

Shintaido

*A New Art of Movement
and Life Expression*



by Hiroyuki Aoki

Chapter One

What is Shintaido?

Shintaido is the light in the shade and the sun in the shadow.

People who have been constitutionally weak and depressed from birth can discover extraordinary strength and ability through Shintaido. People who have lacked the will power or determination to express even a tenth of their talent can grow and develop in Shintaido. People who have never been aware of their true value will realize the dignity of being.

Those who are too self-conscious by nature to express their ideas will find new confidence and conviction. Those whose spirits are closed and stagnant will be inspired with a new faith and purpose. Those who have become private and isolated will be able to communicate a new joy of life to others. Those who are downtrodden or oppressed will understand that all human beings are equal before God and free to express their being. This is why we call our movement Shintaido — "new body way."

As a mood or feeling, Shintaido is more religious and artistic than scientific. It is more emotional and primitive than rational. It involves cooperation more than competition in its movements. But it is cooperation that emphasizes individual expression, rather than passive group enjoyment or acquiescence.

Shintaido was researched, developed and programmed through the concerted efforts of thirty professional martial artists. It is a unique system of body movement based upon martial art expression, which begins and culminates with two basic techniques called Eiko and Tenshingoso*.

Shintaido cannot be understood by trying to pigeon-hole it into traditional or popular categories such as martial arts, gymnastics, health fads or religion. Instead, it should be seen as an answer to one of the deep longings of this age, as the realization of a fervently desired dream.

**Tenshingoso* and *Eiko* are described in Sections 8 and 9 of Chapter 2 and in Part II, Technique.

What is Shintaido?

Just as a map can show us a previously unknown road, Shintaido can be a guide in solving problems of the mind and human relationships. In a larger sense, by showing us how to move our bodies according to natural law, it can be a guide in our cosmic relationships as well. Thus, Shintaido can be considered a textbook for self-education and self-training in our lives.

Although every human being is blessed with an original gift of God-given talent, we have lost our "natural naivete" during the course of history, and can not express this talent fully. Not only our body, but also our way of thinking has been corrupted. When we start Shintaido, we must begin by first softening the hardened and distorted parts of our body to return our body to its natural condition. In today's environment, which is being destroyed by industrial pollution and waste in increasingly harmful cycles, we must rediscover what is natural for us through our bodies. The more you practice Shintaido, the more you will come to understand the meaning of natural. Little by little, by removing muscular stiffness through various exercises, you will find that your feelings will become calm and gentle, and that you will be able to open yourself to heaven and to the world around you. An original power which was asleep in the deepest part of your being will awaken, and you will discover a new expanding sense of yourself and your life in the three-dimensional world which characterizes the Shintaido program.

Sooner or later every human being must face the moment of doubt when he or she must ask him or herself: "What am I?" "Why was I born?" "What is the purpose of my life?" Philosophers have traditionally tackled such problems through their philosophy and artists through their art. The vast majority of people in this world, however, do not have readily available means or talents to answer these questions in a positive way, without first resorting to self-destructive techniques or devices to develop their ideas. For these people Shintaido is a means of examining their lives to the degree and intensity that they begin to understand their own nature, and at the same time, gain a natural sympathy for their neighbors and a stronger more genuine love of their fellow man.

When you come to Shintaido for the first time, do not be concerned with athletic ability or talent. Simply try it and continue for as long as possible. In this way you will experience the invigorating power of Shintaido; with your own body you will feel a new force and energy rising within you.

So that everybody, young and old alike, men and women, the athletic and the unathletic, can practice Shintaido with equal enjoyment, we have created a simple and easy program accessible to all, without compromising its high level of content. Shintaido is first and foremost a body movement and must be experienced with your body. In this way you will discover a wealth of untapped talent and will begin to develop the full range of your potential and ability.

Shintaido was introduced for only one reason: to help you create a new and healthier life for yourself.

Chapter Two

How Shintaido Was Born

To live or die has always been a common theme throughout history because it contains one of the basic truths of human existence. In essence, Japanese martial arts, or *budo*, is a very systematic and unparalleled philosophy which states that by facing death itself, we can understand and complete our lives. Because I was searching for a movement that would be true not only for the Japanese, but for all people of the world, I tried to create Shintaido based upon a global philosophy which includes this ideal of life and death.

In as much as it deals directly with the philosophy of life and death, what would be born in Shintaido should be subjected to the demands of the martial arts. To do this, I had to make the same demands on myself. For instance, when I decided on a new movement to put into the program, I tried to eliminate all traces of personal preference or ambiguities. In this way, I attempted to fulfill the requirements of martial arts philosophy in every detail.

In order for Shintaido to be true for human beings as living creatures, I knew it had to be rooted in the earth, the matrix from which all living things arise. In other words, it had to arise from the Japanese soil. Of course, if it had originated in another country, it would have had its roots in that country's soil.

As a lover of music and art, I also wanted Shintaido to have the same value as the works of Bach or Mozart in music, or as the works of Michelangelo, Cezanne or Picasso in the world of art, or as the great works of literature. How these foreign artistic works excite, uplift and help us to grow! The philosophy of these artists in the modern period is as familiar to most Japanese as boiled rice and miso soup. Through their works and the stories of their lives, they continue to live and converse in our imagination today. Following their example, I wanted to create a movement which could go out from Japan and correspond with the imaginations of people all over the world.

Section One: Meeting Master Shigeru Egami

I do not wish to spend much time concerning the past, particularly my own, because no one wants to hear about another's past, especially without embellishments. I think history is made by that which flows deeply and not from what is observed on the surface of one's life. However, to tell the story of what preceded the birth of Shintaido, I must first ask you to excuse my self-indulgence.

In my childhood, I dreamt of being in the world of artistic expression as an actor or artist. People who knew me as a child said I was always looking at and caring for flowers and plants and that often I would try to draw them. I believe my behavior was a result of the loneliness of losing my mother, brother and sister during the bombing raids of World War II. I do not know how I came by drawing materials at a time when they were lacking in Japan, but I do remember always being fascinated by a strong sense of beauty in my youth.

As a young high school graduate, I went to Chuo University Law School, but I also studied other courses including theater, and I joined the university karate club to build my body for acting. I had three reasons in particular for choosing the karate club rather than some other athletic group. First, there was no gymnastics club at the university; second, I chanced to see a documentary film about karate and was interested in its kata; and third, karate is not a group competition so I thought it could be less restricted. These were all simple practical reasons. However, I never imagined I would have "gone for wool and come back shorn."

After I started to practice karate, I was very surprised. My honorable *sempai*, or, "seniors," trained me in a crazy, inexplicable way. The group captain or leader in each generation before me had been a man of high character, and most of the senior members were the same age or younger than I, so I wanted to survive the severe training and live up to their expectations.* Often my body would be covered with welts, there would be blood in my urine and I would have to crawl on all fours to the bathroom at night. This type of training is almost impossible to envision in today's more democratic, moral circumstances. It would have been unnecessary at the time, also, if more effective methods had been available to us.

Meanwhile I had no time to think about Stanislavsky, Brecht, Van Gogh and Roualt. All of them disappeared from my world. Where was my old sense of beauty?

In the autumn of my second year, about one and a half years after I joined the karate club, Mr. Shigeru Egami, called the "phantom master," appeared in Tokyo after spending many years in the country. We asked him to teach us as a special instructor. At the same time, I became a captain of the Chuo University Karate Club and started to lead the classes. I had become completely "shorn."

Mr. Egami's teaching was like bright sunshine penetrating the darkness. He had been a great student under Mr. Gichin Funakoshi, the founder of modern karate-

*I had spent two years between high school and college studying drama.

do and the first master to bring karate from Okinawa to Japan. Mr. Funakoshi had told his students that in karate there are no title matches which would restrict them with their rigid rules. Mr. Egami developed this idea by teaching us that the practice of karate involves competition within oneself. He taught us that if there is an enemy, it is oneself. He completely changed the traditional and feudalistic conception of our practice. In addition, his training was quite gentle and strangely soft; he never allowed a sadistic or oppressive feeling to enter our practice. Through his teaching, karate movement suddenly approached the basic thinking of the artists and philosophers I had always admired in Japan and abroad. He introduced the stream of *ki* energy and a soft natural movement — unknown in the usual karate world.

When we started our karate club practice under Mr. Egami, he would often say, "Why did karate become so hard and stiff? It used to be much softer." He used to say we should always seek softer movement which would be good even for sick and old people. His constant aim was the creation of a modern way of *heihō* — "a means of training in the day-to-day world" — by arranging the rough and simple fighting techniques of the South China Sea area.

Mr. Egami's teaching is an invaluable guideline for anyone seeking a genuine martial art. He taught us to eliminate tension from our bodies as much as possible through deepening concentration and proper meditation; to use holistic or integral power, rather than strength originating from one part of the body; to develop soft and natural movement with no surplus tension in the shoulders. These are the most basic of tenets, not just for karate, but for all body movement.

Shintaido does not diverge from this theory and I do not believe that it should. To be natural and to move as we want is sufficient.

At the time I met Mr. Egami, his body was very tired and had suffered many injuries as a result of hard practice, but he was still as thin and supple as Nijinsky. He was also very intelligent and humane which was characteristic of all Waseda University graduates. Moreover, he possessed a sense of humor and honesty and was able to win the love and respect of his young students.

During this period I worked as Mr. Egami's assistant and lived in his house. Sometimes when I returned to his house exhausted after practice, especially when his wife was not at home, he cooked dinner for me, even though he never cooked for himself, not even when his wife was sick. I was quite surprised and I ate what he prepared, feeling a mixture of awe and gratitude. Even today, I can still remember his roughly cut fried vegetable dish.

Every morning and night I received his support and teaching, more so than any other student. But the more he showed his love, the more confused I became because I had originally chosen the creative artistic approach to learning, rather than the *tao*, or "apprenticeship" way. Even after I left the karate world, this conflict continued in my mind.

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Section Two: Gorei as Conducting and Classical Studies through Kata*

During my karate days I studied many things, but I was chiefly occupied with two especially rewarding activities. One was the *gorei* which I repeated every day. The other was an extensive project requested by Mr. Egami, to gather, arrange and record all karate kata which had been handed down from generation to generation.

