

合氣道

# AIKIDO FORUM

A JOURNAL OF AIKIDO EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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### WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

We apologize for a significant delay in sending this issue to you. We encountered great difficulties receiving articles from people for this issue. I once consulted with Chiba Sensei from San Diego Aikikai (editor-in-chief of the Sansho) on publishing an Aikido journal. He said, "It's easy to start. The most difficult part is to continue its publication. Good luck!" We now know what he meant. With great relief, we are sending this issue to you.

We have received very encouraging remarks from some of our readers on the educational quality and the inspirational value of the Aikido Forum. Doshu Ueshiba Sensei also has expressed his support and appreciation of our attempt to promote Aikido through our non-profit publication. Aikido inspires harmony among people and dedication to the learning of "the heart of Aikido" (Doshu's expression), of which the Aikido Forum may be seen as one of the by-products.

The pen may not be mightier than the sword in physical training, but it can be the second practice-sword for mental training. Just as holding a sword before a partner sharpens your senses and concentration, holding a pen before a topic that needs to be addressed by YOU sharpens your consciousness. This is another training ground. When there is something to be written about, please pick up a pen and write first and worry later. Your writing can offer valuable information and inspiration to other students of Aikido. It may save the discouraged or confused beginners who are on the verge of quitting. It may help local instructors to learn effective ways of teaching and running a dojo. As in Aikido practice, the receiver also becomes the giver of the inspiring "ki" through writing. We need contributors of articles as well as subscribers.

Please consider writing short or long articles under any of the following categories: (1) essays, (2) seminar reports, (3) dojo or teacher instructions, (4) book reviews, (5) technical information about stretching exercises, care of injuries, prevention of accidents, massage, Eastern meditation methods, the Japanese language and culture, etc., (6) responses to the previously published articles, and (7) letters to the Editor. Your articles should be typewritten, 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 English, but we do have limited translating capabilities in Japanese, Chinese, French, Dutch, Spanish and German.

We are planning to publish the next issue this fall, containing feature articles by Doshu, Chiba Sensei and Tanaka Sensei (Osaka, Japan). We are also working on an Aikido and Japanese terminology booklet to be issued sometime next year. If you have any ideas on this please let us know.

**AIKIDO IN MODERN DAYS, PART 1**  
by **DOSHU KISSHOMARU UESHIBA**

The following is a transcript of a portion of an interview with Doshu by the Aikido Forum Editor held on April 30, 1987 at Doshu's home in Tokyo. The remainder of the interview will be presented in following issues.

Interviewer: Aikido has accomplished a major growth over the years. What kind of problems is Aikido now facing?

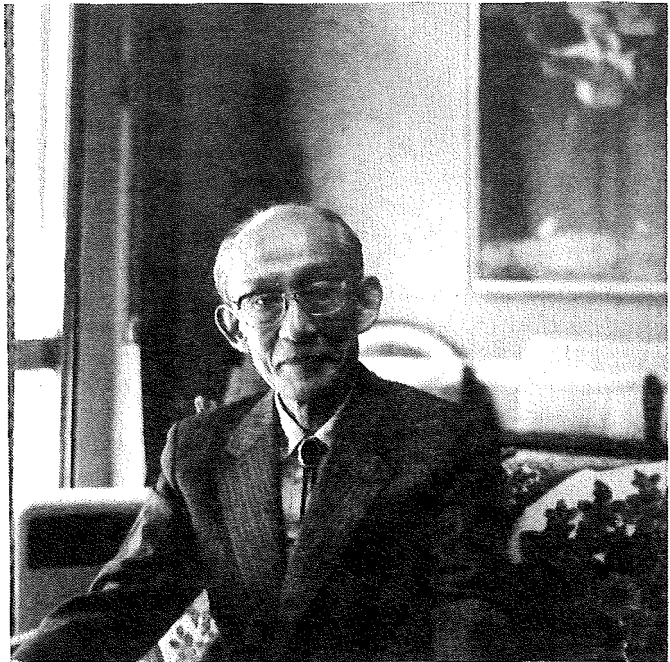
Doshu: Problems arise in the process of growth. Growth is always accompanied by trials and errors and new problems. The way of Aiki has something constant and solid in its heart penetrating through the art. I call the manifestation of it "shin-do" or the way of kokoro (heart). Aikido becomes meaningless if the heart of Aikido, coming from its center, is not surrounding and engulfing its strictness.

I have heard someone say, "Aikido will not grow without competition." The phrase, "without competition," now represents a past issue. There was a big problem with such an idea because people doing competitive forms of martial arts have been over-concerned about superficial growth that does not lead to long-term growth. It is not a superficial and easy task to build the character of the practitioner (through a martial art).

In facing the beginning of a new era, it is our task to nurture respectable and mature human beings. What is most important in human development is the quality of the heart of each individual. That's why we stress the spirituality of Aikido. We used to use dichotomous thinking as in the Western philosophical orientation, such as "right or left," "loss or gain," and "win or lose." Now we need the Eastern way of thinking. We are now facing the era where things will not unfold and grow unless changes are made in the center which regulates and engulfs everything.

Interviewer: You mean that a self-versus-other type of competitive thinking and egocentric thinking centered around personal losses and gains go against the new emerging era?

Doshu: The main reason for the recent development of Aikido is that people have somehow picked up the special features



of Aikido (such as the non-egocentric, non-competitive, and spiritual aspects). This has become a very obvious fact, and we need to continue promoting such features. It would be a problem if there was a form of Aikido that goes against this. Some people may try to make money out of Aikido, or start a publishing business. It's okay to have a publishing business, but I would be unhappy if Aikido was misrepresented.

Aikido has not always been like this (the way Aikido is understood and promoted nowadays) since its beginning, but has evolved over time. It is due to the Founder's clear recognition of the importance of spirituality. There are people who claim that the origin of Aikido is Daito-ryu or Shinkage-ryu. But I don't think that Aikido is a ko-budo (traditional martial art). I do not want people to miss the heart of Aikido. The origin of Aikido is its heart. The origin is not an old school of ju-jutsu. I want people to think deeply about the fundamental distinction between them.

Interviewer: I understand that you distinguish bujutsu (martial techniques) from budo (martial way).

Doshu: Yes, bujutsu and budo are different. Bujutsu was developed into budo. Bujutsu is a system of techniques. Through technical training, students in

bujutsu seek to attain the way of the mind. Instead of focussing on technical mastery as the first priority as in bujutsu, budo sees the accomplishment of what is beyond technical mastery as the main goal of training. The way of Aiki, which certainly is attained through technical mastery, has to be a transformed way that goes above, and free from, technical preoccupations. We have to grow out of technical pursuit and become free from it. Otherwise, we will not reach the ultimate goal of Aikido, which I call the "kokoro (heart) of Aikido."

Interviewer: I suppose transforming and going beyond a highly technique-oriented way of training would mean major changes in the instructional method.

Doshu: Yes. Aikido instructors should not be preoccupied with the superficial and short-term aspects (of Aikido training). It is okay to be over-concerned about such things, but they should not forget to emphasize the spirituality of the art from a greater viewpoint. Otherwise, they would make a big mistake.

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"Aikido is to help us recognize the true nature of the self and transcend it to its highest state of manifestation through human efforts. It is also to help us recognize the unity and harmony of individual differences and the dignity of each individual's personal existence."

