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Special Edition 2000

In this issue, students and instructors look back over the years, writing about how they started Aikido, training events that made impressions on them, ups and downs of training, and their thoughts today... We hope you enjoy reading this special edition, and wish you a happy and productive New Year 2000.



*Above: Toyoda Shihan with Kobayashi Shihan in Japan, June 1998.
Top right: Toyoda Shihan at one of the Astara camps in the late 1970s.*

Aisatsu

James M. Nakayama

Happy New Year! Well, we finally made it – year 2000! With Hikari lighting the way towards the new millenium, we thought we'd take a look backward to see how we've all gotten here. We've asked dojocho and students alike to think back on any anecdote, thought or remembrance from the past and share them with us.

Since our last issue of Hikari, Toyoda Shihan has visited and taught seminars here in the West Coast on three occasions. September 16-18 had Sensei here at Chushinkan Dojo with visiting instructor, Hiroaki Kobayashi. As most of you learned, Kobayashi Sensei is a very friendly and personable instructor. Those of you who had the opportunity to speak with him might have learned that Kobayashi Sensei, besides his native Japanese, is fairly fluent in Chinese as well as English. Many of us walked away with the fun and exhilarating Kobayashi four-step kumijo.

Toyoda Shihan next visited Washington on October 22-24. The workout site was divided between William Gray's Aikido Academy and the Body and Mind Martial Arts Center of Susan and Bill Mix. Mr. and Mrs. Mix, along with their son Jason and his wife Sabrina, are the latest additions to the AAA Western States. Susan and Bill have their dojo in Seattle while Sabrina and Jason's dojo is located in Redmond. Visiting from outside of Washington were Fred Phillips of Jinshinkan Dojo in Oregon with his contingent of students, Angela Yamauchi from the University of Utah Aikido Club, Christine Dyer from Southern California, and visiting Polish aikidoka, Iwona Gosciowska, now residing in Oregon.

On December 3-5, Toyoda Shihan taught at our first AIF sponsored West Coast seminar at the new Aiki-Fit Dojo, under the auspices of Dojocho Kevin Kellerher. Teaching classes, along with Toyoda Shihan, were Teaching Committee members Ken MacBeth, Martin Katz, and myself.

In the future, Hikari is hoping to focus on a wide range of topics that you, the reader, are interested in. Are you interested in becoming a Hikari representative from your dojo? Contact us! We are soliciting help from anyone willing to write or seek articles on all the many Aikido questions and subjects that we all love to talk about. During our daily training, we are constantly learning more and more about this art that we've devoted so much of our lives to. Share your thoughts and insights, no matter how insignificant they may seem. One student's small insight may elicit a major understanding in someone else. Aikido's influence touches countless facets of our lives. This is as it should be. ❖

Toyoda Shihan's New Year Message

Hello to all of our members. This newsletter "Hikari" has become well established and popular among the members in our AAA Western Region. I deeply appreciate the efforts that the writers and editors of this newsletter have made to provide a much-needed source of information. This only serves to further unify our organization.

The Aikido Association of America has been in operation now for 15 years; I first founded the Association in 1985. Now, as we approach 2000, we can proudly say that our efforts have borne results. We are, I believe fully, the best Aikido organization in the nation. Of course we still have tremendous room for improvement and growth, but I am proud of all of our members and instructors who have grown with us. You have accomplished great things in 15 years.

In the upcoming year, we will continue with the same extension of our principles and philosophy, and the same activities, as we have done in the past. We have recently mailed to our dojocho a more comprehensive booklet of AAA information, which clearly shows the organizational structure of the Association. I would like all of our instructors to be familiar with this booklet, so that you will be have the understanding to further contribute to, and benefit from, our Association.

In short, as we move toward the New Year and a new millennium, I will state our goals in this manner: a continuation of our past, but with new refinement and more professional development.

All of you, please train intensively and with care. Fully immerse yourselves in Aikido training, as your shugyo. Then, the benefits you gain are yours to share with society as a whole. This is my true wish for you in the New Year.

Good luck to all of you, and I look forward to seeing you soon. ❖

Looking Back

An interview with Martin Katz Sensei and Veera Kasicharearnvat Sensei as told to Alan Okada and Kathleen Pierce



Katz Sensei (left) is dochocho at Ryushinkan Dojo in San Diego, and Kasicharearnvat Sensei is dochocho at Ganshinkan Dojo in Salt Lake City.

This interview took place the night before Toyoda Shihan's December seminar in Escondido. The four of us sat at a corner table in the almost-deserted Froggy's. Katz Sensei speaks with animation, his intense blue eyes glinting as he recounts story after story. Kasicharearnvat Sensei sits back in his chair, his eyes remote yet observant. He smiles at his old friend's antics, sometimes leaning forward to fill in details.

Katz Sensei jumps right in. "Did you know that in my first year of training, I didn't have a gi? Yeah, I wore sweats until after my first test. During that year, Tohei Sensei taught a seminar at the Salk Institute – remember that, Veera? The first night, I washed my sweats in the sink and hung them up to dry by a space heater. It burned a hole in them! So the next day I had to continue training in these half-dry, half-burned sweats." He rolls his eyes expressively.

