



Mana

The newsletter of Hawai'i Ki Federation

Fall 2011

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Master Koichi Tohei at the banquet in Wailea, Maui, for the seminar he taught in 1993.



A young Koichi Tohei Sensei arriving on Maui for the first time in 1953.

The passing of Tohei Sensei

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

Our great teacher, Master Koichi Tohei, passed away this past spring, May 19, 2011. He was 91 years old. At this time, I was traveling and teaching in Western Europe. Since Tohei Sensei's passing occurred just two days prior to the spring seminar in Helmond, we were able to dedicate that seminar to his memory. Of course, I am sure that many similar gestures occurred throughout the world on or around this date, all being sincere efforts to honor the single most influential teacher in spreading Aikido throughout the world outside of Japan.

Then on July 17, 2011, many of the world students of Shinshin Toitsu Aikido and Shinshin Toitsudo gathered at the Tsukiji Hongan-ji Temple in Tokyo, Japan for the Farewell Reception of Koichi Tohei Sensei. Attended by over one thousand of Tohei Sensei's students and followers, the ceremonies were formal and deeply moving. Each participant was given a beautiful long stem carnation bloom to present, providing each of us with an opportunity to offer a moment of personal respect and gratitude to our teacher.

Because of time and financial constraints, relatively few from outside of Japan were fortunate enough to be able to attend these ceremonies. I am very grateful to the members of Hawai'i Ki Federation for kindly providing the financial assistance to allow me and Jeff Baldwin, as my otomo, to attend. The other Hawai'i Ki Federation member attending was Ms. Lynn Shikatani Curtis.

When I sent my personal condolences, and those of all the HKF membership, to Shinichi Tohei Sensei, his response was very simple, "We will continue with Plus Ki." Then, when we all saw him again in Las Vegas in August, for the National Chief Instructor Seminar, his renewed vigorous commitment was obvious to all who attended. Considering that he had so recently lost his beloved father and teacher, I was very inspired to see his level of enthusiasm and Plus Ki. In my opinion, Shinichi Tohei Sensei is setting the perfect example as to how best to honor Koichi Tohei Sensei's lifetime of sacrifice and generosity to us all. Simply put, we honor our teacher best through our own individual devotion to practice.

The middle of summer in the desert

by Joni Jackson

The average temperature was 108 degrees Fahrenheit. It was rather like stepping into a sauna when you went outside to walk from the dormitory to the gymnasium on the University of Nevada campus in Las Vegas where we all were staying.

On the first day, Thursday, the morning session had around 40 participants; by the afternoon the number of participants had doubled. On Friday morning there were 150 people on the mat to practice and learn from Shinichi Tohei Sensei at this year's National Chief Instructors Seminar.

The theme of the seminar was simple and basic: Keep One Point. It's a term many of us have heard for many years, and yet the meaning grows and deepens as our practice evolves.

Shinichi Sensei began the seminar reviewing the importance of posture in maintaining One Point. From there much of the seminar was focused on how to test one's partner. He emphasized over and over that a Ki test is designed to help a student know the state of his own mind by discovering how the physical body reacts. Often an instructor will mistakenly apply unnecessary pressure during a Ki test, especially if a person appears physically strong, but this does not help the student to see the condition of his mind.

The fundamental principal of Ki testing is to first be in One Point. Then with the clear intention of wanting to help your partner, very lightly place your hand on your partner's chest and extend your arm. If she is calm and stable, she will not move; if she is stiff and resistant, she will move easily. A Ki test is not designed to see if one individual can push another individual over. It is designed to create a feeling of well-being and naturalness for both participants and in this state reveal the true condition of the student's body and mind. This is an important point which Shinichi Sensei went over many times with many different examples during the four-day seminar.

In the afternoons we practiced Aikido arts: Katatedori, Yokomenuchi, Ushirodori. The emphasis here was on not colliding, following the "River of Ki," as Shinichi Sensei liked to call it, not stopping and starting but moving as one with the partner from the beginning, joining with the uke's rhythm and continuing on together as one. Being in a seminar with 150 participants and each individual with his own style and rhythm moving in a continuous line offered a perfect opportunity to practice constantly being in One Point and moving with a mind of non-dissension.

