

SHUHARIKAN NEWSLETTER

Yoshinkan Aikido

January 2000

Volume 4, Issue 1

DAN AND KYU EXAMINATIONS

AIKIDO EVENTS

The following are various Aikido events that have been scheduled as of this date:

1. June 10 - Shuharikan clinic (see notice in this newsletter).
2. June 16 - Shuharikan Kyo Exams - 7:00 p.m.
3. July 17 - 26 - Shindokan 10-day summer training - Huntington Beach, California.
4. July 20 - 23 - Shindokan clinic with Matsuo Shihan (Terada Sensei's student) - Huntington Beach, California.
5. October 13 - 15 - Seidokan clinic with Inoue Sensei, Georgetown, Ontario.
6. November 10 - 20, Shindoka clinic with Chida Sensei - Huntington Beach, California.

SHUHARIKAN INSTRUCTIONAL CLINIC

The Shuharikan Dojo will present two 2-hour instructional clinics on Saturday, June 10, 2000, from 10:00 a.m. until noon and 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m.

The guest instructor will be Jim Stewart Sensei, 6th dan, from the Seidokan Dojo in Ontario. Jim is an excellent teacher with a wealth of Aikido experience and knowledge.



The cost is \$40 for both clinics or \$25 for one clinic. Students may register at the dojo prior to June 2.

COPS AT THE SHUHARIKAN

On May 3, 2000, Shuharikan instructors Jon Sharratt, Gordon Shumaker, Glen Giacoletto, and Jim Nolan presented a two-hour participatory training program for the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department. Each of the deputies who participated was a self-defense instructor for the

sheriff's department. Some deputies had extensive martial arts experience, including dan rankings in Judo and Karate. None was familiar with Aikido, however.

The program began with an overview of the history of Aikido and a brief discussion of the theories of the art. The instructors then explained and demonstrated principles of control and "target removals" - pivots, evasions and stepbacks. Each deputy practiced with a partner.

The balance of the program consisted of the application of modified Aikido techniques that can be used quickly and effectively in law-enforcement circumstances.

The deputies were fun to work with and were very quick learners. They also complimented the instructors for presenting an enjoyable, highly useful program. One deputy, a former Karate competitor and sparring partner for a professional Karate fighter, said this:

"This art is much more useful to me in my job than the other arts I know. I can't punch, kick, and choke people without getting reprimanded or sued. Besides, I

really don't want to hurt anyone. I can use Aikido to control but not injure. Thanks."

A wonderful endorsement of Aikido as a law-enforcement tool.

New article.

TERADA SENSEI
IN CANADA

By Maggie
Murphy

Our trip had a less than auspicious beginning. Bob and I arrived at the airport an hour before the scheduled boarding of a flight to Detroit, Michigan. (London, Ontario is just a few short hours away and the site of an Aikido clinic featuring Terada Sensei). We waited, got on the plane, waited, waited, and waited. Finally, the captain announced that they discovered a mechanical problem and would have to get a new part to fix it. It was to be another hour before takeoff. This was not a confidence-builder in my mind and I began to fidget. Bob, being the good dad that he is, handed me his cell phone to play a game called "Snakes." Suffice it to say that I was a failure as a reptile. We then called Geordan Reynolds to say hello and Geordan gave us tips for surviving the weekend.

Finally, the plane took off. I hoped that there weren't any mechanical problems that had yet to be discovered. Luckily, my worrying was for naught and we landed safely in Detroit. We rented a car for the last leg of the trip. The delay at the airport had put us behind schedule; my navigational expertise put us

even further behind. We arrived in London at about eleven o'clock their time. Too late for the dan tests that had been scheduled that evening, we went out for a late supper of good fellowship, good wine and bad pasta. The day had been an exercise in staying calm, centered, focused. Our spirits were high, but we were hoping for more physical training in the remainder of the weekend.

At breakfast the next morning, Fred Haynes Sensei and Bob amused the wait staff by taking off and exchanging their tee-shirts in the dining room. We wondered why Fred wanted to do this until we were at lunch and met Terada Sensei. Terada Sensei saw the shirt Bob was wearing and got an impish grin on his face that went from ear to ear. I think that Bob was lucky that Sensei doesn't speak English and maybe that sensei is in his late seventies because the shirt said "fearless" in Japanese.

The training began at six o'clock that evening. There were 150 of us. Seventy-five pairs of flying legs at one moment. A challenging exercise in creating space. To add to the excitement, 20 or so senior instructors were circulating throughout the room giving corrections and demonstrating proper technique. It was wonderful to work with so many very talented people and see how each one perceived the technique just a little differently. When the class ended at around nine-thirty that evening I was both exhausted and elated.

The next two days followed the same format. Usually there would be two main teachers who would demonstrate a technique

(not the same technique) for half the group. Each half would have ten or so instructors going through the pairs of students making comments and corrections. Occasionally the group would be rejoined for further instruction. The techniques ranged from a simple entering throw to some fairly complex reverse hand throws. Everyone had access to the teachers and each of us got a significant amount of individual instruction. Because the teachers were mostly sixth dan and above, you could often partner with someone third, fourth, or fifth dan. It was also a thrill to have so many other women on the mat, many of whom were in the higher ranks. Ms. Matsoa, one of the instructors from Japan, was very helpful in correcting my technique and often used me as her uke.

Terada Sensei's techniques are quite hard. Sensei's knees are stiff but his mind is nimble and his pins are hard. He is able to apply his weight to an exact location to pin a much larger, younger uke. We learned several choke holds, and some painful pins. Bob had the opportunity to work directly with Sensei on two techniques. One of the techniques involved putting Bob's big knee on Sensei's little shoulder and applying weight. (No doubt a little uncomfortable for both of them.)

