Transmission, Inheritance, Emulation 21 by Peter Goldsbury

INTERLUDE
IX: Morihei Ueshiba, Aikido and History:
What Case for Revision or Revisionism?
Part 2: World War II and the Life of Morihei Ueshiba

Preliminaries to Part 2:

The previous column ended with some discussion of the 'frame' within which non-Japanese historians writing after Japan's surrender in 1945 viewed Japanese history from 1930 onwards. Some idea of 'frame' can be gathered from the following paragraph in Franziska Seraphim's book on war memory in postwar Japan.

> "*No matter how the problem was **framed**—as individual or collective accountability, responsibility for starting the war or for losing it—positing war responsibility immediately became a strategic instrument in the politics of **reinventing Japan** as a peaceful and democratic society. People from all walks of life **looked back on the war years through the lens of defeat** and foreign occupation in efforts to identify which aspects of Japanese society needed to be changed most urgently in order to reconstruct the social system as a whole. Many attended mass rallies and listened to academics from various disciplines, to writers and critics, to Marxists, non-Marxist progressives, and even conservatives, to war cooperators and war resisters who had been imprisoned. Depending on their field of specialization, political convictions and war experiences, they addressed the problem of responsibility in different ways and different contexts as part of a broad public discourse*." (Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945-2005*, pp. 1-2).

Seraphim then summarizes how the victors reshaped the 'historical memory': the basic frame of reference, within which the war would be interpreted.

> "*In 1946 Japan was occupied by American military forces, and the power to make changes lay primarily not with the Japanese people, but with the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces (SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur. Under the occupation's demilitarization and democratization policies, **SCAP imposed the war interpretation and political agenda of the victor and foreign occupier on the Japanese. That interpretation declared Japan the sole aggressor in the war.** Almost immediately SCAP set out to cleanse Japan of militarism, dismantling the war machine and eradicating the social structures of ultranationalism. The 'military purge' of 200,000 public workers (mainly business executives, journalists, right-wing leaders, and former military personnel) in 1945-46 and SCAP's strict censorship of the public media had a profound impact on public and private lives, in some respects liberating, in others devastating*." (Seraphim, *op.cit*., pp. 5-6.)

The substance of Seraphim's book, and also Sven Saaler's (cited below), is a discussion of the extent to which SCAP was successful in imposing this new historical 'frame' on the Japanese as a whole. Saaler and American scholars like John Dower believe that the 'frame' was accepted by the vast majority of Japanese people, though not without a certain ambivalence. However, the purge was not an unqualified success and in the course of time different pressure groups in Japan attempted to revise the 'frame', in order to make it fit their own political agendas. The matter is complicated by the fact of the 'reverse course', made by the US from the 1950s onwards, when the Cold War with the Soviet Union intensified, the Communist Revolution took place in China in 1949, and war broke out in the Korean Peninsula. Japan then became an ally of the US in its fight against communism: the old ultranationalist war criminals were released from prison and those on the left were purged instead.

As a Japanese martial way, crafted in the half-century leading up to Pearl Harbor in 1941, aikido is right in the middle of these issues and the main aim of this column is to examine to what extent both the official 'frame', sketched above, and also contemporary Japanese attitudes to history in general and to World War II in particular, can be discerned in Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography of his father Morihei Ueshiba. Kisshomaru was born in 1921 and was 24 years old when Japan surrendered. He published his biography in 1978, right in the middle of the controversies over the adjustment of the collective memory of the war, and so it is plausible to assume that his biography was colored by contemporary attitudes, both to the writing of history and also to the memory of the war and his father's role in it.

The arguments of this column are quite complex, but can be presented as ten propositions.

1. The SCAP occupation forces attempted to reshape the 'frame' through which the history of Japan from 1931 till 1945 was viewed.

2. Aikido was created precisely in this period, so it is plausible to suppose that Japanese biographies of Morihei Ueshiba written after the war, would also fit this revised 'frame'.

3. Since the war ended, various attempts have been made by 'revisionists' to change the 'masochistic'

SCAP ‘frame', in which Japan's wartime misdeeds were emphasized, and substitute a ‘bright' frame that ignores the misdeeds and emphasizes patriotism.

4. The ‘revisionist' controversy is still continuing and affects the teaching of history in schools and the general historical consciousness of the Japanese public.

5. Some ‘revisionists' argue that they can change the ‘frame' because history is not a science and historical facts exist only in the context within which they are presented as a narrative.

6. There is a tradition in Japan of historical fiction and some argue that historical fiction is just as good a way of presenting a narrative about the past as historical fact.

7. Historical fiction in Japan plays a major role in shaping general historical consciousness.

8. Sakamoto Ryoma is an example of someone whose life and exploits have been popularized by means of historical fiction.

9. Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography of his father has to be seen in this context of general historical consciousness, rather than as ‘strict' academic history.

10. Kisshomaru presents a ‘bright' picture of his father's life that fits the SCAP ‘frame', but largely by the omission of any ‘dark' episodes, and which also fits the postwar policies of the Aikikai.

By way of introduction, and as a connection with the previous column, we will sketch the controversy in postwar Japan about the collective historical memory of World War II: how this war memory is censored even now in school textbooks and how the Japanese themselves deal with history and the war. Kisshomaru's biography is intended for these same Japanese and, in keeping with his avowed aim of making aikido an art available to all Japanese, and to non-Japanese also, it is safe to assume that he would handle these issues with a certain delicacy.

Writing Japanese History

4. World War II: Dark Masochism vs. Bright Amnesia:

Historical Revisionism and the Teaching of Japanese History

The Japanese Education Ministry takes a great interest in what history is taught in Japanese schools and how it is taught. It imposes a uniformity that perhaps would not be tolerated elsewhere. The uniformity consists in ensuring that the same history is taught in all schools and in consequence restricting the number of textbooks that may be used in history classes and censoring those that are used. This censorship, which first began in 1903, has caused major controversy, including long-running legal battles in the Japanese courts. Particular attention is paid to World War II and the actions of the Japanese military during this war. The indirect relevance to aikido is that most of Morihei Ueshiba's prewar male *uchi-deshi* at the Kobukan volunteered for, or were drafted into, the military and fought in this war, and those who came back would have had vivid memories of what really happened and whether and how they used aikido. They would also know exactly what was being censored. The more direct relevance to postwar aikido is that ambivalent attitudes to the war have continued to color the education of a younger generation of postwar Japanese, some of whom entered the Aikikai Hombu as *deshi*, who see the history of Japan and of the martial arts in terms of the education they received at school. Thus it is very unlikely that these *deshi* would have been taught anything about Onisaburo Deguchi, the Omoto religion or *kotodama* and this is the main reason why they would not have understood Morihei Ueshiba's lectures. The matter of *nihonjinron* (discussed in an earlier column), which is really more of a postwar phenomenon, is highly relevant here, for it is very likely that they will have been taught in these terms and so regard Japanese culture as uniquely unique in some important way. This, in fact, has been my own experience when talking to some of the younger Hombu instructors: aikido is a quintessentially Japanese martial art and therefore the Japanese, especially the Aikikai Hombu, have a unique claim to understand it and also to control how it is perceived and taught.

The latest issue concerning the censoring of school history textbooks arose a few years ago. The issues are well summarized by Sven Saaler.

> "*The changes in the content of Japanese school textbooks which began in the 1980s had by the early 1990s expanded to include more or less detailed explanations of problematic chapters in Japan's war past, such as the Nanjing massacre (also Nanjing incident or rape of Nanjing), the history of the infamous Unit 731, and the so-called ‘military comfort women'* [従軍慰安婦] *(mostly Korean, but also Japanese and women from other Asian countries forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military).* [Saaler cites several references here.] *In reaction, resistance to what conservatives labeled a ‘masochistic' (i.e., self-critical) view of history* [自虐史観]*swiftly emerged, and today an increasing number of critics advocate a kind of history education that creates pride in nation and country—a role that ‘masochistic' views are considered unable to perform. These ‘historical revisionists' dismiss the*

predominant 'masochistic' view of history as a product of the 'victor's justice' meted out by the prosecution in the Tokyo war crimes trial. … Fujioka Nobukatsu, one of the forerunners of what has since grown into a 'movement' to revise Japanese history along neo-nationalist and conservative lines, claimed that the way history is taught is crucial in determining national identity." (Saaler, *Politics, Memory and Public Opinion: The History Textbook Controversy and Japanese Society*, pp. 20-21.)

In 1996 an organization was created called the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho wo Tsukuru-kai* (新しい歴史教科書を作る会: *Association for the Creation of New History Textbooks*). This association (hereinafter called the *Tsukuru-kai* for short) was one of a number of pressure groups that aimed to have a revisionist view of recent Japanese history generally accepted, specifically, to embody the revisionist view of history in new school textbooks. The founding president, Nishio Kanji, produced a pilot text for a new school textbook, entitled *Kokumin no Rekishi* (国民の歴史: *History of the Nation*). In this massive text of 775 pages (with no index), Nishio displays all the characteristics of *Nihonjinron*. So, for example, Japanese civilization is stated to be unique and culturally superior to "the West". The *Kofun* period was comparable to ancient Egypt and was actually superior, since the keyhole tombs of the *Kofun* period were larger than the pyramids. Sometimes Nishida's claims are absurd, as when he compares a medieval **Chinese** ship with the *Santa Maria* of Christopher Columbus, as evidence of Japan's superiority over the West. Apart from any skills in shipbuilding, he criticizes China as a 'backward' country with a 'low level of historical writing.'

The following year (2000), the *Tsukuru-kai* produced a school textbook, based on Nishio's pilot text, and this passed the screening test set by the Education Ministry for texts to be used in high schools. This fact caused a great deal of controversy and the text was not used very extensively. During the controversy, extraordinary claims were made for the importance of 'correct' history education in schools. The following remarks were made by one Takahashi Shiro, secretary of a pressure group to demand reform of Japan's Basic Law of Education.

"As the result of bullying [ijime], truancy [futoko], the destruction of class discipline [gakkyu hokkai], the dyeing of hair [chappatsu], and youth prostitution [enjo kosai], the situation in schools has become serious [taihen]. The reason for this destruction of education is history textbooks." (Quoted in Saaler, op.cit., p. 86. In this connection, at one of my earliest meetings with Mitsuteru Ueshiba, the son of the present Doshu, now Waka-Sensei, he sported a luxurious head of chappatsudyed hair. He was a high school student at the time and we discussed his future career at university. He was a very pleasant, good humored and respectful young man, clearly with a rebellious streak. At that time, however, I think he had little clue about what was in store for him as the fourth Aikido Doshu. He has had to embrace a very steep learning curve.)

The answer, according to Takahashi, is to substitute for the present negative, masochistic history (that tells the truth about the war, but, apparently, makes pupils feel bad about themselves) the bright, amnesic history that ignores, or is delicately selective about, the unpalatable truth, but which instills youthful pride and patriotism.

The matter of presenting the recent history of Japan in school textbooks is of great interest to Japan's political establishment, for the textbooks are screened by the Education Ministry and any revision of the Basic Law of Education is decided in the Diet. This is of some relevance to aikido, since the directors and trustees of the wartime Kobukai Foundation were drawn exclusively from Japan's political establishment at the time, and the same is true of its postwar reincarnation, the Aikikai Foundation, whose directors include conservative politicians such as Japan's ex-Prime Minister, Kaifu Toshiki. The political dimensions of aikido in Japan can be seen very clearly at the annual All-Japan Aikido Demonstration, which is held at the Nippon Budokan [日本武道館]. This is a vast arena, situated a short distance away from the Imperial Palace and the Yasukuni Shrine (which, as we will see below, is a symbol of outstanding historical issues relating to World War II). Before the demonstrations begin, the participants and spectators are always addressed by members of the Diet (some of whom have actually been known to practice aikido), who invariably stress the importance of aikido as a peaceful *budo*, eminently suitable for solving the present problems of Japan, and Morihei Ueshiba's essential links with such aikido. Even foreigners see the importance of aikido, both for health and for solving the problems facing the world (so it must be a good thing).

The focus of the politicians in the Diet was an apology for Japan's conduct in the war, intended to smooth Japan's relations with her Asian neighbors. An apology was made first by Hosokawa Morihiro in 1993 and again by Murayama Tomiichi in 1995, which was the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II. Neither politician belonged to the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Hosokawa considered 'the previous war to have been a war of aggression and a wrong war.' Conservative politicians were outraged and the fires of their outrage were further stoked by various pressure groups, such as the Association of Bereaved Families [*Nihon Izoku-kai*], who issued 'counter-statements' praising the 'Greater East Asian War' as a 'war of self-defense to secure the lives and property of the Japanese

people' (quoted by Saaler, *op.cit*., p. 71). Murayama wanted to mark the 50th Anniversary in a suitable fashion and planned a major apology. He was not entirely successful in the Diet, for many members boycotted the session and the text was watered down in such a fashion that it really pleased nobody, least of all Japan's Asian neighbors, at which it was principally aimed. Nevertheless, on August 15, 1995, Murayama made a speech, of which the following is an excerpt:

> "*During a time in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I confront, in a spirit of humanity, these irrefutable facts of history and here again express once more my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology. Allow me also to express my feelings of profound condolence for all victims of that history both at home and abroad.*
>
> *Building on our deep remorse on this occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, Japan must eliminate self-righteous nationalism, promote international coordination as a responsible member of the international community, and thereby advance the principles of peace and democracy.*" (*Asahi Shinbun*, June 10, 1995, English text quoted by Takashi Yoshida, *The Making of the "Rape of Nanking"*, p. 222.)

Yoshida approaches the matter as one researching the 'tempestuous debate' over the aftermath of a particular event, which occurred on December 13, 1937, when the Japanese army captured the Chinese capital city of Nanking. Yoshida makes the following comment concerning the arguments over Murayama's apology.

> "*As they debated the motivations behind the war and argued over Japan's duty to apologize for the past, the Diet members acted out in microcosm the concerns of Japanese society as a whole during the 1990s, when diverse groups of different political persuasions flourished more than ever. Some stressed the importance of including Asian sufferings in Japanese wartime history, while others denounced such views and defended Japan's wartime behavior.*" (Yoshida, *op.cit*., p. 134.)

In the next section, I will briefly examine the degree to which the 'revisionist' views of Japan's recent history, enthusiastically embraced by the conservative politicians and the pressure groups, are also held by the Japanese population as a whole. Kisshomaru Ueshiba originally wrote his biography in Japanese and the main target is the very same 'Japanese population as a whole' [*ippan kokumin* 一般国民]. In fact, one of the biggest issues facing aikido is this very fact and Kisshomaru's biography depicts this very well: aikido is no longer the exclusive preserve of the rich and powerful, those who had the time to become full-time *deshi*or the wealth to be a dojo patron. Under Kisshomaru's direction aikido in Japan has become a 'mass' art, available to anyone who goes to a dojo, and the training and teaching of the art have had to adapt to match this mass availability. So the question of how aikido and its founder are popularly perceived is crucial to its postwar success. I begin with some preliminary remarks on 'revision' vs. 'revisionism' and then consider a related distinction between history as a 'science' and history as a type of literary fiction. The latter is very popular in Japan, as evidenced by the best selling historical novels of Shiba Ryotaro, with related films and TV productions.

Writing Japanese History

5. World War II: Dark Masochism vs. Bright Amnesia:

Historical Revisionism and Historical Consciousness

In 1995 Stanley Pranin wrote an article for *Aikido Journal*, entitled, "A Revisionist View of Aikido History," which discussed one view of the evolution of aikido history in respect of training with weapons. We will mention Mr Pranin's important contributions to the history of aikido later, but he used the term 'revisionist'. Historical revision and historical revisionism are quite different in meaning and with respect to the history of aikido—including biographies of Morihei Ueshiba, it is very important to be aware of the difference.

The previous column argued for the great importance of the constant revision of historical research and of history writing. Indeed, in a real sense the writing of history **is** revision, since primary sources and secondary authorities need constant reevaluation in the light of new information or different perspectives. However, there are generally accepted rules for historical enquiry, which are regarded as fundamental for the discipline and as a result, maintaining the essential tension between (1) the quest for new facts & greater historical objectivity and (2) the awareness and acceptance of one's possible biases in telling the resulting story, is a continuous process and should also be a creative one.

Historical revisionism is different, as Sven Saaler explains, with reference to one form.

> "*What has been called 'historical revisionism' (*歴史修正主義 rekishi shuusei-shugi*) in the context of postwar Japanese intellectual and political discourse … is a highly politicized version of historiography*

> *that subordinates scientific method—however defined —to the achievement of political aims. These aims are the re-assertion of national identity and the strengthening of citizens' allegiance to the state, and, as a basis for these goals, the construction of a 'bright' or exculpatory historical narrative of Japan's recent past*." (Sven Saaler, *op.cit*., p. 23.)

I think readers of the previous column will not fail to see similarities between this example of postwar historical revisionism and the prewar theories of Hiraizumi Kiyoshi. An outstanding example of 'non-repentance' after Japan's surrender, Hiraizumi cannot be said to have held revisionist views when he was a professor, for such views were considered mainstream. However, he continued to maintain his ultranationalist views after World War II until his death in 1984—and by 1945 had also taught many generations of students, who, in turn, taught history in Japanese universities after the war. It is difficult to know how many of his students embraced Hiraizumi's views, but I myself have encountered such ultranationalist views held by older Japanese university professors and by older aikido practitioners.

Historical revisionism has found a fertile soil in Japan because of the related issues concerned with history as a science, as against history as 'historical fiction', to which I now turn.

Historical Consciousness:

Shiba Ryotaro and History as Popular Fiction

In the last section, I mentioned Nishio Kanji and the *Tsukuru-kai* and briefly discussed his pilot text, entitled *Kokumin no Rekishi* (*History of the Nation*). An important part of Nishio's argument is that he is able to write a 'proud' historical narrative, because history is not a science, in any case. In his discussion of this issue, Saaler cites a book by an American scholar, Hayden White, entitled, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*.

There is no space to discuss White's detailed arguments in detail, but they do not relate very much to the ways of thinking in Japan. White does not discuss any Japanese examples and in any case his whole argument is both misconceived and unconvincing. His argument is based on speculative analyses of nineteenth-century European thinkers, such as Michelet, Ranke, Tocqueville, Burckhardt, Marx, Nietzsche and Croce. While interesting in their own right, White's analyses do not establish that historical data disappear beneath the philosophical analyses of such data. The analyses simply restate in much more detail the points made by Daniel Little, which were discussed in the previous column.

Saaler adds:

> "*These points* [i.e., that historical facts exist only as a function of prior concepts and problems] *have a particular resonance in the case of Japan, where historical fiction has had a considerable influence on the historical consciousness of postwar Japanese*."

However, White has not established that historical facts do exist in this way and Saaler does not explain what he means by 'resonance'. There is a 'resonance' between Nishio's theories and Hayden White's theories, for White was cited in connection with Nishio Kanji's denial of history as a science. However, Nishio believed that this denial allowed him to be unusually selective about what the facts actually were: 'bright' facts were acceptable; dark 'masochistic' facts were not. However, some of the 'masochistic' facts were still facts.

> *The historical novels (*rekishi shosetsu: 歴史小説*) of Shiba Ryotaro have been considered particularly important in this respect. …Not only are his novels bestsellers (and long sellers), but they are almost continually recycled in TV series, movies and new media such as the Internet*."

The 'resonance' here is different, for Shiba Ryotaro is not selective about the 'brightness' or 'darkness' of the actual facts he uses; he believes that an account that blends facts and fiction is as valuable as an account that presents only facts. The 'bright' aspects of his novels are 'bright' periods or figures in history, such as the wars in the early Meiji period, or characters like Sakamoto Ryoma. Shiba has never written novels about 'dark' Showa, or the Asia-Pacific War.

> "*In view of the popularity of historical novels and their recycling in the mass media, commentators have recently drawn attention to the similarities between professional history writing ("historical science" or academic history) and historical fiction. Narita Ryuichi has traced these links in the writings of Shiba Ryotaro*." (The last three quotations are from Saaler, *op.cit*., pp. 47-48.)

Saaler then quotes in English from Narita's book, 『司馬遼太郎の幕末・明治』 (*Bakumatsu and Meiji in the Novels of Shiba Ryotaro*):

> "*The act of combining historical facts with other historical facts and thereby creating an historical portrait is called historical narrative. Although the aim of historical narrative is to provide a real picture of history, in a given historical portrait, the 'interpretation' of the author also comes to the fore.* [Section omitted] *It is obvious that there are differences between the interpretations and the narrative of Shiba on the one hand and the interpretations and narrative of historians on the*

> *other. However, on the level of presenting a real portrait of history in which rival interpretations are weighed against one another, neither historians nor historical novelists can claim superiority or inferiority*." (Narita, p. 37.)

Two points must be made about Narita's views, since they are relevant both to the argument of the previous column and also to Kissomaru Ueshiba's biography of his father. First, Narita is basically stating that, in terms of presenting a "*real portrait of history in which rival interpretations are weighed against one another*," historical fiction and 'straight' history are evenly matched. Compare this view with the discussion in the previous column about the American War of Independence, as presented in the Oxford histories. J Steven Watson, Paul Langford and Robert Middlekauff, the authors of the three Oxford histories, respectively presented a "*real portrait of history in which rival interpretations were weighed against one another.*" However, historical fiction was never allowed to enter the equation and if the three historians had been called to defend their way of writing history on *AikiWeb*, they would all have denied very strongly any suggestion that their accounts of the American war also included fiction. Kisshomaru Ueshiba, on the other hand, was not writing his biography in such an intellectual tradition.

