

INTERNATIONAL EDITION

This is an extra edition of the Newsletter brought out to commemorate the recent international event at Sonoma, California. There is a wealth of information in here, and it's well worthwhile ploughing through it, even if it does seem heavy going at times!

There are also a lot of letters about the question "How do you describe Shintaido?" posed in the last edition.

Please note the deadline for the next edition has now been postponed so that issue 15 will appear in December. We don't want you to have too much of a good thing!

Charles Burns

The SF

"Autumn Intensive"

Workshop

25th-27th October 1996

Bishopton Community Dance Centre, Bristol

Contact Marcus Grant

Tel: 0117 924 1124

NOTICE OF AGM

The Shintaido Foundation Annual General Meeting 1996 will take place in Bristol on the 26th of October.

This will be the Saturday evening of the Autumn Workshop. The meeting will be a new format AGM lasting only half an hour and will be followed by a regular meeting of the Instructors Council. The AGM will cover the basic reports from all officers and the budget. If you have an additional item that you think should be on the agenda please contact Marcus Grant (chair of the board of directors) before October 12th.

The Local Group reports will be part of the Instructor Councils meeting. Could all local groups send a representative to give a report to the meeting or a written report to Simon Neale (chair of the Instructors Council) in case of absence.

BOD Report

BOD (Marcus, Sarah & Peter) met in Peter's garden on 14th July, a big improvement on Chievely Service Station.

There were three main topics: future courses, creating a database, and the news of the recent international meetings in California. In addition, Marcus previewed the new stationary and address labels. They look very smart.

Future courses

In addition to the standard program, we considered the long-standing question of finding an alternative site for the daienshu, in view of the frequent objections to the usual long journey and the spartan conditions on the Gower.

A suggested site near Sheffield has turned out to be too expensive. We decided to approach Swanage Youth Hostel with a view to reviving this as a daienshu site for 1997; but if it proves not possible, we do believe that Llanmadoc should now have hot showers!

Thinking ahead beyond next year, we began to consider options for a pan-European event of some kind in 1988, to coincide with a TC meeting in France, and to lobby for the Millennium gasshuku in Japan (May 2000) to be run as cheaply as possible, so that we can afford to get there!

Database

We have long known that our database of supporters and contact addresses is not efficient and is now out-of-date. We will construct a new database including details of people attending courses (assuming they don't mind this information being kept), and other details (including perhaps health details that might be relevant for goreisha to know).

It is hoped that this more detailed information will improve our ability to run popular and useful events, and to inform people of the kind of events that they may wish to attend.

A printout of the record will be sent out with supportership renewal forms, to allow people to monitor/update their records. the form will also provide an opportunity for people to feedback any comments to BOD on any issue.

California

We discussed many aspects of the recent meetings in California, which are reported elsewhere in the newsletter. In general though, it was clear that many concerns that BOD expressed about the running of ISF were being addressed, and it was agreed that we should collect outstanding instructor fees as soon as possible.

If you have any items you would like to have discussed at future BOD meetings. please contact one of us.

Peter Furtado

THE INTERNATIONAL EVENT

THE GASSHUKU REPORT

"Tony can do the technical report, and I'll have to do the ISF report", said Ula. "That leaves Simon to do the gasshuku report: you know, what it was actually like there; what we did."

(Clever woman, Ula. I suppose that's partly why they made her a Senior Instructor...)

The possibility of a comprehensive review of this gasshuku was always fairly small. Sixth International combined with Shintaido of America's 20th. anniversary. Jet lagged travel to a strange new city. New and half-remembered faces. Lots of new technical Shintaido. Up to three parallel keiko. Heat. Exam stress.

However, the theme of this gasshuku was "Across Space & Time", and this holds a clue to the powerful sense of continuity and connection underneath all the disparate elements. San Francisco was therefore a significant setting: a city so familiar from films and TV that even newcomers experience a powerful sense of *deja vu*.

The U.K. contingent joined in the meeting and re-meeting ("Weren't you at Forum/Massachusetts/Aoki '90?") until we were all thoroughly blended by Jim Sterling's welcoming keiko.

