



BODY Dialogue

Shintaido--a Body Practice for Harmonizing with Nature and the Universe

by Hiroyuki Aoki, Founder of Shintaido
translated by Tomoko Yoshida
edited by David Franklin

[Editor's note: The following is based on the introduction Mr. Aoki wrote for his book, titled simply *Shintaido*, and published by *Shunjusha* in Japan in 1997. The book was originally published by the Shintaido Association of Japan as *Hikari ni Mau*, and then revised and published for the general public. Mr. Aoki added some additional comments that did not appear in the published introduction.

In order to fit into Body Dialogue, this version of the article is abridged from the original translation by Tomoko Yoshida as edited by David Franklin. The full text of the article can be found at: <http://www.shintaido.org/AokiSenseiBookIntro>. We are excerpting for our readers Aoki sensei's observations of how Shintaido incorporates "The Way" as a path of truth, using the body as a means of its expression. Aoki sensei describes the development of the Chinese philosophy of Taoism as well as concurrent ways of seeking truth and enlightenment as varied as the Heart Sutra of Buddhism, the Kabbala of mystical Judaism, and the ancient Greek philosophy of Epicurus and Plotinus. Please see the above URL for the complete text of the article.]

Continued on p.3

INSIDE

Shintaido for College Credit	2
Aoki Sensei on Shintaido as "The Way"	3
A Dresden Doll Does Shintaido	7
Regional Updates	9
Introducing Shintaido Cards	10

Dialogue with "Jet"

Interview between Ito and Ishii

(The following is a recording of a question and answer session between Master Instructor Ito and Toshimitsu Ishii, visiting Instructor from Japan, after the one day workshop in Northampton, Massachusetts on May 28, 2005. [BD Editor])

Ito: First of all, thank you for your contributions to the Shintaido movement in New England, and also for helping Jennifer Wilkov promote Shintaido in New York City for the last eleven months. For the record, I will start with a few basic questions. What is your name, birth date, and where did you come from?

Ishii: My name is Toshimitsu Ishii. I was born March 3rd, 1971. I come from Machida City, a suburb of Tokyo in Japan.

Ito: What kind of social atmosphere did you grow up in?

Ishii: In junior high school, there was a kind of violent situation in my city, because in our town the low-level *yakuza* (Japanese gangsters) were pretending they were in charge. The media made the story bigger than it was. That's why Machida City became well known.

Ito: You went to Chuo University. Why did you choose bojutsu?

Ishii: I hoped to do some sports, and do well, and also I was looking for some martial arts. I wanted to start something new. The Shintaido bojutsu club was trying to promote itself.

Ito: What was your first impression of Shintaido bojutsu?

Ishii: I visited other martial arts clubs, Aikido and kickboxing. The bojutsu club had the most strange and interesting characters. They never forced me to join, but I felt they welcomed me to join very much. They were having fun. They practiced outdoors on the grass. They seemed to be stretching the movements, kind of spectacular, very light and bright.

Ito: When you joined, did you like it right away?

Ishii: Yes, it was excellent. The senpai were kind and took care of me as a freshman. It was very casual and not hierarchical. When I took a physical exercise class in the university, I took Karate class as physical exercise in the university.

Continued on p.5

SUPPORT SHINTAIDO



**Join Shintaido of America,
a non-profit organization.
Includes a Subscription to
Body Dialogue magazine.**

SoA Membership Supports

- curriculum development
- continuing education for instructors
- assistance to new groups
- support the Nat'l Instructors Council
- development of new publications

Members Receive

- subscription to *Body Dialogue*
- directory of Shintaido practitioners
- information about workshops / retreats

Only Members May

- apply for scholarships at national events
- apply for Shintaido examinations

MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

Please add me to your mailing list for information about events and workshops

Please remove me from your mailing list

I would like to support Shintaido of America as a member:

- Full-time student member \$25.00
 General member / Advanced Student \$40.00
 Assistant / Graduate (Sho Dan) \$60.00+
 Instructors (Ni Dan and above) \$110.00+
 Donation \$ _____
 (Your contribution to SoA is tax-deductible)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____

Zip code, Country _____

Phone _____

e-mail address _____

Please send a copy of this form with payment to:

Shintaido of America Membership

PO Box 1979

Novato, CA 94948-1979

Shintaido for College Credit

By Nancy Billias-Mardas

In the Spring of 2003 I achieved a life's dream, securing a professorship in Philosophy at Saint Joseph College, a small Catholic women's college in West Hartford, Connecticut. Later on, after demonstrating Tenshingo kumite for my Philosophy 101 course (even the students with some martial arts background had never seen anything like it), I began teaching an informal introductory weekly class in basic Shintaido. Over the past two years, interest has grown steadily.

This fall, for the first time, I have been able to offer Shintaido for an official college Physical Education credit! I'm not sure if this has ever happened before, but Shintaido is now officially on the books as a course at our college. I am thrilled to say that I now teach eight students, of whom two have become so keen in practicing that they travel to Northampton for weekly keiko, as well as attending monthly regional keikos and gasshukus.

A new chapter, for me and for Shintaido!



DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

The next issue of *Body Dialogue* will be in July, 2006. Please submit articles, poems, pictures to the editor, Roby Newman: namwen67@mind-spring.com or 650 340-1792. Deadline for submissions is May 15, 2006.

Published by Shintaido of America (SoA), a non-profit organization which produces educational materials on the practice and teaching of Shintaido.

