

SHIUN

The Birankai Continental Europe Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 0

Spring 2002

A word from Chiba Sensei

Part one

Congratulations on the publication of "Shiun" (Purple Cloud), the newsletter of Birankai Continental Europe.

It is especially significant that it is written in French (and English), as the European Birankai community would be incomplete without the French language. The English-speaking part of the community is covered both by *Sansho* (which has developed into *Biran* as of January 2002) and the newsletter of British Aikikai thanks to Dee Chen.

Though it requires more work and manpower, I see no contradiction in having *Shiun* in addition to the two above-mentioned publications. Further, it is my hope that these three publications can incorporate a strong sense of unity while preserving their individual unique character and editorial vision.

Shiun is named for the purple cloud that is often seen in the western horizon after the sky has been thoroughly washed by a storm, indicating fine weather for the coming day. *Shi* (murasaki) is the color of purple considered most blessed in Buddhism.

For instance, the purple robe that the priest is

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Editorial

Norberto Chiesa, Director of Publication

I was happily reading about True Speech when Joël Bertrand called to ask me to direct this newsletter. There may be a lesson to learn from this fact, or else I am being punished by some sin. Here is what Yueh-lin, a thirteen century Zen master, wrote about True Speech:

The sun may cool off and the moon may heat up, but all the bedevilments there are, cannot destroy true speech.

What is true speech? Ninety percent accuracy is not as good as silence.

M. Yueh-lin disenchanted me with accuracy. Accepting to run this paper is giving up silence. There is nothing left to do this job with but the love for Aikido.

Statement of Purpose

Shiun has been created in answer to the wishes of the Teaching Committee of Birankai International Continental Europe, to issue a newsletter of its own.

Shiun is committed to the general principles that animate our practice in order to tread, to the best of our abilities, on the path that O'Sensei has opened to the world, as manifested and transmitted to us by the work of our teacher, Chiba Shihan.

To that effect it will direct its efforts to establish communication amongst its European members as well as reinforcing the connection of kinship existing with the British and American members of Birankai international.

Shiun expects not only to inform; it also hopes to stimulate reflection and meaningful intercourse on different aspects of our practice: technical, physical, psychological, ethical, spiritual.

With our best wishes, we remain at your service in the accomplishment of this task.▲

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permitted to wear by the Emperor is regarded as the highest rank in Buddhism, and Shi-den, the "purple house," is considered the most sacred place within the palace.

The Amida sect of Buddhism worships the West as the pure land where Amidabutsu sat waiting with inexhaustible compassion to save people and all other beings, without discrimination.

Biran is the wind that blows before a shift in the order of the universe occurs. Shifting the order cannot take place without a storm passing through the Biran, the subtle wind, and thereby developing into a storm powerful enough to shift the existing order.

Sure enough, we were washed by a powerful storm after the creation of *Biran* in the year 2000.

And if the Biran is associated with a shift in order, what order was it that this *Biran* affected? In short, it was a decisive movement of the decentralization of the order from the single and dominant cultural view to multiple and local cultural views in unison, based on physical, spiritual and ethical disciplines being integrated in the art of Aikido.

In essence, it embodies our strong enthusiasm towards the realization of unity within diversity, with the giving of much attention and recognition to the individual or local character being the underlying foundation.

As I write this note, I envision the purple cloud that covers the mountain range in the western horizon, breathtaking in its beauty, with the sense of ease and blessing of finishing a hard day's work, seen from the balcony of the house in Saussine where I stay in Southern France.

T.K. Chiba

San Diego, California

March 13, 2002 ▲

About Birankai International

Birankai International is the materialization of an idea: a single roof sheltering the countless individuals that have been physically and spiritually touched in their pursuit of Aikido by the teachings of Chiba Sensei.

In January 2000, with the turn of the millenium, Chiba Sensei decided to gather the international community of Aikido students following his teachings, into an organized family. This family aims at fostering a "strong and recognizable character", it intends to

secure the development and transmission of a "sincere practice, committed and non-competitive" in accordance with the teachings of Chiba Sensei.

