



# Mana

The newsletter of Hawai'i Ki Federation

Spring 2013

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*Christopher Curtis Sensei*

## 60 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

*by Christopher Curtis - Chief Instructor HKF*

In 1953, a young and charismatic Aikido teacher from Japan, named Koichi Tohei, first arrived on Hawaiian shores, bringing an exciting and dynamic teaching to the fertile hearts and minds of potential Hawai'i students. At that time, Shinichi Suzuki Sensei, our beloved teacher on Maui, met Tohei Sensei for the first time. During that very first visit to Maui, after meeting Suzuki Sensei and introducing him to the art of Aikido, Tohei Sensei declared Suzuki Sensei "Chief Instructor of Maui." Since then, for the past 60 years, thousands of individuals here in Hawai'i have seen dramatic and positive changes in their lives, through this training. Because of these humble yet inspiring Hawaiian beginnings, we here in the Islands have always felt an especially deep relationship with Koichi Tohei Sensei.

I remember when, just shortly after I began training here on Maui, in 1974, I heard that a son had been born to Tohei Sensei and Mrs. Tohei named "Shinichi." A few years later, when the 8 year old Shinichi Tohei visited Hawai'i with his father and mother, my job was to baby-sit him while the Chief Instructors met and celebrated after training. And now, so many years later, that son, Shinichi Tohei Sensei, is the world wide teacher and President of Ki Society.

We here in Hawai'i want to express our gratitude to our founder, Koichi Tohei Sensei, to Shinichi Tohei Sensei, and to all of our teachers over the past 60 years. This year, at our 60 Year Anniversary Seminar on Oahu, November 15, 16, and 17, 2013, we will be especially honoring those old time teachers of ours here in Hawai'i who are still with us, and who have given so much of their lives to Hawaii Ki-Aikido, Takashi Nonaka Sensei from Hilo, Clayton Naluai Sensei and Seichi Tabata Sensei from Oahu, and Richard Kuboyama Sensei from Kauai.

Finally, we want to extend our gratitude to all of you who have trained through the years, and many of whom will make up the future of Ki-Aikido in Hawai'i, well into this new century.

*A young, lei-draped Koichi Tohei Sensei departs Maui after one of his teaching visits, c. 1955.*



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



*Koichi Kashiwaya Sensei*

### Koichi Kashiwaya Sensei to teach on Maui

Koichi Kashiwaya Sensei, Hachidan, Okuden and Ki Lecturer, will teach the 2013 Guest Instructor Seminar at Maui's Shunshinkan Dojo August 9 through 11. Kashiwaya Sensei is the World Ki Society's Advisor to the United States and the Chief Instructor of the Midland Ki Federation. He travels extensively throughout the United States, South America, Australia and Canada to teach Aikido and Ki development.

Maui Ki-Aikido invites all interested students and instructors to join us in training with this inspiring and dynamic teacher. Please see our website, [www.mauiaikido.com](http://www.mauiaikido.com) for registration information and suggestions for accommodations near the dojo.



*(Left) Tracy Reasoner learns to treat an injury at Maui Ki-Aikido's February 9 CPR and First Aid workshop for instructors, taught by Maui County Life Guard and Certified CPR/First Aid trainer Patrick DaSilva, shown (right) adjusting an example sling on Bob Lightbourn.*



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### HKF dan and den promotions

Godan rank was announced as of January 1, 2013, for Hawai'i Ki Federation President Charles Boyer, Head Instructor of Lokahi Ki Aikido in Honolulu, and Maui Ki-Aikido instructor and HKF Treasurer Tracy Reasoner following their Joden Ki testing in November, 2012.

On February 17, Gloria Falstrom was tested and received Nidan and Shoden rank. Steven Yim passed Jokyu and Shodan. Both are students at Lokahi Ki Aikido in Honolulu.



*Gloria Falstrom and Steven Yim of Lokahi Ki Aikido with Curtis Sensei after their tests February 17.*



*Flanking Curtis Sensei are instructors promoted to Godan, (L-R) Tracy Reasoner and Charles Boyer.*

## A Europe-Hawai'i connection - The 3-generations of Aikido in the Voogels family of Helmond, Netherlands

In this issue, we extend the reach of the MANA newsletter to our fellow teachers and students in Europe, beginning with this interview by email with Toby Voogels Sensei of the Ki-Aikido School Torii, Netherlands Ki Society, Helmond.

*Mana:* When did your father Ad Voogels begin training Aikido, with whom, and did you begin at the same time? If not, when did you begin?

