

# THE KIAI

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Newsletter of THE AIKIDO INSTITUTE

*The Aikido Institute is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SHOELACES

Shoelaces scarcely seem worth considering unless they come untied. Or so I thought until I went to Iwama. There I learned the importance of attending to shoelaces.

At the Iwama dojo, all students enter through a small foyer in which they leave their shoes. On more than one occasion I observed the sempai yelling at some poor student – usually a gaijin (foreigner) - who did not follow shoe etiquette.

Proper etiquette requires one to be able to quickly slip out of and into one's shoes. Slipping out is easy enough, but to quickly slip into shoes, they must be pointing in the



correct direction. Since students leave the dojo walking forwards and not backwards, shoes must be placed so they face away from the room, towards the outdoors. Else when a student leaves the dojo, he has to

turn into the room to put on his shoes, then turn again to leave. All this takes time, which means an inconvenience to others wanting to leave.

Which brings me to shoelaces. Most people wore sandals, loafers or tennis shoes that remained tied. Occasionally someone wore shoes that had to be untied. Leaving the shoelaces dangling outside the shoes was an offense. Not only were the shoes then taking up more space than necessary, but someone else might place their own shoes on the wayward shoelaces, thus slowing the exit of the hapless owner who then slowed others because of his thoughtlessness.

I think about this when I see the way shoes are placed on the shoerack in the Oakland dojo, laces hanging down over the shelf below.

The lesson of attentiveness is an important one. We are all studying a martial art, and most of us will never apply the physical techniques outside the dojo. It is the other things

we learn here that are more applicable in daily life. Attentiveness is one of the most important of those things.

Attentiveness can keep us out of a dangerous situation and can help us in our jobs and other social situations.

We have many opportunities to practice attentiveness in the dojo from the moment we walk in until the moment we leave. Crossing the mat, practicing with a partner in class, working in groups when people are falling in different directions, practicing with weapons after class – all require attentiveness.

I was told recently of an incident where a male student, intending to get cleaning supplies, opened the door of the women's dressing room and walked in, surprising the women inside. While such an action is entirely unacceptable, I suspect the cause was simple lack of attentiveness. Being attentive would have prevented an embarrassing incident.

So to tie this all together, remember to keep your eyes open and notice what is going on, including your own impact on others.

Do you know where your shoelaces are?

KIM SENSEI

## DONATIONS

Aiki Integrated Arts is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation that does business as the Aikido Institute. We received official federal determination of our nonprofit status in May.

Why would an organization become a nonprofit? Most people think it's because "you don't pay taxes". But that's not entirely true. While there are certain taxes you do not pay, there are other taxes you still must pay.

When an organization becomes a nonprofit, there is a significant transformation in structure and purpose. In our case, our organization changed from a sole proprietorship to

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a nonprofit corporation. Rather than having one owner, the dojo now has a group of senior students and teachers who form our Board of Directors. This group guides the organization as it proceeds on the path of achieving its goal. The goal of a nonprofit is called its "exempt purpose." In our case, our exempt purpose is to "educate the general public in martial arts such as Aikido".

People often think that being a nonprofit means that you do not make profits. This is not necessarily true. A number of large, profitable organizations are nonprofits. For a nonprofit, the primary goal is to provide the general public with services that fulfill the nonprofit's mission, while for a normal profit-making organization, the goal is to generate profits for the owners. In a nonprofit, any excess funds that may be generated must be, by law, re-invested in the organization. Since the profits are re-invested rather than taken out of the organization, the organization is referred to as a nonprofit.

Because the focus of the nonprofit is on providing a service that benefits the general public, the government allows certain tax-benefits to nonprofits. One major benefit is that nonprofit organizations classified as 501(c)(3) are allowed to receive tax-deductible contributions from individuals and organizations.

Our dojo enjoys nonprofit status because we have made it our mission to make Aikido classes accessible to the

general public.

We have just started on our nonprofit path, but we already have a plan we've begun to work on.

Our first effort is to establish a scholarship program for the kid's classes. To that end a scholarship committee has been formed to establish policies for the program. The committee's immediate goal is to have a scholarship program in place by the beginning of 2003. We will start small with a one month scholarship, but as our funds grow we'll be able to provide assistance to more kids for a longer period of time.

We need your help to make this happen.

As a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, donations you make are fully deductible as provided for by law. We encourage you to think of making a donation to the dojo and to earmark the funds as you see fit. Use the donation form below, or speak with the uchi-deshi.

