

Kagami

The Newsletter of the Jikishin-Kai International



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Kagami - Winter 2008

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The Logic of Iaijutsu by Masayuki Shimabukuro, Hanshi

In this issue of our newsletter, I would like to focus my discussion on the meaning of the waza of Iaijutsu, as Iaijutsu represents the “backbone” of the Jikishin-Kai International. As most of our members know, Iaijutsu is a unique practice. Many Kenjutsu styles include iai as a component their training, but there is a difference between styles designated as Kenjutsu, as opposed to those classified as Iaijutsu, such as Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu. Kenjutsu refers to sword methods that take place once the sword has already been drawn, with opponents facing each other from kamae. Iaijutsu is face to face combat; a response to an attack or combative situation while the sword is still in the saya. Iaijutsu imparts methods of instantaneously defending against an attack, often from a disadvantageous position.

There are obviously many waza in Iaijutsu. The waza recreate possible combative scenarios, but it is a mistake to think of a waza as a single method of dealing with a specific attack. Instead, one should think of the curriculum of waza as an alphabet, with each technique representing a letter. However, just knowing the alphabet is not enough. Understanding the meaning of each letter and how they combine with other letters to form words gives rise to the ability to read and write sentences, paragraphs and finally, books.

The waza of the Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu curriculum work this way as well. Each technique imparts principles and methods of properly using the sword, and like the letters of the alphabet, they cannot stand in isolation if one wants to truly understand the lessons that they teach. The progression from “waza” to “jutsu” to “do”, an essential progression in the “mastery” of Iaijutsu, that we have previously spoken of can also be understood in this manner. The level of “waza” can be compared to the letters of the alphabet. The progression of “waza” to “jutsu” relates to the ability to form words and sentences with those letters.

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From The Editor's Desk *by Erik Johnstone*

Hello! Well, here we are, releasing the Winter 2008 issue of Kagami in the beginning of spring, with winter (disappointing as it was here on New England's southern coastline) now behind us. In fact, as I revise this column (for what seems the umpteenth time), I can report that the Boston Red Sox came back from behind against the Oakland A's to give the Red Sox and Daisuke Matsuzaka an opening day win in front of fans from Japan and New England alike in the Tokyo Dome!

For some, wintertime is a period of slowing down; for others, it is the exact opposite. For my family, this past winter was tremendously busy, especially with the arrival of our third child, Trystan, who arrived at the beginning of December. Suffice it to say that time definitely got away from me this winter!



For me, this past winter has been one of self-reflection and self-assessment; of evaluation of my actions, my conduct and my motivations. I can honestly say that I am not always happy with what I see. I believe that when I take an honest and hard look at myself, I find that I can frequently be my own worst enemy; that my greatest obstacles or mistakes are those that I create. Regardless of the circumstances or the kind of people that I might have found myself dealing with, a better perception of the dynamics of a situation, a different course of action, or a different approach to dealing with a problem or a personal conflict could have resulted in a more favorable outcome for a given situation.

Why do I openly discuss these things here? It is because it relates directly to one of my reasons for training in Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu and other forms of budo. People often discuss the great feelings they get from training in martial arts, frequently waxing philosophical and speaking of the feel-good effects of practice. And while this is all valid and commendable, I am equally motivated by the realization that training is a way for me to face up to those things I do not particularly like about myself; that internal enemy that I wish to defeat. Sometimes, I succeed...for awhile anyway. Sometimes, however, I find myself repeating those same familiar mistakes in my everyday life. Training, particularly hard, exhausting training, has always been the best way for me to work on conquering my flaws. And as life circumstances make it more and more difficult to find the time slots for such training, it becomes that much more necessary. And so, I am becoming better and better friends with 5:00 a.m.

We hope that you enjoy this late winter-early spring issue; it has a bit of an international flavor, with contributions once again coming in from Belgium as well as two from Costa Rica. On a sad note, this issue also includes a piece written by Erik Tracy in memory of Mark Majestic, who passed away in February. We thank Tracy Sensei for sharing some of his memories with us all. Also, although a small thing, you may have noticed that I so very bravely changed the color scheme (finally!). Maybe a color change every now and again may not be a bad idea. I had also thought of calling this issue "First Quarter 2008" (an attempt at slight of hand due to the whole "winter now being behind us" thing again), but it sounds so...corporate! I like the seasonal designation much better, so if no one minds, I'll stick with that for a bit longer.

