



## Aisatsu

James Nakayama Sensei  
Chushinkan Dojo, Buena Park, CA

Greetings from Hikari! Since our last publication in November, our activities here in the Western Region have continued and kept us busy. On December 8-10, 2000, Toyoda Sensei presented an AAA Instructors' Seminar, hosted by Henry Oshiro Sensei at Orange County Aiki Kai. Martin Katz Sensei, Teaching Committee, visited William Gray Sensei's Aikido Academy in Washington on February 9-11. Katz Sensei also traveled to Veera Kasicharemvat Sensei's Ganshinkan Dojo, Salt Lake City, on March 2-4. March 10 was the Southern California AIF Fundraising Seminar, hosted by Kenshinkan Dojo in Vista. Shortly after that was the National Instructors' Seminar at the new international headquarters facility in Palatine, Illinois. Instruction was by Toyoda Shihan, special guest instructor, Hatayama Shihan, and members of the Teaching Committee. Our Western Region was well represented by two outstanding classes on teaching aikido to children by William Gray and Martin Katz Sensei. Both of

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## Maai

This newsletter's sensei topic is "maai". Ma can be translated as distance. Ai can be translated as the aikido ai meaning harmony. Therefore, maai is much more than just space or distance. It is the constantly changing dynamic spatial and temporal relationship between two objects.

-The Editor

Fred Phillips Sensei  
Jinshinkan Dojo, Beaverton, OR

Maai means the distance between nage and uke at the moment an attack might occur. Ideally (for nage), it is a distance that allows nage to see uke's entire body, head to toes, with peripheral vision. When both are standing, that is a distance that requires uke to take a step to reach nage. After a defense is executed, part of zanshin involves re-establishing maai safely. We teach this by showing how to separate from uke after pinning him/her, and by building final slide-steps into the practice of kumi-tachi.. Does this mean that aikido cannot help you defend yourself inside a phone booth? (Phone booth? These days, someone is more likely to hit you with their cell phone...). Not at all. Aikido is about blending with an attack, regardless of distance. Nage would prefer an ideal maai, but does not depend on it. To show this, we teach "arrest techniques" and defense against unanticipated attacks from the rear.

Better yet, if someone in Oregon wants to attack me, I'd like to be in Hawaii!

Henry Oshiro Sensei  
Orange County Aiki Kai, Santa Ana, CA

Maai is the proper distance between your body and that of your partner. With both partners standing in left hanmi, they bring their left arms up and touch fingers to determine this proper

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## ***Maai continued***

distance. This is the correct maai because it is beyond the range of uke's fist or foot, should uke attempt to strike or kick you. The proper maai is one from which your partner must always take a step or at least half a step to get to you. With proper maai, you will be able to maintain calmness and have time to respond to uke's movements. When instructing the students, have the students stand in the proper maai. Uke will punch at nage's chest. Nage must not flinch but remain calm with a steady outpouring of ki. Once nage is able to maintain calmness, nage should practice to tell when uke's hand will begin to strike and just how fast it will travel. To test nage's ability, nage will shout "hai" when nage thinks uke will strike. If uke's hand has already reached nage's chest by the time nage shouts, nage is too slow. To speed up the response, have nage remain calm and observe uke's whole body. This will enable nage to detect uke's motion and shout "hai" sooner. With proper maai and maintaining calmness, nage will be able to execute many techniques with ease.

Beth Craig Sensei  
Ramona Aikikai, Ramona, CA

Distance. Point A to Point B. A measurable space between two objects. If I stand here and take one step forward, I can touch your head, your hand or your shoulder.

Measuring the space between uke and nage does not capture the full meaning of maai. To have maai, I must be connected to you, my uke, ready to co-join my defense with your attack. To achieve maai we must be connected to each other before we bridge the distance between us.

We must be connected in our awareness and our centers before we begin moving. Our eyes are filled with each other. We move to and with each other. Our focus and awareness is principally for each other.

As we work through the technique our sensei will be instructing, "Get in the proper place", "Get closer", "Turn to the inside". Our posture and position during the technique affect the maai between us.

This maai, this connection, is created between us the instant we bow to each other. It is sustained as we work through the technique. The final pin or throw does not break maai. Maai ends when we formally acknowledge, with our bow, an end to our training.

# SPORTS HEALTH CORNER

Steven Wasserman, R.N., D.C.  
Chushinkan Dojo, Buena Park, California

## **Side Effects of Non-steroidal Medication**

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) are medicines commonly used to treat pain, inflammation, redness or swelling caused by trauma, arthritis or inflammatory disease conditions. Some examples of NSAIDs are Motrin, Advil, aspirin, Celebrex, Naproxen, and Viox. These drugs have their benefits, but also have their downfalls. Over 15,000 Americans per year will die from complications from NSAID therapy and 6% of people taking these drugs will require hospitalization just from the side effects or from drug interactions.