Another way to support our scholarship fund will be through our yearly raffle. Once again this year we'll be selling raffle tickets for our "Winter Event" (the pinata-bashing-winaboken-eat-a-sushi-dinner extravaganza that occurs sometime in December). All proceeds from the raffle will go towards the Kid's Class scholarship program. We'll try and find even better prizes so that you're all excited to buy tickets and ask others to buy some as well.

Thank you.

### DONATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ We welcome donations of any amount.

Please make check payable to Aiki Integrated Arts and return it and this form to:  
 Aiki Integrated Arts, 5036 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609

How would you like your donation to be used?

- Scholarship Fund  
 Mat Fund  
 Anywhere it's needed.

May we publish your name in our yearly list of donors?

- You may publish my name  
 I'd like my donation to remain anonymous

Aiki Integrated Arts is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax-deductible.



## KAYLA SENSEI'S DOJO - GRAND OPENING

Fun, Kayla Sensei's new dojo opening. I trained at her old dojo once. It was a seminar to raise money for her 'new' dojo opening. I trained with her once at Pat Hendricks Sensei dojo. I also saw her Nidan Test on tape from the dojo video collection. I've seen her take ukemi on other tapes in the dojo video collection. She is so strong and so fast!

I went to the dojo opening with Kim Sensei. Leif, Josh Langenthal, JR and Jen were there also.

As I walked up to the dojo I thought to myself "whoa, weird". I took Karate and Judo here about 10 years ago then quit. I was a kid, and I didn't like them nearly as much as I do Aikido.

Saturday morning Keiko had just ended at 11:30. The opening was at noon, so we were walking in as Kayla Sensei was lining everyone up and thanking those who helped create her new dojo.

Kayla Sensei spoke from the heart to thank those who had created her dojo, out of the goodness of their hearts. So many of Kayla Sensei's students had given of so much of their time and resources to make the dojo happen. Dressing rooms were built. Toilets, sink, kitchen and water pipes were worked on. Money and time were both donated to set up Kayla Sensei new mat and Shomen. The Shomen was large and striking. There was a lot of wall space to the side of it. But the shomen was so 'there', that it wasn't hard at all to tell where the center of the dojo was.

Kayla Sensei was very gracious. She thanked everyone, including her parents, her students, her dojo mate, and also thanked Kim Sensei for coming to her opening.

She said Kim Sensei was one of her favorite training partners. I remember Kim Sensei (at Kayla Sensei's fundraiser/Seminar to raise money for her new dojo) saying that he and Kayla Sensei started Aikido the same year. It was truly humbling knowing that Kayla Sensei and Kim Sensei have known and trained with each for nearly 30 years. That's basically my training time, times 30.

Kayla Sensei's dojo mate was also there. Kayla Sensei thanked him and his students for the help with the dojo. He and his students were beautifully dressed in black Kimonos.

Class began with warm-ups, tai no henko just like at the Aikido Institute. Then we went into katate dori kokyu ho, shomen uchi kotegaeshi. I had trouble with that technique of course, and just like at the Aikido Institute a friendly knowledgeable yudansha gave their time to help me figure out just a little of how the technique works. Later on we worked in groups, 4 or 5 people per group with one main

sempai leading. Of course I got thrown around a little but it was fun. I even got to take ukemi from Kayla Sensei at one point, for about 10 seconds maybe. Josh Langenthal and Leif were even luckier. They got to take falls for her during demonstrations. All in all the dojo opening was great fun.

I got to watch Kayla Sensei move and wonder at how fast she was. I trained with some people who were training their first day, and also was able to train and reacquaint myself with people I'd met before. They were nice, good people. My girlfriend thinks that Aikido tends to draw great, real, down-to-earth good people. I agree with her.

Although I'm still a little nervous when I train at dojos other than the Aikido institute, Kayla Sensei's personality, character, and the openness, as well as the friendliness of her students made me feel right at home. I'm really looking forward to training with Kayla Sensei and her students again.

JONATHAN NAPIER-MORALES



## THE LOGO FOR THE AIKIDO INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

The logo is a character extracted from a work of brush calligraphy by Morihei Ueshiba, the Founder of Aikido. It is the word "hi" (or "bi" is substituted for syntactical purposes when it is combined with other words, in this case katsuhaya-bi). It is translated as "day" and it can also be translated as "sun". Both meanings are relevant to our use of it at the Aikido Institute of Texas. There are several reasons why it has been chosen as the logo.

