



KAGAMI

The Newsletter of the Kokusai Nippon Budo Kai

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

▪ 1ST SHIMABUKURO MEMORIAL	1
▪ RENEWAL AND REBIRTH	1
▪ SERVICE AND COMMITMENT	2
▪ ITTO -RYU IN ITALY	4
▪ DON'T LET YOUR EGO GET IN THE WAY	7
▪ NIHONTO	9
▪ DOJO SPOTLIGHT	12
▪ BOOK REVIEW	14
▪ NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	15
▪ UPCOMING EVENTS	17

First Annual Shimabukuro Memorial Budo Festival

Through cooperation and support from the UC San Diego Martial Arts Club and the UCSD iaido club, the San Diego KNBK Branch is pleased to announce the First Annual Shimabukuro Memorial Budo Festival. This event is planned for the weekend of September 7th and 8th at the beautiful UC San Diego campus.

There will be budo seminars in iaijutsu, jojutsu, and kenjutsu on Saturday to further polish our training in memory of Shimabukuro Hanshi. On Sunday there will be celebratory team enbu/demonstrations in honor of Hanshi from all seminar participants. The enbu are to show our spirit and strong budo so that we can recall Hanshi's teaching, his spirit, and our commitment to carrying on his legacy.

This event is to commemorate and honor Shimabukuro Hanshi's legacy by coming together for a weekend of training and demonstrations. All who were touched by Shimabukuro Sensei's spirit are encouraged to come and join us to celebrate his life, honor

his memory, and remember how his presence enriched our lives. We hope that with strong enbu, all will feel Shimabukuro's spirit as a unifying presence to uplift and encourage us to continue his legacy of sincere and strong Budo.

Please contact Erik Tracy, Renshi of the San Diego KNBK dojo at erik.tracy@socal-knbk.org. He will be happy to answer any questions you may have. We hope to see everyone there! Please visit the UCSD Iaido Club webpage to register for the Saturday and Sunday Events: <http://www.ucsdiaido.com/>.



EDITORIAL

Renewal and Rebirth

by Erik Johnstone, Doshi

When I began writing, compiling, and editing material for this issue of Kagami, the earliest manifestations of a newly arriving spring were just getting underway. The telltale signs of the immanent arrival of spring were making their presence known; crocuses bursting forth from bare ground between patches of snow, followed shortly thereafter by the sounds of peeper frogs emerging from their winter hibernation in woodland swamps. The first sakura blossoms, beautiful expressions of the fleeting nature of life itself, on a small cherry tree that I had received as a birthday gift last year were the next arrivals. They were followed with the daffodils that my wife looks forward to seeing each year. Slowly, the buds on the maples and oaks started to leaf out. Our little corner of the world was manifesting itself in its full glory, responding to the call of Life itself.

Rebirth and renewal are

continued on page 18

Service and Commitment

by Erik Johnstone, Doshi

I read a short post on a “blog site” by a martial arts instructor awhile back that absolutely astounded me. Crafted as a question that seemed to be directed to his students, it was something to the effect of the importance of unquestioning respect for the guidance of one’s “sensei.” Unfortunately, whether it was intended that way or not, it came across as an ego-driven exhortation, preached from on high for the purpose of reminding his students of their “place” relative to their “exalted and wise” teacher.

One of the greatest ironies of the post is that the author, a successful instructor of many years standing, does not himself even have a teacher anymore. In any case, the post communicated a profound misunderstanding of the real meaning and role of the teacher-student relationship in budo, and the role of a teacher in a student’s life. Unfortunately, such misunderstandings, or even outright corruption, of the true heart of budo in western society now seems to be the norm rather than the exception in the propagation of martial arts. The post certainly failed to communicate any sense of a deeper dimension in the teacher-student relationship, of the reality of commitment and service, as seen through the lens of budo.

Such individuals appear to think that commitment and service

are demonstrated by the willingness to sign a document obligating a student to pay dues for a specified amount of time, for which a service is then provided in return. It is certainly important to meet financial obligations and of course, one’s goal in operating a business is to see it thrive. But this is not the commitment that we seek to explore in this article; it is merely a monetary commitment to a business arrangement, to a relationship between service provider and customer. This is anything but a commitment to an authentic teacher-student relationship. And service, on the part of the instructor, appears to be seen as a commodity that is paid for and provided in a business arrangement, or, in the case of a student, something that should be blindly extended to those “higher” up in the hierarchy. In some cases, the latter example often manifests as servitude; this is a distortion, not service. In either case, such an approach does little to forge the correct view of the role of commitment and service in an authentic teacher-student relationship, or in other aspects of life, in the minds of students. As we all know, the martial tra-

ditions of Japan represent the living heritage and philosophi-



cal perspectives of the “bushi,” the samurai of feudal Japan. This is especially true in the case of the koryu arts, which are the direct legacies of samurai, received by those of us that have had the great fortune to encounter this “ancient flow” from heart to heart, back through the mists of time. As most of us know, the term “samurai” means “one who serves”, derived from the word “sameru”, meaning “to serve.” What then does this tell us about the samurai? And how does this glimpse into the true meaning of “samurai” inform or motivate the intentions, actions and conduct those of us who are the inheritors of their legacy?

We can catch such a glimpse of the deeper essence of this meaning through the lens of commitment and service in the teacher-student relationship and beyond. In budo, the formation of strong teacher-student relationships is critical. And

the mind of commitment and service are essential elements in a real teacher-student relationship. But, authentic commitment to a meaningful relationship doesn't happen overnight; and it certainly doesn't arise by merely signing on a dotted line.

Imagine approaching relationships in one's personal life with a business-like approach to commitment or a mind of servitude. Such an approach would be a weak foundation, if not a completely damaging or destructive premise, upon which to build any form of meaningful relationship. The reality is that such a relationship takes time to build; time for real trust, from which true mutual respect, commitment and service arises, to develop.

