

Shinsuke Yatomi

...was born on November 29, 1961, in Osaka, Japan. He was the second child of Shinpei and Kazuko Yatomi.

Shin loved animals of all kinds and could recite all the statistics on Godzilla and his enemies. He raised pigeons, giant beetles from larvae and had a crazy poodle named Lucky.

His father was serious about study and about kendo, in the spirit of Bunbu-ryodo, the integration of military and liberal arts. Shin began practicing kendo in elementary school and joined the Ashiya City Kendo Club.

Shin attended Konan School, a private boys school in Ashiya (near Kobe), from first grade until college. He met one of his lifelong friends, Kenji Hagiwara, in junior high school.

In their third year of college, Kenji was diagnosed with leukemia and was expected to live only a few months. Shin wanted to help his friend and so began to follow his mother's faith in Nichiren Buddhism. Every day, he rode the train and several buses to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with Kenji who was hospitalized in Osaka. One of Shin's most treasured memories was watching Kenji regain his health after six months in the hospital.

At the same time, Shin was studying for his exams and continuing with kendo. He studied every possible moment, even while eating or taking a bath. After a full day, he would come home and be tutored in English by his older sister, Aiko.

During his last year in college, Shin passed his san dan (third-degree black belt in kendo). He also had started surfing. Being outside in nature, he said, recharged his batteries.

After graduating from college with high marks, Shin entered the master's program at the University of New York at Buffalo, graduating in 1988 from there with an MA, specializing in international trade and geography. Shortly after, he went to work for an international banking institute in Manhattan.

Also in 1988, while still in New York, he married Joni Herman. They divorced in 1994.

In 1989, Shin moved to Santa Monica when he accepted a position in the SGI-USA's books section. He continued with SGI-USA publications in various key positions, including translator and writer. He was dedicated from the beginning but knew that his English-language skills were weak, so he read voraciously and took class after class in English literature, American literature and the classics (including Chaucer in the original language and the literature of the Bible). At one point, he threw himself into the study of Latin with the purpose of developing his writing.

Shin also studied Buddhism diligently—the writings of Nichiren Daishonin and the speeches and works of SGI President Ikeda—and also delved into Buddhism as traditionally understood in the West, centering on English translations of the Pali Canon.

Shin respected the power of the written word to convey the profundity of Nichiren Buddhism and, through his own determination and effort, he harnessed that power. (On the reverse side is his abbreviated bibliography.)

On June 26, 1996, Shin proudly became a United States citizen. That same year, he fell in love with Carolyn Tynan and stood side by side with her in their shared commitment to the SGI's movement for peace.

In 2002, Shin began practicing and teaching kendo again at Osaka Sangyo University of Los Angeles in Studio City. He competed in the 2002 U.S. Nationals as a member of the Southern California Kendo Organization team and placed in various other tournaments. At the 64th annual Los Angeles Nisei Week Nikkei games in 2004, Shin won first place in the yudansha (3th and 4th degree) division.

In 2004, Shin was appointed SGI-USA study department leader, playing a proactive role in a program of Buddhist learning that has inspired many. In 2005, he was appointed managing editor of *Living Buddhism*, the organization's study magazine.

Shin was also an enthusiastic cook—Mexican, Japanese (of course), French and especially Italian. He loved to cook for his friends.

On October 31, 2006, doctors confirmed that Shin had non-small cell andocarbonoma of the lungs. That was the beginning of a new campaign—not against death but, as Shin wrote, “to live fully each day.”

On April 21, he and Carolyn were married.

Shin is survived by his wife, Carolyn, mother, Kazuko; sister, Aiko Kodo, and older half brother, Jun Yatomi.