



Welcome to the June Issue -- and what a packed issue this has turned into!

The sad news is that regular contributor Mark Harwick has decided to take a break. He has written something for every issue and so he deserves a rest! But the good news is that Mark has kindly offered to "mentor" anyone

who wants to write an article - but who might be unsure how to go about it. So please do take him up on this if you would like to contribute.

The Executive have been as busy as ever, and this issue sees a real milestone in the Board's governance with plans to appoint a part time Director.

I hope you all have a great summer -- and don't forget to send in your promotional posters ready for the Autumn.

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Executive Committee

Report by the Chairman

1. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Understandably members are concerned about the implications of the new GDPR, which came into effect on 25th May this year.

This has formed a major part of the work of the Executive Committee, over the last 6 months, and was discussed in detail at the recent BAB General Meeting.

All Associations should have full information on the decisions taken either by their attendance or through the subsequently circulated minutes.

In brief, the Board has a legitimate interest in maintaining all necessary data for 17yrs after a person's BAB membership ceases, to respond to insurance claims and legal action. If a person leaves the BAB within the period, whilst they could not require the deletion of their relevant data, it could be removed to a "hidden database."

The Board has approved a radical update of the Website to ensure compliance with requirements and has maintained regular contact with the Information Commissioner's Office to ensure we are in line with their current thinking. It has been reassured to note their recognition that small organisations, in particular, were unlikely to be able to fully comply with the new Regulations by the operative date, but the Board agreed that it was important it showed that it was taking

positive steps towards compliance. This has also included the development of a new Data Protection Policy, privacy notices and procedures and agreement to the introduction on direct membership payment which will greatly improve communications and management of data.

In addition a number of template policy, privacy notices and procedure documents with supporting Guidelines, are being prepared for Associations. As soon as these are approved they will be added to the Website.

We are indebted to Steve Billett, our Webmaster for his work in steering the deliberations of the Board on this very complex issue. Steve will be the Board's Data Controller, pro tem, until the newly approved post of part time Director is in post.

2. Appointment of Part time Director to the BAB

At last year's National Course a questionnaire was prepared for participants on the role and activities of the BAB. It was extremely worrying to note that not only did a significant number not know that we were the only National Governing Body for Aikido or that we were open to all styles of aikido, but relatively few were aware of our safety protocols, guidelines or that our Coaching qualifications are nationally endorsed.

This suggests that Associations need to do more to raise awareness within their own membership. However, it also points to the need for resources to be allocated towards publicity and marketing and to supporting the wide range of services provided by the BAB.

The Board suffers from its total dependence on volunteers, and whilst we are very fortunate to include within our management/officer structure a wealth of professional expertise it means that we rely on the time members are able to give which can fluctuate according to their personal circumstances. In addition, some areas, if they are specialist, or a less attractive portfolios, may be difficult to cover.

Current policy on Corporate Governance requirements for sporting organisations recognises that whilst many sporting organisations rely heavily on volunteers they must also be backed up by professionalism.

A major failing for the BAB is the lack of attention able to be given to promoting and marketing itself and indeed to promoting Aikido in general. Media coverage is limited, literature is lacking and there are insufficient resources to assist with developing new thrusts such as promoting aikido in schools. Priority cannot therefore be allocated to increasing our membership.

The Board has therefore agreed to the appointment of a part time paid Director who in addition to developing many of the areas referred to above will also be responsible for issues such as Data Protection, funding opportunities, development of the new direct payment system and establishing contacts with currently non-affiliated aikido clubs.

3. Alex Goodwin Appeal

Last year there was a strong response, from members, to the Alex Goodwin Appeal, in support of the cost of sending Alex to America for special medical treatment. We are delighted to report that whilst Alex will require further treatment, as his bones grow, he is now cancer free.

4. Aikido in Schools.

The support pack has now been sent out to 7 Associations and other clubs and associations can download information direct from the website.

5. BAB National Course

This year's course will again be held at the Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex, on Saturday 22nd September 9.30am - 4.30pm.

This very popular venue offers a wide range of facilities and is easily accessible through the motorway network. Full details, including application forms, are on the website and the BAB Secretary can provide information on accommodation.

The course Instructors are:-

Sensei Paul Barker 7th Dan (Aikido Circle)

Sensei Malcolm Crawford 7th Dan (Ken Shin Kai Yoshinkan Aikido UK)

Sensei Mike Smith 6th Dan (Go Shin Kai Aikido)

Sensei Mark Danford 6th Dan (White Rose Aikikai)

Sensei Paul Bradley 4th Dan (Aikido Development Society)

Pre-Booked places £20, or £25 on the day.

Coach Level 3 holders go free and those holding Coach Level 2 receive a reduced rate.

6. Home Office Tier 5 Sports Visitor Application

We are delighted to report that after a lot of effort, particularly by Scott Allbright, the BAB has been approved by the Home Office as a Sport Governing Body for Aikido authorised to endorse Tier 5 (Temporary Worker) Creative and Sporting Category applications from its members. We are the only Aikido body in the UK able to hold this authority.

This enables member Associations to apply to bring foreign instructors over to teach in the UK for extended periods, and full details are now available on the website.



BAB Insurance FAQs

Vincent Sumpter, AB INSURANCE FAQs

I still get lots of queries from members on various aspects of their insurance cover when training. The answers to many questions can be found on the BAB website under www.bab.org.uk/general/insurance but if you are still in doubt or if you still can't find the answer you are looking for, don't hesitate to contact me at: insuranceofficer@bab.org.uk

That said, to keep you on your toes, here a reminder about free "taster" sessions, and a mind-boggling list of what was asked for by our insurers regarding a claim currently being defended.

