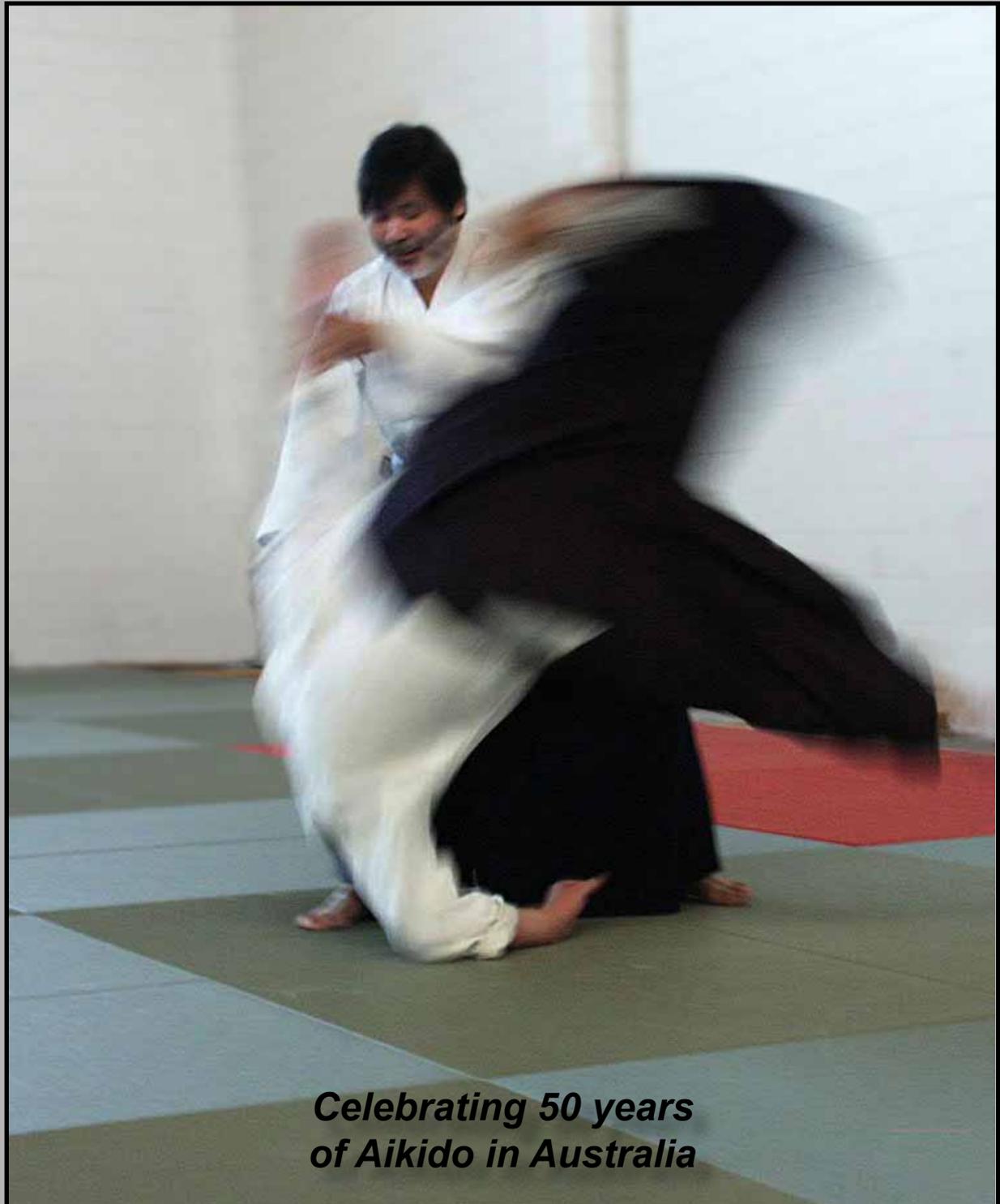


Aikido in Australia

Aiki Kai Australia National Newsletter

Volume 4 Number 2



*Celebrating 50 years
of Aikido in Australia*



Celebrating 50 years of Aikido in Australia



I have wanted to contribute to the Aikido in Australia magazine for a while now, and finally decided to sit down and write this article. I enjoy reading this magazine to find out what's happening in Australia, and I remember Sensei liked reading the magazine – He brought a copy to the New York dojo once and was reading it there. On this occasion there was a photo of us together on the cover, and he pointed to it and said “Good ukemi.” I think I laughed and said thank you, but inside my emotions were roaring. He was that kind of a teacher, to receive a compliment from him was special. I think that's the only one.

I have wondered what to write about for a while now, to talk about Leederville Dojo and how that is going, or about Aikido and what it's about. So now that I'm finally doing it, I will just write about what's going on.

It's awesome to see Jikou on the cover with his father



Luke Derham on
The Process of Learning...



in this year's edition I have just read – They are so much alike, and it's wonderful to see them together.

One of the things that I love about Aiki-kai Australia is the family nature of the organization. Attending the national schools is always a joy, to be able to see old friends again and make new ones, and to participate in energetic training. That's really what everything evolves from – the training. Your own development, your ideas about Aikido and your experience of Aikido. Sensei used to say there are things in Aikido which you can have many thoughts about, but his main focus was training. It's the same message that comes down from the TTC, and from Tony sensei. When Tony was over here last, he said you have to work hard. Looking where he is now in his own training, and his level of understanding, you think that's where you want to be, what you want to be capable of.

There are so many things to philosophize or study in Aikido, for beginners perhaps a good place to start is what's important to you. And that changes over time, as you develop in your training, as you learn. One of the things that was important to Sensei was the teacher student relationship. He said it so many times, and developed so much of his teaching format around this concept it demanded careful study. I think it's a more advanced concept, and probably not something a beginner will grasp immediately, but it is good to be mindful of. As long as you are mindful of these things, you will be learning along the way, even if you don't immediately realize that you are.

Sensei said that you can't see yourself learning. It's a process

– sometimes you feel that you finally do understand something, but behind that experience is a long line of unconscious experiences that got you to that stage. And I think this reiterates the importance of training.

Once when I had started Aikido I asked him what was Ki about and how I could improve my Ki. He said train. When I asked the second time, he said it 3 times. Train, train, train. That always stuck with me. It was the real answer behind all the questions. The answer is in the training.

So how to train more? You just have to do it. Go when you want to; go when you don't want to. Train when it's raining, when it's 40 degrees. Train when it's 50 degrees but drink lots of water. Train in the mornings by yourself if there is no class, or the evenings when there is. Enjoy your training. The experiences you have on the mat, under the stars, the people you train with, the lessons the teacher gives to you. Work hard. And study carefully.





**A Report from St Petersburg
by Jikou Sugano 5th Dan**

It's 37 degrees Celsius a pall of bushfire smoke colours Sydney's sunset a rich orange as I board flight CZ302 for Russia. 32 hours later I arrive tired and jet lagged, late autumn in St Petersburg brings wind and sleet, a bracing antidote.

In the hotel foyer I run into Tony (Smibert) and company after a chat it's 2 am before I get to bed.

