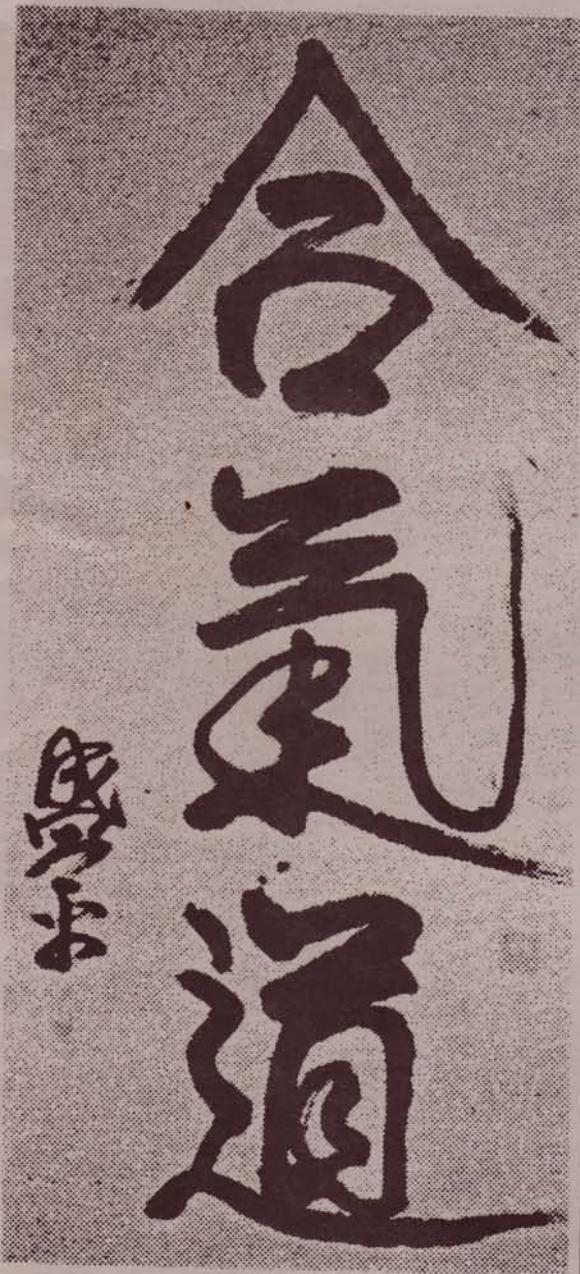




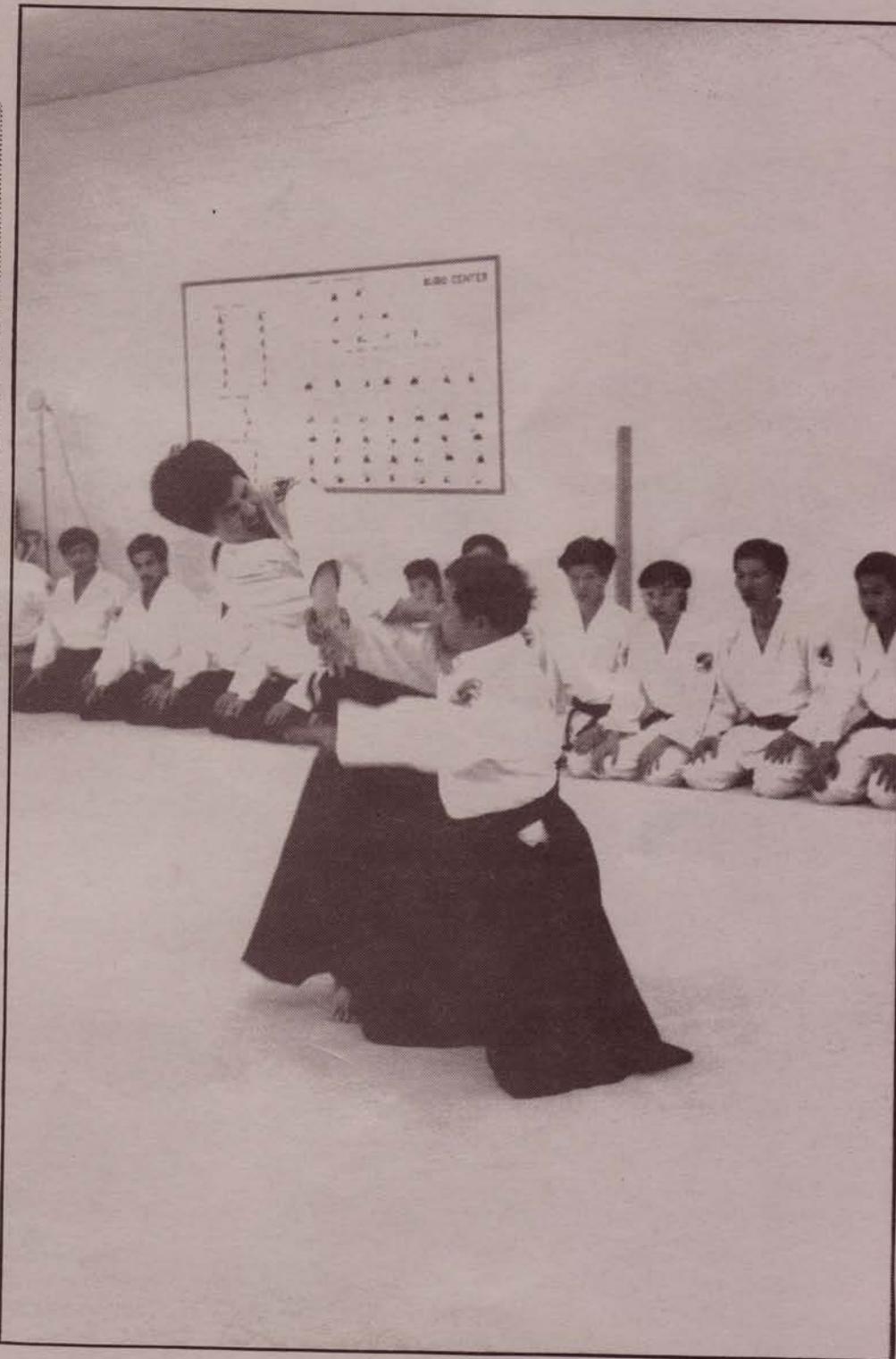
Aikido Insights

Tenshinkai Headquarters

Westminster, California, U.S.A * Issue #3 * Summer 92



"Aikido"
Calligraphy by
Morihei Ueshiba



Tenshinkai Headquarters Dojo

EDITOR'S NOTE:



Jim Wenrick

Contained in this issue of *Aikido Insights* you will find a variety of articles. It is the desire of the staff and authors of this issue that you benefit from the efforts involved in Aikido and insights its contributors share with you.

Aikido Insights is beginning two new columns in the current issue, **Book Reviews** and **Announcements**.

If any practitioner of Aikido would like to contribute to the **Book Review** column after having read a book about Aikido or an Aikido-related book, please write a short summary and include the title, author, publisher, ISBN number and price of the book.

The members of Tenshinkai Federation would like to share significant information about Aikido demonstrations, workshops, advancements in

Aikido, work or school, marriages, births and the like. In fact, anything you want to share can be submitted to Aikido Insights. You do not need to be a member of Tenshinkai Federation to submit Aikido-related articles to Aikido Insights.

Please submit your book reviews or other contributions to Sensei Phong or Jim Wenrick. Thank you!

Aikido Insights would like to thank Joseph Jill, Neta Wenrick, Eric Womack, Hoa Newens, Richard Pham, Quang Hai Nguyen, and Quang Anh Tran for their interest, effort in writing and willingness to share. Each of you is greatly appreciated. □

Announcements

After the Budo Center's humble beginning in January 15, 1987 at 8536 Westminster Ave., Westminster City, California U.S.A., the Tenshinkai Federation is joyously planning to celebrate the fifth year of service to the students and surrounding community. A commemorative T-shirt is being considered as a part of the celebration. Anyone of any age is welcome to submit a design or designs for the shirt. The deadline for submission of these designs to Sensei Phong is November 30, 1992. A prize will be awarded for the one selected. Sensei Phong is proud to acknowledge the work and advancement

... (Continued on page 5)

AIKIDO INSIGHTS

Founded 1991

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The Martial Art of Compassion: Aikido

by Sensei Dang Thong Phong

In the 1990's most people develop and rely heavily on materialism and its related philosophies, hoping to resolve wide and personal crises. The development and increasing application of nuclear power is only one example illustrating the desperate attempt of mankind to manipulate external forces.

However, history has repeatedly shown that mankind has fruitlessly tried to control and manipulate the external, unpredictable forces. In humankind's attempt to harness and control forces and people outside itself, the powerful inner forces often go unnoticed and neglected.

Aikido is a way leading back to the inner force which can harmonize self and others, cooperating with the environment.

