

# 残心

# Zan Shin

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## Training at Shinjinkai

by Ted Yeh

At Northwestern, the Aikido Club meets three times a week at Blomquist gym. We share the space with basketball players, badminton players, runners, weight-lifters, cross-trainers, dancers - anyone looking to work off some extra energy after the work day. As a result, the area that is our makeshift dojo (Zan-

shinkan) is sometimes interrupted with distractions and white noise. In some way it forces us to focus more intently on our training, filtering out the background to achieve some semblance of a quiet atmosphere, but that is easier said than done.

Although Zanshinkan was founded in 1974, we consider Shinjinkai (mid-*SHINJINKAI continued on page 3*

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## Aikido in Cape Town

by Grace Huang

When I first walked into the aikido dojo in Cape Town, South Africa, which is situated in one part of a Presbyterian church at the end of a busy street, I wasn't sure what to expect. (Other than the view - walking out after practice and seeing mountains shrouded in mist is fantastic.) But naturally, it was different from Shinjinkai and Zanshinkan in certain ways.

In a sense, the atmosphere is more casual. The sensei cheerfully inquires how everyone is doing during stretches. Everyone tells me to smile more all the time - they work by a motto of "Smile, both physically and mentally" - and they laugh when I protest that I'm just born with this serious face. People also talk more on the mats, whether to inquire about nuances in the twist of the wrist regarding a certain technique or to ask why we have to move a certain way.

Yet, I never get the sense that anyone's not taking practice 100 percent seriously. The students I've gotten to work with - ranging from 6th to 1st kyu - are nothing if not incredibly proficient. As in,

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## What is Kiai!?

by John Mazza-Sensei

Kiai! is a Japanese martial arts term used to designate a scream or shout. But, is it just that or much more? The term can be broken down into its two parts: Ki, generally identified with energy or spirit, and Ai, associated with joining or combining. Therefore, Kiai! could be read as combining spirit (It should be noted that some hold that Kiai! is an expression of Spirit vs. Combining Spirit), or, as I think of it, a focused energy, projected, the purpose of which is to galvanize your

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## Discipline is Ki

by Jonathan Terrasi

As a musician, I am no stranger to discipline. Not only does pursuing music as a course of collegiate study involve discipline of practice, determining what needs work and not relenting until a given playing deficiency is corrected, but a discipline of attitude, in that one must reconcile with the sad reality that gainful employment in the arts does not come easily. Even as I initiated my training in Aikido a mere month-and-a-half ago with little understanding of martial arts, it was clear to me that Aikido was not markedly different from music in its uncompromising demand for dedication. Thus, even as my development was, at first, discouraging, I was not deterred.

What was not readily apparent was that the focus requisite for Aikido was not entirely encapsulated in coming to class as frequently as I was able and, just as in music, taking time of my own to steel the weaknesses in my technique. I came to learn that there is an aspect of Aikido, and all martial arts, that can only be won and lost in the mind. This struggle playing out in the root of our consciousness is described in one very small word: Ki. So central is it to Aikido that it is in its very name.

Ki, very simply put, is energy, but that in itself is a trite distinction without application. For it to truly be manifest in training, one must cultivate it with such diligence that summoning it is the sole function occupying one's mind. Left in dissipation (as in our average waking lives), it settles harmlessly like dust, but sharpened to a scalpel's keenness, it can rend any barrier. And, sure enough, those instances that saw my focus most intimately invested in one task were the ones where fluidity of motion most crystallized.

Such a concept is impressive enough in its own right, but its utilization in Aikido is only the beginning of its awesome strength. Once it manifested contextually in Aikido, unshackling it from

a solitary purpose unleashed almost unimaginable potential, and I soon found myself fueling the rest of my life's work with it. For example, as central as practice is to musicianship, no musician has completely escaped a nagging reluctance for it. But as soon as I brought the goal I have for my art into the center of my consciousness, such reluctance quickly diminished. Instances where I ordinarily would have skipped a practice session disappeared almost entirely, and even the time spent within my practice was put to more productive use.

The greatest gains Aikido has to offer, then, do not exist purely in the techniques and maneuvers themselves, then, but in the state of mind one must enter to execute them to any notable degree.