As ever, I hope that everyone enjoys this (very delayed) issue of Kagami! I really do intend to get the Spring '08 issue out sometime before Christmas (not to worry, I have some material ready to go for the next issue!). Based on the upcoming trip to Japan for the Dai Nippon Butoku Kai World Butoku Sai, I thought that it might be interesting if the next issue of Kagami featured a focus on the trip. As such, if anyone going on the trip is inclined to write about their experiences, it could make for an interesting issue. Once again, I thank everyone who made the effort to contribute material for this issue.

The Logic of Iaijutsu *(continued from Page 1)*

The level of “do” can be compared to mastery of the written language, with the ability to write spontaneously, creatively and effortlessly.

The various techniques and principles of waza can be combined with methods from other waza, resulting in what we refer to as “kae waza”. In fact, the combining of waza into formal techniques is seen in the Bangai no Bu, which are typically combinations of two waza from elsewhere in the Eishin-ryu curriculum.

When one understands the waza of the curriculum of a given ryu, one may see that one waza contains or creates many possibilities, many waza. One sword, itto, becomes 10,000 swords; one waza is 10,000 waza. Conversely, 10,000 swords are distilled back to one sword.

We see this same concept in Ono-ha Itto-ryu Kenjutsu as well. In Ono-ha Itto-ryu, kirioroshi is the most important technique, and Hitotsugachi, the first kumitachi, is the most important of all kumitachi. Everything starts with Hitotsugachi and always returns to Hitotsugachi. This is in fact, the very meaning of “Itto”, one sword, of Ono-ha Itto-ryu. The same concept is found in nukitsuke in Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu; everything begins with and comes back to nukitsuke. When one understands the meaning and principles of each waza, one sees that one waza gives rise to 10,000 things and returns back to nukitsuke.

But, from the standpoint of self-defense, what is the value of this understanding in our modern age? After all, the sword is an archaic weapon; a combative tool of the past. Iaijutsu and Kenjutsu contain principles that can be applied in empty-hand self-defense and in fact are the root of arts such Aikijujutsu and Aikido. However, one can create empty-hand techniques directly from their study of Iaijutsu, if one really understands the principles contained within the art. However, this requires a high level of skill and understanding, and is a result of many years of dedicated practice.

An expression of this idea is found within the practice of Mutodori within Eishin-ryu. Mutodori typically refers to unarmed methods of defense against an opponent wielding a sword. In short, one takes the sword from the attacker. These techniques are clear evidence of the applicability of Iaijutsu and Kenjutsu principles expressed through empty-hand techniques. Additionally, this concept of “muto”, or no sword, is not limited to empty-hand applications. The principles taught within swordsmanship can be applied to auxiliary weapons such as the tessen. In effect, the concept of muto can be viewed as an expression of sword principles in a self defense situation without the use of a sword.

However, it should be remembered that one of the highest expressions of the principles of swordsmanship lies in the concept of “saya no naka no kachi” winning with the sword still in the saya.



JKI West Coast Koshukai *by Erik Tracy*



The Jikishin-Kai Hombu Dojo and Shimabukuro Sensei were pleased to successfully host another West Coast Instructor's Seminar the weekend of February 8-10. It was a glorious weekend of perfect weather, perfect company, and hard rewarding training.

Friday evening was "open mat" at the dojo as guests from out of town arrived to start of the long weekend of training with Shimabukuro Sensei. We had JKI members coming from many places, with a strong contingent from Ramirez Sensei's Dojo in Bakersfield, students from the Reno area, Montana, and even Ohio to join others from Hombu for a seminar that covered a wide variety of disciplines, techniques, and discussions.

One of the more interesting aspects for Friday's training was Sensei covering a more advanced concept of seme (pressure) for one of the Tachi Uchi no Kurai kata – Ukenagashi. Sensei always makes training rewarding and this was another example of how he can transform a sequence of moves into "jutsu", the art of iai. After class, many of us reconvened for more talk and cheer before heading to home or our hotels for a night of sleep before Saturday's full class.

