



BODY Dialogue

A Shintaido Tree Grows in Brooklyn

By Jennifer S. Wilkov

Here in New York, it has been a challenge to raise the awareness of Shintaido unless someone is already familiar with it. When I talk about this martial art and body movement, people always ask: "Where is your dojo?" When I respond that it is Central Park, Prospect Park, or outdoors, they're skeptical and tend not to continue with their interest and pretty much say: "Fuhgeddaboutit!"

I have been looking for ways to reach new practitioners in New York City, a city filled with skeptics as well as those always on the lookout for new martial arts and body movements.

I knew I had to find a way to connect the dots between Shintaido being practiced outside – in a natural dojo – and making it meet the assumptions folks would have in a city filled with martial arts dojos.

Enter the Destination Backcountry Adventures company, based in Brooklyn.

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The Zen Circle

Excerpted from talks by Seung Sahn Sunim, published in *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha*, and *The Compass of Zen*. Text supplied by Chris Ikeda-Nash, who comments: "This has been of interest to me in the ways that it relates to Shintaido practice, particularly the areas of 270 and 360 degrees on the circle."

The words of Seung Sahn Sunim:

Sometimes, I explain Zen practice by means of a circle. The circle has five points: 0 degrees, 90 degrees,

180 degrees, 270 degrees and 360 degrees. Three hundred sixty degrees is the same point as 0 degrees.

The circle begins in the area from 0 degrees to 90 degrees.

This is the area of thinking and attachment. Thinking is desire, and all desire is suffering. This is also attachment to the realm of name and form. Because of that we make opposites: good and bad, this and that, beautiful and ugly, like and dislike, mine and yours, I like this: I don't like that.

This body has many desires, anger and ignorance. I try to get happiness and avoid all suffering. So here life is suffering, and suffering is life. That is 0 degrees.

Proceeding along the circle past 90 degrees is the area of Karma "I". Before this point, there is attachment to name and form. Here there is attachment to thinking. My thinking makes "I". Everybody's thinking makes their "I". Before you were born, you were zero. Now you are one. In the future you will die and become zero again. So zero equals one, and one equals zero. At this point on the circle, all things are the same, because they are the same substance. All things have name and form, but their names and forms come from emptiness and will return to emptiness. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. This is still just intellectual thinking.

At 180 degrees, there is no thinking at all. I think, therefore I am. But if I am not thinking, what? This is the experience of true emptiness, where "I" completely disappears. It is the realm of Nothing I. All substance completely becomes one. No form, no emptiness.

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Shintaido Bojutsu

Creative writing assignment

from David Franklin

What role does the boh play in your life? Imagine your boh as a character in a play or film. What is he/she/it like, what is its/his/her personality? Importantly, you are also a character in this drama of course. Describe the relationship between you and your boh.

Disclaimer / crowdsourcing research project: I believe that doing this assignment can improve / develop your bojutsu keiko in amazing ways. But I don't really know. Let's find out together! Want to participate in a little crowd-sourced research project?

Do the writing assignment above, and maintain some kind of regular bojutsu hitori-geiko (individual practice) regimen at least 3 times per week (even if it's a an easy one like just stretching with the boh in your living room that's fine). Then keep notes about your bojutsu keiko, written in whatever form you like, and whatever subjective impressions or objective observations you want to record. You could shoot short videos with a smartphone, take photos, draw pictures or diagrams, write text, whatever. Share your impressions / photos / video / media and discuss them on your Facebook page, or if you have a Twitter account, tweet them out.



DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

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Please submit articles, poems, pictures to the editor at newsletter@Shintaido.org. Deadline for submissions is September 15, 2014.

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An Artifact

General Instructor Jim Sterling sent in this artifact from some long-ago gasshuku. It appears to be two translations of the same piece of text from the bible. Points to anyone who remembers the context, and its meaning in Shintaido.

For I reckon that sufferings we now endure bear no comparison with the splendor, as yet unrevealed, which is in store for us. For the created universe waits with eager expectation for God's sons to be revealed. It was made the victim of frustration, not by its own choice, but because of him who made it so; yet always there was hope, because the universe itself is to be freed from the shackles of mortality and enter upon the liberty and splendor of the children of God.

<Romans 8:18-21>

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God.

