



SHINKI NEWS

NO. 10



Onegai shimasu

Editorial

Text: Lukas Underwood

Dear Members,

Christmas is coming and the year is coming to an end. The latest issue of Shinki News, this year, is also the first edition of our journey through the three disciplines. Before we devote ourselves entirely to the topic of Aikido in this issue, a few words are in order.

The Shinki News is a member magazine that provides you all the opportunity to post your thoughts and suggestions. For us, who put a lot of planning and energy into creating each issue, it is very important to plan. Unfortunately, I experience it more often than not that either we receive no input or very little input, despite our requests. This makes our work very difficult. It is perfectly fine to reject a request, because writing an article takes time and energy and cannot always be combined with everyday work. If you realize that the time for writing does not suit you, just let us know, which helps us more than ambiguity does.

The clarity we desire in communication, we seek in everyday training. According to Sensei's newsletter, Duncan Underwood (chairman of the panel of examiners) discusses the opportunities and opportunities offered by Aikido training. Jürgen Dimt then talks about his many years of experience with the development of Shinki Rengo. Also included, Martin Smentekt from Munich reports on the training routine of four different Aikido associations under one roof. In our new category "Member Voices," nine practitioners from Dresden, Leipzig, and Bad Segeberg write about why they practice Shinki Rengo Aikido. We also include the first two Dan essays which we reprint with the permission of the two authors, the Ni-Dan essays by Deniz Seven and Jochen Schröder. In addition, there are three seminar reports from the seminars with Sensei in Cottbus, Sensei's Summer Walk in Weiler, and Duncan Underwood's summer seminar in Oldenswort. The conclusion of this edition is a book review by Nicole Knutsen on Gerda Ital's "The Master, the Monks, and Me".

Now we want to wish you a lot of fun with this issue, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Shinki News Team

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Soke's Remarks

Text: Michael Daishiro Nakajima

Many of you have heard of my life motto that I (and many others) theoretically always knew, but have now consciously formulated. It goes, “When it’s dark outside, you should shine.”

Of course, I’m not talking primarily about the weather or the season, although the cold, wet November weather sometimes weighs heavily on our minds, so we need to stay inside. But there is also the darkness of the surrounding environment (illness, dispute, criminal events, death) or the world situation (various natural disasters, especially due to climate change, environmental destruction, corruption, blatant egoism of some super-rich and some nations, or wars).

It is understandable that some people resign, despair, or try to ignore this in the face of this massive reality. Nevertheless, we all know that this kind of reaction does not help and makes the situation even worse. At the same time, fortunately, we also have the experience that our assistance or our smile makes people in our presence, happy. Well, actually the way is clear on where we should go. Yes, we have to be good in spite of the sometimes accurate, but also often inappropriate criticism of the “good guy.” Only good things should come from us, even if the problem looks impossible anyway, or we need to learn about it. We have to love people as they are. Then we can shine and give life. This requires a hard struggle (for example against resignation or despair) within us. This is budo of the heart.

But how can we shine when there is no light within us? I am convinced that it is not enough, if we rely only on our ability and quality, also some pathos sounds very sympathetic, such as that of Albert Camus (French, apparently an atheistic writer), who pleads for the revolution consistently permeated by love. For we must soberly face our physical, mental, and spiritual weaknesses and shortcomings. We make mistakes, sometimes serious ones.

Where then is the source of the light and the life from which we can draw? The search for it is the Do, which requires not only meditation but also our physical, intellectual, mental, and spiritual search – that is, total human effort. When we discover, draw, and drink from it, we receive life and can pass it on. In the end, we should make ourselves completely permeable, like a pipe that provides a stream of water that comes from the spring so that everyone can drink from it. Or, speaking with another metaphor, the glass window of our heart should be polished, so that the light, which shines deep within us, may shine through to the outside. Sometimes this polishing job is exhausting because of the dirt sticking to it, and it has to be repeated over and over again because it gets dirty again and again, like our house windows, even though we are sometimes lucky enough that the rainwater at least cleans it up outside.

That we carry the Source deep in our hearts is made clear by our longing for fulfillment, purpose, and happiness. We long for something that is possible in principle, but not yet realized. And we should look for the actual source, and not settle for the puddle. Then we start to spread life and shine – if only a little bit.

Remarks

New Homepage

Johannes Hoffmann (Bad Segeberg), Jann-Volquart Hansen (Hamburg), and Matthias Becker (Munich) are eager to take over our general home-pages. Everything is integrated into “Shinkiryu Aiki Budo”, but the three disciplines are still accessible separately. The first draft looks very promising. The page will be published in the foreseeable future (at the latest, on the date of the Aikido Dan course at the beginning of February).

Aikido – Prospects and Opportunities

Text: Duncan Underwood

Many things have already been written about Aikido. Is everything already said or are there things that can be added? Probably not. But of course you can pick out aspects and illuminate some things.

Just after reading some texts about the content and origin of Budo and its basic understanding, I realized again how little is understood about where this path leads to or what this path stands for. It is clear to me that each of them seizes these aspects in their own words, opening the door to interpretation. Nevertheless, I think that what is written indicates whether there is some understanding or not.

One cannot stress enough that ultimate understanding only happens through self-learning, doing, and seeing. You can still read so many texts and books, you will never really find out what the way means. On the one hand, this may seem very frustrating to us westerners at first, but on the other hand, this path, more experiential than intellectual, offers us the option of pointing out one thing for every tangible possibility. This path is not dependent on intellectual and not necessarily on special physical conditions. It depends solely on which to get involved. No more and no less.



Why should I, or should I, get involved in such a thing to learn martial arts? Are not there things hidden that can also be dangerous to me, so that I lose control of my thoughts and emotions? If you learn techniques, why is a philosophical aspect necessary?

There are many questions that you can ask yourself. There are also many different reasons to start using Aikido to find it interesting at all and to try and taste it. I remembered how it was for me. What made me do Aikido? It has been quite a while, a little more than 37 years, but I can still remember my situation.

However, I have to inform you, in advance, that the search for our origin has driven me from childhood on. Where do we come from? Where are we going? It might sound a bit banal, but for me it has always been the question of the meaning of our existence. I come from a Christian environment and have been raised very religiously. This automatically raises the questions about God and how we, as human beings, can grasp this spiritual greatness. It would be beyond the scope to talk in detail about my inner life. Only so much to say, there have been some people in my life who have repeatedly given my direction a seemingly different direction. Seemingly because it was always about the same thing, but the omens got a different character. Also, I did not always recognize at the respective times that I was always on the same path. But that is certainly normal as a young person. And so after intensive discussions concerning Christian religion, and with different philosophers, I was still not satisfied with what was presented to me.

