



BODY Dialogue

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Shintaido Meets Niroga: Interview with H.F. Ito

By Jim Sterling

On Sunday, November 7th, Shintaido Master Instructor H.F. Ito and Niroga Yoga teacher Bidyut (BK) Bose held a joint Keiko (class) at the Marin Academy gym.

The purpose was to meet one another for the first time and share our body wisdom. [JRS]

What is Niroga?

As stated on their website (<http://www.niroga.org/>) the mission of Niroga is to "...bring Transformative Life Skills (TLS) to students, vulnerable youth, cancer survivors, seniors and people battling addiction. The work of Niroga directly uplifts thousands of people every week in schools, juvenile halls, homeless shelters, cancer hospitals and rehab centers..."

In less than five years, their school has trained and certified over 200 teachers in TLS and has reached out to thousands of people who live and work Alameda County. TLS has a very professional method for niche marketing and fund raising as well as comprehensive set of metrics that measure their success rates.

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Beginner's Luck

by Judy Baldwin

A barn owl greeted me by the cabbage patch, circling quietly on massive wings, amazingly within reach for a few glorious moments, on the morning of my first gasshuku (workshop) at Shintaido Farm.

I had recently reconnected with my cousins Stephen and Nancy Billias after more than forty years' absence, and the joy of our summer reunion had propelled us together again in October for my first-ever Shintaido experience.

It may have been Stephen who remarked how good it would be to come to that gathering with Beginner's Mind. And I was pleased to encounter the group of warm and competent practitioners, gathered for a weekend to explore the theme of Yielding. But in the first day's two keikos (classes), I did not experience the sense of childlike joy and discovery I associated with Beginner's Mind. Instead, I found myself stuck in unyielding ego junk of competitiveness, insecurity, and frustration. I kept thinking that the movements looked fairly simple, all these other people could do them, I was an intelligent adult, why couldn't I? People in the group were sweetly attentive to my need for instruction, but the more suggestions they offered the more overwhelmed and frustrated I felt.

That night, Stephen astutely asked "Are you having fun?" and I stammered "Well, I'm working pretty hard, but some of it is fun." NOT. (yet).

The "work" was on my ego, and I knew it.

That night, alone, wrestling with the frustration of the day, I realized that what I needed was not Beginner's Mind, but No Mind. Somehow that insight settled in clearly, and I was able to make an immediate shift in consciousness.

The second day was lovely. My mind was completely open, empty of everything including expectations, and I could take in the teachings, the experiences, the beautiful surroundings, the robust heartiness of the group, the many now-helpful and deeply welcome suggestions, everything. I could fail and laugh.

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The next issue of *Body Dialogue* will be in July, 2011.

Please submit articles, poems, pictures to the editor at: newsletter@Shintaido.org. Deadline for submissions is May 15, 2011.

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The Joint Keiko

The Keiko was very informal. Ito led an abbreviated kenko taiso warm up where we also performed Aozora-taiso ("blue sky exercise;" the "Ah" and "Oh" movements from tenshin-goso). We finished with wakame kumite.

BK taught a portion of the TLS curriculum. His gorei was very gentle and deepening. I felt very much at home. The movements themselves were simple and straight forward and not too "athletic" which makes them quite accessible.

BK blended directional as well philosophical commentary to his audience. I was quite taken by his off-handed remark, "Let's overcome the delusion of our separateness." Needless to say, there was an ongoing emphasis on unification of body, mind and spirit. [JRS]



Bidyut Bose (BK)

The Interview

Jim – Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for Body Dialogue.

Ito – It is my pleasure.

Jim – How did you first hear about Niroga?

Ito – I heard about Niroga from Toni Sterling who understands the value of Shintaido and wants to help us with outreach. She introduced me to the founder of Niroga, BK Bose. BK has been deeply influenced by Mother Theresa and as a result has a natural passion for people who need help. He firmly believes that "children from any background are our future". It is a very clear vision and he is acting upon it.