Sunday we get up early for a 7:00 am breakfast, its dark outside and will be till about 8 am. Our 7:30 bus for morning practice is running late, eventually it shows up and we crunch across pellets of hail, past frozen puddles to board.

We arrive at the venue and there is a traffic jam in the foyer, no one seems to know what's going on, where to go. Having travelled and been inactive for so long I, like many others, am itching to begin training.

The class begins, it's a relief to be moving and practicing at last. It's also chance to meet other students for the first time, shaking hands or holding wrists often with a zap of static electricity generated by the synthetic mats.

The morning class wraps up and it's off to another venue, we're trying to follow an ambitious schedule. The coach takes 40 minutes or more to weave through the street of St Petersburg past monuments, grand buildings and over canals.

The next venue is full with 300 plus students waiting in anticipation for classes by Ulf Evenås Shihan, Christian



Representing Aiki Kai Australia
Jikou Sugano Sensei at the World Combat Games 2013 ...*photo by Viktor Kazarin.*

Below: as Uke with Miyamoto Shihan
The photos with Miyamoto Sensei were taken by Gozca Smierzchalska and we thank both photographers for allowing us to use them here.



Tissier Shihan, Miyamoto Shihan and Waka Sensei. We train cheek by jowl each technique with a new partner and several hours pass quickly.

Delays earlier in the day leave no time for afternoon preparation so it's a meandering trip through peak hour traffic back to the hotel. We are tired and hungry.

Food at the hotel was consistent if nothing else, meat was generally dry and tough while vegetables were on the over-done side if not still frozen. But this took nothing away from the friendly atmosphere.

Time for demonstrations, Saint-Petersburg Sports and Concert Complex (SKK Peterburgsky) is a 20,000 seat venue. To access our space we walked past the kendo area on one side and through the fencing area being set up with runways, lighting rigs and computers.

Media coverage for the event was extensive with multi camera coverage including a boom mounted camera, super slow motion replays and large screen arrays. There was venue commentary in English and Russian in addition to an international TV and web commentary by Tony Smibert Shihan and host Corey.

While the event was called the World Combat Games, even to the casual observer Aikido was clearly defined as not having competition. The Russian Aikido participants were obviously well prepared to demonstrate as described in the programme, this gave great counterpoint to Miyamoto Shihan's demonstration, who showed an Embukai in the moment, spontaneous and living.

On the final evening I was given a unique opportunity to select 4 pairs of students for a 6 minute demonstration. Tristan Derham as my uke the other students came from Finland, Hong Kong, Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and Russia. We had not met before coming to St Petersburg yet there was an ease, a common ground between us that made preparation straight forward and the demonstration cohesive.

It was a great experience to be in a city like St Petersburg, to me many new people, to catch up with friends and to share an enthusiasm for Aikido. It was also a chance to reflect upon what and how we practice Aikido and where that might take us in the future.

World Combat Games a report from Tristan Derham



We arrived at the venue for the 2013 World Combat Games, St Petersburg in the darkness on Monday morning, feet crunching through frozen puddles and our breath smoking in the cold air. The venue was enormous, like some oversized Roman amphitheatre from the outside and a high-tech indoor sports stadium on the inside. We started the day with training: A hundred people from forty countries, keen and fit and smiling.

Once the instructions on the demonstration format had been deciphered and all team members gathered, waiting nervously at the side of the mat; once we'd been called up and walked past the officials and commentators; then we stepped into the brightly lit mat, surrounded by cameras and carefully bowed together. I felt strong gratitude to my parents, watching from the stalls, as I stepped up in the hakama and obi that my father gave me after my shodan grading. The announcer was rather disconcertingly calling out our names, ages, countries along with a few choice facts from our Aikido curricula vitae: 'Tristan Derham has been training since he was a child as his father teaches Aikido in Australia' comes over the PA while I am trying to remember which attack I am supposed to do and Julie is coming towards me with a determined look in her eye.

The format of the demonstrations meant that attacks, the types of techniques and the tempo were all pre-ordained. Many of the groups responded positively to this, especially the Russian team, who had been practising their choreography for more than six months. Some groups looked very comfortable and others found it stressful, as they were demonstrating with colleagues from different dojos or organisations within their own countries. Some had little chance to train together prior to the event.

A highlight was watching Gabriel Horsch and Jerald Tai who had not laid eyes on one another until the day before the event. They were the only attendees from Switzerland and Hong Kong, respectively, and were asked to demonstrate together three or four times. Gabriel and Jerald worked through their preparations and demonstrations with grace and style and looked as though they had shared training for years. They were high on our list to join our final demonstration.

The commentators, including Tony Smibert Shihan went to lengths to emphasise that what the audience was seeing was not combat and I hope that the message came across clearly. The inclusion of Aikido in the so-called 'Combat Games' alongside sports such as kickboxing and fencing was not an idea that sat well with everyone, myself included. In addition, my understanding of an embu is that one should show their true spirit, their true self. This is difficult to reconcile with pre-ordained movements and formats. Nonetheless, something special was happening on the mat. There was focus, intensity and good technique and often the movement was reminiscent of teaching in a modern class – clear, repeated and consistent.

A Canadian television crew had been engaged to film the entire Combat games and the camera work was very professional. There were four or five cameras on the action at all times. These seemed to be selected for the live stream on the fly by an unseen editor in the media room. One of cam-

eras was on a long boom which moved around the action. Switching between this and the other cameras (near and far, side and front) gave a broadness and clarity to the footage. For example, there were sometimes ten people on the mat all moving at once and the wide shot gave perspective whilst the close ups in slow motion lent intimacy. In comparison to the footage of other events that I saw (eg. kendo, muay thai, karate), the cinematography was much more beautiful.

I have been assisting Robert Castiglione shoot the Aikido Foundation's documentary for much of this year and I'm well aware of the difficulty in capturing Aikido movement on film. The timing, scale and direction of any movement depend on individual circumstances and this unpredictability can make filming very hard. In filming for the documentary we found it necessary to reduce the speed and spontaneity to a minimum so as to more clearly show the movement on film. This same approach to the Combat Games demonstrations lent grace to the live footage. I hope that we will see more of this quality of Aikido film in the future.

Before our own demonstrations we could see Brazilian and German judo teams in the waiting area before a set of judo matches. Big boys! One hulk must have been 6'6" and 120 kg. One of the Germans was listening to headphones, the other judoka quietly waiting, shifting, jostling each other but most definitely not looking at the other team barely three metres away. They were focussed on the match they'd been training toward and unwilling to compromise that focus.

It struck me that there was a strong difference in the attitude of the Aikidoka: We were privileged to have classes taught by Ulf Evanäs, Miyamoto Tsuzuro, Peter Goldsbury, Wilko Vriesman, Christian Tissier and Waka Senseis as well as our own Tony Smibert Sensei during our preparation for the demonstrations. At these classes, we were also focussed but at the same time connected, open-heartedly training together. Everyone's ukemi was soft, sincere; we met each other's eyes. We were here for a common purpose, to demonstrate Aikido movement, and we were working in concert to make it happen. What a wonderful opportunity for all of us. I sincerely hope that many of the young people we met visit Australia in the years to come so that we can share more Aikido training with that same sense of purpose and sharing.