By mid-day Sunday Bob and I were beat up, exhausted and thrilled to have taken part in such a great clinic. As we drove back to Detroit Bob and I were both pretty high from the experience. There was a lull in the

conversation when Bob said, "I really have fun at these events but they are a little hard to share with co-workers." "What do you mean," says I. "This was great!" "Maggie," said Bob, "we spent the weekend letting people shove our faces in the mat and telling them how they can do it better." "Oh, yeah, there would be that." Who cares, we had a really good time.

New article.

THE VICARIOUS AIKIDO KID

Shoshin State of
Mind

By John Murphy

My job entails training managers on what are known as "soft skills." A recent session was to be on Team Building. Now there is a ton of materials on team building. Our national organization has done several booklets on the topic. Almost all of the managers I was going to see either read them or attended seminars, done outside reading, or feel they have "a strong sense" of the tenets of team building. This was not going to be an easy sell.

There is a difference between having an insight and living an insight. Sensei, Wendy Palmer.

I went back to what I learned in a deep Aikido class about Shoshin. Over-simplified, it means "beginner's mind." They believe that, to achieve any degree of self-discovery, one must study with this "mind." I used this concept of beginner's mind, as well as other materials from the class, in my training.

There they were - mid-managers reading: "Don't lose your eagerness to improve and learn; don't lose your beginner's humility and openness to instruct. On a deeper level, it (Shoshin) means don't lose touch with the basics in any area of life: for example, love, friendship, and the appreciation of nature and simple things."

I then stated examples I have seen in Aikido that impressed me. Like a person studying for his black belt, being "uke only" in a fellow student's 8th kyu test. Or like every test I have seen, where the first part is the evaluation of Kamae as it relates to your rank. I told them I remembered when a number of black belts spent one-half hour talking about their and other senior students' Kamae and how each has its strengths. This study of Aikido is full of stories of a "back-to-basics," with the understanding that all relates to them.

After this section, I paused to let the materials sink in. Then my summary statement before moving on was: "Shoshin. (Pause) Interesting materials. (Pause) Let's move into the concepts of "team building."

They really did well. They seemed to have "original mind." There was this "calm anticipation" of the next steps in the materials presented. They never second-guessed anyone and listened intently to what was being said. The discussion was open and clear. I really felt that problem-solving was going on. They shared that at times bringing a team together is

balancing the concepts of doing everything at the same time and doing nothing at all. But that going back to the basics helps identify what you need to give the group when they need it.

New article.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR AIKIDO?

By Jon Sharratt

An interesting question for sure .
..

I would like to share with you a couple of recent insights I've had regarding aikido and a *possible* scenario for its future.

The first was when I came across the June 1999 issue of *Utne Reader*. It lists Aikido as one thing "we think [is] worth taking into the 21st Century."

Utne's observation of Aikido is,

"Devoid of offensive moves, devoted to cooperation rather than competition, and dedicated to peaceful cultivation of the spirit, Aikido was the fruit of a mid-life mystical experience. Morihei Ueshiba, a Japanese martial artist since his youth, had finished a sword dual in 1925 when he suddenly saw the world golden and heard the words, 'I am the universe.' Ueshiba infused the peace and joy of the experience into an amalgam of jujitsu and sword techniques that became the most life-affirming (and fastest growing) of all martial arts."

The second occurrence

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was when I saw a rebroadcast episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* series, where the Enterprise's Chief of Security, Tasha Yar, played by Denise Crosby, gives a short demonstration on the holodeck with an interactive training partner. The demonstration was of the ancient Earth's martial art called Aikido, this is in the 24th century.

These two instances of Aikido have raised a number of questions in my mind as we move into the 21st century - one of which asks, "Is aikido only a physical art? Is there something beyond what I do on a physical level?" I hope so. Don't get me wrong, I truly enjoy nothing more than a high-energy Jiyu-waza class, but as I grow older I hope there is something "more." The something "more" is what I will try to address in a small way.

Upon reflection and reviewing some writings of Kancho-sensei (Gozo Shioda), I am reminded of all the aikido individuals I've come in contact with in the last ten years. Some of these individuals had the great privilege to have trained personally with Kancho-sensei; and others, myself included, have benefited from those that had that opportunity.

If Aikido were *only* a physical art, then I'm sure that it would have only a small following. As it is, aikido, and Yoshinkai Aikido in particular, has blossomed during the last decade.

I feel a large part of this can be directly attributed to Kancho-sensei and his

forward-thinking vision.

First, if we step back and briefly define what Yoshinkan is, for those uninitiated with aikido, and to help identify what some of the underlying ideals of this branch still are:

According to the book *Total Aikido*, "Yoshinkan . . . means to cultivate mind and spirit." This name reflects his [Gozo Shida] desire that through aikido, and the mental and spiritual training that goes with it, people will be better able to play a useful role in society." Additionally, ". . . Aikido is more than simply a physical skill . . . it is necessary that the mind as well as the body be pliant . . . the mind must be alert and flexible . . ." Also, noted in *Dynamic Aikido*, "It is a form of timing in which the "aikidoka learns to harmonize with nature through the practice of natural techniques."

These three short descriptions reaffirm my belief that the art is multi-faceted and can offer each individual a multitude of avenues to study and explore.

At the core, this style is defined by its unique basic stance, Kamae. From this Kamae stance, the foundation is expanded to six physical movements (Kihon Dosa). Built on top of these movements are the Kihon Waza or basic techniques; and, finally, the numerous techniques that number in the thousands or tens of thousands.

Kancho-sensei further developed three basic ideals that

can be studied within the context of physical movements but can also be extrapolated into one's mental and spiritual studies as well.

The three principles are:

Chushin-Ryoku, or power developed through the study of the centerline. This ideal or principle is first studied through the basic stance of Kamae. *Total Aikido* notes, "A grounded Kamae can be transferred from a physical stance to one's mental and spiritual constitution."