- K. Chiba Shihan

An excerpt from Chiba Sensei's article which will appear in our next issue.

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#### **AIKIDO, AN APPRENTICESHIP** by Jacques Couturier, 4-dan

On April 26, 1969, O-Sensei Morihei Ueshiba, founder of Aikido, passed away. Since that time, the practice of the art has been spread throughout the world by his direct disciples and by the disciples of these disciples. The recent proliferation of teachers is a good thing for the expansion of Aikido insofar as the message of Master Ueshiba remains clearly understood and faithfully transmitted. There

is a natural law that states that when the source dries up, the river dries up also, and the only thing that remains in the landscape is the empty river bed. The same danger threatens Aikido which runs the risk of having nothing left but the name. But if a river has only one principal source, it can still have tributaries.

It is the duty of every student engaged in the serious study of Aikido to understand its source and to become a tributary to the great stream of Aiki created by Master Ueshiba. But before all else, he must find his own source. For this, the student needs a master, a true master who will guide him and validate his coming to an understanding of Aikido.

In this regard I would like to quote the Lama Chogyon Trungpa (Meditation and Action, Fayard 1972), "Masters must be prepared to learn along with their students; this is very, very important. Otherwise, there is no real progress made by students due to the excessive interest the master takes in imposing his own inflated ego on the student by trying to make him into a copy of himself, instead of helping the disciple to develop his own individual aptitude." It is clear that these words apply not only to masters but to every person responsible for teaching others. The Lama goes on to say: "This exchange occurs continually, consequently students do not become tired of a master who also develops along with those he is teaching. There is always something different, at each moment there is something new, and thus the material is never exhausted."

For twenty years now I have been studying Aikido and I am still far from being a master. There is nothing, therefore, that I can authenticate in any of my students. However, I am the first guide for them, a first guide on a path that I believe true.

Today I began writing in order to communicate in just this way with each one of you. Writing is not an ideal way of communicating; conversation would be better, but it is difficult to find the time for that. When we are all together on the tatami, it is to practise and not to talk. Practice is the most important thing but from time to time speaking is also good.

Master Morihei Ueshiba defined four successive stages in the apprenticeship of Aikido. He named them respectively: GO,

JYU, RYO and KI. In order to follow the path traced by the master, we must attain successively a true understanding of each one of these stages. I will try to give you my current understanding of each of these stages in the hope that you will keep in mind that this understanding is not perfect.

#### FIRST STAGE: GO

>comes from GON (jin in Chinese), Metal  
>concerns training from the rank of muku (unranked beginner) to the rank of shodan.

GO is the apprenticeship of basic techniques and their execution according to the principles of Aikido. At this level, training has the characteristics of metal: static, dense, solid, rigorous. At this stage of study the student should not be concerned with the actual effectiveness of the techniques he is learning. (Since the study at GO stage is static, the manner of executing the techniques does not as yet correspond to the reality of a fight or the reality of life which is movement. Therefore it would be absurd to speak of effectiveness at this level.) He must force himself to imitate his instructor rigorously, without questioning the validity of either the teaching or the techniques. This phase of total submission is necessary to the transmission of the knowledge.

The student begins to develop a body form which is both necessary and unique to the expression of Aiki. This form is right for him. This form is called JITZU.

#### SECOND STAGE: JYU

>of the nature of plants, the vegetable kingdom.

>corresponding to wood (moku in Japanese or mu in Chinese)

>concerns training from sankyu to sandan.

The apprenticeship in the basic techniques continues. Variations of these techniques are slowly introduced. The training progressively takes on the characteristics of wood (vegetable kingdom): flexibility, smoothness, relaxation, vivacity. GO-KEIKO is not abandoned; however, JYU-KEIKO is progressively introduced so that one attains a correct balance between GO and JYU. The body form of the student becomes purer, little by little, thus allowing the principle of Aiki to be expressed more and more. This

form becomes JITZU on the inside and KYO on the outside. The efficiency of the techniques begins to appear as a result of the student becoming conscious of the rhythm of the movements and the meaning of MA-AI.

#### THIRD STAGE: RYU

>of the nature of water (shui)

>concerns training after the rank of sandan

At this stage the student masters all the basic techniques and their principal variations. He discovers new variations by himself and realizes that the movements of Aikido are infinite. The student now requires a master who has attained a certain degree of spiritual enlightenment. The practice of meditation (Zazen, for example) is strongly recommended.

Practice at this level progressively takes on the characteristics of water: fluidity, adaptability to every situation, detachment.

The student is committed to the path of spiritual enlightenment. The nature of water reveals the action of non-attachment which is the very essence of BUDO. The disciple's ego disappears as KU, emptiness, takes its place.

Aikido, as practised by the student, becomes the dynamic expression of his experience of union with the universe. His effectiveness becomes increasingly greater because it is now approaching the effectiveness of the natural forces of the universe.

#### FOURTH STAGE: KI

>KI, energy

The student is one with the universe. Master Ueshiba would say: "I am the universe." Ego has disappeared. There is no longer any BUDO, there is no longer technique. This is action through non-action.

The infinite and eternal forces of the universe are expressed freely through the body of the student who can throw his assailants without even touching them. This is the ultimate defense, non-defense.

The student-devotee is God or Buddha. He is SATORI. He is MUSHIN. From MU-kyu (no-rank) to MU-shin (no-mind) the cycle of the spiral of life has been completed and the human being has regained the consciousness of the newborn.

This summary description of each stage requires amplification which I will try to give you in future articles.

GLOSSARY:

JITZU.....Under control it is the state of intensity, of fullness, of concentration and of positivity. Without control it is a state of tension and stiffness

KEIKO.....training

KU.....emptiness, vacuity

KYO.....under control it is a state of smoothness and relaxed concentration. Without control it is a state of weakness, of vulnerability and passivity

MA-AI.....correct distance

MU.....absolutely nothing

MU-KYU....a term used to designate those who are beginning the study of Aikido. It signifies that one is totally without rank and translates the mental attitude that the student must take in order to receive instruction: simplicity, honesty, and modesty.

MU-SHIN...without thoughts

SATORI....spiritual awakening

ZAZEN....Zen meditation in a sitting position.

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**Mr. Courturier** is the chief instructor of Aikido Kensankai in Montreal. His acupuncture clinic is co-located with his dojo, so that he can practise his profession in close harmony with his Aikido.

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**SOME OBSERVATIONS**  
by **Dan Holmberg, 2-dan**

Over the past many years I have had the great opportunity to study Aikido under a number of excellent teachers, and the equal honour and opportunity to teach some rather good students. Looking back I am somewhat saddened by the unnecessary difficulties that I have encountered in myself, and others, in attempting to learn this art and to pass it on. Some of these obstacles have arisen due to the natural confusion associated with transmitting an art from one culture and linguistic tradition into another very different tradition. As frustrating as these difficulties can be at times, they are merely inconveniences compared to the more uni-

versal, culturally non-specific problems of learning and teaching. Since most of us still have room to grow as students and/or teachers, I would like to offer a few observations on learning and teaching.

On Learning Aikido

Many years ago one of my high school teachers (perhaps the only one to really gain my respect) told me that most education was based upon analogies. Poor students did not catch their teachers' analogies, while good students did. But the truly excellent students would go beyond what was presented to them and make their own analogies.

