

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN

INTERNATIONAL

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN HONBU DOJO
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INTRODUCTION

SOKE SHIODA GOZO

It has been Aikido Yoshinkan's long-lived dream to establish a federation such as the one we created near the end of 1989. I believe that this has been made possible due to the overwhelming dedication and support of many overseas Aikido organizations, for which I can never express enough of my gratitude.

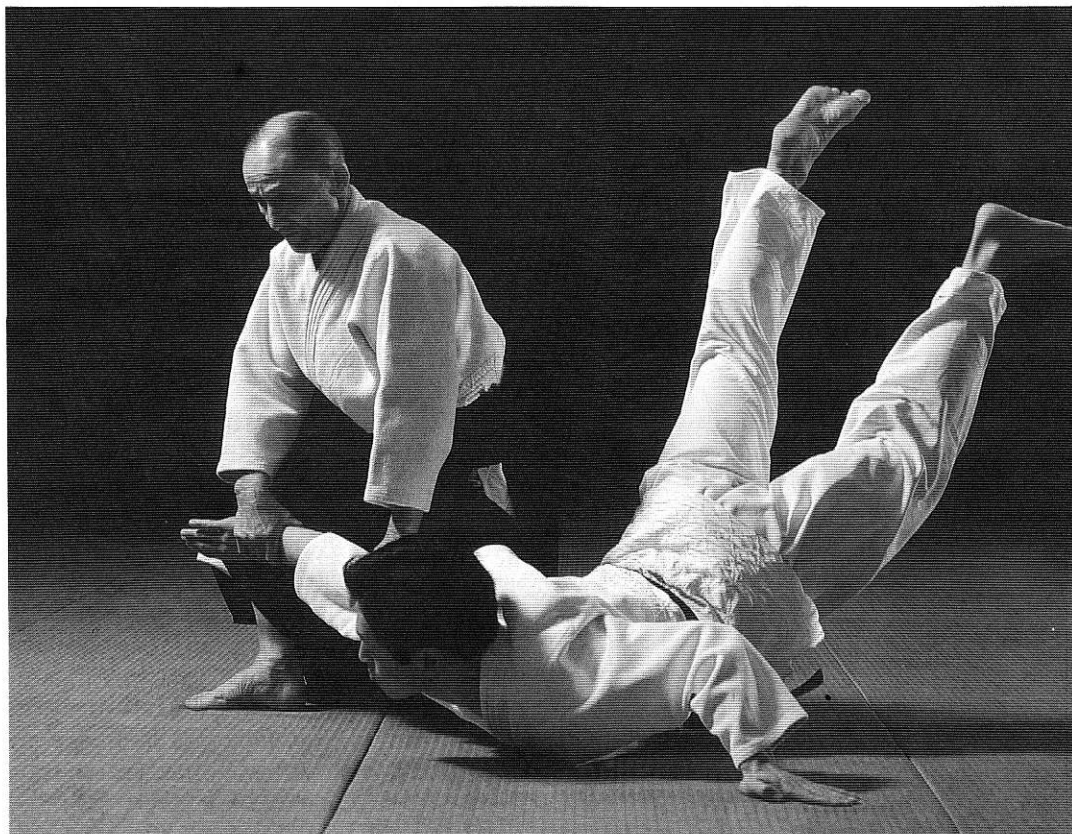
Our aim in the future is to increase membership worldwide and to provide guidance in understanding the spirit of Yoshinkan Aikido. As part of this, we wish to provide proper instruction to improve techniques abroad. To fulfill these aims, an organizational foundation becomes crucial.

Both the Honbu Dojo and members of the IYAF should have a good grasp of their own situations and should be able to freely communicate with one another for the purpose of exchanging the necessary information.

The IYAF is for everybody the world over, and it is the Honbu Dojo's task to provide support for members of the IYAF. In order for the Honbu Dojo to provide assistance, we are seeking information and opinions and invite requests from those who are concerned. The Honbu Dojo would be grateful if this magazine could become a means of conveyance.

Currently, 14 students from various countries are undertaking the first Foreign Instructors Course at the Honbu Dojo. They are all enduring a very rigorous training program, which is demanding mentally and physically. Upon their completion of the course, we hope that they will return to their respective countries and help spread Yoshinkan Aikido, thereby ensuring the prosperity of the IYAF.

In conclusion, I would like to pray for world peace. I hope that Aikido will play a part in promoting peace through international friendship, and I sincerely wish every success for our fellow members of Yoshinkan Aikido.



YOSHINKAN NOW

NEWS

◆27th Riot Police Training Course

On April 5, 1991, the 27th Tokyo Metropolitan Riot Police Training Course began. In addition to the 10 riot policemen, this year there are three other policemen from adjoining prefectures (Chiba and Kanagawa prefectures) and four Japanese *senshusei*, "special students," for a total of 17 undertaking the course. The course was outlined in the first issue of *Aikido Yoshinkan International*. The additional three policemen have rather different backgrounds. They are in their late 30s and hold high rankings in Kendo and Judo. They are instructors in their respective prefectural police departments.