Free "Taster (Training) Sessions"

In response to an enquiry from a Member Association, I sought clarification from our insurers on whether Clubs could offer free 'taster' sessions to prospective members without them having to formally register as members of an Association. Endsleigh confirmed that cover for taster sessions is included in the policy schedules. However, to avoid abuse of the

system (that is, practitioners continually having “free” insurance cover, I agreed some parameters with the Insurance brokers (confirmed by email), viz:

- All the clubs need to do is record the name, address and the date of those attending and keep it on file so there is a record.
- Taster sessions will be limited to “3” after which the practitioner should hold formal Association membership.
- In the event of an accident/incident claim, clubs need to follow the normal claim notification procedures under the policy regardless of whether someone is a full member or attending a free taster session.

This makes it very easy for Clubs and Associations to hold open days or provide for ‘displays’ at village fetes, etc. and meets one of the aims of the BAB to ‘promote’ aikido across the UK.

The Insurer’s Claims Information Requested following a Recent Incident

In response to a recent incident, Hiscox (through Endsleigh, our Brokers) asked for the following information after they had received the incident and accident reports. As a reminder, they also iterated that all of Hiscox’s rights under the policy remain reserved and that you (the incident reporter) do not admit liability or make any offers to settle without their prior written approval. This is to ensure that their position is not prejudiced.

- Accident Book Entry;
- Accident Investigation Report;
- RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations) report to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE);
- Other communications to/from the HSE as a consequence of this injury;
- Minutes of Health and Safety committee meetings (or other meetings) where this accident/matter was considered;
- Accident book entries in relation to accidents similar to the Claimant’s that occurred during the 12 month period prior to the Claimant’s accident;
- Any relevant pre-accident risk assessments considering the risk of injury to class participants;
- Any relevant post-accident risk assessment (if amended);
- CCTV footage (if available);
- The claimant’s membership application FORM;
- The club’s BAB insurance certificate (No. 015154);
- Qualification certificates of the 3 instructors who were conducting the class;
- The class syllabus – identifying the move being performed by the claimant when the injury occurred;
- Colour photographs of the matting/flooring in situ;
- The specification of the matting/flooring used.

Correct as at May 2018





An open letter to readers

Mark Hardwick

Mark Hardwick is a Lecturer in Health Sciences, Kung Fu instructor and Chair of the North Devon Martial Arts Forum

Dear aikidoka,

It has been a great privilege over the past few years to be able to write for the *Aikido Times*. Aikido is an art which commands the greatest respect. It has maintained its historical quality and its integrity, whilst at the same time accommodating modern advances. As a practitioner of another art, the invitation to write for the publication, and the feeling of being accepted into the aikido family is very humbling.

It has been very satisfying to see the publication develop, and many articles in recent issues have been excellent. Moreover, the fact that these have been submitted by many different learned contributors illustrates both the depth and expanse of knowledge which exists amongst aikidoka.

It would seem though that there are many more practitioners who have knowledge which is of value, and who would like to write articles for the *Aikido Times*, but who may feel a little hesitant about doing so. It is probable that sometimes an idea will emerge and the article will begin with all good intentions, but then eventually something prevents continuation. This is a very common problem in many fields of writing.

Also, whilst the vast majority of contributors are of significant rank and experience, it would be good to try and capture the views of lesser experienced aikidoka. Just because someone has not yet achieved a dan grade does not mean that they do not have a valuable contribution to make.

With these thoughts in mind, it is suggested that for anyone who would like to propose an idea for an article, or submit a partly formed article, there is a facility for opening a discussion as to how to achieve publication. The proposal could be just a title, or a general subject area, or it could be a little more developed than that. Anyone making a suggestion would receive a prompt response (either by e-mail or telephone) offering informal discussion or advice.

It is important to add that this is not an attempt at censorship, nor is it a proof reading service (if the article is at proof reading stage it is already almost complete). It is simply a way of converting ideas and enthusiasm into a finished product, and any subsequent published work would represent the sole effort of the contributor. All that is asked is that you observe the 'submission guidelines' which appear in all editions of the *Aikido Times*.

Your interest in contributing to Aikido Times is to be welcomed, and submission of your idea does not represent any commitment or obligation. If after some initial work and discussion your article still doesn't make it to completion, this is not to be considered detrimental.

If anyone would like to take advantage of this opportunity, please send an e-mail to the editor who will then pass on your idea, and we can start to talk about it.

Yours Sincerely

Mark Hardwick

Tanto dori

Peter Downs 7th Dan Norwich Takemusu Aikido Kai

There are a range of defences against knife attacks in the aikido curriculum and these are easily viewable on many You-tube videos. Favourite techniques are kotogaeshi, ude kimaie osae (rokkyou), sokumen irimi nage and shiho-nage. Practising these techniques against tanto attacks may help us to improve certain elements of our aikido and they can certainly be a useful form of training. However, because we often train in a co-operative manner we can gain the impression that we can effectively use these techniques against a real-life, knife-wielding assailant. This false sense of competence is likely to prove fatal. If you find yourself facing a person with a knife and you can retreat then do so. Engaging with a knife attack is an act of very last resort.

Firstly, in normal dojo practice it is often the case that uke will launch an attack and then wait for tori to apply the technique. In a real situation it is much more likely that the knifer will attempt multiple jabs and slashes from multiple directions. I suggest you try this in the dojo and see how far you get. In my experience it is extremely unlikely that anyone will be successful in completing an aikido technique but very likely that they would end up with multiple wounds, some fatal, if a live blade was used.