Therefore, a non-profit organization was created to this effect. As a flexible organization, it consists of three autonomous regional entities lead by an administrative structure: One in California for the United States Federation Western Region, one for the United Kingdom with the British Aikikai, and one based in Strasbourg for the Birankai Continental Europe.

The objectives of Birankai International are to strengthen the roots of Aikido out of Japan, support the regular training of students in the participating Dojos during the various seminars and promote unity among the family of practionners who are following the teaching of Chiba Sensei

For Continental Europe, a committee is responsible for maintaining a high level of teaching, for stimulating the development and the quality of the art by a strong teacher/student relationship, and for intensifying the exchanges between USA, UK and Continental Europe in order to forge a unity of practice. A teaching committee is composed of Gabriel Valibouze, Tony Cassel, Chris Money, Patrick Barthélémy, Didier Hatton, and Steve Magsson (assisting Chris Mooney). The teaching committee is advised by an Advisory Council made of Chiba Sensei, Norberto Chiesa et Daniel Brunner:

A passport is given to each student, upon completion of his or her first grade. This allows the recording of grades, seminars attended, dojo of practice and the teacher's name.

The Birankai International delivers grades from Shodan to Rokudan. The certificates, written in English, bear the name of the student and mention the name of the teacher and the dojo of regular practice, in order to underscore the importance of the teacher/student relation in the practice of Aikido. It is possible, for those who wish so, to receive also certificates from Hombu Dojo in Tokyo.

Finally, in order to strengthen the unity of the family, Chiba Sensei has awarded the title of Shihan ("model") to some non Japanese teachers, among the most seniors of the Birankai International US and UK.▲

The bowl of Biran, Heavenly Gift

T.K Chiba

The note below is featured on the inside cover of the 2001 USAF WR calendar.

At the 1997 French Summer Camp in Mejanne le Clap, one of the senior French instructors asked me to give a name to an international Aikido community whose size was growing rapidly with each passing year. The community has coming into being naturally. It has progressed into an international family with a strong and distinguishable character through an interchange of instructors from the USAF Western Region, British Aikikai, and various French dojos along with their associate members in Greece, Switzerland, and Germany.



Naming this community was needed partly because of the European political situation where organizational control is very rigid surrounding Aikido. It includes control by the government which tends to kill the free and open flow of the students-teacher relationship which is of the utmost priority in our Aikido activity. Because of that situation, many concerned members have been looking for a new direction away from the current state of confusion and unhappiness there. They have been looking for a sense of identity in their Aikido lives.

After two years of careful thought, I chose the name Birankai. Biran is a Buddhist term meaning a cosmic storm that occurs in the moment before cosmic order shifts. It is a force of recovery, spontaneously manifesting itself to restore order. The storm can be ►

powerful and violent. Yet, at the same time it is one that heals through cleansing and purification. In January 2000, I decided to formally start Birankai, taking advantage of the millennium and Year of the Dragon. During the USAF Western Region Summer Camp held in San Diego in June 2000, I appointed Dr. Rikko Varjan to be first head member of Birankai family.

The bowl shown here encircled by three patterns, perfectly satisfies my vision of Biran. In the center, a powerful spiral energy arises out of a mysterious background of three colours: ash white, deep green and blue. The second pattern (as if done with a knife or spatula) surrounds it with smoky brown flower petals that are beautifully stained with deep green and blue from the center, like an aura shooting forth the spiral energy. The pattern reminds me of the effects of amida yasuri (Buddha's aura), often radiating outward in the work of Japanese tsuba. The light brown base blends with these three colours again to appear like a spreading stain. Overall, strong firing and smoky effects without any obvious glaze work makes it beautiful mysterious. The bowl's contour is gradually raised from the base to the outer rim at 40 degrees, simultaneously expressing expansion and contraction, or forces of centripetal and centrifugal energy.