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Pietro Maida Sensei, NCIS host/organizer, chats with Christopher Curtis Sensei.



Byron Nakamura, Masakatsu Head Instructor, O'ahu, and Joni Jackson of Maui practice Ki testing.

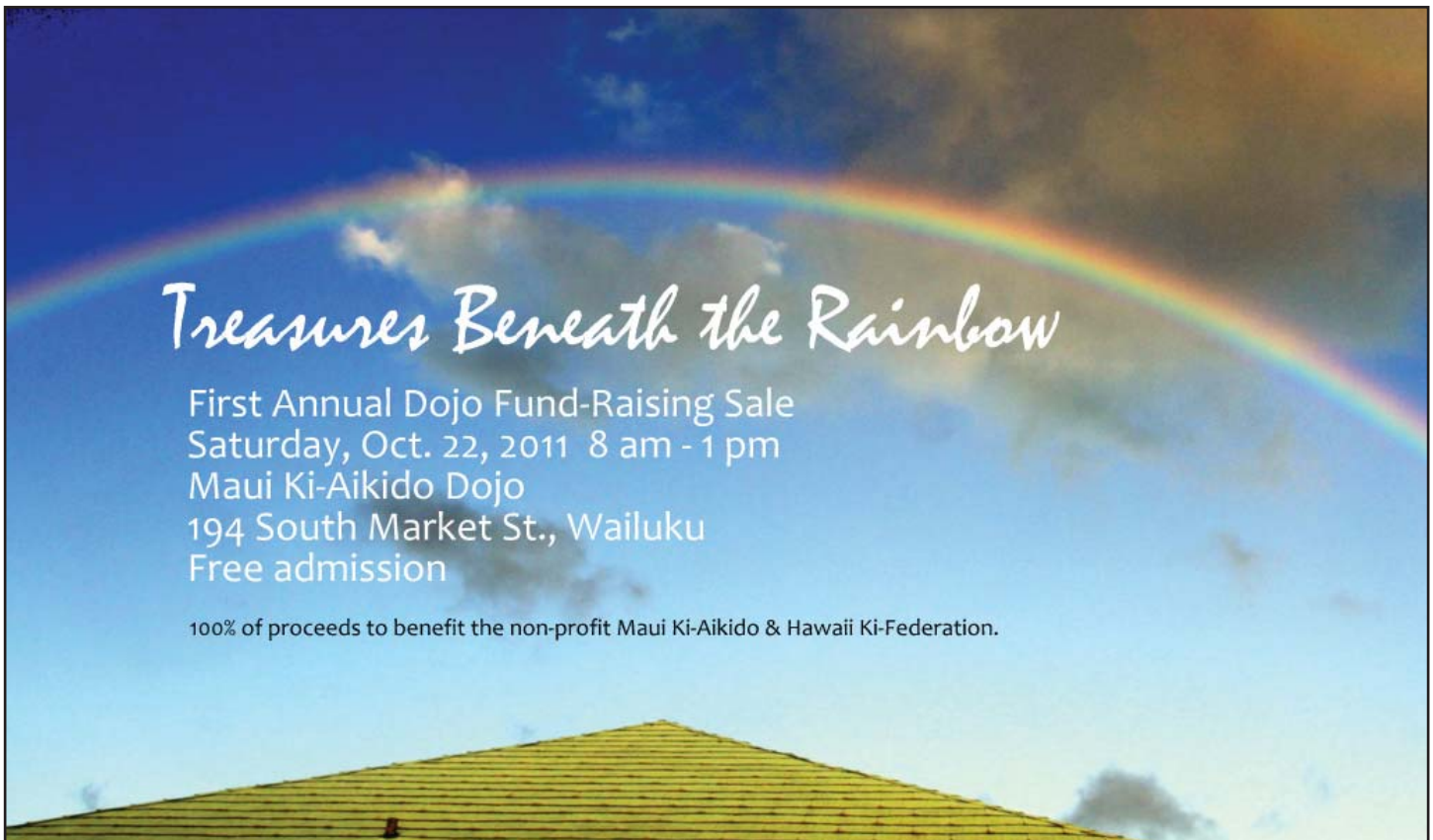


Sayaka Reasoner of Maui Ki-Aikido receives help from Shinichi Tohei Sensei.