The second point is that, until recently, such a discussion by the three writers of the Oxford histories would have had very little currency in Japan. Professional historians were either ultranationalist or Marxist and so their narratives were always excessively flavored with their own political standpoints. Shiba Ryotaro was neither and also told good stories. My university colleagues suggested that they were so good that they became best sellers. The volume of sales established Shiba as someone who, by comparison with doctrinaire academic historians, could be trusted to present a 'real portrait' of a person or period.

The section omitted by Narita in the section quoted above mentions Sakamoto Ryoma and, since we will discuss Sakamoto later, the whole paragraph is worth quoting here in the original Japanese (with the section omitted above in bold type).

> 「史実」と「史実」をむすびつけ、一つの歴史像を描きあげる行為が歴史叙述です。歴史叙述の目的は歴史におけるリアリティを提示し記述することにありますが、でき上がった歴史像には執筆者の⟨解釈⟩が示されています。正確にいえば、さまざまなことがらを整序だて出来事としてまとめあげ、そこに解釈をほどこし、解釈した出来事を束ねあげて歴史像を提供しています。明治維新や坂本龍馬をどのようにまとめあげ、解釈をほどこし、どのように記述したか、ということです。司馬の解釈や記述と歴史像の解釈・記述とのあいだに差異があるのは当然ですが、しかしリアリティをもつ歴史像を叙述しそのために解釈競り合うというレベルにおいては、歴史像と歴史小説像のあいだに優劣はありません。*(成田龍一, op.cit., p. 37.)*

Saaler mentions in a footnote (*op.cit*., p. 47) that English speakers are not comfortable with the term 'historical science' (*Geschichtswissenschaft*), commonly used in continental European and East Asian languages to distinguish history as a discipline from history as a literary pursuit, and notes that, "such linguistic differences reflect different perceptions of and ideas about history in English-speaking countries and countries like Japan and Germany."

Saaler also uses the term 'historical consciousness' rather differently from Hayden White in his book *Metahistory,* cited above. Saaler uses the term not to describe the attitudes of professional historians or philosophers towards history, but as the "*sum of the predominant understandings of history manifested in a given society*." The definition cited by Saaler appears on the home page of the Center for the Study of Historical Consciousness, an institute attached to the University of British Columbia Faculty of Education (http://www.cshc.ubc.ca/). Most of the research on this subject appears to have been done in Germany, where there are analogous issues concerning the public memory of World War II. Very little research has been done on this subject in Japan, but I believe that awareness of this concept is of some importance when approaching Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography of his father.

侠客 *Kyokaku*: A Man of Chivalry

The reference to Shiba Ryotaro is also quite important, for a glance at websites like *Amazon.co.jp* will demonstrate the truth of Saaler's statement, quoted earlier. As an example closer to home, in a recent interview that appeared in the *AikiWeb* forums, Imaizumi Shizuo recounts that he was called upon to read aloud one of Shiba Ryotaro's historical novels to Morihei Ueshiba. The novel was *Niwaka Naniwa yukyoden* [俄 浪華遊俠伝: *Unexpected: The Life of a Chivalrous Man from Naniwa*]. In Imaizumi Sensei's own words:

> "*O Sensei loved the hero of this novel. His name was Mankichi Akashiya as a boy and then he became Sahei Kobayashi as a man. So when O-Sensei came into the office he would always ask me what had happened to Mankichi! He would laugh heartily at a particular interesting event in his life*."
>
> *http://www.durangoaikido.com/interview1.htm*

However, Hiraizumi Sensei was being selective in the information he gave about Kobayashi Sahei, assuming, of course, that he knew who he really was. So perhaps more information about him is in order:

> "*Kobayashi Sahei, a Meiji-era 'kyokaku', was described* [by Sakai Eizo, a *yakuza* boss and founder of the Seigidan, who regarded himself as Kobayashi's successor]*as someone who took and guided delinquent youth, helped orphans and the elderly, and sacrificed his own life out of duty and for society*." (Eiko Maruko Siniawer,*Ruffians, Yakuza, Nationalists: The Violent Politics of Modern Japan*, 1860-1960, p. 114.)

Siniawer defines *kyokaku* as, 'Men of chivalry, a flattering appellation for the yakuza' (*Op.cit*., p. 183). Her book is an impressive study about *yakuza*, especially as upholders of what they believed to be the real values of *bushido*. (I will discuss this in more detail in a later column.)

Shiba's novel *Niwaka Naniwa yukyoden* was first published in book form in 1966 and is still in print. Another long seller by Shiba, *Saka no ue no Kumo*, [坂の上の雲:*Clouds over the Hill*], was published in serial form from 1968 to 1972 and is being serialized by NHK over three years from 2009 to 2011. An entire museum in Matsuyama commemorates the three heroes of the novel, which is set in the period from the Meiji Restoration (1868) until the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).

志士 *Shishi*: A Man of Noble Principle

Sakamoto Ryoma is well known as a 浪人*ronin* [master-less samurai], turned 志士 *shishi* ['man of honor'], who played a major role in bringing about the Meiji Restoration. His fame among the Japanese public is largely due to the very same Shiba Ryotaro, who also wrote a massive historical novel about him, *Ryoma ga yuku* [龍馬が行く: *Ryoma is on the Move*], which was published between 1963 and 1966. The novel was made into a film and was serialized by NHK in 1968 as the year-long *taiga dorama* (大河ドラマ). More recently, Sakamoto was the subject of *Ryoma-den* [龍馬伝: *The Life of Ryoma*], which was another NHK *taiga drama*offering, this time for 2010 (and now available, at considerable expense, on DVD).

Because he is so well known, Sakamoto Ryoma is a much better example of the blurring of the distinction between straight history and historical fiction than Morihei Ueshiba, but this is simply because he is much better known. Despite the valiant efforts of people like his son Kisshomaru and his *deshi* Sunadomari, Morihei Ueshiba is relatively unknown in Japan, especially outside the local areas of Tanabe and Tokyo, Shirataki and Iwama, where he lived. So the blending of fact and fiction occurs on a much smaller scale.

Shiba's novels and the NHK serials led to periodic 'Ryoma-booms' in Japan, with streams of books, TV programs and DVDs on Sakamoto himself and the *Sakamoto Ryoma Museum* near his birthplace, which is Kochi, on the Japanese island of Shikoku (also famed for Kukai's wanderings). One of my own students wrote his master's thesis on Sakamoto's negotiation strategies. In fact, Sakamoto Ryoma is a good example for English-speakers of the issues involved in distinguishing academic history from history as fiction, because he also is the subject of two works in English, which precisely illustrate the distinction made by Narita Ryuichi about Shiba's writings. One was written by the doyen of 'orthodox' historians, Marius Jansen. His *Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration* was published in 1984 and was used by the author of the second work. In the Preface to his biography of Sakamoto Ryoma, Romulus Hillsborough cites the work of Jansen:

> "*Sakamoto Ryoma has been the subject of a highly esteemed scholarly work in the English language, the purpose of which I take the liberty to surmise has been to instruct the student of Japanese history. Somerset Maugham once wrote that the most essential quality of a novel is that it be entertaining. 'No one in his senses reads a novel for instruction of edification,' wrote this master of English letters. 'If he wants instruction or edification he is a fool if he does not go to the books written to instruct and edify.' It has been my intention to go beyond the scope of the novel to both instruct and entertain, in the first biography of Sakamoto Ryoma ever to appear in the English language in story form*." (Romulus Hillsborough, *Ryoma: Life of a Renaissance Samurai*, 1999, Ridgeback, p. xvi.)

So Hillsborough neatly sidesteps the issue, though he cites a novelist, not a historian—and not even an historical novelist, and offers no direct evidence that his own entertaining instruction is reliable. Nevertheless, it is Narita's opinion, as set out in the quotations above, that there is nothing much to choose between the portraits of Sakamoto painted by Shiba or Hillsborough and the portrait painted by Marius Jansen. The fact remains, however, that Sakamoto Ryoma has been rather better served by both academic historians and writers of elegant historical fiction than Morihei Ueshiba, whom he prefigures to a great extent.

Saaler, who is actually German, but writing in English, ends the discussion with the following important point: The historical 'revisionists' want to have it both ways.

> "*While some Japanese historians, including some of the most fervent critics of historical revisionism, would subscribe to the 'inventive' and 'fictive' character of professional historiography (Narita 2003), the position of academic history in Japan has also been challenged by historical revisionists utilizing 'post-modern' and constructivist methods, claiming that that they are doing nothing more than constructing one historical narrative—that of the proud nation—in opposition to the prevailing*

> *masochistic narrative. However, in doing so, they are self-contradictory. For although revisionists take pride in constructing a narrative that excludes Japan's wartime atrocities without openly denying them, the number of revisionist writings that lay claim to the 'truth' (*shinjitsu: 真実*) about modern Japanese history—and the exclusive truth—is astonishingly large*." (Saaler, citing three sources, *op.cit.*, p. 49.)

In fact, those who would enlist Shiba Ryotaro in the service of historical revisionism are doing him a major disservice. Fujioka Nobukatsu was mentioned above in the previous section on school textbooks. Fujioka, who also heads the Association for Advancement of Unbiased View of History [自由主義史観研究会: *Jiyuu-shugi Shikan Kenkyuukai:* English website at http://www.jiyuushikan.org/index.html, which is the more academic predecessor of the *Tsukuru-kai*], claimed that reading Shiba's novels was his inspiration for focusing on 'bright' history in school textbooks. But Sven Saaler is critical. He notes that Fujioka

> "*had clearly not read* The Shape of This Country*, which first appeared in 1993, carefully enough to grasp Shiba's view of history. As a consequence of such misgivings, the historical narrative created by the revisionists, above all with regard to the interpretation of the Asia-Pacific War, stands in contradiction to the views of Shiba. Rather, it can be said that his novels and other writings function as a bulwark against the spread of historical revisionism in Japanese society, particularly with Japan's youth, among whom Shiba's popularity remains undiminished*." (Saaler, op.cit., p. 153.『この国のかたち』 *Kono Kuni no Katachi*, Shiba Ryotaro's non-fiction essays, were published in six volumes from 1993 to 2000. The essay cited by Saaler appears in Vol. 4 and is entitled, 「日本人の二十世紀」, pp. 213-265.)

The Shaping of War Memory

The Sunday evening NHK *taiga dorama* and the historical novels written by Shiba Ryotaro are some indication of popular interest in Japanese history. During the New Year holidays there are invariably popular history programs and local newspapers are always promoting sets of DVDs that deal with World War II, including old news footage. Hiroshima's Atomic Bomb Museum always draws vast numbers of visitors and a few miles to the southeast, in the port city of Kure, there is a museum dedicated to the battleship *Yamato*, which was built there. In their various ways, both museums tell about important aspects of the history of World War II.

In this connection, the wreck of the *Yamato* was discovered a few years ago and a film was made. The film, called「男たちの大和」 [*Otokotachi no Yamato*: *The*Yamato *and her Sailors*], is another example of sensitively depicted fictional 'history', in that the events depicted could actually have happened. An old fisherman, who was one of the few survivors of the sinking, visits the location of the wreck and, in a series of flashbacks, relives his days on the battleship as a young naval recruit, pressed into service at the age of sixteen, and by the cathartic process of returning there, tries to expiate his guilt, because he survived and his shipmates died. There was an issue about showing the film to western audiences, for it was revisionist in tone, attempting to modify the accepted reputation of the battleship, including those who sailed in her, as an evil symbol of imperial power. *Otokotachi no Yamato* was released one year before Clint Eastward's *Letters from Iwojima*, another film of fictional 'history', but based on letters written by Kuribayashi, the officer commanding the Japanese garrison on the island during the siege by American forces in 1945. The narration was largely in Japanese and the principal Japanese actor is a member of a hugely popular Japanese 'boy band' rock group, named *Arashi*.

靖国神社Yasukuni Shrine -- 遊就館Yushukan War Museum

The reason for the continued ambivalence in Japan about the collective memory of the war is not hard to see. August 15 is celebrated as the anniversary of Japan's surrender (though it is never expressed in these terms: usually it marks the 'ending of the Pacific War', though some think that this war ended only in 1951, with the signing of the treaty with the US). There is a double aspect to the Yasukuni Shrine and both aspects are controversial. One aspect is remembrance of the war dead and Yasukuni is the principal shrine for this purpose. A memorial ceremony is held in the presence of the Emperor at the nearby Nippon Budokan for those who lost their lives in the war and some incumbent prime ministers have occasionally paid visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (a private institution), which enshrines the spirits of soldiers who gave their lives in the war (non-Japanese soldiers included). Since these spirits also include those of people like Tojo Hideki, who were executed as war criminals, the official visits by Japanese prime ministers have always incurred the wrath of Japan's neighbors, especially China and Korea, and the accusation is made that Japan has not properly atoned for her misconduct in the war. Apart from the formal apologies, discussed above, Japan usually counters with arguments to the effect that Japan settled all its accounts with its neighbors from 1951 onwards, when the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed with the United States. (This is why requests for financial reparation always fail in the Japanese courts.)

The second aspect is the actual history of the war, as this is depicted in the adjacent Yushukan war museum. The museum aims to communicate to visitors a 'more accurate truth about modern Japanese history' [日本近現代史の真実をより正しく理解して頂く為]. Japanese wars are presented as wars of Asian liberation, from the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 to the end of the war in 1945. The wars are depicted as part of a much longer struggle against Western colonialism and imperialism. The darker aspects of these wars are distorted or omitted altogether. Thus Yasukuni has become a monument to the failure of the victors of World War II to impose their 'frame' for interpreting the war upon a substantial section of the Japanese public. It is a symbol of historical revisionism and the *Tsukuru-kai*, discussed in the previous section, is just one of the many pressure groups formed to make sure that the collective memory of the war was 'correct'.

On the other hand, Sven Saaler presents much evidence in the latter half of his book to suggest that such historical revisionism has not been not embraced by the Japanese public as a whole. The evidence, in the form of surveys conducted by himself and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper, can be found on pp. 128 -- 146. His conclusion is worth quoting in full.

> "[T]*he data so far gathered indicates an important finding: although the Japanese lack consensus about interpreting their recent past, the views promoted by historical revisionists are by no means broadly accepted in Japanese society; notwithstanding their omnipresence in the political arena and the public sphere, they clearly reflect the views of only a minority of the population about the war. Notwithstanding their public prominence, in the historical consciousness exhibited by the majority of ordinary Japanese, revisionist views of Japanese history are anything but representative. As the vehemence of the ongoing debate suggests, however, revisionism is championed by a variety of vociferous lobby groups with connections to powerful conservative political groups, wealthy business circles, and influential sections of the media. …*" (Saaler, *op.cit*., p. 127.)

From my own experience in Hiroshima, war memory is still a delicate issue, even 65 years after the end of the war. For many years I have been one of the few foreign residents to serve on the governing bodies of the Hiroshima Peace Museum. Saaler observes that,

> "*The well-known prefectural peace museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki consider the causes of the war to a limited degree, although they still focus on the wartime damage suffered by Japan, the devastation wrought by the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the meaning of these terrible events for mankind. This kind of narrative also forms the basis of the strong pacifism characteristic of postwar Japan. … Japanese responsibility for the war is still somewhat ambiguous and is never made explicit*." (Saaler, *op.cit*., p. 114.)

I believe this to be true, but I also think there are reasons for this that Saaler does not mention. Like Kisshomaru Ueshiba with the biography of his father, Hiroshima City has set itself the task of being all things to everybody: of creating a picture that caters for the whole spectrum of views concerning World War II, including the positive and negative views concerning the wartime behavior of the Japanese military and the dropping of the atomic bomb. However, when I have raised the question of Japan's wartime atrocities with the city government and A-bomb survivors, the answer has invariably been, 'Yes, there were such atrocities, but they occurred on both sides, and these atrocities pale into insignificance when compared with the main atrocity that occurred on August 6, 1945, when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Accordingly, the most practical course for us in Hiroshima is to put both atrocities behind us and concentrate on the total abolition of nuclear weapons.' This is a very plausible approach for a politician in Hiroshima, even for an A-bomb survivor, but not, in my opinion, for a historian, who should be more concerned with uncovering all the facts about both 'atrocities', without being too ready to submerge these facts in the face-saving camouflage of 'total abolition', vital though this is.

Some Conclusions?

The Sunday evening NHK *taiga dorama* and the historical novels written by Shiba Ryotaro are important for another reason: they help to blur the distinction in Japan that is taken for granted in western academic circles between academic history and historical fiction. They also provide an important cultural context for approaching the biographies of Morihei Ueshiba written by Japanese authors, especially Kisshomaru Ueshiba. (I state 'especially' here, because I believe that the overall aim of the biography written by Sunadomari Kanemoto is somewhat different.)

In the light of the discussion in the last two sections, we can approach Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography in several ways: (1) as straight history; (2) as a 'bright' narrative, after the manner of Nishio Kanji's *Kokumin no Rekishi*, with facts carefully selected, based on a prior concern to portray Morihei Ueshiba as someone 'uniquely' unique, even though he was a Japanese with the ideas and prejudices of his own time; (3) as a cross between history and fiction, like Shiba Ryotaro's*Ryoma ga kuru*, but as interpreted by Narita Ryuichi (after Hayden White), where fact and fiction are so fused together that one cannot tell which is which; (4) or as a cross

between history and fiction, like Shiba Ryotaro's *Ryoma ga kuru*, but interpreted differently, where the facts are still presented as 'facts', but liberally supplemented with 'sympathetic' fiction. Readers can judge for themselves on the basis of the evidence provided and their own further researches. My own personal view is that Kisshomaru was writing a biography of his father as a combination of (2) and (3): as a 'bright' narrative of a period that moved from 'light' to 'darkness' and back to 'light' again, liberally sprinkled with his own reminiscences and speculations. This is a more appropriate model for his biography than an unsuccessful version of (1), on the grounds that Kisshomaru was lying or being deceitful.

Researching Aikido History:

1: Aikido Students Approaching the Life of the Founder

Just as it is possible to practice an art without bothering about its history, so, too, it is possible to practice the art of aikido, even in Japan, without bothering about the life of its Founder. (The qualification 'even in Japan' is intended to suggest that such practice is less likely here, given the vast amount of information in Japanese generally available about Morihei Ueshiba.) Of course, there is the picture guarding the *shoumen* (正面), but people come to the dojo, accept all the dojo furniture as a 'given' for the art, and get on with practicing the art. There is no need for them to learn about the old man in the picture unless they are curious—or are told about him as part of learning the art.

Since an accessible and generally accepted history of aikido has still to be written, postwar students of aikido tend to learn its history in a rather piecemeal, biased and unstructured fashion. They learn that a very small and select number of their prewar Japanese predecessors heard by word of mouth of a person named Morihei Ueshiba, thought by some to possess superhuman qualities, and sought an introduction from two eminent persons. To be accepted by Ueshiba, such students had to have the time and financial means to commit themselves to training 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The life of such students is generally presented in heroic terms: as a vocation, a quest to achieve some of the superhuman qualities supposedly possessed by Ueshiba and such students were invariably radically changed as a result—and almost always for the better. Only one prewar student is recorded as leaving Ueshiba and the reason given is that he could not cope.

(The sketch given here reflects the unfolding introduction to the complexities of aikido and its history given to my colleagues and myself in the dojos in which we trained until reaching the rank of *shodan*. Coming amid the constant struggle to walk properly, breathe properly, visualize properly, do the solo exercises properly, master the *waza* and reproduce them as closely as possible to the model given during each training session, one important milestone was to be told with obvious pride by an early Japanese teacher that, "I was an *uchi-deshi* of the Founder himself." He did not explain what an *uchi-deshi* was, nor who the Founder was, in so many words. It took a long time for me to unpack the cultural depths conveyed by the pride expressed, and also by the nuance of the terms '*uchi-deshi*' and 'the Founder himself'. I assume that there was a reasonable desire by the teacher to keep things simple at the time, but the reality has turned out to be quite different.)

Of course, the postwar students deduce correctly that they themselves do not usually have the time to do anything similar, for times have changed (though this is not usually emphasized too much) and the change is usually presented as part of an overall grand design on the part of Morihei Ueshiba, who allegedly presented his art as a gift to the world and, together with his successors, prepared a Way for Others to Follow. Moreover, since O Sensei bequeathed aikido to the world as a means of lighting up the Way to enlightenment, it is no longer necessary for students to go through the same grueling training regime as that suffered by his prewar students. So, in one important respect, matters have become much easier—and a historical gulf thereby established between the heroic 'golden age' and the more mundane present.

In any case, even if the postwar students had the inclination to become *uchi-deshi* according to the established model, they no longer have the opportunities. These students go to a dojo, perhaps look at a training session, talk to the instructor, sign the waiver and enroll. Even those who do enter modern '*uchi-deshi*' schemes sometimes respond to on-line adverts proclaiming the virtues of the schemes and commit themselves only for a limited period—and there are usually documents to sign.

