

Aikido at the 2013 World Combat Games



Mitsuteru Ueshiba, Aikido Ambassador. Photo by Sonobe Photo Studio.



International Aikido Federation

Aikido at the 2013 World Combat Games

IAF and the Demonstrations

Aikido
IAF, the International Aikido Federation
Aikido in the World Combat Games
Aikido Demonstrations

Participants

Officials:

Mitsuteru Ueshiba, Aikido Ambassador
Peter A. Goldsbury, IAF Chairman
Kei Izawa, IAF General Secretary
Tony Smibert, Narrator
Wilko Vriesman, Technical Delegate

Master Level Instructors:

Ulf Evenås, Shihan
Christian Tissier, Shihan
Tsuruzo Miyamoto, Shihan

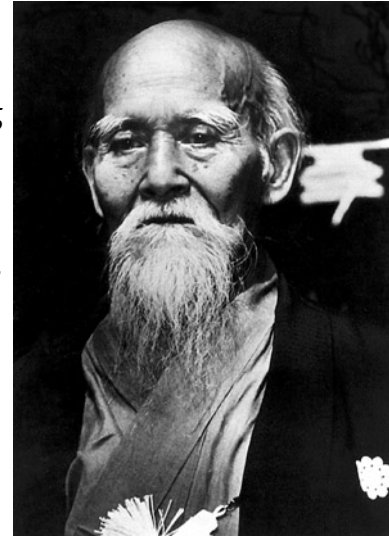
Athletes by country (32 countries):

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Argentina | Australia | Belgium | Brazil |
| Chile | Chinese Taipei | Estonia | Finland |
| France | Germany | Hong Kong | Indonesia |
| Ireland | Japan | Lebanon | Luxembourg |
| Malaysia | Mexico | Netherlands | Norway |
| Poland | Portugal | Romania | Russia |
| Slovakia | Slovenia | South Africa | South Korea |
| Sweden | Switzerland | Uruguay | Venezuela |

Aikido

Aikido is a Japanese budo (martial way) founded by Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969). It consists of pinning and throwing techniques, practiced against grabbing and striking attacks.

All aikido techniques are defensive in nature and there are no matches in aikido, nor any other kind of competition. Practice is done by taking turns defending against attacks, in the strife to master the curriculum. The techniques are also applied against armed attacks: knife, sword and staff. In practice, wooden replicas of those weapons are used.



The throwing and pinning techniques of aikido use the power and direction of the attack, instead of any blocking or resistance. The attack is avoided by initial evasive steps and the force of the attack is redirected into the aikido techniques.

Emphasis is placed not only on managing the techniques, but on doing it softly, even gently, so there is minimum discomfort for both the attacker and the defender. This takes years to master. No matter how long and hard one has practiced, there is always room for improvement.

The training wear is traditionally Japanese: white jacket and trousers, and wide outer trousers in black or dark blue. This is called the hakama and is derived from the pants worn by horse-riding samurai.

Aikido has a grading system similar to that of other Japanese martial arts – starting with kyu grades before the first black belt. Between each black belt an increasing number of years of training is needed. Those with the highest dan (black belt) grades are well into their sixties and seventies. Due to its gentle form of training, aikido can be practiced also at an advanced age.

International Aikido Federation (IAF)

The International Aikido Federation (IAF) was founded in 1976. It consists of national aikido federations of 47 countries. The IAF is a member of SportAccord and other international bodies, such as the International World Games Association.

Between the congresses held every four years in Japan, the governing body of the IAF is its Directing Committee, chaired since 1996 by Peter Goldsbury. Kei Izawa is its General Secretary. The present aikido Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba is President of the IAF.

In addition to the Directing Committee, the IAF has a Senior Council consisting of some of the oldest and most merited high-grade aikido teachers. Its function is to safeguard the spirit and principles of aikido, as expressed by the founder Morihei Ueshiba. They are appointed by the IAF President. So is the Technical Council, an advisory resource for the member federations.

The Directing Committee of the IAF holds formal meetings every two years. Its 2010 meeting was held in Moscow, Russia, in connection to an aikido festivity and a seminar, where some of the DC members held classes, as did Mitsuteru Ueshiba, who is the Aikido Ambassador at the 2013 World Combat Games.

The IAF is closely linked to the Aikikai Foundation, a Japanese organization maintaining the legacy of the founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba. The Chairman of the Aikikai Foundation is his grandson Moriteru Ueshiba, who holds the title of Doshu, or headmaster of the art.

The Aikikai Foundation operates from a large aikido training facility in Tokyo called the Hombu Dojo, where dan grades awarded all over the world are registered. Mitsuteru Ueshiba is the acting head of the Hombu Dojo.

Aikido in the World Combat Games

The IAF has long focused on developing a presence in the international sports community. It joined SportAccord and the International World Games Association (IWGA), and has participated in the World Games.



In 2010, at the first SportAccord Combat Games in Beijing, China, the IAF participated with aikido demonstrations by a number of national teams. For the 2013 World Combat Games in St. Petersburg, the IAF has increased its effort to contribute to the event.

Most martial arts and combat sports involve both training and competition. Their athletes compete to win championships. In aikido there is no competition and participants cannot be called competitors. They work together for the improvement of both.

Therefore, the aikido event at the World Combat Games is one of demonstrations only. There is no competition. Instead, the aikido participants have been given tasks to perform to the best of their abilities, without any measuring or ranking of their results.

In addition to the national teams, there are demonstrations by expert level aikido instructors. They will also coach all the participants in classes held to prepare them for the demonstrations.

Aikido Demonstrations

There is no competition in aikido, so the IAF aikido participation in the World Combat Games will consist of demonstrations only. These are divided into five blocks with separate themes for the national teams to demonstrate. At the end, the three Shihan expert teachers will have their aikido demonstrations.

In addition to giving the participants the opportunity of showing the skills they have reached by dedicated training, the demonstrations set out to show the depth and breadth of aikido and at the same time make it dynamic as much as possible. Also there is special attention to demonstrate that women and men can effectively practice aikido together as equals.

The succession of themes is such that they increase the levels of dynamics and skills needed, as the program progresses from the first to the last block.

Monday, October 21

Block One , 14:00 – 16:00

Objectives:

1. Basic aikido taisabaki, body movements in the techniques
2. Response to specific attacks
3. Basic techniques in free style

The block will start with demonstrations by the Japanese team, then the Russian one, and it ends with the same two nations.

Block Two, 18:00 – 20:00

Objectives:

1. Aikido applied techniques by gender
2. Response to specific attacks or holds
3. Applied techniques in free style

Attention is given to highlight gender equality in aikido practice, regarding both nage (the one doing the aikido techniques, also called tori) and uke (the one being thrown or pinned). It ends with demonstrations by the Russian and Japanese teams, showing applied techniques in free style.

Tuesday, October 22

Block Three and Four, 14:00 – 16:00

At Block Three, demonstrations include as much variety of techniques as possible, with a balanced mix between projections and immobilizations. At each demonstration, two national teams will share the tatami (the mat).