Aoki sensei taught keikos two and three. Instructors were given a powerful new kata, an exercise in sales and showmanship, and a great deal to talk about later. Keiko number four took place after exams; for me, this one involved evening eiko under Ooi sensei's *gorei*.

Numbers five and six were, for instructors, primarily technical bo keiko. (Endorphin-fired translation of Japanese prologue allocating people to various groups: "Least spiritual people, go and do bo with Ito!")

Aoki sensei rounded off with a big plenary keiko which combined more new technical stuff with a massive "feelgood" build-up that unified us all with the earth, the sky, and some other places that they probably only have in California!

In between, there were various workshops and meetings, and a "Shintaido of America" celebratory party. We discussed how to build groups ("superkata"). We audited lectures on Feldenkrais method, children's keiko (ask Ula if you can see her giraffe's ears), and Pierre sensei's insights into phenomenological indexicality as applied to satori (no, really!). I called in late to a calligraphy workshop.

Despite the informality (people talking, or sleeping, and children quietly playing) there was an amazing atmosphere there: very like a chapel in a beautiful English cathedral, which retains a sense of the numinous despite the presence of tourists.

The atmosphere during the exams (there were two large sets) was even more special. The ambitions of individual examinees, receptivity to new keiko partners, and the excitement of spectacle all played their part in creating something, but were also completely transcended.

The theme of this gasshuku - Across Space & Time - does not just mean that Shintaido people jet around the world in order to meet up repeatedly. The art they create is across space and time because it is also beyond them.

Simon Neale

THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING Sonoma, California, July 1996

The Technical Committee (TC) of the International Shintaido Federation (ISF) is a group of senior, experienced instructors, appointed by Aoki sensei, and directed by him in continually monitoring and developing the Shintaido curriculum. The TC get together every two years to review technical and other matters relating to the practice of Shintaido in the international community.

A number of decisions were taken this year which will have varying degrees of effect on our practice in this country. Principle among these is the development of a fairly radically restructured Bo program.

Over the last several years Ito sensei and Minagawa sensei have been working on a new series of kumibo sequences. In addition to this Aoki sensei has introduced to us a Bo program that he has been working on for a period of almost twenty years. Both these programs of study are to be incorporated into a revised and expanded Bo syllabus. This new syllabus will be phased in over the next two years.

In addition to these changes in the Bo program, there are also quite significant developments in the examining requirements for various Shintaido instructor levels. These will be passed on to the Instructor's Council by the Autumn workshop.

Another development that will be of interest to instructors is the introduction of a new kenjutsu program of study. Once again, more details will be available by the Autumn.

Aoki sensei introduced a kata called taimyo to us. This kata will be introduced in the first instance to SF's Instructor Council, and later on to the general membership.

Some techniques in the Shintaido curriculum have been given new names in Japanese, which better reflect the nature of

the movements. These will be passed on as part of the normal teaching program. Instructors will receive a list shortly.

A number of changes have been made in the way Shintaido practice is monitored across the various regional groups, and these will be passed onto BOD.

Finally, the TC will next meet in 1998, probably in France.

A full report on the TC meeting will be sent to all ISF members shortly, and you will be able to get detailed information through them.

Tony Hammick

REPORT FROM THE ISF BOARD MEETING

Sonoma County, USA. July 1996

The current ISF Board consists of the following people:

Aoki Sensei - Chair

Taro Aoki - Managing Executive and Shintaido Kyokai

Representative

Tomoko Katsuno - Treasurer

Friedemann Schultz - Shintaido of America representative

Simon Neale - Shintaido Foundation Representative

Jean Dudont - French Shintaido Representative

Pierre Quettier - Aoki Sensei Appointee

Bill Burtis - Aoki Sensei Appointee

Ula Chambers - Aoki Sensei Appointee

Many and profuse thanks are due to the outgoing members of the board, especially Kesh Narayanan of Shintaido of America who has unstintingly given his time and support to ISF as chair for the International meetings for eight years.

ISF Officers voted in at the meeting are Taro Aoki, Managing Executive and Tomoko Katsuno, Treasurer.

WHAT IS ISF?

