

# 杖道

**BRITISH KENDO ASSOCIATION**



## *Jodobu News and Update for Spring 2008*

Issue 2

Jodo Bucho – Andy Watson  
Other Member – Harry Jones  
Squad Manager – Alan Nash

### Dear members

Here we are, already well into 2008 and it only seems like a month since the first issue of this newsletter went out. So much has been happening in the BKA in the last few months I would hazard to guess that you might already be sick of receiving information from me but unfortunately that's the power that my position offers – emails continuously filling your inboxes day and night!

In this issue there are some event reports as well as looking at the year ahead and of course some technical points which have come to light in the last few months.

As a closing note, I would add that the last Jodo seminar seemed to show that notice has been taken concerning the comprehensiveness required in answering grading question papers. I would still urge grading candidates to provide reasonable but comprehensive answers to the questions. The questions are selected as a mix of quick and easy responses and some which require a more expressive answer. It is part of the test for the candidate to spot these questions and answer them appropriately. Harry and I have seen some shining examples of effort put into this and I would love to see more of the same.

*Andy*

### **Ishido Cup 2008, Mierlo, The Netherlands**

Those of you who are in the know will know that every year in Holland, the Ishido Cup seminar and taikai is run in honour of Ishido Sensei. Some 10 years ago the organisers asked Sensei if it would be okay to use his name for this event to which of course he said yes. That done he pretty much forgot that such an event was being held. Suddenly 10 years was up and he was being invited to the anniversary event.

Given this occasion, a few of us from the BKA hauled our backsides over to Eindhoven to participate and enjoy this extremely well attended event. The event consisted of one day Jodo seminar, one day laido seminar then one day for a taikai for both arts. Sensei brought Morishima Kazuki Sensei 7<sup>th</sup> dan laido Kyoshi with him this time and the taikai was attended by many other 7<sup>th</sup> dans from Europe including Jock Hopson, Chris Mansfield, Rene Van Amersfoot, Aad van de Wijngaart, Momiyama Takao, Patrick Demuyneck and others for whom I apologise if I have left you off.

The Jodo seminar was used to transmit the understanding that Sotai Dosa (paired basic practice) was now seen to be an extremely important part of Jodo training in Japan. It seems that the need for frequent Tandoku Dosa practice has sunk in but the emphasis now is in

ensuring that the paired practice is well embedded to ensure basic technique is continuously improved along with an understanding of correct distance and timing with an opponent there. Ishido Sensei thus went through all the Sotai Dosa and confirmed the main points for us to practice and incorporate. There was a very interesting moment where Sensei demonstrated the speed and tempo that one should practice at (it was quite fast!) to illustrate the need to gain competence and confidence in ones performance of Sotai Dosa through regular training. Developing ones skills to the level where the technique can be delivered very effectively without undue mental or physical effort appeared to be the objective such that the movements could be reincorporated into the kata and an improvement could thus be seen there too. This took best part of the morning before we moved onto Seiteigata. Again the main points were addressed and we went off and practiced.

Towards the end of the day Sensei decided to put us through our paces after the sweat-inducing activity at the end of the last Europeans where everyone had to train with someone they don't usually train with. I must add that this is an extremely humbling but valuable exercise and it really shows areas of needed improvement. It is also quite enjoyable really to interact with others you are not used to. For me however, it was a bit of a disaster as at one point my blubbery hands got in the way of a horizontal cut and I got my knuckle joint clipped. It didn't hurt at first so I carried on and over the next few days it swelled up to the gargantuan proportions last seen on Kenny Everett's Brother Lee Love sketch.

Unable to participate in either the laido seminar or the taikai I was degraded to one-handed translation duties. The following day's laido seminar gave everyone a chance to see the crème-de-la-crème of smoothness in Morishima Sensei's demonstrations as we worked through Seiteigata. With Ishido Sensei not wishing to spend too much time on Seitei explanations we quickly broke into grade groups and practiced under the tutelage of the 7<sup>th</sup> dans there with Ishido Sensei keeping a watchful eye. I translated for the high grade group under Morishima Sensei who decided that having seen the embu from the high grades it would be beneficial to focus on those parts of Seitei which would provide the best results. Being the Jodobu newsletter I don't want to dwell too much on this but a very interesting point he made went something like this...

*"Of course we practice Seiteigata and then move onto Shoden, Chuden and Okuden. However for me I see the learning of the different sets as representing various loops in my training. I do Koryu and try to develop the feeling that that Koryu is trying to express. I then feed this back into my Seiteigata. By people doing this it will allow you to make Seitei something of your own as it will express your own strengths where you have found them through Koryu practice. Having a way of doing the Seitei which is your own is a very strong thing and will maximise the chance of victory at taikai and passing at shinsa."*

This idea of having various feedback loops from Koryu back into Seitei I found very appealing and given that Seitei Jodo is constructed almost entirely from SMR Jodo forms I thought it would be equally applicable for Jodo. I will have to think about this further as time goes on...



