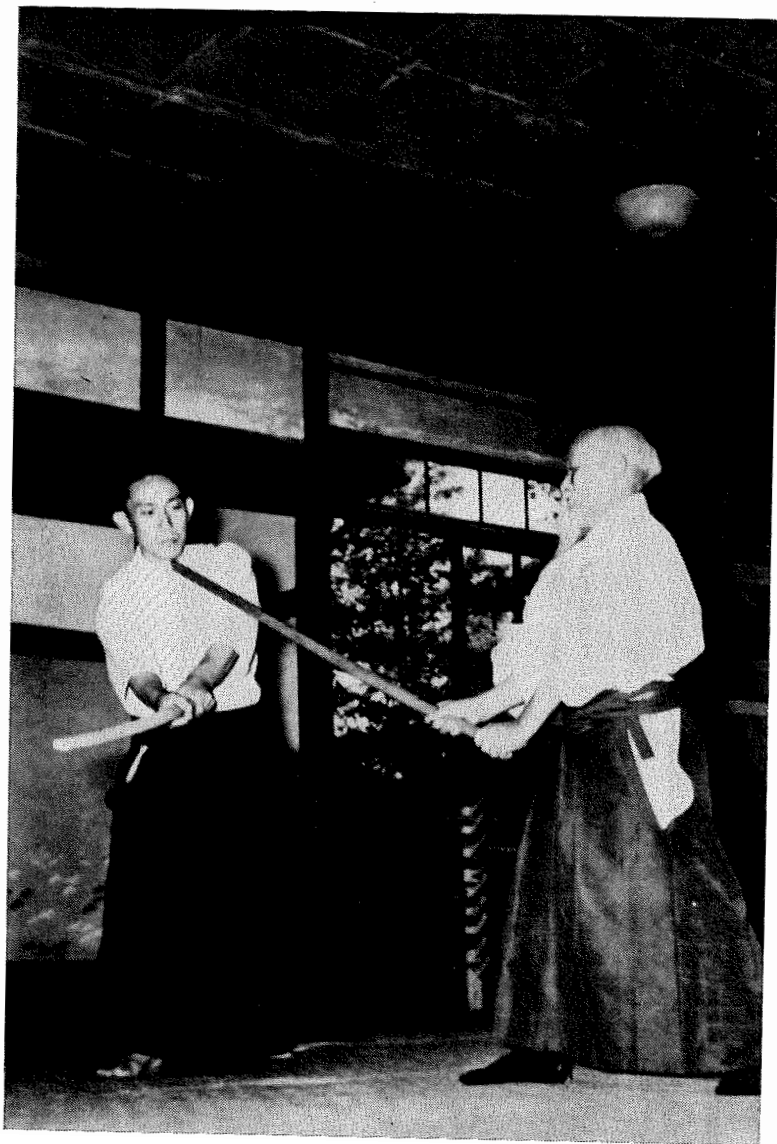


# AIKIDO FORUM

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A JOURNAL OF AIKIDO  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Number 7, December, 1988



# **AIKIDO FORUM**

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

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## **AIKIDO FORUM**

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## WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

ISHU ISHIYAMA

We often forget why we practise Aikido and what we slowly aim for. According to Founder Ueshiba, Aikido is a practice of Creation from which forms are born, and it is practised internally and formlessly by unifying creative forces with self. Aikido is an act of love, a prayer to gods. He used an expression, "ame-no ukihashi-ni tatsu" (to stand on a floating bridge in heaven to give birth to forms and embody God's love in humans), which describes the art, playing with outward form is not the aim of Aikido.

Remember master Tanaka in Osaka saying "physical practice is useless no matter how many years you have done it, in the pursuit of Aikido. Practise what is invisible if you want to get better. It is surprising how many people including senior students call a hard physical workout, sometimes with new tricks learnt, "a good practice". Student's prolonged preoccupation with the outside appearance and the strength is counter productive. Physical form practice is considered only an introduction to formless practice of ki in Aikido. Imitation of visible forms is easy compared to practising formless Aikido and sensing and creating a ki flow. Once the importance of formless practice is understood students begin to show improvement in ukemi, manners and sharpened sensitivity to others physically and psychologically, on and off the mats. After every promotion, black belts are expected to make qualitative progress in mentality (called "shinkyō-no henka) as well as in movements, instead of staying more of the same. Let's not forget that Aikido is more than sweating and throwing each other on the mats.

Three years have past since a handful of amateur editors gathered in 1985 to create the Aikido Forum. I want to thank the subscribers for supporting us both emotionally and financially. I also want to thank Cindy Verheul, our new production manager, for her dedication and hard work in producing the last two issues almost single-handedly.

## Ways of Using Intrinsic Power

CHING-NAN LI

In Aikido, power is strength, life, and breathing. Sky and earth, in order to bestow life also bestows body and mind. The body moves in accordance with the mind, the mind utilizes the body as a mean of showing its motion, the two cannot be separated. No matter the mind or the body, neither can exist alone. It is only when they are together that the ultimate ability can be realized, and then the human can fulfill his highest form of existence in life.

