

Appearing in this article, excerpted from the March 1975 issue of **AIKI NEWS**, are students at Aikido of Monterey, including Danielle Molles, 2<sup>nd</sup> kyu (now Danielle Smith, 7<sup>th</sup> Dan) and Pat Hendricks, 3<sup>rd</sup> kyu (now 7<sup>th</sup> Dan, Shihan). Special thanks to Katsuaki Teraswa for forwarding this.

**AIKI NEWS** began as a small newsletter first published in 1974 and eventually grew to become [AIKIDO JOURNAL](#), a well-respected online resource for information related to Aikido.

# AIKI NEWS

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## OSAWA SENSEI TO VISIT S.F. APRIL 15 AND 16

Kisaburo Osawa, the 9th Dan Aikido Headquarters Instructor, will begin his tour of the U.S. starting Saturday, April 5, the date of his arrival in New York. He will be accompanied by Masatake Fujita, 6th Dan from Hombu Dojo, Mitsunari Kanai, 6th Dan from Boston, Yoshimitsu Yamada, 6th Dan from New York, and Akira Tohei, recently promoted to 7th Dan, from Chicago.

Osawa Sensei will arrive in San Francisco on Tuesday, April 15, for a two-day stay in the Bay area. That evening he and his entourage will perform at a special exhibition held at AIKIDO of SAN FRANCISCO, 678 Turk St., 441-6087, beginning at 7:00 pm. A \$3 donation is requested. Wednesday night, Osawa Sensei and company will participate in a training session at the San Francisco Aikikai, 674 So. Van Ness. Call 431-2224 for details.

The following is the schedule of Osawa Sensei's U.S. visit:

4/5 (SAT) LV Tokyo 10AM JAL #006  
ARR NY (JFK) 11:30AM  
4/6 (SUN) PRACTICE NY

合気道

## WOMEN IN AIKIDO - INTERVIEW

*(The following are excerpts from a recent interview with members of WOMEN IN ACTION, a women's Aikido group in Monterey, California. A number of very relevant comments on Aikido are expressed, particularly from the feminine viewpoint. Participants in the interview are: Danielle Molles, Nikyu instructor, Pat Dally, Nancy Buckley, Pat Hendricks, and K-K Richardson. -Ed.)*

DM: Pat, do you know why you are in Aikido?

PD: When I first started out, I was interested in getting into a consciousness-raising activity for women. I met some women who were in a political group and they were talking about organizing a women's group in Aikido. I hadn't done anything physical at all. I thought I'd just give it a try and see what happened. I'm still here. There's something really fun about working out together. I've just enjoyed the whole spirit and atmosphere of the people.

DM: Nancy, why are you taking Aikido?

NB: Well, I like it because I'm not a very violent person. I hate violence in fact, and as opposed say, to Karate or Judo where everything is so deadly and you can really hurt people. Aikido is really great. You're able to protect yourself without hurting somebody and without being passive at the same time.

DM: K-K, why are you in Aikido?

KR: It's fun to do Aikido and it's fun to be with a lot of people and do it.

DM: How old were you when you started Aikido?

KR: Thirteen.

DM: You have a thirteen year lead on me. There are lots of different ages and varieties of people in Aikido. Pat, I thought it was really interesting when you were training with your daughter, Pam. Did you have any particular kinds



of experiences in training with your daughter?

PD: I tend to be a little bit rigid and uptight and it came through in my body. And since I've been experiencing my body in this way, I noticed also in my daughter some of the same hang-ups that I had. I think it would be very good training for her to continue in Aikido and I hope she'll do that.