<Romans 8:18-21>

われ思うに、今の時の苦しみは、われらの上に顕われんとする栄光にくらぶるに足らず。それ造られたる者は切に慕いて神の子たちの現れんことを待つ。造られたるものの虚無（虚しき）に服せしは、己が願いによるにあらず、服せしめ給いし者によるなり。然れどなお造られたる者にも滅びの僕たる状（さま）より解かれて、神の子たちの栄光の自由に入る望みは存れり（のこれり）。

<文語体による聖書／ロマ書 8：18－21>

今の時のいろいろな苦しみは、将来私たちに啓示されようとしている栄光に比べれば、取るに足りないものと私は考えます。被造物も、切実な思いで神の子どもたちの現われを待ち望んでいるのです。それは、被造物が虚無に服したのが自分の意志ではなく、服従させた方によるのであって、望みがあるからです。被造物自体も、滅びの束縛から解放され、神の子どもたちの栄光の自由の中に入れられます。

<新改訳聖書／ローマ人たちへの手紙 8：18－21>

Zen Circle

Continued from p.1

Some people would say this is the Absolute. But if you say "Absolute" that's no longer the Absolute. That is because this point is before thinking, and before thinking, there are no words and no speech. Opening your mouth is already a big mistake! Then how do you express this point? ... Only action expresses this point, because this point is universal substance. It cannot be shown with speech or words. So at this point there are no mountains, no rivers, no God, no Buddha, nothing at all. There is only ... [Hits the table with his stick] ..

... Hitting at this point is a way of demonstrating complete Nothing I, that point of complete emptiness that cannot be explained with speech or words. That is 180 degrees.

If you keep this point for some time- only Nothing I, a complete stillness mind- and do not become attached to it, then you get universal energy. You reach the realm of magic and miracles. This is 270 degrees, or Freedom I. Here there is complete freedom, with no hindrance in space and time. This is also called live thinking.

Some kinds of Taoist and yoga practices cultivate this point, showing you how to strongly connect with universal energy and get some special powers. Actually, the energy that enables people to do such miracles and special actions is not special at all. It is natural energy. We can see it functioning in different forms in many everyday situations, but we're so used to seeing it that we don't call it special. You have all heard stories of yogis and martial arts masters who can fly through the air, or move or bend hard objects. This is just the result of some people being able to strongly control and manipulate this basic energy that is all things.

If you stay at 180, you become attached to emptiness, if you stay at 270, you become attached to freedom. It is wonderful to be free. But when you become attached to freedom, you will always have a problem, and you will make a problem for others. You must pass this point.

At 360 degrees, all things are just as they are; the truth is just like this. "Like this" means that there is no attachment to anything. This point is exactly the same as the zero point: we arrive where we began, where we have always been. The difference is that 0 degrees is attachment thinking while 360 degrees is no-attachment thinking. There is no subject and no object. Inside and outside completely become one. When you see the sky, you become the sky. You are infinite in time and space. We sometimes call this moment life. In moment there is always correct situation, correct relationship, and correct function.

For example, if you drive a car with attachment thinking, your mind will be somewhere else and you will go through the red light. Nonattachment thinking means that your mind is clear all the time. When you drive, you aren't thinking: you are just driving. So the truth is just like this. Red light means stop; green light means go. It is intuitive action. Intuitive action means acting without any desire or attachment.

My mind is a clear mirror, reflecting everything just as it is.

Zen is reaching 360 degrees. When you reach 360, all degrees on the circle disappear. The circle is only a teaching device, it does not really exist. We use it to simplify thinking and to test a student's understanding.



photo by Stephen Billias

The Zen Circle

Principles:

義理

True emptiness
Nothing I
attachment to emptiness

真空

180

(空我)

No form, no emptiness
 $1000 \times 0 = 0$
 $1 \times 0 = 0$

Absolute existence
Freedom I
attachment to freedom
Freedom form,
freedom emptiness
 $3 \times 3 = 9$
 $1000 \times 100 = 1000 \times 9$

妙有
(有我)

270

Existence and nonexistence
Karma I
attachment to thinking
Form is emptiness,
emptiness is form
 $0 = 1, 1 = 0$

有無
(業我)

90

The common dust (clinging)
Small I
attachment to name and form
 $1 + 2 = 3$

俗塵 (小我)

0

360

如如

The Absolute
Big I
nonattachment thinking
just like this
 $3 \times 3 = 9$

(大我)

Form is form, emptiness is emptiness

Pilgrim

by David Whyte

Sometimes, you need the ocean light,
and colors you've never seen before
painted through an evening sky.

Sometimes you need your God
to be a simple invitation,
not a telling word of wisdom.

Sometimes you need only the first shyness
that comes from being shown things
far beyond your understanding,

so that you can fly and become free
by being still and by being still here.



photo by David Sirgany

Tenshin Philosophy

by Toshimitsu Ishii

(The follow is an excerpt from an email exchange among International Shintaido College Technical Committee (ISC-TC) members about the meaning of Tenshin. These are Ishii's thoughts that he shared with ISC-TC. Reprinted by permission of the author.)

