

AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES

NEWSLETTER

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July 1, 1989
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AIKIDO FOUNDER, MORIHEI UESHIBA'S 20TH YEAR MEMORIAL

Celebrated on April 26, 1989 at Hombu
Dojo in Tokyo

By Eriko Shoji and Jeff Birnbaum

On April 26, 1989, a twentieth memorial ceremony was held for Aikido's founder, or "Kaiso," Morihei Ueshiba at the Hombu Dojo in Tokyo, Japan. By 7:00pm, over 400 Aikidoists gathered and sat in the main dojo on the third floor. Doshu greeted us and showed us three old movies of Kaiso. The first movie was filmed before WWII and showed Kaiso's demonstrations. The second movie was filmed after WWII. The third movie, "The Kingdom of Aikido," showed Kaiso's daily practice and life.

After the movies, all of the people helped to set up the tables for "Naorae." "Naorae" is the party after the ceremony. People brought down the food and *sake* from the *shomen* and shared. Everybody sat at the tables. Doshu and Waka Sensei sat at the front. Shigenobu Okumura Sensei gave the toast. We celebrated with *sake*, chips and peanuts. It was a very relaxed party. Doshu looked very happy and relaxed too. He stood up and, as recalling Kaiso, told us the episodes of his life.

"I have been practicing Aikido since I was very small, but I did not intend to commit myself to Aikido. I felt that Kaiso was overwhelming and not easy to get close to. But, after WWII, the attitude toward anything related to martial arts in Japan was very negative. This negative attitude helped me to realize the importance of preserving Aikido and following in my father's footsteps."

"Recently, many people are interested in knowing about Kaiso. But, I am sick of questions like, 'is it true that Kaiso could walk on the walls and ceiling?' or 'I heard that Kaiso performed psychic phenomena.' He was a human being, not a super psychic or a god. Anyone can be a successful person like Kaiso if they train to get experience and understand the truth."

"As his son, I had the opportunity to see Kaiso's private side. Today, I'd like to talk about Kaiso's personality. Kaiso had strong feelings of joy, anger, happiness and sadness. When he was happy, he showed it bottomlessly. When he got angry, he

roared just like the thunder today (it was thundering outside at the time) and he would scare the people around him. I was completely scared and didn't know what to do. Then, once his anger settled, his mood became peaceful as if nothing had happened."

"Once Kaiso was talking to some guest and he became displeased at something that the guest had said. He told the uchideshi (his senior disciples) and his family to entertain the guest. He then went to his room and never came back. After the guest had left, Kaiso came out of his room and asked, 'Did he leave? That's good. That's good.'"

"Kaiso had interchange with many distinguished artists such as painters, calligraphers and dancers. He seemed to sympathize with artists."

"He often came directly to the point unexpectedly. That surprised people and did touch them to the quick."

"Nowadays, many of the traditional Japanese martial arts have grown successfully as sports since WWII. And all of them have matches to decide who is stronger than the other. Among these martial arts, only Aikido has established itself as an entirely 'no match' martial art. I appreciate this philosophy of absolutely no match in Aikido. It distinguishes Kaiso as extraordinary."

"At the end of the party, Doshu stood up again and added one more episode of Kaiso's life before the memorial ceremony ended. "As I recall, Kaiso's life, I just remembered how Kaiso loved his grandson, this Dojo-cho (Head of Hombu Dojo, Waka-Sensei). When Kaiso was around, this Dojo-cho was a little boy and played on Kaiso's lap and often he tapped Kaiso on the head. Kaiso always said that he was the only one in the world who could tap Kaiso's head."

It was a very relaxed and enjoyable party for all.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

July 4th. Holiday. Special 9:00am Morning Practice only. No evening classes today.

July 9th. Summer Picnic. The dojo will celebrate the summer with a potluck picnic in Griffith Park. From 2:00pm to 5:00pm.

July 15th. Aikido Demonstration at the Zenshuji carvinal and O-Bon Festival. From 4:00pm.

July 15th-16th. Sensei is also setting up an exhibition of Japanese swords for this event.

July 16th. Aikido Demonstration at the Lotus Festival in Echo Park in Hollywood. Time not yet confirmed.

July 29th through August 5th. New England Summer Camp at the Roger Williams College in Rhode Island.

