



## *Kyūdo* – Resonance Involuted and the Folding of Time in Japanese Archery

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**Abstract.** – A Japanese archery (*kyūdo*) tournament is a cosmological event. The 1,388 archers come into the archery gallery in groups of five, take their places facing the targets, and follow an eight-steps shot, which includes setting the body and the hands into the correct position, drawing the bow, aiming, shooting, and lingering in this final position for an instant before leaving the gallery. After many hours, only one archer, the one who had shot perfectly, remains. The rigorous practices of *kyūdo* harnesses tendencies available within a cultural world of immanence, such as the potentiality of resonance, repetition with slight differences, thereby affecting the body and the world. A world of immanence cannot draw on its exterior in order to grow, since it has no exterior, nothing transcends it and thus expanding can only derive from its interior. By generating a multiplicity of connections, *kyūdo* enlists these tendencies of that world to become a powerful transformative tool. [*Japan, archery, immanence, resonance, Deleuze, Sanjūsangen-dō Temple*]

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The Japanese bow, made of bamboo and wood with a linen bowstring, is long and asymmetrical, with two-thirds of it above the grip and only one-third below and bare of any aiming or balancing devices. It is so light that it swivels around the archer's arm after the shot has been taken. The arrow shafts are made of bamboo and a raptor's tail-feathers cut lengthwise to create two sorts of arrows that twirl

in opposite directions when shot, one rightwards and the other leftwards. Furthermore, since *kyūdo* (弓道 – Japanese archery, literally “the way of the bow”) halls face south, one arrow will rotate in the direction of the turning world, while the other will oscillate against the movement of the world.

The *kyūdo* technique consists of rendering the archer's body so stable, calm, and finely tuned that it becomes an anchor. Aiming at the target is performed by the very act of drawing the bow, and virtually no corrections are required once it has been drawn. The archers come into the archery gallery, take their places facing the targets, and follow an eight-steps-shot, which includes setting the body and the hands into the correct position, drawing the bow, aiming, shooting, and lingering in this final position for an instant before leaving the gallery. The archer is alone facing the target, no live, moving opponent is forcing her or him to react, they take their time, concentrate, enter a meditative state of mind; indeed looking at *kyūdo* practice often seems like it is happening in slow motion. The archers follow the preset series of steps without altering their slow and smooth rhythm and without any change of expression. Despite the strain involved in drawing the bow, they are taught that even the color of their faces must be controlled and remain constant. They perform this sequence solemnly and ceremoniously over and over again.

The obvious goal of shooting an arrow is to hit the target, yet my teacher Sakamoto sensei insists that this elaborate sequence of movements is not necessary to hit the target, and thus simply hitting

the target is not the true end of *kyūdo*. But Sakamoto sensei does not say what *kyūdo* is intended to do, because like nearly all such Japanese practices, even though *kyūdo* is considered the most meditative, ceremonial, and spiritual of Japanese martial arts, it has no exegesis.<sup>1</sup> Archery approximates god-like attributes, since an arrow can hit and kill from afar, let loose by an archer who remains out of sight. Shooting an arrow also resonates with music, as the single bowstring reverberates, purifying space and giving an indication of the quality of the shot. In many cultures, shooting an arrow suggests the sexual act, with the arrow clearly phallic while the bow is vaginal. The highly ritualistic *kyūdo* captures these potentialities embedded in shooting within ceremonial manners. The more complex and profound potentiality of *kyūdo* is bound up with the endless repetition of the same sequence of movements with slight differences, namely, the exact positioning of the *kyūdoka*'s (archer's) body to yield the perfect shot. Perfect practice in *kyūdo* can coax the emergence of a powerful connective resonance – the reverberation of the bowstring, the arrow, and its flight trajectory, the archer's body, the air through which the arrow travels, the target, and more –, which become a cosmic resonance. A *kyūdo* tournament captures the auspicious affect of the perfect shot and turns it into a collective achievement, pertaining to all contestants. The process of eliminating the weaker contestants in the course of many hours until only one winner emerges, having shot all his or her arrows perfectly, can reactivate the correct cosmological dynamics.<sup>2</sup> Since *kyūdo*, like many other Japanese practices, insists on maintaining porous borders between things-in-the-world, the tournament, like ritual, stimulates homological connectedness between separate facets of the world, between humankind, the world at large, and invisible forces such as the *kami* – the Shintō gods.

Moreover, the tournament which lies at the heart of this article, held on the occasion of the “culture day” in the vast Meiji Jingu Park in the center of Tokyo, also echoes past tournaments recorded since the 16th century, said to have been held for hundreds of years earlier, at the Sanjūsangen-dō Buddhist

Temple in Kyoto (Hurst 1998). Those historical tournaments, where the present-day equipment was devised inseparably from the ethos and cosmology of *kyūdo*, eventually gave birth to today's *kyūdo*.

So, what links these diverse Japanese cultural and religious phenomena – the contemporary and historical tournaments, the “culture day” events, the Buddhist temple, the Shintō shrine – and how do they come to act together in the present tournament despite the clear differences distinguishing them from one another? The worlds of Shintō, of esoteric Japanese Buddhism, and of *kyūdo* are guided by a common cultural logic of immanence, namely, they are held from within by their internal connectivity and dynamics. In contrast to a cosmology that is guided by transcendence, promoting an essential gap between things-in-the-world, such as the concrete body and the abstract mind, things and their representation, a virtual plan and its actualization, spirituality and practice, humans, gods, and the world at large. Immanence depends on continuous, relentless human effort, carefully devised to overcome gaps, to entice continuity, to enhance precarious stabilities. This Japanese immanent world is unstable, constantly drifting apart, and only meticulously skilled ritualistic action can prevent its dissipation, combat its disjunctive tendencies, and encourage well-being. Perfect praxis has that power; it can coax elements of the world to join together towards invigorating and auspicious results.