The Ishido Sensei showing the correct place for the thrust in Ganmen Ate with Morishima Sensei. The author and translator is standing on the right concealing his massive throbbing limb.



Correct position of feet and sword for Wakigamae

The final day saw both Jodo and Iaido Taikai. It was an amazing turn out, I think over 100 people turned up to take part. As the judges were short of red flags I was allowed to judge and use my swollen hand instead of a flag. Joking apart, by not taking part at all in the taikai and being able to judge gave a very interesting insight into how people performed under pressure. I was lucky enough to have a chat with Ishido Sensei during the taikai while he commented on the various judges' decisions. He commented that it was important for the high grades to start to judge on the more "unseen" side of both Iaido and Jodo.

There has been a lot of commentary on the unseen side of the arts in the last year and I am sure there is more to come. Specifically on this occasion Sensei was interested in qualities such as the following which I will attempt to give a brief translation of:

- *Seme* – attacking pressure, not just through physical action but in serious intent as well
- *Tame* – almost the contrast of *seme*, this is the quality of holding something back rather than constantly "letting rip". The control of the contrast between going full tilt and conserving something is another expression of *meri hari*
- *Meri Hari* – meaning modulation. This is the expression of control over the contrast between extremes of hard/soft, slow/fast, active/static and of course *seme/tame*. It is

difficult to fully explain *merihari* (translation of the characters is “expansion and contraction) but the musical understanding of modulation is an elegant analogy where a change of key is used to add emphasis.

Furthermore Sensei was very interested in the judge’s ability to be able to discern if a good cut was made based not upon speed or swish but the exponent’s ability to commence their cut/strike/thrust when they were most able to do so. This was very evident in forms such as Tsuka Ate where it is tempting to deliver the last cut as quickly as possible rather than choose the moment for your body to deliver its maximum potential. This, I was told, was a good indication of understanding of *merihari*.

The finals saw our Lucy Earley, the only UK entrant into the taikai, take first place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dan Jodo Taikai and second place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dan Iaido Taikai. The 2<sup>nd</sup> dan division was very interesting as it was dominated by Lucy and Poland’s Lukasz Machura. Lukasz did extremely well in last year’s European Taikai as well and the two of them took either silver or gold in the Mierlo event. Ishido Sensei in particular endorsed the results of this division commenting that where the right balance of *seme* and *tame* was achieved by either of these competitors they had proved victorious.



Kyudo Embu with Andre Schiebroek at centre

At the end of the event we were treated to several embu, firstly from the local Kyudo Dojo of which the host organiser Andre Schiebroek was a member. It was an interesting contrast to the more active arts we normally practice. The silence was deafening before each arrow whizzed through the air (usually missing the target but oh well, it’s all in the kata!).

The Kyudo was then followed with an Iaido embu for which there are quite a few movie clips of on Youtube if you follow these links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCTfe6RZE5Y>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUdfsMtplws&feature=related>

It was overall an extremely enjoyable event. Having the whole event in the same hotel we were staying in (which was also very luxurious) was great. I would like to thank the organisers and look forward to the 11<sup>th</sup> Ishido Cup.

### Senior Jodo Training Session

The 23<sup>rd</sup> February saw the first Senior Jodo Training Session held in Northampton (thanks to Jim Jones and his dojo) and taught by sensei’s Jock Hopson and Chris Mansfield. These sessions are aimed at bringing some consistency and then escalation of technical level for

Jodo dojo leaders and seniors within the BKA and was set at 3<sup>rd</sup> dan and above. In all and including the teachers we had 19 attendees.

The day consisted of a run through Tandoku Dosa followed by a close examination of correct Sotai Dosa. As mentioned earlier, Sotai Dosa may well start to constitute a grading criteria in Japan for which we may follow suit. It is therefore very important to begin to incorporate correct understanding of this in our association.

The afternoon was dedicated to learning and improving the first koryu set, Omote. This set consists of twelve forms of which six are incorporated into Seiteigata. These are:

1. Tachiotoshi (falling sword)
2. Tsubawari (break a sword guard)
3. Tsukizue (reach the target)
4. Hissage (to make drop)
5. Sakan (entry from the left)
6. Ukan (entry from the right)
7. Kasumi (mist)
8. Monomi (to envisage)
9. Kasanoshita (under a wide hat)
10. Ichirei (single bow)
11. Neyanouchi (inside a room)
12. Hosomichi (narrow path)

(interpretation of kata names by Chris Mansfield)

In Shimizu Takaji Sensei's book, Jodo Kyohan, he provides commentary at the beginning of each teaching set with information on what that set represents and emphasises. I have translated this and inserted below:

### 表Omote (Surface)

These twelve forms incorporate effective use of the body and frequent change in the manipulation and operation of technique. It is required that these are performed using correct, basic technique in the appropriate manner.

