



Participants to the 2021 Daienshu



*Kizuna
Calligraphy by Minagawa Sensei*

2021 Daienshu Report, of a Sort

By Geoff Warr

Luckily for me, I did not know in advance that I would have (been) volunteered to do a write up of the Daienshu. Had I known, I fear that I would have suffered from a sense of split-self throughout the event—with one part engaging as a participant—and another bit of me floating around semi-detached and worrying about how to put into words the unfolding of the gasshuku. So, as it happened, Peter Furtado confided that he had woken with a jolt at five on the Sunday morning, realising that he had not asked anyone to be the event's recorder, then making me an offer I was unable to refuse. What follows is entirely subjective and impressionistic, but written with an absolute confidence that all of us who were privileged to be there at Emerson shared a weekend which we loved, truly, gladly and deeply.

On arrival: We assembled (most of us, unless caught in a traffic nightmare) at lunch time on the Friday. For me, anxious anticipation was immediately dispelled by the obvious reality that hugging was allowed. We embraced each other with absolute delight, and the world of nothing but zooming vanished on the spot, with the priceless gift of real human contact manifesting as a solid fact.

As we entered the dojo for our BSC session, we seemed to share a sense of a fresh beginning, combining seamlessly with the feeling that we were now developing the group identity and purpose whose conception had begun at the Daienshu's opening ceremony on the preceding Sunday. Warming up together was certainly heart-warming, with an added poignancy which seemed to come as a bonus, marking the end of months of enforced separation. When we were moving freely around the dojo there was a singular lack

Contents

01 **2021 Daienshu Report, of a Sort**
By Geoff Warr

04 **Bath Shintaido Lives!**
By Paul Buck

06 **100th Monkey talk at the International Gasshuku Bristol 1982**
By Michael Thompson

10 **So near and yet so far: my dojo, your dojo, our dojo.**
By Mirabelle da Palma

11 **What is a Shintaido instructor?**
By Peter Furtado

12 **"Time and Taimyo Again"— A Poem**
By Geoff Warr

13 **2021 High Level Exams**
By Peter Furtado

16 **Examination Results, Contacts, and Current Classes**

Continued from page 1

of crashing into each other and apologising—features which had somehow been replaced by extremes of softness and sensitivity. Group-mind had arrived early. Also, the moments of silence were profound, having a depth which is sometimes touched after extended periods of practice together, but now seemed to be in our grasp right from the outset. I believe that we all felt this intuitively in the moment. Certainly, people identified and relished this fact in its aftermath.



The Ethereal Participants

There was also something hugely different about this event. Not an elephant in the dojo, but cameras, laptops, defining pieces of tape on the floor. We were connected, through the ether and high-tech kit, to fellow keikogins in faraway places (plus a few who were really just down the road.). This was the hybrid element. Considering that it was an innovation, I think it was a quite astonishing success, virtually (in both senses) glitch-free. It felt to me as if there was a powerful synergy at work, which enhanced and uplifted the experience both for those there in the flesh and our ethereal partners. Top marks and hats off to all those who made the magic work. A newborn fact of Shintaido life, to be continued, repeated and enhanced.

Now, rather than trying to describe in sequence the events which followed, I want to pick a couple of scenes which shine with stand-out brilliance.

Firstly, Saturday afternoon's examination: Seats were arranged for the onlookers. Masashi reminded us of our duty to offer sustained and sincere attention to the proceedings which were to follow. We did as we were bid, and were then rewarded with the privilege of witnessing a quite extraordinary unfolding. We saw Kihon, followed by Kumite, the formula comfortably familiar. But the emerging content was really exceptional. In the space of an hour and a bit, we watched as Craig, the examinee, moved from what looked like a nervous beginning, becoming gradually softer and more unified during a demanding middle section until he engaged in a finale which was transcendent, in which he willingly laid bare his heart and soul, and from which the dojo echoed as if to the grace of the perfect resolving chord. In the moment, everyone there was moved beyond words. For me, the enduring image is that of Masashi giving a masterclass – as if to an eager musician who was sincere and determined, but yet to reach the heights of inspiration. So, first there was some basic, and then fine tuning of the instrument. Then close examination and



View of The Pond at Emerson College.