As I consider this mutual feeling of respect, commitment and service, I am mindful of something our teachers have taught about the true meaning of shirei, as conducted during reiho at the beginning and ending of class. It is not merely bowing to the teacher. When shirei is performed, it is typically initiated by the teacher as a wholehearted expression of the respect, gratitude and commitment that the teacher has for his or her students. This bow is returned with sincerity by the teacher, infused with the same heart that the teacher extended to those students.

A true teacher instructs by example, not through little "do as I say" posts and fortune cookie-like quotes or memes posted

on the Internet. That example is founded on generations of teachers who have come before, transmitting the heart of budo, including the true understanding of commitment and service, to each succeeding generation of teachers. That transmission is actualized in each moment of our experience in the dojo. Through the example that such a teacher sets, a student may learn to actualize those higher and deeper virtues that are the very heart of budo. A true teacher of budo is indeed a guide, and if one is lucky enough to have found such a teacher, a mentor in one's life, he/she is worthy of deep respect. Such a teacher will never fail to hold a mirror up to you, even if you don't want to see what the mirror is reflecting



at you. Such a teacher will help to ignite an aspiration to reach into the depths of your life to uncover the bright jewel, your highest potential, which although obscured, is your deepest reality.

If we have learned nothing else from our teachers, we should have learned the value of service to others, the value of beneficial and benevolent conduct. We should have learned that we truly to have the power to affect significant changes in the lives of others; changes that, like ripples from a stone dropped into a pond, spread outward in all directions. As idealistic as this may sound, such changes are brought about through conduct motivated by meaningful intentions; conduct illuminated by generosity, patience, determination, commitment and service. The mind that aspires to act in service to others is also the mind that aspires to life of benevolence, loyalty, dignity, humility, gratitude, wisdom and compassion. When we interact with others from the standpoint of service, we can have an immediate positive effect others, even if it does not immediately register in the other's consciousness. In such a way, we sow the seeds of such wholesome elements in our hearts as well as in the hearts of others with whom we share our lives.

Like our samurai forebearers, we must strive to polish this mind of service, wholeheartedly extending this mind to our family members, to our communities, our traditions, our teachers, and our students; indeed to all whom we may encounter in our lives.

Ono Ha Itto-ryu Seminar in Gradara, Italy

by Jason Hulott

Sometimes Facebook can be a wonderful thing. I was browsing a “news feed” and noticed a post for an Ono Ha Itto-ryu Kenjutsu seminar with Sasamori Takemi, the 17th Soke of Ono-ha Itto-ryu, that was to be held in Gradara, Italy in June. Following an immediate email to the organisers, I was booked to attend. I then shared the information with Marc Mebis Sensei in Belgium, who also immediately made arrangements to attend. He also told me that Carl Long Kyoshi was planning to attend as well, in advance of a series of seminars that he was teaching in Europe and the United Kingdom the following week.

What had I started?

A few days after registering for the seminar, I had all the reservations for travel and accommodations completed. It turned out that booking my travel reservations to arrive the day before the seminar and leave the day after was a good move, as the trip involved a number of legs. I had to fly from Gatwick in the UK to Bologna, Italy. From there, I had to catch a bus to the train station for a two-hour train journey to Cattolica, then onward to Gradara by taxi. I arrived in Gradara in the mid-afternoon, where I was met by Long Sensei and Mebis Sensei. After dropping off bags and completing a quick room swap,



we ventured out and headed up to the medieval castle on a hill overlooking the walled town that would be our home for the next five days. It was really impressive, but to try to do justice to such sites in words always falls short; I can offer nothing apart from “WOW!” Although looking forward to the next day’s training, we started our experience in Gradara the right way by checking out the local food and drink!

Thursday

The first training session of the seminar started in the afternoon, with instruction in the proper etiquette for Ono Ha Itto-ryu. This was followed by opening speeches and introductions, which included introductions from a person from each country represented at the seminar. Most participants were from Italy and Germany, where Sasamori Soke has had study groups for some time, with a few, including Mebis Sensei, from Belgium.

Long Sensei and I were the sole participants from the United States and the United Kingdom, respectively.

The introductions were followed by a warm-up conducted in a big circle as well as the practice of the Ono-ha Itto-ryu kamae. This was something I had not experienced before. This was followed by kirioshi practice, the cornerstone of Itto-ryu. We practiced the drill called Ran Do Me, which many of you are familiar with. Learning to apply kiriotoshi at three depths of the cut and three speeds of movement was exhilarating and frightening at the same time. You had to have a great deal of trust in your partner. This also helped me over the course of the seminar to more fully understand kiri-ma; I hope to bring those new understandings to my iai practice.

We next covered the first five kumitachi in the Ono-ha Itto-ryu syllabus, with everyone getting plenty of practice as both shikata and uchikata. It was a lot to take in.

However, as the weekend progressed, found that that wasn’t even half of it. Luckily for me, I had some great partners to work with.

Friday

Friday was the first full day of training, with practice scheduled from 9:00 am until 6:00 pm. Mebis Sensei and I practically ran down the hill from the castle to the dojo, as we had

little time after breakfast. By the end of the seminar, we were a pair of mountain goats. We spent the morning revisiting the first five kumitachi and then moved on to the next five. During the afternoon session, Mebis Sensei and I were approached by Sasamori Soke; we were introduced to him via Watanabe Sensei and were able to have a brief chat. In some ways, those two minutes are worth more than a whole day's training.

We had a great evening out in Cattolica that night with a few German, Belgian and Italian participants. Long Kyoshi and I, along with new friends Matthias and Werner from Germany, had travelled to the town on the hunt for a restaurant that could accommodate what turned out to be about 20 of us in the end. A great time was had by all, sharing many budo stories.

Saturday

The second full day of training was upon us. The morning started with a quick recap of the previous five kumitachi and then we moved onwards, enabling us to cover numbers 15 through 20 by the end of the session. It was all so new to me; however, the Belgian participants and I were keen to experience this as these kumitachi were new ground for Mebis Sensei as well. I was happy to be paired with Mebis Sensei, but we must have looked a bit lost. Fortunately, we were rescued by a couple of more experienced German practitioners (a big thank you to David and Heike!) who swapped with



us and worked us through the these five kumitachi.

