

合気技 道標

AIKI WAZA MICHI SHIRUBE

(Aikido Practice as a Signpost  
to The Way)

selected essays on aikido  
and nonviolent interaction

Second, Enlarged Edition

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## Preface: From Fear Politics to Harmony in Action

When invited to take part in an event celebrating forty years of Linda Holiday Sensei in aikido and the 41st anniversary of the dojo she has guided so lustreously, I asked myself what sentiments inform my feeling of a special connection with her. What sprang to mind was the dictum that forms the title of this collection, words attributed to the Founder of this discipline, Morihei Ueshiba Sensei. In my network of aikido instructors, Linda subscribed to that dictum prominently, cherishing its kanjis and embodying the notion that the point of aikido practice is not mastery of a repertoire of techniques but guidance toward The Way they illuminate.

That thought in turn prompted me to reflect on what I might bring to the event from my own journey on behalf of the Aiki Way. In a moment I had it: how about ransack my sprawling bibliography for a selection of articles and talks that evolved over the years as I pursued the meaning of that dictum?—not for the sake of a coherent book but rather to collect a random set of stepping-stones along the Way. Now that the collection of pieces lies before me, I am astonished to find how much coherence they evince, created as they were in rather different formats for even more different kinds of occasions. So it may be of interest for some readers to view some threads that appear now as I think about weaving them into a single bound volume.

ALTHOUGH NONE of this could have been foreseen at the time, the entire sequence was sparked by an invitation to present a public lecture to an audience of undergraduate students at The University of Chicago in 1983. This event transpired in the framework of a locally celebrated lecture series—organized by a Residence Hall Master, the beloved late Professor of Mathematics Isaac Wirszup, and his warm wife, Vera. In the midst of serving a term as dean of The College, it made sense for me to say something related

to education; but then I seized the opportunity to speculate about what might be educational about the new disciplines which, at the age of 48, had recently evoked so strong a passion in my being. Thus was born the first of these chapters, “The Liberal Arts and the Martial Arts,” a title then so absurd that a neighbor quipped, when he heard of it: “Why that’s like giving a talk on the subject, ‘Lincoln: Man and Car.’”

My neighbor’s quip in fact motivated me to dig more deeply than I might have, to search for historical and philosophical justifications for combining the two notions. And what I found was in fact more of a revelation than I had expected, so striking that it eventuated in a searching book two decades later, *Powers of the Mind: The Reinvention of Liberal Learning in America* (2005)—a book that brazenly asserts the value of including something like aikido practice in the curriculum of every undergraduate program of liberal education.

As dean, however, I had more on my plate than public spectacles and routine administration. I made it my principal business to reconsider the whole curriculum of The College, to launch a discursive enterprise of a sort that distinguished the University of Chicago since its founding (as narrated in Chapter Three of *Powers*). In so doing, I designed a curricular project, which engaged close to a hundred faculty members and advisers in a yearlong effort to rethink the whole four or more years of undergraduate experience. This project took shape through teams of colleagues grouped around a dozen themes, such as the Task Forces on Musical and Visual Arts, on Civilizations, on the Senior Year, on Writing, and the like. One task force—bizarre for the notoriously cerebral University of Chicago community—was assigned to examine afresh the role of physical education. This group, headed by John MacAloon, author of the first cultural- historical analysis of the Olympic Games, produced the report that exerted the greatest impact on my pedagogic development. It broached the novel idea of linking the academic side of undergraduate work with experience in the gymnasium, through courses in which some sort of physical activity could be linked with an academic subject.

The notion gripped me, much as I had been gripped shortly before by the idea of conjoining the liberal arts and the martial arts. By the final year of my decanal term, I found myself offering a course entitled Conflict Theory and Aikido. I offered the course more or less regularly from Autumn 1986 to Autumn 2010; its most recent syllabus appears as Appendix A below. The course proved so successful and engaging that a few years later I found

myself reporting on it at a Japanese-American Conference on athletics and undergraduate education. The published version of that talk appears here as Chapter 2, and an updated report on student comments as Appendix B.

As I reflected on the materials and issues of that course, moreover, I came to ponder some intellectual issues incorporated in them. This led to the first strictly academic paper in this collection, Chapter 3: “Social Conflict, Aggression and the Body in Euro-American and Asian Social Thought.” Presented at an international sociological conference in Paris in 1993 and published soon after in the *International Journal of Group Tensions*, the paper took aikido practices as a kind of text that could be compared with other texts about conflict by figures such as Hobbes, Freud, Morgenthau, Lorenz, and Gandhi. It was a sort of crib sheet for my course.

By the mid-1990s, much else was going on in my life: completion of a major work on the sociological tradition that was perhaps my most visible accomplishment in the sociological community; renewed interest in Ethiopia (on which I had already published two books) thanks to the fall of the hated Derg regime in 1991; an evolving interest in the history and culture of Japan, which I visited with my son Bill in 1992 and my wife Ruth in 1997; first shoots of the work that would constitute my major statement in the field of liberal learning; and a more prominent role in the area of social theory, including an array of fresh papers and an active term as chair of the Theory Section of the American Sociological Association in 1996. Even so, the trajectory laid out the first three pieces of this collection could not be stopped. I began to conjure the idea of a book-length work on what I wanted to call The Aiki Way. I even sketched an outline for a number of chapters, to be focused on such diverse areas of aikido applications as conflict resolution, psychotherapy, administration, character development, and even philosophy. My mature version of conceptualizing aikido in this manner appears as A Paradigm of the Aiki Way, here Appendix C, which offers a schema with which to list concepts that embody aikido practices and their practical applications all at once.

Rather than pursue the idea of that book, however, I decided instead to form an association, one that would bring together the small number of aikido practitioners and instructors I’d met who were also committed to using the ideas and movements of aikido to effect changes in everyday life. During a semester at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1998, I met with a number of kindred souls and began to plot the outlines of the nongovernmental organization that came to be called Aiki Extensions, Inc.

We began to hold international conferences: in Tucson, AZ (hosted by Bill Leicht), Columbus, OH (Paul Linden), Mill Valley, CA (Wendy Palmer), and Chicago, IL (myself). The story of the first five years of this NGO and its work is told in Chapter 4—“The Many Directions of Aiki Extensions”—a talk given at Augsburg, Germany at the fifth of the International Conferences.

As the work of Aiki Extensions grew, so did the range of intellectual issues I wished to associate with explorations of the Aiki Way. The ensuing publications—here chapters 5 through 8—appeared in response to a sequence of occasions where aiki-relevant themes came to my attention.

The invitation to contribute to a session on the Sociology of the Body at meetings of the International Institute of Sociology in Stockholm, 2005, offered an apt venue for developing the ideas broached in chapter 3. The result, here chapter 5, appeared in 2006 as “Somatic Elements in Social Conflict,” in *Embodying Sociology: Retrospect, Progress and Prospects*, ed. Chris Shilling. Oxford: Blackwell.

Shortly before that, I was invited a session of the Research Committee on Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution at the World Congress of Sociology in Brisbane. That gave me an occasion to develop ideas from work on a long paper, “Ethiopia in Japan in Comparative Civilizational Perspective.” I had become more convinced than ever that certain self-destructive aspects of Ethiopia’s political life reflected the persistence of age old features of their warrior culture, a concern that came to the fore in a widely read paper from the Fourth International Conference on Ethiopian Development Studies at Western Michigan University.

A key point of the comparison held that Ethiopia had missed the kind of transition represented in the felicitous title of Eiko Ikegami’s book, *The Taming of the Samurai*. In Japan, martial traditions of killing techniques, *bu-jutsu*, had been transformed into character-building ways of life, *budo*, a transformation of which I believe aikido is the highest exemplar. The resulting 2006 paper—here Chapter 6—was titled “The Masculinity Ethic and the Spirit of Warriorhood in Ethiopian and Japanese Cultures.” *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* Vol.2, Nos.1&2.

Locating the cultural context of aikido in comparative perspective proved too enticing not to extend further. An invitation to honor the doyen of comparative historical sociologists, Professor Shmuel N. Eisenstadt of Jerusalem, provided a wonderful occasion in which to do so. That 2003 presentation, “Civilizational Resources for Dialogic Engagement?,” was published in *Comparing Modern Civilizations: Pluralism versus Homogeneity*, ed. Eliezer Ben-

Rafael. Boston: Brill. For the *Journal of Classical Sociology*, producing an issue to commemorate the now late Professor Eisenstadt, I have substantially revised and updated the paper, a text that forms the basis for chapter 7, “The Dialogue of Civilizations.”

Chapter 8 returns to a context shaped by *Aiki Extensions*: a conference on “Living Aikido: Art of Movement, Art of Life,” May 18, 2007 at the Aiki Institut in Schweinfurt, Germany. The lecture presented there, “The Aiki Way to Therapeutic and Creative Intersubjectivity” connects aiki work with earlier interests in psychoanalytic sociology and Parsonian theory.

The last chapter brings the journey up to date. Chapter 9 expands the narrative of *Aiki Extensions* further back in time and forward into future challenges and promises. The story was retold later in a video produced by AE Board member David Lukoff.

The foregoing narrative projects the gist of the story and rounds out my tale. Except for one obvious question: how did an academic intellectual ever get into this whole business in the first place???

FINISHING HIGH SCHOOL IN 1948, I felt buoyed by America’s upbeat political atmosphere. Despite forebodings, hopeful and confident voices ruled. It was after all the time of the Marshall Plan, of Point Four, of the critical turn among progressive forces by those willing to take a strong stand against totalitarianism Left as well as Right. My own postwar idealism found nourishment in the world government movement, subserving an impeccable logic that found a ready analogy between policemen on the corner who spelled local security and a prospective world federal authority that spelled collective security.

Korea’s War smashed the hopes of those of us who assumed the road to world federal union might be forward and continuous. Voices and forces of U.S. belligerence forged a bipolar world. Public life suffered a remorseless escalation of fear. In 1950 I signed a plea for the United States not to be the first party to use a nuclear strike—the “Stockholm Peace Petition”—and nearly went to jail; news I had done so treasonous a thing flashed from the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* front page. Building on the anti-communist hysteria fed by ambitious politicians, our State Department got cleansed of patriotic public servants knowledgeable about Russia and China.

One piece of this upsetting development related to the self-image of American males. As Talcott Parsons precociously surmised (1954), overly moth-

ered males turned fear of sissiness (and, Norman Mailer would add later, homophobia) into protest masculinity and externalized aggression. Free-floating anxiety permeated the Eisenhower-Dulles decade, starting with the CIA's miserable decimation of Iran's democratic regime under Mossadegh. Few understood and none acted on Eisenhower's testamentary warning of the military-industrial complex. The young senator who downed Ike's would-be successor trumpeted a spurious claim that the U.S. had an inadequate military arsenal.

After 1950 I searched for plausible countervailing forces, and found only the sterling pacifism of the American Friends Service Committee. I loved what they did but my mind could not accept absolute pacifism as a life doctrine. Like many of my activist colleagues, I turned toward what we thought we had named, in quiet protest against the bipolar structure of the Cold War, *le tiers monde*, the Third World. My friend and role model Harris Wofford—later architect of the Peace Corps and a U.S. Senator—went with his wife Claire to Israel and then India; Manny Wallerstein (now a distinguished senior professor of sociology) went to the Gold Coast (later Ghana); Larry Fuchs went to the Philippines; Myron Weiner went to India; others went to Turkey, Indonesia, and elsewhere. Many forsook politics for philosophy.

I almost went the latter way, immersing myself in abstract social theory instead of social realities. Georg Simmel and Talcott Parsons became my homies. I became drawn wholeheartedly to the philosophical outlook of Richard McKeon, whose contribution to calming Cold War tensions consisted of elaborating a way of embracing philosophic *differences* without having to resort to ideological *combat*. Eventually, though, I found my way back into *la vie engagée*. I discovered and embraced the land of Ethiopia.

ETHIOPIA APPEALED for several reasons. Ethiopians I met impressed me with their self-confidence, ego strength, and cheer under adversity—quite unlike the many fearful and frenzied Americans I encountered. Symbolically, Ethiopia's bitter invasion by Italian Fascists—who opted to pursue a *missione civilatrice* by dropping poisoned gas on barefoot farmers—represented par excellence the failure of the international community to manifest collective security and develop a reliable system of world governance. To a budding sociologist, moreover, Ethiopia offered a challenge to use the resources of social science to mediate a traditional society's lurch into modernization (the



topic of my first book on Ethiopia, *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture* [1965]). It also offered the intriguing puzzle of how a “backward” society could possibly have defeated a European colonial power. This was Ethiopia’s stunning victory under Emperor Menilek II against Italian invaders in (the point of departure of my second book about the country, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* [1974].)

What I had not expected to find in Ethiopia was the prominence of the cult of warriorhood. The provincial region where I did my main fieldwork, Menz, was noted for the hardiness of its denizens. The people of Menz cheered their boys on when they had temper tantrums. They gave them names like Ahide (Thrasher), Belaymeta (Hit Him on the Head), Chafchefe (Hacker), Nadaw (Wipe Him Out), and Tasaw (Smash Him). These and related findings were reported in *Wax and Gold*. The association of masculinity with warriorhood became a theme I would explore further in Ethiopia. I found that in all the 70-some ethnicities, aggressive hardiness and virtues of the soldier were highly prized. This proved to be one factor behind the amazing defeat of Italian forces at the Battle of Adwa in 1896. And, half a century later, this cultural trait resurfaced on the international stage when Ethiopians earned a golden reputation as reliable and effective soldiery on behalf of missions for the United Nations, in Korea in the early 1950s, and in the Congo in 1960—the same year in which an Ethiopian named Abebe Bikila, running barefoot and without the benefit of much formal training, surprised the world by winning a gold medal in the marathon race of the Olympic games at Rome.

As it turned out, then, my three years of experience in Ethiopia, 1958-60, led me to internalize some of the Ethiopians’ warrior ethos and to feel myself more of a man by virtue of being more disposed to combat. That of course conflicted not only with my earlier inclinations toward pacifism, but also with what appeared to be the new rash of mindless escalation of US militarism in the Vietnam War. Before long I became active in protests against that War, even as I refused to give up my high regard for the virtues of warriorhood—and wishing that I could manifest more of those virtues.

By the late 1970s, in my upper forties then, I decided finally to begin training in the martial arts. One day I went to a martial arts shop and purchased two books, one on karate and one on aikido. I knew nothing about the latter but thought I would look it over even as I kept looking for a place to learn karate. Then I chanced upon a notice of a campus aikido class, of a club founded by Jon Eley Sensei, and thought there would be no

harm in checking it over. I did, and fell forward for it; it was love at first sight.

AIKIDO APPEALED to me initially as a martial art that seemed to offer a person in my age group an entrée into a martial discipline that I might learn to excel in. That of course was flattering to my ego. Above all, its rhetoric of combining warriorhood with nonviolence offered just what I had been searching for. I plunged right in, never missing a class. Before long I was ready for my 6th kyu test. Slowly I began to walk through the dark streets of Hyde Park with greater confidence and to ease my way into what Andr Protin termed perfectly as “*un art martial, une autre manière d’être*”: a martial art that embodies a whole “other way of Being.”

More slowly but no less surely, aikido promised to offer the path I had sought for decades, wherein one could conjoin elements of what might be called an ethic of warriorhood with an ethic of nonviolence. Awareness of this potential emerged during the second year of my aikido training, which took place during a sabbatical year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto. Studying that year with Senseis Frank Doran and Bob Nadeau, training with so many community-minded partners in Northern California—including many present at the 2010 Santa Cruz celebration—during that Golden Era of American aikido, and then having the good fortune of become a student of Shihan Mitsugi Saotome nourished my receptiveness to the idea of aikido as a Way in the spiritual sense. It was in that rich soil that seeds were planted, which not long after grew into the foundations of my teaching and research founded on the principle that Aikido Practice is a Signpost to The Way.

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Liberal Arts and the Martial Arts<sup>1</sup>

A complete rhetoric for liberal education must address the following six questions:

1. What is “liberal” about liberal education?
2. What kinds of cultural forms are most suitable for the constitution of a liberal program?
3. What kinds of individual capacities should liberal training foster?
4. What are the characteristics of training programs designed to cultivate those capacities?
5. What is the relationship between liberal and utilitarian learning?
6. What is the ethical justification of liberal learning?

In what follows I propose to clarify these questions by asking what we might gain by comparing the liberal arts with the martial arts—those forms of physical training and expression epitomized in the cultures of East Asia by kung fu, tai chi chuan, judo, karate-do, kendo, and aikido. My point is not to argue that some form of athletic training ought to be an integral part of the liberal curriculum, though on that question I find myself in accord with the views expressed by William Rainey Harper, who said: “The athletic work

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<sup>1</sup>Donald N Levine is a professor of sociology and the dean of the College at the University of Chicago. Larry Basem and Susan Henking assisted in its preparation for publication. ©1984 Association of American Colleges, *Liberal Education*, 1984, Vol. 70, No. 3. Reprinted in *The Overlook Martial Arts Reader: An Anthology of Historical and Philosophical Writings*, Overlook Press, 1989.

of the students is a vital part of student life . . . The athletic field, like the gymnasium, is one of the University laboratories and by no means the least important one.”<sup>2</sup> My argument, rather, is that courses of training in the martial arts often constitute exemplary educational programs, and that we might learn something of value for the liberal arts by examining them closely. Just to propose this will perhaps seem to some an act of buffoonery. To suggest that the martial arts are worthy of consideration on the same plane as that usually reserved for the liberal arts—surely that is nothing more than a bad pun. So I must begin by justifying my brazenness in coupling the arts, liberal and martial.

Before proceeding to justify my topic, however, I must confess that one thing about it is indeed gauche. Its two contrasting terms, “liberal” and “martial,” are not logically comparable. For “martial” refers to a kind of content—physical training for self-defense—while “liberal” refers to a quality of approach in training. A logical contrast to the martial arts would be either some other kind of physical training, or else some kind of non-physical training—which, of course, is what we have in mind, what might be called mental or intellectual arts. The logical contrast to liberal would be . . . illiberal. If we provisionally define liberal arts as signifying pursuits undertaken for the sake of personal growth and self-development, then it is clearly the case that both the martial arts and the intellectual arts have both liberal and illiberal forms. So the comparison I want to make here is between the liberal (intellectual) arts and the (liberal) martial arts.

So rephrased, my topic will be justified by arguing that the very culture that originated and legitimated the basic conception of liberal arts we follow in the West supported, at the same time, a conception of martial training as an integral part of the ideal educational program; and that, moreover, the tradition that provided the matrix for the martial arts in the East saw them as part of what can be called an Oriental program of liberal education as well. Once I have defended those propositions, I shall turn to the comparison that is the heart of this exercise.

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<sup>2</sup>William Rainey Harper, Convocation, 1 July 1896. Cited in W.M. Murphy and D.J.R. Bruckner, eds., *The Idea of the University of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 212.

# I

To talk about liberal training is to talk about a form of education that emerged historically only in two very special cultures, those of classical Greece and China. In ancient Greece, this kind of educational aspiration was linked to the ideal of *paideia*, the notion of using culture as a means to create a higher type of human being. According to Werner Jaeger, who wrote a celebrated book on the subject, the Greeks believed that education in this sense “embodied the purpose of all human effort. It was, they held, the ultimate justification for the existence of both the individual and the community.”<sup>3</sup> That ennobling education took two major forms that were equally praised by the writers of ancient Greece, albeit with different emphases at different times—the cultivation of combative skills, on the one hand, and the contemplative intellect, on the other.

To see the affinity between the martial arts and the arts of contemplation in ancient Greece let us look at two notions central to Greek thought: the concept of *arête* and the understanding of the divine.

*Arête*, often translated by the word “virtue,” was the Greek term that conveyed the notion of qualitative excellence. *Arête* signified a special power, an ability to do something; its possession was the hallmark of the man of nobility. The same term *arête* was used to designate both the special powers of the body, such as strength and vigor, and the powers of the mind, such as sharpness and insight. In the Homeric epics, martial prowess was the kind of *arête* that was preeminently extolled, but with Xenophanes and other writers of the sixth century B.C., the attainment of *sophia*, or intellectual culture, was hailed as the path to *arête*. Although Xenophanes wrote in a rather polemical vein against the older ideals of martial *arête*, most classical Greek writers embraced them both. Thus, the poet Simonides could write: “How hard it is to become a man of true *arête*, four-square and faultless in hand and foot and mind.”<sup>4</sup> For Plato and Aristotle, the list of preeminent virtues begins with courage, and ends with philosophic wisdom (with prudence and justice in the middle).

Although the Greeks are best known to us as the progenitors of secular science and philosophy, they are known to classical scholars as a God-intoxicated

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<sup>3</sup>Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, Vol. I, trans. from the second German edition by Gilbert Highet (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939), p. xvii.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

people as well. And, so far as I can tell, there are preeminently two human activities that are repeatedly described as divine in Greek thought—the achievements of victors in athletic contests, and the activities of philosophic speculation. Since earliest known history Greek gymnastic activity was connected with the festivals of the gods. The four great pan-Hellenic games, of which the Olympics were the most famous, were cloaked in religious symbolism; thus, both the Olympian and the Nemean games were held in honor of Zeus. As Norman Gardiner has written of the former, the Games were “much more than a mere athletic meeting. It was the national religious festival of the whole Greek race.”<sup>5</sup> The poetry of Pindar celebrated this linkage with . . . Pindaric rapture. In his triumphal hymns for victors of the athletic contests,

Pindar expressed the religious significance of the spectacle of men struggling to bring their humanity to perfection in victorious combat.

One finds the pursuit of metaphysical speculation described with tones no less transcendent. Greek natural philosophers of the sixth century created a conception of a cosmos under the rule of law that offered a focus for their religious ideals; and Pindar’s contemporary, Heraclitus, developed a doctrine that located man in that cosmos, one that held that “through its kinship with the ‘everlasting fire’ of the cosmos the philosophical soul is capable of knowing divine wisdom and harbouring it in itself.”<sup>6</sup> A century later, Plato and Aristotle in different ways depicted the activity of philosophic contemplation of pure Being as the most godlike of human activities.

In the classic Greek synthesis, then, the arts of combat and the arts of intellect were conjointly eulogized. They were the vehicles of that supreme educational effort, the cultivation of the virtues, and of the journey to transcendence. In both, the Greeks found a supreme expression of their aesthetic quest, the beauty of the bodily form perfected, and the beauty of the universe refracted in the contemplation of pure cosmic forms.

By the end of the fifth century, however, the unity of body and spirit that Simonides and others idealized became fractured. Due to the heightened importance of prizes and spectators, the athletic games became much more competitive. Athletes became professionalized; physical training no longer sought all-round development but aimed to produce strength at the expense

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<sup>5</sup>E. Norman Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 222.

<sup>6</sup>Cited in Jaeger, p. 183.

of vitality, health, and beauty. Moreover, once the Greeks began to feel that the spirit was separate from or even hostile to the body, Jaeger tells us, “the old athletic ideal was degraded beyond hope of salvation, and at once lost its important position in Greek life.”<sup>7</sup>

During the Hellenistic period, the liberal program underwent changes that were fateful for the subsequent evolution of education in the West. Although athletic sports continued as a popular public spectacle, their formative role as part of liberal training declined markedly, and disappeared altogether by the time of the Christian period. There was a similarly progressive decline and eventual disappearance of artistic, especially musical, education, which had also been a major component of education in the classical period. What emerged as the sole respectable form of liberal education was literary studies.

During the Roman period the literary curriculum was further elaborated, particularly the study of grammar and rhetoric. Although early Christian fathers were suspicious of these pagan subjects, by the fourth century A.D. Christian leaders like Augustine embraced major elements of the classical curriculum. Consequently, when the barbarian invasions had swept aside the traditional Roman schools, the Christian church, needing a literary culture for the education of its clergy, kept alive many of the educational traditions that Rome had adapted from the Hellenistic world.

By the sixth century A.D. the clergy had rationalized the literary curriculum into the trivium—the arts of logic, grammar, and rhetoric—and a few centuries later institutionalized the quadrivium—the ancient Pythagorean program of mathematics consisting of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

In the ninth century, Charlemagne restored some semblance of higher studies, drawing on traditions that had been maintained in Italian and Irish monasteries. The Carolingian Renaissance, reinforced by the rise of scholasticism, the beginnings of law and medicine as professions, and the recovery of classical knowledge nourished the liberal arts curriculum until it was securely established in the medieval university. During the Renaissance this curriculum was enriched by an emphasis on the humanistic significance of the classic texts. The Reformation brought a renewed effort to subordinate the trivium and quadrivium to religious materials and purposes.

The liberal arts tradition (in its English manifestation) came to America with the Puritan divines in Massachusetts. Liberal education came to

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

be instituted in the American college in a framework that combined Protestant piety and mental discipline. The mental discipline approach, justified in English and Scottish moral philosophy, held that mental faculties were best developed through their exercise. In the course of recitations in the areas of Latin, Greek, and mathematics, the student disciplined mental and moral faculties such as will, emotion, and intellect. As William F. Allen wrote: “The student who has acquired the habit of never letting go a puzzling problem—say a rare Greek verb—until he has analyzed its every element, and understands every point in its etymology, has the habit of mind which will enable him to follow out a legal subtlety with the same accuracy.”<sup>8</sup>

The rapid modernization of American society after the Civil War gave rise to new perspectives on the role of higher education. Laurence Veysey has identified three rationales of academic reform, which came to compete with that of “mental discipline” in the late nineteenth century. He calls these the programs of utility, research, and liberal culture. The advocates of utility argued that the American university should prepare students to serve the needs of American society for skilled leadership in modern industry, business, and government. Inspired by the model of the German university, the advocates of research insisted that the sole mission of the American university should be the furthering of the frontiers of knowledge. The advocates of liberal culture, however, condemned utility for its crass philistinism, and research for its encouragement of what they considered sterile specialization. In their emphasis on a refined sense of value, through the study of language and literature, the advocates of liberal culture in late nineteenth century America hearkened back to the humanists of the Renaissance. The discovery of an essential and irreducible humanity, which they called “character,” was made possible by breadth of learning. This, together with the aim of self-realization, was the appropriate rationale for higher education according to such advocates of liberal culture as Barrett Wendell, Charles Eliot Norton, Andrew F. West, and Woodrow Wilson.<sup>9</sup> Such was the intellectual background behind those

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<sup>8</sup>Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 24.

<sup>9</sup>Some sense of the ideals of this movement may be gleaned from the following quotations from Andrew F. West: “In the rush of American life . . . [the college] . . . [is] the quiet and convincing teacher of higher things. It has been preparing young men for a better career in the world by withdrawing them for a while from the world to cultivate their minds and hearts by contact with things intellectual and spiritual.” . . . and from Woodrow Wilson: “If the chief end of man is to make a living, why, make a living any



well-known experiments in the liberal curriculum following World War I associated with the general education program at Columbia, with Alexander Meiklejohn at Amherst and Wisconsin, and with the Hutchins College at the University of Chicago.

## II

Contemporary with the archaic and classical periods of ancient Greece, in China during the Chou dynasty we find an educational program that bears significant resemblance to that of the Greeks. The goal of education was to produce a broadly cultivated person, and this included training both in literary and martial subjects. The curriculum codified during the Chou period consisted of six subjects, often referred to as the liberal arts of classical Chinese education: rituals, music, archery, charioteering, writing, and mathematics. According to the historian Ping Wen Kuo: “A liberal education included five kinds of ritual, five kinds of music, five ways of archery, five ways of directing a chariot, six kinds of writing, and nine operations of mathematics. . . . The training was moral, physical, and intellectual in character. . . . The ideal of education of the time of the Chou seems to have been the harmonious and symmetrical development of the body and mind, and may be said to represent a combination of Spartan and Athenian ideals of education, which called for a training at once intellectual and moral, as well as physical and military.”<sup>10</sup>

During the latter sixth century B.C., Confucius articulated the conception of the ideal person to be produced by this Chinese version of *paideia*. He defined that ideal as one who possesses wisdom and courage, who is also magnanimous and accomplished in courtesy, ceremonial, and music. He heavily stressed the virtue of sincerity and held that education was a means to gain an enlightened mind, enlightened in the sense of coming to grasp the remarkable harmonies of nature.

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way you can. But if ever it has been shown to him in some quiet place where he has been withdrawn from the interests of the world, that the chief end of man is to keep his soul untouched from the corrupt influences and to see to it that his fellow-men hear the truth from his lips, he will never get that out of consciousness again.” (Cited in Veysey, p. 216.)

<sup>10</sup>Ping Wen Kuo, *The Chinese System of Public Education* (New York: Teacher’s College Press, 1914), p. 18.

In later centuries this ideal of liberal learning was eroded as the study of Confucian texts became viewed in a more utilitarian vein, simply as preparation for the requirements of bureaucratic office. The martial subjects were dropped from the standard curriculum. However, new forms of martial training were incorporated in disciplines followed in Chinese monasteries. To understand that development, we must digress for a moment to ancient India.

When the Hindus rationalized a program of muscular and breathing training in the discipline of Yoga, they created a system directed toward the perfection of the body with the intent of making it a fit instrument for spiritual perfection—a perfection consisting of beauty, grace, strength, and adamant hardness. At an early stage in the development of Buddhism, systematic physical training became a central component of religious discipline. It is said that Gautama was so impressed with Indian fist fighting as an effective method of unifying mind and body that fist art was incorporated into the framework of Buddhism. This can be seen in the images of certain gods of the Buddhist pantheon—the two Guardian deities, the Devas, and the twelve Divine Generals—who appear in ancient fist-fighting stances.

The movement of Buddhism to China was not only a fateful episode to the history of Buddhism but in the evolution of the martial arts as well. The agent of that migration was the Buddhist monk Boddhidharma, considered the 28th patriarch in a direct line from Gautama Buddha. In the sixth century A.D., Boddhidharma journeyed from India to China, where he introduced the form of Buddhism known as Dhyana (in Sanskrit), Ch’an (in Chinese), and Zen (in Japanese). While in China, Boddhidharma lived at the Shaolin Monastery in Honan Province. He found the monks there solely concerned with achieving spiritual enlightenment and negligent of their physical health. In fact, they were sickly and fell asleep during *zazen* (seated meditation). As a member of the *kshatriya* (warrior class) as well as a monk, Boddhidharma was very well versed in the fighting arts and understood the interdependence of mental, physical, and spiritual health. He introduced a series of eighteen exercises (the “eighteen hands of the Lo-han”) to the monks for the improvement of their health and for their protection against dangerous forces. These exercises became the basis of Shaolin Temple boxing, which, along with other varieties of Chinese boxing, later influenced the development of the fighting arts in Japan, Korea, and Okinawa.

A second line of development in the liberal martial arts of Asia derives from another Chinese religious tradition, that of Taoism. Tai chi chuan (Grand Ultimate Boxing) was evolved to combine certain forms of Shaolin

boxing with an emphasis on breathing and inner control based on Taoist breathing practices and medical lore. According to the most prevalent account of the origins of tai chi, a Taoist monk of the late Sung Dynasty (twelfth or thirteenth century A.D.), Chang San-feng, created the thirteen basic postures of tai chi as bodily expressions of the eight trigrams of the ancient text *I Ching*, and the five basic elements of ancient Chinese cosmology. Somewhat later, a schoolteacher named Wang Chang-yueh is believed to have linked those postures in a continuous sequence of movement that formed the disciplinary core of the tai chi training program.

Yet another set of innovations in the martial arts took place in Japan following the rise of the samurai class after the tenth century and the introduction of Zen Buddhism there in the twelfth century. From this time the culture of *bushido*, the “way of the warrior,” developed gradually from ideas drawn from Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shintoism. Samurai training included unarmed combat, the use of weapons, literary subjects, and training in Zen Buddhism, which provided the courage to face possible death every day. Following the unification and pacification of Japan during the Tokugawa Shogunate, many samurai adapted that Buddhist strain to transform the martial arts from illiberal to liberal uses, vehicles for training that emphasized the spiritual development of participants.

After the suppression of the samurai under the Meiji regime in the latter part of the nineteenth century, new martial arts were specifically created as forms of liberal training. This was the same period, incidentally, when Yang Lu-Chan for the first time taught tai chi publicly, in Beijing; until then it had been a secret heritage carefully guarded by certain elite Chinese families. In Japan a number of masters sought to revive the old *bushido*-Zen ethic by creating new forms that were non-lethal in intent and designed to provide personal growth and spiritual uplift. In 1882, Jigoro Kano, an educator proficient in ju-jitsu, founded the first Judo Institute in Tokyo. The change from ju-jitsu to ju-do exemplifies, in terminology and practice, the self-conscious transformation of the martial arts from lethal weapons to means of self-development. The suffix “jitsu” means technique; ju-jitsu was, thus, a technique for inflicting serious damage on an opponent. The suffix “do” means “way.” It derives from the Chinese Tao, and in Japanese has connotations related to the outlook of Taoism. More fully, “do” means the way to enlightenment, self-realization, and understanding. As conceived by Jigoro Kano, judo—literally, the gentle way—adapted the best techniques from jujitsu, eliminated the harmful ones, and modified others so they could

be practiced safely. As practiced by Kano and his followers, the aim of judo is to perfect oneself by systematic training of the mind and body so that each person works in harmony with others.

Comparable developments took place a little later with other arts. Around 1905, when karate was introduced from Okinawa into mainland Japan, the symbol *kara* (signifying “Tang,” or “Chinese,”) was reinterpreted by invoking another meaning of the word *kara*: “empty.” This was to allude not only to the idea of fighting with empty hands—without weapons—but also to the notion of “emptiness” in Zen, that is to say, emptiness of mind, mind like a mirror or water that reflects without distortion, and thus to connote the ideals of selflessness, austerity, and humbleness. Later, this philosophic component was stressed by adding the suffix “do,” and some of the preeminent schools now refer to themselves as teaching karatedo—that is, the way of life centering on the “empty hand.”

In the early 1920s, when experiments to revive liberal learning began to flourish in the United States, a gifted master experienced in all the traditional Japanese martial arts, Morihei Ueshiba, evolved a new system which he called aikido. In this art, he created a program for the cultivation of *ki*, the cosmic energy that flows through one’s body and is thought to produce health and spiritual uplift, and the capacity for *ai*, harmonious blending, a blending of the forces within oneself, with other people, and with the natural universe.

A major institutional locus of the martial arts in the Far East today is the educational system. They have come out of the secrecy of monasteries and esoteric cults into the curricula of school systems and the clubs of universities. Although divided into hundreds of specialized forms, which vary considerably in styles, techniques, attitudes, and objectives, what can arguably be called their most rationalized forms—those that involve a coherent approach to dealing with aggressive attacks, a systematic approach to training, and a nontrivial grounding in philosophic beliefs—all pursue the goals of developing a harmonious blending of mental and physical powers, a sensitivity to the responses of others, the virtues of calmness and courage under stress, and some form of an experience of transcendence.

This survey of the paidetic curriculum in two great traditions suggests, then, that the coupling of the intellectual and the martial arts is no mere trick of the tongue. Indeed, my sketch suggests that developments within the two traditions where each was perfected exhibit some instructive evolutionary parallels. 1) By the sixth century B.C., both in Greece and China, an ideal and a program of liberal training had evolved, which included both intellec-

tual and martial components. 2) In both cases, this ideal became corrupted in later centuries, as combative arts became commercialized in the Hellenistic period, and as Confucian training became bureaucratized. 3) During the sixth century A.D., a liberal component of the older curriculum became codified and institutionalized in those havens of ideal pursuits, the monasteries. 4) In the medieval period, these paedetic curricula became enriched and extended, with the firm establishment of the trivium and quadrivium in medieval universities, and of the arts of kung fu and tai chi chuan in Chinese monasteries. 5) In the late nineteenth century, mainly in the United States and Japan, the ideals of those curricula were revived and propagated in the form of new secular programs of liberal training.

### III

Let us proceed now to draw on these suggestive parallels between the intellectual arts and the martial arts to address the set of questions I posed at the outset. To begin with, what is liberal about liberal education?

The terms in which Westerners are inclined to think about the distinction between education that is liberal and education that is not—or illiberal, or banausic—were classically formulated by Aristotle.<sup>11</sup> Aristotle's emphasis was not so much on different kinds of subjects as on the spirit in which a subject is pursued. One may pursue a subject out of necessity, as, for example, learning a trade is necessary to make a living. One may pursue a subject out of utility, as reading is useful because it enables one to find numbers in a telephone directory. Or one may pursue a subject because, as we would say, of peer pressure: It is the fashionable “thing to do.” But by definition, to act from necessity is not the mark of being free; to seek for utility everywhere is not suited for men who are great-souled and free; and to follow some pursuit because of the opinion of other people, says Aristotle, would appear to be acting in a menial and servile manner. In contrast to these kinds of motives, Aristotle describes motives for the sort of learning that befits a free person: learning that is undertaken for its own sake, learning that is appropriate for promoting happiness and a good life. And, although Aristotle certainly does not deny the need to study the useful arts, he insists

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<sup>11</sup>A more complete response to this question would, of course, have to attend to post-classical formulations of liberality and, indeed, include reference to some of the complexities associated with the idea of freedom.

that they should not constitute the whole point of learning: people should study drawing, he urges, not merely to avoid being cheated when buying and selling furniture, but for the liberal reason that this study makes one observant of bodily beauty.

Now one does not need to turn to the martial arts to catch the import of Aristotle's distinction, although it may be useful to see how readily it can be exemplified in that domain. Illiberal training in the martial arts, then, would be undertaken out of necessity-learning to fight to prevent your community from being enslaved or slaughtered by an invader; or, for utility-to know how to defend yourself in case you happen to get mugged on the street. And there are other kinds of reasons for studying the martial arts that would render the pursuit illiberal-as when one trains because it is the glamorous thing to do, or to impress one's friends. By contrast, when the martial arts are taught and practiced in a liberal manner, it is for the sake of perfecting oneself as a human being and for acquiring a kind of culture that is intrinsically valuable.

At this juncture, I'd like to share an observation from my own experience with the martial arts that suggests an instructive elaboration on the Aristotelian notion of liberality in education. When I ask persons who have progressed rather deeply into the study of the martial arts why they are doing it, I get an answer that is typically different from what brings people to training in the first place. The reasons why people begin martial arts training are frequently illiberal: for self-defense, or to cure an ailment, or as an outlet for aggression, or because of social inducements. Once they have been training for a while, their motivations usually undergo some subtle change. By the time one has been actively training for a year or two, the reasons tend to converge on a single rationale: I'm training to perfect my masters of the art. What emerges is the sense of a lifelong quest for perfection, wherein each moment is intrinsically satisfying, but the experience is framed as a part of an unlimited pursuit of growth and improved expression. One is reminded of what John Dewey wrote concerning the fine arts: that the works of the fine arts are not merely ends in themselves which give satisfaction, but their creation and contemplation whet the appetite for new effort and achievement and thus bring a continuously expanding satisfaction.<sup>12</sup> What this suggests is a criterion for liberal learning that amends the familiar classical defini-

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<sup>12</sup>John Dewey, "Experience, Nature and Art," in *John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings*, ed. by Reginald D. Archambault (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 157-65.

tions: that education is free and liberating insofar as it involves the quest for mastery of some domain of autonomous forms, forms that are in themselves the free creation of the human spirit. And because that world of form is in principle limitless, this entails a connection with transcendence that is part of the attraction toward liberal learning.

So I would add, as another component of the generic definition of liberal education, martial and intellectual, that it is an enterprise devoted to *the acquisition of cultural forms for their own sake*. Having said this, my next question is then: what types of cultural forms are most suitable for a liberal program? Once we have distinguished liberal education from the various illiberal forms of training—training for occupations, for solving particular social problems, for transmitting a certain tradition, and the like—there remains the more complicated problem of defining the best content for a liberal curriculum. Different philosophies of liberal education tend to take one of three positions. One position holds that the liberal curriculum should consist of a set of fundamental questions and plausible answers, e.g., those contained in a list of Great Books, or those simply having to do with the nature of the world and man's place in it. A second position holds that the liberal curriculum should consist of the most important structures of organized knowledge, e.g., a basic acquaintance with the principal disciplines of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. A third position holds that the liberal curriculum should represent primarily those basic modes of inquiry and expression exemplified in the disciplines, e.g. how a scientist conducts experiments, or how a poet constructs a sonnet.