Continued from page 3

re-examination of the lines of the musical score. And then, allowing the music to inhabit the body and sing out from the soul. Had we been in a concert hall we would have reacted with a long, astonished standing ovation.

My other stand out, take home and treasure piece from the Daienshu was Sunday morning's Taimyo kata, performed around the lily pond as a three-part canon. The setting was goose bump beautiful. The atmosphere and depth of concentration awesome. Time tantalised us, offering a connection to a cherished past in that exact place, a present in which we morphed into a version of suspended animation, followed by an invitation to step into the future at our feet.

I wish to end on a repeat note. Some years ago, a group of us were talking about Shintaido and its future. A rather gloomy picture emerged. A vision of a small and declining group of ageing practitioners shuffling round a dojo on their zimmer frames, scratching their heads in bewilderment. This is no longer my vision. I believe that our hybrid Daienshu has fundamentally changed present reality and future prospects. Because the world has known, since the infamous pictures of a cruel cop's knee on poor George's neck, the world has known that virally shared images can change minds, hearts and attitudes. So, we have to realise that the images don't have to be vile to go viral. Transformations can be things of beauty, seen and felt with joy.

Geoff Warr



Campfire Evening with, from left to right, Geoffrey, Geoff, Ula, Masashi and Nagako

Bath Shintaido Lives!

By Paul Buck

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

After nearly twenty years of Shintaido practice, I have finally been persuaded to write an article for Taimyo. Even though the process may drive me mad!

But I digress. Ensuring the survival of Bath Shintaido has been a long journey. It all began just after the 2019 Christmas break.

In January 2020, Bath University announced they were concerned that our weekly practice sessions were a safety risk to other hall users. The university sports facilities had been our home for the past fifteen years, so this revelation came completely out of the blue.

Simultaneously, it became public knowledge that Masashi would be stepping back from active teaching over the coming year.

Most of our group had been hitherto blissfully unaware of the challenges facing the club's existence.



A Fun Logo to Celebrate our Rebirth.

Personally, I had never even considered the possibility that Masashi would retire! This of course was selfish and unrealistic. But it is testament to Minagawa sensei's sincerity and commitment, that we could not envisage the group existing without his leadership.

After our initial shock, we came to the realisation that we all harboured a strong desire to continue keiko together. To close the club, would mean losing something of inestimable value in our lives. It was therefore decided that we would continue to meet at least once a week, to maintain our community, and to hopefully attract and retain new members. We also decided that we would rotate the role of goreisha on a weekly basis. In this way, we could benefit from each other's experience, and our individual duties would not be too onerous.

So, in February 2020 I began the search for a new venue to host Bath Shintaido. The world was a very different place then. News was breaking of a potentially dangerous virus circulating in China. Yet this menace seemed very distant from our daily reality.

I canvassed over 30 locations. In sharp contrast to what was to follow, all but handful of the venues were fully booked. We even contemplated hiring a scout hut inhabited by a local "ninja school". Presumably, it was being used as their secret base of operations!

By March 2020, a potential "lockdown" was looming. A term previously only familiar to those incarcerated at her majesty's pleasure.

In a frantic scramble to accomplish something before our activities were curtailed, Laurent and I managed to arrange a "test-drive" of a local church hall. The hall in question, was sensibly priced, had helpful staff, and enough ceiling height to enable a small group to use bokken or bo.

Within a few days of our first visit to Oldfield Park Baptist Church (OPBC), the country entered its first lockdown. We had informally agreed to hire the hall every Wednesday, but obviously no keiko could take place whilst we were confined to our homes.

Fast forward 6 months!