I have had many occasions to reflect on this teaching and how it applies to Aikido. True, in most Aikido classes clever analogies are not the mainstay of instruction, but the students' responses to their instructor's demonstrations fall into the same general categories. There are those that just don't catch the points that are being emphasized. Others, far more satisfying to the teacher, may grasp the intent and practise it. The best of all however, are those who observe carefully and seek out more than just what is being taught. In essence, the truly excellent students teach themselves.

What I am trying to say here is that learning is an interactive process which requires the student's full participation. All too often we go to class and sit about the edge of the mat like so many empty jars, expecting someone else to come and pour knowledge and understanding into us. When a student becomes too passive, he may even forget to uncork the jar (i.e. his attention wanders) and thus is unable to receive anything at all. Osmosis is not the most effective method of learning Aikido.

Actively seeking an understanding of Aikido means asking questions and then looking for the answers. Where is your technique weakest, and how can it be improved? Have you left an opening? Are you balanced throughout? Are you really in control, or is uke just being nice to you? Is the ma-ai correct? If your partner is doing the technique better than you are, what is he doing that is different? Does the technique flow well, or does it jolt like a car with serious clutch problems? Etc. If you take the effort to identify your own problems, then you will have a better idea of where to look to

find the answers when you're watching the instructor demonstrate. Maybe you won't always find the answer for yourself, but it is important that you always try. Most instructors do not mind being asked a well-considered question, but nobody likes to be pestered by the idly curious. The more effort you put into finding the answers for yourself, the more you'll appreciate the answer when it comes, and the better you will remember it.

Clearly the majority of people who come to Aikido classes want to improve their abilities. But it is my experience that most of us go about it in a rather non-specific way. That is to say, we usually don't focus on what we are doing unless something obviously does not work and we cannot fudge our way through the technique. By periodically asking questions of ourselves, even when things seem to be going right, we not only open up the possibility of improving our skills, we also work to improve our abilities of perception and awareness, both of which are mainstays of any martial discipline.

The spirit of inquiry is the single most important factor in one's ability to excel at Aikido (or at anything else), and it far outweighs the advantage that may come from native strength or ability, cultural background, or educational opportunity. It has been present in all the great practitioners that I have ever seen, and it has been lacking in most of the rest.

In the final analysis, the onus of learning is on the student, and if he is willing to consciously take this responsibility on himself, and not fall into dependence upon the teacher, he will with time come to truly excel at this art. Learning Aikido is a great adventure of exploration, growth and discovery. How we deal with it reflects, and is reflected in, the rest of our life. The adventure of Aikido is the adventure of life.

#### On Teaching Aikido

In most cases, a person comes to the position of being a teacher because of a certain level of technical competence combined with a local need for a teacher. This of course is quite reasonable, but it does not necessarily make for a good instructor. In Aikido there is little emphasis on learning how to teach effectively and most of us, when thrown into this situation end up with a method that is basically an imitation of our own

teacher, modified willy-nilly by the peculiarities of our own personalities.

In some cases this works out fairly well, but what usually happens is that the teacher is most successful in transmitting his art only to people whose attitudes and personality, and sometimes body-type, are similar to his own. Other people who are too different from the instructor will find themselves in the long run unsupported and even unwelcome in the dojo. If the student wishes to pursue the art, he must either work under a handicap or go elsewhere. This is unfortunate, since there are not yet so many teachers of Aikido that every student can easily find an appropriate teacher.

The instructor's attitude is extremely important to his ability to pass on information. Most of us feel that it is important for students to manifest a certain amount of respect in the dojo. Respect for the art, respect for O-Sensei, and respect for the teacher are all important foundations for learning. What too many teachers and senior students seem to forget, is that respect for the student is also an essential foundation for teaching effectively.

All men may be created equal in the eyes of God, but they are certainly not equal in ability, capacity, or orientation. When these differences are ignored by the teacher, then there is a clear lack of respect for the individual and his integrity. An instructor who insists that his students emulate his techniques and behavior too closely, will only work to alienate those he is seeking to influence. (Clearly, the student should try to come as close as possible to what the teacher has to offer, but due to differences in body type, psychology, etc., it is not possible to be an exact copy or imitation of any other human being.) It is important to realize that one cannot force a person to learn, one can only offer the teaching, and hopefully inspire the student.

If, as many of us believe, Aikido has something truly valuable to offer the world and its peoples, then those of us who teach have an obligation to transmit this art to the very best of our abilities. The student, by making the effort to come to class and the commitment to practise, has already done a lot to earn our respect. Further, as I've already pointed out, the onus of learning is on

the student. It is the teacher's job to assist the student in his efforts to learn, by the most effective means that he can.

When an instructor is demonstrating before a class, he is essentially dealing with a mass audience. That being the case, there is probably no one way of teaching that is going to get through to everyone. During practice; however, he has the opportunity to deal with each student individually. In this situation, I consider 'effective means' to imply two things.

First, the instructor must observe carefully to identify the most central, core problem of the student. Often there will be several things wrong with the way that a technique is being done but correcting them individually will only cause new problems to occur. If a central problem can be identified and corrected then many of the smaller problems will disappear on their own. In my experience, the central problem is usually one of two things -- an incorrect foundation (i.e. incorrect placement of the feet or hips) that throws the rest of the body and technique off, or an unclear intention, where the student doesn't really understand what he is supposed to be doing. He has seen the form and can imitate it, but has missed the subtleties of control, extension, harmony, or whatever, that make the whole thing work. It is difficult to arrive at a destination, if you don't know where you are going.

The second essential part of 'effective means' involves presenting the information in a method that is both acceptable and understandable to the student. The way in which this is done may vary with each student. A student who thrives on vigorous practice, should probably receive instruction in a vigorous manner, but that same method cannot be used on a student who is either physically or psychologically unprepared for the more rigorous aspects of Aikido. Instead he must be allowed the space, and given the encouragement he needs in order to grow at the rate that is appropriate for him.

The preceding example is fairly obvious, but it is only one out of the many ways in which people differ. The traditional methods of teaching Aikido, such as through non-verbal demonstrations work very well for some people, especially those who have a good relationship with

their body. There are, however, many people who would love to learn Aikido but have little or no relationship with their body. Such a person may watch a technique demonstrated scores of times but be unable to effectively translate what he sees into the movements of his own body. Exhorting him to try harder may be useless. Nevertheless, he may be able to grow and progress if he is taught in a different manner, one which is more in tune with his nature. This may mean extensive verbal instruction of how the technique should be done -- at least until he begins to develop an awareness of his own body, after which he may be able to relate to other methods of instruction. Such a person is a challenge, and yet, if he values Aikido enough to be willing to come out and try, then certainly he deserves all the help we can give him. It is easy to ignore people who learn differently from ourselves and leave them to their own devices, and yet if we do so we are cheating not only them, but ourselves as well. There is perhaps no greater joy for a teacher than to see a 'problem' student transcend his difficulties and become good at what he is doing.

Teaching Aikido is far more than a duty for the higher ranks, it is a privilege and a tremendous opportunity. It is an opportunity to share what we have already learned, and to continue our learning through careful observation of, and interaction with, those we are trying to help. Aikido is supposed to be more than just techniques, it is a way of being that permeates our whole life, if we let it. One of the best ways to make the transition from dojo to daily life, is to use teaching as the springboard to higher training. By learning to use the fundamental principles of Aiki as the foundation of the method of teaching, rather than just the content of what is taught, one can practise to manifest Aiki in the interpersonal relationships that are the mainstay of all human life.

