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## Komusō and “Shakuhachi-Zen”

### From Historical Legitimation to the Spiritualisation of a Buddhist denomination in the Edo Period\*\*

#### 1. Introduction

The history of Zen-Buddhism in the West is well-known for its unconventional tales of monks chopping off their arms, of their burning of Buddha statues, and their suggestions that one kill the Buddha if one meets him – these images having been spread through such propagators of Zen 禪 in the West, like Daisetsu Teitarō Suzuki 大拙諦太朗鈴木 (1870-1966). As a result Zen in the West is mainly conceived as an iconoclastic, anti-literal, anti-formal and highly mystico-spiritual form of Buddhism. The fact that Zen in the West was mainly received in its Japanese form has also led to the conception that it is a typical expression of ‘Japaneseness’, a reflection of *Yamato-damashii* 大和魂. Modern scholars such as Bernard Faure (1991 and 1993) have shown, in fascinating depth, that there is a gap between Zen rhetoric in the texts and the historical reality of Zen.

Early Chinese Chan 禪 did have a degree of conformity with its social environment as, without this, it could not have survived and developed into a strong religious movement in the centuries to follow. It was, then, by no means the anti- and a-social “freak” of Chinese Buddhism as is reflected in some East-Asian sources and their modern epigones. An indication of this is that the relatively early historiographical tradition of Chan (cf. Schmidt-Glintzer 1982) did not suffer a setback when it was transferred to Japan (mainly in the Song period).

Rinzai-shū 臨濟宗 inherited the Chinese tradition of demonstrating a continuous, and thus legitimate, transmission of the *dharmā* – the “transmission of the lamp,” Chin. *chuandeng* / Jap. *dentō* 傳燈 – through historiographical-narrative works that constructed an unbroken line from the Buddha Śākyamuni / Chin. Shijiamoni-fo / Jap.<sup>1</sup> Shakamuni-butsumi 釋迦摩尼佛 through Kāśyapa / Jiaye / Kasha 迦葉 and the first patriarch in China, Bodhidharma / Putidamo / Botdaidatsuma 菩提達摩, to their respective historical presents. This is also the case, of course, for

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper East-Asian names or terms are normally given in the order Chinese (Chin.) – Japanese (Jap.) unless only either the Chinese or the Japanese form is quoted.

the sub-denominations of this school which claimed certain Chinese or Japanese founders and temples as their origin.

## 2. Construction of a Zen denomination?

One of the sub-denominations that is represented on a regular basis in Japanese samurai soap-operas (*dorama* ドラマ) and cartoons (*manga* 漫画) is the Fuke-shū 普化宗, although probably most of the Japanese are not aware of its concrete Buddhist background. The figure representing this Zen sub-denomination is a kind of belligerent and somewhat rough monk called *komusō* 虚無僧 who bears a head-cover resembling a bee-basket, the *tengai* 天蓋, which hides his face; he also wears a *kesa* 袈裟, the garment of a Buddhist monk or priest, and plays a long bamboo flute, the *shakubachi* 尺八.

This somewhat naïve popularisation of a conception of a “species” of religious specialists, the *komusō*, is not solely a Japanese matter; this becomes clear when one considers the level of general knowledge of Christian monasticism amongst average Westerners. What is of more significance, however, is that one finds information on the Fuke-shū in dictionaries like the standard Japanese *Kōjien* 広辞苑 uncritically reproduced:

A subgroup (*ba* 派) of the Zenshū, active in the Edo-period. Fuke 普化 of the Tang(-period) was the founder (*so* 祖), and in the year 1254 (Kenchō 建長 6) Kakushin 覺心 from Tōfuku-ji 東福寺 brought this tradition (to Japan). Its followers were called *komusō*, played the *shakubachi* and roamed the whole country. The main temples were Ichigetsu-ji 一月寺 in Shimōsa 下総 and Reihō-ji 鈴法寺 in Musashi 武蔵; it was abolished in the year 1871 (Meiji 4).<sup>2</sup>

This image of the *komusō* in Japan is counterbalanced by the Western image of a Shakuhachi-Zen which parallels the more general reception of Zen as a spiritual practice closely connected with Japan. This is an image which is both projected and reinforced by Western players of the *shakubachi*, as for example in Ray Brooks' autobiography *Blowing Zen*.<sup>3</sup> This ‘spiritualisation’ of an originally historical Zen

<sup>2</sup> Shinmura 1986: 2091d. See also Takayanagi and Takeuchi 1976: 818a., entry Fuke-shū: “Also called Fuke-zenshū. A denomination (*ba*) of Zen. The founder is the Zen-master Fuke from the Tang(-period). In the year 1249 (Kenchō 1) the Zen-monk Shinchi Kakushin went to Song-China and studied the teaching of the denomination and the playing of the *shakubachi* under the sixteenth patriarch of the Fuke-shū, Chō Yū 張雄; after he had returned to Japan he built the Kōkoku-ji 興国寺 in Yura 由良 in Kii 紀伊 and it is said that he had been the first who spread the teaching of this denomination (in Japan). Officially the denomination was recognized at the beginning of the Edo period. Called the denomination of the *komusō* it became gradually a hiding place for *rōnin* because no other than members of the *bushi* were admitted. The main temples were the Reihō-ji in Musashi and the Ichigetsu-ji in Shimōsa. It was abolished in 1871.” Even more detailed is the article Fuke-shū in: Ōtsuki 1956: 1788df., where a historical source of the Fuke-shū is quoted which is obviously identical with the *Denki* (see below).

denomination which had its roots in the late Edo period 江戸時代 (1603-1868) and early Meiji period 明治時代 (1868-1912) can be comprehended with the aid of two concepts, those of “attaining buddhahood through one sound” (*ichion-jōbutsu* 一音成佛) and “the Zen of blowing (the flute)” (*suizen* 吹禪).

In the West playing the *shakuhachi* is connected to religio-spiritual connotations which it basically does not have, and never has had, in Japan.<sup>4</sup> This seems to reflect what the German musicologist Helga de la Motte-Haber (1995) has stated for the history of European religious music: a gradual desacralization of everyday’s life brings with it a complementary sacralization of music – in our case of non-European music; and this also seems to be true for certain circles of the late Tokugawa period 徳川時代 (Edo period) and for Japanese modernity.

My main assumptions, which I will develop on in the following paper, are: First, flute playing mendicant monks of the early Edo period were integrated in the late Edo period into the existing system of the Zen denominations: During this process a line of legitimation had to be created which was connected with the specific feature of this new denomination, the playing of the *shakuhachi*. Simultaneously, there was a process of laicization, spiritualization and aesthetization of this distinguishing feature, the playing of the *shakuhachi*, which consisted of an amalgamation of virtuous musical practice and Zen-Buddhist conceptions of spirituality. This development occurred during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and intensified after the Meiji-restoration. Second, it was this line of interpretation of the tradition which prevailed after the abolishment of the Fuke-shū in certain circles playing the *shakuhachi*. It was this that, in turn, determined the Western reception of classical Japanese music as a kind of spiritual practice.

### 3. *Komusō and Fuke-shū in Buddhological literature*

Who are these flute-playing Zen monks? It is astonishing that the entries in relevant Buddhist studies handbooks do not add much information to what is given in the already quoted Kōjien article. As for an early Western description, the entry Fuke-shū in the still widely used *Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Japan* by the French Catholic missionary E. Papinot may be quoted:

A branch of the Zen sect, founded by the Chinese bonze Fuke-Zenji. In 1248, the bonze Kakushin went to China, where the famous Busshō-Zenji of the Gokoku-ji temple taught him the doctrines of the sect. There was a certain Chōyū in the temple who was very skilful in playing the flute (*shakuhachi*) and from him Kakushin received lessons. After his return to Japan (1254), he went

<sup>3</sup> Brooks 2000; a German translation appeared in the same year in the esoteric publishing house Ansata-Verlag under a more suggestive title than the original: *Ich ging den Weg der Zen Flöte. Eine spirituelle und künstlerische Autobiographie*, München 2000.

<sup>4</sup> See also the content of the two published volumes of the *Annals of the International Shakuhachi Society* (ISS): <http://www.komuso.com/sales>.

through the country preaching and playing the flute. His successors Kichiku and Komu did likewise, and the name of the latter, *komusō* has become the generic name by which travelling bonzes of the sect were designated. Under the Tokugawa, many samurai without masters enrolled in the Fuke-shū sect, dressed in the traditional costume and wore large hats so as to hide their faces. They went through the country begging and playing the flute. To avoid justice or the supervision of the shogunate, it became customary to become a *komusō*; but disorders having ensued, Ieyasu published a regulation to fix their privileges and their obligations. The sect had seventy-three temples, all depending on Ichigetsu-ji at Kaganei (Shimōsa). It was interdicted at the Restoration.<sup>5</sup>

Compared with the article in the *Kōjien* we gain some complementary pieces of information on the history of the *komusō* and of their Fuke-shū, which is dated back to the Tang period in China. The history of the “sect” is divided in four main events and three periods: 1. the origin of the “sect” leading back to a Chinese Zen master called Fuke; 2. the transmission of the tradition to Japan through the Buddhist monk Kakushin and reference to flute-playing; 3. control of the denomination through the Tokugawa-bakufu 徳川幕府; 4. the abolition of the Fuke-shū during the laicization and persecution of Buddhism during the Meiji period. At the same time a negative picture of the members of the Fuke-shū is projected: it consists mainly of masterless *samurai*, so-called *rōnin* 浪人. As usual in Papinot’s dictionary no historical sources are given, however, Papinot has become to a certain degree authoritative for Western literature.<sup>6</sup> The only historical and critical study in a Western language on the Fuke-shū is an article written by the American Japanologist James H. Sanford (1977) who focuses on the history of the denomination during the Edo period.

It is somehow striking that there is no real detailed study of the Fuke-shū in Japanese Buddhist Studies literature. In the Japanese dictionaries and encyclopaedias there is almost the same information as in Papinot’s book. In the still very much consulted *Bukkyō-daijiten* 佛教大辭典, compiled by Oda Tokunō 織田得能 at the end of the Meiji period and edited in the year Taishō 大正 5 (1917) there is at least a hint that there is no proof that the alleged founder and patron of the Fuke-shū had indeed played the *shakuhachi*.<sup>7</sup> It is interesting that Oda obviously did not know, or at least

<sup>5</sup> Papinot 1973: 106; in appendix XII. “Table of the Buddhist Sects” (p. 825) Papinot refers to six main temples (*bonzan* 本山) of the Fuke-shū the founder of which should have been Rōan.

<sup>6</sup> Eliot 1935: 285; Matsunaga 1993: 261. This “myth” is repeated in German handbooks and dictionaries – and certainly in those of other languages which I have not checked: see Dumoulin 1986: 27; Schneider 1986: 114; von Brück 1998: 259. So one may wonder what John Jorgensen (1991: 392), in his review of the English translation of Dumoulin’s quoted book, means: “I would have liked to have seen more on the Fuke-shū, and not just a few lines, ...”: more myth or a deconstruction of it?

<sup>7</sup> Oda 1917: 1516b, entry Fuke-shū: “These are the *komusō*; the southern Myōan-ji with the Great Buddha in Kyoto is their main temple; (Bodhi)dharma and the Zen master Fuke from the Tang period are its patriarchs; because they copy the art of striking the

did not use, the main source by which the Fuke-shū legitimized its authenticity as a Zen denomination, the *Kyotaku-denki* 虚鐸傳記 a text which will be discussed below and which refers to folk tradition (*yo ni iu* 世に言ふ).

