



BODY Dialogue

Proposed Shintaido Kenjutsu Program

by
General Instructor Jim Sterling

The International Technical Exam Committee (ITEC) recently published a draft of a proposed Shintaido Kenjutsu Program. The program includes suggested subjects for examinations, a teaching curriculum and individual practice techniques. The program is being established to complement and enhance components of our current Shintaido curriculum that include techniques using the bokuto. The hope is that the proposed program will give students a chance to learn some new sword movements while retaining the essence of our Shintaido practice.

We plan to use a bokken for the proposed program. The exact type of bokken has not yet been determined.

In order to kick off the program, ITEC made the decision that all active Shintaido practitioners with a pre-2016 rank of Graduate and above will be granted a corresponding rank in the proposed Kenjutsu program. The committee believes that people who have already spent many years practicing bokuto techniques should have an equivalent rank in the new program. Please see the list of people and their new Kenjutsu rankings in this article.

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Tenshin-Ken

by
Master Instructor H.F. Ito
[This piece was originally published on the Taimyo network as Master Instructor Ito's New Year's Greeting to that online group. We are reprinting it here for a general audience. Ed.]

As we move into the new year, it is my pleasure to share my heart-felt thoughts about Tenshin-Ken. This has a lot to do with philosophy of life and my search for the changes that I believe we all hope to see in our world. But as usual, let me take a technical approach first!

Tenshin-Ken, Practice and Your True Self

As you know, in Shintaido we have a large group of kumite forms that fall under the category of Kirioroshi Kumite.

Within this group of movements, Tenshin-Ken = Daijodan Kirioroshi. We take turns cutting through our partner's core. That physical movement cuts away tension, opens up blocked places, and frees our inner self ("Jiga"). In this process, together as partners, we can reach "Muga." Unification beyond conflict: 1+1=1

A famous Japanese poet wrote a haiku:

shizukasaya iwa ni shimi-iru semi no koe

"The silence fills everything, even the rock. And then the voice of a cicada ..."

When most Japanese people read this haiku, they think of a beautiful summer day in the country. But when Philippe Beauvois, one of my students in France, studied this poem, he came away with a completely different understanding:

The silence = complete silence, a world in which noisy thoughts and unnecessary things have been completely cut away

The rock = the ego that is wrapped up in the self

Semi no koe = a message from nature, Tenshin, ends up penetrating your true self

So to put it all together,

"The silence quiets noisy thoughts. Unnecessary things slip away, and my ego is finally quiet. Hear that? The universe is speaking."

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Shintaido of America (SoA) and Regional Updates

Here are a few updates from Shintaido of America (SoA), Pacific Shintaido (Pac Shin), and Shintaido Northeast (SNE).

West Coast Kangeiko will be Martin Luther King weekend, January 14-16, 2017. Pac Shin is inviting Ito-sensei to teach more of the evolving Shintaido sword program.

Shintaido Northeast's website has a new look. The site has moved to WordPress. Check it out! The same URL is still valid:

<http://www.sne.shintaido.org>

SoA is sponsoring Shin Aoki to attend the November ESC workshop in Paris, France.

SOA wishes to keep connection with ESC and the ongoing development of the sword program.

See page 4 for SoA members' exam results at the 2016 ISC event in France, and page 8 for a full list of all exam results.



心身開発体操より「連続反り跳び」

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

The next issue of *Body Dialogue* will be in May, 2017.

Please submit articles, poems, pictures to the editor at newsletter@Shintaido.org. Deadline for submissions is April 15, 2017.

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New Kenjutsu Program *Continued from p.1*

Research and Development (R&D) for the proposed program will begin in France in November 2016. Ito Sensei has offered to work with an SoA R&D team at the Bay Area's Kangeiko in January, 2017. Once the program has been established, if you hold the rank of Shintaido Assistant, you will have the opportunity to challenge Shintaido Graduate, Shintaido Kenjutsu Sho Dan or both!

