



Hiroo MOCHIZUKI

Soke de l'école YOSEIKAN BUDO

To the Yoseikan world

Salon-de-Provence, 27th December 2013

This year 2013 is marked by the 10th anniversary of the death of my father, Master Minoru MOCHIZUKI, first Soke of the Yoseikan School.

As I was chosen to be his successor concerning the Budo of the Yoseikan School, I felt all the weight of the responsibilities for this legacy, as far as passing down and improving the School knowledge as well as ensuring its continuity is concerned.

With this letter, I want first of all to thank his closest pupils for their support during this mission and especially for their efforts to preserve the spirit of work, research and uprightness that has been my father's since the founding of the first Hombu dojo Yoseikan in Shizuoka (Hitoyado cho) in 1931.

As Soke of the Yoseikan School since 2000, it is my duty to publicly remind everyone of the official list of experts who were awarded the diploma "Menkyo Kaiden" (*) by my father almost twenty years ago. It was published at his request in April 1996 in the journal of his international organisation BUDO YOSEIKAN.

1. MOCHIZUKI Hiroo
2. MURAI Kyoichi (†)
3. SUGIYAMA Shoji
4. MOCHIZUKI Tetsuma
5. MOCHIZUKI Kanji (†)
6. AKAHORI Katsutoshi
7. YAMASHITA Takeshi
8. SHINMURA Masaji
9. SUGIYAMA Seiichi
10. YOSHIDA Nobumasa
11. SUGIYAMA Tadashi
12. YAMAMOTO Kazumasa
13. MOCHIZUKI Seiichi (†)
14. TAKAHASHI Minoru
15. TEZUKA Akira (†)
16. WASHIZU Terumi
17. AUGÉ Patrick
18. KENMOTSU Hiroaki
19. FUKUJI Shigetaka
20. KAN Masaki

First and foremost, I have to rectify the regrettable and inexplicable oversight of the name of Mr Alain FLOQUET in this list, member of the Yoseikan School since 1958. His involvement in the European development of our School is to be reckoned with, and his name appeared in the original list of the thirteen Menkyo Kaiden of 1992.

While underlining their infinite benevolence towards our School, I also wish to honour the names of Mr Masaji SHINMURA, Mr Kazumasa YAMAMOTO and Mr Masaki KAN, who have always been discreetly present, efficient and faithful.

Moreover, I would like to pay homage to Seiichi MOCHIZUKI, whose spirit of initiative and loyalty has left a deep mark on my memory.

(*)Foreigners often misunderstand the Japanese word "Kaiden", which they liken to the teaching of secret techniques. This certificate ("Menkyo") actually recognizes the mastery of a set of techniques taught by a School and is more or less equivalent to a teaching degree.

As my relatives know it, I have never been very interested in titles and grades. However prestigious a certificate may be, it rarely reflects one's value as a human. As far as I know, the Menkyo Okuden (**), which my father would have most certainly deserved, is the only certificate which seems to meet a true ideal of personal fulfilment.

This anniversary year seems to be a good opportunity to address the huge Yoseikan family in order to take stock of the current situation of our school, clarify certain grey areas and resolve some misunderstandings. In this way we will be able to view its future more serenely.

- Some of the former pupils of the 2nd Hombu Dojo in Shizuoka (Daiku-cho, founded in 1950) have chosen to cultivate the memory of the first research of 1959-63. Their participation, which many have been unaware of for too long, has not been vain and it cannot be reduced to the simple preservation of this part of my father's teachings. With the reputation they have maintained in the name of Yoseikan, they have also contributed to the success of our School in the world.

- Some of my early European pupils, like Alain FLOQUET (Aikibudo), Roland HERNAEZ (Nihon Tai-Jitsu), Guy SAUVIN (Sei Do Jyuku) and other later students like Gérard OLIVIER (Kempo) have developed their own style. Some pupils like Pascal LEPLAT (kick boxing), Jacques TAPOL (karate) and numerous others have specialized in a discipline which they have made progress with their own talent and experience. They have all made their contribution to martial arts by developing a system which improves the common heritage and guarantees the continuity of techniques.

They should know that I am proud to be partly behind their personal martial research.

- Other practitioners living further away have created their own system while searching to draw on my father's research and the reputation of our School to promote their own experiments. Clarity and legitimacy problems, to which I will return later, are the consequences.

- As far as I am concerned, I have chosen to continue on the path laid out by my father and make progress in line with his philosophy, which have been developed since our common research in the fifties, as he was driven by the same research spirit as the one that drove him until the end of his life.

Beyond any filiation, grade, title bond or rank, the legacy of the Yoseikan name which he passed on to me essentially draws its significance from the way it has been used in comparison with my father's goal, the experimentation and innovation work.

