

December, 2014

残心

Inside This Issue:

- Congratulation Letters 1-2
- Why Study Martial Arts? 3
- No Pain, No Gain. 3
- Who Is Your Teacher? 4
- NU Professor, One-of-a-Kind Club Embody Aikido Spirit 6
- Aikidō, Meditation, and Mantra 7
- A Comparison of Various Types of Martial Arts 8

Contributors to this Issue:

- Craig Bina
- Axel Boada
- Laurel Childress
- Bryan Guo
- John. B. Mazza
- Katie Poland

Journal of the Northwestern University Aikido Club

# Zan Shin

## Special Issue: Celebrating 40 Years of Aikido at Northwestern University (1974-2014)

### A Congratulation Letter from Meido Moore Sensei

We're currently celebrating the 40th anniversary of our Northwestern University Aikido Club (Zanshinkan Dojo), founded by Toyoda Sensei in 1974 and now one of the oldest, continuously training university Aikido clubs in the country. The NU club became part of Shinjinkai shortly after Toyoda Sensei's death in 2001, and has continued its long tradition of practice with help from several of our teachers and senior students. The chief instructor for the majority of its history, however - as well as today - is John Mazza Sensei.

Many thanks to everyone over the years who's been a part of the NU Aikido family. The club was one of the first dojos started by Toyoda Sensei when he arrived in the USA that year, long before he built any large organization or began extensive international activity. It is therefore one of the roots of our training lineage and heritage, and so very important to preserve.

Congratulations to Mazza Sensei and all the NU members!



## **A Congratulation Email** *from Masa Hagihara Sensei*

From: Masa Hagihara, Sensei  
(Taught at Zanshikan/NU Aikido Club in the 70's. He was also one of my Instructors)

Dear John san,

Thank you for your e-mail...

I really miss the days training in Aikido at the Chicago/Evanston Dojo, and the Northwestern University Aikido Club.

One of the things I missed most is the time I spent with my Aikido friends in Chicago. It has been almost 38 years ago, since I had gone to Chicago, at Toyoda Sensei's invitation. I was 23 years old, right after my graduation from Seikei University, in Tokyo.

Seikei University's dojo is the first place I met Toyoda Sensei. At that time he had been called a "terribly strong Toyoda." I was awed by his dynamic force and greatness. It was then that I was absolutely captivated by Aikido and kept practicing every day.

During my university days, I spent a lot of my time training in Aikido, and became determined to go to Chicago and train with Toyoda Sensei at his Dojo there.

One day Toyoda Sensei took me to the Northwestern University Aikido Club. After a time, Toyoda Sensei entrusted me to take care of this newly formed Club. Back in those days, we had the Evanston dojo, on Dewey, it was a fully equipped facility for live in students, "Uchideshi students". (These' Students' along with Toyoda Sensei were known as the Seven Samurai to the rest of us, -jbm).

(Including Masa Hagihara san), there was Frank Hunter san, Tom Nagel san, Hiroshi Tajiri san, Kuni Suzuki san, and Crazy Mike (Michael Rooker san) who was there from time to time... He is now a movie star and director in Hollywood...we were living and training there as Uchideshi.

I sometimes remember the days of walking from the Evanston Dojo to the NU Aikido Club (Housed in Pat-ten Gym) in the late afternoon. I have a plenty of vivid memories with Northwestern University students and hope all of them are still fine and enjoying their life.

Best regards,

Masa Hagihara  
From Tokyo, Japan



## **A Congratulation Letter** *from Anslem Yew*

It has been just over twenty years since I attended Northwestern University, and I must admit that what I enjoyed most about my school years was training at Zanshinkan.

Quite aside from the fact that I was a mediocre student academically, I can truly say I learned the most not in a lecture hall, but in our humble dojo. I experienced the greatest joy, the greatest sense of meaning, a clearer understanding of myself and others. My most cherished memories are of training with the many other dedicated fellow students under Toyoda Sensei and in particular Mazza Sensei. During those years, aikido was everything to me. Although my path since has taken me in other directions, what I learned in Zanshinkan continues to inform how I live my life today. I am pleased and moved that our dojo is marking its fortieth year, and that I have been fortunate enough to be a small part of it.

