

# 合気道

オーストラリア



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## Catching up by the Editor.

It's been a year since the last newsletter, so here are some events that members of Aiki-Kai Australia took part in beginning with Summer school in January 2002. For the 1<sup>st</sup> time summer school took place at Melbourne University. The Dojo was in the Beaurepaire Sports Centre, right in the heart of the university and only a short walk from the restaurants and shops of Lygon Street Carlton, or a short tram ride from the city.

It was also only a short walk to the accommodation at University House for those who stayed on campus. The rooms and facilities were superb, big, clean, bright and cheerful with lovely gardens and courtyards making the surrounds a great place to relax in. The training, as always, under the direction of Sugano Sensei, was excellent and sometimes a lot of fun with Sensei's quiet humour shining through some of the things he asked us to do. Even though the mats covered the gym from one side to the other, there never seemed to be quite enough space.

Photos from this summer school and a list of those who successfully tested for higher grades can be seen on the Aiki-Kai Australia web page at:  
<http://www.aikido.org.au/>

As reported in the last newsletter, Tony Smibert Sensei was invited to teach a seminar in Christchurch New Zealand. As a follow up to that visit, and to keep the cross Tasman connection alive, four people (from Brisbane) and myself (from the Gold Coast) flew over to Auckland to attend the Shinryukan (New Zealand Aikikai) Summer Gasshuku.

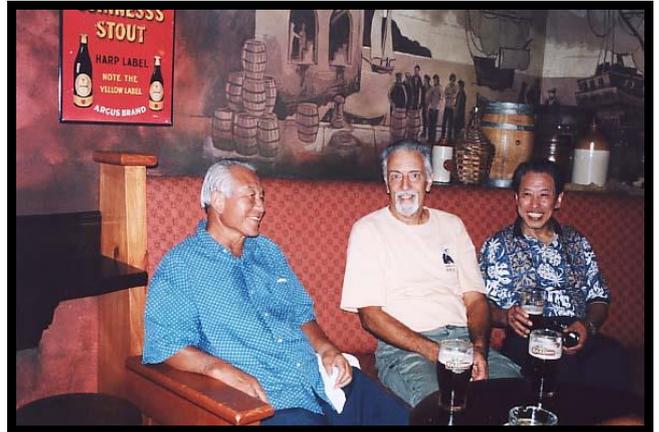


Takase Shihan who was a guest of Aiki-Kai Australia at our 2001 summer school in Canberra (see Autumn/winter 2001 newsletter) had invited Masuda Shihan, Watanabe Shihan and Yamashima Shihan from Japan to teach during the week of training. Accompanying them to New Zealand were several of their senior students from Tokyo.

Each Shihan took classes during the week and when one of them was teaching the others along with the senior students joined in and trained with the rest of us. This gave each person attending an opportunity to have a senior student or Shihan as a training partner. I had the

opportunity to work with each Shihan as well as the senior students, which was an experience I will never forget. I feel that the interaction with these very senior aikidoka has improved my approach to Aikido immeasurably.

They were pretty good beer drinkers too!



Most of the training during the week took place at Shinryukan's bright and cheerful Hombu dojo in Auckland. The snow-white tatami added to the cheerfulness but it was attitude of the students, the openness of their approach to the training, the willingness to focus on something new or perhaps different (as each Shihan perceived and demonstrated a technique in a unique way) that gave joyfulness to the ambiance of the dojo. No one wanted to leave after the classes. They stayed and chatted, and shared a drink, and socialised together.

Because it was during the week and many people had to work, these classes were not crowded so those people there had a unique opportunity to practice with a Shihan as a training partner. Whereas on the weekend, the training took place at the Howick Sports Centre some distance out of town with many more people attending. Once again the Shihan not taking classes joined in to train with other students, but because this venue was more crowded, a lot of these students didn't get the same chance we had during the week.

A full report of this event can be found at:  
<http://www.aikido-chch.co.nz/> go to newsletter, past issues.

### **CPR for everyone.**

During a TTC course in April at the Gold Coast, one of the people training suffered a *heart attack*. He had stopped to catch his breath and was sitting on a chair off the mat when suddenly he started to collapse onto the floor.

