



Visiting Kimori Dojo - Nagoya 2009

by Simon Puffett 01/02/2009

Unfortunately with every high there will be a resounding low and in this case my low was due to having to return to London, after spending a terrific two weeks training at Kimori Dojo in Japan.

This was my 8th visit and as you would expect the time just flew by, but not without experiencing in full the richness and generosity in friendship given by Sawada Shihan, his wife and the many members of Kimori Dojo.

The following day of my arrival a weapons seminar was gratefully organized which saw some fifty people come together, not only from Kimori Dojo and other dojo's around Nagoya but also visitors from the Aikido World Headquarters in Tokyo.

Like myself there were several other visitors from overseas staying at Kimori Dojo. From Hong Kong there was Shane Bentley the expat kiwi that can fly, Max Olsen the Minnesota surfer living in Hawaii and Travis Carter the Canadian cavalier following a career teaching English in Japan.



Toshiharu Sawada Shihan

To call us a bunch of adolescent misfits would be harsh... though fairly accurate. In many instances we were constantly laughing at each other and ourselves during training and especially during socializing session's, however we were all at Kimori Dojo in the pursuit of bettering ourselves through practicing Aikido with Sawada Shihan.

Catching up once again with good friend Aaron McConnell was to prove to be an enjoyable repeat on previous visits, whereby we are trading ideas and laughs on ways to improve our own technique...ever hopeful in the attempt to catch up with Sawada Shihan's continuous improvement each year. Aaron's technique and translation skills has improved immensely over the past year and opened up the opportunity to ask many questions throughout my visit.

One year prior, my visit to Kimori Dojo lasted 5 weeks and in truth I didn't feel I had made the most out of that opportunity. Baring this fact in mind I asked Sawada Shihan each day for extra training and without a second thought or a blink of an eye, he generously gave his time and all the knowledge he could impart upon us.



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With every visit to Kimori Dojo I have had the pleasure of meeting all the new members who have been drawn to the phenomenon of Aikido and with every year passed, I have also been fortunate enough to witness these members improve considerably in their technique. This year three of Kimori Dojo's most senior members were celebrated for attaining promotions, these members were Mitsushi Kobayashi Sensei for 7th Dan, Katutoshi Fuji Sensei for 7th Dan & Eiji Morimoto Sensei for 6th Dan. A feat and dedication too Aikido which should be celebrated to its fullest.

During my stay, Takimoto Shihan 7th Dan, a good friend of Sawada Shihan and Takase Shihan and who is also the Technical Director of the Hidajuku Aikido organization based in Nagoya, kindly extended an invitation to join him and his members for training. This year I talked two of the other misfits (Shane & Max) into tagging along. At the end of the evenings practice, everyone who trained had thoroughly enjoyed the difference encountered in technique and character in those that came on the mat.

With the privilege of being invited to teach at Kimori Dojo, I quickly realised how much the noise of two knees knocking together can make...but I am happy to say that by the 55th minute I had composed myself... funnily enough the second hour was taken by Sawada Shihan who was exuding a much more relaxed and confident state.

All in all the trip was a resounding success, hence I guess the resounding low that closely followed as the wheels touched down and I too came down to earth. While walking out of the plane there was that rare occasion that I had caught myself thinking... thinking about how much I had greatly benefited yet again from another visit to Sawada Shihan and Kimori Dojo.

Now all I have to do is to put into practice, everything that he has given me...



Sawada Shihan practicing with an avid audience in tow.



Sawada Shihan demonstrating Jo Kumi Tachi technique with Simon Puffett as uke.

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Kimiko Sawada - Shane Bentley - Sawada Shihan - Simon Puffett
Kimori Dojo January 2009



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