Congratulations, and my deepest gratitude to Mazza Sensei, and to you, the current students for your continued dedication to practice and discovery!

## Why Study Martial Arts?

by

*Tenzan (Fumio) Toyoda Sensei  
(1947-2001)*

“Why study martial arts? A true martial artist does not train only to defeat others. He trains also to defeat the enemies inside himself, the enemies we all have. He trains to forge his life into something beautiful, something helpful to the world. He wishes not to draw a sword, but to put it away - once and for all. He can do this because, through his training, peace is not just a word or an idea to him. Strength, bravery, compassion: these are not just words to him. They are things he has embodied. They are what he has become.”

## No Pain, No Gain

by *Laurel Childress*

In addition the traditional physical benefits (cardiovascular and respiratory) of regular physical fitness, exercises such as aikido are known to have many mental and emotional health benefits. These benefits can include enhanced/improved mood, increased pain tolerances, and even increased brainpower. These benefits are possible because of the human body's incredible ability to be its own best pharmacy. During exercise, the body produces a variety of helpful chemicals, and the effects of these chemicals on the body can influence the body on timescales of hours, days, and even years.

Opioids (and opiates) have long been used as pain killers, with the opium produced by the poppy plant (*Papaveroidae*) being the oldest known. The most popularly known opioid is morphine, which can be used in the treatment of acute (injury) or chronic (ex. arthritis) pain. However, the body can also

produce opioids naturally, in the form of beta-endorphin ( $\beta$ -endorphin).

$\beta$ -endorphin is produced by the pituitary gland and the hypothalamus, and subsequently binds with opioid receptors in the brain, creating feelings of happiness and well-being. Additionally,  $\beta$ -endorphin aids in the regulation of blood pressure, pain perception, and body temperature. Such endorphins are produced during exercise. In fact, exercise such as aikido may be more effective for the production of beta-endorphins than many other types. Several studies have indicated that prolonged submaximal exercise, meaning less than the individual's most extreme exertion, is more effective at the production of  $\beta$ -endorphin than brief strenuous exercise<sup>1</sup>. Since many aikido training sessions last several hours, it is likely quite effective at producing  $\beta$ -endorphin. Furthermore, the endorphins produced during this type of exercise appear to most directly affect pain thresholds, which is always helpful during a strong aikido workout.

Another biochemically derived compound produced during exercise and linked to feelings of well-being and happiness is serotonin.

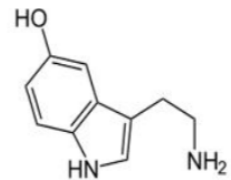


Figure 2. Chemical structure of serotonin.

While many pharmacological antidepressants can increase serotonin effectiveness, the central nervous system and gastrointestinal tract are also able to synthesize serotonin. In addition to instantaneous positive feelings derived from increased serotonin production, increased levels have also been linked to the prevention of depression<sup>2</sup>.

In addition to providing immediate stimulation by chemical secretion, exercises such as aikido can also help in the long-term. As we age, portions of our brains begin to shrink. In particular, the hippocampus which is critical to both short- and long-term memory as well as spatial navigation, and damage to this area is linked to amnesia and diseases such as Alzheimer's. Thus, repairing damage in this region of the brain can have particularly useful long-term effects. Exercise, particularly aerobic, may be able to reverse such damage and promote improved memory<sup>3</sup>.

Practicing aikido offers an opportunity for the physical exercise your body needs, plus, offers a safe environment to release the pent up feelings of the day and release some good endorphins.

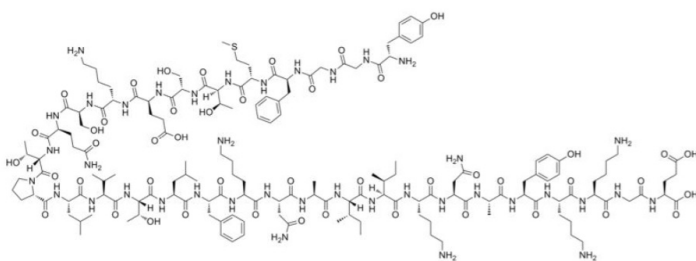


Figure 1. Chemical structure of beta-endorphin.