It was only because of quick action by several people who caught him as he collapsed and carried him onto the mat, and in particular by another two, one a registered nurse and the other a security person who had CPR training, that a disaster was averted.

His heart had stopped and he started to turn blue. Within seconds, and with a calmness that belied the emergency the registered nurse started to apply mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. When he realised there was no pulse

he immediately began heart massage. At this point the second person stepped in to take over the heart massage while the nurse returned to mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. They got the heart beating, and a pulse. But it stopped again. They continued their efforts and once again got a heartbeat and a pulse.

An ambulance had been called and within minutes a paramedic arrived with oxygen and a defibrillator. As he raced into the dojo the patient was already attempting to sit up. The paramedic laid him back down and gave him oxygen while he carried out several tests. The patient kept protesting about all the fuss, unaware, or unwilling to accept that his heart had stopped beating several times over the last few minutes.

The wail of a siren announced the arrival of the ambulance. Two attendants rushed in with a stretcher. Together with the paramedic they placed the patient, still protesting about all the fuss, on the stretcher. They raised it and pushed it out of the dojo and over to the ambulance.

At the hospital he was examined then went into surgery to have a Stent placed into a severely blocked and partially collapsed artery. They kept him there for a couple of days before allowing him to go home. It was a close call. He would have died had it not been for the two people who understood what to do and calmly went ahead and did it.

This unfortunate incident made everyone realise how important it is to have some knowledge of CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation), so Graham Morris Sensei arranged for the Red Cross to conduct a CPR course in the dojo.

14 people attended the course, which lasted about 2 hours. Part of what was covered during this time was the correct position to place a patient in order to check and clear obstruction to the airway.

- Where and how to check for a pulse.
- Various ways to apply mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- How to apply heart massage by one person, and by a team of two people.
- The depth of compression.
- The ratio of compressions to breaths when either one or two people are applying CPR.
- The difference between how to apply CPR to adults and children and to babies.

We practiced positioning the patient and clearing the airway on each other. We used manikins to practice different ways of giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation individually, and in groups of two. After this we went on to heart massage and a combination of heart massage and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, which again we practiced individually and in pairs.



At the end of this course everyone felt certain that they would be able to remain calm and put into effect CPR if ever it was needed.

Tony Smibert Sensei made a surprise visit to a number of places in May including Darwin, and the Gold coast. Even though he was occupied with other business he managed to find time to take a class or two. On the Gold Coast he took a most interesting session using only one body movement to demonstrate a variety of related techniques.

Here is a report from Darwin sent by Lynford Rossos.

**TTC Seminar: A weekend with Tony Smibert Sensei**  
Darwin, NT  
4th-5th May 2002

Smibert sensei's arrival was an unexpected but pleasant surprise. There were morning and evening classes on Sat and Sun each lasting for an hour and a half. Despite the long flight he had, his spirit and enthusiasm to be with us was evident and strong. His presence and



movement gave me a feeling that our connection with Sugano Sensei is very strong.

Smibert sensei's classes were very relaxed yet precise and vigorous, reminiscent of the energy and feel of the summer and winter schools. About 16 people attended the classes despite Darwin's heat and humidity.

We spent our last night with Smibert sensei eating pizza in a restaurant; he was very generous with his time and moved around the dining table to listen and share his unique experiences with all of us.

His commitment to Sugano Sensei is uncompromising, and his words and actions in the dojo were consistent with that dedication.

I asked Smibert sensei how we could achieve and maintain that same, clear and accurate connection to Sugano Sensei's teachings. His answer made sense, and later on I found an article he wrote for Aikido Australia newsletter (Autumn/Winter 2000) that summed up what he said, and I quote:

"We can all be personal students of Sugano Shihan. He has always said that it is the student who selects the teacher, not the other way around, and so it is up to the student to determine the quality of the connection."

Thank You Sensei.

