



SHINTAIDO OF AMERICA

Fall 1988 Newsletter

San Francisco, California

Modern Music Meets Modern Martial Art

by Henry Kaiser

My first contact with Shintaido in 1978 was through improvised music or free jazz. The Japanese trumpet player, Toshinori Kondo, introduced me to Ito Sensei and the San Francisco Shintaido group during his first visit to the United States at that time. Kondo and I were and are members of an international free music improvisation community. Free improvisation is a kind of music that originally developed out of avant-garde jazz but has also incorporated elements of classical, electronic and folk traditions. This eclectic musical approach has much in common with Shintaido and there have been a number of connections and meetings between these arts since the early '70s.

In the *Hikari* chapter of the Shintaido book Aoki Sensei writes, "Music is the natural companion of this *kumite*. The dissonant sounds of modern jazz and rock, which can be heard as the cries and sighs of modern man, are the friends of this *kumite*."

As Ito Sensei says: "In Japanese, *kokoro no uta* means singing from the heart. This is as much a quality of Shintaido as it is of music."

Sixteen years ago, Gan Okada (the brother of Okada Sensei, Japanese Shintaido's current chief instructor) was teaching Shintaido classes at Wako University. The young trumpet player Toshinori Kondo had a job as a night

security guard at the university at this time. Kondo had been searching for new and different methods to develop the personal power of his body and music. He was very impressed with what he saw of Shintaido. He liked the vigorous warming-up exercises

and *kiai*. Kondo approached Gan Okada and began to practice. Okada at this time was also very interested in the then especially fashionable underground theater. Okada thought that maybe Shintaido could do

some underground theater events to promote itself. When Kondo introduced his musical friends with their wild and crazy free jazz music to Okada he naturally thought of making their music a part of some kind of "happen-

ing" event. Towards this purpose Okada brought Kondo, drummer Toshi Tsuchitori and other musicians to play together with the *keiko* of the *Ra-kutenkai* group near the Tamagawa river. During 1974 this resulted in many performances, demonstrations

and theatrical events around the Tokyo area that combined the life expression of improvised music with the life expression of Shintaido.

Since then there have been several events officially combining Shintaido with improvised music outside of



Toshinori Kondo and Henry Kaiser

Japan. The first time that I saw Shintaido in practice was at a demonstration conducted by Aoki Sensei in San Francisco where saxophonist John Gruntfest and drummer Joe Sabella accompanied a giant *hikari* maelstrom.

continued on page 2

Before I practiced Shintaido myself I played guitar to accompany Shintaido conducted by Ito Sensei in New York City and West Germany. So when I did begin to practice Shintaido myself I already felt a strong association between it and my personal life's work of improvised music. I felt that they had a lot in common and that I could use each to expand my understanding of the other.

Hikari is a kind of improvised extension of *Eiko* and *Tenshingoso kumite*. Not attack and defense but sensitive communication, transmission and reception. Not competitive but cooperative. The musical communication between free improvisors who are making up their own rules of musical language on the spot to create a new kind of music each time they play feels very much like the same thing to me. Many people believe that jazz is a competitive kind of thing. Free improvisation came out of jazz and went beyond competition to coopera-

tion of this is an expression of the moment. Shintaido feels pretty much like the same thing to me.

Many of the concepts of Shintaido are as applicable to music as they are to martial arts. *Kokyu* (breathing, concentration), *kyoshi* (rhythm), *choshi* (harmony), *ma* (space, distance), *ki no nagare* (the flow of *ki* energy) are as important for a practitioner of Shintaido as a music improvisor.

I think that Toshinori Kondo is a special model of someone who tried very hard to use Shintaido training to develop his music. Ito Sensei says that Kondo took special training from Aoki Sensei to develop very strong *tsuki*. He directed *tsuki* at 40 or 100 people to develop fantastic personal energy in order to be able to cut through to a musical audience with similar power. Of course one of the special lessons of Shintaido is that the greatest strength is found in flexibility and softness. Soft *tsuki* is 100 times

"In Japanese, 'Kokoro no uta' means singing from the heart. This is as much a quality of Shintaido as it is of music."

tion and care for your musical partners much as Shintaido followed a similar path from the other more competitive martial arts that came before it. Aoki Sensei's creation of Shintaido and the movement's own growth were both very eclectic creative expressions. The same with the many musical improvisors' attempts to create eclectic and expanding personal musical languages and modes of musical communication.

