

40th Anniversary edition

Celebrating 40 years of British Shintaido

Impressions of the Kangeiko Douai Abbey - 5th - 6th January 2013

by Susan Lacroix



As this is the 40th anniversary of British Shintaido, the theme 'Reflecting on our journey and energizing the new' was particularly meaningful. For each of us, there was time to reflect on what this journey had been, how we had come to this point and what we had come with. We could also acknowledge how the unknown was frightening but together we could find the inspiration to go forward towards it. Gathering at the beginning to share our hopes for our practice, words such as light, freedom, openness, joy, expansion, blue and cleansing were offered. After a short but profound meditation we went to the field to begin the keiko, and Minagawa sensei explained the focus of the afternoon, which was to be eiko application. He began by speaking of the sword. Though we no longer need it as a weapon in daily life, and despite the destruction it can bring, it is still meaningful for us, for example in cutting through encumbrances, and in cleansing and purifying. The master sword makers would purify themselves inwardly and outwardly as well as their workspace before beginning

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work on a sword. At the international gasshuku last year, Aoki sensei showed a film of himself using the sword to perform katas in the tsunami stricken areas to purify and cleanse the suffering of both the survivors and the souls of the dead. This was a beautiful illustration of how a weapon could bring healing, not death.

The sword can cut through all that is unnecessary, and Minagawa sensei asked us to learn a kata for bokutoh using eight (a number which implies many, or countless) directions to cut or polish the diamond of ourselves. It began with a tsuki similar to the taimyo movement of reppaku or breaking through the mountain, continuing with chudan, gedan and jodan cuts and ending with a powerful daijodan from heaven to earth. In the cutting we were encouraged to see whatever was before us, aspects of ourselves, which we perhaps found unacceptable, or hard to bear, without trying to avoid or change them. Little by little the cuts helps cleanse and polish whatever is there. As I felt that I had yet again arrived with all my familiar baggage this was a welcome and wonderful opportunity and helped me find the wish to continue my efforts when I began to flag, since so much – the possibility of really entering into this – was at stake.

After practicing the kata standing in kidadachi, we then began moving around the practice field, and finally worked in kumite. Whilst watching some of the demonstrations by others, so much power was built up that I experienced receiving some of the energy of the cuts from the sidelines.

By this time the sun was setting and we could hear the bird song, which for me added to the feeling of being part of and in tune with the surroundings.

In the evening after a splendid and relaxed supper we came together and were invited to each light a candle to be placed in a bowl of water to represent our wish for this year. When all the candles had been lit they spun gently round together, as we had done standing very close and swaying together while listening to Minagawa sensei's explanation of the sword at the start of the afternoon keiko. There was a sense of community as well as warmth, listening to each other and receiving. Candles were also lit for those unable to be with us and for those we have yet to meet in Shintaido.

The following morning after matins there was a choice of meditation, taimyo or shoko to enjoy. I chose the latter and, though demanding, it was extremely rewarding. I felt moved and deeply grateful for the support of others and Ula and Minagawa sensei's, experiencing a rare groundedness and stability despite also struggling with my own resistance. Returning from the practice, Minagawa sensei commented that each step to and from the dojo was part of a path, and this too was enriching and shocking, as too often I am concerned with getting there or getting back to experience those moment, thus losing much of what was gained from any keiko I might have done.



We gathered again for the morning keiko and Minagawa sensei explained that the theme was tenshingoso applications and we would first practice the previous day's eight directions alone, while he and the senior instructors, though present, would disappear and let us discover for ourselves. There was a short but lively warm up, including one hand tenshingoso and then we began to practice. The instructors were available to help us if we struggled, but otherwise we were free to explore the movement. This brought to mind what Minagawa sensei had said when recounting how some students would look at the master and his finger pointing out the direction but learning is better served by looking at and following the direction itself, not the master. Questions were asked about moving from the last jodan to the final daijodan and about focus and bounds, and we were reminded that the most important thing was to be clear in the directions from start to finish, to link each movement without losing concentration and to keep our visions forward whatever is happening as the bokutoh moves to the sides of our physical focus. We were also encouraged to know that we

can do it, which particularly helped me as self doubt us part of what needs to be cut through in myself.