◆Foreign Instructors Course

Starting off on the same date as the 27th Riot Police group, 14 *senshusei* from various countries began training very hard from Tuesday to Saturday. Their days start early. They arrive at the Dojo before 8:00 A.M., and they train from 8:30 to 9:30, 10:00 to 11:30, and 12:00 to 1:00.

A month has passed and they have been taught the *kihon dosa* (basic movements) and the first *kihon* (basic) techniques. They will be sitting their first gradings in June.

In this issue, we would like to introduce two of the *senshusei*—Eva Stoffer from Switzerland and Reinaldo Lopezy from Venezuela.

◆Eva Stauffer



I was born and brought up in a quiet, rural valley surrounded on three sides by high mountains. My home is about one hour east of Zurich.

My first long experience abroad came in 1972 at a Swiss college in London. I was 19 years old. My most vivid memories are those of innumerable school parties and liberal teachers.

After returning to Switzerland, I joined a credit card company as credit supervisor. I moved into a beautiful house with four friends and began singing in their New Wave band. I also worked with some women in a group called Die Frauenrakete (The Women's Rocket).

For many years I lived a double life, directed and career-oriented by day but quite different in my free time. The day came when I was forced to choose. I rejected money and the social status of a company life and chose the alternative.

I left Switzerland for New York. There I had many friends, mostly musicians. Through them I found work as a road manager. I think those three years working with people who tend to be quite self-centred—a necessity in their profession—taught me much about human beings. I learnt about minds and egos, including my own of course.

One of the concert tours brought us to Japan for 10 days in 1983, and I felt certain that one day I would return.

From New York I moved to London, where I stayed for almost a year before moving to Zurich. In Zurich, I worked for a Japanese securities company, gaining knowledge on Japan and its culture. In 1986, after travelling extensively in Southeast Asia, I finally arrived in Japan. I spent my first two years studying the Japanese language and the basics of shiatsu. After another year of travelling

I settled in Tokyo. Like many foreigners in Tokyo I earn my living as a language teacher.

My interest in martial arts started with being unable to motivate myself to go to the gym anymore. One day I met a woman from the Yoshinkan. I remember first seeing Yoshinkan Aikido at the Honbu Dojo and recognizing it as exactly what I had been searching for. Now I find myself among the first women to participate in an IYAF Instructors Course.

I took regular classes for about 10 months before entering the Instructors Course, which so far has been going well. I feel that my mind and body are both getting stronger. I believe getting through this year will be a rare opportunity for an exercise in self-discipline.

◆Reinaldo Lopezy Profile



My name is Reinaldo Lopezy. I was born in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1963.

Although I spent my childhood in Caracas, I moved later to the coastal town of El Caribe. El

Caribe is a port town and, as such, is typical of Venezuelan port towns. It was in El Caribe that I developed an interest in surfing and the sea. This interest has led me around the world as I have grown older, and in my travels I have become familiar with many cultures and languages.

One of the many cultures I found attractive was that of Japan. I travelled to Japan four times before eventually settling here. It was business that originally brought me here, but after entering the Yoshinkan Honbu Dojo in December 1990 I was trapped by the depth of Japanese budo and made the decision to study and if possible capture something of it for myself.

I am now a member of the IYAF Instructors Course. Every morning I wake up early and prepare for a daily, intensive lesson in Japanese martial arts. I had studied martial arts in South America but had not been offered such a chance as I have here at the Yoshinkan Honbu Dojo to study under masters of the art.

The course is a rapid introduction to the mysteries of Aikido. It is difficult to keep up with the teachings we are given each day. Every class and every technique offers a new insight into my life, and I am determined to give my best, to take in all I can while I have this chance.

Physically and mentally I feel I am developing quickly, and after the end of this course I am sure I will need some time to consider everything I have been taught.

From here I will continue with the goal of discovering this Aikido way of life.

AYI magazine wishes both Eva and Reinaldo the best of luck as they continue their progress in the first Foreign Instructors Course offered by the Yoshinkan Honbu Dojo.

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IYAF—International Yoshinkai Aikido Federation

Chida Sensei in Canada

From February 11 to February 26, I was commissioned by Mr. Karasawa, as part of an IYAF scheme, to visit the Province of Ontario, Canada, to give clinics at a number of dojos. A detailed schedule of my tour follows, but first I would like to outline the teaching method I employed.



I began each session with an emphasis on *kihon dosa*, "the basic movements," and then progressed to the teaching of basic techniques centered on the *kihon dosa*. I divided the techniques up into several groups and gave a session on a different group at each dojo. I explained the vital points of the techniques and the common principles among different techniques; for example, that *shite* holds *uke's* hand in exactly the same way in *shihonage* and *nikajo*. The clinics I held on the last two days of my tour were a summary of the preceding clinics.