By focussing on only a few "new" forms I feel that some good progress was made throughout the day and a lot of people commented on how useful it was.

I hope to be holding more of these sessions (but perhaps in the latter half of the year) in other areas of the country in order that more people can attend. I would really urge sandans and above to attend these as I feel having a separate training opportunity to receive direct 7<sup>th</sup> dan instruction and not get distracted by having to teach is very conducive to progressing one's Jodo.

Thanks go to Jock and Chris for keeping the session focussed and providing a relaxed learning atmosphere. Thanks also to Jim Jones and his dojo members who organised not only an excellent dojo facility but lunch as well (including no small amount of cakes!)

### **Coaching Update**

The official launch of the nearly completed Level 1 Coaching Course for Iaido and Jodo took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> March in Suffolk. The course was attended by 18 delegates and several Regional and National Coaches who were aiming to become Course Tutors.



The torture chamber is prepared



Paul Gledhill (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) instructs Lucy Earley (left) how to punish Sandy Sanford (far right) for wearing a retro jogging suit. Aurelien Nacrou (centre) prepares to hit Sandy on the head if Lucy misses

The day went very quickly (for me anyway, the delegates were hanging themselves by 4pm however) and there was much lively debate.

The course feedback was very positive and we are endeavouring to respond to popular requests or comments. The next course will be held in Durham on the 4<sup>th</sup> May and I will be organising another session in the south hopefully before the end of August. Several more sessions should be held during the rest of the year.

Attendees who got their new gold stripes from this course are:

Patty Papageorgiou Axford  
 Carl Markwick  
 Jason Oliver  
 Alan Currie  
 Barrie Aldridge  
 David Green  
 Karl Gibbons  
 Andy Smith  
 Aurelian Nacrou

Lucy Earley  
Gary Easton  
Paul Thomas  
Sandy Sandford  
John Golsby  
Craig Wilson  
Richard Stonell  
Samantha Gerlach  
Piotr Hawrylczak

Well done to all.

### **Eishinkan Seishinkan Koryu Seminar**

Well being such a busy early part of the year we have another seminar update. This year's Eishinkan Seishinkan Koryu Seminar was attended by some 48 attendees from the UK, France, Belgium, Holland, Hungary and Poland. This year we were delighted to be taught by Otake Toshiyuki Sensei, 8<sup>th</sup> dan Jodo kyoshi. Otake Sensei has been coming to the UK more and more recently but was actually here nearly 25 years ago when Jodo was just starting in this country with sensei's Hiroi and Ishido. He trains under Yano Sensei and has experienced both Fukuoka (western Japan) and Tokyo styles of Jodo.

It may be unclear to some what these two styles represent and this seminar allowed me lots of time to discuss with Otake Sensei how these differences came about so I will elaborate in this report...

Our first day we went briefly through the Seitei and allowed people to pose any technical questions they had about the forms. Otake Sensei is something of an inspiring figure as he is constantly trying to evaluate and improve his technique and his attention to detail (provided it is relevant) is very impressive. It was therefore very beneficial to have an analysis in the forms in such fine detail from someone who understood the various opinions from the other most senior Japanese teachers. In the afternoon we started the Omote ensuring we incorporated the Seitei-ized forms into the practice so that everyone could remember the correct sequence. With help from Jock Hopson and Chris Mansfield, Otake Sensei was able to ensure that the Tokyo style of Jodo was adhered to although his main style is Fukuoka. For those who have witnessed or trained with any of the Fukuoka-style teachers you will know that the koryu tends to be slightly more complex in movement and having a firm grasp of Seitei is not always enough to be able to interpret the intricacies of the style. In comparison the Tokyo style seems simpler and more direct.

In one of the breaks I asked Otake Sensei about these differences and the development of Tokyo-style Jodo under Shimizu Takaji Sensei. He explained that when Jodo was introduced to the public, its first target audience were the Tokyo Riot Police who already used the Jo as a police baton and were (to say the least) extremely skilled in Kendo. "Classical" Shindo Muso Ryu Jojutsu incorporates a lot of evasive manoeuvres and non-linear actions which were somewhat repellent to the very direct swordsmanship of the police Kendoka and thus Shimizu Sensei derived kata which were easily absorbed by the Kendoka in their koryu format and could then be taught on a wide basis once formalised into Seitei. This particular description was very interesting as I think the popular opinion is that Seitei and Shimizu Sensei's most "synthesized" koryu Jodo is a watered-down version for the slightly less intelligent (I'm being a bit extreme here but I'm sure a lot of people would agree that this was the impression). From the discussion with Otake Sensei it occurred to me that perhaps the resultant style of Jodo was a bit more "battle tested" under the very telling process of trying it against rock-hard Kendoka and possibly the extravagant stylisation had thereby been bleached out of it.

