



SHINTAIDO OF AMERICA

SUMMER 1986 NEWSLETTER

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA

LOOKING BACK OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS

By
H. F. Ito

Junen hito mukashi

I usually don't look back, but since it's our tenth anniversary year, I hope Aoki-sensei will forgive me.

When I started teaching Shintaido in this country more than ten years ago, people didn't want to bow or clean the dojo. People asked me funny questions like "why aren't you jumping? You're just counting and watching." But now people want to be on the staff of the organization and to learn how to fold the hakimas. People want to become assistants. Finally, some people said the gasshuku itself is the "real world." Truth is here. So we can go back to civilization temporarily, but let's come back to the gasshuku life soon and let's have another gasshuku in the near future. In Japanese there is a proverb -- junen hito mukashi -- "the passage of ten years makes history." Ten years ago Michael and I incorporated Shintaido. That is why we are celebrating our tenth anniversary this year by inviting Aoki-sensei and holding Shintaido Ten on the East Coast. In keeping with the Japanese way, I would first of all like to appreciate not only the cooperation but also the effort of the American members which helped me to develop and lead me to this point.

Generally speaking, when Japanese beginners come to Shintaido gasshukus in Japan, they can easily fit in to the gasshuku system because traditionally Japanese are used to adjusting themselves to others. But Americans who are raised on the idea of freedom and individuality have a hard time accepting the gasshuku system and following the program which requires a lot of self control and togetherness. It was hard for me to transfer this idea and I knew it would take a long time, but after the recent spring gasshuku when I heard many positive responses, I really understood that Shintaido gasshuku, as a cultural phenomenon, had finally been transplanted to America.

Since Shintaido is a body movement, people think I am an instructor of Shintaido technique. But, I personally think I actually brought two things through Shintaido. One is of course the technique of Shintaido -- called waza in Japanese. The other is how to organize a gasshuku.

A Shintaido gasshuku has a certain style and this style itself is carrying some kind of truth. So if you don't understand the gasshuku, you will not understand the "field" which Shintaido is going to provide. Finally it took ten years, but Bela Breslau received what I was trying to impart. Japanese don't usually publicly admire their wives, but in this case I honestly have to appreciate how much she has grown as an organizer. I am happy that the gasshuku system is in place and I believe many others have or will become actively involved.

The recent spring gasshuku was the first in which I could concentrate solely on the instruction without worrying at all about whether everything was going all right on an organizational level. Now I am hoping this will happen with the technical part of Shintaido as well. I am looking forward to the appearance of people who will eagerly pursue Shintaido waza and try to draw everything out of me.

Shintaido for Late Bloomers

The average age of most Shintaidoists in this country is probably the late 20s or early 30s. Perhaps this is because the instructors themselves are getting older so we naturally attract people closer to our own ages. But, I also believe it is because America is a young country with a fairly short history and its young people have a hard time understanding the ancient

tradition and history which lies at the base of Shintaido. Shintaido philosophy seems to be most appreciated by those who are more mature and have more life experience.

When I read an article about American astronauts, I learned that they are usually much older than Russian astronauts. I recognized that Americans like to continue to challenge things even after they reach a mature age. This encouraged me and I was able to wait knowing that it might take a long time for Shintaido to take root, but that once it did, Americans would take up the challenge and do it.

A highlight of this spring gasshuku was the last keiko which was led by Ellen Solot and Michael Thompson. I was watching this keiko from the side and I really thought my dream had come true. I was waiting for this scene of Shintaido with Americans practicing under the gorei of American instructors who grew up in Shintaido. I was glad to see that those who had studied many martial arts could appreciate their pure Shintaido. I was especially happy to see that many who probably thought they were not athletically talented could fully express themselves under their gorei. Some day I want to see advanced Shintaido workshops which are led by American instructors who grew up in Shintaido of America.

A little bit of madness -- Jinsei iki ni kanzu!

At the end of the gasshuku when I asked for impressions, Jabir Titelman who started Shintaido in southern France and moved to San Francisco last fall, spoke out. With strong emotion, he said, "people may think I'm crazy, but I may change my plans at this time and instead of leaving San Francisco for Europe, I am seriously thinking of postponing my departure and so that I can attend Shintaido Ten." I don't know where his "madness" from, but I want to recommend this kind of small madness to ordinary American people who usually don't take so much risk in their lives.

I know that people who have made a steady life very often look back at their own pasts and regret the chances they missed. But, I also know the people who follow their passions and enjoy their lives, never look back and have no regrets even after they reach middle life. They are often confident and filled with love for the next generation.

Only in science fiction like in the movie Back to the Future can we go back and participate in past events. If you are a rock music fan, you may wish you had been at Woodstock. If you are an artist, you may wish you had lived in New York City during the sixties. On the other hand, if you had lived in those times, you might not have recognized what an incredible period you were part of. Believe it or not the present moment in

Shintaido is one of these epoch making times. Even if you put \$10,000 five years from now, you won't be able to buy the experience of Shintaido Ten.