Close quarters knife threats are easier to deal with than long distance cuts, slashes and thrusts. With threat the aggressor seeks to create fear, and this can lead to over-confidence and a susceptibility to surprise. The knife is also usually stationary (perhaps held at the throat) and the attacker is almost in range of a strike. Tori may have their hands raised in a defensive/supplicatory gesture at about chest height, which brings their hands close to the knife hand. Speed and surprise is of the essence and this requires calm relaxation (not easy under the circumstances). Tori must do three things in rapid succession:

- move their body away from the blade
- grasp the knife wielding wrist
- apply atemi, preferably a knock-out or otherwise disabling blow to the most appropriate target.

Doing these things with surprising speed and without telegraphing the movement takes a lot of practice and of course it is only the first step. It is the next stage when the second problem often arises. Unless you have completely unbalanced uke and have full control over uke's wrist to the extent that it is simple to take them down, they will start to recover very quickly. At this stage panic can set in, which will result in the following effects for tori:

- focus will shift to the knife and tori will lose awareness of uke, usually resulting in loss of ma-ai
- fear of the knife will encourage tori to use strength who then becomes rigid, losing the ability to respond flexibly to uke's movement
- fixating on the knife will often mean that tori also fixates on a technique even though loss of ma-ai and kuzushi means that the technique will be difficult if not impossible to apply.

This experience is a very valuable learning opportunity but unless managed carefully can be quite disheartening and cause people to question aikido's effectiveness. The key lessons are:

- maintain awareness of uke's movement in order to maintain ma-ai
- stay relaxed so you can feel and respond to uke's fresh attempts to use the knife
- maintain extension and centre
- take additional opportunities for atemi (which in a real situation could justifiably be disabling)
- adapt technique to the dynamics of the situation
- maintain extension in uke's knife arm to aid in kuzushi and to prevent uke swapping the knife to their free hand
- if uke pulls their knife hand in as a result of tori losing extension and kuzushi, follow the movement and apply an irimi technique.

Defence against thrust and slash attacks is much more difficult. Observing an expert in knife attacks it becomes very clear that:

- there is no chance of capturing the knife wielding wrist, the movements are too fast and any rapid retraction of the knife could easily cut the hand or arm of the defender
- because they have not committed their full body weight to their attack a knife wielding assailant can change the direction of the attack at the moment they perceive a counter
- once within striking distance the probability of receiving a wound is extremely high
- an assailant will rarely launch an attack from a static position and will certainly not remain static in the event of an attempted defence
- it may not even be clear that an assailant has a knife.

There is little we can do about the last point, except maintain awareness in threatening situations. As with knife threats the key again is to disrupt the attacker's mental and physical stability as fast as possible. In this case however, one is probably dealing with a rapidly moving weapon rather than a static weapon in the case of a threat. Any retreat encourages the assailant to move forward and press home their advantage. Not being able to capture the knife hand and not being able to retreat leaves us with one basic option, which is a fully committed irimi movement focussing on the person rather than the blade. This brings one into the range of a knife. In these circumstances it is realistic to assume that one will get cut. O sensei used to say that in aikido one has to look death in the eye and train as though one's life depends on it ('shinken shobu'). This is particularly true in dealing with a knife attack. One has to accept the risk of injury and enter deeply and with full intent. Any hesitation, in the absence of the opportunity to escape, will result in possibly fatal injury. This is not to say that one simply ignores the knife. Timing and awareness are still important as a means of increasing the chances of

success and reducing the chances of injury. Similarly fearlessness and confidence in applying atemi is likely to weaken the attacker's psychological advantage as well as leaving them at a physical disadvantage. So in this sort of practice uke's role in receiving becomes very important. They must be ready to flinch/protect themselves so that tori can practice this deep and committed entry.



Given the likelihood of a wound the defender should attempt any atemi in such a way as to leave vital blood vessels as protected as possible. A cut on the outside of the arm will be less deep and less risky to vital blood vessels than a cut to the inside of the arm. Similarly, because of the likelihood of receiving a wound the initial entry/atemi must be sufficient to at least partially disable and unbalance the attacker allowing the defensive follow-through technique to be effective even in the event of receiving a wound.

I appreciate that this discussion would seem to suggest an aggressive use of force which many could argue is against the principles of harmony embedded in aikido philosophy. In this respect it is worth remembering that the founder said words to the effect that aikido is budo and budo requires a martial mentality. Furthermore I would argue that "aggression" and "force" are the wrong terms to use. I would prefer "committed", "high speed", "confident", and "appropriate". If we could also be "calm" (difficult in the circumstances I know) that would also be good and probably more effective.

In any event students who practice tanto waza in the normal co-operative style of training should recognise the artificiality of such training and the totally different circumstances attendant upon a real world knife attack. By all means investigate more realistic knife attacks in the dojo provided this can be done in a safe way. Here it is worth remembering Saito sensei's admonishment for safe training: "start vigorously, end gently". The introduction of the tanto threat, plus the need to use speed in the opening move, can create an environment in which tori feels all movement must be completed with vigour and high speed. This increases the potential for injury, especially if kote gaeshi, ude kimaie osae or shiho-nage are the resulting techniques all of which can put significant stress on joints.

Providing it can be done safely you will find it a very instructive way of identifying weakness in your technique and your bushido spirit.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. Maximum article length will usually be in the region of 1000 words. It may be necessary to split some articles over more than one issue of the Newsletter.
2. No payment shall be made for items used.
3. The focus of articles must be on aikido, its impact on people and the community, or contain content which would be of interest and relevance to aikidoka
4. Contributors must be either members of the BAB or be invited to contribute. Other people may submit items for publication and approval from the Board's Executive may be required.
5. There should be no explicit criticism of individuals or other associations/organisations.
6. All material submitted must be original (i.e. not breach copyright laws). Appropriate credits and permissions should be included within the submission if relevant.
7. Articles may be edited/corrected at the Editor's discretion
8. The Editor's decision shall be final in determining the content of The Aikido Times.

