

***Through the
Yata no Kagami***

八咫鏡

Stein-Are Storsveen

Meiji Jingu Shiseikan Scholarship Programme

Report by Stein-Are Storsveen, April-May 2013

Firstly I would like to thank the Meiji Jingu for their very generous sponsorship of my visit to Japan, and for the great support I have received during my stay.

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I would like to thank Araya Kancho for the scholarship received. It was a privilege and honor given to me in order to deepen my knowledge in Budo, Shinto and Japanese culture. The practise, the ceremonies, the everyday life, and especially the culture trip, are reviving my soul, mind and heart; I feel grateful for this opportunity and I would like to express my deepest gratitude.

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Finally I would like to thank ISBA chairman Robert Cowham for his support before and after my scholarship.

Overview

In this report I discuss

- My personal background
- Details about my stay and the resulting impressions on me
- A section on cultural understandings – Japanese culture and comparisons to Western cultures and various influences
- A summary

This report has also an appendix with an article about Norwegian Budo that give a brief history of Norway, which was written during the preparation for the scholarship.

Personal background

I would like to begin with some background information about myself. For much of my life I had no particular interest in Japan and its culture. It seemed foreign, difficult and alien. So how and why did I change my mind?

I was born in 1958 in Oslo, Norway and I grew up in a society that became more and more modernized and wealthy every year. New ideas of the women liberation, the Vietnam War and the student rebellions of 1968 influenced society and the way we think fundamentally. The respect for authorities diminished and the role of men and fathers was questioned. The conflict between the old patriarchal ideas and the new ideas took place in most families at that time, and in my case this conflict was very strong. This influenced me to a high skepticism and rebellion against authorities. In short I became an angry young man.

When I started practice Aikido in 1987, I did not have high thoughts about Japan and the Japanese society. My views were greatly influenced by a Swedish book from 1981; Japan ETC, a collection of articles about Japan. Tora (Pearl Harbour), Dogfights, Corruptions, Conservatism and Lack of labor rights, Buraku, Shirō Ishii's weapon, Unit 731, Omuto coal mines and the Yakuza were themes for the articles. Even today these are difficult and controversial issues. Of course the film director Kurosawa, Japanese food, Japanese habits and travelling in what seemed to be a very strange land, were also themes for the articles.

Just after my beginner's course in Aikido, I moved to New York in the spring of 1988, where I studied Aikido at Bond Street Dojo under the leadership of Paul Kang and Chris Jordan. Although the etiquette of practice was strong, it had few obvious links to Japan. Japanese language was not used for greetings and the names of techniques were in English. When I returned to Norway, I found it hard to respect the Japanese sensei who was responsible for Norway, so I preferred to stay away from his seminars. In many respect he confirmed my former impressions and prejudice, and as previously mentioned, authorities and hierarchical organizations were not my cup of tea.

Bjørn-Eirik Olsen sensei, my primary Aikido teacher/sensei in Norway, on the other hand, spoke warmly about Japan, and through him I was introduced to Suganuma sensei in 1998 and Inaba sensei in 1999. After these meetings the seed of interest and liking for Japan started to grow. My interest for Kashima No Tachi had been awakened before by Olsen sensei's engagement when he once in a

while came to visit us in Oslo while he worked at the Norwegian Embassy in Tokyo and studied at Shiseikan.

For me the seminar in Wales with Inaba sensei in 2006, was groundbreaking. Although the opening of Tetsushikan in 1999 was done with a Shinto ritual, it was first at this point Japanese culture became more than Aikido greetings and samurai films. To take part of a Shinto ritual, listen to the music and feel, made a connection for me even though I did not understand. The enthusiasm and keen interest in teaching and helping to improve our training, that all the Japanese participants showed, made a very strong impression.



From a sightseeing in Wales during the seminar

So why do I write about this? Unlike most practitioners of Japanese Budo, it took me more than 20 years after I first started practice Aikido before my wish to visit Japan had grown to make the trip real. I believe that many from my generation that share the same background may have felt alienated from Japan as I had. In 2009 I travelled in Japan for a week during the Cherry blossom season before I went to Shiseikan to practice. The curiosity took a long time to mature, and it was necessary to build on special interests to overcome the previous skepticism. For me it was Budo, for others it might be Zen, Japanese architecture or other specialties that have been cultivated in Japan.

Improvement Kaizen and Sharpness in Softness

In my work I have been introduced to several Japanese production ideas. One that especially caught my interest was Kaizen, an idea of gradually improvement originated by Toyota. These ideas have been formalized and put into a method that is sold as Lean projects by consulting firms. Basically Lean means to cut away everything that is obsolete or waste. You should only do that which creates value, and everything else is regarded as waste.

Inaba sensei talks and writes about unifying mind and body. One way I understand this is the aim to eliminate all unnecessary movements. In my case, I find that if I move too much, my body as well as mind become stiff, and the softness necessary to establish contact is lost and my sharpness becomes like wet gunpowder, that does not explode, but only burns with a sizzling flame.

So my objectives for the scholarship became to investigate Japanese culture with a focus on Shinto, Kaizen and to improve softness as well as my sharpness in my training.

My Stay

In this section I describe the events of my stay and some impressions that arose for me as a result.

Arriving in Japan

To get over the jetlag, I travelled to Japan a few days before my scholarship began. My destinations were Kamakura and Enoshima. I was lucky to have a guide all by myself in Kamakura, since I was the only English speaking person that Friday morning. I had the opportunity to ask the guide, a woman of my own age, questions about Japanese religion and culture. To my surprise she gave me an impression of personal distance to the ancient history of the area she was presenting. In a way she was less Japanese and more international than I expected. When I write international, I was tempted to use the word modern, and this reveals my conceptions of the typical Japanese as something old fashioned, while modern Japan with its highly developed technology is international.



When I was visiting Longukou temple in Enoshima, I was given a cherry Cake by a couple that was passing by. This I found typically Japanese in its friendliness.

Daily life

My scholarship began the 26th of March, but I was already lodged in Aoki sensei's flat in Saginuma the day before. I was a bit skeptical about this lodging arrangement because I had the impression that we should stay there together, and I was afraid this might be too intimate and I was prepared to stay in a hotel for parts of my scholarship. When it turned out that I had the flat by myself, it was much better than I hoped for.

My official daily schedule started at 9.00 am and ended after the evening class around 20.30 except Fridays which was my day off. Daily prayer, paying respect to the Kamis of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken took place at 8.20 and I was allowed to have breakfast at the cantina before going to Shiseikan. So most of the time was spent in the surrounding area of Shiseikan within the Meiji park/forest.

Living outside in Saginuma, which is in Kanagawa Prefecture and a part of Kawasaki, made it possible to get at touch of the everyday life of the Japanese living in the same area . Most people in Saginuma are commuting to work, either to Kawasaki or to Tokyo. Every day I went by Den-en-toshi line to Shibuya station and from there to Harajuku or Yoyogi. It is crowded!



The sound of the thousands of leather-soled shoes from all the salarymen and women at 8 am in Shibuya , and the half sleeping owners returning at night, told me more about the conditions for the millions of Japanese in the Tokyo region than I could read in any magazine or book. The politeness and endurance they show to make the system work, was fascinating and impressive. At the same time everyone seemed to have a genuine concern for each other. Sadly I also learned that even in Japan, women can be harassed on the metro, so there are some women-only carriages in the busiest hours of the day. This idea has caught on in other countries, so apparently Japan was one of the first countries to care and do something about this problem.

One episode that caught my attention started with a young woman's brisk and impolite behavior. At that time I was quite used to the Japanese norm, and I found it strange that she did not give way or take notice of others. After a while an elderly man scolded her for her way of behaving. No one dares to do something like that in Norway or England, and for me it was another proof of Japanese caring for others that I saw more and more examples of.

Training

In Gitanjali, the famous Indian writer and poet Rabindrahath Tagore's masterpiece, a verse starts with:

"No more sailing from harbor to harbor with this my weather-beaten boat. The days are long passed when my sport was to be tossed on waves."

At the age of 54, my boat starts to become weather-beaten! Although I still like to be tossed on waves, I found it impossible to participate in the morning practice - I could simply not get enough sleep. Also some of the most vigorous of Tanaka sensei's classes (Tanaka sensei who is more than 80 years himself !!) I had to skip. I also got a health problem due to a cold that did not release its grip before the very last part of my scholarship.

In spite of this, participating in the regular classes of Shiseikan and being able to train under world-class instructors has improved my abilities and understanding faster than ever before.

The sensation of being a puppet on string at the moment I grab Yamada Sensei's arm, the clear and concise teaching of Araya Kancho and the superb teaching of Inaba sensei, are things so unique for Shiseikan that I feel honoured to train there.

The meaning of the sword, of its practice, is tried to be transmitted in books, but it is through practice I gain understanding, let it live not by the force of a strong grip, but under a loose grip directed by a strong will.

As a manager I have several examples where I have made mistakes, and some where I have succeeded. When my grip was loose and the will strong, people tended to follow my objectives of their own choice. The sword practise is applicable to the life outside the dojo, even though we do not carry a sword then.

Inaba sensei states in his essay about «What is Budo»: the battles we fight today are mostly without shape and are hardly visible. But the battles are real and the principles from ancient times are still

valid. To know yourself and your opponent, smashing his fighting power, and crushing his fighting spirit is still necessary. To find the very thing you want to protect is crucial, and I find that it connects with your centre of being and your spiritual outlook.

This is what training is about.

The Camping Trip

At the same time as my arrival, Shiseikan had visit from a group of Russian kids. I was invited to a camping trip together with them and the Japanese kids that train in Shiseikan.

The importance of a common language become evident when I was given the responsibility to supervise a group of girls. Due to the lack of communication I was not able to support them in a constructive way and we were not really able to connect.



The camping trip

I was very impressed by the kids, and especially the stamina and courage the kids showed in the Night walk, where everyone walked alone in the dark with only some dim lights showed the trail you should follow. Although the weather was so so, there were few complaints among the kids.

For me sleep was difficult. In the cabin where the grown-ups slept there were no mattresses. The second night I got hold of some cardboard to put between me and the cold wooden floor. I am used to something that insulates and gives a bit of softness. I was puzzled that nobody seemed to care. I was thinking about my goals of softening my body. To sleep comfortably without a mattress, your body needs to be very, very soft, or you must like the pain, these were my thoughts.

Meiji Jingu

Meiji Jingu's tranquil forest is a landmark in Tokyo. It is a man-made forest where the natural cycle take place with as little intervention as possible from the gardeners.

Life transforms matter and in just 90 years the forest has taken possession of the area as if it has always been there. To have the privilege to walk through the forest every day and be able to follow the flow of time and the changes of seasons and weather is truly a spiritual experience. The sensory experience from the shifts of temperature and smell from the wet ground made a deeper understanding of the lectures that the Shinto priests so generously gave me.



Further was the daily worship of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken important in trying to understand the meaning of Shinto.

The lectures and especially the visit to the picture gallery gave me insight and knowledge about the Emperor and the Empress, their life and their struggle. The pictures, both what they illustrate as well as the way they were painted gave life to the stories and showed the magnitude of the transformation of the society that took place during the Meiji restoration.

Still, Japan did not lose itself. Can it be Shinto that penetrates the beliefs and values and thus shapes the identity?

Yasukuni shrine visit and Gyokusai

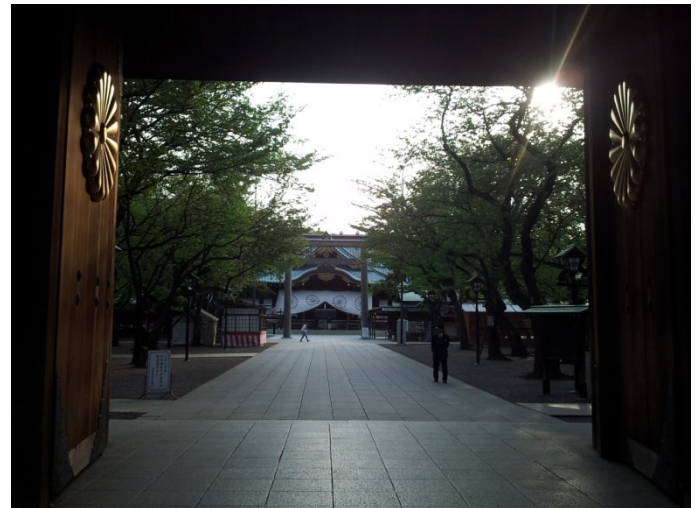
Araya kancho gave me the opportunity to visit the Yasukuni shrine. I was given an invitation to the museum, and Ueda san and I went. At this time I did not know about the controversy that this shrine has stirred. Of course the Shrine's purpose to honor the dead that gave their life for the Japanese Nation, is honorable. Unfortunately it has also been mixed up with politics. As we know politics may be just as potent as religion and the past and present shows many examples where religion is used for political purposes.