Alan asks, "When did you start Aikido?" Katz Sensei responds matter-of-factly, "1974. San Diego City College, with Kadlubowski Sensei. Veera and I started the same day. The class started with about 60 people in it – you could hardly move! Sensei dealt with this by teaching nikyo –" he pauses for emphasis – "for the first two months. People dropped out like flies. When the class was down to a reasonable number, he invited us to more advanced classes."

Kasicharearnvat Sensei comments, "Yes, there we met Damian Sensei." He pauses and looks around the restaurant as if conjuring up memories. "Once I had to stay up all night at a Denny's with Sensei, waiting for some other aikidoists from out of town. We drank coffee, but I was falling asleep. I kept slumping back in my chair –" he pantomimes leaning back in a dazed half-sleep – "but Sensei wouldn't allow it! He said I had to keep one point and sit up straight. Not allowed to be tired!" He shakes his head and helps himself to some more chips.

"What do you remember of him?" I ask Katz Sensei. His eyebrows go up, and he says seriously, "He was undercover narcotics when we knew him. Incredibly tough guy, about five feet seven, with this Fu Manchu moustache and beard. He taught at the San Diego Sheriff's Aikikai." Kasicharearnvat Sensei says, "Remember his knife, Marty?" Katz Sensei laughs, nodding. Kasicharearnvat Sensei turns to Alan and me, "Damian Sensei asked me to demonstrate a knife takeaway once at his Defensive Tactics Class for Police Reserve. No wooden knife –

instead, he brings out this big hunting knife! Razor sharp." He pauses for effect, and adds, "Very important to do the technique right!"

Katz Sensei leans over to Alan and says, in a tone of one giving the background to a story, "When we were with Damian Sensei, Veera was always the 'class of the class.' He picked everything up fast, got promoted faster than anyone else." Kasicharearnvat Sensei shakes his head, refusing the compliment, and points to Katz Sensei as if to emphasize that the credit is all his. Katz Sensei continues, "You know Veera is from Thailand? Bangkok. I used to teach him all sorts of American slang. When he left San Diego, I gave him *The Dictionary of American Slang and Idioms* as a going away present." Kasicharearnvat Sensei smiles, remembering, and says in his still-accented voice, "Yes, I 'flew the coop.' I also learn 'play it by ear.' Play it by ear?"

Katz Sensei continues, "Years ago, I went touring with Gary Forbach. There were five or six of us participating in a martial arts demo. We arrived at this rec center. It had a wooden stage, but no mats! Sensei collected us behind the stage and said, 'We're not here to hurt ourselves. We'll just do rolls, no breakfalls.' Mary Bunting was the first to take ukemi – it was kotegaeshi – and bang! over she goes into a breakfall!" He cuts with his hands to indicate the sharpness of the slap. "Well –" he grins – "after that there was no stopping us. We all did slap falls on that wood stage for the entire demo. No one got hurt, there was lots of energy flowing that day. Sensei was very impressed." He adds wryly, "Several months later, we did some demos at the Sports Arena and a couple of hospitals, and when we got there, we discovered that Sensei hadn't bothered to order mats for the rest of the tour!"

"I met Toyoda Sensei at a Malibu camp in the seventies. What I remember is, instead of clapping to end practice, he'd say, 'Thank you very much!' in this big voice of his. His energy was phenomenal, dynamic. He gave ikkyo to one uke and it was so powerful, uke's feet came right out from under him!" He sweeps his arm dramatically to indicate the fall. "In '79, I was in Chicago and I called up the dojo. This guy answered the phone, and I rattled on and on about how I'd met Toyoda Sensei in Malibu and had been so impressed, how I remembered this amazing energy and teaching ability. After several minutes, the guy identified himself as Toyoda Sensei! He invited me to come train. I saw the kids' class, and he was absolutely brilliant with them. Absolutely one of the most brilliant teachers I've ever seen, in all areas."

I turn to Kasicharearnvat Sensei, who is leaning back, relaxed. "When did you meet Toyoda Sensei?" I ask. "A few years ago, up in Logan," he says over the rim of his glass. "No way!" Katz Sensei interrupts. "You met him back in the seventies, didn't you?" Kasicharearnvat Sensei shakes his head, smiling. I ask, "What did you think of him?" He puts the beer down on the table and looks at it for a moment. "Sensei has great... how would you say... charisma. He is an excellent instructor; a master of technique, yet also very entertaining in class." Alan looks curious, but Katz Sensei and I smile, thinking of Toyoda Sensei's wit and humor at seminars. "The thing that amazes

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Uchideshi life in the '70s at Tenshinkan Dojo

by Hiroshi Tajiri

Tajiri Sensei is Shihandai and dojocho of Seibukan Dojo in Raleigh, NC

It was more than 20 years ago when I was living in the dojo with at least six or seven people sharing rooms in the Evanston dojo which Toyoda Shihan first built.

Living in the dojo was a totally new challenge to me and it was very interesting, training in Aikido, Zen meditation, cleaning, and teaching. We woke up before seven o'clock every day and one person prepared breakfast while everybody else sat and meditated for about 45 minutes. After that there was about one hour of Aikido training with Toyoda Shihan.

At that time the uchideshi program was not clearly designed like today. But for us it was very busy every day because just about everybody had either a part time job or a full time job to support ourselves. After the training we had Zen style breakfast, such as soft rice (okau), miso soup, and Japanese pickle. Everybody took turns to fix food every day. I learned so much about cooking that later on I found I was glad that I did.