Just for fun

Aikido Collective Nouns

As I'm sure you're aware, collective nouns - sometimes called group nouns - are singular nouns which describe plural objects, for example a flock of sheep, a pack of wolves, and one of the more famous ones, a murmuration of starlings.

Some years ago, a friend of mine and I, with one or two others, had a lot of fun composing the following list, our not-too-serious definitions of the physical or mental/emotional state of an Aikidoka at any given grade (but when we composed this list - a long time ago! - we knew far fewer very high grades than we do now, hence some of the more interesting adjectives for the highest grades...)

A Thud of Red Belts

A Stumble of White Belts

A Puzzlement of Yellow Belts

An Arrogance of Orange Belts

A Confusion of Green Belts

A Concentration of Blue Belts

A Terror of Brown Belts

A Triumph of Shodans

A Disbelief of 2nd Dans

An Amazement of 3rd Dans

A Gratitude of 4th Dans

A Brace of 5th Dans

A Beatitude of 6th Dans

A Solitude of 7th Dans, and

An Elevation of 8th Dans

Maybe readers of The Aikido Times would enjoy making up their own definitions....

All the best

Marianne Crisp, Mike Mitchell, and others

DISCLAIMER

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Daito Ryu

Phil Eyers

When asked about what they know about Aikido's parent art, some readers may be of the understanding that Daitō-ryū Aiki-jūjutsu is; "Just like Aikido, but just performed harder or more brutally" or "Just like Aikido, but with lots of added striking".

These statements are not entirely without merit as of course, Daitō-ryū could indeed be performed this way. But this is more likely to be interpretation at club, school or personal level in exactly the same way Aikido is subject to.

However, the statements are inaccurate and often lead to the assumption that "doing aikido harder" or "adding some atemi" turns Aikido into Daitō-ryū. This could not be further from the truth. For a prime example of this misconception, search YouTube for the difference between Aikido and Aikijutsu (sic).

Looked at in reverse, it would be similar to saying "Aikido is just Daitō-ryū done softly, and with a lot less techniques". The inaccuracy of this statement is apparent immediately. So how does one define Daitō-ryū? Lets look at the wikipedia page for the art;

"Daitō-ryū Aiki-jūjutsu is a Japanese martial art that first became widely known in the early 20th century under the headmastership of Takeda Sōkaku.".... Now a look in more detail;

"Aiki-jūjutsu can be broken into three styles:

1. Jujutsu (hard); 2. Aiki-no-jutsu (soft); and 3. the combined Aiki-Jujutsu (hard/soft)."

These three distinctions are very important, and understanding what they mean is key to understanding Daitō-ryū.

1. Jujutsu is the waza. The well known DVDs from Kondo Katsuyuki (Mainline Daitō-ryū Branch) produced for public consumption are primarily Jujutsu forms.



Photo credit Aikido of Tamalpa

In practising all forms of Aikido, everyone is exposed to Jujutsu. When we practise Randori-no-kata or the Koryu-no-kata we are generally doing Jujutsu.

2. Aiki-no-jutsu is a method very specific to Daitō-ryū. It is hidden, the secret highly effective soft stuff you may or may not get taught.

“Aiki contains the Okugi (Inner Secrets). Aiki is to throw the opponent using their own strength.” – Takeda Tokimune

“Aiki is to remove power from the opponent, a technique for making them non-resistant.” – Takeda Sokaku

3. Aiki-jujutsu is the end product. The result of employing the skills from Aiki-no-jutsu, in order to perform Jujutsu waza.

Now what significance does Daitō-ryū have for Aikido? Ueshiba Morihei’s official association with Daitō-ryū continued right up until 1937. After Ueshiba broke away from Takeda Sokaku, he used “Aiki Budō” as one of the names for his new style before finally settling on “Aikido” in 1942.

The link back to Daitō-ryū Aiki-jūjutsu is clear. The physical principles that support Daitō-ryū are the very same that Aikido (of all styles) was built upon. Daitō-ryū has much to offer students of Aikido in terms of history, and technical repertoire.

In the same way Aikido styles and schools differ, Daitō-ryū branches differ. The large syllabus of waza remains across most branches, but how they operate is frequently different. Where one branch may concentrate on Jujutsu, another may focus on Aiki-no-jutsu. Just like with Aikido, what students experience at one school is likely to vary wildly from those at another.

Daitō-ryū has traditionally been very conservative when it comes to what is taught, with schools often refusing to perform public demos, or to show anything to outsiders.

Takeda Sōkaku spent over 50 years of his life teaching Daitō-ryū. He kept meticulous records of everyone who learned anything from him. His record book (eimeiroku) covers 45 years of his teaching career and contains 30,000 names. It is said that Takeda Sōkaku would not teach the same technique twice for fear of it being “stolen”. We have also heard from multiple sources, the assertion from Takeda that the “real techniques” should only be taught to one student in a thousand.

The first Daitō-ryū teacher to openly teach Aiki-no-jutsu at open seminars was Okamoto Seigō. Okamoto Sensei was the top student of Kōdō Horikawa, the longest serving student of Takeda Sōkaku. Okamoto Seigō passed away in 2015, just before what would have been his 90th Birthday.

Howard Popkin and Joe Brogna are based in Long Island, New York, USA. They strive to continue the legacy of their teacher Okamoto Sensei. They will be in the UK teaching Daitō-ryū Aiki-jūjutsu at the Aiki Connections 2018 event on June 30th/ July 1st at Genryukan Aikido in Dover.