From my observation of the Aikido practiced in Canada, I can say that technically the Canadians are very faithful to the basics and are keen in training the *kihon dosa*. Everyone agrees with the importance of the basics, but oftentimes it is extremely difficult to put agreement into practice. "When you are training," says Soke Shioda Sensei, "always reflect whether the techniques you perform correspond with the basics." In my opinion, the Canadian practitioners of Aikido are fulfilling these words of advice. I think that this is because each instructor bears in mind the importance of the basic movements and ensures that, when it comes to training, attention is paid to technical aspects that are grounded in the basics.

From what I saw, the Canadian people are very earnest and broad-minded. With these qualities

and their attitude toward training, I am hopeful that one day they will perfect a wonderful Aikido.

Feb 12-Arrive in Toronto

13-Instructors meeting

14-Clinic at Seimeikan

Instructor: Karasawa Sensei

Attendance: 18

15-Clinic at Seimeikan

Attendance: 24

16-Party

17-Arrive in Windsor

Clinic at Renbukan

Instructor: Jeanette Sensei

Attendance: 35

18-Clinic at Chudokan

Instructor: Block Sensei

Attendance: 43

19-Arrive in Toronto

Clinic at Jinbukan

Instructor: Plomish Sensei

Attendance: 28

20-Clinic at AYC

Instructor: Kimeda Sensei

Attendance: 42

21-Clinic at Seidokan

Instructors: Thompson Sensei

Haynes Sensei

Attendance: 32

22- Clinic at University of Toronto

Instructor: Crosswell Sensei

Attendance: 42

23-Instructors Clinic

Attendance: 24

General Clinic

Attendance: 55

24-Instructors Clinic

Attendance: 19

General Clinic

Attendance: 56

25-Depart Toronto



SOKE SHIODA GOZA ON KAMAE

Everything is contained or condensed in *kamae*. This is the *gokui*, "the most important single basic unit" of Aikido.

Aikido, as the founder, Morihei Ueshiba, said, is "to be one with the elements, with nature." To be natural is the most important thing. The student should be *sunao*, "completely open to learning," and he will learn what it means to be natural. To perform a natural *kamae* is not easy. Often, *kamae* is performed purely as form, a *kamae* just to do *kamae*. This has no meaning in the movement, whose effectiveness is limited to the person's strength. *Shizen no kamae* means that you "are one with the universe," free of *yashin*, "ambition." In other words, you must become *kamae*. You can develop your own *kamae*, the *kamae* that fits you.

Of course there is a basic *kamae*, and you should first perform this basic *kamae*. With time and experience you will find your own *kamae*. Everyone has a different character. In the same way, everyone should perfect his own *kamae*, in unity with nature. But we should never forget that it is the result of the basics. We can never reach this stage without the basics.

Shugyo, or "ascetic training," lasts all of one's life. Everyday you should train in *shugyo*, with feeling and a pure heart. If we train with the idea that we already know the technique then we stop learning, the ego takes over. You do *kamae* just for yourself, separated from the world, and then self-satisfaction enters. When that happens, progress and the development of a person's *kamae* stops and the connection with nature is severed.

There is nothing so strong as the force of nature. There are many ways to train physically. Take wrestling for example. When young people train their muscles, the more they train the stronger and more powerful they become. But muscle gets

weaker with age. We can't rely on muscles forever. Mental strength and strength of spirit become increasingly important.

If, as muscular strength diminishes, mental strength also diminishes then this is not budo. Mental strength should always be preeminent. The Gulf War proves this. The environment was terribly damaged during the war—vegetation, animals, and atmosphere—endangering the human species. Destroying nature threatens humanity. The United States and Iraq, who took the wrong path, should reflect on how wrong it was to use force at the expense of reason and the environment and cooperate to rebuild the natural environment.

It is the same in Aikido. If, after 5 years or 10 years, having learned many different things and techniques, we follow different paths, forget the base, and believe we are *sensei*, this is dangerous. So the more you practice the more it is important to come back to the origin. This is true in Aikido and I think also in sports and in life. There are a lot of things in common between this and *sado* (tea ceremony), *ikebana* (flower arranging), and other traditions.

Of major importance is the notion of *chushin*, "the center line," because the strength of the center is the origin of *ki* or *kokyū*. It is very important to discover and understand this principle. Each student should be able to reach a maximum of efficiency that corresponds to his level.

Please do your best to train with all your soul, with energy that comes from a love of Aikido. Do not train just as an exercise, train with all you have. Like what you are doing and do it as if it were the most important thing in your life. Yagyu Tajima said, "It is when we throw ourselves into the water ready to die, with no intention to move,

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To all of you who have already signed up and joined the dojo, I would like to ask you to be confident and proud of what you are doing. Of course this is easier said than done.

It is my wish that everyone should be able to perform a kamae that is *shizen to ittai*, "together with nature."