I am not trying to be disrespectful to either arm of the Jodo lineage; arguably both flavours have their advantages and disadvantages but this discussion provided a bit more balance to both sides, interesting all the more that this should come from a teacher of the Fukuoka style.

The following day saw the final practice of Omote before we embarked on the Chudan kata. This set, as Otake Sensei explained, was for embedding Jodo into the exponent through repeated practice and should be performed with some vehemence. This was in contrast to the Omote which as described before are for the learning of technique and understanding of distance and timing. In Shimizu Sensei's Jodo Manual he introduces Chudan thus:

### 中段Chudan (Middle Level)

The Chudan techniques comprise of 12 forms. On the whole there are many movements which are to be performed vehemently and vigorously and therefore require adequate feeling and practise to understand the contents of Chudan. The way of using the jo remains the same as Omote.

The forms in order are:

1. Ichi Riki (single force)
2. Oshi Zume (drive back)
3. Midaredome (turbulence control)
4. Ushiro Zue (Zen) (rear stick pt.1)
5. Ushiro Zue (Go) (rear stick pt.2)
6. Taisha (turning wheel)
7. Kengome (entering a gap)
8. Kirikake (failed cut)
9. Shinshin (repeated advance)
10. Rai Uchi (thunder strike)
11. Yoko Giri Dome (half lateral cut)
12. Harai Dome (blocked lateral cut)
13. Seigan (aiming at the eyes)

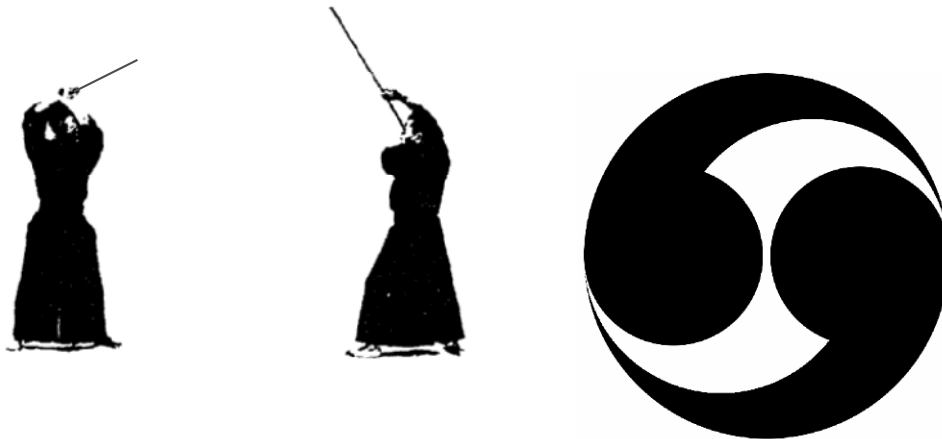
(interpretation of kata names by Chris Mansfield)

Some teachers include Ran Ai into the Chudan (Shimizu Sensei didn't although his descendants did) and it is believed Ran Ai is a much newer form compared to the other Chudan kata.

I should add a point about the interpretation of the kata names; the names themselves are fairly poetic and when created very likely had a different meaning to that today. Remembering the English translation is of relatively insignificant importance to knowing the Japanese name and of course learning the kata itself.

Within the Chudan set comes Yoko Giri Dome a.k.a. the one with the funny kamae at the beginning. Otake Sensei explained this was *Tomoe no kamae* because it resembled a Japanese insignia of the same name. It is very similar to the well known yin-yang image but the correct image is shown below alongside an image of the opening kamae from the Jodo Kyohan:





(Left: Tomoe no Kamae. Right: two pointed Tomoe insignia rotated 90degrees)

On the final day we finished off the Chudan kata and revised both teaching sets towards the end.

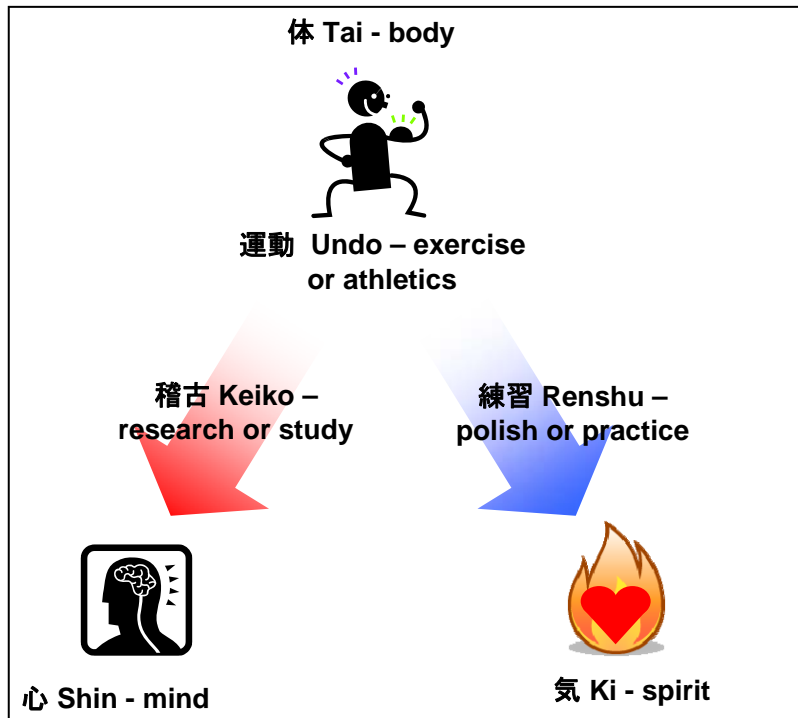
It was a very productive seminar I thought, a lot of the time was spent practicing and even the beginners group were able to repeat all the forms with some prompting towards the end. The senior teachers pointed out that although there was a lot to take in, the point was not for the beginners to be able to take everything on board but merely to get a taste of the koryu, perceive its depths and use the training to improve their own level. To this I think the seminar was a success.