Regardless of the different beliefs and evidences on the origin of mankind, the very first self-defense activity of "man" was struggling with natural phenomena and wild animals. From this struggle originated the art of war, or Martial Arts. Many stances and movements, as well as modes of attack of the wild

animals have, therefore, been imitated and integrated into the human's martial arts (eg. "Hau quyen", "Ho quyen"... or "Monkey stance, and Tiger stance"...).

As the earth becomes more and more populated, the conflicts of interest, and natural selection result in physical conflicts between individuals, families, tribes, and nations. Alongside that development, the martial arts have continuously been



refined and systematized to make them more effective. In order to adapt and satisfy new roles in the increasingly elaborate situations of struggle and survival, martial arts gradually developed a soul, or spiritual component, a philosophy of their own. In this historical context of the world of martial arts, Aikido and its philosophy occupies a unique and lasting position.

Martial arts are the most readily used weapon either for offensive or defensive purposes. If they are weapons to preserve the social order or to protect the weak, the inverse is also evident: they can be used for evil.

In an atmosphere of uncertainty, the skilled Aikidoist practices maintaining his/her composure, being sensitive to the opponent's intent and happiness. The correct concern of the student of Aikido is to follow the moral teaching of his/her Sensei and the regulations of the dojo. With this in mind, it is also important to observe and practice the following Aikido philosophy:

1. Harmonious relationship(s). People are individual "small worlds" who must live together in harmony within the environment, under the same "great world" sky. People are in reality inseparable components from each other within the environment. The exertion of energy, either physical or mental affects others and the inverse is also true.

2. Compassion: The basis of Aikido. The Aikidoist is learning focus and compassion for

him/herself, as well as the opponent. He/she is studying and incorporating the relationship between self and others as "small worlds" within the "great world." The "other" attacks upset the harmonious balance of many. The Aikidoist's intent is to restore the balance. In addition, the Aikidoist desires to restore the balance within the "other's" small world.

With the view of compassion, Aikido techniques do not attempt to "kill", and those who are involved practice exercising control. They practice possessing no bad or hard feelings so that the harmony is not disturbed.

In order to attain the basic understanding of the Aikido philosophy, the necessity of the Aikidoist is to train both in technique and in knowledge of self and others. The technique(s) will help maintain the physical balance, resolving any conflict between human physical and mental components.

In summary, Aikido training will maintain healthy physical development, a confident mental attitude and growth as well as the compassion in human relationships and relation with the earth. □



Learning The Aikido Way

By Joseph Jill

When I was young and growing up in a tough section of Brooklyn, N.Y., learning to fight was a necessity because of the many gangs in the area whose territory one had to pass through to get around. In order to protect myself, I went to a police athletic league gym to box and wrestle. Martial arts schools were not as plentiful then as they are today.

I became a fighter out of necessity. I would fight at the drop of a hat or if anyone even looked wrong at me. When I got older, I took up Judo and Shotokan and Kempo Karate. I became more secure in being able to protect myself. However, I still had an inclination to fight, and I had a quick Italian temper. After meeting Master Hyun Ok Shin, 9th Dan in Taekwondo, I slowly started to change my attitude about fighting.

After many years of training with Master Shin in New York, and with Masters Jung Soo Park, Jung Sool Park, and Tiger Kim in Florida, I gained even more confidence and felt even better about fighting. My training taught me skills I could use if an opponent bothered me. Therefore, it was not necessary to prove myself when someone challenged me. However, I still occasionally fought and found myself enjoying it.

Since starting Aikido training with Sensei Phong, my whole attitude toward a potential problem has changed. For example, just two weeks ago my son encountered a person who passed him while driving a truck and followed him into our parking lot, shouting obscenities and threats without cause. Although my son is more than capable of taking care of himself (he is 2nd Dan in Taekwondo and an A.A.U. champion), I walked over when I heard him taking unnecessary verbal abuse to see what was going on. Normally by this time, if anyone attacked my family even verbally, he would no longer be standing. But I found myself just calmly talking to this person. I made him understand that if he continued to pursue this line of action, he would regret it.

About this time, he reached under the seat of his truck and produced a large knife, threatening to kill us. In the past, this person would have been ripped out of his truck and beaten severely. However, I merely advised him that he would need the weapon for his own protection and that we were in the process of calling an ambulance for him. After a few more words, he saw the futility of getting out of his truck and attacking me with his knife. He left in a hurry. □

LOOKING FROM THE OUTSIDE

By Neta Wenrick

About four years ago, my husband began to show an interest in martial arts. He looked at karate, tae kwon do and various other styles of martial arts. All I could think of was, "These are much too violent and aggressive."

