



RILEY LEE was born in Texas, and spent his formative years in Hawai'i. He has performed worldwide in venues including Sydney Opera House, Boston Symphony Hall, Kennedy Theatre, Espace Cardin (Paris), and Roundhouse Theatre (London).

He began shakuhachi in Japan in 1971, and received his shakuhachi name Kōho, in 1975. He studied with the 20th century masters, Ichizan Hoshida II, Chikuho Sakai II and Katsuya Yokoyama. In the 1970s, he became the first non-Japanese professional taiko player, as a founding member the group now called Kodo.

Riley was executive producer and artistic director of Sydney's 2008 World Shakuhachi Festival, organised by the Australian Shakuhachi Society, which Riley founded in the 1990s. His PhD in Ethnomusicology is from Sydney University. A regular guest lecturer at Princeton University since 2003, he taught his semester-long course on the brain, knowledge, memory, meditation, mindfulness and music at Princeton in 2018 and again in 2023.

Each year, Riley gives breathing workshops in Australia, the USA and in Europe, most notably at Benediktushof, Germany's internationally-known meditation centre. In 2025, he has been invited twice to China by the ever-growing shakuhachi community there.

Arguably the most listened-to shakuhachi player in the world, Riley has released over 70 albums since 1980, which collectively have been streamed over 65 million times on Spotify and his videos has amassed over two million views on YouTube. A recent album is *Breath of the Earth*, an acclaimed 3CD set devoted to the music of Hildegard von Bingen.