



SHINTAIDO OF AMERICA

Summer 1989 Newsletter

San Francisco, California

How Does Attacking Help?

Editor's note: The following are excerpts from a panel discussion that was held during the 1988 Fall Gasshuku at Cape Cod last year. Questions came from the participants and were based upon the theme, "How does attacking help?"

On the Panel: Martine Breant, Junior Instructor and Special Guest Instructor at the Shintaido of America 1988 Fall Gasshuku; Robert Breant, General Instructor and Head Instructor of the Shintaido Federation of France; H.F. Ito, Master Instructor, President of SoA, Head Instructor of Shintaido of Great Britain; and Michael Thompson, General Instructor and Head Instructor of SoA.

Discussion moderated by Bill Burtis.

Translators: Japanese-English, Lee Seaman; French-English, Olivier Maurel.

BB: To Martine. What does it mean when you have problems or you are afraid of attacking people in a *keiko*?

MB: I'm happy. I don't worry. I think the most important thing is when we attack somebody we enter into his universe, which doesn't belong to us.

That means you have to leave your universe to go through the other person's universe, and that is not very secure.

But at this point there are two ways to go about it. If you go through somebody's universe, you might have that person coming into your universe, too. You have to accept this person. I think that it is mandatory to go through that in order to grow in life.

BB: Ito, sometimes we feel frustrated in some way, and anger comes along and becomes a kind of rage. How do we fit rage into Shintaido and the ideas of "life exchange" and loving your partner while being sincere, pure and accurate in our attack?

Ito: I'd like to talk a little bit about challenging our limits. In Shintaido *keiko*, particularly in the *kaiho-kei keiko* (an open, more demanding practice) we talk about and going beyond our limits. There is quite a paradox here, because as you participate in the *kaiho-kei keiko*, your body becomes stronger and stronger. That means that your limits are pushed further, or your wall that you have to break through becomes thicker. That's the paradox. So this

makes the timing for the *goreisha* (instructor) really difficult, because when you see that someone is almost to their limits, if you don't get them through today, they may never go through. That makes it difficult, because if you're too kind, your students don't go very far. But if you use this better timing, sometimes your students think you're cruel. Anyway, I'm sure the person who wrote this question has experienced much frustration from this point in *keiko*, but I want you to know that it's not so easy for the instructors either. Because they have to choose very

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Attacking, from page 1

carefully and give tremendous thought to when exactly to challenge this person so they have the best chance of breaking through into a new world.

MT: I have a little anecdote. This is way back in the golden days in San Francisco. Ito was teaching *tsuki* (punching) and *gedan* block to a small band of maniacs in Golden Gate Park and Robert's brother Claude happened to be in the country and I ended up doing *kumite* (partner practice) with him. Now, 10 or 15 years afterward, I can appreciate the pleasure that he probably took in the confrontation

"In Shintaido attacking means being really sincere and pure. It's expressing all of your energy in the direction of the receiver during just one attack."

between the street thug from Paris and this cerebral East coast WASP professor doing mortal *tsuki* and blocking *kumite*. He was attacking me, and I was being quite gentlemanly. But then I realized that he was really trying to hit me. And not only trying to hit me, but was trying to hurt me (laughter). There was nothing pure about his attack. He was making a point. And when that point struck home, I became very angry. I would say furious. And for the next 10 minutes I was trying to break his arm. I was hitting it as hard as I could, and trying to hit it in the most vulnerable places. Finally we both got exhausted and I looked over, and Ito was rolling in the grass, laughing. He said: "finally, your true nature came out! Yes that was it. But Claude is no longer a street thug, he's

a sweet person (laughter).

BB: Robert, how should we deal with the contradiction of self-sacrifice and self-protectiveness? How do we balance our desire to help (through attacking), which also involves making ourselves vulnerable, with our natural instinct to run away and hide or protect ourselves?

point of view, or a *karateka's* (karate practitioner's) point of view, it won't be efficient this way. In that case, the purpose is to trick the adversary in order to knock him out. In Shintaido, there is no way to trick the adversary, it's just giving all your energy to him.

If I attack Ito *Sensei* or Aoki *Sensei*, I engage all my life in it.



RB: What we mean by "receiving" and "attacking" is somehow wrong. I think it's not like in boxing or whatever martial art. In Shintaido, attacking means being really sincere and pure. What we want to study in Shintaido through attacking is learning about sincerity, it's expressing all of your energy in the direction of the receiver during just one attack. Of course, from a boxer's

When I express my attack, I get the feeling that I am going to meet death, because I give whatever I have. This is the way we study attack in Shintaido.

