



Mana

The newsletter of Hawai'i Ki Federation

Spring 2009

hawaiiiaikido.org

Page 1



Curtis Sensei receives Hachi-dan certificate, presented by Suzuki Sensei on January 24, 2009.



Tracy Reasoner Sensei (second from right), instructor of the MCC class, at the MCC dojo with Rhyn Davies, Lindy Franco, Sayaka Reasoner and Meahgen Jacobsen.



Reasoner Sensei throws Lindy Franco and Reece Ajifu in the March 19 MCC demonstration.

Christopher Curtis Sensei receives Hachi-dan rank

Christopher Curtis Sensei, our Hawaii Ki Federation Chief Instructor and the acting Head Instructor of the Shunshinkan Ki-Aikido Dojo in Wailuku, was awarded his Hachi-dan, or 8th Dan, degree in January of this year by Shinichi Tohei Sensei, president of the World Ki Society. Shinichi Suzuki Sensei, Maui Ki-Aikido's founder and retired Head Instructor, presented Curtis Sensei's Hachi-dan certificate to him on January 24 at the Shugyo Tassei Kigan Shiki seminar banquet at the Shunshinkan dojo.

Christopher Curtis Sensei is only the 16th recipient worldwide of the Hachi-dan degree from the World Ki Society. Regarding his long-time student's high honor, Suzuki Sensei stated, "I never had a student who entered into the training to the degree that Chris Curtis did. He was by my side always and wanted to know everything I experienced from my teacher, Master Koichi Tohei. Where he is today, and the fact that our teacher in Japan has awarded him this kind of high rank, is simply the result of the many years of this kind of single-minded effort."

continues on page 2

Aikido Club started at Maui Community College

This year the long-time dream of successful outreach to Maui Community College students has been fulfilled with an Aikido club started on the MCC campus. MKA Shodan students Reece Ajifu, serving as club president, and Lindy Franco, club vice president, are attending classes on the MCC campus and form the student core of the group that has recruited beginners from the student body. MKA member and MCC Assistant Professor Chuck Carletta is the advisor for the group, and MKA instructor Tracy Reasoner has committed to teaching the weekly classes, held in the newly refurbished Pilina Wellness Center in the Student Lounge building. This MCC dojo is a large, open space with a mirrored wall and plenty of room for laying out the mats lent by the MKA Upcountry Dojo. The MCC group plans to acquire more mats as soon as possible.

Reasoner Sensei and the club's members gave an excellent demonstration of the principles of Aikido and of Aikido arts from beginner level to Taigi on March 19. It was attended by many students and some faculty, during the lunch hour. A second demonstration is planned for May 16 during the Maui Matsuri festival held on the MCC campus. Maui Ki-Aikido is very proud of our students and their instructor for this great start to a college Aikido club.

Christopher Curtis Sensei . . . continued from page 1

Maui Ki-Aikido's students and instructors are very grateful for this honor to our sensei who is truly a profound and inspiring teacher. Here's what some of them had to say about our Sensei and his promotion:

Curtis Sensei gives an enormous amount of his time and of his life to leading Hawaii Ki Federation and to teaching, at home and throughout the state of Hawaii as well as twice per year in Europe as the official representative of Ki-Aikido in the Netherlands and Germany for Ki Society Japan Headquarters. He often teaches on the US mainland, too, and yet somehow he even finds time to sit in consultation with his students, in his office or even over a bottle of wine. All this in addition to running a successful business and enjoying life with his family. Sensei certainly exemplifies the "unity of calm and action," and the words of Tohei Sensei's shokushu, that when we "keep one point and unify our mind and body [we can] find spare time even when busy." -- Mele Stokesberry

Curtis Sensei's having received Hachi-dan rank is important to our dojo because it validates his leadership and belief by Japan Headquarters that he is sending the right message to his students. That he accepts this promotion is also an indication that he is willing to work even harder to promote the values of Aikido Training and lifestyle. Moving up the ladder only increases one's work load and commitment to their chosen path. I wish Hachi-Dan Curtis Sensei every success. Sincerely, -- Jeffrey S. Donohue

