

# AIKIDO YOSHINKAN INTERNATIONAL

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JUNE 1991

IYAF  
INTERNATIONAL YOSHINKAI  
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# AIKIDO YOSHINKAN INTERNATIONAL

Vol. 2 No. 1 June 1991

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"*Aikido Yoshinkan International* magazine is committed to the presentation of true technique and spirit to those who love Aikido."

Gozo Shioda

## CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Yoshinkan Now.....	3
IYAF—International Yoshinkai Aikido Federation.....	6
Techniques Explanation.....	9
Interview.....	11
Yoshinkan Aikido Worldwide.....	14
Communication.....	15

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# INTRODUCTION

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## SOKE SHIODA GOZO

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I am delighted that *Aikido Yoshinkan International* has entered its second year, for which this is the first issue. This has been made possible through support from readers worldwide. It is my desire that *AYI* magazine will continue to help spread Yoshinkan Aikido throughout the world.

The world is undergoing a period of uncertainty amid political instability, economic crisis, and even natural disasters. Although differences in language and cultures exist across borders, I believe that all persons pursuing Aikido training feel, as do I, that it is our mission to help overcome these differences through Aikido and to take part in promoting the true meaning of peace.

Students in the first Foreign Instructors Course are presently undergoing very rigorous training

in Aikido. I trust that they are absorbing not only the techniques of Aikido but also the mental concepts that go hand in hand with the techniques so that each one of them will fulfill their primary objective of becoming instructors of Yoshinkan Aikido when they return to their respective countries.

On June 13, 1991, the first grading on basic techniques for the course took place at the Honbu Dojo. Those who took the test were full of spirit, demonstrated everything they have learned to date during their intensive training, and gave their best.

I ask that all the instructors and members of Yoshinkan Aikido the world over continue to give their utmost in their training and in their daily lives. It is through your efforts that I look forward to the expansion of *AYI* magazine's readership in its second year of publication.



## NEWS

### ◆First Foreign Instructors Course Kyu Test: June 13, 1991

Since its start at the beginning of April, the first Foreign Instructors Course has reached the completion of the first level of techniques (*dai ichi kihon waza*), attained with participants' first grading on June 13.

Participants' training begins at 8 o'clock every morning with a cleaning of the dojo facilities. From 8:30 to 9:30 they have their first class, where they train alongside non-course students of different levels and study a variety of techniques, basic and more advanced. The next training session, with the riot police, starts at 10:00 and consists of very hard basic training until 11:30. After a 30-minute rest, until 12:00, they resume an instructors-course-only class in English.

Three different classes, with three different purposes. A first class in a more relaxed atmosphere to encourage them to develop fluency in techniques and to practice the basics they have learned. A middle class with the police to accustom them to performing under pressure—working in rhythm with a lot of different people, concentrating while being taught in Japanese and in noisy surroundings, and challenging themselves in parallel with the police. And a final class in English to give them detailed explanations and advice and to review particular problems.

Compared with the Japanese, who are very malleable and used from an early age to behaving naturally as a group, the foreign participants, who come from very different countries and cultures and have equally disparate personal backgrounds, are much more individualistic. They have to be convinced, mentally, of the personal benefit or of the necessity of performing an action before giving everything they have.

The Japanese, because they rely entirely on their teachers, tend at the outset to avoid questioning their teachers and personal conflicts among

themselves. They act as they have been told and therefore seem to learn quicker at the beginning. The foreigners need more theories, as if only the content was important, and have to deal with each others' different personalities before they can start the actual learning process.

For this reason, at this particular stage in their development, the trainee foreign instructors exhibit less sharpness and feeling than their counterpart policemen. This was reflected clearly in their first test. We anticipate, however, that as soon as they become conscious of these shortcomings they will change appropriately and catch up quickly.

### Sylva Kheru Profile



*Sylva Kheru has been studying Aikido at the Yoshinkan Honbu Dojo since June 1989. She is one of the four women taking part in the first International Yoshinkan Aikido Foreign Instructors Course.*

I was born in London, England, but I migrated to Australia when I was a small child. As a teenager my favorite activity was horse riding. My family lived in Newcastle, which is a rural area that reaches to the sea. So I had the best of both worlds and could go riding in the bush as well as by the sea. I would ride 25 kilometers a day. When I was 16, I was even crazy enough to exercise race horses on the track four afternoons a week—quite a dangerous job. During that period of my life, I owned four horses and was a regular pony club attendee.

I went to university for four years, two of which were in Newcastle. The other two years, I studied in Brisbane at an experimental university where I took a triple major in film, theatre, and ballet. During this time, I also worked in several productions in both dance and theatre within the Brisbane community.



After university, I moved to Byron Bay, where I became aware of the terrible unemployment problem, especially amongst young people in Australia. I, along with a social-minded group of young people, decided to do something to help the young people in our area. We formed a youth organization and applied for financial grants from the Australian government. Over a period of three years we were granted \$22,000 Australian. We developed art programmes and even set up an arts and crafts shop where young people could sell just about anything. The shop became well known amongst many young Australians. Unfortunately, we had some conservative political opposition, and by the time I turned 25 I had to leave it all behind.

After that I worked for the disabled for a year as a field officer. Then economic circumstances forced me to move to Sydney. In Sydney, I worked as a business administrator for a small health food company. From the time I was 18 years old, I had had a beautiful female German shepherd dog. While I was in Sydney, she became sick and died. Until that point I had wanted to travel but had done nothing about it. Suddenly I decided to quit my job and take off overseas. I headed off through Southeast Asia and ended up in Japan.

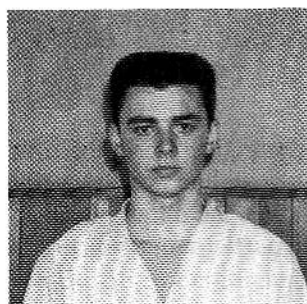
Now, in 1991, I am participating in the instructors course at the Honbu Dojo in Tokyo. There are only four women in this course and I'm sure some of the women who read this article may want to know what being in the course is like.

