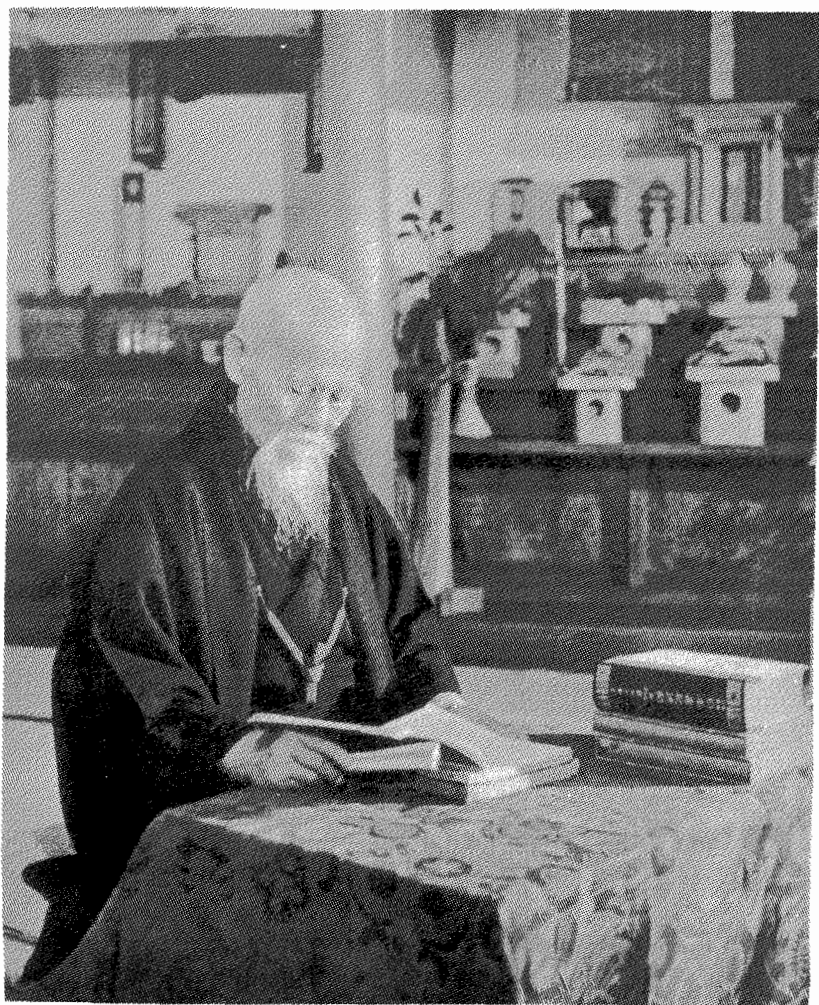


AIKIDO FORUM

合氣道

A JOURNAL OF AIKIDO
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
Published by Victoria Aikikai

Number 11, April 1992



Author's Guide

Articles submitted for inclusion in the Aikido Forum must be type written(double-spaced), be less than 1600 words, and be accompanied by a brief autobiography (40 words, or less) including rank, dojo name, and a personal telephone number. We prefer the articles to be submitted in English, but do have limited translating capabilities. Please keep a copy for your records, and submit your article(s) to the address below.

Aikido Forum,
P.O. Box 5581, Station B.,
Victoria, B.C.,
Canada, V8R 6S4.

AIKIDO FORUM

Number 11, April, 1992

Table of Contents

Waka Sensei Interview	4
Book Review: Musashi	10
G. Hewson	
Zero-Sum Principle	13
E. Damer	
The Physical Side of Training	17
F. Burlingham	
To Be or Not To Be	20
C. Aarons	
Thus Spoke O'Sensei	23
E. Damer	
Thoughts On Summer Camp	28
D. Dick	
Giving Up Your Centre	30
J. Betts	
Aikido and Self Defence	34
G. MacPhail	
The Contract	36
J. Betts	
Gratitude	37
B. Peacock	

c 1992 by the Aikido Forum



Printed on Recycled Paper

The intent of the Aikido Forum is that it be a place for discussion on matters relating to the practice of Aikido. To that end, **articles are invited** from Aikido practioners throughout the Aikido community. Articles can be submitted on paper or MS-DOS diskette. Please provide a paper copy to ease our frustration in the event we cannot read the disk.

As well as articles, **Aikido graphics are invited**. We'd like to present some of the visual impact of Aikido within these pages. We are particularly interested in graphics suitable for scanning and reproducing as small (2" x 2" or less) images for visual impact in white space.

Most of all, our aim is to provide a "participatory forum" for the exchange and growth of information and understanding of Aikido. We invite participation from authors, artists, new subscribers, readers, criticizers, subscription promoters, distribution helpers, and whomsoever else might have something to offer the Forum or the Aikido community in general.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

2 issues:

- (CDN\$) 10.00, Outside Canada - (US\$) 8.00

4 issues:

- (CDN\$) 15.00, Outside Canada - (US\$) 12.00

6 issues:

- (CDN\$) 20.00, Outside Canada - (US\$) 15.00

Single issues/Back issues --- \$4.00 CDN/\$6.00 US

EDITORS MESSAGE

Ralph Kopperson

As all of you who subscribe to the Aikido Forum know, we have had some difficulty in achieving our goal of twice yearly publication. To repeat from last issue, subscriptions are tracked by issue, rather than by year, so slow timing does not mean issues lost to the reader. Having said that, we are still striving to expedite the various stages in production and it remains our goal to publish twice yearly. More and more of the responsibility for production is being passed on to new people. This process, like Aikido, is slow and awkward at first. We ask that you bear with us through this period of transition.