The receiver must accept this attack, and he must want to go through the other person's universe. At that moment, the ideas of sacrifice and protection are completely transcended, as

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Attacking *continued*

you go into another realm. In that universe, this contradiction between sacrificing oneself and protecting oneself doesn't exist. In life, there is always a point where we don't have any choice any more. Once you reach this point, you can't go back. That's called following one's own destiny.

To summarize, I want to give you a little story. It's an American Indian story about a young Indian who wants to know liberty. He goes to see the eagle, to ask him what liberty is. The eagle goes very high in the sky, closes his wings, and lets himself drop down almost to the ground. And then at the last possible moment he opens his wings, and flies again. Then the eagle comes back and says to the boy: "I am a prisoner of the air - that is my liberty."

BB: Martine; how can you create a situation where someone who doesn't like to receive, who only likes to attack, can learn how to receive?

MB: I sometimes have this situation, in *boh* courses. One possibility is to let the person be attacked by somebody who is very strong, and so they're going to be obliged, somehow, to receive this attack. It's what Ito *Sensei* was saying, about when somebody doesn't really want to go through that wall, they keep resisting being willing to receive, and so you have to find a way to open them up. I don't think you have only one possibility when someone doesn't want to accept and attack. It depends on the situation. For example, sometimes it happens that when you know someone is really close to being able to receive well, but something just prevents him or her from doing that, one way is to let this person be attacked by someone very honest. Then they'll be strong. Something happens when you have to save your life. It happened to me. I really studied how to attack this way. After a few years of *bohjutsu*, I still didn't attack properly. So one day Robert attacked me and he got angry.

Maybe he wasn't, but he pretended he was angry and he started to attack me like mad, really like mad, so that I thought he was going to kill me.

RB: Don't tell everybody! (laughter).

**"Learning is to engrave
Truth in your Heart, and
Teaching means talking
about your Hopes and
Dreams with your
friend."**

-Aragon

MB: So finally there was nothing I could do. So I thought, "ok, I'm going to kill him. If I don't kill him, he's going to kill me." So I just tried to attack very strongly and I broke his *boh* (laughter). Well, he liked that *boh* very much, so I thought he would be really angry with me, but he was so happy. He really was very happy...and then he went away, that was all. Then I understood what it means to attack. Women especially are afraid to attack, because they are often afraid to receive. So if we know how to receive, then we are not afraid to attack.

Ito: My conclusion is that attacking is a method of developing your own power of concentration. Receiving is a method of developing and increasing your human capacity. Instructors in Shintaido are learning a method of educating people. And the instructors are struggling constantly to improve this method of teaching. The students are learning a method of personal growth. That's all of us, we are all practitioners. This is a really new type of education, and through these two, the teaching and the growing, we're

pursuing the truth. When Robert and I and the other instructors attack Aoki *Sensei* to learn his truth, we attack in the intention that if we can see the truth in one second, the next second we die. That's ok, we don't mind if we can see the truth the second before. So we can say that the life exchange in the *keiko* is a second to second process. Does anybody remember the *kangeiko* where we talked about the French poet Aragon? He said:

"Learning is to engrave Truth in your Heart, and Teaching means talking about your Hopes and Dreams with your friend."

Special thanks to Lee Ordeman who transcribed this discussion and to David Franklin for organizing and sending it. ■

National Gasshuku Update

Shintaido of America is on track for its 1989 National Gasshuku, which is being held July 1-4 at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Even though the event will not be on the customary Memorial Day weekend, at this time there are almost 70 participants registered with a few more expected. There are still places available, but you must hurry to reserve your space. Due to the nature of our arrangement with the University of California, it will be difficult to register at the last minute. You must contact Michael Goldberg in advance, at (415) 586-4806.

The SoA Advanced Workshop, slated for June 28-30, has 30 participants signed up.

Learning, Understanding, Transmitting: French Theme for the Year

an interview with Robert Breant

Editors note: the following article appears courtesy of French Shintaido and is reprinted from Eiko magazine, the French publication of Shintaido. Robert Breant is a General Instructor of Shintaido and is the Head Instructor of French Shintaido.

Eiko: Why did you choose this theme?

RB: I chose this theme because I want the French to have a wider vision of studying and a different approach. In our Western societies we often want to understand before doing. We always have a desire to analyze. In fact we should first learn to do, then, and this is important, analyze and understand. The third step of studying is the transmission (of what you have learned). The three steps (together) are part of the studying. Aoki Sensei says we should first study and then teach and that we discover the second part of studying in teaching.

