

Samurai News from Honbu



Haru No Jin



ISF
AB
KTRR

Issue 0031

March - April 2005

Sensei's Corner

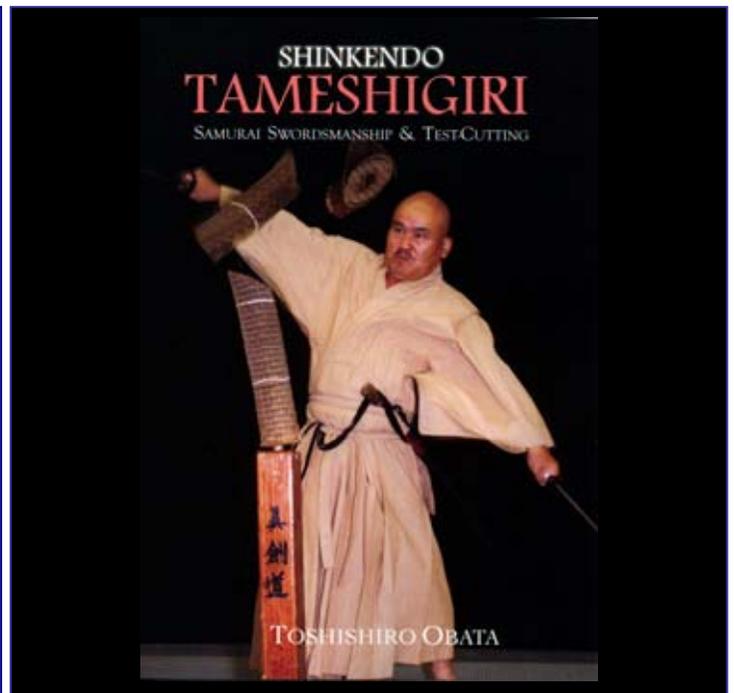
By Toshishiro Obata

The 2005 *Haru no jin* has started

Haru no jin translates to "Spring Campaign." We have just finished the seminar in Arizona, which was hosted by Jeff and Marlene Sensei's. Forty students attended the Shinkendo, Aikido, and Bojutsu seminar over three days. After the seminar finished, Jeff Sensei, Marlene Sensei, several students, my wife and I explored the Grand Canyon over three days. The seminar went well, and the sightseeing was excellent. I would like to thank the students and instructors who attended the seminar from out of state. Also, thank you Sensei Shawn and Mike (current Honbu student and instructor as USC) for assisting me during the seminar.

I went to Arkansas from the 16th to 20th of March, the seminar was hosted by Sensei Randy Beard. We had students from Georgia present. I also spent many hours on private lessons for Charles and Sensei Randy. The place I stayed in was built in 1871, which was previously a woman's dormitory. The inside has been remodeled now and is located in the middle of the university campus.

The second Shinkendo book is now in print. Please order now! I would especially recommend this book to students with instructor's licenses to learn the backgrounds of swordsmanship and practice safety. Instructors, please recommend this book to your students.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 A GRAND RETURN
- 7 SHINKENDO TAMESHIGIRI BOOK RELEASE
- 8 JAPAN DAY ENBU AT SANTA ANITA
- 10 PASADENA CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL
- 12 A LESSON ON BASICS

NEWSLETTER STAFF

PUBLISHER
OBATA TOSHISHIRO KAISO

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MICHAEL C. SHU

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
MARLENE HARRIS
NICHOLAS LAURIDSEN
STEPHEN FAST
RANDY BEARD

A Grand Return!

By Marlene Harris – Mesa and Chandler Dojo's, Arizona
Class and Dinner Photographs by Matt Dexter

After a 2-year intermission, Arizona students were pleased and excited to have Obata Sensei and Mrs. Obata return for 3 days of seminars at the Gilbert, Arizona Dojo. In addition to the seminars, this visit also featured a dinner at a wild-west town (that included a re-enactment of a classic old west shoot out), and a trip to the Grand Canyon via the scenic and fun Williams, Arizona Railroad. Instructors and assistants of the Mesa Dojos accompanied Obata sensei and Mrs. Obata on the Grand Canyon trip.

