



**CABN**

**Peter Bacas sensei  
65 years**



# Introduction

From 1970-1972, Peter Bacas followed tai jitsu, taekwondo, and jiu jitsu lessons from Charles Dumerniet sensei, who in 1973 introduced the first free-fight tournaments and also launched the martial-arts magazine *Samurai*. This magazine was also sold in Belgium, which is how Dedobbeleer sensei and Schelstraete sensei came into contact with Dumerniet sensei. He directed them both to Dick de Wit sensei in The Hague, who had been practising aikido since 1972 from Tohei sensei's famous book. This book had only about four pictures! Together with Dr Ong, Peter Bacas was then already a pupil of the late sensei Dick de Wit, who gave lessons from his living-room dojo on the Beeklaan in The Hague. Three kokyo exercises were well practised, since they only had four pictures to copy. The first students who were students of Dick de Wit sensei were Brakel, Kroon, Thoutenhoofd, Santos, Dr Ongh, and Peter Bacas.

In 1972, Peter Bacas founded his own aikido club, the Nederlandse Culturele Aikido Club (NCAC). Aikido lessons were given, together with his son, in his garage and under the swimming pool 'Morgenstond' on the Loevesteinlaan.

Aikido had already been introduced in the Netherlands by Beljaars, thanks to Asai sensei in 1969. But it came to a standstill. In the period 1973-1974, some of Dedobbeleer sensei and Schelstraete sensei's pupils regularly came to the Netherlands. Dick de Wit sensei was befriended with the vice-chairman of the Budo Bond: Mr. Brakel.

Towards the end of 1974, Tamura sensei gave a demonstration in the Vliegermolen in Voorburg which was to leave a lasting impact on Peter Bacas. Tamura sensei demonstrated uchi kaiten nage and this was the moment when the judo members exclaimed: 'Now we understand what Kano sensei meant!'

In 1975, Doshu Kishomaru sensei came to the Netherlands again. Bacas sensei had by now become Tamura sensei's favourite pupil. Doshu Kishomaru sensei gave a demonstration with Suganuma sensei, Chiba sensei, Tamura sensei and Ichimura sensei in the Hogeschool on the Sportlaan in The Hague. Then, nobody really knew what aikido was. The Judo Bond Nederland suddenly wanted to organise competitions. Because aikido was relatively unknown, they wanted to place aikido under the judo umbrella. This was against Hombu policy. In 1978, the technical director of the former EAF Board promised an independent Aikido Federation would be erected in the Netherlands, but in 1979 they revoked their promise. A furious Peter Bacas then went to a conference in London, where thanks to a three-hour long speech of his he took care that the complete board of the International Aikido Federation was sent home. Finally, in 1980 the first independent aikido federation in the Netherlands was set up by Peter Bacas, the Nederlandse Culturele Aikido Bond (NCAB). His teacher was Kanetsuka sensei, 2nd dan aikikai aikido. After Kanetsuka sensei, his teacher was Fujita sensei. He has remained Bacas sensei's teacher ever since.

NCAB was later changed, in 1983, to the Nederlandse Culturele Aikido Federatie and the Stichting tot Promotie van Aikikai Aikido in Nederland (SPAN). Peter Bacas was also the co-founder in 1980 of the European Aikido Federation. For 18 years he was its general secretary. After the IAF and the Hombu, the EAF was the best-organised aikido organisation in the world. In 1997, he founded the Culturele Aikido Bond Nederland and IPAAF, the International Promoting Aikikai Aikido Foundation. He is also the founder of several aikido schools in various towns in the Netherlands. To name but a few: The Hague, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Leiden, Delft, Uden, Dordrecht and Enschede.

Peter Bacas has trained with some great names in martial arts history. He was taught pentjak silat by Oom Boy Visscher and Oom Wil Wijnhamer. Jiai do - omoryu style - was taught by Tiki Shewan, who was so famous that he was allowed in Otake sensei's company. From Schelstraete sensei and Dedobbeleer sensei, he learned to use the jo and boken. The true aikido spirit was taught by Chiba sensei, and zazen by Oshosan. From 1973 onward, Dr Ong and Pattipilohy sensei taught him taichi chuan – and Peter is still practising this living art beside Aikikai Aikido.

