

# PACIFIC SHINTAIDO



Pacific Shintaido Bulletin

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## Contributions, please

Please send entries to the Pacific Shintaido Bulletin, care of:

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Next issue in September.

## Interview with Jennifer Peringer

Jennifer Peringer responds to questions about music, Shintaido, and life. See below.

## Book Report

David Sirgany reviews a book by Ken Wilber. See page 3.

## Roby Newman reports

Roby Newman describes his self-imposed sabbatical from Shintaido and why he has started practicing again. See page 3.

## Interview with Jennifer Peringer

This interview with Jennifer Peringer is the second in a series with Pac Shin instructors.

*A few weeks ago you gave a thrilling recital for your Masters program at San Francisco State. How do the two worlds of music and Shintaido intersect in your life?*

Jennifer: I use to feel that Shintaido and music were competitors for my time and attention. Both disciplines demand regular practice, memory work, physical grace, spiritual insight, and creative interaction. They also both involve administrative details (like designing publicity and finding venues) and the emotional highs and lows of performing.

Thankfully, at this point in my life I have lost that sense of music and Shintaido being conflicting interests. They have kind of melted into one practice for me, and if I am doing one of them I know it is nourishing and complementing the other one. I find that the skills and insights gained from one are immediately transferable to the other.

For example, recently I was under pressure to learn the piano part of a Brahms violin sonata in a very short period of time. I was having difficulty with my hand seizing up under the strain

of playing all those still unfamiliar big, fast, loud chords, and I remembered some advice my British Shintaido teacher Tony once gave me, to the effect that you can't learn to run before you learn to walk; so first practice a new technique slowly and gently, then speed it up, then finally add intensity.

In that case an insight from Shintaido helped me with music, but it works the other way too. When I study a Shintaido *kata* I use many of the memory and interpretive skills I have developed through studying classical music. I think about what the dramatic implications of the form are, how to break it up into smaller sections (like musical phrases), and how to vary the rhythm and intensity (like varying tempo, dynamics, and articulation in music).

At the California *kangeiko* which Tony came to a couple of years ago he talked about how to use the space in performing a *kata*. He talked about placing yourself in the right place in the room in which to begin a *kata*, and then focusing your energy and channeling cosmic energy in such a way that the space and everyone in it is transformed. That is exactly what performing a piano recital is like.

My piano teacher recommends sitting at the piano and then counting silently to thirty before beginning to play in a performance situation. I prefer to take

one long breath while imagining doing *Tensho-Shoko*. And if my mind starts to wander while I'm playing I imagine that I'm doing *Tenshingoso* 'T' or 'O' to refocus ('T' works if my mind has wandered to things like domestic chores. 'O' works if I have gotten caught up in narcissistic insecurities about what people are thinking of my performance).

While a solo recital is like performing *katas*, chamber music is like *kumite*, and raises all the same issues. Can you selflessly follow someone else's lead, can you assertively take the lead, can you melt together to become one, can you change gradually or suddenly between all of these? Can you together broaden and deepen your abilities to experience and express the full range of human emotions, from the nasty to the sublime?

*After the performance, you mentioned that you had been doing Taimyo kata as a warm-up. How did that help you, and why?*

*Taimyo* is a good thing for me to do before performing because it limbers and relaxes my body and focuses my energy without in any way tiring me out. In fact it does quite the opposite, filling me with a calm gentle glow which tempers the adrenaline coursing through my veins. Like a steaming bowl of oatmeal - comforting, gentle and nourishing.

*To you, what part of Shintaido is most like music? Or, to ask the question a different way, what musical form is Shintaido most like to you - jazz, classical, R&B, or another kind of music? Why?*

I partially answered that in my response to your first question, but here are a few other ideas. *Kata* is like a solo classical piece, in that the forms are a given and the creativity comes in the subtleties of interpretation. Some *kumites* are like classical chamber music, in that the form is again carefully specified and the challenge is in the quality of the interaction. Some *kumites* are freer, more like jazz improvisation, where there is a repertoire of familiar elements which are mixed up spontaneously as the interaction unfolds.

*You participated in the Shintaido:Wave Forms improvisational piece at Theater of Yugen in September. If you were going to do a Shintaido piece and use already written music, what would it be?*

Jennifer: I don't know, but I do find the combination of Shintaido and music interesting. Historically I have seen Shintaido most often coupled with free improvisation. The last show at the Theater Yugen involved some intriguing new sounds from a hip-hop type scratch musician (is that what it's called?). I have yet to see Shintaido coupled with music from the European classical or American Experimental traditions and would be interested to explore some of those possibilities.