We then moved to exploring tenshingoso. Starting with the four elements of ah/eh and ee/oh, we practiced the pairs of movements first with open hand, and then by holding the bokutoh in one hand while doing the movements open handed with the other, passing the bokutoh from hand to hand. This was then incorporated into the full tenshingoso application.

Then we practiced eiko dai on the spot (or zombie eiko as it had been called at the Joyful Shintaido workshop given in Bristol in November). This involved very fast running in one place while maintaining the eiko feeling. This was expanded into kumite with the partners cutting in Daijodan, chudan or jodan. Minagawa sensei reminded us of the concept of "last chance". He told us the story of a very successful baseball player who had joined American team but did badly until he realized that saving his resources was useless and everything had to be given and expressed at each moment, at which point he became successful again. This was the theme of the kangeiko, and we were encouraged to put everything, our whole life, into each movement. This was deeply serious yet at the same time there was a feeling of freedom and joy in the keiko.

We were unable to follow the instruction to do "one" last cut, in our eiko kumite, carrying on because no one wanted to stop. However time had not stopped and we had to close, with a final shoko and tenso, Masashi urging us to go higher and higher. As I brought down my bokutoh I saw a sort of flame at the end of it, which persisted. I do not know what to make of this but certainly it seemed a wonderful image of my experience of the two days. Walking back from the dojo I felt full of gratitude, and that everything I needed was within. This reminded me of what Masashi had told us, that the master is within, and a new confidence and quietness appeared.

There was yet another splendid meal to enjoy before the closing ceremony. Viola was universally acknowledged for her wonderful work in bringing the kangeiko about and the smoothness of the whole organisation. Others referred to the community feeling and the sharing of the household tasks such as cooking, and the companionship. Many of us were very moved in giving an impression of our experience. There was throughout the feeling of being held, not only in keiko, but also with every detail of the weekend having been thought out and cared for. Everyone had played a part and had really come together. One of us spoke about being alternately like a child and a rebellious adolescent and how this could now be seen and accepted. Masashi responded by pointing to his own quality of playfulness, which was so evident throughout. The way to be a real adult without losing that quality of playfulness remains a question for me.

So a very very big thank you to everyone who participated and made the kangeiko possible and so valuable, and thank you to the instructors for their teaching, especially Minagawa sensei. ■



All photographs courtesy of Dave Hampton. Kangeiko 2013

Hopes and Dreams *The Shintaido International 2012 - a personal report*

by Charles Burns

Last March Jim Sterling sent a message to all of us, who had registered for the July 2012 Shintaido International event in California, asking us to share our 'Hopes & Dreams' in advance of the gasshuku. Although I immediately knew what my hopes and dreams would be I did not send him any reply. I was, at the time, unable to write them down. The feelings I had were too painful, and the words simply did not come. Now, some time after the event has taken place, I am finally able to write them down and share my hopes and dreams. The message I would have sent to Jim, had I been able to find the words, would have been something like this:

"Having lost both my parents in the last 18 months I am seeking to find a way to re-build the centre of my life, now that the circle of my family seems to have been so brutally ripped apart. My hope and dream is that Shintaido will help me to do this."

My mother died first, quite suddenly of heart failure during one of the epileptic fits she was prone to. My father followed her just over a year later, in February of 2012, one week after a stroke which left him entirely unable to communicate. Neither of them left an opportunity to say goodbye, or to voice any of the things one might wish to say to a parent on such an occasion. Dealing with two funerals, together with sorting out the practicalities of my parent's estate, has left me feeling numb, confused, and out-of-touch with my own feelings; like a planet which has suddenly lost a sun to revolve around and goes spinning out into space. Angry, unable to grieve, looking for a new sun.

The theme of the Shintaido International was "Be Like Water", yet right from the start I noticed a subtheme which could perhaps have been written "We Age and Die". In the opening keiko Sterling sensei organised us into groups according to age (the under-30's, under-40's, under-50's, etc), which I have never seen done at a Shintaido event before, and sent us all jumping down the field in our groups. This made us all aware how quickly we seem to move from one group to the next. This was followed that evening by Aoki sensei's video and talk about his work in Sendai, an area of northern Japan recently devastated by the earthquake and tsunami. Here he has been using his expertise in martial arts, and in particular sword movement, as a kind of Shinto-style offering to help the spirits of the many people who died so suddenly there. He described the atmosphere in Sendai as not just forlorn and foul smelling, but replete with a deeply ominous and negative atmosphere, which he put down to a 'spiritual echo' of those who had lost their lives.

