

群馬杉武館便り「ローレンス・ジョーンズさん」

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ジョーンズさんは、千葉県銚子に居た頃に合気道に接しました。その後、群馬県の太田市に「美しい奥様」と引越され、群馬国際アカデミーで学校教師の傍ら、玉村町の群馬杉武館で合気道の修業に励んでいます。

「Aikido and Me」

Hello. My name is Lawrence Jones. I am originally from Canada. I first came to Japan 25 years ago, in 1990 and taught English in Ota, Gunma. At that time, I met a beautiful Japanese woman and we went back to Canada and got married.

We came back to Japan in 1995 and lived in Choshi, a fishing town in Chiba prefecture for 8½ years. We enjoyed the quiet life in Choshi but my wife is from Ota so when I heard news of a new English immersion school opening in her hometown, I applied for a teaching job at the new school. I was hired and we moved back to O`ta in 2004. I still teach science and computers at Gunma Kokusai Academy where most of the students are Japanese but they learn subjects like science, math, P.E., art, and music in English.

While living in Choshi, a new aikido dojo called Izunome aikido opened and was looking for students. I didn't know what aikido was but I wanted to learn some kind of Japanese martial art so my wife and I visited the dojo to see what "aikido" was. What I saw was so amazing, I thought, "Unbelievable! It must be fake!" The sensei was throwing the deshi by hardly moving at all.



But I thought the hakama was cool so we joined the dojo. I soon learned that it was not fake, that with the right technique, anybody can throw another person. Besides aikido techniques, I learned a lot about Japanese culture and traditions. It was very interesting. And the hakama was definitely cool.

I practised with Izunome in Choshi for about 4 years. Izunome aikido is based on the Yoshinkan style and after I moved to Ota I didn't practise aikido for about 2 years because I couldn't find a similar style of aikido.

Then I found Sanbukan aikido in Tamamura on the Internet and even though it is a little far from Ota, everyone was very friendly and Sugimoto-sensei was very kind, so I started attending practice. For a while, I couldn't come regularly so it has taken me a long time to get my black belt, but finally last year, after about 8 years, I could get it. Aikido is interesting because anyone can do it.

You don't need to be super strong or quick. You do need to learn good balance and posture and timing so it's helpful outside the dojo too. Learning some of the limits of the human body is also very interesting – how strong and how weak the body can be, depending on the placement and angle of a hold. It is also relatively low-impact so I look forward to continuing aikido for many years.

