



# BODY Dialogue

## ... in My Life

by Bela Breslau

My first day in San Francisco was a beautiful sunny day in September of 1976. After checking in at 776 7th Avenue, meeting up with my very best friend from college, Pamela Olton, seeing Michael Thompson again and meeting Ito, I went with the others to Golden Gate Park to do Shintaido. I was wearing a pair of Judo *gi* pants and a T-shirt.

After *keiko* (Shintaido practice), as we were walking back to the apartment, a tour bus passed through the park. I remember Michael Thompson saying to me, "See, you are already part of the local color."

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I just made a *bo* cover for Nick Sterling for his 7th birthday (A *bo* is a six foot staff - Ed.). Nick and Sophia (our daughter) have recently been coming to *keiko*. Sometimes when we are

*Continued on p. 5*

## I N S I D E

Shintaido of America membership . . . . .	2
Photos from SoA's 25th . . . . .	5
Wearing Our <i>Gi</i> in Public . . . . .	6
Shintaido for Caregivers . . . . .	8
The Meaning of Tenshingoso . . . . .	9
Shintaido's Beginnings in America . . . . .	10
Order books and videos . . . . .	11

Sincere Congratulations  
to American Shintaidoists  
on your 25th Anniversary...

by Hiroyuki Aoki,  
founder of Shintaido  
translated by Lee Seaman

It is my great pleasure to speak with you through this issue of *Body Dialogue*, and to celebrate the wonderful body of *keiko* (practice) experience which you have achieved. It also gives me great joy to see that the life of Shintaido has been communicated to so many people through the dedicated teaching and *keiko* vision of *sensei* (instructor) Fugaku Ito, *sensei* Michael Thompson, and your many other *senpai* (senior students).

In 1972 those of us who were practicing in Japan had the opportunity to participate in an international convention of the Association for Humanistic Psychology held in Tokyo. Our presentation met with great enthusiasm from scholars around the world, so the next year I packed a change of clothes into a shoulder bag and went off to introduce Shintaido in the United States.

I didn't have enough money for hotels, so instead of moving from one town to the next one down the road, I would take an overnight bus to someplace far away and sleep in the bus. After three months of traveling like this, I came back to Japan exhausted and with a sore back!

After that I went to the United States a second time, but even in that second visit Shintaido didn't take root. It wasn't until

*Continued on p. 3*



Mr. Hiroyuki Aoki practicing  
"seaweed exercise" with  
Mr. Michael Thompson

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## The Origins of Shintaido of America

by Eva Thaddeus

Welcome to this anniversary issue of *Body Dialogue*, which celebrates the twenty-fifth birthday of Shintaido of America (SoA). In this issue you will find an article by Mr. Hiroyuki Aoki, the founder of Shintaido, and also by long-time American practitioners who have been with Shintaido ever since it came to this country.

The following partial chronology is excerpted from "The History of Shintaido of America, 1975-1988," which was prepared for SoA's twentieth anniversary. It will give you an idea of Shintaido's background in this country, of where and when the authors featured in this issue began their practice, and of how Shintaido has become established in the United States.

We owe the existence of Shintaido of America to two teachers: Michael Thompson, who encountered Shintaido in France in 1973, subsequently went to Japan to study with Mr. Aoki, and was the first to begin teaching regularly in this country, and H.F. Ito, a member of the original Japanese group which, under Mr. Aoki's direction, created Shintaido. Mr. Ito moved to San Francisco in 1975, and shortly thereafter Shintaido of America was officially under way.

### Shintaido of America: the early days

1975: Michael Thompson introduced Shintaido in Geneva, New York. Among his original students was Irene Hadeishi, whose memories are featured in this issue, and Bill Burtis, who is a Shintaido Instructor today (see photo on p. 4).

1976: H.F. Ito and Michael Thompson filed papers at City Hall in San Francisco, officially founding Shintaido of America. They offered

*Continued on p. 7*

Published by Shintaido of America (SoA), a non-profit organization which produces educational materials on the practice and teaching of Shintaido.

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## Sincere Congratulations

*continued from p. 1*

Mr. Ito came to the United States to live, with the support and friendship of Mr. Michael Thompson, that Shintaido first began to grow and bear fruit in the U.S. Initially Mr. Ito had a very hard time trying to introduce Shintaido to so many different kinds of people. However, 10 students from Hobart College who had studied with Mr. Michael Thompson became interested in Shintaido and formed the core group from which the U.S. Shintaido movement spread.