In the autumn of 2020, we managed to accomplish three weekly sessions in our new hall... before promptly being shut down again due to local restrictions, and the second UK lockdown.

During the second lockdown, I kept faithfully to a regime of outdoor practice in my local park. Shintaido had become a solitary pursuit for me. That is unless you count my interactions with "Arlo" the spaniel, who insisted that I interrupt my keiko to throw his tennis ball for him whenever his owner was not watching.

Fast forward another 6 months!

Continued from page 5

Much to my surprise, on May 17th this year, it was announced that indoor gatherings under the rule of 6 were permitted once more. After some hasty consultations, everyone in the group seemed very keen to resume our weekly sessions. Time for our club to be reborn (again!).

As I write this, we have completed another three practice sessions at OPBC hall, equalling our previous record!

We are still subject to the rule of 6, but we are all determined to revive Bath Shintaido, no matter how many false starts we may have.

Well that concludes my report, but I must put a note in my calendar to submit my next article in time for summer 2041...

Paul Buck 

100th Monkey talk at the 1982 International Gasshuku Bristol.

By Michael Thompson

(Author's note: I believe I gave this talk at the 2nd international gasshuku in Bristol, U.K. Looking back, I realise I was getting at the concept of the "meme" as coined by Richard Dawkins in his book "The Selfish Gene", published in 1976. Of course, that was before the term became adulterated with 'viral' cat videos and 'influencers' in the internet age, and referred to "an idea, behavior, or style that becomes a fad and spreads by means of imitation from person to person within a culture and often carries symbolic meaning representing a particular phenomenon or theme." (Wikipedia)

I am resisting the temptation to do a major rewrite, and will mostly leave it as it was presented despite its obvious rough edges—a little like our practice itself in those days.

Many thanks to Pam Minagawa for transcribing the tapes which I suspect might have been a way of coping with the extended Covid isolation requirement period we are all living through).

The other day while we were looking at some pictures in the Shintaido book Aoki sensei said that maybe one picture is worth a million words but he said more exactly one movement is worth a million words. So I think that those who saw the demonstration today especially the end part when Aoki Sensei was leading, they saw enough in that movement to last one lifetime. So this speech is just addressing that.

Today someone talked about an avalanche, he referred to Shintaido as being something that starts very small like a stone moving, which gathers momentum and becomes a huge avalanche.

But I have a different image, one I like very much, because today my topic is "Surviving into the 21st century". I don't know much about that – for me surviving into tomorrow is enough – but I want to talk about thinking about the future, thinking about the world of ideas or the invisible world as opposed to the visible world.

There is an interesting story about the hundredth monkey phenomenon. It is a true story about a colony of macaque monkeys in Kojima Island in Japan. A group of scientists went to the island and introduced sweet potatoes as a food. The monkeys on this island had never seen sweet potatoes before. The only problem with these sweet potatoes was that they were dirty and the monkeys couldn't eat them. One day, one monkey whose name was actually 'Imo' (imo means sweet potato in Japanese) and who was a very intelligent young monkey, discovered that if she washed the sweet potato she could eat it. She had a kind of monkey satori. And little by little some of the younger monkeys began to imitate her and so very soon quite a few monkeys were washing potatoes. But the older monkeys were too hard headed or stuck in their ways or conservative, and wouldn't copy her. And then later on, I think it was the same monkey, Imo, discovered that if she washed the sweet potato in the ocean then it got a salty taste and tasted much better. Anyway this behaviour was learned progressively through imitation but always by the younger monkeys until it reached the point, according to a book by Doctor L Watson, when about 100 monkeys learned how to do this technique of washing the

potatoes and suddenly monkeys all over the island were starting to wash potatoes without ever having seen it being done before and even the same type of macaque monkeys on the mainland in Kyushu were washing potatoes even though they had never seen this. Dr Watson is a reputable scientist and his thesis is what he calls 'The One Hundredth Monkey Point:' that the first monkey had 'satori' and then after one hundred monkeys have this idea then it becomes a fact and telepathically the wave or technique is transmitted. They said that maybe one hundred people were going to attend this gasshuku ... (laughter).