First, it is very demanding, both physically and mentally. There is so much to learn and so little time. The *sensei* never stop pushing you and teaching you, and you have to find the courage to keep responding and pushing yourself to new limits. I find I have no room to think about other parts of my life—it is all Aikido. A half-hearted commitment would not get me through this course, so I recommend to anyone contemplating doing the course to think carefully first. I must add that no quarter is or should be given because you are a woman, sometimes weighing half the mass of your partner. The "strength" you need must come from somewhere inside yourself. For me it is the development of "spirit" that helps me to get through each demanding day.

In the future I hope to spend a short time in America investigating women's self-defense programmes. I also want to continue training at the

Honbu Dojo. Another plan of mine is to go to France for a year or two and continue with my Aikido there. And after all that probably its back to Australia where I hope to find or help develop a strong Aikido organization.

## Curtis Seeger Profile



*Curtis Seeger was born in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, in August 1971. He began Aikido in October 1986 under Kevin Blok at the Chudokan in Windsor. Curtis is the youngest member of the 1991 Foreign Instructors Course.*

I was educated in Windsor, Canada, and spent all my life there before coming to Tokyo early this year.

Windsor is a beautiful city looking north over the Detroit River to its American counterpart, Detroit. The two cities, although sharing the same river, are about as different as you can get. Windsor was founded by Jesuits and retains an old-world charm in contrast to the black towers of Detroit. Both cities, too, stand on opposite ends of the safety scale, with night walks along the river, on the Windsor side, not only possible but popular.

In Windsor, I worked as a cameraman at the local track during school and even wrote a few pieces for local newspapers and newsletters. I haven't published anything yet, but I have been writing solidly since I was 15 and am continuing here in Tokyo.

After high school, not wanting to go straight off to college, I managed a job as a quality control inspector, saved money, and arrived in Japan.

Tokyo is all I have really managed to see of Japan, so my image of the country is one mass of concrete with swarms upon swarms of people. It has not been that easy to settle in here. Friends had told me how easy it was to get a job here teaching English or something like that, but although this may have been true a couple of years ago it's not true anymore. Also, rent here is incredibly high, so you find yourself paying an unbelievably high

rent on little more than a couple of square meters of straw matting.

Tokyo itself is different from any other city, and like the Japanese people consists of much more than you would imagine upon first sight.

The instructors course has been great. You get what would be the equivalent of two or three months training outside the Honbu in one week. It is tiring, however, and with summer and the rainy season starting it is sometimes hard to find the extra energy you need to start each class. Often, before class, when I am tired and hot, I think about the people I know back home who are now out on the lake, at a barbecue, or maybe just relaxing around home. I look at myself as I sit in a soaked *dogi* warming up again with the riot police, another class coming. A class where I will be pushed again and again and sweat more and feel my body aching... And the awareness of the quality of Aikido I am about to be presented with makes me look forward to the next hour.

### ◆Visit to Hungary and the USSR

From July 21 to July 27, 1991, the Eastern European country of Hungary will be the venue for what has become an annual event in Europe—a Japan Festival.

Yoshinkan Aikido has the privilege of having been invited to provide demonstrations throughout the duration of the festival. Nakano Shihan and Baker Shidojin, both from the Honbu Dojo,

have been chosen by the Honbu Dojo to participate in the festival as representatives of Yoshinkan Aikido.

In addition to Aikido, numerous other aspects of Japanese culture will also be presented at the festival. These include an introduction to Japanese musical instruments; Japanese folk songs; and other martial arts, such as Karate and Jodo, a Japanese martial art that makes use of a cylindrical stick.

The Japan Festival is held annually in different parts of Europe. This year's festival will be the eighth. And the event is expected to be one of the largest held so far. To ensure its success, a committee has been set up in Japan under the representation of Steven Doma-Miko. Mr. Doma-Miko is a Hungarian-born artist currently living in Japan.

The president of the Republic of Hungary has been appointed as an honorable adviser to the committee, and a variety of sponsors, such as the Toshiba International Friendship Foundation of Japan, among other groups, will be backing the venture.

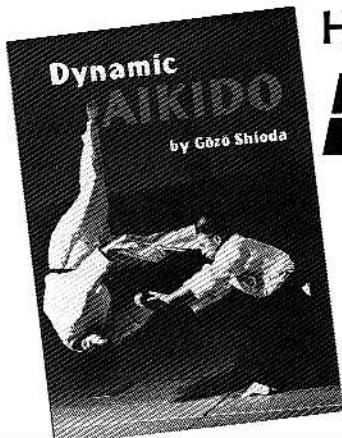
Nakano Shihan and Baker Shidojin will provide Yoshinkan Aikido demonstrations on the dates and at the locations that follow:

July 21- Budapest (Hungary)

July 22- Miskolc (Hungary)

July 23- Beregszász (USSR)

July 27- Balatonfüred (Hungary)



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# IYAF—International Yoshinkai Aikido Federation

## REGISTERING WITH THE IYAF

*The IYAF recently received a letter from an overseas group whose members have been practicing Aikido for several years. They had taken part in a clinic in which a Yoshinkan branch instructor had taught. Impressed with the style, they approached the instructor and requested information on taking membership with the Yoshinkan. The instructor referred them to the IYAF, and they immediately made contact. We have decided to present their questions in this article, along with our answers, to aid other groups in similar situations.*

**Q.** When we register with the IYAF, do we have to do this through the Yoshinkan instructor that introduced us or can we directly affiliate with the Honbu Dojo?

**A.** There are two points here that should be covered. First, all registrations are direct with the Honbu Dojo. The IYAF was established to provide a direct link between the Honbu Dojo and all Yoshinkan Aikido students and instructors worldwide to provide them with unobstructed contact with Soke Gozo Shioda.

Secondly, IYAF instructors can recommend new groups to the Honbu Dojo, but the groups register directly with the Honbu Dojo, not with the recommending instructor. An instructor who claims you must register through him is violating the spirit and design of the IYAF; he may be attempting to strengthen his own power base. Prior to the IYAF, martial arts, including Aikido, were unfortunately characterized by frequent personal power struggles, almost always at the expense of the students.

