



BODY Dialogue

Interview with Okada Sensei: The Future of Shintaido

Okada sensei came from Japan to be the Guest Instructor for our Kangeiko (winter practice) in the Bay Area in January, 2004. His gorei (teaching) was powerful, exciting, and inspirational. Before he left, Body Dialogue interviewed him over sushi and sake at a dinner hosted by Ito sensei at a Japantown restaurant.

Special thanks to Shin Aoki for translating this interview so that Okada sensei could review his responses.

Q. What is your dream for the future of Shintaido? Where do you see Shintaido in ten years?

Okada's Answer: In ten years, every national organization should have good organizational structure and high-quality instructors. Every national group should have good management and an instructors' council like Shintaido of America's National Technical Council (NTC); the various national groups should be equally developed so that we can have a strong ISF. Every national group should have a next generation of instructors and officers who have taken over from the original leadership.

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Off the Grid: Grass Roots Shintaido/Extended Voice Wilderness Retreat Ram Island, Maine by David Franklin

From the brochure announcing the event: "Picture this: five days and four nights camping on a small island in Maine. Shintaido, extended voice training, and an amazing natural environment. A local lobsterman will bring us to this wild island, with seagrass, peat, amazing rock formations, and one lone tree, three miles out in the Atlantic ocean with no phones, no electricity, no fresh water, and no other people. There are a few sheep, and the sky, and the ocean, and the land.



The tides are about 25 feet and the tidal part of the island becomes exposed twice a day with kelp canyons and gorgeous sea-carved rocks. There are high cliffs and flat grassy areas. The dynamic forces of nature require constant attention. Summer temperatures may vary from 80 degrees F in the day to 40 degrees F at night, with intense sun, heavy fogs, rain and high winds. Storms are possible.

David Franklin (senior instructor of Shintaido) and Anne Harley (co-founder of The Voice Institute) will offer a curriculum that can open the door to new realms of voice, movement, and consciousness, at Ram Island in July/August 2004."

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Interview with Okada sensei

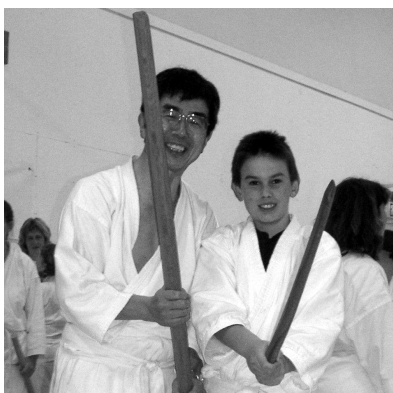
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I hope to send my children to other countries through Shintaido connections. This kind of exchange of home stays would be good for the second generation of families practicing Shintaido, and helpful in strengthening the international organization. Additionally I would like to see any Shintaido officer or instructor be able to speak at least two languages, including Japanese and English. I also hope that every national group could develop a “cocoon,” a retirement place for older instructors who have devoted their lives to teaching Shintaido.

Q. Do your children Taiki (8 years old) and Mai (5 years old) practice Shintaido yet? Do you teach them? Can a child understand the ideas and philosophy of Shintaido? What did you observe about the practice of Shintaido by our children at Kangeiko?

Okada’s Answer: Yes, they are practicing—the whole family practices together. If you watch closely, you will see that the children are Shintaido! Watch them play: learn from them, support them, protect them. They will grow in Shintaido; they are completely free!

I noticed that while many Japanese children just play in Shintaido, American kids seem to have a clear purpose. Some



like the self-defense aspect, others like everyone’s energy.

Q. How much does your Christian belief intertwine with your Shintaido practice? Is it important for Americans to learn more about the Christian roots of Shintaido?

Okada’s Answer: Christianity is just one sect of religion. I don’t attach Shintaido to Christianity intentionally because I separate Jesus’ teaching from Christian rituals; it’s based on a more universal principle. The hope of Shintaido, not only for myself or Aoki sensei, is to let people directly connect with the original life force of the cosmos, as Jesus taught. When Aoki sensei and I refer to “Jesus Christ,” we really mean “Jesus’ teaching.”

The foundation of Shintaido is embodied in the first two commandments, as explained by Jesus in the book of Matthew: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and great-

est commandment. And the second is similar: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” So, yes, we do talk more in Japanese Shintaido about Jesus Christ’s teaching, in the context of universal love.

