

The last German Gasshuku

by Charles Burns



Participants in the German daienshu, Wupperfuth, September 2011

It's a curious fact that in the world of Shintaido very few know much about the German group, and yet for the last 25 years this outpost of European Shintaido has been quietly following its own course, largely with the support of Ito sensei and a handful of enthusiastic German practitioners.

I remember reading - or perhaps did I edit? - an account of Ito's first visit to Germany in some past incarnation of the BS newsletter. For many years this account was all I really knew about them. Then in 2004 I attended the first ESC Forum in France, at which several members of the German group were among the many new friends to be made there. As that event was also my first attempt to challenge the shodan bo exam, and since several members of the German group were taking the same exam, I had a better chance to get to know them than most. Even now I remember my first sight of German keiko: talking to Conny on the night we all arrived we wandered over to look at the indoor dojo the Frech organisers had arranged for us. This was a huge and unlikely modern sports hall, with a sprung-wooden floor, built by the shores of lake. On seeing such a magnificent space Conny's instinctive reaction was to open her body with explosive energy and perform eiko around the hall.

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I was quite carried away, and immediately followed her example! This was so like something from my own early days in Shintaido that it brought tears to my eyes. It seemed such a pure and natural response, I quickly realised something truly remarkable was taking place in Germany. This impression was re-enforced throughout the event during the many kumite sessions I experienced with various members of the group. I resolved to find out more about them if I could.

I met 'the Germans' again at the following year's Forum, and later that year went to Germany myself to experience one of their annual Daienshu events myself. I reported the wonderful time I had there in 'Taimyo' in 2005. Since that event they have never been far from my mind, even though their events (every September) passed me by on dates long since committed to work. Every year I thought "Next year I'll go back", even though I could see at each year's ESC Forum fewer of the German group were able to make it; and for the last few years there have been none there at all.

This year the date very nearly passed me by again. At the last minute an event I was booked for was cancelled (somebody's wedding; don't ask...) and at the same time I was booked to attend a last minute corporate event in Italy on the Thursday before the German daienshu. Looking at the map Italy somehow didn't seem so far from Germany, so I thought "Why not?" and booked a small detour via Dusseldorf on my return to the UK from Italy. In the end it turned out to be a bigger detour than I thought, but that's another story...

The gasshuku was attended by just four members of the German group, as well as a number of visitors from France, Belgium and Switzerland, and me from the UK. This made quite a good number in all, but talking to the German members it soon became clear that German Shintaido had reached a critical point.

Most of the original members had either left Shintaido, or else their personal lives have become too busy with work or family commitments to continue the work of organising events, while newer members are not yet advanced enough in their keiko to take this on. Last time I visited Germany I was witness to some heart-felt discussions about how to keep the group moving forwards, and this time the German group, now fewer in number, seemed to have reached the end of the line. The proposal on the table was that this should be the last annual event they organised. Things had reached a point where for many the only keiko they practiced was at this annual visit by Ito sensei, and it was felt no longer possible to continue on this basis.

Debate about this formed the background to much of the event, with much heart searching on both sides. Eventually it came down to the fact that the organiser of the event felt completely unable to take it on again, and nobody else felt able to take her place. After some discussion with Ito it was decided that after 25 years this would be the last occasion they could invite him to Germany.

Despite this background this gasshuku was every bit as joyous and inspiring as the last event I attended there. The main pleasure was in the continuous conversations that happened between keiko, so that (as often happens) I had no time at all to take notes about the keiko itself. In many ways it felt like a miniature European event. I am now hoping that my body has remembered the movement on some deeper level, since my mind has emptied itself of all but the most ephemeral of memories! Alas, such memories are not often the easy ones to write about.

Two ephemeral memories are, however, solid enough to translate into words. The first is the long and gentle bojutsu kenko taiso session with which Ito opened the event. I recall spending a long time with the bo across my shoulders, marvelling that there are so many ways to move the bo in just this position alone, and wondering about the years of practice and personal exploration that it took to uncover them all. Ito sensei is the only man I've ever met who can actually make me look forward to the process of ageing. Experiencing the slow and deep pace of his mature goriei seems to create a feeling of possibility in the older body, a kind of glimpse into a new world with a depth and beauty all of its own. A world quite impossible to access through a younger and fitter body. It was the first time in many years I've felt too young to properly perform these movements.

The second memory is of an impromptu night time keiko on the Saturday night. Seeing a clear and star filled sky we all took chairs out on to the tennis court and practiced Tenshingoso kumite together, sitting face to face in small metal-framed chairs. This style of kumite was a main theme of the gasshuku, and the arrangements we practiced consisted of a series of one-hand and two-handed sequences, practicing various couplets of movement. First of all 'A' and 'E' for instance, later 'I' and 'O', allowing our bodies to follow the movement freely and making full use of the extra support offered by the back of the chair. However in this impromptu keiko the names of the movements became irrelevant and we simply became one with the stars, swaying together in unison in the deep gloom of a moonless night.

At the end of the event the closing ceremony was a deeply emotional experience. That Shintaido forms such a central part of the hopes and dreams of all those present was clear to see, and the reality of the decision they had made hit home with merciless force. There was a lot of nostalgia for events gone by, and Ito was thanked for his devotion in teaching this event almost unbroken for a quarter of a century (this event was the 25th anniversary of Ito's first visit to Germany). At the end the two visitors from Belgium expressed an interest in inviting Ito to Belgium instead, and so there was at last a feeling that this event would not cease, but simply move to another location. For the German organisers this was clearly a bitter-sweet moment, and our hearts went out to all of them.

