

BOJITSU

by KEN WAIGHT

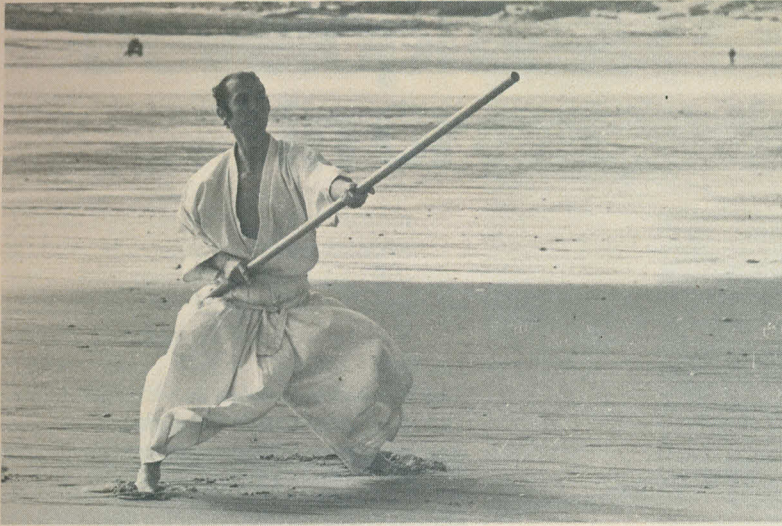


A group of Japanese and English making keiko during a gasshuku by the Pacific ocean in central Japan.

There was a warm breeze blowing, as I strolled down the hill. It felt pleasant as it brushed my face and the trees were being gently washed in its stream. There was a certain softness to it and I could feel spring was near. The wind played on the surface of a pond causing various patterns to appear and as quickly again to vanish. Nature was beginning to have a party. Looking at the renewal about me, crocuses were turning out to meet the sun and some fresh green buds popping out of olive brown branches, brought to mind the renewal of our own bodies and minds. In my last article I wrote of the need for a fresh mind and that also goes for our body and Keiko. Now that spring is here and we feel to renew ourselves, it is perfect to begin Hitori Keiko. That is the study of Keiko alone. Of course, we can

make this kind of Keiko at any time and some seasons are best suited for certain types of Keiko, but with this cold period going to the body tends to open more and along with nature the desire to refresh ourselves. When we study alone we need to change our Keiko and thought. Some people do the same Keiko as they might do in a group or a dojo. Many people never even do Keiko alone so that they never complete their understanding. To make Hitori Keiko requires experience. It takes time and perseverance and much faith in a greater world. Our relationship with the space we move in and nature alter, they become more personal, a silent conversion takes place which deepens. We are able to penetrate more fully and see more clearly our own Keiko and its effect upon us.

Let me say that it is not easy to make Hitori Keiko and continue to a deeper level as well as keeping it open and light. It can be frightening and dangerous and experienced people should be near to offer help and guidance, but it is a necessary part of discovery as is learning with a group and teaching. Renewing ourselves, discovering our own Keiko, getting fresh ideas are all important for group Keiko. As when we pour our energy and ideas into the group a time comes when we will be tired, stale, it then becomes important to make Hitori Keiko to remake our own private Keiko and deepen it. You could say that our group Keiko is a reflection of our Hitori Keiko. When our Hitori Keiko becomes deep and wide and strong so will our group Keiko become more interesting, the underlying communication more



No. 1 your back or hips as this will only make your movement more unnatural and limited. Hold the boh with the whole of the palm, push it forward and extend your feeling through it. Keep the near hand low and close to the hip. (Photo 1.) Now draw the boh back smoothly and in a horizontal line. Extend your arms so as to stretch your chest. (Photo 2.) When you have reached this maximum start pushing the rear arm forwards sliding is along the boh until it is extended out in front. The other hand will

complete and a greater breadth and **No. 2** vision attained.

These two techniques of the boh are both stationary but are foundations for moving techniques. They also offer other points for future study. One is to the middle (chudan) the other the upper (jodan). They may be used in the Kiri Komi or Kiri Harai forms. Practicing them will also teach us to become used to the boh. This



No. 3 have been drawing across and back. (Photo 3.) Repeat this again on the other side and you will be back to the starting point (4). It will take you some time to achieve a smooth, fluid movement but you should be able to continue for a long time without any break in your rhythm as your concentration becomes stronger. This is a type of cycle with the peak of its wave reached at the maximum forward movement.

act of becoming familiar is very **No. 4** important. It is important to be fluid and natural using all of the boh, something like using a pen — we don't even give a thought to holding it in our hands. Unless we group this naturalness our technique and movement become severely limited.

To begin with the posture taken must be strong. Lower the body and relax the knees and legs and allow your gravity to drop. Keep your back straight and look out towards the horizon. Don't tense



