

AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES

# NEWSLETTER

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April 1, 1989  
Volume 4. Number 4.

On April 26, 1989, our dojo will commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Passing of the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba O-Sensei, who left us on April 26, 1969.

There will be a special practice by Furuya Sensei and a Zen Buddhist Memorial Service conducted by Fukushima Sensei of the Zenshuji Soto Mission.

Practice 6:15pm to 7:15pm  
Memorial Service 7:30pm to 8:00pm  
Dinner 8:30pm to 9:30pm

#### MESSAGE FROM SENSEI:

This month is very important for Aikidoists all over the world because this is the month when we remember and commemorate the passing of the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba O-Sensei, on April 26, 1969.

As is our custom, we will have a one hour practice and a memorial service by the priests of the Zenshuji Soto Mission who will come to the dojo and offer sutras and incense. Everyone is welcome to participate in the service. It is not very complicated. We sit in a row, and one by one, we go to the head of the dojo where O-Sensei's picture is, bow and offer a little incense, bow again, and return to our seat. The whole service will only take about fifteen minutes. Afterwards, Fukushima Sensei may present a short sermon. Including the sermon, the entire service will take about thirty minutes. We will then go to the Regent Seafood Restaurant on Alameda Street and have dinner. Dinner is about \$11.00 per person. If you don't wish to offer incense but simply observe the ceremony, that is fine as well.

I prefer the Zen ceremony because Fukushima Sensei is a very good and respected friend of mine and he is also a very fine and giving priest who I see working so hard everyday at the temple. Because of my great respect for him and the other priests there, I like them to perform the service. In addition, the Soto Zen service is very simple and not so elaborate or complicated and I don't think people of other religions in the dojo will take offense.

This service is the traditional method of commemorating those who have passed on before us in Japan.

I hope this tradition is carried on by the members of our dojo long after I, too, am gone. These traditions are very important, I believe, because they transmit wisdom, culture and civilization from one generation to the next. What I have learned from my teacher I am committed to passing on to you and I hope that you will pass on this teaching to your own students as well. This is the only way we can preserve the art of Aikido for many generations to come. Aikido is a living experience, it cannot be preserved on paper or videos or stuffed and put in a glass cage in some museum.

After twenty years since the Founder's death, there are now many, many generations of Aikidoists who have never met or heard of the Founder. We must be grateful to him because, through his efforts and wisdom, we can practice Aikido today and enjoy all of its benefits in our lives. It is important to remember him at least one day of the year. As for myself, there is not a single day that goes by when I do not think of him and how grateful I am to him for giving us this profound but very unique martial art.

Nowadays, I see so many different kinds of Aikido here and there. It still continues to surprise me. Everyone is trying to create their own "style" or "school." I think this is very presumptuous because they seem to believe they are in some way equal to O-Sensei or "better" than him but do nothing to indicate this at all. If I could meet someone of O-Sensei's greatness, wisdom, skill and enlightenment, I would be the first to ask him to become his student. Yet, I know of no such person on this planet today. I have heard some people go around saying that they have improved on his techniques. This again is quite unjust, in my own mind, and must come from some horrible self-delusionment deep within that person. I wish people would study O-Sensei's words more carefully. One can make progress in the technique and continue, all of his life, to polish and polish technique to its finest point. The techniques never change, only one's understanding of it. As one progresses in the understanding of the technique, of course, the external and internal appearance of the technique will change but this is not to say that "I" have improved on the technique. This is a dangerous misunderstanding and, if we fall into this trap, we are doomed like so many others.

This is why it is so important to keep the Founder's memory very clear in our minds. Life is too short and we cannot become so easily self-deluded and led astray. In just one of O-Sensei's technique, among

Page 2.

thousands, there is a lifetime of study and training. This is how mysterious and how potent the art of Aikido is. We should all work together and commit ourselves to preserving Aikido for future generations to come while polishing our own Aikido and applying it in our daily lives.