Board of Directors

Permanent Members
 Haruyoshi F. Ito
 Michael Thompson

Elected Members

Connie Borden, president
 Lee Seaman
 David Franklin
 Jennifer Peringer
 Eva Thaddeus
 Sandra Bengtsson
 Stephen Billias

Honorary Members

Henry Kaiser
 Kesh Narayanan
 David Palmer
 Mario Uribe

Body Dialogue Staff

Roby Newman, Editor
 Stephen Billias, Co-Editor
 David Franklin, Contributing Editor

Subscriptions/Membership

Shintaido of America Membership
 PO Box 1979
 Novato, CA 94948

Body Dialogue is published twice a year by Shintaido of America. Entire contents ©2006, Shintaido of America. All rights reserved.

Aoki sensei article

continued from p. 1

Shintaido

Shintaido is a body practice that enables us to attain true freedom. Here, attaining true freedom means to realize and come into tune with our true Self.

Written using the characters that translate into "New Body Way" in English, Shintaido is literally the newly developed Way-- the new path-- where we learn the philosophy of life through our own bodies. Moreover, at the same time it is the Way itself, the new method by which we learn the Way through our bodies.

Hence, those who practice Shintaido ("New Body Way") should sublimate this all-encompassing multidisciplinary body art into *Shintaido* (using the character "heart/mind"-- "Heart/Mind Body Way"), then to *Shintaido* (using the character "truth"-- "Truth Body Way"), and finally to *Shintaido* (using the character "deity"-- "Divine Body Way") as you progress in your practice.

Objectives of keiko (practice or training)

Shintaido is a body practice for us to attain true freedom, and to become free means to realize our "true Self": the purpose of practicing Shintaido is to unify the *Tao* (the "Way" as the most profound fundamental truth) and our "true Self" as it once was, as a means of re-attaining universal freedom.

...the higher state of being attained through meditation can enable us to transform our daily lives...

In Japan, the same character *Tao* (pronounced dou), is used in words such as *Judo* (lit. "the way of softness"), *Kendo* (lit. "the way of the sword"), *Kyudo* (archery), *Sado* (tea ceremony), *Kado* (flower arrangement), and *Shodo* (calligraphy).

However, you can tell that the character "-do" in this context refers not to the "Tao" as in the fundamental truth but to the learning system that makes us aware of the "Tao." Thus, the same character carries more than one meaning; *Tao* as the purpose itself, and the other *Tao* as the method to achieve that purpose.

How we refer to the ultimate truth varies depending on the country, people, and religion. However, in Shintaido, we usually call it *Tenshin* (lit. "heaven-truth" or "cosmic reality"). Furthermore, I would like to note here that leading a life full of light and happiness in one with Tenshin is called *Rakuten* (lit. "optimism, happy life, complete freedom"), which I chose as the name of the project team that founded Shintaido.

Body Way Practitioners should also study Philosophy

People might be wondering why I am talking about Tao and Tenshin, despite this being a book on the Way of the Body. However, if religion is meant to be "the most fundamental

teaching," we want to make the body practices that we are learning today something that can enable us to reach the ultimate philosophy of life. Many people practice martial arts and sports with passion. I suggest that those people break away from the conventional methods of training that put too much emphasis on fighting spirit, patience, and effort. Whatever activity we engage in, it is time for us to practice with a greater philosophy that seeks for a deeper level of spiritual awareness.

The Ultimate Goal of Meditation

Meditation is a journey into our undiscovered inner world. Once you enter that world, you will find that it is filled with abundance. You will find something that you could never have known before, something extremely surprising about yourself, the most beautiful scene you have ever imagined, or a mass of energy so huge that it is about to explode.

Meditation is the way for us to actively access the very depth of our existence to discover and uncover our highest potential as an individual. Although we do not practice meditation for the sake of becoming enlightened right in this moment, the higher state of being attained through meditation can enable us to transform our daily lives to become happier and more joyful, for we acquire a qualitatively different way of perceiving and living our lives.

Ways of Attaining Awakening and Enlightenment through Physical Practices

Once you begin to have a better understanding of this kind of philosophy as you practice physical techniques, the next thing you should do is to adjust the compass of your heart firmly in that direction. This is most important. After that, just repeat the same simple technique over and over again. Then one day you will have a big realization in which you will be able to see things so clearly as if your sight had just suddenly cleared up before you. The interconnectedness of each and every thing surrounding you will be visible more clearly and vividly than ever. You will be in complete harmonization with all existence, where your whole body becomes suffused with tranquility free from all limitations, restrictions, and boundaries. Interestingly, you can engage in any type of physical activity to attain this state of mind, ranging from active ones like jumping, hopping, and fighting, to static ones like meditation, soft movements, rhythmical exercises, individual practice, and group practice.

There are many different levels of awakenings, ranging from small ones to big ones. Let's deepen our degree of freedom as we experience more and more of these awakenings and grow from them. Thinking this way might help: if you tolerate extremely hard circumstances to achieve a certain goal, your cerebrum invariably secretes beta-endorphin to help you overcome those difficulties. In any case, I cannot accept Spartan or masochistic ways of practicing. The most important thing to keep in mind all the time is to enjoy your keiko.

Fortunately, in Shintaido we already have a firmly estab-

Continued on following page

lished comprehensive practice system that allows us to attain these spiritual awakenings in an unbelievably short period of time. However, I do understand that for various technical reasons, it is hard for some readers of this book to practice Shintaido directly under the Shintaido Association. My advice for those people is to keep making sure that the path you are on right now consistently embraces a "healthy" quality.