Gorei is almost the same as conducting in the symphonic style. When I give the *gorei*, I count in Japanese — *ichi, ni, san . . .*, sometimes aloud and sometimes silently. To give *gorei* means to help each individual in a group practice to express his own emotions, thoughts or philosophy, and to bring all members together in a larger construction.

In the karate classes at that time, any member who was practicing under my *gorei*, had permission to attack me at any moment. In the usual class there were fifty to sixty people and more than half had their black belts, so I had to be ready at all times to receive their attacks. There were also beginners in front of me waiting to be corrected. And finally, there was the whole group moving to my *gorei*. I always had to pay full attention to these three points. Once I started to lead the whole class using a *gorei*, I was never allowed to break my concentration even for a second. Although it is almost impossible to imagine this kind of practice today, I repeated it every day.

It is embarrassing now to think of my mistakes, but when I made a mistake and was hurt by a student's attack as a result, it was very useful for me — much more so than verbal instruction.

The following story is quite recent, concerning a Shintaido *gasshuku*, or "retreat," that we held at Kujukuri beach in Chiba Prefecture with sixty to seventy participants. During the final lesson, at sunset, people were moving about, but there was no break in concentration, just a continual flow of movement. I imagined that this was similar to the movement of African dancers from a primitive age. People were spinning around like whirlpools, mixing and holding hands with no one leading, playing off each other's rhythm. There were radiant faces, no leaders or followers, no beginners or seniors; just a sunset and a long white beach. It seemed like some beautiful, imaginary scenery in which flaming bats and tropical fish were dancing.

Another time while I was leading a class, a golden light suddenly came down from heaven and filled the *dojo* immersing each member, including myself, in a radiant glow. Following the class, the face of each member was shining in awe. This was an unforgettable moment for me. On another occasion I could hardly believe my eyes as I watched the seven colors of the rainbow radiating from each person's body.

**Gorei* means conducting or leading group practice. A *kata* is a series of formal attack and defense movements.

Whenever I gave *gorei*, I felt the presence of Wilhelm Furtwangler and Bruno Walter, German orchestral conductors. For me, *gorei* was conducting, educating, expressing and fighting. But more than this, it was praying to God. Of course this has continued to the present day.

A Japanese jazz critic, Teruhito Soejima, once introduced me in these words, "In Jazz there are no masterpieces, there is only good expression." I would like to recommend this description to all those who are giving the *gorei* today and will do so in the future.

The other task, the study and compilation of classical *kata* was an extremely difficult project because some had different forms in different geographical areas and because of the oral tradition. It was not easy to choose the right one.

Most of the old practitioners of karate practiced very hard, perhaps a few forms for many years. Though there were some books on the martial arts which described certain *kata*, there was no instructor, no matter how knowledgeable, who knew all of the traditional *kata*. Any one *kata* consisted of twenty to eighty attack and defense techniques and the meanings or intent of some of these were quite obscure.

On the other hand, it was awesome to find an incredible movement like *musoken* that can be spontaneously and instinctively expressed when our life is most threatened.* This discovery sent shivers up and down my spine when I recognized the high spiritual level attained by the old practitioners.

Because karate came from Okinawa where conquering rulers often changed, disarming the people each time they did, it is the product of an underground movement that gave rise to an oral tradition. When faced with an oral folk tradition, there are often several different versions, so some critics do not appreciate the fact that karate is also a classical form similar to traditional Japanese martial arts.

There were approximately fifty traditional karate *kata*. They originated in many different areas and in different circumstances and some have several hundred years' history. Solely for the purpose of self-defense, traditional *kata* having their background as actual fighting techniques are much more effective than the more contemporary ones. The latter contain forms of gymnastic movement through which beginners can develop their athletic abilities. But traditional *kata* show us how to survive a critical situation, and at the same time, teach us breathing techniques which enable us to acquire the highest level of concentration.

There are many kinds of movements in karate-do, and the ideas and imagination expressed in these movements are very rich and free. The popular karate we know from films and television is just one small part of this tradition.**

**Musoken* is a form of sword movement (attack or defense) accomplished unconsciously, using only the sixth sense.

**Not only in karate, but also in traditional Japanese martial arts, there are, in addition to fighting

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Forty karate *kata* and four *bojutsu kata* are collected in Mr. Egami's book, *Karate-do Kata for Professionals*. He was the special teacher for the Japanese armed forces until the end of World War II and was recognized as the top martial artist of Japan. It was a great honor for me to demonstrate these *kata* for his book. It is a valuable reference source for the martial arts, and if you are interested in classic karate-do, please add this book to your library.

The difficult task of collecting these karate *kata* continued, as well as my study of other body movements. Eventually, this all blossomed into Tenshingoso, a form surpassing all traditional forms, which became the first basic technique of Shintaido.

At the same time that I was conducting this study, I had formed my own group called Rakutenkai, all of whose members were deeply involved in the intense training and research that led to the creation of Shintaido. Every day and night we lived, ate, slept and practiced together. Three kinds of aspirations converged in my thinking. The first was the aspiration toward traditional introspective training by which I could re-experience what our predecessors had experienced; the second was its opposite — an aspiration toward the artistic way — in which I would destroy or negate tradition and break the shell around me; the third was toward faith in the Creator which has a very different order of value. These three aspirations were sometimes in conflict with each other, but somehow became harmonious in my world. They later appeared respectively in the three forms of Tenshingoso, Hikari to Tawamureru and Eiko, the three great poles of Shintaido.

During that time, I studied many other martial arts and I analyzed the techniques of various masters. I also continued my study of art, at first on canvas using oils I explored the abstract, then abstract and three-dimensional, and later, non-formal art. Action as expression became my final goal. But I could find no reason to show the fruits of my research to the public.

Section Three:

The Martial Arts and the History of the Evolution of Consciousness

Strictly speaking Shintaido is not simply a martial art, and yet it lies in the tradition of martial arts history, and has inherited its strong, rich spirit.

Like other fighting sports, the martial arts developed from the simple fighting techniques of ancient times. It is probable that primitive man used sticks or stones

techniques, special hidden methods of concentration, will power and *heijoshin*—"the ability to retain ordinary or every day mind in the face of danger." When practitioners found and experienced these methods, they would enter a state of spiritual sublimity and sometimes discover a world of cosmic philosophy. If a practitioner studied only the fighting techniques from the Japanese martial arts, his training would amount to fighting with one hand tied behind his back. This type of limited study invariably leads to a complete misunderstanding of the true value of Japanese martial arts.

or lacking these, fists and teeth to hunt and protect himself from wild animals. In times when food was scarce, it was most likely necessary to fight in order to eat as well as to protect himself from intruders. As time went by, villages came into conflict with one another, and it may have been necessary to create a special police force. Little by little, those who were chosen as defenders had to learn how to fight. As a result, simple groups of soldiers and fighting techniques developed. We know these existed before the birth of specialized armies.

In Japan, however, the development of complex military organizations and strategy did not take place until the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries when two important families, the Genji-Minamoto family and Heike-Taira family entered into war. For the first time in Japanese history, serious consideration was given to the tactics of survival on the battlefield.

Of course, it was not possible to practice martial arts techniques only in the heat of battle. Consequently, warriors simply put on their armor, mounted their horses and tried to swing the heaviest sword possible. The strongest, best equipped and luckiest warrior generally survived. The more experience they had, the better they fought; combat was their teacher. Practice on the spot, however, is never the best means of survival.

Finally, beginning in 1467 when all of Japan was embroiled in the civil strife of the Muromachi period (1394 to 1573), and the entire populace was subject to the ravages of war, people had to consider not only how to survive, but also how to accept a death which might come at any moment.

The civil war era was marked not only by fighting, but also by famine and drought. To make matters worse, most of the governors left politics to study tea ceremony and *Noh* Theater. The miserable conditions of the average villager of that time are impossible to imagine today.

Even though there is no famous name which we can associate with the actual teaching of sword technique until the Muromachi period, military equipment and strategy continued to evolve — like the philosophy of the people — according to the demands of the age.

In an attempt to explore various methods, samurai warriors practiced and researched their own sword techniques. In the book of martial arts history, the names of Iizasa Choisai and Aisu Iko appear as founders of the two oldest schools, the Tenshin Shoden Shinto-ryu and the Aisu Kage-ryu. When we examine their curriculum, we can see the high level of proficiency attained in these schools.

By the end of this era, the lancers of the Takeda Shingen family had become the finest example of this type of select training. Chosen from a host of warriors, they were the elite of the civil war period. Guiding their horses with their left hands and holding their spears in their right, they were all over the battlefield. This type of action was quite spectacular, especially on the small-scale battlefields of Japan.

Unexpectedly, however, an event of supreme consequence intervened; the introduction of the rifle by the Oda Nobunaga family. Staking almost their entire military organization on this new weapon, they amassed and trained about ten

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thousand men, generally of humble station. Firing their rifles behind strategically placed barriers, this corps of hastily trained soldiers inflicted an instant and catastrophic defeat on the aristocratic, professional lancers of the Takeda family. Warriors who had practiced martial arts techniques for ten years or more were killed by people who were unknown and uneducated. In fact, from another point of view, they were defeated by new ideas and a new science. Professional soldiers who had practiced and studied from secret martial arts texts were killed at random by a single bullet.

The new technology of the rifle undermined the vertical structure of traditional training and technique in which victory was assured by long study and rigorous practice. When Oda Nobunaga organized his rifle corps, a horizontal attitude which sought success through innovation superceded the vertical reliance on authority and mastery. Of course the lack of unity among the Takeda clan also contributed to their defeat. Even today there are still people who do not understand the lessons and implications of horizontal thinking and continue to practice the martial arts to develop only their fighting techniques. They should remember such techniques are defenseless in the face of modern weapons. From that time, the Japanese martial arts have gone in two main directions; in the first, there is more emphasis on character building; in the second, on fighting tactics.

In 1603, after the civil war when the Tokugawa shogunate began, our society returned to relative peace, and the martial arts were taught to ordinary soldiers as a means of cultivating their spirit. As an essential element of this training, they studied the art of living perfectly up to the moment of death. As a result, the philosophy of the martial arts became deeper and deeper, adopting the slogan *shinken ichinyo* — "developing our mind and sword technique together."

As we will see, the Japanese martial arts are so rich and compelling that once we enter into their world, it is almost impossible to stop studying.