This is a perfect method to study the ideal of conducting one's life in an honorable manner or fashion. The ideal of a "mental and spiritual constitution" as a foundation or reference point is becoming more relevant in today's society. Each individual is confronted by their own unique issues and problems. Aikido can be a guiding thread of stability from which the individual draws strength to conduct themselves in a respective manner. The training one undergoes by studying both sides of a technique allows the individual to view situations from a multitude of vantage points, thus giving the individual the platform to grow and respect others, even if they hold contrary beliefs, ideas or viewpoints. I cite this as aikido has grown and developed in a number of disparate countries, independent of race, religion, gender, or income status.

Shuchu-Ryoku, or the study of Focused Power. This is a study

of bringing together the power of the whole body into one spot or location.

This can also be likened to one's attention. To do justice to our jobs or relationships, we need to be 100% fully present in the moment. To not conduct oneself in such a manner is to cheat yourself of the opportunity to truly understand what is being communicated or experienced. This can be cited as a valuable lesson in the world of work, no matter the field you endeavor in. By not being fully "present," we waste our valuable time and energy as well as the individual or individuals we are dealing with. A result being miscommunication, wasted re-work time, or strained relationships.

Kokyu-Ryoku, or Breath Power, is the study of timing brought into a focused power. According to *Total Aikido*, "You can utilize different tempos and rhythms . . . choosing the one that is appropriate to the situation."

I think of this as applying the proper energy to the situation at hand. Often times we must let events run their course. An example of this is how we help our children grow and develop as individuals. When a child makes a decision, do we always rush in to protect them, or let them try, make a decision, and possibly fail? With each decision there is an inherent risk, but also the potential for growth and a gain in confidence and knowledge. We can and should be available to help support and counsel our

children in their lives, and in some instances to intercede. By allowing our children to make choices, we help them to become stronger individuals and healthy, contributing members of society.

For me, Kancho-sensei's says vision and the direction he took in creating these precepts or ideals were utterly brilliant. Aikido can be used as a "vehicle" from which one can derive innumerable benefits. A physical activity, a method of self-defense, a way to study interactions at work and in one's personal life, and as a method or path in which we "try" to live life with meaning and honor.

This is a brief statement of why I feel Aikido has a bright future and should be something we should be proud to participate in and to act as ambassadors to carry into the future, be it the 21st or 24th century.

Remember, life is what we make of it, and we should strive to follow Kancho-sensei's ideals and to live "to cultivate mind and spirit" in all that we do.

ENCOUNTERING

SEAGAL

By Bob Fischer

"Who's the strongest person here?", Seagal demanded.

The call was quickly answered by a stout, twenty-something karate devotee. Seagal motioned for him to come to the mat for the test and offered both wrists as in

ryote-mochi to the now visibly nervous partner. The prey took the bait. The two bulls locked up, pushing and shoving, back and forth, rather equally, while all of us waited for something dramatic and painful to happen. Seagal stopped and commanded the student to return to his place on the mat as he looked into the crowd surrounding him like ants around Terro, and announced, "Now, let's try again." Someone six-foot five-inches truly looks impressive when you are in seiza.

Sensei moved over to the other side of the ant colony and invited the person in front of me to stand up, and as he did Seagal motioned for him to sit down. "No," he said, "you with the glasses." I looked around and saw that I was the only ant with glasses. Oh, sh--. I jumped up and approached before the fear had a chance to enter. Seagal offered both wrists. I accepted and pushed him back and gained the advantage by collapsing his wrist to his chest by pushing from below with my hips. "Now that's better," Seagal said with his movie-actor smile and voice.

"You're an Aikido student, aren't you?", asked Seagal.

Yes, Sensei.

"Do you do high falls?"

Yes, Sensei.

"Good."

It now occurred to me, did "high falls" mean jump break falls or something that only stunt actors do in movies? Oh, sh--.

Sensei's demeanor now changed from a seductive smile to cold as he offered his wrists. It was now too late for me to change course. My best focus came over me as I grabbed firmly and pushed as before. I looked into his eyes and they felt calm but empty. We pushed around briefly, and then somehow I felt that I no longer had him in my grip. I dropped my eyes to see what magic he had performed, only to see that his wrists were still in my hands. I had been duped. I returned my eyes to Seagal's eyes and they were met with a twinkle. With renewed confidence, I again pushed. He was not there, and as he pivoted I fell forward and thought that I was falling to the mat. Without thought I held onto his hand and ran in a circle to regain my balance. I could feel my balance shift from my hand, to my elbow, and finally more to my center, while my arm was moving across my body. Then my feet, my feet were in front of huge lights of the St. Thomas College gym. But why? I felt the sensation of being airborne and knew that I was rotating and hurriedly slapped my arm to the mat. To my surprise, the landing was painless, and I quickly jumped to my feet and approached in kamae. Seagal's face was filled with a smile as he motioned with his hands that the technique was over.

To have him, and I mean firmly, in my grip, to feel his strength, and to have it disappear. To push him and again find no resistance. To be thrown without the feeling of strength or power. And to wonder how this all happened.

That afternoon and evening I was a mini-celebrity.

Many other memorable moments, none as dramatic as this, transpired during the three-day clinic with Steven Seagal, and some of us had the opportunity to dine with and speak to Seagal for periods of time.

What was he like?

Complex, he evolving as a person, not what he seems to be, and yet when you watch his movies I believe you see still what he is.

New article.

TAKING UKEMI By Jim Nolan

The role of shite is conceptually straightforward - to leave no openings in controlling uke without injuring them. The role of uke appears to be various, depending on who you listen to or read. One sensei says ukemi follows naturally from receiving proper shitewaza, and requires no special treatment. Another says the study of ukemi is the faster way to learn Aikido. A third says uke is to be transparent, without resistance in the technique; another calls this "cheating!" Is it any wonder that students ruminates on uke's proper role!

The easiest way to resolve the tension of taking ukemi properly is simply to follow the teaching of your teacher. But, before long the internal tensions within

yoshinkai and aikido in the larger sphere become irresistible. Kancho Shioda said to "think more!" into the nature of our techniques. I submit that this refers to the role of uke as well as shite. After all, we study Right and Left equally; why not shite and uke?

