



## Jo

**Author:** Dave Lowry  
**Genre:** Aikido and Other Martial Arts  
**Publisher:** USA: Ohara, 1987  
**ISBN:** 0897501160  
**RRP:** £13.95 (+£2.80 p&p)

*Use of the four foot staff has always been an important part of the Aikido experience, yet it isn't as big a part of the syllabus as it once was. This book sets things straight.*

There's something cool about the Jo. Quicker than a Bo or a western Quarter Staff, in skilled hand its hard White Oak construction makes it a match for swords that take a great deal more time and money to produce. So, what's there not to like?

In this 200 page 8 chapter book Dave Lowry begins by guiding the prospective Jo user from the point of buying their Jo and uniform, to selecting a dojo (Aikido, Jo-Jutsu etc.) and through to the warm-up exercises. The final and by far the largest chapter in the book then goes on to explain the full range of techniques capable with such a versatile tool, including other stick weapons, swords, knives and open-hand. Each strike and movement is explained with frame-by-frame photographs which are augmented by arrows showing the direction of travel and also supported by incisive written instructions. This is all preceded by an entertaining history of the Jo as a weapon throughout its life, from the days of the Samuiri to its time in the hands of Ueshiba Sensei, the founder of modern Aikido.

In the end then, this book is well worth a look. I like it because it explores a weapon that gets a lot less 'press' than many others involved in the Asian martial arts. The history section is interesting and very thorough, and the techniques and warm ups include everything a practicing artist might want, including the legendary 31 Jo kata. If you like playing with sticks (as all us big kids do), you'll love this.

9 sausages out of 10

RW Mar 2014