During the Edo period (1603 to 1867), many schools flourished. One was the famous Shinkage-ryu, which was designated by the Tokugawa Shogunate as the official school of martial arts. Another important school is that of Itto-ryu originated by Ono Jirozaemon Tadaaki, who was first employed by Shogun Ieyasu (1542-1616) and continued as a teacher of Shogun Hidetada, Ieyasu's son (1579-1632). The Itto-ryu is still very famous for its graceful style. Later in the period, a third school emerged, Shingyoto-ryu that is based upon rich culture and high level technique.

The other line of development in the martial arts, military tactics and weaponry, which began with the introduction of the rifle, continued its growth and has proven unstoppable to this day.

Under the strict government control of the shogunate, which protected the country from civil war, the individual soldier lost the opportunity to test his level of proficiency in battle. Nevertheless, *kendo*, "the way of the sword," continued to develop, using the slogans *shinken ichinyo* and *munenmuso*—"In your will, nothing; in your mind, nothing." Followers of this "way" unceasingly cultivated

duced his first disciple Hikita Bungoro to be Munetoshi's teacher. Munetoshi was treated like a child by Hikita. The latter, however, in his turn, was treated in the same fashion by Ogasawara Genshinsai who had journeyed to mainland China to study various martial arts and had brought back many new ideas and techniques. (One of Ogasawara's famous techniques involved the use of an eight-inch iron rod.) Eventually, Ogasawara was defeated by Harigaya Sekiun, one of his disciples and a student of Zen who criticized his teacher's technique as nothing more than "monkey fighting." Later when Harigaya Sekiun was about sixty, Odagiri Ichiun, a twenty-eight year old adept, entered his school. Five years later he had three challenge matches with his master, each one ending in a tie.

Unfortunately there is not enough space here to fully describe all of the techniques of these practitioners. But in any case, it was never simply a matter of the strong surpassing the weak, but rather the individual, opening his mind and expanding his ideas, overcoming the limits of the previous generation.

These men were all human beings, living in the flesh and subject to the same, ordinary human limits. For them, however, there was one crucial difference: their lives were a combat in the spiritual world as well.

Section Four:

The Sword Technique of Harigaya Sekiun: Expanding time, space and energy

Although the theory of Sekiun's sword movement is not well known in Japan today, it was influenced by the Zen master Kohaku and is for this reason of particular interest to us. As human beings, Sekiun said, we should not imitate animals either in thought or action. In sword movement there is no mystery or miracle but only reality which is controlled by the rational power of the human mind. Most of the sword masters who habitually spoke of or alluded to magic or occult techniques were not genuine or, as Sekiun would say, were of inferior understanding. He considered those who taught only one kind of response to a specific attack or of attacking in only one way according to a particular situation, practitioners of an unnatural or subhuman concept of fighting.

His school had only one idea called *ainuke* which means "spearing through each other." Though Sekiun and his disciple Ichiun are no longer alive to clarify this expression for us, we can see that it is far different from, and superior to, the meaning of *aiuchi* which means "mutual hitting or killing."

Sekiun believed that our highest goal is to enter into the holiest space which is singular and called *yuiitsu muni*— "only one, never two." Although anyone can reach this space, it is impossible to attain by ordinary means. The person who reaches this level must be completely attuned to the other who has reached the same level. When these two persons meet the instant, called *ainuke*, which precedes the start of the fight, is born.

Sekiun called the highest level which could be attained *sei* or "holiness." This realm is *yuiitsu muni* — "just as the sun is one and the moon is one." It is the highest and the holiest.*

In other words, if we wish to attain the highest level, we must continually seek to inhabit the realm of God. In the words of Jesus Christ: "On that day you will understand that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you," John 14:20. Although this realm is open to all, it is too sacred for us to enter by our own ability. This realm is governed by the grace of God. Or to put it colloquially: "Anyone can come in, but who can come in?"

If a man holds communion with another human being and at the same time unites himself with God, how can we describe it? It is, we must say, "complete oneness of being." I believe that whatever destroys this kind of oneness, or hinders us from reaching it, is called sin in Christianity.

What remains when our skin is peeled off, when our flesh, bones, blood, organs, and even our life is taken away and all of our body burned to ashes, may be nothing more than our small space in this big cosmos. This space has its own reality and can be explained only through the word "Being" (EHIHEH in Hebrew). When Moses asked God: "What is your name?" God answered: "My name is Being" ("I Am who I Am"). With our hands and minds we must grope our way toward this realm. Our search will allow us to become one with those who have clearly experienced this realm ("Being"), Jesus Christ and God. This is called *kiichi* — "going back to Oneness."

Sekiun taught that the way of the sword is similar to the way of using chopsticks when we eat. When we use chopsticks we use them naturally, without thinking, as extensions of our hands. He said when we move, we must move like a baby. How different this is from the usual advice of cutting with all of our power, tightening our arm muscles and forcing our grip. He also said that we should not try to concentrate a special power in the lower part of our *hara*, or "abdomen," but rather as the body leads, we should follow naturally. He said that there is no winner or loser, no stronger or weaker person. He claimed that there is no too fast and no too slow; there is no special timing or special moment. Simply move as your body leads you. He also maintained that there is no special *ma*, or "space," between you and your partner, nor is there any particular timing. If the distance between you and your partner is too great, simply walk forward and when you reach the proper distance, cut down. If the distance is correct from the start, then cut down naturally. He also cautioned against imposing a special philosophy on our technique.

All of these ideas seem incredible today. In today's modern world there may be philosophies which are greater than his, but the point we have to remember is

*The traditional goal of oneness in Zen is called *mu*, but when Sekiun spoke of the highest level, he always used the term *sei* which led us to believe that he must have reached a oneness that is only attainable through grace.

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that Sekiun expressed these ideas three hundred and fifty years ago and he brought them to life through his sword technique.

The technique through which he expressed his philosophy is called *nyuwamubyoshi* — "soft, peaceful, rhythmless movement." From this term, we can imagine how soft, ephemeral and peaceful this technique must have been. Without specifically relying on power, or timing, his movement went beyond the usual sense of *ma*. The use of energy, time and space are the three most important principles in the martial arts, but in his theory and thought they are infinitely expanded and transposed. I believe he created a world of far different dimensions from the one we are familiar with. Consequently, the conventional martial arts and martial arts philosophy are not sufficient to explain his ideas. In his search for the *tao*, I believe that Sekiun, after having done all that was humanly possible, finally came face to face with "God the creator." In that moment, he reflected God's glory and was purified by the Holy Spirit which filled his being. Through this grace, he must have reached a pinnacle far beyond the understanding or scope of ordinary mental processes.

Sekiun criticized and repudiated the great swordsmen, his predecessors who placed great emphasis on how to fight and win, including his own teacher. With their ornate philosophies and techniques which were concerned simply with fighting and winning, he claimed their practice was only "animal fighting." He insisted that the highest secret technique should be *nyuwamubyoshi* and that our spiritual aim should be the realm of holiness. He seems to say that the most important thing in swordsmanship is not how to defeat an enemy or survive battle, but how to enter a holy space. When two holy men meet and cross swords, they put aside worldly turbulence and return to nature where they regain the original condition of an infant. This instant he called *ainuke*. When Sekiun came to these realizations, the martial arts of Japan reached their highest level.

When we describe sword technique, we usually use two expressions, *satsujinto* — "killing with the sword," and *katsujinken* — "giving life with the sword." But Sekiun arrived at this theory through actual combat in which either swordsman might lose his life. Consequently, he saw that we should not superficially equate *ainuke* and *katsujinken*. If we accept his conclusion, then these traditional terms become meaningless or irrelevant in relationship to his ideas.

Although there are few records concerning Sekiun's life or teaching, the light of his achievements shines brightly in the history of the Japanese martial arts. Other swordsmen have become well known through legendary accounts, but I can assure you that fictional heroes are not the same as real martial artists. We should remember that it was through a kind of "historical grace," the gift of preceding generations, that Sekiun was able to attain his level. Every age has produced its own martial artist in such a way that each new swordsman succeeded his precursor and was in turn succeeded by another. Through this process, at least one individual capable of entering the realm of *sei* ("holiness") might have appeared in each age. Sekiun was a revolutionary master, but his times helped him to open his eyes.

After Sekiun, there were many martial arts masters. Some used the same expressions as Sekiun, and often they were more elaborate or exotic, but I do not believe there is a martial arts philosophy equal to his in its development until Yamaoka Tesshu, a master of unparalleled stature and importance for the Meiji period.*

Our forerunners in the martial arts were oriented toward inner research and individual liberation, but we must keep in mind that our country at that time was isolated and quite undemocratic. Modern Japan, on the other hand, is open to the outside world and, while more democratic, is less conducive to this kind of research. It is important for contemporary martial artists to remember that even though the present time is far different than the classic age of martial arts, it offers many new directions and adversaries which must be confronted. We have the responsibility and obligation to express our opinions and beliefs to our nation and our leaders, especially in regard to social and environmental problems. Our movement, therefore, must be different from what has come before.

Section Five: Developing a Modern Martial Art

As we have seen, every martial art reflects its own age, and it is axiomatic that every great idea shall be renewed and that the techniques and philosophies of the great martial artists shall be recreated.

In the *shogun* period, martial artists still carried their sword at their side, but they could not draw it as freely as they had in the earlier times of civil war. Nonetheless, they still risked their lives to create a new way of *budo*. They were spiritual revolutionaries, staking their lives on one swing of the sword, and in many instances, they were avant-garde artists, far ahead of their times.

Even in this age of space travel, I felt that by "crossing swords," we could also develop a new method of exploring psychological sensitivity between two people. By using body movement, we could regain a measure of the genuine communication which has almost disappeared from our lives, and at the same time, repair our bodies and minds from the damaging effects of modern civilization. I believed that in exploring such a method, we would rediscover the true nature of our bodies and our universe. I felt this mode of inner research would be

*As a young man Tesshu devoted himself to the twofold discipline of Zen and sword technique, cultivating that sublime spirit and sensibility which had grown out of the unique combination of *samurai* stoicism and Zen aestheticism during the *shogun* period. He became a master at the spiritual level where Zen and Ken ("sword") are one. Tesshu's accomplishments won him a position as an advisor to the *shogun* during the final years of the Tokugawa government. As a result of his unique spiritual standing among the warring factions, he survived the political and cultural upheavals of the Meiji restoration, unlike most of his samurai contemporaries, and became the personal tutor of the Meiji emperor. In his person and in his teaching the traditional value of the samurai ethos and the spirit of *budo* were recognized and preserved during a period in which it might otherwise have been lost.

