



# Mana

The newsletter of **Hawai'i Ki Federation**

Fall 2016

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## Save the Dates: Keio University Seminar with Shinichi Tohei Sensei, February 17-19, 2017

Maui will again be blessed with a visit from the delightful and energetic young Aikidoka from Keio University in Tokyo as they return to celebrate the anniversary, this-year their 60th, of the club's founding by Master Koichi Tohei. The 3-day seminar will be taught by our world leader, Shinichi Tohei Sensei and sponsored by Maui Ki-Aikido. Students and coaches from this world-class Aikido group have been coming to Maui every few years since their club's 50th anniversary in 2007. The Keio group will again give a public demonstration of Aikido arts Sunday the 19th at the Queen Ka'ahumanu Center stage in Kahului.

Registration will soon be up on the website [mauiaikido.com](http://mauiaikido.com). ∞

## Keio University Seminar Taught by Shinichi Tohei Sensei

February 17-19, 2017  
Shunshinkan Dojo  
Wailuku, Maui



## Chief Instructor Message:

*by Christopher Curtis - Chief Instructor, HKF*

Hello Everyone. Once again, we are looking forward with enthusiasm to our Hawaii Ki Federation/Keio University Aikido Club joint seminar coming up next February 17, 18, and 19, 2017. As usual, our worldwide leader, Shinichi Tohei Sensei, will be with us on Maui teaching the seminar.

This next year will be even more special for us all, as it is the 100th anniversary of Shinichi Suzuki Sensei's birth. Accordingly, we are going to dedicate this seminar to Suzuki Sensei, taking the opportunity to honor him and appreciate all he gave to us while he was our inspiring teacher.

*continues on page 2*

The Hawai'i Ki Federation's annual Omiki Seminar with Curtis Sensei at Lokahi Dojo, Oahu, is October 21 – 23. Registration is still open at <http://event.mauiaikido.com/>.

Chief Instructor's Message . . . continued from page 1

Here is something that Suzuki Sensei wrote about his relationship with Koichi Tohei Sensei. He read this at the grand opening of our Shunshinkan Dojo here on Maui in 2001.

## *My time with Tohei Sensei*

*I first met Koichi Tohei Sensei in 1953. The Nishi Kai of Hawaii invited Tohei Sensei to come here to teach Aikido to the Maui Police Department. When I saw Tohei Sensei for the first time, I was struck by the incredible calmness and clarity of his eyes. I knew that he was an extraordinary human being, and that I should begin training with him immediately.*

*At this time, I was a police officer with the Maui Police Department. During this initial teaching period, and subsequent visits, Tohei Sensei personally taught me police self defense techniques. I have taught those same techniques to every Maui Police Recruit class through the years.*

*On Tohei Sensei's second visit, in 1955, he taught me Ki Breathing and a deeper understanding of the principles of Ki and Aikido. I spent hours alone with Tohei Sensei, during which time he shared his special insights and kokyu. I am very grateful and thankful for these early teachings, which had a profound effect on me, and changed my life for the better.*

*The Maui Aikido Club originally organized in 1953. The four principle people were: Seichi Tabata (1st President), Kenneth Taguchi (Asst. Chief Instructor), Susumu Furukawa (Lahaina Instructor), and Shinichi Suzuki (Chief Instructor).*

*We constructed our first dojo on Market Street in Wailuku in 1960. This dojo was built entirely with donated materials and with the volunteer labor of the students and friends of the Maui Aikido Club. This dojo was blessed by Morihei Ueshiba Sensei in 1961.*

*During the 1990's, we realized that this dear old dojo on Market Street had been gradually destroyed by termites. Beginning in 1996, we put on a massive fund raising campaign, and, thanks to many friends and supporters, were able to construct a completely new dojo, on the same grounds as the old one. This new dojo should last for many years to come.*

