

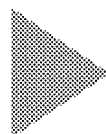
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Aikido Forum



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Editor's Message



In this issue #14 of the Aikido Forum we have articles, poetry, graphics, dojo profile and a research paper on what is like to be a member of an Aikido Dojo. As Editor I would like to calm the minds of the subscribers who have expressed concern with regard to receiving their issues of the Forum.

There are many hurdles to overcome when producing a magazine; the major one is soliciting a minimum number of interesting articles to publish. When you subscribe to the Aikido Forum you are paying for the number of issues, not by the year, so slow timing does not mean issues lost to the subscriber.

I have often pondered why it is so difficult to stimulate Canadian Aikidoists into submitting

articles to their magazine. It was put to me that we are much smaller in number, here in Canada than in the United States; consequently, when an American Aikidoist submits articles to well established aikido magazines the chances are no one has ever heard of them, or will most likely never meet them. In Canada you are much more exposed. Whether this is true or not I cannot say. If any of you have constructive ideas to aid in my quest for articles I would very much like to hear from you. At present the Aikido Forum has five Contributing Editors across Canada which is a great start!

I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous 1995.

Editorial Staff

Editor	Gail E. Macphail (Victoria)
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Our thanks to the various dojo representatives for raising the profile of the Aikido Forum in their areas. Our policy is now to mail all issues directly to the subscribers. We look to the dojo representatives to provide us with a public relations function. We invite anyone in a dojo to volunteer in advertising the existence of, and encouraging articles for, the Aikido Forum.

The intent of the Aikido Forum is that it be a place for discussion on matters relating to the practice of Aikido. To that end, articles are invited from Aikido practitioners throughout the Aikido community. Articles can be submitted on paper (typewritten, double spaced), , MS-DOS or MAC diskette. Please provide a paper copy to ease our frustration in the event we cannot read the disk. Articles Submitted must be less than 1600 words, and be accompanied by a brief autobiography (40 words or less) including rank, dojo name, and a personal telephone number. We prefer the articles to be submitted in English, but we do have

limited translating capabilities.

As well as articles, Aikido graphics are invited. We'd like to present some of the visual impact of Aikido within these pages. We are particularly interested in graphics suitable for scanning and reproducing as small (2"x2" or less) images for visual impact in white space.

Most of all, our aim is to provide a "participatory forum" for the exchange and growth of information and understanding of Aikido. We invite participation from authors, artists and new subscribers, readers, criticizers, subscription promoters, distribution helpers, and whoever else might have something to offer the Forum or the Aikido community in general.

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Aikido & Rowing; Complimentary Disciplines

Mel Malinowski

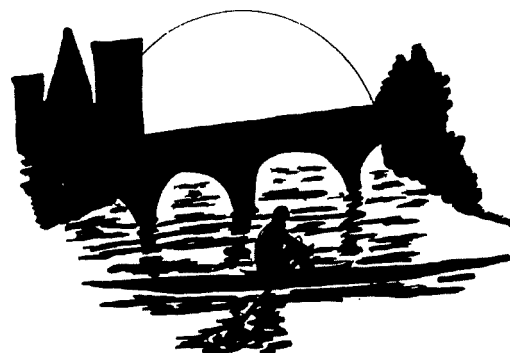
To stay in shape over the years I have pounded out a few miles on the pavement and worn out a number of jogging shoes. Much of this was done to increase my aerobic level for Aikido, especially a month or so before testing. While I've enjoyed having jogged and run, it was nevertheless always a chore to get out there and start. Plus, as the legs get older they tend to suffer more: especially the knees. Bit by bit, my running and my determination waned. Then I discovered rowing.

Our youngest daughter, Jana, joined the Saskatoon Rowing Club. (Yes, Liz, Paul, Mike, and the rest of you in the B.C.A.F., there is enough water in Saskatchewan!). Since I had to be on the dock with her three mornings a week, and rowing had always appealed to me. I joined for better or worse. So far, up to this point anyway, I've managed to stay dry.

When I joined I discovered two things. One was that it has been quite awhile since I had started at the bottom of any new discipline and I was not in the least thrilled with my initial tenseness and awkwardness. I now have a great deal more empathy for our neophyte Aikidoka. The second thing which I learned is the more important of the two: there is much to be gained from rowing that translates very directly to the dojo.

The first thing that comes to mind on this point is the whole aspect of focus. On the mats, we drill into our students the vitally necessary skill of focusing only on the situation at hand. This goes so far as to tell them that even in a multiple attack one must defend by dealing with one uke at a time. Also, at the beginning of class everyone is expected to meditate away all distractions and thoughts that have no connection with dojo and the practice. Well, this is easier to say than to do. One of the main reasons that we often lose our focus is simply that the consequences of inattention are rarely drastic to any degree and all too easily hidden. In rowing, this is a different matter.

When you are sitting in (on is more like it actually) a "single" that in every respect resembles a floating needle, with only your sculls out to the sides for stability, there is zero tolerance for any lapse of attention. One misplaced random thought, unasked for and uncontrolled, can have very direct and totally unwished for consequences. Thus, from the time you place your first foot, followed by the rest of a too-tense body, into the "shell" on a cold and dark six a.m. morning until you take that foot out again an hour or so later, you are nothing but concentration. Every thought and every muscle in your body is tuned to doing what you must do in order to improve your skills and to stay out of



the water. It does get you, as they say, focused and it keeps you sharp. The more I row, the better I am at gaining an ability to be concerned with all the cares and things of life one minute and in the next shutting them out completely as the rowing begins. This ability is getting easier to transfer to other aspects of my life, my work, and especially to Aikido.

Another area of rowing that is very beneficial is when one rows with other club members, be it in a double, a quad or whatever. Here it is the old idea of teamwork, but in a very specially connected way. Your strokes have to be in complete sync with the rest of the crew and it is very much like the blending and joining we do in Aikido. Going up for the catch and all the other steps and techniques involved in every stroke have to be done together. This also requires a tuning in to you partners through a high degree of timing and constant focus. When it is working well one could easily compare it, for example to those times when a shomen-uchi iriminage works as it should; almost effortless, because of the correct timing and yet the power and movement were there in the right places.

The final point that I would like to make deals with the nature aspect of rowing. When you are on the water and the coach has sped away around the bend to push someone else into not stopping, you can take a moment to just look around. The sun is almost up, the bridges and skyline are in silhouette, the water is orange and gold and you are at peace, in harmony with yourself and those things around you. There is a stillness and a balance that doesn't require thinking about. O'sensei certainly would enjoy it and sometimes if you are open enough, you can just catch a glimpse of what the natural world meant to him and how he must have seen it. Aikido and rowing; satori

Mel Malinowski: Began Aikido in January, 1985 in his hometown of Terrace, B.C. in Liz McKinley's Aikikai. Currently, Shodan and one of the instructors at the Saskatoon Aikikai. Other interest besides rowing: pottery, visual art, freelance writing and working through summer and evening classes towards a Bachelor Fine Arts at the University of Saskatchewan.

Interview with Miyamoto Sensei

Gail MacPhail



British Columbia Aikido Summer Camp, June 1994

FORUM:

Thank you Sensei for taking time out from your busy schedule. Many of the students here are wondering when and where you started Aikido.

SENSEI:

I started in Fukuoka, in 1971.

FORUM:

And why did you start Aikido?

SENSEI:

Fukuoka is in Kyushu, and it is a city where martial arts such as Judo, Karate and Kendo are popular. A lot of people practice different kinds of martial arts. When I went to University, I thought maybe in my free time I would try some kind of martial art. I joined the Aikido club at the University, and went to the dojo in the city. At that time, Sukanuma Sensei was sent from Hombu Dojo to Fukuoka.

FORUM:

Did you practice other martial arts then, before you did Aikido or after Aikido?

SENSEI:

No. I didn't do anything else. I only did a little bit of Judo in my high school gym classes because we had to.

FORUM:

Who was it that influenced your Aikido the most?

SENSEI:

Of course that would have been my first sensei, Sukanuma Sensei.