Middle of Summer . . . continued from page 3

The seminar was also dedicated to the remembrance of Koichi Tohei Sensei. On Friday evening in the dormitory's downstairs lounge continuous films of old seminars with Tohei Sensei were shown until midnight. It was wonderful to watch his fluidity of movement. They brought back many fond memories. On Saturday evening we had an auction. The larger and more valuable items were sold by live auction led by Eric Nonaka Sensei, and a silent auction for many smaller items was organized by Lynn Curtis Sensei. Everyone had a good time and more than \$4000.00 was raised for the Japan relief fund organized to help Headquarters repair earthquake damage.

This was an in-depth seminar focusing on the fundamental aspects of Aikido and Ki testing. Pietro Maida Sensei and his wife Catherine Dea did a wonderful job hosting and organizing the whole event. It was truly a joy to practice with Shinichi Tohei Sensei and his lovely wife Sachiko-san. I feel extremely grateful that this opportunity was made available to so many of us. Many traveled very far to be there, and it was a privilege to train with each and every one.



Treasures Beneath the Rainbow

First Annual Dojo Fund-Raising Sale
Saturday, Oct. 22, 2011 8 am - 1 pm
Maui Ki-Aikido Dojo
194 South Market St., Wailuku
Free admission

100% of proceeds to benefit the non-profit Maui Ki-Aikido & Hawaii Ki-Federation.

Saturday, October 22, is the date you can find a treasure at Maui Ki-Aikido's **Treasures Beneath the Rainbow yard sale** at the Shunshinkan Dojo, 194 South Market in Wailuku. There will be a wide variety of used but well-cared-for items, including treasured objects of value donated by members and long-time friends.

Not on Maui? Or, want a preview? You can see lots of the high quality items we'll have on October 22 by going to mauiaikido.com and clicking (bottom, left side) **Special Event: First annual Maui Treasure Sale, continuously updated with new items**. Some of the items will be offered for silent auction bidding, including exclusive men's wear from Curtis Sensei's closet, a Hat by Emi, and other treasures. Purchases can be made via our PayPal account on the website or at the dojo.

Donations of items for sale will be accepted up to October 17 and may be dropped off at the dojo or can be picked up by our member volunteers on Maui by calling 244-5165 or 283-9226. The benefit event is a fund-raiser for the two non-profits Maui Ki-Aikido and the Hawai'i Ki Federation.

Igor Ostroumov, first *deshi* at Maui Ki-Aikido

The following interview was conducted on July 6, 2011, at the end of the month that Igor Ostroumov Sensei, Chief Instructor of the Western Russia Ki Society, spent living on Maui and serving as an otomo and deshi at the Shunshinkan Dojo. He was the first person to take advantage of the new deshi program offered by Maui Ki-Aikido.

Mana: What prompted your decision to come here to participate in the deshi program?

Igor Ostroumov: I met Christopher Curtis Sensei 12 years ago. I knew Curtis Sensei had been the student of Suzuki Sensei in the first and oldest dojo in America. Of course I have a deep connection with Curtis Sensei; he's a great teacher and one of the biggest reasons why I'm here.

I experienced many discussions with Curtis Sensei between classes and received answers about differences.

I started with Aikikai for 9 years and went to many seminars with top ranking teachers. Then I started Ki-Aikido with seminars, videos, letters with both Curtis Sensei and (David) Shaner Sensei. My experience was in seminars, not regular training. It was important for me to experience the quite different thing of regular study.

I also wanted to experience daily life in a 60-year-old dojo that's not in Japan. Staying and training on Maui for a month was a very special opportunity. Before, I had only attended seminars when away from Russia, and I wanted to experience regular training in a traditional dojo. I found that people here (in Hawaii) have adapted Ki-Aikido for American ways of thinking. This is different from Japanese culture.

Mana: You say you find it interesting to see how we have developed and how we resolve problems, and you've observed our etiquette in the dojo and in daily life.

I.O.: Yes, you adopted Ki-Aikido and changed it for American thinking. Interesting. It's inspirational for me. I don't judge, compare. I receive my impressions and save it in my soul - good for my development. Interestingly, the Oriental style of 60 years ago has changed in America, and it's not the Japan way of thinking anymore.

Mana: What does a deshi do? What has your daily routine been like here at the Shunshinkan Dojo?

