



BODY Dialogue

The Road to Bil-in: A Role for Keiko in Nonviolent Resistance

by Aviv Tatarsky, Instructor of Kitaido
edited by Lee Ordeman

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On a Friday in early 2006, I and a friend boarded a bus in Jerusalem to join a demonstration against the construction of a fence that Israel is building between itself and the Palestinian Occupied Territories. During the event, our peaceful group of Israelis and Palestinians was treated brutally by Israeli security forces who opposed us. Their violent response, so typical of the army in the Occupied Territories, upset and frustrated me, but it also allowed me to discover a

Continued on p.3

I N S I D E

Tenshingoso with Rabbi Zalman	2
Spiritual Emergence and the Pedagogy of Risk	4
Stranger in a Strange Dojo	7
Shooting Stars	9

Eiko Dai as Cosmology

by Master Instructor H.F. Ito
edited by Tomi Nagai-Rothe

As I get older and my practice changes, I have the opportunity to observe Shintaido--almost as an art critic would. Since doing this, I have come to appreciate eiko dai as cosmology--or art.

In eiko dai we run in a straight line, our intentions focused on the horizon. It is important to do this over and over while we are alive, because eiko dai is practice for the moment after death when we will be faced with a long pathway lit only at the far end. Without focus and relevant experience, it is all too easy to get caught in that pathway and never emerge into the light.

When you practice eiko dai by yourself it can be very therapeutic, especially if you do it three times. The first time addresses your past, the second time addresses your present and the third time addresses your future. Eiko dai can also be an artistic expression as well as a spiritual expression.

In Tibetan Buddhism, this is referred to as bardo -" the interval between death and rebirth."

It is possible to get permanently stuck to the walls of the bardo hallway--almost as if one's karma adheres to the wall--and never emerge. One potent image to use is from Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi in which Lando Calrissian and a group of pilots is flying out of the Death Star after destroying its core. The star begins imploding around them, enveloping them in flames and debris as they fly toward the exterior, turning and dodging second-by-second in order to reach the opening before being consumed.

In keiko we sometimes practice eiko dai in a circle, running around and around. If you have ever seen aerial footage of the Tawaf during Islamic Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), muslims circle the Ka'bah seven times, counter clockwise. Both of these patterns remind me of the galaxies.

Continued on p.7

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Tenshingoso with Rabbi Zalman

by Stephen Billias

Recently I flew to Boulder, Colorado, to tape a video interview with Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, the founder of the Jewish Renewal movement, for a documentary I am working on with filmmaker Dennis Lanson.

We had interviewed Rabbi Zalman once before, after a presentation at the Assisi Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont. At this presentation the Rabbi, who is eighty-three years old, spoke for over four hours, extemporaneously, without notes, interrupted only by a short lunch break. He told jokes, stories, anecdotes, sang songs, led prayers, got the audience to sing; all in all an incredible performance. Afterwards he granted us a short interview.

In his presence I felt like I was with someone who was on another level, a really spiritual being. He had the kind of eyes that one falls into, a deep, open, penetrating, and unwavering but gentle gaze. In particular it felt amazing to sit across from the Rabbi, especially knowing that only a few months previous he had sat one on one with the Dalai Lama. One can only imagine the depth of the interchange between these two spiritual leaders.

There were many more questions we wanted to ask the Rabbi about our documentary theme, *Seeking the 36*, a quixotic quest for the Thirty-Six Just Men of Jewish folklore, those humble, anonymous beings in each generation who are so virtuous that they keep the world in balance for the rest of sinners. So we planned a trip to Boulder and the Rabbi graciously invited us to his home.

continued on page 3

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The next issue of *Body Dialogue* will be in July, 2008.

Please submit articles, poems, pictures to the editor at: newsletter@shintaido.org. Deadline for submissions is May 15, 2008.

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Tenshingoso with Rabbi Zalman

continued from p. 2

We met with him on a Sunday morning in mid-October. He gave freely of his time and wisdom, and we captured some invaluable archival footage of this remarkable man. At the end of this interview, while the camera people were packing up the equipment, I had the strongest impulse to show the Rabbi something of Shintaido. I asked him and he willingly assented. We went into the next room, his private study. I gave him a very brief description of Shintaido and Tenshingoso, and then I said that I would demonstrate the movement for him.

But when I clasped my hands in UM, I noticed that the Rabbi was copying me. He didn't just want to hear about Tenshingoso, he wanted to do it! So I did the movements, and he copied me, quite well, adjusting his hands when he saw he was slightly off. When we finished, he immediately said to me: "Listen, I want you to do me a favor and make me a DVD of that form, and send it to me, so that I can get it into my body". He used the language we would use in Shintaido: "...get it into my body!"

I have sent the Rabbi a copy of Minagawa-sensei's Taimyo and Tenshingoso DVD. At one point in the documentary Rabbi Zalman turns to the camera and says: "I want to make a plea...[to government and philanthropic organizations] to develop schools where people can learn the transformative spiritual technologies needed to help heal ourselves and the world."

The phrase *transformative spiritual technologies* could be part of an excellent definition of Shintaido.

