



photo by Phyllis King

### **ROBERT NADEAU, 7TH DAN**

California Aikido Association, Division Head  
Division 3

I first began studying martial arts as a teenager in the early 50s. Sometime after I had started taking judo classes I also began practicing meditation. Here I first noticed that the meditation practice seemed to be having a positive effect on my judo - the questions that immediately interested me were 'how' and in 'what way' was the meditation practice doing this. Eventually I heard about Aikido from a friend of mine who was a Japanese exchange student.

I began studying Aikido in South San Francisco with Bob Tan sometime around 1960 or 1961. With Aikido I found a practice that related mind and body in a way I had not found in other martial arts.

I made my first trip to Japan in 1962 to study with the founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba. I was very fortunate to get his attention. On an early occasion I had asked O'Sensei a philosophical question, and he must have liked it because he invited me to come talk to him at any time. From that point on he became more than my martial arts teacher: he became my 'spiritual mentor'. Off the mat we would engage in long conversations about philosophy and metaphysics. I was keenly interested in learning how to attain what he had attained.

Of course, while at Hombu Dojo I trained with all the teachers who were on staff at that time including Nidai Dosshu, Senseis Yamaguchi, Arikawa, Osawa, Koichi Tohei, Tada, and others.

I returned to the San Francisco Bay area at the end of 1964 and first began teaching Aikido in 1965, opening a small dojo in Menlo Park. I made return trips to Japan in 1966 and 1967. A planned a trip for 1969 was cancelled when O'Sensei died.

I am the Head of Division 3, which comprises 24 dojos across the U.S., Europe, and New Zealand. I also instruct at City Aikido in San Francisco, Aikido of Mountain View, and Aikido of San Jose. In teaching Aikido I emphasize good technique. But the most important goal of my teaching is "human consciousness development"; going beyond the techniques, exploring, or using the techniques, to arrive at a change in consciousness.

### **MY MOST MEMORABLE AIKIDO EXPERIENCE**

People hear of, perhaps some even meet, the few truly great personalities of our time. For me, having had the opportunity to know and spend time with one, Morihei Ueshiba, is my most memorable experience.