Peter Bacas' spiritual teacher was Doshu Kishomaru sensei. And from 1980 it is Hombu Shihan Fujita sensei 8<sup>th</sup> dan Aikikai



1. The late Doshu Kishomaru with Peter Bacas sensei (Tokyo)

2. The late Doshu Kishomaru with Suganuma sensei (Sportlaan)



# Interview by Lawrence Warry, Shodan Aikikai Aikido

Despite being a highly controversial figure in the Netherlands Aikido arena, one cannot deny the commitment, dedication and love that Peter Bacas has demonstrated - to the teaching and practice of Aikido. On the tatami, his fierce audacity is ominously present – and yet, at 63 years old, he still shines with innocent youth. Further away from the tatami, at his humble home in The Hague, Holland, one can find Peter almost every time of the day (when he is not somewhere teaching) busy in his office either organising up-and-coming Aikido events or studying Aikido media from the past.

However, the Peter Bacas that not everybody sees is a family man – who adores his wife Maria and his sons and daughter.

In this exclusive interview, Peter Bacas – 5th dan sensei, and chief organiser of the C.A.B.N (Cultural Aikido Bond Nederland) and general secretary of the I.P.A.F (International Promoting Aikido Federation) talks about his life inside Aikido – and gives an insight into his personal life.

**LW.** This October is a very important Aikido celebration – the 60<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Hombu dojo and Aikikai Foundation respectively. You will be attending these celebrations – at a great financial cost to yourself. Why is it so important for you to attend?

- PB.**
1. My teacher has requested to come. Even when there are very high costs, I will meet his wish – that is loyalty. My teacher asks something – and I will perform it – even when I have to borrow money and spend much energy into it.
  2. The respect. What I have to show to Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba. The Hombu is the place from where Aikido has been diffused all over the world. It is the “Mecca” of Aikido. On that specific and special day, we all have to gather together – that shows that the student understands the word “Kai” – social togetherness, sharing emotions, practicing together and friendship.

**Conclusion:** It is based on the two principles loyalty and respect.

**LW.** Throughout your Aikido career, you have changed teachers three times (namely: Tamura sensei, Kanetska sensei, and lastly Fujita sensei) – and you have also departed from the world famous Katori Shinto teacher, Tiki Shiwan. What are the reasons for these changes?

**PB.** I started Aikido in 1971/72 when Aikido was introduced in Holland. That means – the province South and North Holland – because Aikido was introduced two years before into East Holland by Asai sensei and Mr. Beljaars sensei – who already passed away 15 years ago.

The first teachers who came to represent Tamura sensei were Mersers Dedobelleer and Schelstraete – and they were devoted students to Tamura sensei. They introduced Tamura sensei to Holland. Tamura sensei came here – and gave a magnificent demonstration in 1973 in the Hague. It was ‘love at first sight’ for many students – Judokas especially - just like Kano sensei, who saw the Aikido from Ueshiba sensei and said ‘this was the Budo I intended to create with my Judo’. This was a time of high development for Judo in Holland – as Anthon Geesink sensei was the pioneer who beat the Japanese Judoka for the first time during three times at the Olympic games. So, I started to support Tamura sensei as one of the Pioneers here in Holland. Since Aikido was so little, and Judo so Big at that time, Aikido tried to find a home under the Judo umbrella. Tamura sensei introduced this idea. However, due to politics, the idea changed and instead of establishing an independent Aikido organization in Holland, Aikido should stay within the realms of the Budo/Judo Bond Nederland – and that was against the idea of the Hombu dojo.



3. Tamura sensei and Tiki Shewan sensei (Sportlaan)

4. Gift from BBN; Brakel with Doshu and Tamura sensei



In 1975, an invitation of Tamura sensei and Chiba sensei, Doshu Kisshomaru and actual Doshu, Moriteru came to Holland in a round tour all over Europe. There, the general idea was discussed to create an independent Aikido organization – not only in Holland – but also all over Europe.

In 1980, during the congress of the European Aikido Federation in London – attended also by the present IAF president Peter Goldsbury and Chiba sensei, all the Aikikai organizations in Europe decided to give permission to the Dutch Aikidoka's under supervision of myself – to form an independent Aikido organization separated from other martial arts – that meant also a separation from Tamura sensei.

At that time, Kanetsuka sensei – technical director from England came to our rescue – and supported the young Dutch Group – who started a 10-year battle of recognition from the EAF and the Hombu Dojo.

As Kanetsuka sensei was a very young technical director, he requested support from the Hombu in the person of Fujita sensei.