Some of the side effects and adverse reactions of NSAID are anemia, edema, dizziness, gastritis, headache, gastrointestinal bleeding, hepatitis, blood chemistry changes, kidney toxicity, vertigo, rash and many many others.

Most NSAIDs can be safely used for two to three days without any complications. When these drugs are used for longer periods of time, virtually all patients will suffer some complication which may range from a small amount of bleeding in their intestinal tract to liver and/or kidney damage. It is important to be aware these drugs have interactions with other medications that you may be taking. You should only use them after you have consulted your physician or your pharmacist, who know your medical history.

So aikidoka, have awareness, not only on the mat, but of what we put into our bodies.

## Impressions of an Instructors' Seminar

Kathleen Pierce, Ryushinkan Dojo, San Diego, CA

I'm standing off at the side of the mat watching my sensei, Martin Katz. By his fierce grin, I can tell he's in the zone, doing what he loves best. It's a good group of ukes, so he's letting loose just a bit, throwing with energy so the slaps resound through the room. Toyoda Sensei notices too, and comes over,

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saying, "Martin, you are having too much fun!" He indicates Tammy Fahey, who has just taken a hard fall with typical grace. He uses Tammy to demonstrate some refinements on the technique, throwing her very gently, so she rolls smoothly and comes up in a fluid motion. My sensei pays close attention, his eyes taking in every detail. When Toyoda Sensei finishes, Katz Sensei bows very formally, but with a sparkling grin. He's ready to step back in, but Toyoda Sensei does just one more throw, and this time it's a real zinger! SLAM! Tammy bounces up laughing, and the practice continues.

We're in the three-day instructors' seminar, taught by Toyoda Sensei at Orange County Aikikai. Three local members of the teaching committee started out the seminar, each teaching one aspect of how to be an aikido instructor. Ken MacBeth Sensei of Kenshinkan Dojo in Vista stresses continuity. When possible, pick up each class where you left off last time. In class, let the techniques build on each other. The continuity strengthens the students' comprehension and memory. Martin Katz Sensei of Ryushinkan Dojo in San Diego talks about being in touch with the students, paying attention to what each one needs. This one may respond to praise, another to challenge, yet another to teasing that sets them at ease. In addition, you need to know how to keep the basics exciting. After years of teaching, how can an instructor keep teaching kihonwaza with energy and conviction? This triggers a spirited discussion. James Nakayama Sensei of Chushinkan Dojo in Buena Park takes over next. Show the underlying similarity between techniques, he counsels. In katatekosatori kokyunage, the footwork is like this, the hand movements like this. In katatekosatori kotegaeshi, look! the footwork is the same, and the tesabaki just a little different. In katatekosatori kaitennage, again, it's just like the kokyunage, but with an extra step and arm movement to account for an uke that failed to take the first throw.

My knees hurt. It feels like I've been sitting seiza for hours. I lean forward a little to ease the pressure and refocus my attention on Toyoda Sensei. He is demonstrating a kyu level test, using a black belt as a tester and five kyu level volunteers. He walks us through the process of administering a ki test to multiple people, explaining the procedure and the reasoning behind the tests. Kyu-level students should have the opportunity to test at least once a year, he says. Regular promotion testing is particularly important for legal reasons when a student begins assisting the sensei.

This is my first instructors' seminar, and it is both like and

unlike other seminars. The main difference is the amount of lecture time. Toyoda Sensei discusses many aspects of instruction: the legal aspects, the value of rank, the meaning of a dojo, the relationship between sensei and students. The overall level of instruction is higher, assuming that everyone knows the basics. The instruction itself follows the patterns he outlines. In one session we practice the "five variations" required for shodan; in others, the techniques build on each other; in others, he shows different ways of explaining a technique. As a san kyu student, it is personally interesting to me to be the "youngest" one again, instead of being somewhere in the middle of the ranking as I am at my home dojo.

"Instructors must have great patience," Toyoda Sensei reminds us. An instructor should know three or four ways of teaching anything, since people learn in different ways and at different paces. Instructors should especially appreciate the slow learners, he adds. They stay in the dojo, while the quicker ones leave.

As usual at seminars, when I'm not training I watch the higher yudansha, analyzing the difference between their technique and the newer students. The newer students tend to look a bit jerky and rushed. Watching the bigger or stronger guys, it is often hard to tell where sheer upper body strength leaves off and centering and form begin. The advanced students move in one smooth unit, hands in front of their center, turning and extending in a gliding motion. Their footwork is minimal, their balance solid, and their stance exact.