When we consider the the political and economic situation, we don't know when we can have this kind of semi-international gasshuku again. If you are sitting on the fence, be a little mad and jump over into Shintaido Ten.

Furu-ike ya
kewazu toikomu
mizu no oto

Old Pond
frog jump in
water sound

SHINTAIDO STRIKES BASEBALL

By
Ellen Solot

The high school baseball championships in Japan are a really big deal. They are played twice a year, once in early spring and again at the end of summer. All sets are tuned in across the country. Especially in the large metropolitan areas, where people have come for education or jobs, the fans enthusiastically follow the action in their "home countries."

Until this last spring Toyama prefecture (located about three hours north of Kyoto by train) never had a team that was good enough to make it to the championships. But this year Toyama was not only represented, the Shin Minato High School team became one of the top four teams in the country.

How did they do it? Tetsuo Haneki, one of the original Rakutenkai members, had become the baseball trainer for the team. Haneki is a very hard working owner of a roofing company in Toyama. He has been training the Shin Minato High School team on the side. This has been going on for less than a year.

Toyama is a cold, snowy place and during the winter they can't play much baseball. Heavy snow lasts until the end of February and the Spring tournament is the end of March. For the winter, the team could only practice catch ball, and swinging the bat, and of course with Haneki as their trainer, Shintaido. Only a few weeks before the game, they were able to go outside and practice in a real game situation. Now, as the story goes, before each game, the team goes to a nearby field to do stretching, a lot of Kaikyaku-sho and Eiko-dai.

As their winning streak began, Haneki and Shintaido began to get a lot of press. People were surprised that a snow country team could do so well in the spring tournament. When interviewed on T.V., the team members attributed their winning to Haneki-sensei's training.

Stay tuned for the results of the August series as Shintaido moves into the championship leagues.

SHINTAIDO TEN

Don't miss our summer Shintaido event! Shintaido Ten will be held August 14-17, 1986 at Franklin Pierce College in Rindge, New Hampshire. This national gasshuku celebrates Shintaido of America's Tenth Anniversary and will be directed by Master Hiroyuki Aoki, the founder of Shintaido.

Sixty eight people have already registered. Although this is a national gasshuku sponsored by Shintaido of America, a meeting of the Shintaido Instructor's Council (SIC) will take place and many members of the Technical Committee will be there. For a national event, Shintaido Ten will have quite an international flavor with many people from other countries. To name a few instructors who will be present: Robert Breant (France), Bernard Ducrest (France), Ken Weight (England), Tony Hammick (England), Shiko Hokari (Japan), Hideko Hokari (Japan), Atsushi Funakawa (Japan), Alex Pope (Australia).

To get ready for this gasshuku, in addition to your Shintaido practice, please read the haiku poetry and travel sketches of Basho. Aoki-sensei will be giving a lecture presentation based on Basho's works.

For more information, contact Joe Zawielski, 60 Carter Road, Worcester, MA 01609. Telephone: (617) 798-8638.

PINK GI

by

Leslie Goldberg, Staff Reporter
S. F. Examiner

Eleven o'clock at night and I found myself toiling over a hot stove, cooking up my gi. Well, not exactly cooking; try boiling in chemicals. The reason for this re-creation of the Love Canal was that the said gi was inadvertently washed along with a red T-shirt, turning the ordinarily white gi, pink.

Having endured an excessive number of comments about Leslie Pinkberg at the Clement Street dojo in San Francisco, I decided to take Jim Sterling's advice: Try some stuff called Rit color remover. Bleach, sending the gi to the cleaners, as well as washing it several times hadn't worked. Chemical warfare, it seemed was the only solution.

The Rit directions read: "Don't inhale." "Harmful, even fatal if swallowed." "Eye irritant, flush with water if exposed." What ever happened to the good old days when all you had to do was beat your clothes against a rock to get them clean?

Oh well, the choice had boiled down to spending \$40 on a new gi and spending \$1.50 on the suspicious white

powder. So this veteran of kan geiko mustered up a bit of the Shintaido adventuring spirit and dragged out an old enamel spaghetti pot.

Into the bubbling brew went one pink gi. Steam wafted upstairs and Michael Pinkberg shouted from above, "What are you doing down there, making formica cookies or just burning plastic spoons?"

Alas, it was a simple demonstration of better living through chemistry thanks to Jim Sensei and the result was one white gi.