To be successful and progressive, man should be "unified in body and mind" [shin-shin toitsu], and only in this state can he utilize the potential latent strength. When a person works hard in order to achieve the unity of body and mind, his strength will be surprising. It is like a mouse, when under hot pursuit, he reaches a dead end only to spring back and knock down the advancing cat. Likewise in a fire, a man can summon extraordinary strength that never would have been thought possible to save his property. Similarly, a weak woman can push over a car to rescue her child who has been pinned under it. All these incidents can only happen when power is mastered with the unity of body and mind.

In Aikido, it is important to be able to have the state of unity of body and mind, so as to be able to express the latent energy. To be in that state, we must first understand the law of unity. The mind has a mind function and the body, likewise. With the limitation of physical shape in body and the shapeless and free floating mind, it is difficult to maintain stability. That is why it is a hard choice to select either the mind or the body as the centre of unity. In other words, this brings out the question of which should

be the centre. In practising Aikido the mind should be the centre of unity. Mind is Ki, which utilizes the body. How the mind utilizes the body to carry out the physical movement can be experienced in Aikido, by understanding the mind and then by studying the body. Only through this can the unification of body and mind produce Aikido techniques.

How does the mind manipulate the body? Let me explain with this example: by holding out one's arm in a natural posture and by clenching your fist tight and holding all your strength in your arm, you try to make it unbendable. Under this condition anyone with about the same strength can easily bend the arm. But if the hand is open, no strength is exerted in the arm and with the mind thinking as if your energy is flowing out from your body, shoulder and arm, right through your fingers to infinity, you can make it unbendable. If you can maintain, without breaking, such a state of mind, it does not matter how hard your strong opponent tries to bend your arm, it will remain unbendable.

Energy of the mind (ki) is the real strength. Sound has sound waves, light has light wave, why shouldn't mind have mind waves? If you keep thinking that your energy is flowing continuously out of your arm, in reality your "ki" is flowing out. This parallels the fireman's hose, when the fist is clenched it is similar to shutting off the nozzle. Outwardly it seems very powerful but, in fact it is very weak!

After experiencing how the mind directs the body, the next question is how to study the utilization of the mind. Being able to freely command the energy of the mind (ki), one has to be able to focus the mind to a point. The theory is the same as the fact that scattered light is not as power-

ful as a concentrated beam. The next important point is how to use the mind: in Aikido it is known as extending ki. When one does not think of sending out power, nothing can be extended. In order to concentrate the mind in a state of unification of body and mind, we should understand the law of the body. According to Newton's law of gravity, anything in the hand will fall to the ground when released because the centre of gravity is on the lower side. If you use your head as the centre of gravity or use the muscle in your arm to substitute for the centre of gravity, how would this agree with the natural phenomenon of the universe!

When a human body is in a natural relaxed state, the centre of gravity eventually sinks to the tanden below the navel and it is here that the mind concentrates. In other words tanden is the one point of the body and mind. Thus, we must experience tanden before we can move to the state of unity of body and mind. Aikido, in developing the unification of body and mind, allows a multitude of technical movements. With the power from the unified body and mind, in a split second, we can deliver a tremendous ultimate explosion of energy.

Heaven and earth each occupy a limitless half circle; by narrowing and concentrating this circle to oneself, and further bringing it down to the tanden, one can master the ki of this universe and release it to the universe from the tanden. By using the centrifugal and centripetal forces our body will see the technique of Aikido fully expressed.

-----Li Shihan,  
*8th degree blackbelt, is the chief instructor and chairman of the Republic of China Aikido Association. He instructs Aikido at the central dojo in Taipei and across the country. This article originally appeared in Chinese in R.O.C.A.A. Aikido Today No.4, 1988 pp 4-5. Thanks are due to Mr. Chio Woon for his translation and enthusiasm about Aikido as a way of life.*

# **AIKIDO BOOK REVIEW**

**GEORGE HEWSON**

**AIKIDO (revised edition) Kisshomaru Ueshiba Hozansha Publications Tokyo 1985.**

This is the best overall book about Aikido available in English (superbly translated by Larry Bieri). It covers the purpose, philosophy, basic concepts and techniques of Aikido in a brief but comprehensive 190 pages. Ueshiba Doshu's presentation is now available in an inexpensive paperback form. It should be examined thoroughly and thoughtfully by every Aikidoist.

All necessary Japanese vocabulary is included along with accurate English equivalents. Copious photographs (featuring the current Doshu with Tamura Sensei and Chiba Sensei) are accompanied by clear diagrams and pithy explanations.

This book is valuable for beginners as they will find many of their initial questions answered, and will be able to grasp more readily what is taking place during practice. It is also a valuable review for more advanced students who should analyze their own movements using the photos and written descriptions.

The format is as follows:

- a. Basic knowledge and preparatory exercises
- b. Basic techniques
- c. Applied techniques
- d. Weapons taking
- e. History and O-Sensei biography
- f. Appendices
  1. Aikido and Other Budo

2. Dynamic Survey of Aikido
3. Aikido and Health
4. Rules During Practice
5. Words of the Founder

In this technical manual, Doshu offers 127 pages of how to perform the techniques correctly. Demonstrations proceed from breakfalls through fundamental and foot movements. The basic throwing techniques such as shihonage, iriminage, kaitenage, and kotegaeshi are carefully outlined, as well as the pinning techniques such as ikkyo, nikyo, sankyo and yonkyo. Thus, a program for beginners that includes a good mixture of simplicity and variety is offered. This plan might be particularly useful to lower-ranked instructors who are seeking a starting point for dealing with new students.

