

## **2024 Shintaido of America Business Report**

The contributions of 2024 have been done by this community of people:

### **SOA Board 2024**

Rob Gaston, NTC Chair

Nancy Billias, Membership

Connie Borden, SOA President

David Franklin, Developer of Podcast materials

David Palmer, IT liaison

Jim Sterling, Body Dialogue Editor

Michael Thompson, Co-founder

### Officers and contributing volunteers:

Sandra Bengtsson, Acting Treasurer

Rob Kedoin, SOA webmaster

Chris Ikeda-Nash, CPA

Sarah Baker, SOA YouTube & SOA Website Maintenance subcontractor

Tereza Soldatova – Subcontractor for social media coordinator and Mailchimp

The SOA Board has ensured ongoing SOA matters with quarterly business meetings, approval of a 2025 budget, and filing of needed financial reports. SOA had 58 paid members in 2024, a modest change from 59 members. The SOA website remained a SOA Board topic during 2024. SOA representatives (President and TC Chair) meet 2 – 3 times per year with representatives of ESC on international funds. SOA and ESC continue to hold international funds post the dissolving on the International Shintaido, France based nonprofit in June 2021.

## **I. Strategic Plan for 2024**

### **A. Board members and board officers**

Many transitions happened at the end of 2023 with the deaths of Brad Larson and HF Ito. Jim Sterling and David Palmer agreed to join the SOA Board for a term of

18 months until elections in August 2025. Read about these two board members here: [Welcome Shintaido of America Board Members! – Shintaido of America](#)

Sandra Bengtsson agreed to be acting Treasurer for 2024. Additional transitions are happening at the end of 2024. Nancy Billias, SOA Board member since 2012, has officially moved to Scotland and has become active with British Shintaido Management team. Nancy has served as membership chair for the last several years and announced she will be ending her service at the December SOA Board meeting. Laura Sheehan Barron has volunteered to finish the term of Nancy Billias until August 2025.

Michael Thompson, Co-founder of SOA announced he is stepping off the SOA Board on 31 December 2024. During his time on the SOA board, he has served in many capacities such as board president, membership secretary and treasurer. Michael will retain his title of Co-Founder and as such will be providing advice and guidance to the SOA organization. 2024 concludes for SOA with a successful retirement gift to Michael Thompson, Doshu. He thanks everyone for their gifts of time & skills and the financial gift of \$8,713. We wish him well in his retirement!

Many thanks to all who stepped forward during these transitions. Gratitude for multiple years of service to those who are leaving the SOA Board.

## **B. Social Media Platforms**

All the social media platforms experienced growth in 2024. The SOA YouTube channel grew from 219 to 302 subscribers. Videos grew from 224 to 269 videos. The SOA Facebook page grew from 380 to 489 followers, and the SOA Mailchimp has changed from 147 to 145 subscribers. Shintaido of America Instagram page grew from 141 to 154 followers with 172 posts. Visit our media sites: [Media – Shintaido of America](#)

SOA Podcast : David Franklin continued reading Michael Thompson's autobiography, *Untying Knots: A Shintaido Chronicle*. Find your preferred listening method here: [shintaidoofamerica - Listen on YouTube, Spotify - Linktree](#).

## **C. Reaching new students and expanding Shintaido curriculum**

The SOA strategic Plan for 2024 continued to offer teaching grants to reach new groups of people. Tomi Nagai-Rothe submitted a proposal and was selected to offer Shintaido to a group of Quakers in June 2024. Tomi presented to 23 participants over one week of daily practice. She used the same curriculum from

2023 and reflects on what worked in her teaching. Read here: [Seeking What Works – Shintaido of America](#)

Robert Gaston traveled to France in March 2024 to study Shoshi no Kon Boh Kata with Alain Chevet. This Boh kata has been under development for 15 years and might be considered for addition to the Shodan Bojutsu Examination curriculum. Here is his report: [French Bohjutsu Workshop – Shoshi no Kon Kata – Shintaido of America](#). Following the study of the kata, Rob Gaston taught a workshop to seven practitioners in Cotati California during May 2024. Read here: [Bohjutsu Workshop held in Cotati California – Shintaido of America](#).

