



Aikido Insights

Tenshinkai Headquarters

Westminster, California, U.S.A * Spring 92. Vol. #2

REMINISCENCE OF PASSING OF O'ENSEI MORIHEI UESHIBA (1883-1969)

by Dang Thong Phong Sensei

Twenty-three years ago in April, on the 26th day, the Founder of Aikido left this transient life forever and returned to the No-Thingness. Even though Morihei Ueshiba physically left this earth, he left his form of non-competitive, self transforming Budo in the hearts and minds of all the disciples who study Aikido all over the world.

He had conducted painstaking research and had gone through different schools of the martial arts. Not until he was forty-two years of age did he thoroughly understand

the unique meaning of nature. He founded Aikido in 1927.

During O'Sensei's development many doubts occurred in his mind. "What is the use of trying to defeat others with our skills? In the prime of youth a person is physically strong, but strength fades away with age and time. In the present one can enjoy the



Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969)

happiness that victories bring. However, in the future, when strength and youth fades so will victories. All victories are relative. Can there be an absolute victory? What is the effect of victory on an individual. In the eye of the universe, winning or losing in the

human world is valueless. It is no better than the rise and fall of tide on the beach. Is it not a waste of time to devote all of one's life to seeking victories and defeating others?"

Master Morihei Ueshiba concentrated all his effort to solve his own

questions. He visited all the famous temples and studied philosophy. He looked for a quiet place to meditate. He was submerged with the question: "What is Martial Art?"

After several years of training and traveling, one day, descending from the mountain, he went into the yard

INNER INSIGHTS:

by Jim Wenrick

For most people who are reading this article the word Aikido is not unknown. However, there are a few readers for whom the word Aikido is new.

So, what is Aikido? Very simply stated, Aikido is a martial art whose goal is to put an end to violence and fighting. Its aim is to promote both internal and external peace and harmony.

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EDITOR'S NOTE:



Jim Wenrick

A moment of time has passed since the last issue of Aikido Insights was published. Nevertheless, many events have occurred. The highlights were when Master Phong visited Fort Saskatchewan to present a seminar and the Budo Center celebrated O'Sensei's Passing. The reader will find many exciting articles in this issue. One particular item for the newsletter is "Questions For Master Phong." Any reader is invited to send any question relating to Aikido to.... All questions will be reviewed by Master Phong, and Aikido Insights will attempt to publish them in the following issue.

Many thanks to Dang Thong Phong Sensei for his time and energy involved in this issue, particularly for his responses to the questions. Also many thanks to Tanh Van Phan, Andrew Avalos, Bruce MacLeod, Joseph Jill, Eric Womack, Tam Do and Richard Phan for submitting their articles.

All of us at the Budo Center hope that you will enjoy and grow with this new issue of Aikido Insights. ●

INNER INSIGHTS: *Cont...*

Where did the word Aikido originate? From it's founder, O'Sensei Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969). He defined Aikido: Ai (uniting in harmony and love for allthings); ki (not fully translatable in English, however the basic elements of ki are embroiled in Asian culture philosophy art, physical training, the vital training energy of life); do (way).

O'Sensei developed Aikido from other martial art forms. Some of these disciplines are: sumo, jujitsu, aikijutsu, bojutsu, kendo, etc.

When forming/shaping Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba was not only concerned with the functional techniques of other martial disciplines. He was also involved with inner transformation of himself and his students.

For the beginning student of Aikido, the area of inner transformation, work or inner issues (ie: anger, fear, resentment, envy, selfish pride...) is most often neglected. What interests many new and novitiate students are the apparently easy, techniques which are effortlessly and powerfully demonstrated by the Sensei and other advanced students.

One of O'Sensei concerns was that students seek the understanding of Aikido. This can be accomplished by reading, practicing and listening to the various Senseis and advanced students talk about it. Beyond the hundreds of techniques Aikido is not easily understood. In order to understand Aikido a student must first desire to understand its meaning. If this is not done Aikido is nothing more than skill in performing

AIKIDO INSIGHTS

Founded 1991

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AIKIDO INSIGHTS
is the Newsletter of the
Aikido Tenshinkai Federation.

8536 Westminster Avenue
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Published Quarterly

techniques. However, it goes without saying that Aikido as O'Sensei taught is much more than technique(s) and proficiency in their execution. At the foundation of Aikido is inner transformation. The goal is internal transformation, harmony and love.