Walking around the mat, observing the groups practicing, Toyoda Sensei pauses to watch petite Beth Craig dispatching ukes twice her size with a characteristic blend of fierceness and grace. He cowers in mock terror, pleading, "Take it easy!"

Kevin Kelleher is up taking ukemi. Toyoda Sensei has just thrown him, and their hands are still linked. "He could pull me down and punch," says Toyoda Sensei, in the "leading" tone that tells a sensitive uke to do the action as described. Kevin Kelleher obediently pulls, and Toyoda Sensei falls on him, making the air come out of Kevin's lungs with an audible *whoosh*. "It is not such a good idea, though!", Toyoda Sensei concludes, amid laughter.

A student is up taking ukemi, and suddenly Toyoda Sensei is stern, criticizing, correcting technique. The student is a bit pale, but listens carefully and attempts to follow the instructions with accuracy. Toyoda Sensei looks at the watching rows and says, "Is this embarrassing? ... Well, then it is. If you really hate being embarrassed, if it makes you not want to come back, then I will stop! But if I do not teach I am not fulfilling my responsibility.

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You are here because you do not know everything about aikido. I tell you what I know. If you do something wrong, I tell you that too. It isn't personal."

"Training is a constant question," says Toyoda Sensei. "What is aikido? What is a dojo? These questions motivate us. For me, I try to get a certain percentage of the moves just right. When it gets to one hundred percent... maybe then I will stop! But until then I keep training."

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these fun filled, high energy presentations were among the highlights of the seminar, attended by over 150 people.

**ON MAAI...**

This issue's topic is maai. As most of you know, we refer to maai as the starting distance between uke and nage when we practice. It is so much a part of our everyday practice that we rarely give thought to its importance. I'd like to thank the various Sensei who have written their points of view on this simple yet important concept.

For myself, I believe that maai certainly lies at the foundation of aikido. There is a story of Osensei's enlightenment, thought to be one of the milestones leading to the very creation of aikido. In this particular incident, an armed swordsman challenged Osensei to a duel. The unarmed Ueshiba managed to dodge the attacks of the swordsman until, exhausted, the swordsman gave up in defeat. Can anyone doubt the importance of maai in Osensei's victory?

There are other stories of Osensei receiving challenges from different martial artists, all of them intent on proving their skills against the upstart art of aikido. What we hear of these episodes is Osensei would walk around, apparently without a care in the world and say, "Attack me!" Again, I believe the key is that, as he walked around, he constantly changed and disrupted the fighting distance, the maai, thwarting their ability to launch an effective attack. Again, without even having to lay a finger on the opponent, they were defeated by the simple, yet important concept of maai.

Maai is not just known to martial artists. Anyone with common sense employs this very valuable concept. Don't we walk around things that appear dangerous? This is the same as

increasing your maai. As martial artists, we should all understand that no matter how great our skills, there is never any guarantee to the outcome of a fight. If we want a guaranteed "win", the only way to ensure it is to avoid the conflict in the beginning. Understanding maai is certainly the key.

**ON PRE-REGISTRATION...**

I have a small favor to ask – and it really is a small favor. From time to time, I will write and request that when you plan to attend a seminar, that you pre-register as soon as possible.

Those of you who have hosted a seminar know that there are many, many details to put together a successful and smooth running program. A major factor in this planning is to know approximately how many people will be attending. With this knowledge, reservations can be made, supplies can be bought, and all the other multitudes of chores can be adjusted accordingly. For those of you planning to attend, it really is just a small thing. For those hosting, it can be a great help.

So the next time you receive a flyer for a seminar, remember this little courtesy. Let your dojocho know as soon as possible whether you are a "yes" or "no". Even a "maybe" would be helpful. And for the dojocho, getting the number of your students planning to attend a seminar to the hosting dojo in a timely fashion will be greatly appreciated. Hopefully, this common yet simple courtesy will be extended to you the next time you plan an event, too.

## Western Region News

### Aikido Academy News

Julie Manley

### KATZ SENSEI IN REDMOND WASHINGTON

Martin Katz Sensei brought his energetic, fun teaching style to Redmond, Washington and conducted a seminar at Aikido Academy February 9 – 11. Friday night and Sunday morning we held sessions for 30 Adults and teenagers. Saturday we held two sessions, of 2 ½ hours each, just for kids ages 6 – 12. During the course of that day we had 35 kids who participated in this exciting event. We learned a few new games that help to teach the principles of aikido the kids are still talking about. One of our young students, Daniel Miller, wrote, "I am really glad I

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signed up for the recent Aikido workshop with Katz Sensei. I liked working with lots of other Aikido students that I hadn't met before. I also liked the new games we played. I especially liked a game where you tried to get three rolls in a row. At one point, we split up in groups of three and did some techniques I hadn't seen before. Katz Sensei taught us new Japanese names for techniques and exercises. I hope I'll be able to attend next year's workshop." About 30 adults and teens participated in the sessions Friday evening and Sunday morning.