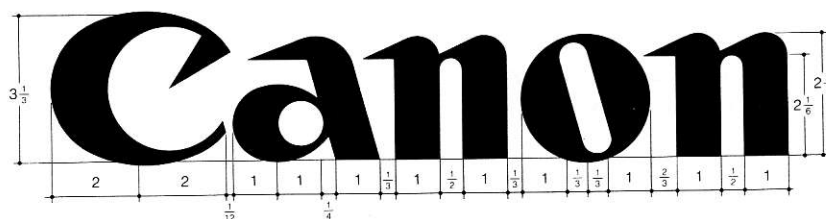
The first thing you learn as a beginner is kamae; this is *gokui*, "a very important thing." Don't forget it. Even later, when you have learned a lot of new techniques, never forget your feeling at the beginning, upon doing your first kamae. Distinguish between doing kamae for the sake of doing kamae, the form, and the true kamae. The explanation you read in the technical handbook of course is not the only or the perfect way, but it is the base of kamae.

(At this stage Soke Shioda asked one of the instructors, A, a Shihan, to step forward and demonstrate kamae.)

Observe A's kamae. First the way of moving the hands forward, then the legs. An important thing in Aikido is getting the hands, legs, and hips moving together and then demonstrating a "feeling" that all is together and happening naturally.

A has nice form, but his feeling is not of oneness. His legs and hands are not working together. It looks like they are working together, but this is not the case. This is very difficult to achieve. As I've already said, all the universe should join in unison with the hands, hips, and feet.

All that makes a person—his personality and character, way of thinking or philosophy, and presence—is reflected in his kamae. If your mind is not straight, your thinking not pure, you will have a stray kamae. Likewise, if you are cruel or brutal it will be reflected in your kamae. The technique reflects like a mirror.



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To expand on what I said earlier about doing kamae just to do it, do not think, "Maybe I should do it this way or maybe that way." Don't train like that. Train to be able to perform naturally, without thinking, only is it then that the feeling of *sunao* springs.

In future, please keep in mind that if you train with the right spirit and thinking you will improve and achieve a beautiful Aikido. Kamae was just now performed alone, but we say in Aikido, *tai sureba ai wasu*, "we practice with a partner." When two partners face on another and perform *shizen no kamae*, someone watching can see it as an expression of pure art and beauty.

Kamae should be beautiful and elegant in such a way that an onlooker possessed of a negative mindset will be moved by this beauty and inspired to change. So is it that many people come to be interested in Aikido.

(B, another Shiha, joins A in opposing kamae)

The *ki no tsunagari*, "exchange or connection in this flow of ki" are very weak. This is not something you can understand by watching, you must

feel it with your body. We should feel a sense of wonder in their kamae; no thought of fighting or moving, just togetherness.

(A and B Shiha move into kamae a second time)

This time is a little better; it's more natural. But there is *rikimi*, "tension," and where there is tension there is *ga*, "ego." We should eliminate the tension. It looks like a good, strong kamae, but if you look with experience you can see that this kamae is static, not living.

Always we should return to the base, the very beginning, otherwise the *shugyo* does not improve. For example, now as I walk around A and B electric waves, different signals, come to me. From B I feel something akin to a smell; near A, another smell. If there is a smell, it is not good. People around should sense only an emptiness, no feeling, that is what we should be able to do—*mushoku mushin*, "no expression, no feeling of aggression, no feeling of movement."

This is not something that you can change and correct straight away. You need years and years, until you die. Both A and B, through their years



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of training, have reached their present levels. They both possess something. It is now up to them to perfect it. Let's look, for example, at a technique, let's say *katate mochi nikajo osae*.

(A and B Shihan perform *katate mochi nikajo osae*)

As regards the *kiryoku*, they are both doing well. A, however, thinks too much from *kamae*. You should try to stop thinking. B is good in the way the hands, legs, and hips are moving. He should improve a bit more to find *shizen no kamae*. The characters of these two are reflected in the technique, which is a reflection of yourself. You should learn your weak point while training if you can't perform *shizen no kamae*.

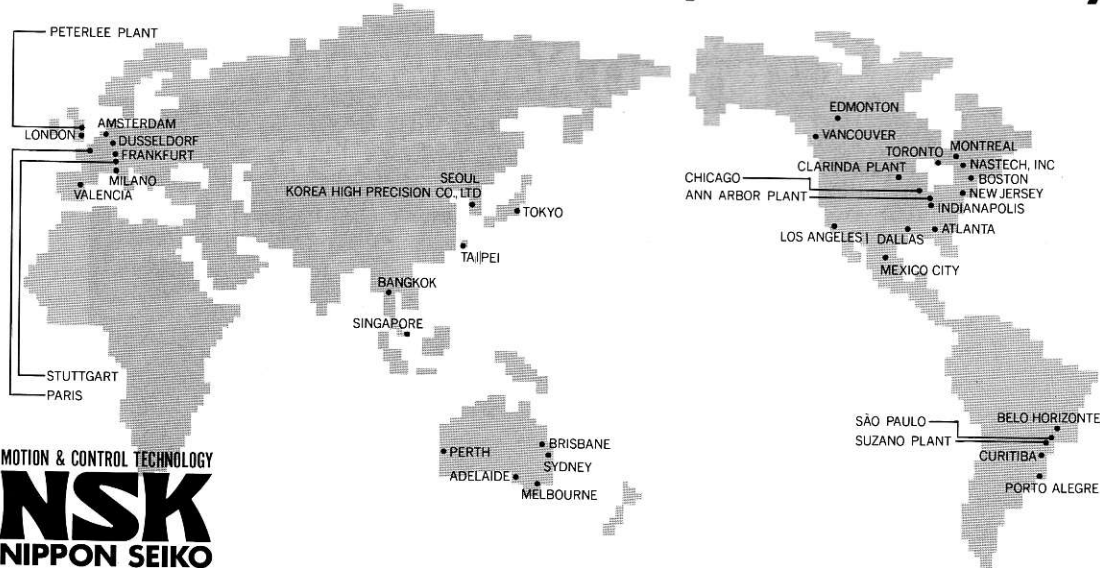
Although the way in which these two perform the *nikajo* technique very much conforms to the basic movement, there is somewhere a kind of tension and hardness. With experience, you will be able to make a technique work, whatever the position or form, and the beauty will appear. When, however, two students of the same level resist each other, then the technique will not work. Keep in mind these two important things: balance *pluski no nagare*, "the flow of ki," produce *taisureba*