Where many martial artists practical by performing katas alone, the role of uke is essential to the study of yoshinkan aikido. Uke is the one who receives the force of the technique; he is not necessarily the "defender" nor the "attacked," as there is no ill will intended in the proper study. Not only does shite need someone to "throw," but uke acts in several additional capacities. In the first place, uke creates the conditions that make a particular technique appropriate. If, for example, uke strikes and continues to vigorously move in, shite might entertain uke with taisabaki and a #2 technique. In this way uke allows the appropriate actions from shite. Then, without repetition, varying the distance, timing, speed, and concentration of power, uke helps refine shite's development of technique.

Uke is indispensable in developing the philosophic side of this study of balance. Whether uke is seen in the mind's eye as oneself, my friend, the eternal other, or the world of reality with its physical and psychological laws, it is necessary to be in harmony with uke. O-sensei made clear the notion that "true budo is practiced not only to destroy the enemy, but it must also make him, of his own will,

gladly lose his spirit to oppose you." Kancho described yoshinkan as a vehicle of world peace.

Even so, Kancho apparently agrees with the translation of ukemi as "falling." (I can't find much to suggest that he thought uke's role as sublime as Saotome-sensei, who described the time spent as uke to be "equal to or greater than" the time spent as shite in progressing in the study.) He would agree, I think, with Gaku Homma-sensei's difference between falling with intention and just falling. At base, however, most teachers seem to agree that taking ukemi has some very tangible benefits, such as learning to avoid injury. Terry Dobson-sensei said it colorfully, "When you're heading toward the mat at 16 feet per second, you better do something if you want to come out of it all right, and that something is inevitably to relax." Development of intuition and action without reflection leads to the development of spontaneity in jiyuwaza. Response without anticipation succeeds from falling with intention and action without intention. Finally, becoming alert to shite's openings and weaknesses, allowing uke to enter and assume shite's role when the opportunity presents itself, is essential to the study. Lisa Tomoleoni, an aikido instructor in Toyko, uses the phrase "Always engaged, always connected" to describe uke's role.

In finishing, we go back to the beginning with O-sensei's recommendations for being uke:

"Do not anticipate."
"Observe and catch [shite's] intention."
"Extend ukemi training into life."
"Avoid injury."
"Employ an open and supple mind, a flexible body, modesty and sincerity."

New article.

WOMEN AND ACL INJURIES

By Aikidoc

One of the most disabling injuries of the knee, the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) sprain, is occurring much more frequently in the past decade, particularly in women working in vigorous sporting activities. Estimates of up to 100,000 sprains per year in men and women have been entertained, with some general recognition of two to four times as many sprains in women as in men. It appears that the more vigorous the activity the greater the proportion of injuries to women.

The anatomy of the knee suggests that God is an optimist. That is, it strikes me as more than a little ludicrous to expect an end-to-end joint to stand up without deformity of shape or translation of the elements for any substantial period of time. The ACL prevents the lower leg from "pulling away" in a forward direction with a low impact from behind (as in clipping in football), or when the thigh translates backward (as in end of the day "sitting on the back of the skis" in downhill skiing). It is buttressed by multiple strong

muscles, tendons, and ligaments. But the potential for injury with the rotation and planted feet of aikido movements is obvious.

Recently, epidemiologic observations have been made correlating the relative vigor of activity, the likelihood of injury, and sex of the participants. A study at the Naval Academy showed that comparable activity leads to ACL injury in women 2.4 times that of men. Even more interesting was the observation that at low activity levels, the risk ratio was nearly equal, but that it increased quite dramatically, up to almost 10 times, for highly vigorous basic military training activities.

Boynton et al, in Vermont, have confirmed an increased risk of 2 to 4 times in downhill skiing, and having further identified ovulation as a significant correlation. The surge of estrogen causing ovulation may be the particular culprit, weakening ligaments directly. Animal models tend to confirm this idea. Other mechanical differences, such as thigh length and the shape of the center of the knee, may also play a role in injuries in women.

The importance of this information to the practice of aikido is evident. We know that since Title IX and access to good sports facilities, many girls and young women have developed some minor but chronic knee injuries, such as partial ACL sprains. Making evident history of previous injury is important in evaluating new students.

Counseling in knee-strengthening exercises is sound advice for men and women. Consultation with a trainer, physical therapist, or physician should be considered where a history is suspect or training is particularly heavy. The developing body of data with regard to ovulation and biomechanics of the femur should be brought to the attention of women practicing aikido. It is our hope that, as aikido is the study of balance, vigorous training will lead not to more but fewer knee injuries.

THE IDEA AND PRACTICE OF AIKIDO

Gordon Shumaker

"If you want to garden, you have to bend down and touch the soil. Gardening is a practice, not an "idea."

Zen Master Thich Nat Hanh

I've spoken with many people who say they like the idea of Aikido; they like its philosophy of harmony and peaceful resolution of conflict.

Aikido is filled with many valuable and useful ideas and insights. Most of them translate effectively to daily life. But, fundamentally, Aikido - like gardening, like Zen - is a practice, an activity. Merely thinking about Aikido or talking or reading about it is not doing Aikido.

Like the gardener who must touch the soil to understand

gardening, the Aikido student must do the physical training that is part of the essence of the art to truly understand Aikido. The student might know something about balance in Aikido, but cannot fully appreciate her knowledge until her partner has taken her balance and has caused her to fly through the air. The student might have a concept of willing restraint, but won't fully realize the significance of that concept until shite has firmly pinned him to the mat with a first-control technique.

Reading, thinking, and talking about Aikido are good things to do. But actual training is the key to true understanding. That training may be designed to accommodate physical limitations and conditions. So, the student whose knees preclude suwari-waza should find the particular training he can do safely. The student whose back condition prohibits ukemi should also search for training that takes his problem into account.