FORUM:

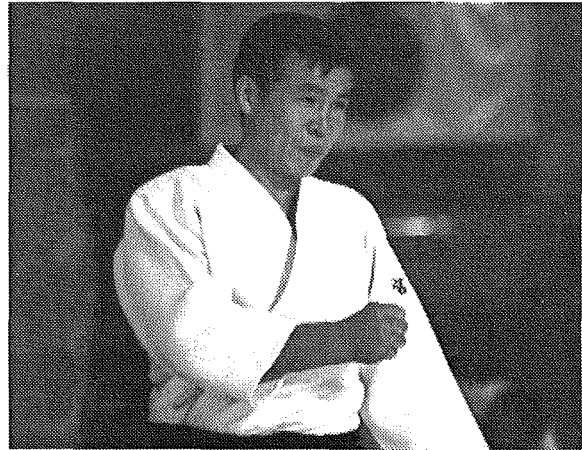
I don't know if this appropriate to ask, but what circumstances led you to devote much of your life to Aikido?

SENSEI:

That's a difficult question. In University my major was in construction and building but after I finished four years of University, I wanted to do more Aikido. So I went to talk with Sukanuma sensei, to ask if I could be more serious or professional, and was told "don't do that". But after Sukanuma sensei thought that I was serious enough, I was introduced to Hombu Dojo to study more.

FORUM:

My nine year old son wanted me to ask you if your parents do Aikido?



SENSEI:

(Laughs) No, my parents do not do Aikido.

FORUM:

What suggestions could you offer a Canadian student of Aikido, who would want to go to Hombu Dojo to train? Do you have any suggestions on how they could prepare for that transition?

SENSEI:

Because at first everything is expensive, you have to think about saving money. And second, as for finding a residence, a lot landlords don't want a foreigner to rent their place, so they ask that you have a good sponsor or some guarantee. And it would be a bit difficult to find a good residence.

FORUM:

Many students, even though they're injured, continue to practice Aikido. Are there benefits to doing that? Do you feel that practising with injuries is good?

SENSEI:

For minor injuries, it is better to keep practising, and also at the same time pick a good partner while you have the injury. In the sumo world, for example, if a sumo wrestler gets an injury, he gets healed on sumo ground.

FORUM:

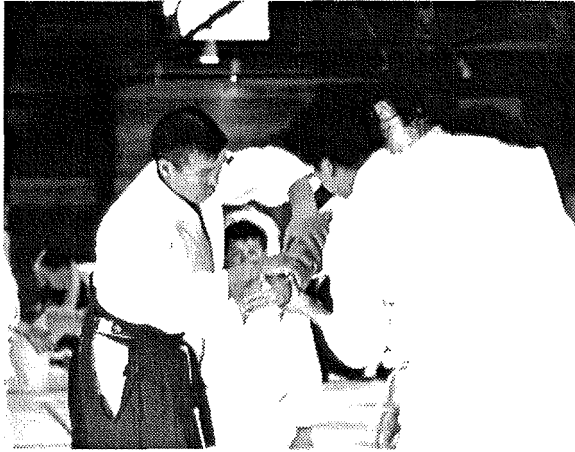
How important is weapons practice?

SENSEI:

It is important.

FORUM:

There are a number of Aikidoists here at the camp who are teaching in dojos across Canada, and they were asking if you have suggestions on how to prepare for classes. How do you prepare for teaching a class? Is there some sort of methodology?



SENSEI:

At the beginning, you have to think about what kind of level of people you have in the class, like beginner, intermediate or advanced, and also, what kind of group you have as a whole. Once in awhile, when I'm teaching in different locations, I will be thinking about one technique that there is a problem with. So even though I will be teaching in different places, I will teach the same technique, because I am thinking about that technique. And also, when a test is coming in your future, you need to prepare for the tested techniques.

FORUM:

What is the importance of testing? Besides just establishing a level, is there a greater importance to testing?

SENSEI:

Does that include just techniques themselves, or every aspect?

FORUM:

Everything.

SENSEI:

When different people are practising, each has their own talent. Some progress very rapidly, whereas others are sincere enough, but cannot progress as fast as other people. But as far as I'm concerned, I'm looking for someone who is serious enough and I will give them a passing grade. It's an encouragement to others too, to pass the tests and go up higher. And also, when people get their black belt, as a sho-dan, ni-dan, san-dan, etc., they are aware of what their position is and all the responsibilities, and it all comes together.

FORUM:

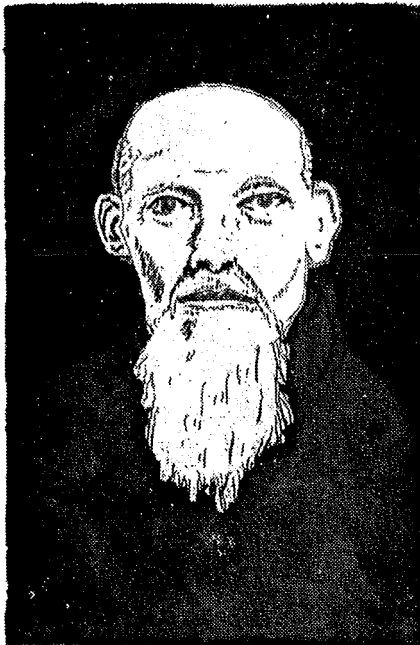
Do you think that extended periods of meditation would be beneficial to an Aikidoist? More than just two minutes.

SENSEI:

I can't give any opinion on whether it would benefit or not. It would depend on each individual and how they do it. It also depends on the purpose for doing it.

FORUM:

Thank you Sensei for this interview, the recipients of the Aikido Forum will be most appreciative.



H/p C'Sensei Rangi/ro

Mel Malinowsky

SUMMER CAMP 1994 PREPARING FOR MEDITATION

Bird of paradise and Santos
Sensei, in seiza,
shower in, the rain forest

*Bruce Riddick, Shodan
New Westminster Dojo
Vancouver, B.C.*

Aikido and Family Systems Therapy



Arnet Hales

I often find myself explaining to others the similarities between Aikido and therapy from a family systems perspective; how the two blend together, each affecting the other in a myriad of moments. One is a metaphor for the other. What follows here are my reflections on that blending.

Salvador Minuchin, a well respect family systems researcher and therapist, suggests that the therapist must be able to enter into the counselling relationship in a creative and spontaneous manner. In much the same manner, Aikido as expressed in "takemusu aiki" seeks to create an unending fount of spontaneity. Therapist and aikidoist must join to accomplish their respective tasks. The goals, tactics, and stratagems sought by both counsellor and aikidoist are dependent upon the depth to which they are able to enter their respective partner in the process. Uke can move only so far as nage is able to join him/her in the process of practice; the client, likewise, moves only so far as the therapist is able to enter the family structure and each individual making up the family system. Effective techniques in both dojo and office are found in the ability of the practitioner to absorb the other's movements into one's own; joining together, creating a new centre from which to move.

The critical part of the "joining", is menesis. This Minuchin says, "is a universal human operation". Is it not the goal of Aikido to become more human? Menesis then must be found in both families system therapy and in Aikido. It can be found in a mother spoon feeding her newborn, opening her mouth in concert with the child as it begins to take solid food. It can be found when speaking with a stutterer, one slows his/her speech and may begin to stutter in rhythm with the other. It is found in therapeutic tracking and reflection of vocal tone and cadence, body posture, and attitudes revealed during therapy sessions. Menesis is also found in Aikido, where nage and uke mirror one another and blend together reflecting in the sacred mirror of illumination, truth and falsehood, life and death.

The key to menesis, in both therapy and in Aikido is "musubi". The word roughly translates into English as unity, harmony and interaction. Mitsugi Saotomi, in his recent book *The Principles of Aikido*, states, "In practice musubi means the ability to blend, both physically and mentally, with movement and energy of your partners". In therapy, the ability of the therapist to blend both physically and mentally with movement and energy of the client is paramount to initiating change. The lines of demarcation between practice and therapy grow fainter and less distinguishable. In practice, therapy and Aikido become one.