As far as I remembered, most of us didn't have much money and the cost of living at the dojo was pretty cheap because we lived a very simple life. One thing that helped us was that a student who owned a Japanese grocery store with her husband sometimes brought good Japanese food like seaweed, fish, rice, or other fancy food for us. She was very sweet and nice to us. We really enjoyed this kind of surprise.

Another memory is very intense Zen training with Tanoue Roshi at the dojo. It was very intense yet memorable. We had so many people attending the sesshin. And one more thing that I will never forget was going into lake Michigan January 1st and 2nd about seven o'clock in the morning for misogi training. It was so cold that we were asking ourselves why. Then we just did it and it was good. That year I never got cold for some reason. Maybe we extended ki at the maximum level.

We also had many other activities like friendship baseball games and a dojo picnic. We also had so many demonstrations in Chicago area. Even though we were not sure which direction we were heading as far as our lives were concerned, we were enjoying living in the dojo. We were young and restless. ❖

My first Aikido Sensei

by Henry Oshiro, Orange County Aiki Kai

In the fall of 1968, I happened to see a business card of Harry K. Ishisaka Sensei, the founder of Orange County Aiki Kai. I called Ishisaka Sensei and asked about Aikido. He invited me to observe the classes, which I did and was impressed by his movements on the mat. His movements were so fluid and graceful and yet so powerful. He was very informative and friendly. He was an excellent teacher. Although he could quickly learn a technique and even create some, he was always patient with the



Oshiro Sensei, a few years ago.

students, even the slow learners. Also, he never criticized his instructors but would suggest ways of doing it better. He lived the philosophy of Aikido. He respected everyone and shared his aloha spirit, which we at OCAK hope to emulate.

Kiyoshi was his middle name, which means pure, but his purity was sprinkled with a few mischievous moments. He was fun to be with. We had many after practice gatherings, and parties. We felt more like a family rather than just members of the dojo.

Ishisaka Sensei was always ready to put on a demonstration to promote and spread the teachings of Aikido. His demonstrations were impressive, especially with the weapons. The audience loved his performances. He gave his last and final demonstration at University of California, Irvine on January 18, 1978 where he had a heart attack and passed away. He had previously mentioned that he wanted to die performing Aikido and his wish was granted. Since then Orange County Aiki Kai has honored Harry K. Ishisaka Sensei by holding an annual Memorial Workout. ❖

This year's workout is on Saturday, January 15, 10:00am.

Who was that instructor?

by Ron Sims, Jyushinkan Dojo

I can't even remember the name of my first instructor in Aikido. It was some 20 years ago (1978) during my last semester at Washington State University (WSU). My sensei was a first kyu student who offered a "free university" course in the evening. No room at the gymnasium, so we practiced in a church on the WSU campus. The course was advertised as AIKIJU - "soft Aiki", as the instructor explained. It was advertised as self-defense for non-aggressive people. I attended because I was curious and skeptical. I did not believe that any martial art was for "non-aggressive" people. And when I told other people that I was taking "AIKIJU" they looked at me incredulously. We did not even have room to roll, so the big event of the course was to go the gym on the last weekend of the semester and be taught how to roll using the wrestling mats. I thoroughly enjoyed the "Introduction to AIKIJU", graduated from WSU, went to North Carolina where I signed up for Aikido, and have continued to practice since moving to Utah in 1982. So, even though I don't even remember my first Sensei's name, I thank him for the gift that he gave me by introducing me to Aikido, and he will always be in my memory. ❖

Aikido for half a credit

by Robert Krone, Koshinkan Dojo

There I was, finishing a two-year Associates degree at a community college in San Diego, when I realized I was 1/2 credit short, couldn't figure it out, but had to take care of it. Summer session revealed an Aikido class given at the local city college. Great, now what the heck was Aikido? I had done Tang Soo Do for the past four years and at 19 years old thought I knew about martial arts (everyone laugh with me now), so I guess I would have to find out about this art too. My first Instructor was Sensei John Sabo and his Sensei, Dick Kadlubowski. They took me into their art and showed me things that I could hardly believe, and soon I couldn't do enough of it each week. I set up work and social schedules around my training and soon found that this "way" of Aikido fit me like a well-tailored suit. That was twenty plus years ago and the fire and desire for the knowledge still burns. I use the art in real life (mentally, spiritually and physically) and hope to continue to do so forever. ❖

What are you DOING???

by Angela Yamauchi, University of Utah Aikido Club

I had been training for less than a year when I first met Toyoda Sensei. He had come to Salt Lake City to teach a seminar at a local dojo. At the time, I belonged to a non-AAA dojo, but my sensei encouraged his students to take advantage of the opportunity to learn from a master aikidoist.

My first impression of Toyoda Sensei was of a powerful man who used humor effectively. I was especially struck by his personal attention to individual students. In my case, Toyoda Sensei noted the similarity between my name and that of a famous Japanese clan (to which my family of Okinawan farmers and fishermen can claim no relation!). This led to his calling me "Yamanouchi-san" and admonishing me for my poor form and failure to uphold my "samurai heritage". It was embarrassing, but very memorable. Two years passed before Toyoda Sensei saw me again, but he immediately picked up where he had left off. "Yamanouchi-san, *WHAT ARE YOU DOING?*" he yelled, pointing out yet another of my failures to execute a move properly. What an impression he made on me! The memory of these initial interactions with Toyoda Sensei continues to provide me with insights into the ways that a skillful teacher can lead a student to wake up, to remember, and to learn. ❖

Considerations...

