



Aikido

West

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MAY 1981 — AIKIDO WEST IS ONE YEAR OLD!



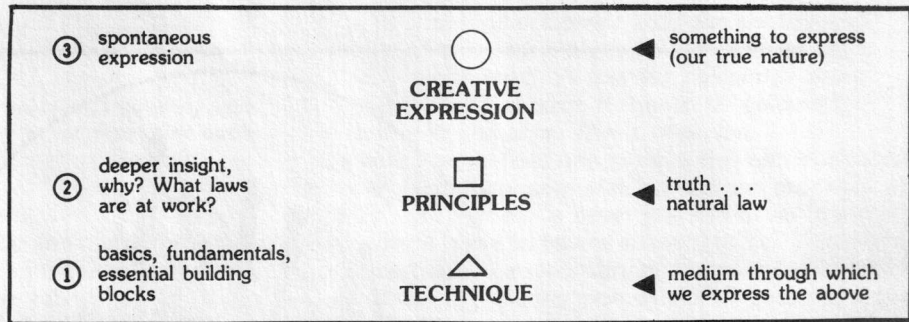
Pictured above is the Aikido training area. The mat space is 3,000 sq. feet with a tailor-made one-piece white vinyl cover. Underneath the cover, cushioning consists of carpet padding and squares of hard, specially made rubber, called "judotex". This judotex is firm and gives people rolls and falls that feel closer to those given by Japanese tatami (straw mats). Falls are crisp, and the foot and knee turn as one unit resulting in less pull and stress on the knee. **Doran sensei** along with **Sandy Wallace**, an interior designer, designed the stripe which travels completely around the training room and encircles the *Kamiza* (altar). The stripe is a reddish brown, which along with the off-white walls gives one a vibrant, rich, warm feeling when entering the training area. Benches line the inside wall where 60-70 people can sit comfortably. We recently hosted a workshop with 90 people at one time training on the mat. Volunteer labor has been responsible for most of the amazing transformation that has taken place this last year...and it continues! We've come a long way friends — from when we took over an empty, cement warehouse one year ago. Thank you everyone for your help - you should be very proud!

Aikido West is a Non-profit, Charitable & Educational Corporation

A Martial ART

By Frank Doran

ART (art) *n.* 1. human creativity
2. skill 3. any specific skill or its application 4. any craft or its principles 5. a making of things that have form or beauty...



AIKIDO . . . a martial art. In my own mind, when I think of art, I think of that which pleases the senses. Paradoxically, most people enquiring about martial arts in general are concerned with practicability. Understandably so. In the view of this writer, art (that which pleases the senses) and practicability (that which is functional), *when both are present*, most fully express the human potential. It is interesting to note that aikido practitioners are often followers of one of two schools of thought:

- (1) **primary concern** — martial application, does the technique work?
- (2) **primary concern** — personal development, aesthetics.

In the spirit of reconciliation I would offer this thought: Function *vs* beauty is an observation made by competitive mind. Function *and* beauty is an observation made by aiki mind. Studying technique for the sake of technique alone certainly has its limitations. Piling technique upon technique, concerning oneself *solely* with becoming "strong" is not in itself a solution, as clearly illustrated in the life of founder Morehei Ushiba O'Sensei. On the other hand, to view aikido as *solely* a dance-like esoteric process that helps us "get our stuff together" is to deny the very heart of aikido — that aikido is budo. (budo: "martial way" a spiritual discipline whose ultimate goal, achieved through rigorous and systematic physical training, is self-realization and self-perfection.)

Function, beauty, technique, self-realization — what, then, is their relationship? Recently, Michael Kosaka shared a quote with me, and I pass it on to you as an appropriate response to the question raised:

"... Opera singer, ballet dancer, a writer. Each has to spend years developing a "technique" of self-expression. But unless he has something to express, all the technique in the world will be useless. Technique is the servant of the creative impulse. Neither is much use without the other. This writing is governed by the laws of grammar, its higher principle is to convey my ideas."
- Collin Wilson
"Mysteries"

Technique is born of form. It is the way of beginners that we commence with form. The musician, for example, begins with basics (perhaps playing scales), moves on to a higher level in time (ability to play a musical score), and eventually has the capacity to abandon form and play spontaneously from source (improvisation). Similarly, aikido at its base has form (technique), but beyond the form there is a basic truth (principle) that, once discovered, expands our knowledge and gives meaning to the form. Still a higher plane is the abandonment of form (creative expression) where techniques spring spontaneously from source. At this point aiki becomes the single technique.

The idea that one can bypass levels 1 and 2 above, and start directly from 3 is currently quite popular. In my understanding of how the world works, it would appear still to be true that a building built upon a weak foundation is tenuous. Beginning with technique stifles the creative process!! Beginning with creative expression is to operate without a base!! Paradox? Welcome to aikido. Resolution: merge - meet - come together - unite - join - harmonize (*ai*) — let's begin with #2, principles. If we diligently study the principles upon which the techniques and Universe agree, . . . I believe we will naturally begin to express creatively our deepest selves through beautiful and functional technique. I also believe that when this occurs, our *lives* as well as technique will become more beautiful and functional.