## NU Professor, One-of-a-Kind Club Embody Aikido Spirit

by Axel Boada

Craig Bina is both a teacher and a student.

The Northwestern University professor paces Blomquist Recreation Center's sports mats, carefully watching the movements of his students.

He's traveled across the United States and other countries, learning from teachers who run their schools differently from one another.



But these teachers didn't train Bina in earth and planetary sciences — they trained him in the martial art of aikido.

"I have found training at different schools with different teachers to be incredibly valuable," Bina says.

Founded in 20th-century Japan, aikido emphasizes the redirection of enemy movements in an effort to destroy attacks while keeping the attacker safe from harm. The transferring of energy between opponents looks more elegant than it does violent.

Bina began practicing aikido as a Northwestern freshman in 1980. Curious about the NU Aikido Club after hearing about it, he decided to stop by a meeting in Patten Gymnasium and asked a student if he could watch the class.

"She replied, 'no, but you can join in.' So, I took off my shoes and joined the class," Bina says. "I'm still coming back 34 years later."

The club turned 40 years old this year and, according to Bina, is one of the United States' oldest university aikido clubs.

Today, as the club's faculty advisor, Bina imparts his knowledge and experiences onto his students.

One of those students is Laurel Childress, a Ph.D. candidate who has been practicing aikido for about a year. Childress says her interest in martial arts spans back to when she did taekwondo as a child and "wanted to be a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle."

"[Aikido] is very technique-driven," Childress says. "It doesn't require you to be stronger than your opponent at all."

Newcomers to the club are undergraduate students Emilie Jones and Henry Tankus.

Tankus stated the martial art is a good way to "de-stress and relax," while Jones does it in addition to boxing. She also studied the Korean martial art hapkido back home.

"They [aikido and boxing] compliment each other because they're different," Jones says.

Aikido also stresses calmness and patience, which are skills Caroline Freitag points to as being important in her everyday life.

"It requires me to pause, to think, and really consider my response before just acting impulsively," the neuroscientist says.

The martial art has also benefited Freitag in another way, as it introduced Freitag to her husband, Rafael Bras, a few years back.

Bina's relaxed demeanor is proof of the calmness aikido brings. He does not talk much during class, even when demonstrating techniques. Instead, he looks at the kneeling students as a signal for them to follow suit.

But that does not mean Bina pays little attention to each student individually. He watches closely as each student performs techniques, adjusting arms and stances when necessary.

He discovered quickly that some aikido students need more repetition and demonstration than others. The same can be said of his students in the classroom. In both lives, Bina says, the martial art has helped him more effectively communicate with students rather than get frustrated when they do not understand a concept.

Additionally, Bina believes students can apply the aikido philosophy of calmness to their work in the classroom.

"If they can remain calm during practice when someone is trying very hard to punch them in the face

or to hit them with a big stick,” he says, “then they are unlikely ever to panic for a final exam again.”

Bras also finds this philosophy helpful in the corporate world. An admittedly reserved person, he says it has helped him “focus under pressure and project [my]self when [I] need to.”

Freitag echoes both Bina and Bras’ sentiments, but also emphasizes the self-defense aspect of the martial art.

“If you ever happened to be attacked in a back alley, you can apply it,” she says.

According to Bina, the martial art’s applicability takes multiple forms. Protecting oneself from accidents is a rather common application he hears from students.

“Usually the story involves some variation of the students flying over the [bike’s] handlebars onto the ground, whereupon they found themselves rolling and standing up again with only a few bruises,” he says.

Bina also credits aikido for helping him get through the stressful years of being a junior faculty member. Though he no longer deals with pre-tenure hardships, the inner peace he finds through aikido remains a constant in his life.



## Aikidō, Meditation, and Mantra

by Craig Bina

Some of you may have noticed a couple of unusual characters, 𠄎 and 𠄏 on patches sewn to uniforms or on announcements from our parent dōjō. Let me offer you a glimpse of these characters’ meaning in the context of Aikidō training. (This is my personal

understanding; Moore-sensei may have deeper goals in using them at Shinjinkai Dōjō.)