I believe that *Tenshin* is not a new word, but has been used in Shintaido for a long time.

Tenshin is 天真.

天 means sky, cosmic, universe, heaven, etc.

真 means reality, truth, etc.

By practicing Shintaido we become aware of what is the origin of the truth of the cosmos and what is the real self and that both are the same.

The origin of the truth of the cosmos is called tenshin, daruma, tao, mu, ku, brahman, sophia, hagiopneuma, etc., in the different cultures and languages of the world.

Such energy started gathering as gas, dust, etc., then, stars were born, galaxies were born, the earth was formed, nature, plants, animals, human, ... therefore everything is the same.

We shall know the above through Keiko by opening our body and mind, making our body and mind natural, removing impurity, etc. Then, we should give thanks for our life from the above, brush up ourselves, do things naturally.

Then, we can use this energy, power, and potential which we have. We can use the strong energy for other people and in society. We can harmonize and integrate each other, with everything, even if we are in difficulty and beyond life and in a killing situation.

We are learning the above through Eiko, Tenshingoso, Wakame, Karate, Bojutsu, Kenjutsu, etc.

Eiko is the primary Keiko to lead us the above philosophy! Tenshingoso also strongly leads us to the same place. Tenshingoso means five expressions of Tenshin.

Aoki sensei has taught us the above for a long time. He has given his whole life to this teaching.

Shintaido Tree in Brooklyn *Continued from p.1*

When I spoke with them about Shintaido in 2012, they were intrigued. The company was about to introduce a new offering of holistic adventures. They began with day-long yoga adventures in 2013 and then added pilates. In late 2013, we connected again to discuss adding Shintaido as a new offering in their holistic adventures catalog.

This year we are introducing Shintaido into their summer offerings: <http://destinationbackcountryadventures.com/collections/shintaido>

It's really a great synergy! They bring the students to the mountain venue where we can use our voices at great volume outside the city and enjoy the beauty of the mountain scenery as I take them through the basics of kenko taiso, Eiko Dai and some basics of Tenshingoso.

The day curriculum is a simple one: kenko taiso followed by a keiko filled with ahs and ohs, a little shoko, and then Eiko Dai. Then lunch! A second keiko in the afternoon includes kenko taiso and then the basics of Tenshingoso. This keiko is followed by an optional swim and berry picking before heading back to the chaos and noise of New York City.

The Destination Backcountry Adventures company pushes the holistic adventures out to their community. This builds leads and opportunities for Shintaido to seed a practicing community and introduce keikos in Central Park and Prospect Park (in Brooklyn) where these natural dojos make more sense.

As we continue to grow and expand the practice of Shintaido to new practitioners, it's a good idea for us to overcome the resistance people have to Shintaido. In New York City – a city of skeptics, overcoming the outdoor dojo issue was my greatest challenge. I have found a means to the end and a pathway to cultivate a new community here.

If you'd like to join us in New York for an adventure, please use this link:

<http://destinationbackcountryadventures.com/collections/shintaido>.

An even more exciting adventure will be the flash mob we're planning in Grand Central Station later this summer with the Shintaido Northeast group. If you're going to be in the New York City area in August, please let me know so we can keep you posted on the date.



Image from Wiki commons

Quebec Shintaido Workshop

by Carole Brouillette

On the weekend of April 5 and 6, 2014, Quebec Shintaido Doshokai held a workshop with invited instructor Master H. F. Ito.

It was a pleasure to receive teaching from Ito sensei. There is always too much time between his visits to Quebec! Also, we had the pleasure of international attendees to this workshop: Richard and Sabrina from Nantes, France

Some of us around Quebec are preparing for our Shintaido Graduate exam. Ito sensei organized his teaching around this curriculum, with consideration for all levels of attendees. Everybody had a chance to progress; the teaching was gradual and adapted to the class.



We did musubidachi stepping, free hand cutting in various directions, kirioroshi kumite, bokutoh cutting also in various directions, and kumite with bokutoh.

Ito sensei's way of teaching helped us become very conscious of the space around us. He invited us to stay aware of the position of the cutting edge of the bokutoh; earthwards, forward, skyward, backwards... awareness of the past, the present, the future.

Also, we became conscious of gravity, using no effort with the arms when cutting, either free hand or with bokutoh, only gravity acting naturally and allowing us to deeply feel connection with our partner.

In November 2014, on the week end of the 8th and 9th, we will have a Fall gasshuku of Quebec Shintaido Doshokai. Stay tuned for more information about this next great event in Quebec.

Hope to see you there and share kumite!!

BODY

Dialogue



photo by Jim Sterling



photo by Stephen Billias

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.