

Soke Shioda Gozo



One of Ueshiba's outstanding students was Shioda Gozo (born September 9, 1915), who contributed much to bring about the increased popularity that Aikido has enjoyed since the war. Shioda entered Ueshiba's dojo at the age of 18, and lived and practised there for eight years, longer than any other student.

Shioda was sent to Formosa with the Japanese army during the war years and, like Ueshiba, was able to utilize the real combat situation to train himself physically and mentally. Shortly after his return to Japan at the end of the war, Shioda left the master's dojo. His principle concern was the promotion of Aikido, since Aikido had been restricted to special groups of people. Further, in popularizing Aikido, Shioda was showing his gratitude for his master's kindness. During the next two decades many demonstrations were presented to police forces, army groups, dock workers, and others. Much of the support for these activities came from Japanese business.



The tremendous interest in Aikido since the war dates back to 1954, when, under the auspices of the Life Extension Society, an exhibition of 160 martial arts from all over Japan was held. This was the first time that Aikido had been demonstrated to a large public audience, and Shioda's first place performance attracted a great deal of attention.

Shioda Sensei's style of Aikido is known as *Yoshinkan*, a name that he inherited from his father who owned a kendo and judo dojo by that name. *Yo* means cultivating; *shin* means spirit or mind; *kan* means house; thus Yoshinkan is the house for the cultivation of mind. Shioda Sensei was highly respected all over the world for his attitude toward the Budo disciplines and for his belief in *Wa* (harmony) as a way of life. On July 17, 1994, Shioda Sensei passed away leaving in place a strong dynamic style of Aikido which continues to grow and develop.