August 12th and 13th. Nisei Week Festival Aikido and Iaido Demonstration at the Yaohan Plaza on 3rd and Alameda Streets. From 2:00pm.

September 10th-14th. Banff Aikido Summer Camp in Alberta, Canada with Waka-Sensei, Yamada Sensei and Kanai Sensei.

CONGRATULATIONS

Ms. Junko Sakai and Mr. Ron Hill, both members of the dojo, went to Japan in May and have returned to the dojo on June 26th as Mr. and Ms. Hill.

They were wed in Japan in Kamakura at the Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gu Temple which happens to be one of the important temples dedicated to the Minamoto Family and the samurai warriors.

All the members of the dojo wish them the very best and a very happy future together always.

DOJO VAGABONDS

Mr. Morgan Weisser graduated high school this year in June and has gone to Japan for one month returning sometime in July. He is planning to spend several days in Tokyo and live with a family in Hiroshima for about three weeks.

Mr. Ken Watanabe will be going to Japan with his family in July for about two months. He will be staying near Tanabe in Wakayama which is the birthplace and hometown of the Founder of Aikido. He will be returning to the dojo sometime in September.

DOJO CONSTRUCTION

Many of the members have noticed a little construction going on in the dojo in the corner of the practice area. With the very kind and generous help of Mr. Pat Monahan, master carpenter, we are constructing a *mizuya* or preparation room for the tea ceremony. Sensei as well as Mr. Douglas Firestone, are studying the Urasenke School of tea ceremony under Madame Sosei Matsumoto who just received Meiyō Shihan (one of the highest degrees in the tea ceremony) from the Grandmaster of tea in Japan. She has also been presented with the Pioneer's Award by the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in Little Tokyo. Matsumoto Sensei taught Sensei's grandmother the art of tea over forty years ago.

Sensei would like to express his deepest thanks to Mr. Pat Monahan for all of his help in constructing the preparation room. Special thanks also goes to Mr. David Wisotzki who went to a great deal of trouble and time to find a special faucet and sink which one cannot normally find in the stores. David has also spent time arranging for the plumbers to install the special faucet.

We will have a party to celebrate the completion of the preparation room when it is finished.

NEW STUDENTS AND GUESTS

We have many new students and guests coming into the dojo all the time. It is important for all the members to make them feel welcome and treat them in a friendly manner. Please do not be stuck-up or stand-offish. Make friends. Make everyone feel welcome to our dojo.

DOJO REPAIRS

We will begin making preparations to repair the mats and carpet in the near future. This means that we must call in a carpet repairman to take up the carpet. Volunteers must then cut, glue and generally repair all the mats underneath which are coming loose or becoming displaced. Then, the carpet-man must come a second time to re-attach the carpet.

During this time, it may be necessary to close the dojo for two days while repairs are being made. Thank you for your help and understanding. Let's do it together!

WHAT IS 'NO MIND?'

From "Two Moons" by Shunmyo Sato. Illustrations by Kyuji Inouye.

I'm sure everyone who drives a car will know what i'm going to talk about.

When you first begin to drive, if you concentrate on the gear shift, you lose control of the steering wheel. And if your attention is distracted by the steering wheel, your foot starts to jerk and won't do what you want it to do. When you try to work the clutch smoothly, you end up forgetting the turn signal. It's really difficult to keep your mind on both hands and both feet and to make all the necessary maneuvers all at the same time. But then, as a result of practicing, without your even thinking about it, the car will start to move along just as you wish it to. If you think about this, it's strange. Accordingly, I would like to call up an appearance of the Thousand Arm Kannon at this point.

The Thousand Arm Kannon, to be more specific, is the Thousand Arm Thousand Eye Kanzeon Bodhisattva. It has one thousand arms, and in the palm of each hand is an eye. This is the Kannon which, using these thousand arms and eyes, is supposed to come to the aid of all sentient beings. However, most wooden statues of this Kannon have only forty arms. And this means that each arm takes charge of twenty-five forms of existence in the realms of desire, form and emptiness, which adds up to a total of 1000 functions.