Report From The Kids' Class

by Foster Gamble

One afternoon in family circle after class, I asked the group, "Why do you practice Aikido?" The responses were honest, humorous, and enlightening. Some examples:

Because I want to be good at it . . . I think it's important to be able to protect yourself from rednecks . . . I want to lose weight and be in shape . . . to learn basics . . . to become more self-confident . . . I want to have eyes in the back of my head . . . To get exercise . . . To get a yellow belt . . . I want a purple belt . . . I want a black belt . . . to be more agile . . . to have more balance . . . I want to concentrate better in school and other things . . . I want to be able to jump well . . . to learn more than just playing . . . to get along better with my family . . . I just want to be in a martial art and wear one of these suits . . . I do Aikido for fun!

By popular demand, we have opened a second young person's Aikido group which meets Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and combines with the Monday/Wednesday group on Saturday mornings. Roy Bennett and I will share the teaching of these classes.

We have done demonstration/participation events in the last month for the Sequoia YMCA, Ohlone and Addison Schools, and the Springer Elementary School's Father and Son Night.

Since the last issue, Danny Chao, Marc Lewis, and Jeff Van Anel, Jason Rosenthal, Corey Johnson, Clark Breyman, James Barnes, and Brian Christman were promoted to Ninth Kyu. David Fowkes, Chris Ienni, Adam Berns, and Sara Berns were promoted to Eighth Kyu, and our first green belts for Seventh Kyu are now worn by Mark Bell and Chris Van Anel.

A special thanks to Ricka, Eagle, Rani, Roy, Helene, Rob, Kathryn, Sally, Jeff, Michael, and everyone else who has assisted Steve Langford and myself in giving personal attention and instruction to these youngest members of the Aikido West family.

And remember — NEVER Underestimate The Power of a KID!!

INTERVIEW: **Linda Hultgren, 3rd dan** *Interviewed for Aikido West,* *by Carol Westberg*

When Linda Hultgren joined the staff of Aikido West last summer, hers was a new face for some, and perhaps a new approach. The interview that follows may give additional insights about Linda — and about aikido. For the past four years she has taught aikido at U.C. Santa Cruz, where she started in 1970 as a student of Frank Doran and Bob Frager. Linda has made four trips to Japan. On the first, in 1973 with Jack Wada and Dick Revoir, she studied in Shingu for ten months. She received her shodan at the end of that visit and her nidan in Santa Cruz in 1977. On Linda's last trip, from August to December 1980, she was promoted to sandan. In addition to furthering her aikido, the three years in Japan have given her some first-hand experience in her studies at Santa Cruz; she received her B.A. in 1979 in Japanese and Chinese studies.

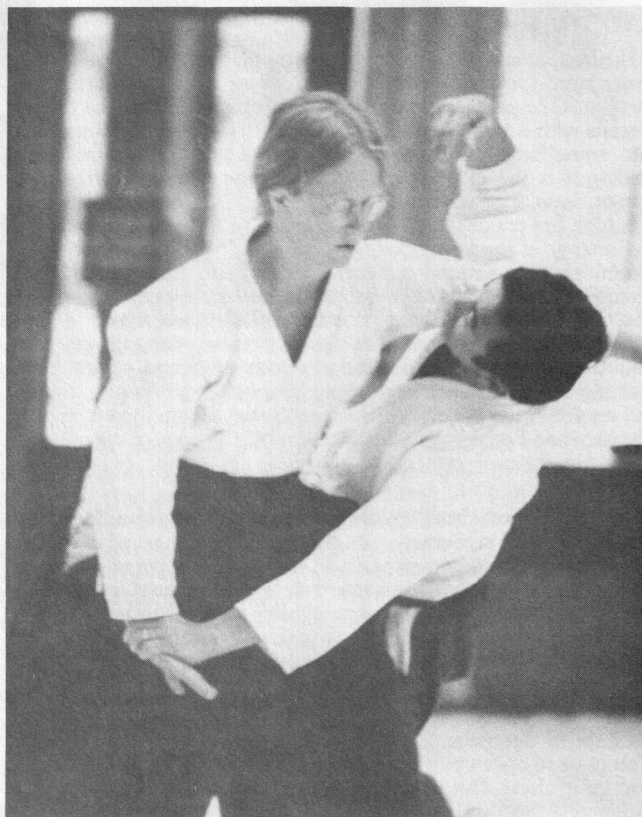
(A.W.) Aikido West: If you were going to look at the strengths of the different kinds of teaching or ways of training, could you contrast what you really like about training in Japan with what you really like about training here? What things are different?

(L.H.) Linda Hultgren: Ideally, that's what I'd like to do: combine the strengths of all the things I've experienced to develop a way of training or teaching that combines the best of all of them — it's almost an impossible task, but a challenging one. First of all, it has to be remembered that training in Japan is different in different places. It's not like "Japanese practice" and "American practice" — most of my "American practice" right now is one in which I participate, so it's hard to separate.

