

Beauty In Old Martial Art

CLASSES to teach the ancient Japanese martial art of Aikido began at the YWCA this week for women and girls of all ages. The instructor for the series is Mrs David Lynch, a tiny, gentle looking Japanese.

Mrs Lynch was assisted in the first lesson by her New Zealand husband, whom she met at the Aikido school in Japan and whom she married in New Zealand just three months ago.

Mrs Lynch does not yet speak English, but after the

first lesson, where the basic principles of Aikido were explained and demonstrated, this may prove to be an asset rather than a drawback to her class.

"I was in a similar predicament in Japan when I could not understand the Japanese instructors," said Mr Lynch, "but I had to watch extra carefully and probably learnt much better."

The group of people at the class watched closely as Mrs Lynch illustrated a variety of movements and with a flick of her wrist or a quick turn of her body, tossed her husband on to the mat.

Later, the class tried the

basic stance — one foot forward and hands held to the front with the fingers stretched wide. At first, some of them found it difficult, but by the end of the lesson, they were all standing correctly and seemed quite proud.

An enormous amount of concentration is required to perfect the basic stance where all the strength of the body is in the arms and fingers.

Strength is not, however, an important factor in Aikido. Balance and timing are by far more important and absolute attention to details is necessary to perfect the art.

For Aikido is an art rather than a sport. There is no contest in Aikido, no struggling and fighting and to watch it performed by experts, the techniques are quite beautiful.



Mrs Lynch, seemingly effortlessly and still retaining the correct feet position, forces Mr Lynch to the mat.

Pupils watch carefully as Mrs Lynch demonstrates the basic Aikido stance, and then try it themselves.