What God, Tao, and Tenshin Are

The reason we were all given this life was to be born into this world to lead a happy life. Perhaps when we were once a part of the larger universal spiritual body, Tenshin endowed us with this body so that we could live on this planet called the Earth to train ourselves, cultivate our spirituality, help people who are left behind, and live in happiness.

That is why we are truly moved when we see people living with their whole heart and soul, or people who have devoted themselves to help those people suffering in extreme adversity. For instance, in a sense typical sports activities are not good for our bodies, considering the potential for straining and abusing the body. Furthermore, we cannot say for sure that they are effective in developing young people's personalities. Yet we are moved by those Olympic scenes on TV, and tears even well up our eyes. It is because they communicate to us through the TV screen a model of someone who is living their life so fully and desperately.

新体道 Shintaido - "new body way"

心体道 Shintaido - "heart body way"

真体道 Shintaido - "truth body way"

神体道 Shintaido - "divinity body way"

Let's have strong faith in believing that we could all definitely attain such state of mind as long as we keep searching for the Way whole-heartedly. However, although attaining such a great realization of "Absolute Nothingness" or the "Truth" brings us to the peak of our Way, we should always keep in mind that it is not the ultimate goal but rather a big starting point. It should be the turning point in which we enter a new phase of life--where we make the commitment to serve our fellow neighbors that are also the children of "Absolute Nothingness" and the "Truth" like us, without sparing ourselves. In other words, our focus in life should change to giving all living beings happiness and relieving them of suffering. This does not necessarily have to be directed towards all humanity but rather "to the people around you who are seek-

ing for your hand of love."

For this reason, I hope you all understand now that ultimately, the whole purpose of various trainings all comes down to lifetime commitment of service to humanity after attaining enlightenment. The most important thing lies not in the fact that you have tolerated ascetic trainings but rather in coming to understand that the most profound joy and the brightest hope in life can be found in such hard circumstances.

One of the teachings of Gautama Buddha says: "Our life is like a cow crossing a muddy road with a heavy load on its back." If we fix ourselves to having this kind of perspective on life from the beginning, even the smallest happiness can turn into a great joy for us. In sum, Shintaido is the body art in which we learn such ways of perceiving life and all that our life encompasses.

Un"--one of the fundamental techniques of Shintaido-- is the materialized form of the philosophy of nothingness, "Ah" is the posture in which we seek for the Truth, the last part of "Ah" is the form that reflects our whole existence becoming one with the Truth, "Eh" after attaining that state is the image of leading a life of Love, "Ii" in Tenshingoso is the image of us steadily consolidating such way of life, and finally, in "O," we develop the capacity and receptivity of accepting everyone and every existence in this world. All the techniques that follow, including the techniques in Shintaido martial arts, are variations and applications of this fundamental core.

What I worked on for years and years by dedicating all my energy wholeheartedly was to reawaken nature in the human body as a means of reawakening the essential and intrinsic divine qualities in all of us through body movement based on a certain law. And I think I was successful in developing such a body practice that fulfills this purpose. Of course, at the time, I proudly thought I had pioneered the very first global achievement in human history! However, it was not until much later that I found out I was just rediscovering what humanity had already known well since its very beginning. Nevertheless, now I am grateful from the bottom of my heart for the fact that I was able to reach the most authentic truth.

Continued from p. 1

At the Karate class, Yoga and Karate were practiced 50/50. It had very a similar feeling as Shintaido. Then a few months passed, and I became aware that the teacher was Aoki-sensei's junior from the Karate club in Chuo University. He taught me what is Keiko and what is Karate in the university.

Ito: What was your impression of the techniques of Shintaido bojutsu?

Ishii: Many times the senpai said: "Release strength and tension. Move bigger and bigger. Keep expanding." I did only these two for all four years. I got Sho Dan in bojutsu in March of 1993. I was the only one who got Sho Dan from my class.

Ito: Who were the examiners?

Ishii: Aoki sensei and Okada sensei. Until the first year when I joined the Bojutsu club, the club invited Aoki sensei to come independently. The next year, we joined the examination in the Shintaido Association.

Ito: How soon after graduating did you start managing the club?

Ishii: I became coach in 1997. But I visited during the years in between.

Ito: When you became coach, what was your ranking in Shintaido bojutsu?

Ishii: Ni Dan.

Ito: How was the club when you became coach?

Ishii: In 1996 we had only three members. This was a low point. Then Mr. Kudo [*coach of the Chuo University bojutsu club - Ed.*] managed the club and promoted it more heavily, and we got some new members. When I took over they had about 12-13 members. Every year we doubled the membership. Ten became twenty, twenty became forty, forty became eighty. I used Kudo's promoting system. He made a short but simple explanation so that everyone could understand in one-two minutes, which helped us attract members. Also, sometimes the students hesitated to promote to persons they didn't know, but we tried to change that. For example, every day if we talked with 200 people, maybe one person would be interested. We made good communication, and more people joined. Once we attracted freshmen we were pretty sure they would stay, because the club members were interesting characters. Then when I became coach I just encouraged people to keep doing this marketing technique. "Even if you are not so good as a rifle, if you keep shooting you will hit sometime." If nobody knew about the Shintaido bojutsu club, it would disappear. This was a crisis. My approach was horizontal-here is a good idea, but why should we do it? I do not think that I ever forced them to follow my orders. Instead, I asked them to think about it. This helped the club members think about why they should promote the club.

