

# **AMERICAN SELF-PROTECTION ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**A Not-for-Profit Corporation**

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The Editor

BLACK BELT

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Sir:

I read with interest the article on Morihei Ueshiba but I believe that it contains inaccurate statements. I was one of the pioneers of Aikido in the U.S. when only a handful of people had even heard the name of "Aikido", **and the highest ranking exponent of this art in the Midwest (see enclosure) During the Ginza festival in Chicago I was asked to demonstrate it, because it was not well known even by the Japanese community.** For a time I was the Yoseikan representative in the U.S. During my many trips to Japan as an engineering consultant to the Toshiba Corporation, I visited the Honbu and was offered by Kisshomaru Ueshiba to represent it in Cleveland, offer which I declined.

It is incorrect that Aikido split after Ueshiba's death in 1969, the split occurred before. Specifically, with strong backing by the military (Yoseikan under Minoru Mochizuki-- Admiral Takasta and General Takeda), financial groups (Yoshinkan under Gozo Shioda-- Shoshiro Kudo), or institutions of higher learning (Waseda University under Kenji Tomiki), some of Ueshiba's students were teaching their own brand of Aikido.

Tomiki's book was published in 1956. Mochizuki was awarding Aikido ranks in France and Switzerland and published a book in French under the title "**Ma Methode d'Aikido**" (**MY Method of Aikido (sic.)**) in 1955 with a preface by M. Kurihara Judo (9th dan), while Gozo Shioda inaugurated the Yoshinkan Aikido in 1954. His book "Dynamic Aikido" was published in English in 1968. All this happened well before Ueshiba's death. The three major schools mentioned above present significant departures from the Honbu style. Not to mention Koichi Tohei's Kido.

Today there are a number of Aikido styles and the term tends to become as generic as Jujitsu.

It is interesting to note a book by Saiko Fujita published by the Japanese Center for Research on Ancestral Martial Arts Techniques under the title "Secret Vital Points of the Human Body", which claims to be a complete study of the physical and physiological aspects of the many vital points used for atemi-waza. In it there is mention of no less than twenty-seven ryus (schools) under a variety of names, starting with the #1 Seishin (Pure Heart) school and ending with the #27 Shorinji (Temple of the Small Forest), the Kodokan being #17. Some of these schools favor hitting and kicking to such degree that one cannot tell them apart from karate (early Judo incorporated atemi te-waza and atemi ashi-waza). Blows are almost totally absent from the Honbu style, yet the Yoshinkan and particularly the Yoseikan styles make extensive use of them.

Politics, discriminatory practices and poor didactic organization of the material taught are the problems plaguing Aikido in all its forms today.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Evan S. Baltazzi". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Evan S. Baltazzi, D. Sc. (Paris), D. Phil. (Oxon.)