended as performances. These include work songs, celebration songs for various life events, and dance songs.
2. songs that were used in tea houses, often called *zashiki* versions.[5]

Shakuhachi in *Min'yō*

Min'yō today are often performed accompanied by shamisen (three-stringed long-necked lute), *shinobue* (Japanese traverse bamboo flute), taiko drums, and shakuhachi. However, most *min'yō* began as unaccompanied singing due to the contexts they were used in, such as singing while doing monotonous work. In these contexts, instruments would not be practical. And for other contexts such as life events and entertainments, there may also have been a lack of availability of instruments in rural areas (Hughes 2008: 29). During the twentieth century, the contexts in which *min'yō* were performed changed, and the genre became more a performance art, being broadcast on radio and later TV as well. It is under these circumstances of changing social functions that instrumental accompaniments had already become standard by the 1920s (Hughes 2008: 121). It is, however, important to state that singing is still the core aspect of *min'yō*. There are examples of instrumental music in, for example, part of the repertoire of *Tsugaru-jamisen* (using a shamisen with a thicker neck and a very distinct playing style) from the northern region of Tsugaru in Aomori prefecture; though it began as accompaniment to singing, *Tsugaru-jamisen* has become an instrumental genre.

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[4] [https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/民謡] (accessed 22.06.21)

[5] *Zashiki* is a room in which the floor is covered by tatami mats. In the context of *min'yō,* it is often used as the word for versions of songs sung by geisha.

According to INOUE Hajime, the shakuhachi entered *min'yō* by accompanying the song *Esashi Oiwake* (a pack horse drivers' song from Esashi – a coastal town on the southwestern shore of Hokkaido) (Inoue 1995: 35-40). The song *Oiwake* came to Esashi from other parts of Japan; but it was, however, the version from Esashi that became popular throughout Japan in the late nineteenth century (Inoue 1995: 54).

One central figure who facilitated the shakuhachi entering *min'yō* was KŌJI Toyotarō (1867–1938), a shakuhachi player from Esashi.[6] He had learned a few pieces from the famous *komusō* monk JINBŌ Masanosuke (1841–1914),[7] who wandered around Hokkaido for twenty-two years as a *komusō*. According to Inoue, it is believed Kōji learned the *honkyoku* (the pieces derived from the *komusō* repertoire during the Edo period)[8] entitled *San'ya* and *Reibo* from Jinbō. This is confirmed in a letter from TAKAHASHI Kūzan (1900–1986) to TSUKAMOTO Kyodō (1902–1988),[9] in which he wrote that he learned *Echigo Reibo* from Kōji (Inoue 1995: 39). According to the common narrative about Kōji's life, he followed Jinbō to the port of Hakodate, but his family caught up and brought him back home (Inoue 1995: 39-40). After his failure aspiring to become a *komusō*, he managed years later to team up with the local singer already known for his rendition of *Esashi Oiwake,* HIRANO Genzaburō (1869–1918) and together they finalized a version of the piece with shakuhachi accompaniment.

In 1892 the first recital presenting this new version of *Esashi Oiwake* with shakuhachi was held. The two young men rose to fame in Esashi and beyond, and a saying flourished: '*uta wa Hirano, take wa Kōji*' (Hirano for singing, and Kōji for bamboo [shakuhachi]) (Inoue 1995: 42-43, brackets added). Other singers, too, began using shakuhachi players as accompaniment. It became so popular in other parts of the country that, for example, the shakuhachi player GOTŌ Tōsui (1880–1960) from Miyagi Prefecture was able to open and run an *Oiwake Bushi* classroom in Tokyo in 1906 (Hughes 1992: 39).

After the success and popularity of *Esashi Oiwake* throughout the whole country, a movement in Esashi town to preserve the already popular song took place in the first decade of the twentieth century. According to the

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[6] A short description of KŌJI Toyotarō can be found here: [https://kotobank.jp/ word/小路%20 豊太郎-1671290] (accessed 24.02.20)

[7] [https://kotobank.jp/word/神保%20 政之助-1671932] (accessed 24.02.20)

[8] Edo period 1603–1868.

[9] Both TAKAHASHI Kūzan and TSUKAMOTO Kyodō are well-known players from the first half of the twentieth century. They both played a large repertoire of *honkyoku* pieces, and they researched shakuhachi and were prolific authors.

Esashi Oiwake Kai (Esashi Oiwake Association), several singers from Esashi gathered and agreed on a version of the song as the standard and correct version, at the expense of the many variations such as the geisha versions in existence prior to standardization in 1909 (Hughes 2008: 113). The first *Esashi Oiwake* competitions were held in Esashi from 1910 (Hughes 1992: 43), and the first Esashi Oiwake All Japan Competition took place in 1963. These have continued annually, except for the cancellation of the competition in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[10] Many *Oiwake* classes were offered throughout Japan soon after the success of HIRANO Genzaburō, who moved to Tokyo, achieving fame and praise for his singing. He had to move back to Hokkaido due to poor health and performed with Kōji in 1914 (Inoue 1995: 44). Kōji continued to play and perform occasionally in Sapporo.

There seems to be no doubt that the combination of Kōji and Hirano had a significant role in facilitating the shakuhachi's entrance to the genre of *min'yō*, and today the shakuhachi is a standard instrument in *min'yō*. David HUGHES wrote about the instrument (2008: 85):

> This brings us to the wandering mendicant shakuhachi players known as *komusō* ('priests of nothingness'). Originally and officially, they were members of the Fuke sect of Zen, playing solo shakuhachi as a spiritual exercise, not primarily a musical or economic one. Their meditative solo music held little attraction for most villagers. The instrument itself, however, was eventually to become a major factor in modern folk song.