One of the strengths of training in Japan would have to be the expectation or the willingness to really push yourself and to be pushed, to have practice be something that pretty consistently pushes your physical, emotional, and spiritual limits and that requires a little bit more of you all the time. Maybe a little more than you may think you're ready to give. That certainly exists at various times in all sorts of dojos, but I guess the first year I was in Shingu I felt kind of bombarded all the time with different ways in which I had to put out more and more.

Another thing that affects the practice in Japan is the idea that when you're beginning something, your task is to be completely receptive to whatever it is that might be taught you. Although this is somewhat a reflection of Japanese culture and the hierarchical nature of their society, there's a real strength to that. The system is not good for the development of individuality, but it's good for learning. You start in, you shut up, and you train for three years and then maybe you start to get a sense of what the training is. Then you shut up and train some more and in a while you have something to formulate a personal opinion about. That really can get exaggerated, and it's one of the things I don't like about Japan — the squashing of individuality.

And yet I find the polar opposite here where — and I'm speaking for myself as well as others — there's quite a reluctance among Americans to give up anything we might consider to be our individuality. In order to learn something, particularly something as demanding on many levels as aikido and something that's supposed to be as transforming as aikido practice, you have to give up some of that stuff. I think that's one of the things we really need to learn as Westerners. The whole idea of giving up your individuality depends on how you interpret it. I think the last thing O Sensei envisioned was everyone turning into robots and doing what someone ordered them to do. But a certain amount of discipline in yourself, a stilling of your own ego, is necessary to learning. If you've got your own chatter and questions going all the time, you don't hear what anybody's saying or experience what you yourself are doing. I don't feel I'm less of an individual when I'm teaching or learning that way but I do feel more open to other things.



Linda throwing Glen Kimoto

I think it's a very important question, how you open yourself up to training with many different teachers in many styles and still maintain an awareness of your own aikido. I think that if we train in an accepting way, there's a balance. None of those different things would have touched you very deeply if you had always been saying "that's good" or "that's bad" or "I don't like this or that."

I remember my first year in Japan. I trusted my teachers, and when they told me to do something, I took it to heart and did it. When I thought about it later, I would get some perspective. I think probably the hardest thing when I started aikido was the idea of punching anybody. I think that's hard for a lot of people but I just could not do it. I remember the punch and any kind of irimi technique were practically beyond me. Yet during that first year in Japan I learned a lot about atemi and irimi even though it was really difficult at the time. If I had thought about it or thought I had any choice in the matter, I'd have probably said, "I don't want to do that." But the fact is, it was a directed course of study. And now I think how much it is a part of me...

A.W.: That feeling of not wanting to strike, not wanting to be the aggressor — to me the role of the aggressor is very difficult and mysterious. Just how do you get a good sincere intent?

L.H.: I guess I was particularly redefining that the first year that I was in Japan. I don't think of uke as the aggressor at all. I do the best kind of practice when I don't think much about uke or nage. My instructors in Japan said that uke and nage are really learning the same things. Aikido practice is so much the direction of energy, balance, focus, timing, and awareness — and all those factors are part of any attack. The energy of your attack is giving your partner something to work with and I don't think that energy has to be tinged at all with personal feelings.

One aspect of the practice that's been so valuable for me over the years is the practice of closing your openings. As the person who is striking, you're actually showing your partners in a very benevolent way how they are open so that they can close off those openings and move to a safer place. It's a real constant give and take. That's also an interesting aspect of the techniques in which nage moves first.

A.W. The lines really blur...

L.H.: Yes, and if they don't, we're practicing a lot of duality. It's really important to blur the lines. Counter techniques are great for that. One person goes in attacking, and the energy he or she attacks with is then carried into something else, which transforms into something else, and you can go on and on — whoever's leading it is the one who is in charge, the doer, and the other person is in a sense the receiver.

I think the concept of uke as receiver, as the one who receives the energy of the technique, is really important. Our concept of ukemi should demand an active, intelligent, informed sort of ukemi — but a real awareness of the sincere, positive not, "Oh yes, it's shiho-nage, I'm supposed to fall down here" — and balanced action that we take as uke. And it depends on who you're training with... particularly with someone who's been training a long time, there's a real gift of energy. As uke, I must put myself in the position where I can receive from the technique, just as when I'm sitting in my best seiza at the edge of the mat in a receptive state of mind.

A.W.: I was just thinking about how much we use the word "open" in our society — in the positive sense of opening yourself up to an experience. In our training, we sometimes use it to mean an openness, a fullness, almost a benevolence. Yet "an opening" is something quite different. Somehow I think of a person who is open as emanating so much energy that you wouldn't violate that...