Training Down Under
by Simon Selby
a visitor from Trowbridge Dojo, UK.



“Sensei, what do you think the chances would be of getting some training in when I’m in Australia?” This was a question which was to result in me meeting a whole new group of friends I never knew I had on the other side of the world.

My name is Simon Selby and like many people I came to Aikido after trying various other martial arts and finding them wanting in various ways; some were too aggressive, required gymnastic flexibility, or simply revolved around brute force and ignorance. When I first entered Sensei Bob Hill’s aikido class in Trowbridge, UK I knew I’d finally found something different and special.

I’m sure many Australian Aikikai aikidoka will know and fondly remember Bob as for years he lived and trained in and around Sydney, and I believe Melbourne, learning directly from Sugano Sensei. As such I know everyone who has met him will understand when I say that his technical ability and depth of knowledge ‘blew me away’. After all, here was a lightly built man who could sit me on my backside, stand me up on tiptoe and basically tie me up in a knot with seemingly no effort and with an enthusiasm that positively glowed. I should add here that having spent over 26 years in the police, three of which was on the task force (riot unit) I am no pushover. As a result this highly intelligent art which Bob had imported, (along with his good self) had me immediately hooked.

So, I commenced training and while still a relative novice I have loved every minute since, which is why when Hanan Sensei and Alfred Sensei came to Trowbridge on a social visit to see their old friend Bob I broached the possibility of training on my forthcoming trip to Australia. They all said that I would be made to feel most welcome and Bob gave me the details of another of his friends ‘down under’, Andrew Dziedzic, the National Co-ordinator.

Various Emails were exchanged and the day came when I found myself somewhat jetlagged and in Sydney. Various touristy type activities followed in what I have to say is a huge and beautiful country before I turned up rather nervously on the doorstep of Sutherland Dojo. I was greeted by Mathew Lo and the students and immediately felt welcome. What really made me feel at home was Sensei Lo’s warm up, as it was virtually identical to Bob’s and presumably demonstrates how Sugano Sensei’s teaching is still prominently influencing training internationally. Similarly, perhaps this can be traced back through Sugano even to O’Sensei himself?

The style was technically superb, again mirroring Bob’s and I learned various new pointers, like not allowing the Jo to go behind me, tucking my head in while rolling and adopting a better angle when doing Kokyu techniques. The evening was over far too quickly and a young lady from the class was even kind enough to drop my back at the rail station so I didn’t get lost, again! (that’s another story).



Alfred and Alfredo at The Alfred
an Aikido demonstration
see story next two pages

A few days later I disembarked from the train in Olympic Park, which was again somewhat larger than anticipated. Heading in the general direction of where I thought the Dojo was I eventually spotting someone with a weapons bag in the distance. Setting off in hot pursuit I found the right place and met Andrew Dziedzic. Again I rapidly found that Aikido is genuinely one huge family and I hit the mats full of determination to learn from my new buddies. Roger Savage took the class and following the familiar warm up I tried to represent my dojo and teacher to the best of my abilities. I've always said that what I lack in skill I make up for in enthusiasm and I had a brilliant time. Andrew repeatedly pointed out some openings in one of my techniques and then demonstrated it, which caught me completely off guard and resulted in me sitting on the mat laughing before insisting on a detailed debrief on how he'd done it.

Another notable moment was when an unassuming student came over and very patiently spent time practising Nikkyo with me. As someone with an MA (and nearly a PhD in Education) it was very odd moment as while we didn't say anything we set about trying every variation and subtle adjustment exploring the results and evolving the approach accordingly: quite a deep learning method and an interesting lesson which I have since reflected upon for some time. I later learned that this 'student' was Sugano Sensei's son Jikou!

Anyway, the session concluded and we all reconvened for coffee nearby before heading off in our different directions. So I would like to conclude by saying a huge thank you to the Australia Aikikai for making a visiting student feel so welcome and at home. I will be back and if any of you are in the UK near Sensei Rob's dojo in Trowbridge come and meet the friends here you don't yet know you have.



What Aikido must sometimes be:
A Budo in the workplace.
Alfredo Mori – Shodan.



Let me start this with a question: how would any of you fare in a confrontation with Sensei?

I work as full time emergency physician in Australia's largest and busiest trauma centre. I am quite senior in my speciality and in my workplace, perhaps translating to a *Shihan* in the traditional martial lexicon; quite the juxtaposition to my current standing in aikido.

Many years ago as a fifteen year old I studied *ju jitsu* with school friends for all the reasons that teenagers begin martial arts. One day I was with my mother paying fees at the martial arts school. On the wall behind the counter hung a large poster of whom I now know to be the current *Doshu* receiving *kote gaeshi* from his father. Both men were perfectly vertical: one calmly standing and the other, hakama unfurled like a sail, equally calm upside down in mid-air. I was transfixed. *I want to be that guy one day*, I thought.

Eight years later as a medical student I watched staff gather around a newly arrived trauma patient. My attempt to come closer was stymied by a man who pushed me aside so he could stand closer still, and as trauma team leader, take control of that patient's resuscitation. Once again I thought, *I want to be that guy*.

My workplace, a modern emergency department, is a diorama for the consequences of bad decisions. There are no accidents. If you smoke for forty years, drink yourself to oblivion for twenty or ride a motorbike for ten, you may one day pay the price for your choices. More acutely, if you fall off a ladder you are too old to be on, carry a weapon in public, or use recreational or illegal drugs, then one day, you may again pay a price for doing so.

I use aikido at work because I have to. I use aikido physically on people that want to do me or those around me harm. **I use aikido almost as many times a week as I train. Just this weekend past in one shift I was extending and holding the arms of three junkies while they were being bodily restrained by security so another colleague could safely place a cannula for chemical sedation.**

Modern stimulants: cocaine and methamphetamines

in particular, have irrevocably changed the nature of workplace violence. Ice users are slippery with sweat, disinhibited, and numbed to pain: they are aggressive, domineering and violent. Aikido— most often *Ikkyo* — offers a response that can safely and effectively overwhelm, control and dominate drug affected workplace aggressors.

You have read in these pages what many people more senior and expert than me at aikido think what aikido is or isn't. Twenty years from now my thoughts may be consonant with theirs. Perhaps that is the wisdom that comes with living another two decades. For now, when it matters, and it does, aikido is the most effective, safe and medico legally responsible martial art for me: a fighting art, a *Budo*. I must occasionally depend on aikido to protect me and those around me when, and not if, our lives are threatened.

For me, 'getting out of the way', avoidance, timing and distance mean not being spat on, bitten or bled from by people with a higher than normal incidence of transmissible infections; something that happens three or four times a week.

In less bellicose encounters, my aikido training means I now perform procedures conscious of my centre. Fractured and dislocated limbs are reduced with my body and not my arms. Necessary traction is applied and maintained gently, without tiring. As the trauma team leader I so often now am, I direct the exclusion and treatment of life threats with an empty mind, free from distractions, and must be ready to do so again ten or more so times per shift.

Outside of work, the greatest beneficiaries of aikido in my life are my family. Dr Grouchy comes home after training as Dr Placid, his mind freed from the workday's worries and frustrations: a mind humbled in accepting that for all my years of study and training still to come, I can never hope to know as much aikido as my teachers have forgotten.