For more details and to book tickets visit <http://www.daitoryu.co.uk/aiki-connections-2018/>

“It isn’t easy to describe what he does, and in spite of there being no language barrier (well hardly any!), light bulb moments occurred when he was explaining at the same time as I was feeling him apply it to me.” - Robert Cowham (5th Dan Aikikai)

“What Howard teaches is not about magic, its not about peace and love, its just: body mechanics, physics, psychology, etc.... being applied in a very specific way: a way that works. He wants you to learn it. If you have the chance you should take it.” - Vicente Bosch (2nd Dan Japan Aikido Association)

“I highly recommend taking an opportunity to challenge your own skills and grow your own Aikido by attending a Popkin Brogna seminar!” - Bob King (6th Dan TAA) Chief Technical Director, Tomiki Aikido of the Americas.

MY THANKS TO CHRIS LI OF AIKIDO SANGENKAI HAWAII FOR HIS ASSISTANCE WITH THIS ARTICLE

2018 Yoshinkan Aikido Training in Japan

Dee Masters, Kenshinkai



Sensei Richard Lewis, Chief Instructor of Kenshinkai Yoshinkan Aikido UK has recently returned from a three-week trip to Japan to train Yoshinkan Aikido in Kyoto and Tokyo and take part in the annual Urayasu Aikido Demonstrations held in Maihama, Urayasu which are hosted by Tsuneo Ando Sensei (8th Dan Yoshinkan Aikido).

Ando Sensei was an apprentice to Gozo Shioda Sensei (founder of Yoshinkan Aikido) for 14 years.

Richard arrived at Haneda Airport on Wednesday 9th May and travelled via Shinkansen (bullet train) to Kyoto. Richard managed to attend a few training sessions with Jacques Payet Sensei (8th Dan Yoshinkan Aikido) at the Marutamachi dojo in Kyoto. Payet Sensei was the longest serving foreign uchi-deshi (live-in student) of Gozo Shioda Sensei.

Richard also managed to get some R&R in Kyoto, hiring a push bike but then the following day an electric bike (much easier), to tour Kyoto visiting among other places, Arashiyama (bamboo forest), Shinsengumi Temple (statue of Kondo Sensei). Richard also managed to see the Aoi Matsuri festival, one of the three main annual festivals held in Kyoto, Japan



On Wednesday 16th May Richard travelled via Shinkansen to Tokyo, to attend training sessions with Ando Sensei at his dojo located in Urayasu, whilst staying in Jimbochu close to the Nippon Budokan. Richard was appointed an uke for the demonstration (as unfortunately no other members of Kenshinkai were able to make the trip to Japan this year having visited Japan the previous year with Richard).

The annual demonstration was held on Sunday 20th May. Over 700 participants attended with people travelling from UK and Europe to participate. Richard represented Kenshinkai at this event. After demo training and parties were attended and plenty of beer and sake consumed and time to meet with Yoshinkan Aikido practitioners from around the world.

Prior to returning to the UK, Richard was invited by Kenji Nakazawa Sensei (AikiSambo chief instructor) on a walking tour of Kamakura.



During Richards absence classes were run by Garry and Dee Masters with support of Kenshinkai Instructors. Members of the junior class sent a weekly picture message via Facebook to Richard in Japan.



Same as the Dodo - is Aikido's goose cooked?

Richard Small

I've been practising Aikido since about 1974 and I'm only just beginning to develop a new and worthwhile understanding. I've seen people who I believe really understand the essence of aikido, though I still struggle to find the way they achieve it. I would like to share what I now know with anyone who is interested. Therein lies the problem – no one is! I teach Aiki weapons, Jo and Ken and have done as a dedicated weapons class since 2008. These isolated years of training and exploring have opened up new and rewarding insights.

It's about connection within self, about victory over self, overcoming the habits and reactions that we unerringly developed over the years to our detriment. The greatest power comes from relaxation. The lightest touch of thumb and forefinger on the Jo can overcome almost any opposing physical strength. To understand this, it is required to understand what is meant by relaxation. Videos and books can rarely if ever express the essence of the art of Aikido, though they may on occasions show you a suitable gateway. Once again, a recurring theme shows itself, what you really need is not what it appears to be. In fact what you desire, you can have, by doing the opposite of what you think you need. Never add strength, if anything, remove strength to find real power. Opposites have immense power, as does relaxation. However, the key to much success will come from your mind – your greatest friend and yet your greatest enemy.

You must learn alone but, to do so, you need the company of others.

Our modern, progressive world with all its impatient information and frenzied, tense activity finds little time for an inner journey that takes a lifetime . . . or more.

Eventually, this could draw people into a dark age of wide spread mental illnesses . . . and there may not be a lamp left burning for them to find their way out.



Aikido has a beneficial spiritual quality, or at least it should have.

Even if O-Sensei's aikido dies out and its bones lie in the ashes with those of the Dodo, my own personal journey does not feel as though it was wasted, despite the disappointment of no new students to enjoy the same.

To any club, or individual, within reasonable travelling distance from North Devon I would like to offer a free Aiki weapons workshop – no strings attached.

There is a contact page if you are interested on www.aikijo.weebly.com.