The shrine is impressive, and we paid our respects. As always I enjoy the atmosphere of a Shinto Shrine and the sincerity that fill the visitors.

The history and background for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (Tora) on the 7th of December 1941 as well as all the Japanese history of war, was very different presented from what I have found elsewhere. This made me reflect on the subjectivity of history. Do we know the truth of anything? A difference in point of view may result in another story being told. Of course there are several examples of history falsification where information is changed or withheld on purpose. A well-known saying is "history is written by the winners". At the museum, I was not able to tell, since this was a new story to me.

There were several objects, weapons of war that I found disturbing: the suicide weapons. I believe most people in the West have heard about the Japanese Kamikaze pilots.

The museum on the other hand was a slightly disturbing experience for me.



The entrance to Yasukuni shrine

They are portrayed in several films, and I knew them well from my childhood comics. The term *Gyokusai*, honorable suicide, and that this idea is the foundation for these weapons, is not well known.

When I first saw a Kaiten, I did not understand. It looked like a torpedo,



Kaiten Type I, Tokyo Yasukuni War Memorial Museum

For a samurai, *Gyokusai* (honorable death/defeat), sometimes resulting in *Seppuku*, was a part of the code of honor that guided his life. How did this influence the individual that took the decision to end his/her life for the cause of the Country? Today the international community typically regards the use of suicide weapons to be connected with some form of fanaticism, usually nationalistic or religious, and it is often labeled as terrorism.

Of course all commanders in war have to make decisions that put people's life at risk. Sometimes it seems inevitable that death will be the outcome of a mission. Even so, a difference appears when weapons are constructed with the sacrifice of the pilot's life in mind. In addition to Kaiten and Ohka, the Shinyo (Suicide boat) and the Fukuryu (Suicide divers) were exhibited. All of them gave rise to the same questions about obligations and the value of the individual human being.

Very thoughtfully, we left the museum and the Shrine. In front of the Torii, there are several memorial stones. We went to up to see a particular one more carefully, and we became engaged in conversation with an elderly woman. She was 82 years old, and she had visited the shrine to honor and remember her brother who died as a Kamikaze pilot. Every year she went to the shrine on this date. Her brother had been a student of Biology at Tokyo University and he did gymnastics for sports. She was his younger sister, apparently from a normal good family. She told us a about how they learned to fight Allied soldiers with sticks. It was different back then, she said, not as today, when everyone can come and visit. It is much better now, she said. Suddenly the abstract impressions from the museum became rooted to reality.

There is a Danish poet and priest (Christian Richardt 1867) who wrote a psalm/poem which is very popular. The last verse is;

*"Kjemp for alt hva du har kjær,
dø om så det gjelder!
Da er livet ei så svært,
døden ikke heller."*

*Fight for all that you hold dear
die if so you must
Then the difficulties of life will ease
and fear of death vanish.*



Ohka at the Yasukuni War Memorial Museum

but it had to be a mini submarine since it had a cockpit. The truth dawned on me; the weapon in front of me was made so that the pilot would die. The Ohka made me feel the same. That the Americans renamed it to Baka (idiot), tells us a lot about the vast difference in culture that exist(ed) between Japan and the Allies.

The capacity to protect that which you hold dear is probably rooted in our genes and is in almost all if not actually all cultures. So far as I understand Inaba sensei's teaching, it is also from this capacity that we can find the inner strength and power. (i.e. We have to find something that we will fight and eventually die for.)

One interesting question is how to cultivate this capacity so it balances between your personal (including family) and the society's needs.

The culture trip

Tokyo is not Japan, was something many said to me during my scholarship. There are about 35 million people living in the Tokyo Metropolitan area, and it is still the largest urban area in the world. It counts for more than one quarter of Japan's population of 127 million. So what is Japan?

Shiseikan planned and prepared a culture trip for me, accompanied by Araya Kancho and Ueda san. The trip started with a journey by Shinkansen, the fast bullet train that Japan is famous for. It is so precise and runs so frequently that if your watch is wrong you may get on the wrong one.

Our first day's stop was Ise City, Honshū, where maybe the most important Shinto Shrine in Japan is located.



Ise Jingu houses the inner shrine, Naiku, dedicated to Amaterasu, the sun goddess. Every 20 year a ceremony, known as Shikinen Sengu is held to honour the ōmikami. The shrine buildings are destroyed and rebuilt. New clothing and food is offered to the goddess. This has been practiced since the year 690 AD.

Amaterasu-ōmikami is the goddess of the sun, but also of the universe. The name Amaterasu derived from Amateru meaning "shining in heaven." The meaning of Amaterasu-ōmikami, is "the great august kami who shines in the heaven". The Emperor of Japan is said to be a direct descendant of Amaterasu.



The Sun goddess emerging out of a cave, bringing sunlight back to the universe



The shrines, the forest and the site in itself filled me with a sense of serene melancholy and a spiritual longing. To see how the untreated wood of the shrines starts to rot, to return to nature, while at the same time new shrines are build, was an illustration of death and renewal of nature and the impermanence of all things. I later learned the expression *wabi-sabi*, nothing lasts, nothing is finished and nothing is perfect.

The second day we went to Nara prefecture, and we started with a visit to Isonokami Jingū, where the *Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi*, a legendary sword, is said to be kept. It is one of the three Imperial Regalia of Japan. According to the *Kojiki*, the sword was used by the god Susanoo to slay the Yamata-no-Orochi, a giant serpent with eight heads and eight tails.



Isonokami Jingu



Detail of Isonokami Jingu

From here we started on the Yamanobe no Michi, a hiking trail which runs north to south on the eastern foot of mountains in the Nara basin. The path was originally part of the Shinkaido, or "new road", a 1,679 km long route originating in Edo, or present day Tokyo, and is recognised as Japan's oldest road.



Besides the trail this stone is found. It reminded me of how highly poetry is esteemed in Japan, like the Waka poetry of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken. Maybe poetry is linked to the Japanese language in the way that not all is said, and what is said does not include what is to be understood. So when a man feels it, in the right place, he stops and carve a poem in stone to honour his wife that had passed away.



Our walk ended with a visit to Omiwa Jinjya. Unlike other Shinto shrines it contains no sacred images or objects and it has no Shinden ((神殿)) where the kami (deity) is housed, since the kami is Mount Miwa itself.



The shrine is one of the oldest shrines in Japan and the site has been sacred ground for *Koshintō* practices, the original animism of Jōmon period, which is the basis for today's Shinto practices. It is sometimes said to be Japan's first shrine. Ōmiwa san does truly inspire people's spirituality.

Ōmiwa Shrine is also a tutelary (guardian) shrine of the Japanese sake brewers.

As with most major Shinto shrines, The Ōmiwa shrine complex includes other smaller shrines (*setsumatsusha*). The *sessha Ikuhi jinja* enshrines the *kami* who was appointed Ōmiwa's sake

brewer. A poem associated with Ikuhi is said to have been composed by Empress Jingu on the occasion of a banquet for her son, Emperor Ōjin:

This is sacred sake

is not my sacred sake.

This sacred sake brewed by Ōmononushi

How long ago

How long ago.



In Norway's Viking heritage, we have skaldic poetry, which were made to document events and entertain in celebrations. As with the Japanese poetry, the form was very important and to be a master in poetry was highly valued.

Leaving Ōmiwa san we went for Mount Yoshino ((吉野山 *Yoshino-yama*) where we stayed the third day.



Mount Yoshino is famous it's many thousand sakura trees which makes it a very popular during the cherry blossom season. To us it's rich history was the reason to go there. Yoshino-yama has been a center of Shugendo mountain worship for many centuries, so it can be said to be a spiritual spot.

In 2004, Yoshino, together with Mount Koya and Kumano, was designated a cultural UNESCO World Heritage Site named the "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range".

Yoshino mikumari jinjya is dedicated to Mikumari, a female Shinto kami associated with water. Yoshino Mikumari Shrine is one of four important *mikumari* shrines in Japan



Honden of Yoshino mikumari jinjya



View from Yoshimizu Jinjya towards Kinpusenji Temple

The visit to Yoshimizu Jinjya (吉水神社) was probably the highlight of the Culture trip. It was founded in the 8th century as a temple and it served as the living quarters for practitioners of Shugendo mountain worship. In the 14th century the shrine served as the temporary seat of Emperor Go-Daigo whom is enshrined here to this day. It was converted to a shrine during the Meiji period when there was a separation of Buddhism and Shinto.

The samurai Kusunoki Masashige (楠木 正成) 1294-1336) fought and died for Emperor Go-Daigo in his attempt to wrest rulership of Japan away from the Kamakura shogunate. He is remembered as the ideal of samurai loyalty. Kusunoki became a patron saint of sorts to the World War II kamikaze, who saw themselves as his spiritual heirs in sacrificing their lives for the Emperor.

“Kusunoki, in what would later be viewed as the ultimate act of samurai loyalty, obediently accepted his Emperor's foolish command, left his death poem with his young son Masatsura and knowingly marched his army into almost certain death”

The loyalty and obedience that Kusunoki showed is hard to understand, since he knew that the chosen tactic were of no good, the decision was foolish, and his better suggestions were turned down.

He is enshrined as a patriotic hero, called Nankō (楠公) or Dai-Nankō (大楠公), who epitomized loyalty, courage, and devotion to the Emperor.

During our visit the priest took time with each one of us to make a spiritual encounter with the kami. This moved us deeply, and made this visit to an unforgettable experience.



Yoshimizu Jinjya

Reflections through the Kagami and Tachi: My Scholarship presentation

As a part of the scholarship a presentation is made. The limits of the presentation make it hard to transmit the adventure which the scholarship is. The physical distance as well as the cultural distance made two of the emperor's regalias, the Kagami (mirror) and Tachi (sword), the base for my presentation.



Through the kagami, mirror, reality is reflected, but not all mirrors are made of glass and silver. To travel and to live and study a different culture is also a mirror. When the difference from your daily life is big, the reflections are clearer. Studying at Shiseikan has reflected my opinions, behaviors and spirituality.

At the beginning of my stay, the news from North Korea about a possible missile launch, made me change my perspective. The world is affected by the decisions of individuals and nations, and our actions will be decisive for our common future.

We live in a time with big changes. Development as we have seen during the last 150 years, must take a different course. We do not live in a sustainable way, and this will create challenges that we must meet. From history we can learn that famine, diseases and changed weather condition starts migrations and conflicts. Conflicts may escalate and become wars, which again make the challenges even worse.

The main challenge can be summarized by the necessity to accept that the planet Earth is limited and has limited resources. Humans cannot expand and grow in numbers and consumptions without severe consequences.

The climate change driven by the emission of CO₂ is something that is well known. On the other hand the threat to the biodiversity driven by an huge human population and consumption, might have a major effect on human health and welfare. Free trade where the natural borders of organism are neglected, might cause the distinction of species due to introduction of new ones that have no natural enemies as well as new diseases are introduced which the local animals and plants have no defense against.

The Norwegian history shows how these external factors have influenced the people and the country.

Even though science has made remarkable progress, the challenges we meet must be solved by human cooperation. Religions, in spite of their good intentions, seems to add fuel to the challenges rather than become a vehicle for positive interaction. At the same time, it is through the people's values and beliefs that changes can be done. It is almost as we need a new religions, so to speak.

All major religions are built on two basic building blocks. One is to fulfill the spiritual need in the individual and the other is the survival and regeneration of society. Religions have always been used as a tool for the ruling powers to gain control over the population.

Monotheistic religions, with one truth, seem to be very strong tools for the ruling powers, and they do not cooperate very well. Their claimed possession of the truth need to be questioned so the division caused by religion is lessend.



Polytheistic religions, like Shinto, have a better standing by the acceptance of many truths. In addition Shinto's worship of nature , or should I say, the worship of the Kamis in nature, and the underlying Tama, is values and beliefs that can make a difference.

The Norse religion, that existed in Norway before Christianity, have some similarities with Shinto. I looked at some of the myths and beliefs, and I have found that the Norwegian identity contains many elements from the time before Christianity. Many of these show a respect for the spirits of ancestors and of nature. Maybe we once again have to find this respect again to protect the environment we depend on and are a part of.

The importance of Budo, to train people and join body and mind, is known in Shinto. The values in the Norse religion, as it is known from the Vikings, is similar. The practice with the sword, purifies as well as enhance the decisiveness needed to meet our challenging future.