I agree with all of you: I wouldn't want to be in a fight with Sugano Shihan, or Koichi Tohei, Shoji Nishio, or Kazuo Chiba. These remarkable men, great teachers all, trained in the best martial art they knew, so that when it mattered, and it always does, they would win without fighting... Every time... Against all opponents... And so must I.



**Alfred and Alfredo at The Alfred
an Aikido demonstration**
Alfredo Mori – Shodan.



As you know from the local media, workplace violence in the health care sector is an unfortunate reality for pre hospital or hospital workers. My own heads of department have been engaged in a psychologically focused programme, Mindfulness, which trains participants in strategies to manage conflict resolution, based on the little known martial art called Aikido. In response to these paradigms, I was asked to physically demonstrate aikido in our workplace. The event was called 'Aikido with Alfred and Alfredo at the Alfred.'

Alfred Camilleri Sensei and I gave a brief demonstration of some aikido principles on Friday morning October 18 in the Alfred hospital Education Centre. We discussed and demonstrated aikido's philosophy as a non-Western, non-confrontational and non-aggressive method of conflict resolution. The audience were senior health professionals; Emergency Medicine physicians and trainees, medical students and nursing staff: about 18 in total.

After introducing Camilleri Sensei, with his permission I engaged my colleagues through the proprioceptive preparation exercises we perform to ready our bodies for training, the emphasis being some understanding and focus on centredness and body movement in space. I then explained the idea of *maai* - the distance at which something must happen - which practically translated into either getting out of the way, entering, turning or walking away from an oncoming force. I then spoke of the three attack vectors and their respective body movement response options.

Camilleri Sensei then demonstrated these principles on me as his *Uke*. We then allowed the session to be free flowing: his spoken teaching with the audience intermingled with physical examples such as *Ikkyo*, *Nikkyo*, *Kotegaeshi* and some *Kokyū* techniques. We also showed that movements were the same if the opponent is armed (with tanto), and discussed some ideas on disarming once an opponent is restrained.

The idea of self-awareness was transposed into a demonstration of body movement for *Ushiro* techniques; specifically *Ushiro Kubishimi*, and *Ushiro Ryo Katatetori* holds.

I then spoke about environmental awareness and control and asked audience members to come forward and surround

me: the analogy to our work environment being a stressful situation where the risk of distraction error, or focusing on only one thing, such as one attacker, means you are at risk of being overwhelmed.

Being aware of the whole environment, without necessarily engaging with any one aspect in its entirety - breaking the circle - is essential in ensuring control of oneself and one's environment at the same time. The clinical equivalent is the trauma team leader who directs a team of doctors and nurses without actually performing any of the requested procedures himself. In aikido I'm learning our best training simile is *jiyu waza*.

Camilleri Sensei then spoke of the principles of *omote* and *ura* and how aikido is unique in considering these directions. We also demonstrated how aikido absolves distractors such as height, strength and speed advantages by some *Hanmi Hantachi* movements, *Morote Tori* and *Kata Menuchi* responses.

The emphasis was on body movement, control of centre, harmonising with an oncoming force and maintaining equanimity — performance under stress — in what medical educators would describe as high stakes encounters. There is no higher stake than your own health and safety.

The demonstration concluded with meditation in silence for a minute in attempt to empty our minds. What was left unspoken but very much appreciated was the humility and honour of receiving instruction (I am very senior in my workplace but showed due deference to my teacher), the self-sacrifice of good teaching (Alfred took a day off managing his own business to demonstrate), and the gratitude and joy we enjoy training with one another. I asked my colleagues to contemplate how these translate into our own workplace.

I then offered Alfred a tour of the Emergency and Trauma Centre: he happened to see police and security guards in action in the 'Behaviours of Concern' restraining room with an agitated patient, reinforcing the relevance of aikido training for me in my workplace. The highlight of the day was a well-



continued next page...

...continued from previous page

deserved lunch with Alfred and our greatest fan, my beautiful wife Deirdre, who also took photos of the demonstration.

The feedback has been overwhelming; 'the best teaching session of the year'; many apologies from absent staff who have since heard about the demo; requests for future demonstration opportunities. I am grateful above all to Alfred for his time, dedication and participation as a natural and engaging teacher, and thank Aiki Kai for their support in improving this workplace initiative.



Summer school 2014 testimonial letter...

Background info: Bruce Roberts started training in aikido in 2009 and is currently 2nd Kyu. Bruce lives in Perth, WA with his wife and five children and runs a successful IT business.

I'm grateful to have received the bursary for Sugano Shihan's Summer School 2014 in Melbourne. Thank you to everyone involved in the organising and delivery of the school and of course to everyone that trained with me during the event.

When I was growing up we used to mark our height on a wall at each birthday. It was always an exciting occasion to see how much I'd grown. I had that same sense attending Summer School. I first attended Summer School for the Commemorative School in 2011 when I'd only been training for a year and a half. Now, three years on, it was really a satisfying milestone to see how far I've come. Watching the shodan tests was motivational for me to keep focusing on training and studying to be back in a couple of years (I hope) and perform well in that test.

I thoroughly enjoyed the school and learnt an incredible number of things. I really love the way so many people each at different places on their aikido journeys come together to train and each get something out of it that is appropriate to where they're at. As well as the fantastic teaching from the instructors, I enjoyed all of the coaching, encouragement and tips I received from those training with me on the mat. It is nothing short of incredible that so many people with so much experience are so generous and open in sharing it with whoever they're training with.

One of the impressions that sticks with me is the palpable sense of enjoyment on the mat. There was no shortage of focus and concentration but at the same time, a sense of enjoyment from everyone that could not be missed.

I've got about a million other thoughts still flying about my head from the school, but I think I'll finish with one last observation. The school provided for me an opportunity to look not just at technique, but some bigger picture thoughts and ideas. For me, aikido is immensely satisfying in its own right, but also for what it teaches me about myself, others and life. In the words of Tony Smibert Shihan, "We learn aikido so we can study it."

Thanks again and see you on the mat!

Bruce

TROWBRIDGE MAY 2014

For Spring Keiko this year (30 April, 2-4 May), Trowbridge Aikikai was pleased to welcome Louis van Thieghem shihan to teach on the weekend. Over the three days of practice all members of the dojo as well as visitors from The Bath Aikido Society were able to attend at least one session and most attended them all. Energy had been building up in the preceding weeks with some students arranging extra practice sessions. Their energy was met by Louis sensei's precise and calm instruction to produce a palpable atmosphere of relaxed intensity.

Grading tests were done on Saturday with five students advancing their kyu level and two students achieving shodan. On Saturday evening many students and their families gathered together for a meal and we all realised that our small dojo has a special spirit which we can enjoy both on and off the tatami.

Louis sensei's presence meant that for the first time the dojo has been granted permission from The Aikikai Foundation to conduct yudansha tests and we were most grateful to be given the honour. All students were aware of the importance of this recognition of their practice and loyalty by Hombu dojo and of its significance for the future.