After a brief chat with Sasamori Soke, we were informed that our group was to do the next five kumitachi, which would bring us up to 25. We were very lucky to get so much exposure to the various kata, especially given my previously limited exposure to Ono-ha Itto-ryu. If I came away learning just the first five I would have been happy.

It was a long day. At the end of the day's training, we were each presented with a tenegui with Sasamori Soke's calligraphy. I intend to have it framed upon returning home, and have been given permission to hang it in the bedroom as the colours match the decor! We finished the day with a climb back up to the castle for a

quick shower and change before heading off for the seminar banquet out in the Atlantic hotel in Pesaro.

Sunday

Sunday was the last day of the seminar. We started with a recap of the previous five kumitachi. The morning session was followed by a break and then group enbu. I apparently misheard what we were going to be doing, thinking we had to choose one of the kumitachi to demonstrate. It was soon clear that I was very wrong!

We were asked to choose which group of ten to demonstrate so Mebis Sensei and I chose the first ten. We went in the third demonstration group; I had managed to wedge myself between two of the experienced

ONO-HA ITTO-RYU ITALY

practitioners so I could glance over if I got stuck. Let's just say it happened more than once, but I made it through without injury or looking like a complete idiot.

We then finished up our training that afternoon, said our goodbyes to everyone, and made the last trip up the hill to the castle. And yes, it had gotten easy! We finished up our time in Gradara with a nice, quiet evening in a local pizzeria, unwinding and reliving four great days of training.

Our Italian hosts were fantastic throughout the event and were very accommodating in speaking with us in English and translating all of the Japanese into Italian and then into English. Everyone we crossed swords with was helpful and friendly; all went out of their way to help us if they saw us puzzled. I am looking forward to training with our Italian hosts again and practicing Ono Ha Itto-ryu again soon.



Don't Let Your Ego Get In The Way

by Mike Robinson with Erik Johnstone, Doshi

I recently had the opportunity to train with an old friend of mine named Bill. Bill and I have known each other for approximately 40 years; he was influential both in my martial arts career as well as in my professional career as a police officer. Bill, a retired Maryland State Trooper, was, along with my main instructor (who also was a police officer) in unarmed martial arts, my major influences in choosing a career in law enforcement. Bill is 70 years old now. He is in good shape for his age and still has good technique. The kicks may not be as high as they once were, but he still has solid technique. Bill was still actively sparring up until a few years ago. However, his doctor warned him that his jaw bone was a bit more fragile than it had once been, and that if he continued to spar he was taking the chance of getting his jaw broken. Additionally, his wife had been after him for years to stop sparring. So he has stopped, albeit reluctantly. Bill continues to stay active in the local martial arts community, sitting as a judge in promotional tests and at tournaments. He and I still get together once in a while to refine forms and technique.

At a recent black belt test, Bill was promoted to fifth degree black belt. Bill later told me that he deeply appreciated the honor but that he hadn't been looking for a promotion; higher

rank just really didn't mean that much to him. It was, to be sure, a really nice surprise; he just hadn't been actively looking for it. He said that promotions in rank are nice, but it's really just something you wear around your waist. Higher rank may be a bit of a boost to the ego for some, but not for Bill; he just enjoys practicing martial arts and plans on continuing the ride as long as he is able. Bill's take on the issue was sincere. I could tell that he was genuinely unconcerned about rank or promotion; he didn't need it to feel secure about his place in life.

And so, we come to the point of this article. How many times have we heard Carl Long Kyoshi talk about ego and not letting your ego get in your way? How often have we heard him speak of the hindrance that one's ego can really be? We are all familiar with the beam that has been the nemesis of more than one aspiring swordsman/woman at Sakura Budokan. Long Sensei has often told the story about the late Shimabukuro Masayuki Hiidenobu Hanshi striking that beam with a new iaito while teaching at the Sakura Budokan many years ago. On looking at the huge chip in the new blade, he turned towards Long Sensei and said, "Carl-san, now that's a memory!" Long Sensei has warned everyone about the infamous beam and again at a recent Shidosha Koshu Kai

stated, "Don't let your ego get in your way or the beam will get in the way of your ego!"

What exactly is the "ego"? Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines it in the simplest terms that the ego is the "self" as opposed to another self or the world around us. It is conscious mediator between the person and reality. It is also the balance between the other two parts that make up our psyche, the id and the superego.

Another friend of mine, another retired Maryland State Trooper, was telling me about a friend of his that has a martial arts school in western Pennsylvania, not far from Pittsburgh. My friend said this individual goes by the term "master" and insists on being referred to as such by his students. Upon being asked what the term "master" really means to me, I replied that my interpretation of what a "master" means is probably completely different than his friend's interpretation of the term. To me, a true master is someone who is at the top of their game; someone who is extremely knowledgeable and highly proficient in their particular field or discipline. But a real master is also one who is humble and doesn't feel the need to boast or actively advertise who or what they are. I told my friend it sounds to me as if his other friend needs to be called "master" to help boost his own ego, self-esteem, or self

image. I've never met the man and he might be talented and a nice person, but as I stated earlier, I believe that most true masters are humble. They know their talent and have no need to prove it to anyone else. In fact, within our own lineage of teachers, we have had headmasters of the highest caliber, true examples of the heart of real budo, demonstrate time and time again how that heart manifests and actualizes in this world.

How many times have we heard the story of the late Miura Takeyuku Hiefusa Hanshi, bowing first in greeting when encountering one of his students while walking down a hallway? Typically, one would expect the student to be the one to bow first. But from what I have come to understand of him, this exemplified the kind of man Miura Sensei was; a shining example of the humble and compassionate heart of a real master of budo. We see this teaching in reiho as we begin and end each class. In shirei, it is actually the teacher who initiates the bow. This is a living teaching of the respect that exists between teacher and students; a respect that flows both ways. Indeed, without the presence of students, the teacher cannot exist in that role.