SHINJINKAI *continued from page 1*

1980s) our parent dojo. Both dojos were founded by the late Fumio Toyoda Shihan. Shinjinkai is located in Ravenswood, near the Addison stop on the Brown line. The facility operates as both a Japanese martial arts dojo as well as a Zen meditation temple. It is directed by Meido Moore, a 5th dan aikidoist and ordained Zen Roshi. Shinjinkai offers adult and youth aikido classes throughout the week in addition to meditation sessions, Japanese sword arts, and internal training.

When I first started aikido I was strongly encouraged by senior students to visit and train at Shinjinkai if I was serious about progressing. After several months and much prodding, I headed down to a Saturday class with Jared Lewis (former NU aikido club president). In marked contrast to Blomquist, the atmosphere at Shinjinkai is much more peaceful and quiet. The mat area is only slightly larger, and on “normal” class days there are between 10-20 students. The people who train come from a variety of backgrounds, ages, and experience levels. For beginner NU aikidoists thinking about going to train there: do not be concerned about being a newbie – there are many beginners at Shinjinkai also.

The main advantage, in my opinion, is the ability to train with many more students. Because

Zanshinkan’s membership is quite small, we only get to train with a handful of people. But some of the best progress that I’ve made in aikido has come from training with a much wider variety of people at Shinjinkai. I’ve had the opportunity to work with yudansha (black belt holders), as well as beginners and similarly-ranked students. The diversity of people allows one to fine-tune technique to different body shapes and skills as well as learn tips and tricks from the more experienced aikidoists. Everyone is very friendly and helpful in Shinjinkai’s close-knit community.

Although schedule and transportation limit my visits to Shinjinkai during the week, in the summer I will often go to Saturday class, leaving Evanston on the El just before noon and attending class from 1:00 to 3:15, stopping for a sandwich or burrito nearby before returning home. There is also Trader Joe’s on the other side of the Metra tracks, if one wanted to stock up on food. All in all I encourage the members of Zanshinkan to take at least one trip down to Shinjinkai during their aikido career at Northwestern. The people love hearing from NU students, and the training and experience there is invaluable.



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they are very diligent, very focused, and know techniques as though they've practiced them and the vocabulary for years. The sensei puts great emphasis on the basics – not just tai sabaki, but your general stance as well.

The self-defense aspect of aikido is especially emphasized here – though this area of Cape Town is fairly safe, muggings are not exactly unheard of. The higher-ranked students move with precision, walking with their shoulders square and stances unforgiving – a habit that is incredibly beneficial for dissuading potential attackers. They move in larger, sweeping circular motions for techniques such as nikkyo – part of a strategy for someone smaller like me, they explained, to get myself better footing against a hulking attacker. No matter how precisely I use a technique, there would probably be a man on the street who simply has more muscle mass and a foot and a half of height with which to trample all over me.

They made a point to demonstrate that fact, with me squaring off against a 2nd kyu who had a lot of upper arm strength – and showed no mercy.

But all the same, the sensei emphasised that no matter our confidence or martial mindset, our first strategy is to run far away as fast as we can.

Perhaps until we get to his level, anyway, he said with a smile.

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## Aikido in Presentations

*by Alex Adler*

Through our training as students of Aikido, we are frequently reminded to remove all unnecessary movement, to retain balance, and to form a connection with the uke. Sensei will point out that our shoulders are raised unnecessarily or that our elbow is up when it should be down closer to your center. We see our imbalance both during and on completion of the technique. And, we can easily tend to lose track of the connection between nage and uke when trying to remember our own technique forgetting that this connection is part of the technique. Although most of us have only been training in Aikido for a few years,

## Aikido and Graduation

*by Mert Iseri*

This quarter, I waved goodbye to Northwestern. I had arrived here three years ago as a transfer student from Istanbul – eager to try new things and learn about new cultures.

Upon other things, something that stayed constant with me over the quarters was Aikido. Classes, midterms, friends changed, but I knew Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays meant training.

I was a student of Aikijitsu back in Turkey, and I definitely went through an adjustment period for Aikido (even the mats are a little harder here). My mind and body was shaped and bent over and over again on the mats.

It took me three years to realize how little I know. After three years, I'm a beginner now. As I look at my teachers and my future, I can't help but ask myself "If it took me three years to begin learning, how many years will pass before I can become like them?"

I know that it will be a journey. A journey that I'm looking forward to with passion. I thank everyone in Northwestern and Shinjinkai who have helped me so far, and I'm looking forward to help those after me as well.