## Teaching Disease

James Nakayama Sensei  
Chushinkan Dojo, Buena Park, CA

In our dojo, we have a term we use to describe students who have shifted their focus from their own personal training to that of fixing others: Teaching Disease.

To paraphrase an old proverb, you cannot teach others anything until you, yourself, have learned first. Since no one ever stops learning, even instructors and dojocho alike, and Shihandai, and Shihan, and even Doshu, everyone must pay attention to his own training or one day become stagnant, and yes, suffer from Teaching Disease. "But they are teachers!" you say, "Aren't teachers supposed to teach?" Yes, of course, but if teachers don't also learn, they will stifle their own development and become useless to their students. The best teachers are active students. Osensei said, "I am still only a student of aikido." Being a student means that we should learn something new every time we go to class. We should never forget our beginner's mind.

The nicest people are susceptible to Teaching Disease. It is rooted in goodwill, kindness, generosity and helpfulness; all wonderful qualities that go to the heart of what aikido is about. People start on the path of Teaching Disease with a genuine desire to help others, but something goes wrong and they get stuck. Suddenly they are attending class more to teach than to learn. They may even be encouraged into this position. In most dojos, it is common practice for students to help one another. In particular, dojos where senior students are few, both the dojocho and the fellow students may appreciate someone who is willing and able to help others. Teaching becomes a disease when somewhere along the way, the ego satisfaction makes

people start to abandon their own training.

There are many rationalizations for teaching your fellow students, all of them worthy: There are lots of beginners and they need my help. I am more advanced and it is my duty to share. I need to get some people up to speed so I have partners at my own level. Since I am more advanced, everyone asks me for help. I am doing what I can to help the dojo, etc.

It is possible to share your knowledge, give a lot of help to others, and not have Teaching Disease. All you have to do is keep your focus on your own training, and train hard.

Teaching disease is subtle. The person who has it is the last to know. Other students can tell when you have it, but rarely will they tell you.

Symptoms of Teaching Disease:

1. When it's time to train, you find yourself looking for a beginner to "practice" with, someone who needs your help.
2. You have an unquenchable desire to share your knowledge with others.
3. You find yourself in someone else's class having to cut short what you were saying to your partner because the teacher has moved on. You might even feel a little frustrated or impatient that you didn't get to finish.
4. You may be sitting next to the person you were teaching, and as the class teacher is demonstrating, you will be whispering (or even talking) to that person, giving them additional pointers.

You take people under your wing so you can give them extra help.

1. You may feel that it is your duty to contribute your unique insight because you have a perspective others don't understand.
2. You often experience a need to comment on other students' technique and give them your opinion.
3. You want to work on things after class with students who need your help.
4. You sometimes hold up group training so you can make a point to one of the participants.
5. You find yourself talking a lot.

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## Harry Ishisaka Memorial Workout – 2001

By Matt Brown

Orange County Aiki Kai's founder, Harry Ishisaka Sensei, passed away in January of 1978. A heart attack struck him without warning while conducting an aikido seminar at Irvine College, California. He passed away en route to the hospital. Each year since his passing, Orange County Aiki Kai hosts a workout known as the "Harry Ishisaka Memorial Workout" in memory of the school's founder. At this event, students, instructors, family and friends of Harry gather and share their favorite techniques and stories of Harry. This year, 2001, Sensei John Borges, Louie Martinez, Henry Oshiro, Dan Kawakami, Gil Donnelly, Neil Mackenzie, Walter Muryasz and Frank McGouirk led the workout. Dojo members came from all directions to join in on the training. Following the 3 hour workout, everyone enjoyed a wonderful potluck, which of course included many wonderful and much appreciated dishes prepared by Harry's wife, Evie Ishisaka.