*What do you find different about the practice of Shintaido in the United States, and specifically in the Bay Area, as compared to your practice in England?*

This feels like kind of a delicate topic. I don't want to set up some sense of trans-Atlantic rivalry! Well, here goes. In England I used to feel a bit squashed sometimes, like I had to keep a lid on my naturally loud, expansive, competitive American personality in order to fit in. It was cooler to be non-competitive, gentle, feminine, etc.

So in being into Shintaido karate and into taking Shintaido exams I was being a bit uncool, unfeminine. Oh well.

So now I'm back home. Only after being in England thirteen years British sensibilities have gotten into my blood too. And I sometimes miss the natural respectfulness and self-deprecating humour of the British.

You know what I really miss about British Shintaido? I miss the big yearly event, which usually happens around this time of year. When I was over there we always went to Rhossili beach in Wales. It's a beautiful big beach in the country, with the half-buried skeleton of an old ship in the middle of it and islands on either end of the bay which you can walk out to at low tide. We either camped in a muddy field or stayed in extremely rustic Boy Scout type accommodation. It invariably rained, and we did all our own cooking, cleaning, and child care. All of which added up to lots of work and discomfort, great camaraderie, and profound *keiko*.

*You are now involved in a global Shintaido keiko, the weekly bokuto meditation with people from other states and countries. Can you describe this practice, how it works, and how you benefit by it?*

This was something I set up with Ula when I saw her in England last summer. We started Shintaido together in 1979, so our sense of connection goes way back. We really enjoyed doing *keiko* together last summer, and came up with the idea of continuing to do long-distance, synchronized practices. Then I mentioned it to a few other people. It worked for a while, then fizzled out as the urgencies of my immediate present took precedent. It was hard with such a big time difference to find a mutually convenient time in the week. I love the idea though, and would be interested to hear about anyone else who tries it.

What has worked better for me in terms of a long distance connection is the mentor relationship I have developed with Lee Seaman, where I can phone her with any concerns I have about teaching and she lends a supportive, insightful ear.

*What do you see as your future in Shintaido?*

Basically I just want to keep Shintaido in my life, as a physical and spiritual practice. I also want to continue to be involved in helping maintain and develop

the international Shintaido community. Continuing to teach feels very important, and I would like for my neighborhood Shintaido group to thrive. Finally, I want to help develop a women's mentorship network within Shintaido that will help women develop their practice and grow into positions of power within the international organization.

## Upcoming Events of Interest:

### SUMMER BACKYARD BARBECUE + FIRESIDE CHAT BY H.F. ITO ON THE ROOTS OF SHINTAIDO

Saturday, June 12, 1999 — 4:00PM to 10:00 PM

If you bring food to barbecue (or eat with the barbecue), we will provide great company, music, conversation and badminton. Please bring people from your class, friends interested in Shintaido, children and other family members. After dinner, Ito will elaborate on the conversation he began at Kangeiko 1999 on the roots of Shintaido.

Location: Peter and Tomi Nagai-Rothe's house in San Francisco, 643 Second Avenue (between Balboa and Cabrillo — look for the wave on the garage door) in San Francisco. Call 415-221-0463 if you get lost.

### GROUP LEADERS' KEIKO

Saturday, June 12, 1999 1:00 - 3:00 PM

St. Mary's Park in San Francisco (outdoors). Theme is *bojutsu* practice.

Contact Jennifer Peringer for information.

### KANGEIKO (Winter Intensive Practice) 2000 — January 15 - 17, 2000

Hold the dates! Come and break open the new century with Pacific Shintaido's Kangeiko (Martin Luther King Jr., Day Weekend). *Keiko* will be offered in and around San Francisco and the focus will be on great *keiko/kumite*, great food and conversations, simple organization and low cost. We also plan to offer examinations (this is a good time to start thinking about it).

And keep your calendars open for possible early morning events the week before Kangeiko — January 10 - 14! This event will be organized by Jennifer Peringer and Tomi Nagai-Rothe, with

major assistance from Shin Aoki. For information, contact Tomi Nagai-Rothe (tomi\_nagairothe@grove.com or 415-561-2500 x224).

### PACIFIC SHINTAIDO WEB SITE

Kudos to Lucien Jamey, Bay Area Shintaido Practitioner and Pacific Shintaido Board Member. Lucien has developed a great web site design that should be up and running this summer. It will feature information on local classes, instructors, and current events with links to the new Shintaido of America web site. Thanks to Peter Avildsen, Bay Area Shintaido Practitioner, for his contribution to the SOA web site!