The International Shintaido Federation, ISF, is the body of Shintaido Instructors across the world who have been licensed and are registered with the ISF Board. Anyone who has passed their instructors examination or 1st dan in Shintaido Bohjutsu or Shintaido Karate can join ISF by paying an annual subscription and a once only registration fee for their current instructor level.

WHAT DOES ISF DO?

Primarily, ISF as a body exists to provide mutual support and encouragement to Instructors and to further the development, teaching and study of Shintaido.

The International Board works in an administrative capacity - to oversee registration and licensing, to publish information about international Shintaido activity, to encourage networking between instructors and to set up international lines of communication between the technical committee and individual members (If required), and to oversee and keep records of the examination/qualification system.

Another function of ISF is to provide quality control for the international Shintaido movement. This is done by requiring the regular checking of Instructors at examinations, usually held at International events with Aoki sensei, the founder of Shintaido. Instructors are encouraged to develop their keiko and teaching, and by belonging to ISF they have access to Aoki Sensei and the Technical Committee. Non members do not have access to examinations.

Also ISF supports the Technical Committee by contributing to their meeting expenses at international events and by funding Aoki Sensei's and Ito Sensei's travelling costs and accommodation to Technical Committee meetings.

BACKGROUND AND SOME COUNTRY REPORTS

When ISF (then the Shintaido Instructors Council, SIC) was founded in 1988 its membership was for the most part organised into recognisable national groups, led by a national Head Instructor. Whilst this is still the case in the UK and Japan it is no longer true in the USA or France, and there are now practitioners in many other countries who are not organised into national groups.

These changes have occurred over several years and there has been a period of flux and change. ISF has adapted to these changes by allowing Instructors to be directly affiliated if they chose rather than by going through the national group. The keiko development of these instructors is checked by regularly visiting members of the Technical Committee, such as Ito, Minagawa and Okada senseis.

FRANCE

Pierre Quettier passed on information about France as there was no official representative at the ISF Board meeting.

Since the collapse of the French National group, instructors there have continued to practice in their own areas and run gasshukus on an individual sometimes unco-ordinated basis. However regular visits by the technical committee have ensured correct keiko development. A real worry for the French instructors is that some former members are running their own classes without any reference to the technical committee or

current keiko development, but using the name Shintaido. Pierre Quettier on behalf of ISF is talking steps to register the name of Shintaido so that it cannot be associated with any other form of body movement other than that which is supervised by ISF.

A recent highlight for French practitioners has been a personal visit from Aoki Sensei including a keiko which was enjoyed by all. Jean Dudon, who, since the ISF board meeting has agreed to be representative for France, will act as a channel for collecting ISF fees and disseminating information and certificates etc.

USA

The USA organisation is now run on a regional basis with local groups having responsibility for organising gasshukus, selling equipment etc. They are supported by the national organisation which publishes the excellent Body Dialogue Magazine, runs examinations and co-ordinates keiko activity via the Technical Director. Currently this is Jim Sterling of the Bay Area who has the tenure of this office for four years. There is no Head Instructor as such.

Administrative affairs are co-ordinated by the President of SOA, who is Friedemann Schulz. SOA organised the international gasshuku in July this year, as well as the 20th anniversary of SOA gathering.

UK

Tony Hammick presented the Shintaido Foundation report on behalf of Simon Neale. (A full report will be given to SF supporters during the AGM in October, check with Marcus Grant about timing).

Shintaido in the UK continues to be practiced weekly in Bristol, Brighton, London and Edinburgh. Keiko activity is co-ordinated by Tony Hammick, Head Instructor in collaboration with Masashi Minagawa. Exams are held regularly twice a year and practitioners are progressing steadily.

The Board of Directors, currently Marcus Grant, Peter Furtado and Sarah Whitely meet regularly to co-ordinate the practical running of gasshukus and various administrative matters. Shintaido Foundation recently changed its focus from a membership to a supportership base.

JAPAN

Taro Aoki the Shintaido Kyokai representative described the situation in Japan.

A summary is not available at time of writing but will appear in another edition of the magazine.

OTHER COUNTRIES

Shintaido is also regularly practiced in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany and Italy. Most of these groups do not have qualified instructors at present, but are working steadily through the curriculum with the aid of visits from Technical Committee members.

