

Excerpts from an Interview with Masashi Minagawa talking about the making of

Tenshingoso Arrangements DVD translated by Masahiro Minagawa



Can you explain simply about Shintaido-Tsuki ? What is the unique point of view about Shintaido-Tsuki ?

Egami Shigeru Sensei was searching for an effective tsuki. He discovered that by relaxing the body and changing the angle of the wrist, the tsuki became far more effective. He also discovered that the most powerful tsuki goes through rather than just striking the surface, enters into and through the recipient. He discovered that this type of tsuki was the strongest. Aoki Sensei developed this further and he found that Kaishouken was the most efficient. I think that it was this development which led to the start of Shintaido.

In a kumite situation, the important thing is to feel the partner's ki or energy. Then use that connection or 'ma' to gradually synchronise with your partner. We learnt that this should be the first aim of kumite. This is why, when faced with multiple attackers, if you are only concerned with one person at a time then you lose sight of the flow. By perceiving the tsuki as a big flow of energy, you can go with that flow and become one with your partner, then become one with your surroundings. Keep expanding this concept and become one with the massive cosmic flow of the universe. Through the movements of kumite we can use Shintaido as a method to achieve this image.

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What drew you to Tenshingoso?

Aoki Sensei said that the world of Tenshingoso starts at zero or from nothing and returns to nothing. There may be many phenomena but eventually it returns to nothingness or to be part of a great energy. This rather Oriental/Eastern ideology appealed to me. I personally believe that the aim of kumite isn't defeating your opponent, it's not about conflict. It is about connecting with the person, exploring their consciousness and about unifying yourself, a micro universe.

Egami Sensei was the innovator of a new tsuki. It wasn't just about knocking down an opponent, but going through and into that person. Aoki Sensei developed this further and said that we can also enter into that person's world.

This is my personal opinion but the heart or essence of all traditional Japanese martial arts (budo), Japanese Buddhism, Japanese Philosophy all give the same message Through Shintaido, using the body as a medium we can find this same message. The appeal of Tenshingoso is that the form is very clear and simple so that anyone can do it. Further study of this will allow you to obtain the wisdom of our ancestral masters.

Can you talk something about Mudras, meditation and Tenshingoso?

Aoki Sensei once told me the original idea behind Tenshingoso was the hand positions of the various buddhist sculptures (mudras). He was discussing kata with Egami Sensei and how, as it got passed down through various martial arts, such as karate, the forms gradually deteriorated. This led to the misunderstanding of the original form and the association of martial arts (budo) with violence and fighting

So, Egami Sensei determined to "clean up" the various kata which now existed. Egami Sensei entrusted Aoki Sensei with this research project. One of the principle aims of this was to create a new kata which was applicable to all the techniques of various martial arts. But Aoki Sensei had in his mind at the same time not only to restrict this to martial techniques but also to various fields he was studying at the time. These included meditation, breathing technique, Shiatsu and other healing techniques and the different schools of Buddhism such as Mountain Buddhism, Shinsenjutsu and its esoteric teachings. It was his vision to create a kata/form that could easily be practiced by anyone irrespective of age, gender or ability.

The many hand movements and positions (mudras) are martial techniques and also healing and massage techniques. By adding voice to Tenshingoso, you can practice breathing techniques and learn how to improve the flow of ki. There is so much essence within it. The Tenshingoso Arrangements programme began as a result of my exploration into this aspect of Tenshingoso

You mentioned few times about Aoki sensei and Egami sensei. May be you could explain a little about who they are ?

Gichin Funakoshi Sensei was the master who bought karate to mainland Japan from Okinawa. Shigeru Egami Sensei was one of his top disciples

As I mentioned earlier, it was Egami Sensei who developed this new tsuki during his pursuit for greater power and tsuki. He believed that karate could be more effective and his research resulted in a tsuki where the shoulder movement is more smooth and reaching with a relaxed body, similar to the current style that is practiced by Shotokai Karate now.