Now, at this juncture, I could launch into the typical monologue of "we did/saw/said/ate this and that", but I'll spare the readers of this type of much-too-standard fare and instead provide a brief pictorial romp through some of the high points (some over 7, 000 ft. in elevation!) of Arizona events!

Enjoy!



A fine flock of Saturday Afternoon Shinkendoka



Some Saturday afternoon Aikido practitioners



Enjoyin' the show at the Rockin' R Ranch



How's that "haymaker punch" boys? Tisk Tisk, maybe he needs more training



Above: James Fabian Sensei of Gilbert Shinkendo with his lovely bride, decked out in their cowboy best!



Right to left: Shawn Sensei (Atlanta), Gene Sensei (of AZ, retired), and Tan of NY



Left: Brian Vickery, Sensei of Gilbert Aikido, smiles....
.....almost



The Group Ready to Roll on the train
From Left to Right: Jack Hilton and Tosh Daley of the Mesa & Chandler Dojos, Mrs. Obata, Obata Sensei (sporting his snappy new cowboy hat!), Bryce Fields and Marlene Harris Sensei. Not pictured due to his service as the photographer on this shot, but deserving of honorable mention, is Jeff Harris Sensei



Above: Ed Bergweff Sensei of Gilbert Aikido and his wife at the Rockin' R



The best part is we don't have to drive!



They told me to put the tour sticker in the visible place!

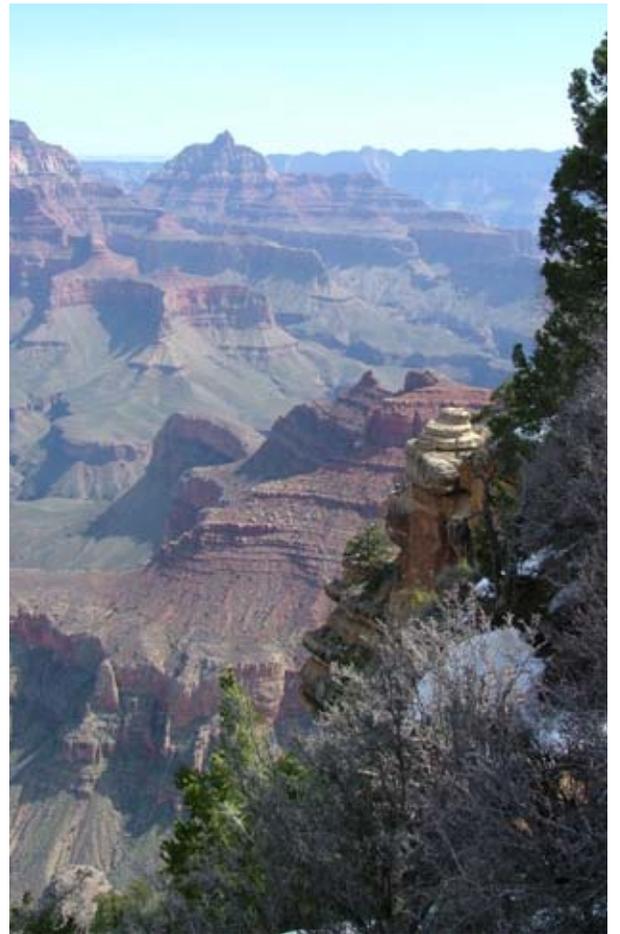


Yes indeedy! Watch that first step!



Upper Left: The group at the Grand Canyon, this time with Mrs. Obata at the camera lens. (No, we don't know who the guy with his back turned is!)

Life on the edge...waaaay out on the edge. (It should be noted that Kaiso made us waaaay nervous on this shot!)