L.H.: I think O Sensei was just like that — radiating. It gets kind of difficult when I'm trying to teach a class and explain this concept of openings... it is a really positive, essential concept. You have to open your heart and also open your hand, you know, and your chest. But opening like "suki" means gap. So a gap, a moment of being off your guard, a break in your concentration — all of these are translations of suki. In a sense it means something which isn't quite whole. I think eliminating suki is very important in practice because otherwise we start to fool ourselves. You know, like when you put on a kotegaeshi and your partner goes down but you're really open, you're just kind of fooling yourself. On the other hand, if you just think about not being open, you get paranoid. It becomes a negative teaching instead of a positive one.

A.W.: Because you're just trying to patch everything up...

L.H.: Yes. I've found a lot of value in hearing Jack Wada talk about openings because he's been through heavy training in eliminating openings, too, where you get bombarded and you have to keep covering, keep covering. Now I hear him talk about the source of the opening — what it is that creates this negative sort of opening. A lot of openings are eliminated just by being balanced and extended and by being in the right place at the right time. I think that the idea of opening the heart is absolutely essential, and yet there is sometimes a contradiction between our attempts to open up the heart and close down those openings. I actually try to emphasize that you're moving to a safer place because you're aware of the danger. I learned a lot by getting punched when I was in the wrong place because I was spacey... I wasn't aware.

A.W.: That connects back to what you said about the intensity of the training in Japan where there aren't a lot of breaks, where it's not a chopped up practice but a continuing one. It seems as if one of the advantages of that intensity is that you're upping your level of awareness.

L.H.: We just finished a week of kangeiko, winter training, at Santa Cruz, which is like a week's intensive because we add the morning classes to regular practice. I'm reminded again that the intensity or the steadiness of just coming to class is really valuable because you never get enough time to dissociate yourself from the practice. I think staying with the practice is very important. There's a time to just step back and get perspective and there's a time to stay right in there with it — because perspective is very "safe." One of the advantages of intensive practice is that it doesn't give you time to think about it or to reestablish your safe perspective.



Linda and Yanase sensei, in Japan (Shingu)

A.W.: Did you find it difficult to accept certain aspects of being a woman in Japan?

L.H.: In many ways, yes. Particularly when I traveled around, I came to appreciate the dojo where I was training. In Shingu I felt that I was taken seriously, whereas it is a problem in some dojos here and there. There is a kind of "separate but equal" approach which doesn't really work. It can end up that the regular practice is the men's practice and there is the women's auxiliary or something.

A.W.: Did you have any difficulties crossing some of those barriers yourself, like deciding not to wear a hakama, for example?

L.H.: Well, I didn't have any trouble with that because contrary to public opinion, it's not true that in Japan all the women wear hakama while the men don't until they are shodan. I'd say that is generally more true than untrue, but in Shingu there is a single standard of dress. Most of the time I was there, people of kyu ranks just trained in their gis and white belts or sometimes colored belts and everyone wore hakama when they got to be shodan. However, when I traveled to some other places, they questioned me about it. You know I am strongly in favor of a single standard of dress because I feel that we have a single standard in all other ways and it would be strange to have a double standard in that. I think if in Santa Cruz we suddenly offered women the possibility of wearing hakama before shodan, there would be a great hue and cry.

A.W.: What was most surprising to you when you got to Japan?

L.H.: The surprising thing to me at first was that Japan looked really different from my image of it, which turned out to be very antiquated. For example, I had an image from the samurai movies and from the books I had read about Zen Buddhism that made me expect to see a lot of Zen priests walking around and everyone very serene. Actually it was almost the opposite. When I first arrived in Japan, it seemed that everyone was speeding around very frantically. Of course because I didn't understand the language, everyone seemed to be talking very rapidly and rushing around, particularly in Tokyo, but I think that's true all around Japan. Maybe they have taken to Zen and those things to balance themselves out.

A.W.: One of the striking things about many of your practices is the pace. I don't get a sense of speediness but definitely a lot of rapid movement. Is that characteristic of the training at Shingu?

L.H.: I think it was characteristic of the training at that time but the dojo has changed. I'm not sure that that's how I would characterize the training now. In most of the dojos where I trained, the practice was quicker or more sustained than the practice I had experienced before. But then I think the practice here in the Bay Area has changed a lot since then. I was very impressed by the rapid pace at Hombu dojo when I first went there; I was completely worn out at the end of ten minutes and thought an hour must have gone by.

A.W.: You've talked about a lot of things that you like to emphasize in your teaching. What do you want most to convey?

L.H.: I feel that aikido is a way of teaching which operates on many different levels and in different ways. For example, it's a martial art and a spiritual discipline and it's very much a personal growth, mind-body-harmony discipline. All those things are intertwined and yet I feel that there's a tendency for people to compartmentalize the different parts of aikido. O Sensei showed there was an undeniable unity of the martial and the spiritual. But many students of aikido tend to think that when they're being martial, they're being martial and when they're being spiritual they have to sit down and meditate. I'm not knocking meditation at all — I think that's really important — but I think that we should strive toward unity, toward a view and an experience of aikido which is comprehensive — not limited.