Immanence as a logic of cultural organization does not depend on external constructs such as belief and representation; rather it is brought to life by doing as it is done. Moreover, since such a world tends to dissipate, in order to maintain it, practice follows dynamics – such as repetition, resonance, emptiness, actionless action, and homology – that are capable of setting specific modes of connectivity into motion. Elsewhere I explored the forces of homology and emptiness as they are set into motion to energize Japan on the occasion of the succession to the throne of the Japanese Emperor (Bar-On Cohen 2009, 2012); here resonance is at the forefront. Resonance is a simple form of repetition that yields a contentless difference; through folding their bodies into the bow, the archers control resonance and force it to amplify instead of waning down.

In order to achieve continuity, the rigorous practices of *kyūdo* harness available tendencies, such as the potentiality of resonance, and alter the way in which forces embedded in the world are organized, while espousing the logics of repetition with slight differences, emptiness, and homology thereby affecting the body and the world. Moreover, by deftly deploying the potentialities embedded in these ten-

1 In his famous book “Zen in the Art of Archery,” Herrigel (1999 [1953]) claims that the true aim of *kyūdo* is Zen enlightenment. As Yamada (2009) forcefully shows, this interpretation probably stems from a misunderstanding. Nonetheless, as I will show below, although the vast majority of *kyūdo* training has no formal connection to Zen, cultural logics found in Zen, Japanese esoteric Buddhism, and Shintō can also be traced within a *kyūdo* tournament.

2 *Kyūdo* is popular amongst men and women alike. Today *kyūdo* teachers evaluate that around 40% of the *kyūdoka* in all ranks are women.

dencies, a shot can open spaces of depth from within itself. A world of immanence cannot draw on its exterior in order to grow; since it has no exterior, nothing transcends it and thus expanding can only derive from its interior.<sup>3</sup> By generating a multiplicity of connections, *kyūdo* enlists these tendencies of the world to become a powerful transformative tool.

In *kyūdo*, dense connectivities are set into motion to connect wood, bamboo, and the birds of prey that contributed to the making of the bow and arrow with the *kyūdoka* in his or her perfect practice and serene manner, the weather, the turning of the world, past archers and events, and other invisible forces such as the *kami*. In Deleuzian terms, *kyūdo* tournaments open “lines of flight” between separate facets of the world. The exact way in which these tournaments are organized sets loose the ritualistic potentialities of *kyūdo*, to reenergize the world and reach the highest potentiality of humankind as integral to cosmos. Through repetition and resonance, devised to draw lines of homology, space and time are formed where none existed before – involuted space and time that provide depth from within. A seamless world of perfection comes to life pushing the archers to the limit of humanness, fusing muscle, sense, cognition, the other archers, and parts of the world until a single shot comes to include everything there is.

### Culture Day at the Meiji Jingu

The third of November is a Japanese national holiday, the “Bunka no Hi” (文化の日; Culture Day), celebrated since 1948 to mark the announcement of the new postwar Japanese constitution. The same date had been celebrated as a national holiday until 1927, commemorating the birthday of Emperor Meiji (1852–1912), a central figure in the Meiji restoration, Japan’s alleged leap to modernity (Keene 2002: 716f.). Meiji is now a *kami* (a Shintō god), involved, like the living emperor and his family, in ritually ensuring agricultural bounty and generally protecting Japanese boundedness (Eisenstadt 1996: 443). Although the deceased emperor’s birthday is no longer a national landmark, at the Meiji Jingu, the complex of parks and shrines in which Emperor Meiji and his Empress Shōken are enshrined, this date is still noted. Thus the convivial and joyous celebrations of the “Bunka no Hi” at the Meiji Jingu relate to the multiple facets of Japanese life: the fe-

licity of the post-Pacific War constitution, namely, Japan’s modern democracy, the fête of Japanese culture, the birth date of Emperor Meiji, and the agricultural holiday, marking a privileged time for harvest rituals.<sup>4</sup> These aspects all together constitute a celebration of Japaneseness.

The word Japaneseness immediately evokes the *nihonjinron*, which Dale (1986) has labeled “the myth of Japanese character.” Yet the word “myth” here may be misleading, *nihonjinron* is certainly a neo-tradition, artificially thought up to create and propagate a unified Japanese nation, yet as many neo-traditions – such as the Japanese martial arts, including modernized *kyūdo* – it was devised to inculcate *nihonjinron* as a cultural construct, while incorporating some widespread cultural foundations. Furthermore, *nihonjinron* has been propagated within Japan for over a century by now and has profoundly influenced, in its turn, the ways in which the Japanese come to see themselves. And, following historical changes in the 20th century, *nihonjinron* has altered its emphasis, and, in particular, came to include universalistic aspirations (see for example Reader 2003). Here at the Meiji Jingu Park, however, a very generalized, consensual, convivial celebration of Japaneseness is demonstrated. The stated aim of the Meiji Jingu is to retrieve “authentic Japanese values,” yet those are very loosely defined.<sup>5</sup>

On the “Culture Day” the vast park bustles with activity. Farmers offer their produce on the green lawns, visitors strolling alongside the stalls, carrying the long and heavy radishes (*daikon*) that they have bought from the farmers, while families dressed in kimono come to present their 3-, 5-, and 7-year-old children to the *kami*. A colorful procession of archers and Shintō priests, wearing long-sleeved kimono, pointed black hats, and shiny platform black shoes, arrives at the site where a ritual called *Momote shiki* (One Hundred Arrows) takes place, which in the past was a divination ritual in which

3 On the differences between holistic worlds held from within and monotheistic worlds encompassed from without, see Handelman and Lindquist (2011).

4 The new emperor’s rites of succession are also connected to the rice harvest and are held at the beginning of November (see Bar-On Cohen 2012).

5 See, for example, the brochure advertizing the martial art center, “Shisei kan” at the Meiji Jingu (2008). The center’s purpose is to revive “true Japanese values” and to spread Shintō all over the world by the vehicle of martial arts. When I asked for permission to conduct participant observations at the “Shisei kan,” the permission was conditioned on my agreeing to bow to a Shintō shrine. They had had problems in the past with Jews and Christians on this point, and wanted to make sure I do not object. The ambition to retrieve “true Japanese values” certainly encompasses some nationalistic motives, yet during the Culture Day celebrations, it had no explicit or even pedagogical exterior aspects.

the patterns created by the fallen arrows revealed next year's rice crop. A short purification ceremony is performed by a priest, who wafts a wand bearing white paper knots in all directions. To ward off evil spirits a special arrow with a bulbous red tip producing a whistling sound is shot. The archers then take a seat on collapsible stools along three sides of a square, their helpers kneeling behind them, as they wait for their turn to shoot at a target screen. In succession, three groups of archers rise and ceremoniously shoot 100 white-feathered arrows.<sup>6</sup> The ritual ends with the sharing of sacred sake in small dishes. The festivities at the Meiji Jingu also feature a demonstration of martial arts, including the remarkable and rare horseback archery (*yabusame*) and a *kyūdo* tournament, to which I now turn.

