



Mana

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

Fall 2010

Hawaiiikiaikido.org

curtissensei.com

Page 1

Memorial to Suzuki Sensei Unveiled

There is something new to see for everyone entering the Shunshinkan Dojo. When Maui Ki-Aikido's students and visitors walk in the door now, our eyes meet a photographic image on bronze of Suzuki Sensei, flanked by his famous words enjoining us to "Breathe, breathe, breathe."

The memorial plaque to our founding teacher Shinichi Suzuki Sensei (1917 - 2009) was unveiled and dedicated May 29, 2010, at the banquet honoring his lifetime of dedication and achievements, held during the HKF Taigi Competition seminar and attended by members of Suzuki Sensei's family as well as students and teachers from all over the state.

The creation of this memorial plaque was a process that took a number of months of discussions and problem solving before MKA members finally arrived at this perfect solution. First there was the idea of an outdoor stone with a message carved into it, but the stone proved too dense for the carving machine. Then a smaller bronze plaque attached to the stone, or the bronze plaque itself, mounted outside on the building, were among the ideas contemplated. But the possibility of vandalism damage proved too painful for the group, so we finally arrived at having the bronze plaque mounted inside, just in front as one enters the door. Curtis Sensei stated, "Now we bow twice when we enter; first to Suzuki Sensei, then to Tohei Sensei at the shomen. This seems just right, and we are all grateful to have Suzuki Sensei watching over us in this way as we enter the dojo to train!"

Meeting on river banks of Neva

by Igor Ostroumov, Chief Instructor of Eastern Europe / Russian Ki-Aikido Federation

I became acquainted with Curtis Sensei in 1999. At first we corresponded through postal mail (e-mail wasn't then accessible to me). We were divided by thousands of kilometers but connected by common interests, values, ideas and beliefs. Curtis Sensei has helped me to understand what actually is important. His patient and benevolent attention to my questions was important for me at my level.

Then in 2000 there were regular meetings at seminars in Denmark, Sweden, Germany, and Japan. Each time I was able to experience more of Master Tohei's teachings through Curtis Sensei. Moreover, in cooperation with Curtis Sensei we have prepared translations of his two books in Russian: *Ki-Aikido on Maui* and *Letting Go*. For me it was important to keep the



Photo by Chris Barene



Guests look on as Curtis Sensei and Fincher Sterling adjust the unveiled plaque May 29.

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Christopher Curtis Sensei and the instructors and students who attended his seminar taught in St. Petersburg, Russia, in October, 2010.

Meeting on river banks . . . continued from page 1

spirit of this teaching, as well as being very accurate in the teaching. Therefore, the publishing of these books was a big step in this direction.

Since then our Ki Society has grown and developed, and many groups in other cities and countries have joined us to study Ki-Aikido with mind and body unified. As a result, Doshu Shinichi Tohei Sensei made the decision to confirm the Eastern Europe / Russian Ki-Aikido Federation uniting our Ki societies to improve our possibilities for training and development.

And, here this fall, for the first time it became possible for Russia to have Curtis Sensei come teach us directly. The long way was crowned with success, and on September, 15-19th in St. Petersburg we experienced the first seminar with Curtis Sensei. For this event, participants arrived from six countries: Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Latvia and Great Britain. About 65 participants trained together throughout four days. The majority of them had the inspiration to get acquainted with the manner and maintenance of training from Sensei through his books, especially *Letting Go*. At the beginning of a seminar, two thousand copies of the book had already been sold, and it had become a rarity! This book has opened the eyes of many, as its text contains talks and questions and answers from other seminars all over the world. It is an invaluable source of experience!

In addition to teaching us, Curtis Sensei has had an opportunity to get acquainted with our magnificent city of St. Petersburg which is rightfully named the cultural capital of Russia. The museums, palaces, historical monuments, sculpture, quays and bridges, parks and views, churches and temples of all religions are beautiful sights for visitors. Three hundred years ago St. Petersburg was created by Peter the Great as the capital of the big European state. The resulting architectural realization of this accounts for the great beauty of St. Petersburg. It is difficult to remain indifferent when you see such. I do believe that this teacher has taken great pleasure from this trip.

Separately I would like to add a note of gratitude for Jeff Baldwin Sensei. It is a great courtesy from his side to arrive together with Curtis Sensei. Throughout the seminar he served as the true and attentive Otomo for the Sensei. It was a demonstration of good interaction and understanding of living in the present moment. My students and I have received a good lesson in it. I offer my thanks for this fine seminar!