That was 25 years ago. When we are walking on a finished pathway, it is hard for most of us to imagine how difficult it must have been to open up that path originally. There are some mountains in Japan called the Japanese Alps. Many years ago a very dedicated mountaineer spent years building a path up one of those rocky mountains, and when he finally succeeded he made it possible for thousands of people to go up that mountain. That path takes only about 10 minutes to

developing new policies and structures.

After seeing this remarkable transition, I was able to step away from all organizational responsibilities and from giving *gorei* (instruction, leadership) at the regularly scheduled classes. In October of the same year, the instructors had a *bojutsu* (wooden staff technique) workshop at which each participant was able to experience radical physical transformation. That atmosphere was then communicated by the participating instructors to students throughout Japan, resulting in a quickening of *keiko* across the country.

The experience spread through the joint *keiko* (the monthly practices which are open to everyone, beginner through advanced, from across Japan). Participants felt things they had never felt before, a sense of naturalness revived within their bodies, or an expansion of consciousness, or an experience of enlightenment or insight.

Michael Pope



*Mr. H.F. Ito gives instruction in bokuto (wooden sword)*

walk. I think most people today would have a very difficult time imagining the years of hard work and struggle which it took to create.

When he came to the United States, Mr. Ito was like someone dropped into a jungle without a map. Every day was a struggle and a harsh challenge. But he had confidence in himself and a great love for the truth and for other people, so he was able to carve out a path. And from the very beginning he received support from others who had the same values.

I am sure that someday the history of the early days of Shintaido will also become weathered by the passage of time, into a traditional story of "how it was back then". And a new generation will point the way to an even higher level of practice and will begin the work of opening up those new paths.

In Japan, after the international *gasshuku* (retreat, workshop) held in Haguro in May of 2000, all of the members of the Board of Directors of the Japanese Shintaido Association were replaced by young practitioners. We made this change not because of their excellent technique or superb instructional skills, but in order to make room for their youthful optimism and enthusiasm. It changed the atmosphere of the entire organization, and has received a lot of supportive feedback from the membership. Now all of the members are excited about

Not long ago we started a mailing list for Shintaido members in Japan. That list has become very active in the last year, providing a forum for the expression of opinions and discussion. Every month or so I have introduced a discussion theme, and the resulting discussions have produced a deepening of the participants' thoughts and opinions about Shintaido. Most of the opinions are constructive and forward-looking, and people are able to share their ideas with each other. This is extremely valuable for Japanese people, who do not usually express their own opinions. The discussions have been very lively, and some of the main contributors have experienced a real change of consciousness.

In March of this year we had a karate workshop at which even absolute beginners received one-on-one instruction, and every participant experienced some sort of awakening. In April we had a retreat for people who were teaching either in the central classes in the Tokyo area or in a regional group. All of those participants learned the basics of how to avoid an attack from behind. This was the first time in the history of Shintaido that such dramatic results had been achieved at a single workshop.

Today the Japanese economy is unimaginably bad, with multiple bankruptcies and mergers among the largest companies,

*Continued on following page*

## Sincere Congratulations

*continued from p. 3*

and the situation is even worse for small and medium-sized businesses. The Japanese Shintaido Association has adopted a form of operation which is very well suited to Japanese people, but to tell the truth the organization is struggling financially. However, the practice itself is developing more rapidly and vibrantly than ever before.

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*I don't think we learn much from succeeding.*

*We probably learn 10 times more from failing... Don't worry about failing or suffering, just do it. You will grow from it.*

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Today Shintaido practitioners around the world are developing very different organizational structures, whatever is most appropriate to that country. This is truly admirable. It is also important for all of us to work ceaselessly to continue to develop structures which will optimize Shintaido thinking so that all people can practice in ways that increase their hope and their happiness. If organizational operations do not change every year, it will be impossible to keep up with the changing times. We must continue our efforts to find effective ways to hand down the essence of Shintaido to people of different generations and in different parts of the world.

All of you who have families know how important family-building is, whether it is with your husband or wife, your children, or your parents, so that you can live happily together. But you also know how difficult this can be. Imagine, then, how valuable it is for the entire world when we can bring 20 or 30 Shintaido practitioners into a group which has a joyous experience through practicing together. Building that kind of group is also an extremely effective method for self-development.