Saturday morning began with something not usually part of the JKI curriculum but one Sensei has been working on with Jim Thompson Sensei for the training of Law Enforcement officers in the use of a police "jo." Shimabukuro Sensei and Thompson Sensei have been working long and hard on formulating a curriculum of simple but effective techniques in the use of a police jo for crowd control and for controlling suspects. Sensei explained that it is important for law enforcement officers to train effectively in non-lethal techniques to control or subdue suspects and not have to resort to the lethal use of their firearms. Too many times do we read in the media of police resorting to shooting suspects, which often times may be due to lack of training or fear response as officers may not have had sufficient training in other methods that would be more effective in subduing someone using a simple "stick." As we trained in these police jo techniques, it became quite obvious that with some practice, they are easy to use, VERY effective, and non-lethal. Sensei hopes that this curriculum can be made available to police officers and become widespread.

After the police jo session, we paired up and switched to tanjo, the short walking stick/cane and we went thru all of the techniques. Many of us are new to tanjo, having just been introduced to them by Sensei before the 2007 Gasshuku, so this was a good review. The tanjo is shorter than the regular jo, so distance and timing is more crucial, but the techniques against daito are highly effective.

We took a break for a much deserved and earned lunch to re-energize ourselves for the afternoon training session. Before starting though, Sensei put all of us on the spot by asking us some very hard questions for those of us considered as JKI Instructors. Sensei wanted to know how we, as instructors, teach the benefits of studying martial arts. Open any phone book, or read a promotional flyer, or a book on martial arts and many expound on the benefits of etiquette, character development, and philosophy; yet where does this "really" show up in class? If class solely consists of showing up and going over techniques – where do students realize or benefit from the study of a martial art? We tossed this about for a bit and while some offered that some benefits are embodied in how a class is conducted/taught by the instructor, Sensei said we do have to sometimes actually talk about the context of martial arts in class to our students. Sensei went on to explain that the samurai existed to "serve"; that the word samurai actually does mean exactly this, "to serve." We, as modern practitioners, also should strive to teach and exemplify this same attitude so that our society is improved. Sensei talked about the importance of teaching, especially teaching children, and instilling values through the study and practice of martial arts to create future generations of leaders and people willing to make positive contributions to our society; to give something back.

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European Report *by Marc Mebis*

Jikishin-Kai Europe recently sponsored a splendid Iaijutsu and Karate-do seminar with Masayuki Shimabukuro, Hanshi. Held from January 18th to the 23rd, this seminar marked Shimabukuro Hanshi's second teaching visit to Europe, providing excellent instruction in both Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu and Shito-ryu, as well as an introductory session in Ono-ha Itto-ryu Kenjutsu.

I was thrilled when Shimabukuro Sensei initially agreed to come to Europe to teach a seminar in two of the Low Countries (Belgium and the Netherlands), especially given that we had scheduled to be held in the latter part of January. We quickly got to work on preparations for his visit, with everything running smoothly, right up to Sensei's scheduled arrival on Friday morning. That's when we hit our first (and only) bump in Sensei's trip. Long Sensei called me on Thursday evening to inform me that Shimabukuro Sensei's flight to Brussels was cancelled due to bad weather in Atlanta, Georgia. I called Sensei and he told me his flight was rescheduled to arrive in Brussels at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, the same time that the seminar was scheduled to begin in the Netherlands! I ended up leading the scheduled Friday training session in Belgium; I think some people were so nervous in anticipation of meeting Sensei that they didn't even notice that I was teaching the class!

On Saturday morning, I met Sensei at the airport and we went straight on from Brussels to the seminar in the Netherlands. Sensei focused on Karate-do on the Saturday and Sunday morning sessions, covering kumite, self-defense and the traditional kata from Shito-ryu. These sessions were very enlightening for the seminar participants, even for those with substantial Karate-do backgrounds. The afternoon sessions were devoted to iaijutsu and kenjutsu. Sensei covered Batto-Ho, Kumitachi, Bangai no Bu, Omori-ryu (Seiza no Bu) and Ono-Itto Ryu Kenjutsu basics and kumitachi. I am really not going too far at all when I say it was an overwhelming experience. While most of this material was not new to me, much of it was completely new to most people present as it was their first seminar with Sensei.