The above quote shows the important role of shakuhachi in modern *min'yō* today – it has become the standard accompaniment for free-rhythm pieces, now called *takemono* (lit.: bamboo pieces, referring to the shakuhachi, which is made of bamboo) such as *Miyagi Nagamochi Uta* or *Akita Kusakari Uta*. The shakuhachi follows the voice playing the same melody and remaining just slightly behind throughout the song – apart from some sections with instrumental solo, such as the introduction or interlude (Hughes 2008: 121). Furthermore, the shakuhachi may accompany the singer in metred songs together with other instruments such as shamisen and taiko unless it is a song specifically for *shinobue* flute accompaniment.

[10] http://esashi-oiwake.com/esashioiwakekai/history (accessed 15.03.21)

Min'yō Shakuhachi in the Twenty-first Century

According to the monthly magazine on traditional Japanese music *Hōgaku Journal*, the largest group of shakuhachi players in Japan at the beginning of the 1990s were players of *min'yō*, with an estimated 32,000 players in 1992 (Ōhashi 1992: 17-8). It is, however, interesting to note that when reading most accounts on the history of the shakuhachi in academic writings as well as other books and articles, *min'yō* is often not mentioned: see for example Malm (2000: 165-176) or Tsukitani (2008: 145-168). The separation of the two musical worlds is very apparent, despite the fact that the shakuhachi entered *min'yō* – and thereby music that was popular – at the beginning of the twentieth century.

A decade after the survey of shakuhachi players in Japan by *Hōgaku Journal*, *min'yō* shakuhachi was found to be the fastest declining group in Japan, having halved to 16,000 players according to the survey conducted by Ōhashi for the same journal (2002: 35-37).[11] Shakuhachi players of the Tozan-ryū style declined from 17,000 to 14,000, a decline slightly below twenty percent, whilst Kinko-ryū declined from 8000 to 6000 players, declining twenty-five percent in the same decade (Ōhashi 2002: 36). Unfortunately, there seem to be no nationwide surveys made since. When I asked ŌHASHI Taizan what had prompted him to include *min'yō* shakuhachi in his surveys, his answer was as follows (pers. comm., 7 July 2021):

> In Japan, *min'yō* shakuhachi and classical shakuhachi are regarded almost as complete separate performance genres. But for us shakuhachi makers, until about year 2000, *min'yō* shakuhachi was a big market.
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> There was a *min'yō* boom in Japan from ca. 1960. It peaked around 1975 and has declined since. I will estimate that the number of players [today] is around 10–20% of the people active in 1975.
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> In my case, I made my debut in 1980, and I sold more than fifty *min'yō* shakuhachi a year at Mr. Yoneya's place.[12] All in all, I sold more than 100 *min'yō* shakuhachi a year back then. That's why I have also played *min'yō* shakuhachi.

[11] The survey counted the members of *ryūha* or guilds and other official groups of shakuhachi players and is therefore imprecise in numbers as players not belonging to any specific group or guild have not been included. However, as the same method was used in both surveys, I believe it still shows a tendency among shakuhachi players in Japan.

[12] YONEYA Iwao was a famous *min'yō* shakuhachi player. He died in 2000 but is still an inspiration to many interested in playing *min'yō* on shakuhachi as his recordings of solo *min'yō* shakuhachi are readily available online among other places.

> I believe it is very unlikely that *min'yō* shakuhachi will make a comeback in Japan. My hypothesis is that in the next ten years, active *min'yō* shakuhachi players will be half or less of the number today. There are no young players who want to play *min'yō*.

The figures above show a severe decline in *min'yō* shakuhachi players in Japan, and Ōhashi's comments on the future of *minyō* is pessimistic. ENDO Yoshihiro, who is a *min'yō* shakuhachi player, expressed concern about *min'yō* becoming a hobby where players and singers perhaps gather once a week on a weekday evening at most – if work does not come in the way. This seems to be the way of learning today. "*Min'yō* is just no longer a daily part of life," he said (pers. comm., 27 June 2021). Yoshie ASANO CAMPBELL told me that if a young aspiring *min'yō* singer wants to pursue a career as a professional singer, the system was still *sumikomi* (the student moves into the home of the teacher to live with his/her family and takes part in family life as well as receiving training). Since singing is at the core of *min'yō*, singers are important for the continuation of the genre. She expressed concern that young people today may not want to dedicate so much of their life in order to pursue this as a profession. She had lived six years at her teacher's home before becoming professional (pers. comm., 26 June 2021).

When I began my journey entering the international shakuhachi community around 2000, it was very clear from communications with many of the international shakuhachi players that the prevailing attitude was that the only music that mattered was *honkyoku* and contemporary composed music for shakuhachi.[13] In my experience, an unspoken common understanding among non-Japanese *shakuhachi* players was that "most of us do not like *sankyoku*"[14] and nobody spoke about the genre *min'yō* about which many were unaware or knew it as a repertoire for mostly beginner shakuhachi players.

However, despite the decline and difficulties in Japan, I have noticed during the past decade that there has been a small change in attitude towards Japanese vocal music among the members of the international shakuhachi community including *min'yō*. Gunnar Jinmei LINDER agreed that he had also noticed a shift in the attitude towards *sankyoku* (pers. comm. 29 June 2021).

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[13] Based on many conversations with fellow *shakuhachi* players since 1990 and on various *fora* such as the Shakuhachi Email List [http://shikan.org/bjones/shaku/index.html] and the shakuhachi *fora* such as [www.shakuhachiforum.com] and [www.shakuhachiforum.eu] and later in shakuhachi groups on Facebook.

[14] *Sankyoku* is a trio consisting of shakuhachi, koto, and shamisen with one of the string players singing. *Sankyoku* is also the name of the musical genre played by this ensemble.

None of us have done a rigorous examination to explore our assumptions of the attitude change. Some players have released CDs including *min'yō* pieces or written manuals in English on how to play *min'yō* on the shakuhachi, or begun to perform *min'yō* at concerts or on YouTube (described below).