*I am very grateful to Tohei Sensei for all of his teachings of Ki and Aikido throughout the years. Everything I know about Ki and Aikido I owe to my teacher Tohei Sensei.*

*Thank you, Tohei Sensei.*

*Sincerely,*

*Shinichi Suzuki Head Instructor, Maui Ki-Aikido, April 14, 2001*



We at Hawaii Ki Federation look forward to welcoming all our members and friends from around the globe to join us in training with our teacher, Shinichi Tohei Sensei, the young and enthusiastic Keio University Aikido Club students and their alumni and in honoring our own Shinichi Suzuki Sensei. ☺

Dear Hawaii Ki Federation members and supporters,

Several years ago the Hawaii Ki Federation Board of Directors voted to establish an endowment fund to ensure the future of Ki Aikido in Hawaii. I am happy to report that we continue to make progress in our goal to establish the Hawaii Ki Federation Endowment fund. Our initial fundraising goal of \$25,000 is very close. Please consider a tax deductible donation before the end of the year to help support the future of Aikido training for all members.

Please make your check out to HKF Endowment Fund and mail it to:

Maui Ki Aikido - PO Box 724, Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Your continued support brings us closer every year to making this happen.

Thank you

Jeff Baldwin - Chairman, HKF Endowment Fund

## We have a dream

by Toby Voogels, Assistant Chief Instructor, Netherlands Ki Society, Helmond, Netherlands

Just like any Monday evening my dad and I are driving to Aikido class. It is a 45-minute-drive, I am about 15 or 16 years old and my dad and I are talking about our dreams for the future. The conversations as usual are all about Aikido. My dad is a high school teacher, and I would tell him how I would like to become a good teacher like him and how this would also help in teaching Aikido. I would tell him how I would like to study English so that I would be able to travel the world and train with all kinds of people. We would both talk about how we would be teaching in our own dojo and what it would look like. My dad is confident we will start our own dojo someday. I smile, and for the remainder of the drive I thoughtfully gaze into the starry night.

It's October 1997. My mum and dad have purchased a three-story house of which the ground floor can be used as a dojo. We started renovating the house. In 1998 we start our own dojo. In the meantime, I went to university to study English became a teacher like my dad and now have time to train and travel. No more 45-minute-drives, but still some days after training we would dream of the future. My dad would tell me someday we will buy a bigger dojo; he even drew a few designs. I smile, and from my chair on the balcony I thoughtfully gaze into the starry night.

It's October 2016. We have finally been able to buy a bigger property (about 22400 ft<sup>2</sup>). It took us nearly two years of negotiations with banks and the city council in order to finalise things. The property is made up of two very small houses connected through a big hall. We turned the hall into a dojo with a 1066 ft<sup>2</sup> tatami, and we live in the remaining part of the building. Another dream came true. And now I smile sitting in my garden, and I thoughtfully gaze into the starry night.

My family's lives have always revolved around Aikido, and with hindsight it seems that everything, from the beginning in 1983 to now, has been directed to this moment. Although we are still working on the accommodations and we have plans to build a new house next to the dojo, the dojo is almost completed. From this summer on we are already practicing in the new dojo, getting to know its possibilities.

We hope that this new dojo [Ki Aikido School Torii] will become a place of inspiration for many who would like to practice Ki principles. Like we were, when Curtis Sensei started to visit us. We would therefore like him to ceremoniously open the dojo. The dojo blessing will take place during the weekend of May 6 and 7. At this point we are not thinking of a grand opening with many important people from our community. At this point we would like to keep it "intimate," with everyone that would like to come and share our dream with us. It will be a regular seminar with a dojo blessing on Saturday and in the evening a festive meal. And for the rest, we will do what we will always do, practice, practice, practice...☺



Dojo under construction, blessing of which is planned for May 6-7, 2017.



Toby Voogels Sensei and students toast the completion of their dojo.

