

The
Shintaido
Foundation



Newsletter

April 2003

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EDITORIAL

The 30 year Newsletter

This edition should perhaps more properly be called the “Nailsworth Edition” because of the improbable amount of material pouring out from that part of the world. Also I am aware it is a very late edition, and it’s been far too long since the last Newsletter, for which you have your editor to blame (largely because all my attention has been taken up with the Shintaido book, of which more inside!)

2002 was an exciting year for SF, and 2003 promises to be no less so.

Charles Burns

DIARY DATES:

Sat 1st & Sun 2nd November 2003

*The Shintaido Foundation's
Autumn Event, in Nailsworth*

Two days of and exams.

More details to follow shortly

The Bear

*This article was by John Seaman forwarded to me for inclusion in "Cutting the Grey Sky",
but I thought it would be pertinent to print here as well:*

I want to tell you a story about the Bear — "Kuma" in Japanese — Kuma-san — Mr. Bear.

I wanted to tell the story when Michael asked me about my exam experience, but it wasn't quite appropriate.

To understand the context of the Bear, imagine Shintaido in America without Lee and me and therefore without Robert Gaston and therefore without Mike Sheets and also without Tomi. The lines weave out to even more people, but this list will do.

When Lee and I stumbled — literally — across Shintaido in Tokyo, we could only attend one practice a week because of our work schedule.

Not long after Lee and I started, Minagawa casually came up to us and suggested we might come to the Monday afternoon class. We didn't know there was a Monday afternoon class, and since Monday was our day off, we jumped at it.

We showed up. There was no one there except Minagawa. We asked where the other students were. Minagawa casually mentioned that he created the class for us.

When other people found out about the class, they came occasionally. But for the next six years — until we left Japan — it was mostly Lee and me and the Bear — Kuma-san — Mr. Bear.

There were times when Lee and/or I would have quit without the love and support of Mr. Bear.

Without me continuing, no Robert. No Robert, no Mike. Without Lee and me, Tomi says there were times when she would have quit.

So if it had been appropriate in the context, I would have dearly loved to tell the story about Mr. Bear

teaching us for six years and what it meant to me to have him there for my exam. That, I thought, was the high point of the gasshuku for me.

But two higher peaks happened.

First — after the evaluations — Michael Thompson and Mr. Bear came over to talk with me.

What Michael said surprised and delighted me. Then Mr. Bear said something that tore the roof and the floor and the walls away and totally disoriented me. I don't know if he meant it as a koan, but it is and looks to be one that I'll have to work on for at least five years.

And I thought: that's it — that's the peak of this gasshuku for me.

But I was wrong. The peak came the next morning right before closing ceremony.

Looking down through the windows by the tea corner in the plaza below at Mr. Bear doing Tenshingoso kumite with Pamela Fuller who is one of Mr. Bear's grandchildren. And then afterwards, seeing the glow in her face, listening to what was behind her words when she talked about her experience.

That's it. That was the peak of this gasshuku for me.

Mr. Bear, Kuma-san, old friend, beloved teacher — I have never heard you lie to me in the 27 years I've known you. But if I ever hear you say again that you have no students or that you have nothing more to give, I'm going to laugh in your face. I saw Pamela's glow, I heard the notes in Pamela's voice.

And I cannot begin to tell you what you mean to me.

John Seaman

English Eiko



Last Autumn saw the long awaited "English Eiko" event, which invited all practitioners, past and present to join in celebrating 30 years of Shintaido in England. These are some of the many photographs taken at the event, and may serve as a reminder for those that were there.





*Photography by Jeff Chambers.
Digital re-touching by Charles Burns*

BRANCH NEWS

Reports from Nailsworth

Our weekly Shintaido classes continue at Horsley Village Hall with new times Monday from 7:20 - 9pm with Bo afterwards. The term structure is a series of six classes with a one week break for half term followed by another six classes. The first class of the series of six is open to beginners and they must take this class to join in with the rest of the term. During the class we follow a 'Basic Forms' workshop to introduce Shintaido's principle movements.