During his search for the ultimate tsuki, Egami Sensei was told that there was a great master. This was how he came to be introduced to Morihei Ueshiba Sensei, the founder of Aikido. After discovering that he was no match for Ueshiba Sensei, Egami sensei realized that there are many great people in the world. He studied Aikido/Aikijujutsu under the tutelage of Hoken (later, Noriaki) Inoue Sensei, founder of Shineitaido (Shinwataido), nephew of Ueshiba Sensei and reputed to have been as strong as him.



Everything that Egami Sensei learnt from these masters, and I think we can include Aikijujutsu in this, from throwing techniques to Japanese sword movements, was passed onto Aoki Sensei. I heard that during the final year of his life, Egami Sensei talked about creating a kata by fusing Karate-do and Aikijujutsu. Unfortunately, he passed away before realizing this dream.

This is why there are throwing techniques in Shintaido, which is quite unique. It is extremely rare for these movements to be in Karate and Bojutsu.

All the influence from Egami Sensei, Ueshiba sensei, Inoue Sensei has become incorporated into the Shintaido we practice today.

One of the reasons I included throwing techniques as part of Tenshingoso Application programme is because I wanted European people, even those with little martial arts background, to be able to perform these techniques by visualizing them as big energy movements. In Shintaido, we see that when the body and mind are unified, the expression of that movement is very beautiful. Shintaido is about the full expression of yourself.

Can you explain a little bit about Tenshingoso kumite?

In Shintaido we learn many things through kumite. This is not only restricted to Tenshingoso kumite but is a feature of Shintaido's system of study.

There are two ways in Shintaido to reach the Tenshin philosophy. One is to realize this through kumite and the other is through meisou technique, (meditation). One is dynamic, (active) and the other reflective (passive). To practice kumite is to study our connection with the partner. Relax and calm yourself. Through kumite you learn about ma, breathing and ki no nagare (the flow of ki/energy). Through this connection, the first part is self discovery. Let the mind, body and self become one and through the kumite, become one with your partner. Expand this idea a little and become one with your surroundings also.

I think kumite in Shintaido is an incredibly unique system of study. Through kumite, we can understand and empathise with one another. This is very important. We are not alone. We are supported by many people,

gain sustenance from nature, sunlight and other unseen energy and air from the atmosphere. We exist in this moment supported by all of these things and I think that kumite is a body movement or a system of study, which allows us to directly experience Nature's phenomena

Can you explain a little bit difference between Tenshingoso Sei and Dai?

This is an extremely difficult question to answer. Personally, I think that Tenshingoso Sei is about looking inwards, focusing on your inner self. It is very similar to meditation. Tenshingoso sei is very Eastern in that respect, calming yourself and enjoying the tranquility, looking at your inner self, trying to achieve a state of mu (nothingness).

Tenshingoso Dai on the other hand, is about an expression of life, full expression. It is more of a Western art, a place for freedom. I think the movement for Dai comes from expressing everything you have, holding nothing back. That's why you don't have to be overly conscious of form in Dai. Make the movement as big as you can, run around using a big voice and a feeling or sense of freedom. To be able to enjoy all of these things is the reason why I think Dai was created.

If you practice only Sei, the movement becomes too small and contained. So it is important to also practice Dai as well, in order to express yourself with freedom. By practicing both you can maintain the balance between inner and outer elements.

Do you have any practical advice to those who are studying Tenshingoso Arrangements ?

Fundamentally, the most important thing is to enjoy the practice. This application is not definitive and it is not necessary do all of it. You can practice one part, maybe your favourite part. By focusing on this you can enrich your practice and improve your technique. Don't get caught up in selfish thoughts. Whether it's Tenshingoso, Meisou kumite or Eiko, it is my wish that people are able to enjoy Shintaido

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the European Technical Committee who participated in this project. Also to Aoki Sensei, the members of Rakutenkai, Ito Sensei and Michael Thompson Sensei all of whom have supported me for so many years.



All photos courtesy of David Franklin



The Shintaido Tenshingo Arrangements DVD is available from November 2015. Cost 15 Euros.

Shintaido Outreach

by Nagako Cooper

In early September, I received a call from lanto and his wife, Liz who used to come to the Lightwave class and also often attended the annual Gower Gasshuku. They shared with me that their new business "Pathways to Ventures (PTV)" and the Bushcraft Company were co-organizing a 3 days camp for Oxford International College (OIC) students, and invited me to join their team and to lead morning exercises, introducing Shintaido kata and kumite (forms and pair work) within the context of the planned activities at the camp.