For me it was my great honour to participate in the last German daienshu (well, for now, at least...).

Postscript:

The Belgium event will take place on 21st - 23rd September 2012, taught by Ito sensei. Belgium is not so far from the UK, so I would urge any BS members who can to book a place and experience this unique gem in the annual Shintaido calendar.

BS Daienshu 2011 'Kandou'

by Nagako Cooper

This year's inspirational BS Daienshu took place at Douai Abbey from 27th to 29th May. The theme Kandou, - "to be moved" in Japanese, was present throughout the event, echoing in each one of our hearts. We were very fortunate to have three senior instructors, Gianni (the head of Shintaido Italia), David (the head of Shintaido Czech Republic) and Ula (our BS guiding star!) with the over lighting sun-like presence of Minagawa sensei.

It was such a rich event that I can only hope to write about a few fragments from the vast tapestry of experiences.

The first keiko started with the warm up led by Ula, relaxing and opening us to come closer and closer to each other to the point where we formed a small circle doing hips rotations supported by others, actually experiencing our hips 'to be moved' effortlessly by others, with lots of laughter.

Then the main keiko's gorei was handed over to Gianni. Gianni's way of leading us from relaxed warming up to more dynamic movements was magical. We started with lying on the floor rubbing our foreheads with our arms, just like waking up in the morning, then through gently stretching neck and back like a cat, we stood up to start jumping 'effortlessly'.

We explored relaxed "youki-tai" jump and open "kaihou-tai" jump in depth with the support of partners. When my partners on both sides of my hips grabbed my obi to bring my koshi up, I felt as if I was jumping up to the sky, lifted out of gravity. That feeling lasted even when my partners let go of their hands! I first really experienced and understood so clearly the contrast of these two jumping styles through these exercises.

Next we practiced Tenshingoso application "I/O" kumite, entering into a partner in turns, using the grips





from Tenshingoso kumite in condensed way. I realised that Tenshingoso application opens up a vast variety of practices in kumite as if all the jewels kept and stored in Tenshingoso can be brought into light through different applications.

Gianni encouraged and supported us to expand our imaginations. At the end of the keiko, we were led to imagine a clear dai jodan cut with our eyes closed. It was amazing to actually feel the clarity and refreshing effect of the cut in my body through the imagination!

Both Saturday and Sunday morning, we had Taimyo practice led by Ula, full of useful and imaginative instructions. When we got to the field on Sunday morning it was rather cold with dark clouds hanging over us. But while we were doing 10 position standing meditation, the clouds began to disappear and the golden light started to shine upon us. Then we all faced the sun to continue Taimyo until the end. It was an unforgettable moment.

In this Daienshu, we had our first BS Kid's Shintaido class "Animal Kingdom" led by Minagawa sensei. Minagawa sensei has started doing "warming up kumite" with our sons, Christopher and Michael, whenever he meets them, long before this actual keiko started, (at least several months ago!), making connections with them, relaxing them and opening them up through playful interactions. Then on Saturday morning, Luke, Daniel, Christopher and Michael all sat together with Minagawa sensei for breakfast. Minagawa sensei showed me the importance of pre-keiko interactions, or rather, showing that real keiko extends beyond the time frame of keiko into our daily lives, how we connect and interact with everyone we meet in our lives.

When we got to the field that morning, we saw a magnificent red kite flying in the sky. With Minagawa sensei's joyful gorei, the children and the parents all started with running down the slope, flying like the bird, circling around the beautiful oak tree. A great way of entering into the "Animal Kingdom"!!

We became lots of different animals, snakes for crawling, elephants with long trunks for swinging arms,



kangaroos for jumping, monkeys for rolling around, etc. with the animals' sounds. We did horse riding and galloped around the tree. Minagawa sensei was leading the group in a fun-filled and encouraging way. He was spontaneous and able to catch the children's imagination allowing them to express it freely.

It was a great help for parents to participate with their children, giving a rare opportunity to cross a bridge from our adult world, full of concepts and ideas, into the kingdom of childhood, which is full of imagination and play.

I heard from Minagwa sensei that back in the 1980's, the kid's Shintaido curriculum was created in Japan, which has been sleeping more than 20 years, and finally brought back into light in this Daienshu, as if a new door in BS Shintaido has opened up. Later I also heard that Gianni has been teaching children Shintaido in Italy and wrote a book on it, too. I am very interested in and excited about possible further development in this new area.

Straight after this, I stepped into Gianni's Bo class. We practiced kumite, using one Bo between the two, - one to give energy with a clear cut and the other receiving and absorbing the energy from the partner. Next we built up to a group of three with more movement, then to a completely free way in a big group - all of us together. Although I am new to Bo practice, Gianni helped me to feel more at one with the Bo. I enjoyed the sense of giving and receiving energy through the Bo from partner, all the practitioners, trees, the sky and the earth. I felt as if I was expanding, giving me a real sense of freedom.

On Saturday afternoon, David led the open hand Shintaido class on Tenshingoso. We had several exercises opening 3 points; hara (abdomen), hands and feet. Through these exercises, I experienced grounding in myself, making a connection to the earth and also to my inner energy centre. The following Tenshingoso dai was completely transformed having opened these areas and one could feel the dynamic energy coming out from deep within.