Jim – What are your impressions of BK and Niroga Yoga?

Ito – I was very impressed by BK's personal history. He

never intended to be a yoga instructor, but when he grew up he met many teachers and gurus through his father. BK has modified and simplified the practice without losing its essence. He is a good role model for me. I am interested in teaching peace and conflict resolution using Shintaido and transmitting its deeper meaning.

Shintaido is practiced by Shintaido lovers like mainstream Yoga. I want to bring Shintaido to those who really need it. When I met BK and Niroga, I was very happy to see a good business model.

The time of instruction was not long enough so it is difficult to say what I learned. I was very impressed by the confidence in BK's Gorei (teaching). He easily led us to deep meditation right away! It was like seeing the top of an iceberg floating in the ocean!

After meeting BK, I was reminded of one of my favorite quotations by Hideo Kobayashi, a Japanese art critic:

"Hito wa, sono seikaku ni atta jiken ni sogu suru!"

"A person may accidentally encounter an opportunity that fits his or her own character!"

Jim – What can Shintaido offer Niroga?

Ito – I appreciate the opportunity to share my body wisdom with professionals who are successful in the real world. I'm looking forward to hearing impressions of Shintaido from BK and his instructors.

Shintaido's Kenko Taiso program has a rhythm and uses counting so people can easily follow. Niroga does not include these aspects which I think would be beneficial for concentration and focus.



Ito leads warmups

When I started studying Shintaido, I enjoyed pushing myself! But, as I began to manage and drive the organization, Shintaido produced more stress and tension instead of inspiration and relaxation. Eventually, this may happen to Niroga instructors as they expand their practice.

Scuba diving and Tai Chi helped me recover and deepen the

Shoko

Continued from p.3

understanding of what I originally discovered by practicing Shintaido. I think some simple Shintaido exercises may help them release their stress and tension and provide new inspiration.

Jim – What do you see as next steps?

Ito – I would like to attend one of BK's training programs and invite him to my workshops in the near future!

If someone in Shintaido is willing to give of themselves, I am happy to recommend them to BK and Niroga.

Final words

Jim – When BK asked me "Ito you told me you came here to change America. Have you been successful?"

Ito – My answer came from Thomas Edison, *"If I find 10,000 ways something won't work, I haven't failed. I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward."*

Yoga is an ancient body method while Shintaido is quite new; and Yoga has become well-known while Shintaido is not.

I am sure there were many groups who collaborated with Yoga and even though it has become popular, it seems rather mono-cultural.

Unlike Yoga, Shintaido sees the world from three different perspectives – religion (god first), martial arts (sensei first), western arts (me first). Even though yoga is much more popular now, Shintaido has the ability to reach a wider audience in the future. Shintaido is inherently collaborative. We should always keep this strong point of Shintaido as it becomes better known.

Although Shintaido is not very popular, I am happy since my dream was to establish a grass roots network so even when Aoki Sensei or I die, Shintaido will be alive. There are many people who have grasped the essence of Shintaido and I feel it has a bright future.

Beginner's Luck

Continued from p.1

I could do one movement out of ten somewhat ok and be happy. I could fall down. It was all good, all celebration of the joy of being alive, of being in community, of being at one with All That Is.

Woven throughout was my deepening joy at getting to know Stephen and Nancy as the vibrant, interesting adults they have become, joy also at encountering Bela, Sophia, the wise and playful senseis (teachers), and the rest of this impressively grounded and radiant Shintaido community.

The second night, eve of my 60th birthday, after sitting under a clear, starry sky, bobcat yowling in the far woods, another breakthrough came. I realized that just as Beginner's Mind

has its positive and negative aspects, so, too, does ego. I could see that the positive side of ego was to be a vehicle to carry us around in this life, to help us function, otherwise we'd be blobs. But what I saw for the first time was that the problem with ego was that it wants to be eternal, i.e.: it wants Glory, it wants to be Glory-fied! And that is also its brilliance. But of course the only way it can achieve this wonderful goal is by surrendering- yielding! - to spirit.

