

News from Honbu



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Sensei's Corner

About 40 people participated at the Arkansas seminar where they refined their techniques and learned new material. The seminar was a success. While waiting at the airport to return back to L.A., I met a Thai lady who worked as a janitor. She was approximately 45 to 50 years old. She asked me if she could chat, so we socialized. We chatted a little and I gave her the Shinkendo good luck card and she went away. A little while later she returned and showed a great interest in the Shinkendo philosophy and wanted to know everything about it. I told her that it would take a long time to explain Kuyo Junikun and Hachido and I wouldn't be able to do it in that time. She explained to me that she was a Thai immigrant and she couldn't make friends or talk to anyone. She asked me how she could be happy in this country. I remembered 23 years ago when I first came to the U.S., I went to English school and met people of different ethnicities who worked hard to learn the English language. I knew where this lady was coming from and so I couldn't ignore this matter. I told her to always smile and to greet the people around her. I told her that at first, the smile could be fake. If it was hard, she could practice in front of the mirror. I told her that she immigrated to the U.S. to live a better life, so her wish came true. I told her that she was able to speak English and she had a job. My advice to her was that she should be appreciative and have an optimistic view, then she will smile naturally. I told her that if she always smiled, something good will happen. When she heard this, she brightened up and gave me a beautiful smile. She left saying, "Domo arigato" (thank you), and a request to learn more Japanese language.

If you give out positive energy, you will receive positive energy back from that person. You can't see the face you are making now, so it might be a good idea to look into the mirror once a day and smile.

"Good Luck"
Toshishiro Obata

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

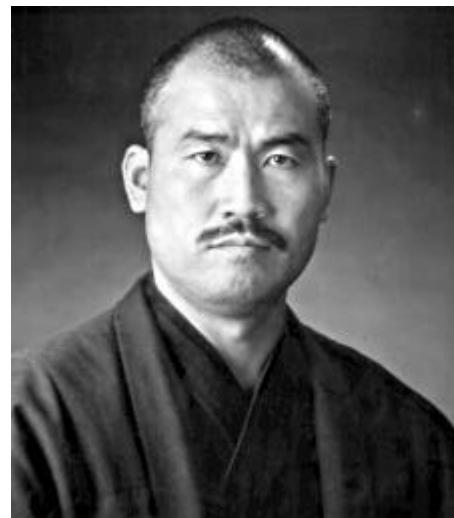
- 1 A Message From Obata Sensei
- 2 The Orange County Dojo
- 3 Thoughts on Shinkendo
- 4 New Branch Dojos

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The Orange County Dojo



Front: Max Nishimura, Masaji Saito, Daniel Raker and Daryl Oberg.
Back: Davis Evans, Michael Fohman and Duane Oberg

Hi from Orange County Dojo for Shinkendo & Aikido!

Maybe everybody involved in Shinkendo already knows me only by my name. So I would like to introduce my dojo and myself. I have started teaching Shinkendo and Aikido here in Orange County since October 2002. I am the first Japanese instructor from Honbu Dojo in Los Angeles. I have been with Kaiso Obata Sensei since 1986. I haven't named my dojo any fancy one like Oni Dojo, Jigoku Dojo, or Kongo Dojo. I have named it only O.C. Dojo. Not even Saito Dojo. This is the simplest. Shinkendo O.C. Dojo. This sounds great to introduce many people in Orange County and San Diego area in Southern California. My dojo is located in the city of Laguna Niguel, just a couple minutes from the exit of Crown Valley Parkway on Freeway 5. If anybody knows anybody who is especially interested in Shinkendo, please let them know about my dojo and myself. By the way, the first time I became interested in the martial arts was when a classmate of mine at high school gave me a bokuto. I practiced swinging it in the dark on the side yard of my house at night when I was eighteen years old. Before this, my classmate took me to his dojo, and as soon as I wore the "MEN" of kendo, he hit my "MEN" continuously and sharply many times. At that time he held the rank of second dan in kendo. I realized his ability in kendo as I couldn't dodge his blow, even once. After high school, until I met Kaiso Obata Sensei, I hadn't any chance to study budo martial arts. I only practiced straight swing like MEN UCHI of kendo. I did not know KESA-GIRI, which is a practical and effective technique. I have learned this from Obata Sensei. Another funny story I believed for a long time is that one could throw a man over "Sanken" or three houses with aikido technique. When I was a junior high school student, a sergeant in the Japan Self-Defense Army told me enthusiastically how Aikido technique was great. He was like my big brother who I admired and trusted very much unconditionally. They are required to train and get at least black belt in Aikido. Now I find "Sanken" has two meanings. One is just three houses (how to count a number of houses) and another meaning is the units of length. One ken (ikken) is about 6 shaku, 1.818 m, or 6 feet. So 3 ken is about 18 feet long. It is possible for an Aikido expert to throw someone over 18 feet in distance. Isn't it fun? At the end of this message, I would like to tell you all this. Continue your training as a life time work. Also, find something worthwhile in your choice. I love the phrase, "Life is Shinkendo." Shinkendo means not only our martial art, but also every aspect in our lives. Come and see me at Honbu or O.C. Dojo. I always welcome you and your interest in Shinkendo.