In the popular terminological dictionary of Nakamura Hajime (1981: 1179c) we only find the short remark: “Name of the founder of the sect (*shūzo*) of the Fuke-shū.” Here the term Fuke-shū is not explained at all, thus suggesting that Puhua / Fuke had indeed been the patriarch of the denomination called after him. Checking the entry *komusō* in the same dictionary one reads: “[They] are also called Komo-sō 薦僧 or Fuke-sō. Name of the monks of the Fuke-shū. They do not wear monastic garbs, put on a *kesa* 袈裟 and a *hōben-bukuro* 方便囊, beg for money by playing the *shakubachi* and, as a religious practice, roam the whole country. Their name is derived from the conception that the world is vain illusion and has no substance and that the mind has to be emptied.” (Nakamura 1981: 351c) In the *Bukkyō-daijiten* 佛教大辭典, edited by Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信亨, the lemma “Fuke-shū” gives an exact reproduction of the Fuke legend discussed below (Mochizuki 1932-1964 [vol. 5]: 4400a ff.). The main source for the legend of the transmission of the Fuke tradition to Japan through Kakushin is recognisably taken from the *Denki* which is listed in the bibliography between other Chinese and Japanese historiographical material of Zen or local origin.

In the light of the Japanese standard dictionary of Buddhism lacking a ‘critical-historical’ view of the *Fuke-shū* – and the repetition of this uncritical attitude to the sources in the few Japanese articles on the subject published in scholarly journals which I have been able to find<sup>8</sup> – it is not surprising that the history of

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bell of Zen master Fuke and roam the townships playing the *shakubachi* they are called Fuke-shū. According to a folk tradition once the wind had entered the bamboo stick of the Zen master Fuke and had evoked a sound when he was on his way so that he suddenly attained enlightenment and performed Buddhist rites by using the flute. At the beginning of the era Kenchō the Japanese founder of the Kōkoku-ji in Yura, (in the province) Kishū (Wakayama), Hottō Kokushi Kakushin, went to Song-China, heard of the practice of the Zen master Fuke, experienced great enlightenment and transmitted the tradition after his return to Japan. A more detailed examination of the monks’ biographies and the Zen-historiographies (reveals) that although Fuke strikes the bell he never blows a flute; but even if one checks the biographies of Hottō Kokushi there is no report on his roaming by playing the flute – a fact which should raise some doubt. In the ‘Tomeisho-zukai-shūi’ 都名所圖會拾遺 (‘Collection of Pictures of Famous Places in the Capital’), section 4, we read: The grave of Fuke is located in the second town district to the south of the Imperial Gate and the legend reports that it is there where the patriarch of the *komusō*, Fuke Ryōan 良庵, is interred. In former times this was a bamboo grove where the *komusō* of the capital and from the countryside fought with each other and cut bamboo to make their *shakubachis* but now (this grove) is deserted. Originally master Fuke has been a foreigner and it may well be that the mentioned Ryōan was mainly attracted by the practice of this school because he liked the *shakubachi* and roamed the country and that people therefore called him the Japanese Fuke (*wachō-fuke* 和朝普化).”

<sup>8</sup> See Kōchi (1958) and Shibata (1976 and 1979).

the denomination as it is constructed by the main schools of the *shakuhachi*, the Kinko-ryū 琴古流 and the Tozan-ryū 都山流, and also the minor Myōan-kyōkai 明暗教会 (founded in 1890 and seen as having received the legacy of the Fuke-shū), reflect a similar and rather naïve picture. The main focus in these publications is on the historical development of the instrument and the history of the Fuke-shū and its connection with Zen practice all of which is presented in a rather unquestioning and traditional way. It is, however, also the case that one of the most comprehensive historical studies originates from exactly these circles: the *Shakuhachi no rekishi*, “History of Shakuhachi,” whose author, Ueno Katami,<sup>9</sup> is the head of the Tozan-ryū’s headquarter in Tokyo. This book contains a quite detailed chapter on the *komusō* and the Fuke-shū.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. *Shakuhachi – the instrument*

The shakuhachi is made of the root- or bottom-piece of the *madake* 真竹, the so-called “real bamboo,” which differs from the vulgar kinds of bamboo as a consequence of its harder and wood-like quality and its stronger and thicker side. The name of the instrument is derived from its normative measure or length: one Sino-Japanese foot, *issbaku* 一尺, and eight (*bachi* 八) Sino-Japanese inches (*sun* 寸 – *hassun* 八寸). The specific feature of the flute is that the diameter is relatively large compared with its length and that the five fingering holes – one being positioned on the underside of the instrument – are also relatively wide, thus allowing the player to modify the tone through different techniques of fingering and covering. The sound is produced by blowing against a labium consisting of horn or bone. The flutist has to cover almost the complete opening of the cane with parts of his chin below the lower lip. The basic tone – all fingering holes covered – of the standard length (*issbaku-hassun* 一尺八寸) is the small *re*, the basic scale being a pentatonic one. The amazing flexibility of intermediate tones is achieved by techniques of varying the distance between upper lip and mouth-piece – called *utaguchi* 歌口, the “chant-mouth” – and thus changing the angle of embouchure. Another tone-modulating device is the different grade of covering the fingering holes.

In contrast to modern instruments which consist of two pieces, the *shakuhachi* of the *komusō* of the *Tokugawa* period, the so-called *Fuke-shakuhachi*, are made from one piece of bamboo, and are not as elaborate as the professional instruments from the late *Tokugawa* period on.

The oldest examples in Japan are five *shakuhachi* made of stone or jade from the seventh century, four of which came as presents of the king of the Korean kingdom of Paekche 百濟; these instruments are now stored in the treasure-

<sup>9</sup> Ueno 2002: 176-262. See also the entry Fuke-shū in the Japanese *wikipedia*: <http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki> (accessed 30/10/06).

<sup>10</sup> For a similar presentation see Gutzwiller 1974 and, as a very short overview, Gutzwiller 1996.

house of the Shōsō-in 正倉院 in Nara 奈良. This early type had six fingering holes instead of the five holes of the later flutes and was used in Japanese court music, *gagaku* 雅樂, of the Heian period 平安時代 (794-1185).

In modern China, the instrument which corresponds to the Japanese *shakubachi*<sup>11</sup> is called *dongxiao* 洞簫, but in the province Fujian 福建 it is still called the “Southern *shakubachi*,” *nan-chiba* 南尺八.<sup>12</sup> In Medieval Japan a similar instrument was used which was called *bitoyogiri* 一節切, literally meaning: “cut from a one-knotted (piece of bamboo).” Later on, the Japanese seem to have used the names *bitoyogiri* and *shakubachi*<sup>13</sup> alternatively for different types of flutes.

### 5. *Komo-sō* and related issues

It is exactly the *bitoyogiri* which was used by a class of mendicants in the late medieval period who seem to be the predecessors of the later *komusō*. These were the so-called “straw-mat monks,” the *komo-sō* 薦僧, who got their name from the straw mats (*komo* 薦) which they wore as protection against the weather. In the history of Medieval Japanese religion, they belong to a non-institutionalized class of mendicant “saints” called *hijiri* 聖. They roamed the country, did not belong to any of the official Buddhist denominations and their teachings and practices were a hodgepodge of different religious traditions. According to the orthodox Japanese view they were neither clerics nor laypeople but *hansō-hanzoku* 半僧半俗,

<sup>11</sup> It is an interesting side-line of the modern re-mythologisation of the *shakubachi* that Chinese circles playing the *dongxiao* are obviously starting to “respiritualize” their instrument by referring to the Japanese Fuke-shū tradition; see: <http://www.wenhuacn.com/guoyue/article.asp?classid=60&articleid=4436>, <http://www.wenhuacn.com/guoyue/article.asp?classid=60&articleid=4438>, [http://www.huain.com/music\\_zhuanti/news\\_read.php?no=566](http://www.huain.com/music_zhuanti/news_read.php?no=566), [http://www.huain.com/music\\_zhuanti/news\\_read.php?no=567](http://www.huain.com/music_zhuanti/news_read.php?no=567), [http://donsiao.net/BIN\\_ANG/binan.htm](http://donsiao.net/BIN_ANG/binan.htm) (accessed 30/10/06).

<sup>12</sup> For a description of the *nan-chiba* see Zhao 1992: 116b. The instruments have approximately the same length as a *shakubachi* but have six fingering holes and are endowed with a V-shaped mouth-piece. Beside these minor differences the Chinese flutes are cut from the same segment of the bamboo plant as the *shakubachi*, namely the root piece with the first seven knots (*shakubachi*) or the first ten knots (*dongxiao*). In the history of the Tang, in the Jiu-Tangshu 舊唐書, the term *shakubachi*, Chin. *chiba*, is used for the first time in Chinese literature but it is used in a completely secular context and without any religious connotation. Morohashi (1955-60: vol. 4, 129, no. 7632.77), remarks that the *chiba* / *shakubachi* was already used in the Tang 唐 period (618-906) in Buddhist monasteries; but as no original Chinese sources are given but only late Japanese texts this may have been deduced from the Japanese legend of the Fuke-shū. The oldest reference to the *chiba* in a Chinese piece of literature is found in the novel *Youxianku* 游仙窟, “Travelling to the grotto of the immortals,” by the Tang author Zhang Zu 張鷟, alias Zhang Wencheng 文成 (c. 651-721): “Wusao played the harp and a boy played the *chiba*”; cf. Luo 1990: vol. 4, 5b.

<sup>13</sup> For the obscure history of the instrument see: Ueno 2002: 11-175.

