

## Featured Dojo-cho, October 2000



### **Henry Lynch**

Riai Aikido, Wellington, New Zealand  
Division 3

I started my Aikido journey around 27 years ago when I saw an Aikido demonstration at school. The demonstration was arranged by my physical education teacher who had studied Judo and some forms of Karate.

He had arranged for two Aikido Black Belts who were visiting Auckland New Zealand off the Japanese Navy Ship. I was immediately attracted to this non-aggressive art as I had previously studied Judo and Karate.

My first teacher was Ben Griffiths who also studied Judo. Sensei Ben's commitments were such that over the years he let Aikido go and placed more time and energy into Judo and subsequently coached the New Zealand Women's Judo Team. Following Ben my teacher was Johan Buiters Sensei 4th Dan (who is now retired).

I am now proud to say that my Sensei is Robert Nadeau 6th Dan who recently visited New Zealand and taught at our 19th Annual Riai Friendship Aikido Camp. This was Sensei's 3rd trip to New Zealand.

When I am not doing Aikido I am a Consumer Markets Manager for New Zealand's largest Bank.

My Dojo is Riai Wellington which has been operating since 1994 when I opened the Dojo in Ngaio, Wellington after moving from Auckland, New Zealand.

When I opened the Wellington Dojo there was on opening night 6 eager new beginners. Since then Riai Aikido Wellington has grown to 25 adult and 22 children students.

In 1998 Riai Wellington Dojo moved Dojo to Chartwell School, Crofton Downs, Wellington. This is a special Dojo as the school is a joint operation with the New Zealand and Japanese education authorities and because of this the school and Dojo has a very Japanese feeling about it.



The picture of the class in action is from our opening day at the Dojo wherein all 8 local Aikido clubs came to the Dojo and taught.

Children's classes are taught weekly during school terms. Adult classes are held 3 times a week and once a month on a Saturday afternoon a Symposium is held.

### ***My most Memorable Aikido Experience***

Is when my daughter decided she would like to do Aikido at the age of seven. Since then Hannah has continued her aikido practise and now aged almost eleven is looking forward to training with adults on a more regular basis.



### **About Riai**

The Riai Aikido Association is a New Zealand Aikido organisation, founded in Auckland in 1977. The association now encompasses three dojos, located in Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington. Riai dojos offer a friendly and encouraging environment in which to pursue the art of

Aikido, placing extra emphasis on the flowing and graceful aspects of the art.

Riai is a founding member of the Aikido Association of New Zealand and is affiliated to the Aikido Association of Northern California with Sensei Robert Nadeau, 6th Dan, being Mike and Henry's Sensei.

### **What's in a Name?**

In its present day context, Riai (pronounced ree-eye) means Principle of Harmony. The concept of Riai was in practice in ancient feudal Japan and became one of the top goals of the sword fighting Samurai during the shogunate of Tokugawa Ieyasu. The Tokugawa dynasty lasted from 1603 to 1867 and was the most formal and rigid time for the Samurai in both etiquette and code of conduct. The Samurai of this time endeavored to combine the principles of Sen, Suki, Kiai, Kamae, Zansin and Ma-ai. When all these principles were in harmony with each other and honed to the highest degree, the Samurai was said to be in a state of Riai.

### **Riai Friendship Camps**

The annual Riai Friendship Camp is a well-established tradition that attracts many enthusiastic Aikido proponents each year. The friendship camp usually runs over a weekend and is open to all people of Aikido. The camps seek to provide a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where people from different styles from New Zealand and overseas can come together to share and expand their Aikido.

### **A Little History**

The Riai Aikido Association was founded in Auckland in 1977 by Johan Buiters Sensei, who inherited the Auckland University Aikido Club from Jack Sims of the Chidokan. The university club changed its name to Riai Aikido, making it the first of the Riai dojos now spread throughout the North Island. Johan, who rose to Aikikai 4th dan, has now retired from Aikido. The current leaders of Riai New Zealand are Mike Ashwell (who is based in Auckland) and Henry Lynch (who is based in Wellington). In 1997 the Riai Association celebrated its 20th anniversary and it has, over the years, hosted some 19 Friendship camps throughout New Zealand.