Although ranks and titles are an important part of martial arts, too much emphasis is often placed on such things. How many of you have had someone come into your dojo and ask is, "How long will it take for me to

get my black belt?" In this seemingly far too common example, that of the proverbial "belt chaser", the person is already worried about getting his/her black belt; and they just walked through the door! How often have you seen the unscrupulous "martial arts studios" out there that promise a black belt in six months to a year, for a certain fee? Unfortunately, such schools give the entire martial arts community a "black eye" in terms of public perception. And even more disconcerting is that, rather than pointing the way to a life of gratitude and humility, such schools serve only to capitalize on ego and promote self-aggrandizement.

Martial arts are seemingly everywhere these days. True budo, however, is not. It can therefore be hard to find a legitimate, qualified instructor of authentic budo. But the search is worthwhile. It is, in fact, life changing, if you let it be. But you must be ready for such a teacher to hold up a mirror in front of you. You must be ready to look into that mirror and see clearly who is reflected; you must be ready to admit to things about yourself that you might not really like. We are all fortunate to have had teachers who were willing to hold that mirror up for us. Teachers like Shimabukuro Hanshi and Long Kyoshi, who through their example, have transmitted and continue to transmit the true heart of budo through the vehicle of koryu such as Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu and Shindo Muso-ryu Jojutsu.

So, as we continue our journey that is budo, continue to train, learn and grow; let us all try to improve our budo and conquer our respective egos. As another close friend in the martial arts once told me, "It's not the destination that is important, it's the journey along the Way."

Nihonto: The Art of the Japanese Sword

by Matthew Ubertini, NYC Budo

The nihonto, or Japanese sword, has a long and prolific role in of Japan's history, most obviously as the symbol of the samurai, the warrior class of Japan's feudal ages. Indeed, the sword even holds a place in the ancient teachings and mythology of Shinto, Japan's indigenous religion, in which, along with the jewel and the mirror, it is upheld as one of three sacred treasures. Indeed, even the forging of the nihonto was accompanied by various Shinto rituals. The imagery of the sword also figures prominently in some of the imagery of Zen, in which the sword metaphorically cuts through delusions that impair one's ability to see "things as they really are." The Japanese sword is also rightly upheld as an "objet d'art." with antique swords a prize highly sought after by collectors and connoisseurs the world over.

The purpose of this article is to share some of the knowledge of the craft, history, and evolution of the Japanese sword, so that we might develop a deeper appreciation for the weapon around which the arts that we study and practice together revolve. Please understand that in no way do I consider myself an expert in this field; the Kokusai Nippon Budo Kai has many members who possess in-depth knowledge in sword appreciation and various aspects of the craft of the sword. I am simply

a student, as well as a bit of a collector, who continues to pursue the study of this wonderful and fascinating subject.

The Japanese sword in its current form has existed since the Heian Period (794 - 1185 CCE), developed from the Chinese prototype swords called chokuto, which were straight, single edged swords. It is said that the smith Amakuni (ca 700 A.D.) was the first to develop the processes and techniques of steel-making, folding and forging of this beautiful art object.

The forging process of the Japanese sword is actually quite sophisticated; as such, the following is only a general description. This steel was manufactured from a fairly heterogeneous form of iron ore found in "iron sand." The ore was first smelted in a forge called a tatara to create raw steel. This yielded steel of differing levels of carbon content, including the high carbon steel known as tamagane. It was then pounded and folded up to ten to twelve times creating thousands of layers of steel, sometimes more for different parts of the blade. The folding of the steel served to remove impurities and increase its strength. The steel is then beaten flat and combined with a softer (lower carbon) inner layer



called shingane. The blade is then covered in a special mixture of clay and water then finally quenched in water. This quenching creates the hallmark sori (curvature) and hamon (temper line), of what we now know as the nihonto.

The overall method of Japanese sword-making was refined by five major schools, called koto (old sword making) schools, including the Yamashiro, Bizen, Soshu, Mino and Yamato, with the Yamato school being the oldest. Generally, these schools had specific styles to their manufacture. The Yamato and Yamashiro schools favored simple, graceful lines and tempering, with the Yamato school leaning toward a more robust blade. The Bizen school was famous for its wild and erratic styled hamon while the Mino school favored large overall blades. The Soshu school; founded during the Kamakura Period (1185 – 1333 CE), is well known as the school of Masamune, probably the most famous tosho (sword-

NIHONTO

smith) in its history. He manufactured swords that are considered by some to be the best ever made, comprised of bright hamon, strong jihada (texture) and elegant shapes. Masamune also mentored the jutetsu, or “ten brilliant disciples”, who each went on to make their own unique marks in the history of Japanese sword-making. With the passing of time, the Japanese sword would undergo changes in shape and other characteristics based on factors that included social environment, personal tastes, schools of manufacturing, codified systems of kenjutsu and iaijutsu and, of course, war.

The Ever Changing Sword:

In the Heian Period, Japan’s “Golden Age,” swords were used not only in war, but also in courtly ceremony and religious ritual. The Japanese sword at this time, referred to as tachi, was worn on the left hip, hung from the obi (belt), blade positioned downward for better use of drawing and slashing on horseback. It’s actually interesting to note that the mei (signature) of the particular smith on the nakago (tang) of a tachi is positioned on the ura (reverse) side of the blade. Blades during this period were elegant, featuring a thin kasane (thickness) and koshi zori (curvature toward the nakago). These swords also had a ko kissaki (small point), relative to later swords. Suffice to say, the Japanese sword underwent a tremendous change after two pivotal events in the Kamakura Period.