The applied techniques section repeats the eight basic techniques but employs them against a wide range of attacks. Furthermore, techniques such as koshinage, tenchinage, jujigarami, aikiotoshi, sumiotoshi and aikinage are added. A brief, illustrated commentary on weapon taking concludes the technical portion.

Beyond the technical descriptions, Doshu furnishes an important introduction to the philosophy of Aikido. (He expanded this in his companion volume **The Spirit of Aikido** which I plan to review for another issue of the Aikido Forum.) Here are some quotations from the "Forward" and "Introduction" that merit daily reflection:

" The essence of Aikido does not lie in fighting with others." (p.7)

" All study must be based on the correct understanding of Aikido principles or mastery will be impossible." (p.7)



" A humanistic world view of the highest order, along with the beauty and interest of Aikido movements, has captured the attention of intelligent people the world over. Aikido lets them physically practice and train themselves in a philosophy that leads to 'spiritual prosperity'." (p.8)

" Aikido comes into being when the kind of strict training that comes from confronting the instant of life and death is used as a stepping stone from which to leap above one's usual level. This severity of training, balanced and blended with the feeling of "Oneness with the Universe", characterizes the Aikido approach." (p.8)

" Aikido is the act of assimilation and unification with Nature. There is no duality, no struggle, no opponent. There is only a harmonious action of our own spirit with the spirit of the universe. The techniques of Aikido are the bodily realization of this harmony. " (p. 14)

" Having conviction that Truth shall triumph, we move forward to eliminate all evil from this world, and further, to reach the state where there is neither right nor wrong. When Truth has won and we have won over ourselves, we have accomplished the mission which was given to every one of us." (p.14)

" We must be strong. Whatever evil comes, we must be strong enough to sweep it away and protect justice." (p.15)

" The Founder also stated, "Aiki is the expression of Truth itself. It is the way of calling people together and reconciling them with love whenever they may attack us." When you do not understand this teaching, and use Aikido for fighting, you will never obtain its secret." (p.15)

" Perhaps you have gained the general idea of Aikido by

reading this introduction; however, its true meaning can only be realized through practice." (p.15)

These quotations provide ample grist for the mill of debate or meditation. At least two paradoxes are apparent. The first is that the techniques must be effective and realistic in situations of combat and yet embody an attitude of love and harmony. The second is that we must do battle with evil while we have no opponents.

This kind of non-Aristotelian logic is often difficult for a Westerner to comprehend. These seemingly contradictory phrases, however, abound in such Asian literature as the Indian Bhagavadgita or the Chinese Dao De Jing. In Zen training koan or riddles are often used to help the trainee penetrate beyond surface appearances. Perhaps an Aikido koan would be; "Where is the enemy without whom I fight?".

-----*Mr. Hewson, 3rd degree black belt, is a student of, and secretary for J.C.C.C. Aikikai in Toronto where he has practised since starting his training in 1975. He teaches high school french and history.*

# CO-OPERATIVE TRAINING -- UKEMI

BOB MOLINE

## Background

In previous Aikido Forum articles I have tried to describe my understanding of the seemingly contradictory concept of "co-operative martial art training". This is a concept which presents certain difficulties in understanding, especially for those of us who have grown up playing the usual sports, or have studied the most common martial arts in North America, Judo and Karate, all of which use competition rather than co-operation to hone skills.

In this series of articles, I am offering my personal view of the mutual responsibilities that nage and uke bear toward each other, and to our art, in order for cooperative training to be successful. My overall premise is that to become adept at Aikido one must have a solid understanding of both harmony and martial rigor, and that the search for this solid understanding is complicated by the fact that neither harmony nor martial rigor can be studied as entities by themselves. Instead there exists a number of singular training elements, "building blocks" if you will, upon which we can focus individually and which, in their totality, form harmony and martial rigor. The first article attempted to deal with maai and kogeiki, and the second, kuzushi. In this article I will try ukemi, which is the final phase of the form, occurring immediately after kuzushi, when a throw or take-down is in progress.

## Introduction

Ukemi is a method of receiving nage's technique

whereby, for training purposes, firstly we protect ourselves from damage, and secondly we provide as realistic a circumstance for nage as is possible. Thus it is not appropriate to stop attending to our growth and learning of ukemi once we understand enough to avoid injury from the technique. At that point we have, at best, only attended to the first, and perhaps the simplest, of our dual obligation. A major challenge still lies ahead.

Ukemi must be clearly recognized as an obligation to the training process, to uke, and to nage. As suggested before, uke plays a most important role in assisting nage to train effectively. In fact, I believe it is only through paying primary attention to developing skills as uke that one can achieve meaningful progress in our art. If one slights the intricacies of ukemi, focusing mainly upon nage-waza, one will become an insensitive practitioner, and this leads directly to a decreased ability to learn. This is so because the insensitive practitioners are easily identified, and are seldom first choice as training partners. As a result, insensitive practitioners experience less meaningful training because they are not sought out by those who understand the critical need for sensitivity in their training. This is the "pain-less" result of insensitivity that may lead to discouragement and eventually to the discontinuation of training. The "pain-full" result of insensitivity that may lead to discouragement and eventually to the discontinuation of training, occurs because insensitive practice leads to injuries. As uke, an insensitive practitioner will make mistakes that cause "self-inflicted" injuries, which lead to less practice, which in turn leads to poorer technique, and so starts a regressive spiral from which it is very difficult to escape. It seems to be one of those injustices of life that, in their role as nage, insensitive practitioners do not suffer injuries due to their own shortcomings in the same way they do in their role as uke.

