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Maui Ki-Aikido



Shinichi Suzuki Sensei, Head Instructor of Maui Ki-Aikido's Shunshinkan Dojo.



Christopher Curtis Sensei, Chief Instructor of Hawaii Ki Federation, at the Hilo HKF Seminar in August. (See article page 5.)



Franco brothers Lindy (nage) and Lyman (uke) earning their 6A kyu rank at the October testing. (See more photos page 5.)

A Very Special Teacher

by Joni Jackson

Many teachers have written great words and spoken great thoughts about the universal concepts that have been flowing through man's awareness for thousands of years. When a group of individuals, who for various reasons have been drawn together to study the precepts of the Universe, interact with each other, most will bring conflict with them, as this is human nature and very hard to overcome.

Occasionally within these groups, one teacher in particular will stand out - a man who can stand in front of the class and teach the absolute way of the universe, then leave the mat and take it with him when he goes, a man who is never forgetful or careless of his teachings, whose words and actions are one. I know such a man. Everything he tells his students to do to heighten their awareness and awaken their understanding, he does himself, only more so. Indeed, he doesn't ask as much of his students as he does of himself, afraid that that might frighten them away. He asks only that they do a little, something every day, just a start, in the hopes that they too will begin to experience the wonder of being one with the universe and begin their own paths for themselves. For as long as I have known him, he has been so - a steady spark of truth in a world full of contradictions. At 86 years of age, he is still doing his own daily training, as well as going to weekend seminars off island and building rock walls at home in his spare time. His name is Shinichi Suzuki Sensei.

Thank You, Sensei

As we come to the close of the 50th year of Aikido in Hawaii and the West and consider the many achievements of the people and organizations spreading the teachings of Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido which we have celebrated in various ways this year, all credit and accomplishments point back to one person. That person is our Head Instructor, Shinichi Suzuki Sensei. He has inspired and led the development of Aikido on Maui and in Hawaii for 50 years, and he has also greatly influenced teachers and students on the Mainland of the USA and in other countries.

Many words have been said about the 86 years of his life so far and of his training under his teacher Master Koichi Tohei*. But since it is characteristic of Suzuki Sensei to live in the present moment and to persevere toward his future goals, we have asked him about his vision for the future of Maui Ki Aikido.

MKA: Sensei, what do you want to see happening here in our dojo during the next 50 years? What is your dream for Maui Ki-Aikido's future?

Suzuki Sensei: "I hope there will be many more students, men, women, and especially children, take up Aikido. I want to see the philosophy of Aikido spread far and wide because of the good it can do in people's lives. But I especially want to see every Aikido student training in the inner disciplines of breathing and meditation.

"People today don't do enough of the inner discipline training. When you get old, you can't jump around any more so physical techniques are not so important. I want to

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What is Meditation without Thinking?

by Christopher Curtis Sensei

You may say “this is impossible, to stop thinking”. But let’s just look at this question here a little bit, and maybe we can see something fresh, something new and un-thoughtful.

We can see that experience gives rise to knowledge, which becomes our memory, from which arises thought. So thought is always about the past: history. We cannot think about the present moment. It is impossible. Once we have a thought about something, reflect on it, it is past, even if it was just a split second ago. It is not the present. If we are thinking, it is always about a moment, a movement or action, that has already occurred.

Of course, we cannot stop thinking by trying to not think about it. That sort of circular effort is endless, and never leads to any realization. Instead, we must simply be aware. When we look at something like a Maui rainbow, is it possible to just look at it, without immediately putting ourselves in the past by commenting “Oh, how beautiful”? Because when we do this we are inserting a space, a separation, between ourselves and what we are observing. When you are listening to me talk like this, can you just listen, without agreeing or disagreeing, but just listen as if you are one big ear? Can you simply be, without bringing any history, without adding anything extra to it? When you are practicing Oneness Rhythm Taiso, or Kengi, or some other kata from Aikido, are you just doing it, or are you watching, observing yourself doing it? When we were watching the students perform taigi the other evening, they were moving very fast, what seemed like too fast, and yet their time was too slow. Why? Because they didn’t do simply what had to be done and nothing else. Many small and seemingly unimportant movements were tacked on, over and over, and these movements added up to 5 or 6 seconds altogether. It’s not that life has to be lived according to some superimposed time. But the taigi is designed to reveal to each of us, among other things, just how much we are adding unnecessary movement into our techniques, our lives.

We must realize that knowledge is infinite. Even knowledge concerning a specific, seemingly unimportant thing, is infinite. There is no end to the amount of things it is possible to know about any particular subject. Once we see that fact, then we can see that no matter how much experience we have in some discipline, like Aikido, no matter how long we have practiced, or how well-read we are, relative to the infinite amount of knowledge available on the subject, we have accumulated actually very little. In fact, it is possible to know only an infinitesimally insignificant amount. So for all intents and purposes, we know pretty much nothing at all about anything!