I drove Sensei round a bit for the next couple of days and took the opportunity to extract as much information as I could from him (he wasn't too impressed with the thumbscrews or the threat to crash my car if he didn't explain all the Jodo secrets). One interesting insight concerns Yano Sensei's feelings towards the technique we usually call Ai Uchi. This technique will be familiar to those who know Midaredome and Ran Ai where the sword attack to the flank is thwarted by a reverse strike to the face with the Shijo's feet coming together. The literal meaning of Ai Uchi is mutual slaying and to this Yano Sensei does not agree that the appending of this name is appropriate as neither side is slain and it is the Jo which has the concluded advantage. When I asked Otake Sensei what we should call it he indicated that it didn't really have a name although he had also heard "Ai Uchi no sen" being used. From hereon it shall be known to me as "The Technique Formerly Known As Ai Uchi" or TTFKAAU for short.

The next intriguing conversation was initiated by Otake Sensei when he was talking about training. He explained that there were various types of training hence there were several expressions for it. These were clarified into three main areas:

- Keiko – Research or study. That area of training relying on the learning of new techniques, evaluation of learned techniques and modifying/correcting where necessary. This area of training is conscious brain dominated and uses analytical skills and feedback. This should represent nearly half of one's training.
- Renshu – Polish or practice. The process of actual repetitive practice to embed the technique into the subconscious and the muscle memory. It does not require as much conscious effort but intention and intensity of feeling are manifest. This should represent the other half of one's training.
- Undo – Exercise or athletics. This is merely making the body go through the motions of movement with neither mental nor emotional engagement. Sensei explained that it wasn't good to do any significant amount of *undo* although it was an integral part of normal practice. He commented that if a sensei looked at your performance and said you were doing "undo" then this wasn't meant as a compliment!

Thinking about this later it occurred to me that this rationale fitted quite neatly into the martial arts concept of Shin-Gi-Tai-Ichi. This concept meaning mind, spirit and body as one is often used in unarmed martial arts in place of Ki-Ken-Tai-Ichi or Ki-Jo-Tai-Ichi although its meaning tends to be more esoteric than the literal meanings of the latter expressions. The fitting of the concepts of training with Shin-Gi-Tai-Ichi is a convenient relationship. Naturally being a martial art rather than say, seated meditation, the body is going to be the most used resource thus it is easy to rely on merely learned bodily movement to fill up ones training time. To engage the mind and the spirit (and for the atheists I mean emotional content) requires the other two training methods and seeing as *undo* takes place almost involuntarily, attention to *keiko* and *renshu* is especially important.



I thought it would also be interesting to ask Otake Sensei what he thought about Yano Sensei's warning not to mix up the two styles of Tokyo and Fukuoka. He replied that some people inevitably do it, sometimes by mistake especially if the pair of practitioners are from different styles. However it was important not to blend the styles intentionally and attention should be made to make a distinction between them. He added that the expression of skill was the ability to clearly express and define the correct technical system you had learned. I asked if people would be castigated if they did an embu and mixed up the styles in front of senior teachers to which he responded that the exhibitors wouldn't be reproached but there would be questions asked about who their sensei's were...

After a relatively easy checking-in process (in comparison to arriving at T5 on its opening day) we waved goodbye to Otake Sensei and said we would look forward to seeing him at this year's BKA Summer Seminar – get your applications in quick!

