VOSHIKAN INTERNATIONAL

Vol. 6 No. 5 February 1996

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"Aikido Yoshinkan International Magazine is committed to the presentation of true technique and spirit to those who love Aikido."

Gozo Shioda

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NoticeBoard

Inoue Shihan to visit Paris (April 3 -10)

(April 3 - 10)

Muguruza Sensei will host Inoue Shihan and Oyamada Jokyo for a series of demonstrations and clinics in April.

For further information contact:

Aikido Yoshinkai de France 2 Avenue de Savoie 78140 Velizy France

Chida Shihan at Sowakan Dojo (June 28 - 30th)

The Sowakan Dojo will host Chida Shihan in Vancouver B.C. for clinics and a demonstration.

For further information contact:

Keith Taylor 1410 Toronto Pl. Port Coquitlam, BC V3B 2T7



Chida Shihan throws Itoh Jokyo

Chida Shihan to Germany

This year Nagano Sensei is celebrating the 10th anniversary of Aikido Yoshinkai in Germany with a series of clinics, and demonstrations with Chida Shihan and Itoh Jokyo. The clinics will take place September 19-22, with a demonstration on Sept. 21.

For further information contact:

Aikido Yoshinkan e.V. Auenstr. 19 80469 Munich tel.: (089) 2 01 22 90

Internet Pages

The Chudokan dojo recently made their internet debut. All are welcome to visit at:

url=http://www.wincom.net/knash/chudo.html

The IYAF home page has posted additional photos from the Kagamibiraki (p. 2) and the Kangeiko (p. 2). Take a look at: url=http://iac.co.jp/~iyaf/

Thanks to all the recent contributors to the magazine. Support of all IYAF members is needed to make the magazine a truly international one, and to keep open the communication between Yoshinkan practitioners.

Those wishing to contribute can send submissions to :

AYI

2-28-8 Kamiochiai Shinjuku-ku Tokyo 161 Japan

or submissions can be sent by email to: iyaf@iac.co.jp

Honbu Dojo News

New Years Demonstration

On Sunday January 21, 1996 the Honbu Dojo held the *Kagami biraki*. This annual demonstration, is the traditional end to the New Years season, and the opening of the dojo for the New Year. Always a spirited occasion, this year was no exception with the senshusei demonstrating kihon waza, and the instructors showing kihon dosa, advanced techniques and some dynamic jiyuwaza.



Nakano Shihan demonstrates at the Kagami biraki

A large crowd filled the dojo for the demonstration, and then helped celebrate the occasion by sharing in the traditional Kagamibiraki meal. *Oshiruko*, a sweet red bean soup with mochi (rice cakes), was prepared by the instructors, and it was washed down with sake and beer, another New Years tradition. Additional photos of the Kagami biraki are available on the IYAF home page at

url=http://iac.co.jp/~iyaf

Kangeiko (January 20-29)

Kangeiko is another traditional Japanese event that the honbu dojo holds every year. Held over ten consecutive days during the coldest period of the year, kangeiko is purported to build the spirit, and invigorate practitioners.

Despite 7 a.m. start, the 41st annual kangeiko was well attended on each of the 10 days. On each day, one technique is presented from several different types of attack. Chida Shihan started the first day with shihonage teaching tachi (standing) and suwari (kneeling) waza from attacks such as katate mochi (one wrist grasp), and yokomen uchi (side strike). The next day was Shioda Sensei teaching ikkajo, and on through the instructors. Each day a different type of technique was taught, going through them all over the 10 days. Recently promoted to Jokyo, Kenji Itoh Sensei made his kangeiko debut teaching sokumen iriminage.

It is a struggle to wake up each morning and trudge off to the dojo in the dark and cold, but at the end of class, you are awake and alert. It's a great way to start the day, and a great way to chase the winter blues.



Final Day of Kangeiko

International News

Buseikan Dojo

In November 1995, Steve Nickerson head of the Buseikan Dojo, was invited to attend the seventh annual Canadian Forces Sports Award Ceremony held in Ottawa, Canada. This event is held to honour deserving Canadian Forces athletes, coaches, officials, and teams for their leadership, athletic excellence, and outstanding achievements in the past year. Major-General Desloges presented Steve Sensei with 5th Canadian Forces Recruiting, Education, and Training System "Male Athlete of the Year" for his tireless efforts, leadership and contributions to the Canadian Armed Forces through Yoshinkan Aikido.