I don't think we learn much from succeeding. We probably learn 10 times more from failing. So I encourage you to work on building a group. Don't worry about failing or suffering, just do it. You will grow from it. And the experience will keep you young!

I've spoken often on the topic of "*Tenchi hitobito ware ittai*" in Shintaido (the unification of heaven, earth, others, and self), so I am sure that you are all familiar with this expression. The term *ware* is very similar to the "self" that Socrates mentioned when he said "Know thyself," and we also see this concept in disciplines such as Zen which require rigorous self-examination. So *ware* has a lot to do with how well you understand yourself. Shintaido has some very demanding practices such as *Kaikyaku zenshin* (jumping technique for opening the lower body) and *Eiko* (a basic Shintaido form; lit., "glory") which can provide a deeper understanding of the self. There are other forms of activity which can also teach us more about

ourselves, including group organization and event planning (these can really help us understand our weaknesses and shortcomings, and we need that in order to grow). By becoming involved with other people and doing *kumite* (partner exercises) with them, we are able to lessen the separation between ourselves and others, and to study the spirit of love.

In order to move well, you have to reawaken 100% of the intrinsic naturalness of your body. That means a kind of "makeover", and the only way to do it is to start. Work toward relaxing your shoulders and releasing yourself from rigid self-consciousness into natural movement, and study from your teachers, your senior students, and your fellow practitioners, humbly and with an open mind and heart. If you do this, each of you will finally come to be unified with the great universal truth which we can experience although we cannot see it with our eyes.

These are the concepts of Shintaido. But don't take just one and lean on it only. Instead, consider all of them without bias and let an even bigger Shintaido world or Shintaido universe grow within yourself so that you can express it through your body. I think the next question for Shintaido in the United States and for each of you is how to live your own life so that it supports these objectives, and how to continue building an organization that will also do this.

In the last few years we have seen terrible massacres of countless thousands of people because of racial and tribal differences in Africa and Eastern Europe. But with continued advances in airplane travel and internet communications, surely a day will come when discrimination based on nationality or race will break down, and we will truly consider ourselves as citizens of the global village, the world, or the universe. Since it was first founded, the United States has been a country of people from all over the world. You provide an inspiring model for the rest of us.

It is my sincere hope that Shintaido of America will continue to provide innovative models of Shintaido practice in the future. Congratulations on your 25th anniversary, and my sincere best wishes for even greater success in the future. •••



Bill Burtis c. 1974,  
Geneva NY

## ... in My Life

*continued from p. 1*

waiting somewhere, Sophia will do a little cross step and practice her *tsuki* (thrusting) movement, pretending to have a *bo*.

§

Shintaido has saved a lot of people. But, I never really thought it saved me. It did though. It saved me. It gave me a second family, though not exactly a family of choice. "You can pick your friends, but not your relatives" is true in my Shintaido family as well.

It made my life full and interesting. It helped me escape and

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*Who does anything for twenty-five years?  
It's almost un-American.*

---

go beyond the ordinary.

And, it's a constant. Twenty five years is a long time. What else have I done for so long? Certainly have not kept a job, or lived in one place for that long. Certainly have not been married to one person for that long. Who does anything for twenty five years? It's almost un-American. And I can't seem to get away from it. It's still on my home answering machine: "...and, if you want information about Shintaido..."

§

Nick really liked his *bo* cover. He went and got his *bo* and put it in the cover and practiced the different ways to tie the ties around. Later as I was driving, I had a little day dream. I imagined sitting on the sidelines and watching Nick and Sophia perform a *kata* (form, sequence). I wondered whether they would keep at Shintaido and whether they might be doing a *kata* at 17 or 18 years old. I thought about sitting with Stephen and proudly watching Sophia. I thought about sitting with Ito as he watched them. I saw them performing beautifully. By then they would have been doing Shintaido for more than 10 years. I imagined Ito saying: "*Kirei desu ne*" (very pretty). Maybe that would never be said by Ito or someone watching a *kata*. But it was a little proud mother day dream. •••

a celebration  
of the 25th Anniversary  
of Shintaido in America  
June 14 - 17, 2001  
Greenfield, Massachusetts

photos by James R. Sterling



# Wearing Our *Gi* in Public

by Jim Sterling

What can I say about the future of Shintaido in America?

In 25 years as a student and teacher, I've seen our movement transform itself, and display many different manifestations, much like an actor who comes on stage, each time wearing a different costume. I am sure this will continue and it fulfills the vision that Shintaido is a martial art that must adapt to the times.