When a friend brought me into contact with Zen, I was very excited after reading books; however, without contact with real teachers. In a very close temporal context, a friend of my then girlfriend (my current wife) told me that he started a Japanese martial art and that physical strength alone does not play the main role, but the so-called “ki”. It fascinated me immediately. I thought I saw connections between what I had read about Zen and my friend’s statement about Aikido. Was there anything here that could reveal secrets that I had not understood until now?

And so I came to the gift of the movement, learning techniques, and engaging with martial arts to find a way inward. A path that for me was from different perspectives and gave me the opportunity to introduce myself in my physicality and spirituality. I’ve always been a person who likes to move. Sport has always played a central role in my life. After all, I was named after an English national football player! How should it be different then?

As you can easily see, the learning and the fascination of Aikido for me, from the beginning, has been determined by the opportunity to see more, to learn, than just to practice martial arts. I am fully aware that this does not have to be the case for everyone. The beautiful movements and the versatile possibilities as martial arts are legitimate enough to run Aikido. And also for that you need a lot of time and effort.

But I am firmly convinced that these external, technical aspects are really only a small part of what this art offers us. It would be a great pity to avoid these aspects and not use the time you invest for this to “see more”. You can point it out again and again, but ultimately everyone has to accept and search for themselves.

The danger of distraction from this search for the inner reason is manifested in Aikido.

- It can just become “getting better,” “self-sufficient” and also “being in love with oneself”. You realize that you can master the situations that arise during training and that you learn to control the confrontations with uke. It can lead to thinking that you are at the goal of gaining control. Unfortunately that does not happen often. And arrogance and stubbornness do not make life with such people, during training, easy.
- Aikido can be used as a human argument. This is also in its nature, but to see it only as a psychological tool is certainly very limited. It is quite possible to use the means learned here to analyze the confrontations and problems of human encounters. It will then also be possible to derive ways of coping with these problem areas. Since these are deeply human behaviors, the relationships are complex and certainly not trivial. Nevertheless, this detachment of this aspect from the whole represents a shortened view and not the essence of art.
- As mentioned above, falling in love with the flowing, beautiful movements is often a big problem. Even this aspect is certainly present in Aikido, but a pure harmonizing technique, closes the eyes to the necessary sharpness.
- In this context, the reduction to technology must be mentioned, whatever that looks like. A consideration of the attitude to Aikido about certain determinate processes, which can only be followed in this way and not otherwise, narrows and shortens the dimensions of this art and thus, also the development possibilities of each individual. Sportiness and dynamics are a lot of fun, especially if you have the physical possibilities. But these are partial aspects and, as I said, in the life of each person is limited.
- This martial art only as a possibility of physical conflict, i.e., fighting each other, seeing, shortens the actual goals very much. This means the reduction is due to a pure athletic and aggressive effect aiming for quick success. Aikido is certainly not the tool of choice to survive in melee combat. Which does not mean that it does not convey these things as well. However, since they are not the target for which training is done, they are discovered and developed only gradually, and it takes a relatively long time. Fast successes in terms of effectiveness are not expected in Aikido.

The complexity of Aikido becomes apparent relatively quickly after starting to exercise. The above statements show a part of it. Anyone who practices this art and remains with it for a long time knows how to sing a song about how many phases there are that are going through. Again and again you come across borders, desperate and initially no solution. But one always opens a new door through the passage. At any time, a new “becoming aware” can occur.

The possibilities to develop in this movement and martial art, as a whole human being, are manifold. And I think that's what sets Aikido apart. It is and will remain a martial art. At the same time, it is designed to bring people together. To give you the opportunity to open yourself to the whole cosmos. It satisfies and pacifies. It shows how confrontations can be handled without causing annihilation. This emphasizes O-Sensei over and over again. This deep insight should become recognizable to everyone over time. This distinguishes Aikido clearly in relation to the other martial arts. On the one hand, it creates a clear position through accentuated entry and thus actually bring about a termination of the conflict, on the other hand, it does not use its sharpness to destroy, but in the end diverts and dissolves the confrontation.

To learn and experience all these things require a lot of diligence, perseverance, and stamina. All “secrets” can and must be fathomed by everyone. The teacher can always only point out, correct, and initiate. Everyone bears the responsibility for themselves. This means that it is up to each one to decide how far he / she wants to go, how much he / she trusts, and what are ultimately the goals that each one pursues. The possibilities are many and the chance to achieve much is always there.

Only life, as a whole, offers you all these possibilities. And Aikido gives you a very effective tool. Living together, the desire for constant learning, and also always having questions are the basic conditions for progress.



Text: Duncan Underwood

Interview with Jürgen Dimt

Shinki News: Jürgen, you are the Shinki Rengo member who has been around the longest. Tell us about the beginnings. What were you doing in 1984? What fascinated you about Shinki-Rengo Aikido?

Jürgen Dimt: In February 1984, when I first came into contact with Aikido through a friend and colleague of Nakajima Sensei, I first became impressed with the harmonic discipline of training. There was no hierarchical rigor, everyone practiced with each other and even short conversations with each other did not cause the practitioners to lose sight of the goal of learning the technique that was presented. Also, the movements, the execution of the technique, inspired me so much that I decided to join the next training. At this time, Aikido was still under the SSV of the GTO (school sports club of the All-day School in Osterburken).

Shinki News: In comparison to today, what has changed?

Jürgen Dimt: Until 1991, emphasis was placed solely on the round, harmonious, and dynamic movement of the founder M. Ueshiba-Sensei. Then elements of Daitoryu-Aiki-Jujutsu were integrated into the technically unchanged Aikido movement. In 1995, when Yonezawa Shihan founded the Bokuyokan style and Nakajima Sensei became the European representative, Nakajima Sensei differentiated Aikido and Daitoryu in training and practiced some Daitoryu techniques within an Aikido training session. From 2002, the training was supplemented with sword exercises; which then, from 2009, had a permanent place during training, upon the founding of Ittoden Shinki Toho. So today, every form has its firm place in the training at Shinki Dojo in Oberkessach – about 40 minutes each of Shinki Toho, Daitoryu, and Aikido – which leads to a strict disciplined training. Unchanged in all the years, the high priority was to deal with Shinki in meditative-spiritual training. Without them, we cannot reach the required maturity, neither human nor technical maturity.

