

# Ken shinryu 流神劍

TRADITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

An Initiative of **Compass**  
INSTITUTE INC.



VOLUME 27 ISSUE 11 THE INSTITUSHIN DECEMBER 2017

## Kancho's Corner



Osu!

December again... and another great year of training is drawing to a close. The official Dojo Breakup Party is on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> from 11am – 2pm down at Mooloolaba, however this won't be the final training date. This year we'll be training up to and including Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> December. The final class that Saturday will be held in the park at Mooloolaba Spit from 7.30 to 10.30am and everyone is invited to join in whether you normally do Shinto Muso Ryu or not. We'll have a brunch as usual at a local Café afterwards. Hope to see you there.

Congratulations to everyone who has graded this year... a year where we will add four new names to the Honour Board. It's particularly pleasing to see three of those Dan ranks are awarded for Shinto Muso Ryu, given there is only one intermediary step available across the 6 years or so it takes most people to achieve their Shodan. The lack of focus on grades within the Koryu approach fits with the trend of less ego in its practitioners in my opinion. People have to find something else inside themselves to sustain the effort across a landscape of training that doesn't have the same quite

numerous and celebrated milestones as the unarmed syllabus. Time training and 'rank' is rarely mentioned because it has far less meaning to practitioners in a context such as the Koryu I assume.

2017 has provided a couple of highlights for me with the opportunity to refresh my relationship with two of the eminent teachers to whom I owe so much... Inoue Sensei and Chida Sensei... legends of Aikido and Yoshinkan Aikido in particular. They were hosted respectively in Sydney by Darren Friend & Peggy Woo Sensei's and in Melbourne by Joe Thambu Sensei and everyone who participated in the seminars owes these teachers a real debt for creating the opportunity for the rest of us. During a Q & A session Inoue Sensei was asked if he considered himself a 'friend' of Shioda Gozo Sensei – founder of the Yoshinkan – to which he replied simply "No... he was my teacher". This didn't imply there was no friendliness... just that he (Inoue Sensei) never *presumed* to be Shioda Sensei's friend. It would be interesting to know how Shioda Sensei saw their relationship... might he have considered Inoue Sensei to be his friend? We can't say.

This year has also been quite an interesting one for me personally – some disappointments and some highlights. One of the pieces of advice I received as a young man was "Study the man as well as the Art" and I have repeated this advice on many occasions and applied it throughout my martial career... in particular with the teachers named above and of course with Nishioka Sensei. It's worth noting that the advice does not say 'Speculate about...' or 'Judge...' and that's for good reason. I certainly have never felt it was my right to speculate about or judge any of these people though I know that many others have done so. Speculation always occurs in an environment where we don't have access to all the facts or the context... and judgement, particularly when based on speculation, will never

Kenshinryu — 5 Briggs St Palmwoods Qld — Ph: +61 (07) 5445 9116

[www.kenshin.com.au](http://www.kenshin.com.au)

## Kancho's Corner Cont'd

work out well. The moral high ground is a very slippery place. I'm very grateful to all of you who - by neither speculating nor judging - demonstrated your thoughtfulness, friendship and care to me. I appreciate it deeply.

2018 is going to be a big year for the Dojo and I can hardly wait to get into it. This weekend I've confirmed an SMR seminar in Sydney on the weekend of 4<sup>th</sup> May if you're keen. There'll be time for some sightseeing and maybe even a beer and excellent dinner or two. We're also going to host a Camp on the Sunshine Coast in October with dates to be confirmed shortly. It'll be great to have a lot of our interstate friends up here with us again.

Thank you to all those who volunteer their time to help in the Dojo - keeping it clean, doing repairs, making sure the technology is working, teaching or assisting with classes. That spirit is what makes the world go round and it's also appreciated. Finally please allow me to wish you and your families a great Christmas and New Year and all the best always.

*Sensei David*



## Upcoming Events

### DOJO XMAS BREAK UP DATES

**Juniors** - Friday 8th December -  
Monday 22nd Jan

**Adults** - Sat 23rd December -  
Monday 15th January

**Everyone** - Sunday, December 10th 2017  
Dojo Break Up Party—Mooloolaba Spit  
11am—2pm

**Kenshinryu**  
剣神流

**DOJO BREAKUP PARTY**

Sunday 10th December 2017  
11am—2pm  
Mooloolaba Spit - Near the BBQ's

BYO food and drinks or shops available near by.