Instead they cause injuries. Ukes who are junior will receive injuries to both the body and spirit because they have not yet learned enough to follow basic forms properly, let alone vary a form to compensate for nage's insensitive moves. Ukes who are senior will tend to be displeased.

Of course (perhaps unfortunately is a more appropriate word) not every insensitive student drops out of Aikido, some practice for many years; however, they are their own worst enemy. It is impossible for an insensitive practitioner to make the intellectual leap from visualizing two separate people using each other for training to that of one entity training. Thus their technical quality and their absorption of the fundamental issues of O'Sensei's philosophy do not reflect the years they have spent in training. This is extremely regrettable because, if they had been able to be more sensitive, they would have accomplished so much more, and their fellow practitioners would have been so much more fulfilled by their presence. The real question is whether or not the insensitive practitioner has been a detriment to the dojo and to Aikido, for they do diminish the quality of practice and discourage beginners.

### **Uke Serving Uke**

It should be clear to us all that the breakfall is the best way to eliminate the danger of falling. Unlike Judo where the outcome of a well-executed throw automatically places uke in the ideal position in which to breakfall, a well executed throw in Aikido places uke in an extremely dangerous position in which it is impossible to breakfall. Thus, in Aikido, uke must take a specific action in order to eliminate the danger (the fact that only a student of Aikido is taught this action is what makes Aikido so dangerous in practical situations). Consequently we must spend a signi-

ficant part of our training time as uke, learning the specific action that we must take for each specific technique. Without doing so we cannot possibly train in a safe, productive, and responsible way. Eventually we reach a more rewarding plateau where we have the knowledge and ability to respond to the dynamic ki flow, rather than to a static, pre-set pattern.

The difference between Judo and Aikido, of course, comes from the individual outlooks of the two Founders. Kano Sensei (Judo's Founder) was an educator who strove for a martial art in the form of a sport where students could play, with limited danger, while gaining the benefits of fair-minded competition. Ueshiba Sensei, on the other hand, was a philosopher who felt that an attack should not be considered as part of a game, but rather a serious matter requiring a serious response (please forgive the superficial and simplistic treatment of O'Sensei's motivation).

Koshi-nage gives an instructive illustration of this difference. In Judo, the arm that is needed to slap in the breakfall is free, while the other arm, the one that is not needed for the slap, is held and used by nage to supply the rotation that uke must have in order to land in a perfect breakfall position. In fact, in competition, a full point is only awarded if uke lands in the perfect breakfall position. In total contrast, in Aikido, nage holds the other arm, the one that is required for the slap, and does not give uke any rotation to the breakfall position, in other words, going headfirst into the tatami. The action that uke must learn to take is to use nage to help rotate the body into the correct position for the breakfall by using the free arm to hook nage's arm or grab nage's dogi. Not doing so puts uke's neck in jeopardy. Similarly, in receiving nikyo, uke must learn to drop the outside hip to the tatami in order to allow the chest to drop unimpeded to the tatami.

Doing otherwise often results in uke's legs being trapped between the chest and the tatami, with nage continuing to apply nikyo in an attempt to drive uke's chest to the tatami. Poor ukemi puts uke's wrist in jeopardy.

In every technique, as indicated by these two examples, uke must understand and follow the form to ensure personal safety; if uke does not, only a sensitive nage who is both knowledgeable and caring will be able to prevent uke's improper form from causing uke damage.

### **Uke Serving Nage**

Once the ability to receive nage's technique has developed to a level where uke is relatively at ease, attention must be turned to providing a realistic circumstance for nage. This is a great challenge because it is so dynamic, so variable. Each technique and each nage are different, errors exist both in being too cooperative and too resistant.

As an example, in irimi-nage it is important that uke stay in contact with nage for the appropriate length of time. As nage steps forward for the throw, uke should be striving to keep solid contact between nage's upper arm and uke's neck. To slip down vertically to the tatami while nage's arm is still moving in a horizontal direction is not appropriate. It is something we do as beginners due to our primary concern to land safely (uke serving uke), we must grow from that state. Another example is receiving nikyo. As beginners we tend to keep our arm straight in a futile attempt to reduce the pain, in reality a straight arm invites an elbow technique such as hiji-kime rather than regular nikyo. Nage can only effectively practise nikyo if uke accepts nage's force through a bent elbow and wrist into the hara, and this can only be done when uke follows the form. This also strengthens uke's body, form, and hara.

It must be recognized, of course, that there will always be fellow practitioners who are senior to us who will be able to keep us in the mode of "uke serving uke", ie. trying to accept their technique safely, and after practising for a while, there will always be practitioners who are junior to us for whom we can remain in the mode of "uke serving nage". A rewarding time, both intellectual and physical, takes place when practising with someone of comparable ability because of the constant switching between these two states.