Three years ago, he found some information on a form of martial art which was foreign to both of us: Aikido. Again my thoughts were, "Just another martial art." He read and shared books about O'Sensei and other great teachers of Aikido. As he learned, I learned and was impressed with the fact that Aikido is not an aggressive art, but a way of peace. Later that year, he began his study of Aikido.

Two years ago, he began to study at the Budo Center, with Sensei Phong. Although I do not study at the dojo, I have always felt very welcome by Sensei Phong and the other students. I am impressed by Sensei Phong's gentle nature and the discipline I see from his students, especially the very young ones.

Although I have no plans to study Aikido, it is a part of our life and our home. Initially, out of enthusiasm my husband would demonstrate a particular

wrist lock on me. This particular move caused me great pain and suffering. Since that time he has learned not to attempt a technique with someone who is not involved with Aikido or other martial arts.

Our three year old son, Joshua, loves to go to the dojo to see "Master Phong". At home he and my husband play "kido", and he enjoys it a great deal. I have no doubts that when he is old enough, he will also study at the Budo Center with Sensei Phong and the other students. I am quite confident that he will learn discipline and how to avoid any fighting, rather than how to pick a fight with other children on the playground at school. The fact that Joshua will study Aikido does not bother me like the thought of him practicing karate or some other aggressive martial art. I know he will, as my husband is doing, learn a way of peace and harmony.

Announcements...

in rank of the following students:

Kyu 1:

- #313. Au Duong Di
- #388. Chan Sam Way

Kyu 2:

- #496. Chu Chuan C
- #516. Frank Kane M

Kyu 3:

- #433. Pham Dong
- #583. Richard L Roodzant
- #568. Maloln Bill Thomas
- #629. Ogborn Jim T
- #630. Fisher James David

Kyu 4:

- #549. Brian Nguyen
- #705. Womack Eric Dwane
- #707. Andrew Avalos
- #758. Pham Nguyen Anh Huy

Kyu 5:

- #565. Dinh Ngoc Quang
- #600. Ha Van Lam
- #647. Nghiem Xuan Bao Son
- #696. Robert J Concha
- #721. Huynh Duc Nha
- #722. Huynh Thanh Nghi
- #724. James Wenrick
- #731. Phan Le Dean
- #732. Phan Dennis
- #736. Laurie Nha Tuyen Ho
- #737. Alan Viet Thiet Ho
- #738. Dinh Xuan Duong
- #743. Tran Long Quang
- #744. Tran Thuy Long
- #752. David Nguyen Christopher
- #792. Hong Thuan Q
- #821. Le Tho P
- #854. Smith Richard L
- #861. Hopking Sonya Dunton
- #864. Hopking Mark M
- #866. Dornbach Steven

(Continued on page 6)

STUDENT INTERVIEW: JACQUELINE HAYCOX

By Eric Womack

AI: Jackie, you must like Aikido. How long have you been practicing now?

JH: I started in January 1992.

AI: Jackie, are you happy here and do you like the way your training is going?

JH: Yes, I'm real happy with it!

AI: Jackie, being a student here myself and observing you from your first day, I've seen much improvement in your movements and appearance. Could you tell us your feelings on this?

JH: Yes, I'm real happy with the way it's going. First of all, I feel better in general by getting some exercise which helps me, and my overall physical condition is better. It helps me mentally to get through the work day in general.

AI: I've had a chance to train with you and it was a very good experience for me. Could you tell us what you try to do to keep a good outlook toward your different partners.

JH: Patience mainly. If I don't get it the first time, maybe it

takes eight or nine times, but I eventually get it.

AI: Has there been anything really frustrating for you?

JH: Oh yes. Rolling still gives me problems. It's real frustrating for me. It's frustrating most people can do it in a week after starting here, but I'm learning how to do it better slowly but surely. And I feel much better when I do learn something that takes me a while.

AI: Is Aikido what you thought it would be when you first started?

JH: In some ways it is, and some ways it's not. I have friends that I asked that are in martial arts and they told me about Aikido and so I found out what to expect. When I first asked around inquiring about the different arts, I found out that Aikido could be done by older people as well as young people. In Aikido you're less likely to break your bones and it's graceful too. I could also appreciate that there was a lot less hitting. In that sense I knew what I was getting into.

AI: Is there anything that you

like to do in particular?

JH: I like to do the hard techniques along with the easier ones. I also like Shiho Nage.

AI: How did you find out about the Budo Center?

JH: My friend recommended it. He is Vietnamese and he takes Tae Kwon Do. His Sensei also teaches Judo and knows Sensei Phong. He saw Sensei Phong do a demonstration in Vietnam.

