

# KUNOICHI TAIKAI 2010

when	theme	basic	intermediate	intermediate	advanced
Friday afternoon	Taijutsu	Cathy	Sabine	Frances	Gillian
		Beth	Patricia	Marie	Natascha
		Estelle	Sandra	Carol	Cathy
Saturday morning	Taijutsu &	Marie	Natascha	Sheila	Gillian
	weapons/	Sabine	Cathy	Patricia	Estelle
	Ryuha	Carol	Angeles	Beth	Frances
Saturday afternoon	Reality Budo	Natascha	Frances	Mariette	Sheila
	for women	Patricia	Beth	Sabine	Angeles
		Mariette	Carol	Marie	Natascha
Sunday	Taijutsu	Gillian	Sheila	Estelle	Mariette



September 17–19, 2010  
Hannover, Germany

*„We are proud to have presented the first women’s TaiKai, a first in the history of Bujinkan. It was held September 17-19 2010 in Hannover, Germany. There were 235 participants and 14 instructors all from 27 countries around the world! Great effort was made by many to travel a long distance for this event. Countries represented were: Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, France, England, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Austria, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. The friendships made, connections discovered, information shared, skills learned, made this event a huge success. The general atmosphere was one of fun, warmth, care, respect and above all, a commonality we all share as women training in a predominantly male art.“*

*— Sheila Haddad*



## INTERVIEW WITH SOKE

March 2010, Noda, Tokyo: Hatsumi Masaaki Sensei in Interview with Sheila Haddad, Translation (Japanese-English): Doug Wilson  
German Translation: Katrin Jansen

**Q. Sensei talks often in training, about teaching how to live, being men and women there are different roles we play in our lives, it's important I think, for women to say, teaching us how to live, how are we learning this.**

*A. Sensei feels its the same, there is no difference, no division, he feels it is important for everyone to do the same.*

**F. Sensei spricht im Training oft darüber, daß er lehrt, wie man leben soll. Als Männer und Frauen spielen wir unterschiedliche Rollen in unserem Leben. Ich denke, es ist für uns Frauen wichtig zu fragen: Wie lehrt Sensei uns zu leben. Wie lernen wir dies von ihm?**

*A. Sensei meint, es gibt keinen Unterschied, keine Trennung. Es ist wichtig, daß jede/r das gleiche tut.*

宗家: 両方は同じと思ってね、勉強している人。

**Q. There have also been a couple questions regarding the history within Bujinkan of women, and one has to do with the difference in training gi and the belt, and that history has been lost to the newer generation who is wondering what that was about, where the difference came from.**

*A. Sensei feels that it isn't lost, that there has been a merging of men and*

*women, and everybody is the same.*

**F. Es gibt immer wieder Fragen zur Geschichte der Frauen im Bujinkan. Eine hat mit den Farbunterschieden von Trainings-Gi und Gürtel zu tun, deren Hintergrund der neuen Generation verlorengegangen ist, und die sich wundert, warum das so ist, woher der Unterschied kam...**

*A. Sensei meint, daß der Hintergrund nicht verlorengegangen ist, aber daß eine Angleichung von Frauen und Männern stattgefunden hat und nun alle gleich sind.*

宗家: まあ、なくなったというはなくてね、結局、男も女、同じだとことなっているね。

**Q. Also, as in Western writings, it is difficult to find history of kunoichi, maybe there is more written in Japanese, that's not translated, but many women are wondering what was kunoichi life like in the old days, what weapons did they use, how were they trained, what kind of training did they have.**

*A. It's difficult to say, because according to the generation things will change, how they lived will change, what weapons they used changes, so it's an aspect of the actual period, of evolution of the period.*

**F. Es ist in westlichen Texten schwierig, etwas über die Geschichte der Kunoichi zu erfahren. Vielleicht gibt es mehr auf Japanisch, das nicht übersetzt ist? Viele Frauen wollen wissen, wie Kunoichi in früheren Zeiten lebten, welche Waffen sie benutzten, wie sie trainiert waren, welche Art von Training sie hatten...**

*A. Das ist schwierig zu sagen, denn in jeder Generation änderten sich die Dinge: wie sie lebten, welche Waffen sie benutzten. Es ist also abhängig von*

der jeweiligen Zeitepoche, von Entwicklungen in der Epoche.