We are honoured to include in this issue, an interview with Waka Sensei who was in attendance for the 1991 B. C. Summer Camp. We hope that you find it as enlightening as we did. The rest of the issue has a distinctly philosophical bent to it with articles on Neitzche, the principles of the zero-sum game and the Eros/Thanatos duality. There are also articles on the physical side of training, another book review by George Hewson and one practitioner's experience of discovery and appreciation for this martial art that we all practice. We also have an article on summer camp, one teacher's personal dilemma as he comes to term with various styles of teaching, and more.

We hope that you enjoy this issue. We are always open to new ideas, so feel free to write us with your ideas. Would you like to see a place for letters to the Forum? Please let us know what you think of the present format and how we might improve it.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor Ralph Kopperson (Victoria)

Associate Editor Ishu Ishiyama (Vancouver)

Book Reviewer George Hewson (Toronto)

Subscriptions Gail MacPhail (Victoria)

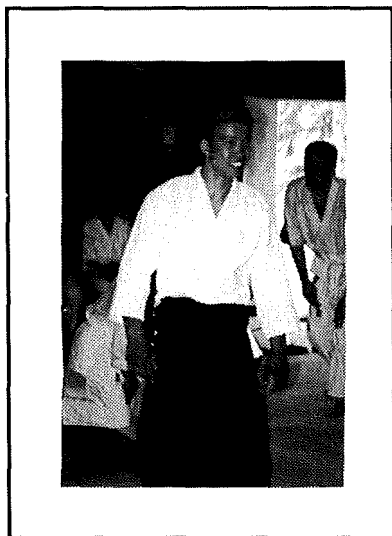
Design and Layout Jim Pine (Victoria)

Publisher

Victoria Aikikai
P.O. Box 5581, Station B,
Victoria, B.C.,
Canada, V8R 6S4

Our thanks to the various dojo representatives for raising the the profile of the Aikido Forum in their areas. Our policy is now to mail all issues directly to the subscribers. We look to the dojo representatives to provide us with a public relations function. We invite anyone in a dojo to voluteer in advertising the existence of, and encouraging articles for, the Aikido Forum.

INTERVIEW



**WAKA SENSEI
HOMBU DOJO, JAPAN**

**INTERVIEWER: RALPH KOPPERSON
ASSISTANTS: L. MCKINLAY
G. MACPHAIL
TRANSLATION: ISHIYAMA SENSEI**

FORUM: Thank you very much for giving us this time. We much appreciate your presence here for our summer camp and Aikido training.

In your travels for Aikido, you see many different dojos and many people of different cultures practising Aikido. Are there major differences in practise from one place to another?

WAKA SENSEI: I go to various countries for instruction. The earnest, sincere attitude toward the practise is one thing that is common amongst various practitioners. Practising attitudes or style vary depending on each practitioners attitude or consciousness and also, each regional instructors style or attitude.

FORUM: Aikido is practised all over the world today, and has been for many decades now. Do you see Aikido transforming?

WAKA SENSEI: Techniques do not change. However, the environment in which Aikido is practised has been changing. It is possible that such environmental changes may influence the way we practise Aikido. As an example, when the founder started Aikido, the rigor of the Martial art was expected and this was because of the era-related cultural background. Whether the martial rigor is stressed and taught in a given culture or country now really depends on the instructors attitude or approach.

FORUM: Can you tell us something about your own training in Aikido and the major influences that shaped your Aikido?

WAKA SENSEI: The person who has influenced me the most in my life and training has been Doshu, my teacher and my father. These days the Aikikai building is a modern concrete building, but when I was born, the Dojo was part of the house. I learned by watching and

imitating practitioners, but my parents never asked me or forced me to do Aikido. Through such exposure and also having watched my father live his life this way, I have decided to take on this Aikido career.

FORUM: One thing that we see in North America in the last few years is an increasing interest in studying Aikido. In the same period, the movies of Stephen Segal have given a higher profile to Aikido. What is your view of such movies?

WAKA SENSEI: I think that kind of movie has had some impact or influence. However, the main sources of influence or promotion of Aikido are the practitioners who practice seriously and sincerely and their instructors. The passion of these practitioners for Aikido and the efforts of the instructors have contributed mostly.

FORUM: Aikido differs from some martial arts in that there is a co-operative relationship between Nage and Uke. Can you say something about the responsibilities of Nage and Uke, in that relationship?

WAKA SENSEI: This practising style comes from the Founder's beliefs. He had an intention that we need to appreciate this subtle relationship. Training should be done accordingly. You cannot practice by yourself; you can only practice and improve because you have a partner. Keeping this in mind you need to practice, explore and strengthen the mind and the body.

FORUM: As North Americans we sometimes have difficulty with the Japanese culture and concepts that we deal with in Aikido. There are three elements I would like you to comment on, if you would: Shoshin, Mushin, Zanshin.

WAKA SENSEI:

SHOSHIN- Means you maintain the humble attitude as a beginner.

MUSHIN - The Empty Mind, you throw away distorted thinking or unnecessary thoughts and immerse yourself, mind and body, in practise.

ZANSHIN - Refers to the body posture after you have thrown a partner.

Shoshin and Mushin are concerned with the mental attitude or mental state and Zanshin is not. That is, it does not have the same psychological meaning. It is very easy to forget Shoshin and Mushin. The importance of these concepts applies to everyone at all levels.

FORUM: Many different kinds of people practice Aikido: strong, old, weak, men and women. The black belts moving very fast with the beginners going more slowly. Can you comment on the responsibilities that Yudansha and beginners have in their shared practise.

WAKA SENSEI: As I said earlier about Shoshin, the senior students or black belts should practise with the clear awareness of how they felt when they were beginners so that when they practise with beginners they have a better understanding. Beginners, on the other hand, should express and feel the appreciation of learning something from black belts. When those two elements work together, it becomes Aikido; without it, it's not Aikido.

FORUM: There are some advanced practitioners who are older and physically sore, who cannot practise with the same speed and rigor. Can they still participate in Aikido and gain from practise?

WAKA SENSEI: Yes, that's the unique strength of Aikido, and old people, young people and men and women can practise. Aikido allows you to practise in harmony with those people.

