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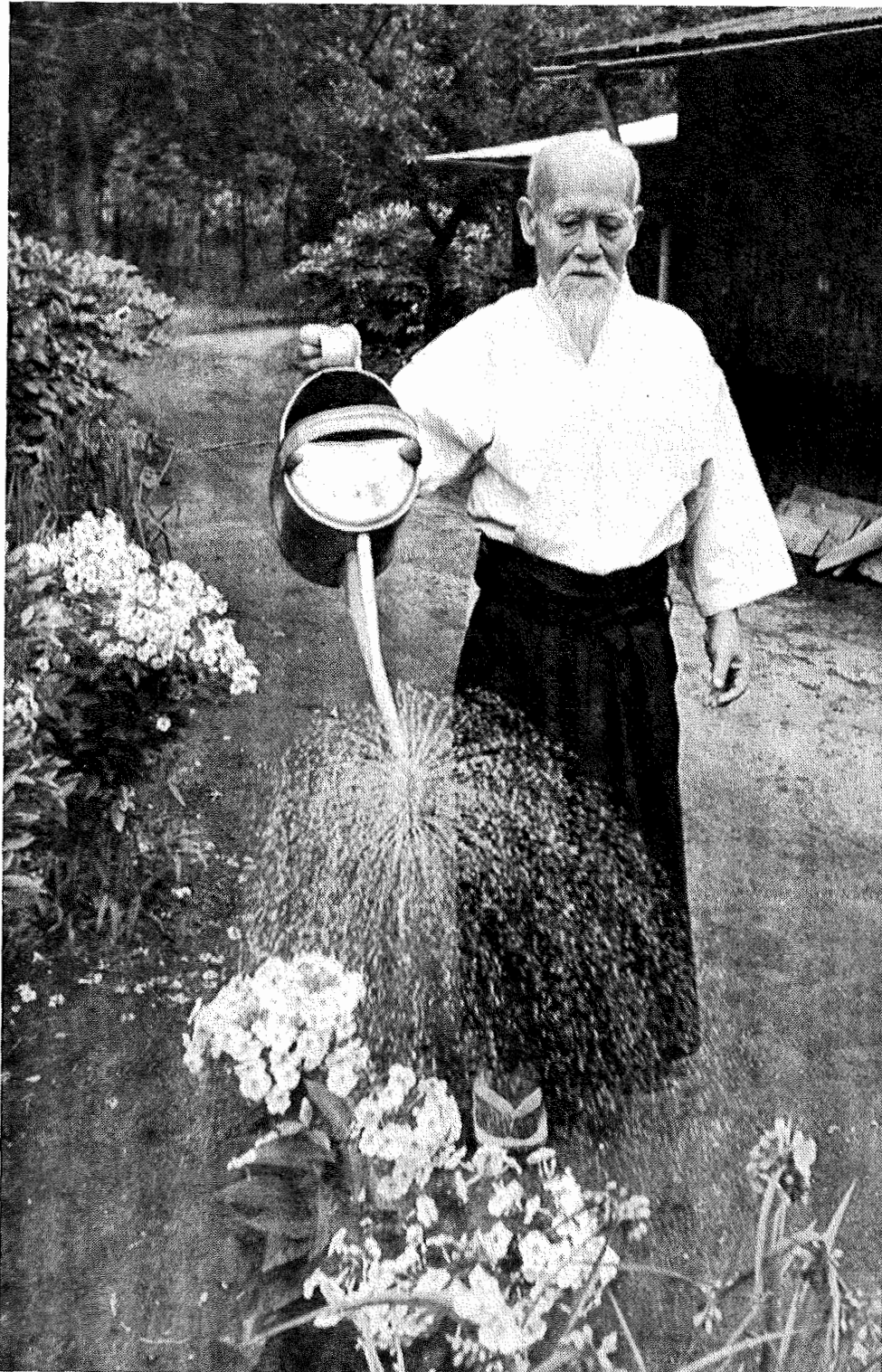
AIKIDO FORUM

A JOURNAL OF AIKIDO EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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<u>ARTICLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1. Essence of Aikido.....	Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba...	2
2. Aiki with Nature as Ecosophy: Aikido and Deep Ecology, Pt. 1..	Alan R. Drengson.....	3
3. A Thought on Reigi-saho.....	Mitsunari Kanai.....	7
4. Significance of Manners in Martial Arts.....	Ishu Ishiyama.....	10
5. From Aikido Seminar Textbook.....	Masatake Fujita.....	12
6. The Traditional Learning Method....	Bruce Bookman.....	13
7. Japanese Terms.....	Paul Martin.....	15
8. Off the Line -- The Process of Harmony.....	Antony Raymont.....	15
9. Stretching for Aikido.....	Gordon MacLeod.....	16

WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

We are pleased to present the second issue of the AIKIDO FORUM. This issue makes a primary focus on the philosophical underpinnings and social implications of Aikido as a martial art education. Among a number of the submitted articles, we have chosen these in the hope of providing Aikido practitioners with a refreshing look at the broad scope of Aikido and with a renewed sense of direction in training.

We are calling for short and long articles (deadline: Sept. 15, 1986) on the cross-cultural aspects of Aikido training as a special focus in the next issue, in addition to some feature articles by leading shihans. Cross-cultural encounters inevitably generate value conflicts and a ground-shakingly new or different outlook on life leading to personal confusion, inner conflicts, and enlightenment. The process of facing such cross-cultural differences and the task of integrating the eastern and the western cultural elements can be both rewarding and frustrating. What are your experiences like? What have you learned from them? Do you have any suggestions for improved ways of teaching and learning Aikido in the west? We hope you will share your personal learning experiences (both the rewarding and frustrating ones) and your constructive insights into cross-cultural (or trans-cultural) issues in studying and teaching Aikido in the west.

We are also hoping to start a section entitled "Voices" for short articles on your reflections on recent seminars, personally insightful experiences, technical and philosophical questions raised by beginners and seniors, and reactions to the articles published in the AIKIDO FORUM. Poems, cartoons, and book reviews (on Aikido, martial arts, personal growth, or Japanese culture) are also welcome.

We have added the subtitle, "A Journal of Aikido Education and Training," to clarify the function and objectives of the AIKIDO FORUM. With your contribution of articles and subscriptions to this journal, we hope to involve Aikido practitioners at the international level in our attempts for open and constructive mutual communication and education.

Submitted articles must be typewritten (double spaced), be less than 1600 words, and be accompanied by a brief autobiography (40 words or less) including your Aikido rank, dojo name and a personal telephone number. We prefer that the articles be submitted in English but we do have limited translating abilities in French, Spanish, Dutch and Japanese. Please retain a copy for your own record and submit your article to the address on the cover.

ESSENCE OF AIKIDO

by Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba

A Note to the Editor: I feel very pleased with your conscientious work on the Aikido journal, and I have been very impressed with its high quality. I am honoured to be invited to submit another article. However, I have been getting progressively busy lately, and it is rather difficult to concentrate on writing at this moment. It would be my pleasure to give permission to you to use excerpts from any of my books such as "The Heart of Aikido," and "Aikido."

Editor's Note: With Doshu Ueshiba Sensei's generous permission, I have chosen the following excerpts from Chapter One (pp10-16) of his book, Aikido Nyumon (Introduction to Aikido) published by Saito-sha (Tokyo) in 1975.

Way of Self-Discipline

Human desires to be stronger than others, to excel others, and to capture and possess many things are well reflected in various forms of struggles in the history of mankind. Unlike other animals, humans can replace materialistic and animalistic desires with invisible symbolic desires.

However, it is practically impossible to gratify all those desires within one's limited body and lifetime, even if one has super-human abilities. Therefore, the discipline of the human mind becomes necessary, and schools of self-discipline develop. The desire to discipline and strengthen the self in the pursuit of personal growth is also endless. However, such a desire for actualization does not allow for the preoccupation or greed which is reflected in the desires for materialistic possessions and for power to conquer others.

There are various steps and approaches to self-discipline. Although large differences are found between the east and the west in their approach to self-discipline in history since the ancient days, they have shown a noticeable development at the philosophical and religious levels.

Aikido is based on the bu-jutsu (combative techniques) born in the old Japanese tradition. The Japanese martial arts prior to Aikido were based on offensive

and defensive techniques with their first priority on the win-lose aspect. Aikido also started as a discipline that emphasized relative strengths and its techniques were derived from the main body of the Japanese bu-jutsu as a cumulative body of secrets in offensive and defensive movements. However, Aikido has moved from being a combative school concerned about winning and losing to an introspective school of self-discipline aiming at self-actualization.