#### **CORRECTIONS IN THE MARCH ISSUE**

Many apologies are in order. In the last issue, I used the wrong masthead for our Newsletter. Instead of the ACLA Newsletter on the page headings, it stated the Nanka Token Kai Newsletter. Many, many apologies.

#### **ZENSHUJI CHILDREN'S CLASS VISITS THE DOJO.**

On March 19, 1989, Sunday, the Children's Class of the Zenshuji Temple visited the dojo for a lecture by Sensei on Reigi-saho (Traditional etiquette in the dojo). This was part of a larger program in which about twenty youths spent the night at the temple practicing zazen and listening to various sermons and participating in activities much like a traditional training monastery for monks. On Sunday morning, they all woke up at 6:30am to practice zazen (sitting meditation). They all came to the dojo at 9:00am to hear Sensei's lecture and see a demonstration of swordsmanship by Douglas Firestone and Kazuho Nishida, Assistant Instructors of the dojo. Everyone had a good time and Sensei presented the temple with an antique Japanese drum which was made about one hundred and fifty years ago. This was for the Temple's famous Zende-ko drumming troupe.

#### **DOJO AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP**

We have established a dojo scholarship for Mr. Mark Francis to enable him to continue his Aikido training at the dojo. He is a very serious and promising student living in South Central Los Angeles and attending school at UC Northridge. This is almost a two hour bus ride going one way. Unfortunately, his financial aid at UC Northridge ends this year after four years so he will be attending Trade Tech in Los Angeles from next semester. The scholarship is awarded with the understanding that he will continue his training in Aikido, excel, and eventually become a fine Aikido teacher at our dojo along with his career. We all wish him the best of luck and much success!

#### **NEW AFTERNOON CLASSES**

The dojo is now offering afternoon classes from 1:00pm to 2:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These classes are especially designed for students and many professionals working in the downtown area and are specifically designed for people who cannot attend classes during our regular training

schedule. The fee is \$40.00 a month for Tuesday and Thursday afternoons only. Regular members who wish to participate in these additional classes will be charged \$20.00 in addition to their regular monthly dues.

#### **YELLOW PAGES AD**

We still need a great deal of help for our yellow pages ad. It is still beyond the financial strength of the dojo to cover it each month but it is very important in helping our dojo invite new members. Each student can contribute whatever they like each month or whenever they can. We would like to collect at least \$350.00 each month from the membership. If you cannot help at all, that is fine; but, if you can help out, please see Douglas Firestone or any of the Assistant Instructors. Every little bit helps.

#### **NEW TRAINING SCHEDULE EFFECTIVE AS OF APRIL 1, 1989**

Please note all of the new changes in your schedule:

#### **BEGINNING AND OPEN CLASSES**

Monday through Friday Evenings  
6:15pm to 7:15pm

Monday, Wednesday and Friday Evenings  
7:30pm to 8:30pm

Saturday and Sunday Mornings  
10:15am to 11:30am

#### **ADVANCED CLASSES**

Tuesday and Thursday Evenings (Weapons)  
7:30pm to 8:30pm

Saturday Mornings  
11:30am to 12:30pm

#### **CHILDREN'S CLASSES**

Sundays Noon  
12:00pm to 1:00pm

#### **MUSO SHINDEN RYU IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP**

(Separate Fees)  
Wednesdays  
8:45pm to 9:45pm

Saturday and Sunday Mornings  
9:00am to 10:00am

#### **SPECIAL AFTERNOON CLASSES**

(Separate Fees)  
Tuesday and Thursday Afternoons  
1:00pm to 2:00pm

Current schedule subject to change. All changes will be posted on the dojo bulletin board. Please check the bulletin board for special events and changes.

Page 3.

### **BLACK BELT EXAMINATION**

Our Black Belt Examinations will be conducted on April 8, 1989, Saturday, from 12:00pm to 12:30pm after the regular class. The results of the examinations will be presented at the Memorial Dinner on April 26, 1989.