Later on, after a period of training, the students might hear again about the man who started it all: the unusual individual usually referred to as O Sensei (大—less usually 翁—先生 'The Great One Who Has Gone Before' = Supreme Teacher), or The Founder—and the very unusual life he led. They might also hear more about the disciples of this individual, who left Japan to settle overseas (being sent, rather than going voluntarily) and how they devoted themselves selflessly to a kind of missionary effort: to preach a gospel of love and thereby spread the light of aikido to the regions of darkness. The students might actually be taught by one or more of these disciples, as I was.

They might also hear about the Founder's son Kisshomaru, called Doshu (道主: Head of the Way), who was at the center of something called the Hombu (本部: Headquarters), and who was largely responsible for the international expansion of aikido after World War II. In addition, depending on who tells the story, Kisshomaru Doshu was considered

responsible for reorganizing—or completely changing—the content of the training. They might not know that this particular Doshu wrote a detailed biography of his father, which is regarded as a ‘standard' (though ‘Aikikai') biography.

Even at this point there are serious gaps in the history. There is usually no mention of the prewar and wartime political activities of Morihei Ueshiba, especially his activities with Onisaburo Deguchi (both in Japan and in Mongolia) and his activities as an important member of the Japanese military establishment. There is no mention of Koichi Tohei, who virtually started aikido in America and was a central figure in the Aikikai Hombu immediately after World War II. After he resigned from the Aikikai, to found his own organization, Tohei was virtually erased from Aikikai existence and to this day is talked about only in private conversations. There is no coherent account of Ueshiba's training methodology, including his training with weapons, which has been called both crucial and useless for learning aikido.

If they probe a little further and search the Internet, students might learn of an American researcher named Stanley Pranin, who lived for a time in Japan, training mainly in Iwama (the village where Morihei Ueshiba retired during World War II), and who conducted extensive interviews with most of the Founder's disciples, including the said Kisshomaru Doshu. The biography of Morihei Ueshiba was summarized by Mr Pranin in his *Aiki News* magazine and later in his *Aikido Journal*magazine website [no complete translation was possible at that time, apparently for ‘copyright' reasons]. Over the years, Mr Pranin also uncovered information that cast much doubt on the accuracy of the said biography, which, after a very long interval [due, apparently, to the time it took to find a suitable translator], was published more or less entirely into English.

Biographies of Morihei Ueshiba

1. Kisshomaru Ueshiba: Filial Emotions Recollected in Tranquility

Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography of his father was published in 1978 and was translated into English in 2008, which is precisely thirty years later. According to the present Doshu, Moriteru Ueshiba, it was written at the express request of his grandfather Morihei Ueshiba.

> "*I understand that when the Founder was still alive, he often said to Kisshomaru Doshu, "In order for the path of Aiki to be passed on correctly, the story of my life needs to be known to the public. The only person who can do that is you." After the Second World War, Aikido began to be spread around the world, far from the place of its origin. As O Sensei's son and disciple, Kisshomaru Doshu became convinced that it was crucial to publish a biography of the Founder* ***based on detailed and solid historical evidence****. He felt that such a biography would provide good direction for Aikido, and would be meaningful for its future growth*." (K Ueshiba, *A Life in Aikido*, p. 13.)

Unlike the earlier biography written by Kanemoto Sunadomari, which is concerned with Morihei Ueshiba's Omoto beliefs, Kisshomaru's biography covers the whole of Ueshiba's life and also deals with the two legal organizations that were created: the Kobukai Foundation and its postwar successor, the Aikikai Foundation. In fact, the creation of these foundations and the creation of an *iemoto* tradition in the person of the *Doshu* are the principal aims of his book.

Preliminary Issues

The main reason why I have discussed in such detail the more general issues relating to the collection of historical data, the presentation of these as a story, and also the important distinction made in Japanese works between ‘historical science' and ‘literary history', is that they have an immediate bearing on Kisshomaru's biography. Readers of the English translation who are not aware of this cultural context might well raise questions about the work that Kisshomaru simply took for granted or did not believe were serious issues. He certainly tells a dramatic story, but he gives the reader no help whatever in evaluating the purely factual content. In the Japanese text there are no lists of primary or secondary works that Kisshomaru consulted when he wrote the work. Since he was writing for people who were well acquainted with the historical fiction of Shiba Ryotaro, he might not have thought it necessary. Nevertheless, the fact remains that it is not possible to determine the extent to which his biography of the Founder is "based on detailed and solid historical evidence." Sometimes Kisshomaru Ueshiba even mentions people who were in fact no longer alive at the time they are supposed to have done what he states they did, and this calls into question the degree of critical rigor behind the entire enterprise.

However, given the type of publication it is, however, which is biography or memoirs, the work follows conventions that are quite current in Japan, as I have suggested. In previous columns I have cited the memoirs of Saigo Tanomo / Hoshina Chikanori, the survivor of the Boshin War who allegedly taught *aiki* to Sokaku Takeda, which have been collected and published by Hotta Setsuo. In addition to the text, there are notes and a list of other works consulted, together with a chronological chart that lists all the details of Saigo's life, year by year, in parallel with the main events taking place both in the Aizu clan and in Japan at the time. Narita Ryuichi's literary biography of Shiba Ryotaro, who published historical fiction, also includes a similar detailed chronological chart.

Kisshomaru's biography contains a similar chronological chart, fifteen pages long, as an appendix, but this has not been included in the English translation. In addition, Hotta and Narita provide lists of sources consulted and secondary works, but Kisshomaru gives no indication of any sources and there are no explanatory notes. (To their credit, the translators of Kisshomaru's biography have added footnotes, but some of these are actually translations of portions of the main text.) Although he was not writing a biography, Robert Middlekauff, in his *OHUS* volume discussed in the previous column, was scrupulous in providing notes and references to support his statements, so one could, in theory, go over the same ground again and evaluate all his sources. This is quite impossible with Kisshomaru Ueshiba's life of his father.

Moreover, the accounts of the American War of Independence in the Oxford histories, considered in the previous column, are based on exhaustive research by professional historians from an enormous amount of primary sources and secondary authorities. The individual authors have done their best to strike a balance between presenting the most important facts, without giving excessive detail, and presenting these facts in an ordered narrative. That this is possible is the reason why the Oxford histories have such a high reputation: even the earlier *Oxford History of England* is still in print and the *Oxford History of the United States* has established a standard for one-volume historical surveys of particular periods and events. Yet, all three accounts are quite different and the reason for the difference is not simply that it is impossible to have an objective viewpoint. A glance at the bibliographies of these works will reveal the vast amount of original sources and secondary literature that has to be mastered by anyone setting out to write a definitive history of a period or the biography of a famous historical figure. This material is simply not available in the case of aikido.

The fact that that Kisshomaru Ueshiba was not a professional historian is only a partial defense. Given that it is based on "detailed and solid historical evidence", as the present Doshu stated, it is certainly in order for western readers, at least, who are accustomed to the accepted conventions of history and history writing, to seek details of the evidence on which the book is supposedly based and to judge the quality of the work accordingly.

Finally, in conjunction with the treatment of the American War of Independence in the Oxford histories, we discussed the question of the narrator's ‘omniscience'. This is especially important in the case of Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography. The reader is made to sit like a monkey on Kisshomaru's shoulders, but sees the entire world of his father through Kisshomaru's eyes, not those of Morihei Ueshiba. This point is of some importance, since the reader might believe that he / she has the impression of seeing the world through Morihei's eyes. However, one should remember that this is a common literary device and does not at all establish that Morihei Ueshiba's worldview was exactly as Kisshomaru describes it. Actually, some of the quotations that follow will show that Kisshomaru himself intruded into his own narrative of his father's life to a considerable extent.

The main events in the life of Morihei Ueshiba occupy six out of the seven chapters of the book. There is no space to examine all of these chapters in detail, but there is a need to point out some of the things that Kisshomaru chooses to include, emphasizes, assumes, omits, or takes for granted. Accordingly, after a discussion of the first chapter, which sets the overall tone of the whole biography, I have chosen a number of periods or episodes: (1) Morihei Ueshiba's childhood and youth; (2) The encounter in Hokkaido with Sokaku Takeda; (3) Ueshiba's activities during the war in Asia from 1931 to 1945; and (4) The creation of the Kobukai Foundation and the Aikikai Foundation. (I have quoted extensively from the text of the recent English translation. In these quotations, any parts highlighted in **bold** type are followed by the original Japanese text in square brackets. Occasionally, complete paragraphs, not highlighted in bold, are followed by the Japanese original. I have done this in order that those with reading ability in Japanese can study the choices made by the translators.)

Prologue: Beginning with the End

The book begins with a chapter that is intended to set the tone for the entire biography, but which would have been better placed at the end. Readers would then see the extent to which the judgments made in this chapter are really conclusions, based on the evidence presented in the rest of the book, rather than general statements that are intended to guide how we interpret the evidence that follows. Chapter One, entitled, "Attaining Heavenly Skills," is a curious mixture of anecdotes told to Kisshomaru by others who knew Morihei Ueshiba and of Kisshomaru's own recollections and opinions. The chapter has several major themes.

A ***Morihei Ueshiba spent his entire life creating the art of aikido.***

Kisshomaru uses the metaphor of a man-made mountain, which Morihei Ueshiba spent his entire life building, in contrast to ‘the islands of Nijima and Shinzan, volcanoes that erupted from the ocean floor overnight.' The main issue here is what period in Ueshiba's life can be said to be the ‘main' period during the creation of his art. Those who argue that Ueshiba was really practicing Daito-ryu, or that the training in Iwama most truly reflects Ueshiba's aikido, assume that one can isolate certain periods or phases, rather than others. Kisshomaru is very clear that Ueshiba's entire life should be considered as one seamless whole.

B ***Morihei Ueshiba dedicated his entire life to a punishing regime of personal training.***

Kisshomaru immediately equates this mountain with aikido and is also very clear that mastering 'the ancient traditions of the martial arts' was not the goal; the goal was 'a new art built on deeper truths.' This regime of training means that,

> "*the principles of Aikido are very powerful: physical movements developed and tested by long experience; deeply felt spiritual principles that touch the heart. Aikido embodies a search for truth that reaches beyond the human frame of reference to the realization of an omnipotent presence and to union with that presence*." (K Ueshiba, *A Life in Aikido*, p. 19.)

Note that here Kisshomaru immediately transfers the qualities of a personal training regime to the art that was created. In this respect, the emphasis of Kisshomaru's biography is quite different from that of Kanemoto Sunadomari, for whom the art was quite secondary to its creator and his commitment to the Omoto religion. However, both stress that Morihei Ueshiba became 'enlightened' and that this made a vast difference to the way he conceived his aikido.

C ***This training regime enabled Morihei Ueshiba to perform* kami-waza*, techniques so far beyond the normal that divine is the only suitable epithet.***

Kisshomaru cites and quotes several disciples who all claimed that seeing and being thrown by Morihei Ueshiba was a unique experience and, without laying any stress on the point, quotes Sogabe Genryu, the chief priest of Kozanji in Tanabe, on the importance of *ukemi*:

> "*I believe he felt that technique could not be taught in words; he wanted people to learn by being thrown over and over again. Each time the same technique is used, it differs, depending on the angle, the timing, or the force applied by each partner—these crucial variations may be quite subtle. I believe O Sensei saw little value in words, because they fixed the form of the technique without capturing its fluidity in actual practice*." (K Ueshiba, *op. cit.*, p. 23.)

In a later chapter, Kisshomaru dates the manifestation of such *kami-waza* to around 1925. One major episode was the duel with a naval officer from Maizuru, when the latter's attacks with the *bokken* were preceded by a flash of white light. In Kisshomaru's words,

> "*If he could anticipate the trajectories of bullets* [as had allegedly happened in the Russo-Japanese War and in Mongolia]*, it was not difficult to read the intended path of a sword. This kind of ability goes beyond reading the mind through the eyes and almost becomes a kind of mystical insight*." (K Ueshiba, *op. cit.*, p. 178.)
>
> 弾丸筋ですら読みとられるにいたった開祖には、太刀筋などはむろん楽に読みとれたわけである。ここにいたって心眼は、むしろ"霊眼"とすら評してもさしつかえないのではなかろうか。*(合気道開祖植芝盛平伝, p. 171.)*

Kisshomaru adds—just to head off those who might claim that one can replicate such abilities with sufficient training—the comment that Ueshiba was just 41 years old at the time, but had trained the equivalent, for an "ordinary" person, of 70 or 80 years, "*given the single-minded way he approached life, with complete absorption and commitment*." So Gladwell's 10,000 hours are too simple an approach to fit Morihei Ueshiba.

The second episode was the experience in the garden after training with the naval officer. Ueshiba alleged that he was suddenly bathed in golden light and saw himself in complete oneness with 'the universe'. He made statements like, 「黄金体に化す」: '*This is a divine transformation*,'「神を視た！」: '*I encountered God*,' 「はっと悟り得たように思う」: '*I felt I was enlightened*.' Kisshomaru adds a few 道歌 *doka*, which he believes describe the state that Ueshiba achieved.

A perceptive reader can perhaps see where Kisshomaru is heading. The two episodes together mark the transition from the old ways to the new.

> "*O Sensei finally came to see his budo as "The workings of love," believing that this way of Budo would eventually join him with the heart of the universe. I believe that from that day in 1925, the day that O Sensei underwent the divine transformation, our Aikido took its first steps forward*." (K Ueshiba, *op. cit.*, p. 180.)
>
> かくて開祖は、みずからの武道が「愛の働き」であり、宇宙そのものと一つになり、宇宙の中心に帰一する」ものである妙諦に達し得たと思われる。
>
> わが合気道は、大正十四年、この日をもって、すなわち開祖が黄金体した化した日をもってその第一歩みを踏み出したものであると、私は断じたい。*(植芝盛平伝, p. 174.)*

In a later chapter, Kisshomaru notes the transition from pure strength, which Morihei Ueshiba possessed in abundance, to '*kami-waza*'. The immediate context [Kisshomaru follows an established style of writing in Japanese known as 起承転結: *ki shou ten ketsu*, where the immediate context is not always closely connected to the main argument] is a reference to one

Nishimura Hidetaro, a judoka from Waseda University who challenged Ueshiba in Ayabe and who introduced Kenji Tomiki to Ueshiba. After giving Tomiki's impression of training with Ueshiba, Kisshomaru adds his own conclusion.

> "*There is no doubt that O Sensei's strength was unrivalled.*
>
> 開祖は当時、無類の強さをもっていたことはまず間違いない。
>
> *If he had concluded his development at this stage, he would have gone down in martial arts history as a great master of jujutsu, but it is unlikely that he would have been remembered as someone whose techniques had become* kami-waza*, something more than simply human. His legacy might have remained in the domain of Aiki Bujutsu (Aiki martial techniques), never reaching the level of Aikido (the way of Aiki). I am deeply convinced that both Aikido and O Sensei's* kami-waza*became possible only by way of the experiences of enlightenment I have described.*
>
> ただ、かりにその段階で終わったとしならば、武道史に「柔術の名人」としては記されたであろうけれど、はたして今日の「技、神に達す」と導崇されるまでの 盛名は遺されたかどうか。ひいては「合気武術」にとどまって「合気道」の誕生はあり得たかどうか。つまり、「神技」も「合気道」も、大正十四年春の豁然た る開悟によって、はじめて真に可能になったのではないかと私は考える。
>
> *In other words, that experience enabled the shift from an art of mind, body and technique to the union of mind, body and ki, unique to Aikido.*"
>
> いいかえればいわゆる心・技・体にとどまらず、合気道ならではの「気・心・体」への大飛躍は、あの開悟なくしてはおそらく不可能ではなかったとすら思われる。*((K Ueshiba, op. cit., p. 185,* 植芝盛平伝*, p. 177.)*

Kisshomaru does not mention that at this time Ueshiba still called his art Daito-ryu and I have quoted this passage in full, in order to show the parallel between Kisshomaru's narrative: of hard training, leading to great physical strength, leading to *kami-waza*, and the other narrative: of hard training, leading to great strength, but at some point transformed by *aiki* (in Ayabe with Sokaku Takeda?) and leading to what Kisshomaru calls *kami-waza*, but what could also be described as 'internal power'. The two narratives are parallel and, of course, never meet in Kissomaru's biography. In consequence, the issue arises, which is not resolved here, of whether Kisshomaru had any idea of the second narrative, or did have some idea, but chose to express it in terms of *kami-waza*.

D ***Morihei Ueshiba's regime of personal training and the way it was expressed bore his own unique stamp.***

Although Kisshomaru states that Ueshiba taught *misogi* to his students, he never stresses this point, but emphasizes that this training time was especially private.

> "*He was like a huge, deep-rooted tree. A powerful spiritual energy surrounded him; even when I was serving him closely on a daily basis, during that half-hour when he performed his* Chinkon *ritual in the morning and evening, he gave off such a strong and severe energy that I would not have dared to go near him.*" (Morihiro Saito, quoted in K Ueshiba, *op.cit.*, p. 29.)

Perhaps without any intention on M Saito's part, this has the effect of underlining a major difference between Ueshiba's own training and that of his students and many of the issues relating to present-day aikido relate directly to this alleged difference. Neither Kisshomaru Ueshiba nor Morihiro Saito ever state or even suggest that they, too, spent one hour each day performing the *Chinkon* ritual, because Ueshiba directed or urged them to do so, or because they wanted to train exactly like he did.

In *An Aikido Life*, Gozo Shioda gives a sketch of his training schedule in the Takeda dojo.

> "*Ueshiba Sensei was very religiously oriented. He regarded Mr. Onisaburo Deguchi of the Omoto religion as his master. He firmly believed that having Mr. Deguchi as his teacher would make it possible to attain eternal power. Therefore, his religious services in the morning and evening used to be a major event each day. Sensei recited Shinto prayers and then offered thanks to the kami or deities (starting with the Sun Goddess to the kami of water and grass). The whole ritual took approximately one and a half hours every day. Sensei was especially severe with respect to the kami and even the slightest mistake by his students during the daily ritual would raise his ire. That was one aspect of the most difficult training we experienced. I personally could not commit myself to believing in the kami and I only followed my teacher.*"
>
> "*It* [outdoor training in Takeda] *started with prayer exercises for about one and a half hours starting at five am. Then we performed purification rituals for another hour. After breakfast, the period of training started at around ten and lasted until lunchtime. We rested for about two hours after lunch. Then training resumed at four pm and lasted until six. During this*

special seminar we practiced outdoors every other day. This was especially hard." (Shioda, *An Aikido Life* (08), *Aikido Journal*.)

Thus, the prayers and purification rituals lasted for two-and-a-half hours each day. Clearly Shioda also did this, but he does not state anything about the form it took, and how it affected his own training.

E ***Morihei Ueshiba was unusually naïve and selfish, especially with respect to finance, family affairs and human relationships.***

My own personal impression on reading this section of the biography, where Kisshomaru really seems to speak from the heart, was that if Morihei Ueshiba liked people, they would bask in the warm glow of his direct sunlight; if he disliked people, they would quickly feel the chill of the outer darkness—and there was no way of telling this beforehand. This, apparently, changed around 1925, after the enlightenment experience—which indeed was a learning experience, "*he began trying to see and understand others before being critical*." With family, of course, neither side had much choice, but Kisshomaru mentions several times his father's frigid attitude towards him. The ice cracked only with the opening of the new Hombu Dojo in 1968, when for the first time in his life Ueshiba praised his son, then aged 47, for his efforts.

F ***Morihei Ueshiba appears to have changed his mind about the Fifteen Years War (1931-1945).***

According to Kisshomaru, there were two phases in Morihei Ueshiba's later activities: from 1927 to 1941; 1941 and afterwards, when he retired to Iwama and left 'the younger generation' in charge of aikido. During the first phase, Ueshiba was actively involved in Japan's Fifteen Years War, but whatever anxiety occurred about the war, occurred around 1941, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

References to the war are scattered throughout the latter half of the book, but Kisshomaru Ueshiba discusses his father's views about the war only in the first chapter. The comments are intended to illuminate Ueshiba's own wartime activities and the problem is the extent to which Ueshiba's comments were emotions recollected in postwar tranquility. In the first chapter we find this question posed:

"*People have noticed that the period when O Sensei came to prominence as a martial artist coincided with the emergence of an aggressive military policy at the national level, and it is natural to wonder how these two events were related*." (K Ueshiba, *op. cit*., p. 38.)

したがって、開祖の世間的な活躍は、おうおうにして戦時下日本の、武力発展の推移と重ね合わされつつ評価されかねない。*(*合気道開祖植芝盛平伝*, p. 34.)*

Kisshomaru answers the question in the next two paragraphs. He begins by noting that Ueshiba was very well acquainted with political and business leaders, army generals and navy admirals. He lists the military schools at which Ueshiba taught and names the high-ranking generals and admirals who attended his classes. Kisshomaru then notes his father's patriotism and, in fact, identifies such patriotism with *budo*:

"*It is also true that O Sensei was determined to contribute whatever he could to his country, and to sacrifice for the greater cause out of patriotism and a desire for the good of the Japanese people. This readiness to sacrifice the smaller self for the communal good belongs to the most ancient traditions of the martial arts, and it was an integral part of O Sensei's identity as a martial artist*." (K Ueshiba, *op. cit*., p. 39.)

