



Mana

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

Spring 2019

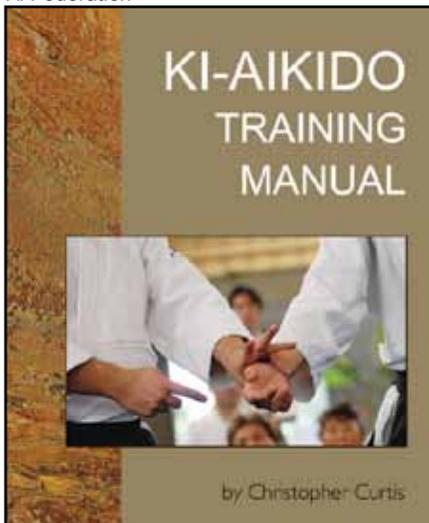
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Christopher Curtis, Chief Instructor, Hawai'i Ki Federation



Shinichi Suzuki Sensei
March 22, 1917~May 22, 2009

Chief Instructor's Message

by Christopher Curtis, HKF

In 1985, Shinichi Suzuki Sensei and I completed the very first “Ki-Aikido on Maui – A Training Manual.” Since then there have been two additional editions, and for the last year or so, I have been re-writing, updating, and adding content to bring together the 4th edition of this training manual. We expect this new edition to be available both in hard copy and as an ebook on iBooks, Kindle, and Nook very soon. Here is an excerpt from the new edition:

Connecting with Your Partner

Koichi Tohei Sensei always taught us that there are three basic options that humans follow in response to a challenge, or when attempting to accomplish anything.

Option A – Struggling

Option B – Collapsing

Option C – Connecting

With Option A, we struggle to bring about a change of some kind. This struggle may involve mental, verbal, or physical manipulation, following some form of psychological technique, pressuring, begging, cajoling, paying off, or all out fighting with the opponent. When any of these attempts are made, they are naturally met with strong resistance from the partner. Generally, the strongest person wins. This is never effective, and is not Aikido.

With Option B, we collapse in the face of the challenge, and hope that someone else will handle the problem for us. Sometimes it may be a god or angel figure we ask to help us, sometimes the government, or very often a teacher, priest, councilor, mentor, or guide. In Aikido, this approach is characterized by holding very lightly and hoping for the “Ki of the Universe” to come down from wherever and accomplish the task for us. This is never effective, and is not Aikido.

With Option C, we connect intensely with the opponent, in a completely agreeable and openhearted way, and in so doing, win the heart, mind, and body of the opponent. As a result, we both move together in complete agreement to accomplish whatever needs doing. This is very effective. This is Aikido. ☺

The 10th anniversary of Suzuki Sensei's passing

by Christopher Curtis, May 22, 2019

In the formative years of Aikido in Hawai'i, it took a Western person of unique capability and dedication to lead the few of us who wandered into this Budo wilderness brought to us from the East. Shinichi Suzuki Sensei was just such an individual, and as such, we all feel a deep gratitude in our hearts. ☺



Tribute to Olive Silva Sensei

by Christopher Curtis, HKF

One of Maui's dearest old timers has left us. Olive Silva Sensei passed away on April 25, 2019, at age 96.

Olive Silva began her Aikido training very soon after Master Koichi Tohei first visited the islands in 1953. After hearing about Aikido in 1956, she immediately signed up with Shinichi Suzuki Sensei at the Maui Aikido-Ki Society in Wailuku, Maui.

Silva Sensei was an inspiration to us all. She particularly paved the way for, and inspired, many women in our Maui dojo to train and train, without hesitation and without doubt.

Olive Silva Sensei was a beloved elder to us all, and we shall forever cherish her memory. ♪

Meet Mits Murashige Sensei of the Big Island of Hawai'i

MANA interviewed Mits Murashige Sensei during the March 2019 Shugyo Tassei Kigan Shiki Seminar in Hilo. He was just made a Senior Advisor of the Hawai'i Ki Federation, and at the seminar he received his Rokudan and Joden certificates. Murashige Sensei, who at 91 is still teaching the Sunday Ki class at Hilo Dojo, participated fully in every class in this seminar. He is a model for us all of the way Ki-Aikido practice helps us age with wisdom and grace, maintaining mental physical health. Here he shares some observations about Ki-Aikido in Hawai'i over the past 45 years.

MANA: Murashige Sensei, how many years have you practiced Aikido and what was the year in which you started Aikido training? And, are you okay with us telling your age now?