宗家:それは、やっぱり時代によって使い方が変わってくるという話ね。生活について変わるから言えないですね。

A. There are no real difference between men and women, for example, there are men who are (like) women now.

A. Es gibt keine wirklichen Unterschiede zwischen Männern und Frauen, zum Beispiel gibt es heutzutage Männer, die (wie) Frauen sind.

だからね、女性も男性も僕考えたらね、例えば、男性に今にニューハーフがいるでしょう。

A. So Sensei said earlier that it is important for humankind to continue, and that women play a very important role in that. So maybe men are starting to feel that as well, therefore, you have men who are becoming (like) women because they see that the role of the women is very, very important and that it is critical for the next generation, for the future generations.

A. Sensei sagte zuvor, daß es für die Menschheit wichtig ist weiterzumachen, und daß Frauen dabei eine sehr wichtige Rolle spielen. Vielleicht beginnen Männer dies auch zu fühlen; daher gibt es Männer, die (wie) Frauen werden, weil sehen, daß die Rolle der Frauen sehr, sehr wichtig ist, und daß dies entscheidend ist für die nächste Generation, für die kommenden Generationen.

そうすれと、先が多いね 結局、女性のほうはこれから地球には責任を持つてるといふ説があるでしょう。やっぱり、その生面対が生きたいという意味から、変わらなくてはいけない。だから、男性が女性になっている。

Q. So I am understanding that we as women training in Bujinkan, in the current situation, we adapt to being women, what kind of attacks women have and the kind of skills they need to develop specific to women. That is no different to the women training in history as well, adapting to their culture and their times.

A. Yes, that is fine, do as you would according to the present, to now.

F. Wenn wir als Frauen im Bujinkan trainieren, in der gegenwärtigen Situation, tun wir das aus der Perspektive von Frauen: welche Art von Angriffen wir zu erwarten haben, und welche Fähigkeiten wir entwickeln müssen, frauenspezifisch. Dies ist kein Unterschied zu den Frauen, die in früheren Zeiten trainiert haben und sich ebenso ihrer Kultur und ihren Zeiten angepaßt haben.

A. Ja, das ist okay. Macht es, wie es für Jetzt, für die Gegenwart paßt.

宗家:宜しい

Q. What is Sensei's definition of the woman warrior?

A. Maybe Sensei's generation is different from the current generation, but he feels that the definition of a woman warrior is to be a woman, just be a woman, be woman, don't be afraid to be a woman, be honest in that, and women have different roles, they have the role of wives, the role of sisters, the role of mothers, these different roles, please be pure in those roles.

F. Was ist Senseis Verständnis von einem weiblichen Krieger (woman warrior)/einer Kriegerin?

A. Senseis Generation ist vielleicht anders als die gegenwärtige Generation,

*doch er meint, daß eine Kriegerin zu sein heißt, eine Frau zu sein. Einfach eine Frau zu sein. Keine Scheu zu haben, eine Frau zu sein, ehrlich darin zu sein. Frauen haben verschiedene Rollen, als Ehefrau, Schwester, Mutter dies sind unterschiedliche Rollen. Bitte seid unverfälscht in diesen Rollen!*

宗家：女性のあれですか、女性の武士ですか？僕らの年代のいっとたらね、年代にとると違うけれども、やっぱり、女性は女性であて欲しいね、そのほうが男性合うね。どっちかというと、同じだね。女性というのはセックスと限らないわけ。ママ、そういう兄弟 そのハート結局女性だね。

*A. It's not that you just think the woman is a „hole in one“. So this way of writing the character for kunoichi has a connotation to that. So ku no ichi, right, for example, „hole in one“ so, um...thinking about that.*

*A. Es ist nicht so, daß ihr einfach denken sollt, eine Frau sei einfach nur ein Loch („Hole in one“, wörtl. „Loch in eins“, Hole-in-one ist ein Terminus aus dem Golf-Spiel und bedeutet das erfolgreiche Spielen einer Bahn mit einem einzigen Schlag, also das „Einlochen“ des Abschlags). Die Schreibweise für das Kanji „Kunoichi“ steht damit in Zusammenhang. „Ku no ichi“ ... ja, man könnte sagen „Einlochen“, ... hmh, darüber muß ich nachdenken.*

だから、女性はホールインワンだと思ってる人がいるけれども、そうじゃないね。くの一のいち という字はそうだから。ホールインワンが一つ多いから。。。

**Q. There has been comment from some women, they do not want to participate in the Kunoichi Taikai, which is fine, and their comment is they would rather train with men than with women.**