Since the Board meetings in America we are considering inviting a Technical Committee member to be part of the Board. If this motion is passed then these groups will be represented on the Board.

MAIN AREAS OF DISCUSSION AND MOTIONS PASSED DURING THE BOARD MEETINGS

It was recognised that since the last International Gasshuku and Board meeting in 1994, the ISF board has been somewhat inactive, and that many areas of responsibility were not adequately dealt with. This had led to a certain loss of faith among ISF members with many instructors allowing their membership to lapse or not hurrying to renew it. Also because funds from annual license fees had not been collected there was a short fall in the budget and the financial situation looked poor. The current board earnestly wishes to reverse this situation and create an atmosphere of mutual support, regular networking, and information flow as well as a financially stable situation where the income from fees, registrations and examinations can be used to support the technical committee and instructors world-wide.

THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS WERE TAKEN DURING THE MEETING:

1. To create an international ISF database of Shintaido Instructors, listing their gradings in the various disciplines, their address, telephone etc., and their membership status. The database will be used to give examination organisers a history of those taking examinations and give instructors entry to exams. The list of Instructors will be available to ISF members should they wish to invite instructors from abroad to teach in their country, or to advise students who are travelling about who is available to study with in each country. Part of the database will be published on the Internet on the Shintaido Homepage. This will allow non shintaidoists to see the level of qualification and number of instructors available. The database is being developed by a working group of three ISF members from three continents and is currently being put together with the help of National reps and the technical committee. Details of its location and how to download the data will be available soon and will no doubt be

the subject of further discussion and correspondence before it becomes fully available.

2. To create an internet mailing centre for the use of registered ISF members. This initiative is for the increasing number of practitioners who have e-mail facilities,. The e-mail mailing centre will be an e-mail address to which ISF members can send messages about anything they feel will be of interest to other instructors. The Mailing centre will automatically send on the message to all other e-mail addresses on the list, and so one message sent to this address will reach all ISF Instructors who are on the mailing list. This is a quick and efficient way of passing on details of gasshuku, regular practices, inspirational thoughts, good contacts or ideas, new projects etc. It really is very easy and quick to use this facility and I am sure ISF members will soon get the idea and be communicating regularly. We ask that messages be kept short and in easy English so that everyone has a chance to understand what is being said.

So that non e-mail ISF members also get the chance to see these messages, in the UK at least messages will be posted in the newsletter with Charles Burns acting as editor. The ISF Board will be working out how to pass on items of interest to people in other countries without e-mail.

3. To make a list of all published materials about Shintaido or relevant to Shintaido. This will include materials published by the various national Shintaido groups. It will include details of where the literature is available and a current price. Work on this project has not yet begun, but will be an ongoing project once it is started.

4.To publish Information relating to ISF and the Technical Committee on the Internet. Information can be down loaded and put in National newsletters as an ISF corner, or else by ISF individuals with e-mail or those not belonging to a national group. Again a mechanism for getting this information to non Internet people will be developed, probably using the ISF database above.

This published information will be used in place of a printed newsletter, which is costly to produce and distribute.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

5. To open a bank account in Japan into which ISF license fees can be paid. This has now been done.

Tomoko Katsuno has agreed to be treasurer and oversee the account. The ISF Board will ask Tomoko san to produce yearly accounts which will be published.

6. To go through the 1994-95 accounts and budget and to set a new budget for 1996-7.

This was done at the Board meetings. Details will be published separately when all the figures are available. the ISF accounting year begins on October 1st each year and ends on September 30th. At the time of writing we are in the 1995/96 accounting period.

DISBURSEMENTS

ISF was able to donate a sum of \$5,000 to the organisers of the 20th anniversary gasshuku and International gasshuku, to help with costs when numbers were looking low.

ISF was able to cover the expenses of several board members and technical committee members at this time. However this policy has been revised in the light of an uncertain financial situation. ISF will continue to pay airfare and accommodation costs at technical committee meetings for Aoki Sensei and Ito Sensei. However other technical committee members will where possible be sponsored by their national groups - as their members will benefit directly from the activities and research of the technical committee. If ISF funds increase however it is hoped to make a scholarship fund for technical committee and ISF board members to attend international meetings. ISF will pay for travelling costs of Aoki sensei appointees to the board. National Reps will be sponsored by their national groups. ISF will pay for board and technical committee members accommodation and expenses at TC/board meetings.