We had our first 'Basic Forms' last week with 12 participants doing Tenshingoso, Eiko, Meiso jumping, Wakame (seaweed exercise), and Bo practice.

Written details were given out to describe the movements and subtleties of Tenshingoso; the intention is to follow this up with further written information about the forms so that people can take something home as a reference for what has been done in the class. We have also started a journal to record what was practiced and any comments or feedback that anyone wants to give.

We had a wonderful first Advanced class in Nailsworth on 26 January and thank you to all who came and made it such a special event. Future dates for Advanced Class in Nailsworth are printed at the back of this Newsletter.

Christoph Greatorex

A Memorial

It was with great sadness that we learned of Christoph's death on 20 January 2003 after a long fight against cancer.

It was a Monday night and Charles Burns was the gori for our Shintaido Class. At the end Jo Hofman felt moved to lead us all in a seiza meditation based on the 10-point mudras for Christoph as she knew that he was extremely frail and may die at any time. The next day we found out that Christoph had in fact died half an hour after the time of our meditation.

Christoph was one of the main founders of Shintaido in the Nailsworth area about seven years ago. He was responsible for inviting Masashi to lead our class. According to Ingrid, after Christoph had met Masashi at a singing workshop he said 'I have to find a way to study with that teacher'.

Shintaido became an integral part of Christoph's life, his dying process and his funeral. During the last Gasshuku in November 2002 Christoph arrived in a wheelchair and performed Tenshingoso with us and later participated in a free movement demonstration by Ingrid Evjen, Jo Hofman and

Alex Howard who moved to his delivery in majestic voice of several verses from T.S. Eliot's 'Four Quartets'.

Masashi visited Christoph regularly during his last days and after his death on 26 January the Advanced Class was invited by Masashi to do Kumite with Christoph during keiko and the class was dedicated to Christoph. It was wonderful that Ingrid was able to come to join us in that keiko.

The funeral was on 27 January. Masashi, standing in the main aisle of the church performed Tenshingoso as the coffin was brought into the church and up the aisle towards where Masashi was standing.

Masashi was also asked to be there as a support for Ingrid during her address to the congregation. During the memorial celebration in the evening, amidst songs and poetry,

Ingrid did Tenshingoso and at the end of the evening Masashi led everybody in Tenshingoso which had a palpably joyful and grounding effect on the atmosphere in the room.

Carina Hamilton

Nailsworth AI Shintaido Workshop

Sunday 23rd March 2003

On the last weekend of March, a few shintaido practitioners, who ranged from beginners to Instructors, met up in Nailsworth for some keiko practice. Spring had arrived, but it felt more like summer, so we decided to take advantage of this rare opportunity to practice outside in the sunshine, while the grass was still soft.

The main focal points of the day were Eiko, Tenshingoso, and the Bokuto practice (with a wooden training sword specially developed by Aoki Sensei to extend and challenge our energy, characterised by its straight blade).

After a light warm up, which involved some foot and toe massaging, and, thankfully for some, was minimal on the meiso jumping, we started on the Eiko.

With Eiko - dai, there was no confusion about the running, but there were several uncertainties about the shouting. After Om, some were screaming out AHH-EH, while others were using just a long AHH. The latter is preferred, but as one instructor commented, if you're still unsure, 30 mins of Eiko every day should make things clearer!

Many looked forward to the Bokuto practice, including myself, as it had been some time since I had contact with it. The Bokuto helped free up our minds and energy, although, for me, the highlight was watching the instructors, taking turns one after the other, in defending themselves from attacks that came from all directions.

The key was to create some space and to remain soft as the defender opened and led each attacker with his Bokuto. Each instructor demonstrated his or her own technique in achieving this.