Ultimately this type of attention to nage's needs also benefits the ukemi. Although it may be hard to see initially, most throws, if uke has faith in the form and flows with nage, keep uke's head in the position of "least travel" while the feet travel the farthest. Thus, the danger to uke's neck and head diminishes as uke participates to a higher degree. Similarly, in nikyo, if uke fully participates in the form, the pain encountered is less than when resisting the form. It seems this dual responsibility that uke has to self and to nage in the beginning ultimately merges into one responsibility as expertise is gained.

### **Nage Serving Uke**

To the uninitiated it might seem that nage would have no role in ukemi. As the thrower, how can nage be involved in receiving? However, after some thought it is possible to identify at least two major responsibilities that nage has which are critical to successful training, for both uke and nage. Firstly, with an inexperienced uke, nage should be assisting uke in developing an understanding of the ukemi. In nikyo, nage should help uke by going slowly, using modest force so that uke can focus upon the form and an acceptable amount of pain, rather than upon fear of serious pain. This should continue until uke fully assimilates



the proper form. Secondly, nage is ultimately responsible for uke's safety, and after a certain level of training is reached, nage is able to act as uke's safety valve because of the ability to sense from the ki flow when uke has lost the form of following and is in danger. Nage, at an early level of training, has the ability to sense the danger well enough to abandon the technique. At a higher level of training, upon sensing uke's loss of form, nage can ease the pressure, or change the direction of the flow, taking uke out of danger without necessarily abandoning the technique.

Nage also has to understand that certain things must be done in practice that would not necessarily be done in a practical situation. For instance in the koshi-nage example cited earlier, nage should release uke's slapping hand at the appropriate time in order for uke to be able to use it to take the ukemi safely. As uke's safety valve, nage may even supply some of the rotation energy uke needs in order to get to the safe landing position, especially if uke has failed to follow the form and cannot generate the necessary rotation.

### **Nage Serving Nage**

In the final analysis, it is nage's understanding of proper ukemi that ultimately determines the degree of success in training and, God forbid, in a practical situation. Dojo training and practical application are the two sides of the blade, and one cannot exist in strength without the other. I am not suggesting that we should seek opportunity for practical application, in fact, just the opposite. When we can apply techniques proficiently in our dojo practice, the practical knowledge has already been naturally incorporated into our abilities. This is so because the other side of being uke's safety valve is that, in a practical situation,

nage will be able to sense a dangerous situation or the attacker and decide not to make the changes that would ensure safety, or to make subtle changes to control the amount of damage inflicted. Directly related is nage's ability to sense the opposite situation -- that the attacker is not in danger -- and change the pressure or the direction of the flow to one more appropriate for the situation. The moral goal must be to inflict the least amount of physical damage that will result in the attacker losing the ability and motivation to continue the confrontation.

### **Summary**

In three rather long articles, I have tried to identify a number of specific training issues that are of significant importance to us all. The overall lesson, I believe, is that it is an open and aware mind that allows us to practise effectively and to succeed in our co-operative training. A closed or unaware mind is a great hindrance. In a competitive martial art such a hindering mind only limits the person who is unfortunate enough to bear it. However, in the nature of the co-operative training that exists in Aikido, the holder of a closed mind also hinders the partner, and to a lesser degree both the dojo and the sensei as well.

No matter who puts what theories forward for our consideration, surely the most simply stated key to successful training is that we must each strive constantly to give meaning to our partner's practice.

-----*Mr. Moline, 2nd degree black belt, is an instructor at Victoria Aikikai and works as a telecommunications engineer for the provincial government of B.C.*

# AIKIDO AND MATHEMATICS

THOMAS CZYCZKO

It is with some trepidation that I am submitting this article because of the reactions I have received in the past when I have attempted to voice some of my opinions about the connections I have noticed between two of my favourite disciplines -- Aikido and mathematics. The reactions have run the gamut from exclamations of "But won't that take the mystery out of Aikido?" to having a high ranking practitioner tell me in no uncertain terms that they have nothing to do with each other.

My silent (until now) response to these statements is that nothing can take the mystery out of an endless quest and, I still believe that there are very beautiful and useful relationships and differences between the two.

The controversial nature of these and other responses stem in part, from a basic failing of our school system that emphasizes the formula approach to solving mathematical problems. We are told to memorize certain operations and apply them under certain conditions. The underlying motivations for, and the methods used in, developing the solutions are rarely shown except by the best of teachers. This is also true in Aikido. The instructors I have responded to the most are the ones that have taken pains to hint at some of the history and logic that went into the forms we practise in class.

Mathematics, like Aikido, is an art, not a science. Mathematics starts with statements called axioms which are taken to be self-evident. All parties agree on the truth of these statements and then logical consequences are explored. If one has trouble accepting the truth of the axi-

oms then acceptance can be gained by solving problems with the formulae generated from the axioms until familiarity and some other unknown factors, combine to give the student a sense of understanding. This very mysterious process is also present in Aikido when an instructor tells you to "just practise" when you feel you that have lost all contact with the ability to complete a technique.

In mathematics one of the terms used for spiralling in on a solution is iteration. A practical example of this is to find out where there is a break in an electrical conductor. We have a length of wire but we are not sure where in the length the fault is to be found. By connecting the end points of the wire with a pair of alligator clips to a battery and a light bulb we know that there is a break because the light bulb does not go on.

By moving one of the alligator clips to a position half way along the length of the wire we will notice that either the light goes on or stays off. Either way this will tell us which half of the wire contains the fault. We repeat this process on the half of the wire that does not allow the light to come on. Eventually the alligator clips come closer and closer together until they meet at the fault on the wire.