I met Fujita sensei for the first time at the international congress – at the Novitel Hotel in Paris – during a seminar in Courbertan Sport Palace. More than 1000 students were gathered together at that moment, and Fujita sensei was the person who demonstrated there - as furious as a rhinoceros, but as soft as a willow tree. I was so impressed by that teaching that I decided to follow him. Up until now – more than 20 years has passed, I am still his student – and I am still impressed by his taisabaki, kokyo, by his spirituality, inspiration and technique.

**LW.** Is it not a contradiction to your loyalty to a Japanese sensei?

**PB.** My first teacher was and is a very good Aikido teacher – however, much to the regret of many students, he suffered in 1993/94 a severe blow of cancer – which created a certain atmosphere between him and his students that he became ill in a way that he became irrational in his behaviour – and he stopped many people doing Aikido – and people separated because of it.

**LW.** After Fujita sensei, who has been the most influential figure – and why?

**PB.** I met Doshu Kisshomaru in 1975 – and he impressed me with the demonstration he made here in The Hague. . He impressed me in such a way that he could demonstrate and speak without showing that his breathing was out of control. That means that he showed clearly his movements were in harmony with his breathing (kokyo) – that for people who start Aikido, this was the 'Valhalla' – it was the inspiring moment. His ukes – Tiki Shiwan, Tamura sensei, Chiba sensei showed such a devotion that you felt they wanted to be united – and make one circle. (Yokota sensei also did this very well with Kisshomaru Ueshiba).

There was a silent and hidden relationship between Doshu Kisshomaru and myself. Because, the next time I saw him, in Germany – he was walking to the tatami and passed me (accompanied by Yokota sensei). Yokota sensei whispered to me "Bacas... Doshu...". Then Doshu looked around and saw me, and said "ah... genki desu ka?". Then, I answered "genki desu" – and that was a very nice moment that I shall not forget.

2<sup>nd</sup> January is always a special day – because this is the anniversary of his death. At my dojo, we have a special training on this day.

That special relationship, I have also with his son – Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.



5. Reception at Hotel des Indes:  
Doshu, Chiba, Tamura, Sukanuma senseis,  
Bacas san, and Ir. Wessel.

**LW.** What is the importance of your relationship with Fujita sensei now?

**PB.** Fujita sensei taught me spiritually, physically and also on a social level to become a good person – and after that, to become a good Aikidoka. He always inspired me. The very moment when he is coming to Europe – and I see him coming into my house, my heart trembles, my body shakes, and I pleased to see him. My inner energy starts to flow – as one performing Chi Kung. The presence of Fujita sensei, initiates this flow of internal energy – and he teaches me how to control it – in a very soft, light, mild and peaceful manner.

**LW.** In the Dutch Aikido world, you are a very controversial figure – in that you have been criticized for your ‘self-important’ teaching style, how you treat your students - and have been the centre of many group splits in the Dutch Aikido Federations. How can you explain yourself regarding these criticisms?

**PB.** Controversial? –

What does ‘controversial’ mean? For me, it is a man who has his own idea, his own opinion, and his own lifestyle – who can choose his own way. In such a way that if he likes that way, he influences people in such a way that others can follow him and, if the time is there that the ideas are no longer equal to each other, it is a normal process (just like a child in a family growing up and establishing his own life). I have been a lighthouse for many students. Many students have found a safe harbour with me. However, many people who did not want to see the correct signals for coming to the harbour have been shipwrecked. Whether or not it is their fault or my fault, they must analyse themselves – and they can learn from their own mistakes – and they can learn from their own paths – as I try to follow my own path.

### *Criticism*

They do not look well. They criticize not me, but themselves. They criticize the idea that they want to follow a teacher, but they keep their own self-importance. They come with a cup of tea, which is already full. However, they must come with an empty cup. However, students who criticize always have too much luggage – which sometimes prevents them to understand the correct teaching. It is understandable, because sometimes they have spent much time, inspiration and sweat – and have learnt from another teacher and now they have to have the courage and energy to unlearn everything. However, following a teacher means to come with an empty mind to the teacher – in order to learn something from him.

I criticize these people for coming to me with a full cup of tea.

I have followed only one teacher for over 20 years. I go every year – 4 times a year to see the moods of my teacher, when he is enjoying, when he is performing – and I try to analyse why he is doing such things.