*A. It's the freedom of the individual, it's up to them.*

**F. Es gibt immer wieder Frauen, die sagen, daß sie nicht am Kunoichi Taikai teilnehmen wollen, was natürlich okay ist. Ihr Argument ist, daß sie lieber mit Männern als mit Frauen trainieren.**

*A. Das ist die Freiheit des Individuums; jede kann entscheiden, wie sie denkt.*

宗家：その人の個人の自由でわかれば。。。

*A. Sensei feels that it is good to have your own thoughts and your own kind of feelings and morals and that type of thing, but its also good to come, and not always follow your own mind all the time, experience it, to come and see what it is like, to experience it, it might expand your field of view. You might find a new way of looking at things, for the purpose of the experience.*

*A. Sensei meint, es ist gut, wenn jeder seine eigenen Überlegungen anstellt und seine eigenen Gefühle und Vorstellungen etc. hat. Aber es ist auch manchmal gut, nicht immer nur der eigenen Nase zu folgen, sondern etwas ausprobieren, dabeisein, sehen wie es ist, es selbst erfahren. Das kann dazu beitragen, den eigenen Horizont zu erweitern. Ihr könnt vielleicht eine neue Sichtweise auf die Dinge entdecken – der Erfahrung halber.*

宗家：だから、やっぱりそれに偏って自分の考えはどうだけでも、この大会のことによって、もう少し女性としてまた大きくというな視野が広がってくることなってくれば僕はいいんじゃないかと思う。

*A. Again, as he said, the role of the woman is very, very important and because of that, this event, its the first time we have an international event such as this, and this is for the purpose of fostering the value of a woman and women in training, in martial arts and in the Bujinkan.*

*A. Sensei betonte nochmals, daß die Rolle der Frauen sehr, sehr wichtig*

*sei, und daher auch diese Veranstaltung. Es ist das erste Mal, daß wir eine solche internationale Veranstaltung haben, und das Ziel ist, die Bedeutung der Frauen und (besonders) der Frauen im Training, in den Kampfkünsten, im Bujinkan zu fördern.*

宗家: 今度は世界的な大会でしょう女性にとって男より大きな違いがあるわけ。だからそういう意味で。。。やっぱり武神館の世界の女性集ってやっぱり女性の生き方、価値、才能を見せてはいけない。

*A. Sensei feels that fighting is not about power, power is in the weapons, and weapons is just pushing one button and a woman can do that just as well. But what is important is that women have this sixth sense, this ability, this feeling...*

*A. Sensei sagt, daß es beim Kämpfen nicht um stark sein/Macht ausüben geht. Stark sein kann man schnell mit einer Waffe – man braucht nur einmal abzurücken, und das kann eine Frau genauso tun. Was aber wichtig ist, ist, daß Frauen den sechsten Sinn haben, diese Fähigkeit, dieses Gefühl.*

宗家: だから、今ね戦いにはパワーがなくなっている。武器はパワーにしてる。ブツトンの一つで、女性でも押せる。何かを感じをするか女性が強い。

*A. Sensei feels it should be a Taikai for this fostering of this feeling, in Japanese this word is „kan“, this ability to sense, to sense violence or to sense attack, this type of thing, Sensei would like it to be for this purpose.*

*A. Sensei meint, das Taikai solle genau dieses Gefühl fördern. Im Japanischen ist das Wort dafür „kan“, die Fähigkeit, zu fühlen: Gefahr zu fühlen, einen Angriff zu fühlen... Sensei würde das Taikai gerne unter dieser Ausrichtung sehen.*

宗家: だから、どっちかにすると、暴力的な、パワー的なことでわなく、予知する大会になって欲しい。

*A. In nature, the natural evolution of things, those things that are strong, those things that have this ability will survive.*

*A. In der Natur, in der Evolution sind jene stark, die diese Fähigkeit haben. Jene werden überleben.*

宗家: だから命という物は、昔からいい物が結局、残そう、残そうと言うセンスを努力した。

*Q. That was my next question ...we would like to see this...this women only... it is the first one, and probably the only one, and since Sensei has said it is an important one, so I was wondering what he felt was the importance, the important point of it.*

*A. Sensei feels its great that you have this opportunity to create this opportunity, not for the purpose of violence or training for fighting, this type of thing, but for the purpose of cultivating our heart, mind and bodies for communication of this type of feeling.*