神代に発する日本古来の武の伝統を踏まえた武道家たる者の自覚として、民族の興隆をねがう愛国の至情はきわめて熾烈であり、「お国の役に立つ」ならば、いわゆる小我を捨てて大義に身を滅するの覚悟は確固として定まっていた。*(*植芝盛平伝*, p. 35.)*

So, to judge from the above quotation, one could properly call Morihei Ueshiba a diehard nationalist (the Japanese conveys this more than the English). On the other hand, he was most definitely not the 48th *Ronin* and Kisshomaru notes that Ueshiba had reservations, even opposition, to the way the war was being fought, but had no intention of making this opposition public. In addition, it is important to be clear about the timing.

"*When a peaceful resolution with China was rejected, he began to fear that the aggression of the Japanese military would have catastrophic consequences. As war in the Pacific seemed imminent, O Sensei would sometimes sigh, showing great displeasure, and say this kind of thing to me:*

'There are more foolhardy and arrogant people in the military all the time. They have lost sight of their duty to the nation…Maybe the only way for me is to withdraw from the world.'" (K Ueshiba, *op. cit*., p. 39.)

ことに、中国との平和の努力をおこたって、いたずらに強圧的、侵略的な軍事的征覇一辺倒に偏りはじめた暴走には、いずれ破局がくるであろうとの危惧を予感していた。すでに大平戦争勃発の前あたりから、開祖はしばしば不機嫌に、私に次のようなことをいっては嘆息した。

> 「己れの力をわきまえぬ無謀な軍人たちが増えとるのう。足もとの経世済民の大事を忘れおって、　…　神隠れするないようじゃ。」*(*植芝盛平伝*, p. 35.)*

So, Kisshomaru gives Morihei Ueshiba an orthodox, 'frame' to the war, which is similar to the one through which Kisshomaru himself saw the war. Unlike John Stevens, who appears to believe that Ueshiba was opposed to the war right from the beginning, but was left with wrestling with the huge contradiction this caused from his links to the military establishment, Kisshomaru allows him to have been a very good patriot, but to have quietly changed his mind around 1941, once he saw which way the political winds were blowing. I have discussed Ueshiba's attitude to the war in Column 10, including the lengthy discussion in the *Takemusu Aiki*discourses edited by Takahashi Hideo, but the column was written before the English translation of Kisshomaru's biography was published. I discuss the matter further, in Section (4), below.

G ***After the war, Morihei Ueshiba turned over the running of aikido to Kisshomaru Ueshiba and his associates.***

After 1941, Ueshiba retired to Iwama and left 'the younger generation' in charge of aikido. Kisshomaru is in no doubt that Morihei Ueshiba did this, but whether he did it by choice or because he had no choice, is moot. I have argued elsewhere that Morihei in effect gave the 'family jewels', in the form of the Tokyo dojo, to Kisshomaru in 1942, but when this once again became the Aikikai Hombu around 1950, it was Kisshomaru, not Morihei, who was in charge, and there is some evidence from an *Aikido Journal* interview with Minoru Mochizuki (not, of course, mentioned by Kisshomaru) that Ueshiba was uncomfortable about this. The number of references made by Morihei Ueshiba to himself as 'this old man' suggests some discomfort with the passing of generations, which in Japan was an inevitable event in a three-generation extended family like the Ueshibas. (Incidentally, by chance I was recently asked by the present Doshu about the last All-Japan Demonstration. My praise of his son's demonstration elicited the pained response that he himself was still going strong and was not giving up yet.)

(1) Ueshiba's Childhood and Youth

The English translation of Chapter Two begins with a short reference by another local native about the attraction of the small town—now a sizable city, where Morihei Ueshiba was born.

> "*The great scholar and world famous expert on fungus Kumagusu Minakata (1867-1941) described the town of Tanabe as an attractive place, modest and quiet, with temperate weather and beautiful surroundings…*" (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*. p. 49.)

The Japanese original actually includes much more detail: a quotation from Minakata himself, together with a brief biography that mentions Minakata's friendship with the folklorist Yanagita Kunio. All this—just over a page of text in Japanese, has been distilled into the sentence quoted above. Of course, since Kisshomaru is writing a biography of Morihei Ueshiba and not of Minakata Kumagusu, no great harm is done, but the English text is presented as a translation of Kisshomaru's biography and one assumes that it will be complete.

Kisshomaru goes into detail about his immediate family. His father Yoroku was a 'middling' farmer with about five acres of land. He was hard working and frugal, not formally educated, but well versed in politics and the economy. Since he was a member of the Nishinotani village council for eighteen years, he seems to fit the image of a local worthy. From his description of the ruling clan in Tanabe and, most importantly, where they lived, Kisshomaru makes it clear that the Ueshibas were not samurai stock, though he notes that Morihei's wife Hatsu was distantly related to a branch of the Takedas, an eminent samurai family. However, Kisshomaru's main point is that Yoroku was relatively wealthy and that he was quite happy to give this wealth to his extraordinary son —over a number of years. There is no mention at all of the various economic crises that were buffeting Japan at this time and the impression is given that the Ueshiba family was living in a modest but productive economic cocoon.

Kisshomaru spends a great deal of space on Morihei's relationship with his parents. He was an only son in a family that tended to produce daughters and so appears to have enjoyed a relationship with his father Yoroku that was somewhat different from the rather austere relationship he had with his own son Kisshomaru—and which shows clearly in this biography. Kisshomaru makes several references to Morihei's stern manner towards him and this seems to be evidence of the truth of the popular saying that there are four things Japanese fear most: 地震, 雷, 火事, 親父: *jishin*, *kaminari*, *kaji*, *oyaji*: earthquakes, thunder, fire, fathers. Every Japanese to whom I have mentioned this saying has stated that nowadays it is no longer true of fathers, but it was certainly true when Yoroku was alive and one can wonder whether Morihei was a normal example of the saying and Yoroku the exception.

Morihei Ueshiba went to a temple school in Tanabe, where he was taught the Chinese classics and the rituals of Shingon Buddhism. Kisshomaru gives many details of the local organization of Shingon Buddhism, but these will be lost on the average reader. The real purpose for discussing Ueshiba's liking for Buddhist rituals, however, is to prepare the groundwork for the later connections with the Omoto religion, which Kisshomaru believes to have been the major influence on his father's aikido. His account, incidentally, reveals his own relative disinterest in the religion.

"*Yet it seems only natural that what he learned at the Jizo temple as a young boy would have affected O Sensei for the rest of his life, especially given his interest in it. Think only of his later encounter with Onisaburo Deguchi of the Omoto religion. The way O Sensei immediately responded to this meeting and decided to follow the Omoto beliefs, suggests that his childhood study at the temple had lasting effects.* ***I make this connection because I believe that Onisaburo Deguchi's practice, and perhaps even the basis of his spiritual ideas, had some elements of Ryobu Shinto—although I could be mistaken since I am not familiar with these doctrines.*** [なぜならば、出口師の修行修験体験や霊的発想の根拠には、察するに（教義に未熟な私ゆえいささかの誤解はあるかもしれないが）両部神道的要素がふくまれているように感じられるからだ。(植芝盛平伝, p. 54.)] *Master Deguchi's famous concept of Miroku Gesho, or the incarnation of Miroku (Buddha) … echoes a widespread teaching within Shingon Mikkyo, where it is also associated with the prophecy that the great teacher Kobo Daishi would return to earth after his death. There are some differences, but the basic principle is the same, so it is not surprising that O Sensei became a convert to the religion. Perhaps his closeness to Master Deguchi reflected the importance of these childhood memories and influences*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*,, p. 57.)

Since Kisshomaru has just given a precise account of Ryobu Shinto on the previous pages, it is clear that he is referring to Omoto doctrines here.

Political Activities: Shrines, Fisheries and Minakata Kumagusu

The chapter began with a quotation about Tanabe by Minakata Kumagusu, the botanist who was also a local activist. Morihei Ueshiba met Minakata Kumagusu and they became acquaintances. Kisshomaru notes that it was his father's respect for Minakata that led him to support Minakata's stance against the government's decision to reduce the number of Shinto shrines. He then adds that Ueshiba became the virtual 'enforcer' of the protest movement in Tanabe.

"*O Sensei took a leading role in the movement. He met with the governor, he petitioned Parliament, he even sent letters to foreign correspondents. Kumagusu Minakata may have been the one in charge, but O Sensei was the one who put his directives into practice. Thanks to the hard work of these two men, the movement was quite successful*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 78.)

Kisshomaru adds his father's own comment, but it is not translated completely.

"*O Sensei would later recall, 'This was the first time I felt the joy of having an effect on things at the national, political level. Mr Kumagusu Minakata was a great man.'*"(*ibid*.)

「わたしはあの時、うまれてはじめて国事に奔走しとるのじゃという欣快を味わったものじゃ。熊楠爺さんは偉いお方じゃった」のちに開祖は、とくに「国事に奔走」に力を入れながら、そう語っている。*(*植芝盛平伝*, p. 77.)*

Kisshomaru does not record what 熊楠爺さん ['Old Man Kumagusu'] thought about Morihei Ueshiba.

This was one example of Ueshiba's local activism, the other being his support of the local fisheries. The local fisheries were resisting a law passed in 1901, largely as a result of the Meiji Restoration and the ending of Japan's isolation. Kisshomaru does not go into much detail, but the new law was a consolidation of an earlier law passed by the Tokugawa shogunate in 1741, which, among other things, established a clear distinction between farming villages and fishing villages and also created farming cooperatives and fishing cooperatives. The new law of 1901 made joining the fishing cooperatives compulsory and also gave the cooperatives responsibility for issuing fishing permits. As a consequence, without membership of a cooperative, no one could engage in commercial fishing. Kisshomaru notes that the law would have a very severe effect on the livelihoods of the smaller fishermen.

Morihei Ueshiba had graduated with success from an abacus institute in Tanabe and was working at the local tax office. He left this job to concentrate on the resistance to the new law. Kisshomaru explains his decision in psychological terms.

"*He had a kind of chivalric desire to help the little guys and try to improve their situation. But he also felt a principled anger against the bureaucrats and big businessmen who had ulterior motives for supporting regulations from which they would probably benefit. These were deep-seated parts of O Sensei's character that had nothing to do with logic. Similar things happened many times later on and he often ended getting the short end of the stick because of these tendencies*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 63.)

However, it is unfortunate that Kisshomaru does not support this character analysis with any other examples from later periods in Morihei Ueshiba's life. Presumably, the bureaucrats and big businessmen who helped him during the Kobukan years had no ulterior motives. Kisshomaru notes that Morihei Ueshiba became the leader of the fisheries

resistance, as he did with all his other projects, but that he also learned some painful lessons.

> "*One was how powerless the masses were against public authorities; another was how little an individual could do without a power base. He came to realize how limited he was by his youth, his small stature and lack of experience*." (*ibid*.)

Commercial Activities and Military Service

As a result of the bruising his ego received in the fisheries dispute, Morihei Ueshiba went to Tokyo in 1901 with funds given him by his father Yoroku. He set up in business, worked hard and did well. However, probably due to the life he was leading, he developed acute beri-beri and decided to return to Tanabe. He gave the business, *Ueshiba Shokai*, to his employees and left.

During his account Kisshomaru mentions a relative from another side of the family. The relative was Inoue Koshiro, who was the younger brother of Ueshiba's brother-in-law. Morihei's elder sister, Tame, married Inoue Zenzo and he and his brother Koshiro made their respective fortunes in Tokyo. Kisshomaru never mentions the wealth of the other side of the family, and I suspect that the reason is his concern to show that Morihei's later flowering as a martial artist was due entirely to the support of his father Yoroku—and to no one else.

When Morihei Ueshiba arrived in Tokyo, he went to meet Inoue Koshiro. According to Kisshomaru, Ueshiba was

> "*an independent soul and did not ask for any help. … After that first visit in any case, he never went back*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 64.)

However, a different account is given by Stanley Pranin, based on his later interviews with Ueshiba's nephew, Yoichiro / Noriaki Inoue.

> "*Since it is known that Morihei was apprenticed to Koshiro to assist in the latter's businesses in the Asakusa district of Tokyo, it would appear obvious that this career decision* [to go to Tokyo] *was taken jointly by family members including Morihei's father, Yoroku and Zenzo. As fate would have it, Ueshiba stayed in Tokyo for less than a year under the tutelage of Koshiro*." (Pranin, "Yoichiro Inoue: Aikido's Forgotten Pioneer", *Aikido Journal*, accessed online, 25 Sept, 2011.)

In fact, Morihei Ueshiba's nephew Yoichiro / Noriaki and his family hover like ghosts behind Kisshomaru's narrative, but take on verbal form only rarely. Their ghostly presence strengthens the impression that Kisshomaru was being rather selective in his account of his father's early years.

The Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904. This was a major 'patriotic' war for the Japanese and some have argued that this war set Japan on the path to ultra-nationalism and defeat in 1945. There is no hint of this here, of course. Kisshomaru gives the 'bright' version and merely states that Morihei Ueshiba followed the example of most men of his age and went to enlist in the army in 1903; he was rejected because he was too short. Given the names he was called at the fishery barricades because of his height, this must have been extremely galling to Ueshiba and Kisshomaru goes into great detail about the various exercises he undertook to gain the required height, with the result that Ueshiba was eventually accepted as a reservist.

Morihei Ueshiba saw some action in Manchuria and Kisshomaru mentions that there were "many stories from this time." He recounts one.

> "*O Sensei recalled later that as he started to experience actual fighting, he "began to see the bullets coming. I could see them coming from left and right and so I could easily get out of their way." It could have been strong intuition and fast reflexes, or an instinctive ability to feel the* ki *of the moment, but he said he could easily see them in mid-flight*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 70.)

> ただ興味をひからるのは、何回かの戦闘に参加するうちに、「飛んでくる敵の弾丸がよう見えるようになった。右からでも左からでもよう見える。だから、らく に避けることができたものじゃ。」とのちに述懐していることである。直感的、直覚的に気を察しての反射動作かもしれないが、とにかく開祖自身には「よう見 えた」のである。*(*植芝盛平伝*, p. 68.)*

Kisshomaru devotes much of Chapter Four to his father's secret visit to Mongolia, where Ueshiba also allegedly saw bullets flying through the air. Later he mentions the crucial episode in the garden of the dojo in Ayabe in 1925, where Ueshiba saw white light preceding the officer's sword cuts. Kisshomaru mentions the episode here also, in order to relate the later visions in Mongolia to the earlier experience of fighting in Manchuria.

> "***O Sensei liked to tell this kind of story, and it may be that this kind of intuitive 'pre-vision' of an opponent's movement goes back to his experiences in real battle situations during the Russo-Japanese War.***[…という実談を開祖は好んで話したが、そのような、武道のいわゆる一瞬の「先」のひらめきは、前記の日露戦争における実戦体験にまでさかのぼれよう。] *During his military service, O Sensei gained the ability to remain calm and focused even in life-and-death situations, to command any opponent or situation, and to capture*

in his mind the details and energies of a particular moment. ***Certainly his four years in the army were crucial in triggering O Sensei's turn towards the martial arts.***" [ともあれ足かけ四年間の軍隊生活は、開祖を確定的に武の道へ向けた契機であったと解してさしつかえない。] (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 71, 植芝盛平伝, p. 68-69.)

Again, as with the protest against the fishery law and the shrine issue, Kisshomaru has Morihei Ueshiba taking a major leadership role in the army also, and entitles this section of the chapter, 'Star of the Army' (the Japanese being 兵隊の神様, a moniker that Ueshiba applied to himself). Ueshiba certainly progressed upwards quite rapidly, but he was not a commissioned officer and so his rank on leaving the army has to be seen in starkly relative terms. He rejected the opportunity to go to the Toyama officer training school and found himself back in Tanabe at the age of 23 with a young wife and nothing to do. The severe emotional crisis he appears to have suffered at this point is a stark contrast with what Kisshomaru has just stated earlier, about Ueshiba's ability to "*remain calm and focused even in life-and-death situations, to command any opponent or situation*."

Early Married Life

Shortly before enlisting in the army, Morihei Ueshiba married Hatsu, who had been a childhood friend. Kisshomaru notes that on her trips to Osaka to see her husband, she was always well received by the soldiers in his unit. Kisshomaru is actually quite candid about the difficulties of their early married life.

> "***O Sensei was a stubborn man, not the kind of person who would demonstrate his affection for his wife in front of outsiders or even his family.***[開祖はそのやや頑な性格からして、外部か、あるいは妹や子供である私のような身内に対しても、彼女への愛情を明かすことはまずなかった。(植芝盛平伝, p. 70.)] *But I am convinced that inside he harbored deep gratitude towards her. … I think this mutual understanding* [of Morihei and Hatsu] *may have been reached only after O Sensei had established himself as a martial artist. It must have been quite different during these early years, when he was still searching, restless and angry, and his new wife could barely make a dent in his pain and anxiety. Of course, we are talking about the Meiji era, and O Sensei was not the only stubborn and ambitious young person in Japan at the time. It was a moment when people were caught up with issues of national importance, on fire with lofty ideas instead of thinking about the comforts of home*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 72.)

Kisshomaru assumes a marital relationship here that non-Japanese readers might not. Almost certainly at the time when Morihei Ueshiba married Hatsu and even when Kisshomaru was writing his biography, Japanese marriage was seen as a union between two family lines and not as a union between two individuals. Usually marriages were arranged, with the union quietly organized by the parents and a go-between. So the individual relationship developed—or did not. Since the new wife was entering the husband's family and leaving her own, there was far more social pressure on her to make it work and produce children, sons and daughters, but especially sons, to continue the husband's family line. Thus, Kisshomaru slides over the real emotional torment that must also have been experienced by Hatsu, quite as much as by Morihei.

Martial Arts Training

Yoroku Ueshiba took Morihei to play sumo on the beach with the children of the fishermen and an old fisherman named Suzuki Shingo taught him spear fishing. Kisshomaru adds his own comment on the potential for the future and also a footnote (which is part of the main text in the Japanese original).

> "*He enjoyed diving and underwater fishing. I sometimes wonder if his fondness for spears originated in his experience of the agility required in spearfishing*."
>
> "*Next to* Taijutsu *(techniques using the body), O Sensei loved* Sojutsu, *using the spear (*yari*). He is said to have studied Hozoin-style spear technique, but in my observation, he didn't follow the forms of any particular style; his* te-sabaki *and* tai-sabaki, *certainly, were entirely his own*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 50.)
>
> べつにこじつける気はないけれど、手練を要するモリ突きの習得が開祖の槍好き（開祖は体術のほかに、なによりも槍術を好んでいた。宝蔵院流槍術を学んだこ とがあるようだが、わたしの見るところでは定型にはとらわれず手捌き体捌きは独自のいわば"植芝自然流"であった）にまでつながっていたかと思われる。 *(植芝盛平伝, p. 45.)*

Although Kisshomaru records his observation here, in the early part of his biography, his 'observation' (わたしの見るところでは: he is honest enough to state this unequivocally) clearly relates to Ueshiba's training seen as a whole. It is of some importance for those discussions about what kind of weapons work Ueshiba practised and when. Later, Kisshomaru himself practiced Kashima Shinto-ryu and his earlier training in kendo at school was a small spur to his decision to train seriously in aikido.

When he was working in Tokyo at his business, Morihei Ueshiba began to practice Kito-ryu *jujutsu* at a dojo in Asakusa. Kisshomaru notes some confusion about the name of the teacher (Tobari, as against Tozawa) and adds that after this basic *jujutsu* training, he trained in Shinkage-ryu at a kendo dojo in Iida-machi, Tokyo. Kisshomaru does not state what this training actually consisted in, but assumes it was kendo—and adds that this was really casual training and lasted only for a short time.

Kisshomaru observes that during his years in the army, Morihei Ueshiba apparently became very good with the bayonet and he notes that this must have been partly due to his earlier training in Tokyo. Kisshomaru also notes that on his days off, Ueshiba visited the Yagyu-ryu dojo of Nakai Masakatsu in Osaka, where his army unit was stationed. Kisshomaru's observations need to be quoted in full.

> "*Kito-ryu is a* Kobudo Yawara*, a traditional form of Judo developed by Masashige Terada during the fourth Tokugawa shogunate. It seems that O Sensei had some doubts about this art. While he though the style was beautiful, he wondered whether it would be effective in real situations, and whether it was useful for training the mind. After learning the basics of Kito-ryu, O Sensei began going to a kendo dojo in Iida-machi, where they taught Shingake-ryu, as developed by Koizumi Isenokami. (This was perhaps only for a brief time. O Sensei's memory was failing when he told me this, and he was not very clear about the names of people he studied with early on.) He began going to dojos just to let off steam. This almost casual activity was the beginning of his lifelong involvement with the martial arts*." [開祖は、起倒流をいちおう習得後、剣道をこころざし、飯田町の新陰流（上泉伊勢守秀綱が創始）の道場かよいはじめたちうが、これは短時間であったらしく開祖の記憶も薄れていて、道場主の氏名その他もさだかではない。
>
> いずれにしても、いえることは、性に合わぬ商売への鬱屈を晴らそうとした道場通いが、結局はやがて武道に踏み込む糸口になったという点のおもしろさであろう。*] (K Ueshiba,op.cit., p. 64-65,* 植芝盛平伝*, pp. 61-62.)*
>
> "*It seems that on his days off, O Sensei would visit the Yagyu-ryu dojo of Mr Masakatsu Nakai. The regiment was located in what was then Osaka Chindai, and after they returned form war they were temporarily stationed in Hamadera—so it was easy for O Sensei to get to Sakai, where the dojo was.*
>
> *Mr Nakai was apparently related to the Yagyu family, and he was a Jujutsu master of great fame. I have heard that Jigoro Kano, the founder of Kodokan Judo, and Chubei Yokoyama, a master of* naginata*, used to come and study under Mr Nakai. O Sensei studied diligently and attained a* menkyo *(certificate of mastery) from Mr Nakai. Although he told me this on a number of occasions, the timing was not very clear and I have to admit I haven't been able to confirm when it happened, so it's a case of making an educated guess*." [開祖は熱心にかよい、免許を得るまでにいたった。そのことは、私自身、生前、開祖からしばしば聞かされている事実ゆえに問題はない。ただ問題は、その入門の時期である。] (K Ueshiba, *op.cit.*, p. 68-69, 植芝盛平伝, p. 66.)