Ito: How did you become closer to the Shintaido *honbu* (home organization)?

Ishii: At the same time I came to coach at Chuo University, Okada sensei handed over to me a class in Tokyo. So I started working for Shintaido Kyokai.

Ito: Did you have any conflict between your job and your hobby of Shintaido bojutsu?

Ishii: Somehow I did them both.

Ito: How many hours on the job and how many hours at bojutsu?

Ishii: Once a week I did a two-hour Shintaido class. From our office to the gym was twenty minutes. Also, I was still teaching the bojutsu club at Chuo once a week on Saturday, and going out to eat afterward. Also, whenever the kohai (junior members) needed help I was available. We had many discussions. Then I had my regular 9-5 job every weekday, but sometimes we went to 7, 8, 9 o'clock at night.

Ito: So, then you came to America. Was that your choice or your boss's assignment?

Ishii: I offered to come here, and then they decided to send me.

Ito: Why did you want to come to America?

Ishii: The company has a system of training in foreign countries. Every young person in my company offers to do that, if they'd like to. My job is in international cargo ship shipping, so I wanted to see an overseas job, country, and culture.

Ito: What was your first impression?

Ishii: Everything seemed bigger in the United States.

Ito: Was it hard when you first came here?

Ishii: At the beginning I really enjoyed being here. Everything was new for me. The lifestyle is different. The morning greetings between people were very casual and friendly. The food and the supermarkets and how to get around, those things were not difficult to adjust to, but the timing of communication, and how people were thinking, that was different.

Ito: Can you give us an example?

Ishii: Well, if someone asks me, "How are you?" I start to think of an answer, but my American friend might already say "Good" because he is expecting me to say "Fine, and you?" So I realized that the culture is different. The *kimochi* (intentions) are not so different. If we see them face to face, we feel their emotions. Are they sad, happy? Do they wonder, do they understand? The expression is different, the timing is different, but the emotions are not so different. The intentions are the same. Now I understand this.

Ito: What about the differences between Japanese and Americans in general?

Continued on following page

continued from p. 5

Ishii: Japanese have many ways of thinking. For example, if I practice in a park in Japan, I think about how people are looking at me, what they are thinking, how it affects them without conversation. But in America, people just ask me what I am doing, and tell me what they are thinking about what they see. They simply ask, and simply answer. If no answer, they simply ask again.

Ito: My observation is that the Japanese way of learning is "watch and copy" but the American way is "show and tell." The Japanese way means that the student has to think about it and try for himself or herself. They might come up with new and different answers. The American way is clearer: the teacher must provide the right answer. But it might stop the student from thinking for himself or herself.

Ishii: I have another difference. The Japanese range of thinking is thicker than Americans. The range of ideas is broader. In the U.S., ideas have a wide range, according to the person. Also, lifestyles are more varied in America. More choices, more positions. Back to Ito's second question. Even in my company there were two different kinds of people. Some people do things for the company, but their home life is separate. Another type is also "home is home and company is company", but they are more flexible about the border between the two.



Ito: So how about your Shintaido related experience here? Did you feel any big difference between American Shintaido members and Japanese Shintaido members? Also, how are the American Shintaido people different from the people you work with who are not in Shintaido?

Ishii: In the U.S., people want to learn Shintaido and also Japanese culture. In Japan, sometimes Shintaido people try to change their conservative side, they think about that, and try to change things. Also, the organization has the possibility to become steady and conservative in Japan, so they try to break even the Shintaido of the moment and make the next Shintaido. The basics, the essentials of Shintaido, do not need to change, but the hardware needs to change. If Shintaido becomes fixed, it will die, because it is not Shintaido already. Shintaido should have a life of its own. If

someone says: "This is Shintaido, this is not Shintaido," I don't think so. Both could be Shintaido. The expression of Shintaido should change according to the needs of the age and the period. So on that point, Shintaido people in Japan think about that. If it becomes old, it should change. Sometimes there is confusion between American/European Shintaido and Japanese Shintaido about what should change and what should remain the same. Americans want it to be what it is now, Japanese want it to continue to grow and change, or it will die. A strong point in Japan that Americans have learned is that we really care about each other and take care of each other. I have found this here in America, and it still exists in Japan and can be a strong point again for Japanese. It is harder to explain what is different, both have very similar points, not different but not the same.

Ito: How about American Shintaido members compared to your colleagues at work?

Ishii: For American Shintaido members, one's job, life, and relationships are connected, the ways of life and job are not so separate. If I communicate with a colleague, sometimes I cannot enter his family life. But in Shintaido, core people of Shintaido in U.S., it is very easy to enter their family life, talk about children, talk about family.

Ito: So if you hadn't had the Shintaido experience, you wouldn't have seen as much of American family life.

Ishii: Yes. But some people in my company can do that.

Ito: One big difference I observed is that in America, people have big houses, so Shintaido members can have open houses. We can't do that in Japan. We have to go to a bar or coffee shop or restaurant.

Ishii: Also, every space is efficient and well-used in Japan, but in U.S. there is so much space, a lot of it is wasted. No need to manage the space so carefully. For example, trucks, in Japan they have to be packed carefully, but in the U.S. they just put it in another truck. Or in the U.S., they will put things on top of the car instead of trying to fit it inside.

Ito: Do you have any advice or words for Shintaido people in America?