Block Four starts with free style practice, which should primarily contain basic

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techniques. The last three demonstrations will be aikido techniques against weapon attacks: the French team shows techniques against jo (staff), the Russian team shows techniques against ken (sword) and tanto (knife), and the Japanese team shows defense against tanto (knife).

Block Five, 18:00 – 20:00

The last block starts with demonstrations by three multi-national teams, followed by the teams of Russia, Wim van Gils, Bruno Gonzales and Japan, ending with demonstrations by the Shihan teachers: Ulf Evenås, Christian Tissier and Tsuruzo Miyamoto.

After Block Five, the closing ceremony of the aikido demonstrations follows, with a final bow headed by the Aikido Ambassador, speech by the IAF Chairman, and the handing out of Certificates of Participation.

Training and Preparations

Training and preparation for the participants, under the directions of the Shihan expert instructors and the Technical Delegate, will be held:

Sunday October 20, 08:00 – 09:00 (GZ), 10:00 – 14:15 (VAP), 15:30 – 17:30 (SKK)

Monday October 21, 08:00 – 09:15 (GZ), 10:00 – 12:00 (SKK)

Tuesday October 22, 08:00 – 09:15 (GZ), 10:00 – 12:00 (SKK)

(VAP=Volleyball Academy Platonov, SCC=SSC Peterbursky, GZ=Gazprom venue)

Mitsuteru Ueshiba, Aikido Ambassador

For the 2013 World Combat Games in St Petersburg, we have returned to the source of aikido and appointed as our Ambassador a direct descendant of the founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba.

The traditional organization of Japanese martial arts is based on the founding family, and Mitsuteru Ueshiba is the aikido founder's great-grandson.

Born in 1981, Mr Ueshiba is Deputy Head of the Headquarters Dojo in Tokyo. As such, Mr Ueshiba follows an intensive program of training and teaching aikido. He gives many overseas seminars and last visited the Russian Federation in 2010, when he gave a seminar in Moscow, with classes for adults as well as for children.

The IAF is very pleased and honored that Mr Mitsuteru Ueshiba has consented to act as Aikido Ambassador for the 2013 World Combat Games.



Mitsuteru Ueshiba, Aikido Ambassador. Photo by Sonobe Photo Studio.

Peter Goldsbury, IAF Chairman



IAF Chairman Peter Goldsbury. Photo by August Dragt.

Peter Goldsbury was born in 1944 in the UK. After the usual school sports of soccer and cricket, he took up cross-country running as a university student – until he discovered aikido in 1970, attracted by its absence of competition. He is still training aikido and his current rank is 7th dan.

It was due to a growing interest in Japanese martial arts that he moved to Hiroshima in 1980, where he now lives and teaches aikido. His dojo is one of very few in the country where one of its martial arts is taught to Japanese people in Japanese, but by a foreigner.

Peter Goldsbury gives regular aikido seminars in the Netherlands and has also taught in the UK, Ireland, Malaysia and Brunei.

He began working for the International Aikido Federation (IAF) around 1980, soon becoming its General Secretary, and was elected IAF Chairman at the 7th Congress in 1996.

Peter Goldsbury is a PhD in ancient Greek philosophy. From his initial move to Japan, he taught courses at Hiroshima University in western philosophy, but up until his retirement he was Professor in the graduate Department of Management Studies, specializing in Comparative Culture and Negotiation Studies.

Now semi-retired, he still has a keen interest in Japan's martial arts culture and

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is working on a history of aikido. His aim is to show how traditional Japanese values are embodied in a modern martial art practiced and taught widely in other countries.

He visited Moscow in 2010, to attend the IAF Directing Committee Meeting and aikido seminar held there.

Kei Izawa, IAF General Secretary

Kei Izawa began his aikido practice in 1969 at Aikikai Hombu Dojo in Tokyo, under the late Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba. In 1976, he moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he studied under Mitsunari Kanai, 8th dan, of New England Aikikai.

Kei Izawa has taught aikido at New England Aikikai (1977-1978), as well as in the United Kingdom (1987-1990) and Germany (1997). Presently he teaches at Aikikai Tanshinjuku in Colorado.

In 2008, he was elected General Secretary of the International Aikido Federation. He was re-elected in 2012. He was also the Technical Delegate for the IAF at the Beijing Combat Games in 2010.

Kei Izawa translated, in collaboration with Mary Fuller, the biography of Osensei, titled *A Life in Aikido*, published by Kodansha International in 2008.

Kei Izawa is a 6th dan black belt in aikido.



IAF General Secretary Kei Izawa. Photo by Larry Armstrong.

Tony Smibert, Narrator



Tony Smibert, IAF Senior Council member. Photo by Hong Kong Aikikai.

Tony Smibert, born 1949 in Australia, is a 7th dan aikido shihan, member of the IAF Senior Council and before that for many years its Vice Chairman. He is also president of Aikikai Australia and a trustee of the Sugano Foundation. His home and dojo are in a tiny Tasmanian town beneath the mountains and very near to a world famous wilderness.

He started training aikido in 1964, at age 15. Next year, Seiichi Sugano Shihan arrived in Australia and Tony Smibert soon became his student, remaining with him until his death in 2010, assisting in the development of aikido around Australia.

“I can’t really remember 'life before aikido,' because I've been fully engaged in it since I was a kid,” he says. “Even though, sadly, Sugano Shihan has passed away, I’m still very much his student and trying hard to learn what he was teaching.”

Tony Smibert is also an accomplished artist, working mainly but not only in watercolors and acrylic. His art career includes more than 50 solo exhibitions in Europe, South East Asia, Japan, the Americas and Australia. He is currently a Visiting Artist Researcher at Tate Britain, working with Senior Conservation Scientist Dr Joyce Townsend and focused on the painting techniques of JMW Turner. Smibert and Townsend’s “Tate Watercolour Manual: Lessons from the Great Masters” was released this year.

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Tony Smibert's art is deeply informed by training in Japanese martial art. The larger acrylic abstracts use the energy flow (ki) of aikido to create a broad calligraphy reminiscent of Franz Kline and Action Painting very different from his classical and oriental watercolors.

He was present at the 2010 IAF Directing Committee meeting in Moscow, and taught at the adjoined seminar. At the 2013 World Combat Games in St. Petersburg, he is the narrator of the aikido demonstrations.

Wilko Vriesman, Technical Delegate

Wilko Vriesman was born in Amsterdam 1958. He started to practice aikido in 1981 under Minoru Kanetsuka Shihan and then Masatake Fujita Shihan. In 1991 he was invited to stay in Hombu Dojo as a student.

“That became a turning point in my aikido life,” he says.

Returning to Europe, Wilko Vriesman was introduced by Seigo Yamaguchi Shihan to Christian Tissier Shihan in Paris, where he trained from 1993 until 2000, by commuting to Paris once or twice a week.

In 1993 he opened a dojo in Amsterdam and in 1995 founded the Dutch Aikikai Federation, which at this moment consist of 56 dojos and 300 yudansha (black belts). He is its president and Technical Director. He also founded Aikido Nederland, the all-style aikido organization of the country, in 2009, where he is the General Secretary.