Suzuki Sensei will be very proud I am sure of what he has helped to accomplish, watching the seed grow into a strong mature tree full of fruit for the many. I think Curtis Sensei will always do his best for us and the dojo no matter what rank. -- Casey Robinson

Curtis Sensei's promotion compliments his life-long dedication to the teachings of Suzuki Sensei and his teacher Tohei Sensei. It is not an easy accomplishment by any means, and it is an honor to the Shunshinkan Dojo to have him as our teacher and to the Hawaii Ki Federation as our Chief Instructor. -- Tracy Reasoner



Hawaii Ki Federation embraces change so you can “break the ice”

Did you know? This year marks Hawaii Ki Federation's step into the blogosphere as well as Facebook. Hawaii Ki Federation has sponsored a new blog, <http://curtissensei.com>, along with also offering a way to connect with all the students on a Facebook group entitled Hawaii Ki Federation.

Curtis Sensei is always pushing the envelope in methods and ways to bring the teaching to students. He also has had many requests from students on the mainland as well as Europe to make the seminar teaching available for those unable to attend his seminars and intensives. Therefore, several years ago he began writing transcripts which led to his new book "Letting Go." Further requests continued, and he began releasing his audio recordings on the website www.hawaiiikido.org, but, as many of you know, the site was a bit difficult to navigate. Thus, at the HKF board meeting in December it was suggested that a "blog" be developed to host the new transcripts and recordings for the ongoing classes that Curtis Sensei is providing monthly for each chapter of his new book. The job was completed in early February. The blog is easy to navigate. It allows for the transcripts to be downloaded and the podcasts to be played on the site or downloaded for play on your MP3 device. The site is also a venue for seminars, Ki talks and our annual schedule.

Facebook came about via a bit different route. Last year Lora Melman of the St. Louis Ki Society posted some photos from last year's World Camp, and that provoked Curtis Sensei to join Facebook. Suddenly, a lot of students were "friend-ing him up." This paved the way for HKF to launch a Facebook group for students, friends and teachers to discuss and learn about events the HKF was conducting.

Both of these new methods are only as good as you, the members, make them. Your feedback, questions and comments are not only welcome but also encouraged. To date no one has posted a question, so please be the first to break the ice, for if you have a question, someone else somewhere likely has the same question. So break the ice and be the first person to write a question on either Hawaii Ki Federation's Facebook or our new blog.

St. Anthony High School students try Aikido

by Alex Schaefer

I recently had the pleasure of introducing Aikido to a group of Japanese language students at St. Anthony High School here on Maui, at the request of a close friend, Tokie Sydney, who teaches the class. I gave one lecture to three different classes the first week, then a demonstration for all of them at the Shunshinkan dojo the following week. The lectures were the first public discussion I had ever done on Aikido, so I prepared a long series of topics and reviewed chapters from the training manual and Sensei's new book. Of course, most these preparations flew out the window the moment the lecture began, but I managed to keep the skeleton of the lecture intact.

The kids were genuinely open to hear a different view on the experience of life, and many of them told me how they related mind-body unification to their own lives. They got to experience Ki tests and were part curious and part baffled at how a change in one's mental state would affect one's physical sense of stability.

For the demonstration, I had the help of many current students and senseis at the dojo, and the guests were treated to a tour of the dojo and a bit of Japanese language and culture as they viewed our calligraphy. Particularly memorable for them was the painful experience of seiza sitting, which many of them were discovering for the first time. Personally, it was a chance to examine how I have understood the last 5 years of my own training, what Aikido is and means to me and others, and how best to help others see a glimpse of what I think I know. Hopefully, I'll have a chance to do the demo again with next year's students,maybe we can get them rolling!

About the Value of Our Existence

by Leil Koch, Chairman, MKA Endowment Fund

This statement from the fund's establishing document shows what the Maui Ki-Aikido endowment fund stands for.

“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 Endowment Fund is to ensure the physical future of Maui Ki-Aikido training on Maui, including Dojo 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.