This joining of which I have been speaking, is both an

attitude and a technique. Both therapist and aikidoist must be able to respond creatively and spontaneously. Morihei Ueshiba, founder of Aikido, and Carl Whitaker, Family therapists, spoke of their respective arts as the "spontaneous combustion of energy created when tension is raised in the system". Aikidoist and therapist: agents of change. Both must respond to what is presented, and both must introduce into the relationship that which will create the desired result. Each must be flexible, choosing techniques mirroring volume or lack thereof; strength or weakness, aggression or withdrawal. Therapist and aikidoist alike must enter and direct the flow of energy from what is presented that which will be received.

The role of therapist and of the sensei is to join and to lead, to remain the helmsman on the journey to enlightenment; to act as a mirror through which the truth of "Aikia no Kurai", that moment when all of life becomes a perfect reflection of the universe, becomes reality. The purpose of practice and of therapy is to help each individual live in harmony with themselves and with the world about them, they join together in the practice of life.

Students and clients are often drawn in by the metaphor. They consider how their practice and their therapy is affecting their lives, and in the metaphor of the other, they come to see in one brief moment, that neither Aikido nor therapy is simply techniques to create change, but a way and path of life whose ultimate truth is simply doing that which must be done in this present moment.

*Arnet H. Hales, MCS
Family Therapist/Aikidoist practising life in Port Hardy,
B. C.*

I am never defeated, however fast the enemy may attack. It is not because my technique is faster than that of the enemy. It is not a question of speed. The fight is finished before it is begun.

*Morihei Uyeshiba
(Memoir Of The Master)*

Dojo Profile: Maurice Lavigne

Fran Turner

Six years ago Maurice Lavigne realized that if he wanted Aikido in Fredericton, New Brunswick, he'd have to teach it. Fortunately, he's a high energy person. Now he teaches five or six classes a week, even with a demanding job as communications and promotions coordinator at the Department of Economic Development and Tourism in the province.

As do many other dedicated Aikidoists, Maurice has to balance practice with his life as a husband, and as father of a high-spirited three year old son. "Sometimes it is heart-breaking to leave Louise and Marc-Antoine, to go teach class in the evening." He has adjusted, by teaching fewer evening classes but more morning classes, so that he can spend time with his family. Aikido also keeps him from turning into a couch potato and helps balance him physically and spiritually for family life.

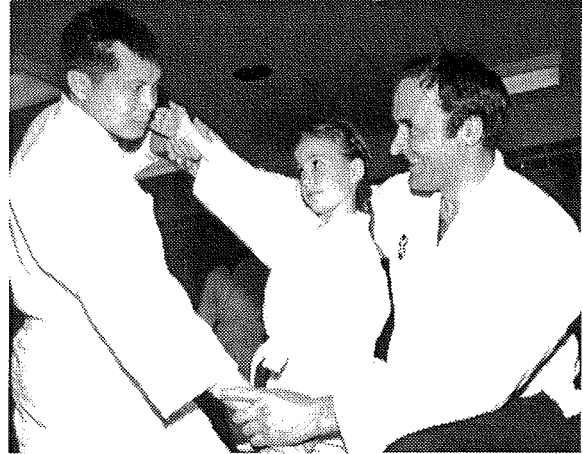
Before he found Aikido, Maurice studied a number of martial arts, some for a few weeks, jiu jitsu for a couple of years. He also studied dance and yoga. He stuck with Aikido because, "I just found I had more in common with other Aikido students." He started with the Ki Society nine years ago and after three years became the senior student just before his teacher left. That was when he realized that the only way he could keep practising was to start teaching himself. Travelling to seminars to get some of the training he needed, Maurice passed his shodan in Aikikai.

What has Maurice found to be some of the challenges of teaching and practice in Fredericton? It is hard being isolated and continually teaching beginners. Progress feels slow. He realized that when he creates an atmosphere in which he enjoys teaching, the natural outcome of is that students enjoy the classes and feel inspired.

Fredericton Aikido Club consists of 18 adults in Fredericton, 10 students in near-by Oromocto and 50 children ages seven to fourteen in three classes. "The kids' classes just keep growing," says Maurice. Suzanne Brosseau, Maurice's assistant, teaches the children's classes at the Fredericton YM-YWCA.

Recently, Maurice and the Fredericton Aikido Club had a chance to promote Aikido when they were filmed for local CBC television.

"I want to contribute to Aikido, and through Aikido, I want to contribute to the lives of students." Maurice



foresees participating in the growth of Aikido in New Brunswick, even on into his retirement phase. Since he's forty-one now, that is likely to be a few years away. He hopes for students who, like him are willing to commit a big portion of their lives to Aikido. And when his son steps onto the Aikido mat for class, one of Maurice Lavigne's Aikido dreams will come true.

FRAN TURNER: is a 4th Dan, teaches at Central YMCA Aikikai, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Fran also writes poetry, short stories and Aikido-related articles.

The secret of Aikido is to harmonize ourselves with the movement of the universe and bring ourselves into accord with the universe itself. He who has gained the secret of Aikido has the universe in himself and can say, "I am the universe".

*Morihei Uyeshiba
(Memoir Of The Master)*

Letter

Todd Pellerin



(The following letter has been reprinted with the permission of the writer. It was originally sent to another Aikidoist, to thank them for a seminar that was held.)

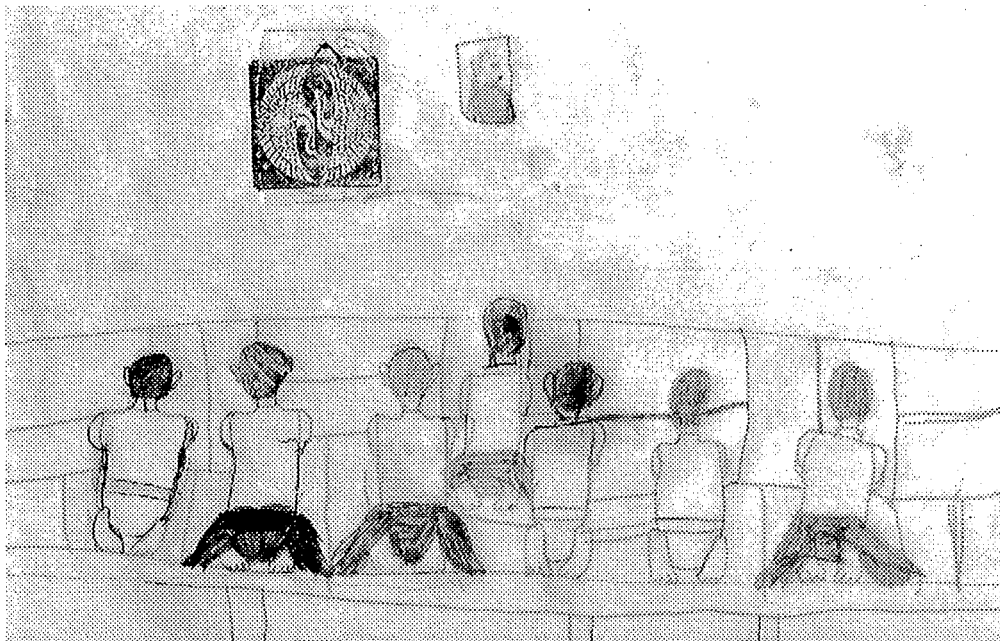
Just a note to thank you for the Aikido seminar you put on in Port Hardy August 5-6th, 1994. As you are aware, I am a member of the R.C.M.P. Auxiliary. On August 27th, we had a young lady pulled over outside the T-Bird Bar for drinking in public. While we were writing her up, a mass of people poured out of the bar, 35-40 persons and at the centre, 3 fights broke out. We called for back-up and then proceeded over to the incident where the combatants were very drunk and very agitated. The use of pepper spray on such a large group would have been questionable as we were outside. At this time the Aikido training started to kick in; I felt a physical and aggressive response would have compounded the problem we had. Aikido taught me to control my emotions, stay calm and portray that calmness to people around me. The majority of the crowd listened to reason and backed off. But of course, not all people will listen to reason. One fight was still going on; both combatants intent on injuring each other. I waited until the fight eventually ended up on the ground. One person had his hand completely wrapped up in the other's hair while kneeling above him trying to punch him in the face. The guy on the ground rolled up, trying to protect himself. I moved in, placed my hand on the hand that was wrapped in the hair

and at the same time, talked calmly to the combatants, trying to be as non-aggressive as I could be, so as not to excite anyone around me. This did not work. With no other option open to me, I slid my forearm on top of the forearm with the hand wrapped in hair, as the hand was pinned and could not move, I applied downward pressure with my forearm. This you would recognize as a form of "Nikyo". The result was immediate. I now had complete control of the combatants by joining my energy with theirs. Both combatants were unable to move; one because he was under the other and the one on top because he was now experiencing "Nikyo". I still had one hand free in the event something should change. The whole incident ended uneventfully. No one was seriously hurt or injured, the crowd became bored because the fighting suddenly stopped and went their way, which in the end was our goal all along.

