



# SHINTAIDO OF AMERICA

January 1988 Newsletter

San Francisco, California

## Shintaido and the Theatre du Soleil

by H. F. Ito with Leslie Goldberg

Many artists have been drawn to Shintaido. Painters, sculptors, photographers, musicians and writers have turned to Shintaido as a means of strengthening their bodies and enhancing their creativity.

A few years ago an actor, Jean Louis Lorente of France, joined the ranks of Shintaido artists. I have been impressed by his Shintaido practice, which reflects, I believe, his personality. With an incisive koshi movement and superior concentration, Jean Louis's form suggests his strong commitment to his artistic vision and his acting career.

When I was in Paris last fall I had the opportunity to see Jean Louis perform along with his company, the Theatre du Soleil, in a play titled "The India of Their Dreams." Theatre du Soleil is directed by the group's founder Ariane Mnouchkine, a truly remarkable woman.

The performance was more like a gasshuku than an ordinary stage production. The atmosphere in the hall was comfortable and relaxed. Actors wearing Indian garb served audience members Indian food and tea before the play started. Musicians played Indian music. I felt as if I had arrived in India.

The building itself was also unusual. Located in the suburbs of

Paris, it seemed more like a gymnasium than a traditional theater. The actors put on their make-up in full view of the audience. This practice apparently got started many years ago, when the company was too poor to set up a separate dressing room area.

Before I had taken my seat, one of the actresses suddenly began shouting. At first I thought a fight has broken out but it was in fact the start of the production. The ruckus captured everyone's attention and we naturally moved to our seats. Since there was no curtain, we watched as the actors finished setting up the props and scenery.

Although the play was in French I didn't have difficulty understanding the plot which depicted India's fight for independence and the incipient division between India and Pakistan.

Throughout the performance the play's director, Ariane, stood offstage giving support and direction to the actors in much the same way a goreisha leads keiko. She seemed to communicate both love and encouragement to her group of actors. It seems that Ariane has managed to capture the original spirit of theater which, in primitive societies, is closer to what we think of as a festival. Everyone participates in this burst of primal

energy or "life expression."

There was a great contrast between what she was expressing and the character of Ghandi on the stage. In the play, Ghandi was portrayed as an almost feminine figure. Ariane is a woman, but her way of supporting the whole group was very much like a father's love. I felt that she was expressing all of her love as a human being and had developed the masculine as well as the feminine within herself.

On the whole the Theatre du Soleil company struck me as very similar to Shintaido. For example, many of the actors come from different countries. The Ghandi character was played by a Peruvian. The off-stage conversation was a mixture of French, Spanish and English. Like Shintaido, the group has kept its customs and traditions from its early days. This reminded me of how we have kept many of the Rakutenkai customs.

The company also resembled the early Russian theater where I understand actors were trained not just to be actors but to be full human beings. This holistic education or education of the whole person is similar, I think, to traditional Japanese martial arts training.

Like Shintaido students, these actors have built a community around their

common commitment. "With respect to the freedom of the actors when they play, we do our best so that the play will always improve and grow deeper," said Jean Louis, "I would also like to add that it is the love of the theater which allows us to have the confidence, the tolerance and the love to work together."

When I asked him how Shintaido contributed to his own acting, Jean Louis said, "I think that Shintaido can give us something at the moment of the play's creation. Personally, it is at that moment that I need it most. That is when I do shoko every week because shoko allows me to work on something a little deeper, truer and to be in touch with my inner self."

Jean Louis had to go through an intense one-month audition process before he was accepted into the Theatre du Soleil. Out of 120 hopefuls, Jean Louis and four others were chosen. He was picked, in part, because of how he was able to communicate with and relate to Ariane.

Ariane has continued to work with the Theatre du Soleil for 24 years. She isn't married and told Jean Louis that her company members are her children. Like a good parent (or a good goreisha!) her gift to her children, is love, tolerance and community. "Her message is simple: Love each other despite the character defects you may see," Jean Louis said. "Tolerance is very important, although that doesn't mean you don't strive to do your best."

"The theater also teaches us to get along. If an argument does occur, it doesn't last because the play goes on in two hours. It also teaches us to have confidence in ourselves. We come to take each other very seriously: If someone says something you believe it."

