



AIKIDO FRIENDSHIP

By Sensei Peter Brown
Kyu Shin Kan – United Kingdom Aikikai

During the mid 60's was the first time I entered a Dojo. On the tatami there were two Sensei, one by the name of Bob Hardy and the other was a man called Alan Wade.

After a year or so one of the Sensei stopped coming to the Dojo, at that time I was too young to understand the reasons for his departure. This left the Saturday afternoon junior class in the hands of Sensei Alan Wade. He embodied all you could ask for in a Sensei, he had time for all us juniors and considering his power he had an ability to adjust his training to accommodate the younger students. However when called upon to practice with the seniors he demonstrated a power that made us all want to emulate his kind of Aikido.

Looking back now I think most people would consider that we were joined at the hip because if you saw Alan Sensei you would put money on it that I was close by. He used to make sure I arrived home in one piece and I also remember travelling to courses in his car or van. Just after his wedding Alan Sensei emigrated to New Zealand, which I believe was a great loss for the UK. I never saw him again until some years back when he returned to the UK on family business and we relived old times back at the Secular Hall Dojo.



Sensei Peter Brown emphasising the importance of Taisabaki and correct rhythm when training with uke.

At the beginning of 2009 I had the pleasure of meeting Simon Puffett. Our first contact was at a small Dojo in a student's garden. I totally read the wrong signs that day. My feeling was that Simon did not care too much for my class, how wrong I was. Simon started to attend the Kyu Shin Kan Dojo in Leicester and it took a very short time to realise that we were somewhat similar, not only in our Aikido but also in our approach to practice.

I looked forward to the Wednesdays that he travelled up from London, we trained and then it became a "must do" event to travel back to the hotel he stayed to have a drink and to put the world of Aikido right. In August of this year we both attended the 2009 United Kingdom Aikikai Summer School, the guest instructor was Kobayashi Shihan from Hombu Dojo. We had a great time on and off the mat. I also told Simon that a group of us would be going to Hombu Dojo Japan in November and he kindly made it possible for us to attend Kimori Dojo to train with Sawada Shihan, which is something I am looking forward to.

The highlight of this year was a grading course we had at the Secular Hall Dojo at the beginning of November. I considered that it would be most appropriate to invite Simon to instruct on the day. What a bonus that decision was, as he demonstrated with the Jo movement that he had been taught on his travels. This provided a different angle for some of us to work on.



Sensei Simon Puffett demonstrating Kumi Jo techniques with Uke Sensei Kevan Ginns.

I believe very strongly in allowing people from different Dojos and cultures to become a part of what you are doing. No matter how long the relationship lasts, as this can only be beneficial to all concerned. The ability to allow students to seek out the differences, good or bad, can only make you stronger as a Sensei. You will have no problem with this if as a Sensei you have confidence in your own ability.

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Within my own Aikido I consider that Taisabaki is the basis of all Aikido, it is more important than technique. People spend a lot of time trying to master the technique and never give a second thought to the body art, which when used in the right context makes our Aikido smoother and more doable.

I am sure that I would be right in saying that we have a friendship that will go on, no matter where we find ourselves in the Aikido world. The main factor I personally remember about my new friend is the openness, his ability to see what I see and yes how his hair figures very much in his explanation of his Aikido.



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