

Samurai News from Honbu



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The Obata Foundation

Aikido & Aikibujutsu

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Word from Obata Kaiso

By Obata Toshishiro Kaiso

The International Shinkendo Federation was established in 1994. Late last year, we were successful in creating the Obata Foundation, a non profit organization. It is my hope that the Obata Foundation will help the spread of Shinkendo, and in the future generations to the community. We are currently starting small, with the help of Hombu students, but I hope that other branch leaders and students will be able to help. Our goal is to not only spread Shinkendo, but preserve this traditional Japanese art here in America. This is no small goal, and it will need the help of the Shinkendo community.



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Editors' Corner

This newsletter was last published in May 2008. Between this time, Honbu Dojo had participated in demonstrations and held many seminars. And now we are establishing a Non Profit Organization. As an activity of this, we had decided to publish newsletters again. If there are any ideas, articles that you want to share, or comments, Please contact the editor at kanumaiku@gmail.com.

Life is Art

By Stephen Fast

Obata Kaiso sometimes refers to our actions in terms of a “plus-minus” system. Negative behaviors may occur in decisions regarding ethics, health, relationships, etc. We are wise if our positive actions outnumber the negative ones. Life is an art where our decisions shape who we are and have effects on other people. Shinkendo, Aikido, and Bojitsu are not only ways to defend ourselves or to lead to enlightenment, but they are also the paths which pave the way through the comedies and tragedies and favors and adversities of this life. Balance is the key, and Shinkendo teaches how to center your body regardless of its position- sitting or moving -and concurrently the mind becomes “centered.” Passions and vices may be diminished as self-control is developed. As a result, more positive decisions are made regarding one’s actions, which benefit yourself, those around you, and maybe even your natural surroundings.

Personally, I find that Obata Kaiso’s art has taught me how to better deal with adversity. I know when to face challenges head on, and when to sidestep them. Shinkendo, Aikido, and Bojitsu have taught me that the greatest challenge we face is often ourselves, and how you meet those challenges is your “art.” My life as art is crude when I lose my patience. However, it is rich with form and meaning when I harmonize and live Shinkendo. Thank you to Kaiso, and my fellow students for helping to create a well-lit path.

Martial Law

By Louis Boyarski

Every hardworking individual needs an outlet. I found mine in martial arts. Three years ago, I began law school. It was also during this time that I started studying Aikido and Aikibujutsu with Sensei Obata. Since then, I have passed the California Bar and am preparing to begin my professional career.

Reflecting upon what I have learned as a student of Obata Kaiso, I realize that studying martial arts has become much more for me than just an outlet from the stress of law school. I believe that there is a direct relationship between the ritualized, carefully crafted combat of the martial arts and litigation. They both have the same intensity of training and preparation, the same focus on your opponent’s tactics, the same requirement to see through feints and diversions. In addition to using martial arts for physical release from tension and stress, I have learned to be a more effective litigator from its study.

As I continue to develop my skills as both a martial artist and attorney, I feel privileged to be able to call myself a member of the Shinkendo family. I looked forward to my continued growth under the tutelage of Obata Kaiso. Jinsei Shinkendo!

Shinkendo Arrives in Athens, Greece

By George Konstantine Laskaris Sensei

On April 21, 2009, I moved to Athens, Greece. Greece is the birthplace of my Mother and Father, and of my ancestors. I was born in New York and lived most of my life in both New York and California with yearly visits to Greece, but simply for vacations and to visit my relatives. There are many reasons I decided to permanently move to Greece, one of which was my desire to start a Shinkendo dojo here as, up until now, there have been no Shinkendo dojos in the entire country. I saw this as a great opportunity for the I.S.F. Needless to say, this was a big move which involved years of planning and preparation. The day finally came that my preparations were set, my planning paid off and, like Odysseus, I returned to my ancestral home.

On a side note, interestingly enough, the words Greek and Greece do not exist in the Greek language. They are foreign words commonly used by the International Community to describe our country, our language and our people. We refer to our country as Hellas, our language as Hellenic and ourselves as Hellenes.



Greece is known throughout the world for many different things such as its food (souvlaki, gyro, Kalamata olives and feta cheese) for the brave warriors of Sparta (most recently portrayed in the movie "300") , and for its gorgeous, clear, blue oceans and beautiful islands like Mykonos and Santorini, which have brightly glowing, white-washed houses whose doors and windows are painted a vibrant hue of royal or sky blue (which also happen to be the colors of the Greek flag) commonly seen in photographs on calendars and postcards. I would have to say, however, that Greece is probably best known as the birthplace of Democracy, for its noted Philosophers like Socrates and Plato, its Mathematicians such as Pythagoras and



Archimedes, and, of course, for the Acropolis, home of the Parthenon.

Just north of the Acropolis is the Temple of Hephaistos, built ca. 460-415 B.C. Hephaistos was the God of Metal Working and the Forge. Being that I am here pursuing opening the first Shinkendo dojo in Greece, I found this quite ironic and viewed it as a very fortuitous omen. Maybe, some day, my students and I will be able to perform our *Tanren-gata* in front of this temple of the *Tanren*. I've been eagerly waiting for the opportunity to share this information with Obata Kaiso. I



hope he finds it as interesting and as ironic as I do.

