



SHINTAIDO OF AMERICA

Winter 1989 Newsletter

San Francisco, California

The Mission of Shintaido

by Michael Thompson

*He who enriches his self, his inner self,
does he not also enrich the science of
man?*

Hans-Ulrich Rieker

Our national *gasshuku* on Cape Cod last fall was preceded by an advanced workshop led by Ito Sensei. Twenty-four instructors, assistants and prospective assistants attended this event which featured two *keikos*, one video session and a discussion. The meeting/discussion marked one of our first attempts to define the role of the Instructor's Council in the United States, a body which will become increasingly important as our movement grows into the 21st Century. There are now almost 50 members of the Instructor's Council, consisting of instructors and assistants, a number which equals the total SOA membership of a few years ago. I hope a future newsletter can deal with the goals and structure of this newly-formed group, especially with respect to Ito's remarks about the "triune" nature of Shintaido, beginning with *Eiko-Tenshingosō-Hikari/Wakame*, but I would like to talk more generally about our Shintaido "mission" as we prepare to open into a new century.

I use the expression mission

advisedly. One of the questions that arose during our discussion dealt with the genesis of SOA and the fact that it is a *religious*, non-profit corporation. In fact, it was Ito's and my original idea that we set up an *educational* corporation, but this was much more difficult under California law. It reminded us that his own reasons for choosing to incorporate as a religious corporation rather than merely operating Shintaido as a business were religious in nature and were in response to a kind of "divine command."

Be that as it may, it is my own idea that we should think of our Shintaido mission as being educational, while *keiko* itself might be described as religious in that many people have experiences which could best be described by that term.

I recently finished reading "Person/Planet" by Theodore Roszak and was impressed by his analysis of our current situation in this country and by some of the solutions he envisions to the obvious problems we are facing. His main thesis is that the way to save or protect our planet is, paradoxically, to turn inward and to work toward personal enrichment and development. I have some friends who would be horrified by this idea, especially those



*Michael Thompson, Head Instructor of
Shintaido of America*

who view progress as being the result of definable and controllable historical, political or economic forces along with ongoing scientific "enlightenment." These people usually consider that anything dealing with personal development is self-indulgent, if not outright narcissism, although I would hope they agree that, in order to help others, you have to help yourself first. Roszak maintains that we should not condemn the movement toward self-awareness and development because of the excesses of some of its more visible adherents. Anybody who who studies Eastern or Western religious/philosophical traditions soon recognizes that there is little new about the search for the truth

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that lies within or would deny its valuable contribution to whatever privileged status mankind claims in the hierarchy of life.

For individuals seeking to become "persons," to use Roszak's terms, a system of education is necessary which goes beyond the mere training of the forebrain, and certainly beyond the pseudo-Darwinistic philosophy according to which evolution is a kind of war, or maybe a football game, where a few winners stand triumphant on a field littered with the debris of the vanquished. It must also look beyond the outworn notion that education is best conducted in institutions and that it is something to be force-fed to the young.

"I think old ideas of what education is are dying out and that it is up to us to help define what its new form will be."

Many universities now offer something called "continuing education" or "extension school," etc. in recognition of the fact that people keep learning until they die, and that older, motivated individuals are just as capable of meeting educational challenges as their younger colleagues, if not more so.

Obviously, I think that Shintaido has a place in the area of adult education, and is a perfect discipline to unite the twin ideals of "holistic" and continuing education. It allows us to study: 1) another culture and way of thinking, 2) what is called nowadays "transpersonal psychology," and 3) interpersonal relationships and group dynamics through the language of the body.

I believe the last three *gasshukus*, in California and New England, attest to the correctness of my contention

that Shintaido should be considered to be in the forefront of the movement to take responsibility for the health of our planet by expanding the definition of "self" to include all of life. And it provides a necessary ingredient of implanting its philosophy in the body so that the idea of oneness with all of life is more than an empty platitude.

I think old ideas of what education is are dying out and that it is up to us to help define what its new form and meaning will be. That may not be our entire mission, but it will do for starters. For this, we must be quite clear in our own minds as to what it is that we are doing and why, and must be more articulate in our description of Shintaido to others. This necessitates good and deep *keiko*, of course, and an organization that facilitates the practice of Shintaido and helps to improve communication between individuals and groups or regions. But we also need to pay attention to our intellectual as well as spiritual growth. I don't propose to start suggesting reading lists, or the like, but I think each group and group leader should consider how best to attack this phase of what I would call our "Shintaido education." I will be very interested in hearing what you come up with. ■

Equipment

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

Shintaido bumper stickers	\$1.00
Shintaido windbreakers	\$35.00
History of SoA	\$3.95*
Shintaido book	\$10.95*

Keiko equipment including gis, tabi, boh, and boktohs are 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.