The spirit of Harry Ishisaka remains strong within everyone's training at Orange County Aiki Kai. Each one of us represents a uniqueness to the art and work hard to make our techniques grow stronger with each practice. Even as Harry first tried mixing Sumo and Judo, he encouraged others to explore facets of different arts and apply those to Aikido training. In a 1976 letter to Black Belt Magazine, Harry wrote "the original teachings of Osensei were interpreted and applied by his various students, who emphasized in their own schools, aspects of Osensei's teachings which they felt to be most meaningful and worthwhile; of course, it was inevitable that each disciple would interpret the teachings in his own way." Furthermore, "Osensei insisted that aikido be dynamic and that its practitioners be willing to apply their insights and experiences to its improvements". It is always a great pleasure and honor to have so many "family members" of Orange County Aiki Kai participate in the Harry Ishisaka Memorial Workout each year. Thank you to everyone who participated in this years training.

For future information on upcoming seminars and special events, including the Harry Ishisaka Memorial Workout 2002, visit the Orange County Aiki Kai website at [www.oaikido.com](http://www.oaikido.com).

## PROMOTIONS

### ADULTS

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#### 1st Kyu

Wasserman, Steve                      Aikido of Rossmoor

#### 2nd Kyu

Forrest, Jon                              Chushinkan Dojo

#### 5th Kyu

Alejandro, Al                            OCAK

#### 6th Kyu

Suwa, Mike                              OCAK  
Sean Roby                                Chushinkan Dojo

#### 7th Kyu

Chandler, Mike                        Aikido of Rossmoor  
Lee, Andrew                            OCAK  
Nunez, Fabiola                        Aikido of Rossmoor  
Paulson, Randy                        Aikido of Rossmoor  
Sanders, Mike                         Aikido of Rossmoor  
Terri Weyrick                         Aikido of Rossmoor  
Josef Cura                              Chushinkan Dojo

### CHILDREN

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#### 3 Kyu

Bryan Pham                              Chushinkan Dojo  
Kevin Pham                              Chushinkan Dojo

#### 6th Kyu

Westermeier, Julia                    OCAK

#### 8th Kyu

de los Reyes, Mark                    Chushinkan Dojo  
Nguyen, Daniel                        OCAK  
Nguyen, Edward                        OCAK  
Sanchez, Antonio                       OCAK  
Sanchez, Ramon                        OCAK

#### 8.5th Kyu

Flores, Aidan                            OCAK  
Flores, Gisella                         OCAK  
Nguyen, Kelvin                         OCAK

## Calendar of EVENTS

WESTERN STATES AIKIDO CAMP FUMIO TOYODA SHIHAN  
CHUSHINKAN DOJO, BUENA PARK, CA, SEPTEMBER 6-9, 2001.

WESTERN STATES INSTRUCTORS' SEMINAR FUMIO  
TOYODA SHIHAN  
KENSHINKAN DOJO, VISTA, CA, DECEMBER 6-9, 2001

TEACHING COMMITTEE SEMINAR JAMES NAKAYAMA AND  
KEN MACBETH SENSEI  
CHUSHINKAN DOJO, BUENA PARK, CA, JULY 14-15, 2001.

*Dates may not be firm - Check with AAA before making travel arrangements!*

### Teaching Disease continued from page 6

At first, these symptoms are directed to the newer students. Later, your peers are subjected to the same "kindness". You may not realize it when some see this as an attempt to dominate them. If you do, you may rationalize this as jealousy because you are more accomplished.

Eventually, you will start to share your views with higher ranked students and start to comment on their technique. Most will outwardly appear to appreciate your views and learn from you. You will find this encouraging. Then again, some will not. They will appear to be narrow-minded and set in their ways – obviously unteachable.

There is a cure for Teaching Disease. Understand that you got into this condition because you are a good person. What you need to do is get back into your own training. Appreciate the joy of learning, rather than the joy of teaching, anew. Get fit if necessary (sometimes we teach because it's easier than to workout). Train regularly for three months, and be selfish. Don't initiate sharing what you have learned with anyone. If asked for help, give it as succinctly as possible, then get back to your own training. If someone (anyone) is doing something better than you, learn. Rediscover training. Ask your sensei for help, and listen to the advice you get. If you think you know better than your sensei, search your soul.

Don't feel bad about being selfish in your training. Keep in mind that it is just as valuable an experience for someone to learn through self-discovery, as it is for them to have it explained. Lessons learned through our own experience often stay with us longer. It's then that our understanding goes deeper.

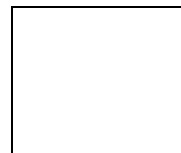
Even if you are one of the higher ranking people in the dojo, even if you are dojocho, the useful way to help others is to share your training with them. Just taking good ukemi is useful. You can help the newest students a lot by doing your techniques slowly and clearly. This will help you too. When other students discover your abilities as a good partner, they will develop confidence while working out with you. They will want to emulate you. And, they will learn from you without you having to say a word.

# Aikido Association of America Western States

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