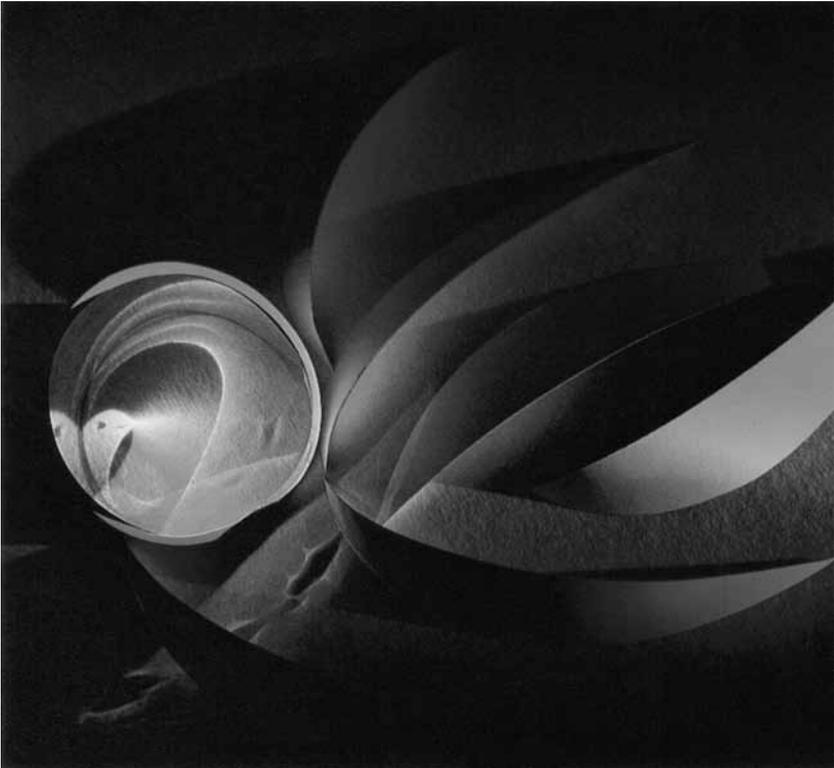


# KALEIDOSCOPE



**HERMAN AIHARA**

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*Macrobiotic Articles, Essays, and Lectures 1979-1985*

George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation  
Chico, California

Mr. Aihara's works include:

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*Milk - A Myth of Civilization* — November 1971  
*Seven Macrobiotic Principles* — January 1973  
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# Preface

For many of its early years in this country, macrobiotics was thought by some, especially writers in the mass media, to be a strange Asian dietary practice whose proponents graduated eventually to eating nothing but brown rice. During the Sixties, a few fanatics expanded this to include psychedelic or other drugs. Later, it was: “Macrobiotics? Oh, that’s tofu, right?”

Today it’s clear that the extensive techniques of macrobiotic cuisine preceded and even influenced the current cuisine movement. Any experienced macrobiotic cook has long been ideally equipped in the preparation of many natural foods now rapidly gaining repute as health giving and delectable.

Yet however essential the foods may be, the sublime concept of yin and yang, with its endless applications, remains the jewel this teaching. And there is no one more qualified than Herman Aihara to explore the facets of this traditional wisdom—the wisdom that realizes nothing stays the same, everything alternates—not chaotically but with certain orderliness. Many people mention the principle of yin and yang, macrobiotic teachers included, but it would be hard to find anyone who has delved as deeply into the subject.

In this regard Herman is the logical successor to George Ohsawa; he began studying under him in 1941 and continued as his translator, editor, and emissary until Ohsawa’s passing in 1966, eventually founding the George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation in 1970. He carries the Ohsawa spirit closely. If, in reading this book, you feel the student speaks of his teacher reverently (but with common sense) and frequently, you can understand why. In many ways he took up where Ohsawa left off. The student became the teacher but remained

a student. He has also brought macrobiotics up to date, ignoring not even the smallest item of interest in current events. Ohsawa would have done the same.