In the late thirteenth century, Japan found itself facing invasion by the Mongols, who had already conquered most of east and central Asia. Turning their attention to Japan, which had refused to pay them tribute, the Mongol Empire launched an invasion of hundreds of vessels and many thousands of Mongol, Chinese and Korean warriors. During the first invasion in 1274, the samurai, who until then had never faced an invasion by a foreign enemy, found it difficult to deal with the war tactics, assault weapons, cavalry and even the armor of the Mongol forces. Mongol armor was made of thick, boiled leather, which resulted in breaking and damaging many Japanese blades. The Japanese were saved by the sudden appearance by a great typhoon, the kamikaze, which destroyed most of the Mongol fleet. The Japanese were better prepared when the Mongols returned in 1281 in far greater numbers than their previous invasion attempt. Having fortified the beaches at Hakata Bay and discarding their “battlefield” tactics of single combat with an enemy, a tactic which the Mongols had previously completely ignored in favor of mass attack, the samurai cut down the invading forces in great numbers. However, the outcome of the invasion was not determined on the battlefield alone. Almost inconceivably, the kamikaze returned, sending a great portion of the Mongol fleet, and with it, thousand of warriors, to the bottom of the Japan Sea. The Mongols never again returned.

In response to the experiences with the Mongols, significant changes were implemented in the design of Japanese swords, which adopted a robust shape, similar to the swords one uses for tameshigiri competitions in modern times. This was even more apparent during the Nanbokuchō Period (1336-1392 CE), the “Northern and Southern Court Period.” a fifty-year period the beginning of the Muromachi Period (1336-1573 CE) during which Japan was divided between two rival courts, each claiming the Imperial throne. It was during this brief timeframe that the Japanese sword reached its pinnacle in terms of size.

The next significant development in the evolution of Japanese sword occurred during the Muromachi Period (1336-1573 CE). This development, especially significant in the history of Musō Jikiden Eishin-ryū, was the change in design that resulted in the katana, the “samurai sword” that most people think of today. Fighting was fierce during this time, and because of the high demand for weapons, blades made in this period are considered to be lesser quality than their Kamakura and Nanbokuchō counterparts. Swords were made in bulk, many made by the Bizen Osafune school. The temper lines, size and shape of the now shortened uchigatana were scaled down and simplified to facilitate close quarter fighting and grappling on foot. Additionally, the katana was worn in a different manner from that of the tachi.

It was worn thrust through an obi, with the cutting edge up. The Japanese sword needed to be wielded differently (sometimes meant to be used with one hand) due to these facts and was designed to foster quick draws and decreased distance. A significant figure in the adaptation of technique to the katana was Hasegawa Eishin Hidenobu, the Seventh Generation Headmaster of what came to be known as Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu.

The advent of the Momoyama Period (1573 – 1603 CE), located in history toward the end of the Sengoku Jidai, or Warring States Period (spanning the period from approximately the mid-15th century until the beginning of the 17th century), saw the eventual unification of Japan. This unification was the result of the efforts of Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and finally, Tokugawa Ieyasu, who, following his victory at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, established the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1603. With the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate, based in its capital in Edo, Japan entered the Edo Period (1603 – 1868 CE), a period of relative peace and stability. With respect to swords, there was a split from the old koto blades to the new “shinto” or “new sword” school of sword manufacturing. During this time, the daisho, the wearing of both katana and wakizashi, was established as a symbol and privilege of the samurai class. As a side note, merchants also carried wakizashi as a sign of status and protection; they were, however,

barred by the Tokugawa Bakufu from carrying katana. Because the Edo period was somewhat peaceful, swords took on a new look with increased use of horimono or decorative engravings on the shinogi. That’s not to say that koto swords did not have horimono; they did, but Shinto swords were much more elaborate in their design. Shinto swordsmiths also tried to bring back some of the flavors of old style koto swords and mixed different schools of manufacturing. The shape of the katana took on another change during the Kanbun Era (1661-1673), where the overall shape became much straighter in profile, similar to a kendo shinai. I’m not sure if this came about because of the proliferation of many kenjutsu schools that utilized shinai and straighter bokken in their training. It may be, but it seems that kendo started in the early 18th century and the shinai could have been influenced from Kanbun-styled swords. This is an interesting point.

Toward the end of the 18th century, with the fall of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1868 and the re-establishment of Imperial power that marked the beginning of the Meiji Period, Japan underwent significant political changes. As throughout its history, with changing times came changes in the Japanese sword. Sword makers brought back the flare of older, classical styles of Heian and Kamakura periods. A smith known as Naotane, one of the best during this new shinshinto period, made excellent swords in the Soshu and Bizen styles. With the re-es-

tablishment of Imperial power and the rapid westernization and industrialization of Japan, including in terms of military structure, power and weaponry, the need for the sword declined sharply. Its wearing in public was finally banned in 1876 by the Haitorei Edict, mirroring the abolishment of the samurai class. Swords made during the Meiji and subsequent eras are now known as gendaito (modern swords); their manufacture continues on in modern times as both art objects as well as for the practice of Japanese sword arts.

The Japanese sword, a symbol of the samurai, a focus, of many classical martial arts, and a highly refined craft, is something that deserves respect and study. It has gone through many changes over its thousand-year history and has been almost deified by those that used it in their lifetime. No other sword on earth has rivaled its reputation for sharpness and metallurgical beauty; it is something to admire and preserve for generations to come. It was truly the soul of the samurai.

References:

1. *Sinclair, Clive; Samurai: The weapons and spirit of the Japanese warrior, 2001*
2. *Nagayama, Kokan; The Connoisseur's Book of Japanese Swords, Japan, 1997*
www.nihontoantiques.com
3. *Conversations with Moises Bercera, Professional Togishi and Nihonto Dealer.*
www.nihontoantiques.com

Santa Fe Budokan

by Ken Jeremiah with Damon Apodaca

Nestled in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a traditional dojo known as the Santa Fe Budokan is home to a small but sincere group of people diligently training in traditional Japanese budo. The Santa Fe Budokan, established in 2007 by Damon Apodaca Sensei upon returning to his hometown after seventeen years of teaching Aikido and Iaido in Newport, Rhode Island, is the source for some of the best Aikido training in the Southwest. It is also the home of Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu Iaijutsu practice in New Mexico. Santa Fe Budokan is a place where people from different budo paths can meet, train, and discover similarities between their respective arts.