A good instructor guides in this manner as we attempt to learn. Only through much practice do we get to come close to the form, to greater understanding. Our corrections become smaller and our movements more precise and efficient as long as we are unwilling to quit or become satisfied with our knowledge.

Self-satisfaction is as big a trap to understanding mathematics as it is to Aikido. I once was having a conversation of mathematical nature with several friends when we confronted by a belligerent, half-sober individual who de-

manded of us "If you think you're so smart, why is a manhole cover round?" We replied that we did not know. "Because it's the only shape that can't fall into a hole that is the same shape," the fellow barked. I replied that on the contrary, there was at least one other simple shape that had a constant diameter, but the fellow obviously had felt he had proven his superiority and wandered off. There was no attempt at harmony and mutual benefit.

The shape I was talking about looks like a triangle with rounded edges and bulging, rounded sides. It will roll just like a circle but its centre of mass does not stay a fixed distance from the ground as it rolls. It rolls because, like a circular object, the farthest straight line distance from any point on the side to another point on its side is a constant length.

Aikido students are taught that we learn the forms in a steady progression from the square to the triangle to the circle. The beginner's movements are square. Eventually the student learns to move solidly along the lines of a triangle. Finally, the senior student's movements follow a circle. The trap to avoid is being satisfied with the performance that is represented by the figure I have described that is intermediate between the triangle and the circle. The movement may seem the flow (or roll) but in reality the centre is not always on the straight line that forms the diameter of the movement. This means that the centre is not steady and extra force is required to maintain the technique.

It is my belief that it is necessary to learn to practise Aikido forms by using a minimum of physical energy in order that spiritual energy (ki) can manifest and be felt by the student. This is why we must closely watch the demonstrations offered us by the Shihans, and constantly

try to emulate them.

The usual perception of the development and practice of mathematics is one of a solitary person hunched over a piece of paper, drawing arcane symbols while wearing a look of fierce concentration. While some of this does go on, the actuality of creative mathematics involves meeting other professionals, reading journals, and submitting articles and ideas for approval or disapproval from one's peers and instructors. No one can reinvent all of mathematics.

Aikido starts with the assumption that one must train with other people. While certain exercises can and should be performed during solo moments, the essence of Aikido can only be grasped by practising with many people. I find that trying to constantly be aware of my partner and others on the mat during practice is the most difficult part of training. It can be too easy, especially if one has an obliging uke or nage, to just move your own body and have no thought or reaction to the movements of your partner.

I hope that this article has conveyed some of the awe and wonder I feel when I contemplate Aikido, mathematics and our universe.

-----*Mr. Czyczko, first kyu, practises at, and is treasurer of, Vancouver Aikikai. He began Aikido in Winnipeg.*

# LOOKING BACK, REACHING FORWARD

CINDY VERHEUL

My husband used to come home from his Modern Arnis practice (a martial art that originates in the Phillipines) with a sense of accomplishment and such energy. I thought it must be wonderful to physically experience the moves he was capable of. Of course, I felt you had to be a powerful man or a very odd woman to take up one of the Arts. I have a female friend who studied Tai Chi for a number of years, a wonderful Art but it seemed a little slow to my ignorant self. At one point in my husband's training, his teacher taught him a few Aikido techniques. He felt he would like to learn more and also recognized that it might be an Art suitable for me.

I study Kinesiology and am a fitness instructor and consultant. I thought if I studied a martial art, it would look good on my resume. So in February of 1985, I started Aikido to be involved in something with my husband, to be able to say that I practised a martial art, and to get a little extra exercise on Sunday.

The concept seems so silly now. I know Paris Sensei is too generous, respectful and has too good a sense of humour to have discouraged me. What a sight I must have been in my emerald green sweatsuit and dusty rose toenails.

For some unknown reason, destiny perhaps, I stayed with Aikido. I attended one class per week for my first year. I didn't comprehend why other people were urging me to attend more classes per week. I surprised myself as well as Sensei when I attended class without my husband. Being a black belt in Arnis I'm sure he was perceived as a more likely candidate for furtherance in Aikido than I.

However attending class 'alone' instilled a sense of confidence in me and now I know it was the beginning of a journey that would change and enhance my life.

That year, 1986, I attended my first summer camp. I probably need say no more for those of you who have experienced a first summer camp. What a strange and wonderful experience. I expected and loved the physical aspects of the week. What I didn't expect and still don't understand was the dynamics of the whole group that took place, the special friendships that were formed, the bonding, the emotions experienced. At times the practices were distressful, hard to go through, but in the end, I felt cleansed and very much at peace, not to mention the difference Summer Camp made to my perception and assimilation of Aikido.

Upon returning to the city, it became natural to attend classes three or four times a week. My focus on fitness changed. Instead of using Aikido for extra exercise, I now try and keep fit, or get in better shape for Aikido.

Aikido has become a valued and even necessary part of my life. There have been times when I have become involved to the detriment of other aspects of my life, including marriage, work, school, and social life (outside of Aikido). But I am a young Aikidoist and am finding the balance, the harmony. Through this developmental process I have always felt, and continue to feel, supported by Aikido and all my teachers and friends. When I say, since Aikido I feel more centered, I know you understand. I find if I just let things flow, it all falls into place and everything gets done.