**PRESENT** *continued from page 4*

over the course of our education, we have presented and been witness to many presentations from impromptu speeches to more formal powerpoint. While these basics of many techniques--efficiency, balance, and connection--are clearly present on the mats, they manifest in different ways in front of an audience

While on the mat, unnecessary movement can indicate sloppy technique or worse, expose an opening for uke to take advantage of. In front of an audience, unnecessary movement can take the form of rocking back and forth, shifting weight, or even pacing. Mindfully planting your feet on the ground and ensuring you move only when you mean to (for instance, when approaching the slide to make a gesture) can greatly improve the way one is perceived by an audience. Similarly, a lack in verbal efficiency can take the form of 'um's' and 'like's'; filler words that can distract. Someone who is constantly shifting can appear nervous and what's worse is that this shifting coupled with filler words can distract the audience thus diluting your message.

In Aikido, we attempt to balance and ground ourselves at every moment. In front of an audience, we must balance the visual display of infor-

mation. Visual balance can mean ensuring there is not an overabundance of text on a slide or a lack of text for explanation. This can also mean balancing the importance of the speaker and his/her slides. After all, there's a reason people are watching a presentation and not reading a pamphlet.

Finally, it is important to maintain a connection to your audience. Understand that much like a shomenuchi strike has a starting point/trajectory and a goal in mind (to slice the head from the top), so too does your audience have a background and a set of goals they have when watching you speak. Knowledge of the audience's background knowledge and their intended outcome to having seen you speak can allow you to adapt and enhance the experience for everyone involved. Much like you would not use the same exact technique for every attack, you should never give the same talk to audiences with different backgrounds.

Aikido is much more than a means of self defense. As the embodiment of a set of philosophies and physical concepts, one can practice Aikido in any environment and at any time.



## Why Study Aikido?

by Colin Gilliland

This may seem an especially puzzling question for me: an out of shape, less than athletic college student prone to a lazy lifestyle. Aikido, on the other hand, requires sharp reflexes, agile movement, and most of all an intense focus on every aspect of one's own physical movements. The short answer is that, rather than to become a master of the martial art, I wanted to experience a radically foreign activity and hopefully take something away that I would typically never encounter in my day-to-day life. I have never studied any form of martial art before, and went in with the understanding that it would be extremely difficult and require a lot of will to learn. Now, after just one quarter of being thrown down on the mat from every angle, I can confidently say that I have begun to accomplish my goal. In order to become

skilled in something, one must change the way one thinks in order to accommodate the acquisition of new information. This first crucial step is often the most difficult. I had to drastically develop my spatial awareness and open up my mind to a more extensive understanding of my own body, something I was not used to doing. Once I realized this necessity, it became much easier to understand why any given move was executed the way it is. All movements in Aikido are interconnected and require elegant, fluid communication between the mind and body. This newfound perspective not only helped me to progress in my studies on the mat, but also translated into my daily life. Aikido has taught me not only how to move, but also how to mentally approach difficult situations. I hope to develop these skills more greatly in time.

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entire being in to one moment. This one moment expresses your intent, or focus.

This focus is meant to express an individual's intensity or passion directed, either inwardly or outward. Inwardly, Kiai! internally expressed propels you to continue on through a task: 1000 cuts with the Bokken. My teacher, Shihan Toyoda, had an expression for this inward Kiai!. He would say, "Show me your guts!" Your intestinal fortitude used to overcome a self-imposed limitation that sometimes keeps us from giving 100%. Outwardly, this intensity can be a look, a shout, or a physical posture demonstrating your willingness to do what needs to be done; it unifies the body and mind to receive a blow, deliver a

strike, to inject apprehension, or, simply, to ward off an adversary.

I think of Kiai! as a process that can be used to strengthen one's own psyche for any encounter, martial or otherwise.

Based on my own experience, the best way to develop Kiai! is through meditation, misogi breathing, makiwara training, and Kiai! practice... Simply said, training!

Kiai!, in my opinion, can not be truly explained. What is expressed above is a limited presentation. There is more to be said, but to know Kiai! it must be experienced. This experience is achieved through training, and it is through daily training that you become experienced. Are you experienced?

*An old proverb tells us:*

I hear and I forget.

I see and I remember.

I do and I understand.