Cultural Understandings

Questions and understandings of Norway

The preparation period was very important, and retrospectively crucial for the outcome of the scholarship. The books I read, and even more, the questions and discussions I had with Endo san, and members of the ISBA community, forced me to rethink my opinions and listen to new stories.

The questions were: What is Budo? What is Budo in Norway? What do you need from and why do you need Japanese Budo?

To find Budo in Norway, it was necessary to look back into the Viking age and the Norse mythology. Most Norwegians relate to this mythology as a part of being Norwegian. When we travel abroad, one of the main stories about Norway is the land of Vikings, and in our national anthem there are several references to the Viking culture. Is the link to the old Norse real or is it manufactured? and how do immigrants in Norway relate to this?, were some of my new questions.

In the middle of the 19th century National Romanticism was dominant in arts and culture in Scandinavia as well as in other parts of Europe. Its mission was clear for the forming of national identity. Norway had to build on its old history, and the Viking era as well as myth and exaggerated presentation of nature became important. Even for Denmark that, unlike Norway, had been able to stay as an independent country since the Viking age, the roots to this period became more important for the country's identity. The painting shows a bridal procession in the westcoat of Norway by Tidemann and Gude dated 1848.



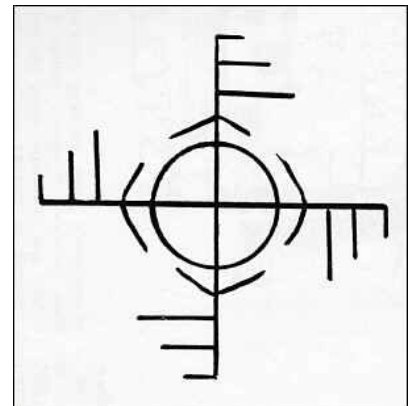
The changes that took place in this period, had their ideological heritage from Rousseau (1712-1778) and Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803). So when industrialism and trade grew, and took place internationally with steamships and railways, the traditional states were challenged and it became necessary to redefine and recreate the culture and identity of a country. The Meiji restoration took place in the same period, and it can be said to be a logical consequence of the same changes and ideas.

So today we relate to the Vikings as our historic heritage and identity, but Christianity that came to Norway about year 1000, has strongly influenced and shaped our society, values and minds. The

Viking society, its rituals and values are almost gone, but some traces can be found in some customs and beliefs.

Another movement was inspired by the Pre-Christian heritage and took place in the 1930s. The reason may be a reaction to the revolution in Russia, the perceived decadence in the 1920s and the economic crash in 1929. It seemed necessary to get new values and (re)build the society economically as well as ideologically. Unfortunately the National socialist party in Germany took the lead in this movement. We all know the resulting horrors of WWII, and it became political incorrect to draw historical lines back to our Viking heritage. For instance it is just recently that we, here in Norway, dare to find inspiration from the Viking era in cultural activities. Personally I find that the political scene and what we call Political Correctness is shaped by a desire to create distance from everything associated with the Nazis. So as a result the pride and interests of traditions and the Viking heritage have been diminished for a period.

When I looked into the Norwegian Budo, I found Glima-wrestling, that is believed to be almost unchanged from the Viking era. Its tradition is upheld in Iceland, but there seems to be some increased interest in recent years in Scandinavia especially in connections with Viking fairs. There was actually a demonstration of Glima in the summer Olympics in 1912. Balance, posture and technic is more important than strength. Also you were supposed to wrestle by touch rather than sight. They use belts and the grips are related to how you were supposed to prevent your opponent from drawing his weapons. Above all the most important in Glima is the right fighting spirit.



Rune "Ginfaxi", one of two Runes worn by wrestlers in their shoes to invoke magic powers.

Without it all techniques becomes worthless. Probably this is the case in all martial arts.



Example of Glima wrestling tournament from the first half of 1900

In my period of preparation, there was a discussion in the Norwegian political scene about the definition of Norwegian culture. The background for this discussion was mainly the potential effects of the high number of immigrants in Norway. Although Norway is not a member of EU, we are a member of European Economic Area (EEA) which grants us most of the benefits and drawbacks. We are member of the Schengen agreement, which is set up to promote easy movement across borders between the countries, while keeping a common border towards others. The freedom to move and seek employment within EU also applies to Norway. The result of this is that 40.000 immigrants from EU come to Norway per year the last couple of years. In addition we have immigrants from outside EU in an increasing number. Since the population of Norway is only 5 million this is a comparable huge immigration that will affect the Norwegian society in a lot of different ways.

The importance of language

One very strong, may be the most important of all, denominator of a culture is its language. It is as if the language itself contains the wisdom and spirituality of a culture, and if the language dies, the culture is lost.

My impression of the Japanese language is that it is extremely complex, not so much because its three different way of writing (hiragana, katagana and kanji), the words or its grammar, even though all these are great (and for me almost impossible) obstacles for a Westerner, but more for the ambiguity everything is expressed. I have an impression that a lot more has to be known about a text to be able to understand and even more to translate it, than the text itself. The context of the text, the author and even the audience influence how the text is to be understood.

Later I will discuss Teruhisa Se and Rie Karatsu description of the Japanese interdependent construal self. The ambiguity of the language supports this, or should I say that due to the interdependent construal of self, the language has to be ambiguous so the meaning of the same words can be adjusted to fit the relations in a situation.

In our globalized world where we have to speak a common language to be able to understand each other and interact, do we put our identity and culture at risk? We find the same shops and restaurants all over the world, and some of the TV-shows and films are shown everywhere. A Japanese company, Sony, is one of the biggest in the entertainment industry, but they do not export much Japanese culture. (An interesting question is whether Japanese manga and computer games would have reached their influence and spread without companies like Sony). It is the culture of the English speaking world that dominates.

Masami Daimaru san is referring to Dr. G. Kato comments from the title "Meiji Shrine Examined from the Vantage Point of Religious Studies", in his paper about the Story and Significance of The Creation of Meiji Forest, saying that there are wars where weapons of spiritual nature are used, and that the reverence and respect in which Shinto shrines are held, are powerful weapons in this spiritual warfare.

Maybe the use and protection of the Japanese language is an even stronger weapon.

Fairy Tales and Poetry

One entrance to the understanding of a culture and a people is its mythology and fairy tales. The reading of Kojiki was part of the preparation, and during my stay I found wonderful collections of translated fairy tales.

Unlike myths, which try to explain how and why things are the way they are and cosmic issues like creation and death, fairy tales are far-fetched stories containing archetypical characters told for didactic (teaching) purposes. Sometimes they give a glimpse into the dreams, longings and fears of common people and they illustrate moral principles.

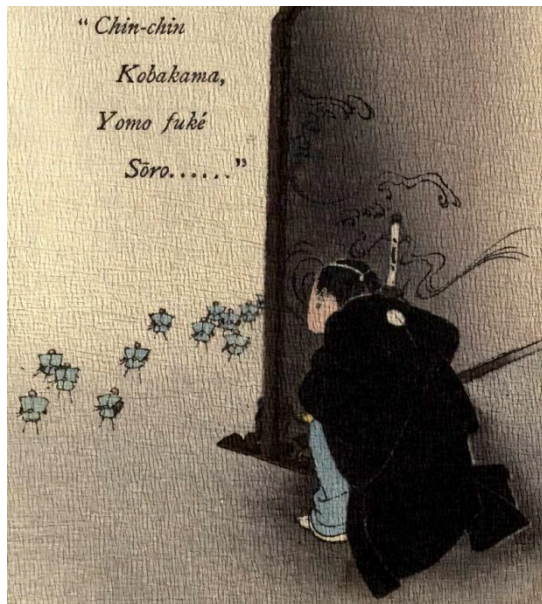
Even though the basics (at least on a superficial level) of the fairy tales seem to be more or less the same everywhere, like the good deeds are rewarded and so on, (moral principles are remarkable common throughout the world), it seems to me the Japanese have a wider definition of good behavior than I find in the fairy tales of Northern Europe. The obedience to the society, elderly and those in power and the honoring of your parents are probably stronger expressed than in Northern European fairy tales, but there are many elements similar. Some stories have rewards kindness and punish disobedience and foolishness, like the Fisher boy Urashima. Some are very poetic, like the Princess Splendor the Woodcutter's daughter, with issues like eternal life and happiness. A tale like Matsuyama mirror favors innocence and loyalty, and it touches the magic of the mirror. Some favor cunning and good luck. There are some human traits that are not appreciated like laziness and cowardice. The sword and the samurai play an important role in doing right, clearing up the mishaps of people and problems caused by devils and monsters. (like in "A Devil's Hand Lost and a Devil's Head Gained")

In Matsumaya Mirror a daughter finds and talks to her dead mother in the mirror. She needs to behave well otherwise her mother will not look happy. So she behaves well and her purity and innocence are rewarded. The mythical aspect of the truth in mirrors is also present.

In the *Wooden Bowl* a beautiful but poor girl promises her old parents to cover her beauty with a wooden bowl, so her beauty (in combination with poverty) will not destroy her. Her diligence, purity and innocence are rewarded. Even the question of *Giri* and *ninjō* is touched, because it is first after her mother in a dream allowed her to "without scruple, yield to the prayers of her lover, and to the wishes of her own heart" marry the man she loved.



From *Masumaya mirror* when the mother gives her daughter the mirror in which she can be remembered.

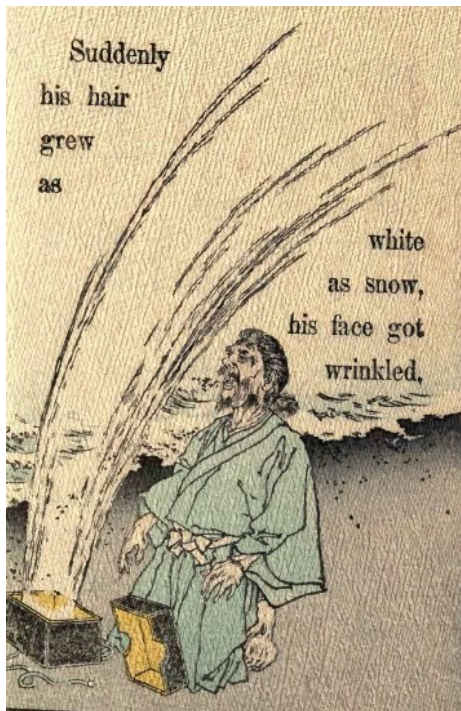


In Chin-chin Kobakama small men made of toothpicks ridicules a lazy mistress that does not even put the used toothpicks in the right place. Her samurai man has to protect her from this men with his sword, and the truth of her laziness becomes known to him.

Momotaro, the peach boy, is found by an elderly couple. They take well care of him and his education. He becomes strong and enterprising and with his three followers, a dog, a monkey and a pheasant they fight and get the riches from the devils (the bad ones). He becomes a leading man, a man of influence, very rich and honorable: a man to be very much congratulated. Indeed!



Momotaro and his helpers fight the devils.



The Fisher boy Urashima, who marries the daughter of the Sea God, is rewarded for his kindness, but punished for disobedience and foolishness by opening the box he is not supposed to open. The story reveals the human shortcomings in front of the Gods, and there are many parallels in stories in the western mythology where you are not supposed to do something, like in the story of Pandora's box (Greek myth), a beautiful jar that should not be opened, but it does and diseases and death are released upon humankind, or in Orpheus and Eurydice (Greek Myth), where Orpheus brings his wife back from the dead, but he shall not turn around to look at her, which of course he does.

The importance of poetry in the Japanese culture was proven to me by to which extend Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken wrote Waka poems and by the tradition of death poems (*jisei*) among warriors and monks.