### **PROMOTIONS**

The following promotions are made as of April 1, 1989. Congratulations!

6th Kyu

Mr. Ed Labayna  
Mr. Scott Moon  
Mr. Tom Wyngarden  
Mr. Lennie Senibaldi

### **GET WELL SOON!**

Mr. David Wisotzki injured his arm in work and hasn't been able to practice for several weeks. We wish him a speedy recovery and speedy return to training.

### **DOJO TRAVELLERS**

Mrs. Erica Shoji Birnbaum left for Japan in mid-March for a three month stay at her parent's home in Tokyo. She will be training regularly at Hombu Dojo and will try to take her test for ni-dan, second degree black belt before her return to the States. She trained in Japan about ten years ago and has travelled all around this country practicing at various dojos. She resides in Thousand Oaks with her family and comes to the dojo for practice about three to four times a week.

Mr. Morgan Weisser will be going to Germany for about a week to celebrate the 90th birthday of his grandfather. He will then be travelling to Chili to be with his father who is on location making a movie. We'll all miss him in the dojo for several weeks.

Mr. Sukko Lee has been away from the dojo for several weeks being in New York and practicing at the New York Aikikai. He returned to the dojo in March.

Sensei went to Houston, Texas, last month for the weekend to attend the Houston Sword Show and lecture on the Japanese sword. The lecture was very well received.

Sensei will also be travelling to Dallas Texas in May where he will be presenting a demonstration of Aikido and Iaido for the Dallas Sword Show. He will be assisted by Mr. Douglas Firestone and Mr.

### **SEIHA WAKAYAGI KAI DANCE CONCERT**

On March 11, 1989, the Japan America Theater in Little Tokyo presented the Seiha Wakayagi classical Japanese dance concert from Japan. I always try to attend these concerts because of my interest in Japanese culture and fine arts. I went accompanied by several of my assistants.

The program contained many interesting articles about the history of classical Japanese dance. One article in particular is interesting and related to our Aikido training so I have included it in this newsletter. It is an article by the Noh master, Uchida Anshin who is a member of the Japan Noh Association (Nihon Nohgakukai) and elected as an Intangible Cultural Treasure In Japan. The article is entitled, "How did I learn Noh?" (Noh Yakusha no Shintokucho) and is translated by Ms. Reiko Kasama of Los Angeles.

Noh is the Japanese classical theater and dance developed in the 15th century in Japan. It is a unique form of theater which is virtually unchanged from its inception to the present day. It was created by and for the warrior class and contains much of the aesthetics, attitudes and aspirations of the early samurai warrior. Noh was developed during the same time and in the same environment by the same people who developed traditional Japanese martial arts.

The Kita School of Noh was developed by a warrior according to the article so the dance in Noh maintains the same mental attitude as a warrior "going off to battle" or facing his opponent. Even the stance in Noh is taken from the martial arts. The "hanmi no kamae" or half-body stance is the same stance we use today in Aikido. So, at least, we know this stance has been used for the last five hundred years! In addition, it is important in Noh, as in Aikido, to maintain the mental concentration and body weight in one's center. The Noh actor must move with his entire body and exhibit no "suki" or "openings" in his movement. This is no different from martial arts or Aikido training. This type of dance is known as "buke-jimai" or "warrior dancing."

The article is an interesting account of Uchida Anshin's training as a Noh actor. It is interesting to note how the same tradition pervades all of the arts in Japan. In one way, we can relate everything about his training to Aikido practice. I hope everyone will read this article very carefully and keep it as a very good reference. I myself have read it over and over trying to understand all of its meaning and implications.