Another year has come and gone at the Buseikan Dojo with 1995 being our best ever. The spirit of Yoshinkan Aikido continues to grow here at Canadian Forces Base Borden, and so too does the popularity and respect for this, the most fantastic art on the planet.

Every year the students and instructors at the Buseikan Dojo throw a Christmas party at the dojo with food and beverages available after training. This one time of the year, we like to relax the discipline, just a little, and invite parents and siblings to join us for a combined adult and children's class. For one hour out of the year, parents are permitted to try their hand at Aikido and we commend those who participated. We also do a belt exchange where the Chief Instructor trades belts with the senior students in the children's class. We find this to be very enjoyable as an eleven year old leads his peers, parents, and instructors through a technique. We would like to invite other dojos to try this some times. We find it promotes family involvement, respect and emphasizes the true spirit of Yoshinkan Aikido. In closing, we sincerely hope that all Aikidoka around the world enjoy a happy and prosperous New Year.

-Buseikan Dojo Executive Committee

Jeannette and James Senseis Visit California

During the month of December 1995, James Jeannette Sensei from the Aiki Centre of Canada, visited the West Coast to conduct classes and clinics at the Shuyokan and Kadokan. Several classes were held at each dojo focusing on the *kihon dosa* and *kihon waza* of Yoshinkan Aikido. A three hour clinic was held towards the end of Jeannette's visit that covered more advanced techniques started in previous classes. Jeannette Sensei finished his tour by attending the 5th annual Shuyokan Dojo Christmas party where he received an award for his contribution to the growth of Yoshinkai Aikido on the West Coast.



Jeannette Sensei at the Shuyokan

Gilbert James Sensei from the Midwest Yoshinkai Aikido Association Seigokan Dojo in Chicago Illinois also visited the Shuyokan and Kadokan during October. During his visit he conducted classes at both dojos, demonstrating the fine points of *tai no henko ichi* and *nikajo* as they apply to techniques of Yoshinkan Aikido. James Sensei was presented with a Certificate of Recognition for his contribution to the continuing growth of Yoshinkan Aikido on the West Coast.

Making Aikido Accessible to Everyone

Kevin Bradley, a shodan instructor at the Seigokan Dojo in Chicago, Illinois, has had a dream of teaching Aikido since he began training over 12 years ago. As he matured in the art and in life, his dream took a slight turn and he wanted his art to be available to a population of people who often get ignored: people with disabilities.

Kevin contacted the Fox Valley Special Recreation Association, a nonprofit organization that provides recreational activities for children with disabilities, early in 1995 to explain his plan. After a few short meetings, an Aikido class was established. The group started out with four students, and is now up to fourteen. The children range in age from 8 to 13, and the disabilities include Downs



Syndrome, Turettes and Attention Deficit Disorder, just to name a few. Since the program's inception, parents have approached Kevin and indicated that Aikido has helped their children in other physical activities and in everyday life.

Bradley Sensei with a student at Fox Valley

During the year, Kevin had the honor of testing and passing his first student, and at the end of the year, this student passed her 8th kyu examination. Six of her classmates also tested at the end of 1995 and received their 9th kyu certificates from Kevin's instructor, Gilbert James Sensei. In the Spring of 1996, the children in the Aikido program will be performing at a talent show held by the Association. If anyone is interested in learning more about the program for children with disabilities, please call Kevin Bradley at 708-572-2967 or 708-820-2001.

Seiwakan Dojo

On Sunday December 17th, Alan Burnett was tested and graded to shodan. This came after 4 years with Greg West Sensei. The reason this grading is so special to Seiwakan Dojo is that Alan started his Aikido training at 55 years of age, having never practiced Martial Arts in his life. He performed a very focused and spirit filled test. Alan has been an inspiration to all who know him and is testimonial that there are no limits in Aikido. We would like to welcome Alan to the Yoshinkan family and wish him continued growth in Yoshinkan Aikido.