Members of the TTC have visited various states during the year but this newsletter has not received reports of these events. If you want others to know about these events, please send a report to the editorial address or to the editor's email at: [jlitchen@ausinfo.com.au](mailto:jlitchen@ausinfo.com.au)

## Winter School 2002.



This year's winter school once again took place on the Gold Coast at Tallebudgera. Despite the annoyance of a gym rebuilding programme Sugano Sensei led a very successful week of training. The days were beautiful, warm and sunny, but the nights were freezing with everyone asking for and getting extra blankets. Once again the ever-present problem of not enough mat space didn't deter anyone from getting the most out of their training. The sunrise meditation and the early morning practice on the beach behind the camp were exhilarating. Practicing on sand is certainly different than training on mats in a dojo.



In general the training was spirited and well focused with a good feeling. There were five visitors from New Zealand and one of Sensei's students from New York. They all said they had a wonderful time and wanted to know when the next winter school on the Gold Coast would be.

Here is an extract from Kevin Allen's report in the *Southern Aikido Connection newsletter of Aikido Shinryukan Canterbury*. <http://www.aikido-chch.co.nz/>



...Training at the seminar brought back memories of past winter and summer schools in Australia...they are all fantastic fun, and a great place to make new friends and renew old friendships.

Sugano Sensei conducts a great seminar and this time in my opinion he focused a lot on the technical side of Aikido, a lot of which we couldn't hear because of the building extensions on the big stadium, but we persevered. Information was absorbed as best we could and Sugano Sensei would always be demonstrating to a group somewhere on the huge mat, and this was always a golden opportunity to pick up things we couldn't hear him say. There is an old saying that actions speak louder than words and this was a prime example of that. And having him demonstrate something directly to you was a bonus. "Ah, so that's what he meant! OK, got that!"

Each class Sensei conducted, included weapons work for at least half the time, which was great. My forearms at the end of the week were quite sore, but I learned heaps. The people on the mat numbered around

150, and about half of them were Yudansha. It gave every white belt an opportunity to train with a black belt for just about every technique.

Sometimes the room on the mat wasn't big enough for dynamic technique, so Sensei would say "groups", and we would all form groups on the side of the mat...and the techniques would begin. Seniors first in the middle. Now and again Sensei would say "Senior Yudansha stay in the middle and throw everybody else." So the senior ranked person would be in the middle for quite some time throwing everybody else. You could tell who had been training the most by the level of their fitness! There were some very tired people around at the end of each of those sessions. The days leading to the seminar's end included a plethora of weapons "partner drills", and to this day I still can't remember all of them, but I'm sure they are imprinted on my brain somewhere.

In closing, congratulations to the Queensland people for holding a fantastic seminar and also to all those people involved with it from the other Aussie states. Well done everybody.



**Winter School in July 2003** will be held at Collaroy, 30 minutes north of Sydney, practically on the beach. Please visit [www.collaroycentre.org.au](http://www.collaroycentre.org.au) to check out this venue. Andrew Dziedzic will be handing out pamphlets with more information at Summer School in Melbourne.

The spring / Summer 2001-2002 edition of the newsletter last year focussing on women in Aikido raised a lot of interest, both in Australia and overseas.

Given that the ACT has a relatively high proportion of women training, particularly in the Dan grades, we thought we would add our own contribution.

The ACT has a core of about 25 students, half of these with Dan grades, who train regularly. We have two dojos — two classes a week at our central dojo located on the south side of Canberra in the Melrose primary school. Classes at Melrose are taken by Hanan Janiv Sensei. We share our second dojo at the Australian National University with all the other martial arts on campus. We run four classes here with senior students instructing.

At times there have been a high proportion of women training in the ACT – (compared with other states). Currently there are five senior women training including Ruth Treyde (Yondan), Margaret Dinan and Lis van Papenrecht (Sandan), Kathryn Henderson, and Lou Gould (Nidan).

Three of us (Ruth, Margaret and Lis) got together over a cup of coffee to talk about the ACT from a women's perspective.

We all agreed that one of the notable things about training in the ACT is being a student of Janiv Sensei. As anyone who has met Janiv Sensei knows, he is unique — and that's the way he treats everyone — as unique individuals.

Each student in the dojo has a relationship with Janiv Sensei that mirrors the relationship he himself had with his teacher Sugano Sensei. The depth and breadth of that relationship depends on a variety of things including commitment to training and growing as an individual, and how long one has been training. But each of us (women and men) has a unique relationship with Janiv Sensei. We think it fair to say that it is this aspect that particularly appeals to women.

