



# AIKIDO

## AIKIDO AND ENLIGHTENMENT

"In the right hand  
manifest *yang*;  
in the left hand  
turn to *yin*  
and lead your partner."

"If you do not  
link yourself to  
True Emptiness,  
you will never fully comprehend  
The Path of Aiki"

O'Sensei Ueshiba,  
Founder of Aikido

Aikido provides a cross-cultural experience that gives meaning and insight into some of the most significant cultural developments in the Far East. Things such as ki (chi), the Yin and Yang Principle and Centreing are basic to Aikido training, along with other psychospiritual subjects such as Zen and Satori.

Zen is an inner state wherein one's energy is enhanced, as is one's sensory perception and awareness. At the same time one's intuitive truth-sense becomes greatly inspired.

Traditionally, Zen practice revolves around meditation - sitting quietly while intensely focussing on achieving the Zen state. The first stage is learning to monitor one's mind by continually checking if it is drifting away into idle reflections, distracting memories or confused imaginings, while keeping it fully open to the here-and-now. A traditional analogy is that one's mind should be like a great lake whose surface is so superbly calm that it perfectly yet effortlessly reflects everything around it. A lake so vast and deep that even the worst storm merely ruffles its surface without disturbing its depths.

Such an achievement is not easy. It means discarding all one's delusions, conceits, egotistic biases, expectations, preconceptions, judgements and distractions, for they are barriers to true seeing. They are like vagrant breezes distorting a lake's reflections.

The result of freeing one's self from such unnecessary baggage is a vibrantly relaxed and pleasant state. Interestingly, modern science can identify it by its alpha-rhythm brainwave patterns on an electroencephalograph. The same patterns are present when people become absorbed in beautiful music, especially in its creation or playing.

Zen was developed in India and introduced to China by the sage Bodhidharma 1600 years ago. Its benefits quickly made it popular with the Chinese intelligentsia, from whom it spread to Japan, having a profound effect on culture and society. It can lead to satori - enlightenment, and has



O'Sensei Ueshiba, the Founder of Aikido

been a major factor in Japan's rise to international eminence.

Enlightenment is an inner transformation which frees one from the insidious bonds of self-delusion. It gives insight into the nature of the Universe and the creative principles that brought it into being, and into what life is all about. It is typified by a wonderful ability to cut through foggy thinking. People who attain satori are highly valued for their genius and problem-solving ability. Einstein's insight into the nature of time and space was pure zen.

Za-zen - training in the zen state while seated - is a basic part of traditional Aikido. Many years ago, when I asked my teacher, Seiichi Sugano about Zen, he told me that Aikido is like Soto Zen, where progress occurs gradually but surely, leading step by step towards enlightenment. This is different to the Rinza school, where enlightenment arrives in a single great burst of inspired insight.

Zen training is not easy, and neither is Aikido. Both involve arduous, sensitive training of the mind, and in Aikido's case, of the body also, for in Aikido we practice zen during combat.

O'Sensei Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido, attained satori. From his enlightenment he developed this wonderful art which incorporates the creative principles of Nature, and which is consequently very unlike the destructive martial arts of the

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past. Not only is it a superb method of training for health and self-defence, but it is a pathway to enlightenment in the Soto tradition of step-by-step progress towards genuine self-development.

When asked the purpose of psychotherapy, Freud said "to make the unconscious conscious". To this Scott Peck added "to help people become more aware so that they can think more clearly and live their lives more effectively and efficiently."

As Alan Watts noted, Zen has many aspects in common with Western psychotherapy, and is in some ways much more advanced. Aikido is at a summit of this domain.

- John Turnbull

### Committee Contact Information

President : Caroline McGregor  
 Treasurer : Tamara Abed  
 Publications : Annette Vincent,  
 annettev@ozemail.com.au  
 Women's Officer : Marianne Hirsch

aikido@iinet.net.au

### CLUB ACTIVITIES

**October 16th Sunday**

Grading.

**October 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> Saturday/Sunday**

Coastal Training (weather permitting)

### RECENT CLUB ACTIVITIES

**September 16<sup>th</sup> Friday**

Movie Night

**August 12<sup>th</sup> Friday**

Beginner's Dinner

### Club Notices

#### Attendance Sheets

A reminder to all club members to mark their attendance on the attendance sheet. The Sport and Recreation Association uses this information to determine level of facility usage etc.

#### Uniforms

The club still has some gi's which are available to members for a reasonable price of \$65. Anyone interested, please see Tamara.

#### Badges

The National Aikido Federation now has a small and elegant badge, designed to be worn with deserved pride. It features O'Sensei's calligraphy "ki" in gold on a ruby-red background. Available to club members for \$20. There are also some Aikido T-shirts still available.

#### Summer School

There will be a club meeting to discuss ideas for the summer school to be held in early January.

### The Final Word

#### Ki Shout

In explaining funakogi (the rowing exercise) to the class recently Sensei emphasised the Ki shout aspect to this particular exercise. We all have the ability to use Ki shouts to disrupt would be attackers and Sensei related a story about a woman being harassed in Civic who turned on her harasser and caused them to flee - just by the power of her voice. We can also use Ki shouts in other instances of danger and I just want to relate a recent incident where I used this 'attack' to prevent a potentially horrible outcome.

I had parked my car in the Woolies car park at Dickson and collected a parking voucher. I had to wait to cross the road back to my car as another car was approaching rapidly (especially for a busy car park). It was at that moment that I realised my 3 year old, Sebastian, was out of the car and had spotted me. He then began to come towards me.

There was no way the car driver could see him (being small and hidden between parked cars) and no way I could get across the road before the car to stop him. I was left with one option - I shouted 'STOP' and projected all the Ki I could muster straight at him. Sebastian stopped instantaneously and shook for a second or two, staring at me with wild eyes. The car passed and I scooped him up for a cuddle and another talk about road safety.

It was only later that I realised exactly what I had done - projected all the Ki I could with my voice, directed straight at Sebastian across the road to stop him running over to me. Since then I have found funakogi I very rewarding exercise as my shouts remind me of this time and just how important it can be to be able to project Ki in this manner.

James Connor.