These characters are not regular Japanese characters. They are called bonji, a name for characters in the ancient Siddham alphabet. Originally used to write Sanskrit in northern India, they were carried into China and later brought to Japan by the priest Kūkai in the early ninth century, when he visited China to study Tibetan Buddhism. Today they are used in the Shingon school of Buddhism, founded by Kūkai upon his return to Japan, as well as in some schools of Zen. Often they serve as a meditative focus, either silently or while chanting a mantra. They come to our dōjō in part because of the special connection of our line of Aikidō instruction with Zen. Toyoda-sensei (with whom Mazza-sensei, Moore-sensei, and I all trained) was sent by his Aikidō teacher, Tohei-sensei, to study in a Zen temple, and the connection has flourished. Mazza-sensei is fond of saying: “Lead the mind, and the body will follow.” While this may refer to leading the mind of uke in an Aikidō technique, it also refers to leading one’s own mind. A famous saying of O-sensei, the founder of Aikidō (who studied both Shingon and Zen), is masakatsu agatsu 正勝吾勝 “true victory is victory over oneself” – also an exhortation to train one’s own mind. Thus, in addition to practicing technique in Aikidō, we also practice breathing and meditation exercises.

The first bonji is 𠄎 [Sanskrit hām], pronounced “kan”. This is the mantra “seed syllable” for a figure (adopted by Buddhist iconography from the ancient Hindu pantheon) called Fudō-myōō, drawn from the final syllable of the short form of the Acala mantra associated with him. Fudō is generally depicted as seated on an (immovable) rock, wreathed in (purifying) flame, holding a sword (to sever attachments) and a rope (to bind passions), and exhibiting a wrathful countenance (signifying compassionate power to overcome one’s own ignorance, rather than power to harm others). Fudō’s very name means “immovable”, bringing to mind O-sensei’s saying: “All I have to do is keep standing this way.” His attachment-severing sword also reminds me of O-sensei’s words: “I am calm however and whenever I am attacked. I have no attachment to life or death.” Meditation on this sound, this bonji character, and the attributes associated with Fudō-myōō are methods of training one’s own mind, for the challenges of Aikidō and of daily life.

The second bonji is 𑖀 [Sanskrit ma], pronounced “ma”. This is the seed syllable for the figure Marishi-ten, drawn from the second syllable of the Mārīcī mantra associated with her. Marishi is generally represented riding a wild boar, often carrying a bow (of wisdom, whose arrows vanquish delusion), sometimes wielding many weapons simultaneously with many hands. The root of her name means “ray of light”; moving with dazzling speed, she cannot be seen, grasped, or deceived. She was considered a patron of samurai warriors even before the introduction of Zen to Japan, with meditation upon her attributes intended to cultivate mastery of the self and detachment from concern with life and death or with victory and defeat. I am reminded of further words of O-sensei: “Therefore to compete in techniques, winning and losing, is not true budō.”

Interestingly, adding to the second bonji just two small strokes (basically accent marks) from the first bonji yields 𑖀 [Sanskrit mām], pronounced “man”. Taken together, 𑖀 𑖀 is “kan-man” [Sanskrit hāmmām], the seed drawn from the last two syllables of the long form of the Acala mantra associated with Fudō-myōō, often written as a single merged monogram.



Thus we have in these two bonji some important foci for contemplation, whether while practicing Aikidō techniques, breathing, or meditating: two ancient calligraphic characters, representing two syllables, drawn from two mantras, associated with two ancient Buddhist figures and their respective attributes, embodying both male and female principles – stressing mastery of self, non-attachment to life and death, detachment from concepts of victory and defeat, perseverance in the way of the warrior, immovable solidity, and irresistible compassionate energy to overcome one’s own obstacles and delusions. To close with a few more relevant words from O-sensei: “I want considerate people to listen to the voice of Aikidō. It is not for correcting others; it is for correcting your own mind. This is Aikidō. This is the mission of Aikidō and should be your mission.”