*The gi is the traditional white jacket and pants worn in the practice of many martial arts (including Shintaido) and other traditional disciplines.*

"Master Aoki asked us to give up our black belts that we had finally attained after long and hard efforts. He asked us to wear white belts and he followed this same rule. He thought the Japanese martial arts were getting weaker spiritually and technically... In order to rebuild the Japanese martial arts, we had to leave behind this kind of [grading system] inflation and go back at least a few hundred years to the era that was the source of Japanese martial arts.

White *kimono* was the costume of the death ceremony in the *samurai* era. Wearing white meant we were ready to sacrifice ourselves, to give up our lives in the quest to develop Shintaido and restore the true meaning and spirit of the martial arts in our modern age...

Just as an actor puts on a costume and begins to assume the character of his role, when you put on your *gi*, please appreciate it as an act of becoming prepared. Make yourself ready to receive. Ready to be the right person in the right place at the right time.

*(excerpted from "The Meaning of White" by Mr. H. F. Ito, reprinted in the anthology Cutting the Blue Sky)*

See p. 11 to order copies of  
*Cutting the Blue Sky*

As we look to the future, it is important to note that Shintaido is a very young movement. Keep in mind that it took several hundred years for Christianity to grow from a fringe sect to an established faith with a world-wide presence. In some ways, the world may not know all it needs yet.

I always enjoy seeing new people come to Shintaido. It's a wonderful experience to watch their excitement as they awake during *keiko* (Shintaido practice). We need to bring in fresh ideas and new faces to keep Shintaido's creative spirit alive. I feel this will occur naturally as we share our love of *keiko* with others. I recall during the national *gasshuku* (retreat) held at Mount Hermon in Massachusetts, I had a brief discussion with Mr. Hiroyuki Aoki (Shintaido's founder). I mentioned to him how disappointed I was that Shintaido of America was not getting many new members. I felt as if I had

been a failure and asked what he thought we could do to change the situation. He looked at me, smiled and said, "Don't worry about that, you have so much Shintaido in your body that it acts as an electrical charge, arcing from you into others." I suppose as long as I can recharge my battery it will continue to work effectively. I have kept that example in mind ever since.

When I go to workshops and *gasshuku* in America, I am always amazed at how many familiar faces attend. My guess is that many practitioners in this country have been involved in Shintaido for close to ten years. This is an extraordinary commitment given that the average amount of time spent on a job in this country is about three years.

I am starting to see a second generation of teachers and students bring Shintaido into the world using themselves as examples and role models. I like to use the phrase "wearing our *gi* in public" to describe the phenomena of making Shintaido a part of our daily life.

This analogy has had practical applications a number of times. Once when Mr. Okada visited us in San Francisco, he came to his first American practice and afterwards we went out to dinner. He commented near the end of the meal that he didn't recognize anyone at the table because they were not wearing their *gi* in the restaurant.

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*I changed into my gi behind some bushes since the park was filled with young couples hugging on the park benches. I was very self-conscious... Aoki-sensei sensed my discomfort and reminded me the young lovers were not interested in me, only each other.*

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One of my most vivid recollections is from the summer I spent in Japan, going to the university summer workshops and taking private lessons from Mr. Aoki. One afternoon he took me to a park in the middle of Tokyo. I changed into my *gi* behind some bushes since the park was filled with young couples hugging on the park benches. I was very self-conscious as I began to do *Tenshingoso* (a basic Shintaido form). Mr. Aoki sensed my discomfort and reminded me the young lovers were not interested in me, only each other.

After our lesson, I decided not to change back into my street clothes and we walked for miles around downtown Tokyo eventually arriving at a local *sentō* (bath). Many years later, I

*Continued on following page*

## Wearing Our *Gi* in Public

*continued from previous page*

realized that this was a wonderful practical application of “wearing my *gi* in public”. What could be more public than strolling in my *gi* in downtown Tokyo at rush hour!

Those are practical examples, but in a figurative sense, I hope that all of us take the opportunity to bring our practice into our daily lives and wear our *gi* in public. Since the time I started Shintaido, I have worked mostly in large corporations that are miles away from the *dojo* (practice place). I feel I have been able to survive the corporate world by using much of what I have learned in *keiko*. There is constantly a need for accurate timing and adjusting to your partner’s intentions.