I personally was a good example of an average non-Japanese player with the attitude described above. My own initial introduction to *min'yō* shakuhachi began at one of the *taketori* (bamboo harvesting) trips to Gunma and Nagano prefectures, organised annually by my shakuhachi teacher OKUDA Atsuya since 1989. The harvested bamboo would be made into shakuhachi. In 1990 I participated in my first *taketori* trip, which included an overnight stay at a Japanese Inn. As the evening dinner went on in the large *zashiki* room assigned to our group and the intake of alcohol rendered performances of *honkyoku* difficult, two of the participants stood up. One began singing while the other followed him on shakuhachi. The shakuhachi player that accompanied the singer was ENDŌ Yoshinori, head of the *min'yō* association Shōfū-kai.[15] He was also a fellow student and my *senpai* (co-student with a longer experience than oneself). It was perhaps the first time I heard *min'yō* live, and I recall the experience as having been unpleasant. Especially the singing came across as unpleasant. I participated in *taketori* every year for ten years, and slowly I began to sense a shift in my own attitude towards *min'yō* and to the sound of the voice. Later, as a student of ethnomusicology at SOAS, University of London, David Hughes – the unsurpassed *min'yō* expert – managed to open my ears through his many lectures in which he would often suddenly burst into song.

This, however, brings me to the perception of Japanese music by people from the so-called 'West'. Ury EPPSTEIN has written an excellent article in which he documents more than 400 years of Western writings about Japanese music by Jesuit missionaries, diplomats, traders and travellers, musicologists and composers. Unfamiliar music has the power to provoke strong emotions in people. Eppstein introduces us to his article as follows (2007: 191):

> 'Listening to their music was a great torture for us' (Allessandro Vaglignano, quoted in Cooper 1965: 271)… This, the earliest known reaction of a European to Japanese music, was written in 1583, a little over 420 years ago, at a time when Japanese music first attracted the attention of the earliest Westerners to reach Japan. The writer, Naples-born Vaglignano (1539–1606), was among the first of the Jesuit missionaries who arrived in Japan towards the end of the sixteenth century. Today, when some Western audiences accept Japanese music as part of 'World Music', enjoy it or at least

[15] Shōfū-kai had more than 100 members in 1990. In June 2021 it has sixty members of whom thirteen are shakuhachi players.

> regard it with curiosity and respect, even as a possible source of enrichment for Western music, such a comment may seem strange or surprising. In fact, however, negative Western reactions to Japanese music prevailed for a long time and changed only very gradually. The present-day positive Western attitude toward traditional Japanese music is a very late stage in a long process of changing assessments.

The slow appreciation of Japanese music is interesting. What made this shift? Is a certain number of people needed to be exposed to the music before we collectively can accept it? If we follow some of Eppstein's examples of writings on Japanese music, we see that it took centuries before the attitude showed any sign of change. In the nineteenth century, the attitude remained the same. Even in the twentieth century, Karl Florenz (1865–1939) wrote on vocal music in 1906 (quoted in Eppstein 2007: 204):

> The orchestra is very primitive. The most primitive, however, are their vocal sounds, for one may hardly talk here about singing. Many modern Japanese do not deny anymore the unintentional comicalness of this vocal accompaniment which should be described only as one of the strangest musical aberrations. It is probably the scarce musical talent of the Japanese and their total ignorance of a natural voice development in singing that is to be held responsible for this.

It is interesting how emotional writings on music can be compared with the respect received by other genres of Japanese arts. One such example is Robert Lach (1874–1958) who in 1927 wrote (quoted in Eppstein 2007: 209):

> What confronts us as the music of the Japanese, with its nasal singing, moving in the highest falsetto, the moaning and whining intervals, howling tone liaisons, sobbing glissandos and portamentos, the dull chirping and clamouring of the wretched lute-, guitar-, and zither-like string instruments, the noise of the drums, clappers, ringing, rattling and beating tools, strikes us as so unspeakably brutish, poor and primitive, not to say childish, ridiculous, barbarous and grimace-like, that we find it incomprehensible how such a low level of musical sensibility is compatible with the refined subtlety and super-culture of the other fields of Japanese spiritual life.

It was not until the twentieth century that Western composers such as Igor STRAVINSKY, Henry COWELL, John CAGE and others showed that they could find material in the traditional Japanese music with which they could be inspired to experiment in their compositions (Day 2005: 63-65; Takemitsu 1989: 201). The above quotes also show that a negative attitude is often strongest towards vocal music. In the first book on Japanese music in a

European language, Taylor PIGGOTT (1852–1925) praised the "mellow notes of the shakuhachi" while criticizing other aspects of the music of Japan (Piggott 1893: 10). William P. MALM wrote about the shakuhachi: "As one of Japan's more Western-sounding instruments, the shakuhachi was also used extensively in the experiments of the new Japanese music movement in the 1920s and 1930s" (2000: 170). Malm explained that he had noticed that many "Westerners" were accepting the sound of the shakuhachi compared to, for example, the sound of the *hichiriki* (double reed wind instrument from the *gagaku* court music ensemble) (pers. comm., 28 August 2021). The question that remains is: What facilitates such a change in perception and attitude?

Musical Exclusion and Theory on Critical Mass

Tensions between genres

The *hōgaku* (Japanese music) world,[16] in which shakuhachi plays an important role, is completely separated from the *min'yō* world (as gleaned from conversations with players in both *min'yō* and *hōgaku* worlds – including the chief editor of *Hōgaku Journal* TANAKA Takafumi 2010–2021). The curriculum of Tokyo University of Fine Arts' traditional music programme states:[17]

> The Department of Traditional Japanese Music trains gifted students through research and classes on practical techniques and performance theory. Classes focus on shamisen music (nagauta, tokiwazu, and kiyomoto), Hogaku Hayashi (accompaniments to traditional Japanese music), Japanese dance, Sokyoku (koto), shakuhachi, Nogaku, Nogaku Hayashi, and Gagaku (Japanese ancient court music).