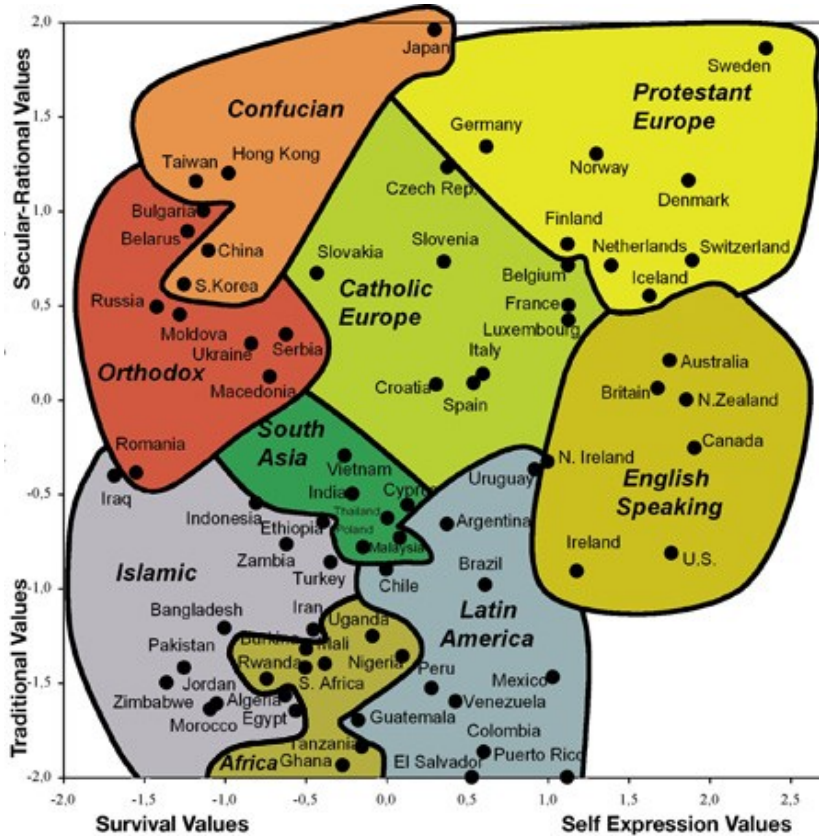
As mythology and fairy tales tells stories with several layers of meanings, the ambiguity of a poem delivers different kind of information than normal prose. To understand Budo different kind of information has to be exchanged. In this context I found that poetry and fairy tales is part of my Budo studies.

The similarities of Northern Europe and Japan

Some questions that have been on my mind in meeting with the Japanese culture have been; How come that Japan and the Germans are the toolmakers of the world? How come that just these two together with Sweden are famous for their high quality steel, and they have been that for centuries. How come that there are some countries that just do not seem to be able to succeed, while these are highly successful?

Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel are two Professors of Political Science that have worked with the questions of modernization and democracy. They have made an Cultural Map where different countries are plotted where the main axes are Traditional values – Secular-Rational Values and Survival values – Self Expression Values.

The World Value Survey Cultural Map 2005-2008



<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

It is very interesting to find the close proximity between Japan and Germany and the other Protestant European countries. Many of the core values are similar, but the paths to arrive where we are today have been very different.

I would like to quote the following from *How Development Leads to Democracy (What We Know About modernization)* By *Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel*

"social and cultural change is path dependent: history matters. Although economic development tends to bring predictable changes in people's worldviews, a society's heritage -- whether shaped by Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, Confucianism, or communism -- leaves a lasting imprint on its worldview. A society's value system reflects an interaction between the driving forces of modernization and the persisting influence of tradition. Although the classic modernization theorists in both the East and the West thought that religion and ethnic traditions would die out, they have proved to be highly resilient. Although the publics of industrializing societies are becoming richer and more educated, that is hardly creating a uniform global culture. Cultural heritages are remarkably enduring."

An empathic Culture

During my preparation period, the question of culture and the effects of immigration came to my mind. Japan is, compared to most Western European countries, very homogenous and it appears to have a strong distinct culture.

We say that most countries have their own culture and at the same time we speak about a western culture as opposed to an eastern culture, an African culture, but what is it, and are we talking about the same thing?

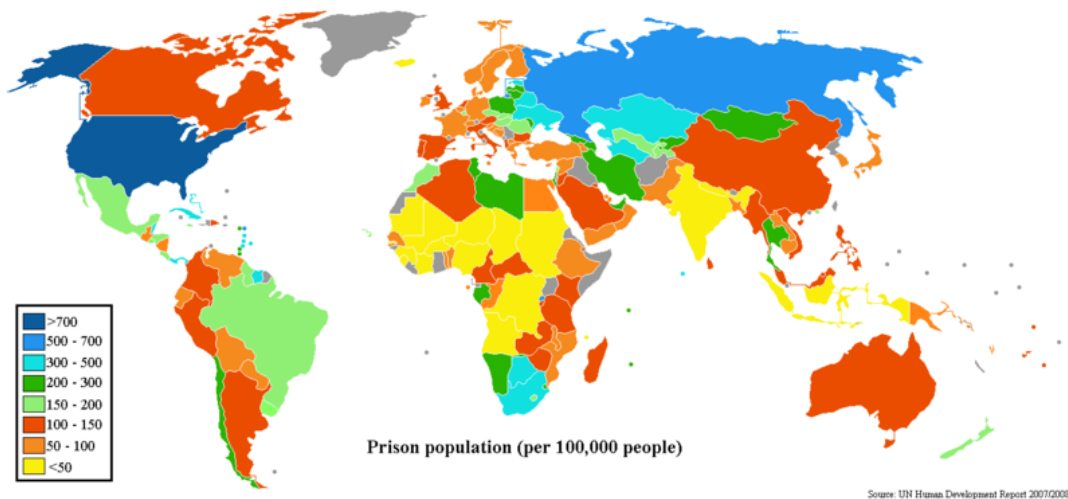
Looking at the some of the definitions I find that culture is;

- *the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society*
- *a particular form or stage of civilization, as that of a certain nation or period: Greek culture.*
- *the behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group: the youth culture; the drug culture.*
- *the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts*

Apparently there must be some common denominator that identifies a culture, and the question arises whether a country like United States has a common culture or do they have several cultures living side by side. Of course it can be said to have dominant culture, may be the one which is presented to the outside world, and which is hard to find when you visit. I think many European countries are moving towards the same challenges of having many cultures within the boundaries of a country, and even more so when we look at the European Union.

The multitude creates a lot of energy and can result in best of breed – or the opposite.

We know that the quality of life is linked to trust and security. It is difficult to claim that the opening of borders within EU has increased trust and decreased criminality. United States have the highest proportion of prisoners in world, while Japan and Norway are on the other end of the scale. Is trust and security dependent on a culture with many common denominators?



The absence of every day crime is particular obvious while staying in Japan. Of course the Yakuza (Japanese mafia) influences the society, but it appears not to affect the sense of security among the common Japanese citizen.

Most visitors to Japan are fascinated by the extraordinary service you find everywhere, which seems genuine and not like a smile that is dependent on the tips you give. On the contrary, you are not supposed to give extra for service and you do not tip in restaurants. Service and friendliness seems not to be for sale.

During my stay and in all my encounters with Japanese people I got a feeling of sincere caring for my wellbeing. This was stronger than I ever experienced anywhere before. The caring was if their wellbeing was linked to my wellbeing. By the end of my stay I came to the conclusion that the best word for this is empathy. Since then I have found this;

“For the Japanese, empathy (omoiyari) in Japanese) ranks high among the virtues considered indispensable for one to be really human, morally mature, and deserving of respect. I am even tempted to call Japanese culture an “omoiyari culture” Takie S. Lebra a cultural anthropologist

Teruhisa Se and Rie Karatsu further states;

In a situational view of morality, a person has to be aware of the perspectives of others and of the public in order to act morally. He must also be conscious of his social roles, other people’s feelings and expectations. In addition, he is required to have the ability for empathy to sense the expectations, feelings and ideas of others acutely, even if they are not verbally expressed.³¹

Focusing on these tendencies of Japanese morality to care about how others feel, Ruth Benedict, a famous American anthropologist, called Japanese culture a ‘shame culture’. According to Benedict, in contrast to a ‘shame culture’, the moral culture prominent in the West is defined as a ‘guilt culture’. A ‘guilt culture’ is one that ‘inculcates absolute standards of morality and relies on men’s developing conscience’.³² In a guilt culture, moral acts are meant to obey transcendental moral principles from one’s inner conviction. Thus, conducting with watchfulness of the judgments of the public on one’s deeds is negatively interpreted as a ‘relaxation of morals’.³³ On the contrary, according to Benedict’s definition, a ‘shame culture’ is one that ‘relies on external sanctions for good behavior’.³⁴ ‘Shame’ in this context means ‘a reaction to other people’s criticism’.³⁵ ‘A man is shamed either by being openly ridiculed and rejected or by fantasizing to himself that he has been made ridiculous.’³⁶ The idea of shame culture is constructed by focusing on the feature of situation-based morality that the feelings and emotions of others are much cared.

If we accept this, in Europe Christianity has defined the absolute standards of morality. What happens when these absolute standards of morality exist in different versions, as they will with different religions or interpretations, or if these absolute standards vanish as a result of the declining influence by religion?

Some claim that religion is the core of a culture and a fundament for civilization and humanity. Others claim that those countries where religions have lost its grip, have developed towards a more human society.



Development towards “freedom”

Japans main religion of Shinto has no dogmas, and there seems to be no absolute truth or absolute standard of morality. Japan’s civilization is continuous and unbroken since Jinmu Tennō.

My meeting with Japan made me truly reflect on the question of what culture my country is moving towards.

Honne to giri, Honne to Tatemae

A primary objective for all cultures is the survival and regeneration of society. For this reason there will always be a conflict between the individual's inner thought and desires and the obligations required by the society.

The main character in a well known Norwegian novel situated in medieval times says;

"All my days I have longed equally to travel the right road and to take my own errant path."
— Sigrid Undset, *Kristin Lavransdatter*

The conflicts arising from the right way and your own way is expressed by Giri (義理) ("duty", "obligation", "burden of obligation") and ninjō (human feeling). This conflict is said to be the primary topic of traditional Japanese drama.

Two other expressions; Honne (本音), which refers to "truth", "authenticity", and intimate inner thoughts and desires, and Tatemae (建前) which is "face," or the "façade" of politeness, ritual, tradition, and manners that one dons for all but the closest, most intimate friends, shows the inner and outer face of the Japanese.

Some claim that it is due to the geography and population density that one goal of Japanese culture is to maintain Wa (和) or harmony, peace, societal-oneness, etc, and avoid openly expressing opinions, emotions, or confrontational behavior.

In an article by Teruhisa Se and Rie Karatsu it is said that a Japanese person has an interdependent construal of the self and thus tends to regard morality primarily as keeping good terms with others or fulfilling social roles smoothly. It is as if you are trained to adjust the sense of the self to handle the conflict between Honne and Giri.

The western mind in contrast is claimed to have an independent construal of the self and "the moral responsibilities of a person, transcending the given social context, are conceived to be independent of human relationships or social roles. It is considered that they are determined by abstract moral principles." The monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam have previously supplied these principles, and today they are to a large extent expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by United Nations.

[A Man Made Disaster](#)

The world looked at Japan with sympathy after the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami on 11 March 2011. How the Japanese people handled the catastrophe with their calmness, solidarity and dignity was noted and respected throughout the world. The absence of thefts and robbery was particularly interesting compared to the situation in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

When information about how the catastrophe had affected the Fukushima Nuclear Power plant came out, and how the Japanese government and officials handled this, the impressive behavior of the Japanese people was replaced by disappointment and by some anger, not for the Japanese people, but against the ruling powers. How could this happen?

During my scholarship I had the chance to read the report made by the Investigation commission after the Fukushima disaster and I would like to quote:

"Our report catalogues a multitude of errors and willful negligence that left the Fukushima plant unprepared for the events of March 11. And it examines serious deficiencies in the response to the accident by TEPCO, regulators and the government. For all the extensive detail it provides, what this report cannot fully convey – especially to a global audience – is the mindset that supported the negligence behind this disaster. What must be admitted – very painfully – is that this was a disaster "Made in Japan."

Its fundamental causes are to be found in the ingrained conventions of Japanese culture: our reflexive obedience; our reluctance to question authority; our devotion to ‘sticking with the program’; our groupism; and our insularity. Had other Japanese been in the shoes of those who bear responsibility for this accident, the result may well have been the same.”

Kiyoshi Kurokawa
Chairman
The National Diet of Japan
Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission

Further it says:

“We found a habit of adherence to conditions based on conventional procedures and prior practices, with a priority on avoiding risk to the organization. We found an organization-driven mindset that prioritized benefits to the organization at the expense of the public.”

I wonder about Giri, Honne and Tatemae, which, from my point of view, are keys to understanding the Japanese psyche and thus the foundation for how society is organized. Every visitor to Japan experiences the politeness and service which are one of the positive sides of Japanese character and society, and envies this. The downside of the Western more individualist society is often characterised by selfishness and isolation (for example the looting described above). The report raises the question of the negative side for Japan. One indication of openness is that the Fukushima Investigation Commission has its mandate from the National Diet, so the wishes for change come from the very top.

