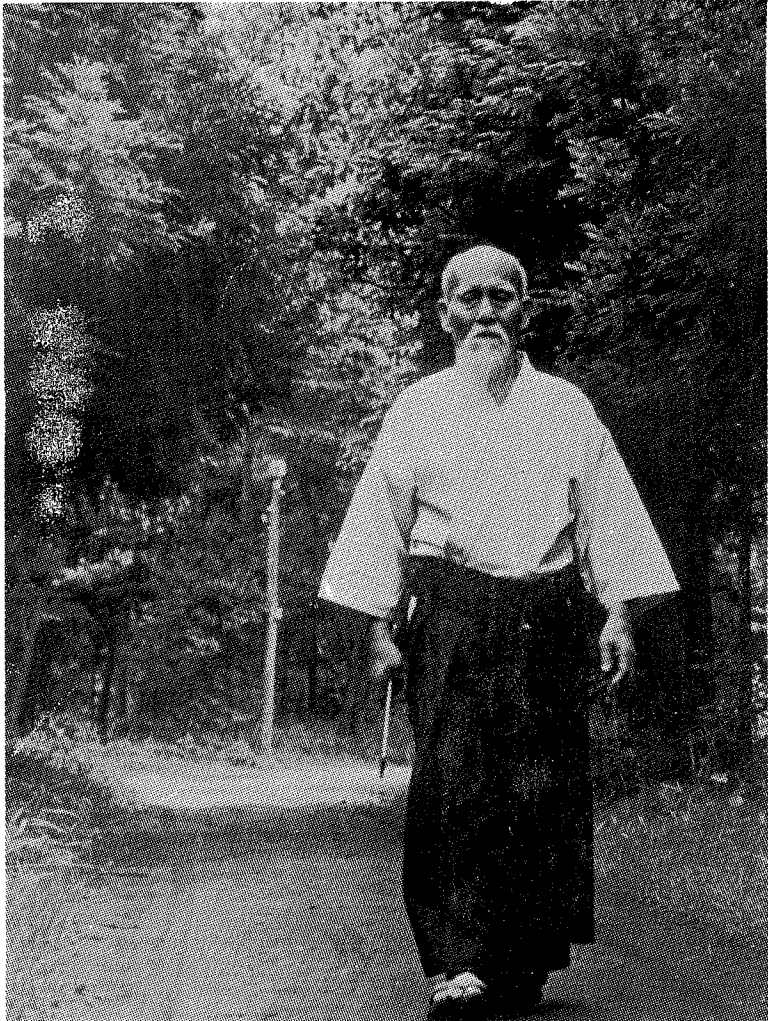


Dojo Copy

# **AIKIDO FORUM**

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A JOURNAL OF AIKIDO  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
Published by Victoria Aikikai  
Number 12, February 1993



## 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 we 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.

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## AIKIDO FORUM

Number 12, February 1993

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Our thanks to the various dojo representatives for raising 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 volunteer in advertising the existence of, and encouraging articles for, the Aikido Forum.

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 practitioners throughout the Aikido community. Articles can be submitted on paper, MS-DOS or MAC 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"x2" 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 and new subscribers, readers, criticizers, subscription promoters, distribution helpers, and whoever else might have something to offer the Forum or the Aikido community in general.

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## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Ralph Kopperson

In this issue we have a feature article by Ishiyama Sensei of Vancouver on helping beginners appreciate Aikido. We also have two views of the 1992 BCAF Summer Camp, a one pager two minute glimpse of practice at Hombu and a one page insight into practice in general. And more!

Also, we are trying to get back to our goal of two issues per year, published in November and May. To make this goal achievable we are looking for Forum representatives in various areas to take the role of Associate Editor. You'll see a brief note in this issue describing the job. If any readers would like to volunteer their effort in support of the Forum, please drop us a line.

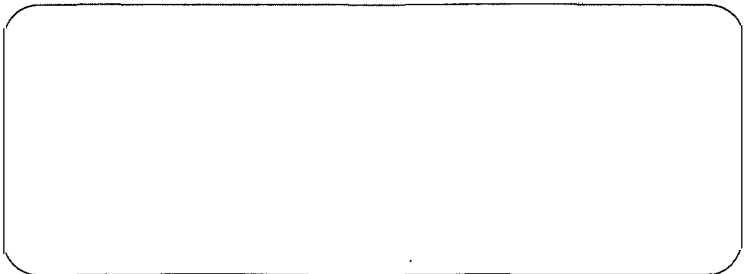
Finally, we've changed the layout. We've gone to a two column format to increase the ease of reading. We've placed simple graphics to fill big blocks of white space. please let us know how well it works.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear sirs,

Summer camp is over for 1992. While I was there I had the opportunity to read Aikido Forum. In particular, an article on summer camp from the year previous. While I do not question the value of summer camp in the area of relationships, they are clearly only a very small part of what occurs during the week. Like the special training of Shotokan Karate Beikoku summer camp is to stretch the individuals who participate, and renew their resolve to do better. I offer the enclosed brief article as another reflection of yet another summer camp, but this time from the perspective of seeking to find new limits.

Sincerely,  
Arnet H. Hales





The photograph above was taken at the 13th Annual BC Aikido Federation Summer Camp, near Gibson's Landing on the Sunshine Coast. In the foreground: (on the right) M. Fujita, Shihan, Administrative Head of Hombu and guest instructor at the summer camp; (on the left) and Y. Kawahara, Shihan, Technical Director of the BC Aikido Federation. In the background is Tony Hind, formerly of Vancouver and now practicing at Hombu, who assisted Mr. Fujita during the camp.

Below we have two articles by students who participated in the summer camp. One deals with challenges of the learning process, the other with people and events.

## CLEARER EYES

B.C. Summer Camp 92

Arnet Hales

"Special training has come down to us from martial artists of the past who sought a way to put their mental and physical powers to a test by calling on their innermost strengths— strength that you will realize you also possess after this intensive training experience. Indeed, to put ourselves into hardship, to push ourselves to our physical limits, and thereby to strengthen our mentality, and to see ourselves with clearer eyes are the ultimate goals of this practice." Shihan Tsutomo Oshima Sensei (Shotokan karate Beikoku) speaking on special training experiences.

The 1992 B.C. Aikido Summer Camp is over. Fujita Sensei has returned to Japan, and the students who practised under him this week have returned to their home dojos to work out those things which he has taught us. When I stop to reflect on the week of intensive practice at summer camp, like many others, I remember renewing old acquaintances, and the meeting of the minds in practice like a fine old wine: it lingers fondly on my palate. but there is more to the summer camp experience than this, I remember stretching to find new mental and physical limits through the sometimes seemingly endless practice.