## A Comparison of Various Types of Martial Arts by Katie Poland

**Karate:** A Japanese martial art that focuses on punches and kicks. It’s usually taught in one of two ways: either very traditionally, or more sport-focused. Traditional karate is heavily focused around forms-- series of techniques directed towards imaginary opponents. Emphasis is placed on strong stances, powerful attacks, and forceful yells. Sport karate takes the same moves and places them in a very different context: sparring. Here, less weight is placed on stances and more on punches and kicks. Speed is valued over power, and mobility over stability.

**Best For:** Those who want to learn martial arts quickly or who want self-defense. Sport karate generally provides a better cardiovascular workout.

**Taekwondo:** A Korean martial art; very similar to sport forms of karate. It uses punches and kicks in combat, but unlike karate places greater emphasis on kicking (and has slightly different rules for sparring.) There is usually more sparring than karate, and harder hitting as well.

**Best For:** People who like stand- up fighting, cardio workouts, and lots of kicking; or who want to learn an Olympic sport.

**Brazilian Jujitsu:** A sport focused completely on ground fighting. The goal is to wrestle your opponent into submission using any manner of chokeholds or joint locks. It takes more time to pick up than karate or taekwondo, but is easier to experiment with. It’s excellent for self-defense with the caveat that you have to be on the ground to use it. Almost all training is done with a partner, and much of it is free grappling.

**Best For:** Wrestlers, those who’d like an excellent all-around workout, who want to get close with a friend, or who want to learn submissions.

**Aikido:** Japanese martial art that emphasizes takedowns and submissions. No strikes are involved. Techniques involve blocking an attack, then utilizing your opponent’s energy to bring them to the ground. From there, you can submit them using a joint lock or any number of uncomfortable positions. It takes a while to learn effectively, but can be a powerful self-defense tool that won’t hurt your opponent more than you want to.

**Best For:** Those who like stand- up combat but not striking, want to learn takedowns, learn a highly unique style of martial arts, or impress their friends.

## Who Is Your Teacher?

by *J. B. Mazza*

People would often ask: Who is your Teacher? In Judo, under Mr. Pak, endlessly practicing falling: from kneeling, squatting, Jumping, Standing (Falling forward and Backward), then the throwing drills. The seemingly endless throws; your body pounded into a thin canvas mat filled with cotton and punctuated with buttons to hold it all together.

In Karate, endless stepping punches and kicks hold stances and kicks, for what seemed like hours. Not moving or the instructor would kick you; on occasion tap you with a shinai. And then, Katas, practice moving across wetted newspapers (We couldn't afford rice paper) for the instructor to see how light yet powerful we could move.

Sparring, sparring, and more sparring; suiting up in age old Kendo gear filled with the musk of the Karateka who donned this armor long before you to practice full contact sparring, all under the direction of Mr. Pantano. Running barefoot along the New Jersey White Horse Pike to an open field, Century Park (?), a few laps, maybe some Kata, or other training... Then run back to the Dojo to practice more: kicking drills, punching drills, Kata, Sparring, all under the direction of Mr. Safar (My Karate Instructor, at the time). Going to tournaments to test my strengths and weaknesses... Kata, sparring; the excitement of it all.

Cross-training in Aikido with Mr. Maruyama, who had the qualities of a cat, he was amazing to watch, especially the moment when he was about to throw you and you lost all semblance of earth and sky, and then, out of the chaos, at the center of it all were these widened eyes and smile before you hit the ground. On occasion Mr. Maruyama would throw in a pressure point or two to add to the joy. Later under Toyoda Sensei (Also, Aikido), techniques, suwari waza, rondori, and oh yes, the breakfalls (It seemed as though every technique was a vehicle that lead to breakfall), weapons, 1000 cuts with the Boken, rondori (Seizing Chaos; Multi-man attacks).

To me, he was a bear of a man who had tremendous power especially when you were on the receiving end. On numerous occasions I had the honor of being his wind dummy, to be thrown into a heaping mound of flesh. He too would smile and enumerate the

countless "Joy of Aikido" with a bellowing laughter as you sailed off into the horizon. Mr. Miura (Kyokushin) who was yet another powerful instructor. He presented me with the only trophy I would get throughout my Karate Training: The Best Kata (I was deeply Honored).