Some Resources:

Budo by Morihei Ueshiba.
Aikido: The Way of Harmony by J. Stevens.

The Principles of Aikido by M.Saotome.

Aikido by O. Ratti. ●

TENSHINKAI AIKIDO FEDERATION HONORS MORIHEI UESHIBA

by Eric Womack

April 26, 1992 marked the 23rd year of O'Sensei's passing. Dang Thong Phong Sensei of the headquarters dojo, Tenshinkai Aikido Federation invited Gary Wellborn Sensei, a 4th dan and his North Orange County Aikido Club members to attend. Phong Sensei also invited Frank McGouirk Sensei, a 5th dan and his students from Aikido-Ai, Whittier, CA. McGouirk Sensei was to give a three hour seminar at the conclusion of the ceremony. In the true spirit of O'Sensei's teaching, all three Aikido associations gathered to honor the founder of Aikido and his teachings.

Phong Sensei began the ceremony by reading the beautiful and moving words of O'Sensei. Afterward, flowers were presented and candles lit at the newly remodeled shrine for O'Sensei. McGouirk Sensei summed up the ceremony best by saying, "These very beautiful words are felt with great sadness in my heart. All of us have great reason to feel both sad and happy. Sad for O'Sensei's passing and happy that he left us with this wonderful art to practice and this harmonious and peaceful way of life; these are the teachings of O'Sensei." To conclude the ceremony, a few students of the Budo Center put on a demonstra-

tion of various Aikido techniques.

McGouirk Sensei began the adult seminar and commented on the new mat. He was very kind to tell the members of the Budo Center that

thusiasm over these newly learned techniques. New friendships were discovered and the old ones renewed.

Everyone at the seminar indicated appreciation of McGouirk Sensei's style and teachings. He had a way of teaching that was both very nice to watch and easy to understand. His step by step method was very popular.

The day was one of gratefulness and remembrance of peace, harmony, togetherness and friendship. On behalf of Sensei Dang Thong Phong and members of Aikido Tenshinkai Federation, thanks to

everyone who made this a very special day.●



Dang Thong Phong presented flowers to Frank McGouirk Sensei

they have the best ukemi in the state. McGouirk Sensei showed over 50 students smooth and flowing techniques. He said that Aikido is for everyone, old and very young. All of the participants enjoyed the seminar and learned a great deal. After two hours, a pot-luck lunch was served. Many were reluctant to stop training due to en-



Frank McGouirk was teaching an Aikido technique

of a hut and poured a bucket of water over his body then looked at the blue sky. Suddenly, he felt himself elevated, and enlightened while tear drops rolled down his cheeks in his gratefulness to the universe. "Try to find, and you will see." With all his mind and body, he acknowledged a great truth of nature. Since then he was one with the spirit of nature. This is what is understood to be enlightenment of heaven, a state of direct understanding of the perfect truth mentioned in ZEN.

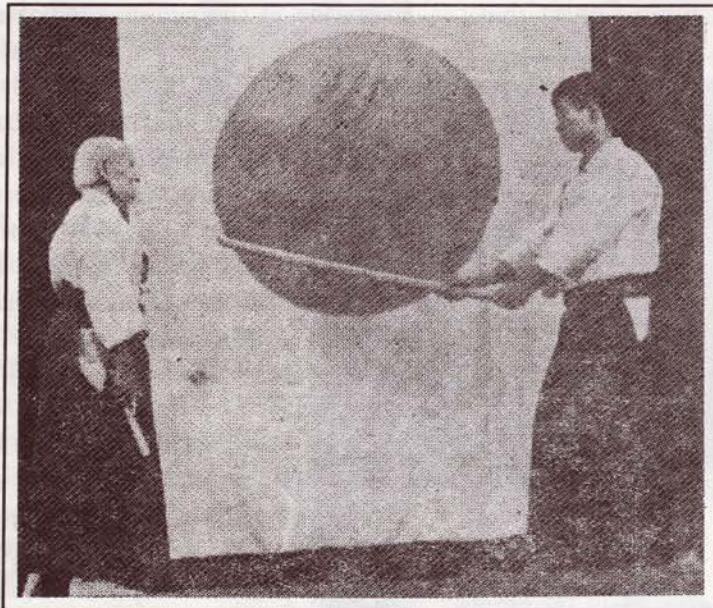


Photo by Dang Thong Phong Sensei (1967)
Master Morihei Ueshiba, recalling whatever happened that day, always related the following story:

"When I was wandering in the yard of the hut, the earth suddenly trembled, yellow smoke from the earth covered all my body. Then I had the feeling my body became a golden body. At the same time, my body and my mind felt very light. I could understand the singing of birds and clearly understood the spirit of the creator. Right at that moment I acquired an enlightenment. The basic principle of Martial Art is to love the creator and the universe. Happy tear drops rolled down on my cheeks. Since then I felt the whole world was my home and title, fame or richness were meaningless to me."

The teaching and purpose of Morihei's Martial Art is not of defeating opponents and expecting victories. Genuine Martial Artists do not compete, but try to harmonize with the power of the universe and to lead everything in nature to its maturity.

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THE MEANING OF AIKIDO

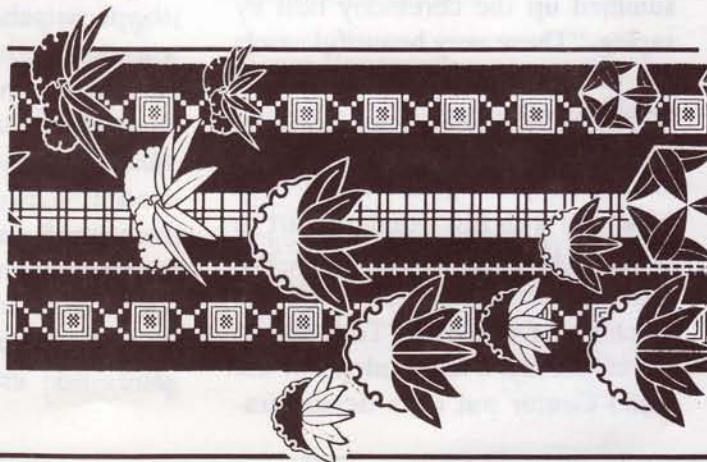
Joe Jill, Aikido Shodan

The word "AIKIDO" means harmony (AI), energy (KI), and method or way (DO). Aikido was developed by master Morihei Ueshiba. It was developed from self defense methods which were taken from sword fighting, Aikijitsu and other martial arts. Aikido has to do with the HARA which is the center of inner energy. Everyone has this intrinsic energy but very few people develop it. The center of the energy (HARA) is a point approximately 2 inches below the naval. This is roughly the physical point of balance of a man's body, otherwise known as the center of gravity. Aikido places great emphasis on this balance point and inner energy. It is the whole basis of Aikido.

The Aikido practitioner learns to defend himself through smooth extension of power against one attacker or many. This is accomplished by neutralizing the opponent and having control over his or her actions at all times. The attacker is neutralized without inflicting unnecessary harm. In Aikido, one does not meet force with force; rather, he/she flows with and redirects the opponent's energy.

Practicing Aikido will result in increased coordination, flexibility, more self confidence and mental discipline. One will see improvement in general health, stamina, mental attitude and physical fitness. The practice of abdominal breathing will also increase your health and well being. Men, women and children of any age can participate in Aikido.

My personal experience from practicing Aikido is that I have more self control and relief of the tensions associated with the business world. It keeps me in excellent physical condition and keeps me flexible. I look forward to learning and teaching Aikido.●



"Winning is to win over the deterioration, the discordance and jealousy that divide our mind." The key to the success in practicing Aikido is completely contained in that teaching. This is the principle which makes it different from any other Martial Art.

Thus, training in Martial Art does not mean to try to defeat opponents, but to train to accomplish the love of the creator among ourselves.

The Aikidoist learns to practice the Martial Art not for competition, nor the title of "champion" or to become a "hero." This results in the division of Martial Art combined with new creations. This is AIKIDO today.

The Master's moves were very beautiful to look at, as if he were performing a dance, indifferent to the presence of his opponent. He threw several strong persons to the ground at a time, and yet his opponents did not see how it happened. His moves were in harmony with the rules of nature and all the strength of his opponents lunging at him was surely turned against themselves.

"Nature is deep and wide," the Master said, "the more you advance, the longer you see the road. AIKIDO is a road without end."