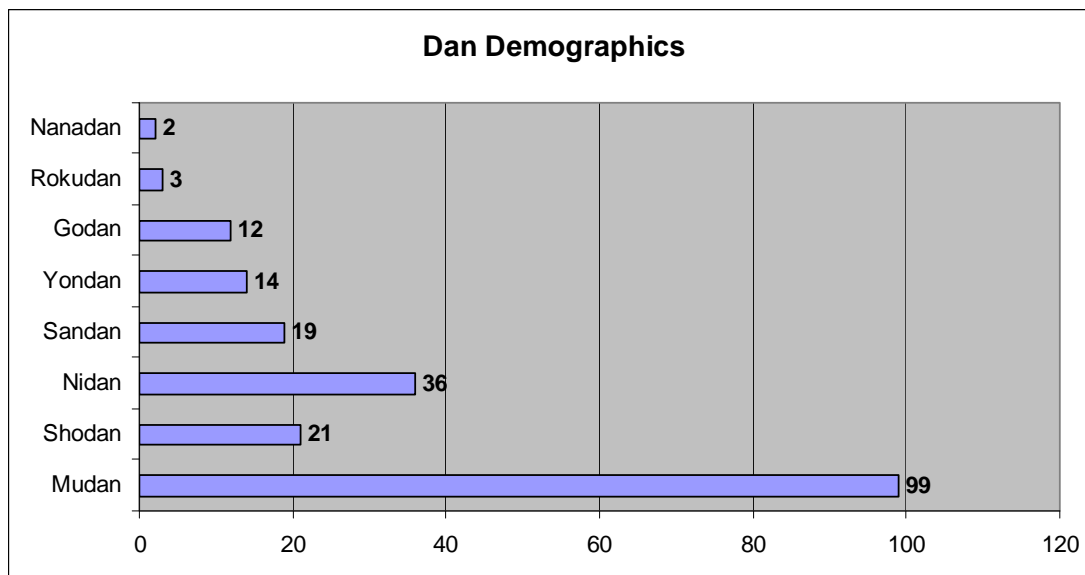
### Jodobu Strategy Update

The end of the calendar year meant I received a membership summary from our Membership Secretary, Malcolm Smalley. This allowed me to see how we were doing presently and into the short-term future within the Jodobu in relation to our strategic objectives.

The two main objectives, that of Jodobu members and number of dojos had the following information

1. Total members 276. Last year 247. This is a 12% increase.
2. Total operating dojo 25. Last year 30. This is a 17% decrease although this is probably erasing dojo which aren't actually in operation.

While the increase in members looks promising, an analysis of the dan demographics provides a little bit of concern:



This means that nearly half the Jodo membership is either ungraded or ikkyu. This particular group will consist of:

1. Beginners to the art and therefore having the most likelihood of giving up compared to other dan groups
2. People who have registered as doing Jodo but don't actually practice it

This could mean that a very large proportion of our membership is quite volatile.

Looking at dojo numbers we have seen a drop but that is more than likely a rationalisation of those dojos which are in operation.

Compared to laido and Kendo, the average number of members per dojo is quite a bit lower (11 compared to 12 for laido and 20 for Kendo) which would indicate that we possibly have dojos with plenty of capacity for more practitioners.

At the Senior Jodo Session I made a heart-rending speech (or was it heart stopping?) to the seniors there regarding their responsibilities as dojo leaders or assistant leaders. I will précis it here and ask that you read it as a polite, if not desperate, plea from your Bucho rather than a moan:

To dojo leaders and seniors:

For a number of years Jodo has ridden on the back of laido and this has provided stability and promoted growth in its own way through this support. While I have no wish to discard this support I am painfully aware that this back-riding may also be restricting the growth and spread of Jodo in this country. The dan demographics are showing a frightening skeletal quality from the intermediate to senior grades. We have two 7<sup>th</sup> dans in comparison to laido's seven. Grades lower than this show a hiatus in comparison to the comparably brighter signs of elevation to be coming within laido. Succession looks strong in laido, it is not so with Jodo. While I appreciate that Jodo is a lot younger in this country than the other two arts it is still disproportionately slow in growth. In short, the Jodoku is looking rather sickly.

Some of this we have no control over; some of this we do.

For me the prime needs for the art are an increase in membership and a boost to the rate of grading passes. The latter I feel may be being held back by the lack of confidence in skill by the more junior Jodo dojo leaders and the subsequent reluctance to push juniors through their grades and I will do all I can from the Bu to encourage regional coaching support and the frequency and quality of seminars. With regards to the first need, the increase of membership, short of doing some PR activities there is very little I can do; this comes down to the dojo leaders and senior members of the art.

- I need you to encourage your members (those who maybe do laido but not Jodo) to take up the art
- I need you to locally encourage more people to join your dojo and take up the art and thereby fill up your dojos

In short, the payback to the Association and the Jodobu comes by having 360 degree responsibility:

Downwards: to nurture and encourage your lower grades to participate in Jodo, to attend seminars, taikai, gradings, squad training; anything to boost their progress. Furthermore create a healthy Jodo dojo with new members coming in and current members escalating in grade.

Sideways: to interact positively with your peer group. To communicate and assist other dojos in your locality to operate and grow and make use of efficiencies of scale (even if that means sharing a car to a distant seminar). To group together to do PR activities and generate interest in the art in the locality.