Teaching comprises of two things: the extrinsic and intrinsic form. However, many students follow a teacher and only focus on the extrinsic form. The intrinsic is much more difficult, because it means they are obliged to change a whole attitude.

That is why I am so convinced (but also humble) about what Fujita sensei is doing. That is why I say to my students try to understand what he is doing.

Treating Students Badly... hmmm.... Give me an example.

**LW.** Some people say you are making an example of people – and destroying their dignity:

**PB.** When I put somebody in front of the class and ask them to show what I have done – and they do it incorrectly, it is not a



6a Guru Oom Boy Visscher; pentjak silat (Loevesteinlaan)



6. Bacas san with son Gaston in the dojo

bad thing. It is not for making them ridiculous. I want to show to everybody that everybody starts as a beginner, and that we always will be a beginner – and should never think like we are grown up and that we know everything. The basics of my teaching is not to show to people who is the teacher acting just like a superman - showing very energetic techniques, but to communicate an understanding that the level of the class is always based upon the most inexperienced member of the class. The teaching is not supreme, mysterious or secret in technique. It is based upon the basic elements of Aikido.

### ***Group Splits***

An example: If you go to Stanley Pain's Aikido Encyclopaedia, and you look to the history of the life of O-sensei and his students then you must realize that his first student was a far member of the family, named Noriaki Inoue. This man was a follower of O-sensei. After becoming a high level, he split from O-sensei, and formed his own group.

I can tell you how many students have split from O-sensei. For example: Koichi Tohei sensei, Saotome sensei, Toyoda sensei, Shioda sensei.

So it is. It is a normal process. I would even say that it is an essential part of an organization. I think that splitting is not a danger. If students continue to work in the spirit of O-sensei, and follow their own realization of their ideas in another group, then it is okay. But, he has to keep one thing – that is Kai = Unity. That means friendship. That is what the people who split in Holland forgot. That is because they wanted to build their own empire – they wanted to be their own O-sensei. That is why they split. That's why you may come back again.

Forming your own group is normal, but not keeping a friendship with your teacher is unacceptable.

It is a pity that the base upon which the splitting has been created is jealousy and sometimes-incorrect manners and etiquette. Sometimes, it is unforgivable (at least for the time being).

**LW.** Do you have a strategy to try to re-unify the split groups of the Netherlands?

**PB.** Unification.

### ***The ideal is:***

We have a family – Ueshiba – who has created Aikikai Aikido. Up until now, it is the only source, which is spreading Aikido all over the world. The Hojin Aikikai consists of 80-100 teachers and employees who devote their lives daily – to spread Aikido all over the world. That is so unique.

No other Aikido institution is comparable to it. If we all come and look to that centre with all our differences, they have the spirit. If we continue to follow their spirit – and if we can have our own variation, then we are in a house with many rooms – but we are still in the same house.

It is not necessary that I have a plan. Look to the Hombu. The Hombu has a plan!

O-Sensei created a spiritual and technical system. Doshu Kisshomaru created from the Aikido Hombu Dojo, a modern Aikido Organisation to meet the demands of the modern society – and create a certain internationalisation of Aikido. The grandson of O-Sensei and son of Kisshomaru sensei, have been given this gift, and shall continue to deepen the original ideas and plans to bring Aikido into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I have much confidence that he will achieve good results, as he has a good Hombu staff and the support of the older generation.



6b Sukanuma sensei with Bacas sensei and Marja Bronkhorst

7. Children's aikido with Gaston (Loevesteinlaan)



**LW.** How has Aikido affected your personal life?

**PB.** Sometimes, I am feeling I am Aikido. Is this boasting? Is this the self-importance that you talk about?

**LW.** Well, people can read it in a way that you try to be some deity.

**PB.** Yes, but I devoted all my movement to my teacher Fujita sensei.

I feel I am no longer the person 'Peter Bacas' ..For 24 hours a day, I am living Aikido. There is no longer the separation between personal and Aikido life. However, due to the fact that it is completely integrated into my life, it is no longer a burden for me. I created the circumstances in such a way that my social and family life are completely integrated into my Aikido life, and my Aikido life is completely integrated into my private life. But, this is a very long and slow process – and I am happy with it – and I would not like to change it. I think it will make me very rich in the mind. When I was young, I was vital full of energy. Now I am 63, I feel as if I have much more vitality and life than before.