This reminded me (although it didn't really help) of all the people in the world whose family centres are torn from them in ways far more brutal than my own. The following day, back in the dojo, Ito sensei built on this sub-theme by asking us to remember those Shintaido friends who have passed away. Names were listed, beginning with Stuart Blackburn from the UK; there were a surprisingly large number of them. We were also asked to think about all the people who may have lived before in the beautiful county of Sonoma, California (where the event took place) including the native Americans who were now so conspicuous by their absence.

Calling to mind the dead was easy for me, as they were never far from my thoughts. Their memory informed all my practice, both in keiko and the two exams I took, throughout the event.

During the final keiko, which I had been looking forward to as a moment I could relax and enjoy after the exams, Aoki sensei interrupted my kumite with Carol (a new Shintaido friend from Quebec) to give me some very direct and personal exam feedback: feedback which seemed to go straight through me and open me up as effectively as if he had cut me with a sword. Aoki began by talking a little about the theme of the gasshuku, and what it means to 'be like water'. He explained that in nature, water exists in three states: ice, liquid water, and vapour. In my exams he had observed me presenting very clearly two of these three states: sometimes my movement flowed like water, and at other times I was like steam. Further, he said I seemed to be changing very rapidly - and unpredictably - from one state to the other, which made me - as he put it - "too hot to handle". The inimitable onomatopoeia he used to describe this was "fiza-fiza-fiza-BAN!", the final 'ban' being accompanied by wide-open kaisho hands.

Aoki went on to say that since I was exhibiting these two states so clearly it was safe to assume that, although I was keeping it well hidden from him, I must also be carrying large quantities of the third state: ice.

"Was this so?" he asked.



Photograph courtesy of Charlotte Stace. Shintaido International 2012

"Yes" I could only reply, as the implication of this observation made me suddenly feel inexplicably ill. He explained that this ice had formed deep inside, but was driving my explosive keiko. Since ice (unlike water and vapour) can only change its state very slowly, there was perhaps nothing I could do about this, so he advised me simply to be aware of its existence, to keep it in mind and allow this knowledge to modify my actions. However as soon as he spoke these words I knew he had given me the answer to the 'Hopes & Dreams' message I failed to send Jim last March: in order to find a new centre to my life I need to find a way to begin to melt some of the ice that has formed in my heart. ■

Another side of Aoki Sensei

by Pam Minagawa

I remember one particular gasshuku. It was in Chiba, which is to the east of Tokyo. It was a very popular place to hold gasshukus as there are many long beaches along the Pacific coast.

There were probably about 50 people at the gasshuku, including one young mother and her 2 year old daughter, Akiyo chan.

There was, as usual, a large room for the women to sleep in and a large room for the men. The first person would lay their futon down at one end of the room, and gradually as people arrived and settled in they would lay out their futon alongside. If there were a lot of people, two rows of futon would be laid out, all heads together in the centre, feet pointing out to the edges. Harada San, with her young daughter, was the first to lay out her futon. I was a couple of spaces down from her, to her right.

By about midnight we were all tired after long keiko, dinner, lecture etc, and most of us went to bed. The little girl started crying and screaming. No matter what her mother did, she could not console her daughter. She cradled her, carried her, took her outside, soothed her, rocked her, but no matter what, as soon as she lay the little girl down the screaming started again. No body could sleep. About 2 hours passed.

All of a sudden a thunderbolt entered the room... Aoki had thrown open the door and was glaring at every one. In a split second he took in the situation, looked at Harada san and said "Move your futon to the other end". She picked up her bedding (with some help from others) made her bed at the far right end of the row, laid the little girl down and within ten seconds she was sleeping peacefully.

I later asked Aoki sensei about this and he explained to me that energy is given out to the right and taken in

from the left. Every body was on the right side of Akiyo chan, so we were all taking her energy. It was draining her and she could not bear it. By putting Akiyo chan on the far right, she naturally absorbed all of our energy and this was a comfortable place for her to be.