### NEWS FROM MONDAY SHINTAIDO IN SAN FRANCISCO

We are settling into the generously-sized dance studio at George Washington High School and enjoying the community center environment.

Our spring theme was helping the "seeds" inside us (ideas, new directions and inspirations) sprout through focused opening (in "A"), *tenso*, *low-koshi eiko* and *eiko kumite*. As summer nears, we are using *tenshingoso* and *tenshingoso kumite* to grow and leaf out our dreams and inspirations. Our group numbers from 3 – 7 and we have had several new students join *keiko*. Cheryl Williams is our teaching assistant (apprentice teacher) and is now leading warm-ups and break out. Hope you can join us sometime!

NOTE: We are considering an earlier starting time in July (5:30 - 7:00 PM). Please call for latest information. In June, we will meet on Mondays from 6-7 PM.

George Washington High School/Richmond Village Beacon (Enter upper parking lot just south of 30th Avenue and Anza. First bldg. on the right) in the Richmond District. Class is free. For information contact

Tomi Nagai-Rothe  
(tomi\_nagairothe@grove.com or 415-561-2500 x224).

### PACIFIC SHINTAIDO BOARD MEETING JUNE 26, 1999 7:00 PM

Everyone is welcome to join the board for food and a short meeting at the end of June. We are particularly interested in your ideas and inspirations for great *keiko* and *keiko*-related activities in the

Bay Area. Bring your thoughts to the meeting or call David Sirgany at 415-731-8229. Dinner meeting location: Home of Tomi Nagai-Rothe in San Francisco.

### Workshop with Tony Hammick

July 31-August 1, 1999

*Listening to Shintaido, Studying Zanshin*

See the flyer enclosed with this newsletter. For more information, please call Stephen Billias at 415 459-5803.

### OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST:

MEDITATION WORKSHOP FOR CAREGIVERS sponsored by Hospice by the Bay and taught by H.F. Ito, master instructor of Shintaido. SEPTEMBER 11 AND SEPTEMBER 18, 1999 at Rodeo Beach, the Marin Headlands. This event is free.

Please call to register: 415-626-5900

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### Book Report

"A Brief History of Everything"

Ken Wilber Shambhala 1996

Reviewed by David Sirgany.

This book is a wonderful introduction to the mind of Ken Wilber. It is a more accessible version of his in-depth work: *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*.

The ambitious title is fitting for the ground he covers. He draws on findings from a diverse range of fields including, physics & biology; the social & systems sciences; art & aesthetics; developmental psychology & contemplative mysticism; and a broad range of philosophies.

He explains and maps out stages of development, and structures of consciousness, along the evolutionary path toward transcendence. He speaks of evolution as "...an actualization holarchy, each stage of which unfolds and then enfolds its predecessors in a nested fashion." He emphasizes the importance of "transcending and including" and not "transcending and dissociating" - which he points to as "the disaster of modernity" and "the collapse of the kosmos."

Reading this book reminded me of the talk Ito sensei gave at this past Kangeiko on the roots of Shintaido. Ito sensei said that "Shintaido Karate has transcended traditional martial arts" and, as we know, includes the essence of martial arts. I was

also reminded of times in my life when I had seemingly transcended and attempted to disassociate from family, friends, religion, and community - and generated much confusion in the process.

Wilber's approach to the many different schools of thought claiming to have "the truth" is that there are (at least) four different domains of truth:

- Interior individual reality (Inter-objective experience)
- Exterior individual reality (for more dense matter or physical reality)
- Interior collective reality (culture)
- Exterior collective reality (society)

Without each of these different domains being acknowledged and honored we inevitably collapse our very existence. Wilber highly values depth and writes: "The greater the depth of transcendence, the greater the burden of inclusion." The ongoing task at hand is the inclusion of others in the depth (or height) of our experience.

In addition to pointing out the disasters of modernity, he also honors the dignity of modernity and holds them both in a broader transpersonal view. He offers alternate possibilities and glimpses of a greater organizing pattern, or Spirit at work. I especially appreciate Wilber's broad scope, discerning eye and sense of humor. For anyone sincerely interested in the process of human evolution and transformation, this book is a must read!

### Trusting the Path Through the Forest

by Roby Newman

I have been practicing Shintaido for 8 years, 3 months, 2 weeks, and as I write this, 5 days. It suggests, besides a slightly anal memory, that on February 9, 1991, something important happened to me, i.e., my first *keiko*. I vividly remember walking out of the *dojo* at Dolores and 16th Street in a daze, wondering what this "new body way" was that had hit me like the proverbial Mac Truck. I was exhilarated, exhausted, and confused. Later I would also be frightened. Twice in the first eight months, I almost quit, sick of my inner demons springing out of my personal Pandora's Box during and after every class.