FORUM: There are some times when women in Aikido feel that their role in Aikido is more restricted than men. For example, often when two practitioners are of equal rank, one a man and one a woman, the man expects the woman to take the role of lower rank. Can you comment on that?

WAKA SENSEI: That kind of attitude is non-Aikido in the first place, because in Aikido you are expected to practise with all sorts of people. This kind of problem is an individual's problem, but the most important thing is that the origin or centre of Aikido training is to harmonize with different types of people, with respect.

FORUM: Aikido is rewarding on many different levels and many practitioners combine meditation with Aikido. Can you comment on whether meditation is essential to further your practise in Aikido.

WAKA SENSEI: It really depends on how you capture it or how you frame it. It also depends on how wide your interpretation of Aikido is. While practising Aikido, one may realize that meditation may be useful, but someone else may think differently and find something else to pursue in relation to Aikido. What's important is not what is said but what is experienced, or what is observed.

FORUM: Many beginning students take wholeheartedly the goal of interacting harmoniously with their partner and then see, at times, non-harmonious interaction within the Aikido community itself. As instructors, we often find it difficult to relate the goal of harmony in practice with some of the "politics" of Aikido. Can you

comment on this for us?

WAKA SENSEI: Whenever people get together and form a group, political problems are inevitable. The core common factor or common thread, is Aikido. People want to practice Aikido. However, sadly enough, it is also human nature to become political. As someone who is engaged very much in Aikido, I would like to see political problems minimized. This is my wish.

FORUM: You commented on the relationship between Nage and Uke cooperation. Some people would like to see competition combined with Aikido. What is your view of this?

WAKA SENSEI: Aikido, as founded by the Founder, and promoted widely by Doshu, has no competitions and this is Aikido. My thinking is that it is not Aikido if it involves competition.

FORUM: A last question for you Sensei. In some of the writings of O Sensei that have been translated into English, he speaks of Aikido as something for the world. You have travelled around the world teaching Aikido, is there anything you would like to say or comment on Aikido as an international language?

WAKA SENSEI: The Founder has talked about people becoming friends through Aikido as an important part of the Aikido spirit. Earlier you mentioned that there are some political problems, yet in spite of these problems, people from different cultures come together and practise together. That is, in spite of various problems, this harmonious cooperation of practitioners is the major point to reflect upon.

FORUM: Thankyou.

BOOK REVIEW:
MUSASHI
EIJI YOSHIKAWA (1892-1962)

G. Hewson

This novel is the story of a young man, an orphan, whose wild energy and ambition are gradually channelled into a variety of challenging activities both bloody and humane. Highlights of the story include: a compelling rivalry between Miyamoto Musashi and his apparent arch-rival Sasaki Kojiro; dazzling descriptions of combat with swords and other weapons that will set your heart pounding with tension and excitement; a memorable romance; portraits of life in a Japan whose 17th Century values and attitudes still persist to a considerable extent today.

I will not summarize the plot in any detail because there is nothing I hate more than to be denied the pleasure of watching a gripping plot gradually unfold.

Musashi, of course, was an authentic figure who lived from 1584 to 1645. He participated on the losing side in Japan's most important civil war encounter, the Battle of Sekigahara, where the forces of Tokugawa Ieyasu triumphed and laid the groundwork for a Japanese government and society that would last until the 1850's when Japan was forced to come to terms with the modern world. An independent samurai or "ronin", Musashi became one of the greatest swordsmen in Japanese history and also one of the most interesting and influential philosophers of the Japanese martial art tradition. (His Book of Five Rings is must reading for all

martial artists. It will be reviewed on another occasion.)

In his forward to the modern English language translation of the novel, the distinguished American scholar Edwin O. Reischauer comments that Yoshikawa provides a more accurate portrayal of Japanese life than does James Clavell in Shogun. Furthermore he observes:

"Miyamoto Musashi was an actual historical person, but through Yoshikawa's novel he and the other main characters of the book have become part of Japan's living folklore. They are so familiar to the public that people will frequently be compared to them as personalities everyone knows. This gives the novel an added interest to the foreign reader. It not only provides a romanticized view of Japanese history, but gives a view of how the Japanese see their past and themselves."

This novel first appeared in serialized form from 1935 to 1939, a period which saw the increasing militarization of Japan and the destruction of its fragile democracy. But the story is not a paean to war. It is, rather, a subtle analysis of the psychology of the warrior.

Like Dickens' novels, it suffers from being serialized, i.e., it is rather too long. Moreover, the plot has too many incredible coincidences and more characters than a 19th Century Russian epic. Nevertheless, I enjoyed it tremendously. It is well worth reading if you:

1. Like long, complicated novels
2. Enjoy learning about history through fairly accurate fiction
3. Are prepared for long passages of philosophical speculation punctuated by flashes of bold action interspersed with a rather non-occidental love story
4. Are trying to understand the "way" of Aikido

What is the value of this story to an Aikidoist? It is deeply moving to watch Musashi turning from violence to peace, from egotism to enlightenment. To a considerable extent he may have laid some of the groundwork upon which O-Sensei built Aikido.

Musashi is available in five paperback volumes from Pocket Books (Simon and Schuster) or in a single volume hardcover edition which you could probably persuade your local librarian to obtain for you.

George Hewson, 3rd degree black belt, practises Aikido at the Japanese Christian Cultural Centre in Toronto. He works as a teacher in the public school system and is an active participant in the Canadian Aikido Federation.

REJECTING THE ZERO-SUM PRINCIPLE

E. Damer

The other day, I had the good fortune of catching a CBC episode of "The Nature of Things" entitled "Little Wars". It essentially dealt with games theory, particularly as applied to war games and war itself. What was significant to me was that the inherent problems in all the traditional game strategies are missing from the strategy which Aikido embraces; conversely, the goals traditionally missed form the primary goals of Aikido.