For example, I have rarely had a run in with any boss, not because I always blindly agreed with his or her directions or opinions but because I have learned how to treat my senior colleagues with respect. I sense when it is important to follow and not push back. This sounds trite, but you’d be surprised how much people appreciate this kind of treatment. Most are

## Origins of SoA

*continued from p. 2*

Shintaido classes in San Francisco. Jim Sterling, who is today a Senior Shintaido Instructor, and who has written for this issue, began studying at this time. So did Bela Breslau, Shintaido Instructor, who is also featured in this issue, and Kazu Shibao, Senior Instructor.

1980: Tom Abbott began teaching Shintaido in Worcester, Mass., and Shintaido was registered as a non-profit corporation in this state. Joe Zawielski, now Senior Instructor, began studying at this time.

1982: Lee and John Seaman, who previously studied Shintaido in Japan, began teaching in Oregon.

1983: Michael Thompson moved back to the United States after 2 1/2 years in Japan. He began a group in Los Angeles, where Friedemann Schulz, now Senior Instructor, began Shintaido. He then moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts to start teaching Shintaido there.



Michael Pope

so accustomed to the democratization of the workplace that they never acquire the recognition they feel they deserve. This approach can be very disarming. It has given me the opportunity to get to know people better. One Vice President commented to me how much he enjoyed working together because “I treated him like a real human being.” This kind of relationship makes for interesting corporate *kumite* (partner work).

There have been other times when a swift *mae geri* (front kick) or strong *geidan barai* (block) was appropriate. This can work for you too, but make sure it’s effective and that your timing is just right!

Most people who come to their first Shintaido class know someone who is doing *keiko*. They have come, not because of an advertisement they saw on TV or words they read in a marketing brochure but because they trust and appreciate you. When you wear your *gi* in public and make Shintaido an integral part of your life, it will grow organically and reach out to those you touch on a daily basis.

Although Shintaido has taken on many different roles over the years, an underlying truth has been present and accessible to those who practice sincerely. As we move into the future let’s always try to express the core of our *keiko* that has kept Shintaido alive and will help it continue to blossom. •••

At the date of this writing, Shintaido of America has trained and accredited six Senior Instructors, eighteen Instructors, and sixteen Shintaido Graduates. We have sponsored dozens of *gasshukus* (Shintaido retreats) and advanced workshops in different parts of the country. Local groups and the ongoing practice they represent continue to be the heart of Shintaido in this country. •••

### Pacific Shintaido Fall Meditation Workshop

H.F. Ito will lead a Shintaido meditation workshop in San Francisco this September. The dates are:

Sun. 9/23 Early morning whole group meditation *keiko*, plus potluck meal

Mon. 9/24 through Fri. 9/28 Early morning meditation in small groups around the Bay Area or individually.

Sat. 9/29 Morning and afternoon whole group meditation *keiko*, plus mid-day potluck.

Sun. 9/30 Early morning meditation *keiko*, plus potluck.

Those planning to attend from outside the Bay Area can join in the early morning meditation at a distance, and participate in person on September 29-30.

For more information, and to be added to our e-mail distribution list contact:

Robert Gaston at 415-454-4749 or robgaston1@aol.com

# Shintaido Moving Meditation Classes for Caregivers

by Eva Guralnick

For seven years, Hospice by the Bay [in San Francisco —ed.] has offered caregivers a unique way to care for themselves. More than 600 caregivers— professional and volunteer— have participated in our Moving Meditation classes to learn how to relax and rejuvenate.

The classes were created by Haruyoshi Ito, one of the founding masters of the Japanese moving meditation practice of Shintaido. Ito had been offering stress reduction and management workshops to business people in the United States and Japan when Hospice by the Bay Executive Director [and Shintaido senior instructor —ed.] Connie Borden invited him to adapt his program for caregivers. Since its inception, the series of workshops has been funded by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Menlo Park, and has been offered at no charge to participants.

Originally, Ito and Borden envisioned a program that would serve both patients and caregivers; the diagnostic focus was on AIDS. “We found there were too many levels of physical ability,” said Ito. “After the first year, we realized the caregivers really needed these exercises the most.” The program was re-focused on all types of hospice caregivers. Ito has now taught similar workshops in Los Angeles, Boston, Quebec City and France.

Shintaido, which literally means “new body way” in Japanese, was founded 30 years ago in Japan and is rooted in traditional Japanese martial arts training. One component is a martial art, while the other focuses on healing and meditation exercises— the emphasis of the workshops.