Ishii: American Shintaido instructors should focus their teachings *shin shin kai hatsu*, (mind body development exercise) such as *kaikyaku sho kaikyaku dai*, and Shintaido jumps. Maybe because body conditions are different, you don't do too much, because you end up hurting your knees, but it is a kind of paradox. If you don't do this kind of exercise, you'll miss a good chance to change your mind and body. So even for a short time, these exercises should be included in your daily practice. Please remember that there is some kind of essence and/or groundwork of Shintaido which you can win only by doing *shin shin kai hatsu* movements.

Ito: Any other advice?

Ishii: Try to promote Shintaido, just like we do in Japan. Approach as many people as possible.

Ito: When you go back to Japan, what kind of advice will you give your colleagues or Japanese Shintaido members?

Continued on following page

Ishii: Don't think too much! Don't worry too much!

Ito: Do you think you have changed some part of yourself? If so, which part? How do you think it will affect your life in Japan?

Ishii: My way of viewing the world as become much wider, as a result of my many cross-cultural experiences.

Ito: How are you going to use this when you go back to Japan?

Ishii: That helps me to view a matter objectively. Also that makes me enjoy my Keiko, Business and Life more and more. From that point of view, I would like to be a bridge to Japan from other countries. Please call me any time day and night if I can do anything else!

Ishii's Contact Address:

Toshimitsu Ishii (Jet)
 #307, 984 Mamedo-cho
 Kohoku-ku
 Yokohama
 Kanagawa, Japan 222-0032
 E-Mail: t.ishii@lily.ocn.ne.jp
 Mobile: 81-90-3689-1466

Beyond Waterfalls

By Amanda Palmer

[Editor's Note: Amanda Palmer is one half of the band Dresden Dolls. This is an abbreviated version of her article, which recently appeared on a blog website.]

I have an old friend, David Franklin (aka Manta), whom I met back in 2000. Manta is a performance artist and a martial arts instructor for an esoteric Japanese style called Shintaido, and after being invited to attend some of his Boston classes (which were often held outside in random parks) I was really turned on to the practice.

I went to one weekend-long Shintaido retreat, where I found the community very tight-knit and welcoming. There are small communities all over the world, but Japan is where the style originated and where the largest number of folks practice. It was founded in the 1960s as a reaction against the violent and careless direction that karate and other Japanese martial arts were taking, and was more or less developed by a bunch of artists through a long workshop process.

Watching someone practice, it looks like a combination of karate, tai chi, primal scream therapy, and modern dance improvisation. On our second European tour, we invited Manta to travel with us on the tour bus for the purpose of videotaping and kicking our asses awake in the morning to practice Shintaido. Some of my fondest memories of that tour were of running "Eiko" across a field in Blackheath,

England at dawn, screaming "AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAEEEEEE" at the top of my lungs at the rising, cloudy sun.

As soon as we realized we were coming to Japan, I wrote Manta to see if he could hook us up with some Shintaido folks, and he shot right back that his friend, Jet, lived right near Tokyo and would probably love to come to the festival and do some practicing. As fate would have it, there was a "waterfall training" already scheduled in a nearby town right after the festival, and Jet invited us to come along. I knew little about this but figured it could only be interesting and probably wonderful. We got on the train the next morning with Jet and his friend Mr. Oi and began our journey.

Jet spoke some English, but communication was limited to the basics. We took two trains, buildings disappearing and rice paddies growing, and then a taxi from the last train stop to the mountain, which has been a holy Buddhist place for centuries. There was a large shrine across from our small inn (which was run by a kindly old Buddhist monk) and a path along a rocky stream leading up to the waterfall. During the day, it was an obvious tourist destination for Japanese, and there was a handful of families with kidlets bathing in the stream. Our inn was very spartan and beautiful; each room was in the old Japanese style, with only woven straw mats on the floor and one low table. We slept on thin futons that were folded in the closet along with the quilts and pillows.

After we arrived, we met the other Shintaido folks who had made the trek to the mountain for the training. There were five other men besides Jet, Mr. Oi, and two women, everyone mostly in their 30s or 40s. We met Goro, a beautiful long-haired guy who was the waterfall training leader, and headed out to a beautiful clearing in front of the shrine to practice Shintaido for about an hour in preparation for going up the mountain. Mr. Oi was the sensei (the teacher/leader) for the Shintaido practice and gave his instruction in gorgeous broken English for our benefit, which was very kind, since my Shintaido was rusty and I'd forgotten a lot.

Then we went to the waterfall, where things started to get very interesting. One woman who spoke excellent English interpreted everything that Goro told us as we prepared, one by one, to go through this process, which apparently has roots stretching back ages in the Buddhist, Shinto, and Japanese warrior traditions. All eleven of us walked the paths and stairs up to the base of the waterfall, which was about 20 stories high and loud as hell. On the way up we bowed at the small shrines built into the sides of the mountain and purified our hands and mouths (via swishing) with the water from the shrine, which was trickling directly, they said, from Mount Fuji. Above the waterfall itself was built a wooden balcony on a gorge that overlooked the place where the crashing waterfall met the earth, and this is where we left our belongings.

The trees and flora on the mountain were thick and rain-forestry, and there were luminescent black butterflies and spiders flitting about everywhere. Goro passed out sandals made of rope that we tied to our feet for traction while walk-

Continued on following page

ing in the slick, rocky white-water; then he determined an order in which people would enter the waterfall - basically from most to least experienced...there were men there who had done this training 100 times and a few total novices like us. A small wooden box of sea salt was passed around and we rubbed the dry salt on our bodies for purification ("private parts" area - very important).

