

## Michael Chikuzen Gould

Michael Chikuzen Gould lived in Japan from 1980 to 1997 and studied shakuhachi under renowned masters Taniguchi Yoshinobu and Yokoyama Katsuya. Gould earned a "Shihan" (Master of Shakuhachi) in 1987 and was given the name "Chikuzen." In 1994, he became one of only a handful of non-Japanese to hold the title of "Dai Shihan" (Grand Master of Shakuhachi). After returning to the U.S., Chikuzen taught Zen Buddhism and Shakuhachi at the University of Michigan, Oberlin College, and Wittenberg University.

One of the most prolific performers outside of Japan, Chikuzen has presented over 500 solo concerts and has also played with traditional Japanese music ensembles, Taiko drumming groups, Chinese harp and pipe organ. He appeared in the world premiere of the opera "Madame Butterfly" using Japanese instruments, performed Karl Jenkins' "Requiem" with the Metropolitan Detroit Chorale, and provided the music for the prestigious Dance Company of Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan in a presentation of the works of Mary Cassatte. Chikuzen is also a Shakuhachi instructor at the annual Shakuhachi Camp of the Rockies in Loveland, Colorado.

The capacity of the Shakuhachi is huge, not only as a musical instrument due to its variety of colors and special sounds, but, more so as a link or bridge between the essential nature (soul) of human beings and the essential nature (spirit) of the cosmos. The ability of the Shakuhachi to reach into people and touch something deep inside, to stir up something in a place that is not often used, is evidenced by the large number of people attracted to it that express such an experience. At the same time, it has always evoked images of nature the music reminding individuals of a beautiful place they visited, maybe waterfalls, mountains, or the seaside. Many titles of the songs (honkyoku) created by the Zen monks bear natural titles: Three mountains, Three Valleys, Floating Clouds, A Mountain Waterfall, Crane Calls, The Distant Cry of the Deer, and so forth.

For him shakuhachi has always had this connection to nature. Growing up in a small village in the Midwest, he spent much time with nature, not being consciously aware of it, but always in nature. He was aware of the Earth underneath spreading out under his feet, the distant woods forming the horizon across the fields, and the sky above with the clouds. These were like friends accompanying him: dependable, real entities. Shakuhachi music comes out of these places for him now: the expansive fields, the rolling hills, and



the cloudy skies bearing the thunderstorms of the Midwest. These settings, of course, include man as a spiritual being here on Earth. The Komuso Zen monks spent their lives in contemplation of the natures of both the human being and the natural world. The instrument they used and the music they played on it reflects the thoughts and feelings of their lives, and can still be useful and powerful tools today for anyone drawn to the contemplation of man's inner nature through sound.

Michael has published one solo CD of traditional zen shakuhachi songs and several CDs with other artists, including another Michael Gould, professor of percussion at the University of Michigan; Sebastien Gishin Cyr, a zen monk based in Montreal, Canada; and Joy Hoffman of Chicago on chinese harp.

Chikuzen, now based in Cleveland, locally, has performed at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance Hall, and the dedication of the Peter B. Lewis School of Management building, designed by Frank Gehry.

Michael currently is continuing the transmission of this Zen music by offering lessons (e.g. webcam, private, home intensives, and weekend retreats in the midwest.) He may also be contacted for lectures, performances and recording sessions.

For further information, please contact as follows:

Michael Chikuzen Gould  
2641 Idlewood Rd., 2F  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

telephone: (313) 600-2610

email: [Michael@chikuzenstudios.com](mailto:Michael@chikuzenstudios.com)

website: <http://ChikuzenStudios.com>