- Seiwakan Dojo

Aikido Shugyo

Nineteenth Installment, continued from Vol. 6 No 3

LEARN THE LOGICAL STRUCTURE OF AIKIDO THROUGH BASIC TRAINING

Now, let me explain what everybody should be aware of while training. Aikido is based on basic training. Looking just at these basics, many people seem to think that this is not very practical. They miss the point. The problem is not to say whether it is practical or not, the problem is to know what is the purpose of basic training.

As I have said previously, at the Ueshiba Dojo there was no direction, no set form and no basics. There was only the techniques that Ueshiba Sensei would demonstrate and the students could only try to copy the best they could. In relation to teaching Sensei used to say "Be one with the universe", and that was all. Actually it is true, to say that this is what aikido is about. According to the situation we should be able to adapt and move freely in any direction. So in a sense we can say that having a system, ordered and patterned for the technique is a lie. But the fact is that without any rules or systems to learn or to teach, only a small minority who understand the principles can eventually progress and all the others have no chance to improve or to get better.

When I started my own dojo I decided that I had to do something about this. I felt that when we are responsible for teaching collectively to many students it is absolutely necessary to have a way of teaching that allows any individual to understand and consequently progress. Therefore I applied a system to the techniques I had learnt from Ueshiba Sensei and arranged them according to my own understanding of the logical structure. I thought to myself "How would it be possible to keep the power flowing consistently and with the least amount of physical strength make someone lose his balance and still be extremely powerful?". That is how I came to define a standard technical pattern or system. These are the actual basic techniques used by the teachers of the Yoshinkan, and they therefore follow a very strict form. The position of the hands or the angle of the feet are taught very precisely and carefully to a point where sometimes it is difficult for beginners to accept. But there is a meaning to each movement and what really is important is to think about the way to connect it to the logical structure. That is the real training.



By merely repeating the technique we do not understand is of no meaning whatsoever.

Following the same line of thinking someone who is concerned only about throwing or locking a person is hopeless. These kind of people never think about the meaning of the logical structure but just throw in a movement, so that even if they are physically very strong they have few chances to learn the logical structure. Training and repeating a form is not struggling or fighting each other. We practice the form to find out how to position ourselves to make the partner lose his balance, or to learn about this kind of strength and how to use it. This is the purpose of katageiko (form training). However this does not mean that in a real situation when we have to face someone in a fight that we have to move exactly as in the techniques. It is important to be aware of this.

Something that is often said in relation to the basic techniques is that it is strange to make our opponent hold our wrist. This is correct because in fact we should not be in a situation where somebody grasps our wrist. The principle of true aikido is to apply a technique before the opponent can really hold us. But as I have already said many times the basic techniques are for the purpose of training. If we let our partner hold our hand while training we can feel his strength and how it changes. For example we will learn how to react depending on if we are pulled or pushed.

In this way we practice the basic techniques and we learn how to move our body according to all kinds of strength and power, so that during the next step we can train and learn how to put it freely into practice in movements.

Robert Mustard Sensei In Toronto

David Oikawa, Aikido Yoshinkai Canada

Aikido Yoshinkai Canada members were very fortunate to have Robert Mustard Sensei visit the Toronto dojo to offer 3 clinics over the last weekend in October. Mustard Sensei first began his study of Yoshinkan Aikido under Kimeda Sensei in Canada 1977. He has spent the last 10 years in Japan training at the Yoshinkan Aikido headquarters in Tokyo. In 1991, he was awarded the rank of 5th *dan* and was the head foreign instructor at honbu. Mustard Sensei has now moved back to Canada in the Vancouver area of British Columbia.

Mustard Sensei began the Saturday clinics by emphasizing the importance of the kamae stance. Kamae is the foundation for all other Yoshinkan Aikido techniques. Interestingly enough, kamae is one of the main differences that sets Yoshinkan Aikido apart from other styles of Aikido. In particular, Mustard Sensei stressed the importance of the location of the hips in kamae. The usual instructions from our seniors about keeping a square stance in kamae was emphasized by Mustard Sensei. He brought a new spin on the issue by emphasizing the importance of the "opposite hip". He noted that we frequently have a strong forward hip, but it is our back hip which helps to focus power through our hara (center body). He also stressed the importance of keeping our bottom hand strong and focused while in kamae. Finally, he stressed the importance of keeping the back of the neck, body and hip in line so that all three parts were focused and moved in a unit.

