

Eulogy for Anita

It is tremendously sad, but at the same time an honour to be present here for Anita's funeral and to speak a little about her and what she meant to our community and to me.

I met Anita in the early 2000s, and we had some intense experiences together in our studies of Budo – particularly with Inaba sensei of the Meiji Jingu Shiseikan and good friends and teachers on the path such as Miyoko san - Inaba sensei's wife, Endo san and his wife Kazuko san, Fukutoku san, Okada san, Araya Kancho and many others at the Shiseikan. That Anita and I are of a similar age also is a connection and gives pause for thought.

It was quickly clear to me on meeting Anita that she was a woman of substance who was very capable, straight forward and direct. She was open and friendly, but had a confidence in her, clear ideas and goals, and always a plan to move forwards towards those goals.

I could tell by the dojos she had developed and ran so well, that she was an inspiring leader and a good teacher. She was also a good student, and it was always a pleasure to practice with her on the mat. I always felt I needed to give of my best when we practiced together. I am sure that many men might over the years have made the mistake of underestimating her abilities and power on the mat – and being quickly disabused! She was I think an inspiring role model for many female practitioners. Anita had a strong ego – something I think she shares with most senior practitioners of Budo. She could be a little abrupt occasionally – but it was always in pursuit of her goals.

She developed her students and created an organisation around her with the support of those such as Camilla and Jochen that is evidence of her leadership qualities.

She kindly invited me to teach a weekend in Darmstadt and was a very generous host. I also realised her business success and acumen – as we walked around Darmstadt every few hundred yards we met yet another person who knew her and stopped for a chat, or she pointed out another building (typically the brightly coloured ones) that she or her family owned!

Anita was a key person leading up to founding of ISBA – the International Shiseikan Budo Association – in 2009 and became a founding board member serving for 8 years. She hosted the ISBA seminar in Darmstadt in 2009 – Inaba sensei's final year as Kancho, and then also Strausberg in Berlin in 2012 with both Araya Kancho and Inaba Sensei.

When I took over from Jerzy Pomianowski as Chairman of ISBA after 4 years, Anita gave great support and good advice, and was also forgiving of mistakes. She organised the women's visit to Shiseikan in partnership with Josette and with the support of Sonja, which was a great success. When I found out about the programme on offer I was only sad that my sex-change operation could not happen in time!

I was also privileged to experience 3 Budo spirit seminars with Anita as primary organiser and lead by Inaba sensei. The first was in Herzogenhorn, where we had to take the snow plough up the mountain due to a couple of meters of snow! Such a stunning location and excellent organisation was graced with exceptional teaching by Inaba sensei and a real

feeling of bonding amongst the practitioners present. Anita's enthusiasm for showing off the local countryside did mean that we didn't get home on the cultural day until late into the night.

Anita had visions and dreams and was courageous enough to pursue them whole heartedly. An early one was youth projects together with the Shiseikan. So ably supported by Camilla and with the strong support of Araya Kancho, they inspired a set of teenagers to learn Japanese language and culture before a successful visit to Shiseikan. But they didn't just take, they also hosted a great return visit. I can only imagine the impact of these experiences on future generations of Budo practitioners and members of society here in Darmstadt, Mainz and Mannheim.

Maybe her final vision was that of the Himorogi Budojo in Bad Saarow near Berlin. She was not just an ideas person, but practically set about realising those ideas, gaining the support of the necessary people. This involved huge efforts and commitment, of time, resources and finance. After struggles and political battles on many fronts, Anita achieved her goal of welcoming Inaba sensei to Germany to conduct the inaugural ceremony in May 2017. And yet all this was at a cost to herself and her health – so focussed on her goals and on others that she perhaps ignored some warning signs. It was very sad that she could take part herself, but her spirit was so clearly present.

It was a great personal pleasure to be able to have dinner with her and Jochen in July last year when I was fairly close on a business trip. She was clearly thinner but seemed in good spirits and on the road to recovery, and looking forward to future projects.

So, we come together to share our sadness in Anita's life being cut short, but also to celebrate a life well lived. In addition I think it is important for many of us to build on the legacy that she has left behind and to work together and support each other. It is important to take time to mourn and to adjust to the loss of Anita, and yet we can also remember her by developing her legacy.

I would like to finish with some words sent by Inaba sensei who greatly valued Anita and the work that she put into various projects together with him:

To get good results to achieve your goals, you need to build a relationship of trust with relevant people, while taking appropriate actions in everyday life and making a consistent effort over a long time towards those goals. You cannot achieve your goals by producing a good result only once or twice a week. You will also need to accumulate concrete results of education in order to affect younger people who become your successors.

I appreciate that Anita-san has raised a fundamental issue, at the risk of her life, for those who practice Budo not only in Europe but also in Japan – to discover the true nature of genuine Budo practice. You might say, the question is what the spirit and the way of Budo training for Budo practitioners should be.

Robert Cowham, former Chairman of ISBA, 16th February 2018.

(Eulogy delivered in German with the kind help of translation by Judith Hannah Kämmer)