When I was first taught the sea weed exercise, it struck me that the feelings that it evoked in me were very similar to those that I feel during a solo guitar improvisation concert or recording session. When I play solo my mind is in a meditative state. The winds of my past and future histories blow through me and I react to the universe and my instrument as my partners. The music that develops out

stronger than hard *tsuki*. I think that this same type of approach is applicable to music. Putting these kinds of things together in both music and Shintaido has helped me to go beyond myself. I hope that more people will consider combining music and Shintaido in *kumite* and in personal practice. Specifically free improvised music seems to me to have the most in common with Shintaido, its methods and goals.

Henry Kaiser is a well-known guitarist who has appeared on more than seventy record albums. The Los Angeles Herald Examiner has called him "the most important and innovative guitarist in America." Kaiser has been a practitioner of Shintaido for about eight years.

■

Kangeiko 1989

It's time to renew our spirit and practical direction by participating in the 1989 San Francisco *Kangeiko*.

Kangeiko means cold weather training. It's a Japanese martial arts tradition to start the new year with a special practice, typically at the coldest time of the year.

This year the Bay Area will hold a three-day workshop December 31 through January 2.

There will be both advanced and general *keikos* led by guest instructor Michael Thompson Sensei and Ito Sensei.

Registration information will be available in November. Contact Ben Schireson at (415) 566-2351. Out-of-towners are invited to stay with local practitioners.

All participants are also invited to the wedding of Connie Borden and Mike Sheets on December 30th.

Celebrate the New Year Shintaido style.

S of A Equipment

Shintaido of America has an inventory of equipment available for purchase.

Shintaido bumper stickers	\$1.00
Shintaido red windbreakers	\$35.00
History of S of A	\$3.95*
Shintaido book	\$10.95*

Keiko equipment is available.

We can mail any items to you — or you can come get them!

Contact SoA Equipment Manager Juliette Farkouh at 57 St. Charles Ave., San Francisco, CA 94132-3032, (415) 239-4132.

*Includes shipping and handling.

"Iron and Silk" Author Chops Chinese Stereotypes

by Leslie Goldberg

"YO! NINJA! HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE YOU KILLED WITH THAT SWORD?!!"

Chinese martial arts student Mark Salzman says he's used to hearing such jeers and jokes whenever he practices in public. Like many Shintaido students he's encountered the difficulty of trying to explain....

Salzman, 28, who lives in San Francisco is also the author of the critically acclaimed best-seller "Iron and Silk," the story of his experiences teaching English and studying martial arts in China. "The Chinese understand the martial arts," he says. "In America violence is the emphasis. People want to know how to fight. In China the good teachers never talk about fighting. It's silly. If you want to fight, join the army."

Giving arts demonstrations and lectures on China at museums and historical societies across the country and throughout the world, Salzman's made a career of clearing up misconceptions about China and martial arts. Recently the young author gave a talk and a performance at the Asian Art Museum in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, which was well-attended by

many Bay Area Shintaido students. He's been called a combination Spaulding Gray and Bruce Lee.

"I'm not the Baryshnikov of Chinese martial arts by any means," he says. "But because I'm American I can present it [martial arts] in a way that makes it accessible to Western audiences."

"Iron and Silk" reads like a modern-day Huckleberry Finn goes to China. Salzman, who speaks Chinese

"In China the good teachers never talk about fighting. It's silly. If you want to fight, join the army."

and graduated from Yale in Chinese literature, takes the reader to this most exotic land and introduces him to a whole cast of real-life characters including Pan Qingfu, Salzman's fierce martial arts teacher nicknamed, "Iron Fist" because he trained by pounding a metal plate with his bare hand.

The Chinese way-of-life depicted in the book is a long way from suburban America. Salzman paints a picture of a dirty, grimy, rodent-besieged country where homes are usually dark, cold and depressingly sparse. Yet he says, "The physical conditions were actually the easiest thing to get used to. What I didn't get used to and what I think I would never get used to was the sense of isolation.

"You're outside the system [as a foreigner] and therefore looked upon with a certain amount of suspicion and, if not suspicion, awe and reverence. It's one or the other.

"I remember times sitting in my room and thinking that I would give anything to be able to say 'yabadabadoo' and have someone know what I meant."