These are but a few of those who taught me. There was also the Kung Fu practitioner who taught me about Chi and how to use it, the Hsing-I instructor who taught me the power of Form, and the 77 year old Shuai Chiao Grand Master, who, with a seemingly light shift of the body, was the only person to almost knock me out. There is no doubt in my mind that if he had wanted to, he would have. He too, chuckled at the delivery of the blow. My Sparring Partner, Bob Bartolomeo who spent countless hours working with me to hone my fighting skills... To Hiroshi, Masa, Kuni, Minoru (Toyoda Sensei's early stable of the Best and brightness), and to the countless other practitioners with whom I've trained with, who taught me; to the Instructors from numerous seminars that taught me as well.

No disrespect to the many who guided my path (I Honor and Respect All), but there is one who stands out, Mr. Toyoda, Sensei as he will always be, from my first encounter to his untimely passing, and, yes, even now.

That's how ingrained his teaching is to me. That's how committed I was/am to him. That's how committed I am to my friend, my confidant, Mr. Toyoda's foremost student Meido Moore. Out of respect for my Teacher I could do no less. Out of respect for my



friend I should much more.

So, what is the point of this regurgitation of a past that is only important to me? First and foremost, it is a commitment to a path, but more specifically it is a commitment to a Teacher.

Many people causally talk about the Art they study, what they do, and how it has expanded their understanding. But have no real commitment to their Teacher. To most, a Teacher is one who is just there to provide instruction; a class environment, someone to pass out information. But, what is your commitment to that person?

It may be an outdated concept in this modern era, but if you follow a Teacher, truly follow them, it means that you are committed to that Teacher. He or She is your Teacher! For me, you are fully committed to follow his/her way. You're dedicated to their methodology. What they are offering connects with what you are seeking. In this manner, an individual chooses to give themselves over, in mind and body, to be taught a Way, follow a path; to commit fully.

It seems that people wander in and out of the Dojo without the commitment to learn; to what is being taught; to the Teacher. Lack respect for the tradition that has preceded the moment they find themselves in. How can you fully learn, understand, or even respect what is given? If you do not embrace a thing fully, how can you expect to fully comprehend the meaning?

Finding the right Teacher is no easy task. Human Beings have encrusted their minds with an impenetrable shell that lets nothing in. Each journey starts from within. You begin with a simple question: Why? This leads to: What is it I'm looking for? Ultimately you come to: Who? Who can guide me in this journey?

A path viewed is not the same as a path traveled. It is said that when you are ready, a Teacher will be given to act as your guide along whatever path you've chosen to follow. Once that Teacher has been given, or found, the Teacher followed must be able to break through that shell that blinds each us. The practitioner needs to Commit themselves totally. It is the Teacher's responsibility to break away the illusions that limit us; block us. Sometimes the methodologies used seem harsh, but the outcome... is in the knowing; the doing; the understanding.

When a piece of stone is being carved, if it says

oh, this is OK, but that is not. The sculptor may decide to cast the stone aside and begin on a different piece. The sculptor, Michelangelo, would walk away from a carving because there was nothing inside to reveal.

A Teacher, a good, no a great Teacher will dedicate themselves to your teaching if you are but willing to accept what is offered. So to with a practitioner, you leave yourself open to all teaching, but commit to only one Teacher. It is that Teacher, that individual, which if you choose to follow, can truly light your path.

My Teacher has lighted my Path so that I can be the best I can. That is all he ever requested of me. Not the limited best that I saw in myself, but the best that he saw in me. Only a Teacher, an individual, can bring that out. They push you beyond reason and thought holding the mirror up for you to see, not who you think you are, but who you really are. He also gave me an understanding of his training methodology: To train with Joyful heart and a serious mind.

So I ask you: Who is your Teacher?



## Quote of the Day

by James Allen

*British philosophical writer*

“You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you.”

by James Allen--British philosophical writer

Photo credits in this issue:

Axel Boada

Molli Kiser