Another time, another gasshuku, again in Chiba but a different beach. Masashi and I arrived a little early and Masashi asked me to sit with Aoki sensei while he sorted things for the gasshuku. I sat on Aoki sensei's right! As I poured him some tea he suddenly looked me straight in the eyes and said "You are pregnant!". Indeed, although I didn't realise at the time, I was about 6 weeks pregnant. When I asked how he knew he explained that when I sat next to him his energy was suddenly pulled from him in a different way, the way an unborn baby pulls energy from its mother.

On another occasion Aoki sensei held a special gasshuku for the foreigners. He was going to introduce us to Mikkyo (Mystical or Secret Buddhism). It was going to be quite a long gasshuku, lasting about 1 week. I think we were all very excited but also somewhat fearful of such a long gasshuku as Japanese gasshukus tended to be quite exhausting. However this event was going to take place in northern Japan, up in the mountains where snow is several meters deep in winter. It was a long train journey and Masashi had booked 2 tickets for myself and Aoki sensei, asking me to take care of him.

We arrived in Akita and were met by Jugoro san, Ito sensei's younger brother. We travelled by car for another 30 minutes or so, up in to the mountains. There were no shops, nothing but mountains and valleys. Occasionally we passed old farm houses and small huts. Finally we walked. We had arrived at a group of mountain lodges where we were to stay. There was no body else there. Jugoro had brought up all our food and provisions for the week. We cooked and cleaned for ourselves. The whole area was volcanic, and there were many natural hot springs. Some were open-air pools, some had structures built around them. Some were quite large, some were small. There were many different pools with different minerals in the water.

It was a magical time. Most of the keiko took place in the hot springs. We looked at energy moving between us. We looked at how people changed according to where in the group they sat. We looked at how sometimes some one would look big, sometimes small. We also learnt about shiatsu. Aoki sensei gave many lectures about meditation and it was as if we were in a state of deep meditation for the whole time. It was as if we were in a time warp, in a different space. For one keiko we walked. We came across a road and sat down. We, a strange group of foreigners wearing white keiko gi, were literally in the middle of no where, sitting beside a road, learning about shiatsu and the flow of energy, and right beside us was a group of elderly Japanese people waiting for a bus! I have a photograph (*below*). We didn't see them and they didn't appear to see us. It seems we were invisible to them. To this day I don't quite know where we were (literally).

All through the event Aoki sensei's face changed. One minute he was a playful boy of about 10, then, he was a young man, then a wise old master.

We climbed to the top of a mountain. On the way down, as the sun set, the stragglers at the end of the group were treated to a memorable sight. We looked back and saw Aoki sensei on the path above us, performing the most beautiful kata. It went on and on and he was bathed in the beautiful rays of the setting sun, silhouetted against the background. He was on fire and so was the sky around him.



After the gasshuku finished most of the group headed back to Tokyo. Aoki sensei was completely exhausted

and needed time to replenish his energy. He suggested to me that we travel for a while and he invited John and Lee Seaman to join us. The four of us set off. We visited apple orchards (this is Japan's apple growing region), stayed in small rural villages, bathed in the local public hot springs. Wherever we went Aoki sensei knew somebody.

We ended up in Aomori, the most northern town of Honshu Island. From there Aoki sensei suggested we take the local bus up around the peninsula to Osore Zan, the weirdest place I have ever been. This is at the top of the tip nearest to Hokkaido. It is a dormant volcano and means 'Mountain of Fear' or 'Mountain of Awe'. In ancient times, when the peasants were so poor they could hardly feed their families, another baby was a terrible burden. Sometimes the mothers would have to leave their babies on the mountains to die. One place they would come to was Osore Zan. It is a heart wrenchingly sad place. It feels like being on the moon. The ground is stoney and dry. There is a beautiful round lake filling the crater. At the edge of the crater are many rocks which have been thrown out from the bowels of the earth. One huge rock is flat and shaped like a throne. Aoki sensei told us that monks would come and sit here to meditate. The beauty of heaven in front, the lunar moonscape behind, it really felt like a place between two worlds. All around there are small piles of stones, offerings to the spirits, helping them to build bridges across the river so they can reach heaven. You must never touch a stone, or you may be condemning a spirit to eternal limbo. Many mediums come here to talk to the spirits. Aoki sensei told me to take photos because sometimes you see the faces of spirits. We didn't see any.