The greatness of Founder Morihei Ueshiba is in his development of an introspective self-discipline. This is what attracts the attention of society to Aikido. In one introductory sentence, Aikido may be described as "a new way of training the body and the mind, based on the traditional Japanese combative arts."

It is a well known fact that Aikido movements are very rational and natural. The flow in the movements is found in the rhythmic circular motions converging and diverging along the centre of the circle.

When the Aikido movement reaches the ultimate state of nature, powerful energy and strictly observed preciseness will be found along with its rationality, ethics, and beauty. It is an expression of the mind and the body unified in motion. The self converged with nature becomes an absolute existence as in nature, and becomes free from relative existence of being separate from nature.

When one reaches this ultimate state in Aikido training, one has attained the task of mind-body unity, personal growth, and the mastery of both the ki flow and the mind. These elements of growth characterize the uniqueness of Aikido. For this reason, Aikido has been called "an expression of the Zen mind in motion", "the religious expression of the Japanese martial art", and "the martial expression of the Japanese world view."

Kokyu Power

Aikido requires no physical force. However, it is impossible to conceive of a person without physical strength, regardless of the labels used to describe people such as "strong" and "weak." The meaning of not requiring force is a lesson that

one must not rely on physical strength and must move in accordance with the universal laws by emptying out the artificial force. No matter how strong one is, when one goes against the universal laws, one will eventually get defeated by one's own forcefulness.

The flow of water and movements of winds and tides all remind us of the great flow of the power of nature. In Aikido, we practise to match ourselves with nature to utilize its power. This power is actualized only when our ki, mind, and body are unified, and we call such a power "kokyu" (breath) power. Ki is the life of Aiki, and the kokyu power generates ki. Aikido techniques depend upon the strength of the kokyu power.

From a physiological perspective, one cannot survive even for a moment without absorbing necessary elements from the air. The organism's life energy can be estimated from its ability to breath powerfully.

Breathing is done locally through the nose, and totally through the skin from the top of the head to the tip of the toes. When the organs function together and breathe together, the mind and ki of the person must be united. Otherwise, the person cannot actualize the true power endowed by Mother Nature.

When one utilizes the unified power of one's entire being, one attains absolute stability and rootedness in the earth. The mind experiences oneness with nature and connectedness with every member of nature, along with the sense of rootedness. From the outside, such an actualized person appears to have the centre of gravity in the earth, and the flow of ki seems to come out of such earthly stability like a fountain. This ki flow is felt from the person's body, especially from the eyes and the extended hands. Therefore, we call this most precious power "kokyu-ryoku" in Aikido, and train to learn how we can express the kokyu power through our daily training.

The more one advances in the mastery of Aikido, the more freely one can make use of the kokyu power under any circumstances. The kokyu power becomes the support for living and the source of energy in living. It is impossible to discuss the essence of Aikido without referring to this kokyu power.

AIKI WITH NATURE AS ECOSOPHY: AIKIDO AND DEEP ECOLOGY (Part I)

by Alan R. Dregson

A Tale of Two Nations

There is an old, old story, which I have heard through family sources, about two ancient nations. The two nations in the story were neighbors, and the history of their relationship was characterized by competitive jockeying for position and episodes of conflict and war. The story has several levels, three of which will concern us here. The story is about nations, but it can also be taken to represent the relationships between individuals, communities, or between humans as a "species nation" and nature as the "other country."

In its barest form the story goes like this: There were two countries who shared a common border for many generations. Their relationship was characterized by periods of relative calm, and by episodes of open conflict, sporadic violence and even extensive warfare. During periods of prolonged conflict both states diverted much energy to perfecting the skills of war. They also tried to outpace one another in the ability to wage war, and each constantly searched for ways to get an edge over the other, a technical or technological advantage.

This situation inevitably led to an arms race, the results of which were often war. The wars, when they came, were much more destructive than they would have been, had they not worked to improve their military skills and war technology. Now it happened that during one of their periods of conflict they both developed a weapon that was very devastating, and furthermore, it was one which neither could use, without having it used on them. The awesome weapon was never used and yet the two nations did not try to resolve the source of their open conflicts. Instead, each continued to seek other ways to get an advantage over the the other. Both nations eventually exhausted their treasuries, their lands and their people. All that remains of their cultures is some ruins and this story.

Competitive Conflict Resolution and its Alternative

The situation of these two nations is in many ways analogous to the current super-

power nuclear stalemate. When you can destroy each other several times over, and possibly all life on the planet, it should be clear that technological arms races are not going to solve problems of international and interpersonal relationships which are based on conflict and a lack of a spirit of reconciliation.

One of the options available to people who have a conflict, but cannot allow open violence, is to continue the conflict by other means, instead of resolving it through reconciliation. The countries in the story continued their conflicts by another means. They found themselves in a position where neither could destroy nor subdue the other. They chose not reconciliation and cooperation, but continued their conflicts through other forms of competition. We could put this in a different way: We could say that when explosive weapons become equally threatening to both parties, they might resort to knives, where perhaps one could "win" and survive. But if the use of knives could lead to escalation, or if they were outlawed, the parties might resort to other forms of fighting. Psychological "knives", verbal barbs, innuendo, and other indirect forms of violence might be used in order to control, subdue, or put down the other person or country through intimidation and other more subtle forms of coercion.

To continue the aggressive aims in these other more subtle ways carries the great risk that one will become all of the things that one dislikes about one's enemy, the "other". In playing the Roman's game, one becomes a Roman. Both countries could have thrived through cooperation, and could have built a community. Instead, they continued their conflicts and eventually destroyed themselves by wasting their energies in fruitless competition.

Animosity and ill will tend to generate or provoke like responses from others. If we participate in the circle of animosity, we both become victims of this negative Ki. Self-righteous struggles (and who does not think that they are in the right?) against "evil" usually boomerang. Furthermore, such a battle often makes war on evil, and in the process inflicts evil ends on others.

This applies not only in the case of interpersonal relationships, but more fundamentally, to our relationship with nature. If we approach nature as an alien

other that needs to be overcome, our understanding will be of this kind. Our actions will be aggressive ones and will generate conditions not reflective of nature as it is (reality). If one goes around attacking bears, one is very apt to receive much evidence that bears are aggressive and dangerous.

However, if one approaches nature (or a bear) with an open heart, with a spirit of respect and love (admiration and affection), one is apt to have a much more reasonable sense of nature (or a bear) as it is. In this approach we understand nature through aiki which generates an understanding quite different from approaches characterized by indifference or hostility. Aiki as an approach deepens understanding, and a deeper understanding deepens aiki. Note that I am taking "aiki" to represent an approach that seeks to harmonize with nature by means of loving and understanding it. "Aiki" can also stand for the fullest realization of such harmony. This will be explained later when we discuss ecosophy or ecological wisdom.

In the story, the two countries experienced mutual fear, past grievances, feelings of envy, hostility, competitiveness and animosity. Neither saw the other for what it was in itself, nor did either see itself in the way the other saw it, even though they were reflections of each other. Although neither was right, each justified its own position first, and sought to build up its defenses and its own image of itself by putting the other down. The hostility that characterized their approach prevented them from developing a deeper mutual understanding.

This old story is a familiar one, and we will now apply it in more depth to the philosophy of nature. Consider humans as a nation and nature as the "other" nation. If the humans in a community lack self-confidence, feel fearful of nature, see nature as a hostile "other", then they might be led to declare war on it. They will seek to master animals and plants, the whole of nature in fact, as a way to insure their security, as well as to prove their own superiority over this other.

Modern technological humans have attempted to master nature in order to make it do their bidding. Our impacts upon nature are now showing us the qualities of this collective will. There are now many indications that these practices are un-

sound, such as the increasing destruction of forest and wildlands, the accelerating rate of extinctions of animal and plant species, the pollution of air and water, the increasing incidence of degenerative and malignant diseases, the destruction of farm and grass lands, and the tremendous waste of human creativity and talent on destructive pursuits. All of these negative conditions are symptomatic of a more pervasive egoism, nationalism and anthropocentrism that have come to be closely associated with certain aspects of modern industrial culture, in both its international relationships and in its relationships to nature. Modern technology has raised the threat of mutual destruction between superpowers, but it also now threatens the integrity of the biosphere with its war on nature.