There was a short meditation and then we descended altogether into the rocks and water and Goro took his place at a large rock that faced the waterfall (whose base was probably about ten feet wide). As we stood there, deafening waterfall bits bursting in our faces, Goro began the ceremony with what I assume was a kind of blessing of the waterfall, though it appeared more like an exorcism, hands clapping powerfully together, Japanese words shouted and muttered, the rest of the sea-salt scattered, a bottle of water from the mountain shrine splashed into the spray, and then Mr. Oi entered the water (fully dressed - we were the only ones not wearing a full "gi" - the traditional white martial arts uniform).



photo by Kelly Davidson

I don't know if you've ever tried to stay erect under a massive waterfall, but it's near impossible. Even the masters like Mr. Oi would get violently punched over by the sheer velocity of the water and have to re-find their footing. Most stayed under for less than a few minutes: the hardcore would remain there, locked to the earth like human edifices, for what seemed like ages. It wasn't a question of man vs. nature with man emerging triumphant, it was more a vivid display of man triumphing over the division between man and nature itself. A teeny woman before me was knocked down four or five times and finally made it through a few moments in the waterfall without tumbling. My turn came: I waded through water and rocks trying to completely clear my mind, and stood in a very light part of the waterfall (I knew we'd be returning the next morning). The water hit my head and I raised my hands. It all made perfect sense.

When everyone was finished we convened back up on the platform and bowed to each other and the water a final time. Then we descended back to the inn, where we had strict orders from Goro to spend fifteen minutes in the baths. I was alone in the women's communal bath with the two Japanese Shintaido women (whose names I never knew); we soaked there, naked in the big tiled tub. I talked to them a little about how grateful I was to be, finally, around people who were taking care of themselves. They listened and asked questions: I told them about Rock World and the many self-destructive and harmful people we encounter. Then I went up to our room and fell asleep. We all ate a late dinner together in the inn dining room. The best food I've eaten here by far, a lavish spread of sashimi, soup, tempura, salad, and tofu, a smorgasbord of orgasmic food.

The next morning we awoke and ate a similarly incredible breakfast, then went to the temple clearing to prepare for waterfall training: day two. Jet showed us a few good exercises, and then I sat and watched the two of them do some symbolic sword-fighting using long wooden staffs. The two of them would occasionally get locked together, each facing the sky with swords pointed heavenwards and clashing upwards like two coital birds.

Then back up to the waterfall...rope shoes, meditation and preparations, salt, exorcism. This time it was only the four of us: I resolved to become a human rock and entered the water (which was colder than the day before). After getting knocked over multiple times I managed to stand my ground for a few minutes. Your mind has no choice but to clear; maybe a stray thought to keep your balance, but there is just you and your body getting eaten and reborn by thousands of gallons of water pummeling your meaningless self. I knew it was time to go when it was, and I let myself get spit out back into the world.

We were exhausted by all this and went to rest again in the inn; we left a Dresden Dolls CD with the monk and thanked everyone there for taking good care of us, then started to head back towards Tokyo with Jet. Japan has been wonderful for me because it has forced me at every turn to be humble. Everybody here is very quiet and respectful, and I am overly self-conscious about seeming like the Ugly American. This has increased my general mindfulness about everything I do, from the volume at which I speak to the way I eat to the way I sit down in a chair. This is good, this is very good.

*"God whose love and joy are everywhere
can't come to visit unless you aren't there."*

Angelus Silesius

Regional Updates

[This is the first of what we hope will be an on-going series of updates from regional representatives on activities in the various regions of Shintaido around the country. *Body Dialogue* Editors]

Pacific Shintaido

By Tomi Nagai-Rothe, Instructor

2005 marks the 30th anniversary of Shintaido classes in the San Francisco Bay Area. Shintaido *keiko* (practices) have been offered in locations as varied as Ocean Beach and Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, and indoor spaces in Oakland, San Rafael, Berkeley and Santa Rosa. Most classes take advantage of being outdoors in nature part of the year.

Keiko offerings include bojutsu, karate, kenjutsu and Shintaido. Classes are tailored to the needs of students, are always open to newcomers and beginners, and can generally accommodate people of varying physical abilities.

Attendance averages 2 - 8 practitioners who range in age from late 20s to mid 70s.

Senior instructors teach the majority of classes and all have a long-term commitment to supporting local practice and the Bay Area Shintaido community. Instructors contribute regularly to Shintaido organizational efforts through Pacific Shintaido, Shintaido of America, the National Instructors Council and the International Shintaido Federation.

We are fortunate to host out of town practitioners who come for workshops or some of our seven weekly keiko.

Northwest Shintaido Exchange

By Lee Seaman, Senior Instructor

NorthWest Shintaido Exchange is located in Bellingham, Washington on Interstate 5, midway between Seattle and Vancouver BC. Bellingham has a beautiful, natural environment (mountains, sea, great hiking) and few industries. The weather is mild, with rain much of the year.

Classes are taught by me, John Seaman (Instructor), and Isabel Farquhar (Assistant). At present, we have four weekly classes in bojutsu, jojutsu, bokuto, or kaihotai Shintaido and two monthly Taimyo classes. We also do occasional workshops with Lucian Popa in Vancouver, about an hour to the north, and with Paula Kerby in Langley on Whidbey Island, about two hours to the south.

