

Aikido in Australia

Aiki Kai Australia National Newsletter

Volume 2 number 6 Autumn 2010



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Summer School 2010 report...

40th Anniversary of Aikido in New Zealand

Getting to know your Area Representatives

Part One - History of Aikido in Australia

**Aiki Kai Australia Founder and Patron
Seichi Sugano 8th Dan Shihan**

President: Tony Smibert 7th Dan Shihan

179 Mole Creek Rd., Deloraine, TAS, 7304

Tel: (W) 03 6362 3326 (H) 03 6362 2474

Vice President: Tristan Derham

tderham@gmail.com M: 0420 336 134

Technical Teaching Committee

Seichi Sugano 8th Dan Shihan, Tony Smibert, 7th Dan Shihan, Hanan Janiv, 6th Dan Shihan, Robert Botterill, 6th Dan Shihan, John Watson, 6th Dan, Andrew Dziedzic, 6th Dan.

TTC Contact address: c/o National Coordinator for the TTC, Andrew Dziedzic, 5 Bertram St. Eastwood, NSW, 2122.

Tel: 02 9858 5241 e-mail: dziedzic@bigpond.net.au

Area Representatives

ACT

Hanan Janiv, 6th Dan 23 Crest Rd., Queenbeyan, ACT 2620.

Tel/Fax: 02 6297 8258

NSW

Austin James, 5th Dan, 29A Yarran Road, Oatley, NSW 2223.

Tel: 02 9580 2627. M: 0417 435 949 email: ausjam1@gmail.com

NT

Marie Petery, 6th Dan. PO Box 131 Alice Springs, NT 0871.

Tel: 0413 376 299 email: marie.petery@gtat.com.au

QLD

Chris Seto-Payne 4th Dan. 11 Ortive St. Yeronga, Qld 4104. Tel: H. 07 3892 7551. W. 07 3379 1831.

SA

David Scott 6th Dan. PO Box 81. Norton Summit, SA, 5136

Tel: 08 8390 3322

TAS

Kaye Jenkins, . GPO box 110 Hobart Tas, 7001. Ph: 03 6229 7743,

0418 569 314, email: kaye.jenkins@dhh.tas.gov.au

VIC

Linda Godfrey, 4th Dan.

Tel: 03 9802 7211 M: 0418 381 674 email: linda.godfrey@iinet.net.au

WA

Satyavan Reymond, 3rd Dan.

Acting Area Representative: **Nick Archbold** 53 Allanswood rd.

Greenwood WA, 6024. Ph: 08 6262 2996, 0422 920 206

General Editor and Publisher

John Litchen. PO Box 3503. Robina Town Centre, QLD, 4230

Tel: 07 5578 8748

E-mail: jlitchen@bigpond.net.au

Contributing Editor

Bodhi McSweeney c/o PO Box 69, Meander, 7304

E-mail: tenchi_farm@bigpond.com

Registrar

Kathy McCarthy.

Registrations and information: PO Box 799 Warwick, Qld, 4370

Webmaster:

John Rockstrom. phone: H 03 9757 2926, W 03 9788 7776

mobile 0411 115 235.

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Aiki Kai (Australia) is the sole qualifying organisation for Aikido with the Federal Government National Coaching Accreditation Scheme.

All members are advised that Aiki Kai (Australia) is a signatory to the anti-doping policy developed by the Australian Coaching Council and consequently all students are bound by the rules of the policy. A copy of this policy is available on Coaching Council website.

NEW EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Aiki Kai Australia has had an equal opportunity policy drawn up. The policy contains procedures to be followed should, for example, any person feel that they have been victimised or sexually harassed. This policy is posted on the website. Should anyone experience or have a matter of concern, they should contact Andrew Dziedzic to find out the appropriate officer to speak to. All enquiries will be handled with the strictest confidence and should discussion be needed Andrew will phone back at Aiki Kai Australia's expense.

Editor's note:

Since I was unable to be at summer school 2010 I have taken the liberty of reproducing in this issue the report on this event that has been posted on the Aiki Kai Australia website. I have also taken the same liberty and reproduced the report from Lauren Walsh of her experiences as an Uchi Deshi at the New York Aiki Kai. This I feel will be of immense interest to all Aiki Kai Australia students.

Also Highly recommended is an article by Sugano Shihan which appears on the Aikido Online Website. This article is essential reading for students of Sugano Shihan as it delineates his thinking about why we study Aikido. There is a link to this important article directly from our own website, so please log on and have a look...

Recently Aikikai Aikido Shinryukan in New Zealand celebrated 40 years of Aikido teaching and practice and one of the very important guests who took classes at this celebratoion was our own Tony Smibert Shihan 7th Dan. There are two reports and some photos from this event featured in this publication.



Smibert Shihan teaching at ASB Stadium, Kohimarama, Auckland, New Zealand, 6th March 2010.

Aiki Kai Australia members who also travelled to New Zealand for this event included: From Victoria - Judy Boydell, Linda Godfrey, Paul Osborne, Alex Raystin, Michael Davidson... from Queensland - Bruce Eccles Duncan Lyall, Chris Seto-Payne, Roland Stettler Patricio Jaime, John Litchen... from ACT - Duncan Stevenson, and of course from Tasmania our own Tony Smibert

Cover image: Waka Sensei, Mitsuteru Ueshiba

Back cover: Sugano Shihan - 2007 Winter school
photography by John Litchen

The following Yudansha are registered with the **Aikido Foundation** as senior teachers and advisers. Each of them holds **Rokudan** certification or above.

ACT: Hanan Janiv. **NSW:** Andrew Dziedzic, Roger Savage, George Lo, Steven Armfield. **NT:** Richard Barnes, Mike Petery, Marie Petery. **QLD:** Graham Morris. **SA:** David Scott. **TAS:** Tony Smibert. **VIC:** Robert Botterill, David Brown, Felica Birman, Ray Oldman, Geoffrey Savage, John Rockstrom, John Watson. **WA:** Hugh Derham.

Summer School 2010



This year's Summer School was a great success, with over 190 students on the mat during some sessions! The first few days of high heat really tested everyone but, fortunately, it cooled off later in the week. Phew!

The quality of instruction from both Sugano Shihan and our special guest instructor, Osawa Shihan, was amazing, leaving both new and experienced students in awe of the knowledge and ability demonstrated by these two men.

This point probably underlines the real essence of these special events, it's an opportunity to get out of your normal day-to-day training and experience a new level of teaching. Just being on a different mat, with a new instructor wakes up our whole being and puts us into a receptive mindset to try new ideas and movements. When you have the quality of these two world renowned teachers added to the mix, it ends up being a unique and highly memorable moment in time.

Sugano Sensei finished up the week with the usual Yudansha (black belt) course on the Sunday. This is where he reinforces the basic messages that he has been working on during the previous week so that when instructors are

taking classes in their local dojos they have a clear idea of what to show those students.

Inaugural Inner School

For the first time in Australia, Sensei also ran an Inner School. This is an idea developed by senior students in Belgium and has been successfully running there for 10 years. The Inner School only accepts a limited number of students for 2 days of meditation, weapons training and the opportunity to have first hand instruction from Sugano Sensei. For this reason only newer students, up to 3rd Dan, were invited to attend and we had a near capacity group.

Reminder:

If you didn't make it to the Summer School, well, Winter School is coming up in Queensland this year! Just a **reminder to all those wanting to go for dan grades**, you need to spend time training at National schools. Sugano Sensei in particular has an amazing ability to remember everyone's technique and attitude. It is a requirement to attend TTC and National schools before being able to go for a grade.

