

## From the Chairman

# A "full house" on the Executive Committee

I am pleased to tell you that we now have a full complement of officers on the Executive Committee. For most of my 8 years as your Chairman, the Executive Committee has struggled to fill the various appointments necessary to get through the work of managing, reviewing and updating the many specialist areas that comprise the guts of our raison d'être – that is, our aim of operating as an effective National Governing Body for Aikido in a way that permits Member Associations to retain their individual autonomy over styles of practice and the grading of their individual members. However, thanks to the IT improvements that have been made by our Webmaster, we are now able to communicate by e-mail down to Club level, with the objective of eventually reaching directly to you, the individual members, with all the news from the Board. I have always known that, with almost 10,000 individual members there would be people out there with the time, energy and expertise to fulfil all the roles we require on the Executive Committee. We've now reached you through the wonders of mass e-mail addressing and the resulting response is a "full house" on the EC.

I should add that, without the volunteer help of our 2 Media Officers this newsletter would still be a pipedream. But if it is to be a regular feature of the BAB in the future then perhaps I don't need to add that you, the readers, are more than welcome to add input on topics of interest. Let's make the newsletter an on-going success.

Vincent Sumpter  
Chairman, British Aikido Board  
June 2010

If you have a news story, an event, or a view you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please feel free to email it to us at: [mediaofficer@bab.org.uk](mailto:mediaofficer@bab.org.uk). Please see the last page for further details on how you can contribute.



**SUMMER SCHOOL 2010**  
4 DAYS  
3 SEVENTH DANS

Friday 30th July - Monday 2nd August  
Jesse Boot Wildcats Arena  
Nottingham

Contact the Shudokan toll free on 0800 612 1126 or visit the website for more information

Sensei Robert Mustard      Sensei Joe Thambu      Sensei Ken Robson

[www.shudokan.co.uk](http://www.shudokan.co.uk)

The Shudokan Institute of Aikido International is holding it's annual 4-day Summer School on Friday 30th July to Monday 2nd August. Guest instructors include: Robert Mustard Sensei, 7th Dan Yoshinkan and Joe Thambu Sensei, 7th Dan Yoshinkan.

Students from other styles of Aikido are very welcome. Please phone 0800 6 121 126 for more details.

## BAB National Course 2010

This year's event which will be held at Brunel University on 9th October. The Course instructors are:-

Sensei Ken Robson, 7th Dan (Shudokan Institute of Aikido)  
Sensei Bob Jones, 7th Dan (British Aikido Association)  
Sensei Bob Spence, 6th Dan (Lancashire Aikikai)  
Sensei Gary Masters, 6th Dan (Ken Shin Kai UK)  
Sensei John Jenkin, 6th Dan (UK Shinwakai Aikido)

# Towards Unity

In my Aikido journey I have encountered many ways of executing Aikido. Many are spiritually based and the tranquility of their dojos enable me to see why O Sensei believed that Aikido might contribute to the spread of world peace. A few, from the other end of the Aikido spectrum, can demonstrate quite painfully how effective Aikido can be. After training, conversation inevitably turns towards our styles or our teachers. But discussion immediately evolves around overt movements. These overt movements are seen as the correct way to execute a technique and as overt movements are as many as Aikido is creative, discussion of Aikido seems to end inconclusively and in disagreement. The purpose behind this article is to offer a format to discuss Aikido. My intention is not to highlight the differing overt movements or pain thresholds, which historically have divided us, but to focus on mechanical constructs which by definition do not require strength or pain to be effective, that enhance our overt movements and which permeate all techniques. By studying these constructs in a moving form, mechanical movement, I hope to raise discussion of Aikido to Aikido itself and find the unity in our Aikido.

## Overt movements

At a basic level, different styles appear to have the same overt movements. In other words, if shiho nage were performed by any Aikidoka it would be recognised as shiho nage by any other Aikidoka. However, with a little more experience, small differences are seen in these overt movements which are then linked to a style or Association. It is like a style has a physical signature.