There are very few people who can't learn to do some type of Aikido training. For them and for those who have no physical problems, make actual training the core of your art - then think, read, and talk about it all you want.

New article.

DOJOS IN OTHER
The Unknown
Aikidoka

I attended an Aikido clinic with students from many other dojos

and styles of Aikido. I was amazed to see the differences, not only in technique but in etiquette as well.

For example, in the host dojo it was customary that only the instructor wore a hakama. All of his students, no matter what their ranks, wore only dogies. I noticed, however, that a few of the visiting students, of lower rank than the instructor, wore hakamas because that is their custom in their dojos. That seemed disrespectful to the clinic instructor.

I also noticed that some of the visitors bowed differently. Instead of sliding both hands down the thighs and onto the mat to form a triangle, they placed one hand down first and then followed with the other. I'm not sure if this is a big deal or not, but it seemed strange that the visitors would not follow the practices of the host dojo.

Most disturbing of all was the desire of some visiting students to show me how they do the technique in their style. Instead of doing the technique as the instructor explained it, they would show a "better" way. I felt that this not only was disrespectful to the instructor but it also deprived me, and others, from learning what this instructor taught.

For me, one value of going to other dojos is to experience the differences. Although my belt rank is not high, I have come to learn that there is no one absolutely correct way in Aikido,

whether it be in seiza posture, kamae, the bow, or the execution of technique. I like the style I have been taught, but I always grow when I observe and try different ways of approaching an Aikido principle. I think that also gives me both a broader understanding and a deeper appreciation of Aikido.

The old adage, "*When in Rome, do as the Romans do*," is a wise one. If we follow it when we visit other dojos, we will learn and grow and, above all, we will show respect.

Congratulations to Shuharikan members who have been promoted in rank.

Instructor Jon Sharratt tested in Canada before Fred Haynes Sensei (6th Dan) in September. As a result of Jon's excellent technique and proficiency, Sensei Haynes awarded Jon the rank of San Dan (3rd degree black belt). Additionally, Jon was upgraded as a Yoshinkai instructor and is now authorized to grade all ranks through Shodan (1st degree black belt).

On December 3, 1999, Bob Fisher and Pat Gerkey tested for 2nd Kyu (2nd degree brown belt), and Doug Dotts, Ken Yarina and Paul Schulstad tested for 3rd Kyu (3rd degree brown belt). All successfully completed the examinations and received rank promotions.

Laura Miller and Ajen Birmingham also tested for 8th Kyu on December 3. Their performances were exemplary, and they achieved their first rank in the Aikido development process.

With rank comes honor and responsibility. Responsibility is to oneself to continue to grow and perfect techniques; to other members to support them and make a best effort to achieve harmony; and to the dojo to enhance it as a place of serious training.

DEEP AIKIDO AND SHUGYO TO BE OFFERED

Beginning in January 2000, the Shuharikan Dojo will again offer Deep Aikido and Shugyo training.

Deep Aikido will be held on Wednesday evenings from 8:00-9:30 p.m. January 10 through March 8. The course consists of three parts: breathwork, basic movements, and martial arts philosophy. No prior Aikido experience is necessary and we will not do throws or pins. Most emphasis is placed on learning "hara," or deep abdominal, **breathing** while sitting, standing still, moving slowly, and moving rapidly. The main purpose of breath training is to enable the student to coordinate breathing with physical and mental functions so as to achieve a relaxed state of being.

Shugyo is a non-instructional class that will give students an opportunity to practice jiyu-waza. The class is vigorous, and is open only by invitation of an instructor.

The Shuharikan has offered Deep Aikido four times previously and Shugyo once. Feedback from participants in both classes has been very positive. Shugyo is free to regular dojo members. There is a \$30 course fee for Deep Aikido.

COMING AIKIDO EVENTS

The following are a few Aikido events tentatively planned for 2000 and 2001:

2000

January 17 – 26

Asageiko (10 days of winter training)
– Geordan Reynolds Sensei,
Huntington Beach, CA.

March 3 – 5

Winter Gasshuku – Geordan Reynolds
Sensei – Zen Mountain Center –
Idlewyld, CA.

March 30 – April 1

London, Ontario, Canada – Teradu
Sensei and Parkes Sensei

Spring

Trip to Ando Sensei's dojo in Japan

Fall

Georgetown, Ontario, Canada, Inoue
Sensei

2001

Spring or fall

Georgetown, Ontario, Canada –
Shioda-Soke.

These dates are not firm. The

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Shuharikan will provide more information as it becomes available.

CALIFORNIA TREK

For the past several years, various Shuharikan Dojo members have traveled annually to California in January to train with Geordan Reynolds and David Dye Senseis. This year, January happened in November as Glen Giacoletto, Jim Nolan, Bob Fisher, Laura Miller, Ken Yariha, and Gordie Shumaker attended a clinic hosted by Geordan Sensei featuring Tsuneo Ando Shihan and special guest Jacques Payet Sensei.

Surely one of the best instructional clinics ever presented, it featured basic techniques and several variations of those techniques. Ando Shihan was masterful and everyone enjoyed his light, humorous touch, and his eagerness to help students learn Yoshinkai Aikido. The clinic was well attended by students from many dojos in California.

As a special treat, we were able to observe dan and kyu gradings for several of Geordan Sensei's students. All performed excellently and we congratulate them on their success.

Glen, Jim and Gordie also had an opportunity to train briefly with David Dye Sensei and to dine with him and enjoy listening to his observations on martial arts philosophy and history. David Sensei's "street" versions of Yoshinkai Aikido techniques are always enlightening and help us to growth in our understanding of Aikido.

Finally, Glen and Gordie did a little informal training with Sam Combes Sensei. The lesson was fourth control. Ask either to show you the bruises.

INSTRUCTIONAL TIP

An old '50s song had this line,

"Let's twist again like we did last summer." Great advice for the fad dance known as "the twist," but bad advice for Aikido.