The gist of the television show was this: in a situation where one party stands to gain, maximization of this gain by one party may be perceived to depend on the loss by another. In such a traditional strategy, there is a winner and a loser. Such a game is called a "Zero-sum" game.

There are, however some interesting problems which arise when the zero-sum game strategy is applied to human affairs. A favourite example is the so-called "Prisoners' Dilemma". It describes a situation in which two thieves are each facing jail sentences of six months. However, if one thief finks on the other, the fink will walk free while the other is sent away for five years. If they both fink, both will receive a two year sentence. To maximize gain for one, i.e., no jail sentence at all, one thief would fink while the other did not. However, if both thieves fink, they each lose more than they would have if they had both not finked. The best strategy, many would contend, is for the two thieves to co-operate and keep quiet; but this rejects the premise of the zero-sum game.

Here's another problem arising from a variation on the zero-sum strategy. While driving to work, you hear on the radio that there are some congested streets and some quiet streets. Wishing to maximize gain -- having the freedom of quiet streets -- you head toward the quiet streets. However, if everyone were to do that, congestion would result. If everyone pursues a personal win strategy based on the zero-sum principle, everyone loses.

Several years ago, a contest was held to see who could design a computer program which would win a certain game. The game involved two parties, each exchanging with the other some goods. Maximizing gain for one could be done by cheating on the exchange; that is receiving the goods but not giving. The risk, however was that the other party might employ the same tactic. The question for the contest was: which strategy would, over the long run, garner the most points for one party if zero points were awarded if neither delivered the goods, one point if both delivered the goods, and two points if one delivered the good and the other did not?

It is quite interesting to note that the winning program was also the simplest. Called "Tit for Tat", the program began by assuming that each party would indeed keep its side of the exchange. After that, the program would simply do whatever the other party had done in the previous transaction. The designer of the program described it as being "nice". This means that the program began by assuming trust. The program also had the feature that both parties win: maximization for one coincided with maximization for the other. It rejected the zero-sum principle.

People familiar with Aikido may now see where this is leading, for Aikido shares several of the characteristics which make "Tit for Tat" successful, and avoids the problems which the other zero-sum scenarios encounter. Aikido is "nice" in the same way as described above: it is non-aggressive, yet deals with the situation, and does not bear a grudge.

In the arena of war, such a perspective is quite radical. Because warfare has long been seen in this zero-sum, winner/loser perspective, a strategy based on mutual benefit really is different. Implicit in such a theory is re-defining personal needs, such that personal gain is not dependant on anothers' losses, and the result of personal gain does not result in collective personal loss. Nuclear weapons build-up is one example of a lose/lose situation based on a perceived personal advantage, and there are many others. What a change it would be to resolve disputes for the mutual good!

In judging an action with moral implications, there are always two factors: what was done, and why it was done. Observers of Aikido often see it as being as rough and nasty as any fighting skill, but they often fail to realize the spirit which lies behind the art. Conversely, there seems to be the possibility of practising Aikido for personal gain and the egotistical feeling of power over another. However, two features of traditional Aikido seem to ensure a certain quality; namely the lack of competition and the "co-operative" uke/nage relationship. While I do not doubt that for many of us there is an element of competition, the fact that it is not explicitly endorsed undermines the zero-sum principle which is at the heart of so much competition. The co-operation required between uke and nage while learning the art further subverts this competitive principle.

What seems to be emerging, based on the analysis of game theory as applied to real life, is a new definition of strength. It is to O'Sensei's credit that he realized this new definition many years ago. The new definition is this: strength lies not in an individual's ability to overpower another being, but to co-operate for mutual benefit.

My favourite philosopher, Nietzsche, suggests that the mark of true strength is forgiveness. There are many illustrations of this in literature, such as when two noble warriors do hand to hand battle. The victor is not the one who kills the other, but the one who is able to decide that he (or she) can simply walk away and leave the other unable to do harm.

O'Sensei's Aikido also teaches one to be strong, but the kind of strength that says "You can't hurt me", not "I will bash your head in". Part of that strength arises from a different perspective on conflict resolution, rejecting the zero-sum game and replacing it with co-operation. "You can't hurt me" becomes "We can help each other". Aikido truly is a different perspective on conflict resolution because of one simple yet fundamental change: it rejects the zero-sum principle.

Eric Damer, 5th kyu, lives in Coquitlam, B.C., where he practices Aikido and works as a Parks Interpretation Naturalist.

THOUGHTS ON THE PHYSICAL SIDE OF TRAINING

F. Burlingham

All of us practitioners of the martial arts, (whatever our discipline), entered for numerous reasons such as wanting to keep fit or to learn self-defence. One individual even thought that Aikido was the art of folding paper. Oh, what a surprise was had! After many years of studying Aikido and a few years teaching, I have begun to question what we do, why we do it that way and whether it could be done differently to achieve better results. I am, of course, referring to the physical training methods employed.

I am sure that most of us have been brought up through the traditional methods of training and exercises. The exercises in themselves are generally very good. They form the basis from which to learn. They teach the body to be strong and flexible, and most importantly, they give the practitioner the confidence and stamina to practice more vigorously and thereby make progress.

Not so many years ago the four minute mile was a dream. Now to be of any standing as a runner at that distance one must be able to at least beat that time. How was this improved standard achieved? Without a doubt it takes a special person to push the boundaries further and achieve what no one has accomplished before. However, the study of sports performance and the quest for physical excellence has furthered human knowledge and capability greatly. We have a vast wealth of knowledge and expertise available, yet little regard seems to be paid to it within the martial arts.

These few points lead to one question: should we get fit through our practice or should we get fit in order to practice? Many leading coaches advocate getting fit for the activity and quite rightly so. There is now a substantial amount of scientific evidence that suggests that what we do, how we do it, and when we do it, would be far more beneficial if only we were to modify our approach slightly. Here are a few suggestions.