Q. We have struggled to grow Shintaido in the United States. Ito sensei has worked very hard to spread Shintaido, but we remain a relatively small group compared to Aikido or tradi-



tional karate. Do you think it is important for us to become larger, both here and around the world?

Okada’s Answer: I believe it is important that Shintaido spreads widely in the world. The reason is that we want more people to become healthy, to liberate themselves from suffering and fixed thinking, and find their true happiness. If Shintaido is marketed well, it will spread to many different countries. People should be studying the fundamental principles and core movements, such as Tenshingoso and Eiko. If the practice of Shintaido becomes twisted, goes away from its original ideas, then that is not good.

For example, Aikido was not particularly popular when the founder, Morihei Ueshiba was alive. It is very popular now, and practiced by many people for self-defense and spiritual development. While his techniques have been passed down, it is questionable whether or not the heart of the techniques were passed down as the founder hoped. There is no keiko in



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Aikido to cut one's opponents deeply. They remain safe and comfortable and don't feel a need for transforming themselves. In Shintaido we have kirikomi (cutting by pushing) and kiriharai (cutting by pulling) practice through which one cuts off one's old self and challenges one's new self. Then, one can always live within the new self as it evolves. That's how we let each other shine through kumite. Shintaido is challenging, and deep, and because it is hard to practice, it is more effective compared to other form of martial arts.

Q. Do you think Aoki sensei is finished developing Shintaido?

Okada's Answer: Aoki sensei is finished with the organizational management of Shintaido. However, he isn't finished with Shintaido activity. The embodiment of the Ten Shin philosophy: *Ten-Chi-Hitobito-Ware-Ittai* (Unification of Heaven Earth Self and Others) is Shintaido. Right now Aoki Sensei's expression of Ten Shin is in his calligraphy. For example, every once in a while Aoki asks me to do kumite (partner practice) and shows me his latest ideas. While I was in France last year, a British television reporter with the BBC came to Japan and filmed Shintaido. Aoki sensei showed him Shintaido and Taki-gyo (waterfall training) and while demonstrating Shintaido, Aoki sensei showed something completely new! I believe that Aoki sensei is like Eiko itself.

Q. Sometimes we have trouble defining our practice. In a few words, what do you say to people when they ask: "What is Shintaido?"

Okada's Answer: You have to go beyond what people expect as the answer. I like to say to them: "Shintaido is Shintaido (New Body Way)". Sometimes people in Japan mistake Shintaido for Shintaiso, which is the Olympics new gymnastic-form of dancing with hoops, balls, or silk banners. Since Shintaido is a new body art, you have to understand that no one has the concept, because there is nothing else like it. So everyone's initial conception is a misconception. If I had to answer you in just a few words, I would say: "Shintaido is a body method through with you can find your original self, which is very much related to cosmic truth." ●●●

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Taking the Leap

The inspiration to organize this kind of retreat came from a few Shintaido students who wanted to explore what kind of practice we could do if we really got away to an isolated location of natural beauty. The philosophy of Shintaido embraces so-called unification with *dai shizen* (Great Nature), and they wanted to go to a place, both literally and emotionally, where living and practicing Shintaido with less insulation from

natural forces was simple necessity.

I was skeptical at first, but at the same time curious. Earlier in the spring I had gone to the large gasshuku in Japan, which took place at a hotel resort. We practiced outdoors on a huge field covered with astroturf. I felt a wilderness/Shintaido retreat would be no problem for me. But would anyone join me in driving six hours to Downeast Maine ("Takes 'bout



three days to get the city out of your pants," one local said), bringing camping gear, food and drinking water to an island for five days? Ten said they would.

Using Voice

We decide to place Extended Voice in the late morning or early afternoon, since it's warmer then, and the voice work is usually less physically vigorous than Shintaido. We decide to



keep the first day completely unscheduled, to give time for unstructured exploration of this 14-acre dojo (practice place) of rocky cliffs, rolling seagrass meadow, and pebble beaches.