Picasso used to say that when he was painting he didn't master anything. Rather, it was his painting that was guiding him. The second step for him was to explain to himself his own painting. The third step was to explain it to others. This kind of approach makes me think of the notion of "learning, understanding and transmitting."

I learned to study this way in Japan. The Japanese practice and then they try to understand, it's the opposite of the Western approach. By reading this article on Picasso I could see that this approach was not foreign to us, it also existed in the West. I think that we should follow this method of study. We should break the habit of having to have a Cartesian approach in which we want to explain everything initially.

Eiko: How is this method applied in Shintaido?

RB: In *keiko* when the instructor shows forms he or she doesn't explain. We would rather ask people just simply to practice. When a student asks too many questions the answer is often "you should practice first." I think that many students understand this idea and that they have experimented with understanding the movement itself by practicing it first. Then when you master the movement you can explain it to yourself, analyze it and understand it. We can't just do, it's incomplete. When I began Shintaido I was practicing with people who rapidly were confronted with this kind of problem. They would refuse to understand, sometimes refuse even to try to understand. They had reversed the process and refused the second step. They couldn't progress. It's a real



danger so we have to try to understand. After a few years of practice we feel like sharing and naturally are led to teaching. It's now time to transmit what you have learned. If we avoid the step of understanding then we can not transmit and when we teach this naturally leads us to study more fully, to go deeper in our understanding. We naturally are led to study in this way.

To study only in the world of *keiko* is not enough, however, because it is a protected place. In Shintaido though, we have another space of study, organization. In *gasshukus*, workshops and national organizations this is a space that takes us nearer to the social world which some people call the "real world." We study in the

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French Theme continued

organization in the same way we study in *keiko*. At the beginning we ask people to take part in the organization. Quite often Western people want to know why they should do what they are asked to do. In addition to that, certain tasks are difficult to understand for Westerners, *sensei* care for example.

In wanting to understand before doing we often encounter our cultural prejudices. We can definitely not understand because there are too many filters. We have to do, to go into the task and then we are in a position to understand. Those that accept the challenge and use this approach will learn a lot. Then you have to explain it to yourself. The next step is to be the leader of a team because you have already experimented and explained the task to yourself. This is why it's important to respect the person that has a bigger responsibility than ours because he or she is transmitting. If we don't accept this hierarchy we can't receive the teaching.

Inside the organization we find these three levels again: learning, understanding and transmitting. What I would ask those working in the organization is to be truly humble and just to do at first. Then to try to understand. If they haven't understood then they should do the task again so that they can put themselves into a position to transmit. Then a bigger responsibility can be taken such as the leader of a team at a *gasshuku* for example. Sometimes when we want to transmit we realize that our understanding is lacking, and we have difficulties. Then we have to explain to ourselves more, to understand in a more profound way. This is one reason that transmission is a necessary step.

Whether it's in the world of *keiko*, of organization or of a life everything is one and the same thing. The work in the Shintaido organization is an intermediary step between *keiko* and professional and social life. This is why I choose to make learning, understanding and transmitting our theme for the year, so that all our practitioners can approach their study in this way.

Special thanks to Laurence Mourey for translating this article. ■

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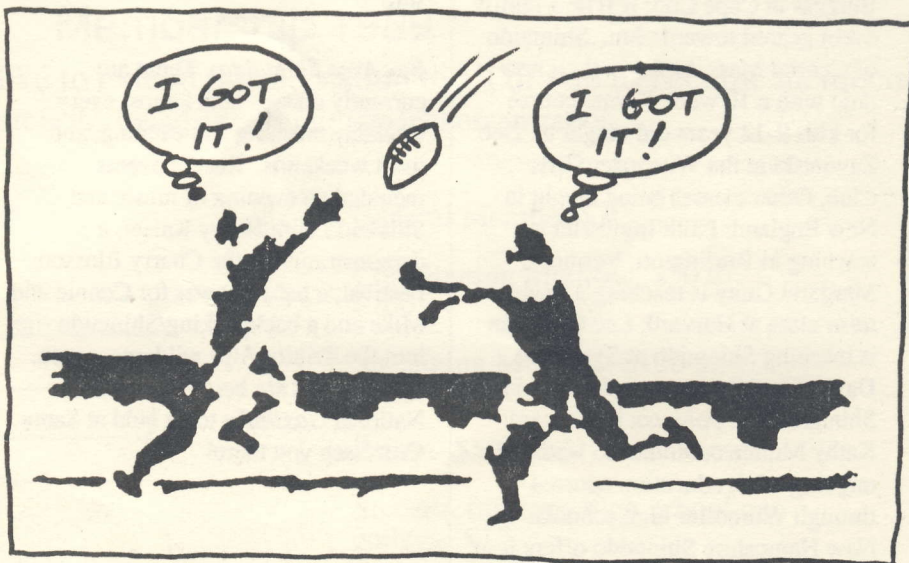
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True origin of Eiko kumite _____
By David Franklin