### The *Kyūdo* Tournament

The modernization of *kyūdo*, like other Japanese martial arts, has led to a standardization. Many different schools of *kyūdo* existed in the past, each with its own tradition, but since the beginning of the 20th century, after long discussions among *kyūdo* teachers, a common way of practice was agreed upon. After the Pacific War, the "All Nippon Kyūdo Federation" was established. It produced a common manual for all federation members to follow, one section of which indicates the exact way to hold a tournament.<sup>7</sup> There are technical, pedagogical, and historical explanations for the special features of such a tournament. Whatever the reasons for these choices, however – like in case of many neo-traditions – they created a certain reality while discarding other potential solutions, generating an event carrying its own profound significance. Analyzing the practical results, the precise way in which this event unfolds, in its own terms (Handelman 2004), will therefore point to its cosmological premises and dynamics. *Kyūdo* is first and foremost a practice, it is not formulated in abstract terms, and does not have dogmatic exegesis, so that such an analysis was not formulated by the *kyūdoka* themselves; it is not a phenomenological analysis either, since it does not follow the participant's consciousness alone. Such an analysis entails that through careful assemblage of the details and dynamics of the event as a social enclave, in correspondence with the ex-

planations in books for practitioners, and those given by teachers and students on different occasions, the event's cultural logic and working emerges.

At the 2008 All Nippon Kyūdo Federation Tournament, I attended the "Dai Kyūdodojo" (literally, "Big *Kyūdo* Training Hall") at the Meiji Jingu on a cold and gloomy day in early November, and I was surprised by the sheer size of the event. When I arrived at 9 A.M., the spacious lawn separating the shooting gallery from the targets was full of *kyūdoka*. Some wore long white cotton cross-breasted jackets with a dark *hakama* (the pleated pants that are part of the traditional attire for men), some wore colored kimonos over the cotton jackets, others wore formal Western suits, and some were still dressed in ordinary clothing. Near the targets, a Shintō priest was wafting his wand in all directions to purify the space for the event; everyone clapped their hands, and then left the lawn.

The numbers were assigned to the 1,388 contenders participating in that event according to their *kyūdo* level, so that the most senior had the highest number and shot last. The numbers were attached to their belts for all to see. When I asked why the participants had numbers instead of names, I was told that this was to avoid confusion since so many Japanese have the same surnames. The participants in Western suits held formal roles during the tournament, such as indicating hits, organizing the participants before they entered the archery gallery, retrieving arrows, and, in general, stewarding the event. Using the archers' numbers, other stewards kept track of the contestants and the scores, marking them on boards for the judges to see. The role of the steward *kyūdoka* is to ensure the smooth unfolding of the tournament. After the *Yawatashi* ceremony, in which the highest-ranking *kyūdoka* performs a ceremonial "perfect shooting,"<sup>8</sup> two rows of participants prepared to enter the gallery. They first sat on stools just outside the gallery, holding their bows and arrows in anticipation of their turn. The steward was handed a spare bowstring from each contender which they could use to replace any strings that snapped. Every detail was now in place; the tournament could begin.

In the first round of the tournament, the archers entered the gallery in groups of five; they bowed to the *kamiza*<sup>9</sup> (featuring a Japanese flag and a hand-

6 Each group includes some 16 archers who shoot two arrows, so a total of approximately 100 arrows is shot.

7 The agreements were compiled into two very detailed volumes, the first of which was translated into English (All Nippon Kyudo Federation 1971).

8 For an analysis of the *Yawatashi* ceremony see Bar-On Cohen (2013). In the case of *Yawatashi*, "perfect shooting" means a perfect form performed by the most senior teacher, many miss the target on this occasion but their shooting is still deemed "perfect," the best in this setting.

9 The *kamiza*, literally the shelf of the *kami*, is the place of honor.



written black-ink calligraphy under which the judges sat) and proceeded to their positions in the shooting line. They rose one by one and, consecutively, shot an arrow at the target, and sat down again. After all five had shot one arrow, they repeated the sequence and, while they were shooting the second arrow, the next row of five archers entered the gallery and took up position behind them. After releasing the second arrow, the members of the first group bowed again to the *kamiza* and took their leave, one by one. The second row of archers then came forward to the shooting line and each took his or her turn to take the two shots.<sup>10</sup>

The overall picture is one of an endless succession of row upon row of archers moving slowly but constantly. Dressed in kimonos and *hakama*, they enter the gallery, bow, sit down, get up, shoot, bow, and leave while others enter, bow, sit down, and so on, and so on. Rows of solemn archers, all dressed alike and, in the case of male archers with the same color, left nipple exposed when they remove half the kimono, all performing the same movements, yet each a different person. The first round extended from 9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.: five hours of a silent and tempered flow of moving, contemplative archers entering, shooting, and leaving, at three shooting galleries simultaneously.<sup>11</sup> Only those who hit the target twice were called up for the second round.