I think it's a human tendency to take things that may be very mysterious and very large and in a sense make them smaller, to make them into something that we know and that seems manageable. I think aikido is or points to great mysteries. I try to make sure people get a sense that aikido isn't something where you can just say, "well this is what it is" — that aikido is not the techniques. I've heard O Sensei quoted as saying that the techniques are guideposts, are like a map that points the way to the state of aikido, and that state is very large, like protection of all things and unity with the center of the universe. That's one thing I'd like to emphasize, the grandness of aikido. We shouldn't belittle it into something that we can understand right away.

Much as I value and respect my teachers, what we are involved in is not any one of those individuals but really a tremendous teaching, like a source. They are not the source — they are pointing. What is that great story of the Zen master pointing at the moon and the disciple thinking that it's the finger? I get concerned sometimes when I hear people talking about the martial arts aspect of aikido, like well, now we'll do aikido as a martial art and now we'll have an energy class. I feel so strongly that the practice of aikido as a martial art is so much connected to learning about a greater energy than just your own physical or personal force.

If we look at O Sensei or listen to his words, he was constantly redefining "martial." He said aikido is not what we think of as martial arts, but it is the "true" martial art: a way of love and protection of all things. When we try and separate out the martial aspect of aikido, we aren't quite getting what O Sensei meant.

A.W.: I wonder how many of our difficulties have to do with our unfamiliarity with the word "martial". Maybe we have an idea that is somehow distorted.

L.H.: Budo is not a familiar concept in this culture. But even to the Japanese, O Sensei said, "you don't understand martial arts." And yet in Japan almost everyone does martial arts at some point or at least they know lots of people who do. It is seen very much as a character-building activity. The idea is that you become a better person if you do it. Whereas among most people in America, the idea is that martial arts means fighting. For quite a

while I would not tell people in America that I did aikido because of the weird reactions people have had. When I said martial arts, I meant something very positive, and when they heard martial art, it meant something really threatening. People get images of boxing or something, I mean what other traditions do we have?

A.W.: That's related to the most frequent questions people have: Does it work? Can you use it on the street? Can you beat somebody in karate?

L.H.: I was asked that question just the other night. There was a woman in the beginning class who said "I heard a karate teacher say that aikido is no good because it gives people a false sense of security." It kind of took me by surprise... I wanted to say, "what sense of security?" but I didn't say anything for a second, while I was thinking how best to respond. Then I said that first of all, any martial art or self-defense system that gives you the impression that you can learn it easily is giving you a false sense of security and I hope that we don't give you that sense. And any confrontation between two individuals, which we hope doesn't happen, is just a reflection of those two individuals and not the arts that they study. As for having a karate master and an aikido master fight it out, I mean, they don't, they just don't fight. But I don't have any questions about aikido being effective. My own teachers have given me experiences to take care of any doubt. But I was trying to stress to her that what she was learning in the beginning class was a very gradual approach that would be of great benefit to her in extricating herself from situations before they could get violent.

A.W.: I've heard so many people say, well, I study aikido for other things but if I were ever really attacked on the street I'd use something else. That bothers me because I want to practice and reinforce a response that I think is a positive one. I don't want to have to stick in my back pocket something that I think will work.

L.H.: I think that matter of learning responses is really important because that's what comes out when you're under stress. I very rarely have been in situations off the mat where I had to use any of this kind of stuff, but I got attacked in the locker room one time by this crazy woman. I was putting on my gi and I don't know what she was trying to do but she came leaping at me. I have subsequently given thanks over and over again that my reflexes were not to smash her. It was one of those real split-second things. I don't know what it was, some kind of blend and I just held her from the back and sat her down and asked her "What did you do that for?" You know, I still see her sometimes and I'm really glad that it happened that way.

I feel that we all have the right to self-defense, however that comes up. Like if my life were threatened and ikkyo didn't work very well, I wouldn't have any compunction about striking.

A.W.: In your own personal training, what kinds of things are you emphasizing? Why do you keep training?

L.H.: Well... it gets more and more interesting. I feel like every year it gets deeper and that my perspective on practice gets broader. I mean my perspective on aikido not as a set of techniques but as what we experience through that practice. I also am not satisfied at all with my so-called level of proficiency. I'm always working on that because I feel that the techniques, which aren't aikido but are the map to get there, are pretty ragged in a lot of ways. I don't feel like there's any level of proficiency to really be satisfied with at this point, because even if I can pull off the techniques, that doesn't mean anything about where my heart is. I think having teachers who continue to train has a lot to do with it. You know, if my teachers had stopped training themselves, if they figured they had gotten there and were dispensing maps to where they were, then maybe, who knows...

A.W.: How do you feel about your recent promotion... does it feel like a responsibility?