### **HOW DID I LEARN NOH?**

**By Anshin Uchida**

**Reprinted from the Seiha Wakayagi Program. Translation by Ms. Reiko Kasama.**

Special Grand Master of Nihon Nohgaku-kai

**ANSHIN UCHIDA**

I remember watching a TV program called "Shishi no Za" when I was a young boy. The story of how a man became a Noh master through long and arduous training greatly impressed the audience. Among various segments of the program, one scene in particular stays clearly in my mind: The young man was trying to walk straight while carrying a bucket filled with water on his head and a tray on his inwardly turned elbows in order to enhance his sense of precision and gracefulness of movements.

Thinking back to my younger days, I can also recall practicing similar movements day after day. This particular practice is intended to make the movement smooth and graceful by strengthening the hip muscle. It is a very difficult part of the training, but practicing it daily, one will eventually achieve the graceful and refined movement of the arms.

We also practiced walking on a straight line while looking at a mirror. We practiced this over and over until we can walk without problem. It was necessary to put the weight toward the hip in order to walk properly. However, the most important thing was not to show the back of your feet to the audience without lifting ankles. We were taught to walk with the back of the feet always touching the floor.

Kita-Ryu, Rokuheita Kita XIV (Human treasure), Minoru Kita XV, and Tokuzo Goto (Human treasure) were the best examples of the great Noh masters in our school.

It has been said that some forms of Noh originated in martial arts. I suppose one can say that being on stage to Noh actors is just like soldiers going to the battle.

Each school prides itself in developing its own varieties of the Noh movement. For instance, our school adapted, "kamae" (positioning) from martial arts, so that even in the female movements, toes open outward to represent its masculine origin. "Hanmi-No-Kamae", used for the male movements, has a much firmer appearance without any wasted movements.

The important thing is to keep your weight firmly in the center, and not be sidetracked by the more apparent importance of the movements themselves.

There are two ways to form the movements: A dancer may move his whole body, or he may move only his hands and feet. In either movement, he may never show "Suki" (unawareness).

The center weight of the body rests on your hip. So whether a dancer sits or stands, he should draw his hip backward to make his movements firm and graceful.

When a dancer does not wear a mask, he must not blink his eyes, pretending that this own face is a mask. That is why it is important for a dancer to practice before a mirror. This may sound very difficult, but whenever you have Kiai (concentration and passion), your whole body is in harmony and the eyes will not easily blink.

Thus, I have been practicing ever since I was a pupil.

# 能役者の心得帳

重要無形文化財  
日本能楽会会員

内田 安信

私の少年の頃、ある能楽御宗家の幼少の頃より成人になられる迄の、芸道修行稽古風景をドラマ化した「獅子の座」という映画が制作され、多くの方を感動させました。

その中で主役の子供が、着物、袴、白足袋姿で、頭の上に水を入れた桶をのせ、すり足で歩いたり、ひじを内側にひねらせた上に盃を置き、稽古をする風景がありました。大変無理な姿なのですが、しかし腰の構え、両腕の張りの美しくなってゆくための稽古と見受けられました。

今思いだしてみますと、私共の内弟子時代の稽古も、頭の上に桶こそ置きませんでした。腰を重く、強く、両ひじを内に向け、はこび（運歩）を美しくする、この稽古の毎日でした。特に腰の位置、両ひじのかえり方など、とても厳しい稽古でした。扇も自然に内側に下向きになります。しかし何年か後に、両手首だけ普通の構えに向きを直されると、不思議に両腕は美しい弓なりになっています。両肩に力を入れず弓なりの腕が美しい姿なのです。

「はこび」は鏡を見ながら板の目に沿って真直ぐに歩く練習をくり返します。そして摺り足で、自由に舞台の上を滑り廻れるように稽古をくり返すのです。もちろん仕舞を覚えながらです。美しい摺り足で歩くには、身体全体の力を統一し、中心の力を腰できめ、その腰の加減によって「はこび」なめらかにしなければなりません。足の裏を見せないことが、第一条件です。従って爪先を蹴上げるように高く上げないように、又踵もち上がらないようにします。「はこび」は土踏まずが板にくっつくようにと教えられました。