At the beginning, like many others, I didn't know where or when to eat. Considerable time was lost while sitting on the side feeling nauseous from eating too much, or the wrong food or simply too close to practice. It is wise not to eat at least two hours prior to training. For less fat build up and better energy storage, it is advisable to eat a light meal within one hour afterwards.

Traditionally, we all stretch at the beginning of a session. Light stretching is good but major stretching should take place when the body is warm, e.g., at the end of or after the class. (To develop true flexibility, daily time spent outside of class is essential.) Moreover, the pace of the class is important. A steady build up of intensity is better than a format that alternates between light and vigorous activity.

What about children? Some of the exercises that we as adults use are totally unsuitable for pre-pubescent children; they only serve to injure and in some cases deform joints. For example, knee bends beyond ninety degrees may lead to Osgood-Scatterer's disease, i.e., calcification of the anchor ligament from the knee cap to the shin bone which forms a nodule between the two. Children need to be nurtured. We should, therefore, adapt their training as required.

With great respect, I would like to suggest that we question what we do and the format we use. Could we not improve our own and our students' performance and well-being by applying some scientific facts? Within Aikido we study love and harmony and try to unify body, mind and spirit. We ought to listen to our bodies and study the messages if we wish to continue training over a period of many years. After all, if we are not in harmony with our own bodies, how do we harmonize with others, the community and, our ultimate goal, the universe?

Frank Burlingham, nidan, is a former student of Obata Sensei at the JCCC Aikikai in Toronto. He now resides in his home town of Lowestoft, England and teaches Aikido in the area.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

C. Aarons

There are a number of significant events that can occur in life: birth, marriage, and shodan tests are a few that come to mind.

Not too long ago, I underwent such an event -- I transplanted myself and my family from Los Angeles, California to Mission, British Columbia -- a tiny town fifty-five miles east of Vancouver.

In Los Angeles I trained with Godan Jack Arnold under the auspices of Shihan Chiba Sensei in San Diego; and before that with a young Bruce Stiles and Bob Zimmerman at Toronto Aikikai. Why is this relevant? Well, my formative influences in Aikido were from the East Coast Shihan who visited on a regular basis and provided guidance through seminars and summer camps. After my years in Toronto, a move to Los Angeles, with Chiba Sensei's Aikido, was a change for me. It looked to be the same Aikido, but was infused with the personalities of a different Shihan. It was not the Aikido that changed, but the personalities and strengths of the intimate followers of O-Sensei, each interpreting his teaching through their own personality.

Now I am again in a new place under the guidance of yet another outstanding Shihan with his own unique emphasis on the arts of Aikido. Having started a dojo in Mission, I have found myself facing a dilemma: a complete compliance of the Aikido in this jurisdiction or an Aikido I liked based on both previous and current instruction. To be or not to be? Is the former correct? Would following the latter course make ours a "rebel" dojo?

The Shihans I have had the privilege to train with have all been world class quality. They appear to me to all have the same goal of promoting O-Sensei's Aikido to the world. As a student I find myself fascinated by the differing abilities expressed in the personalities and power of these great masters of the art. I wish to emulate these special people, and I see nothing inherently wrong with that. Imitation is, after all, the greatest form of flattery. Yet when a student leaves one dojo to train in another, does he or she "empty the cup"? I think so -- particularly in the presence of a Shihan. The learning process of this art demands that the cup be empty. It demands that current "default assumptions" be reset whenever needed. But does that mean to abandon all that has gone before? My answer is no. Each of us is the product of all the training that has gone before.

In the last issue of Aikido Forum, Ishiyama Sensei pointed out that there is a special relationship of gratitude between each of us and the Aikido teachers that have guided us along the path.

As each of us steps onto the mats, we need to combine respect and gratitude for past training with focus and commitment for current training.

This Fall I approach my twentieth year in this wonderful art, and I see parts of different Senseis I have trained under evident in my own practice and teaching -- from the present days all the way back to "day one" with Bruce at the "Y". Today I am the teacher, and I have a responsibility to myself and to those who train under me to provide the best Aikido possible. I encourage all dojo members to attend as many seminars as possible. This year five of our twelve regular students attended the 12th annual B.C. Aikido summer camp. Yet the daily training in our dojo occurs away from the direct contact

of Shihan, and I find I must face the issues of goals and directions alone each day. For better or worse, I make these decisions as best as I know how.

I believe in the end that we must practice each day with sincerity. We must practice according to how we fit into that great scheme of things. In order to accomplish this we must each day practice according to our beliefs and personalities, looking for guidance from Shihan on technical and spiritual matters. Yet ultimately, we will become the unique persons that we are all meant to be.

"Standing amidst the heaven and earth
Connected to all things with ki,
My mind is set
On the path of echoing all things."

Morihei Ueshiba, Founder of Aikido

Charles A. Aarons, 3rd degree Black Belt, began his Aikido training in Toronto with Bruce Stiles. He now instructs Aikido under the technical guidance of Shihan Y. Kawahara Sensei, at the Mission Aikikai in Mission, B.C.

THUS SPOKE O'SENSEI

E. Damer

I would likely never have been introduced to Aikido had I not been studying philosophy with a professor who was a Shodan; furthermore, my receptivity to Aikido philosophy was paved, to a certain extent, by my exposure to the works of the German philosopher Freidrich Nietzsche.

Living in the late nineteenth century, Nietzsche is often villainized as the forerunner of Nazi ideology; however, many scholars do not share this view, and it is my belief that much of what Nietzsche says is relevant to Aikido. Although incapable of doing justice to either Aikido or Nietzsche, I would nevertheless like to present what I consider parallel themes.