The shakuhachi mentioned above refers to *hōgaku* (*honkyoku,* ensemble music, and contemporary composed music) but not *min'yō*. The solidified separation between the *hōgaku* world and *min'yō* can be considered as a means of reinforcing symbolic boundaries between the educated and uneducated, countryside and urban areas in Japan. In my many conversations in Japan with *hōgaku* musicians, many mention *min'yō as* the music of *inakamono* (country bumpkins) and thereby distinguishing themselves from

[16] *Hōgaku* literally means Japanese music. However, it is a term very often used to describe the professional, conservatory-educated world of musicians playing on traditional Japanese instruments.

[17] [www.geidai.ac.jp/english/music/traditional-japanese-music] (accessed 23 June 2021). The romanization is as stated on the website.

it (this is similar in the case studies of Bryson 1996 and Kim et al. 2020). Even the shakuhachi players who do not make such a distinction, often do not view *min'yō* as part of their tradition. This is the case even though *min'yō* is heard at festivals during summer, and Japanese people – whether from urban or countryside areas – often find the sound of *min'yō* dance music nostalgic. The status of *min'yō* is generally regarded as lower than *honkyoku*, or ensemble music such as *sankyoku*, or contemporary music composed by composers trained in Western classical music.

When the division between the two worlds is this definitive in Japan, it comes as no surprise that players in the international shakuhachi community have trouble obtaining information let alone instruction on *min'yō*. It is, however, my hypothesis that little by little the members of the international shakuhachi community are accepting Japanese vocal ensemble music such as *min'yō*. This led me to ponder upon what makes a community accept – albeit gradually – music they once heard as unpleasant. There seems to be a maturation process needed for a community to open up to a new kind of music that is hard to understand. This has led me to investigate the theory of critical mass – a term borrowed from nuclear physics, in which field it describes the amount of a substance needed to sustain a chain reaction (Logan 1996: 263).

I am here exploring theories on critical mass and social networks that generate collective actions in terms of changes of musical perception and taste. I am drawing on Howard BECKER's writing on "art as a form of collective action" (1974: 767-768); he describes situations where multiple individuals join forces for the benefit of all from that action, which would be implausible for any individual to undertake and solve alone. For a collective action to take place it needs a certain density of population and network (Crossley and Ibrahim 2012: 598). I believe the growing inter-national shakuhachi community plays a role. The fact that the Internet brings players and aficionados together has facilitated both communication and coordination of actions. In doing so, the Internet has provided the necessary centralization and has formed a base for the transmission of various aspects of shakuhachi. It is here that "minority interests" such as *min'yō* may have the "opportunity to hit critical mass" (cf. Crossley and Ibrahim 2012: 610).

Dissemination of min'yō *shakuhachi unfolds*

My interest in how *min'yō* is perceived and imagined by the international shakuhachi community was initiated when I noticed a post from 27 April

2010 by Brian Tairaku RITCHIE on the shakuhachi forum, which had up to 2000 members at the time: [18]

> We have had a lot of Japanese working for us at Chado [Ritchie's wife's tea house in Tasmania, Australia]. None of them recognize more than 4 or 5 of the Minyo pieces and one of them is "Auld Lang Syne" which they think is Japanese. The others are "Sakura" "Soran Bushi", "Kojo no Tsuki" and "Aka Tombo".
>
> Today a young Japanese chef came into the teahouse so I started playing from the green book and he knew ALL of the songs and was singing along with them. I told him most Japanese only know that handful of songs and that I was impressed that he knew all of the Minyo. His wife (Aussie) revealed the reason, "Probably because he was raised by his grandmother."

The above post made me curious. What was meant by "all of the *min'yō*?" And what is the 'Green Book'? Of the four pieces mentioned in the post, I would only consider *Sōran Bushi* to be a *min'yo*. I thus asked Ritchie about the 'Green Book' and its content in a personal email. His answer was the following (pers. comm., 29 April 2010, brackets inserted):

> There is the book I was referring to. It is a book all of us in the USA of the Jin Nyodo style use for our first 6 months of lessons or so. Maybe most Kinko players do as well, I am not sure. It's readily available at Mejiro [a shakuhachi specialist shop in Tokyo and online] so it must be common.

When I began researching the subject some years later, the above communication introduced me to Ritchie's American shakuhachi 'lineage'. His teacher is James Nyoraku SCHLEFER, a New York-based shakuhachi performer and composer who is also a player of the western traverse flute. He received his *dai-shihan*[19] from his first teacher Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin SELDIN (1947–2017). Seldin received his *jun-shihan* in 1975 from KURAHASHI Yōdō I (1909–1990) in Kyoto.[20] Seldin has been a key figure in

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[18] [http://shakuhachiforum.com/viewtopic.php?id=4573] (accessed 28 April 2010).

[19] *Shihan* is a teaching and performance licence often used in various Japanese art forms. It is often translated as a Master licence, and players who have received the *shihan* licence often call themselves master shakuhachi player. Although definitions vary, in this case a *jun-shihan* is a teaching licence, a *shihan* is regarded as the full license after achieving which, you can freely perform and represent the guild as well as teaching. *Daishihan* is an honorary title the teacher may bestow on the student some years after he or she received the *shihan*.

[20] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronnie_Nyogetsu_Reishin_Seldin] (accessed 24 June 2021).

the dissemination of shakuhachi in the USA, particularly on the East Coast, where he travelled to various destinations every month to teach from the 1970s to his death in 2017. His *dai-shihan* was bestowed upon him for his efforts to disseminate the teaching of shakuhachi in the USA. He estimated that he had taught 1000 students shakuhachi in the forty-one years he had been teaching (pers. comm., 9 April 2016). Seldin taught beginners using the book he called the "Green Book". He answered in an email to my inquiry (Seldin, pers. comm., 9 April 2016):

> The beginning book has some min'yo, but is mostly songs of the Meiji Era. I learned these, of course, from my teacher Kurahashi Yodo I. The Meiji Era beginning book that I learned from and have been using to teach my students for the past 41 years, is known to me only as THE "GREEN BOOK".