A native of Japan living in the United States since 1952, Herman Aihara is an engineer, scientist, philosopher, and teacher who has written articles for the Foundation's monthly newsletters and for other publications with illumination on a diverse range of subjects for the past twenty-five years. He has always had something unique to say not only on health issues but also politics, business, the economy, human relationships, philosophy, and spirituality. Subscribers eagerly await his fresh and original thought with every issue, yet his readership has been relatively limited to this audience; evidently, today's popular press still thinks of macrobiotics as brown rice, whereas its real basis lies in what founder Ohsawa dubbed 'the unique principle' (yin and yang)—a physical interpretation of the ancient Chinese metaphysical system of natural balance. Herman goes a long way toward correcting this problem. "If you become attached to brown rice," he says, "you must give up brown rice too."

However, "give up" does not mean forever, and this is one of the many examples of confusion when Eastern thought meets Western mind. Herman and his wife Cornellia tell the story of a macrobiotic student who asked their advice on a dietary question of yin and yang. When they gave another lecture in that person's area some time later—a year or so—they found the person still following the same advice! "Just try for awhile," they laughed, surprised at the static thinking. In the same way, were compelled to spell out such things as how much salt to use in cookbook recipes, having realized that this is the Western way. I hope Herman's sense of flexibility is conveyed in the pages of this book, for that is one of his greatest and most valuable lessons.

In 1980 we at the Foundation collected many prior Aihara writings in a volume called *Learning From Salmon*, named for one of its inspirational essay titles. During the ensuing six years, Herman has become even more prolific, clarifying his macrobiotic concepts in a matured and further defined writing style. The present volume

represents a compilation of his newer articles, arranged this time in approximately chronological order instead of a composed pattern.

It has been, and is, a pleasure and an honor to work on these articles. It's a rare opportunity to learn from Herman while helping to clarify his meanings and expression. I thank him here for giving me this chance.

Like the earlier collection, this book is easy to read; essays can be chosen for their varying length and subject matter. The format is nondemanding of your time—there are only one or two longer pieces—but it invites steady unfoldment of the author's way of thinking. Most of the articles appeared in Foundation newsletters (*GOMF News*, February 1979 to February 1984, and *Macrobotics Today*, March 1984 to July 1985) and a few, noted by season rather than month, were published in *Macromuse*, the Washington, D.C. area quarterly.

"The Essence of Macrobotics" I transcribed verbatim from one of Herman's animated lectures at his annual macrobotic summer camp in the Sierras. "A Night at Vega," "How to Overcome Fear," "Thoughts on Marriage," and "Holding On and Letting Go" were also taken from lectures. The "Nei Ching" translation is not exactly an article by him but we decided to include it anyway for its value. Some of the entries, such as the trip diaries, New Year's messages, and Ohsawa memorials, were intended as letters to Foundation members, but there was always that pearl of wisdom in each one that made it worth including here.

Herman writes all his articles in English with a strong command of the language; I learned so much about writing from him. Still there are a few meanings that one may question. For example, the word 'happiness.' Why is it so often cited as a macrobotic goal? Is this the simple happiness that *Webster's* defines as meaning "pleasurable satisfaction" or suggesting "a dazed irresponsible state...enthusiastic to the point of obsession"? Could this be the ultimate aim of macrobotics, as some topics or wordings seem to suggest?

Hardly. But, seeing constant repetition of the term, one might be inclined to think so unless a deeper meaning be uncovered.

Explaining further the Ohsawa and Aihara usage of “happy,” *Webster’s* also offers: “A state of well-being and contentment...notably well-adapted or fitting.” A deeper overall satisfaction comes to mind (“Happy even when sick,” Herman says), indicating a larger sense of joy in life that can of course include the usual kind of happiness. And what better key to this happiness than the little compass of yin and yang that teaches the art of adaptability? Herman’s friend, the “rare, happy cancer patient,” was “happy” because she would have been willing to repeat her life exactly the same, without any changes.

Ohsawa’s method of showing the inclusiveness of his all-embracing or “eternal happiness” lies within the structure of the seven levels of judgment. His notion of “supreme judgment,” to which one can “tune in” via the cosmic channel of higher functioning, is an all-inclusive state to be cherished and encouraged despite our tendency to dwell in the lower, nonabsolute, relative worlds of judgment.