All members and families welcome!

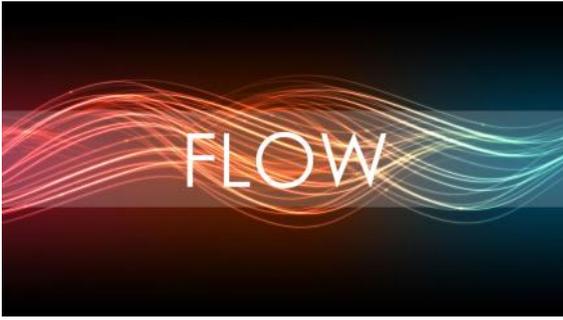
**find us**

**on facebook.**

Contact us today to book your place in  
any of these events!

P: (07) 5445 9116  
E: [info@kenshin.com.au](mailto:info@kenshin.com.au)

## Members Corner



*You don't become unstoppable by following the crowd. You get there by doing something better than anyone else can do it, and proving every day why you're the best at what you do - Grover*

Think of an experience where you have become completely absorbed within a moment... where time and space seem to disappear. At the same time you become complete open to and effective at expressing yourself and your skill level. In fact there becomes no need to think or analyses, and if you do, the whole experience ends and you lose that state of mind. This, in essence, is the concept of Flow. In positive psychology, flow, is a state in which a person performing an activity is mentally submerged. They are focused, involved, and truly enjoying the process of the activity. Flow has been recognized throughout history and across cultures. Particularly, in Buddhism and Taoism which refers to flow as the "action of inaction" or "doing without doing".

From a mechanical perspective, Flow will shut the conscious part of your brain down and cause the substantially more powerful unconscious to take control. The deep concentration triggers a release of nitric oxide which eliminates stress. Then your brain releases neurotransmitters that enhance your brain activity and allows you to perform better, learn faster, and become more creative. From this understanding Flow can be triggered. In a recent study, Schaffer (2013) proposed 7 conditions that help to stimulate it:

1. Knowing what to do
2. Knowing how to do it
3. Knowing how well you are doing
4. Knowing where to go
5. High perceived challenges
6. High perceived skills

### 7. Freedom from distractions

Like a dancer, a martial artist works to find a cadence within themselves and within their practice. By having the awareness of being truly present and being able to relax the body as well as the mind, a practitioner can potentially find the state of Flow. You can see it in an elite fighter, who will not risk thinking about his technique and instead reacts to the heat of battle. There's no time to think, only to be present. When we find that moment of truly being present we will notice that we have come full circle to a technique that approaches perfection. It is at this point you're able to perform it in free-flowing mode. You no longer have to work through all the individual steps, flowing through them smoothly and efficiently to perform the technique.

It is at this stage that you should start to challenge your application of the technique a bit more. You can start working on performing the technique in a less mechanic way. You can have your training partner adjust their attack in an unpredictable manner with higher levels of resistance, or when you get even more comfortable with it, you could apply the technique in live training (Jiyu-Waza). If you never take your training to this level, your martial arts techniques will be static and you'll find yourself getting stuck trying to apply them when the circumstances don't match the ways you've trained them.

Ultimately, the biggest benefit we get from flow is a change in the self. Many people live life pursuing the goals they are supposed to pursue, whether those goals are initiated internally or externally. With flow we become an "autotelic self," one who chooses their own goals and pursues activities for their own sake. We find flow at work, at home, at dinner, in solitude. With focus, we pay attention to the world around us and notice more of its beauty and intricacy; we're curious to discover more. We aren't slaves to the outside world and the powers of others, because we don't need those things to give our lives meaning; the meaning is already there.

*Tamara Burriss*

## Members Corner



### Patterns...

Many of us practice 'patterns', drills or *kata* as a daily part of our martial arts, at first memorising, then studying and finally comprehending, integrating and letting go of the learned pattern. It's a process we come to take for granted. But what actually constitutes a pattern in the non-martial sense of the term? We could say that a pattern is an arrangement of objects in a certain layout that may be identifiable as a recurring theme.

