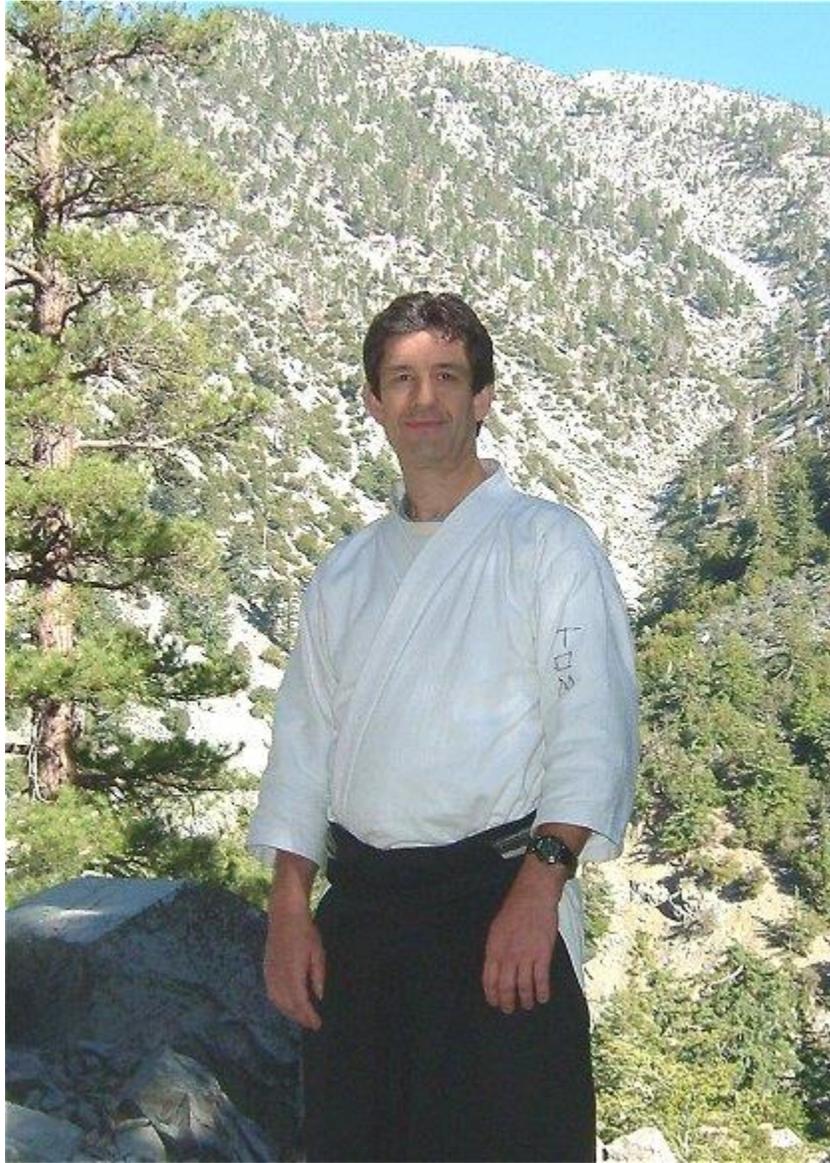


Featured Dojo-cho, July 2005



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In 1972, while travelling home during a break at college, an article in Intellectual Digest magazine caught my attention. The article focused on the art and philosophy of Aikido, and as I read further I realized that in this art was the piece that I had felt was missing from the karate I had been practicing since 1967. The article was written by Robert Nadeau. Upon returning to Long Island, I located the only Aikido dojo in the area: Long Island Aikikai. The sensei was Eddie Hagihara, who I later discovered had trained with Robert Nadeau Sensei in Japan. It was

Hagihara Sensei who had acted as translator when Nadeau Sensei had had his private meetings with O' Sensei. At the Long Island Aikikai, I remember watching Hagihara Sensei's dynamic, yet gentle, demonstrations -- showman-like, yet revealing glimpses of an inner layer of the mystical. It was Nadeau Sensei's article that got me to the door; it was Hagihara Sensei's movements that got me onto the mat.

I studied at the Long Island Aikikai for the first 5 or 6 years of my training. This also included regular trips to train with Yamada Sensei at the New York Aikikai, with which we were affiliated. In 1978, wanting to pursue further study in Bhuddism and Aikido, I travelled to Japan for what was initially planned as a 3 month trip, but which ended up being a 3 year stay. During the first year I trained almost exclusively at Hombu dojo. During the second year I started including other dojos in my regular training, eventually reaching the point where I was studying with 9 different teachers, including senseis Tohei, Chiba, Saito, and Hikitsuchi. Feeling that I needed to focus my training, I studied for the next year almost exclusively with Saito Sensei. For a year I commuted nearly every day to the Iwama dojo - a trip of almost 200 miles. From Saito Sensei I was able to establish a good foundation and framework for my Aikido training.

In 1981 I returned to New York. I also began making regular trips to California. It was at this point that I finally made contact with Robert Nadeau Sensei. I found myself very interested in his philosophy, but I was also greatly influenced by his technical ability.

Since my return from Japan, I have helped to develop two dojo, which are now self-sufficient. At this point in time, I have returned to just being a student, and have rediscovered my love for Aikido.

My most Memorable Aikido Experience

In 1984 while I was working as a social worker at a New York psychiatric hospital, a male patient at the hospital went totally berserk and was terrorizing the staff with threats to kill himself and/or someone else. At one point he ran into a room with large glass windows and barricaded himself in. He then grabbed a large, metal, IV pole and began swinging it wildly, breaking objects within the room. Watching him in that room, I realized that if he tried to kill himself nobody could do anything to stop him. That moment of realization was the only moment that I myself did not feel terrorized by him. Something inside me took over and, against orders from doctors and staff, I went into the room. I had barely entered the room when he attacked me with the IV pole. To this day, I have no awareness of using any

specific technique; I only know that we both ended up on the floor with his head cradled in my arms.