***Aikido is a precious thing for me.***

**LW.** At the age of 63, how do you see your Aikido progressing now?

**PB.** I'm in the beginning of understanding what is Aikido. I am trying to teach to everybody – to express the inside and the outside. For the first time, I understand the internal aspect. I am now gracious to Fujita sensei for teaching me what it means to look inside of the form. So, I have now a schedule for myself. I want to live 30 years more to understand what is internal form – and to diffuse it. Of course, only if the heavens above permit me to do this. When I was born, I was given only 30 years to live – due to the condition of my heart and my lungs. I have overcome these 30 years – and I am now 63 – and I feel stronger. So, I plan to live 30 years more – if God provides me with that time.

**LW.** Speaking from experience, being your uke is very challenging – your Ki is very strong. In some moments, it can be unbearable. How can an uke learn to deal with such strength of Ki?

**PB.** This is a very complicated question. I will give an example. In 1975, Tamura sensei came for the first time to Holland and gave a big demonstration.

He had 2 ukes. (one was Tiki Shiwan – a very famous sword man). I think, together with Don Dregger (author of many martial arts books), he is a living legend in Aikido.

Tamura sensei was performing Kaiten Nage – omote waza, soto, uchi. There was one moment that Tiki Shiwan did not follow – and mis-interpreted the kokyo and technique of Tamura sensei. At that moment, I was one of the students who were always close to Tamura. After the demonstration to my astonishment, I heard Tiki Shiwan pouring out into excuses towards Tamura sensei. Then Tamura sensei said: “one moment, you lost the connection with my hara. You were thinking for me – and that was a disharmonious moment. So, the whole of the posture was lost”. Ikkyo as a technique, and ikkyo as a posture are two different things. When not following, you disrupt the extension of ki from the partner.

I think to learn to be uke is still such a mysterious thing – because I always have the picture of Doshu Kisshomaru performing together with Yokota sensei. I love Yokota when he is working with Doshu. You see that he gave his body and his soul completely to the energy circle of Doshu Kisshomaru. At that very moment, they were one.



8. Meditation, Bacas sensei

If you ask how Yukota has learned, I can only guess he can do such things when he trusts his teacher and when he is loyal to his teacher. When his heart is open, the moment he sees the face of his sensei, his heart beats at the same rhythm. If you have not such a relationship with the teacher, you will never understand correctly how to be an uke.

Up until now, Tiki Shiwan is a true follower of Tamura sensei.

**LW.** Ki is a very strong factor of your teaching. What is its significance in your aikido and how do you explain ki-no-na-geri to students?

**PB.** Ki-no-na-gare is an expression of Doshu Kisshomaru sensei:

It means that your extending energies meet each other and unite in one circle. So, you meet each other, and you perform. There is never a moment of rest. You meet, and you don't hesitate in your movement. Definition of Ki (Kisshomaru):

“By virtue of the subtle working of Ki we harmonize mind and body and the relationship between the individual and the universe. When the subtle working of ki is unhealthy, the world falls into confusion and the universe into chaos. The harmonizing of a united ki-mind-body with the activity of the universe is critical for order and peace in the world.”

### **- From “The Spirit of Aikido”**

If you understand what Doshu Kisshomaru defined the expression of Ki – and you try to understand that the technique is not a physical performance, but it is based upon the energy fields of your inner part, people are always making technique on the physical level. However, the technique must be placed on the inner part of your energy. Then you perform ki-no-nagare.

**LW.** Is this the first time you go to Japan? If no, how many times did you go to Japan – and give me your impression of every time you went to Japan.

**PB.** This is the fifth time. First time was 1984. Then 1988. Then 1992 and 1997/98. I love the country. I admire the country. I should like to live in Japan. However, my social and family life was always an obstacle in order to realize such things. I should like to stay a certain time – two or three years in Japan – to study Japanese and to understand the Japanese soul – and to practice under my teacher. When I go again this time to Japan, I will make diary of every moment I am there, and I will report that to the I.P.A.F newsletter.

Everything has changed in Japan so much. When I came the first time, in 1984, a Gaijin (foreigner), was almost an alien. I remember that when we went to the station in Kyoto, we were sent from one place to another because nobody could understand our English. Then, somebody said we should go to the information office. Finally, we arrived at a guichet with a very small sign saying “Information - English Speaking”. When we started to speak English, the girl started to giggle – her mouth opened – she could not say a word. Now, if you go to Kyoto, the station is a modern creation of the new Japanese mentality – and many people speak English. The whole Japanese society is more or less focused upon the American way of living and the Gaijin coming to Japan.