“half-monk, half-layman,” *ubatsu* 有髮, “having hairs [i.e.: without the tonsure of a monk];” in contemporary literature they are frequently called *ubosaku* 憂婆賽 (Skt. *upāsaka*), “laypeople.” (Nakamura 1981: 92d)

From the early Kamakura period 鎌倉 (1185-1382) on, these mendicants appear under different names such as *boroboro* – written with Chinese characters as 暮露々々, literally: “dew of dawn.” This name is, as a reduplication, an allegro form of the word *boro* 襤褸, “rags,” indicating the pejorative nature of the term. The oldest occurrence is found in the *Tsurezure-gusa* 徒然草 by Yoshida Kenkō 吉田兼好 (ca. 1330 / 31). In the section called *Shukugawara* 宿河原 it is stated:

It seems to be that *boroboro* ぼろぼろ monks did not exist in former times; ... (it may be that the monks Boronji ぼろむじ, Bonji 梵字 and Kanji 漢字 were the first of them). These monks are stubborn although they have abandoned the world and they fight constantly, even if they appear to strive for the path of the Buddha. They are without any self-restriction and break their vows shamelessly, but they take death lightly and do not engulf in vain deploration. – This I have recorded as people have told me.<sup>14</sup>

There is not yet any connection of the *boroboro* with the bamboo flute, it is in the commentary of the *Tsurezure-gusa*, the *Tsurezure-gusa-nozuchi* 徒然草野槌, the “Hammer of the *Tsurezure-gusa*,” (section *Jō-no-hachi* 上之八), written in 1621 by the Confucian scholar and advisor of the first Tokugawa-*shōgun* Ieyasu 家康, Hayashi Dōshun Razan 林道春羅山 (1583-1657), that we find a clear identification of *boroboro* with *komo-sō* and a description of these mendicant monks which reflects the general idea of the later *kumusō*:

These [i.e.: the *boro-boro*] were later on called *komo-sō*; they did neither look like monks nor like laypeople. They wore a sword (*katana*), blew the *shakubachi*, had

<sup>14</sup> *Tsurezure-gusa* 115, after Sanari 1952: 237; see also the translation by Keene 1981: 98 f. In the context of an identification of the *boroboro* with the later *kumusō* but also considering the question of the religious orientation of these mendicants the precedent passage of the *Tsurezure-gusa* is of some importance (after Sanari 1952: 236f.): “At a place called Shukugawara many *boroboro*-monks had come together and they prayed the *nenbutusu* of nine stages (*kubon no nenbutsu* 九品の念仏) when suddenly an(other) *boroboro*-monks entered and asked (the others): “Hey! Is someone of you called Irooshi-bō いろおし坊?” One of them answered: “Yes, that is right. Who are you?” – “My name is Shirabonji しら梵字. I have heard that my master so-and-so has been killed by a *boroboro*-monk called Irooshi in the Eastern Provinces and therefore I ask (you). I would like to meet him to take revenge.” Irooshi answered: “You have come to the right place. It is true what has been reported to you. But if we fight here we would implicate this holy place. Should we not go down to the river-bed before the temple and finish our matter? And you, my friends, I ask you not to help any of us! The holy ceremonies would be disturbed if there is a too big turmoil here.” After this had been arranged like this they went to the dried-out river-bed, took position facing each other, pierced each as they wanted to until they both fell to the ground and were dead.” Note that Keene 1981: 98, translates *boroboro* with “mendicant priest.”



a straw mat on their back, wandered in the streets, stood in front of people's doors and begged. It is said that they belonged to the school of the *boroboro*.<sup>15</sup>

The name *komo-sō* first occurs in a poem in the anthology *Sanjūniban-shokunin-utaawase* 三十二番職人歌合, “Collection of poems (or: songs) from thirty-two professions” – compiled at the end of the Muromachi 室町 period (1333-1573) before 1539 – bearing the title *Komosō*:

(*uta* 歌:) Inmidst of the spring flowers – who should be disturbed by the blowing?  
It is not the wind but the *shakubachi* of the *komo* かも.<sup>16</sup>  
(*kotobagaki* 詞書:) The *samādhi* of the *komo-sō*<sup>17</sup> consists of putting a paper-cape around his shoulder,<sup>18</sup> hanging a rice bowl<sup>19</sup> at his hip going in front of the doors of the rich and the poor and playing the *shakubachi* – they are of no other use.<sup>20</sup>

In the title of this poem the name of the monk is written as *komō-sō* 虚妄僧, literally meaning: “monk of voidness and idleness” connotating at the same time the meaning of “monk of lies, of betrayal.” The poem and the commentary show that the kind of mendicant described was not very highly respected or was at least regarded in an ambivalent way as were the other types of *hijiri*.

What can be derived from these sources is that there were, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century on, religious mendicants who were known under different names; some of them obviously had the special sign of playing a bamboo flute. It has to be emphasized, however, that there is no connection to a Zen denomination and that the name Fuke is not used. The quoted passage from the *Tsurezure-gusa* demonstrates that the *boroboro* practiced the *nenbutsu* of nine stages (*kubon no nenbutsu* 九品の念佛),<sup>21</sup> connotating the invocation of the Buddha *Amida*(-butsu) 阿彌陀佛. These mendicants seem to have placed themselves, or have been placed, in the context of Pure-Land Buddhism (*jōdo* 浄土) and not in connection with Zen. This religious type was obviously a special kind of *hijiri*.<sup>22</sup> Like the *hijiri*,

<sup>15</sup> Translated after Ueno 2002: 185.

<sup>16</sup> Translated after Ueno 2002: 184. See also Blasdel and Kamisango 1988: 82.

<sup>17</sup> Here *sanmai* 三味 is certainly used in an ambivalent and ironic way: the state of meditative concentration is interpreted as a superficial outer phenomenon of the “three obscurations (ignorance)” of the paper cape and of playing the *shakubachi*.

<sup>18</sup> Capes made of lacquered paper used by the mountain ascetics, the *yamabushi* 山武士, which were also called *ma-gesa* 真袈裟, “real kesa” (Ōno 1982: 329a).

<sup>19</sup> *Mentsū* or *mentsu* 面桶: bowls made of cypress (*binoki*) or cedar (*sugi*) wood, having an elliptic form and being used for one portion of food (*men*) (Ōno 1982: 1272a, who quotes a passage from Dōgen's 道元 *Shōbō-genzō* 正法眼藏 in which the term occurs); see also Tōdō 1978: 1459b.

<sup>20</sup> Translated after Ueno 2002: 184.

<sup>21</sup> According to the *Guan-wuliangshou-jing / Kan-muryōju-kyō* 觀無量壽經, there are nine forms of birth into the Pure Land and accordingly nine stages of *nenbutsu* (Nakamura 1981: 1157a).

<sup>22</sup> In the poetic anthology *Shichijūichi-ban-shokunin-utaawase* 七十一番職人歌合 (*Meiō-shokumin-utaawase* 明應職人歌合), compiled between 1492 and 1501, poem no. 46 refers

the *boroboro* did not belong to a specific monastic institution and spent their lives begging for alms (*takubatsu* 托鉢); the later *komo-sō* used the flute as a kind of signal instrument for begging, but also for identifying themselves as members of the same group. This kind of identification is also found in the case of the *yamabushi* 山武士 of Shūgendō 修験道 who recognised each others by ritualized dialogues, *mondō* 問答,<sup>23</sup> and this custom is designated in the same way for the *komusō* of the late Tokugawa period.

It is not clear from the sources when the “zenized” term *komusō*, “monk of voidness (*ko* or *kyo*) and nothingness (*mu*)” replaced the older *komo-sō*. A still somewhat polemical transitional form is found in Miura Jōshin’s 三浦淨心 (1564-1644) *Keichō-kenbun-shū* 慶長見聞集, “Collection of (Things) Observed and Heard from the Era Keichō” (ca. 1614), where he speaks of *komusō* 古無僧, literally meaning: “old (monk who) is no monk.” (Ueno 2002: 191) The earliest evidence of the form *komusō* seems to be in the *Keichiku-shoshin-shū* 糸竹初心集, “Anthology for beginners of string instrument and bamboo (flutes),” by Nakamura Sōsan 中村宗三, published in 1664.<sup>24</sup> Up to the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, the *komusō* were not directly connected with any Zen denomination and were still considered to be *boro* – as can be seen in the *Wakan-shinsen-kagaku-shū* 和漢新撰下學集 (1714) – without mentioning the instrument *shakubachi* –: “In the east of Japan the *boro* 暮露 are called *komusō*.”<sup>25</sup>

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to “horse saints,” *uma-bijiri* うまひじり / 馬聖 in connection with the *boroboro*: “The moon of the *dharmā* dwells broadly and calmly above Musashino 武蔵野 – o, the grass bed of the *boro* who has risen (from it)! The heart of the *boro* – the radiance of the *dharmā* at the origin of the moon should, alas, be spread. Being awoken without faith – o do not forsake the world! Even the ‘horse-ascetic’ with his heart always returning – this should be well known – does not utter such a sound.” (Translated after Ueno 2002: 187 f.)

<sup>23</sup> Hartmut O. Rotermond in: Hammitzsch 1984: 1547.

<sup>24</sup> “The *shakubachi* of the *komusō* is cut to one *shaku* and eight *sun*: that is how it got its name. Its origin is not clear. Even if it is now (*sonokami* そのかみ) said that Hottō of Yura is the ancestor of this Way this cannot be proved. It is said that (the *shakubachi*) had been used by members of the *boroboro* from ancient times on. They were called *bonji* 梵士, *kanshi* 漢士, *irooshi* 色おし, *shirabonji* しら梵士, and it is said that they practiced the *shakubachi*.” (Translated after Ueno 2002: [151 and] 182) In the *Yōshū-fushi* 雍州志 (see next note) the *komusō* were connected with Roan; see Kurihara 1918: 110.

<sup>25</sup> See Ueno 2002: 187. In the *Yōshū-fushi* 雍州志 of Kurokawa Dōyu 黒川道祐 (1686, Jōkyō 貞享 3) *komo-sō* is the category and *boroboro* refers to a specific type: “In medieval times there where some called *boroboro*. They also belonged to the *komo-sō*.” (Ueno 2002: 152; translated from p.187) This quotation shows that, at least at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the *komusō* were not really known as a specific group of their own right.

6. *The Kyotaku-denki (kokuji-kai) and the Fuke-shū:  
the construction of a legitimization*

The special feature of the Fuke-shū as a Zen denomination is not only the fact that an instrument, that is sound and music, stands in the very center of its religious and meditative practice, but that the establishing of this group in the religious context of late medieval Japan of the Edo period was constructed deliberately by means of a “fake” line of tradition that traced its origin to early Chinese Chan circles of the Tang period.<sup>26</sup> The compilers of the respective texts used the usual self-legitimizing and historiographical patterns which were already used by earlier Japanese denominations, namely, the (re)construction of a transmission line from master to student (or from student to master) followed by a link of some sort to a famous Chinese master or monk through whom the line was further connected to the Indian patriarchs of Buddhism until it reached the Buddha, Buddha Śākyamuni. This scheme, which was followed by most of the Japanese denominations, was also closely followed by the “makers” of the history of the Fuke-shū.

The only source for the foundation legend of the Fuke-shū is the *Kyotaku-denki* 虚鐸傳記, “Traditional report of the ‘Empty Bell’” (subsequently abridged as *Denki*), a treatise from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century said to have been composed in classical Chinese (*kanbun* 漢文) by a certain Ton’ō 遁翁. It is completely unknown from other sources and dates to the period Kan’ei 寬永 (1624-1629). It was transmitted in the noble family (*chūnagon* 中納言) Aya 阿野<sup>27</sup> and compiled in its existing form between 1765 and 1770.<sup>28</sup> The earliest extent redaction of the *Denki* is from the year 1781 (Tenmei-gennen 天明元年),<sup>29</sup> the *Kyotaku-denki-gokuji-kai* 虚鐸傳記国字解, “Explanations to the *Kyotaku-denki* in National Characters (i.e.: Japanese),”<sup>30</sup> which is attributed to a certain Yamamoto Morihide 山本守秀.

The transmission line of the *dharmā* at the beginning of the *Denki* is completely in agreement with the mainstream Zen tradition, it lists the patriarchs in a

<sup>26</sup> Sanford (1977: 412) writes: “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.”

<sup>27</sup> Court nobles (*kuge* 公家) claiming as their ancestor Fujiwara Sanjō Kinnori (1103-1160).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Ueno 2002: 182, note 1. Sanford (1977: 416, note 21) mentions a tradition according to which the author should be the *shakubachi*-player and *komusō* Mufū 無風, a disciple of Ton’ō 遁翁; another tradition gives his teacher about whom nothing is known from other sources. The text is printed in *Kojiruien* 古事類苑, *Shūkyōbu* 1 宗教部一, Tokyo 1901 (Meiji 34) (quoted subsequently as *Ruien*), 1130 ff., and in Kurihara 1918: 94 ff. It is my pleasure to thank Dr. Funayama Tōru 船山徹, Kyoto University, for sending me copies of these texts which were not accessible in Germany and Austria when I wrote the bulk of this article.