"Iron and Silk" is Salzman's first book. The hardcover edition sold 27,000 copies. The paperback edition is now in its third printing and has sold up to 50,000 copies. "It's a Cinderella success story," he says. "No one expected it to be so successful, least of all me."

The book is soon to be made into a
continued on page 4

Meditation Workshop

The light before the dawn

by Peter Nagai-Rothe

Editor's note: A seven-day meditation workshop was led by Ito Sensei August 14 through 20, and organized by Leslie Goldberg. Ito Sensei taught Ritsui-Ju Meiso-Ho, the 10 Shintaido meditation poses and Kenkain-hoko, flower walking to 38 students.

We assemble at the Dolores Street dojo with sleep still clinging to our limbs. Ito leads us through warm-ups. The more vigorous the warm-up, the easier it seems to stand in meditation. One of the movements becomes my favorite: Imagine your *koshi* is a magnet being pulled towards one end of the room — reversing direction upon command. The rest
continued on page 4



Participants in the 1988 Meditation Workshop

Iron and Silk – continued

movie with Salzman in the starring role. The author says he hopes it will be released sometime in 1990. The screenplay was co-written by Salzman and Shirley Sun who produced and co-wrote, "A Great Wall" and who worked with Bernardo Bertolucci on "The Last Emperor."

"It won't be a martial arts movie, just like the book wasn't a martial arts book. It will show martial arts training, how its done in China."

Salzman says he hopes the movie will cut through some martial arts stereotypes. "Most people have the impression that Chinese martial arts are some sort of secret deadly fighting skill and that it has mystical or even religious atmosphere to it. What I'm trying to do is show people that Chinese martial arts is perfection of form. In China there is a word that means self-cultivation. It's the idea that whatever art form you're doing, the purpose of it is to sort of lose yourself in it. This is the way to cultivate each person's spirit, through this perfection of form."

Mark Salzman first started studying *wushu* (Chinese martial arts) when he was a kid back in Connecticut. "Fifteen years ago there were very few teachers whereas now actually there are a lot," he says. "San Francisco is the best city outside of China for

Chinese martial arts. There are wonderful teachers here."

While teaching English at a Chinese medical school in the Hunan province, Salzman managed to hook up with one of the most respected martial arts teachers of China, Pan Qingfu. Apparently the student/teacher relationship there is similar to the Japanese student/teacher relationship. "He was the absolute authority," says Salzman. "Between us there was a lot of affection and a lot of tension."

"Me being American...I think it's very important that you be true to your own identity. I never tried to be Chinese. I felt that wasn't the way to go. So I stubbornly tried to apply some of my own ideas to what he would teach and oh, that would drive him nuts!"

In China martial arts students are usually assigned by the government to a particular teacher. "It's not because they have a passion for it," says Salzman. "They're chosen because of their natural physical ability."

Of course Salzman was not assigned to his teacher, but had to convince the older man to accept him as a student. "I would have done anything to study with him," says the "Iron and Silk" author. "Every minute with him, I treated like it was absolutely priceless. I was panting for more, whereas his other students would get him every

day. I think he liked the desperation I brought to it."

Salzman says the Chinese were impressed and a bit mystified by his desire to study *wushu*. "So here's China now in the process of trying to modernize. English is the national fad and things Western are on everyone's lips and now here's someone, a Westerner, an American kid who could have become an engineer, but instead he's spent his whole life trying to learn Chinese and to practise this ancient exercise."

Although his Chinese martial arts teacher was harsh, he never resorted to hitting his student, unlike Salzman's American martial arts instructors. "If I was doing something wrong, he would imitate me unmercifully, but I would continue to try. He would never hurt me, never. He'd say only the smallest kind of person would do that. I wanted his approval so bad and his standards were so high. I was afraid I'd never satisfy the guy."

"Iron and Silk" was well received in China, even among Chinese officialdom. Mark Salzman is still working on perfecting his form these days in Golden Gate Park. Currently he's at work on a new book based on the Chinese myth of the Monkey King. ■

Meditation Workshop – continued

of the body is loose *wakame*, feet try to keep up, head follows.

Standing meditation: I imagine a flow of energy into the center of the earth and out toward light. Each pose changes the quality of this light. It spreads out in pose number three, recharges in number four and concentrates in number eight. I pay attention to my awareness or conscious sense of location, usually centered in my head (this holographic image or sensory "body" in our brains which replicates itself and acts as a template for the physical). I feel this sense of location compress and become flat or stretch to towering heights. This flow is particularly

affected by Ito *Sensei's* presence behind me.