List of promotions for summer school 2010

Shodan:

Richard Nicholas Vic
Sonny Peng Vic
Alex Rojas Vic
Linton Tuleja Tas

Nidan:

Aaron Beutel ACT
Adrienne Cleaver Vic
Luke Derham WA
Jemy Lim WA
Denis Moffat NSW
Sharon Stewart SA

Sandan:

Nicholas Archbold WA
Pelham Wilson NSW

Yondan:

Barry Ford NSW
David Hall Qld
Duncan Stevenson ACT

Rokudan:

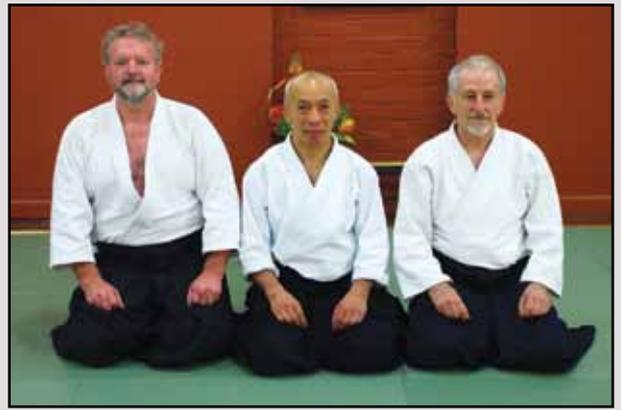
Steven Armfield NSW

Shichidan:

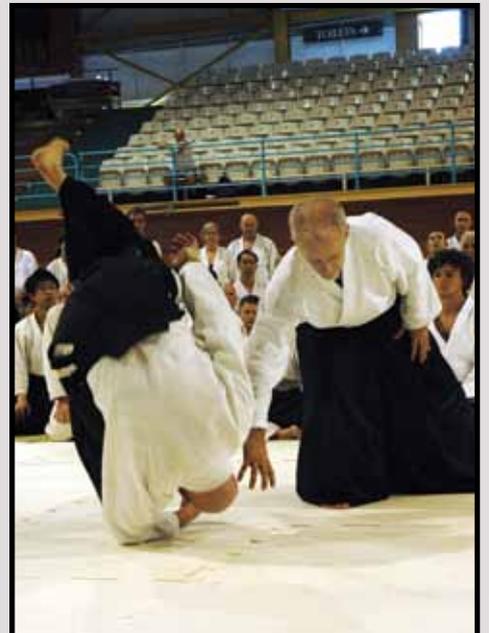
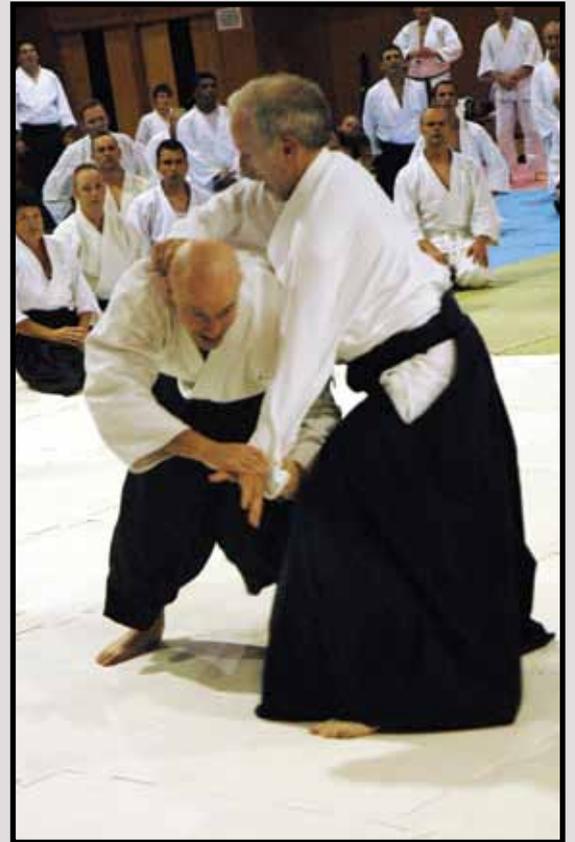
Tony Smibert Tas



Osawa Sensei at Clifton Hill



Linda Godfrey and Tony Smibert Shihan presenting Takase Shihan with gift made from 3000 year old wood from Tasmania. Below: Smibert Shihan at Kohimarama



As Time Goes By

Tony Smibert Shihan

What IS it that keeps people training for so many years? We Aikido people seem to be in a minority group from within the sporting community for we keep going at something we may have started when relatively young – and despite the decline of our youthful capability - going on through injuries, bung knees and aching joints. Why?

Here in Australia, we know that our Shihan, Sugano Sensei is a large part of it and that this explains the very large number of original trainees from the 60s and 70s still deeply involved as students and teachers under his guidance. Then there are the social factors and fairly strong personal cohesion of the people who have been attracted to Aikido as Sensei has developed it here in Australia. Despite our problems we still feel like a family and look forward to seeing and training with each other at each and every school.

But this is not the key issue. There is something about Aikido itself that keeps us going. Ten years ago I watched a close friend and great pioneer of Australian Aikido, Peter Yost Sensei, die before his time. After 35 years of hard training on the mat he continued his efforts and was still training on his deathbed. Despite numerous strokes he worked at keeping centred. He and I used to practice a kind of improvised 'sticky hands' ikkyo etc even when he could no longer sit up. He was as devoted and committed to progress and study on the day he died (we trained that day too) as he was in earlier years of full health. Clearly Peter saw beyond the physical nature of Aikido and found some profound purpose to his study.

The Aikido grading system offers some insight into the stages of training a person might expect at different stages of their aikido study. The kyu process prepares us for the dan rankings so that, by the time you are tested by Sugano Shihan and the Dan examination panel you are familiar with the basic waza laid out in the syllabus. These 'basic waza' are not of course really basic, because they also contain the structure of all the aikido to follow. In Osawa Shihan's recent classes at Summer School we were treated to a profound illustration of how beautifully sophisticated and advanced these basic waza can be. Yet by Shodan you are expected to be able to demonstrate proficiency in all of them. Sugano Shihan often says that by Shodan we should have them '70 – 80% right' so, if that's the case does it mean that we spend the rest of our life trying to get the remaining 20 – 30% right? No, because Aikido is not about technique per se but rather, about what we learn by training.

By the time a student takes the Nidan test they are expected to have further refined and developed their understanding of the technical side of the syllabus. At Sandan, there is an expectation their Aikido will be more unified and holistic. They have to demonstrate awareness of the connection between techniques and a fluidity

of movements which previously might have worked individually but now seem to be part of a total package of capability. We hope to see a general maturing of their Aikido and the capacity to move instinctively and without hesitation – a strong resolution of confidence where previously there might only have been determination in jiyu waza and so on.

Then, by 4th dan we are normally looking at an individual whose aikido reflects a kind of personality – in that what was previously 'consciously performed' and 'studied' has now become 'evolved' and somewhat more 'personal' and reflects what each individual has grown into as a mature Aikidoka. 4th dan usually comes after around 20 years of diligent training and study, during which time the 20 year old has grown to be 40, the 40 to be 60 (or the 50 to be 70) and so the person has matured as a human being, affected by and having affect on their Aikido.

We grow as individuals and we grow together over such a period of time. One of the great joys of training is that, when we meet at National Schools we contribute to and receive the benefits of the individual efforts of everybody else's study and evolution.

So what happens after 4th dan? After this, it seems to me we have the chance to go back and re-examine the very foundations of all the things we study in Aikido but, this time, from a matured perspective. My own experience around 4th dan was that Sugano Shihan advised me to work on precision and I remember his saying how as a result of his own progress he was working on it himself. And so we can take our understandings and established physical capability, our broad and specific knowledge of the syllabus and our own movement and apply these to a much more careful and intense study than was possible in earlier years.

Then of course there is the much more important issue of the inner art of Aikido – the real spiritual meaning of training which your effort over years positions you to study in new ways and with different perspectives as the years pass. Aikido becomes more, rather than less, interesting as the years go by.

Those who train for a long time usually end up with responsibilities associated with teaching as well. Teachers have to know, understand and demonstrate the full syllabus – to raw beginners as well as to mature trainees – or may be called upon to teach at major seminars where those present might include teachers of very high rank themselves.

All of these challenges and others, including management and leadership responsibility, add challenge to the years beyond those grades for which there is a physical test. Looking around at major training events I often notice how seriously many older trainees maintain their study. The quality of their effort is reflected

in awareness, attentiveness and focus during class. Hopefully younger trainees are noticing how Aikido can be energetically maintained throughout life. We silver-heads don't really want to be reminded about our years but sometimes its good to reflect on how the very same things that brought us into Aikido are still there for us – what Peter Yost often called “harmony with the Universal Ki” – every day and every session.



Smibert Shihan

New Zealand Aikikai 40th Anniversary

Report by Linda Godfrey

NZ Aikido Shinryukan celebrated the 40th Anniversary of Nobuo Takase Shihan's teaching. He provided an opportunity for Aikido practitioners (approx 250 students) of all levels from all parts of the world (Australia, Samoa, Singapore, New Caledonia, Japan and Tahiti) to celebrate and participate in this wonderful school. Tony Smibert Shihan (7th dan) from Australia was one of four guest instructor Shihans to participate. These included Seijuro Masuda Shihan (8th dan), Toshiharu Sawada (7th dan), Etsuji Horii Shihan (7th dan) and Waka-Sensei, the great grandson of Aikido's founder Morihei Ueshiba.

Takase Shihan has been guest instructor at our summer school in Canberra as well as at our 40th anniversary school. We have had the pleasure of training with him and many of his students at these schools as well as at the IAF congress in Tanabe in 2008.