Proposed - Shintaido Kenjutsu Program**Examination/Grade/Subjects of Study****Godan**

Diamond Cut 2 with Naked Blade
Hagakure / Kara with Naked Blade
Kumitachi / Mugen (1 vs. 2, 3) ~ Dai-Ginga/Sho-Ginga

Yondan

Muso-Ken Sambon Kumite
Soei-Kumibo
Kumitachi (Bo vs. Short Stick)

Sandan

Jissen-Kumitachi #1~#20
Hagakure / Kata on knee-walking

Nidan

Diamond Cut 2
Hagakure / Kumitachi 1
Hagakure / Kumitachi 2
Kumitachi / Tenshin-Ken

Shodan

Diamond Cut 1
Hagakure/ Kata

Teaching Program

8-Steps arrangement with Bokuto
Eiko Dai Kumitachi with Diamond 8 cuts
Tenshingoso Sword Movement
Tenshingoso Canon
Studying the concept/philosophy via "Kanji"
Time & Space Management with Mae-Irimi ~ Sagari-Irimi
Shoko and/or Bokyo-I Standing Meditation
Kenka-In Walking Meditation
Taikyoku-Sho on Knee-Walking

Homework / Hitori-Geiko

Shoko
Hoshi-Otoshi with Bo
Ten-Nage with Bo
Taikyoku-Sho on Knee-Walking
10 Position Meditation
Test Cutting / Tameshi-Giri (for Godan)

Golden Line - Diamond

8 - Tenshin ken

by

Master Instructor Masashi Minagawa

According to the Chinese calendar, it is the year of monkey this year. We usually use a Chinese character 迪 for monkey, but originally a different character, 逕 was used specially for the monkey in the Chinese calendar, which can be pronounced "SHIN".

The character 逕 originates in the image of 'Lightening'. Interestingly, both of the Chinese characters for 'Body' - 霄, and 'God' - 逾 also originate in the same word root as 逕, 'Lightening', and also they are pronounced 'SHIN'!

I heard that Chinese characters were originally created as means to tell people messages from a particular kind of fortune telling. People burnt turtles' shells at the beginning of a year to tell a fortune based upon forms which cracks on the shells were made by the process. You can say that the Chinese characters were made to convey messages from God through FORMS'.

On top of that, when messages from God are communicated, we use the Chinese characters 逕 - to express, the same character as the year of monkey!

When we encounter something beyond our own imaginations, we say in Japanese, 'I've got struck by lightening'.

It is interesting that Aoki sensei expressed SHINTAIDO as 'Body is a message from the universe'. As you know, in Shintaido a message from the universe is conveyed through the FORMS such as 'Tenshingoso', 'Eiko,' and Kenjutsu forms especially at this gasshuku.

Fundamentally, Kenjutsu is based upon solo practices. Through numerous practices which cut away unnecessary things, the swing of the sword shines like a flash of light as it cuts through the darkness. The light shines through the darkness of the past and opens up the new future.

I would like to name this line of light "The Golden Line of Life" as it connects the past, present and future, and unites Ten-Chi-Hitobito-Ware, (Heaven-Earth-People-I).

I believe that Kizuna, connection, is born between each practitioner through Kumite if we practice with sincerity in our hearts. These connections will create our future.

Let's start a new future together. Everyone has a bright future. This is your own Shintaido and also your own Golden Line.

SHIN 諱- (逕-express, 逾-God, 逕-truth, 董.-believe, 蠢-heart, 豺-depth, 闕-core, 隕-I-kind, 貂-pure, 莨-extend...) TAIDO 菴駟%!