Shinki News: Es gab ja mehrere Bestrebungen sich in internationale Verbände einzugliedern, wie hast du diese wahrgenommen?

Jürgen Dimt: I never felt that Nakajima Sensei wanted to get involved in any international federations; rather, he wanted to be recognized by the largest International Aikido organization, the Aikikai Hombu Dojo in Tokyo. This was also achieved in 1995 with the help of Yamaguchi-Sensei without loss of content of Shinkiryu - Aikido. Everything else resulted from the tireless search for the roots of Aikido. To do justice to the history, it should be mentioned that Sensei actually made an attempt to contact the Kōrindo-Aikido of Minoru Hirai Sensei. But this contact did not materialize because Hirai Sensei probably no longer wanted such organizational expansion because of his old age. This was after Tendoryu and Aikikai, and was not publicized publicly by Nakajima Sensei.

Shinki News: Has the content development also been reflected in the techniques?

Jürgen Dimt: Of course, at some level of development, there is some mixing of one or the other of the techniques to soften or defuse a technique. However, in Aikido, Daitoryu, and Shinki Toho, there are basic techniques that must be rigorously practiced. Only then can we obtain a strong foundation to maintain the state and level of Shinkiryu.

Shinki News: What do you want for the future development?

Jürgen Dimt: That the "heritage" of Nakajima Sensei is practiced and passed on responsibly in both technical and spiritual directions.



Interview mit: Jürgen Dimt

“Four Associations Under One Roof”

Text: Martin Smentek

In the Autumn of 2015, the Aikido Dojo München e.V. celebrated its 20th anniversary. The club was founded by a handful of enthusiastic aikidokas (female/male) who belonged to different associations. From the very beginning, they loved having an open-association dojo. In the articles of association of the non-profit Aikido Dojo München e.V., it also states that the purpose of the association is to promote Aikido. The association should not become a member of an Aikido organization that represents only a single grouping or requires its members (female and male) a specific Aikido Examination Regulation. The members of the association (female and male) are free to be a member of any Aikido organization. The orientation of the Dojo, has not changed to this day.

The club maintains its own dojo, which is financed through membership fees. Operating costs of the association amount to over 3200 € per month. Currently, two of the founding members of the club are active as a trainer in the dojo. One of them is Dr. Gerhard Scheitler from “Shinki Rengo.” The other founding member is connected to “Aikikai Germany.” In total, seven instructors teach in the dojo. Three of them belong to “Shinki Rengo,” two to “Aikikai Germany,” and one instructor each to “BDAL – Bundesverband der Aikido-Lehrer (Federal Association of Aikido Teachers)” and “Aikikai Sweden.”

The possible training sessions – at least two training sessions are offered daily from Monday to Friday – are distributed among the associations. Each club member is free to participate in all training sessions, regardless of any association membership. On weekends, the dojo is also often used for exam preparation or for training courses.

The basis for a harmonious coexistence within the “coaching-ship” are mutual respect and great willingness to compromise. Different affiliations do not play a role in everyday training, nor is the quality of others questioned. In addition to the board, the coaches represent the dojo internally and externally. Internally, they are responsible in particular for the quality of their teaching, for the practice of budgeting and a harmonious coexistence within the dojo. Of course there are also disagreements with so many coaches. But the fact that all Aikido and teaching matter a lot is a common denominator that solves many problems. The organizational structure of our dojo ensures a broad-based expertise. This is also communicated to the outside by the trainer.

If necessary, the instructors represent the association within the dojo or use advanced club members – if necessary also from other associations. Some instructors also participate in the training of their fellow members. Basically, the versatility offered in our Dojo is rated positively by the members. In addition to the temporal, the diversity of content is also greatly appreciated. Of course, there are also those who, initially overwhelmed the rich offer of diversity, initially focus solely on the training of a particular coach (female or male), before they participate in others’ training.

How about “Shinki Rengo” in our dojo?

Dr. Gerhard Scheitler, Matthias Becker, and Birgit Bolk teach Shinki Rengo Aikido. Gerhard is the “boss” in terms of Aikido. He administers the exams, Matthias and / or Birgit are assistants. Matthias is primarily responsible for Daitoryu and Birgit for Itto-den Shinki Toho.

The trainers, as well as the board, were and are the mainstays of Aikido Dojo Munich e.V. It is through their efforts that the Dojo, with its various associations under one roof, has existed successfully for over 20 years. We look forward to the next 20 years.



Text: Martin Smentek

Dojo Voices

Dresden



Bernd Jung
1st Dan, Aikido for 10 years



Enrico Thies
2nd Kyu, Aikido for 10 years



Mario Kaden
3rd Kyu, Aikido for 8 years

Why do I do Aikido?

In my everyday life, especially at work, I often experience how my energy is not used optimally and how it could be because of a variety of distracting factors that affect me.

Aikido allows me to find a balance, it helps me to find and concentrate on energy again. I can experience how an encounter and joint movement result in a larger whole.

Why am I in the Shinki-Rengo?

An important aspect for me is that I find the Budo idea to be holistic. Both the inward view and the spiritual aspect, through meditation, as well as the outward effect that is emphasized through fundamental combat techniques.

Equally crucial for me is the good and classy way the Aikidoka interact with each other, whom I have found in my training group and I experience during training sessions.

Why do I do Aikido?

Aikido keeps me in great shape through movement. It helps me concentrate in difficult situations. As an example, during a recent fire department practice alert, I was really excited. After centering myself some relaxation techniques, I was very relaxed during the test.

Why am I in the Shinki-Rengo?

I came to Shinki Rengo Aikido by accident. I really liked the training from the beginning. For example, I find the training with the sword extremely appealing. It conveys a good relation to one's own center, understanding distance and timing. I also like that everyone trains with one another. This is not the same based on my own experience. The most important point, however, is the very good methodology of the teachers. I learn something with each training and each seminar.

Why do I do Aikido?

It was a teenage wish, through various action films.

Why am I in the Shinki-Rengo?

The big reason is because of my sensei. The elegance, the soft but direct techniques that are practiced with a certain sharpness. To resolve situations while maintaining inner serenity. Aikido is more than just martial art, it is a way of life.