Janiv Sensei has a great love of people, and a tremendous curiosity as to what and how they think. He takes great joy in imparting his deep understanding of Aikido, and in seeing people grow and develop to beyond their expectations on and off the mat. He is encouraging, supportive and always approachable. His attitudes are also reflected in the way his senior students establish a relationship with beginners to in turn support and encourage them.

Another aspect of training with Janiv Sensei is that we train on real tatami that are laid before each class, and then picked up again after class. These tatami certainly tell

you where the flaws are in your rolling, and test the commitment of students in terms of arriving early to lay the mats and spending time outside of class in repairing them. It certainly adds to the community feel of the group, and continues in a very real way our training off the mat.

Ungraded women are encouraged to wear a hakama. This goes against the national (and probably International) trend. As ungraded women we wore our hakama with great pleasure, and rather than feeling discriminated against or privileged, used the opportunity to enjoy the feeling that a hakama brings to a movement, to knee walking, and to rolling in these beautiful

garments.

Is critical mass a factor when trying to increase the proportion of women students? Probably, although we only have anecdotal information to go on. We were all certainly encouraged by the women in the class when we first started training. It is both hard and lonely if you are the only one in the change room and then the only woman on the mat! The senior women do go out of their way to support, encourage and mentor all beginners, and in particular more junior women not just in Canberra but also at the National Summer and Winter Schools. They also provide each other with encouragement and friendship.

Janiv Sensei also shares his responsibilities for the ACT. He is neither jealous nor insecure about his authority. Ruth and Margaret each take a regular class at ANU. Ruth is president of the ANU Aikido Club and Margaret is treasurer. Both have recognised senior positions of responsibility within the organization in the ACT, which would again indirectly enhance the perception of the role of women in Aikido. Ruth also sits on the kyu-grading panel with Janiv Sensei and Guy Fripp Sensei.

We do have many occasions where there are as many women as men training at a class.

What impact does having a high number of senior women on the mat have on the men training?

It may well impress them further about how Aikido works. More importantly, it teaches them respect for women on the mat.

When ACT men go to a national school they have respect for the women training. (The problem of being 'instructed' by more junior men on the mat at national events is a regular annoyance.)

Overall the greatest single factor for senior women training in developing and maintaining their commitment to Aikido has been the student teacher relationship with Janiv Sensei, something that not just the women, but each ACT student comes to know and prize.

## The women of Canberra

### Training in the A.C.T.

Where everyone is treated the same —  
As individuals.

By Ruth Treyde, Lis Van Papenrecht, and Margaret  
Dinan



## CONNECTION WITH A SHIHAN

Editor: *Last issue we started a section where students could ask questions and senior instructors would answer. We continue this issue with several questions relating to connection with a Shihan.*

*Tony Smibert Sensei being Vice President of Aiki-Kai Australia, National Area Representative, a member of the Technical Teaching Committee, as well as Vice Chairman of The International Aikido Federation is in a unique position to answer.*

### **Sensei, why the connection with one Shihan? What is so important about training under the supervision of one particular Shihan?**

It's a good question because lots of students ask it. I'll have a shot at it this way:

Aikido is not a subject — it's not a course of study in existing knowledge. It is a course of study of oneself, and it takes place through the medium of regular training. You learn it with the structured experiences that occur in the dojo. You learn it from what you are taught, from the thoughts that come to you as a consequence of Aikido, from direct transmission of knowledge that can occur between people— from simply looking at good aikido. It comes through sweat and effort — out of the nights when you'd rather have stayed home. It comes when you suddenly move "right".

This is more than training — It is a profound learning experience.

Someone has to structure and guide that experience. Not necessarily in person but certainly through the way the local instructors are taught, and also through the grading syllabus and consequent exams. Then someone has to carry the responsibility of recommending the applicant to Doshu. These are parts of the traditional role of a Shihan, though, in the absence of one, a national organisation *can* do this. Those organisations that don't have someone qualified, look for someone — hence the number of Shihans who travel internationally.