He demonstrated the importance of all of these matters by having uke push and pull on shite while shite was in the kamae stance. I personally found it fairly easy to maintain my kamae position when uke was pushing, however when uke pulled, I was surprised at how easily my kamae was disrupted. Mustard Sensei also illustrated how important the hip position is in kamae by having uke twist shite at the hips. This exercise clearly showed how important the "opposite hip" is to maintaining the strong kamae position.

The practical application of this exercise was then demonstrated through a variety of hand techniques. It immediately seemed clear to me that by using "the opposite hip" much more power was transferred to uke in techniques. In particular, shite's *zanshin* (finishing stance) was much stronger by allowing the focusing of energy.

On Sunday, Mustard Sensei continued to demonstrate the practical aspects of hip position and the importance of a proper kamae stance.

All those who attended the seminar series owe a great debt to Mustard Sensei.

Balancing the Scales of Training

By Leslie Mills, Shuwakan Dojo

There is so much to learn in Aikido. We talk about the lifelong pursuit and then we watch what we are pursuing as it evolves and modulates. We watch our level of knowledge grow and our techniques improve. We see that changes in our understanding can have dramatic affects, both in the body and the spirit. We are constantly reminded of what we don't know yet, of where we might grow next, of what we might try to do differently. It is humbling.

I am approaching an interesting anniversary. Soon, I will have been a *udansha* (black belt) for as long as I was a *mudansha* (kyu grade). Half of my 'career' in Aikido will have been spent after my decision to become a student of the way. I still remember, weighing whether or not to actually pursue this, knowing the symbolism and rite of passage associated with getting the black belt. I still have a tremendous respect for the path itself, and those who came before me to pave my way. I know I have only taken a few steps as I look at the whole journey, and as I go further, more and more of the journey is revealed to me. So, on I go.

Some of my students are very new, and are really students of the techniques at this point. Some are having a great time, and don't really understand the choices they will be making yet. They train with zest and joy and a lot of energy, and they stay after class to talk, or maybe to try to make it all last a little longer. They see me through very different eyes than the ones I see myself with. They watch and learn, question and compare, practice and praise. They think I already 'arrived' because my belt is black. They want me to know how 'good' they think I am, and how much they appreciate my teaching. They quote me to other students as though I were an authority on the way Aikido should be. That is how they see me.

A good teacher is always a student. And a good student is always trying to do better, and find the next milestone. It pleases me that I am genuinely humble in the face of their praise. They help me to keep things in perspective. It's true, as yudansha we don't spend a lot of time gloating over how far we've come, but we have come a commendable distance. The students will remind us of that every now and then. And it's equally true that we don't stop where we are and think we are done with our journey. We count on our own spirit for the inspiration and desire to continue.

So the process of teaching and learning keeps itself in a beautiful balance. And we place ourselves within the process. We know that we have become too heavy or too light when we tip the scales to an unbalanced place. We require and recognize the opposing influences that steady us in the center. We are buoyed by those that come after us, and nourished by those that came before. It's a beautiful thing, isn't it?

Technique Explanation

Ryote Mochi Tenchinage Ni

In tenchinage (heaven and earth throw), shite re-directs uke's power in a large circular movement, stretching uke both up and down to take his balance before focusing the power into one point to throw uke to the ground.



1. Shite and uke face each other in hidari gyaku hanmi kamae.



2. Shite and uke then move in, shite offering both hands with fingers spread. Uke grasps shite's wrists firmly and pushes.



3. Harmonizing with uke's push, shite pivots on the front leg just under 180 degrees (in the same way as in the first movement of shumatsu dosa ni). Be careful not pull the right hand, but raise it as in hiriki no yosei ichi, keeping the focus forward.



4. The left hand moves with the left leg in a large circular movement forward and around uke. The left hand finishes palm down, stretching uke down and to the rear without pulling. The right leg follows with the right hand moving up towards uke's armpit, locking the elbow while stretching uke up. This position is the same as that in ryote mochi tenchinage ichi.



5. Shite steps behind uke with the right leg to throw. As uke is thrown, the circular movement of the hands and the straight movement of the body are focused to one point on the mat behind uke and everything comes together in strong zanshin.