St. Anthony High School student visitors watch as Alex Schaefer demonstrates with David Borer.

From a woman's perspective

by Rhyn Davies, Maui Ki-Aikido

When I first moved to Maui, I never expected to find the kind of training I stumbled onto when I walked into the Wailuku dojo. As anyone who has had the chance to train with Suzuki Sensei and Curtis Sensei can attest, Ki Aikido offers a personally meaningful experience to anybody willing to train sincerely. With respect to the obvious contributions of Suzuki Sensei and Curtis Sensei, I don't think they are the whole reason that Maui is such a center of excellence in Ki Aikido. Each member adds to the quality of this dojo, but the Maui dojos are fortunate to have an unusually large number of very high ranking people. At 6th Dan, Lynn Curtis, Joni Jackson, and Mele Stokesberry are among the highest ranking martial artists in the country. They are certainly some of the highest ranking women in Ki-Aikido in the US, perhaps in the whole world, and yet they still show joy and interest in practicing even the most basic aspects of Aikido. Mele, Joni and Lynn kindly agreed to answer some questions about their training, their views on Aikido and their experiences as women in martial arts, and they offered a few words of wisdom to train by.



L-R: Mele Stokesberry, Lynn Curtis and Joni Jackson.

What interested you in Aikido originally?

Mele and Lynn each came and watched a class and were impressed by the Ki principles. Like so many people, they had been seeking "something" in their lives and found the idea of non-physical power intriguing.

The authenticity of Aikido attracted Joni, even though she was quite content in her life. A friend invited her to watch a class, and when she saw Suzuki Sensei teaching she just thought, "This guy makes sense." She wasn't seeking anything in particular, but when she saw Aikido principles in action, she couldn't not come back for more.

What actually got you to step on the mat and start training?

All three women said that encouragement from others made the difference. All of them started when there were more men training than women, and all wondered if the Aikido classes were really for them. They initially intended to focus on the Ki classes, but each was encouraged by other students to try the arts and found them to be both fun and an important part of understanding Aikido.

How do you think Aikido has changed since you started?

All reported feeling like the classes were more physically demanding in the past, though they allow that both advancing rank and age may have cut down on the amount of physical strength they try to use in the training. They feel that Curtis Sensei maintains the strong kiai of the dojo that Suzuki Sensei established, even though his teaching methods are necessarily different, and they feel lucky to have teachers that are committed to transmitting the central teachings of Aikido.

What kinds of changes have you seen in your life or your way of living life since you started training Aikido?

All three women said that over the years of training they have made an effort to practice the principles during the challenges of their daily lives. As a public school teacher, Mele became more calm and patient with her students; Lynn uses her Aikido training to maintain her focus on service; Joni tries to view everything that comes her way as a chance to train and go deeper into her understanding and awareness of the principles of Aikido.

What advice would you give someone just starting out?

Joni- "Nothing generic, because it depends on the person and what their situation is. If someone wants advice

continues on page 5

Woman's perspective . . . continued from page 4

from me, I try to focus on them and their concerns.”

Mele- “Keep coming. You don’t realize what you’re going to learn or how it will affect your life. And the fact is, whatever your best intentions may be, you won’t keep up with them if you don’t keep coming and training.”

Lynn- “What Suzuki Sensei said to me, “Train hard!””

What advice would you have for people who are just getting into yudansha ranks about training at that new level, or regarding new expectations and responsibilities?

Lynn- “Shodan is just the foot of the mountain.”

Mele- “There is an expectation that yudansha will teach. At this level it’s an obligation to the dojo and to fellow students, but it’s also the best way to further your own training. If teaching isn’t possible, then find some way of contributing that expands your awareness and understanding of the deeper lessons of Aikido. However you do it, remember that you’re never finished contributing.”

Joni- “Not everybody feels this way, of course, but many people see a black belt as a goal. You get it and you’ve achieved something and you can stop now. But it’s really more like you’ve got the basics and now your training can start. It can’t be said enough that your training is your responsibility and if you don’t do the work, nothing will ever change for you.”