Humans have created conditions which threaten to destroy the Earth's biosphere, with its millions of years of accumulated wisdom stored within the living beings all around us and within us. Our understanding of these living forces and communities of beings is limited by a narrow technological, technique oriented, highly specialized approach, which is often disinterested, unloving and even hostile toward nature. Widespread perception of the negative conditions described has spurred the development of a world-wide environmental or ecology movement.

Reform Environmentalism and Deep Ecology

The environmental or ecology movement represents a broad spectrum of persons, actions and views. Within this context there are some who advocate a mild reform of our current practices, and some who advocate a more radical approach to transforming our relationships with nature.

The reform environmentalists believe that the basic values and methods of the western world view can be modified to give more emphasis on wise use of resources. Reform environmentalists do not see inherent values in nature, but see all the values as located within humans. Nature is just a source of raw materials, a system for supporting human life. Nature's instrumental values are best assessed by primarily quantitative, rather than qualitative methods. The reform ecologists think we can draw a line between humans and nature.

The deep ecologists are more radical. They think that such mild reform might buy

us some time, but they ultimately will not resolve the fundamental problems. Deep ecologists say that we must adopt practices which are based on respecting and recognizing the wisdom and values inherent in nature itself. The deep ecologists think that we have to learn to think with nature and not against it, and that this is possible only if we recognize that there are values other than purely human ones. Furthermore, we also must learn to perceive in an ecological way, in harmony with the principles of ecology. When we do this, we will see that we cannot draw a line between the human self and nature. The needs of the Earth are also the needs of the self.

Within the continuum of attitudes representing the environmental movement there are common grounds for shared objectives and policies. This is because, presumably, all those concerned about the fate of the Earth are searching for ways of life which are sustainable and compatible with the long term integrity and balance of natural systems. Even mild reforms over time can lead to radical changes. And one who starts out with a shallow environmental consciousness can move over time to a deeper understanding of the ecological inter-relatedness of all beings, with their interdependencies and complementary ways of life.

The distinction we have been discussing, between reform (shallow) and deep ecology, was first spelled out in print several years ago by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. He described these emerging ecological sensibilities and called them shallow (reform) and deep ecology. In the literature, shallow ecology is now called reform environmentalism. Naess and others have pointed out that the shallow-deep spectrum is a dynamic continuum. An initial shallow concern for the environment might be based only on concern for humans. However, if this leads to study of the inter-relationships that ecological processes involve, one will come to a deeper perception of the nature of ecological wholes, their reciprocities and symmetries, whether within or without.

One will begin to realize that we cannot consider humans as something separate from nature, and that human values must have some grounds that are not merely egoistic, nationalistic or anthropocentric (human centered). Deepening ecological awareness leads one to see how different industrial

processes reflect a culture's character and the minds of its persons, the spirit with which they act. This can lead one to realize that certain values in one's culture must be changed. One can be gradually led to a deeper ecology by study and deepening experience, coupled with an increasing concern and love for nature. Eventually one can come to realize that humans are part of a larger Self of nature.

If one is a follower of deep ecology, one's ongoing practice will be to seek to understand ever more deeply the mysterious, inter-relational, dynamic character of all that lives, including the Earth. A follower of deep ecology will come to see how the spirit of his or her actions over time conditions a character and a destiny. He or she will see how these interact with the activities of others to produce various environmental effects. They will understand the metaphoric power of seeing the self as a miniature ecosystem and the living planet as an extended, larger Self.

Such a deep understanding can only come about fully through direct personal experience with the natural world. It is not the product of intellection alone, nor is it just being informed. Firsthand experience of nature through, e.g., immersion in the wilderness, enables one to become deeply receptive to the softer voices of nature, both within oneself and in the natural world. At the same time one will become more deeply aware of how the quality of one's interpersonal relationships and relationships to other beings is a result of certain specific attitudes and approaches. In the case of nature, a nation's or a person's approach might be characterized by an underlying, or even an explicit, attitude of antagonism and hostility toward all that is not identified with the narrow human ego or nation self.

Aikido and the Pursuit of Ecological Wisdom

The ultimate aim of deep ecology, both personally and communally, is what Naess called "ecosophy", which is ecological wisdom. The realization of ecosophy, as noted above, is not just an intellectual matter, but involves firsthand experience and an integrated, holistic approach to life. It involves aiki in everyday life, and in everything one does.

It involves reorganizing one's life by becoming conscious of the relationship between one's sense of self-competence and the balanced development of the total human body-mind.

To achieve such learning involves an apprenticeship in an art such as farming, and/or Aikido. It involves ecological field studies and wilderness journeys. It involves working with others to regenerate local communities, or to cut down on waste by recycling. It involves supporting efforts to find non-violent ways of resolving human conflicts with one another, other nations, and with nature. This type of commitment and activity helps us to develop a strong enough confidence in ourselves and in our capacity to work with others and in ourselves to allow our sense of self, our self-identification in terms of commitments and love, to expand to include other persons, our community, our nation, the international community and also the natural world.

Naess and other followers of deep ecology have written on this sense of extended identity. This concept is also found in Zen Buddhism and in various nature religions. The basic idea here is that we should make no sharp boundaries between ourselves and nature. There is the narrow, historical ego-self, but there is also the larger transpersonal, transhistorical Self of nature, which is within all things.

It is not merely a concept. In pursuing a realization of this extended sense of identity, we expand our compassion, our love, until it includes all beings. Love (aiki), in this sense, is a force that unifies, brings together and creates the strongest foundation for community. It leads to reciprocal understanding and finally to communion. The realization of communion in the community is the same kind of harmony involved in the realization of ecosophy, as a total harmony with nature. From the viewpoint of deep ecosophy, one's actions simply are expressions of nature. One's movements are natural.

Here let us say more about the word "ecosophy." It is made up of two Greek roots, "ecos" and "sophia." The word "ecos" means household. "Sophia" means wisdom. In the ancient Greek language "sophia" was one of the roots of "philosophy" which meant love (phil) of wisdom (sophia). Plato and Socrates both observed that to be a philosopher (i.e. a

lover of wisdom) is one of the most practical undertakings, for the wisdom the philosopher seeks leads to eudaemonia, which is the optimum harmonious state of being consistent with the laws that govern the Cosmos. Philosophy as a practice, then, is the getting of wisdom through an inquiry of love, or through a loving inquiry into the very centre of our lives and values. It is against this ancient background that the word "sophia" is used in ecosophy.

Given the above, we can say that ecosophy is wisdom of household realized fully by and through love. "Household" here is not just one's hearth, but also one's place in the larger sense. For the family of humans, it is the planet Earth. As O-Sensei said: "This beautiful form/ Of heaven and earth/ Is a single household/ Created by the Guardian spirit." The words "Guardian spirit" tell us that nature is benign to us, wants to protect us, if we will but harmonize with its ways.

The deep ecologists would concur with this. They would say that to dwell in our place with wisdom is to love that place and see it as it is. In seeing it as it is, we come to love it ever more deeply. In loving it we learn its wisdom and how to dwell in it in an ever more loving, harmonious way. We do not try to master or control it, but to live in peace and harmony with it. This is the deepest ecology as ecosophy. It is also a perfect form of Aiki, for to live in complete harmony with nature as it is in oneself, in others and in the natural world, is to be truly centered in the source of the universe, which is at the very heart of Aikido but also of ecosophy. "Aiki, the root/ Of the power of love,/ Makes love grow/ Forevermore." (O-Sensei)

Part II of this article will focus on Aiki and farming, and the nature of apprenticeship. A short list of references for both parts will be included.

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A THOUGHT ON REIGI-SAHO by Mitsunari Kanai, 7-dan

Fundamental Philosophy of Reigi

The motivating principle of human survival, based upon the instinctual needs of food and sex, is power. The ability to effectively use power is crucial for the sustenance of life itself. The technology of fighting, pre-modern and modern, is an expression of this power, and the human race has survived to this point in history because of the ability to properly use this power. In fact, the development of this technology has given rise to new ideas, scientific advances, civilization, and culture. The basic principle of power is deeply rooted in life itself, and it is still the basis of human society as we know it today.