A member kenkyukai of the Kokusai Nippon Budo Kai (KNBK), Iaijutsu classes occur four times weekly. “Establishing a study group is a great way to introduce people to Iai,” Apodaca Sensei said. “The art is subjective, especially in the beginning, and these days, people have greater access to information. For this reason, creating a forum that allows people to speculate and offer opinions and observations without ridicule or prejudice is the key to the group’s success. Once a core group of students is established, the dojo will grow.” Masayuki



Shimabukuro Hanshi once told Apodaca Sensei that Iai practice is still in the “caveman” stages outside Japan. Therefore, Apodaca Sensei feels that the way the art is represented and practiced, especially in the public forum, is important to future growth. Apodaca Sensei currently studies Iaijutsu and Kenjutsu under Carl E. Long Kyoshi. He says that “the KNBK has great leaders. The 22nd Soshihan, Carl Long Kyoshi, is a sincere man with great vision. His ability to transmit the art in a comprehensive yet inoffensive way will be the through which many Americans discover and enjoy the art.”

The Budokan is also home to the only United States Aikido Federation (USAF) dojo in New Mexico. Apodaca Sensei,

6th Dan, Shido-in, and a Santa Fe native, is the chief instructor. Although affiliated with the USAF, he welcomes people from other Aikido organizations or dojo, and even other arts, to drop in to practice. In fact, he encourages people to train together in the arts that they love to learn more about it together. Apodaca Sensei has been an Aikido student for 39 years, coming from an illustrious lineage in Aikido, a lineage that is rivaled by very few in the Aikido world. He has studied and trained under a number of notable Aikido Shihan, including Mikoto Masahilo Nakazono, Morihiro Saito, Kazuo Chiba, and Yoshimitsu Yamada, all direct students of the founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba O-Sensei. Prior to studying Iaijutsu and Kenjutsu as a member of the KNBK, Apodaca Sensei studied Iaido during his years at the San Diego Aikikai under Chiba Shihan and also received advanced certifications in Aiki-ken and Aiki-jo from Saito Shihan in Iwama, Japan.

Apodaca Sensei continues to practice regularly and learn, as learning is a lifelong process. He says, “I admit that I am particular in the way I regularly practice, but I try to remain true to the principles I was taught. This preserves the mindset that aided me in my practice for so



many years.” He holds an annual “friendship seminar,” in which he invites other teachers from Santa Fe and Albuquerque to come and teach a class. He asks them to bring their students, so that they can see that Aikido practice varies between dojo and teachers. Apodaca Sensei is also a co-author, along with Walther G. von Krenner and Ken Jeremiah, of the recently released book *Aikido Ground Fighting: Grappling and Submission Techniques*. Besides Iaijutsu and Aikido, Santa Fe Budokan is home to the Santa Fe JIN (Japanese Intercultural Network), and they hold monthly meetings, parties, and classes in Japanese dance and kimono at the dojo. Recently, they participated in the 9th Annual Matsuri (festival). This year the theme was “kimono,” and Apodaca Sensei’s wife, Dr. Jody Erickson, participated, modeling kimono and helping in other ways. The event, which draws thousands of visitors yearly, also included Aikido and

Iaijutsu demonstrations by Apodaca Sensei. Dr. Erickson’s practice, “Kansha Japanese Acupuncture,” also has an office at the Budokan, where she sees patients regularly. She also returns to Newport, Rhode Island every month to treat the large patient group that she had previously established during the 17 years that she and Apodaca Sensei lived there. Apodaca Sensei and Dr. Erickson also shared the same teacher, Nakazono Sensei. A direct student of Aikido founder Morihei Ueshiba and 9th Dan Shihan, he started the Kototama Institute: a school specializing in Japanese acupuncture. Nakazono Sensei created a “style” of acupuncture and incorporated Aikido practice into the curriculum. He felt that Budo practice was an essential ingredient to healing. He was instrumental in introducing acupuncture to the New Mexico State Legislature, and spearheaded the licensing process for acupuncturists in the United

States. New Mexico’s guidelines, established by Nakazono Sensei, have become the “model” that the rest of the country uses for licensing. Other healing arts are also practiced at the Budokan. Seimei practitioners use the dojo every Thursday evening and hold weekend seminars several times each year. Seimei, a Japanese no-touch method of healing, is practiced worldwide and has a big following.

Santa Fe Budokan combines the arts of self-defense and healing. With classes in martial arts like Aikido and Iaijutsu, and healing arts like acupuncture and Seimei, Apodaca Sensei truly follows the teachings of his revered teacher, Nakazono Sensei. It is a great place to train, learn and grow, and it serves as a cultural bridge between the East and the West.

Contemporary Knife Targeting

by Paul White

We train with edged weapons. A large portion of our training involves visualizing and responding to an attack by enemy with *nukitsuke* and *kirioroshi*. In *solo waza*, these cuts take place in the air. Occasionally, we cut *wara* to demonstrate to ourselves the power of our sword and our skill in using it. But in truth, the vast majority of us are far removed from the reality of actual combat with edged weapons.

The book *Contemporary Knife Targeting* highlights the reality of the use of edged weapons. This is not a coffee table book or a title that you'll want to discuss over family dinner.

The book is an update of the WWII commando instructor Fairbairn's "Time Table Of Death." Fairbairn used this table during hand-to-hand combat instruction of British commandos and Office of Strategic Service (OSS) spies (a dagger that was designed by Fairbairn carries his name). This small table listed the times-to-death for various knife cuts and stabs to an enemy's anatomy. For example, in Fairbairn's table, severing the carotid artery causes unconsciousness in five seconds and death ensues in 12 seconds.