When Morihei Ueshiba began teaching his Budo, only people belonging to the aristocracy and high ranking officers attended his training classes. All his disciples, of course, respectfully recognized his incomparable skill, but they were also charmed by his spirit and character.



Photo by Dang Thong Phong Sensei (1967)

After World War II, he deplored that morals in the post-war period were deteriorating and that youths were living in vice, without any hope for the future. Master Morihei Ueshiba realized that it was time to propagate AIKIDO to the public, to make people understand the philosophy of the universe in order for them to regain their hope. He gathered his students and started to teach AIKIDO without restricting it to only the aristocratic class and the high society.

In 1960, the Japanese government presented the Master with the Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon, an honor only awarded to anyone who made great contributions in education, art or inventions.



Dang Thong Phong Sensei was giving a speech at the Reminiscence of Passing of Morihei Ueshiba (April 26, 1992)

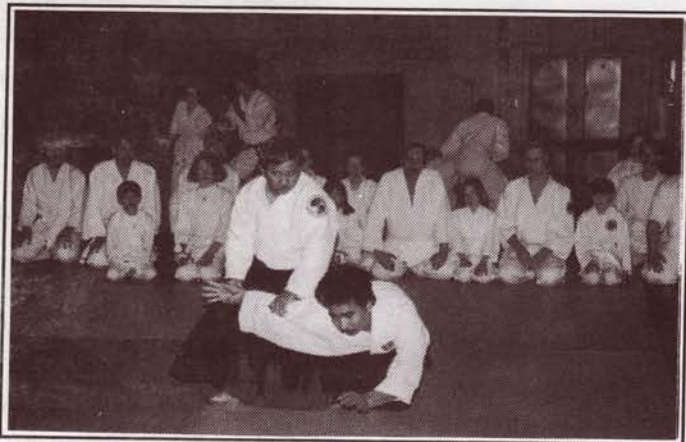
Now not only in Japan, but all over the world, people are learning AIKIDO with zeal. AIKIDO expands gradually, day after day, a Martial Art admired for its non-violent philosophy. ●

Fort Saskatchewan Aikido Seminar

by Bruce H. MacLeod

The first ever Aikido Seminar at Fort Saskatchewan occurred on February 15th and 16th and was taught by Dang Thong Phong Sensei. At this point, you are asking, "What and where is Fort Saskatchewan?" So let us deal with mundane matters first. Fort Saskatchewan is a small city of about 12,000 people located about 20 minutes drive from Edmonton, which is the capital and largest city in the Province of Alberta. For those still in the dark, the Province of Alberta is north of the 49th Parallel in the land of ice and snow (in short, in Canada).

Fort Saskatchewan, on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River, was one of the first settlements in Alberta and has been a center of fur trading and point of incarceration for criminals (among other things), hence the "Fort" in the name. During the days of capital punishment, more than one criminal took his last breath at "The Fort". Now the jail is no longer used for criminals and the City (of Fort Saskatchewan) has taken it over for recreational purposes. Among the beneficiaries is the Fort Saskatchewan Aikido Club, which practices in the gymnasium of "The Jail".



Dang Thong Phong Sensei demonstrated Aikido technique Ikkyo

The Fort Saskatchewan Aikido Club is the newest Aikido Club in Alberta. It was established by Van Duong, Nidan about one year ago. It was Van's fondest wish that Phong Sensei would journey to the land of ice and snow in order to officially open the Club. This wish finally came true on Friday, February 14, 1992. The "Club" consists of 20 to 40 members (depending on the day) who range in age from young children to middle age adults. There is a

variety of skill levels in the club, but the majority of members are in the 6th and 5th Kyu.

In addition to the "local members", the seminar was attended by a number of representatives from the other two largest Aikido Clubs in Alberta: the University of Alberta Club from Edmonton and Calgary Aikikai from Calgary. In addition, we were joined by Mr. Inaba, the President of the Alberta Aikido Association and Mr. Hilchie, the Vice-President. Since few of us had met Phong Sensei, it was with great anticipation that we awaited the arrival of his flight from Los Angeles. First impressions were very positive; Phong Sensei was warm and cordial in his greetings for all who met him, but he seemed especially pleased to see the children. There are a number of children in the Club and his warmth was most important to them and was greatly appreciated.