There is a shrine there and a lodge where people can stay. It was a strange place, filled with the strangest people I have ever met. The long halls had paper screens, which sort of made semi partitions. The people in the space next to us were strange. There was a lot of chanting and weird noises coming through the paper screens all through the night. Every time we saw them they had changed their clothing, old kimono, flowing robes.... We went outside to take a bath in the hot springs, and it was very spooky. We all stayed close together and close to Aoki sensei. Nobody slept much that night.

In the morning we took the bus back to Aomori, and Aoki sensei decided to teach us an old traditional folk song. We were happily singing along when the person behind us interrupted and congratulated us on our beautiful singing (!). This person turned out to be one of the top pop stars of the time. It was rather like being congratulated by Lady Gaga!

We took the train back to Tokyo and arrived just in time for Friday evening keiko at the Olympic stadium at Sendagaya. The keiko was being held outside on the running track. It is hard to imagine a busier place. Every centimetre of space was occupied. The track was crammed with athletes practising hurdles, 100 metres, 500 metres etc.. The area in the centre was packed with other groups warming up, stretching, American football teams kitted out in the full regalia, and amidst all of this was the Shintaido group, about 40 people trying to dodge in and out, doing kai kyaku sho, eiko and kiri harai. Aoki sensei had recovered his energy from

the Akita gasshuku and we were still in a state of heightened awareness. I looked around me and saw golden dust everywhere, floating down from heaven. Everything was so peaceful and calm. Aoki sensei asked Lee and myself to show Shinsingoso kumite to the group.

I am so honoured to have had the chance to spend these times travelling with Aoki sensei and to have so many wonderful memories. The stories could go on. Maybe one day I will write some more... ■



FUJICOLOR 79

Taimyo Imagery

by Andrew Stones

Recently I've been exploring using some visual imagery during some of the movements of Taimyo kata. I've found this imagery personally very satisfying to work with, so I thought I'd share it.

The movements I am going to speak of are the sequence of movements that come at the end of section 2 and the beginning of section 3, that is to say: YOSHIN(2) followed by HACHIJI DACHI ZANSHIN followed by HITORI WAKAME followed by KI ICHI I.

This is how I like to do them:

In the Yoshin (2) movement, I like to imagine that I am standing in a column of light, receiving energy from Heaven. I raise my hands up to embrace this light, as I allow it to pour down on me and through me. The hands then mimic and enhance this flow of light as they stroke down my body and all the way down to Hachiji dachi Zanshin.

When Ito sensei demonstrates this hachiji dachi in his DVD he holds his fingers angled slightly outwards like the roof of a house; this suggests to me that this hachiji dachi is not just a normal run-of-the-mill hachiji dachi. As I stand in this posture I continue to imagine the heavenly energy pouring down and through me. As I stand in this column of light I imagine that I myself become part of the column – my body as a kind of conduit – heavenly energy flowing down and through me into the earth bellow. I imagine myself standing as a link from heaven to earth in this way. As I imagine the energy continuing to flow, as I stand in hachiji dachi zanshin, I imagine the heavenly energy penetrating deep into the earth below. Right down, lower and lower it penetrates, until I imagine it touches the very centre of the planet. At this point the Earth smiles and responds. It's as if Heaven has tickled Earth, through me, and the Earth now chuckles, and delights in joining in the game. The way the Earth joins in is that She begins to send her own beam of Earth energy up from the centre of the planet, back up to meet me. Up and up it comes, from the centre of the planet. All the way, up and up, until at last it meets me and starts flowing into me. And now an interesting thing happens. The Earth energy is very healing for the physical body. It's very lovely therapeutic energy. And it's very good at releasing blockages. One of the ways the blockage-releasing process manifests in the physical body is through spontaneous movements (compare the "Spontaneous chi kung" of Hua Gong, and "Facial Unwinding" of Craniosacral therapy).