MM: I started my training in Aikido in 1974. At present I am 91 years old. My first exposure to Aikido was in the late nineteen sixties, as I recall. My wife had been attending a Ki class taught by the late Takashi Nonaka Sensei at a dojo located near Hilo. One evening I attended the class together with my wife. To my surprise, instead of Takashi Nonaka Sensei, his son young Eric Nonaka Sensei instructed the class for the evening. He must have been a college student at that time. I was impressed.

MANA: Could you share your experience of training over the years? For example what were the early years like for you and the people you started training with?

MM: In those days, it was very different from how it is today. There were police officers training alongside Aikido students, and techniques were executed in a rough manner. The teachers didn't talk about the four basic principles, and I don't recall breathing practice being done. We just came to the dojo and did arts, including ran dori. However, by the time I joined Aikido in 1974, the roughness was gone, though the class I trained in only covered arts, and Ki development was taught in separate classes.

In 1979 when I attained the rank of Shodan, I was assigned to a Ki class taught by Hajime Uyeki Sensei assisted



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Mits Murashige . . . continued from page 2

by Ed Kobayashi Sensei. Uyeki Sensei, in his youth, was a champion weight lifter and thus physically powerful. Yet he never ever exhibited this in Aikido, He only taught Ki development. At that time he was one of a few from Hilo who had spent some time in Japan training under Koichi Tohei Sensei. I was fortunate indeed to be part of his Ki class. In later years Uyeki Sensei moved on to start new dojos in Hilo and Puna. Ed Kobayashi Sensei became the instructor for a few years but left because of job-related reasons, and therefore I became the instructor of the Ki class and have been ever since.

MANA: What are some of the differences in the focus of training from 1974 and now?

MM: Over the years changes have occurred in Aikido. Tohei Sensei left Honbu to focus on teaching Ki in Aikido rather than only arts as the Honbu (Aikikai) continued to focus on. There have been numerous changes in all areas of Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido. Today, all techniques in arts involve application of Ki principles as of first and foremost importance. Also, in Ki development training, changes have occurred mainly to refine the technical aspects of training. As an example, Ki breathing methods. Some time ago I had some elderly friends demonstrate how Ki breathing was done in the very early days of Aikido. Their techniques were far different than how it is done today. They seemed to be abrupt, with much body movements, compared to today which is more subtle. The arts classes evolved changes, too. During my early years of training, techniques were executed without regard for application of Ki principles. Moreover, we only did arts. Ki development was taught in separate Ki classes. The Taigi arts that we do today did not exist until later years.

MANA: What teachers were influential in your training and how were they influential?

MM: Of course it's Koichi Tohei Sensei. I am grateful to Sensei for much of what I am today and I attribute this to my receiving his teachings in Ki Aikido as a student in Ki-Aikido. In 1979 I visited the Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido headquarters in Shinjuku Tokyo. My wife and our teenage son were with me to purchase a supply of bokken and jo for our Hilo Dojo. There we met Tohei Sensei. I was very humbled when he graciously greeted us. We conversed for a while mainly about our Hilo Dojo. At one point he asked me if I was doing my breathing exercise as he had taught us during one of his earlier visits to Hilo. When I replied I did not, he lectured me to do it every day. I took to heart what he said. Perhaps this is what saved my life when I had serious medical problems in my later life. I am forever grateful to Tohei Sensei for his sage advice and also for being so humble as to sacrificing his precious time for our sake during our visit to headquarters.

Then Takashi Nonaka Sensei. He had been a former chief instructor for Ki Society for the State of Hawai'i and also the former Head Instructor for our Hilo Dojo. He was my mentor for over forty years. He taught us to always follow the way of the universe. Ki Aikido was a way of life for Sensei.

There was Shinichi Suzuki Sensei of Maui. I really took to heart all that he taught. He was just amazing. I tried my best to emulate him in breathing exercise. I recall whenever he instructed a class in Hilo, he would emphasize Ki breathing. He would have everyone do the Haku breathing individually and then give a critique. Today in Hilo, at our Ki class, besides doing our Ki breathing exercises, we continue to do the retention breathing and the cadence breathing as Sensei had taught us.

And now we have the excellent teaching of Christopher Curtis Sensei and Shinichi Tohei Sensei. I have read Curtis Sensei's biographical account of his pre-Aikido life and also his experience as a student of Ki-Aikido under the guidance of Shinichi Suzuki Sensei. I admire his determination, courage and discipline as Suzuki Sensei's student to see it through to become who he is today. His publication "Letting Go" is a treasure house of information for students of Ki-Aikido. Often in our Ki class we share the excerpts of this publication for class discussions and instructions. We also share his numerous postings on the internet for class instructions and discussions.