My teacher Sakamoto sensei started the day wearing a Western suit; his role was to indicate with a flag whether the arrow had struck the target or not; but after several hours he changed into his kimono and *hakama* and, since his ranking is *hanshi* 7th *dan*,<sup>12</sup> he was among the last to shoot. Both his arrows hit the target. In the second round only 58 *kyūdoka* were left, including Sakamoto. At the

third round, the targets were replaced by smaller ones, which were harder to hit, and each candidate shot only one arrow. Very few participants, who had been eliminated in the first round, stayed to watch the remaining rounds, which become shorter and shorter as 14, then 6, and then 4 *kyūdoka* remained. In the last round only Sakamoto and a young man remained. The younger archer missed, Sakamoto hit the target, and formally left, without as much as a smile, while the number he wore was inscribed on the board. This ended the active phase of the tournament; no concluding ceremony was held, and the winner's name was not even announced. The next time I came to the *dojo*, one of the senior teachers, Kurasawa sensei, remarked that Sakamoto was *subarashi* (magnificent), and indeed it was so. When I next met Sakamoto, I greeted him with congratulations, but he only waved his hand and said “*ie*” (no), indicating that it had been nothing. He told me that much later, after everyone had left the tournament and after he had spent several hours in the freezing weather, he was awarded a handwritten certificate at a small ceremony among the senior *kyūdoka*.

“Competitions are regarded not just as sporting events, but as an essential part of the practice of kyudo, since here the archer can find out if and to what extent his form is already so strong that outer conditions – such as an unfamiliar *dojo*, the presence of an audience, the tension that goes with elimination, and team feelings – do not disconcert him, in his shooting, leaving him able to shoot with all of his skill” (Hoff 2002: 199). Indeed, a tournament is not a simple competition; its goal is extending far beyond the mere selection of the best archer: It is at one and the same time a pedagogical, ludic, and cosmological event, and it is the last facet that I would like to foreground here. As at any tournament, here too all the participants begin with the same single task and with the same hypothetical chance of winning.<sup>13</sup> As the event unfolds, all of them together engender a common reality out of which the winner emerges, carried on the waves of the continuous flow of archers. Every contestant can hit the target twice; surely, all of them have done so

10 *Kyūdo* tests are similar to what occurs at the tournaments, but whereas at the tests the judges must see every movement of every candidate, at a tournament it is the striking of the target that is accentuated. For this reason, in the tests the intervals between the archers are longer than at tournaments. Another difference between the tests and the tournaments concerns the attire. To prevent their sleeves from getting entangled with the bow, test candidates wearing kimonos remove their kimono sleeves or (women) tie it up after entering the gallery. Kimonos are worn by those at the third *dan* level and higher. Women do not remove the sleeve, tying it up instead with a strip of silk (*taski*) to keep it in place. Tournament contestants come into the gallery with the kimono sleeves already removed or tied. Thus the rhythm of the tournament is markedly quicker than that of the tests.

11 The Dai Kyūdojo is located next door to the “Shiseikan” martial arts center (*budokan*) of the Meiji Jingu. A moveable wall divided the Dai Kyūdojo into two archery galleries, with the final rounds held in a third gallery at the adjacent “Shiseikan,” where the most advanced *kyūdoka* competed.

12 The highest rank in *kyūdo* is *hanshi* 8th *dan*.

13 Tournaments, of course, are not necessarily a collective and cosmological effort and can take many forms, for example, being defined for business purposes (Thavikulwat and Pilutla 2004). Even within the Japanese martial arts tradition, Sumo tournaments are different; there “wrestlers do not fight members of their own stable in tournaments, there exists in the stable a certain fraternal sense of unity and loyalty” (West 1997: 171), so that the unit of solidarity is the stable and not the entire tournament setting. Sumo was a tool of divination in which the *kami* would enter the winner, so competition between stables has a cosmological role (see also Cuyler 1985).

at their respective *dojo*. At the tournament, however, only a very few did manage to do so, as the magnificent character of the winner emerged through his constant striking of the target. Within this tournament, he is perfect, he never misses a shot, and thus he makes the tournament perfect.

### The Tournaments at the Sanjūsangen-dō Temple

One of the twelve Chinese commandments of archery distinctly states, “Do not compete with others” (Stevens 2007: 30),<sup>14</sup> implying that the only true competition is with oneself. The 1716 “Honchō Bugei Shōden,” the first chronicle of Japanese martial arts, explains that competitions are opposed to the true warrior values of *kyūdo*; the author warns against them because the quest for personal achievement and fame are dangerous vices deforming the true values of the warrior (Rogers 1990). Despite these admonitions, the competitions at the Sanjūsangen-dō Temple (The Hall of 33 Bays) are famous and respected milestones in the history of Japanese archery, particularly in the evolution of technique and equipment, but also in the connection between *kyūdo*, religion, and ritual as a mode of generating meaning, and thus can deepen the understanding of today’s tournaments.

Beginning sometime in the 12th century, exhausting archery competitions were held at the rear of the Sanjūsangen-dō Buddhist Temple Hall in Kyoto.<sup>15</sup> Within a single 24-hour period, archers attempted to set new records by shooting as many arrows along the entire length of the hall as they could. The site is remarkable: Along its 120-meter hall are 1,001 gilded, life-size serene Buddha figures, called the “Sen-ju-Kannon” (The Thousand Handed). Aligned in rows, each figure stands on a lotus flower and gazes downwards, or perhaps inwards, with 20 pairs of arms engaged in different actions. One pair of

hands is pressed together in prayer, while others hold cosmological objects, such as beads, a serpent, a bow, a mirror, a skull, a seated Buddha, or an open-mouthed laughing face, which – as noted in that national treasure’s site brochure – reminds us that laughter can be used to lead people who are of sound mind away from doing evil. These objects are all attributes of the ambiguously gendered Buddha of Mercy, “Kannon.” The palm of each of the 40 hands contains one eye, and each eye can see into and save 25 worlds. Each object is a world, each palm can see into 25 worlds, each “Kannon” is a world and can change into 33 different forms if needed, and the entire hall is a world. At the center of the hall sits another, much larger Buddha, a “Juichimen-senju-Kannon,” an Eleven-Headed, Thousand-Handed Buddha of Mercy. In front of the rows of Buddhas stands a row of guardians.<sup>16</sup> Unlike the number 25, which in Chinese and Japanese cosmologies includes the entire world, the numbers 1,001, 1,000, 11, and 33, which are attributes of the “Kannon,” are not finite numbers but rather suggest continuity to infinity (for an analysis of numbers see Crump 1992: 49, 62, 135).<sup>17</sup>

The hall is multiplicity incarnate, yet the lush external multiplicity is but an inkling of the abundant outpouring of intimate multiplicity within each statue, within the seated “Kannon,” within the on-looker strolling along the hall: Inner multiplicity created through repetition. Just imagine walking slowly alongside the gilded statues and discovering more and more faces, more and more hands, going deeper and deeper into the multiplicity of repetition, which only spawns ever more multiplicity. These beautiful and peaceful “Kannon” are repetitions of the same image but differ slightly from one another. They were made by several artists, in several workshops and, as the brochure claims, “the multiple im-

14 Archery is one of the Chinese aristocratic arts; the others are ritual, music, chariot driving, writing, and arithmetic (Selby 2000), and their aristocratic provenance also influenced *kyūdo*.