We enjoyed nearly 14 hours of intense training over 3 days. Each Shihan provided tremendous classes. Masuda Shihan in his class told us that he was only really here to warm us up for Waka Sensei's classes. Sawada Shihan's Jo weapon class utilised ice hockey gloves with Kevlar reinforcement in the fingers in the fingers. Horri Shihan's classes emphasized basics that brought all facets together from tachi waza to suwari waza. Smibert Shihan's class was no secret to us from Australia but the comments afterwards were 'wow! He seemed to be somewhat feeble as he wandered around the dojo but now he has blown us away'. Waka Sensei's classes were clean, clear, vigorous and very energetic. He also did an excellent demonstration for the Japanese consulate and other visiting signatories.

The accommodation was luxury 4 stars, the weather stayed in the pleasant mid 20's. The social events organized by the NZ team were excellent. These enabled us to establish and maintain good relations with fellow



Horii Shihan

Aikido Shinryukan Gasshuku, 2010

aikidoka from all around the world. The highlight event was the 40th anniversary party, and the atmosphere was very special indeed. There were speeches from Waka Sensei, the Japanese consulate and other senior students from NZ. I was given the honour of presenting the Australian Aiki Kai gift to Takase Shihan (cocktail tray made from 3,000 year huon pine) and a gift to Waka Sensei for his recent baby. Masuda Shihan commented on the party the following day at training stating how wonderful it was and a reflection on the whole event in that spirit had traveled from the dojo to the party and back again. For those who attended the party we felt that we had been privileged to be part of the making of Aikido history.

The last social event was a ‘fingers crossed barbecue’ in stunning surrounds followed by several hours of informal socializing in Takase Shihan’s home.



Masuda Shihan



Waka Sensei



40 years of Aikido in New Zealand

a report by John Lichen

New Zealand Aikikai and Shinryukan Aikido celebrated 40 years of Aikido teaching by Nobuo Takase Shihan with a very special Gasshuku held over 3 days from 5th until 7th march 2010. Five very special guests took classes during this long weekend which demonstrated the highest levels of Aikido, and while they were not teaching some of them joined in with the other attendees to practice, giving some very lucky people the opportunity to personally interact with these remarkable teachers.

At the beginning of the weekend once everyone had registered and was ready and waiting on the mats, Takase Shihan introduced one by one the Guest instructors beginning with Waka Sensei from Hombu Dojo in Japan – Mitsuteru Ueshiba, great grandson of the Founder of Aikido Morihei Ueshiba, O-Sensei. He then introduced Sejiro Masuda Shihan 8th Dan, a frequent visitor to New Zealand who is well loved and immensely popular, Toshiharu Sawada Shihan 7th Dan from the Aichi Prefecture branch of Aikikai (Nagoya), very popular for his dynamic weapons teaching as well as his Aikido, Etsuji Horii Shihan 7th Dan (also known as Aioikai Shihan) from the Kansai region of Japan, director of the All Japan Aikido Federation, and our own Tony Smibert Shihan 7th Dan, President of Aiki Kai Australia and the most senior teacher in Australia (After Sugano Shihan). He is a member of Aiki Kai Australia's Technical Teaching Committee. He was vice chairman of the International Aikido Federation for many years and is now a member of the IAF Senior Council.

Takase Shihan was 22 years old when he came to New Zealand in 1969. His intention was to introduce Aikido to New Zealand and he has been teaching ever since then. It wasn't long after he arrived that he met his wife Barbara. They have three adult children, and he never fails to remind everyone how wonderful his family is. He mentioned them again in his

speech at the formal dinner celebrating his 40 years of teaching Aikido. His early teachers before he came to New Zealand were Chiba, Kanai, Ichihashi, and Watanabe Shihan. He also received instruction from O-Sensei, Second Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba, and many other senior instructors. He is of course the head instructor for Aikido Shinryukan and Technical Director for Aikikai New Zealand. He was awarded his Shihan certificate from Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.

There was an immense feeling of enthusiasm as each of these important Instructors was introduced by Takase Shihan, as well as a wonderful feeling of anticipation for the lessons and the practice to come over the next three days. You could literally feel the energy in the air of the huge ASB stadium at Kohimarama just out of Auckland.

With the introductions over some of the guests came on to the mat to participate in the first class which was taken by Takase Shihan, which meant that quite a few lucky students had the chance right from the beginning to train with Horii Shihan, Sawada Shihan and Tony Smibert Shihan. Whenever they weren't teaching a class these Shihan could be found practicing during Masuda Shihan's class as well as each other's and Waka Sensei's class. There were also a number of other senior Japanese teachers who were simply there for the event and did not teach a class, but were a wonderful help during practice with students who found themselves training with these highly qualified people.

It seemed to me there were about 180 to 200 people on the mats for the Friday series of classes. But Saturday was the biggest day with close to 300 people crowding the mats. There were only four classes offered on Friday but on Saturday with an extra early start there were 5 classes plus a children's class as well as a long involved photo session where apart from the whole lot of attendees having a group photo taken with Waka

Sensei and the visiting Shihan, each group from each visiting country also had group shots taken with the guests—a very busy day with some fantastic training. Sunday, the final day, seemed much more relaxed even though there were also 5 classes. I think by this time everyone's energy had reached a plateau, and also everyone was familiar with all the people that they had been training with so there was a more relaxed feel to the practice, even though it was as intense as any of the classes on the previous two days.

Everyone of course has particular highlights which they will remember for a long time afterwards, but for me the two that stand out are the dynamic classes and teaching of Waka Sensei, and the very amusing and fun classes taken by Masuda Shihan, who had more fun on the mat than anyone else during his classes.

Briefly summarising my own impressions I thought that Waka Sensei demonstrated a wonderfully clean fluid style of Aikido reminiscent of his father Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba, and of his grandfather, the previous Late Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba. The similarities imply for me that there is a style that is being preserved as a baseline for students around the world to use as a reference. It is clean and simple, and basic, and when performed at a high level as demonstrated by Waka Sensei, it is outstanding.

During Saturday's class Waka Sensei had everyone move back so he could do a short embu which was not only for our benefit but also in honour of the members of the Japanese Embassy in New Zealand who were there as special guests. They were also at the formal dinner that night with the Ambassador making a speech in honour of Takase Shihan's 40 years of teaching Aikido in New Zealand.

Each of the other Shihan also presented some wonderful aspects of Aikido to be studied. Masuda Shihan amused everyone with his playfulness as he stated he was only teaching a gentle class to warm the students up in preparation for Waka Sensei's class to follow. However, if you were on the receiving end of a technique he demonstrated you certainly felt the immense power he was capable of expressing.

Horii Shihan was very serious and presented some interesting aspects of body movement to control Uke. He focussed a lot on how Nage can control Uke with body movement alone

and I remember he showed that dropping to the knees partway through a movement was a powerful way of controlling Uke. Starting as tachi waza he often finished the application as suwari waza. He demonstrated a most interesting shihonage where he and his Uke both began in suwari but his application forced Uke to get to his feet and scoot around behind to receive the throw. Horii Shihan remained almost unmoving throughout this Ura application while Uke really had to scramble to receive it safely. He also demonstrated some interesting aspects of dealing with a shomen attack from a bokken.

Sawada Shihan's first class on the Saturday morning was a weapons class, and he emphasised the direct line used with the weapon, in this case a Jo. His later classes emphasized the direct relationship between how one moves and uses a weapon to how one does the same things without the weapon. Some interesting footwork, which obviously came from weapons training, confused quite a few people who perhaps don't practice much using weapons.

Smibert Shihan's class took a lot of people by surprise. Perhaps they thought he would take a slow moving class, because his practice had been somewhat restrained due to an injury, but after his initial breathing exercises and Tai no henka, he moved into some very fast kokyunage which had everyone running ragged as they tried to emulate the pace he had set. It wasn't a surprise to the Australian visitors there because they were all familiar with Smibert Shihan's way of teaching. I heard some really good comments later by some quite senior people who thought Smibert Shihan was most inspirational.

Takase Shihan took the opening class on the first day as well as the last class on the last day. He also presented some interesting and innovative Aikido in classes that were relaxed, entertaining yet serious at the same time. Anyone taking his classes, as with those from all the other guest instructors, would come away with lots to think about and hopefully to put into practice as they continue their various studies of Aikido into the future.

To sum up: No one who was there would go away disappointed.

Congratulations to Takase Shihan for his 40 years of patient and innovative teaching, and may he continue for many more years into the future.

