

## Featured Dojo-cho, May 2010



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Division 3

Born to Scottish immigrant parents in Auckland New Zealand on 11th May, 1959. I am a New Zealand citizen, British citizen, Australian citizen, and am also a permanent resident of Japan.

I had my first glimpse and start in Aikido back in the 1970's in Auckland, New Zealand. It was in a sports club called Boystown (a sports club run by the police, to offer a variety of sporting activities to the youths in the area to help keep them out of trouble).

I walked past a big glass viewing window and saw a Japanese man being chased and attacked by everyone in the class. He evaded and/or threw all the attackers without being caught himself. To a young boy, this was amazing to watch, and I immediately joined in for a short time. That memory, and experience, remained with me for years.

It wasn't until the 1980's that I became obsessed with Aikido, and trained almost every single day. My resident Dojo was in Auckland, New Zealand, and my Sensei was a rather large man of Dutch descent called Yohan Buiter. Thank you for all you taught me Yohan Sensei, my style is built on the strong foundation you taught me.

I obtained my Shodan rank in New Zealand in 1985 under the watchful

eye of the resident Japanese Shihan, Takase Sensei (7th Dan). Domo arigato gozaimasu, Takase Sensei.

Shortly thereafter I left New Zealand and settled in Melbourne, Australia, where I lived, worked, and continued my Aikido journey for over 15 years, seven of which was teaching at their Hombu Dojo in Clifton Hill. My classes were very popular and well attended, with 15 to 20 students in each class, and I made many lifelong friendships and connections Australia-wide throughout my years there. Thank you Australia.

I later left for Japan and have spent over 8 years here in Fukuoka with my Japanese wife and 2 kids living, working, and studying Aikido. I also have been studying a traditional Japanese sword art (Kuroda Han, Yagyu Shinkage-Ryu, Aratsu-kai), with a noble well documented history dating back well over 500 years. It was chosen by the last 3 Shoguns (warlords) of Japan as the number 1 sword style. My sword teachers in Japan will be presenting me with a Kaiden Menkyo (a traditional teaching license) so I can officially open my own sword school in Australia. I will encourage my students and others to study both arts, as they enhance and contribute greatly towards each other's martial progress, ability, awareness, evolution, and understanding.

I will be assisted in Australia by my co-instructor Anthony O'Connell, 2nd Dan. Anthony has been a good friend of mine since the 90's, when he first turned up to train in my class fresh from Japan. Anthony is a qualified engineer, and he was recruited from Ireland and brought to Japan by a major Japanese company. Japan is where Anthony honed his skills in Aikido for a number of years, before he was sent to Australia to be a branch manager. Anthony will be a great asset to Aikido Alliance Australia, and I greatly admire and value his Aikido style and abilities.

I look forward to this new chapter in my personal Aikido journey, with CAA and Nadeau Shihan. Just at the point when I was going to give Aikido up forever, I had an unexplained desire to seek out old connections from when I first started Aikido back in New Zealand many years ago, which subsequently led me to CAA and specifically Nadeau Sensei.

Aikido obviously has something more for me to learn, share, experience, confirm, and I look forward to what will be revealed in time.

***My most memorable Aikido experience, to date:***

Given the opportunity to study with and sit my Yondan grading in Fukuoka, Japan, under Hari Sunao Sensei (7th Dan).

He is a small statured gentleman in his mid-70's with an amazing style of Aikido. Sunao Sensei has such incredibly soft yet powerful flowing technique, like trying to grab water. Sunao Sensei was kind enough to allow me to sit a physical Yondan grading whilst I was with him. He

was very pleased with my demonstration and the individual style of Aikido that I had formed over the many years of study and deep reflection, and he encouraged me to continue exploring even further down the path I was following. Domo arigato gozaimasu, Sunao Sensei.

I am also sure that on this new journey with CAA and Nadeau Shihan, there will be more memorable Aikido experiences to come. I look forward to meeting you all on the mat someday.