Again thank you for the seminar, I hope to practice with you again "Domo arigato gozaimash'te".

Sincerely,
Todd Pellerin

(Mr. Todd Pellerin is an Auxiliary R.C.M.P. Officer in Port Hardy, who has been practising Aikido for 10 months with the North Island Aikikai. Just after writing this letter, Mr. Pellerin used Iriminage on a prisoner who bolted for the door while in custody. Mr. Pellerin went in behind the prisoner, did Iriminage and within a few seconds the man was handcuffed.)



Martin MacPhail, 9 yrs.



University of Victoria Aikido Club: A Qualitative Research Paper

Hersh Kline

The following research paper on what is like to be part of an Aikido Club raises as many questions as it answers. This paper has been reproduced in-part only. Should you the reader be moved to reply to the many issues raised within the topic, the Aikido Forum editor would like to hear from you.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

My research attempts to answer the question, “What’s it like being a member of the UVic Aikikai?” The UVic Aikikai is an independent club at the University of Victoria, affiliated with the Victoria Aikikai. Its purpose is the practice and study of Aikido, a 20th century Japanese martial art based on the peaceful and harmless reconciliation of conflict. I posed my question to two current club members and one former member.

RESEARCH PRESUPPOSITIONS:

Based on my experiences and observations in the UVic Aikikai, what kinds of experiences and feeling do I suppose other who have been involved with the club might have?

- I suppose that hierarchy issues centering around rank and time spent in Aikido practice might come up for others. This could manifest as internal questions around inclusion and status, wondering where and how to fit in. It could arise as an effort to “not get caught up in the quest for rank”. Here, there may be some impatience or reluctant acceptance of the hierarchy, and a preference to break through rank-status associations. Alternatively, the reality of rank in Aikido could take shape as a competitive urge to grade as soon and as often as possible.

Discomfort may come up around the rank issue in social gatherings, where older members may seem to hang out together in a tighter sub-group, while new members are left to find their way in. It may also appear on the mats, where lower-ranked students may try and pair up with higher-ranked students, and higher-ranked students may have feelings (one way or another) about practising with lower-ranked students.

The hierarchy issue may also appear as an appreciation of the inclusiveness a member has felt in the club, and thus as a wish to model this with new members. Here, older students would take a lead role in reaching out to new members.

- Some students may find the authority, chain of command, and ritualism questionable, others might be drawn to these aspects of practice.
- I expect that some students may like the Japanese language and the exploration of another culture. They may talk about

plans to go to Japan some day and study there. Others may find the foreignness an obstacle.

- I wouldn’t be surprised if some students find the atmosphere is too serious; others, however, may thrive on the discipline.

- I expect that some members will say that the club has become a major source for getting social needs met. They may talk about the great parties and other aspects of social intercourse, feeling a close connection with other practitioners. Some may talk about the club in terms of a place to find an intimate partner.

- I suppose that practitioners may speak about the pleasure of the physicality of Aikido: the benefits of a good cardiovascular workout, and the after-glow of a good practice. For example, students may describe feeling burnt out at times with school stresses—and they would rather not go to practice. But they go anyway, and feel better for it.

- Students might talk about a feeling of impatience with injuries; they may also describe finding Aikido practice as healing.

- Practice may be described as feeling “addictive”, and a feeling of longing for Aikido when students are away from it may be addressed.

- I expect that some students will talk about the partnering interaction on the mats, and the flow of a good connection with a partner.

- Some students may talk about being in it for the long haul, and not “fast-tracking” to black belt. This could lead into a discussion about the dilemma of goal-orientation versus process-orientation. Here, they may describe foreseeing an endless possibility of explorations within the Aikido context.

- The philosophy of Aikido could be a significant interest for students, and a primary reason for their involvement with the practice. Central to this should be the joys of finding applications for the philosophy not only on the mats, but also outside of the dojo.

- I suppose that students would address what it feels like to be called by the sensei to demonstrate a technique. I would expect a range of emotions, from nervousness, to feeling honoured, accomplished and appreciative of the opportunity to learn kinaesthetically from the sensei how a technique works.

- If students have travelled and practised in other dojos, they may speak about how Aikido offers them an international language: the language of Dojo etiquette—and this may contribute to a feeling of fluency in a foreign environment.

THE SUBJECTS OF INQUIRY

I selected three co-researchers to help me with this qualitative research into what it is like being a member of the UVic Aikikai. (I have changed their names to protect their anonymity.) Ted and Bob are still active members of the UVic Aikikai, while Amy left the club approximately two years ago. All three are in their mid-twenties. All three were willing and able to communicate their feelings and experiences in conversation with me. We met for anywhere from forty-five to ninety minutes. The conversations were meaningful for all participants, in that they furthered our individual understanding of our involvement with the club and Aikido practice in general.

Ted emigrated to Canada from Europe with his family several years ago. Shortly after arriving in Victoria to attend UVic, Ted began practising Aikido at the UVic Aikikai. Ted had previously studied martial arts. He was initially drawn to Aikido as an extension of this interest in things Eastern. Ted has been practising Aikido now for 2 1/2 years. His involvement with Aikido is extremely rewarding for him—physically, socially, philosophically and spiritually. He describes Aikido as being one of the greatest experiences of his life.

Amy left Aikido about two years ago. She had practised with UVic Aikikai for approximately 1 1/2 years. Amy was originally attracted to Aikido for its philosophical dimension. She was equally interested in learning the physical techniques and the spiritual lessons that Aikido offers. However, a sense of social exclusion within the club and dissatisfaction with the lack of emphasis on the spiritual aspects caused Amy to begin withdrawing from Aikido activities. She reached a bifurcation point when she realized that she needed to either get more involved and do Aikido really well or not do it at all. She chose to not do it at all.

Bob began Aikido 5 1/2 years ago, when it was offered as a credit course at UVic. He has maintained a steady and active level of participation in the UVic Aikikai in his years of involvement, and is now senior student in the club. Aikido is an important thread in the fabric of Bob's life. A biology student, I recently phoned Bob and the outgoing message on his answering machine referred to him as genus *Kayakus aikidoist*.

THEMATIC INTERPRETATION:

The fruits of qualitative research are borne in the thematic extraction phase. The researcher's task is to correlate themes that arise in the co-researchers' testimonials with his or her original hypotheses. Several of the themes that I presupposed about individuals' experiences in Aikido appeared in conversations with my co-researchers. Some of the themes that I expected to appear either came up incidentally or not at all. No unexpected themes arose.

Although common themes arose, within those themes I discovered a remarkably contrasting description of experience. What follows is an examination of common

themes whose appearance I presupposed.

PARTNERING:

For me, partnering is one of the magical things in Aikido. We see a technique demonstrated, we find a partner (or a partner finds us), and we take turns attacking and receiving the move. How we choose who we practice with and the ensuing energy exchange that we experience is always dynamic and often unpredictable. It might be hard or soft, it could trigger feelings of distrust, or a sense of deep intimacy and caring.

My co-researchers and I all agreed on our appreciation of those special moments of sharing that happen in the partnering relationship. We concluded that the level of relating can be very profound, and that the closest thing to compare it to is the feelings of deep intimacy that happen in sexuality. And yet it's not sexual—certainly in the standard way that we think of sexuality. It's neither genital nor gender-specific. But it is clearly an energetic blending that fulfills a need for intimacy.

Bob spoke of a related aspect: that Aikidoists seem to share a joy in sensual pleasure—for example, in delicious food, visually pleasing movies and sports days. He notices an uninhibited, joyous quality among club members. He also related to me that having partnered for so long, he feels he can touch and be touched by others more easily than before. He is more willing to let go of his boundaries. The dynamics of what happens between him and a partner is what keeps Bob in Aikido.