This was uncharted territory for me but it sounded quite exciting at the same time. I consulted Minagawa sensei, who kindly supported and encouraged me to jump into the deep water! I made up my mind to say "Yes" to their offer.

The camp took place in an ancient woodland called Wychwood Forest near Oxford, from Thursday morning on the 24th Sept to Saturday afternoon, the 26th Sept.

It was wonderful to meet students from all over the world, - Nigerian, South African, Chinese, Mongolian, Uzbekistan, Korean, Malaysian, Russian, German, Spanish, Iranian and Canadian, about 80 of them all together aged mainly from 16 – 18 years. On arrival at the woodland, we all walked together from the car park to the campsite, which was about 3 miles away, on muddy tracks and across some fields. Some of the students looked as if they were completely out of their comfort zone, not wanting to get their brand new trainers covered with mud!

I was warmly welcomed by the PTV team led by lanto and Liz, with their wonderful group of staff; Mark who works as a mentor for the OIC, Kirsti who is a psychotherapist, Sola who is an African martial artist and storyteller, Rosie who is a contemporary dancer and choreographer, and Reece who is a young volunteer full of fun and energy, and also by Mario, the principal of OIC and his staff, with 2 camp leaders from the Bushcraft company.

The programme involved practical activities like fire lighting, shelter building, etc. led by the Bushcraft leaders, while games, circle times, songs, movements, drumming and storytelling were mainly led by PTV.

Early on Friday, I led morning exercises for the 1st year group of about 50 students, while Sola was leading 2nd year group at the other end of the clearing in the wood. At first, I could see that most of the students would have rather wanted to stay curled up in their sleeping bags. It was even hard just to form a big circle! As soon as we started to move gently with rhythms, they became more awake, and by the time we did Chudan honzuki (mid level thrusting) with kiai (voice), they were really into the movements, enjoying shouting "Ei, Yah, Toh!" After this, I was amazed to hear them repeating my gorei, counting in Japanese, as if echoing back to me. At the end, we finished with massaging each other in a big circle, getting ready for another full day.

I also introduced Renki kumite (Kneading energy pair work) in the gender circle for girls, which Liz was leading, as an introductory exercise to explore Ma (space) and connection with each other, and also did Tenshin goso. Although Liz and I discussed and made a plan, we had to work spontaneously and flexibly, depending on the students' conditions and their mood. It felt natural and easy to do so thanks to Liz's supportive and open energy.

I was quite moved by watching the process of the students' transformation by being out in nature, singing, dancing, moving, eating, sleeping and sharing together. As for myself, I was actually not feeling very well the night before the camp, wondering if I could make it or not, but to my surprise, I was completely healed and got energized by being there, even though it was intensive work.

By the way, on the note of Shintaido outreach, Hawkwood college, where we did some demonstrations and workshops at their Open day and their Seed Festival this summer, have invited us to give a weekend residential Shintaido workshop from 22nd July to 24th July 2016.



It is my wish that the seeds of Shintaido spread like dandelion seeds blowing in the wind, landing wherever they find themselves, growing their roots deep down into the earth and blossoming their nature brightly and happily under the sun.



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It's quite a few years now since I last ran a regular class; my old students have all moved on. I let other things in life get in the way, and I wasn't at all sure how I would promote Shintaido – and myself – in a convincing way. What sort of keiko did I want to offer? Who could I attract? I know how important Shintaido has been to me personally, and what a lot I've got from it – but how to communicate that to people who don't know me, and who've never heard of it?

I felt I'd need personally to demonstrate the benefits in some way – yet I'm not in the first flush of youth nor even as healthy-looking as many others of my age; I'm not a credible martial artist; I'm not a health professional; nor a therapist of any description. How can I frame what Shintaido can do for people, in a comprehensible way and one that I could credibly embody?

But the BS growth strategy day in March demonstrated that we need all the regular local classes we can get. This gave me a friendly kick. Then one morning in June I woke up with the answers, and all the slogans that went with it. By lunchtime I had designed my poster, found and booked a dojo, planned my keiko programme. I was ready.

