



# Ken shinryu 流神劍

TRADITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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## Kancho's Corner

### The Standard Bearers



My Shinto Muso Ryu teacher, Nishioka Tsuneo Sensei, and I had commenced our training one morning some years ago, performing *Kazari 飾り* - the traditional bow

where the sword and staff are set out in a triangular shape on the floor prior to commencement of the *Kata Keiko* (paired form study).

Usually, following the first part of the bow we would return to the weapons and complete the bow by taking control of our respective weapons once more. On this occasion, as Sensei moved towards the weapons he paused and then, moving to one side, he indicated for me to join him in *seiza*. Nodding towards the crossed weapons he said "For some seventy years I have performed *Kata Keiko* on a daily basis. I have come to realise that each day I practice, I am challenged by the Jo and Tachi (staff and sword) to perfect myself. Their inner and outer natures are fixed and perfect... they will never change. It is I who must 'come to them'. It is I who must seek to modify myself to harmonise with their perfect nature. At the outset our bodies will be unable to form the correct grip or take the correct posture... however it is we who must change – the sword and staff are fixed and cannot change to suit us. As students of Bujutsu we must be careful to avoid making our own style."

I've thought this instruction over many times since that day and have come to understand why it was so important to him. And of course it doesn't just apply to weapons arts, being equally important in the world of unarmed combat. In part, I've learned from watching people come into the Dojo over the past 25 years assuming that the technique will be changed to suit them... in many instances these people not only expect that the technique will change, but that the entire Dojo will undergo the same change. Etiquette will be downgraded... sloppy bows will be ok, lack of punctuality will be overlooked, failure to wear *dogis* will be acceptable, train-

ing standards will be modified to suit their lack of fitness and so on. Needless to say these people are always disappointed. In part I've also learned from my own experience. When I first went to Japan to train 20 years ago the joke was that 'the training will make a new man of you'. What wasn't mentioned was that the 'old man would be killed in the process'. How does that work? When we're born our eyes pop open and we begin to breathe. As we get a little older we stand and then begin to walk. From these experiences we believe for the remainder of our life that we can see, breathe, stand and walk... and it's true that to some extent we can. But what if we were to receive coaching from an expert in each area and we learned that for each of these life basics there was in fact a 'best practice' method we could study and make our own? Why would anyone default to the 'natural' basic when they could, with a little effort, achieve their personal best?

This is what the Dojo, the weapon and the technique did for me. They challenged me to get outside my comfort zone and do all I could to make 'best practice' my personal practice. I was in a class being taught by that wonderful Aikido teacher and statesman, Inoue Kyoichi Sensei of Yoshinkan fame when one of the other students asked him "Sensei, this technique seems almost impossible and I feel I can never achieve it. Why should I try to achieve something that may well be impossible for me?" Inoue Sensei's response was simple and eloquent... "We struggle against the most difficult challenges to polish ourselves... and along the way we build the spirit and the skills to achieve what otherwise may have seemed impossible".

Maybe I'm turning into a grouchy old bastard, but it seems to me there aren't many places left in an increasingly commercial world where standards are upheld and where people are encouraged, supported and sometimes driven to reach for them. Even in the martial arts world, students have become clients or customers with the power to negotiate or even demand that their expectations are the ones that are met. This change in relationship is a dangerous one with many pitfalls. Not the least of these is the relationship between the student of Budo and the standards that have been maintained, polished and passed down generation after generation.

I know that for myself at least, I now regard the sword and staff not only as the immensely practical weapons that they are... but also as reminders of the opportunity to polish myself on a daily basis to be the best person I can be.

*Sensei David*

## KANCHO'S CORNER CONT'D



Osu!

As 2016 comes to a close, we also sign off on a quarter of a century of traditional martial arts training since Kenshinryu became a full time organisation. During this period we have been based at the same Dojo here in Palmwoods... a place that is positively overflowing with history and significance.