After moving to the gym because of rain, David led us into some very imaginative kumite exercises; one person doing Tenshingoso moving backwards and forwards with an energy flow with his partner following him, moving like seaweed. Next, the seaweed person led the movements while the Tenshingoso person followed the energy flow. This reminded me of a very deep insight from dialogue on "Unification Beyond Conflict and the Space of Love" on Taimyo no.49. In this article, Ito sensei said,

"In the seaweed exercise, the receiver in a physical sense is the seaweed person, the leader is ocean. But actually, the seaweed person is pursuing the ocean waves in their mind, so he is actually the leader."

This insight can open up a completely new way of perception and understanding, and the kumite we practiced helped me to explore this.

At the end of the keiko, there was a demonstration by Gianni, David and Ula with Minagawa sensei on Daiheigen and various Tenshingoso applications, which was very inspiring, encouraging us to further our practice.

On Saturday evening we had our sharing time about the 'Kandou' pictures we brought, facilitated by Peter with his warm presence. It was so touching to hear the stories behind all those beautiful images, which brought tears in our eyes, opening our hearts to one another and reconnecting with our friends even deeper. After this, it was party time!

Then came the final keiko on Sunday morning. With Gianni's gorei, we started by lying on our tummies stretching both arms to "hug the earth". The grass underneath us was so soft with fresh scent while the sun was shining upon us, I felt the pulsating warm living being of our mother earth, hugging me back so gently.

After exploring "Sumo" kumite, Gianni led us to do Eiko toward the mighty oak tree, with relaxed upper body imagining someone was pushing our koshi from behind. Through the power of imagination, again, it became almost effortless. I felt as if I was carried by something bigger than my own strength while the oak tree was reaching welcoming arms towards me. When we got there, we hugged this oak tree, which is deeply rooted to the earth with branches full of fresh leaves reaching out to the sky, providing abundance, rest and joy to birds, squirrels and us, human beings.

We did "Hokushin – Great Plough" starting with hugging a tree posture, then we were becoming one with the tree, experiencing the presence of the oak tree within us.

At the end, Minagawa sensei led us to do Taimyo Part 1, entering into the ocean of universal energy, enjoying fully the beautiful interplay of receiving and giving energy with nature all around us. When he led us through "Taiki mai – Dancing with heaven" to "Tenso", we became one with the sky and rejoiced! At the very end, we did "Eiko" again, running to the oak tree. I felt as if I could run, run, and run infinitely, being carried by everything surrounding me.

I would like to end with sending my deep gratitude to our wonderful teachers, Gianni, David, Ula and Minagawa sensei, and also to Charles, Pam and Ruth for organizing and running the event so gracefully with children also warmly welcomed. I returned home with an ignited heart. ■

Bo in the Park

by Matt Vandre



For three summer evenings in August southwest shintaido had the wonderful opportunity to attend Bo Keiko under the sky in Ashton Court, Bristol. I was particularly excited for the opportunity having only practiced bo once at the Daienshu earlier this year. We were lucky to have Pam Minagawa Sensei to lead the first two evenings and Masahiro Minagawa Sensei to lead the ultimate one; fortunate too to have all the support and organisation from Katrina Sensei.

The first of the three evenings was the largest gathering and was attended by the Bristol group and several members of the Nailsworth and Bath groups. The weather could not have been more accommodating with a warm, light evening and clear skies. We were a mixed group of abilities and Pam Sensei focused on fundamentals for the benefit of us real beginners. I had the feeling that the more experienced practitioners were happy to work on the basics as well – I know in my own experience that I never tire of hearing basic instruction and connecting to the foundation of practice.

After warming up in a circle we learned some simple things like which hand to hold the bo before practice and during, and how to be safe and respect the bo at all times. We also spent time getting to know the bo in our hands, feeling the weight, moving and balancing it. After getting comfortable with our bo, and learning the primary movements from relaxed stance to readiness for engagement, we went into learning Dai Jodan striking and blocking. Pam Sensei did a lovely job of slowly building up the phases of the movements to make sure we all got there. It is remarkable really how such simple movements can be so easy to watch yet so easy to mix up in the doing. In no time we were paired up in kumibo and making contact. This is where bo really comes alive for me. There is something quite poetic and lovely about the movement of you and the bo on your own, almost like dancing with a partner, but when you feel the force of the connection with another bo extending from another person it is really something. It is a joy experimenting with variations – moving quickly or slowly, making soft contact or hard and the accompanying sound of wood meeting.

Moving into *neriai* we really can explore the giving and the receiving of another. What becomes clear to me very quickly is how unsatisfying it can feel to have tentative contact where you have to struggle to keep that connection and how much more satisfying it then becomes to feel solid contact and force from another that you can meet firmly. This practice really moves into to realm of dance as you communicate non-verbally with your partner, giving and receiving, asking for more perhaps, or less with your *bo*, leading and allowing yourself to be led. Finding a balance between leading the movement and allowing it can be a real challenge. It can also bring up all kinds of stuff like 'am I comfortable asking for more or less from someone else? – asking for what I want?' or is that too difficult? Can I ask for what I want with my *bo*? Or can I use my voice? Perhaps both.