The hosts of the 2005 Arizona seminar, Marlene and Jeff Harris, wish to gratefully acknowledge the assistance and support of Ed Bergweff Sensei and Brian Vickery Sensei of Gilbert Aikido and James Fabian Sensei and his assistants Cameron Chino and Sepp Lanz of Gilbert Shinkendo for their part in making the seminars a successful event! We may have lit the fire, but we couldn't have done it without your efforts to keep that fire burning brightly! We would also like to thank all of the students of the Mesa and Gilbert Dojo's for their enthusiasm, attendance, assistance in providing support and clean-up services, and generally honorable conduct during the seminars! You've done us all proud! Thanks also to Crosswell Sensei and the Phoenix Shinkendo group for their attendance.

We would also like to extend a big *domo arigato gozaimashita* to Shawn Forristall Sensei from the Atlanta Budokan, and Tanvir Akhtar from Lou Sensei's NY Dojo for their traveling a such hefty distance to join us for the seminars! We hope you enjoyed your visit as much as we enjoyed hosting you both!

Another *ooki domo arigato* goes out to *sempai* Michael Shu of Honbu Dojo for his attendance, his knowledgeable assistance during the seminars, and his laudable performances and composure on the frequent occasions he was summoned by Obata sensei to demonstrate solo in the spotlight!

Yet another thanks goes out to our unsung hero, Tink Golamb Sensei who graciously tended to our classes while we romped in the fresh air and sunshine at the Grand Canyon! Poor Tinkster and his wife Sue were all set to go on the Grand Canyon trip with us when plans were usurped by Tink sensei's call to fresh (and much needed) employment. *Gomenasai* that you were unable to join us, and *arigato* for being such a good sport about it all!

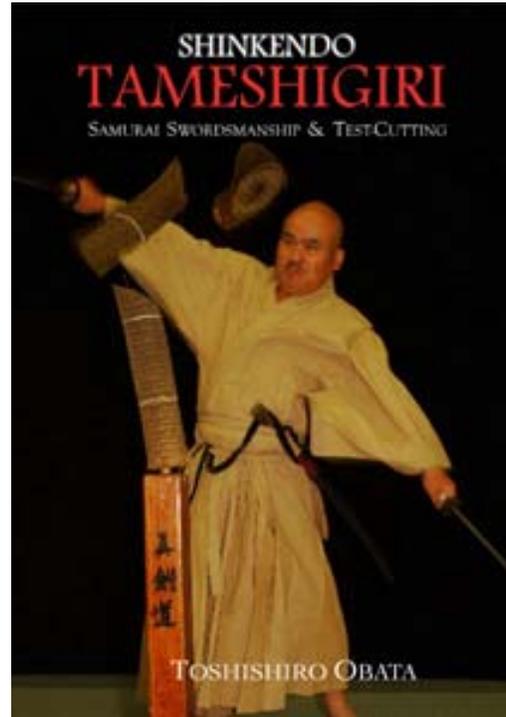
Finally, and last but not least, to Obata Sensei and Mrs. Obata: many thanks for your willingness to share your knowledge with us, the students, and instructors of the Arizona Dojos! We hope we've provided you with some fun and interesting experiences and good memories of your most recent visit to the Grand Canyon State!

Shinkendo Tameshigiri Book Release

By Nicholas Lauridsen

It has certainly been a while in the making, but the second book on Shinkendo, Shinkendo Tameshigiri: Samurai Swordsmanship & Test-Cutting, has finally arrived. This is a monumental publication in many ways: it is the second book on Shinkendo, and the first book to concentrate specifically on one element of the *Gorin Goho Gogyo*; it is a distillation and codification of some of Obata Kaiso's practices and experience, and officially documents one facet of Shinkendo; and, ultimately, it is the world's first tameshigiri manual.

I first saw the manuscript probably three years ago, while I was still living in the Bay Area. Over the past couple years, it has been a great privilege to work on the project over its many phases. I can now see what Nathan Sensei was talking about when he mentioned the hard work required to bring the first Shinkendo book into being. We were all inspired to work very diligently on the book, especially as it addresses a unique area of Obata Kaiso's experience and expertise, and contains much critical information that the world has never seen.



Particularly with a lot in interest in tameshigiri in the martial arts community, this book has a wide-scale relevance, and comes at an important time.