I thought readers of *The Aikido Times* would like to know that John Cornish has passed away

John Cornish started his martial art journey with judo and was taught by Trevor Leggett (taught by Yukio Tani) at the Budokwai in the early 1950's. He then left to study in Japan in 1958 at the Kodokan and with his good technique he was given special training as a Kenshusei and was taught by some of the judo greats. He arrived at the Hombu dojo to study aikido under O'Sensei at the same time as Chiba Sensei and he took early morning practice with Osawa Sensei (he was used as uke, due to his skill at breakfalls) and also studied under Waka Sensei and Tohei Sensei, as well as O'Sensei (he described his technique as being 'electric'). His first few black belts were awarded by O'Sensei and he returned to the Budokwai and London to teach both judo kata and aikido in the mid 1960s (he was one of the very few westerners to be licensed to teach and examine in all the judo katas and he even demonstrated the judo kata at the Olympics with Donn Draeger). With permission from the Kodokan he published a book on the Goshin Jutsu no Kata and continued to study, practice and teach both aikido (he was a good friend of Tamura Sensei) and judo. For over 40 years students benefited from his wisdom, patience and powerful technique, as well as his sense of humour at the Budokwai in London.

Some of my favourite comments from John were:

"If a train is coming what do you do...get out of the way"

"If you have two legs move two legs and if you have three move three"

"You can never be low enough"

He will be sorely missed by his family, friends and students.

Comment from the BAB Webmaster Stephen Billett.

My early martial career meant that training in London you had to be at the Budokwai. Originally I went as a Judoka but after seeing John Cornish I also trained at his Aikido class. He complained constantly that I trained with him because I was injured from Brian Jack's Judo class. The truth was I enjoyed both Arts and had found coaches that knew how to deliver the knowledge -- also I hurt much more after John's Aikido class!



The Art of Ukemi

Quentin Cooke

It is common when you start aikido to think that nearly all the learning is to be gained from performing the techniques. So taking ukemi is simply a necessary evil, allowing your partner the opportunity to have their turn. Of course, this is completely false. The roles of uke and nage are simply two sides of the same coin. You cannot have one without the other and there is just as much to learn in either role, (though if you pinned me up against a wall and forced me to toss that coin in the air, I would actually say that the role of uke teaches you more).

Given its importance then, it is surprising how little emphasis is placed on teaching ukemi in most classes. Think for a moment about all the classes and seminars that you have attended and try and recall how of them focused on this aspect of our study. As a teacher, I know that I am as guilty of this as most, and so to re-dress the balance somewhat, I decided to write this article. (I would love to have others add to this and give me their feedback).

The following list sets out what I think are key principles that need to be followed if you want to improve your ukemi, your practise and your learning:

1. First and foremost, you are not working against your partner, you are working with them. It is a shared experience, where you both have the opportunity to learn.
2. Uke should act as a mirror to nage, reflecting back to them exactly what the consequences of their response to an attack are.
3. Uke needs to establish the appropriate level of energy/degree of power that they need to attack with, in order to maximise the learning experience for both parties.
4. Uke needs to be mindful of attacking in a way that allows them to maintain their coordination of mind and body for as long as possible.
5. Ukes need to ensure that their commitment to the attack is maintained from the moment that it starts to the final moment when they are thrown or the technique breaks down.
6. Uke needs to trust nage.
7. Uke needs to maintain martial awareness.
8. Attacks need to be purposeful, honest and without ego.

Let's now consider these in a bit more detail.

Working with your partner

Uke's job is to be as helpful as possible to nage in moving them forward in their learning. You are not there to defeat them, you are seeking to provide a learning opportunity. Only when you work together as a partnership with an honest desire of enquiry will you create the right environment for the most learning. It is no coincidence that aikido can be translated as the way of harmony with nature/life.

Acting as a Mirror

This is an incredible skill to learn and in itself, it is a lifetime's learning, but we need to start with this goal in mind. In essence, we want to reflect back to nage the consequence of their response to our attack. If they perform well, then the technique being practised is concluded successfully. However, if a mistake is made by nage then the move should either break down completely at that point or at least feel like some modification is required. Ideally, both nage and uke notice and take advantage of the kinaesthetic feedback. So don't fall down for no reason and don't be stubborn either, just follow honestly.



Gauging the Appropriate Level of Power

Rushing in, without gauging what you are up against is a common error and can be dangerous, particularly when you don't know who it is that you are practising with. When you commence your practise, there needs to be a period of sizing each other up, even when you are practising with good friends. You simply do not know how they feel on that particular session or how they will respond to what their teacher is asking of them. A golden rule should be to start from a low base and work from there. If the movement is static, then you certainly need to give your partner something of yourself, but using your full power right from the get-go, is simply inappropriate. If you are starting with movement, then your first attack should be at a slow walk. See how both you and nage cope and build from there.

This might go a number of ways. Uke may have more power than nage, in which case they need to dial back their power to a level that nage can cope with, but which will stretch them. Working on the borderline is a massive theme in aikido and deserves a paper in its own right. This basic premise though is fundamental to all learning. There is no joy in never moving beyond two plus two, but equally there is no point jumping from simple addition to algebra. To grasp the latter, students need get to grips with many other mathematical concepts first. I think that uke is always there to teach their partner, as you can learn as much from a brand new student as you can from a master, but that said, if you find yourself having to dial back your power, you are taking the role of taking your partner from one level of practise to the next as efficiently as you can.

When you find that you are taking uke for someone with more power than you, then it's really important not to attack at a level, where you do not have the skills to take a controlled fall. That's when injuries happen. Your job in these circumstances is to find a level, where you can maintain your coordination of mind and body successfully throughout the technique. It isn't nage's job to determine the speed of a move, it is yours. Their job is to come up with an appropriate response, not the response that they are capable of. That task for nage is also a lifetime's work, so there is plenty to learn under these circumstances for them. By slowing down, and maintaining your centre you will much more accurately reflect back to nage what they are doing throughout the technique. Most of us always have plenty of room to improve our technique and having an uke that is able to reflect back what is really going on, is our best chance of doing this.