The Road to Bil-In

continued from p. 1

practical application for keiko when peaceful people confront others intent on using violence.

Since 1967 Israel has occupied territories in which today several million Palestinians live. Though Israel recently withdrew troops from the Gaza Strip, it still holds the West Bank, where roughly two million Palestinians live. In response to Palestinian terrorist attacks, which over the years have caused much panic in Israel, Israel has begun building a fence between itself and the occupied West Bank. This fence is causing great controversy in Israel, as it commonly encroaches on Palestinian settlements and prevents many Palestinians from living anything approaching a normal life. The fence often makes it impossible to reach their places of employment, their schools and hospitals.

The demonstration I participated in was in the Palestinian village of Bil-in, 30 minutes by car from Jerusalem and 50

minutes from Tel-Aviv. The fence stood in such a way that it divided the village from more than half of its agricultural lands. As if this blatant robbery weren't insult enough, housing for Israeli settlers was subsequently built on these stolen lands. Since 2005 Israeli and Palestinian protestors had been clashing with security forces at the site of this injustice.

If the government embarked upon this policy in the interests of all Israelis, I and the roughly 80 other Jews aboard that bus from Jerusalem weren't happy about it. Many of us, including me, had served our time in the armed forces, as national service is the obligation of all young adults. The military had made us well aware of the prevailing attitude that Palestinians were supposedly our enemies and that this fence was something we were expected to be happy with. We headed for Bil-in hoping to express our opposition to this approach.

Our bus never reached the village. The army had anticipated our arrival and blocked the road. So we turned around and disembarked a few kilometers from Bil-in and then walked to a nearby Palestinian village where we meant to hire taxis that would take us to Bil-in. We managed to hire taxis, but soon three army jeeps arrived to prevent their departure. As the jeeps approached, four of us stepped in front of them to keep them from blocking the taxis. Soldiers got out of the jeeps and pushed us aside. We immediately returned to stand in front of the jeeps. Soon the soldiers became more forceful but we continued to resist them passively. The jeeps managed to creep forward but too slowly to stop the taxis filled with demonstrators. As the taxis took off, the soldiers became violent, shoving us strongly, throwing us about and threatening to harm us. We felt they had no authority to prevent the demonstration, so we continued to resist peacefully.

I knew the soldiers were stronger than I; I could do nothing to prevent them from pushing me. And so, as if by instinct, I let go and things became very fluid and I found myself doing *wakame taiso* (seaweed exercise).

My body becomes soft and lets itself be shoved. This protects me from getting hurt and allows me to quickly return and stand in front of the jeeps, using the momentum that the soldiers give me with each push. A soldier with murder in his eyes runs straight at me. He is much heavier than I am and he intends to smash into me. Again I receive the impact safely. The wakame protects me time after time.

I notice that the wakame has a strong psychological effect on me. I feel no fear. The shoves, the beatings, being thrown around - these are all things to flow with, to harmonize with. There is no need to resist. And my body knows how to do this instinctively; I don't need to give any commands to my body or to consciously calm myself. Normally, I suppose, I'd be afraid that I'd be injured, but here even though I am being thrown to the edge of the road and am in danger of falling on boulders and discarded metal. The wakame keeps me calm.

Continued on following page

Road to Bil-in

continued from p. 3

I notice another, even more significant psychological effect of the wakame. It prevents me from opposing the soldiers in a way that would only make the situation worse. Because I never feel frustrated that I am not having more success in stopping the soldiers, I don't become angry and, in turn, I don't become violent. Nor do I feel like giving up. The persistence of wakame always takes into account the forces which influence it.

The situation reminds me of something I wrote years ago: "Falling down is good, getting up is good." Now, confronting the soldiers on the road to Bil-in, that thought changes to: "Being thrown to the side is good, and returning in front of the jeep is also good." In this way I am neither stubborn, nor do I give up. And it is all without effort.

It is clear that there is no sense in forcefully resisting the soldiers. They are stronger than I am and I might injure myself. Luckily the road is very narrow and the jeeps have to go one behind the other. If one of my friends (we are only four) is standing in front of the lead jeep, then it is less important that I stand there. The minute that he is shoved away, I take his place in front of the jeep. This reminds me of being in keiko and hopping as a group, as when doing *meiso* jump or *soritobi* (Shintaido jump). In keiko, even when I rest from jumping, I pay attention to the rest of the group, and if it seems that people are tiring and soon no one will be jumping, then I gather my strength and jump again.

As a space opens in front of a jeep, one of us fills it. I am reminded that a big part of the art of Budo is concerned with opening: Creating an opening in your adversary, recognizing this opening and entering into it, awareness of one's own openings and knowing how to use them. So where there is an opening in front of the jeeps I try to fill it. Sometimes more than one soldier comes at me and the opening that this creates enables another demonstrator to take my place...