On over 15,000 occasions a Teacher has brought their hands together and bowed in a class... over 4,000 adults and 5,000 children have entered into training in this one Dojo alone... over 7,000 local students have participated in our School based programmes... 3 branch Dojos have been opened and 2 remain active today... 300 newsletters just like this have been published... 38 adults have successfully tested for their black belt... 5 people have completed an *Uchi Deshi* course... and of course in 2003 Compass was born as an offshoot of the Dojo. With some 50 staff and now one of the biggest (and certainly the best) disability day service provider in the State, that's one hell of an offshoot.

There are far too many milestones over those 25 years to recount and far too many people to thank for their contributions, however I must recognise the inspiration and support of Joe Thambu Shihan of the Aikido Shudokan, the Teachers at Yoshinkan Honbu Dojo (particularly Terada, Chida and Inoue Sensei's), Saito Morihiro Sensei of Iwama and last but far from least, Nishioka Tsuneo Sensei of the Shinto Muso Ryu.

And of course there is you - my fellow students - whose blood, sweat and tears have stained the mat and whose *kiais* have echoed across our sleepy little village over that quarter of a century. Thank you all... because without your passion and effort *Budo* would have no future and that would be a great loss indeed.

I look forward to another 25 years of Budo practice by your side. Osu!

*David*

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I'd like to recommend that you have a look at this [website](https://www.aikiinsights.com/) and become a subscriber. <https://www.aikiinsights.com/>

When I was last in Melbourne I was interviewed by its founder, Marvin Oka, and I have since listened to all the podcasts on the site.

There is an absolute wealth of information for Aikido and Budo students - all being shared in a conversational format by some very highly experienced Teachers including Joe Thambu, Robert Mustard and Darren Friend Sensei's.

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## Deshi's Diary

Osu

What a great year it's been! It feels like only a few days ago we were talking about gradings, Japan and our 25th Anniversary.

This year we had 4 trips to our cold sister school in Armidale which is run by Sensei Daniel Watkins. We also had a Japan pilot trip in September just before our gradings. It was the biggest grading we have had in the last 3 years. We also had our Kenshin memories, showing some old faces and realised just how long some of our members have been around.

This all led up to our 25th Anniversary which had our good friend Sensei Joe Thambu come up to conduct a few classes. After that we had our first Junior grading which hasn't happened in over 5 years!

Even though its gone by so quick a lot has happened this year, and there's still more to come.

This will be my last time writing to you as Deshi, so I would like to thank you all for the help and support you have given me over the 2 years that I have been in this role.

Stay safe over the Christmas break and we will see you on the mat next year.

OSU!



## Upcoming Events

**Dojo Breakup Party**  
 Sunday 11th December\*\*  
 Look for our sign along The Mooloolaba Spit  
 11am kick-off **Bring lunch & the family!!**  
 BYO Picnic and/or meats for the BBQ  
 BBQ, PICNIC, CRICKET, SACK RACE, EGG & SPOON RACE AND SWIMMING!!  
 \*\*weather pending - keep an eye on Facebook to confirm\*\*



Close your eyes  
and you will see clearly.

Cease to listen  
and you will hear truth.

Be silent  
and your heart will sing.

Seek no contacts  
and you will find union.

Be still  
and you will move forward  
on the tide of the spirit.

Be gentle and you will need no strength.

Be patient and you will achieve all things.

Be humble and you will remain entire

**Taoist Meditation Chant**



Check out our Facebook page at  
[www.facebook.com/kenshinryupalmwoods](http://www.facebook.com/kenshinryupalmwoods)  
 For some fabulous Kenshin memories!

## Rest in Peace Richard Larcombe



**08-05-83 - 01-12-16**

With sadness and respect, I announce the passing of our Budo Brother, Richard, on the evening of Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016. Our thoughts go out to his wife Cathrine, his family and close friends. Richard fought bravely and died far too young. We will remember him.