In the closing article here, “Supreme Judgment,” Herman makes an important point when he explains that even brief experiences of “supreme judgment” are powerful and healing. Much in the same way that he illuminates the yin and yang idea as an in-flux situation (that is, not seeing life as a pendulum but rather things changing, changing back, and then changing some more), he eliminates the danger of thinking that one obtains supreme judgment and stays there, or one does not. The macrobiotic usage of “judgment” itself calls for examination under the macro microscope too; we are not talking about judgmental opinions but about consciousness, awareness, and evaluation by the fine capacities of discernment. Ohsawa referred to the “veiled judgment” of modern humanity, a term that nearly self-explains his meaning for the verb “to judge.”

But how to obtain this supreme judgment?

Become trustworthy and respected; maintain good balance in health; be humble in all activities; and, most important, remain as all-embracing, as inclusive as possible. Who can qualify for these conditions? The closest candidate is Herman Aihara, the one who was impressed forty years ago by the wisdom and energy of his

teacher and inspiration, George Ohsawa, and who so faithfully but unfanatically carries on these ideals for his own students in the Western world and around the globe.

– *Sandy Rothman*  
*November 1985*

## From the Author

A title for this book was discussed one day this autumn at the Foundation office. *Macrobiotic Journal* was one title advised. It is a good name but I wasn't satisfied because it sounds too normal—no excitement. I was thinking a few days. And then I got the name: *Macrobiotic Kaleidoscope*. I announced it at the staff meeting. They liked the name very much. However, I realized it was too long, so I agreed to change it to just *Kaleidoscope*. In Greek, *halos* is “beautiful” and *eidos* means “form.” Therefore, a kaleidoscope is an instrument that shows beautiful forms.

When I was a college student I read a book called *Kaleidoscope* written by a famous scientist named T. Terada. He was also famous as a writer and haiku poet but not so much as a provoker of Japanese language. He supported an idea that Japanese should be written in the Roman alphabet so that it could be typed by typewriter easily. George Ohsawa had the same idea. I am not sure whether Ohsawa learned the idea from Dr. Terada or not. In any event, Ohsawa admired him. When I was living in New York City, Ohsawa visited the United States and stayed at my apartment. On one occasion, I mentioned my admiration for Terada's writing. As soon as Ohsawa returned to Tokyo, he sent me a whole set of Dr. Terada's works, which I treasure among my most precious books.

His *Kaleidoscope* includes many short articles, observations on natural phenomena, social matters and human behavior, and scientific reports. What made me interested in his writing was his objective view and lack of emotion in his opinion. His style is the result of his haiku training. Haiku is a seventeen-syllable poem which is one of the shortest forms of poetry. However, the uniqueness of haiku is

not its short form but its rule of expression.

The rule of haiku is: it must express location, season, and nature. In other words, haiku must express space, time, and the orderliness of nature in seventeen syllables. Terada was a master of haiku; therefore, his writing was objective and yet hit the point.

My *Kaleidoscope* is the accumulation of my writings from *GOMF News*, *Macrobiotics Today*, and *Macromuse* over the past six years, expressing my macrobiotic opinion on various subjects such as social issues, political and economic matters, and health. When I wrote, I tried to be as good as Dr. Terada. I am not sure I could achieve that aim or not. However, after I read all these articles, I felt I was looking in a kaleidoscope. In fact, macrobiotics is an instrument to judge and think on natural and social phenomena with yin and yang as the two mirrors. These two mirrors show ever-changing beautiful forms. It is my greatest pleasure if I ever could give you kaleidoscopic images, made of the two mirrors of yin and yang, by this book, so that your view of life is more colorful and meaningful.

I would like to thank the many who helped in producing this book. For the original editing of the articles: Sandy Rothman, Kevin Meutsch, Gerry Thompson, and Stan Hodson. The final editing was done by Sandy Rothman with help from Carl Ferré, who was also responsible for text design and production. I wish also to thank Sandy for the cover concept, Sylvia Zuck for typesetting, Julia Ferré for proofreading, and Stan Hodson for work on the index.

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