Once we can understand and accept this, then and only then can we truly begin to learn. Then and only then can we have a “beginner’s mind,” so often referred to by Suzuki Sensei.

So to be constantly in a state of not knowing, this beginner’s mind, is to be able to actually learn. This is to be in a state of constant learning. Then life itself is as exciting and curious as watching a movie or reading a book. When we are reading a good story, or watching one unfold, our attention is always focused and in harmony with the story. We are drawn into it, and we follow it with all of our senses. And even though we know it is only a story, it can move us to laughter and to tears. Life, as such, is the ultimate story, much more compelling than any movie ever was. Because the story of our life is never over. It never stops. You can never put the book down for dinner, or walk out of the theatre of this life. This story only ends when we die; and yet even this we cannot know for sure. As long as we are alive, we must continue to be open and learn in every moment.

Only when we are able to lead a life of this kind of thought-less, open inquiry, having available to us and using but not depending on past knowledge, only then can we come into contact with that which cannot be accumulated or measured. It cannot be measured because there is no “amount” to it. It doesn’t gather, but continues to unfold, infinitely. It is ever new and constantly opening right before our very senses.

Then, when we are in this very practical and real, yet indescribable state, this is what we can truly call “meditation”.

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Thank You, Sensei . . . Continued from Page 1

encourage them to do spiritual development through breathing and meditation.”

We Maui and HKF students treasure our experiences over the past 50 years and our on-going unique opportunity to train with Shinichi Suzuki Sensei. He always reminds us that our attitude must be “Shin ken shobu,” life or death training. As Sensei often ends his class, we always are left with, “Something to think about” from his lessons and example.

Thank you, Suzuki Sensei, for 50 + years of inspired teaching and exemplary living!

* *Ki-Aikido on Maui*, by Christopher Curtis, MAKS publishing, 3rd ed., 2001, pages 17-19.

World Camp 2003

Attending this year's World Camp at Ki no Kenkyukai Headquarters in Tochigi, Japan, were 8 Hawaii Ki Federation students accompanying our Chief Instructor, Christopher Curtis Sensei. They were Lynn Curtis, Jeff Baldwin, Tracy Reasoner, and myself (Charles Hudson) all from Maui, Charles Boyer and Steven Orot from Lokahi Dojo, and Roy Uyehara and Ray Welch from Central YMCA Dojo, both on Oahu. The theme of this seminar was definitely "Oneness of Mind and Body," with an emphasis on this being defined as a peaceful feeling of harmony resulting from being part of a functioning whole.

Having attended the World Camp over the last 5 years, I found this year's camp to be a pinnacle experience. There was an openness and camaraderie like never before. Our teachers worked diligently in assisting the students from every country to interact, train, and communicate with each other. Although training was demanding and serious at times, there was a relaxed sense of ease and comfort in the atmosphere. There was warm hospitality and acceptance for all the different students from many cultures. The World Camp Seminar 2003 was a living demonstration of the purpose of our training, which is to realize that oneness of mind and body is our existing condition, and to experience this as we live in our daily life.

Interview with an otomo

Jeff Baldwin, Maui Ki-Aikido yudansha, was the winner of the first Hawaii Ki Federation otomo award. Jeff just returned from World Camp at Ki No Kenkyukai October 20 - 26. We asked him to describe the experience of serving as Christopher Curtis Sensei's otomo.

MKA: You were selected to receive the first ever HKF otomo award. What did that include?

JB: Basically it was air fare, room and board plus seminar fees. It also included a great learning experience.

MKA: What was it like being Curtis Sensei's otomo at World Camp?

JB: I had a small advantage having done this before. Curtis Sensei is "on" 24-7, though. If you plan on keeping up with him, you need to do the same. That means getting up an hour and a half before he emerges if you plan on breathing. However, I missed one or two nights. I need more than two hours sleep each night.

MKA: What was the most difficult part of it?

JB: That's hard. It's a combination of things, the lack of sleep, the fact that you have to be 100% aware of what is going on every minute, and the fact that world camp is going on at the same time.

MKA: What recommendations would you have for others who are thinking of applying for next year's award?

JB: Everyone has inside them the ability to rise above almost anything. You will see some of this if you are sincere about it. Don't just plan on starting when you get to Japan, though. You need to start every morning when you get up. It's something that you can carry into all other parts of your life.

MKA: Did you ever have time to soak in the o-furo?

JB: Sure I did. Not every night, but there was time for me to get in there for a few minutes when I wanted to. Curtis Sensei made it sound like I never got to do anything and that I practically slept standing up outside his door.

MKA: Sensei praised what an excellent job you did, and how you really exemplified awareness and extension of ki. Congratulations on a job very well done!