In addition to his work for Dutch aikido, Wilko Vriesman holds many seminars in several other countries, helping them to develop their aikido practice. He's the Technical Director of major aikido organizations in Slovenia, Dubai and Saudi Arabia.

At the 2012 General Assembly he was elected to the Directing Committee of the IAF and appointed as Technical Delegate for the IAF 2013 World Combat Games participation. His current aikido rank is 6th dan.



Technical Delegate Wilko Vriesman. Photo by Satomi Ishikawa.

Ulf Evenås Shihan



Ulf Evenås Shihan. Photo by Viktor Kazarin.

Ulf Evenås was born 1946 in Gothenburg, Sweden, where he still lives. After training karate he turned to aikido in 1968. He was one of the first western students to have an extended time as uchideshi in Iwama, 1973, under Morihiro Saito Shihan. He remained a close student of his for 29 years.

The last ten years of Saito's life, Ulf Evenås was his personal representative in Europe, Russia and Australia, even co-teaching with him at a seminar in Australia in 2000. Ulf Evenås continues to teach aikido as it was taught to him by Saito, at countless seminars around the globe.

His first Russian seminar was in St. Petersburg 20 years ago, in 1993. Back then, Russian aikido was with little means, facing many difficulties.

“I slept on somebody's couch, and even paid the travel costs myself,” he recalls.

But friendships were made. Each year since, he holds a St. Petersburg seminar in May, but also regularly in Moscow and other parts of Russia. For many years, Russia is the country in the world outside Sweden, where Ulf Evenås holds the most seminars.

“During these twenty years, Russian aikido has grown tremendously in both quantity and quality.”

In his professional work with conflict management and negotiations, he uses aikido based principles. He received training at Harvard University and the FBI National Academy, whose methods are also based on aikido principles.

Still his main focus is on aikido practice, where he works to improve his proficiency and to understand its deeper meaning. And he is devoted to sharing his knowledge with others.

Ulf Evenås has contributed significantly to the development of Swedish aikido, in its board, its grading committee and other functions. He is a recipient of the highest medal of honor from the Swedish Budo & Martial Arts Federation. He is 7th dan in aikido.

Uke (attackers) at the Ulf Evenås demonstration

Domas Jablonskis

Male, born: 17-03-1977, from: Lithuania, Vilnius, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1994

What attracted me to aikido: The movements.

Where I practice: Vilnius, Ulf Evenås Aikido Center.

My teacher: Ulf Evenås Shihan, 7th Dan.

About myself:

Fredrik Snell

Male, born: 20-09-1977, from: Sweden, Karlstad, 5th Dan.

Started aikido: 1993

What attracted me to aikido: That Aikido is not only physical training.

Where I practice: Karlstad Aikido Club.

My teacher: Ulf Evenås Shihan, 7th Dan.

About myself: Head instructor of Karlstad Aikido Club and teaching regularly at seminars.

Christian Tissier Shihan



Christian Tissier Shihan. Photo by Maria Polevaya.

Christian Tissier is a French aikido instructor born in 1951. He took his first aikido class in 1962, which made him, barely 11 years old, one of the youngest practitioners in Europe. He soon became a student of Mutsuro Nakazono at his Paris dojo.

Christian Tissier was quickly recognized for his talent in aikido, which was confirmed when he received 2nd dan at the age of 17. In 1969 he realized his dream of going to Japan to practice aikido. Although he initially intended to stay for six months, he remained for seven years.

He practiced for all the masters, mainly Kisshomaru Ueshiba Doshu and Seigo Yamaguchi, the latter of whom came to regard him as a favorite student, Mitsugi Saotome and the revered Kisaburo Osawa, Technical Director of the Aikikai. He also practiced kenjutsu and even kickboxing for fun, just to add a "contact sport."

In 1976, when he was 4th dan, he decided to return to France. In Vincennes, near Paris, he opened the Cercle Christian Tissier, where many of today's French aikido teachers have practiced. For all these years, he has also held countless seminars around Europe as well as the rest of the world.

He has visited Russia regularly for aikido seminars since more than 20 years.

"The first time I went there, the level was quite low because aikido was

very new to them,” Christian Tissier recalls. “But I immediately felt the potential of the students and how hungry they were to learn.”

The development of Russian aikido was speedy:

“Just a couple of years later it was completely different. What I had taught before was mastered. Now, the level is very high and it is always a great pleasure to go and meet all my Russian friends.”

Christian Tissier was awarded 7th dan in 1998.

Uke (attackers) at the Christian Tissier demonstration

Fabrice Croizé

Male, born: 16-05-1973, from: France, Paris, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1991

What attracted me to aikido: Its dynamism and efficiency.

Where I practice: Vincennes, Cercle Tissier.

My teacher: Christian Tissier, 7th Dan.

About myself: I arrived at Cercle Tissier in 1995, and I've been practicing daily since. Began teaching in 2000, at first with children, then teenagers, now only adults.

Bruno Gonzalez

Male, born: 12-09-1972, from: France, Montreuil, 5th Dan.

Started aikido: 1988

What attracted me to aikido: The study of a complete educational method.

Where I practice: Cercle Tissier Vincennes.

My teacher: Christian Tissier, 7th Dan.

About myself: I'm a regional technical director of the FFAAA (Fédération Française Aïkido, Aïkibudo et Affinitaires).

Tsuruzo Miyamoto Shihan



Tsuruzo Miyamoto Shihan. Photo by Sonobe Photo Studio.

Tsuruzo Miyamoto was born in 1953, which means that he reached Kanreki this year, i.e. 60 years, which is celebrated in Japanese tradition. He celebrates it as usual for him, with aikido practice:

“I would like to spend the rest of my life practicing aikido hard and continue exploring my potential.”

He was 18 when he enrolled in the Aikikai 1971 and started his aikido practice. What attracted him was the continuous training in accordance with traditional budo, without the competition format.

In 1975 he entered in the services of Aikikai Foundation, with intense study of aikido at the Hombu dojo as well as instructing at universities, enterprise aikido clubs, and other dojos in Japan and overseas.

He holds seminars in several countries, such as the USA, Israel, France, Spain, Germany and the UK. His first visit to Russia was 1995 in a Hombu Dojo delegation led by Ichihashi Shihan. Since 1997 he teaches annually in Russia.

In 1998 Tsuruzo Miyamoto was awarded 7th dan in aikido.

Uke (attackers) at the Tsuruzo Miyamoto demonstration

Toshio Suzuki

Male, born: 21-12-1980, from: Japan, Komae-shi/Naka-Izumi, 5th Dan.

Started aikido: 1990

What attracted me to aikido: Keiko (lesson).

Where I practice: Hombu Dojo, Tokyo.

My teacher: Ueshiba Moriteru Doshu.

About myself: I instruct at two universities, a culture center and the Aikido Academy.

Naoto Uchida

Male, born: 16-06-1981, from: Japan, Tsukuba-Mirai shi/Yokodai, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 2000

What attracted me to aikido: Keiko (lesson).

