

2006 January 9

New Years' Shidoshikai Meeting- Noda - Japan

Coming of Age Day in Japan is a day which is celebrated by everyone who turns 20 years old that year. 20 years old in Japan is the date when you officially become an adult and you enter into adult life. Usually there is a special ceremony, the women are dressed in very beautiful kimonos, and the guys are usually dressed in suits or some other kind of formal wear. A lot of pictures are taken, a lot of alcohol is consumed and basically it is a national holiday and celebration of all of the young people who have become adults that year.

January 9th is also an interesting date because 9 of course is the special mystical number for the ninja. Also if you add up all the numbers in 2006 01 09, you get 9. So it's a day of 9's.

Anyway, there was a meeting in Noda, at a restaurant. It was a small dinner party - small meaning there were about 40 people there altogether I would estimate. Hatsumi Sensei gave an opening message to bring us all into the New Year.

Hatsumi Sensei expressed his desire to have an English translation of what he was saying, and asked me to translate for that. There was a video also made and we're supposed to be putting the English version of what Hatsumi Sensei said on that tape. Hatsumi Sensei expressed his desire that what he said kind of be spread around the world for everyone to hear, so I've taken the liberty of giving some thoughts and paraphrasing of what he did say, on this Podcast for everyone who is listening. So here is some notes basically from the opening speech that he gave.

It has been 50 years now since Hatsumi Sensei's first meeting with Takamatsu Sensei. Many years ago it was said that 50 years is one lifetime, and I suppose that was probably because of the lower life expectancy many many years ago, so 50 years was basically considered to be one lifetime.

And since it has been one life time in that sense since Hatsumi Sensei's meeting with Takamatsu Sensei, the time is now coming for Hatsumi Sensei to pass on the Bujinkan to the new generation.

And because the day was Seijin no Hi, the Coming of Age Day, this was an appropriate topic.

Now the rest of us in the Bujinkan are all kind of becoming adults, the Bujinkan has grown into an adult, and it is time for the Bujinkan to start acting as an adult in that regard. Hatsumi Sensei went on to say that there are some tough times ahead for the Bujinkan, so it would be necessary for the 15th dans, the leaders of the Bujinkan, to persevere and endure if the Bujinkan is to survive.

Takamatsu Sensei said that Yo-Jo is needed in Budo. The regular meaning of Yo-Jo is the care of one's health. But by changing the kanji one can also arrive at the the term Kaname and Kaname is a Japanese word which can mean a couple of things. One of the things it can mean is Divine Eyes, Divine Sight, and the other thing it can mean is the Essential Points of Things, the Essence of Things. And the ability to see through the cloudy outer aspect of something right through to the essential points of it.

So for the future of the Bujinkan, the leaders of the Bujinkan must possess this ability to see what is truly important and what is not - to possess this Eyes of the Divine, to see what the essential things, what the important things truly are.

In Gyokko Ryu, which we studied last year, there is a special calendar of luck, of say, auspicious days. It is a Fu-Sui Calendar. Fu-Sui is the Japanese word which is the same as the Chinese word Feng Shui ("Feng Shway") - also pronounced by some people as

Feng-Shui due to the spelling, but I think "Feng Shway" is the proper pronunciation. Feng Shui or Fu-Sui in Japanese is combined of two characters: Fu for wind, and Sui for water. So Gyokko Ryu has this Fu-Sui calendar, and the date of the Shidoshikai Meeting, the January 9th on the calendar is marked with a black circle indicating that it is not a fortunate day. It is kind of an unlucky day actually.

This is through the normal way of reading the calendar, but there is also an opposite way of reading it as well, in which the interpretation would be that it is not a negative day at all. Hatsumi Sensei used this to say that we must be able to take the negative and change it to make positive come out of it. We have to take things that might not be so positive, and be able to change them, using the principle of change or henka in Japanese (the Japanese word for change), to bring positive out of the negative. So this henka refers to the Fu-Sui of Gyokko Ryu.

And again, Fu-Sui meaning Wind and Water, the exchange or henka of Wind and Water are inherent in these cycles of nature. So Fu-Sui really reflects the change of nature, the changing of the seasons, and that brings us right through into what we will be studying this year with Shinden Fudo Ryu. Shinden Fudo Ryu - Hatsumi Sensei went on to say - is the Bujinkan school which stresses the importance of nature and of doing things naturally. We will be studying this school this year, so we should see the connection between the Fu-Sui of Gyokko Ryu, and the naturalness of Shinden Fudo Ryu, and also realize that change itself is natural in life.

And in this we can find the answers to the questions "What is humanity?" and "What is life?" Hatsumi Sensei says. Everything is connected. Like the concept of Inryoku or magnetic attraction which we find in Gyokko Ryu. Good and Evil, Life and Death are opposites, but they are connected at the same time, because they are on the same line with each other. They are at the polar opposites. So everything is connected in this way, in a natural way.

Sensei ended his talk by expressing happiness that he has been able to build an era for the Bujinkan in the last 50 years, and in this time the senior people in the Bujinkan have grown up and can now carry on the Bujinkan into the future as adults.

Hatsumi Sensei ended his talk with the statement that what it all comes down to is Gambatte. And Gambatte of course is the concept of persevering to the end, of keeping on going, no matter what, to the very very end. He actually made a comparison to Christ in this aspect, because Christ endured even to the point of crucifixion and death, and Hatsumi Sensei used him as an example of what the concept of Gambatte means. To continue to the very very very end, without giving up.

And so Sensei sees some difficult times ahead for the Bujinkan, but if we continue on with the concept of Gambatte or To Keep Going in mind, then we will be successful.

That was the main point for the opening Shidoshi Kai for this year.

As an update to this, Hatsumi Sensei has now written a large piece of calligraphy and put it up at the front of the dojo. The characters read ("seijin youjou") and serve as a "keyphrase" to go along with the theme of this year.

In order:

'sei' : saint, holy, sage

'jin' : virtue, benevolence, humanity, charity, human brotherhood

'you' : essential, vital, crucial, important, main point

'jou' : life, birth, purity

Perhaps an exact definition can be left for each person to work on for themselves, using the above information as building blocks.

Best wishes,
Shawn Gray

[Kutaki](#)

- Please, following Sensei's desire, share this information with all your Bujinkan fellow