喜多流では十四世喜多六平太（人間国宝、芸術院会員）、十五世喜多実（芸術院会員）、後藤得三（人間国宝、芸術院会員）、師などの舞姿が美しく、私共の良きお手本となりました。

「能」の型は、元来武道より出たものであるといわれています。そして能楽師が舞台へ出るのは、武士が戦場へ出ると、同じ心持ちであるといわれています。もちろん流儀によって多少舞い方も異なってきます。特に喜多流は武士の出であるので、舞う型に剣術の構えを取入れ、女姿も爪先が少し開くのが特徴です。男姿は半身の構えになります。従って強くなり、無駄がなく美しい型になります。大切なことは、舞の中で、型に気を奪われ身体を中心を保つことが、おろそかにならないようにすることです。型をするのに身体全体を動かす場合と、手足だけ動かす場合がありますが、常に全身に一分の隙も見せてはいけません。身体を中心は、腰にあるので、立っている時も、座っている時も、腰を後方に引いて、どこから押されても、よろけないだけの用意が身体になければならないのです。面「おもて」を使用しない時は、自分の顔を能面と心得て、眼を動かさないことも大切です。気合いが入ってくれば、自然に「目ばたき」はしないものであり、腰を中心に保ち、五体の一致が肝要となります。五体と型の調和こそ最も重要だということが言えましょう。

私はいつも鏡に向かって、自分の型を直しながら稽古に励んでいるのです。

以上、私の内弟子時代よりの思いついた身体の扱い方を、思いのままに書き出してみました。

Page 6.

#### **TALK BY BISHOP KENKO YAMASHITA**

On March 19, 1989, the day of the Children's Sunday School visit to the dojo, the monthly memorial service was conducted at the Zenshuji Temple which I attended. This was a special occasion and Bishop Kenko Yamashita, head of the Buddhist Churches of North America, presented a short sermon after the service. He spoke of many things but a few of his words caught my attention.

Dogen Zenji spoke of "Kobutsu Shinbutsu" or "Old Buddhas and New Buddhas." This does not mean that we are to determine who are senior Buddhas and who are junior Buddhas or who are "old" and who are "new" Buddhists. It means that originally, from the very beginning, we are all Buddhas. However, we don't realize this within ourselves. When we come to this realization that we are already "old" Buddhas, we become, at that moment, "new" Buddhas. The message is that the realization or the actualization of the teaching is much more difficult than the teaching itself. The same is true in our Aikido practice.

When I was training at Hombu Dojo in 1969, I had no intention of returning home but I wanted to spend at least several years there developing myself. My stay was cut short by the illness and death of my grandfather which required me to return to this country. Before leaving, Doshu presented me with the words, "Wago," which means "peace and harmony." These are simple words and quite easy to understand. There is nothing complicated or esoteric about the meaning, "Aikido is the way of peace and harmony." I have been looking at these same words for over twenty years now and sometimes I have to hide them in the closet because I am afraid to look at them. The meaning, of course, is so simple, but how difficult it is to realize "peace and harmony" in one's life and in one's training! Nothing has ever caused me so much hardship and it often seems I will never realize it in my lifetime.

We often meet people who simply read the "definition" of Aikido and think they understand it. Once, a middle-aged person came to the dojo and said to me (much to my surprise), "I read the book and understand everything about Aikido, I just came to learn a few techniques from you." As a teacher, where do I start? If it were a hundred years ago, I could simply bash him in the head and kick him out of the dojo. If I did this today, he probably wouldn't like me anymore.

I think we understand what Aikido is from the very beginning. The message of the Founder is simple. He said, "Live in peace and harmony, don't fight."