**Q.** I have been told that if my club joins the IYAF I could risk being expelled from the Yoshinkan.

**A.** IYAF is the Yoshinkan, the name International Yoshinkai Aikido Federation attests to this. Soke Shioda and the Honbu Dojo created this federation. If you do not belong to the IYAF then you are not a member of the Yoshinkan because all Yoshinkan members internationally automatically became members of the IYAF under stipulation by Soke Gozo Shioda on January 1, 1990. No instructor, Yoshinkan or otherwise, has the

right to expel you from the Yoshinkan family created by Soke Shioda.

**Q.** I was accredited with my *dan* certificate before the creation of the IYAF, and members of my club have received certification from a Japanese branch instructor since the establishment of the IYAF. Are we recognized by the Yoshinkan?

**A.** All members accredited with ranks (*kyu* or *dan*) before the formation of the IYAF in January 1990 will continue to be recognized if they were previously registered with the Yoshinkan Honbu Dojo in Japan. You can check that you are registered by simply writing to the Honbu Dojo. Please give details of the instructor, date of accreditation, and rank.

Since the formation of the IYAF, the Yoshinkan recognizes only those ranks accredited through the IYAF. *Dan*, *kyu*, and instructor certificates are issued by the Honbu Dojo and readily available to all Yoshinkan instructors. If you are in any doubt about your certification please contact the Honbu Dojo. If you have not completed an IYAF *dan* or instructor application form, then you may have been issued certification not recognized by the Honbu Dojo. Certificates are easily recognized by their distinctive style. The Honbu Dojo will send photocopies of certificate designs for you to check; otherwise, send your name, rank, and date of accreditation for verification. Again, be warned, some people may be attempting to build their own power bases and may unscrupulously attempt to utilize your group and registration funds. It is your responsibility to check. Contact the Honbu Dojo, and we will assist you. All students have the right to Honbu Dojo certification and direct contact with Soke Shioda.

**Q.** I have been teaching for several years. During this time I was never registered. What is the advantage to me if I now register with the Honbu Dojo through the IYAF.

**A.** Prior to the formation of the IYAF, very few people were aware of how to register as an instructor to receive their teaching license from Soke Sensei. This was especially so in the West in, for example, Canada, the United States, and Europe because there was little information available on how *dan*-ranked students could register.

Often, existing registered instructors would actively discourage their *dan* ranks from contacting the Honbu directly.

The advantage of registration—your teaching license is granted directly by Soke Sensei, the founder of Yoshinkan Aikido. Within the martial art world such licenses are treasured documents. You can then receive *dan* and *kyu* rankings for your students, also issued by Soke Sensei at the Honbu. Soke Sensei has provided all this through the IYAF in order to support the activities of instructors and students worldwide.

## IYAF REGISTRATION FROM NOVEMBER 1989 TO JUNE 1991

### Registered *Dan* Rankings

#### CANADA

Mitsugoro Karasawa	6th dan
Kevin Blok	5th dan
James Jeanette	5th dan
Alister Thompson	5th dan
Gordan Blanking	3rd dan
Roger Plomish	3rd dan
Greg West	3rd dan
Ed Dalton	2nd dan
Geordan Reynolds	2nd dan
Art Williams	2nd dan
Maybritt Leyk	1st dan
Erik Pohjola	1st dan
Ray Probe	1st dan

#### U.S.A.

Sam Combes	5th dan
Masatoshi Morita	5th dan
Yukio Utada	5th dan
Mits Yamashita	5th dan
David Dye	3rd dan
Evelyn Dyzars	3rd dan
Christopher Howey	3rd dan
Arthur Mach	3rd dan
Jose Cileone	2nd dan
Nicholas Wada	2nd dan
Allen Baugh	1st dan
Steven Benham	1st dan
John Campagna	1st dan
Julie Cody	1st dan
Elizabeth Daugert	1st dan
Mark Dorfman	1st dan
Rene Gimay	1st dan
Robert Parker	1st dan
Mark Ryder	1st dan

#### ENGLAND

Antony Yates	5th dan
Colin Mcwatt	3rd dan
Alan Pegram	3rd dan
Gary Yates	3rd dan
Paul Campbell	1st dan
Andrew Squires	1st dan
Paul Stephens	1st dan
Jamie White	1st dan
Krysia Zalewska	1st dan

#### GERMANY

Karl Heinz Pohl	3rd dan
Wolfgang Dorflinger	2nd dan
Rene Pandis	2nd dan
Max Bosch	1st dan
Wolfgang Christl	1st dan
Richard Eckhardt	1st dan
Stefan Fink	1st dan
Stephan Otto	1st dan
Frank Tegtmeier	1st dan
Jacob Theisinger	1st dan
Norbert Zessel	1st dan

#### AUSTRALIA

Joe Thambu	4th dan
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#### MALAYSIA

Morad Bakar	3rd dan
Robert Choong Ewe Jin	3rd dan
Razali Deen	3rd dan
Kalidasan	3rd dan
Lock Chuan Sun	3rd dan
Loh Kong Yoon	3rd dan
Gopal Veerasingham	3rd dan
Yeoh Eu Hock	3rd dan

### Registered Instructors

#### CANADA

Chuck Bates	Gordon Blanking
Kevin Blok	Pat Blok
Brad Claeys	Edward Dalton
James Demers	Chris Gordon
Fred Haynes	James Jeanette
Jim Kootnekoff	Mark Lemmon
Roger Plomish	Jim Stuart
Alister Thompson	Greg West
Art Williams	

#### U.S.A.

Steven Benham	Sam Combes
David Dye	Evelyn Dysarz
John Fox	Chris Howey
David King	Arthur Mach
Masatoshi Morita	Julius Rosenstein
Yukio Utada	Mits Yamashita



## ENGLAND

Paul Campbell	Colin Mcwatt
Alan Pegram	David Rubens
Andrew Squires	Paul Stevens
Jamie White	Antony Yates
Gary Yates	Krysia Zalewska