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even more necessary in this age because the damage is greater now. By using a body movement or the martial arts to examine the conditions of our own age, I believed that a new mode of expression might arise and attract "a new age philosophy." I hoped to focus the martial arts in this light because I am, after all, a martial artist.

If I were a cobbler, I would of course wish to make strong, beautiful and comfortable shoes. But more than that, I would want to make them in a way that would enable one to be healthy, to work efficiently and to have a bright face and shining free spirit. I would hope that a person wearing my shoes would discover personal confidence and love of neighbor and live in liberty and peace. I would try to produce this shoe, even if it required several hundred years and I were obliged to hand my secrets down to succeeding generations. Even before I created Shintaido, this determination burned in my heart.

I viewed the martial arts as the evolution of consciousness because there was a parallel in the flow of the history of Western art. Of course any connoisseur of art is familiar with its history from Masaccio and Michelangelo to Delacroix, a forerunner of modern art. Delacroix broke through aristocratic control of artistic expression by means of striking colors and vivid imagination. Following his achievements, especially in France, there was a momentous artistic movement known as Impressionism. This was followed by German Expressionism which was steeped in the discoveries of depth psychology. In America, modern art continued to develop in the works of Jackson Pollock, Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol, leading to the "golden sixties" of modern art.

Perhaps there is no better way to describe our times than as the creation of a monster. The rapid development of mass communication and transportation has crisscrossed the sky with jet planes and overrun the earth with motor vehicles. Even in these conditions, modern art continues to rise before us in solemn splendor.

In my own experience as an artist, my canvas was often the same to me as the site of a battle. However, if I lost, I was not injured; I never lost my life, but it was still a battle. I was facing "beauty" as an opponent.

After retracing the last three hundred years of martial arts history, I concluded that just as modern art had to be created in its own historical context, the martial arts could be adapted to modern conditions, and the forms and movements would be completely different from the traditional styles.

It is said that great art can foresee the future fifty or one hundred years hence. Even if a modern martial art cannot do this, it can at least issue a call for today's needs. Just as modern art evolved from the concrete to the abstract and the aim of the artist changed from the evocation of beauty to directness of expression, I felt that the martial arts world should emphasize not only the development of power and individual discipline, but should also be the direct expression and communication of life.

I would like to make one point clear at this juncture. It has been said that

Shintaido was created in an eclectic fashion by taking the best parts of traditional martial arts, including karate. However, in the crucible of modern art, the simple study of classical methods never produces a new way of expression. One cannot be an Andy Warhol merely by practicing drawing for a prescribed amount of time. Similarly, I did not limit my study to karate and the other martial arts in this limited way. This holds true for Shintaido as well: you cannot become an expert in Shintaido simply by studying many kinds of martial arts. I believe it is nonsense to say that it is necessary to study all the classical martial arts before creating a new one. This is the same as saying that before we use an electric light, we must use a candle; or before we drive a car or take an airplane, we must use a horse and buggy. Furthermore, how can we fit the long history and great diversity of the classical martial arts into one category? I spent almost ten years in the study and systemization of classical karate *kata* alone. By the same token, if we were to enter into even one part of classical *budo*, I doubt we could reach Shintaido in one lifetime.

Kobudo, or "old martial arts," is one of the richest aspects of Japanese culture. It is a brilliant treasure which preserves the great philosophical and spiritual attainments of our ancestors. The purpose and character of my work, however, is completely different. My intention is not to preserve old classical forms and transmit them to succeeding generations, but to work and live in the spirit of the old martial artists.

Section Six:

The Locus of One Swing of the Sword is Itself a Sign— Stripping Away Spirituality

After the Second World War, Japanese nationalism which found its ultimate expression in emperor worship, was suddenly and completely destroyed. As a result, most Japanese suffered a loss of confidence and sense of direction.

Following the war, the Japanese martial arts were suppressed by the occupational forces as methods of killing. During my boyhood, I remember how surprised I was when I saw a strange thing called *shinai-kyogi* — "bamboo stick fighting" — practiced by *kendo* students in defiance of this ruling. I believe General MacArthur was very astute when he banned the martial arts in order to weaken the Japanese people physically and spiritually, a condition we call *koshi nuke* (roughly, a loss of will to continue or fight). All martial artists should reexamine the fact that they willingly joined the forces of nationalism, thereby creating a bad impression among the occupying Americans who knew only the fun of sports and games.

Martial artists should always keep in mind and begin from Sekiun's idea that we are human beings, so that the crossing of our swords should be different from

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animal fighting whose main concern is to kill the enemy. Until the end of World War II, the actual expression of most martial arts never reached Sekiun's standard. On the contrary, they were most certainly inferior to his ideas regardless of the ornate theories later associated with them.

Even today, I am afraid that some movements in the martial arts are proceeding in the same mistaken direction of earlier times. I wonder how their proponents would reassure me. While I do not believe it is wrong for them to subscribe to the spirit of *wa* ("peace" or "harmony," a concept deriving from *Nihonshoki*, a myth of Japanese origins, which was revived by Moto-ori Norinaga during the Edo period), in today's global age, martial artists should avoid the attractions of narrow-minded nationalism. In its place, we must find a genuine patriotism based on the spirit of *daiwa* or "great harmony," which is created by the simple and natural movement of the sword. The spirit of *daiwa* leads naturally to the love of truth, the love of one's neighbor and harmonious relations among all human beings.

Mr. Junzo Sasamori has written in his book, *Itto-ryu Gokui* ("The Secret of Itto-ryu"), that we must always move forward passing through traditional *kata* and masters who have handed them down to us. I believe we must study more and more deeply the real and hidden meaning of these words.

How did the spirit of the sword lose its real meaning? Perhaps because it became too spiritual. My reason for saying this can be found in the sadistic tendencies of today's college martial arts clubs.*

What has led to this turn of events? One apparent reason is that most martial arts were created and developed during the Edo period when our country was isolated and its inhabitants prohibited from looking outwards. As a result, most techniques, movements and theories came from inner research, whereby some exceptional martial artists could attain a level of complete freedom or non-attachment. So ordinary people could imagine only tight fists, concentrated *hara* and overall tension throughout the body, when they heard the term "martial arts."

It is very easy to illustrate what I mean. For example, let any Japanese hold a wooden sword. As soon as he grasps it, his face gets contracted and "serious," his knuckles turn white, his arms are glued to his sides and he begins a strange toe dance. I know it is almost impossible to wield a real sword using this kind of form. However, in each of our bodies there flows the blood and culture of our ancestors, for better or for worse. On the other hand, let the same person hold a baseball bat and suddenly his arms and shoulders relax, his eyes focus on the imaginary pitcher, his hips become soft, and he begins a rhythmical motion as he awaits the imaginary pitch.

Every technique or movement of the martial arts should be similar to those of the batter. As long as human beings are involved, basic and correct movement

*In these clubs, the philosophy is very lofty, but the actual practice borders on sadism.

should not be different from other types of athletic activities. I cannot believe that only the martial arts must be hard and unnatural.

If Japanese martial arts have acquired a dark reputation because of the divorce between spiritual explanation and actual conditions, how can we reinfuse them with new light? If we try to attach bamboo to a wooden base — putting new wine in old wine skins — in the name of modernization, we would never succeed. In this case, there was only one way: to strip away all spiritual explanations which had been added after the creation of various techniques. I tried to remove all spiritual gloss until we could reach a "zero point."

In the process of compiling the encyclopedia of karate-do *kata*, I had studied and experienced the traditional forms until I was completely sated. This was a kind of ecumenical karate, embracing all schools and styles. It was almost the same as studying many different martial arts. This experience prevented me from making critical errors based on a limited number of examples, and at the same time, I gained the open-mindedness and confidence to observe any form, technique or movement objectively, as an outsider. As a result of this study, in addition to daily *kumite* practice ("practice with one or more partners"), I arrived at a single conclusion several years later:

What is *kiru*—"cutting?" *The locus of one swing of the sword is itself a sign.*

Only that. Nothing more.

Whenever we talk about the martial arts we usually think of strength or weakness, or spiritual exercise and concentration; but, denying this way of thinking, simply swing the sword. Denying all emotions, simply swing the sword like a machine or robot.

Mr. Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido, and my teacher, Mr. Egami, used to say that seventy percent of the martial arts movement is found in *tsuki* ("thrust or punch") and the remaining thirty percent is throwing. For me, however, even that important *tsuki* was reduced to the simple formula: *tsuki* is forward movement of the fist from the hip.

Finally the day came when the meaning of all techniques became zero for me, and at this point my consciousness was also empty whenever I employed them. I was able to experience the original movements as pure forms, free from all spiritual explanations and theories. Whenever I practiced attack and defense techniques in this manner, I found that the pure original movement was still useful in our age, and that was my purpose and the direction of my studies.

Along with their long history, I found many impurities in the ideas and movements that had been handed down to us from our ancestors. On the other hand, I also recognized how high their spiritual level was in many cases. By making a clean slate of all martial arts movements and reducing them to simple physical actions, little by little, I was able to place them in their true perspective.

The Japanese in particular have a tendency to focus on one *kata* and load it with special meaning to the point of sanctifying it. But, to really study the mind of our teacher, or teacher's teacher, or the teaching of the ancient masters, we must copy

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their forms simply without excessive reverence or preconception. If we can approach them in this way, I am sure the original mind of the founders will naturally come back to us, into our bodies, through the forms themselves. Thus, even though we are living in today's modern world, it may be possible to reexperience their philosophy and teaching. Unless we are geniuses, we cannot hope for more than this. It is very important for us to have a creative life, but if we study properly, we do not all have to be geniuses.

It is true that when we correct the center of our life or practice we can naturally correct everything related to it. Just as sunlight brings the darkness to light and gives life to what had been dead, many errors can be gradually dissolved, revealing the original shapes which had been obscured.

The explanation of this theory may be easy to understand, but becoming zero is a totally revolutionary concept in the martial arts world. When something disappeared from my technique, from my body, many superfluous ideas simultaneously melted away. When my body and mind became zero, new understanding and ideas about nature entered, completely different from my earlier understanding. It sounded like a slow, rhythm coming from a very deep and dark world.