JB: I have to give a lot of credit to Tracey (Reasoner) and Charles (Hudson). Those guys worked very hard help me out all along the way.

Children's program growing, new class added.

Kids, Kids All Over the Place!

Because the children's classes are bursting at the seams, a new intermediate class has been added on Thursdays in Wailuku at the main dojo, from 4 to 5:30 pm. The new class is for children in school grades 6 through 8 who are 6th kyu or below.

Moving to the later time of 5:30 through 7 pm on Thursdays are the high school students and any youth 5th kyu and above.

The other youth classes in Wailuku at the Shunshinkan Dojo are:

Tues. 6-7 pm and Saturday 8:30 - 10 am: beginner children (age 6 and above). No uniform required.

Monday 5 - 6 pm: Children ready to test for 10th kyu (by promotion).

Monday 6 - 7:30 pm: Children 10th kyu and above, up to 6th grade.

At the Pukalani Dojo, the children's

classes are on Tuesdays only:

5-6 pm: Beginning children; 6-7 pm, Advanced children.

Please call 244-5165 for more information about enrolling a child in our youth Aikido programs.





ATV Ride “Fun-Raiser”

Bump, sail and scream over the mountain, have a great time, see a very special rainforest, AND raise money for the dojo, all at the same time? That’s what Maui Ki-Aikido members did on Sunday, Sept. 14.

The special ATV outing into the rainforest was provided by Haleakala ATV Tours. Company owner Jeff Baldwin, a Maui Ki-Aikido yudansha and Board Vice-President, donated the rides, which were offered to members as a fund-raiser for the dojo. The day ended with a barbecue at Jeff and Janet Baldwin’s home for members and their families. A good time was had by all, and monies were raised toward the building of a museum cabinet at the dojo for historic and treasured items from the past 50 years of Aikido in Hawaii.



Taigi Competition Getting Close

March 2004 will be upon us before we know it! If you haven’t yet, it’s time to find a partner and start practicing for the first Hawaii Taigi Competition, to be held at the Shunshinkan Dojo.

While the Gold Medal-winning pair will be given their trip to Japan to compete in July, 2004, in the World Taigi Competition, there are great intrinsic rewards for participating even for those who are not the winners. Have fun, sharpen your training, and experience taigi competition, both at home and in Japan.

The age groups are Junior Division (under 18) and Adults (those 18 and over). Children are especially encouraged to get started participating. Junior Division participants may perform only Kitei Taigi.

Adults will all perform Kitei Taigi and one sentaku, or select, taigi from this list: number 1, 2, 6, 9 and 13. The weapons taigis as usual are numbers 21, 22, 23 and 24. To compete for first place and the gold medal, partners must perform both weaponless and weapon taigis and both Kengi and Jogi 1 and 2.

A Year of Aikido Events Announced

Listed below are Maui Ki-Aikido and Hawaii Ki Federation events to mark the ending of the year 2003 and to fill in on your 2004 calendar. All events are at the Shunshinkan Dojo unless otherwise noted.

- HKF Seminar on Kauai Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 12 - 14
- Omiki and last class of the year Wednesday, Dec. 17, 7 pm
- Children’s Holiday Party Friday, Dec. 19, 6 pm
- Dojo New Year’s Blessing Thursday, Jan. 1, 7am
- Water Misogi Sunday, Jan. 4, 6 am Waiehu Beach Park (meet at dojo)
- Omiki and first class of year Wednesday Jan. 7, 7 pm
- Shinnen En Kai New Year Dinner
and Annual Membership Meeting Saturday, Feb. 14
- HKF Board Meetings: Saturday, Mar. 6
Saturday, Jun. 5
Saturday, Sept. 11
Saturday, Dec. 4
- HKF Workshops: Taigi Workshop - Jan. 31, Feb. 1
Weapons Workshop - Aug. 14, 15
- HKF Seminars: Maui - Mar. 26, 27, 28 (HI Taigi Competition)
- Oahu - Jun. 25, 26, 27
- Hilo - Sept. 24, 25, 26
- Lihue - Dec. 10, 11, 12

The Shinichi Suzuki Sensei Ki-Aikido Youth Award

The Maui Ki-Aikido Board of Directors is proud to announce this annual award, which is being established to acknowledge and honor the 50 years of dedicated service by Suzuki Sensei to Maui Ki-Aikido and all its programs.

The award will bring an all-expense-paid trip for 2 teenage Maui Ki-Aikido members to Japan for training at World Camp each year. In 2004, World Camp training will also include the International Taigi Competition at Ki no Kenkyukai Headquarters dojo in late July.

Recipients of the award will, among other criteria, be youth who prepare for, and participate in, the first annual Hawaii Ki Federation Taigi Competition at the Shunshinkan Dojo on Maui in March of 2004. Application forms will be available after the first of the year.