I think we understand this from the day we are born because we have a natural sympathy and respect for other human beings. But, how to actualize this in our daily lives, as the Founder of Aikido did, I think, is very difficult and must be the main purpose of our training. We don't train to become strong, we train to understand this fundamental essence of our lives. Without "peace and harmony" and without a basic concern and respect for other human beings, we will eventually destroy ourselves. Gradually, this reality is becoming more evident in our lives today. This, I think, is where martial arts and religion differs. In martial arts, we have no one to save us or forgive us or give us power. We must do it on our own power within our own short lives and with not very much help from others. The help we do receive comes from great teachers like the Founder of Aikido.

This month, several students will try to qualify for their black belt degrees. Some students look at the black belt as the ultimate goal of martial arts. It is not. We call first degree black belt, "shodan," which literally means, "the first step." In some ways, like Yamashita Sensei's sermon of "Old Buddhas, New Buddhas" maybe shodan means the transition from "old Aikidoist" to "new Aikidoist."

When O-Sensei became a great master recognized all over the world, he took off his black belt and wore the white belt of a beginner until his death. We always think we are "new" Aikidoists hoping to become "old" Aikidoists. It is interesting that it is really the other way around.

#### **MEMBERSHIP DRIVE**

We will begin our membership drive for the dojo until summer, so each member should make an effort to introduce Aikido practice to their friends and family. We would like to build up a stronger group of active members. If everyone makes a small effort, collectively the results will be significant. Everyone can help.

Members should also discuss among themselves the best way to build up our membership. We need good ideas. We have a nice ad in the Yellow pages and a daily ad in the Rafu Shimpō, a local community newspaper, but this is about all the dojo can handle at present. Are there other effective ways to introduce our dojo to the community?

#### **YAMADA SENSEI'S FIRST AIKIDO VIDEO**

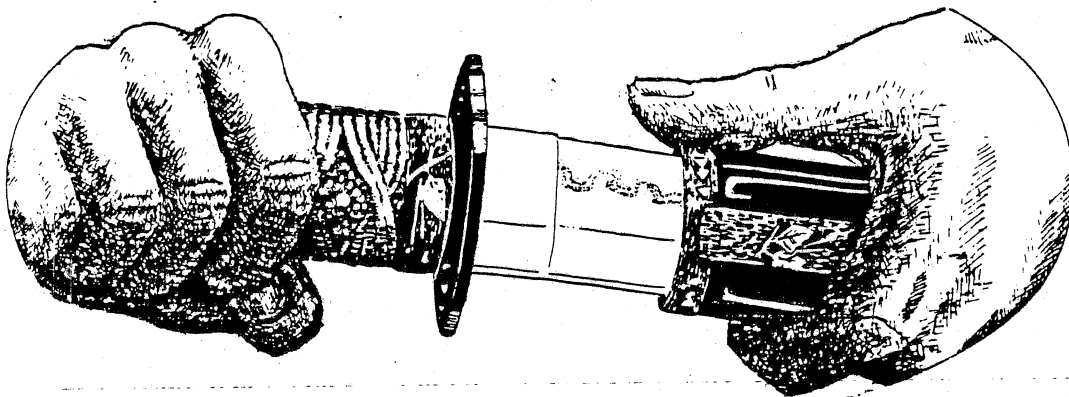
Yoshimitsu Yamada Sensei, 7th Dan, Shihan, Chief Instructor of the New York Aikikai, has produced the first in a series of videos on Aikido techniques. It will be available this month and the cost is around \$29.00 plus postage and handling. There is a slight delay in production because the handling will be transferred from the New York Aikikai to the United States Aikido Federation.

Please see Sensei if you are interested in ordering a copy.

**THE TRUE AND WONDROUS SWORD OF TAI-A**  
By Takuan. Translated by Taitetsu Unno and reprinted from the Federation News, 1978.

illustration by Lynn Sonneman

# The True and Wondrous



# Sword of Tai-A

by Takuan (1573-1645)

The art of the sword consists of never being concerned with victory or defeat, with strength or weakness, of not moving one step forward, not moving one step backward, of the enemy not seeing me, and my not seeing the enemy. Penetrating to that which is fundamental before the separation of heaven and earth where yin and yang cannot reach, one instantly attains proficiency in the art.