"We know that human beings are very kind to themselves and are loving as easily as they can. In this kind of situation we can only maintain what we have, and the only way to obtain

something new is to push ourselves strongly forward." Sadaharu Honda on the ideals of special training.

As the week wore on and I found myself more and more tired, each new practice became a new mental and physical challenge. I approached each practice with a resolve to give 100%. Physical and mental exhaustion set in, and I grew more and more weary. As I went beyond my preconceived self imposed limits I entered a new mental state. Brain waves changed perceptibly; alpha rhythms became beta rhythms; Aikido became moving meditation.

Moments before the final practice I sat thinking; "It's finally over. One more practice, and I can begin to relax and strive for physical recovery."

Ironically, as I sat in the same place after the practice I found myself thinking, "It's over." And the mental drop off was clear as I suffered from some kind of post partum blues syndrome. This morning, as I sit in my living room at home, 42 hours after the last practice, I am already thinking of next year. I know now that there was more to give, I have not yet tested my limits to their fullest. Next year I will resolve to push myself yet further; to stretch myself to new heights; to explore new personal frontiers; to go beyond where I am today.

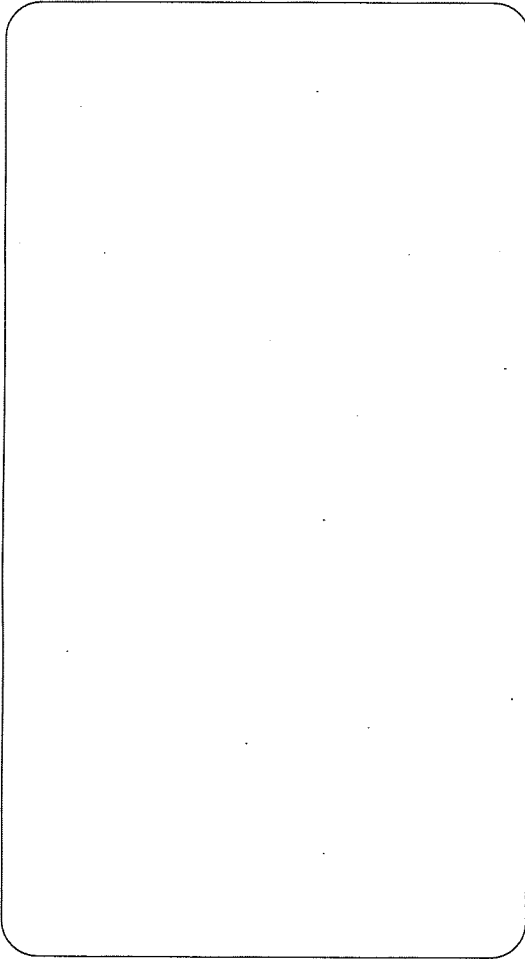
The 1992 Summer Camp has come and gone, it is now a memory. But it is more than this, It has stretched us, set new limits, and given us goals for the coming year. We have voluntarily put ourselves into hardship, pushed ourselves mentally and physically, and

---

we have been allowed to see ourselves  
with clearer vision.

---

Arnet Hales is a 3rd kyu student of  
Charles Aarons of the Mission Aikikai  
and practices Aikido at the  
Similkameen valley Aikikai, in  
Keremeos B.C.





## BC SUMMER CAMP 92

Alan Baiss

Did you hear ?

Once again Kawahara Shihan, 7th Dan honoured us as instructor at the B.C. Aikido Summer Camp. We were also especially honoured to have Fujita Shihan, 8th Dan and the Secretary General of Aikikai Hombu Dojo join us from Japan.

The weather cooperated, all weapons classes were held outside, but it was not so hot that the practices were unenjoyable. Several practitioners, including Liz Mckinlay, were spotted bathing in the waters between the Camp Elphinstone and Gambier Island. The number in the ocean may have increased on those two afternoons when a broken water main cut most of the water off from the camp. Showers and laundry were disrupted but somehow the kitchen staff managed to keep the meals coming. For those who were wondering about the ringing meal bells, there was fifteen minute warning bell and then one to announce the meal, and no there was no way to distinguish the two sounds.

Classes continued with few incidents. One 3rd kyu and under class was interrupted from Suwari Waza practice by a single loud clap. The many obedient students who moved quickly to the side of the mats knew something was amiss by the questioning look on Kawahara Sensei's face. All was explained when Mike Atkinsons's partner uttered

"mosquito Sensei!" Evidently the mosquito survived and so did Mike's unidentified partner who was, though, noticeably embarrassed.

The Saturday testing consisted of 6 Gokyu, 2 Yonkyu, 7 Sankyū, 3 Nikkyū, 2 ikkyū, and 4 Dan tests. The four Dan tests we were treated to included: Frank Barta and George Khouri for Shodan, Ben Peacock for Nidan and Liz McKinlay for Sandan. Congratulations to Liz, the first woman Sandan in B.C.

After his Nikkyū test, Pasquale Pagiuso of Edmonton was spotted in a men's washroom trying to induce vomiting. He had placed his contact lens, which had dislodged in the last moments of his test, in his mouth for safe keeping. Moments after his test was over he had swallowed the lens. As the vomiting was unsuccessful we wish Pasquale quick success at whatever other processes he tries.

Camp 1992 was enjoyed by about 100 participants according to Cary Boyce to whom those of us who attended are grateful for his hard work and organizational skills. At the summer camp many new friendships were forged and old ones renewed. If you were unable to attend you were probably missed and we hope to see you next year.

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Alan Baiss, 4th Kyū practices Aikido at Victoria Aikikai. He works in Victoria as a counsellor and personal therapist.

## HELPING BEGINNERS APPRECIATE AIKIDO

I. Ishiyama

[This paper is based on a talk given by the author at an Aikido seminar held at the University of Victoria in 1990.]

In this talk, I wish to reflect on various aspects of helping beginners and initiating them to a healthy appreciation of the art of Aikido. Instead of limiting the task of helping only to the dojo instructor, I encourage senior members to play an active role in concert with the instructor, in guiding beginners and junior members. I do not mean that senior students should automatically take on a teaching role and assume authority and expertise. Their helping should be discrete and appropriate for the occasion and remember that both senior students and beginners are learners travelling the same path of Aikido.

### AIKIDO AS A PATH FOR PERSONAL QUESTS

Aikido is like a huge, bottomless drum which resonates deeply when you hit its' centre and lightly when you tap the peripheral. You can ask a profound question, and Aikido answers you with profound wisdom. Even when you ask only a technical question, Aikido offers you more than technical guidance which you might recognize if you would listen for more. Aikido offers something to everyone, including people who only watch it as spectators.