## FRANCE

Jacques Muguruza

## GERMANY

Karl Heinz Pohl    Hiromichi Nagano

## AUSTRALIA

Joe Thambu

## MALAYSIA

Francis Ramasamy

## Registered Dojos

### CANADA

Chudokan	Kevin Blok
HHYA	Fred Haynes
Seiwakan	Greg West
Jinbukan	Roger Plomish
Renbukan	Jim Jeanette
Seishinkan	Kevin Blok, Ed Dalton

### U.S.A.

Kadokan	Sam Combes
Shuyokan	David Dye
Sanbukan	Mits Yamashita

### AUSTRALIA

Shudokan	Joe Thambu
Shinbukan	Scott Roche

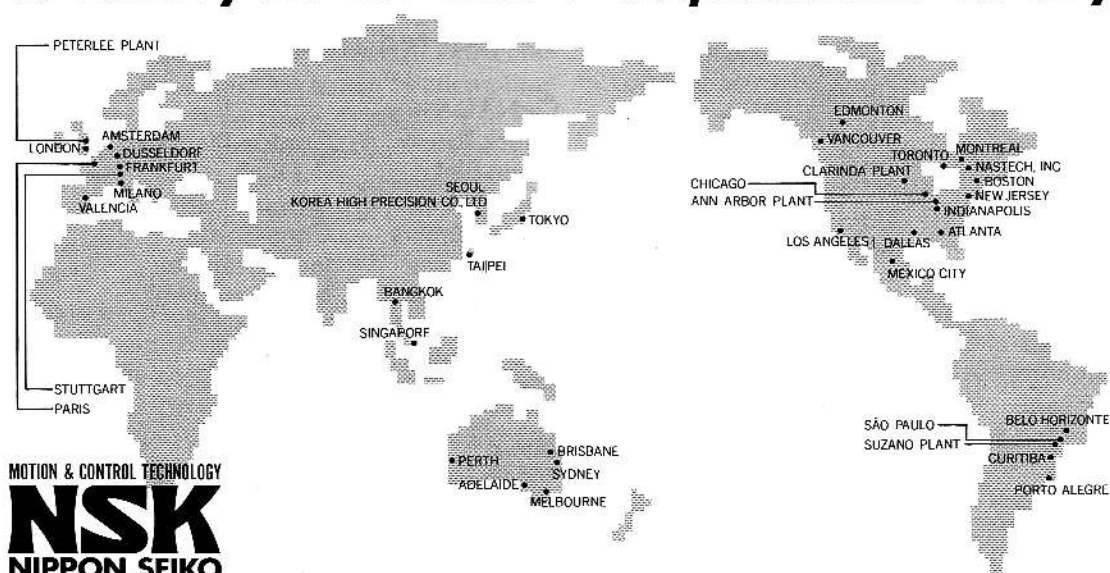
### UK

Taidokan	Antony Yates
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### MALAYSIA

Mushinkan	Francis Ramasamy
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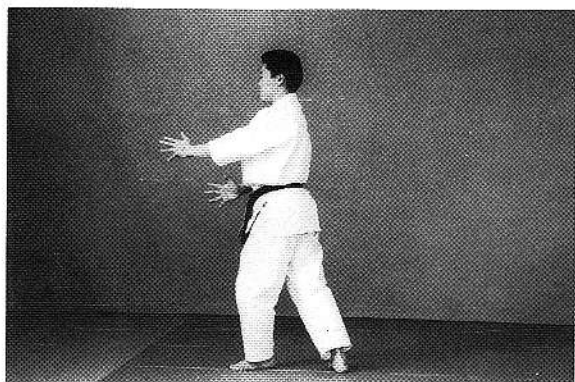
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# TECHNIQUES EXPLANATION

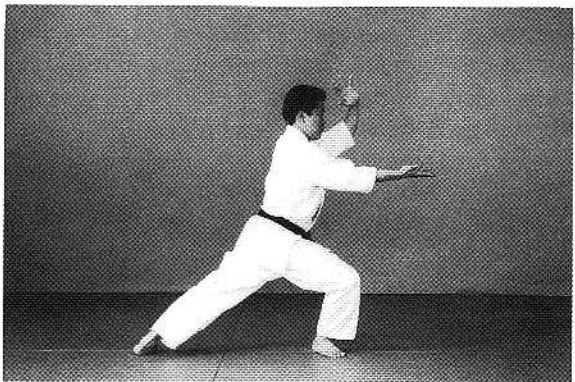
## SHUMATSU DOSA NI

*Shumatsu dosa ni* is the last of the six basic movements. It is the basic exercise for learning the sword cutting motion and is useful for practicing stability, weight shifting, raising the *tegatana* (hand sword), and making a final downward cut.

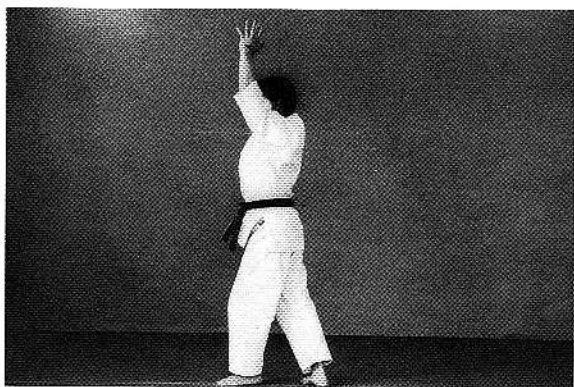
*Shumatsu dosa* is directly connected with the *shiho-nage* technique. As a number two movement, it is a response to a pushing attack.



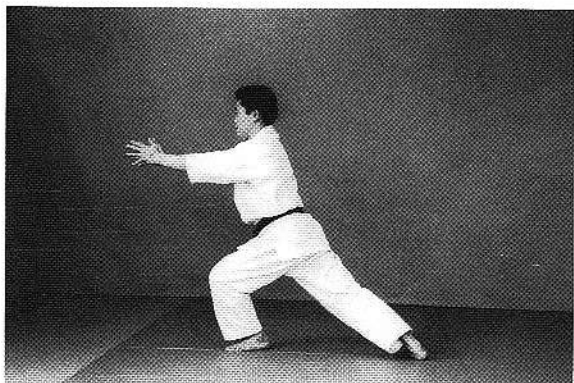
Always start from *kamae*, with your weight strongly forward, but with both legs balanced.