**LW.** When did you meet Doshu Kisshomaru for the first time – and Doshu Moriteru?

**PB.** In 1975, Doshu Kisshomaru, and his son Waka sensei (current Doshu Moriteru) came to Holland, Spain, France and England. With the invitation of Tamura sensei, they came to Holland – in the company of Chiba sensei (Technical director of England) and Tamura sensei (Technical director of France), Suganuma sensei, Tiki Shiwan.



9. Travelling around Europe with Fujita sensei and Bacas sensei

I was third kyu at the time.

Since I am Indonesian ( by blood and I was born in Djakarta/Indonesia), I understood how to treat people from the east – and I was asked to host them for eating. I took them to a Chinese restaurant in the Hague. I spoke to the proprietor, and ordered a long table full of food (in the Japanese way). I did not know, during the long tour, Doshu Kisshomaru and Waka sensei eat mostly European food very well. However, Waka sensei became ill. He stayed in his room. When Doshu and other sensei's came to the restaurant and table, they were completely surprised and astonished that they saw Chinese food – and they started to eat. There, Tamura sensei and others introduced me to Kisshomaru – and asked me to look after them . I remember the next day greeting Kisshomaru as he came out of his car - to the dojo to teach. I opened the door of the car and I said 'good afternoon'. I was surprised when he said in English 'Good morning. How do you do.'

In 1984, I came to Japan. and I saw all over Tokyo posters of coca cola – with the slogan “Good morning. How do you do”!!! Then I began to laugh, as I understood.

Later, I had the chance to converse with him – and I told him about my dreams in Aikido. He nodded approvingly. From that moment, I inherited him as my teacher.

**LW.** When did you meet Fujita sensei for the first time – and what was the reason why you were his Student for more than 20 years.

**PB.** Dr. Goldsbury called me his prime student. I met in 1980 at the IAF congress in Paris. At that very moment, I saw Fujita sensei at the Sofitel Hotel cursing and saying bad words about the French. We asked what the matter was. Fujita replied in Japanese that he was requested to teach at the Palais de Courbertant – but they had not arranged proper transport to get there. So, we did arrange good transport – and accompanied him to the training hall – where about 1000 students were there waiting for him. At that time, he was already a rather full man in size – so, I expected from him when he started, that the whole practice should be very slow and calm exercise. However, he was so furious about the whole treatment that he got from the organization of the I.A.F. that he performed as a furious rhinoceros amongst the students. He was so dangerous in his movement that all the people looked with fear in the faces and respected him. When I saw his movement, I fell in love with his movement – and I still am in love with his movement – because I was aware that his tae sabaki, breathing method and expression of his kokyo were the basic movements how to learn real Aikido. It was not a show – but he was Aikido at the moment on the tatami. During all these years – following him 4 times per year (4-6 weeks), I discovered still things, which are mysterious – and he disclosed these items for me. Spiritually, he is now my teacher also.

**LW.** We hear much about your promoting trip to east Europe. Give us the reason why you went to East Europe – and what are the goals you hope to achieve,

**PB.** After the breakdown of the iron curtain, I understood as General Secretary of the EAF in the beginning of 1989/1990 that the development of Aikido in Eastern Europe should be structured in such a way that will understand what is Aikikai Aikido – and that they would not fall into chaos of all kinds of styles of Aikido. So, I spent all my energy together with other persons – to lead this development in good order – and we achieved – because in 1979, we founded an international department into an international Aikido Federation (called the I.P.A.F). With the support of the Hombu, and especially Fujita sensei, the promoting tour of the IPAF yearly is a great success. We diffuse Aikido in all corners of the former Russian Soviet Republics.



10. 60th Birthday Celebration Party on Ameland;  
Bacas sensei and Marja Bronkhorst

### ***The main goals of IPAF:***

- Promote Aikikai Aikido Technically, Organisationally and Spiritually.
- To create a foundation which follows the spirit of 'Kai' a friendship between each other – and between nations.

**LW.** What is your understanding about the quote from Fujita sensei 'Daily Practice is the key to understanding Aikido'.

**PB.** Daily practice means to train you body as a sword. The sword means filling the body with ki and energy – in order to use your energy in an efficient way to achieve your goal, using your feet, your hands, your breath power, your intuition and your intellectual capability all together as one.