I find the same dynamic with striking movements – what kind of movement wants to be expressed in me right now? If that feels particularly strong, can I trust the other person to receive what I have to give right now? Can I allow myself to express fully whatever wants to be expressed? Also, and I hesitate to add but will for the sake of honesty - 'do I look totally silly or cool to all those people watching over there?'

Over the course of the three evenings I was really pleased with how much we were able to cover. Even though the evenings progressed at what felt like a relaxed pace, by the end we were able to experience the range of basic striking/giving movements and their blocking/receiving counterparts – *Dai Jodan*, *Jodan*, *Chudan* and *Geidan* – in *kumibo*. As a bonus, on the final night we were treated by Masahiro Minagawa Sensei to the *Hi No kata* or *Fire kata*. The *Hi No kata* seemed particularly appropriate to me as, in the *Five Elements/Movements* theory I'm studying along with *Shiatsu*, *Fire* is the phase of high summer, utmost *yang* (action), joy and communication. Going through the *kata* in concert with my fellow students in a warm field with the sky almost literally on fire brought these qualities alive for me. Within the two hours we could all complete the *kata* and perform it together which really tied the sessions together beautifully.

I would like to express my gratitude to the teachers and organisers of these sessions Pam and Masahiro Minagawa Sensei and Katrina Sensei, and to all of my fellow students who made these three nights in August so special. ■



Taking my grading

by Andrew Stones

An Aikido teacher once said to me “If you ever get the opportunity to demonstrate in front of the class, always take it; it’s a great learning experience.” “In what way?” I asked. “You receive all the Ki of the audience watching you, and the sensei. As people watch you with interest and concentration, their ki flows to you and supports your practice. Any good points about your practice will be strengthened and celebrated, and any not-so-good points will become blatantly obvious very quickly, and so can be more easily identified and transformed.” I’ve always remembered those words, and hence always look forwards to gradings, in whatever milieu, including Shintaido. Apart from the benefit of “receiving the ki of the audience”, in Shintaido gradings I always find one receives extremely comprehensive and useful feedback from the teachers, through which much future development is made possible. I’m not frightened of failing. I’ve done dozens of martial arts gradings in my life, and failed many of them. I took my black belt grading in hard style karate three times, and failed each time. In that style you hardly got any feedback, and certainly none on the day of the grading. You wouldn’t be told on the day, whether you’d failed or passed. The teacher would just narrow his eyes inscrutably and say nothing. You’d then have to wait several weeks or months to hear anything, and usually the answer would come in the next newsletter as a single word “pass” or “fail”. And that would be that. In contrast to this, I find Shintaido gradings to be the height of human courtesy and respect – truly respecting and honoring the keikonin as an individual deserving of feedback, and simply seeking to help him or her progress in their practice. Another reason I find them such a delight.

It was with happy enthusiasm then, that I approached my “one-man-grading” in November in Lewis. I was the only person taking the grading. It does probably also help that astrologically I’m a Leo; we rather enjoy being the centre of attention.

Having done nigh on fifteen years of hard style karate, two of which were with Harada sensei (who had himself studied with Egami sensei senior in the 1950’s), I always had thought I would pick up Shintaido karate relatively easily. But after 5 years now, it still eludes me. One of my biggest challenges is Taikyoku sho. I love watching Masashi sensei perform Taikyoku sho. Really, it doesn’t look like anything I’ve seen before. In all honesty it doesn’t actually look like karate to me, when he does it, or at least not what I’ve previously thought of as karate. It looks more like a sword kata. It looks like Masashi is doing these incredibly smooth swift penetrating sword movements; he just happens to be holding his hands in Jikkyo ken (fist) rather than holding a sword. Magnificent. My grading feedback from Charles and Ula, and added to by Masashi gave me important pointers for my way ahead with this simple yet profound sequence.

The Universe seeks inexorably, to lead us forwards. One of the ways I like to “listen to the whispers” of the Universe in its desire to help us, is through the use of divination methods such as the I Ching, the Tarot, and other more modern decks of divinatory cards. One such deck I love is called “The Archetypes” by Chuck Spezzano of Psychology-of-Vision. Around the time of the grading, a card I picked up more than once from this pack was the archetype of “The Prude”. Of the Prude, Spezzano states “The Prude is stingy, repressing his or her sexual energy; holding the energy back, and judging others who express theirs.” I suppose it should have come as no surprise then (although it did) when Charles and Ula both told me as part of my grading feedback that I was being stingy with my energy, holding my ki back; not giving 100%, and not taking the movements to their full completion. So...time to unleash Andrew’s koshi a bit more? ...I’ll do my best.

Big thanks to Masashi, Ula and Charles for all their help and inspiration, and all the Brighton crew for organizing the event. And big thanks to all who watched the grading, who “leant me their ki” with their attention and concentration – much appreciated. And thanks to Kim for teaching me, healing me, and introducing me to Shintaido. Oh no, this is now beginning to sound a bit like an Oscar acceptance speech. I believe it was Chutoka that I got. Ah well, to me it was like an Oscar. :)

Shintaido Demonstration Wynstones - Nailsworth

by David Cooper

On June 25th, the Nailsworth "Lightwaves" Shintaido Group gave a demonstration / workshop at the Wynstones Rudolf Steiner School Summer Festival. This is the 2nd year in a row that we have 'performed' at the school which is situated on the outskirts of Gloucester. This year, the demonstration fitted in with a Tanabata Corner (Star Festival - takes place every July 7th in Japan) and a closing Japanese themed concert in the big hall, all proceeds from these initiatives being donated to the British Red Cross to be sent to help those who continue to suffer from the after-effects of the March 11th Tohoku Tsunami/Earthquake/Nuclear disaster.