The student of Aikido, regardless of the reason, has chosen this particular form of martial art as his or her path, seeking to integrate it into daily life and undertaking the practice with dedication and constancy. Some people get enjoyment out of the Aikido training while some others get lost and fall into confusion. Some approach the training selfishly while others approach with modesty. Each person's approach to the training is a personal expression of his or her suffering and conflicts as a human being. Thus, the person applies his or her own judgment to Aikido and tries to give his or her own meaning to Aikido. The significance of Aikido, first of all, is that it is a martial art, but it also has meaning as the manifestation of natural laws and as a psychological, sociological, physiological, ethical, and religious phenomenon. All of these are overlapping, although each has its own unique identity, and together they constitute what we call Aikido.

If we pursue the combative aspect of Aikido in our training, we can find an extremely lethal and destructive power in Aikido. Therefore, if Aikido is misused, it can become a martial art of incomparable danger. Originally, martial arts meant this dangerous aspect. Aikido is no exception. Thus, any combative art unaccompanied by a strict philosophical discipline of life and death is nothing but a competitive sport.

While sports do not deal directly with life-or-death situations, they nevertheless advocate certain values necessary for

the building of character: for example, the observance of rules, respect for others, sportsmanship, proper dress and manners. This should be even more true and essential in the art of Aikido because Aikido deals with the question of life or death and insists on the preservation of life. In such an art is it not unquestionably appropriate to emphasize the need of dignified Rei in human interactions? Therefore, it is said that Rei is the origin and final goal of budo.

Some people may react negatively to this emphasis on etiquette as old-fashioned, conservative, and even feudalistic in some societies, and this is quite understandable. But we must never lose sight of the essence of Rei. Students of Aikido are especially required to appreciate the reason for and the meaning of Reigi-saho, for it becomes an important step towards misogi which is at the heart of Aikido practice. I hope to discuss misogi in a future issue.

At any rate, people working in martial arts tend to become attached to technical strength. They become arrogant and boorish, bragging of their accomplishments. They tend to make unpolished statements based on egoism. They immerse themselves in self-satisfaction. They not only fail to contribute anything to society but, as human beings, their attitudes are underdeveloped and their actions are childish. What is important about Reigi-saho is that it is not simply a matter of bowing properly. The basis of Reigi-saho is the accomplishment of the purified inner self and the personal dignity essential to the martial artist.

If we advance this way of thinking, the matter of Reigi-saho becomes the question of how one should live life itself. It determines what one's mental frame and physical posture should be prior to any conflict situation, the guard-posture must have no openings. Thus, Reigi-saho originates in a sincere and serious confrontation with life and death. Above all, Reigi-saho is an expression of mutual respect in person-to-person encounters, a respect for each other's personalities, a respect which results from the martial artist's confrontations with life-or-death situations. The culmination of the martial artist's experience is the expression of love for all of humanity. This expression of love for all of humanity is Reigi-saho.

The martial artist's respect for the self and for others easily tends to become coarse and unpolished. So the idea of Reigi-saho, that each person is important, functions as a filter to purify and sublimate the martial artist's personality and dignity. Reigi-saho thus melts into a harmonious whole with the personal power and confidence that the martial artist possesses. This coming together establishes a peaceful, secure, and stable inner self which appears externally as the martial artist's personal dignity. Hence, a respectful personality with strength and independence is actualized. Therefore, Reigi-saho is a form of self-expression. The formalized actions of Reigi-saho reveal the total knowledge and personality of the martial artist.

We who are trying to actualize ourselves through Aikido should recognize that we are each independent. Only with such deep awareness of the self, can we carry out a highly polished Rei with confidence.

In short, Reigi-saho is to sit and bow perfectly and with dignity. In this formalized expression of Rei, there exists the martial artist's expression of self resulting from his or her philosophy of life and death. And, for this reason, the martial artist shows merciful care and concern for those who walk on the same path. The martial artist shows merciful care and concern for all who seek to develop themselves in mind, body, and spirit, with sincere respect for other human lives.

In order for any external, physical act to be complete, it must be an expression of the total person. Abstractly, the external form includes the inside. This is a complete form. For Reigi-saho, that means that the external act was from the deep heart or mind. Also, the heart or mind was using the external act for its expression. This is a complete act. The formalized expression of the inner and outer person harmonized is the Saho of Reigi.

Saho (Formalized expression of Rei)

Reigi-saho thus contains varied implications regarding the inner life, but the observable form is a straightforward expression of respect for others, eliminating all unnecessary motions and leaving no trace of inattention. In the handling of martial art weapons the safest and most rational procedure has been formalized so

that injury will not fall upon others as well as on oneself. Ultimately the formalized movements become a natural movement of the martial artist who has become one with the particular weapon. Below is an outline of the basics of Saho which I consider necessary knowledge for the martial artist.

1. Seiza (formal Japanese-style sitting)

From your natural standing position draw your left leg slightly backwards (in some cases the right leg), kneel down on your left knee while staying on your toes. Then kneel on your right knee, lining up both feet while on your toes. Sit down slowly on both heels, as you straighten your toes, placing them flat on the floor so that you sit on the soles of your feet. Place either your left big toe on the right big toe, or have both big toes lightly touch each other side by side.

Next, place both hands on your thighs with fingers pointing slightly inward. Spread out both elbows very slightly but naturally, dropping the tension in your shoulders into the tanden or the pit of the stomach. Raise your sternum which will naturally straighten your back (do not stiffen your back), look straight ahead of you, and calm your body and mind for proper breathing. The space between the knees on the floor should be about the width of two or three fists.

2. Rei before the Kamiza (front altar)

From the seiza position slide both palms of your hands forward to the floor about a foot in front of you, forming a triangle, and then bow by lowering your face slowly and quietly towards the center of the triangle. Do not raise your hip or round your back as you do so; it is important to bend your body at the waist, keeping the back straight as possible. After a brief pause gradually raise your bowed head, pulling up both hands at the same time. Return both hands to the original seiza position and look straight forward.

3. Rei toward fellow students

From the position of the seiza first slide your left hand forward slowly, followed by the right hand, and place them on the floor about a foot in front of you and form a triangle, identical to the procedures described above. Following the bow, pull back your right hand while raising the body, followed by the left hand, and

return to the original seiza position.

4. Rei towards teachers

The same etiquette as above is observed for bowing to your teacher, but the student should remember to lower his or her head in a bow before the teacher does, and to raise his or her own head after the teacher raises his or hers. Please remember that your bow shows your mental readiness.

5. Standing from the seiza position

First get on your toes, then begin to stand as you move your right foot (or left foot) half a step forward. Stand up slowly and quietly and pull back the right foot (or left foot) so that you are standing naturally.

6. Saho when holding sword (applies also to other weapons such as bokken, jo, etc.)

The sword is normally placed on the swordstand with the handle to the left of you and the blade facing upward. (The side of the sword thus seen is called the front of the sword.) The placement of the sword is reversed for self protection in cases of emergencies and when retiring at night.

(a) Rei to the sword (standing)

Take the sword from the swordstand with your right hand grasping the scabbard near the swordguard with the right thumb pressing the swordguard. Then turn up your right hand, placing the handle to your right. Open your right palm holding the sword with the blade turned upwards, while at the same time the thumb of the left hand, palm down, holds the scabbard closer to the tip. The sword should be held up at eye level and the bow should be made slowly from the waist with the back kept straight. The sword is raised slightly during the bow.

(b) Rei to the Kamiza (standing)

From the standing bow to the sword, lower the sword in front of you thus bringing it closer to your body. With your right hand turn the handle upward with the blade facing you. The sword is held vertically with the right hand in front of your center, and the left hand now grasps the scabbard immediately below the right hand. The right hand then is freed, permitting it to grasp the backside of the sword blade from above. The right

hand thus grasping the scabbard should have its index finger placed on the back-side pointing towards the sword's tip. Hold the sword close to the right side of your body with the tip turned towards the front at a 35° angle with your right hand at your hip bone. Stand erectly and piously make your bow to the Kamiza. The bow should be about 45° and you should pull your chin in while you bow.

(c) Rei in front of Kamiza (sitting)

Sit in seiza. Place the sword on the floor on the right side of your body with the blade pointing towards you. The sword should be parallel to your body. Slide both hands simultaneously down from your thighs to the floor and bow to the Kamiza.

(d) Rei toward fellow students and teachers (sitting)

The same procedure should be followed as in the case above, except for the different sequence of putting your left hand down on the floor first when bowing and pulling up the right hand first when rising from the bowing position.

