



# Ken shinryu 流神劍

TRADITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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## Kancho's Corner



Osu!

When I first started Aikido in 1986 I wanted to study swordsmanship and I was assured that 'Aikido was the art of the Samurai (the warrior class of Japan), the techniques derive from sword principles and sword was an integral part of the Aikido curriculum'. Over the next 5 years I saw very little of the sword actually being applied and the sword work I learned was performed with a bokken without either tsuba (handguard) or saya (sheath) let alone an Iaito (training blade) or 'real' katana. The only variation to that theme was some Aikijujutsu training where there was a better established link between technique and sword, primarily when the sword was sheathed and the opponent was attempting to stop the sword being drawn. Many of these techniques have been practised over the past month and are a credible link between sword and unarmed technique. That said, the detail we can now bring to those techniques did not come from that training. Rather it was provided by Nishioka Sensei post-1997 as I studied Shinto Muso Ryu and a more refined understanding of technique from Yoshinkan Aikido.

In the three years prior to that I continued to study Aiki Ken and Aiki Jo, however was fortunate enough to be able to do that during trips to Japan with Saito Morihiro Sensei – widely acknowledged as the key figure in this field. Unfortunately I struggled to be able to connect this practice with either the earlier unarmed Aikido technique I had done or the excellent Yoshinkan Aikido technique I had been practising from 1991. The reality

is I was already having a crisis of confidence around this purported link between the sword and unarmed Aikido technique and was just another Aikido person trying to use a sword in a way that was somehow meant to be consistent with Aikido principles... the reverse of the historic sequence. Then I met Nishioka Sensei – a truly professional *Koryu* swordsman – and under his guidance came at last to see Aikido's unarmed technique through the eyes of a professional swordsman.

This revelation led me to choose not to teach Aiki Ken and Aiki Jo any longer... and as I was not proficient in Shinto Muso Ryu at that time, the Dojo entered a period of several years where there were only unarmed Aikido classes, except for the Shinto Muso Ryu seminars conducted twice a year by Nishioka Sensei. As a consequence many students at that time learned no or little weapons and came to think of Aikido as being an art that did not include weapons training. When Nishioka Sensei asked me to start teaching Shinto Muso in 2003 the students saw these classes as separate and the timetable (bizarrely on reflection) as a choice between Aikido and 'weapons' training.

That division in thinking and training is still prevalent today in our Dojo despite the fact that Shinto Muso Ryu provides the weapons training that is an important part of everyone's grading syllabus... as well as informing every aspect of our unarmed technique - practice and philosophy. My goal over the next 5 years is to see that perceived barrier dissolve. I don't mean I will make an effort to break it down... I won't... because ultimately I have nothing to sell and am not attached to whether students achieve their potential as that is up to each individual. Rather I simply invite people to see for themselves that the study of the unarmed component of Aikido without the weapons component will always seriously restrict them in their understanding and abilities.

See you on the mat. Osu!

*Sensei David*

## Kancho's Corner Cont'd

### VALE Matthew Nixon

Matt was a much loved member of Kenshinryu 'back in the day'. His cheeky grin and quick wit / filthy sense of humour endeared him to everyone. In September, and after 18 months, Matt finally succumbed to cancer of the throat one day short of his 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday... but to the very end he made sure he lived life to the fullest.

Matt's Aikido career was cut short by a broken leg but he was often in attendance at Dojo Dinners and functions in the years that followed and I always looked forward to catching up with him. A truly great bloke. We'll miss you Matt. (Frankly I'm pretty sure he's somewhere REALLY hot pestering the shit out of a guy with a red cape and horns – Mate make sure you tell him the one about the... )



## Upcoming Events

- October 21st—22nd, 2017  
David and some members from the Dojo are travelling down to Melbourne for the Chida Sensei Seminar. If anyone would like to attend please contact: [admin@compassinc.org.au](mailto:admin@compassinc.org.au)



Aikido Shudokan Proudly Presents:  
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Methodist Ladies' College  
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Tickets: \$20



Seminar: 21st & 22nd Oct.

Open to practitioners of the  
Yoshinkan system of Aikido.  
St Georges Antiochian Church,  
28 Shaftesbury Parade, Thornbury

\*Limited spaces available. Please contact us for more details

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## Members Corner



### Cultural Observation in the Land of Koryū Bujutsu

I am in Japan at the time of writing this, and as it's at the forefront of my mind, I thought I'd impart some interesting elements and observations of Japanese culture.

To begin with: the average Japanese person doesn't "get" martial arts. I'm always amused by this whenever I'm here, but to the Japanese, martial arts is something you study as a hobby, usually in High School or University. Prolonged study (at least of a Koryu bujutsu) is as mysterious to them as almost the average Australian. The most commonly practiced martial art here is certainly Kendo, with Karate finishing closely behind. This is unsurprising I suppose. As Kenjutsu became Kendo, so has samurai culture.

All things samurai have been relegated to anecdotes, or kitsch tourist items. Famous warriors are humourously marketed as

Anime-styled characters and period TV dramas are the closest the public would get to seeing Bujutsu being performed. Here and there you might see pockets of martial history shining through. Tsurugaoka Hachimangu (shrine to Hachiman, god of warriors and agriculture) is the most visited shrine in Japan, with many people regularly visiting to ask for blessings. In Asakusa photographing a statue of Meiji samurai Katsu Kaishu, we witnessed an elderly man approach it and bow in deep respect, a private and lovely moment. A dilapidated second-hand store, overflowing with abandoned heirlooms, hid some beautiful examples of samurai equipment, now rusted and forgotten. The old shopkeeper chuckled and said "Ninja, ne?"

What is \*not\* forgotten however, is the mindset that led to the creation of Budo. All Japanese have an air of practical self-sufficiency. An elderly woman descending temple stairs, obviously unbalanced and hampered by her knees, smiles and mutters "Yoi-Sho!" (a motivational cry of exertion) as she makes her way. A beggar refuses to ask for money outright, instead offering tourists help before asking for repayment.

The centuries-old shrines and temples hidden amongst skyscrapers, "Itadakimasu" said before every meal, the frequent bowing. All are reminders that Japan has a deep respect for its history and its citizens. As a foreigner it is hard not to feel like a lumbering, loud barbarian, but at least the locals are polite about it.

*Aaron Williams*

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I'd like to recommend that you have a look at this [website](https://www.aikiinsights.com/) and become a subscriber. <https://www.aikiinsights.com/>

When I was last in Melbourne I was interviewed by its founder, Marvin Oka, and I have since listened to all the podcasts on the site.

There is an absolute wealth of information for Aikido and Budo students - all being shared in a conversational format by some very highly experienced Teachers including Joe Thambu, Robert Mustard and Darren Friend Sensei's.

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