We have 8 to 10 people practicing once a week or more in Bellingham, and another 8 to 10 who come irregularly or who attend the Taimyo classes only. The age range is 19 to 65, with an average age of about 40. Our neighboring groups in Langley and Vancouver have 3 to 6 people each.

I am particularly interested in fluid movement and connection with kumite partners; John has a deep interest in keiko as play (particularly outdoors), and we are both strongly drawn to the spiritual aspects of Shintaido. But at least half of our students come initially because they want to take a weapons class, so at present we do at least some bo, jo, or bokuto in all of our classes, except the Taimyo meditation. Because Shintaido practice is holistically effective at removing the non-

essential and stripping people down to the core of their being, the basic kihon and kumibo practices become a way to lead our students to what we consider the heart of Shintaido. We do that by emphasizing "ma," timing, opening your partner, and not being committed to a specific outcome.

Shintaido Northeast

By Joe Zawielski, Senior Instructor

Shintaido Northeast has grown and changed a lot in its 26-year history here. Our numbers might be the same or even less now than at certain times, but the geographic area that we cover has increased quite a bit. We now have people in New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Massachusetts. People who began studying here have gone to New Mexico, Colorado, and the Czech Republic to live and teach Shintaido classes.

Weekly classes are currently being offered Tuesday evenings in Easthampton MA, where Bela Breslau is teaching an open hand class; Stephen Billias and Margaret Guay fill in for her on occasion. The class location will be moving to the Deerfield dojo at Stephen and Bela's Shintaido Farm soon, which will be the site for future gasshuku and workshops.

Nancy Mardas is leading an open hand class Thursdays where she works at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford, CT. Wednesday evenings Roger Solomon leads an open hand class through the adult education program where he lives in Woodstock CT. I am teaching a class in Watertown MA in response to people in the Boston area who wish to continue studying after their teacher, David Franklin, went to the Czech Republic.

We have regional keikos once a month rotating between Northampton, Worcester, and New Hampshire. Each weekend, depending on the season and the space available, we will focus on bo, karate, or open hand Shintaido. We have two gasshukus a year, Kangeiko in winter and an autumn gasshuku in October. It is an exciting time with many opportunities for growth and practice.

Shintaido in New Mexico

By Eva Thaddeus, Instructor

What defines Shintaido practice in New Mexico is largely the life circumstances of the three practitioners here. We are parents of young children, which means we have trouble making it to places on time, catch a lot of colds, and sometimes show up to the dojo with our toddler in tow. That said: Shintaido has been a strong and ongoing presence in our lives, even though our lives have changed. What we are experiencing and experimenting with then, in this little Shintaido locality, is the art's adaptability.

Michael and I downgraded our weekly keiko after our son was born. Rather than offer instruction, we offered a weekly dojo space for *hitorigeiko* (personal practice.) Richard's son was born soon afterwards, and for about a year after that, our keikos included three adults and two babies. At some point Michael Thompson began to join us occasionally, and now he comes most every week. Peeking in at our keiko,

Continued on following page

you might see one adult jumping, another lying on the floor, a third doing a boh kata, a fourth rolling around with a frisky child or two. Sometimes Michael sensei stops what he is doing and watches one of us, and if we are lucky, he'll come over and give us some instruction.

Boh, jo, bokutoh, karate, and stepping practice are of great value in *hitorigeiko* (private practice). It is easy to run out of motivation or ideas if you are in charge of your own practice week after week. So it's helpful to put your body through the paces of one of Shintaido's more systematic practices. Holding a piece of wood in your hands especially helps bring focus to solitude. On other days, when you may not feel up to a vigorous practice, the dojo becomes a supportive space, one that allows you to lie on your back and stretch, or sit in ten-position meditation.

Most recently, we have begun to hire a babysitter, so that the dojo can return to being an adult space. Next, we will resume wearing our gi's, and soon, the count of "ichi, ni, san," will be heard in the dojo, as we begin to move in unison again.

Introducing Shintaido Nature Cards!

Stunning color laser-printed nature photographs on 4" x 6" cards, blank inside, SoA logo and website on the back, with envelopes.

Use these lovely note cards to keep in touch with friends and spread the message of Shintaido! They also make great gifts.

\$10 for a set of six. Introductory offer--free shipping!

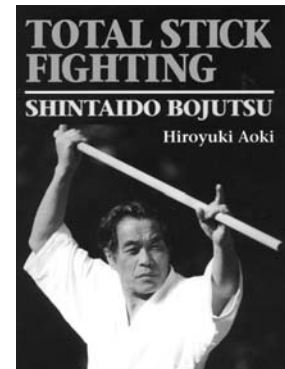
Photographic rights will be donated to Shintaido by photographers Grace Mitchell and Roswitha Heinz. Profits go to SoA. See the cards in the bookstore on the SoA website:

http://www.shintaido.org/docs/pubs_books.htm

Or e-mail Lee Seaman at info@nwse.shintaido.org.



available on-line
via www.shintaido.org
or www.amazon.com
or your local bookseller



TOTAL STICK FIGHTING:
SHINTAIDO BOJUTSU

by Hiroyuki Aoki
140 pages, illustrated with photos, \$27

Released in March 2000 by Kodansha, this authoritative work covers the art of Bojutsu as practiced in Shintaido. Aoki-sensei presents traditional *bo kata* adapted for Shintaido as well as his own research and development.

available on-line
at www.shintaido.org
or by mail order
from Shintaido Publications

An anthology of the best
articles from Body
Dialogue, the Shintaido of
America newsletter



The Shintaido
Textbook is a
must-have for all
serious Shintaido
practitioners.

