

ISBA 10th anniversary

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate ISBA on its 10th anniversary.

I am pleased that many members could join the ceremony and the seminar. I feel grateful and honoured to be here with you all today – representatives of over 40 ISBA member dojos.

In October last year, I became the fourth Kancho of Shiseikan. I'd like to make a speech on several matters.

The seeds of connection between Shiseikan and international dojos were sown back in 1976.

At the "Japan festival in Paris by UNESCO", Tanaka sensei, the first Kancho of Shiseikan, and Inaba sensei demonstrated Aikido and Kenjutsu. They displayed remarkable skills and budo spirit and impressed the audience.

Professor Herbert Popp, from the Universities of Mannheim and Heidelberg was inspired to begin practicing budo at Shiseikan every time he visited Japan. That resulted in a close partnership between those two universities and Shiseikan. Then Tanaka sensei and Inaba sensei started to visit Germany to teach Budo.

Since then many people from abroad have studied Budo seriously at the Shiseikan. Some of them went on to become sensei and instruct Budo in their own countries.

In 1992, twelve instructors from various parts of Europe gathered at Shiseikan to participate in an intensive seminar. We also invited Mr. Hiroo Onoda, the famous ex-Imperial Japanese Army intelligence officer who did not surrender at war's end in August 1945 and kept fighting for 29 years on Lubang Island, the Philippines, until his former commander travelled from Japan to formally relieve him from duty by order of the Emperor in 1974. Mr. Paul Smith and his wife, Sasha, from UK joined the Nature Camp and were deeply impressed by the experience. So much so that the following year, in 1993, International Budo Seminar was held in the beautiful nature of Wales.

Since then, there have been active exchanges between Shiseikan and overseas dojos at various levels. And, 13 years after the first Seminar, the International Budo Seminar was held again in Wales in 2006. It was the first time representatives from all the participating dojos held two official meetings with then Kancho, Inaba sensei.

After these meetings where opinions and ideas were actively exchanged, the connection became more substantial. By then International Budo Seminars had been hosted by Poland, France, Norway, Greece and Germany, and the dojos had dialogues on various issues during each seminar. Finally, in 2009, all the participating dojos agreed to form an official organisation. Thus ISBA was born. The following year, 2010, saw Mr. Araya's inauguration as the third Kancho of Shiseikan as well as the First ISBA International Budo Seminar held in Plock, Poland. Mr. Jerzy Pomianowski became the first chairman of ISBA. He was succeeded by Mr. Robert Cowham. Two years ago, Mr. Adam Radecki was elected as the third chairman of ISBA during the ISBA International Budo Seminar held in the UK.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of ISBA and hence we are all gathered here today to celebrate this special occasion.

It has been my great pleasure to take part in ISBA's activities such as the seminars in Wales, France, Norway and Germany which preceded the aforementioned ISBA seminars and were the key steps in the creation of ISBA. I was present at those meetings and witnessed the discussions which paved the way for the creation of ISBA. Therefore I personally found it profoundly moving when ISBA was finally established.

I sincerely hope that every member of ISBA and Shiseikan stands shoulder to shoulder, work together and pass the spirit of Shiseikan Budo from our generation to the next and the following generations.

The theme of this year's seminar presented by chairman Adam Radecki is "THE FUNDAMENTALS OF TRUE BUDO PRACTICE" which I find very fitting for the 10th anniversary of ISBA.

Budo education became a compulsory subject in secondary education in Japan in 2012. Sadly, however, it is still at the superficial, sport level and not enough emphasis is placed upon spiritual searching and development which are the true core of Budo education.

Even in the regular classes at Shiseikan, spiritual development through martial discipline is a crucial theme. Our ultimate aim is to gain deeper understanding of Budo by placing the development of "Japanese-Shinto" spirit first and through understanding and appreciating the divine intension of supreme deities at the Meiji Shrine on personal level. In order to achieve it, I believe it is imperative that we practise a curriculum combining fundamental practical skills, bushido spirit and Shinto code.

Such a curriculum plays a key role in building a firm partnership between Shiseikan and ISBA. Many of you became inspired by Kashima-no-tachi. Through Shiseikan's Budo practice, which is based on Shinto spirit, you have attained deeper understanding of traditional Japanese culture. The harder you practise, the more you gain the inner strength to pursue Budo spirit and the profound spirituality of sword.

Meiji Tenno described the importance of the spirit of the sword for Japanese people in this poem:

Although we no longer carry our swords
Never forget to sharpen it and Yamato spirit.

In this spirit let us join together on the path of spiritual refinement through Budo practice.

Thank you!

August 2019 (Reiwa I)
Old Village Dojo, Poland

Udagawa Tetsuya

Kancho (Director), Shiseikan, Meiji Jingu Budojo