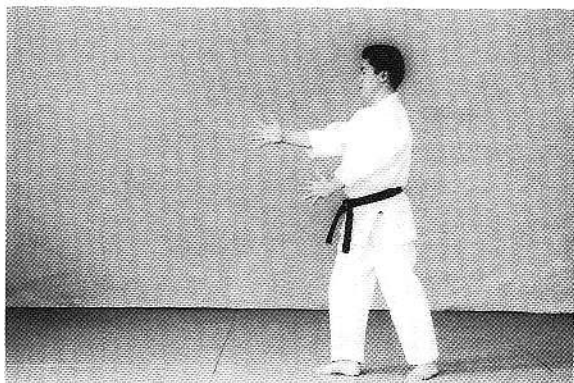
Pivot 180° on your front leg. When you stop, ensure your body is squared. Both hands describe a circle, as if you were running your hand around a ball. The top hand stops at chest level, palm facing up, and the lower hand comes to forehead level, elbow facing forward, both shoulders down.



As in *shumatsu dosa ichi*, shift on the balls of the feet and quickly pull your back leg toward the front leg and face the opposite direction, legs in *kamae*. Simultaneously, raise your hands above your head, arms parallel and palms facing.



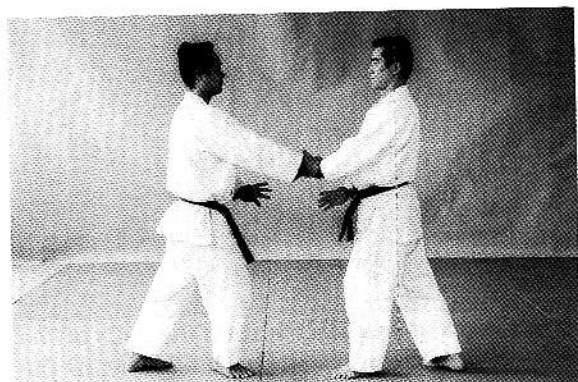
Slide forward with the front leg, cutting the hands forward and down to shoulder level. Pull your back leg in toward the front leg to return to *kamae*.



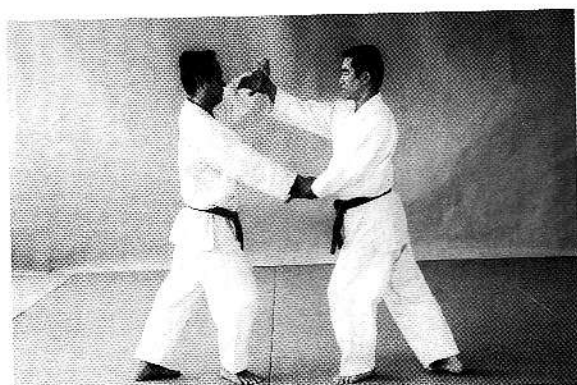
Finally, shift on your toes to face the opposite direction, returning to the starting position and *kamae*.

## KATATE MOCHI SHIHO-NAGE NI

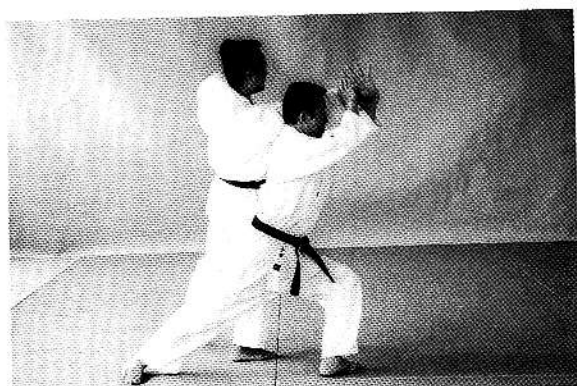
*Katate mochi shiho-nage ni* is the direct application of *shumatsu dosa ni* and is usually the first technique to be taught to beginners.



As a number two movement, *shite* and *uke* face each other in opposite *kamae* (*gyaku hanmi*): *hidari gyaku hanmi*. *Uke* grasps *shite*'s left hand and pushes.



As in *katate mochi shihonage ichi*, *shite* keeps his fingers spread, body squared, and chin up and strikes at *uke*'s face with the back of his right fist.

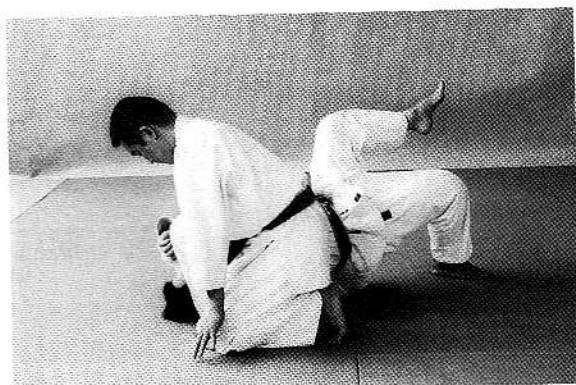


*Shite* pivots 180° on his left leg, dropping his hips down. *Shite*'s left hand describes a circle, and at the end of the movement *shite* grasps the base of

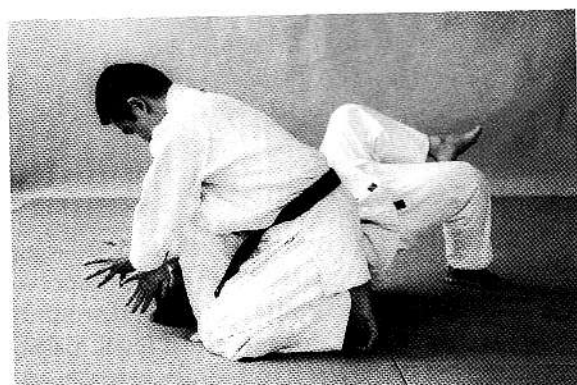
*uke*'s hand with his little finger and thumb. *Shite*'s shoulders are down and his elbows closed.



