



# Mana

The newsletter of Hawai'i Ki Federation

Fall 2017

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## Chief Instructor's Message

*by Christopher Curtis, HKF*

When we honor those who came before us, we honor those who share our training now, and we even honor our own personal training experience as well.

Recently members of Hawai'i Ki Federation, Eastern Ki Federation, Ki societies in Western Europe, Russia, the Arizona Ki Society, as well as Australian and Tahitian Ki societies all gathered together to honor Clarence Chinn Sensei, the Chief Instructor of the Southern California Ki Society. This was to be Chinn Sensei's last visit to the Ki Society Headquarters in Tochigi, Japan, and so this Combined Camp was dedicated to celebrating his many years of sacrifice and devotion to the teachings of Koichi Tohei Sensei, as well as his great friendship and support for so very many Ki Society members throughout these years.

At this Combined Camp, we had four days of inspiring teaching by Shinichi Tohei Sensei, as well as by his student, Tomonori Kobori Sensei. Chinn Sensei was on the mat throughout, looking and acting like a much

*Continues on page 2*



*Clarence Chinn Sensei and David Kaneshiro*

## Good memories of training with Clarence Chinn Sensei

*David Kaneshiro Sensei, now Head Instructor of the Hilo Dojo on the Big Island of Hawai'i, talks with MANA about his years of training under Clarence Chinn Sensei, Chief Instructor of the Southern California Ki Society, who was recently honored at the SCKS Combined Camp in Japan. David, originally from Hawai'i, always attended Suzuki Sensei and Curtis Sensei's seminars in Los Angeles, taking uke from Chinn Sensei, Suzuki Sensei and Curtis Sensei for many years, and thus returned with his family to live on the Big Island well-known to Curtis Sensei and HKF.*

*Mana:* Please tell us something about the circumstances of your being in California and training with Chinn Sensei. How long did you train there? Did you test for rank there?

*David Kaneshiro:* I had the good fortune to live and work in the Los Angeles area from 1987-1991 and from 2002-2007 and to train with Chinn Sensei and the members of the Southern California Ki Society during that

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*Chief Instructor's Message . . . continued from page 1*

younger version of himself! On Saturday night we held a special gathering to honor Chinn Sensei, at which the HKF contingency offered him a congratulatory Hawaiian kukui nut lei (with discussion of relevance provided by HKF student, David Hewahewa), as well as a photo of his last seminar on Maui mounted on white board, with well-wishing comments from everyone in Hawai'i plus all those present at the Camp. It was a rousing evening, complete with a Ki-filled "Compail" offered to Chinn Sensei by EKF Chief Instructor David Shaner Sensei.

If you were unable to attend this Ki Society Headquarters event this year, we hope you will be able to join us for this very highest level of training next year. The dates for the next HKF/Western Europe Combined Camp have been reserved: Monday, October 29 through Friday, November 2, 2018.

All are welcome to join with us, and we look forward to seeing you there. ☺

*Good Memories . . . continued from page 1*



*Yudansha of Southern California Ki Society with Suzuki Sensei circa 1990. Chinn Sensei is at lower right. David Kaneshiro is at upper right. Standing next to David is Ed Grover of Visa card fame ("Visa, it's everywhere you want to be."). Masao Shoji Sensei, lower left, was a member of Maui Dojo many years ago.*

9th Hawaiian Island. Shaner Sensei visited too and he's like an honorary Hawai'i local.

Chinn Sensei created many opportunities for us to train. The most memorable was attending World Camp in 2004 and participating under his guidance in taigi competition with his wife, Eileen-san. That was my first visit to Ki no Sato.

*Mana:* What was it like for you to go to Japan on this training camp trip where everyone, from Australia to Tahiti to Europe to U.S. to HKF, came with the purpose of honoring Chinn Sensei?

*DK:* It was really great to be able to train with Chinn Sensei again and to spend time catching up. I'm very happy to have had the opportunity to be there with him, the many members from Southern California and Hawai'i as well as from around the world. The years have gone by so quickly, but Chinn Sensei has had a profound effect on my life, so I am glad we could have such a wonderful camp and gathering with him. ☺

time. I began my training in Hilo and was nidan when I joined the Torrance Dojo in 1987. In 1990, Chinn Sensei tested me for sandan. In 2007, he recommended me for promotion to yondan.

*Mana:* What do you remember most about those years training with Chinn Sensei?

*DK:* Chinn Sensei's techniques were impeccable and had a very big feel to them. He always had good stories to tell with many lessons to go with them. We loved his classes and always trained hard. A whole bunch of us would hang out and talk with him in the parking lot for quite a while after practice. Between his experiences as an engineer, MBA, and manager along with his Zen training and Ki-Aikido training he had so much to offer!