A strong case could be made for viewing each of these as the central principle for a liberal curriculum, and perhaps an even stronger case for a perspective that attempted to represent them all in some balanced way. But what all of them have in common is a stress on what Georg Simmel called objective culture: the external representations of reality and the externalized expressions of meaning that have been created in human history. The true cultivation of individuals, by contrast, takes place in what Simmel called subjective culture: the personal growth that comes about through the internal appropriation of cultural forms.

The advantage of looking at the martial arts in this context is that such training is almost exclusively concerned with the development of subjective culture—in this case, the competences of bodily movement that enable one to defend oneself in certain stylized ways. There is simply no way to think about the martial arts curriculum without dealing with the ways in which personal

capacities of various sorts-perceiving, moving, responding-are nurtured and shaped and perfected. Thus, the martial arts curriculum provides a model for a kind of liberal training in which the principle of the learner's capacities is unmistakably and unavoidably at the center of attention. Although this principle was prominent in early nineteenth-century American notions of liberal intellectual learning, which focused on the goal of mental discipline, it has fallen by the way in contemporary discussions. The principle deserves, I believe, to be revived and viewed afresh as an important basis for organizing the modern liberal curriculum.

Once we have set the cultivation of subjective capacities as a primary goal of liberal education, however, we must deal with what is perhaps the most complicated of all the questions in the theory and practice of liberal education: What competences should be cultivated? And the obvious answer to that question is another question: What competences are there? Open ten books about competences, and you will find seventeen lists. How does one compose an inventory of competences that can be ordered and ranked so as to provide a set of priorities for liberal education?

Because I do not think this is a matter that can be resolved definitively for all time, or even that there is a single best way to resolve it at any given moment, I would not look to the martial arts for a model of how to solve it. The problem of identifying a basic list of competences is nearly as intractable in the martial and in the intellectual arts. But martial arts can be helpful on the question, because they illustrate so transparently what the issues are and how one might grapple with them.

Complications here stem from the fact that disciplines emerge historically as concrete traditions, while technical competences can be generalized and used across a variety of disciplines. For example, aikido is a tradition that uses diffused energy, circular body movements, and wrist and elbow throws, while karate relies on concentrated energy, direct body movements, and punches, blocks, and kicks. Yet in both of them a basic movement is the straightforward punch. Moreover, both have a variety of defenses against said punch. So one could imagine a type of competence called punching and responding to punching, the first learnable within either of the two arts but usable beyond, the other requiring some new curricular effort to bring together a wide variety of defenses against punches into a single training program. Just in the last few years, in fact, some martial arts programs have come out with eclectic training approaches not unlike this.



There is, moreover, a set of generalized competences involved in various ways in all the martial arts that may be formulated as follows: Know oneself; know the other; and observe the right timing in one's response to the other. The idea of self-knowledge in the martial arts is tied to a concern for being centered. One must be in touch with the true center of one's being. One must be unified, the hands with the arms, the limbs with the torso, the body with the feelings and the mind. One must be poised in a state between relaxation and readiness to move-at all times. In the words of the seventeenth-century martial artist, Miyamoto Musashi, "Do not become tense and do not let yourself go. Keep your mind on the center and do not waver. Calm your mind, and do not cease the firmness for even a second. Always maintain a fluid and flexible, free and open mind."<sup>13</sup>

And yet preoccupation with oneself and one's readiness to act, by itself, would be foolhardy. One must be alert to the dispositions and responses of others no less. One must be aware of the other's balance points, the "four corners" of his position in which he is vulnerable. One must sense the precise direction and intensity of an attack from the other. In aikido, the term *ai*, or harmony, refers in an important sense to the idea of blending effectively with the energy of one's attacker.

Finally, the relational field between self and other must be viewed in dynamic terms, such that the *timing* of one's response to the other is all-important. It does no good to be centered in oneself, and aware of the flow of the other's energy, if one responds too soon, or too late, to the other's attack. So a great deal of emphasis in training focuses on these three areas: how to maintain one's own center; how to perceive and blend in with the energy of the other; and how to time one's responses with pinpoint precision. What this suggests for the intellectual arts is that we might well start looking for basic forms of intellectual competence that are not tied to concrete traditions. In my judgment, this constitutes one of the most exciting challenges facing the academic profession today. Those who are honest about the matter acknowledge that a concrete tradition-sociology, say, or biochemistry-is

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<sup>13</sup>Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*, trans. by Bradford J. Brown, Yuko Kashiwagi, William H. Barrett, and Eisuke Sasagawa (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), p. 34. In much theorizing about the martial arts, especially in Japan, this principle of subjective centralization, or centeredness, is viewed as a process of concentrating one's attention on the lower abdominal center-the "*hara*." Maintaining this center is viewed as an essential condition of maintaining some mental distance between yourself and events as they unfold around you.

rarely coterminous with a particular set of competences. I know, for example, that the distinctive skills needed to analyze social phenomena in the economic terms of rational exchange, or the cultural terms of symbolic codes, are practiced across all of the social science disciplines, including cultural anthropology and economics. The challenge today is to take stock of the enormous changes in all the intellectual disciplines over the last few decades and, for purposes of liberal training, attempt to translate them into competence fields that can be truly defensible components of a future liberal curriculum.

Closely connected to the question of what subjective capacities are to be cultivated in the liberal curriculum is that of the kind of training program best suited to develop those capacities. On this question, I believe, training programs in the martial arts offer much that might be relevant to the design of training programs in the intellectual arts. Of many possible suggestions, let me mention two.

The first is the stress on *practice*—regular, systematic, unremitting practice. The components of each art must be identified and laid out in such a way as to admit increasing mastery through incessant practice. As Miyamoto Musashi has written: “Practicing a thousand days is said to be a discipline, and practicing ten thousand days is said to be refining.”<sup>14</sup> One must practice continuously, and make a lot of mistakes, so that one can be corrected, and be ever on the lookout for ways to refine one’s art.

Second, there is a sequence of phases in developing the practice of one’s art. Gradations of rank, marked by a succession of tests that examine clearly defined levels of competence, form a crucial part of the training. Beyond that, there is a kind of progression, common to all arts, that I would call the road to the transcendence of mere technique. One begins by self-consciously practicing a certain technique. One proceeds slowly, deliberately, and reflectively; but one keeps on practicing until the technique becomes internalized and one is no longer self-conscious when executing it. After a set of techniques has been thoroughly internalized, one begins to grasp the principles behind them. And finally, when one has understood and internalized the basic principles, one no longer responds mechanically to a given attack, but begins to use the

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

art creatively and in a manner whereby one's individual style and insights can find expression.<sup>15</sup>

Notions like these seem to me enormously suggestive for training programs in the intellectual arts. As one of their possible implications, I would stress the importance of some specialization as an essential component of a truly liberal education. There is simply no way to acquire any art to the point where it becomes truly effective as a means of advanced personal growth without the intensity of involvement that requires years of work and progressive mastery. Whether the capacity in question is knowing how to interpret an ancient text, or how to perform chemical experiments in the lab, or to formulate and analyze a problem of public policy, an enormous amount of practice is required in order to be able to progress in some field from techniques to principles to expression (and, indeed, if you will, to develop a sense of personal groundedness *and* sensitivity to the objects *and* knowledge of how and when to time interventions). That is the rationale, I believe, for including concentration programs as an integral component of a full curriculum in liberal education.

## IV

I want now to discuss the question of the relationship between liberal and utilitarian learning. The rhetoric of liberal educators vacillates between two apparently contradictory positions. On the one hand, we say that liberal training is a good in itself, superior in worth to those illiberal pursuits that are merely practical. On the other hand, we often say that a liberal education is really the most practical of all. Is this just double-talk, somewhat like saying: I never borrowed your book, and besides, I returned it to you last week?

Perhaps; but let us look at the martial arts once more to see if some clarification of this matter can be found. In the martial arts, the question of practical utility is always right at hand. In training dojos one often hears

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<sup>15</sup>A parallel formulation of this progression appears in the classic treatise on tai chi chuan by Wang Chung-Yeh: "From the stage of familiarity with the techniques comes the stage of a gradual understanding of the inner strength, and from the stage of understanding of the inner strength comes the state of spiritual illumination. However, without going through prolonged and serious practice, it is impossible to reach ultimate enlightenment." Cited in Tem Horwitz and Susan Kimmelman, *Tai Chi Chu'an: The Technique of Power* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1976), p. 78.

an instructor make some offhand reference to what might happen in real situations—”on the street,” as they say. Yet nothing could be more clear-cut than the difference between an applied training program in self-defense and a liberal curriculum in the martial arts. If you want to acquire some immediate skills for the street, I would say: Don’t take up one of the martial arts, but take a crash eight-week course in self-defense; just as I would say, if all you want is a job as a lab technician or an interviewer in a survey research organization, take a crash vocational course in those areas. Yet there is, I believe, a higher practical value in the liberal form of self-defense training. By proceeding to the point where one has mastered the basic principles of the art of self-defense, one has acquired resources for responding to a much wider range of threatening situations and a readiness to respond that flows from basic qualities of self-control, calmness, and courage that one has internalized as a result of years of dedicated training. It certainly would be advantageous to combine some techniques of practical self-defense with a liberal martial training—remember that Aristotle, after all, advocated that training in useful arts be combined with liberal training—but then the former are enhanced by being grounded in a broader conception of the principles of direct combat. The argument may proceed similarly in regard to the liberal intellectual arts: by learning, not merely the specific facts and techniques of a particular subject-matter but its most basic principles and methods, and by understanding these as exemplified in a range of fields, one has gained capacities that enable one to respond intelligently and independently, critically and creatively, to the conditions of a complex and rapidly changing environment, the kind of environment in which all of us are now fated to spend our lives. This is like the ideal that Pericles attributed to the free citizens of Athens: “To be able to meet even variety of circumstance with the greatest versatility—and with grace.”<sup>16</sup>

The last question I want to raise in this comparative exercise may be put as follows: Isn’t there something basically immoral in this program for liberal training? Doesn’t it focus too much on the individual at the expense of the community? What’s worse, couldn’t it simply set people up—by training them in the arts—to carry out amoral or even vicious purposes? No matter how much the arts are glamorized, do they not only amount to sets of technical skills that can be put to evil purposes? And if my argument that

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<sup>16</sup>Cited, interestingly enough, in A. Westbrook and O. Ratti, *Aikido and the Dynamic Sphere* (Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Japan: Tuttle, 1970), p. 87.

liberal training produces a higher form of utilitarian competence is sound, then does it not follow that the person with an advanced liberal education has the capacity to be more evil than others?

Certainly this is a question that can never be far from the mind of those training in the martial arts. Indeed, the old masters in Asia were often very selective about whom they allowed to train with them, for they feared the consequences of putting their lore into the hands of those who might use these very potent powers for destructive purposes. In Japanese culture there is in fact a social type associated with that negative possibility—the *ninja*. The *ninja* is precisely one who has mastered martial techniques but puts them to selfish or destructive purposes. And I must say, before we liberal educators take too much pride in offering a wholly blameless product, that we must come to terms with the possibility of creating intellectual *ninjas*—people who are very adept indeed in the manipulation of linguistic and mathematical symbols, and other intellectual capacities, and use them in the service of the basest opportunistic motives and even for destructive purposes.

To say this is to raise the most fundamental issue of all about the liberal arts: the need for an ideological framework in which they find some ethical grounding. Precisely because the immoral potentialities of martial arts are so transparent, this question is harder to dodge. It is answered forthrightly by ethical formulations associated with the educational programs of all those martial arts I would call liberal today. In a manual of tai chi chuan, for example, one reads:

The technique of self-defense . . . implies a coherent vision of life that includes self-protection. The world is viewed as an ever-changing interplay of forces. Each creature seeks to realize its own nature, to find its place in the universe. Not to conquer, but to endure. The assumption is that there are hostile forces. One can be attacked by animals, by angry or arrogant people, or just by the forces of Nature, within and without. In the human world, attack is verbal and emotional as often as it is physical. The most subtle and manipulative struggles are the ones of which we are the least conscious. But the prescription for survival is always the same—integrity. [In the martial arts] this is more than a moral adage, it is a physical actuality.<sup>17</sup>

The practice of aikido is suffused by the kind of ethical vision embodied in these words by its founder, Morihei Ueshiba:

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<sup>17</sup>Horwitz and Kimmelman, pp. 64-65.

- Understand Aikido first as *budo* and then as a way of service to construct the World Family.
- True *budo* is the loving protection of all beings with a spirit of reconciliation. Reconciliation means to allow the completion of everyone's mission.
- True *budo* is a work of love. It is a work of giving life to all beings, and not killing or struggling with each other . . . Aikido is the realization of love.<sup>18</sup>

## V

As college educators face the need to develop a fresh rhetoric for liberal education, a rhetoric responsive to the enormous changes undergone in recent decades by the academic world and the global environment, we may do well to seek the insights and suggestions that can come from stepping outside our customary universe of discourse on the subject. This is a process we are familiar with from the numerous instances of cross-fertilization among the intellectual arts and disciplines. The foregoing essay at comparison has explored one such channel of cross-fertilization, with the following results:

1. We have raised the question of the difference between liberal and illiberal learning. The experience of the martial arts suggests that one principle of the liberal program might be formulated as the cultivation of free cultural forms for their own sake.
2. We have asked about the kinds of cultural forms appropriate to a liberal program. The martial arts exemplify for us a neglected type of culture, that which concerns the perfection of the capacities of human subjects.
3. We have asked about the types of subjective cultivation that constitute a plausible inventory. The martial arts clarify for us the problem of distinguishing between concrete traditions and general technical capacities.

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<sup>18</sup>Kisshomaru Ueshiba, *Aikido* (Tokyo: Hozansha, 1974), pp. 179-180.

4. We have asked about the character of training programs appropriate to develop such capacities. The martial arts exemplify for us the significance of practice; of a phased program of development, from techniques to principles to expression; and of the need for specialized work to develop any capacity through that curriculum.
5. We have asked about the relation of liberality to utility. The martial arts exemplify the way in which liberally acquired powers are of especial utilitarian value in a complex and changing environment.
6. We have asked about the moral justification of liberal training. The martial arts provide models in which those questions are resolved through being linked to an ethical worldview.





## CHAPTER TWO

# Martial Arts as a Resource for Liberal Education: The Case of Aikido<sup>1</sup>

In the Autumn 1984 issue of *Liberal Education* I published “The Liberal Arts and the Martial Arts,” an essay which explored how efforts to rethink the rationales of liberal education might benefit from comparing the liberal arts as developed in the West to certain educational programs, commonly known as the martial arts, developed in the cultures of East Asia. The paper made three main points.

To begin with, I suggested that the distinction embodied in the Japanese contrast between *bujutsu* and *budo* parallels an age-old Western distinction between strictly utilitarian arts and arts that possess a liberal character. The Japanese distinction contrasts techniques used for practical, combative purposes (*bujutsu*) with disciplines that employ training in combative forms as a means to cultivate the students’ physical, mental, and spiritual powers (*budo*). The Western distinction derives from Aristotle’s discrimination of knowledge which is tied to necessities and so of a servile sort from the kind of knowledge that is worthy of free men (*eleutheron*)<sup>2</sup>—a notion embodied in later formulations about the liberal arts (Greek: *eleutheriai technai*; Latin: *artes liberales*), arts whose study was intended to cultivate a person’s

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<sup>1</sup>1991 “Martial Arts as a Resource for Liberal Education: The Case of Aikido,” in *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, eds. M. Featherstone, M. Hepworth, & B.S. Turner (London: Sage), 209-24. [Reprint of 1990.] This paper was originally presented at the U.S.-Japan Conference on Japanese Martial Arts and American Sports: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Means to Personal Growth, University of Wisconsin-Madison, August 7-10, 1989. I am grateful to David Waterhouse and Clifford Winnig for suggestions which helped me improve the final version.

<sup>2</sup>*Politics*, 1255b, 1258b.

“humanity.” In both cases, techniques<sup>3</sup> learned for mundane instrumental purposes stand in contrast with arts which are studied in order to enhance their learner’s capacities as a free and virtuous human being.

Second, I suggested that affinities between the traditions from which both budo and Western liberal arts emerged could be found by noticing parallels in their patterns of historical evolution. In the West, we find in ancient Greece the ideal of *paideia*, the notion of using culture as a means to create a higher type of human being. Classic Greek thought celebrated the way to *arête*, or virtue, through cultivating powers of the body, like strength and vigor, as well as powers of the mind, like sharpness and insight. In later centuries cultivation of the body disappeared as a component of liberal training, so that only intellectual arts, organized eventually as the trivium and quadrivium in the Middle Ages, emerged as suitable subjects for liberal learning. Transmitted by monastics for centuries, this curriculum entered secular universities during the Renaissance. American educators of the late 19th century hearkened back to this Renaissance tradition while devising a program of liberal education oriented to the “formation of character” and the goal of self-realization. This formed the intellectual background for the experiments in the liberal curriculum which flourished in the United States after World War I.

I traced a comparable development in East Asia, beginning with the movement in China during the Chou dynasty to form an educational program aimed to produce a broadly cultivated person. This curriculum, often referred to as the “liberal arts” of classical Chinese education, included training both in literary and martial subjects. Confucius articulated the conception of the ideal person to be produced by this Chinese version of *paideia*.<sup>4</sup> The eventual decline of that curriculum was followed by the institution of new kinds of martial arts training in Chinese monasteries, which cultivated Shaolin Temple boxing, derived from exercises introduced by the Indian Buddhist monk Bodhidharma and, subsequently, the Taoist-inspired forms of tai chi chuan. In Japan during the Tokugawa Shogunate, a number of samurai adapted the martial techniques into vehicles of spiritual training and, beginning with the

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<sup>3</sup>Sino-Japanese *jutsu* corresponds exactly to Greek *techne*.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Max Weber: “For the Confucian . . . the decisive factor was that . . . in his self-perfection [the “cultured man”] was an end unto himself, not a means for any functional end.” *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*, trans. and ed. H. Gerth (New York: Free Press, 1951), 246.

efforts by Jigoro Kano in the 1880's, a number of Japanese arts evolved to constitute the resources of modern budo.

The main part of my paper, finally, drew on the experience of martial arts training programs to suggest ideas relevant to a number of central issues in the modern philosophy of liberal education. These issues included the question of what is "liberal" about liberal education; the kinds of cultural forms most suitable for a liberal curriculum; the kinds of capacities liberal training should foster; the characteristics of training programs designed to cultivate those capacities; the relationship between liberal and utilitarian learning; and the ethical justification of liberal learning.

In that earlier paper, then, I used training programs in the martial arts as a source of ideas to enrich our thinking about the liberal curriculum. I did not explore the possible role which actual training in the martial arts might play in contemporary programs of liberal education, nor did I explore the ways in which the philosophy of the liberal arts might provide ideas for enriching instructional programs in the martial arts. These two questions form the agenda of the present paper. In addressing them I shall first discuss some general issues raised by the aspiration to incorporate budo training into programs of liberal education. I shall then report on an experiment in which I have incorporated martial arts training in an academic course and conclude by reflecting on some implications of that experiment for those who might like to attempt similar efforts in other institutions.

## **Is There a Role For Budo in the Liberal Curriculum?**

In my earlier paper I proceeded on the assumption that there are no inherent differences between the educational approaches of budo and the liberal intellectual arts. At this point I wish to question that assumption and suggest that in certain respects budo training appears incompatible with the objectives of the kind of liberal education suited for modern democratic societies.

Although there are clear lines of continuity between the ideals of *paideia* and *humanitas* which informed the liberal curricula of ancient Greece and Rome and subsequent developments in the history of Western Civilization, what constituted liberation and the development of humanity underwent changes. In each epoch new curricula and rationales had to be devised to accommodate changes in the state of knowledge, in the circumstances of life, and in the meaning of a free and fully realized human being. In the

course of the 20th century, a number of Western educators have worked to articulate the aims and rationales of a liberal education appropriate to life in advanced industrial world society. If, now, we wish to find a place for budo within this emerging educational culture, we must consider whether or not the properties of budo as it emerged from Japanese feudal martial traditions are in all respects consistent with the ethos of a modern liberal education.

Suppose we identify the central features of the state of knowledge in our time as those of accelerated rationalization and fragmentation; and the central features of our historical situation as those of one small world and cultural diversity. Then what notions should guide the construction of educational programs which cultivate the arts of freedom appropriate to the conditions of life in the late 20th century? Two notions would command a great deal of consensus among modern exponents of liberal education, I believe: autonomy and generality. We want students to become autonomous as persons, able to critically understand rationalized courses of thought and action, to formulate rational grounds in support of their positions and present their thoughts clearly and persuasively, and to recover relevant traditions and adapt them creatively to changing circumstances. We want students to attain general breadth, in the senses of possessing ideas and skills which can apply to broad domains of experience, of being able to find connections among dispersed branches of knowledge, and having the capacity to understand and communicate with persons oriented by radically diverse cultures.<sup>5</sup>

If we take some formulation such as this as a standard for the kind of liberal curriculum that is suited for our times, then we may question whether contemporary forms of budo training are in fact conducive to the educa-

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<sup>5</sup>In a powerful elaboration of many of these points which Richard McKeon set forth a quarter-century ago, the liberating arts were described as ‘general’ in four senses. “They are general in the sense of applying to all subject matters and therefore in the sense of providing an approach to any particular subject matter placed in a context of other parts of information or knowledge. They are general in the sense of embracing all fundamental skills that can be acquired in education and therefore in the sense of providing a basis for any particular skill. . . . They are general in the sense of bearing on the formation of the whole man and therefore in the sense of providing a model or ruling principle for any particular excellence fitted into achievements of a good life. . . . [T]hey are general in the sense of being the arts of all men and therefore in the sense of providing guidance for each particular man and each particular association of men responsive to the cultures and objectives of other men and of mankind.” “The Liberating Arts and the Humanizing Arts in Education,” in Arthur H. Cohen, ed., *Humanistic Education and Western Civilization* (NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 171-72.

tional goals of autonomy amidst complexity and rapid change, and generality amidst fragmentation and diversity. A good deal of contemporary budo practice exhibits characteristics one could describe as authoritarianism, anti-intellectualism, particularism, doctrinaire rigidity, narrowness of focus, and excessive competitiveness.

- Authoritarianism. It is common to attribute absolute authority to the instructor in a dojo. The sensei must not only be accorded complete respect, but no aspect of his teaching is to be questioned. In describing the pedagogy of the dojo, Richard Schmidt among others has observed: “The sensei serves as the model for the trainee to emulate. Long and difficult hours of intense, repetitive training and prescribed movements punctuated at times by physical and verbal abuse by the sensei is the mode of instruction.”<sup>6</sup>
- Anti-intellectualism. Budo teaching places a great premium on non-verbal training and often exhibits a studied hostility toward discursive presentations of any sort. As Richard Schmidt further observes: “Reflective of the Zen method of training, the emphasis is on a nonverbalized, intuitive approach rather than rational intellection. The trainee is encouraged to ‘think with his body’ and not with his mind.”<sup>7</sup> It is generally considered poor form to discuss issues regarding principles or techniques while training.
- Particularism. Many martial arts senseis expect absolute loyalty to their persons and their organizations. Some senseis even forbid their students to train with any other instructor while they are under his tutelage. This trait accounts for the pronounced sectarianism which afflicts a number of budo organizations.
- Doctrinaire rigidity. The combination of authoritarianism, anti-intellectualism, and particularism supports the belief that the teachings of a particular sensei represent the one right way of doing things. His approach is presented as one which all students must reproduce faithfully in every detail.

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<sup>6</sup>Richard J. Schmidt, “Japanese Martial Arts as Spiritual Education” *Somatics*, Aut./Win., 1983, 47, citing H. Befu, *Japan: An Anthropological Introduction* (1971).

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 48.

- Narrowness of focus. Virtually all the training in most dojos is confined to the mastery of a circumscribed set of techniques. Although these may be taught on the assumption that that kind of training develops the student in accord with certain more general principles, those principles are rarely articulated. It is even more rare to find explicit consideration given to ways in which those principles might be applied in other domains.
- Excessive competitiveness. Some schools of budo place considerable emphasis on competition, both within the dojo and with other, rival, dojos. It becomes a primary goal to defeat the “enemy,” which can be another student, members of another school, or another martial art.

Insofar as these characteristics are inherent in budo, it would seem that they operate in an illiberal direction. However appropriate they may have been in earlier times, they seem inconsistent with the objectives of a liberalizing and humanizing approach to education suitable for the late 20th century. Authoritarianism and anti-intellectualism run counter to efforts to cultivate personal autonomy; particularism, rigidity, and narrowness of focus run counter to the spirit of generality; and an exclusively competitive ethic runs counter to the capacities for mutual understanding and synergistic collaboration which arguably are essential to the advancement of the life of the human species at this point in history.

This raises the question whether one can modify these features of traditional martial arts pedagogy in a liberalizing direction without losing the heart and soul of authentic budo. I believe it is possible. My belief is inspired by the fact that a number of exemplary aikido teachers have shown ways of doing so.

On the matter of authoritarianism I have witnessed a number of prominent aikido teachers question this as an absolute value, by example as well as by precept. Although they naturally expect proper respect, they do not appreciate slavish compliance or obsequious attention. While following the sensei’s directives remains an important condition for proper training, if only for reasons of safety, this is fully compatible with an active and questioning spirit on the part of students. Some of the most highly ranked aikido instructors with whom I have trained often conclude their demonstration of a certain technique with the remark: “Try this out and see if it works for you.” In my own course, to be described presently, I give students an opportunity

to raise questions from time to time on the mat, and encourage them to reflect on our practices critically when they are off the mat.

Again, one can affirm the importance of nondiscursive teaching and non-verbal learning in the dojo without supposing that committed training in a martial art entails the sacrifice of the intellect. Nonverbal learning is good for the mind as well as the body, but one can also benefit from reflection and discourse about what one has learned thereby.

Although it is natural and helpful to develop sentiments of attachment to one's sensei, this need not take the form of fanatic or highly partisan loyalty. As Mitsugi Saotome Shihan has written wisely on this point, "Blind loyalty is most dangerous for it is all too easy to twist the ideas of loyalty and righteousness with the lever of human greed and selfish ego."<sup>8</sup> Some aikido senseis make a point of encouraging their students to visit other dojos and to train with different kinds of instructors. The Founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba, encouraged aikido students to learn from as many teachers as possible.

On the issue of doctrinaire rigidity, two points can be made which draw on the most reputable of budo authorities. At the highest level of practice, one can cite the ideal which many budo masters subscribe to, that of the "technique of no-technique" or the "form of no-form." Indeed, one interpretation of that formula could serve as a standard for the highest ideal of liberal education, in which particular forms are viewed merely as resources to be employed variably as the occasion indicates. A magnificent formulation of this ideal appears in the dictum by Matsuo Basho, "Only by entering into the principles and then taking leave of them can one attain autonomy."<sup>9</sup> In addition, one can cite the importance which great budo masters have accorded to continuous growth and change. Recall the dictum attributed to the 17th-century master, Miyamoto Musashi—"the purpose of today's training is to defeat yesterday's understanding"—not to mention the experience

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<sup>8</sup>*University of Chicago Aikido Club Handbook* (1989), 24. See also Mitsugi Saotome, *The Principles of Aikido* (Boston & Shaftesbury: Shambhala, 1989), 198: "If you accept the idea that *budo* is a study that can encompass all aspects of your life, there is another fallacy which you must avoid. This is the temptation to turn the teachings of your art into doctrines, or your teacher into an idol. . . . Your teacher is a guide, not a guru. There is a great difference between respect and idolization."

<sup>9</sup>Cited in Uzawa Yoshiuki, "The Relation of Ethics to Budo and Bushido in Japan," paper presented at U.S.-Japan Conference on Japanese Martial Arts and American Sports, 10.

of Founder Morihei Ueshiba, who continuously changed ideas as his practice evolved.

A certain amount of rote training is indispensable for any art. One must drill basic movements in any martial art just as one must practice scales and arpeggios in learning to play musical instruments. Yet to master techniques without learning the principles which underlie them is patently illiberal, and it is also illiberal to learn principles but to confine their application to a narrow domain. Budo faces the challenge of finding ways to apply its principles to domains outside the martial art in question. A number of aikido masters have met this challenge with enormous creativity. Koichi Tohei Shihan has written books on the application of aikido principles in daily life. Robert Nadeau Sensei has devised a repertoire of ways to show the applicability of aikido moves to interpersonal situations off the mat. Frank Doran Sensei regularly articulates the more general human meanings of various aikido principles and gestures.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, one must question the extent to which a competitive spirit is needed to achieve the developmental goals of budo training. This question is complicated by the surface similarity of competitive and combative ethics. While too much competitiveness is degrading, most forms of budo which are entirely “liberal” in orientation focus mainly on combat. At issue here is a distinction between becoming proficient at combat as a way to advance at the expense of others and becoming proficient for the sake of defending oneself and others, and improving one’s own character.

Master Morihei Ueshiba understood this distinction and how easy it is to confuse the two notions. He wanted to guard against the competitive spirit in aikido, so he removed the aspect of competitive combat from the art. He proclaimed that the only victory worth going for was the victory over one’s

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<sup>10</sup>On the connection between *budo* applications and general knowledge, see also Mitsugi Saotome’s statement: “*Budo* means organizing society. It is management. . . . Unfortunately, many managers come from very narrow, categorizing educations. How many business schools are teaching universal knowledge? They give specialized knowledge but never make a ‘general mind.’ Modern universities seem to pursue the opposite of the original meaning [a place to study universal knowledge]. Some professors do not study biology or the ecology of systems, not even human psychology. They don’t understand what it means to be human. Many of the problems are caused by very narrow professional people controlling the world. . . . Top executives must study philosophy, religion, nature, art, science; otherwise they do not have the knowledge to create a vision for themselves and their workers.” “Budo and Management,” *Aikidoka*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Washington DC Aikikai, 1987), 7-11.



self, and that the only kind of character worth cultivating in our time is one devoted to the task of bringing peace to mankind around the world. His words eloquently depict the transformed budo this entails:

In Ueshiba's budo there are no enemies. The mistake is to begin to think that budo means to have an opponent or enemy; someone you want to be stronger than, someone you want to throw down. In true budo there is no enemy or opponent. . . . True budo is the loving protection of all beings with a spirit of reconciliation. Reconciliation means to allow the completion of everyone's mission.<sup>11</sup>

## **Employing Martial Arts Training in a Liberal Arts Program**

I turn now to report on an experiment in which I have incorporated martial arts training in an academic course and present some reflections on what that experience suggests for colleagues who might like to attempt similar efforts in other institutions.

Over the past few years I have twice taught a course at The University of Chicago which includes martial arts training as an integral component. Offered as a regular credit course under my Department of Sociology, it is called "Conflict Theory and Aikido." Half of the time this course proceeds like any other academic offering. Twice a week I meet with the students to discuss a series of texts, chiefly writings by sociologists and philosophers which deal with the sources, dynamics, and consequences of different forms of human conflict.

In addition, twice a week the class meets at the mat, for a systematic introduction to the art of aikido. (I also ask the students to participate in at least half a dozen of the regular training sessions of the campus Aikido Club.) I define the mat training sessions as "lab" sessions and ask the students to keep a lab notebook in which they write down after each session some lessons learned and questions raised by the mat training. The grade for the course is based on six components: frequency of training, performance in a modified 6th-kyu test taken during exam week, quality of the lab notebook,

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<sup>11</sup>"Memoir of the Master," in Kisshomaru Ueshiba, *Aikido* (Tokyo: Hozansha, 1974), 179-80. Translation altered.

participation in class discussions, short assigned papers, and a final paper in which the students are asked to integrate the major things they have learned in the course as a whole.

In organizing the sequence of sessions on the mat, I attempt not only to provide a graduated introduction into the art of aikido, but also to time certain mat experiences so that they will be relevant to issues raised by the reading. For example, I introduce the notion of ma-ai, the proper distance between training partners, in connection with the sociologist Georg Simmel's discussion of the proper distance between individuals in social interaction; or I focus on the alternation of attack and defense in aikido training with the notion of "reciprocal priority" discussed by the philosopher Walter Watson.

In presenting this course, I have four chief educational objectives.

1. By having the students experience regular physical activity as an integral part of the class work, I attempt to overcome the mind-body split which so pervades Western education. Besides reading about issues involving human conflict, on the mat we have an opportunity to experience actual feelings which accompany the expression of physical aggression and the different responses, conflictual and non-conflictual, which one can make to that aggression. As a sociologist, I find this particularly valuable since my academic discipline tends to operate at a high level of abstraction and often represents human relations as though they took place outside of human bodies.<sup>12</sup>
2. By acquainting students with traditional dojo etiquette and basic aikido ideas, I provide an experiential basis for some cross-cultural learning. Aikido is particularly suitable for affording entree into a number of Asian traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, and Bushido, as well as elements of the Japanese language.
3. The major theoretical point of the course is to refine the student's abilities to think critically about human conflict, both descriptively and normatively. I try not to sell a particular point of view on the subject

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<sup>12</sup>In recent years some sociologists have in fact rediscovered the body. For a seminal contribution, see Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984). Arthur W. Frank has composed an exceptionally helpful overview of this newer literature, in an essay entitled "Bringing Bodies Back In: A Decade in Review," *Theory Culture & Society*, forthcoming.

but require that students articulate and reflect on the assumptions regarding conflict which they bring to the class. At the first session, I asked them to write a short paper indicating what they understand by conflict, whether they think that conflict is good or bad, and what questions about conflict they would most like to have answered. At the end of the course, I asked them to return to their initial formulations and write a long essay which incorporates ideas and insights provided by the texts and the training experience.

4. Throughout the course, I attempt to cultivate their ability to follow the aiki<sup>13</sup> way, in everything they do related to the course and not just on the mat. In reading, I encourage them to respect the ki of the author and to blend with it in a centered way. In learning, I encourage them to treat mistakes as useful features of the learning process. When they communicate with one another in class discussions, I encourage them to use aiki principles of communication, instead of ignoring or combatting responses from their fellow students. I encourage them to think of ways to adapt aiki principles to their life outside the classroom. In my own teaching, I attempt to model the aiki approach, respecting the ki of the students and blending with it to make the points I wish to get across. More generally, I encourage them to think of ways to extend aiki modes of response into all aspects of their living.

## Outcomes of the Course

In discussing the outcomes of this course, I shall incorporate statements made by the students in their lab notebooks and their final papers.

1. One outcome of the course related to the goal of integrating experiences of the body with experiences of the mind. Many students appreciated the challenge presented by an opportunity to experience non-verbal learning. Some expressed appreciation for the special kind of learning that only bodily practice provides—

I am sore in a real and profound way that only a good night's sleep will cure. I had one worthwhile thought during the club

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<sup>13</sup>The central concept of aikido, *aiki* refers to the process by which energies from different sources are brought into harmonious integration rather than opposition.

session this evening. Conflict is only one possible outcome of one person's violence. The point of aikido is to prevent this violence from resulting in conflict. On paper, this hardly seems a profound comment, but my body is beginning to understand the concept.

or the access physical practice provides to truths which are not accessible through verbal means—

If, in fact, thinking and speaking and reasoning are all mere imitations or descriptions of some greater truth, it seems hopeless indeed that we could ever know such a truth. . . . Aikido is one way of learning the nameless truth—while I cannot explain what *ki* is, I can certainly experience it as it flows through me or when it throws me to the ground.

For some students the challenge of experiencing pain in a protected space provided a stimulus to reflection:

One thing that impressed me during our first meeting today was the obvious fact of physical stress. I am accustomed to exertion, but not self-imposed, arbitrary pain, i.e., the self-torture of sitting *seiza*. It is very interesting to experience, but only endurable if one assumes the view that it is good. One must adopt the ethos of nobility in self-denial, the importance of the ritual, and grim, unhesitating determination with the immediate task, in order to persist. I did so, though it is really contrary to my normal way.

Some students were able after a relatively short period to experience a different state of consciousness attendant on the experience of bodily relaxation:

I have discovered a state in myself which I call the simple mind. I discovered the simple mind by accident when I actually joined with *uke's*<sup>14</sup> *ki* and successfully defended myself against *katate-dori*. When *uke* attacked, I was day dreaming and relaxed; I was not thinking of the impending attack.

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<sup>14</sup>In aikido practice, *uke* signifies the person who initiates the attack and takes the fall.

When uke attacked, I simply reacted without thinking. My response was hardly fluid or graceful but it was more powerful than anything I have ever done. The simple mind, I deduce, is a state of readiness that can only be reached, permanently, through years of practice. It is a state, not of thinking or reasoning, but of knowing. The simple mind reflects an understanding that is so deep and innate that it operates without conscious thought or effort. I doubt that I have the discipline to achieve what I term the simple mind but I feel privileged to know that it exists. In other words, I feel as if I was afforded a rare glimpse of what I can possibly achieve.

Many students came to understand the importance of patience in learning worthwhile skills. Thus:

Frustration again wins the day. I can never seem to do anything in the way it is supposed to be done. I am beginning to think that I will have to conquer tremendous obstacles just to become coordinated. I wish that there was some short-cut to grace, but I know that effort is the only answer. . . . The first rule of aikido should really be patience!

Finally, many students came to an awareness of the possibility of new forms of body-mind integration. Thus one student wrote:

Strangely, I have always been cognizant of a ki force but I located its center in my skull, not my body. However, I like aikido's hara location better because it could forge a link between my mind and body that I have always lacked. In the past, I tended to view my body as nothing more than a vehicle for my brain. I am hoping to forge real mind-body connections so that I can break out of this mold.

2. The course did appear to provide a relatively efficient way to give students entree into exotic features of a different culture. This was particularly visible with regard to respect rituals which are emphasized in the aikido dojo. Following the first day of training, one student wrote:

Today, I overcame a taboo; I accepted bowing. In addition to the foreignness of the custom, bowing to another human is considered unacceptable to Judaism. However, I tried to think like a visitor in another culture. I know that bowing in Japan is a sign of respect, not worship, and thus I should view it only as a courtesy. If I were in Japan I would bow and thus I should accept it here. If nothing else, today I accepted bowing.

Following the second day of training, this student wrote:

Today I felt a little less intimidated with the rituals that accompany the training. I accepted bowing as a foreign but valid method expressing courtesy and respect.

For other students, the course provided experiences which facilitated their understanding of notions from East Asian traditions which previously they had only grasped intellectually. So, one student wrote that he had previously had some understanding of the concept of ki from a Japanese civilization course, but previously it was hard for him not to intellectualize the idea and just feel it. Others made similar comments regarding the concept of hara. Finally, some students responded to my invitation to regard the whole practice of aikido as a text and to consider it critically in comparison with other kinds of texts. One student, for example, wrote an extended comment on the question of whether philosophical conceptions embodied in Asian notions of ki and chi are compatible with concepts generated by Western positive science.

3. The practice of aikido facilitated the students' inquiry into the nature of human conflict in a number of ways. It not only gave them a concrete physical anchoring of some of the phenomena we were talking about; it gave them resources for raising new kinds of questions about the meaning of conflict. This was true with respect to the status of conflict in aikido itself. As one student wrote:

It appears that on the mat that we are turning another's aggression toward ourselves to work for our benefit, but why all this talk of "avoiding conflict?" The phrase, "getting off the line" sounds like "avoiding the conflict." In the same movement we will use the force an opponent applies to us in order

to engage in contact/conflict to overpower him or make him weak. Is that not engaging in conflict? Is that not using our forces to surmount another? So is the significance of aikido to avoid conflict—to reduce conflict—to resolve conflict—or to stimulate conflict?

It is precisely that kind of probing, that encounter with the ambiguities of conflict within and outside of aikido, that enables the students to reach a much more sophisticated level of thought when considering the subject of conflict.

4. In learning the aiki way, a number of students felt that they had acquired a resource that would be helpful in many other learning contexts. The students who habitually rebelled against authors found that they could learn to respect the ki of the authors without sacrificing their own individuality, their ability to remain centered. Students learned how to integrate mistakes as part of the learning process, rather than waste energy blaming themselves and expressing remorse for making mistakes. They learned to listen to and communicate with one another in a more empathic and constructive way. Thus, about halfway through the course, one student wrote in her lab notebook:

I sense a different feeling among the members of our class in and out of the dojo. We all appear to communicate better and more freely among ourselves. Smiling and praising are so much more present than they were at the beginning of the quarter.

More generally, most of the students found some ways in which the training experiences on the mat carried over into benefits for their everyday living. One student summed up his experience:

The most important thing I learned from the mat sessions is the concept of relaxing, “joining with the surrounding ki.” . . . When relaxed, one feels more confident about working or studying; there exists no mental resistance or tension in writing or thinking or just talking with people. When stress or conflict arises, I relax and accept the ki of the offender or attacker, which in return calms him/her also. On one

occasion, someone pointed out that I “radiate an aura of calm,” which caught me off guard, seeing I feel no different from when I began this course.