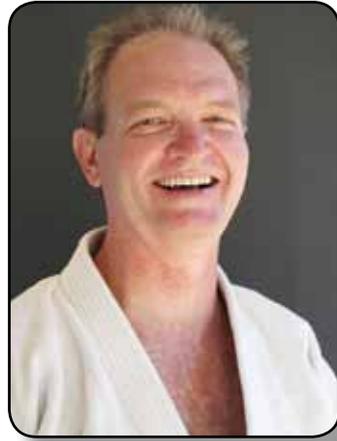




Some Australians who attended Takase Shihan's 40th anniversary are seen in these photos. Bruce Eccles (Brisbane), Editor John Litchen (Gold Coast), Michael Davidson (Melbourne), and Duncan



Winter School 2009 a report from Austin James



I love winter schools

–lots of training, time to spend with Sensei Sugano, with my friends, meeting new people, the wonderful yudansha grading and the party, which for me is always a highlight. The buzz and goodwill given and received at these events is good enough to be bottled – and keeps my spirits alive in between national schools.

This year was an extraordinary week of intensive training, soul searching and learning. It was also the wettest winter school I can remember in decades. I don't think those two things are related.

Planning and preparing for my first winter school as NSW Area Representative, could have been a worrying and anxious time. However, the planning and administrative skills and general enthusiasm of NSW people meant that it actually was a doddle. To all those who provided the real hard work and genuine team spirit – I thank you.

Sensei looked fit and fabulous – notwithstanding a fairly intensive schedule of teaching in the months prior to the school and also succumbing to a cold. All his classes were deep and required the utmost concentration. I only hope I can retain a little of what he gave.

One day, after a particularly difficult bokken class - I went home after training convinced I should give up because it was “all too hard.” Yet, I was back on the mat next morning bright and early – eager to find out what had escaped me the day before. And for me, that is the real joy of school – it is so good to be wakened and see the new challenges and opportunities and to still have challenges and opportunities.

On the night of the party, we had an informal celebration for Sensei Sugano who is turning 70 this year – but looks 20 years younger. The MCing by our inimitable Steven Armfield was witty and urbane, while the extraordinary cake made and crafted by the siren of the soufflé and the soft lens– Margie Carter, had to be seen to be believed.

At this school we also had the chance to re-unite with Louis Van Thieghemi– a senior student from Belgium who often accompanies Sensei Sugano on his overseas seminars as well as teaching in his own right. Louis was accompanied by offsider Fouad Hachemi.

Louis was an absolute delight and gave some interesting insights into aikido in Belgium and its chocolate. His classes were joyful and underscored that language is not necessary to communicate aikido. I am looking forward to meeting Louis again.

The senior members of the Technical and Teaching Committee also gave wonderful classes, providing ample evidence of their Australian shihan status.

Andrew Dziedzic, the former area representative provided sound advice and practical assistance on a regular basis.

Felicity Peters, who not only worked tirelessly enrolling students, liaising with camp management, assisting wherever possible, also found time to train at every class and included hours of revision every day – and still smiled. My thanks go to her for her selfless effort, and my congratulations on a wonderful nidan grading.

A number of others also gave selflessly and rather than try to name them all – thanks to everyone of you for your fantastic contributions.

We had a bumper crop of yudansha applicants this school all of whom were successful.

Youz Iqbal achieved shodan
Felicity Peters, Brett Edgley, Victor Bajanov, Brett Marshall all achieved nidan and Maciej Skierski obtained sandan grading.

A great effort by all, demonstrating their commitment and dedication.

An aikido school is an active and vibrant community where there are so many great moments that there is never an effective way of sharing them. There are so many connections that it becomes like that old saying “you can't see the wood for the trees”

For anybody who has not attended a National School – you don't know what you are missing.

I have been practising aikido now for well over 25 years – I got a medal to prove it (they wouldn't give me a watch though) and I still look forward to every school. If you can, try to get to a National School even if it is for a couple of days.

There is no better time to train under Sensei Sugano's direction.

Have I told you how much I love Summer Schools?



Photo by Margaret Carter

Reflections of a New Area Representative by Linda Godfrey



I was personally appointed to the role of Vic Area Rep by Sugano Shihan in January 2009. Since then, I have been on an unimaginable journey. As Tony Smibert Shihan has said to me on several occasions, 'no one can know what it is to be an Area Rep until they find themselves in the role'. As a student I had been through the path of beginning at sempai kohai and now found myself organisationally appointed with significant formal responsibility and authority. I did not ask for this role and I have to admit, my first response was that of disbelief and one fundamental question 'why me?'. In essence, the answer to my question like so many times before in my aikido journey has been to trust in the belief in me of my seniors.

Victoria has approximately 350 students excluding interims and children spread across 16 dojos. It is no small feat to comprehend the size and scale of the Victorian operation. Victoria in terms of the maturity level of students has a significant number of yudansha. Apart from the given of trying to take the State in direction that Sensei wants us to follow, the key challenge has been to build on the existing foundation to:

- Grow Victoria in terms of students, maturity of practice and provide access to high quality training events.
- Move Aikido Victoria onto a sounder business/financial basis in order to support current and future strategic operations
- Succession plan for dojos/instructors/students/key roles

In true Aikido fashion nothing was written down so coming to grips with what the role entailed was quite challenging. Even 15 months later I am quite surprised by some of the type of issues that arise not to mention long standing ones that just go with the terrain. My professional life entails being thrown in the deep end and sorting out whatever needs to be sorted, so I just dove in and went for it.

The role of Area Rep has given me the opportunity to increase my understanding of Aikido. It is a very difficult concept to explain, but my perspective has altered considerably as now I am charged with how to cater for the serious student right through to the novice. The role has increased my engagement with senior students in the organisation not just a State level and a National level but more recently at an International level in New Zealand. There is so much to learn and absorb from such dedicated practitioners. It has been a personally challenging experience. Trying to follow what Sugano Shihan says and communicating and implementing at a State level is not an easy task in an Australian context. My admiration of senior students who have wrestled with this for 40+ plus years has increased

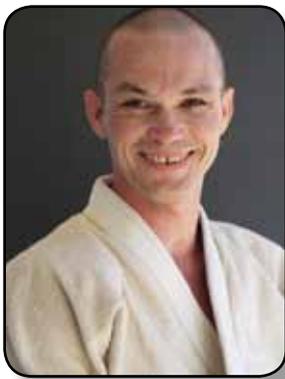
enormously.

The last 15 months has been extremely busy, in addition to normal training and running summer school, we have secured a 3 year lease for CHD, conducted major floor renovations at CHD, established the Aikido Victoria website, increased student participation at CHD events, conducted alternative events at other dojos ranging from beach training to mountain training, increased the participation/profile of senior yudansha, established a national school training savings plan, and new student booklet to just mention a few.

The coming year for Victoria offers even more opportunities as we seek to further leverage our increased internet/social networking presence, continue with implementation of the new children's syllabus, improve our financial position, grow our student base, strengthen the depth and quality of our training, and generally increase the social cohesiveness of Aikido Victoria.

I feel I have grown at personal level through this role; it has benefited my life outside of Aikido in ways I could not have imagined. None of this of course would be possible without the support of the Vic Assistant Area Reps, TTC members especially Robert Botterill Shihan and John Watson Sensei, Victorian students and last but not least of all my partner.





Interview with Chris Seto-Payne Queensland Area Representative

You did say that being asked to be Area Representative was unexpected, and that you didn't want to do it at first, but you did do it. What decided you to take the plunge and accept the position?

Graham Morris Sensei said he was going to step down from the position of Area Representative for personal reasons, and he asked me to be his replacement. I really didn't want to be Area Representative, but I did want to help Graham. He said he had spoken to Smibert Sensei and Sugano Sensei and that there would be other changes in the near future. He also explained that I was the logical choice for him, so I felt I had to accept. I felt it was an obligation I needed to fulfil.

And having done that, how did you find the first few months of being in that position?

It started simply with organizing some weekend courses for the year, but quite quickly it became more complex when issues at some dojos came up that had to be sorted out. I won't go into that but it certainly opened my eyes to the fact that being Area Representative was more than simply organizing weekend courses. I was responsible for gradings and related paperwork. I am learning as I go along and enjoying the challenges.

When Graham left there was void because he did so much and he was the focal point of the state. As an entity Queensland Aiki Kai ceased to exist and I have been busy establishing a new Queensland entity with the help of a number of good people, and hopefully the new representative organization which we are in the process of setting up will function in a way that the next Area Rep will be able to step into a state that is self regulating with only little tweaks needed here and there to continue its efficiency.



You mentioned that it was a good challenge. Has being Area Rep opened your eyes to wider aspects of studying Aikido?

Having to conduct weekend courses and intensives as well as gradings has been almost like a natural progression. It certainly does challenge me to have a higher understanding of the art. Sugano Shihan has given me the opportunity to be an Area representative and I appreciate the faith shown. I feel that being an Area Rep isn't the be all and end all of Aikido training, but it can open a sense of care for the art and the many different people studying Aikido.