Where I practice: Hombu Dojo, Tokyo.

My teacher: Ueshiba Moriteru Doshu.

About myself: I instruct at Hombu Dojo children's classes, three universities, and other classes outside Hombu Dojo.

Argentina

Gustavo Moreno

Male, born: 02-01-1974, from: Argentina, Neuquen Capital, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1995

What attracted me to aikido: I was attracted by the fighting style of the actor Steven Seagal and was in search of this then little known style of martial art. I practiced other styles until starting aikido in 1995 and since then I haven't been able to leave it aside.

Where I practice: Neuquen Capital dojo Kuma Kan.

My teacher: Onofre Entraigas, 2nd Dan.

About myself: Aikido has become an important part of my life: I now practice and teach in my own dojo. I constantly search for opportunities to travel abroad (Busco, Japan, France, etc.) to continue learning from the great masters. I feel attracted to masters such as the shihan Tissier, Yokota, Yasuno, Seki. This art is a force that changes my life constantly and therefore when I practice I feel free and totally fulfilled.

Robert Christopher Rothmund

Male, born: 08-07-1972, from: Argentina, Boulogne, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1995

What attracted me to aikido: Steven Seagal.

Where I practice: Buenos Aires, San Martin, OAK Dojo.

My teacher: Daniel Sandoval, 5th Dan.

About myself: I like to get to know people in other countries.

Diego Singer

Male, born: 28-06-1978, from: Argentina, Buenos Aires, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1993

What attracted me to aikido: Its elegance and complexity.

Where I practice: San Martin City, OAK Dojo.

My teacher: Daniel Sandoval, 5th Dan.

About myself: Philosophy professor.

Australia

Julie Boydell

Female, born: 18-03-1974, from: Australia, Malvern East, Melbourne, 1st Dan.

Started aikido: 2003

What attracted me to aikido: I like that anyone can practice aikido regardless of size, age, sex, or physical fitness.

Where I practice: Melbourne Australia, Glen Waverley Dojo.

My teacher: Robert Botterill Shihan, 7th Dan.

About myself: Off the mat: I enjoy snow skiing, textile arts and love my pets. On the mat: I train 2-3 times per week. I assist teaching aikido at university and enjoy encouraging others, especially women, to train.

Tristan Derham

Male, born: 01-02-1980, from: Australia, Subiaco, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1986

What attracted me to aikido: My father teaches aikido.

Where I practice: Perth, Western Australia.

My teacher: Sugano Shihan, 8th Dan.

About myself: I have trained closely with Tony Smibert Shihan and Yoshimitsu Yamada Shihan.

Jikou Sugano

Male, born: 18-06-1966, from: Australia, Sydney, 5th Dan.

Started aikido: 1984

What attracted me to aikido: Its positive energy, physical, mental and spiritual.

Where I practice: Sydney.

My teacher: Sugano Shihan, 8th Dan.

About myself: I have been around aikido all my life.

Belgium

Wim Van Gils

Male, born: 06-01-1972, from: Belgium, Ravels, 5th Dan.

Started aikido: 1990

What attracted me to aikido: The harmony.

Where I practice: Paris.

My teacher: Christian Tissier Shihan, 7th Dan.

About myself: I like the international connection in and around aikido.

Laetitia Dubasin

Female, born: 07-03-1980, from: Belgium, Malonne, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1991

What attracted me to aikido: The way of life.

Where I practice: Namur, Tada Ima Dojo.

My teacher: Stéphane Goffin, 6th Dan.

About myself: Aikido is an artistic form of expression.

Cindy Jacquet

Female, born: 05-05-1982, from: Belgium, Seraing, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1989

What attracted me to aikido: The philosophy.

Where I practice: Kobukaï aïki dojo of Esneux, Liège, Belgium.

My teacher: Jean-Pierre Jacquet, 6th Dan.

About myself: The aikido is a familial story.

Brazil

Alexei Angelo Caio

Male, born: 05-11-1974, from: Brazil, Sao Paulo, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1996

What attracted me to aikido: It's a nonnegotiable tool in human communication and an excellent tool for maintaining my health.

Where I practice: Sao Paulo, Do Centro Ao Movimento.

My teacher: Ricardo Kanashiro, 5th Dan.

About myself: Ultramarathon runner, high mountain climber, civil engineer and athlete with diabetes type one since the age of four.

Vagner de Sousa

Male, born: 10-03-1976, from: Brazil, Botucatu, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1996

What attracted me to aikido: The harmony of the movements.

Where I practice: São Paulo, ACAM Dojo.

My teacher: Makoto Nishida, 7th Dan.

About myself: I have practiced aikido since 1996. I teach in São Paulo Botucatu in Suburi Dojo.

Saulo Fong

Male, born: 25-06-1976, from: Brazil, São Paulo, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1998

What attracted me to aikido: I was attracted by the flow of the movements and the mind/body integration aspects of aikido.

Where I practice: São Paulo, Instituto União Dojo.

My teacher: Makoto Nishida, 7th Dan.

About myself: I am also a 2nd Dan in kendo and work in self-development and mind/body integration training.

Chile

Ranya Iqbal

Female, born: 31-03-1980, from: Chile, Santiago, 1st Dan.

Started aikido: 2007

What attracted me to aikido: The beauty and complexity of the art, as well as the enthusiasm and camaraderie between the students and teachers.

Where I practice: Santiago, Chile, Aikikai Chile.

My teacher: Jorge Rojo Shihan, 6th Dan.

About myself: I am a professional musician and have been playing the cello for over 20 years.

Michel Manghi

Male, born: 04-01-1975, from: Chile, Santiago, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1995

What attracted me to aikido: Its principles and philosophy.

Where I practice: Santiago, Aikikai Chile.

My teacher: Jorge Rojo Shihan, 6th Dan.

About myself:

Ricardo Toro

Male, born: 03-01-1983, from: Chile, Santiago, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1999

What attracted me to aikido: I started aikido by family recommendation.

Where I practice: Santiago, Aikikai Chile

My teacher: Jorge Rojo Shihan, 6th Dan.

About myself:

Chinese Taipei

Cheng-Chang Lin

Male, born: 24-10-1968, from: Chinese Taipei, Guishan Township, Taoyuan County, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1993

What attracted me to aikido: I had a friend who was practicing at that time. I was impressed by the beautiful techniques of aikido.

Where I practice: Taipei City, Republic of China Aikido Hombu Dojo.

My teacher: Hsiu-Chuan Wang (Teresa Wang) Shihan, 7th Dan.

About myself:

Hsuan-Yi Wu

Male, born: 12-05-1977, from: Chinese Taipei, Chinese Taipei, 1st Dan.

Started aikido: 2000

What attracted me to aikido: I was very interested in martial arts back then and decided to join the aikido club of my school.

Where I practice: Taipei City, Republic of China Aikido Hombu Dojo.

My teacher: Hsiu-Chuan Wang (Teresa Wang) Shihan, 7th Dan.