Finally, we often find that we are well matched and largely speaking practising with someone at a similar level. The only advice here would be to maintain respect for your partner and not to be assumptive. Every session and indeed every moment within a session can bring change, and assuming that things will be as they usually are, can be dangerous.

Maintaining Coordination of Mind and Body

In order to maintain the integrity of the attack and to maximise learning experience this is essential. It is linked to the level of energy that you attack with, but it is a separate point. We might have to lower the level of energy that we attack with in order to maintain coordination of mind and body, but reducing speed is not enough in itself.

All too often, when the first attack fails, perhaps because when you went to grab the wrist, nage directed your energy/body down, uke is prone to let events take their course, rather than seeking with all their being to regain their centre and continue their attack. In a real life attack, your best chance of survival when the first attack fails is to regain your coordination of mind and body, and follow nage's movements as closely as you can in the hope that they make a mistake, which will allow you to regain the initiative.

When we work on centring, grounding, relaxing or extending, (four central pillars of aikido), on our own, we only have to think about what is going on with us and it is fairly simple to use these ideas to coordinate mind and body. In these situations you are effectively uke and nage, so unifying mind and body is relatively simple, but when we work with a partner, the whole dynamic changes and it becomes more complicated. The trick here is to realise that the object of your practise is effectively to become one with them, (to really feel connected in mind and body).

Physically the place or places, (the more the better) where you are joined is where you need to place your focus, (you shouldn't be thinking of yourself). For example, if you grab someone's wrist, that is the best place to gain information about your partner's response. Are they trying to pull away, or push in, or perhaps allowing you to push or pull? Your body will tell you everything you need to know about where you need to move in order to stay safe and keep your coordination going. (All too often we ignore this kinaesthetic information, focusing on what we want to do, or expect to happen, rather than the reality that faces us. Focusing your intention on your partner, will help you find the centre of the movement and the centre that exists between nage and uke. In finding this, you will find your own centre and this is what will help you maintain your coordination for as long as possible throughout the technique. If nage allows you to fully express your attack and sticks to the principles, you will be thrown in the end, but it is in fact your own energy that should throw you, rather than nage seeking to impose their technique/will on you.

Maintaining your Commitment

In many ways this is integral to everything said so far, but it is common to see people begin the attack and once they receive the initial response from nage, to stay where they are, like some kind of mannequin. This simply isn't martially sensible and is selling nage and uke short on the learning experience. It's important that having made the initial attack that you continue with that intent until such time as the technique breaks down or you are thrown to the floor. This gives nage the chance to see if what they are doing really works and for uke to explore the technique from start to finish. For me this has been a rich source of learning.

Following all the principles above and below will ensure that you are able to maintain your commitment in a meaningful and realistic way.

Trusting Nage with Your Body

Practising aikido takes courage. As nage you have to be open to attack. To be uke, you have to be prepared to receive your partner's technique/power. In your studies it is not unusual to experience pain and to cause pain in equal measure. It's rare that this happens because of bad intent, and usually, this simply results from clumsiness, or of lack of knowledge and sensitivity. Nevertheless, we cheat our partners if we attack with fear of the consequences. So we have to accept that we are lending our bodies to our partners, so that they might practise and learn. In essence, we have to trust them with our bodies and not worry about the consequences. Paradoxically, this is the best way of avoiding injury.

We can minimise the dangers by ensuring that we follow the two points above, but in the end, after ensuring that we operate within the bounds of safety for both parties, we have to believe that nage will not abuse the trust.

Maintaining Martial Awareness

Personally I do not train with any great desire to become a fantastic martial artist who can look after myself, if attacked on the street. Any move in that direction is a by-product of my study, but actually I hope I never have to find out just how good I am in a fighting context. Instead I see the practise of martial art technique as being the vehicle to practise an incredibly powerful set of ideas than can improve my life off the mat. Furthermore I believe that if society adopted the principles within aikido, then the world would be a much nicer place.

Nevertheless, the point of using martial technique is because it's stressful to be physically attacked. We shouldn't forget that martial technique was developed for the battle ground. The consequence for one party or another was potentially death. Clearly, we cannot practise in this way, which is where the art comes into play. Like a painting of a rural scene, our practise is just a representation of the real thing. However, if uke loses sight of the martial consequences of what they are doing, then they are selling themselves and nage short. Uke, has to be mindful of what the martial consequences of moving into the wrong space or not following properly are. In simple terms they open themselves up to a killing blow. If we don't pay attention to this, then we are moving further and further away from the reality of martial technique and reducing the



chance to learn the principles of aikido effectively. If we are to test, challenge and stretch nage, then we need to keep safe for as long as possible, to look for the openings that allow us to counter or escape, and in doing this we retain the integrity of the principles that we seek to embody in our practise and give our partners the best possible learning experience.

Attacking with Intent, Integrity and no Ego

If you have ever practised with someone who won't attack you properly, (probably because they are fearful of the consequences for you or themselves), or who is intent on proving that they are better than you, then you will appreciate how frustrating and limiting this can be. As uke, you need to attack with proper intent. So if for example, you are practising shomenuchi, and uke does not genuinely attack with the idea of slicing you in two, down the middle 'from knave to chaps', then you simply do not know if your defence to this attack is going to work if you are faced with it in reality. The secret here, if you are unsure of your partner's abilities or indeed of your own, is to slow your attack down. Just like driving a car, you require less breaking distance with slower speed, so you know you can stop long before you actually hit nage, if they fail to respond or they respond in an inappropriate manner. Driving in this manner still gets you from A to B and on the mat, attacking more slowly doesn't mean that you lose the intent. You can drive faster when you are more certain of your abilities and the road conditions ahead.