New Kenjutsu Program*Continued from p.3***Corresponding SOA Kenjutsu Rankings****Graduate – Sho Dan Kenjutsu**

Nancy Billias
 Michael Bogenschutz
 Mary Foran
 Brad Larson
 Chris Nash
 Matt Shorten
 Roger Solomon
 Cheryl Williams
 Deb Zawielski

Instructor – Ni Dan Kenjutsu

Stephen Billias
 Bill Burtis
 Vera Costello
 Michael DeCampo
 Margaret Guay
 Jennifer Hicks
 Rob Kedoin
 Tomi Nagai-Rothe
 Lee Ordeman
 Byron Russell
 Mike Sheets
 Eva Thaddeus

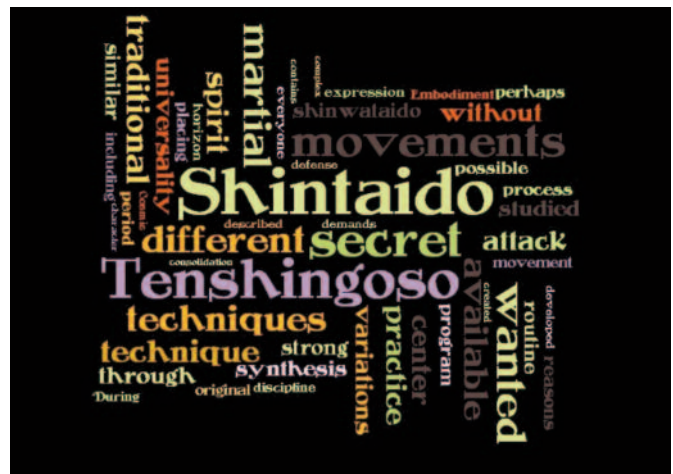
*Demonstration of Iaijutsu from WikiCommons***Corresponding SOA Kenjutsu Rankings (continued)****Senior Instructor – San Dan Kenjutsu**

Shin Aoki
 Sandra Bengtsson
 Connie Borden-Sheets*
 Bela Breslau
 David Franklin*
 Robert Gaston
 Joe Zawielski*

*Now General Instructors but were Senior Instructors when rankings were determined.

General Instructor – Yon Dan Kenjutsu

Jim Sterling

*Image from ISC website home page***SoA Members Exam Results 2016**

Heartfelt congratulations to the following SoA members who were promoted at the July, 2016, International Shintaido College examinations:

Connie Borden-Sheets - General Instructor

Joe Zawielski - General Instructor

David Franklin - General Instructor

Chris Nash - Karate, San Dan

[For a full list of examinees and exam results at the 2016 International, please see page 8. Ed.]

Mission statement from Master Instructors Ito, Minagawa, and Thompson

The following is a short message that was presented during the email discussions that have been ongoing among members of The New Examination Committee (TNEC)* since the beginning of this year.

General Instructor and Master Instructor: To begin with, we looked at the ranks of Daishihan (General Instructor) and Doshu (Master Instructor),** which could apply to future examinations after the ISC 2016 event.

We believe it is ideal that the ranks of Daishihan and Doshu be given based on the demonstration of technical proficiency at the examinations as well as contribution to the community. The decision would be made by the current Doshu in consultation with active Daishihan.

As mentioned in previous discussions, the model of practice in Shintaido Bojutsu, Karate, and Kenjutsu*** can be compared to climbing a mountain, aiming for its summit as the goal. In Free-hand (Open-hand) Shintaido, on the other hand, this model of learning will let you reach the level of Seishidoin or Senior Instructor. In order to go beyond this level, one is expected to broaden his or her capacity by growing deep roots and spreading out in the earth much like a bamboo plant.

One would not only be expected to demonstrate mature technical proficiency in front of the examiners, but also to demonstrate the ability to apply Shintaido philosophy in one's everyday life and community. This goal is embodied in our "Tenso - Shoko, Shoko - Tenso" bokuto practice.

Out of all this, we have come to understand that, when we are asked to sit as examiners, it is our responsibility to have developed our vision as well as our teaching ability. In other words, in addition to witnessing your aspirations, your potential, and your technical skill, we also have to be able to see your true strengths and to assess how effectively you can bring Shintaido to many different kinds of other people, including people very different from you — different cultures, different backgrounds, different ages, and different levels of athletic ability.