INCOME

- >From Instructor registrations (on passing an exam)
- >From Instructor license fees (annual)
- >From examinations (Instructor, Shodan bojutsu and karate, and above)

At present Instructors fees are based on a graduated amount depending on the level of instructor. These are..... ISF are asking national groups to collect fees for this accounting period at this level where possible.

However, the ISF board recognised that this system of membership fees is unpopular and burdensome to instructors, especially those at higher levels. As a result many instructors have just not paid their fees. To change this situation the ISF Board has decided to bring in a flat rate fee of \$60 (L40) per annum regardless of rank from 1996/97 . Hopefully this will not discourage Instructors from aiming at higher level examinations, and will be less burdensome to pay.

Since 1988 groups who are organised on a national basis had been asked to pay an additional levy of \$1 per member per

month to ISF to help pay for some of its activities. Subsequently it was agreed that in recognition of Aoki sensei's continuing creative talent and development of Shintaido, an Aoki Foundation would be set up and the money collected from the \$1 levy would be allocated to this area. In practice, it appears that Aoki sensei had not received any of these funds, and the levy was proving a not only a financial burden but also difficult to administer.

The ISF Board agreed to abolish the \$1 per member per month levy on National groups (which had often not been collected), and to open a separate "Aoki Foundation" bank account. National groups are being asked instead to make voluntary contributions from time to time to this account in recognition of Aoki Sensei's work for Shintaido. Donations can be raised through fund raising or special courses, or be part of the groups budget as it suits individual groups. Individuals may also donate money to this account.

Income from examinations will continue.

The levelling of license fees and abolishing of the levy will, of course, make a difference to ISF income and has necessitated some budget cuts. These are: not paying all technical committee airfares to TC meetings, asking national groups to issue certificates up to nidan or junior instructor level, not publishing a printed newsletter.

If finances improve it is hoped to set up a scholarship fund from exam fees collected, to help any technical committee members who will find it hard to get to meetings. this may be expanded at a later stage.

We have suggested to technical committee members who run courses outside of national groups, that they ask for a modest percentage of gasshuku income to be allocated to ISF funds. This is still to be fully discussed .

FUTURE

All Board members agree that the meetings were very constructive. The above information was presented at the ISF AGM on July 5th 1996. About 25 ISF members attended.

Our hope for the future is that we will enable Shintaido Instructors to continue their practice and to increase their understanding and love of Shintaido. We hope to develop an increased sense of community between us through better communication and also help to dispel the isolation that some instructors experience when practicing away from a larger Shintaido centre.

Many Instructors have taken new initiatives in spreading Shintaido in a variety of ways. It has been fascinating to learn about these initiatives during the International gasshuku, and no

doubt we can feature some of them in ISF bulletins on the net. The ISF board aims to encourage Shintaido "software", new initiatives, as well as Shintaido "hardware", traditional practice, as this is an expression of individual talent and the development of our keiko.

Finally I would like to thank all the people who were involved in the ISF Board meetings including translators, Lee Seaman and Lee Ordeman. The ISF board continues to meet electronically via an e-mail service. This means that we can, hopefully deal with the above issues on a continuing basis, and can tackle new issues as they arise.

All members of the ISF Board are volunteers working in their spare time. Though we aim to be efficient some of our initiatives may take longer than at first envisaged, but, be reassured, we have the best interests of ISF members at heart.

Thank you for taking the trouble to read this information. If you have any questions about this report please contact Ula Chambers on (01273) 271521 (e-mail to 100573.1600@compuserve.com) or Simon Neale.
Ula Chambers

EXAM RESULTS

Here is a list of the levels attained at the International Gasshuku exams in California, USA in July. I have only included the people who passed the exams which they took. However 47 examinations were taken in all, some people took two or three exams.

The conditions were very hot indeed and Examinees made the comment that the overall level of exams taken was very high, and that everyone showed their very best despite the long wait in the heat. Everyone who took an exam is to be congratulated for their effort.