Amy also recalled fondly those memories of being on the same energy level as her partner: "It felt like you were dancing, like you were just flowing... I was quite comfortable with it. It never felt invasive. I enjoyed having a closeness with people, even for a brief period of time."

Ted, too, has overcome some reticence about touching and being touched by others. He appreciates the interaction of different ranks in Aikido. He is excited by the non-verbal responsiveness to partner's energy, and by getting a sense of partner's mental state. Ted spoke of intimacy in terms of "giving up your sphere, allowing that person to come in close to you, and you work together and make something happen...I make that step when I enter the dojo—I allow people to touch me, subdue me in a way. We have that kind of contract when we practice."

FULFILLMENT OF SOCIAL NEEDS:

The issue of social interaction, of inclusion and exclusion, clearly was a significant theme amongst all three co-researchers. My experience of feeling included in the Aikido group led me to surmise that this feeling of inclusion would be commonly shared. In fact, there is a sharp contrast between Amy's experience and that of Ted and Bob.

When Ted started out, he felt a bit insecure and uncomfortable in the group. Although still feeling at times like an outsider, in the past six months Ted has come to

feel that he is accepted. Ted attributes this lengthy process of feeling accepted to several factors—most notably, his coming from another country and thus having a different cultural background than most of the other members. Furthermore, Ted describes himself as someone who doesn't get to know people quickly; he tends to have a few good friends rather than a large group of friends. Now, all of Ted's good friends (with the exception of one person) are or have been in Aikido. Aikido has satisfied many of Ted's social needs. He goes to practice, works hard, and is grateful for the social interaction outside of formal classes.

I asked Ted why the UVic Aikikai has such a strong social focus. He believes that the answer lies in part in the nature of the people involved and in their dynamic interaction, and in part because the members are all students, and few have an active family life. In this vein, Ted feels that the club itself forms an extended family, fulfilling some of the standard roles of support for problem-solving and sharing that one finds in functional families.

Ted also spoke about an ongoing concern within the club regarding cliqueness, and mentioned that recently this issue has been explicitly addressed by some of the more senior members.

In the past 5 1/2 year, Bob has seen the club go through many changes. Although the UVic Aikikai has a high turnover of members, Bob has seen the club form a strong core group. He has held various administrative roles over the years. And today, he is senior student in the club. Despite Bob's focal role, he still retains a feeling of being an observer, looking in from the outside. Bob attributes this to the type of people in the club being quite different than the kind of person he typically befriends. In a very general sense, UVic Aikidoists are clean-cut, polite, considerate individuals. Bob normally tends to associate with more fringe people: environmentalists, kayakers, a scruffier lot of underdogs. He is grateful for the interaction he has with the UVic Aikido club, in that it has expanded his social horizons.

Bob sees the separation of core members and newer members as a natural phenomena. The core members have a body of shared experience that they continue to build upon, and that experience extends beyond the dojo to parties, seminars, retreats and shared administrative duties. However, Bob voiced his concern about what some perceive as a clique. He feels it is important to address his issue explicitly and has done so, both recently and in the past.

Amy clearly felt little of the benefits of what others have experienced as positive social interaction in the UVic Aikikai. Although she didn't join the club in search of social interaction, she also didn't find it easy to bond with the other members. In fact, she felt a barrier to social involvement. It remains inconclusive to Amy how much of this feeling of exclusion is self-generated and how much

originates with the group. Amy attributes her feeling of separateness to her being a few years older than the average group member, and so at different developmental stage than most of the members. She also came to Aikido with a different set of social needs; while some others had little or no social group in Victoria before joining the Aikido club, Amy had a well developed social network in Victoria.

On the mats, Amy did not experience the barrier. But before classes began, as the core group would be stretching together, she felt excluded. She also felt excluded after class, when others would go out together and she would find out about it only by happenstance. Amy noticed that the separation in the club seemed to fall on the lines of serious and not so serious students. If one attended retreats, seminars parties and video nights, one was accepted. If one didn't demonstrate that kind of dedication, one was left out.

Amy acknowledges that she didn't make an effort to change herself to fit in, and neither did she feel badly about moving on. She was, however, disappointed that by leaving Aikido, her original needs weren't met. And she left largely because of her sense of exclusion.

THE HIERARCHY OF AIKIDO

All three of my co-researchers spoke about the effect of Aikido's hierarchy. Again, this was a topic of contrasts. Amy told me that she's always been leery of hierarchies. She felt the rank separations most profoundly between students and senseis; within the group of students, one often doesn't know the other ranks because all ranks wear white belts until they graduate to black belts. Amy felt an assumed respect by others for some of the instructors, rather than an earned respect. She also spoke about visiting instructors "playing with power" at seminars. Demonstrations were too fast, and this was overwhelming for beginners. This separated the beginners from the "experts", something Amy didn't see as a supportive way to teach. Amy feels she questioned the hierarchy more than other students did, and was not as accepting of the structure. With no wish to try and change the structure, Amy left Aikido.

Ted sees the hierarchy as a good and necessary aspect of Aikido. He appreciated the rank differentiation, and referred to a military analogue of saluting the rank—not the person. "It's not like someone is God", he told me. "They're just more experienced." He also sees rank as a pragmatic necessity to help lower-rank students avoid getting injured by those with higher-ranks. Although relatively advanced in the UVic club, Ted still perceives himself as a beginner.

Bob told me he has given the question of hierarchy a lot of thought. He respects the in-built hierarchy of Aikido; however, being senior student, Bob perhaps has a more expanded experience of the chain of command than do my other co-researchers. He now has authority in the club. Bob's struggle with his own authority was evident in our

conversation. On the one hand, he feels reluctant in his role as senior student. He has a tendency to give his authority away; he saw a senior student do this, and felt it was one of the greatest gifts to the club. On the other hand, Bob views authority and responsibility as two sides of the same coin. Authority without responsibility becomes dictatorial, while responsibility without authority is ineffective. To this extent, Bob views his position of being senior student in the club as a challenging opportunity to learn about self-responsibility.

Bob feels that the authority issue in the club is not a problem; things seem to work because of mutual respect. He sees an informal, subtle system of sensei learning from students, and delivering his or her understanding in a respectful way. Bob posed the question: "Where is the focus of authority on you? In Aikido," Bob explained, "we often say 'you know best...'. That's emphasized in things like the warm-up exercises: 'only stretch to your own ability; don't try and force yourself. You don't have to copy me, elastic man...'. Find your limits and set them. But sometimes, Sensei finds your limits too, and helps expand them." This, Bob told me, can happen without those limits being breached.

AIKIDO PHILOSOPHY

Aikido's elegant philosophy of harmless reconciliation and creative expression of ki energy drew all of us into its folds. We all found that this philosophy gave us opportunities to learn about ourselves. Ted attributes the philosophy of Aikido to his increased relaxation, expanded interests in things Eastern, and re-ordering of priorities—essentially changing his life. He feels more focused and centred, and notices applications off the mats. A previous interest in the military and guns has been supplanted with ancient swords and conflict resolution: "I started (Aikido) because of my interest in the body-mind connection...(now) I'm not learning how to kill people, but how to deal with aggression with the least amount of destruction. It's good training. I feel my true personality coming out. We try to be sensitive with each other..."

Amy also felt that O'Sensei's writings drew her into the practice. However, a lack of what she perceived as philosophical/spiritual instruction in classes was one of the factors leading to her disinterest in the club.

Bob spoke at length about his philosophical realizations over the years. He sees Aikido as a self-deepening experience, and through this process of getting to know oneself better, confidence develops. Bob views Aikido as a way of bringing forth the natural ki energy that we all have—of not meeting force with force, but learning to blend with resistance. Working with ki harmoniously is where Aikido becomes animate.

AIKIDO TECHNIQUE

Technique is the thread that weaves together the experience of Aikido. In practising technique, we meet our

awkwardness and flow; we encounter our partnering joys and challenges; we kinaesthetically learn the philosophy that runs the length, breadth, and depth of Aikido. Practising technique forms the ambience that experiences and perceptions reside in. Bob sees the technique as the letters that form the story of Aikido, and the experience of interrelating and of applying the philosophy of Aikido as the words, the text, the narrative.