This concludes the description of the minimally required basics of Reigi-saho. The brevity of the explanations was intended to avoid possible confusion, but it may also have lead to lack of clarity and thoroughness of explanation concerning certain procedures. If I have not been generous enough in writing my description of Reigi-saho, then I hope that you will forgive me and give to me and others the chance to teach you more in the future.

Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the U.S. Aikido Federation (USAF) News, 1978, Fall issue, and is reprinted here with the author's permission.

Kanai Shihan is the chief instructor of New England Aikikai. He is one of the last uchideshis (disciples) of Founder Ueshiba. He also instructs Iaido.

The breath of a human and the breath of the universe are the same. It is the human who receives the breathing of the universe and that of the earth.

O-Sensei

SIGNIFICANCE OF MANNERS IN MARTIAL ARTS

by **Ishu Ishiyama, 4-dan**

Why is it that you do not bow to the swimming pool before you dive in? Why do you not meditate before a squash game? Some people believe that martial arts are nothing more than a combative technique for practical purposes or physical entertainment. Some regard the act of bowing as self-degrading and a violation of democratic individualism.

Bowing is more than a physical act. It takes on a symbolic meaning of the subjugation of the ego, and this can be the most fundamental challenge to some people who step into the world of martial art training. I have seen a handful of beginners who showed great difficulty accepting bowing as part of Aikido training and disappeared from the dojo.

With a closer look at the nature of budo (the martial art), you realize that budo is based upon concern over life-or-death issues. There is no room for entertainment. Budo originates in man's desire to live and let live, and respect for life. Driven by the fundamental fear of death and the self-preservation instinct, man searches for eternal life and power towards the ultimate union with Nature God.

In this respect, as an old saying goes, "Budo starts with rei and ends with rei," rei becomes the central focus in budo training. Rei is both an internal mind-set and a behavioural expression of respect to, and appreciation of, whoever or whatever helps you live and actualize your inner potential. Rei may be experienced with parents, teachers, friends, employees, natural environment, and protective and nurturing gods.

The significance of rei or manners in budo education can be conceived of in several interrelated domains of human functioning such as: pragmatic training of attention and social sensitivity, spiritual education of the self, and the appreciation of symbology in self-other relationships.

Practically speaking, the formalized or ritualized manners ("Reigi" or "Reigi-saho") give practitioners a structure in which they can relate to each other smoothly and efficiently. Offending others who deserve due respect is often caused by one's egocentric preoccupations.

Budo, as a training for mastering a sensitive balance between the self and the

environment, requires flexible externalization of attention. When one's attention is fixed upon oneself, one loses the freedom in responding to changes in the environment. The first step in training, therefore, is to keep your attention (ki) extended and be sensitive to others' needs, behaviours, and feelings. When one fails to do this, one develops "suki" (an opening for an attack) in oneself.

The best defense is to not offend others. Others can turn into your enemy easily due to your unrespectful or insensitive behaviour. This can lead to an unnecessary life-or-death confrontation which could have been avoided by your increased awareness of the needs of the situation. For this reason, reducing your emotional self-preoccupation and increasing the objective awareness of the interpersonal situations have been part of the core of martial art training in Japan.

Some students engage themselves in fruitless competition with, or criticism of, fellow practitioners due to their own temporary frustration, selfishness, or inconvenient feelings. Such persons must know that their "suki" is highly visible to the well-trained eyes of the seasoned practitioners and instructors.

Manners have also a symbolic and yet vital significance in the training of the Way, be it a martial art, fishing, or dancing. Have you ever been deeply moved or awestruck by the serenity of natural phenomena such as the sunrise and the sunset? Just as ancient people prayed and danced at sunrise and sunset, you may also have experienced the omnipotence and omnipresence of Nature God residing in yourself and the world on such occasions.

Founder Ueshiba said, "In Aikido, we protect and nurture the power of God's Love within ourselves...and actualize the Way that is circulating in the body like blood." Budo, a highly pragmatic art, eventually comes to such a point of spiritual awakening when you realize your limitations and submit yourself to the power of nature. You come to question the essence of your existence and your relation to Nature God. Final perfection of your technical ability and mastery of your inherent existential insecurity is beyond your conscious control. After doing your best, you must pray for something to come and fill in the gap between the possible and the impossible. Keeping yourself empty and pure, you await in prayer.

In Japanese dancing, you place a folded fan in front of yourself and bow toward it before and after performing. Why bow to such a bamboo-paper object? The world of dancing is regarded as the world of gods. The fan draws a symbolic demarcation between the human world (the conscious) and the world of gods. As you enter the latter, you leave your ego behind. The bowing is a salute to the gods. It is not you who is dancing any more. It is Nature God who is manifesting its presence through dancing. The moment your ego returns, the gods disappear. Your earnest desire to perfect your existence through the medium of dancing makes you bow deeply and humbly.

Here, you may replace the words "dancing" and "fan" with "budo" and "sword." Interestingly, the Founder called Aikido practice "dancing the martial art."

From our life experiences and budo training, we come to respect the fact that there is something far mightier than our ego power, something beyond our conscious manipulation. Just as our words are used symbolically, our actions are symbolic expressions of our attitudes towards life.

Therefore, budo training is more than a combative physical exercise. Your teacher, fellow practitioners, weapons and the dojo are more than mere instruments at your disposal. They directly or indirectly help you attain the perfection of self and the mastery of the power of Nature God. In this sense everything and everyone is an important guide. Inanimate objects do not vocally or intentionally teach you. Rather they act as the "sounding board" or the mirror of your progress. You can blow life into objects by treating them with respect.

Bowing is a typical expression of rei. It is a form of self-submission to the Way and to Nature God. This is not self-degradation. It is an act of your conscious self paying respect to the power and wisdom of Nature God manifesting within the self. Therefore refusal to practise "rei" is a refusal to acknowledge a greater part of the self beyond the ego.

Dr. Ishiyama is the chief instructor of Victoria Aikikai. He is an Assistant Professor in the Counselling Psychology Department at the University of British Columbia, and practises Morita Therapy.

FROM AIKIDO SEMINAR TEXTBOOK
by Masatake Fujita, 7-dan

Editor's note: Fujita Shihan kindly sent me a copy of Aikido: A Seminar Textbook published by Aikikai Hombu Dojo in 1986. He and his staff prepared the textbook with this introduction: "This textbook is aimed for the executive officers of local Aikido dojos and university clubs. This was prepared for seminars consisting of two parts: (1) lectures to provide knowledge on Aikido, and (2) practice to provide the wisdom of action. Our wish is to promote the accurate understanding and popularization of Aikido" (p.1).

The following are excerpts translated and published with Fujita Shihan's permission.

Ideal of Japanese Martial Arts: Budo of Harmony

The ideal goal of the Japanese martial arts, though they originally started as techniques for killing and damaging the opponent, is placed in the pursuit of harmony, love, and self-actualization.

Therefore, killing and destruction are prohibited as in the saying "shinbun-fusatsu" which means the divine martial art does not kill. A transition has been made from the world of killing and hurting the opponents to that of coexisting and letting others live and self-actualize. The virtue of the martial art is found in the training of not initiating the attack but effectively responding to the other's aggression. Especially, the Aikido techniques without using weapons clearly demonstrate this principle.

The task of Aikido students is to concretely realize this ideal goal in their daily training at both physical and mental levels.

You neither fight people nor damage nature. Without forcefulness, you harmonize with others as they confront you. Aikido is such a martial art; a budo of love aiming at harmony with the universe.

Aikido's being so wide spread not only in Japan but also all over the world reflects how people in the world strongly empathize with such fundamental Aikido spirit.

Training Method in Aikido

We call the exercises in Aikido "keiko." Students of the traditional Japanese arts and martial arts aspired for the attain-

ment of the "true genuine self" through the mastery of techniques, and called the process "the way" and "keiko-goto" (training activities).

Normally, we practise techniques repeatedly in Aikido. What is very important is to build and actualize a technique between the practicing partners in the pursuit of both technical accuracy and attainment of power based on the correctness of the technique, and to apply this attitude to the actualization of the self throughout life as the way.

Development of Basic Physical Strength

The meaning of developing basic physical strength is to provide energy to live one's life actively. Since Aikido training requires minimum physical strength, one must maintain good health and attempt to develop a higher energy level. For this purpose, attention must be paid to nutrition and hygiene. Voluntary training for increasing physical strength is also recommended.

(1) Regard basic physical strength as something that every person requires for survival and daily functioning, and try to build a healthy body.