ai wasu, "freedom from conflict and unity with your partner."

When executing a technique, do not anticipate the person's use of strength or resistance, consider him a part of yourself. I don't think of trying to fight or of doing something to him, only of being natural. Even with one hand it's possible to execute a technique. So it's not physical strength. This is the natural posture. The combined age of A and B is the same as mine, but age doesn't matter. We can do the technique and yet still be laughing. I have no *yashin*, "ambition." I always think that I have *kawaii deshi*, "very good students." The feeling of love is at the base. I don't think of wanting to take control, but rather of being nice to people; that is why I can throw them. This is something anyone can do, whatever their sex or age.

If the technique does not work it is because there is too much of something. You should learn to eliminate what is unnecessary and to become pure hearted. The problem is in the heart. If the heart is right and pure, the sword will be right, we say. If your heart is right, what you will be doing will be right. I wish for all of you to change, to

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become your natural selves and then to perform the techniques, just like when you were born, simple and natural.

When I control or throw my students, never do they hate me or have bad feelings toward me. They can be thrown and still be happy. Gradually, that is what you have to aim for. Keep that in mind in the future when you train in a lot of techniques, for example, *shomen* or *yokomen*. Do not do Aikido with the idea of doing harm or with strength or hands only, try to commit your heart.

Never forget that *shugyo* means looking for your hidden weak points. Always ask yourself, Where is my weak point?, and you will gradually, in looking for yourself, understand your partner's weak points. Just as even the largest, most fearsome animal has a weak point in its neck where, if stabbed, it can be killed easily, so, too, is there no invincible human being; somewhere there is a weak point. To first find this weak point is an absolute must, then you can learn Aikido in an enjoyable way.

Never look down on people. Instead, be as humble as possible. If you can do this, you can do anything. Unfortunately, as you progress too often you move away from the base. You forget. Oftentimes techniques performed for grading at the upper levels were performed better at a beginner's level. So it is of the highest importance to build up a strong base and to gradually add little by little to the foundation to reach the summit.

Please think about this when you practice, for from this springs beautiful technique and movement and an abundance of energy. Everyone can attain this level, the problem is the *ga, garyu*, "the ego," wanting to do it your own way; this arises

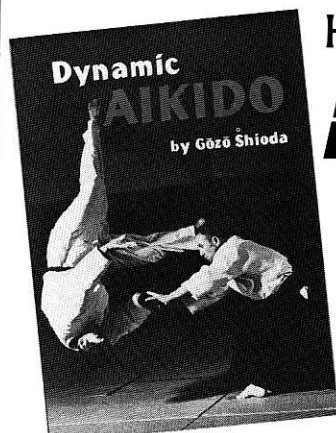
and stops progression. To avoid this you should forget everything and just do your best. Give all your heart during the one hour you train and then the interest, the pleasure, and the vitality you should derive from Aikido will come.

Eagerness and vitality are a must not only in Aikido but in fact anywhere—at work, in business, and so on. Again, train with energy and vitality. For that, learn to like and appreciate what you are doing. Keep in mind *tai sureba ai wasu* and *kokoro*, "your heart," and, more specifically, *shinjo*, "thoughts from your heart," not your mind, and *omoiyari*, "consideration," but not from compassion or pity.

Always think about the other person, your partner. What is he thinking about? What does he want? Develop the kind of telepathy that is at the origin of *wa*, the "harmony" of Aikido. This is the origin of all Aikido, its movements and its techniques—the root. This *wa* is not *dakyo*, "cooperating with your partner," but rather accommodating to him. Without destroying or losing yourself, adjust yourself to your partner.

You must learn to use your entire body, otherwise, if you teach, your students will doubt you. This reaction on the part of students is to be avoided. The student should trust and believe completely in what you teach because he realizes it's true. Look at your student as you now look at your teacher. Ask yourself what your student expects from you. If you teach with this in mind, then you will become a good teacher. When you teach always try to discover the good points in your student, what you don't have yourself. If you don't know how to do that you can't progress.