Around the Country

Bernard De Crest A Bientot

Northwest Shintaido Exchange:

There are about 10 students practicing in Bellingham. Our regional *Kangeiko* was small, it was so snowy that no one east of the mountains made it. Jen Day did a workshop in La Grande in April. John Seamen will teach a workshop in Wenatchee, WA; sponsored by the Lutheran Social Services, it can only be reached by a two hour boat ride in the middle of the desert. There are small groups in Spokane, Seattle, La Grande, Baker, Cottage Grove and there may be some new groups starting up soon in various places in the northwest. Jim Sterling will led a regional workshop on Memorial Day weekend in Bellingham. Marsha Coroles moved to Idaho and made contact with Judy Lewis; Michael Buckley is in La Grande for the summer and is doing some teaching there; Mary Helm is teaching for a social services group in La Grande.

Shintaido New England: We will be hosting our May *Gasshuku* on Memorial Day weekend at Camp Burgess in Cape Cod; it'll be a family event geared towards fun. Shintaido of Central Mass. broke in their new dojo with a 10 week Karate course for kids 9-12 years old taught by Deb Zawielski at the Worcester Girls Club. Other classes being taught in New England: Faith Ingulsrud is teaching in Burlington, Vermont; Margaret Guay is teaching a *kenko taiso* class at Harvard; Lee Ordeman is teaching Shintaido at Syracuse; David Franklin is currently teaching Shintaido and *bohjutsu* in Harvard; Kathy Mulica continues to lead ongoing adult education courses through Worcester high schools. New Hampshire Shintaido offers four classes a week taught by Bill Burtis, Michelle Grenier and Leslie Smith.

Shintaido of West L.A.: Classes are held three times a week and include a full range of Shintaido study: Shintaido, *karate* and *bohjutsu*. Most of our group went to Tucson for the workshop there. We enjoyed it very much, the feeling was very relaxed.

Desert View Shintaido: Though our group consists of five consistant members over 50 people have been introduced to Shintaido in the two plus years of the group's lifetime. Our first workshop was held last Easter weekend. Claude, Friedemann and Ellen led classes and Mits expounded on the subject of chaos. It felt like one happy family and we hope to make it an annual event. *Keikos* are held at 6:00 a.m., and we offer classes through the community college several times a year for outreach. A recent article generated some inquiries including an invitation for Ellen to speak at a nearby retirement community. Some upcoming plans include a moonlight hike into the Tucson mountains, a weekend camping trip, and we all plan to attend the National *Gasshuku* in July.

Bay Area Shintaido: There are currently classes held almost every weekday morning and evening, and most weekends. Recent events included an evening of music and Shintaido with Henry Kaiser, a demonstration at the Cherry Blossom Festival, a baby shower for Connie and Mike and a backpacking/Shintaido trip into the Trinity Alps wilderness area. Preparations are being made for the National *Gasshuku* to be held at Santa Cruz...see you there!

Bernard De Crest, Junior Instructor of French Shintaido died of malaria and hepatitis in Banaras, India.

Those who attended the TRIS *gasshuku* held at Pontalier, France in 1984, and the Shintaido Ten held in New Hampshire in 1986 must remember his character and sense of humor.

Bernard started practicing Shintaido in Japan in late '70s, and went to Goa, India where he started and led a French Indian Shintaido group for a couple of years, before going back to France in 1983. He was the translator and editor of a French Shintaido textbook published in 1986. He left for India last fall to write a book about the Coomberise festival held along the river Narmada.

Just before his trip to India and my return to the United States, while having a lunch together in Paris, I asked him, "How long are you going to stay there?" His answer: "Until next spring." Then I teased him, saying "I am afraid that you will end up staying there forever!?"

Our conversation has become reality. Though I was shocked and scared when I received the news from France, I am jealous of his way of finishing his life.

His body was cremated in Banaras, and half of his ashes were sprinkled into the Ganges and the other half went back to the south of France.

We miss you, Bernard! But, definitely a *bientot* in the near future!!