15 The tournament at the Meiji Jingu was markedly Shintō with no Buddhist elements visible, whereas the Sanjūsangen-dō is a Buddhist temple. In Japan, in general these two religions have lived alongside each other for so long that idiosyncratic mixtures prevail. This can be seen at the Sanjūsangen-dō itself in the two guardians at the extremities of the hall, the carriers of thunder and of the wind, who are of Shintō origin (see next footnote). Here I draw on these commonalities, and, in particular, the common cosmological premises, which is not to say, however, that there is no institutional or theological distinction between the two religions.

16 Most of the guardians are known from Buddhist tradition, but two are of uniquely Japanese origin: the “Carrier of Wind” and the “Carrier of Thunder.” These two fierce deities, situated at opposite ends of the hall, are positioned higher than the other guardians. Thus, the Buddhist world of multiplicity is bordered and guarded by the atmospheric phenomena which causes rain: Original Japanese deities embedded within a Buddhist world bringing elements of the natural world into the hall.

17 Crump (1992) distinguishes between architecture that employs mathematics for its aesthetics and architecture such as that of the Sanjūsangen-dō Temple, which is constructed around numbers, and in particular the numbers 7, 11, 42, and 1,001. This is of course a profound difference, but Crump’s distinction is only partial, since he calls these number “symbolic” and interprets their role as such. I regard these numbers as basic elements of this cosmos of multiplicity, which do not symbolically represent anything but are instead active in generating the dynamics of resonance.

ages of the Sanjūsangen-dō cause one to feel a deep sense of intimacy with *Kannon*, such that there is a common belief that one can find the face of a loved one amongst the many images.” The folds within folds of the waves of inner multiplicities are intimate; they remind us of our loved ones, and their affect is a mimetic recollection born of the deepest profundity, because the many statues resonate with the intimate humanness of the person watching and of Buddha. The minute difference emerging from the multitude of repetition yields the totality of human potentialities, including my own loved ones. Buddha was a human who lived a certain life, and through his experience and suffering he ultimately surpassed human capacity and attained Buddhahood. Thus the state of Buddhahood can be said to be an extreme form of humanity, humanity pushed beyond its ordinary limit. The true Buddha nature is inherent in all creatures and humans, and, therefore, attaining Buddhahood is a potential that we all share. We only need to find a path by which we can stretch ourselves to the limit of humanness, as did Buddha; and the densely spiritual space of the Sanjūsangen-dō Temple is a site intended for this realization (Grapard 1982: 202).

Archery is another such path, as the archers can reach beyond the usual human capacity to repeatedly shoot arrows and strike a target. In the corridor behind the western wall of the Sanjūsangen-dō Hall, which is open on one side, archery contests called *tōshiya* were held. The *tōshiya* are said to have begun in the 12th century and were reinstated again in the 16th century, during the peaceful Tokugawa era. They became very popular at the beginning of the 17th century, with the winner awarded the title “Best Shooter of Japan” (Rogers 1990: 256). Even today, the names of the archers who set new records are posted on the temple’s interior corridor.<sup>18</sup> The aim of the contest, in which the archers shot from a seated position, was to shoot as many arrows as possible to the opposite end of the 120-meter-long corridor without touching either roof or wall. The constraint of the roof prevented contestants from shooting in a normal arc trajectory, and even today, the grooves created by arrows lodged in the roof beam can be seen.

*Tōshiya* eventually became standardized and institutionalized; the archers shot approximately 600 arrows per hour: one arrow every six seconds (Rogers 1990: 258). Asaoka Heibei’s 1599 record of 51 successful shots was repeatedly exceeded until Hoshino Kanzaemon reached 8,000 shots in 1679;

17 years later, in 1686, Wasa Daihachirō successfully shot 8,133 arrows, a record that will probably never be surpassed (Hurst 1998: 135–141). It is told, that in 1679, after resting for a short while, Wasa found that he could no longer shoot. A man came up to him took a small knife and made a number of tiny cuts on Wasa Daihachiro’s left hand, which had become so gorged with blood that he could no longer hold the bow properly. Once the pressure was released, Wasa Daihachiro regained his strength and went on to surpass all previous attempts. The man who had cut Wasa’s hand was none other than Hoshino Kanzaemon, the previous record holder, who had done his utmost to help the younger archer surpass his own record (Onuma 1993: 19). Although both archers sought to set new records and we remember both their names, they worked towards the same goal of extending the frontiers of human capacity: *Tōshiya* was aimed at extending human potentiality to the extreme.

The enormous difference between the records of 1599 (51 arrows) and 1686 (8,133 arrows) is not only the result of better training but also of improvements in technique and equipment. To compete, the archers had to devise paraphernalia for rapid and accurate shooting. At the end of the 16th century, the bow was relatively heavy and the arrow comparatively light. Some 100 years later, the proportions had been reversed, as the technique was perfected. The bows were lighter and the arrows heavier. A glove specifically designed for *kyūdo* – the *kake* – came to replace the glove previously worn, which was originally intended for *kendo* (swordplay). The three- or four-fingered *kake*, which is used in *kyūdo* to this very day (Sakamoto Takehiko, pers. comm.) includes small protective wooden pegs near the forefinger and the thumb, where the bowstring rests when the bow is drawn.

