



Zenko International

Advisor:
Sakyong Mipham, Rinpoche

Kyudo Master:
Kanjuro Shibata XX

February 29, 2008

Kyudo Friends and Family,

This year of the earth rat, Kanjuro Shibata Sensei continues to gain physical strength, and will once again travel and teach in Europe, Canada, and the United States. I feel grateful and lucky to have Sensei's teaching and guidance. Although it sometimes has to do with the details of shooting arrows, more often it is about the importance of kindness, dignity, and clear communication.

At this time, Zenko International continues to function almost entirely under Sensei's direct oversight. Last year, he expressed a desire for Oko Kyudojo, the umbrella group of European dojos, to be reunited administratively with Zenko International. That process is ongoing, and Sensei and Alex Halpern will meet with the European dojo leadership this summer at Dechen Choling in France to bring it closer to conclusion.

In recent years' annual letters, I have passed along Sensei's wish for individual dojos to check with him before inviting visiting teachers for local programs. I want to apologize to everyone for not understanding and communicating Sensei's wishes precisely and clearly enough. Sensei would like to approve all visiting teachers and programs in all of his dojos in advance, before invitations go out and plane tickets are purchased.

Sensei has strong ideas about what activities should take place in his dojos, and more importantly what the spirit is that underlies those activities. When consulted about programs in advance, Sensei often has insights about who would be a good person to lead it, and what the focus should be. His ever-improving health and strength allow him to communicate these wishes with increasing insistency. As evidence of that, Sensei stated recently that he will not continue to teach at dojos that invite other teachers without his express permission, and that those places will no longer be part of his teaching circle if such unauthorized programs go forward.

A year ago, Sensei asked me to call Don Symanski and arrange a time when Sensei could come speak with him, at Don's convenience. Don replied that he didn't have time to speak with Sensei. After returning from teaching a program at Toko Kyudojo in New York, Don collected all of his yumis and equipment from Zenko Kyudojo in Boulder, and has never returned or contacted Sensei. Given these circumstances, it is not appropriate for Don to teach in dojos that are under Shibata Sensei's direction at this time.

In Europe, several groups have invited Nobuhiro Shibata, Sensei's son-in-law and yumi-making heir, to teach in recent years. At this time, however, Sensei has not authorized Nobuhiro to teach in his dojos. Because arrangements had already been made, Sensei sanctioned Nobuhiro's spring program at the Dusseldorf dojo. Nobuhiro agreed to check with Sensei before accepting similar invitations in the future.

I apologize for the blunt nature of this letter. My intention is not to shock, but to make sure that all of Shibata Sensei's students understand very clearly how he views his relationship to his students and dojos, and what his wishes are for the future.

Sensei has big plans for Zenko International over the next couple of years, including expanded teaching and programs, and an International Conference in Boulder in 2009. If anything in this letter is unclear, please don't hesitate to contact me at scott@spanbauer.com, or 303-956-1112. As always, Shibata Sensei is very interested in hearing from his students. You can contact him directly by e-mail at KanjuroShibataXX@gmail.com, or by phone at 303-440-0603. Chances are, he will answer the phone himself with his usual "*moshi moshi*."

On behalf of Kanjuro Shibata Sensei and Zenko International,

Scott Spanbauer

Kanjuro Shibata Sensei Teaching Schedule 2008

March 28-30: Boulder, Colorado

April 11-13: Ojai, California

June 10-13: Shambhala Mountain Center, Colorado, advanced program
June 12-15: Shambhala Mountain Center, Colorado, beginners' program

July 9-13: Karme Choling, Barnet, Vermont (Sensei will give talks this year via video-conferencing in order to simplify his travel schedule.)

July 17-29: Dechen Choling, France

August 1-3: Bern, Switzerland

September 12 -14: Dorje Denma Ling, Nova Scotia