Yours faithfully,
Igor Ostroumov

HKF Dan and Den promotions

Since our last issue of MANA in Spring 2010, these members of Hawai'i Ki Federation have taken Den (Ki) or Dan tests and been promoted:

- from Hilo Ki-Aikido: Leilani Pakele, Joden, on July 18;
- from Maui Ki-Aikido: Olive Silva, Bob Lightbourn, Jeff Baldwin and Chris Barens, Joden, October 27 and November 3; Joëlle Perz and Sally Worcester, Chuden on June 2, and Tielr Ortogero, Shodan, November 14;
- from Central YMCA Dojo: Linda Sasaki Sensei, Joden; Roy Uyehara, Chuden, and Robert Oda, and Scott Oshiro, Shodan, on July 18.

Chief Instructor's Message

by Christopher Curtis Sensei, Chief Instructor, Hawai'i Ki Federation

It is with great appreciation that I look back on this year, which has been a whirl-wind of traveling and teaching for me. Of course I always enjoy the many Hawai'i Ki Federation seminars and workshops throughout the year. But today I would like to take the opportunity to thank those who have made it possible for me to travel as well to distant lands on this globe, bringing and sharing Tohei Sensei's message of mind/body unification.

This year, as usual, I traveled twice to Europe to teach, once in the spring and once in the fall. This past September, in Helmond, Holland, the constantly supportive Chief Instructor Ad Voogels Sensei and his son/partner Toby Voogels Sensei both hosted a large seminar for me with the support of the Netherlands Judo Bund, the national martial arts organization. Without the support and sanction of this organization, no martial arts teaching can take place in Holland, so this is a key to being able to present our teaching there. Through the efforts of Ad Voogels Sensei, this Judo Bund organization has recognized Ki Society as the official Ki-Aikido teaching for the Netherlands. Once again and as usual, the two Voogels families and the many Dutch students took very good care of us during our one week stay there.

This year, nine individuals from the newly organized Ki Societies in Spain, both from Valencia and Barcelona, traveled to Helmond to take part in this seminar. I can't say enough about the enthusiasm and engagement in life of this Spanish group. I am truly looking forward to our first seminar in Valencia next spring (May 14 & 15, 2011).

Following the Holland seminar, we enjoyed the wonderfully efficient German train system as we traveled south to the small town of Bubenreuth, the location of the head dojo of Ki-Aikido Bayern, representing the world wide Ki Society in Southern Germany. Once again, as usual, we were feted and entertained through the efforts of the Chief Instructor Uwe Filush Sensei and his many devoted students.

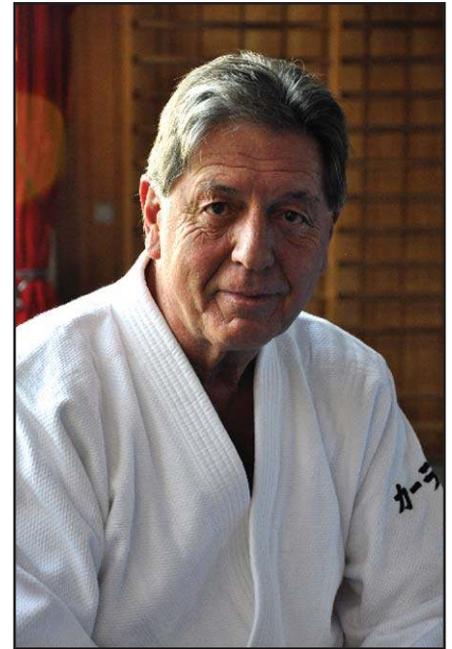
After a successful weekend seminar in Bubenreuth, we flew from Munich to St. Petersburg, Russia, at the generous and open-hearted invitation of David Shaner Sensei, the Ki Society Advisor to Eastern Europe and Russia. This was a very special event for me, as the Chief Instructor of this extremely large Ki Society, Igor Ostroumov Sensei, has been a friend and student of mine for many years. I first met Ostroumov Sensei when I was teaching in Denmark and Sweden in the summer of 2000. At the time he was a student of the Aikikai school of Aikido, and out of sincere interest in the teachings of Koichi Tohei Sensei, he traveled on a shoestring to come to Denmark and Sweden to study with me. Over the last ten years, under the expert guidance of David Shaner Sensei, he has managed to put together a Ki Society of over 400 students.