I do not see Aikido this way, because with more experience still, one can see differences within overt movements, not only within every style but within every dojo of that style. This results from the mixture of style, teacher and physical characteristics. To criticise an Aikidoka's technique on the basis of overt movements, borders on xenophobia (when leveled at a style), disrespect (when leveled at a teacher) or downright rudeness (when leveled at physical characteristics).

## Kamae



Kamae is a vital part of Aikido. It shows how one's body is prepared for defence: a still body and a quiet mind; a stance poised to turn or move forward, without prior movement; a readiness to catch the attacker's energy; and a means by which one can transmit one's power to the contact point. At the highest level, all the constructs are contained within kamae, making it an article for discussion in its own right. However, I feel mechanical movement is perhaps the place to start.

## Mechanical movement

In order to discuss mechanical movement, esoteric terms are necessary. Initially they will provide a universal language for us to use. Definitions of mechanical constructs are shown in the glossary. Mechanical movement is a generic term for the way the body moves to maintain and employ mechanical constructs to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of a technique. Indeed, the whole emphasis of mechanical movement is to show that it is the body form, not upper-body strength, that is the first step towards taking an attacker's energy and enhancing it with one's power; the very basis of Aikido.

As contact is made by the attacker, that side of one's body becomes the contact side and the other is the shadow side. As one progresses through a technique, contact and shadow sides can be swapped as a dynamic contact point is established. For this reason and for effective triangulation, the hips need to be square to the balance line. The source of physical power comes from the rear foot. If toe power is to be transmitted to the contact point, the contact line should be visualised as straight and kept as close to the body form as possible. Hence a straight spine needs to be maintained in preparation for such a transmission of power from rear foot to contact point. The contact point is best located by triangulation to the hips. If the hips are square, then the contact point is effectively located and remains on the central plane. To ensure that the attacker's energy is directed to the hips and that one's own power transmitted to the contact point, the arms are slightly bent to enable this energy/power transmission. If the arms were straight then the contact line would be routed through the shoulders, making a straight contact line impossible. However, with "kamae arms", the contact line is routed down the forearm, across the gap from elbow to hips then down through the hips to the rear foot. This is not an easy line to envisage as the elbow does not stay on route as some techniques progress, however, with subliminal movements it is a line that is felt. For identical reasons of energy/power transmission, the rear leg invariably needs to be straight. Primarily, motion in Aikido occurs when one rotates about the front foot or when one pushes forward from the rear foot. If these movements are to be made without first making a movement of balance adjustment, then weight distribution is important. Consequently, weight distribution is at a point where these frequently used movements can be made as first movements. Indeed, all these constructs make one's whole body form, from rear foot to contact point, part of a network of points and lines that have a common format that is not technique based and are there to make one's balance more stable, to eradicate minor additional movements and to make subliminal movements effective.

As one begins the overt movements, mechanical movement shows the quality of one's Aikido by the way these constructs operate simultaneously as required, from kamae to disengagement, to maintain each other and to give an efficient, effective and fluid technical strength to the overt movements.





## Beyond mechanical movement

Mechanical movement is just the first category of movement that permeates all techniques. In my dojo, this is taught up to 4th kyu. However, as one's understanding of Aikido develops, movement becomes more subtle. For example, the next category of movement, taught up to 1st kyu, is subliminal movement. These movements are less obvious but nevertheless greatly increase the efficiency of a technique and again permeate in all techniques. The object of subliminal movement is to impair the attacker's constructs and consciously bring the attacker's centre of gravity to the edge or beyond his base. In other words, Aikido now incorporates one's own physical constructs with movements that both impair and control an attacker. Later, as one enters the dan grades and begins one's study of Aikido, conceptual movement, which again permeates all techniques, gradually enables one to perform what appears to students to be magic, but to oneself, is still simply movement.

## Glossary

### Body Form

The extension of kamae into a moving form, allowing mechanical constructs to be effective and efficient.

### Balance Line

The forward-extended straight line passing through the heels, sometimes envisaged as a tight-rope.

### Central Plane

Refers to a plane defined by the balance line and the power line. It is in front of one's body extending from one's forehead to one's front knee in a curve prescribed by one's hand. The elbow is never straightened as the contact point would be overextended thus losing triangulation, energy capture and power transmission.