1989 National Summer Gasshuku

This year we will be holding our Northern California *gasshuku* on the gorgeous University of California at Santa Cruz campus. The *gasshuku* will begin on Saturday, July 1st and end on Tuesday, July 4th.

We expect that Ito *Sensei*, Michael *Sensei* and Minagowa *Sensei* from Japan will be teaching.

The Santa Cruz campus is set on a hill among lush pine trees, and overlooks the town of Santa Cruz and the ocean. It features a nine-acre grassy *keiko* field ideal for *Eiko*. Once one is on the campus, there is a wonderful sense of being removed both physically and spiritually from everyday concerns.

We will be staying in comfortable, roomy campus dorm rooms (two people per room) and eating at one of the dining halls.

There will be Shintaido *keikos*, late night meditations, a Shintaido of America meeting, examinations in *boh*, *karate* and Shintaido as well as other activities.

We are very excited about the new *gasshuku* site, and are especially happy that it is more than four hours closer to Los Angeles than Gualala. Additionally, there is inexpensive transportation from both the San Francisco and San Jose airports to the *gasshuku* site.

There will be an Advanced Workshop for instructors and assistants held in San Francisco just prior to the *gasshuku*. This year the *gasshuku* fee including all instruction, accommodations and meals will be approximately \$280.

Registration flyers will be sent to all Shintaido of America members in the coming months. We are looking forward to seeing you at U.C. Santa Cruz this July.

Giving Thanks at Goleta

by Sandra Bengsston

A tremendous variety of people from different countries, cultures and perspectives came together for the 1988 Thanksgiving *gasshuku* held at Rancho La Sherpa in Goleta, California, just north of Santa Barbara. Sponsored by Shintaido of West Los Angeles, this *gasshuku* offered a bit of everything from varied *keiko* to a "Vocal Resonance Hum-in" and including, of course, a warm and stimulating *gasshuku* atmosphere.

50 participants studied *bojutsu*, freehand Shintaido, and meditation from a variety of instructors including Ito Sensei, Michael Thompson Sensei, Jim Sterling Sensei, Claude Breant Sensei and Guest Instructor and Examiner Funakawa Sensei from Japan. *Bohjutsu nagewaza* was also enjoyed and because of conditions the perennial "muddy gi" contest was held; Mits Hadeishi collected the first prize of laundry detail. Way to go Mits!

In a talk given by Funakawa Sensei, he raised the question "what is Shintaido," and also discussed the differences between Eastern and Western cultures and the importance of Shintaido for making us aware of our cultural blind spots.

"When I do Shintaido, it inspires me by helping to develop my self individualism, important for a Japanese I think," Funakawa Sensei said. "Americans can benefit from the group harmony aspect and learn to work and live together through Shintaido. I am glad to see Shintaido being practiced as Shintaido, I am very grateful for that."

Special Guest Bonnie Barnett led an enjoyable evening of "Vocal Resonance," her own method of coordinating breathing and sound and getting in touch with self and others. This was her second appearance at a *gasshuku* in California after having met some Shintaidoists at Mount Shasta during the Harmonic Convergence in 1987. Some interesting techniques

were introduced such as "overtone chanting" and Tibetan "voice breaking toning." The participatory performance ended with her trademark group hum on E flat.

Exams were held on Saturday for the first time in Southern California. Karate and *bojutsu* exams were offered and a golden afternoon light highlighted 12 practitioners who demonstrated their technique and expression. Ito-sensei expressed his appreciation to the participants and to Shintaido of West Los Angeles for their persistence and effort in sponsoring the exams and this annual event, which was the biggest *gasshuku* yet held in Southern California.

Through all of these activities the beauty of Shintaido shined through. People came together to give and receive, to see their own and others points of view, to understand and connect and were changed in the process. ■

Exam Results

Shintaido Karate

Juliette Farkouh	7 kyu
Chris Nash	8 kyu
Shin Aoki	8 kyu
Debra Buddie	9 kyu
Bill Peterson	9 kyu

Shintaido Bohjutsu

Tom Stinnett	1 kyu
Friedemann Schulz	3 kyu
Lori Breant	6 kyu
Chris Nash	7 kyu
Lilia Torosian	7 kyu
Debra Buddie	8 kyu
Christian Thillet	8 kyu
Juliette Farkouh	8 kyu
Robert Gaston	8 kyu
Raphaelle Goethals	8 kyu
Florence Malgouyard	9 kyu
Bill Peterson	9 kyu



Cutting into the New Year

by Lou Meyer

Kangeiko began on December 31, 1988, and continued through January 2, 1989. It was a fitting end of an old year and a cutting into the new.

An incredible energy and focus became evident during this important workshop, which was taught by Ito Sensei and Michael Sensei. There was also a very important message for all Shintaidoists.