P. S. The fumes weren't that bad.

SPIRALING TO SHINTAIDO TEN

By

Joe Zawielski

While writing my notes on the content of keiko from the Spring gasshuku, my mind keeps returning to the sights, sounds and events that surrounded those keikos. It is amazing how thoughts flow and interconnect; one thought leading on to another and eventually seeming to turn around and come back to the beginning again, somewhat as a circle. From keiko my thoughts wander to the giant redwoods which reached so high in Tenso (not having a head to get in their way), to the starlit night sky and the sight of a line of white and light coming across the bridge for night keiko and the voices of the frogs rising and lowering as if being lead by some unseen conductor; the lack of human sounds during meditation, that is except for the periodic human sound of gas being released; which brings thoughts to the food which I could easily persue for a long time, but I'll stop them at great, delicious and abundant, then poppyseed cake comes to mind and I can picture Daniel Snyder's face covered with sand as he lifts himself from the beach one more time; on to beautiful blue skys, the blue green ocean, wave beaten cliffs, the sound of another group doing tenshingoso dai, the quiet sight of a group in circle doing seiza, the feelings of peace and oneness with myself and all the people and nature around me, the openness and warmth that I felt from everyone, the music, the kids, the jokes both good and bad, the thoughts are endless like a circle, but here I am on a plane going back to New England and my thoughts turn to the upcoming gasshuku and also to past gasshukus and I think that what I had just experienced wasn't a circle but rather just part of a spiral -- going where? Maybe Ixtlan! Must be Shintaido Ten.

ITO'S BOOKSHELF

There are empty spaces on the shelves. If you have borrowed books from the Shintaido library, please return them to Ito at your earliest opportunity.

SHINTAIDO OF AMERICA ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting was held during the Memorial weekend gasshuku. Here are some highlights.

The three elected board members were re-elected for a second year. The Board amended the bylaws so that after this year elected board members will serve a two-year term.

Board of Directors: Michael Thompson, H. F. Ito, Bill Burtis, Jean Pierre Marquez, Lee Seaman.

Officers: Michael Thompson, President; Bela Breslau, Vice President & Secretary; Bob Howald, Treasurer; Kazu Shibao, Equip. Manager; Jim Sterling, Shintaido of America's SIC Representative.

THE MAKINGS OF A MEMORABLE MEMORIAL DAY GASSHUKU

By
Bela Breslau

Last May we had a good gasshuku, but without the great gorei by Oakada-sensei, we would have been miserable. The Marin skies were heavy with cold grey fog and the food served by the Point Bonita staff was grim. Looking back, one of the Berkeley members told me the military style cinderblock barracks made her feel like she was in prison, and another student told me that when she recently took her son to see Alcatraz prison, he said "Hey, this reminds me of Point Bonita." We needed a new place.

In January of this year, Jim Sterling organized the Bay Area Kan Geiko. For the first time we went to the beach every morning for seven days (from 5:30 to 7:00 am). Shintaido and nature did it again. After this, members of the Berkeley group were even more determined to find a beautiful new place for the spring gasshuku.

Leslie and Michael Goldberg initiated the search. They had found out about a place a few hours north of San Francisco and one rainy November day the three of us drove up 101 and then took a narrow winding road off towards the coast. The place is called camp Gualala and is located in a redwood grove along a small river. We liked the rustic lodge, the fireplaces and decks, the kitchen where we could do our own cooking. We didn't like the bathrooms, but you can't have everything. Also, I wasn't sure about the keiko field.

When Ito returned from his travels in December, we took another rainy drive up to see it. This time we saw a second smaller lodge which we had also reserved

but had not seen. We drove the extra 45 minutes it takes to get from the camp out to the coast and north on Route 1 to the town of Gualala. From the place where we had tea, we could see a beautiful, long, wild beach and Ito said we would have at least one keiko on that beach.

By the end of 1985 we had signed the contract and had our place. I had met with Ito and sketched out a list of probable attendees, a preliminary budget and a possible schedule. Ito was both a consultant and a staunch representative of the interests of Shintaido of America. As the local organizer, I wasn't thinking as much about Shintaido of America, but Ito made sure we budgeted for raising funds for this year's Shintaido Ten.

Beginning in February, we had meetings. I asked Leslie Goldberg and Rosemary Rae from the Berkeley group to be the assistant directors of the gasshuku. We met every month for a few months and then every two weeks. Gradually, Michael Goldberg became more and more involved until he eventually became what Ito called the "gasshuku papa."

At the end of April, one month before the actual gasshuku, with the cooperation of Bay Area Shintaido, we went to Gualala for a staff workshop. We held a working meeting to bring everyone up to date on what had been done and also to work on room assignments, cooking arrangements and the many other details. We had two keikos, one on the field and one on the beach. At the beach, 4 or 5 California grey whales came to watch our keiko, spouting off and playing a few hundred yards from the shore.

One piece of bad luck became good luck. We had worked hard to make sure we would have good food. We talked to several caterers and cooks and finally hired a woman to handle most of the cooking. About two days before the staff workshop she became sick and couldn't come. No problem for 12 people spending one night, but what if that happened before the actual event when we had 50 people to feed for three days? Leslie Goldberg came up with a cooperative cooking plan. With Leslie's plan in gear, Barbara Molongowski, Bob Howald's wife and a great cook, came to the rescue and agreed to do the two main entrees. Anyone who attended the gasshuku will tell you how great this combination was.

During the gasshuku I really appreciated all those meetings and the staff workshop. The gasshuku seemed to unfold. We were busy, but I found I could even enjoy keiko and not worry much about what was next.

Our choice of location was crowned by beautiful sunny weather. To make us even more content with the choice, when we came back to San Francisco, we heard it had been foggy all weekend!