Promotion testing was conducted on Sunday. It was a successful effort, with all candidates passing for advancement in the kyu grades. Additionally, Frank Van den Branden and Arthur Lucas successfully tested for advancement to Shodan. I want to congratulate everybody for their success in testing; it takes a great deal of commitment to walk the path of budo, and is both physically and mentally demanding.

On Monday, Frank Van Den Branden took Sensei and I to Germany for a visit to Trier, an old Roman city with buildings from the second century. For Sensei and I, it was day of relaxation and sightseeing; unfortunately, I cannot say the same for Mr. Van Den Branden, who had to drive 7 hours each way from the Netherlands to Belgium to Germany!

Tuesday's training brought an Iaijutsu session held back in the Netherlands in which Sensei covered Okuden Tachi waza and Tachi Uchi no Kurai, then finishing the seminar off with another session of Shito-ryu training on Tuesday evening. Sensei flew back home from the airport in Brussels on Wednesday; this time his flight wasn't cancelled!

It was a wonderful event, and I want to thank Shimabukuro Hanshi for once again traveling all the way from California to Belgium to teach such a wide-ranging seminar, and for allowing me the honor of being his student. Domo arigato gozaimashita, Sensei. I also want to be sure to thank Frank Van den Branden and his Kobukai Dojo (Jikishin-Kai Netherlands) for their assistance in organizing and supporting this event. Last but not most definitely not least, I want to thank Jeanny for all the wonderful meals! I look forward to a seminar like this again...soon!

Dojo Spotlight: Bushikai Dojo by Henry Steinberg & Erik Johnstone

With this issue of Kagami, the Dojo Spotlight once again shifts southward to Costa Rica, this time focusing on the Bushikai Dojo and Henry Steinberg Sensei (*pictured at right*).

Steinberg Sensei states that he began his martial arts training in 1966, practicing Judo for about two years. He then trained in arts such as Shotokan Karate-do, Tang Soo Do and Wu-Shu. He resumed training in Judo in 1984, and also began practicing Jujutsu at that time.

Bushikai Dojo was established in 1990, initially offering instruction in Judo and Jujutsu. In 1999, Michael Chavarria, a Shito-ryu Karate-do and Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu Iaijutsu practitioner who had trained under Masayuki Shimabukuro Sensei in San Diego, relocated to Costa Rica.

Steinberg Sensei began studying Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu Iaijutsu with Chavarria Sensei that same year, and subsequently became a member of the Jikishin-Kai International. Steinberg Sensei was able to meet and train with Shimabukuro Sensei in 2001 at a seminar in Costa Rica.

In addition to beginning his practice of iaijutsu and joining the JKI, Steinberg Sensei joined the Kokusai Jujutsu Renmei as well as Genbukan Ninpo Bugei Federation (both under the direction of Shoto Tanemura Sensei) in 1999, beginning his studies of Genbukan Ninpo in 2001.

In 2000, Bushikai Dojo moved into its own space and now offers 16 classes each week. Classes are offered for both adults and children, from 3 years old and up.

Each year, Bushikai hosts a JKI seminar with Shimabukuro Sensei or Long Sensei. Steinberg Sensei and other dojo members travel to seminars in Japan and the USA for seminars. In 2009, Bushikai Dojo, along with Katabami Budokan (also located in Costa Rica) will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the JKI in that country.

The Bushikai staff of instructors is as follows:

- Henry Steinberg (Ninpo, Jujutsu and Iaijutsu)
- Edwin Hernandez (Ninpo & Jujutsu).
- Arnoldo Ramirez (Ninpo & Jujutsu).
- Edgar Sequeira (Iaijutsu; currently living in Florida).
- Pedro Centeno (Iaijutsu).



The members of Bushikai Dojo look always look forward to meeting other JKI members and hope that many will make the trip down for the celebration in 2009! Please visit Bushikai Dojo's website at <http://genbukancr.com> for a better look at their dojo, or better yet, make a trip to Costa Rica!

Ichinen: Overcoming Obstacles by Patrizia Gallo

A recent injury has forced me to temporarily revise my teaching method. But, I have learned something in the process: “yes, I can teach from a chair!” Although a new experience for me (but only for the next three months I hope), I have found that it has presented few problems thus far. It has also taught me that I can overcome obstacles that I may be faced with. This is, in my opinion, one of the reasons for studying budo; training in the martial arts can forge a strong will, without limits. Perhaps you have a similar story.