*Interview and photos by the Editor
part of a series: Getting to know your Area Representatives.*

On Being an Uchideshi in New York

by Lauren Walsh

It was on October 2nd 2009 that I boarded the QANTAS aircraft to begin my 30 hour journey to New York City to start a new phase of my life as an uchi deshi at the New York Aikikai. Up until such point, I had been training for two years in Perth, Western Australia. People have often asked me why it is I started Aikido. The truth is that I never set out to learn Aikido specifically, rather that I had reached a point in my life where I understood that for my own wellbeing I needed to find another outlet in which I could dedicate my energies. Although an avid competitive equestrian at the time, a series of somewhat traumatic situations and happenings resulted in a succession of broken dreams. This was a very low point of my life, and I can only say in hindsight that Aikido came to me at such a time that I needed it to help back onto me feet again.

What started as merely an interest to learn a martial art soon led to me dedicating a huge part of myself to learning Aikido itself. One of the most intriguing aspects of studying Aikido is the very many levels on which it can be explored. Perhaps the most amazing thing for me was that the training mat became a wonderful and challenging place for self-exploration. For me, Aikido is a lonely journey so to speak and from the mere two years that I have been studying the art I have come to understand myself far more intimately than I could have previously expected. I believe Aikido in its purest and truest form, shapes one internally – or at least – encourages the embrace of a certain philosophy and understanding of life, the world and oneself within such. At least this is what Aikido is for me.

My desire to train as an uchi deshi was born from the love of aikido training and of my desire to see worldly places to which I have never ventured before. I also found the concept of dedicating one's life to martial way day in and day out to be very romantic indeed. But to be fair and honest, I suppose I was also searching for an escape from my reality. I guess you could say that my life wasn't unfolding how I had wished it to and every day felt wasted on unhappiness except for those two hours I would spend on the Aikido mat. I wanted a fresh start, and I wanted to do it in New York City as a full-time student of Aikido.

New York City itself proved to be an eye-opener indeed. I have never enjoyed suburbia or city living, though I appreciate New York for it's grandness in terms of cities. For all its grandeur, NYC is a place that does not pity the lonely, the underprivileged, or the heartbroken. Masses of concrete, insanely busy roads, buildings so numerous and tall that they blot out the very sun itself, not to mention the millions of people – each and every one of them so self-absorbed in their own personal daily mission. To stand in the crowded squares and traffic-light crossings within those masses are the most isolating and lonely experiences I have ever had.

I arrived at the dojo five weeks after an accident in Aikido left me with a grade 3 separation of the AC joint in my left shoulder. The timing of the injury was so typically unfortunate, but in my stubbornness and desire to just "get away" I did not postpone my trip. I remember the pain of my very first training here. It

was excruciating. As a matter of fact, the first two months here were unbelievably cruel on my body. The nature of training I found here to be far harder than Australia. NYA's strong martial emphasis took a huge amount of adjusting to. My ukemi was not up to standard either for that matter. Although I came here as an ikkyu, there were many students of lower rank whose ukemi was beautiful and of the highest standard. It was a very humbling experience. This motivated me to start focusing on my ukemi as a number one priority, for if I didn't I felt that I may not survive. The ukemi practiced here, although seen as rather "stylized", is very soft and I feel the benefits of practicing it everyday.

The New York Aikikai is certainly one of the most amazing dojos in the world. To have so many Shihan and senior students instructing here every day of the week is incredible. As a deshi, I am basically required to take every class and as such am exposed to a huge amount of variety and opportunity in training. There are usually five to six classes a day during the week. On weekends there are usually three classes Saturday and Sunday plus two children's classes which I assist with. During the week I must be up by 5.45am and ready for the first class of the day at 6.45am. All classes here run for an hour. The following classes take place at 12.15pm (then a 1.30pm class on Tuesdays and Thursdays). There follows 3 hours of consecutive training between 4.15pm and 7.45pm.

Of course part of the responsibility of an uchi deshi here is to help maintain and run the dojo itself. Each deshi is allocated a set of chores to do daily, as well as given a shift for minding the downstairs front desk during the day. My chores entail cleaning the ladies change room and bathroom and doing the laundry (the dojo has a gi-washing service for members). I must be downstairs at the front desk at 3pm, and sit there between evening classes. There are currently five deshi here, including myself plus a young guy from Brazil who will be training here full time for 2 months. Two of the deshi are from Poland, there is a young native New Yorker and another Australian from W.A (Andrew Bumbak). They are all nice guys, which makes a huge difference given I must live and train with these people all day every day.

It is interesting being a female deshi in this environment. As far as femininity is concerned, being able to cope with this training and play on a level field with a lot of young tough guys is rather empowering. Of course, it isn't easy, but finding the inner strength and will power to persist and endure is satisfying on many levels. In ways, being the only girl in a male-dominated environment can be tough, however I think it will be a very positive experience (and defying the skeptics is always worthwhile in itself!).

To be a deshi is understandably one the most challenging dedications a person could possibly commit to. Pain – both mental and physical - is ever present. When you get an injury it literally loves throughout your body, gradually from one place to another. Wear and tear takes its toll on such susceptible places as knees, wrists and elbows. Sprains to feet and ankles, necks and hamstrings are all common. Thank goodness for the ice pack...

The boys try to supplement themselves with protein shakes; however I personally found them to be of little benefit myself. Deshis are known for their insatiable appetite, and to prove that I probably eat about twice the amount I would in a 'normal' living situation. It's easy to loose weight here, but if you eat properly the training you receive here ensures fine muscle development. Warming up and cooling down properly is vital in looking after yourself and maintaining flexibility.

Having the opportunity to train beneath the amazing likes of Sugano Sensei and Yamada Sensei is an invaluable opportunity. Although they travel a lot, there classes are always inspirational and a constant reminder of what it is worth striving for in my Aikido pursuits. Even after all their years of training, they are still studying and trying to perfect their Aikido. It serves to remind me that there is in fact no "end of the road", just an ever-continuing journey...

I will be here training and living the life of an Aikido deshi for the next 6 months, should all go well. I am extremely appreciative of the experience, and am enjoying the many lessons and challenges life here is laying across my path. Although I look forward to returning to Australia perhaps a little harder and a little more polished, and grow excited contemplating the countless opportunities the world of Aikido and its community have to offer...

Namaste.



Passing of an Australian Aikido Pioneer Arthur Moorshead OAM, 8th Dan Judo Shihan

Countless people over the years first met the martial arts through the efforts and inspiration of the late Arthur Moorshead Shihan Judo 8th dan OAM.

I started judo as a junior in his original Caulfield Judo Club - a scout hall - around 1962. He then introduced me to Aikido in 1964 and later recommended I study with Sugano Shihan when he arrived in 1965, so I've never forgotten where the direction of my adult life began - in Moorshead Sensei's dojo and classes.

A major figure in Australian and World Judo Moorshead Shihan was also key pioneer of Australian Aikido. His own teacher had been the famous Kenshiro Abbe Shihan (a Judo and Aikido pioneer in England) so that, when Arthur Moorshead came here as a young man, around 1960, his dan rankings in a number of arts including Aikido made him one of the highest qualified teachers of martial art in Australia..

Moorshead Shihan's were probably the first formal Aikido classes in Australia. The dojo that he built around 1963 became and has remained one of the most important centres in the country - where Aikido has been taught with Judo and other arts for nearly 50 years. He also started the first Australian Aikido Association (I still have my membership card no. 0001) with students including Bob Hill Sensei, David Brown Sensei, Robert Botterill Sensei, Peter Yost Sensei, John Van Roessell Sensei and others. Numbers of those early students went on to lives that bridged Japan and the west - and David Brown Sensei is a good example because the seeds for his career as an internationally renowned

Shakuhachi maker were probably sown the day that he first saw Moorshead Shihan demonstrating Aikido in Tasmania in the mid 60's. David honoured the debt of us all by beautifully playing a 700 year old shakuhachi composition at Moorshead Shihan's recent funeral.

When Sugano Shihan arrived in Sydney, Moorshead Shihan contacted him. This is part of the early history of Australian Aikido and so Bob Hill and I first met Sugano Sensei in Moorshead Shihan's home. Two of the first three Australian shihans had their first lessons with Moorshead Shihan and of course, many of his early students went on to become Sugano Shihan's senior students and play an important role in assisting Sugano Sensei to establish the Australian Aikikai. Sugano Shihan recently acknowledged Moorshead Shihan's contribution and had invited Moorshead Shihan to attend the recent Summer School dinner but, sadly, illness made it impossible for Arthur to be there. Bob Hill, who kept up his contact with Moorshead Shihan whenever he visited Australia, has reminded me of how much our first teacher contributed to our later lives through our introduction to Aikido and to Sugano Sensei. His perspective: "I owe that man so much..."