Due thanks go to Obata Yukishiro Sensei, Michael Esmailzadeh Sensei, Frank Klaver, Dr. Deborah Klens-Bigman, Jorin Bukosky Sensei, Sammy Briggs Sensei, and Nathan Scott Sensei for their work on the first Shinkendo book. They really made the Tameshigiri book (and all subsequent books) possible by setting the standards of the first book so high, especially as the inaugural book on Shinkendo. The Tameshigiri book was really modeled on the first book, and we wanted to preserve the directness and the overall feel of it. And we are very grateful to everyone who worked on it – Obata Yukishiro Sensei, Gabriel Koneta, Mike Yamasaki, Lou D'Agostino Sensei, Shahin Rarii Tabatabai, and Mike Shu. They have all worked very hard to bring the best possible representation of Obata Kaiso's ideas and teachings into print.

Despite having worked on the book for the past two years, I still find it fresh and inspiring every time I read it, and Obata Kaiso's clear and direct style very succinct in its presentation of his ideas; I sincerely hope everyone will enjoy reading it and studying it as much as I have. Even after he had completed the manuscript, Obata Kaiso kept thinking about it, making revisions and additions as he saw fit so that it would be as detailed, accurate, and comprehensive as possible. It is really for our sake as students and for future generations that Obata Kaiso has endeavored to commit many of his ideas to writing; in turn, as students and instructors, we have a new resource for our own training and teaching, and are further empowered to practice Shinkendo with a more perfect integrity. I hope everyone will take the opportunity to thank Obata Kaiso for this gift to us.

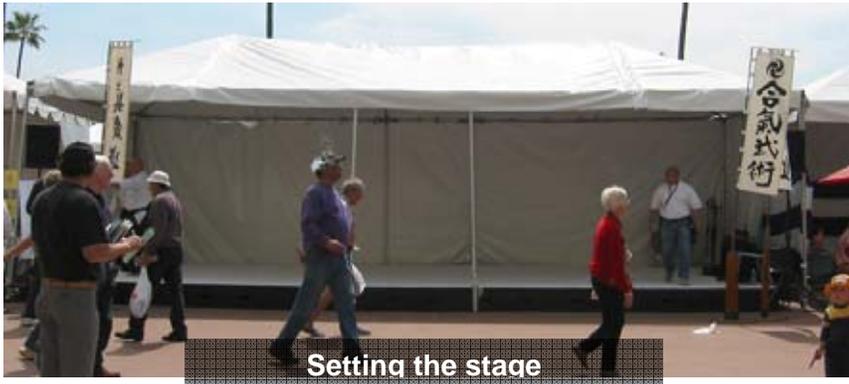
Detailed information on the book is available in the press release downloadable online at www.shinkendo.com/images/tameshigiri_press.pdf. Obata Kaiso's next project is a new edition of Heiho Okugisho, a translation that has been out of print for some time. Please look forward to it!

JAPAN DAY ENBU AT SANTA ANITA RACETRACK

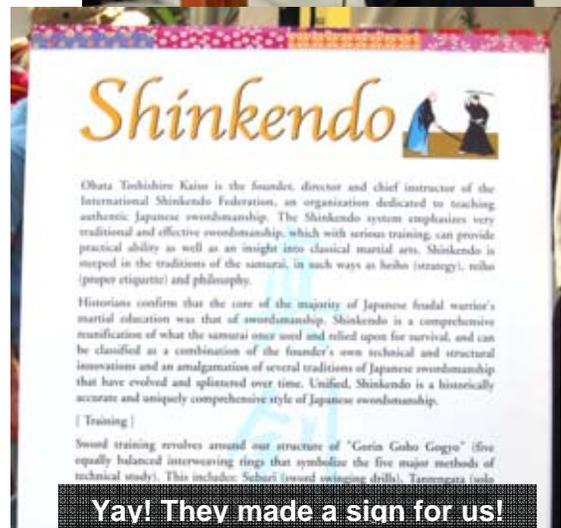
By Stephen Fast – Honbu Dojo – Photographs by Daniel Zahn – Mashuu Dojo

Saturday April 2, 2005 marked Japan Day at Santa Anita Racetrack. Shinkendo was featured in two well received demonstrations at the racetrack, as was bojutsu by Obata Sensei and daughter Yoko. Michael Shu and Chuck Light did tameshigiri which earned a good round of applause from the audience. Matthew Lynch Sensei's dojo was represented by Daniel Zahn – Thank You – and Julian van Zandweghe from Honbu also gave support. Obata Sensei thanks all who help to support the demonstrations.