My revised teaching method was caused by an injury to my left Achilles tendon, which, saying “that’s enough for me!” ruptured right in the middle of a Kendo seminar. I took part in the seminar to try to get a bit of a feel for the breadth of sword arts, but as I learned, Kendo can be dangerous! In hindsight, it was a somewhat funny experience, but I now have a greater understanding of the range of sword arts. After a quick surgery to fix the rupture, I was teaching again the next day, and I hope to recover my skills in a short period of time.



My recent experience calls to mind some passages from Shimabukuro Sensei’s Katsu Jin Ken: Living Karate, which seem to apply so well to such experiences (have you read this book? If not, what are you waiting for?).

“The one person over whom karate is designed to secure victory is one’s self. The most crucial victory in karate is over weaknesses, failures and conflicts that invariably arise within each of us.”

“With true understanding no person, no situation, no adversity, no catastrophe –nothing- can diminish your happiness and fulfillment, because you embrace life in its proper context. All of life, every joy and sorrow, triumph and adversity success and failure, people, material objects, and circumstances, is ultimately for your benefit.”

“Nothing worthwhile can be achieved without determination (ichinen) and determination results from the focus and force of spirit.”

“In karate-do your mind is your ultimate weapon.”

“It is not the circumstances, but how you choose to perceive them.”

“The physical training of karate, of course, is analogous to handling the everyday problems and occasional catastrophes of life.”

“Further, none of that vast potential is of any value until it is unleashed... which will not happen unless you have a problem”.



I’m only at the beginning of this long and difficult path that is budo, but I am confident that I have the right guidance, and as such, that I have the chance to reach true understanding someday. Time will tell.

Today I was looking through a window at my wonderful blossoming orchid (it blooms only once every two years), and my iai was there.

Today I was enjoying the wonderful album, “American Songbook” by Rod Stewart during a pleasant, warm and peaceful afternoon, and my iai was there.

Today I was gratefully remembering the teachings of my instructors, Shimabukuro Sensei and Long Sensei, both greatly responsible for this brave and strong feeling in me, and I assure you, my iai is always there. I thank them both for allowing me to be part of this invaluable legacy.

Surgical Training *by Paul White*

Three separate incidents of severe abdominal problems, leading to emergency room visits over the past year, found my doctor and I in agreement that surgery was in order. The “interesting” thing is that I had this very same surgery 11 years ago. It is very rare for any recurring incidents of diverticulitis, but I turned out to be one of those “special cases.” You can imagine my delight. We set the date and I wouldn't be late. The consultation was in mid-July and the surgery was set for mid-September 2007.

What did I learn from the last surgery in 1996?

In 1996, I was a year into my single-minded goal for an Aikido black belt. The training had been a joyful, sweaty and mat-slamming experience. I did not want the surgery to interrupt my training. Hoping to dodge the bullet, I sought a second opinion. Fortunately, there was a surgeon in the dojo, who agreed to look at my records, x-rays, etc. My further great good fortune was that surgeon called me back and skipped all the professional patient/doctor jargon. He said, *"Get this done and don't **** around."*



So I trained harder to glut myself with as much Aikido as I could and to harden my body for the shock of surgery. I guess I accomplished that to a degree. The surgery was done and in little less than two months, I was back on the mat, taking "delicate" ukemi. Delicate, not only to guard the healing abdominal muscles, but a large section of my intestine had been removed and my center of gravity was no longer where it had been for 43 years or so. It felt weird for a month or so. Fast forward eleven years. Here I was in the same situation, but this time I did not seek the second opinion.

My experience with hospitals, visiting sick relatives and a few personal emergency room visits, provided me with ideas for an outline for a training regimen for the upcoming surgery. Generally, I prepared through physical conditioning, spiritual training and by gathering my family and friends.

Physical Conditioning

Simply increasing my Aikido training was not enough from the last surgery. Although the surgery was performed laproscopically with minimal incisions to my abdomen, the lateral cuts across the abdominal muscles wall made coughing, laughing, sitting up, and even climbing stairs pretty uncomfortable.

