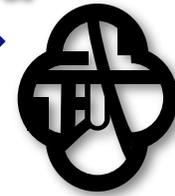




# Samurai News from Honbu

*Happy New Years!*



**ISF  
AB  
KTRR**

**Issue 0039**

**Winter 2006-2007**

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## SENSEI'S CORNER

By Obata Toshishiro Kaiso

Happy New Year!

Last year (2006) the seminars ended with Germany, and Georgia/Alabama. Including the Honbu seminars, there were seventeen in total. This year we will be starting off the new years with 2 demonstrations, one in Weller Court and one in the Japanese Village.

December 8th was a very important day for me. First and foremost, December 8th, 1980 is the day that I first came to America. Dec. 8th, 2006 was my 26th year in America (as well as Marimo's 21st birthday). May 10th, October 20th, and December 8th are all very special days for me as well as for Shinkendo.

I hope to visit Japan in April 2007 in order to plant the roots of our federation there.



Keiko Hajime will be on January 12-14 this year. I believe many of the students will stay a little longer to extend their training time. The seminar will be held in a new location this year, so please don't go to the old Dojo location.

It is very important not to get injured during training, especially during Tachiuchi and when practicing/cutting with a Shinken.

Kendo and Judo have a 100 year history in foreign countries, Karate and Aikido have a 50 year history in foreign countries, and Shinkendo has just started but it is important for instructors and students to realize that we will also become a part of history. It is important to keep the quality up and continue training hard and growing.

Allow Budo to become a beneficial aspect in your personal life; if it does not, one cannot call this art Jinsei Shinkendo.



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## Martial Arts Museum Ceremony

Article & Photos By Shatto Light

For those who don't know me, I'm Shatto Light, better known as Chuck's mom. I'm also the non-student who carries a camera whenever a demonstration is taking place. I was very fortunate to be at the Martial Arts History Museum Ceremony in Madrid Theater last October 14 to cover the event for an Asian newspaper, ASIA, The Journal of Culture and Commerce. I was also fortunate to witness Toshishiro Obata Kaiso receiving the award for the museum's Hall of Fame.

I felt that I was one of the gang when I saw familiar faces: Mrs. Obata Sensei, Steve



Sensei and Marlene Harris Sensei from Arizona, Lou D'Agostino Sensei from New York and from honbu dojo, Matthew Lynch Sensei with Luke La-Fontaine, who appropriately introduces Obata Kaiso and talks a little about Shinkendo.

It is only in such an occasion that I see all the sensei dressed in their tuxedos and night gowns. Obata Kaiso's elegant wardrobe is a change from



his regular hakama and dogi. Although Matthew Lynch Sensei was not able to wear his tuxedo that night, he was on the stage with the Museum Players who presented a play, *Taking Root*, that tells the history of how martial arts influence the American culture. Sensei Matthew demonstrated a glimpse of what Shinkendo is all about. I can hear the cheer from the martial artists themselves and from the audience after Sensei Matthew did tameshigiri. He was probably the only martial artist on the stage who did not yell *yaaahhhh* and kick legs.

Five other martial artists were honored that night: Ark Y.





Wong (kung fu), Buck Sam Kong (Hung Gar kung fu), Wally Jay (jujitsu), Wen Mei Yu (tai chi) and Cacoy Canete (kali/eskrima). Sensei Obata proved to be the leader of the pack when he stands in the middle of the stage and the museum president, Michael Matsuda, and other honorees followed him for some kodak moments.

For a follow up, the construction for the Martial Arts History Museum building will hopefully begin early next year and will be housed in Santa Clarita, according to the museum manager, Karen Gonzales. Senator Richard Alarcon, who

is very supportive of the museum, also awarded certificates of merits to the martial artists Hall of Fame.

For a little museum history: Martial Arts History Museum is a non-profit organization. Michael Matsuda, a martial artist himself, founded the organization in 1999. The museum is intended to recognize the achievements of martial artists and highlight the contributions of Asian Americans in bringing their arts from Asia to America. Matsuda is expecting the museum to be a tourist attraction.