Ikhsan Muhammad, Jyushinkan Dojo

It's been a year since I first practiced Aikido. This martial art seems very organized. Body posture, footwork, hands, turning, everything, has to be synchronized and harmonized. Otherwise the techniques will never work. It is not like other martial arts where power and force are emphasized more. It is amazing how balance is a very important issue in martial arts, and it is very well emphasized in Aikido.

I would like to raise an issue about courtesy in Aikido practice, especially at seminars where not everyone knows each other. It is important to consider courtesy in partnering with lower ranked Aikidoka. Observing the capability of the lower rank Aikidoka should be done the first time, with the higher ranked partner doing the technique slowly and taking it easy, especially with 7th and 6th kyu students. Although performing a good technique is a must, I think adjustment is still needed. Of course we don't want to break the relationship between Aikidoka just by doing what we think is a "good technique". I realize that Shodan and the higher rank never do such things. This is a good example from them, and should be followed by others. ❖



UKEMI –life at its finest!

by Andy Sato

Sato Sensei is Shihandai and dojocho of Tenshinkan Dojo in Chicago

Like the rest of humanity I have been/am pondering the meaning of the new millennium and what it will bring or change in my life. It is with some trepidation and concern (probably due to all the hype), but the one thing that I know will always stand and support me is my study and practice of Aikido.

Aikido and Toyoda Sensei offered me some intangible thing which at the beginning I was not able to articulate or even be aware of. But as I continue to study it has become clearer. They both defined what it means to be rock steady in the turbulent stream of what we call life. Sure it was the martial/physical part that was exciting at the beginning, but when things get crazy or unexpected situations occur, can you always be ready to throw someone, sorta speak? Not really. And that is the thing that has taken me years to understand.

It is not the role of Aikido to teach us how to throw - that's a byproduct. The basic tenet Toyoda Sensei and Aikido teach all of us is how to take ukemi. To be ready for the inevitable falls thrown at us by life. How to "take it" gracefully and be ready for the next one. Translated it can be seen in all forms of our life from the breakfall on the mat to the tragedy of a lost relationship. It is a tool to help us stay open to the situation so that we can see all sides of it at once, react correctly and grow from it rather than feel "oh s**t, again, why me??!" Taking good ukemi encourages/forces us to try our best. To stay connected and in touch with the moment at hand, so that the causality of it will become directed and controlled by you into something positive in the future. Ukemi communicates to us that we are a part of the situation, we must take the responsibility that comes with it, it's part of the deal. If we turn away or try to shrink from it, the rhythm is off and we go into bad ukemi, accepting whatever the result rather than "becoming" a part of it.

So as we look towards our future I say bring it on!! We are ready to face it, take it, and remain steady throughout, so we can fully experience life at its finest. ❖

The toughness of no toughness: taking a long-term view

by William Gray, Aikido Academy

I have been training for 14 years and through these years my attitude regarding training has changed. When I first began, my attitude was tape and train. I believed if I could walk on the mat I could train.

At first it was minor injuries. When I sprained my wrist I wore a wrist brace. When I sprained my ankle I wore an ankle brace. And then, when I strained my back I wore a back brace. And I lost the motion in my neck but, I continued to train. After a couple of years of doing back rolls to put on my socks, I popped out my shoulder. So, I kept training, and I thought I was real tough. After my shoulder popped out for about the 10th time, once in the position of nkyo, I kept training. Then the pillow took out my shoulder, and of course, I kept training.

What woke me up from this cycle of injuries was walking into the dojo and seeing my teacher on the bench saying his back hurt, his knees hurt, his neck didn't feel so good either. I looked at him at 40 years and myself just turning 30 and said

to myself, "I love this art too much to give up taking ukemi at age 40."

It has now been about 6 years since my shoulder has popped - my ankles, neck and back are fine. I still get hurt every now and then, but now, I walk off the mat when my body is hurt. For some reason my body recovers much faster.

I understand the meaning of toughness now. Toughness is realizing you are only human. If you are hurt more than you are well, it is time to change your Aikido. If you are hurting yourself in Aikido, you are probably not doing good Aikido.

One of the things I appreciate since I have joined AAA is the emphasis on teaching good ukemi. After saying that, I still see the tough people with wrist braces. My suggestion for tough people in wrist braces is to be real tough and tell people to take it easy on their wrists. ❖



Washington seminar with Toyoda Shihan

The October 22-24, 1999 seminar was divided between the Aikido Academy in Redmond, hosted by William Gray, and the Body and Mind Martial Arts Center in Seattle, hosted by Susan and Bill Mix. Also pictured are visitors from California, Oregon, and Utah.

Our new Washington Correspondents

Our Introduction to Aikido

News from Susan, Bill, Jason, and Sabrina Mix
Body & Mind Martial Arts Centers

1999 has been a positive year for us with Aikido through the Aikido Association of America. We have had many opportunities for training and working with other students passionate about the martial arts.

The generosity of AAA instructors and members has been wonderful. Early this year, to assist us in our training, Martin Katz sensei came to our school for a weekend seminar. We enjoyed his enthusiastic and clear instruction.