The Shintaido demonstration this year was discussed and choreographed in our Tuesday classes during the weeks leading up to the event. The Minagawa's (Masashi and Pam) came up for the day. Pam graciously gave a Jo kata which neatly slotted into our sequence of movements. To finish off, Masashi stepped in and led us all in Taimyo Part 1. Upon completion, the audience were invited into the circle and we were led by Nagako in a warm-up sequence. When Nagako finished, she handed over to Masashi who then led us into a Wakame Taiso exercise followed by Taimyo Part 1. This completed our demonstration.

It was somewhat nerve-racking - particularly I think for our beginners - to 'put ourselves out there' in this way but at our concluding Tuesday session, we were pretty unanimous that it was a worthwhile enterprise - and went some small way to make Shintaido a little more visible in the world. Another benefit mentioned was that it helped us to get clearer about our own practice and to become more conscious of our movements. It was also fun to do and helped us to bond as a group. ■



All photographs courtesy of David Cooper and Katrina Horne



The history and development of Zenkutsu Dachi and Fudo Dachi

by Andrew Stones

Zenkutsu Dachi means “Forwards Stance”, and Fudo Dachi means “Immovable Stance”. They are two fundamental stances of Shintaido, and originate in the art of Karate, from which Shintaido partly derives, and continues to be included in its syllabus of practice. Of the two, Zenkutsu is the older.

All karate originates in Chinese kung fu, in particular, the White Crane method of Shaolin chuan. Shaolin chuan is the style of boxing (“chuan” means “fist” – Japanese, “ken”) that is said to originate in the Shaolin Temple of China, where legend has it, the Indian Zen patriarch Bodhidharma taught martial arts to the monks to complement their sitting meditations. Martial artists from the island of Okinawa in the south China seas, later traveled to China to learn boxing, and at the same time, traveling Chinese fighters such as Ku San Ku (who taught the kata “Kanku”) came to Okinawa to teach. The version of Chinese Kung fu developed and practiced on Okinawa by the native Okinawans became known as “Karate”, which originally meant “Chinese Hand” in honor of its parent art. Of the many styles of Okinawan karate, that known as Shorin ryu is the widest practiced, and has many variations. “Shorin” in the Japanese pronunciation of “Shaolin”, and refers to the aforementioned Chinese temple, whilst “ryu” means style or school. It is from this school, the Shorin ryu school of Okinawa and its Chinese forerunner Shaolin chuan, that the Zenkutsu Dachi originates. Chinese kung fu terms are often flowery and full of symbolic imagery, whilst Okinawan karate terms tend to be more simplistic. So the “Bow and Arrow stance” of Shaolin kung fu, became the “Forwards stance” (Zenkutsu) of Shorin ryu karate.

In the 1930's several Okinawan karate masters were living and teaching in mainland Japan. Funakoshi Gichin was one of these. At this time the karate he taught was not referred to as “Shotokan” as it later became known; at this time it was taught under the traditional Okinawan name “Shorin ryu” (1). Funakoshi himself was not particularly an innovator; he was more of a transmitter, transmitting the traditional methods he had been taught in his homeland of Okinawa. Okinawan Shorin ryu has short high stances, and indeed we can see Funakoshi Gichin in photos doing Zenkutsu dachis which are short and high, not like the long low stance later characterized in Shotokan. In the late 1930's and throughout the 1940's, Funakoshi's son Yoshitaka emerged as a veritable karate genius and innovator. He made all the stances longer and lower, developed the use of koshi (hips/waist), and developed new kicks such as yoko geri (side kick) and mawashi geri (round-house kick) which did not previously exist in Okinawan karate. It is Yoshitaka who really developed many of the characteristics we now identify as being signature characteristics of Shotokan karate. He also invented a new stance which has become the foundation stance of Shintaido: Fudo dachi. (1)

The traditional Zenkutsu dachi of Shorin ryu and Shotokan karate has the back leg locked dead straight. Yoshitaka sensei, who already did a Zenkutsu dachi longer and lower than any of his fellows, now went even lower by bending his back leg and bracing it outwards and in so doing creating a radical new stance which he called Fudo dachi. This new stance emerged out of Zenkutsu, but also had the feeling of Kiba Dachi (horse riding stance) and Shiko Dachi (horse riding stance with the toes pointing outwards), with the weight much more even on both legs than in Zenkutsu. Yoshitaka's friend and colleague was Aoki sensei's teacher, Shigeru Egami (2). Egami sensei continued to develop and evolve karate-do after Yoshitaka's untimely death in 1947 from gangrene of the lungs. Whilst mainstream Shotokan became somewhat fixed and rubber-stamped in the methods Yoshitaka had been using prior to his death, Egami sensei and Okuyama sensei continued to develop and evolve their keiko. Egami sensei was so delighted with Yoshitaka sensei's Fudo dachi that he adapted it and applied elements of it into Zenkutsu. Egami modified Zenkutsu dachi so it became partly like a traditional Zenkutsu, but partly like Yoshitaka's Fudo. Like traditional Zenkutsu, the weight was still mainly driven onto the front leg, but like Yoshitaka's Fudo, the back leg was slightly bent, with the back knee braced out and back. Beyond these structural modifications, Egami sensei was inspired by Okuyama sensei to include the principle of softness and relaxation to all his evolving Shotokai karate waza, including all the tachi. It was Egami sensei's Shotokai karate which of course later became the fertile soil from which Shintaido evolved. Aoki sensei took this softer more fluid Zenkutsu and Fudo dachi's of Egami, and applied them beyond traditional empty-hand karate, to Shintaido kenjutsu, bojutsu, and all the basic forms of Toitsu kyhon in Shintaido. Thus it became the wellspring and foundation of excellent koshi in our school.