Soke Shioda, February 24, 1991



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INTERVIEW

INOUE SHIHAN

PROFILE

Kyoiichi Inoue is presently 8th dan in Yoshinkan Aikido. He is a full-time instructor at the Tokyo Metropolitan Police University and is responsible for teaching the *kidotai*, a select group of Riot Police. He is also responsible for the teaching of Yoshinkan Aikido to all women police in Tokyo. Inoue Shihan has played a leading part in the growth of the Yoshinkan since his entrance to the Yoshinkan in 1955.

In November 1990, *AYI* magazine interviewed Inoue Shihan in his office at the Tokyo Metropolitan Police University in the Nakano district of Tokyo.



Q. What was dojo life like when you began training?

A. I was still going to university. I trained with a four o'clock to five o'clock class every day and again from six thirty to seven thirty. I entered the dojo in 1955—November 1. I was a beginner when I joined. In 1956, on April 20, I became an *uchi deshi* (live-in student). I trained with the first group of *kenshusei*. The *kenshusei* were not the riot police but a group of students who trained alongside them. There were about ten *kenshusei* at that time.

Q. How would you compare training at that time with now?

A. It was very hard. Every morning we had to get up at six thirty and start training at seven o'clock.

We had *kenshu* classes from nine thirty to eleven thirty and again from two o'clock with private students of the dojo. And then the four to five training and six thirty to seven thirty.

Q. Was Soke Shioda always teaching?

A. Yes, most classes. He was assisted by Terada Shihan and the head of the Shiseikan Dojo, Tanaka Sensei. Also, we as trainee instructors would help too. As I said before, I started in November 1955, and I received my black belt, my *shodan*, on June 26, 1956. It was very fast, but I trained every day, all day. Even though I was enrolled at university, I would miss lectures to train. As a result, I had to delay my graduation.

Q. What is your involvement with the police in Tokyo?

A. I started teaching the metropolitan police in 1960. It was at this time that the riot police started training at the Honbu Dojo. In the beginning, I would accompany Soke Shioda to the place where the metropolitan police trained, but after a while I was going alone as a dojo instructor. In 1967, the women's police force began studying Aikido, and they requested an instructor to teach them. In 1970, there was a sudden increase in the number of police women studying Aikido. So on December 1, 1970, the police made an official request for a full-time instructor, and Soke Shioda asked me to go there. In 1970, I left the Honbu and began training the police. This was about the time of the seventh or eighth Riot Police Training Course.

Q. Do you think Aikido is useful for the police overseas, considering the special situations they must face, particularly when dealing with armed offenders or in cases where drugs are involved, or racial violence?

A. Yes, I believe it does help. Of course it is difficult to deal with someone who is armed, but I had the opportunity of speaking with a Japanese police officer who had studied Aikido. He had worked for the New York Police Department in the U.S. He told me that once he was chasing a drug dealer. He knew that police had often been shot while entering rooms so he crashed open the door and entered the room on his knees, in *shikkoho*. As he entered, the dealer started shooting, but at head level. In this way the police officer evaded the dealer's shots.

Considering this, it can be said that not only the technique but the spirit of Aikido, all that surrounds Aikido—*ukemi*, *shikkoho*—not only an individual technique like *kotegaeshi* is useful, but everything as a whole is useful.

Q. In your own view, what is Aikido?

A. That is a difficult question. All I can say is Aikido is *budo*. Of course to have strong wrists and good technique is important, but above that is the human level. To try to become a greater and stronger human being is also important. This is, for me, what we should be looking for in Aikido.

Ueshiba Sensei said that Aikido was the art of love and peace. Human beings have egos, and when something is not interesting, does not go the way they want, or especially when something goes wrong, they get angry. But in Aikido, even if you could escape when, for example, your partner is trying to do *nikajo* or *sankajo*, you will cooperate, or if the technique is painful or uncomfortable you will bear it. Learning to be patient and developing mental and physical endurance is the goal. One shouldn't train for the purpose of becoming the winner or of defeating an opponent, one should try to develop a bigger heart, bigger spirit. Learn together. Together make the technique. Create a special relationship. In other words, love.

Q. Is there a difference in the Aikido that is taught to the police and that which is taught to regular students?

A. Yes there is. When teaching the police, we don't train very much in *suwari waza* (sitting techniques). Because the police are working mostly outside there is little opportunity for them to use *suwari waza*. In the police, we wait for the students to reach a higher rank before we teach

suwari waza. And, for example, police women who study Aikido are studying not to become strong but to study a form of Aikido that can be directly useful in their work. This is the difference. I would like them to become strong and to understand better, to come to like Aikido for what it is, but we are dealing with a different problem

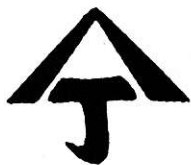
AYI Note: Inoue Sensei has asked us to point out that these are his personal opinions as an Aikido instructor and Shihan working inside the police department.

Is there an interview that you would like to see appear on the pages of Aikido Yoshinkan International?

Do you know someone involved in Aikido whom you think has something to say to the rest of us?