*Judy and Gianni*

I realized that if I could speak to my ego as Beloved (rather than enemy), congratulate it for this sublime desire, I could help it understand and accept that the only way to achieve its deepest desire is by yielding to spirit. And then, like something waking up, opening, and beginning to trust, ego starts relaxing into the embrace of spirit.

The third day was truly glorious. Everything was even more deeply unified: body, psyche, spirit, community, nature. I felt deeply at peace, quietly myself, humbly grounded, flowing with gratitude, delighted in this practice and in the beauty of people so generously sharing their passionate presence.

During one of the keikos, I experienced the joy of running faster than my legs could possibly go, effortlessly pulled by the far woods, laughing wildly on the knife edge of annihilation, and choosing to release everything, to fall into this new zone of freedom, in complete trust, yielding into Glory.

Thank you to everyone involved, from a now-besotted and very lucky Beginner, for the wonderful teachings you conveyed in this powerful gasshuku. Thank you for providing the guidance and perfect holding environment for me to experience something of the spirit of yielding and of Glory. I feel touched by a very great blessing to have had this introduction to Shintaido.

Interview with Sensei Tomoji Miyamoto about Egami Sensei

Jim Sterling discovered this online interview, a fascinating glimpse into the history of Egami Sensei, and of Hiroyuki Aoki before Shintaido. Norman Welch, president of Canada Shotokan, who conducted the interview, is a friend of our organization and has attended Shintaido events.

This is an excerpted portion of the article. The full text with pictures may be found at:

<http://www.mushinkai.net/pages/english/TheHistoryOfKarateEnglishSite/Miyamoto01English.htm> [Ed.]

Many thanks to the Mushinkai School for their generous agreement to allow Body Dialogue to reprint this article.

*"In a previous article, I wrote about meeting Tomoji Miyamoto during a visit to Beijing. Miyamoto was Egami Sensei's assistant and also Chief Secretary of Shotokai until Egami Sensei's death in 1981. Mr. Miyamoto has a law degree from Chuo University and is a professor in the Physical Education department of his alma mater. Mr. Miyamoto helped Egami Sensei publish his book *The Way of Karate: Beyond Technique* (Kodansha 1976), one of the most important books for practitioners of Shotokan Karate.*

*During a recent visit to Beijing, I spoke with Mr. Miyamoto about the publishing of Egami Sensei's book, *The Way of Karate: Beyond Technique*. In addition to discussion about Egami Sensei's book, our conversation led into several areas about practice and Mr. Miyamoto's relationship to the Shotokai. Set out below is my translation of some of that interview." [Norman Welch.]*

When did you first meet Egami Sensei ?

I first met Egami Sensei at Summer Gasshuku (workshop) during my first year. As first year students, in addition to practicing, we also were responsible for preparing meals and taking care of the senior members. There were about 100 members at Gasshuku, 50 of whom were new white belts. Because we were new members, we were not instructed directly by Egami Sensei. On the third day of Gasshuku, we went to a large gymnasium, which is where I first saw Egami Sensei, who was seated on a large stage at the front of the gymnasium from which he directed Mr. Isayama to lead practice. At the end of practice, Egami Sensei gave his comments on practice. Seniors like Takagi Jotaro, who is now leader of the Shotokai, and Aoki Hiroyuki, who later left the Shotokai to form Shintaido, would often act as Goreisha, leading practice under Egami Sensei's direction.

Egami Sensei published a book in Japanese before he published *The Way of Karate: Beyond Technique*, so why was there a need for a second book ?

There is a book called *Karate Do for the Specialist* (Rakutenkai 1970), which was published in Japanese and bears Egami Sensei's name, but that book contained a limited amount of Egami Sensei's ideas about karate practice. That book was published by Mr. Aoki, who was the leader of Rakutenkai.

Can you tell me about Rakutenkai ?