Moorshead Shihan's great personal knowledge reflected a full lifetime of study. He maintained the Journey right to the end and kept learning and sharing. While his contribution to Judo as a teacher, leader, Olympic coach and inspiration to many great champions was well documented and earned him the OAM, his pivotal contribution to Aikido was less well known.

Life in a Suburban Dojo

by Adrienne Cleaver



I started my aikido life in the Brunswick dojo in metropolitan Melbourne. After completing the beginner's course I discovered that I liked aikido and I continued to train as often as I could. The dojo began to be a place where I would train hard with people that I began to know as friends, working out the techniques and helping each other improve. We would share a cup of tea and biscuit (or two) after each class, as well as sharing lunch on a Saturday afternoon. And if we felt we hadn't had enough training, we would travel en masse to participate in an afternoon training session at Clifton Hill dojo.

When I started to train regularly at Clifton Hill the aikido didn't change (it was always challenging!) but the dojo environment certainly did. At first it was daunting as I didn't really know anyone and there were a lot more people on the mat than I was accustomed to. There were no comfort zones to rely upon and the only familiar aspect was the training. Social events weren't group related or as regular as what I had become accustomed to. Instead they seemed to be initiated by a few people after an invigorating session, particularly when the weather was warm. Other dojos that I trained in had a different flavour and different rituals to watch out for, and to help out if required – eg. The laying of the mats for each class, cleaning the dojo, and a few dojos enjoyed a regular cup of tea after class.

From a student's point of view, aikido life is fairly simple. Turning up to class and training is probably the hardest thing they have to do; there are always classes to attend and confusing techniques to work out and perfect. There is everything that we could possibly need in the dojo and up until last year, the thought never entered my mind of how much work actually goes into the running of a dojo. That is, until I was asked to be a part of the committee for the Clifton Hill Dojo.

From the outside what looked like a simple operation soon turned into a humongous pile of tasks. Regular maintenance, tea and biscuits supplies, first aid supplies, new keys for all the instructors, renovating part of the floor, initiating and maintaining a regular cleaning roster, advertising, organising and updating an Aikido Victoria information noticeboard for students, photocopying and answering telephone and email queries are just some of the tasks that we have tackled so far centred around the daily training schedule and weekend events of special days of training.

Looking back over the past year, how we managed was to constantly plan ahead so that the allocated work was shared and completed a little bit at a time. The tasks were never allowed to pile up and if we were in doubt, we'd always ask for help when we had no idea what to do. There's a good chance that someone senior has the answer to the task at hand, and is more than willing to share their experience and expertise.

Despite the fact that there have been a few icky moments, the challenges and the benefits to the dojo we have implemented as a committee, far outweigh any of the less savoury aspects. I find it exciting to see Clifton Hill Dojo hosting new classes for ukemi training, beginner's courses as well as children's classes. This has allowed a younger generation of yudansha an opportunity to experience teaching on a semi regular basis. Personally, I am glad to have the opportunity of helping out in the dojo, and look forward to helping the next person who takes up this role.

As well as my committee role, I've recently been asked to help out at another (small) suburban dojo. The dojo doesn't have as many of the tasks to deal with as with Clifton Hill Dojo, but the essential aspects of developing and strengthening a community that trains together remains. I am constantly reflecting upon my aikido beginnings and how and what I've been taught over the years. At the moment, it seems like I've come full circle, getting to know a new community of people, but this time I'm working hard at teaching them what I've learnt so far. The new challenge is how to communicate these experiences to this new generation.

Overall, my experience at being a committee member has enriched my understanding of facets of the aikido community at large, whilst teaching has given me new insights and furthered my understanding of aikido. It is fascinating to be a part of the community building process at both dojos. But above all, I'm thankful that these roles have allowed me an opportunity to make a contribution to the aikido community and the people who have inspired, guided, encouraged and who still offer their ongoing support.

Photos supplied by Linda Godfrey



Aikido Victoria Mountain Training by Michael Nagle



Since the Winter School moved from Camp Yarramundi in western Sydney several years ago, many students have not had the opportunity to take part in the mountain training that was held at Mount Banks in the Blue Mountains. Addressing this issue, Aikido Victoria organised mountain training over the 2010 Easter weekend at the Mount Hotham ski resort in the Victorian Alps.

The training was led by Robert Botterill Shihan, John Watson Sensei and Ray Oldman Sensei, based on their remembrance of this type of training with Sugano Shihan over many years. Twenty four trainees attended with about one-third kyu grades and one person from interstate. Family members and partners also came along, with most people living together at a very comfortable ski lodge.

One aim of the weekend was to foster camaraderie among the students. Consequently, the training schedule was not overloaded and there was adequate time to engage in social and outdoor activities. The weekend began with a relaxed drive from Melbourne on Good Friday with diversions to wineries and various gourmet food outlets.

We were fortunate to experience exceptionally good conditions over the whole weekend, given the fickle nature of mountain weather. Each session took place at a different location, selected to provide a variety of outstanding views and training conditions. The things underfoot included rocks, tussock grass and various small shrubs.

The training began on Saturday morning with a short drive and walk to the summit of Mt Hotham at 1861 metres. Led by Botterill Shihan, the group began our traditional

sunrise meditation about one hour before dawn and we were fortunate to experience a spectacular sunrise through a low bank of cloud. It was followed by misogi and weapons training.

A number of sessions followed over Saturday, Sunday and the Monday morning with the instructors, consisting of weapons work and training without throwing. Following training on Easter Sunday morning, we had a hunt for 150 Easter eggs secreted around the lodge, much to the delight of our youngest as well as many of the older people attending. Of particular note was the sunset training on Sunday afternoon on a mountain ridge that attracted the attention of a number of bemused bushwalkers. The sunset training was followed by an impromptu unlit meditation in the lodge

To aid accessibility for everyone, the weekend was organised at a modest cost which included accommodation, food and drinks. The weekend's training covered all expenses and resulted in a small excess of funds for the state's association. Given the extremely positive feedback from the participants, the mountain training will continue at about three-year intervals so that it is kept as something special.

Thanks go to the Instructors, Linda Godfrey Sensei for organising the event and the accommodation, David Bell and Beverley Webster for organising the food and refreshments, and Richard Nicholas for acting as the registrar. Everyone helped with the cooking and cleaning during the weekend.



History of Aikido In Australia

Part One - Queensland

by John Litchen

Everyone joining an organization such as Aiki Kai Australia and the Aikido Foundation through one of its affiliates in the states and territories around Australia should know how this organization as well as the various state and territory groups came into being. A series of articles delineating the history of Aikido in the various states and territories will be presented here over the next several issues for new members, while at the same time reminding older members of how their particular state or territory organization came to be established.

To begin the history series I am going to write about Queensland.

You may ask: Why Queensland first? The simple answer is that after moving up from Victoria I have lived here for the past 15 years and have practiced Aikido with Graham Morris 6th Dan Shidojin as my principal instructor for almost all of that time. It is of course logical to begin with something familiar before moving on and relying upon others to contribute material on the other states and territories.



The history of Aikido in Queensland necessitates writing about Graham Morris Sensei because quite simply without him there would be no Aikido as we know it in Queensland.

Morris Sensei was born on the 19th of September 1954 in Liverpool, England. When he was 15 he spent a year studying Goju Ryu Karate. His instructor often spoke highly about Aikido and this piqued Graham's curiosity so he went along to observe an Aikido class. He was most impressed with the breathing exercises at the beginning of the class and thought that such exercises may help with his asthma, so he decided to take up Aikido. This was in August 1971 and he was 16 years of age.

It was difficult at first because after a few rolls he would be gasping for breath, but he persisted, defying everyone's belief that he would drop dead on the mats. Over time the harder he tried the better became his breathing and general health. A change of diet also assisted in this. His first teacher in Liverpool was Jean Hill Sensei 3rd Dan, an instructor who was at that time the most senior female teacher in Europe and who was highly regarded by Chiba Sensei.

Graham recalls that training under Chiba Sensei was very disciplined. "He was a hard taskmaster and always expected 100% and more from all his students, especially the younger ones. People say the training was brutal but I didn't find that. It was however very, very hard, and it certainly built character both mentally and physically. A lot of students weren't able to stay because of the strict discipline."