*TV:* My father started Aikido in 1983 when the school where he played table tennis burned down. After seeing a demonstration he thought that the stretching exercises would keep him in shape. The group in which my dad started was very small, and it was financially unattractive for the teacher, Eugene du Long, to drive to Helmond. So in May of the same year my dad allowed me to come practice with him as well so the club would have more members.

*Mana:* When did your wife Claudia begin training?

*TV:* Claudia started practicing Aikido May 2004. When I first met Claudia she had already been dancing for a couple of years. Being in love, I automatically had to take dancing classes with her too. We both liked it so much that when we got the opportunity we started to teach dancing classes to children together. We enjoyed teaching children, so in 2003 we started to teach Aikido to children. During that period Claudia would just assist me. Later she got so interested in Aikido itself that in 2004 she started practicing.

*Mana:* When did your two boys begin training?

*TV:* Kylian our oldest son started in February 2011 when he became seven years old. Cayden started only recently at the age of six. I guess I now know what my dad felt when I was sitting next to him as a little boy proudly looking up to him.

*Mana:* Were you always in Ki Society under Koichi Tohei Sensei? If not, when did you change over and why?

*TV:* We have always been in Ki-Society. The period in which we started was a period of change. Our teacher had been practicing Aikikai Aikido, and he and a few others had only recently met Yoshigasaki Sensei who lived in Brussels and was teaching for Ki Society in Europe. They were so impressed by the teachings that they joined Ki Society.

*Mana:* Please talk about your impressions of Shinichi Suzuki Sensei when you met him, and then your relationship with your current teacher, Christopher Curtis Sensei.

*TV:* We met Suzuki Sensei and Curtis Sensei during a seminar in June 1992. My dad had just taught a class for our teacher, and we were having tea, when we saw this old man with big glasses watching through the window. Accompanied by our teacher and Curtis Sensei, he came in and sat down to have some tea with us. For us it was very unusual for a teacher to be so open and approachable.



*Toby, Kylian, Cayden and Claudia Voogels of Ki-Aikido School Torii, Netherlands Ki Society, Helmond.*



*Ad Voogels, Chief Instructor, Netherlands Ki Society, Helmond.*

*Europe-Hawai'i connection . . . continued from page 3*

Although we had been practicing for a few years, also with other teachers, we always had the feeling something was missing. But at the end of this seminar we both agreed that we had seen Ki-Aikido for the first time and Suzuki Sensei *was* the teachings himself. It gave a completely new insight into our training.

When Curtis Sensei later returned to again teach a seminar in the Netherlands I felt a strong connection. This teaching was different from what we were used to. Shortly after that Yoshigasaki Sensei decided to leave Ki Society, and because some dojos, including ours, were now without a teacher, Curtis Sensei was invited to teach in Germany. Meeting him there fueled the intense connection I had felt off and on the mat. From that time on Sensei has been teaching a seminar in Europe twice a year. He has greatly influenced my life, for which I am really grateful, and I hope I will be able to train with him for many years to come.

*Mana:* What are the advantages and disadvantages of having so many members of your family training in the same dojo?

*TV:* Sometimes you hear people's partner complain about the fact that they are never home and that they are in the dojo too often. One advantage of having all members of your family training in the same dojo is that there never is an argument about training. We can always go. Furthermore you are spending time together and we all share the same thing, so there's plenty to talk about.

A disadvantage is that everyone brings their relationship on the mat and sometimes boundaries get crossed. The teacher-student relationship gets mixed with the father-son relationship. And husband and wife practicing together is not always easy!

*Mana:* Thank you, Toby Voogels Sensei, for openly sharing your memories and insights with MANA. Aloha to you, your family and all in your dojo from us here in Hawai'i!

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## Washing away the old

Water misogi, or Sen Shin no Gyo, on Maui is held on the first Sunday morning of training in the new year. It starts before dawn when Maui Ki-Aikido students and instructors gather in the dark parking lot of the Shunshinkan Dojo, bundled in sweatsuits against the pre-dawn chilliness of Wailuku. Car pools are quickly formed, and headlights to taillights, a caravan rolls over the five miles to Ma'alaea Beach Park.

On the beach, Curtis Sensei leads a warm-up with Master Tohei's three-minute exercises, then reminds everyone why they are braving the ocean waters as the sun is coming up: this is a ritual we choose to do to wash away everything of the old year and face with open hearts the fresh, new start of the new year.

Ki barai is pronounced by Sensei at the water's edge, and all hold hands in a circle as, giving great loud Kiais, they submerge three times.