Most of us are living in a goal-oriented society. I have fallen prey to this attitude and thrive on it. I seem to re-



quire goals in work and school, in marriage and life. When I'm feeling in limbo, there are always goals in Aikido. Everyday something is learned or achieved. I will never stop reaching and that is a satisfying thought.

I read an article by Yamada Sensei (Aikido Forum #5) recently in which he said that you should always respect your original instructor because it was they who opened your eyes to Aikido in the beginning. I was speaking about this topic to Fran Turner a while ago and we wondered together why we so often seemingly forget about or discount our first instructors. She offered the explanation that perhaps, when we review our beginning in Aikido we feel we weren't practising "real" Aikido so we dismiss it. I can agree with that, I don't like to think about showing up for practice in an emerald green sweatsuit with dusty rose toenails. But my eyes have been opened; along with destiny, my first Sensei had much to do with my desire to stay with Aikido, forever.

Living in Vancouver, I am spoiled by the level of instruction I gratefully receive. Though I rarely have the opportunity to practise with my original instructor, I hope he can take some satisfaction from the fact that his efforts have made a difference to me (and others) and I thank him for the path he has sent me along.

-----*Ms. Verheul, 3rd kyu, practises Aikido at Point Grey and Refrew Aikikai in Vancouver. She works in marketing in the mining industry, and is a fitness instructor and consultant at the Vancouver Y.W.C.A. She also studies Kinesiology at Simon Fraser University.*

# AIKIDO AND T'AI CHI

DOUG MACDONALD

Out of stillness comes motion; out of softness comes strength. - T'ai Chi saying

I have had the good fortune to be exposed to one of the newest martial arts - Aikido - as well as one of the oldest, T'ai Chi. I was a student of T'ai Chi for about 15 years before first experiencing Aikido about a year ago.

When I first began to practise O Sensei's discipline, my reaction was: " -- Aha, this is T'ai Chi for two people!" I sensed the same grace, the same reliance on inner power rather than brute strength. Many times while attempting to learn a new Aikido technique, I discover my body almost magically flowing through the form with ease. Then I realize that I have learned exactly the same movements in T'ai Chi.

Of course, Aikido is not identical to T'ai Chi. In both arts I have learned that the external form is not the goal, but only a path that leads to a formless SOMETHING that goes far beyond any physical fitness or martial purposes. However, it is intriguing to note the similarities in the form. The sequence of movements in ikkyo, for example, is identical to "Grasp Swallow's Tail" -- one section of the 108-movement major form of T'ai Chi. A number of the irimi entering techniques in Aikido are very similar to T'ai Chi sequences.

A deeper thought shows that the truly important similarities between the two arts are in the underlying philosophy. Aikido and T'ai Chi are very close to each other in that respect. Both emphasize centering and flowing with

an opponent's energy. Aikido places emphasis on ki and speaks of the hara, the centre and root of power in the body. T'ai Chi has the identical concepts. The intrinsic energy is called Ch'i, and it gathers and develops in the Tan Tien (same as hara). Meeting force with force is just as alien to T'ai Chi as it is to Aikido. In fact, the T'ai Chi forms emphasize this even more. One master said that even as slight a change as a fly landing on you should set your body in motion.

Cheng Man-ch'ing, this century's acknowledged T'ai Chi master, summarizes it profoundly for me. Asked by a student if he had a secret for success, he said, "You are right, there is a secret. But it is so simple as to be unbelievable. Its nature insists that you believe, that you have faith; otherwise you will fail. The secret is simply this: you must relax body and mind totally. You must be prepared to accept defeat repeatedly and for a long period; you must 'invest in loss' -- otherwise you will never succeed. I succeeded to my present state because I pushed pride aside and believed my master's words. I relaxed my body and stilled my mind so that only ch'i, flowing at the command of my mind, remained. Initially, this brought many bruises and defeats. In fact, in some matches I was pushed so hard that I lost consciousness. But I persisted. I followed my teacher by listening to and heeding my ch'i. In crushing defeat, I forgot anxiety, pride and ego. By emptying myself I gave the full field to ch'i. Gradually my technique improved. Then, and only then, did my responses sharpen so that neutralizing and countering were the work of a movement."

Most readers will be familiar with the history of Aikido, so I will not repeat it here. The beginnings of T'ai Chi, however, are lost in the antiquity of China. Legend has it that the basic art was brought to China as early as 475 A.D.

by the great Buddhist monk Bodhidharma (also known as Ta Mo or Dharma). He apparently introduced a series of physical exercises in Buddhist monasteries to help keep monks from falling asleep during meditation!

This early form split into a number of branches of martial arts. The original Shao Lin Kung Fu also traces back to these times.

However, the distinctive form of T'ai Chi is said to have been created by Chang San-Feng, a Taoist, about whom wonderful and incredible stories are told. He was essentially a wild mountain man of great strength, seeking, like most Taoists today, to achieve immortality. He would wrestle bears, and do his martial dance on mountain tops during thunder storms. It was said that he was so sensitive he could place a bird on the palm of his hand and prevent it from flying away.