Haruyoshi Fugaku Ito

Masashi Minagawa

Michael Thompson

* TNEC = The New Examination Committee for the ISC event scheduled in Reims, France this summer, which is

temporarily representing ISC/TC.

** One of us thinks that the Doshu category could be retired with the current holders of that rank.

*** The three of us have agreed to the development of a new Kenjutsu path by inviting the present Daishihan & Seishihan to join us in a new R & D project team. The details of this project will be presented more clearly at the summer event and thereafter.

Back to the Future

by

Master Instructor Michael Thompson

This summer, the ISC (International Shintaido College) co-sponsored the quadrennial international gathering in Reims, France. For me, being there seemed like coming full circle in my 45-year Shintaido career since I had begun my practice in Paris in 1971. I was very happy to make the acquaintance of current French Shintaido practitioners (and to find that I could still manage to speak French somewhat coherently).

The practice in the early days was quite rudimentary; the focus being on physical training with seemingly endless jumping and, when outside, running Eiko. This made sense to me since I thought that Shintaido, which of course I'd never heard of, was some form of Karate. But, there were a couple of features that intrigued me: the existential nature of jumping for long distances, occasionally through the cow fields of Normandy, for no justifiable purpose outside of "just doing it," and the fact that, rather than lining up and bowing to our Sensei, we formed a circle that emphasized our common intention and value. This was especially meaningful given the communal spirit of the late '60's and early '70's and the catchphrase: "Question Authority." And Eiko itself seemed like a crazy, and therefore intriguing, activity in any art, let alone one of the "martial" variety, in keeping with the "subvert the dominant paradigm" ethos of the times.

It goes without saying that the practice of Shintaido has been greatly developed and refined since, and the event in Reims featured new and interesting information, mostly involving the new Shintaido Kenjutsu path.

Of course, this is a positive development, but in a paradoxical way, it appears retrogressive to me since, if it becomes the main focus of keiko, it reflects a diminished understanding of the goal of our practice. In the "five stages of keiko" (Nuke, Nobi, Kiki, Sae, Jizai) that Aoki-sensei postulated, it is the 3rd phase. But it must be admitted that it has always been the martial art model and is obviously an effective system for transmitting knowledge from master to student.

Back to the Future *Continued on p.6*

Back to the Future *Continued from p.5*

But, to return to the circle model which attracted me in the first place, upon returning I found this from an interview with Mark Rylance, the stage and screen actor, in the *New York Times*:

"I learnt so much wit, really, from the Globe audiences. If you can make a circle, even in a proscenium theater, if you can get a circular energy going, so that all these people are involved with it and present, then there is something curious that happens with the imagination. And I swear, as a performer, you get ideas from the collective, from the audience, much as I expect a jazz musician, like Charlie Parker, did."



This, I think, is similar to what we are aiming for in our practice: the creation of something original and spontaneous by means of individuals interacting while sharing a common aspiration.

It reminds me of a Zen story (from *Zen in Action*, www.Zinzin.com, probably cited from D. T. Suzuki):

Bodhidharma left his robe and bowl to his chosen successor; and each patriarch thereafter handed it down to the monk that, in his wisdom, he had chosen as the next successor. Gunin was the fifth such Zen patriarch. One day he announced that his successor would be he who wrote the best verse expressing the truth of their sect. The learned chief monk of Gunin's monastery thereupon took brush and ink, and wrote in elegant characters:

The body is a Bodhi-tree®The soul a shining mirror:®Polish it with study®Or dust will dull the image.

No other monk dared compete with the chief monk. But at twilight Yeno*, a lowly disciple who had been working in the kitchen, passed through the hall where the poem was hanging. Having read it, he picked up a brush that was lying nearby, and below the other poem he wrote in his crude hand:

Bodhi is not a tree;®There is no shining mirror.®Since All begins with Nothing®Where can dust collect?