Are you interested in conducting an interview with someone from your country whose experiences with Aikido would be of interest to readers worldwide?

If so, please contact the staff of Aikido Yoshinkan International at the Yoshinkan Honbu Dojo. We would be happy to hear from you.



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YOSHINKAN AIKIDO WORLDWIDE

YOSHINKAN IN CANADA

The Aikido Yoshinkan of Burlington—Seiwakan Dojo—was conceived during the visit of Dojocho Shioda Yasuhisa to Burlington, Ontario, Canada, in October 1990. Dojocho presented us with the name Seiwakan, meaning "Purity and Harmony," ideals that we have adopted into our Aikido training. An instructors certificate was also presented to Sensei Greg West at this time.



Two months after Dojocho's visit, Greg West tested and was promoted to *san dan*, as were Gordon Blanking of the Seidokan Dojo and Roger Plomish of the Jinbukan Dojo. This test was conducted at the Halton Hills Yoshinkan Aikido Seidokan Dojo under Sensei's Alister Thompson, *go dan*; Fred Haynes, *yon dan*; Jim Stewart, *yon dan*; and visiting sensei, Mitsugoro Karasawa, *roku dan*, of the Seimeikan Dojo of Agincourt, Ontario.

Sensei West's study of Yoshinkan Aikido began in spring 1983 in Toronto, Ontario, under Sensei Takeshi Kimeda. The true spirit of Aikido inspired him to continue training to his present level. This spirit of harmony is ever present in Sensei West's personable teaching method. Although he takes his teaching seriously, he never fails to smile or acknowledge a student's efforts.

Sensei West is married to Lori Ann and has a daughter named Jessica. Although they do not take part in Aikido classes, they are supportive of his teaching and his club. Greg's wife is actively involved in the promotion and administration that is necessary to run our organization smoothly.

In addition to his Aikido activities, Greg owns and operates his own home renovation business and is involved in the business community in Burlington.

As in the start-up of any organization, there are problems. The first problem was finding a location to hold the classes. The next was to explain to the prospective locations what Aikido really is; this was a task in itself. Through persistence and patience, we were able to educate them in what Aikido represents.

We truly believe the spirit of Aikido came through for us in finding a dojo location. Our advice to other Yoshinkan instructors in their bid to start a club in their area is to let your true love for Aikido come out in your negotiations; your enthusiasm will be well noted.

Much of our present success was due in part to the demonstration that we held in January 1991. We had an overwhelming response of over 70 spectators. This resulted in the initial one class per week at one location growing to three classes per week at two locations and a membership of 35 students in only three months. Our first official class was February 3, 1991. We are optimistic that our membership will continue to grow, as the city of Burlington is a very fitness-conscious and athletic community.

We are very proud that our city now has a twin city in Itabashi, Japan. We plan to be actively



involved in promoting the relationship between the twin cities. Burlington is promoting sponsor-

ing exchange students, cultural groups, and educational concepts. Soon, we will demonstrate Yoshinkan Aikido at a festival as part of our continuing promotion of the art.

In the not so distant future, we plan to have our own dojo. In order to achieve this, however, our student numbers must increase, along with our availability of classes.

Our success to date is largely due to the enthusiasm for Aikido among our current students and a unification of their efforts in promoting our club and its goals. We must constantly educate and increase public awareness of Aikido. We feel that Aikido is known for its harmony between people, and we endeavour to create an atmosphere free of the aggression and hostility that surrounds us daily.

Our goals are to encourage the sharing of information among dojos and to unite local IYAF dojos to assist each other in building the IYAF and its membership. Support is there to develop closer communication and inter-club functions through demonstrations, inter-club classes, clinics, and instructor training. This is feasible because we have many qualified IYAF instructors in our immediate area who work well together.

It is apparent that the support from the Honbu Dojo and visiting instructors strengthen our students' belief that correct basic movement and technique are of the utmost importance. This was evident during Chida Shihan's visit to Canada earlier this year, which was hosted by Sensei M. Karasawa.

Our students in Burlington, who had only had three beginners classes at the time, observed his overwhelming ability and commented on Chida Shihan's movement and technique. His visit has strengthened our emphasis on building a solid foundation in basic movement and basic technique. The Seiwakan Dojo hopes to sponsor more visits by Honbu Dojo instructors in the near future.

We are all very excited here in Canada to be a part of the IYAF. We feel a need for a federation of this kind for the continued growth of Yoshinkan Aikido worldwide.

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. When we perform the *kihon waza kotegaeshi*, why does *shite* turn away from and show his back to *uke*?

A. This is a basic technique where the main aim is to make *uke* lose his balance by transferring *shite*'s weight from one foot to another. At this stage, *uke* is strongly unbalanced and it does not matter if *shite* shows his back to *uke*, as *shite* wants to project himself forward, keeping his weight strongly on the front leg. From this position he will accentuate *uke*'s unbalance in the ensuing movement. However, in advanced techniques this part is cut out and *shite* always watches *uke* throughout the movement.