Refreshed aikidoka then quickly rinse, dress and head back to the dojo for Soku Shin no Gyo, the misogi practice done almost every Sunday morning.

Following misogi, everyone is invited to the Curtis residence for a hearty and delicious brunch for a pleasant finale to this annual new year's ritual.



*On the beach at dawn, Maalaea, Maui*



*Into the water with a big KIAI.*

# Over the Past 60 Years . . .



## Meet Auntie Olive Silva, Maui's 60th Year Grand Marshal

The year 2013 is the 60th year anniversary of Aikido in Hawai'i, and as such Maui Ki-Aikido is celebrating this occasion here on our island by naming our longest-training sensei, Olive Silva, as the Grand Marshal of Maui's celebrations. "Auntie Olive," 90, started training 59 years ago and still actively participates in our dojo's classes, board meetings and events.

Silva Sensei's honor was announced at Maui Ki-Aikido's Shinnen Kai annual meeting and dinner on February 9 when she was celebrated with lei and a certificate naming her our Grand Marshal.

Olive Silva began training in Aikido almost as early as anyone in Hawai'i. In 1953 Koichi Tohei Sensei from Japan had come through all the Hawaiian islands to teach and establish dojos. Silva was working as summer recreation director in Hali'imaile, Maui, and saw a flyer for a self-defense class in 1954. As a tough, self-described "tom boy lady," she signed up and went to Wailuku to meet the new Maui Aikido teacher, Shinichi Suzuki Sensei, and the newly formed Aikido group training at the Wailuku Gymnasium.

Over the years, as she and her husband Paul raised six children, Olive says her Aikido training helped her in many ways. She taught physical education at several Maui schools, worked for the Red Cross, for a bank, and was a house mother in Honolulu at the school for the hearing impaired. She trained with Tohei Sensei and Suzuki Sensei, and along with other early Maui Aikido students, practiced in branch dojos that were established in communities all over the island. She taught Aikido to many, many Maui children for years at the Hali'imaile, Paia and Ha'iku gyms with "Sheriff" Horiuchi Sensei, starting when they were ikkyu (brown belt) students.

While in her eighties she was still regularly assisting the teachers of the Monday, Tuesday and Thursday youth classes. Now 90 years of age, when she is able she comes to Ki and meditation class and sometimes stays for Aikido, giving valuable tips to fellow students.

In 2004 Olive was awarded the Ki Society's 50-years-of-training plaque by Tohei Sensei. It reads: "Let your Ki flow like a stream and never let it stop. Getting stuck on something, whether good or bad, is never good. The past does not return. Only human beings cling to the past. The Universe never ceases."

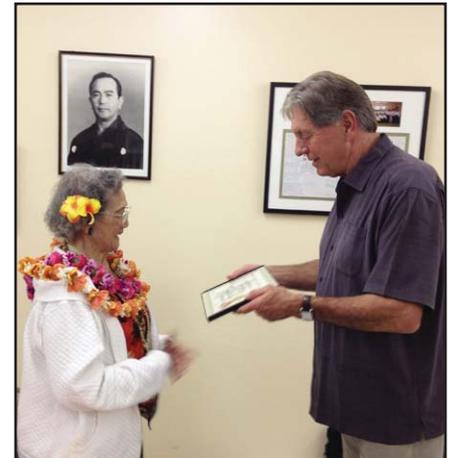
Silva Sensei says that Master Koichi Tohei was a model and an inspiration for her. She attributes her long life and the energy and motivation to keep practicing Aikido to his core Ki teachings which lead to coordination of mind and body with the aim of oneness with the Universe.

Olive Silva is also a well-known and highly skilled kupuna (elder) lei maker and was honored by Maui's mayor and County Council in 2005 with a proclamation declaring September 16 of that year Auntie Olive Silva Day.

In addition to the Maui celebration, there will be larger and more elaborate commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Aikido in all of Hawai'i during the Hawai'i Ki Federation's celebratory Winter Seminar at Lokahi Ki Aikido in Honolulu November 15 through 17. (See page 1.)



Auntie Olive Silva is named the Grand Marshal of Maui's 60th year celebrations.



Curtis Sensei awards the certificate at Maui Ki-Aikido's Shinen Kai dinner.



Olive Silva and Christopher Curtis Sensei

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Purchase and download *Letting Go*, and *Ki-Aikido on Maui* for \$9.99 each in the following formats: Kindle (Amazon); Lulu (Viewable on any device from Lulu); iBook (iTunes Store); and Nook (Barnes & Noble).

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

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