Later that night Gunin, the fifth patriarch, called Yeno to his room. "I have read your poem," said he, "and have chosen you as my successor. Here: take my robe and my bowl.

I believe Yeno's satori illustrates wonderfully what Aoki-sensei was pointing us to when he made "Jizai" ("perfect freedom") the last stage of Shintaido practice.

Tenshin-Ken *Continued from p.1***Escaping Our Privilege**

In Rakutenkai there were two Okada brothers. Everyone knows Mitsuru Okada, who was a founding member of Rakutenkai and is now a master instructor. But a lot of people have never heard of his younger brother, Gan Okada, who was also one of the core members. Before I left Japan to be a Shintaido emissary around the world, I managed the Shintaido headquarters in Tokyo in the 1970s. We had a little office in Shinjuku, and Gan Okada helped me a lot with the human relations side of running that office. Like his brother Mitsuru, Gan drove a taxi for a living, and when he got off work he would come in to the office, when most people would want to eat or relax or sleep. He didn't have a lot of business skills such as accounting or administration, but he was wonderful with people.

Gan had a really big heart, and he was concerned about things that most other people didn't think about. He was concerned about women who were being used by the underworld in prostitution, and he would show documentaries in the Shintaido meeting space about the difficult lives of single mothers who had children. He was so passionate that the Japanese secret police started keeping an eye on him.

We were all young, and most of us were just crazy about martial arts. We loved to move our bodies, and we loved the feeling that we got from the keiko, but we hadn't really integrated our martial arts practice into our hearts. But Gan already knew, at a deep level, why he practiced Shintaido.

Gan loved a song by the Japanese singer and songwriter Nobuyasu Okabayashi:

Here is what we dream!

We dream of no more sorrow,

We dream of joy not yet seen

We must not be trapped in sorrow

Let's turn toward the unseen joy, and fly in that direction!

Okabayashi worked with disadvantaged people, almost like what some would call a slum doctor. But after a while, he became famous, and wealthy people would attend his concerts. Okabayashi then turned the song upside-down and invited the audience to not be trapped in their wealth and privilege, but to get out and go into the world of disadvantaged people.

Gan Okada had that same feeling. In Rakutenkai, he always encouraged us to get out of our privileged position and share our lives with people who were having a hard time. Of course none of us had any money, but we were healthy and excited about our practice. And most people wanted to stay around Aoki-sensei and practice with him, rather than going out to help the world. So Gan was often frustrated.

After I left for the U.S., Gan went back to his small home-

Tenshin-Ken *Continued on p.7*

Tenshin-Ken *Continued from p.6*

town in Aichi Prefecture. The biggest city is Nagoya, but Gan was out in a very rural area. He supported himself as a taxi driver, and started a private daycare center to take care of mentally and physically disabled young people.

That was 35 years ago. He has been helping people ever since, and now is the director of one of the most successful nursing homes in Aichi Prefecture. He truly embodied his dream of helping disadvantaged and forgotten people; he made it happen in his life.

My Current Understanding of Tenshin-Ken

Simply speaking, the spirit of Tenshin-Ken can be expressed in the Italian phrase "Bella Ciao!" Bella Ciao is an expression of a deep passion for life.

The Hasta Siempre music video by Nathalie Cardone captures my passion about empowering people around us. In the video a young mother with a nursing baby in her arms and a rifle on her back is walking through the streets of a small South American village and out into the fields. She walks past poor people who are hopeless, some of them slaving in the fields, and they put down their tools and come with her.



Nowadays I'm very passionate about original spirit of Bushido – the heart of the martial arts – that is at the center of my life work. While Budo is the technique of the martial arts that many of you have studied, Bushido is much deeper.

In developing Shintaido, Aoki-sensei stripped away all the attractiveness and packaging of the martial arts, as well as

its connection to Bushido. He chose to remove the connections to Bushido due to the environment in Japan at the time – the Japanese military wanted to use Budo to strengthen its culture.