“Professional caregivers often know how to take care of themselves physically through activities like swimming or hiking,” said Ito, “but the strong point of the Shintaido program is that we offer a holistic experience, which will help them satisfy their mental and spiritual needs as well. I want to help these people recover their energy so they can keep doing their good work.” Although professional caregivers have outnumbered volunteers, recently a group of church members who had been caring for a Hospice by the Bay patient attended together.

All of Hospice by the Bay’s Moving Meditation workshops have been held on Saturdays at Rodeo Beach in Marin. The setting is beautiful, but often foggy in the mornings. “I think the fog is good, actually,” said Ito. “One movement is called *eiko*, which literally means sword of glory. The technique involves stretching your arms and cutting the sky. In a way, when it’s foggy, I can let them imagine cutting and opening the fog to reveal the blue sky.” •••

*(Reprinted with permission from the Hospice by the Bay Newsletter.)*



Caregivers can use this two-minute sequence of movements to quickly relax and rejuvenate.

- 1) Relax your shoulders by rolling them forwards and backwards and side to side.
- 2) Shake your body forward and back like a wave.
- 3) Place the heels of both palms under your jaws and push up. Arch your back a little as you do this, with your eyes looking at the ceiling. This opens and stretches your solar plexus and the front of your chest.
- 4) Let your arms roll back and raise them to the ceiling as though to hug the sky and stars.
- 5) Align your palms face down and slowly push your hands down the front of your face and chest, to where they’re naturally extended. Imagine your hands are a filter and that your mind and body energy are going through them, starting from far above you, moving through you, and continuing down to the center of the planet. Through this exercise, you can imagine yourself purifying not only your mind and body, but the spot on which you are standing.





# The Meaning of “Tenshingosō”

by David Franklin

Finally, the secret meaning of Tenshingosō explained... or so you may have hoped. In fact, Tenshingosō (one of the basic forms of Shintaido) is supposed to contain many esoteric secrets of martial arts and meditation, handed down from ancient tradition and encoded in the movement technique. Mr. Hiroyuki Aoki, the founder of Shintaido, says that he intended to stand the pyramid of traditional transmission of ancient secrets on its head: the distilled essence of this knowledge is contained in the form of Tenshingosō, which is taught to every beginning Shintaido student.

Alas, that is not the topic of this article, since plenty has been written on the subject by others far more qualified than I. What I am going to discuss is the English translation of the term “Tenshingosō.” This question was raised by one of my students, who wanted to know why we use so much Japanese terminology in Shintaido practice. In T'ai Chi (or Tai Ji), for example, most instructors refer to the names of the movements only by their English translations: Cloud Hands, Grasp Sparrow's Tail, or Embrace Tiger and Return to Mountain, for example (never mind that the Chinese names are difficult for most English speakers to pronounce).

Realizing that the techniques of Shintaido are also endowed with equally poetic names, I decided that when teaching, at the least I could use the English names of the movements in conjunction with the Japanese names. Using the Japanese names helps students to communicate with others when they go to workshops or study with other instructors; but the English translations may help us communicate to ourselves a clearer image of what the movement means.

The art of translation is quite subtle, and between languages coming from cultural backgrounds as different as Japan and the U.S. or England it always involves a degree of transformation. On the nuts-and-bolts level, this is often because single Japanese words often have multiple layers of meaning and history that differ from their closest single-word English counterparts (the reverse is equally true, but that's not our problem). Each word of Ten Shin Go So could almost become a short essay, but that would not be of much help to Shintaidoists, who need an elegant yet accurate English phrase that translates the syllables of a foreign tongue into meaningful shorthand.

I've sometimes felt dissatisfied with some of the translations, such as “five phenomena of heavenly truth.” My study of Chinese language (which forms the backbone of much of written Japanese) suggests that it might be useful to break down Ten Shin Go So à la Ezra Pound. (Ezra Pound was an American poet who was fascinated by Japanese *No* drama and Chinese poetry, among other influences. While not literate in classical Chinese, he collaborated on several word-by-word translations of ancient Chinese poems. On a side note,

he was a graduate of Hamilton College, Michael Thompson's alma mater). So here goes:

*ten*

*Ten* is often translated as “heaven.” This makes sense, since one meaning is “sky” (a.k.a. “the heavens”), and like the word “heaven,” it combines the literal meaning of sky or “what is above” with layers of metaphysical meaning related to an invisible or spiritual world.