Leipzig



Tino Schwierzy

4th Kyu, Aikido since April 2014, Shinki Rengo since November 2014



Matthias Paetz

1st Dan (DAB), Aikido since 1995, Shinki Rengo since November 2016



Katrin Reimer

2nd Dan, Aikido / Shinki Rengo since October 2000

Why do I do Aikido?

The answer to the question about why I practice Aikido does not come about easily! I practiced Iaido for 18 years and practiced all sorts of martial arts since I was 14. In Aikido, and especially in Shinki Rengo, I find everything that I had previously experienced in the other martial arts. I can say now that Aikido was predetermined from the beginning; however I only recognized this only very recently.

Why am I in the Shinki-Rengo?

Nakajima Sensei shows that Shinkiryu is a way of devotion and love, and I realized that I would like to learn from him and thus take a holistic path.

Why do I do Aikido?

Aikido gives my life, besides my family, a spiritual content that is important to me. It helps to strengthen good qualities and to train concentration, endurance, and serenity. My goal remains to maintain my fitness until old age.

I started Aikido in 1995 on the basis of the peaceful principles of a book I read and the DAB (Deutsch Aikido Bund – German Aikido Federation). I had been training for 2nd Dan for more than 15 years. From the end of 2016, I trained in parallel in both associations (DAB and Shinki Rengo).

Why am I in the Shinki-Rengo?

I became a student of Shinki Rengo because of the effectiveness, straightforwardness, and variety of techniques; and, of course, because of the friendliness of those who are in Shinki Rengo.

Why do I do Aikido?

I came to Aikido looking for physical activity. I stayed with Aikido because it works on body and mind. Physically and mentally, we practice to relax and let go. Both sides promote each other. Over the years, I found serenity and new opportunities in dealing with occasional verbal aggressiveness in everyday life – and my curiosity on what can emerge from everyday conflicts have been positive.

Why am I in the Shinki-Rengo?

Because with Shinki Rengo, the focus is on the inclusion of others, both in practicing the techniques as well as in the group. The “we” comes clearly before the “I”.

Of note ;-), the meaning of the second sentence is meant in the truest sense of the word, just as a sculptor works a stone: hammering, grinding, polishing, and continuous sculpting...

Bad Segeberg



Alexander Eisenkrätzer
1st Dan, Aikido for 20 years



Christiane Saß
2nd Kyu, Aikido for 24 years



Bernd Timm
Not yet tested (Mu Kyu), Aikido for over a year

I started about 20 years ago with Aikido in another federation. One year ago I decided to join the Shinki Rengo Association.

Why?: the quality, the versatility, the development possibilities, the organization of the association, which offers a nationwide platform and has deep roots in the homeland of Aikido. Above all, the friendly reception by the people who belong to Shinki Rengo and strive with dedication and patience to raise my level of performance on the Shinki Rengo level.

I started with Aikido in 1993 and then took a long break from 1995 to 2005. Since 2005, I train regularly. In 2013 I attended my first Shinki Rengo Summer Seminar in Oldenswort. The community, warmth, and intensity during the course touched me a lot. At the same time, I got even more involved in my Feldenkrais work and the parallelism, between the Feldenkrais method and Shinki Rengo Aikido, fascinated and inspired me in my work and my everyday life. The clarity and body logic of the Shinki Rengo Aikido and the committed affinity always have the other person in mind, making practicing in Shinki Rengo Aikido a dynamic, intense experience for me, which I want to pursue as long as possible. Graduations are in the background for me because thinking about them would slow me down. I am 55 years old and take life as it comes and do not want to burden myself with exam stress. I also learn without going on and on.

Why do I do Aikido?

I was infected by the Aikido virus in Bad Segeberg, during children training that my grandson Neo participates in, trained by Johannes Hoffmann. Aikido has changed my life into something positive. Responsiveness and suppleness are trained and strengthened. Madness!!

Why am I in the Shinki-Rengo?

Because I have two good, patient teachers, Alexander Eisenkraetzer and Johannes Hoffmann. Because we are trained to be present and serene by doing dynamic, flowing movements from the center. Because we also practice with the sword – according to the motto of Helmut Theobald: not much frills, a cut and everything is over! And because there is a great Aikido group in Oldenswort trained by Duncan Underwood, where Shinki Rengo is alive!

Dan Essays

Do, Dojo-Cho, Shu-ha-ri

Essay for the 2. Dan from: Deniz Seven, Berlin, September 2017

Actually, we should all be on the way. Someone who follows Budo, that is, practices a Japanese martial art, automatically follows an inner teaching or philosophy expressed by the syllable Do. I am on the way.

I am concerned with the question of what is required to move forward on the path. I see all sorts of aspects that play a role here, but come pretty quickly to the point that the respective Aikido teacher who has responsibility for students, Sensei, in the sense of a companion has a central role. I see the dojo-cho in every training. He lives and shows us his way.

I practice diligently and try to accept constructive criticism and implement it. I want to learn. Aikido training is not performance-related, in the sense of a competition, and yet we want to move forward. I came from competitive sports and have understood that I am not working on an exam or even practicing the exam techniques. Rather, the daily and ongoing training should show maturity.

On the mat all sorts of fates meet. The experience shows in training, in movement and posture. Sometimes there are discrepancies between students, as well as arguments. There should be harmony in the dojo, the training should be exciting and motivating, and we want to trust that the training will bring us forward. The techniques are practiced and refined. All these points have to be “handled.” It requires benevolent leadership, which also allows free space, so I can try. Space is important for the development of one’s personality. That’s growth for me, the individual student; and thus the dojo.

I understand that development in Aikido is essentially shaped by learning the technique and understanding the underlying movement. Here perhaps the style has a meaning.

Nevertheless, the invisible or less externally visible portion is increasingly important to me, e.g., everything that makes up the encounter with the partner: Whether my posture and alignment are right; I am attentive and perceive the tendency and direction of the energy as accurately as possible; I have the right distance to the partner and my movement is as natural and fluid as possible, so that I can move from my center strong and at the same time without the use of force and without hurting; if I use my breathing to develop ki.

For me, these techniques, which have complementary or underlying qualities, have an essential meaning for my path, and thus my development and understanding in Aikido. My wife says I have changed through aikido. I recognize this even on individual occasions.

I have heard of the “image” of Shu-ha-ri and see it as a structural aid along the way. According to Wikipedia, it is a Japanese martial arts concept that describes the stages of learning, the mastery of the learned, and the development of one’s own personality.