It seems long ago, and just yesterday. The connection of spirit, self, and nature



that is both the theory and practice of Shintaido, had caught me, and I could not wiggle free. I felt that I had found some new truth (small "t") that would open my body, and my soul, and so I began to shed some of my onion layers, making vulnerable my *koshi* and my heart.

Fast forward almost seven years. In January 1998, a bit in amazement and awe, I achieved the rank of Graduate Instructor at Kangeiko. Year by year the notion had crept up on me, as I developed enough technical ability and self-confidence, that I might actually become a teacher; on the second try, I passed the exam. The pride I felt, however, was fleeting, quickly turning into internalized pressure and doubt: "I have to do better, I'm in the deep end of the pool now." I looked at my practice with harsh self-criticism and precious little appreciation, and as the summer wore on and I was increasingly frustrated with my two left feet, I realized something that struck with much pain: I didn't know if I wanted to continue Shintaido if this was how it was going to make me feel.

But that was not, really, what was happening, I realize now: I had always felt that, somehow, some way, and without great effort on my part, Shintaido would transform me, take

away self-doubt and insecurities and leave me...whole. As much as it had already changed me – or facilitated the change – I still dealt with many of the same issues that had troubled me years before Shintaido entered my life. I didn't blame Shintaido for the emptiness I felt; I knew no outside force, no matter how powerful, could "fix me," and that I would have to step back and look at myself and my practice.

So I stopped going to *keiko*, and missed my first Kangeiko in six years. In this self-imposed sabbatical, I reflected on what mattered to me most in Shintaido, and what it ultimately was. Keiko had never meant the accumulation of rank, in spite of my certificate of accomplishment, but had always been the community of practice, and trusting the elusive Truth (big "T") of that communion.

I have fought with myself all of my life, often tooth and nail – many of us are our own worst enemies. Nonetheless, Shintaido had seeped into my consciousness, opening my eyes even if I sometimes kept them closed. It has been an integral part of my hospice work from the beginning, a constant reminder, when I look into the eyes of the dying, of the need to be truly open and in the moment, something best learned in *kumite*. The more I reflected on this, the greater the

realization that, yes, Shintaido was not a cure for loneliness nor a balm for old wounds but rather a path that stretched out before me through the "world's woods" that I could, of my own free will, choose to follow.

The way ahead, with many branches and side paths, also had clear markings, and would cut through spider webs and shadow whether I walked it or not. There was a comfort in that certainty – Shintaido was real, of substance, and it worked – and the further knowledge that I would not walk it alone. I realized then, with the shock of rediscovery, that I had to find my way back to practice, for my own growth, at my own pace, and to be with my friends who are an extended family despite my peculiar nature which sometimes runs from what it wants most.

I may never practice as much as I should, but I will always practice. Having flirted with giving Shintaido up in my first and seventh year, I can no longer conceive of doing such an ultimately foolish thing. It, and the people I love, are too precious to dismiss, even when Fear makes its siren call. The world remains a forest full of tall trees that often obscure the sky, but how lucky I am to have at least one true road to follow. For that, I shall always be grateful.

## Current Class Schedule

Class	Instructor	Date and Time	Place
Advanced Shintaido	James Sterling (call Robert Gaston at 415 454-4749)	Sundays 8:30am-10:00am	San Domenico School, end of Butterfield Road, San Anselmo
Shintaido	Tomi Nagai-Rothe (call Peter Avildsen 415-664-7187 )	Mondays 6:00pm-7:00pm	George Washington High School 30th and Anza, San Francisco
Shintaido Bôjutsu	Jennifer Peringer (call Jennifer at 415 586-1177)	Wednesday evenings 6:30pm-8:00pm	St. Mary's Park and Rec Center, 95 Justin Drive, San Francisco
Shintaido	Robert Gaston (415 454-4749)	Wednesdays 5:30pm-6:45pm	San Rafael Comm. Ctr. 415 485-3333
Shintaido Karate	Shin Aoki (call Shin at 925 284-3318)	Saturdays 8:00am-10:00am	Lake Temescal, Oakland (off route 24) or JFK Univ., Orinda, in case of rain
Shintaido	Stephen Billias (call Stephen at 415 459-5803)	Saturdays 8:30-10:00 A.M.	Rincon Valley Community Center Montecito Blvd. Santa Rosa