DANCE

Nietzsche avails himself of a dance metaphor on numerous occasions. He values dance, and his notion of a great human being includes the ability to dance (see The Gay Science, 366). The concept of dance, however, goes beyond the mere mechanical trappings of physical movement: true dance involves freedom of the spirit, and is divine. Emphasizing the spirit of Dionysus, which implies "stepping outside" oneself to merge with one's environment, Nietzsche's free spirit is constrained neither by body nor mind. This dance knows no bounds within the possible and is pure creativity supported by its own being. It affirms life, yet acknowledges death.

For Aikidoists, this dance metaphor should be familiar. As the "dancing martial art", its ideals have a strong affinity for Nietzsche's metaphor. In Japanese

culture, too, dance belongs to the world of the gods and is therefore divine. Aikido also goes beyond physical movement because of the creative nature of the art. One learns the forms in order to transcend the forms; the aim is complete freedom of a unified mind and body to harmonize with the energy flow of one's environment, to be, in Nietzsche's words, a free spirit. Aikido affirms life -- as loving protection -- but recognizes death and violence. Aikido does not hide from the unsavoury realities of life, but seeks to understand them, if met, and invite them to share a dance of life. As a free spirit in action, true Aikido is the dance of the universe, creative and beautiful, embracing all aspects of life.

THE OVERMAN

"I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?" (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, I, 3). The idea of man "overcoming himself" is another of Nietzsche's more important themes, expressed in the German as gender neutral. Nietzsche has at least two related themes in mind: evolution theory and, more significantly, his genealogy of morals.

As beings, humans are subject to the principle of change. However, we are not the initiators of change: in evolutionary terms, we change to adapt to our environment. Why, asks Nietzsche, should we presume to be at the end of the sequence of change? He answers that we are not the end, we will change; not to change would be destructive. Since change is warranted by the environment, there will be change that accords with the new environment and is "good" change. It is this change in humans which Nietzsche anticipates.

Morals and values also change. From a historical perspective, Nietzsche suggests, morals share the common element of self-overcoming. For example, where we once gave direct retribution for (perceived) wrongs, we have overcome those feelings and deferred to law; where law was once vengeful, the sentiments have been overcome to be more humane. The point is, for Nietzsche, morals change, grow, and evolve as people do, expressing always the innate desire for life (the will to power), while being appropriate to the environmental conditions. There is something about our current set of social values, our morals, that shall be overcome -- changed, or replaced -- if people are to fulfil their inborn will to exist. The person who leads this change is Nietzsche's "overman"

I would like to suggest that O-Sensei can be likened to Nietzsche's overman. At the physical level of existence, O-Sensei developed Aikido as the art of free movement. At the mental and spiritual levels, Aikido was likewise free. As the paradigm of his art, O-Sensei diverted himself of both physical and mental trappings, allowing for complete reception of his changing environment. This allowed for change in accord with the environment, positive change and evolutionary advancement.

As he matured, O-Sensei also nurtured a changing set of values. From the hard-hitting Daito-ryu student to the gentle yet strong, Aikidoka, O-Sensei overcame in himself the dominant values of his (and our) day: competition, winning through others' defeat, and retaliation for insignificant injury. Furthermore, he rejected "turn the other cheek" pacifism. Overcoming aggressive domination and submissive subordination, he danced on the sharp edge of harmony between the two.

As a value with moral implications, such a philosophy combined with a practical art is a reaction to a changing environment -- a change for the better and an evolutionary advancement.

But Nietzsche goes further. Morals will be overcome until there is no morality! Of course, then there would be no immorality either. Consider O-Sensei's Omoto-kyo belief "I am the universe". Is the universe good? Bad? Does it even make sense to apply moral criteria to "reality"? The ultimate goal of Aikido -- harmony with the universe -- seems likewise to lie outside the scope of morals.

LOVE

Amid Nietzsche's stern polemics, glimpses of a more sensitive nature can be seen. Above all, Nietzsche affirms life; the fundamental basis of his philosophy is that all humans share one characteristic -- the "will to power", or desire for life. The life he envisions is one full of passionate love for life, and desire for nothing but the fullness of life in all its aspects. Furthermore, there is no real distinction between self and environment: love of self implies love of others and environment (Genealogy of Morals 3, 9). One section in The Gay Science (4, 334) is titled "One must learn to love." Love, Nietzsche suggests, is a process of becoming acquainted with the unknown -- accepting, tolerating, understanding, and finally enjoying the formerly unknown. The more one works at this process, the more love is generated.

Aikido, as conceived by O'Sensei, is likewise a work of love, a work of accepting, tolerating, understanding, and enjoying the unknown or strange. While affirming one's own life, Aikido strives to affirm the life of others.

Love, in Nietzsche's words, is our reward for patience and gentleness with what is strange. I think Aikido can similarly be characterized.

Nietzsche's philosophy ultimately is irreconcilable with Aikido philosophy, and of course I have chosen those aspects which I find most appealing. His preference for the elite perhaps goes too far while his sexism is often inexcusable; but despite these and other problems, Nietzsche brings to view many issues well worth considering. Iconoclastic and irreverent, Nietzsche is important ground to cover for the adventurer in ideas, especially for those on a parallel adventure in Aikido.

Eric Damer, 5th kyu, lives in Coquitlam, B.C., where he practices Aikido and works as a Parks Interpretation Naturalist.

THOUGHTS ON SUMMER CAMP

D. Dick

When asked by the Aikido Forum to write about my summer camp experience, I thought it would be a great idea. But what do I write about? There were so many



positive memories from summer camp it was hard to decide which ones to write about. After some time I have chosen three points which I feel will show new members what can be expected of summer camp. They are: the quality and experience of Aikido, what I got out of summer camp as a beginner and friendships that I made at summer camp.

Since there were so many outstanding Senseis at summer camp, each class was just phenomenal. The styles and techniques were displayed differently for each class. I found that the more experienced practitioners also had a lot of patience with the lesser ranked Aikidoists. The lesser ranked people got to see how Aikido is performed on a higher degree. With such a wide variety of instruction, I learned so much from attending summer camp.