Shinichi Tohei Sensei too has numerous postings on the internet which are well thought out. Many are applicable in daily life. In one posting he admonished people today who are engrossed in mobile phone use and oblivious to their surrounding while crossing a street. In other words Ki is not extended correctly then. As we all know this has become a major problem locally and abroad. In another, Shinichi Tohei Sensei states that his dad Koichi Tohei Sensei never ever raised his voice to correct a behavior of his son as a child. Instead, he taught his son to discern right from wrong by examples. In this way the son developed confidence as he grew up rather than insecurity. I frequently share his postings in our Ki class, also.

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Mits Murashige . . . continued from page 3

I would also like to recognize Eric Nonaka Sensei who conducts a seminar for the Hawai‘i Island Ki Aikido members annually in memory of the late Takashi Nonaka Sensei. He is very capable, as he had started his training in Ki Aikido in the nineteen sixties long before I started.

MANA: Could you describe the changes you’ve had in your own experience of Ki-Aikido over time, changes that are important to you?

MM: First and foremost, Ki Aikido has helped me develop confidence which enabled me to carry out my duties and responsibilities as an employee for a government agency on the island of Hawai‘i, maintain calmness during critical times, and be mindful of humility at all times. Ki Aikido has helped me overcome a serious medical problem by committing myself to daily Ki breathing exercise. Based on my experience, I have become a true believer in Ki breathing exercise. ☺

Hawai‘i Ki Federation news from dojos around the Islands

At least 20 HKF members state-wide will be going to the Chief Instructors’ Seminar in Las Vegas June 27 – 30, to be taught by Kaicho Shinichi Tohei.

HKF Dan and Den Promotions

At the March 2019 Shugyo Tassei Kigan Shiki Seminar in Hilo, Honoka‘a Dojo Head Instructor Lillian Paiva, and Vernon Loo and Gloria Faltstrom, Lokahi Ki Aikido instructors, tested and received Sandan. Mitsuo Murashige Sensei received certificates for Joden and Rokudan, announced January 1, 2019, in Japan.

In May, Gary Cera and Sarah Yamamoto of Mililani Dojo tested and passed their jokyū and Shodan tests. ☺



Test takers Lillian, Vernon and Gloria, with Curtis Sensei at the Shugyo Tassei Kigan Shiki Seminar



Mits Murashige Sensei, recipient of Joden and Rokudan.

Honoka‘a Dojo -

Honoka‘a Dojo’s head instructor Lillian Paiva gave a talk at the Honoka‘a Hongwanji Mission for Buddha’s Birthday celebration April 7. She spoke about what the kanji in Aikido means, and her students did a demonstration. In July Honoka‘a will hold their annual bake sale at O-bon as a fundraiser for the HKF Endowment. ☺

Hilo Dojo –

Hilo Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido reported that their annual club picnic was held on April 14 featuring great food, excellent fellowship, tandem geta races, tug-o-war, and bingo. HKF Assistant Chief Instructor Eric Nonaka Sensei visited us May 19 and conducted Sunday morning advanced class. Head Instructor David Kaneshiro conducted Parent/Student classes May 21 and 23 to introduce members' parents to Ki training. Hilo held a "Friendship Exchange" with Ichimikan Judo Club on June 18 with a half hour of judo exercises and half hour of Ki introduction. It was open to all members, families, and friends of both clubs and everyone had a fun, new experience. The club continues having fundraisers to support their activities, a trip to Japan with Eric Nonaka Sensei in 2021, and the HKF endowment. ☺



Parents try Aikido training with their kids in Hilo's special class.



Instructors and members of Hilo Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido at their Kagami Biraki event in January, 2019.

Maui Ki-Aikido - Fundraisers in April

To boost both the Maui Ki-Aikido and the Hawai'i Ki Federation endowment funds, the annual dinner was held April 7 at the home of Jeff and Janet Baldwin, with Curtis Sensei, as usual, the excellent head chef. All those attending enjoyed an afternoon of good food and drink, lawn games and tarot readings by Prakash.

On April 16, Maui Ki-Aikido was hosted by The Flatbread Company of Paia for a benefit night with a silent auction. The generous donations of Flatbread, and of our members and various other businesses who provided art and services for the auction benefitted Maui's Reserve Fund for future dojo maintenance. ☺



Flanking the chef at the Baldwin dinner, Joelle Perz, Lynn Curtis, Sophia Rottman and Joni Jackson.

HKF Shugyo Tassei Kigan Shiki Seminar, March 2019



Robert Kaneshiro and Jack Friend get advice from Eric Nonaka Sensei.



At the question and answer session which Curtis Sensei always holds at the end of HKF seminars.



Ken class at the seminar



Vernon Loo with uke Celine Boyer.