As the Earth energy flows up into me, I try and sense where it's naturally wanting to release my body and also how it's wanting to release it, and in what rhythm and manner, and then I allow my body to go with that, and it becomes Hitori Wakame. And so the Hitori Wakame is not really "Solo Wakame" any more. I do have a partner who is gently and therapeutically pushing me! My partner is the Earth energy now rising up to meet me and join me! I sense where and how this energy wants to nudge me...and I try and allow it. I enjoy this as long as I like...sensing for the releases and the unblocking of my energy.

After a while I feel clearer. It's like the Heavenly energy flushed me out from above down; and now the Earth energy has flushed me out from down up. Spiritual Dyno-rod. Now I allow myself to come to peace, allowing my body to come to rest in Ki Ichi I (the first of the Ritsuju meisoho sequence in Taimyo). A theme of Ki-Ichi-I as I understand it, is One-ness. So now I just stand, allowing the Heavenly and Earthly energies to continue to flow into me. The Heavenly energy continues to flow down into me and through me and filling me from above, and the Earthly energy rising up and filling me from below. And now these energies are joining in me. Melding in me. Becoming as one. A synthesis of Heaven and Earth. And filling, and melding, and filling, and melding, and becoming one, and brightening, and brightening, and brightening, and intensifying.....until.... brrrrriinnnggg.....I cannot help but light up like a light bulb as my arms spontaneously role out into Hoko-I, and I begin what seems to me to be the "triumph", the "finale" of Taimyo: the full Ritsuju meisoho sequence. Having received from Heaven and Earth, we now get to give – to share the light. Ritsuju meisoho is surely where we get to save the world! Though art the Light! Let the Light Shine!

Joyful Shintaido Almondsbury Workshop

by Peter Furtado

Ever done keiko in the Tardis? You would have if you had come to Masashi's workshop on 11 November.

Explaining that when Aoki Sensei developed Shintaido with Rakutenkai in the 1960s, they often practised in tiny dojos, Masashi proceeded to give us an extraordinary taste of how to achieve a very 'dai' feeling in a very 'sei' space.

Starting by sitting on chairs, we thought this was going to be gentle keiko for oldies, but renki kumite and tenshingoso kumite (in groups of three, and in canon), soon built a fluid, flexible space and showed us that we had to engage deeply through the koshi, despite the restricted movement possible when sitting.

We stayed sitting for taikimai -opening up a big space first in our imagination only, then in our bodies, then 'running on the spot' (while still planted on our bums). Finally full eiko dai, sitting, drumming on the floor with our feet. The tiny, low room opened into wide open space around us.

Next, traditional toitsukihon (yes, upright, in musubidachi and fudodachi), with the gorei building the intensity that was only enhanced by the squash (two lines of practitioners, and just three cuts to the end of the dojo). Then, eiko dai kumite, zombie-style – with the person cutting dai running on the spot, or moving forward only fractionally. When we moved on to one-cuts-two, or one-cuts-three, the focus had to be on accurate cutting, and using every square inch to make the space we needed. So powerful that it was as exhausting as doing it on the beach.

To end, we came back to earth, and sealed this mysterious vast-yet-tiny space, with silent, sitting taimyo.

To judge by this instance, this series of classes, run by Susan and Laurent Lacroix, are a joy. They offer keiko for practitioners both old and young (in physical years and in keiko-years), and keiko that is rooted in Masashi's unique knowledge of Shintaido's past yet clearly focused on its future. Don't miss the next one....

Tenshingoso Tree

by Andrew Stones

As my arms spread and reach upwards with "Ah", my tall branches stretch towards the sky and embrace the sunshine.

As my arms rotate inwards and I breathe in, my leaves draw in the sunlight energy all the way down into the heart-wood of my trunk.

As my arms descend down and out with "Eh" I send the sunlight energy down through my trunk, right down through into the earth spreading outwards through my roots under the ground.

As I breathe in and draw my hands down to my waist, I draw up nourishment and water, and the combined sunlight energy and earth energy, up through my roots, back up into my heart-wood.

As I extend my hands forwards and up with "Ee", I connect to my brothers and sisters, my fellow trees around me; I notice that there are trees in woods and groves and forests, as far as the eye can see, to the horizon all around me.

As I breathe in, lifting my arms up and back, my leaves breathe in carbon dioxide from the air all around, and as I breathe out with "Oh", my leaves breathe out oxygen into the atmosphere all around; my gift to animals and humans of the whole planet.