In the first stage, Shu, one learns by imitating. You learn the rules to master them. If you later surpass it in future development, you do not lose the art itself. ‘Ha’ as a second level that means further learning, but the standards and rules can be varied and adapted to one’s own situation. This also includes understanding the background in order to go beyond the mere observance of the rules. The highest level, Ri ‘means the patterns can leave, be driven by their own impulses, to find something new. That does not mean that rules can be left. They are lived.

I’ve heard that you “get” sandan and “give” somewhere from yondan. I have already gone a short way. They say it is never finished. I would like to go on with it and continue to align my inner attitude so that Do shows itself to me in every situation, even off the mat.



Text: Deniz Seven

From “Right” and “Wrong” – Is It the Only True Execution?

(Thoughts from the point of view of a student, a training partner, and a teacher)

Essay for the 2. Dan from: Jochen Schröder, Karlsruhe, June 2017

The step is wrong,” “You are standing too high / too low / too wide ...,” “You have to throw there.” – How many times have I been corrected and criticized in my Aikido life (I am sure I am right!): bad attitude, bad steps, bad execution?

As a student of three teachers, who belong to different styles (the clear advantage, but in some cases the disadvantage of a heterogeneous Aikido group in a university sport), it also happened that teacher A criticized what teacher B taught during the previous training session. Specifically, for example, one wanted me to stand lower, while the second objected that I would be too low to do the same technique. I was grateful for the well-founded phrase “I would not stand so low, because ...”, I was unhappy about the disparity “your stance is wrong,” which, in its absoluteness, contradicted the statement of the other teacher.

At first, I was a little unsettled, and sometimes I even got used to doing different movements during different training sessions by teacher A and B in order to satisfy them, so my self-assessment about the correct/wrong decision become more and more clear over time. I learned to classify the teachers’ statements better, but in the end, I also followed the teachings of one teacher – and I could not or did not want to follow the teachings of another teacher in some situations. In many cases, I felt that both of them felt “right” or “good,” even if one teacher criticized the other teacher’s variations, or even labeled them as “wrong.” In other situations, I preferred the version of one teacher, in other situations, the version of the other one; and, in some situations, both variations did not feel really good or useful to me. My body began to look for its own truth and feel what was, to my regret of course, what was still criticized by both teachers.

I dealt intensively with this question about right and wrong, especially through my own training (as co-trainer of the adolescents, later independent trainer for youth and adults), but above all, also with the question “is this the only true execution of a technique?”

In the following, I mainly use one of the basic techniques (which I incorporate as a trainer in almost every training) to support my statements: Irimi-Nage. There are, of course, many other examples of techniques for which similar assertions apply.

For my testimony I assume that not a completely different movement is carried out or even straight forward in a knife attack is run; especially the last-mentioned extreme case can, of course, only be described as grossly false. I therefore assume that the technique carried out is carried out in a recognizable basic form.

As an instructor, I consciously avoid (if possible) the phrase “wrong,” but still try to clearly explain (and better yet, show) to the students when I think a movement is inefficient. To put it bluntly, there are things that I think are wrong (beyond the extreme cases mentioned above): An example of the technique Irimi-nage is the “forgotten arm” that falls behind the shoulder as it rotates and comes from the very back and tries to knock the partner down with force (which can only come from the shoulder). But can I really tell a 1.65-meter-tall student weighing 100 kilograms that he has to do the same for Irimi-nage as I do, barely 30 centimeters taller and much lighter? Obviously, as a big attacker, he has to break me down a lot more and bring me down to his height in order to have a chance to use Irimi-nage when I have to do this or even can. The disadvantage that he has to break me more, he can turn into an advantage, because he can break me much easier. In return, he has significant advantages in other techniques, such as Koshi-nage, thanks to his low center of gravity, which I do not have.

Just as I admit that I do not do individual techniques exactly as the teacher teaches them or as Sensei shows them on the DVD (because obviously we have completely different requirements and I have to do some techniques differently to use my physical strengths and bypassing the physical handicaps), I also have to allow my students to not do the techniques exactly as I do and show them – and as long as there is a round and good movement for them and their training partners, then the movement can go wrong?

As a trainer and training partner (but also as a self-trained person), I see my task thus more in finding out and feeling whether the movement of my counterpart (and my own movement) fits our common requirements, and to help him, his own way instead of forcing my way on him, which may not make sense to him. Everyone has to learn to deal with their own requirements (and the requirements of their changing partners): is their own center of gravity high, is it deep, does the attacker have more or less mass, longer or shorter arms, is he weak or immobile, ...?

There are many things to keep in mind when performing the technique, and ultimately you can only feel for yourself (!) If a movement makes sense or not.

I think that’s one of the things that fascinates me most about Aikido, that everyone has to find their own way. Sadly, this does not make Aikido easy, but the journey is the goal – a way to get help from the instructors, but it’s your own path that you can only go yourself.



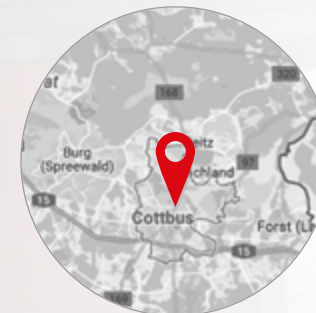
Text: Jochen Schröder

Seminar Reports

Seminar in Cottbus

Nakajima Shihan / 06. & 07. Mai 2017

Text: Nigel K. Downes / Fotos: Inga Themann



Location: Cottbus

It is always a special experience to train at an Aiki-Budo seminar headed by Nakajima Shihan; even more so, if your dojo is hosting the seminar. On the weekend of 6-7 May, 2017, the Aikido Shinki Rengo group in Cottbus was pleased to host a seminar with Nakajima Shihan, teaching the arts of Aikido and Daitoryu Aiki Jujutsu.

Both days began with meditation. “We should not ask where we stand in comparison to others, or at what level I am at, but simply train and study the arts.” With these words from Sensei in mind, the seminar began.

Initially, we researched and internalized the techniques of Daitoryu Aiki Jujutsu. Sensei began with the basic exercises of “Aiki-age” and “Aiki-sage” to tangibly demonstrate the principles of the Daitoryu. Win with the entrance, connection, and control. Subsequently, we progressed to simple techniques from the same attacks. Each technique was developed in several stages, demonstrated and elaborated by Sensei; from the initial movement, to the capture of the attack, to the final technique. – Win first, fight later. Once the participants had grasped the basic principles of Daitoryu, more advanced techniques were taught.