Anne is an operatically-trained vocalist with a deep knowledge of the mind-body-voice connection that ranges beyond the confines of what we normally call "singing." Thus the term Extended Voice. From the Voice Institute website: "The work is highly body-centered and concentrates on feeling resonances and characters of voices throughout the organism, in the presence of others and while alone. Sounds can be used as tools of leverage for unearthing buried selves, and as such, this is not an enterprise to be entered into lightly, but with sin-

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cerity, acceptance and love of one's own sounds and those of others."

The applications of movement techniques such as irimi (entering), timing, stepping, elasticity of ma (space), and the relationship of kaiho-tai, yoki-tai, jigo-tai, and seiritsu-tai (open, soft, compact and neutral body conditions, respectively) to the Shintaido philosophies of toitsu (unification), ten-chi-jin (cosmic axis), and kumite (partner exercises) are well-developed.

In contrast, relatively little has been written or discussed about the use of voice in Shintaido. Yet for a beginner encountering Tenshingoso or Eiko (two of the most fundamental Shintaido techniques), the use of voice— big, bold, and unsubtle— is probably the distinguishing feature that most sets Shintaido apart from the smorgasbord of Asian-based holistic movement disciplines and martial arts available to the seeker. I began to think that Shintaido is a young discipline, and many facets of the diamond have not yet been polished to a visible shine.

Shintaido, especially in its vocal expression, includes an emotive element that the Asian traditions – from the overtone chanting of Buddhist sutras or sacred texts to the use of "Ah" and "Um" as seed syllables of the Shingon Buddhist meditative practice – omit almost entirely.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

"My profession is to be always on the alert to find God in nature, to know his lurking-places, to attend all the oratorios, the operas, in nature.... It is pleasant to walk over the beds of these fresh, crisp, and rustling leaves. How beautifully they go to their graves! They teach us how to die. One wonders if the time will ever come when men, with their boasted faith in immortality, will lie down as gracefully and as ripe, with such an Indian-summer serenity will shed their bodies, as they do their hair and nails."



For people who are familiar with the samurai philosophy and eastern mysticism, or who practice Shintaido, it doesn't sound shocking. But in the mid-1800's, the thought of Nature as a teacher— not of scientific principles, but of values— was radical. At the beginning of the era of modern science, Francis Bacon said: "We must torture Nature until she reveals her secrets."

Thoreau, a Transcendentalist merging radical American politics (abolition, women's suffrage) with recently translated Hindu and Buddhist texts, is already planting seeds that will live beyond the Industrial Revolution. Not nature as raw stuff to be manipulated into forms that fulfill human needs, but eco-feminist Nature, neo-pagan Nature, Taoist Nature. Big Nature, as in Chinese and Japanese landscape painting where the philosopher is a tiny figure wandering in the immense mountains.

The way we use our voices can unlock secrets of our identity: the word "voice" refers not just to vocal sound, but to the stance, the attitude, the version of the self who is speaking.

Under the right conditions, the voice is more than just a metaphor for who we are, it is a very special kind of symbol, pointing to the deeper layers of the self. At the same time it is an example and expression of that self.

Every moment of our lives can be an inspiration to become the greater version of ourselves...

Shintaido is not a purely Japanese or East Asian form. It is a contemporary formulation of a global consciousness that includes many explicitly Western elements. Transpersonal Psychology, Stanislavskian theatrical training, German Expressionism, Mozart, all were poured into the crucible in which Shintaido was formed, and these influences exist in Shintaido technique in specific ways. Ways which generally have yet to be unfolded, unpacked, and developed. One of which is the way we use our voices.

Making Connections

We are enacting the ancient human social ritual, sitting around a fire at night telling stories and making music. There are several musicians in the group, but one of them has come with us more to be with his lady friend than to do Shintaido. Vadim is a Russian Rom (gypsy), and has never gone camping before. He is more than a musician; his life is music, and he has almost no interest in anything else. He generally refuses work, unless it is making music. He hates camping, as it turns out, and is playing guitar while he and Anne sing Russian gypsy folksongs, tender, beautiful, boisterous. Behind them, the full moon is rising over the ocean.