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Mr. Holmberg had the good fortune to study Aikido in Tokyo for two and a half years. He formerly taught Aikido in Edmonton, Alberta and now resides and practises Aikido in Vancouver, B.C.

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**THE AIKI OF MARRIAGE**  
by Daniel Kempling

Though marriage is not usually a martial art, it is, like Aikido, a lifelong study which when practised well is a gift to those around us. By integrating Aikido principles into marriage we can deepen the love and harmony with our spouses, and by doing so, free up clear energy to put back into our practice. The arts of marriage and Aikido, when done with integrity and commitment, are mutually reinforcing.

By using Aikido as a metaphor for marriage we can see many parallels. First of all, in Aikido there must be a spirit of service; service to the dojo, the sensei, and constant service to our training partners. Implied in this service is a certain vulnerability, a willingness to let go of our egocentric desires to dominate others and prove our strength.

Nobody wants an uke who practises only to show his skill without giving of himself in committed ukemi. This is a one-sided bargain. So it is in marriage. If we view our spouse as merely someone who supplies our need for companionship, social status, sex, etc., then the rewards of this relationship are already seriously limited. A truly harmonious marriage, however, sees both partners serving and supporting the other's vision of what they want to accomplish as a man, a woman, as a father, a mother, as an Aikidoist, or whatever is important to them. In this context, marriage is not a "50-50" relationship; it is 100% and nothing. That is, you give of yourself not because there is the expected reward of returned services and considerations, but because you are a warrior in the discipline of love. As O-Sensei said, "True Budo is the work of love."

Commitment is another principle essential to both Aikido and marriage. When we bow onto the mats to start practice it is a commitment as equally important as saying "I do" at the altar. In the act of bowing we silently promise to abide by the high standards of conduct established in that dojo. If we have the option of walking off any time the practice becomes too intense or frustrating, it would rob the keiko of its integrity. Likewise in our marriages, we have promised ourselves unconditionally and for a lifetime. The will to resolve thorny problems is eroded when this commitment is not taken to heart

and quitting becomes an option.

Obviously, we are not perfect spouses or martial artists and it would seem that making apparently tragic mistakes is a common, if not comfortable method of self-education. It would be a true tragedy, though, if we should lose faith in the power of our commitment for fear of failing once again.

As martial artists we strive to be wholly present each and every moment of practice. In a life and death situation there is no room for thoughts not centered on the here and now. The consequences of a wandering mind are obvious on the mats: sloppy ukemi, poor retention of lessons, and in some cases injury.

This lack of focus is similarly dangerous in marriage. To "be here, now" with one's spouse can be the most difficult of principles to live out. After a few years together many of us lose that feeling of loving attention, or "hanging on every word" that began our relationship. Having already heard everything important that he/she is likely to say, we can now give the newspaper the attention it deserves. As one guilty of this particular sin, I've come to strive for a sense of presence in my conversations with my wife. For if I cannot "be here, now" enough to converse with my loved ones, what chance is there to learn the subtleties of Aikido?

That the practice of Aikido and marriage parallel and reinforce each other should not be surprising. Both arts are a form in which we, as players in the game of life, have an opportunity to uniquely express our love and creativity. By our commitment to these arts we initiate and weave together our dojos and our families. Through our gift of service we nurture and support our practice partners and our spouses in whatever path they choose. And by "being here, now" in our Aikido and in our marriages we align ourselves with the natural flow of life, finding the path of least resistance for the transition to true global harmony.

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Mr. Kempling and his wife, Becky, are both members of Victoria Aikikai, and as well are part of the Victoria Sterling Community a group dedicated to nurturing relationships between men and women.

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**MY ENCOUNTER WITH BOB**

by Paul Weideman

This is a true story, only the names have been changed. During my lifetime I have met a number of violent people. One such person was Bob, a man who came to work with me.

Bob and I had known of one another for many years before we met. I don't know what he had heard of me, but I had heard many stories of his violent lifestyle. He once spent two years in jail for breaking a policeman's legs. He spent more time in jail for almost killing a man with his fists and feet. His father had been a professional boxer in his younger years and Bob learned to fight at an early age.

Bob had worked as a logger since his teenage years. Aside from his violent reputation he is also known in logging by the kind of work he does -- we call him a Rigging Man or a Hooker. Years of this work develops physical power and balance beyond what many other men achieve. With his broad shoulders, big arms, strength and agility, this was the new man in camp.

The first day on the job Bob argued with another man named Dave; on the second day they fought. Dave quickly backed down before anyone was hurt, quit his job and left camp. Everyone in camp was paying attention, what would happen next?

The man who replaced Dave was named Roy, he was an old friend of Bob's. Roy had a lot of the same hobbies as Bob. Roy once went to jail for biting a man's nose off in a fight. He was jailed another time for attacking three people with a baseball bat. Roy was another strong and violent man. Roy and I had worked together as Rigging Men, but Roy and Bob were old friends and in any fight they would help each other.

Time passed and Bob began to be curious about me. I seldom discuss Aikido with people like Bob and Roy because I know that they will not be able to understand and will only want to test me. In spite of my silence Bob had long heard rumours that I studied a martial art. He didn't know what kind of martial art, maybe something hocus pocus with lots of meditation and a few religious rituals and maybe a few secret techniques thrown in. Or maybe something like Bruce Lee or Chuck Norris on TV. How would it stand up against a right uppercut? Bob began to test me.

He began to grab me from behind or

pretend to punch me whenever he was near me -- always in a lighthearted manner but always aggressive, always irritating, always testing.

I certainly wasn't interested in fighting with Bob. I like my nose the way it is and my legs the way they are. The title of "toughest guy in camp" just wasn't important to me. Bob could have that title; I would be happy to concede that to him. But he kept testing me, pushing me.

Verbally now as well as physically, he would ask me to do favours or run errands for him. When I refused he would be angry. Not enough reason to fight, but always another reason to dislike me. Eventually there would be enough reasons to fight.

Two choices were beginning to emerge. I could compromise myself and I could become subservient to Bob either by taking the abuse or by quitting my job and leaving camp. Alternatively, I could fight. Neither option pleased me. I pondered the situation and it continued to get more difficult.

Then, one evening as I walked along a trail, Bob and Roy approached from the opposite direction. They walked side by side. I would have to step aside to let them pass as I knew Bob wouldn't step aside. I stepped aside and smiled a greeting -- maybe this was the subservient option beginning to emerge. As Bob got closer he lunged at me, still testing, still less than serious combat but still offensive and irritating. As he jumped at me he punched at me as well. A right jab to the stomach -- tsuki! Not very hard, he meant to make contact only lightly.

As he moved towards me I grabbed his hand in the manner of kotegaeshi and pulled him forward. He pulled back. I smiled to myself, almost amazed to find that people actually do pull back in real life. He seemed so slow, so unknowledgeable of my intentions. He seemed to hold his otherwise very quick hand in mid-air, almost assisting me as I changed my grip. I now held him ready to throw or possibly break his wrist. Can one break a man's wrist with kotegaeshi? I'm sure it's possible but I certainly had never tried! And Roy was there! He would certainly attack me if I injured Bob. I could stop Bob from this position but could I beat Roy when he attacked too? And would that be the end of my problem with Bob? He

would be insulted if I threw him and that would only add fuel to the fire. Or I could let him go and only I would know the position of power that I briefly held over him. That would be subservient. He seemed to move so slow, his hand was still in mid-air. "Ah why not?" I turned his wrist sharply and then released him without throwing him.