And as my hands come back towards me as I breathe in, and then sink as I breathe out with "Un" I come to rest and peace in the completeness of who I am....a tree.



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Each workshop costs:

- £23 for non British Shintaido members
- £18 for British Shintaido members.

The venue is:

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email. slacroix@btinternet.com





Announcing the 2013 BS Daienshu

Douai Abbey
24th-26th May 2013

Hanami in England
Celebrating 40 years
of Shintaido Flowering in the UK

**led by Masashi Minagawa
and BS Instructors**

One of my early memories of Shintaido practice 32 years ago was doing Sanshin kata under a blossoming cherry tree in Bristol, enjoying the sunshine through the flowers and then having a picnic with digestives and tea in china cups. It was my introduction to Hanami (flower viewing), the Japanese custom of enjoying the beauty of the blossoming of sakura or ume, (cherry or plum trees). Cherry and plum trees are planted alongside the Old Deer Park in Richmond, where Sunday morning keiko was practised for 10 years or more, and in those days we would look forward to seeing the beautiful colours of the trees each year as we ran eiko around the park.

The tradition of Hanami can be traced back to 3rd century Japan, and these days Hanami festivals are a chance to relax and enjoy the beautiful view. The blossoms also symbolise clouds, extreme beauty and the transience of life. Much as my first experience of Hanami in England had a unique British slant on the Japanese festival, so I feel that our Shintaido has become imbued with the British character.

The metaphor of the cherry blossom has been with us during these last 40 years; moments of extreme beauty experienced deep in our hearts, friends who have flowered and left, whilst the tree of Shintaido has deepened its roots in the British soil, and spread its branches.

The Japanese cherry tree, though slow growing, is one of the varieties of cherry tree that has been transplanted into English soil where it has established itself as popular blossoming tree. My hope is that Shintaido practice and culture will take enough time to establish itself in the UK and will produce both abundant beautiful blossoms and much fruit for future generations.

As we celebrate our 40 years anniversary in May 2013, we can enjoy a Shintaido Hanami—the flowering of the present generation of Shintaido practitioners, and together look forward to the fruitful future that lies ahead.

(Ula Chambers, Senior Instructor)

Exams will be offered in Shintaido, Bojustu and Karate up to Assistant or 1st kyu level.

Another announcement will follow at the beginning of January 2013 with the opening of early bird registrations.

For further information please contact Nagako Cooper

Tel: 01453 750598 E-mail: coopernagako@hotmail.com

Hanami in England *Celebrating 40 years of Shintaido Flowering in the UK*

by Ula Chambers

Insert from poster

One of my early memories of Shintaido practice 32 years ago was doing Sanshin kata under a blossoming cherry tree in Bristol, enjoying the sunshine through the flowers and then having a picnic with digestives and tea in china cups. It was my introduction to Hanami (flower viewing), the Japanese custom of enjoying the beauty of the blossoming of sakura or ume, (cherry or plum trees). Cherry and plum trees are planted alongside the Old Deer Park in Richmond, where Sunday morning keiko was practised for 10 years or more, and in those days we would look forward to seeing the beautiful colours of the trees each year as we ran eiko around the park.

The tradition of Hanami can be traced back to 3rd century Japan, and these days Hanami festivals are a chance to relax and enjoy the beautiful view. The blossoms also symbolise clouds, extreme beauty and the transience of life. Much as my first experience of Hanami in England had a unique British slant on the Japanese festival, so I feel that our Shintaido has become imbued with the British character.

The metaphor of the cherry blossom has been with us during these last 40 years; moments of extreme beauty experienced deep in our hearts, friends who have flowered and left, whilst the tree of Shintaido has deepened its roots in the British soil, and spread its branches.

The Japanese cherry tree, though slow growing, is one of the varieties of cherry tree that has been transplanted into English soil where it has established itself as a popular blossoming tree. My hope is that Shintaido practice and culture will take enough time to establish itself in the UK and will produce both abundant beautiful blossoms and much fruit for future generations.

As we celebrate our 40 years anniversary in May 2013, we can enjoy a Shintaido Hanami - the flowering of the present generation of Shintaido practitioners, and together look forward to the fruitful future that lies ahead.