Back in the 80s we had visiting instructors like Suzuki Sensei, Nonaka Sensei, and Eto Sensei, so we had a nice Hawai'i connection. In the 21st Century, we had Curtis Sensei visit, and we even saw Naluai Sensei from time to time. As far as I was concerned, Los Angeles was like the

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



In May, Curtis Sensei taught seminars in Helmond, Holland, Stuttgart, Germany and Valencia, Spain. He was accompanied by Lynn Curtis, who also taught children's classes in Valencia, as well as Charles Boyer, Bob Lightbourn and Fincher Sterling from Maui Ki-Aikido..

### HKF Dan and den testing

Four HKF members received dan promotions since our last issue. Hilo's Mike Matsui took his Sandan test and Maui's Ilima Loomis and Michael Dour took Nidan tests at the HKF Summer Seminar, Lokahi Dojo, on Sunday, June 25, 2017. David Hewahewa tested for Nidan on Maui in July. Sayaka K. Reasoner received her Chuden test of Ki on Maui November 17. ∞



Eastern Ki Federation Summer Seminar with HKF's Eric Nonaka Sensei as instructor, held July 22, 23, 2017

### Annual STKS Seminar in Honolulu March 2, 3, 4

The annual HKF Shugyo Tassei Kigan Shiki Seminar, to be taught by Christopher Curtis Sensei and including Omiki ceremony for the new year, will be held at Lokahi Dojo in Honolulu Friday through Sunday, March 2 through 4 with an HKF board meeting at noon Friday. Look for registration forms soon on the mauiakikido.com website. ∞

## Three from Maui Ki-Aikido awarded free trip to Japan training camp

In October, three Maui Ki-Aikido assistant instructors, Michael Dour, David Hewahewa and Ilima Loomis, received scholarships to attend the Southern California Ki Society Combined Camp honoring Chinn Sensei at Ki Society headquarters in Japan. All three are Nidans, recently having received promotion this past June and July. David was awarded the annual HKF scholarship to train in Japan, a grant that circulates between all dojos in Hawai'i Ki Federation. Ilima and Michael had the honor of being the first ever to be sent to Japan on proceeds from the earnings of the Maui Ki-Aikido Endowment Fund. It was established in 2006 to insure that our instructors continue to be able to learn directly from Tohei Sensei at Ki Society headquarters and is now matured enough to begin to be drawn upon.

We interviewed Ilima, David and Michael in November. Here is what they shared with us about their experiences.



David Hewahewa, Ilima Loomis, Christopher Curtis Sensei and Michael Dour.

*Mana:* Please share some impressions of just being at the camp in Japan.

*Ilima:* It was immersive. You're living and breathing the training with no distractions of daily life - training, eating and sleeping there for 5 days. This primes you to absorb the teaching.

*David:* Yes, it was all that for me, and I experienced so much more awareness of my one point and the ability to go into it during the camp. But it was physically and mentally challenging and exhausting, too.

*Michael:* I was really impressed by the facility. I didn't expect the dojo and all the grounds to be so big. The ancestral home is the well-spring of what we have here. It's good that the old is still there.

*David:* Yes, I could relate that (the antiquity) to my culture – the pohaku (stone), the taro I saw growing there, all the old things, and even the very modern Tokyo, which showed me that things can be done in the right way. That changed my mind some about progress.

*Mana:* What was something you learned that you feel is especially important to retain and apply to your training?

*Michael:* I've heard "Keep One Point first" many times, but during the 5 days at camp I think I learned it. I internalized it.

*David:* "Calmness in action" – like action returning to immediate calm.

*Ilima:* Yes, Kubori Sensei taught this theme and embodied it. Tohei Sensei returned several times to the concept of "ma," proper space and proper timing, and he taught it in a way I hadn't heard before, and different ways, returning and closing the circle. And it's not just teaching the concept; his clear and effective teaching helps you internalize it. I found it very valuable for personal reasons, a new understanding.

*David:* Also experiencing an intense connection with my partner. And always supporting my partner.

*Mana:* How was it for you training with the people from different parts of US and other countries?

*David:* I enjoyed meeting people from all over the world there and had a realization that we are all experiencing the same needs and feelings. I think I made life-long friendships, if only on Facebook. But I want to go back again. Some participants didn't speak much English, and I found that it didn't matter. While training with someone from Holland, we could simply feel if we were on the same path, with no judgment, and we could correct ourselves and try again without needing words.

*Ilima:* I had that same experience with some of the Russian girls the first year I came to Japan camp, and it seemed to have taught me to talk a lot less during training now. This year I enjoyed connecting with a lot of Shodan and Nidan students who are at about our experience level, on the mat and socializing. I even experienced a limited French conversation in the fudo.

Three From Maui . . . continued from page 4

*Michael:* We are so used to training here at home with just our Aikido “family” that it was a little strange for me but also a very beneficial new experience.