Founder Morihei Ueshiba was initially interested in learning a strong and undefeatable martial art in his youth. However, his questions went far beyond a technical level. What is life for? What am I supposed to do with my life? What is my mission? He asked these questions. While Jigora Kano, Founder of Kodokan Judo, developed judo for scientific use of the body and physical education, Ueshiba created Aikido as a discipline of spiritual quest for unification with the divine power. The human being, mind and body together, is a vehicle or instrument for attaining and nurturing harmony and spiritual evolution. O'Sensei found the path to enlightenment and emancipation in search of an ultimate martial art, which he called Aikido.

Aikido can handle a wide range of personal inquiries. A martial minded person might ask : What is an undefeatable art? An educator might ask : Is there a way of channeling my delinquent student's rebellious energy into a constructive one? A mother might ask : How could I remain centred when my child takes temper tantrums in public and embarrasses me?

A person in an emotional crisis might ask : What am I supposed to do with my life? Aikido offers opportunities for personal growth as well as practical self-defense training.

So senior students should not forget to encourage beginners to appreciate both sides and to ask questions about the many aspects of life and self. Although beginners need to

concentrate on learning body movements and improving technically and avoid getting carried away with philosophical and intellectual discussions, it should also be emphasized that quiet self-reflection and soul searching is very much a part of Aikido training. Talking about the Aikido philosophy and its application to daily life is an extremely important aspect of mutual learning, especially off the mats.

So you see, Aikido has a wonderful, technical side which embodies the most efficient way of controlling the opponent's aggressive force and transcending a confrontational relationship. It also has a psychological, philosophical and spiritual side that is applicable to all aspects of life beyond the mats. These are the two sides of a same coin. Philosophy and movements do not contradict in Aikido.

#### AIKIDO AS PRACTICAL MARTIAL ART TRAINING

Aikido practice offers joy and satisfaction to sincere students, while they may also enjoy personal challenge and technical rigour in an uncompromising training. Aikido being a martial art, we need to be grounded in our attempts to improve ourselves technically and to develop reliable and efficient body movements. It's like developing a foundation for a house. Before intellectualizing Aikido or seeking fun and rewarding social contacts, we need to discipline our body and mind to respond accurately and quickly to the opponent's uninvited attack. This gives us a healthy grounding, a reality check.

A martial art loses its unique meaning when it is taken out of the original context of an opponent attacking the defendant. Imagine performing Aikido-like movements only for aesthetic appearances and a pleasurable flow experience or for a gold medal in the Olympics. How absurd! Because we know we could get hurt in practice and get killed in a life-or-death situation, we take the roles of nage and uke seriously, and respect the value of being alive. In this sense, technical improvement should be the primary goal for beginners. In this process, many good things will come out at emotional, interpersonal and spiritual levels.

Techniques must work. Make a wrong move. Pow! We get hit on the head or punched in the stomach, only to realize bitterly how much more we need to train. Doing cannot be replaced by talking or thinking, no matter how well we can intellectualize Aikido or talk about new age enlightenment. We cannot talk our way out when someone is already coming at us. Although it is better not to be in such a conflict in the first place or to get into a dangerous situation, we never know. This "serious business" perspective keeps our feet on the ground so that we will not float away with ideas and leave the body behind.

#### CONCENTRATION ON TECHNICAL ACCURACY

Personal ideas, moods and philosophies can be embodied in various artistic and therapeutic activities, including singing, ballet, dancing, and bioenergetics. In the case

of Aikido, we practise to mobilize all our senses and bodily functions effectively and efficiently in response to sincere and serious attacks with variations and unexpected moves. a wrong move could result in injuries and even death. O-Sensei said, "Even one percent of inaccuracy would destroy the life of a technique." Absolute accuracy needs to be pursued.

Senior students should explain to beginners that this is why we practise the same technique over and over, until it becomes a real technique which is reliably effective and embodies the principle of following the path of least resistance and maximum harmony. Some beginners do not realize that they are doing a martial art. Instead, they approach Aikido practise as something that is supposed to be fun and pleasant. Senior students may take them aside, and verbally explain to them the importance of concentration and technical mastery and about the dojo rules. This should be done verbally first. Some intolerant and impatient students try to "teach a lesson" physically by being nasty or excessively demanding. They should refrain from this type of communication. Advance students' unrequested physical "lesson" or demonstration of impatience can hardly achieve an educational purpose. Instead, it can unnecessarily turn beginners away and may instill a feeling of being punished and manhandled.

## DEALING WITH TALKATIVE BEGINNERS

Among those attracted to Aikido, there are always some who are verbally and intellectually very inquisitive and sometimes eloquent about Aikido, but are amazingly stiff and undextrous (some can't even tell the right foot from the left) or rather lazy on the mats. They may be logical, articulate, and sincerely interested in exploring Aikido concepts. Senior students need to be patient but firm in emphasizing that they should apply their logical mind and detailed attention to bodily parts and movements. Such beginners should not be discouraged or punished for being top-heavy. Others should not forget that they may be feeling more frustrated with their klutziness and critical of themselves than anybody else. So, do interpersonal Aikido of guiding their training attitudes in the right direction without offending or threatening. Often these same students are the ones to ask profound questions, stimulate others' thinking, and get a good Aikido discussion going in social gathering.

## SPIRITUAL PURSUIT

Taking Aikido practice seriously and practically does not at all mean being rough, competing for superiority, or exerting strengths indiscriminately with partners of varying ranks. There are manners and limits to be respected when training at the dojo. Rudeness, self-indulgence, power-tripping, brutality, and intolerance are completely the opposite of what the Japanese budo training purports to achieve. Aikido is a noble art, not a beast's fighting instinct. It is an art for

ladies and gentlemen and for ladies-to-be and gentlemen-to-be. Students are united under the common goal of appreciating the art developed by Founder Ueshiba and utilizing its movements and inherent philosophy and wisdom in the areas of our life. They are not allowed to use aikido practice as a place where they advance their egotistical needs and exercise insensitivity and one-upmanship.

Advanced students need to explain to beginners that many serious students are learning the very spiritual side of Aikido as well as the self-defense side. Aikido is not an extraverted engagement of self seeking relative superiority or competition trophies. It is rather an introspective discipline, through which we examine our own weaknesses and bad habits and validate the pure transpersonal self deeply; connected with nature and the universe. We confront our inflexible and disharmonious ways of dealing with various confrontational situations in life. Aikido reminds us that the real opponent is within ourselves, not outside, until we overcome our egoful attempts to control and be superior to others and until we achieve a harmonious state within ourselves and with nature.

#### WORKING WITH ENERGIES

Aikido teaches us how to work with various energies - the partner's energy, our own, society's and the universes. The term "ki" refers to energy or life. It has physical and metaphysical dimensions. On the mats we practise body movements and techniques and to move with the partner and harmonize with his/her energy. In

short, you make friends with the partner instead of turning your partner into an opponent or enemy. Aikido movements are physically expressed a attitudes of seeing harmony and appeasing aggressive forces. Needless to say, it takes years to embody this simple principle.