It can be seen then that Shintaido Zenkutsu and Fudo Dachi's have a rich and ancient heritage, ranging from the ancient Chinese temple of Shaolin, through the short high Shorin ryu method of Okinawa and Gichin Funakoshi, evolving through the modern karate geniuses of Yoshitaka Funakoshi, Shigeru Egami and Tadao Okuyama and bequeathed to us by Aoki sensei. Although our Fudo can be fluid and dynamic, it can equally become as Yoshitaka intended it, immovable, resolute and steadfast; and perhaps allow us to be as ferocious in our battles as the Japanese Buddhist diety, Fudo Myo-o – the immovable one, the resolute one, who binds the enemies of the spiritual teachings with his rope, and decapitates them with his diamond sword. This process is of course the internal process – the battle within; whether that be with our ego, with our addictions, or with our negative tendencies. May we all be victorious! ■

References:

- (1) "The Life and Times of Mitsusuke Harada" by Dr. Clive Layton
- (2) "The Heart of Karate-do" by Shigeru Egami

Taimyo Workshop & Fundraising Bristol

by Susan Lacroix



For some time I had been hoping that some day we might be able to have a Shintaido workshop and study Taimyo with others. One day I received the internet magazine Parabola with a beautiful and moving calligraphy which was translated as '*pure stillness corrects everything under heaven*'. Somehow, its very characters reminded me of Shintaido and I sent it to Masashi and Pam. After receiving this, Masashi generously suggested a workshop to raise money for the reconstruction in Japan, and that my husband Laurent and I should organise it.

The practical aspect was not too taxing as Pam gave me the relevant details of the venue and how to book it. She also told me what things needed to be taken into account and with this support I felt confident.

Much harder was how to phrase the flyer, as Masashi had asked me to find the theme. It took some days to arrive, and it came from practising Taimyo one day and experiencing a rare and deep sense of connection. I then remembered the calligraphy and they seemed to be related as when there was more stillness in me then connection could arise and order appear.

Laurent used his design skills to prepare a striking and elegant flyer and the next step was to contact as many people as possible so that the workshop could raise the maximum money for Japan and enable new people to experience Shintaido.

In the end we had a very good number, some of whom were completely new, and were very fortunate to benefit additionally from the presence of Gianni Rossi and David Franklin, who were in the UK making a film of Shintaido.

Everyone commented on the warm and welcoming atmosphere of the workshop, from the registration and first circle, to the last sharing, again in a circle. We were able to get a real taste of the movements and it was an additional delight to watch Masashi and Gianni demonstrating. We benefitted too from the presence of many senior practitioners who embodied the principles of Shintaido. Apart from the first part of Taimyo we did some kumite and this was particularly interesting, as we could see how different each person's expression was and try to work with that, especially in wakame.

People were very impressed by the inclusive feeling of the workshop. This extended to the children who lent a lightness and gaiety to the whole room. At the end of the two hours, people spoke of calmness stillness, depth, connectedness, and they continued to experience this over the following days.

We were delighted to find that over £500 was raised thanks to the generosity of the participants.

Masashi is now offering a series of three Shintaido workshops over the coming 6 months. They will introduce the basis of Shintaido and attendance to all three will lead to the 'introductory' or 'nyumon-ka' certificate, a new qualification in Shintaido.

For further details of workshops please contact Susan at slacroix@btinternet.com or on 07590 368 998

Feedback from participants:

.... *THANK YOU for a WONDERFUL afternoon. It was a fabulous experience. I think it went perfectly for me. I am a very slow learner but I liked Masashi's speed in talking/explaining and his son's translation...I felt held and cared for in an exquisite way. I was very moved by the people and the whole afternoon. I learnt a great deal and cannot think of anything I would change. It was so lovely to look at the notes afterwards and realise what I had done. There was a gestalt in the process/world and my belief system of peace through connection and effort that I found satisfying in my body....*

...*I am still enjoying the effects of the Shintaido on Sunday: I have a very peaceful sense of myself which is most unusual. Thank you for inviting me....*

...*I really loved Master Minagawa Sensei's Shintaido masterclass! and was so glad I came. THANK YOU for recommending the afternoon's teaching so strongly. Yes, I found it rewarding and enriching and, further to that, it was delightful to meet all the people there and to interact as a group -- even in such a short time there were breakthrough conversations and meetings - unusual! I went away feeling more grounded in myself,*



definitely more relaxed and sort of humming to myself -- nice warm feeling. I think the most important lesson for me, which I mentioned to Master Minagawa, was the powerful message of 'coming home to one's self' -- that really resonated. I loved the warm up and the other movements, which are liberating in themselves. I think there is a lot more to it than meets the eye -- learned through practice. Having done Tai Qi for many years I was able to adjust to Shintaido possibly more easily and I enjoyed its energy flow, and the simple message to let go and experience a deeper state of connectedness, one might say. I so much enjoyed the afternoon. Please will you thank Master Minagawa Sensei and the other teachers...

