



Aikido–Bridge

Connecting with the new generations of aikidoka, while passing on the Art

There are two years since Aikido Bridge, this beautiful and complex project, idea of Hiroshi Ikeda shihan has also arrived in my country, Romania. So, each April we meet in Cluj-Napoca (Klausenburg) city and we practice under the guidance of Hiroshi Ikeda sensei, 7 dan Aikido Aikikai and Wilko Vriesman sensei, 6 dan Aikido Aikikai.

I remember that in the first edition of Aikido Bridge in Romania, in April 2013, it was the first time when I, as well as many of my compatriots, saw these styles of Aikido live, from the two masters, very different from what we were used to see before. The entire seminar was different!

Don't get me wrong we have here seminars with shihan Yukimitsu Kobayashi and shihan Christian Tisser, each having a unique, beautiful style and approach to Aikido, but also sensei Ikeda and Vriesman were different of the two senseis I mentioned before and even between each other.... We all agreed it was different and quite difficult to reproduce what we saw during Aikido Bridge seminar. It is no secret for anyone the fact that the practices are very intense, seen from the point of view of the quantity of information. Even so, that is not all, there is something even more difficult, something more, something that

beats the eye which makes it for us, the new generations of aikidoka very difficult to reproduce the technique with the circularity and cursivity of the two masters. It was overwhelming, back than in 2013, for it is known that one needs decades of practice and certain exercises in order to work with that „something more” than the body. But we practiced, we made as good as we could their exercises, during the seminar, hoping one day we'll be able to reproduce, as sensei Wilko says „the feeling”. Once you can reproduce the feeling with your uke, the technique will also be there. The most important is the feeling, and the feeling can be reached by harmonizing yourself with the others. And in which other way if not practicing and understanding the principals? Though it was confusing at the beginning, practicing and hearing sensei H. Ikeda and sensei W. Vriesman teaching, it became clear that no matter how different the system you practice and teach is, the principals are the same.

So, it is natural, the teachers have different approach to the Art, because we are also different, each of us is unique in his own way, but respecting the principals and following one of the systems the knowledge is transmitted further. Moreover, I think this is the beauty in building this bridge, Aikido

bridge, an aikidoka can take elements from more than one of this styles created with a lot of hard work during many, many, years and create it's own one. As I understood from sensei Wilko Vriesman the basic idea is to bridge, create connections between different styles and approaches of Aikido in order to create understanding and to expose the richness of Aikido to the new generations.

In 2013, we saw the richness of the Art, but the understanding started to come, by practicing at this year's edition of Aikido Bridge, when sensei Ikeda and sensei Vriesman started to teach by decomposing in small fragments their systems, in order to make it easier for us to understand.

The feeling itself of the seminar is unique by seeing two great styles communicating like that! I can only add that if you are on the tatami at one of the Aikido Bridge seminars it is impossible not to have that wonderful, amazing feeling of connecting with the others through the Aikido practice, no matter how different it is for each of us! AJ

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