After a meal at a local restaurant, a party of about 20 retired to the home of a club member for the evening. Here we were treated to conversation and videos of Aikido in California. Phong Sensei appeared to be a most humble man. Here we had gathered to be honoured by his presence and he seemed to be honoured by ours. He was much in demand as a conversationalist. Several people took turns monopolizing him. Later in the evening Phong Sensei allowed us to view videos of his students in California. We were impressed by the youth and skill of the demonstrators. The clip of the two little boys "mugging" the two little girls was priceless.

The Seminar itself began the next day (on the Saturday) at "The Jail." The first session was from 5:00 to 7:00 Saturday evening. As noted earlier, the Seminar was attended not only by representatives of our own Club but also by members of the other two large Clubs in Alberta. There were people of all ages and skill levels on the mats. Phong Sensei managed to accommodate everybody. For the higher levels, he demonstrated advanced techniques. For the lower levels, he reviewed the basics. No one was left out and he seemed to be able to help everyone with problems.

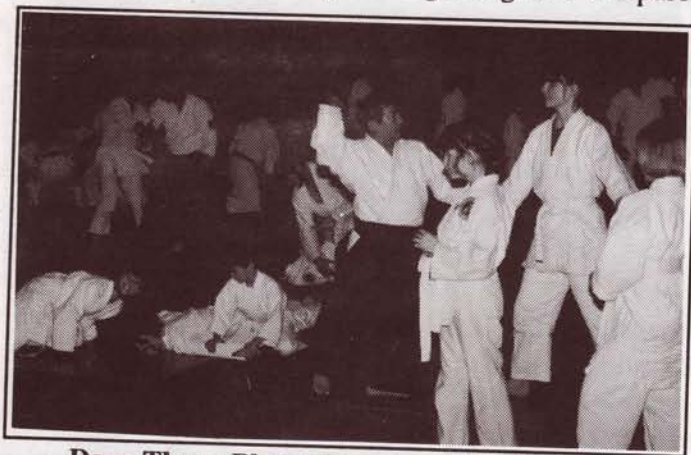
The Saturday session was followed by supper at another local restaurant. Phong Sensei again demonstrated his ability to make all feel welcome. Because there were

about 40 Aikidoists at the restaurant, not all could sit with the Sensei. He dealt with that situation by going around to each and every person to thank them for coming. This gesture was very much appreciated.

The Sunday session commenced at 9:00 AM. Attendance was down over Saturday (the partying that went on after dinner the previous night may have had something to do with that). We went until 11:00 in much the same vein as the previous night: advanced techniques for advanced students, basic techniques for lower level students. Sensei concluded the morning session with a lecture on the importance of falling correctly ("... because if one is injured, one cannot continue to practice."). This turned out to be fortuitous for me because, in the afternoon session I ignored his advice, fell on my shoulder, and had to quit practicing.

The afternoon session commenced at 12:00 and went until 2:00. At this point, one of our more severe winter storms began (one that gives us the reputation of living in the Land of Ice and Snow) and Sensei very nearly did not make his airplane connection.

Many comments were made during and after the Seminar, particularly by representatives of other Clubs. These fell into two general areas. The first concerned the Tenshinkai style which is very flowing and gentle compared



Dang Thong Phong Sensei practiced with a group of teenager students

to the more direct style common here. Tenshinkai has a particular beauty. The second concerned Sensei himself. He is a most humble man. While we had gathered to honour him, he seemed to be honoured by us. He has a talent for making all feel welcome and at home. Although he may be a small man in physical stature, he is a Big Man in Aikido. ●

QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

by Andrew Avalos

The Late JIM O'HARA said, "Practice doesn't make perfect.. Perfect practice makes perfect."

A former athletic coach of mine was fond of the above quotation. He may or may not have originated the phrase, but I give him the credit because I first heard it from him. Reflecting on it constantly, I believe (hope) it can bring all of us a step closer to the successful practice of Aikido.

Because of my lack of experience, my discussion relates, on almost a purely physical level; a few items related to the main idea contained in the above quote. As always, please consult "the experts" for the real "meat and bones" of Aikido.



Phong Sensei congratulated Andrew Avalos on his Kyu 4 promotion

Briefly speaking, the involvement of the uke (the one who falls) must be 100%. He/She, ideally, must supply enough momentum (energy) for the nage (the one who executes the technique) upon which to act. In Aikido, from a certain viewpoint, we are to use our attacker's strength (energy) to subdue him; we must generate the energy (use physical strength) if our partner does not wish to.