If we take the avalanche theory one step beyond the actual physical effect of people gathering and look at it from the point of view of an idea - a "meme," - then the idea, once it gets enough acceptance or enough energy goes into it, then this idea according to the 100 monkey model becomes true or becomes real. I think it is a very interesting idea that something that you might consider to be a figment of your imagination or thought really has reality. It is just as real a table or a glass of water or anything else. If your imagination works that way, if you let your imagination go in that way, then something really can change.

There is a punchline from my introduction which my brother just told me. My brother is an anthropologist and said that not only did the monkeys learn how to eat salty potatoes but that they are the only monkeys that like to go swimming because once they started washing the potatoes in the ocean then they suddenly learnt how to swim and enjoy swimming and no other monkeys learnt how to swim.

This is why we have learnt how to like kai yakyo sho and renzoku jump (Laughter). It isn't true that you would naturally have liked this, it's an acquired taste....

The first point I want to talk about is the possibility of something that is invisible that we can't see with our eyes or touch or smell but may be as real as something we can.

If you were watching Aoki sensei's demonstration today with Mr Hokari and Mr Okada, maybe if you looked at it with one kind of eye you would say 'Ahh its very easy for him to receive when they are not really attacking or they are very tired'. So if you look at it one way you would say 'What's the big deal!' But let's look at the other side.

Historically talking in great generalisations, up until the renaissance in western cultures, human beings' way of seeing reality was really inwards looking. What they considered to be reality was the relationship between man and god or man and angels. But essentially reality was something that couldn't be seen, it was something that was in another world. But when we became enlightened or reasonable or rational then we stopped looking inside and we stopped seeing angels and we stopped seeing all these so called imaginary phenomena, and we learned how to deal with the real world outside of us. So the relationship between one person and another became materialistic. Now it seems to me, speaking as an ex-Japanese resident (I lived in Japan for 3 years and now have moved to the centre of 'no mind' and the hippie ethos in California) that the pendulum is swinging back. I'm not saying that California is the prototype for humanity by any means but ... It's not a religious revival, there are religions that are quite kinky really, bizarre, a little strange, but the key words now are words like consciousness, or awareness or 'so your own thing'. So I would say that there is a trend where there is less interest in manipulating external reality and more in looking inside to try to change yourself or the self improvement boom or the self psychology boom or whatever.

So I think in some ways we are in what we could call a consciousness age, the interest in human consciousness, the human brain, human potential etc. But what interests me is that one time Aoki Sensei said this is the body movement age and for a long time I didn't understand. I said sure, I mean body movement was his thing. We knew that the real thing came from reading and writing, we were very prejudiced. So I tried to think this is the body movement age because this is what we are doing, so if we are doing it then that is what it is. I am not going to say what he meant by what he said, but what I interpreted what he said was that this is the age of human energy. It is an age when everybody is going to be dancing or swimming or jogging, and I interpreted his observation to mean this is an age when we start exploiting human energy in all its dimensions, not just physical, intellectual, but also spiritual and others... and body movement incorporates all these elements.

Continued from page 7

There is one chapter in the Shintaido book which I would like to talk about briefly because in this chapter Aoki sensei talks about energy and time and the title is 'Sword technique expanding time and space and energy'. He is already talking about body movement but in this case sword techniques too. But at the same time he mentions time and the modern scientific or physical concept of time and space and energy. What is interesting in this chapter is there is a connection made between sword techniques and scientific phenomena. I am sure you will read the book so I just wanted to make 2 or 3 points from this chapter. He writes that Harigaya Sekiun was a great swordsman master who lived about 350 years ago and according to Aoki sensei the thing that distinguishes Sekiun from other masters is that Aoki sensei thinks he attained some level which the Japanese people call 'sei' and is translated as 'holiness'. His sword technique was so great, and in order for it to be so great, he must have entered into some different world which is called holiness.