<sup>29</sup> Sanford 1977: 416, note 21, gives 1779.

<sup>30</sup> See Sanford 1977: 416, note 21.

continuous line from the Buddha to the alleged founder of the denomination, that is, in this case: Shejiamouni-fo / Shakamuni-butsu 釋迦牟尼佛 / Śākyamuni Buddha to Mohejiashe / Makakasha 摩訶迦葉 / Mahākāśyapa and A'nan 阿難 / Ānanda to Shangnahexiu / Shōnawashu 商那和修 / Śaṇa(ka)vāśa, Youpojuduo / Ubagutta 憂婆毘多 / Upagupta, etc., including Maming / Memyō 馬鳴 / Aśvaghōṣa (no. 13), Longshu / Ryūju 龍樹 / Nāgārjuna (no. 15), Poxiupantou / Bashuhanzu 婆修盤頭 / Vasubandhu (no. 22), up to the first Chinese patriarch Putidamo / Bodaidatsuma 菩提達磨 / Bodhidharma (no. 29) and then the Chinese patriarchs Huike Dashi / Eka Daishi 慧可大師 (no. 30), Huineng Dajian / E'nō Daikan 慧能大鑿 (no. 34), Nanyue (Huairang) / Nangaku (Ejō) 南嶽(懷讓) (no. 35), Mazu (Daoyi) / Baso (Dōitsu) 馬祖(道一) (no. 36), Panshan (Baoji) / Banzan (Hōshaku) 盤山(寶積) (no. 37) to Puhua / Fuke 普化 as the thirty-eighth patriarch.<sup>31</sup>

The “traditional” line ends with the Chinese Zen-monk Puhua, Jap. Fuke, who is not found as a patriarch in any other Zen source. The *Denki*, however, develops its own individual transmission line:

Ton'ō says: Fuke Zenshi lived in the Tang-(period) as a successor in the teaching of Śākyā in the 38<sup>th</sup> generation. In his days he was a great sage and he practised crazed idleness in Chinshū / Zhenzhou 鎮州,<sup>32</sup> beat the bell in the city and always told people: ‘If there comes a bright head I beat the bright head; if there comes a dark head I beat the dark head; if all the four directions and all the eight sides come I beat like a whirlwind; if the void comes I beat with the pestle.’ One day a (certain) Chō Haku / Zhang Bo 張伯 of the district Ka'an / Henan 河南 heard these words and he very much longed for the great virtue of the Zen-master. He asked him (to be allowed) to follow him (but) the Zen-master did not allow it. As Chō Haku liked the (bamboo-)can he immediately cut a measured (bamboo-)can after he had heard the sound of the Zen-master's bell; he constantly played the sound (of the bell) and did not dare to play another melody. (Thus) he imitated the sound of the bell (by using a bamboo-)can and that is why (this piece) was called ‘Empty Bell’ (Kyotaku 虛鐸). This (tradition) was transmitted for sixteen generations in (Chō Haku's) family.<sup>33</sup>

Up to this point, the only figure in the *Denki* who is also found in authentic Zen-sources is the alleged founder of the Fuke-shū, the Chinese Chan-monk Puhua / Fuke about whom the Chinese sources only report short episodes. These are not very significant for the general history of Chinese Chan. According to the sources he lived in and around the time of the famous patriarch Linji 臨濟 (Jap. Rinzai), who died in the year 876. Puhua / Fuke's character is marked by a peculiar eccentricity and – at least on the outside – by his not accepting the authority of master Linji.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Ruien*, 1130. The list is a complete one and is similar to the one found in the *Baolin-zhuan* 寶林傳; cf. the list in Yampolsky 1967: 8 f.

<sup>32</sup> In the translation of the Japanese text I quote the Japanese pronunciation first and then give the Chinese spelling.

<sup>33</sup> Translation after *Ruien*, 1131.

<sup>34</sup> There is an Indian monk called Luomo 羅摩 (Rāma?) who visits the mountain

The affiliation of the Fuke-shū with Rinzai-Zen in the *Denki* is clearly connected with the Tang-record *Linji-lu* (Jap. *Rinzai-roku* 臨濟錄), “Records on Linji”.<sup>35</sup>

- (1.) As follows: Puhua often roamed the streets of the city, beat a bell and said: “If my common essence [lit.: a bright head] comes I hit my common essence; if there comes my hidden essence [lit.: a dark head] I beat the hidden essence;<sup>36</sup> if all the four directions and all eight sided come I beat like a whirlwind; if heaven (or: void) comes I beat like a pestle.” Master (Linji) ordered a servant to approach him who first observed how he acted, kept it in his memory and said to him as (Linji) had ordered him: “If absolutely nothing comes, what will you do?” Puhua put (the bell) on his palm and said: “Tomorrow there will be a vegetarian feast in Dabei-yuan 大悲院.” The servant went back and told it his master. The master said: “I always mistrusted this fellow.”<sup>37</sup>
- (2.) One day Puhua begged for a monk’s robe from the people in the streets of the city. They gave it to him but (suddenly) Puhua did not want it (any more). Master (Linji) gave an order to the prefect of the monastery to buy a coffin. When Puhua came back the master said: “I ordered a monk’s robe to be made for you.” But Puhua took (the coffin) on his shoulders and ran around in the streets of the city and shouted: “Linji has ordered a monk’s robe to be made for me. I will go to the eastern gate and there I will die.” The citizens of the city followed him and wanted to watch. Puhua said: “Today I will not (die), but tomorrow I will go to the eastern gate and will die.” Thus it went for three days. People did not believe it any more. On the fourth day nobody followed him to watch, and he went alone in front of the city, entered the coffin and ordered a passer-by to nail (the cover). Thereupon (news) spread and the citizens came running to open the coffin. They saw that his complete body had already disappeared and only heard the sound of the bell vaguely fading away.<sup>38</sup>

The founding legend of the Fuke-shū and the terminology in the *Denki* is full of loans from, and allusions to, this story in the *Linji-lu* which was very well known in

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Wutaishan 五台山 to see Mañjuśrī and who is also called Puhua in the Dunhuang manuscript P. 3931 (cf. Schneider 1987).

<sup>35</sup> In the *Jingde-chuandeng-lu* 景德傳燈火錄 (T. 2076.253b.29 f. = T. 2036.612a.29 ff, *Fozu-lidai-tongzai* 佛祖歷代統載; cf. T. 2077.558a). Puhua is the renitent as a pupil of the Chan-master Baoji. In the texts Puhua is in a constant fight with Linji questioning his authority.

<sup>36</sup> 明頭來, 明頭打, 暗頭來, 暗頭打, ... I take this meaning from Iriya 1989: 81, note 4.

<sup>37</sup> Translated after Iriya 1989: 157 f. See also the translation by Sanford 1977, Appendix A: 439.

<sup>38</sup> Translated after Iriya 1989: 175 f. A short version of these two episodes is found in the *Shishi-qigu-lüe* 釋氏稽古略, a chronologically structured “church history.” (T. 2037.840b.20 ff) Additional pieces of information on Puhua are almost absent but this was, of course, in the sense of the Japanese compiler(s) of the *Denki* as he or they could use the narrative “vacuum.” A condensed version of all stories found in Tang-sources is given in Puhua’s biography in the *Song-Gaoseng-zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (T. 2061.837b.14ff).

Japan at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and it is clear that this text was one of the main sources for the fabrication of the legend.

The Japanese nestor of Zen studies, Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, in his paper *Fuke no fūkyō* 普化の風狂, “The craziness of Fuke,” aptly defines the function of Puhua in the Zen tradition as follows:

If we remove the story of Fuke from the *Rinzai-roku* the attraction of this text would probably be reduced by 50%. (Yanagida 1969: 1083)

Puhua / Fuke was the important, if not the only connecting element between a Japanese form of musical activity of a Japanese Zen denomination and the flourishing of Chan in the Tang period. In the respective processes, Puhua / Fuke is eventually separated from his original function: almost ironically, he is transformed in the *Denki* from an extreme Zen-fool who has his counter-part, the famous Zen-excentric Linji / Rinzai, who appears as a lame hare – Yanagida calls this the “unification of contrasts” (*bantai no itchi* 反対の一致) – to something which he was never supposed to be, a Zen-master and patriarch.<sup>39</sup> It seems to be important to note that it is not before the *Denki* that the name of Puhua / Fuke is mentioned, before this we only find flute-playing mendicants called *komo-sō* or *komusō*.

Let us review our observations so far: A superficial analysis of the Japanese *Kyotaku-denki* already reveals some inconsistencies in the narrative and its historical claims:

1. The Chinese monk Puhua, who was never a Zen-master but was rather a rebel monk loosely connected to Linji. The quest of Zhang Bo / Chō Haku to become his lay-disciple is completely external to the Chinese sources and reflects rather the realities of Japanese Zen of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, where laypeople could indeed be part of monastic life.
2. According to the *Denki*, it is not Puhua / Fuke but the non-historical layman Chō Haku<sup>40</sup> who used the bamboo flute and identified it with Puhua’s bell.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Faure (1993: 200) who writes: “... his feigned madness prevents him from becoming a master and taking a position in the authorized discourse. Because of his reluctance to accept a patriarchal seat, he strikes us as the ‘true man without rank’ idealized by Linji.” In note 9 he writes: “However, Puhua himself was not without spiritual posterity: he was later ‘tamed’ by the Zen tradition, which promoted him as the ‘founder’ of the Fuke (Ch. Puhua) school, a relatively obscure school introduced to Japan by the flute player Kakua and Muhon Kakushin (...)” Although he quotes Sanford’s work which is critical in this point, Faure seems to suppose that the tradition about Kakushin and the Fuke-shū is not without substance. It was Puhua’s “crazy Zen” image which recommended him to Zenist circles in America during the sixties and early seventies, so that he eventually became mentioned under his Japanese name Fuke in Jack Kerouac’s novel *The Dharma Bums* (originally published in 1958); it was, however, still some time to go until the musical aspect of Fuke was discovered.

<sup>40</sup> The first Chinese novel *Youxianku* 遊仙窟, “Travels to the caverns of the immortals,” may have motivated the author of the *Denki* to choose the Chinese name Zhang /

3. The initial *shakuhachi*-piece, which Chō Haku imitates rather than composes, and which is called “Empty Bell” (or “Bell of the Void”), Kyotaku 虛鐸 and Kyorei 虛鈴 respectively, has no direct connection with the episodes of Fuke / Puhua which the *Denki* takes from other Zen-sources. Thus the connection between void and bell is a constructed one. Indeed, a certain amount of imagination is necessary to establish a connection between a bell and a bamboo flute.