*F. Das ist im Grunde meine nächste Frage: Wir wollen dieses Taikai ausschließlich für Frauen veranstalten. Es ist das erste, und wahrscheinlich das einzige Mal, und da Sensei gesagt hat, daß es eine wichtige Veranstaltung ist, würde ich gerne wissen, was seiner Meinung nach das Wichtige daran ist.*

*A. Sensei meint, daß es großartig ist, daß ihr diese Möglichkeit habt, daß ihr euch diese Möglichkeit geschaffen habt, nicht mit dem Ziel von Gewaltausübung oder Kampf-Training etc., sondern mit dem Ziel, unser Herz, unser*

*Bewußtsein und unsere Körper miteinander für die Verbreitung dieses Gefühls zu entwickeln.*

宗家:だから暴力的物ではなくて、未来のことをお互いに考えなくてはいけない。

*A. So again, its about this aspect of the future of mankind, of humankind, the woman's role is very, very important and Sensei would like the value of this Taikai, the purpose of that, to be based upon this and this cultivation of this feeling.*

*A. Also, nochmal: Es geht um die Zukunft der Menschheit, der Menschen. Die Rolle der Frau ist sehr, sehr wichtig. Sensei sieht die Bedeutung des Taikai in der Wertschätzung der Frau und in der Entwicklung dieses Sinnes.*

宗家:一般的に思われている格闘技は男性が色々多くてしょうがない。ようするに女性が持つ子供を抱える、やっぱり地球に大切。未来がある。

**Q. I don't have any more questions, if Sensei has any more he would like to say to us.**

*A. That's it, he doesn't have anymore to say.*

**Ich habe keine weiteren Fragen, wenn Sensei uns nicht noch etwas mitteilen möchte ...**

*Das ist alles, er möchte nicht mehr sagen.*

宗家:どうぞ

**Ok, we'll go forward.**

**Okay, dann beenden wir das Gespräch hier.**

*Yes, and we'll talk later about more things.*

*Ja, wir sprechen ein anderes Mal über weitere Dinge.*



## INSTRUCTORS

### Angeles Bordon Mendoza

Spain (Las Palmas, Canary Islands)  
b. May 1969



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**Years training martial arts?**

22 years training in martial arts

**What arts have you trained in?**

Bujinkan only

**What year did you start your Bujinkan training?**

1988

**Rank in Bujinkan?**

14. Dan

**What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?**

"I didn't have any particular reason to begin training.

I was looking for something to complement my life and I found Bujinkan."

### Beth Zimmerman

USA

b. June 1981



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**Years training martial arts?**

9 years training in martial arts

**What arts have you trained in?**

Bujinkan only

**What year did you start your Bujinkan training?**

2001

**Rank in Bujinkan?**

10. Dan

**What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?**

"The Martial arts are something which has always interested me, but the feeling I received from other arts didn't matched my spirit, the Bujinkan did! At first it was something "fun", intriguing and something to do; as I studied more I felt a part of it, not just doing it! As my life has been given many wonderful gifts through the study of Bujinkan Budou Taijutsu, I feel I am indebted to the Bujinkan to study correctly, so my life and others will continually be good, and maybe pass along some of the things I have learned!"



## Carol Koch

USA

b. August 1961



### Years training martial arts?

32 years training in martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

Kung Fu, Bujinkan. Introduced to the Bujinkan in 1981 while studying other arts.

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

began training exclusively in the Bujinkan in 1985

### Rank in Bujinkan?

12. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

“As a child, I grew up in places like India and Southeast Asia where there was often civil unrest and life could be very dangerous. But these places also offered glimpses into deeply spiritual communities. As a result, I wanted to develop a sense of safety and balance in my life so I sought out a realistic, self defense, non-tournament oriented art that included a strong spiritual base.”

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

“Keep training! The Bujinkan honors the natural capabilities of women more than any other art I’ve explored and every year Soke’s teaching gets deeper and more profound. There’s never a dull moment!”

## Cathy Lewis

USA

b. August 1956



### Years training martial arts?

27 years training in martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

Budo (21 yrs), Kung Fu San Soo (6 yrs), Aikido (3 months), Tai Chi Chuan (2 yrs). Brown Belt in Kung Fu San Soo. Bujinkan

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1990

### Rank in Bujinkan?

15. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

“I have been asked often why I train and why the Bujinkan. I only know that I am supposed to. What has kept me going is knowing there is infinite learning within this the art, the awareness and connection is extremely important to living today. I love that I continue to learn how to change and adapt in situations and hope to grow very old with this art so I can remain youthful and flexible.”  
 “There is a quote by Eleanor Roosevelt: ‘A woman is like a tea bag, you never know how strong she is until she gets in hot water.’ It reinforces for me what Hatsumi Sensei says when he states he ‘teaches people how to live’.