Similarly, this first visit by Louis sensei, the senior student of Sugano sensei in Europe, creates another concrete link between the branches of our extended aikido family. These links will be strengthened further over the next year with students attending Smibert Shihan's Stage in Middlekirk in June, then The Inner Aikido School at Maredsous in August and, of course, the Australian 50th anniversary in Melbourne next January.

Summer school 2014 promotions

Shodan:

Chris Brain (Vic)
John Claxton (Vic)
Graham Coombe (Vic)
Ross Iliopoulos (Vic)
Bill O' Connor (Vic)
Chris Schurmann (Vic)
Pedro Siblesz (SA)

Nidan

Linton Tuleja (Tas)
John Robbins (ACT)

Sandan

Aaron Beutel (ACT)
Justin Bree (Vic)
Merrill Gonsalves (Vic)
Richard Head (NT)
Andrew Last (Vic)
Sharon Stewart (SA)
Beverley Webster (Vic)
David Whyatt (WA)

Yondan

Matt Aitken (SA / UAE)
Jo Giovinazzo (Vic)
Simon Pearce (Vic)
Wyman Young (Vic)

By the Way...Thanks for Nothing

Being of an apprehensive disposition when it comes to gradings, and having been asked to do my first one in nine years, I resorted to my usual tactic of asking my many past and present instructors for grading advice.

Their responses ranged from the very specific, "know your sword patterns!" to Ray Oldman Sensei's great tip "just go out there and enjoy yourself" (thanks sensei – I really did!).

Interestingly, other instructors, (some of whom I have done many classes with, known for well over twenty years and highly value as friends) when I asked them if they had any tips simply said "no" or "nothing".

Zen literature greatly emphasises the value of "nothingness" or "emptiness" in training in the sense that these qualities paradoxically foster spontaneity, focus and unlimited potential.

Robert Botterill Shihan also tells us that at Yondan a student goes from being "a person that does Aikido" to "an Aikido person." From the conscious to the unconscious; from thought to no- thought; from aspiring to being. I really love that insight into our Way.

So to all my instructors over twenty four years of training, thanks for Nothing (and Everything!).

Simon Pearce

Sensei's Sayings — the lessons he left us
a personal interpretation by John Rockstrom Sensei, 6th Dan

Over the years Sensei has handed down to us many sayings that embody his frame of mind, relate specifically to an issue or are a general guide to training. These sayings are gold and I write them here with the idea of preserving them for future generations of students who are following his specific interpretation of O Sensei's system of training and martial understanding.

A number of the sayings are generic; they relate broadly to budo or bujutsu and have been used for centuries, while others are very specific to the man and his view of Aiki training. I have listed a few that I can recall off the top of my head, but I'm sure there are many, many more that people with much better memories than I can contribute to these pages.

During his early days in Australia, Sensei was fond of recalling sayings from O Sensei and as time passed and he developed his own unique view of Aikido he contributed a broader range of comments that reinforced a particular point he wanted to make. This list is not exhaustive by any means and not meant to imply that Sensei is the creator of all of them, merely they are points for us to consider as we train. Please understand, the explanations I have added are *my personal* interpretation of what I think they meant and could be entirely wrong. As you read this you may have an alternative view or another way of interpreting the words, which is wonderful! By thinking deeply about these lessons he left us and putting forward differing viewpoints we have a chance of, perhaps, discovering what was really meant.

The way is in training, if you don't understand what you're doing, train harder!

(This is a regular encouragement that can read in many of the older treatise on martial training.)

We would often ask Sensei how to do some technique that we just couldn't manage, usually related to extension and the use of ki. In the early days he used to supply an answer but quickly got out of the way of doing that, instead he would nod and say 'Keep training' or 'Train harder!', which was very annoying as an instant answer to our dilemma would have been so much easier. Sometimes he would specifically tell us 'The way is in training!' Meaning, it is the deep study to solve the technical issue that is important, not the solution itself. If he *tells* us the answer it still won't be any use until we *understand* the answer.

You can do anything you like and call it Aikido. It doesn't mean that it is Aikido! You must be able to distinguish between the two

This was always a killer, the students would be pounding away at each other with great effort and he would throw this thought in, usually when we were trying too hard physically and not observing the correct martial distances or positions. The point being is, if we do any old movement that sort of looks like the technique, that doesn't make it the technique. It is only when we maintain the correct distances and body positions and the technique is martially correct is it the 'right' training. Without that discipline you can 'wave your arms' (his term) as much as you like but it doesn't make it Aikido. There is a much greater discipline to the actions of Aikido than a quick look would imply and it's this discipline that he expected us to train and distinguish and study when applying a technique. The throwing down of a person was to an extent a secondary result, it was the product of correct technique, not the aim.

If you have to use physical force, you've missed the point

This point follows on from the last one. We've all been here; the technique doesn't seem to be working 'naturally' so we give it a helping hand with a good dose of physical force. Some of us, and I include myself at the top of the list, have great difficulty in not using our arms and shoulders to do the work. Despite his obvious physical size and strength there was never a feeling that he forced you to do anything when he applied a technique, you were simply carried away with the motion. His energy was always extending outwards; there were no bulging biceps and powerful shoulder muscles to be seen. You were carried along with his (internal) energy blending seamlessly with yours, always being led to a point, never pushed there.

A couple of other sayings reinforce this point:

Ki energy flows outwards, the more you give it away, the better

The arms are only signposts showing ukes where you want them to go, the power comes from the one point

He would regularly demonstrate this last point by just pointing in a direction and telling us this was as much strength as was needed, like you were showing someone where to go after they've asked you for directions. This is one of my key areas of study at the moment and I could rant on about this subject for the next five pages! But I won't. I find when your arms and shoulders are relaxed it is easier to fit with what your partner is doing and because you are relaxed you are more sensitive to where their strength is going and then guide it to your own end. In the words of many previous authors and Sensei, you must study this.

Understand centripetal and centrifugal energy

To get to a position of being able to just point someone in a direction you need to see how centripetal and centrifugal energy is applied during an Aikido movement. As we rotate our bodies the partner is drawn inwards to us by centripetal force, we are the centre of the rotation, like a tornado. As we continue the rotation the partner is then sent flying outwards by centrifugal force, not by the power of our arms. Your body, focussed at the one point, is the powerhouse of energy that directs your partner's movement.

You must have faith in the movement

I can own up now that for many years I did not have faith in the movements. I couldn't see how the movement would do the 'trick' and certainly nothing I was doing reinforced my belief that the movement alone was sufficient. And, guess what, it never was! As long as I kept trying too hard, pushing and pulling people all over the place the techniques never really worked, because I never gave them a chance to work. I'm not owning up to exactly how long it took for me to gain enough faith in the techniques to allow them to do the work, but let's say we can measure it in decades! Don't be a Dumbo like me, relax, just do the movement, apply the points above and you will be amazed at the result. As someone said incredulously to me the other day as I collapsed like old laundry at their feet 'Is that all there is to it!?'.