William Blake once wrote: "When the doors of perception are cleansed, everything will appear infinite and holy, whereas it now appears finite and corrupt." In other words, it might be said that consciousness dwells in the room of perception. If we wish to make his idea a reality, then we must open the doors of that room and liberate our consciousness to the outside where there is fresh, new space. Then we will see the whole world in a new light.

I believe Gauguin once said that painting is a two-dimensional world of methodically systematized color. In the same way, any practitioner who wants to study the real and original meaning of *kata* should reduce them to zero, removing all spiritual accessories. When the forms, techniques and movements, thus purified, become simple actions having passed through the space of nothingness, an observer will experience a direct response. The real mind and spirit of the technique will naturally come out of the form.

We should not add spiritual explanation to the movement; it will come naturally, at first vaguely and later very clearly. With mind, body and technique unencumbered by philosophizing, it was easy for me to hear the original voice of natural movements.

I then understood that what we needed at this time was not a martial arts movement that was constrained by tense shoulders, clenched fists and a tight *hara*, but rather one in which our hands and bodies are open to our partner and our neighbor in a gesture of respect, forgiveness and acceptance. What is required is a martial art which allows us to start from this idea. A martial art of today must be a means of developing a new philosophy allowing people all over the world to understand and help each other; it must contribute to the education of the universal man with a global point of view.

I clearly understood this idea during my practice. I believe our age is about to see the dawn of a new culture. Whenever I asked myself what was needed for this new age or what kind of philosophy was required for men living in a global community, my mind, body and technique, in a state of emptiness, sometimes vibrated with a heavenly response, and sometimes to something coming from deep within my being. Afterwards, new techniques, forms and movements came forth one by one.

From the ancient past to the present, there has always been one great truism for the practicing artist: The secret never comes to us unless we go to it first. So, I had to grope my way ahead step by step, through trial and error.

When we consider our lives from a cosmic point of view that embraces a universe whose dimensions are measured in millions of light years, our lifetime becomes a tiny speck under a microscope. But this tiny micropoint is more important for us than the larger cosmos. This is, I believe, the fate of all human beings — we are destined to wander and grope for some truth in our short lives.

I realize that Sekiun transcended the usual understanding of life and death. Before we reach this point, however, the key to our lives is to live and die, to be humble before Truth, to open ourselves physically and mentally, and to develop as much as possible. Furthermore, we should not act as a hindrance to those who are also trying to grow; rather, we should be supporting them.

After World War II, the Japanese received a democratic government as well as freedom of thought, speech and assembly. We did not win what was most urgent and necessary for us — it was given to us. If each of us really wants to be free, we have to experience the battle of personal liberation, a difficult task, especially for the Japanese. In this way, we will realize the true value of freedom of thought and expression in our lives, and, at the same time, understand the value and importance of our lives from a different perspective.

The poem of one person's life is created only for himself, but it can strike a common chord in the hearts of all men. To arrive at that kind of life-expression, I tried to strip away all preconceptions, even the most minute, and I sought to make my entire being zero in every detail.

Section Seven: Looking for the Strongest Technique

A long period of trial and error had to pass before we could fully understand the meaning and necessity of opening our fingers and palms in Eiko and Tenshingoso, the fundamental techniques of Shintaido. After trying many closed fist arrangements, we finally arrived at an open hand form of expression. Let me clarify this for the beginner. If you are just jabbing or punching at random, you really cannot worry about much more than how hard your fist is. A true *tsuki* specialist, however, knows that the strongest fist is not the hardest fist but the one which produces the maximum effect with the least amount of energy. The

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strength of a *tsuki* must be completely controlled so that its effect is exactly as intended. Depending on your intent, the effect should be either strong or weak. The human body is very different from bricks and boards. Sometimes the body can easily receive a *tsuki* that could smash a brick. At other times, however, even a weak or slow *tsuki*, one which only grazes the body, is enough to knock somebody down. This seems strange, but it is true.

Depending on the part of the body which you are attacking, the direction of your opponent's movement, and the timing of your blow, the effect of your *tsuki* will be completely different. Consequently, it is always necessary to change the shape and hardness of your fist, the position of your shoulders and way of moving, and at the same time, to regulate your *kokyu* ("breathing, concentration and will power"). All of these factors without exception must be considered, mastered and harmonized before a good *tsuki* can result.*

To obtain the greatest effect with the least amount of energy, we should not depend on the power which originates from a single part of the body, such as our arms or legs. Instead we must use our holistic power which can only be found by removing all the tension from our body. By making our whole body soft and fluid, our movement will naturally proceed in the direction of our aim, carrying with it our hands and feet, our arms and legs and all the parts of our body in exactly the right balance and motion.

Though it is possible to obtain limited results through the use of muscle power and body building techniques, what I was looking for was something far greater, similar to the natural power and grace displayed in the extraordinary movements of certain animals. If we return to the innate condition of our infancy, we can express this graceful animal power when we move. A baby will never tense up a particular part of its body. Even though babies have had no physical training, their expression of power is so strong and automatic that it is difficult for us to imitate. As infants, we all had strong breathing, soft muscles and a natural innocence which could disarm the strongest opposition. Where has this ability gone? Whenever I had the chance to play with babies, I tested my ideas with their bodies.

The natural form and movement of holistic energy expression is quite different from the so-called natural movement espoused by traditional disciplines. As I was doing my research, whenever I had the opportunity I would study the movement and technique of an experienced or skilled worker, a shoe maker, farmer, fisherman, or other craftsman, very intently. On close inspection, I discovered that as an artisan works, his seemingly slow movements are soft and devoid of shoulder tension. Perhaps this is why they can work so rapidly with a technique that looks sublime compared to an amateur.

Following this thread, after a long time I finally found that the open hand — in

*By the same token, a master such as Sekiun can reach a level where all these elements are a natural ingredient of his personal space. In this case, it is the world which adjusts itself and harmonizes with the man.

which the hand is pulled back, the palm pushed out and the fingers stretched to their limit — was stronger than the hardest fist because when we open our hands, we can automatically express the full power of our life energy. As a result, when this form was used for attack and defense, the damage inflicted on one's partner was infinitely greater than before. My joy at this discovery was similar to that of catching a very large fish.

Previously in my studies, I had discovered a similar form in the old martial arts. In the traditional form, however, the palm is not sufficiently open and the wrist is not bent back enough. The form of the hand which I discovered is exactly the same as that which certain statues of the Buddha have been "practicing" for hundreds of years. This discovery was proof for me that our research went beyond the temporal and that we were reaching back to the origins of humanity and even life itself.

By arranging these forms, I found that *tettsuiken* could best receive a *kaishoken* attack; *musoken* could best receive a *tettsuiken* attack; and, *kaishoken* could best receive a *musoken* attack.* (This last form resembles the hands of a Japanese ghost). Remember, the relationships and meanings of these forms are not so simple or cut and dry; remember that the strength of any form is not absolute, it is always relative.

Section Eight:

Tenshingoso: An Embodiment of the Hidden Cosmic Breath

During that time, although it seemed it was almost impossible, I had the idea of and worked toward creating a short easy *kata* which would include the essence of all that I had studied, and at the same time, would fulfill all the requirements of *budo*. I wanted this *kata* to be a consolidation of all the traditional movements, forms and techniques that had been handed down as secret texts, so they would be available to everyone, even amateurs. As my ambitions for this *kata* grew, I also wanted to bring together all that I had studied in *shiatsu*, massage, health exercises, meditation and certain esoteric training.

The process I envisioned might have been similar to the complex synthesis of many chemicals that produce plastic from petroleum.** I wanted a crystallization of the secret movements of the martial arts, not only for the benefit of the martial arts, but for all the reasons I described in the first chapter. And perhaps, most important, since I am absent-minded I wanted this *kata* to be a readily available

*After I had made this open-hand discovery, I was able to systematize attack and defense techniques. The spectrum of available responses for receiving an attack was immensely expanded; from *Tettsuiken* ("closed hand"), to *musoken* ("soft hand") and *kaishoken* ("open hand").

**In the original, the author often uses the passive voice to describe the creative process.

catalogue and reference book of all the secret techniques that I had learned up to that time.

In response to this configuration of demands, a *kata* consisting of what might turn out to be eight or ten different attack and defense movements gradually took shape. Although this *kata*, as a synthesis of martial arts technique, was created for largely pragmatic reasons, as an embodiment and expression of the common *tao* of many different disciplines, it simulates the cycle of a human life and even the rhythm of the cosmos.

It moves from: nothingness, through birth and awakening, growth, trust and openness, adoration and expression, coherence and consolidation, exploration, control and responsibility, justice and discipline, hope and aspiration, fruition, forgiveness and acceptance, offering and blessing, and returns to the original state of nothingness.

As we repeat this cycle, the forms seem to symbolize the above kinds of mind or spirit (*kokoro*).

When we practice this *kata*, we make the vowel sounds "A" (ah), "E" (ā), "I" (ē), "O," "Um" as loudly as possible, concentrating our focus on a distant horizon and opening our hands as wide as possible. As this form is carried out, very strong and unimagined results begin to manifest themselves. This *kata* can be completed in less than a few minutes, and yet in that time we can reach a state of peace and well-being.

Nevertheless, it still took time to put this *kata* through a rigorous test period before placing it at the center of the Shintaido program.

There are ten attributes or aims of this *kata* which I would like to specify.

- 1) As the center and basic technique of our discipline, the *kata* contains a universality in clear, simple forms which encompass and express a deep and complex philosophy.
- 2) This *kata* is easily enjoyed by the weak as well as the strong, regardless of nationality, sex or age.
- 3) The *kata* can be practiced alone or with two or more people, and can be performed anywhere.
- 4) This *kata* is an antidote for our body to the routine discouragements and small illnesses of our daily life.
- 5) This *kata* contains and supports the whole world of Shintaido and is a means for divining our future course.
- 6) This *kata* demands a wideness of character and a depth of concentration and intensity.
- 7) This *kata* teaches us to focus our spirit on an infinite horizon.
- 8) Routine practice of this *kata* will result in a bright, well-rounded character.
- 9) This *kata* is not an artificial fruit; it expresses the sensi-

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tivity of life and the truth of being which are found in the works and movements of artists in every age.