We're on a pebble beach, the tide is going out, there is a good neck of smooth grey pebbles a bit bigger than quarters, and we're surrounded by driftwood that we'll collect later for tonight's fire. We've got ourselves out here, what now? Every moment of our lives can be an inspiration to become the greater version of ourselves, and in this kind of environment we tend to focus on that more. Mainly because there's nothing else to do. But how do we make it real? How do we live the greater version of ourselves in our bodies? I can only draw on my experience: first we have to feel it in our legs. Then there's the magic of the obstacle: give a body something to push against, and all will be clear. We practice sumo (Japanese wrestling).

We are passing a rock around the group, trying to match exactly the sound of the person handing you the magic rock. Matching their posture, their facial expression, their attitude. Then we take turns lying down and pushing on the other person's ribcage to help expel air from its cavity

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while they vocalize. Strange sounds come out, and in the midst of these expressive exercises, a feeling of mutual trust emerges. It is both an exercise— a form of training— and a game. You give your voice to your partner, and then you play them like an instrument, and that is a process of letting go.



Just as has been said about Shintaido, that it helps people who are timid to live more boldly, everybody has a voice; you don't have to train as an opera singer to use your voice expressively.

Medusa Lives

Being on the island forces you to go beyond the comfort of your surroundings, and in this temporary utopia, daily tasks are reduced to dealing with the survival needs of food, water



and shelter. Two people volunteered to cook, and started their kumite (partner exercise) with the whole group back on dry land, planning the menu and shopping, while Anne and I planned for the non-functional activities.

Each person finds their role— their voice— in the group. The organizing principle of this retreat has been “from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs.” Bill offered us the use of the island and asked for nothing in exchange, only that we enjoy the environment and treat it with respect. We've organized the retreat with no registration

or instructional fees. This raises a question that the group discusses around the camp fire: what are the responsibilities of a leader, and what kind of support does a community give the person who plays that role? If the leader, for example a Shintaido instructor, has to turn to other activities for economic support, doesn't that diminish their capacity for the inner work and daily practice necessary to the dedication to their art? Anne and I both listen, but don't speak much.

If there is no place to jump physically, then let's hope for a leap of faith.

We are on the rocky side of the island. Dense fog darkens the sky, unmitigated Atlantic swells crash on the cliffs, and there is no place to hide from the wind. The surface is only a semblance of flat, everywhere are deep fractures and dangerous gaps. Some of the group are experienced Shintaidoists, others are beginners. Vadim has joined this keiko (practice session), in spite of, or maybe because, the others all remarked their legs were so stiff and sore from yesterday's practice they could barely walk. This is his first Shintaido experience, and I am afraid the conditions are too harsh, the weather too damp, the food too simple, and that the practitioners will lose their physical energy and enthusiasm.

For it's cold here in August, and running or jumping to get warm are not options on this surface. We have to find another way: faith in the basics, don't fail us now. Lower the koshi (center), deepen the stance. If there is no place to jump physically, then let's hope for a leap of faith. Next thing I know they are opening wide to the earth, the ocean, and the sky. I don't bother looking up to see if the clouds are parting overhead, the feeling inside is enough. The vowel sounds of Tenshingoso do not echo here, and the group's voice radiates purely outward. They have more than risen to the occasion. Their love is showing.

Our gear is packed up, staged on the peat, and we're waiting for Captain Neal Sprague and his lobster boat to appear on the horizon. Vadim asks me if there will be a place to shower in town when we get back to land. Five days, and he is desperate. “It's beautiful here. I'm happy I decided to come.” Maybe he inadvertently speaks for the group. We've been cold, hot, and damp, weathered, windblown, and sunburnt. We are odorous— salt, seaweed, peat, sweat, sheep manure, and wood smoke. We don't smell; we stink. But we almost don't want to leave.

It is 2004. World War III will likely be fought over oil, and may have started in Iraq, initiated by an American president. The USA puts more people in prison than any other industrialized country. Just now, the Democratic National Convention is occurring in Boston, and we are on an island off the Maine coast, yelling to the sky.

Heather puts seaweed on her head and a rock on her tongue; Medusa lives. Turn us to stone, and we'll stay here forever, we'll become part of the island. But it's not necessary. We carry the island inside us. The island has become part of us.

•••

Points of Gorei

By Lucian Popa

[Editor's note: In this article, Lucian Popa, a Graduate in Shintaido, interprets the "points of gorei" (teaching) he received at a two-keiko workshop taught by Master Instructor H.E. Ito.]