## Training with Shinichi Tohei Sensei at this year's camp

By Joni Jackson

It is a very warm day in early September and we are walking along the road in single file on the way to Koichi Tohei Sensei's ancestral burial ground and his grave site. When we all arrive, Sachiko san gives a brief history of the gravestones and who is buried there, then we each in turn carry three sticks of lighted incense and place one in front of the three main headstones signifying Koichi Tohei Sensei's grave, his first wife's and that of his parents. The sun is very hot and we do not linger long. On the way back to the Dojo we pass the second group on their way to offer their respects. This is my memory of one of the very good days at the Japan/ Western Europe/ HKF camp this year at the World Ki Society headquarters in Japan.

There were over 60 participants. They came from St. Petersburg, Russia, and Holland, Slovenia, Germany, Spain, the mainland USA, including David Shaner Sensei and some of his students, and of course Hawaii. Although the group was large, the feeling of comradery was very strong. Everyone present embraced the teaching that was offered with open hearts and minds.

The instruction at this seminar was on the highest level. Shinichi Tohei Sensei emphasized the importance of posture and maai, both of which return us again and again to our connection with our partners and all that is around us. At the end of each class he had us form into groups and express our experience of the teaching, and as always, each person would come away with his or her own understanding. To me it seemed that what Sensei was trying to convey was for all students to be able to clearly define within themselves what it is to be in one point and to be aware of the movement of Ki constantly around us.

His teaching, to me, was more refined and clearer than ever. All the different partners I practiced with seemed able to grasp what was being shown, much more this year than in previous seminars. There was a keen receptivity that flowed throughout the four days of practice.

I spoke with Curtis Sensei a little after the seminar, and he commented on how much he noticed the absence of contention among the participants this year. At previous World camps when he would walk among the groups and pairs practicing together, he mentioned that he would often sense a feeling of combativeness between some of them. This year he only sensed eagerness and an openness to the practice and to each other.

On the last day we all gathered in the main hall. One by one we circuited the room, being sure to say a fond farewell to each and every one present. As the buses drove away, all the staff and teachers followed us along the road, sending us on our way and waving us goodbye until we were completely out of sight. ☺



Curtis Sensei & Lynn Curtis at Tohei Sensei's ancestral home, Ki Society headquarters, Tochigi-ken Japan.



Linda Sasaki, Cora Godinez, Lillian Paiva, Alaria Franzoni & Joni Jackson, all of Hawaii Ki Federation..

## Lynn Curtis teaches children in Russia and Spain



We interviewed Lynn Curtis about her experience of teaching children's Ki-Aikido classes in St. Petersburg and Valencia when she and Curtis Sensei traveled with a contingent from HKF to teach seminars in Russia and Spain in May of this year.

*Mana:* How did the opportunity arise to teach Russian Aikido kids?

*Lynn Curtis:* Igor Ostroumov Sensei, Chief Instructor of Eastern Europe and the Russian Ki Federation, spent a month in 2011 training with Maui Ki-Aikido as the first in our deshi program. He attended all the classes for that program, including my children's ones and came to know how I teach. I took him on a couple of excursions around Maui that he enjoyed, and he invited me officially to come with Curtis Sensei for the St. Petersburg seminar. Later, he offered me the opportunity to teach some of his children's classes. I taught 3 classes there and also 2 children's classes during Curtis Sensei's seminar in Valencia, Spain, as part of that same trip.

*Mana:* As a long-time teacher of children at Maui Ki-Aikido, are the Russian or Spanish kids any different in their responses or their understanding of Ki activities from Maui kids?

*Lynn Curtis:* No, and that was just amazing to me! They were just like any other kids I've ever encountered. Except for the language barrier, which we breached by having a translator. I kept it all very simple. They were already familiar with Aikido basics, both the Russian and Spanish kids. I even had a 4-year-old in one class who went right along with all the older kids. There were really no cultural barriers at all. Kids are just universal!

*Mana:* What did you do that worked well, or best, with the Russian kids?