...I found the workshop enriching and inspiring... I would definitely like to attend further workshops in the future. I was touched by the spirit of our teacher, of how the group was held and guided... especially for me as someone who has never experienced shintaido before.

I am very drawn to developing a practice for myself that is supportive of my Shiatsu journey... a once every two month workshop would be great:)

I am grateful for the running of the workshop and that the money raised will go to Japan to help people there...

...The workshop was fantastic. I really enjoyed it. We were welcomed straight away in a very friendly and warm way. Nearly every single person came to us to introduce themselves, know how we had found about it, etc...

It was fun, it was intriguing, it was heart opening, playful and sacred at times, emotional as well when we gathered in a circle at the end and gave our feedback... It was all that. Fascinating and peculiar. I had a great time. It was 2 hours basically spent with very compassionate, soft and open hearted people. Tenshigoso was amazing.

I really loved some aspects of it, like the dance like movements we did when working with a partner. I was like a child exploring this curious discipline and time flew by incredibly quickly. It was too short.

Very good combination with Shiatsu obviously. The whole concept of working with energy through body movement is really fascinating. There's a beautiful and gracious flow about it.

The partner exercises reminded me of capoeira too.

To summarise, it was great fun and lovely to connect with beautiful people and explore a complete new discipline.

It was kind of mind expanding too. It opened my mind on martial arts, reminded me of the beauty of all these body movement arts...

All photographs courtesy of Pam Minagawa





SHINTAIDO

A Way to
Inner Peace
Through Movement

A series of three workshops with
Master Minagawa Sensei.

Sunday November 27th 2011 — 2 to 5p.m.

Expression of energy and selfawareness.

Kenko taiso
Tenshingoso

Sunday February 5th 2012 — 2 to 5p.m.

Harmony with people.

Meiso kumite – moving meditation
Taimyo

Sunday April 15th 2012 — 2 to 5p.m.

*Refreshing our mind and heart,
Harmony with nature.*

Eiko
Taimyo

*Those attending all three workshops will be eligible to
receive the Shintaido Nyumon-ka (introductory) certificate.*

Each workshop costs £23 for non British Shintaido
members and £18 for BS members.

The venue is:

Almondsbury Sports and Social Club, BS32 4AA.

Contact: Susan: **tel.** 01225 812 088 or 07590 368 998
email. slacroix@btinternet.com

清
静
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天
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*Pure Stillness Corrects
Everything Under Heaven*



Moving in the Eternal Present Kangeiko 2012

with Masashi Minagawa & BS Instructors.

Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th January 2012

The White Cottages, Douai Abbey, Upper Woolhampton, Berks, RG7 8TQ.

Cost: BS members £72, non members £80

The event begins at 12.30pm on Saturday and finishes at 2.30pm on Sunday. We are limited to 16 beds in the White Cottages. As this is a popular event please reserve your place soon by email to:

psik_kim@hotmail.com as well as sending your cheque in. Please also contact Kim if you would like to attend for the day.

Accommodation is in shared rooms. As well as sharing our space we will share the following roles as a group: registration, sensei care, dojo care, evening social organiser and time keeper.

Please let Kim know which of these you would like to take on this year.

We look forward to welcoming in the new year together!

Shintaido South West Report

by Katrina Horne

2011 has seen much activity in the South West. We continue with our weekly classes during the term time in Bath, Bristol and Nailsworth (near Stroud). A few of the Instructors in the South West have been meeting and working towards a more coherent approach to Shintaido in the local area. We were wanting to make practitioners aware of other classes and events in the area. A SSW newsletter with dates of classes, workshops and events was started this Spring.

Feb 5th & 6th

Shintaido South West hosted the first residential BSC (British Shintaido College) meeting at Springhill Co-Housing Community in Stroud.



Feb 9th

First of 2 taster sessions for Bristol Shintaido at DanceSpace. We continue to run a weekly class during term time on Wednesdays 7:45 – 9:15pm . We invited Minagawa Sensei to our final class of the Spring Term.

DanceSpace is based at 'The Island' (www.theislandbristol.com) in the former Bridewell Police Station, DanceSpace Bristol shares a home with visual artists, musicians, circus performers and others under the project management of the cooperative ArtSpace LifeSpace. (www.artspacelifespace.com). DanceSpace also offer a physical base and meeting point for independent dance artists to gather and share their work and ideas through regular skill shares, workshops, classes performances, research events and socials.



May 31st

Shintaido Taster FREE at Freeskilling, 31st May @ 7pm, The Better Food Company, St Werburghs, Bristol.

Freeskilling is a FREE weekly skill-sharing evening... Bristol Freeconomy Community.

We had a lovely time. We got lots of smiles and laughs from passers by - we must have looked pretty entertaining, 8 women punching and then waving around like seaweed in the café . The main thing is we laughed ourselves and had fun.