10) Before I presented this *kata* to the public, it was examined and weighed in the light of all classical movements including the traditional martial arts and was finally selected as the long sought-after nugget.

In April of 1965, as the answer to all these conditions, this *kata* appeared to us in its final radiant form as Tenshingoso.*

Tenshingoso could not have come into existence without the demanding but kind suggestions of Mr. Shigeru Egami, my former teacher and the modern architect of contemporary Karate-do in Japan. He also introduced me to the practice of *shinwataido* developed by Mr. Hoken Inoue who is considered by many martial artists as an unofficial living national treasure. I called our movement Shintaido — "new body way" — for its universality, brightness and simplicity; but perhaps I was also influenced by the name *shinwataido* which means "physical study of peace and unity."

Later, Tenshingoso developed and we were able to discover and arrange many variations of the movement; for example, by oneself while walking, or in *kumite* with a partner holding each other's wrists. We also arranged the order of the movements into different sequences and used different eye directions. By placing Tenshingoso and Eiko (described in the next chapter) at the center of the Shintaido program and applying them, Toitsukihon and its variations came into being. In a similar manner, a new karate, *bojutsu*, *jojutsu*, *jujutsu*, *kenjutsu* and *naginata*** were created without deviating from the basic principles of Tenshingoso and Eiko.

In the Itto-ryu school, there was a great secret technique known as *seijoreiken* which means "sword of the holy spirit." It was expected by many, including several of my own students, that I would follow the tradition of "secret techniques" and keep Tenshingoso as the inner secret of Shintaido. My understanding and aim, however, were different from the point of view of traditional *budo* and I wanted to make Tenshingoso available to everyone.

*"Five expressions of cosmic truth."

**Long-handled sword used mainly by women during the Edo period.

Section Nine: The Birth of Eiko: The Gyroscope of Shintaido

*The heavens declare the glory of God,
The vault of heaven proclaims his handiwork;
Day discourses of it to day,
Night to night hands on the knowledge.
No utterance at all, no speech,
No sound that anyone can hear;
Yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
And their message to the ends of the world.*

Psalm 19: 14, *The Jerusalem Bible*

As an expression of philosophy, the ideas of Eiko actually preceded those of Tenshingoso. As a group leader in karate, I was faced with a persistent problem – common to all karate circles – concerning the practitioners' aggressiveness and readiness to fight. This had been a problem for me since my university days as captain of the karate club when I found myself in the difficult position of having to control several aggressive students. A similar problem existed for judo during the Meiji period (1868 to 1912). The students of *kyudo* ("archery") on the other hand, never suffered from this debility even though they belonged to the martial arts world. I believe that the more a martial art is involved with "fighting spirit," the more likely it is that this kind of problem will arise.

Whenever a violent incident occurred, as a result of this attitude, people would criticize the spirit of the person involved without ever questioning the "nature" of the discipline itself. It is true that troublemakers form only a small percentage of any discipline, and if an individual's personality is stable, there are usually no problems. But this does not change the fact that young men are easily tempted to test the effectiveness of the techniques which they have learned. I believe that each technique must preserve our mind and spirit, and in turn, our mind and spirit should support our technique. Or to put it simply, technique is mind.

If the basis of a movement is *tsuki* or *nage* ("throwing"), it is very natural for this problem to occur. For example, it is natural for you to want to draw something if you have a pencil and paper, even if you are not a great artist.

Perhaps if we were still living in an age when physical combat was still an acceptable means of resolving conflicts, it would be appropriate for us to use force to defeat others. Our destiny, however, was to be born into this age, and we must have the strength and will power to live in the world that was given to us; where the hope of people, in countries large and small, is to live together in peace and harmony; where the overriding theme of the martial arts must be the pursuit of truth to engender love of one's neighbor and the expansion of our consciousness.

How Shintaido Was Born



Cutting by pushing

I thought that if a program of basic movements were created which embodied and expressed a philosophy appropriate for our age, and which at the same time was related to practical considerations of attack and defense, a student practicing *tsuki* or *nage* would be led automatically to pursue truth and the means of loving his neighbor at the same time he was performing the actual technique.

There is a word *inyoittai*, which means, "yin and yang united," that martial arts movements generally use to explain their philosophy. But I was looking for more than a word. The actual movement of the sword must express itself *inyoittai*. This was the form I sought as the root of our discipline.

I was seeking the form of sword technique, which in the second of one swing, combined mind with technique, focusing on heaven or God with focusing on one's partner or man; that combined *oshi-giri* ("cutting by pushing") with *hiki-giri* ("cutting by pulling"); that combined the ideal with the real, and the expression of the strongest power with the strongest feeling of defeat.

In the texts of the old martial arts, we find many great ideas that have been handed down to us. But often the forms themselves did not express these great ideals. I was not convinced that what they were saying was free from sophistry, although I am sorry to have to say this.

This attitude may have come from my theatrical and artistic studies. In the world of artistic expression, there is one uncompromising rule. It says that "if it is not expressed, it does not exist." If an accomplished actor who has trained diligently and is possessed of a beautiful mind, plays a role in a play, everything he does looks beautiful. In as much as he is performing for the public, his role must be presented in such a way that the audience cannot criticize by saying: "We do not understand, make it clearer."

I wanted this form to convey its meaning exactly. On the other hand, I wanted it to enable us to pursue and praise truth, God, love, peace and liberty; and on the



Cutting by pulling

other hand, I wanted it to appear to the professional martial artist as an awesome killer technique, devoid of compassion. This was the only kind of form that had value or interest for me.

In September of 1965, we formed a special group of twenty-seven martial artists called Rakutenkai and we practiced almost every day. Although they were young, the main members had achieved the highest ranking in the black belt system. This was an extremely serious and rigorous endeavor. People joining this training had to put their house in order before each practice, as if they might not return. Our purpose was to discover our physical limits and the threshold of the unknown world which begins at the end of our psychological strength. We had regular weekly practices plus three or more midnight practices a week, from 11:00P.M. to 4:00A.M. These were held in Nogyama park from where we could see the port of Yokohama. Everyone participating in this practice, wearing only a thin *keiko-gi*, was able to endure and suffer no ill effects on cold nights because of their strong will power. They ignored lack of sleep. Often if someone's *boktoh* happened to touch another person, he would drop to the ground in a dead faint.* In addition, we went on frequent fasts to free our bodies from tension and to sensitize our sixth sense.

During this training, we discovered many effective methods to liberate our consciousness, purify our souls and at the same time develop our bodies. Some of these techniques were later used as special warming-up exercises called *seiteihojoundo*.

On December 1, 1966, at about three in the morning, people engaged in sword *kumite*, without my realizing it, entered a perfectly calm world. They pointed

*I had designed a *boktoh* ("wooden sword") which was straight and much heavier than ordinary ones. We later used this sword as the formal *boktoh* in Shintaido-*kenjutsu* practice.

How Shintaido Was Born



Shintaido jump

their *boktobs* toward the night sky and looked up, swaying slightly in unison as if their movement had been choreographed. Their bodies, clad in white, appeared transparent to my eyes. Two or three feet above the ground, I could see what looked like a green mist. No one said a word; they just stood there stretching skyward, and their bodies evaporated, disappearing into the predawn night. There are no words to describe this scene.

I knew intuitively this was the moment I had been seeking, and I could not continue my instruction. My body was caught in the throes of a turbulent inspiration and I was trembling with awe. Suddenly what I had been searching for and struggling toward was there before me in the shape of these other-worldly apparitions. I had almost given up hope of seeing this form in my lifetime, expecting that it might take as much as a hundred years or more to come into existence.

Tenshingoso was born from my idea and perhaps I could say that it was my discovery. But this form, which suddenly appeared from afar, was like a divine apparition. Everything was clear to me. This was the *kata* which fulfilled all the conditions which I had established. What happens when someone cuts down with a sword which is thrust skyward? What would happen if we ran using this form? Is it *oshi-giri* or *hiki-giri*? What would happen if we repeated the same movement open-handed? And what would occur if we used the same ideas cutting diagonally or horizontally? I understood the answer to all these questions immediately without having to put them to the test.

The form of the sword pointed toward heaven is a symbol of love of God. The sword pointed forward represents love of man. Pointing to heaven or pointing to

the horizon amounts to the same thing. There is no greater technique than this.

Two of the most important passages in the New Testament are found side by side in Mark 12:29-31. Jesus says: "Listen Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength." He continues: "You must love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than this." I had never been able to understand why these seemingly contradictory statements were placed together; but when I saw this form, I experienced the words of Jesus immediately and exactly.

Later, while reading an account of the old Japanese martial artists, I came upon the words of Tereda Goroemon, a disciple of the Itto-ryu school, who said:

"Tenshin – shoden – aji – itto" which means "one swing of the sword using the sound of 'Ah' will open one's soul to the truth of heaven." Perhaps centuries ago, he had received the same inspiration of a sword pointed to heaven as we had.

We called this form *Eiko no ken*, "sword of glory," but later we simply called it *Eiko*, or "glory," because of the universal nature of the Shintaido program. This form along with *Tenshingoso*, became the fundamental movement of Shintaido. All students of Shintaido begin and end their practice with these forms.



Tenso



Shoko

Chapter Three

What Shintaido Has Conceived: Hikari to Tawamureru — "Playing with Light"

In Section six of the last chapter, I described our attempts to eliminate all traditional explanations and spiritual ideas from each *kata* in order to reinfuse these forms with their original life. As we continued this process, we attempted to strip away all spirit, authority, and commentary, even from those *kata* considered accurate; refining each one to the point of being a simple sign or pure action. Once we experienced this naked form, we found that seemingly beautiful corollaries such as a pure mind, honesty, life-exchange and holistic action had been added on after the fact. As each *kata* was reduced to a simple act, free from the old mentality, buds of a new life which had never been seen before would sprout forth as if they had been waiting for a chance to live and thrive again through the *kata*.

Even if traditionalists or the public in general might offer a very reasonable interpretation of Tenshingoso, I knew that any explanation, either of its parts or as a whole, was completely unnecessary.

New forms evoked a new spirit which as a matter of course renewed each practitioner. Each face I saw was completely changed. A somber darkness lifted and was replaced by a new exuberance. People had become youthful, powerful and agile, not only in their bodies, but also in their minds. I felt that something important was taking place. *Waza*, or "technique," acquired a deeper practical meaning as well as theory. Beginning from zero, they had liberated themselves from the silence and heaviness of history, and were able to practice the techniques and variations of the Shintaido program, whether alone or with partners, in absolute freedom.