Our seminar lasted for four days and evenings, so we had ample time to explore multiple themes and disciplines, and with more than sixty students attending, the seminar seemed a great success for all of us. Jeff Baldwin Sensei (my constant and capable otomo on these European trips) and I were given the full tour of the beautiful ancient city of St. Petersburg, complete with a wild evening at the Russian Baths, a walking tour of the estate grounds of Peter the Great, the incredible Hermitage museum, as well as a fantastic evening at the ballet. Thank you, Ostroumov Sensei and all the Russian students who made our stay so memorable and unique.

Lastly, I want to offer my humble thanks to Jeff Baldwin Sensei who, although provided with some partial financial support from HKF (for which I know he is very grateful, as am I), largely at his own expense has generously guided my sometimes weary body and mind through the trying exigencies of world travel. He is a great friend and sincere student for whom I am particularly thankful.

Of course, I could not close this account without offering my sincere thanks to all of those teachers at Maui Ki-Aikido who carry the teaching burden during the absence caused by my travels.

Aloha,
Christopher Curtis



Meet Joëlle Perz

In this issue we are shining the spotlight on Joëlle C. Perz, a renowned artist who is a Maui Ki-Aikido yudansha and youth class assistant teacher.

MANA: Joëlle, you are not only a very well-known painter with many awards and work in many shows and galleries but also a founder and the Art Director of Viewpoints Gallery in Makawao, Maui, as well as very involved with the local art community. You've been training Aikido, first with Shinichi Suzuki Sensei and now with Christopher Curtis Sensei, since 1986. Has your Aikido training had any effect on your work, and if so, in what ways?

Joëlle: Founding Viewpoints took courage that I wouldn't have had without the support and guidance I received through the Aikido training. I would run into a tight spot (in the management of the gallery) and then come to the dojo and train, and the answer would just suddenly be clear. Another way the practice has influenced my work is, I've found that I use the brush like I use the bokken. I have to be totally committed, go right to it and do it with a steady mind. I can do my work so much faster than in the past, and the old compulsion of "working harder" has just been shaved off my mind.

I carve into wood now, also, before painting, and I find that I'm not worried about making a mistake. I carve swiftly and with sureness that comes from doing it with Ki! Especially while carving, my work is a meditation.

MANA: You started training here on Maui with Suzuki Sensei in 1986. What originally interested you about Aikido?

Joëlle: I came with a friend, just to see why she liked Aikido. They were having a Ki class, and instantly I saw that it gave me an experience, a feeling in my body, like this is something very special. I heard the words "whatever problem you have, *you* are the problem," and I saw that it was a window-opening, life-changing self training. And Aikido has really changed my life for the better.

MANA: With your busy professional life, what kept you coming and continuously training at the dojo?

Joëlle: I saw right away in the people who were training that Aikido was really working in their lives. The more advanced the person was in rank, the more they embodied Aikido principles and the "better" people they were.

MANA: In our dojo, you are not only an assistant teacher in Lynn Curtis's children's classes and for years the creator of fabulous flower arrangements in the Shunshinkan Dojo, but you also have been creating the art and photos for Curtis Sensei's books, Maui Ki-Aikido's posters, and our logo clothing items and graphics, as well as those of HKF, for many years. What are your latest projects related to Aikido?

Joëlle: I'm designing a new tee-shirt for the Maui Ki-Aikido with the drifting leaves of the cover of Sensei's latest book *Letting Go* on the front. It will be available before Christmas.



Recently Joëlle, on her return from a trip, had the Chuden test of Ki "sprung" on her by Curtis Sensei. Afterward, she wrote this essay for MANA:

My Chuden Test ...

At the beginning of the year I was notified of the recommendation of the board for my 4th level of black belt. As a result I found out that Sally Worchester and I had to take the Chuden Ki test when I came back from a trip off island, and it had to happen a couple of days later! I guess this was part of the test, since in life this is how it is: you don't always get notified, and you have to rise to the moment at all times, prepared or not. Which reminds me of what we were always told: don't be just a dojo expert. Bring your training to everyday life...

Well, I was coming back from a vacation in Tahiti and the Tuamotus, and even without knowing that I was going to take a test, I had spent the 3 weeks fully training "live." Being on a boat most of the time, I had the opportunity to be with the water, floating without fighting... emptying and clearing my mind, relaxing completely, especially in the presence of the local residents, that is - sharks and barracudas.