This wrist that had never practised Aikido suddenly felt intense pain. He staggered backwards and yelped like a puppy stung by a wasp that it had sat on. I looked at Roy. He turned to face me squarely. "Hey leave my buddy alone!" He moved towards me. "You ok, buddy?" Bob was holding his wrist with the other hand. He was already beginning to look more puzzled than pained, like a puppy wondering what had happened behind him. The pain was disappearing almost as fast as it had appeared. Now there was still a sensation in the wrist but the searing pain of seconds earlier was all but gone. "Yeah, I'm ok, c'mon lets go." Roy relaxed. He had thought Bob was hurt but Bob was okay. Apparently nothing was wrong.

They left in one direction and I left in the other. The next time I saw Bob there was no testing. He was pleasant, even respectful. Roy still didn't seem to know for sure that a serious encounter had even happened. In fact, although people saw a difference in my treatment by Bob, nobody seemed to know anything had happened. Bob apparently told no one and neither did I. Bob was still the toughest guy in camp and that was fine.

I was pleased for my part. There had been no combat but I hadn't been forced to give in to Bob either. That was the lesson in this for me. I had first thought that there were only two options for me -- fight or give in. I realized now that with Aikido there are always many options. A vital element of Aikido is, after all, flexibility. Aikido is magic of a very high order -- just ask Bob.

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Mr. Weideman is a logger who works deep in the bush on Vancouver Island most of the time. When not logging he lives on his farm near Courtney and practises Aikido occasionally in Vancouver and Victoria.

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## CO-OPERATIVE TRAINING -- KOGEKI AND MAAI by Bob Moline, 2-dan

### Introduction:

The co-operative nature of Aikido training is, for some people, a difficult concept to grasp. Since they see martial arts as being primarily related to the ability to fight, it is reasonable that they would question co-operation as the foundation upon which Aikido is built. When so many martial arts have competition as the cornerstone of their training process, how is it that Aikido does not? When competition appears to be the closest thing to actual fighting, how can anything else be an adequate substitute? These are reasonable questions which are worthy of our analysis. The answers lie beyond the real danger in the competitive practise of Aikido techniques. The answers to these questions, the reason that co-operation can successfully substitute for competition, is in the mutually beneficial training relationship that exists between uke and nage. This symbiosis provides both martial rigor and harmony, the two primary elements necessary for co-operative, yet effective martial arts training.

### Martial Rigor and Harmony:

Aikido is "designed" so that both martial rigor and harmony can be successfully studied. Training can be safe and enjoyable, and still contain all the martial rigor that is necessary for Aikido to take its rightful place in the martial arts community. And this can be done without any concern about sacrificing the heightened focus on harmony which sets Aikido apart from the other martial arts.

It is significant that our human nature inclines us toward the easiest route, even when that route may not be the most beneficial. Over-focussing on harmony is a constant threat to our study of Aikido because it is the easiest route. The responsibilities that both nage and uke undertake when training with a primary focus on harmony are so much simpler to learn (for both the mind and body) than they are for martial rigor. Also to some, harmony is more aesthetically attractive than martial rigor. Nevertheless, Aikido practice must be a blend of both harmony and martial rigor, a two-edged blade, and uke and nage must each forever bear in mind that equal attention to both is necessary. Harmony without martial rigor

is not Aikido, it is dance; martial rigor without harmony is not Aikido, it is some other martial art. Although it is surely obvious to everyone that uke must attack with martial rigor in order for nage to be able to practise with martial rigor, it may be less obvious to some that the same rigorous attack is necessary for nage to practise true, effective harmony.

However, one cannot just go to the dojo and practise harmony and martial rigor because neither are an entity which can be studied. Rather, they are each the sum of a number of elements which one can study individually. The elements focussed upon in this article are kogeiki and maai, but there are many others such as kuzushi, ukemi, ki extension, heavy center, kiai, and unbendable arm to name but a few.

Kogeiki, the attack, and maai, the distance between uke and nage, are inter-related, and are vital for creating the atmosphere in which the necessary blend of harmony and martial rigor can be fruitfully studied. Unless the principles of kogeiki and maai are correctly applied, the learning process for developing harmony and martial rigor cannot operate at peak efficiency.

#### **Kogeiki:**

Kogeiki must always be on target. There is no value whatsoever in training to respond to improperly-directed attacks. In some circumstances such attacks will be considered an insult, and may attract a related response. But even if not so considered, it must be acknowledged that a poor attack is worse than a waste of time; a poor attack is more serious than proof of a lack of basic understanding; a poor attack is actually "negative practice" because it trains nage to move improperly, and therefore is a major hindrance to learning proper form. As far as self-defense is concerned it is worse than no practise at all because it instils confidence in an ineffective move. One might see it as being more related to suicide than self-defense. Consistently improper attacks will result in distorted nage-waza which will leave one unable to deal with an accurate, serious attack in a practical situation, or even to practise effectively and enjoyably with a well-trained visitor from another dojo.

A specific example of an appropriate attack is a shomen-uchi that takes the

shortest way up, and then the shortest way down to the middle of nage's head. On the way up the striking hand should protect uke's face rather than approach nage's face. Improperly raising the hand close to nage's face is not only unrealistic, but it also reduces nage's sensitivity to an open-handed tsuki to the face. An example of an appropriate kata-tori done in motion is where uke seriously attempts to grasp the shoulder of the dogi rather than merely sticking the arm out, without intent, because of the knowledge that the hand will be redirected by nage into a technique. This lack of intent not only deprives nage of the proper feel of an attacking hand, it also desensitizes nage to a "dangled hand" feint with the strike coming from the other hand.

As well as being on target, the attack should be appropriately strong, neither too soft nor too hard. While there is no value whatsoever in attacking a beginner in a fierce manner, the more advanced we become as nage, the stronger the attacks must be in order for the learning experience to continue.

Just as it takes time to hone our skills as nage, it takes time to hone our skills as uke. Perhaps it is even more difficult to develop skills as uke because it takes a certain period of time to understand that Aikido is not just nage-waza, and an even longer period of time to comprehend the immense value in the statement "you must first become a good uke before you can become a good nage." Even after that point of understanding is reached it may be some time before that mental acceptance can be translated into physical action, because accurate striking and powerful grasping are also skills that take time to learn. Then it is only after that point that there comes a further period where one can develop the ability to dynamically vary the attack's intensity.

Uke's responsibility is to attack with a level of rigor that taxes nage just enough to ensure that it is a peak learning experience; where both less rigor and more rigor result in a poorer learning experience. In order to be able to provide that peak learning experience for nage, it is necessary that uke have the skill and sensitivity to:

- (1) know the optimum strength of attack from which nage is able to learn,
- (2) attack at exactly that level of rigor,

(3) recognize, during the technique, if a mistake has been made in either of the first two,

and finally, having recognized a mistake,

(4) adjust the attack, while it is in progress, in order to respond to nage's actual needs.