"Ariane has told us that we are all responsible for each other and that we should not take foolish risks because the whole group may suffer. We are all in it together and that one dies from the moment one seeks to be completely alone."

I would hope that all Shintaidoists would consider Ariane's message. In

Shintaido, too, we learn that we're all responsible for each other. And in Shintaido we're offered an alternative to the isolation, alienation and self-interest that characterizes much of contemporary existence.

I also think that Jean Louis offers Shintaidoists a good example of what it means to integrate Shintaido into one's daily life. As he said, "I hope I can someday fully appreciate what I get from my art and what I get from Shintaido. I want to try to mix them together and use them both on stage and in my life."

*Editor's note: Theatre du Soleil is currently looking for a sponsor so that they might tour the United States. Meanwhile if you have a chance to go to Paris in 1988, don't miss this play! □*

## Shintaido Terminology

by Faith Ingulsrud

This terminology column gives the meaning of some words used in the gorei.

**GOEI:** Conducting, teaching, leading.

go	rei
号	令
shouting	command
howl	order
title	decree
	an act

In Shintaido, the instructor gives the *gorei*, and the instructor is often called the *goreisha*.

**YOI:** Prepare, be ready mentally.

yo	i
用	意
function	mind/heart
work	care,
engagement	thought
service	idea

In martial arts, *yoi* directs you to engage your mind, focussing on what you are about to begin.

**KAMAETE:** Take a stance or posture, "make form."

kamae	te
構え	て
build a structure	suffix
take a posture	indicating
be ready for	command

After preparing your mind in *yoi*, *kamaete* signals you to ready your body by taking the correct stance.

**HAJIME:** Begin, commence, start.

haji	me
始	め
begin	suffix
start	indicating
break out	command

The *goreisha* will say "*keiko hajime-masu*," at the beginning of the *keiko*. To begin a *kata* or movement, he or she will simply say, "*hajime!*"

**YAME:** Stop (the movement).

ya	me
止	め
discontinue	suffix
stop	indicating
end	command

*Yame* is the opposite of *hajime*, stop, but keep the form and the mental focus.

**YASUME:** Rest, Relax.

Yasu	Me
休	め
rest	suffix
relax	indicating
at ease	command

*Yasume* signals relaxation for both the body and mind. □



# The Enterprise

by Leslie Goldberg

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Just when it looked like we were in danger of becoming an enclave of Yuppie Shintaido, the Bay Area group received some new recruits: Robert Gaston, Kris Dirck, Lloyd Johnson and Mike Sheets, all members of the U.S. Navy and all stationed aboard a 85,000-ton aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Enterprise.

When the guys, or "squids," as they sometimes call themselves are in town and manage to break away from their 16-hour-a-day jobs on the ship and come ashore, they never miss a keiko. They can also often be found taking a bit of a break from military life at Juliette Farkouh's house or at Connie Borden's.

Sometimes Mike, who is quickly becoming our resident chef, can be persuaded to whip up a meal. "You buy the food, I'll cook the dinner," he says.

Mike comes from Missouri, Lloyd is from Arkansas and Kris is from Illinois. Before Robbie joined the Navy, he lived in Oregon where he started studying Shintaido with John Seaman at Eastern Oregon State University. Since the Enterprise is usually docked in Alameda—just over the bridge from San Francisco—Robbie began attending Jim Sterling's class about a year ago. A few weeks later he brought his buddies along from the ship.

"I was looking for something to do and Robbie said this wasn't competitive, so I thought I'd give it a shot," says Mike.

The gang of four has been coming back ever since. "Shintaido has been a rich experience for me," says Kris, one evening before keiko. The foursome are gathered at a San Francisco coffee shop to discuss their impressions of Shintaido.

"I'd taken karate before and it turned out to be a kind of hollow experience," continues Kris. "I've

learned that martial arts doesn't have to be the way the media portrays it. Usually you have the image of it being real hard or you're going to hurt somebody."

For many of their shipmates, life in port can be lonely and boring. There's not much to do, they say, but play cards, watch TV, work on their cars or go fishing. "Usually if you meet someone it's in a bar," says Kris.

"It's hard to meet anyone besides other squids," adds Lloyd.

For Robbie, Mike, Lloyd and Kris, Shintaido has added another dimension to their lives; they've made many friends in Shintaido. For the rest of us in the Bay Area Shintaido family, its almost like having four new brothers.