After 45 minutes the soldiers are fed up and decide to detain us. My friends resist and try again to reach the jeeps. The soldiers beat them, though none of us ever attempts to strike a soldier. I see that there is no chance to overpower the soldiers, so I relax and don't get beaten up. They bind our hands with plastic handcuffs. They tighten Amnon's cuffs so strongly that they cut through his skin and he cries in pain. After ten minutes they decide to cut off our handcuffs. However, they cannot cut Amnon's because this will also cut his skin. Finally they manage to release him as well. They let us go on the condition that we return to Jerusalem and not go to Bil-in. To the taxi driver who picks us up they say: "If you don't get out of here in 5 minutes we will shoot your tires." Of course, we go straight to Bil-in.

There we found about 80 people from Jerusalem had arrived in Bil-in. Other Israelis arrived from Haifa and Tel-Aviv making us 300. Many of the Palestinian villagers were waiting for us. When we joined them to march toward the fence, we numbered 1000. As I marched I could see on the other side of the fence the buildings of the Israeli settlement built on the village's stolen land. Roughly 200 soldiers and border police stood between us and the fence. Despite their presence, we somehow made it to the fence. After singing a few songs, we turned to head back. This time the army attacked us and many of us were beaten up.

Protests at Bil-in would continue until a few months ago, when the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the placement of the fence at Bil-in was unjust, and that it should be moved in order to reunify the town with its other lands.

Spiritual Emergence and the Pedagogy of Risk

(in response to "Risky Questions", Body Dialogue No. 21)

by David Franklin, senior instructor of Shintaido

There is clearly a pedagogy of risk at work in Shintaido practice, and both Ito-sensei and Aoki-sensei have discussed it in detail. Whether Shintaido should be considered a type of *budo* (lit. "art of war," usually referring to classical Japanese martial arts) is subject to debate. But obviously Shintaido is rooted in body movement, so we should start examining a "pedagogy of risk" from that point of view.

As Friedemann Schulz rightly pointed out [1], "going beyond our limits is intrinsic to any learning situation." Yet if we interpret this statement too superficially, all new situations are learning situations and take us beyond our limits--in which case, is there any need for the specific techniques that we practice in Shintaido? In other words, what are the specific effects of the methods of Shintaido in practitioners' bodies, as they relate to a pedagogy of risk?

We might start with Aoki-sensei's statement that Shintaido practice can activate a person's hidden talents and abilities, abilities that the individual may not be aware of [2]. Both Aoki-sensei and Ito-sensei have outlined one of the specific ways that this is accomplished: situations of perceived risk or perceived emergency (which of course includes actual as well as "simulated" emergencies) can evoke reactions during which people exhibit physical and mental abilities far beyond their normal limits.

Many physical responses to perceived danger are well-documented. The "fight-or-flight" response of the autonomic nervous system causes adrenaline to be released into the bloodstream, which is associated with various physical and psychological responses: blood supply to the major muscles and the cardio-vascular organs increases to prepare them for action;

Continued on following page

continued from p. 4

breathing and heart rates increase; sensitivity to pain decreases; the pupils of the eyes dilate, allowing for enhanced night vision, often accompanied by improved peripheral vision and increased sensitivity to motion; the sense of hearing is heightened; and brainwave frequency actually increases [3], suggesting perhaps we actually think faster in such situations, or that our perception of time changes (subjectively, such effects have been reported by professional athletes)[4]. Clearly all of these effects could allow a person to function well beyond their "normal" capacity--and these are probably only the tip of the iceberg.

If some of this sounds a bit unpleasant--not so different from a panic attack, perhaps--we might say that Shintaido is less about handling any situation with coolness than it is about experiencing, expressing, and navigating through all possible feelings that can be experienced by a human being. Rather than avoiding anything, including so-called "negative" emotions, it includes the art of continuing to live and to function in the midst of panic, joy, sadness, fear, ecstasy, anger, love, peace, unbalance, balance...

This willingness to explore all possible frequencies on the spectrum of human experience is part of what makes Shintaido an expressive art. When we use the term "martial art," we should mean much more by that than simply "beautiful and skillful." The profound role that art plays in the lives of all human cultures at all periods of history cannot be underestimated, and the contributions of artists to understanding the inner realities of the human psyche are on a par with those of any philosophers, mystics, monks, yogins, psychologists or religious leaders.

Artists are by nature risk-takers. Part of creative expression is not knowing at the outset how the painting will turn out (unless it's a paint-by-numbers piece)--in other words, risking failure. Improvisation is central to the creative process, and thus Aoki-sensei offers no formal description of one the three pillars of Shintaido (*Hikari to tawamureru*, or "playing with light"). Improvisation, with its inherent risk-taking, is one-third of the entire Shintaido system.

But while *Hikari* could be called an exercise in formlessness, what kind of form makes Shintaido instantly recognizable to the untrained eye? When we watch an experienced T'ai Chi practitioner for example, we may immediately observe balance, harmony, gentle transformations of movement and stillness: the yin-yang symbol embodied in action.



Figure 1: T'ai Chi Ch'uan sword practitioner.



Figure 2: Amida, Buddha of Infinite Light. Japan, Heian period, 12th century, cypress wood. Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston MA.

Looking at a statue of Buddha with his perfectly vertical posture and serene face, the liberation from all desires and inclinations is virtually palpable.