At 10:00 a.m. on July 17, 2004, we gathered at Ocean Beach, 20 people ready for the morning keiko in smoky, damp weather. Naomi Caspe led our group in 20 minutes of *kenko-taiso*, preparatory exercises to get our minds and bodies ready for the main practice. The first keiko focused on teaching *Toitsukihon* ("unifying fundamentals;" Shintaido kihon based on sword movements) *kumite* (partner practice) to groups consisting of students of various Shintaido experience. Five assistants were assigned a group which they led through the given movements for 10-15 minutes. At the end of each session they received feedback by Ito sensei and others who wished to do so from the watching group.

The second class focused on the performance of *Toitsukihon*



by each participant and in *kumite*. We worked on *kirikomi* (cutting by pushing) and *kiriharai* (cutting by pulling) movements from single techniques to combinations of two or three cuts in succession, even at times employing only one arm. This keiko offered a model of what was discussed in the first class, and after I returned to Vancouver, I reflected on the workshop. I realized that from this feedback came a framework that can be built on by those who wish to become future instructors, that I have summarized below:

- Begin by greeting your students: if they are new ask their names and continue being present with them throughout the keiko.
- Present the main theme of the class to the participants and give a short description of what it is, asking them if they are familiar with it.
- If they are new to the movement, place them in the most favorable positions where they can watch and copy the more advanced students.
- Before proceeding in giving gorei, demonstrate the technique in question from different angles and explain the main aspect of the movement; if necessary,

break it down into its sequences and demonstrate just the section you choose to practice, e.g., stepping from one *fudodachi* (immovable stance) to another without the use of hands.

- Place yourself in front of your students and perform the movement as you give gorei. If the class is large, change your place so everyone has an opportunity to see and imitate you.
- Project your voice so everybody can hear you; keep a pleasant tone even if you need to be loud.
- Start the movements slowly, at a speed which everyone can follow, then increase the tempo gradually as the class becomes more proficient.
- *Kiai* (vocal expression) should be introduced when the movement becomes more familiar to the class.
- Be kind: encourage those having difficulty by your physical and emotional presence. If they cannot continue, have them mentally do their practice.
- Make sure everyone feels some improvement by the end of class and does not leave discouraged or with low self-esteem.
- When correcting mistakes, don't single anyone out but present the mistake to all; show the mistake as well as the correct way. Never correct more than three mistakes at a time (sometimes it is best to correct silently by positioning a hand in the proper place or pushing a *koshi* in the right position without any verbal comment).
- Be in *Yoi* (alert) position all the time; be present and support your students by mentally doing the movements with them.

Goethe wrote, in a letter to a compatriot: "Moreover, I hate everything which merely instructs me without increasing or directly quickening my activity." We require instruction for life and action, and not as a costly intellectual excess and luxury. Shintaido aptly speaks to this in its stages of development:

"By the fifth stage of Shintaido, whatever you do, Shintaido will be expressed as part of it, as part of your life. Whatever you study in your daily life and whatever you do in your work, will also naturally be expressed through your Shintaido performance. Shintaido expression will be freely and naturally part of all that you do." ●●●

-DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

The next issue of *Body Dialogue* will be in July, 2005. Please submit articles, poems, pictures to the editor, Roby Newman: namwen67@mindspring.com or 650 340-1792. Deadline for submissions is May 15, 2005.

Shintaido in the Workplace

by Patrick Bouchaud

Aside from practicing Shintaido I have been working for years as an international engineering manager for computer technology. One might say that our professional life is just a particular set of circumstances and that it is possible to remain connected to Heavenly Truth there as it is under any other circumstances. However in practice I found it impossible. Truth does not hold much value to the Business environment. Neither does Heaven. To make use of a well-known image, it is like everything there happens on a plane, so that when one tries to introduce the third, vertical, dimension then one ends up pretty soon alone, up in the air!

Until I wrote this article my own notion of Ten (Heaven in Japanese) was definitely unrelated to my work environment and did not even appear connected to anything concrete and tangible in this world. Ten was just the concept used in Shintaido to describe the fourth level of unification, after body and mind, self and others, and Nature. I thought of Ten as similar to the notions of Paradise or Nirvana, which were also concepts unused by anybody I knew in their work world.