However, the word “heaven” in English also connotes a Judeo-Christian (and perhaps Muslim) paradise where the righteous, but not the evil or faithless, go after death. This flavor is not part of the original Chinese word, which combines the sense of “what is above” with a neutral idea of implied universal order or un-manifested higher reality. In addition, the word “heaven” is a bit mono-directional (up), while the ancient Chinese felt that *ten* was round (in contrast to *chi* or “earth,” which was square). Although it sounds a bit hippy-ish, I vote for “cosmos.” It's rounder, and implies what is beyond the blue sky, out there, maybe even “far out” (Shintaido was, after all, created in the Sixties).

*shin*

*go*

*Shin* means “truth,” and I can't add anything beyond directing the reader to Aoki-sensei's mini-book *Tenshingosō and Eiko* (available from Shintaido Publications— see p. 11), in which he discusses the

meaning of *shin*. As for *go*, the simplicity and clarity of “five” reminds us of why mathematics is the universal common language of scientists all over the world.

*so*

*So*, sometimes translated as “phenomena” or “manifestations” also has an implication of “appearances” and also “phase” (in the sense of a condition that one passes through— “it's a passing phase” suggests immersion in a condition, not just an outward appearance). The Five Elements frequently referred to in Chinese medicine and philosophy are in fact the same words as the *goso* of Tenshingosō and are sometimes translated as the Five Phases. But “phase” is a bit too transitory; I prefer “expression.” Like “phenomena” and “manifestations,” it gets across the idea of something invisible emerging to take on form in the world, but it's less murky and philosophical and more— well, expressive.

Since the *kata* Tenshingosō represents a cyclical process, it should come as no surprise that after arriving at my preferred translation:

## Five Expressions of Cosmic Truth

I checked the Shintaido textbook and found it waiting for me right there on page 46. Tenshingosō: return to the original. The cosmic cycle of life. •••

## PRACTITIONER'S CORNER

## Shintaido's Beginnings in America— a personal account

*Irene Hadeishi and her children, Mitsuharu and Yukiharu, were part of the first group that practiced Shintaido in the United States. Irene and Mits have shared some memories with us of Shintaido's early days. — Ed.*

Irene: We came upon Shintaido in the form of Michael Thompson introducing it at Hobart and William Smith College in the fall of either 1972 or 1973. Mits and Yuki's dad, Nobuyuki (Nob) was a new assistant prof at Hobart that year in the art department, teaching drawing, printmaking, and art history. One of the students in Nob's freshman tutorial, Lynne Lofeld, brought us that historic first flyer supplied by Michael announcing classes in Shintaido. I signed up primarily wanting to give Mits and Yuki, ages 7 and 3 at the time, an experience from their Japanese heritage and ended up thoroughly enjoying the experience for myself.

Just briefly, we signed up, I think, for a couple times a week. There were practices in the gym at Hobart as well as outdoors. I think I embraced the idea and practice of Shintaido as I understood it partly because the open hand forms made sense to me, unlike perhaps Karate.

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*I think I embraced the idea and practice of Shintaido as I understood it partly because the open hand forms made sense to me, unlike perhaps Karate.*

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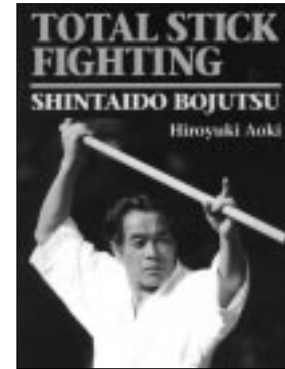
Michael says: Run as if you have an ice cream cone in your hand. Another memory is running *eiko* (a basic Shintaido form) for the first time with some Hobart maintenance people watching in amazed wonderment. Of course, the *kata* (forms) were beautiful, especially when the *sensei* from Japan visited and demonstrated. For myself, I was happy that I could keep up with students half my age during the warmups.

Michael embodied Shintaido for us and he did it very well. Besides regular classes, I remember dinners after some practices. His specialty was baked ham. Michael arranged for early morning cold winter practice— in blizzard conditions (indoors, of course). Michael also organized a weekend *gasshuku* (retreat) at Letchworth Park in upstate New York. It rained, but we practiced anyway.

I think Michael carried on as the lone Shintaido instructor for at least two or perhaps three years before a permanent presence from Japan entered the scene in 1975. •••

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... ETC

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