You should not **twist** your body for any technique. Twisting means that your upper body is moving in one direction while your lower body is moving in another. This is especially noticeable in irimi techniques, but it could happen with almost any technique.

If you perform a technique with a twisted body, the technique will lack power; you will imbalance yourself; and you will risk injuring your back.

In Yoshinkan Aikido we have a beautiful guide for helping you to correct and check your technique against twisting. It is called kamae. In kamae, the hips and shoulders are squared; there is no twisting. If you practice the kamae posture during techniques, as well as standing in formal kamae in class, you will be able to correct any twisting error.

THE COOPERITION OF AIKIDO

By Pat Gerkey

Aikido is a paradox!

What do I mean by a paradox? A paradox is a statement or situation which seems to be contradictory or opposed to common sense, and yet it is often true. Here are some examples:

"Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discord, find harmony. In the middle of difficulty, lies opportunity." -*Three Rules of Work by Albert Einstein*

"Should you desire the great tranquility, prepare to sweat white beads." -*Hakuin*

"When the way comes to an end, then change--having changed, you pass through." -*I CHING*

"The more you know, the less you understand." -*Tao Te Ching*

"Good hitting will always stop good pitching and vice versa." - *Casey Stengel*

"Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." -*Leonard Cohen*

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(The COOPERATION OF AIKIDO continued from page 2)

"Participate joyfully in the sorrows of the world." -*Joseph Campbell*

The philosophy and practice of Aikido is very much like one of these paradoxes. On the one hand, partners in this Japanese Dance of Conflict are "attacking and subduing" each other in what appears to non-Aikido observers as a structured, violent, dynamic wrestling match. Yet, as the techniques continue, it appears that the partners are "cooperating" as they seek to support each other's movements and techniques. Uke must attack with sincere energy, or it is very difficult for Shite to perform a technique effectively. If done correctly, the more enthusiasm in the attack, the more effective the technique. In other words, the more earnestly Uke seeks to dominate Shite with an attack, the better Shite's response to the attack can be. In this sense, Uke is attacking to overpower Shite, which is competition, and Shite is seeking to control and redirect the energy of the attack, which is also competition. But once Shite blocks or controls Uke's initial attack, then Uke "goes along with" Shite's redirection of the attack and Shite subdues Uke in some way without harm to either Uke or to Shite. This is cooperation on the part of the partners!

This ritualistic martial arts dance is paradoxical in that it appears that the partners are attacking and subduing each other out of "competition" which eventually turns into a "cooperative" effort. Both of these seemingly contradictory intentions are necessary in performing effective Aikido. Each

partner must perform his/her role with enthusiasm or the movement/technique is not balanced.

The word that best describes Aikido for me is COOPERTITION! Shite and Uke are in cooperation and competition at the same time! This is part of the balance, the yin and yang, the paradox of Aikido. To many people who do not practice Aikido, this behavior is very strange. As my mother-in-law put it after seeing her first Aikido demonstration, "Why would anyone want to do that?" I ask myself that question often. There are probably about as many answers to this question as there are individual souls who practice this demanding martial art. Everyone has his/her own reasons for practicing Aikido. What follows is one of mine.

RESPONSE TO CONFLICT

The universe is full of conflict. It is necessary for all life to exist. It is part of our biology, psychology, and daily lives. Without conflict, we would not have music; our cells would stop regenerating; we could not build things; we would not be able to walk, drive cars and Harley's, sail boats, run, or swim; we would not have jobs; there would be no resolution; and there would be little or no order in the world. Conflict is neither good nor bad. It simply is!

Unfortunately, most conflict among individuals and groups of people does not result in a resolution which allows each participant to maintain integrity and a feeling of self worth. In people conflicts, someone wins and somebody else loses. Most resolutions of people conflicts are not win-win! **In Aikido, however, the restoration of harmony is the goal of the conflict; not the destruction of the opponent.** That is why Aikido is COOPERTITION. It is a metaphor for resolving conflict including both cooperation and competition which returns the conflict situation to a harmonious state without destroying any of the participants.

Morihei Ueshiba, O-Sensei and founder of Aikido, deserves the credit for inventing this martial art as a way of demonstrating how we should deal

with the conflict in our world. After a brutal attack on his father by political opponents, O-Sensei recognized that we needed a more appropriate way of resolving conflict then destroying our opponents. I think he recognized the instinctual conflict among people on many physical and psychological levels and founded Aikido to give us both an outlet for this natural aggression towards each other and guidance for resolving it. Through Aikido, he gave us a way of using our minds and bodies to: express our aggression (Uke's attack), enter into this assaultive dance (Shite's block), harmonize with the energy of the conflict (the movement/technique), and resolve the offensive (the throw/pin) without harm to any of the participants. It is an assertive, therapeutic, affirming dance of life. Every day, we discover how wise a man was O-Sensei!

This is one of my favorite reasons for practicing Aikido -- COOPERTITION!

Possibly O-Sensei might have put the paradox this way:

"In competition, develop cooperation, From conflict, harmonize resolution."

SHOSHIN AND "CORRECT" AIKIDO TECHNIQUE

By the Unknown Aikidoka

During any first two years of Aikido training, I had only one instructor. I learned several basic techniques from him.

Then I went to an instructional clinic in another state. The sensei there demonstrated a few of the techniques I had already learned. But, to my surprise, he did them a bit differently from the way I had been taught. I visited another dojo on this trip and saw yet a third variation of how to do the same techniques. I was relatively inexperienced, fresh out of the womb of my home dojo, and I was

becoming very confused. Three dan-ranked senseis, each doing the same techniques differently – which was correct? And how would I know?

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(Shoshin and "Correct" Aikido Technique – Continued from page 3)

Back home, when I did a first-control technique according to a variation I had learned at the clinic, my sensei corrected me. Maybe a little defensively, I said, "This is the way Sensei X showed us how to do it." He replied, even more defensively, "This is the way to do the technique in this dojo." More confused and a bit frustrated, I conformed to my sensei's way. But I was not at all sure he was right.