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Instructor Registrations

Fifth International Instructors Course

February is the final month of the instructors course, and the senshusei are training hard for their final test. As with all senshusei, theirs has been a dramatic change from last April, when twelve students donned white belts and joined the course. Eight senshusei will take their test, February 27.

Estella Carvalho

AYI: Tell us about your background, and why you are doing the course.

E.C.: I trained at the West Hampstead dojo in London with David Rubens for a year before deciding on the course. I decided I wanted to teach, and thought I could learn best by being taught by the Japanese masters.



left Terumasa Hotta; right Estella Carvalho;

AYI: How do you find the course?

E.C.: My idea was that it would be physically and mentally hard, I thought I would die, but it wasn't as bad as I expected. We do a lot of *kihon dosa (basics* movements), and a deep introduction to Aikido, which I think is good for not just beginners, but people of all levels.

AYI: How are your preparations for the final test?

E.C.: For the first two tests, I felt really good. I knew the techniques from before, and I was

well prepared. For the shodan I was mentally stressed. I knew the techniques, but I wanted more time to practice.

For the final grading, there is so much more. I have so much information in my head and I want to use it all. There are the techniques, *jiyu waza* (free style), and *jissensoku waza* (self defense) that are new, and then the *kihon dosa* too. Even with all the new things, the *kihon dosa* is still a big part of it.

Yaheli Bet-Or

AYI: How did you come to do the course?

Y.B.: I had never done it before, but I came to Japan specifically to do Aikido. I began in an other dojo, but the training was not enough. When I heard of the course, the schedule and the intensity, it fitted my idea of training. The structure of Yoshinkan Aikido, right from the basics was what I thought Aikido should be.

AYI: What have you got so far?

Y.B.: I know the basics. I can't do them very well, but I have the idea, and this is a start. From here I know what to do to get better.

The change in my Aikido is like night and day. I started knowing almost nothing, and I never could have learned as much as I have outside the course. I know I am still a beginner, I only know some of the theory, I need a lot more practice to make it work.

Matthew Murray

AYI: Was the course difficult to get through?



left Yaheli Bet-Or; right Stephen Ohlman

MM: It was mentally tough. I really had to think of it one day at a time. If I thought of it as "eleven more months to go" I wouldn't have made it. I would think about the next holiday, and luckily there are a lot of national holidays.

AYI: Is it difficult to understand the Japanese instructors?

MM: At first it was difficult. But you pick it up on your own and eventually you learn to anticipate the instructors idea. You become a visual learner, not relying on what is said. The sensei also speak a little English, and then the foreign instructors translate as well.

AYI: What do you plan to do when you go back?

MM: I plan to teach, and some day I may open a dojo, but I think of myself as a student. At the honbu it's hard to think about being a teacher with so many teachers around.

Steven Ohlman

AYI: How do you find living in Japan?

S.O.: I enjoy Japan. I didn't find moving here a drastic change. There are minor inconveniences like reading directions on packages, or reading directions and signs. But other things like the trains are not as bad as everyone says. And the people are friendly.

AYI: How about supporting yourself in Japan?

S.O.: Because I come from Canada, I was able to get a working holiday visa. With it I got a`

teaching job, and was able to support myself. I also had the advantage of having my wife with me, and she found work as well. We were able to live comfortably, and even save some money.

AYI: Do you have any advice for prospective visitors to Japan, or senshusei?

S.O.: One thing to do is to learn *Katakana* (Japanese alphabet) before you get here. It will really help you understand simple things, and adjust to life here.

Corrections

AYI apologizes for an error in AYI Vol. 6 No. 4. The date Kancho Sensei received his 9th dan from Ueshiba Sensei should read Showa 36, or 1961.

AYI apologizes for the omission of the Mushinkan Kuala Lumpur dojo from the dojo list in Vol. 6 No. 4. Dojo details are:

Sonny Loke Sensei Mushinkan Kuala Lumpur 11A. Jalan Jejaka Dua Taman Maluri Cheras Kuala Lumpur 55100 Malaysia

AYI welcomes contribution from instructors and students.

Is your dojo having a special event you would like others to attend?

Did your dojo have an event you would like others to know about?

Do you have some ideas or insights that might be helpful to others?

Contact AYI! We would like to hear from you.

Deadlines for submissions are:

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