Summary

During my preparation for the scholarship I was challenged to investigate Norwegian Budo, which meant to investigate the warrior traditions of the Viking area. Although I have been interested in my country’s history for many years, it was in a new context and thus made me rethink and reevaluate the understanding of mechanisms for change that the knowledge of history gives us. This preparation resulted in an article that is attached to this report as an appendix.

My scholarship period in Japan was enthralling, exhausting and extremely giving. I received so much kindness and concern that my ability to receive was challenged. I, and I believe that this is quite common, need distance to be able to see clearly, so while my day to day experience was Japan, I was able to see Norway and the European culture more clearly. I asked questions about the sustainability of how we live. The difference in culture and the actual physical distance became a mirror to see myself and my background clearer. This mirror became a tool for self-knowledge and understanding.

At the same time I accumulated a lot of impressions from Japan, training, the busy life of Tokyo, the life in Saginuma among Aoki sensei’s friends, a wonderful day in Yokohama, the trip to Mitake Mountain, the music of Edith Piaf in Mr. Uematsu’s car, the daily worship and training, the fantastic Culture trip and so much more.

As a sponge I accumulated impressions, and after I returned to Europe, the mirror turned the other way. Now I started to question and analyse what I experienced. Every sentence and image relating to Japan has got a new meaning. As I read about the North-Korean missile controversy, while I was in

Japan, I read about the Senkaku islands today. The challenge of being challenged is so difficult, on a personal level as well as on a national level.

That reality is understood in many ways is obvious. That there is cultural difference that makes understanding more difficult is also quite obvious. That the cultural differences influence our perception of the self, was to me a discovery that explained a lot of what I experienced. The way empathy penetrates the Japanese thinking brings a quality to the society that most countries can envy.

Regretfully I have to admit, that I have not found the essence of Budo, but I have found a place where the search and questions are kept alive, and on this place I found people that have so much to share and a willingness to do so. Of course it is Meiji Jingu and Shiseikan, I talk about.

The scholarship ignited a curiosity and desire to understand and make a difference, so what I can do, is simply to go along with this, and make the Japanese expression to my own;

Gambatte

do your best...never give up.



APPENDIX;**Budo in Norway and personal accountability in a global age.**

A short article by retired Vice Chair Atle and Treasurer Stein Are, April 2013.

Probably the first that falls into your mind when Norway and Budo is mentioned, is the Vikings. They were warriors famous for their fierceness and courage. What happened with the Budo of the Vikings, and how is budo and personal accountability today in the modern age. To discuss this we have to look briefly on Norway's history.

Norway was first settled in 12,000 BC and the Neolithic period (agriculture) started 4000 BC. The people of Norway was Sami (mainly in the north) and Norse. The Migration Period (400 to 800 AD) caused the first chieftains to take control and the first defenses to be made.

The Viking Age (800-1200 AD) was a period of Scandinavian expansion through trade, colonization and raids. The expansion may be motivated from overpopulation combined with the ship and navigation technology. Some claim that the raids also were a defense against the introduction of Christianity that was spreading north. Viking religious beliefs were heavily connected to Norse mythology. Vikings placed heavy emphasis on battle, honor and focused on the idea of Valhalla and Folkvagnr, mythical homes together with the gods for fallen warriors. (Here they exercised their craft for the great battle at Ragnarök, which symbolize the destruction and renewal of the world.)

By year 800 AD, some 30 small kingdoms existed in Norway. Half a century later the largest chieftains of the petty kingdoms started a major power struggle. In that Harald Fairhair started the process of unifying Norway in which he succeeded after the decisive Battle of Hafrsfjord in 872.

Christianity in Scandinavia came later than most parts of Europe. In Denmark, Harald Bluetooth Christianized the country around 980. Christianization and abolishing the rites in Norse mythology was first attempted by Olav Tryggvason, but he was killed in the Battle of Svolder in 1000. Olav Haraldsson, starting in 1015, made the things (centers for legislation) pass church laws, destroyed heathen Hofs, built churches (often on the same place as the Hof) and created an institution of priests. Olaf and Olaf II had been baptized voluntarily outside of Norway. Olaf II managed to bring English clergy to his country. Norway's conversion from the Norse religion to Christianity was mostly the result of English missionaries. As a result of the adoption of Christianity by the monarchy and eventually the entirety of the country, traditional shamanistic practices were marginalized and eventually persecuted. Völvas, practitioners of seid, a Scandinavian pre-Christian tradition, were executed or exiled under newly Christianized governments in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Many chieftains feared that the Christianization would rob them of power in lieu of their roles as heathen priests, and some of them left Norway and settled in Iceland.

The Viking Age correlates with the Medieval Warm Period (MWP) from 950-1250 and it was followed by a cooler period in the North Atlantic termed the Little Ice Age.

High rise in the population combined with changes in the climate was much the cause of the Great Famine, which struck much of northwest Europe in 1315-1317. Furthermore the Black Death, the great pandemic, from 1348-1350 wiped away more than half of Norway's population, and the royal line ended by king Olav IV who died in 1380. Without its own king Norway came in a personal union

with Denmark from 1380 and union from 1536 where Norway was the weaker part. This union lasted until 1814 where Denmark "lost" Norway due to their support of Napoleon. During some months in the spring of 1814 a new constitution was made, but the country was handed over to Sweden in a new union that lasted to 1905.

To look for Budo in Norway, we have to bear this history in mind. The Viking age came to an end and their traditions and belief was changed by the Christian church. The land was weak and scarcely populated. The professional soldiers and the knights with their chivalry code did not exist in Norway, since the feudal system to support a knight and his accessories was not there. From the King of Denmark's point of view there was no interest to build up the knowledge of martial arts in a vassal state. Of course men was made to go to war, but it was mainly farmers that had to do their duty for the Danish king.

So we have to look back to the Vikings to find Norwegian Budo. Physical fighting was a part of their life; for defense, as a mean to settle dispute, to expand territory and to get hold of values. They handled fighting by training and attitude, but to call them violent as opposed to peaceful will make them injustice.

Norse society was based on agriculture and trade with other peoples and placed great emphasis on the concept of honor, both in combat and in the criminal justice system. It was, for example, unfair and wrong to attack an enemy already in a fight with another.

Olav Hauge describes the Viking as;

"The Viking society was permeated by their beliefs, although they had no word for "religion". Instead they used the word "siðr", which means custom or practice, which main purpose was the survival and regeneration of society. The moral code in Viking society was not directly tied to having a belief in the gods and social behavior was based upon an unwritten system of honor or code of ethics. Right and wrong, gender roles, sexual morality, daily life, the timing of festivals; in all these circumstances the free man was evaluated by standards of honor.

A man of honor was a principled man. He was given to moderation, was hospitable and generous and offered a helping hand to friends in need. (Including aligning himself against his friend's enemies). A man of honor also never forgot to be the foe of his enemy. This he did with all his heart.

The opposite of honor was disgrace, and because every man lived his life as a member of an extended family-circle, he could easily bring disgrace to his entire family - including his forefathers. Therefore, it was intolerable for a free man to live in such a fallen state. If he was disgraced, he could only restore balance in his social system by confronting the source of his fall from an honorable status. Thus, revenge was an key component of this social system, a system which placed great importance upon maintaining personal honor. "

It is also worth mentioning that disputes could be settled by duels called Holmgang. At least in theory, anyone offended could challenge the other party to Holmgang regardless of their differences in social status. This could be a matter of honor, ownership or property, demand of restitution or debt, legal disagreement or intention to help a wife or relative or avenge a friend. It was a disgrace to refuse a challenge, but a capable warrior could volunteer to fight in the place of a clearly outclassed friend. So it was important to train martial arts as well as being wise in choosing friends and foes.

History shows the way of the warrior, that penetrated the Viking society had no continuity, and the Norwegian Budo from the Viking age is lost.

So why do we go to Japan and Shiseikan to find and understand Budo. Norwegians do well in sports and we have world class athletes in martial arts like kickboxing, but martial art as sports pay little attention to the spiritual side. I think it is necessary to accept that we need teachers and guidance to understand the spiritual side of Budo as well as the deeper meaning of the technics. Teachers that have dedicated their lives to this research and can build on the continuity of the Budo traditions are only found in Japan. Shiseikan is one of these places where the source of Budo is kept alive, and fortunately a Norwegian, Bjørn-Eirik Olsen san was introduced to Inaba-sensei in the late 1980s. He brought with him knowledge of technics as well as spirituality back to Norway that he willingly spread to those eager to know. He started dojos in Oslo and in Tromsø, which both are members of ISBA today. This relation and the willingness and openness of the Shiseikan's instructor to share their knowledge have built a keen group of students in Norway. When we participate in the summer seminars or visit Japan, we meet Shiseikan instructors, employees and students that show their personal integrity and spirituality in all their doings. At the same time we are challenged to find our own way based on our traditions and values.

As for the Vikings **Siðr**, which main purpose was the survival and regeneration of society, traditions and beliefs in any society must support this purpose. Personal accountability supports this purpose on a personal level and can in short can said to act righteous. Sometimes personal accountability to yourself and how this correspond to the rules and expectations of those near and dear as well as the general society, becomes a source for conflict and energy that fuel to the creative impetus necessary for all development.

The main character in a famous book situated in medieval times says

“All my days I have longed equally to travel the right road and to take my own errant path.”

— Sigrud Undset, Kristin Lavransdatter

The conflict of individualism and collectivism is universal, but in today's society, at least in Norway, the individual has won over the collective, especially when the collective is not limited to this present moment, but rather seen as the collective future of all nations and mankind. Our lifestyle implies a cognitive dissonance between our knowledge and acting, so we change our morals and beliefs to fit. The purpose of siðr, the survival and regeneration of society, is forgotten.

This intuitive disharmony, I believe, is one of the reasons why we find Shiseikan Budo attractive. We practice technics that (hopefully) have no direct relevance to our everyday life, but the practice makes us connect to our self and all there is in a profound way.

In the dojo, when we bow and clap our hands, we act with respect and sincerity, but I believe it is very unclear for most of us to what we pay respect. Those who have participated in the Shinto ceremonies at the start and finish of the ISBA seminars have been more challenged, and to some a connection that makes a resonance in our souls is awakened.

Norwegians can be said to be unconscious nature spiritualist. We celebrate nature by hiking, skiing, sailing and a lot of outdoor activities. Unfortunately there is a movement towards a tendency to use

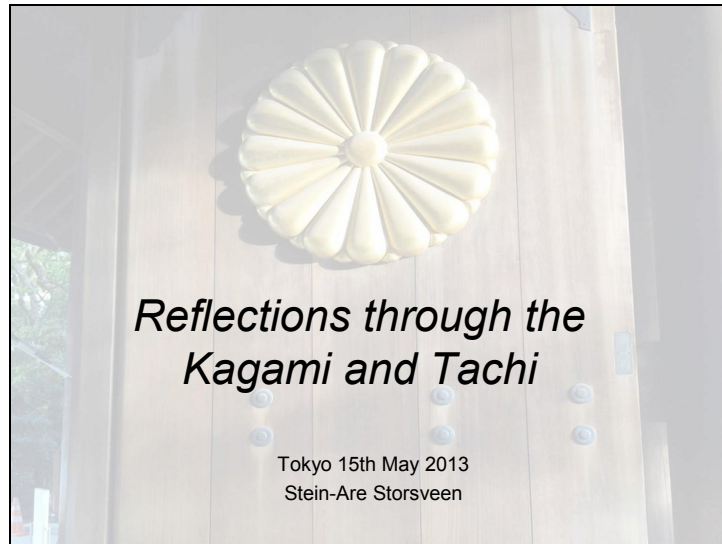
nature for activities rather than be in nature while doing activities. Competitive values and efficient use of the time are two drivers. Even so, to most Norwegians the sea, the forest, the mountains are a part of our identity, and it is where we find energy and peace of mind. The resonance that the Shinto ceremony makes, is deeply rooted, not in religion or believes, but in just being a Norwegian with our roots from the Viking age.

To succeed in life, both on a personal as well as on a professional level, personal accountability is necessary. The link between personal accountability and virtues found in most religions is clear. A man of virtues will have a high degree of personal accountability. In the age of the Vikings, physical endurance and courage was necessary since the martial arts were the problem solver. Today we need the same level of endurance and courage to fight our problems, and even though that the physical technics are not used, the same inner state of mind will be necessary. Today we need to (re)connect with nature to find and be able to accept the solutions necessary to our global challenges.

To us, Shiseikan Budo is demonstrating a way to connect with the spirits of nature and build the inner strength necessary to meet our challenging future.