About myself:

Estonia

Aleksandr Gudkov

Male, born: 10-05-1983, from: Estonia, Maardu, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1999

What attracted me to aikido: Its power, beauty of movements, and huge potential for personal growth.

Where I practice: Tallinn, Maardu, Dojin dojo

My teacher: Dmitri Mestserjakov, 4th Dan.

About myself: Graphic designer.

Dmitri Meštšerjakov

Male, born: 23-08-1972, from: Estonia, Tallinn, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1992

What attracted me to aikido: The beauty of movements and philosophy of aikido. Aikido offers alternatives to violence, alternatives that are strong and effective and at the same time non-aggressive.

Where I practice: Tallinn, Maardu, Dojin Dojo.

My teacher: Fujita Shihan, 8th Dan, Sugawara Shihan, 7th Dan.

About myself: I work as aikido instructor since 1997. At the moment I am President and Head Instructor of my Aikido Dojin Club in Estonia and at the same time I am a member of the Examination Committee of the Estonian Aikido Federation.

Finland

Kustaa Ylitalo

Male, born: 14-12-1971, from: Finland, Kärkölä, 5th Dan.

Started aikido: 1991

What attracted me to aikido: Its peacefully philosophy, intention to harmony and physical and mental challenge.

Where I practice: Lahti Yuko Aikikai.

My teacher: Kazuo Igarashi Shihan, 7th Dan.

About myself: I am a peaceful man from the middle of the Finnish forests and lakes, an eternal explorer who always wants to learn more about the human being, nature and myself. I love to practice aikido and chi kung, hiking in forests and mountains, travel and adventure all around the world. But the most important thing in my life is my two and a half year-old daughter Melina.

Antti Pekkarinen

Male, born: 03-02-1979, from: Finland, Helsinki, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1998

What attracted me to aikido: I liked the soft, elegant and dynamic motion of aikido and also the philosophy of not harming the attacker.

Where I practice: Helsinki, Finn-Aiki.

My teacher: Mari Wiklund (former family name Lehtinen), 5th Dan.

About myself: I like aikido.

Jenny Tervakari

Female, born: 09-04-1980, from: Finland, Helsinki, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1992

What attracted me to aikido: My mother told me to start practicing aikido.

Where I practice: Helsinki, Budoviikingit.

My teacher: Jukka Helminen, 6th Dan. I have also done some uchideshi journeys to Yasuo Kobayashi Shihan's (8th Dan) Dojo and Kazuo Igarashi Shihan's (7th Dan) Dojo.

About myself:

France

Hélène Doué

Female, born: 07-05-1980, from: France, Paris, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1989

What attracted me to aikido: The elegance and dynamism of the practice.

Where I practice: Cercle Tissier, Vincennes.

My teacher: Christian Tissier, 7th Dan.

About myself: I began aikido at the age of 9, and received 1st Dan at 18. I began teaching children at 22, now I have my own dojo inside Paris.

Henriette Flader

Female, born: 11-06-1980, from: France, Paris, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2002

What attracted me to aikido: You don't need to be big and strong to be a good aikidoka.

Where I practice: Vincennes, Paris, Cercle Tissier.

My teacher: Christian Tissier Shihan, 7th Dan.

About myself: After several years of practice in Berlin, I moved to Paris 2 1/2 years ago to practice at the Cercle Tissier on a regular basis.

Germany

Kerstin Berkemeier

Female, born: 27-10-1977, from: Germany, 40237 Duesseldorf, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1985

What attracted me to aikido: My mother took me with her to aikido training when I was a child of eight years old.

Where I practice: Duesseldorf, Aikido Dojo K. Asai.

My teacher: Katsuaki Asai, 8th Dan.

About myself: I met my husband because of aikido and we were lucky to have Asai Sensei as a witness of our marriage.

Oliver Berkemeier

Male, born: 27-12-1973, from: Germany, 40237 Duesseldorf, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1989

What attracted me to aikido: The interaction of uke and nage in finding a harmonized solution for any kind of conflicts, which is not limited to the tatami but also present in daily life.

Where I practice: Duesseldorf, Aikido Dojo K. Asai.

My teacher: Katsuaki Asai, 8th Dan.

About myself: I met my wife on the aikido tatami and we were lucky to have Asai Sensei as a witness of our marriage.

Hong Kong

Jerald Tai

Male, born: 02-07-1976, from: Hong Kong, Shek Kip Mei, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2006

What attracted me to aikido: The spiritual education.

Where I practice: Hong Kong.

My teacher: Late Kenneth Cottier Shihan, 7th Dan, Samson Li, 6th Dan, and Edmund Wan, 6th Dan.

About myself: I'd like to improve both my physical and spiritual level, and meet other aikido devotees from around the world.

Indonesia

Merdi Murti

Male, born: 14-10-1979, from: Indonesia, Tangerang Selatan, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1996

What attracted me to aikido: Its smooth movements.

Where I practice: Jakarta Selatan, Bulungan.

My teacher: Toto, 1st Dan.

About myself: Indonesia Presidential Security Forces Instructor and was injured in 2003 (lumbar 4 – 5 HNP), but manage to keep training aikido by maintaining good posture.

Albertus Nugroho

Male, born: 03-09-1977, from: Indonesia, Curug, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1993

What attracted me to aikido: Its mystery.

Where I practice: Jakarta Barat, Slipi.

My teacher: Chris, 2nd Dan.

About myself: Indonesia Presidential Security Forces Instructor.

Ireland

Dave O'Mahony

Male, born: 28-09-1973, from: Ireland, Cork, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1996

What attracted me to aikido: I saw a video of a number of martial arts demonstrations at Bercy. The aikido demonstration involved a multiple attack with at least ten attackers and was very unique in the show. I was impressed by aikido because it was the only demonstration that was not choreographed. From the first time I heard of aikido I was interested in the philosophy. The spirit of co-operative learning as opposed to competition interested me. As I learned more about martial arts and aikido I developed a love for the art.

Where I practice: Cork City

My teacher: John Rogers Shihan, 6th Dan.

About myself: I'm a father of two. I work as an IT technician. I love music but can't play and can't sing. I read a lot and enjoy playing chess.

Seamus Whitty

Male, born: 09-09-1974, from: Ireland, Killarney, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1997

What attracted me to aikido: I was attracted by the focus on development of character and the principle of harmonizing with conflict. Also that it is not a sport but the emphasis is on Budo.

Where I practice: Co. Kerry, Killarney Aikido Club.

My teacher: John Rogers Shihan, 6th Dan.

About myself: I work with young people in health education, have two children (6 and 2) and have always been interested in Russian Literature.

Japan

Toshiharu Abe

Male, born: 12-03-1988, from: Japan, Sendai-shi/Taihaku-ku, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 2003

What attracted me to aikido: Regardless of gender and age, we can train our soul and body with partners, while respecting each other.

Where I practice: Miyagi pre./Sendai-shi, Aikido Shinbu Rensei Juku.

My teacher: Shirakawa Katsutoshi, 7th Dan.