Aoki sensei also writes 'what remains when our skin is peeled off when our flesh, bones, blood, organs and even our life is taken away and our body is burnt to ashes there may be nothing more than our small space in this big cosmos. This space has its own reality and can be explained only by the word 'being'. When Moses asked god 'What is your name?' god answered my name is being. With our hands and minds we must grope our way towards this realm, (in other words towards this realm called being). And finally he says this is called Ki Ichi going back to oneness!'

The important thing is that in this chapter we go beyond body movement and go beyond physics and we enter the realm of meta-physics and so this is the invisible world that I was talking about before and the role that you have to accept provisionally. This is the invisible world.

So maybe some people who did this afternoon's keiko lead by Okada sensei which was very soft and playful and so maybe they said it's not the real thing. But actually you were doing the real thing.

According to Aoki sensei Sekiun developed a technique which in Japanese is called 'nyu wa mu byo shi' it is a soft, peaceful, rhythmless movement. It is the highest kind of movement. In other kinds of movement maybe he had to train very hard and for a long time to reach this point and if you saw him in this state of training his movement would not be soft and effortless and rhythmless; it would be hard or stiff. But with Shintaido we are allowed to start with this kind of soft movement without needing to the preliminary process ourselves.

Another thing that Sekiun seems to say, according to Aoki sensei, is that the important thing in swordsmanship is not how to defeat an enemy or survive a battle but how to enter a holy space.

Aoki sensei writes "in his search for the Tao I believe that Sekiun, after having done all that is humanly possible, finally came face to face with god the creator and in that moment he reflected god's glory and was purified by the holy spirit which filled his being. Through this grace he must have reached a pinnacle or beyond the understanding or scope of ordinary mental processes."

So we started with soft movement and reached a level of holiness wherein Aoki Sensei uses terms like grace or holy spirit or god's glory. These are unusual terms to apply to martial arts (and I am not trying to influence your own experiences).

I think the reaction against institutional religion has been justified, and I am talking here about religion as an emotion or reaction: an emotional expression rather than a spiritual expression. Like the old monkey on the Japanese island, maybe our thinking has got rigid, our skepticism or cynicism has made our thinking too rigid about the possibility of different kinds of experience or different kinds of reality.

It is very interesting having this book in English because the thinking of the author of one of the books I read recently back in SF seems to be quite similar. The odd thing is that Jacob Needleman, who wrote a book called 'Lost Christianity', is not a christian and is not interested in virtuous people. He is a professor of philosophy or an historian of religion. He is interested in finding what he calls a christian tao - a way for christians. He says that the problem with christianity is that it assumes that everybody is good and has reached some spiritual level without studying for it, just by saying 'ok I believe' so that suddenly I can love my neighbour, I can be

kind, I can be humble. Just by the fact that you call yourself a christian means that you can do all these things that you are supposed to do. What he calls lost christianity or intermediate christianity should be something which allows people to study how to grow and learn how to love their neighbour or how to act as a true christian. He said we need a path. He doesn't know the path, he doesn't know Shintaido (laughter). His idea is that the monks' training that was some kind of meditation training or concentration training which used to exist in the middle ages, this should be reinstated or reexamined.

...(tape gets turned over)

Mr Needleman's book seems quite similar in some way because Aoki sensei said that if a person holds communion with another human being and at the same time unites himself with god how can we describe it? It is, we must say 'complete oneness of being'.

And Mr Needleman talks about the necessity of transmitting truth and of helping your neighbour to grow and of caring for your own nature. He says you have to encourage the arising in yourself of a new sun or a new principle or energy. His idea is quite similar: the creation in yourself of a light or a sun and the sharing of that light with your neighbour.