Amy never lost a sense of enjoying the activity, the physical movement of techniques. At times, she still practices some of the centering exercises at home. Ted spoke about the internal rewards of Aikido practice and about the danger of thinking "I've got it!... As soon as that happens, I lose it." He tries to maintain a beginner's mind. Bob reflected this sentiment, saying "when I learn it, and think I know it...then I soon realize I don't know it at all...practice works best when I stay in the moment and notice the journey. When I don't have an agenda, things go best."

We all shared a feeling of wanting to work with higher-ranked students so we can learn more quickly, and at the same time wanting to gracefully accept practising with less-experienced students, realizing the learning opportunities inherent in that.

THEORETICAL INQUIRY

I will now try to explicate some of the themes that I discovered in my research. First I turn to the themes that figured prominently—social inclusion, exclusion and the sense of being an outsider—attempting to place these in a theoretical context. This will lead into a discussion of some of the background themes: intimacy, boundaries, and technical and philosophical inquiry.

The most obvious question that begs to be answered is, Why do some people feel predominantly welcomed and included in a group, whereas others experience the same group as being exclusive and repelling? Why would different people describe that experience in exactly opposite terms?

I can begin to answer this by considering one's level of need for socialization. In Amy's case, as has already been stated, she had a well-developed social network when she entered Aikido. And Ted claims that he did not, and he was looking to connect with a larger group of people: "If it wasn't Aikido, it would have been something else." I, however, shared with Amy the characteristic of already having a social network when I came to Aikido. And yet, while Amy felt excluded, I felt welcomed and respected by the group. This may in part be explained by the fact that although I wasn't particularly looking for a group social experience, I was open to it. Perhaps then, having an established group of friends doesn't exclude the notion of need—although I had a social network, I also had room in my life to expand it. And it may simply be a matter of individual gregariousness.

Amy also spoke about being a few years older than the

average UVic Aikidoist, and so perhaps it was a maturity issue. If it is a maturity issue, it must be irrespective of age, because I have several years on Amy. Is it then a gender issue? Although I didn't interview other women in the club, women are certainly in a minority; however, one of the senseis and several of the more senior students are women, and they seem to be highly dedicated. So I feel safe in ruling out gender as a sole variable. I can only conclude the answer is complex, having to do with interpersonal chemistry, previous conditioning, level of need, and other unknown variables, and is (unfortunately) beyond the scope of this paper.

My three co-researchers and I all had a wide range of experience on the continuum of inclusion-exclusion. And yet, all four of us felt some sense of being an outsider. I wonder if a sense of being an outsider or observer is a part of all group experiences. Considering my experience in and observation of other groups, I suspect this is the case.

For those of us who do feel more than less included, I suspect that this may happen in part because of the physical intimacy that we share in Aikido practice. We meet, we touch, in a close, caring and respectful way. There are not many places in our lives and in our culture where that happens. And we do this, over time, repeatedly, with everyone in the club. When boundaries are respected, we grow closer—in and out of the dojo.

Within the discussion of partnering, we all made reference to a sexual analogue. And we were all a bit embarrassed by this, and wanted to be very clear that it was not sexuality in the standard use of the word. But there is this feeling of deep connecting that rarely, if ever, happens outside of the intimacy that sexual experiences provide. We all have a need for intimacy, and Aikido provides a safe venue for some of these needs to be met. I find this fascinating, and wonder if there are any other contexts in our lives besides Aikido where we might experience this degree of enlivened closeness.

Interestingly, only a small amount of any of the conversations was devoted to discussing the technical dimension of Aikido. Perhaps this is because Aikido is something we do—not something we talk about. Even in practice, we're told not show our teeth (that is, keep the conversation to a minimum).

I found it intriguing that my conversation with Bob, who has been practising longer than any of the others, was the most philosophical. While this may be attributed to his natural proclivities, it could also be that he has steeped longer than us others in the philosophy of Aikido. However, we were all attracted to both the philosophy and the techniques, and sustained interest in these two dimensions. Perhaps this is because the techniques are a carrier of Aikido values.

I was fascinated to observe that the sense of significance in the beginner's mind was also a shared experience. I wonder

if this is built into the methodology of teaching Aikido, and into the very fabric of the philosophy itself. After all, Aikido originates in the land of Zen—and beginner's mind is a Zen concept.

CONCLUSION:

If I were to conduct further research into this topic, I would want to pursue several questions: Does social closeness in Aikido arise from dropping boundaries on the mats? Can the experience of intimacy in partnering be generalized? Do practitioners find a difference partnering with males and females? If so, what is the difference? Do Aikidoists find applications for Aikido philosophy off the mats? If so, where?

I expected to hear more personal accounts of some of my presuppositions. For instance, I found a high level of acceptance of the hierarchy in Aikido. Personally, I have struggled with this. And I have found a place of acceptance. But do others accept the chain of command without a struggle? This could be a point of provocative further research.

I also expected to hear more about a goal versus process dichotomy. Aikido has gradings, tests that indicate advancement. I have struggled with the significance of testing. On the one hand, being a university student I feel that I have more than enough challenges with tests and exams. Furthermore, I see myself committed to Aikido over the long haul. On the other hand, tests help to check correctness and avoid bad habits. Do others struggle with this polarity? If so what is that like for them?

I thought that the issue of learning aspects of Japanese culture—language, bowing, meditation, and other rituals would have been met with some resistance—and yet, this seemed widely accepted. Is this because those who join a martial art are looking for a more expanded cultural experience? A second aspect to this question revolves around the acceptance of the serious atmosphere in the dojo. Based on what I perceive as generally a casual attitude to recreational activities held by Canadians, I imagined there would be more resistance to the discipline expected in the dojo.

In comparing the experiences of four people in one Aikido club, I discovered a multiplicity of thought, feelings and perceptions. The practice of Aikido seems to be an ever-changing growthful adventure. While the research findings documented in this paper provide some explication of what it is like being a part of a group studying Aikido, the results spawn more questions than answers.

*Submitted by: Hersh Kline, Practising 5th Kyu
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East Coast Summer Camp 1994

Fran Turner



Summer camps can be mind boggling, and the East Coast Summer Camp was the Grandmother of mind boggling. By the end of the week there were 800 participants on the mat space, taking classes from ten shihan. The occasion for this enormous assembly and celebration was the thirty year anniversary of the New York Aikikai under the leadership of Yamada Sensei.

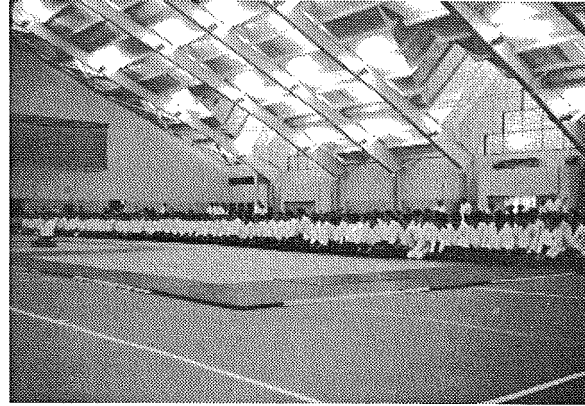
Simply the logistics of the event were daunting. But from what I could see, it all went smoothly with the efforts of the New York Aikikai volunteers doing registration. Accommodation varied from dorms to apartments. And the meals were outstanding, five star for college food. The long waits in line at least had the consolation of good food at the end. Colgate University in Hamilton, New York, about one hour east of Syracuse seemed fully prepared to handle all this. There were commuter buses to convey people across the spacious campus. First established in the early 1800's, the campus is on the side of a hill. Even off the mat, you got a workout walking to the dining hall or to your room.

I am always impressed with the universality of Aikido. At this camp I practised with students from Mexico, Morocco, France, Chile, Venezuela, Brazil and Peru. Curacao and Puerto Rico were other countries represented. Canada's showing came from across the country. British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland are the provinces I knew were represented.