The Enterprise guys consider some of the differences between life on the ship and Shintaido. "The ship keeps things very formal and organized," says Mike. "Shintaido teaches you to open up and express your self. If you expressed yourself like that on the ship, more often than not, you'd get yourself in a lot of trouble."

Robbie says he can also see some similarities between Shintaido and the military. "They both have the hierarchical approach. I can see the formality in both. But I would say that Shintaido could learn a bit about organization from the Navy and the Navy could learn from Shintaido about how to treat people."

Robbie, Mike Lloyd and Kris practice Shintaido even when out at sea with Robbie giving gorei. They say they feel most comfortable working on their Shintaido karate. They don't do kiai or any of the more (how shall we say it?) avant-garde movements of Shintaido.

Other men stationed on the Enterprise stay in physical shape by jogging around the ship, which is a quarter of a mile long. Others lift weights or do aerobic dancing. "It's hard to stay in condition," says Lloyd. "Most of the jobs are sitting down."

Although the deck of the U.S.S. Enterprise is bigger than a shopping center parking lot and the ship itself is nearly 230 stories high, life for those on board can seem cramped. The bunks

are only slightly longer than six feet and are just 40 inches wide. "The ship feels very confining," says Kris. "I think Shintaido is helping me break out of myself."

P.S.: Right now Robbie, Lloyd, Mike and Kris are at sea. They're not expected back until the spring. The night before they left, Mike said, with a good bye hug, "Don't worry. We won't forget you."

We won't forget you! But come back soon. □

## Making the Bokutoh

by Michael Buckley

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*Editor's note: Ken Gwin of San Francisco Shintaido began making bokutohs (wooden swords) and bohs (six-foot long wooden staffs) many years ago. Recently, Michael Buckley and Ben Schireson have been assisting him. Just before this year's West Coast Kan Geiko, Michael, Ben and Ken set out to make bokutohs for the many new students who were joining in Kan Geiko for the first time.*

Purple Heart, a South American hardwood, has the necessary strength, density, and grain pattern to be our stock for the Bokutoh. No part of the making process is more important than wood selection. Purchased full size: 2 inches thick, 16 to 20 inches wide, 16 to 20 feet long, these are mammoth sticks! Kazu Shibao, Shintaido of America's Equipment Manager, helps me with the challenge of selection: lifting and turning each examining for grain character and figure through the dirt and rough sawn texture. Critically examined for regular grain (no swirls), free from sapwood and cracks, the plank candidates are then felt and checked intuitively. The selection process takes half a day, especially since I am picky, and the lumber yard

## Bokutoh — Contd.

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insists we restack the rejects. Kazu wrote a check for the wood, while I was giving the order to have it planed from a thickness of approximately 2 inches to 1 3/8 inches. Later I return to pick up the milled stock for delivery to Ken Gwin's workshop.

Later at Ken's workshop, I use a portable circular saw to crosscut the stock to a rough length (42 - 43"). From this procedure until the final crosscut with the radial arm saw, all milling are rip cuts via table saws.

Ben blocks out the boards to a rectangular shape. All rips are made with steel combination blades, which cause less drag and accompanying burn marks than do the thicker and slower cutting carbide tip blades. While Ben makes rectangle blocks on one table saw, I "set-up" the other with a jig fence and tilt the saw blade for beveling the facets. This set up makes the angular top and blade sections, and requires four separate, careful adjustments of degrees and distance from the angled saw blade. When the stock are rectangles we look and feel for upward thrust choosing the top and blade, then stack accordingly.

I have clamped a temporary fence to the permanent fence just above where the blade is angled in, thereby creating a space for the waste to float out angling to 30°. We reality check the blade with a previously made blank. Then on the new stock we make a short pass to test for accuracy, correcting to the final position as necessary. There can be no mistakes. For the "set-up" Ken Gwin's supervision is essential. It is with a sense of "We're doing right" when he gives the Okay, that Ben and I make our first bevel cuts, the three equally spaced facets on the top of the bokutoh.

Actually we desire the three to be equal in width so we cut the two side angles somewhat longer to accommodate the third cut, which creates the small bevel just to the side of the top

three facets.

The second cut is the same 30° angle as the first except we move the fence to allow the blade to be proportioned correctly. The bokutoh is on its side while being cut.