The technique begins the moment the idea of attacking enters uke's mind

Due to the nature of our training, particularly in the very early days, we have a misguided viewpoint that nage begins to move only after uke initiates a physical attack. This can often leave us trailing behind uke's timing and feeling that we are trapped by it. Whereas, once we get past the early days of practicing techniques in a static position, we should be leading uke by a variety of methods that attach his/her mind to a part of our body. You all recognise the extended arm at handshake length or the extension of the sword when receiving a cut. The same idea applied to a te waza shomenuchi attack as your arm extends to control the raising arm of your partner at the wrist before it commences the its downwards trajectory and becomes, for instance, Ikkyo. A yokomen attack is captured before the attacking arm is in front of your partner's shoulder by an irimi movement. All these are part of the understanding that we are not a target to be hit but in fact leading ukes before they fully develop their attack. We are controlling the situation even as uke forms the physical attack, not just responding to it.

You must focus on the smallest part of every technique, then later throw them all away!

Techniques are only a vehicle to carry you some place, not that important within themselves

These two saying I've grouped together as they are making essentially the same point, I believe. We were asked to look closely at every aspect of a technique, where the hands were placed and the fingers, which way were the toes pointing, how to use the head. The smallest part of the technique required our close attention and we were told to do this whilst moving! Study and adjust as you do the technique, not stand still and play with one small part.

Ultimately, the body knows the technique inside out and no longer requires conscious thought to perform the movement. The position of every part of you adjusts on the fly with each individual technique; nothing fixed yet everything in its place, now you can train. When you can forget about the physical technique your mind opens up to the more important aspects of timing and distance and two people

working as one.

We only train weapons to improve our Aikido; we don't train weapons for their own sake

Despite the fact that Sensei devoted much of his Aikido study to weapons, particularly the bokken, he often maintained that we were not learning to be good at weapons. The idea of weapons training was to refine and define our movements. With weapons there is much greater discipline in distances and timing, and especially precision. Similar to his saying above about waving your arms he made the same comment here but in respect of the idea of not having great precision of where the arms and hands were. With weapons you can see exactly where they are placed and/or pointing and the tolerances can be down to a couple of millimetres. Also with timing, weapons give a greater sense of the right timing to receive or pass a movement and show any faults in your timing, quite dramatically at times. When incorporating weapons you add three more ma-ai to the basic distance of two extended arms, tanto, bokken and jo (plus all the combined alternatives when you mix these weapons against each other and versus te waza).

To call the five patterns a kata, you don't understand the movements at all!

(Spoken to me with great frustration!)

It's taken me quite a while to 'get' the sword patterns, not in the sense of the actual movements but how they differ from 'kata' or prearranged forms. Both are set movements with a giver and a receiver (of sorts), everyone knows what the movements are, so how come 'kata' and 'sword pattern' are not the same thing? Why did Sensei get so upset with me for thinking they were? It was only the fact that he was so annoyed that kept me pondering on the subject, obviously I was missing something very important if I couldn't tell the difference. I don't have the answer, at least one endorsed by Sensei as he passed away before I could sort this out to some degree in my own mind. As far as I can tell, kata in the classic sense are very rigid, prearranged forms of ritualistic movement done with a set timing of movement between the paired exponents. There is little leeway for change and the minute detail of each movement is fixed. In my view this is very much an external, physical system.

What I think Sensei was expecting us (me) to perceive was the dynamic interchange between the two people the whole way through each exercise, the two distinct roles of Oshiete and Manabite and the way this interaction was adapting every time you performed the movements. The movements of the patterns are alive to the very second of each one, very much an internal system. Knowing the physical movements per se are just the beginning of the training, once you have those in your mind then you can really start to learn what he was offering! ...in my view.

Atemi stops the training

As we trained Sensei would sometimes take a moment to demonstrate the many atemi (strikes) that were possible during a technique, he would always say that we should be aware of them but not to let them interfere with the flow of the movement. This was always a tricky point, as we had to understand the correct distance when performing a movement so there was not the opportunity to be struck yet not let ourselves develop a 'defensive' mind, where we would specifically go out of our way to avoid an atemi. His comment was that Aikido had moved well beyond just hitting someone and it was, in general, too limited a goal. Aikido was about movement and correct distance, not decking your partner, which in his viewpoint was far too easy. If we moved with the understanding of which atemi could be applied we would be in the right position, however learning to lead your partner was much more advanced training than landing a blow.

He regularly emphasised we are not practising to fight, that's a *bujutsu* form, we are training a *budo* or even a *bushin* form, which advance and enhance us as individuals and our partners at the same time. The moment we think about hitting someone we've lost Aikido. I believe, in Sensei's mind atemi created openings or directed our partners to move in a specific way, they were not applied with destruction in mind. I recall him saying the main difference between Aikido and aikijujutsu is the intent with which we apply the techniques.

Try not to be fixed

How often have you heard this one!? It seems the more we're told not to be fixed the more fixed we become! And what does 'fixed' mean anyway? I suspect it relates back to the Zen philosophy of a fixed or rigid mind, one that can see only a single path or solution, a mind that doesn't respond easily to

changing situations but holds fast to previous knowledge and methods... the inability to adapt. In Sensei's Aikido, immediate adaptation to the rapidly changing situation was paramount. You never caught him off guard, if you attacked incorrectly as uke he adapted seamlessly to your movement. He was like the living embodiment of water fitting whatever vessel it's put in, it naturally takes the shape, without pause or thought. There are libraries full of texts on this subject and I can add nothing to the discussion except to say as Aikidoka, following Sugano Shihan's interpretation/method/system/understanding of Aikido to set techniques in concrete, i.e. only do them one, very specific way is to miss the point of his instruction. He regularly changed the timing, distance and movement of techniques so ultimately we'd be free to move freely in any direction as needed, without a moment's hesitation.

Before moving on, how do these comments about being totally non-fixed equate with the ones in the section above that discuss understanding techniques down to their smallest particle? This is just one of a hundred conflicts of the mind ever present in Aiki training.

These next items are not so much sayings but concepts of training. I'm sure Sensei expressed something succinctly to summarise them, I only remember the concepts but believe it's worth including here for others to add more value in the future.

Emphasis on the kensen line and understanding the concept of omote and ura

Omote and ura were very much part of the training 'system' when I began and it was obvious that techniques was performed in front or to the rear of your partner. As my training developed I could then see that depending on the distance and timing or the way in which I moved dictated if a technique should be completed as an omote or ura form. And then he introduced the concept of 'kensen' the line of attack as represented by a sword stroke. Now, many of my contemporaries may say that the concept of kensen was always there, I just failed to see it, which could be very true. But when I did become aware of it, much of my dilemma of which way to move was instantly dissolved (for instantly read 'over the next few years'). He would stand at the beginning of sword classes and just move from left to right hanmi in chudan position, sometimes stepping forward and sometimes stepping backwards, aiumiashi and tsugiashi. It took me far too long to see the relationship with the kensen line and these movements. But I kept stepping, as he was simply stepping, during the start of these sword classes. It wasn't until one day when I was enthusiastically attacked in bokken group training that the understanding of the kensen line became really obvious to me. I was forced by their 'enthusiasm' to move to one side of the kensen line or the other, there was no middle ground, and when moving in their timing I could safely pass their efforts. Applying this same attitude to hand techniques is not quite as clear because the definition of the attack is not as precise, but it is part of my ongoing study to acquaint myself better with the requirements of both musubi and the kensen line as each technique is attempted, as I see it these two concepts must work in unison.