Going beyond the martial arts realm, we realise that we are dealing concurrently with energies at physical, psychological, social, political, cultural, historical, and spiritual levels. What I appreciate about Aikido is that its principles of non-fighting and unconditional caring are immediately applicable to various life situations. For example, O'Sensei said that ki in Aikido is a nurturing force, not a destructive or self-serving one. This spirit is expressly technically in the forms of advancing into uke's blind spot (i.e., completing uke's defense by becoming part of it and thus ceasing to be the opponent), utilizing uke's force to do the techniques, and immobilising uke without necessarily causing organic or structural damage. According to O'Sensei, Aikido offers a way of teaching the futile and self-defeating nature of aggression and forcefulness.

#### BECOMING A WHOLE

Psychologically, we go through a number of emotional reactions on the mats. For example, negative feelings, old wounds and inappropriate reactions might surface when we practice with certain personalities, when we feel out of control, or when we get stuck technically and blocked by the partner. We sometimes see an undesirable side in us, or resort to

immature behaviours out of exacerbation and helplessness in such situations. Although these psychological reactions may have little to do with techniques per se, successfully dealing with the inner dynamics can lead to technical and personal breakthrough in our Aikido training.

Sometimes, practitioners are at an extremely low and rather vulnerable point in life, and may show signs of distress during practice. Advanced students with an empathic heart might want to approach them and offer support when they notice such students. Although I do not suggest peer counselling or quasi-therapeutic attempts, experienced practitioners can offer as one human being their humble support for those going through difficult times.

From a Jungian perspective, Aikido directs out attention to the uncompleted tasks of individuation, the process of becoming a holistic being and achieving a psychic totality. That is, we have a potential to be truly balanced and integrated persons living in harmony with nature, without creating enemies out of ourselves or the environment. However, many of us have developed egotistical attachments and defensive habits. We have not yet freed our own healing energy and inner wisdom. Nor have we attained freedom and efficiency in dealing with people's various energies. The Aikido practice embodies the union of the masculine and the feminine sides of the psyche and reconciliation among the opposites. We are neither nage not uke. We do omote (front) and ura

(back) movements. We move in sharply with force in irimi, and also turn around harmoniously to deflect the attack in tenkan. In Aikido, we have a hypothetical opponent called "uke" but it is a projection of a part of us. We are the ones that are aggressive for self-serving purposes and need to be guided. The Aikidoist is the wise old person in all of us. In Aikido, we activate and strengthen this wise side of us.

### CORRECTING BEGINNERS

Allow me to be quite general for a moment. Human communication is a transaction of energies. A beautiful relationship can be built with caring and sensitive energies, while hatred and hurt can result from conflicts and aggressive energies. I think that there are many ways of helping other individuals in Aikido. Here, I wish to emphasize the use of a nurturing ki, or "megumino ki." This is the expression that the late master Bansen Tanaka used to refer to completing the partner by offering energy and fulfilling the blind spots in the partner. Helping on the mats must be nurturing and energizing, in this regard.

For example, you may recognize ten different mistakes in detail on one occasion, you end up shrinking the other person's energy and discouraging him/her. Instead, it would be more productive to find one mistake to be corrected and offer feedback on it. This is when you need to think of how much feedback or criticism your partner can take. If you did not think of this, you will not be able to impart your knowledge and observation effectively. If you keep

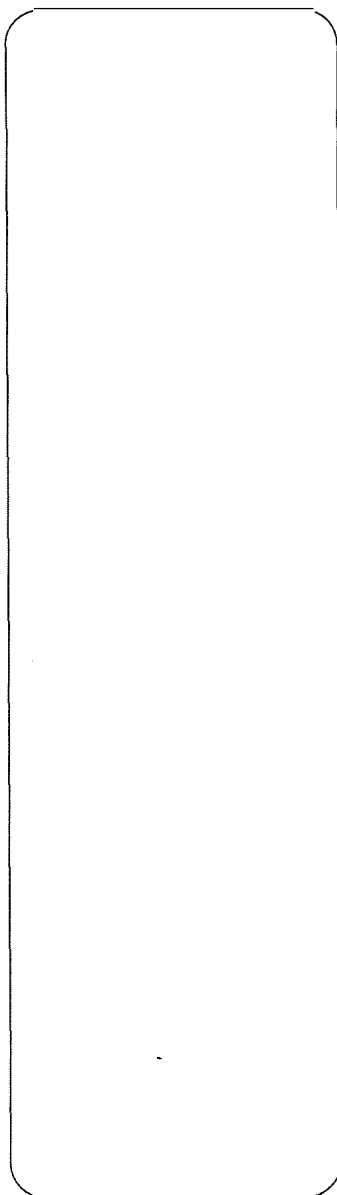
saying no, a person may never grow personally or technically. So, senior practitioners should practice how they can give energy and not take it away from beginners, in order to facilitate a positive learning experience for them.

### CONCLUSION

Aikido has physical and metaphysical sides, both of which are important. Think of how you can express your appreciation of Aikido. Although our physical Aikido may be limited by level of technical mastery, aging, injuries and physical strength and flexibility, there is no limit to how we can embody the teaching and wisdom of Aikido in other aspects of training and life. In dojo training, I encourage senior students to be active and creative in helping junior students, and contribute to their well-guided appreciation of the art.

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I. Ishiyama, 5-dan, is instructor at the Point Grey Aikikai, Vancouver.



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## AIKIDO NOTES

Cecil Paris

Aikido the ever circular rhythmic motion of finding your centre.

Soft and hard with speed and accuracy

Verbal or non-verbal

Short or tall

A Zen of simplicity

What are we seeking? What is Aikido to you and how many of  
your non-practicing friends understand your pursuit?

Does it matter?

Is it clear to you.....

Is it enjoyable, comfortable, easy, rewarding, live, fun.....

At the beginning - less than two years maybe of consistent  
practice - your body/mind timelessly becomes Aikido-like ...  
stronger, more agile and flexible.

Another few years it's even better, but  
try to stay relaxed and enjoy your practice.

Aikido is a long wide road, take your time don't overtax yourself  
with so many internal questions, worries, struggles.

There are enough conflicts without adding yours....

Trust your practice.

And practice/train everyday - solo or with a partner - but enjoy it.

Recently, at the Budokan demonstration - a show of 7 of Japan's  
finer martial arts - it was a great feeling to see the years of  
dedication, the hours of training shine through. The room was filled with  
sincerity, spirit, power.....comparable to Aikido life.

There are always ups and downs, but no short cuts....