Practicing daily means going to the top of your intellectual, physical and spiritual power – that means going through a circle from beginning to end. If you start as a modern warrior, you have to start as a warrior, and end as a warrior – and not let it slip away.

**LW.** Peter Bacas, thank you very much for your time. I think this interview will be very interesting for the many students who already know you – but also others who may wish to learn about you.

**PB.** It is a pleasure. If the students have any comments about what I have said, I would be pleased to hear form them.

**LW.** Once again, thank you.

### ***Some Questions for Sensei Bacas About His Involvement in East European Aikido***

#### **1. Why do you involve yourself with Eastern Europe?**

**PB.** In 1990 when Gorbachov opened the Iron Curtain, I was general secretary of the European Aikido Federation, and in this board, was a fear that if high ranking European dan-holders under supervision of Hombu Shihans should not enter in a structured way into the gap of the iron curtain, then a crowd of Aikido fortune-seekers should enter into that gap - and confuse what really is Aikikai Aikido. For that reason, the Aikikai world headquarters sent in 1992 Doshu M.Ueshiba (the former Wakka sensei) to Moscow and St. Petersburg in order to show to the former Soviet Republic states that Aikido has an official centre in the Aikido World Headquarters, Tokyo, Japan. The Aikido World Headquarters started a dojo at the state university in Moscow and the European Aikido Federation approached St. Petersburg Aikido Federation and the European Asiatic Aikido Federation covering all the soviet republics.

Continuing the friendship with the Russians in St. Petersburg and former Russian Republics, Fujita sensei started his mission in East and Central Europe.

Many other Hombu Shihans such as Tamura sensei, Kanetsuka sensei started also their Aikido Mission work in these regions - but, at this moment, the International Promoting Aikido Foundation has the best Aikido Structure for promoting Aikido in these countries.

#### **2. Do you feel a danger from the possibility of people you dont know exploiting you and your Aikido in Western Europe?**

**PB.** Fujita sensei is such a wise and respectful Hombu Shihan that his mission is safeguarded against such possibilities. Fujita sensei is supported by the Hombu Dojo in such a way that all the Hombu Certificates are presented efficiently, on time and not mishandled - and training is regular and according to the Hombu methods.



11. Children's class in St. Petersburg:  
the golden future for aikido

### **3. What is the driving force behind this movement within Aikido - which seems to break away from the mainstream Aikikai Aikido?**

PB. The driving force that Fujita sensei is thinking that each student is a teacher for themself - in this way, each student is precious and if there is a break from the mainstream, something precious has been lost - so I disagree from the question that Fujita sensei is breaking away from the mainstream.

### **4. What was your aim when you started Aikido?**

In the beginning of the 70's, Aikido was an unknown activity. Everybody thought it was something mysterious. Nobody had a good idea what Aikido was. For example, in the library of the Dutch sport federation there were only five books about Aikido - one from Tohei and two other books written by French teachers - and two other books mixed half Aikido and half Jiu Jitsu. The former chairman of the Judo Bond asked when we should have competition for Aikido - but there was the aspect of Aikido - which talked of peace and love - and that was something so strange to the martial arts where kick boxing, tai-boxing and free-fighting were very popular. Suddenly there was a martial art which was preaching no competition, no fighting and collision, but to try to accept the energy from your opponent and to guide them.

I was touched and convinced that I had to learn this, and decided to follow one of the best teachers at that time, and that was Tamura sensei.

### **5. Is this still valid after 30 years doing Aikido?**

I have polished these ideas - but I think that the dream of creating peace and harmony during Aikido is still valid - and I think it is even more valid today. My teacher, Fujita sensei, has shown that those valid values have been put into practice.

I recall the story when he was teaching in Bosnia at the same time as the war. While there was death and destruction on the front lines, Fujita sensei was only 30km away teaching in a dojo.

Now, after 10 years, many people from conflicting nations (such as Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania) shall join together in Belgrade to follow Fujita sensei's teaching (such people from these lands training together would otherwise be unheard of) and I share the dream of Fujita sensei to one time bring an Aikido demonstration to the UN big hall - and demonstrate to the world that there is a living art that can preach.

### **6. Which teachers did you have during your training of Aikido and the martial arts?**

From Pentjak Silat, guru Boy Visscher and guru Wijnhamer.

From Iai-do Omo-ryu, Tiki-shiwan - a Scottish man who's mother and father lived in China. He is of such a quality that he shares the company of the famous Otake sensei.