...it may be possible...to be completely open to others but at the same time invulnerable to their attacks...

Then after the last workshop with Ito Sensei in Köln I thought I had all the elements to convince myself once and for all that, in order to be true to myself, I should completely re-orient my career. My key argument was that in order to achieve my double objective (i.e. to be true to myself and successful in my career) I needed to be simultaneously completely open to others as well as invulnerable to their attacks. From this apparent contradiction I derived the conclusion that my career and my quest for truth were incompatible

But then I considered the Shintaido practice of Wakame ("seaweed" in Japanese, a partner kata). In this kata the practitioner is requested to project mentally into seaweed anchored on the ocean floor. The current is embodied in the partner who gives gentle pushes. The unique aspect of this condition is how it relates to the idea of "verticality," that no matter what oscillation is provoked by the current, the body (seaweed) constantly remembers its own earth-heaven axis (connection to Ten) which it comes back to when the impulse (current) stops.

So at work, where I spend a lot of energy imagining all possible attacks, it may be possible to accept whatever comes as it comes and adapt my plans accordingly, to be completely open to others but at the same time invulnerable to their attacks, as I would connect with something which is in "them" (bosses, co-workers) but which goes beyond them: something both

impermanent (as I no longer predict their moves) and permanently with me (as I do not get affected by them) – something like Ten.

I thought this was worth another try. ●●●

Poem from a Friend

submitted by Jennifer Peringer

An old friend of mine from London sent me this poem after coming to visit me in California. It reminds me both of the forms of Shintaido (the bird's kumite, the water's ripples, the upward-reaching ferns and bark) and of the way Shintaido makes me feel (seeing the world anew, sparkling with beauty and energy). Ruth has a natural, deep sensitivity to and awe of nature, and after growing up with the windswept moors of Scotland, and living in the midst of one of the largest cities in the world, London), the woodlands of Northern California seemed to her quite miraculous. I am grateful to her for sharing her fresh vision of nature's wonders with me, and hope you enjoy it too.

Mendocino Redwoods, California

By Ruth Marshall

A fern ignites with sudden green fluorescence,
And a host of burning darts skim across to the
opposite bank

On their gossamer trajectory.

Hoops of reflected ripples waver up the trunks,
And in the mirror pool below, small brown fish
Flick through the upended towers of the trees.

Where the burn rummages,
Bubbles flock and gossip, and then stream away,
Their headlights winking in nano-second pulse.

Two black birds patrolling the forest corridor, pass
And curve slowly upstream.

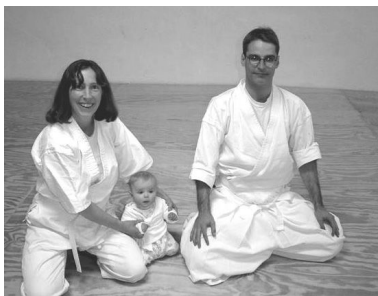
Under my fingers, the fibrous bark feels warm,
Is riffled like the pages of a prayer book, expanding
In long slow metre; is diamond shaped,
Like crowns in flame, like the ragged arms of a
multitude
Raised in supplication.

Shintaido with Baby Ben (the Next Generation)

By Eva Thaddeus

As long as I have been doing Shintaido, there have been kids – running around the dining hall during our retreats, rolling on the edge of the field as their parents practice. Dark Neena and fair Martine, our first children on the East Coast, were a little bigger every time I saw them at a workshop, and every time they were busy renewing their friendship under circumstances so familiar they couldn't know they were unusual. And unusual we are: a traveling community of practitioners who have met over years in dozens of different sites to run, roll, yell, jump, kick, cut the sky and each others' hearts. I love it that a group of children is growing up thinking this behavior is normal. It delights me that when I taught an East Coast event a couple of summers ago, two of the practitioners in my keiko (practice session) were the teenaged Neena and Martine.