Not only did I learn to “relax,” I also learned the concept of being “centered.” When one is centered, one is in control. In Coleman’s diagram of the stages of conflict, conflict escalates because there does not exist a controlling element in its progression. Coleman presents barriers to control the progress of the escalating conflict but provides no control for conflict itself. In the way of dealing with conflict, there exists a center, a calm, relaxed center, containing the range of conflict.

The notion of being centered also transcends aikido and the dojo; [it can] establish a sense of control or stability in your environment. Being centered allows one to be in control of the effect of external forces rather than being controlled by these same forces. These external forces will generally create unnecessary confusion and anxiety, causing one’s ki to be “off.”

## Concluding Reflections

Courses on the dynamics of conflict or on conflict resolution provide logical contexts in which to introduce aikido practice. Yet I could imagine other kinds of thematic foci with which aikido practice might be coupled beneficially. One could readily organize a course around any of the other themes I mentioned at the beginning, such as an introduction to East Asian civilization or a course on body-mind connections.

Topics like the body-mind nexus, the East Asian connection, and the dynamics of conflict represent academic themes which could be linked with a wide range of martial arts, not just aikido. Other kinds of thematic foci might be specific to aikido. For example, I could imagine a course dealing with the aiki process—synergy—as it manifests itself in a wide range of human activities, from the domains of business enterprise or international diplomacy to those of family counseling and the organization of research projects. Training in other martial arts might imaginably be coupled with other, specific kinds of themes. But my sense is that there is a great range of possibilities relevant



to both aikido and other arts which I have not yet begun to contemplate. One thinks of courses on religion; on anatomy and physiology; on approaches to healing; on the aesthetics of movement; and so on.

In concluding, I wish to reaffirm my sense that the search for linkages between martial arts training and the liberal arts holds promise for educators. The flow of influence can and should go in both directions. At a time when the pressures of a technicalized society, accelerated now on a worldwide scale, have weakened the traditional case for liberal education, the arts of budo, taught as they were originally intended—as vehicles for personal growth and spiritual enlightenment—provide a formidable exemplar of education for human excellence at its purest. Incorporated judiciously into high school and college curricula, they can add new dimensions to education by focusing on the richness of mind-body learning, new roads for intercultural understanding, new kinds of experience to illustrate general principles, and new ways of being centered in a de-centering universe. On the other hand, martial arts pedagogy stands to be reinvigorated as a force pertinent to the needs of a truly liberating and humanizing culture in our time if it abandons older features of authoritarianism and provincialism in favor of a more open, inclusive, and harmonizing ethos.



## CHAPTER THREE

# Social Conflict, Aggression, and the Body in Euro-American and Asian Social Thought<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Philosophical perspectives on social conflict in Western social thought comprise four general positions, formulable by cross-classifying two variables: (1) is conflict viewed as inexorable or contingent, and (2) is conflict viewed primarily as a negative or a positive phenomenon? A “pessimist” views conflict as negative but inexorable. An “optimist” holds that conflict is inevitable but positive. A “prudential” position views conflict as contingent and entirely negative. Finally, a “provocative” view holds that conflict is a definite positive that needs to be promoted.

These positions can be linked with assumptions about the bodily bases of human aggression. Views of conflict as inexorable regard the body as a source of egoistic impulses that well up and initiate aggressive behaviors. Views of conflict as contingent regard the body as a source of flight or fear. A variant of the prudential position sees the body as a source of malleable plastic energies. In contrast, certain Asian traditions imagine a body that is neither at the mercy of aggressive instincts, nor a scene of conflicting drives, nor utterly lacking in natural structure. In particular, the traditions of yoga in India and of aikido in Japan depict the body as disposed to a state of calm and serenity through becoming unified with the mind and spirit. In the aikido view, conflict need not be the outcome of aggression, since the response to attacks can be neutralization rather than counterattack

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<sup>1</sup>“Social Conflict, Aggression, and the Body in Euro-American and Asian Social Thought,” *International Journal of Group Tensions*, vol. 24, no. 3: 205-17.

or submission. To reduce conflict, this prudential view relies, not on external social arrangements, but on internal practices that calm the mind and promote harmony within oneself and with others.

The theory of social conflict includes a number of more or less consensually validated propositions about the causes, forms, levels, dynamics, resolution, and consequences of interpersonal and intergroup conflict. Regarding philosophical presuppositions about conflict, however, strong differences persist despite agreement on the more empirically ascertainable aspects of conflictual phenomena. I propose here to articulate some of these differences. I shall do so by constructing four ideal types, which I designate as pessimistic, optimistic, prudential, and provocative perspectives on conflict.<sup>2</sup> After discussing the defining features of each perspective and some of its eminent representatives, I shall analyze how these positions relate to assumptions about the natural human body. That will lead to an opening through which certain ideas developed in Asian thought could be included in the discourse about conflict, with the consequence of inviting us to take a look at the entire subject in fresh ways.

## Social Conflict As Inexorable

What I am calling a *pessimistic* perspective on social conflict has deep roots in Christian theology. Humans are essentially sinful creatures, disposed to aggress against their neighbors. The wages of this sinfulness are misery and suffering, which is the human lot on earth. Immanuel Kant presents a secular version of this view. Kant finds the disposition to engage in conflict ever-present and inherently immoral. From the day of birth human egoism advances unrestrained. Humans expect opposition on all sides because they know from within that they are inclined to oppose all others. In consequence,

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<sup>2</sup>Calling these constructions ideal types signals my intent to present the perspectives in simplified form so as to clarify the issues. In particular, I note two egregious simplifications: the paper does not make stable distinctions between conflict and such overlapping terms as antagonism, competition, and combat; and in maintaining an opposition between views of conflict as mainly positive or negative, it runs the risk of appearing to support what Boulding rightly describes as “the illusion . . . that conflict in any amount is either bad or good in itself” (1988, 305).

the tableau of human history is woven from childish vanity, malice, and destructiveness.<sup>3</sup>

The tenets of a Kantian philosophical anthropology have found their way into modern social science through research traditions in psychology, ethology, and political science. Psychoanalytic psychology, despite vicissitudes of thought regarding the instincts, has tended to assume both an inherent human disposition to aggression that leads to conflict, and inexhaustible reservoirs of intrapersonal conflicts that spill over, via externalization and projection, into interpersonal conflicts. Freud held that violent conflict was endemic to human experience, as a means to resolve conflicts of interest and as an expression of an instinctive craving—an “active instinct for hatred and destruction.” He bemoaned the destructiveness of modern warfare but held little hope that cultured aversions to war could overcome the aggressive dispositions so deeply rooted in man’s biological makeup ([1932] 1939). Freud theorized about this by positing a self-destructive “death instinct” which gets turned away from the self toward others to produce a constant fund of conflictual energies. Although most psychoanalysts rejected Freud’s assumption of a death instinct, they substituted a destructive instinct for the polar opposite of the sexual instinct, which let them incorporate Freud’s pessimistic views on aggression without having to subscribe to what they considered a far-fetched metapsychological construct.

The ethologist Nikolaas Tinbergen likewise posits a universal proclivity to intraspecific conflict based on genetically transmitted instincts. Comparing human aggression with aggression in other animals, however, he finds human aggressiveness distinguished by the fact that it is socially disruptive: “Man is the only species that is a mass murderer, the only misfit in his own society” (1968, 180). This condition comes from a combination of instinctual, cultural, and technological factors. Whereas in other species and earlier human periods the impulse to fight got balanced by the fear response, humans have contrived cultural conditions that dampen the impulse to flee from battle, while the technology of fighting at a distance eliminates the taming effect of personal contact in face-to-face encounters. Dismayed about these seemingly ineradicable dispositions which threaten to convulse modern society with destructive warfare, Tinbergen acknowledges the impact of increased

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<sup>3</sup>To be sure, Kant overlaid this pessimistic diagnosis of the human condition with a secular version of Providence that found in man’s “unsocial sociability” the dynamic that leads to civil order and eventually a world state.

population density on the impulse to fight and pessimistically admits that the internal urge to engage in combat will be difficult if not impossible to eliminate. A similar diagnosis was made a half-century earlier by William James. Despite the acknowledged horrors of modern warfare, James wrote on the eve of World War I, modern people have inherited a pugnacious disposition and a love of glory that inexorably feed combat: “Our ancestors have bred pugnacity into our bone and marrow, and thousands of years of peace won’t breed it out of us” ([1910] 1939, 314).

Political scientists who espouse a position of “political realism” express a comparably pessimistic position. Long an eminent spokesman for this position, Hans Morgenthau holds that the social world results from forces inherent in human nature which makes it “inherently a world of opposing interests and of conflict among them” (1960, 4). These conflicts are inexorable, and Morgenthau sees no need to glamorize them or consider them benign. Indeed, he cautions social scientists to take care not to mistake the policy prescriptions that follow from the perspective as *moral*. Morgenthau thinks it important to uphold morality as a set of ideals, but urges social scientists and policy-makers to understand that reality consists of conflicts of interests that can neither be understood nor practically mediated from a moral point of view.

What I call an *optimistic* position draws on a philosophic outlook in which conflict figures as an inexorable yet essential source of human well being. Its proponents hail the Heraclitean dictum that “war is the father of all and king of all.” Heraclitus chided those who dreamed of eliminating strife from among gods and men. Things exist only insofar as they embody a tension between opposites, and human goods come into being only through strife.

Among ethologists, Konrad Lorenz has been a prominent advocate of viewing conflict as inexorable but basically positive. Conflict has provided such adaptive advantages as balancing the ecological distribution of members of the same species, selection of the fittest specimens through fights among rivals, mediating the ranking orders need for complex organizations, and instigating ceremonies that promote social bonding. Aggression, he argues, “far from being the diabolical, destructive principle that classical psychoanalysis makes it out to be, is really an essential part of the life-preserving organization of instincts” (1966, 48). If not war, then at least conflict should be called the father of all things. Conflict between independent sources of impulse can produce tensions that lend firmness to systems, much as the stays of a mast give it stability by pulling in opposed directions (95).

The optimistic position was developed in classic sociology through the seminal work of Georg Simmel (1903/4; [1908] 1955). Simmel saw conflict not just as an inexorable feature of human social life but also as a process with essentially benign consequences. That is, Simmel conceptualized conflict as an essential constitutive feature of social structure. This is because antagonisms maintain distances essential to stable social structures. It is also because the expression of conflict preserves association among parties who might otherwise sever relations. Simmel suggested that mutual aversions are indispensable ingredients both of small intimate groups which involve numerous vital relations among their members and of large concentrations of people in modern metropolises. The capacity to accommodate conflict he considered to be a sign of the vitality of intimate relationships.

Simmel's classic analysis was recovered half a century later by Lewis Coser. In *The Functions of Social Conflict* (1956) Coser refined Simmel's ideas by casting them in the form of discrete, clearly formulated propositions; comparing them with relevant materials from psychoanalysis, psychology, and social psychology; and showing how they could be qualified by the interposition of intervening variables. Although Coser argued that intragroup and intergroup conflicts promote social unification only under specified circumstances, he also identified ways in which the expression of conflictual sentiments enhances the effectiveness and long-term stability of groups.

## Social Conflict As Contingent

For all their differences, the pessimistic and the optimistic perspectives share the assumption that social conflict is universal and inexorable. A different perspective appears in authors who consider social conflict to be something that can be avoided or minimized. Among such authors, one group regards conflict as essentially negative in its nature or consequences. These authors therefore hold that social conflict can and should be kept under check or prevented through appropriate social interventions. I call this a *prudential* perspective, with two main variants—one represented classically by Thomas Hobbes, the other by cultural psychologists like Margaret Mead and Erich Fromm.

The Hobbesian perspective presumes that the pursuit of personal interests sooner or later disposes all human actors to engage in social conflict. This stems both from the promptings of pride and from the need to acquire power

to defend one's goods against others. Unrestrained social conflict produces a condition he famously described as the "war of every man against every man," in which people live in chronic fear and misery. To counter this ever-present possibility, fearful humans institute sovereign authorities. In exchange for the protection against anarchy and civil strife afforded by those authorities, citizens transfer their rights to self-defense. More generally, a Hobbesian perspective sees conflict as always latent but actually contingent. It can and should be forestalled through the establishment of appropriate governing authorities.

A variant of this perspective appears in authors who hold that the disposition for conflict does not inhere in the human condition, but results rather from how persons are brought up and how their relations are conventionally organized. Margaret Mead (1937) was perhaps the first cultural anthropologist to examine this variable across many cultures. She found that primitive societies range from highly competitive to highly cooperative ones, and that the main determinant of whether people behave in a competitive or a cooperative manner was the cultural conditioning which they experienced. Erich Fromm (1973) pursued the issue more intensively, examining thirty primitive societies from the standpoint of aggressiveness versus peacefulness. Fromm found several—like the Aztecs, the Dobu, and the Ganda—who evince a great deal of interpersonal aggression and violence, both within the tribe and against others. The atmosphere of life within those societies is truly Hobbesian, a condition of constant fear and tension. On the other hand, Fromm found a number of primitive societies where precisely the opposite qualities manifest themselves. Among the Zuni Pueblo Indians, the Mountain Arapesh, and the Mbutu, for example, he found little hostility and violence, virtually no warfare, hardly any crime, little envy and exploitation, and a generally cooperative and friendly attitude. Fromm goes on to analyze the specific social conditions that tend to generate aggressive responses, both of the biologically adaptive sort he calls defensive aggression and the nonadaptive, purely destructive sorts he calls malignant aggression. Psychologists from the behaviorist tradition, like Watson and Skinner, likewise view conflict as contingent. Since aggression represents a response to frustrating experiences and the reinforcement of aggressive behavior patterns, it can be curbed through the proper reinforcement of nonaggressive dispositions. Whatever the disciplinary orientation, this variant of the prudential perspective views much if not all conflict as eradicable through practices



which dispose a largely if not entirely plastic human nature to live in accord with nonconflictual patterns.

Quite the reverse of the prudential perspective is an outlook that advocates social interventions not to eliminate conflict but to stimulate it—what I am calling a *provocative* perspective. Its most extreme versions appear in writers who extol the virtues of war and berate their contemporaries for not being sufficiently martial. Nietzsche's Zarathustra asks: "You say that it is the good cause that hallows even war?" and comments: "I say unto you: it is the good war that hallows any cause"—yet Nietzsche viewed the general run of mankind in his time as objectionably timid. Among social thinkers this stance appears classically in George Sorel's *Réflexions sur la violence*. Although Sorel proceeded from a radical socialist perspective, his arguments are generalizable and did in fact become utilized by spokesmen for a wide spectrum of ideological positions. Sorel advocates a view of combat that highlights its noble side in the way that poets have eulogized illustrious armies. The whole of classical history, he argues, was dominated by the idea of war conceived heroically. This idea celebrates the profession of arms as an elite vocation, reflecting the opportunities that great battles afford for submitting to tests of strength and for appealing to the sentiment of glory. Voluntary participation in war and the myths associated with such combat provide the inspiration for the loftiest moral convictions.

Sorelian ideas found their way into 20th-century apologia both for colonial expansion and for anti-colonial violence. Benito Mussolini cited Sorel's forefather, Proudhon, to claim a "divine origin" for war. Everlasting peace would be depressing and destructive of man's basic virtues: pacifism represents cowardice before sacrifice. Fascism thus rejects all international structures designed to ensure peace, despite their having possibly been accepted temporarily for opportunistic reasons. War alone, Mussolini declaimed, "carries to the maximum of tension all human energies and stamps with a seal of nobility the peoples which have the virtue of facing it. All other tests are substitutes which never put man in front of himself" (Borgese 1938, 392, 346f.).

Writing on the other side of the imperialist divide, psychiatrist Frantz Fanon invokes overtones of Sorelian combat against capitalist oppression to proclaim the ennobling effects of participation in violent struggle against colonial domination. Fanon sees liberation to be possible only after a "murderous and decisive struggle between the two protagonists." He criticizes social forms that permit violence to be averted, either by channeling legiti-

mate combative energies into outlets such as dance, spirit possession, or self-destructive symptoms where they are dissipated; or else by defusing them through anti-polemical ideational forms like religion, philosophies of human rights, ethics of non-violence, or a politics of compromise. Nonviolent forms of political opposition—work stoppages in a few industries, mass demonstrations, boycotting of buses or imported commodities—simply represent other forms of action that let people work off their energy and so constitute a kind of “therapy by hibernation.” Violent combat alone can liquidate colonialism, regionalism, and tribalism, and thereby introduce into common consciousness the ideas of a common cause, national destiny, and collective history. At the level of individual personality, “violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect” (1968, 37, 66, 94).

However, the provocative perspective on conflict need not be tied to an espousal of physical violence. It can and has been expressed by those who advocate an increase in verbal forms of conflict as a means of promoting social change or as the preferred means of arriving at the truth. Herbert Marcuse helped persuade a generation of intellectuals to follow an ethic of negation on grounds that harmony of opinion was counter-emancipatory. Wayne Booth has described a polemicist position among literary critics that holds that “the more vigorous the conflict, the healthier the body critical” (1979, 4). Such a position appears among those who promote conflict as the best way to approach truth, an epistemological stance that Walter Watson (1985) designates as the agonistic method. Watson cites Machiavelli as one who applies the agonistic method to politics in arguing that the opposition of conflicting parties is needed to preserve liberty.

## **Bodily Bases of Aggression and Nonaggression**

Like much sociological discourse, conflict theory can become highly abstract. Yet its intimate connection with the realities of physical combat, by metaphor when not literally, makes it easy to relate the discussion of social conflict to the interaction of physical bodies. And the tendency to adduce biologically rooted dispositions for the presence or absence of conflict invites us to consider how differing perspectives on conflict might be related to differing assumptions about the human body.

The pessimistic perspective tends to view the human body as a continuously bubbling cauldron of egoistic and aggressive impulses that sooner or later spill over into combative action. The bodily imagery that underlies this view has been depicted most vividly in classical psychoanalysis. Freud saw the human organism as a perpetually renewed source of instinctual energies that well up and produce inner discomfort until they get released. Psychic and somatic symptoms reflect failures in the personality's ability to release those instinctual tensions, which eventually find release through indirect channels. In one way or another, directly or indirectly, human aggression represents a constantly flowing impulse that emanates from the human body such that humans can never escape the proclivity to destroy either themselves or others.

Although Lorenz took a more positive view of conflict, he too espoused a mechanistic-hydraulic view of aggression. Lorenz likens aggression to a gas constantly being pumped into a container or to a liquid in a reservoir dischargeable through a spring-loaded valve at the bottom. In Lorenz's conception, energies specific for an instinctive act accumulate continuously in neural centers for that behavior, leading animals and humans to hunt for stimuli in order to trigger the release of those energies. Although Simmel downplayed the salience of instinctive aggressive energies as a source of conflict, he considered the mobilization of such energies useful for the prosecution of conflicts once they get started on the basis of conflicting interests. Even so, Simmel admits the existence of a pure hostility drive which manifests itself in the institution of combative games.

Insofar as they entertain considerations of the bodily sources of aggression and conflict, then, those who think of conflict as inexorable tend to see the body as a mechanism that regularly produces aggressive energies. Authors who regard conflict as contingent have a different set of images: either they see the body as producing other impulses that swamp the aggressive instincts, or they look at aggressive behavior altogether as not instinctually based.

Hobbes represents the former alternative. The perpetual and restless desire of power after power to which all men are inclined would lead inexorably to constant civil strife were it not for the activation of an even stronger natural inclination: the wish to avoid violent death. Humans are also motivated by a wish to live comfortably by means of conveniences which only a regime of peace can procure. So the impulse to aggress against others gets subordinated to a wish for peaceful coexistence, a condition procured by establishing a sovereign political authority. The logic of Hobbes's argument can be mod-

ified to cover a variety of social arrangements designed to prevent conflict, but his logic regarding the bodily bases of action can be left intact: the body is the home of divergent impulses including aggressiveness, but aggression can get inhibited by other propensities that support institutions designed to prevent conflict. This image of the body is not unlike what we find in writers like Nietzsche and Sorel. The latter visualize a natural human disposition to be fierce and combative, a disposition that (for them, unhappily) gets swamped by fear and desires for convenience, thereby deflecting martial impulses into innocuous channels.

A third view of the body appears in authors who reject instinctual determinisms of any sort. The model here presents an organism whose genetic programming is so minimal that it extends only to general response capacities. Without cultural patterns to give some particular shape to human lives, “man’s behavior would be virtually ungovernable, a mere chaos of pointless acts . . . his experience virtually shapeless” (Geertz 1973, 46). Margaret Mead first applied this credo of the cultural anthropologist to the variable of conflict versus cooperation. Bodily dispositions to engage in combat reflect the internalization of symbols and the cultivation of habits promoted by combative cultures, but pacific cultures can just as successfully create nonaggressive dispositions.

## **Some Asian Views of the Body, Aggression, and Conflict**

Although disciplines concerned with bodily healing have recently started to examine what “non-Western” arts might contribute, it is rare that Euro-American social science has an opportunity to draw on the insights and understandings of other traditions. Yet it may be the case that certain Asian traditions afford ways of thinking about conflict that are hard to encompass within available Euro-American paradigms, and that the most direct entree into those traditions might come from looking at their distinctive views of the body and aggression. In what follows I shall discuss the traditions of yoga in India and aikido in Japan, although comparable ideas may also be found in certain aspects of the lore of Taoism in China and of the Korean tradition of hwarangdo.

The general thesis I wish to advance is that these traditions imagine a body that is *neither at the mercy of aggressive instincts, nor a scene of conflicting drives, nor utterly lacking in natural structure*. Rather, the state

of being battered about by desires, whether shaped or chaotic, represents human nature only in an immature state. Mature humanity exhibits a body that is unified internally and unified with the mind, a being living in inner harmony and with little inclination to aggress against others.

Two thousand years ago the Sanskrit classic *Bhagavad Gita* represented a state of human joy and fulfillment brought about by a practice that calms the mind and the passions. This practice of unification—of “yoking,” or *yoga*—the body with the soul, the individual self with the universal spirit—involves a complex of methods that are not only moral and meditative but physical as well. They include *asana*, a discipline of holding carefully designed postures, and *pranayama*, exercises in the rhythmic control of the breath. These are not extraordinary practices, the privilege of an exceptional elite or of super-human creatures, but are available to anyone willing to work hard at them. Exercising every muscle, nerve and gland in the body, the asanas secure a fine physique, one that is energized, limber, and strong yet not muscle-bound. They are designed to produce a state of superb bodily health, understood as a state of complete equilibrium of body, mind, and spirit.

A millennium-and-a-half after the principles of yoga were classically codified in a book of aphorisms by Patanjali, another Asian discipline was developed which holds a similar view of the human potential for living with a harmonious body-mind. The art of aikido, developed by the martial artist/religionist Morihei Ueshiba in the 1930s and 1940s, draws on a combination of Asian disciplines, including neo-Confucianism and Shinto as well as *budo* (Japanese: martial ways). Foundational to this art are the notions of unifying the entire bodily system through proper posture and of unifying the body with the mind through focusing one’s attention on the bodily center of gravity. The movements that adepts learn for responding to physical attacks require the body-mind system to be centered in this way, and certain exercises have been designed to enhance body-mind harmony. In the words of its founder, aikido “is the way of unifying the mind, body, and spirit” (Saotome 1989, 33).

What does the image of the body conveyed by yoga and aikido imply about social conflict? When students of those disciplines stand or sit in the relaxed and centered postures cultivated in their practice, they experience a state of calmness. From that experience they derive a conviction that there is no inherent, inexorable force driving all human beings to aggress against one another. They also know that, compared to the state of calm enjoyment they experience, the act of committing aggression is unpleasant—

even when one commits aggressive acts in self-defense. When they sense an impulse to aggress proactively or reactively, they connect it with an immature response which can readily be overcome. So the bodily states experienced in yoga or aikido practice support a belief that conflict is neither inexorable nor desirable, which aligns them with proponents of what I have called the prudential perspective.

In contrast to the Hobbesian version of that perspective, however, they do not make refraining from aggression dependent on fear. The body in the relaxed and unified state experiences anxiety as little as it does aggression. Nor do they presume, as do cultural anthropologists, that only in a specially designed culture is it possible for an infinitely plastic human nature to be molded in nonaggressive directions. The body in the relaxed and unified state experiences itself as unaggressive, whatever cultural patterns may prescribe.

Yoga and aikido conceive the bodily harmony promoted by their teachings as a model of mature human functioning and thus a model for right living. They also connect it with teachings about interpersonal conflict. They see such conflict as a byproduct of inner discord and thus neither inexorable nor necessary for the good human life. Yoga complements the state of inner harmony which its physical and meditative disciplines aim at with various *yama*, or ethical disciplines, that cultivate harmony with others. These include the commandment of *ahimsa* or non-violence. *Ahimsa* is an injunction to show respect to all living creatures. Closely related to this is the principle of *abhaya*, freedom from fear. As a distinguished contemporary yogi puts it, “Violence arises out of fear, weakness, ignorance or restlessness. To curb it most what is needed is freedom from fear” (Iyengar 1979, 32). Far from basing understanding of social life on a presumption of ineradicable instincts of aggressiveness and fear, this strand of classic Hindu thought evolved a conception of healthy human functioning in which both fear and combativeness could be avoided.

The preeminent application of yogic principles to contemporary social thought about conflict was the work of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi embraced certain well-known notions of the yogic tradition, including *ahimsa* and *satya* (truth),<sup>4</sup> and reworked them into an approach to conflict based on refusal

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<sup>4</sup>Gandhi came to call the technique of political action he devised *satyagraha*, the force that is born of truth. He defended its commitment to nonviolence on grounds that truth is absolute, equivalent to God, and “man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth and therefore not competent to punish” (Bondurant 1988, 16).

to respond to aggression with counter aggression. Following the yogic philosophy Gandhi insisted that it is possible—and finally more effective—to oppose the evil in the wrong-doer without opposing the wrong-doer.

Similar ideas were articulated by the founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba. Although Ueshiba created his discipline as a *budo*, a martial art, he came to insist that in his particular form of *budo* “there are no enemies.” The only enemy consisted of the egoistic and aggressive strivings of the immature self, and the only victory worth pursuing was a victory over that immature self. Ueshiba described the goal of his *budo* as a kind of *ahimsa*, a spirit of loving protection of all living creatures. He dedicated his art to the ideal of promoting peace and harmony throughout the entire world community.

This does not mean that aikido presumes a world wholly free of aggression. Aikido teachings do presume that from time to time some people will, wittingly or not, attack other persons or intrude into their space, physically or verbally. But aikido also assumes that the options for response are not restricted to those motivated by the impulses to fight back, to take to flight, or to submit obsequiously and so plant seeds for resentment and later conflict. The aikido position presents a fourth option, that of neutralizing the aggression of the attacker so that conflict can be avoided. The person or group attacked can respond in an aiki way by blending with the energy of the attacker, remaining centered, and redirecting that energy in a way that protects the victim but respects the attacker.

Yoga, satyagraha, and aikido introduce a new position into the inventory of perspectives on conflict developed in Euro-American social thought. Like the other prudential perspectives, they argue that conflict is not good, because human life does not fulfill itself through discord: assaulting others bespeaks an expression of the immature self and disrespect for the truth that each person represents—not to mention the horrors brought about by warfare in this century. The virtues of courage, self-respect, and enlarged truth espoused by the supporters of conflict can be attained—indeed, attained more effectively—through modes of assertiveness that do not entail aggression against others.

In contrast to the two other variants of the prudential position which I have sketched, the Asian approaches discussed here do not look to external institutions to curb conflict. To be sure, they would not repudiate formal political arrangements as espoused by Hobbes and others, or the effects of benign cultural conditioning as espoused by cultural anthropologists. Their primary emphasis, however, is on internal practices that calm the mind

and unify body, mind, and spirit. Such practices promote a naturally-based harmony that energizes nonconflictual interactions and gets fortified by doctrines supportive of respectful relations with others. Perhaps contemporary discourse about social conflict might benefit from pondering the implications of this piece of Asian social thought.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Many Dimensions of Aiki Extensions

Standing before a sculpture of the Greek god Apollo—a torso only, without head, arms, or feet—Rainer Maria Rilke was overcome with emotion. This fragment, of a god who represented order, harmony, and civilization, radiated a luminous energy that held him in thrall. Beholding the archaic torso, the poet tells us:

. . . *da ist keine Stelle*  
*die dich nicht sieht. Du musst dein Leben ändern.*  
. . . there is no place at all  
that isn't looking at you. You must change your life.

Entering the aikido dojo, I see the head of an old man with a white beard. There is something in his look, and in the attitude of the people who practice there in his name, that holds me in thrall. Wherever I go in the dojo, I feel: there is no place this man is not looking at me. And I imagine I hear him say: *Du musst dein Leben ändern*. You must change your life.

If I shall have entered the dojo for the first time, I will not have this experience. More likely, I have begun to practice this Japanese martial art of self-defense for a particular personal reason: to gain streetwise confidence, improve my health, impress old friends, meet new friends, who knows what. It is only after I have practiced for a while that the spirit of O'Sensei takes me in, and that my reasons for going there begin to change.

And slowly, I come to realize: what we are working on is not an art, not a set of techniques to accomplish something, but a *practice*, a way of being and acting. Nor is this practice concerned with war, but about promoting *Peace*. Strictly speaking it is not Japanese: its roots are in ancient India and China; it is cultivated and refined in dozens of countries *all over the world*. Nor is it about self-defense, really. Aikido helps one to *transcend the self*, not to firm

up the ego. And it is not about *being defensive*, but about connecting with and neutralizing aggression. O’Sensei was a prophet who sought to deal with the chaos and strife of the modern world by promoting order, harmony, and civilized conduct.

This view of aikido could not have been expressed more directly than by the title of a book by André Protin published in Paris in 1977, *Aikido: une art martiale, une autre manière d’être* (*Aikido: A Martial Art, an Alternative Way of Being*). If aikido does indeed represent *an alternative way of being*, then once we come under its spell, we become mindful of an injunction implicit in every moment of our practice: *du musst dein **Leben** ändern*. We begin to understand what the Founder meant when he said, “Aikido is not about moving your feet, it’s about moving your mind.” And how, when he saw advanced students teaching it like some sort of athletic activity he said sadly, like a forsaken prophet, “What they are doing is okay, but that is not what I do.”

O’Sensei reportedly was serious when he claimed that he wanted aikido to function as a medium for bringing peace to the world community; he wanted us to experience the world with compassion and equanimity, and to extend our energy outward in all we do. If that is his message, then are we who follow the practice he created not obliged to consider what we can do to change our lives in that direction?—in everything we do, including our work and social lives?

Several years ago, I became aware of several aikidoka who were struggling to do just that, by taking aikido out of the conventional dojo setting. Most of them were doing so in isolation, unaware that anyone else was following that path. I thought there might be as many as two dozen aikidoka so engaged—using aikido ideas and movements to alter the ways they would practice therapy, or teach, or run a business, or resolve conflicts—and clapped to see if they wanted to connect with one another. Before long, some two hundred aikidoka in seventeen countries had clapped back. The result is Aiki Extensions, and it is now my pleasant task to tell our story.

## **Aiki Extensions: The Three Modalities**

One way in which we extend aikido practice outside the conventional dojo setting is to provide such practice in settings that are closer to where the participants actually live. This can take place in high schools, churches,

hospitals, detention centers, recreation centers, or anywhere else that such practice is approved and safe conditions are present. For example, Steve Ives of San Anselmo, CA, has offered regular aikido classes in the San Rafael Youth Center; members of Aikido Harmonia teach aikido to 7-to-14-year-old in a center for children from the *favelas* (slums) of São Paulo, Brazil; Søren Beaulieu has worked with teen-agers in central city high schools in Philadelphia; and Martha Levenson teaches in middle schools in Seattle.

A second modality of extension work is the use of selected exercise and movements to convey certain ideas. Practitioners might ask novices to experiment with different physical responses to attacks to experience how the *attacker* feels when the response is counter-attack, or acquiescence, or a neutral off-the-line response. Or they might have students experiment with tight vision and soft vision, to observe the bodily sensations associated with each, and to experience the difference that relaxing the face and eyes makes in the scope of one's visual awareness. Or they might have executives feel the difference by moving a tight restraint with tight versus relaxed muscles.

The third modality is to use aikido ideas purely in non-physical forms. This modality has sometimes been called “verbal aikido.” The late Terry Dobson pioneered this sort of work. Among AE members, Aviv Goldsmith has implemented what prove to be powerful exercises of “verbal aikido.” For example, he has the group form a standing circle, facing inward. Each person takes a turn being in the center (‘uke’). Facing each person around the perimeter in turn, uke receives an insult/negative statement of some sort, acknowledging it with a simple “thank you.” In a second, integral round of the practice, the same format is followed by having each participant receive compliments/positive statements.

In a variant of this technique, I emphasize the notion of reframing. First we practice, on the mat, experiencing the difference, when responding to an attack, between perceiving it as threatening, in a defensive state of mind, or as energizing, in a welcoming state of mind. Then I ask them to carry out this exercise non-verbally—with a room-mate, an acquaintance, a work partner, etc.—and write a short report of the reframing experience. Students often report major changes in the quality of the relationship.

## **Aiki Extensions in Work with Individuals**

Creative aikidoka have devised a rich repertoire of techniques for conveying insights about centering and how to relate harmoniously with others.

### *Body Work and Somatic Education*

Much discourse in the teaching of aikido concerns the process of staying centered and re-centering oneself. This theme was verbalized in the teachings of Koichi Tohei sensei, who talked about keeping “one point.” Relatedly, he also tied this process to bodily relaxation and correct posture. These aiki teachings converge with some major developments in Western somatic education, including F. T. Alexander’s work on correcting posture, Ida Rolfs work on structural integration, and Moshe Feldenkrais’s work on functional integration.

One of the earliest aikidoka to sense the affinity between aikido practice and Feldenkrais’s work was Paul Linden, who developed a modality of somatic education he calls Being in Movement®. One point of departure for this work was the awareness of what a difference it makes in one’s stability when grabbed if one bends one’s head or not. Linden’s work utilizes a number of directives to improve posture, breathing, and related somatic functioning. The set of practices Linden evolved have been used effectively in treating cases of paralysis, stress disorders following physical or sexual abuse, and severe backaches, and for promoting pain-free computer work and athletic functioning.

Through a system of aikido-inspired practices she calls Conscious Embodiment, Wendy Palmer has developed a series of bodily practices that enable students to enhance intuitive capacity and to identify different modes of experiencing mental attention. Thus, they gain awareness of distinct attentional states (dropped, open, and blended), which serve specific purposes, while they become aware of other attentional states (contracted, ellipted, and split) which are inherently dysfunctional. Palmer employs awareness of one’s responses to being led by the hand in different ways to elicit understandings about separation and connection. Her repertoire includes practices that expand understanding of the dynamics of fear, empower the self through becoming more centered, and engage inquiry about ethical choices.

The line between bodywork and psychotherapy is thin to nonexistent. Assignment to one or the other category is often arbitrary, if not counterpro-

ductive. Asperger's syndrome (AS) offers one challenge that conspicuously involves both dimensions. Martha Levenson offers aikido practice as therapy to children who suffer from the debilitating social and physical disorder. She has found that through aikido, AS children find creative ways to develop social skills and integrate sensory input, while becoming successful in physical activity.

### *Psychotherapy*

Numerous aikidoka are professional psychotherapists—more than three dozen in our list of members. Charlie Badenhop has created a practice he calls Seishindo®, which integrates with aikido various modalities of psychological growth, including NLP and Ericksonian psychotherapy. Hanna and Günther Buck have had success in utilizing aikido-based techniques in clinical work with children, adolescents, and adults who suffer from Attention-Deficit-Hyperactivity-Disorder, and in helping managers in leading positions who often suffer from shadow symptoms of emotional regulation and self-monitoring problems. Scott Evans has taught aikido to groups of disturbed adolescents in a psychological treatment center, in the course of which the participants improved noticeably in their management of anger, control of anxiety, and relief of depression.

Tim Warneka adapts aiki techniques in clinical work with physically and/or sexually aggressive children and adolescents at an outpatient treatment center. Coming to believe that the degree of awareness concerning affect is directly correlated to the degree of awareness concerning somatic states, he has drawn on Paul Linden's work to create somatic, verbal, and combined exercises for this population. Thus, with adolescents who are “up against” the legal system for their offenses, he might have them stand up and push against a brick wall as a way to demonstrate the level of force they were trying to push against. This would lead to talk about ways to get around the brick wall instead of trying to GO THROUGH IT and then help the teen identify ways to blend and enter and do *tenkan* with their present situation.

In work with substance abusers, Steve Schuh has used an “aiki-focused” counseling approach to help recovering people face their addictions. In-group and individual therapy sessions, Steve has used simple aikido techniques to demonstrate recovery principles including how to “blend” with obstacles on the path of recovery. Learning how to center and breath properly is

paramount in reducing stress, a key component in many relapses to substance use. Steve helps patients to physically experience handling anger and other difficult emotional states by having them pair up and do blending exercises. By learning how to connect physically with a partner who represents a negative emotional state, the patient regains a locus of control over the “roller-coaster” ride of emotions that surface in recovery. Steve has also designed and implemented a wellness component in a substance abuse residential treatment center that features aikido exercises and partner practices.

In *Dynamic Counseling* (1994), Jim Lee compiled exercises with themes from Morita Therapy, Naikan Therapy, and other mind-body modalities as well as aikido. Jim draws on ki development ideas to train therapists to “join,” “lead,” “connect,” and “maneuver” clients for more harmonious outcomes. His exercises include: Being Centered in Relationships, Feedback and Centering, Aligning and Moving with Gravity, and Mind and Body Are One.

### *Education*

Aikido affords a number of techniques that benefit academic work, including the ways students read and write, how they and the instructor relate to each other, and how they relate to one another in the classroom. Jim Lee has applied aikido methods to test students on the final exam of a counseling skills course: in randori style, students were “attacked” randomly with orders to perform particular counseling techniques called out by group peers. Jim Lee has applied aikido methods to test students on the final exam of a counseling skills course: in randori style in groups of 8. Students took turns being in the middle and were “attacked” randomly by reading client statements with orders to perform particular counseling techniques called out by Jim.

Aiki ideas assist the learning process in extra-academic settings as well. Fiona Keltly uses aiki techniques to assist blind people in Dublin, Ireland, to deal confidently and effectively with help—and hindrance—from strangers.

When teaching my class on Conflict Theory and Aikido (the syllabus is included here as Appendix A) I treat the academic classroom itself as a dojo. We consider the difference between collaborative and competitive learning, and explore what it means to read a text, write a paper, converse with others, and take exams in an aiki manner. I ask students to consider their internal sensations from time to time, and use movements in the class to illustrate or explore certain concepts. On the mat, we use more expansive techniques

to illustrate concepts dealt with in the classroom such as social distance, dynamics of escalation, and reciprocal priority.

## **Aiki Extensions in Work Within and Between Groups**

For a long time, Aiki Extensions' work has invigorated the area of organizational and human resources development, bringing fresh resources to questions of leadership and coaching, conflict management, team development, and personal mastery. Pioneers like Terry Dobson and Victor Miller led workshops on conflict management for business executives during the 1980s. Chris Thorsen and Richard Moon created Quantum Edge, an aiki-inspired consulting enterprise that focuses on leadership development and change management in corporate settings. Tom Crum founded Aiki Works, and teaches aiki extensions ideas in management seminars on leadership skills, personal vision, development and change. His popular book, *The Magic of Conflict*, emphasizes the creative "push" conflict management gets by trained aiki responses: centering, connecting, and openness to change (and has been extended to work with children in *Your New Conflict Cookbook*, with Judy Warner). Richard Strozzi-Heckler's Institute offers seminars and in-house projects on how to apply aiki principles to organizations and human resources management. He has recently anthologized pieces by twenty-two authors which explore ways that somatics and aiki practices can enhance creativity in the workplace, *Being Human At Work: Bringing a Somatic Intelligence to Your Professional Life*. A number of AE members in Germany and Poland provide aiki-based consulting groups.