In the Kofukuji at Nara, there is a splendid Kannon statue which actually has 1000 arms, and during the Tokugawa Period when it was taken to Edo and exhibited, it seems that there was quite a turnout of people who came to venerate it. Among the pilgrims there were some who were sarcastic. One of them said, "She certainly does have a lot of arms, I'm sure there are a thousand. But in spite of that she only has two feet. That's not enough, is it?"

The priest whose duty it was to give explanations responded, "That's right, that's right; she doesn't have enough, and that's why she's come to Edo this way to get some more."

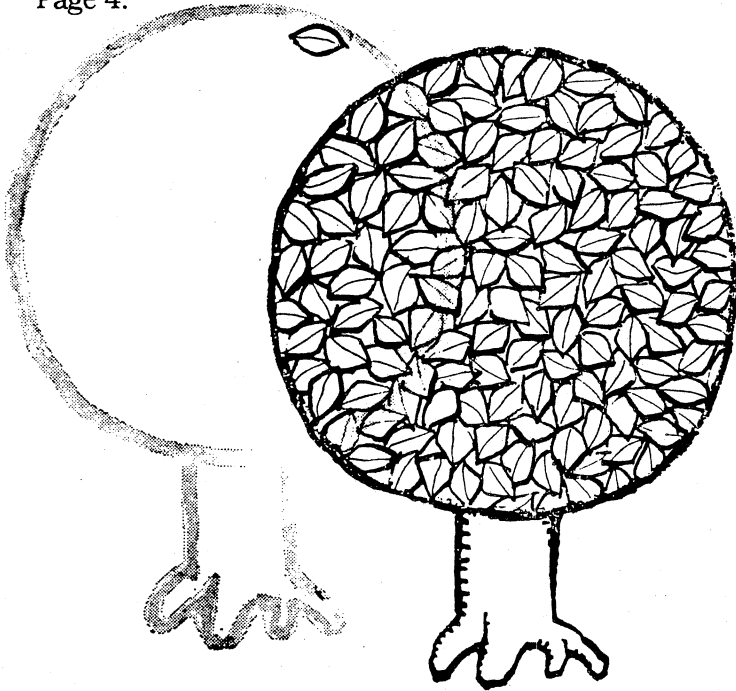
This is an amusing story, but let's put it aside. In the *Fudochi Shimmyoroku* which Takuan Zenji gave to Lord Yagyū of Tajima we find the following. Even though Kannon has a thousand arms, if her mind is caught up in the movement of one of the arms, the remaining 999 arms becomes useless. Just because of the fact that she does not fix her mind on one place, all of the one thousand arms are

useful. Speaking of Kannon, we may ask why should one body have a thousand arms. Well, this figure was created to show people that, if they can open up the 'immoveable wisdom (prajna)' mentioned in the previous story, even if they have a thousand arms, they can manage all of them.



For example, let's say we're looking at a tree. If we fix our mind on one red leaf on the tree, we will not see the remaining leaves. If we simply look at the entire tree without fixing our eyes on any particular leaf, we will see the whole thing without some of it being left out. If our mind is caught up by one leaf, the remaining leaves will not be seen. If our mind is not caught up by one leaf, then a million leaves can be seen at one time. And the person who has come to realize this is himself the Thousand Arm Thousand Eye Kannon. "The mind which moves ahead, to the left, to the right, in the four directions, in the eight directions, and while moving does not stop anywhere -- this is the mind we call "immoveable wisdom."

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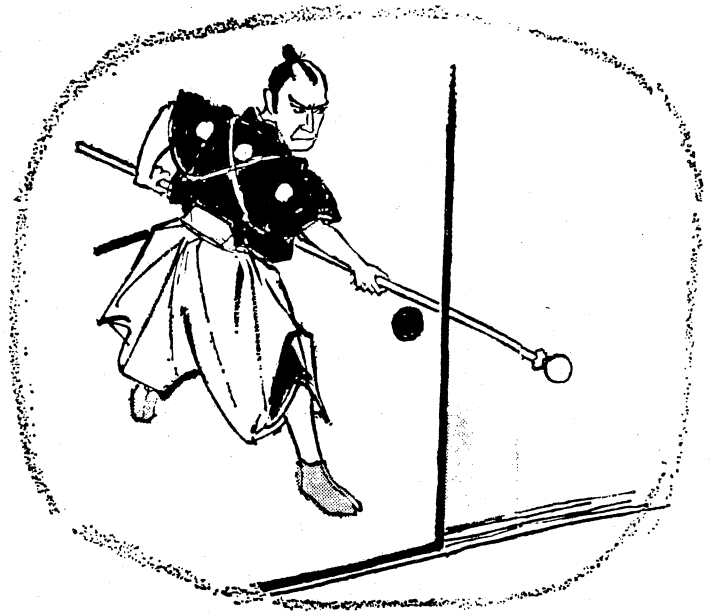
"I won't let you do that!"