L.H.: I think responsibility in some ways is really the essential concept because as Tojima Sensei, one of my teachers, talked with me about rank, he said that rank gives you a function in the dojo and is not at all like a trophy. We tend to think of getting ahead or always progressing and getting achievement symbols, whereas I really think that whether it's kyu or dan rank, it's not an achievement symbol or a trophy. It's just kind of a step. As you are promoted, it means that you are taking on more responsibility — I don't mean a tremendous burden, but you've trained long enough, you've had enough experience that you're starting to have some ways in which you can help. So I'm happy about being promoted, and in a sense it surprised me. It's been more interesting since I came back because people have somehow been giving it more significance than I have.

A.W.: Can you isolate any important, informative training experiences, times that you look back on as turning points?

L.H.: What comes to mind is the first ten months I was in Shingu — it was a real transformative period when I felt almost overloaded all the time and burst out of that in a new direction. One experience in particular is kind of interesting. I was taking ukemi at the end of class. Anno Sensei was teaching and Yanase Sensei and Tojima Sensei were both throwing people. I was kind of tired, and it was just going to be ten falls. So I went in — I'm sure it was quickly — but inside I knew I was pacing myself. I took my falls and Anno Sensei called me over; I sat down in seiza. He was standing up, and he pointed at me and said, "Your ukemi is no good — lousy." It struck me incredibly because here was this teacher I respected so much and wanted to follow whatever teaching he had, and he was usually very positive in his teaching and praise. Yet what my respect for him did, it just opened me up and I thought, "What's he going to teach me?" And he said, "You have to commit — don't pace yourself, go in actually." I bowed, I was really shaken by the experience, but afterward I was inspired because he had given me a direction out of it. I talked with Mary Heiny later and she said that I should be honored that he felt I was in a place where I could benefit from that teaching.

A.W.: Is there anything else that you particularly want to convey?

L.H.: I think it's so important that people remember O Sensei and try in whatever way they can to get in contact with his vision of things. Because the path of aikido as we know it and experience it was put together by O Sensei. He said he didn't create aikido, that aikido is something that has always existed. But on the other hand, he put it together as a path and to try to walk along that path means that we have to try to understand what it is. I feel like we get caught up in our day-to-day training and the friends that we train with and the teachers we like or dislike. It's so important to look beyond that, to connect with O Sensei — not so much the personality, because he's dead, but the part of him that lives on.

I think it's important to watch movies of O Sensei and to read what he wrote and talk to people who knew him. One of the things I'd like to do since I have language skills is to translate what there is of his writings. I try to do some of that on an informal basis now. I feel that contact with O Sensei's vision is really essential. When I think of all I've gotten out of reading those things in Japanese... that's where a lot of my inspiration comes from, things that I've read or heard that O Sensei would say about aikido. That's something people should have more day-to-day access to.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Linda teaches at Aikido West on alternate Monday nights. Please consult Linda or the dojo calendar for the dates. Don't miss her. In appreciation for the time involved to produce this very rich interview—and this issue of the newsletter, heartfelt thanks to Carol for her thoughtful interview, transcription, and editorial work; Judy Van Gastel for her production time, and Cathy Vian for her final professional once-over. —SHD

Letter from Robin Cooper.

March 23, 1981
Dear Aiki Circle:

Many thanks to Doran Sensei and the students of Aikido-West and Stanford dojo for the wonderful training I received during my recent stay in Northern California.

As many of you know, I am currently residing in Madison, Wisconsin. My husband and I teach Aikido at the University of Wisconsin to about twenty beginners and ten kyu-ranked individuals. You can't imagine my delight and envy when Doran Sensei called for peer practice and the mat was completely full of swirling skirts. It was really a pleasure to have so many advanced students to train with and learn from.

While visiting, I also had the pleasure of attending the dan exams held in San Jose. It was very interesting to see so many styles of Aikido represented. Even more pleasing was seeing so many sensei with very different ideas willing to come together and agree (or at the very least compromise!) about ranking the students.

It was also good to see that students from each dojo were welcome to train with whomever they pleased. This is not so in the Midwest and elsewhere. Students from differing branches of Aikido are not encouraged and in some cases not allowed by their sensei to train elsewhere for fear of being excluded from their current dojo. Also, students from certain schools are not welcomed or allowed to practice in some dojo nor are their ranks accepted.

I think I am most amazed with the amount of choice Aikido students have in Northern California. Not only do you actively participate in determining how your dojo is run and structured, you also have many options to choose from if you become dissatisfied with your current practice. This is truly a luxury compared to other places and is an indication of the strength of the Aiki spirit in the many sensei in the area.

Again, many, many thanks for welcoming me and helping re-new my spirit.

See you all at summer camp.
Robin Cooper

Response to Fund Raising Letter

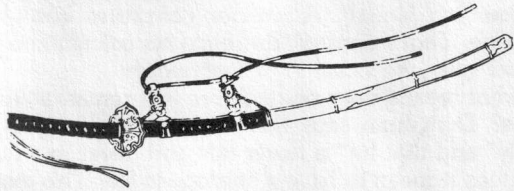
I am pleased to report that 49 people responded to Aikido West's annual fund raising letter and that the net receipts from the letter totaled \$4,253. On behalf of the Board and officers of Aikido West, I wish to thank all of the persons listed below and all of those who have supported us throughout the year for their generous contributions. Special thanks also to Carol Westberg, the primary mover and shaker of this fund raising effort.