In the early sixties, after my first journey to Europe, my father and I often worked together on the tatami of the 2nd Hombu Dojo Yoseikan. I used to assist or replace him since I was 14, given that my father was often absent or unavailable because of his professional activity as physiotherapist. Jim ALCHEICK trained in this dojo during the fifties, with my father or me.

Back then, I was 3rd dan in judo, 4th dan in karate, 5th dan in aikido and 5th dan in iaido, and most of the basic katas come from this working sessions with my father:

Hyori no kata, Tai sabaki no kata, Gen ryu no kata, Suwari waza, the first Hashakuken, whose original form sank into oblivion, and even Tai no kata, which was developed after we had watched sumo fights together on television.

(**) "Okuden" evokes the concept of deepening as well as the concept of infinity, reaching the secret field which is the most difficult to access. This is the last level of knowledge, which combines technical and mental worth, the recognition of human genius in his ability to anticipate the future and reinvent the teachings (not only technical) he was given in order to develop them according to the context.

Concerning the kata Happoken, as passed down by my father, he had been taught its original version in China by a Master from Okinawa.

The 3rd Hombu Dojo Yoseikan in Shizuoka was only established in Mukoshikiji in 1964.

Today, I am facing the same situation with my sons Mitchi and Kyoshi during our twice-weekly practices in our 5th Hombu Dojo (Salon-de-Provence). As we have different technical and strategic views, our exchanges are particularly enriching. I learn a lot from them, as my father learned a lot from me in a different time, while sharing its experience and expertise with me. It is a constant source of joy for me. We only have to open our eyes to realize that we learn not only from our elders, but also from youngsters, and even from children.

I am personally proud and happy of the involvement of my sons, their beautiful complementarity, their equally shared talents and the ardour with which they carry on the family tradition. I know better than anyone else how difficult their mission and position are. However, I know without a doubt that they work in total synergy with a network of technicians and experts, as they envision the future of our discipline through the exchange and sharing of skills. I am greatly pleased with this way of seeing things, as I have always associated the name Yoseikan with the concept of “research laboratory” and the notion of mutual aid.

Few people know it, but even though my father taught me kendo, judo, aikido, iaido and kodubo, he was the one to request me to begin practicing karate and boxing in Japan. He also strongly encouraged me to learn Savate after one of his first trips to France. Even though my father did not practice aïmeis very much, he considered that mastering them was necessary to the mission he personally entrusted me with at that time: achieving a synthesis of martial arts. This was his major ambition.

I put aside my veterinary diploma obtained with difficulty and gave up my youthful dreams in order to devote myself to this objective. I gave up the professional career I intended to follow in Brazil. My younger brother Tetsuma, who planned to join me there after his agriculture studies, had also to choose another path. He then decided to specialize in physiotherapy, like our father.

Our youngest brother Kanji came to France in 1976. He accompanied me on this path with a lot of talent as long as his health condition allowed it. He contributed to the technical part of the drafting of the first work on Yoseikan Budo which was released in France in 1979. The both of us also brought our father from Japan at the end of 1999. Finally, he helped us during the last years of the life of our father.

All those who knew him were able to appreciate not only his remarkable technical qualities, but also his great humane character. I also take this opportunity to pay homage to him, as he sadly passed away in 2009.

I thus finally devoted my life to martial arts. It led me to define a new educational approach under the name of Yoseikan Budo. It underlines the common (biomechanical as tactical) logic in all martial arts.

In order to achieve this, I based myself on the fundamental concepts passed down by my father:

- The concepts of *Ma*, *Hyoshi*, *Sen* and
- The study and development of strategies and educational methods stemming from basic katas

In spite of the numerous obstacles encountered on the way, I have the feeling that I have met my father’s expectations and carried on my mission. I still devote myself to it assiduously, passionately and honestly, driven by the unwavering determination to share and pass on something positive.

In June 1999, as my brother Tetsuma warned me about my father’s health condition, I paid the latter a visit with my two sons in Japan in a care facility where he was pining away.

Since my mother passed away almost three years before, I invited my father to go and live with us in France, which he immediately accepted with enthusiasm. Organizing this move was not easy, but we finally overcame all the administrative and logistic obstacles. Following this decision, we welcomed him in Aix-en-Provence at the end of 1999 and the Yoseikan headquarters (4th Hombu Dojo) were thus naturally established there.

In 2001, the physical and moral condition of my father had greatly improved. He used to go on a walk in the park behind our house and do some exercises there. From his wheelchair, he regularly took part in our trainings from more than a year, as a watchful and passionate observer, in particular when it came to the new Kihon system carried on with music by his grandson Mitchi. I still remember how unhappy he was when I would not wake him up to take him to classes...

As he was convinced of the value of our work and was concerned about gathering together the Yoseikan family and officially expressing his gratitude towards it, he asked his oldest pupils in Shizuoka in writing to join our organisation. He was deeply and durably affected by their refusal.