The third cut is at 25°, bokutoh top to table saw top while being cut. This side of the sword angle is important as it is bisected on the second to last procedure thereby creating the tip of the point.

The fourth pass at 30° helps define the blade; it is cut with the bokutoh on its side. When the four bevels are completed, we have a blank bokutoh, with facets forming the top and blade.

Then a most fascinating procedure: choosing the handle and point. A unique, yet not surprizing fact is that experienced Shintaido bokutoh makers are unanimous, together or separate, eyes open or closed, we invariably chose the same handle and point for each blank!

Direction known, cutting of the point becomes the last table saw cut. Bokutoh on its side, miter gage at 45°, we push the wood, top first, through the saw. Then, turning the wood to its other side, the second pass in aligned to bisect the top side facet (cut #3 above) nipping off the tip just as it coincides with the bottom of the side bevel.

Finally we measure 40" from the newly cut tip to mark for the last: a cut to length crosscut of the radial arm saw (fine toothed blade).

With the deadline 24 hours away, the milling completion time in Ken's shop, start to finish, was seven hours. with a well coordinated *gambatte*. from Ken.

At last we celebrate and rejoice the rough cut bokutoh by holding and touching them one-by-one. We know them intimately. □

## New Officers for SoA

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As of February 1st, 1988 the following people will be the new officers of Shintaido of America

H. F. Ito	President
Jim Sterling	Vice President & Secretary
Chris Nash	Treasurer
Juliette Farkouh	Equipment Manager
Bela Breslau	Newsletters & Publications

The Board of Directors would especially like to thank Bela Breslau, Bob Howald, Kazu Shibao, Rosemary Sterling for their work as officers since May of last year. □

## David Nakagawa

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As some of you may know, we have two honorary Board Members for Shintaido of America, David Nakagawa and Nobu Hadeishi. Over the years we have relied on their good sense and advice to keep the organization moving in the right direction. For the past 15 years David Nakagawa has been the minister at the Christ United Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. Recently, he has moved on to become the Field Representative of the Board of Pensions for the Presbyterian Church's Western office which handles the 11 western states. We wish David well in his new post. Perhaps someday he can help Shintaido set up a pension plan for old, retired Instructors! □



# Kangeiko 1988 — Towards the One

by Lou Meyer

Kangeiko 1988 marked not only the beginning of the new year for participating Shintaidoists but was an introduction to "The Way of the Sword."

Insight into the philosophy and instruction on form and technique of the *bokutoh*, or wooden sword, were taught by Sensei Haruyoshi Ito, Head Instructor of Shintaido of America.

Before each of five keikos from January 1st to January 3rd, Ito Sensei explained aspects of *kenjutsu* or sword movement and Shintaido philosophy. We were taught that cutting with the sword is a positive and productive thing comparable to the splitting of cells. In Japan it is an honor to be known as one who is 'cutting in' the new age which in the west would be the equivalent of being an innovator or creator of new direction.

The *bokutoh* should be respected as a consecrated and spiritual tool, and that is used to attain a purified internal state. Energy can be put back into the sword. Through this cycle of energy transfer the *bokutoh* can be used to create a new atmosphere and help as a guide into the future and into the invisible spiritual world. It will also become a partner and a protector. Warm-up exercises and meditation are extremely important and necessary in order to rid oneself of physical and spiritual "poisons" and to attain a natural state. Shintaido warm-up takes a long time at the beginning because there is so much to get rid of, but, if done every day, warmups can be completed in a shorter period of time. In Japanese they say *choh-shin, choh-soku*; to correct your mind, correct your body and to correct your body, correct your breathing. Working to correct the mind/body and breathing happens in a kind of circular interaction.

During a dinner lecture following

the second day of keikos, Ito Sensei presented the ideas of an educational hierarchy or pyramid which consists of the sensei at the top, *senpai* or senior students next, and then *kohai* or junior students. Depending on when a student started Shintaido he or she would find a place in this order. *Dohai* is used for those who started at the same time and have stayed at the same rank or level.