*Lynn Curtis:* At the Russian dojo, there were a couple of very excitable beginners. I used gestures, such as lowering my hand (she shows Mana interviewer) to my one point to mean "keep one point, calm" and two fingers pointing to them and then to my eyes to mean "Please look at me." The message got across without language.

*Mana:* What was the experience like for you?

*Lynn Curtis:* It felt very comfortable and natural. I've been teaching in our children's program for close to 30 years now. Suzuki Sensei always wanted a Saturday children's class, so when my son Quinn was a year and a half old, I returned to train and right away Sensei said "You start a Saturday kids' class." And that led to teaching my Monday classes, too.

Kids are kids wherever you are, and the ones I taught in Russia and Spain were very responsive to learning and to me. The hospitality of all of our hosts in Europe was just wonderful. I had not been to Russia before, and this experience was a great introduction to the Russian people. There was such a sweetness. ☺



Lynn with a Russian children's class.



Lynn Curtis and Igor Ostroumov Sensei with St. Petersburg children and class helpers.

## Europe 2016: The Otomo's Report

By Charles Boyer, Head Instructor, Lokahi Ki Aikido

A few years ago at a party after one of the European seminars taught by Curtis Sensei, a student asked him something along the lines of: "Why does this person (meaning myself) have to act like your servant, always next to you, pouring your drink, putting things in front of you ...? Can't you do these things yourself?" The student's words and tone could not have expressed more clearly his discomfort at the idea of Otomo practice. Curtis Sensei gazed at him for a few moments before speaking. His answer pointedly stated that the Otomo is practicing all the time while others take a break. He added that it's a misunderstanding to see the Otomo as a servant; it is practice in paying attention rather than being consumed with yourself and your own needs.

To anyone who has read the section about Otomo in the Maui Training Manual, Curtis Sensei's response would sound familiar. But what struck me was that momentary gaze before he spoke. After six trips to Europe with Sensei, I've become accustomed to these quiet moments between his words. And what I've begun to notice is that each one is unique and tailored to that moment. There is a rhythm to the gazing, to the speaking ... everything has rhythm and movement. Nothing in these interactions is prefabricated or repeated from before.

And so it is with the seminars themselves. From mid May to early June 2016, Curtis Sensei taught four seminars over four consecutive weekends in Germany, the Netherlands, Russia and Spain. One might think that Curtis Sensei's teaching after one or two of these seminars would begin to repeat itself. One might think that after more than ten years of teaching seminars in Europe, Curtis Sensei might begin to develop a formula to ease the burden of so much teaching. The truth, however, is that every seminar was different, each one with a life and rhythm of its own.

On this trip Curtis Sensei taught the topics of calmness and action, equanimity, Shugyo, and experiencing the movement of the universe, each time in a different way, as if it were the first time. He spoke at length about paying attention, living life completely and understanding the difference between learning a skill and true practice. Half-way through the trip, we were joined by Shunshinkan Dojo members Lynn Curtis Sensei, Jeff Baldwin Sensei, Bob Lightbourn Sensei and Ilima Loomis.

While it may be easy to see that the Otomo facilitates the teaching of these important topics and manages the travel of the group, the more elusive truth is that all of this teaching and all of these changes are for the Otomo. The work of the Otomo is not only to prepare ahead of time and plan well so that everything goes perfectly. One also must exhibit, to some degree, an understanding of what Sensei is teaching. One must experience and feel the rhythm of the moment.

Why is this important? Because everything will not go perfectly. And then what? How do you respond when you spray your teacher in the face with scalding hot coffee? (This actually happened.) How do you respond when you accidentally soak Sensei's only gi top while trying to spot clean it in the hotel room sink at midnight the night before class? (Yes, happened.) One of the biggest offenses by the Otomo is to lose that equanimity during a moment of crisis with the teacher. How does one learn to maintain equanimity? By practicing Otomo. This is the unnerving part of this practice; this is why we would rather not do it. By going through this heart-wrenching, exhausting, exhilarating practice we begin to see that no amount of skill can free you from this. For the Otomo there is no escape. This is true practice.