Scholarship presentation by Stein-Are Storsveen 2013




I have given my presentation the title Reflections through the Kagami and Tachi

Slide 2

Mirror of Empress Shoken

Mirror

Every morning
We gaze into our mirror
Which are unblemished;
Oh, that we could attain
Such a purity of soul.



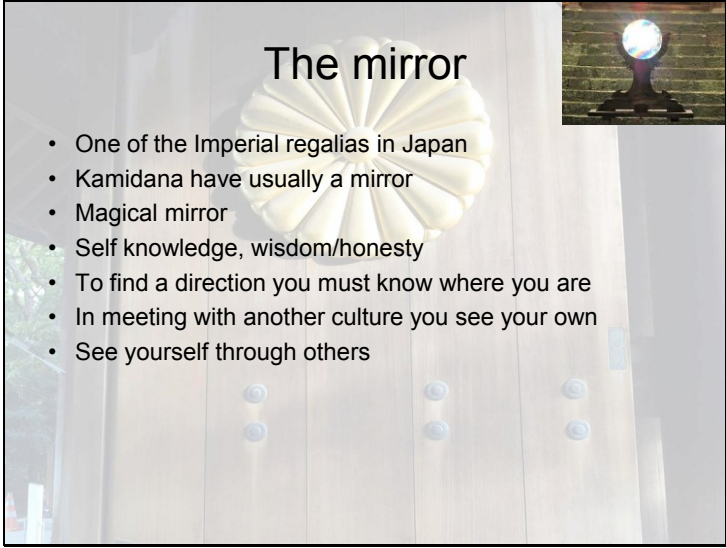
Kagami

Asagoto ni
Mukô kagami no
Kumori naku
Aramahoshiki wa
Kokoro narikeri

Every morning
We gaze into our mirror
Which are unblemished;
Oh, that we could attain
Such a purity of soul.

(If asked;;;;;; The picture is from the fairytale about Matsumaya mirror, from a collection

Slide 3



The mirror

- One of the Imperial regalias in Japan
- Kamidana have usually a mirror
- Magical mirror
- Self knowledge, wisdom/honesty
- To find a direction you must know where you are
- In meeting with another culture you see your own
- See yourself through others

- The mirror has great symbolic importance in Japan,
 - It is one of the Imperial regalias and it is normally in the Kamidana
 - Many stories in the West refer to magical mirrors
 - The mirror symbolises self knowledge, wisdom and honesty
 - And of course; To find a direction of where to go, you must know where you are
 - Travel and visiting other countries is a mirror. By being here I confront myself with the Japanese culture, and I am not only learning about Japan, but also a lot about my own culture. What is it, how is it similar and how is it different. Why is it different. In short;
 - I can see myself and the culture I belong to through the mirror of studying and living in Japan.
-
- I will try to share some of that I have seen.

Slide 4



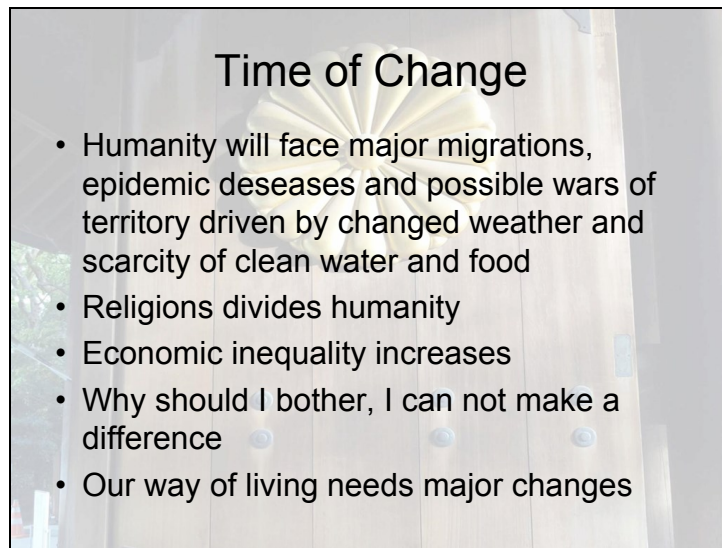
First of all the distance between Norway and Japan changes my perspective.
News that used to be from far away increase in importance. I might be directly involved in everything that concerns Japan.
So I looked for a picture of Earth and I had difficulties of finding one of this side.
Almost all I found shows the other side. (with the american continent)
That tells me something..

Slide 5



This is Earth at night.
Human activity or should I say the use of energy, is clearly spotted by the lights.
Some places it is hard to find darkness.
Some places it is hard to find your soul
in the never ending busy life of modern cities

Slide 6



In the mirror I see

That we live at the beginning of an area where big changes will take place.

- Humanity will face major migrations, epidemic diseases and possible wars of territory driven by changed weather and scarcity of clean water and food

...Of course science will solve some of this, but we are more than 7 billion people and our consumption is too high

- Religions divides humanity and makes it difficult to find solutions
- Economic inequality increases

.....In spite of economical growth, it seems that it the rich that get the most. Greed is accepted, and no one wants to give away what they have got, so everyone wants more. Of course there is a lot of people that need and deserve more, but there is also a lot that has more than enough.

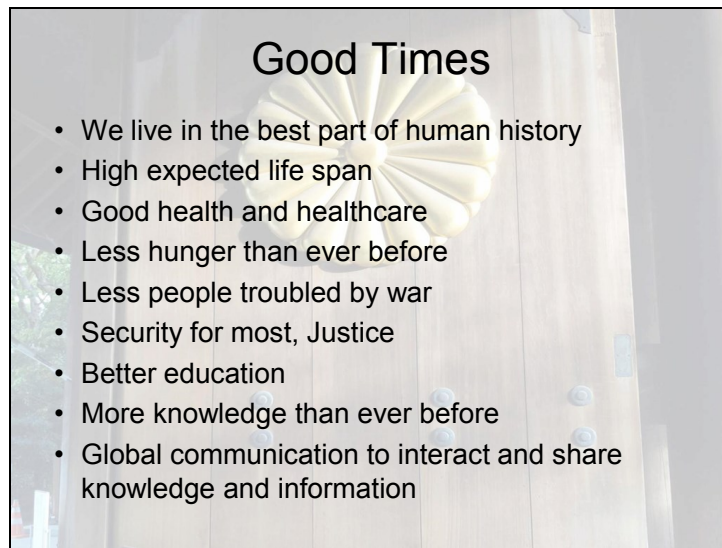
- Why should I bother, I can not make a difference. This is the common feeling. As individuals we feel powerless, so the show must go on and we continue as we have done
- But, our way of living needs major changes

--

Line 1. have seen -> see

Line 2. must -> will

Slide 7



In the mirror I could also see that

1. We probably live in the best part of human history

At least modern history, some claim that hunters and gathers lived even better...

Before work and commuting was invented.

2. We have high expected life span

3. And we have good health and healthcare

..... *Most basic health issues are solved. Smallpox was eradicated in 1980, it took many lives up through the centuries. This and better understanding of basic healthchare is the main reasons for the sharp increase in the population we have seen in the last 200 years.*

4. We have less hunger than ever before and

5. Less people are troubled by war

6. Most people have Security and Most countries have a justice system.

7. We have better education and

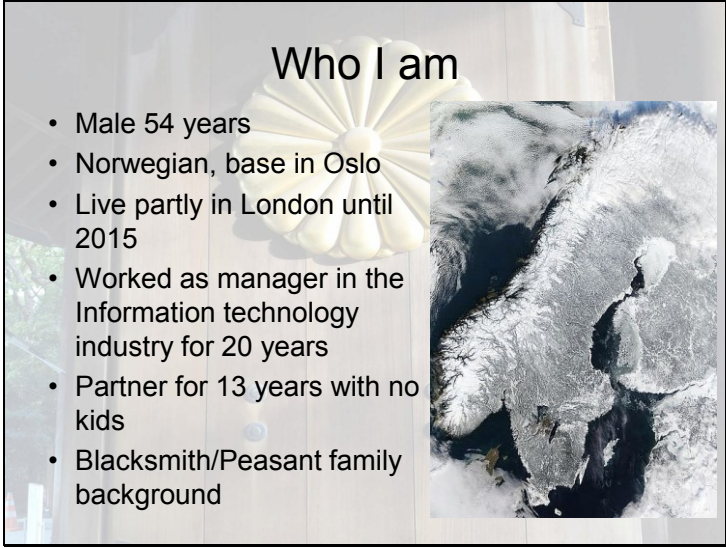
8. More knowledge than ever before

9. We even have Global communication to interact and share knowledge and information so the fundament for global cooperations is here

The ISBA seminars in Europe would probably not take place if Internet was not used.

...But leaders as Kim Jong-un with nuclear weapons reminds us how fragile it is

Slide 8



Who I am

- Male 54 years
- Norwegian, base in Oslo
- Live partly in London until 2015
- Worked as manager in the Information technology industry for 20 years
- Partner for 13 years with no kids
- Blacksmith/Peasant family background

Before I continue, let me tell a little about myself.

- I am 54 years old
- Norwegian, and my base for living is in Oslo, Norway
- I will live partly in London until 2015, so I live in two countries.
- I have worked as manager in the Information technology industry for more than 20 years, and I was involved in the film industry before that.
- I live in a partnership for 13 years and we have no kids

In Norway it is common for people to live together before they get married. We wanted to wait until we got kids, but that never happened.

- My family background is Blacksmiths and Peasants,
- Thanks to the high social mobility in Norway I had the change to get an university degree, and good jobs.

This is the Scandinavian peninsula, Norway, Sweden and North-West of Finland, in winter where most of the land is covered by snow.

As you see Norway has a lot of mountains. Norway is famous for its fjords where the sea goes far into the country. They were made during the ice ages, when glaciers covered these parts of the world completely.

Slide 9



This map shows Euroasia, the continent that both Japan and Norway is part of. The distance between Japan and Norway is about 8.400 Km.

Norway is located in the northern parts of Europe.

Svalbard, a group of islands high up in the Barents sea is also Norwegian and gives Norway influence in the arctic region.

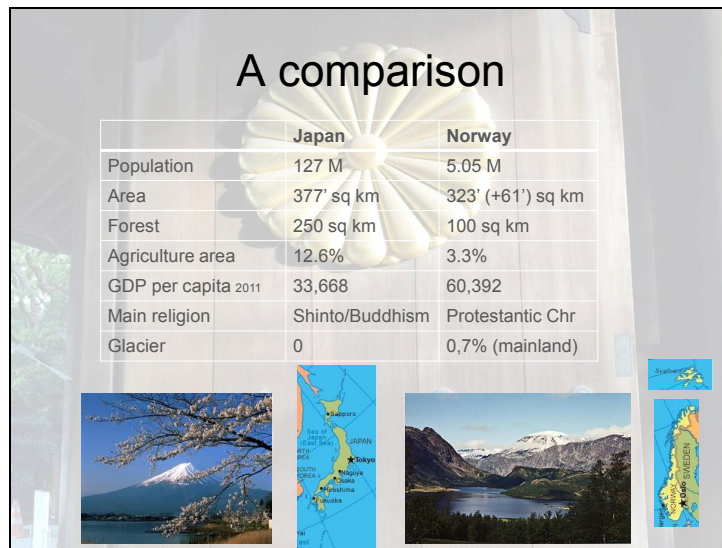
Svalbard was also important during the Cold war due to it's russian community, - Barentsburg.

Let me show where Norway would have been if we were at the same longitude as Japan, but kept our latitude.

As you see it is very far north, and if it did not have the warm wind from the west and the Gulfstream it would be very difficult to live in Norway.

As you can see the size is almost equal to Japan.

Slide 10



When we compare Norway and Japan the small population in Norway is important. Norway has only 5 million people, Japan has 127, and the two countries have almost identical size. The + 61' is Svalbard

Norway has little agriculture, most of the land is mountainous and where trees can grow, we have forests.

It is probably known that Norway is one of the oilproducing nations. Due to this our GDP per person is more that 60 thousand USD per year, almost the double of Japan. Even so, we are a very small economy compared to Japan.

I have put Glacier in the comparison table because it is still parts of Norway that is covered by ice. It is the Glaciers that have created the nature of Norway with its rounded mountains and u-shaped valleys, as you can see on the picture.

In Svalbard there is no trees, at it mostly glaciers and mountains.