Then in the spring, Jason and Sabrina had the incredible good fortune to go to Toyoda Shihan's 25th anniversary seminar in Chicago. It was inspiring. The great instruction and the open and friendly partners made it an experience we will not forget. Kobayashi Shihan always had a smile, even while he instructed the participants to throw him! We have participated in many seminars of various styles and it is very rare to see an instructor encourage the students of even beginning levels to throw him. We were equally impressed with the energy level and intensity

expressed by Toyoda Shihan at his seminar. He is a very generous instructor.

We first met Toyoda Sensei several years ago at a seminar in Oregon. We were drawn to him because of the wholeness of his art, the integration of the physical, mental and spiritual.

This summer we had the opportunity to participate in a seminar with James Nakayama Sensei. His emphasis on the component parts of Aikido was very helpful. We enjoyed his expressive, easy to understand teaching style.

This winter, with Bill Gray Sensei, we had the good fortune to co-host a seminar led by Toyoda Sensei in Seattle and Redmond. We are looking forward to entering the new millennium with Aikido at the Body & Mind Martial Arts Centers. ❖

*"Always practice the Art of Peace in a vibrant and joyful manner."
- Osensei*

Two Lives

by Fred Phillips, Jinshinkan Dojo

Have you ever felt like you're living two lives? One in the dojo and one at work? I've been trying for many years to live life in one piece - that is, to make Phillips Sensei and Professor Phillips one and the same person.

Society has been changing, resulting in reduced roles for family, religion and other traditional transmitters of values. Furthermore, in the fast-growth, high-tech companies that employ my current students, cultural values are still "under construction." My MBA students are trying to formulate values for their lives and find meaning in their work. They come to school hungry to learn how to manage people, how to formulate ethical standards, and how and when to take a stand on an issue - and still make money for their companies.

MBA programs can serve by educating the whole person. As management dean at Oregon Graduate Institute, I'm trying to figure out how best to do this. How can one integrate the values of Zen martial art - physicality, the reality of life and death, the imperative for sincerity and generosity - with the suit-and-tie pursuit of market advantage in the business world?

It seems to me a manager embodying Zen values...

- tries to see the big picture ...
- doesn't believe everything he or she is told...
- rejects easy labels...
- constantly hones personal skills...
- is committed to lifelong learning - for everyone in the organization...
- exercises respect and compassion in all dealings...
- is flexible but not wishy-washy...
- spares no effort to match the right people with the right jobs...
- lets employees put their best foot forward...
- controls the organization loosely...
- tries to see the adversary's point of view.

I would appreciate knowing whether you would change this list, and I'd like to hear how you brought these characteristics to bear on a management or policy decision in your career or in your volunteer work. Have you unified your Aikido and work lives? ❖

To respond to Mr. Phillips, e-mail fphillips@admin.ogi.edu.

How I started, why I continue

by Julie Manley, Aikido Academy

I began Aikido after watching my sons' classes for a couple of months. I sat on the side and each day Sensei would make it look like so much fun. Also he would make me feel, even from the sidelines, that anyone, no matter how short, tall, skinny or large, young or old, could do this art. I liked that a lot because at the time I started watching I was already 40 years old and I had never done anything very physical. I was the quintessential couch potato. (In fact, as a sophomore in High School I received a D in PE one term because I was never able to accomplish a tumble roll. Hmmm, in hindsight, was that the teacher or my ability?)

Slowly, very slowly, Sensei worked with me and kept telling me I could do it and what nice Aikido I would have. As time passed I began to get a sense of my body and what a joy it has been to feel myself getting stronger not only physically but emotionally and also on a spiritual level. My training incorporates all of who I am. I am much more self-confident and willing to make mistakes. Not only have I enjoyed my own progress, it is also very delightful to watch the progress of others. I enjoy the interaction with others and enjoy learning from people of all levels. ❖

A thread of Confucius

by Kathryn Williams

Aikido embodies philosophies of the East in several ways. However, it is still surprising to notice similarities with one of the prime teachings of Confucius.

In Aikido, an eventual goal is to harmonize oneself with the universe. In other words, students hope to become in tune with the energy of this world and beyond. Confucius advocates a similar achievement when he says, "To find the central clue to our moral being which unites us to the universal order, that indeed is the highest human attainment. For a long time, people have seldom been capable of it." (pp. 72, Yutang, *The Wisdom of Confucius*).

One must live a completely moral life in order to come close to unification with the world order. Similarly, Aikido is a moral art. Students are taught ethics as a way of life. Just as Confucius applies his teachings to all aspects of an individual's actions, Aikido is taken out of the dojo for use in daily affairs. Also, Aikido mirrors Confucius' assertion that few people find

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unification with the universal order. One must practice Aikido for many years before achieving harmonization with the universe. Few people stay to learn and practice with such dedication. However, harmony with the universe is a worthy goal towards which we should all be aimed. ❖

Training benefits

by Courtney Hicks, Jyushinkan Dojo

Since the age of eight, a desire has burned inside of me to learn a martial art that could teach me harmony, respect, and discipline. As a timid individual, I have always let my fears take control, but as I look back at the last two years, I realize that Aikido has helped to change the way I live my life.

As a former high school wrestler, I always felt a certain contention with my opponents or even my colleagues. There was always too much pressure to be number one. Of course everyone wants to be the best, but the only person that one must compete with, in Aikido, is oneself.