Now look at a picture of someone doing Shintaido:



Figure 3: (L to R): Bill Burtis, Pat Maher, Michael Bogenschutz at Shintaido North East gasshuku, Cape Cod, Massachusetts Fall 1992. D.Franklin photo.

What do you see? Of course there are many Shintaido techniques, just as there are many T'ai Chi postures and many Buddhist deities; but if we choose an iconic image that exemplifies the core of the practice, what is the basic gesture of Shintaido? Rather than a Buddhist or Taoist image, doesn't it more resemble a person running amok? Or perhaps it reminds you of statues or paintings of a Catholic saint, arms reaching in unfulfilled grasping, eyes raised in longing for the love and grace of his god.



Figure 4: Figure of a saint on Sasky Bridge, Plzen, Czech Republic. D. Franklin photo.

I believe this speaks to the essence of what is "western" in Shintaido, the stream of Shintaido culture that derives from the European philosophical, religious and artistic traditions. Tomi Nagai-Rothe raised a highly controversial point in her earlier contribution to the discussion [5], when she suggested that the approach suited to the founders of Shintaido--"young, physically fit men (and a few women) who needed to push themselves to the limit and break themselves down in order to change their consciousness"--is not necessary for a different generation of practitioners. Obviously, nobody (I hope) is trying to teach the most physically demanding or martial-arts related techniques of Shintaido to people who can't do them without injuring themselves in the process. But Nagai-Rothe's comment begs the question: why has Aoki-sensei cautioned practitioners that the *yoki-tai* (lit. "nurturing ki energy system"--the soft exercises of Shintaido) are more dangerous than the more physically demanding *kaiho-tai* exercises (the ones intended to physically push one beyond one's limits) [6]?

Within the aspect of Shintaido that is a tool for personal growth (a way to encounter "our weaknesses, our tensions, our pains, as well as joys, aspirations and mystical union with God" as Nagai-Rothe writes), isn't the essence of going beyond our limits included (albeit using less physically demanding methods)? Isn't there a risk, and therefore the need for a pedagogy of risk? The gesture of longing that Shintaido often embodies implies taking risk in the spiritual dimension: the risk, among others, that what one longs for will never be attained.

For most of human history in almost all cultures around the world, direct encounters with the divine and exploration of the invisible world have been fraught with fear, risk, and potential or actual trauma. Therefore the profession of "mystic" (in the guise of oracle, shaman, yogin, adept of Kabbalah, temple priestess, etc.) was limited to a very few who were carefully chosen, and usually extensively trained. Virtually all known versions of shamanistic initiation include disturbing

encounters with underworlds and near-death experiences; some Buddhist monks and nuns undergo special meditations in crypts or with corpses; legends tell of Kabbalists who misapplied their secret knowledge and died or went insane as a result; Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus was heralded by a bolt of lightning and three days of blindness.

The excellent clinical studies of "spiritual emergency" pioneered by Christina and Stanislav Grof (see their books *The Stormy Search for the Self* and *Spiritual Emergency: When Personal Transformation Become a Crisis*) compassionately yet objectively examine the emotional and psychological issues surrounding individuals who are undergoing spiritual transformation and mystical experiences. Often people in such situations are considered by more conventionally-trained therapists to be having mere psychotic episodes, and unfortunately are sometimes treated with inappropriate medications or hospitalized. Grof and Grof, on the other hand, recognize the validity of these experiences--and also the very real pain and psychological instability which accompanies the spiritual crisis (notwithstanding the lack of validation by the wider society).

Wouldn't a person in this situation benefit from the type of training that the martial arts side of Shintaido offers? Martial arts can give you stability. Martial arts can help you to be brave and independent. Martial arts can train you to function under extreme conditions, external or internal. Undergoing genuine personal transformation of any kind, and especially if it involves mystical experience, is a very risky business. People facing that kind of challenge need a form of martial arts training to learn how to handle the risks of spiritual emergence--but a kind of martial art based on accepting rather than rejecting, based on unity beyond conflict. A martial art where one learns to face the challenges of emergency with a spark of creative expression. Doesn't this sound like Shintaido? They--or rather, we, hopefully--need the pedagogy of risk.

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2. Aoki, Hiroyuki. *Shintaido: the Body is a Message of the Universe*. Trans. H.F. Ito and Michael Thompson. San Francisco: Shintaido of America, 1982, 1992: 22
3. Cyphert, Dale PhD. "Managing Stagefright." 2005. Retrieved 17 November 2007
<<http://www.cba.uni.edu/buscomm/Presentations/stagefright.html>>
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<<http://www.llewellyn.com/bookstore/article.php?id=376>>
5. Nagai-Rothe, Tomi. "Risky Questions." *Body Dialogue*. No. 21. 2007: 1-6.
6. Aoki, Hiroyuki. *Public talk at Shintaido 10 gasshuku*, 1986.

Eiko Dai as Cosmology

Continued from p. 1

During eiko kumite (eiko with partner(s)) we run in a figure 8 pattern, back and forth, around and around. The energy rises and falls like molecules in a confined space--heat makes them bounce and react more, cool makes them calm down.