“With busloads coming everyday, young school children will develop an understanding of how beautiful Asian art, history and philosophy is and how it revolves around the martial arts,” said Matsuda.



## Living Shinkendo in Göppingen

By Mischa de Brouwer



In a quiet little city, not far away from Stuttgart (home of Porsche) in Germany, about 60 students from Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Switzerland, France and Belgium, gathered during the weekend of 3<sup>rd</sup> till 5<sup>th</sup> November for a thorough autumn training, where Sensei took us back to the basics of *tachiuchi*, as well as a fine selection of *nitoken* techniques. One of those 60 students was I, Mischa de Brouwer, instructor in the Delft Dojo, in the Netherlands. 15 participants from the Netherlands, including Brent Hire sensei made the journey to Germany to take part in this seminar.

A surprisingly high number of instructors were present among the attendants. It was a refreshing experience for me to be able to receive so many instructors' views on Shinkendo, other than the view of my teacher, Hire Sensei. Finally I could commit myself completely to receiving, rather than giving, and it was good to have this feeling again.

With dojos all over the world, bonded by Sensei's seminars 2-3 times per year, you find that different views on the techniques appear do sometimes appear. While one senior Shinkendo student concentrates on doing his *tachiuchi* techniques clear and powerful, another likes to

perform it more flexible and agile, while a third tries to focus on timing and reaction. No doubt this is due to the background of all the people we have met at the seminar in Göppingen. There were real advanced Shinkendo students, who were even more advanced in other martial arts of aikido, ju-jutsu or kendo for example. Of course it is difficult for them to avoid the influence from those other martial arts. But seeing the rather large differences in emphasis while doing the techniques, it is perfectly understandable that Sensei came with the new directive to help oversee upper level exams earlier this year.

After class and during diners, Sensei taught us about the philosophy of Shinkendo. The large potential for all students to still develop in terms of health was stressed many times. From the theme for 2006, applying the *Go-iku* (Five Teachings), the fifth, *Shoku-iku*, was of primary focus; pertaining to the importance of eating a healthy and balanced diet, not to mention moderation with alcohol, drugs and tobacco. Clearly during this seminar Sensei discovered, as in previous seminars, that most of us still have a long path ahead of us.

One of the final remarks before our separation was that through studying and developing the *Kuyo Junikun* and *Hachido*, students of Shinkendo should be able to develop other skills and be successful in life. There are many ways to explain *Jinsei Shinkendo*, and this is one of them.

We went back on our long journey home, contemplating on ways to live Shinkendo. For one person this could mean trying to be more modest, for another it could be living healthier, for a third it could be taking extra care of the people and environment around you. Expanding Shinkendo to our lives outside the dojo is something Sensei is always showing us, and we all have a long way ahead of us in facing the challenge of improving ourselves and making a difference in the world.

We are looking forward to receiving Sensei and hopefully a large number of visiting students and instructors in Amsterdam, the Netherlands at our upcoming seminar at the end of April in 2007.

## U.K. September Seminar

By Neil MacKinnon, Kenbukai Dojo

**September 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> 2006 - Weston-super-Mare**



For the second year running September became the month that the UK dojo came together to train. We all met up again in my home town of Weston-super-Mare, a seaside resort in the South West of England. Once again Brent Hire sensei brought his special brand of humour and his infectious enthusiasm along with him, and we knew we were in for a good weekend.

The Friday evening session was for instructors and senior students.

The emphasis of the evening was basic technique and the vital need to know and teach the foundations of Shinkendo. The group included the three UK instructors, Fred East sensei, Wayne Kensett sensei and Darren Whyley sensei, and we were joined by Alec Corper sensei and Walter Vendel sensei from Shinkendo Nunspeet in the Netherlands.

Saturday found around 20 students, both local and from Northampton in the modern village hall that was home for the next two days. A distinct contrast to last years rural and historic building, the new building never the less had a good atmosphere and fine sunny weather did nothing dampen our already high spirits.

