

Ken shinryu 流神劍

TRADITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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Kancho's Corner

Osu!

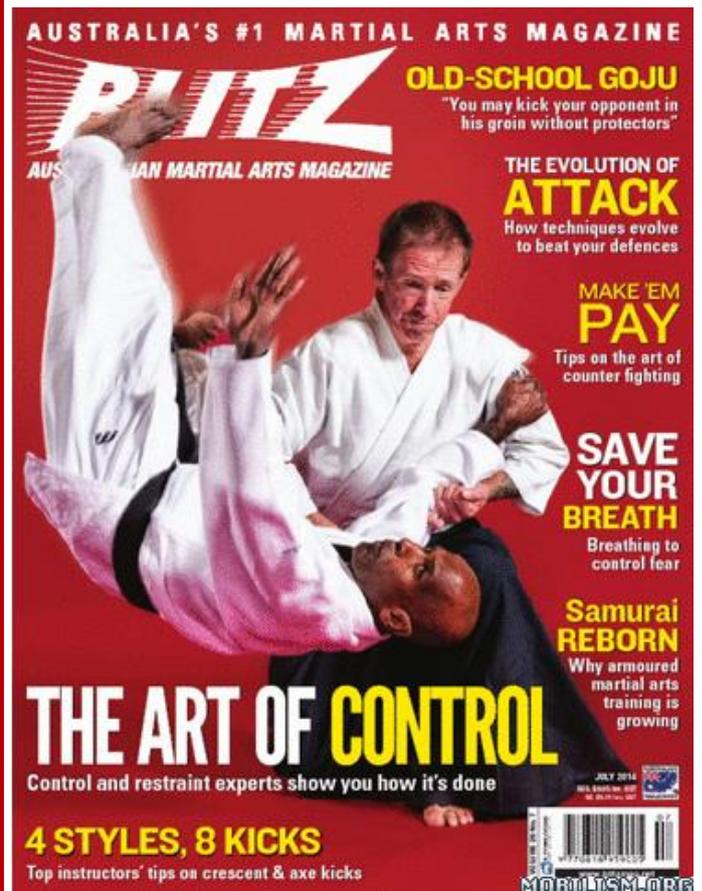
Easter behind us and into the second term of the year. Time to start knuckling down to some serious Shinsa Training for adults and juniors now. It's been an interesting year to date for me with an apparently innocuous injury that has managed to keep me off the mats longer than at any other time in 40 plus years. Fortunately I believe I'm finally noticing a slow but positive difference... for once it looks like the specialists were right and I should have made a full recovery by the end of this month. I'm aware that getting this right is important as I could easily set myself back more seriously if I rush it.

Meanwhile the silver lining in this particular cloud has been the dedication and performance of those who've inherited the teaching mantle over the past few weeks – Sensei's Josie and Stuart as the seniors in Shinto Muso Ryu and Aikido respectively and Sensei's Aaron and Tamara primarily in Aikido but in Aaron's case also SMR. I've heard so many glowing reports on the development in confidence and teaching skills and the way each person has been able to bring their personality, perspectives and strengths to the teaching role... and of course this helps everyone grow. It's a sign of a healthy Dojo when there is so much depth.

A crew of six are off to the Armidale Dojo this month again to support Daniel Sensei and the students down there. It's always one of the most pleasant and rewarding things I get to do each year... a lot of enthusiasm and gratitude in every day. This time I'll be taking a back seat but still hope to lend a hand as I can.

This month also sees the end of an era with the announcement by Silvio Morelli that he has taken the very difficult decision to shut down martial arts icon – Blitz Magazine - and associated publications. Blitz has been the benchmark for 30 years both nationally and to some extent, internationally... and like many of you I've looked forward with real delight to receiving my copy each month. I was also very proud to provide a regular column for the past 5 years as well as numerous articles over the past 10 years or so. While some times I was under the pump to meet the deadlines for the columns, the sense of pride at being part of the Blitz family always kept me motivated. Thank you to Silvio, Ben (Editor) and the whole Blitz team for the most amazing 30 years of martial arts information and inspiration. You

will be sorely missed and it's difficult to conceive that the next generation of Australian martial arts students won't have access to such a concentration of quality reading material to help them on their journey.