A small library of books and models has emerged in this area, including *Leadership Aikido* (O'Neil 1997), *Corporate Aikido* (Pino 1999), and *The Randori Principles – The Path of Effortless Leadership* (Baum & Hassinger 2002). These provide materials for courses in schools of business that present the systematic transfer of aiki principles to organizational settings. At the University of Augsburg Peter Schettgen teaches such courses using "Aiki-com," i.e., aiki communication for solving verbal disputes through centering, grounding, reframing, and using verbal analogies to the physical irimi-tenkan movement (see his *Der alltägliche Kampf in Organisationen [Everyday Conflicts in Organizations]*, 2000), while at Georgia State University in Atlanta, George Kennedy teaches graduate students in business aikido-based techniques of managing conflict.

This modality of Aiki Extensions work was exemplified by AE founding member Philip Emminger, whose business enterprise reaped great benefits and profitability from adapting aiki methods into his managerial approach, which included holding center with the presence and awareness of a martial artist, yet blending compassionately—and seeing the fulfillment of the needs of others as a benefit to the whole. When a management consultant once approached Philip to hire the consulting firm that he worked for, to adopt their conventional, competitive approach, the aiki-based alternative so impressed the agent that the consultant left his job and came to work for Phil!

### *Mediation*

Almost by definition, the field of mediation is a natural for aiki practitioners. Donald Saposnek broke fresh ground in this area with his paper on using aikido in family therapy. His book, *Mediating Child Custody Disputes*, which has become the classic text in its field, includes a chapter in which aikido diagrams represent ways of reducing conflict in disputes over child custody. Rod Windle has devised imaginative aiki techniques, including the use of jo, to mediate a wide range of civil and domestic disputes, and conflicts with schools.

In the international theatre, Chris Thorsen and Richard Moon have used aiki principles to aid peace processes. In Bosnia, Moon led peace-building work with a group of young people from the various factions in the conflict, while Thorsen carried out similar assignments in Cyprus. By teaching mediators and organizational leaders how to operate with the power of openness and listening, Thorsen and Moon have helped restructure systems so that they will operate more harmoniously and experience less conflict both internally and externally.

Dual American-Israeli citizen Jamie Zimron works with Israelis and Palestinians in Israel and in the US, teaching aiki principles of “Peaceful Power” as part of the Mideast peace process. In 1997 she helped found the Israel Women’s Martial Arts Federation, which brings Palestinian girls and women into Jerusalem for training conferences. Despite the ongoing war and media emphasis on violence, Jamie reports that many people engage in non-violent conflict resolution efforts and co-operative educational and business projects, and that aikido is practiced all over Israel, as well as in Egypt, Jordan and other Arab countries. Her dream is to work with aikidoka throughout the Middle East to create an international peace dojo, Dojo Salaam Shalom



## *Law Enforcement and Public Safety*

Aikido has long been used in the training of policemen. Yoshinkan aikido has been taught to Tokyo riot police since 1955. Aikido of diverse schools has been taught to Law Enforcement officers in several countries, including Australia, Canada, Poland, and the Philippines.

Officer Matthew Little of the Chicago Police Department's Education and Training Division has been involved in the training of military and police personnel for over a decade. He applies the principles and doctrine of Aiki not only directly as defensive tactics techniques, but also for principle-based firearms and tactical training. This aiki-based principle-driven training methodology allows officers to resolve violent conflict in a calm and appropriate manner, increasing officer safety and lessening the need for use of debilitating or deadly force.

Three years ago, Richard Heckler introduced a Martial Art program into the U. S. Marine Corps using aiki principles. Dojos have been established in every Marine base in the world, and all current personnel and recruits are required to participate in the program. Heckler envisioned this program both as a way to enhance the effectiveness and ethical comportment of marines, and as a kind of character training that would stand them, and their society, in good stead after discharge. Since its inception, reports continuously come in about how incidents of drunkenness, brawling, drug abuse, and domestic violence have gone down and morale has risen in cases where Marines have been engaged in regular practice of the art. Last year, the results of the Marine Corps Martial Art Program were presented to an appreciative audience at a conference of Marine Commandants from all over the world.

## *Youth Outreach*

An area that is just starting to be developed involves a more proactive approach to extending aiki practice to young people outside conventional settings. For several years now, Bill Leicht has headed a Bronx Peace Village/Dojo, where fundamentals of aikido, conflict resolution, meditation and council circle are taught to help inner city children how to live non-violently in high-violence areas. [A slide show on this project was shown after this talk; copies can be ordered for \$10 through Aiki Extensions, via the same method as for payment of dues and donations.] In Chicago, a Greater Chicago Aikido Youth Project coordinated three different projects for youth, with an eye to

reaching out into all high schools in the area. In Providence, RI, aikidoka Michael Werth helped organize a kata-a-thon to promote awareness of martial arts training for nonviolent objectives. Dr. Victor la Cerva has transformed his public health work into a campaign for violence prevention. Working for the state of New Mexico, he makes the rounds of high schools with his interactive message of aiki-based alternatives to violence, a message also conveyed in publications, including *Pathways to Peace: 40 steps to a less violent America*.

## **Extending Aiki Principles in Symbolic Work**

### *Theatre, Dance, Music, and Spirituality*

In a dojo built inside a professional school for dance, music, and theater near Munich, Martin Gruber teaches Aikido for Actors, as a way to enhance their resources for dealing with scenic demands as well as promote physical and mental training. Working with actors, dancers and singers in northern California, Pamela Ricard uses aiki-based techniques to help performers stay ‘present’ and thereby maintain moment-to-moment physical, emotional, and mental awareness in order to create believable characters. Through theatrical practices of creating and developing characters in imaginary scenarios, actors learn to identify with, feel compassion and empathy for another person’s point of view—someone for whom they might not otherwise feel any affinity. She accompanies this training with some grounding and centering practices—to help them tolerate the discomforts of conflict so they can stay present more skillfully.

Bill Levine, a jazz pianist and film composer working in Hollywood, experiences aikido as a time-based art, similar to music and dance, which contains improvised phrases of energy. He speaks of playing and composing musical phrases, from beautiful/smooth (spiraling) to dynamic/sharp (entering), more effectively when he applies the discipline, wisdom, and compassion cultivated from the practice of aikido, and of how aikido has enabled him to viscerally feel varying degrees of harmonic tension as sound moves around a tonal center, analogous to the “hara” (center) in aikido.

Jack Susman has found considerable connections between the mysticism of aikido and the mysticism of Judaism. Both in the Shinto-based tradition of kototama and in the kabbalah, the fundamental views of the systems

are set forth in a form that is often paradoxical, usually unintelligible, and always surprising. One fascinating connection is in their respective theories of creation: both use a symbol of exhalation to explain the origin of the cosmos.

The activities I've just described represent a small fraction of work going on in many countries by aikidoka who are affiliated with Aiki Extensions, not to mention many hundreds more who are not. For a complete list of members and their activities, see the web site link at <http://www.aiki-extensions.org/affiliates/>, where you may also find links to the various AE members mentioned in these remarks. The network is growing, the work is deepening, and there is no reason not to believe that the aiki spirit may accumulate substantial momentum in the years ahead.

## Connecting the Links of Aiki Extensions

These areas of application require a good deal of specialized training. Normally, professionals in one domain would have little or nothing to say to those in others. Nevertheless, the fact that all of them are aikidoka, seeking to manifest different dimensions of the Aiki Way, might lead one to think that sooner or later they could develop valuable understandings to exchange with one another.

The work of José Roberto Bueno in Brazil begins to suggest some openings of this sort. To begin with, Bueno organized a program to bring young people from the *favela* to an after-school center for regular classes in aikido taught by volunteers. At the same time, he also teaches aikido to members of an upscale business consulting firm, Amana-Key. Thanks to his own personal networking, the employees of Amana-Key who practice aikido in a small dojo there have become interested in the *favela* project, to the extent that some have become sponsors of the children in the *favela* center and a few have even reached a point of aikido training where they can serve as volunteers in the youth outreach center as well.

And suddenly, the possibilities seem endless. Ask me, I think it is what O'Sensei would have wished.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# Somatic Elements in Social Conflict<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Social conflict presents a topic where the wish to bring bodies into sociological analysis should meet no resistance. Although conflict theory can be dryly abstract, its close connections to the realities of physical combat, by metaphor when not literally, makes it easy to link representations of social conflict with the interaction of physical bodies. Think of conflict and you quickly bump up against bodies—yelling and screaming, pushing and shoving, punching and wrestling, stabbing and shooting. Even in purely verbal conflict the body swerves quickly into view: reddened faces, clenched jaws, tensed muscles, and quickened breath. Even when conflicts of interests or ideas are negotiated in a non-combative mode, differences in bodily posture and demeanor readily appear. And bodily changes manifest even when the parties to conflict are not in direct physical proximity.

Yet for the past century the literature on social conflict has ignored its corporeal substratum. Post-war classics—Coser (1956), Coleman (1957), Boulding (1962/1988), and Shelling (1960)—do not mention the body. Randall Collins's (1975) comprehensive *Conflict Sociology* has nary a reference to the bodily dimensions of his subject, nor does Louis Kriesberg's (1998) compendious analysis of conflicts, destructive and constructive. Instead of bemoaning such neglect, suppose we turn the point around and view that neglect as understandable, if not warranted, given the paucity of theoretical resources on how to formulate such linkages. Suppose then that we address

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<sup>1</sup>Revised version of a paper presented at the 37th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology, Stockholm, Sweden. July 6, 2005. For help in revising I thank Michael Bare, Daniel Kimmel, Paki Reid-Brossard, Dan Silver, and Mark Walsh.

the problematic of social conflict and the body with an eye for openings through which we might insert fresh lines of substantive work.

As point of departure for such an effort I shall reference the contributions of Talcott Parsons. This will seem odd to those who consider Parsons irrelevant to such concerns on grounds that his stressing the normative dimension of action precluded engagement with the body in society. As with many other dismissive glosses on Parsons, this one is hard to square with a review of what he actually produced. In publications spanning more than thirty-five years, Parsons considered the organismic dimension of human action in a number of places. These encompass subjects related to age and sex, including seminal papers on the incest taboo and youth subcultures; contributions to the theory of socialization; analyses of the cultural framing of life and death; an influential discussion of the parameters of medical practice; classic papers on aggression and reactions to social strains; writings on the human body itself—with attention to such phenomena as proper clothing, treatment of bodily injuries, and norms regarding physicians' access to patients' bodies; and intermittent efforts to weave the corporeal dimension into the general theory of action, culminating in his testamentary 'Paradigm of the Human Condition' in 1978.

In spite of these substantive contributions, in his general theory of action Parsons did not focus on the organismic dimension anywhere near to the extent that he did when analyzing the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of action. To be sure, on occasion he signaled his awareness of the theoretical lacuna between the physiological body, as one of the external environments of action, and the orientations of actors. Given his commitment to the Weberian concept of action, which conceives action as subjectively meaningful conduct, Parsons had some sense of the difficulty involved in leaping from purely biological process to a process imbued with meanings. He attempted to address that problem with intermittent, almost perfunctory, glosses on what he called the *behavioural organism*. This concept made it possible to represent aspects of action that involved the body but contrasted with the merely 'vegetative' aspects of the organism's functioning. The conception of the behavioural organism came to include certain organ systems and physiological processes, especially those involved in mental functioning. Although the usual connotations of 'behaviour' excluded meaning, Parsons used the term behaviour to mean that these processes represent capacities that manifested certain kinds of meaning. He located that dimension in what he was calling the adaptive subsystem of the general universe of ac-

tion, and treated it in terms of the general quality of intelligence. Lidz and Lidz (1976) developed this notion further, emphasizing the separation from purely organismic processes by calling it the *behavioural system* and incorporating thereunder work by Jean Piaget that analyzed complexes of intelligent operations as universal capacities.

Three decades later it appears that this piece of action theory has been left where Lidz and Lidz left it (Bare, 2006). In the meantime, explorations in other disciplines, related especially to education, have greatly extended the notion of behavioural capacity. The notion of intelligence has been expanded well beyond its earlier restricted sphere, to include a number of different functions including audiovisual powers, interpersonal skills, emotional capacities, and language abilities.<sup>2</sup> Although the Lidzes' intervention threw new light on the topic, it rested on a questionable Cartesian split between body/mind and neglected the fact that humans possess, after all, only one nervous system. What is more, the body itself has come to be theorized as the seat of a number of powers of its own, involving kinesthetic perceptual abilities and movement skills, and has come to be understood as participating intimately in all of the other powers just enumerated. The latter field has been investigated and documented by work in the field known as somatics. In the words of one of the most brilliant pioneer somatic investigators, Moshe Feldenkrais, "the most abstract thought has emotional- vegetative and sensory-motor components; the whole nervous system participates in every act" (Feldenkrais, 1949, 26).

Following Piaget, Lidz and Lidz articulated the constituents of the behavioural system as 'capacities to act which are intrinsic to human adaptation,' likening them to the notion of grammar in transformational linguistics; that is, grammar as denoting the ability of competent speakers to form sentences under any conditions (1976, 197). Adopting this notion provisionally, I propose to understand the behavioural system as signifying *the repertoire of human capacities that consist of physical abilities and dispositions together with the somatic components of 'non-physical' behaviours*. Accordingly, this would include physical capacities that are involved in the execution of conflict and the ability to control conflict. I shall return to the general issue of how to integrate the body conflict nexus into the general theory of action after I have reviewed afresh the general theory of conflict.

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<sup>2</sup>Howard Gardner (1983, 1993) has been a leading figure in this development. For its manifestation in liberal education programs at the undergraduate level, see Levine (2006).

## A Paradigm of Social Conflict

To investigate conflictual phenomena thoroughly requires that we differentiate among types of conflict with respect to a variety of salient dimensions. These include the media of conflict (verbal/physical), intensity (violent/nonviolent), systemic location (internal/external), type of conflictual party (family, community, nation), and type of outcome (constructive/destructive). On the other hand, supposing that something is to be gained by considering conflict at a more abstract level, I shall outline a paradigm of generic conflict.

As a form of social interaction, conflict has properties that can be investigated without reference to the orientations of individual actors. Even so, its basic dynamics derive from actions of parties that can be represented as acts of individual subjects, as follows:

1. A makes a bid for conflict by aggressing against B (verbally or physically).
2. B responds through counter-attack of some sort. Thereafter,
3. A and B continue to engage in conflict, establishing
  - (a) A static equilibrium in which conflict becomes a constitutive element of the relationship, or
  - (b) A dynamic equilibrium in which both parties continue an escalating spiral, until one of them
    - i. Defeats the other, or
    - ii. Tires or has a change of heart about the conflict, or
    - iii. Responds to an outside force that dampens or resolves the conflict.

From this paradigm, it follows that the elements involved in the generation of conflict will be the factors that dispose party A to aggress, party B to counterattack, and the two parties to continue waging their conflict.

What factors account for those dispositions toward aggressive action? From the literature on conflict I have culled six factors that abet the process (as well as two countervailing variables that dampen these dispositions).



1. *Hostility level.* In his pioneering treatise on the subject, *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory* (1962), Kenneth Boulding related the disposition to engage in conflict to an initial base of dispositions to aggress against others.
2. *Reactivity.* James Coleman (1957) noted the tendency for conflict to escalate when a provoked party reacts in ways that antagonize the initiating party further, until the escalating process takes on a life of its own. Boulding designated the tendency for parties to react in this way as a reactivity coefficient.
3. *Positional rigidity.* Boulding also viewed a factor that lessens the disposition for conflict to be a willingness to accept other satisfactory utilities as a substitute for one that another party craved equally. In a popular textbook on the subject, Roger Fisher and William Urry (1981) depict this as a capacity to alter 'positions' regarding means to secure a particular 'interest.'
4. *Moral righteousness.* Hostile energy is intensified when conjoined with a sense of moral valorization. Georg Simmel analysed how conflict becomes intensified when objectified out of purely personal reactions into combat for a cause. Bettelheim and Janowitz (1950) identified a number of emotional dynamics in which out-groups were hated for qualities that the in-group members found unacceptable.
5. *Weakness of conflict-aversive values.* a) Some cultures glorify combat and the virtues of the warrior. b) Conversely, Freud stressed the importance of internalized controls over the expression of social aggression: the superego process employs aggressive energy to inhibit or repress the activation of hostile impulses, the ego-ideal instantiates cultural ideals of harmony and peace. Durkheim similarly identified conscience and 'effervescence' in groups as brakes on conflict.
6. *Weakness of external dampening factors.* Parsons (1951) and Coleman (1957) among others delineated a range of social structural factors crucial to the existence of conflict. The absence or weakness of such factors facilitates the escalation of conflict. Conversely, the presence of such factors serves to dampen conflict. These factors include, for example,

the activation of policing processes; the invocation of shared transcending values; the availability of mechanisms of cooptation, and customs that favor the resort to mediation.

In what follows, I inquire into how these factors that generate or dampen conflictual actions relate to features of the physical body. Following Weber's authoritative definition of 'action,' as behaviour to which some sort of meaning is attached, I ask: what kinds of conflict-relevant meaning might emanate from processes within the human body itself, and what supra-organismic variables imbue bodily conduct with meanings that relate to conflict?<sup>3</sup> I suggest renaming the site of these linkages as the *actional organism*—the subsystem of action where the organism's input of energies and the inputs from sources of meanings meet and interpenetrate.

## Somatic Elements That Promote Conflict

### 1. *The body and aggressive impulsivity*

When social science does appropriate knowledge about bodies into its discourse on conflict it often relies on assumptions about an inherent human disposition toward aggression. On the eve of World War I William James asserted that 'our ancestors have bred pugnacity into our bone and marrow, and thousands of years of peace won't breed it out of us' ([1910] 1974, 314). In his landmark formulations on political realism, political scientist Hans Morgenthau argued that the social world results from forces inherent in human nature, which render it 'inherently a world of opposing interests and of conflict among them' (1960, 4). Ethologist Konrad Lorenz (1966) depicted aggression as an essential part of the life-preserving organization of instincts, arguing that for numerous species conflict provides clear adaptive advantages: balancing the ecological distributions, selecting the fittest specimens through fights among rivals, mediating ranking orders needed for complex organizations, even instigating ceremonies that promote social bonding. Another ethologist, Nikolaas Tinbergen, likewise posits a universal instinctual proclivity to intraspecific conflict and finds human aggressiveness marked by

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<sup>3</sup>Chris Shilling's recent discourse on the topic (2005), not to mention classic formulations like those of Max Scheler (1928/1961) and Talcott Parsons (1951/1964), iterates that streams of causality or influence flow in both directions.

a socially disruptive quality: ‘Man is the only species that is a mass murderer, the only misfit in his own society’ (1968, 180).<sup>4</sup> More recently, Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson (1996) summarize evidence from ethological studies to conclude that the human animal, and the male of the species preeminently, has inborn propensities to attack and kill others that exceed adaptive needs.

Despite vicissitudes of instinct theories, psychoanalytic psychology has tended to assume an innate reservoir of egoistic and aggressive impulses that, amplified by externalization and projection, flood into interpersonal conflicts. Freud thought violent conflict endemic to humans, both to resolve conflicts of interest and to express an ‘active instinct for hatred and destruction.’ He bemoaned the destructiveness of modern warfare but held little hope that cultured aversions to war could overcome the aggressive dispositions so deeply rooted in man’s biological makeup ([1932] 1939). Freud’s theory posited a self-destructive ‘death instinct’ which gets diverted from the self toward others, thereby producing a constant fund of conflictual energies. Most psychoanalysts rejected Freud’s assumption of a death instinct and some substituted a destructive instinct for the polar opposite of the sexual instinct.

Freud and his followers view the human organism as a perpetually renewed source of instinctual energies that well up and produce inner discomfort until they get released. Psychic and somatic symptoms reflect failures in the personality’s ability to release those instinctual tensions, which eventually find outlet through indirect channels. In one way or another human aggression represents a constantly flowing impulse that emanates from the human body such that humans can never escape the proclivity to harm if not destroy either themselves or others. Although Lorenz took a more positive view of conflict, he too espoused a mechanistic-hydraulic view of aggression. Lorenz likens aggression to a gas constantly being pumped into a container or to a liquid in a reservoir dischargeable through a spring-loaded valve at the bottom. In Lorenz’s conception, energies specific for an instinctive act accu-

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<sup>4</sup>This condition, Tinbergen explains, comes from a combination of instinctual, cultural, and technological factors. Whereas in other species and earlier human periods the impulse to fight was balanced by the fear response, humans have contrived cultural conditions that dampen the impulse to flee from battle, while the technology of fighting at a distance eliminates the taming effect of personal contact in face-to-face encounters.

multate continuously in neural centers for that behavior, leading animals and humans to hunt for stimuli in order to trigger the release of those energies.

For those who view conflictual action in this perspective, the propensity to act out aggressive impulses is limited by one or both of two other basic drives. For Freudian psychology, the aggressive instinct is balanced by Eros, the drive to form harmonious relationships with others. For Tinbergen, it is limited by fear of the countervailing force of enemies. To some extent, Hobbes can be seen as combining both combative and pacific drives. The perpetual and restless desire of power after power to which all men are inclined would lead inexorably to constant civil strife were it not for the activation of an even stronger natural inclination: the wish to avoid violent death. Humans are also motivated by a wish to live comfortably by means of conveniences, which only a regime of peace can procure. So the impulse to aggress against others gets subordinated to a wish for peaceful coexistence, a condition procured by establishing a sovereign political authority.

The logic of Hobbes's argument can be modified to cover a variety of social arrangements designed to control conflict: the body is the home of divergent impulses including aggressiveness, but aggression can get inhibited by other propensities that support institutions designed to prevent conflict. This image of the body is not unlike what we find in writers like Nietzsche and Sorel. The latter visualize a natural human disposition to be fierce and combative, a disposition that (for them, unhappily) gets swamped by fear and desires for convenience, thereby deflecting martial impulses into innocuous channels.

What none of these theories offers, however, is a way of connecting those dispositions with the constitutive systems of bodily organisms, a way that the relatively new discipline of somatics may help to illumine. Such analyses would proceed, for example, from considering hormonal levels of aggressivity through neuronal responses that mobilize aggressive physical or verbal impulses. Acting out such impulses involves their translation into complex neuro-muscularskeletal responses. The behavioural capacity to enact those responses, and thereby direct aggressive energies toward some social object, brings hormonal levels into the orbit of human action. Hormonally grounded aggressivity is the portion of the actional organism that energizes a trained capacity to attack and injure others.

## 2. *The body and conflictual reactivity*

In his analysis of the dynamics of social conflict, Boulding points to a second variable that figures in the equation regarding escalation of conflict. He refers to these as ‘reaction processes,’ processes in which a movement by one party provokes a movement by the other which in turn changes the field of the first, and so on. He proposes to designate this variable as a reaction coefficient: ‘the amount by which the equilibrium level of hostility of the one increases per unit increase in the hostility of the other’ (1962, 26). Whatever the degree of initiating aggressive impulses, the actuation of conflict depends essentially on some level of reactivity on the part of the attacked party. It depends further on the rate of change of the reaction coefficient as hostility from the other increases. As Boulding emphasizes, the reaction of a party depends on the images it holds, both of itself and of the other. The reaction coefficients are likely to be high if a party feels itself to be misunderstood.

With this variable, we enter the domain of the self and its vulnerabilities. The more a self is threatened, the more likely that party is to resort to ego-defensive measures. The more fragile or insecure the self, the more likely the party is to perceive itself as being misunderstood and to perceive slights where none exist or at least to exaggerate their import. It is here that a more recent school of thought within the psychoanalytic tradition makes an important contribution. This stems from the work of figures like Winnicott, Kohut, and Bowlby, who view the need for attachment to social objects as a more fundamental instinct than the disposition toward aggression. In this perspective, aggression is not a primary drive, but a response to threats to attachment. Its manifestation in physical violence is then viewed as a product of disintegration or fears of disintegration, in which counter-phobic responses reenact dissociated traumatic events that seem intolerable for individuals in groups (Smith, 1993; Scheff and Retzinger, 1991). Neurophysiological processes, in this view, bring bodily functions into the orbit of aggressivity through hard-wired anxiety.

## 3. *The body and mental rigidity*

In discussing what he calls static models of conflict, Boulding analyses conflict in terms of interests rather than passions. In this context, he defines conflict as ‘a situation of competition in which the parties are *aware* of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party *wishes*

to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other' (1962, 5). The extent to which parties are committed to gaining specific positions rather than exploring ways of satisfying their needs forms a disposition towards conflict. The ability to do otherwise—to focus on *interests* rather than *positions* (Fisher and Urry, 1981)—depends on how rigid the competing parties are in pursuing their objectives by specific means.

Here again, the repertoire of available actional responses depends on a bodily infrastructure. Many workers in the field of somatics have demonstrated that the tightness of sets of muscles is related to the inability to be open and flexible—cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally. Whereas high reactivity to threats reflects how weak and vulnerable the self is, rigidity of habits indicates how strongly defended the self is.

John Dewey's teachings about human nature considered the matter of rigid habits a central issue in human experience. It was Dewey's lessons with renowned somatic teacher F. M. Alexander, who focused attention on the proper relaxed use of the body, that he said enabled him to hold a philosophical position calmly and to change it if new evidence came up warranting a change. Dewey contrasted this disposition with that of academic thinkers who adopt a position early on and then go on to use their intellects to defend it indefinitely (Jones, 1976, 97).

#### *4. The body and moral righteousness*

Simmel early on identified the dynamic whereby conflicts become intensified the more they are separated from the personality of the parties to the conflict. His chief examples in that regard were conflicts carried out through legal procedures and conflicts on behalf of social causes. One can generalize Simmel's point by saying that conflicts become intensified whenever they become informed by normative directives. Although Simmel's cases were chosen to show how shifting the locus of conflict away from the personalities of the engaged parties works to heighten the intensity of a conflict, this may be seen just as well when applied intrapsychically. This is to say that once conflicts enlist the support of the superego, they will be driven by the same emotional energies that constitute the punitive forces of the ordinary superego. The statement by one presidential political campaigner—at first I just wanted to defeat my opponent, now I want to save the country from him—nicely illustrates the dynamic at work here. Both moral indignation

and bigoted antagonisms of the sort analysed by Bettelheim and Janowitz (1950) represent striking exemplars of this syndrome.

Moral righteousness can be said to involve an infusion of bodily energies akin to the aggressive or counter-phobic instincts that drive the initiation of conflicts. One can almost visualize the way in which aggressive impulses intensify as the adrenaline flows and the blood boils on behalf of righteous indignation. This will escalate the conflict, although not necessarily make it more lethal. The infusion of so much agitation into the conflictual process might, as well-trained warriors and martial artists know, interfere with the optimal execution of a task and the actual execution of combat.

### *5a. The body and conflict-supportive values*

The activation of conflict depends not only on those elements that dispose parties to engage in conflict: high levels of aggressive impulsivity, reactivity, rigidity, and proclivity for moral indignation. It depends just as much on factors that work to inhibit the outbreak or continuance of conflictual interaction. These are primarily of two sorts, general values regarding conflict and the operation of social controls.

Cultural values can work either to instigate conflict or to suppress it. Conflict-supportive values appear in cultures where masculine aggressivity is particularly esteemed and promoted. This appears where the symbolism of warriorhood holds an esteemed place, as in archaic Greece and ancient Rome. In the cultures of Japan and Ethiopia, the values of warriorhood were so esteemed that they came to permeate the culture as a whole (Levine, 2002). The same is true of elements of Islamic tradition that idealize violence against those perceived as infidels or legitimate objects of external jihad. Masculine aggressivity is also valorized where considerations of proper recognition of the self are paramount, most famously in Mediterranean 'honor and shame societies' (Giordano, 2005). Cultures that embrace masculine aggressivity provide socializing experiences that enhance combative bodily dispositions and abilities.

## Somatic Elements That Reduce Conflict

### *5b. The body and conflict-aversive values*

On the other hand, cultural values of harmony and peaceableness have been developed in most cultures. Where such values are dominant, as in particular institutional sectors like monasteries, or in societies reported to possess entirely pacific cultures, impulses to engage in conflict tend to be nipped in the bud if not entirely repressed.

Contemporary somatics supports the view that human bodies are actually designed to function in a loving, empowered way. Fear and anger weaken the body and therefore the whole self. Actions driven by feelings of fear and anger tend to create, escalate, and perpetuate conflict. As Paul Linden puts it, ‘Generally, disputes are carried out in a spirit of distrust, competitiveness, fear, and anger, which leads to escalation and the generation of new disputes. Conflict, as it is usually experienced, includes fear and anger. When people are afraid or angry, they lash out and try to hurt the people who make them feel afraid or angry’ (Linden, 2003). To minimize such reactions, Linden prescribes a number of bodily practices, including a relaxed tongue and a soft belly, which he associates with the normative natural state for human bodies.

These views are supported by millennia of wisdom about the body cultivated in a number of Asian traditions. This hearkens back to ancient Hindu traditions starting with the *Bhagavad Gita*, which described a state of human fulfillment brought about by a practice that calms the mind and the passions. This practice of unification—of ‘yoking,’ or *yoga*—of the body with the soul, the individual self with the universal spirit, involves a complex of methods that are physical as well as moral and mental. They include *asana*, a discipline of holding postures, designed to exercise every muscle, nerve and gland in the body, and *pranayama*, exercises in the rhythmic control of the breath. In similar ways the art of aikido, developed two millennia later in Japan, incorporates notions of unifying the entire bodily system through proper posture and of unifying the body with the mind by focusing one’s attention on the bodily center of gravity. In the words of its founder, aikido ‘is the way of unifying the mind, body, and spirit’ (Saotome, 1989, 33).

What does the image of the body conveyed by yoga and aikido imply about social conflict? When students of those disciplines stand or sit in the relaxed and centered postures cultivated in their practice, they experi-



ence calmness. From that experience they derive a conviction that there is no inherent, inexorable force driving human beings to aggress against one another. They also know that, compared to the state of calm enjoyment they experience, the act of committing aggression is unpleasant. When they sense an impulse to aggress proactively or reactively, they connect it with an immature or impure response, which can be overcome with training.

Yoga and aikido conceive the bodily harmony promoted by their teachings as a model of mature human functioning and accordingly view social conflict as a byproduct of inner discord. Yoga complements the state of inner harmony, which its physical and meditative disciplines aim at with various *yama*, or ethical disciplines, by cultivating harmony with others. Closely related to this is the principle of *abhaya*, freedom from fear: 'Violence arises out of fear, weakness, ignorance or restlessness. To curb it most what is needed is freedom from fear' (Iyengar, 1973, 32). Similar ideas were articulated by the founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba. Although Ueshiba created his discipline as a *budo*, a martial art, he came to insist that in his particular form of *budo* 'there are no enemies.' The only enemy consisted of the egoistic and aggressive strivings of the immature self, and the only victory worth pursuing was a victory over that immature self. For achieving this state, the powerful effects of a softened belly and an open heart have long been identified.

## 6. *The body and social controls*

Sociologists have analysed a variety of mechanisms of social control that work to mute or dampen conflictual processes. These include binding arbitration; voluntary mediation; cooptation of antagonists; deflecting attention to symbols of higher allegiance; and dramatizing threats that transcend the partisan interests of the conflicting parties. Such mechanisms operate at the psychological and social levels, and would seem to admit little playroom for corporeal variables. Even so, one can ask: what psychosomatic processes inform the ways in which actors respond to intervening agencies?

That question in fact opens an enormous complex of possibilities. One process has to do with the degree of openness to arbitrating or mediating parties. This is the obverse of rigidity which, we saw above, demonstrably has a somatic basis. This openness is sometimes experienced as a relaxation of the visceral organs. Another process has to do with openings with new conflict-transcending social objects like larger communities or cultural ob-

jects such as values that enjoin conciliation and harmony. In the body, these are experienced as located in what have been called a mind-heart nexus.

## Implications for General Theory

The foregoing investigation opens up new lines for work in the general theory of conflict. The paradigm of generic conflict processes offers a framework with which to assemble contributions from various, normally disconnected, research traditions. Current advances in psychoneurophysiology and comparative ethology, for example, promise to enrich our understanding of anger, anxiety, and aggression a good deal. A generic conflict paradigm also enables us to develop a much more differentiated schema for analysing the onset, dynamics, and resolution of social conflict. It adds to the repertoire of existing conceptual tools such notions as hormonal levels, rigidity, reactivity, moral indignation— notions that come from different disciplines and that carry different sets of associations and supporting evidence. With that, it provides a framework with which to begin to consider more precisely somatic elements that pertain to conflict.<sup>5</sup>

Returning to our point of departure, the material assembled above instantiates more general points that could provide a basis for revisiting the Parsonian legacy in a way that facilitates a more systematic analysis of the interfaces between the body and the other action systems of action. The conceptual link would be what I am calling the actional organism, defined, again, as ‘the subsystem of action where the organism’s input of energies and the inputs from sources of meanings meet and interpenetrate.’

In a sense, this could be taken to mean something like returning to a modified version of the old instinct theories. Those were discarded because they were taken to represent hard-wired dispositions that propelled types of conduct no matter what. Incorporating this subsystem into the framework

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<sup>5</sup>Future collaborative exploration by professionals in somatics and social psychology might well explore a hypothesis of organ specificity in this regard: the idea that even though all organismic responses are thought to involve the entire bodymind system, it may be possible to locate the physical seat of each in some part of the human body. Thus one might hypothesize that impulses of instinctual aggressivity are felt primarily in the visceral organs (‘guts’) and the shoulders; fear in the lungs and shoulders; rigidity in the throat, jaw, and neck (‘stiff-necked’); moral anger in the head and the dorsal shoulders; receptiveness to masculine aggressive values in the upper chest.

of action theory permits a clearer and more precise specification of interconnections.

Thus, within the cybernetic hierarchy, the actional organism is energized from below by the processes of the organic and inorganic systems. It energizes and receives direction, then, from the organized motives of the personality system; the organization systems of status-roles in the social system; and the organized symbolic complexes of the cultural system. Concrete action stands to be understood more completely by incorporating this set of abstractions that might now be more clearly identified and investigated.

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## CHAPTER SIX

# The Masculinity Ethic and the Spirit of Warriorhood in Ethiopian and Japanese Cultures<sup>1</sup>

In modern social science, the notion that human behavior has instinctual bases has been downplayed. Over the past century, anthropologists and sociologists have marched under the banners of Sumner's dictum that "the folkways can make anything right," Dewey's advice that there are "no separate instincts," and Benedict's formula that cultures pattern behavior.

In one area, however, some resonance to the notion that genes affect destiny has persisted: the phenomenon of human aggression. To William James's suspicion before World War I that "our ancestors have bred pugnacity into our bone and marrow, and thousands of years of peace won't breed it out of us" (James 1910, 314) Freud added his theory, in the inter-war years, that humans are animated by an inexorable stream of destructive energy fueled by a Death Instinct. The thesis of innate aggressiveness was advanced, and linked to gender, with the work of ethologists Konrad Lorenz (1966) and Nikolaas Tinbergen (1968), who analyzed the adaptive significance of aggression among human males. Revising Freudian instinct theory from such an ethological perspective, psychoanalyst John Bowlby argued that

virtually every species of animal shares its habitat with a number of potentially very dangerous predators and, to survive, needs to be equipped with behavioural systems resulting in protection. . . .

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When members of the group are threatened, the mature males, whether monkeys or men, combine to drive off the predator whilst the females and immatures retire. (Bowlby 1969)

More recently, comparative primate studies have marshaled robust evidence to show that the human genome resembles most closely that of the chimpanzee, and the latest research on chimpanzees shows an unmistakable proclivity for violence by males against males of other groups (Wrangham and Peterson 1996). In addition, genetic research has begun to zero in on the chromosome that may account for such aggressivity. For example, on chromosome #17, there is a coding region which affects the distribution of serotonin throughout the body, and the extent of that distribution in turn affects the disposition to commit violent actions (Ridley 2000, 168).

Be all that as it may, the fact remains that as with any other such genetically-based traits, cultures shape inborn dispositions variously; in the felicitous words of a dictum pronounced, I think, by P. B. Bedawar, “Instinct proposes . . . culture disposes.” Even if humans possess a genetically based behavioral system that tends toward physical aggression, cultural systems process that disposition in various ways—by glorifying it, polishing it, or suppressing it. They determine whether or not and how aggressive inclinations get molded into an ideal of what it means to be a “real man.” In many cultures, the ideal of virtuous manhood stands to impose strict control over aggressiveness, which thereby becomes subordinated to a more pacific model of what it means to be a mature human being and citizen. In the ancient Hellenic period, for example, the virtue of a man, *arête andros*, was equated with the capacity to manage one’s household and the affairs of the city well. When a man’s personal obligations conflicted with his civic obligations, it was simply a mark of manliness (*andreios*) to resist the requirements of the law (Adkins 1960, 226-32).<sup>2</sup> Within the Jewish tradition, being a real man was associated with the assumption of full moral responsibility, either in the mode of altruistic generosity symbolized by the Yiddish term *Mensch* or in the mode of manly self-control sometimes described as the mark of modern

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<sup>2</sup>Reconfigured in an aesthetic mode, this antinomian undertone to masculinity persists in present-day Crete. According to Michael Herzfeld, in *Poetics of Manhood*, the Cretan village ethos foregrounds a studied skill in playing at being a man, through deeds that strikingly speak for themselves; in any domain such performative excellence “can gain from judicious rule breaking, since this foregrounds the performer’s skill at manipulating the conventions” (Herzfeld 1985, 25).



Jewish manliness at the turn of the last century (Boyarin 1997). Closer to this mode of manly self-control, Alexis de Tocqueville described Americans as tending to esteem “all those quiet virtues which tend to regularity in the body social and which favor trade” (Tocqueville 2000, 621). Insofar as the American conception of honor includes the virtue of courage, it does not have to do with martial valor. Rather, the type of manly courage

best known and best appreciated is that which makes a man brave the fury of the ocean to reach port more quickly, and face without complaint the privations of life in the wilds and that solitude which is harder to bear than any privations, the courage which makes a man almost insensible to the loss of a fortune laboriously acquired and prompts him instantly to fresh exertions to gain another. (622)

Not surprisingly, however, Tocqueville contrasts this ethos with that of a feudal aristocracy “born of war and for war,” in which “nothing was more important to it than military courage. It was therefore natural to glorify courage above all other virtues” (618). Indeed, societies in which warriorhood figures prominently tend to feature combative excellence in their ideal of masculinity and to give it a high place in their scheme of values. This was surely the case in the Archaic Age of Greece, when the most powerful words of commendation used of a man, *agathos and arête*, signified above all military prowess and the skills that promote success and war (Adkins 1960, 31-32).

## **Martial Values in Ethiopia and Japan**

This pattern was also conspicuously evident in two of the oldest continuous national societies, Ethiopia and Japan, where, for most of the past millennium, there existed expectations of continuous readiness for martial combat. In both countries, military prowess offered a royal road to prestige and legitimacy, and the ascendance of powerful warrior-lords and their retainers lifted martial values to a dominant position. It was these two nations alone that successfully defied European imperial ambitions: Ethiopia over Italy in 1896, Japan over Russia in 1904.

In both nations, esteem for warriorhood was not just a matter of according high prestige to military men; it involved the diffusion of martial attitudes, virtues, and ambitions throughout the population. That diffusion

came about through very different routes. In Ethiopia, it took the form of promoting widely the inculcation of combative dispositions. This feature so impressed the first European scholar of Ethiopian civilization, Job Ludolphus, that he described Ethiopians as “a Warlike People and continually exercis’d in War . . . except in Winter, at what time by reason of the Inundation of the Rivers, they are forc’d to be quiet” (Ludolphus 1684, 217). It meant that every able-bodied male who was not a clergyman was assumed to be ready to engage in battle at a moment’s notice—armed, skilled, supplied, and transported, all through his own devices. It meant that boys were encouraged to be combative and that as men they were disposed to be fearless in combat. It even meant that, for most of the past millennium, the royal capital took the form of an army camp—“a vast array of tents, arranged in combat-ready formation with the Emperor’s tents in the center, flanked and guarded at the front and rear by officers of standard ranks with their entourages” (Levine 1968, 7). As a result of the prominence of warfare in Ethiopian history, military virtues have ranked among the highest in the Abyssinian value system; military titles have been among the most prestigious in their social hierarchy; military symbolism has provided a medium for important national traditions and a focus for a good deal of national sentiment; and military statuses and procedures have influenced patterns of social organization in many ways (Levine 1968, 6).