The five patterns are ten years of study

Originally, or so I've heard, Sensei said when he introduced the five patterns to us he thought they would be about ten years study for us. Here we are, some fifteen years on and I'm, personally, just starting to come to grips with the multitudinous layers that abound as part of understanding these patterns. I have written my views about the patterns above but would like to take a second to reiterate, particularly with newer students, don't take these patterns lightly or see them as just a series of steps. They have evolved since they were first introduced and continue to do so, they are timeless.

In my view they are a lifetime of study and as we add to them with variations, as Sensei started to do, they will become a multitude of lifetimes to study. Agghhh, there's not enough time!

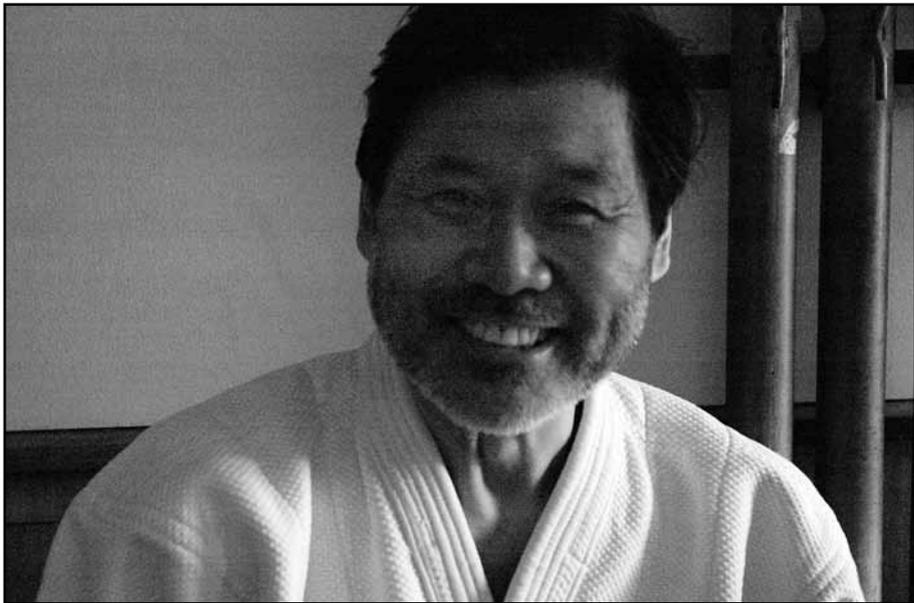
Do Aikido with Love

I have written this point elsewhere, often when Sensei was interviewed by journalists he would say Aikido was love, which immediately confounded them no end as they had usually just seen him demolish, in the nicest possible way, a bunch of students during a demonstration. He said O Sensei read the first character of Aikido as 'Love' not the slightly watered down version of 'Harmony', as we more often read. The idea of Aikido training was not to defeat or injure your partner. If you cherished them as you performed your technique there was no aggression, no requirement for strength or to interpose your

will. It is very difficult to see this concept sometimes, particularly if you view Aikido in a traditional martial attitude of beating someone in combat (as I did, for far too long). We don't train combat situations, at least not in the Sugano Sensei way of training, we train specific movements and study set pieces to train various parts of our bodies, always with the idea leading, not forcing, our partner. Being a fairly pragmatic person and coming from a history of competitive martial arts I have to admit actively avoiding this concept of Love for many years, I just didn't get it. It's only as I watched Sensei move and could never, even closely, emulate his timing and technique did I start to think that I'd better start getting with the programme and adopting ALL the bits, not just the ones I wanted, were comfortable with or thought I understood. The Love of Aikido is, in my understanding, a frame of mind, and since I have now tried to adopt that frame of mind it has changed the timing of much of what I attempt, it changes the way in which I handle my partner, of how I finish a technique. Aikido, in my way of thinking at the moment, is a concept, an attitude. It's more about intent than attempt. If we can better understand the intent that O Sensei had behind the techniques perhaps our attempts will improve?

A final point, I've just read a very interesting article and the author said in it 'Aikido is expansive and isn't limited to a set of explanations'. Don't let my explanations limit you; consider them thought starters only, of little consequence. Think more of the what Sensei was saying or trying to say, come to your own conclusions, because at the end of the day it's your Aikido you'll be doing, an embodiment of you and all you know and understand.





The Importance of Kihon Waza by Tony Smibert Shihan



In this very exciting year when Aikikai Australia commences its international celebrations of the 50th anniversary, the most important message of all is to keep training. So with that in mind — and thinking of the latest generation of trainees heading towards shodan — I hope you won't mind the following 'update' of an article I wrote some years ago on the importance of regular training in *kihon waza*, the basic techniques of Aikido.

Kihon waza provide not only the foundation of Aikido but also its core structure. Imagine Aikido as 'a building' and they are like columns that go straight up through it, holding the whole thing together *and* vitally important at every level. And that's why they are so important to ongoing study and teaching at all levels.

We don't *study* Aikido in order to *learn* it, we *learn* Aikido in order to be in a position to *study* it; and this provides the basis for lifelong learning, while our notion of what Aikido is as an art will mature over the years and be somewhat different to each of us. Aikido is not fixed or defined. Each person will come to an idea of what Aikido is as a result of their own study; and the basis of this study rests on our experience of training in the most basic waza. These include irimi nage, shiho nage and ikkyo, which provide the core of our regular training and the foundation for all the other basic waza — including kaiten nage, tenchi nage, kote gaeshi, nikyo, sankyo, yonko and gokyo. Training in kihon waza provides the structure for numberless other waza including the variations of the basics; and so we have a whole system. It remains a thrilling prospect to know that while travelling the same path together we inevitably become 'more ourselves', as evidenced by any group of long-term trainees.

Without first building a strong foundation it's very hard to construct a *tall* building. Because the Aikido foundation is based on kihon waza and actually extends upward *into* it, each and every level depends upon maintaining our understanding and training in the basics. A large building also requires a *solid* foundation, so this explains why the great teachers of the past made such a big deal of fundamentals, and particularly the importance of exercises such as morote tori kokyu ho, suwari waza kokyu ho, remaining centred and low, moving with a stable koshi (centre) and so on.

When I was a teenager I thought how great it would be to master such techniques and to be able to rely on them to seamlessly occur whenever I needed them. Because Sugano Sensei seemed to have that ability I thought it was a reasonable goal. But now, after years of training I've observed that

nothing happens seamlessly or automatically. It takes effort to do everything; and Aikido still challenges me to bring mind and body together every time. An outstanding example occurred in Sensei's own life where, at the top of his game, he suddenly endured a radical change to his physical condition — he called it a 'big challenge' — requiring even *more* effort to bring mind and body together. And he succeeded magnificently, so that I may have learned more from him about this part of Aikido in the last years than ever before.

The thing about *kihon waza* is that it's very easy to forget how important they are, especially if you've been training for a long time. Back in the 60's and 70's Sugano Sensei ensured we had a strong physical foundation through basics training. Remembering that this is still vital to Aikido's structure seems to be one of the most important challenges that *we* now face as teachers and students.