Tamura sensei - the pearl of Aikido at that time. He taught me not only Aikido, but how to use the jo.

Dedobbeler sensei - Jo and Bokken - he also taught me the human aspects of Aikido.

Za-zen by Oshu-San - Japanese Monk Master

Kanetsuka sensei - Aikido.

Fujita sensei - My current teacher of Aikido.

Above all, the spiritual leader for me was always doshu Kisshomaru.

### **7. You are one of the pioneers of Aikido in Holland. What is the result of your pioneering work?**

Firstly to start a Circle Bushido Nederland - as they had within Belgium. I began in Lisztstraat in Den Haag with my two sons - in my garage. I further moved to a room under the local swimming baths. From there, I started to spread Aikido. Then, we started Aikido with my students John Hoverts and Peter Lacherwad in Rotterdam and Dordrecht - Kees de Boer - later to be taken over by Ernesto Lavadas. In Amsterdam, at the Cosmos, I supported Erik Lowe. From Cosmos, we started the C.A.S.A. organisation. From there came people such as Wilko Vriesman, Erik Lowe, Hank van Duin, (Suganuma sensei).

Following on, I went further to develop clubs in Utrecht (Anton Geesink dojo), in Leiden, at the University of the Boelenlaan in Amsterdam.



12. Winter school December 2002 in St. Petersburg

With the Circle Bushido Nederland, I supported the introduction of Aikido into the Judo Bond Nederland. I then founded the Culturele Aikido Bond Nederland (C.A.B.N) and after that, the Nederlands Culturele Aikido Federatie. During the inauguration of the C.A.B.N., other names to mention include, myself, Dr. K.F. Leising, Martinaz Perrtula, Veneri, Goldsbury came together in order to form the E.A.F (European Aikido Federation). Further, this developed into the International Aikikai Aikido Foundation for the whole of south Europe.

**8. During your 65th birthday, many students are coming from abroad. Is this an indicator that you are pioneering further away from the borders of Holland now?**

Yes. After 1989, when the Iron Curtain was removed, I started to spread Aikikai Aikido together with Fujita sensei and now, the results of five years work, one sees flourishing organisations throughout the Baltic and the former Russian states and now, they come to celebrate my 65th birthday. It is a really wonderful growth.

**9. How do you think Aikido will develop in Holland?**

At this moment, many Japanese European dan holders are frequently coming to Holland. Some are Aikikai Aikido. Others are introducing another kind of so called Aikido. However, in one way, they are all trying to practice this art seperated from other martial art influences such as mainstream judo, karate and jiu jitsu. That is an achievement of independence from other martial arts.

**10. How will it also develop in Europe?**

At this moment, there are already 2 seventh dans in Europe. In the near future, more Europeans will obtain such a high ranking position. That implies that in ranking the Europeans are standing shoulder to shoulder near the former Japanese teachers. This is a big step in the development of Aikikai Aikido.

That implies also that there are dangerous aspects in this field - due to the fact that we are thinking that we are standing besides with the same ranking as the other Japanese - and we are thinking that we are able cope without a Hombu dojo (this is a great danger - as we go further away from the line with our own styles of Aikido).

**11. How will it develop in the World?**

In the world the dissemination of Judo has already happened - as more and more factions formed due to the fact that Judo developed itself as a sport and no longer as a martial art.

European dan holders - such as Anthon Geesink - went further to develop their own judo emporium.

In Bucharest last year, we attended a world Judo tournament, but there were no Japanese present - except, of course, Fujita sensei who was giving an Aikido demonstration at the time. Fujita sensei was rather surprised that he was the only Japanese present. This can also happen with Aikido, but fortunately O-Sensei has passed on a continuation of Doshus - Kisshomaru and Moriteiru in order to keep a strong line of tradition within the Aikido framework. During the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Hombu Dojo, the Hombu staff introduced the fourth generation of the family Ueshibe to the world. So, the future of Aikikai Aikido is secure.

There are over one hundred people working at the hombu dojo every day - organisationally, financially and with the promotional aspect.

During the last interview with an American Japanese sensei, he told the Americans that the future is for them - thus the direction of Aikikai Aikido within America and further within the world is secured. (I personally don't subscribe to this point of view).

**12. How do you think Aikido will develop for yourself?**

[To be continued.]

*Lawrence Warry, Shodan Aikikai*

13. Winter school November 2003 in Kazan / Where is Bacas sensei?