I.O.: My program is 4-part:

1. Train alone
2. Open, clean, prepare the dojo for classes, close up the dojo at the end of training.
3. Attend every class and even a meeting of the board.
4. Serve as otomo to Curtis Sensei.

There wasn't much free time. I was very busy, arriving at the dojo by 5:30 am (4:30 am on Sunday) and opening the building, doing Ki breathing. Then, Aikido and weapons exercises and training until my 9:30 coffee break; then dojo cleaning until 11am, Aikido, hitori waza and ukemi practice, until noon brought rest time. Starting again at 4 pm I prepared the dojo for classes, talked with Curtis Sensei and attended each class until time to close the dojo at 9:30 pm.

Mana: Where did you sleep, when you had some time to do that?

I.O.: I stayed at the North Shore Hostel in Wailuku. I could easily walk to the dojo. They were very helpful and took care of me well. I only got to go swimming 3 times, (not ideal for a trip to Hawaii!) but I did get to see a rodeo and attend a luau and an American Fourth of July party.

Mana: As a Chief Instructor yourself, how has the experience of putting yourself into the position of an otomo been for you? What are some things you've been learning during this experience?

I.O.: I received training in otomo which I didn't have much experience with before. Sensei gave me a lot of feedback, and many students also helped me. It was a deep experience that will be developing within me and that I will be thinking about. I follow the spirit of the book Letting Go. While I'm here I'm just a student. It's not a problem. Like parent and son, it's simple to change. I'm not stuck in my rank.

Mana: Do you have any suggestions for our deshi program?

I.O.: I think with my *shugyo* study I can train alone, but it's not for everybody. Not everybody would be ready. Maui could receive a beginner-level person as a deshi, but that person might need to have more oversight and management, especially for the training alone. It would be good to assign a special advisor to support a deshi step by step.

Mana: Do you have any impressions of Maui and American culture you'd like to share?

I.O.: Some stereotypes about United States people were broken. People here are kind, warm and want to help me. In Hawaii, you hug. Not all just shake hands. People here in this dojo, your relations (with each other) are smart, clear and mature. I like it.

Mana's note: This fall Curtis Sensei will be returning to St. Petersburg as the guest instructor of a seminar at Ostroumov Sensei's dojo.

Practicing the “Seven arts of Aikido” on the island of Kaua‘i

For three days in August, Aikido teachers and students from the islands of Hawai‘i, Maui and O‘ahu gathered at the Hanapepe, Kaua‘i, dojo to enjoy the teaching of guest instructor Clarence Chinn Sensei, Chief Instructor of the Southern California Ki Society, hosted by Hanapepe Head Instructor Dean Mayer Sensei.

Chinn Sensei’s theme for the seminar was the “Seven arts of Aikido,” which are: ikkyo, nikkyo, sankyo, yonkyo, kokyunage, shihonage, and kote-oroshi. Chinn Sensei led us to vigorously practice many arts that include these locks and basic throws. His white hair and gentle grandfatherly appearance belies his youthful energy and graceful, impeccable movement. With ever a twinkle in his blue eyes, Sensei regaled us with stories of his family in China and Hawai‘i and his interesting life experiences, as he illustrated and explained the basics taught by Shinichi Tohei Sensei at the National Chief Instructors’ Seminar in Las Vegas earlier in August.

Thank you, Sensei, for a good seminar. All in HKF look forward to the next time we can train with Clarence Chinn Sensei.



David Kaneshiro of Hilo Ki Aikido is uke as Chinn Sensei demonstrates a point at the Kaua‘i seminar. Looking on are (left to right) Eric Nonaka Sensei and Christopher Curtis Sensei.

HKF dan and den promotions

Since our last issue of MANA in Spring 2011, the members of Hawai‘i Ki Federation who have taken Ki or Dan tests and been promoted are:

- Jay Morita of Central YMCA Dojo (Linda Sasaki) – Shodan May 22, 2011,
- Michael Matsui, Hilo Dojo, Shoden and Nidan Feb. 19, 2011
- David Kaneshiro, Hilo Dojo, Chuden Feb. 19, 2011
- Robert Kaneshiro, Hilo Dojo, Shoden and Sandan, Feb. 19, 2011
- Harry Daguman, Lokahi Dojo, Jokyu and Shodan, March 20, 2011
- Patrick Sullivan, Masakatsu Dojo, Jokyu, May 22, 2011
- Don Kamoku, Masakatsu Dojo, Jokyu, May 22, 2011

Three Generations on the mat in Las Vegas

by Reid Nonaka

The 2011 National Chief Instructor Seminar held in Las Vegas, Nevada, was the first national seminar I have attended. I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the seminar with my grandfather, Takashi Nonaka Sensei, and my father, Eric Nonaka Sensei.