In Japan, the hegemony of martial values derived not from universal combat-readiness but from the way in which a military stratum, the *samurai*, came to set the tone of the national culture. This class emerged in the late Heian Period (10-12 C) as a group of military specialists positioned to serve the court nobility. In time they acquired power in their own right by establishing domination over agricultural land and building their own hierarchical political organizations, culminating in a semi-central regime, the shogunate, in the late 12C. The samurai political organization rested on the formation of strong emotional bonds between military masters and vassals upheld by a strict code of honor (Ikegami 1995). In the Tokugawa Period this code was elaborated into a formal code of martial ethics known as Bushido (the Way of the Warrior). The code enjoined such virtues as loyalty, politeness, diligence, frugality, and a constant sense of readiness to die. At this time, the bushi class became more segregated than ever, since membership in it was hereditary and only those within it were entitled to bear arms. On the other hand, the ethos of this class became hegemonic in the society. In contrast to China of the time, the Japanese insisted on retaining a martial spirit as part

of the mark of a gentleman (Hall 1970, 82). During the Tokugawa period, it has been said, the samurai ethic came close to being the national ethic, for even the merchant class had become “Bushido-ized” (Bellah 1957, 98).

One of the marks of the warrior ethos in both cultures was a disposition to value ascetic hardiness. This is manifest, for example, in the Ethiopian ideal of *gwäbäznet*, a symbol for masculine aggressiveness and hardiness. In consequence, Ethiopian soldiers have been noted for great endurance—they climb mountains with ease, march rapidly for distances under heavy pack with light rations, and sleep on a rock. In Japan, similar virtues were the pride of the samurai class, who prided themselves on undergoing great hardships without complaint—for example by undergoing a week of arduous training outside each year in the dead of winter (*kangeiko*).

Another mark of the warrior ethos has been a pronounced concern about honor and a sensitivity to insult that numerous observers have found in the psychological profile of both peoples. In Ethiopia, insults traditionally formed reason enough for violent retribution, and continued into the modern era as grounds for instigating legal proceedings. In Japan, a cult of honor became the subject of extensive elaboration, leading samurai to cultivate an extreme sensitivity to insult (Ikegami 1995). Countless legends idealize the person who secures revenge against someone who impugns his honor.

Finally, although Ethiopia and Japan have traditionally held esteemed the just warrior, in both cultures there existed a type of antinomian hero who carried masculine aggressivity to a high pitch. In Ethiopia this took the form of the *shifta* (from *shefete*, to rebel), a retainer who rebelled against his chief and withdrew, often hiding in the hills, to fend as an outlaw (Levine 1965, 243-4). In modern times, this word has in fact acquired the primary meaning of a bandit. Many stories depict the *shifta* in idealized terms. The first modern nation-building emperor, Tewodros II (1855-68), famously began his climb to power as a *shifta*.

The Japanese counterpart of the *shifta* was the *ronin*, a samurai who left his lord or never subordinated himself to a lord. Here, too, heroic performances by *ronin* form the stuff of legends. And in modern times, the status of outlaw strong man has been taken by the *yakuza*, the bold gangster. In a playful form of this status, Japanese young males in the 1970 and 1980s took up a semi-delinquent lifestyle called Yankee and, combined with prowess on motorcycle, formed *bosozoku* (“violent driving tribe”) gangs in major cities where their ultramascularity could be flaunted (Sato 1991).

## The Ethiopian Masculinity Ideal: Aggressivity Unbound

Although both Ethiopians and Japanese construed the ideal of masculinity in ways that provided a strong impetus to warriorhood, one can also identify characteristic differences in how these play out in Ethiopia and Japan. In presenting this analysis, I shall also comment on distinctive institutions that represent a counterbalance to male aggressivity.

In describing the Ethiopian pattern, I shall rely initially on what for most of the past millennium has been the politically and culturally dominant group, the Amhara, and the terms of their language Amharic.<sup>3</sup> The Amharic term for male, *wänd*, not only indicates gender (e.g., *wänd lijj*, “male child”), but also connotes strong emotional approval. To say of someone, *Essu wänd näw*, “He is a male,” is to state more than biological fact; it is a eulogy of virtue, analogous to the American expression, “He’s a real man.” However, unlike the American concept, *wänd-nät* does not connote manly maturity and the assumption of adult moral responsibilities. In Amharic, this notion is signified by the term for middle-aged man (*mulu säw*). The term *wänd* may refer to any age and has nothing to do with moral maturation. Nor does it connote male prowess in heterosexual affairs, for the Amhara attach no particular value to the expression of heterosexual sentiment or the enjoyment of sexuality. In fact, a puritanical attitude toward sexuality in the public realm has the effect of keeping such matters from becoming the object of spoken concern at all; for an Amhara male to boast of his heterosexual achievements would be considered shameful.

The traditional Amhara ideal of masculinity refers primarily to aggressive capacity. The Amhara male likes to boast over his ferocity, his bravery in killing an enemy or a wild beast. Amhara culture provided genres of oral literature for such impassioned boasting, employed before and after military expeditions as well as for entertainment on festive occasions. In the second place, *wänd-nät* connotes the ability to make little of physical hardship—to live for a long time in the wild, to walk all day long with no food. In short, for traditional Amhara the virtues of the male are the virtues of the soldier.

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<sup>3</sup>Strictly speaking, although the Amharic language was the national political language of Ethiopia from the thirteenth century at least, the term Amhara denoted a local geographic region, and was not extended to the vast population of Amharic speakers until the second half of the twentieth century. See Levine 2003.

The Amharic word which represents the virtues of the soldier is *gwäbäz*. *Gwäbäz* may be translated as “brave,” as “hardy,” or simply as “outstanding.” One of the goals in the socialization of boys was to teach them to be *gwäbäz*. This is done in a variety of ways. Amhara boys are early taught to defend themselves with sticks and stones against any outsider who happens to injure or insult them. Tiny boys are trained in mock battles with members of their family. Temper tantrums are regarded positively by the child’s parents as a sign that he is *gwäbäz*. The norms of violent revenge when someone has taken one’s land, harmed one’s relative, had relations with one’s wife, or spoken a grievous insult are taught to growing boys. Boys of about twelve were wont to prove their virility by scarring their arms with red-hot embers. The Amhara youth develops skill in improvising *shilläla*, the strident verse that is declaimed in order to inflame the blood of the warrior; and he commits to memory verses which glorify the *gwäbäz* warrior and the act of killing (Levine 1966, 18-19).

Warriorhood takes different forms among the two major cultural traditions in Ethiopia, the Amhara-Tigrean and the Oromo or Galla,<sup>4</sup> as we shall see below. In both cultures, however, the secular identity associated with being a male is tied closely to a man’s capacity for combat. Both Amhara-Tigrean and Oromo cultures extol courage the virtues of aggressive masculinity and martial courage in particular. In both societies, boys are trained to be fearless fighters. Men who slay dangerous animals or human enemies are lavishly honored. Special boasting chants are declaimed to shame cowards

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<sup>4</sup>Similar to the way in which “Amhara” was extended to represent a much broader population than its original local referent, the term “Oromo” has come to designate the entire population of those who speak dialects of the language called Afan Oromo, formerly known as Gallinya. Even today, a group believed to represent the purest form of traditional Oromo culture refuse to refer to themselves as Oromo, but as Boran. It has therefore been difficult to adopt a term that can be used consistently.

and incite the brave. Amhara and Oromo verses of this sort often share a close resemblance.<sup>5</sup>

This has the effect of informing warriorhood in both traditions with a spirit of enormous daring, bordering at times on foolhardiness. In the modern period, this meant that Ethiopians with arms inferior to the Italians were able to inflict a crushing defeat on that invading force at the Battle of Adwa in 1896. Their spirit was embodied in the refusal of some Ethiopian soldiers to get down in trenches; they insisted in fighting out in the open, as befits a real *wänd*. This meant that Ethiopian men were disposed to fight again in 1935 with spears and limited weapons against an Italian enemy now equipped with planes and poison gas.<sup>6</sup> It was later reflected in the extraordinary performance of the battalion of Ethiopian troops sent to Korea to fight with the United Nations forces in 1951, a performance that earned them the reputation of being perhaps the most effective military unit of the entire U.N. contingent.

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<sup>5</sup> Amhara:

Sellelew shellelew	War cries, war cries!
Mindenew shellelew	Of what use is boasting and challenging
Baddisu gorade	Unless you decorate your new sword
Demun telamesew	With his blood!

Oromo:

Sala buttan dakkutti sala	The swords edge on the [shepherd's] apron is shameful
Chirriqun durba sala	To spit on a girl is shameful
Sala lama batani	After bringing the two edges [of a spear]
Lama bachifatani	After ordering two [edges of a spear] to be brought
Dirarra diessun sala	The flight from men [enemies] is shameful

(Levine 2000, 152-3)

<sup>6</sup>It was due to their “unreasoning offensive spirit,” an Italian officer wrote in 1937, that Ethiopian troops were easy to defeat by a disciplined modern army (Perham 1948, 167).

## The Japanese Masculinity Ideal: Aggressivity Bound

Although the ideal of courage figures prominently in the Japanese ethic of masculinity, that ethic has come to depart from a notion of raw aggressivity. The Japanese have traditionally referred to those who behave with untamed violence, not as real men, but as barbarians or wild beasts. The attitude toward a man who manifests physical strength alone is just as negative as that toward an effete courtier. Rather, the fully realized masculine character—*otoko no otoko*, a “man’s man”—modifies raw, self-asserting physical prowess in a number of ways.

To be sure, the earliest professional warriors, of the 8th and 9th centuries, who may represent a distinctive ethnic group who were originally hunters, appeared extreme in their raw violence. However, by the middle ages and continuously thereafter, samurai violence was progressively domesticated, as Eiko Ikegami’s *The Taming of the Samurai* (1995) demonstrates so elegantly.

The conduct of the samurai and of those who emulate the samurai model came to exemplify a quality called *shibui*. As Lebra describes it,

The concept of *shibui* implies an outlook which is practical, devoid of frills, and unassuming, one which acts as circumstances require, simply and without fuss. In baseball, neither the spectacular homerun batter nor the brilliant infielder can really become valuable players unless they acquire this *shibui* quality. Unless the spectacular and the brilliant include in themselves this element of the *shibui*, the technique can never really be called mature. The ever-available ability to go concisely and simply to the heart of what is required . . . the pursuit of high efficiency, shorn of excessive individual technique, neither flashy nor yet dull (Lebra 1976, 20).

In addition, Lebra writes, man-like behaviors include suppression of the emotions. It is important to be free from lingering attachments, so that one does not hesitate for a second to kick one’s wife out if something is found wrong with her. Real men should also not talk too much. One of the best-known commercial catchphrases in recent years is: “*Otoko wa damatte Sapporo biru*” (“Men silently drink Sapporo beer”), uttered by Toshiro Mifune, the John Wayne of Japan” (80, 18, 78).

Beyond such qualities of personal comportment, certain cultural accomplishments formed part of the repertoire of the Japanese male ideal. Japanese

samurai were expected to show proficiency, not only in the arts of war (*bu*), but in a number of non-martial spheres that linked with the neo-Confucian notion of personal culture (*bun*). This linkage was represented by an ideal that joined them by means of a compound phrase, *bu-bun*. Proficient calligraphy was the main one. The embodiment of *bu-bun* involved practice with the pen and brush in a manner that evinced unself-conscious and fearless directness. A secondary art was the composition of highly stylized verse, most notably haiku.

As samurai culture evolved, it also came to experience the martial code in a context formed by overarching ideals of loyalty and devotion to corporate groups. This progressed from impassioned martial loyalty to the household (*ie*) of one's lord, to a sense of loyalty to the samurai status group and its code of honor, to political loyalty to the head of the state (Ikegami 1995). Such loyalty was no less important than courage in defining the ethic of the full Japanese male. Well-known stories describe Japanese retainers undergoing enormous pain and other deprivations to serve their lords, not to mention the countless episodes of *seppuku* (suicide by disembowelment). This ideal of manly courage pertained to the peasants as well as to the *samurai*. A famous tale of peasant protest concerns a 17C villager named Sakura Sogoro who, at the cost of being crucified, brazenly presented a petition from his neighbors to the *shogun* in the tip of a six-foot-long bamboo pole. The traditional text about this episode concludes, "Truly if you are a warrior, you ought to leave behind a glorious reputation because your name is written down in the records for all posterity" (Walthall 1991, 75).

The sacrifice of personal comfort on behalf of corporate goals and organization fed into the Japanese penchant for collective discipline. Before WWII at least, regimentalized patterns of collective action were instilled in Japanese schools.

In warfare, these ideals promoted distinctive patterns of conduct. The implications of these ideals for patterns of martial conduct were twofold. On the one hand, the notion of subordination of the individual promoted deeds of suicidal daring, most notably in the kamikaze pilots. On the other hand, the ideal of cultivated warriorhood, *bu-bun*, meant that combativeness was traditionally restrained by norms of exaggerated gentlemanly decorum. Even so, a turbulent self-assertiveness that constituted what Ikegami has called "honorific individualism" fueled their dispositions to serve.



## Ethiopian and Japanese Warriorhood in Social Context

Within Ethiopia, however, how the masculinity ideal played out in warfare was further determined by the context of social structure. This variable led to marked differences between the two major ethnic protagonists of modern Ethiopian history, the Amhara-Tigreans, often known as Habesha or Abyssinians, and the Oromo, formerly known as Galla.<sup>7</sup>

The Abyssinian military ethic took the form of a cult of the hero. Personal bravery—not discipline, training, honor, or self-sacrificing loyalty—was the paramount virtue in Abyssinian warfare. The *gwäbäz* warrior was rewarded by his chief, praised by the minstrel, and esteemed by the populace. His bravery was ranked according to the fearfulness of the enemy vanquished. Thus, in Menelik’s day the fanciest headdress was given to a noble who killed one of the fierce Danakil, a less fancy headdress being awarded to the killer of the tough Raya Galla. Such actions constituted the one area in which personal boasting was permitted and, in fact, institutionalized in the genre known as *fukara*.

We are indebted to Arnauld d’Abbadie for a firsthand account of the effect of this cult of the individual hero on the orientation of the Abyssinian warrior, in a passage worth citing at length:

The type of combat which [the Abyssinian] prefers over all others—because it gives him the most freedom to expand his personality—is that where, due to insufficiency of terrain or other circumstances, the chiefs can engage only a part of their forces. . . . Joyously he throws off his toga to clad himself in some military ornament. . . . He loves . . . to know, finally, that on the hills, behind their drummers who beat out the charge in place, the two rival chiefs and the two armies are following him with their eyes, and that he may at one moment or another, return to his lord and, hurling before him some trophy, tell him, at the end of his

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<sup>7</sup>In present day Ethiopia, the term Oromo has become standard for referring to all of the peoples formerly designated as Galla in the Ethiopian chronicles. Even so, some “Oromo” groups today still do not use that term for themselves. I shall use both terms loosely, depending on the context. Interaction between the Oromo and the Amhara-Tigreans from the sixteenth century on, I have argued, formed a central dynamic in the evolution of the modern Ethiopian nation-state (Levine 1974).

war chant: “There! This is what I know how to do!” (Abbadie 1868, 313)

The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike traditional Oromo, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a “career” soldier when he came of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning equipment should he leave that lord’s service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer number of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a “team”; the prevailing military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his drive to bring back a cache of booty and trophies (Levine 1965, 262-3).

This pattern contrasted with the pattern exhibited by Oromo warriors. The Oromo went to war, not as proud and self-sufficient individuals, but as members of named collectivities. Raiding and military expeditions were executed by members of the same age set, or *hariyya*. Formed by boys in their late teens by wandering from camp to camp, the age sets were deployed in organized divisions called *chibra*, which collected supplies for the campaign, elected regimental leaders, recruited scouts, and distributed booty. The *chibra* served as fighting units and followed carefully planned battlefield strategy. Where Amhara males fought as individual soldiers, expected to provide their own supplies and capture personal booty, the Oromo derived support, resources, guidance, and morale from their age-mate comrades. Oromo proverbs celebrate the efficacy of massed collective action in waging war.

Beyond that, Oromo were bound to one another deeply through a number of social classes that went through a system of grades generally lasting eight years, a system known as *gäda*. Often misconstrued as an age-class system, *gäda* was actually a system based on generational position, in which sons of whatever age entered the system precisely five grades after their fathers. Each *gäda* class took a turn at serving as the governing class of a particular Oromo society, during which it made the decisions as to when and where military expeditions should be launched as well as when ritual ceremonies should be performed. Oromo males traditionally felt strong ties not only to the general class which they joined but also to a transgenerational solidarity, the *gogessa*, consisting of the classes of their father, their son, their son's sons, and so on. The decisions of a particular ruling class thus had historic implications. The class in power felt obliged not only to avoid the chief misfortunes that befell its ancestors and to repeat its signal successes, but also to set precedents that would benefit its descendants many generations in the future (Legesse, 1973).

Oromo traditionally observed an injunction to undertake a ritual killing expedition every eight years. The *gäda* class that undertook the expedition fought not only for itself but also to live up to the reputation of its ancestral *gogessa* classes. In contrast to the repertoire of Abyssinian martial chants, which exclusively glorify the boasting man's own exploits, Oromo also possessed a distinctive genre of boasting songs known as *farsa*, which celebrate the deeds of famous ancestors. The *farsa* are sung to glorify Oromo solidary groups—clans, lineages, age sets, or *gogessa*.

One other important difference should be mentioned, the religious dimension. Although Abyssinian culture put a premium on associating masculinity with aggressive prowess, it nevertheless placed great emphasis on the curbing of aggression through religious teachings and practices. An extensive regime of fasting in Abyssinian Christianity is held to curb man's natural sinful aggressive inclinations. A substantial proportion of the populace—a 17C visitor estimated as high as one-third (Lobo 1984, 178)—have been monks and clergy, and so ineligible to take up arms. Piety in many forms stood to curb the tendency to violence. Among the Oromo, warfare itself was integrated into their religious system. A religious ritual known as *butta* entailed the execution of raiding and killing expeditions every eight years.

The structuration of masculinity and warriorhood in Japan represented a kind of middle ground between Abyssinian individualism and Oromo collectivism, and also between their respective forms of religiosity. As with

Abyssinian Christianity, Japanese Buddhists promoted an ultimate ethic of nonviolence, and supported monastic roles on its behalf. On the other hand, Buddhist temples were among the staunchest bastions of armed defense during the medieval period. Some forms of Buddhism preached the oneness of death and life, and did not regard death as a source of impurity (as did native Shinto). The samurai drew eagerly on Buddhism as a resource to steel themselves against fear of death.

Institutionally, Japanese warriorhood was centered in a complex of patron-client ties, as was the case in Abyssinia. In contrast to the Amhara pattern, however, Japanese patron-client ties were embedded in a named collectivity to which deep loyalty was expected: the household (*ie*) of a lord. This nexus enmeshed the warrior in a corporate grouping, which reinforced a disposition to self-sacrifice on its behalf. Even so, the striving for aggressive self-assertion continued to permeate the samurai outlook. The result, Ikegami notes, was “two coexisting modes of aspiration in the Japanese elite . . . competitive individuality on the one hand and orderly conformity on the other” (1995, 335).

## Historic Consequences

Differences in the ways in which the traditional cultures of Japan and Ethiopia construe the masculinity ethos in the service of warriorhood represent instructive exemplifications of how “culture disposes” what male gender-linked instincts of aggressivity propose. Beyond that, these phenomena may be seen to have had important historic consequences.

To begin with, differences in the spirit of warfare between Abyssinian and Oromo had, I have argued, important consequences for the making of the modern Ethiopian state. In the course of the Oromo expansions of the 16th and 17th centuries, their advances were rarely checked by Abyssinian troops. This remarkable fact was noted by our most valuable contemporary source, an Amhara monk named Bahrey who wrote a *History of the Galla* in the 1590s. “How is it,” Bahrey wondered, “that the Galla [Oromo] defeat us, though we are numerous and well supplied with arms?” (cited Levine 2000, 89)

In accounting for the Oromo victories, I have relied on a clue provided by a statement attributed to Bahrey’s contemporary, Emperor Särtsä Dingil, who reportedly ascribed the Oromo conquests to their firm determination

on going into battle to either conquer or die, and the routs and defeats of the Amhara to the exact opposite disposition. In explaining this difference, I have argued that although both cultures placed enormous emphasis on fearless masculine combativeness, they differed in the extent to which those motivations were activated.

The Amhara pattern of hierarchical individualism had the effect of making the motivation of individual soldiers contingent on the particular reward structure of a given campaign. Amhara troops fought for personal gain from booty and to be acknowledged and rewarded by their superiors. The presence of the king or lord on the battlefield typically made a great difference in how bravely Amhara soldiers were inclined to fight. If the relevant lord was killed, or if there was no chance of his learning about a soldier's bravery, the latter was likely to feel that there was not much point in fighting. If their lord was defeated in battle, Amhara soldiers often shifted allegiances and went over to another side. If the gains possible from any battle situation seemed too small, they felt no moral compulsion to continue the fight.

In the Oromo case, by contrast, several factors made the activation of their military ethic less contingent on the particularities of the battle situation. For one thing, killing a man was intrinsically an important accomplishment for any Oromo male who wanted to live a self-respecting life. It enhanced his chances of securing a wife or wives, and not to be married at the appropriate time was considered quite shameful. It gave him the self-esteem associated with wearing the victorious warrior's hairstyle. Beyond that, the Oromo warriors' engagement drew considerable support, we have seen, from the social structures in which it was organized. Consequently, he was inspired to contribute to the corporate success of his fighting division, and to play his part in the drama of Oromo history, as well as to appear a fully competent male in the eyes of his home community. Since he thereby had a set of motivations for battle that were continuously operative and not contingent on the circumstances of the particular battle, the Oromo warrior needed no lord to inspire and reward his particular exploits in battle.

The upshot was that the Oromo not only overran a vast territory inhabited by Amhara and other ethnies, but made their way to the center of the historic kingdom. Their accommodation with indigenous groups with which they came to mingle, and their integration to the national center by intermarriage and vassalage constituted the central dynamic of the emergence of the modern Ethiopian nation (Levine 2000). In particular, they soon came to provide troops for the Ethiopian Crown. Quick to appreciate their valor,

Särtsä Dingil, for example, deployed Oromo warriors as early as 1580 in missions to defeat rebels aligning themselves with Turks on the Red Sea Coast, and also in expeditions against the Falasha and other Oromo tribes (Conti Rossini, 1907). This pattern made it possible for Oromo troops in substantial numbers to fight alongside Amhara-Tigreans under Emperor Menilek II, who quadrupled the size of the Ethiopian empire, and led a multiethnic army to defeat the Italians in 1896.

Likewise, in Japan, the samurai ethos played a double role in creating the modern nation-state. Their ethic of shaping conduct through rigorous discipline and subordinating individuals to collective interests worked wonders when transferred to nation building under the Meiji restoration and economic transformation thereafter. The transference of absolute martial loyalty from one's immediate lord to the imperial head of the Meiji state furthered mightily the establishment of a powerful modern nation, one which at Port Arthur in 1904 became the first Asian country to defeat a European army.

With that achievement, Japan joined Ethiopia to become the only other non-European country to defeat a European army in the final era of imperial expansion. Recognizing this affinity, a number of Japanese citizens showed enormous sympathy with the Ethiopians when they were invaded in 1935, even to the extent of sending them a shipload of swords. Differences in their social structural and other cultural patterns, however, meant that the application of martial dispositions to economic life enabled the Japanese to modernize far more rapidly in both economic and political domains (Levine 2001).

Contrasts in contemporary expressions of these martial dispositions appear as well. On the one hand, mobilization of traditional warrior values on behalf of a strongly centralized modern nation-state led Japan to embark on a program of ruthless military expansion, invading Manchuria and China in the 1930s and imposing severe cruelties on the peoples of East Asia, including China, Korea, Burma, and the Philippines. By contrast, Ethiopia in the 1930s was a victim of unprovoked invasion by Fascist Italy, pursued through a war machine that rained poisoned gas upon peasants armed with spears. In the postwar era, Japan tended to abstain from international efforts to stem Communist expansion and maintain world peace, whereas Ethiopia, earlier casualty of a dysfunctional system of collective security, played a gallant role in United Nations military actions in Korea and the Congo and, through actions of both Emperor Haile Selassie and her current Prime Minister Meles

Zenawi, performed statesmanlike services in mediating major conflicts in Nigeria, Morocco, Somalia, and the Sudan.

A less conspicuous contrast, albeit one no less consequential, appears in the manifestation of this ethic in the civil political sphere. The process of taming of the samurai has continued well into the twentieth century, as traditional martial arts (*bujutsu*) became transformed into disciplines pursued purely for the cultivation of character (*budo*), and finally underwent a revolutionary charismatic transformation into a practice known as aikido, designated by its founder as a way to promote peace and world harmony (Saotome 1989, Beaulieu 2005).

The civilian manifestation of this ethic presents a far-reaching expression of civil discourse in the political arena, albeit one that offers less room for the individualistic assertiveness that could be displayed even in the samurai universe. The lack of a comparable taming process in Ethiopia has meant that throughout the twentieth century, the assertive martial habitus never disappeared from the governance system. Like all of his predecessors of the past two centuries, the current Prime Minister has had to shoot his way into power, and has publicly boasted of the significance of his guerrilla days in the bush as the schooling of choice for his political career and vocation.<sup>8</sup> Once the taming of her traditional warrior ethic gets under way, Ethiopia may well experience a surge of new productivity and cultural achievement.

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<sup>8</sup>In an interview in a Tigrinya-language Eritrean quarterly, the Prime Minister expressed his conviction that "To me quality of life means to be part of an armed struggle . . . I don't think that there is a better life than the life of a combatant. If I were not a combatant I don't think I would have been a happy person." (Hwyet 11, May 1997)

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

# The Aiki Way to Therapeutic and Creative Human Interaction<sup>1</sup>

*Aiki Waza Michi Shirube*, “Aiki Training is a Signpost to the Way,” serves as a motto for the organization co-sponsoring this felicitous event. The saying is ascribed to the Founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba O’Sensei. If *Michi*, the Way, is to be understood as the goal of our practice then might we not do well to think about its inner meaning? I think the classical saying that “the Tao that is told is not the essential Tao” advises us not to avoid talking about the Way, but only not to assume that whatever words we use possess absolute validity.

Conceptual understandings about the martial arts lag behind what we do in practice. In spite of the historic shift from viewing martial arts training from forms of *jutsu* to approaches to *do*—from techniques of accomplishing something to ways of being (Levine 1991)—available concepts fail to do justice to what we know from the experience of training and teaching *budo*.<sup>2</sup> We know, for example, that we do not practice aikido as separate individuals but almost always in connection with others. And yet, when we think about the essence of the aiki experience we typically do so with an eye to the improvement of personal character through becoming more accomplished *nages*. Although that perspective is of course valid, exclusive reliance on an individual-centered perspective overlooks the special properties of the *interactions* involved in this joint practice.

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<sup>1</sup>Presented at the conference “Living Aikido: Bewegungs- und Lebenskunst,” AIKI-Institut für Gesundheitsförderung und Selbstentwicklung, Schweinfurt, Germany, May 19, 2007.

<sup>2</sup>See Shibata 2004 on problems associated with the term *nage*.

If that is so, we might take a moment to consider the uke-nage transaction as an instance and a metaphor for interhuman relations generally. To examine that transaction fully requires shifting from perspectives centered on individuals to an interactional perspective—to viewing aiki transactions as processes of mutual communication rather than as something that one person does to another.

An interactional model of the aiki transaction can take different forms. I propose to sketch two of them. For one thing, aiki transactions offer a paradigm of therapeutic relationships of all kinds. In this paradigm, uke is seen as sick, as a patient. In developing this interpretation I draw in particular on the insights and models of Talcott Parsons regarding the “doctor—patient” relationship. In a different vein, I conceive uke rather as example of the role of a dynamic creator. Pursuing this notion will take us toward a paradigm that seeks to combine elements from Lao-Tse, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Martin Buber.

My remarks, then, fall into three sections: 1) shifting from focus on single individuals to discourse about social interaction; 2) interpreting aiki transactions as parallel to patient-doctor relationships; and 3) viewing aiki work as modeling the interactions between creators and receptors generally.

## **Paradigm Shift: From Individuals as Such to the Interaction of Parties**

To ground my advocacy of a shift from an individual-centered to an interactional perspective on aikido I need to call on a different sort of *waza*, the history of social theory. This history directs us to observe, first off, that the greatest part of human thought assumes that the proper subject of philosophical, spiritual, and scientific investigations about humans should be the concrete individual. That assumption appears in three major venues.

1. We find, in all cultures, a program of human improvement directed to the individual person taken as a moral agent. In this perspective we find, for example, doctrines that regard the person as an entity to be shaped by right discipline; or ennobled by purifying practices; or edified by proper enlightenment; and the like.
2. In Western moral philosophy, we find a tradition of thought, originating with Thomas Hobbes, that bases its analyses of social phenomena on

a concept of the individual as an organism moved by desires, pursuing utilities, and guided by interests. Sometimes referred to as ‘utilitarianism,’ this perspective has gained renewed currency with the ascendance of “economism” in the past few decades.<sup>3</sup>

3. Third, we find a view of the human individual that derives from philosophers like Rousseau, Goethe, Emerson, and Nietzsche—the individual as a subject whose nature is to be expressed, whose personal growth is to be cultivated, and whose creative urges are to be satisfied. This view is sometimes formulated as an effort to promote the cultivation of individuality, a form of modern individualism that has been contrasted with the libertarian individualism championed by thinkers of the Enlightenment (Simmel [n.d.] 1957).

In reaction to these formulations centered in individuals voiced above all by thinkers of the British and German traditions, a number of French thinkers counterposed the notion of ‘society’ as a phenomenon whose natural properties and moral value could not be reduced to those of individual actors. Foremost among these were thinkers such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, Comte, and Durkheim. These thinkers of the French tradition espoused what has been referred to as a notion of “societal essentialism” (Levine 1995). (Modern debates between proponents of societal essentialism and those of what has been called “atomic naturalism” recapitulated older metaphysical debates between nominalists and realists.)

This opposition between the individual and society dominated nearly all of Western social thought. There have, however, been two striking exceptions, which emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century. In Germany, philosopher Georg Simmel interposed between those polar terms the notion of “interaction,” a domain that had properties, he insisted, that were distinctive and *sui generis*. In the United States, John Dewey and G.H. Mead collapsed the distinction in favor of a notion of socially constituted and societally constituting selves. For Mead, the crucial ingredient of this process was the acquisition and use of language. Both the ability to participate in social interaction and to construct a self-conception, Mead argued, depended crucially on the ability to grasp and internalize the meaning of external objects as symbols. This central process suggests a formulation that works

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<sup>3</sup>Ciepley 2006 offers a searching account of social and ideological forces behind the resurgence of economic worldviews in the United States over the past half-century.

better in German than in English: the birth of dialogue (*Gespräch*) out of the spirit of language (*Sprache*).

Reaching back to Mead's seminal work, Jürgen Habermas retrieved the notion of a form of rationality that he called *dialogical*, which he contrasted with the monological rationality that had formed the subject of philosophic discourse previously (Habermas 1984). Well before Habermas, however, the notion of dialogue had been thematized and made central by Martin Buber, whom I regard as one of the philosophers most closely attuned to the Aiki Way. Buber's intellectual development traverses the shift in paradigms of which I have been speaking. He began as a devotee of Nietzsche, from whom he acquired the ideal of intense transcendent experience. Buber became, as his biographer Paul Mendes-Flohr aptly put it, an "*Erlebnis*-mystic." At the University of Berlin he joined the Neue Gemeinschaft, a fraternity dedicated to pursuing the "Dionysian worldview" which Nietzsche celebrated.

At the same time, Buber's studies with Simmel at the University of Berlin planted seeds for a transition away from an exclusive focus on the individual self. Simmel's insistence that psychologistic explanations of interaction are inadequate converted Buber to a perspective in which the interhuman (*das Zwischenmenschliche*) figures centrally. The first step of this transition appears in Buber's introduction to Simmel's essay *Die Religion* (1906) published in *Die Gesellschaft*, a series which Buber edited. In this introduction, Buber endorses Simmel's view of the discipline of sociology, employing Simmelian terms like *Formen der Beziehung*, *Wechselwirkung*, *Vergesellschaftung* (forms of relation, interaction, association), and affirming Simmel's ontological point:

*Das Zwischenmenschliche* is that which occurs between (zwischen) men; in *some ways it is not unlike an impersonal, objective process*. The individual may very well experience *das Zwischenmenschliche* as his 'action and passion,' but somehow it cannot be fully ascribed or reduced to individual experience. For *das Zwischenmenschliche* can only be properly comprehended and analyzed as the synthesis of the 'action and passion' of two or more men. (cited Mendes-Flohr 1989, 38-9).

For Simmel, the concept of *forms of association* served to carve out a distinctive domain for the new academic discipline of sociology. Reproducing Simmel's argument in 1906, Buber affirms: "Sociology is the science of

the forms of *das Zwischenmenschliche* . . . [forms such as] super- and subordination, cooperation and noncooperation, groupings, social rank, class, organizations and all types of economic and cultural associations, both natural and normative” (39).

In spite of this new ontological vision, this awareness of the interaction domain *sui generis*, Buber did not endow social interaction processes with any particular moral or spiritual qualities. He continued to locate transcendence in the sphere of *Erlebnis*, of personal life experienced with the utmost intensity and integrity. Indeed, it was his enthusiastic engagement in the War spirit that brought to Buber, as to so many other German intellectuals of the time, an unprecedented intensity of transcending experience.

What turned Buber away from his War enthusiasm in particular and his idealization of intense personal experience more generally was a traumatic exchange with his close friend Gustav Landauer in May 1916 (in his new family home at Heppenheim, not so far from Schweinfurt). Landauer was one of the few German intellectuals who opposed the War strenuously. After his visit with Buber, Landauer wrote a letter in which he excoriated Buber for the moral lapse of indulging in militaristic sentiments. Mendes-Flohr argues that Landauer’s critical letter occasioned a *volte-face* in Buber and writes: “In Buber’s writings subsequent to the spring of 1916, we notice three new elements: an explicit opposition to the war and chauvinistic nationalism; a reevaluation of the function and meaning of *Erlebnis*; and a shift in the axis of *Gemeinschaft* from consciousness (i.e., from subjective-cosmic *Erlebnis*) to the realm of interpersonal relations” (102).

From that time on, Buber expanded his conception of interpersonal relations in ways that connected it with the wish for transcendence. He came to sacralize what Simmel’s lectures had identified simply as a sociological form.<sup>4</sup> He came to find in the relation between “I” and “Thou” an instantiation of ultimate values. In 1914, according to Mendes-Flohr:

Buber, the *Erlebnis*-mystic, spoke of religiosity as a tendency in man that seeks to actuate God’s realization; by securing the creative integrity of one’s personality one acts to renew the cosmic harmony. In 1919, Buber defined religiosity as the human disposition that affects the realization of God through the establishment

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<sup>4</sup>In the *Die Religion* essay, however, Simmel points the way to Buber’s sacralized dialogue by tracing in certain types and moments of interhuman experience the seeds for what becomes objectified as religion.

of authentic relations: “Whenever one man joins hands with another, we feel [God’s] presence dawning (*aufkeimen*)” (115).

In sum, Buber had come to find in *das Zwischenmenschliche* the venue for self-transcendence that he had previously sought in Nietzsche’s appeal for a peak experience. In this, he later recalled, he was harking back to Ludwig Feuerbach. For Feuerbach, he noted, man

does not mean man as an individual, but man with man—the connexion of *I* and *Thou*. “The individual man for himself,” runs his manifesto, “does not have man’s being in himself, either as a moral being or a thinking being. Man’s being is contained only in community, in the unity of man with man—a unity, however, which depends only on the reality of the difference between I and Thou” (Buber [1938] 1965, 147-8).<sup>5</sup>

Buber’s journey thereby brought him to a point of fusing the interactionist model of Simmelian sociology with the self-transcending ecstasies projected

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<sup>5</sup>Buber took this quote from Feuerbach’s *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (*Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft*). This was published in 1843, two years after his most famous publication, *The Essence of Christianity*. The earlier work provided fodder for Marx’s famous attack in Thesis VI, where he excoriates Feuerbach by asserting:

Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations. Feuerbach, who does not enter upon a criticism of this real essence is consequently compelled to abstract from the historical process and to fix the religious sentiment as something by itself and to presuppose an abstract—*isolated*—human individual. . . . (Tucker ed. 1972, 145).

It is ironic to compare Marx’s words of 1845 to those of Feuerbach in 1843 just cited. The original Feuerbachian text cited by Buber follows.

Der einzelne Mensch für sich hat das Wesen des Menschen nicht in sich, weder in sich als moralischem, noch in sich als denkendem Wesen. Das Wesen des Menschen ist nur in der Gemeinschaft, in der Einheit des Menschen enthalten—eine Einheit, die sich aber nur auf die Realität des Unterscheid von Ich und Du stützt. . . . Selbst der Denkkakt kann nur aus dieser Einheit begriffen und abgeleitet werden. (Feuerbach [1843] 1903, 318)

In retrieving these words, Buber goes on to observe: “Feuerbach did not elaborate these words in his later writings” (Buber 1965, 148).



by Nietzsche. The way to such heights was to be obtained by a concentrated, open, and genuine kind of communication between two subjects. *Buber's notion of genuine dialogue between two committed subjects offers precisely the kind of model of open communication that we strive to attain in the practice of aikido.*

The possibilities of such interhuman encounters are endless, just as possibilities of uke-nage communication are endless. I turn now to examine two sets of possibilities that are manifest in aiki interactions, forms resonant with our experiences in everyday life. One of those possibilities gets evoked when the person who initiates the interaction presents himself or is perceived to be sick.

## **Uke as a Patient, Nage as Healer: Aiki Interactions as Therapeutic Work**

I attempt now to delineate what I consider rather precise parallels between the therapeutic transaction and the aiki transaction. This effort draws inspiration from three sources. First off, I was struck by how many of those who were initially drawn to the work of Aiki Extensions were themselves psychotherapists or bodyworkers with therapeutic consequence. A number of practitioners claimed to be securing therapeutic results by using aikido techniques or at least aikido-inspired ideas. Indeed, some of them reported accomplishing more by doing aikido with their patients than through any standard therapeutic techniques in which they had been trained.

Within the non-aikido community of therapists, moreover, I took note of the growing import of those who construe the psychotherapeutic situation in terms of interpersonal process. An earlier proponent of this approach, Jacob Moreno, inventor of sociometry and psychodrama, had in fact acknowledged an explicit indebtedness to Georg Simmel. A number of psychologists were inspired by the pioneering work of Harry Stack Sullivan who defined the therapeutic experience as essentially constituted by interpersonal relationships.

In pursuing these leads I was struck, as I explored the subject further, by parallels between the founders of these two practices, Sigmund Freud and Morihei Ueshiba. Figure 1 schematizes a few of these parallels. Both men successfully completed rigorous training in conventional disciplines in young adulthood and then, in their early 40s, had breakthroughs associated with intense emotional experiences that led them to found new disciplines and

Figure 7.1: Parallels between Psychoanalysis and Aikido

<b>Charismatic Founder</b>	Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)	Morihei Ueshiba (1883–1969)
<b>Cultural Context</b>	biologism	martialism
<b>Disciple</b>	head of school head of ryu	director of institute leader of organization
<b>Local Head</b>	supervisor	sensei
<b>Role of Teacher</b>	analyst	sempai/nage
<b>Role of Student</b>	patient, client	kohai/uke
<b>Secessionists</b>	Jung Adler	Tomiki, Tohei

to renounce early martial ambition fantasies (Levine 1984). They were also charismatic figures whose new disciplines—and prophetic postures—inspired international movements which they headed. Moreover, Freud and Ueshiba continued to evolve beyond their mature breakthroughs, remaining active and productive well into their eighties. Both had disciples who trained with them along the way and then went on to transmit the teachings of that phase as *the* orthodox teaching, and they were survived by a number of disciplines whose competitive strivings introduced dissent in what they each hoped would survive them as unitary movements (Beaulieu 2005).

Parallels in their substantive teachings are no less striking. Freud and Ueshiba both propounded an ethic based on nature and respect for the natural propensities of humans rather than on some transcendental conception. Conceptions of natural energetic forces grounded their teachings. Jonathan Lear’s words about psychoanalysis apply to aikido: “Psychoanalysis works both against a devaluation of empirical life and for a reintegration into the flow of life of patients who have been thrown off their middle” (Lear 2000). Both Freud and Ueshiba identified the sources of human aggression and martial combat in the psychic disposition of humans rather than in culture and social structure. Both illuminated ways in which inner discord gives rise to external discord. Both devised training programs to alleviate inner discord, programs that focused on a slow process of becoming more integrated (inner harmony) as a way to promote external harmony as well as personal freedom.