### The Tournament: An Analysis

The tournament at the Meiji Jingu provokes a number of questions: Why was there no preselection of candidates from among the great number of participants? Why, aside from technical reasons, are the archers numbered instead of named? In particular, why are the numbers not converted into names even when the winner emerges? It takes time to handwrite the certificate in black calligraphy, but again, the technical reason has meaningful consequences, so why is the winner’s certificate handed out long after most participants have left? The result is that very little anticipation accrues to the revelation of the winner’s identity, and thus, despite the great

18 When the *tōshiya* were originally held, the corridor was covered but one side left open; today it is enclosed on both sides.



popularity of the tournament, it does not build up towards a climax.

The tournament's intensity grows slowly and consistently over many hours, but as Sakamoto claims, striking the target is not the aim but only a visible indication of the inner workings of this event. The winner's identity remains ambiguous until the end, because although the winning arrow is shot from the winner's bow, it is not exclusively his: It contains within it all the other arrows shot by all the contestants throughout the entire tournament. The winner's identity seems to be of little consequence, because the achievement of the tournament also belongs to all the contestants who missed their shots. The archers perform repetitions of the same potentiality, the potentiality to win the tournament through perfect praxis. By missing the target, the 1,388 initial contestants are carrying the winner to his "magnificent" practice and, at the same time, carried by this perfection to a higher level. Just as the *tōshiyā*, the tournament held historically at the rear of the Sanjūsangen-dō Temple, pushed the participants to the limit of their human capacity to shoot under harsh and constrained conditions, thereby carrying the potentiality embedded in their humanity to the extreme, so the tournament is also organized to manifest the human capacity for perfection. Through repetition, with slight changes, and through resonance the event as a whole yields an auspicious environment.

The continuous flow of row upon row of downward- and inward-looking archers at the tournament are reminiscent of the endless rows of "Kannon" at the Sanjūsangen-dō Temple, and the similarity between the two cultural phenomena goes even deeper, since the temple follows a similar logic. The multitude of "Kannon" are all the same, yet also slightly different from one another; they are numbered, and the artist who created each of them is noted; and amid the sameness of the beautiful "Kannon," a loved one, a particular identifiable face, can be recognized. Multiplicity is further enhanced since each "Kannon" encloses endless worlds, each the same and also unlike the other. The temple does not build up towards a climax; its multiplicity through repetition with slight differences swells into gushes of interiority through internal resonances.

At the tournament, the seemingly endless rows of archers entering and leaving the gallery lead up to the moment at which the perfect archer is revealed, yet that moment is not different in intensity from the previous hours of shooting. The tournament is a process of becoming, of surfacing, a moment when all the archers and the entire event take form. It is made up of patient repetition, a multiplicity of the

same series of movements over and over again, with the introduction of very slight differences: a horizontal difference, since each archer is a different person with friends in the audience, who are particularly interested in his or her performance; and a vertical difference, over time, since the contestants are organized by seniority with the more experienced archers shooting after the novices, so that the shooting improves over time. Each wave of archers entering the gallery is imperceptibly more proficient than the previous, and so over the four hours of the first round, the shooting becomes more relaxed, agile, and elegant, and the scores higher. The last to shoot are masters, older men who entered the gallery with a playful smile on their faces and whose shooting, despite their age, was smooth, dexterous, and somewhat amused, reinforcing the suggestion of a playful Buddha.

Slowly, as the same movements are repeated and as the tournament evolves and the more experienced *kyūdoka* enter and shoot, the gap between the intention to shoot in the correct manner and the actual shot, between the plan and the deed, is reduced and eradicated, as perfect praxis emerges. Perfect praxis is not representation and not symbolic; it does not depend on any gap between a thing and its representation. The tournament, like that at the Sanjūsangen-dō Temple, affects through a different logic; collective endeavors such as these lead to the gradual erasure of any break or mediation between meaning and affect: They depend on doing as it is done.

Repetition is never the repetition of the precise same thing, never a recurrence of the identical. The first time may be a surprise, the second comes after the first, so it is something new accentuating, elaborating on the first. The third time may be ominous, boring, funny, intimate. Repetition becomes a condition of emergence for a difference that is not a difference of sorts between two identified distinct things but rather a dynamic of difference in its own right. For Deleuze, a philosopher of difference, repetition is opposed to identity: Identity is a tyrant who imposes external categories as a measurement of difference, but "difference" as a concept emanating from repetition is not lodged between two distinctive states but rather occurs from within itself to become a condition of the emergent new (Sauvagnargues 2009: 10). To "repeat is to begin again; to affirm the power of the new and the unforeseeable" (Parr 2005: 223), because repetition is pregnant with potentialities, it has the capacity to disrupt our faculties and free our senses from established tendencies and uncover the difference evident in the lived world to realize a unique moment (Stagoll 2005: 73). In Deleuze's words:



The theater of repetition is opposed to the theater of representation .... [sic]. In the theater of repetition, we experience pure forces, dynamic lines in space which act without intermediary upon the spirit, and link it directly with nature and history, with a language which speaks before words, with gestures which develop before organised bodies, with masks before faces, with spectres and phantoms before characters – the whole apparatus of repetition as a “terrible power” (1994: 10).<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, the “terrible power” of repetition, the domain of the inchoate that Deleuze places in the primordial and natural, before organization of body, character, words, or faces, before a cultural gap of representation is installed – that power is at work here. However, at the tournament (as well as the Sanjūsangen-dō Temple) the forces of repetition follow a highly rarified cultural logic, far from the instinctive primordial; they come after organization and a systematic attempt to break that gap. Different facets of the world are aligned, the archer, the target, the other archers, the bird’s feather, the whirling of the world and more, all are made to adhere at the moment of the shot. Things in the world that have a tendency to drift apart, to generate gaps, differences of sorts, are coaxed to blend with each other. The missed shots eliminate distracting potentialities thus tightening this world closer together and the last perfect shot completes the fusion. The “terrible power” of repetition is exploited in a purposeful effort to eradicate gaps, to harness the forceful potentiality in an immanent way.

The slight difference in the precision of the shot as the archers’ performances improve almost imperceptibly is trapped within the space of resonance, which is itself a repetition of the same movement with a slight change in decibels – the same sound repeated between the walls of a valley diminishing only in volume. Shooting an arrow is about the potentiality embedded in resonance, the empty space trapped within the limits of the movement creating the resonance and taming this space and energy towards one point: the target.