With an Aikido history that spans thirty years, there are bound to be "older" familiar faces showing up. Indeed this was true. There were lots of people on the mat who I'd first seen on the mat in the late seventies when I started attending summer camp.

It was also satisfying to take classes from the shidojin. Peter Bernath, Harvey Konigsberg, Donovan Waite and Gina Zarelli, students of Yamada Sensei, all demonstrated different perspectives as they taught, their personalities emerging. I think it is to Yamada Sensei's credit to have created a strong foundation from which these students grew into teachers.

Yamada and Waka Sensei taught, along with a rich slate of shihan: Tamura, Tohei, Chiba, Kanai, Kawahara, Kurita, Sugano, Shibata. The mats were most crowded for Tamura Sensei's classes. His good humour and enthusiasm make him an immensely enjoyable teacher at seminars. An observer from the balcony said that when all the students stood up to practice in his classes, it was not possible to see any mat.

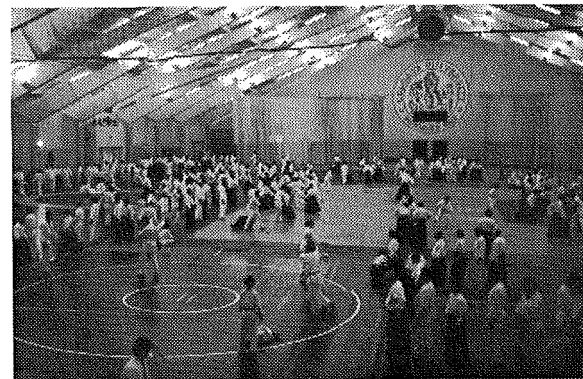


At the closing banquet, Waka Sensei read a letter from Doshu congratulating Yamada Sensei for his efforts in bringing together an international family. He began in New York humbly enough, living in a room behind the dojo.

Yamada Sensei shared some anecdotes. His favourite bokken went missing and he despaired of finding it. One day a student said to him, "Sensei, I found a neat bokken. It has some Japanese writing on it. Maybe you can tell me what it says". It was Sensei's bokken and it was his name engraved on it.

On another occasion, at the end of class, Yamada Sensei was curious to see a student practising kokyū dosa, motionless, partner's hands around his wrist. Sensei came over to inquire if there were problems. "Don't bug me, Sensei, I'm extending my ki", the student told him, still not moving. That he took these experiences with humour and grace testifies to his adaptability. He's well adapted to New York's zaniness.

The last morning of the camp we woke up to grey skies and rain. After the final classes taught by Yamada and Waka Sensei, the sun shone brilliantly to see us all home.



Aiki with Animals

Alan Drengson

Children are usually quite ready to love other living beings, such as dogs, cats, birds, snakes, frogs, and ants. Our youngest daughter is delighted when she sees an insect on the floor. All of our children love caterpillars and birds. We can learn important things about life by watching children and animals together. They remind us how to use the creative energies of imagination to live fully. Watching them with puppies is great fun!

Like many children, my brother and I were given a puppy by our father when we were quite young. Father loved all animals, but especially horses and dogs. He taught us how to relate to the puppy and how to train it. He did this by example and by explaining to us what he was doing. He did it by showing us the right spirit with which to relate to animals. He had an amazing rapport with them. He could attract the most skitterish of dogs to come up to him. He did not do this by calling them, gesturing broadly, or coaxing. He did it by being still. He assumed a lower, hunkered down position. He looked to the side of the dog. His overall stance told the animal that he was not frightened, hungry, or aggressive, just curious, friendly, and playful. He taught us how to project to animals (and children) positive spiritual energy, which is welcoming, reassuring, and kind. He didn't call it spiritual energy but that's a fair name. He said it was an attitude that comes when the heart and mind work together as one. In his interactions with our dogs, cats, seagulls, rats, snakes, chickens, and other animals we never saw him show impatience or anger. In training our dogs he was very soft spoken. He worked with gesture and continuous praise. He held the dog's attention completely. I remember asking him what he could teach a dog, and he said anything they were capable of wanting to learn. He said this about horses as well. His confidence was based on his proven ability to work with them.

Dad grew up on a mixed family farm with all kinds of wild and tame animals to relate to. His people were pioneer homesteaders from Norway. He told me that the things he knew about animal education he had learned from his dad and from the old time pioneers. They were hunters, gatherers and horse farmers. A favourite Norse image is of a man, horse and dog together going "aviking", a-journeying. These two animals have powerful meanings in the old traditions. Dad knew this mythology about animals. What we learned from him was a fraction of what he knew. This was because we did not live on a farm, and because his work kept him away from home for long hours and days year round. What we did learn from him was of central importance, however, for we learned how to approach and be with animals. Most of the specific techniques that he taught me I've forgotten from lack of use.

What Father taught us about animals was partly a body of knowledge, facts and lore, rules of thumb, but more importantly it was an attitude, a sense of respect for the values

of the animals. It was a way of being, an approach, an orientation, a positive spirit of friendly energy. From this spirit comes rapport and shared learning through imaginative play.

It is well known that children who suffer from deep emotional difficulties can often relate to animals, such as dogs, and this can help them to make contact with humans. A dog makes no demands on them. It does not judge them. It accepts them on their own terms. A dog expects nothing of them. It wants to relate to and interact with them. A child can say or do anything, and so long as she is kind she will be accepted.

Dogs are social animals who bond readily to humans, especially when they are shown affection and respect, are fed, brushed, talked to, and petted. Dogs like to be praised, and will do surprising things, when they are praised in the right spirit. They are very sensitive to human emotions and can respond to genuine grief and happiness in deep sympathetic ways. Over the years we've witnessed impressive and moving displays of intelligence, sensitivity and caring from the animals we've known.

Many years ago I spent a summer with a grandfather horseman. Like my father, he had grown up on a family farm with horses and other animals. He learned to ride by the time he could run. He confirmed everything Dad had taught about being with animals. I'd already seen confirmations of these things over the years, but he showed and told me a lot of things about wild animals that I hadn't learned from Dad or on my own. Grandfather Horseman had lived daily with horses and other animals throughout his whole life, and he was then in his late sixties. He had also spent years in the wilderness. As my father had done earlier, he showed me that working with horses and relating to wild animals requires deep respect and an aura of affection. There were times when he was firm with a horse, but this firmness was not anger. He said to me, "Horses are timid animals. Their teeth are dull. They eat grasses and grains. They have hooves and legs to run fast. They like to run away from danger rather than fight it. They have keen eyes, ears and a good nose. It's important to let them know that you mean them no harm. You must approach them with confidence, but not aggressively. Make friends with your horse and pay close attention to what he likes and dislikes." He showed me how to get on with the horse I would ride and care for that summer: Lucky, a big white gelding. He was trained for pack and riding saddle. Lucky and I became friends, as I was able to follow the horseman's coaching.

Each evening Grandfather Horseman and I sat quietly after supper by the campfire. The horses could be seen grazing a short distance away. Wild animals would come out of the forest into the meadows. Some would come very close. The horseman showed me that one only has to sit in a certain way, calm one's breathing, settle into one's belly into a kind of emptiness, and the various animals would come around. Birds

would drop into camp, bear could be seen By the river below camp, deer would browse by, chipmunks would scurry around.

Grandfather Horseman had an endless supply of stories about wild and domestic animals, most of which contained some wisdom or insight. Altogether they showed a keen power of concentration and observation, which comes from an ability to relax and let things be, so that they can reveal themselves to us. When he walked the trail with the packstring, he never hurried, wasted energy, or fought the horses. Although in his late sixties, he could walk from dawn to dusk, unpack and unsaddle the horses, make camp, cut wood, build a fire, cook supper, washup, all the while telling engaging stories. Much of what he knew was from an oral tradition stretching back to the dawn of domestication of animals in the West. Alas, we are on the verge of losing these traditions.

When I went out into adult life, I forgot some of the core lessons my father and the horseman taught me about being with animals. Once, when tired, I tried to teach one of my dogs something. I lost my patience and spoke in harsh anger to the dog, and struck him with my hand. That intemperate act took quite some time to work out with the dog. He did not bear a grudge or cringe when I called him, but he became anxious about certain things. There was no doubt that my lack of patience and use of negative energy had done temporary damage to our relationship. Eventually, through the right approach, trust was reestablished, practising what is called blending energy (Ki, or Chi) with others. In this way, the dog and I worked out the problems caused by my impulsive action.