Not only must the uke (oo-kay) follow through sincerely, but should be committed to fall to the best of his/her ability. I'm not saying to fall over when your partner sneezes, but on a certain level become aware of the fine line between falling prematurely (when not properly thrown or off balance) and resisting to the extent that the nage cannot execute the technique. Especially during the introduction of a new technique, resistance, I believe, should be negligible.

In terms of the nage, I was warned that if I didn't pay strict attention to developing proper form it would be very

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Questions For Master Phong



Dang Thong Phong Sensei

Q Master, what does TENSINKAI mean and why did you choose this word to give to the AIKIDO Federation you are now lead.

A (Dang Thong Phong)

"TEN" : Heaven

"SHIN" : Heart

"KAI" : Association.

Generally speaking, Tenshinkai means the Association of Heaven's heart. The common interpretation of it is the Association emanating from the heart of Heaven. The heart of Heaven is generous and impartial. We are to follow Heaven's love of life to deal with people. Heaven does not have enemies, therefore we have to follow Heaven not to consider anyone as enemies. If we don't want to have enemies we are not to do any harm to others.

The word TENSINKAI is the name the Great Master Morihei Ueshiba gave to the Vietnamese Aikido league in the 60's. I was delegated by the Masters Morihei Ueshiba and Doshu

Kisshomaru Ueshiba to organize and propagate AIKIDO in VIETNAM in the spirit of Love and Peace. I think that the name given to the Vietnamese AIKIDO affiliate was not without intention. At that time VIETNAM was in an endless internecine war. The Great Master hoped that Vietnamese people would be able to eliminate the barrier which separated themselves to live together in reconciliation and concord, and for the sake of Love, annihilate hatred and bring Peace to this suffering country.

After my settlement in the U.S.A., I decided to use this name TENSINKAI again.

Q Sir, we have heard that you have learned different Martial Arts. In some Martial Arts you even obtained a higher degree than in AIKIDO. Why didn't you develop it to have a better chance to move up in your career?

A Every Martial Art has its own special points. If I studied other Martial Arts, it was to acquire a broader knowledge. I don't like to compete or to quarrel. I don't have the idea of fighting with the expectation to gain victory over people. For this reason AIKIDO is the martial art that fits me most. Aikido is a martial art that treasures peace. Love is the guideline of all moves, thus there is no rancor which engenders vengeance. As I have related before, I chose and serve

AIKIDO because it's a perfect martial art to develop ourselves physically and spiritually. It is a high-minded philosophy. I chose and serve AIKIDO to carry out the duty Great Masters MORIHEI UESHIBA and DOSHU KISSHOMARU UESHIBA entrusted me to propagate AIKIDO in the spirit of Love and Peace.

Q According to you, what are the minimum requirements expected from anyone aspiring to become an AIKIDO instructor?

A AIKIDO is not merely a martial art, It is a philosophy and a Budo. All high ranking AIKIDO instructors are people with a heart dotted with generosity. Anyone entrusted with the duty to teach AIKIDO must have a virtuous way of living. He or she must not lie, cheat and must welcome what's right and be receptive to all critics. He or she must fraternize with everybody and not regard anyone as enemy. He or she must not dislike anyone because that person is not in his or her group.

In the end, any AIKIDO student in whatever school or whichever instructor he or she may study with, always comes to the same source: the forever respected Great Master MORIHEI UESHIBA. Only with such respect can the power of AIKIDO be strengthened to denote the entire meaning of the word "Chivalrous" as "AI" in the word AIKIDO.●

head to toe warm-up exercise before demonstrating a series of Kokyu Nage techniques involving Riote Dori and Riokatate Dori. He then went into some control and lock techniques of the Nikkyo series. There were about 25 to 30 people attending his class. Sensei Phong's smooth, quick and circular movements seemed to be in total contrast with the TaiChi-influenced Aikido style of the class' participants that they were pleasantly surprised and impressed. After about an hour of continuing practice, Sensei Phong took the class to the open area in front of the conference room, where earlier we had the "Dharma Talk", to practice sword exercises. It was just afternoon, but even with the sun right above us the air seemed cool. Still, some of us had our uniform soaked with sweat from the exercises. Finally, after forty-five minutes, Sensei Phong finished his teaching with a brief speech expressing his appreciation for the occasion to share his Aikido techniques with such enthusiastic group of Aikido practitioners. Of course, there was the inevitable photo session with the whole class followed by some pictures with Sensei McGouirk.