(2) Maintain balance in the overdevelopment of the bodily strength.

(3) Develop an initiative in self-training instead of feeling obliged.

(4) Use body-strengthening not only for a high energy output but also for an effective application of strength.

(5) Develop the way of physical strengthening in such a way that you can rationally integrate it into your daily life.

(6) Physical strengthening exercises (or "tanren") must become part of the regular daily activities that bring benefit to your life.

Principles of Correct Posture

(1) You must be physically stable.

(2) There must be little stress placed on the muscles.

(3) The posture must not be disturbing to the functions of the internal organs.

(4) The posture must be esthetic in its overall appearance.

Learning the Correct Posture: Bones

(1) Both legs are vertical against the floor.

(2) Pull back the pubic bone (symphysis pubis) firmly.

- (3) Stretch the backbone straight up.
- (4) Push the chest forward.
- (5) Pull in the chin.
- (6) Both shoulders and both hips are horizontally aligned.
- (7) The tip of the nose and the navel are on the same vertical line.

Learning the Correct Posture: Muscles

- (1) The biggest toes are firmly and strongly anchored.
- (2) The achilles tendons are stretched.
- (3) There is even strength in the muscles of both the hips and the stomach.
- (4) The muscles around the solar plexus, the chest, the shoulders, and the chin are flexible.
- (5) There is firm strength in the "tanden" (lower abdomen), and the anus is tightened.

Ukemi

It is often said that three years of solid ukemi practice is necessary so that you can receive anyone's throws or immobilizations safely and quickly. Ukemi is a movement to maintain yourself in the safest condition when you get thrown or knocked down, or when you take an initiative to fall to avoid the opponent's attack. The most important thing that requires your attention is to avoid hitting the head. As the word "ukemi" (receiving body) connotes, ukemi is an overall body movement. It is necessary to accumulate enough solitary practice to condition the body to take a reliable ukemi.

The important elements in ukemi are: (1) maintaining the flexibility of the body, (2) eliminating fear, and (3) taking ukemi as an active technique by self-sacrificing.

Strictness ("Kibishisa")

It is important to develop an attitude of overcoming our tendency to seek comfort and avoid self-discipline. An active attitude of overcoming hardships in life is beneficial for our individual existence and society.

Therefore, strictness must be part of the training to strengthen the mind and the body. Take practice seriously, and concentrate your mind on practice.

There are three basic elements in strictness: (1) asking questions of yourself such as "What is strictness for?", and searching for the answers; (2) enthus-

iasm that is firm and quiet, not subject to changes in moods; and (3) immersing yourself in action (becoming one with action).

The focus of self-strengthening ("tanren") must be on our body and mind in the daily practice.

There is no graduation from training, as an old saying goes; "Practise for one thousand days, and practise for ten thousand days." Then, another saying goes, "Do not seek the trace of the seekers in the olden days, but seek what they were searching."

Fujita Shihan teaches at the world headquarters (Hombu Dojo) in Tokyo, and also acts as the General Secretary of the International Aikido Federation. He frequently conducts Aikido seminars in Japan and abroad. His interest is to promote standardized Aikido instructions for beginners in order to expose them to both conceptual, physical and technical aspects of Aikido training.

THE TRADITIONAL LEARNING METHOD

by **Bruce Bookman, 4-dan**

With the spread of Aikido to all parts of the world, traditional learning methods have been modified and in some cases, completely overhauled, to accommodate the transmission of the art to different cultures. However, before modifications can be made, a thorough knowledge of the traditional method is essential. Aikido has many subtleties that have been handed down from the Founder. Included in these subtleties is a method of passing on the knowledge of the discipline. With this in mind, it can be detrimental to tamper with traditional methods.

The traditional method emphasizes basics, non-verbal communication and dojo support activities. It is vitally important for a beginning student to see one version of all of the basics and to copy the teacher's demonstration of them as exactly as possible. Naturally it is easier for beginners to learn one version of the basics rather than to get confused by seeing several variations. Practitioners need to be very assertive in their role as observers. Students should not wait for the instructor's verbal presentation, but

should start an internal process of taking imaginary movies of the teacher's movements in order to save them for repeated study. Copying the teacher's moves provides you with an example from which you can build a strong foundation.

Copying does not mean impersonation. Advanced students and local instructors (myself included) love our teachers so much that we sometimes end up copying their mannerisms as well as their techniques. I think that it is comical when, for example, a non-Japanese instructor all of a sudden picks up a Japanese accent when teaching an Aikido class. We need to copy the essence of the teaching; not to be someone we are not.

Non-verbal communication is more efficient and thorough than verbal instruction. When verbal communication is used, it has been my experience that the students' observation gets lazy. They are content in saying, "Since Sensei did not correct me, I must be doing it right." This rests the total burden for the education of the students on the teacher. I have tried to accommodate my students' dependency on verbal communication; it doesn't work! The instructor gets exhausted and the student only knows what he/she is told, if that much. A teacher can point out only so much with an art like Aikido. He/she will always leave something out. That is where the students have to train themselves to make technical observations. Regardless of the level of the practitioner, some degree of on-the-mat verbal communication is necessary. Beginners must rely heavily on words for the first few months of practice. However, verbal communication should be used only as "training wheels" with the ultimate goal being the development of the students' observation and sensitivity.

Last, but not least, are the dojo support activities. Traditionally, the physical state of the dojo is indicative of the membership's internal growth, development and attitude toward training. Additionally, students should be sensitive to the needs of the teacher so that the teacher is free to concentrate on teaching Aikido; the dojo should always be kept ready for class (clean dojo, Sensei's weapons are on the mat, kamiza is in order, etc.). By tuning into the teacher's needs, without having to be told, you are tapping into a non-verbal communication that carries over to waza on the mat.

To me this seems like a very efficient and beautiful way to communicate. At a lecture given by Chiba-Sensei at the USAF Western Region summer camp in 1985, he spoke about travelling with O-Sensei. O-Sensei in his latter years was ill. He would awaken several times a night to go to the bathroom. When Chiba-Sensei travelled with him, Chiba-Sensei would take the adjacent room to where O-Sensei was staying. When O-Sensei woke up in the the night, the student travelling with him would have to be up, dressed, have the door to the bathroom open before O-Sensei got there. According to Chiba-Sensei, if O-Sensei stepped over a sleeping student to get to the bathroom, that student would never be asked to travel with O-Sensei again. Sensei mentioned that at first it was difficult but after a while he would intuitively wake up when O-Sensei awoke and was able to anticipate his needs. Sensei indicated that this mode of communication carried onto the mat. I am not suggesting that we should try to establish this kind of student-teacher relationship, but this does point out the beauty and usefulness of the traditional learning method.

Therefore, I feel that much is lost when we modify the traditional teaching methods too much. By emphasizing basics, practitioners develop a strong foundation that will allow them to carry on more advanced practice and to study different methods of training. The more non-verbal communication, the sharper the practitioner's observation. Attention to dojo support activities not only serves as a barometer for the student's attitude toward training, but frees the teacher's time to teach effectively. In my opinion by following traditional guidelines, aiki principles are more readily embodied.

Mr. Bookman is the Chief Instructor of Aikido Northwest in Seattle, Washington.

When I grasped the real nature of the universe through budo, I saw clearly that human beings must unite mind-and-body and the ki that connects the two, and then achieve harmony with the activity of all things in the universe.

O-Sensei

JAPANESE TERMS
by Paul Martin, 1-dan

One of the difficulties I have had in practising Aikido, and one which seems to be common to most of the beginners I have met has been with Japanese terminology. Some of us seem to be anxious to master techniques but annoyed at having to learn their Japanese names. Others of us just find them bewildering. However, as foreigners learning a Japanese art, I believe that Japanese terms have significance and value for us.

They have significance in all aspects of our practice. In our introduction to Aikido they provide an orientation to the dojo, to our teachers and to each other. This orientation is primarily one of respect for the art and those who are accomplished in it, willingness to learn, and gratitude towards those who can teach us. Basically we honour our Senseis, we ask each other for help, we practise, and we thank those who have helped us. All of this is expressed with only two terms, "onegai-shimasu" (please do me a favour) and "arigato gozaimashita" (thank you), accompanied by rei (bowing).

These terms are an important part of the process of admission into the Aikido community. Saying them helps promote a friendly and cooperative feeling on the mats. Learning the names of techniques allows us to communicate with each other about our practice off the mats.

