



Soon after arriving in Australia Aikido Master Seiichi Sugano Sensei asked John Turnbull for a good place to do “Mountain Training”. This is a special type of training originally developed in Japan to help people develop their Ki (life-energy) in harmony with the energy found in some wilderness places. These are special locations “where the hand of man has rested only lightly”.

Turnbull Sensei was very familiar with this kind of training and knew several such places. He showed Sugano Sensei three which were a reasonably close to Sydney where Sugano Sensei then lived. Sugano chose the one in this picture which was then a pristine wilderness area reached by a relatively unused road followed by an hour’s walk through superb wilderness. Unfortunately the Blue Mountains Council later built an access road into it which has now somewhat reduced its wilderness appeal due to over use. Never the less, it’s still

beautiful place where one’s mind can expand and where some Aikido groups still occasionally train.

Elsewhere on this web site you can find a picture of Sugano Sensei meditating on a high rock overlooking the ranges during a colourful sunrise. This common Aikido practice is unsurprisingly called sunrise meditation. Turnbull Sensei is one of the few Australians able to teach these traditional and invaluable mind developmental processes. Another part of this tradition are various other powerful Shinto and Zen ko-kyu-ho exercises for improving the mind and strengthening and body while also enhancing the spirit in harmony with nature.

It’s also worth noting that Aikido’s self-defence techniques, although apparently only physical, are based on powerful “inner” knowledge which develops an extraordinary ability to perceive an attacker’s intentions before he moves. This results in what’s called shin-shin-toitsu (coordinated mind, body and spirit development). It lies at the very core of Aikido and is essential for proper development. Without it what many people think is Aikido is not actually Aikido at all. Learning it is challenging but that the rewards are immense.