Above all, I suggest, both of them invented practices whose meaning they did not fully comprehend, practices which evolved nontrivially through efforts

of later practitioners. Others have wondered about this: psychoanalytic theorist Edgar Levenson confessed that “analysts of all persuasions continue to treat all of their patients with a considerable degree of success . . . and yet are hard put to know exactly how to talk about what it is they do when they do what they know how to do. This ineffable competence can be defined as the *praxis* of psychoanalysis” (Levenson 1983, 6); and one of Ueshiba’s students, Anno Sensei, wondered if what the Master created had not evolved beyond *budo*, or martial arts, altogether (Anno 1999).

Levenson himself attempt to identify the obscure secret of good therapeutic praxis. He describes it as a “deep structure of cognition . . . [whose] efficacy, no different from that of other forms of propagandizing influence, depends on its resonance to deep structures of thought” (89). In contrast, I want to suggest that there is *an unconscious structure built into the interactional structure of the therapist-client relationship*, one that is cognate with what Talcott Parsons identified half a century ago as the unconscious structure built into the doctor-patient and many other kinds of socially reintegrative relationships. I believe that both Freud and Ueshiba, through their intuitive genius, created structures whose true significance has only begun to be visible through generations of work since their mature formulations.

During the 1950s, Talcott Parsons came to theorize in different ways the logic of what he termed double-interchange paradigms. The template for this schema came from the depiction of interactional flows of the economic system. Figure 2 shows the familiar schema of this flow in economic exchange, where one party offers labor or its equivalent for goods or their equivalent.

For Parsons, this schema of double interchange offered a template for exchanges among subsystems of action at all levels. He did so unaware that Simmel himself had posited the advantage of doing this when he suggested that “most relationships among men can be considered under the category of exchange” ([1907] 1971, 43).

Prior to presenting this general model of systemic interchanges, Parsons had offered a cognate schema of interchanges in his analysis of the system of medical practice in *The Social System* (1951). In that work and related writings of the period, Parsons analyzed the virtually subliminal structuring of responses of doctors and patients. He did so along lines he would employ later when discussing comparable dynamics in the socialization of children. The net effect of all this was to highlight the unwitting structuring of processes by which the motivations of persons with needs for social integration could be mediated by occupants of roles with resources suited for that task.

Figure 7.2: Double Interchange in the Economy

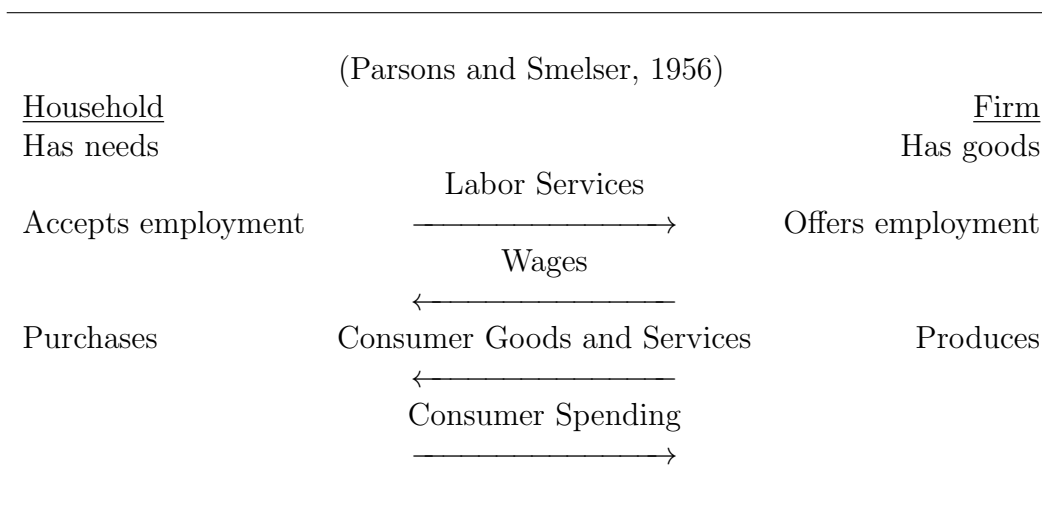


Figure 7.3: Double Interchange in the Medical System

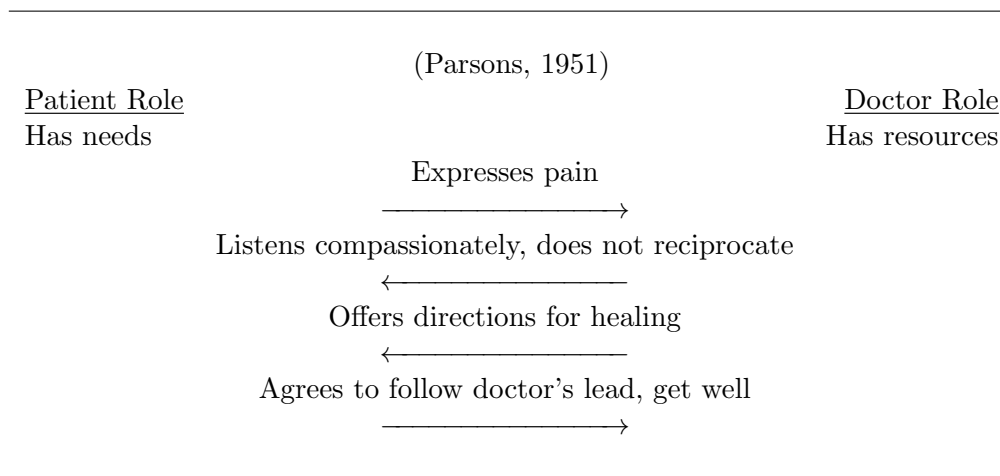
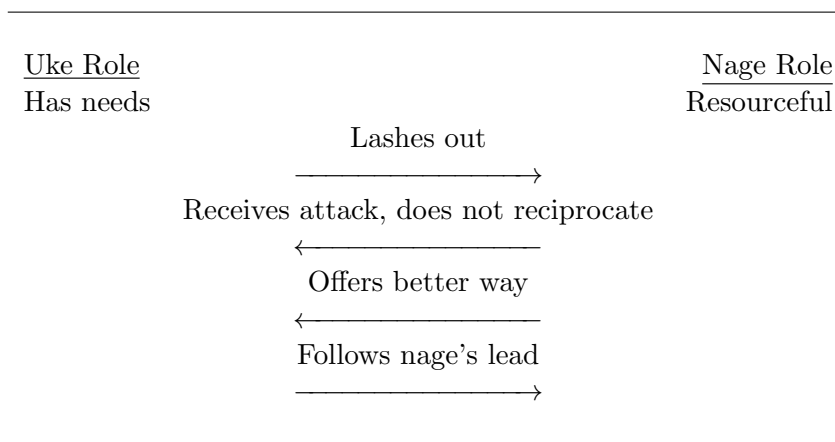


Figure 7.4: Double Interchange in the Aikido System



With just a little reflection, one can see how closely the elements of the paradigm of medical practice resemble the elements of the uke-nage interaction system. Figure 4 brings out the main aspects of these parallels.

What this represents is that the script for uke, like that of the patient, is to express his feelings openly. In aiki practice, this is manifest in the advice to “attack sincerely.” That is the “basic rule” of the psychoanalytic interview, just as it is a basic rule of aiki practice. In response, the task of the therapist/nage is to accept that expression, without getting upset, letting himself be hurt, or reciprocating. The therapist/nage then moves to resolve the situation by guiding the client/uke in a tonic direction. In response to that, the client/uke takes responsibility for changing his patterns by moving in that new tonic direction. This basic schema has been refined in many ways by experienced therapists just as experienced senseis have a repertoire of increasingly subtle ideas.

Before discussing them, let us step back a moment and note that in order to adapt all of these double interchange paradigms to real situations, one thing more must be added: a starting point or a presenting situation. For the therapeutic situation, two conditions have been identified. One is the setting of the therapeutic interview. It must be defined by ritually demarcated boundaries in time and space, a condition that affords a safe and secure therapeutic “playground” for the client, as Freud himself called it. In aikido, the “playground” in which the uke and nage carry on is similarly constituted,

through the ceremonial marking of boundaries in time (bowing in and bowing out of class) and space (bowing on and bowing off the mat).

The other condition concerns the state of being of the therapist, who is expected to embody a higher degree of integration and whose mind is to be marked by “evenly hovering attention.” Similarly, the nage in aikido is expected to strive for a state of being “centered” and to maintain a mental attitude marked by “soft vision.” In that frame of mind, both therapist and nage can actually initiate the interaction with a “leading” move. The therapist can “lead” the client to open up with a remark such as “you seem upset today” or simply “how are you feeling?” The alert nage can sense a coming attack and extend an arm to draw out the imminent energy that uke itches to deliver.

Once the interaction proper begins, a number of subtle responses are likely to be involved. It is hard to imagine the sense of freedom, self-acceptance, self-confidence, and growth that may come in the wake of uke’s feeling free to express anything she wishes, or uke’s freedom to attack with full sincerity. There is also an added boost for the client/uke on those rare occasions when they get through to one of the therapist/nage’s vulnerable spots. In addition, that the client can be listened to compassionately, that the uke’s attack can be graciously received, comprise elements of anticipatory gratification and of actual relief and self-enhancement that may do much to restore confidence in the possibility of genuine I-Thou connecting. It can also be a matter of satisfaction and growth for the therapist and the nage to realize that they in fact possess the capacity not to reciprocate their antagonist’s deviant bid and that they have the power to refrain from treating him the way that everyone else normally does.

That much accomplished, it remains for therapist/nage to resolve what was potentially a difficult problem in a tonic manner. The challenge to them is to avoid making responses that are either exploitative or that involve an improper degree of familiarity. That done in turn, it remains for client/uke to follow their lead in a positive manner, albeit remaining on the lookout for openings and weaknesses in the therapist/nage to make use of as they see fit. It is not productive if they simply wimp along when therapist/nage manifests weaknesses of leadership and shows openings. If client/uke should resist this lead, however, therapist/nage will be challenged not to oppose their resistance but to blend with those any resistance and to soften them.

Each transaction takes place in a broader context of ongoing interactions. It behooves the therapist/nage to restore attention to the larger context,

Figure 7.5: New Uke Paradigm

<b>Handeln</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Manner</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Breathing</b>
1. Sein	Being	Centered and open	Expecting nothing, ready for anything	Continuous deep breathing
2. Schöpfen	Initiating	Energetically	Uke 1	Exhale 1
3. Engagieren	Engaging	Harmoniously	Nage 1	Inhale
4. Lösen	Resolving	Appropriately	Nage 2	Exhale
5. Anpassen	Adapting	Creatively	Uke 2	Exhale 2
6u. Zuruckprallen	Rebounding	Easily	Uke 3	Inhale-exhale
6n. Beherrschen	Controlling	Zanshin	Nage 3	Inhale-exhale

to mark the boundaries of successive engagements, and to set the terms of continuous work. It is up to the client/uke to integrate what has been learned from each transaction and to get ready for proceeding to the next step.

### **Uke as Dynamic Creator, Nage as Creative Receptor: A Six-Stage Paradigm Drawing on Lao Tse, Nietzsche, and Buber**

Instead of viewing uke as a patient, as a pathological actor in need of healing, suppose we reframe the role of uke in a more positive manner. Suppose we carry out the reframing process radically—that we view uke’s ostensible aggression as an expression of energy that is to be welcomed for the good it can bring. Such a shift can lead to a reframing of the entire aiki transaction that might unleash a great deal of human potential. The paradigm that I visualize for this interpretation has six components, as in Figure 5.

This paradigm stays closer to the aikido experience as we know and seek to cultivate it. The paradigm amounts to little more than an effort to take the basic moves that we practice and to extend them directly into everyday responses. It stands at one and the same time as a guide to training and as a guide to life generally.

It commits us, to begin with, to find the center of our being in ways that keep us open to the worlds within us and around us.

It reminds us that, since we are prone perpetually to lose our center, to study more effective ways to regaining center.

It encourages us to align with the yang energy entailed in every creative process, albeit in a way that flavors that extension with the yin of subtlety and control.

It alerts us to be receptors of creative inputs, treating them neither as threats, nor as annoyances, nor as demons.

It bids us offer honest and insightful responses to creative initiatives, such that any destructive or misleading elements they may contain can be redirected into more benign channels.

It coaches us to be flexible and to learn from obstacles or things that do not work, viewing them not as “mistakes” but as a normal part of the creative process.

It tells us to regain our balance after every exchange, returning to a state of readiness to learn, to create, to enjoy, and to be.

## Conclusion

The aiki schemas of uke as patient/nage as therapist and uke as creator/nage as receptor are two among many. I invite you on your own to extend this mode of analysis to other forms in which you may be engaged: parent-child, husband-wife; leader-followers; mediator-client; enemy combatants; whatever. I suggest that it is valuable for us to execute comparisons of this sort with a double aim in mind: to show how aikido practice can deepen our capacities for such experiences off the mat, and no less to suggest how awareness of those applications can enrich our training experiences on the mat.

In setting forth these ideas I hope to have responded to the question with which I began: what can we say about the nature of the Aiki Way, which we try to pursue?

Insofar as we are patients—and we are all patients—it disposes us to reach out when we are in need, to ask for help, and to do so in a sincere and direct manner; and then to respond respectfully and in good faith, yet not blindly, to solutions to our problems offered by those who listen to us.

Insofar as we are healers—and we are all healers—it inclines us to listen with compassion to requests for help without giving in to illegitimate responses that may be proffered, to learn how to make contact with another



while staying attuned to the center of our being, and to develop resources that can be useful in resolving issues that others present from time to time.

Insofar as we are creators—and we are all creators—it inspires us to express our deepest feelings with courage, honor, and awareness, and to regard obstacles along the way as important components of the entire creative process. “In the hands of a master,” one of my music teachers once observed, “the limitations of a medium become its virtues.”

Insofar as we are receptors—and we are all receptors—we learn to savor the various responses of our partners in ways that show we take them seriously but will not be taken in by gestures that seem misleading or harmful to themselves or us or anyone else.

The Way of Dialogue, which Martin Buber elucidates on from his devotion to the inspirations of Nietzsche and the profound teachings of Lao Tse, can be enhanced through the somatic practices fashioned by Morihei Ueshiba O’Sensei. I find this point restated with exemplary economy by one of the newer members of Aiki Extensions, David Rubens of London, who wrote in a personal communication: “One of the blessings of aikido, at least as I have found it in my life and as you have shown in your work with Aiki Extensions, is that it creates a completely effective short-cut to creating connections between people.” If *aiki waza* is indeed a *michi shirube*, that is not such a bad *michi* to be heading toward.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

# Extending the Way: Aikido for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

“I did not invent aikido, I discovered it.” So, we believe, said the Teacher who founded aikido, Morihei Ueshiba. He thought he had discovered a system of practices that was in deep accord with the fundamental energy processes of the universe—an aspect of his thought expounded by one of his most intimate, late deshis, Shihan Mitsugi Saotome in the brilliant book, *Aikido and the Harmony of Nature* (1986).

O’Sensei’s sense that aikido is a form to be *discovered* lends poignancy to the fact that his own understanding and practice of aikido continued to evolve throughout his life. It began as *aikibujitsu*, his own polished version of the system of martial techniques developed since medieval times and transmitted through his own mentor Sokaku Takeda Sensei. It continued through his conversion of that system to *aikibudo*, which he taught in the 1930s: a system of training in powerful techniques for vanquishing opponents but whose practice was geared to ennobling the character of the practitioner. His teaching of this system continued through 1941, the year that Japan’s war against the United States began. It was in that year, writes Gozo Shioda in *Aikido Shugyo* (1991), that O’Sensei turned toward a more spiritual path of development. Shioda Sensei notes that he did not follow O’Sensei’s teachings further at that point, and that therefore, with perhaps some hyperbole, he claimed to be the last of O’Sensei’s students to be trained as a martial artist: “The concept of Aikido as a martial skill has ended with me” (204).

During the years of inner exile at Iwama, Ueshiba’s system, which in 1941 he named aikido, continued to evolve. Its movements came to be inspired increasingly by the principle of attunement between partners. According to recollections of Saotome Sensei, Ueshiba’s emphasis on interhuman harmony increased enormously due to two events that occurred in 1945, the

atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the reports from Japanese acquaintances who had been present at the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. Ueshiba became determined to develop a teaching whose emphasis was altogether contrasted with that of defeating an enemy—“in my aikido there are no enemies,” he maintained.

This change was experienced by Hikiutchi sensei when they reunited for the first time after the war in 1948, as he recounts in the video, “The Birth of Aikido.” “Help me establish a wholly new approach to budo,” O’Sensei pleaded to Hikiutchi at an emotional meeting, “we must expound and promote a budo that is dedicated to the creation of peace.” As Motomichi Anno Sensei, Hikiutchi’s main deshi and successor at Shingu, recalled in an interview in 1999: “According to O’Sensei, *bu* is no longer a matter of fighting; *budo* exists for the purpose of developing good relations among all people. . . . As I listened to O’Sensei’s teaching, it seemed that Aikido was something unprecedented, that O’Sensei had newly created out of his training in various classical Japanese martial arts [and] that Aikido has evolved beyond *budo*.” And Anno Sensei took the next logical step, affirming that the state of being that O’Sensei sought to cultivate through aikido could be achieved by devoted practice of a number of arts, including calligraphy, flower arranging, tea ceremony, and music. A pithy dictum of O’Sensei’s makes this point: “*Aiki waza michi shirube*, Aikido training is but a signpost to the Way.”

Many of those who went on to teach aikido continued to teach it as a set of techniques for vanquishing the other, despite the account of aikido as a spiritual path set forth so eloquently in *The Spirit of Aikido* (1984), by Ueshiba’s son Kisshomaru Ueshiba, the late Doshu. Nevertheless, three of his deshis, in particular, began to explore pointedly the implications of seeing aikido essentially as a Way, designed to promote harmony in the world.

One of these was Koichi Tohei sensei, O’Sensei’s preeminent student after World War II. Tohei’s earlier studies with yoga teacher Tempu Nakamura, founder of a practice called Shin Shin Toitsu Do (Way of Mind and Body Coordination), equipped him to enrich aikido pedagogy with practices directly aimed at calming the mind and enhancing the flow of ki. While still the principal instructor at the Hombu dojo he set forth teachings on how to extend these practices beyond the mat in a book first printed in English in 1966, *Aikido in Daily Life*. The organization Tohei later founded to promote these teachings directly, the Ki Society, took as its central motto: “Let us have a universal spirit that loves and protects all creation and helps all things grow and develop.”

Tohei Sensei was the first person to introduce the teaching of aikido into the United States, where his influence was profound and extensive, such that the American reception of aikido proved from the outset resonant with the notion that aikido had some palpable connection with daily life. Other sources of ideas for extending aikido's teaching into daily life came from two talented Americans who studied with O'Sensei in the 1960s, Terry Dobson and Robert Nadeau.

The only American to be an *uchi deshi* student with the Founder, Terry Dobson told his junior colleague James Lee that "O'Sensei's mission for him was to spread Aikido around the world and show people how it could be used to create peace in the world." Accordingly, he developed a range of materials for workshops on conflict management and personal growth. Dobson's first effort, *Giving In to Get Your Way*, co-authored with Victor Miller, was published in 1978, and posthumously in 1993, with a new title: *Aikido in Everyday Life*. The book encouraged people to engage in conflict and to respond to life's inexorable conflicts in ways that avoid fighting back, withdrawal, inaction, and deception in favor of confluent engagement. He continued to grapple with these issues, and prior to his untimely death had worked out the outline of a sequel, to be titled *Soft Power: The Resolution of Interpersonal Conflict*. The book would have included centering exercises devised by Koichi Tohei and supplemented by several of Terry's own invention. He envisioned it as a unification of aikido "with the academic discipline of interpersonal communication," wherein the verbal counterparts of aikido responses were realized through a number of "verbal forms." Retrieved by James Lee, these verbal forms are explained in detail and examples given in *Restoring Harmony: A Guide for Managing Conflict in Schools* (Lee, Pulvino, and Perrone, 1998).

The other principal conduit for O'Sensei's idea of aikido as a vehicle for spiritual energy was Bob Nadeau. Nadeau's teachings ignited an enormous amount of creativity in the extension of aiki ways off the mat. At least five of his students went on to inspire countless others with fresh manifestations of extension work: George Leonard, who developed a systematic form of energy training he calls LET (Leonard Energy Training); Paul Linden, who created a healing modality known as Being in Movement®; Richard Moon, who focused on powers of empathy through his Listening Institute; Wendy Palmer, who created Conscious Embodiment, a system of practices designed to enhance inner awareness; and Richard Strozzi-Heckler, who fused somatic training with psychotherapy and then forged a somatically grounded

approach to leadership training. All five epigones published considerably. In particular, one might mention Strozzi-Heckler's influential anthology, *Aikido and the New Warrior* (1985), which assembled writings by aikidoka who applied the practice in various domains, including family therapy, sports, and playing with animals. A later book, *In Search of the Warrior Spirit* (1990), documents his efforts to engage professional soldiers in aikido ways, and *The Leadership Dojo* (2007) bases management strength on integral body awareness.

Aware of these disparate efforts, and of other practitioners who on their own had attempted to use aikido movements and ideas in areas outside of conventional dojo settings, I thought it might be of value to organize a little network to create and enhance communication among them. During a semester teaching in Berkeley in the spring of 1998, I discussed the idea with longtime sempais Wendy Palmer and Philip Emminger. Later that year I clapped, expecting that at least a dozen or two would clap back. They did. In October 1999, after frustrating legal delays and the like, we incorporated formally in the State of Delaware as Aiki Extensions, Inc. An initial founding membership consisted of about twenty Americans, including all those named above (Lee, Leonard, Linden, Moon, Strozzi-Heckler as well as Emminger and Palmer).

During those months of gestation I was pleased to discover a publication by Peter Schettgen and invited him to join the network. The first aikidoka outside North America to join the group, Peter served on the AE Board of Director for several years, attended the first three Aiki Extensions conferences in the U.S., and organized a series of conferences in Germany. The first two of these resulted in published collections of articles, *Heilen Statt Hauen (Heal Don't Hack!)*, 2002) and *Kreativitat statt Kampf! (Creativity Not Combat!)*, 2003).

The growth of Aiki Extensions work in Germany has been phenomenal. During the past year the same has been true in Great Britain, thanks largely to the efforts of AE project director Mark Walsh and Quentin Cooke. At this point AE is clearly an international effort, with members in some twenty-seven countries in six continents. Its pioneering activities include novel forms of youth outreach, including a center for favela youngsters in Sao Paulo, Brazil; the Bronx Peace Village in New York; weekend gasshukus for kids and a program at the Seven Tepees Youth Center in the Bay Area, California; and a Peace Dojo that forms part of the Awassa Youth Campus in Ethiopia. Its most ambitious project was a four-day international seminar at Nicosia,

Cyprus, in April 2005, from which has sprung a variety of continuing efforts to build bridges among Arabs and Israelis.

With the passing of so many of the first generation of direct students of the Founder of aikido, the whole question of the future of this distinctive international movement comes into question. There are those who say that its social and spiritual dimensions represent the most enduring and valuable aspects of aikido practice. Indeed, AE Director Strozzi-Heckler writes that Aiki Extensions is “the 21st-century iteration of how O’Sensei envisioned aikido’s role in global peace. AE is in a direct lineage to his vision and it is thus playing out what his vision projected in a world marked by transforming technologies and new epidemics of strife.”

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CHAPTER NINE

## A Paradigm of the Aiki Way

<b>UKE</b>	<b>NAGE</b>
Being present	Being present
Scanning the situation	Showing resources (openings)
Taking action	Welcoming
Engaging	Receiving
Following	Extending
Moving with the situation	Relaxing (expanding outward)
Landing	Releasing
Finding new situation	Restoring presence



## CHAPTER TEN

# Clashes or Dialogue Among Civilizations<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The thesis of a “Clash of Civilizations,” famously voiced by Samuel Huntington in 1993, draws support from selected social science generalizations and the fact that all historical civilizations organized around core beliefs and values condemned outsiders. This thesis can be challenged by showing that civilizations are internally complex, including elements that also develop non-exclusionary themes; and by specifying a human need for “dialogue” driven by compresent needs for attachment and differentiation. The historic emergence of those inclusionary subtraditions by looking at the cases of Gandhi in India, Ueshiba in Japan, and a number of historic and contemporary figures in the Abrahamic civilizations of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

In 1993 the late Samuel Huntington advanced a claim that the bipolarized world of the latter 20th century would yield inexorably to clashes among civilizations. This alarm caught many social scientists by surprise. In the early 1990s literate opinion lingered under the glow of the Soviet collapse and savored a sense that world consensus behind liberal democracy and capitalism

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<sup>1</sup>Original version was presented in the session, “Clashes versus Rapprochement,” at Comparing Modern Civilizations: Pluralism versus Homogeneity. A Conference in Honor of Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt. Jerusalem, November 2-4, 2003. The paper had the benefit of comments from Adam Kissel, McKim Marriott, Nilesh Patel, and Rabbi Arnold Wolf and was published as: “Civilizational Resources for Dialogic Engagement?” In *Comparing Modern Civilizations: Pluralism versus Homogeneity*, ed. Eliezer Ben-Rafael. Boston: Brill. This revised version was published in the *Journal of Classical Sociology* 11, No. 3. August 2011: 313-26 as “The Dialogue of Civilizations: An Eisenstadt Legacy.”

stood to preclude future ideological clashes. The view that the array of culturally diverse historical societies would “converge” on a single common constellation of modern society—a principal tenet of the first two centuries of sociology—seemed reconfirmed.

Shmuel N. Eisenstadt figured prominently among those who had long challenged the convergence thesis. His noted conception of “multiple modernities” seemed to point to a world future in which gross cultural differences would perdure and if anything grow more intense. His perspective might thereby have been assumed a priori as fielding an argument consistent with the central claims of the Huntington thesis. This essay will demonstrate, however, that in virtue of Eisenstadt’s championing of two other ideas—the complexity of historic civilizations and the potentialities of dialogue—that assumption must be challenged.

Global developments since the early 1990s could be said to have corroborated Huntington’s claim. As a rough indicator of that denouement, consider John Mearsheimer’s recent summary: in the first years after the Cold War, many Americans evinced profound optimism about the future of international politics, but since 1989 the United States has been at war for a startling two out of every three years, with no end in sight, such that the public mood has shifted to an aching pessimism (Mearsheimer 2011, 17). To be sure, it is a large leap from the frequency of post-Cold War international clashes to an assumption about the clash of civilizations. Warfare among contemporary societies stems from many sources: growing competition over increasingly scarce resources like land, energy, and water; struggles for political control and economic hegemony; and hostile reactions to economic insecurities and rapid social change. The management of such conflicts depends largely on the restraint of statesmen, negotiations among political stakeholders, and the attitudes of their followers.

Even so, the salience of those polemogenic factors does not rule out the thesis of a deeper-lying clash of civilizations. This sweeping claim deserves to be addressed in its own right.

## **In Support of the Huntington Thesis**

The Huntington thesis holds that *diverse civilizations are marked by core symbolic complexes that ultimately stand in irreducible conflict*. This claim draws support from three truths.

Ever since William Graham Sumner (1906) provided the language to say so, social scientists have affirmed that all human groups manifest *ethnocentrism*. This designates a syndrome marked by an exaggerated view of a group's own virtues; a pejorative view of others; a relation of order, law, and industry among members of the in-group; and a relation of predation against out-groups. Related to these elements is a tendency to exaggerate the differences between in-groups and out-groups. The universality of this pattern can be linked in part to the ways in which it satisfies at once two of the most powerful human needs: the need for attachment and the need for differentiation.<sup>2</sup>

Second, as systematic studies on the matter have shown, the more complex and technologically advanced a society, the stronger its level of ethnocentrism is likely to be (LeVine and Campbell 1972).

Third, ethnocentric beliefs become fortified when intertwined with imperatives that stem from strong cultural mandates. Certain of these mandates derive from the work of elites who have produced transcendent ideals for reconstructing worldly relations, ideals that were elaborated in what have been called the Axial civilizations (Eisenstadt 2003, I, chs. 1, 7).

The great civilizations, consequently, have tended to defend and extend their respective domains through glorified ethnocentric processes involving conquest, conversion, and assimilation of those outside the pale. In Greco-Roman civilization, for example, Hellenes came to disparage outsiders who were ignorant of Greek language and civilization, thereby uncivil and rude. Calling them barbarians (*barbaroi*) encouraged the Greeks to conquer, enslave, and colonize others who were deemed culturally inferior. This conceit continued in Roman times, as Roman citizens justified their extensive conquests of alien peoples (*barbari*) in ways that coerced them into adopting the Latin language and their religious beliefs. In the case of European civilization this pattern found its denouement in the "*missione civilatrice*" whereby Italian airplanes rained poisoned gas on shoeless Abyssinian peasants armed with spears, and Nazi armies attempted to expand their notion of a superior German culture throughout Europe. The Greek/barbarian paradigm can be found in all other major civilizations. Its omnipresence underlies the plausibility of the clash of civilizations thesis.

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<sup>2</sup>These needs, as recent social neuroscience has demonstrated, are hard-wired in the human species (Smith and Stevens 2002).

The pejorative distinctions one associates with the great civilizations include, alongside the Hellenic distinction between Greek and barbarian, the dichotomies of Hindu/*mleccha*, Chosen People (*am segulah*)/gentiles (*goyyim*), Christian/pagan, *umma/fakir* (infidel), and *nihongo/gaijin*. Each of those dichotomies derives from certain core values in each civilization, values that implant criteria used to justify disparagement if not aggression against others. If, in fact, those values represent hegemonic notions that subordinate all beliefs and norms in their respective civilizations, then there would indeed be grounds for adducing theoretical support for the Huntington worldview.

## Challenges to the Huntington Thesis

Nevertheless, the Huntington thesis appears vulnerable when both of its key assumptions are subjected to question. The first views civilizations as monolithic formations, organized around a coherent core of animating beliefs and values. The second holds that the most likely interactional form in which serious differences tend to get aired is that of combat. These assumptions simply do not hold up under critical examination. Few thinkers have had the erudition and imagination to provide as much substance for those critiques as did Shmuel Eisenstadt.

The first critique was voiced eloquently by Edward Said, when he discounted the Huntington view of civilizations as “shut-down, sealed-off entities that have been purged of the myriad currents and counter-currents that animate human history, and that over centuries have made it possible for that history not only to contain wars of religion and imperial conquest but also to be one of exchange, cross-fertilization and sharing” (Said 2001). Few scholars have gone so far as Eisenstadt in elucidating the enormous complexity of all civilizations, not least in identifying strains within and between institutional structures and cultural complexes. In consequence of this, each civilization has evolved internally contradictory sub-traditions. Although each embraces a core value that separates some category of worthy humans from one that denigrates others, each also contains elements that promote a more inclusive orientation. All civilizations possess customs that promote hospitality toward strangers. They contain elements that can be used to encourage the toleration of diversity. They harbor teachings that cultivate understanding and compassion. They thereby offer seeds that can sprout into resources for inter-human dialogue—a form of open communication that could inspire

ways of reducing clashes among contemporary civilizations. In fact, in an interview given shortly before his passing, Eisenstadt emphasized his belief that all civilizations contain universalistic elements (Shalva Weil 2010).

The second critique takes aim at implied assumptions about panhuman belligerence. It questions the notion that combat is the most likely interactional form in which differences come to be resolved. To be sure, much research—by biologists such as Konrad Lorenz, Nikolaas Tinbergen, Richard Wrangham, and Dale Peterson—supports the assumption of an inherent human disposition toward aggression; and some ideologists regard the polemical principle as a defensible human ideal. A growing body of research in neurophysiology, however, supports the idea that humans are essentially motivated by needs for community and social harmony—claims that fit a long tradition of philosophical argument about the value of open communication and consensus. In its pure form this yields to the Habermasian frame that stipulates ideal conditions of conversation under which concerned parties will expectably arrive eventually at similar positions.

In contrast to a notion of open communication as mutual aggression or harmonious consensus, dialogue signifies a type of discourse in which parties take turns listening respectfully, and responding genuinely to one another's expressions. Empirically, the quest for dialogue draws support from the same human tendencies cited earlier—namely, the need both for attachment *and* for differentiation. It implies, in the words of that prophet of dialogue Martin Buber, “the acceptance of otherness” (Buber 1992, 65). The simultaneous wish for attachment and differentiation formed a central theme in the social-psychological analyses of Buber's own teacher in Berlin, Georg Simmel.

Thanks to the anomalous circumstance that Shmuel Eisenstadt imbibed his sociology from books loaned by Buber, his professor at Hebrew University, he early on became acquainted with this notion of dialogue. Indeed, in later autobiographical reflections he acknowledged the deep impact of Buber's teachings, and went on to edit a volume of Buber's writings for The Heritage of Sociology series. What is more, in the course of writing *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*, I came to realize that Eisenstadt's narrative (in *The Form of Sociology: Paradigms and Crises*) was not, as I previously thought, strictly pluralistic, but rather took the form of a dialogical narrative: it saw diverse approaches to sociology as occasionally offering dialogical openings to one another an interpretation that Eisenstadt himself corroborated in a personal communication (Levine 1995, 96).

## From Clashing to Connecting Civilization: The Greco-Roman Case

If we were to conjoin Eisenstadt's affinity for the principle of dialogue with his passion for the comparative study of civilizations, we might be led to ask: how was it possible for historic civilizations, rooted as each was on a starkly exclusionary principle, to have evolved to a point where some of their elements could be used to support an ethic of dialogue? How, in other words, could each of the major world civilizations give rise to developments in which authentic traditional symbols were invoked in ways that heighten levels of openness and inclusiveness?

To adumbrate the transformational pattern that I have in mind, let me begin with a prototype of the process in Greco-Roman civilization. The concept of *physis* (nature) formed a central notion in the Greco-Roman worldview. This concept defined nature, not in the post-Newtonian sense of an inherent force which directs the world, but as designating the essential quality of something in a universe of substances. Hellenic philosophers moved from questions about the nature of inorganic and organic bodies to a concept of nature that could be taken as a foundation for ethics. The texts of Plato and Aristotle afforded a basis for superseding conventional notions of morality with a search for what is good by nature as distinguished from what is good merely by tradition or convention (Levine 1995).

At the same time, however, the notion of nature provided a basis for dividing people into superior and inferior categories on the basis of naturally given characteristics. This distinction was used to reinforce the Greek/barbarian dichotomy, in that all barbarians were held to be slaves *physei* (by nature). Aristotle quotes a line of the poets, "It is fitting for Greeks to rule barbarians," commenting that "the assumption being that barbarian and slave by nature are the same thing" (*Politics*, Book 1, ch. 2, 36).

In the minds of other Hellenic thinkers, however, the notion of nature was employed to overcome such political oppositions by envisioning a single polis of the entire world. Diogenes the Cynic thus proclaimed the doctrine of a world state (*cosmopolis*) in which all humans would be citizens. This became a central doctrine of the Stoics, based on the assumption that all humans possess by nature an identical divine spark (*apospasma*). Accordingly, Stoicism undermined distinctions based on race, class, and even gender. These ideas were amplified by Romans like Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, who ex-



panded the doctrine of humanitarian cosmopolitanism. Their doctrines drew on the core Greco-Roman idealization of nature in ways that articulated the notion of a universal human nature, as a means for transcending the pejorative attitude toward outsiders that proponents of the civilized/barbarian dichotomy had fostered.

## India and Japan

In the civilization of India, the idea of *purity* (Sanskrit: *sattva*) figured as one central symbolic theme. Connoting freedom from alloy, and so from defilement of the spirit by the impurities of matter, purity was tied to the belief that there is no possibility for humans to see and manifest divinity without being cleansed. In accord with this ontology, Hindus divided people into categories (*varna*) that classified groups with respect to their levels of purity/impurity. Historically, the first group to be so classified was the Brahmans. Although Brahmanic status rested on birth, to become a fully accredited Brahman a man had to study the Vedic texts, learn certain ritual practices, and acquire a holy belt. Brahmans were expected to manifest a number of virtuous qualities, grounded on purity in several dimensions, including purity of body, purity of mind, and purity of heart, and the avoidance of contact with impure substances and persons. They were obliged to provide literary instruction, priestly duties, and certain magical services, and to support themselves from gifts, not by earning a salary.

Commitment to this ideal of purity had well-known consequences of an exclusionary and destructive character, both internally and externally. Within Indian society, one category designated a set of castes that came to be known as the Untouchables. These were considered irredeemably impure and therefore to be excluded from such goods as rights to own land and opportunities to perform certain rituals. In addition, Hindu doctrine considered those outside their religious traditions to be impure as well. Groups who did not respect the Vedic rituals and the ban on killing certain animals were called *Mleccha* or outsider, a term that generally connoted impure. *Mleccha* and Untouchables were often thought of as being in a similar or identical status category. Hostility toward Muslims thus was grounded to some extent ideologically on their being impure.

On the other hand, the enormous heterogeneity of Indian culture, together with absence of political pressures to impose religion and an egalitarian strain

in Hindu culture, accounted for the proverbial syncretistic cast of Indian culture as well as the conspicuous absence of wars of religion (Eisenstadt 1996, 410). Evolving from such background a position of radical egalitarianism and inclusiveness, Mohandas Gandhi devoted himself to overcoming those established polarizing animosities. He strove to secure equal rights for the Untouchables, even renaming them as *harijan*, children of God. He also worked continuously for unity between Hindus and Muslims, aspiring to promote the notion of Indian nationals living together in a civic society. He strove valiantly to prevent the creation of a separate Islamic state following India's Independence, but in vain. Identifying with the traditional Indian notions of *mleccha* and impurity, a Muslim League under Muhammed Ali Jinnah established a "Nation of the Pure," Pakistan.<sup>3</sup>

Although Gandhi failed to prevent the Islamic split-off and the ensuing massacre of millions, he created a Way for Hindus to transcend tenacious animosities stemming from deeply held cultural convictions by drawing on other aspects of Indian tradition. He did so by turning to classical symbols such as *ahimsa* (nonviolence, drawn from the Jain tradition) and the quest (*graha*) for truth (*satya*). Gandhi found purity above all in what he called the search for truth. He categorically ruled out the use of violence on the ground that it inhibited the search for truth, since no one could know more than a portion of what is true. In Gandhi's teachings, to use *satyagraha* to overcome injustice required considerable training and confidence. Training included understanding and controlling one's impure thoughts through regular meditation. To transform the mind of an opponent, a *satyagrahi* needed this mental purity.

Around the time of Gandhi's transfiguration of Indian notions, a comparable breakthrough was taking place in Japan, with efforts to reorient the heirs of the culture of Japanese warriors. For Japanese civilization, the core symbol to be considered here is *makoto*. Usually mistranslated as 'sincerity,' *makoto* signifies a disposition to discharge one's social obligations with utter fidelity, suppressing personal utilitarian goals. Considered the highest virtue of the Japanese hero, *makoto* connotes the value of calm action in whatever

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<sup>3</sup>They were obliged to provide literary instruction, priestly duties, and certain magical services, and to support themselves from gifts, not by earning a salary. Although Brahmanic status rested on birth, to become a fully accredited Brahman a man had to study the Vedic texts, learn certain ritual practices, and acquire a holy belt.

circumstances.<sup>4</sup> Although the focus of *makoto* has varied in different periods of history, a constant theme has been the disposition to act in a self-effacing manner on behalf of the well-being of others.

As Eisenstadt (1996) made clear, the ultimate ideal of Japanese civilization lies not in some transcendent value to which worldly actions are held accountable, but to the authority figures of this world, on whose behalf *makoto* actions are dedicated. Since the Middle Ages, the samurai were expected to display this conduct most consistently. The seven pleats of their traditional garb, the skirt-like pants known as *hakama*, allude to what are understood as the components of *makoto*: loyalty, honor, respect, affection, and sincerity (*shin*). The samurai ethos diffused through Japanese society; economic entrepreneurs recast the notion of samurai *makoto* in ways that favored Japan's economic modernization (Bellah 1957). That ethos was further utilized following the Meiji Reformation by political modernizers, who directed it toward passionate allegiance to the emperor as symbol of the Japanese state.

