

Yoin (Reverberation) by Sensei Iwata Norikazu

Kindly translated by Yuriko Terao

According to the dictionary, Yoin means Reverberation.

When I see things, I feel Yoin and when I meet people, I feel Yoin, thinking of their dignity, personality. When I was young, my school teachers, especially my homework teachers and the principal left me Yoin. Many budo teachers left me Yoin too. Up until now I had many teachers and each of them left me with Yoin.

I met Ueda Keitaro, a kendo teacher in my childhood. I met Ogawa Kinnosuke and Ooasa Yuji Sensei when I was in the army. I remember Ueshiba Morihei, an aiki-jutsu teacher, Nakayama Hakudo, Hashimoto Touyou, iai-do teachers too. I still feel their Yoin —dignity, force and power— deep in my mind. I want to have Yoin and leave it.

I want to leave my students and the spectators long-lasting Yoin. I think it is really difficult. I have to make efforts to leave Yoin.

Yoin to personality.

I attended Kyoto Taikai for the first time when I was around 18 years old.

When I entered the former state of magnificent Butoku-den, Kamiza drew my attention. Only Butoku-den has such a Kamiza.

Prince Nashimoto was sitting still there, putting his hands on his knee from morning to noon. He just nodded and watched intently. He is always present in my mind.

There were famous teachers from all over the country.

Takano Sasabrou was one of them. Their majestic appearance and impressive faces are in my mind very clearly. They were prominent, first-rate teachers at that time.

I was overwhelmed by the events, kendo kata, and iai-do in a majestic atmosphere.

This Yoin was the essence, the spirit of budo and that encouraged us a lot. I can't forget this Yoin all my life.

Yoin of waza.

Ueshiba Morihei, an aiki-jutsu teacher left me the strongest Yoin of his carriage. He coached me directly at the military police school at Nakani in Tokyo in 1942. He explained waza with a couple of big young men, I was surprised at his waza and power. He was a real expert. I was deeply move by his marvellous movement. I met many great judo teachers before that, but I had never seen such a natural movement as his. That was a super human feat, a miracle,I couldn't know how he trained, and I couldn't ask him about his training. I watched iai-do enbu by Nakayama Hakudou Sensei at the Shinbuden in Manchuria that year too. I learned just about the outline of Shoden before entering the army. I was deeply moved. He drew the sword very slowly and the sword went forward. He was stretching his body up very calmly. Nakayama Sensei was young and he was studying dogi very heard then. During my long iai training days, I met many great teachers who gave me deep impressions.

Sano Shigenori Sensei.

His magnificent Noutou was like throwing the kissaki into the koikuchi all at once.

Mori Shigeki Sensei.

His noutou was very quick and magnificent. He did it before his left shoulder, from the upper to the lower very quickly.

Kouno Hyakuren Sensei.

His tsukati grip was marvellous.

Okada Morihiro Sensei.

His energetic touhou in his last years around the age of 85.

Yamamoto Harusuke Sensei.

His posture and attitude, using koshi and hara was magnificent.

Kimura Sanzou Sensei.

His last enbu at Butoku den in Kyoto was great. His last waza and posture was like nukiuchi.

Yamamoto Takuji Sensei.

He was my great teacher. His nukitsuke was dynamic.

Fukui Harumasa Sensei.

He was 19th Fukui Soke and his noutou was magnificent. I can remember their distinctive carriage clearly. They are deep in my mind.

Yoin of learning.

I remember Prince Nashimoto and a zen priest at Butoku-kan in Kyoto Taikai before World War II. They were both sitting still, straightening their back for hours and didn't move. They were very different from the high dan people. So I felt their trainings were very different from us. I felt the need to train much harder.

When I attended Kyoto Taikai every year, I felt I was in a different world and it gave me a lot of stimulation. I did enbu and watched enbu of the others and I thought my enbu over and I swore to practice harder.

Yoin of training.

We have a different Yoin according to the degree of difficulty. Before World War II we used to have dog-tired trainings. We need to practice until breaking down with exhaustion. We could learn a lot through such hard trainings. But after World War II, Japan was demoralized and training became easier than before. I feel unsatisfied with such easy trainings. We don't have places to train ourselves completely. Some people do really hard training, but many people do just tame trainings.

Is this a biased view?

Yoin of my life.

Life is long but short, or short but long. It is full of pain, but I can remember joy I felt. I've become eighty eight years old, and my heart is filled with deep emotion. I think of my hard younger days, my luck of surviving a life-or-death crisis because of the war, details of my family, ups and downs of Japan...

These are all in my mind as Yoin. Deep, painful, joyful Yoin. Yoin is becoming stronger and stronger at my age, and am enjoying Yoin. I want to enjoy the rest of my life with Yoin.

Iwata Norikazu (26th May 2000)