The ‘educated guess' is that Ueshiba received the *menkyo* before, during, or after his spell in the army. However, according to Kisshomaru, the main impetus to his interest in the martial arts occurred after his time in the army—and this would include his study of Yagyu-ryu *jujutsu* described above. Yoroku turned the barn in front of the family house into a judo dojo and hired a judo teacher.

> "*When a famous Judoka named Kiyoichi Takagi came to visit Tanabe—he later received ninth dan from Kodokan—Yoroku begged him to stay and teach Judo to young people there. Really, he probably had in mind mostly his own son, training his body and mind and settling him down a bit. Yoroku spent his own money to hire Mr Tagaki, rent a house for him, pay his salary and build the dojo*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit.*, pp. 73-74.)

Again, this account needs to be read in conjunction with the comments made by Yoichiro / Noriaki Inoue in Mr Pranin's interview. Inoue used to practice in this dojo and he suggests that the dojo was much more of a joint project between two families than the sole work of Yoroku.

Training of the Spirit

The title of this second chapter is, "Hard and Solitary Training: O Sensei's Youth." Kisshomaru describes and explains his father's transformation from physical weakling to a very strong individual. When he practiced at the Takagi judo dojo, Morihei Ueshiba:

> "*was always like the king of the castle. His worrying crazy behavior was no longer in evidence. O Sensei had already built a strong body through military training. It was only natural that with daily hard practice at the dojo, his enormous strength soon became more apparent. There are scores of stories about this strength and some of them are well known*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit.*, pp. 74-75.)

Kisshomaru then cites "one account" of a style of jujutsu called Ai-oi, practiced by Ueshiba's great-great grandfather Kichiemon and suggests that, "perhaps this strength was

really mastery of Ai-oi jujutsu." The unstated implication is that Morihei Ueshiba's great physical strength was somehow tied to the life of dedication to the unnamed family martial art he would eventually practice.

However, Morihei Ueshiba seems not to have trained with Mr Takagi at the new dojo very much. Kisshomaru states merely that, "*he practiced whenever he had the time. He had studied Kito-ryu Kobudo Jujutsu, but this was the first time he had studied modern Kodokan-style Judo*." Kisshomaru does not explain what Morihei was doing at other times—and it was certainly not learning to do farming. In any case, though he does describe this in great detail, Kisshomaru did not see his father's 'hard and solitary training' in purely physical terms. The descriptions of Morihei Ueshiba struggling to gain extra height, in order to meet the army's entrance requirements, or of his wild behavior after he left the army, at the age of 23 and with nothing to do, are intended to set out the emotional dimensions of a search for a major goal in life: a goal he began to find in the martial arts. The description of the judo dojo, opened by Yoroku at some point between his son's discharge from the army and his departure for Hokkaido, marks the early outline of this goal.

Conclusion to (1)

I have discussed this chapter in some detail, because Kisshomaru is preparing the groundwork here for the development, in the rest of the book, of the central thesis announced in Chapter One, namely, that Morihei Ueshiba was a unique genius, someone who created a unique art—and prepared for this from a very early stage in his life. Accordingly, he presents a picture of the young Ueshiba, on the one hand, as someone radiating leadership, as someone who was 'his own man' from an extremely early age, and as someone who took his main life decisions virtually alone. A consequence of this is that more distant members of the family, like Kenzo and Koshiro Inoue, and Ueshiba's nephew Yoichiro / Noriaki, do not receive the degree of attention from Kisshomaru that is commensurate with the assistance they actually gave to Yoroku and Morihei. On the other hand, the picture also includes times when Ueshiba was, sick, broken and defeated in spirit, when his skills at human relationships virtually disappeared, but this is always seen as a training opportunity. Kisshomaru also suggests that the various martial arts he practiced in these early years would have an effect, at some time or other, on the development and ultimate flowering of aikido as the result. Finally, his bemused family acted as a sort of retroactive financial and emotional cushion, while showing some bewilderment at the strange and unpredictable phenomenon in their midst. Ueshiba's new wife Hatsu, especially, assumed the role of a quietly suffering servant and faithful supporter.

(2) Brief Encounter

Kisshomaru Ueshiba devotes just over six pages of Chapter Two to his father's encounter with Sokaku Takeda. This is wedged in between accounts of Morihei Ueshiba's exploits as 白滝になる王: *King of Shirataki* and the fire that broke out in the town just before his departure. Compared with the whole of Chapter Four and much of Chapter Five devoted to Onisaburo Deguchi, this is very short and perhaps reflects Kisshomaru's own ideas about the influence that Takeda had on his father's aikido, compared with that of Deguchi. In fact Kisshomaru cites Deguchi here and intrudes into the narrative, with a description of Takeda that is hardly prepossessing.

> "*Sokaku Takeda made a name for himself in the history of modern martial arts by restoring Daito-ryu Jujutsu. He was a formidable master of his art. Even though he was about two inches shorter than O Sensei, he had an impressive appearance: high cheekbones, sharp eyes that glowed with mysterious determination, and a tight-lipped mouth with missing teeth. He had a habit of looking around him contemptuously, with the corners of his mouth turned down*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., pp. 93.)
>
> 武田惣角という人物は、大東流柔術の中興の祖として近代武道史にその名をとどめている。一種おそるべき武道の達人であった。
>
> 顴骨の高く突き出た容貌はまさしく魁偉、背は開祖よりなお二寸ほど（六、七センチ）低い短躯ながら、眼光鋭くかつ妖しく底光りし、歯の抜け落ちたままの口もとをぐいとへの字にひき結び、あたりを睥睨してやまなかった。*(*植芝盛平伝*, p. 93.)*

Kisshomaru offers no analogous description of Deguchi's face in the chapter about Onisaburo Deguchi, whom Kisshomaru mentions next. Admittedly, he does not rely totally on Deguchi's knowledge of fortune telling by phrenology, but adds his own unease about Takeda, from when he was about ten years old.

> "*Master Onisaburo Deguchi was good at assessing people's character from their faces. He acknowledged that Sokaku Takeda had accomplished something in his life, but as he told O Sensei, he felt that this man had a 'strange destiny.' Apparently, he said he could smell blood about him, and could not warm to him as a person. I can't say whether or not this assessment was correct, but it is true that during the time of the Ushigome dojo, when I was a child and Takeda Sensei was staying with us, I always felt a bit afraid of him*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., pp. 94.)

観相に長じた出口王仁三郎師は、いちおう一道に達した人物とは見ながらも、「数奇な運命の持ち主」ではあるまいかと開祖にいい、なにやら、「血の匂いがす る」とて、人間的にはあまり好まれなかったと聞いている。その観相の適否はむろん私にはわからないが、少年時、牛込の道場にしばらく滞在されたおり、しば しばお目にかかった私の印象は、子ども心に、ある種のおそれを感じさせられた。*(*植芝盛平伝*, p. 94.)*

Kisshomaru then discusses the celebrated meeting at the Hisada Inn in Engaru. He quotes the interview with newspaper reporters first published in 1957.

"*When I was about 30 years old, I moved to Hokkaido. I was staying in an inn called the Hisata Ryokan in the town of Engaru in Kitami-no-kuni. This is where I met Sokaku Taekda Sensei, who was a sensei of Daito-ryu from Aizu. I received his instruction for about thirty days.* ***During that time, I felt something like a flash of inspiration which I didn't completely understand. Later we invited Takeda Sensei to come and teach us, and about fifteen of us tried to learn from him the quintessence of martial arts.*** [なんだかよくわからないながらも、ある霊感のようなものを感じたのです。その後、先生をお招きして十五、十六人の使用人や弟子と一緒に入門し、必死になって武道の真髄を探求したものです。]

When the reporter asked whether O Sensei had encountered Aikido while receiving this training in Daito-ryu, he shook his head and clearly said 'No.' He continued, 'Perhaps it is more accurate to say that Takeda Sensei opened our eyes to martial arts.'"

そして記者の「大東流を習っているとき、合気道を悟られたのですか」の質問には、はっきり、「いえ」と首を横にふり、「武田先生には武道の目を開いていただいた、といった方がよいでしょう。」と答えている。*(K Ueshiba, op.cit., pp. 94-95,* 植芝盛平伝*, p. 94.)*

Kisshomaru transcribes the interview exactly as it was published, but adds for emphasis the shaking of the head and the clear 'No'. Morihei Ueshiba definitely did not encounter aikido in Hokkaido, but neither he nor Kisshomaru are forthcoming about how Takeda opened their eyes.

There are some problems with Kisshomaru's account. On the one hand, Ueshiba stayed at the Hisada Inn for one month practicing from morning till night before returning to Shirataki. However, Kisshomaru adds:

"*Much later he recalled this time: "I didn't know it then, but Takeda Sensei didn't introduce new techniques after the first month. When he came to Ayabe, he would say, 'I don't need to teach you any longer,' and he was not interested in continuing with the training*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 97.)

のちに、開祖は、莞爾として述懐した。「あとでわかったことなんじゃが、先生は最初の一ヶ月後はあまり、新しい技はお示しにならなかった。綾部に来られて からなどは、『もう稽古をつけんでもよい』といわれて、わしと相手されたがらならなかったからのう。*(*植芝盛平伝*, p. 97.)*

On the other hand, after the month in Engaru, Ueshiba invited Takeda to Shirataki and arranged for fifteen people, including himself, to take his instruction, such was their earnest desire to penetrate the 'quintessence' of *budo* (必死になって武道の真髄を探求したものです). Ueshiba received a copy of the Daito-ryu *Hiden Ogi*(*Manual of Secret Techniques*), which is dated Taisho 5, or 1917. The reference to Ayabe is to a visit made by Takeda a few years later, in 1921, when he took his family and stayed for six months. Kisshomaru states nothing about this visit and moves on to a new topic. He does not consider what his father meant or, assuming that his father's recollections were correct and that Kisshomaru understood them, why Takeda stopped teaching Ueshiba new *waza*.

The new topic is distinguishing "legends" from "well-known facts" concerning Sokaku Takeda and Kisshomaru presents what he and many other people believe to be the latter. Accordingly, Daito-ryu originated with Shinra Saburo Minamoto, and was transmitted as the secret *otome-waza* of the Aizu clan through Tosa Kunitsugu Takeda, who was *Jito Kashira* (地頭職) in the Aizu domain. One of Tosa Kunitsugu's descendants was a samurai retainer named Takeda Sokichi, who was Sokaku's father. After noting Sokaku's "genius" with the sword, Kisshomaru notes that he gave up the sword and changed his focus to Daito-ryu Jujutsu.

"*In 1898, Chikanori Hoshina, the priest of Reizan Shrine in Fukushima Prefecture, conferred on Sokaku Takeda a certificate of mastery or* menkyo*, in what had been the Aizu domain* otome-waza*. Chikanori Hoshina had at one time been the chief retainer of the Aizu domain and was then known as Saigo Tanomo. So, when this happened, Sokaku Takeda became both officially and practically the true restorer of Daito-ryu Jujutsu*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 98.)

明治三十一年、旧会津藩家老で、当時は福島県霊山神社宮司をされていた保科近悳氏（家老当時の名は西郷頼母）より津藩家御留技の秘奥を免許皆伝され、名実 ともに大東流柔術中興の祖たるべき資格を得た（そではない、との大東流

> 関係者の証言もあるが、ここでは私が伝を聞いたことのみを述べるにとどめたい）。*(植芝盛平伝, p. 98.)*

The comment in the brackets, not translated in the English text, is evidence of the general looseness of Kisshomaru Ueshiba's idea of "detailed and solid historical evidence." The comment is noted, perhaps in an attempt to be even-handed, but with the response that Kisshomaru has stated only what he has heard. Or perhaps he was being ironic. Immediately before presenting the "well-known facts", Kisshomaru states that he does not know much about Sokaku Takeda and refers the reader to his son Tokimune. The reason for the reticence is that, "*the current art of aikido is completely different from Daito-ryu, consolidating the powers of body, mind and* ki." [現在合気道は、大東流とはまったく異質の道をゆく気・心・体の道統] (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 97, 植芝盛平伝, p. 97.)

Training of the Spirit: Takeda's Devoted Servant

One thing that stands out in Kisshomaru's account—and was something that apparently irritated Onisaburo Deguchi—is that Morihei Ueshiba was the perfect *deshi*. In this way Kisshomaru is able to place Takeda's technical skills in a wider context and show his character still wanting in some way. He quotes one Takeda Yoshimatsu:

> "*O Sensei took heart-breaking pains for Master Takeda. He wanted O Sensei with him at all times and required his constant attention, whether it was to bring him food, prepare his bath, or join him for games of* shogi *(Japanese chess).* ***Master Takeda's martial techniques were impressive, but O Sensei's devotion was even more impressive.***" [惣角先生の武術も偉かったろうが、植芝さんの献身ぶりはもっと偉かったな]

After complaining that young people would not think in this way, Kisshomaru concludes that:

> "*I don't know anyone who was stricter than O Sensei about showing deference and respect where it was proper.* ***Paradoxically, this quality was part of what made him so great that even his own teacher was in awe of him.***" [なればこそ開祖には、師をして畏敬せしむに足る器量がおのずから備わったのであった。] (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 99, 植芝盛平伝, p. 99.)

With that observation, that Sokaku Takeda was in awe of his student, Kisshomaru ends his discussion about him.

Conclusion to (2)

Kisshomaru takes some pains to show that Sokaku Takeda instantly recognized Ueshiba's *budo* skills and that the meeting at Engaru was a meeting between equals. The evidence for this is the mutual perception of *ki* as they passed in a corridor and a conversation lasting all night. There is no reason to disbelieve that they passed in the corridor or that the all-night meeting took place. However, recognition of Ueshiba's *budo* skills did not at all preclude an eye-opening demolition of these very same skills not long afterwards.

The only later reference to Sokaku Takeda occurs in connection with a reference to Ueshiba's training in Ayabe in 1921. He did much personal training alone and the training consisted of Daito-ryu *jujutsu*, as taught by Takeda, and also *soujutsu* and *kenjutsu*:

> 「この道場はあくまでわしの修行場じゃ」
>
> 武田惣角師から極意をうけた大東流もさることながら、綾部において開祖がとくに錬磨につとめたのは槍術および剣術である。*(植芝盛平伝, pp. 131-132.)*

Despite Kisshomaru's silence about Takeda's six-month stay in Ayabe, the description he gives of Ueshiba's training needs to be compared with the description given by Takeda Tokimune of his father's training and his own. The similarities are very close, so that one may be forgiven for thinking that Ueshiba learned these training methods from Sokaku Takeda himself.

(3) Morihei Ueshiba at War: 1931 - 1945

Japan's *Fifteen Years War* forms the 'dark' background of the later chapters in Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography. [There are various names for this series of conflicts, but I have chosen the fifteen-year period from 1931 because of Morihei Ueshiba's involvement with the Omoto religion / political organization and with the *Sakura-kai*, or Cherry Blossom Society.] However, the war is never allowed to intrude very far into his narrative. It is mentioned only in order to highlight generally praiseworthy aspects of Morihei Ueshiba's activities. His activities as a member of the military establishment are mentioned in some detail, but only from the viewpoint of personal relationship with his students—who also happened to be high-ranking admirals and generals etc. Kisshomaru states hardly anything about his father's private feelings about the war and what he does state shows some ambivalence.

Omoto Politics: The *Dai Nippon Budo Senyo-kai* and the *Showa Restoration*

The war is mentioned in connection with the Omoto *Dai Nihon Budo Senyokai*. Onisaburo Deguchi created this organization in 1932, with himself as *Sosai* (総裁: governor) and Morihei Ueshiba as *Kaicho* (会長: president). Deguchi's stated purpose contains the following:

"***The Budo of Divine Japan originated from God's greater path, embodying the sincerity of the Yamato spirit in order to disseminate it throughout the world.*** *[*神国日本の武道は惟神の大道より発して皇道を世界に実行する為に、大和魂の誠心を体に描き出したものであります。*] During the three hundred years of the Tokugawa Shogunate, where Bushido (the way of the samurai) was surrounded with ceremony, true Bushido was lost.* ***True Bushido existed from the beginning, before it was captured in words and was covered with human ideas****." [*真の武士道は、武士道を言挙げせぬ神代に存在して居たのであります。*] (K Ueshiba, op.cit., p. 224-225,* 植芝盛平伝*, p. 214. NB. The English translation misses the deep nuance of the original. As was explained in Column 13,* 言挙げせぬ *kotoage senu appears in the Manyoshu in connection with kotodama. Because there was kotodama [and also true bushido], kotoage was rendered unnecessary. The translators appear not to have knowledge of the Manyoshu poems.)*

Deguchi continues:

"*The great undertaking of the Showa Restoration cannot be achieved by political or economic means alone, or by science alone, or by spiritual things alone. By presenting the real God-given Dai Nihon Budo to the world, we would like to contribute, however modestly, to this great goal.*"

昭和維新の大業は政治経済のみでもゆかず科学のみでもゆかず、又、精神のみでも充分ではありません。吾々は神より下されたる真正の大日本武道を天下に宣揚して、此の大業成就の方分の一の働を相共にさして頂きたいのであります。*(K Ueshiba, op.cit., p. 225,* 植芝盛平伝*, p. 215.)*

Kisshomaru states that he does not understand Deguchi's real intentions, but he then spends much space in speculating about what these intentions were. However, we do not know whether Kisshomaru is giving his own thoughts here, or Morihei Ueshiba's. Deguchi's statement is a clear announcement of support for the Showa Restoration and the role that 'true budo' has to play in it. Kisshomaru continues:

"*However a historical incident at the time perhaps has some bearing on the establishment of the Dai Nippon Senyo-kai, and that is the bombing of a section of the Manchurian Railway at Ryujokyo on September 18, 1931, known as the 'Manchurian Incident.' Master Onisaburo saw this incident as a portent, with some foresight for what was to come. One can say that Omoto as an organization was preparing to wisely meet the new challenges that were about to occur in the next few years.*" (K Ueshiba, *op.cit.*, p. 225.)

It would seem that Deguchi had the goal of creating a 'world utopia' in Mongolia or an independent Manchurian nation, with PuYi as the last emperor. However, as Kisshomaru delicately puts it, "The Manchurian Incident intervened." [その矢先の満州事変である。] He does not state here that this Incident led to a full-scale invasion of Manchuria and the establishment within six months of Manchukuo, headed by the same PuYi, as the puppet emperor. However, perhaps there is a reason for Kisshomaru's bland description of the Manchurian Incident, for the invasion of Manchuria by the Kwantung Army was very popular with the Japanese public.

"*When Kwantung Army members orchestrated the Manchurian Incident in September 1931 as a rationale for occupying Manchuria, many politicians, the mass media, and a variety of patriotic groups viewed them as heroes whose brave actions could save Japan from its domestic economic woes.*" (Nancy Stalker, *Prophet Motive*, p. 171.)

However, there were some domestic problems, as Kisshomaru mentions with his usual delicacy:

"*Simultaneously on the domestic front, the May 15 Incident involving young naval officers and army cadets exemplified the emerging sentiment of Showa Ishin (Showa Restoration). [The prime minister was assassinated by a group of young naval officers, necessitating the formation of a new government.]*" (K Ueshiba,*op.cit.*, p. 226.)

The Showa Restoration was a project that meant different things to its supporters and also, in turn, to its opponents. This fact might explain Kisshomaru's delicacy here and his preference for focusing only on the 'bright' aspects of the matter: the good intentions of Deguchi and, by implication, of Morihei Ueshiba and the future contribution to aikido afforded by the establishment of the *Budo Senyokai* and the Takeda Dojo. However, it is not clear from his account whether it is merely a summary of much deeper knowledge, or whether Kisshomaru also speaks for his father.

If we focus for a moment on the 'dark' aspects, the *May 15 Incident* was the sequel to the failed *League of Blood Incident* in March 1932, the failed *October Incident/ Imperial Colors Incident* in September 1931, and the failed *March Incident* also in 1931. All of these attempted *coups d'etat* and successful assassinations were carried out by young naval or army officers, or their associates, some of whom actually met in Morihei Ueshiba's Kobukan Dojo. I have explained the domestic politics of Omoto during these years in some detail in Column 9, in connection with Thomas Nadolski's doctoral thesis. More recently, another scholar, named Nancy Stalker, has studied Omoto and the social impact of the dire

economic woes that affected Japan in the economic depression caused by the 1929 stock market crash in New York. Kisshomaru passes over this economic crisis in silence and one is left to wonder how the human aspects of this crisis affected Morihei Ueshiba and his family. He was very active in local politics when he lived in Tanabe until 1912, but nothing is stated in the biography about any similar activities after Ueshiba's departure from Hokkaido in 1919.