After twenty years, I have my own Shintaido kid. Benjamin was born on November 5, 2003, and attended his first keiko on November 20th. As his mom and dad are the only Shintaido instructors in Albuquerque, we prepared for his arrival by changing one of our biweekly classes to a group hitorigeiko (personal practice session). This gave us the flexibility to be late, to step out of keiko as necessary in order to see to his needs. At first, of course, he slept straight through. Then, he'd wake up halfway through and want attention. His father found that he liked to be held during stepping practice. I found many ways to stretch with him. Sometimes, he simply likes to watch and stare. Now, he's entered a talky phase, and there are times when we need to take him out of the room. However, with the arrival of Yarden Griffith (our student Richard's little boy), Ben has gained a keiko buddy almost his own age. We foresee a separate kids' room, supervised by one of the three Shintaido parents on a rotating basis, while the other two get to practice.



I brought my little boy to California when he was only ten weeks old, and we attended Kangeiko, the yearly cold-weather practice weekend. After years of jumping into this intensive practice weekend with both feet (literally), I was here as a non-participant, as a mom. Two things happened, both wonderful. The first was that the community of Shintaido children opened to welcome its newest member and his mom. These were kids I'd known since they were Ben's age, but

they'd barely noticed me before. Suddenly, I was included. And Ben was more than included: he was embraced. In fact, sometimes I couldn't even get my hands on him, there were so many children waiting their turn to hold him. The second thing that happened was that I got to practice. My Shintaido peers stepped in to baby-sit, and I made it to two of the four keikos. And there I saw something else great: I saw Shintaido kids practicing alongside their parents, wielding sticks and having fun.

In Albuquerque, we have cancelled one of our weekly classes, and are only holding on to the hitorigeiko space for now. Personal practice is very different from regular keiko. It is informal and less rigorous – at any given time, one person may be stretching, another jumping, a third working on a kata (sequence of forms). Ours is punctuated by baby noises, or by a grownup responding to him. I realize there is a risk that our practice will degenerate into something recreational and superficial, that it will float above the depths of intensity and effort that sustain serious keiko. I realize there is a risk it may, for a while at least, become good wholesome family fun. But to everything there is a season. And this is ours, and Ben's, and Yarden's.

Easter at Concord Naval Weapons Station

by Tomi Nagai-Rothe

Just outside the chain link fence, there are 12 folding chairs set in a circle, the grass tamped down in a round swirl.

It is still dark when we begin singing Easter hymns.

People take turns reading from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Cars rush by.

We settle into silence, acknowledging a power beyond this world.

One person speaks about the 350 year-old Society of Friends Meeting on Cape Cod—so many years on the doorstep of a military base that finally closed.

Someone else speaks about Hiroshima, U.S. occupation and the desire for peace.

We will return here for 350 years if need be.

As we light candles the sky washes from dark blue to the lavender, light blue and pink of early morning.

Two police cars pull up beside our prayer circle in the grass and ask if we have permission to gather here.

Our misplaced permit takes on the shade of a terrorist threat.

So we invite them to join our service, but they decline.

When the officers discover we've been approved they drive off in opposite directions, relieved. No religious terrorists today.

We close by singing songs to God in the shadow of Mt. Diablo, and weave flowers through the hurricane fence beside the sign, No Persons Beyond This Point.

Only birds, grassland and bunkers full of nuclear weapons.

The landscape shapes its own sermon: weapons rather than the promise of life transformed.

UPDATE FROM ISF

by Connie Borden

The International Shintaido Federation Board met for two days at Matsuri 2004, the international gasshuku held in Japan in May of this year. ISF board members in attendance were: Aoki Sensei (founder and permanent member); Connie Borden (Shintaido of America); Bill Burtis (Aoki Sensei appointee); Taro Aoki (ISF manager); Katsuno Tomoko (Shintaido Japan); Mieko Hirano (Shintaido in France); and Peter Furtado (British Shintaido). Ula Chambers (Aoki Sensei appointee) participated via phone and fax. This meeting's success was based on volunteer translator work by Shin Aoki, Lee Seaman, and Akira Watari (Watari-san).

A major focus of the meeting was to re-establish an ISF Technical Committee, replacing the ISF Technical Committee that dissolved at Haguro 2000. The ISF board appointed an Interim ISF TC to work from May until the end of September 2004 on this task in partnership with the ISF board. Members of this Interim ISF TC are: Shintaido Japan - Hideki Oi, Shintaido of America - Michael Thompson, British Shintaido - Masashi Minagawa, Shintaido in France - Alain Chevet, and as nonvoting representative of the ISF Board - Taro Aoki.