Of course, when we overly intellectualise, we tend to use grandiose concepts very easily which quickly lose their meaning, but we shouldn't run from these terms like grace and holy spirit and human energy. We should aim high, as high as possible and try not to close our eyes to the fact that maybe if we wash the sweet potato then we can go swimming .

I have to get back to the title of the speech which was 'Surviving into the 21st century' but I have changed the title a bit into 'Leading the way into the 21st century'. What we have to do is redefine what leader means. Usually we think of leaders as being politicians or seers; they have been leading us for quite a while and are not getting us anywhere, so I think we have to start thinking of ourselves as leaders (washers of sweet potatoes).

Thank you.

Michael Thompson



Poster for the Second Shintaido International

So near and yet so far: my dojo, your dojo, our dojo.

By Mirabelle da Palma (Translation by Peter Furtado)

For more than a year, you – yes, you – have welcomed me, through your screens, into your spaces, your homes, your dojos. I have actually been there, despite the screens between us. I've got used to Zoom link after Zoom link. I've got used to hearing English spoken, receiving *gorei* in English, and talking to you in my strange hybrid English language. It's been a true experience of travelling abroad. Your welcome has warmed my heart. I am alone in Belgium so far as Shintaido is concerned, and I can only share and grow my *keiko* by travelling to other countries where there are already Shintaido groups. But for 18 months, I haven't been able to do that in person at all.

The 2020 Daienshu was a great moment for me – a moment of sharing, of opening, of a sense of being so close to you all, and of being able to practise intensively for more than a week at different times of day. At every practice I thought about the day when I would be able to meet you all in a real dojo, on our shared Earth.

When the 2021 Daienshu was announced, I told myself it might be possible to come to meet you for real. But I had to give this idea up: what with the vaccines the quarantines, the tests, I just couldn't see how to do it. I resigned myself to this fate, yet was cheered at the thought of seeing you again online. I didn't think much further.

So I happily accepted the notion of experiencing the Daienshu entirely online, torn between my desire to experience as many moments of Shintaido with you as possible, in my own home, and the slight disjunction of the different time zone, and the fluid relationships online. The dojo – each person's dojo – came right into my living room.

But when the “hybrid” element of the daienshu took over, I was shaken.

The first wave, was when, seeing you all together took me back to the real dojo; my living room felt so small, and I felt alone and far away from you.

The second wave: the instructors' *gorei* created a wonderful link between us and you with such generosity, so opening, such connection. On top of the creativity, which knocked me out every time, I experienced the connection and the *kumite* with a power that is hard to describe. You took me in, you took us all in with you. An entirely new space was created, one that comprised the “real” dojo and our separate “little” dojos.

The third wave was the closing meeting and feedback, which took place in hybrid form. It began with “us”, the screen folk. The listening was palpable, both among those online, and those in the dojo – such non-verbal communication made the screens dissolve. Feelings and sincerity always enrich the words spoken on these occasions, and help us get back to “life after the *gasshuku*”. We all recognise this, and the screens were no obstacle on this occasion. But when it was time for those in the dojo to speak, the quality of sound became variable, and even though I turned the volume up to the maximum, I couldn't hear. So I sat back, accepted what was happening, and watched the words, the bodies, the gestures almost soundlessly. This was the third wave: the feeling and the sharing were huge even without the exact words and phrases. The connection was there, the “*ma*” was tight. We were together.

Our dojos are normally vast - sports halls, pitches, fields and waterfalls. But for more than a year, our dojos have been our houses (and our houses have been our dojos). For me, the dojo has been my dining room, 5 metres square, the ceiling just 3 metres high, full of furniture, and with a wooden floor I can't jump on.

Practising with empty hand or with *bokken*, facing the screen, doing *kumite* via the screen, making circles via the screen. Britain, USA, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, Czech republic all have come together in a colourful, moving, living checkboard. The whole familiar world of the dojo suddenly moved to the screen. The dojo demands respect for the rules that enable us to maintain harmony (“*wa*”). Bowing to partners and to the

heart of the dojo on entering and leaving are part of any dojo behaviour. Perhaps surprisingly, they remained equally vital on the screen.