The *Denki* attributes the honour of having brought the art of meditation with the bamboo flute to Japan to Hottō Kokushi Shinchi Kakushin 法燈國師心地覺心 (1207-1298).<sup>41</sup> This figure is, as in the case of Puhua / Fuke, selected quite deliberately. Kakushin is well-known for his various interests; he combined esoteric Shingon 真言 and Zen and he spent some time between 1249 and 1254 in Song-China where he practiced Zen under the famous master Wumen Huikai 無門慧開, Jap. Mumon Ekai (1183-1260), who was the compiler of the *gong'an* / *kōan*-collection 公案 *Wumen-guan* / *Mumon-kan* 無門關, “Gateless Passage.” Kakushin is considered to be the patriarch and founder of the Rinzai sub-denomination Hottō 法燈 which made him a candidate for the construction of a personal connection between Fuke-shū and Rinzai-shū. In Kakushin’s own writing, however, there is no evidence of either the events or the personal connections postulated in the *Denki*.<sup>42</sup>

The line of transmission perpetuated in the *Denki*, from the layman Chō Haku up to the Song period when Kakushin studied in China, consists of a tradition of laypeople from the family Chō / Zhang: 1. Chō Haku / \*<sup>43</sup>Zhang Bo 張伯, 2. Chō Kin / \*Zhang Jin 張金, 3. Chō Atsu / \* Zhang Ya 張軋 (?),<sup>44</sup> 4. Chō Ken / \*Zhang Quan 張權, 5. Chō Tei / \*Zhang Ting 張亭, 6. Chō Ryō / Zhang Ling 張陵, 7. Chō Chū / Zhang Chong 張沖, 8. Chō Gen / \*Zhang Xuan 張玄, 9. Chō Shi / \*Zhang Si 張思, 10. Chō An / \*Zhang An 張安, 11. Chō Kon / \*Zhang Kan 張堪, 12. Chō Ren / \*Zhang Lian 張廉, 13. Chō Shō / \*Zhang Zhang 張章, 14. Chō Yū / \*Zhang You 張雄. It is remarkable that there is a gap in this line between generation 14, Chō Yū / \*Zhang Zou and generation 16, Chō San / \*Zhang Can 張參, the latter being important for what is to follow in the *Denki*.

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Chō for his protagonist because it is in this piece of literature that we seem to find the oldest occurrence of the term *chiba* / *shakuhachi*. Both the author and the hero in the Chinese novel bear the name Zhang, and the *Youxianku* was well-read in Japan. On the *Youxianku* see Wang 1948: 153 f; Egan 1976: 136; Nienhauser 1987: 209, entry Chang Cho; English translation Levy 1965: 75 ff. It may well be that the famous explorer of the Western Regions of the Former Han period, Zhang Qian 張騫, may have had an influence on the decision to pick up the surname Zhang / Chō (Levy 1965: 19).

<sup>41</sup> A discussion of Kakushin’s role as the transmitter of the Fuke-practice to Japan, the conflicting source of the transmission through the four Chinese householders (*koji* 居士) Hōfu 寶伏, Sōdo 僧恕, Kokusa 國作, Rijō 理生 – rather unusual names in a Chinese context – in another source, the *Fukeshū-mon* 普化宗門, see Kōchi (1958), who too positivistically takes the sources as completely objective historical evidence.

<sup>42</sup> Yampolsky 1993-1994; Ueno 2002: 179 f.

<sup>43</sup> The asterisk (\*) indicates that these names are not documented in Chinese.

<sup>44</sup> I have not been able to find the character given in the Ruien: 車 + 己.

Having reached the Song period through this constructed line of succession, the *Denki* now reports a meeting between Kakushin and Chō San; Kakushin had allegedly moved to the monastery Lingdong-Huguo-si / Reitō-Gokoku-ji 靈洞護國寺 in Shuzhou / Joshū 舒州 to practice Zen; the name of Kakushin is written as Gakushin 學心:

The monk monk Gakushin from our country travelled there in order to study and (they) learnt and recited (*sūtras*) together. (Gakushin) befriended (Chō) San (*yūzen* 友善: Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*). Once, while they were having a conversation, they talked about who first transmitted the (piece) Kyotaku (“Void Bell”) and the existence of the melody to this day. (Chō San) tuned (his instrument) and played (the melody). As soon as he began to play (it was like) entering in a mystery (*myō* 妙). Gakushin sat reverently on his knees (*kiza* 跪坐) and said: “How strange! How wonderful (*myō* 妙)! One never has heard such a pure tune, such a wonderful melody, amazing and touching the heart (*kawai* 可愛), from any (bamboo) cane. I beg you<sup>45</sup> to teach me the melody so that I can transfer this wonderful sound to Japan.” Thereupon (Chō San) played this melody again for Gakushin, taught it to him, and Gakushin learnt it. One day, when (Gakushin’s) Zen had matured, and after he had mastered the melody, he bid Chō San farewell, ... and he returned to his home country by ship.<sup>46</sup>

As a connection between the transmission line of the Chinese Chan denomination of Linji / Rinzai<sup>47</sup> and a Japanese denomination tracing its origins back to Puhua / Fuke, Kakushin is a cleverly chosen *membrum coniunctum*. In Kakushin’s biography there are at least two points which qualified him as a patriarch for the Fuke-shū and its mendicants: on the one hand he had a connection to the so-called Kayadō-hijiri 萱堂聖, “reed-hall saints,” a group practising the *nenbutsu*. On the other hand, there is the legend that Kakushin had sent a disciple, after having given him his own name, to Kōya-san 高野山, the center of Shingon 真言, to recite the *nenbutsu* while using drums and bells. When the monks of Kōya-san sought to prevent these activities, the drums and bells suddenly flew through the air, resounding.<sup>48</sup> The motive for the connection of Kakushin and the Fuke may have been, despite the differences in terms of context, the formal similarity of both narratives with the Fuke legend.

<sup>45</sup> It is strange that a fully ordained monk addresses the layman by the honorific expression *fuse* 伏; in the twisted logic of the narrative and intentional logic of the *Denki*, however, where the layman Chō has to be the master of the monk Kakushin / Gakushin, this wording is rather essential.

<sup>46</sup> Translated after *Ruien*, 1131.

<sup>47</sup> See the tables in Dumoulin 1986: 359 and 361.

<sup>48</sup> Yampolsky 1993-1994: 252 f; the story is found in: *Hijiri shireki* 非事吏事歷, *Shintei zōbo shiseki shūran* 新定增補史籍集覽 32, Kyoto 1968, 387-390. One of the new conventions introduced by Kyomu was a kind of deep-rimmed hat which later was called *tengai* but is called *kaya-maru-gasa* 萱圓笠, “round reed hat,” in the *Denki*.



Subsequently the *Denki* narrates that Kakushin, after he had founded the monastery Saihō-ji 西法寺 in Wakayama 和歌山 (Kishū 紀州), accepted a disciple called Kichiku 奇竹, literally “Mysterious bamboo,” whom he taught the *shakubachi*-piece Kyotaku, “Empty Bell,” and thus founded the transmission line of Fuke in Japan. It is this Kichiku<sup>49</sup> who is considered to be the real first patriarch (*shūso* 宗祖) of the Fuke-shū. It is said that in a dream he had had two *shakubachi* pieces revealed to him which were, in this way, legitimated as authentic Fuke melodies.

The transmission line construed by the *Denki* then goes from Kichiku to Ton’ō is: 1. Kichiku 奇竹, 2. Jinsai 塵哉, 3. Gihaku 儀伯, 4. Rinmei 臨明, 5. Kyofū 虛風,<sup>50</sup> 6. Kyomu 虛無, 7. Gidō 儀道, 8. Jidō 自道, 9. Kashō 可笑, 10. Kūrai 空來, 11. Jikū 自空, 12. Echū 惠中, 13. Ichimoku 一默, 14. Fumyō 普明, 15. Chirai 知來, 16. Ton’ō, (17. Mufū 無風<sup>51</sup>). The pattern of this transmission line seems to reflect the sixteen generations of the Chinese line of the Chō / Zhang family.

For the origin of the term *komusō* and for some of the paraphernalia of the Edo-period monks, the *Denki* presents an aetiological legend: the sixth patriarch Kyomu 虛無 is said to have been the name-patron of the monks who, originally, should have been the noble Kusunoki Masakatsu 楠正勝. With this figure the *Denki* introduces the only historical personality from Japanese history besides Kakushin in the entire text. In the year 1399 Kusunoki Masakatsu, together with Ōuchi Yoshihiro 大内義弘 (1355-1400), revolted against the third Ashikaga (足利) *shōgun* Yoshimitsu 義滿 (1358-1408) (Papinot 1973: 335); they were both defeated and all trace of them was lost in the mists of history. In this way, Kusunoki was available for the role of the first *bushi*- and *rōnin-komusō* and this was not a bad choice for the author of the *Denki*. He was, after all, writing in a period in which the Tokugawa *shōguns* still had relative control over the country. The author of the *Denki* may have intended to please the regime with his choice: like Masakatsu, many members of the Kusunoki clan had been opponents of the Ashikaga-*bakufu* 足利幕府 (1392-1573) which preceded the Tokugawas. It is said in the *Denki* that Kyomu introduced the formal signs of monkhood such as the tonsure (*taihatsu* / *kami-zori* 剃髮) and the monastic robe (*hōe* 法衣), and he is also held responsible for the convention of covering the face by use of the *tengai* – a practice which is, however, not found until the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – nor the specific *dharmā-*

<sup>49</sup> Shibata 1976: 67 f, refers to a memorial stone at the “grave” of Kichiku – written as Kyochiku 虛竹 in the quoted text – in Uji from the year 1843 (Tenpō 14) as an external source but this is, of course, a source which has been produced after the production of the *Denki* and, by the name variant Kyochiku, even may reflect some concurring tradition or uncertainty about this patriarch at that very time.

<sup>50</sup> The text of the *Ruiens* (1132) drops no.3. and no. 4. but the text in Kurihara (1918: 100) has the complete transmission line.

<sup>51</sup> Mufū cannot be considered as a generation of his own in the transmission line as the text points out that there was a kind of heterodoxy at that time – see *Ruiens*, 1132: “I have transmitted this (tradition) to Mufū. Mufū also learnt from other teachers and made (or: played) an infinite number of melodies.”

rules, *botto* 法度, for funerals of the *komusō*. He is also said to have initiated reference to Puhua / Fuke<sup>52</sup> while at the same time originating the term for the members of the denomination.<sup>53</sup>

7. *Ikkyū Sōjun – a possible but unused membrum coniectum  
between Kakushin and the komusō?*

The *Denki*, having constructed a narrative of the introduction of the “old” tradition of Puhua / Fuke into Japan by the patriarch Kakushin, was also to attempt to fill in the gaps between Kamakura-Japan of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the 17<sup>th</sup> century; the time of the first presence of organized *komusō* which did not develop in *shakubachi* circles before the Meiji period and not until after the abolishment of the Fuke-shū. There must have been Zen-adherents playing the *shakubachi*, and there was indeed one paradigmatic figure: Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394-1481), an eccentric Zen monk and “prototype” of a *kyōsō* 狂僧, a “mad monk.”<sup>54</sup> One of Ikkyū’s poems, “Eulogy on Fuke,” *San-Fuke* 讚普化, clearly shows that Ikkyū highly venerated Fuke – a fact which is not really that astonishing when one considers the similarity in character:

How could Tōzan (Dongshan) 德山 and Rinzai (Linji) socialize with (Fuke)?  
The fool in the streets and on the markets frightened people. Many die sitting  
or die standing: great defeat! Softly (and) vaguely reverberates the sound of  
(Fuke’s) bell.<sup>55</sup>

Ikkyū’s predilection for the *shakubachi* is also well known and can be seen in various poems as e.g. “Portrait of Ami playing the *shakubachi*”<sup>56</sup> (Dai-Ton-Ami-

<sup>52</sup> *Ruiien*, 1132: “The confused Kyofū asked (Kyomu about his outfit): ‘You foolish fellow! What kind of appearance is this?’ (Kyomu) answered: ‘Once (our) first master, the Zen master Fuke, roamed towns and markets, hit the bell and pretended to be fool. I humbly want to imitate (it) ...’”