Curtis Sensei teaches in Europe May 2019



In Germany with Curtis Sensei: Charles Boyer, Thomas Ziegler, Lynn Curtis, Sophia Rottman and Jeff Baldwin.



At Helmond, Netherlands, banquet: Curtis Sensei, Europe Chief Instructor Toby Voogels and HKF members Jeff Baldwin and Charles Boyer.



At the Valencia, Spain, banquet: Valencia's Head Instructor Rafael Gandia and members present Sensei with a mysterious gift.....

During the Valencia Seminar in May, the Ki Society of Spain held a special moment for me, celebrating the 10 years I have been teaching them, complete with cake and champagne. I so appreciate Rafael Gandia Sensei, and of course all of his students, for their gracious hospitality and warmth of spirit. I will be forever grateful to them for the opportunity to share what I have learned from my teachers with them.

Thank you!
Christopher Curtis



Unwrapped, Sensei discovers a beautiful commemorative book created for celebrating the 10 years he has been teaching in Spain, with photos from each visit. (See photo of book cover at right.)



Helmond - Valencia: 10 años con Curtis Sensei

Visitor from Japan



Mr. Kenzo Horie is a Keio Aikido Club alumnus and a current student of Shinichi Tohei Sensei at Tokyo Shinshin Toitsu Aikido Kai Headquarters. In 1975 he first visited Suzuki Sensei at our old dojo with other Keio boys, and he visited us and trained with Curtis Sensei in June this year. Mr. Horie regularly visits our camps in Japan and Keio seminars on Maui. ☺



Student from Germany trains on Maui

Sophia Rottmann, a student of Olaf Schubert Sensei of Rodgau Ki-Aikido in Germany, trained with Maui Ki-Aikido for 5 weeks this spring as a visiting student. While here on Maui, she was training to take her Nidan test, which she did upon her return while Curtis Sensei was teaching a seminar in Rodgau in May. Here's MANA's interview with Sophia.

MANA: How did you decide to come to Maui Ki-Aikido for this period of practice with us?

Sophia Rottmann: I had successfully passed my silversmith education on February 1 of this year and was thinking about what I could do in my free time afterward. Since my Nidan exam was probably on May 19, and the examiner would be Curtis Sensei, I found it a very good preparation to visit him on Maui and to train there intensively.

MANA: You've been attending every class here, which is strongly encouraged for visiting students. Do you see differences between our training and yours in Germany?

S.R.: The biggest difference is that there are so many different class levels, from beginner to very advanced training (on Maui). So that I am sometimes taught at a very high level. And when you get to the advanced training, you have to expect, as a beginner, that it gets harder because it's taught on a different level.

In Germany we also have different levels of training. However, our evening classes are the ones most people go to, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and since that means the beginners are mixed in with the advanced students, and Sensei has to teach so that everyone can come along and learn something, we do not have separate advanced training for the people on the dan level. Of course, this isn't bad, because we all learn and practice basic techniques, all the principles you need.



Student from Germany . . . continued from page 8

Another difference between training in Germany and here on Maui is, there is a difference in the feeling in the dojo. Here people seem more open and they are very warm.

MANA: What similarities do you note, also?

S.R.: The principles and the techniques are the same. And that all who come to the training, no matter which training, everyone is respectful and is respected. Everyone is treated the same.

MANA: You teach a children's class at home. Tell us something about that. What has it been like to observe in the children and teen classes here on Maui?

S.R.: Watching the kids exercising is just great. All train diligently and watch very well. What I find very nice to see is that even the children learn from the beginning the principles of Ki-Aikido, although it is difficult for most adults to understand. All children are doing very well and trying to implement the principles.

MANA: What are your plans when you go home?

S.R.: What I learned here to take with me and continue to develop.

MANA: What is your impression of Maui? What all have you visited, seen or gone to?

S.R.: I scoured the various beaches and enjoyed the ocean, the famous track to Hana, and I drove to the sunrise on Haleakala and looked at the national park. My impression of Maui is just incredible. Everyone is so open and friendly, helping wherever they can. You can really find peace on Maui and be content with yourself. ☺



The HKF and MKA endowment funds benefit all Hawai'i students and teachers

Maui's Endowment Fund was started in 2005 and has reached and surpassed its initial goal of \$100,000. As of 2017, the proceeds from interest on the fund have been used for partial funding for assistant instructors to attend Japan camp, greatly benefitting the development of our 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:

c/o Maui Ki Aikido
PO Box 724, Wailuku, Hawai'i 96793

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

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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 Hawai'i Ki Federation and Head Instructor of Maui Ki-Aikido 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.