That symbolism, notoriously, turned Japan in externally destructive directions. It fostered frequent violent combats among trained martial artists. It eventuated in imperialistic ambitions that led Japan to embark on brutal conquests under Emperor Hirohito.

Yet those same samurai ideals served to transform Japan's traditional martial arts in an opposite direction. This began with the work of educator Jigoro Kano, who reconfigured the traditional teaching of lethal unarmed combat, *ju-jitsu*, into a practice of judo utilized only to develop character. It eventuated in the teachings of Morihei Ueshiba, who reoriented martial arts training away from competitive struggle of any sort toward practices designed to produce an attitude of respect for all living beings and to serve as "a bridge to peace and harmony for all humankind" (Ueshiba 1984, 120). Ueshiba failed to persuade Japanese militarists to desist from launching war against the United States, just as Gandhi failed to prevent the partition of India. Nevertheless, just as Gandhi's teachings in South Africa and India inspired subsequent political leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela to relate to their political opponents in a respectful, nonviolent manner, Ueshiba's teachings, through the practice he created, aikido, have

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<sup>4</sup>Success is not the criterion here. Ivan Morris (1975) suggests that the value of *makoto* action may be enhanced by failure. Other aspects of *makoto* are described in Gleason 1995.

inspired millions worldwide to embrace a Way that would enhance intercivilizational dialogue.

## The Abrahamic Civilizations

Christianity was founded on an ideal of universal love. Funneled through the Greek word *agape*, the teachings of Jesus propounded the virtue of unselfish and benevolent concern for the welfare of others. The universalistic cast of this teaching received classic formulation in the words of the proselytizing convert Paul, himself influenced by Stoic doctrines, who announced: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free, male or female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). In society after society, these teachings have restrained violence and promoted generosity of spirit.

On the other hand, Christianity holds the record for the number of people from other cultures slain on behalf of a religious emblem, including millions of native Americans, Africans, and aboriginal Australians, not to mention, from among its own members, huge numbers of heretics and “witches.” Western Christianity created a tenacious pattern of anti-Semitism that, acknowledged in the recent statements of Pope John Paul II, played a nontrivial role in destroying the civilization of Continental European Jewry. Although Christian figures from time to time espoused a turn to the ethos of Jesus and early Christianity, almost none of them grappled conspicuously with the challenge of using the foundational statements of Christianity to oppose the waves of persecution launched against the Jewish people in their midst (Carroll 2001).

None of them, that is, until Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Inspired by the social activism of the Abyssinian Baptist church in Harlem, which he assisted during a postdoctoral year at the Union Theological Seminary in the early 1930s, Bonhoeffer returned to Nazi Germany to join Martin Niemöller in his work with the Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*), the center of Protestant resistance to the Nazis. He directed one of the underground seminaries of the Confessing Church in 1935. After the Nazis closed down the seminaries, he went on to engage in underground activity to help Jews escape and was associated with the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler. The theological and ethical statements that he worked out in the course of this resistance became a benchmark for a new brand of Christians. In justifying courageous pastoral intervention against Nazi oppression, he worked out a justification of political activism in an immoral world, based on a notion of “venture of responsibil-

ity”: “It is better to do evil than to be evil,” he decided. His theological creativity has been described as forging a kind of “religionless interpretation of biblical concepts in a world come of age” (Bonhoeffer 1963, 5). Bonhoeffer thereby paved the way for the more inclusive kind of rapprochement that many German Christians have displayed since the War, and has been described as a key theologian for leading future generations of Christians.

For Islam, the core symbolic notion is, evidently, *islam*, i.e., submission. This signifies a posture of humble acceptance of and outward conformity with the law of God. The term is derived from Arabic *‘aslama*, to surrender or resign oneself, in turn derived from Syriac *‘aslem*, to make peace. Islamic tradition focuses on a complex of laws found in the Koran and promulgated by Muslim clergy, laws which cover everything from family relations and civil accords to criminal codes.

Among the notions to which Muslims owe submission, nothing is more motivating than the injunction to pursue *jihad*. And nothing illustrates the capacity of civilization to promote different directions better than the different meanings this term has acquired in Islamic civilization. On the one hand, *jihad* refers to aggression against Unbelievers through the legal, compulsory, collective effort to expand territories ruled by Muslims. Most scholars argue that despite ambiguities about the term in the Koran, this has been the principal line of interpretation of the doctrine in Islamic tradition. Thus, *jihad* was invoked to instigate the conquest, beyond the Arabian Peninsula, of the region from Afghanistan to Spain within a century of Mohammed’s death, and later to spur Muslim invasions of such territories as India, Anatolia, Balkans, Ethiopia, Sudan, and West Africa. More recently, it has been dramatically revived in modern Islamic fundamentalism by influential figures such as Sayyid Outb, who argues that the only way for Muslims to achieve religious purity is to establish an Islamic state through *jihad*.

On the other hand, *jihad* has been interpreted as a struggle for personal moral improvement, in the sense of living more closely in accord with Islamic Law. Thus, in language that parallels Ueshiba’s formulation that in his form of martial art, there are no enemies and that the greatest victory is the victory over oneself, the 11th-century theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazali maintained that the soul is an enemy which struggles with one and which must be fought, and that this *jihad* against the soul constitutes the “greater *jihad*” (al-Ghazali 1995, 56). In this sense of the term, it extends beyond overcoming baser instincts to a struggle for social justice. So understood, it could be viewed as an injunction to live peaceably with everyone, and

to cooperate with people of all faiths in a quest for social reform. This position has been embraced by virtually all Sufi theologians. This accords with the absence in Islam of any particularistic ethnic emphasis, apart from the status of Arabic as a sacred language (Eisenstadt 1992, 41). In fact, in many contemporary societies until recently, including Ethiopia and India, the norm was for public displays of solidarity between Muslims and other religious groups.

Although some progressive Muslims wish seriously to promote and extend the latter definition of *jihad*, no charismatic figure, such as a Gandhi or a Bonhoeffer, has arisen to challenge authoritatively the contemporary drift toward an escalation of the other view.<sup>5</sup> In the past dozen years, Muslims appealing to the symbol of *jihad* have launched a worldwide campaign involving assassinations, vandalism, and terrorist acts—against Christians in Indonesia and Yemen, Jews in Israel, Hindus in Kashmir, and traditional religionists in Sudan; and against Buddhists through demolition of their world-prized mountain sculptures in Afghanistan. This trend has been exacerbated by another tenet of Islamic faith, the notion that the requirement to act in accordance with God’s decrees as a condition of salvation—possible but difficult to fulfill—may be short-circuited when fulfilling the religious obligation of *jihad*, thereby enhancing one’s chances of being sent to heaven at the Last Judgment or, if one dies a martyr, going directly to heaven.

For Jewish civilization, a core symbolic notion is *berith*, or covenant. This refers to biblical accounts of the covenants made between God and the Jewish people, whereby God would provide certain benefits for the people of Israel in exchange for their loyalty to Him and obedience to his moral directives. Accordingly, a central distinguishing feature of Jewish civilization, in Eisenstadt’s insightful account, consists of the semicontractual relationship with the Higher Power, in contrast to the absolute status of the transcendental symbols in the other Axial Age civilizations.

Over time, as related in the Bible, the content of God’s promissory note changed. With Abraham, it had to do with the Eretz, the Land, of Israel. With David, it had to do with legitimizing the political authority of a lineage. But the heart of the divine covenant for Jewish civilization lies in the central chapters of the Book of Exodus, where God’s promises to consider

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<sup>5</sup>This view was propounded with particular virulence by heirs to the 13C *jihad* revivalist Ibn Taymiyya and his 18C disciple, Mohammed Ibn Abdul WahhabNajdi, from whom the fundamentalist Wahabi sect derives.

the Jews a Chosen People, in exchange for their adherence to the numerous commandments enumerated therein.

The quality of being Chosen set up a constant invidious comparison with other peoples, referred to in what later became a pejorative Yiddish term, the *goyyim*. This dichotomy never led to conquest or aggression, although when a 6C South Arabian king DhuNuwaas converted to Judaism, he began to persecute Christians (thereby provoking the Ethiopian Christian emperor at Aksum to send troops across the Red Sea to overthrow him). However, the conceit of chosenness produced at times an arrogant attitude toward outsiders that belittled their worth. (One account relates that Mohammed's turn against Jews was based on their rejection of his appeal for support at the beginning of his mission.)

On the other hand, the evident meaning of chosenness, as the covenant is spelled out in Exodus 19-24, signifies the adherence of Jews to a system of maxims that enjoin ethical behavior toward a wide range of people. Prominent among those maxims is the commandment to take care of strangers. Whatever narrow, cultic or particularistic grounds for the Covenant are entailed in the covenant with Abraham, or later with King David, are far overshadowed in the history of Judaism by moral imperatives. And this history of Judaism is itself an essential part of the core symbolism. The central text of Jewish Civilization takes the form of a historical narrative, not a straight listing of absolute commands or mythic portrayals. The course of its history moves steadily away from the primordial cultic observance and toward a universalistic ethical dimension. This shift is itself a subject of attention in the sacred text itself, as when God rebukes those who simply following old ritual prescriptions for fasting, just bowing their heads, and spreading sackcloth and ashes under them: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free?" (Isaiah 58:6).

Even so, the particularistic aspects were never completely transcended; People and Land were perpetually celebrated. And when the time of the great return arrived, there were those who sacralized it in the terms of the earliest covenant. For them, the reappropriation of ancient soil amounted to a return of the earliest covenant. For some, that motivated a commitment to reclaim territory by building settlements on a vulnerable, contested area that became a constant provocation to the people with whom they were sharing this piece of the earth's surface. This appeal to the earliest covenant has

Figure 10.1: Exclusionary and Inclusionary Concepts of Selected Civilizations

Civilization	Core Idea	Benign Consequences	Exclusionary Framework	Expanded Inclusionary Concept	Creative Agent
Greco-Roman	nature	rational ethics	civilized/ barbarian	cosmopolitanism	Stoics
Indian	purity	Brahmanic moral leadership	pure/impure	satyagraha	Gandhi
Japanese	<i>makoto</i>	social order, rapid modernization	<i>nihon/gaijin</i>	aikido	Ueshiba
Western Christian	<i>agape</i>	domestic pacification	believer/pagan	Confessing Church	Niemoeller & Bonhoeffer
Islamic	submission	domestic pacification	<i>umma</i> /infidel	peaceful jihad?	Badshah Khan
Jewish	covenant	Promulgation of moral law	chosen/gentile	cohabitants on sacred land?	Buber

been defended in some fundamentalist Christian groups more avidly than by most Jews.

## A Challenge for the Future

The major source of civilizational clashes in the coming generation lies in the actions of the minority of Abrahamic religionists who are extreme fundamentalists. Most visible, of course, are those Muslims who insist on the aggressive side of *jihad*. There could be a kind civilizational clash in the coming generation if those Muslims who insist on the aggressive side of *jihad* continue to grow in strength—if the politicized elements of Islamism continue to make headway in their recurrent assaults on the other world religious groups including Hindus and Buddhists as well as Christians as well as Jews.

Jews also play a part in perpetuating the clash of civilizational exclusivists. Those who do so include those settlers who occupy the West Bank, not as a tactical move, but out of deepest conviction. Just as militant jihadists draw on early Islamic beliefs and practices to inspire their terrorist attacks, so ardent Jewish West Bank settlers draw on archaic biblical symbols to justify this occupation.



One way these symbols can be recast is through the emergence of a charismatic leader or group who, steeped in traditional symbolism, will connect Islam with its deepest roots in ways that point to inclusionary imperatives. Within the Islamic tradition, the potential for turning *jihad* in a nonviolent, inclusionary direction was demonstrated by Khan Abdal Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988)—known as Badshah Khan—a Pathan (Pushtun) Muslim from Afghanistan. Khan defined Islam as a faith in the ability of every human being to respond to spiritual laws and the power of *muhabat* (love) to transform human affairs. So oriented, Khan raised a ‘nonviolent’ army of some 100,000 Pathan warriors and worked closely with Gandhi to use nonviolent techniques to promote social justice and independence (Easwaran 1999). In this vein strong statements against Islamic terrorism have been issued by contemporary Islamic spokesmen such as Abdal-Hakim Murad, who finds the taking of innocent civilian lives unimaginable in Sunni Islam, and Hamza Yusuf, a popular American Muslim speaker, who has declared that the “real *jihad*” for Muslims is to rid Islam of the terrorist element.

And as in Islam, potential for overriding such exclusionary claims lies near to hand in Judaism. The Talmudic tradition has recently been drawn on by Aaron Lichtenstein, in *The Seven Laws of Noah* (1981), to argue that observance of the Noahide laws sufficed to include non-Jews in the divinely approved community. Figures such as Joseph Abilea have eloquently endorsed a nonviolent, universalist position, as have participants in such groups as Oz ve-Shalom, the Jewish Peace movement. A substantial portion of the world Jewish community considers the moral covenant of Exodus to supersede the territorial part of the covenant with Abraham.

To make these new openings does not require a purist *ex nihilo*. The charismatic innovators needed could come from perfectly conventional backgrounds, as did the exemplars whom I described above. Gandhi began as an elitist who shared the white South Africans’ disdain for blacks. Ueshiba served proudly in the Japanese army in 1904 and trained officers of the Japanese military academy until 1941. Niemoeller, a submarine commander in World War I, supported the National Socialists until they came to power in 1933. Bonhoeffer began as a conventional German who refused to perform the marriage ceremony of his brother to a Jewish woman in 1930. What all of them shared was a deep grounding in their respective traditions, which earned them credibility, and then a powerful impulse to break out of their elitist/ethnocentric molds in response to the ethical demands of the current world situation.

In a brief essay composed just after World War I, “What Is To Be Done?” Eisenstadt’s mentor Martin Buber confronted the dilemma of our time in the voice of unknown comrades:

Some say civilization must be preserved through “subduing.” There is no civilization to preserve. And there is no longer a subduing! But what may ascend out of the flood will be decided by whether you throw yourselves into it as seeds of true community. No longer through exclusion but only inclusion can the kingdom be established. . . . Silently the world waits for the spirit. (1957, 111)

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# Aikido and the Art of Mediation

How can an adversarial relationship be replaced by harmonious transactions that benefit both parties? Independently, portions of the traditions both of Japanese martial arts and of American legal practice have developed ways to accomplish such a change. Both have replaced notions of defeat and victory with the idea of enhancing the wellbeing and autonomy of both parties.

What follows is a modest effort to open up a conversation about the remarkable confluence of those two developments. The paper sketches the historical *evolution* of their key ideas—for the martial arts, in the development of *aikido*; for legal practice, through the development of *mediation*. It proceeds to outline some *key features* of the two practices. A concluding section offers suggestions regarding ways the two practices stand to reinforce and *learn from each other*.

## I. The Martial Arts in Japanese Culture

The practice of aikido emerged in 20th-century Japan following an evolution of martial arts there over two millennia. Those arts stem from customs of the *samurai*, a stratum of military specialists that came to the fore in the late Heian Period (10-12C CE). The *samurai* came to replace the stratum of professional warriors of preceding centuries—men from a different ethnic group it seems, who originally were hunters and manifested an extreme sort of raw violence; other Japanese often viewed them as barbarians or wild beasts. However, seeds of the tutored *samurai* culture can be found in the 8C Japanese classic, the Kojiki. Before that, esoteric lore regarding sword work was cultivated at the imperial court.

Initially, the *samurai* (“retainers”) were positioned to serve the court nobility. In time, they acquired power in their own right, establishing dom-

ination over agricultural land, and building their own hierarchical political organizations. This culminated in a semi-centralized military regime, the shogunate, in the late 12C. The *samurai* political organization rested on the formation of strong emotional bonds between military masters and vassals upheld by a strict code of honor (Ikegami 1995). By the 16C the *samurai* code was elaborated into a code known as *bushido* (the Way of the Warrior), consisting of seven bushi virtues: integrity, rectitude, courage, benevolence, honor, loyalty, and respect.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond qualities of comportment, *samurai* were expected to show proficiency in a number of non-martial spheres that linked with the neo-Confucian notion of personal culture (*bun*). This linkage was represented by an ideal that conjoined them by means of a compound phrase, *bu-bun*. One such art was the composition of highly stylized verse, most notably haiku. Another was calligraphy: the embodiment of *bu-bun* involved practice with pen and brush in a manner that evinced unself-conscious, fearless directness. Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu proclaimed that the brush and the sword are one.

Nevertheless, the core *bushido* virtue consisted of fearless combativeness in battle and readiness to kill or be killed by a perceived enemy. In the words of samurai Kato Kiyomasa (1562-1611), “[By] reading Chinese poetry . . . one will surely become womanized if he gives his heart knowledge of such elegant and delicate refinements. Having been born into the house of a warrior, one’s intentions should be to grasp the long and the short swords and to die” (Wilson 1982, 131).<sup>2</sup> But grasping the swords was far from spontaneous; it required years of training in one of the specialized schools (*ryu*) that flourished toward the end of the medieval period. This involved mastery of one or more of the martial techniques for which complex curricula of instruction had become codified.<sup>3</sup> During the long period of peace under the Tokugawa Shogunate, the martial skills could rarely be exercised on the battlefield. Even so, their cultivation remained no less sharp. The status

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<sup>1</sup>The seven *bushi* virtues came to be symbolized by the seven pleats of the *hakama*, a skirt worn by *samurai* during the Tokugawa period ((1603-1868).

<sup>2</sup>Kato sama further prescribes: “One should rise at four in the morning, practice sword technique, eat one’s meal, and train with the bow, the gun, and the horse. . . . When one unsheathes his sword, he has cutting a person down in mind” (*Ibid.*, 130).

<sup>3</sup>Mastery of the dagger (*tanto*), glaive (*naginata*), bow and arrow (*kyujutsu*), empty hands combat (*jujutsu*) and, above all, the long sword (*katana*) and short sword (*wakizashi*).

of lords often depended on the number and quality of expert martial artists under their authority. The spirit of contests, even for matters of honor, dictated the ambition of seeking victory of an opponent, which often meant his death. Even as the arts of combat became “domesticated” during the long Pax Tokugawa, competition among different courts and *ryu* was no less fierce. During the Tokugawa period, it has been said, *samurai* ideals became close to a national ethic, for even the merchant class had become “*bushido*-ized” (Bellah 1957, 98).

With the overthrow of rule by the feudal lords (*shogun*), the system of Japanese martial arts faced major challenges. The advent of Western culture and the spirit of commerce dislodged the hegemony of samurai notions of victory and defeat in combat. Not many years after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, a prominent Japanese educator, Jigoro Kano, began to reconfigure the ethos of martial arts training. Kano Sensei started a *dojo* (training hall) in a Buddhist temple in Tokyo, the *kotokan*, which became the matrix for developing a discipline he called judo. In this effort, he sought to reconfigure the goal of training from defeating enemies into something purely educational: promoting the development of personal character and social engagement. He renamed the educational goal *shushin-ho*, “the cultivation of wisdom and virtue as well as the study and application of the principles of Judo in our daily lives” (Kano, in *AikiNews* 1990, 4). As he later came to formulate it, “the ultimate objective of Judo discipline is to be utilized as a means to self-perfection, and thenceforth to make a positive contribution to society” (Murata 2005, 147-8).

The view of budo training that Kano articulated became increasingly prominent in Japan in the 20th century. This was especially true following World War II—the most disastrous outcome of the resurgence of the bushidoized nation imaginable, a denouement that Kano opposed. By the 1980s the Japanese Budo Association (Nippon Budokan) took the question of defining their goals so seriously that they spent years deliberating the matter, proclaiming in their 1987 Charter:

*Budo*, the Japanese martial ways have their origins in the age-old martial spirit of Japan. Through centuries of historical and social change, these forms of traditional culture evolved from combat techniques (*jutsu*) into ways of self-development. . . . Practitioners study the skills while striving to unify mind, technique and body; develop [their] character; enhance their sense of morality;

and to cultivate a respectful and courteous demeanour. . . . This elevation of the human spirit will contribute to social prosperity and harmony. (Nippon Budokan 1987)

Even so, tensions remained between the age-old martial spirit of Japan and the pacific goals of moral development and social harmony. However much Kano Sensei espoused the ideals of ego-transcendence and societal betterment, judo retained something of the traditional martial goals of victory in combat. This spirit was rekindled by the incorporation of judo into Olympic competition. A Budokan was built to house the judo Olympics in 1964, and continues to house national competitions among different martial arts, including karate, kendo, shorinji kempo, kyudo, and naginata as well as judo. In addition to the egoistic competitive spirit promoted by such matches, judo's goal of *victory* enabled practitioners to use such means as "throwing, choking . . . bending or twisting the opponent's arms or legs. The combatants may use whatever methods they like" (Kano 1932, 58). Recognizing this tension, the Japan Budo Association saw fit to express concerns over "a recent trend towards infatuation just with technical ability compounded by an excessive concern with winning" (Nippon Budokan 1987).

It was given to Morihei Ueshiba to complete the evolution of *budo* and resolve that tension. This involved configuring a curriculum of training that *embodies* in its foundational principles the elimination of competition and movements designed to avoid inflicting pain and promoting peace. Drawing both on superb training in traditional martial ways and on immersion in a universalistic new Japanese religion, Ueshiba's aikido journey began with an epiphanic experience in 1925, through which he says he came to understand that the way of the warrior is to spread divine love. He continued forging new martial techniques throughout the 1930s. In vain he tried to forestall Japan's attacks against the United States. During the war, he withdrew in inner exile to Iwama, where in 1942 he renamed his practice *aikido*. In the postwar years, the catastrophes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki together with revelations from a Japanese soldier present at the liberation of Hitler's concentration camps spurred him into another turn. In 1948 he invited an old disciple, Hikitsutchi Sensei, to join him in promoting a "new kind of *budo*," one devoted explicitly to promoting world peace. Ueshiba Sensei continued to refine this practice for the rest of his life, which ended in 1969.

As Ueshiba came to formulate the end of his *budo*, the goal was not victory over the other, but *masagatsu agatsu*: "the great victory is victory



over oneself.” The practice he created relied not on pain or physical force in any form, but a welcoming of the energy of an attack, neutralizing its aggressive direction, and caring for the attacker. The structure of combat had transformed into a harmonious exchange of gestures. This was an idea whose time had come. In the early 1950s aikido dojos were established first in France and the United States, then in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Australia; at present, more than a million practitioners pursue aikido training in all six continents.

## II. Litigation in Euro-American Culture

The transformation from combat to nonviolence in Japanese martial arts appears to have been prompted by educational, civic, and spiritual concerns. In contrast, the move from adversarial legalism to professional mediation in the legal profession was motivated largely by economic and political concerns.

As with the martial arts, arts of litigation evolved over millennia, from resolving disputes through violence, to civil litigation, to socially mediated opposition, to a process of seeking agreements that both parties freely assent to. The initial evolution was from spontaneous fighting between aggrieved parties to formal dueling with rules and witnesses. Among Germanic peoples, trial by combat—sometimes known as judicial dueling—appeared in the early Middle Ages. An 8C document prescribes a trial by combat for two families who dispute the boundary between their lands: the contestants were required to touch a piece of that land with their swords and swear that their claim is lawful; the loser would forfeit claims to the land and pay a fine also. Other issues settled through trial by combat concerned dynastic power. “Wager of battle” entered the common law of England following the Norman Conquest. In Renaissance Italy and France codes for formal dueling emerged, conflicts in which honor rather than material interests was at stake. Similar codes emerged elsewhere in Europe, especially in Scandinavia (*Holmgang*) and Ireland (*code duello*). All these were forms in which Might makes Right, under conditions in which social and then judicial norms were in place to regulate the antagonistic encounter.

In the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, trial by combat began to disappear, initially due to ecclesiastical opposition and then through legisla-

tive banning.<sup>4</sup> Instead, civil disputes came to be settled almost exclusively in courts through the arguments of lawyers and the testimony of witnesses. Modern European civil procedure begins with the Napoleonic Era and the passage of the French Civil Code of 1806. That widely influential code sought to standardize civil procedure. It promoted a court system that featured oral arguments between equal parties that were open to the public. This heightened the dramaturgical presentation of legal conflict in court trials. In the United States, litigiousness grew as the expanding young country's litigation scene evolved alongside new societal and economic conflicts of the Industrial Age and the consequent creation of an ever-denser network of courts. It engendered a system that Robert Kagan aptly describes as "'adversarial legalism'—a method of policymaking and dispute resolution with two salient characteristics: *formal legal contestation* [and] *litigant activism*" (Kagan 2001, 9).

Over time, critics began to target the socially dysfunctional aspects of this system. President Lincoln advised Americans to "discourage litigation" and instead encouraged them to consider "how the nominal winner is often the loser in fees, expenses and costs of time" (Steiner 1995, 2). Edward Bellamy called for the "abolition of law as a special science," seeing "no use for the hair-splitting experts who presided and argued in [the] courts" (Hensler 2003, 169). Toward the end of the century, Austrian legalist Franz Klein broached ideas that would gain traction only half a century later, arguing that "parties to a lawsuit should cooperate in order to facilitate a judgment" instead of stretching facts and the law in a zero-sum showdown (Rhee, 12). Opposition to litigious practices grew in the 20th century as conflicts between families, contractual parties, and businesses grew more complicated, populations swelled, legal codes thickened, and court costs rose.

By the middle of the 20th century, litigation had reached a saturation point in American life, as civil case filings reached all-time highs and courts carried overloaded case schedules. One step toward relieving this situation was to give judges assistance from professional court administrators to set their calendars and manage the flow of cases (Hensler 2003, 174). Beyond that, communities and disputants came increasingly to favor alternative

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<sup>4</sup>Because Britain did not abolish wager by battle until Parliament's 1819 response to *Ashford v Thornton* (1818), and because no court in post-independence United States has addressed the issue, the question of whether trial by combat remains a valid American alternative to civil action remains open, at least in theory. *Wikipedia*, "Trial by Combat."

forms of dispute resolution. The community justice movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s supported ADR because participants felt that the litigation system in the United States disproportionately protected elite interests and neglected the need of the socioeconomically disadvantaged. Child custody disputants and divorcees came to see the bloated civil litigation system as too sclerotic and adversarial to produce nuanced outcomes tailored to the specifics of familial and individual disputes. Businesses found that ADR was better equipped to handle industry specific disputes in a manner more in line with the ever-faster world of commerce. This evolved attitude towards ADR is one significant factor in the 84 per cent drop in federal civil cases that went to trial between 1962 and 2002 (Stipanowich 2010, 4). ADR's newfound prominence in American legal life was ratified by the passage of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act. As a result of the 1998 law, federal courts are required to offer "some form of ADR", and many state courts began to standardize such options voluntarily (Hensler 2003, 167). Other countries followed suit. In 2001, for example, the Government of Colombia mandated that all civil and commercial disputes undergo a conciliation process before being filed in court.

The first step away from standard litigation process took the form of arbitration. The process of resolving disputes by submitting them to a third party adjudicator is probably as old as organized human societies. The process became formalized with the expansion of international trade in the 16th century. In France, the 1566 Decree of the Moulins made arbitration the only mean to resolve commercial disputes; in Germany and England, too, arbitration was practiced early and recognized as an effective form of dispute resolution. In the USA, arbitration among merchants was common already in the colonial period, since it proved more efficient than the courts; George Washington himself served as an arbiter prior to the Revolution. Arbitration achieved permanent international status in the wake of the Hague Conference of 1899. In 1923, the League of Nations issued a Protocol on Arbitration Clauses to cover non-domestic arbitration agreements. Two years later, the USA Congress passed a Federal Arbitration Act drafted initially by the American Bar Association.

By the 1960s, massive cultural shifts were starting to provide a type of support for ADR that specifically favored mediation as preferable to arbitration. To the improvements over litigation offered by arbitration—speed and efficiency, reduced cost, and confidentiality—mediation added the benefits of autonomy for the disputants and increased consensuality. The latter

Figure 11.1: Evolution from raw combat to consensual conflict resolution

Evolutionary stage	JAPANESE MARTIAL ARTS	EURO-AMERICAN LITIGATION
1. Raw physical combat	Violent struggle	Violent struggle
2. Disciplined physical combat	Samurai martial engagement: <i>bujutsu</i>	Trial by combat
3. Regulated verbal combat	—	Civil litigation
4. Conflict subordinated to societal object	Martial forms subordinated to societal betterment: judo	Arbitration
5. Consensually achieved resolution	Conflict resolution through non-combative interaction: aikido	Mediation

values were championed by changes in the social milieu. The growth of family therapies came to provide an alternative to dealing with antagonisms in marriage other than the cold calculations of the divorce lawyer industry. The Civil Rights Movement found in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. a charismatic proponent of Gandhi's methods of voluntaristic nonviolent political reform. Relatedly, heightened attention to the ideal of universal human rights encouraged tendencies toward non-combative solutions. In this spirit, an industry of Family, Marital, and Business Mediation Services sprang up at national and state levels, as did academies that provided training for professional mediators.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, this very cultural jump that produced a market for less adversarial forms of dispute resolution paralleled the shift that created an enthusiastic market for aikido teaching in the martial arts. Americans and Europeans came to experience a hunger for methods of conflict resolution that favor autonomy and consensus.

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<sup>5</sup>In the case of at least one prominent professional mediator, the parallels between mediation work and aikido have been explicitly discussed and even diagrammed (Saposnek 1998).

### III. The Methodology of Aikido

To schematize the methodology of aikido as a resource to manage social conflict, I list below a set of factors known to promote the onset and escalation of conflict, and explore how aikido deals with each of them. This is by no means an exhaustive list; complex tomes and thousands of papers have investigated the universe of internal and systemic variables related to conflict, escalation, and violence.<sup>6</sup> Those I have selected delineate factors which, in decades of teaching a course on Conflict Theory and Aikido, have seemed particularly plausible to me and relevant to engagement with aikido practice.<sup>7</sup>

Classic theories of conflict identify a number of factors internal to the parties: 1) bio-psycho-sociocultural dispositions toward aggression; 2) emotional reactivity; 3) hostile sentiments of the parties; 4) low self-esteem; and 5) memories of prior conflicts between the parties involved. Social science also has identified kindred factors located in the social and cultural environments, including 6) cultural beliefs about conflict and violence; 7) social controls that dampen conflict; and 8) availability of allies to help protagonists pursue the conflict.

Dispositions to aggressiveness in human personalities stem from a wide range of biochemical, psychological, social, and cultural factors (Levine 2006a, 2006b). Aikido theory assumes that humans will be subject to aggressive inputs from others as a matter of course. As a practice that seeks to promote harmony in action, accordingly, aikido seeks methods whereby attacks do not elicit counterattacks, but instead teaches ways to neutralize incoming aggression. Indeed, neutralizing aggressive attacks by others forms the core of aikido training. This involves both cognitive and kinesthetic responses. A major cognitive shift involves reframing the attacker as a training partner, not as an enemy; and reframing the attack itself not as a threat but simply as a charge, even a “gift,” of energy. In words that noted Sensei Mitsugi Saotome has expressed in seminars, “when someone grabs your wrist, it does not mean the start of a fight; it is the beginning of a conversation.” This

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<sup>6</sup>I find *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution*, by Louis Kriesberg (2007) a particularly valuable overview the field not least for its useful distinction between destructive and constructive conflicts.

<sup>7</sup>The syllabus of that course has been made public as an Appendix to my *Powers of the Mind: The Reinvention of Liberal Learning in America* (2005).

reconfiguring can be extended to cognitive operations that critique distorted perceptions one has of others (Eidelson and Eidelson 2008).

Kinesthetically, neutralizing the aggression of an attacker involves a number of moves. It means moving in such a way that the attack is not permitted to impinge on the body or the feelings of the person attacked, which is known as “getting off the line.” At the same time, it means allowing the energy of the attack to express itself fully—not “cutting the ki” of the attacker. Instead, it means conjoining with the attacker’s energy and directing it in such a way that neither party is harmed. It does so, moreover, not in a spirit of directing attackers to change their ways, but by listening to them, concurring with them and, indeed, even caring for them.

In whatever manner the attacker is defined, there remains the psychological issue of how ready the person attacked is to experience a Fight-Flight response. In his classic work on conflict, economist Kenneth Boulding coined the expression, “coefficient of reactivity,” to represent the degree to which parties react to a negative gesture by the other, which Boulding describes as the “touchiness” of the parties (1962, 25-7). Aikido puts a premium on learning to “respond, not react,” to attacks. Training for this includes learning how to remain calm by continued breathing, relaxed musculature, and staying “centered”—a state of being in which attention is directed to the lower abdomen.

Another factor that Boulding identified as inducing the escalation of conflict is the variable of what initial levels of hostility were evinced by one or both parties. Evidently, persons with an initial proneness toward hostile feelings and gestures are likely to instigate attacks and to perform counterattacks. Aikido trains persons to control their hostile impulses in a number of ways. They habituate themselves to express gratitude frequently. They learn to be continuously mindful of their bodily states, and to examine their own motives so as to subdue egoistic strivings that motivate aggressive gestures.

In a classic paper on community conflict, James S. Coleman (1957) begins his inventory of causes of social conflict by considering whether the parties had a prior history of conflict. Memories of previous conflicts can be recalled quickly and thereby reactivate the neurons that carry traumatic memories. One way in which aikido minimizes this factor is by training people to be present in the moment, to work to avoid carrying the baggage of prior injuries or hurt feelings into current transactions.

Beyond these factors intrinsic to the parties in interaction, other elements in aikido practice work to substitute harmony for conflicts that are promoted

by external conditions. As comparative cultural studies have demonstrated, cultures vary widely with respect to the positive or negative values they place on conflict and violence (Fromm 1973). The ideology of aikido implants strong dispositions to avert or counteract cultural dispositions to aggression. The very word aikido contains elements that signify harmony and love.<sup>8</sup> In the words of its Founder, “I’m not teaching you how to move your feet; I’m teaching you how to move your mind toward nonviolence.”

The customary ways in which aikido is practiced include elements that theorists have shown to have a dampening effect on conflict. Coleman showed that social conflicts were likely to be contained when the antagonists shared allegiance to some sort of supervening authorities and/or symbolism that enabled them to transcend their local conflict, and to third-party controls over their interaction (Coleman 1957). Aikido practice always begins and concludes with a ritual bow to the Founder of the practice and to the Japanese kanjis that signify harmonious interaction. On the mat, instructors intervene tirelessly to check students when their movements become the least bit aggressive. Other theorists point to the tendency of combatants to escalate conflict through the recruitment of allies among others in the system (Kerr 1988). Again, dojo etiquette requires partners to solve their own problems, and to seek assistance only when they cannot reach a solution in any other than a combative manner.

On all counts, then, aikido works to reduce if not eliminate factors understood to produce conflictual interactions, such that its practitioners do successfully replace notions of defeat and victory with the idea of enhancing the wellbeing and autonomy of both parties.

#### **IV. The methodology of mediation**

While the aiki approach to managing conflict emerged from a continuous historic process of domesticating martial ways, from the most brutish combat to cultivated weaponry to a benign exchange of non-injurious gestures, the history of judicial litigation shows a substantial upturn before economic and political crises forced the turn to alternative forms of dispute resolution. Sociologist Georg Simmel was among the first to note that when interpersonal

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<sup>8</sup>‘Aiki’ translates as joining of energies, or harmony. ‘Ai’ also has a homonym that signifies love.

Figure 11.2: Elements of aikido that reduce conflict and promote mutual respect

<b>FACTORS THAT PROMOTE CONFLICT AND ESCALATION</b>	<b>AIKIDO RESPONSES THAT COUNTERACT THOSE FACTORS</b>
Aggression invites counterattack	Neutralizing the aggression: get off the line of attack; reframe the attack; permit energy of attacker to spend itself
Reactivity heightens Fight-Flight response	Relaxation and centering
Hostile sentiments feed the fight	Generalized gratitude; understanding and connecting with the other
Insecure egos cannot stand humiliation of defeat	Using setbacks or “failures” as occasions for growth
Memories of prior conflicts feed reactions	Focusing awareness on the present
Symbols glorifying war, macho aggressiveness	Symbols of peace and humanity
Ineffectual moral authorities	Instituting respected authorities
Recruiting allies heightens escalation	Search within to eliminate discord



disputes get transferred to the jurisdiction of courts, they become uncompromising in content and vicious in execution. In a passage worth citing at length, he writes:

In judicial conflict . . . claims on both sides are pursued with pure objectivity and by employing all permissible means, without being deflected or in any way attenuated by personal or any other extraneous considerations. . . . Elsewhere, even in the fiercest battles, something subjective, some mere turn of fortune, or some interference from a third party is at least possible. In legal conflict, however, everything of that sort is excluded by the matter-of-factness with which the just fight and absolutely nothing else proceeds. . . . The prosecution of legal battles in more evolved societies serves the pure disentanglement of the controversy from all extraneous personal associations. When Otto the Great orders that a particular legal controversy be settled through trial by combat (*gottesgerichtlichen Zweikampf*) to be decided through professional swordsmen, only the bare form—the process of fighting and winning—is what remains out of the whole conflict of interests. (Simmel [1908] 1992, 305-6; translation mine)

In this spirit, from Law School on the contemporary legal system trains lawyers to deal with conflict by out-strategizing and out-maneuvering their opponents through an arsenal of techniques that aim at convincing a jury or a judge to produce a decision favorable to their interests—without regard to the best interest of both parties, and surely without regard to the best interests of third parties and society more generally. In the words of Daniel Weinstein, a former litigator and judge who became a professional mediator:

The goal of convincing juridical authorities is achieved through employing a blitzkrieg of maneuvers that includes interrogatories, depositions, and advocacy aimed at influencing decision makers rather than the “opponent.” The results are measured by how much you “win” . . . like Rocky standing on the steps with his arms raised in victory. Unlearning this warrior-like behavior for any litigator who enters the world of mediation advocate is difficult and not at all natural. Winning by a verdict imposed on the

other side is so much a part of our system that in order to inveigle lawyers to take mediation training, I once had to rename a course I taught on the subject from “Effective Mediation Advocacy” to “How to Win at Mediation,” an oxymoron of sorts. (Weinstein 2004).

Accordingly, just as aikido practitioners have to unlearn so much that is associated with the samurai ambition to defeat an enemy, so do lawyers who wish seriously to pursue a career in mediation have to learn a whole new set of techniques, techniques which are rarely available in the curricula of law schools. As Weinstein phrases it:

Effective mediation skills for the lawyer representing a client are very different from those of the litigators, whose skills do not translate from the courtroom to the mediation table. Stating your claims in terms that do not inflame the other side, and yet still integrate your clients’ important interests, is a learned rather than a spontaneously manifested skill. Turning your opponents’ fears, weaknesses, and anxieties into advantages, giving them a share of the outcome, and creating win/win solutions are new territory for the warrior litigator. (Ibid.)

The skills and norms of mediation were codified initially by practitioners in the areas of family counseling and conflict resolution education. The mediation movement was boosted substantially by the publication *Getting To Yes* (1981), the outcome of a Negotiation Project at Harvard University (2nd ed., 1991). The authors offer prescriptions for conduct that run precisely opposite the paradigm of lawyerly practice that Simmel had articulated when writing about legal conflict. They advocate moving from a win-lose mentality in which personal feelings and biases are rigorously excluded to a process in which perceptions are clarified; emotions are recognized and legitimated; listening to one another is prioritized; what the participants really need and want is assessed honestly; finding solutions in which both parties gain is encouraged; and fair standards and fair procedures are agreed to.

During the 1980s, a growing number of lawyers and judges developed an increasingly sophisticated repertoire of ideas and techniques for resolving disputes through mediation. In *Mediation: A Comprehensive Guide to Resolving Conflicts Without Litigation*, Folberg and Taylor provided a useful overview of the field. They provided a useful, succinct definition of the

process of mediation: “[A]n alternative to violence, self-help, or litigation that differs from the processes of counseling, negotiation, and arbitration. It can be defined as the process by which the participants, together with the assistance of a neutral person or persons, systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives and reach a consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs. Mediation is a process that emphasizes the participants’ own responsibility for making decisions that affect their lives. It is therefore a self-empowering process” (7-8). The volume offered materials on stages of the mediation process; relevant skills; diverse styles of mediating conflict; the educational, ethical and practical dimensions of mediation as a profession and an extensive bibliography.<sup>9</sup>

Although law schools were relatively slow to embrace this approach, since 2000 they have hastened to catch up. At present, many introduced courses and even programs about mediation. Now almost every American law school offers a course in mediation; many in fact offer programs with a constellation of mediation courses, clinics, and certificates. In the process, numerous traditional law course texts have come to include some material on mediation in the domains of contracts, torts, and trial practice.