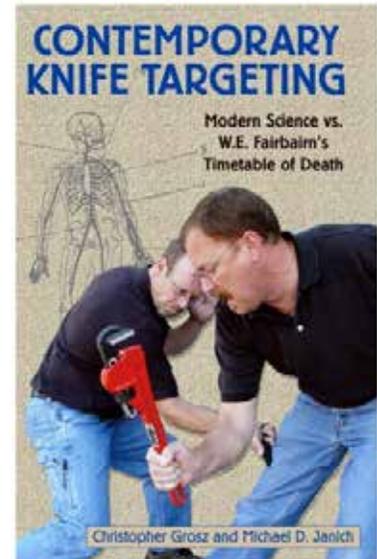
The authors, Christopher Grosz and Michael Janich, wondered if Fairbairn's table was accurate. The authors enlisted the help of Dr. Michael Doberson, a Colorado Medical Examiner who also holds the title of Associate Clinical Professor of Pathology at the University of Colorado. Looking at the Time Table Of Death, Dr. Doberson immediately questioned Fairbairn's assumption of the average depth of veins. The doctor explained that an opponent's size, health, and physique would be significant and variable factors in determining the lethality of knife wounds. The authors developed updated tables based on 'average' persons and what the heart rate was at the time of various cuts (e.g., carotid, femoral, wrist, etc.).

Contemporary Knife Targeting includes explicit black and white photos of severe knife wounds. (The photo depicting the damage done with a #2 pencil is particularly disturbing). The photos are accompanied by captions describing the circumstances and the outcome of the wounds. From these examples, many movie knife myths are dispelled. For example, a thrust to a major organ, such as the kidney or liver, always stops an attacker immediately, but this notion is countered in the book with contrary forensic and anecdotal evidence.

Authors Grosz and Janich also demonstrate, in black and white stop-action photos, various knife defenses, knife cuts to an attacker's anatomy that will stop him/her, and how to flow through and execute these cuts in a fight.

For a person studying a martial art that includes edged weapons, the book *Contemporary Knife Targeting* contains a lot of valuable material. Not the least of which are the vivid photographs of the effect of edged weapons.

Contemporary Knife Targeting by Christopher Grosz and Michael Janich is published by Paladin Press and is available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle editions.



New Book, *Aikido Ground Fighting* Released

by Erik Johnstone, Doshi

A potentially groundbreaking new book in the Aikido world, *Aikido Ground Fighting: Grappling and Submission Techniques*, co-authored by the KNBK's very own Damon Apodaca Sensei, was released in May of this year. This book presents "innovative applications for ground fighting, a practice often omitted from modern Aikido training." The book explores the application of the principles of Aikido through the lens of ground fighting, expressed through a presentation of the "pillars," the technical categories through which these principles are actualised. The purpose of suwari-waza, the seated techniques of Aikido, is also explored, presented as a "basis for further ground techniques."

Along with Apodaca Sensei, a long-time practitioner and teacher of Aikido (and a subject of the "Dojo Spotlight" found elsewhere in this issue of Kagami), this volume was also co-authored by Walther von Krenner Sensei, who studied directly under Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido, and Ken Jeremiah, one of Apodaca Sensei's senior students in Aikido and a member of the KNBK.

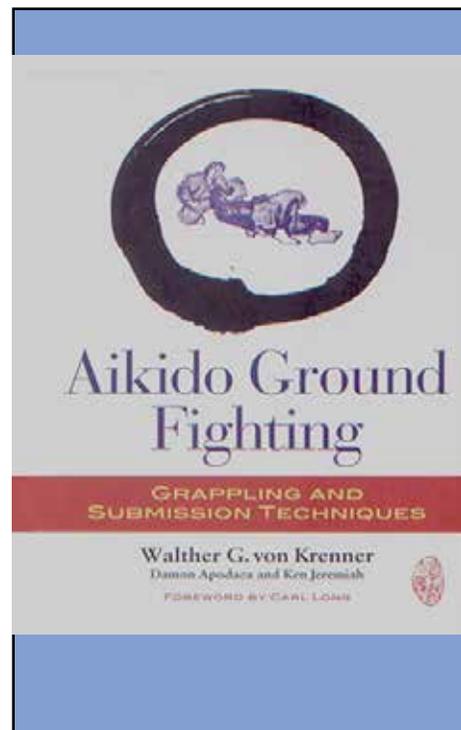
Significantly, this book has received the "stamp of approval" by Carl Long Kyoshi, Soshihan and Chairman of the KNBK, who wrote the foreword for this book.

I am sure that, as many of our KNBK members are also practitioners and instructors of Aikido and related arts, *Aikido Ground Fighting* will offer deep insight into another dimension of Aikido practice, will benefit to their practice and evolution in budo. This book will also be a valuable addition to the library of anyone interested in traditional budo as a dynamic, living practice!

Published by Blue Snake Books, of Berkeley, California, *Aikido Ground Fighting: Grappling and Submission Techniques* (ISBN 978-1-58394-606-0), can be ordered through your local bookstore or purchased online. Alternatively, you may consider contacting Apodaca Sensei for a signed copy (stock dependent!) at www.sfbudokan.com!

An accompanying DVD, currently in production by Catshot Productions (www.catshot.com), will be available in the near future.

I am sure that I can speak for all of the KNBK in offering our whole-hearted congratulations.



Dai Nippon Butoku Kai Memorial Enbu

On March 23, 2013, KNBK members from around the country congregated in Norfolk, Virginia to take part in a very special Dai Nippon Butoku (DNBK) Memorial Kensho Kai, held in memory and honour of the passing of DNBK members in 2012, including Masayuki Shimabukuro, Hanshi, 21st Soshihan of the Masaoka line of Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu Iaijutsu. Shimabukuro Hanshi had received official appointment by the Dai Nippon Butoku Kai as the International Director & Coordinator for DNBK Iai-do and Batto-do divisions. He had also been awarded both Hachidan and Hanshi in Iai-do by the Dai Nippon Butoku Kai and represented the DNBK International for teaching the art of swordsmanship and budo outside of Japan.