AI: Well Jackie, thank you for your time and good luck in your training! □

Announcements...

Kyu 6:

- #822. Carrillo Carric Felice
- #874. Mai Tung Peter
- #875. Tran Nhat Viet
- #876. Tran Nhat Nam
- #877. Kongo Arthur Hokuto
- #878. Kongo Alex Hayato
- #879. Haycox Jacqueline J
- #898. Kelly Michael Eugene
- #900. Tran Tony Thuan Vinh
- #926. Rivera Stephen E
- #927. Peace Vince L

(Continued on page 12)

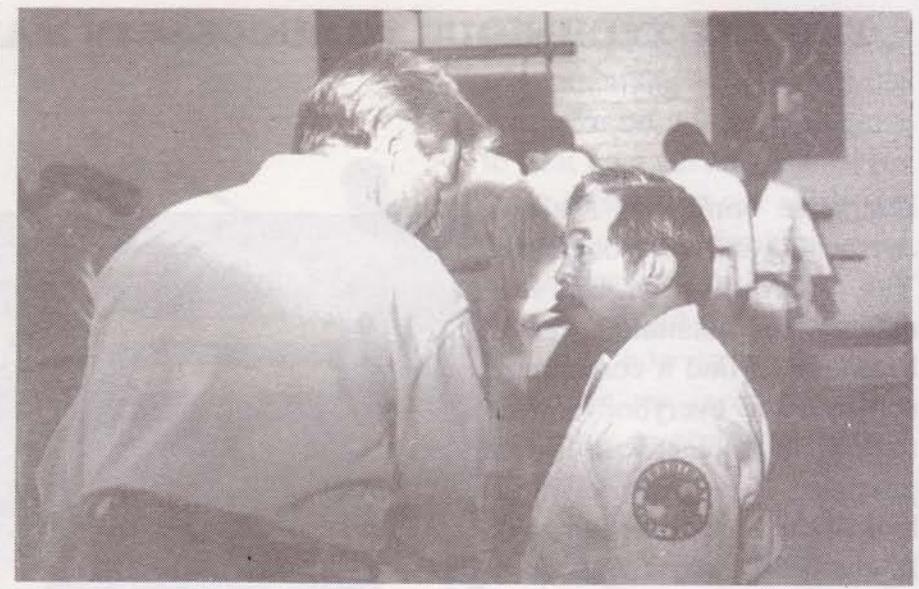
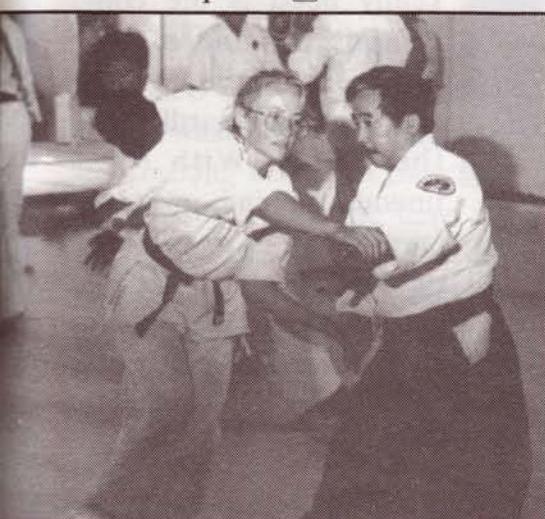
Aikido-Ai Seminar

By Eric Womack

August 1, 1992, Sensei Frank McGouirk, 5th Dan from Aikido-Ai in Whittier, California and Sensei Dang Thong Phong, 5th Dan from Aikido Tenshinkai Federation shared teaching a seminar in the morning and afternoon. This proved to be a great opportunity for the attendees to learn from two different teachers with two different styles.

It was a full day of Aikido, but there was plenty of time to renew old friendships and make new ones. We all wish to thank Sensei McGouirk and Sensei Phong along with all the members from Aikido-Ai for the kindness and hospitality they showed us.