What sorts of things do you like best or find most interesting/enlightening about training with different people?

Mele- “I like training with everyone, but there is a special place in my heart for the teens because I see how much they learn as they advance in classes and train with adults. I love watching them come up through Aikido ranks and make a strong transition from being children to being young men and women.”

Lynn- “It’s always a learning experience to train with others. It’s part of the dojo culture here to work with different people and learn from what they bring up in you, because you always reflect each other.”

Joni- “I really don’t dwell much on the differences in the people I train with in our Dojo. Whether they are male, female, child or adult, the teaching is always basically the same. Perhaps when training in Japan, because of their culture, there were slight differences, but training is training and it doesn’t matter who your partner is.”

What advice would you give women, in particular, about training?

Joni- “Don’t try to be a man. I work with men all the time, and even if you meet them on even ground, don’t try to match them in strength or competitiveness. Realize your own strengths and work with those. You’ll be able to get a lot further by joining and leading than by trying to overpower someone.”

Mele- “One thing I like about Aikido is that men and women take the same training, and no one makes a distinction between them here. We all learn not to rely on pure physicality and to develop our Ki and our awareness. This is good training for life. So, don’t think for a minute that being a woman would limit you in Aikido or any other pursuit. You can reach whatever level of excellence that might exist in personal development, leadership or anything else.”

Lynn- “Keep training and always push out your ki.”

I really appreciate Joni, Lynn and Mele taking the time to share their secrets with us. However, you may note, as I did, that there is no secret in here at all. There’s no magic to training at a very high level. They show up and practice just like the rest of us. Their commitment to service and training shows up in the dojo and in their lives in a thousand tiny ways, and the cumulative effect of years of that is what makes a 6th degree black belt seem so impressive. I hope everyone will take the opportunity to train with them and that watching how they put their principles into action will inspire you in your own training.



Some of the founding yudansha of the Wailuku Aikido club with their assistant instructors, including Lynn Curtis and Joni Jackson, circa 1980: LR front row: Christopher Curtis, T. Watanabe Sensei, Sam Takaki Sensei, Head Instructor Shinichi Suzuki Sensei, Endo Sensei, and Joni Jackson. Back row: Lynn Curtis, Keiso Miyamoto, Richard Matsushima, Minoru Gushiken, Frank Houser, Larry Shishido, Olive Silva, and Nobuo Tengan.

Meet Charles Boyer Sensei, Head Instructor of Lokahi Ki-Aikido

Our featured Hawaii Ki Federation member for the Spring 2009 MANA, Charles Boyer (whom many of us lovingly call “Carlos” from his day job as a Spanish teacher) took over the responsibility of guiding Lokahi Dojo as its head instructor upon the retirement in 2007 of Lokahi’s founder, Clayton Naluai Sensei. We wanted to know what challenges have inspired, helped and also possibly ambushed Boyer Sensei during these first two years of his new responsibility.

MANA: Now that you have been Head Instructor of Lokahi Ki Aikido for two years, what have been some of your most interesting challenges?

Boyer Sensei: First of all, I would say that becoming the Head Instructor of Lokahi is the best thing that has happened in my training. In this position, I have become aware of the awesome responsibility I have. In the beginning I thought being Head Instructor meant simply guiding my students correctly to know what I know. But slowly I am realizing that the responsibility is for my own training and understanding. I thought I trained hard before – going to class 4 times per week, breathing every day, practicing outside of class – on top of what else I was doing in life. This may have been physically demanding, but frankly, there was not much demand on my life. I had the same issues and problems as before I began training. In this sense, my training was quite superficial. What I see now is that the training *is* my life: everything that comes up in my life, everything that causes tension, is my Ki test, and when I see it as such, I see the wonderful opportunities and lessons the Universe gives me for deeper understanding. This is my greatest challenge: to accept this life responsibly. Having said all of that, this is also the greatest gift I could receive.

MANA: And during those same two years, what individuals have been most helpful to you in resolving or overcoming those challenges?