*Shite* shifts promptly, turning on the balls of the feet and pulling the back leg forward at the same time, as in *shumatsu dosa*. Bend the knees and lean forward. The hands cut down to chest level. *Shite* releases his left hand at the end of the movement.



*Shite* slides forward to throw from the front leg. The throwing hand and front foot are parallel and the back knee is drawn up close to the front heel. The throwing hand is positioned close to the middle of the front foot, controlling all of *uke*'s body.



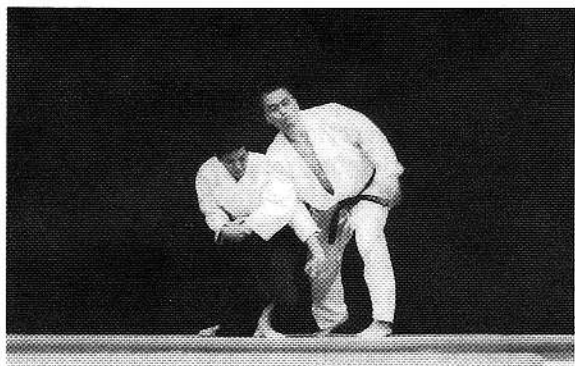
*Shite*'s free arm rises far above *uke*'s head, and he strikes *uke*'s face with the blade of his open hand.



## TAKENO SHIHAN

### PROFILE

**Takafumi Takeno** is presently 7th *dan* in Yoshinkan Aikido. He assisted Inoue Shihan in the instruction of female police officers in Tokyo for many years. He is now responsible for the Yamanashi branch of Yoshinkan, where he teaches around 120 students at five different locations.



**Q.** What is Aikido for you?

**A.** It is many things. Of course the beauty of the technique and above all the mental training. The first thing I felt when I joined the Yoshinkan was the mental strength. I had never experienced it before. There was a special atmosphere in the dojo. I felt the relationship between the senior and junior members at the dojo was more brother-like than with my own brothers. I loved this atmosphere. We say that Aikido creates harmony and love, but I believe that this kind of feeling needs a particular atmosphere in which to spring. This is the Aikido I want to do and this is the Aikido I want many people to know about.

**Q.** Do you think your Aikido has changed since leaving the Honbu Dojo and moving to Yamanashi Prefecture?

**A.** Basically there is no change. I just want to put into practice the teaching that I have learnt from Gozo Shioda Sensei. I also want to present this

teaching to as many people as possible. This has always been my dream.

**Q.** How do you see your role as a branch dojo in relation to the Honbu Dojo?

**A.** Basically the branches are there to teach the students who cannot train at the Honbu. At a local level, we can try to open more branches to enable more people to study Aikido. The result will be the further promotion of the Honbu Dojo.

**Q.** Do you ever train with *bokken*, "the wooden Japanese sword?"

**A.** Gozo Shioda Sensei always talks about the *riai* of the sword, the distance and also the technique. When I hold a sword I feel unified, as if I can concentrate myself. So I raise and cut and train distancing and power. Using the Yagyu Shinkage Ryu I learnt at the Honbu Dojo as a base, I train with *bokken* in my dojo.

**Q.** As an Aikido teacher, where do you find new ideas and what do you think is important to teach?

**A.** If I find good ideas from other forms of Aikido or even other forms of *budo*, I consider them and try them, and if they are good I use them. You can learn not just from Aikido but from everything. I learn from all things—Karate, Judo, Kendo, whatever.

There are many different styles and schools, but I think we have to consider Aikido as a complete unit. There are different approaches or ways of thinking, different bases, and it is good to have these variations. Even within the Yoshinkan it is the same. Some teachers place more emphasis on the spirit, others on technique, on the legs and footwork, or on the hands. I don't think there are strict rules, what you should and shouldn't do. The problem is how you can be yourself, put everything together in the form. What I said about the different approaches is true here too. If you don't forget the goal, the aim, you will reach the summit whichever way you choose.

Without losing the basics, you should think about the many ways of practice. I don't think there are bad ways, but you should have a very strong base. It is because you have the base that you can start



to create. The problems start when you want to change and vary before you have a strong base. In my view of things, first comes the base. With basics as a center, techniques can be applied. You should cherish the basic movements.

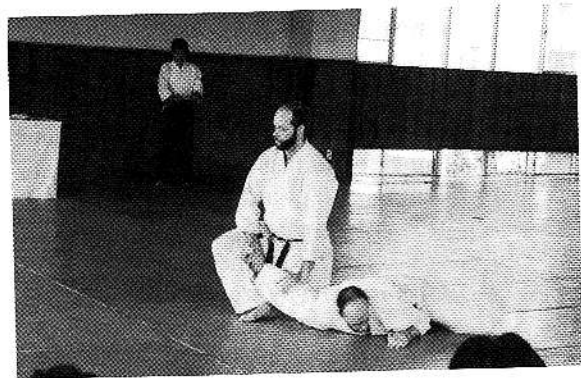
Whatever you do, never forget the Aikido spirit. For example, to encourage children to walk in *shikkoho*, have them train while playing a game. *Shikkoho* is painful and children don't like it. Make them forget the difficulties, inconveniences, or pain by distracting them.

We say that Aikido is the art of love and peace, but love is not something easily attained. Although we can say with words that we are friends, to really mean it is another thing. For me, *budo* inspires us to open our hearts and teaches us how to do it. It takes time, but when the heart finds this opening it can communicate with other kindred spirits. But this is not something that comes easily.

## ROBERT MUSTARD

### PROFILE

Robert Mustard is presently 4th *dan* in Yoshinkan Aikido. He arrived in Japan in 1986 and participated in the 22nd Riot Police Training Course. He works as a full-time assistant supervisor at an English school in Tokyo and regularly attends *kenshu* (special training) classes at the Honbu Dojo.