Oxford is a city with a lot going on – everyone is busy, there are world-class teachers of everything you can think of here. So the next question was (is) how to grab anyone's attention? I sent my poster to everyone I knew who might possibly be interested, and asked them to help by passing it on or sticking it in a local newsagent. But the old route of postering is less good than it was – the number of boards and shops taking posters has drastically fallen, and most posters are for concerts, not classes.

Oxford has a huge listings site so I'm using that, and I know people who have found me there. Primarily, though, I decided to use Facebook, and made a page for Oxford Shintaido where I could post continually about the class, about keiko, about myself. That's good, but the difficulty is still getting noticed. I suggested all my friends like it, which many have done though only a few shared it, which is what I really need. I have had a lot of support from the Shintaido community worldwide, which makes the page look active but is of marginal practical use in promoting a local class.

Still, one way and another I got the word out. First class, three people turned up; second class, five (all of them under 30). Terrific. They arrived through all three channels – digital, posters and word-of-mouth.

One of the challenges is to teach Shintaido to complete beginners, and with no assistant. How am I going to convey the overall idea, give a comprehensible glimpse of what we're aiming for, yet not confuse or overface people? How much touching is OK in a new class with a handful of people who have never met before? What sort of kumite? How to demonstrate it? How much running and jumping (you don't know the age or ability range in advance)?

Judging by the feedback after each class, I think I got the balance pretty much OK on this. BUT....

Third class, it was dark and pelting with rain. No-one turned up. I wasn't surprised - I got soaked from cycling there, and wouldn't have ventured out that evening otherwise. Fourth class (a warm bright night), no-one again. Fifth class, no-one again.

In the interim, I renewed the postering campaign, and kept the Facebook page alive by posting videos or other material of the keiko that I'd planned. Two of the guys who had come before got in touch via FB to say



The facebook campaign

they planned on coming back "soon". One of the others was, so I heard, not well.

You expect things to be slow when starting a new class. But several blank weeks on the trot get you thinking. My poster and digital campaign has obviously done its job initially, but what next? Is there something wrong with the keiko I showed? Is it something about me? Am I not psychically preparing in the right way? Is there something practical I'm failing to do? Is it the physical conditions (8.15-9.30 is pretty late, and the dojo isn't THAT easy to find)?

There's no point approaching a class in a negative frame of mind, but how long should I go on? I asked BS for a grant to finance a Facebook targeted advertising campaign for a fortnight. After a week I had a load of 'likes', but next class, no-one turned up. We'll see what happens after the second week of this.

I had expected that launching a new class would feel lonely, but actually it doesn't. BS and other friends

Martial arts -

nintaid

as you've never seen them before



Think martials arts. Do you think about acrobatic leaps and kicks, power punches and competitive sparring; macho discipline and controlled aggression?

Think again.

Think big, open, dynamic, soft movements; think laughter, co-operation and gentleness.

Think challenge, intensity and commitment, of course; but also think creativity, freedom and beauty.

Which sort of martial arts does the world need today? Which would you rather do?

Shintaido, the Japanese martial art for those who think there are more important things in life than learning to fight.

Discover Shintaido for yourself at the beginners class starting Monday September 14. Suitable for all ages and physical conditions. St Margaret's Institute, Polstead Rd, 8.15-9.30; £5 or £40 for 10. Contact peter@shintaido.co.uk or visit Oxford Shintaido on Facebook.



(Shintaido and not) are supportive. Having no-one turn up can feel lonely, but only if you let it. In a way it's a great luxury to have an entire warm dojo all to yourself every week, and I am making full use of it. But of course it's an expensive luxury, and I'll have to call a halt soon if people go on not turning up.

And if they don't, what then? It's taken me long enough to get around to trying this class. Will I ever try again? What will I do differently? A new message and poster? A new approach to promotion?

I have a growing list of questions without answers, but am optimistic enough to hope I'll get them in the end. But by the time you read this, we'll know whether Oxford Shintaido was a brief spark that sputtered and died, or one that gradually took hold and grew into a strong flame.