Q. What is the significance of the *hojo dosa* movement before all *ushiro waza*?

A. Both *shite* and *uke* face each other in *kamae*. *Uke* attacks first with *shomen*. *Shite* blocks and punches back. To avoid the punch, *uke* cuts down to drop *shite*'s other arm onto the punch. He then moves behind *shite* to initiate an attack from the rear. *Uke* has no intention initially of holding from behind. It is only after his initial frontal attack has been thwarted that he is forced to hold from behind.

Q. Is it possible to do *shihonage* with good form when *uke* is much shorter than *shite*?

A. It is certainly more difficult to perform *shihonage* when *uke* is much shorter than *shite*. When there is a very big difference we cannot avoid losing a little form, but we should try to adjust by working as low as we can and by relaxing the hands so that we never lose our balance when we shift. We should always be able to adjust to any situation.

Q. What is the reason for pointing the toes outward in *kamae*? Most other martial arts, including many Kenjutsu styles, advocate toes forward or pointing slightly toward the center in order to protect the inner thigh.

A. In Aikido, keeping the toes pointed out provides better balance and stability. In this position it is easier to keep the weight forward and to concentrate the strength in the big toe.

Q. What types of changes have there been in Yoshinkan techniques over the past 40 years?

A. There have not been a lot of changes in the techniques themselves—some details, however,

are slightly different. As the teacher evolves, the technique evolves. In Soke's youth, his techniques were certainly very physical and powerful. Gradually, they became smooth and refined as he got older. So we can say that Yoshinkan Aikido has been refined over the years with the progress of the teachers.

Q. Were the *kihon dosa* that we practice today taught to you [addressed to Soke, ed.] by Ueshiba Sensei or were they developed after you began to teach on your own?

A. The *kihon dosa* that are taught at the Yoshinkan have their foundation in Ueshiba Sensei's early teaching. Some details were changed to be more structured. This helps the beginner to learn techniques and to advance. It also helps advanced students come back to the basics.

Q. How did Ueshiba Sensei's teaching differ from yours?

A. Ueshiba Sensei used to show the technique once and ask you to try to feel it with your body. I have tried to set up a system, a kind of program, that students can follow to help them progress. That's why there is *kihon dosa* and basic techniques. Students have to achieve skill in these areas before they can go on to more advanced techniques.

Q. There are many styles of Aikido, but even in Yoshinkan itself there are some major differences between the way it is being taught in the United States, Canada, and even in Japan. How can these differences be explained?

A. Aikido is an art inseparable from a feeling of creation. The martial artist models the Aikido that fits him. Consequently, the way of teaching and some details of the techniques will change with the teacher; however, the base is the same. That is the way it is, but as long as the spirit is there and the teacher is sincere it does not matter.

If you have a question about Aikido or about the Yoshinkan in particular, AYI magazine looks forward to hearing from you.

COMMUNICATION

...On a technical note, I noticed and also one of my students was asking about the English translation of *shumatsu*. We heard that it meant "fixing," but according to the new handbook, it means "finishing." Is this due to the fact that the exercise is used at the end of class as a form of stretch? I see in my dictionary it means something like "weekend" or something like that.

Thank you again for your response,
Sam Combes, Kodokan Dojo

Yes, in fact, you are right.

The basic movement was given the name *shumatsu dosa* because it translates as "the last movement" or "the ending movement." It was called this simply because it was performed at the end of each lesson. Unlike the other *kihon dosa*, the name bears little relation to the movement itself.

When we translated the term in English for the basic techniques manual, we were at a loss, so we chose the translation "finishing movement" because it was a fair rendition of the Japanese and had meaning in that the student understood this to be the last of the *kihon dosa* set.

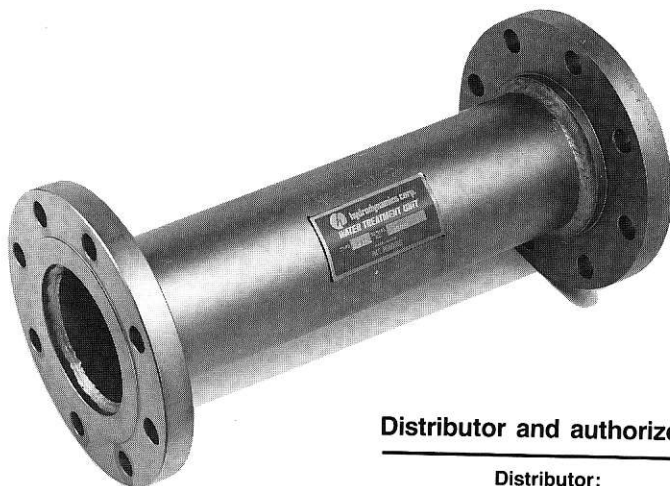
Also, this *kihon dosa*, with more movements than the others, is perhaps the most easily recognizable in actual technique (*shihonage*), and the image of it being a complete movement in this respect will make it more easily learnt and understood by students.

There is, however, also a homonym of our *shumatsu dosa* that does mean end of the week.

AYI magazine

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