As the basic or central *kata* can change or develop in incredible ways, the person performing it can change his consciousness just as incredibly. In *kumite*, participants no longer practiced with tense muscles because they would give



themselves entirely to the form. It was possible for them to try to respond to the slightest movements of their partner, The strong desire of two persons to express this kind of intense sensitivity can lead to perfect communication. In this interaction, the complete oneness of two human beings is created.

At first we may practice Eiko and Tenshingoso by ourselves, but later we can practice with one or several partners. After becoming familiar with these forms, as many as fifty or one hundred people can practice together; either facing each other in two lines or in a group, circling in and around each other at random. In either case, the movements of the group can be arranged freely in many directions. With sufficient experience, a whole class might achieve a climax in which the unbelievable soft and natural movement of wild animals returns to the body of modern man.

When we practiced these *kata* and movements, we found that they reflected the universe itself, and sometimes the mysteries beyond.* One television station went so far as to introduce our movement as a "cosmic martial art."

Whenever a student's form is corrected, it is natural that his mode of thinking

*From another point of view some of the movements in the basic program could be seen as a collection of sub-atomic particles which can be arranged in an infinite number of variations of patterns, corresponding to the infinite variety of talents and abilities that are contained in the human spectrum.

What Shintaido Has Conceived

will change and his philosophy deepen. This leads to a renewal of consciousness, which leads in turn to social awareness, all of which reenters the forms: an endless circle.

When practicing a *kata* which has been liberated, the mind of each participant is free to express itself in a natural and spontaneous manner. Nothing has to be coaxed or forced. If something is there, it will come out automatically through the movement. Someone watching such a movement might feel as if he were seeing a dance being performed for the first and last time.

The birth of *Hikari to tawamureru* — a *kata* which consisted of pure and free movement — marked our complete independence from traditional *budo*. The profound reflections of personal value based on the absolute freedom which was expressed in the forms of Tenshingoso, were now jumping and dancing about like beams of light.

Everything — fighting, dancing, natural movement, spiritual confusion, nature — entered freely into the field of our movement and was burned in the glowing crucible of our practice. Deep concentration was no longer a secret esoteric technique, but a natural and common element of our practice.

When we practice this *kumite* on the beach, it resonates with the ocean breeze and the sound of the waves. If we practice in an urban setting, it sings of the nostalgia of civilized people. Music is the natural companion of this *kumite*. The dissonant sounds of modern jazz or rock, which can be heard as the cries and sighs of modern man, are the friends of this *kumite*.

During this practice, people emit cries of joy or sadness; others may reach a point of total ecstasy. We can be drunk or sober with these movements, somber or exuberant. All that is required is that we express ourselves as simply and sincerely as possible, regardless of our physical strength. It is not even necessary to move. It is enough simply to play or just be present. This *kumite* is a revival of childhood expression that we lost by growing up.

Perhaps this form can best be described as the "embodiment of love expressed through movement," because it is the truth in and of itself. There were no longer any *kata* here. All taboos, traditions, preconceptions, prejudices are now irrelevant. There are only human bodies, spirit and movement — nothing else.

What is expressed in the field of this movement is pure being. Since there are no formal components in *Hikari*, we cannot include a technical description of its movement in this book even though it is one of the three fundamental techniques of the Shintaido program.

Chapter Four

To Overcome the Barriers to Mutual Understanding

Shintaido is now gaining popularity overseas, especially in Europe and the United States of America where it is called "art" because of its subtle and swift movements.

In the spring of 1969, a team sponsored by the French Ministry of Culture and headed by M. Philippe Ferrand visited Japan to collect, document and introduce the Japanese martial arts to the French people. When they came to see the *keiko* of Rakutenkai, they were amazed and excited since it was so dynamic and powerful and, at the same time, so peaceful and calm. It was so different from other *budo* that the team could not put the Rakutenkai *keiko* in the same film as the others. Therefore they decided to introduce this *keiko* in a separate film as the culmination of Japanese martial arts. When the film was shown, one of the spectators, the late Toko Anzawa, a great master of Japanese archery at the time, described his impression of what he saw in this way:

I fully comprehended that, in these sequences, they were moving in a state of complete mental concentration where only those who had gone beyond human limitations through practice could enter. Awakening from a reverie in the middle of the film, I tried to shoot an imaginary arrow at them whenever there was an opening, but I finally was unable to let fly a single shaft during the entire duration of the film. I would like to express my sincere thanks to them for making such a wonderful *keiko* despite their youth.

In September of 1971, I went to the mountains of Massachusetts to a commune called "Spirit in the Flesh" led by Michael Metelica, a twenty year old individual with exceptional leadership qualities. About two hundred people who shared a back-to-nature philosophy, including older adults and children were living at the commune. Following up an address which I had received by chance, I went to visit them at their home, far from the cities, carrying one small shoulder bag. I wanted to use them as sounding boards and to see their reaction to Shintaido. On that day, almost the whole commune gathered to practice a movement which



they had never seen or heard of before; some were enthusiastic, some in awe, some in tears. This new culture brought by a stranger from a foreign land flooded into the hearts of these young Americans who were struggling to live a life of freedom and peace in nature. After a brief introduction to Shintaido, through Tenshingoso, each person came up to me to tell me of their strong impressions. This was Shintaido's first day in America.

At the Third International Conference of Humanistic Psychology held in Tokyo, August 1972, Shintaido was introduced to psychologists, philosophers, medical doctors — scholars of the first order — from all over the world, and it won the highest praise from them especially with respect to its underlying philosophy. On another occasion, a demonstration tour of the United States, the late Dr. Alan Watts, who lectured on Oriental philosophy at many American universities, was very impressed, saying, "Shintaido will enlighten and redeem the young generation in America today. I earnestly hope you will spread Shintaido in our country and I will spare no effort to help you achieve this."

Although Shintaido had arisen and developed in modern Japan, I found it was accepted among Westerners without revision or qualification. The martial arts which had been transmitted vertically from generation to generation, could now spread horizontally over the entire surface of the globe.

Two months earlier, I had attended the summer camp of French Shintaido at Stes. Maries de la Mer in southern France. This group, which was almost a year old, had been very active putting up posters in and around Paris. The camp, held near Arles, included people from all over France, plus students from Spain, England,

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Germany, Morocco and Brazil. There were approximately seventy participants from all walks of life, ranging in age from six to fifty.

People in Japan usually notice how bright and relaxed Shintaido members at a *gasshuku* are compared to participants in other Japanese athletic groups. But even with my experience of Japanese *gasshukus*, I was quite surprised to see how casual this French gathering was. The French attitude seemed to be that they were being taught by a "friend from Japan" rather than a *sensei*, perhaps a reflection of their natural character, although their attitude toward the study of hidden truth and their humility and seriousness concerning individual initiative are admirable. This kind of bright, open atmosphere enabled me to relax, and behave freely (perhaps in part because I was freed from some of my responsibilities as a teacher). However, when it is a question of transmitting a culture, this type of relationship will sooner or later prove inadequate.

The *tao* or "way" in the East used to be closed to all but a few disciples who had to be approved by the master. This is similar to the relationship between master and apprentice in the old European guild system. This strict kind of apprenticeship training featured a strong, compact, human bond. Naturally, the student would earnestly try not only to assimilate his master's specific techniques, but also to discover the experiences and wisdom behind the techniques which had been handed down from countless generations.



To Overcome The Barriers to Mutual Understanding

"The constant way" is the *tao* which cannot be verbalized. There are so many truths which are silently scattered along this "way." Only through the bond between master and disciple, developed through a long period of human history, can the seeker hope to find these hidden truths. Shintaido was successful in crashing through the narrow gate which leads to the "way," and in that moment, made an opening for people all over the world. That is why many have gathered at the entrance, acquired the truth and found fulfillment. You might, on the other hand, just find yourself standing motionless on this speechless path; only your own incredible effort, only your own hand can grasp the unspoken truth.

In most cases, human relations in the West are developed horizontally, but in the East, despite recent tendencies to the contrary, vertical relationships generally remain as in days of old. Societal relations are based on and reflect family relationships wherein individuals work while they are young to contribute to the group, but when they grow old and infirm they are in turn supported by others.

With respect to the master/student (disciple) relationship in the East, there is mutual and equal responsibility despite the relative superiority or inferiority of their position. In the West, there is a tendency for the positions themselves to be equal. Eastern "disciples" will totally accept and follow the teacher's direction in every aspect of their lives, which they place in his hands. Through this kind of human relationship a student can learn the ways of masters from many earlier generations. By devoting himself to one master, trying to fill himself completely with his teaching, the student can absorb the *kata* of thinking which have come down through many generations, just as the desert absorbs water; by following his teacher he can reach his true self and go on to create something new which can, in turn, be transmitted to subsequent generations.

The teacher will take total responsibility for his student, not only in the *dojo*, but in all details of his private life and in planning his future as well. It may be hard for Westerners to believe it, but there are many such masters at the present time — and they are not the exceptions — who will sacrifice their own lives for the well-being of their students: finding jobs, marital partners, in fact, just about anything. If a teacher cannot do this kind of job, society cannot rate him as a true teacher or master.

Of course Japanese society has changed greatly in recent years, but even in the most modern, giant trading companies or commercial enterprises, human relations are still "vertical" to a degree surprising to most Westerners. It must be admitted that the Western "horizontal" type of human relations are most appropriate and functional when doing business or trade, but it is deficient as a means of completely handing down spiritual tradition from generation to generation.

At the risk of over-generalizing, I might say that Western society has no way to transmit the "world of spirit" (*kokoro nosekai*) which can compare to that found all over India, China, Korea and Japan. Eastern human relations are truly the "mother's womb" in which the magnificent spiritual world is created. In Japan,

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this world is found in the tea ceremony, *Noh* plays, martial arts, flower arrangement, archery and others. I therefore believe that our friends can reach a deep understanding of the Eastern spiritual world, to a degree they might not have imagined beforehand, if they can experience in a profound way the kind of relationship I have described.

