



THE SENSHUSEI COURSE

Information and Application Package

The Honbu Dojo has created this information package for prospective senshusei.

The intent of this package is to enable prospective senshusei to make a more informed decision about whether to come to Japan and take the course.

If you decide to apply please be aware applications are accepted on a first come first serve basis.

The Honbu dojo has a large training area, but unfortunately there are limits to the number of applicants we can accept.

Applicants will be chosen based on their essay and the effort they have made to involve themselves in the Yoshinkan Aikido community.

Preference will be given to applicants who receive a favorable recommendation from a Yoshinkan aikido instructor.

GUIDELINES FOR PROSPECTIVE SENSHUSEI

Before coming to Japan and commencing the Senshusei Course it's very important to seriously consider what you are about to undertake. The course is designed to be very exacting, both physically and mentally, so correct preparations are necessary.

The cost of living in Japan is very high and your working hours are restricted so you are advised to bring as much money as possible. At a bare minimum you will need 250,000 yen per month to live. This includes hostel like accommodation, tuition fees, transportation and food. Work is becoming harder to obtain and it takes a while to establish yourself so you will need enough money to keep yourself going for at least three months, preferably longer.

Try and obtain a reasonable level of fitness - the first month is particularly difficult physically. It's a time when old injuries will recur, especially if you have had a serious disability in the past.

For New Zealanders, Australians and Canadians it is suggested that you obtain a Working Holiday Visas if you are under 30 years old. Check with the Japanese Embassy or Consulate for eligibility. For other nationalities and those not eligible it is possible to apply for a Tourist Visa. Once the applicant demonstrates their commitment to the program, the Honbu dojo will assist the applicant in obtaining a Cultural Visa from within Japan. Please remember you will have to leave Japan at least once. Budget accordingly.

The first two months of the course is classified as a trial period. Not everybody is assured of completing the course; for whatever reason you might leave or not qualify to continue. Evaluations are based on attitude, commitment and aptitude. You are not accepted on your resume or prior Yoshinkan ranking alone. Also be aware that there is a high drop out rate and if for any reason you wish to leave the course you should have some contingency measures available to yourself to either stay in Japan or return to your home country. In both situations the dojo or the AYF cannot be held responsible for you. If you wish to stay on in Japan your senshusei Cultural Activities Visa must be changed - this is considered your responsibility.

The Senshusei Course is run over an 11-month period. When purchasing your air ticket ensure that it is valid until after the finishing date of the course.

Remember that you will be living in a foreign country with different food and a different life-style from what you are used to. You may suffer from culture shock for a period of time.

These guidelines have been prepared to assist you in your decision on whether to participate in the course or not. It requires intense dedication but is an invaluable experience. You are advised to think carefully before committing yourself. Consider the level of commitment, the level of fitness and, in your own mind whether you are mature enough to participate in such a specialized course. We look forward to hearing from you.

SENSHUSEI COURSE - TRAINEE REGULATIONS

1. While in Japan, trainees must respect and obey the laws of Japan. Trainees will be expected to maintain high moral and social standards in their daily lives.

2. On Aikido Yoshinkan premises the trainee will abide strictly by the rules prescribed. The trainee will be punctual, organized and follow respectfully all directions from the instructors.

3. Trainees are required to pay a monthly tuition fee of 31,500 yen and a dojo entrance fee of 10,500 upon entering the course. Please note prices are subject to change with or without notice.

4. Monthly tuition fees are to be paid in advance (i.e. by the end of the previous month). If tuition has not been received, trainees will not be able to continue the course.

5. No testing fees for kyu level gradings will be required during the course. However, those trainees eligible for grading will require a testing fee of 10,000 yen and 20,000 yen for 1st and 2nd dan respectively.

6. Upon completion of the course trainees will be considered for Instructor Certification. Refer to AYF bylaws fee table for payment.

7. If problems arise or incidents occur during the course, instructors must be notified immediately. In the case of financial problems the Domestic Guarantor must take responsibility and not the sponsor in Japan.

8. Trainees can and will be directed to discontinue training and may be dismissed from the dojo if any of the following occur:

- **Intentionally causing damage. Disruption or allowing accidents to occur either within or outside the Yoshinkan premise.**
- **Violating Japanese law.**
- **Violating the Yoshinkan or International Instructor Course regulations.**
- **Injury or poor training habits.**
- **Bad Behaviour**

Application Requirements

Please provide the following on separate standard business size paper. One page per section.

1. **Resume of personal history including education and work experience.**
2. **Letter of introduction / recommendation from Yoshinkan Aikido instructor or person of authority, including contact address and phone number.**
3. **Letter of reason for making the application to be hand-written by applicant.**
4. **Signed application form.**

Note: Acceptance as a trainee does not guarantee graduation. Only trainees that have successfully completed the course to set standards will graduate.

Applications should be returned as soon as possible to the Honbu Dojo.

Applications are accepted on a first come basis. Honbu dojo reserves the right to refuse applications without explanation.

DETAILED APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND EXPLANATION

Personal history or resume: This is self explanatory but you should make sure to include hobbies, interests, volunteering and any other "personal growth" experiences.