My Chuden Test . . . continued from page 4

Most of my companions were diving with many more sharks than I was, but as the only snorkeler, I was bait, an easy bite, and you only need one inspired creature to be in real danger! And... when at one point a few of them were starting to circle around me, I did exactly what I have learned in Aikido which is not to play brave but calmly and swiftly got back to the boat out of their reach!

Well... coming back to my Ki test... just before the test, I asked all my Yudansha friends if they had any advice for me... Graciously they all wanted to help. It actually started with Mele saying, "You must be 'freaking out!'" Should I be? Got me right in a place with the gravity and intensity of the situation. Then more advice flew in. Jeff: "connect with the teacher, he wants to help you... just be yourself" Prakash: "Don't have your eyes going all over the place; have a calm mind"... Lynn: "Extend your Ki at all times; don't turn on and off" ... Garry: "You will be tested on your mind. Sensei will try to move your mind"... Sally shared with me the lessons she just learned from the seminar: "Feel and fill yourself from the tip of the head to toe,"... and last but not least the answer of Charles Boyer to his wife who, at the seminar, asked: "How do you deal with nervousness before taking a test?" Answer: "Nervousness is energy moving. Take advantage of it. Use it."

All that advice I will take with me for the rest of my life, and I am so thankful to all for their help... but the fact is when I stepped into the mat to take my test, I forgot everything and all fears and uneasiness fell away. I clearly stepped into the present ...truly a blissful state of being, even if I didn't score perfect.

Later in the summer, I had the opportunity to put in practice all my years of Aikido training: while on a 4 days hike leading to Machu Picchu in Peru, the teachings of Suzuki Sensei on cadence breathing help me on my way up to the 4215meter peak. Going down 2000 steps on the Ancient Inca Trail, I just kept remembering the feeling of weight underside while Jeff Baldwin was trying to lift me up at the test...Relaxing completely, going straight down on those steps some of which were less wide than the length of my shoe! At times, I felt so light that It was almost like flying...



Eric Nonaka Sensei teaches EKF Seminar

by Eric Nonaka, Assistant Chief Instructor, Hawai'i Ki Federation, Head Instructor, Mililani Ki Aikido

This past June I was very fortunate to have been invited to teach the summer Eastern Ki Federation seminar. As we all know, our good friend David Shaner Sensei is Chief Instructor there and is doing a wonderful job.

Virginia Ki Society was the official host, and we trained at a small college there. About 55 students participated. We had participants from Connecticut, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Minnesota. It was a great experience with lots of positive energy and everyone extending Ki fully! My otomo was Rich Fryling Sensei who is head instructor in New York. I last saw Fryling Sensei when he graduated from Furman University almost 20 years ago and got as a graduation present a trip to Hawai'i to train. It was really great seeing him again.

We could not do Soku Shin no Gyo (boo!) but our time was spent wisely. We covered kitei taigi and bokken suburi. Lots of jumping around and a lot of fun. Of course there was time to socialize, and I enjoyed some really good cigars and the local beers. Mostly I enjoyed meeting new friends and spending time with Shaner Sensei, his wife Ileana and their three wonderful children. I hope one day they can all come to Hawai'i for a family vacation.



Eric Nonaka Sensei teaches a bokken class at the Eastern Ki Federation's summer seminar.

Shaner Sensei's Hilo seminar

by Joni Jackson, Maui Ki-Aikido Rokudan and Upcountry Dojo Youth Instructor

"It is easier to co-ordinate the mind and body when we are sitting or standing still, than when in motion."

This is the first line of "The KI development Exercises" shokushu written by Tohei Sensei, and the premise for Shaner Sensei's Hilo seminar last August.

David Shaner Sensei has a gift for breaking down the teachings of Tohei Sensei and presenting them in well ordered, easy to follow progressions. Shaner Sensei is a professor and a scholar, which is very apparent in the depth and clarity of detail with which he unveils Tohei Sensei's wonderful teaching methods. Tohei Sensei was still teaching the Gakuin when I was in Japan, and he would take a movement and break it down to a very basic physical technique for the gaijin beginners in the first year gakuin. Shaner Sensei has grasped this point very deeply and expanded on it.

For two days we went through all of the hitori waza (one person exercises) in great detail, following the five principles for KI exercise and the five principles for keeping one point as guidelines.

Moving very slowly at first, Shaner Sensei had the students pay close attention to what each part of their body was doing through each movement. Then slowly increasing the momentum, he had us check that we didn't start doing something different or extra as we moved more quickly. For certain of the hitori waza, Shaner Sensei would demonstrate the evolution from a single person exercise into an Aikido art.