Another piece of important information with consequences for this Dojo is that Joe Thambu Sensei – long time teacher, mentor and friend – has taken the very difficult decision to have the Aikido Shudokan become an independent organisation. Joe Sensei has been engaged in a very complete process of consultation with his team and personal contemplation following the sad passing of Inoue Kyoichi Sensei in late December last year. Inoue Sensei's widow, Inoue Aiko Shihan has agreed to be the Patron for the new Aikido Shudokan

International. We wish Joe Sensei and all our many friends at the Aikido Shudokan the very best on this new stage of the path they have walked with such pride since 1980.

See you on the mats soon.

Sensei David

Members Corner

"Internal Narrative and Sukima"

Humans are habit forming, narrative-following creatures. We all follow a tune, routine or role that is in part self-imposed, part socially imposed. In order for us to function, our internal monologue or identity is scripted to run in synch to our understanding of social expectation, and our personal ethics. In everyone's personal narrative, they are the hero, nobody considers themselves a villain, even if they believe they are behaving contrary to societal ethics, it is always for what they consider "good reasons".

In the sense of conflict and combat, these narratives are often a composition of ego, prejudice and image assertion. It is important to be aware of these and make sure to prevent yourself being pulled into the patterns, as someone skilled can use them as psychological controls. (eg. You are the Victim, I am the Attacker.) Luckily, all of these motivations have their own, unique methods of diffusion.

In unavoidable combat (when all negotiation breaks down), the aggressor has an internal script, either conscious or unconscious, and this can be affected before any physical interaction takes place. It can be as simple as the schoolyard "Behind you!" or "Shoe's untied!" to our occasionally explored technique of "Sukima" 隙間. (I have heard excellent stories of verbal conflict resolution, from the guy who prevented a bar

fight by singing "Happy Birthday" at his aggressor and slipping out while the rest of the bar joined in, to the person who avoided being mugged by saying "No, thank you." and walking past when the mugger said "Give me your wallet." - turning them from Mugger into a rejected Donations Collector.)

Sukima is translated as "an opening" or "a gap". We use physical techniques like flicking a hand toward the eyes, throwing an object at the face or body, or even just pretending to go for a high technique so Uke will commit high, only for Shitei to do a low or "dropping" technique. Many Kōryū ("old-school" martial arts schools) that have a system of Kakushi Buki 隠武器 (concealed weapons, such as short chains or suntetsu hand spikes) will include at least one technique where the weapon is not used conventionally, but is instead thrown (discarded) in order to create some opening. Either at the Uke, or in some otherwise distracting direction. Jodo has its own Sukima techniques, such as the "Metsuke" 目突 "eye thrust" in Kata like Yokogiridome. In Aikido we can use a tenugui cloth in the same way.

So, be analytical of your actions. Only through awareness, self-control and improvement can you avoid the traps of habitual patterns and ego and begin to see or create openings in others' technique.

~ Aaron



Part 1 of An Interview with Nishioka Tsuneo Sensei

Q. *Sensei, what do you believe are the crucial challenges facing Budo/Bujutsu in this century?*

A. The standards of Bujutsu are slowly diminishing due to a lack of the appreciation of the aspect of Uchidachi (the receiver of the technique). UCHIDACHI MUST LEAD SHIDACHI. "The biggest problem in Budo today is that there are no highly trained Uchidachi. Good Uchidachi is essential to draw out the potential within Shidachi (the performer of the technique). The role of Uchidachi is to lead Shidachi. "Yes, that way so you can cut me this way! "Yes, this way", Uchidachis' role is critical. By practicing Kata, Uchidachi leads so as to be defeated. This is important. In Budo today, it often seems like there is no partner – even IAI is performed solo. This is not good. There should always be Uchidachi, and Shidachi must always think and research his role based on the impact of his actions upon Uchidachi.