With his gentle but very strong posture and his graceful but effective techniques, Sensei Phong seemed to capture the participants' enthusiasm and respect. Sensei Phong seemed to be able to project his KI to express the true spirit of Aikido not only during the training but throughout the whole interaction. Sensei McGouirk then took me aside and asked me to relate to Sensei Phong his desire to invite Sensei Phong to his dojo for a one-day seminar to further strengthen the already close friendship between his and Sensei Phong's dojos.

* * *

We left the Mt. Baldy Zen Center a short while after bidding good-bye to Sensei McGouirk and our new friends. The sun had begun to go down. We stopped

several times during the return trip so that Sensei Phong could try out his new video camcorder. Slightly exhausted, I lay down in the back seat of Jim's Blazer, trusting my life to his driving. Luckily, his driving skill was excellent and he brought us back home safely.

I do hope that our school will participate more in the future with other schools. It would be interesting to be exposed to different styles of Aikido as well as to a different environment, away from our routine, stressed out daily life. On a personal note, I am glad that the occasion has reinforced my trust and devotion in the spirit of "AI" and "KI" of Aikido. Otherwise, the air was fresh, the people were friendly, the lasagna was delicious, and, Jim assured me, I was not so bad an Uke for Sensei Phong after all.... What a relief!●



Dang Thong Phong Sensei, Frank McGouirk Sensei and practitioners at the Mt. Baldy Zen Center (May 23, 1992)

A DAY TO REMEMBER

by Tam Do

The trip was planned about a month after Sensei Phong received the invitation from Sensei Frank McGouirk to attend a Zen and Aikido seminar put together by him and his friends, all high level Aikido masters and Zen practitioners, at the Mt. Baldy Zen Center during the Memorial Day weekend. Even though Sensei Phong announced the invitation to all of his classes, Jim Ogborn and I were the only two students who went with him.

Sensei Phong, Jim Ogborn and I left Orange County around 7:40 in the morning of May 25th, 1992 after a pleasant breakfast at Denny's. Jim drove North on Freeway 57 before turning East onto San Bernardino Freeway. It took us about 25 minutes we passed the city of Pomona, before we reached the foot of Mount Baldy. The weather was partially cloudy, cool and very serene. The road was very winding and beautiful scenery quickly passed by the car window. An hour and twenty minutes into the trip, we reached the Mt. Baldy Zen Center.

We were greeted by Sensei McGouirk. He was kind enough to allow us to use his bungalow to rest and store our personal belongings. Eager to participate, however, we quickly changed and walked up the hill to attend the first Aikido class, taught by a young Japanese lady. This class was intended for beginners even though there were about 20 to 25 people attending. Most of them wore black belt. The highlight of this class came when the five young monks who lived and worked there (as cooks, for this particular weekend) asked to participate. Only one of them had some previous Aikido experiences but most of them were muscular and pretty quick with their feet. I noticed that Sensei Phong participated with enthusiasm; he even seemed to enjoy being thrown by one of those monks. The class lasted about an hour and 30 minutes with enough Kokyu to warm us up, even Sensei Phong.

After about 15 minutes of recess, most of us walked up the "boulevard" to attend the "Dharma Talk", featuring a Zen master from Los Angeles. The talk was held in a long and airy conference room specially designed for such event with small pillows to sit on, and a small Buddhist altar at one end. The talk that day concentrated on the topic of "...Meet the Buddha Kill the Buddha, Meet (your) Master Kill (your) Master!" It was interesting and very thought provoking. "Let the intuition flow and relax your rational power," the Zen master advised before ending the talk. Of the three of us, Jim seemed to enjoy the talk the most!

It was noon. We walked back to our bungalow to change and get ready for lunch. I did not know about Sensei Phong and Jim, but I was about starving to death. It was then that Sensei Phong advised me to prepare to be his Uke. In the morning, Sensei Phong had accepted Sensei McGouirk's unexpected request to conduct the afternoon Aikido class. The vegetarian style lasagna and the vegetable prepared by the monks were so good that I could not resist to serve myself twice before I was able to exert some self-control with the thought of being an Uke, thrown around with a full stomach, in less than half an hour! Suddenly I wish that Hai, Chien, or Quang-Anh, with their graceful rolls, were around to take the part of the Uke. Why an old guy like me?

