

## **Matsuoka Sensei answers Questions from students**

By Haruo Matsuoka

Question: Please give some suggestions on how to let go of being so rigid while practicing techniques and instead of thinking too much, be more relaxed and flowing.

In Aikido, techniques progress from Go, Jyu, and Ryu (form, softness, and flow). This means that every single movement is a process of Go to Jyu, and Jyu to Ryu. You start with the forms, when you know the forms you will start relaxing. For instance, when you learn how to type, first you learn which finger will punch which keys. Later you start typing words and you learn which fingers to move for certain words and when you get used to typing certain words, you know all the angles for the keys and your fingers will just flow smoothly. When you really get used to typing, you know when to move and how to move your muscles. This is the same for sports and musical instruments.

When you are tense during keiko (practice), relax. Don't rush to improve. Take your time and keep working on the techniques that you are not used to. If you take the time and do whatever you need to do and do it the right way, then the third part, Ryu (flow), will come. It doesn't matter if it takes you one, two, three or five years, just don't give up! You need to build a spirit that will never give up. This attitude will help you not only in techniques but it will also enhance your self-confidence, perseverance, and it will also help you achieve your goals.