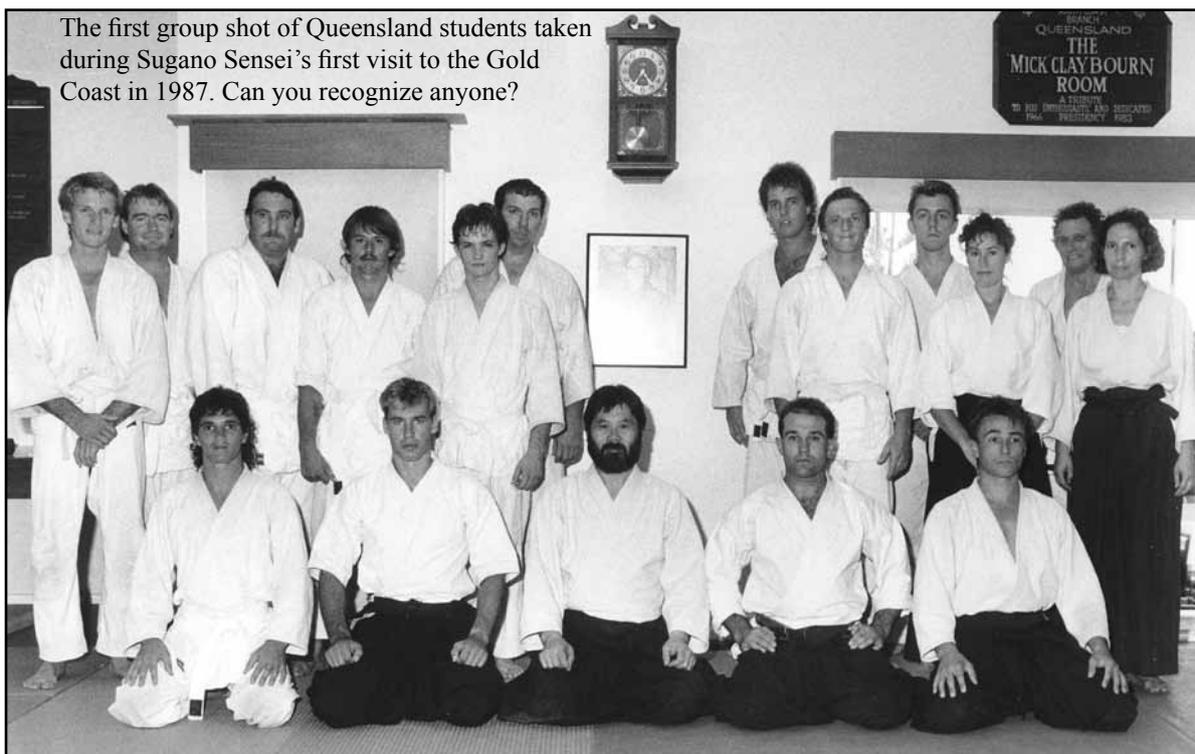
Graham worked hard at his training and progressed to the point where he at the age of 21 became the youngest ever 2nd Dan in Europe, at which time he was also awarded a Fukushido certificate for teaching. In 1978 he went to the Isle of Man, and with Alan Ruddock an older Dan grade who had actually trained with O-Sensei in the 1960's, they formed together the Isle of Man Aiki Kai. Alan was soft and Graham was hard, and together they made an ideal combination.

Being in Europe Graham was able to travel to various countries at the drop of a hat to attend seminars taken by his own senior instructor Chiba Sensei, as well as many others like Tamura Sensei, Saito Sensei, Yamada Sensei, Kanai Sensei, Kanetsuka Sensei and the Late Doshu Kisshomaru, all of whom left lasting impressions on Graham and his Aikido. But the strongest influence was his training with Chiba Sensei, and it was this hardness and sense of strict discipline that he brought with him when he migrated to Brisbane Australia.

In no time he decided to settle on the Gold Coast, and naturally wanting to continue with his Aikido practice he went looking for a dojo, only to find there was no Aikido in Queensland, no dojo, and no place to practice.

Graham clearly remembers seeing a magazine when he was kyu grade in England that showed a picture of Sugano Shihan on the cover and inside there was a story about how he went to Australia to teach Aikido. Graham had forgotten about this article, but now being in Australia he remembered it. He contacted the Aiki Kai headquarters in Australia and immediately became a member. He asked for permission to open a dojo on the Gold Coast and was told that Sugano Shihan would have to authorize it, and that he would be in Australia for a national summer school in January which wasn't too far off.

Graham was nervous about meeting Sugano Shihan and worried perhaps that he wouldn't allow him, a comparative stranger, to open a dojo in Queensland. A number of senior students were surprised by Graham's request. But as Graham said, "I had no choice if I wanted to continue training. There were no Aikido dojos in Queensland."





Sugano Sensei instructing Graham Morris with weapons in 1987.

He needn't have worried. He introduced himself to Sugano Shihan and explained that he had been one of Chiba Sensei's students in England and that he had established the Isle of Man dojo with Alan Ruddock. He explained that he wanted to fit in and would adapt his practice to fit in with whatever Sugano Shihan wanted. When Sensei told him it was time to start a dojo in Queensland Graham was ecstatic. He was supported all the way by Sugano Shihan, who appointed him as Area Representative for Queensland which was later confirmed as an official position in 1985.

As soon as he returned to the Gold Coast he set about finding a suitable place to begin training. Initially classes were conducted at the Academy of Martial Arts in peerless Avenue, Broadbeach, but after problems with the management it was decided that the club which was now Queensland Aiki Kai would have to find a new location. Some classes were conducted in Nerang, but Mermaid Beach Community Centre hall became the dojo where classes were held Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday morning. Straw Tatami were bought which belonged to Queensland Aiki Kai. The evening classes were from 6pm 'till 8pm and on Saturdays from 8am 'till 9-30am.

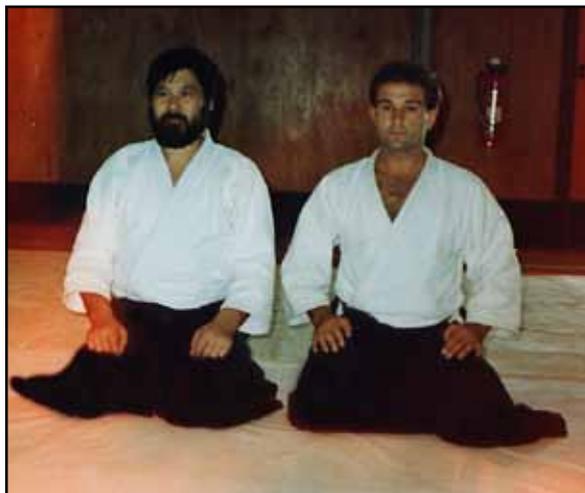
There was a short period when Graham had to return to England but once he came back things took off rapidly. The students had kept the classes running while he was away, and everyone was enthusiastic about his return. The club was growing and there was a continuous search for a newer and larger place where a proper dojo could be located. This seems to be a perennial problem with Aikido dojos in general, as rented spaces often become inadequate, and there is a continuous search for newer and better premises. Warwick is one of the few exceptions within Aiki Kai Australia because they actually have ownership of the dojo premises providing they maintain it as a martial arts group, club, or association. (*I have written about Warwick dojo in a previous newsletter — see issue for Spring/Summer 2000/2001.*)

In 1987 Sugano Shihan visited the Gold Coast for the first time and conducted a number of classes which inspired every student at that time to continue and train hard

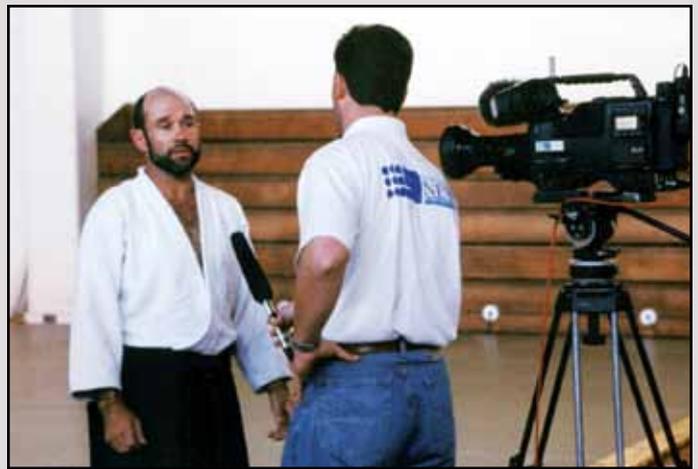
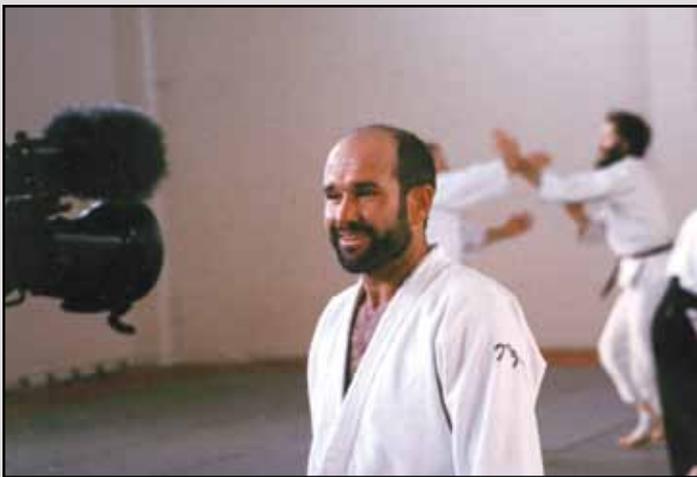
Apart from teaching Aikido Graham also presented courses for Security groups where he presented simple and practical non confrontational Aikido techniques as a means of conflict resolution. He was also employed by