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

“I encourage each woman to be patient and unfold what is inside you, train with childlike curiosity so you can discover the warrior within and not be afraid of it. Love and appreciate that which is within you, both the dark and the light, the weakness and the strength, so it cannot be used against you.”

## Estelle Padeloup

Canada/France  
b. November 1972




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### Years training martial arts?

13 years training in martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

only Bujinkan

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1997

### Rank in Bujinkan?

13. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

"First for the simplicity and the complexity in a same time for each movement. And after my interest growing up because for the works I need to do on myself all the time, and the adaptation we need to work on every moment of our practice. And of course for the impact this art and Hatsumi Sensei made on my life."

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

"Keep going. Believe in yourself and don't compare with the others. It's your path, just do it for yourself and for nobody else. Be proud to be a woman in martial world, you will be a light for the others."

## Frances Haynes

Australia  
b. October 1959




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### Years training martial arts?

30 years training in martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

Women's self-defence, Karate, Jujutsu, Hapkido, Kung Fu (ca. 2 years in each art)

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1990

### Rank in Bujinkan?

15. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

"Bujinkan just makes sense to my mind, body and spirit with its radical flexibility, constant freshness and effectiveness. And what a gift to do something completely new every training session for 20 years yet still feel like I am on the top layer of a chocolate box that keeps filling up the more I eat!"

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

"Your primary teacher provides a foundation only - be creative and find ways to train outside class to build physical and mental confidence. Learn to experiment and 'steal your ninjutsu' from many sources. Gambatte! Keep turning up whether life is easy or hard and let the essence of bujinkan transform you. You have to be in it to win it."

## Gillian Booth

Australia  
b. October 1958



### Years training martial arts?

38 years training in martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

Judo for 15 years achieving a black belt, becoming State and National Champion and representing Australia at international competitions including two World Championships; Hapkido, Kung Fu, Aikido and the Women's School of Self-Defence, but none beyond kyu grade level.

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1993

### Rank in Bujinkan?

15. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

"I had become disillusioned in my martial arts practice and felt that it might be time to stop training. Yet I kept going - thinking, if I keep going something will change. Not long after it did. It was then that I discovered the authentic martial arts of Masaaki Hatsumi and the Bujinkan. The Bujinkan seemed to offer the opportunity to not only incorporate things that I had learnt in other arts, it had such a wide curriculum, I felt that my eyes, heart and mind were opened and that I could be on a learning curve for many years to come (I was right)!!! The Bujinkan has also enabled me to connect with many kindred spirits - we may be quirky but it would seem that we are certainly not alone!"

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

"Honour your intuition, acknowledge your fears, while moving forwards..."

## Mariette van der Vliet

The Netherlands  
b. August 1955



### Years training martial arts?

28 years training martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

Taekwondo, Bujinkan

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1984

### Rank in Bujinkan?

15. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

"I first became interested when I read an article about Ninjutsu in a martial arts magazine. In this magazine, there was an announcement for a ninjutsu training weekend. I was curious, so I went to check it out. It was a great experience, and I was hooked ever since."

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

"You will find difficulties on your path like in daily life but don't let anybody stop you, keep going."

## Marie-Valérie Saumon

France

b. December 1962



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### Years training martial arts?

26 years training in martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

Bujinkan only

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1984

### Rank in Bujinkan?

12. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

“Since my teen years, I would like to train Martial art but I didn’t know which one. I saw ninja’s movies and I was interested. First french Ninjutsu’s Dojo was near my home. It was very tough at the beginning and meeting Mariette and Natacha at the first french Tai Kai in 1993 has been the most great souvenir after meeting Hatsumi Sensei.”

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

“Don’t think you’re a man. You’re a woman: so be proud of it. Use your brain and beware of your heart: it must be strong. Stay as a woman with a male brain. Keep going no matter what BS you might hear from other guys who trained with you.”

## Natascha Tomarkin-Morgan

U.K / Switzerland

b. October 1968



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### Years training martial arts?