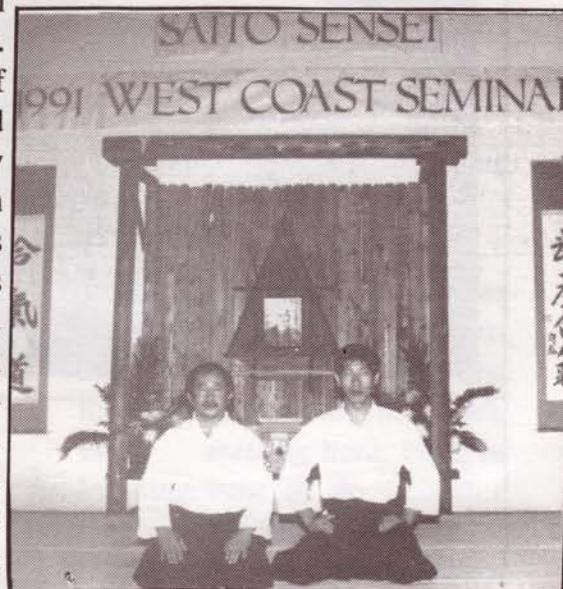
It was a great pleasure to be in their beautiful facility surrounded by a friendly and harmonious spirit. □



THE KEY TECHNIQUE TO SUCCESS IN MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING

By Hoa Newens

Everyone comes to Martial Arts with a different objective. Yet, whether it is for self defense, for maintaining good health or to find a community activity , it is everybody's wish to reach that objective as fast as possible. The majority of us look at the Black Belt as a goal. If everybody starts with such eagerness, Martial Arts logically should develop very rapidly. On the contrary, experience shows of ten people who start Martial Arts training, only one or two still practice after a few years. Does this mean that the majority didn't succeed? What was then the reason they did not stay with Martial Arts?



Sensei Dang Thong Phong and Sensei Hoa Newens - 1991

The reason people give up Martial Arts training may not be lack of self-control or willingness, but probably because of the lack of their understanding of the very basic principle of Martial Arts practice. To succeed in the learning process we have to repeat each movement and each basic technique thousands of times with all of our attention. That is what it is all about, and yet, that is the foundation which leads to the thousands of transformations of Martial Arts. Japanese called it "SHUGYO" meaning painful



practice; Chinese called it Kung Fu.

Most new trainees prefer practicing many different techniques. Being able to demonstrate

many techniques gives practitioners the impression that they possess a thorough knowledge of Martial Arts. In reality, learning too many techniques distracts the mind, making trainees unable to make use of their mind to direct their strength. Not being able to build up their strength while still making extensive use of their body weakens their health state.

There are, however, trainees who concentrate on building up their strength rather than learning techniques. Such practice is not much different than building a building while the foundation is not firmly in place. Sooner or later the stories will collapse.

Actually new trainees do not need to concentrate on building their strength or on the learning of many techniques. What they really need is the continuous training of the basic technique month after month, regardless of the result. With continuous training, one day (over ten years or so) they will suddenly realize that all techniques flow like water without the need of much effort. Gradually they will find that thousands of new techni-

ques suddenly are born from the basic techniques. Trainees will realize that these thousand techniques are firmly consolidated and have their origin in the Aikidoist themselves. O-Sensei Morihei Ueshiba called this "Takemusu Aiki" (Inner-strength consolidation to a point where thousands will only be one).

New trainees should not take that fact as a goal. They must specialize their training in the basic techniques daily. This is only what they need.

Continuity is the most important factor to succeed in training. To abandon the training and to resume after awhile or to practice training off and on will delay the build up of their foundation. It will take a long time before the student will be able to build up his/her physique. However, overtraining to obtain a quick result will bring disequilibrium of the body and mind. A simple philosophy is very effective in Martial Arts training: sufficient and continuous training.

Sensei Phong many times reminded me of that practice when I was under his training at the training center in Saigon: "Why didn't you come here to practice yesterday...? Why do you sit here so long instead of training...?" The key technique to success lies in these few reminders. □



Sensei Hoa Newens is now conducting training at the Aikido Institute at Oakland, California. The institute has about one hundred students, children and adults who are currently attending the training sessions in the morning, afternoon and evening, seven days a week. For further information, please contact (510) 658-2155.

In My Experience

by Richard Pham

In my earlier years before Aikido, I took many forms of martial arts. I have taken Taekwondo, Karate, and others along that line. All of them were sports based on competition and winning. The only thing I thought of while participating in these arts was the desire to win.

I then "turned over a new leaf" and began Aikido under the instruction of Sensei Dang Thong Phong. Sensei Phong's experience and teachings of

Aikido opened my mind to the true meaning of the Martial Arts. We do not learn the arts to beat up a person, instead we learn to sharpen our spirit like a sword. As swordsmiths, we try to refine ourselves, keeping our spirit clean and pure. From this, we learn how to overcome a challenge we face: the challenge to overcome our ignorance and ego.