Roy Bennett,
General Manager

Claire McGibeny	Dusty Miller	Don Moccia
Paul Goldstein	David Weisbrod	David Hurley
Carol Westberg	Luis Janssen	Rob Swigart
Kathryn Strachota	Karen Kettley	Frank Doran
Stuart Brown	M.D. & Esther Leno	Ron Chandik
J. Kenneth Salisbury	Jean Diane Nixon	Ron Cochran
Justine Bennett	Janel Beeman	Roger Chaffee
Swan Graphics	Susan Cain	Frank Kirk
Sam Weber	Michael Friedl	Mary Poulin
Roy Bennett	Cynthia Hayashi	David Gamble
Aaron Reizes	Kathryn Barry	Mary L. Schumacher
Philip Hayes	Elba Serrano	Ted & Jessie Harcham
Richard Luduena	Gary Kramer	Dwight Westberg
William Daul	Geoff Ball	Jerry Murphy
Bruce Smith	Patti & Rich Osiecki	Foster Gamble
Ann Bergfors	Marc Comisar	Steve Langford
John Moyer		

Notes on Weapons Training

by Malcolm Brown



The primary thing when you take a sword in your hands is your intention to cut the enemy, whatever the means. Whenever you parry, hit, spring, strike or touch the enemy's cutting sword, you must cut the enemy in the same movement. It is essential to attain this... More than anything, you must be thinking of carrying your movement through to cutting him.

—Miyamoto Musashi, *A Book of Five Rings*

Does this statement from Musashi's book have any relevance to aikido? Upon first reading one is tempted to say that aikido does not train in martial combat with live swords; hence the notion of "cutting the enemy" is not appropriate in aikido practice. Also, in aikido the attitude with which we train is not that of cutting down an enemy, but rather of seeking the least violent means of resolving a conflict.

Certainly if we take Musashi's statement literally such objections apply. However, I detect a kind of spirit in this statement that is very important for us, especially with regard to weapons training in aikido. This statement touches a spirit that should underlie and be the source of the various forms we learn in the course of our training with jo and bokken.

In picking up the bokken or jo, it seems to me to be of critical importance to move beyond the stage in which the bokken is simply a tool that you employ to accomplish something. I have heard Japanese instructors speak of *swallowing the sword*, that is, of going beyond the stage of tool implementation and achieving an integration in which the bokken or jo becomes a dynamic part of you. Another way of thinking of this is that we must learn to extend our spirit into the jo or bokken. This is of great importance if our aikido is to become "large" enough to touch another person's center. This is one way I interpret Musashi's statement: "cutting the enemy" means to develop a spirit large enough to grasp the partner's center. To accomplish this, we must move beyond the stage of implementation; to "swallow the sword" means that you become yourself a "cutting" edge. As Musashi constantly reiterates, this takes diligent and relentless practice.

We often hear that working with weapons is more intense. What does this increased intensity mean? Certainly there seems to be more at stake if you are contemplating the prospect of being whacked by a piece of wood. In my own training, this intensity means that I confront more dramatically that which hinders my development: my fears for my safety. This tends to make the practice more mental in the sense that I begin to try to do something to ensure my safety. The intensity of weapons training seems to bring an increased pressure, and it is important that we be able to allow our aikido to operate even in such intense situations. Just like the plunge into the cold ocean water on New Year's Day, which tends to take your breath away, the increased pressure of weapons training makes it difficult to manifest the aikido principles of relaxed extension, flow, blending, and so forth. It seems to me to be of

the utmost importance to strive to break through the barriers such intensity tends to construct. In this case, the "enemy" we are striving to "cut" is ourselves.

It is often said that working with jo and bokken can assist us in training proper movement and provide clarification regarding how to align oneself in *tai jitsu* (empty-handed techniques): the relations worked out with weapons can be applied to non-weapon situations. I certainly feel that this is true. However, I feel it is also important to keep in mind that weapons training also trains your spirit. Beyond acquiring a set of forms, such as *suburi* and *kata*, we can move to a largeness of spirit. This means for me developing an intuitive sense that is always in connection with the partner's center, which will in turn allow us to respond appropriately to our partner's movements. This aspect of training means moving beyond simply knowing how to cut the enemy to actually "cutting" the enemy, to really touching the partner's center. "Cutting" requires the integrated movement of all that we are: mind, heart, spirit.

These are some aspects of weapons training that I feel are of great importance and which I have been emphasizing on Friday evenings during the weapons training.

Self-Defense for Women

by Marilyn Anderson

On January 8th Marilyn Anderson, Mary Poulin, and six aikidoists of different ranks gave a demonstration of aikido to an audience of almost 30 people assembled to explore self-defense alternatives for women.