VIDEOS

Kenko Taiso II & III: (\$20)

Demonstrates a series of more advanced health exercises and stretches that two people can do together, and introduction to group warm-up movements. Also includes sections on self-massage and *seiza* meditation with the diamond mudra. Excellent for instructors or group leaders who are leading group warm-up exercises.

Golf-Do (\$20)

Master Shintaido Instructor H.F. Ito teaches the Way of Golf, exercises designed to help golfers: (1) stretch and limber up; (2) relax; (3) focus and concentrate; and (4) enjoy. Using a golf club instead of the traditional six-foot oak staff, Ito demonstrates how to stretch, relax the body, and prepare the mind for a pleasurable round of golf. Golf-Do provides insights into the unification of mind and body that produces the best of golf.

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.

Roots of Shintaido (\$20)

Footage from the 2001 West Coast winter retreat in Juarez Springs New Mexico. Two lectures by Master Instructor H. F. Ito on the history, lineage, and philosophy of Shintaido in relation to Japanese karate and sword traditions, footage showing the relation of fundamental open-hand techniques to closed-fist techniques, and bokuto movements 1-9.

Set of all 4 videos above: \$70

DVDS

Kata and Kumite (\$15)

H.F. Ito gives instruction for kaiho-kei (opening and challenging) exercises with Michael Thompson and Robert Breant. Includes: kaiho-kei group practice, Bojutsu kata (hi no kata, kaze no kata, sho-dan, nidan), Jojutsu kata (taishi, hojo), karate kata (sanchin, tensho), kumibo (bo vs. bo) arrangements, kumitachi (sword vs. sword).

Kenko Taiso Instruction (\$20)

Produced by On-Site Enterprises, presents the classic Shintaido *kenko-taiso* warm-up sequence with detailed explanation. The 15-minute warm-up sequence is an easy-to-follow routine that is excellent for those who are relatively new to body movement.

Taimyo/Tenshingoso (15)

Master Instructor Masashi Minagawa performs Taimyo Kata, then leads a group of students through Tenshingoso. This beautiful DVD, set in an English park, provides a step by step illustration of the Taimyo Kata form, as well as basic Tenshingoso technique."

Self Care Program for Hospice Caregivers (\$15)

Master Instructor H.F. Ito leads hospice caregivers in a Shintaido program designed to relieve the stress of their emotionally demanding jobs. Master Ito uses the Shintaido techniques of Kenko Taiso, Wakame, and Tenshingoso to teach caregivers how to relax and meditate.

BOOKS

Cutting the Blue Sky

various authors (\$20)

An anthology of the best articles from the Shintaido of America newsletter over the past 25 years. There are 32 articles by students and instructors, 33 photos, 162 pages, grouped by topics: the roots of Shintaido, cultural clashes, spiritual development, using Shintaido in the world, and musings on timing, facing death, the invisible world of the 4th dimension, and passive resistance.

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 in 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.

MINI-BOOKS

Tenshingoso 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. *Tenshingoso* 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.

Student Handbook

by Faith Ingulsrud (\$3)

Written by an American Shintaidoist who grew up in Japan. Includes a glossary and description of the basic structure of a Shintaido practice.

Set of all five Mini-books above: \$25

for credit card orders,
shop on-line at
www.shintaido.org

PUBLICATIONS & VIDEO MAIL ORDER FORM (Prices include sales tax)

VIDEOS:

QTY	ITEM	PRICE
	Golf-Do video	\$20.00
	Kenko Taiso II & III video	\$20.00
	Life, Burn video	\$20.00
	Roots of Shintaido video	\$20.00
	Set of four videos (above)	\$70.00

DVDS:

	Kata and Kumite	\$15.00
	Self Care Program for Caregivers	\$15.00
	Kenko Taiso I video	\$20.00
	Taimyo/Tenshingoso video	\$20.00

BOOKS

QTY	ITEM	PRICE
	Cutting the Blue Sky	\$20
	Untying Knots: a Shintaido Chronicle	\$20.00/ \$15.00*
	Shintaido Textbook: the Body is a Message of the Universe	\$20.00/ \$15.00 *

Domestic shipping: <\$20.00, add \$2.50
\$20.00-\$40.00, add \$5.00
>\$40.00, add \$7.50
International shipping: <\$20.00, add \$5.00
\$20.00-\$40.00, add \$10.00
>\$40.00, add \$15.00
Free shipping on domestic orders over \$75.00
Free shipping on international orders over \$100.00

MINI-BOOKS:

QTY	ITEM	PRICE
	Tenshingoso and Eiko	\$10.00
	Zero Pt. of Consciousness & Ki	\$5.00
	Origins, a History of Shintaido	\$7.00
	Improvisation and the Body	\$3.50
	Student Handbook	\$3.00
	Set of five mini-books (above)	\$25.00

SUBTOTAL →

SHIPPING →

TOTAL ENCLOSED →



BODY Dialogue

Journal of the U.S. Shintaido Movement

Issue No. 18, 2006



新
体
道

"Shintaido" means "new body way." It is an art form, a health exercise and meditation through movement developed in Japan in the 1960s. Shintaido grows out of the roots of ancient martial arts and meditation traditions, but the aim is to help modern people rediscover the original wisdom known by the body and realized through movement.

www.shintaido.org