Sensei Phong began the class with our school's traditional



ON HIS 8TH I



Masatake Fujita, General Secretary of Hombu Dojo and Dang Thong Phong Sensei, President of Tenshinkai Aikido Federation in Tokyo (11/17/91)

... A FORMER STUDENT

Sensei Dang Thong Phong has received a letter from one of his former students, Mr. Patrick Dimayuga. Mr. Dimayuga studied Aikido first with Sensei Dang Thong Tri and then with Sensei Phong from 1964 to 1966. After that Mr. Dimayuga returned to France to live with his family. He is currently the Editor in chief of SESERAGI, the official Newsletter of AIKIDO FEDERATION FRANCAISE D'AIKIDO et de BUDO (AIKIKAI DE FRANCE). It has been more than 26 years since they last met. With this renewed contact with Mr. Patrick Dimayuga, Sensei Phong hopes to establish close relationship between Tenshinkai Aikido Federation and Aikido Federation Francaise.



Mr. Patrick Dimayuga

AIKIDO SEMINAR

AUGUST 1, 1992

Aikido-Ai will host a one-day seminar with Frank McGouirk Sensei and Dang Thong Phong Sensei. The class will begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 4:30 p.m. on August 1, 1992. The fee is \$30.00.

For more information, write to Aikido-Ai dojo at 6727 S. Milton Ave., Whittier, CA 90601 or call Frank McGouirk Sensei at (213) 696-1838.

QUALITY NOT ...

(Cont. from page 7)

difficult to correct my technique later. Even as a beginner, I am still "working on it" and feel it is almost impossible to realize what I am doing incorrectly, let alone convince my body to make the necessary adjustments.

Instead of refining the basic movements, I have practiced my mistakes over and over. Impatience and lack of concentration have slowed my progress and clouded my ability to see what is directly in front of me (the true lesson of the day).

(Continued on page 12)

CONGRATULATIONS TO SHIHAN MASATAKE FUJITA ON HIS 8TH DAN PROMOTIONS



Masatake Fujita, General Secretary of Hombu Dojo and Dang Thong Phong Sensei, President of Tenshinkai Aikido Federation in Tokyo (11/17/91)

Aikido Insights has just received the great news that Sensei Masatake Fujita, General Secretary of the Hombu Dojo, Aikido World Headquarters, has been promoted to 8th Dan since January 12, 1992. Sensei Masatake Fujita and Sensei Dang Thong Phong have met and known each other since 1967 when Sensei Phong went to Japan for the privilege to study Aikido under the direct guidance of O'Sensei Morihei Ueshiba and Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba. They met again last November when Tenshinkai Aikido Federation's delegation, led by Sensei Phong, went to Japan for the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Aikikai Foundation and the 60th Anniversary of Hombu Dojo. On behalf of all members of our Federation, Sensei Phong has sent a letter to congratulate Sensei Fujita as soon as he received this belated news.

QUALITY NOT ...

(Cont. from page 11)

During practice, I feel frustration by my side. He and I practice the art of taking short cuts (ie., trading speed for form and muscular strength over true coordination.) If the technique does not continue smoothly, most of the blame is directed toward the uke.

"You are too stiff... too tense!"

"Too heavy!"

"Nonsense!"

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The fear of injury makes the uke tense. This is due partly to falling techniques not being completely absorbed into natural reaction. The body completes a rigid set of motions until these become refined to the point that one just falls (rolls), utterly relaxed.

In addition, the displacement of aggression (the actual intent to inflict damage) interrupts the unison between uke and nage. This aggression as originating from our experiences outside the dojo (job dissatisfaction, marital stress, other problems) may make us throw our partner or twist his/her wrist a little harder. The uke not only fears striking the mat abruptly, but also fears an over-zealous partner.

Looking back, waving my arms around during the warm up period hasn't been very beneficial. Once the application has been introduced, I have had to relearn certain movements (sayu undo and tenkan). I believe a few correctly performed movements are far more productive than a thousand poorly executed techniques. Hence, quality not quantity. In fact, only when I engage this process and repeat to myself... "Practice doesn't make perfect... Perfect practice makes perfect."

Can I work through frustration.

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