I can see why Aikido is so popular all over. It displays the true meaning of the Martial Arts while preserving its spirit of Budo. In Aikido, I have learned that all martial arts are one in the eyes of nature. I believe that the other arts supply the explosive power and energy from a focused attack. I also believe that Aikido supplies the beauty and grace not seen in everyday kick-and-punch arts.

All arts show the spirit of Budo. I think that Aikido just takes it a step further. □

AIKIDO INSTITUTE SEMINAR

Aikido Institute, Oakland, California will host a seminar with Sensei Dang Thong Phong, 5th Dan Aikido and founder of Tenshinkai Aikido Federation, on August 29, 1992.

Sensei Hoa Newens, 5th Dan Aikido Institute started his study of Aikido in Vietnam with Sensei Phong. This should prove to be a very dynamic seminar. For more information call (510) 658-2155. □

SAME RECIPE, DIFFERENT COOKS

By Quang Hai Nguyen

On our journey toward proficiency in Aikido, many times we encounter surprises and confusion. Novices watching the dance-like techniques for the first time often assume that learning Aikido is "a piece of cake"; however, as their training begins, they are surprised to find it's not as easy as it looks.

The beginner also can become confused when helped by senior students. They may ask themselves, "How come this person shows me how to do this technique differently than the person who showed me earlier, and why are both demonstrations so different than that of Sensei's? Which is the correct way for me to follow?" This beginner may very well base his decision on the personalities of the senior students, deciding that the most likable and agreeable student is correct and the other must be wrong.

As a novice I experienced the same problems and became even more confused when Sensei Phong demonstrated the same technique differently with different Ukes. Although the quality of the demonstration was equally beautiful and the outcomes were always the same, I kept asking myself

which version should I work on.

Luckily, Sensei Phong resolved my confusion by explaining that at first we must learn the basics, and that by following certain rules, guidelines, and principles we build a strong foundation for further learning. The reason the techniques appear different every time is that application depends on many factors such as the size, shape, and speed of the opponent. Other factors involve timing and blending. It is necessary to be flexible and to "go with the flow" without becoming tied up with oneself for any reason. Later, as my understanding of Aikido progressed, I came to think of this as the "same recipe, different cooks." It gives us a lot of choices to learn instead of just one way.

Each student sees things differently and interprets them according to their level of training. Upon observing the demonstration of a sophisticated technique, one person may grasp the moves more rapidly than another. Later, during the demonstration of another technique, the second person may understand more quickly. Generally speaking, we need to be flexible so we may be more receptive in our listening and learning. From each demonstra-

tion we must adopt the skills suitable to our level and work hard on those. In time, it will all fall into place as we develop a total picture.

As the new student practices a technique over and over with his/her favorite partner, a certain timing and ease of movement develops. The surprise comes when the student is paired with partners of different sizes and shapes. The same technique which flowed so smoothly with a favorite partner may now be poorly timed and choppy. As a result, the student may become frustrated and blame his/her opponent when in fact there is nothing wrong with the opponent at all. The lesson is to develop the ability to adjust to the size, shape, and timing of any opponent so as to develop a sense of blending. We must avoid jumping to the conclusion that if an opponent's moves and timing are different from ours the opponent must be wrong.

In summary, things may look easier than they are. Every individual is unique and each has different ways of doing things. We cannot force another to do exactly what we want them to do without colliding head on with

(Continued on page 11)

DIVERSITY

by Quang-Anh Tran

The Aikido Tenshinkai Federation originated from South-east Asia, specifically Vietnam. Master Morihei Ueshiba, the Japanese founder of Aikido presented the specific title, "Tenshinkai," which means "Association of Heavens's Heart," to the Vietnamese people through Sensei Dang Thong Phong. After many years this Federation has reached Westminster, California under the President of Tenshinkai Federation, Sensei Phong. Although the students of the Federation at the Headquarters in Westminster have consisted of primarily Vietnamese, recently many people from other ethnic groups have chosen to come and practice at the dojo.

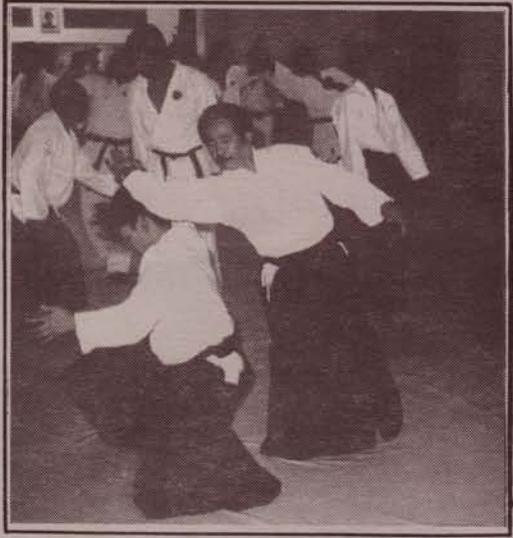
Master Ueshiba's intention was to expose all people to Aikido's philosophy of harmony. Similarly, the Federation has become more diverse since the years of its founding. This is a perfect reflection of the spirit of Aikido. With a blend of many different people at the dojo, students may gather insights about different customs and values while understanding how to study and practice in harmony, which is the heart of the

philosophy of Aikido.