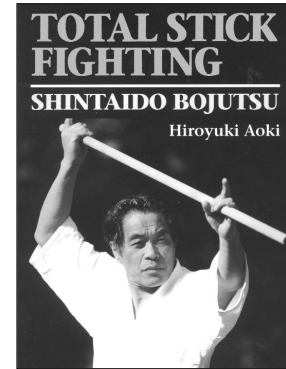
As of October 1, 2004, the International Shintaido Federation Board unanimously voted approval for an ISF Technical Committee with 9 ISF TC representatives holding the ranking of Senior Instructor/SanDan or above (excluding Master Instructors), with three from Japan, three from USA; three from Great Britain/France & Italy (Europe). The Interim ISF TC will remain in place until November 15 to allow time to select the nine representatives.

The ISF Technical Committee (TC) will embrace the following purposes: maintaining a standard examination system across the world standardizing curriculum and technique communicating a standard practice, including spiritual development and quality control, to practicing instructors around the world providing guidance on teaching methods, gorei, and working with new students coordinating research and development and feeding results back into the curriculum.

The ISF TC will bring recommendations to the ISF Board for approval (based on Shintaido principles rather than technical details), financial support, and administrative support to implement recommendations.

The nine ISF TC representatives have been selected. The Euro Shintaido (ES) representatives will be Allan Chevet, Pierre Quettier, and Gianni Rossi. Also Minagawa-sensei is coordinator of the EuroShintaido TC. Shintaido of America has selected Joe Zawielski, Jim Sterling and Jennifer Peringer as the SoA representatives. Japan has chosen Hideki Oi, Toshimitsu Ishii, and Tadafusa Sakakibara to represent their country. ●●●

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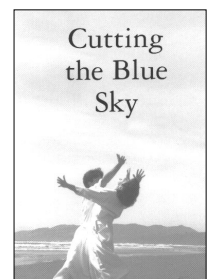


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Life Burn (\$20)

Document of the live painting / shintaido / music performance collaborations at the Theater Yugen in San Francisco in August 1992. Featuring painting by Kazu Yanagi; music by Henry Kaiser and others; and Shintaido movement led by H.F. Ito.

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various authors (\$20)

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Untying Knots: a Shintaido Chronicle

by Michael Thompson (\$20 / 15*)

This autobiographical memoir by one of the co-founders of Shintaido of America tells of the author's cross-cultural adventures in France, Japan, and California of the course of his 25-year Shintaido career.

Shintaido: the Body is a Message of the Universe

by Hiroyuki Aoki (\$20 / \$15*)

For years this textbook has served as a gateway and guidebook to the practice of Shintaido. Includes sections on the history and philosophy as well as detailed explanations of technique. 120 pages, illustrated with photos. This second printing features more information about the ten Shintaido meditation positions.

... ETC

History of Shintaido Scroll (\$15.00)

A pictorial description of the cultural inheritance and history of Shintaido, from the three martial arts masters Ginshin Funakoshi, Shigeru Egami, and Hiroyuki Aoki. Created by Tomi Nagai-Rothe during a lecture and discussion on the origins of Shintaido led by H.F. Ito during the PacShin Kangeiko in 1999. 9" x 32" on gloss laminate paper.

MINI-BOOKS

Tenshingosō and Eiko

by Hiroyuki Aoki (\$10)

This booklet is for Shintaido practitioners what the Diamond Sutra is for Buddhists: a concise yet thorough description of the basis of practice. *Tenshingosō* and *Eiko* are two of the fundamental movements of Shintaido, which embody philosophies and prescriptions for human growth.

The Zero Point of Consciousness and the World of Ki (\$5)

In this interview Mr. Aoki describes his experience of reaching the "space of *mu*" (nothingness). He also discusses his unique understanding of *ki* energy (life force).

Origins, a History of Shintaido

by Shiko Hokari (\$7)

One of the founding members of Shintaido relates the stories of Rakutenkai (the group that developed Shintaido), and of Aoki-sensei's early days.

Improvisation and the Body (\$3.50)

Japanese jazz musician Toshinori Kondo discusses Shintaido, performance, and music. Illustrates how one artist benefitted from Shintaido by going beyond his limits.

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by Faith Ingulsrud (\$3)

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