As with last years article, even 36 hours after the event, my mind is a blur of technique, with ashi and tai sabaki high on the agenda, along with another taste of bo technique, some solid foundation work and some new techniques. Brent sensei, as always, illustrating his points descriptively and with humour, to teach both individuals and the group a finer point, or to correct an error.

On a personal note, Juppon-dachi with bo and bokuto was an incredible sight, and it actually took me a while to recognise it as Juppon-dachi. However, when I found a bo in my hand, familiarity suddenly flew out of the window. It was all very enjoyable.

In the afternoon, we returned to Shinkendo, running through more Tanrenkata, some familiar and some new to me.

Saturday night, we all met up locally for a meal and a natter and it was great to see that everyone who was at the seminar was there, a sign of the camaraderie felt between us. I felt rather sorry for poor Sylvia at the Castle Restaurant, who was invaded twice in two nights by a bunch of wild eyed, happy, laughing people, speaking in some strange Anglo Japanese language. This is what happens I guess when Shugyosha from different dojo get together of an evening.

Sunday morning was bright, breezy and very pleasant. No visible sore heads from the night before and so after a good run around the dojo, we were led in Taiso Ichi by Wayne sensei and into some more great training.

We spent some time reinforcing some of what we had been shown on Saturday. My heart went out to Mark and his son Jonathan, who had not been able to join us on Saturday and were really thrown in at the deep end. They did their best to keep up and never gave up. Next we continued to get warmer with Suburi and we spent some time looking at fine details and correcting anything not quite right. I have a nasty habit of shortening my Shinchokugiri cuts, a left over from my Kendo days I think. Brent sensei was very patient, but increasingly vocal. This for me is what events like this are all about and everyone benefits. After Suburi came Goho Battoho, and then a break for lunch.



After lunch we spent some time concentrating on Happo Giri, again, nailing down those fine points, which are so important, and we then spent the last hour watching and participating in Tameshigiri.

With safety paramount as well as correct technique, individuals under the close guidance of Brent sensei, either experienced Tameshigiri for the first time, or worked on developing existing skills further. At times you could have heard a pin drop.

Alex, Paul and Will from Kizeme Kai dojo did a fine job of keeping the floor clean and mounting new targets, and then, all too soon it was time to sit in seiza for the last time.

Once again I must thank all the sensei involved, especially Alec Sensei, who's presence and humor kept my spirits up and Walter sensei who's quiet, assured and confident manner, made him a pleasure to train with and learn from. Of course Darren Sensei, Wayne sensei and especially Fred sensei must be thanked, for once again organizing the event, and a final thank you the Brent sensei, for being everywhere and seeing everything.

What a great weekend, we all look forward to the next opportunity.

Jinsei Shinkendo  
Gambatte Kudasai

## Shinkendo: A Way to Self Discovery By Shaffee Bacchus - New York

There are many reasons that propel me into the practice of Shinkendo, most of which I don't pretend to understand. Once asked why I study Shinkendo, given my obvious frailties, I sought to answer from a philosophical viewpoint based on peace and truth.

Mustering up my utmost concentration and drawing deeply on the reserves of my ever dwindling intelligent, I stated that I practice Shinkendo because it offers me the ultimate irony such a martial art can, when one considers the modern concepts of law enforcement and civilization.

I continued to explain that practicing Shinkendo, I seek to learn an art so deadly that I am bounded by honor and respect forged by centuries of Japanese tradition to never use the sword in actual combat. Therefore the only opponent that is really left is myself, I concluded that this is why Shinkendo is the true art of the sword, in search of the truth, a truth that is only revealed by seeking deeply into oneself. A process of unique self-actualization, that leads to a reality seen from the edge of a Shinken. Such a stark and utterly vivid realization of the spirit of the

Samurai and Budo is revealed that there is no contest, only knowledge.

Of course I received a troubled look and so recited a part of Kaiso's poem, "Train, train, train..." and the answer will come.

My visits to the Honbu provide sustenance to these ideals, glimpses of reality that I eagerly



try to comprehend or simply devour. In New York, I am guided in the understanding and value of this knowledge. Spoon-fed sometimes to prevent choking, and heartily slapped on the back when this occurs. There is never any dishonor in asking for seconds.