### Contact Line

A line from the rear foot to the contact point. The closer it is to the body form, the more powerful it is.

### Contact Point

The point at which attacker and defender are united. It can change throughout the technique but is always on or near the central plane.

### Power Line

A line from the back foot to the head. The spine is facing forwards, hence the hips are orthogonal to this line.

### Square Hips

All the vertebrae of the spine are facing forward along the balance line.

### Straight Spine

Describes the way in which the hips are kept upright in order to make the small of the back have as little curvature as possible.

### Toe Power

The source of one's physical power that comes from the rear foot being in contact with the ground.

### Triangulation

The way the contact point is located about one's central plane. It is most easily visualised as an isosceles triangle from an overhead camera whose base is the width of the hips with the arms as the other two sides holding the contact point at their apex. Alternatively, observed from the side, it is seen as the extension of the forearms to the hips (a poor geometrical triangle, but a useful technical construct).

## Events calendar

### 2010

3 July to 04 July 2010

Cinque Ports Aikido Summer School

10 July to 11 July 2010

KSMBDA General Course - Plymouth

17 July to 18 July 2010

South of the River Seminar

18 July to 18 July 2010

General Aikido course

24 July to 25 July 2010

The International Big 3

29 July to 2 August 2010

Shudokan Institute of Aikido International Course

31 July to 06 August 2010

Chiba Sensei/Miyamoto Sensei Summer School

31 July to 1 August 2010

Woodlands Aikido Course

21 August 2010

Beach Practise at St Annes

4 September 2010

KSMBDA General Course - Swindon

5 September 2010

KSMBDA General Course - Bristol

10 September to 12 September 2010

Saito Hitohira Shihan - Iwama Kai-Cho

12 September 2010

Altincham General Aikido Course

18 September to 19 September 2010

Dublin Tomiki Aikido Seminar

9 October 2010

BAB National Course, Brunel University

22 October to 24 October 2010

Traditional Japanese style uchi deshi course

30 October to 31 October 2010

Aikido Course - Robert Mustard Sensei

### 2011

11 March 2011 to 13 March 2011

Ribby Hall - Aikido Weekend

BAB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

15 May 2011

## From the Media Officer

Welcome to the first edition of the new Aikido Times, the newsletter for BAB members. We plan to start by producing 4 editions per year but will increase the frequency if demand requires it. Being the first edition we have not had much input so have included some items to give you an idea of the sort of things that might be included. Many thanks to the anonymous Sensei for his intriguing article on Unity, just the sort of thing we need.

It is our hope that all of you will find this a useful and inspiring publication where you will be able to find a plethora of Aikido related information such as current issues and events, interesting articles and profiles of some of our senior Aikidoka to name just a few.

If you or your dojo are doing something interesting in the world of Aikido please share it with us. We are interested in what you are doing and what you think, even if you think what you are doing is not news worthy – if you find it interesting and exciting then most of us out here will too! So please share!

The success (or failure) of this publication will be down to the amount of interest and participation of our members. We will welcome everything Aikido related from seminar details and reports to club events and profiles and personal ideas on training. If you have an urge to write then send us your thoughts on anything Aikido related. If you have ideas about what you would like included in the newsletter email us and let us know and we will do our best to include it.

We will also be putting effort into promoting the art of Aikido nationally, through whatever means we can so, again if you have any ideas that might help in this please email them to us. We are here to serve the Aikido community and we need your help and participation to do it. I hope you enjoy this small first edition and I hope you will flood us with items for the next edition so it can be much better and larger.

Help us to make this publication GREAT!

Mick Mercer, Media Officer

## If you wish to contribute...

Any text for newsletter articles should to be sent in one of the following formats: Word, .doc, .rtf, or plain text.

Any images need to be sent as either a JPEG file at as high a resolution as possible or as a high resolution PDF. But please bear in mind that most email system have a limit of 10mb file size.

Please send your newsletter text and images to:  
mediaofficer@bab.org.uk

*It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life  
that no man can sincerely try to help another without  
helping himself*

Ralph Waldo Emerson