KARATE

Ito Haruyoshi (USA)	Go dan (5th dan)
Okada Mitsuru (Japan)	Yondan (4th dan)
Ooi Hideki (Japan)	Sandan (3rd dan)
Pierre Quettier (France)	"
Alain Chavet (France)	"
Kazu Shibao (USA)	"
Shin Aoki (USA)	Ni dan (2nd dan)
David Sirgani (USA)	1.5 kyu (not quite Shodan)
Iida Soichiro (Japan)	4 kyu
Gianni Rossi (Italy)	5 kyu

Evelyn Monteil (France) 10 kyu

BOHJUTSU

Ito Haruyoshi Go dan
Okada Mitsuru Yondan
Alain Chevet Yondan
Kudo Tetsuaki (Japan) Sandan
Ooi Hideki "
Pierre Quettier "
Joe Zawielski (USA) "
Friedemann Schultz (USA) "
Simon Neale (UK) "
Christian Foulon (Japan) Nidan (2nd dan)
Rob Gaston (USA) Shodan (1st dan)
Gianni Rossi (Italy) 1 kyu
Michael Bogenschutz 1 kyu
Eva Thaddeus (USA) 1 kyu
Iida Soichiro (Japan) 3 Kyu

SHINTAIDO

Tony Hammick (UK) General Instructor
Wendy Laird (Japan) Senior Instructor
Ooi Hideki " "
Joe Zawielski " "
Lee Seaman (USA) " "
Friedemann Schultz " "
Ula Chambers (UK) " "
Michael Bogenschutz (USA) Instructor level 1 (Provisional)
Sandra Bengtsson (USA) " "

FROM THE SF SUMMER WORKSHOP

Shintaido: Simon Neale became Provisional Instructor
Bo: Sarah Whitely - 8kyu, Peter Bougas - 3 kyu
Karate: Geoff Fitch - Ni dan, Tony Hammick - Ni dan
Congratulations to all!

INTERNET NEWS

I have established an FTP facility on the edobarn site. This will enable Shintaido Newsletter editors around the world to exchange digital pictures with a minimum of fuss. There were some initial technical problems for PC users who were unable to read my MacIntosh generated pictures, but I'm happy to report these have now been solved. (Thanks Rachel)

Any Shintaido related pictures sent to me by e-mail will be placed on the FTP site. They can then be collected by anonymous ftp from:

home.virtual-pc.com /pub/edobarn/

The e-mail mailing list is now thriving. Some of the correspondence on it has been reproduced in the letters section below (apologies to those on the list who've read it already). To recap, you can subscribe to the list by sending an e-mail request. Unlike the ISF list, subscription is open to anybody even remotely interested in Shintaido, whether or not they are currently practicing. Subscribers will receive the e-mail version of this Newsletter, + a lot of general chat!

Charles Burns

<shintaido@edobarn.demon.co.uk>

Letters

HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE SHINTAIDO?

After 10 years of practice I feel even less able to describe Shintaido than when I started. I am going to give up even trying to. I think the only way to know it is to do it. When people ask me what it is in future, I'm just going to have to invite them along to keiko.

Marcus Grant

IT TAKES 20 YEARS!

A few months after I first started practicing (this was way back in 1976 in Tokyo), I had the chance to write an article on Shintaido for a Christian newsletter in Japan. Well, I thought, I'll wait a little while till I know more. But a few months went by, and I realized every week what I could say was getting less, and if I didn't hurry up and do the article before I had been practicing a year, I wouldn't be able to say anything. I complained to one of the senior people, who laughed and said, yes, he had found that too, but after he'd been practicing 20 years he started being able to explain Shintaido again.

Funny thing is, I've been practicing 20 years now, and right on schedule, I'm beginning to be able to talk about Shintaido to people who don't practice. In another few years, maybe I'll even learn how to do it without their eyes glazing over (smile).

The second best way I've found to describe Shintaido, though (Marcus' strategy of "just inviting them to class" is definitely the best), is to have a beginner do it. Wonderful things come out, that I never would have thought of.

Lee Seaman <lseaman@az.com>

A LETTER FROM SONOMA

Thanks for sending me the Shintaido Foundation newsletter #13. I very much enjoyed reading it. I'm the editor of the Pacific Shintaido Bulletin here in San Francisco, so I can relate to your plea for submissions of articles, letters, photos, art, etc.