Many changes were made to the style of T'ai Chi over the centuries. As an interesting historical side note, the famous Boxer Rebellion was a peasant rebellion which attempted to drive all foreigners from China in 1900. The Boxers was a name given to the secret Chinese society known to itself as I-ho cu'Uan (Righteous and Harmonious Fists); they practised Pa-kua chiao, a form closely related to T'ai Chi. Today, while many T'ai Chi forms exist, the main stream is known as the Yang Style, named after its founder Yang Lu-Ch'an (1799 - 1872).

Today, the Chinese put great emphasis on T'ai Chi, mainly as a source of "physical culture" for health and fitness. I am told that in any Chinese city you can see many people dancing the form in parks at any time of the day.

At first glance, T'ai Chi requires much patience to master. Until a student is well advanced, he/she does not touch another. After years of learning form, students are taught a series of highly stylized "push hands" exercises. Again after further years of study, a form of "free style" is learned which allows spontaneous use of the various techniques. There are no "throws" in T'ai Chi. All the emphasis is on moving aggressive energy around and past. The one exception is the "push", in which you gather all your energy and direct it up under your opponent's centre. Masters of T'ai Chi develop a fantastic ability to launch an attacker into the air, with no seeming effort and project him ten or fifteen feet away.

I confess to being first intrigued by Aikido out of impatience with T'ai Chi. I thought Aikido was a quicker and more "practical" route to being a competent martial artist. How much I have changed that attitude! The more I study Aikido, the more of a beginner I feel. The road gets longer and longer every time I step on the mat.

I guess Aikido has knocked some sense into me.

-----*Mr. MacDonald, 6th kyu,  
has been practising Aikido for one year at the Victoria  
Aikikai.*

CANADIAN AIKIDO FEDERATION DOJO INFORMATION (11/88)

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Alberta

Aikido Tensinkai: H. Tran 15-10715 112 Street, Edmonton, AB T5H3H2  
Calgary Aikikai: Y. Inaba 5614 Dalcastle Hill NW, Calgary, AB T3A2A3  
Edmonton Aikikai: B. Heron 9124 67th Ave., Edmonton, AB T6E0N3  
Wetaskiwin Aikikai: E. Ball 109 Barnett Cres., Wetaskiwin, AB T9A2L2

British Columbia

Camosun Aikido Club: L. Dettweiler 3100 Foul Bay Rd., Victoria, BC V8P4X8  
Duncan Aikikai: M. Antilla 3048 Westview St., Duncan, BC V9L2C5  
Granville Island Aikikai: D. Holmberg 1318 Cartwright St., Van., BC V6H3R8  
Kootenay Aikikai: B. Mauchline Box 502, Rossland, BC  
Pt. Grey Aikikai: I. Ishiyama 5851 West Boulevard, Van., BC V6M3W9  
Spencer Highschool Aikido Club: G. Mols 950 Terrace Ave., Vic., BC V8S3V3  
Terrace Aikikai: M. Bostock R.R.#2 Usk Store, Terrace, BC V8G3Z9  
U of Victoria Aikido Club: R. Kopperson 1011 Amphion St., Vic., BC V8S4G2  
UBC Aikido Club: Y. Kawahara 439-4800 Kingsway, Box 1102, Bby., BC V5H4J8  
Vancouver Aikikai: Y. Kawahara 439-4800 Kingsway, Box 1102, Bby., BC V5H4J8  
Victoria Aikikai: S. MacPhail Box 5581 Station B, Victoria, BC V8R6S4

New Brunswick

YMCA (Aikido Club): M. Lavigne 25 Ramsey St. (Lincoln Rd), Fredrickton, NB E3B6X1

Newfoundland

Graham Burt Aikikai: D. McDonald 19 Sunrise Ave., Mt. Pearl, NF A1N1B6  
Memorial U Aikikai: L. Mulholland Philosophy Dept. Memorial U., St. John's, NF A1CSS7  
St. John's Aikikai: A. Skehen 10 Connemara Pl., Wedgewood Pk, NF A1A3E2

Nova Scotia

Antigonish Aikikai: P. MacLean R.R. #1 James River, Antigonish, NS B2G2K8  
Halifax Aikikai: R. Shears 11 Pleasant St., Dartmouth, NS B2Y3P1

## Ontario

- : C. Sotomayor 156 Islington Ave., Toronto, ON M8V3B6  
Carleton U: P. Carbone 99 Hobart Cres., Nepean, ON K2H5S3  
Central YMCA Aikikai: S. Rae 375 Brunswick Ave. #504, Toronto, ON M5R2Z3  
Huntington Aikido Club: R. Mendoza 89 Chiltern Dr., Stoney Creek, ON L8J1L8  
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Vanier Aikikai: C. West Box 306 Station B, Ottawa, ON K1P6C4

## Quebec

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Aikido Kensankai: C. Berthiaume 3734 Avenue du Parc, Montreal, PQ M2X2J1  
Aikido Shobukai de Loretteville: D. Galarneau 2948 Boul Neuviale, Quebec, PQ G1P2W3  
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McGill U Aikido Club: - 475 Pine Ave. West, Montreal, PQ H2W1S4  
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U de Quebec a Montreal: Y. Lafraniere 7906 Rue Henri Julien, Montreal, PQ H2R2B8  
Zanshin: Ecole Aikido et Iaido: J. Forget 5440 De Lorimier 503 D, Montreal, PQ H2H2R6

## Saskatchewan

Saskatoon Aikikai: D. Ragush 1321 12th Street East, Saskatoon, SK S7H0E5