The *Budo Senyo-kai* was a domestic organization [it was actually a paramilitary organization and the members wore uniforms] and was one of a number of similar nationalist groups set up by Omoto.

> "*It may be that Dai Nihon Budo Senyo-kai was created under the same premise, with a kind of dual purpose. One the one hand, the organization obviously contributed towards a patriotic posture of national defense; on the other hand, it identified Omoto more closely with Showa Ishin (and thus might help to insulate it from the potential recurrence of persecution by the government).*" (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 226.)

In fact, the Showa Restoration was conceived in terms of direct rule by the Emperor, with the total elimination of any elected government.

> "*This had to be a repetition of the glorious Meiji Restoration, three generations earlier, which still carried enormous prestige. … The second, or Showa, restoration had to be achieved in the same way as the first one. Dedicated and patriotic men were to destroy the evil advisers around the Throne, in order to enable the Emperor to exercise his authority as the sacrosanct monarch of the nation.*" (Ben-Ami Shillony, *Revolt in Japan*, pp. 56, 58.)

However, the term 'Showa Restoration' also included a variety of viewpoints and this was what constituted one of the 'new challenges' for Omoto.

> "*The conceptual vocabulary they* [the Young Officers] *used to express this vision of a Showa Restoration was often contradictory and included, for example, both agrarian utopian and national socialist ideas. Where the translation of these ideas into radical action is concerned, the picture is complicated by their overlap with different factions of the military. Without pressing the correlation too far, the agrarian utopian variety of Showa Restoration criticism appealed mostly to the idealistic 'imperial way faction' (Kodo-ha), while the national socialist variety had greater traction in the more pragmatic and utilitarian 'control faction' (Tosei-ha), in the army.*" (Stephen Large, *Emperor Hirohito and Showa Japan*, p. 58.)

Kisshomaru does not mention this here, but one of the 'new challenges' was the virtual elimination of Omoto, as a result of the Second Suppression in 1935. This occurred because Deguchi backed the wrong horse in the political struggle within the military establishment and supported the agrarian utopian view of the Showa Restoration, as exemplified by the *Sakura-kai* and Kita Ikki. The *Tosei-ha*, led by Tojo Hideki, out-maneuvered the *Kodo-ha* and Omoto was one of the casualties. Morihei Ueshiba was protected by some of his students in the Osaka police and escaped the Second Suppression unscathed, subjected only to a session of police questioning. His escape, however, led to some sort of rupture with a family 'ghost'. Yoichiro / Noriaki Inoue, who had trained in Ayabe and at the Takeda Dojo, felt that Ueshiba should have behaved like a man and taken similar punishment to his Omoto friends. Of course, Kisshomaru does not mention this consequence of the suppression and leaves his father free to continue his hectic training schedule at the Kobukan, its satellite dojos, all the military establishments, and also in Manchuria, to which I now turn briefly.

Manchuria: A Place for Demonstrations

As mentioned above, the Kwantung Army launched a full invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and established the puppet state of Manchukuo. Anxious to be fair to everyone [and perhaps showing his awareness of the school textbook controversy discussed earlier], Kisshomaru does not describe at all what happens. He moves straight from the 1931 'Manchurian Incident', discussed above, to the fact of the state itself, without any mention of what happened in between. He refrains from commenting on the ethics involved, but emphasizes what to him is one 'bright' aspect: the enormous scale of the operation.

> "*Opinions of the Manchurian state founded by Japan in 1932 under Emperor PuYi would vary greatly depending on one's position and way of thinking. It is not an issue on which I would comment. But setting aside the question of whether this endeavor was right or wrong, it is a historical fact that its scale was immense. I am honestly dumbstruck that Japan managed to undertake the project of building a nation in that part of the continent.*" (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 255.)

> 昭和七年（一九三二）三月、宣統帝溥儀を皇帝として建国された満州国については、人それぞれの立場や見方・考え方によって評価が大きく異なるはずである。ここで私がとやかく、あげつらうべき筋合いの問題ではあるまい。
>
> ただ、事の是非はさておき、一つの歴史的事実として見るかぎり、スケールは雄大、正直なところ、よくもまあ日本が一角にあれほどの"建国

の大業"を推進し得たものだと、半ば呆れもし、半ば感嘆せざるを得ないような気がする。*(*植芝盛平伝*, pp. 243-244.)*

With this comment, revealing in some ways about his knowledge of world history, Kisshomaru passes over any discussion of the invasion, the puppet state and the huge human cost, and focuses entirely on his father's involvement there.

This involvement with 'Japanese Manchuria' was quite extensive and Kisshomaru gives a list of official positions Ueshiba held.

> "*Directly, he was the adviser for Manchuria Budokai* [満州国武道会顧問], *adviser for the Shinbuden Dojo* [神武殿顧問], *and Budo Adviser for Kenkoku University* [建国大学武道顧問], *which was established in 1937. Indirectly, he had many relationships with people who were involved in Manchuria through the military, the civil service, and the private sector. If you add the number of Aikido disciples in Manchuria as well as the number of instructors sent to teach them, the total figure would be very high*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., p. 255.)

There are two parts to Kisshomaru Ueshiba's discussion of his father's activities in Manchuria: his aikido demonstrations; and his encounter with Tenryu, the sumo wrestler. Morihei Ueshiba gave three demonstrations in Manchuria and Kisshomaru focuses on the first and the third, but in reverse order. The second was mentioned in the previous column. It was the demonstration given in 1940 to mark the 2,600th Anniversary of the Japanese Empire (though Kisshomaru uses another description, avoiding the word 'empire': **日本の奉祝**二千六百年記念事業: *Nihon no houshuku*, which is translated as 'celebration of Japan's history'). Nothing is stated about this demonstration other than that it occurred.

The third demonstration occurred in 1942 and marked the tenth anniversary of the State of Manchukuo. Kisshomaru mentions elsewhere that Sonobe Hideo attended this demonstration. (Though Kisshomaru states that she was said to be the greatest expert of Jiki Shinkage-ryu *naginata* since the Meiji Restoration, she was not invited to participate.) She exclaimed, "Oh, it is Shinbu" [a divine martial art: 神武じゃ].

The first demonstration occurred in 1939 and the main demonstration was followed by another demonstration, given by Morihei Ueshiba at popular request. His *uke*was none other than the family 'ghost', Noriaki Inoue ['an old uchi-deshi': 古い内弟子]. During the demonstration, there was murmuring from the audience because "his movements were so flowing that those present felt somewhat skeptical and began to question whether that they were seeing was real." Ueshiba stopped and issued a declaration. His statement is best quoted in full, because it gives some clue about how Ueshiba saw demonstrations.

> "*It seems some of you wonder if this demonstration has been fixed. Is there anyone—it doesn't matter who—that will volunteer to attack this old man all-out? Aikido is quite dangerous if performed with full power, so I have been showing you kata. But since everyone is a renowned martial artist, we can bend the rules and try some more serious practice*."
>
> どうも馴れ合いのように感じられている方もあるようじゃ。どなたでもよいから、この老人にひたつ力いっぱい掛かってみなさらぬか。合気は試合すると危ない から型だけにしとるんじゃが、今日は名だたる武道家ばかりだそうじゃから、ちょっとだけ真剣にやりましょう。*(K Ueshiba, op.cit., p. 257,* 植芝盛平伝*, p. 246.)*

The sumo wrestler Tenryu accepted the challenge and was soundly defeated. This episode allows Kisshomaru to move away from Manchuria and the war and focus again on the 'bright' aspects of the war, namely, Ueshiba's personal relations with his students.

Morihei Ueshiba as Peacemaker: A Mission to China

Just before his discussion of Manchuria, Kisshomaru Ueshiba discusses a curious episode involving a visit to China in 1941 by Morihei Ueshiba and one of his *uchi-deshi*. The aim of the visit was to bring about peace between Japan and China. The episode shows that Ueshiba appears to have had sympathy with those like Konoe Fumimaro, who wanted to ensure that the US remained neutral and refrain from entering the war against Japan. Tojo Hideki planned to extend the war in ay case, and did not care much about the intentions of the United States.

Kisshomaru sets out the background to this visit:

> "*On December 8, 1941, Japan entered the Pacific War against the US and the UK. As battle lines on the mainland were expanding, this eventuality was not unforeseeable, but it now became obvious that Japan was in crisis, fighting a war on two fronts*."
>
> 昭和十六年十二月六日、世界情勢の推移はついに日本をして対米英の太平洋戦争の渦中に巻き込むにいたった。 *(The English translation of this first sentence does not quite capture the delicacy of the metaphors.)* 大陸における戦火の拡大とともに、いつかはこうなる事態も予測されないではなかったが、しかし腹背に敵対せざるを得なくなった日本の危機は明らかであっ た。

"*It was at this time that O Sensei made a secret visit to the continent, in the company of his disciple Tsutomu Yukawa, to help lay the groundwork for peace negotiations with China. He undertook this task at the request of Prince Fumimaro Konoe, with whom he had a close relationship*."

この前後、開祖はかねて親交を得ていた近衛文磨公らの意をうけて、中国に和平交渉の根まわしの一端をにあうべく、門弟の湯川勉氏を連れて隠密裡に大陸に渡っている。

"*The Japanese military needed to concentrate their forces and so as they entered the Pacific War, they hoped to reach a peace settlement with Chiang Kai-shek and to pull out of China. Every possible means to this objective was considered, and O Sensei's visit was part of a broader effort*."

というのも、太平洋戦争突入によって戦力の分散を余儀なくされた軍部は、いわかに蒋介石氏との和議をはかり、大陸戦線から手をひくべき両策をすすめてい た。そのため、あらゆるルートから打診を根まわしがおこなわれたわけだ。その一端として開祖もまた意をうけて中国へ渡ったのである。 *(K Ueshiba, op.cit., pp. 263-264,* 植芝盛平伝*, pp. 252-253.)*

I do not think this passage shows any evidence that Morihei Ueshiba was opposed to the war in general, though he might have become disenchanted over a period of time. However, Kisshomaru's account should be compared with the account given by John Stevens, where the latter discusses Ueshiba's association with a *deshi* named Tanahashi.

Whereas in this chapter Kisshomaru passes over in silence his father's views on the war, Stevens states explicitly that,

"*Morihei was actually extremely distressed by the outbreak of war in 1937 with China and then with the United States in 1941. … Morihei was acutely aware of the contradiction between his contention that budo was a way of love that fostered and preserved life and the massive death and destruction of war.*" (Stevens,*Invincible Warrior*, p. 65.)

The evidence given by Stevens are unsourced comments by Ueshiba, including one reproduced by Kisshomaru (and partially quoted above, in the discussion on Chapter 1), but interpreted by Stevens rather differently. Stevens also gives a different interpretation to Ueshiba's trip to China in 1941. Kisshomaru describes the trip as a mission to end the war in China, because Japan was fighting a war on two fronts. In *Abundant Peace* (1987), Stevens presents an account that is similar to that given by Kisshomaru, discussed earlier in this column and in Column 10. In *Invincible Warrior* (1997), however, his account is different.

"*It has recently come to light that Morihei had valiantly worked behind the scenes in attempts to prevent war with the United States and to make peace with China. …*" (Stevens, *op.cit*., pp. 65-66.)

Stevens does not reveal the source of this new information, but one possibility is an article written by Kazuaki Tanahashi about his father and published in *Aikido Today Magazine* (Issue #43). The article starts with a certain drama [a train pulling away from the station, with Tanahashi's father on the train and with Morihei Ueshiba standing on the platform] and some hyperbole ["*I had no idea that the increasing distance between Ueshiba Sensei and my father was destroying a chance for Japan and the United States to prevent Pearl Harbor*"]. Basically, Tanahashi Shigeo, a student of Ueshiba at the Kobukan, who was also a military planner at the Imperial Headquarters, became aware in 1938 of the possibility of war between the US and Japan—and believed that Japan would lose. He discussed this in secret with Morihei Ueshiba and Ueshiba was alleged to have responded,

"*I agree with you, Tanahashi-san. We must try as hard as possible to avoid the war. I would like you very much to work on it. You will have all my support*." (*Aikido Today Magazine*, #43, p. 45.)

Tanahashi adds that, given the need for secrecy, discussions were held at the Kobukan Dojo after training and that another person involved was Okawa Shumei, "a well-known nationalist thinker." The article was based on a memo written by Tanahashi Shigeo in 1955 and it is unfortunate that the original Japanese text of the memo, including the conversation with Ueshiba, is not identified nor access details given. However, perceptive readers should see the ambivalence here. Tanahashi Shigeo was apparently concerned about war between Japan and the US, a country with huge resources. So, one can interpret his concern as a concern to preserve, at all costs, US neutrality—especially a concern to prevent US entry into the war against Japan, but US neutrality would leave Japan free to pursue her conquests in Asia and keep her gains in China. This concern has been interpreted by Stevens as a concern to prevent any war in the Pacific at all. Tanahashi mentions discussions between his father and Konoe Fumimaro, Japan's Prime Minister, who was the person responsible for Morihei Ueshiba's abortive mission to China early in 1941. However, Konoe's concern to avoid war with the US and to prevent US entry into the war in Europe was not secret at all and was based on the very practical need to preserve Japan's access to oil from the US and also access to raw materials from China and other countries. All this has been discussed at length in various places, in Japanese, but including a book in English written by Kazuo Yagami, entitled *Konoe Fumimaro and the Failure of Peace in Japan: A Critical Appraisal of a Three-Time Prime Minister*, published in 2006. Thus the account by Stevens and also Tanahashi's article need to be read in

conjunction with Yagami's efforts to rehabilitate Konoe, against his adversary Tojo Hideki, and present him as a genuine peacemaker. It is somewhat ironic that Konoe Fuminaro was a friend of Morihei Ueshiba and a member of the governing board of the Kobukai and that both Tanahashi Shigeo and Tojo Hideki both practiced aikido under Ueshiba or his students. (Yagami's biography of Konoe Fumimaro is a better example than Kisshomaru's of a biography written in a western style, according to the conventions of 'straight' history, rather than of history blended with plausible fiction.)

In fact, a Tanahashi is mentioned in Kisshomaru's Ueshiba's biography, but he is called Nobumoto and not Hideo. However, his association with Okawa Shumei and his later creation of the *Heiwa Kyokai* confirms that the same person is being discussed.

> "*O Sensei was also serving as a visiting instructor to the Toa Keizai Chosakyoku (East Asian Economic Investigation Bureau of the Manchurian Railroad), where he met many young people. Nobumoto Tanahashi, who was then at the army's staff headquarters—he was the organizer of the Heiwa Kyokai (Peace Association)—introduced O Sensei to Shumei Okawa and they became friends. He was keenly interested in working with these young people, an elite and talented group who would be stationed all over Asia*."
>
> さらにこの頃、目立った出張稽古所として、東亜経済調査局の青年諸君の指導があった。これは当時陸軍参謀本部の棚橋信元氏（平和教会主宰）の導きにより大川周明氏と開祖との交遊から始まったものであるが、東亜各域に散ってゆく好青年を相手にして開祖も非常な楽しみの一つにしていた。*(K Ueshiba, op.cit., p. 254,* 植芝盛平伝*, p. 242.)*

Neither Kisshomaru nor Stevens mention that Okawa Shumei was actually chairman of the board of the *Toa Keizai Chosakyoku*, which by this time had become independent. He also ran a school (the *Okawa Juku*) dedicated to training Japanese who would work in Asia. Okawa had long studied Asian culture and believed that 'a final conflict' between East and West was inevitable. Since war had started in Europe, this presented a chance for Asia to break free from Western colonialism, which involved attacking the British and the Dutch in Southeast Asia. For this to succeed, however, it was imperative that the war in China was brought to a speedy conclusion and the US remained neutral. Others, like Ishiwara Kanji, who was the Kwantung Army officer largely responsible for the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, were hoping that US investment and technology would create a self-sufficient military industry in Manchukuo. Whether Morihei Ueshiba knew all this 'dark' information is unknown.

Conclusion to (3)

As I suggested above, Kisshomaru Ueshiba's presentation of Morihei Ueshiba at war, from 1931 to 1945, is a 'bright' narrative, emphasizing only the facts about Ueshiba judged by Kisshomaru to be acceptable to the vast majority of his Japanese readers, whatever their own views about the war and Japan's responsibility for it. Accordingly, there is no discussion whatever about the origins or progress of the war and it is presented simply as a general background, rather like the changeable weather, to Morihei Ueshiba's activities.

(4) Foundation

Chapter Six covers Morihei Ueshiba's activities in Tokyo and elsewhere after 1936 and his break with Onisaburo Deguchi. His break with Sokaku Takeda, as a result of the latter's sudden visit to Osaka in 1936, is passed over in silence. Kisshomaru instead discusses *budo* 'politics' and the creation of the legal foundation around the Kobukan. The fact of this very important event gives the lie to the notion that Morihei Ueshiba was completely uninvolved with *budo* organizations. Of course, Kisshomaru himself was not involved: he was still at high school and had only just begun to take aikido training seriously. He states that he went to the dojo in the evenings and trained with some of the *deshi*. Kisshomaru has been accused of focusing on building an organization at the expense of training, but this is not correct and the point he stresses here is that Morihei Ueshiba needed to be embedded within an organization, in order for the Kobukan to function effectively.

Foundation and Empire: Kobukan Becomes Kobukai

The war did intrude, albeit indirectly, on Morihei Ueshiba's plans for the future of the Kobukan Dojo. In 1939, Tomita Kenji, Fujita Kinya, and Okada Kozaburo, who were students or political and business associates of Morihei Ueshiba, made an application to the Ministry of Health and Welfare for the Kobukan Dojo to become the*Zaidan Hojin Kobukai* (財団法人皇武会: Kobukai Foundation). It is clear from Kisshomaru's account that the application was made with Morihei Ueshiba's full knowledge and approval. It was approved in the spring of 1940. Kisshomaru notes blandly that the dojo finances and administration greatly improved, especially since Japan entered the war the following year and "the domestic situation became more difficult." As a legal foundation, the Kobukai had to have a board of directors and a board of trustees and these were drawn from the political and military establishment. The first *Kaicho* (会長: President) was Admiral Isamu Takeshita and the Vice-President was Lieutenant General Katsura Hayashi. The board of directors included Prime Minister Konoe Fuminaro and Maeda Toshinari, Chancellor of the Army Academy.

Second Foundation: Kobukai Becomes Aikikai

The final chapter, Chapter Seven, deals with the creation of the Aikikai Foundation and it is clear that Kisshomaru aims to portray this event as one of the crowning achievements of his father's life and work. The chapter actually starts with a brief mention of the shock of Japan's defeat in 1945, but then Kisshomaru spends several pages discussing the building of the Aiki Shrine in Iwama, the initial ceremony of which took place several years earlier, in 1940. After noting that the first Iwama dojo was completed in the summer of 1945, Kisshomaru then adds the following, which reinforces the impression that Kisshomaru considered the move to Iwama as temporary.

> "*The coincidence in timing was lucky, because the Iwama dojo played a crucial role during the chaotic period following the end of the war. Even though the Tokyo dojo avoided any major damage, it was converted into housing for about thirty families displaced by the bombing raids. As a result,* ***both the formal administration of Aikido and I myself as Dojo-cho*** *relocated to the Iwama Dojo for about three years. Although this relocation was forced by circumstances, it was not without several benefits*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., pp. 279-280.)

The impression is reinforced by a comment made later in the chapter, that the registration of the headquarters of the Aikikai Foundation in Iwama from 1948 until 1953 was recommended by the Japanese authorities, in order to avoid friction with the SCAP occupation forces. One might wonder about the "formal administration of Aikido", if this was different from Morihei Ueshiba himself and his students, and the original Japanese text makes this somewhat clearer.

> 道場長なる私自身をふくめて合気道に関する社会的基盤はすべて *Dojo-cho naru watashi jishin wo fukumete aikido ni kansuru shakaiteki kiban wa subete* (植芝盛平伝, p. 268.)

The ‘formal administration of aikido' was the legal requirement of a board of directors and a board of trustees, drawn from the upper echelons of Japan's political and military establishment. In 1948, the membership changed, but not the structure.

After a few years, this establishment began to urge the formal re-launch of aikido:

> "*I travelled to Tokyo from Iwama, and from a twelve-tatami room that I had secured as an office in the Tokyo dojo, I began laying plans to reconstruct the organization of aikido. Kinya Fujita and Katsuzo Nishi* [of the Nishi health system, using the renowned rock-hard wooden pillows]*, as well as some energetic younger disciples, took part in many planning sessions. Whenever we felt progress had been made, I would go to Iwama and report to O Sensei. Each time, he would tell me to trust my feelings; throughout this process, he took the position that it was up to me to run the show, and he would simply observe what developed.* ***My mother tells me that he said to her at the time, "He has truly become serious," and showed great satisfaction. Of course, to me my father neither smiled nor spoke any words of appreciation; he maintained a stern posture till the end***. [のちに母がもらしたところでは、「あれも本気になってくれたのう」と、いかにも嬉しそうであったという。それでいて私自身には 笑顔ひとつ、ねぎらいの言葉ひとつかけない厳格さ最後までくずせない父であったのだが……。]

> "*After many deliberations, those of us in Tokyo concluded that we should apply to the government to be once again officially recognized as an authorized foundation. The application to the Ministry of Education bore the new name of the "Aikikai Foundation." I will never forget the extraordinary efforts contributed to this process by Kinya Fujita and Katsuzo Nishi, and I myself was on the phone over and over again with the ministry. Also unforgettable are the hard work of Seiichi Seko, and the friendly collaboration of Koshi Nakayama, who was the administrative official we dealt with in the Ministry of Education*." (K Ueshiba, *op.cit*., pp. 280-281, 植芝盛平伝, p. 269.)