In 1996, the Aikido training seemed very aerobic, with plenty of suwari waza, breakfalls, and randori. But I was unprepared for how the surgical anesthesia and subsequent pain medication suppressed my breathing. Back then, I was in better shape than most guys in my age bracket, but it was still not enough. One of the more common complications from surgery is pneumonia because lung function is so depressed.

So *this* time, in addition to my Aikido and Iaijutsu training, I ran two miles every other morning and lifted weights on the alternate mornings. The Iaijutsu was great for developing the leg muscles for climbing stairs and balance-compensating for healing abdominal muscles.

Spiritual Training

Iaijutsu seemed to be the best training in this mental/spiritual aspect before surgery. The Eishin-ryu teaching of sending the spirit ahead in an encounter and not give up any gained space is important. After learning the shapes of the kata movements, practicing surging one's spirit ahead is a difficult, but valuable lesson.

Despite all of the medical technology we have today, no outcome is certain. In surgery, like combat, you could get cut, maimed or worse. Be ready for drastic life changes when the anesthetic wears off. Preparing with Iaijutsu training definitely helped my spirit in this regard.

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Surgical Training *(continued from Page 8)*

Gathering Family and Friends (You may be able to do your surgery alone. You might be a winner)

Visit the sick. In my experience, this can't be emphasized enough. In U.S. hospitals, in-patients need an advocate. That means, the patient's care is a chancy evolution -- *if* the hospital is crowded, *if* the ward is understaffed, *if* the doctor has a heavy patient load...all of these factors are possible. The patient medicated and in pain is simply trying to survive. Without an advocate to intervene with the staff on behalf of the patient, healing probably will not happen efficiently. You, as a visitor, help immensely. Okay, you don't believe in prayer or intention. Whether or not one believes that it helps healing, there are other reasons for hospital visits. Visitors are important simply for being visible in the room, seen by the hospital staff. Members of the hospital staff have a whole floor of patients and they have to divide their attention among them. When they come into the room and see visitors, my experience is that they see that the patient has friends and relatives and this garners positive staff attention. I have seen elderly people with no visitors, or few signs that people have visited, and rarely have I seen any staff linger in the room...except a dietician delivering the meal and scooting as fast as she can. It's very sad, and seems to me, pretty unhealthy.

If there's a belief in prayer and intention in the role of healing, then you are blessed to be a dojo member. When I go to seminar and see a room full of black belts, I think "*my God, this is a group of really stubborn, dedicated people with intent.*" Martial arts, in addition to shaping your body and sharpening your reactions, tend to weed those out who don't want to build their intent. I was especially blessed to have quite a few dojo members visit me and while their influence was subtle, I felt their intent start to push me out of that hospital bed. The hospital staff were impressed at my stay of only a week after the major abdominal surgery.

If you're a relative visiting in the hospital, again, it's a matter of presence. Be confident. Ask questions of the staff, e.g., *where can I get ice for the patient? Where are the towels? What medication is the patient getting and when?* If bandages need to be changed, watch the nurses do it; you might be required to change the bandages when the patient gets home. Amuse yourself, bring a book, crossword puzzles, a laptop or whatever, because it's unlikely that the patient will want continuous conversation or company. So, take breaks. Go outside of the hospital and eat. Hospital cafeterias are notoriously bad.

Keep the Hospital Stay Short

Hospitals are not about rest. They are about performing medical procedures and stabilizing the patient afterwards. You get to rest when you get home. The patient is awakened at all hours with blood tests, vital signs, changing IV bags and the conversations from the staff. This is not restful. The rule of thumb is one month of recovery for every day spent in the hospital.

Be a Good Patient, But Don't Be a Chump

It can't be easy being exposed to sick people in pain on a daily basis; and if patients are foul tempered as well, this invites avoidance by the hospital staff. You're in pain, but suck it up and try to be as nice to the staff as is possible. Learn their names and try to be interested in them. On the other hand, pay attention to what's being done to you; don't pretend it's not. Look at the needle stick and surgical scars. If something about the treatment or medication seems wrong, don't be afraid to challenge the routine. Learn the medical jargon and use it. Just like in a dojo where martial students listen with a different ear if you use the terms of the martial art, (e.g., tai sabaki, chiburi, tsuki, irimi), the hospital staff is less likely to treat you condescendingly if your conversation uses their terminology. Since the hospital ward is not a restful place, if possible, get an mp3 player with sound isolating earbuds. Loading the mp3 player with natural ambient sounds like ocean waves, will make for better sleep and internal healing [Hemi-Sync sounds are good for this].