<sup>53</sup> *Ruiien*, 1132: “Then Kyomu travelled through the five central provinces (*ki* 畿, around Kyoto) and through the seven districts (*dō* 道) and played the sound of the Kyotaku (empty bowl). People asked him: ‘Master, who are you?’ He answered: ‘The monk (*sō*) Kyomu 僧虛無.’ Thereupon people called his disciples *kyomu-sō* and a lot of people imitated his appearance.”

<sup>54</sup> On Ikkyū and Fuke see Sanford 1981: 146ff.; on Ikkyū and *shakubachi* see Sanford 1981: 147 and 180 f, and Fritsch 1983: 7 ff.

<sup>55</sup> No. 126, translated after Ueno 2002: 192; Sanford (1981: 147) translates: “In Praise of P’u-k’o: Who could walk beside Te-shan and Lin-chi? That old madman from Chen really startled the crowds. Some die in meditation, some on their feet, but he beat them all. Like a distant bird call, his bell rang faintly.”

<sup>56</sup> According to Sanford (1981: 180), this is the poet Ton’a Nikaidō Sadamune 頓阿二階堂光貞 (1310-1384); according to Fritsch (1983: 29, note 37), and to (Ueno 2002: 128 f), he was the disciple of the *denraku* 田楽 master Zōa(mi) 噌阿(彌). Beside the court-music (*gagaku*) *denraku* was a popular form of music practiced from the Kamakura period onwards whereby flutes, *shakubachis*, were used, too.

suishakuhachi-zō 題純阿彌吹尺八像) in the anthology “Collection of the Crazy Cloud,” Kyōun-shū 狂雲集:

The play of the *shakuhachi* (even) evokes feeling in ghosts. As a wanderer between heaven and earth (I am) again without companion (*tagui* 倫). In all things there is only this melody – the man steps out of the painting into the flute from the mulberry-island.<sup>57</sup>

As Ikkyū is officially recognized as belonging to the Rinzai tradition, and as he roamed the country like the *komusō*, he was the ideal missing link between Kakushin, whose Zen affiliation was more connected with the Sōtō tradition, and the Fuke-shū associated as they were with Rinzai.<sup>58</sup>

However, except for Ikkyū’s playing the flute and his mendicant lifestyle, there are no parallels with the *komusō* of the Tokugawa period as e.g. the use of the paraphernalia of the *tengai* or the begging for alms by using the flute. There is also no historical relation with, or reference to, Kakushin. Ikkyū’s playing the flute is not in any way an expression of Zen spirituality but represents, instead, Ikkyū’s solitude<sup>59</sup> and his unconventional lifestyle which was directed against the Zen establishment of his time. By using the flute, he expresses his identification with the *hijiri*, the mendicants (like the *boroboro*) who were mistrusted by the Buddhist orthodoxy. No connection is drawn between the *shakuhachi* and Fuke (Puhua). – This is something one would expect if such a connection already existed during the lifetime of Ikkyū.

The connection between the wind and the bell of Fuke is referred to in a poem called “Wind Bells” (no. 111):

The realm of sight and sound is endless, Yet, imperceptibility, a pure note crystallizes. That old fellow P’u-k’o knew a trick or two. Wind and bell hang together, there above the jewelled railing<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Translated after Ueno 2002: 129; “mulberry-island” is Jap. Fusō (Chin. Fusang) 扶桑, which according to Chinese legends is an island lying in the east on which a huge mulberry tree is crowing; it also means Japan: Tōdō 1978: 517c. See also the slightly different translation of the passage by Sanford 1981: 180: “*Shakuhachi* music stirs up both gods and demons. Once again the world’s number-one rake lacks a friend. In the teeming universe just that music. He leaves the painting to enter a bamboo flute.” I am unable to understand the reasoning behind the German translation of the last line by Fritsch (1983: 9): “... Abbild für uns Menschen des Götterlandes.”

<sup>58</sup> His flute is still shown today in the Hōshun-in 芳春院, a branch temple of the Daitoku-ji 大徳寺 in Kyoto, but it is an instrument of the type of the *hitoyogiri* different from the *shakuhachi*s of the later *komusō*.

<sup>59</sup> On the almost archetypical expressional spectre of flutes see Brunotte and Treibel 1999; Fritsch 1986-87. On the various poems by Ikkyū describing the connection of the *shakuhachi* with Ikkyū’s loneliness and his position as a social outcast see Fritsch 1983: 10f.

<sup>60</sup> Translation by Sanford 1981: 146; see also poem no. 110: “With motion it rings, when still it is silent. Does the bell hold the sound, or does the wind? An old monk jangled out of his midday nap. How is this? The midnight bell at high noon?”

The emphasis of Puhua / Fukes' "motto" "dark head – bright head" (Chin. *antou – mingtou*, Jap. *anzu – myōzu* 暗頭 – 明頭) is found in Ikkyū's poem "Monk Fuke [P'u-k'o]":

The Monk P'u-k'o: Arguing first the Bright Head, then the Dark, That Zen-fellow's tricks fooled them all. Now, blowing up again, the same old madman, A sensual youth, howling at the door. (Sanford 1981: 148, no. 595)

A poem bearing the title "Shakuhachi" (no. 969) may have been the motivation for scholars such as Fritsch to draw an historically problematic line between Fuke and Ikkyū on the one hand and with the *shakuhachi*-playing mendicants on the other hand:

*Shakuhachi*: even now I remember the recluse of Uji. Empty belly, no wine, colder than ice. Yet, the sound of the angel's shining cloak. Lost among refugees, the rural priest takes comfort.<sup>61</sup>

In the light of all this, it seems strange that Ikkyū is not officially incorporated into the story of the Fuke-shū<sup>62</sup> and this again shows, in my opinion, that the making of the Fuke-legitimation legend took place considerably after the lifetime of Ikkyū.

### 8. Privilegation or control? The self-made official recognition

Beside the *Denki* which represents, of course, the view of the *komusō* / Fuke-shū-"ideologists" some other documents about the *komusō* exist from the side of the *bakufu*. In these documents, the privileges of the *komusō* are recorded which, one assumes, had been awarded to them by the first *shōgun* of the Tokugawa, Ieyasu 家康 (1542-1616). One of these is the *Keichō-sadamegaki* 慶長定書, "Decree

<sup>61</sup> Translation by Sanford 1981: 181; the "angel" is a reference to the famous Nō-play Hagoromo 羽衣, "Robe of Feathers," by Zeami 世阿彌 (1363-1444).

<sup>62</sup> As, for instance, Ikkyū's "colleague" Roan – different versions of his name are 蘆菴, 蘆安, 良庵, 朗庵 – on which the *Yōshū-fushi* 雍州志 of Kurokawa Dōyu 黒川道祐 (1686, *Jōkyō* 貞享 3) records in the chapter about the temple Myōan-ji, the later Meiji headquarter of the Fuke-shū: "In the recent past there was a strange monk called Roan. Nobody knows where he comes from. At his time he was very close to master Ikkyū of the Daitoku-ji, Ryūgoku-zan 龍寶山. He had a predilection for the practice of the wind-holes (that is: flutes) and he loved to blow the *shakuhachi*. He called himself 'the ascetic wind-hole' (*fūketsu-dōsha* 風穴道者). Originally he lived in the district of Uji 宇治 in the (hermitage) Kyūkō-an 吸江菴. He also lived in this temple (Myōan-ji) for a while. As people say, this is the main temple of the *komusō*." (*kanbun* in Kurihara 1918: 109, and Shibata 1976: 66, Japanese reading in Ueno 2002: 152) Cf. on this in more detail Ueno 2002: 152ff. On the uncertain identification of Roan with the Fuke-shū patriarch Kichiku (Ryōen) 寄(奇)尺(了圓) from the *Denki* see Shibata 1976: 64 ff.

from the Keichō era,” dated to Keichō 19 (1614) the full title of which is *Gonyū koku-no-(migiriōse-)watasaresōrō-osadamegaki* 御入國之砌被仰渡候定書, “Decree about bestowing entrance to the different provinces” – which, in fact, is extant in several, quite different, versions – as Sanford remarks: “rather too many, in fact.”<sup>63</sup> The original does not exist any more; only late copies from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century are still extant.<sup>64</sup>

These later versions enumerate in eight, eleven, seventeen or twenty paragraphs the privileges and duties of the *komusō* – not of the institution Fuke-shū (!) – such as extra-territoriality and their submission to the jurisdiction and authority of a given main temple or of the office for religious affairs of the *bakufu*; they also are allowed freedom of travel, the right to bear swords, free use of ferries, free admission to theatres, *sumō* tournaments, etc. Mention is also made of the restriction of recruiting *komusō* only from the ranks of the *bushi*.

The oldest attested form of the document was sent to the “office for temples and shrines” (Jisha-bugyō 寺社奉行) of the *bakufu* by the two main temples of the Fuke-shū, the Ichigetsu-ji 一月寺 and the Reihō-ji 鈴法寺 in Edo 江戸, in the year 1792. The request for this document was, in my opinion, a reaction by the *bakufu* to the publication of the *Denki* one year earlier, a document which, quite naturally, made the case for a considerably higher degree of historicity and legitimacy for the Fuke-shū as an institutionalised subset of the Rinzaishū. This was a far higher status than the *komusō* organisation – whatever this was – had had before.

Another even longer document, bearing the same name as the older version, and quite consistent with the other extant versions, was sent by the two temples on receipt of the request of the office in the year 1846 (Kōka 弘化 3); this document has a note saying that the originals from the year 1614 had been destroyed in the temple fires of the years 1707 (Hōei 寶永 4, Ichigetsu-ji) and 1703 (Genroku 元祿 16, Reihō-ji). The authenticity of this document had already been questioned as early as in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the scholar Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1656-1725) on the basis of linguistic and historical “irregularities.”

The character of the members of the Fuke-shū became more and more subject to the suspicion of being uncontrollable by the *bakufu*. This became more alarming as the sect became increasingly open to ordinary *shakubachi* players and in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the *bakufu* obviously tried unsuccessfully to liquidate the privileges of the Fuke-shū.

<sup>63</sup> Sanford 1977: 418. Only in Kurihara (1918: 130-143) four different versions are quoted.

<sup>64</sup> From the side of the *bakufu* there are only documents from the year 1677 (Enpō 延寶 5) in which the infrastructure of the main monasteries is laid down, the restriction of admission to the sect is emphasized and Ichigetsu-ji and Reihō-ji are recognized as the principal monasteries of the sect (cf. Sanford 1977: 420, note 38). Myōan-ji, which originally has been a subtemple (*matsuji* 末寺) of the Reihō-ji, in the year 1767 was recognised as a subtemple of the Kōkoku-ji 興國寺, founded by Kakushin and thus obtained a higher degree of independence and a legitimation of its own (cf. Sanford 1977: 431 f).