- H. F. Ito

Equipment

Shintaido of America has an inventory of equipment available for purchase.

Shintaido bumper stickers	\$1.00
History of SoA	\$3.95*
Shintaido book	\$10.95*
Shintaido corduroy hats	
red or white	\$10.00
2 Hats	@\$9.00
3 or more	@\$8.00

Keiko equipment is available.

We can mail any items to you - or you can come and get them!

Contact SoA equipment Manager
Juliette Farkouh at 57 St. Charles Ave., San Francisco, CA 94132-3032, (415)239-4132.

*Includes shipping and handling.

Published by

Shintaido of America
P. O. Box 22622
San Francisco, CA 94122
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Calendar

1989

June

29-30, Advanced Workshop in San Francisco

July

1-4, National Gasshuku in Santa Cruz

October

4-6, Advanced Workshop in New England

6-9, Fall Gasshuku in New England

November

24-26, Thanksgiving Gasshuku in Santa Barbara

Japanese Arts Seminar August 4 -13

The California School of Japanese Arts announces its annual Seminar in which participants study four traditional arts during an intensive retreat at the Green Gulch Farm Zen Center in Marin, CA. H. F. Ito will be teaching Shintaido Kenjutsu, along with master teachers of Brushwork, Noh/Kyogen and Tea Ceremony. For more information call Liz Kenner at (707) 578-8014.

Two New Shintaido Booklets

Two interview articles were translated and published recently. One is the TAMA (one of most popular monthly magazines of new science in Japan) magazine's interview with Master Aoki, and the other is the French Shintaido's interview with Toshinori Kondo, the Japanese jazz musician who developed his talent through Shintaido. Two booklets are now available by mail order, \$3.50 each. To order them both, send a check of \$8.00 (includes \$1.00. postage) to: Shintaido of America, P.O Box #22622, San Francisco, CA 94122.

Membership 1989

Shintaido of America would like to extend this invitation to all of you to become members!
Your support is the foundation of our national organization.

My 1989 membership is enclosed:

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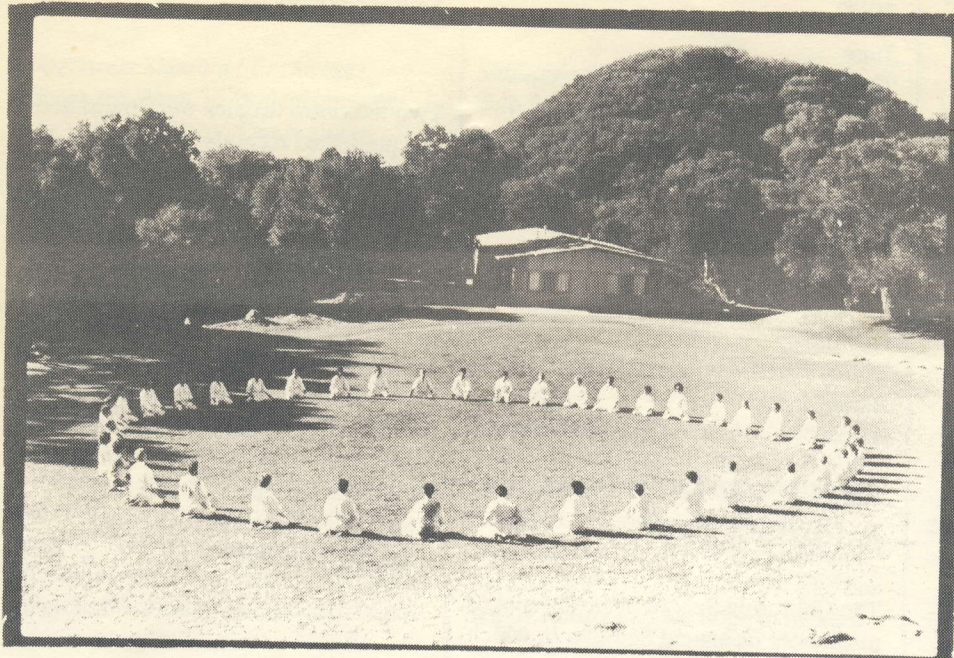
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- Contributing Member- \$50 to \$100
- Sustaining Member- \$100 to \$500
- Patron- \$500 to \$1000 or more!
- Student, full time high school or college- \$15

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National Gasshuku

July 1-4, University of California, Santa Cruz



There's still room! For registration contact Michael Goldberg, 106 Surrey St., San Francisco CA 94131 or phone (415) 586-4806.



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