During our five weeks overseas we traveled through nine countries. We sampled wonderful cuisine and experienced beautiful sights. And through it all, I slowly come to the realization that it is Curtis Sensei who is taking care of me, introducing me to the rhythm of the universe, guiding me in this experience of living life completely and helping me to appreciate the unique opportunity I have. ☺



Otomo Charles Boyer with Curtis Sensei, St. Petersburg.



Curtis Sensei gives a Ki test to Alexandr Shavritskiy in St. Petersburg.



Sensei with Igor Ostroumov, Chief Instructor of Eastern Europe & Russian Ki Federation



Fun on the mat with Maui's Jeff Baldwin.



HKF group with Rafael Gandia Sensei (on right) and members of Valencia Ki Aikido



Maui Ki-Aikido participated again in the annual Police Dept. Troy Barboza Torch Run, a Special Olympics fundraiser. Participants were, L-R: Shaun Lonzaga, Cora Godinez, Jeff Baldwin, Curtis Sensei, Tracy Reasoner and Fincher Sterling.



Honokaa Ki-Aikido Club members demonstrated at Honoka'a Hongwanji Mission's Hanamatsuri (Buddha's birthday) this year.

## Hawai'i Ki Federation news from dojos around the Islands

### Mililani Dojo takes youth to Japan

by Eric Nonaka, Head Instructor Mililani Ki Aikido

Recently members of the children's class from Mililani dojo visited our headquarters dojo for training and the experience of being there to practice with instructors such as Shinichi Tohei Sensei, Taketoshi Kataoka Sensei, Ishikawa Sensei for calligraphy and Kobori Sensei.

We stayed in Tochigi for three nights and had two full days of training. Of course learning from professional instructors was an eye opener for our young students. The students are all about the same age (12-14 years old). Their names are: Beau and Cade Yasui, Jarrod Shimabuku, Sarah Yamamoto and Jenisis Hirao. Training was lively and fun. Shinichi sensei had the students play a modified game of tag with Kobori sensei, Iwade Sensei, Nadia Sensei and David Litz Sensei participating. Even with that small amount of students they used almost the whole dojo. It was amazing! After returning, all the parents said the students enjoyed meeting everyone there and experiencing living in the dorm even for a short time.

I was informed that this may have been the first time that a children's group had trained at HQ like we did. Of course there are children's camps, but the training was not quite like what we did.

Learning calligraphy from Ishikawa Sensei was just amazing. The depth of his knowledge and his explanations (translated by Nadia Kobori) were interesting to say the least. During the last 30 minutes of class he did a demonstration of free form calligraphy, explaining that it was much like Aikido in that at that level there is "no form".

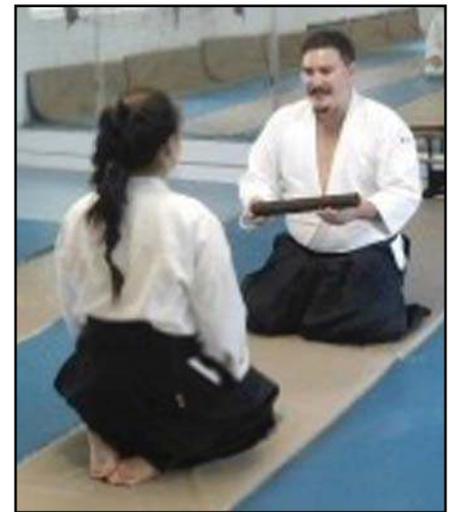
We look forward to going again, maybe when all these students become Shodan! ☺



Shinichi Tohei Sensei and other Ki Society Instructors with Eric Nonaka Sensei and the other visiting members of Mililani Ki Aikido of O'ahu, Hawaii during their trip to train at HQ in Japan.