Today, with the rapid growth of Aikido and ongoing evolution of the art itself it would be easy to focus on the beautifully free and flowing movements, or the neat and nifty ones, or even the fascination of training in sword and jo. But the danger there lies in losing the things that actually make Aikido such a powerful and creative learning experience for every individual so that, like children at school, each person has to train hard in basics and learn for ourselves. So it's never been more important than it is right now to maintain awareness and practice of the grading syllabus, not simply to tick off the various levels as 'learned' or 'passed' but as the foundation and structure for continued study through life.

Ranks aren't important in themselves but simply mark the journey. Sensei always found ways to counsel against becoming too excited about achieving higher ranks by saying things to us like "another year, another grade" which rather deflated your ego if it started to swell. Yet, in other contexts he would also remind us of the value of the grades we held, if we sought to downplay them. After all, to undervalue a grade that Sensei had awarded was unthinkable. And so we've ended up with a lot of people with high grades all of whom seem to have walked a very long distance together while remaining mindful that this is merely a side product of the years of training and not the goal.

Which brings us back to those vital first years in training: when kihon waza are deeply imprinted into every trainee as a *system* and an *experience*. In the first few years of training, the foundation for a lifetime is laid so that, by continuing to train in the years to come, we can each discover how they lead to the 'advanced' techniques and, beyond there, towards the heart of Aikido.

Add a little Romance to your Aikido by John Rockstrom Sensei



Many of you may know that the first Japanese character, “*Ai*”, in the name Aikido can be read as ‘Harmony’ or ‘Love’, O Sensei meant it to read as ‘Love’. So when I’m now suggesting that we should use romantic language as part of Aikido instruction it could be seen as maybe pushing the whole touchy, feely envelope a stamp too far!

In previous times the use of fanciful or romantic terminology of techniques was a way of making sure the knowledge of a martial school remained secret and the ‘code’ or explanation was known only to the fully initiated students. For instance, the current headmaster for the Shinkage Ryu of Kenjutsu, who is now looking to more broadly disseminate the knowledge of that tradition, via YouTube no less, was explaining one of the most fundamental secrets of their swordsmanship was the use of the Dragon’s Claw grip. Up until this time it has remained a *kuden*, special teaching, of the school. He showed this secret grip to the camera, the left hand gripping right at the end of the hilt with the last three fingers maintaining firm contact, thumb and forefinger relaxed. Which, by the way, is the standard grip we use in our daily practice with bokken.*

So, in this context, you could say that the use of obfuscating, or romantic terminology, only created a barrier to the better understanding of a basic hand position. But, this is not the terminology I’m referring to.

Here’s a specific example of what I mean. For a number of years Sensei had been demonstrating Ryotedori TENCHINAGE; you know the technique, done it a thousand times. Uke takes both Nage’s hands, nage splits them to heaven and earth, enters forward on the earth hand and uses the heaven hand to knock Uke down - or words to that general effect.

On one particular occasion I recall, Sensei moved away from the specifics of the physical movements to the intrinsic explanation of how the technique should *feel*. I’m paraphrasing now but it went something like this: ‘Imagine Uke is a rock standing in the ocean and a wave comes sweeping up to it. When the wave strikes

the rock it doesn’t pause to gather more strength or stop and think about the object in front, it just washes around the rock on all sides, as if it wasn’t there. The wave has no thought of the rock, its moving towards the beach and gathers up anything in its path’.

These words had a profound effect on me. It probably wasn’t the first time I’d heard them but it was the first time I’d understood them. Up until that moment I’d been rushing up to my Uke, crashing into their chest and mostly using the heaven hand/elbow to a) push strongly on the chest area or b) create great pressure on their neck. Either one of these movements was using undue physical force to down the person in front of me. And before anyone sends me mail rattling on about was I using the earth hand correctly, the answer is yes and no. Yes, I had dropped low with it at knee height to help unbalance Uke. No, I don’t think I had used the hand correctly, to its full potential.

As I watched Sensei’s TENCHINAGE ‘wave’ wash over and past the person he was demonstrating on I could now see the point of principle about the nature of the technique that the mere physical attributes, had failed to explain. There was neither hesitation when he arrived at Uke’s body or any obvious additional energy to ‘throw’ him. Sensei swept in and past, oblivious to Uke, who was picked up and carried with the motion. Sensei, at that time, showed both of his hands, heaven and earth, as coming together behind Uke, in an understanding the completed motion of the wave re-joining itself having passed the rock.

—Think *kokyu ryoku*, hands rotating towards each other, trying to meet approximately at a centre point behind Uke.—

I’m sure many of my contemporaries have an endless number of similar or better examples. The point is, and I address this thought to those new instructors who have taken on the role of demonstrating Aikido to other students, we should think about Aikido in broader terms than just the physical components,

continued on page 20....



more than using the term *ki* (however we understand that word). Often to understand the true nature of a technique we need to address the internal feelings, the romantic description, that Uke or Nage should feel when such a movement occurs.

When Sensei applied the Nikyo shoulder pin, he often used to say where the position of Uke's arm curled in both of Nage's, Nage should feel like he is holding a baby — firm enough not to drop it but not tight enough to make it cry.

Think about this the next time you apply Nikyo Osaekomiwaza.

It's in the greater understanding of this intrinsic nature of techniques that, I believe, allows us to come to grips with the real philosophy of Aikido. All of us have complained over the years how hard it is to understand Aikido and its movements. Are we perhaps using the wrong language?

O Sensei declared Aikido is Love, maybe we could allow in a little more romantic language into our training to spice it up!

Ai to you all...

*You could say the demonstration of the handgrip was nothing special, but that would undervalue both the teaching and the grip. This grip had been pivotal in Shinkage Ryu for 400 years, and O Sensei obviously felt so strongly about its benefit he was compelled to incorporate it as part of his training method. There are many aspects of Aikido training which we practice daily and don't give a second thought to that used to be the most defining techniques and hidden secrets of former martial traditions that O Sensei was well versed in. This grip is just one of them.

Photographs by John Litchen: pages 12,17, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 Beach Training at Miami, 2014, with Rockstrom Sensei 6th Dan. Sensei explaining how to use a bokken at Collaroy. Sensei and Tenchi Nage, Melbourne 2006. Page 21 also from Melbourne, 2006.

Front cover, Sensei at Tallebudgera 1999 winter school.



Ai - Au - Waseru
Meeting
Joining together
Fit



*Editor's note: It is said; O Sensei chose the kanji for meeting possibly because it sounded the same as the kanji for love, but also contained within it the meaning or concept of joining together, meeting and fitting together, combined with the kanji for Ki or Chi, (Energy - life force) and Do or Dao (path, way or road) to create the compound **Ai Ki Do** to describe the art as the way of meeting and joining of energy together. This joining together could imply love since the kanji for love is pronounced the same as the kanji for meeting and joining, and it is this final meaning which has overlaid the original sense and has become the dominant attribution given to the word today. Then again it could simply mean the way of Aiki, (unified ki), one word not two, which alters the basic concept... something to think about, yes?*





Photos from Winter school 2013 by Youz Iqbal



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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.

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