In Shintaido we say, "*Ten (w)o kiri komi, Chi (w)o kimi harai*" Cut heaven by reaching out, cut the earth by pulling down. These two fundamentally different philosophical concepts and movements find unity in eiko dai. We cut and open heaven (that which lies beyond the visible world) as we begin eiko dai and we cut and open the earth as we reach toward the horizon. Once we open both heaven and earth, both vanish and all that remains is openness and emptiness (*ku*). This is akin to the philosophy of the Upanishads that reality is open and empty.

This idea was perfected by Harigaya Sekiun of the Shinkage-ryu in Japan, in "*ai-nuke*"--two ego-less warriors coming to a complete understanding of one another and their place in the universe. At that point, fighting is unnecessary because the imbalances that lead to competition do not exist. This is the same today when two highly qualified and spiritually developed musicians or craftspeople meet one another--there is complete acceptance and understanding, without any need for comparison.

Eiko dai is a manifestation of unification of self and nature--the end of the natural progression which begins with unification of mind and body, self and other, self and nature. For some, the distinction between nature and heaven isn't so large--connecting to something larger than themselves feels like Big Nature or the earth. But in my life, I have felt supported by generative, healing forces that I attribute to Nature. And beyond that, I sense that Nature is supported by another healing force that you could call Universal Energy or The Tao or God. This is another level of magnitude beyond Nature and observable phenomenon. And this is what we are trying to reach toward through Eiko dai.

When I was in the hospital after my stroke, and not sure if I would live, I practiced eiko dai in my hospital bed. I am grateful to still be alive and equally grateful that I have been able to study Eiko dai so I will be prepared when the moment comes.

Stranger in a Strange Dojo

by Roger Solomon

So often when we meet newcomers to Shintaido, we're told that they have come from another discipline such as Karate, Aikido, etc. I had the opportunity to come from the other direction last summer; it was enlightening, and served to reaffirm why I enjoy Shintaido as much as I do.

Prior to beginning my Shintaido practice, I had no other martial arts experience, aside from watching an occasional Bruce Lee movie. But at the end of the school year last June, coupons appeared in the staff dining room offering a free month of martial arts classes. I thought this would be a good way to get some free exercise and experience a different style, so I picked one up and went to the dojo/fitness center to inquire. The receptionist was very pleasant: "Everybody gets a free uniform (*that's okay, I've got my own gi*) and you're entitled to two classes a week (*so that's eight classes*), but first you need an introductory lesson with the sensei, Mr. B. (*A private lesson? Sounds okay.*) Come in next Monday at six."

Now I'd seen Mr. B. before because he'd come to our school to give motivational talks to the kids. I knew he had a background in psychology and counseling, and I'd seen his "show team" at local events: lots of high kicks, acrobatics, etc. Not what martial arts is all about, but I guess it's exposure for his school and he is a businessman. But I figured given his experience in psychology and Karate, working with both the head and the body, he must emphasize personal development through martial arts, just what its focus should be. Nonetheless, I approached my appointment with some trepidation.

Introductory lesson: Mr. B. came over and introduced himself along with his business manager, Ms. D. (also a black belt). "What have you studied?" I attempted to give an explanation of Shintaido with the usual success (*i.e. none. Thich Nhat Hanh says, "Things cannot be described by concepts and words. They can only be encountered by direct experience," but I figured I wouldn't toss that at them*). We went into his office where he explained how he came to study Karate. "I began with Kyokushin style (*hadn't I recently read that was considered one of the hardest and most lethal techniques--uh-oh.*) and have since studied Judo, Aikido, and Ninjutsu to develop our own system (*okay, an eclectic approach. I can appreciate that*). We emphasize showing respect--we call each other Mr. or Ms.--and having fun (*great. I've experienced both*).

"What's the first thing you should use to stop an attack? Your voice, right? Saying something like 'Leave me alone.' If that doesn't work, take a stance that shows you're ready to respond. If that doesn't work, be prepared for defense (*wait a second; I remember Ito-Sensei being asked what to do if you were attacked by a mugger: 'Run away screaming!'*). There was, of course, much more than this; he talks really fast.

"All right, let's see what you know." High block, low block, punch, front kick, nothing I wasn't familiar with. "Okay," he said, "you can jump right into the adult beginner class (white,

Continued on following page

Stranger in a Strange Dojo

continued from page 7

blue, and green belts) tomorrow." *Jump right in--okee-doke....*

First class: Instructions and responses sound like boot camp. "Ready position! (*Just try to follow along...*) Tsuki through your partner! (*Or were they called opponents? And was this to demonstrate power rather than to pierce and open the person as I've been doing for so long?*) Okay! Everybody down for push-ups!" (*PUSH-UPS!?! I didn't sign on for this! Where are the warm-ups?*)

"YES MA'AM!" (*Where is the collegiality I'm so used to?*)

A group of new people, including me, breaks off with Mr. M. to practice Taikyokusho Kata (*Good! I've been trying to remember this one!*), but very briefly. No breakdown into parts, just run through- again- again- again (*not exactly the refresher course I had in mind*).

There's something special each week-this week, it's board breaking (oh great-I get to fracture my hand the first day). As I stroll across the dojo with Mr. M., smiling, asks, "Ever broken a board before?"