### Kapa'a dojo

On May 7 at the Kapa'a HKF dojo, Kendra Ishida received her Shodan certificate from Kyson Gusukuma, acting on behalf of Dean Mayer Sensei who was in Europe. Kendra was literally passing through Kaua'i on the way to her new work assignment in Korea. ☺



Maui Ki-Aikido enjoyed the visit of Frederike Gerhartz of Aikido Ki Society Stuttgart, Germany, Udo Schill Sensei's student. She trained with us in late September/early October and also explored many beautiful places on Maui.

## Maui goes high-tech

Maui Ki-Aikido has made a big change in how members register, pay dues, and sign in for classes. Our new system, Zen Planner, lets you do all this online at home from your PC, from your own phone, or from one of the dojo's iPads. The goal is to make managing your membership with Maui Ki-Aikido easier, reducing paperwork and providing an electronic means for the dojo to communicate directly with you. One of the new functions is paperless auto billing giving our members the ability to pay for dues online with a credit card. All you need to do is setup your account, enter the appropriate information and viola! - you are connected.

If you haven't already received an email with your temporary username and password, please email [mauiaikido@gmail.com](mailto:mauiaikido@gmail.com) and let us know. If you need help registering or signing in, ask one of our teachers to show you how. Thank you for your kokua and patience as we make this transition! ☺



*Ilima Loomis shows Michiko Powers the new system of checking in for class with Zen Planner.*



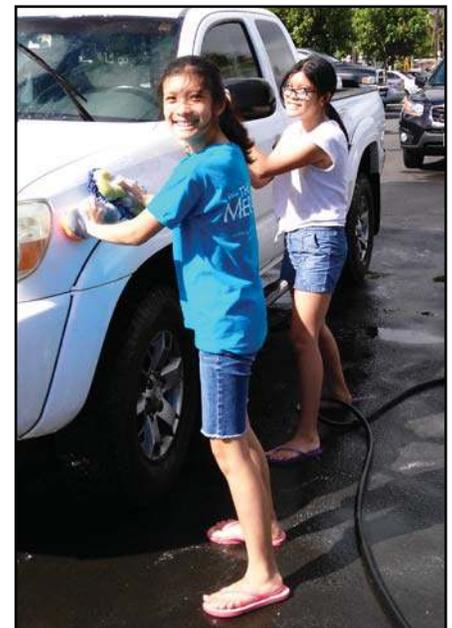
## Using roosters

Curtis Sensei taught the HKF Summer Seminar on Maui in July of this year (group photo shown above). His whole seminar was about how to be in the world. He reminded us that we are here to explore and experience the possibilities of living as a human. What is the nature of being human? Love is a way of being open in the world; love and compassion for everyone, and not focusing on yourself, were themes.

We do hear, see, read quite selectively, stated Curtis Sensei. That's because we have preferences. He taught, "Be open to all," and he gave the participants the rooster exercise: Let the sound of roosters crowing, a common serenade on Maui mornings, be just as much in your awareness as is the state of your (hopefully mindful) meditation. Open yourself to the best possibility. Have an open heart. Let the Universe have its way with you. ☺



*Archer Fabrao doesn't mind getting soapy to help Maui Ki-Aikido.*



*Sisters Raina and Randi Ouye worked hard at Maui's fund-raiser car wash in September.*

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**Letting Go: Talks on Aikido** is a collection of insightful, concise essays adapted from talks given by Christopher Curtis, 8th Dan, the Chief Instructor of the Hawaii Ki Federation and Head Instructor of Maui Ki-Aikido in Wailuku, Maui. A wide range of topics is covered, from the basic principles and techniques of Ki-Aikido to the practical ways that Ki-Aikido can be applied to living a more centered, productive, and mindful life.

The *Letting Go* book is a useful companion to related Letting Go lectures, podcasts and discussions available on Curtis Sensei's blog, found at [curtissensei.com](http://curtissensei.com).