---

Cecil Paris, 4th Dan, teaches Aikido at  
the New Westminster Aikikai. He  
works as an audio visual technician at  
Vancouver Community College.



## AIKIDO AS TRANSFORMATION

John Betts

Our First World socialisation has successfully created artificial barriers between ourselves and the natural world. With an awareness of and a connection with the natural world comes an awareness and connection with our own psychophysical world. This "natural" world includes, for me, both the physical and psychological worlds. I wish to examine the psychological aspect of our alienation and its relation to Aikido.

### AIKIDO AS A BRIDGE

Aikido acts as a bridge between the alienating world we live in and the raw world of our psyche. In this way I see Aikido as a change agent and the practice of aikido as a process whereby we face the dark aspects of our psyches. Aikido may be seen as an individuation process (the lifelong personality development).

### HARMONISING VERSUS HURTING

In physical practice we continually glimpse the raging blackness of our aggression and then strive to attain an emotionless clarity devoid of feeling. The physical practice of attempting to attain harmony with a partner, and still be capable of exacting terrible pain (and resisting the instinctual urge to do so) is the struggle we allow ourselves to enjoy. We embrace this fine line between great harmonising activity, and the infliction of pain and disharmony. We challenge the ego to be subjugated to the harmonising principle of Aikido.

Success in Aikido seems to me to be

the denigration and subjugation of this ego. In so doing we transform ourselves. We strive to be ego-less.

### THE DOJO AND CONSULTING ROOM AS "CRUCIBLES"

The dojo and my consulting room are containers, or crucibles. The core process in individual therapy is to provide a safe, nonjudgemental container within which changes may occur. Jung saw this as akin to the alchemists' crucible, within which he witnessed alchemy - the transmuting of the base substance - lead (neuroticism) to the noble substance, gold (the Self)

In psychotherapy I join with my client at an interpsychic level and together we wade through the conflict that the client's psyche is striving to process. However, unlike aikido, it is often necessary to confront the client's ego, to challenge it and reform it. Both parties in the therapy process have unconscious reactions to the attitudes and expressions of the other. For the client, transference occurs and for the therapist countertransference. I as therapist have unconscious aspects of my psyche "triggered" by the statements of the client. S/he develops an unconscious relationship to who I am and what I seem to represent. I am alternately a nage and an uke in psychotherapy, joining, blending and moving with the conscious and unconscious activity of the client. The alchemical process creates change and growth in the client (and therapist).

In the dojo we attempt a similar task. We take our raw, untamed energy (the psychological energy is far more

difficult to tap than the physical) and attempt to transform it into a calm yet focused harmonising force we may use in interaction with others. This has been a struggle for me. I am repeatedly reminded by senior students that I am too tough, too hard in my attacks, and resistant in ukemi. It is because of what I do in the world that I understand that my difficulty stems not from using too much muscle but from being hard and aggressive psychologically. How ever hard I try to drop my shoulders and relax the muscles in my chest, my mind screams out to be hard and quick. The change that I need in aikido is psychological. The dojo acts as the crucible within which I see this change occurring, and my fellow practitioners as the alchemists of the change. They are transmuting the base metal of my being into a noble one of purity. Aikido then is for me a cleansing, a refining process.

#### GENDER ASPECTS

Even through I am new to aikido, my clinical training enables me to have insights into the psychological baggage people bring into the dojo. I see others using the basic attitudes and notions they have been trained and socialised into since birth. This is clearly the case for men who have been socialised into being hard, tough and brutal. The gentle, harmonising qualities of their personality (represented psychologically in the anima or feminine archetype) has been subjugated by their socialisation by the dominant patriarchal world within which they exist.

A distinct difference is for women. I watch women practitioners, even in

level one beginner training and envy for a moment their socialisation. The way in which they have been socialised as female-in-the world is diametrically opposed to my own. Where I as male-in-the-world have been taught to be outward looking, forced to change my immediate environment, to exploit the natural world to my benefit, the patriarchal socialisation of women has trained them to be introspective, nurturing and gentle. The anima we as men struggle to find is easily actualised by women. They know how to harmonise, how to relax, how to blend as this is the basis of their socialisation. These qualities, unfortunately also form the cornerstone of many of the issues women face in the patriarchal and unequal society within which we live. These are qualities that I see as a therapist, that have been instrumental in many of the abuses women experience in our world, both physically and psychologically.

Being able to enter the dojo each week, leaving behind the struggles of the real world is a wonderful process. I feel as though once on the mat I am in therapy, working through individual issues in my psyche in a gentle manner (and getting a great work out as an added bonus).

Recognition of the issues we bring to the dojo may allow us to better understand the difficulties we have with techniques, as the world is reflected in our dojo practice.

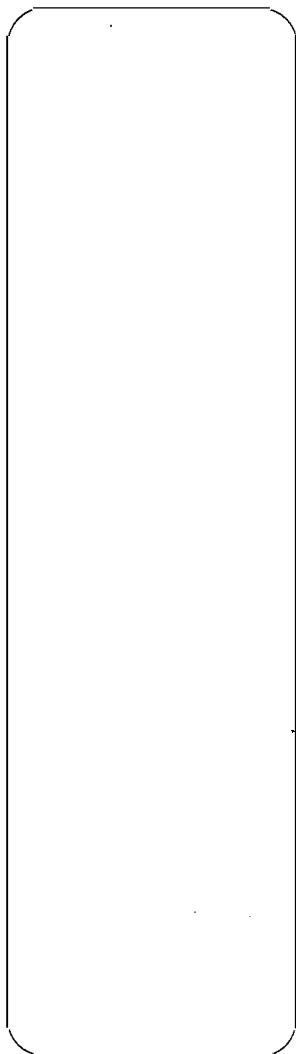
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John Betts practices at Victoria Aikikai. He runs counselling practices in Victoria and Duncan.

6:30 - 6:32 AM

Max Cu

Max Cu, a student from Kerrisdale Aikikai in Vancouver, is practicing Aikido at Hombu.



6:30 AM

The deep  
Silence causes me to awaken  
Fully. My breath mists in  
Front of me. All around, the  
Cold air is heavy with  
Expectation. Young and old,  
Man and woman, Skirt and  
Sans-skirt are randomly  
Placed upon the mats. Light  
Footsteps are heard. The  
Doshu is at the entrance  
With Dojo Cho close behind  
Him. Father and son enter.  
The Doshu looks serious;  
Dojo Cho looks excited.  
Every eye is on the Doshu as  
He slowly walks to the  
Center where the sunlight  
Has just peeked through the  
Window to touch the tatami.  
The Doshu bows to his  
Father, O Sensei, and then to  
His students. The silence is  
Broken by the loud morning  
Greeting, the signal for Dojo  
Cho to start the warm-ups.  
The hakamas rustle. The fun  
Begins.