### 9. Fuke-shū – a “late-born” Zen denomination?

It is important to keep in mind that the term Fuke-shū does not actually occur before the *Denki* and that the other documents (decrees) discussed right up until the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century only use the name *komusō*. In my opinion, this clearly shows that it was the tradition of the *Denki* which first capitalised on the name of Fuke – although there were already indirect connections between Fuke and the *shakubachi* (Ikkyū) on the one hand and Fuke and the *komusō* on the other.<sup>65</sup> One had to make Fuke a Zen patriarch – something which he had never been in Zen literature – in order to create a legitimate affiliation between the *komusō* and the Rinzaishū. There are no Rinzaishū documents before the date of composition of the *Denki* which posit a connection between the *komusō* and themselves.

Another point to be discussed is the assumed repertoire of the Fuke-shū, which is more or less identical with the oldest *shakubachi* school Kinko-ryū 琴古流 (see below). The old lists of the repertoire, none of which is earlier than the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, are comprised of pieces which do not show a direct reference to the content and terminology of the *Denki*; instead they contain a large number of names which point to the local mendicant movements of the *komusō* and their “ancestors.”<sup>66</sup> This, again, seems to indicate that the amalgamation of the *komusō* and shakuhachi-Zen is a relatively late phenomenon of which the *Denki* is a culmination.

It is not before the appearance of the *Denki*, that is after around 1780, that the lists demonstrate the increasing influence of the text and its symbolism. The only list, which is said to originate from the time before the establishment of the Kinko-ryū around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is the one from the year Kyōhō 享保 17 (1732), which is signed by an “idler (*sanjin* 散人) Kakushin from Fusō 扶桑 (Japan).” (Ueno 2002: 248) It lists the three “original” pieces, *honkyoku* 本曲, of the Kinko-ryū, Mukai-ji 霧海籠,<sup>67</sup> “Flute in misty sea,” Kokū 虚空, “Void” and Kyorei 虛鈴, “Empty Bell,” which are all either referred to, or which have their origin described, in the *Denki*. There should be some doubt concerning the authenticity of this list because of the way in which the names of the *honkyoku* at the beginning of the list are written. These are too similar to the classical names of the later Kinko-ryū. What is more important is that in “Kinko’s notebook,” *Kinko-techō* 琴

<sup>65</sup> See Ueno 2002: 191 f, who also refers to the entry in the a dictionary of the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup>, first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the *Kuromoto-Hajime-Setsuyō-shū* 黒本本節用集: 薦僧 (コモソウ)・普化 (同), which states: “*komusō* is the same as Fuke”; this entry is, however, not an historical identification *komusō* = Fuke-shū but, instead, only shows an early connection between the *komusō* (and their strange behaviour) and the crazy Chinese Zen monk par excellence, Puhua / Fuke.

<sup>66</sup> For an interpretation of these titles see Fritsch 1983: 16 ff, whose discussion of the three original *honkyoku* on page 14 f follows the inner tradition of the *shakubachi* schools without any critical differentiation.

<sup>67</sup> It should be noticed that Chin. *chi*, Jap. *ji* 篳 is a traverse flute and not a vertical flute like the *shakubachi*.

古手帳, a work ascribed to the founder of the Kinko-ryū, the same three honkyoku are registered under the year Kyōhō 享保 13 (1728) with varying titles: Mukai-ji-reibo 霧海簾靈慕, “Longing for the flute of the misty sea,” Kokū 虚空, Shinkyorei 真嘘靈, “Exhaling soul of truth”<sup>68</sup>; in this list the archetypical piece referring to the legend of the *Denki*, reflecting Fuke’s beating of the bell and Chō Haku’s imitation on the bamboo, the *Kyotaku* or *Kyorei*, the “Empty Bell,” is absent – That is without mentioning the inverted order of the pieces with *Kyotaku* = *Kyorei* at the end of the list. This piece, which is, from the standpoint of the *Denki*, the most important one, appears first in a repertoire-list *Takubatsu-shugyō-shintoku* 托鉢修行心得, “Rules (or: understanding) of the religious practice of alms-begging,” which was produced between 1789 and 1818 (eras Kansei 寛政 and Bunsei 文政) in the context of the Myōan-ji in Kyoto. It was not recorded, however, before the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ueno 2002: 251 f).

From all this, we can conclude that the canonised musical tradition, and the systematisation of certainly already existing elements legitimising Fuke-shū in the *Denki*, probably originated in the proto-organisation of the Kinko-ryū which was itself starting towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This proto-organisation, with its legend and related musical tradition, consolidated the Fuke-shū as a Zen denomination in its own right. The Kinko-ryū was also emerging in the context of the Tokugawa policy towards religion, but it could, at the same time, find its “spiritual” roots in the religious institution of the Fuke-shū.

### 10. Spiritualization and laicization

Given the establishment of the Fuke-shū through the – in reality rather belated – recognition of the Tokugawa-*bakufu* and the creation of the historiography of the *Denki* – which incorporated the denomination into the mainstream Zen tradition – the creation of a religio-ideological “Überbau” was well under way. All this took place in the context of the establishment of the Kinko-ryū (1756:<sup>69</sup>) through the agency of Kurosawa Kōhachi Kinko I. 黒澤幸八琴古 (1710-1770) who originated from a lower *bushi*-(*samurai*-) family from Fukuoka 福岡 and had become a *komusō* at the age of nineteen. He is said to have collected pieces for *shakuhachi* while travelling through Japan and to have added thirty-five of them to the repertoire of the *Kinko-ryū*. In the year 1768, he was appointed *shi’ nanban* 指南番, *shakuhachi* teacher of the music schools of the two main temples of the Fuke-shū in Edo and also of his own schools.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Ueno 2002: 248. It should be noted that *kyo* 嘘 is ambivalent: in a Japanese context it may mean – and originally probably meant – “lie”; the title could also be interpreted as “Soul of truth and lie.”

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Gutzwiller 1974: 23.

<sup>70</sup> See Gutzwiller 1974: 22 f; unfortunately the diaries ascribed to him were assumedly destroyed during a bomb raid on Tokyo and the extant copies have never been published. He is held responsible for the Zen-ideological trait which is found in Hisamatsu Fūyō’s work (Gutzwiller 1974: 23).

The only extant writing which really has Zen-inspired content was composed by Hisamatsu Masagorō Fūyō (1790-1845) 久松雅五朗風陽 who was a disciple and factual successor of the third head of school (*iemoto* 家元) of the Kinko-ryū Kurosawa Masajirō Kinko 黒澤雅二朗琴古 (d. 1816). These works bear the titles *Hitori-gotoba* 獨言, “Monologue” (before 1830), *Hitori-mondō* 獨問答, “Monologous dialogues” (1823) and *Kaisei-hōgo* 海靜法語, “Dharma-words of the silent sea” (1838).<sup>71</sup> In them the Zen-Buddhist ideology and rhetoric is combined with forms of musical practice. This is evident in such sentences as *ichion jōbutsu* 一音成仏(佛), “to achieve enlightenment by one sound” or *chikuzen ichinyō* 竹禪一如, “bamboo [i.e.: the *shakubachi*] and Zen are one and the same,” which are quoted over and over again; the instrument itself is called *bōki* 法器, “instrument of the dharma.”<sup>72</sup>

A passage from the *Hitori-mondō* reads: “I become the bamboo and the bamboo becomes me: dwelling in the void, acting in reality – when this is achieved one is an extraordinary (*shakubachi*-)player (*meijin* 名人).”<sup>73</sup>

Despite all these catchphrases, Hisamatsu’s texts contain amazingly few “Zenist” expressions and instead focus on the actual practice of the playing of the instrument. Especially in *Kaisei-hōgo*, Hisamatsu comments in a nostalgic way about the Fuke-shū, a comment which, at the same time, expresses criticism of the present in general<sup>74</sup> while also directing a *captatio benevolentiae* towards the Tokugawa-*bakufu*:

The way of the (Fuke-)order has been transmitted for thousand years<sup>75</sup> and during this time, since (the era) Ōei 應永 (1394-1412) and the (era) Eikyō 永享 (1429-1441) mainly warriors (*bufū* 武夫) have been ordained into the order, but, alas, through swords, halberds, arrows and guns the religious practice of trodding the realm of truth has not been realised. Fortunately the essence of (the teaching) (宗旨 *shūshi*) of the order has not fallen into decay, and during these (past) two hundred years in which the Great Peace has returned (this teaching)<sup>76</sup> has become bright. Nevertheless, there are no proven masters any more and there is nobody to show the way of practice. Only idle words of

<sup>71</sup> Texts and German translation in Gutzwiller 1983: 164-198.

<sup>72</sup> The connotational range of this term includes the ambiguous meaning of musical instrument / tool and the meaning “recipient.”

<sup>73</sup> My translation is slightly different from Gutzwiller’s (1983: 180).

<sup>74</sup> But also of contemporary Zen: “Not practicing, walking ten thousand (miles) without stopping, not (reaching) the end – that is the silence of the see.’ – and that is how one should act. What is called the dharma instrument (*bōki* 法器), the *shakubachi*, elucidates the deeper sense of the Zen of all schools, (but) the schools (*shoba* 諸派) have split off the deeper sense of Zen (*zenshi* 禪旨), do not use the *sūtras* as measures (of teaching), do not use scriptures; that is why one should realize enlightenment (*satori* 悟) on the basis of non-action (*mu’i* 無為) and of (spiritual) breath (氣息 *kisoku*).” See, slightly different, Gutzwiller 1983: 192.

<sup>75</sup> I cannot accept Gutzwiller’s (1983: 189) over-negative interpretation of *megurikite* 運り来て, “hat sich sehr verändert” (“has changed a lot”).

<sup>76</sup> I.e.: the period of the Tokugawa *bakufu*.



egocentrism are skilfully used, the narrow view<sup>77</sup> of hypocrisy is prevailing, and therefore the (true) meaning of the *shakuhachi* as an instrument of the dharma is distorted and the (deeper) meaning of Buddhism (*butsu'i* 佛意) is destroyed.<sup>78</sup>

The phenomena expressed here is certainly a late spiritualisation and aesthetization of *shakuhachi* practice and theory, and it is to be placed in the context of laicization of a religious group, the Fuke-shū. One sign of this development is that all the *iemotos* of the Kinko-ryū taught in their own schools in Edo, in schools which were only partly training places for the two main temples of the Fuke-shū in the capital of the *bakufu*; here mainly laypeople were instructed. These headmasters were – with the probable, but not fully proven, exception of Kinko I. – not fully ordained *komusō* but, in the terminology of the order, so-called *shūen josui* 宗縁助吹, “assistant flutists related”<sup>79</sup> to the (Fuke-)shū.” The *komusō* are hardly mentioned in the documents of this period, and they seem to have been, at least, very passive in their “public relations” activities. We might conclude from these facts that the religious and ideological “Überbau” of the Fuke-shū is not an authentic product developing from within the order but a strategy of legitimation for a more and more bourgeois musical tradition of the late Tokugawa-period, a tradition which, not least, was attempting to fix nostalgically the glorious past of the *komusō* as a full-fledged Zen-tradition.

Seen from this point of view, some of the inconsistencies of the *Denki*, the historiography of the Fuke-shū, become explicable: For instance, the fact that “Zen-master” Fuke is depicted as only an indirect patriarch, while the complete Chinese transmission line after him up to the movement to Japan (Kakushin) is that of a family of laypeople, the clan of the Chō.<sup>80</sup> This is in line with the way in which the *Denki* explicitly emphasises the fact that, beside the Japanese patriarch of the order, Kichiku, Kakushin had four other disciples who were called the “four householders” (*koji* 居士) and were assumed to have been non-ordained persons.<sup>81</sup>

The function of these “lay-motives and –elements” in the *Denki* was probably to be able to legitimate a stronger interest in the musical practice of the *shakuhachi*

<sup>77</sup> *Kanken* 管見 certainly is ambiguous: “view of the (bamboo-)cane [i.e.: the *shakuhachi*].”