Therefore, and most significantly, kogeiki must be variable, dynamic -- each nage, each technique with each nage, even each turn of each technique with each nage, requires continuous analysis before, during and after the technique in order for uke to adjust to nage's needs. This is a life's work in itself.

Training gets complicated in a different way when uke changes from the mode of helping nage train by faithfully attacking with the optimum rigor, to that of holding extra firmly, or attacking more ferociously, in order to identify a weakness in nage's technique. In fact, the attack portion of uke's total role is easier when done in this fashion because it is so one-dimensional. Uke merely tries to overpower nage without paying attention to the more complicated demands of harmoniously supplying the optimum rigor. However, the remainder of the technique may be much more difficult because in many techniques the fierceness of the technique relates directly to the fierceness of the attack, and therefore the need for uke to take accomplished ukemi is greater.

This type of training is extremely difficult to do in a responsible manner. It is a situation so fragile, so fraught with potential misunderstanding, that it can easily move both uke and nage to a non-harmonious, even antagonistic, frame of mind. This has no value for uke, nage, or Aikido. It does more than just waste time, it can actually decrease the ability to learn, because it refocusses both nage and uke from the technique to their personal dynamics. It can create a negative frame of mind that can last throughout the technique, the practice and perhaps even longer. It is vital that both uke and nage be able to retain freedom of mind and emotion so as not to be dragged down into a personalized match. It is uke who has the option to harmonize or resist and therefore it is uke who bears the major responsibility. Uke must be very careful about deciding when to resist -- the nage, the location, and the circumstances have a direct bearing on the acceptability. If uke's intent is to help, the choice of an

inappropriate time to do so may totally negate that intent, and perhaps even create a personal conflict that may not allow for future help. On the other hand, if uke's intent is to prove dominance, then uke had best look deep inside to try to see why O-Sensei's principles are misunderstood, and address that personal problem immediately because it is so much more serious than any technical problem that nage might have.

There is no justification, I believe, for most practitioners to make the assumption during a regular class that it is their responsibility to add their own "teaching through resistance" to the technique that Sensei has already indicated should be practised. After all, it takes a great deal of training and attention over many years for a sensei to develop the ability to understand the type of practice that the students need to experience in order to progress at a reasonable pace. For any uke at kyu rank, and many at dan rank, to presume to have that same knowledge (which is what this action can imply) is too foolish by far. Our time as uke is better spent in developing our own skills as uke, rather than resisting.

We have all experienced one or another of the abuses caused by inappropriate resistance. There is the uke who stops nage in a different place in every attempt to do a technique so that nage cannot focus on any one problem; the uke who resists and then shows how to correct the weakness with an attitude that offends nage; the uke who, knowing the technique being practised, uses that information to take a resistant position that would not normally be taken by someone who does not know the technique in advance; the uke who resists whenever the sensei approaches in some misbegotten belief that it will be a benefit; and the uke who, by resisting at one part of the technique, forces nage to focus on that particular part when nage was originally intent on focussing on, and developing, a different part of the technique. All of these, and many more, are not at all instructive but instead only serve to frustrate nage, waste time, and ultimately lessen the learning experience for nage, not to mention the waste of an opportunity by uke to practise the ethics of the art.

Both uke and nage must be aware that Aikido ultimately teaches nage to respond to uke, regardless of what action uke

takes. If one technique does not work, another one will. Whenever uke departs from the standard form, the "contract" is broken and nage is no longer bound to that particular form, but instead is free to change the technique, to add an atemi, or both. In the case of intended resistance, uke should accept the consequences of any change in technique as good-naturedly as uke presumably assumed that nage would accept the lack of co-operation. Perhaps even with more acceptance because uke, by deciding to resist, has initiated nage's variation. Unless there is an agreement to resist beforehand, a decision to resist must be accompanied by a commitment to willingly accept the danger, the pain, and possibly the injury, of an atemi, or technique variation, without losing emotional balance. After all, if I, as uke, am truly resisting in order to help nage, I should not be angry when nage overcomes my resistance, even if it is painful. On the other hand, if I resist for any other reason, I have no right to be upset. I should instead apologize for my attitude, for I had never established an emotional balance, instead I have probably only traded one inappropriate emotion for another -- selfishness for anger.

Despite all of this, however, we must not lose sight of the fact that, done appropriately, resistance provides vital information for nage. It is a valuable form of training because it is necessary to know what does work and what does not. At a certain level, on certain occasions, and with certain fellow practitioners, it is a highly desirable form of training.

#### **Maai:**

I once read an article in a martial arts magazine written by a "streetfighter" who boasted of having had hundreds of victories. He said that his primary strategy was to control the space between himself and his opponent. While we all know that streetfighting is not the primary goal of Aikido training, this practical tactic should make it clear that the martial rigor we must strive for is permanently linked to maai. Clear understanding and detailed attention is necessary because it largely determines what can happen next. Therefore it is related to realistic training through appropriate kogeiki, effective nage-waza, and safe ukemi.

For purposes of clarity in this article I will generalize the distance between two

people (i.e. the maai) and personalize an individual's space (i.e. nage's maai). The former can be visualized as a straight line drawn between two people, whereas the latter is more like an irregularly shaped circle drawn around the person.

The outer boundary of your maai is defined by the point where it is personally advantageous for you in relation to a potential attacker. Your maai is your private space which extends around your body as defined by that outer boundary. You should be aware of all who approach it; you should analyze the circumstances and decide what response, if any, is required by the time the person crosses the boundary of your maai. For once your maai is breached, the advantage has already shifted away from you. I, and probably most of you, need to first think about, and then do, such an analysis, but martial art lore tells us that after a certain point in training both the analysis and the response is done at a subliminal level.

In everyday situations there are innumerable reasons why a person might be approaching your maai. Your immediate determination has to be whether or not there is any danger so that at, or before, the point of entry into your maai you can make the appropriate response. An amiable drunk with a cup of hot coffee, a mugger with a knife, and a car running a red light are each very different, and may require totally different responses, but they are all the same in that they must be recognized as potentially dangerous early enough to allow you to ensure your own safety.

To my mind there are only four possible responses to someone crossing into your maai. You can:

- (1) accept the person within your maai,
- (2) move away to re-establish your maai,
- (3) move the person out of your maai, or
- (4) neutralize the person within it.

Some may think this to be overly aggressive, but I contend that upon analysis, you will agree that either of the first two options are preferable, but if neither are possible, then either the third or fourth are necessary, recognizing of course that words may well achieve the goal.

Along with this we should understand that when we approach another's maai we should go through the same analysis ourselves from the other person's point of

view. Not only to help us clearly understand why and how we are doing so, but also to try to determine how our action will be interpreted and therefore how the person may react. It is this principle that explains why it is wise for someone taking ukemi (especially from a sensei, when demonstrating before the class) to be alert when getting up from the tatami. If uke stands up inside nage's maai, one of the four choices will be made and uke must accept the role of initiator, and the consequences which come therefrom.

Each technique has its own maai and should be practised with it in mind. Even the same technique can have a different maai depending on whether it is hanmi-handachi-waza, suwari-waza, or tachi-waza. Weapons techniques (tanto-dori, jo-dori, tachi-dori) again have a maai of their own.