DM: I started out in Aikido partly out of curiosity and having an interest in Eastern kinds of philosophies. In fact, I looked for Tai Chi or Aikido. Aikido kind of attracted me because there was self-defense involved also. That's become a really important thing to me over the last few years. Now, I've found that it's really changed my life in so many kinds of ways. It's changed the way I feel about other things, changed the way my body is. My body feels much stronger now. I never felt in bad shape, but I feel like I have much more of a flow to my body now. I don't feel like I'll break if I fall or if I get hit. That's a new experience for me, because I'm not used to being hit or falling a lot. It's really good to know that my body can take it. And just my attitude toward things, my whole psychological set. In Aikido, we haven't learned how to kick and gouge, some of the things that are usually taught in self-defense. But, if I perceived an attack situation I would react a whole lot differently now than I would have a year and a half ago.

PH: I think it's not only helped my body, but it's helped my mind, too. I feel so much better. When I was sick for a couple of weeks and didn't take Aikido I felt very depressed and I had a different outlook on things. When I came back I felt so much better mentally and physically. When we're doing techniques it teaches you to blend with each other and we try to keep from coming in conflict with people. That's really important. You start doing that in everyday life. You start learning that when you're with people, if they're trying to have a conflict with you, all you do is blend with them and after a while it just goes away. It's a law of nature.

PD: For me, blending with other people was always a weak position. I always blended with them and, in doing so I

really felt that my personhood or my identity wasn't being upheld. And I think with Aikido, I can blend but I'm still strong and I can still hold my head up and be a person while going along with the other person.

NB: Maybe before you weren't really blending, you were just submitting. I think there's a big difference between submitting and blending.

PH: You can go too far to one extreme. You can let someone dominate you or you dominate them. Or, you dominate yourself and the other person dominates himself. When you come in contact and you're two strong forces, you can go together because you're of equal energy.

NB: Danielle, do you notice a difference between training with the women's class and the men's class?

DM: I do notice a difference. The reason why I really wanted a women's class to start on the Peninsula was that I'd been training for a while with the men and women's class really liking it a lot. Mary Heiny, who is an instructor and also a Sandan, came to one of our classes. I just got so excited seeing a woman that was really performing well because all I'd seen was my own teacher, who is really good, and also a man. Other men do really well and I had the feeling that you had to be a man to do well. It was exciting for me to see a woman I could relate to as far as the way she was moving and the fact she had gotten to be really accomplished in Aikido. So it sort of reinforced my own feelings that I could really do that. It was very exciting for me in the women's class to see them getting really strong. Aikido is a supportive kind of thing. And so often women are put together in a competitive kind of way - just in every thing we do. I enjoy training in the men and women's class because I think it's important to be able to train with all different kinds of energy. What the women's class helps me do is to build a strong self-image.

NB: Were you awkward when you first went into it?

DM: Of course I was. I was awkward like any student.



NB: I mean you were the only girl, right?

DM: No, there were a couple of other women in the class. I remember one instance that illustrated the way I thought the class was. We were a new class, people had just started, brand new. It had the feeling of a coed gym class, in a way. It was like people hadn't really gotten into the philosophy around Aikido. I remember once we were watching some films from Japan and a woman in a hakama came on the screen and one of the guys who was watching the movie gasped and said, "You mean there are women black belts in Japan?" I almost fell over and thought, "Well, of course, there are women black belts in Japan. Just that somebody would be surprised that women would be black belts was kind of what made me start working hard. Do you think you are going to go on in Aikido, Nancy?"

NB. I think I'm definitely hooked.

PH: Sometimes I look forward and I can't imagine myself being a black belt, but then I couldn't look forward and imagine myself where I am now. Now it seems just like part of my life. Like I couldn't really go without it.

DM: You sound like you're hooked, too. More and more women are going to get into higher and higher ranks in Aikido, the longer that it's in the United States. I think that as women see this happening it will be a reinforcing kind of thing.

PH: It's a different thing from Women's Lib. There are a lot of aspects of Women's Lib that are carried too far. And it wasn't that they recognized their own strength but that they were going to an extreme. I think that this is a really positive form of women's movement because we're developing in our own way a really positive strength.

DM: I think that's really a good point. Thank you all for expressing your ideas.