Now, a few years later, and after exposure to well over two dozen instructors in many clinics, I think I have resolved my confusion. By asking about the "correct" way to do a technique, I was asking the wrong question. My inquiry implied that there is one, fixed, unchanging, absolute way to do the technique. There is not.

O'Sensei and Shioda Sensei often changed the ways they did techniques. They recognized, as I do now, that Aikido is an art rather than an exact science. Furthermore, it is an evolving art that allows, even invites, experimentation.

On the subject of "correct" technique, three teachers in particular have made impressive observations. The first, whom I train with annually, always starts the opening session with: *"This is what I have learned or discovered about [kamae, first control, etc.] since your last visit."* He obviously approaches Aikido with an investigative attitude. As a result, he grows with the art.

The second instructor makes a "correction" by saying, "Your way of doing the technique is not wrong. Here is one more way of doing the same technique. Please try it and decide what works most effectively for you." Implicit in his comment is an understanding that techniques must be adaptable to persons and

circumstances. This very flexible approach also promotes Aikido growth.

The third sensei, who was for several years one of Shioda Sensei's direct students, pointed out that Aikido techniques are always changing as we increase our understanding of balance and movement. He noted how Shioda readily changed techniques as he grew, so that one-wrist grasp second control pin toward the end of Shioda's career was quite different from the same technique when he first started to teach.

These excellent teachers, and many others, have helped me overcome my confusion and frustration. Instead of an obstacle to my Aikido training, varying approaches have become part of the excitement and challenge of the art. Now, when I attend a clinic, I'm curious to know how the guest sensei will do the same techniques that I have seen other teachers do many times. And I can guess that there will be differences. They might be subtle variations but his approach will not likely be identical to anyone else's.

I try to approach all instruction, even my own self-teaching, with Shoshin, beginner's mind. Instead of asking, "What is the correct way?", I ask, "What can I learn from trying it this way?" It is possible that I will discover that the new approach is not as effective as the way I already do the technique. But haven't I then learned something valuable about Aikido?

BUDO BOOK REVIEW

by

Glen Giacoletto

Title: *Thorsons Principles of Aikido*

Author: Paul Wildish

Publisher: Thorsons, HarperCollins Publishers, London, 1998

Prospective Student: What the heck is this "I -Key-Doe" stuff anyway? Who's this Ueshiba dude and what's his story? Why are all these people wearing white PJs and black skirts – even some of the guys?! It

really doesn't look like the stuff Steven Seagal does in his movies. And what about this Ki Society thing – one guy wearing a black belt just touched that other guy's arm and he fell down! Is that for real? It doesn't look too much like "love and harmony" to me with these people throwing each other all over the room! I started to read a book about "I-Key-Doe" but there was so much metaphysical crap in it that it made my head hurt!

Teacher: Cripes! One of my students watched a Tomiki Aikido demonstration on cable TV that he thought was really cool. Now he asks me what's the difference between the Tomiki and Yoshinkan schools. I've never even seen a Tomiki aikidoka practice let alone know how to spell it! I've heard Tomiki stylists actually have competitions; isn't that antithetical to O Sensei's philosophy? It's hard enough teaching and keeping up my own training; I'm lucky to get out of the dojo long enough to attend a Yoshinkan clinic once or twice a year! How I am supposed to know about these other aspects of aikido let alone understand them?

Confused? Have lots of aikido questions like in the above two scenarios? Trying to find a resource for your questions that doesn't require pouring over dozens of books and countless aikido Internet web sites? Fear not, gentle readers! Have I got a book for you! This inexpensive (~\$11), little (150 pages) paperback is one of the best (and only) I have come across that at least tries to describe aikido in a short, concise manner as well as to clear up some misconceptions about our aikido brethren from the other three major schools of aikido.

Wildish Sensei is an Aikikai instructor (5th dan) in the British Aikido Association with over 20 years of experience. He distinguishes among the four major schools of aikido, rather simplistically but somewhat accurately, through the titles of their respective chapters - "Ways Within the Way" as he says:

The Martial Way: Gozo Shioda and the Yoshinkan

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(*Budo Book Review* – continued from page 4)

The Sporting Way: Kenji Tomiki and Tomiki Aikido

The Ki-Powered Way: Koichi Tohei and Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido (Ki Society)

Although not treated specifically as a separate entity as the he does for these three aikido "paths," I will presumptuously assume that the author would entitle the other parts of the book - The Traditional Way: Kisshomaru Ueshiba and the Aikikai.

Mr. Wildish does an excellent job of organization for such a short book. The book starts with a brief history of O Sensei and the origins of aikido. He goes on to describe the object of aikido as well as "ai" and "ki". He then talks about a traditional dojo and what a beginning student may experience during a typical class, including etiquette and exercises. The heart of the book then delves into how aikido techniques work, focusing on the application of fundamental movements. Be forewarned that this is not a "how to" book of aikido techniques. The author seeks only to describe some of the fundamental techniques, such as tenchinage and kote-gaeshi, in order to illustrate basic principles. You cannot learn techniques from the simplistic drawings in this section. This is followed by the "The Parting of the Way" in which the other "ways" are described in separate chapters as mentioned above. Lastly, he talks about how to find and what to look for in an aikido school, then postulates and answers questions that a prospective student may ask.

To Mr. Wildish's credit, he obviously takes great pains to remain non-judgmental; he succeeds in describing these different paths as fairly as possible. However, he does not delude the reader into thinking that everything in aikido is completely harmonious. He relates how the defection of Koichi Tohei, the one-time 10th dan and chief instructor of the Aikikai, to form Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido (Ki Society) caused a

tremendous schism in the aikido community that is still not fully healed.