Grandpa was apprehensive about attending the seminar because of the long flight and all the walking. When he was invited by Pietro Maeda Sensei to attend this seminar, he thought at first, he wasn’t going, but after reconsidering, he decided to attend. This is when I also made my decision to attend. It isn’t often I get to train with both my father and grandfather these days. To accommodate the long walks, the wonderful staff from Northern California Ki made arrangements with UNLV

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to use a golf cart for Dad to chauffeur Grandpa from location to location.

As I watched Grandpa at the seminar, I could see that he was happy and that he knew that he had made a good decision. This made Dad and me very happy. Grandpa was able to see Shinichi Sensei teach Ki Principles. He got a chance to catch up with old friends that he hadn't seen in years. He also got the opportunity to "talk-story" with Sachiko-san. And lastly, he was able to do what he loves; helping others understand the teachings of Tohei Sensei.

I also made it a point to also watch my father during the seminar. Growing up, I was able to see Dad's progression in Ki Society. I can see how living his life with plus Ki has positively affected his life. I've been with him at many seminars, but never on a national level. I was very impressed with the way people responded to him. From what I could see, people found him to be easily approachable, and always willing to help.

My favorite part of the seminar was mealtime. Not only because the food was delicious, but also because I got to eat all my meals with my family. Grandpa was elated when he found out about the never-ending chocolate milk, daily weenies, and endless desserts! The only thing missing was the soft rice. Mealtime was a good chance for us to debrief over the day's sessions, and for Grandpa to give me a few pointers. It also provided an opportunity for us to converse with some old and new friends.

As for me, I can see what kind of Aikido student I must strive to be. Being a third generation Aikido student, I have a lot to live up to. Expectations are high, but I must not let that get in the way of my true purpose for training. I feel proud to carry on the legacy of Aikido in the Nonaka family. I can only hope that I can make a significant impact on the next generation by instilling them with plus-Ki principles.

My overall experience was wonderful. I learned a lot at this seminar, not only on the mat, but also during the fellowship sessions after training. I learned that training does not only take place in the dojo, but also in everyday conversations and experiences. I look forward to many more opportunities like this, and I'm excited for the next national seminar.



(Front) Shinichi Tohei Sensei and Mrs. Sachiko Tohei; (Back) Reid Nonaka, Takashi Nonaka Sensei, Eric Nonaka Sensei.



Jeff Baldwin (Maui) and Charles Boyer, Head Instructor, Lokahi (O'ahu) practice the meaning behind Jo 1.



Curtis Sensei leads Question and Answer session on Maui during the Weapons Intensive.

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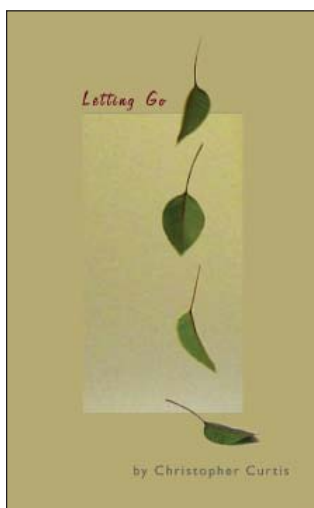
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Anytime is a great time to give the gift of *Letting Go*, soon to be an e-book!

Do you have a copy of Curtis Sensei's latest book? If you do, consider the value of sharing this teaching with your friends and loved ones.

Curtis Sensei has completed a two-year series of discussion classes at Maui Ki-Aikido, each on one chapter of the book. This give-and-take between Sensei and the students makes a wonderful adjunct to studying the book. These talks and Sensei's current series of discussions on the 4 Basic Principles can be downloaded and listened to or read on our blog at <http://curtissensei.com>.