The fact that Seldin knew most of the pieces were songs composed in the Meiji era and therefore knew these songs were most probably written by composers trained in western music, came as a surprise. According to Kusano, the author, only four of the forty-four songs were listed *min'yō* pieces in the so-called "Green Book" (see Table 7-1 below), the title of which Seldin could not read and did not know despite the fact he had taught from the book for forty-one years. When asked why he told his students the content of the "Green Book" was *min'yō* pieces, he answered that the students were happy to play the music of the people of Japan. He explained that he gave them what they wanted. Seldin also argued for his choice of wording by explaining that the songs were what the Japanese people had grown up with (pers. comm., 11 April 2016). Here, Seldin is correct. The songs in the 'Green Book' are songs Japanese people have grown up with throughout kindergarten and school. However, only the four pieces *Kuroda Bushi*, *Hietsuki Bushi*, *Seichō Oiwake Bushi* and *Konpira Funefune*, which are also in the index of songs categorized as *min'yō*, qualify as actual *min'yō*. Table 7-1 below shows how the songs are categorized in *Kinko-ryū Shakuhachi Dokushū* (Kusano 1981: 3).

The above may explain some of the confusion regarding what *min'yō* actually is – in particular among the large group of North Americans. From interviews conducted during 2015–2016, it seems as if shakuhachi players expect *min'yō – routinely translated as* "folk songs" – to be small melodic pieces "of the Japanese people". Many children's songs composed during the shift in politics on music education towards teaching only western music seem to fit this expectation.[21] The predicament is that these pieces are not

[21] See Miller 2004: 59-77 for an explanation about the creation of a music curriculum for school children.

min'yō and are composed in a style more familiar to the ears of the non-Japanese shakuhachi players from the so-called Western countries.

Table 7-1 The content of the "Green Book" *Kinko-ryū Shakuhachi Dokushū* by KUSANO Reifū, organized into genres as provided by Kusano (1981: 3)

Genre	Number	Explanation
dōyō	8	children's songs mostly composed during Meiji (1968–1911) and Taisho (1912–1926) eras
kakyoku	4	solo accompanied song often based on western classical music or *gagaku*
min'yō	4	folk songs
sōkyoku	3	pieces for the koto
koyō	2	old songs that are not considered a part of the *min'yō* repertoire; one well-known example is *Sakura Sakura*
hauta	2	urban popular songs accompanied by shamisen from the end of the Edo period
sawari	1	normally, the buzzing sound of a shamisen
kokka	1	national anthem

In order to understand the phenomenon better, I posted a question out on various shakuhachi fora and in shakuhachi groups on Facebook about people's experiences with *min'yō*.[22] I have selected some of the answers to be representative of the many people who kindly replied. A shakuhachi player from the USA wrote: "I like to play a number of minyo because they are fairly easy and more melodic than honkyoku" (pers. comm., 27 February 2016). In a personal conversation to follow up on the posts, he wrote to me that he had started out with Genni SKENDO's book and recordings of *min'yō* pieces (Skendo 2010). He continued (pers. comm., 9 April 2016):

> When I started learning Japanese notation in 2014, I found lots and lots of sheet music online and in books. So, in addition to learning honkyoku and sankyoku pieces, I found many minyo pieces to learn. I liked them because they more closely resemble western music, and so it is easy to find melodies in them that I can work on. I find that a recognizable melody "anchors" a song in the realm of familiarity, and that makes me feel attached to it. It's

[22] [www.facebook.com/groups/156126251071128/posts/1291371314213277] (posted on 27 February 2016)

> kind of like being at home and feeling attached. I find very little melody in honkyoku, even though I like it for that very reason. There is something very freeing in playing a piece for which I cannot discern a melody (*Choshi*, for instance). It's kind of like leaving home and finding my own way. So, minyo and honkyoku represent two different ways of being for me.

The above informant is a self-taught shakuhachi player, which is not uncommon among non-Japanese players. On 27 June 2021, the same person kindly answered to the question of which *min'yō* pieces he found "more closely resemble western music" and he replied "*Kōjō no Tsuki*, *Hinomaru no Hata*, *Yūyake Koyake*, *Sakura,* and *Ryoshū*". Looking at these five pieces, not one is a *min'yō* (Table 7-2). Only *Sakura Sakura* is a *koyō* (old song) and does not have a composer. Three of the pieces are twentieth-century compositions, while one, *Ryoshū*, was a song composed by an American about the Civil War.

Despite several players showing a willingness to play what they imagine to be "the music of the Japanese people" it seems as if the theoretical concept of "*min'yō* or folk song" (often mistakenly translated as "folk music") is more highly valued than the music itself. Another player answered: "For me, compared to Kinko honkyoku or the classical pieces we call gaikyoku, minyo is very easy to play" (Facebook conversation, 10 April 2016). *Min'yō* pieces may be easier to play, but in my opinion the challenge lies in knowing the repertoire and being able to play the tune by ear and follow the singer.

Table 7-2 Five songs thought to be *min'yo* but are not

Piece	Year composed	Composer	Lyricist	Genre
Kōjō no tsuki	1901	TAKI Rentarō (1879–1903)	DOI Bansui (1871–1952)	*dōyō*
Hinomaru no hata	1911	OKANO Tei'ichi (1878–1941)	TAKANO Tatsuyuki (1876–1947)	*dōyō*
Yūyake koyake	1923	KUSAKAWA Shin (1893–1948)	NAKAMURA Ukō (1897–1972)	*dōyō*
Sakura (Sakura)				*koyō*
Ryoshū	1851 Japanese text 1907	John P. ORDWAY	John P. Ordway	foreign

From the examples in Table 7-2, it becomes clear that *min'yō* as a genre has suffered from confusion. Nevertheless, I regard this step as an important first step for shakuhachi players to become conscious about a musical genre in which their instrument of choice plays an important role.