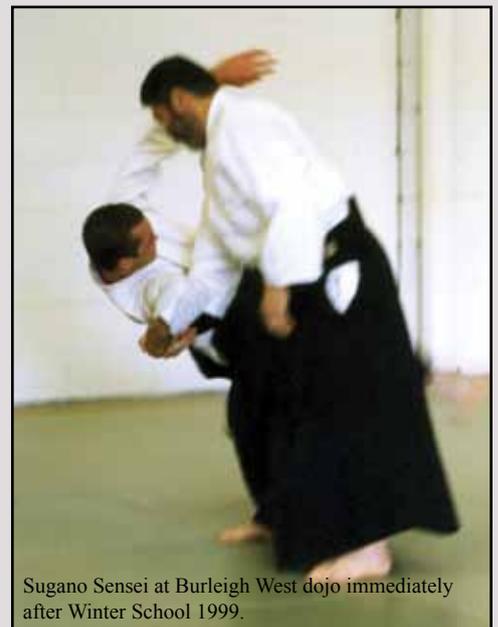
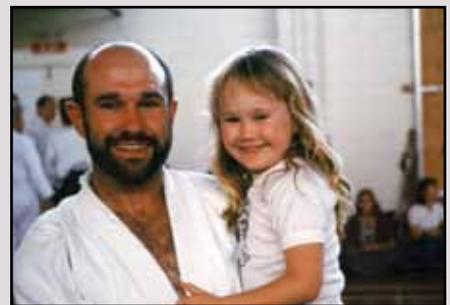
suwariwaza kokyuhō...1987



continued on page 22



Queensland's 1st Winter School in 1996, with Graham Morris Sensei being interviewed by 9 Gold Coast News (above).
Left: Sugano Shihan, and Graham Morris...



Sugano Sensei at Burleigh West dojo immediately after Winter School 1999.



The very first Queensland Winter school group. July 1996.

the Gold Coast Skill Centre from time to time as a specialist self defence consultant. He was and still is highly respected amongst the Police and Security organizations on the Gold Coast.

Finally in the early 90's a move that everyone thought would be permanent gave Queensland Aiki Kai Inc a permanent dojo. It was located in Burleigh West just off Reedy Creek Road. It became a dynamic centre for Aikido study in Queensland and very quickly expanded in mat area with new judo mats to replace the old straw tatami. Student numbers grew rapidly now that they had the opportunity to have classes every day. Graham called it the Queensland Aikido Centre which at the time was appropriate because there was no other centre in Queensland where Aikido could be studied.

Sugano Shihan also taught some special classes at the Burleigh West dojo after Queensland's first and second winter schools in 1996 and 1999, which again were an inspiration to the new as well as the students still with Graham after the move from Mermaid Beach.

Some of these students who started early with Graham ended up moving to Brisbane. Chris Seto Payne was one of those who moved to Brisbane and he established a dojo at the YMCA which operated approximately for 4 years before classes were moved to a permanent location in Commercial Road, Newstead. They have a lovely dojo on the top floor of a small warehouse building that although it has a low ceiling making it awkward sometimes for weapons training, is quite cheerful and airy and bright. Students from Brisbane often came down to the Gold Coast on Sunday mornings when Graham conducted a vigorous class that often involved weapons training as well as unarmed training.

The year after I moved to Queensland was the first year that Queensland hosted the national winter school on behalf of Sugano Shihan. It was a very successful school and since then three others have been held and we are due now for another coming up in July 2010.

A dojo also opened in the early 90's in Warwick, where initially special permission was granted for non-dan grades to teach. To assist, Dan grades were sent from time to time from both the Gold Coast and Brisbane to help with the teaching in the dojo. About this time Queensland Aiki-Kai Inc changed its name



to Aikido Queensland Aiki Kai Inc. This was the umbrella organization which on behalf of the two other Queensland dojos maintained contact with Aiki Kai Australia coordinating technical teaching courses and special training days where all the dojo members got together to practice and study.

Things were rattling along with many TTC courses held in Burleigh West, and special training days which alternated between Burleigh and Brisbane with the occasional foray out to Warwick. Many students moved up the ranks to become Dan grades and later, teachers. Several people arrived in Queensland from Melbourne and eventually Darren Love and Ray ming Ong established a new dojo at Samford on the northern side of Brisbane. An offshoot of Warwick has been established at Toowoomba, and several people from Warwick also moved further north close to Mackay where they continue to practice. Brisbane Dojo has also now established some smaller groups in University campuses in Brisbane.

The crunch came when the owners of the building we used at Burleigh West decided to demolish it to redevelop the site. And this was only a six months or so after two disastrous floods that ruined the mats and necessitated a wooden floor be built high enough to protect the mat area from future floods. (See also A



At the opening of the Brisbane dojo at 95 Commercial Road, Newstead. Chris Seto -Payne is Uke.

Constant Effort to keep Aikido afloat in the third 40th anniversary issue.)

The dojo was evolving into a place that had a good character, with beautifully painted portraits of the 2nd Doshu and the present Doshu adorning the side wall, (*very kindly painted and donated by student Frank Firley*) with a revamped and much improved Kamiza exhibiting a large portrait of O-Sensei, with the students names engraved on wooden pegs suspended from a rail, with posters of past National schools along another side wall, there was a feeling of permanence as well as a bright cheerfulness. The news that the building was to be demolished stunned everybody. They gave us 8 months notice and we all thought there would be plenty of time after going to Melbourne for a summer school to find somewhere new, but on returning we were told we had only a month to quit before the demolition took place. The owners had brought it forward.

With costs extraordinarily high for even a small place a feeling of despondence set in. We couldn't find a place that was suitable. Graham was involved in a new job that took a lot of his time so he decided he had no option but to pass on the reins to someone younger. He is at the moment taking some time off. One of his original students, Chris Seto Payne, who established the Brisbane dojo was given the responsibility of being Area Representative for Queensland and the centre of activities has moved to Brisbane.

Eventually the Gold Coast group found a new location, once again back in a community centre, this time in Mudgeeraba, and we hold classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights from 7pm as well as on Saturday from 8am to 10am.

This is a newly established group registered as Aikido Gold Coast Aiki Kai Inc. An umbrella group is being formed in Brisbane to represent Aikido in Queensland and they will be registered as Queensland Aiki Kai Inc. Most of the former members of the Gold Coast have left or moved and the Gold Coast now has a small core group of new young and very enthusiastic students.

On the Gold Coast, in essence we have come full circle, back to a similar situation to what occurred when Graham first came to Queensland almost 30 years ago.

Sugano Shihan and Graham Morris, 1999, Hanmi handachi sankyo ura from ushiro riokata



Brisbane on the other hand is forging ahead and numbers in Queensland are on the rise again. From this point on the future looks good.

Among the many wonderful things that Graham did during his time as Area Representative was to train a number of extraordinary younger people, although some of them have since moved away from aikido. One of the most outstanding was Chris Seto-Payne. On Graham's departure, Sugano Sensei selected Chris to take his place as Area Representative. Chris was already well-known to Aikido people around Australia for the level of his training and of course for his outgoing personality. Although Graham's absence from Queensland dojos is keenly felt, under Chris' leadership and with the help of the many instructors, the state is once again moving ahead strongly. Chris is one of a generation of younger appointees by Sugano Sensei Australia-wide, and reflects the generational evolution of our organisation. This year Chris will be one of four Australian Aikido students selected to participate in the International Aikido Federation's demonstration of Aikido in Beijing - and that is on top of the work associated with the holding of the Queensland Winter School on the Gold Coast. In his own way, this is inspirational, just as Graham in his way was inspirational. *(Editor: See interview with Chris on page 13.)*



The last special training day at the Burleigh West dojo was exemplified by dynamic techniques performed by Graham Morris Sensei and Chris Seto Payne as Uke which left everyone stunned, and inspired even though most of them couldn't do what was

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Sugano Shihan at Winter School in
Queensland July 2007