Chris Nash's image work transports all of us up to Oregon into a beautiful Siskiyou mountain valley under a dome of golden light streaming down to each of us; the light turns blue as he enters pose number eight.

Venus, the morning star, announces a clear, sunny day, a pink dawn for the first time during the workshop. On this day Ito *Sensei* asks us to do the poses in our minds while sitting *seiza*. I imagine standing in front of my physical form and moving in *Ritsui-Ju-Meiso-Ho*. I flow into the figure I imagine before

me. Sitting *seiza* is difficult on *tatami* and this is the bare *dojo* floor! The pain in my feet melts whenever I guide my wandering mind back into the standing figure. "Do not doubt yourself." Ito *Sensei's* voice appears as I expand into that space. The clear chime of the bell erases the thought, leaving me in vibrating silence.

At the lecture which follows the last days sumptuous breakfast, Ito *Sensei* explains that he is not teaching us meditation, rather, only a form that allows meditation; we have to fill the form with our own being. ■

Rich Harvest For Fall Gasshuku, 1988

by Tom Stinnett

Can I go on? Why do we do this? Sweat stinging eyes, lungs laboring, legs aching to keep pace with the blur of motion and heat. A part of one's mind stands apart questioning coldly, distracting. "No, faster! Oh that was a crummy step, I'm such a clod!" A cacaphony of conflicting emotions and desires rise to a tortuous crescendo. Continuing with a seemingly impossible effort, using all of one's energy until beyond caring, beyond wondering ...beyond...

. . .

The internal ego-battle was only one of the many things to study and experience at the 1988 Fall *Gasshuku* and Advanced Workshop held in Cape Cod October 6 through 10. Fifty-seven people gathered to create a rich *gasshuku* experience for beginners and old-timers alike. Held at beautiful Camp Burgess, the participants stayed in rustic cabins nestled among pines and surrounded by clear blue lakes.

There was varied and intense *keiko* offered with instruction by Michael Thompson, Joe Zawielski and guest instructor Martine Breant from France. Martine's inspiring *yohki-kei keiko* was welcomed warmly and was contrasted by Joe's more energetic *kaiho-kei keiko*.

Ito Sensei led the advanced workshop that preceded the general *gasshuku*, mainly *bohjutsu* and *Tai Ki Mai* arrangements. Guest examiner Robert Breant and Martine added some French flavor to the proceedings helping to make the *keiko* even more intense and stimulating.

The theme of the *gasshuku* was "How can Attacking Help?" After exploring that question in *keiko* and *kumite* the participants gathered for a unique panel discussion that provided a forum for further investigation.

Answering questions from the practitioners were Robert and Martine Breant, Michael Thompson and Ito Sensei. The discussion, chaired by Bill Burtis, was stimulating and enlightening, yet mystifying and challenging. It led beyond the usual concept of attacking and defending and toward some larger, more profound questions. Some concepts touched on were: the importance of beginners mind, going beyond ourselves, truth and sincerity, *shugyo* (life training) and life exchange philosophy.

Saturday's cold rain gave way to Sunday's welcomed sunshine as everyone gathered on a euphoric New England afternoon for Shintaido exams. Some 20 people participated whole heartedly, reaching for their best expression. It was beautiful and transitory, like the falling leaves.

Martine's final *keiko* was wonderful and the *piece de resistance* was an amazing demonstration including *karate*, *boh* and *boktoh kumites*.

The *gasshuku* was a powerfully alive and vital example of what a Shintaido *gasshuku* is all about. Try one and find out for yourself!

Some Quotes from Participants:

"The thing I got most was how supportive people were. It was overwhelming. I was very appreciative."

—John Seaman

"Martine Breant is really inspirational to me. Her balance of strength and sensitivity is remarkable."

—Connie Borden

"It was a real homecoming for me. I had been away for awhile and the strong feeling of the group blew me away."

—Lee Ordeman

"I learned what it meant to be humbled. It was more purposeful then fun"

—Michael Buckley

"I identify with all the '*gasshuku* junkie's' out there. All these small wonderful experiences keep happening to me at *gasshuku*'s. It was fun."

—Irene Hadeishi

"Nothing left out, nothing left. Far out!"