*Mana:* Can you recount a special training moment that you’d like to share?

*Ilima:* There was an optional evening class, and we wondered if we had the energy, but we motivated each other to go, and it turned out to be one of the best experiences. I think that was due to being in pain but really immersing myself and letting go of resistance, training beyond the point of exhaustion. We all supported each other in attending all the classes.

*David:* Although at first I was unsure about how it would be to be called up as uke by the sensei teaching, Tracy (Reasoner) had told me, “Make yourself available.” I was sitting in the front row anyway with all the Maui people, and as soon as I thought that, Kubori Sensei called me up. He really threw me around. It was good.

*Mana:* Anything else you’d like to add about your experiences?

*Ilima:* Speaking for all of us, we are all very grateful for being given this wonderful opportunity. This program of HKF and Maui Ki-Aikido Endowment scholarships is very important, making it possible for instructors and assistant instructors to be able to train at Headquarters in Japan, people who might not otherwise be able to go and have this experience. Our sincere thanks to HKF and Maui Ki-Aikido.

*Comments by Curtis Sensei:* I think this is an excellent discussion, and holds real value, particularly for those who have never experienced HQ.

It is very gratifying to finally hear such positive feedback after asking that these funds be set up so many years ago. At the time, there were a number of others who thought it would be too expensive, and unnecessary. But I insisted that we can’t just rely upon the few who can afford to go. This intense experience of training every day like this must be made available to everyone. ☺



Back row: Shu Loo, Joni Jackson, Lynn Curtis, Linda Sasaki, Sayaka Reasoner, front Cora Godinez and Ilima Loomis at STKS Combined Camp in Japan.



Curtis Sensei (center front) poses with all the members of Hawaii Ki Federation, plus Ki Society members from the mainland USA and from Europe at the Southern California Ki Society Combined Camp in Japan, October 2017.

## Why I Invite Curtis Sensei to Kansas

by G. Andrew LeBar

I met Shinichi Suzuki Sensei for the first time in the spring of 1991 in Seattle, Washington. My teacher Andrew Tsubaki Sensei had been trying to get me to go to Ki-Aikido seminars for a couple of years. I finally overcame my fears/worries and relented, and it was maybe the most important decision of my entire life. Suzuki Sensei and Takashi Nonaka Sensei were teaching a seminar in Seattle, Washington. I had been training for about 2 or 3 years, and I was completely blown away by both men. They showed, demonstrated, lived the complete embodiment of this thing called Ki Aikido (Ki Development and Aikido, The Way to Union with Ki).

Because I met Suzuki Sensei and I followed him, I met Curtis Sensei. However, I did not meet him until 1993 when Tohei Sensei came to Maui to teach in the 40th Anniversary of Tohei Sensei coming and teaching on Maui. Not knowing this man from Adam, I was in line at the Welcome Banquet at a very nice hotel in Wailea (my first time on Maui). My school, the University of Kansas, was paying for my trip and seminar through the University of Kansas Sports Clubs Office, and they would not pay in advance. Well, the people running the check-in table saw that I had not paid and called Curtis Sensei to come investigate this situation. I clearly remember standing down a couple of steps and Curtis Sensei, all 6'3" of him, looking down at me and asking me why I couldn't pay. Boy, did I feel like I was under the microscope as Curtis Sensei looked down on me, literally. His presence was obvious, and not knowing who he was, having never met him, made it more difficult as I tried to explain, "My University would pay, I promise." Tsubaki Sensei (my teacher in Kansas), I could tell, was enjoying this situation. Tsubaki Sensei told Curtis Sensei that my word was good, and Curtis Sensei, reluctantly I felt, said OK as I was cleared, but I knew that he would be keeping an eye on me and whether I paid up or not.

That first impression aside, I felt that Curtis Sensei remembered me when I saw him next in Boulder, Colorado, as Suzuki Sensei's Otomo. I had no idea what Otomo was at the time, but I noticed that Curtis Sensei never left Suzuki Sensei's side and his attention never wavered from Suzuki Sensei. While I did not have much time with Curtis Sensei in Maui, in Boulder I did get to experience Curtis Sensei's presence as he helped me throughout the seminar. There was something different about Curtis Sensei, and while I could not put my finger on it, it felt different than when other teachers were helping me. Tsubaki Sensei was always trying to bring other teachers to the University of Kansas for us to experience. I remember him telling me in Colorado to pay attention to Curtis Sensei and that he felt he couldn't get Suzuki Sensei to come Kansas, but that maybe Curtis Sensei would. Wherever Suzuki Sensei was, Curtis Sensei was there. So, I followed them through many seminars in Arizona, Colorado, and Maui.