The terms are valuable on many levels. In a broad sense, knowledge of them can have value as an introduction to the Japanese culture. In an immediate sense, knowledge of them can keep us from being dumbfounded and unresponsive in tests. I recall several times being told to do something like katate-tori shihonage omote and ura and being frozen into inaction because I didn't know what that referred to. This was my case despite the fact that I had some familiarity with the physical forms of the techniques.

I think the "foreignness" of these terms actually helps to deepen our understanding of Aikido techniques eventually. They have none of the easy and automatic associations which English words have and so discourage superfluous knowledge of techniques. The foreignness helps us search for the true meanings and the implications of the terms. For example, I may know that irimi means "enter", but what does it

really mean? When? How far? Under what circumstances? The terms have power because they are associated with martial training and with our body movements in an immediate and intense way.

Learning the names of techniques is a concrete and accessible way of unifying mind and body. Now, if I could only get straight on which one is *migi hanmi*....

Mr. Martin trains under Kawahara Shihan, and also teaches beginners classes at Vancouver Aikikai. He has a small business doing home repairs and renovations in Vancouver, and is a geography student at Simon Fraser University.

OFF THE LINE -- THE PROCESS OF HARMONY
by Antony Raymont

A few weeks after I began to practise Aikido in California, I had the opportunity to join in a celebration of the day of O-Sensei's death. As I approached the host dojo I could recognize the Aikido students by their springy step and open faces; later at the ceremony, the assembled teachers expressed their calm and power without demonstrating actual techniques. Such perceptions of the Aikido community persist. Clearly, Aikido is a way of life, but what is this way to which we aspire?

For me, it is a style of interaction practised at the dojo, with my family and with the general community. My first understanding of Aikido in daily life was of "getting off the line." When a bank teller snaps at me, it is getting off the line not to snap back. When my partner is worried, it is getting off the line not to join her in anxiety. This does not mean that I should suppress such feelings but that I should do whatever is necessary to deflect them before they enter my spirit. Sometimes this may require returning such unwanted gifts to the sender, just as a violent physical attack may be turned back on the attacker. Aikido is a way of harmony, not of victimization.

But, I realize, if the thrower (*nage*) gets off the line, there can be no interaction at all if the receiver (*uke*) does not move in to attach or also remains balanced and unmovable. As *uke*, I contribute my imbalance, my unmet needs and my unfinished emotions, this being symbolized

on the mat by my willingness to attack. As my skill increases I can enter more vigorously and still remain sensitive to my partner; my aggression can become cooperation. Similarly, in life, I practise so that my needs can become requests and my emotions can be shared rather, than imposed.

We learn to attack and defend, but the process becomes approach-harmonize-and-separate. We seek to develop our power to be unmovable without losing the ability to move; we seek to develop our power to approach without attachment to arriving.

Just as we each have our own strengths and weaknesses in life, so each student of Aikido has different things to learn and sees different aspects as easy and difficult. Aikido teachers work in specific ways with each student, and it is obvious, even to a beginner, that people have idiosyncratic responses. For example, men may tend to be tense and resistant while women may tend to collapse.

As a 45 year old, overweight, bespectacled male, I have my own special needs and fears. While younger and more athletic people can take Aikido training in their stride, I am more susceptible to injury and to exhaustion. Also I am used to being in charge and sometimes find it difficult to accept instruction. On the other hand, I have been analyzing myself and my relationships for years and can more easily see the connections between life on and off the mat.

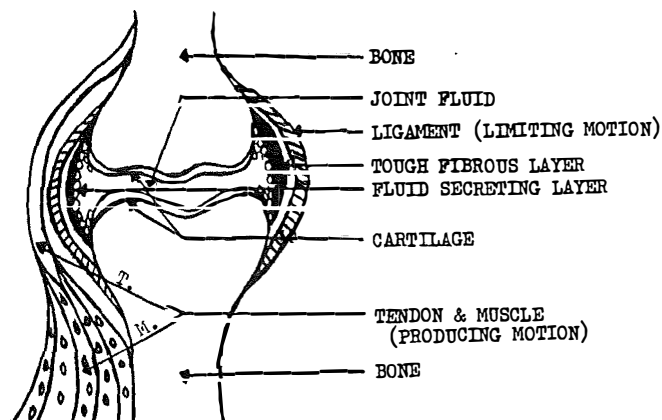
The beauty that I perceive in Aikido is that it comes to address the needs of all. As an older practitioner I may have more aches than does a younger person, but I gain more in fitness and well-being. Perhaps a young person will learn maturity, an aggressive person will learn sensitivity, and a timid person will learn firmness. The Way is a physical training that teaches interpersonal skills and encourages spiritual development. I recommend Aikido to all -- there is only one requirement -- the desire and willingness to grow and change.

Mr. Raymont began the study of Aikido at North Bay Dojo, Santa Cruz in 1984 and is now a member of Victoria Aikikai. He presently owns a bookstore in Victoria and attends graduate school at the University of Victoria.

STRETCHING FOR AIKIDO by Gordon MacLeod

There are several ways that a student of Aikido can learn the importance of physical flexibility. One way is to observe the grace and suppleness of the teachers. Another way is to observe the sensations in our uke-joints when they receive nage's attention. A third way is to understand the anatomy and physiology of a joint and the effects of inflexibility on the various tissues. Below is such a description with recommendations of stretching to improve your flexibility and thus your Aikido techniques. Four pages of information have been excerpted from Bob and Jean Anderson's Stretching with the authors' permission; it is recommended that those new to stretching pick up and use this book or another of similar quality. It contains a wealth of information to help you in Aikido and almost any other physical activities.

A joint, or articulation, is an area of union between bones which permits motion. Most joints of the body are synovial joints such as the one drawn below. The surfaces of the articulating bones are covered by cellular articular cartilage. From the edges of the cartilage a sleeve-like capsule connects the bones and seals off the joint-space. This capsule has two layers: an outer, tough fibrous layer and an inner cellular layer. This inner cellular layer secretes synovial fluid into the joint space to lubricate the joint and to provide nutrients to the cartilage which does not have a direct blood supply.



Surrounding and adherent to the outer layer of the joint capsule are the liga-

ments -- strong bands of tissue joining the bones together, limiting their motion so that the articulating cartilage surfaces stay properly aligned. Opposing the function of the ligaments are the muscles which cross the joints and are secured to the bones by strong bands of connective tissue known as tendons.

The body has well over 200 synovial joints; the spine alone has 137. The other major types of joints of concern to us are those such as the knee and sternoclavicular joints, which have movable cartilaginous discs between the articular surfaces, and the intervertebral disc joints of the spine, which have very tough elastic-like material between the bones and surrounding a gelatinous center (picture the inside of a golf ball with its inky core). Flexibility is required in all of these joints, and the basic tenets of stretching apply to all.

What are the consequences of decreased flexibility in a joint? Examining the various tissues we find:

(1) muscles -- are in a state of partial contracture, unable to relax to their full non-active length. The tendons, being more taut, reach the limit of their physiologic stretch earlier. Thus, tendon tears and muscle strains are more easily sustained especially with quick and strong contractions.

(2) ligaments -- are not stretched to their full capacity and adhesions form between the various ligaments and between the ligaments and the capsules, muscles, tendons, etc. This inflexible complex is more easily damaged when stress is applied to the joint by excessive flexion and extension, torque, or shearing force.

(3) joint capsules -- similarly acquire adhesions and lose their resilience. When a joint is "sprained", the ligaments and capsule are stretched beyond their limits. The inner cellular layer of the capsule becomes irritated and secretes an abundance of fluid into the joint space: the joint swells and becomes very tender.

(4) joint fluid -- provides most of the nutrients to the articular cartilage. It is reasonable to assume that in an inflexible joint the cartilage, especially at the periphery, will not be as well nourished and therefore be more susceptible to trauma and degeneration.

Another major element not shown in the diagram but affected by optimal flexibility and muscle tone is the local nerve

function. All of the aforementioned tissues external to the joint capsule are supplied by nerves, the bulk of which send sensory information to the central nervous system. Sensations relevant to this discussion include tension in the joint, direction of forces applied to the joint, position in space, touch, pressure, temperature, etc. The nerves also supply "motor neurons" which, to provoke muscular contractions, rely totally upon the sensory information supplied via the central nervous system. When a joint is able to move through its full and normal range of motion without pain and undue tension the sensory nerves surrounding it send refined and unambiguous signals to the muscles via the brain, spinal cord and motor neurons. The result is reflexive and sustained muscular contraction precisely matched to the environmental stimulations, be they nage's grip, ukemi, or the tatami.