**Q.** When did you first start Aikido and where?

**A.** I started Aikido in Toronto, Canada, in 1977. My first teachers were Takeshi Kimeda and Mitsugoro Karasawa.

**Q.** What was your motive for learning Aikido?

**A.** I started practicing the martial arts when I was about 16 years old. I have been fortunate to have had excellent teachers in Kung Fu and Kendo, and through them I developed an interest in all martial arts. I read as many books as I could find about the martial arts and like most people I was very impressed by the books about Aikido and Morihei Ueshiba. I felt that I was becoming very strong physically, but I also felt that spiritually I didn't understand the finer points of *Budo* and that my character wasn't becoming better.

I was interested in studying Aikido, so I went to the Japanese Canadian Cultural Center in Toronto to watch a class. To be quite frank, I didn't like what I saw. I felt the techniques were not strong and that the teacher didn't really try to answer my questions. I now know that the style I observed was Aikikai, and I am not saying I don't like Aikikai, I just didn't think that particular dojo was right for me.

In September 1977, I participated in a demonstration of the martial arts in Ann Arbor, Michigan. At that time I was demonstrating Kendo, and I had the chance to witness Takashi Kushida Sensei's demonstration of Yoshinkan Aikido. I was very impressed by Kushida Sensei's speed and power, and I remember thinking that I would like to be able to do the techniques like him. I met Kimeda Sensei at the demonstration and liked him very much. He seemed very honest and open-hearted. The following month, I started training with Kimeda Sensei, and after about a month—and I hope this doesn't sound pretentious—I knew Aikido was the martial art for me. I have been training ever since.

**Q.** You have studied other types of martial arts. What ranks, if any, do you hold in them?

**A.** I studied Chinese Kung Fu for approximately five years, in Chinatown in Toronto. My teachers were excellent, but I don't think I was really that good, and because the school was a traditional school ranks were never given. I also have practiced Kendo and Iaido. I am a *ni dan* in Kendo, but I have no grade in Iaido.

**Q.** What do you think are the differences between Aikido and other types of martial arts? What do you think are the advantages of Aikido?

**A.** I think one of the big differences between Aikido and other martial arts is that there is no competition in Aikido. It is a martial art or way

and does not lean toward sport as some of the other martial arts do. The relationship between *shite* and *uke* is also unique in Aikido. They have to work together, so both become strong. There is no winner or loser—they both win! I also feel that in some ways, certain physical characteristics lend themselves to a particular martial art, whereas in Aikido anyone can practice.

I don't feel that Aikido has any particular advantage over other martial arts. Other than some of the obvious differences of technique, I believe that all martial arts are just different paths up the same mountain.

Students who study martial arts, like all people, have egos. And those egos need to be satisfied by proving how strong we are and by knowing that, if we are in a situation where we have to defend ourselves, we will win. In reality, things happen very quickly, and regardless of the martial arts studied, whoever has trained harder and is better, will win.

On a personal level, one advantage Aikido has for me is that I can honestly say Aikido is more interesting now after 14 years than when I started. Moreover, I'm starting to understand that the more you learn, the more there is to learn. At this point in time, I feel that my interest in Aikido will continue to grow and that the desire to train will not diminish and that, I think, is very wonderful. I have been fortunate to have had good teachers, teachers who have shown me not only the techniques of Aikido but also what the deeper aspects of Aikido are.

**Q.** When did you arrive in Japan, and what was your impression of the dojo in Japan?

**A.** I visited Japan in 1977, for two months. At that time I was representing Canada in the Junior World Kendo Championships. Unfortunately, we found out I was too old to compete. But just being in Japan and training in famous Kendo dojos made up for it. I returned to Japan on March 31, 1986. I had originally intended to stay for one year to study Aikido and Japanese, but I'm still here.

**Q.** Have your ideas on Aikido changed during your stay in Japan?

**A.** My first impression was that the dojo was the real thing. The teachers were incredible; the mats were really hard; and the dojo had a feeling of hard work, pain, and lots of sweat. I lived in the dojo for one month before I got my own apartment, and it was just as I imagined it would be, lots of hard work, pain, and a certain amount of frustration because the techniques that I knew and had been practicing in Canada for nine years were very different from what I was learning in the Honbu Dojo. I also developed a real healthy fear of Takeno Sensei's *sshiho-nage* and *hijiatekokyu-nage*. Sometimes after he threw me, even my eyebrows hurt.

I believe that my thoughts about Aikido haven't really changed, except I now have a better understanding of the technical aspects of Aikido. As with most people I used to love fancy techniques and *jiyu-waza*, but now I understand the value of *kihon dosa* and *kihon waza*. Now, I really like practicing basic techniques and know that I must improve my *kamae* and *kihon dosa*. Another thing I have learned is that Yoshinkan Aikido is an attitude just as much as it is a set of techniques. And I realize that I must improve my understanding of *Budo* if I hope to really understand what Aikido is some day.

**Q.** Please tell us your future plans with Aikido.

**A.** I imagine that I will teach Aikido in Canada when I return. I really don't know yet where I will be living, but if it's possible I would like to have a dojo where I could continue to study and to help Yoshinkan Aikido grow in the world and in Canada. As for now, I will probably continue living in Japan for another year or so. I plan to continue studying Aikido in the hope that both my techniques and my understanding will develop further.

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# YOSHINKAN AIKIDO WORLDWIDE

## YOSHINKAN IN AUSTRALIA

Aikido in Australia is said to have begun with Arthur Moorshead in Melbourne in 1963. In 1980, Joe Thambu arrived in Melbourne and became the first instructor of Yoshinkan Aikido in Australia.

### Joe Thambu Profile



*Joe Thambu, the head instructor and founder of the Shudokan Dojo, is a 4th dan IYAF-registered Yoshinkan instructor. He is a precise technician and teaches fast and effective Aikido. He has made several tours to the Honbu Dojo in Japan and is greatly respected for his attitude and achievements in Yoshinkan Aikido.*

Joe Thambu was born in 1961 and spent the first 19 years of his life in Malaysia. During this time, his uncle Thamby Rajah was teaching Aikido in a town called Sereban. At the age of 12 Joe began training under his uncle.