A year on: my screen has not been broken, the furniture has not been upset, there have been no breakages, no accidents. We all explored our domestic spaces, cubic foot by cubic foot. The spaces we live in seemed to have grown bigger, the walls and ceilings had been pierced open. Our movements have grown larger, yet we have also made them as small as possible, sometimes just reducing them to the scale of a single breath. Each of us has found, more clearly than ever, a space that is infinitely small and infinitely large – despite all the screens, and the lack of physical contact that is such an essential part of our keiko.

All this is the true legacy of the Daienshu of 2021.

Mirabelle da Palma



Ula Chambers Giving instructions for the Zoom Participants

What is a Shintaido instructor?

By Peter Furtado

I'm not at all sure I am one at all. That's because I don't see myself as instructing anyone in how to do Shintaido, or how to be a Shintaido practitioner. Nor do I believe that the exam I just passed was testing my ability to instruct those things. Of course I teach technique to my group, and anyone else who wants to learn. But the exam wasn't testing my knowledge of technique - but something else: my understanding of the essence, how close I am getting to that essence.

A driving instructor teaches you how to use the controls, how to use the road safely, the rules of the road, the tricks for passing the driving test. But a driving instructor doesn't teach you to find a balance between power and responsibility, between extended concentration on future destination and on the present moment, or between speed and safety; let alone how to find your way, how to deal with squabbling children in the seat seat, how to choose the right car for your personality and practical needs. You find these things out for yourself, once you have the basic techniques. Your driving instructor won't be there to advise.

Continued from page 11

The essence of Shintaido isn't something you can instruct. But you can be there for students as they search for it. You can express it, show it, make it palpable, give people an experience that allows them to start to grasp it, to come closer to it, to discover ever greater depths.

Of course, form - kata - and technique is important and I can, and do, teach those. But as we increasingly find ways to help even very new practitioners of Shintaido to glimpse quite 'advanced' insights despite their still-minimal knowledge of the detailed kata, so it's vital that the *goreisha* has really built a sense of the meaning of that kata, a meaning acquired through careful study of the detailed form. It's that meaning that we aim to impart in the *keiko* we lead.

So, I don't think this is really about being an instructor; it's about being a kind of leader, or perhaps a kind of tribal elder, a person who has built a lifetime of knowledge and experience and wants to impart that essence to anyone who asks - and who is also capable of passing on that knowledge and experience to the one or two who want to become elders in their turn.

Peter Furtado 

"Time and Taimyo Again" – A Poem **By Geoff Warr**

A brief introduction for the zoomers who weren't with us for Sunday's Taimyo. Peter suggested that we divide into a 3 part group, and performed Taimyo in sequence, as a canon.



Taimyo Performed as a Canon

TIME AND TAIMYO AGAIN

In the soft hush
Of an early summer's morning
We arrived together
In the heart of a paradise garden

Our single group split
Into three parts
Spaced around a lily pond
Where the reeds stood straight
Or bent on the occasional whisper
Of a warm breeze

When the one had divided, becoming three
We bowed together
And stood in the quiet moment
Waiting for the future
To enter the present

And then, the future arrived, inspired in silence
So one part moved
Whilst two parts waited, and
So the future moved, until each and all of us
Were moving in
And were moved by the present
As the tide of time flowed strongly
Touching us all

And in the moment
Time sat, quite still,
Resting in comfort, with something eternal
Then moved again
With the softest step
From the treasured present
Into its freshly opened future.

Geoff Warr 

2021 High Level Exams

By Peter Furtado

High level exams, which have to be examined by doshus, usually take place at internationals every four years, but this year was different, as the planned international in Japan couldn't take place. So a new format was devised. Candidates were asked to video their kata and kumite, as well as, in many cases, writing a short essay about their Shintaido journeys. Then, some months later, in a zoom masterclass, they performed again, watched by the doshus and ITEC members and with Ito giving instructions and advice. Only after all this was the candidate judged and the grade awarded, or not.