In summary, stretching will improve your flexibility, coordination, balance, and agility, and it will lessen the likelihood of injury.

Now, on to the stretches. Below are a few "tenets of stretching"; read them now and review them a few sessions from now. Following these are Anderson's instructions, "How to Stretch", and diagrams of the stretching regime which he recommends. Borrow the book from the library, buy it (donate it to the dojo?), read the description of each stretch and enjoy yourself.

Tenets of Stretching:

(1) Be good to yourself. Do these exercises carefully, as though you were doing them for the first time. Your progress will be quicker this way.

(2) Concentrate on the muscles, tendons, and capsules. You will feel them "let go" at certain points in the exercises.

(3) Be smooth and balanced going into, during, and coming out of the stretches; flow from one to the other.

(4) Never "stretch until it hurts"; pain provokes muscle spasm, undoing your efforts.

(5) Do the exercises regularly, at least once a day.

Dr. MacLeod is a Victoria chiropractor who has recently completed the Victoria Aikikai "beginner" program.

How To Stretch

Excerpted from STRETCHING (c) 1980 by Bob and Jean Anderson. \$8.95 Shelter Publications, Inc., Bolinas, California. Distributed in bookstores by Random House. Reprinted by permission.

Stretching is easy to learn. But there is a right way and a wrong way to stretch. The right way is a relaxed, sustained stretch with your attention focused on the muscles being stretched. The wrong way (unfortunately practiced by many people), is to bounce up and down, or to stretch to the point of pain: these methods can actually do more harm than good.

If you stretch correctly and regularly, you will find that every movement you make becomes easier. It will take time to loosen up tight muscles or muscle groups, but time is quickly forgotten when you start to feel good.

The Easy Stretch

When you begin a stretch, spend 10-30 seconds in the *easy stretch*. No bouncing! Go to the point where you feel a *mild tension*, and relax as you hold the stretch. The feeling of tension should subside as you hold the position. If it does not, ease off slightly and find a degree of tension that is comfortable. The easy stretch reduces muscular tightness and readies the tissues for the developmental stretch.

The Developmental Stretch

After the easy stretch, move slowly into the *developmental stretch*. Again, no bouncing. Move a fraction of an inch further until you again feel a mild tension and hold for 10-30 seconds. Be in control. Again, the tension should diminish; if not, ease off slightly. The developmental stretch fine-tunes the muscles and increases flexibility.

Breathing

Your breathing should be slow, rhythmical and under control. If you are bending forward to do a stretch, exhale as you bend forward and then breathe slowly as you hold the stretch. Do not hold your breath while stretching. If a stretch position inhibits your natural breathing pattern, then you are obviously not relaxed. Just ease up on the stretch so you can breathe naturally.

Counting

At first, silently count the seconds for each stretch; this will insure that you

hold the proper tension for a long enough time. After a while, you will be stretching by the way it feels, without the distraction of counting.

The Stretch Reflex

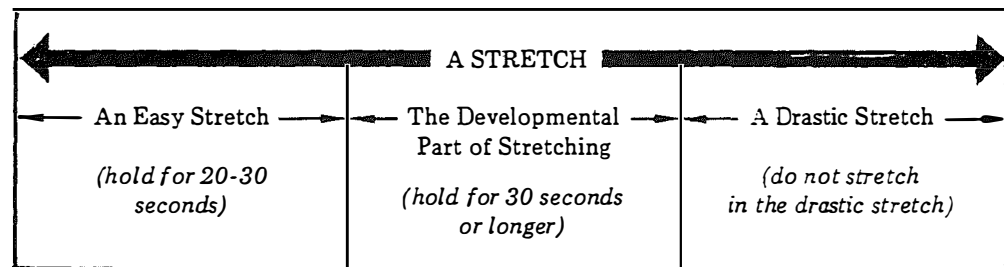
Your muscles are protected by a mechanism called the *stretch reflex*. Any time you stretch the muscle fibers too far (either by bouncing or overstretching), a nerve reflex responds by sending a signal to the muscles to contract: this keeps the muscles from being injured. Therefore, when you stretch too far, you tighten the very muscles you are trying to stretch! (You get a similar involuntary muscle reaction when you accidentally touch something hot; before you can think about it, your body quickly moves away from the heat.)

Holding a stretch as far as you can go or bouncing up and down strains the muscles and activates the stretch reflex. These harmful methods cause pain, as well as physical damage due to the microscopic tearing of muscle fibers. This tearing leads to the formation of scar tissue in the muscles, with a gradual loss of elasticity. The muscles become tight and sore. How can you get enthused about daily stretching and exercise when these potentially injurious methods are used?

Many of us were conditioned in high school to the idea of "no gain without pain." We learned to associate pain with physical improvement, and were taught that "... the more it hurts, the more you get out of it." But don't be fooled. Stretching, when done correctly, is not painful. Learn to pay attention to your body, for pain is an indication that something is *wrong*.

The easy and developmental stretches, as described on the previous page do not activate the stretch reflex and do not cause pain.

This Diagram Will Give You an Idea of a "Good Stretch":



The straight line diagram represents the stretch which is possible with your muscles and their connective tissue. You will find that your flexibility will naturally increase when you stretch, first in the easy, then in the developmental phase. By regularly stretching with comfortable and painless feelings you will be able to go beyond your present limits and come closer to your personal potential. □

Before and After

Martial Arts

Approximately 17 Minutes

Note: These stretches are not intended to replace your traditional routine, but can be used for improvement of overall flexibility.



60 seconds
(page 46)



8 times
each direction
(page 89)



15 times
each direction
(page 31)



30 seconds
(page 24)



3 times
5 seconds each
(page 25)



25 seconds
each side
(page 29)



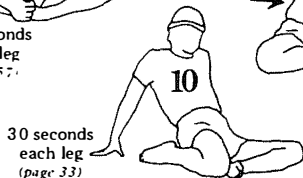
3 times
8 seconds each
(page 28)



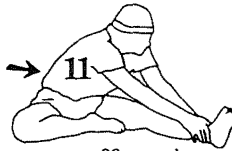
30 seconds
(page 56)



30 seconds
each leg
(page 57)



30 seconds
each leg
(page 33)



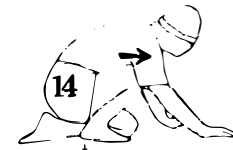
30 seconds
each leg
(page 36)



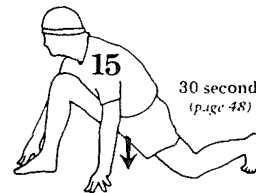
30 seconds
(page 93)



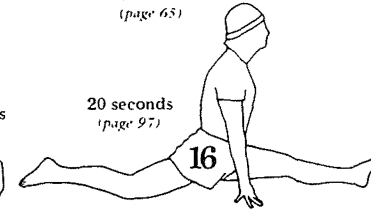
30 seconds
(page 63)



15 seconds
(page 47)



30 seconds
(page 48)

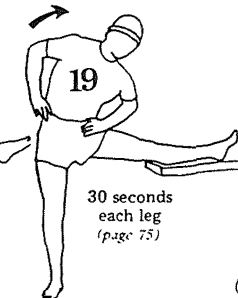


20 seconds
(page 97)

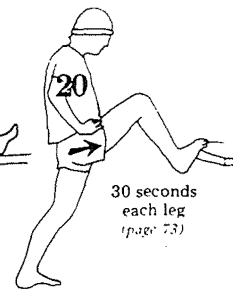
17
Repeat
14, 15, 16
other leg



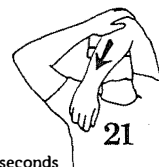
30 seconds
(page 98)



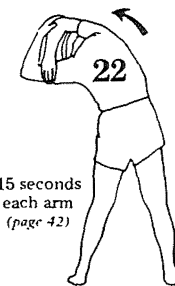
30 seconds
each leg
(page 75)



30 seconds
each leg
(page 73)



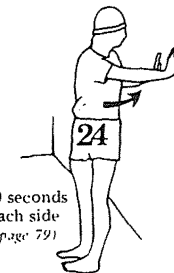
15 seconds
each arm
(page 41)



15 seconds
each arm
(page 42)



20 seconds
(page 43)



20 seconds
each side
(page 79)

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