Be Brave

When it's time for the surgery, be brave. Be positive. Most people reading this have trained in martial arts. The pain, the sweat, the dedication that has been invested in one's training usually has a result of minimizing personal fear in a combat situation. Surgery is no different. Connect your martial spirit with your hospital spirit.

Gambatte!

In Memoriam: Mark Majestic *by Erik Tracy*

It is with great sadness that I must say that the JKI has lost a valued member of our family.

Mark Majestic passed away on February 16th due to a heart attack at his home in Los Angeles. It was reported that he passed on quickly and suddenly. While Mark's health was not what it used to be – still being a 'young' 51, his death did take many people by surprise.

A Memorial Service was held on March 19th at the Perris Jump-Zone where Mark was an avid sky-diver and had many friends there who graciously hosted the service in his honor.

Many of us from Hombu made the drive up to pay our last respects to Mark and to give our consolation to his family and friends. We shared stories about Mark and each circle of friends got to see just how much he was appreciated and will be missed.

A last jump for Mark was planned for that day, as Mark wanted to have his ashes spread to the four winds – but the winds were not cooperative, or perhaps not willing quite yet to say goodbye to Mark.

Mark's last jump was held on March 29th.

Mark was a long time member of the San Diego Hombu Jikishin-Kai and would make the long drive down from Los Angeles to practice several times a month. His dedication to making the effort to come was inspiring to all of us at Hombu.

People who saw Mark for the first time might have been put off by his appearance – he always dressed in black, carried an assortment of knives on his person, and had many visible tattoos. But once you met Mark and got to know him – his positive attitude, sincere spirit, and helping personality was easily recognized and appreciated.



Mark was one of those people that beamed with a smile when he was at the dojo – he truly cherished the times he could come train with his fellow martial artists, learn from Sensei, and know that he was considered as one of the family.

One of the fondest pictures I have of Mark is a group shot of us at the old Hombu dojo that showed the camaraderie we had.

Left to Right: Chuck Arnold, Reuben Veliz, Jason Mizuno, Kevin Walda, Mark Majestic, Erik Tracy

Mark is survived by his daughter, Kaya, who lives in Germany with her mother. One of Mark's friends is collecting any pictures or memories people may want to share and put into a scrap book to send to his daughter. If you have a story or memory or dedication you wish to share, please contact me and I will forward them on.

His spirit will be greatly missed at Hombu – his name will always be proudly honored on the Hombu name board.

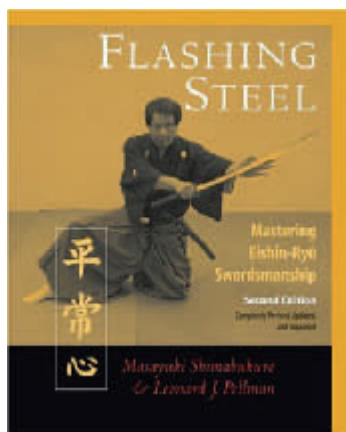
News & Announcements

New DVD Set Featuring Shimabukuro Sensei and Long Sensei!

Black Belt Magazine has recently released a three volume DVD series entitled Samurai Swordsmanship, featuring Shimabukuro Sensei and Long Sensei. The production quality of these DVDs is excellent. Volumes 1 through 3 cover basic to advanced concepts and features interviews with both instructors. Topics include sword and uniform care, reiho, nukitsuke, noto, waza and tameshigiri and kumi-tachi. The DVDs are available singly or as a set. Please visit the Black Belt Magazine [on-line store](#) for ordering information.



Revised Edition of Flashing Steel Released!