<sup>78</sup> Text according to Gutzwiller 1983: 195, and Kuritani 1918: 216; note again that my translation in some places is substantially different from Gutzwiller’s. It is striking that in Hisamatsu’s text the introduction of Neo-Confucian concepts (e.g. *in* 陰 – *yō* 陽) is obviously used as a sign of “spirituality” but is at the same time a kowtow towards the official Neo-Confucian ideology of the *bakufu*.

<sup>79</sup> There is the Buddhist connotation or karmatic interconnection in the term *en* 縁, “relation.”

<sup>80</sup> See Ueno 2002: 179.

<sup>81</sup> *Ruien*, 1131: “Other disciples (of Gakushin) were Kokusaku 國作, Rishō 理正, Hōfu 法普 and Sōjo 宗怒 (who) were also capable to learn (the art of the bamboo) cane. They were called the ‘four householders’ (*shi-koji* 四居士) by people.” Tsuge 1977: 51, translates *shi-koji* ambiguously as “Four Devoted Men.” An inconsistency is, of course, the fact that these laypeople often have distinctly Buddhist monastic names (*bōmyō* 法名); this may be due to an attempt to imply a semi-religious status for these disciples.

among rich laypeople even on a historiographical level. This reflects the tendency of the time, counteracting the official class order of the Tokugawa regime, to facilitate social mobility, especially between the merchant and the *samurai*, *shōnin* and *buke*, on the one side,<sup>82</sup> and between monastics and laypeople on the other. The concrete meeting places of music practitioners and connoisseurs from the strands of the *samurai* and the *shōnin* were the so-called *fukiwase(-dokoro)* 吹合(所), “(places) of common flute(-practice).”<sup>83</sup> These places were music schools which had a rather loose connection with the head-monasteries of the Fuke-shū, and it is completely unclear if, and to what extent, ordained *komusō* were taught in these schools. This shows again the secondary role of the assumed historical subjects of *shakubachi*-Zen. The woodblock prints (*ukiyo-e* 浮世繪) of the late Edo-period depicting *komusō* often show the dandy-version called *date-* 伊達 or *santo-komusō* 三都虚無僧. They are also known under the ironical name *tabako-komusō* 煙草虚無僧, as they were said to only stick the *shakubachi* into their mouth like a cigar without being able to really play the instrument.

This laicization, or even “bourgeoisization,”<sup>84</sup> is in line with the art genre and the aesthetic of *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 whose name, “pictures from a floating world,” already evokes Buddhist connotations without a real and clear Buddhist content. There is also a counter-tendency of rationalization which can be found expressed in the well-balanced critique of religion of Tominaga Nakamoto 富永仲本 (1715-1746) in his *Shutsujō-kōgo* 出定後語.<sup>85</sup> It can also be observed in a direct and biting polemical attack against Fuke by the Neo-Confucian Hayashi Razan (1650):

The fool Fuke – this name – I laugh at him (whose) tricks are without success.  
I would like to hear the sound of the bell in his two hands, to hear the superb  
sound without sound. (*Ruien*, 1146)

### 11. National aesthetisation in the Meiji period

The *Fuke-shū*, like other Buddhist denominations, was finally prohibited in the year 1871 during the wave of laicization and persecution (*haibutsu-kishaku* 廃佛棄釋, “throw away the Buddha, abolish the monks”) in early years of the *Meiji*-period. There are no direct sources that indicate that this dismantlement of the *Fuke-shū* was due to a special strategy of the *Meiji*-administration on account of the perception that the *Fuke-shū* was thought to have conspired with the Tokugawa

<sup>82</sup> For a general discussion see the case-study by Bellah 1985, well-known, although not undisputed, but still convincing in some of its basic analysis.

<sup>83</sup> See Ueno 2002: 236 ff.

<sup>84</sup> Another early semi-mythical figure of the merchant-Zen connoisseur is Sen no Rikyū 千利休 (1522-1591), the famous tea master and *iemoto* princeps of the two main tea-ceremony branches in Japan, *Ura-senke* 裏千家 and *Omote-senke* 表千家.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Pye 1990.

regime<sup>86</sup> – although it is suggested in almost all subsequent writing on the Fuke-shū. Rather, the opposite is the case: the laicization of the sect’s temples in the framework of state restrictions and the persecution of Buddhism between 1869 and 1871<sup>87</sup> occurred rather late and was relatively mild. It also seems to me that the marginality and loose connection of the order with the main institutional body of the Rinzai-shū, to which it had belonged, and the strong involvement of laypeople in the *shakubachi* practice (leading to the formation of the different *shakubachi* schools during the Meiji-period), may have been the primary reasons for the lack of effort from the Buddhist mainstream to re-establish the Fuke-shū.

Another aspect of the legacy of the myth of the Fuke-shū from the late Edo-period is that it has been assumed that its *bushi*-monks occupied a privileged position as spies and collaborators with the Tokugawa-*bakufu* which had led to the complete ban of the Fuke-shū during the first years of the Meiji administration – this is a mixture of conspiracy theory and preconceptions regarding the decadence of the late Tokugawa period which fit perfectly into the bourgeois, anti-Tokugawa and conservative nationalism of the Meiji period.

Among the three main temples of the Fuke-shū, it is only the Myōan-ji 明暗寺 in Kyoto which is said to continue the now secularised tradition of the order in the form of the Myōan-kyōkai 明暗協会, the “Myōan-association,”<sup>88</sup> which was founded in the year 1890, one year after the establishment of religious freedom in Meiji-Japan. Its members wore – and still wear – the costume of the *komusō* during public events.

Despite all the differences between the *shakubachi*-schools – the Kinko-ryū, the Tozan-ryū 都山流 which were officially founded in 1905 by Nakao Tozan 中尾都山 (1876-1956) (and which were very receptive to the introduction of Western musical elements and new compositions) and the Myōan-ryū<sup>89</sup> (which, originally, was a rather ideological trans-denominational institution) – they are united in developing the tendencies towards spiritualising and aestheticizing the legacy of

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<sup>86</sup> The text of the decree can be found in Ueno 2002, 234: “(According) to the article on the abolishing of the rules of the Fuke-shū, (effective) from today, monastic officials and monks (*jusō* 住僧) are to be restored into the status of citizens (*minseki* 民籍), to be transferred to the fixed conditions and it should be arranged that they enter professions appropriate to the region. The temples left after the abolishing of the order (*baishū* 廃宗), however, be sold for an appropriate price, a duty and auxiliary service to their original inhabitants after they have returned to laity (*kizoku* 歸俗). Shinmatsu 辛末, 10<sup>th</sup> month, Daijōkan 太政官.”

<sup>87</sup> See Ketelaar 1990: 96.

<sup>88</sup> The Myōan-ji did not play a real role as a main temple of the Fuke-shū in the documents before the Meiji-era. It was probably gaining this value after the abolishment of the sect as a temple which was still “available” and did not have the direct Tokugawa connections of the two head-temples in Tokyo.

<sup>89</sup> See Weisgarber 1968: 314. The Myōan-kyōkai 明闇教會 was established in 1889 (Meiji 22) (Shibata 1979: 5). For a short description of Myōan-“*komusō*” in Taishō-Japan, after the institution of the Fuke-shū had already been abolished, see Shibata 1976: 57.

pre-Meiji *shakubachi* music. One could call these attempts the national legacy of the *komusō* in a form which had been purified of the aberrant phenomena of the Edo period.<sup>90</sup> At the same time, the rise of these schools constituted the clear and consequent victory of the bourgeois *shakubachi* players over the – be it real or constructed – exclusivity of the *bushi-komusō*.

## 12. Conclusion

The complex “real” and textual history of the *komusō*, the Fuke-shū and *shakubachi*-Zen is, admittedly, an example from the periphery of the history of Japanese religions; however, what makes it special is, in my opinion, the fact that the concept of “*invented traditions*,” postulated and exemplified by Eric Hobsbawm und Terence Ranger (1983) is so relevant. This concept, was applied representatively in the volume “*Mirror of Modernity – Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*”<sup>91</sup> in the case of several social and cultural developments in Meiji-Japan; but it can be dated back to late Tokugawa-Japan and thus calls into question standard narratives of a rather abrupt change of paradigms as a consequence of the foundation and consolidation of the Meiji regime. The formation of the history and ideology of the Fuke-shū goes back to a period which was marked by social tensions between a wealthy class of merchant-bourgeoisie (*shōnin* 商人) striving for cultural and intellectual emancipation in the context of the decline and impoverishment of much of the warrior class (*bushi* 武士). This context – despite *and* because of Robert Bellah’s notion of a Weberian protestant working ethic during the Tokugawa-period – made claims to religiosity and spirituality through the appropriation or creation of “fictive” lines of transmission and tradition. This tradition was finally transferred into the secular context of Meiji-Japan in order to contribute, in the case of *shakubachi*-music, to the creation of a national identity<sup>92</sup> in the sense of an ancient

<sup>90</sup> This development ran parallel with the official doctrine of *kōsei issbin* 皇制一新, “renovation of Imperial rulership,” in the historical blueprint of which the Tokugawa-*bakufu* represented the last one of the six “impurities” in the Imperial history of Japan (Cp. Ketelaar 1990: 119).

<sup>91</sup> Vlastos (1998: 3) states: “... tradition is not the sum of actual past practices that have perdured into the present; rather, tradition is as a modern trope, a prescriptive representation of socially desirable (or sometimes undesirable) institutions and ideas thought to have been handed down from generation to generation.”

<sup>92</sup> This is probably also the reason for the construction of the conspiracy “myth” around the Fuke-shū and its collaboration with the Tokugawa-*bakufu*: it was indeed a difficult task for the new *shakubachi* establishment to legitimize the abolition of the sect through the Meiji administration with the help of a theory of decadence while at the same time preserving the “lineage of tradition.” In reality the Fuke-shū belonged rather to the groups which were judged as a conspiring organisation; let alone that the Myōan-ji in Kyoto had been a supporter of the Imperial case: see Sanford 1977: 432, note 193. on the so-called Sengoku-case (Sengoku-sōdō 仙石騒動) and on an incident in the Myōan-ji.

tradition which is only preserved in Japan (Cf. Kikkawa 1984). Such a musical tradition could then eventually enter into a new, second period of spiritualisation in the postwar period of Zen-enthusiasm in the West. Paradoxically, in Japan this assumed spirituality was lost in the more and more secularised and formalised world of Japanese *shakubachi* practice of the main schools. It seems, however, latterly, to be more and more the case that *shakubachi* practice is constructed in terms of a consciousness of it, “re”transferred as this has been from the West, as a spiritual Zen-instrument.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> The more general “myth” of the *shakubachi* in modern Japan is – when an average Japanese person is asked – the one of an instrument which is extremely difficult to master, especially by foreigners. I was told that it would take me about six months to learn to produce a sound and further two years to master the *furi*-technique 振り, the specific kind of vibrato produced through changing the angle between the lips and the mouthpiece, the *utaguchi*, and through the horizontal movements of the head.

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