CB: The other instructors at Lokahi have given me an exceptional amount of support, without which Lokahi would not be what it is. Eric Kahalehewa, for example, serves 2 roles on the Lokahi Board (President and Treasurer), while also teaching 2 children’s classes and 2 adult classes. Gloria Faltstrom has trained and taught at Lokahi for 25 years with Naluai Sensei as Head Instructor, and yet she graciously and lovingly accepts my suggestions and supports me unconditionally. Eric St. Georges has stepped into a new role as instructor at Lokahi, and in so doing has taken a major leap forward in his training with Ki Society.

I do not express enough how much support I get from my wife, Celine. People tell me how difficult it is to have a spouse who trains with you ... but I believe I am very blessed to have such steadfast support. It is truly an exercise in selflessness when she accepts the many hours (and dollars) I spend involved with Ki Society, teaching classes, attending seminars, traveling to Japan.

I also have the constant support of Curtis Sensei, Naluai Sensei, Eric Nonaka Sensei and Shaner Sensei (my first Aikido teacher and early member of Lokahi Dojo) in my new position. They have all devoted their energy in helping me to understand more fully the responsibility I mentioned



earlier and to see how all of the challenges I may face are actually lessons for my development.

MANA: How has your relationship with your teacher, Clayton Naluai Sensei, changed and developed since you took over for him upon his retirement?

CB: To be honest, it took an act of selfishness on my part for me to suddenly see how much Naluai Sensei was doing for me. Since then, we have a very close connection, to the point where I will say something in class when he’s not there (for instance, about “trust” or “plus Ki”), and when he returns to the dojo he says to the class the exact same thing. This is quite uncanny, something I’ve never experienced with a person before. And because of this connection, we spend a lot of time talking about living, training and Ki Society issues.

I would also like to share that over the years I’ve watched how Curtis Sensei interacts with Suzuki Sensei – the unconditional attention and care he provides, even if an otomo is doing all the “work.” There is no “slack” (so to speak) in their relationship. And although

Boyer Sensei . . . continued from page 6

I have only been Naluai Sensei's student for a relatively short time, I am extremely grateful to have some superficial understanding of that type of relationship. This understanding then becomes a doorway for all our relationships, meaning that it is possible – crucial, in fact – to relate to everyone with such depth and connection.

MANA: What are your hopes or your vision for HKF and/or for your dojo?

CB: Sometimes it takes a harsh jolt for us to realize that the direction we're following is not the most fruitful for ourselves and for others. We seem to be experiencing such a jolt at a societal, if not a global, level. Now is the time to put aside our differences and work together to, as Tohei Sensei wrote in the Shokushu, help "all things grow and develop."

We have the opportunity right now to share Ki Principles, to practice "Setsudo," and extend ourselves and our organizations beyond what we normally do. Imagine Ki classes not only in the dojo, but also in community centers and neighborhood homes. Picture people doing Oneness Rhythm, Ki Breathing, Kiatsu, and so on, in small or large gatherings in a variety of places. How do we accomplish this? It takes a small group of determined and responsible people with the enthusiasm and will to share what they've experienced. This is what we're doing and what we can build on for the future. This is our responsibility.



Shinichi Suzuki Sensei, founding teacher of Maui Ki-Aikido, turned 92 as of March 22, 2009. A brunch was held in his honor on the patio of the Shunshinkan dojo.

Curtis Sensei, Lynn Curtis and a big gathering of students look on as Suzuki Sensei opens his cards and presents.



A gourmet potluck breakfast, ice cream and cake and a good time were enjoyed by all.

Happy Birthday and many more happy returns of the day, Suzuki Sensei!





Kashiwaya Sensei to teach for HKF in August

Koichi Kashiwaya Sensei, Chief Instructor of the Midland Ki Federation, will be Hawaii Ki Federation's guest teacher at a seminar August 21 through 23 at the Lokahi Ki-Aikido Dojo in Honolulu. Kashiwaya Sensei is based in Seattle but teaches in the many dojos of Midland Ki throughout the United States and also in Canada and Brazil.

Watch the blog <http://curtissensei.com> for more details and a registration form.