If one were to draw up a set of training points for mediators that bears some resemblance to the list presented for aikidoka, it might look something like the following.

## V. Mutual relevance

For a society and a time dominated by an ethos of competitive individualism—where the business world dominates public imagination and feeds upon the imagery and motivations of competitive sports—where the American Dream is configured in terms of individuals’ “getting ahead” and where heroes are celebrated by how they achieve Victory and handle Defeat—aikido and mediation represent cutting edge, counter-cultural engagements in which the dominant motifs include Win-Win, subdue the ego, communicate openly, learn to trust, and build consensus. This is so, we have seen, even though both of them derive from traditions informed by centuries of mortal combat but which have been transformed at their core.

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<sup>9</sup>The literature on mediation techniques has grown enormously in recent decades. Prominent treatments include such titles as *Mediation: The Roles of Advocate and Neutral* (Folberg and Golann 2011) and “The Secrets of Successful Mediators” (Goldberg 2006).

Figure 11.3: Elements of mediation promoting agreement based on mutual respect

<b>FACTORS THAT MAINTAIN A LITIGIOUS ETHOS</b>	<b>MEDIATOR RESPONSES THAT COUNTERACT THOSE FACTORS</b>
Aggression as a stimulus	Lawyers and clients must not attack one another
Reactivity	Maintain a calm and friendly atmosphere
Hostile sentiments	Spot and build on points of agreement
Insecure egos	Praise willingness to be open and creative
Prior history of conflicts	Focus on present aspirations and future goals
Ideology favoring conflict	Appeal to general values of harmony
Nonexistent supra-local controls	Mediator stands to control escalation, and to adduce authority of shared values
Available allies	Identify allies as others who have successfully completed a mediation process

Insofar as these practices have contemporary value, it may be useful to see in what ways they can be seen to reinforce one another and, even more, how each can enrich and contribute to the other. Both join a number of other contemporary modalities in which combative procedures are explicitly replaced by practices that eschew adversarial postures. These include Couples Therapy, Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg 2005), a wide range of Alternative Dispute Resolution strategies, as well as Principled Negotiation (Fisher, Ury, and Paton ([1981] 1991)).

## **Aikido's Gifts to Mediation**

Aikido practice seems pertinent to all three of the domains in which mediators act:

1. the mediator's effect on the conduct of the disputing parties and their lawyers;
2. the mediator's effect on the interactional context of the mediation efforts; and
3. the personalities of the mediators themselves.

### *Affecting the litigators*

The mediation process requires exactly the opposite of what conventionally trained lawyers and their clients are disposed to do. In the words of experienced mediator Antonio Piazza, "Litigators tend to think of themselves as warriors. Frequently they come into mediation and forcefully communicate to the other party that the other party is: (a) simply wrong, and (b) perhaps too stupid to know it, and (c) quite probably too venal to care, and (d) if they don't settle they will be beaten to a pulp in court" (2004). Even though the actors in question understand that the goal of the process is a settlement agreement signed voluntarily by both sides, such counterproductive dispositions are a "natural" response based on aggressive instincts and a culture that values aggressive macho attitudes.

An aikido approach here would be not to change the behavior of others, but to change oneself. This begins with the self of the mediator. That is, discarding the usual method of importing techniques into a situation designed to instruct or coach someone how to communicate less aggressively or

less defensively, the mediator opens up him-/herself to non-directive, non-manipulative communication. So Piazza:

For the mediator, the process is not one of standing outside a dispute and applying skillful techniques to it, but entering fully and wholeheartedly, and without importing yet another agenda (and its concomitant fears and desires) into an already changed situation. By way of example: Mediation theory may tell you that it is critical to allow a disputant with an emotional charge to vent their feelings, and experience being heard. But if “active listening” is practiced as a technique to remove an obstacle, the felt experience of the disputant is as likely to be “I am being manipulated” as “I am being heard.” Paradoxically, aikido might well move you to fill the space between you and the disputant who is winding up for a tirade instantly, and so completely, that he never gets going at all. While that may sound brutal, the felt experience can be one of compassion. The difference is whether you are “doing to” or opening up to the person with whom you are interacting. (Ibid.)

### *Affecting the interactional context*

People who train aikido walk into a dojo carrying whatever stresses, frustrations, peeves, and gripes the day has brought them. They are expected to leave these at the door, much as Ethiopians traditionally left their weapons at the door of the church or mosque before they entered. They bow into the dojo, begin and close their training with a communal ritual. Expectations for deportment while practicing in then dojo are made clear.

It might be of value for mediators to direct some attention to the ritual setting of their deliberations. Another idea would be to distribute beforehand a list of point about etiquette in the mediation setting, much as many aikido organizations distribute to newcomers information about dojo etiquette. The psychosomatic power of gratitude can be rehearsed at unusual times. No less important would be words that remind the participants to reframe continuously the setting of their work: from a situation of combat to an opportunity to become more free and creative partners in a problem-solving conversation. One experienced meditator has suggested recently that the mediation process would be enhanced by attending more consciously to

preliminary groundwork for mediation and concluding mediation with words of grace that acknowledge the work that has been accomplished consensually. Aikido promotes such moments somatically both through a moment of getting centered before each exercise and by bowing appreciatively to one another at the beginning and conclusion of every practice.

### *Personalities of the mediators*

Practiced aikidoka may understand the situation of mediators better than they do themselves, in the sense of being trained in mindfulness about inner somatic and emotional responses to a complex of aggressive actors swirling about them. On this point, experienced aikidoka-mediator Stephen Kotev maintains that there is a serious gap in the training of ADR practitioners:

As mediators and conflict resolvers our somatic education has been neglected. Mediators are starting to realize their body language is often communicating more than they know. A clenched jaw, an exasperated look can say more than you ever intended. Your stress may cause you to say or do something that you later will regret. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to notice where in your body you were feeling stressed and be able to release it? Wouldn't it be nice to be able to show our neutrality in our posture as well as in our words? Knowledge of your physical process will help you be a more effective conflict resolver. (2007)

The mediator's need to be neutral requires a level of emotional development that is not easily come by. Aikido offers a variety of techniques and exercises that promote the state of being "centered," a state wherein the charged pushes and pulls of a subliminally litigious context can be finessed. Indeed, learning to be *centered under stress* forms a central part of aikido training. The state of being centered enhances abilities to perceive tense situations with more clarity and understanding, and to become aware of openings and options in stuck situations. Beyond that, the mediator works best when manifesting a positive state of openness and love that litigants can be exposed to and mirror. One particular relevant training is that of *randori* practice, where one is being attacked simultaneously by a surround of aggressive bodies and moving in an aware and flowing manner to manage them effectively.

## How Mediation Might Enrich Aikido Practice

This gets us into truly uncharted territory. The most I can do here is throw out a few suggestions. One is that the work of mediators provides greater awareness of the interpersonal dynamics involved in neutralizing aggression and harmonizing energies. This would evidently be particularly true of those, like family or couples therapists, whose primary focus is on the emotional landscape of the parties they work with.

Another contribution could be to turn the attention of aikidoka to the whole area of three-party interactions. Virtually all of aikido training concerns what to do when one party is being attacked by another. Aikido as hitherto practiced has little to show about how to stop fights, how to turn combat among others into conversation, and how to attain peace other than working one each individual's potential response to negativity. In today's world, that cannot be sufficient.

We remain beginners in these new modes of communication. It remains to be seen—most certainly, a worthy initiative to consider—what insights and fresh understandings of their own practices might emerge from occasions in which small numbers of mediators and aikidoka were brought together to share with one another reports of what they already do. I hope that these thoughts might stimulate others to carry the conversation forward.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

**Extending the Mature Vision of Morihei  
Ueshiba Sensei: Aikido as a Universal  
Practice of Peace and Self-Transcendence<sup>1</sup>**

Moi drodzy przyjaciele i wojownik-towarzysze dla pokoju!  
Agapitoy mou filoi kai sympolemistés gia tin eirini!  
Mes chers amis et guerriers-comrades pour la paix!  
My dear friends and fellow warriors for peace!  
Meine liebe Freunde und Mit-Kämpfer für die Friede!

It is wonderful to be here with you this week. I am so very grateful to Bertram Wohak and the good people around him who have mounted this amazing gathering. It is a special delight to share with you some thoughts about what we do, why we do it, and how we might do it even better.

To begin with: a deep bow to the Founder of our practice, Morihei Ueshiba Sensei, whom we love to call O'Sensei. The bow to him that commonly precedes our training signifies appreciation for his creation of aikido. But today, in addition, I bow to him as a special exemplar in two respects. First off, I salute him as a courageous leader, one who promulgated an inspiring vision and remained steadfast in pursuing it for the rest of his life. In this quest, he showed moral courage in rejecting the violent policies of his country prior to and during the World War. His exemplary leadership resulted in a global movement which continues to flourish generation after generation.

O'Sensei also stands as an exemplar by virtue of being an innovator who did not hold fast to a particular form, but continued to develop throughout

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<sup>1</sup>Keynote address for the European Aiki Extensions Seminar, "Aikido—an Embodied Art of Peace," Burg Rothenfels, Germany, June 7-9, 2013.

his life. And this means that the example of his life encourages us to experiment and move beyond his own attainments. “Life is growth,” said the Founder. “If we stop growing, technically and spiritually, we are as good as dead” (20).<sup>2</sup> In other sayings, he hinted at a course of action for growth. “I did not invent aikido,” he said, “I discovered it.” That is, aikido represents a set of phenomena that exist in nature, and if we study nature intently, we should be discovering other things there as well.

I often liken O’Sensei in this respect to another pioneer who worked to help us overcome our inner discords, Sigmund Freud. Both Freud and Ueshiba learned and experimented with new ideas and techniques continuously. Their example was not always followed by their students, some of whom treated as canonical only those lessons which they took pains to incorporate during the years when they were training with the master. On the other hand, just as some of Freud’s followers followed his example and went on to fashion novel analytic concepts and therapeutic tools, so a number of Ueshiba’s deshis—including Senseis Koichi Tohei, Terry Dobson, Seiseki Abe, Motomichi Anno, Mary Heiny, Seishiro Endo, Robert Nadeau, Mitsugi Saotome, and many others—created technical and philosophical innovations that sought to advance aikido in the spirit of his mature teachings. My remarks today aim to carry on in that spirit.

## O’Sensei’s Later Path

One way, I think, that aikidoka cling to outdated visions of aikido’s Founder is when they define it simply as a Japanese Martial Art of Self-Defense. This definition fits the earlier phases of Ueshiba Sensei’s teaching, and continues to provide useful entree for novices. However, I find it misleading as a representation of the vision that came to fruition in the last two decades of his life.

Let us consider in turn each term of this definition. ‘Martial,’ to begin with. Although aikido originated as *aiki-bujutsu*, as a new style of fighting in a panoply of combative arts traditions that climaxed with the samurai warriors of the 16th century, after World War II Ueshiba Sensei resolved explicitly to abandon the aims and the methods of those traditions. Already in 1941, when Japan’s war against the United States began, Gozo Shioda

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<sup>2</sup>The page references for all quotations by Morihei Ueshiba are taken from Ueshiba, *The Art of Peace: Teachings of the Founder of Aikido* (1992).

reports that O'Sensei turned to a more spiritual path. Shioda Sensei notes that he did not follow O'Sensei's teachings further at that point and thus claimed, with perhaps some hyperbole, to be the last of O'Sensei's students to be trained as a martial artist: "The concept of Aikido as a martial skill has ended with me" (Shioda 1977, 204).

According to O'Sensei's long-time live-in disciple, Mitsugi Saotome, two experiences accelerated that resolve: the catastrophes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and revelations from a Japanese soldier present at the liberation of Hitler's concentration camps. O'Sensei signaled this intent at a fateful meeting with Hikitsuchi Sensei in 1948, when he invited the latter to join in developing "a new kind of budo," one devoted explicitly to promoting world peace. This new budo, he emphasized, would be taught through an entirely different curriculum. Its methods were not to rely on pain or physical force, but to welcome of the energy of an attack, neutralize its aggressive direction, and care for the attacker. The structure of combat was transformed into a harmonious exchange of gestures. O'Sensei would represent this shift with the famous saying: "The secret of Aikido is not in how you move your feet, it is how you move your mind. I'm not teaching you martial techniques. I'm teaching you non-violence." And the goals of this curriculum changed radically—from defeating an opponent to gaining victory over oneself—*agatsu*. In later statements, O'Sensei identified two concrete ends of aikido: to help realize each individual's personal life mission, and to promote social harmony and world peace. In that spirit, aikidoka often translate aikido as The Art of Peace.

In so doing, however, they use a term that can also be seen as problematic: 'Art.'

But please remember: O'Sensei followed the precedent of Jigoro Kano, who reconfigured martial training by changing the term *bu-jutsu* to *bu-do*. What is *jutsu*? It signifies an art, a technique for accomplishing something. This word parallels the Greek word *techne*, from which English gets the word 'technique.' The *jutsu* or art of a carpenter is to make tables, of a painter to make pictures, of a doctor to make sick people well, and of a warrior to make enemies dead. By contrast, *do* signifies a Way—a way of being, a way of acting. As a *do*, aikido is not an art, but a way of living. Mindful of how classical Greek philosophers contrasted art (*techne*) and action (*praxis*)—and regarded the practice of philosophy as a "way of life"—let us call it a *practice*. This notion has affinity with the neo-Confucian concept of "cultivating

practice” (*xiuxing*), and resonates well with the dictum of Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh: “There is no way to peace—peace is the way.”

What is the point of that practice? Not self-defense, surely. For one thing, aikido is not about being defensive. It is easy to demonstrate how a defensive response produces continuing fear and discord, not harmony. Rather, the point of aiki practice is how to make connections—*musubi*, if you will. As Saotome Shihan has noted on the mat: “When someone grabs your wrist, it does not signify the beginning of an attack; it means the beginning of a conversation.” To grasp fully the somatic shifts involved in *receiving* an attack, not defending against it, takes years of practice; but is that not the point of so much of our training?

Moreover, aikido is not about defending the “self.” Recall what the Founder described as the objectives of aikido training: to realize one’s mission and to harmonize with others. With regard to the self and its boundaries, that implies an effort to transcend boundaries of the mundane self. This starts with simple etiquette, which O’Sensei once called the most important outcome of aikido training. It extends to care for our species and our planet. “Those who practice aikido,” he insisted, “ must protect the domain of Mother Nature . . .and keep it lovely and fresh” (24). Both etiquette and care for the earth, and everything else in between, involve moving above and beyond the ego. “Return to the source [of all things],” said O’Sensei, “and leave behind all self-centered thoughts, petty desires, and anger” (16). Elsewhere he adds, “Forget about your little self, detach yourself from objects, and you will radiate light and warmth” (116). His words resonate with the neo-Confucian contrast between the “small self” (*xiao wo*) and the “big self” (*da wo*), which involves a broadening of vision to connect with a wider community (Madsen 2012, 438); and bears a family relationship to the Hindu contrast between the individual, personal self (*atman*), and the universal *atman* that is identical with *brahman*, the ultimate ground of all being.

Putting all these notions together, we can describe aikido as *a practice of peace and self-transcendence*.

And what, finally, about the term ‘Japanese?’ Here, too, some revision is in order. To be sure, aikido was created in Japan, imbued with Japanese language, and associated with the distinctively Japanese religion of Shinto. Nevertheless, aikido is not Japanese in the same way that kabuki theater, ikebana, and sushi are Japanese. For one thing, the cultural roots of aikido stretch unmistakably across Asia. Key features of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism are conspicuously present in the ideas and rituals of

aikido practice. Shintoism itself, although often associated with Japanese identity, draws heavily on those other traditions, as William Gleason (1995) has emphasized. In his youth, Ueshiba studied many aspects of those traditions. A publication of the Japanese Budo Association affirms that Confucianism, Taoist thought, and Buddhism, were an integral part of the culture that went into the formation of aikido—that they all take universal nature worship as their direct foundation, and “generally speaking assert the concept of humankind as being at one with the universe and nature. Accordingly, to this extent *we cannot say that these beliefs constitute an ‘indigenous philosophy’ of Japan*” (Sadami 2005, 39; emphasis mine). Although we need to be careful in generalizing about traditions of the “East,” aikido is justifiably regarded as a bearer of “Eastern” thinking in ways that other Japanese martial arts are not.

As such, the widespread appreciation of aikido among Western practitioners can be seen as a yearning to incorporate the “Wisdom of the East.” It fulfills what Karl Jaspers imagined, in the clairvoyant work published just after World War II, *The Origins and Goal of History (Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte)*, when he asked: “What is it that, despite all the pre-eminence of Europe, has been lost to the West? It is in Asia that we find what we lack and what vitally concerns us! . . . Asia is indispensable for our completion” (1983, 95; “Was ist bei allem Vorrang Europas doch dem Abendland verlorengegangen? Es gibt in Asien, was uns fehlt und was uns doch wesentlich angeht! . . . Asien ist unsere unerlässliche Ergänzung.” Translation mine.) Such an insight indicates that, if aikido is supra-Japanese in its origins, it is all the more so in its contemporary appeal. As Ueshiba Sensei would have affirmed happily, it is *universal*, a gift for humanity.

In sum: on reflection, why not define aikido as: **A Universal Practice of Peace and Self-Transcendence?**

## Aikido as a Prophetic Teaching

If you follow me thus far and accept, if only for the sake of dialogue, the definition I just proffered, it might be fruitful to step back and reflect on what is at stake in the practice of aikido so defined. *Universalism, self-transcendence, and peace*: what do these ideas bring to mind? They remind me of what Karl Jaspers, in the book already referred to, described as the great human breakthrough: the complex of new values articulated in different

geographical centers during middle centuries of the first millennium BCE: in China, with Confucius and Lao-tse; in Greece, with Plato and Thucydides; in India, with the Upanishads and Buddha; in Iran, with Zarathustra; and in Palestine, with Isaiah and Jeremiah. Jaspers described that historical period as an “Axial Age”—axial in the sense of constituting a turning point in the history of mankind. This era was followed by comparable breakthroughs in later times, including those of Jesus; of Mohammed; and of the European Enlightenment. Our own time, I believe, has witnessed the emergence of two prophetic figures who produced new breakthrough visions regarding universalism, self-transcendence, and peace: Mahatma Gandhi and Morihei Ueshiba.

In recent decades an international collegium of scholars has turned to Jaspers’s formulations as a point of departure for wide-ranging analyses of the sources, forms, contents, and consequences of the Axial Period. Among the many insights these analyses have produced, what comes to my mind is certain tensions that inhere in the working out of these prophetic teachings in the world of humans. One is the competition among followers of the prophetic figures for ownership of what can be affirmed as the true message of his teaching. Another tension is the assertion of particularisms that subvert the universalism of the message.

The brief history of aikido has known both tensions. Although O’Sensei’s dying wish, eye witnesses tell us, was to implore his disciples to hold the movement together, not long after he passed tensions arose among those who claimed to possess the true version of his teachings. Over the years those tensions became more pronounced, and they persist to the present day. In addition, certain particularistic tensions arose, especially among those who sought to maintain the notion of aikido as a distinctively Japanese practice, one owned by the Japanese themselves. Recall, for instance, it was only a few years ago that Japanese authorities agreed to certify non-Japanese with the highest honorific titles previously preserved for Japanese nationals only.

Such tensions express perfectly natural reactions to ethically ambitious aspirations. The wish to stand as the main or the sole legitimate representative of one of the Axial visions and the wish to hold fast to group identities manifest deep human needs. That is why, time and again, many are called to retrieve and re-assert the claims of universalism and of positions that transcend the contentions among epigones.

From the outset, Aiki Extensions has stood as a prominent organization in the aikido world that holds fast to the universalistic ideal of the mature



Ueshiba's prophetic vision. AE's Training Across Borders Seminar in Cyprus, 2005, gave dramatic expression to this ideal. In the video made about that event, Richard Strozzi-Heckler commented on how readily persons from antagonistic groups come together in aikido because they relate to one another through their simple humanity. Since that time, Shihan Hiroshi Ikeda has regularly brought together practitioners from different aikido organizations in North America. This remarkable seminar at Rothenfels, with participants listed from several countries and diverse aikido organizations, continues that effort.

Beyond that, it engages directly the question of how the teaching of aikido can be brought more in accord with other aspects of O'Sensei's evolved vision. In that spirit, the remainder of my remarks will suggest ways to do so that challenge us to refresh our conception of the aikido curriculum all together.

## Revisioning Aikido

The Founder claimed that the teachings of aikido are intended to shape the whole of everyday human experience. As one of his memorable sayings goes, *aiki waza michi shirube*, training in aikido is a signpost to the Way. This implies that mat practices should feed directly into ways we handle all situations in personal and public daily life. Many if not most aikido instructors transmit this claim. Yet one may ask: does what transpires in the normal course of aikido training accord with this ideal? Here are four ways in which we might do so more systematically, ways which I shall present in a simple typology of four dimensions of aikido: reflexive; receptive; projective; and mediative.

1. The conventional aikido curriculum consists of training on the mat in techniques to neutralize and redirect the aggressive energies of attackers. That very fact should give us pause. For one thing, O'Sensei's curriculum was made up of two parts, as Robert Nadeau Sensei likes to remind us. In addition to *keiko*, or practice on the mat, it involved *benkyo*, or study. This model invites us pursue inquiries that ponder the verbal teachings of O'Sensei and to explore current issues and experiments that relate to them. This could become a formal part of our work, and not be left to casual off-the-mat occasional chats over beer. I propose that we envision a category of training called "reflexive

aikido,” something that we expect to focus on in AE’s international Aiki Peace Week.

2. How we talk about redirecting attacks continues to employ words and techniques that remain combative. I refer in particular about term ‘*nage*.’ *Nageru*, to throw, derives from samurai days, and connotes an aggressive response to an attacker. On the mat, this connotation surfaces when, following an initial harmonious ‘blend’ or *musubi* connection, the person playing the *nage* role moves to hurl down the attacker. That response does not fit the meaning of aiki. In a recent conversation with Anno Sensei, when asked if it was indeed not time to give up the term ‘*nage*,’ he thought for a moment and replied, “Perhaps it is.” (If the word ‘*uke*’ were not already used to signify the attacker, I would suggest *ukeru*, to receive, as the proper response of the person being attacked.)

We are all familiar with the sense of O’Sensei’s dictum: “When an opponent comes forward, move in and greet him” (77). So let us have the courage of O’Sensei’s wisdom and designate this mode of training as “receptive aikido.” This is the bread and butter of aikido keiko as we know it. There are two changes I would introduce. One is to move beyond the word and even more the attitude of *nageru*, of tossing our attacker down, and instead to conclude the aiki transaction with the notion of just letting the ki flow through. The other is the idea, which I learned from Mary Heiny Sensei, of actually moving our bodies to make room for the attacker. That promotes a more welcoming attitude.

3. What is more, although attacks offer frequent challenges in our lives, unless we are soldiers in battle, or politicians on the stump, dealing with attacks does not comprise the major activity in our lives. Rather, our primary attention goes to renewing our daily energies and pursuing our respective missions. Should we not then shape training with a focus on initiating and carrying through our *projects*? Let us call this work “projective aikido,” a term to designate practices that embody the initiation and execution of projects.

For this, the range of exercises invented by the late Koichi Tohei forms a fruitful point of departure. These focus on finding ways to extend ki and to avoid breaking ki. It is important to bear in mind: Tohei Sensei’s advice to “extend” ki, *ki o dasu*, does not mean to try to *do something*

with one's energy. Rather, the point is to relax into a position of good posture and feeling centered, remaining aware of the larger context of one's action, and then to maintain a clear focus on an end. That done, the flow of ki follows naturally in the direction of one's attention. This can be a protocol for all instances of projective aikido.

Somatically grounded guidelines for leadership represent one significant area in which projective aikido has been developed. Expanding Tohei Sensei's emphasis on focused attention, Richard Strozzi-Heckler advises: "To fulfill on our pledge as leaders, it's essential to know what to attend to and how to extend our attention toward that end. Energy follows attention" (2007, 148). Adapting the warrior idiom he encourages leaders to fight for a stand, which involves "the ability to decline what's inconsequential, insist on what's right, require others to pay attention, demand justice, quit those who pull you away from your stand, and, if necessary, put your identity and body at risk for what you say is important" (114). In a kindred vein, Wendy Palmer has re-configured aiki-inspired work in Conscious Embodiment into a training program for leadership, which teach ways to alter reaction patterns to stress, be more inclusive, and speak up clearly without combativeness or collapsing. She has extended this program to work with leaders in and around Capetown, South Africa, to support a positive future for an integrated country.

Other areas in which projective aikido has been implemented include applications of aiki principles to work in the arts. A preeminent exemplar of this mode was the late Seiseki Abe Sensei, for whom the principles of aikido were essentially the same as those for *shodo*, calligraphy. In the performing arts, we have a number of models to inspire us. These include Dance Improv, which was inspired directly from aikido; the work of Paul Linden and Pamela Ricard with dramatic actors; and in music, the examples of Craig Naylor's aiki conducting, Bill Levine's aiki playing on the keyboard, Masumi per Rostad in viola-do, and Jack Wada in aiki flowing on the trumpet.

When I started to experiment with this perspective on the mat, I used the term "uke-centered" aikido. But again, *ukeru*, to receive, was just as inappropriate for the activity on initiating projects as *nageru* was for receiving the energy of an attacker. In this case, I found a perfectly fine Japanese term, *hajimi*, which signifies one who starts something.

And so, whether it be an attack on the mat, the draft of a charter, a brush stroke on parchment, or the stroke of a bow on a viola string, the point of training is to enhance the capacity to focus attention, to center oneself prior to initiating the move, to proceed freely and responsively, and to deal with obstacles in a caring and protective way. Creative aikido surely represents a dimension of action to which the notion of *takemusu aiki* is exceptionally relevant.

4. Finally: what in our usual training embodies the goal of turning social antagonisms into harmony? Many of us speak of social conflict resolution as an important contribution of aikido, yet how often do we turn to aikido for ways to prevent violence or resolve the stopping of fights between others. The field is open for us to comb the literature and practice of aikido to codify exercises that enable conflicts to take a constructive turn. Here we would do well to collaborate with other disciplines that deal with conflict resolution. The practice of mediation by lawyers and former judges has been developed a great deal in recent years. Non-Violent Communication likewise gained an international following.

For professional mediation, we already have a number of readily usable ideas. These include ways to affect the conduct of the disputing parties and their lawyers; to enhance the mediator's effect on the interactional context of the mediation efforts; and to guide the personal conduct of the mediators themselves (Levine 2013). Might we devise new exercises on the mat that work to break up fights and move combatants toward harmonious resolutions? This whole complex could form a challenging frontier area: Mediation-centered Aikido.

To sum up: to refresh the aikido curriculum to bring it into greater harmony with the full teachings of the mature Ueshiba Sensei, I propose an approach to our practice that organizes it in terms of four different dimensions: 1) *reflexive* aikido, to ponder the meaning of our practice; 2) *receptive* aikido, to deal with attacks from others; 3) *projective* aikido, to promote the initiation and execution of projects; and 4) *mediative* aikido, to help resolve conflicts among others.

My remarks this evening have been in the mode of reflexive aikido, or *benkyo*. Tomorrow morning in *keiko* I shall suggest some techniques for so doing. For now, I close with an expression of enormous gratitude for your

attention and for sharing your time with me this evening. *Domo arigato gozai mashita.*

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# Appendix A: Conflict Theory and Aikido Course Syllabus

The University of Chicago

Sociology 20115/30115  
Autumn 2010

Donald Levine, instructor  
Dan Kimmel, course assistant

## CONFLICT THEORY AND AIKIDO: The Aiki Way to Managing Conflict

This course has three aims:

1. to expand knowledge about social conflict and ways of dealing with it;
2. to explore bodymind reflexivity as a resource for cultivating self and understanding others;
3. to introduce the practice of aikido, as a means for dealing with conflict and for cultivating selves.

### I. SOMATIC AWARENESS AND AIKIDO

#### **M, 9-27 — *Aikido and Bodymindfulness***

Connections among body-feelings-mind-spirit

Mind > body (mental framing)

Body > feelings (postural affects)

Mind > body > energy (force of intention)

Body > perceptions > mind > spirit (relaxations)

Modes of learning through aikido

attending to bodymind experience

collaborative inquiry with training partners

Conditions of intense bodymind learning

dedicated place (*dojo*), uniform (*dogi*), attitude (*shugyo*)

disciplines of respect:

- 1) for Place; 2) for self; 3) for partners; 4) for teachers; 5) for conversations;

6) for Truth

#### **W, 9-29 — *The mat-dojō as a place for learning the martial Way (budo)***

Respect in the dojo (*li / rei*)

Elements of martial practice:

Stance (*kamae; hanmi*). Changing *hanmi*. Stepping and pivoting.

Sitting (*seiza*). Rolling. Falling (backward).

Lowry, *Sword and Brush*: ch 1, “*Do*”; ch. 3, “*Keiko*”; ch. 35, “*Rei*”; ch. 40, “*Shugyo*”

“The Dojo and its Culture” (Selected Readings: A)

**F, 10-1 — *The mat-dojō as a place for learning about one’s self***

Centering experiences. Testing for centering and ki extension. *Katate-dori kokyu-nage*.

“Why Aikido?” (Selected Readings: A)

Lowry, *Sword and Brush*: ch. 11, “*Ki*”; ch. 26, “*Hara*”; ch. 27, “*Uke*”

## II. INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL CONFLICT

**M, 10-4 — *Broaching the study of social conflict***

Broaching the study of anything (stasis theory)

Commonplace questions:

Is it?

Why study it?

Defining it:

How define it?

Why define it that way? (cf. “essentially contested concepts”)

How study it?

Simmel, “The Problem of Sociology”, “On Conflict”, “Competition” (SR:A)

Boulding, *Conflict and Defense*, pp. xv-xvii, 1-6 (e-reserve)

Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict*: preface, introductory, props. 1, 2, 4, 5

**W, 10-6 — *Aikido practice as collaborative inquiry***

Attacking sincerely and falling safely (*ukemi*). *Katate-dori kokyu nage* (wrist-grab, breath-throw).

Lowry, ch. 39, “*I: Intent*”

**F, 10-8 — *Investigating conflict on the mat***

Types of conjoint training. *Katate kosa-dori ikkyo* (cross-hand grab, first takedown).

Lowry, ch. 5, “*Kata*”; ch. 23, “*Te*”; ch. 24, “*Kamae*”

## III. ELEMENTS OF CONFLICT

**M, 10-11 — *Motives, means, and consequences in conflictual interaction***

Boulding, *Conflict and Defense*, pp. 7-18 (e-reserve)

Coser, *Functions*, prop. 3

Gelles & Straus, “Determinants of Violence in the Family,” Intro, sec. 1-4 (e-reserve)

**W, 10-13 — *Elements of martial engagement***

Distance and timing (*ma-ai*). *Katate-kosa-dori ikkyo*. *Yokomen-uchi waza*.

Simmel, “Distance” (SR:A);

Lowry, ch. 15, “*Hyoshi*”, ch. 36, “*Ma*”

**F, 10-15 — *Types of attack and types of response*.**



*Tai no henko* (three forms), *Musubi* (joining), *Katate-dori kokyu-nage*  
Saotome, “*Musubi*” (SR:A)  
Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, ch. 3

## IV. ESCALATION / DE-ESCALATION: PERSONAL SOURCES

### M, 10-18 — *Paradigms of escalation*

Kerr, “Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self” (SR, B)  
Boulding, *Conflict and Defense*, ch. 2 (e-reserve)  
Coser, props. 5 & 6 (60-72)

### W, 10-20 — *Escalatory effects of different responses to attack*

Counter-attack. Acquiescence. Moving off the line.  
Taking a hit. Offline with connection. *Munetsuki kokyu-nage*.  
Leonard, “Taking the Hit as a Gift” (SR:B)

### F, 10-22 — *Escalatory effects of different forms of aggressive expression*

Expressing antagonism in a relationship. *Munetsuki kokyu-nage*.

## V. ESCALATION / DE-ESCALATION: SOCIAL SOURCES

### M, 10-25 — *Social mechanisms for controlling escalation*

Coleman, *Community Conflict* (SR: C)  
Parsons, “Racial and Religious Differences as Factors in Group Tensions”  
Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, ch. 6, “Escalating Conflicts”

### W, 10-27 — *Bodymind mechanisms for controlling dispositions to escalate*

Positive receptivity. Reframing. *Munetsuki kote-gaeshi*.

### F, 10-29 — *Embodied responsive techniques for controlling escalation*

*Munetsuki waza*. *Irimi nage waza*.  
Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, ch. 7, “De-escalating Conflicts”

## VI. VIOLENCE

### M, 11-1 — *Dimensions of violent engagement*

Biological: Lorenz, *Aggression*, Intro, ch. 13;  
Wrangham & Peterson, *Demonic Males*, chs. 3, 4, 6 (7, 9 optional)  
Social-Psychological: Scheff, “Male emotions/relationships and violence: a case study”

(e-res)

Social: Coser, “Some Social Functions of Violence” (SR:B)  
Cultural: Sorel and Fanon, selections (SR:B); Fromm, “Anthropology” (SR:B)

### W, 11-3 — *Training for courage*

Entering the line of attack. *Marubashi* training. *Katatedori irimi-nage*.  
Lowry, *Sword and Brush*, ch. 15 “*Shin*”, ch. 19 “*Fudo*”

### F, 11-5 — *Staying centered under stress*

Multiple attacks (*randori*). *Irimi waza*.

## VII. NONVIOLENCE

### M, 11-8 — *Conceptions of non-violent engagement*

James, “The Moral Equivalent of War” (e-reserve)

Bondurant, *The Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, 3-41

Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication*, selections (SR:B)

### W, 11-10 — *Training for Calm Control*

*Mushin and fudoshin*. Reframing.

Leggett, “*Mushin*” (SR:B)

*Shomen-uchi ikkyo, omote*.

### REFRAMING ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

### F, 11-12 — *Leading the mind*

*Shomen-uchi ikkyo, ura*.

An Aiki reconstruction of the Cain and Abel story:

Heckler, *In Search of the Warrior Spirit*: 84, 134-40, 197-203 (e-reserve)

## VIII. MEDIATION

### M, 11-15 — *Third parties in the management of conflict [with guest Craig Naylor]*

Simmel, “The Nonpartisan and the Mediator” (e-reserve)

### W, 11-17 — *Mental states of conflict mediators (classroom)*

Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, ch. 8, “Intermediary Contributions”

Kagan, *Adversarial Legalism: The American Way of Law* 9-17 (SR: B)

Hovering awareness (*zanshin*). *Happo undo*. *Yokomen-uchi shihonage*.

Lowry, *Sword and Brush*, ch. 32, “*Zan*”

### REFRAMING ASSIGNMENT DUE

### F, 11-19 — *Position and timing in mediating conflict*

Conflicts with multiple parties

Folberg, *Resolving Disputes: Theory, Practice and Law*: 95-97, 204-207

Saposnek, “Mediating Child Custody Disputes”

Kerr, “Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self” (SR, B) *Reprise*.

## IX. AIKIDO AND KINDRED DISCIPLINES? OTHER ASPECTS OF CONFLICT?

### M, 11-22 — *Review of Readings and Discussion of Final Paper*

Levine, “Ki Development and Aiki Training” (handout)

### W, 11-24 — *Keiko Review*

## X. THE AIKI WAY

### M, 11-29 — *Classic formulations*

Ueshiba, *The Spirit of Aikido*

Quotations from Aikido Masters: Ueshiba, Saotome, Doran (SR:B)

W, 12-1 — *A Paradigm of the Aiki Way (handout)*

F, 12-3 — *Optional keiko review*

## XI. PUTTING IT TO THE TEST

M, 12-6 — *Testing waza*

W, 12-8 — *Final papers due*



## Appendix B: Student Reflections on the Aikido Course Experience: Update Autumn 2010

Each year that the Conflict Theory and Aikido course has been offered, students have submitted notes—in journals, responses to prompts, or spontaneous letters to the instructor—which describe some key learning experiences from the course. Over the past two dozen years, these notes show considerable continuity, particularly regarding the themes of enhanced ways to manage conflict situations; in handling personal stress; in gaining awareness of body-mind connections; and in ways to gain an understanding of an unfamiliar culture. In the later versions of the course, other themes became salient. These include enhanced appreciation of formal structures of etiquette, and awareness of the process and value of improved social connections.

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1. Expectably, learning new ways to deal with conflict appeared as one fundamental outcome, inasmuch as aikido introduced techniques of deescalation and mediation.

One does not seek to block an attack, but to blend with it, one does not push or pull their partner but instead connects with them and guides them. All of these techniques are intended to help both parties understand one another and see the conflict from the other's perspective, thereby allowing the conflict to be resolved in a manner beneficial to both parties.

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The on-the-mat practice of Aikido has entirely transformed the way I see conflict, relationships, leadership, and life-energy by showing me that the harmonious middle-ground always exists; all it takes is a few breaths and a relaxed mind.

2. Like their predecessors, students in the Autumn 2010 class applied their aikido training to other aspects of their lives. Aikido opened up new ways to handle the enormous stress that the academic requirements of The College places on its students:

Another consequence of centering yourself that has been very useful, both inside and outside of class, is its stress-relieving effects. . . . [T]hrough aikido classes, I have learned to focus on breathing from my center. Not only has this been useful for relaxing myself during mat sessions when I find myself confused in an exercise, but also with dealing with the stress of classes, work, and any other demanding situation. Focusing on breathing from your center grounds you; it calms you down and allows you to see things clearer with an unclouded mind.

Another student shared a similar experience, writing:

Whenever I was feeling particularly stressed this quarter, I made sure to take a second to sit down, calm myself, and re-find my center. Originally, I tried this on a whim when I was feeling very overstressed, and to my surprise, it worked! I felt a lot better. Ever since then, I've been using our technique of centering whenever I feel anxious and once I finish, I find that I am able to tackle whatever problems were bothering me with a much calmer demeanor and a rejuvenated enthusiasm. . . . [T]hese two practices translate very easily to the world outside of the mat. They become applicable, and eventually necessary, to one's everyday life.

3. As before, the dojo rituals and codes of conduct created an atmosphere that initially confused some students and often provoked resistance. More recently, students talked about coming to find meaning in such prescriptions as the course progressed, and about the value of relating to them with an open mind. One student, who identified himself as a "free spirit," found the dojo structure difficult, but wrote later:

Once I realized that the structural confines liberate Qi flow in the dojo, however, I was able to fully accept Aikido. In essence, by accepting Aikido, I turned it into my partner. I regained my center and pivoted into this new world to see things from its perspective. What Don Sensei said, that the physical practice inculcates the theory into the self, is starting to ring true to me.

Some students described growing up in an environment that emphasized advancement by competition and besting other persons. The non-competitive, mutually respectful ethos of aikido challenged them to rethink those earlier norms. From fighting with his partners when they did not comply with his expectations, one student wrote, he began to be influenced by the calm, respectful demeanors of other aikido practitioners:

At the dojo, instead of focusing on causing my partner to fall, I started to focus on the precision of my own technique and stance. This awareness of my own center and my personal development has naturally evolved into a sincere attitude towards everything in my daily life. . . . I realized that by following the norm [of the dojo], I actually started to develop real respect towards the other classmates and the dojo tradition. Such attitude of respect has extended beyond the dojo. As I have become more respectful during the

Aikido training, I also naturally became more respectful to people I met everyday.

4. A fundamental tenet of aikido is the creation of a “connection” between uke and nage. Without this connection, techniques will not work and partners will stay locked in trying to overpower one another. Like all beginners, students in the class focused exclusively on crude, physical connections. With time, the physical connection became refined, and what became even more important was mental: “a connection of intentions.” Aikido thereby became more than just a way of warding off an attack; it opened a new type of understanding. Training led the students to look at one another in a new light:

Aikido is showing me that it’s a perfectly realistic aspiration for us to turn adversaries into partners.

This type of awareness extended to enabling students to improve personal relations outside of the class. By learning to take challenges, problems, and negative feelings as opportunities to learn, students began to view the tense relationships in their lives as paths towards growth:

Aikido forced me out of my comfort zone. I had no choice but to get closer to others. Indirectly, I guess, this helped me open up a bit more with people.