"Only with an axe." A paraphrase of Muhammad Ali jumps to mind: I got nothin' against any boards.

Mr. B. explains that most of us will use a strike with the heel of the palm rather than a punch (*ah-fractured carpals rather than metacarpals; that makes me feel much better*).

Everybody gets a practice hit with a hard plastic breakaway board; nearly everybody breaks it on the first try. My turn comes: focus...go through... KRAK! Both pieces go flying out of the instructor's hands, one nearly taking his nose off. "You've got some power," he laughs as he picks up the pieces.

Now comes the real thing-white pine, 10" x 6" x 1".

This should be easy, one part of me thinks.

Don't get cocky, replies the other.

Okay, here goes-"HAA!"-Thunk!-Nothing.

"Try again." Breathe-focus-"HAA!"-KRAK!

"Good job. Take the pieces home to show the family." I leave with my board, a tingling palm, and uncertainty about the next classes. This isn't what I was hoping for.

Second class: As luck would have it, this is the class that they have decided to have outside in a local park, presumably as a way to let people know about the school, even though it's been in town for at least 15 years. But family members were invited to observe, so my wife and kids are here to watch.

We start with more "warm-ups" as before, nothing gentle as I'm used to. Then everyone, probably at least 50 students of all ages, takes a jog around the park. Although we're told not to race, there's a lot of competitiveness, especially among the kids. I fall in toward the rear with a woman about my age. She knows I'm new and asks, "How do you like things so far?"

"It gets a lot more aerobic a lot more quickly than I'm used to."

We break into three groups. My group works with foam swords. "Each of you wants to score a hit on your partner, but you have to defend as well." I get paired with a kid, probably about 12 years old (*okay, I should be able to handle this*). He's pretty good, but I still score more often than he does (*oh yeah, go me, I'm better than a sixth grader!*).

The next exercise uses a pair of Escrima sticks: tap high, tap low with your partner, first slowly then with increasing speed. I do okay with this, messing up the rhythm and nailing my partner's shins only 4 or 5 times. Not surprisingly, the more I think about what I'm doing, the more likely I am to mess up.

The final exercise of the night has us breaking into groups of three or four with an instructor. "You need to try and tag the sempai without getting tagged yourself. Every time you get hit, you give us 20 push-ups." It's a little chaotic, and I'm able to land a couple of hits, but get hit a few times myself. When we're done, Mr. B. yells, "Okay, everybody down for push-ups!" (*What is it with these people and push-ups?*)

The evening closes with everyone standing in lines, yelling the school motto back to Mr. B. I can't remember what it was; something about being strong and respectful, and never using your skills in anger. Then I gather up my family and go home for supper.

I never finished out my free month. One of the best aspects I've found about Shintaido is the welcome that everyone gets and the fact that more experienced practitioners are always willing to show new people the steps. This was not the case here.

Admittedly, Mr. B. is running a business and needs to pay his bills; maybe that was the feeling I got, that he was teaching a *jutsu* (technique) and not a *do* (a path or way). Perhaps if I had struck around, it might have become more of a *do*.

But then again, Ito-sensei never asked me for a push-up.

Change in SoA Examiner Qualifications

The National Technical Council (NTC) has revised the qualifications necessary to be an examiner for Shintaido of America exams. Here are the new qualifications:

<u>SUBJECTS</u>	<u>RANK CHALLENGED</u>	<u>NECESSARY EXAMINERS</u>
OPENHAND	Instructor	Two General Instructors
	Graduate	Two Senior Instructors
	Assistant	Two Instructors
	Advanced Student	Two Instructors
BOJUTSU	2nd Dan	Two 4th Dan holders
	1st Dan	Two 3rd Dan holders
	1 kyu & below	Two 2nd Dan holders
KARATE	2nd Dan	Two 4th Dan holders
	1st Dan	Two 3rd Dan holders
	1 kyu & below	Two 2nd Dan holders



Recent Shintaido Examinations

Bojutsu

Byron Russell	Shodan
Mike Sheets	Shodan
Naomi Caspe	5 kyu
Nancy Mardas	8 kyu
Andre Allard	10 kyu

Shintaido

Marta Rodriguez	Advanced Student
Linda Foss	Advanced Student

Congratulations to all examinees!

SHOOTING STARS

Annelie Wilde's Talk
at the Russ Staples Ceremony
October 6, 2007

Twenty-one years ago, Russ Staples, a wholehearted practitioner of Shintaido, died in a car accident. His grieving family recognized how deep his connection was to his practice. They asked that memorial contributions be made to Shintaido of New England (now Shintaido Northeast). These contributions were set aside in a trust until a meaningful way to use the funds could be conceived and implemented. Meanwhile, Shintaido scholarships were created and offered from the interest earned by the trust.

In 2007, a gazebo to honor Russ was completed at Shintaido Farm in Deerfield, Massachusetts. The gazebo stands in a meditative spot on a hillside overlooking a wooded valley. Tall trees offer shade, privacy and beauty. There is an engraved stone that commemorates Russ.