35 years training in martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

Judo (1. Kyu), Bujinkan Budo & Ninja arts

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1986

### Rank in Bujinkan?

15. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

“The concept of nature was fascinating.”

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

“Enjoy Life! – Be Happy!”

## Sabine Fröhlich

Germany

b. February 1961



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### Years training martial arts?

21 years training in martial arts (plus 4 years Judo as a teenager)

### What arts have you trained in?

Judo, Bujinkan

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1989

### Rank in Bujinkan?

15. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

"My husband introduced me to Bujinkan and when I met Sensei Dr. Hatsumi the first time, it changed my life completely."

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

"For me the important things are living values. The best or nicest things in the world you can not see or touch or buy, you must feel them with your heart. Beware the laughing in your heart."

## Sandra Elster

Germany

b. November 1980



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### Years training martial arts?

23 years training in martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

Judo, Jiu Jitsu, Tae Kwon Do, Bujinkan; Greenbelt in Judo

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1999

### Rank in Bujinkan?

10. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

"My friend and I decided to do a world tour after high school and she came up with the idea that we had to learn self-defense. That's how I attended my first Bujinkan classes. In the end, we never did the world tour, and I went to Japan for three months after finishing high school, instead. Since then, Japan and the Bujinkan haven't let me go."

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

"Train like a women, be a cat."

## Sheila Haddad

Germany/USA  
b. October 1954

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### Years training martial arts?

21 years training martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

Jujutsu - 7th Dan, Japanese Sword - 5th Dan, Bujinkan

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1990

### Rank in Bujinkan?

15. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

"I was attracted to the freedom, the freedom in thinking and being creative, the freedom of movement, the freedom of little tradition, and the freedom of Hatsumi Soke's heart. I enjoyed learning and understanding the past traditions of many styles, and the application to today."

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

"Be clear on why you train, what your goals are and to re-evaluate them as your grow. Be yourself, know yourself, train for yourself, smile, laugh a lot and have fun."

## Patricia Witteman

The Netherlands  
b. March 1967

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### Years training martial arts?

20 years training in martial arts

### What arts have you trained in?

Ninjutsu, Taichi, Bajutsu

### What year did you start your Bujinkan training?

1990

### Rank in Bujinkan?

12. Dan

### What was your interest or motivation to train in Bujinkan?

"At the moment i started training ninjutsu there was no specific motivation, I just wanted to train martial arts. Later I found out that it was really great for me compared to other martial arts. The training/martial art itself, the people, the freedom, the fun and the deepness of it all made me stay and keep training. Very special for me is also to train in foreign countries, meet people and learn from each other."

### Any message you would like to share with other women training or thinking of training?

"If you want to train, train, go for it, have fun. The goals don't always have to be high, in my opinion, if you like what you do, you will keep training when the feeling is good. I think this is the best way to learn and to get better."

## WOMEN WHO HAVE LED THE WAY

### Mariko Hatsumi

Japan  
b. 1932



- Trained in Bujinkan from the time she and Soke were married, until her late 50's.
- She danced traditional Japanese Buyo dance since she was a child and continued that long past the time she stopped Bujinkan training.

#### MEMORIES FROM NOGUCHI SENSEI:

Noguchi Sensei recalls that in the earliest Shidoshikai training events, all of the senior students were numbered - for no clear reason, they were just numbered. Mariko was Number 1, etc. and so on down the line - Noguchi Sensei was Number 7. Noguchi Sensei recalls that she always chose him as Uke when they were doing an Embu demonstration, and didn't pull any punches - she also used her nails a lot, which Noguchi Sensei has painful memories of.

### Bonnie Malmstrom

USA  
b. November 1943



- Started Bujinkan training in 1979
- First visit to Japan in 1983  
Okusan (Mariko Hatsumi) and Bonnie would spend together, talking and shopping.
- Bonnie was the first non Japanese woman to pass the Godan test.
- Her last rank was Judan (10. Dan)
- She hosted 5 US Taikai's.

"Bonnie passed away in March 2007 from cancer."

#### BONNIE MALMSTROM'S BIOGRAPHY

Bonnie was November 11, 1943, as Bonnie Gay Mitchell, in Atlanta Georgia. She was raised in Atlanta and was married to Robert (Bobby) Garmon. They had two children, a daughter, Tammy Gay and a son, Jeret Bame. During this marriage they lived in Atlanta, Minnesota (where Jeret was born) and in Germany while Bobby was in the Army.