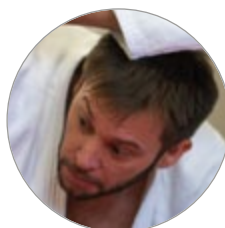
Chronologically, following the footsteps of O-Sensei, the second part of each session was taken up by Aikido. Sensei interrupted training repeatedly to make us aware of the flow of ki. We went through a series of basic Aikido techniques focusing on Kokyu-Nage and Irimi-Nage, with emphasis on posture, contact and, of course, attitude. Here too, we developed from basic attacks to proceed and experiment with more advance techniques. In the last training session on Sunday, the focus was on Aikido techniques for the defense against attacks with a Tanto.

Saturday evening provided all participants the opportunity to sit down, enjoy a meal, and to get to know one another. For many, it was the first time to get to know Sensei, both on and off the Tatami. This was especially true for the many students at our university dojo. Culinary delights, the odd beer or two, and interesting conversations made the evening memorable.





For us it was a wonderful experience to host Nakajima Shihan once again in Cottbus. The seminar provided Shinki Rengo members and aikidoka throughout Germany, the opportunity to meet, exchange, and train together. **We would like to thank all the participants and all those who made the weekend possible. In particular, we would like to thank Sensei, who, with his teachings and the sharing of his life experiences, carried us a little further on our way. So we wish to continue...**



Text: Nigel Downes



Fotos: Inga Themann

18th Summer Course in Oldenswort

Duncan Underwood / 24. – 27. Juli 2017

Text: Gunnar Clausen / Fotos: Johannes Hoffmann



Location: Oldenswort

What do you write after 18 years of training, which has not been said in all these years? Probably nothing new. What is the core, that makes this course special? Is it the Aikido techniques or the meditation, the cultural contributions of the different participants, or rather the weather-triggered, sometimes quite adventurous tales of the tireless tents? All of this contributes to the overall picture of the course. And in all of this there is a piece of the same core: dedication.

Even after many years, as Duncan might put it, "It's always the same." Here it is very important not to misunderstand this. By saying "always the same," this is not meant that this is a repetitive course of warm-up exercises at the beginning of the training and subsequent techniques in different variations. Rather, it's about the way every single person should train after all these years.

It is important to open one's heart and to train with full dedication. Whether it's meditation, sword training, Aikido or other activities outside the mat. It makes no difference.

Especially in such a training-intensive week as the summer course, this dedication can be practiced especially well. The physical fitness is put to a welcomed test; and, after the first signs of physical fatigue are over, it allows us to increasingly engage with our inner strength. Again this year, a whole series of diligent aikidokas took up this challenge. Different ages, training experiences, and athletic performance took a back seat. Everyone had to train with dedication. A whole range of people made a significant contribution to this ongoing development by bringing life to the mat and the surroundings. Some people had even managed to contribute in one way or another each year. And for these contributions one should be thanked sincerely.





The age of 18 is a particularly significant year for young people. Many circumstances in life are changing as you are officially considered an adult. So, perhaps, the summer course has grown up. Many experiences in the training were made, successful exams completed, and much organizational developments, such as the mat construction, the structure of the common Friday evening, or about finding the date for the traditional slaughter, now done routinely. But this routine does not mean uniformity, but again and again there are new experiences and changes. **And so, even after 18 years: it is "always the same."** The end is not reached and it continues as in the years before. New experiences are made and new ways and perspectives open up, so that we will hopefully be a lot more experienced for the 36th course and continue to train with the same dedication.



Text: Gunnar Clausen



Fotos: Johannes Hoffmann

Summer Course 2017 in Weiler

Nakajima Shihan / 01. – 06. August 2017

Text: Shinki Dojo Weiler / Fotos: Martin Smentek



Location: Weiler

For the fifth time this year, the Aiki Budo Summer Course took place, from 01.08.17 to 06.08.17, with Soke Daishiro Nakajima in Weiler-Simmerberg.

At sportive temperatures around 30° C, up to 50 participants came together to practice together in a relaxed and peaceful atmosphere in the Allgäu. The next six days were to be worked out on the subtleties in the disciplines of Aikido, Daitoryu Aiki Jujutsu and Itto-den Shinki Toho Kenjutsu. The entire course was rounded off and united by daily, contemplative meditation units. In no training with Soke can one be immersed deeper and more intensely in the conception of Shinkiryu Aiki Budo.

The day of arrival began with a 2 ½ hour unit of Daitoryu and Aikido. In addition to practicing the techniques, it was a great opportunity to get in touch with all known and perhaps unknown partners at the time.

Wednesday started with a morning meditation. Soke began to build a theme that was to move through the meditations throughout the course: **the constant quest for depth. In budo, in life, in being.** This was followed by a Daitoryu and Aikido unit. In addition to the basic movements, more advanced techniques were practiced dynamically and energetically. One main theme that moved through all disciplines of the course was letting go and falling into shape. Within the framework of a course, such pillars of Budo can be made more tangible on the basis of the various, often also “unknown” partners and lead to one or the other aha moment.

In the afternoon, training began in Itto-the Shinki Toho. Here, too, the participants were able to study the forms of this sword art intensively and in peace during the 2 ½ hour long session. Beside Soke also Shihandai Helmut Theobald and uchi deshi Mathias Haass were on the mat to let us profit from their knowledge and experience.





So describes, for example, Hiltrud's experience:

"When I practiced, especially in Daitoryu, I had a place in my head, because Soke mentioned it in meditation, that we should always let go." If I bring my partner to the ground with outstretched hands, then it is not an active "moving-the-other-down-or-drag" but a "dropping into the mold" – a "letting go"; – it is hard to describe - **important to know**. In Kenjutsu I practiced the form "Ippon-me-hittosu-gachi" again and again for about half a year. Although I have been repeating the form all the time, it caused an "aha-effect" in me, because through Sensei's explanations and the demands of my training partner, I could understand them better, and learn to do so. It is even a gift to participate in these summer courses."

Thursday also started with meditation, followed by keiko in Daitoryu and Aikido. This afternoon, instead of the Shinki Toho training, a joint outing was on the program. After having been down to the valley as well as to the mountains in recent years, this year we went on the water. A boat trip on Lake Constance with the destination Wasserburg. A relaxed, peaceful and sociable day was spent before the train returned to another programed point of the day.