## The Space within Resonance

Resonance between body and cosmos rhythmicities is not unique to *kyūdo*; it is a basic notion in healing processes in Chinese medicine, which is also traditional in Japan. You (1994: 470) shows how these two flows, rhythms or pulses, are made to connect so that the cosmological pulse can alter the body pulse and improve its workings. Resonance is central to *kyūdo*,<sup>20</sup> it is embedded in the basic form of eight steps to a shot – the *hassetsu*. Eight is a potent number in Sino-Japanese cosmology; the eight-faceted trigram includes all directions, elements, calendar dates, viscera, and all potential combinations of yin and yang. In brief, the number eight includes everything there is. The *hassetsu*, too, if correctly performed, can be made to include everything there is, to ritualistically break up separations and reinforce connectedness through resonance. To perform the *hassetsu*, the archers position their feet, inspect the target, grip the bow, lift it, and pull the bowstring first with the left hand and then the right, take aim, shoot, and then hold the position for a brief moment more. They then wait for the other archers in their group to release their arrows before repeating the *hassetsu* a second time, and then they leave the shooting gallery. There is a difference between the first and the second arrow shot by each archer: The first whirls to the left, against the turning of the world, while the second whirls to the right, in the direction of the turning world.

The bow is drawn in such a way that the archer’s body is folded within it, unfolding at the instant the arrow leaves the bow. The body becomes the anchor for stability, the aiming device, the spring that grips the bow ready to release the arrow, and also the trigger that releases the tension of the bow when shot. Then, in the last of the eight steps, the archer remains still, briefly contemplating the target; despite the motionlessness of this last step, something is happening within the unmoving body. The archer’s body is folded within the bow, it holds the bow ready for the release, nothing further must, or indeed can, be done. Time and space are folded and involuted within the body which comes to include everything there is, as the shot threads together the *kyūdoka*, the equipment, the shooting gallery, the air through which the arrow travels, and the entire world. Resonance is the key to this feat.

19 The Deleuzian concept of “Difference” is very complex and difficult to render in positive terms; it is more easily explained as *not* representation, *not* a difference between identities, and other negative attributes. Here the main interest in Deleuze’s insight is to highlight the particularity of practice employing difference in its making rather than debating conceptual concerns. Deleuze writes “Difference” with a capital D to denote the concept, but we shall not follow his lead.

20 Resonance is employed in many rituals of transformation; see, e.g., Lambek (2007) who describes the ritual of the Sakalava people of Madagascar in which a hidden sacrificial beast is turned into drums, and Wikan (1992) who considers the role of resonance in Bali rituals.

Resonance is to be found in the vibration and alluring sound – *tsurune* – of the linen bowstring, which can provide a clue as to how the shot went without the need to even look at the target. A clear and beautiful *tsurune* when the arrow leaves the bow smoothly suggests a good shot, while a dull and wobbly *tsurune* indicates an unsuccessful one. Another resonance can be observed in the trajectory of the arrow. When it leaves the bow, the arrow flies in wide oscillations that stabilize about midway; it then picks up speed and assumes a straight course until it pierces the target. Only when it hits the target does the vibration stop, and again, the less the arrow trembles as it strikes the target, the better the shot. The sound of the bowstring and of the arrow penetrating the target are important; the archers cannot see the others behind them in their line and must, therefore, rely on the sound of the *tsurune* and of the arrow piercing the paper target to know when it is their turn to shoot.

Another resonance in *kyūdo* is the tremor in the archer's body, particularly the trembling hands of older men, which is clearly visible once their kimono sleeve has been removed. This tremor results from the strain of pulling the bowstring, and the archer must take the trajectory of the tremor into account when synchronizing the movements of their hands with their breath and with the position of the target in order to release the arrow in correct timing.

Resonance is also present within the archer's body as it remains steady and resists the recoil of the shot. The vibration of the bowstring at the release of the arrow is sent forward with the departing arrow and backward into the archer's body, which must nevertheless remain immobile in the last step of *hassetsu*. The oscillation is thus absorbed into the body and becomes internalized. The *hassetsu* of *kyūdo* is a practical attempt to restrain the disjunctive traits of this series of resonances and conjoin their energies, to tame them, albeit for the brief moment of a shot. All the resonances – that of the bowstring, of the archer's muscles and interiority, and of the arrow – become a powerful transformative force. They also come to include the movement of the bird that contributed its feather to make the arrow, the changes in the weather, and the turning of the world; the shot fuses all these oscillations into one point in time.

A vibration such as an echo will likely engender a series of resonances, differences in intensity that will dissipate and weaken become blurry, increasingly less recognizable, and eventually die out. *Kyūdo* tames and arrests the disjunctive tendencies of resonance, since an arrow generates a resonance that becomes more focused as it travels towards

the target. The arrow leaves the bow in an oscillating movement and then stabilizes, darting the rest of the way to the target in a straight line. Instead of a movement that is interrupted, blurs and dissipates like a ripple, the arrow picks up speed and its sideways movement is lessened as it adopts a more steady trajectory. The *hassetsu* carefully assembles the shot within the archer's body to prevent the disjunctive character of resonance. The archer's feat consists of systematically excluding the potentiality that would cause the resonance to lose this special quality and become a simple vibration that weakens and drifts away – which means that the bowstring has emitted a feeble *tsurune* and that the arrow has wobbled as it pierced the target. Following precise techniques ensures the stabilization of the arrow's flight and harnesses the special relation between the arrow and the world, to engage with the intensity of resonance. *Kyūdo* insists on capturing and taming the in-betweenness or resonance.

The *kyūdoka* themselves become sites of resonance, which Massumi (2002) calls “interference patterns”; resonance captures a space in-between the limits of its movement. The sound of an echo does not occur on the walls of a valley but in the emptiness between them, requiring distance for the sound to bounce between the walls. This space is a product of repetition, difference in its own right. In order to prevent disjunction from taking its course, every movement, position, tool, and muscle must be organized to set into motion the dynamics of the space, folded and trapped inside the resonance of the shot. This movement, this little world that is delineated within the limits of the movement follows a trajectory of coalescence. The movements of the string, the arrow, and the muscles are greatest at the moment of release when the arrow comes darting out of the bow, and the oscillation becomes smaller as the arrow picks up speed and is stopped, arrested within the objects, the target from one direction and the interiority of the archer's body from the other. The arrow is stopped, the muscles are stabilized, yet the intensity of whatever is trapped inside the movement increases, becoming thicker and denser as the arrow picks up speed and the archer's body is energized.