Although, the instructors and their Bokuto's didn't quite steal the show, as the slightly absurd knee walking and the rolling that followed proved as confusing as popular.

These were new movements to many of us, and like most other shintaido movements, they may look simple, but are incredibly challenging and refreshing to



Photography by Carina Hamilton

the body and mind. Its important to have variety in our Keiko, in order for new energy and interest to be originated, especially when the sweat and tiredness sets in.

Tenshingoso kumite completed our 3 hour practice, very appropriate in opening and calming our shaken bodies while appreciating our fellow partners awareness.

The Keiko ended with Taimyo, lead by Masashi – sensei, dedicated to the current war in Iraq. Despite all the bombs, nuclear gases and bullets that are heading their way, it remained important for the group to direct their compassion, hope and positivity gained from the day's keiko to everyone involved in the war.

Manish Gandhi





Taimyo in Nailsworth

Energy for Peace

We are standing on the hilltop. The wind is flowing through our hair. The sun is shining down on us. It is the most wonderful spring, full of life and hope. We stretch up and dive into the balmy, soft, warm air. With the sound of birds in our ears and the sight of blossom in our eyes.

Our energy contrasts with the shouts and kicks of the footballers smacking their boots against their ball.

We reach out and pull that life force into us. We pull it down into our souls. We feel it's warmth and strength. We step forward into this new vision.

We send our energy out, over the horizon. It passes over the hill in front of us, over the fields full of spring and on towards the men at RAF Fairford busy loading their bombs into the huge B52 bombers, standing on the tarmac, their engines running, waiting to take off.

Our energy passes further, over the politicians in London, their minds locked onto all the things that 'must' be done. They are not aware of our energy passing them by. They have no space left within.

Our energy passes on over The Channel and over Europe. Past distant memories of horrors long ago that still haunt those that let them.

Our energy passes on further still. It goes over the desert to a distant land. It picks up on the history, the history of thousands of years of human civilisation. Over the Tigris and Euphrates. Over the land that is now Iraq.

It swings it's way around a falling bomb, on it's way towards it's target. Love and peace in contrast with this falling lump of chemical and metal, carefully

crafted with huge amounts of energy of a different kind to ours. Carefully crafted to seek maximum damage to whatever gets in it's way, whether it's concrete, steel or the soft life force of our own race.

Our energy passes on further. Over the Himalayas, past a prayer wheel turning. Our energy rises up into the blueness of the sky. The blue turns to starry blackness.

The earth gets smaller and smaller and still our energy flows. The earth is now no more than a spec. A piece of dust in the cosmos. And now it is lost from sight altogether against the mass of stars in our galaxy.

And still our energy flows out into the heavens. Our galaxy is now just one of many until it too is lost from sight.....

We bring our energy back to ourselves and let it rain down over us. We are still standing on the ground, in the field, on the hill, feeling calmer now.

We move into Tenshingoso. We are alone in the World reaching for the heavens. We are the first humans on the earth as we bring the energy down and forward. We reach forward. We are on a planet that has yet to be discovered. Rivers, forests, lakes, plains, hills and valleys. We open up to encompass everything. All of nature in one movement.

We reach out and then up. We bring our hands together in prayer to the universe. We bring that prayer down into our world. Our world of people and things as well as nature around us. We are back in the present.

Peter Newland

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Ito's workshop in Zurich *March 2003*

I want to thank you sincerely for this wonderful workshop you taught at Renkikai.

It took me about a week to understand the feelings in my heart. During this workshop I could never quite relax. Even though (as I have said at the end of the workshop) I didn't really have to do much. That so many people came was a surprise. On the one hand I felt very glad and on the other hand I felt under pressure that everything would go well. But during this last week I came to realize just how wonderful it was having you here, teaching Shintaido, and again what a beautiful art it is.