So Aoki-sensei practiced and taught a pure form and movement (detached from its context).

Shintaido's philosophy revolves around opening, stripping away and discovering anew. So now, having practiced the form Aoki-sensei gave us, we're left with the question, "How do we strip away the surface of our own practice (i.e. deconstruct it) in order to find our own form and true essence?"

For me, Bushido means standing at the edge of life and death on behalf of others. We need the courage to stand up for those less fortunate – to inspire people to stand up for themselves. That involves two steps – 1) Finding one's true essence and gaining strength and inspiration and 2) Taking action to make that possible for others.

In Shintaido, Tenshin-Ken became kirioroshi kumite and we've gained great insight by practicing it. We've worked hard to give up our ego and go beyond the self. But that can also become a kind of self-centered enlightenment without the second step. If we get stuck at the first step, we miss the courageous message of the video and the opportunity to be truly free and unified. When we stand up and say "No!" to an unfair situation, like the suffering of the poor people in the video, we're no longer defined by our ideas of personal risk and loss. Our own courage emerges, and with it our true self, which is much bigger than our ego-self.

The original message of Tenshin-ken is the ability of someone who is really weak or in an unfair situation, to connect to Ten (Universal Truth) and express themselves and change his/her life. My hope is to re-infuse this original message of Tenshin-ken into Bushido.

In order to realize this, we have to step out of our comfortable and privileged lives, and reach out to those less privileged than we are (Step Two). The question is, "How can we create space for others to gain their voice and stand up for themselves?"

Gan Okada was very clear about why he was studying with Aoki-Sensei: to develop a sense of social justice. He took in the values and practices of Shintaido and translated it into social justice action. We each need to find a way of translating our learning into something that creates a positive change in the world, drawing on what we've learned in Shintaido.

I hope we can rediscover the original heart of Bushido this time.

Looking forward to going with you into this new world of courage and hope.

P.S. Many thanks go to Lee Seaman and Tomi Nagai-Rothe who helped me express my message in English, and to Patrick Bouchaud who helped in French!

BODY Dialogue

ISC Examination 2016 in Reims

Results

Name	Current rank	Challenging for	Last exam date	Group of practice	Result
KARATE					
Chris Ikeda-Nash	Ni dan	San dan	July 2012	Pacific Shintaido, SOA	San dan
Giovanni Rossi	Ni dan	San dan	Bristol 2010	Omegna ASD, Shintaido Italia	San dan
David Franklin	Ni dan	San dan	BRISTOL 2010	Czech Republic	San dan
BOJUTSU					
Stephane Sedikki	Nidan	San dan	2014	Regensburg, Germany	San dan
Christine Gov	Nidan	San dan	2000	Toulouse, France	San dan
Charles Burns	3rd Dan	Yon Dan	2012	Reading	San dan
Georg Müller	San Dan	Yon Dan	2012	ETC	San dan
SHINTAIDO					
Charles Burns	Sei ShidoIn	Sei Shi-han	2012	Reading	Sei Shi-han
Giovanni Rossi	Sei-Shihan	Dai Shi-han	2004 JAPAN	Omegna ASD, Shintaido Italia	Dai Shi-han
David Franklin	Sei-Shihan	Dai Shi-han	2004	Czech Republic	Dai Shi-han
Joe Zawielski	Sei-Shihan	Dai Shi-han	2008 in Italy	Shintaido of America	Dai Shi-han
Mieko Hirano	Sei-Shihan	Dai-shihan	2008 in Verbania	RDJ(local group), AFIS	Dai-shihan
Ula Chambers	Sei-Shihan	Dai Shi-han	2012	Bristish Shintaido, Brighton	Dai Shi-han
Connie Borden-Sheets	Sei-shihan	Dai Shi-han	2012	Pacific Shintaido, SOA	Dai Shi-han
Akio Tsujimura	Sei-shihan	Dai Shi-han	2004	Japan	Dai Shi-han