The resonance that travels forward with the arrow also travels inward within the archer's body as recoil, which comes to include the distance from the shooting line to the target, and perhaps the entire world. In this way, space is folded or involuted. This space of in-betweenness becomes more condensed, since the oscillation is not muted as it halts, but rather intensifies into a rapid linear movement. The entire world is trapped within the space of vibration folded and refolded, its foldedness and connectivity

become dense, concentrated, and distilled as the archer, after endless repetitions, becomes more proficient at generating pure vibrations, and as the arrow reaches the target.

Moreover, while the arrow is dynamic, the *kyūdoka* espouse another logic, that of stillness, of emptiness, what the Japanese call *mu*: the double negation, nothingness, or the something-lessness central to practice (Ohnuki-Tierney 1994; Bar-On Cohen 2012). The body both creates the ripples and obstructs the free movement of the undulations, and in the same gesture, the body senses the affect of resonance. Here there can be no distinction between creating the vibrations and interpreting them, since the archer's body is positioned at the center to become one with the bow, stabilizing, aiming, drawing, releasing, and remaining still as the arrow leaves the bow.

Through their calm, calculated, patient, well-trained, and perfect praxis, the *kyūdoka* become an empty center, the eye of the storm. They are not aiming at the target, but also not not-aiming at it; they are not self, yet not not-self – they are not shooting, but of course also not not-shooting. This emptiness, resulting from the stillness and the in-betweenness, engenders a state that is called in Chinese *wu wei* (“effortless action” or “actionless action”), “a state of harmony in which action flows freely and instantly from one's spontaneous inclinations – without the need for extended deliberation or inner struggle – and yet nonetheless accords perfectly with the dictates of the situation at hand” (Slingerland 2003: 7; see also Duyvendak 1947). Through painstaking preparation the arrow will seem to have its own intentionality and fly perfectly of its own accord.

Resonance as generator of difference through repetition is a simple thing; it connects two sides of a repeated movement, systematically bringing together the two sides of a valley, the limits of the movement of a bowstring, the undulations of air or muscle in an oscillating movement. It has no content in and of itself, it is only a becoming of relation, determining an uncomplicated to-and-fro connectivity. That is why Gilbert Simondon calls resonance “the most primitive of communication tools” (Massumi 2002: 273, note 48, also 34–43); since it repeats the same again and again and again, and thanks to its very simplicity, resonance can link together very different things. *Kyūdo* takes advantage of this potentiality and complexifies it, embedding it within a precarious, dynamic cosmos that harnesses difference for its working, a world that requires constant tending, set into motion by endless repetition, folding and resonating around an empty center. It is always in the process of drifting apart and constant-

ly, and painstakingly, steered back on course by the *kyūdoka*. The *kyūdoka*'s body, folded into the bow in anticipation of the arrow's release, comes to include the bow and the arrow, the space between the shooting line and the target, and probably the entire cosmos. The arrow is sent into the world and the recoil is absorbed by the body; they capture the projectile energy of violence in-to the body, and out-to the world, linking the two.

### An Immanent World

Hence each shot in the tournament is transformative, exploiting the potentialities of resonance, which are amplified as the day advances and as the shooting improves, to harness the “terrible force” of repetition and difference. Throughout the day, the resonance of the shots becomes clearer, more distilled, until the affects of involuted space and time come to the full. As the difference between intention and deed becomes less and less significant, this cosmos becomes more tightly connected. Through perfect shooting, aspects of this world are positioned as homologous, brought into correct relation. As the tension and release, condensation and rarefaction are made to operate together, space and time change their behaviors and become unobstructed, involuted, and purified as this world is energized.

There is, however, a condition. Resonance can create a complex world if that world is a non-dual one, not encompassed from without like the monotheistic ones – which begin from an external point, that of the monotheistic God – but held from within, unfolding of its own potentialities. The world is not ontologically non-dual or dual, but made increasingly non-dual through practice (Yuasa 1987). For resonance to reveal its capacity to generate profundity, a holistic world must be set into action, one that takes in everything there is, and in which the parts do not provide meaning on their own through representation or other semiotic means, but can only be deciphered in relation to one another and to the whole. Whereas representation posits formal connections between signs in order to produce meaning, it does not stipulate its connections to the world it represents, deed is ontologically separate from meaning. Here, by contrast, there is no gap between deed and meaning, they both stem from the same dynamics. The parts in a holistic cosmology can only make sense as parts within an assemblage. So, too, resonance as a pure form of folding and condensing can position various aspects of a holistic whole by making them resonate in unobstructed communication, connection or flow.

In a non-dual, holistic cosmos coaxes the body into dissolving borders, the objects are also sensing surfaces; and in *kyūdo* the arrow, the bow, and the archer become sensing surfaces that resonate with the world. The body is no longer the center of the sentient universe, or the only experiencing event; rather, the body may expand, fold, and unfold the entire universe into a single instance, that of shooting an arrow. We are not in a phenomenological world in which the experience of the human is the only point of view, where the unlimitedness of the human exists only in the ethereal mind, whether cognitive or affective. A holistic cosmology is a much more ambitious, and simultaneously much more modest, project.

The oscillation of the archer, his or her capacity to control physical forces, increases the non-duality of the world. Thus, the body comes to include the entire world, and concomitantly the body fuses with the world to become one insignificant part among many parts. Just as the body senses, experiences, and becomes an event, so does everything else involved in the shot: the arrow, the bow, the bowstring, the target, the bird, the small animal whose hide became the archer's protective glove, and all there is. If this force can be controlled and the arrow made to focus resonance into directional flight to strike the target without tremor, then the entire world becomes sentient and creative; it creates resonance as it senses it.

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