On Saturday, October 6, 2007, a warm fall day, the memorial came to life. Russ's family arrived from distant places, shared lunch and gathered with gasshuku (a Shintaido retreat) participants to meet at the gazebo. The following is the speech given during the ceremony by long-time Shintaido practitioner Annelie Wilde. [Editors.]

1986 was the year of Shintaido Ten, the beginning of my married life with Kesh and the end of Russell Staples' life.

Shintaido Ten was an international gasshuku hosted by the Cambridge and Worcester groups to celebrate ten years of Shintaido practice in the US. With participants from Japan, England and France and Aoki sensei as director, it was a big event requiring lots of planning and preparation. My job was to collect the money and pay the bills. That is how I became the treasurer for Shintaido of New England (SNE) in August of 1986.

It was in my capacity as treasurer that Suzanne Staples phoned me one glorious Saturday morning in October to tell me that her husband, Russ, had been killed the previous night in a car accident. She wanted an address for memorial donations to be made in his name. Thus was born the Russ fund.

That Saturday was moving day for me. The next weekend I was getting married to Kesh Narayan. Joe Zawielski had come over to help load up stuff onto Kesh's truck. Faith and Eric Ingulsrud would join us later. At least we could share our grief and commiserate with each other. We had all known Russ as an enthusiastic Shintaido practitioner. He seemed to "get Shintaido" immediately on a spiritual and emotional level as well as the physical practice. With a warm smile and a quiet presence he was the kind of person that we were always glad to see show up for keiko. He too, had been part of the group that worked to produce Shintaido Ten. In

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continued from p. 9

addition, he and his wife Suzanne had hosted our group at his mother's home on the Cape. We had mini gasshukus and enjoyed the beach and a great green field just perfect for break out *Eiko* ("glory", a fundamental form of Shintaido) practice. Jacqueline (Russ's mother) and Suzanne planned and cooked meals and made us very welcome.

Although it has taken 21 years to spend the money donated in Russ's name, that does not mean Russ was forgotten. Quite the opposite in fact. Personally I remember him and Suzanne each year when I celebrate my own wedding anniversary. However, in 1986 SNE was less than 5 years old. We barely knew how to run a gasshuku let alone administer a memorial fund. One thing we did know and that was the Russ fund was a sacred trust, to be used carefully and thoughtfully and not to bail ourselves out if a gasshuku went into the red. So the monies were always kept in a separate account and invested conservatively. At some point the SNE board decided that it was in keeping with the spirit of the Russ fund to use it as a source of scholarship money. Students who wanted to attend a gasshuku, instructors who wanted to travel for advanced training were encouraged to apply if money was an obstacle. At least once or twice a year discussion centered around who should benefit from a scholarship and how that would best serve the organization's goals. In this way Russ's Shintaido practice continued among us.

In 2004 Stephen Billias and Bela Breslau moved to Massachusetts and created the Shintaido Farm. They invested their money, their energy and their hearts to create a space that would always be available for Shintaido practice. In addition to their home, they built an indoor dojo and set aside land to be maintained as an outdoor keiko field. They started regular classes, hosted gasshukus and created a community of Shintaido teachers and students. What better place to invest the remainder of the Russ Fund and create a more tangible memorial? Shintaido funds had long since passed from my hands. Yet as financial responsibility was handed off from one treasurer to the next each had taken it upon themselves to preserve the fund. The SNE board was consulted as to the advisability of offering the monies to Shintaido farm and a proposal was requested.



Ultimately the decision was made to create a meditation space in the form of a gazebo in an attractive location. I like to think Russ would approve or perhaps more likely be amused. When the pressures of work got to him, he told us, he took himself off to the men's room and performed Tenshingoso, an image that always amused me.



Be that as it may, memorials are for the living so that we may take a moment to reflect and be grateful. If we knew Russ personally, then we can remember the pleasure of his company, the gift of his life. If we didn't then we can appreciate that Shintaido had great significance for Russ and meditate on our own practice. Although Shintaido is wide and deep it can be distilled down to two forms; Tenshingoso and Eiko. Practice these two forms as a metaphor for your own life, your place in the world.



Ito said that Tenshingoso is circular but that Eiko is linear, without end. In that case, happy Eiko Russ-----Gambatte!

Shintaido Farm News

Reserve some time for visiting and studying at the Shintaido Farm in beautiful Deerfield, Massachusetts.

Private Lessons

- * Available with Bela Breslau, Stephen Billias, or Margaret Guay (\$35.00 per lesson)
- * By Special Request lessons available with Master Instructor Michael Thompson (\$50.00/lesson)
- * Other costs include: \$30/night to sleep in the dojo, \$10/meal

We are also looking for investors. There are development possibilities here at the Shintaido Farm and the possibility of building another house! Please call Stephen or Bela at 413.773.1926.

VIDEOS

Kenko Taiso II & III: (\$20)

Demonstrates a series of more advanced health exercises and stretches that two people can do together, and introduction to group warm-up movements. Also includes sections on self-massage and seiza meditation with the diamond mudra. Excellent for instructors or group leaders who are leading group warm-up exercises.