Unfortunately many non-Japanese thought this is just "guys running seminars" and so that's what it has evolved into — Lots of seminars by lots of Shihans who teach without the usual relationship between Shihan and student. This is far from what we have here with Sugano Sensei. We've ALSO had lots of visiting Shihans who've come as his invited guests — mostly others among the highest ranked Shihans at Sensei's level — people who have devoted their entire lives to the study of Aikido — as well as Ueshiba Kisshomaru Doshu and Ueshiba Moriteru Doshu. But they are all respectful of our traditional relationship with Sugano Sensei.

What worries me is that some of the more recent students think that our Summer and Winter Schools are just courses with a visiting Shihan and have no idea of the traditional relationship they are part of. So they miss out on half the opportunity that these schools afford.

Understanding the master-pupil relationship is traditionally part of the study of Aikido. It hasn't been all that common in the West because not all that many people have access to a high ranked Shihan.

Ongoing access to a Shihan who "accepts you" is pretty lucky — it's like a "Gift from the Gods."

You must respect that gift if you are lucky enough to receive it either personally, or through an organisation or school. Of course this is a traditional point of view, but there is a lot that flows from it.

### **In our case, would there be a special connection between Sugano Shihan and Aiki-Kai Australia?**

Yes. You have to remember the significance of Sugano Sensei's original appointment here by O-Sensei in 1965. That still stands today under the current Doshu. If you look at our history, in 1975 Sugano Sensei himself set up the organisation, along with instructors and students taught by him, specifically in order to assist him to teach and to protect Aikido in Australia. Look at the Constitution.

As everyone matured over the years he's stepped back — but his traditional role as Shihan is probably more significant than ever.

### **You mentioned "Exchange of responsibility". What do you mean by that?**

You commit to a Shihan. He or she accepts responsibility for you — not just for today, not just for a seminar or class... It's ongoing, as long as you keep studying and learning.

Over time you realise that in aikido we give of what we have learned through our own effort. What we give doesn't come out of books. It is what we know — learned by body and mind effort at training. To give others what you've learned through your efforts is always special, and you have to respect it if you receive it. I think some people sometimes miss this point.

### **What about those people who are always telling you that such and such particular way is the right way to do a technique? They often seem so set in their ways and just don't want to try something different.**

In my own case, I don't think there are any fixed ways to do techniques, and I think that would be the antithesis of Sugano Sensei's teaching. The problem with fixed ideas is it's not a technical thing but more about whether your mind is open to ongoing learning.

Certainly some people come in to the organisation with fixed ideas about Aikido or what the organisation should be. They've read this or that book so they think they know what to expect. They have an intellectual structure already in place, which they expect to find in the dojo...or else they might have strong hopes or expectations that aikido will conform to some other certain philosophical or political ideal.

Trouble is, aikido is aikido. It's never what you might expect. Everyday we learn more, so what it is to us changes. I guess one important point is that Aiki-Kai Australia was not a club formed by a bunch of people with an interest in Aikido, no Shihan and no idea of how to achieve their aims. (As Vice Chairman of the IAF I see organisations like this try to get going around the world and it's really hard for them.)

We really are a school, and it's dedicated to making it possible for students to learn Aikido. *Aiki-Kai Australia was established by a Shihan*, not the other way around. It is important to know that.

Indicative of this is how many relative beginners ask questions with a statement. "It's like such and such isn't it?" They are asking for confirmation of what they think they already know.

It really amazes me when people with no experience of the subject say something like, "This focus on one Shihan which I can see here is quite unhealthy, you know!" They've just started, and never experienced half the things that can make the close interaction with a Shihan so relevant — and yet they feel they want to see it dismissed.

I guess the main point is there are not too many places outside of Japan where you have the opportunity to be a student in an organisation, which places so much emphasis on the traditional role of that Shihan who was appointed by O-Sensei himself.

I think one of the great things that has flowed from this is the high number — the very large number of high ranked students who are still training under the one teacher. Look around the world; you don't see it very often.

We've been very lucky.

There's a lot more to this but I guess those are some points to consider.

*Editor: We leave the discussion at this point, which I think gives everyone much to think about. I will be asking other senior students some of the same questions so there will be more on this in future issues.*



SUGANO SHIHAN in action at the Winter School on the Gold Coast July 2002.

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