In the past two years, I have applied this concept into my everyday life. Sometimes I still let my insecurities get the best of me, but overall, the confidence that Aikido has given me can never be replaced. ❖

First times and last times

by Christine Dyer, Chushinkan Dojo

Although I've been studying Aikido for 13 years, the greater part is always still ahead. That's why it's so interesting. At my first class, my teacher Neil McKenzie said that if you study Aikido for 20 years you will still be studying the same things as you did on your first night. This is true.

The first time I took ukemi for Toyoda Sensei at a seminar, the technique was yokomenuchi sokumen iriminage. I felt as if a cartoon weight with "20 Tons" written on it had dropped on me. Despite the fact that my breakfalls were at an early stage, I surprised myself by landing safely. That's when I realized how much sensitivity, control and power Toyoda Sensei really has.

The thing Toyoda Sensei said that I remember most vividly is a very practical speech he made about "ordinary mind" immediately before I took my shodan test. He explained that a student's everyday performance in class is what prompts their instructor to put them up for a test, and all that is required during the test is for the student to demonstrate their everyday Aikido. Nothing special. I found this thought both comforting and inspiring.

In 1999, two of my former training pals quit Aikido. Both were veteran black belts. The deciding factor for both was that they could no longer train without constant physical pain. Their decisions were made with considerable sadness, as Aikido had been a big part of their lives for many years. But guess what – it still is. Over the years Aikido has been installed in them. Their bodies may not be able to train, but their sprits are still going strong. They practice, think about, and struggle with Aikido philosophy as if nothing had changed. For them, the words of the song are true: you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave....❖

Through the eyes of beginners

by Carol Chavers & Dave Barker, Jyushinkan Dojo

We began Aikido classes at the beginning of the summer knowing that we were undertaking a discipline in which our minds and bodies had to learn to cooperate in new ways. We assumed that beginning as not-so-young adults would be challenging and that we would probably learn slowly and would sometimes be discouraged. We wanted to improve our physical conditioning and thought we would enjoy working with the teachers and other students in the dojo.

We were correct on all counts. We've made some (unrelated) observations from our first few months' classes:

- ◆ The placement of the radiators in the dojo coupled with our tendency to practice ukemi by rolling in novel directions makes this exercise a challenge to do safely.
- ◆ Beginners showing up for all three days of a seminar deserve "I survived" tee shirts.
- ◆ Just because you believe that you've learned a technique from the left side does not mean that you can do the same technique from the right side.
- ◆ Dave wishes Aikido classes had subtitles. With no background in languages, he has resorted to flash cards at home to learn the unfamiliar sounds of Japanese.
- ◆ He also believes that working on mats causes widening of bare feet. His already EEEE-width feet have expanded even further this summer.
- ◆ Our senseis have creatively structured their teaching for those of us who are struggling, and they possess infinite patience when we can't remember today how to do the technique we learned yesterday.
- ◆ Our fellow students possess the same infinite patience. ❖

My Aikido Rules

by George Redinger, Jyushinkan Dojo

Here is a list I call “my 10+1 rules”. I want them to read like, “here is an evolving set of rules that George is wrestling with...”. Not “here are some rules that you should follow” or “if you don’t use my rules you won’t learn”.

It could easily become “my 4 rules...” or “my 18 rules”. It has been valuable to me to try to articulate a small set of rules for a “learning methodology” or maybe a “Personal Aikido Process”. I would like to keep working on this, but that would violate half of my self-imposed rules...

My 10 + 1 rules for learning:

1. **Spend time carefully.** Aikido is too hard to spend time on things that don’t matter. So I must focus on what is important. Starting over from scratch, what am I certain matters? “No matter how far you have gone on the wrong road, turn back.” – Turkish Proverb
2. **Keep it simple.** Simplicity is the single most important contributor to my ability to make rapid progress. How can I possibly learn more, better than less?
3. **Testing.** I am a fanatic for testing. I test everything I do with a measurement system. In everything I do I ask, how simple is it, how right is it... I devise my own tests, shaping them to my own values.
4. **Embrace change.** After simplicity, this is the second most important contributor to progress. “If things don’t change, they stay the same, and that ain’t progress” –Old Utah proverb 75.
5. **Keep a log.** In my log, I record the results of my measurements. My log has little value, unless I use the information it records.
6. **Get a partner.** I need a partner to give me information. To make my measurements objective. To keep me honest.
7. **Do aerobic exercise.** To make good use of my limited time in the dojo, I need to be in good enough physical condition to repeat experiments many times; accurate measurement requires many samples.
8. **Early successes.** I give myself some successes. I sometimes choose a area for exploration where I am sure of success. Rewards are not just for others.
9. **Optimize last.** Make it right, then make it fast.
10. **Refactor mercilessly.** When my measurement system gives new information, I use it to refactor my Aikido. Sometimes, I hold on to things long after they are no longer appropriate. Sometimes, I am afraid to modify something that has worked in the past. My rules help me to remove redundancy, and eliminate the obsolete, saving time and improving quality. The reduction in performance caused by refactoring is temporary. In the end performance is improved.
11. **These are only rules.** Use them to refine themselves. ❖

Garage Dojos: a how-to guide

by Beth and John Craig, Ramona Aikikai

Most people think you just go to a garage sale and buy one. No, that is *not* the case.

First, you build a garage. The three-car size makes a small dojo. Finished walls and windows add nice touches. It’s a good idea to have a portable heater (small) for the winter, but warm summer nights with the doors open and mats covering the floor and driveway are magical.