We usually associate Zen with 'no mind,' but there is no small tendency to mistake this for becoming insensitive much like a tree or rock. However, 'no mind' actually is not like that at all; rather, it is extending our awareness in every direction simultaneously and paying close attention to everything and, furthermore, it is not fixing our mind on any one point. 'No mind' is having a sense of universal fulfillment, not being caught up in objects, not being attached to anything, conducting oneself freely according to time, place, and circumstances. This is 'no mind'; this is immovable wisdom; this is Dogen Zenji's 'absence of thoughts.' Also, this is the profound teaching of the art of swordsmanship and the heart of the art of flower arrangement.

Musashi Miyamoto once called on Nagatsune Hachiemon Tanabe, who was instructor in the art of spear to Yoshinao Tokugawa. Nagatsune at first was thinking about having a practice match with Musashi, but after talking with him decided there would be no purpose in it. so instead he had Musashi play a game of Japanese checkers with his son while he himself left the room to prepare a carp dish which he took great pride in. Musashi began to play checkers with Nagatsune's son and soon was glaring at the surface of the checkerboard, intently studying the moves he needed to make. Suddenly, he flung a checker and in a scolding voice said, "I won't allow that!"

The son was shocked, but when he looked at Musashi's face, it had already returned to its normal composure.

Well, you are probably wondering why he said what he did. Actually, at the time he said it, Nagatsune was in the next room with a practice spear waiting for an opportunity to strike Musashi.



Even though Musashi was concentrating his attention on the checkerboard, his awareness was extended in every direction and that is what made him an expert swordsman.

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"THE MIND IN A NATURAL STATE"

From: The Sword and The Mind. By Hiroaki Sato. The Overlook Press. 1985.

(Note: This is an excerpt written by Yagyu Tajima no Kami. One can see the strong influence of Takuan's teaching.)

A monk asked an ancient man of virtue, "What is the Way?" The man of virtue said in reply, "The mind in a natural state is the Way."

This story contains a principle that applies to all arts. It puts forth the ultimate truth. A natural state of the mind is one in which all the diseases are eliminated and you mingle with diseases and do not have them. Let us apply the principle to some actual arts. If you are conscious of shooting an arrow when you are doing so, you will not be able to take aim properly. If you are conscious of using a sword when you are doing so, you will not be able to hold steady the tip of your sword. If you are conscious of writing something when you are doing so, you will not be able to handle your brush properly. When you play the *koto*, if you are conscious of it, the music will be out of tune. Someone who shoots an arrow must forget that he is shooting an arrow; if he shoots an arrow with the same state of mind as when he is doing nothing, he should be able to take aim properly. Using a sword, riding a horse, or whatever--do it with a natural mind such as that when you are not using a sword, not riding a horse, not writing, not playing the *koto*, not doing anything at all. Then everything will be done without difficulty, smoothly, with ease.

In whatever art you pursue the Way, if you are singleminded and determined to accomplish what you set out to, you are no longer pursuing the Way. Someone with nothing in his mind is a man of the Way. If you have nothing in your mind, you can easily do whatever you do. A mirror always, clear, with no form or shape of its own, distinctly reflects whatever faces it. The mind of a man of the Way is like a mirror; because it has nothing and is clear, it is "mindless," and is lacking in nothing. That is the mind in a natural state. Someone who does everything with his mind in a natural state is called a master.

No matter what you do, if you do it singlemindedly, trying to control your mind correctly and not allowing it to be distracted you will end up becoming muddle-headed. You do something right once, so you think you are good enough; but then you do it wrong. You do it right twice and wrong once, so you may be pleased that you have reached a point where

you do something right two out of three times; but then you do it wrong twice in a row and find everything confusing. All this is because you are determined to do something well.