Ito Sensei gave two separate talks at *Kangeiko* during which he stressed the importance of sacrifice and commitment. He pointed out that we are living a relatively comfortable lifestyle while there are others who are less fortunate than ourselves. He also addressed the importance of concern for the environment. The point of the talks centered on the necessity for the individual to make sacrifices of the little things of daily life, the luxuries which we are fortunate enough to have, to help save the world and one's soul.

Ito also pointed out the importance of not judging our fellow man by outward appearance; as one who might appear to be wonderful on the outside may be corrupt, while someone who has difficulty in relations with others may have a pure mind. He used the example of athletic ability wherein those who have poor *kata* try harder and thereby their Shintaido experience is much richer. Ito quoted the words of Sing-on, a Japanese "Bob Dylan" of 1000 years ago, "even good people can go to Heaven." ■

Surfing Shintaido, a Real Life Wakame

by Leslie Goldberg

For surfer David Sirgany, Shintaido is the first thing that could ever compete with the beauty of the ocean. "It's the only thing that's ever been able to keep me on the beach and out of the water," he says. Well, at least on one Saturday morning, it was Shintaido *Eiko*, not surfing, that sent Sirgany for a dive in the Pacific.

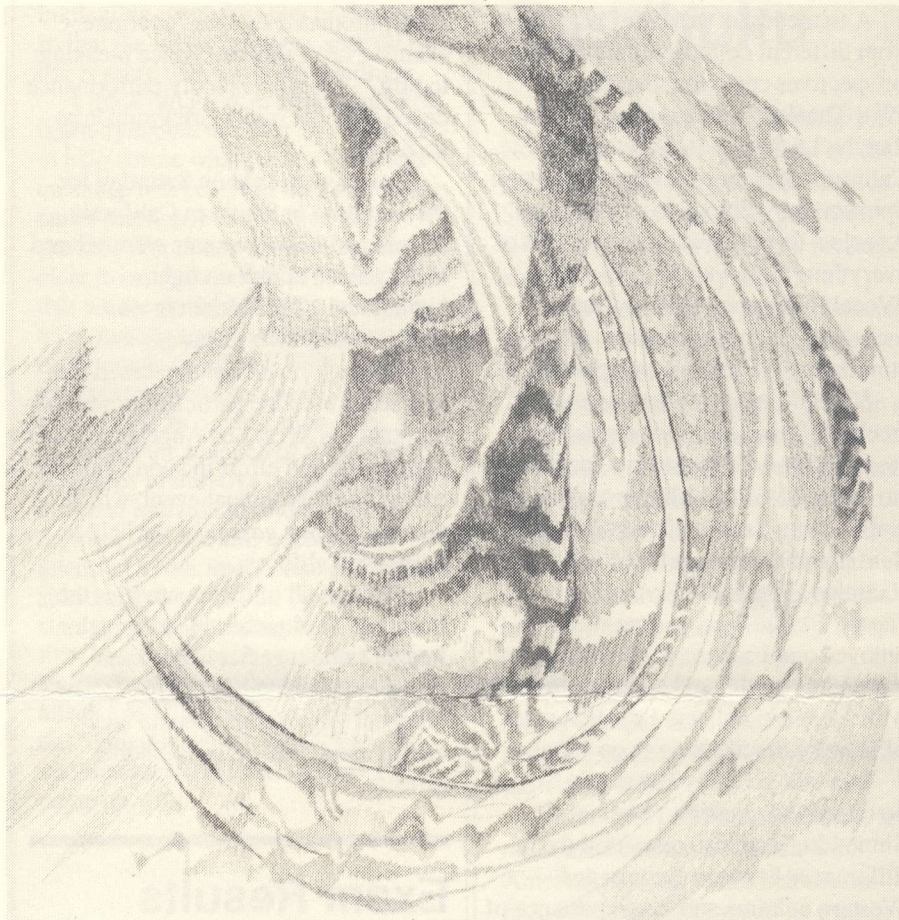
Actually, Shintaido and surfing are similar, says David. "Surfing is a dance with nature. It's all about feeling, precise timing and being in harmony with the most powerful source of energy on the planet. Both Shintaido and surfing are about energy and feeling and about the non-visible. But surfing doesn't have the community that Shintaido has."

David Sirgany, who is also an artist, comes to California from Atlantic City, New Jersey. "When I got here I didn't know anybody," he says. "It's been like becoming part of a big family."

It was Shintaido instructor Ellen Solot who first introduced Sirgany to Shintaido. "I was in a book store in Tucson, Arizona called 'Cosmic Connection,' if you can believe that. I was looking for a Tai Chi master and I met Ellen. It was a classic instance of 'When the student is ready the teacher will appear.'"

Sirgany said he had been searching for something like Shintaido for many years. While an art student at Rutgers University in New Jersey, he took up Taekwondo and Kung Fu. "Shintaido is completely different for me from the other martial arts I studied, he says. "It's much more focused and has more spiritual awareness."