Several Shintaido students planned for taking examinations at the Dokan '24. Rob Gaston was invited to Massachusetts to teach and assist in examination preparation. An NTC grant helped support his travel to support and advance the study of Shintaido. Thank you, Rob, for your travels in 2024!

#### **D. SOA NTC**

Two new members joined the SOA NTC in 2024. Jennifer Peringer rejoined with new enthusiasm this year. Jennifer became Yondan Bojutsu at Dokan '24 in addition to being Shintaido Senior Instructor and Nidan in Shintaido Karate. Margaret Guay become Shintaido Senior Instructor at Dokan'24 and joined the SOA NTC in September 2024. Byron Russell also advanced to Shintaido Senior Instructor at Dokan'24. Shin Aoki became Godan in Shintaido Karate and General Instructor in Shintaido at Dokan'24. Robert Gaston became Yondan Bojutsu and David Franklin became Yondan Shintaido Karate. Connie Borden was appointed to a 4-year term as Shintaido Doshu. See the full membership of the SOA NTC here: [National Technical Council \(NTC\) – Shintaido of America](#)

The SOA NTC refined the SOA examination process for examiners to focus on objective criteria. SOA together with ESC offered examinations prior to the start of Dokan '24 in August 2024. Heather Kuhn became Shintaido Graduate – Congratulations! With the enthusiasm from Dokan, the NTC is considering a plan for 2026.

## **II. New Projects**

#### **A. HF Ito Memorial Fund**

Connie Borden traveled to France in January 2024 for HF Ito's Funeral. She represented SOA and ITEC at the service. A travel stipend was provided by SOA for Connie's travel. To provide an opportunity for the larger Shintaido community

to join together a Celebration of Life was held 4 February 2024 via ZOOM. Use this link: [Celebration of Life - 4 Feb 2024](#).

Per Ito's final wishes, SOA established a HF Ito Memorial Fund. \$2500 was donated by 23 February 2024. This fund will support the scattering of his cremated remains at places that were significant in Ito's practice and development of Shintaido. These include at Mt. Tam and Ocean Beach in California as well as Mt. Asama in Japan. Nicole Beauvois, with support from this fund, traveled to Japan to scatter Ito's sensei's ashes at Mt. Asama on 5 October 2024. Read more here: [Body Dialogue – Shintaido of America](#). Planning is underway for Nicole's travel to the SF Bay Area for May 2025 to scatter his ashes in California. More details will follow.

### **B. Discussions with Global Taimyo Community(GTC)**

The SOA Board held several meetings discussing a proposal for SOA to provide fiscal sponsorship to the Global Taimyo Community (GTC), an unincorporated organization. SOA previously provided this service – which is listed as part of the SOA mission to support fledgling groups – to Italy. At the December 2024 meeting, the SOA Board agreed to offer fiscal sponsorship to GTC.

This provides GTC the ability to have charitable contributions support its mission of expanding the teaching of Taimyo to the general public. GTC plans for one week of community practice of Taimyo in July 2025. See the GTC website for more details: <https://sites.google.com/view/globaltaimyo>.

### **III. International Gasshuku**

The international event Dokan '24 with the theme Dokan – Circle of the Way was held 16 August to 20 August 2024. Charles Burns was the event manager and Ula Chambers was the Director of Instruction. The location in England was Worth School, Turners Hill, Crawley. SOA sponsored 8 scholarships to assist with travel. At total of 54 attended Dokan '24 for six Keiko, morning Taimyo, evening gatherings, and two high level examination sessions. The report from Robert Gaston is here: [Body Dialogue Special Edition Dokan 2024 – Shintaido of America](#)

Respectfully submitted by

Connie Borden, SOA President

December 2024 \* amended 16 Feb 2025