Still, in time your achievements add up, and as your training continues, the mind set to do well what is being done will recede into the distance, and whatever you do, you will do without thinking, without intending, regardless of yourself, just like a wooden puppet. That is when you are not aware of yourself, and your arms and legs do whatever they are supposed to without your mind contriving things--that is when you do right whatever you do ten times out of ten times. Even then, if you allow your mind to interfere if only slightly, you will miss it. If you are "mindless" you hit it every time. "Mindlessness" does not mean having no mind whatsoever; it simply means the mind in a natural state.

SENSEI'S COMMENTARY

The last line, "'Mindlessness' does not mean having no mind whatsoever; it simply means the mind in a natural state," is the key to the message. In our Aikido training, we know it is important to be aware at all times. At the same time, our concentration is usually too affected by everything around us. We are concentrating, but not with our own minds. On the other hand, if we think about "not concentrating," we lose everything. The message to find our "natural, original mind" which is always aware, yet not attached to anything. This is the purpose of our training and the state Aikido ultimately achieves. When Yagyu speaks of the "wooden puppet," he does not mean to become like dead wood. He was inspired by a poem by the Zen master, Bukkoku Kokushi (13th century) who wrote: "Though not consciously trying to guard the rice fields from intruders, the scarecrow is not after all standing to no purpose." (From: Zen and Japanese Culture by D. T. Suzuki.)

Yagyu quotes another poem which is important, I believe, to keep in mind when training. "It is mind that deludes Mind. For there is no other mind. O Mind, do not let thyself be misled by mind." (Zen and Japanese Culture: Kokoro koso, kokoro mayowasu, kokoro nare. Kokoro ni Kokoro, Kokoro yurusu na.)

Several years ago, our dojo was plagued with pigeons who bothered the dogs and left their droppings on the steps to the dojo. These city pigeons are a problem, very dirty, and very difficult to get rid of. Tom McIntyre, one of our black-belts, suggested that we place a fake owl on the building to scare away the pigeons and bought a plastic pigeon for the dojo. We put it above the doorway and sure enough the pigeons went away. Once in a while they return, so we take a long piece of bamboo to move the position of the owl a little, and the pigeons go away again. When I saw this, I thought of Yagyu's scarecrow.

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SENSEI'S COMMENTARY continued.

When you come to the dojo you can see the plastic owl sitting above the doorway of the dojo. It doesn't look very imposing and it certainly has no mind to scare away the pigeons because it has no soul or brain. Yet, sitting there by itself, doing nothing, the owl does his job very well.

Waking up in the morning and brushing our teeth is not a special event in our lives. There is nothing "special" about brushing our teeth, yet, it is essential in the daily activity of our lives. We never get enough of teethbrushing and quit. We never "master" teethbrushing and go on to bigger and better things. We must continue to brush our teeth until the day we die. We don't, in the normal course of our lives, give "special" meaning to taking care of our teeth, yet we know it is important and necessary to do very conscientiously every day, several times a day.

We should look at our Aikido practice in the same way. There is nothing "special" about our practice, but it is necessary every single day to the healthful and happy maintenance of our lives,. Everyday, we take a bath, brush our teeth and comb our hair. We clean our clothes and sweep our room, but how many of us take care of and clean our minds and souls as well? Taking care of our minds, cleaning away all the dust and dirt that accumulates there is the benefit of our training. That is why we feel so good after one hour of Aikido.

Speaking of brushing our teeth, several weeks ago, I thought I had a bad tooth. Because of that, I started to brush harder thinking that it will go away and blaming my tooth-paste, I began searching for a different brand. Once we have a cavity, brushing harder does not make it go away. And, I am sure it is unfair to blame the toothpaste. I should realize that I was not being aware enough in my brushing everyday to allow this to happen. I realize that taking care of my teeth is not the most important activity of my life everyday but I still must approach it with great seriousness and awareness. Everything is our lives, even the smallest and most insignificant event, is important. We must realize this and become aware of it yet not become attached to the idea of it.

It seems rather funny to say it, but we should practice Aikido like we brush our teeth everyday. Thank you.

Sensei.