The benefits of ethnic diversity are not limited to only the understanding of Aikido's philosophy. It also contributes to the improvement and refining of techniques. When an individual learns how to perform a technique, he or she must be able to utilize it with all types of people. When an Aikido student executes an arm lock, for example, he or she must learn how to lock all types of arms: flexible arms, stiff arms, and unbendable arms. When the Aikido student learns how to deal with such a problem described above, he or she benefits by attaining an open mind.

Even though the Aikido Tenshinkai Federation has attracted mainly Vietnamese students due to its location and sensei, ethnic diversity characterizes the dojo. The advantages of having various races in an Aikido class can be both social and physical. The most significant benefit of an ethnic mixture in Aikido class is the recognition of importance of harmony. The usefulness of this philosophy is not limited only to practicing Aikido stu-

dents, but to all people who have problems harmonizing in society. Ethnic diversity is invaluable and can be treasured by all. □



SAME RECIPE...

the will of our opponent. Such a collision violates the principles of Aikido.

The big person will have a much harder time if he tries to move exactly like the smaller student, and vice versa. The older person cannot move as fast as a younger one.

The young child cannot perform like an adult. We must all recognize our limits and be ourselves. There is a proverb "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." If we keep this in mind, our study of Aikido will become much easier. □

Book Review

by Jim Wenrick

SECRET OF THE PEACEFUL WARRIOR

by Dan Millman and Illustrated by T. Taylor Bruce.

30 Pages

ISBN 0-915811-23-5

Price: \$12.95

One of the latest books from the pen of author Dan Millman is a children's book, *Secret of the Peaceful Warrior*. It is the creative story of Danny Morgan who faces some challenges when he moves into a new neighborhood. He learns about bravery, love and the ability of making a friend from an enemy.

Announcements...

(cont... from page 6)

Kyu 7:

- #901. Ruby John R
- #904. Holder James Christopher
- #906. Cryder Vincent T
- #907. Fello Arnelito Crooc
- #908. Bowie Mark Tudor
- #913. Maciel John Paul
- #917. Pham Dinh Duc
- #920. Uliana Regina L
- #922. Anderson Howard
- #930. Trinh Vu M
- #933. Nguyen Teresa Phuong
- #934. Nguyen Johnson Ba
- #935. Dang Vu Peter V.P
- #936. Nguyen Anthony Tuan
- #938. Meezan Mike Richard
- #941. Vo Quang Phi
- #942. Nguyen Judy

- #943. Nguyen Dinh Bang
- #944. Nguyen Dinh Tam
- #945. Le Nhu Cam
- #946. Le Hong Kong
- #947. Le Quoc Jimmy
- #948. Le Quoc Tommy
- #949. Lu Minh Ky
- #951. Ho Nhat Huy
- #953. Tran Thao Kim Ly
- #955. Nguyen Minh Toan
- #956. Nguyen Hong Van
- #957. Nguyen Q Chinh
- #958. Nguyen Thi V.Huong
- #960. Bui Nguyen Loc
- #961. Bui Nguyen Phat
- #962. Pham Anh Tuan
- #963. Segal Michael
- #966. Hoang Quoc Thuan
- #967. Nguyen Duy Steven
- #970. Do Cao Thuong
- #978. Le Thi Thu Dong
- #979. Le Long Hai



AIKIDO TENSINKAI FEDERATION

Affiliated with Aikido world Headquarters Tokyo - Japan

Chief Instructor

DANG THONG PHONG

Self Defense training

Mind & Body coordination

8536 Westminster Ave., Westminster, CA 92683
(corner of westminster Ave. & Newland, next to Stater Bros Market)

(714) 894-1003

AIKIDO TRAINING SCHEDULE

Monday thru Friday

8 - 9:30AM Adults

5 - 6:30PM Juniors

6:30 - 8PM Adults

Saturday & Sunday

10 - 11:30AM Juniors

11:30 - 1PM Adults