<http://www.justforthe loveofit.org/>

<http://www.betterfood.co.uk/events/>

June 25th

SSW's Nailsworth Group carried out the annual Shintaido demonstration and workshop at the Wynstones Summer Fair on 25th June at 2pm. *(See Nagako's article on pages 10-11)*

August

Bo in the park - For 3 Wednesday evenings during August, we studied Bojutsu with invited Instructors Pam Minagawa and Masahiro Minagawa *(See Matt V's article on pages 8-9)*

Sep 7th

Stroud FM, Community Radio for the Stroud Valleys, invited SSW Instructors Nagako and Katrina to share about Shintaido on their Drivetime Show.

The interview at Stroud FM went well. Gratitude to Chaz and Brendan who were relaxed and charming. The grand finale was being played out to 'Katrina and the Waves' Walking on Sunshine... seems apt in more ways than one.

<http://stroudfm.co.uk/>

Sep 18th

SSW hosted a Tenshingoso Workshop taught by Minagawa Sensei, organised by Susan and Laurent from the Bath Shintaido Group. The afternoon workshop was full, relaxing and very enjoyable. It was a fundraising event, raising over £500 for the Japanese Red Cross Society. For many people it was their first taste of Shintaido. There have been dates set for follow up workshops



Shintaido International Gasshuku 2012 San Francisco

3rd July - 6th July 2012

Shintaido of America (SoA), in affiliation with the International Shintaido College (ISC) , is pleased to host the 2012 International Shintaido Gasshuku at Sonoma State University, in Rohnert Park, California, from July 3-6, 2012.

Every four years Shintaido students and teachers come together to practice and live in community. This is a very special and extraordinary opportunity to experience keiko and cross-cultural exchange with the international Shintaido community:

Founder **Hiroyuki Aoki** is the Guest Instructor

Four Master Instructors are going to teach:

Haruyoshi Ito
Mitsuru Okada
Michael Thompson
Masashi Minagawa

Everyone is invited to attend. There will be advanced keiko for ISC Members and general keiko for all other participants.

Sonoma State University is located north of San Francisco near the wine country, surrounded by rolling hills and redwoods. Keiko will be held on soccer fields and grassy lawns near pools of water with mountain views.

The retreat offers apartment-style accommodations, with swimming, biking and walking trails, and outdoor areas for enjoying and relaxing in nature, all close by. We expect to have participants from many countries in a truly multicultural atmosphere.

Text taken from SoA event website

To learn more about the event visit the event website

<http://2012.shintaido.org>

There is also a facebook event page by SoA (Shintaido of America)

**British Shintaido are offering bursaries for those wishing to attend the International event.
A limited number are still available.**

Please contact your instructor for further details if interested.

British Shintaido Examination Report

BS examiners:

Masashi Minagawa

Ula Chambers

Charles Burns

Spring to Autumn 2011 has been a quiet period for examinations.

Examinations were held at Bath Bo Club on 28th June and at the Autumn Shintaido Workshop in Brighton on 13th November. Congratulations to all those who took part.

Here are the results.

Shintaido

Andrew Stones Intermediate (Chuto-ka)

Karate

Andrew Stones 6 kyu

Bojutsu

Laurent Lacroix 8 kyu

Matt Ryan 8 kyu

Andrew Stones 7 kyu

Jamus Wood 8 kyu



Bath Bo Exam Session - June 2011

Programme, Contacts & Classes

2012 Programme

See www.shintaido.co.uk for further details

7-8 January 2012	Kangeiko, Douai Abbey, nr Reading Contact: Kim Chan
5 February 2012	Shintaido Workshop - A way to Inner Peace through Movement, Bristol Contact: Susan Lacroix
15 April 2012	Shintaido Workshop - A way to Inner Peace through Movement, Bristol Contact: Susan Lacroix
3-6 July 2012	Shintaido International - San Francisco, California Contact: Charles Burns

Contacts

BSC

Chair	Ula Chambers	01273 390541	ula.chambers@ntlworld.com
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BS Management:

Chairman	Geoff Warr	01843 583483	gandmwarr@btinternet.com
Treasurer	Charles Burns	0118 9476808	charles@shintaido.co.uk
Newsletter	Emi Minagawa	07906 506804	newsletter@shintaido.co.uk

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Ramsgate	Geoff Warr	01843 583483	gandmwarr@btinternet.com
Reading	Charles Burns	0118 9476808	charles@shintaido.co.uk
Stroud	Katrina Horne	07969 167838	katrina@shintaido.co.uk

Regular Classes

Classes led by current BS instructors or assistants. Shintaido classes and their venues may change, so please check before attending an unfamiliar class

Monday	Farnham, Farnham Maltings. Ramsgate, evening. Shintaido or Tai-Chi	7.30 - 9.00pm	Shintaido
Tuesday	Nailsworth, Christchurch Hall. Bath, University of Bath.	1.30 - 3.30pm 7.30 - 9.00pm	Lightwaves Class Bath Bojutsu Club
Thursday	Bristol, Greenway Centre. Brighton, Hollingbury Methodist Church.	10.30 - 11.30am 8.00 - 10.00pm	Shintaido for people with Learning Difficulties Shintaido
Weekends	Specialist classes with any BS Instructor. Available by appointment.		

Taimyo

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Taimyo Next Issue - Spring 2012. Thank you to all who contributed articles. Please send further articles, pictures and ideas to newsletter@shintaido.co.uk