Recommendation: A letter of recommendation must be written and signed by a recognized Yoshinkan Aikido instructor. The letter should detail the instructor's faith in you and your ability to train hard, show spirit and commitment and to behave appropriately as a senshusei. Students from other styles of Aikido or other Budo should get a similar letter from their instructors. However the Honbu Dojo may want more information about you and your Sensei's Budo history.

Letter explaining why you want to do the course: This letter should be hand-written and signed and dated. You should explain your interest in Aikido in general and your reasons for wanting to take the course. You should also include your future plans, whether you intend to open a new Dojo or return to your present Dojo or whether you are doing the course for other reasons.

Taking the course is a serious commitment. When you send in your application you are stating that you are fully committed to the course. The Honbu Dojo, from that point on, will be spending some time and effort on your behalf arranging your first accommodation, and preparing for your arrival and the start of the next course.

Application: The application form must be filled out by both the recommending instructor and the applicant.
INFORMATION ABOUT JAPAN AND THE COURSE

Visas: It is your responsibility to contact the Japanese Embassy or consulate in your home country and to get all required documentation / regulations for whatever visa you are applying for. There are a number of visa options when coming to Japan.

These include; working holiday visas, cultural visas, tourist visas and spousal visas. For Australians, Canadians, and New Zealanders a Working Holiday Visa is best. If you are not eligible for this visa then you must look into getting a tourist visa.

Money: As stated earlier Japan and Tokyo are very expensive. You will need to bring as much money as possible. For most people it will take about one month to get settled and find a job. You will receive your first pay cheque about 1 1/2 months after you start work. This means you will need enough money to last you three months best-case scenario). At 250,000yen / month this means you will need to bring approximately 750,000yen. In addition you will be required to show a return air ticket to immigration when you arrive in Japan.

Preparation: The course is very demanding, physically, mentally and emotionally. Try to be in good physical condition (with special emphasis on cardiovascular training). You should try to improve your flexibility in your hips, knees, ankles, shoulders and wrists. You will also need to work on having a strong lower body and at the same time having "soft and relaxed knees". Mental preparation is probably the most important. You need to prepare yourself to train hard and push yourself every day. (see training / attitude / commitment section.)

Living Expenses: Living in Japan is expensive (this can not be stressed too much). If you share a room in a gaijin (foreigner) house you can expect to pay about 40,000yen per month (i.e. the room will cost ¥ 80,000 for two people). This room will probably be a six mat room (6 Japanese tatami mat are about 6 square meters). The kitchen, lounge, and bathroom / shower facilities are shared.

Food: Food is also expensive. You can try to eat cheaply, but it is important during the course to eat nutritional and well-balanced meals - high in carbohydrates, vitamins, and nutrients. In the dojo, between classes, it is very important to replenish your fluids; in the summer months this can mean 4-6 liters of "sports drink" per day. To eat right it can cost 50,000yen /month. Again, sharing food can moderate the cost.

Dojo fees include a 31,500yen / month training fee plus expenses that may be incurred during special functions.

Training / Attitude / Commitment: The training at the Honbu Dojo is hard. Most people will never have done anything like it before. Even if at your home dojo you have hard practices a few times a week, it probably will not compare with hard practices 4 hours a day, 5 days a week for 11 months. The course is truly grueling especially over the long run. In the course it is expected that you push yourself to what you believe is your limit, and then push yourself further. As senshusei, you are expected to train harder, respond quicker, listen, watch and train more intensely than any other student. You are expected to show strong spirit and to try to increase your spirit through training. You are expected to show the utmost respect for all the Honbu Dojo staff, other students and the general public. You are expected to follow commands given by the Sensei's immediately and without question. When given a command or feedback on any matter the correct response is Osu! In short, you should be giving everything you have and then some more to the sensei, the dojo and to your training. In order to do this, your commitment to the course, to aikido and to improving yourself must be intense.

Jobs: Jobs are getting harder to come by, but there are still many jobs out there. The most common job is an English language instructor, if English is not your native language finding a job may prove to be extremely difficult.

What to Bring: You don't need to bring a lot; it won't fit in your apartment anyway. You need to bring clothes and dogi. Many English language schools require that you wear a suit / business dress, so you need to bring suitable attire. On Dojo outings and at some ceremonies a suit and tie are required. Other than that regular clothing is fine. The Japanese tend to be well dressed wherever they are, if you tend to dress "down" you may find you are a little out of place. (being a foreigner - a little more out of place) If this bothers you bring some nice casual clothing.

It is also not appropriate to come to the dojo looking like a bum. There is no dress code per se but you need to look reasonable. In line with this you should be clean-shaven when training at the dojo. Beards are fine, but stubble is not.

At least three dogi will be needed during the course. In the summer it gets very hot and you will sweat a lot, putting on a wet dogi is not pleasant for you or anyone around you!! You will have to wash your dogi on a regular basis for the sake of other people and your partner!!

This application/information package was designed to cover many of the questions you may have about the Senshusei course. However, it is impossible to cover everything that everyone wants to know. Should you have questions that are not covered in this package, please do not hesitate to contact the Honbu dojo. It is better to make an informed decision than the wrong decision. In the past, some applicants have come to Japan before the course to acclimatize themselves to the dojo and living in Japan. If this is a possibility for you, please give it due consideration.

Although this program is open to all, acceptance is not guaranteed. Honbu dojo reserves the right to refuse applications without explanation. Please note the above information, prices and training times are subject to change with or without notice.