It was truly a special and deeply moving experience; I am sure that I can speak for the rest of the KNBK Team members when I say that it was a profound honour to represent Shimabukuro Hanshi and the legacy of his budo with so many other DNBK International Division members.

However, as Long Sensei has a gift of words matched by few, I offer the words that he shared following this very special occasion.

Dear KNBK Team Members,

Thank you for making the DNBK event in Norfolk a memorable and at times emotional experience that we will never forget. I want to reiterate something that Hanshi Hamada said to all of you over the weekend.

Shimabukuro Hanshi's spirit lives on in each of your budo enbu. I know that he was there with you, within you.

You should be very honored and yes, proud, that your budo continues to imbue elements that cannot be defined but can only be felt by those who are witness to it. You expressed dignity, humility, nobility and most importantly, sincerity throughout your entire trip to Norfolk. I know that Hanshi would be very pleased to call you his budo children. But he would be even more proud to call you the new capable leaders that he worked so very hard to create.

Hopefully the weekend in Norfolk has left you with a renewed sense of fellowship and commitment to your budo heritage. Hopefully, you have now returned home with a steadfast determination to dedicate your training to your own unique personal journey in budo. I have returned home with the knowledge that our martial heritage is safe and more importantly, living strong within the body of the KNBK.

Thank you for representing. Thank you for making our teachers Iai come alive once again. Thank you for now moving forward making it our own.

The journey to Norfolk was not the end. It was another beginning.....Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carl E. Long



Upcoming Seminars and Events 2013

August 23rd-25th

A Weekend of Koryu Iaijutsu: Carl Long Kyoshi in South Carolina

Host: Aikido of Lake Keowee

Contact: James Bartee

Phone: (864) 888-3226 (dojo)

E-mail: aiki@bellsouth.net

Web: www.aikidooflakekeowee.com



September 6th:

2013 West Coast KNBK Shidosha Koshukai

Host: Southern California KNBK/JKI Dojo

Contact: Erik Tracy, Renshi

E-mail: erik.tracy@socal-kenbk.org

September 7th-8th:

First Annual Shimabukaro Memorial Budo Festival

Host: Sand Diego KNBK Dojo and UCSD Iaido Club

Contact: Erik Tracy, Renshi and Scott Chang, Doshi

Phone: (858) 876-5650

E-mail: erik.tracy@socal-kenbk.org or scott_chang@iai-ken.com

Web: www.ucsdiaido.com (for additional information and registration)

October 3rd-6th:

European Koshukai and Gasshuku

Host: DNBK Belgium

Contact: Marc Mebis, Doshi

Phone: +32 477 475 376

E-mail: marc.mebis@dnbkbelgium.org

November 22nd-24th:

Annual KNBK Shidosha Koshukai

Host: KNBK Hombu Dojo/ Sakura Budokan

Contact: KNBK Hombu Dojo/ Carl Long, Kyoshi

Phone: (570) 288-7865

E-mail: hombu@kenbk.org

Web: www.KNBK.org



EDITORIAL (CONTINUED)

experienced in many ways in our lives. The reality of the nature of the universe is one of continuous change. All of reality is an ongoing process of cause and effect with nothing standing outside or separate from this truth; nothing remains constant. This truth applies to us as much as any other phenomena that we might experience in this world. We experience renewal each day, in fact in each moment, albeit most often in small and quite often unnoticed ways. Our bodies, our cells, are constantly changing; our thoughts and feelings a continuous process of change. In fact, on a subatomic level, our very existences can be viewed as a moment to moment event in space-time. Each moment is therefore fully and completely unique, filled with boundless potential. Each moment is renewal, and as such a new and unique opportunity; each moment is a chance to express the highest potential or life condition, already existing within the depths of our lives. Each moment can truly be a rebirth; Ichigo Ichie.

The Kokusai Nippon Budo Kai has also experienced the reality of the constant change and with it, renewal. In accordance with the directives of the late Masayuki Shimabukuro Hanshi, the 21st Generation Soshihan of Masaoka-ha Muso Jikiden Esihin-ryu, the KNBK is now lead by his designated successor, Carl E. Long, Kyoshi, the 22nd Generation Soshihan. The KNBK has already experienced many new changes arising from Long Sensei's wise

and compassionate guidance. And like each new moment, like each new dawn, the future of the KNBK is filled with boundless potential. We, the members of the KNBK must therefore make a determined effort do everything that we can to assist Sensei in his own determination to continue the mission that was begun so many centuries before; a mission that has been handed down to him through succeeding generations of wise and compassionate teachers. This mission is nothing less than the heart to heart transmission of teachings and values, of truths, that have the power to transform this world.

Spring has now passed and summer is well upon us. Independence Day, and with it a long weekend filled with happiness and the company of dear friends and loving family is mere days away. My kids, like

countless children throughout the Northern Hemisphere, are out of school and are filled with excitement by the prospects that the long summer brings. As I consider the KNBK both in this unique moment and in a future filled with boundless potential, I too am filled with great admiration, deep gratitude and great hope for what lies ahead of us all.

With Palms Pressed Together,

Erik A. Johnstone, Doshi



Kagami: The Newsletter of the Kokusai Nippon Budo Kai

Kagami is published by the Kokusai Nippon Budo Kai.

**Advisor: Carl E. Long, Kyoshi ; Kaicho & Soshihan
Kokusai Nippon Budo Kai**

Editor-in-Chief: Erik A. Johnstone, Doshi

Assistant Editors: Paul White; Stephen Ferraro

Graphic Design: Robin McGuirl



KNBK
KOKUSAI NIPPON BUDO KAI
国際日本武道会

Kagami Contact Information:

*Erik Johnstone
Shindokan Dojo
829 Stonington Rd.
Stonington, CT 06378 USA
Phone: 401-474-2568
Email: shindokan1@gmail.com*

KNBK Contact Information:

*KNBK Hombu Dojo
Sakura Budokan
390 Tioga Ave.
Kingston, PA 18704 USA
Phone: 570-288-7865
Email: hombu@knbk.org
www.knbk.org*