It could also equally be said that a pattern is a recurring arrangement of 'spaces' couldn't it? It's like music - is it the notes that create the melody or is it the spaces between the notes? Perhaps more accurately it's the combination of both? It seems very human though to attribute value to the objects and not to the spaces. My Shinto Muso Ryu teacher, Nishioka Sensei taught me a game at our dinner table one evening that involved manipulating my vision in such a way as to be more aware of the spaces without losing sense of the objects within the spaces. Having cleared the table he lined up five objects across the table top and invited me to kneel at the end of the table and describe what I saw. I responded by describing the objects on the table, the table surface and the background of wall and doorway. Over time and under his questioning I began to perceive the scene differently... the reality was what I became conscious of was space. Space between the objects... in front of and behind, above and under. Space everywhere.

Over time I learned that the *relationship* between the objects was only comprehensible if I was conscious of the spaces because that was where their connection lay. Different spaces or 'intervals' between objects underpinned different tensions... and different opportunities. The perception and understanding of the patterns that emerge in and of the space may importantly also allow for deductions to be made by us about what will occur next. It's impossible in this short article to do justice to a topic such as this however Nishioka Sensei said (in the offhand manner he often adopted for important revelations) he believed this may be the meaning of enlightenment because this way of being enriched each moment through increased awareness of our world.

Specifically of course this vision was to be employed in Shinto Muso Ryu *kata* and combat but I became aware of a number of applications in Aikido for children and adults that really informed multiple opponent activities in particular. I've also introduced this concept and practice to our staff training within the Compass Disability Service. Much of the work involves '*super-vision*' after all, and the support staff have reported that their awareness has expanded incredibly taking a great deal of stress out of that task.

Watching Nishioka Sensei in action provided the perfect example of a person who essentially manipulated space and time, but not through some mysterious power - it became obvious that it was a result of 'understanding' space and time and mindful practice over many years. Great players in all sports appear to have so much time to move and are capable of perceiving patterns in play. Repeatedly practising patterns of play (set plays) can bring this about at a simplistic level - we know where the ball will be in a game of football because we have practised a set move over and over - so we have a conscious knowledge of a preset pattern. This is the level of *kata* training. To remain at this level however is to place limits on ourselves and miss the potential of the training.

Famous ice hockey player Wayne Gretsky talks about his method of 'circling the play waiting for some unconscious signal and then darting into the melee to arrive at a certain place at the same time as the puck.' This is evidence of a deeper recognition of patterns that are naturally occurring... patterns that have been seen again and again over time until in some way we can accurately understand or even predict how events will unfold.

The Japanese term for this interval or space is *Maai* (間合) and in combat it refers to the space between combatants and the time it takes to cross that space as well as the intricacies of relative speed, angles, weapon reach and more. In life however I've come to learn that *Maai* is about respectful distances in all our relationships... and that all relationships demand different 'intervals'. To make it more complex, even one relationship can require different intervals for different occasions. We have to become flexible and adaptable to the needs and the flux of the many relationships in which we are involved. With our family, with our friends, with our colleagues, with our seniors and with our juniors... look for the patterns and learn from them. As a martial artist we have the unique opportunity to be aware of the best possible space in all our relationships.



Traditions for the Future  
[www.kenshin.com.au](http://www.kenshin.com.au)

# DOJO BREAKUP PARTY

Sunday 10th December 2017

11am—2pm

Mooloolaba Spit - Near the BBQ's



*BYO food and drinks or shops  
available near by.*

*All members and families  
welcome!*



## Aiki Insights

Tap into the minds of numerous Aikido Sensei to learn how to learn Aikido. Get fortnightly podcast interviews and quarterly webinars with the masters. Invaluable for all serious Aikido students.



### Aiki Insights Annual Subscription Special Introductory Offer

Aiki Insights is a student support service and resource library for serious students of Aikido. It gives you access t...

[Learn More](#)



### Aiki Insights Webinars

Included in your annual Aiki Insights subscription is your access to quarterly webinars involving powerful conversa...

[Learn More](#)



### Aiki Insights Student Support Resources

As an Aiki Insights subscriber, you are entitled to significant discounts on numerous self-paced learning p...

[Learn More](#)

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.

The information is suitable for absolute beginners through to students and instructors with many years practice behind them.

Accelerate your development in Aikido - Double your results from your training efforts - Improve your mind-body coordination - Develop your Aikido spirit - Embody and apply Aikido principles in daily life.



#### Learn how to learn Aikido

Get insights and teachings from various Sensei that make a difference to how you train.



#### Improve your Mind/Body coordination

Learn tips and techniques to enhance your Mind-Body connection when doing Aikido.



#### Daily applications of Aikido Philosophy

Learn about Aikido philosophy and key principles, and how it applies in daily life.