As you know, we recently held an International Shintaido event here in northern California, at Sonoma State University. Aoki sensei taught, and many other people came from all over the world, including England, France, Japan, Australia, Quebec, and elsewhere. I was one of the organizers, so my images of the week are blurry, but I'm hoping to have some of the local attendees provide me with their impressions. There were incredible high-level exams, meetings, great keiko, a Shintaido of America celebration with a Michael Thompson book-signing, and a big party at the end. If I receive some good material, I'd be happy to share it with you if you'd like to publish some of it in your newsletter.

Stephen Billias

A LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

Who am I? Vera Costello, abiding in the Blue Mountains 1 1/2 hours' drive west of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Both Michael and I were at the International at Sonoma recently and we have tried to run Shintaido here for the past decade or so. I know Tony H. and many others there from way back. I even practised there back in 1977, 78 for a year or so.

Anyway, one mustn't assume that everyone knows about one, so in a nutshell, that's me. Hope that you will let me know something about yourself and what's happening in your neck of the UK. Although we are on the other side of the world, down under you might say, and with few members, we actually have a life and it's pretty good! If you've been here, you will know this is an understatement. Please respond soon.

Vera Costello <vcostello@CSU.edu.au>

FROM A MYSTERIOUS BEING....

I often have the same impulse as Marcus, but I have to confess to being a little less honest and more strategical in my answer. It seems the question is almost akin to asking "who are you?" In which case I'll again admit to being a little less than honest - I usually answer "David Franklin," because the total truth: "I am a mysterious being of miraculous and divine potential, largely unknown to myself, transcending worldly

identity, etc. etc." tends to produce undesirable reactions from clerks at the motor vehicles registry, etc. etc.

In fact, society's name for people who constantly speak the total spiritual and emotional truth about everything is often "lunatics."

So the question is: can we find some worldly identity for Shintaido that doesn't compromise the truth too much? I agree that some of the worldly identities tried before either don't suit my taste - "a health exercise," "a derivative of Japanese martial arts" - or are so vague they leave the audience puzzled - "an expressive movement form." So what do I say? I usually improvise something on the spot, depending on my mood and a quick intuitive assessment of the background and interests of the person I'm talking to.

Another tactic I've been using is writing very short articles in my own 1-page newsletter (stole this idea from Pierre Quettier), each one focusing on one detail about Shintaido - maybe in this way, taking many small glimpses from different angles, a picture can emerge.

David Franklin

"AVANT GARDE" MARTIAL ART

I always feel that a description of Shintaido is sort of personal, and depends on what you are able to compare it with. Since I am a painter I tend to look for parallels in the history of painting. What follows is my own way of describing Shintaido to others.

A very brief history of Modern Art. You will be aware that prior to this century painting was primarily a method of conveying information. The Church commissioned a lot of artists to paint picture depicting "religious truths" for the purpose of educating people. While this kept a lot of artists fed and clothed, it also placed a severe restriction on the artists' freedom of expression.

The other main use for painters was as portraitists, preserving for posterity the likenesses of important people.

At the end of the last century, the arrival of photography put an end to all that. It seemed as though artists had been superseded by technology. But instead the exact opposite proved to be true. Beginning with the Impressionists, and continuing with the "Expressionists", "Cubists", "Fauvists", and many more, and whole plethora of "Avant Garde" art movements appeared, as artists discovered that they had been freed from the traditional constraints of painting, and could now explore a whole new world of human expression. In doing so they have completely re-defined the role of painting in society.

A similar thing can be seen happening in the world of Martial Arts.

In ancient Japan the various martial arts evolved primarily as a means of self-defence (or often blood-thirsty attack!) Whilst these skills were being developed by various cultures all over the world, the Japanese developed them to an extraordinary degree. Much as artists did in the European "Art Renaissance". Nevertheless they were still constrained in their development by the rigorous necessities of fighting.