The Rape Education Project at Stanford University arranged the event, in which five different groups talked and/or demonstrated. The alternatives discussed included taking courses to become licensed to carry tear gas, the self-defense classes offered at Stanford by Duke Moore, Kenpo Karate, Aikido, and the Women's Self Defense Collective (a group of feminist women who discuss and role play self-defense situations on an ongoing basis).

The Kenpo Karate people talked before us and presented a philosophy of self-defense very similar to that of Aikido (as I understand it). They stressed that the best situation is to avoid being attacked or get out of the situation if possible; there is no victory in having to maim or bully your attacker. They brought out clearly that knowledge of any martial art is never a guarantee that it will work in a real attack. And if you're going to do any type of technique/fighting in a real attack, you need to be prepared to take it all the way to completion on the first attempt.

For the aikido demo, Marilyn talked briefly about the philosophy of aikido, about its advantages as a means of resolving conflict while keeping the maximum number of options open. Mary led the group in demonstrating aikido techniques and giving the audience a feeling for what a typical aikido class is like.

There was a good feeling in the room at the end of our demonstration and several people expressed interest in classes.

Thanks to John Strawn for alerting us to this opportunity to demonstrate and thereby spread knowledge of aikido in the community. If any of you know or hear of a group that is interested in a demo, please contact any black belt. Increasing our visibility in the community is good business, is good for aikido in general, and it's fun!

On the Way of the Warrior

(Note: The masculine pronoun is used only for consistency with the quoted material. The warrior's way is not dependent upon gender.)

The way of the warrior is typically associated with the philosophies of physical combat, with the martial arts, with budo. The warrior is an artist who refines his art with patience and dedication. The oriental culture has a long tradition of this art, and we in aikido have absorbed much of the flavor and spirit of this ancient way. As with many other ways, however, the way of the warrior is subject to being taken only in its external form. The inner aspect of the warrior's struggle to subdue the enemy is the difficult task of subduing the unruly inner self. The path of the warrior is thus a description of the path of one's inner struggle.

It is interesting to examine a description of the path of the warrior's way which has as its basis a culture altogether different from the oriental and yet describes the path of the warrior as a way toward self-perfection. Carlos Castaneda's conversations with Don Juan Matus frequently refer to the way of the warrior in this manner.

A warrior's attempts to defeat his enemy depend, foremost, on the constant awareness of his situation. To be asleep is to make oneself available to death. Don Juan describes it thus:

A warrior is not a willing partner; a warrior is not available, and if he involves himself with something, you can be sure that he is aware of what he is doing.

This awareness gives the warrior the quickness to "blend" with his world, avoiding conflict and unnecessary effort.

To become unavailable means that you deliberately avoid exhausting yourself and others . . . (the warrior) is inaccessible because he's not squeezing his world out of shape. He taps it lightly, stays for as long as he needs to, and then swiftly moves away leaving hardly a mark.

The path of the warrior is the struggle to be in harmony with both his world and his inner being. It is the struggle to find the proper balance within—the balance that allows him to be in life and still leave "hardly a mark."

One aspect of this is the balance of restraint and action. Don Juan calls this internal balancing act the "mood" of a warrior:

The mood of a warrior calls for control over himself and at the same time it calls for abandoning himself. A warrior calculates everything. That's control. But once his calculations are over, he acts. That's abandon.

By what means does one achieve this remarkable inner balance? Don Juan says that "a warrior proceeds strategically" and that he "is never idle and never in a hurry." What does it mean to have a strategy in life? This exercise is our exercise in the discovery of the inner meaning of the warrior's way. To see my moments of idleness and of haste give the first indications of the need for a strategy and point to its proper creation.

Howard Bornstein

Nutrition and The Athlete

Many athletes (weekend or otherwise) believe that certain nutritional practices can enhance their performance. As discussed by authors from the Milton Hershey Medical Center in Pennsylvania (October 1979, *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*), some of these common beliefs are false — and even potentially dangerous. Among the concepts singled out for debunking in their review are the following:

1. "Fluid intake during competition is dangerous": In fact, the opposite is true. Restriction of fluid during competition can lead to dangerous dehydration. Athletes should be allowed to satisfy their thirst during competition; they will not become "water-logged" or develop excessive muscle cramping.

2. "Sugar drinks provide quick energy": If there is adequate pre-game food intake (three to four hours before competition), there is little to be gained by gulping special sugar drinks during the contest. Theoretically, such a practice might actually cause the gastrointestinal tract to delay absorption.

3. "Extra proteins help build muscles": Assuming a balanced diet that is adequate in calories, the only practice that really helps to build muscles is the exercise of those muscles. Given the cost of steak, that may be good news for athletic department budgets.

4. "Extra vitamins are needed for energy": Again, not so. Normal amounts of vitamins are essential for us all, but athletes need no more than the rest of us if their diets are well-balanced.

In short, persons engaged in strenuous athletics require more total calories and fluids than those who are sedentary, but such increases need only be balanced to be effective. Fancy concentrates and special vitamin supplements do not give an "edge," they only thin the wallet.



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