6:32 AM

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THE INCOMING TIDE AS A  
METAPHOR FOR  
CROSSING PERSONAL BORDERS  
IN AIKIDO

Alan Baiss

As I consider the role Aikido plays in confronting my personal limitations I am reminded of the action of an incoming tide on a calm day. More specifically I am reminded of the notion of the water as it moves up the beach and of the fullness of its interactions with what it encounters along the way.

While the tide floods, each successive wave does not surpass the upper limit along the shore established by the previous one, rather there may be a number of waves which fall well short before a new upper limit is set. Similarly, in Aikido, it may take many practices before I pass or even again reach the border of a newly established personal limit. As waves come up and retreat it is often initially unclear if the tide is coming in or not. This uncertainty about whether progress is actually being made toward establishing a new boundary is also quite familiar to me in my practice of Aikido. Eventually though, a wave glides further up the beach and a new boundary is set.

Although my work toward crossing previously established boundaries does not have the same focus or commitment as I see in the incoming tide, this metaphor still has merit. Aikido is a practice which helps me to find some of this focus.

If you have ever watched the tide

move up the shore you will also know that the entire body of water, and all life which it touches, is effected by the process. Crabs come out from under the rocks which are moistened by the new tide, and kelp, dried by the sun, again becomes turgid. Small fish swim in the shallow and murky water as it churns up many particles which were previously resting on the beach. In Aikido, as I approach and pass my previous borders, I also feel my entire being and all which I come in contact with, are part of the process.

As I practice Aikido I am often aware of feelings and sensations which are familiar to me in other areas of my life. My personal issues are integrated with my Aikido practice. If my uke attacks me more forcefully than I have anticipated I might pull back and close down as has been my wont when verbally attacked. Alternatively, if I remain open to the situation and accept my partner's attack I may progress into new territory on and off the mats. Just as a portion of the beach is transformed each time the tide reaches a new height, my entire being and my interactions with those I come in contact with are changed a little each time I cross an old border.

For myself, and I expect for most people, crossing personal borders is very difficult. It requires me to let go of some of the very things which, at some time in the past, I learned for my survival. Even if these things no longer serve me, and even if I do not see how they ever did, the fear I feel around what might happen if I let go is still very real. So, as much as I want to move beyond my present

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boundaries, I also hold back and protect myself with out-moded techniques. I protect myself from things which, at times, might be nothing more than monsters my imagination has conjured up.

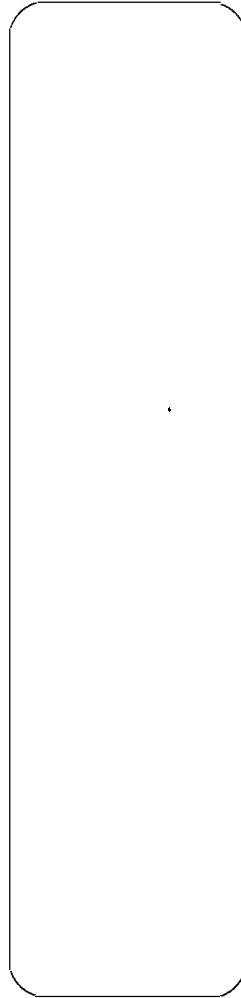
With this in mind, approaching my limits with the motion of an incoming tide seems understandable. Plowing ahead through border after border might be overwhelming and destructive for me and most certainly would rob me of the rich and nourishing interactions which are available at each new level that I not identify with this and become stuck there, I wish to remain fluid and ready to cross each successive border which waits for me.

Often, as uke, I find myself trying to take control when I feel potential danger. This is another old way of being which, at the time, I feel would be unsafe for me to let go of. Again, if I do risk crossing new borders in Aikido, my tide comes a little further up the beach and I, and all those who I come in contact with, have the potential to experience me differently. If, for example, I experiment with less control as I practice on the mats, I may find that when I am in a verbal argument, rather than trying to control the direction of the dispute, I am able to safely hear what my friend is trying to put across and able to let him or her know that I am receiving his or her message.

So, having said all this I hope my metaphor has made some sense. That is that the role Aikido plays in my confronting my personal limitations

reminds me of the persistent tide as it moves up the beach and the many changes it brings about along its path.

Alan Baiss, 4th kyu practices Aikido at Victoria Aikikai. He works in Victoria as a counsellor and personal therapist.



## AIKIDO AS AN INITIATION PROCESS

John Betts

In this paper I wish to outline aspects of the initiation process, particularly for males, and how this process has been neglected in our society. It is my contention that Aikido may be a way that this initiation may occur. For some, the attraction of Aikido may be an attraction to the initiation rites that are practised within the martial art.

### THE SEPARATION FROM THE NATURAL WORLD

As part of the "civilisation" of our society has come a separation from the natural world. By natural I refer not only to the land and the organisms that are connected within a web of life, but also the psychological issues we as humans need to face in our individuation or psychological development.

A core process we as humans need to undergo, is that of initiation. We are all aware of the rituals that many cultures place their adolescents through in order to make physical the psychological transformation from childhood to adulthood. In many of the "primitive" (sic) cultures, this process of transformation and separation took place in an initiation rite. In my country with a rich tapestry of cultures, the initiation rites of many adolescents was a set, well developed process that had existed for centuries. This is so for many of the indigenous peoples of Canada, who to a certain extent, still practice initiation of their adolescents.

### THE PROCESS OF INITIATION

The initiation process usually involves two core issues. Firstly, separation from the parents into a group of older, wiser same sex adults, and secondly, some form of marking (in some cultures it is wounding or tattooing). The adolescent is separated from his normal social support, and taught the lore of his culture by elders of his normal social support. Tests of physical prowess and intestinal fortitude are set for the initiate to demonstrate primarily to himself that he has ability to rely upon himself (physically and psychologically) in time of need. Once the adolescent has completed the set tasks and learning, a public ceremony transforms him from the status of an adolescent to one of an adult.

### CHANGE IN STATUS AFTER INITIATION

After the initiation process is complete, an acknowledged conferment of status is accorded the initiate. This may take the form of different style of dress and a new system of respect (new name, different manner of being spoken to). Once these stages are complete the individual is accepted into the society of adults and expected to behave accordingly. No childish or uncontrolled behaviour is permitted.

We may see Aikido as an initiation process. We as beginners are placed away from our set society and its' members (we come onto the mat alone, and leave behind our families and supports that prop up our status in society). We begin in state of "nothingness." We undergo a

physical process (that for many, myself in particular) has painful aspects to it. We are accorded some recognition after having undergone this ritual. We are treated differently (welcomed into the community of aikidoists). We now wear a white dogi whenever we enter the dojo. We sit in a particular order according to our change in status (more towards the right in seiza). For young people, a change in belt colour also may occur.