-Masaji Saito, Honbu and O.C. Dojo Instructor

First Impressions

Early in the Autumn of 2002 I had the good fortune of watching a Shinkendo class, followed by Aikido. I was immediately impressed by the quality of the instruction, the knowledge of the teachers, and the integrity of the students. I decided to sign up for both classes. "In for a penny, in for a pound," as the saying goes. When Obata Sensei returned from his seminar schedule, I finally witnessed the source of these impressive martial arts. I introduced myself as a new student and Sensei welcomed me and said, "Gambate!" which I understood to be loosely translated as, "Go for it!" Being mostly from Southern California, I knew I was in the right place.

Although everything was new, my sempai worked patiently to show me the ropes. I am still grabbing for them, but once in a while I catch hold. One evening during tameshigiri practice Sensei called to me on the sidelines, "New student!" I confirmed that he was talking to me and he called me onto the mat. He handed me a shinken, a live blade, essentially a three foot razor blade with a handle, with which to cut a tatami target. I must admit that I was quite intimidated, but Obata Sensei walked me through the test cutting. His instruction, and that of my sempai did not fail me. I cut most of the targets! My continuing gratitude to all. Many concepts were realized through that first test cutting experience.

In addition to tameshigiri (testcutting), there are four other important aspects of swordsmanship practice unique to Shinkendo. They include suburi (swinging) practices, battoho (drawing methods), tanren gata (solo forms), and tachiuchi (sparring). Through these five elements of Shinkendo, I am not only learning how to draw and resheath a sword properly, how to swing the sword, and how to do things like gauge distance and timing, but my body is getting stronger. I am also developing knowledge of body mechanics- how to move from the waist.

Most of these skills transfer over to Aikido class. But while Obata Sensei has pointed out that most of Shinkendo may be practiced solo, most of Aikido requires working with a partner. Students learn how to work with each other. The idea of harmony puts my ego in check as I must act out of consideration for my partner. These lessons continue outside the dojo.

Thank you Sensei for teaching us.

Jinsei Shinkendo!

Steve Fast



Dreaming of newsletter deadlines...

New Branch Dojos



Woman's Club of Hollywood
1749 N. La Brea Avenue
Hollywood, California 90046
(310) 617-5967

This month Peter Teymouraz Sensei opened his second Shinkendo dojo .Located in Hollywood at the Women's Club of Hollywood, a historic building established in the early 1900's, the training hall consists of over 2000 square feet of hardwood floor with a 20 foot ceiling. Kempo, karate, kobudo, and Shinkendo are offered to prospective students twice a week on Monday and Wednesday nights from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Peter Teymouraz is a licensed Instructor/Examiner recognized by the International Shinkendo Federation and the United Martial Arts Association. He has 25 years of experience in the martial arts. He places great emphasis on developing inner strength, self-confidence, concentration, and control. He strongly believes in the basic tenets of martial arts: respect, compassion, gratitude, and honor.

Delano Recreation Center
15100 Erwin Street
(near the corner of Victory and Sepulveda)
Van Nuys, CA 91411
(323) 376-6657

Saturday March 22, 2003 marked the opening of Matthew Lynch Sensei's Shinkendo branch dojo. Held inside the Recreation Center at Delano Park, Lynch Sensei hosted an impressive demonstration which featured Nathan Scott, Masaji Saito, Michael Shu, James Huang and Jonathan King. After a brief introduction and opening comments, everybody performed Tai Sabaki. The five elements of Shinkendo were first represented with Suburi. Battoho was next, followed by an installment of Toyama Ryu Gunto Soho performed by Lynch Sensei. For Tanren Gata, Michael Shu performed Happo Giri, Saito Sensei performed Shoden no Kata, Scott Sensei dd Chuden Sei, and Lynch Sensei finished with Goho Ho En. Tachiuchi included Ippon Dachi, Juppon Dachi, Iso Nami, and Juppon Omote. The demonstration ended with some well-executed Tameshigiri performed by Michael Shu, James Huang, Saito Sensei, Scott Sensei, and Lynch Sensei. All received enthusiastic applause from the audience which included Obata Sensei and David Rothburgh. Thank you to all!