Slide 11

Brief history of Norway

12 000 BC	Glaciers melts nomadic hunter	
4000 BC	Neolithic	
2700 BC	Warm climate and new technology, <i>new crop and animals</i>	
1800 BC	Bronze age	
500 BC	Iron age and Colder climate	660 Em.Jimmu
400-550 AD	Migration period, Need for protection Chieftains	
800-1200 AD	Viking era (<i>793 first Viking Raid</i>)	
872	First King; Harald Hårfagre	
1000	<i>Leiv Erikson discovers Amerika</i>	
1030	Christianity introduced	
1315	Great Famine	
1348-1350	Black Death	
1380	Union with Denmark	
1814	<i>Napoleon</i> , Own constitution and union with Sweden	
1905	Union ends	
1940-1945	Occupation of the Germans	
1970	Oil was found	



The history of Norway shows that we have not been in the center of the world events, but we have always been affected.

The first event that happened about 14.000 years ago, was of climate change. The glaciers started to melt after more than 100.000 years and Nomadic hunters started to populate the country. The Neolithic age is the start of farming

The Migration period in 400-500 that affected whole of Europe, and in Norway it made protection necessary. Chieftains took control over villages and surrounding areas. This corresponds with the forming of Clans in Japan in the **KOFUN** period.

At the same time as Japan started to protect its national identity by breaking the bond to China (838), the Viking area started with the famous Viking raids. The reasons for these raids is unclear but it could have been a. Unfair practice of trade by the Christians, b. Spreading of Christianity. c. Dense population in the Nordic region.

High rise in the population combined with changes in the climate was much the cause of the Great Famine, that struck much of northwest Europe in 1315.

The Black Death, the great pandemic, wiped away more than half of Norway's population, and the royal line ended in 1380.

Without its own king Norway came in union with Denmark where Norway was the weaker part.

This union lasted until 1814 where Denmark "lost" Norway due to their support of Napoleon.

During some months in the spring of 1814 the Norwegian constitution was made. It was signed the 17th of May 1814, and it's celebrated today as the picture shows. Norway became then in union with Sweden, which ended in 1905.

Norway was occupied in 1940 by the Germans after small resistance.

Today Norway is one of the richer countries in Europe, and the world, but at the start of 20th century we were one of the poorest in Europe.

Slide 12

Driving forces for change

- Climate change
- Over population
- Migration
- Diseases
- Threats of War
- New religions and beliefs
- New technology
- Ambitions of the leaders
- Migration of money and ideas



In my study I have seen that Norwegian history was driven by forces that is universal for changes.

- Climate change
- Over population
- Migration of people
- Diseases
- Threats of War, or War
- New religions and belief
- New technology
- Ambitions of the leaders
- Migration of money, which in most cases represent power and ideas


I see many of these forces today

The pictures show the migration period where the Roman empire broke up. This was a time of great changes, both due to invasions and diseases. A plague around 540 lead to the final end of the Roman empire and the rise of Muhammed's Caliphate less than hundred years later.

The second image shows the Black death in 1350, which was one of the main reason for the Danish-Norwegian union.

Slide 13

Sustainability



- Achieving sustainability will enable the earth to continue supporting human life.
- For humans, sustainability is the potential for long-term maintenance of well being, which has ecological, economic, political and cultural dimensions.

Our common future, was the title of a report that was published in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development.

It is also called the Brundtland report after Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former Prime minister of Norway that chaired the Commission.

In this report the term sustainable development was introduced.

Since then sustainability has become more and more important because

Achieving sustainability will enable the earth to continue supporting human life. The problem is ours, it is not the earth that has a problem. We are destroying the very fundament for human existence.

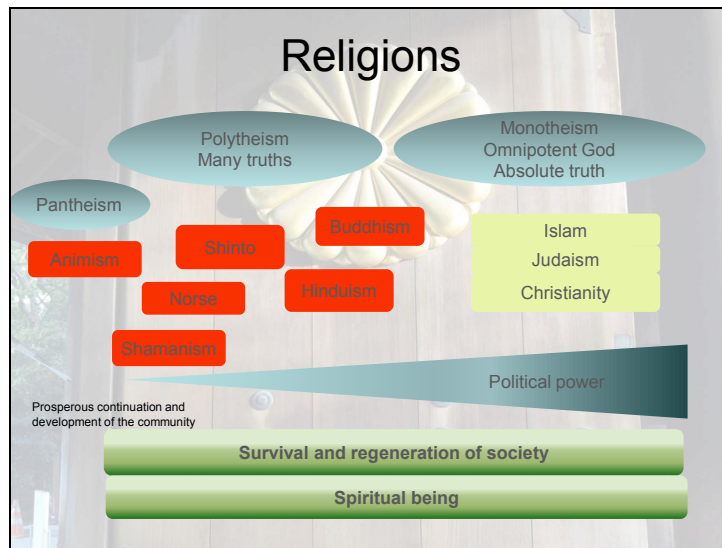
Sustainability is the potential for long-term maintenance of well being, which has ecological, economic, political and cultural dimensions.

I just saw a DVD called; ISE, the myths of a sustainable world.

From what I have found Sustainability is a fundamental part of Shinto, even if the word is new.

What about other religions?

Slide 14



As I see it, the primary goal for all religions is the Survival and regeneration of Society. I believe that in every human is a spiritual being. The respect and awe we feel in meeting with the magnificence of nature, is inherent in our genes. That we are connected is obvious to me.

So at the bottom of my illustration these two building blocks are visualized. Human as a spiritual being and the survival and regeneration of the society.

A sustainable world is of course necessary for the survival of the society.

So where does it go wrong?

It can be that we have lost our beliefs, and drift along without a spiritual foundation for existence.

I believe that Political powers take charge of the religions and use it for their purpose. That is a major part of the problem.

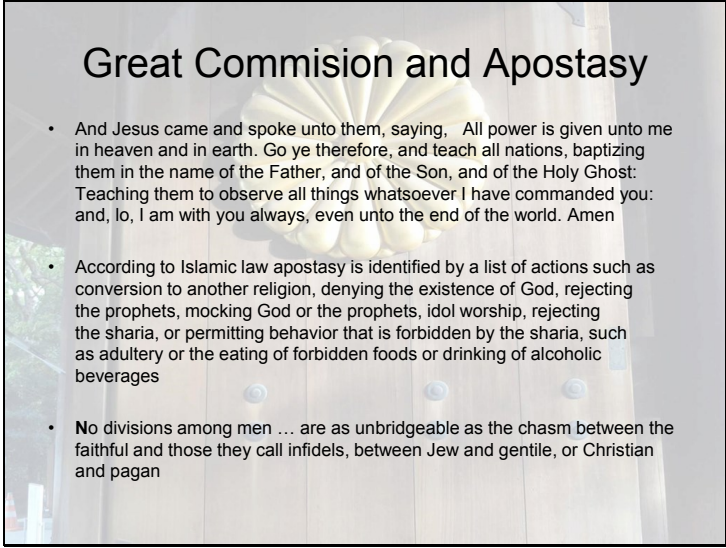
When the religion is monotheistic and an absolute truth exists, it becomes a particularly strong tool for a ruling power, both to control the population of believers, as well as to control and suppress those with a different faith.

Even though all religions have been used in wars to create a common identity and motivate for fighting, Islam, Judaism and Christianity are special. They have the same origin, and I would say the same God, but due to their written dogmas and absolute truths, conflicts are common. Even today the religious organizations of these religions are strong political powers in themselves.

That a person can belong to more than one religion, as most Japanese do with their Shinto and Buddhist beliefs, is only possible when many truths can coexist.

I have put the Old Norse religion in the chart to show how I view it compared to the other religions.

Slide 15



Great Commision and Apostasy

- And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen
- According to Islamic law apostasy is identified by a list of actions such as conversion to another religion, denying the existence of God, rejecting the prophets, mocking God or the prophets, idol worship, rejecting the sharia, or permitting behavior that is forbidden by the sharia, such as adultery or the eating of forbidden foods or drinking of alcoholic beverages
- No divisions among men ... are as unbridgeable as the chasm between the faithful and those they call infidels, between Jew and gentile, or Christian and pagan

Our challenges are of global nature. It is our common Earth – that must become sustainable again, but to unite people is particularly difficult when each group claim to represent the absolute truth.

It is important to remember that it is not only monotheistic religions that claim to know the absolute truth.

Most –isms have the same attribute, like Communism, Maoism, Stalinism and to a certain degree Capitalism, and in hand of the wrong people any belief can used for politics.

Christianity will always try to get new members due to their Great Commision, while if you enter Islam you can not leave due to the strict reactions to Apostasy.

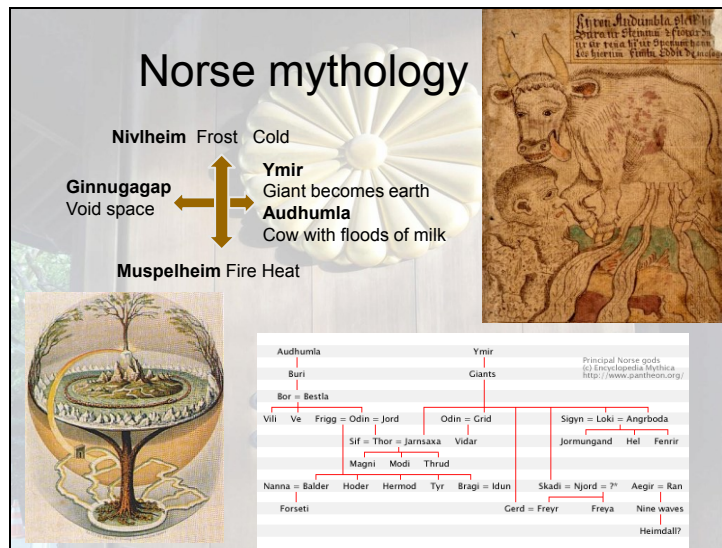
Both religions have ambitions of growth, and the leaders of both are much against birth control, which is a prerequisite for a sustainable world.

The division among men is particular strong between those who belong to the monoteistic religions and those who believe they have the only answer.

How can they unite?

I did not find the answer, the time was too short, I am sorry.

Slide 16



But I looked into the Norse mythology to see if there are old answers to be found. The Norse mythology has an understanding of a cyclic time. Everything has a beginning and an end, before it starts over again.

The world was created from the body of a great Giant in the space between frost and fire. The Giant was fed by a big Cow. The illustration show that the first God was licked out from the stone.

The second illustrations shows the relationship between Gods and Giants, both with mythical powers that make the destiny of the world.

The illustration in the lower left is of the Norse cosmos. It has nine different worlds. The cosmos is held together by the tree of life, Yggdrasil, an evergreen Ash tree. There are three upper worlds, the Gods live in the center, Åsgard, Humans in the middle, Midgard and the Giants on the edge, Utgard. Outside is Chaos. The underworlds is the ones of the dead and of different beings that can enter the human world.

The first humans are created by the Gods from two logs of timber. They were called Ask og Embla.

Slide 17

Ragnarök

The end of the rule of the Gods,
The predicted end of the world
And the beginning of a new world
Cyclic time
A new Iceage and a new
beginning?




Iðavöllr the new Asgard.
Víðarr, Váli, Baldr, Höðr



Líf and Lífþrasir are the new origin of a human race



Móði and Magni survives and keep Mjöllnir

Ragnarok is the end of the known world.

Everything is predicted, and all beings seems to have their destined role.

The illustration shows the battle. The rainbow that is the bridge between the world of gods and humans.

The new world dawns, with a few surviving gods, the humans Líf and Lífþrasir, that will be the ancestors of the new human race.

A new sun, the daughter of Sól, will be even more beautiful and continue as her mother.

Thor's hammer, Mjöllnir, that makes thunder and lightening, is kept by his two surviving sons, Modi and Magni. They symbolises bravery, courage and raw physical strength.

Maybe Ragnarok is an intuitive understanding of the big dramatic climate changes that occurs in the nordic region *and earth as whole* and that time will start again..

Slide 18



The Norse mythology live in our fairtales and folklore. Mythical beings are used in films and stories. There is many signs of a increased interest and popularity.

Troll was a group of different beings that lived in one of the underworlds, but sometimes humans could see them, and their actions could be seen.

The big trolls were very strong, and most were very stupid, but some could help humans if treated right.

Slide 19



You could learn to play music from Fossegrimen, a troll that lives in the waterfall. You should make proper offers and listen intensively.

Draugen and Nøkken, symbolizes the danger of water in sea and lakes.

Nisser, small beings, live close to humans and influence our life.

Gardsnissen is said to be a protector and guardian of a farm, and is somehow related to the ancestor that broke the land and made the farm.

To avoid trouble and sometimes get help, you should always treat him with respect, and give offers on special occasions.