This initiation process is repeated again and again with each new rank attained. We may ultimately join the subsociety of elders (higher ranks) that influence and guide the practice of the lower ranks, and in so doing become part of the group of elders who would separate the initiates from the community and teach them the lore of Aikido in the form of techniques, etiquette and attitude.

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John Betts 3rd kyu, practices at Victoria Aikikai and trained as a psychologist in South Africa and runs counselling practices in Victoria and Duncan.

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**BOOK REVIEW**

Bruce Riddick

The Code of the Warrior, Rick Fields,  
Harper Perennial, New York, 1991,  
297p

There are many good works on warriorship, but few with an overall perspective touching on the social and cultural aspects of warriorship as they developed throughout history. Rick Fields attempts to do this in his recent book The Code of the Warrior. He is of the opinion that each society has its own unique code of warriorship that has evolved over time. From his research we can pick up some insights about the common elements of warriorship in each society, common pitfalls and obstacles and speculate on the direction the modern warrior should take.

Fields begins with "Warriors Before War" reaching back through paleontology to Australopithecus and examines the question of what it is that makes us human. He discusses the contributions of Margaret Mead and the great controversies in anthropology. He says that the first warrior's fight was personal. "No one fought for him and no one could order or force him to fight...He fought to bring life from death...to restore the balance of the world...he was responsible for his own actions." Warriorship is personal and independent - it requires commitment - then as it does now.

The Sumarians were the first to transfer the individual tribal warrior into the citizen-soldier. " it is here,

with the advent of civilized war, that we also come across true savagery." The story of Gilgamesh shows the danger of the supernatural warrior's intoxication with his own powers, the warrior's rejection of the feminine in the human psyche, the futility of power and strength against death. Fields considers this the point where the warrior began to look inward at himself.

The book moves on to discuss the Old Europeans who would transform themselves into predatory animals - the berserkirs - and what had to be done to control their unbridled battle frenzy. This brought up the warrior's conundrum - how to fight by letting go of all inhibitions without being a threat to society. This conundrum Fields examines in several societies. He delves at length on the codes of conduct of the Classical World as well as that of the European knights and their rise and fall. He addresses the same question as he examines history on the Indian sub-continent and the warrior traditions of the Kshatriyas, the Aryan warrior class. He discusses the Mahabharata epic of Arjuna, the philosophy of warriorship of the time and how Arjuna was lead to reject the accepted rules of combat and the consequences of such rejection.

Thus Fields sets the time and place for the next philosophical step by introducing Prince Siddhartha who became Buddha in his search for an answer - destroying the illusion of self - directing attention to the "enemy within".

What Fields fails to point out is that



although detachment may liberate the warrior in the performance of his tasks, it cannot free him from the consequences of his actions. In reflecting on Fields' book at this point, it was becoming evident that whether or not there are rules of warfare or a code for the warrior, the warrior needs more than skill at arms - he needs sound judgement. Fields could have taken Alexander as a prime example in this regard, but he doesn't.

The Taoist philosophy influenced the warrior's code - military action was a last resort. Warriors were skilled at arms and in social conduct. Their code was based on familial relationships and a feudal hierarchy. Eventually chaos reigned even in this society, but not before Sun Tzu offered his treatise on The Art of War. For the Taoist the "essence of the principles of warriors is responding to change".

In Japan the warriors' qualities and the social order blended to produce the code of Bushido. Zen training offered practical physical and spiritual benefits to the warrior. Meditation developed qualities useful to the warrior, but more importantly the abandonment of the ego liberated the warrior from the fear of death. This combination allowed the warrior to emphasize the means rather than the ends, and to extol the virtue of sincerity. It also contributed to the ennobling of the failure - provided the motives and acts were pure.

Tokugawa avoided the failures of other rulers in other times and other places. He insisted that the art of peace was no less important than the

art of war and prepared the samurai as administrators. When the Christian knights could not adapt to new methods of warfare, many enjoyed political power along with the Church, but they were not administrators, the clerics were. Although the spiritual basis of Christianity is love, the Church had based its preaching on the never-ending struggle with evil, a struggle of opposing forces. The knights had no spiritual or philosophical guidance that would direct their mastery at arms to anything else. Self-perfection in a spiritual sense was the affair of monks.

The samurai, however, were raised in a different tradition. The contributions of Zen offered a way for the samurai to transcend mastery of arms for their own sake to mastery of the self - through the practice of the martial arts. The genius of Tokugawa was to emphasize Confucian norms to develop the samurai warrior as an administrator while fostering the social and cultural Japanese norms of loyalty to one's lord, sincerity, duty and responsibility. Success was possible because of the spiritual direction marital spirit could take.

One of the great lessons Fields' romp through history contains is that from ancient times, one of the warrior's dilemmas has been to transcend the physical to enrich the spirit. Where ever competition has taken place it has fostered skill for skill's sake. Competition is not only retrograde, it spirals into chaos and is an impenetrable barrier to spiritual development.

Unfortunately the chapter on Japan leaves my appetite unsatisfied - an appetite whetted by an excellent first 170 pages. Thirty-pages is not enough; and too much space is given to history rather than to philosophy.

If Fields' treatment of Japan was shallow, his treatment of the American Indian is even shallower. His 24 pages on the American Indian is limited to the story of Crazy Horse. Fields falls prey to the romantic vision of the Indian, ignoring the harsh realities of their lives. He fails to point out the similarities between their practices and those of other primitive societies. This chapter is meant to introduce us to the notion of the spiritual warrior "l'americain" and to introduce us to the notion of the "eco-warrior".

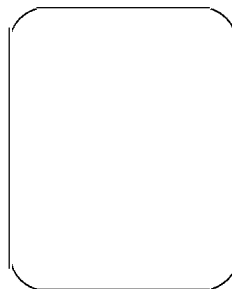
But first he must discuss the myth of the "lone warrior" in American culture which went unquestioned until Vietnam and the inability of this myth to reconcile itself with failure. What a clinch! There is the obligatory chapter on warriorship in business. He would like to say that the warrior's code is applicable to all endeavours. It may be - but it takes extensive training and practice - physical and spiritual to accede to the warrior level of spiritual development - to the "Ring of Emptiness". Few will take the time.

Taking off from the American Indian, Fields develops the theme that the warrior's code now encompasses the protection of the environment. He condones "monkey wrenching" and tree spiking. The destruction of property and endangering others are legitimate ends to protect the balance,

he argues. He forgot the Imperial Precepts of 1882, "Those who thus appreciate true valour, should in their daily intercourse set gentleness first.... If you affect valour and act with violence, the world will in the end detest you and look upon you as wild beasts."