I think Shintaido has this unique capacity in that it increases the energy I can feel and at the same time it instills a peaceful heart. For a long time I have always wanted to be a powerful warrior and often I was angry and felt the need to prove myself. But when we did taimyo during Sunday afternoon I wanted to invest that power for peace and not destruction.

In these troubled times we live in with a war looming in Iraq I appreciate it even more that you brought Shintaido into my life (and also into Christine's). There is a lot of positive feeling in the dojo and in my heart left over from the workshop. I believe this is due to the fact that through Shintaido all the people who came created some kind of powerful peace energy in the dojo, for which I thank them but also especially you for generating it.

*Andi Baer (from a letter to
Ito sensei after the Zurich workshop)*



Traditional group photo after the workshop in Zurich

BOOK PRODUCTION

Cutting The Grey Sky

The last gasshuku of 2002 saw the production of a draft version of "Cutting the Grey Sky", the publication aimed at marking the 30 years of Shintaido in Britain. The book was generally well received and the aim is to edit it a little more, and some more material (especially relevant articles from this and the last Newsletter) and print it properly towards the end of

this summer/ autumn.

Although I am happy to continue with editing and layout, book production is not a speciality of mine, so I would welcome input from anybody with experience in this field. I feel somewhat lost at the moment! I am informed we do have a reasonable budget for production costs, so it would be a rewarding project for somebody.

We do also need more material, especially about the early years of Shintaido (well, anything pre-1985

really) so I would urge any long-standing Shintaido practitioners to turn out their cupboards and hunt through old boxes in the attic, looking for anything which might be of value to future historians of Shintaido. I especially need old photographs, and notes from ancient gassukus from the past.

Failing that, just write down your memories of those days. So far the 1990's are very well represented in the book, the 1980's somewhat less so, and the 1970's hardly at all! If any of you feel inspired to write about how Shintaido has affected you over the years, now would be a really good time to do so!

Charles Burns

SUPPORTERSHIP

Once again April comes around and it is time to renew SF supportership fees. Those of you who need to do this will have received a letter with this Newsletter with details of how to do so. Please do renew your Supportership as soon as you can, and don't wait for a reminder which I may or may not get around to sending out. We are few in number, and every Supporter really does make a difference!

Charles Burns

DIARY DATES:

Nailsworth AI Classes

Following on from the "English Eiko" event last autumn, the Nailsworth Group are hosting a series of AI workshops, designed to keep alive the energy that all felt at that event. These will take place every 2 months or so throughout 2003 (our anniversary year). Up coming dates are as follows:

Sunday 18 May
Sunday 13 July
Sunday 28 September
Sunday 30 November

Venue Nailsworth Primary School. Per person cost £15 per session.

For more information or to pre-register please call Carina or Jamie on 01453 833882.

Newsletter Distribution by internet

This Newsletter is distributed by post free of charge to SF Supporters, but is not normally available to those who have not paid! However, for those who wish to distribute copies of this Newsletter to their local group I suggest the following:

1. Visit my web-site at <http://www.edobarn.demon.co.uk/Shintaido.html>
2. Click on the link "Current SF Newsletter" to download the Newsletter as a .PDF file.
3. Print out and distribute as many as you wish!

This will save your unpaid editor an awful lot of extra work! There is enough here already, believe me! Note that .PDF version does not include the column "SF Organisation" on the last page, since this is really only relevant to SF Supporters.

SF ORGANIZATION

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ABBREVIATIONS

SF	Shintaido Foundation
TP	Technical Panel
BOD	Board of Directors
NIC	National Instructor's Council
ISF	International Shintaido Federation

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Newsletter Submissions

Please send all submissions by e-mail to: newsletter@shintaido.co.uk
 Alternatively post them to: *The SF Newsletter, 234 Peppard Rd, Emmer Green, Caversham, Berks. RG4 8UA*
 Or fax them to: **0118 947 6813**
 Copy deadline for the next issue is: **Monday 28th July 2003**

But please don't wait until then, write now, while inspired!



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