Second, borrow scads of mats from your sensei. You can offer to store them in your garage! Of course if sensei asks if you are using the mats, you will have to confess that you are the proprietor of a garage dojo. If you confess humbly, your sensei may wish to annex you.

Third, put up a picture at home of yourself throwing someone through the air. People will ask, “What’s that?” Or, “Who are those people?” Or even, “Is that you?” someone will say, “I want to do that!” That’s the person who will call back, and ask, “Have you found a place to teach yet? Here are some people to call.” And this interested individual will keep calling for the next several months.

It’s OK to spend time investigating leads on space. You will learn a lot about your community. However, if you haven’t found dojo space within a few months, you may conclude that you just have to start somewhere. Like, the garage!

We are very fortunate. In our case Ramona Aikikai came into being not because Aikido found people, but because the people found Aikido. ❖

PROMOTIONS

ADULTS

Yondan	
John de Strakosch	OCAK
Sandan	
Mike Gallo	Kanshinkan Dojo
Nidan	
Zitapilli Luna	OCAK
Shodan	
Eric Bauer	Ryushinkan Dojo
Hiroyuki Tatsumi	Kanshinkan Dojo
Paul Ulich	Kanshinkan Dojo
2nd Kyu	
Alex Kotov	Jinshinkan Dojo
Young In Park	OCAK
Bill Townsley	Jinshinkan Dojo
3rd Kyu	
Mike Harris	OCAK
Richard Sano	Ganshinkan Dojo
4th Kyu	
Almut Branner	Ganshinkan Dojo
Jeff Lemos	OCAK
Hiroimi Taya	Chushinkan dojo
5th Kyu	
Bradley Demarest	Ganshinkan Dojo
Glennnda Gilmour	OCAK
Phillip Gogue	Ryushinkan Dojo
Ikhsan Muhammad	Jyushinkan Dojo
Becky Saddler	Ganshinkan Dojo
6th Kyu	
Lauri Blouke	Jinshinkan Dojo
Scott Bui	Chushinkan Dojo
David Caruso	Aiki-Fit
Lisa Conard	Aiki-Fit
Bill Foy	Aiki-Fit
Clark Glenn	Aiki-Fit
Daisuke Ishihara	Chushinkan Dojo
Alex Kain	Jinshinkan Dojo
Abbie Livingston	OCAK
Nelson Musgrave	Aiki-Fit
Edward Sajdera	Aiki-Fit
Sergey Zaderey	Jinshinkan Dojo
7th Kyu	
Deepthi Byreddy	Ganshinkan Dojo
Jeff Clark	OCAK
Jason Drees	OCAK
Andrew Horvath	OCAK
Philip Jones	OCAK
Michael Krygowski	Jinshinkan Dojo
Ian Lee	Chushinkan Dojo
Theodore Paul Moffett	Jinshinkan Dojo
Bill Sornstein	OCAK

JUNIORS

2nd Kyu	
Kirsten Sims	Jyushinkan Dojo
Nathan Stapley	Jyushinkan Dojo
Jamily Wences	Jyushinkan Dojo
5th Kyu	
Courtenay Coker	Aiki-Fit
Eric Indseth	Ryushinkan Dojo
Lawrence Telles	OCAK
Zak Zelin	Ryushinkan Dojo
7th Kyu	
Natalie Fronk	Jyushinkan Dojo
Scarlet Fronk	Jyushinkan Dojo
Ammon Neff	Jyushinkan Dojo
Jeremy Neff	Jyushinkan Dojo
David Stapley	Jyushinkan Dojo
Jared Stapley	Jyushinkan Dojo
7.5 Kyu	
Luke Anderson	Jyushinkan Dojo
Mandy Anderson	Jyushinkan Dojo
Keith Albretson	Jyushinkan Dojo
Rochelle Ashcroft	Jyushinkan Dojo
Aaron Fronk	Jyushinkan Dojo
Jessica Fronk	Jyushinkan Dojo
Jeremy Greene	Jyushinkan Dojo
Alexis Halling	Jyushinkan Dojo
Chelsea Halling	Jyushinkan Dojo
Laisha Neff	Jyushinkan Dojo
Sellece Neff	Jyushinkan Dojo
Justin Pot	OCAK
Mat Sims	Jyushinkan Dojo

8th Kyu

Chris Brown	Aiki-Fit
Brina Collins	Aiki-Fit
Brian Danque	Aiki-Fit
Genny Harrison	Aiki-Fit
Jessie Holt	Aiki-Fit
Cory Toma	Chushinkan Dojo

8.5 Kyu

Alexa Galindo	OCAK
Andres Gutierrez	OCAK
Viviana Gutierrez	OCAK

Calendar of Events 2000

H. ISHISAKA MEMORIAL WORKOUT
OCAK, JANUARY 15

TSUKI & SKI (AIKIDO/SKI TRIP)
SALT LAKE CITY, FEBRUARY 12-13
CONTACT: angela.yamauchi@m.cc.utah.edu

TEACHING COMMITTEE: KATZ
GANSHINKAN DOJO, UT, MARCH 17-19

TEACHING COMMITTEE: NAKAYAMA
JINSHINKAN DOJO, OR, JULY 8-9

WESTERN REGION CAMP: TOYODA
SHIHAN
LOCATION TBA, CA, AUGUST 3-6

TEACHING COMMITTEE: NAKAYAMA
JYUSHINKAN DOJO, UT, SEPT 29 – OCT 1

Dates may not be firm – contact host dojo or see flyers for confirmation.