It's now June and I've spent most of my time since getting here laying the ground work for starting to teach Shinkendo in Athens. After a lot of research on the internet, searching through various neighborhoods, after many phone calls and conversations, handing out of Shinkendo flyers and literature, showing Shinkendo video clips to lots of different people (a BIG thanks to Sensei Mike Shu for preparing those for me last year!) and lots and lots of networking, I am very proud to announce that Shinkendo Greece has found a home!

On Friday, June 5, 2009, I had the honor of teaching the first ever Shinkendo class held on Greek soil, at the Athens Bushido Center, located in Kallithea, Athens, Greece. The Athens Bushido Center is a martial arts school that teaches Aikido, Judo, Tai Chi, Zen meditation and now, Shinkendo! Our first class consisted of 5 students and 4 observers. All of the students from the first class returned for the second class, held the very next day. Also one of the observers from the first day joined us for our second class,



bringing our total up to 6 students. It goes without saying that I am very pleased and proud to have had such a good turn out.

Both classes went very smoothly, with a lot of positive energy, good training, and VERY loud “Kiai” put in by our new Shinkendo-ka. Let us all please give them a hearty and enthusiastic welcome as the newest members of our ever growing Shinkendo family, and for helping us to be able to include Greece as the newest country to be representing the I.S.F. I would like to take a moment to thank Obata Kaiso and Mrs. Obata Sensei for all of their wisdom, teaching, patience and support throughout the years. You have laid a very solid foundation within me. And thank you to all of my fellow Shinkendo-ka, my family and my friends who have helped me and supported me throughout my years of training. None of this would be happening if it wasn't for all of you. To all of you I humbly say, with a very deep bow, Domo Arrigato Gozaimashita.

JINSEI SHINKENDO!!!!



The Instructors Seminar GuestBook

From the Honbu Dojo

5-08-2009

I am very happy to be back at Honbu again training with Kaiso and those here in L.A. It is always a humbling and enlightening experience. It is a great family here. Thank you very much Kaiso for all your insights.

Steve Bertsch

Yamakaze Dojo, Illinois

5-09-2009

I am really enjoying the instructor training. It's great to see all the instructors from different dojos. I always learn so much from these. Thank you very much Kaiso Obata and Mrs. Obata for everything you do for us!

Mary Giles

KikenTai Dojo, Georgia

It is always a pleasure to travel to visit the Honbu Dojo. I thoroughly enjoy the excellent training and the opportunity to visit with and train with so many excellent students from around the world! Thank you Sensei Obata and Mrs. Obata!

Robert Bonen

KikenTai Dojo, Georgia

Dear Sensei and Mrs. Obata,

It is always a joy to visit the Honbu to train. Now that I'm in Chicago I don't have regular training partners and when I visit it is a wonderful opportunity.

Travis Crane

Sojokan Dojo, Illinois

My training in Shinkendo continues to open new ways of moving in my other martial arts. I always go away from Honbu full and satisfied, like a good meal. Thank you Sensei.

Margarita Jiminez

Morgan Hill, California

Keiko, Keiko, Keiko... that is what matters.

David Fazio

Iwanami Dojo, Illinois

5-10-2009

It has become a saying in our dojo "that all you know is that you don't know." This is all the reason we need to keep training at Honbu, because with each trip, the many things that we don't know become a few less. As always, our deepest thanks goes out to the Obata family and the Honbu students for their generous nature and their kind spirits.

Blake Meyer

Yamakaze Dojo, Illinois

Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to train with such excellent swordsmen. Thank you all for coming!

Matthew Lynch

Honbu/Mashuu Dojo, California

A great summer. Nice to meet folks from everywhere.

Michael Mason

Shinkendo New York at Brooklyn Dojo, New York

The Tenugui Travels Again - Japan

Dr. John Liu of the Honbu dojo continues his mission of taking Shinkendo around the globe



Kondo Isami (1834-1868)

He was originally a practitioner of Tandenrishin Ryu. He left Edo and headed to Kyoto, and became the leader of the Shinsengumi. He is considered one of the last samurai of the Tokugawa government. On 1864, July 8th at the Ikedaya house, there was an event where the samurais of the emperor side held a meeting to overthrow the government. 9 Shinsengumi (including Kondo Isami) went to stop the meeting. There were 20 plus samurai on the second floor. Kondo and two other Shinsengumi attacked the second floor where 7 enemies died while fighting, and 4 other enemies died later from wounds. 23 of the enemies were arrested by the Shinsengumi. Of the Shinsengumi, one died at Ikedaya and 2 others died later from wounds.

Itsukushima Shrine

Itsukushima shrine was built 1400 years ago. It is one of the three most famous shrines in Japan. In 1068, Taira no Kiyomori helped rebuilt the shrine to what it is today. It is considered a red guardian to the Heike family. There was the battle of Itsukushima on 1555, October 15. Sue Harukata and his army of 25,000 fought Mouri Motonari and his army of 3000. Harukata attacked the island with 500 ships, but were defeated by Motonari's 300 ships that enclosed Harukata's ships when they entered the gulf. The army of 3000 on the mountains and the ocean attacked and were successful. In the end Sue Harukata could not run away, at 25 years old, he committed suicide. Mouri Motonari became a powerful Daimyo in the feudal era.



Bonus Photos