Forward the Foundation

The application was duly made to the Ministry of Education and the authorization was granted on February 9, 1948. Kisshomaru then began negotiating with the bombed-out families who remained in the Tokyo dojo to leave, in order to "bring Aikido back into the public sphere."

> "*I felt that the reopening of the Tokyo dojo would be a crucial first step in rebuilding Aikido. My vision was that this dojo would be the* Honden *(main shrine) of Aikido, its outlook on the world, while Iwama would be Aikido's innermost sanctuary, the* Oku-no-in."

> 道場を東京に開くことが、やはり再建の第一歩であり早道だと考えたである。合気道の〝奥の院〟たる岩間の前衛として、東京にいわば〝本殿・拝殿〟を設けたいというほどの気持ちであった。 *(K Ueshiba, op. cit., p. 281,* 植芝盛平伝, *p. 270.)*

Knowledge of the layout of Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples is required to understand Kisshomaru's metaphors here. Probably the most famous *oku-no-in* in Japan is the

cemetery and mausoleum of Kukai (Kobo Daishi) on Koyasan, the cluster of temples in the famous mountain range situated in the Kii Peninsula, with which Morihei Ueshiba and Kisshomaru would have been familiar. Sometimes, however, the *honden* is the innermost sanctuary, where the deity is enshrined—and to which access is forbidden to the public, with the *haiden* (mentioned in the Japanese original, but not translated), as the prayer hall adjacent to the *honden* and open to the public. Though probably unintended, the unfortunate aspect of the metaphor is the fact that access to both *honden* and *oku-no-in* is exclusive.

However, Kisshomaru's distinction between the Iwama dojo and the Tokyo Hombu reflects his own idea of what should be taught there and this has been reinforced a number of times in private conversations I have had with the present Doshu. As *iemoto*, the Doshu embraces a certain way of practicing a certain, fixed, number of *waza*, which are interpreted as the essence of the aikido as bequeathed by Morihei Ueshiba. Other dojos are not so restricted, but at the Hombu these *waza* are constantly practiced by Doshu—and in a particular way, so that they are regarded as a kind of benchmark. I also suspect that the focus on weapons training in Iwama, which training Morihei Ueshiba constantly pursued, and not in the Tokyo Hombu, where the received opinion is that Ueshiba actually forbade such training, has its roots here.

The *Joshinsho* 上申書:

Kisshomaru then reproduces the letter of intent that was submitted with the necessary documents to the Ministry of Education, which, he states:

> "*reflects O Sensei's ideas, as fleshed out by my collaborators and put into final form by Kinya Fujita. Although it reflects in some ways the circumstances of the times, I believe this document also offers a straightforward description of Aikido's consistent principles, expressed with sincerity.*"

Space prevents a detailed examination of the letter, but a few extracts will indicate how Kisshomaru and his collaborators saw the place of aikido in Japan and the world.

Aikido is:

Important for Japan…

They begin by underlining the importance of aikido for rebuilding Japan:

> "*Nothing in the world is more precious than health. A strong mind and powerful vitality can only emerge from a healthy body. We firmly believe that such strong bodies and minds will play a vital role in Japan's reconstruction. …*"

…Indescribable…

They then give a brief outline of aikido.

> "*Aikido unites the body and the mind with both earth and heaven. It also develops the skill of protecting oneself from harm. The movements of Aikido, in defending, are circular, in moving outwards, like a square; when standing on guard, like a cone, in motion like a spiral and when drawing inwards like a jewel. The fluid and constantly changing character of Aikido defies description. …*"

…Character-Building (like Judo) …

Among the effects is its role in building character. To emphasize this, the writers quote from a scroll that Katsu Kaishu, the Meiji era leader, sent to Kano Jigoro:

> "*Aikido's many facets might lead us to understand it as an activity combining the study of health with the arts of* kagura-mai [舞楽道と健康道]. *It is also an art of physical education, a powerful tool for the formation of character, and a way to cultivate vitality, to build the golden palace of life. Both men and women may practice it. As its techniques are perfected, the mind as well as the body experiences purification. He reaches 'the state of nothingness, a natural excellence from which without intention one responses freely and spontaneously to the changing flow of events*' [from the Kaishu scroll]."

…Virtuous…

Aikido can also guide those who strive to acquire the four virtues of *jujun* 柔順: obedience / docility; *kyogo* 強剛: patience / endurance; *eichi* 叡智: sagacity / intelligence; and *shisei* 至誠: sincerity / devotion.

After giving a brief history of the Kobukan, which was formally established as the Kobukai in 1940, the writers closely follow the 'frame' decreed by MacArthur and SCAP and delicately handle the matter of Japan's descent into the 'dark shadow':

> "*Over the last half century, the nation has been led on an incorrect path, deviating from the True Way. As a result of Japan's defeat in the war, a return to the path of sincerity and virtue has become possible. Up until now, to avoid its co-optation for misguided ends, Aikido has maintained a discreet posture and operated on a small scale, abstaining from active promotion of the art and training only those known to be of benevolent character. We have taught this art*

only to those intending a positive and altruistic use. In the new circumstances of the present moment, we can now begin to express the original and true spirit of Aikido more openly."

天地の大道である中道の趣旨を誤り半世紀以上に亘る誤った指導方向は敗戦と同時に立ち返り、合気道本来の精神発揮し得る事の出来る時代にはなりましたが、今日迄は稍もすれば誤った指導下に深入りせんことを恐れて洵微々として影の形の如く残念乍ら頗る小規模に、大袈裟な宣伝もせず、特志の人々にのみ指導をし て参りました。唯善用するものと判断せられる方面にのみ望まれる儘に教導も人類愛の一端として、続けて来たものであります。

Though the account of the war fits the 'frame' discussed above and in the previous column, the writers do not go into detail here, either about the nature of the deviation from the True Way that began before the turn of the century (the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which ended the First Sino-Japanese War, was signed in 1895 and was followed by Japan's invasion of Taiwan), or about when aikido began its 'discrete posture'. If it was before 1942, there is a certain irony here, for Kisshomaru has earlier spent a great deal of space relating how Morihei Ueshiba taught his art to the very people who led the nation on the 'incorrect path'.

…And Has Great Potential

Going on to discuss future plans for the Aikikai, the writers emphasize the great potential of aikido:

"*Aikido is an art of profound significance. Once it is made available to all, it will spread far and wide, connecting with all levels of society, rather than only with an elite. Its potential for expansion is boundless.* [The Founder's]taijutsu *techniques are based in a training that gives the highest priority to mutual love between human beings. Even though Aikido techniques may be applied in life-or-death situations, Aikido itself is connected to the love of the heart. Aikido techniques demonstrate the execution of justice by love. It should be apparent that Aikido techniques exist in order to protect human love. What kind of a technique would it be without love?* Aiki *sounds just like* aiki *(love energy), and the meanings are connected as well*."

その体術は人間相互愛を基調とする合気実修の為めのものありますが故に、生死線上の技も此の愛の心に帰するのであります。技は愛の実行面の正義の標示であ ります。外観的に言うと人間愛を護るべき技であって、愛なくして何の技かやとも唱導せられて居る所以もここにあるのであります。従ってこの合気という言葉 は愛気と語音も相同じく、其の意も相通ずるのであります。

After quoting the letter, Kisshomaru notes that it was at this point, around 1948, that Morihei Ueshiba began to talk of *aiki* (合気) as *aiki* (愛気), making use of the homonymy found in the Japanese language. Again, his comment is worth quoting at length.

"*Perhaps the most striking comment from this text would be the new idea that* 'Aiki *[合気] sounds just like* Ai ki *(love [愛] energy [気]), and the meanings are connected as well*.' 'Aiki *is* Ai *[love]* ki.' *This expression became a favourite saying of O Sensei's, after he had become enlightened to the point of* Banyu aigo*(giving protection to all). After the war, he often used this expression in his lectures*."

"右の文中でとくに注目されるのは「合気という言葉は愛気と語音も相同じく、其の意も相通ずる」という発想であろう。「合気は愛気じゃよ」とは、あの「万 有愛護」の開悟からこのかた、開祖のもっとも好んだ表現のひとつであり、戦後はとくに講話などをするたびにそのことばを口にしていた。"

(All quotations in the sections above are from K. Ueshiba, op.cit., pp. 281-286, and植芝盛平伝, pp. 272-273.)

One point is worth noting here. The comments quoted above by Kisshomaru Ueshiba clearly draw attention to what he saw as a change in Morihei Ueshiba's view of aikido and they also serve to date the origin of one central idea emphasized, as Kisshomaru states, in Ueshiba's discourses. *Aiki* [合気] *as Aiki* [愛気]is a constant theme of the discourses recorded in *Aiki Shinzo* and also in the *Takemusu Aiki* lectures edited by Hideo Takahashi, which Ueshiba delivered to the Byakko Shinkokai. However, Kisshomaru states clearly that it is something that occurred to Morihei Ueshiba after the war.

Postwar Demonstration

The final part of the chapter deals with the last years of Morihei Ueshiba's life. Kisshomaru spends some time discussing the aikido demonstration held on the roof of the Takashimaya department store—and how he persuaded his father to agree to participate.

"*We* [Kisshomaru mentions Tokunaga Shigeo, who was the managing director 業務理事 of the Aikikai] *had come to the conclusion that only such a demonstration would enable us to make a decisive leap forward and expand the awareness and practice of Aikido in a way suitable to the times*."

しかし私も徳永も、合気道が新しい時代とともに普及し飛躍するためには、どうしてもこれをおこなわなければならないとの臍がかたまっていた。*(K. Ueshiba, op.cit., p. 300,* 植芝盛平伝*, p. 286.)*

After lengthy hesitation, Ueshiba agreed, giving his reason.

"*Very well. Perhaps it is necessary to reach out to all levels of society. If it helps to clear the muddy stream, this old man will do his best to demonstrate the essence of Aikido. I have already put you in charge. As long as you follow the path of helping society and helping humanity, I have no objection to what you propose. Make use of this old man to help you reach your goal.*"

よかろう。広く天下の上と交わることも必要じゃろう。濁流を清めるのに役立つというのであれば、この爺いも合気真髄を演武しよう。この道の後事は、すでに おまえたちに托したのじゃ。世のため人のためという真理使命の大道から踏みはずさぬかぎり、おまえたちがやることに異存はない。大いにこの爺いを引っ張り 出し、存分に活用するがよい。 *(K. Ueshiba,op.cit., pp. 300-301,* 植芝盛平伝*, pp. 286-287.)*

Kisshomaru also notes the fact that on his deathbed Ueshiba expressed his support for him.

"*A few days before he passed away, O Sensei summoned Kisaburo Osawa and others to his bedside and told them, "Keep everyone together and support Kisshomaru.*" …

入神の数日前、大澤喜三郎氏らを枕もとに呼び寄せ、「皆をよくたばね、吉祥丸に協力せよ」

"*On the night of April 25, he suddenly began to experience a high fever. As I held his hand, he said to me with a smile, 'Carry on, won't you.' When I said, 'Yes,' he nodded clearly.*"

四月二十五日夜、にわかに高熱を発した。私は手を握ると「たのむぞ．．．．」と微笑し、「はい」と答えると大きくうなずいた。*(K. Ueshiba, op.cit., p. 315,* 植芝盛平伝*, pp. 296-297.)*

Morihei Ueshiba passed away the following morning at 5 am. As it turned out, Kisshomaru made some efforts to 'keep everyone together', but he was not completely successful. In fact, given the history of Japanese martial arts, one can wonder how serious Morihei Ueshiba was, when he requested K Osawa and the others to "keep everyone together." Some quietly drifted away, but Koichi Tohei, technically brilliant and related by marriage to Kisshomaru, went out with a major explosion. Given the demands of the *iemoto* structure, however, the only choice he had was to accept Kisshomaru's leadership, warts and all, or to go out with a bang or with a whimper. True to his style, he chose the louder version of the latter alternative.

Conclusion to (4)

This section of Kisshomaru's biography records the final 'bright' episode in Morihei Ueshiba's life. Ueshiba appears to have done all the things he would never have conceived of doing when he was younger: fiercely individualistic and apparently possessing an uncanny ability to read people's deepest thoughts about themselves, yet, he trusted business and political associates of dubious ethics and relinquished his kingship of the castle to an organization, headed by a crown prince whose martial virtues did not exactly shine out, in comparison to those of others he had taught—and tried to persuade to take over the castle.

General Comments:

Did Kisshomaru lie about his father?

In Column 26 I plan to discuss the challenging question of the extent to which independent research about Morihei Ueshiba's life and training opens Pandora's *Aiki-box*. The question could be put another way: how much do we need to know about Morihei Ueshiba's life, in order to practice aikido 'fruitfully'? The choice of adverb is deliberate, since it encompasses a wide spectrum of training scenarios, from 'pure' Daito-ryu, to 'pure' Iwama weapons training—with the resulting *taijutsu waza*, to the wide variety of Tokyo Hombu forms.

In his biography, Kisshomaru Ueshiba presents a very careful and controlled account of his father's life and activities and the question arises whether the account is so careful and controlled as to present a false picture. This leads to the question whether Kisshomaru lied about his father. The question needs to be understood very clearly, for there are serious ethical questions involved. It asks whether Kisshomaru deliberately presented falsehoods in his biography of his father, knowing them to be false. It is certainly true that Kisshomaru omits a good number of facts about Morihei Ueshiba, but it is less certain that this was done with malicious intent. Given the discussion I have presented in the previous sections, I believe that the suggestion that Kisshomaru simply lied is a major oversimplification. If asked why he did not present a 'straight' history of his father's life, he might have answered by quoting from a recent discussion in *AikiWeb*:

"*Because that's not the way we do it in this school.*"

In other words, the history of the art and the Founder's life are subordinate to the art itself and cannot stand apart from this. One respected Hombu shihan, now deceased, explained

that it was still too early to present a view of aikido's creation and development that allowed for seriously different scenarios of this development. In this interview, which lasted for several hours, the shihan indicated his own understanding of the issues surrounding Kisshomaru's role in the early developmemt of aikido, but felt that aikido needed to become more stable as an art, with a clearer view of what it was intended to achieve, before serious issues about its history could be debated.

So I should stress that in presenting these critical comments on his biography of Morihei Ueshiba, I am seriously questioning Kisshomaru's skill as a historian, as a researcher and perhaps as a storyteller, but I am not questioning his *bona fides*. As the son of a very unusual—even grossly eccentric, father, he had a very difficult task to perform. He saw it as his duty to maintain *iemoto* family values as he saw them and also to propagate the family art in accordance with his father's wishes, but in ways that his father could never have done himself. However, it is also fair to state that Kisshomaru embraced a Japanese version of the somewhat Whiggish view of history that Robert Middlekauff displayed in his account of the American war. Kisshomaru believed that he was also charting a revolution in aikido and the fact that Japan had been defeated in some way aided this new beginning, since it offered a way of making a completely new start and placing the old myths embraced by his father in a new ‘postwar' context. In writing his biography, he was also following some established and very respectable precedents in Japan and these should be understood by those seeking to attack Kisshomaru on the grounds that he was deliberately presenting falsehoods, or not presenting historical facts.

There are three levels assumed in Kisshomaru's biography, two of which seem to match chronologically. The first level [1] is that of general Japanese history. The accepted ‘frame' here is the descent of Japan into the ‘dark valley' after 1931 and the subsequent ascent to the light, the pivotal years being 1941-1942. The battles of Coral Sea and Midway in 1942, not mentioned in the biography, marked the turning point. The second level [2] is that of aikido: the story of the development of the art during this period (I have described it in this way to distinguish the art of aikido itself from Kisshomaru's non-historical view of its founder Morihei Ueshiba: see [3] below). According to this view, aikido was created in the years of the dark shadow, but was untouched by any of the darkness and played a crucial role from 1942 onwards in the general transition from the old regime to the new postwar ‘enlightened' view, expressed in the 1948 application for recognition of the Aikikai Foundation, namely, of a peaceful art, to be embraced by anyone who wished to pursue health and spirituality, as well as the more strictly martial skills, which were still available for those who had not yet embraced the new postwar way of thinking. The third level [3] was the personal life of Morihei Ueshiba himself, who was a kind of ideological constant throughout his whole life. He was committed to the same goals throughout his life, and as a consequence was generally untouched by the passage through the dark shadow of the war and into the light. He himself became a beacon, whose presence enabled Kisshomaru Ueshiba and his associates to bring the art of aikido to this new postwar stage.

Finally, despite the aim of his biography to present a ‘timeless' portrait of a man whose entire life was dedicated to training, Kisshomaru is virtually silent about the type of training that Morihei Ueshiba actually undertook. Later, in Columns 28 and 29, we shall have occasion to compare the knowledge of Father and Son, based on what they wrote and what others wrote about them. There are very few details in this biography of Morihei Ueshiba's personal training regime, beyond references to weapons work, *chinkon kishin*, and a summary of the various arts that Ueshiba is alleged to have practiced—all of then stated to be completely different from aikido. Admitttedly, there is some discussion of his training with the sword and the spear with the ball suspended from a tree [uncannily close to Tokimune Takeda's discussion of his father's Daito-ryu training] and how close aikido is to weapons training. However, the details scattered throughout the biography are not sufficient to reconstruct this personal training regime with any clarity, and certainly not sufficient to enable would-be practitioners to reproduce it themselves.

Biographies of Morihei Ueshiba

2. Kanemoto Sunadomari: Omoto is the Key

The first biography of Morihei Ueshiba was not written by his son Kisshomaru, but by an early disciple who trained in Ayabe. Kanemoto Sunadomari was an adherent of the Omoto religion and first met Ueshiba in the spring of Showa 3 (1928). His biography is mentioned by Kisshomaru Ueshiba in his own book, but is given a different title.『合気道開祖植芝盛平伝』was published by Kodansha on 28 February, Showa 44 (1969). Later, it was reprinted as 『武の真人』: *Bu no Shinjin*: *A True Warrior*. In the あとがき (Afterward), the author explains that it was written in response to a request from Morihei Ueshiba himself [わたしのことを書いてくれ] and that Ueshiba was very happy when it was completed and handed to him, not long before his death. The work has not been translated into English as a book, but a part of it was serialized in the earlier issues of Stanley Pranin's *Aiki News* magazine and can be seen on the *Aikido Journal* website.

Since Sunadomari's biography has not been published in English in its entirety, I will not discuss it here, except to state that the central focus of the biography is the fact of the Omoto religion and Morihei Ueshiba's membership of this religious organization. This accounts for the general bias and unevenness of the work, which really ends after the second

Omoto Incident in 1935, when Onisaburo Deguchi was arrested and Ueshiba ceased to have contact with him.

Biographies of Morihei Ueshiba

3. John Stevens:

Since there were no translations in book form of Sunadomari's biography, discussed above, or of Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography, which appeared in Japanese in 1978, there was a clear lack of information in English about Morihei Ueshiba. John Stevens, who lived for a time in Japan, was the first to fill this gap with a biography, published in 1987. The work was entitled *Abundant Peace*. A few years later, this work was superseded by another work, entitled, *Invincible Warrior*. The main questions we will discuss here concerning the two biographies are (2) what *Invincible Warrior* adds to *Abundant Peace*, and (1) what both add to the biography written by Kisshomaru.

Abundant Peace* becomes *Invincible Warrior

The text of *Abundant Peace* is divided into three sections: 'The Man', 'The Martial Artist', and 'The Message', but I am unconvinced that the three can be separated so neatly in a biography. The first section is the straight biography and the second section is actually a discussion by Stevens himself of his own thinking about the various arts that Ueshiba studied and it stands apart from the biography. The third section consists of a similar discussion by Stevens himself about Zen, *kotodama* theory, and cognate subjects. Here Stevens ceases to be a narrator of events in Ueshiba's life and becomes an independent—and fallible—interpreter of his thinking.

With *Invincible Warrior*, the three sections have been replaced with a straight biography, about 70 pages in length, complemented by a presentation of Morihei Ueshiba's life in photographs and by a selection of photographs from the Noma Dojo archive, showing Ueshiba training.

***Invincible Warrior* and *A Life in Aikido* Compared**

In my opinion, a comparison between *Invincible Warrior* and Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography underlines the difference between 'straight' biography and 'biography mixed with reminiscences' even more clearly than *Abundant Peace*. I also believe it supports the general conclusions I reached in the earlier discussion about history compared with historical novels. Stevens is still the 'all-knowing' narrator, but, compared to Kisshomaru, intrudes less into the narrative with his own personal reflections. Of course, Kisshomaru is in a privileged position and has access to far more private information than John Stevens, but the gain in information is not matched by any loss in bias. It is as if Kisshomaru is telling his readers, 'Trust me. I was told many things by my father that he told no one else.' On the other hand, Stevens paints Ueshiba's character a brighter shade of white than Kisshomaru and has admitted in the interview quoted below, that his biography is not exactly neutral in standpoint. His favorable bias to Morihei Ueshiba slightly exceeds Kisshomaru's.