In 1995, Tsubaki Sensei asked Tamura Sensei from Japan to come to Lawrence, Kansas. Tsubaki Sensei wanted either David Shaner Sensei or Curtis Sensei to come and teach us how to prepare and hold a big seminar like this one. Tsubaki Sensei thought that it cost too much to bring Curtis Sensei from Maui, and so we asked Shaner Sensei to come teach and help us in November of 1995. One week before Shaner Sensei was set to come, he had to cancel due to an illness in his family. Because of the way Curtis Sensei always seemed to find me, and because Tsubaki Sensei really liked him, I called Curtis Sensei and asked if he could come on one week's notice from Maui



Curtis Sensei with Mrs. Lily Tsubaki and Andrew LeBar Sensei, November 2017.

*Why I Invite Curtis Sensei . . . continued from page 6*

to take Shaner Sensei's place, as we were really in a great need of help. Curtis Sensei asked Suzuki, and somehow he agreed to let Curtis Sensei come. Curtis paid for his own flight, and afterward when we tried to pay him the \$1,000 for teaching the seminar and helping us, he refused and said that because we had just opened a city dojo, to put the money back into the dojo. I couldn't believe it! I couldn't imagine such generosity, and I felt deep sense of gratitude for his gift.

When Tamura Sensei came to teach a six-day seminar in March of 1996, Curtis Sensei was there with Koichi Kashiwaya Sensei and Shaner Sensei to help us. Due to the large group of students who attended the seminar, we divided up the group, and Curtis Sensei, Kashiwaya Sensei and Shaner Sensei rotated teaching everyone when they were not with Tamura Sensei. I was in one of Curtis Sensei's Classes, and I remember it like yesterday. Eric Harrell was my uke, we were doing a ryotemochi attack, and I could not move Eric at all. Curtis Sensei came up and saw my difficulty and began saying to me, "Throw Andrew into the bucket! Throw all of Andrew into the bucket! The boat is empty Andrew. Throw Andrew into the bucket!" This went on what seemed like forever as I struggled to, but never did, throw Eric. This was the first of my many lessons from Curtis Sensei. I thought about this for a long time and even dreamt of it. Me, in the boat, the bucket. . . . . Still do, me, the boat, the bucket, empty. . . . .

I don't know why, but Curtis Sensei had an interest in Kansas Ki Society. This probably this was because of Tsubaki Sensei who loved Curtis Sensei and encouraged him to come to Lawrence and teach. Tsubaki Sensei and I felt then, and I feel now, a deep sense of what Curtis Sensei's presence is, which is exactly what Suzuki Sensei had and wanted to express so deeply.

When Tsubaki Sensei passed away, I felt that to celebrate my teacher, we needed to do what he always wanted us to do, which was to bring great Ki Aikido teachers to Lawrence, Kansas. Tsubaki Sensei always encouraged this and did it. We decided to create the Tsubaki Sensei Memorial Seminar, which values and demonstrates what Tsubaki Sensei made happen. The first teacher I asked to come and teach at the First Annual Tsubaki Sensei Memorial Seminar was Curtis Sensei. Just like that first time that Curtis Sensei came to Lawrence, Kansas, Sensei comes with open arms, generously giving everything he has and everything he is. This is not an easy a journey for him like it was back in 1995, but he comes anyway, and we always get students to come from across the United States to come to train with Curtis Sensei and to support the Kansas Ki Society. They come back time and time again for a reason. They know that like his teacher, Suzuki Sensei, he speaks with an authority of power and love that we now call an intense connection of love and support for all of us. Suzuki Sensei knows, Sensei, that you stand on the shoulders of your teachers. ∞



*Members of Kansas Ki Society and Maui participating in the Andrew Tsubaki Sensei Memorial Seminar taught by Curtis Sensei in Lawrence, Kansas, November 10 through 12, 2017.*

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

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**Christmastime or anytime is a great time to give the gift of *Letting Go*.**

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

Curtis Sensei has completed several series of discussion classes at Maui Ki-Aikido, on each chapter of the book, on the Four Basic Principles and on the Shokushu. Now he is leading monthly discussions on the meaning of Master Tohei's 13 Rules. This give-and-take between Sensei and the students is a great adjunct to studying the book and can be downloaded and listened to or read on our blog at <http://curtissensei.com>.



## **HKF and MKA endowments benefit all Hawai'i students and teachers**

Maui's Endowment Fund was started eleven years ago and has reached and surpassed its goal of \$100,000. This fall, as noted above, the proceeds from interest on the fund were able to be used for partial funding for 3 Maui assistant instructors to attend Japan camp, greatly benefitting the development of our newer teachers, and thereby, all the students they impact.

HKF's endowment, started in 2007, is younger. It has reached a preliminary goal of \$25,000 and is still growing. Donations to the HKF Endowment Fund will nurture the future of Aikido training for all members of our state-wide organization.

Please consider a tax deductible donation to the HKF Endowment Fund, and mahalo nui loa for your support!

Mail it to:

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