When I am with people from abroad who are studying Shintaido in Japan, I can see that beautiful and solid human relationships, transcending the distance between West and East, have been formed, and I cannot hide my admiration for them and happiness to be in their midst. However, when I see a Japanese instructor trying to do something for his non-Japanese student, albeit in a quiet or "hidden" way, and hear that student complaining about him without trying to understand what he is really doing, I find that we have a problem we must resolve if we want to overcome the barriers which stand in the way of mutual understanding. The day will soon come when students from the Middle East, Africa and communist countries will be joining Shintaido. In order to have complete understanding among all members, we must reconfirm that Shintaido is deeply rooted in one country's soil — as I wrote at the beginning of Chapter Two — and focuses directly on the question of life and death which goes beyond borders, nationality, race and time itself.

I believe it is very beautiful to see the sweat on a person, regardless of race or nationality, when he or she is seriously challenging *kai kyaku sho* for three or four kilometers on an ocean beach. I can also see wondrous beauty in two persons who cannot speak the same language but are performing a *kumite*, at first

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roughly, and then more and more smoothly and deeply until they attain complete unification of *kokyu*. There is another kind of incomparable beauty which has struck me. This occurs when I am giving some explanation to non-Japanese and they press around me, their imaginations burning with a desire to learn.

Most of my effort when I was creating Shintaido was directed to the idea of creating a system which would enable people to reach a high level of growth. So, if we meet some difficulties in understanding Shintaido, let us try to overcome these difficulties rather than changing the system of Shintaido itself.

I wanted to gather as many people as possible through Shintaido and to let them know the world which is revealed by this method. It is not Shintaido which comes to them, but they, the learners, must come to it. You must grasp for yourself and not wait to be served. Before complaining that the method of giving is wrong, first examine your way of learning to see where the fault lies.

It is not only the exotic or the unusual that foreigners are looking for in Japan. Although their way of research may be quite different from ours, they too are looking for a new method to develop themselves. I believe they will find in Japan a philosophy which can lead all the people of the world to a new life.

We do not have to try to flatter each other; it is enough to come with an open, unprejudiced mind. There may be a philosophy in the world which can lead and give life to its inhabitants. What I did was to look for it, and found it through my own method in Japan.

There are many Shintaido members who happened to find Shintaido here in Japan or who came here for the purpose of studying it. Included among them are some who have recovered their health which had been completely devastated by drugs; some others found the true meaning of what they had studied in other fields when they came to Japan to study Shintaido.* One individual was a missionary who was freed from dogma and found that love itself will give life to people. Another joined after a long history of karate study in his own country and found what he was searching for in the practice of Shintaido. Yet another found the ultimate purpose he had been seeking in life. There are many people who have had similar experiences in Shintaido.

If you do Shintaido with a proper attitude, if you seek with a "beginner's mind," you will surely reap abundant fruits, recovering your body's natural condition in a natural way and discovering a vastly expanded world.

A new culture is never born without a parent culture to nurture and develop it. No culture has ever come into being without the blood and sweat of many individuals. Shintaido, conceived in the womb of a warrior tradition, is one of these new cultures marking the dawn of a planetary age that will unite mankind.

*One of the greatest hopes of foreign members is to participate some day in the annual *Daienshu* held in Japan. At this event, all instructors in Japan who have received direct instruction from the author in Tokyo come together. Also, a very strict examination for instructor certification is held. It takes place every year in May and many members come from outside Japan; regardless of their experience, they can study from excellent instructors and meet new friends.

Chapter Five

How to Make This Age Better

In today's complicated world, there is much happening that cannot be comprehended or expressed through a simple *yin-yang* philosophy or a philosophy of attack and defense. *Keiko* is a basic formula and does not have to include or express these complexities. Instead we must focus our practice on the simple human principles that unite the *keiko* world with the social world. We must learn these principles with our bodies and translate them into concrete arrangements in our daily life. The most important task for us is to find the true direction of our life. By shining a light on the center of our being, we can renew ourselves and make our center sure. When someone starts our program and begins to awaken his hidden talent, he fulfills one of my original aims for Shintaido.

I believe creative life consists of millions of continuing *satoris*.* Creativity is not the exclusive province of artists and artistic expression. If we stop the automatic acts of daily life, surrendering yesterday's happenings and separating ourselves from the old self of one day ago, through an act of our will we will discover a new life of continuing *satori*. By pursuing a new mind, we will approach our real self, step by step, and discover the deeper meaning of a truly creative life.

It is surprising to see how many external and internal pressures, how many mental corpses have become customs, taboos, rules and prejudices in this world. They have exhausted our life energy and drained our creative mind. At one time perhaps there was some purpose for their existence, but they have lost their meaning and spirit during the course of history. Unable to express either our hopes or convictions, our ideas or inspirations, this debris of history threatens to still the pulse of our existence. This is not the place to describe all the antiquated customs and conventions of the world, but when the fire of our life is ignited and glowing, we will naturally see what is false and contradictory, masquerading in the guise of the genuine.

In this struggle, there are some setbacks, but we have no alternative except to

*Enlightenment, awareness or understanding.

How to Make This Age Better

continue to develop ourselves, and when we have won the truth that this struggle brings, then we must sincerely try to share the fruits with our neighbors. I hope — first for myself and then for others — that we will persevere in this venture, and that Shintaido will continue to be a map and textbook for self-study. I dream that someday a future generation will forge ahead using the map which has been prepared anew by each succeeding generation of practitioners.

What is received by the body will never disappear because the body itself has been transformed in the process. I hope that, together with all those who love, practice and support Shintaido — directly or indirectly — plus those who will find Shintaido in the future, we can continue our movement and transfer Truth from body to body, our most dependable witness.

In the past, we struggled for the future, but now the victory we must win is for today.

Translator's Note

*D*uring my first visit to the United States ten years ago, I saw the Thomas Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C. and read the following words inscribed there:

I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws or constitutions, but laws . . . must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind . . . with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times.

These words reminded me of the code of Master Koizumi,* one of the great figures in the history of Japanese martial arts who said:

Martial arts must change with the demands of each age, otherwise they are of no use to the warrior.

Just as Jefferson's code can be adopted as a slogan for radical, revolutionary movements, though it was originally intended as a guideline to a vision of popular democracy, Master Koizumi's code has also been adopted by opposing aspects of the Japanese martial arts — the technological and the spiritual.

The technological aspect which began its modern development with the innovations of the Oda Nobunaga clan during the Civil War Period in Japan,** has been inordinately successful during the last four hundred years, to the point of threatening the life of the planet with nuclear weapons and "star wars" technology. On the other hand, even though it was possible for a practitioner to aspire to the highest level of spiritual training available in his particular age, the overall historical development of the spiritual aspects of the martial arts lagged far behind these technological advances. After World War II, the martial arts were particularly vulnerable to the corruption of commercialism through the mass media. The more Japanese martial arts were popularized throughout the world, the more superficial became the understanding of the true spirit of *budo*, even by the Japanese themselves.

*Founder of the Shinkage-ryu school in the early sixteenth century.

**Fourteenth to sixteenth centuries.

Translator's Note

Fortunately, however, it was destined that certain martial artists in Japan would recover the true balance of the martial arts.

During the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, after Anton Geesink, a member of the Dutch judo team, defeated the Japanese and became champion, the Japanese were stunned. They felt the honor of Japanese *budo* had been tarnished by a modern martial arts system in which technique and spirit had been subverted by size and power. We were not of course angry with Anton Geesink. In our defeat, we found a new aspiration. Those of us who were practicing under Mr. Aoki vowed to restore the Japanese martial arts. Each of us wrote a will to our family and left home. We put our life in his hands with the understanding that our talent would be used to develop a martial art for our new age, even if it meant giving up our life.

The story of the long struggle that followed and which eventually led to the discovery of *Eiko no Ken*, is described in Chapter Three.

Until this age, I think most great philosophers and religious leaders have traditionally denied the violence which is an integral part of our being. In place of a real solution to the question of violence, they have given us ideals or morals — even though they know those with great potential will naturally also have a greater capacity for violence. The more violence is turned into a form of spiritual garbage through misunderstanding and suppression, the more virulent is its odor when the cap blows off and it is finally released. I personally believe Mr. Aoki is the first man to break through this barrier and, acting in the spirit of Jesus Christ, he has given us a positive *kata* ("way") to accept and assimilate this violent energy.

It is a truly great moment for us as we make this textbook available in English. In the action part of this text we have shown only the great foundational techniques of Shintaido. Traditionally, such foundational techniques have been kept a closely guarded secret. From these fundamentals, however, spring the principles for a new system that today encompasses almost every aspect of the Japanese martial arts as well as aspects of fine arts and esoteric arts. My own participation in the development of the Shintaido program over the past twenty years has included the study of *kenjutsu*, *bojutsu*, *jojutsu*, *jujutsu*, karate, performance, physical therapy, esoteric training, discipline . . . and much more. I hope that in the future we can publish more information about these various areas of Shintaido, and eventually compile a general encyclopedia of all Shintaido.

A few words about this translation; I worked with Michael Thompson over a five year period translating from the original Japanese text. We started with reading sessions for the San Francisco group in which I translated and Michael took notes. I take full responsibility for any parts which are difficult to understand or mistranslated. This is a result of my limited English and is neither due to Mr. Aoki's original text nor to Michael's attempts to translate from my Japanese

Translator's Note

English. Since Shintaido is a body movement, if parts of the translation are hard to understand, please support your imagination and understanding through actual experience.

I would like to thank some of the many people who made this translation possible. A special thanks to Masatake Egami and Kenneth Waight who volunteered to demonstrate the movements. Also, I would like to thank Kazu Yanagi for the photography, and all of the efforts of Shintaido of America in raising funds, editing, publishing and for their future efforts in distribution. And finally, I would like to thank the International Shintaido Federation headquarters in Tokyo for giving us the great honor of publishing this English version, and for providing us with information, pictures and support.

A final note, the original textbook was published in 1976 in Japan. Some parts have necessarily been arranged according to the demands of our age.

Haruyoshi Fugaku Ito
San Francisco
March, 1982



*Run, run, young people!
Keep running, keep your eyes
Fixed beyond the horizon!
Tomorrow is for you . . .*

Do the Japanese have more to teach us than how to increase productivity?

What is a "modern" martial art?

How can the actual practice, not just the idealistic philosophy, of a body movement help us to change our lives and our world?

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