Either way, though, I am sustained by Aoki Sensei's words: "Learning is only one side of practice. You will find the other side through teaching". But I would add, "and even through failing to teach".

A year in the life of an instructor

by Charles Burns

2015 has been a memorable year in my career as a Shintaido instructor. I have had the strange impression that things are trying to happen by themselves, but somehow not quite taking off.

For over two years I have been running a Wednesday-evening class at the local Quaker Centre in Reading. With just three regular students the class never comes close to breaking even, so I find myself constantly subsidising the hall fee to keep it going. Luckily my silhouette business is going well, so I can easily afford to do this; I have long ago resigned myself to this being the way things are!

Yet there are compensations. My class, just in the last few months, has begun to move into deep waters. It is travelling that well-trodden path from beginner to intermediate level. I can feel it in my students and the way the sessions run. It would no longer be such an easy task to integrate a complete beginner into the class without altering it's nature; for any instructor this progression is a reward in itself.

There are also spin-offs. I spent most of the year trying, together with one of my students, to establish a University of Reading bojutsu club. We practiced outside and created an official UoR Club, allowing us to advertise our presence to the student body. During the whole year no more than half-a-dozen students ever came to try it out, and none came back for a second session. Yet throughout the year my one bojutsu student progressed from kata to kata and has developed a good working knowledge of basic Shintaido bojutsu.

Even these non-returning students have not been a waste of time. One of them, the president of the UoR Japanese Society, promptly invited me to give a lecture on the origins and practice of Shintaido. Sadly, it was not well attended - possibly because of the unknown and un-sexy name 'Shintaido' - yet was well received by those who did attend. I wanted to finish my talk by giving them a practical experience of Shintaido, so offered them a choice between tenshingoso, eiko and wakame taiso (having explained the origins and nature of each in my talk). They chose wakame taiso. It turned out to be a wise choice and the talk ended on a calm and meditative note, the students visibly changed by their short and intense experience of Shintaido. The lecture was a happy experience and one which I would love the opportunity to repeat.

Then there was Brookfields School. At the start of 2015 I was approached by this local SEN Secondary School to teach Shintaido to some of their older students. Many of these students were autistic while others had a

variety of special needs to consider. After a few 'taster' sessions in the spring I was booked to teach a regular Monday-morning class throughout the summer term. The classes were large, noisy and chaotic, yet seemed enjoyable and successful. The students made remarkable progress in the few months I was there, I was really amazed! Their favourite movement was eiko, the students almost literally jumping for joy when I announced it, soon after the warm up at every class.

Sadly my students were all in their final year. During the last two classes of summer some students from the year below did join us, with a view to gauging their suitability for Shintaido, however I think they felt rather overwhelmed by the already-quite-advanced classes they experienced. For whatever reason I cannot be sure, but the class was not renewed in September.

For me, the summer of 2015 was memorable in being the only time in my Shintaido career when I have found myself teaching three regular weekly classes at once: Brookfields SEN Shintaido, Quaker Hall Shintaido and the UoR Bojutsu Club. I realised my diary was full, if the opportunity to teach another class had come along I would have had to turn it down, I had found my natural limit!

Finally, there's my Moldovan student, who contacted me out of the blue last summer looking for a bojutsu instructor in London. Not knowing who to recommend I offered him my services for private lessons (at a suitable fee) which, to my surprise, he accepted. So far we have met half a dozen times, he has bought a bo and is progressing slowly through the bojutsu curriculum. We meet in Regents Park when he is in London (an irregular occurrence) whenever both our busy schedules and the weather permit. Regents Park is a wonderful place to practice full of joggers and a variety of fitness classes. On one occasion we shared the space with a giant marathon run - snaking continuously through the park throughout our 90 minutes - and on another with a frisbee convention. The space is so full of physical activity that nobody notices the pair of bojutsu practitioners locking their staff together.

Teaching Shintaido is always a struggle alongside my busy and irregular silhouette-cutting schedule. There are frequent timetable clashes when I need the services of stand-in instructors (thank you Peter and Jamie). Although I do find time to teach there is never enough to publicise the class, so Reading remains sadly devoid of Shintaido posters. I desperately need help in managing the growth of Reading Shintaido and attracting new students. Yet still I have this strange impression that things are somehow trying to happen by themselves...