Lynn Curtis taught an action-filled children's class at the HKF Hilo Seminar.



Curtis Sensei with Tamaka Miyake and Lloyd Miyashiro Sensei, Head Instructor of Kauai's Kapa'a dojo.



Mits Murashige, who has just been appointed by Takashi Nonaka Sensei as Assistant Head Instructor of Hilo Ki-Aikido Dojo, helps a student.

Big Island HKF Seminar 2003

Christopher Curtis Sensei (7th Dan), in his unique and reliable style, once again illuminated Tohei Sensei's teaching during our recent Big Island HKF seminar on September 26-29, 2003. In the dynamic and vigorous fashion that his teacher Shinichi Suzuki Sensei (8th Dan) taught him, Curtis Sensei inspired us by demonstrating the principles of the universe through taigi training. Curtis Sensei revealed the same theme throughout the seminar using many aspects of Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido training to point to the truth. He reminded us that the 4 basic principles were to be practiced to coordinate mind and body for the purpose of becoming one with the universe. Sensei used the analogy that when our mind and body are coordinated we become a gateway to the universal mind, or taiga nature.

As Curtis Sensei began preparing us for the March 2004 HKF taigi competition on Maui, he continued to bring us back to the purpose of our study and why we are having the taigi competition. Sensei began teaching the students and judges how to score the taigi pairs. He announced that he would be the main judge, accompanied by Suzuki Sensei, Nonaka Sensei, Clayton Naluai Sensei, and Eric Nonaka Sensei, with the remaining judges to be announced at a later date. Sensei encouraged all HKF dojos to begin preparing taigi pairs and dojo teams to participate in the competition. He reminded us that the winning partners would receive an expense paid trip to World Cup 2004 at headquarters to participate in the international competition in Japan at Ki no Kenkyukai Dojo.

Curtis Sensei instructed us that the judges would be looking for fudoshin, rhythm, and largeness of ki. Sensei told us that although the technical aspect of the arts are important, our scores will be heavily weighted on demonstrating universal qualities of taiga during our exhibition. Sensei used this point to show how we use shoga to reveal taiga and how shoga and taiga are ultimately one. He opened the discussion by asking if, when we are judging using a 1-5 scoring system in the relative world to grade universal qualities of taiga manifested during a taigi, is this shoga mind or taiga mind? After Sensei took all questions and answers on the subject, the group of students all agreed that it was both shoga and taiga operating as one that was being demonstrated in taigi. Sensei showed how the use of the 4 basic principles to coordinate mind and body for the purpose of becoming one with the universe is the same as using shoga correctly to experience our taiga nature, and this is the purpose of taigi competition: the revelation of the oneness of shoga and taiga.

Charles Hudson



Endowment Fund Donations Requested

Maui Ki-Aikido's endowment fund is slowly but steadily growing. An important safeguard for the future of the Shunshinkan Dojo, the endowment fund accepts donations of any size, and all donations are tax-deductible.

Please remember Maui Ki-Aikido's endowment fund in your year-end charitable giving, and, as always, thank you very much for your wonderful support of our mission to disseminate the teachings of Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido.

Adults, Teens and Children Test in October



At the promotion tests in October the students pictured all received 2A kyu rank. They are from left to right, Glenn Young shown throwing Fincher Sterling, Ladini Conder as nage with Helen Barrow, and Robert Tada of the high school class also throwing Fincher Sterling.

Order Form:

Please write in the number of items you are ordering after each price.

Ki-Aikido on Maui, 3rd edition, by Christopher Curtis Sensei \$25 _____ (non-member)
Training manual used by all Hawaii Ki Federation dojos. \$20 _____ (HKF member)

50 Years of Aikido in Hawaii, A Book of Days \$20 _____ (non-member)
Perpetual keepsake calendar with historic photos that chronicle the birth, \$15 _____ (HKF members)
evolution and development of Aikido, with rare photos of the founders.

Bokken Suburi Video - Training Aid \$20 _____ (video)
Christopher Curtis Sensei performs the 8 Bokken Suburi, 10 repetitive \$25 _____ (DVD)
bokken cutting exercises, Kengi 1 and 2, and Jogi 1 and 2, developed
by both Soshu Koichi Tohei Sensei and Shinichi Suzuki Sensei over the
past 50 years.

Meditation CD with Christopher Curtis Sensei \$15 _____
Breathe and meditate along with an actual Maui Friday night class with
Curtis Sensei, professionally recorded.

Subtotal of order \$ _____

Shipping: USA & Territories Add \$4, or International Add \$9 for each
1 video, or 2 books, or up to 4 DVDs or CDs \$ _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Check enclosed Visa or Mastercard

Card # _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Ship To: _____

email contact: _____

phone/fax: _____

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