Golf-Do (\$20)

Master Shintaido Instructor H.F. Ito teaches the Way of Golf, exercises designed to help golfers: (1) stretch and limber up; (2) relax; (3) focus and concentrate; and (4) enjoy. Using a golf club instead of the traditional six-foot oak staff, Ito demonstrates how to stretch, relax the body, and prepare the mind for a pleasurable round of golf. Golf-Do provides insights into the unification of mind and body that produces the best of golf.

Life Burn (\$20)

Document of the live painting / Shintaido / music performance collaborations at the Theater Yugen in San Francisco in August 1992. Featuring painting by Kazu Yanagi; music by Henry Kaiser and others; and Shintaido movement led by H.F. Ito.

Roots of Shintaido (\$20)

Footage from the 2001 West Coast winter retreat in Juarez Springs New Mexico. Two lectures by Master Instructor H. F. Ito on the history, lineage, and philosophy of Shintaido in relation to Japanese karate and sword traditions, footage showing the relation of fundamental open-hand techniques to closed-fist techniques, and bokuto movements 1-9.

Set of all 4 videos above: \$70

DVDS

Kata and Kumite (\$15)

H.F. Ito gives instruction for kaiho-kei (opening and challenging) exercises with Michael Thompson and Robert Breant. Includes: kaiho-kei group practice, Jojutsu kata (hi no kata, kaze no kata, sho-dan, nidan), Jojutsu kata (taishi, hojo), karate kata (sanchin, tensho), kumibo (bo vs. bo) arrangements, kumitachi (sword vs. sword).

Kenko Taiso Instruction (\$20)

Produced by On-Site Enterprises, presents the classic Shintaido *kenko-taiso* warm-up sequence with detailed explanation. The 15-minute warm-up sequence is an easy-to-follow routine that is excellent for those who are relatively new to body movement.

Taimyo/Tenshingoso (15)

Master Instructor Masashi Minagawa performs Taimyo Kata, then leads a group of students through Tenshingoso. This beautiful DVD, set in an English park, provides a step by step illustration of the Taimyo Kata form, as well as basic Tenshingoso technique.

Self Care Program for Hospice Caregivers (\$15)

Master Instructor H.F. Ito leads hospice caregivers in a Shintaido program designed to relieve the stress of their emotionally demanding jobs. Master Ito uses the Shintaido techniques of Kenko Taiso, Wakame, and Tenshingoso to teach caregivers how to relax

BOOKS

Cutting the Blue Sky

various authors (\$20)

An anthology of the best articles from the Shintaido of America newsletter over the past 25 years. There are 32 articles by students and instructors, 33 photos, 162 pages, grouped by topics: the roots of Shintaido, cultural clashes, spiritual development, using Shintaido in the world, and musings on timing, facing death, the invisible world of the 4th dimension, and passive resistance.

Untying Knots: a Shintaido Chronicle

by Michael Thompson (\$20 / 15*)

This autobiographical memoir by one of the co-founders of Shintaido of America tells of the author's cross-cultural adventures in France, Japan, and California in the course of his 25-year Shintaido career.

Shintaido: the Body is a Message of the Universe

by Hiroyuki Aoki (\$20 / \$15*)

For years this textbook has served as a gateway and guidebook to the practice of Shintaido. Includes sections on the history and philosophy as well as detailed explanations of technique. 120 pages, illustrated with photos. This second printing features more information about the ten Shintaido meditation positions.

MINI-BOOKS

Tenshingoso and Eiko

by Hiroyuki Aoki (\$10)

This booklet is for Shintaido practitioners what the Diamond Sutra is for Buddhists: a concise yet thorough description of the basis of practice. *Tenshingoso* and *Eiko* are two of the fundamental movements of Shintaido, which embody philosophies and prescriptions for human growth.

The Zero Point of Consciousness and the World of Ki (\$5)

In this interview Mr. Aoki describes his experience of reaching the "space of *mu*" (nothingness). He also discusses his unique understanding of *ki* energy (life force).

Origins, a History of Shintaido

by Shiko Hokari (\$7)

One of the founding members of Shintaido relates the stories of Rakutenkai (the group that developed Shintaido), and of Aoki-sensei's early days.

Improvisation and the Body (\$3.50)

Japanese jazz musician Toshinori Kondo discusses Shintaido, performance, and music. Illustrates how one artist benefitted from Shintaido by going beyond his limits.

Student Handbook

by Faith Ingulsrud (\$3)

Written by an American Shintaidoist who grew up in Japan. Includes a glossary and description of the basic structure of a Shintaido practice.

Set of all five Mini-books above: \$25

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	Shintaido Textbook: the Body is a Message of the Universe	\$20.00/ \$15.00*

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	Student Handbook	\$3.00
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BODY

Dialogue

Journal of the U.S. Shintaido Movement

Issue No. 22, 2008



Photo by Sarah Prince

新
体
道

"Shintaido" means "new body way." It is an art form, a health exercise and meditation through movement developed in Japan in the 1960s. Shintaido grows out of the roots of ancient martial arts and meditation traditions, but the aim is to help modern people rediscover the original wisdom known by the body and realized through movement.

www.shintaido.org