

Newsletter "The Source"
BUSHINDO UNIVERSITY
**"THE WAY TO ULTIMATE TRUTH FOR THE
WARRIOR WITH HEART"**
by Shihan Richard J. Van Donk

We ask for your comments, support, and personal commitments to making our training the very best anywhere in the world.

Martial arts offers many things besides self defense techniques. Very few people in society as a whole are looked up to with respect anymore. Who is going to bring our society back to a state of freedom, to remind people of the ideal of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that our forefathers fought so hard for? The Police? The Government? Lawyers? Doctors? Scientists? A person who has received a true certified Blackbelt in a martial art is still looked up to in society as someone who has discipline, commitment, and inner strength. They have proven their character and are respected as a person who could be counted on if help is needed. A blackbelt is held in awe for many things other than being able to beat someone up.

I believe that all human beings have an innate desire for freedom, contentment and a fulfilled heart. Teaching our students to live a full life while being free mentally, physically, and spiritually is our goal as instructors of the American Bujinkan Dojos. I want my students and friends, such as yourself, to never have to be in fear - whether you find yourself faced with a challenging physical encounter, on a stage giving a speech, or just plain looking into the mirror of life, we want you to be prepared.

To accomplish this we as instructors must provide and encourage the proper education to help you to make this happen for yourself and to implement it in our daily training. I teach a science called Life Enhancement Technologies™ as a division of Uni-Dynamics Transformational Seminars™ for my living, and I have created a system bridging the martial arts (mainly the BudoTaijutsu / Ninjutsu of Soke Hatsumi, combined with a little of the Decuerdas Eskrima I inherited, some groundfighting, and Enshin Ryu Iaido/Battojutsu of Soke Machida), with the Life Enhancement Technologies. I have simplified these teachings into an easy to learn and teach system: Bushindo International Martial Arts™.

Through an International Board of Directors (IBDA) will oversee the martial ranking of our Bujinkan Ninjutsu, especially the Dan rankings of Budo Taijutsu (which all come from Japan). For those who are interested we will also offer a very nice certificate from IBDA, if asked for. (For Ninjutsu ranking this will only be in addition to, not in place of, Soke Hatsumi's certificate!)

Some of you know all too well that the Bujinkan as a whole has a problem in relationship to its

obscure ranking system. Soke Hatsumi has left it up to each Shidoshi (5th Dan and above) to set their own curriculum of study and standards for grading of Budo Taijutsu. In the beginning all students below 5th dan were under the guidance of a Shidoshi. This has now seemed to have changed somewhat due to no organization in the International Bujinkan. Although we (BIMA board members) respect Soke and his decisions, we do not agree that this has been in the best interest for the Bujinkan, ourselves, or our students. A 6th kyu student who goes to Japan for two weeks and comes home a Sandan (3rd Degree Blackbelt) with a junior teaching license has hurt themselves and the Bujinkan. These actions and ones like them have created much confusion and misunderstanding among members of the Bujinkan as well as other, more structured, martial arts.

Foundations are very important in taijutsu, your checkbook, your relationships and especially in your life. You deserve a great foundation that you can count on years down the line (especially when Soke is no longer here to teach). We will continue to set the standard to help keep these traditions alive.

When properly structured a ranking system is a great measurement of ones accomplishments for hard work, determination and discipline. When combined with a detailed study plan, ranks help a person grow in ability, confidence, and knowledge that will help them for the rest of their life. Without such a complete system it is like a ship with no rudder, or a car that only turns to the left. There is an ancient proverb that says "If you don't change where you are going you will end up where you are headed". Where are we headed?

Developing the individual person, protecting others, standing up for our freedoms, and building a great community of friends helping each other to live more fully (as long as it is not harming others in the process) is what we are about. We will be growing and evolving as we go along. Bushindo™ is a master plan for martial artists and will contribute to martial artists and non-martial artists around the world. We can do this because it will be a team effort. We will not change the martial arts we have been studying, we will expand and add to them in new ways. You're going to be excited about the changes!

We are committed to giving each person studying with us the best knowledge, tools, teaching, and support you need to become the best martial artist you can be. We look forward to you joining our Masters Council someday, bringing to it your new ideas and innovations. A teacher's goal should be to help make his students even better than himself if possible. I now have students that are 7- 10th dan. I am happy and proud for them and their accomplishments.

Jan 1997 Shihan Richard Van Donk