A person who has attained such mastery of the art does not use the sword to kill; he uses the sword to serve people. But when killing is in order, it kills; when giving life is in order, it gives life. It is free to kill and it is free to serve life. Without seeing good and evil, he clearly sees good and evil; without discriminating, he clearly discriminates. He sets foot in water as if it were on earth, and he walks on earth as if it were in water. When one gains this freedom, he is a great-earth-person, and no one can obstruct him. He stands supreme by himself.

If you wish to realize this, strive unceasingly to see things, including the self, as they are sharply, endeavoring to see them from every angle and so gain insight into their true nature—whether walking, resting, sitting, or lying, whether talking or remaining quiet, whether drinking or eating. With the accumulation of months and years suddenly of itself true wisdom will appear like a light in the darkness. Then you will have gained the insight that no teacher can teach you and manifest the miraculous movements of actionless action. Truly at that moment you will be simply part of the ordinary, yet you will go beyond the ordinary. This is the true and wondrous sword of Tai-a.

This sharp sword of Tai-a is possessed by everyone and lies perfected in each person. When it is made bright, demons fear it; but when it is unpolished, demons will play tricks upon it.

When a superior person meets another superior person and they cross swords, there is neither victory nor defeat, like the

translated by Taitetsu Unno (July, 1978)

Buddha holding up a flower and Mahakasyapa smiling. To know the other three when only one is mentioned, or to discern the weight of gold or silver merely by looking—these are examples of ordinary intelligence. But one who has attained perfection in the art will cut you into three parts even before one is mentioned or the three clarified, even more so is the case if you stand face to face before him.

Such a person will never draw his sword. His quickness cannot be matched even by the flash of lightning; his swiftness is beyond even the sudden gush of wind. But those who have not mastered the art become attached to the sword or cling to their thoughts, breaking the blade or hurting themselves. They are far from being skilled. Do not try to figure this out with ordinary thinking. It cannot be explained by words, not taught by any kind of examples. This is called the transmission outside of conventional teaching.

When this dynamic function becomes manifested, all rules and conventions disappear. Sometimes it asserts itself, sometimes it negates itself, and even Heaven cannot figure it out. What does all this really mean? The ancients said, "When there is no picture of the evil-devouring monster in the house, there are no evil spirits." When one trains the body-mind and attains this wisdom, the single sword will pacify the world. If you seek to master this art, get rid of all frivolous talk! ■

Note: Takuan, the author of the text on swordsmanship, was a leading Zen monk in Kyoto who later retreated to the life of a recluse. Tai-a is a legendary sword of Japanese myth. It is said it could cut without cutting. In the text Takuan uses it as a metaphor in expressing the philosophy that developed with the sword. By the 16th century, the samurai polished their art with philosophy; in fact, it was forbidden to draw a sword. Aikido developed for samurai to defend themselves without a sword. ■

Page 8.

**"A LESSON FROM THE COMMONPLACE"**  
By the 15th Grand Master of Urasenke Tea,  
Sen Soshitsu.

Reprinted from the Chanoyu Quarterly, Tea and the Arts of Japan, No. 35.

In the Genryu Chawa, a treatise on chanoyu written by the tea master Yabunouchi Chikushin (1678-1745), Sen Rikyu (1522-1591) is said to have noted that *sabi*, an elusive kind of elegance born out of deprivation and poverty, is good, but that striving to achieve *sabi* is not. In other words, true *sabi* is born out of one's lifestyle as it is; it is not a product of calculation and study. Certainly *sabi* and striving to achieve *sabi* are related, much like a work of art is related to its copy, but the two are worlds apart in meaning and consequence.