A specific example of the effect of poor maai is in doing ikkyo ura from ai-hanmi katate-tori where the maai is too small at the beginning because nage's front foot is too close to uke's front foot. When nage's back foot moves forward to start the tenkan at uke's front foot, nage will have both feet close together and be less stable than if the maai had been larger at the start. Another is in doing nikyo from ai-hanmi chudan tsuki where the maai at the start is too great because uke's front foot is too far away from nage's front foot. As uke attacks, nage will step back and find that uke's hand will not be near nage's center making it more difficult for nage to properly grasp the back of uke's hand.

The knowledge gained from detailed attention to both maai and kogeiki will ensure safe and enjoyable techniques, as opposed to dangerous and frightening ones, in regular practice and especially in the more advanced practice of jiu-waza.

#### **Jiu-waza:**

Static techniques, even techniques done in motion, have a specific form to which both uke and nage must adhere, but jiu-waza training removes that obligation.

Since nage has all techniques and atemi available for use during jiu-waza, it is very important for uke to understand that proper kogeiki, done from proper maai, is vital to effectiveness and safety. An attack that allows too much suki (opening) in uke's form can draw an atemi to that opening rather than the type of technique

perhaps expected by uke. The only safe uke is the one who knows and follows the "rules" of maai and kogeiki faithfully.

Maai during jiu-waza is dynamic, it is undergoing changes constantly whenever uke or nage is in motion. Both uke and nage must be fully aware of its magnitude and each small alteration as it is being made. Uke, through the judicious use of maai, tries to get close enough to nage so that the attack will be quick and effective. Nage, through the judicious use of maai, tries to control uke by limiting uke's options, ultimately establishing "sasoi" where uke gets a false sense of opportunity and attacks, only to find that it is actually nage who is, and always has been, in control.

The maai, being the distance between uke and nage, includes a decision point where the maai has become so small that an attack is either expected or necessary. At a large maai awareness is small but as the maai shortens, as nage's maai and uke's maai touch and then start to overlap, the awareness in both nage and uke heightens. At the decision point both uke and nage are bowstrings pulled to the release point. Neither will remain in that state for long because a significant difference between free-style and regular practice is that, in free-style, nage can initiate a technique. Uke does not have control by virtue of the usual "starter" role undertaken in regular practice. Uke is therefore under just as much pressure as nage and knows that at the decision point there will be one brief opportunity to attack and if it is not utilized, then nage will likely attack.

Jiu-waza is the closest we can come to combat and competition under practice conditions. It is worth noting that competition in the other martial arts is governed by certain rules. For instance, not all types of attacks are allowed -- in Judo one cannot strike, and in Karate one cannot grapple. Furthermore, there is a referee who monitors the match, making win/lose decisions based on the particular rules, and trying to ensure the safety of the participants. And finally there is only one opponent. By contrast, in Aikido jiu-waza there are numerous opponents, no rules, and no referee. When you add the fact that the attacks and the techniques are neither limited nor predetermined, it is apparent that it much more closely resembles a real situation. What could

competition possibly add to benefit us further? In fact, I think that the only physical difference between a brawl and jiu-waza is the fact that, in jiu-waza, uke normally knows how to receive the technique without being hurt, and nage can normally sense when, and how, to modify the technique in order to make it effective but not injurious, or even to abort the technique, if uke is not able to take proper ukemi. It thus requires a skilled interaction between uke and nage because there is nothing but their "feel" for the flow of technique, developed by years of form practice, that allows them to move safely from the point of attack, through all the numerous points where technique options are available, to the completion of a technique. This is one reason why jiu-waza is reserved for advanced practitioners. Another reason is that, until a certain level of expertise is reached, jiu-waza is more likely to be harmful to the learning process because it will cause nage to lose the form instead of apply it.

#### Conclusions:

Much more space (and an author with a better understanding) is required to address the full spectrum of responsibilities that nage and uke each bear in cooperative training. This article is meant to focus primarily upon the role that kogeiki and maai play in the process of achieving harmony and martial rigor, and secondarily upon the need for harmony and martial rigor in order for co-operative training to achieve its goal.

This article also presumes that a basic knowledge of the form has already been gained. Maai, kogeiki, and all the other individual elements of harmony and martial rigor cannot be entirely ignored while learning the form because the form incorporates them all. However, it is more important to focus on the basic form in the beginning and leave the detailed study of these more-advanced training issues for later.

Uke, it must be acknowledged, takes on a very responsible role as the tactile teaching device for nage. The degree of understanding that uke has, not only of basic form but also of this symbiotic relationship, determines the pace at which nage can learn. If nage is the seed, then uke's willing and skillful participation in each technique is the fertile soil. Consequently, we should always seek out

the senior students during training and, while practising with them, try to notice and remember their movements as uke while, at the same time, we are developing our skills as nage. Obviously, the ultimate privilege is to have a sensei as uke, and when that experience occurs, we should heighten our awareness, and extract from it everything that we possibly can.

Ultimately, the true study of Aikido probably starts with the analysis of the questions identified in the first paragraph. Only when we start to seek the answer to the apparent conundrum of a martial art taught through co-operation, will we begin to find out that it is exactly this aspect that develops, and then reinforces, O-Sensei's grand design for us, not just as martial artists, but also as human beings.

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**POINT OF VIEW**by **Cecil Paris, 4-dan**

I have always enjoyed, and been influenced by the perfect timing, power, grace, goodness, speed, and the correct sense of Aikido which seems to become part of the Aikidoist when he/she understands the full, practical application of each movement, and applies this attitude in Aikido practice.

It is easy to miss or even misplace this important training approach if one does not keep constant vigilance of the purpose of Aikido and what one is learning at the time. It is necessary to constantly check and correct our errors in order to respect and develop our Aikido. A diligent, ready, respectful effort to change appropriately will bring us greater success in Aikido and in our everyday life.

The many so-called roadblocks or difficulties of training are easily solved by this approach of readily recognizing new information that is specific to you and then working with it immediately. We all know that there is sometimes a great wealth of such information, but there is also time to prioritize it -- time that is not necessarily isolated to mat practice.

With the availability of great Shihans in our lives, it is up to us as students to pursue and develop their teachings; to grasp, ardently and completely, all of their knowledge at every opportunity.

There is probably no prepared situation in which we could apply our learning, but there are always situations to which our level of learning could be applied. From constant practice and awareness we should be able to produce a sincere and (most likely) a successful result.

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**Mr. Paris** is a student of Kawahara Shihan and the instructor at New Westminster Aikikai in greater metropolitan Vancouver, B.C.

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Aikido must be the way of self-actualization, the way of God, and the way of the universe.

O-Sensei

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**AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL GROWTH**by **Tom Koch, 2-dan**

When my eyes first began to fail, in the 70's, I was a fanatic student of karate. I trained six days a week and when the time came that my eyes were no longer good enough for automobiles, I was frightened and discouraged. I could not drive, and cars were crucial to my work. I could not read, and without books my life seemed lost.

My teacher in those days was Kudo Sensei, sixth dan in judo, sandan in karate, and yondan in kendo, for whom karate was a hobby. He knew of my problems. It would have been hard to not know -- my eyes did not focus.

"Operation?" he asked one day. I said no, the doctors said that an operation wouldn't work. "Blind?" he asked. I said no, I wasn't to be blind, really, just sight-impaired. "Hearing good?" he asked. Strange, I thought, we were talking about vision. "Yes," I said, "my hearing seems even more acute." "Ah," he said with relief. "Then listen." He walked away.