Taimyo Editor Wanted!

by Emi Argent

After 5 rewarding years of editing Taimyo magazine, this is to be my last edition as I will be stepping down from the role as editor.

Being Taimyo editor, in my opinion, is one of the most fulfilling roles within BS. It is a great way to stay in touch with the Shintaido community and events - both within BS and internationally. Looking back over the editions in the last 5 years makes me realise how many wonderful events have taken place.

While writing may not be my strong point, I have enjoyed expressing a little creativity in designing the content and layout of the magazine. I hope you have all enjoyed reading them!

Finally, a huge thankyou to all those who have contributed articles, photos and support over my time as editor. These valuable contributions have given us plenty of interesting and inspiring reads, as well as a providing a great documentation of British Shintaido life. A special thanks also goes to Laurent Lacroix, who has recently very generously offered to assist me in the printing and distributing of Taimyo.

So, anyone interested in taking up the challenge of being Taimyo editor, please get in touch with any of the Management team. Support is available and new ideas and fresh energy is always welcome!



Thank you...

The fast 5 years of failing californs.

We would like to express our gratitude to Emi Argent, who will be stepping down from the role of Taimyo manager. Emi has been editor of Taimyo magazine for 5 years.

For the last 2 years or so, Laurent Lacroix has kindly offered to help, and together they have produced many editions of a very high standard. Laurent's expertise in publishing, and both of their "eye for detail" has given us many fine editions to read and enjoy, with many excellent photos. Laurent has recently printed and posted all the Taimyo copies, even hand delivering many of them when he meets people at the classes he attends.

Many thanks to you both.



Please join us to celebrate our annual New Year Gasshuku

at

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

Saturday 9th & Sunday 10th January 2016

Keiko led by Masashi Minagawa via BS Instructors

To register your place please contact:

Charlotte Stace: 07986 853973 blue4dolphin@hotmail.com

Early-bird registrations by 28th November

There may be an opportunity to take exams: Examinees MUST register by 28th November



British Shintaido Examination Report

BS & Guest examiners:

Masashi Minagawa David Franklin Ula Chambers

Local Examinations took place at Upper Bucklebury Hall and Bath Bo Club. Congratulations to all those who took part.

Here are the results.

Shintaido

Viv Rimmer	Chuto-ka
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Bojutsu

Alex Hooper	1 kyu
Laurent Lacroix	2 kyu
Susan Lacroix	2 kyu
Elizabeth Sandeman	9 kyu
Sally Sharpe	9 kyu
Darren Lawrence	9 kyu

Karate

Nagako Cooper	3 kyu
Alex Hooper	4 kyu

Programme, Contacts & Classes 2016 Programme

See www.shintaido.co.uk for further details

9 - 10 Jan 2016	BS Kangeiko, Douai Abbey near Reading	
	Contact: Charles Burns - charles@shintaido.co.uk	
10 - 12 Jun 2016	Daienshu, Douai Abbey near Reading	

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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	Ramsgate, Contact Geoff Warr.	evenings	Shintaido or Tai Chi
Tuesday	Bath, University of Bath.	8.00 - 9.30pm	Bath Bojutsu Club
Wednesday	Reading, St Barnabas Church Hall	1.00 - 3.00pm	Bojutsu
Thursday	Bristol, Silver Care, Dovercourt Rd	10.30 - 11.30am	Shintaido for
		people with Lea	arning Difficulties
	Stroud, Old Town Hall	10.30 - 11.30am	Gentle Shintaido
	Brighton, Hollingbury Methodist Hall	8.00 - 10.00pm	Shintaido
Friday	Eastington Community Centre, Glos	1.45 - 3.45pm	'Lightwaves' Class
·	Reading, Clayfield Copse playing fields	7.30 - 8.30am	Shintaido/Bo tutorial
Weekends	Specialist classes with any BS Instructor. A	vailable by appoi	ntment.



Taimyo Next Issue - Spring 2016. Thank you to all who contributed articles. Please send further articles, pictures and ideas to **newsletter**@ shintaido.co.uk