

only some wear Hakama. Why is this?

PB: It is traditional to wear a white belt up until you achieve Dan grade and since we are studying a traditional art we should try to respect its traditions in every aspect possible. In the Aikido Circle Hakama is generally awarded at 2nd Kyu.

DB: It is said that most Aikido techniques evolve from the sword, could you expand on this?

PB: O-Sensei was a great swordsman and also very skilled with the spear. The use of the sword can be easily seen in Shiho-nage for example. But I think the sword and spear give the art some of its beautiful flowing movements.

DB: Of all Aikido Sensei's you no doubt have practised with, who would you say has influenced your mode of practice the most and why?

PB: In the past Chiba Sensei through my old Sensei Alan Beecham. But over the last seven years Tamura Sensei in particular, as well as many others.

DB: Of all modern day Sensei, who would you consider the best?

PB: This question can be answered easily or with difficulty. So I will answer the question this way. There is no one who is best, only different. Every one will have a preference, some like the strong martial looking Sensei, some the more 'soft' looking. we are, however, talking about the higher echelon of Aikido Sensei, say about 8th Dan and above and this being the case they have no doubt had a very strong martial basis, so even though you may think the Sensei's technique is soft looking, he can probably apply his technique in a very martial manner if need be. The thing to remember is that you cannot judge a book by its cover.

DB: Do you think etiquette is important in the Dojo, or should we neglect the bowing and other aspects of etiquette and call all Sensei's 'coach'.

PB: Yes, etiquette is definitely highly important and must not be neglected. If you are doing a sport you could be called 'coach', but if you are teaching a martial art you

are Sensei.

DB: Which qualities do you try to instill in your students, and which qualities do you look for in your students, that is to say which qualities make a good student?

PB: Patience, hard work, honesty, dedication and love for Aikido.

DB: Is there an upper and lower

many clubs. I let others do that.

DB: How can you see Aikido progressing in Great Britain?

PB: By becoming very popular it could be weakened and demeaned. In other words, people will bastardise it which is very sad. Where people can make money or inflate their own egos by doing



age limit when Aikido can be studied?

PB: Not really. From 7 years upwards, as long as you are very careful. I, however, do not teach children myself.

DB: You stated earlier that you have seven Dan grades under you. What criteria must they achieve before they are allowed to coach?

PB: To be at least Shodan and to be graded under me or by someone I recognise.

DB: The "Aikido Circle" of which you are the Chief Instructor is by most standards quite small, do you plan to expand, or keep it quite small?

PB: I do not intend for the club to expand too much. It is very hard to keep a high standard if you have too

Aikido they will do so.

DB: Finally, on a more sombre note, when you are no longer with us, how would you like to be remembered by your students, what would you like your epitaph to be?

PB: Hopefully as a good messenger for Aikido and someone who has been loyal to its teachings.

DB: Thank you Sensei for taking part in this interview. I hope your goals for the future grow to fruition.

PB: Thank you for some soul searching questions.