Looking Back - continued from page 3

me always is, you can learn from his classes no matter what level you are at." Kasicharernvat Sensei is intent, leaning forward and talking rapidly. "Recently, Sensei has opened my eyes to oyowaza, enabled me to see how the focus changes from one area of the body to another. It really is like a whole new way of seeing, like an artist who sees things differently from everyone else..." He laughs suddenly. "I remember Marty doing a spectacular oyowaza demo for Toyoda Sensei. He just kept going, kept switching the technique from one area of the body to another, until Sensei told him to stop!" We all laugh, thinking of Katz Sensei's unflagging energy on the mat. Katz Sensei laughs too, protesting, "I don't know if I remember it quite like that!" He goes on, "A few years ago I was in Yokohama, and this sixth dan started throwing me. It was all kokyunage throws, and he just didn't stop. He kept going until it was clear to everyone between there and the Bay of Tokyo that I was about to die, right there on the mat." Kasicharernvat Sensei puts in, "The only time Marty's ever been too tired to go on!"

Katz Sensei pauses and says more quietly, "Yeah, I remember that trip. At one point we were at Hombu Dojo and I was up for a 6:30 class. We were waiting in the dojo, and the sun was coming up. It shone into the room and illuminated the shomen, this quiet early morning light. I looked at it and thought, 'This is where it all started.'"

Kasicharernvat Sensei says to me, "I owe all my Aikido to Marty. He was my training partner from the beginning." Katz Sensei looks across the table at his old friend and says, "Training with Veera goes to the center of my being." Kasicharernvat Sensei nods, and concludes, "We keep each other young." ❖

Western States Dojo Directory

Please send updates to: hikari@chushin.com.

Aikido Academy	William Gray	7289 W. Lake Sammamish Pkwy NE, Redmond, WA 98052; (425) 882-9934 e-mail: wkgray@gte.net ; web: home1.gte.net/wkgray
Aiki-Fit Aikido and Fitness Club	Kevin Kelleher	426 W. Second Avenue, Escondido, CA 92025; (760)233-2454 e-mail: kevin@aikifit.com ; web: www.aikifit.com
Body & Mind Martial Arts	Susan Mix	1508 NE 117th Street, Seattle, WA 98125; (206) 364-4515 e-mail: susanmix@aol.com
Body & Mind Martial Arts	Jason Mix, Sabrina Mix	8410 165th Avenue, Redmond, WA 98052; (425) 869-0276 e-mail: jsmix@netscape.net
Chushinkan Dojo	James Nakayama	7212 Orangethorpe Avenue, Suite 8, Buena Park, CA 90621; (714) 523-2255 e-mail: info@chushin.com ; web: www.chushin.com
Enso Dojo	Beverly Corwin	P.O. Box 77614, Shoreline, WA 98177; (206) 390-0743 fax: (425) 670-1862; e-mail: dojocho@enso-dojos.org ; web: www.enso-dojos.org
Ganshinkan Dojo	Veera Kasicharearnvat	529 S. 800 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84102; (801) 328-1381 e-mail: ganshinkan@hello.to ; web: hello.to/ganshinkan
Jinshinkan Dojo	Fred Phillips	15695 Bobwhite Circle, Beaverton, OR 97007; (503) 690-1353 e-mail: fphillip@admin.ogi.edu ; web: omlc.ogi.edu/Aikido
Jyushinkan Dojo	Ronald Sims	The Whittier Center, 290 North 400 East, #5, Logan, UT 84321; (435) 752-6069 e-mail: rcsims@cc.usu.edu
Kanshinkan Dojo	Mike Gallo	388 Enterprise, #106, San Marcos, CA 92069; (760) 471-0424 fax: (760) 471-5368; e-mail: kanshinkan@aol.com
Kenshinkan Dojo	Ken MacBeth	1310 N. Melrose Drive, Suite E. Vista, CA 92083; (760) 724-3636 fax (760) 729-6598; e-mail: kenshinkan@aol.com ; web: members.home.net/aonc
Koshinkan Dojo	Robert Krone	6280 N. McDermott, Boise, ID 83642; (208) 387-0410 e-mail: rkrone7514@aol.com ; web: member.aol.com/rkrone7514/index.htm
Orange County Aiki Kai	Henry Oshiro	2525 N. Grand Avenue, Suite Z, Santa Ana, CA 92705; (714) 997-4861 e-mail: ocakho@yahoo.com ; web: www.angelfire.com/ma/aikido2
Ryushinkan Dojo	Martin Katz	2029 28th Street, San Diego, CA 92104; (619) 552-1652 e-mail: mkatz@mail.gcccd.cc.ca.us ; web: fun2do.com/ryushinkan

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Address all correspondence to: Chushinkan Dojo, 7212 Orangethorpe Avenue, Suite 8, Buena Park, CA 90621; e-mail: hikari@chushin.com; Phone: (714) 523-2255. Publisher: James Nakayama; Acting Editor: Christine Dyer. *Copyright 2000, Chushinkan Dojo. All Rights Reserved.*

Chushinkan Dojo
7212 Orangethorpe Avenue, Suite 8
Buena Park, CA 90621



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