Q. *Why do you believe this insight is being lost?*

A. There is a tendency to concentrate on merely winning with the introduction of competition, as opposed to the emphasis in practicing Kata. Matches (competitions) are held when yourself and your partner are at the same (equal) level. Then you can compete. But in that case, one may be encouraged to think that winning is most important and one may never reach the higher level of spirit. One should find that Kata practice is more important than competition. The person who performs better should be Uchidachi and, as Uchidachi, can then lead Shidachi. In that way improvement will be natural. (In SMR Jodo, all kihon are first learned unpartnered, then partnered. The 64 Kata which comprise the syllabus are all practiced partnered.) So, in true Keiko (practice), usually the teacher should be



Uchidachi – the one willing to be hit and thrown by his student. Being Teacher is not an easy job. A good teacher will give advice to his students even while he's being thrown and hit by the students. If you don't want to have a partner, maybe you should start Zen. Zen doesn't require a partner.

Q. *In what ways can we return to this important understanding?*

A. "What Budo needs is reason and all the reasons are found in Kata. We need to understand the purpose of Budo and the purpose of Kata. But these days, in many Budo, most people forget Kata. They might practice Kata a little and then only before grading tests." He has difficulty in hiding his grief over this matter. "Their excuse is that you can't win the competition when you practice Kata"

Q. *Sensei, has this type of change also occurred in the world of Kobudo?*

Nishioka Interview continued...

A. Throughout the period before and after war and up to today, I have been watching and feeling with my own body, how Budo was forced to change its style and the relationship with the society from time to time.

"After the war, police stations decided to teach Jodo to policemen, so Shimizu-sensei and I traveled to many police stations around Japan to teach, but it was never taught as Budo, because around that time, Japanese Budo was still banned by the American Occupation Forces. Under the circumstances, Master Shimizu taught Jodo as "Pure way of using stick" demonstrating that policemen could use sticks to help them in their duty and service, but not as Budo. For example, it will make it easier if you use a long stick when you want to control a big crowd of people. Or even where there were huge traffic problems, if you use the long stick appropriately, traffic can be lead smoothly. So, even today, if you visit police stations, you will always see sticks there. The merit of the stick is that one can control the other without hurting him. The Jo does not cut like a sword, does not stab like spear, and also it does not give the others unnecessary fear or pressure even if you are holding it. With those merits, the Jo was accepted as a useful tool to keep safety and was formally adopted by the Japanese Police Force.

Q. Sensei, can you please share your ideas on the development of Budo?

(Nishioka Sensei has studied not only Jojutsu. From the age of 20, he has studied Kenjutsu (sword), achieving master Dan level.)

A. "The Sword is the centre of Japanese Budo. All kinds of Japanese Budo have been developed from the view of how to compete against the sword. In other words, the technical styles of stick, spear, Japanese halberd etc. have been developed from the base of sword. When you talk about sword, the role of Uchidachi is the one to be focused upon. Also in Kenjutsu today, many masters do not take the role of Uchidachi. Instead they play the role of cutting their students." Today Ken-do is practiced just for the competition, and Kata practice is treated lightly. This influence is coming now to Jodo and in this way modern Jodo is being lead astray.

Q. Sensei, how is this occurring?

A. Formally, Jodo is now practiced under the guidance of the All Japan Kendo League, so even though it uses a Jo, the core part of Jodo is adopting a similar format to Kendo. Shimizu Sensei originated today's popular style of Jodo based on Shinto-Muso Ryu Jojutsu, so the basic spirit is supposed to be the same, but I do not see the same spirit in today's Jodo. Perhaps most people wouldn't know but people who have been practicing properly would definitely notice it."



Noriki Sensei received the title of Shihan (master instructor) in 2012 and was appointed Hombu Dojo Dojo Cho (head of dojo) in 2017. He is ranked 7th dan and has previously taught or assisted in seminars in Germany, Russia and the Ukraine.

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