Hiroshi Hatayama

Male, born: 28-09-1981, from: Japan, Sayama-shi / Sayamadai, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1985

What attracted me to aikido: Through aikido training I can find my own possibilities, which still sleep inside.

Where I practice: Saitama pre., Aikido Kenshinkai.

My teacher: Mr. Katsuaki Asaki, 8th Dan.

About myself: I practice aikido since early childhood. After graduating from college, I stayed in Germany to be taught by Katsuaki Asai Sensei. Now I give aikido trainings in the Saitama area.

Ryuji Shirakawa

Male, born: 04-09-1980, from: Japan, Sendai shi/Izumi-ku, 5th Dan.

Started aikido: 1995

What attracted me to aikido: I believe that aikido is life-time-value budo for me.

Where I practice: Miyagi/Sendai, Aikido Shinbu Rensei Juku.

My teacher: Shirakawa Katsutoshi, 7th Dan.

About myself: I instruct in aikido every day as a professional instructor. Aikido is part of my daily life.

Takaki Suzuki

Male, born: 17-05-1981, from: Japan, Nakano-ku/KamiTakada, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 2001

What attracted me to aikido: Its difficulty.

Where I practice: Tokyo, Hombu Dojo.

My teacher: Ueshiba Moriteru Doshu.

About myself: Nothing in particular.

Lebanon

Fady Atik

Male, born: 05-09-1974, from: Lebanon, Beirut, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1995

What attracted me to aikido: Discipline, etiquette and harmony.

Where I practice: Beirut Central Club.

My teacher: Shihan Nebi Vural, 7th Dan.

About myself: I have been in the field of martial art since 1986 and started as karateka, holding a black belt in Shotokan.

Elias el Hachem

Male, born: 18-09-1970, from: Lebanon, Keserwan, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1993

What attracted me to aikido: I found myself in aikido.

Where I practice: Harmony dojo.

My teacher: Bio Gabriel, 6th Dan.

About myself: I am a calm person.

Luxembourg

Stéphane Pastoret

Male, born: 27-12-1982, from: Belgium, Arlon, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1999

What attracted me to aikido: The physical development over the long term seen with old sensei, and the beauty of techniques.

Where I practice: Petange, Aikido Petange.

My teacher: Frédéric Burnay, 5th Dan.

About myself: I am in constant search for technical improvement but still with pleasure and enjoying the atmosphere without competition on the mat.

Jeremy Rizza

Male, born: 06-02-1990, from: France, Longlaville, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1999

What attracted me to aikido: The non-competitive martial art which allows the development of one's body and spirit according to the value of the samurai.

Where I practice: Pétange, Aikido Pétange.

My teacher: Frédéric Burnay, 5th Dan.

About myself: I like to develop aikido with children to understand the benefit of aikido with this population.

Malaysia

Abdul Na'im Bin A. Wahid

Male, born: 28-03-1986, from: Malaysia, Bandar Manjalara, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2002

What attracted me to aikido: Good posture, freedom of movement and the gracefulness of each technique.

Where I practice: Selangor/Bandar Baru Bangi, My Aikido Dojo.

My teacher: Haji Muhammad Haneef, 6th Dan.

About myself: I have been practicing aikido for 11 years, being the instructor of the My Aikido Dojo since 2011.

Suzalie Mohamad

Male, born: 24-09-1975, from: Malaysia, Kota Kinabalu, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1995

What attracted me to aikido: Its philosophy.

Where I practice: Kuala Lumpur, Aikikai Malaysia.

My teacher: Haji Haneef, 6th Dan.

About myself: I'm a peace-loving person with a positive attitude.

Mexico

Alejandro Cuevas

Male, born: 16-08-1978, from: Mexico, Mexico City, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 2003

What attracted me to aikido: The health benefits, both mental and physical.

Where I practice: Mexico City, Mexico Aikido Federation.

My teacher: Michael Moreno, 6th Dan.

About myself: I started martial arts training at age ten in judo. I also practice jiu-jitsu. I work as an advertising photographer in Mexico City.

Ernesto Lezama

Male, born: 16-05-1980, from: Mexico, Mexico City, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2000

What attracted me to aikido: The techniques.

Where I practice: Mexican Aikido federation.

My teacher: 2nd Dan.

About myself: I love aikido.

Rene Quintanar Gaytan

Male, born: 06-02-1978, from: Mexico, Queretaro, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1998

What attracted me to aikido: The philosophy.

Where I practice: Queretaro, Qro. Mexico, Sonkei Meiyo Dojo.

My teacher: Michael Moreno Sensei, 6th Dan.

About myself: Additional to my aikido practice I practice BJJ, Goshin jutsu, judo and Shito Muso Ryu. I love the martial arts because they give the practitioner the potential to be a good and active member of society, but I love aikido the most.

Netherlands

Lijnie Reijers

Female, born: 13-09-1978, from: Netherlands, Dordrecht, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1996

What attracted me to aikido: The beauty of martial arts, its effectiveness and use of power of your opponent instead of sheer muscle power.

Where I practice: Netherlands, Dordrecht, Waraku dojo.

My teacher: Ladavas Sensei, 6th Dan.

About myself: I'm an aikido athlete, with very diverse roles: as an aikidoka I started practicing in Belgium and followed seminars in my home country, Hombu Dojo and other countries with diverse shihans, among them: Fujita Shihan, Kobayashhi Shihan, Tissier Shihan, etc. I'm a mom of two kids, I have my own enterprise of child psychology and I not only practice but also teach aikido on different levels. In our own dojo we have about 80 kids from 4 to 16 years. I teach at the national training of future Dutch aikido teachers on the subject of children and aikido. I'm a member of the board of Aikido Nederland.

Tom Dijkman

Male, born: 15-05-1970, from: Netherlands, Amsterdam, 5th Dan.

Started aikido: 1993

What attracted me to aikido: I started aikido out of curiosity. I went on doing it because I liked all the falling and rolling, all the ukemi work, and got interested in learning how to defend myself in a good way. Nowadays I am still passionate about aikido, in both my practice and my teaching. I think it is a way to explore and express yourself over a lifetime. Every day I learn new things, mostly about how to be present in the moment, within myself and towards partners. I think aikido is a way to grow over the years and that there is no ending in learning.

Where I practice: I practice in Amsterdam in the Vriesman dojo and I have my own dojo called Aikido Amsterdam.

My teacher: Wilko Vriesman, 6th Dan.

About myself: It is difficult to say, but I believe that the path of aikido among others has brought me where I am now. I think it brought more peace and calmness into my life, less stress and hopefully more tolerance. I found a good balance in life with my family, practicing aikido and teaching. This feels like a good way to continue.

Frank Groenen

Male, born: 09-03-1985, from: Netherlands, Breda, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1999

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What attracted me to aikido: The techniques and the martial culture.

Where I practice: Vriesman Dojo in Amsterdam & Cercle Tissier in Paris.

My teacher: Wilko Vriesman, 6th Dan, Christian Tissier, 7th Dan.

About myself: I started aikido in my hometown. Later I joined the Vriesman Dojo in Amsterdam. I received my 1st Dan in 2004, after which I was directed to train monthly in the dojo of Christian Tissier in Paris.