Simultaneously, there seems to be another process of integrating *min'yō* into shakuhachi playing. One player answered (pers. comm., 9 April 2016):

> I first heard Yoneya-San on recordings... a CD that turned out to be a collection of min'yō by Yoneya Iwao. This type of music was new to me, I had heard and played a lot of children's pieces, popular folk melodies, sankyoku, and some honkyoku, but hadn't heard any of this. It struck me as being very much like honkyoku but more melodic and, for some pieces, much more rhythmic. Later, on one of my trips to Japan, I bought the set of Yoneya's books. I began to learn a few pieces from the books and listening to the recording I had. Later, Michael Gould (my teacher) helped me with some of the material. I've played vocal pieces with my koto group (I'm their only shakuhachi player) but have never played shakuhachi with just a singer in the min'yō style, although I would like to. I play a lot of pieces from those books when I'm playing solo gigs where I do incidental music (art openings, bonsai shows, etc.). I also like to play min'yō at concerts with the group when I'm asked to do a solo piece or two. It usually goes over much better than honkyoku (which is more cerebral and less audience friendly).

Another player, who had lived in Japan most of the 1990s but began playing shakuhachi after he returned to New York stated (pers. comm., 15 April 2016):

> My first teacher was Marco Lienhard. He actually got me started on *min'yō*. The first piece I started practicing was *Takeda no komoriuta* (Lullaby from Takeda). You know, simple fingerings and easy melody to get the tone right and play in tune. Other *min'yō* pieces that come to mind were *Edo no komoriuta* (Lullaby from Edo), *Kuroda Bushi* (Song from Kuroda) and *Kaigara bushi* (Seashell song). I'm not sure I've "used" the pieces for anything in particular. I've played them for practice and my own enjoyment (I do like *min'yō*) and in some parties.

The answers above show another layer of *min'yō* dissemination among the international shakuhachi players. They have tried their best to understand the genre. They have also actively performed *min'yō* at various events and are therefore disseminating the genre. The third player above shows he learned four *min'yō* pieces of which two were lullabies. It is my understanding that lullabies, which have slow tempi and a relatively free pulse, suit shakuhachi players as the style of playing does not differ from *honkyoku* as much as

min'yō ensemble pieces. The answers above also illustrate that singing is the core of *min'yō* and that the tradition of chasing the singer has not been included or readily transmitted. One can, to some extent, argue that for a shakuhachi player trained to play solo or one who has the mindset that the shakuhachi is traditionally a solo instrument, playing *min'yō* pieces as solos is a logical approach – also due to the lack of singers.

Some international players have not only included *min'yō* into their repertoire but also released CDs or even a manual on how to play *min'yō*. One such person is Véronique PIRON from Brittany in France. She is both a flautist and shakuhachi player and has a *shihan* licence from Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan (International Shakuhachi Training Group or KSK) founded by the legendary shakuhachi player YOKOYAMA Katsuya (1934–2010). Piron is an active shakuhachi player, a co-founder of the European Shakuhachi Society; as a licensed teacher (Certificat d'Aptitude) for traditional music in the French conservatoire system, she has taught Japanese music in French conservatoires and higher education institutions.[23] She explained why she has begun to play and also release a CD with *min'yō* pieces (pers. comm., 11 March 2016 and 23 July 2021):

> People in western France have a strong connection with folk music. Living in Brittany, West of France, I am surrounded by a very lively tradition, which has been the object of an amazing evolution and creation absorbing all the musical styles during last century… My grandmother was singing the songs. In Brittany people go to Fête de la nuit and dance to live folk music. Still today. It is a very alive tradition. There is vocal music for songs and instrumental music for dances, while in Japan all the *min'yō* are songs (folk-songs).
>
> It is interesting to have contact with the music of the people in Japan – not only classical or *honkyoku*. Unfortunately, I did not play or learn *min'yō* while I was in Japan.
>
> When I play solo concerts, I realised the audience in France really appreciated if I introduced them more widely to Japanese music. So, I try to mix various types of music, also *shinobue* and *nōkan*. I also play popular melodies and *min'yō*. *Min'yō* has often a rhythmical beat, which makes it is easier for audience to get into it. It has a light feeling… I ask people to clap – which they seem to enjoy.

There seems to be serious investment in Piron's playing of *min'yō* pieces and in her knowledge of it – cross-referring with experiences from her own childhood and life as a musician in Brittany. Also, for Piron, the challenge is to play alongside a singer. Piron has taught *min'yō* together with David

[23] [http://wsf2018.com/people/veronique-piron] (accessed 06.08.21)

Hughes and Gina BARNES at several Summer Schools organised by the European Shakuhachi Society. Here Piron has been able to play along, perform, and teach alongside David Hughes' singing. But otherwise there are very few opportunities to collaborate with a *min'yō* singer in Europe.

Another player who has engaged with *min'yō* is Geni SKENDO – a jazz flute and shakuhachi player, originally from Albania. He moved to Boston, USA in 2003 and studied at Berklee College of Music, coming across shakuhachi in 2005. Already in 2010, he released a *min'yō* players' manual with play-along CD (now online on his website):[24] *11 Japanese Minyo Folk Songs for Shakuhachi*. When asked how he encountered *min'yō*, he answered that he came across CDs of YONEYA Iwao. He explained why he became interested in playing *min'yō* (pers. comm., 18 February 2016):

> [Yoneya Iwao] is *the* best *min'yō* player! His sound is powerful, it projects so much. It almost projects like a saxophone although he plays shakuhachi. Really powerful!
>
> The way they play their instruments. The sound is bigger, more expressive, there are more harmonics out there… and you can kind of rock out with *min'yō*. Emotionally there is the sadness… and also happiness.