Continued from page 13

For the examiners this was huge, as there were four masterclasses (Japan, USA, UK, Europe). For examinees, it was a long drawn out, fragmented process. For some of us, the video kumite, which we made in May, was literally the first time we had been able to practice together for 18 months, and it was inevitably ropey. Then, there was the nerve-racking business of watching the masterclasses in other countries - a boon in that you could learn what the examiners wanted, but also alarming when you saw how good the other candidates were.

Anyway, in UK the masterclass was held on August 15th in Eastington (near Stroud), three months after the initial videos. Four of us (Ula, Nagako, Charles, Peter) challenged a total of five exams, in kenjutsu, boh and Shintaido, watched over by Ito and Masashi plus the ITEC members and anyone else who wished to watch on YouTube. We were asked, in some cases, to perform over and over again, adjusting our technique each time, so the session took three hours until the examiners retired to deliberate and the exhausted examinees went nervously back to Peter's house to wait.

At last the results came. Ula awarded Yon Dan kenjutsu, Charles General Instructor in Shintaido, Nagako and Peter both Senior Instructors. Charles though was asked to challenge Yon Dan boh again on another occasion.

All of us were deeply moved by the examiners who must have been severely challenged by such long periods of concentration and deliberation on Zoom, and thankful both for their support, humour and deep insights. Also by the many messages of support from Shintaido friends that came via WhatsApp, Facebook or whatever.

And British Shintaido can move on to the next step in its path. We all look forward to working, learning and laughing together for a long time to come.

Peter Furtado



Nagako and Peter Demonstrating the first 5 Kyukajo



Ula Showing Okuden no Kata



Charles, Peter and Ula Practicing San Nin Ichiretsu



Doshu Ito during the Zoom Master Examination

Examination Results

On 26h June 2021, during the British Shintaido Daienshu.

Examiners: Masashi Minagawa Doshu and Ula Chambers General instructor.

Shintaido

Craig Thorn Jun Shidojin (Graduate)

On 15th June 2021, Zoom international examinations

Examiners: Haruyoshi Fugaku Ito Doshu and Masashi Minagawa Doshu with ITEC members.

Shintaido

Charles Burns Dai-Shihan (General instructor)

Nagako Cooper Sei-Shihan (Senior instructor)

Peter Furtado Sei-Shihan (Senior instructor)

Kenjutsu

Ula Chambers Yon Dan

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Current Online Classes (August 2021)

- **Monday:** 7.30am Morning Taimyo (30 mins) Jackie Calderwood
- **Tuesday:** 11.00am HAS Kenjustu (45 mins) Charles Burn
5.30pm Gentle chair-based practice (irregular, 60 mins) Susan Lacroix
- **Thursday:** 10.00am Shintaido (60 mins) Susan Lacroix
11.00am HAS Freehand Shintaido (45 mins) Charles Burns
- **Friday:** 7.30am Morning Taimyo (30 mins) Jackie Calderwood
10.20am Shintaido (50 mins) Naagko Cooper

Current Classes (from September 2021)

- **Monday:** 7.30pm—8.30pm Gentle Shintaido with Nagako Cooper
Glencairn Memorial Institute, 3 Chapel Street, Moniaive
- **Wednesday:** 19.00—20.30 Bath Shintaido with Susan Lacroix, Paul Buck and
Laurent Lacroix
Oldfield Park Baptist Church, Bath Ba2 3JD.
- **Friday:** 11.30am Spirit of the Sword, with Peter Furtado.
Eastington Community Centre, GL10 3AQ.

Please Visit www.shintaido.co.uk for further details

Taimyo 66

Taimyo Next Issue — Winter 2022. Thank you to all who contributed articles. Please send further articles, pictures and ideas to newsletter@shintaido.co.uk