OK, OK, to heck with those other guys; how does he treat us, you ask? Quite frankly, fairly well I think. Mr. Wildish recognizes Shioda as one of the greatest aikidoka of all time. He also infers that the Yoshinkan style is an accurate rendition of Aiki Budo as taught to Kancho by O Sensei when he was at his physical peak during the 1930's at the famous Jigoku (Hell) Dojo. He also correctly describes Kihon Dosa as being the foundation of Yoshinkan techniques. Wildish writes, "Differences that exist between the Aikikai and the Yoshinkan are largely matters of technical interpretation, not philosophical dispute. This has enabled the Yoshinkan to maintain its distinctive approach yet still enjoy good relations with the Aikikai mainstream." Conversely, he chide us slightly for our lack of emphasis on *ki* and he describes a few Yoshinkan practices that I have not seen in North American dojos that are perhaps done in British dojos. In all, he presents what I believe to be an accurate, balanced portrayal of our system.

Is the reader going to come away with an in-depth understanding of aikido from reading this book? Absolutely not! That is not its intent. Is the reader going to acquire a sufficient, elementary knowledge about aikido such that the book may be able to help the reader decide (1) is aikido the type of martial art they may wish pursue and (2) which path of aikido may be a better fit with their personal philosophy? Yes! This book is the Cliff Notes of aikido. It is intended as an introduction to the art and to perhaps entice the reader into further study. If I was to teach a community college short course entitled *Aikido 101*, I would use this little book as the classroom textbook.

THE CREATION OF A MARTIAL ART SYSTEM

PURE OR ECLECTIC

By Shodai Sensei David Dye

Going back to the beginning of time, let's imagine, hypothetically, that one of the many physical confrontations that took place on the face of the earth between two human beings

involved one person striking the other person with a punch, knocking them to the ground.

This is the birth of a pure fighting system or a martial art. The person who was struck with the punch now decides to select the punch and add it to their system of kicking, thus creating what is called an eclectic fighting system or martial art.

Webster's New Word Dictionary defines the word "eclectic" as "choosing, selecting or selected from various sources." The eclectic source in the incident above would be the punch taken from the pure system or martial art that used it as a striking technique. A closer examination of the origin of the word "eclectic" reveals that it came from the Greek language.

For example, if we look at the Greek martial art of Pankration, which dates back before the 7th century, we can see that it used various methods from earlier eclectic forms of boxing, wrestling, and included kicking techniques, throws, and joint locks.

In the two examples depicted here in these Pankration drawings, we are able to see some of the techniques that would later go on to influence the creation and birth of an eclectic Chinese martial art system known as Chinese Kung-Fu. In time, this (Continued on page 6)
(*Creation of a Martial Art System* – continued from page 5)

eclectic Chinese art would later go on to influence the creation and birth of various eclectic Japanese martial arts.

The dictionary defines the word

"pure" as "unmixed." Therefore, there is no such thing as a pure "unmixed" martial art form as we know it today. Every fighting system or martial art system that has been created in one form or another has selected or chosen techniques from other fighting system or martial arts to form an eclectic martial art system. If we take a look at the roots of some of the martial art systems that we study today, we can see that many of the techniques that we use have come from other eclectic martial arts systems which the masters themselves chose and selected to use within their own creation of an eclectic martial art system.

Perhaps it is time to take a good look at the martial arts systems that we study today and accept the realization that our generation, and those generations to come, are and will always be studying and training in eclectic martial arts systems.

O'SENSEI

(Part IV and concluding)

By Bob Fisher

In 1927 O'Sensei moved to Tokyo and continued to train and teach. It was at the Kobukan Dojo (a/k/a Hell Dojo) that O'Sensei realized that Aikido must be understood as a spiritual discipline and not merely a study of combat. O'Sensei grew increasingly disturbed by world troubles and in 1942 moved to Iwama to farm, train, pray and contemplate.

O'Sensei explained:

Aikido is the way of nonresistance and is therefore undefeatable. Fast and slow are of no consequence. Merely by having the intention to fight with someone who embodies the universal law, they have fixed their mind on violating the harmony of nature itself. The person with evil intent is defeated before he makes the first move. The contest has already been decided.

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This being so, we must rid ourselves of evil feelings or intent. We must fill ourselves with feelings of compassion of the universal spirit. Filled with compassion of the universal spirit, love, there is no room for evil. Filled with compassion of the universal spirit there is no antagonism and competition. Filled with compassion of the universal spirit we have no enemies.

After the ban on martial art teaching was lifted in 1948, O'Sensei named his son Kisshomaru, doshu, which allowed O'Sensei to pursue his personal training through prayer, poetry and living. O'Sensei held that living a pure and truthful life with sincerity of intent was godliness. He continued his life in this fashion and his Aikido flourished. At the beginning of his public demonstrations O'Sensei would chant "Oom Oomuu" and say, "Let the dance of the gods begin." His Aikido was exalted with speed, power and grace. Although O'Sensei required assistance to climb the stairs of the dojo, once he was on the mat O-Sensei was invincible.

On April 26, 1969 O-Sensei drew his last breath. The words on his shrine should be carefully considered:

Aikido must elucidate the order of the universe and the path toward spiritual understanding. We have the responsibility for the well being of the planet and all life upon it. Failing to meet this responsibility, we can never realize our true nature or become happy and free. When we grasp our actual substance, life becomes devoted to the realization of the dreams of our ancestors since ancient times. This is to establish the paradise on earth: to create the mirror image of the heavenly world on this earth. Our individual practice of Aikido is a barometer of this activity.

Budo is not a matter of physical strength, the handling of weapons with great skill, nor the ability to strike another person down before he can do the same to you. It is the path toward eternal wisdom and spiritual understanding. Nevertheless, it is not

effective in actual practice, it loses its spiritual value and uniqueness as well.

In the true budo, there is no enemy. You should not train to become strong or to be able to defeat an enemy, but rather that you can be of use to world peace.