"There was no real reason for beginning training. The dojo was situated close to my home and I'd grown up in a dojo atmosphere long before I could even put on a *dogi*. I suppose at that age you never really think about it. It was just something to do."

While in Malaysia, Joe studied under several renowned martial arts instructors, including Donn Dreager, author of numerous works on martial arts; Aizawa Kamataro of Jodo; and Yagi Sensei of the Yoshinkan, who promoted Joe to first *kyu* in August 1976. Thamby Rajah encouraged a broad understanding of many arts centered on an Aikido core.

After arriving in Melbourne and being unable to find a Yoshinkan dojo, Joe trained with a local Aikikai group but was dissatisfied with the

training. Donn Dreager contacted Joe and suggested a Judo instructor friend in the area and Joe began teaching Aikido and undertook training in Jujutsu. He continued along these lines until returning from a trip to the Yoshinkan Honbu Dojo in 1984, when he opened his present dojo. The Shudokan registered with the Honbu Dojo through the IYAF in September 1990.

The present dojo consists of three sections. The largest mat area is 30 *tatami*; next is a 14-*tatami* room with extra training gear, an office, and changing rooms; and the third section is Joe's house. The dojo is raising funds to enlarge the mat area, and renovations will take place in August this year.

"The problems were and are innumerable in setting up a dojo, the primary difficulty being finance. But we have managed to convert what was once a factory into a dojo and a home. The dojo was purchased by my wife and myself in 1984, and we decided from the start that it would only be used for Aikido. We don't rent it out to other schools for example. It is solely an Aikido dojo."

Joe has 112 members, a large percentage of whom are children, including a group from Melbourne's prestigious Boys Grammar High School. Ages in the dojo range from 5 to 52 years old.

"My objectives vary according to the individual or group I am dealing with. For myself and the more serious practitioners, the aim is to consistently perform strong technique, to improve, and to understand the technique. Through this it becomes possible to understand the true meaning of the technique. On another level, I want to establish a dojo along the lines of the Yoshinkan Honbu Dojo, where people cannot only learn Aikido but can actually live it.

"When I teach it is always difficult to get across the idea that Aikido has to be practiced with *shite* and *uke* working in cooperation as partners, not in opposition to each other. And it is difficult to convince young, strong people that Aikido is second to none. That Aikido is a strong, viable, and effective means of self-defense. From there, self-development stems. The young are the ones

that will spread Aikido. The young men and women pass the spirit of *budo* on and are important in any dojo.

"I have seen and participated in many demonstrations, clinics, and classes in a number of countries. Soke Shioda is in a class of his own. No other person I know of has the ability to speak his mind and heart and at the same time show in technique what he means. His technique and his words are one. Too many people talk about what Aikido has to offer but are incapable of visualizing this for the public—they say and do different things. To spread and teach Aikido we must look and learn from Soke Shioda, and learn to say and teach and do the same thing.

"Aikido has been in Melbourne and other parts of Australia for many years now. Early on, Shioda Gozo was known by some martial artists, but Yoshinkan as a style was unheard of. Aikikai and Tomiki Aikido were well known and practiced in universities and numerous other locations. In 1980, when I first began teaching Yoshinkan Aikido, most other Aikidoists looked down on us. As we grew, people gradually began to take notice, and gradually Yoshinkan Aikido has become accepted and recognized. We started with nothing and now we are teaching at three locations.

We have had problems on the way. At the moment there is the Martial Arts Control Board, which issues licenses to all instructors. By law all instructors must be licensed. This poses some problems, but the IYAF has been invaluable here.

As for the Yoshinkan itself, I have studied many styles in my life and have had the opportunity of working with a number of well-known Aikido instructors on my visits and tours to Japan, but always my original feelings have been reinforced. Each Aikido school emphasizes different aspects of Aikido. I feel the Yoshinkan surpasses the others because the technique is emphasized above everything else. This is the strength of the Yoshinkan. From the technique flows all else. Nowhere in the world will one find better technique than in the Honbu Dojo. I feel that if the IYAF can help outside dojos in bringing *deshi* out then our technique will be enhanced and so will our bonds to the Yoshinkan."

#### Dojo Address:

Shudokan Dojo  
C/O Joe Thambu  
308 St. Georges Road,  
Thornbury, Victoria 3071, Australia  
Phone: 480-1570

#### An outline of the Shudokan Dojo's schedule for the coming 12 months of 1991-1992 is as follows:

July 27-	Gradings
August-	Dojo closes for two weeks for renovations
September-	Annual demonstration
November-	Gradings
Late December-	Summer vacation
Early January-	Dojo reopens
March-	Gradings and summer <i>gasshuku</i> (camp)



Books, videos...

I am very interested in knowing whether it is possible to buy some of Shioda Kancho's books from you. I already have *Dynamic Aikido*, *Aikido* (Do Sports series), and the Yoshinkan technical manual by AikiNews. I wonder if there are other technical manuals written by Shioda Kancho it is possible to obtain.

Flemming Madsen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Thank you for your letter. You have covered all the books we have in English, but I would like to mention two further books you may wish to purchase. The first is *Aikido Nyumon*, (*Entrance to Aikido*). This is a 158-page technical manual published in 1990. It has numerous photographs of Honbu Dojo instructors performing basic techniques, advanced techniques, and self-defense and restraint techniques and includes a section on

breath throws, or *kokyū nage*. The explanations are in Japanese, but the pictures are very good and display the important segments of the techniques quite clearly. This book is available from the Honbu Dojo for ¥1,500, postage not included.

The second is a new book on the life of Soke Shioda. The book was released in Japanese on May 31, 1991. We are presently translating this book and hope to have it out in the not-too-distant future. It is an exciting book telling many previously unrecorded experiences of Soke Shioda, illuminating the practical use of Aikido, and offering many of his views on Aikido today. We will let you know when this book is available for purchase.

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