This method was very helpful for beginners, as it clearly pointed out the sequence of events allowing the student to understand the meaning of each art. For others, it helped to show the bad habits that inevitably crop up for many long-time Aikidoists.

On Sunday morning, we picked up our bokkens and were treated to a new 'tsuburi' taken from Ken waza taught by Tohei Sensei and interconnected into a flowing whole by Shaner Sensei. The movement has fifteen counts and travels the full length of the Dojo, beginning with a four direction cut in very slow motion, continuing in a straight line down the room, picking up great speed to a block followed by a flourishing round cut at the end. It has been nicknamed "the dog bone tsuburi" due to its configuration.

The main theme of the seminar was "Move from one point, do nothing extra." Shaner Sensei has a wonderful ability to make Aikido fun and informative and very available to all.

Everyone had a wonderful experience in Hilo last August. For many of us, we knew Shaner Sensei and had attended his classes before, but for some it was a first time encounter, and from many of them I heard grateful comments. They found his method of teaching easy to follow, clear in its understanding.

Many thanks, David Shaner Sensei, for visiting us in Hawai'i. Come again soon.



David Shaner Sensei and some of the attendees at the Hilo seminar August 6-8, 2010

What is Aikido...

by Joni Jackson



Waiting in line at the market without minding because everyone else waiting has things to do the same as you do;
 being on the beach, looking at the waves, feeling the motion of the water move in and out with the rhythm of your heart;
 hitting your head on a protruding shelf, stubbing your toe on a hidden rock, nicking your finger with the kitchen knife, the sudden pain, a moment of anger, then shaking it off, picking yourself up, putting on a band aid, letting it go;
 driving along and a favorite song comes on the radio, the music fills you up and suddenly you start singing along, full and complete, no separation between you and the song;
 having a confrontation with a close friend, disagreeing with a family member, feeling the tension, then pausing, looking, trying to see their point of view;
 watching a flower breathe.
 This is Aikido.

Half, half, half.....and Shift Happens!

by Mele Stokesberry

At the HKF Winter Omiki Seminar Nov. 12 through 14, 2010, Christopher Curtis Sensei and the statewide participants examined the nature of Ki meditation and the meaning of the tools “shuchuhu,” or infinite gathering, and “kakudaiho,” or infinite expansion, given to us by Master Tohei. The theme of the seminar at Kauai Island’s Hanapepe dojo was to shift into being *in the experience* of half, half, half all the time, and to get there not by “doing” or “trying,” but by the practice of Ki meditation which will lead to experiencing the One Point all the time.....whenever, whatever. Sensei taught that Ki meditation is the most important aspect of our training.

Curtis Sensei explained that the One Point is an ever-moving expression of the mind and a kind of portal that transforms small, self-obsessed mind (which we all have) to Reiseishin, Original Mind. He suggested that if we experience being aware of our tiny place in the Universe, that might help us have the feeling of half, half, half. He asked us to consider looking up into the heavens with the question, “Where does it end?” or to imagine looking into the sub-atomic world’s relatively vast spaces between un-seeable, unpredictable particles to find the feeling, and to trigger the shift to the One Point experience. But whatever we do to practice, we must remember the condition is not “achieved” nor brought on by thinking but is rather a direct experience.



HKF Winter Omiki Seminar host Dean Mayer Sensei and our teacher, Curtis Sensei, with students who tested at the seminar: Hanapepe student Kendra Ishida, Jokyu test of Ki, and Maui's Tielr Ortogero, Shodan.

Reiseishin (The Universal Mind) -- by Master Koichi Tohei

Human beings are blessed with a mind that is directly connected to the mind of the Universe. This is known as Reiseishin. The moon is clearly reflected in the water when the water is calm. In this same way, when our mind and body are unified and calm, our Reiseishin manifests itself completely. Once this happens, all suffering and wicked desires fall away, and the Universal Mind of love and protection for all things appears in us. Let us strive to realize Reiseishin.

About the Value of Our Existence

Curtis Sensei has written, “Aikido on Maui begins and ends with the premise that mind and body are essentially one phenomenon, looked at from two different perspectives: mental and physical. Aikido training is a process of realizing not only the unification of mind and body, but also our innate sameness, and ultimate union, with all that surrounds us. This unification of mind and body is our natural state. It is in this natural state that we can perform at the highest level of our potential. Aikido provides the way to study and practice the function of mind and body as one.