From experience, then, I have learned that we can generate positive energy that is healing and attractive. It's also inexhaustible, if we dwell in harmony in all of our relationships with animals, plants, humans, and nature. Establishing such relationships is not a theory of animal training. It is an ongoing way of being, a practical activity that enables us to learn and share openness with others. Compassion is a key to this open, positive energy. Through loving attention we learn to complete ourselves in harmony with others, nonhuman and human. In this way we realize the intrinsic goodness of all beings. This is a deep source of insight and understanding.

The natural world is filled with animals all around and within us. The animals have the facts and wisdom we need to solve our human problems. Those who can dwell in harmony with animals live in peace because they are peace. With harmonious energy we do not train or condition animals. We let them be themselves. We learn to work together to create something more beautiful from our relationship. The techniques of animal teaching are subordinate to learning how to be in harmonious energy through compassionate attention. This was shown by Father and Grandfather Horseman in their actions.

Some of the greatest horse trainers in the Nineteenth Century learned their skill in the North American West. Among the most famous were the "whisperers." They were called this because they spoke very softly into the horse's ears. According to all accounts, a whisperer could gentle unruly, dangerous horses in a short time, when everyone else had failed. They began working with the horse by spending several hours alone with him in the barn with no distractions. In this way they

established a n intense bond with the horse, befriended it, let it know they were not going to harm it, that they were going to help it. A whisperer could ride a horse a short distance and tell exactly how it had been trained and treated. Whisperers were said to love horses and favour their company.

The horseman said that in his family the horsetrainer would bond with colts from an early age. This was accomplished in a number of ways. One of the most important was playing with them. He said that each day his father would go out and play with the colts. He would play with them as a horse; he would gambol and play their games. In this way he became a member of their "tribe." They would then follow him around. This whole process had nothing to do with breaking the horse or its spirit. Broken horses, he said, are damaged. He remarked, "The secret of being a horseman is to be your best so as to encourage the best from the horse."

These are just some of the things that Father and Grandfather Horseman taught me about being with dogs, horses and other animals. Being with one's self and with other people is no different. This way of harmonizing with animals should also be practised so as to live wisely with the natural world. If we empty ourselves of desire, ambition, fear and urge to control the animal (nature), and match our energy with theirs (it), then we are not of two minds; we meet the other in cooperative harmony. Together we create something more beautiful than we can create alone.

My dad told me that he once watched some Sioux horsemen ride their ponies bareback in a demonstration. He marvelled over their ability to remain seated while their mounts were doing all sorts of wild galloping, jumping, twisting and turning. He asked an elder Sioux standing next to him at the exhibition how the young warriors managed to stay on their mounts. The elder thought for a moment, then smiled and clasped his hands in front of him and moved them about vigorously together while saying "not two, not two!" In unity the two were one. When our relationships with animals are an emergent unifying process, then we together realize our larger ecological Self and spiritual powers of nature, of which we all are a part.

In learning to be with animals we come to know more deeply who and what we are. We only know animals, nature and others, in all their intrinsic values when we know them through the heart of compassion's clear energies. This is the wisdom animals have taught me, with assistance from Dad and Grandfather Horseman. I thank them all for this wisdom. Let us love the animals around and within us. May they all flourish!

Alan Drengson is an Associate Professor at the University of Victoria, in Victoria, B.C., Canada. He is the founder and Senior Editor of The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy. He is also the Senior Editor of the International Journal of Ecoforestry. He has co-edited two anthologies, the Philosophy of Society (Methuen 1978), and The Deep Ecology Movement (North Atlantic Books, 1955). He is the author of numerous articles and books including Beyond Environmental Crisis (Peter Lang 1989), Doc Forest and Blue Mountain Ecostery (Ecostery House, 1993), and The Practice of Technology (SUNY 1995). He is a devoted wilderness journeyer. He is also a practitioner of Aikido the Japanese Martial Art.

The information below was kindly forwarded to me by Tony Hind of Hombu Dojo in Tokyo, Japan. I requested the Aikido World Headquarters "A Guide for New Members" (which is reproduced here in-part only) in an effort to help those Aikido students travelling to Japan and to increase our level of awareness of dojo's around the world.

If you have information on other national or international dojo's which you think would be of interest to our readers, please forward that information to: Gail Macphail, Editor, Aikido Forum, P.O. Box 5581, Stn.B, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V8R 6S1

AIKIKAI FOUNDATION
AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS
17-18 WAKAMATSU-CHO SHINJUKU-KU, TOKYO
162 JAPAN
TEL. 03-3203-9236 FAX. 03-3204-8145

ENTRY FEES AND REGULAR PRACTICE RATES

	ENTRY FEE	MONTHLY RATE	
Regular Class	¥ 6,000	¥ 10,000*	Mon.-Sat.
Sunday	¥ 5,000		Sun. only
Regular & Sun	¥ 13,000		Sun.-Sat.
Children's Class	¥ 4,500		2 days/wk
Individual Class	¥ 40,000		2 days/wk
Group (3-Plus)	¥ 60,000-plus		2 days/wk
*students	¥ 7,500		

All Entrance and Monthly Practice fees are non-refundable.

PRACTICE HOURS

Practice if offered once per day at the following times:

CLASS	DAYS	TIME	LOCATION
Beginners	Mon.-Sat.	07:00-08:00	2nd Floor
	M. W. F.	17:30-18:30	2nd Floor
	M. W. F.	19:00-20:00	2nd Floor
Regular	Mon.-Sat.	06:30-07:30	3rd Floor
	Mon.-Sat.	08:00-09:00	3rd Floor
	Mon.-Sat.	15:00-16:00	3rd Floor
	Mon.-Sat.	17:30-18:30	3rd Floor
	Mon-Sat	19:00-20:00	3rd Floor
Sundays	(Sat. only)	10:30-11:30	3rd Floor
	Sun.	09:00-10:00	3rd Floor
Sundays	Sun	10:30-11:30	3rd Floor
	Sun (Beg. only)	09:30-10:30	4th Floor
Women's	Tue./Thu.	18:30-19:30	2nd Floor
Children's	T/F/S/S	(Ask Office)	

DOJO ETIQUETTE AND CUSTOMS

1. Proper manners and rules should be obeyed, while following the instructions of one's teacher.
2. Practice should be serious and sincere, but should not inflict an injury on others.
3. All should participate in cleaning following practice, in order to insure a clean place of training.
4. There should be no smoking in the dojo at anytime.
5. Harmony should be respected, and practice should be bright.
6. Practice under the influence of alcohol should be avoided.
7. People observing practice should respect the rules and order of the dojo.
8. All accidents and/or injuries resulting from practice are the responsibility of the individual member.

MELODIOUS FOUNDATION

Tugged by alarms, and by a love/
addiction sometimes alarming,
we have pulled our larval bodies out
from cosy dream cocoons.

Even as we arrive at the Y
the chrysalis of sleep still
encrusts our eyes, entangles hair.
Creases of absent pillows embedded
in some of our morning faces.

A straggler slithers into an empty space
in line. My students behind me
for the ritual bow before
the laminated photo of O'sensei
propped in front

as we are swallowed
in the mega-decibel typhoon.
From the other half of the gym
Blondie, then Bob Seeger, pound
the speakers for fitness seekers
who bury stretch of muscles, grind
of joints in ordered frenzy.
Sneakers squeal from the quad
behind us, and tremors rumble from one
basket to the other chasing the blam-blam
dribbled basketball.

Oh, we add our share, exertion and noise.
Thunk-thunk bodies strike the mat in ukemi.
Breakfall whap-bang explodes
through the thick racket
as one arm slaps and feet land.

Can others hear the music from our quad
when fragments of sleep are sloughed
and inner ears awaken? Body-minds
concentrate melodiously
so deep

that through the silence
I think I hear
O'sensei
as he sings

the ocean, the continent,
generations.

Students spiralling, toss musical notes
as their bodies strum fierce melody.
Halo of exertion, halo of sweat,
halo of music
encircles us all.

Fran Turner

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