This caused a stir among the most traditionalist pupils in Japan, which led to the founding of an organization named "Seifukai", which mainly aims to pass down my father's aikijustu techniques. The technicians involved, who claimed to be some sort of spiritual heirs, asked my brother Tetsuma to become president. As he was concerned about easing tensions, he accepted this title in a spirit of conciliation and in accordance with his inner nature.

As far as I am concerned, I respect their freedom of decision because they did not have the same technical development, nor did they have the same encounter and confrontation opportunities. First and foremost, they were not entrusted with the same research and international development mission.

I only regret that no representative of the Seifukai came from Japan to talk directly to my father and me. In this way, it would have been possible to take stock of the decisions already clearly expressed in the public letter of 1992 and during the international ceremony of 2000. Above all, it would have given my father the opportunity to confirm in person his last wishes.

Unfortunately, my relationship with my father was sometimes punctuated by misunderstandings and misapprehensions, which were generally maintained by outsiders for various reasons.

Because I was far away from Japan for a long time, some people allegedly faithful to our School were greatly encouraged in their propensity for manipulation and taste for plotting. I find regrettable that my family members were fictitiously made to compete with each other. I deem certain actions clearly incompatible with the values of martial arts: loyalty, honour, respect – which those people claim to represent. I regard those actions with regret as a misuse of the notion of mutual aid dear to my father.

My father could only fully gauge the scope of our discipline at the end of his life, while observing my work and the work of his grandsons during the regular classes in Aix-en-Provence as well as the work of our experts and pupils during international training courses, which he wanted to take part in until his last breath. He then clearly recognized this result and I am pleased to think that this was his last sources of joy on this earth.

At the present time, and I am very proud of it, the Yoseikan School, which is inspired by my father and remained faithful to his spirit, is above all a work to be perpetuated. It is not only my work and the one of my sons, but also the work of the numerous technicians improving it every day with their own contribution.

Where are we in terms of organisation?

- Most practitioners have understood the importance of experimenting and have accompanied us during the various research stages throughout all those years, and hundreds of others have joined them.

Today, they represent a great promise for the future of our School.

- To my great satisfaction, some practitioners who had distanced themselves from our dynamic have now decided upon careful reflection to rally the Yoseikan organisation under the aegis of the World Yoseikan Federation (WYF) with their pupils.

I want to thank them for their trust and encourage them to share the fruits of their experience with us.

- At the same time, I note that the pupils who are the most respectful of the choices of the MOCHIZUKI family – out of courtesy and without disowning their background - have changed the name of their style when their personal journey has led them to create their own system.

I welcome their honesty and I am grateful for this decision.

- Finally, I note on the contrary that the name Yoseikan – out of habit, out of ignorance or because of the distance – is sometimes used to refer to personal systems that have nothing to do with our School, which largely causes confusion among the general public.

The use of the name of a Budo School does not pertain to simple legal issues, which would in some way reduce the work initiated by my father to some sort of label. I have always publicly underlined that the word “Yoseikan” is not a simple registered mark. It is however understood that, between what is allowed or possible, the persons claiming to belong to our School have the personal responsibility to maintain a regular technical and educational connection with the reference Hombu Dojo.

Therefore, I request formally that the persons responsible for the movements which are not willing to work closely with our global Yoseikan organisation make the necessary name changes and I thank them in advance.

From now on, we can envisage an optimised outreach for our School thanks to a better use of our energy and a more rational task assignment and I am delighted about it.

Therefore, we can carry on with greater confidence our task to improve martial arts in general and Yoseikan Budo in particular.

The global organisation WYF, in accordance with its purpose, endeavours to welcome all the practitioners who share the moral and educational values of my father. It maintains an exclusive partnership with the Mochizuki School, which is devoted to technical research.

My father used to say that travelling was important, especially for young people, in order to open one’s mind and understand the world and men. As for me, I have always regarded our discipline above all as a vehicle for exchange and encounters and a tool for developing versatility and personal creativity. This is the ideal I have relentlessly pursued throughout the years. I have made my share of mistakes, but I have learned a lot at the same time. I have had the opportunity to meet a lot of respectable people from all walks of life all over the world. Among all those beautiful persons, I wish to honour two of them here, who have contributed to common success throughout their lives: Ms Ayako MOCHIZUKI, my mother, admirable wife and clever adviser of my father and Ms Eliane MOCHIZUKI, my wife, without whom the Yoseikan Budo and I would not be what we are. They should know that I know how lucky I was and am to live by their side.

This anniversary gives me the opportunity to remember, to thank all the persons who have supported, encouraged and inspired me and who continue to do so, first of all my father, the one who launched this adventure under the Yoseikan banner.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Hiroo Mochizuki', written in a cursive style with a large loop at the top and a horizontal line at the bottom.

Hiroo MOCHIZUKI
Soke de l'Ecole Yoseikan