This year, Lou Sensei, Michael and I, set out on the harrowing trip across America by plane, plagued with the ever-increasing airport security and fearful for the people that may dare stand in our way. We arrived safely in Los Angeles a week early for Shucho Geiko. Our goals are to train, train, train and survive with honor. Some of us even embark on our personal quest of self-discovery, for instance I discovered that I am indeed quite muscular. I base this on the fact the after a week and over ten hours of private classes with Kaiso, I hurt in places where muscles aren't suppose to be.

Michael and I even found that we share interest besides Shinkendo; I like to sing and he really can sing, just ask around on the second floor of the Miyako.

Recently, we have been practicing Nitoken. As a left-handed person I know that somehow I am supposed to have an advantage with two swords. Waiting for this to become evident is yet another way Shinkendo teaches me patience. Using two swords is really an amazing process. I feel like there are now two truths to reconcile, but deep down I know that this is not

really the case.

My earlier misadventures into organic chemistry spring to mind and I see, symmetry, mirror images, enantiomers and strange flower patterns of colored ink between pressed papers. Yet despite my confusion I press on because I know that I am part of an evolution.

Practicing Shinkendo in an era when the art is evolving and dynamic is like being a part of an exquisite cosmic multi-layered cake while the layers are being applied. I am indeed grateful to Kaiso, Mrs. Obata Sensei, Yoko Sensei, Lou Sensei and my entire fellow Shinkendo-ka's for the energy that flows, when we practice.

I learnt Shinkendo this summer, and through Shinkendo I felt friendship, pure and simple. Matthew Sensei and family also made sure of that, and I extend my thanks. With the kinship of Shinkendo, I am a step closer to realizing my youthful boast to my father of becoming a man of the world. Kinship with the people of the world and the ongoing efforts to understand and exist on common ground is yet another way that Shinkendo reveals the truth to its practitioners.

## R.O.N & Basic 5

By Lou D'Agostino - Modern Samurai Dojo, NY

The rotation of neglect (R.O.N.) was taught to me by my mentor and percussion instructor decades ago. The goal in employing the rotation of neglect is the same regardless of your

discipline, be it music or martial arts. As a matter of fact, mixed martial arts MMA "is"

the rotation of neglect by definition. Namely to rotate various skill sets in order to be versatile.

Beyond varying diverse skills sets in Shinkendo i.e. suburi; tanrenkata, batto ho, tachiuchi, tame-shigiri, as well as Shinkendo Nitoken, another important aspect of practicing R.O.N. is to work on weak points first. By diligently paying attention to the particular skill requiring improvement (weak points) as your first priority as opposed to reviewing technique that are your strong points.

The Shinkendo curriculum as researched, developed and organized by Obata Kaiso reflects the rotation of neglect due to the fact that in addition

to each structure supporting and strengthening each other the permutations therein reflect diverse aspects of technique, tactics, strategy and their implementation therein.

My participation in private lessons, honbu classes and various seminars throughout the U.S.A. and abroad with Obata Kaiso have illustrated that Sensei always has a yearly goal and often bi annual goals for his students, instructors and the International Shinkendo Federation

. This may vary slightly from dojo to dojo, region to region domestically and internationally. However, Kaiso always rotates the areas of the curriculum that he feels need additional attention.

Even advanced practitioners that could be considered strong Shinkendo in every area of the curriculum need to rearrange the order of practice sets to keep the mind and body sharp.



As has become our dojo custom, Obata Kaiso visit our Shinkendo New York dojo each spring and fall. It's a perfect arrangement due to the fact that in between these visits the honbu is host for Keiko Hajime ( new years

training) and shocho geiko ( summer training). For a few years now I have had the opportunity to look at what is accomplished in quarterly visits with Kaiso as well as personal visits to the hobo for private instruction.

During Obata Kaiso's fall visit he instituted a R.O.N. concept by reformatting basic and intermediate tachiuchi sets resulting in a new combination known as "Basic 5"