Norway

Thy Thy Vanem

Female, born: 07-07-1975, from: Norway, Oslo, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1995

What attracted me to aikido: The focus on developing one's own mental strength and control over one's own body rather than competing with others.

Where I practice: Oslo Aikido Dojo.

My teacher: Erik Vanem, 3rd Dan.

About myself: Aikido is a good combination with my work as a physician.

Kim Tinderholt

Male, born: 14-07-1983, from: Norway, Bergen, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2002

What attracted me to aikido: The philosophy.

Where I practice: Bergen, Bergen Aikido club.

My teacher: Bjørn Eirik Olsen Shihan, 6th Dan.

About myself: I am the founder of Haugesund Aikido Dojo, its technical leader and also the technical leader of Bergen Aikido club.

Poland

Magda Ciepielewska

Female, born: 26-08-1978, from: Poland, Katowice, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2000

What attracted me to aikido: The beauty and grace of the movements.

Where I practice: Cieszyn, UKS Aikido Cieszyn.

My teacher: Roman Hoffmann, 6th Dan.

About myself: I'm the instructor in my own club of aikido in Cieszyn.

Sylwia Niedziółka

Female, born: 17-02-1990, from: Poland, Warszawa, 1st Dan.

Started aikido: 2006

What attracted me to aikido: I was fascinated by the wisdom of movement, which perfectly combines the effectiveness and great respect for the partner.

Where I practice: Center Aikido Aikikai in Warsaw.

My teacher: Roman Hoffmann, 6th Dan.

About myself: I'm a student of biology, but sport is my greatest passion since childhood. Now, I realize my passion for aikido - as an instructor and as a practitioner.

Michał Was

Male, born: 07-01-1980, from: Poland, Piotrków Trybunalski, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1998

What attracted me to aikido: Aikido fascinated me by the smoothness of movement and the partnership in exercises performed.

Where I practice: Piotrków Trybunalski, Klub Aikido Aikikai.

My teacher: Roman Hoffmann, 6th Dan.

About myself: I'm the instructor in my own club of aikido in Piotrkow since 2005.

Portugal

Alexandra Lopes

Female, born: 10-06-1975, from: Portugal, Lisboa, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1980

What attracted me to aikido: Seeing my daddy's classes, it was love at first sight :)

Where I practice: Lisboa, Bushinkai.

My teacher: Artur Lopes, 5th Dan.

About myself: I am just a simple person who loves to teach aikido to children.

Pedro Loureiro

Male, born: 25-08-1977, from: Portugal, Setúbal, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1998

What attracted me to aikido: Its philosophy.

Where I practice: Setúbal.

My teacher: Orlando Marques, 5th Dan.

About myself: I enjoy all opportunities of sharing knowledge.

Romania

Stan Oana

Female, born: 08-01-1978, from: Romania, CLUJ NAPOCA, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 2002

What attracted me to aikido: Besides the technical aspect of aikido, there is also an important spiritual side which can only be discovered after all the techniques are repeated over and over again, in the beginning with the specific mystiques, in a left-handed manner, but then with small steps a new path is revealed and everything has meaning. In the end all these aspects come together as one, the techniques, breathing and spirit, they all become one, but now there is no difference between I and everything I learned.

Where I practice: Cluj, Napoca, Musubi Dojo.

My teacher: Dorin Marchis Sensei, 5th Dan.

About myself: I am an optimistic person and I believe that although we may follow a rough path in our life, we have so many questions and so few answers, we must live in harmony with ourselves and everything around us; to always find the positive in life and to believe that tomorrow will be a better day.

Sorin Despa

Male, born: 20-11-1978, from: Romania, Bucharest, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1993

What attracted me to aikido: The life of Osensei.

Where I practice: Bucharest, Tenchi Dojo.

My teacher: Dorin Marchis Sensei, 5th Dan.

About myself:

Russian Federation

Pavel Bobrov

Male, born: 01-08-1983, from: Russian Federation, Skopin, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 2000

What attracted me to aikido: At first aikido attracted me from the aesthetic point of view. Movements of masters of aikido looked very graceful, and thus prompt.

Where I practice: Moscow, Oshinkan-dojō.

My teacher: Kachan A.B.

About myself: I graduated from the Ryazan State Radio engineering Academy. I love the Soviet cinema and movies with Al Pacino.

Yulia Bryskina

Female, born: 11-07-1983, from: Russian Federation, Moscow, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2003

What attracted me to aikido: I casually got to aikido and very quickly liked the spirit of this oriental martial art.

Where I practice: Moscow, Oshinkan-dojō.

My teacher: Kachan A.B.

About myself: I prefer an active way of life. I love outdoor recreation.

Igor Komarov

Male, born: 13-03-1991, from: Russian Federation, Samara, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2006

What attracted me to aikido: I came to trial training. It was pleasant to me and I understood that it is my type of combat.

Where I practice: Moscow, CMA Kotengu-dojō.

My teacher: Tcapaev D.B.

About myself: I teach aikido, I like to work with children.

Dmitrii Sapozhnikov

Male, born: 27-06-1977, from: Russian Federation, Metallostroy, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 2000

What attracted me to aikido: Having been traumatized in boxing, I decided to try a less contact sport. Aikido attracted me with its rich history and strongly developed spiritual beginning.

Where I practice: Leningrad, Lenkai club.

My teacher: Kiselev S.V., Novikov I.A.

About myself: I am married. In my free time I like to box. I am fond of motor racing.

Natalia Timchenko

Female, born: 09-03-1990, from: Russian Federation, Moscow, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2001

What attracted me to aikido: I was attracted that in aikido there are no distinctions between men and women.

Where I practice: Moscow, Samurai club.

My teacher: Egorov N.N., Rudneva N.V.

About myself: I prefer an active way of life. I give classes in aikido in children's groups.

Artur Vasyukov

Male, born: 29-04-1985, from: Russian Federation, Solnechnogorsk, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1997

What attracted me to aikido: I wanted to try a new sport. In aikido, a high level of self-organization, discipline and spirituality is traced.

Where I practice: Moscow, Ryusuykan-dojō.

My teacher: Matveev V.A., Kachan A.B.

About myself: I am married. I bring up my daughter. In my free time I like to travel.

Slovakia

Roman Danek

Male, born: 06-08-1982, from: Czech Republic, Vsetín, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1999

What attracted me to aikido: The movements.

Where I practice: Vsetín, Aikido dojo Vsetín

My teacher: Michele Quaranta, 6th Dan.

About myself: Teacher.

Petra Tichá

Female, born: 20-11-1982, from: Czech Republic, Vsetín, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2000

What attracted me to aikido: The dynamics of aikido movements.

Where I practice: Vsetín, SKP Aikido Vsetín.

My teacher: Michele Quaranta, 6th Dan.

About myself: Lawyer.

Slovenia

Jasmin Bišcevic

Male, born: 30-08-1981, from: Slovenia, Škofja loka, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 2000

What attracted me to aikido:

Where I practice: Aikikai Slovenia.