In 1965 Master Egami asked Mr. Aoki to form a group to research new methods of practicing karate that would not be restricted by the traditions of the Shotokai. This group would practice several times a week in Nogeyama Park in Yokohama from 11:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. I attended several of their practices, but when I realized their practice was going in a different direction from Egami Sensei's, I stopped attending and continued to practice with Egami Sensei. Later Rakutenkai became Shintaido, and they left the Shotokai.

Can you tell me more about the book *Karate Do for the Specialist*?

Master Egami wrote the manuscript for the book, but Rakutenkai did the kata photos. The book was a limited edition of 1000 copies; it contained about forty kata, including several Bo kata. Egami Sensei and Mr. Aoki disagreed on the content of the book and eventually Egami Sensei told Mr. Aoki, "You're free to do what you want with the rest of the book." As a result the book became Mr. Aoki's book with Egami Sensei's name on it.

Is this why the second book came about ?

Yes. I felt that there should be a book that everyone could afford, and which explained clearly what changes had come about in technique and what Egami Sensei felt about practice. At that time, Egami Sensei wrote articles which were published in the Shotokai newsletter four times a year. I felt that these articles could be the basis for a book, so I took them to my friend Mr. Kenji Suzuki, who was in charge of the International section at Kodansha publishers. He agreed that these articles could form the basis of a book.

Was Egami Sensei still actively teaching at this time ?

Yes, Egami Sensei was teaching, but it was very difficult for junior members to get to practice with him and spend time learning from him. That is why I felt a book would be very helpful. Furthermore, Egami Sensei was in poor health, so I wanted him to record his ideas for future generations.

You appear in most of the photographs in *Karate: Beyond Technique*. Did you take these photographs over several weeks or several months ?

We took the photographs in one day. We went to Kodansha Dojo, the same dojo at which many of the photos in *Karate*

Interview with Miiyamoto Sensei *Continued from p.5*

Do Kyohan were taken, early in the morning and worked until the photos were complete. I was unhappy with many of the photographs, but we were on a limited budget, so most photos were done in one take.

When the manuscript was complete did you help Egami Sensei to edit it ?

No. Egami Sensei edited the book himself. I was quite young at the time and felt the book should be written in a more formal manner, but Egami Sensei's style was to write as if he were talking to someone about practice. Looking back on it, I'm glad I did not speak to Egami Sensei about this issue, because I feel this is the bible of his teachings and truly reflects his ideas. I still refer to this book often and have reread it many many times. Each time I reread the book, I find new things. It is one of the books I brought with me to China.



Egami Sensei

Why did you quit the Shotokai ?

About a year after Egami Sensei's death, I quit the Shotokai. I felt that things had changed at the Shotokai and that they were not proceeding as Egami Sensei wanted them to. Mr. Hironishi, who had been Egami Sensei's friend and associate for many years, was now the most senior member of the Shotokai, and under his influence things began to change. They offered me a position to stay on, but I felt there were conditions, so I left. I still have many good friends in Shotokai, but I do not regret leaving.

Looking back on the sixteen years you practiced with Egami Sensei, what are some of the things that you remember most vividly ?

Egami Sensei was constantly telling us, "Relax, relax take the power out of your shoulders". I bet you have heard that from Ohshima Sensei.

Mostly I remember how the last two or three years before Egami Sensei died, even though he was physically weak and did not have much energy, he could still handle my attack with little effort. I was about 30 years old at the time, in top physical condition, but when I attacked Egami Sensei he

would send me flying across the room with no effort--he would hardly touch me. It reminded me of when he practiced Toate with Mr. Aoki when I was a beginner. Egami Sensei would repel Mr. Aoki's attack without physically touching him.

Do you think Egami Sensei had ESP ?

Yes. Many times I would arrive at his house unannounced and he would be waiting for me, or Egami Sensei would tell me that someone would be coming soon. Suddenly there would be a knock at the door and that person would be standing there. It is not unusual for people of Egami Sensei's martial arts level to possess such ability. I also believe he had hypnotic power which he used to control his opponents.