Although all are students to the sensei, the sensei is teaching a great deal to the *senpai* and it is his or her impression that this information is being filtered down to the *kohai*. The communication and understanding is greater between *senpai* and *kohai* because there is less of a "generation gap." Also, many questions come up from the *kohai* and if the *senpai* is unable to answer, he then can ask the sensei. This lets the sensei know that there is a problem with either the teaching itself or the students' understanding. The result is to keep everyone humble and eager to learn. This hierarchical relationship is one of the ways we can study the *Shu, Ha, Ri* training process of Japan. (*Editor's note: Shu Ha Ri will be explained in an article in the next newsletter!*)

Ito Sensei said that he realized that in America, the home of equality and freedom, where one man is as good as another, this kind of relationship may be very difficult to understand and he closed the lecture by translating the words of the French poet, Aragon: "Teaching means sharing hopes and dreams, learning means to engrave truth in your heart."

During the three-day Kangeiko the participants from northern and southern California, Oregon and Arizona spent much time together and enjoyed a comradery and group consciousness. It was a great way to "cut in" the New Year. □

## 1988 Calendar

### February

Kangeiko, Feb. 13-15, local exams, New England.

### March

Gardena group will host a workshop for the L. A. area inviting Ellen Solot as instructor, March 25-27.

### May

Fourth International Shintaido Conference for Instructors & Assistants, May 2-5, Japan.

Advanced Workshop for Instructors & Assistants, May 25-26, San Francisco.

SoA Spring Gasshuku, Memorial Day Weekend, May 27-30, Spring Exams, Gualala, California.

### August

Mediation & Kenko Taiso workshop, August 14-20, San Francisco.

### October

Advanced Workshop for Instructors & Assistants, October 6-7, New England

SoA Fall Gasshuku, Columbus Day Weekend, October 8-10, with guest instructor from abroad, Fall Exams, New England

### November

Thanksgiving Weekend Workshop, with guest instructor from abroad, November 25-27, local exams, Goleta, California.

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# 1987 Members — Thanks for your support!

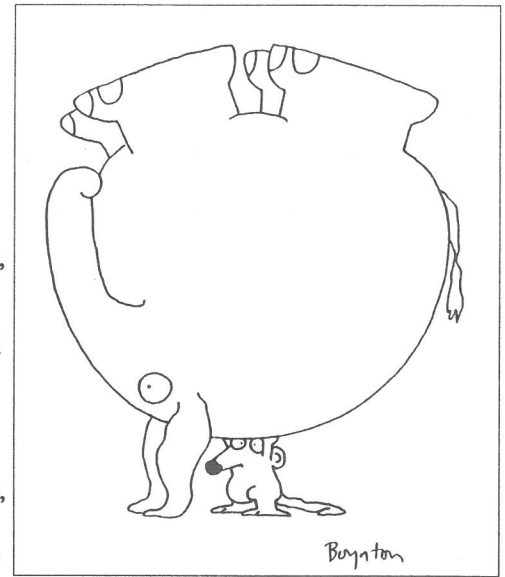
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**Sustaining Members:** Tony Pulla

**Contributing Members:** Christophe Bernard, Claude Breant, Christina Cross, Susan Fried, Robert Gaston, Takako Iwasa, Kathy Mulica, Kesh Narayanan, Pamela Olton, John Seaman, Lee Seaman, Bruce Taylor

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**Student Members:** Jennie Day, Megan Martin, Eric Neuhaus, Barney Rhodes, Barney Zinter



# 1988 Members — A Great Start!

Barbara Bamard, David Bolle, Connie Borden, Lori Breant, Claude Breant, Bela Breslau, Bill Burtis, Susan Chow, Flora Cruz, Joseph Curley, Jennie Day, Nancy Dresser, David Franklin, Robert Gaston, Dale Gillon, Leslie Goldberg, Mits Hadeishi, Yuki Hadeishi, Irene & Nobu Hadeishi, Mary Helm, John Hines, Nancy Horrocks, Bob Howald, Faith Ingulsrud, Henry Kaiser, Lou Meyer, Marc Meilleur, Clytia Montllor, Kathy Mulica, Chris Nash, Kesh Narayanan, Neena Narayanan, Chris Nash, William Peterson, Jerry Prohaska, Tony Pulla, Anne-Marie Schulz, Friedemann Schulz, Lee Seaman, John Seaman, Kazu Shibao, Al & Mary Shore, David Steinore, Bruce Taylor, Annelie Wilde, Joyce Yee, Ghislaine Yver, Jay Zuckerman. (*Memberships received through January, 1988. If anyone was left off, please let us know!*)

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