Intellectually and aesthetically, an original work of art is preferable to a copy, however well the copy succeeds in reproducing the original. But problems arise once one becomes accustomed to a copy. Even knowing full well that it is not "real," those subtle characteristics that distinguish it from the original eventually become so indistinct that only a constant, conscious effort to keep them clearly separated in one's mind will prevent one from inadvertently mistaking one for the other. But no matter how blurred the distinctions, in the final analysis copies will always pale when compared with the original work of art, because a work of art is the end product of a quintessentially natural process, whereas a copy is the product of an utterly artificial process. This is true with all things.

The Chinese Zen patriarch Sengcan (Sosan, d. 606) wrote in his philosophical poem *Xin Xin Ming* (Shinjinmei) that "attaining the Way is without difficulty. Simply avoid picking and choosing." though these words may seem elusive, they point to the natural way, the obvious way -- in a sense, to the commonplace. We are all born with a natural inclination toward this way. But, ignorant of its existence and consequently, our natural state, we compete -- for status, for possessions, for influence, for spiritual attainment, for love -- and pick and choose. Victims for our passions, we are emotionally and spiritually caught up in the tangles of likes and dislikes. So wrapped up are we in ourselves, it seems that the world never goes as it should and impermanence, pain and suffering seem to be the only ways it knows. In the words of the famous Japanese Zen priest Dogen (1200-1253), "Loving the flowers, they wither; hating the weeds, they flourish." It is no wonder that all sorts of problems arise, so far have we strayed from the natural Way.

There is a story about a man who called upon a wise Buddhist priest to ask him what he should do to be happy. The priest told him, "Always be grateful and live one day at a time." Coming away from the meeting a little perplexed, the man strove to live as the priest had advised. After some time he still didn't feel he was happy, so he decided to pay a second visit to the priest. Confronting the priest, he asked him why he was still denied happiness. This time the priest explained that the man was too attached to the idea of striving to be grateful and that he should go about it in a more natural manner. Hearing this, the man departed and tried very diligently to be more natural about his endeavor. But still the man was without happiness, for he simply transferred his attachment from striving to be grateful to striving to be natural and, consequently, forgot about being grateful. **Once we become attached to anything at all, the attachment itself, the delusion that what we are doing is what we should be doing, hinders us from finding the Way.**

The phrase "*Hibi kore kojitsu*," which can be roughly translated as "Every day is a good day," is often heard among Zen adepts and chanoyu practitioners. It refers to the acceptance of the fact that the present is all there is -- to an acceptance of the commonplace. This is the attitude of one who has achieved an advanced state of spiritual purity and innocence, having vanquished the demons of discrimination and attachment. For those of us who have yet to overcome these, simply living a life of daily concern for others and putting aside our own desires will head us toward this state. By not becoming attached to the ideal of a "good day" and by living for others in an enriching way, every day will be a good day, naturally.

By Grand Master Sen Soshitsu XV.

**SPECIAL GUESTS**

On March 26, 1989, Easter Sunday, the dojo was visited by Toyoda Fumio Sensei, 7th Dan Araki Munisai Ryu Iaido and Grandmaster of the Toyoda Ryu Kenbu School, and Fujimoto Masami Sensei who makes fittings for Japanese swords.

Toyoda Sensei had heard of the dojo and was very anxious to meet us despite his busy schedule. He plans to make regular visits in the future and may begin instruction in Araki Munisai Ryu Iaido at our dojo.

Araki Munisai Ryu is a branch of the Araki Ryu which was developed in the end of the 16th century. The school utilizes a great variety of weapons including the short sword and kusari-gama (sickle and chain). Araki Munisai Ryu specializes in Iaido technique.

**WITHOUT FORGETTING WHAT EASTER ORIGINALLY MEANS, THE DOJO HOPES THAT EVERYONE HAD A VERY HAPPY AND SAFE EASTER HOLIDAY !**