In the evening we were treated to a Shakuhachi concert with Viz Michael Kremietz.

Viz is a theater and performance musician. He has practiced Zen meditation for 14 years and learned to play shakuhachi with Jim Franklin Shihan for 7 years.

The most unusual sounds and the resulting atmosphere ended this day in a particularly relaxing way.

Friday was all about practicing the three disciplines of Shinkiryu. A small highlight was the Aikido exam for 1st Kyu by Anna-Antonia Berger, who currently lives and trains in Copenhagen.



Saturday was also dedicated to training. Once again, after the training sessions, we experienced another test. This time to Shoden Grad in Itto-the Shinki Toho. Two participants met this challenge under the eyes of Nakijama Soke and Theobald Shihandai. Again, Anna-Antonia Berger from Copenhagen, followed by Markus Meer from Dojo Simmerberg.

On Saturday evening there was a traditional dinner, which, as in recent years, took place in the Braustätt in Simmerberg. As always, this graduation ceremony was a pleasant highlight, especially for the community aspects of the course. Once you got to know each other better in the course during the various sessions, you sat there almost like a family, reviewing the week and the experiences made, and enjoying the time and local delicacies with the others.

On Sunday the final session was Daitoryu and Aikido, and also farewell to the participants, helpers, and Sensei. Breaking down the mats went fast and smoothly, as all participants diligently tackled the task.

Finally, Rüdiger, the representative of all participants, conveyed the following thanks: "Sensei Daishiro Nakajima, this week's intensive meditation, Aikido, Daito Ryu Aiki Jujutsu, and Kenjutsu Itto-the Shinki Toho, personally and from what I saw, with sincere dedication, made perfection possible during all sessions."



Also, I send a heartfelt thank you to Shihandai Helmut Theobald, who also cultivated a supremely good, highly qualified, and affectionate relationship with us and with Budoka seeking help from him. With his comradely nature, he made it easy for me to recognize mistakes and accept his well-intentioned advice.”

All in all, a practice-intensive, instructive, challenging, but extremely satisfying summer course week in the Allgäu, which should be repeated in any case.

By the way, next year the Shinkiryu Aiki Budo summer course will take place in Croatia.
All information about this can already be found on the website.



Text: Shinki Dojo Weiler



Fotos: Martin Smentek

Book Reviews

Gerta Ital

The Master, the Monk and I

Book Review by: Nicole Knutsen
Buchrezension von: Nicole Knutsen

What is this book doing here? This Sentence, which I already used within my Review of Wilibald Jägers Book about Zen, should bring clarification:

“what’s the connection between Zen and aikido? Or Budo? Does the description of this book – written by three authors – fit here? Somehow yes, I think. Budo naturally has its roots in the Buddhism or Shintoism, and is influenced by a world which has nothing to do with our contexts of conceptions, originated as art of war in a far eastern spirituality. Zen originated there as well. Both found their way through place and time.”
 You can find more reviews on aikido-eiderstedt.de, and of course there are some about books about aikido.

Gerta who? I must admit, if you are looking for a book about Buddhism you don’t just think about Gerta Ital. But she is something special. She was the first stranger, the first European and the first woman who spend a couple of months in a Japanese Zen-ministry. Her impressions are written in “the Master, the Monk and I”. The first edition was published in 1966 and this book should be written that way: out of a modern reading its writing style is antiquated, but was done in a time, as far eastern philosophy where a mystery in Germany, an unexplored country, a time, where Yoga wasn’t taught in every community college. **That’s how one should understand the uniqueness: in 1962 Gerta Ital is going on an adventure and travels without any further knowledge about the country or the language, without travel agency or google search results to Japan. She listens to her heart.**

8 Years before that the author began her inner journey with a lot of self-discipline in ascetic Raja-Yoga. Ital describes her experience with the indish religion in the afterwar Berlin. This is how she experienced her first mystic union with outer terrestrial masters.

To her the path to enlightenment is not a bright, happy way but a continuous struggle, a continuous temptation, filled with painful tests, only for strong people, even heaven places traps. That doesn't sound like a beautiful, fulfilled and happy life.

Shortly after she had to give up her work as an artist due to an illness, which nearly broke her. A new life began: die and become! A motto which influenced her life.

Later in 1951 she discovers the mystic of Zen threw the book "the art of archery" of the still acknowledged professor Dr. E. Herriegel. She contacted him, became his student and a new chapter in her life began.

This is how she came in touch with the still highly esteemed Jesuit and Zen-Master Zen-Meister Hugo Makibi Enomiya-Lassalle and his standard work about Zen-Meditation. Her wish, to study Zen in a Japanese monastery grew, and became reality threw several faithful encounters.

In Japan Ital is taught by Master O and meditates often and long. It's part of her sometimes strange writing style that she shortens companions with a capital letter (Mrs. M., Mr. O.). That's why the reader doesn't become part of the action, of the daily routine, Itals keeps the reader at distance. Master O. trains his students in Zazen, including hart strikes with a wooden stick, which his pupils beg for. To reach enlightenment (SATORI), Ital excepts everything full of joy and without any critique. Thanks to the hart work she puts in the meditation, Ital achieves Mu after a couple of weeks. She describes her ambitions and her pride on this achievement in every detail, as if the meditation is a homework which is graded by the teacher. And the reader wonders: shouldn't somebody who is experiencing Mu, the self-lessness, be freed of pride and ambitions?

The following initiation in the ministry is difficult and without the help of the roshi her stay would have been a disaster. Nest to her spiritual experience Ital describes her journey through this strange country, but out of the ministry she also experiences helpfulness. Due to reasons of health and climate the big ZAZEN, which lasts several days, is the hardest part to her.

She is impressed by the accompanied reverent ceremonies, introduced by drums, timponis and crashes, she describes the everyday life detailed in the monastery, in which the monks are as well imprisoned within those ceremonies and rituals. You must have experienced it, to understand it.

The western understanding from the seren Buddhistic monks doesn't fit the descriptions of Ital. The monks neglect her as the first stranger, the first woman and European, she often feels misunderstood and humiliated. You have to know, that there where women as well, but as nuns they only did heavy and niedere Arbeiten.

Itals book is based on her journal. That's way the experiences seem to be staccato like and lined up. The red line which describes here spiritual forthcoming is woven within. The irritation, that meditation is something to Ital which you got to do under pressure, the troubles over lost time, wrong meditation-technic and wrong answers to the Koans, stay until the end of the book.