My teacher: Wilko Vriesman, 6th Dan.

About myself: Chief instructor of Aikikai Slovenia.

Matjaž Žalig

Male, born: 05-06-1985, from: Slovenia, Ljubljana, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2003

What attracted me to aikido: A poster of a flying uke.

Where I practice: Ljubljana, Aikido Keiko Dojo Ljubljana.

My teacher: Wilko Vriesman, 6th Dan.

About myself:

South Africa

Regina Lindau

Female, born: 25-02-1980, from: South Africa, Cape Town, Muizenberg, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1999

What attracted me to aikido: The impact that the first classes had on my mind/body experience; the grace and clarity of the movements and the interplay between two people on the mat.

Where I practice: Cape Town, University of Cape Town.

My teacher: Ghalib Galant, 4th Dan.

About myself: For me aikido is a wordless expression and practice of something essential. I began my aikido practice in Berlin, Germany, where I trained for the first few years. Very soon aikido became a major part of my life and of me. For the past nine years I have been living and practicing in Cape Town and aikido continues to shape all parts of my life - from the personal to the professional. I work as a Coach and Process facilitator with individuals, groups and organizations and aikido continues to be an important teacher in this work. I also practice shiatsu as a part-time activity that I enjoy very much.

Saud Anderson

Male, born: 28-01-1978, from: South Africa, Ruitervacht, Cape Town, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1996

What attracted me to aikido: The beauty, grace and simplicity.

Where I practice: Cape Town, Mushindo School of Aikido.

My teacher: Paul De Beer, 6th Dan.

About myself: Aikido is my life.

Candice Dugmore

Female, born: 13-03-1970, from: South Africa, Port Elizabeth, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 2002

What attracted me to aikido: The graceful flow, efficacy and elegance.

Where I practice: Port Elizabeth, PE Aikido dojo.

My teacher: Colin Beyers, 3rd Dan.

About myself: I am a mother and a Doctor of Chiropractic.

South Korea

Dohan Kim

Male, born: 05-03-1976, from: South Korea, Seoul, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 2000

What attracted me to aikido: Aikido has something in common with real life.

Where I practice: Seoul, Korea Aikido Federation HQ.

My teacher: Yoon Dae-hyun, 5th Dan.

About myself: I'm an aikidoka who always tries to train harder to become a better student and senior, and a businessman who works hard for a retail company as a merchandiser.

Ju-hwan Sung

Male, born: 23-02-1977, from: South Korea, Incheon, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1997

What attracted me to aikido: Shihans, who have been training life-long, show me how to live energetically and joyfully.

Where I practice: Seoul, Korea Aikido Federation HQ.

My teacher: Yoon Dae-hyun, 5th Dan.

About myself: I'm a police officer in South Korea. I had been in Timor-Leste in 2006-2007 as UN-Police, taught aikido to refugees as a tool of regaining self-esteem. This activity developed as a friendship martial arts demonstration with taekwondo, shorinji kempo, karate. It was to show civilians that martial arts are for peace and harmony, and also to counteract the 'martial arts gangsters', a big social problem in the country. My personal activity with aikido was chosen as a good example of community policing by UNMIT(United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste) HQ.

Junhwan Youn

Male, born: 01-10-1987, from: South Korea, Seoul, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1994

What attracted me to aikido: In aikido, it is always you that you should conquer, not others. And there's no end in your training until your death.

Where I practice: Seoul, Korea Aikido Federation HQ.

My teacher: Yoon Dae-hyun, 5th Dan.

About myself: My teacher, Yoon Sensei, is actually my father, so I started aikido quite young. It's not long since I have begun extensive training to follow his path, but I will go on.

Sweden

Sten Frödin

Male, born: 16-04-1989, from: Sweden, Stockholm, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1995

What attracted me to aikido: As a child I was very fascinated by Japanese culture.

Where I practice: Iyasaka Dojo, Stockholm.

My teacher: Urban Aldenklint, 6th Dan Shihan.

About myself: I started to practice aikido as a six year old child in 1995. Now I am 24 years old and an instructor at Iyasaka aikido dojo in Stockholm. I practice almost every day in different dojos all around Stockholm.

Ulf Hjerppe

Male, born: 04-08-1973, from: Sweden, Umeå, 4th Dan.

Started aikido: 1988

What attracted me to aikido: The concept of resolving a physical conflict without inflicting bodily harm on the aggressor.

Where I practice: Umeå, Isshinkai Aikido Club.

My teacher: Seishiro Endo Shihan, 8th Dan.

About myself: I have practiced aikido since I was 15 years old, which is 25 years now. My main influences are Endo Sensei, Christian Tissier Sensei and Franck Noël Sensei. I focus on being rapid but fluid in my aikido and try to find freedom within the movements together with the partner.

Anna Wilder Hjerppe

Female, born: 01-10-1973, from: Sweden, 907 38 Umeå, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1994

What attracted me to aikido: The connection between uke and tori with a martial art perspective.

Where I practice: Umeå, Isshinkai Aikido club.

My teacher: Seishiro Endo, 8th Dan, Christian Tissier, 7th Dan.

About myself: I find the joy of movement very interesting, there are so many dimensions in it but I also try to keep focus on the combination of connection and the martial art part.

Switzerland

Gabriel Horsch

Male, born: 06-12-1978, from: Switzerland, 8487 Zell, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 1997

What attracted me to aikido: The nice movements.

Where I practice: Winterthur, Körperschule.

My teacher: Dragisa Jovic, 6th Dan.

About myself: Since five years I have my own dojo.

Uruguay

Leonardo Giangreco

Male, born: 19-01-1973, from: Uruguay, Ciudad de la Costa, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 2000

What attracted me to aikido: The fluid movements and the harmony of this martial art.

Where I practice: Canelones, Samurai Dojo.

My teacher: Sensei Enrique Silvera, 4th Dan.

About myself: From 2007 on I teach in my own dojo (Satori) where my first student received his 1st Dan last year.

Andrés Pajares

Male, born: 25-01-1972, from: Uruguay, Montevideo, 3rd Dan.

Started aikido: 2001

What attracted me to aikido: The search for harmony.

Where I practice: Samurai Dojo, Canelones.

My teacher: Enrique Silvera, 4th Dan.

About myself: I am running my own dojo since 2007 in Montevideo.

Venezuela

Snyler Carvalho

Male, born: 16-02-1978, from: Venezuela, Maracaibo, 1st Dan.

Started aikido: 1995

What attracted me to aikido: The non-competitive martial art.

Where I practice: Maracaibo, Venezuela, Dojo Aikikai Zulia.

My teacher: Nelson Requena Sensei, 6th Dan.

About myself: Thanks for the opportunity.

Francisco Otero

Male, born: 23-03-1976, from: Venezuela, Caracas, 2nd Dan.

Started aikido: 1990

What attracted me to aikido: The philosophy, martiality and my passion for martial arts.

Where I practice: Caracas/ Miranda, Dojo Santa Fe.

My teacher: Nelson Requena Sensei, 6th Dan.

About myself: Thanks.