Upwards: to seek assistance and guidance from Regional and National Coaches, senior teachers and Jodobu in order to facilitate removing any obstacles to growth in size or strength.

In summary I will do all I can from the Bu officers role to encourage coaching, kickstarting new dojo through financial support and working to publicise the art both within and outside of the association. The rest is up to you.

### **BKA Jodo Spring Seminar 2008**

Yup, it's another seminar report although I won't go into too much detail. This was the first Jodo only BKA seminar and grading that Harry and I had organised and it was interesting to see how much work was required to prepare for it. Jock Hopson and Chris Buxton once again were invited to fill the lead sensei status with the other 5<sup>th</sup> dans in support. We are up to about 40 attendees with a little iaido training group in the background furiously swishing for their grading on the Sunday.

As planned we worked through the Seitei Tandoku Dosa and Kata rapidly on the Saturday. Sunday saw the explanation of Sotai Dosa along with some practice before we broke up the seminar into gradees and those wishing to do koryu. Keith Rose led the koryu group doing Omote which caused a little surprise when it was seen that one of the forms was a kneeling one!

The Jodo grading was a great success with a 100% pass rate and I would like to congratulate the following candidates for passing:

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Kyu**

Alex Wengraf-Hewitt  
Chris Brown  
Carlos Xilotl  
Gavin James  
Alex Clarke

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Dan**

Eiko Matsuo  
Carl Renner  
Piers Wisbey  
Bill Neenan

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Dan**

John Burn  
Sandra Santos  
Cezary Wozniak

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Dan**

Helena Khan

## Upcoming Events

Please note that the BKA Summer Seminar will be led by Otake Sensei again and I would recommend getting your name down for it early.

Event	Date from	Date to	Days	Art	Location	Organiser
Iaido and Jodo Squad Training	10/05/2008	11/05/2008	2	IJ	Stevenage	Greg Drewe
Ishido Iaido and Jodo Seminar, Villingen	15/05/2008	18/05/2008	4	IJ	Germany	Karl Danneker
BKA AGM	31/05/2008	31/05/2008	1	IJ	Birmingham	Ric Schofield
Masamune Cup	07/06/2008	08/06/2008	2	IJ	Birmingham	Fay Goodman
Iaido and Jodo Seminar, Ellos	26/06/2008	29/06/2008	4	IJ	Sweden, Gotthenburg	Raili Parkkonen
BKA Iaido and Jodo Nationals	12/07/2008	13/07/2008	2	IJ	Sussex Uni	Vic Cook
HNIR Kenjutsu Seminar	18/07/2008	20/07/2008	3	I	University of Warwickshire	Scott Halls
Iaido and Jodo Squad Training	26/07/2008	27/07/2008	2	IJ	Stevenage	Greg Drewe
Netherlands Summer Seminar	29/07/2008	03/08/2008	6	IJ	Eindhoven, Holland	Andre Schiebroek
BKA Summer Seminar	17/08/2008	22/08/2008	6	IJ	Stevenage, UK	Vic Cook

This year's BKA Jodo Nationals will be held in Brighton on the same weekend as the Iaido. The event will be based on two heats:

- Individuals by dan
- Team's of two with total dans not exceeding 7 per team (there is no limit to the number of teams for each dojo)

As well as medals and shiny things we will be looking to award special prizes to first place and fighting spirit .

## Technical Digest Part 2

### Awase

The Kenkyusha's New College Dictionary defines "Awase[ru]" as "put [bring] together; add to; merge; combine; join; unite". It is also defined in other dictionaries as meaning to fit or to suit.

