



United Kingdom Aikikai Seminar May '09

By Simon Puffett

In the month of May my interest was drawn to the United Kingdom Aikikai [U.K.A] seminar in Slough, West London. The seminar was lead by the designated UKA Principal Gordon Jones Shihan 6th Dan.

Courtesy of the UKA website...*Gordon Jones Shihan began his Aikido training in 1964 and was a founding member of the Aikikai of Great Britain. Later to be known as the British Aikido Federation and then eventually the UKA. Following the formation of the UKA Mr Jones became Shidoin and Principal, which was followed by his promotion in January 2007 to 6th Dan in 2004 by Chiba Shihan.*

Jones Shihan travels abroad regularly to teach in Serbia, Greece and is technical director of the Australasia Aikikai in Sydney. The UKA is made up of 4 individual groups led by senior instructors (Shidoin). These groups (houses) are integrated within the umbrella of the UKA and are completely autonomous. The 4 houses together have over 30 Dojo's throughout England with membership currently standing at around 900.

Upon my arrival I was warmly welcomed by the organisers of the seminar from Staines Aikido Club lead by Neil Mould Sensei 3rd Dan. I quickly got changed and made my way to the dojo whereby I was pleasantly surprised by the number of Yudansha in attendance and the amount of space available. On entering the Dojo I was greeted by Shihan Jones with a hearty handshake and an invitation to join everyone else on the mat. The UKA enjoys a very strong relationship with the Aikikai Foundation with the alternation of guest instructors each year between Shigeru Sugawara Shihan and Yukimitsu Kobayashi Shihan. During the 2008 summer school I had the pleasure of training with many of the UKA members. I also had the opportunity to witness Gordon Jones Shihan training while attending another senior instructor's class. His no nonsense approach to playing and mixing it up with the younger more physically performing members of the UKA was certainly an inspiration to watch, especially when I would consider it to be such a contrast in character coming from a gentleman who is surprisingly soft spoken when teaching.

On the day, Gordon Shihan demonstrated numerous interesting techniques, with the primary focus on Nage's hand manipulation to control and secure Uke's wrist whilst leading Uke into the numerous Oyo Waza available. Each technique provided a greater and greater challenge to Nage's timing, position and control of their Uke. This seminar was certainly an excellent demonstration of Gordon Shihan's technical and teaching ability.

The second class of the day was taken by Neil Mould Sensei. Sensei Mould's experience and passion for Aikido was evident throughout the entire class, with his emphasis on techniques detailing the importance of successfully taking Uke's balance from the very onset. Sensei Neil's techniques demonstrated the same cutting movement utilised between bokken/ken technique and the hand technique of Nage to remove and lead Uke off balance.

Throughout the seminar, all participants enjoyed the atmosphere and Aiki friendship on the mats.



UKA - Gordon Jones Shihan 6th Dan



Gordon Jones Shihan demonstrating Kokyu Nage Waza.



Neil Mould Sensei 3rd Dan demonstrating during the seminar with David Whiteland as Uke.

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