DOJO TRAINING SCHEDULE

Beginning Classes

Monday through Friday: 6:15pm-7:15pm

Monday-Wednesday-Friday: 7:30pm - 8:30pm

Saturday & Sunday: 10:15am to 11:30am

Advanced Classes

Tuesday: 7:30pm-8:30pm

Saturday: 11:30am-12:30pm

Weapons Classes

Thursday: 7:30pm-8:30pm

Children's Classes

Sunday: Noon-1:00pm

UNIFORMS:

We are having difficulties obtaining uniforms for students because the company is continually back-ordered. Please try to keep an extra uniform handy because, when you do order them, there may be a long wait until the company gets them in stock. Please keep this in mind. Thank you.

SUMMER PICNIC

Members of the dojo are planning a summer picnic in Griffith Park on July 9, 1989, from 2:00pm to 5:00pm, after practice.

There is a sign-up sheet on the wall, please bring your favorite specialty and join everyone in our pot-luck party.

USAF NEWSLETTER of the Eastern Region

The newsletter is published by the dojo on a bi-monthly basis. The next issue comes out on July 1, 1989. The subscription is \$15.00 per year. The price will probably go up to \$20.00 in 1990 due to printing and postage costs.

Please see Sensei if you wish to subscribe. The Newsletter contains many articles of interest about Aikido.

The next issue will come out on September 1, 1989.

Thank you.

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SAIKONTAN: THE ROOTS OF WISDOM
By Hung Ying-ming. Trans. William Scott Wilson.
Kodansha Press.

Those who do evil and yet fear that men should know of it

Are, in the midst of evil, still on the road to good.

Those who do good and yet want that men should soon know of it,

Live within good, but are truly at nothing other than the root of evil.

* * * * *

The contrivances of Heaven are unfathomable:

They are repressed, and then increase, they increase, and are then repressed.

In all, they make sport of heroes,

And set great men on their heads.

Thus, if reverses come to the gentlemen, he receives them as routine.

When living at peace, he thinks of the emergency,

And Heaven itself has no place to use its skills.

* * * * *

Happiness cannot be sought: nourish your own spirit of joy,

For this alone is the foundation for beckoning happiness.

Disaster cannot be avoided: flee from that which engenders the brutal,

For this alone is the way of keeping disaster at a distance.

BOOK REVIEW

From Time magazine. June 19, 1989 Issue.

"Bicycle Days"

By John Burnham Schwartz

Summit: 253 pages; \$8.95

"Absent father. Melancholy mom. Squail-free adolescence followed by the ritual college degree. But with no draft to face--no obligations at all, really--how is a bright, sensitive, well-off young fellow to grow up? Honoring tradition, Alec Stern decides to go abroad to try out maturity. His destination: Tokyo. "Bicycle Days," a first novel by a 24-year old Harvard graduate, is the wry, rueful story of Alec's efforts to cope with his job at a computer outfit and with a vexing foreign culture. Through his adoptive family, the friendship of an old fisherman and a troubling affair with an older woman, he succeeds in learning some humbling lessons. Of course that means turning west, to face life at home. Like his hero, Schwartz avails himself of no shortcuts. Innocent of slickness or lit-crit smarts, his novel has authority and a refreshing flinty charm."

From Time Magazine.

"THE PRACTICE OF RIGHT POSTURE"

From "Hara-The Vital Centre of Man. By Karlfried Durckheim.

What right posture with its centre of gravity in Hara means in the purely physical sense, can be easily demonstrated. A man standing in his ordinary posture will fall forward if he is suddenly pushed from behind. If he stands with Hara, he feels surprisingly stable. Even a hard thrust cannot topple him over or even push his forward.

Right posture can be acquired only if one does three things: drop the shoulders, release the lower belly and put some degree of strength into it. For this it is sufficient to say 'I am, I feel myself down here, a little below the navel.' It would seem so easy to follow these instructions, but not only is it far more difficult than we suppose to effect a change in the bodily centre of gravity but long, long practice is needed before it becomes habitual. Indeed to learn to feel oneself constantly down there is tantamount to overcoming the unconscious dominance of the I, and to feeling oneself permanently rooted in a much deeper region. This new placing of the whole centre of gravity comes to full fruition only after years of practice. Yet, as with all spiritual exercises, everything is contained in the very first lesson. But the beginner cannot realize this.