Well, I know that this is certainly old news for many, but just in case you have been living under a rock or in exile in the remote interior of Irian Jaya, the revised edition of Flashing Steel has been released! The revised edition includes updated photographs, and theoretical explanations for the waza and Tachi Uchi no Kurai of Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu Iaijutsu. The photographic updates in this volume are fantastic, clearly demonstrating the sequence of waza and katachi in great detail. The revised edition is absolutely a must have addition to your budo library, especially (and this is an understatement of epic proportion) if you study Muso Jikiden Eishin-ryu (which you all likely do, or you this issue wouldn't have shown up in your inbox!). Flashing Steel is available at the [JKI Budo Store](#) at the [Sakura Budokan eStore](#) as well as other on-line book sellers. Did I mention that you really should get this book?

Column by Long Sensei in Current Issue of Black Belt

Once again, this month's issue of Black Belt Magazine includes another offering by Long Sensei in the "Cutting Edge" column. In the current issue, Long Sensei discusses the sageo, its use, methods of wear and other interesting information. Please keep an eye out for Long Sensei's essays in Black Belt. To date, each one of them has been interesting, informative and very well-written. I am sure that this will continue to be the case with each article to follow!

Interview with Shimabukuro Sensei on the Black Belt Website!

Please be sure to visit the Black Belt site at the following link to read this interview! http://www.blackbeltmag.com/masayuki_shimabukuro_exclusive_interview/archives/620



Upcoming Events and Seminars

Dai Nippon Butoku Kai WBS

April 24th - Kyoto, Japan

Members of the JKI will be taking part in the DNBK's WBS in Kyoto, Japan in April!

Upcoming Seminars to Be Announced!

Please be sure to contact us with details for any JKI-related seminars that your dojo may be sponsoring or teaching!

[email: eajohnstone@cox.net](mailto:eajohnstone@cox.net)

Iaijutsu/Jojutsu Seminar

Date: TBA

Instructor: Shimabukuro Sensei or Long Sensei

Host: TBA

Contact: TBA

Phone: TBA

email: [TBA](#)



West Coast Koshukai (continued from Page 4)

As we let this soak into our thoughts, we packed up our iaito and headed outside to train in the San Diego sun at a local park close to the dojo. In what could be called perfect weather, we went thru all of the Eishin-ryu Tachi Waza. It was different and a good opportunity to test ourselves on the relatively uneven turf of the park as Sensei corrected us on several important points for tachi waza. From there we paired up with bokken and moved on to do Batto-Ho Kunitachi, which was a good review. Sensei is hoping that his Batto-Ho curriculum serves as a great beginning base for those dojo interested in sword arts and a gateway for students wishing to progress into the study of koryu.



The day was not over yet! After our outside session we went back to the dojo and paired up again to cover some of the Ono-ha Itto-ryu Kenjutsu kata before calling it a day. The kenjutsu kata are very rewarding to practice and we were fortunate to have Sensei's enthusiasm and guidance as we worked thru the kata; it is different than Eishin-ryu and brings a fresh and effective perspective to swordsmanship.

With Saturday's training finally over, many of us met up at Ichiro's Japanese restaurant to enjoy good food, some beer, and great conversation with Sensei. Then it was off to bed before Sunday's final day of training.

Sunday morning started with two of Ramirez Sensei's students testing at Hombu. Testing can be a nervous ordeal for some, but I imagine that testing in front of Sensei at Hombu can add just a bit more! Still, both of Ramirez Sensei's students passed which is credit to both of them and to Ramirez Sensei for his instruction. Congratulations to Thomas Bengston and David Loya who both earned their Nidan menjo! After the testing concluded, we resumed our training to finish up with the remaining Ono-ha Itto-ryu Kenjutsu techniques we started on Saturday. Sensei had some very good advice when asked how an instructor should deal with a student who is performing the role of uchikata (uchidachi) but is not helping shitachi and instead tries to 'defeat' shitachi. Sensei went on to explain that this attitude undermines the whole purpose of paired practice since uchikata's role is to follow the form correctly so that shikata is better able to learn and progress. If uchikata tries to defeat shikata, this only leads to bad technique, and the head instructor is better advised to simply not let students take the role of uchikata until they are ready.

We ended Sunday's training with a review of the Police Jo techniques, after which all who attended received their certificates which Ramirez Sensei and his students had designed and prepared for us. It was a long weekend of training and I doubt anyone really expected to retain everything that was covered, but we all came away with A LOT to think about and to work on, yet with a sense of accomplishment and a tiny bit of progression. Again, thank you, Shimabukuro Sensei. And thank you to all that came!

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