At the beginning of this century technology overtook the Martial Artists. It seemed as though they had been superseded by Modern Warfare. In addition, many of the Martial Arts that survived were actually banned by the Americans after the Second World War. However, as with painting, the exact opposite proved to be true. Martial Artists have been freed from the traditional constraints of attack and defence, and are now able to explore a whole new world of human expression. It is this freedom which Shintaido exploits to the full, and in so doing is now completely re-defining the nature of Martial Arts.

Charles Burns

SHINTAIDO IS NOT COOL

I was looking again at the quote from Kent Nagano that's on the publicity brochure: "When you do an exercise like Shintaido, it's a reminder that the point of living is not to keep from looking bad, or being embarrassed. The point of living is something more important."

Kent Nagano is the conductor of the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra in California, and he first started studying Shintaido because he had been mugged. I don't think he knew he was letting himself in for anything more than some kind of non-aggressive self-defence technique.

A guy like Mr. Nagano, who regularly stands in front of an orchestra who rely on him for an interpretation of great masters like Beethoven or Mozart and an audience expecting an exciting artistically inspired performance night after night, has many opportunities to embarrass himself. How can he continue to function creatively under that kind of pressure?

Jazz vocalist Ella Fitzgerald said that she never really got over the fear of making a fool of herself on stage— though seeing and hearing her perform, you'd never guess she had anything less than total self-assurance.

I'm guessing that never getting over the fear of feeling foolish is part of what makes these artists great. If they try to play it cool, their performance becomes stale— there's no creative risk.

The need to be cool is a significant obstacle to creative expression that society sets in our path, and I have often seen people (myself included) grappling with it when they come to Shintaido. This is a difference between Shintaido and many other martial arts, dance, or exercise forms: you don't get to feel cool, even after practicing for many years. This is because Shintaido is not cool at all.

I think Marshall ("the medium is the message") McLuhan said that television is a "cool" medium; this suggests that it makes you feel disengaged, distant, emotionally flat. You don't have to expose much of yourself watching TV.

Shintaido, on the other hand...

I'll bet people like Ella Fitzgerald and Kent Nagano and probably Mozart and Picasso and many others reach a point where they just give up on trying to be cool. They just resign themselves to being hot. Probably they say to themselves: "if I'm going to lose my cool, at least I'm going to stand tall, step boldly, and do it in a BIG WAY."

David Franklin

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SHINTAIDO CD?

This is an open letter which Pierre handed out at the American Gasshuku. He would like as many people as possible to have a look at it and pass on any relevant comments.

PROJECT FOR A MULTIMEDIA CURRICULUM FOR SHINTAIDO

to be included in a PhD project in Sciences of Education to be entitled:

"The educating body:educating ethnomethods of Shintaido Instructors"

The Project

The final products will be:

A CD Rom including

1. A number of various Shintaido documents (images, short animated sequences, text, vocals, etc.)
2. Software allowing editing of those documents (files?) according to proper sequences (kata) and allowing the making of convenient hypertext links to properly comment on the teaching
3. sequences of documents and files corresponding to the mainstream curriculum (i.e. M Thompson) set by the technical committee.

These materials could be made available for sale.

From the "mainstream" sequences/links any specific teacher would then be able to develop their own customised edition according to their own "light" (inspiration) or according to specific events, etc. and put this on a separate file (either disk or Internet) and send it out to students.

Students would then be able to enrich (and link) this file to their personal notes, pictures, minutes or conversation etc.

PROCESS OF ELABORATION

I would suggest making a prototype on Jumbi Taiso before going on to more complex kata.

CONCLUSION

This short explanation of my project will probably raise questions (if only because of my poor English or of technical considerations). I am happy to give more details and welcome any comments and suggestions you could make. Thank you very much.

Pierre. 28/6/96

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AN INTERESTING LIST

As Chair of BOD something I came across recently that seems to have alot of sense.

'An effective group will:

1. Continually clarify its purpose and goals;
2. Choose its own procedures, but be flexible;
3. Develop trust among its members;
4. Make decisions effectively and effeciently;
5. Balance group and individual goals;
6. Have shared leadership responsibilities;
7. Be cohesive;
8. Make good use of the skills, interests, experience etc. of its members;
9. Not be dominated by any member or group of members;
10. Occasionally focus on how the group is doing.

Marcus Grant