An Important Letter To HKF Members

Dear HKF Members,

Last year we set out with what seemed like an ambitious and achievable goal of raising \$25,000 for the HKF Endowment fund to ensure our state-wide organization's ability to continue promoting Ki-Aikido on all the islands in Hawaii into the future. With the economic times, it was a tough endeavor, and while we did not reach our goal, we have raised \$12,335.18, almost reaching the halfway point. I consider this a great success, though it was short of our mark.

Some members gave considerably more, while others were no doubt just trying to make ends meet. We are once again asking our members for a donation. The suggested amount of \$100 should not be a limiting factor. If anyone was not able to afford that, a more modest donation is certainly always welcome.

Our goal still remains to raise an initial \$25,000. Please make your donations to Hawaii Ki Federation. You can give these donations to your head instructor. Please help us continue to spread the teachings of Tohei Sensei.

Thank you

Jeff Baldwin
Fundraising Chair HKF



New Nidans Rhyn Davies, Lillian Paiva and Mike Malkovich with Curtis Sensei at Hanapepe Dojo, HKF Winter Seminar 2008.

Dan promotions in HKF

The following Hawaii Ki-Federation members were tested for dan ranks since our last issue of MANA. During the HKF Winter Seminar at Hanapepe Kaua'i in November 2008, receiving Nidan rank were: **Lillian Paiva**, Head Instructor of Honoka'a Dojo, Big Island, and from Maui Ki-Aikido, **Rhyn Davies** and **Michael Malkovich**.

On Maui in January 2009 at the Shugyo Tassei Kigan Shiki seminar, Maui Ki-Aikido students **Lyman Franco** and **Aaron Villanova** were tested and promoted to Shodan.

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

Letting Go by Christopher Curtis Sensei..... (non-member) \$25____
 (HKF members) \$20____
 (bulk rate to dojos, 5 or more) \$15____

Ki-Aikido on Maui, 3rd edition, by Christopher Curtis Sensei (non-members) \$15____
 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, with rare photos of the founders.

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

Meditation CD with Christopher Curtis Sensei..... (non-member) \$15____
 Breathe and meditate along with an actual Maui Friday night class, professionally recorded. (HKF members) \$10____

Norito CD, as read by Christopher Curtis Sensei.....\$25____

Shokushu (Ki Sayings) CD, as read by Clayton Naluai Sensei.....\$25____

Subtotal of order \$_____

Shipping: USA & Territories Add \$5, or International Add \$11 for each
 1 or 2 books, or up to 4 DVDs or CDs.....\$_____

Total amount enclosed:.....\$_____

Visa or Mastercard Check enclosed payable to Maui Ki-Aikido

Card # _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

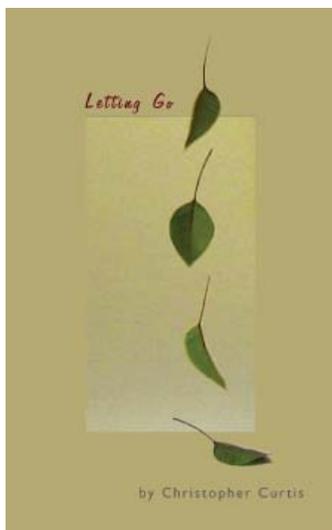
Ship To: _____

email contact: _____

phone/fax: _____

Mail to:
 Maui Ki-Aikido
 P.O. Box 724
 Wailuku, HI 96793

Fax: 808 244-5165
 Email: mauikiaikido@
 gmail.com



ANYTIME

is a great time to give the gift of Letting Go

Here's your opportunity to purchase Curtis Sensei's 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, the sessions on chapters 1 through 3.



At Aikido retreat circa 1980 at Camp Erdman, north shore Oahu, L-R: Christopher Curtis, Toni Dodds, Shinichi Suzuki Sensei, Larry Shishido, David Dodds, John Sutherland, and Kenny Ewing.

Hawai'i Ki Federation
c/o Maui Ki-Aikido
P.O. Box 724
Wailuku, HI 96793