The mistakes commonly made in this first practice are the following: the shoulders are not just allowed to drop but are pressed down. The belly is not simply released, it is thrust out. Distending it is not what is meant. If done in the right way the pit of the stomach

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HARA continued.

falls in while the abdomen comes slightly forward. In this way the third mistake is avoided, the most usual and most easily concealed one, namely the mistake of tensing the region of the stomach while tensing the abdomen. What matters is that everything above the navel should be relaxed.

Further, the right practice of Hara requires first of all the discovery of a new support for holding the body upright. The aspirant must find this support in the lower part of the trunk. Until he does so he is either tense, wrenching himself upwards in order to stand, or slack, sagging down completely if he does not forcibly hold himself up. Support from the lower trunk, although most clearly felt in the belly, lies actually in the whole trunk. So the whole trunk will gain firmness as soon as the belly is free and able to take the weight from above, while the small of the back in particular will acquire a new vitality.

The achievement of right posture is soon noticed by certain signs. If a man has found his proper centre of gravity he soon feels, to his own surprise, not merely a physical freedom in the whole upper region of his body but also that his whole personality is different. His knees which in the old, hunched-up posture were stiff and pressed back have become supple and his whole person is less rigid. The firmness of the trunk gives a lift to the spinal column as though it were being pushed from below upwards. When holding himself erect in the wrong way a man forcibly thrusts his shoulders back, pushes his chest out and draws in both his belly and the small of his back, with the result that his vital middle region is constricted and diminished.

At the same time the neck becomes rigid, bull-necked indeed, while the head is bent back and the chin thrust out. This leads to cramp. But with Hara the uprightness of the body is no longer the result of will-power but comes by itself. The whole body finds itself in flexible equilibrium. The difference in the tension of the neck is a special criterion of right posture. It is as if a secret power soared up lightly from below and culminated in the free carriage of the head. And so letting-go above gives concentration of strength below and the resulting easy freedom of the head has its counterpart in the sustaining weight of the trunk.

Thus the practice of Hara consists from the beginning in a constantly repeated letting-go or dropping down movement. Then one notices how from the vital middle region strength rises upward through the back and produces the sensation of being uplift-

ed.

Actually it is difficult for most people to give up a certain top-heaviness connected with wrong posture. Even if for a moment an aspirant is able to shift his physical centre of gravity downwards, the next moment it shoots up again. And while he is gradually learning to hold Hara for longer periods he loses it again as soon as he is seriously occupied with something else until, after a long time, he has finally incorporated it as a permanent part of himself. Only to the extent that he carries out the exercise not merely in the physical sense, by dropping his shoulders, but also by dropping his persistent, clinging I, will he be able to achieve permanence in the new posture. Then indeed the inner transformation has begun. The 'new' is not merely a hitherto unknown physical support in the form of a fine strong spinal column but a new backbone to his whole feeling of life.

Anyone setting out to practice Hara naturally begins by straightening up his body into place. This is the first and lowest step. As soon as he experiences and realizes that this new intentionally adopted posture gives him a different feeling of life and that it brings with it a new inner attitude, he can, and indeed must, begin his work with this new inner attitude. He must not only stand differently, but stand as a different person for indeed the man who stays calmly in his body-centre is different from the one who either forcibly draws himself upwards or weakly sags downwards.

However, the practice of right sitting, standing, walking fulfils its real purpose only at the third stage. When the aspirant realizes that with increasing Hara-force he has become different from what he was before, he may suddenly realize that the power flowing into him from below is not the product of his will but comes from somewhere else, and that he has only to let it in and to guard it. It is this experience and the realization of its significance that raises the exercise to the third stage, when the aspirant by means of his reverent and upright posture becomes aware of Great Nature within him. He then realizes that his previous posture was not only blocking the forces now flowing into him from hitherto obstructed depths, but also that by his wrong posture he was violating a higher law, a law which he should express even in his outward appearance. So he tries to obey this law. The significance of this stage of realization and practice is fully clear only when both become fused with his everyday life. From then onward it is a continual source of wonder how this sinking into and yielding to his deepest level of being results all at once in a transformation and deepening of the meaningfulness of every situation, in life as well as in the possibility of his mastering it, and how everything thus acquires a new perspective. It is only in this perspective that the full implications of Hara practice become visible and fruitful.