合わせ

合

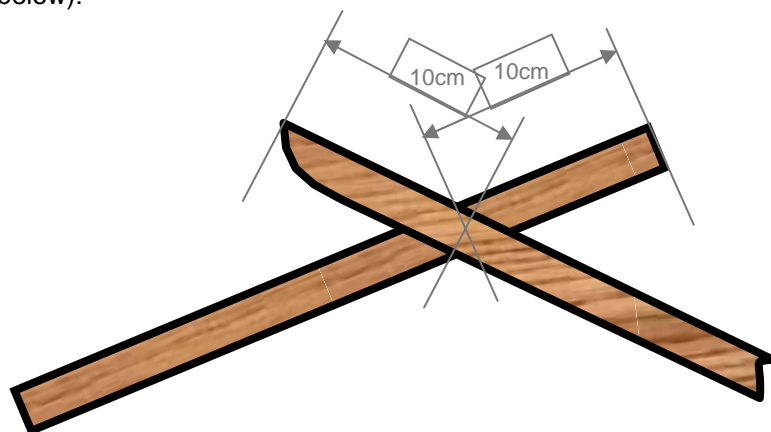
Awase

Ai-

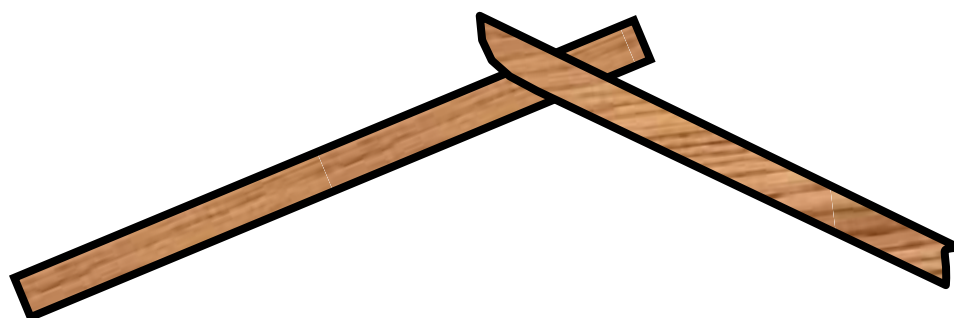
The Chinese character used is the same as is used in the words laido (the "ai" part) and Aikido. Budo practitioners may feel that the expression "to harmonise with" is a good equivalent, more aggressively "to cancel" or "to stalemate" might also be appropriate alternatives.

In Jodo, the awase position is used frequently at the beginning of kata's (Hissage, Kasumi, Tachiotoshi, Rai Uchi and Midaredome to name the Seitei ones) as well as for setting the correct distance in nine of the twelve Sotai Dosa.

ZNKR Seiteigata sets the overlap distance of Awase as being approximately 10cm (see below):



Obviously, being humans it is impossible to achieve a consistent 10cm overlap every single time and some margin for adjustment is of course allowable. However, any more than a 10cm overlap tends to create a distance which might put either exponent at a position of vulnerability. Considering that the Awase position is meant to represent a mutually safe distance (both sides would need to take a step in order to cut/hit the other), closer proximity is not considered viable. However, in experience it seems that making the separation distance between exponent greater, thus reducing the overlap, is acceptable provided that contact and some overlap is maintained between weapons (see below):



In this position there is a gentle tension between the weapons as each exponent seeks to dominate the centre. Given the linear nature of the sword art and the indirect nature of Jodo it would seem a simple premise that in ZNKR Setei Jodo, the sword takes the centre and the jo allows itself to “fit” itself around it.

However, it has been explained (and given that it is not detailed in the Seitei manual it is suspected that this has Koryu roots) that the continuation of the kata is determined by whichever weapon has taken control of the centre. Where the sword is dominant, the next movement out of Awase and into an attack is initiated by the jo; where the jo is dominant, the sword breaks the Awase and initiates an attack.

If this is the case then the following rationale should apply to Seiteigata (as an example):

Form	Weapon dominating the centre	Initial response
Hissage	Jo	Uchidachi steps in to jodan and then cuts to the shomen
Kasumi	Tachi	Shijo breaks Awase by delivering a <i>gyakute uchi</i> sweep
Tachi Otoshi	Tachi	Shijo breaks Awase by stepping to the side to deliver a <i>gyakute uchi</i> strike
Rai Uchi	Jo	Uchidachi breaks Awase by stepping in to cut the left upper arm
Midare Dome	Tachi	Shijo breaks Awase by delivering a <i>gyakute uchi</i> sweep

The above is not written for the purpose of practitioners to start picking apart their kata. As has been stated, the Seitei manual gives no detail on this and it would be better to concentrate one’s attention to more important points.

In assuming Awase from one’s starting position it is important to ensure that no vulnerability of weakness exists in the movement. This involves maintaining the following points:

1. Shijo should not allow the Uchidachi to come too close before initiating the Awase position taking. It should be thought from the Jo side as being a proactive response to Uchidachi’s approach rather than a reaction to a dangerously close proximity. Bear in mind that the Uchidachi has no initial intention of taking Awase, this is also a response to the Jo’s action.
2. When assuming Awase from Kasumi no Kamae (forms 7 and 9) the jo should be the first things that moves rather than the feet and body. By moving the body in while maintaining Kasumi no Kamae, the Shijo is merely bringing their body closer to the sword without any defence. Assuming Awase from any other position also requires a proactive movement ahead of allowing the Uchidachi to come in too close.
3. The Uchidachi should move their sword into the Awase position in a direct, positive and possibly aggressive manner. They are not yielding to the Shijo’s movement but rather adapting a stalemate situation reluctantly.
4. The target area for the monouchi of the sword and the josaki when moving into the overlap position is only a couple of inches higher than the finished Awase position. It should not occur high above their heads and drop down into position.
5. The final movement should be the settling of the Shijo’s feet into position as it is them that sets the final distance.

While there is a moment of stillness in the Awase position in Seiteigata, this moment should be kept alive with the tension and should not be overly stretched. There should be an acknowledgement of the mutually balanced position, a moment of silent questioning as to who is going to break the position, then the kata should continue.