It is not the first time I have heard shakuhachi players describing another player's powerful sound despite the fact that they had only heard them through their CD player and loudspeakers. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the power of the recorded sound and the inspiration felt by the listener. Several of the interviewees in this project described being fascinated by Yoneya's playing. Talking about the manual and sound recordings that he had published, Skendi emphasized, "My playing is different because I was not seasoned like a Japanese player... My phrasing will be different... It is different, you know... Perhaps I put some Eastern European influence into it" (pers. comm., 18 February 2016). This may be quite the case, as the manual and, in particular, the sound recordings give an impression of there being less emphasis on trying to present the pieces as *min'yō* but rather as an expression of the musicians' own creativity through *min'yō* pieces.

The content of Skendo's manual is eleven *min'yō* pieces from various parts of Japan. The pieces are presented both in staff notation and in a shakuhachi notation created on computer. They are all arrangements by Geni SKENDO and Ben LEVIN, the accompanying guitarist on the sound recordings. With their own arrangements, they move far away from *min'yō*. The guitar accompaniments are somewhat dramatic and not anything like shamisen. The CD or sound recordings consist of eleven pieces played by the two musicians

[24] [www.genimusic.com/shakuhachi-minyo-book] (accessed 01.02.13)

and play-along versions where the shakuhachi is either absent or lowered in volume. For a shakuhachi player living far away from a *min'yō* singer, this is certainly one option to learn pieces. However, the shakuhachi remains the soloist even when the guitar is present.

Min'yō *shakuhachi in taiko groups*

Taiko drumming groups such as Kodo have achieved unprecedented success performing both in and outside Japan, and many local taiko groups have emerged in countries such as USA, Canada, Europe, and Australia. Showcasing physical strength and being highly choreographed, taiko goes beyond traditional Japanese drumming. Taiko – which can be described as post-WWII stage music – has become a representative musical genre of Japan (Fujie 2001: 93-95). What is interesting in the case of this chapter is that in some cases the taiko groups include a shakuhachi player who may play *min'yō* pieces.

Riley LEE, an American shakuhachi player, scholar, and taiko player, living in Australia, was a founding member of the pre-eminent taiko group Ondekoza that is now called Kodo. He explained: "The *min'yō* I played most often…was *Esashi Oiwake*…sometimes [accompanied by] slow, sparse *odaiko* drumming" (pers. comm., 7 August 2021). Another shakuhachi player and taiko drummer, Markus GUHE, a German shakuhachi player living in the UK, also plays in a taiko group. He admitted that the group did not play much *min'yō* because nobody could sing the songs. But they had played *Akita Obako*, *Komoro Bushi*, and *Itsuki no Komoriuta*. But Deborah WONG and Shih-wei CARRASCO-WU both explained to me that with North American taiko groups, the *shinobue* flute is seen more often since it is an instrument of the *bon odori*.[25] The Americas have had greater Japanese immigration; consequently the paths of the dissemination of *min'yō* are different from Europe.

Shakuhachi min'yō *activism*

The European Shakuhachi Society organized a Summer School in London in 2011.[26] Here I was able to invite ENDŌ Yoshinori, from my first encounters with *min'yō* during the bamboo harvesting trips, as one of the main teachers. Apart from David Hughes who sang and taught, also Yoshie Asano Campbell

[25] *Bon* is a Japanese Buddhist annual festival honouring the spirits of ancestors. *Odori* is dance, thus *bon odori* is a communal dance form enjoyed during the festival.
[26] See [www.shakuhachisociety.eu/summer-schools/london-2011].

was invited to sing with us. This proved to be the start of a wonderful collaboration between Campbell, Hughes, and other *min'yō* aficionados in London. Sylvia VALE, then a 74-year-old British singer, who had lived in Japan and learned *min'yō,* joined to support the teaching and singing. These activities aided the creation of the SOAS Min'yō Group led by David Hughes.

The participants of the Summer School were able to learn to play shakuhachi *min'yō* techniques with Endō and chase the singing of Hughes, Campbell, or Vale, and the other participants, who also learned to sing. In subsequent years, the European Shakuhachi Summer Schools have tried as much as possible to include *min'yō* either with the presence of David Hughes and Gina Barnes or just one of the shakuhachi teachers who play *min'yō*. In 2018, the World Shakuhachi Festival was held at Goldsmiths, University of London with more than forty invited performers and 250 participants. Here *min'yō* played a large role. The Aomori Min'yō Kyōkai was the official group applying for funding for the festival in Japan and *min'yō* performers came to London, giving performances, lectures, and workshops over four days. The members included ENOMOTO Shūsui, a representative of Nihon Min'yō Kyōkai (Japan Min'yō Association), MIYAKE Ryōji and SHIRATO Tomoya from Aomori Min'yō Kyōkai, Yoshie Asano Campbell and local support by Hughes, Barnes, and other members from the SOAS Min'yō Group.

An event of this size will always inspire players. One example is Tatiana RECHNAYA from Russia. She learned *min'yō* at the World Shakuhachi Festival 2018. Her feeling is that *min'yō* is the music of everyday life: "It is the music of my kitchen, my cup of tea…". She kept all her material from the festival, continued to play them and even contacted ENOMOTO Shūsui for advice on advanced techniques. She explained (pers. comm., 25 January 2021):

> *Min'yō* filled a gap in my repertoire. I felt I lacked something when I was only playing *honkyoku* and *sankyoku*. Something that was part of my everyday life. The first time I heard *min'yō* in a recording with shamisen and singing, it made me confused. I didn't understand it. It was in fact the same when I first heard *sankyoku* but I had forgotten about it since it was a long time ago. Now I understand it better. I have also begun to play *min'yō* in concerts as solo shakuhachi pieces a year ago. But I also now try to sing the pieces. I can do this with *min'yō*. I wouldn't be able to do this with *sankyoku*… Here in Russia, now that taiko has become so popular, *min'yō* has become a small part of the repertoire… for me it is like medicine. It is important for me to play.