GENTLE SHINTAIDO

With Nagako Cooper

The flow of ki (energy)

Health

Meditation



This class is especially designed for people 40+, seniors, or in fact, anyone who would like to take up a regular gentle exercise program.

Through gentle exercises, soft movements and meditation, we can activate the flow of ki (energy) within our bodies promoting health and inner peace.

The class will begin with gentle warm-up and massage to release tension and soften our muscles.

Time: Thursdays from 10:30 –11:30 a.m.

Venue: Old Town Hall, Stroud

Cost: Block 1 £20 (for the 4 sessions), Block 2 £25 (for the 5 sessions)
or single drop-in £6 per session

Contact: Nagako Cooper Tel. 01453 750598
Email. coopernagako@hotmail.com
www.shintaido.co.uk

British Shintaido Examination Report

BS examiners:

Masashi Minagawa

Ula Chambers

Charles Burns

Examinations took place at the BS Autumn workshop in Brighton and Bath. Congratulations to all those who took part.

Here are the results.

Shintaido

Ollie Goodall	Shoto-ka
Laurent Lacroix	Chuto-ka
Susan Lacroix	Chuto-ka
Matt Vandre	Chuto-ka
Andrew Stones	Joshu
Terry Bickers	Joshu

Karate

Alex Hooper	6 kyu
Paul Buck	6 kyu

Bojutsu

Andrew Stones	4 kyu
Laurent Lacroix	4 kyu
Susan Lacroix	4 kyu
Alex Hooper	3 kyu

Programme, Contacts & Classes

2013-2014 Programme

See www.shintaido.co.uk for further details

24-26 May 2013	Daienshu at Douai Abbey, near Reading Contact: Nagako Cooper - cooopermagako@hotmail.com
23 June 2013	Shintaido Workshop - Joyful Shintaido II - Eiko Applications, Bristol Contact: Susan Lacroix - slacroix@btinternet.com
5 September 2013	Shintaido Workshop - Joyful Shintaido III - Hikari Applications, Bristol Contact: Susan Lacroix - slacroix@btinternet.com
4-5 January 2014	Kangeiko at Douai Abbey, near Reading
23-25 May 2014	Daienshu at Douai Abbey, near Reading

Contacts

Chairman	Charles Burns	0118 9476808	charles@shintaido.co.uk
Treasurer	Peter Furtado	01865 251234	pfurtado1543@gmail.com
Co-ordinator	Pam Minagawa	0117 9570897	pam@shintaido.co.uk
BSC Chair	Ula Chambers	01273 390541	ula.chambers@ntlworld.com
BSC Co-ordinator	Carina Hamilton	01252 728078	carina_jamie@onetel.com
Newsletter	Emi Minagawa	07906 506804	newsletter@shintaido.co.uk
Merchandising	Miles Bennett		
Equipment	Laurent Lacroix		
Exam Co-ordinator*	Nagako Cooper	07906 586674	cooopermagako@hotmail.com

*from Autumn 2013

Local Contacts:

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Nailsworth	Nagako Cooper	07906 586674	cooopermagako@hotmail.com
Oxford	Peter Furtado	01865 251234	pfurtado1543@gmail.com
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	Reading, St Barnabas Church Hall	1.00 - 3.00pm	Bojutsu
	Ramsgate, Contact Geoff Warr.	evenings	Shintaido or Tai Chi
Tuesday	Nailsworth, Christchurch Hall.	1.30 - 3.30pm	Lightwaves Class
	Bath, University of Bath.	8.00 - 9.30pm	Bath Bojutsu Club
Wednesday	Bristol, Dancespace, Bridewell Street	7.45 - 9.15pm	Shintaido
Thursday	Bristol, Greenway Centre.	10.30 - 11.30am	Shintaido for people with Learning Difficulties
	Stroud, Old Town Hall	10.30 - 11.30am	Gentle Shintaido
	Brighton, Hollingbury Methodist Church.	8.00 - 10.00pm	Shintaido
Friday	Reading, Clayfield Copse playing fields	7.30 - 8.30am	Shintaido/Bo tutorial
Weekends	Specialist classes with any BS Instructor. Available by appointment.		

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Taimyo Next Issue - Autumn 2013. Thank you to all who contributed articles. Please send further articles, pictures and ideas to newsletter@shintaido.co.uk