From then on we trained harder and even with the lights out in the dojo occasionally. He would practise with his eyes closed and laugh at the sound of my feet. I took off my glasses and saw nothing but a blur (which I sometimes saw even with my glasses) and used my ears to time my moves. I became shodan and, over the years, often beat second and third dan opponents in tournament and practice.

Eventually I had one operation and then another. But my Sensei's reaction to my initial despair is what has sustained me. The point was flexibility and the ability to find different ways and different senses in an emergency. It took me a long time to understand the lesson.

Karate and Aikido are not so different, both growing from a Japanese martial vision and philosophy. Students in both areas begin with strength, hard practice, lots of bruises and the idea that if only they were stronger, a bit faster, a little tougher, they could accomplish more. But at the higher levels the focus is upon meeting another's power, facing the situation and rechannelling it. If one can't see, hear. If one can't beat another's speed, turn with the timing. Accept the reality and live with it. That is what he taught me to cherish.

**AIKIDO FORUM BOOK REVIEW**  
by George Hewson, 3-dan

In both, martial ways are to become a life philosophy. The lessons taught with such pain by my eyes became part of the reality of my world. The problem was not only on the practice floor, it pervaded my waking world. Since I could read little, I began to listen to music more; unable to force my way in a profession which values the sighted, I turned to radio where my vision is less crucial.

Donn Draeger, the great martial arts expert who spent over 30 years of his adult life in the martial world of Japan, said to me that modern students could not understand sei-shi no renshu, life and death practice. In our world we see so little of death, understand so little of its realities, that practice at that level is barred to us. That is not bad, just different. What we can do, however, from the fears we feel and the problems we face, is understand the flexibility, the external flexibility all arts teach. From it comes that hard core, the centre, which is stability. This has been a part of the transformation from jutsu (technique), to do (way). Internalizing it means coming to grips with limits and problems. Not merely accepting them, but subsuming them, using them to forge abilities beyond our physical limits.

In some ways, I feel sorry for the rest of you. I hear you even when I can't see you. The rustle of hakama, the slap of feet, the turn of cloth against cloth is more real than the vision of your bodies. You are constrained by your sight, and move to its pulse. But a second before you see, I have heard.

In my moments of pride, I figure I'm half-way there. The rest of the way will require that the understanding permeate my life. It will probably take me the rest of my life to understand that simple truth but, in bad moments, I remember Kudo Sensei and can see him shrug and turn away, unconcerned.

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Mr. Koch is a Vancouver writer and broadcaster, he is also a black belt in both Shugoukai and Shotokan karate.

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You must realize the true Self -- O-Sensei

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Reviewer's Comment

The best Aikido training takes place when dedicated students practise regularly under the guidance of a competent instructor. There is no substitute for the physical, mental, and emotional experience of keiko. Therefore, why should one bother to read about Aikido? Because it is important to develop a broad concept of the function of training. And since you have chosen to examine the contents of the Aikido Forum, I assume that you might very well be interested in reading books about this or other martial arts.

It is, thus, with pleasure and trepidation that I begin this first of a proposed series of book reviews. The pleasure stems from the satisfaction of sharing my enthusiasm for certain publications that I will be recommending. The trepidation arises when I acknowledge how difficult it is to express verbally many ideas related to budo that are better exemplified in the actions of the masters.

The opinions set out in these reviews will be my own and do not necessarily reflect those of my teachers, the Canadian Aikido Federation, or the Aikido Forum. I believe that training on the mat can be enhanced by a greater understanding of what we are doing, and that there are some books that contribute to this knowledge. My goal is not to assist certain individuals who are able to talk about Aikido rather than living it. On the contrary, I wish only to suggest some stimulating sources of information and analysis.

The Martial Spirit: An Introduction to the  
Origin, Philosophy, and Psychology of the  
Martial Arts

by Herman Kauz

Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1977

I initially read this little (141 pages) book as a beginner in Aikido and rereading it now, as a more experienced student, has reinforced my first impression; this is a very valuable study.

Kauz addresses two types of individuals: one who is contemplating a first attempt at budo; and one who is wondering why he/she is continuing. He offers a variety of reasons for training and helpful suggestions about selecting the right art and the right teacher -- as indicated by the

following Table of Contents:

1. INTRODUCTION
  - Martial Arts as Self-Defence
  - Martial Arts as Physical Exercise
  - Martial Arts as Meditation
2. WHAT KIND OF MARTIAL ART SHOULD BE STUDIED?
  - Class Procedure
  - Weapons Systems
  - Sport vs Non-Sport Systems
  - Internal vs External Styles
  - Comparisons of National Styles or Systems
  - Who Can Study?
3. THE AIM OF INDIVIDUAL FORM PRACTICE
  - Developing Skill
  - Kata Practice
  - Meditative Aspects of Individual Form Practice
  - Tan tien or Tanden
  - Hara
  - Analytical and Intuitive Aspects of the Mind
  - Extensions of a More Intuitive Approach to Life
  - Discipline
4. THE RESULT OF TRAINING WITH A PARTNER
  - Developing Skill
  - Relating to Others
  - Assessing Character
  - Competition
  - Learning to Concentrate
5. PHILOSOPHY: ITS RELEVANCE AND APPLICATION
  - Philosophical Ideas in the Martial Arts
  - Individual Differences in Students
  - Difficulty of Meeting Ideals
6. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AT THE OUTSET OF TRAINING
  - Mind Control
  - Selecting a Teacher
7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Kauz is greatly concerned about the inter-relationship of East and West, and says that each can learn from the other. His book helps build a useful bridge for Occidental students of an Oriental Way. His desire to start with physical training and combat, then push on to the psychological and philosophical elements of budo

echoes O'Sensei's revelation of Aikido.

Kauz is dan-ranked in Judo and Karate, has some Kendo and Aikido experience, and now teaches Tai Chi in New York. Here is how he describes his own transformation:

"As the years passed, my approach to the study and teaching of martial arts continued to change. My earlier emphasis on self-defence and competition began to move more in the direction of training as a preparation for, or aid in, living as fully, as completely as possible. As I reflected on the changes my study of the martial arts had made in me, I realized that my training had been something more than the surface, body-strengthening, skill-producing kind. I became aware that an inner development was also intended..."

Written in a pleasant, non-provocative style, this book is also well illustrated with photographs of Judo, Kendo, Iaido, Aikido, Karate, and Tai Chi. The lack of an index is unfortunate. Kauz is objective and non-dogmatic. His judgements are balanced and sincere.

This is an excellent starting point for Aikido students who are interested in a mildly intellectual and always sensitive discussion of why and how to train.

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**THE BACK COVER**

The picture on the back cover is a reduction of a 15" x 22" pencil drawing by Dave Giblin of Victoria Aikikai who primarily works in Egg Tempera, pastel and pencil.

For many years Dave has worked summers as a salmon fishing guide in Northern B.C. in order to finance his winters doing art (and Aikido) in Victoria. This year he has had a successful showing at a local art gallery. In October his work will be exhibited at Art Expo in Los Angeles, an international event bringing together artists from South and North America, Japan and Europe.

Dave has donated this drawing to the Aikido Forum. At the end of October we will put the names of all subscribers to the Forum into a draw for this original Aikido drawing. The winner will be announced in the next issue.

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