“Even though Aikido is a martial art, it is not about learning how to overcome others. Aikido training is learning about ourselves, and learning to live with fuller potential and integrity. It is learning to live calmly, to live with dignity, and to live with courage and self-esteem, here and now, which is the only place and time that really counts. Aikido, in other words, is training to lead a positive and successful life.

“The mission of Maui Ki-Aikido for over 50 years has been to provide this kind of opportunity to the community of Maui, and beyond.”

The mission of Maui Ki-Aikido’s Endowment Fund is to ensure the future of Maui Ki-Aikido training on Maui, including the Shunshinkan Dojo’s physical plant and instruction. Your donations ensure that we meet this goal.

Donations may be sent to Maui Ki-Aikido Endowment Fund, P.O.Box 724, Wailuku, HI 96793. Thank you very much.

Winners of Hawai'i Ki Federation's 2010 Taigi Competition

Maui Ki-Aikido hosted the Hawai'i Ki Federation's state-wide 2010 Taigi Competition on May 29 at the Shunshinkan Dojo in Wailuku.

In the adult division, Tracy Reasoner and Lyman Franco of Maui won the Shunkunsho award for overall best pair; Celine Boyer of Lokahi Ki-Aikido on O'ahu was named best yudansha (black belt) nage for the Fudoshin Award; David Hewahewa of Maui won best mudansha nage (below the black-belt level); Alex Schaefer of Maui won best uke; and Lee Chong of Maui was named the "most inspirational" participant.

In the junior division, Maui students Tielr Ortogero, 16, and Chris Rickard, 14, won for best overall pair and for best nage and uke, respectively; and Olivia Franco, 13, of Maui was named "most inspirational."

The Taigi competition is held yearly to prepare Hawai'i Ki Federation students for the international event held in Japan every four years.



Shunkunsho winners Tracy Reasoner and Lyman Franco perform Taigi before Chief Judge Curtis Sensei and Criteria Judge Joni Jackson.



Taigi Competition judges (back row L-R) Lillian Paiva, Byron Nakamura, Charles Boyer, Eric Nonaka, Christopher Curtis Sensei, Joni Jackson, Lynn Curtis, Mele Stokesberry, Prakash Mackay, Roy Uyehara, and awardees, (front row L-R) Alex Schaefer, Lee Chong, David Hewahewa, Tielr Ortogero, Chris Rickard, Olivia Franco, Celine Boyer, Francis Wilson, Lyman Franco and Tracy Reasoner.

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

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(see book cover below) (HKF members) \$20____

(bulk rate to dojos, 5 or more) \$15____

Ki-Aikido on Maui, 3rd edition, by Christopher Curtis Sensei (non-members) \$15____
The training manual used by all Hawai'i Ki Federation dojos. (HKF member) \$8____

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

Bokken Suburi DVD - Training Aid **Remastered**..... (non-member) \$25____
Christopher Curtis Sensei performs the 8 Bokken Suburi, 10 repetitive bokken cutting (HKF members) \$20____
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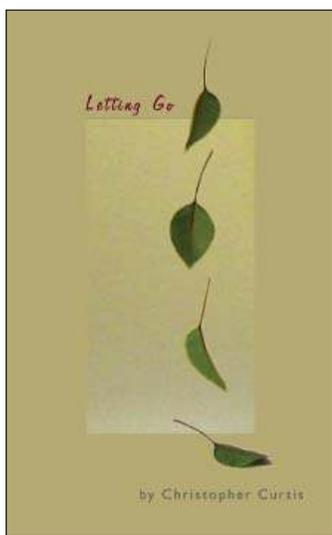
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gmail.com



The HOLIDAYS

are a great time to give the gift of **Letting Go**

Here's your opportunity to purchase Curtis Sensei's latest book if you don't already have a copy. If you do, consider the value of sharing this teaching with your friends and loved ones. On the last Friday of every month, Curtis Sensei teaches a class on one chapter of the book. This give-and-take between Sensei and the students is recorded and posted on our blog at <http://curtissensei.com> where you can already download and listen to or read, past sessions.

Hawai'i Ki Federation
c/o Maui Ki-Aikido
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Dear Reader, Please assist us in reaching you better

Hawai'i Ki Federation's semi-annual MANA newsletter is now published both in print form and sent out by email. In addition, each new issue and an archive of all back issues are available on our website, www.hawaiiikido.org.

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