The everyday life of the monks persists out of the duality of hard physical work and extreme spiritual exhaustion. The training is to “make no difference”. That means “...the monks should not make a difference between the hardest physical work and the deepest ZAZEN. Inside and Outside, Spirit and Body are ONE – this is how his mind should be, no matter if he pulls up weed or cooks rice, then in the moment differences are made, cracks appear, World and Sein (?) are separated and drift apart in infinite difference. **The truth of ZEN is the unity of all being, this is to be trained by the monk continuously. The result is, even if he is far away of the SATORI, a within himself resting, happily balanced human, who – without wanting them (...).**”

It's Sentences like that, the reader at peace.

Finally, in the long holidays, Italo's continuous and restless pressing stops and an inner emptiness appears. It is then that she experiences a Flow of warmth and harmonic affection while watching the silent monks and she realizes: Not the woman, that stands here, is the loving one, but it's something else, which watches through her on the beings: **it's love itself, impersonal but permeate. (...) Only there, where nothing is, the oneself can reveal itself.** “The **“ichhafte awareness” of oneself and all things disappears, so that everything that exists starts to interweave.**

And yes: shortly before she leaves again to Berlin she reaches SATORI, and feels the right answer on the difficult Koan “how does one Hand sound?”. She must sound like the universe, then there is only ONE, no “appearing from inside”, no “effect from outside” – everything is one. Everything is nothing. Life is everything in one, one flow, which connects everything. **The flow doesn't end on THIS world, not on THIS universe. You can only feel, experience the participation, but she is indescribable. Words are useless, then everything that can be described by words, is part of the being.**

Conclusion: SATORI is the goal of ZAZEN, and not only Italo, but all the great ZEN-Master (even LaSalle) are writing, or have been writing, that you can't describe this enlightenment, that you must experience it. This doesn't make it easier to write a book about it. Italo tried it threw here biography. So the book “the master, the monk and I” is partly journal, partly a description of a spiritual journey. Maybe it would have been better, to split the book up in two. My favorite Sentence in this book is a quote from Buddha: “my teaching is great to grasp, not to hold on to.”



Book Review by: Nicole Knutsen

Promotions

01. September – 12. November 2017

Aikido

10. Kyu	Constabel, Justus	Wi-Sonnenberg
10. Kyu	Scherhorn, Marlene	Wi-Sonnenberg
10. Kyu	Stachelscheid, Tobias	Lahnstein
10. Kyu	Noll, Lucas	Lahnstein
10. Kyu	Althaus, David Christian	Rheinbreitbach
10. Kyu	Althaus, Johannes Nikolaj	Rheinbreitbach
10. Kyu	Maier, Isa Miriam	Ulm-Schmid
10. Kyu	Maier, Julian Maximilian	Ulm-Schmid
10. Kyu	Larouk, Mellina	Ulm-Schmid
10. Kyu	Larouk, Amir	Ulm-Schmid
9. Kyu	Chubarov, Vladyslav	Wi-Sonnenberg
9. Kyu	Pfeiffer, Gian-Luca	Wi-Sonnenberg
8. Kyu	Schuhmacher, Lovis Béla	Wi-Sonnenberg
8. Kyu	Nissen, Dana	Wi-Sonnenberg
7. Kyu	Rabitz, Lenny	WI Sonnenberg
3. Kyu	Stanciu, Paul – Olivian	Sibiu
3. Kyu	Knudsen, Nicole	Oldenswort
3. Kyu	Becker, Amadeus	Cottbus
3. Kyu	Dieterle, Michael	Oberkessach
2. Kyu	Germar, Ralf	Wiesbaden
1. Kyu	Schulz, Elmar	Cottbus
1. Kyu	Fries, Michael	München
1. Dan	Hansen, Jann-Volquard	Oldenswort
1. Dan	Jung, Bernd	Dresden
2. Dan	Erberich, Michael	Osnabrück
2. Dan	Seven, Deniz	Berlin Tomosei

Daitoryu Aiki Jujutsu

5. Kyu	Thies, Enrico	Dresden
4. Kyu	Oreski, Slavko	Maribor
4. Kyu	Shenson, Alexander	Maribor
4. Kyu	Germann, Reiner	Weikersheim
4. Kyu	Maaß, Lea	Edingen
4. Kyu	Maier, Alexander	Oberkessach
4. Kyu	Becker, Amadeus	Cottbus
4. Kyu	Heim (Rist), Markus	Weiler
4. Kyu	Pfeifer Christoph	Dresden
4. Kyu	Richter, Winfried	Weiler
4. Kyu	Zebandt, Sandra	Weiler
4. Kyu	Bottke, Raban	Weiler
3. Kyu	Jung, Bernd	Dresden

Itto-den Shinki Toho

Shoden	Brand, Monika	München
Shoden	Reimer, Katrin	Leipzig/Schkeuditz
Shoden	Schwierzy, Tino	Leipzig/Schkeuditz
Chûden	Bolk, Birgit	München
Chûden	Aden, Kristina	München
Chûden	Smentek, Martin	München
Okuden	Nicolas, Six	Oberkessach

Seminars

2017/2018

Seminars with M. D. Nakajima

30.12.2017 – 01.01.2018	Oberkessach, Turn of the Year Seminar
03. – 04.02.2018	Edingen, Aikido-DAN-Seminar
24. – 25.02.2018	Bartholomä
14. 04. 2018	Weikersheim
21. – 22.04.2018	Euskirchen
25. – 27.05.2018	Landau, Internationaler Daitoryu-Seminar with Tim Tung Sensei and M.D. Nakajima Sensei
09. – 10.06.2018	Königheim, Shinki Toho
30.06. – 01.07.2018	München
06. – 10.08.2018	Rovinj/Istria/Kroatien, Summer-Seminar
22. 09. 2018	Heidelberg
10. – 11.11.2018	Edingen
24. – 25.11.2018	Dresden

Other Seminars

30.07. – 04.08.2018	Duncan Underwood, Summer-Seminar in Oldenswort
23.06. – 24.06.2018	Michael Danner and others: Youth-Seminar in Edingen

Arigato gozaimasu

Preview Shinki News No. 11

The next edition of Shinki News will be published in March 2017.

If you would like to contribute to Shinki News, please submit your contribution(s) to: shinki.news@gmail.com and we will contact you to discuss the formalities.

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and a lot of fun and energy during training during the cold season
Shinki News Team!

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