Bonnie and Bud Malmstrom met in January 1974. Bonnie started Training in Ninjutsu in 1979, because it was the only way she could spend time with Bud. They went to Japan for the first time in 1983 where she met Hatsumi Sensei and Okusan (Mrs. Hatsumi). Bonnie stole their hearts as she did with everyone she met. She sang "You Are My Sunshine" with Hatsumi Sensei at Yumoa Mura banquet and it became their theme song throughout her training. She was our 'sunshine'. Bonnie could not walk into a room with brightening the whole place. She had a magnificent energy that made us all feel a little more special because she was around us.

Many of us experience a similar feeling when we are around Hatsumi Sensei. Somehow we just feel warmer and more comfortable just being in his presence. She had that to a lesser degree but even Hatsumi Sensei could feel it. Okusan and Bonnie had a connection of deep sisterly love. Man they loved to shop! I have walked into my bedroom with the two of them sitting on our bed and they were crying. When I asked what was going on, I was told to leave because they were talking about their husbands. They both had a fondness for their pets and treated them like children. They would send pictures of them back and forth as if showing a relative the progress of a child. It was great to witness this relationship and the love she had for her Japanese sister.

American Bujinkan members would call our house and talk to Bonnie about their relationships and she would advise them on how to improve themselves. I was always amazed at how she could create lasting relationship with people she met only one time at a training event. She was the 'Mother of American Bujinkan'. She had a way of making everyone she met feel special to her.

Bonnie was the first non-Japanese woman to pass the Godan Test. She eventually attained the rank of Judan (10th degree black belt). She was the director of 5 very successful Tai Kai in Atlanta. This is where she met most of the training members from around America.

Bonnie Malmstrom was diagnosed with breast cancer in June of 2004 and died from complications of the cancer spreading to her liver and spine March 12, 2007. There will be a hole in the heart of Bujinkan Taijutsu in America [and all of Bujinkan worldwide] because she is not with us.

– *Bud Malmstrom*

## Abi Allen

USA

b. July 1949



- Bujinkan training since 1982
- Last rank in 2001: 13. Dan
- Passion about: Argentine Tango

"Abi passed away March 2011 from cancer."

### A MESSAGE TO MY FELLOW KUNOICHI

Years ago, I was strong, physically attractive and self reliant. Soke once told me that I was too strong. Now all of that has vanished. How? No, it was not my cancer. That is only a manifestation. It was caused by emotions. All my life I have swallowed my emotions to stay „strong“. The power of these pent up emotions have eaten me up from the inside out. The last ten years have been especially trying and destroyed the last of my health. Always know that your most dangerous enemy is the self. I believe that our training is to teach us to control ourselves, not others. During my battle for life, I have learned more about life and love and true values than I did in the whole rest of my life. It has truly helped me „polish my heart“ and learn to let go. I hope to be able to plant some seeds here by which you all may benefit.

Emotions are much more powerful than muscle. Women are well endowed with the use of emotions and should cultivate them. Soke has told us this many times yet I do not see it being put to use. You all know that without unbalancing an opponent, all you have is speed and power (stupid). Use of emotions will unbalance better than physical contact. For an exercise, try doing a simple technique while changing from one emotion to another.



This will also help put you in control of your own emotions instead of them ruling your life.

Also, please drop the idea of one person being „better“ than another. Soke said long ago that a child could walk up and kill him. Does that make the child „better“ than Soke. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses and all can gift you with some tidbit of knowledge (even if it is what NOT to do). Listen and watch with your heart and not your deceiving brain. All of us are growing. None is perfect.

May life bless you with wisdom and love,

– *Abi Allen*

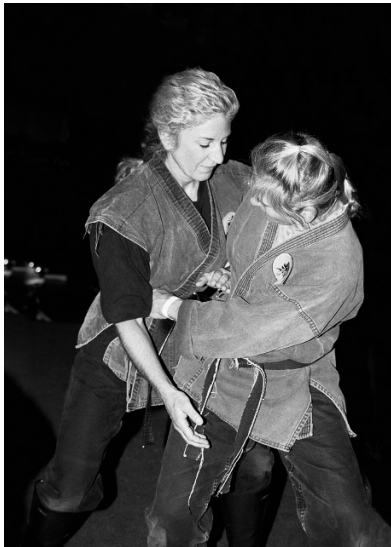


Photo by Michael Waschak

Sheila Haddad (left), Abi Allen (right)

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