—Juliette Farkouh

Exam Results

Provisional Instructors

Connie Borden
David Franklin
Faith Ingulsrud
John Seaman
Tom Stinnett
Deb Zawielski

Assistants

Susan Chow
Robert Gaston
Mitsu Hadeishi
Mary Helm
Linda Leroux
Leslie Smith
Eva Thaddeus
Lilia Torosian

Bohjutsu

Joe Zawielski	2 kyu
David Franklin	3 kyu
Lee Seaman	3 kyu
Kathy Mulica	5 kyu
Shin Aoki	7 kyu
John Seaman	7 kyu
Linda Leroux	9 kyu
Michael Buckley	10 kyu

Karate

Tom Stinnett	3 kyu
Connie Borden	6 kyu
Robert Gaston	9 kyu
Michael Buckley	10 kyu
Michael Sheets	10 kyu

Thanksgiving Gasshuku

Shintaido of West L.A. will host a Thanksgiving *Gasshuku* November 25 through 27. Located at beautiful Rancho La Sherpa, 27 miles north of Santa Barbara in the Santa Ynez Mountains, there is a striking panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean Channel Islands from the *keiko* field.

The instructors will be Mr. H. F. Ito, Master Instructor, assisted by Atsushi Funakowa, Senior Instructor and managing director of the International Shintaido Federation from Japan.

Shintaido *karate*, *bohjutsu* and assistant exams will be held. The Guest Examiner will be Michael Thompson, General Instructor and Head Instructor of Shintaido of America.

Special Guest Bonnie Barnett will offer her unique vocal approach called Vocal Resonance which allows students to study optimal breathing and the "sounding process."

Beginners are welcome! For more information please contact either:

Lori Breant
2411 2nd Street
Santa Monica, CA 90405
(213) 450-4577 or
Christian Thillet
12621 Matteson Ave. #3
Los Angeles, CA 90066
(213) 390-5051

Calendar

1988

November

Thanksgiving Weekend Workshop with guest instructor Atsushi Funakawa from Japan. November 25 through 27, exams, Goleta, California.

1989

January

Bay Area Kangeiko. December 31 through January 2. Michael Thompson and H. F. Ito, Instructors.

February

Kangeiko, New England

Published by

Shintaido of America
P.O. Box 22622
San Francisco, CA 94122

Editors: Bela Breslau and Tom Stinnett
Technical Assistance: Michael and Leslie Goldberg



Claude Breant and Ellen Solot at the May Advanced Workshop

Shintaido in the United States

San Francisco Shintaido

There are three groups led by:
Jim Sterling, Senior Instructor
Stephen Pizzella, Prov. Instructor
Ben Schireson, Prov. Instructor
BASEC, 630 Silver Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94134
(415) 586-1177

Shintaido of San Mateo

Kazu Shibao, Junior Instructor
544 Laidley Street
San Francisco, CA 94131
(415) 584-8026

Blue Mountain Shintaido

Sarah Lee Seaman, Prov. Instr.
John Seaman, Prov. Instructor
Jennie Day, Assistant
2818 Wilson Ave.
Bellingham, WA 98225
(206) 676-8543

Spokane Shintaido

Judy Lewis
West 1201 12th Street
Spokane, WA 99204
(509) 747-2620

Shintaido New Hampshire

Michele Grenier, Prov. Instructor
Bill Burtis, Provisional Instructor
13 N. Main Street
New Market, NH 03857, (603)
659-3254

Shintaido of West L. A.

Claude Breant, Junior Instructor
Lori Breant, Assistant
2411 2nd Street
Santa Monica, CA 90405
(213) 450-4577

Shintaido in Tucson

Ellen Solot, Junior Instructor
3917 E. Louis Lane
Tucson, AZ 85712
(602) 323-8241

Cambridge Shintaido

Michael Thompson, General Instruct.
David Franklin, Prov. Instructor
331 Harvard Street, #10
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 492-6536

Gardena Shintaido

Friedemann Schultz, Prov. Instructor
1460 W. 182nd Street
Gardena, CA 90248
(213) 532-1654

Worcester Shintaido

Kesh Narayanan, Junior Instructor
Faith Inglusrud, Prov. Instructor
Kathy Mulica, Prov. Instructor
60 Carter Road
Worcester, MA 01609
(617) 798-8638