Japan American TV News used a clip of the Shinkendo Enbu at Santa Anita for its story on Japan Day. This was aired Saturday April 9, 2005 along with a feature story on the Japanese sword that included an interview with Obata Sensei. The interview was recently conducted at honbu dojo during videotaping of a Shinkendo class as part of the feature story. One of Sensei's quotes was about how the Japanese sword is an embodiment of the samurai spirit. Again, thanks to all who help support the demonstrations.



Setting the stage



Yay! They made a sign for us!



Mike...your face is scaring me



Whoa... this sword rocks!



It's not just Japan Day,
It's Samurai Day!!!



Pasadena Cherry Blossom Festival At The Rose Bowl

Photographs Provided By Mashuu Dojo

April 2nd was kind of a demo day. At the same time the Honbu was demonstrating at the Santa Anita Racetrack, a joint demo was being held at the Rose Bowl for the Sakura Matsuri.

Members from the Tsuki Kage, Hokuzan, Mashuu, and Honbu Dojos attended to make this demonstration a big success. Nathan Scott Sensei of Tsuki Kage was back in action representing the Tsuki Kage Dojo along with new Shibuchō Nate Oshidari and Brian Drake. Sammy Briggs Sensei of the Hokuzan Dojo traveled all the way from Pine Mountain to take part. Matthew Lynch Sensei of the Mashuu Dojo came with several students and Sang Lee from Honbu Aikido completed the group.

The plan for a one hour demo had to be adjusted due to the group before running overtime. One effect was that there was no time to set up mats. But despite the shorter time, the demo ran smoothly and wowed the audience.



Wait a second... ground not soft...

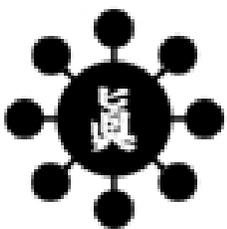




It's all about the zanshin



Watch me unravel, as you walk away...



A Lesson on Basics

By Randy Beard

Kyoshi -Tatsumaki Dojo - Springdale, Arkansas

It's been right at a month since the Tatsumaki Dojo sponsored a small but intensive three day Arkansas seminar. Even though it was not posted on the webpage we enjoyed several participants from Shawn Forristall Sensei's Atlanta Budokan, Mary Giles Sensei's Kikentai Dojo (Norcross GA), as well as Bobby Holley's Conway Karate and Jujutsu.

I'm sure we all experienced the frustration of polishing those skills Kaiso had reviewed during his last visit only to be overwhelmed by a totally new set of techniques. This seminar was no different when Kaiso broke down the simplest techniques into their most basic



parts. Not only did this give us a deeper understanding of the techniques, it also increases their effectiveness many times over. Obata Kaiso made it clear that slowing down and teaching solid basics was key in building a strong student body and organization. This also ensures that we will preserve the arts and pass it on correctly during our part of history. Obata Kaiso had the instructors teach smaller groups of lower kyu level students to reinforce this lesson. As any instructor knows having an assistant that teaches in the exact matter speeds up the group as a whole. Kaiso expressed how seminars can be more beneficial if the responsibility of teaching was split up among the other instructors present. His time could be better used if we shouldered some of the responsibility during the seminar freeing him up to instruct on a higher degree.

By Saturday evening the amount of information we had to digest was overwhelming. The group retreated for a banquet style feast at J.D. China Restaurant, where we toasted to Obata Kaiso, the ISF and its members. The Tatsumaki Dojo then presented Kaiso Obata with a round beveled mirror that has the Shinkendo *Mon* etched on it. A final Sunday morning refresher ended this wonderful training time, leaving everyone anxious for the next available seminar. Hope to see you there.