Another shakuhachi player, who participated in the SOAS Min'yō Group, Brandon STOVER told me how much the practical playing of *min'yō* had changed his view on the shakuhachi as an instrument and his impression of Japanese music as a whole. He is now pursuing a PhD at University of Colorado Boulder and studying Japanese music with Jay KEISTER (pers. comm., 28 January 2021).

The above examples show how activism can bear fruit, with players incorporating *min'yō* into their own performances. The genre confusion, however, lives on. Another example is Shawn Renzoh HEAD's playlist on YouTube, "Minyo A Day Keeps The Doctor Away".[27] Of thirty-three pieces he presents as being "minyo", there are seven *min'yō* pieces and three lullabies which can be regarded as *min'yō*. This means more than sixty-six percent of the pieces are not part of the *min'yō* repertoire. It will take a long time before the knowledge of what *min'yō* is will be restored, whilst someone with more than 6000 subscribers to his YouTube Channel continues to repeat the same mistakes.

Reflections

When I embarked on this project researching the dissemination and knowledge of *min'yō* among non-Japanese shakuhachi players, I had a more positive attitude to the future of *min'yō* being embraced by the international shakuhachi community as one of the genres played on the instrument. I imagined shakuhachi players would welcome a genre in traditional Japanese music that is cheerful and which includes dance music and drinking songs.[28] However, the biggest obstacle remains the singing. Although *sankyoku* ensemble music had somewhat gone through the same problem with string players, who are also the singers, there seem to be many skilled koto/shamisen players who have moved abroad and are active as musicians. These players have added to the attitude change observed in shakuhachi players in Europe towards *sankyoku* as they can more readily play with string players. For the World Shakuhachi Festival 2018 in London, I collated a list of Japanese string players in Europe and found sixteen active koto and shamisen players. Fourteen were Japanese players living abroad while two were Europeans.

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[27] [https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZCbeL2IDlrtMqnUqhg7bvub3d-eAQxu1] (accessed 04 May 2021).The videos were premiered between 26 January and 13 April 2021.

[28] Based on twenty years of performing and teaching shakuhachi, I realize that *honkyoku* and *sankyoku* are often heard as sad music by non-Japanese listeners.

Despite the fact that *min'yō* has been part of the European Shakuhachi Society's Summer Schools almost every year since 2011 and was a major part of the World Shakuhachi Festival 2018, it is clear that the networks that bring interested shakuhachi players together with each other and with *min'yō* singers or string players are still too weak. Network formation plays a critical role as a collective action; it depends on the amassing and connecting of enough interested participants (a critical and connected mass) in order to inspire players who will continue to play. The way that most shakuhachi players outside Japan learn about *min'yō* continues to be through CDs and YouTube videos with shakuhachi solo. As a result, many players I interviewed understood *min'yō* to be a solo shakuhachi genre, or just that "it happens to be shakuhachi playing the melody" (this was mentioned in several personal conversations 2015–2021). For a musical genre to root outside its native country, a certain density of players is necessary; where networks between musicians are non-existent, it seems as if musical genres are changed and adapted to function in new environments. It may therefore be that, despite the fact that players are not playing together with singers, there is nevertheless a change towards adapting *min'yō* as a possible genre of shakuhachi playing.

From the various players I have interviewed above about *min'yō*, I believe I can conclude that there is a shift on its way and that there is a larger interest in the genre. Confusion about the genre remains and is still repeated by new players. I believe this is an example of the fact that when the soundscape of a musical genre crosses cultural and geographical borders, it is not a linear process. Rather it is a bumpy road where only parts of what that music genre encompasses passes into new environments before other elements may follow. I am grateful for the *min'yō* activism by David Hughes in Europe, and I hope the shakuhachi community can in the future play a role in adding to the numbers of players with the knowledge of and a more holistic approach to *min'yō* playing outside Japan.

Song titles

Akita Obako = [Woman from Akita]
Akita Kusakari Uta = [Grass-cutting song from Akita]
Azumajishi = [East Japan lion dance]
Echigo Reibo = [Reibo from Echigo] (see *Reibo*)
Esashi Oiwake = [Esashi forked road] (horsepack-drivers' song from Esashi)
Fudaiji Tsuru no Sugomori = [Fudaiji Temple nesting of cranes]
Hietsuki Bushi = [Song of threshing Japanese millet]

Hinomaru no Hata = [Flag of Hinomaru] (Japanese flag)
Itsuki no Komoriuta = [Lullaby from Itsuki], alternatively [Song of the childminder from Itsuki]
Kōjō no Tsuki = [Moon Over the Castle Ruins]
Komoro Bushi = [Song from Komoro]
Konpira Funefune = [God of sea-faring boats] (drinking game with singing)
Kuroda Bushi = [Song of Kuroda]
Miyagi Nagamochi Uta = [Miyagi dowry chest song]
Nagamochi Uta = [Dowry chest song]
Oiwake Bushi = [Song of the forked road] (horsepack drivers' song)
Otachizake = [Farewell drink]
Reibo = "Yearning for the Bell" (many *honkyoku* pieces have Reibo in the title, referring to the bell of the Zen Buddhist monk Fuke).
Ryoshū (旅愁) = "Loneliness on a Journey" (original title: "Dreaming of Home and Mother" composed by John P. Ordway in 1851)
Sakura (Sakura) = [Cherry Blossom (Cherry Blossom)]
San'ya = [Three valleys] (a piece in the *honkyoku* repertoire).
Sōran Bushi = [Sōran song] (*sōran* is a nonsense interjection), from Hokkaido
Seichō Oiwake Bushi = [Correct version of Oiwake Bushi] (decided, for example, by a preservation society in a town)
Yūyake Koyake = [Evening glow]

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xx is the highlighted text your translation? or in the original?