> "*I am aware that some have criticized my book INVINCIBLE WARRIOR as hagiography rather than objective biography—as if there can be such a thing as an objective standpoint—but in fact all that I am doing is to present the Founder in the best possible light. All of us want to be remembered at our best*." (From an interview with Cheryl Matrasko, *Aikido World Web Journal*. Published online:
>
> *http://www.aikido-world.com/articles/JohnStevens-interview2.htm*.
>
> *Accessed August 31, 2011.)*

Nevertheless, *Invincible Warrior* is closer to the model of straight history writing that we have seen in the previous column, from the Oxford histories by scholars like Robert Middlekauff. The discussions about Minakata Kumagusu and Sokaku Takeda stand independently and are not simply part of the glorious aura cast by Morihei Ueshiba. Ueshiba's Mongolian adventure is presented in a judicious summary, with little of the breathless adulation that pervades Kisshomaru's account. Stevens also provides a fairly detailed bibliographical essay, listing some source material and books and articles published in English. However, there still the same problem with sources that affects Kisshomaru's biography. Stephens makes factual statements about Morihei Ueshiba that are not documented and which it is therefore impossible to verify.

Biographies of Morihei Ueshiba

4. Stanley Pranin:

The name of Stanley Pranin has been mentioned frequently throughout these columns. Mr Pranin is the pioneer of 'independent' study of aikido, in the sense that he has not had any formal position within an organization like the Aikikai. *Aiki News* was one of a small number of magazines dedicated to aikido that appeared during the 1970s and 1980s. Mr Pranin has never written a formal biography of Morihei Ueshiba, but all the biographies discussed so far need to be read in conjunction with the interviews he made with Ueshiba's students and his seminal articles in *Aiki News* and its successor *Aikido Journal*. (I have given more details in the bibliography, below.)

Some General Conclusions to Columns 20 and 21

At the beginning of the previous column, some questions were posed to which we can perhaps give some tentative answers:

A. To what extent do narratives of both prewar / wartime aiki-budo and also postwar aikido rest on a particular interpretation of Japanese history?

The answer to this question depends on the way in which World War II is interpreted in modern Japanese history. The research of Sven Saaler, discussed in this column, suggests that the most popular 'frame' for interpreting Japanese history is the transition from darkness to light. Japan descended into 'darkness' during the 1930s and World War II, but the US, aided by her allies, arrested this descent and turned it around, with the result that Japan was purged of these 'dark' elements and set on the road to the 'light' of freedom and democracy, as these concepts were understood by the victors. Of course, there are some histories that do not fit this 'frame', such as the wartime 『日本二千六百年史』 *Nihon Nisen-roppyaku-nen Shi*, by Okawa Shumei, or the postwar 『国民の歴史』 *Kokumin no Rekishi*, by Nishio Kanji, of the *Tsukuru-kai*, and one of my oldest aikido teachers and friends still now consistently argues that World War II was not a war of aggression by Japan and that there were no 'dark' elements then. The 'dark' elements occurred after the defeat and SCAP occupation.

Since there are no general histories of aikido, the only narratives that are relevant here are the lives of Morihei Ueshiba and it has to be stated that his retirement to Iwama in 1942 render aikido especially suitable for interpretation as a path from darkness to light. Some people believe that training in aikido affords this anyway, but the above 'frame' enables the history of the art also to be seen in this way. That the postwar movers of aikido saw themselves as a part of this discourse is clear, in my opinion, from the way this retreat to Iwama is presented. There are several major issues about Iwama, which can be posed in the form of hypotheses:

1. Because of his Omoto connections, Morihei Ueshiba had been buying up land in Iwama for many years before he actually moved there, around the time of the formation of the *Budo Senkyo-kai*. In his biography (p. 265) Kisshomaru suggests that Ueshiba planned to retire there, but is difficult to see how this could have happened if Japan had not been defeated. On this hypothesis, Ueshiba would have moved there at some point anyway, in view of (a) the earlier Omoto connections, (b) his apparent desire to realize the ideal of '*budo* and the soil' and repeat what he did in Ayabe and Takeda, and (c) the command that he was given by his deities, as recorded in the *Takemusu Aiki* discourses.

2. The decision to move to Iwama, to cultivate the soil and live very quietly, hidden away from the authorities, was seen by Morihei Ueshiba as a stopgap move, as a kind of insurance for the future of aikido, based on the supposition that Japan would lose the war and that training in the martial arts would be forbidden. Kisshomaru suggests this in his biography (p. 265) and the command given by the deities can also be interpreted in this way. In fact, in the *Takemusu Aiki*discourses, the command to move to Iwama is given as a condition for bringing the war to an end.

Actually we can take the information given in the biography in three ways, based on the account given by Kisshomaru that Ueshiba gradually became progressively unhappy with the way the war was being fought and planned the move to Iwama as a way of dissociating himself with the Japanese military and the role he was being urged to play. There is the 'ultra-pacifist' interpretation, according to which Ueshiba became disenchanted with the war as a whole and retreated to Iwama because he had become 'enlightened' and was infused with the spirit of *banyu aigo -- loving protection for all things*: nothing else mattered by comparison. Directly opposed to this are the comments, often repeated by Kisshomaru, that his father was never a pacifist. Thus, Ueshiba's comments can be interpreted in a different way, according to which he was upset with the stupid ways the military had chosen for waging war: they could have done better—but Kisshomaru never states what his father thought would have happened if the military had in fact done better. The third interpretation is that he did not jump, but was pushed. Ueshiba's teaching in the military establishments became progressively spiritual, but not in the way required by the army and navy. As a consequence, he stopped all his teaching activities and retired. Nevertheless, whichever way the move to Iwama is interpreted, the 'frame' of aikido passing from darkness to light is left unaffected.

B. To what extent is the historical presentation of Morihei Ueshiba influenced by a particular view of Japanese identity, itself based on this view of history?

From the biographies and discussed above, this is not really clear. The Sunadomari biography is centered exclusively on Morihei Ueshiba's membership of the Omoto religion. Sunadomari believed it was Ueshiba's Omoto beliefs that constituted the defining characteristic of the man and his art. Thus, the biography has three stages: pre-Omoto, Omoto, and post-Omoto (which is hardly discussed at all).

Kisshomaru's biography embraces a general postwar view of Japanese history, according to which Japan emerged in 1945 from a dark shadow towards the light, as suggested above. Kisshomaru is careful not to define the light too closely (and carefully avoids 'western' concepts like democracy), but he describes his father's entire life as a selfless quest that itself became a beacon of light. Consequently, the darker aspects of Morihei Ueshiba's activities in the 1930s are mentioned only in the context of teaching students who also happened to be

army or nave officers and acting as an adviser; what is given unusual emphasis by Kissomasu are his efforts to stop the war in China and Stevens has suggested that this unusual episode means that Ueshiba became a pacifist and wanted to stop the entire Pacific War. After the war, Morihei Ueshiba slides into his new role as 爺ぃ (*jiji*: *This Old Man*), tirelessly supporting Kisshomaru and his associates in the background, but also giving demonstrations and traveling to his favorite *dojo* in Shingu, Osaka, and Kumamoto, in company with his *deshi*.

Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography also embraces what can be called a multifaceted view of history, in which the central focus is Morihei Ueshiba as Founder of a timeless art, which he himself intended to be practiced through the generations. According to this view, all the truth about aikido, the 'revelation', so to speak, ended with the death of Morihei Ueshiba, so the only possible research in training is confirming what is known already, but exclusively in a form that will benefit the individual researcher: it does not involve pushing back the actual boundaries of the art as a whole by the creation of new objective knowledge. (By 'objective', I mean knowledge that adds to the fundamental structure of the art, which would hold regardless of the opinions of the practitioners, compared to the 'subjective' knowledge acquired by practitioners over their years of training.) An analogy might be found in Umberto Eco's quasi-historical novel *The Name of the Rose*, which is set in a medieval monastery. Those young monks who wanted to pursue research, in order to take delight in the new knowledge to be achieved, were murdered by the senior monk Jorge, precisely in order to prevent them from enjoying the creation of new knowledge and delighting in the results they found.

Though this is more prominent in his own autobiography than in the biography of his father, Kisshomaru also takes for granted the crucial role to be played by Japan in disseminating the art of aikido in its new postwar guise (not, of course, that the art had changed in any way—see the previous paragraph). He assumes a 'missionary position'. Of course, when Kisshomaru planned and wrote the biography, aikido overseas had not reached the maturity that it has today.

This can be put more sharply:

C. Should we believe all that we read (and hear) about Morihei Ueshiba?

No, not for one moment.

Since this might seem unduly sharp, one could rephrase the question:

C - 1. Should we believe anything that we read (and hear) about Morihei Ueshiba?

Yes, but the issues discussed in this column and the previous column become very relevant.

D. Whose version of the life and work of Ueshiba is the truest one, the one that comes closest to affording us access to the man as he actually was?

It is very difficult to give a definitive answer, since the whole purpose of this column has been to emphasize that history is in constant need of new research and new writing. We do not yet have a clear picture of '*the man as he actually was*' and in achieving a clearer picture it will be necessary to take account of an aikido establishment that (a) possesses the means to give a clearer picture and (b) is also committed to maintaining a high degree of control over the dissemination of any new knowledge necessary for giving a clearer picture.

E. Does the fact that many of Ueshiba's disciples saw him through postwar lenses influence how they interpreted his aikido?

Undoubtedly. However, some essential qualification is needed here and this is why Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography is so important. Kisshomaru mentions a whole generation of *uchi-deshi* at the prewar Kobukan, but only a few of these played any major role in the postwar development of the Aikikai. Ikkusai Iwata and Kenji Tomiki became *uchi-deshi* before the Kobukan was actually established and they were followed by Rinjiro Shirata and Minoru Mochizuki a few years later. Of these, Mochizuki ran a dojo in Shizuoka that was affiliated to the Aikikai for a number of years. Iwata and his fellow *deshi* Tanaka Bansen ran dojos in Nagoya and Osaka, respectively. Shirata stopped aikido training for a lengthy period after the war, until he ventured out of Yamagata at the request of Kisshomaru Ueshiba, with his father's support. After the IAF was created in 1976, the chairmanship of the IAF Superior Council alternated between Shirata and Iwata. K Tomiki and his student and fellow-POW, Shigenobu Okumura, were the only ones who played any major role in Aikikai affairs after their return from Siberia, but Tomiki's extremely enlightened views about the educational value of aikido *randori* brought him into conflict with the Omoto beliefs of Morihei Ueshiba. Nevertheless, Tomiki was one of the small group of teachers around Kisshomaru who were planning for the postwar resurrection of aikido, but shorn of any Shinto or religious concepts: of anything that would be misconstrued by the Occupation authorities.

However, the postwar generation of disciples who went to live abroad and spread aikido as their vocation trained mainly at the Tokyo Hombu (T Abe, K Abbe, M Nakazono, N Tamura, M Noro, A Tohei, Y Yamada, K Asai, M Kanai, K Chiba, S Sugano, M Saotome) and thus were mainly responsible to Kisshomaru Ueshiba and the second generation of senior disciples who took over the direction of

aikido after 1942 (K Osawa, K Tohei [mentioned in Kisshomaru's biography as the head of the *Ki no Kenkyukai*] and S Okumura, with S Yamaguchi, H Tada and S Arikawa assisting from the early 1950s). Looking after O Sensei and travelling around with him was something they all desired and was an enriching experience when it occurred, but it occurred comparatively rarely. Of course, Morihei Ueshiba visited Iwama frequently and there are stories of Kisshomaru's 'city boys' being put to the test by the *Mito-kishitsu* farmers headed by M Saito.

F. Does this matter for our own aikido training?

As was suggested earlier, the earliest focus on aikido by many beginners is on the forms, known in Japanese as *taiso* 体操, *sabaki* 捌き, *waza* 技 / 業, *kata* 方 / 形, which are interpreted by the main *shihan* in each branch, who follows to very varying degrees what they remember from their own training or what is taught by visiting Hombu instructors. Accordingly, these forms are usually practiced under the supervision of an instructor or more experienced student, but the way they are practiced admits of a huge range of possibilities. One could probably create a preferred idea of supposedly authentic training, with its vast spectrum of meanings, and then place the training done in a dojo—and also one's own private training, if this ever occurs—somewhere on this spectrum.

However, the point to make here is that virtually no one goes to a dojo with a clear perception of what and how Morihei Ueshiba himself actually practiced and then checks off whether the dojo actually trains in this way. Kisshomaru Ueshiba was *iemoto* of the Aikikai Foundation, which is an organization that sees a leadership role as its natural due, based simply on the consequence of aikido being considered as the property of the Ueshiba family. So his biography was a carefully constructed picture of Morihei Ueshiba as the founder of an *iemoto* line and all the details of his life that were presented fit this picture. Material considered extraneous was omitted—and this includes clear and precise details of how he actually trained.

Given that the life and activities of Morihei Ueshiba are presented in the way I have described & discussed in this and the previous column, the realization that Morihei Ueshiba might have trained in quite a different way to the regime usually offered in the average dojo, if it comes at all, comes only after a great deal of training, study and reflection, or as a result of a chance encounter with an iconoclast. This sometimes leads even those who have put in the decades and the mileage of training to go back to the beginning and think things out all over again—and re-train accordingly. I will discuss this issue in greater detail in Column 26.

Further Reading

Important issues relating to 'cultural memory' are raised in a number of books concerned with more specific of topics: Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*, 1993, U Cal P. This is a book that attempts to do for Asia what Edward Said's *Orientalism* attempted to do for Islam and the Middle East. The differing reactions to defeat in Germany and Japan are discussed by Ian Buruma: *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan*, 1994, Farrar Strauss Girouz.

Japan's defeat in particular is discussed in two seminal works: John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, 1999, Norton; Eiji Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 2002, Continuum.

The discussion in this column of 'war memory' owes much to the following scholarly works: Sven Saaler, *Politics, Memory and Public Opinion: The History Textbook Controversy and Japanese Society*, 2005, Iudicium; Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945 -- 2005*, 2006, Harvard U P; Takashi Yoshida,*The Making of the "Rape of Nanking": History and Memory in Japan, China and the United States*, 2006, Oxford U P; John Breen (ed.), *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past*, 2008, Columbia U P.

Works cited by Sven Saaler include: Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, 1973, John Hopkins U P. The book by Nishio Kanji, cited in the text is: 西尾 幹二、 新しい歴史教科書をつくる会, 『国民の歴史』, 1999, 産経新聞ニュースサービス. The book by Narita Ryuichi, cited in the text, is: 成田 龍一, 『司馬遼太郎の幕末・明治　「龍馬がゆく」と「坂の上の雲」を読む』, 2003, 朝日新聞社. Narita has also written a literary biography of Shiba: 成田 龍一, 『戦後思想家としての司馬遼太郎』, 2009, 筑摩書房. Historical consciousness is discussed by Abe Kinya: 阿部 謹也, 2004, 『日本人の歴史意識』, 岩波新書. There is a detailed discussion of *kyokaku* (*yakuza*) and their role in Japanese politics in Eiko Maruko Siniawer, *Ruffians, Yakuza, Nationalists: The Violent Politics of Modern Japan, 1860-1960*, 2008, Cornell U P.

Works cited on Sakamoto Ryoma include: 司馬遼太郎, 『龍馬が行く』, 1963-1966, 文藝春秋; Marius B Jansen, *Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration*, 1994, Columbia U P; Romulus Hillsborough, *Ryoma: Life of a Renaissance Samurai*, 1999, Ridgeback; NHK, 「龍馬伝」(*Ryoma-den*), which is available on four boxed sets of DVDs.

There is more specific discussion of various issues relating to Hiroshima and the alleged 'hegemonism' of the US in a large number of recent books. Those I have consulted for this column include: Robert Jay Lifton, Greg Mitchell (eds.), *Hiroshima in America: A Half Century of Denial*, 1995,

Avon; Michael J Hogan (ed.),*Hiroshima in History and Memory*, 1996, Cambridge U P; Kai Bird & Lawrence Lifschultz (eds.), *Hiroshima's Shadow: Writings on the Denial of History and the Smithsonian Controversy*, 1998, Pamphleteer's Press; Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*, 1999, U of California P; Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman and the Surrender of Japan*, 2005, Belknap Harvard; Edward Demenchonok (ed.), *Philosophy After Hiroshima*, 2010, Cambridge Scholars Publishing; John Dower, *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor / Hiroshima / 9-11 / Iraq*, 2010, Norton.

Details of the biographies of Morihei Ueshiba discussed in the column:

砂泊兼基, 『「武の真人」合気道開祖植芝盛平伝』, 1981, たま出版.

植芝吉祥丸,『合気道開祖植芝盛平伝』, 1978, 講談社. Revised edition, 1999, 出版芸術社. Translated into English as Kisshomaru Ueshiba, *A Life in Aikido*, 2009, Kodansha International.

John Stevens, *Abundant Peace*, 1987, Shambala; *Invincible Warrior*, 2000, Shambala.

Kazuaki Tanahashi's article has been cited in the text, above. Full details of the biography of Konoe are: Kazuo Yagami, *Konoe Fumimaro and the Failure of Peace in Japan: a Critical Appraisal of the Three-Time Prime Minister*, 2006, McFarland.

Walter Edwards, *Modern Japan Through Its Weddings: Gender, Person, and Society in Ritual Portrayal*, 1989, Stanford U P; Ian Buruma, *Behind the Mirror*, 1983, Jonathan Cape, published in the US as, *Behind the Mask*, 1984, Pantheon.

The following works are essential reading on the politics of the *Showa Restoration*: George M Wilson (ed.), *Crisis Politics in Prewar Japan: Institutional and Ideological Problems of the 1930s*, 1970, Sophia U P; Ben-Amy Shillony, *Revolt in Japan: The Young Officers and the February 26, 1936 Incident*, 1973, Princeton U P; Stephen S Large, *Emperor Hirohito and Showa Japan: A Political Biography*, 1992, Routledge.

For Omoto, the place to start for a discussion with a different bias to the publications put out by the organization itself is Thomas P Nadolski, *The Socio-political Background of the 1921 and 1935 Omoto Suppressions in Japan*, 1975, U of Pennsylvania PhD Dissertation, University Microfilms. Nancy Stalker has written a penetrating study on Omoto, without any reference to Morihei Ueshiba or aikido: Nancy K Stalker, *Prophet Motive: Deguchi Onisaburo, Oomoto, and the Rise of New Religions in Imperial Japan*, 2008, University of Hawai'i P.

Stanley Pranin produced a partial translation of the Sunadomari biography and started out to produce a complete translation of Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography. This stopped very early on, but continued in the form of summaries. Mr Pranin has also produced various essays and interviews, originally published in *Aiki News* and then in *Aikido Journal*. When production of the printed publication ceased, the essays and interviews appeared on the *Aikido Journal* website. The interviews have appeared in book form a number of times in Japanese and English. The latest edition of interviews with prewar disciples is: *Aikido Pioneers: Prewar Era*, 2010, *Aiki News*. Pranin has recently revamped the website: http://www.aikidojournal.com/blog/. There is a small membership fee and one of the major benefits is a disk containing all the back issues of *Aiki News* and *Aikido Journal*. All the essays and interviews cited in this column can be found there and Pranin plans to augment these with a vast archive of material he has collected over the years. The essays are continuing and cover much the same ground as these articles. They are shorter, however, and with less discussion of the broader cultural background and the philosophical issues involved. My aim in writing these columns has been to supplement Stan's pioneering work with background material that he did not include. Mr Pranin, however, is a pioneer of aikido history and his essays and interviews provide an essential contrast to the picture of Morihei Ueshiba given in the biographies discussed in this column. They are indispensable for a fuller understanding of Morihei Ueshiba and his art. This is not intended as a plug for Mr Pranin and his work, although we have been friends for many years. Simply, the actual situation concerning general knowledge of the origins and nature of aikido is really quite dire and if Stan had not done his pioneering work, non-Japanese would be in a state of almost total darkness, illuminated only by the few translated crumbs thrown from the certain tables.

Finally, Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography should be read in comparison with the discussions in two seminal books by Ellis Amdur: *Dueling with O-sensei: Grappling with the Myth of the Warrior Sage*, 2000, Edgework; *Hidden in Plain Sight: Tracing the Roots of Ueshiba Morihei's Power*, 2009, Edgework.

Peter Goldsbury (b. 28 April 1944). Aikido 6th dan Aikikai, Emeritus Professor of Hiroshima University, specializing in philosophy and comparative culture. B. in UK. Began aikido as a student and practiced at various dojo. Became a student of Mitsunari Kanai at the New England Aikikai in 1973. After moving back to the UK in 1975, trained in the Ryushinkan Dojo under Minoru Kanetsuka. Also trained with K Chiba on his frequent visits to the UK. Moved to Hiroshima, Japan, in 1980 and continued training with the resident Shihan, Mazakazu Kitahira, 8th dan Also trained regularly with Seigo Yamaguchi, Hiroshi Tada, Sadateru Arikawa and Masatake Fujita, both in Hiroshima and at the Aikikai Hombu. Was elected Chairman of the IAF in 1998. With two German colleagues, opened a small dojo in Higashi-Hiroshima City in 2001, which is now independent and directly affiliated to the Aikikai Hombu. Instructed at Aiki Expo 2002 in Las Vegas, Nevada.