What I think I got out of summer camp as a beginner was a good solid week of practice, endurance (both physically and mentally), and a better understanding of how dedicated people are in their study of Aikido. After summer camp I realized that Aikido was more than

going to the dojo 3 to 4 nights a week. It's a way of living.

I felt it would be prudent to include in my essay the friendships that I made at summer camp. Summer camp bonds Aikidoists locally as well as internationally. It gave me a feeling of closeness with the Aikido community not found in other martial arts. With such a feeling I developed friendships on an international scale. I found I really got to know people after practising 5 to 6 hours a day of Aikido. I found that the free time that was given off the mats was an excellent time to talk to people on topics like how they got started, where they practice and who is their Sensei .

Overall, what I got out of summer camp was a lot of fun and a deeper sense of Aikido. As a beginner following the way of Aikido, I would like to say to any other beginner that you cannot go wrong attending the B.C. Summer Camp. The memories I hold will be carried with me forever.

Devin Dick, 4th kyu, is a Native Indian from the Songhees Band of the Coast Salish Nation. He is a part-time student and practices Aikido at Victoria Aikikai.

AIKIDO - LIFE AND DEATH INSTINCT

J. Betts

GIVING UP YOUR CENTRE

A difficulty experienced by beginners in Aikido (and I am one), is the notion of "giving up your centre". How often have I heard these words and privately said to myself "Yeah, right, and get crunched as a result." Yet the irony of the situation is that more often than not I end up feeling crunched because I did not give it up. As parts of my ki were being jealously guarded and not shared with my nage, I put my nage at a disadvantage, in that I did not fulfil my part of the contract - to practice cooperatively. By retaining some control due to fear of becoming sore, my nage had to impart more of his ki into the technique in order for some flow to occur. I prevented any establishment of harmony or dynamic equilibrium.

I find this to be particularly critical in ryotetori techniques. For me one of the most difficult techniques to "give it up" is in ryotetori kokyunage. In most techniques, uke has a free hand to begin a roll or to cushion the ukemi. In a ryotetori attack, the "security blanket" is gone. By keeping my hands grasped on my nage's wrists, I offer her the opportunity to project me and place me in a breakfall. As breakfalls are a perfect example of "giving it up", I place myself at a double disadvantage - I must retain my grasp on my nage's wrists and I must allow myself to be directed into a breakfall.

EROS VERSUS THANATOS

As a person who practices psychology for a living, I find myself analyzing this issue at great length. I recognize that I, as a young aggressive male (that's the way I was socialized), attempt to retain control over my mind, body and environment wherever possible. I am continually determining whether my placement in a particular physical reality is safe or dangerous, and further, determining what I can enact upon the components of that environment. I am responding to a basic drive Freud called EROS or "life instinct". I try at all times to stay alive. An opposing drive in my mind (and yours) is THANATOS or "death instinct". This is the individuals unconscious drive to self-destruction. We travel through life continually struggling to steer a course mindful of these basic drives. We all know individuals who will continually test out their ability to get thanatos in relative supremacy over eros (by pushing the limits) by being involved in psychologically and physically dangerous situations, eg., freefalling to the last possible safety margin before deploying a canopy or scuba diving to extreme depths with little margin left for decompression errors.

In the unhealthy or neurotic individual we see the unconscious thanatos struggle to self-destruction such as substance abuse or assault. My work often takes me on journeys with the pain that some unhealthy individuals travel, a journey in which they will try any technique to replace the terrible reality of their memories or life (I work mainly with sexually abused male adolescents) with something else - drugs, crime, assault or even sexually offending.

THE EROS-THANATOS PARADOX IN AIKIDO

It is therefore really clear that for me to give up my basic instinct to stay alive (in Aikido, to be untouched, on both feet and fully aware of your immediate surroundings) and harmonize with a nage (be thrown to the ground, have my body reoriented in space, accept submission techniques - "giving up my centre") means I have to embrace thanatos. To embrace thanatos goes against my socialization and against my education. To refuse to do so, results in pain to my body and to my ego.

LETTING GO

One day I accepted that today I must recognize that my life can be over in an instant, and to spend large amounts of time worrying about it was a waste of a gift. Secondly, to practice this wonderful art, I had to trust people, I had to accept that when people threw me they were doing so in awareness of my lack of training and competence. Sensei asked me to be uke to demonstrate a technique to the class. My heart rate climbed and eros screamed in my head. As I walked to my "death", I looked at Sensei and said internally "OK, this one time, I place myself in your care - I embrace thanatos." The technique she demonstrated was scary; by saying "give it up" to myself, and finally managing to do so, I was offered a brief glimpse of a reality that was totally alien to my experience, yet non-threatening and with aspects of great beauty. It was in many ways, a brief self-actualizing experience. These are rare experiences that we as humans may encounter. They are psychologically akin to getting the face of a golf club to connect with the ball on a "sweet spot" or to time a baseball bat's swing perfectly.

As Aikido is a gradual learning experience, I have been fortunate to experience a few more of these moments, but more importantly, in "giving it up" I no longer felt the pain that clouded my first months of practice.

John Betts, 4th kyu, is a counselling psychologist trained in South Africa. He practices Aikido at Victoria Aikikai.

AIKIDO AND STREET SELF-DEFENSE

G. MacPhail

Why would an Aikidoist choose to write on such a topic? Well, quite simply, because I have been asked to by several of my fellow practitioners.

I recently completed an eight hour course on street mugging self-defense for women and learned quite a lot. For example: there are many simple and effective ways of striking offensively which allow the victim enough time to quickly retreat to safety. Needless to say these techniques are difficult to explain. However, I think that they are a necessary part of all of our lives because we consciously choose to live in very close proximity with complete strangers.