"Eventually I'll get back to painting but I've had to satisfy that



A Shintaido energy drawing by David Sirgany

'Jonathan Livingston Surfer' in me," says David. "I have to get him well fed."

Currently David Sirgany has been studying Shintaido with Jim Sterling's San Francisco group. He's also been studying traditional Japanese massage at the Amma Institute. "The hardest part for me to accept is the fact that I can only go to *keiko* three or four times a week," he says. "*Keikos* are too short."

As of late, the surfer/artist has taken up drawing again, creating what he calls "Shintaido energy drawings." "After *keiko* I'll often sit down and draw."

"Shintaido can open up a clear passage, letting the energy flow,

keeping you in touch with the deepest part of yourself."

David Sirgany's energy drawings are abstract. "When I do art, I don't set out with anything in mind or try to represent something," he says. "It's like, let's see what happens."

When David first arrived in San Francisco, he says he'd only planned to stay a few weeks. The West Coast Shintaido outpost was only one of his stops on a surfing world tour that included South Africa. Now he has decided to put down stakes here in order to study more Shintaido and massage and according to David, the surfing's not half bad in San Francisco either. ■

Johnny Shintaido



Dear Johnny,

I'm a Shintaido junkie. I've tried to quit so many times, but each time I end up at a *keiko*. I can't control myself. I've tried to go to concerts, to make dinner plans and to put my mind on something else. Nothing seems to work. Three times a week I leave my family, even with my wife begging me to stay. I spend all my money on classes, *keiko gis*, *bohs*, workshops and Shintaido fashions. I can't help thinking about Shintaido organizational problems and upcoming examinations.

The worst is that I'm always trying to drag as many innocent people as I can to Shintaido. I can't help myself.

Do you know anyone who has recovered from Shintaido addiction? Is there a Shintaido Anonymous or any other organization that you know of?

I want to change so much. Please help!!

Sincerely,

Desperate

Dear Desperate,

Yours is a growing problem among Shintaidoists around the country.

The lack of self-control, insistence on having other interests, the attempts to think of other things and this obsession with family and finance are all symptoms of a lack of commitment to Shintaido.

You, and others like you, would do well to examine the motivation behind

this desire to have some sort of "other life." Perhaps some deep introspection with openness and your purest intention will reveal the true nature of your unrest.

If, however, you feel that you are incapable of maintaining the lifestyle of a Shintaido idealist, I would suggest that perhaps you move to a Shintaido-free state such as Pennsylvania or Iowa. That ought to fix your wagon.

I myself, will be having a little discussion with the Shintaido Executive Council about tightening up the screening process so that we can, hopefully, eliminate this problem before it gets any worse.

Johnny

Dear Johnny,

I have been having trouble with my form. I wonder if you could give me any hints on how to develop a more open *koshi* during *kaikyaku-sho* and *fudodachi*? It's extremely frustrating to have to be constantly corrected by my *sensei* in front of my fellow martial artists. Thanks for your input.

Tightpants

Dear Tightpants,

Try taping some 36 grit sandpaper in your shorts during *keiko*. This should quickly solve your problem.

Johnny

Got a burning question that you just can't take to mom? Write it legibly and send to Johnny Shintaido, 3917 East Louis Lane, Tuscan AZ 85712

Shintaido in the United States

Shintaido of West L. A.

Claude Breant, Junior Instructor
Lori Breant, Assistant
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Gardena Shintaido

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Honorary Members: Nobu Hadeishi

Calendar

1989

February 17-20

New England Kangeiko

June 29-30

Advanced Workshop in San Francisco

July 1-4

National Gasshuku in Santa Cruz

October 4-6

Advanced Workshop in New England

October 6-9

Fall Gasshuku in New England

November 24-26

Thanksgiving Gasshuku in Santa Barbara

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Ito's New Year Message

Editor's note: the following is an excerpt from a letter Ito wrote to the members of Bay Area Shintaido Executive Council following Kangeiko.

Since Shintaido of America was formed in San Francisco about 12 years ago, the Shintaido movement in this area always had to keep a kind of double structure, bearing the responsibility of headquarters as well as the development of the local Shintaido movement. At times you could receive quick benefit from headquarters, but most of the time you were asked to do many types of volunteer work from Shintaido of America.

Because of your hard work accepting your destiny, however, I believe we were finally given: 1) *Ten*

no toki or heavenly timing, 2) *Chi no ri* or earthy benefit, and 3) *Hito no wa* or harmony of people in our movement in the Bay Area. Once you have received these three graces, my understanding is that they will remain with you as long as the third point remains intact.

With this *Kangeiko* and the upcoming one on the East Coast, I think we can cut strongly into the new year and welcome our future, as a local community, a national organization and also, an international movement.

With Faith, Hope and Love,

Haruyoshi F. Ito
President of Shintaido of America