This fundamental error of confusing the code of warrior, warriorship and the task of the warrior is one fatal flaw in the book. Another lies in the style - a journalistic style, well researched in the first half, but lacking in conclusions and direction. That it puts the warrior in perspective in past societies up to the start of the 20th Century is its great merit. That its weaknesses offers jumping-off points for further study, makes it worthwhile to read. That the research has been so extensive sets a high standard for those who might wish to write more.

Bruce Riddick, 1st Kyu, practices Aikido at the New Westminster dojo. He works in the Permits and Licensing section for the Municipality of Surrey.



## TRANSFORMATIONS IN AIKIDO

Ralph Kopperson

Like many Aikidoists, I have been very intrigued throughout my practice history with the more esoteric aspects of the art.

Among these are such concepts as integration of body mind and spirit, use of Ki rather than physical strength, kokyū integration of breath, energy and body motion, the integration of energies of uke and nage as captured in the concept of Ki Musubi. For me this focus seems quite natural and integral to my being. I see it in much of my life and actions. The strong presence of this focus in Aikido is probably a main reason that I am still practicing after 13 years. At the same time, the difficulty in discussing these aspects beyond the most vague conceptual level has frustrated me throughout my practice time. At times it has caused me to doubt the validity of the concepts.

Like all long term practitioners, throughout my practice time I've gone through a great many transformations. The practice of Aikido has been a key influence in my migration from what I was to what I am. With that in mind, I constantly seek to understand the fundamental basis of this process.

Many of the transformations have been on the physical level. They are fairly easy to recognize and describe. As an example, while my body weight has remained about the same, the muscle mass has been redistributed. My posture has improved immensely. I have over-stressed various weak parts of my body, injured them and

then generally built them to greater strength than the pre-injury level. (that view of the injury process is itself a sign of mental transformation: I've become shamelessly prone to positive mental outlook!)

Other transformations have been on a more subtle level, these have not been so immediately obvious. They have also been much closer to the essence of my being, and for that reason difficult and somewhat risky to try to discuss. Still, they are the ones that interest me most as a human being on my path from birth to death.

Recently a small but concrete example of a transformation on the boundary of the esoteric level came to my attention. I want to describe it in this article, as one small step in coming to better understand this level of the process we go through. I might add that I don't view these esoteric elements as aspects that are necessarily unique to Aikido. Rather, it is my guess that they are part of the normal human process of development. I would expect that the Aikido related terminology would have its equivalent in many other human pursuits, physical, mental, spiritual and artistic. Aikido might be unique in the distinct focus put on these elements by O'Sensei, both in the nature and interaction of the physical discipline and the integration of the higher spiritual goals.

Here is an example which deals with body/mind integration. Recently, while warming up for a class, I was doing an exercise in one corner of the Dojo. The exercise involved repeated tenkan's, each flowing into the other,

with the arms being raised from the hips to a "double salute" sort of position at the end of each *tenkan*. There is nothing particularly unusual about this exercise. I'd done it many times. The interesting point is that every time I'd done it, I'd had a particular focus in mind, but it had escaped my conscious analytic attention.

A fellow student approached me and asked what I was thinking about as I did the exercise. As I considered my response, I realized that in doing the exercise a process both amazing and mundane had been taking place. I was "putting my attention" into the main joints I was using in the exercise, striving to move without ever losing the alignment that gave the best posture for "effortless strength". I was trying to use my body in full knowledge of the strength and limitations of its structure. To do that I was integrating in some sort of holistic "complete organism" sense the efforts of my mind and the actions of my body.

The mundane part was that I am sure we have to do this each time we move our body. The amazing part was that the level and sophistication with which this was happening was far greater than I would have considered myself capable of. I figured my Aikido had improved over the last decade, and I have some understanding as to what the change has been. But until that moment I didn't have a clear understanding of this very fundamental change in the integration of my mind and body.

So, that is the example. I don't know how well I expressed it, but I think I got the idea across. To my mind it stands as a clear but small example of part of the process of the integration of body and mind. I like that, because I really want to be able to understand other aspects of the integration of body, mind and spirit. After a decade of physical practice and mental questioning, maybe I have a small foothold. We shall see.

I don't think it makes much difference to my Aikido execution to have realized any of this. I do think it makes an important difference in understanding why I practice Aikido, and in knowing how important that practice is to me. One of the great strengths of this art is that all we have to do is go the dojo and practice. Through that process the changes come in their own time. That is what is really important. The rest of it just puts the experiential reality of practice into a conceptual context.

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Ralph Kopperson, 2nd Dan, works as a Computer Systems Analyst for the British Columbia Ministry of Forests. He practices and teaches Aikido at Victoria Aikikai and the University of Victoria Aikido Club.

## THE EXCITING WORLD OF CONTRIBUTING EDITOR!

The Aikido Forum is run by volunteers who involve themselves in the journal as an adjunct to their practice of Aikido. A frequent obstacle we run into is that of eliciting articles from other dojos across Canada. In order to facilitate this, the Forum staff would like to develop the position of Contributing Editor in other dojos in Canada (or outside of Canada if the spirit moves you.)

To be a Contributing Editor you would be required to elicit/harass/blackmail articles from your fellow practitioners. These articles would be submitted to you as Contributing Editor. You would then forward these articles to Victoria for inclusion in the Forum. In effect you would represent the Forum in the frozen wastes of a town such as Dryden, Ontario (hello Bob!). You can become a shining beacon when all about you is in darkness!

Anyone interested in helping the Forum as a Contributing Editor, please contact the Forum office. Your qualifications for the job are that you can raise awareness of the Forum in your region, and that you can read (just enuf too get by).

And now for something completely different - we need articles! The staff is often asked what articles are needed for the Forum. It is difficult to see just where their ideas could fit into the Forum. Yes, we do encourage eclecticism, so what about writing articles about the following issues?

- Memories of being an outright beginner
- Anecdotes of events in practice
- Practicing Aikido in another country
- The effect of Aikido practice on your work/life/relationships.
- Using Aikido at work
- What keeps us coming back for more?
- Peak experiences in Aikido
- Technical questions.

We appreciate any and all graphic works. As you can see we are desparately short of graphic pieces, be they drawings/cartoons or photographs. Is there something that you could capture on film or paper about Aikido? The best graphic we receive will earn it's producer a years subscription to the Forum.

We have been using photos of O'Sensei as our title cover. A suggestion received by the Forum is for us to have a cover page logo competition. The logo should be produced on a sheet of white paper (or glossy photographic paper if it is a photograph) and represent the Aikido Forum. The entries should be received by the Forum by 30 June 1993. Entries will be judged by a panel of jurors chosen from the Aikidoists in the Victoria region. Prize for the winner is two years subscription to the Forum.

Overwhelm us with your contributions!

-The Editor