I can't be sure of the bowl's origins, but it looks to me to be Bizen or Tamba pottery of Japan. I had found it sitting amongst some rubbish in the middle of my garage in the summer of 1999, just about the same time that I chose the name Biran. It came with such perfect timing and coincidence, I first thought. Later, I learned that my wife found it on top of a garbage can in a neighbourhood alley. It surely happened to be a gift from Heaven with a blessing for Birankai.▲

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

WHO ARE WE ?

Founding Dojos: ■

Aikikai de Strasbourg (France): www.aikido-strasbourg.com

Athens Aikikai (Greece): www.birankai.org/Ceeurope/athens

Dai Jyo Kan (Bagnols/Seze, France):

mailto: chiesange@aol.com and pbaroch@aol.com

Ryu Seki Kai (Lausanne, Switzerland): www.ryusekikai.ch

San Ju Kan (Lisbon, Portugal): www.sanjukan.org

Sho Gi Kan (Bern, Switzerland): www.shogikan.ch

Associated Dojos: ●

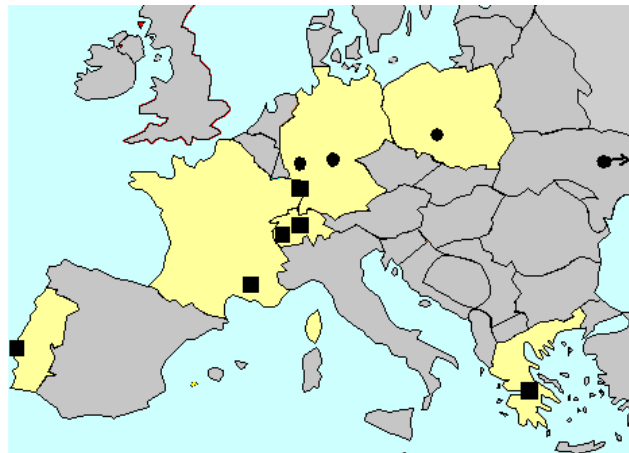
Almaty Aikikai (Kazakhstan): www.aikido.kz

Gen Ei Kan (Landau, Germany): www.landau-aikikai.de

Sentten Sugi Aiki (Wroclaw, Poland)

Sigmaringen Dojo (Germany): mailto:robin.malte@gmx.net

WHERE ARE WE ?



THE DOJO CORNER

Shiun will be published three times a year, in two languages, English and French. In order to participate to the unity of Birankai Continental Europe and to establish strong links between the participating Dojos, a "corner" will be dedicated to the members expression. For that "Dojo corner" to be abundantly furnished, we would like to clarify a few rules of operation.

1. Each dojo will nominate a member as the Shiun contact person and will inform the Director of publication, Norberto Chiesa of this person. The default contact will be the Dojo's chief Instructor.

2. The Contact person will be responsible for requesting individual contributions of the general members in the form of article, essay, or opinion to be published. These essays can address various aspects of our practice or a point of view: (technical, physical and medical, psychological, ethical and spiritual or artistic.)

3. The contact person also will be in charge of providing those articles to the Shiun Publishing Director at the following address:
Norberto Chiesa, Saussine 30580 Bouquet, France

4- It is understood that the submitted articles actually reflect the culture and position of the Dojo in general, thus the choice of what articles to be sent for publishing is left for each Dojo to be addressed as internal matters

5- The overall size of each edition of the newsletter may vary, therefore the selection of articles will be made by the Publishing committee, based on space and prioritization factors.

6- As the newsletter matures, a Reader's committee may be added to help on the selection of content in order to provide a wider spectrum of representation.

7- The Shiun contacts will be informed about the timeframe requested to submit articles, with deadlines to respect.

8- Some Shiun editions, at specific times, may be driven by a particular theme Aikido and children, Aikido and the elderly in which case that theme will be indicated along with timeframe constraints, so that Dojo contacts may orient the writings of their members within the given theme. ▲