Equally, as uke you diminish the potential to learn for yourself and your partner if you are intent on turning your practise into a [edited] contest. Aikido, as taught by the founder, is supposed to be practised non-competitively. The true victory is over self. So park your ego off the mat and treat every engagement with a partner as a first. In actual fact every engagement is unique, and though it may share much in common with other similar experiences, it is in trying to explore the subtle differences that we learn the most.

It is often said that you when you find things out yourself that the learning is much deeper than if someone gives you answer. Indeed this is the logic behind the traditional Japanese teaching method. Actually I believe that the latter is anachronistic and unhelpful, but I do believe that what your teacher tells you only means something when you feel it or experience it for yourself. The art of ukemi done well gives you the best opportunity of doing this.

This is why, when asked: *'Who is the teacher that has taught me the most?'*

I always say: *'My students.'*

Taking ukemi for them has revealed far more than I would ever have imagined. In fact the only reason why I wrote this, was because we explored ukemi in class together and I realised how much there was to learn.

Finally, I practise aikido always with its applications for daily life in mind. As we worked through our lesson on ukemi, I came to the realisation that many of the above principles would help smooth out the way we engage with other people generally. Life is not a conflict free zone. In fact, it is often a requirement to bring about positive change. So when you enter into conflict observing these rules will serve you well. Aikido really could reconcile the world if we let it.

Sugawara Shihan London Seminar 2018

Lucy Aitken, 3rd Dan, North London Aikido

Sugawara Shigeru Shihan, 7th Dan Aikikai, has been visiting the UK to teach an annual weekend course every February over the last decade from Hombu dojo where he is the Head Instructor. For the last two years, this weekend course has been in Dartford, Greater London, in a massive purpose-built judo dojo that gives students the space to train without feeling cramped or inhibited in their movement.

Everyone is uke

Sugawara Shihan always makes a concerted effort to train with everybody on the mat. This February, for the last technique he demonstrated, he worked with everyone, meaning that every student on the mat was his uke for the final few moments of the course. His generosity and kind spirit are evident: if a student doesn't understand a movement, he will endeavour to show them, repeating it with them until they do.

Clear explanations

His explanations are always clearly expressed. Instructing us on where we should position ourselves when receiving specific attacks, he invited us to imagine a clock face, recommending that our feet should be either at 5 o'clock or 7 o'clock. He always emphasises that uke should look at their hand to align their posture correctly and emphasises that gripping mindfully with the middle, ring and little fingers is preferable to squeezing with the thumb and index finger which engages the biceps and constricts uke's ability to respond. These three points in particular have helped me so much with my practice.

Collaborative atmosphere

Students travel from far and wide to attend the course, recognising its special atmosphere. This year, students were warmly welcomed from Japan, Holland, Lithuania and Ireland, as well as from all over the UK. The spectrum of ages spanned from 11 to 70, and, in terms of experience, there were beginners to godans. Yet there is never a sense of one upmanship or tension on the mat: whatever your age or ability, the feeling is the same: there is always something to learn, always room for improvement and we will progress more effectively if we help rather than hinder one another.



Excellent facilities

The staff at the Judo Dojo in Dartford are welcoming, providing hot drinks and a place to relax at lunchtime, and facilities such as changing areas and parking are excellent. Dartford can be reached easily from London, with trains taking under an hour, and there's plenty of reasonably priced accommodation nearby.

High quality instruction

Practicalities aside, the take-out for everyone is always the quality of the teaching. Returning to your dojo after attending the course gives you a focus and a renewed enthusiasm for aikido. After a course with Sugawara Shihan, your technique will be sharper, of course, but, more importantly, you will always be grateful to have been reminded of aikido's special capacity to unite a broad cross-section of people so cohesively and inclusively.

Sugawara Shihan will return to London in March 2019. The seminar will once again take place in Dartford. Full details will be available on the North London Dojo website (www.northlondonaikido.org) later this year.



Upcoming Events

BRITISH AIKIDO BOARD NATIONAL COURSE 2018

22nd September 2018



Venue

Brunel University Sport Centre, Kingston Road, Uxbridge UB8 3PH

Telephone: 01895 265305

Instructors

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Paul Barker 7th Dan | Aikido Circle |
| Malcolm Crawford 7th Dan | Ken Shin Kai Yoshinkan UK |
| Mike Smith 6th Dan | Go Shin Kai Aikido |
| Mark Danford 6th Dan | White Rose Aikikai |
| Paul Bradley 4th Dan | Aikido Development Society |

Course Fees

On the day £25.00
Advance booking £20

*Non-BAB members: 30.00 on the day
£25.00 Advance booking*

Instructors holding CL2 £10.00
Instructors holding CL3 Free

Booking forms obtainable from BAB website

Refreshments are available

Accommodation

Lancaster Hotel (on Brunel University site): Telephone: 01895 268006

Those attending should make their own arrangements direct



合気道

Tony Sargeant Sensei
6th Dan Aikikai

Aikido Seminar
All styles welcome

Saturday 30th June 2018

11:00 – 16:30

Morton War Institute, 11 Main Road, East Morton, West Yorkshire BD20 5SP

£30 for the day

Aikido Insurance must be current and shown on the day.

Teas and coffees provided and roadside parking is available.

Please bring a bokken and jo.

**Please contact Alex Gent for more details and to register:
07455 159890 or alex@aikiflow.uk**



Hosted by Aiki Flow in Association with Takemusu Iwama Aikido Europe