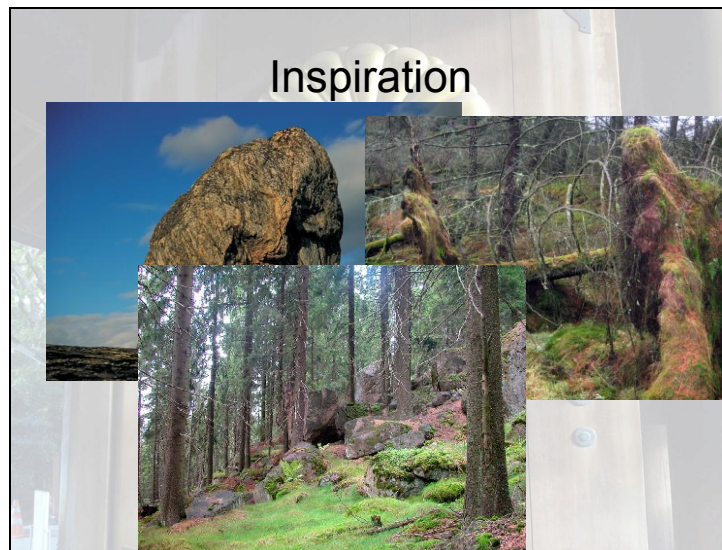
The people from the underworld could also do vicious things, like exchange a baby with one of their own, in which case the parents would have a real troublesome child.

Many places in Norway there are very big stones that were moved by a glacier, which is hard to understand how got there.

Was it the work of the Trolls, or may be it had been a troll that was caught by the sun, in which case they could turn into a stone or break into pieces.

Here we see such a stone.

Slide 20



How could this stone get here if not thrown by a Troll, or maybe it is a Troll that was caught by the sun.

As in Japanese old forest there grows moss on the old and fallen trees. Due to the ice there are many big blocks of stones, that inspire the fantasy.

Slide 21



Lichen, a composite organism of fungus and alga, grow on stones as well as on the branches of the trees.

It looks like hair from someone really old, maybe from a Troll?

Even today the forest comes alive at night

Slide 22



And your fantasy will make you see

Slide 23



Worship of nature

- Most Norwegians have very close contact with nature
- Find peace and relaxation
- A place for contemplation and activity

New insight in my relation to nature
Unconscious to conscious



Our mythology, and way of life, show that Norwegians have always lived close to nature. Our cities is not very big, we are few people in the land, and people enjoy outdoor activities. We find peace and relaxation in nature, and it is a place ofr contemplations and activity

The shinto rituals, my daily worship and the walks in Meiji forest have made me more concious about the spiritual side of my relation to nature.

.. Here I am with my niese

Slide 24



When Christianity was introduced in the middle of the 11th century, many old rites and ceremonies were made Christian. Many of the festivals during the year existed before Christianity, got a Christian meaning. Other ceremonies are kept without reflections on their origin.

For instance to put down the ground stone is a ceremony with ancient roots. In older days a sacrifice of an animal was done and buried under the building as a guardian. The picture shows a ceremony for a new school.

The other picture shows Topping out, a ceremony that took place when the roof was put on a new building so the rain could not enter. In former days all buildings in Norway were made of wood. It was an ancient practice to appease the tree-dwelling spirits of their ancestors that had been displaced. The picture is from 1959 when this tradition was closer to its origin. The tree was decorated with paper.

Today with buildings in stone and concrete, the tree has lost its symbolic meaning, but it is very common with a celebration.

I have learned that in Japan similar ceremonies exist.

Here I have found pictures of Ji-chin-sai (Groundbreaking) and Jo-to-shiki or Mune-age-shiki.

Slide 25



An old custom was to feed the Gardsnisse of the farm, the ancestor, with porridge at Christmas. A recent poll shows that 10% of the population keep up this tradition, which means a high percentage outside the cities, because this tradition is connected to farming and rural living.

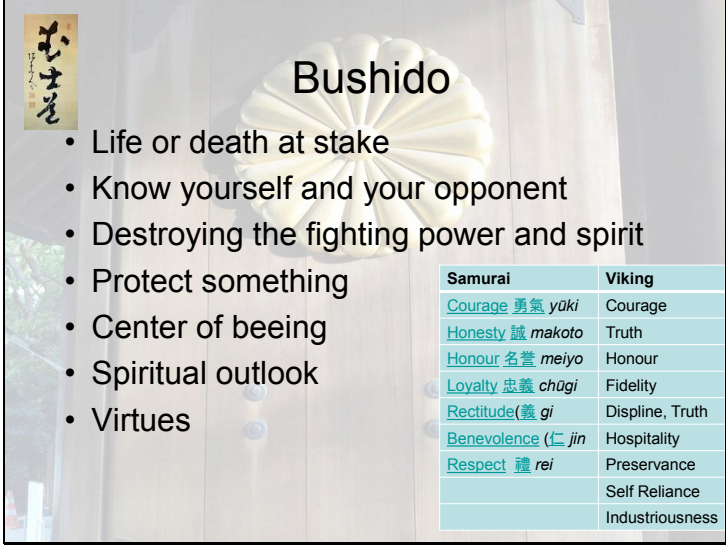
At midsummer, this magical night, according to old beliefs, the nature is filled with supernatural forces, -we have the tradition of burning a big fire. The meaning was to purify the land and celebrate the summer. In Sweden, this midsummer celebration is particular important and they set up a pole, which may be a phallic symbol or it may represent Yggdrasil, the tree of life, which I showed earlier.

Close to where I grew up, this stone marked the start of a long travel through the forest. To throw a small stone onto the big one was believed to make the travel good, and protect from the evil.

Many places in Norway you will find «Varder», which is primarely build as markers for travel but also on places of significance.

As these customs show, the connection to the spirits of nature is still alive.

Slide 26



Bushido

- Life or death at stake
- Know yourself and your opponent
- Destroying the fighting power and spirit
- Protect something
- Center of being
- Spiritual outlook
- Virtues

Samurai	Viking
Courage 勇氣 <i>yūki</i>	Courage
Honesty 誠 <i>makoto</i>	Truth
Honour 名譽 <i>meiyo</i>	Honour
Loyalty 忠義 <i>chūgi</i>	Fidelity
Rectitude(義) <i>gi</i>	Displine, Truth
Benevolence (仁) <i>jin</i>	Hospitality
Respect 禮 <i>rei</i>	Preservance
	Self Reliance
	Industriousness

So did I find any answer to my question of sustainability?

In Norway as in Japan the connection to nature is defintively there. We have a history and understanding that can be nourished.

There is an urgency in the problems we face. For humans it is life or death at stake.

So how can we prepare and how can we make a difference?

As Inaba sensei states in his essay about «What is Budo», the battles we fight today are mostly without shape and are hardly visible.

But the battles are real and the principles from ancient times are still valid.

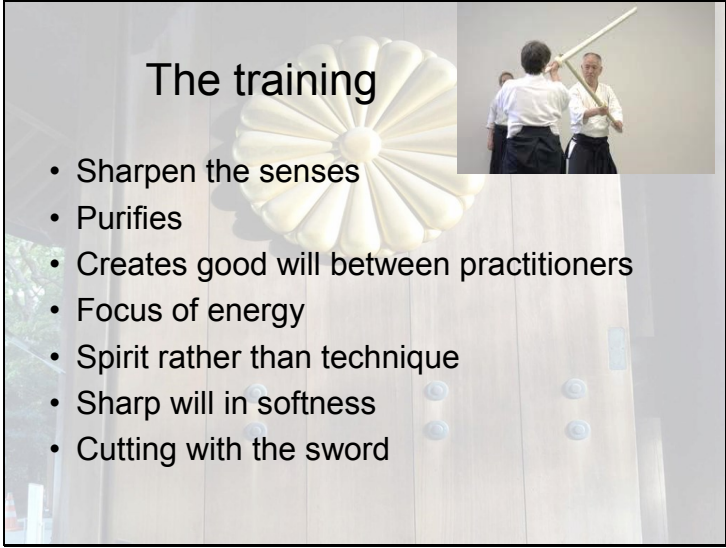
To know yourself and your opponent, smashing his fighting power, and crushing his fighting spirit is still necessary.

To find the very thing you want to protect is cruical, and I find that it connects with your center of being and your spiritual outlook.

Virtues is very important. Both as ideals to built a strong character, and as guidance in everyday life.

When I compared the virtues for the samurai and the Vikings, the similarity is exeptional.

Slide 27



The training

- Sharpen the senses
- Purifies
- Creates good will between practitioners
- Focus of energy
- Spirit rather than technique
- Sharp will in softness
- Cutting with the sword

The slide features a background image of a large, white, multi-petaled flower-like object. In the top right corner, there is a small inset photograph showing two men in white shirts and dark pants practicing with a sword (kenjutsu) on a tatami mat.

Shiseikan give me a possibility to practise with persons that have a broad understanding of Budo.

I am challenged and I have to sharpen my senses. May be the very reason for that I started with kenjutsu.

It purifies the mind

The good will among the practitioners is remarkable, and the instructions inspire the members to care about others

All men have limited amount of power, so it must be focused to achieve anything. The practise is direct reminder of how important focus of energy is, and how effective it is when energy is used correctly.

I can not be a master of Budo, like Inaba sensei, but I can polish my spirit even when my technique has its faults.

The sharp will in softness that I experience on the tatami is something I try to crasp, and transcend the knowledge to negotiations and everyday life.

Cutting with the sword makes the movements clearer, your balance and posture.

What is your will, what is your intentions, what do you fight for?

Knowing the importance of things and be able to let go of the less important is an art, that will become crucial in these times of change.

Slide 28



The power of judgement

Having the power of judgment among man's virtues
is like having a sword among the Three Sacred Treasures

Even if there is nothing to exceed
The comma-shaped bead's magnificence
And the mirror's clarity
If the sword loses it's edge
All three are useless

Man is also of this sort.

Maki Izumi no Kami

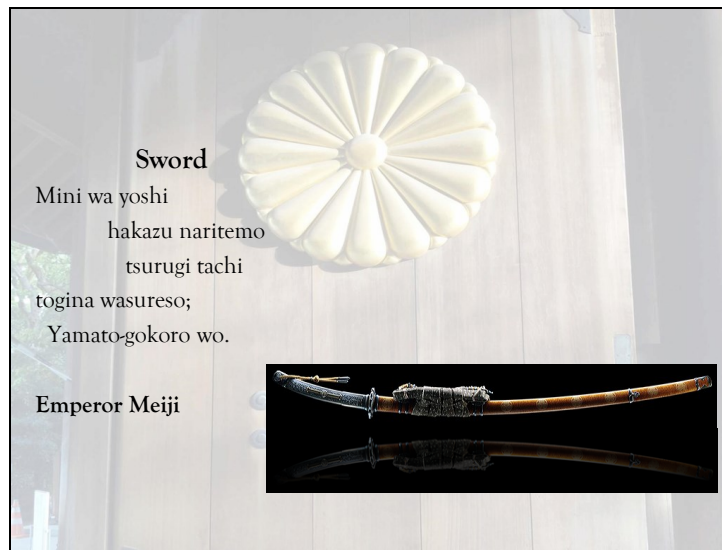
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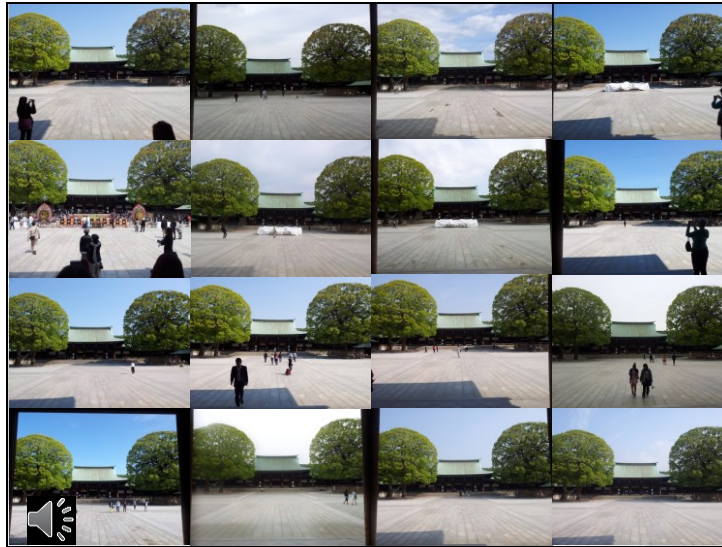
Slide 29



Mini wa yoshi
hakazu naritemo
tsurugi tachi
togina wasureso;
Yamato-gokoro wo

Although we do not carry swords around any longer
We must not forget cultivating the Budo spirit

Slide 30



Thank you for listening.