Having been involved in the Aikido community now for twelve years, I came to realize while walking in a brightly lit park with my two infant sons, that my vulnerability had increased two hundred percent. When attempting imagery visualization, a process used by professional athletes to overcome fear and anxiety, I realized that my Aikido knowledge didn't help in the way I needed it to. Let me explain.

Statistically, a street mugged VICTIM, has five seconds to fell the PREDATOR before they come to harm. This is complicated by the fact that women are usually attacked from behind and quickly thrown to the ground. Given this information, any martial art known to this author would not be very useful. The reason for this is that we are studying stylized movements, and therefore, openings must be seen to be filled, and usually these are from a standing position.

Aikido for me is certainly the superior form of self

defense as it trains the individual holistically. The other night at one of my adult beginner courses, one of the students commented that he questioned Aikido as an effective form of self-defense. My question to him was, "Is there only one means to an end?" He looked at me puzzled, as you are surely frowning now, and I explained that for me a superior form of self-defense first teaches mental and physical harmony. The body and mind first learn and train to operate as a unit and in doing so both become strong, supple, and calm. Certainly when this Aikidoist leaves the dojo it is with a feeling of peace.

One other form of self-defense, which certainly heightens the awareness of how lethal a well-trained mind and body can be, comes through a stylized series of kicks, punches, throws, and blows to various vulnerable parts of the human body. I found that after leaving a self-defense course for women that my senses were certainly heightened, but the inner feeling was not one of peace and harmony but more along the lines of "tense awareness". This was not a comfortable feeling as it was more of a parallel to fear and aggression. After practising for two hours straight on how to seriously hurt another fellow human being, sleeping did not come easily that night.

The knowledge I gained is effective, and in a strange way comforting. This Self-Defense for Women course had another positive aspect, which was to reinforce the superiority of a holistic, self-defense course for human beings, namely, Aikido.

Gail McPhail, 2nd degree black belt, teaches and practices at Victoria Aikikai, while devoting her full time effort to the nurturing of her two young children.

THE CONTRACT

J. Betts

I was once told that the "contract" that Aikidoists agree upon in practice may be explained in terms of the "ten rule". In every technique we practice, there are "ten units" of ki shared between nage and uke. Ideally, the proportion of these ten units of ki is apportioned to each partner according to experience, rank, and ability. Should uke attack with eight units of ki (ie., attack with great intensity), nage only has to employ two units of ki to execute the technique (ie., to harmonize at the ten units level). Alternately, should uke attack with two units of ki (ie., not be committed and unfocused) nage has to employ eight units of ki (ie., put a great deal of effort into the technique) to complete the movement successfully.

The second example is often a problem for beginners such as myself. We fail to recognize the ten rule and often put far too much energy into a technique (for myself usually in the form of muscle) and end up crunching our uke. After a year of practice, I finally began to see the importance of the ten rule and began to realize how I could use it. It was only due to the fact that senior practitioners would tell me I was being too hard (and still am) that I was able to begin to change this aspect of my practice. The core essence of the contract between nage and uke is dependent on uke giving up his/her centre. Without this, the attainment of physical harmony (and the resultant psychological harmony) is frustrated.

John Betts, 4th kyu, is a counselling psychologist trained in South Africa. He practices Aikido at Victoria Aikikai.

GRATITUDE

B. Peacock

Tonight something profound happened to me. I was restless and although I had an early Aikido class next morning and "needed" my sleep, I just could not drop off. At about three A.M., the time psychologists tell us we are weakest, I was feeling wide awake and brimming with, well, maybe, Ki. I got up, grabbed my jo, and bowed to my picture of O-sensei in my usual way -- half out of sincerity, and half out of obligation -- and went outside.

It had just stopped raining; it was a warm night, clear and fresh. I bowed again to nothing in particular and started limbering up. I felt good. I had brought out a flashlight and a list of movements to work on with scrawled notes and started going through them, experimenting. In particular, I did all of the movements on both sides, even those that have always been taught one way. It felt awkward at first (of course) but I started getting used to it, and an hour-and-a-half later I had even worked out the way of doing two kata with the opposite hand and foot forward to the way I had been taught. I did not feel particularly brilliant, just satisfied, as I went through the movements grinning. It was one of those moments that brings us back to this constantly frustrating and cruelly self-revealing art.

There was a nice light sweat on my body as I gazed at the night sky, marvelling at nature. I bowed to it all and felt thankful and appreciative. When I got inside my father was still up working/playing at his computer and I went and told him what I had been up to. I did not tell him how glad I was that he made me start

Aikido, but I should have. I sure felt it inside. Back in my room, I bowed again to O-Sensei and realized how much I meant it -- and not just to him but to all of my teachers. It was sincere and I felt humbled inside (a rarity). Lying in bed once more, I thought of relating this feeling of gratitude to others; especially my students at the university club or in the junior class. I was reminded of Shirata sensei, in John Steven's Aikido -- The Way of Harmony, saying that shihonage (four-directions throw) is symbolic of four-directions of gratitude and as such is the first pillar of Aikido. These four directions, I remembered, are to nature, one's parents, one's teachers, and to all other human beings. "Well," I thought, "I've covered three of these four gratitudes tonight automatically, even sincerely, so I'm doing pretty well." It then dawned on me that, by lying there mentally preparing a speech on gratitude to give to my students, I was very thankful to them for letting me learn from them (and it has been alot) by giving me the opportunity to teach them. I felt humbled, yet exhilarated.

I feel as if I've gained a little something inside, a glimmering of understanding of one of many principles. When I first heard the idea of Aikido as gratitude, I immediately wondered how throwing someone down was an expression of thanks. But I did like the idea and did not just dismiss it as weird oriental philosophy designed to confuse me (and thus best ignored until I was much older and wiser). I do not feel I have grasped this paradox of the martial arts as a way of peace, but yes, I do feel a small bit closer. Thank you.

Ben Peacock, shodan, teaches Aikido at the University of Victoria Aikido Club and spent three years teaching juniors at the Victoria Aikikai.