Do you think this was a gift, or did Egami Sensei develop this power through Karate practice?

I think it was a combination. Egami Sensei always insisted that you could develop these mental powers through karate practice.

(Read the complete article at:

<http://www.mushinkai.net/pages/english/TheHistoryOfKarateEnglishSite/Miyamoto01English.htm> [Ed.]

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For further information, please contact Stephen Billias at 413 475-3745 or sbillias@comcast.net

An Experience in Brazil

by Carole Brouillette

translated by Patrick Bouchaud

In November 2009, I went to Brazil for an interior or spiritual trip. I lived near a spiritual healing center which I visited regularly during a three-week stay.

People came from everywhere in the world to meditate together; people from different religions and from different health conditions, some very sick and seeking recovery, others taking the time to look within for renewal.

Every day the center offered free soup to each visitor on site. Once a week people living nearby could help prepare the vegetables for the soup. On the first Thursday when I was there I got up early and decided to offer my help. The person in charge gave me instruction on what I could do. She asked me to peel a vegetable which is called "moo-moo". There was a big basket full of moo-moo and I was advised to take away as much skin as possible; otherwise the skin would give a bitter taste to the soup.

I sat astride the bench in the park. A woman from the United States sat in front of me. We introduced each other and started on our work.

After some time peeling the vegetables I looked at my companion and she appeared tired. She confirmed by saying that she found the bench uncomfortable and that it was difficult to keep going. I realized that I also started to feel fatigue and tension in my body. I shared with her that it was certainly time for us to relax and peel our vegetable while moving our body. She found the idea interesting and we moved on.

I started to be aware of the motions of my body, and the fatigue quickly dissipated. Not only was the fatigue disappearing, but I became more aware of what I was doing. My partner seemed to be more comfortable too.

I could not tell how long I stayed there peeling moo-moos; I was in a very pleasant energy, feeling a soft joy, moving my body like a wave or a piece of seaweed.

The more relaxed and present I was, the more consciousness flowed naturally through me. To peel properly the vegetables was not only about giving the soup a good taste, but also about the process. The moo-moos had crevices and it was difficult to take away the skin from these places. In addition to the grater, we had to use a small knife to take it off. This required us to be gentle and precise in order not to lose any part of the good vegetable and at the same time to keep a good rhythm to remain efficient. This simple movement was teaching me.

The crevices in the moo-moo were becoming like human sufferings. To reach them requires patience, softness, focus, determination as well as to let go.

In the end, I was simply sure that this soup we had prepared all together would help all those who would eat it.

A good *keiko* (class)!

Today I really think that it is this Universal Energy, this Love that we naturally let flow through us and into a soup when we decide spontaneously to cook a simple soup for our child, a member of our family or a sick friend. They end up telling you that it really was what they needed and that they enjoyed it so much! The soup is only one example. Life is full of possibilities.

I think it is possible to develop this spontaneous flow of Love towards human beings and all forms of life on Earth, and why not in the universe?

I am thankful that the practice of Shintaido helps me become more conscious and I hope to keep the strength to use the time which is offered to me to develop and expand loving presence more and more each day.



Carole Brouillette

At the beginning of my Shintaido practice, often I had a difficult time during *keiko*; sometimes even a while after class. Resistance or suffering was emerging naturally, but I came back to practice even though I encountered these states because they were generally followed by a kind of release, and more inner peace. I kept going with my *hitori geiko* (solitary practice), staying positively centered on my will to have a more solid commitment to my life and to deserve receiving even more teachings which were helping me to feel closer to my soul, closer to others and more in peace.

Now, *keiko* often brings me a nourishing, meditative energy, in a shared radiance.

I cherish every moment when I have the chance to receive some teaching, every moment when I feel at ease enough to share my understanding by teaching, and also the rare but precious opportunities I have to practice with Shintaido friends.

I thank my instructor and Master, Haruyoshi Fugaku Ito for his constant teaching, his Humility and his Loving Presence.

BODY *Dialogue*



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.

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