The particular scroll that it is extracted from hangs in the Aikido Institute in Oakland, Ca., which is the home dojo of the chief instructor of the Aikido Institute of Texas. The Oakland dojo, which celebrated its 30 anniversary in 2000, is known throughout the Aikido world as a center of the highest level of serious, committed training. It has produced a number of excellent instructors who are teaching in various locations throughout the world. It was the first and favorite venue for the late Morihiro Saito Shihan on his many annual trips to the U.S. Many aikidoka have shed gallons of sweat on its mat over the years. Here in Texas we seek to achieve that level of serious training. It should be noted that while we train in a serious Budo that retains its effectiveness on a physical level, most of us come to Aikido for personal development. Certainly, if you train for 15 or 16 years with scant, if any, chances of using your skills "on the street", you must find meaning in your efforts beyond physical self defense.

The phrase on the scroll is part of a "Doka" (song or poem of the Way) composed by O'Sensei, (the Founder). The phrase is generally translated thus:

"True victory is victory over oneself. May the day of that victory come swiftly!"

O'Sensei trained on a daily basis for a spiritual purpose from 1923 until his death in 1969. For the last 23 years of his life his principle student, who trained with him every day and cared for him in old age, was Morihiro Saito. Upon the Founder's death, Saito Sensei became the chief instructor at the Iwama dojo, and dedicated himself to preserving Aikido as the Founder himself had practiced it. He was a paragon of daily, serious training and became a legend in his own right while humbly continuing along the Path the Founder had created

In his writings and talks which illuminated his idea of the Path he had created, O'Sensei routinely used the concept of spiritual self-forging. Iron is strong, but brittle. By being repeatedly heated and hammered in the right environment with the right ingredients, it is turned into steel, which is very hard, but very flexible and resilient, and therefore much more useful. Instead of a dull clang it can produce a bright ringing sound which proclaims the worth of the process that created it. This is a useful metaphor for the student. In Aikido on a physical level, we seek to create a protective sphere around us, not a brittle, impenetrable shell which is blasted to bits by adequate force, leaving us defenseless, but a flexible, responsive "sphere of influence" within which we can "awase," or blend, with the challenges coming in at us. So it is on the emotional level. By training on a daily basis we develop strong but resilient egos that are not crushed by the emotional challenges we face in life. In Aikido we become stronger and more sensitive, and thus we can expand that sphere of awareness larger and larger, encompassing our friends and family, community, and ultimately, all of humanity. Our tunnel vision focused in on our own petty grievances and selfish needs, our own inadequacies and fears, is expanded out into the world.

Notice that the reference is to self-forging. Aikido is not a process by which toughness and skill gets hammered into us by a dominant personality. It is up to each individual to proactively assume responsibility for their progress on the



Path. We must each make a decision about who we will accept as our teacher and put our trust in that teacher to lead us on the Way. Part of that process is having the humility and perseverance to receive gratefully the challenges our teachers put before us.

The character "hi" also refers to the sun. Certainly no Texan is a stranger to the sun. On a physical level the sun is the source of our very existence. For our purposes at the Aikido Institute of Texas, it refers to the "fire in the belly" we have for serious, fun, wholesome training.

DAVID DELONG

### KID'S CLASS

I'm probably not the first and I know I won't be the last. But the children taking Aikido here at the Aikido Institute of Oakland are so cute, so good at Aikido and blending.

I'm trying to learn a lot from them. How to relax and have fun on the mat. How to smile. How to blend.

Sometimes they start to giggle, they keep on giggling and you think they are never going to stop. But not 1 minute later you ask them a question and they turn to you with eyes as serious as any adults and answer your question. They blend.

Some of the kids are faster than others. Some of them are new and some of them have been here for years (as far as I can tell) but they all seem to love Aikido and soak up the teachings and body movements. Leif, Lars-Eric and Martha try to teach them. Even if the teacher teaches things differently, they just blend with that teacher.

When I was younger, around 18 years old, I was a camp counselor and I'd always gravitate toward the kid who, for whatever reason, that day seemed a little sad or a little down. I'd always try to make them smile or laugh or feel better.

With the children in the kid's class, I don't think that's necessary. They are doing Aikido and that in itself will make them feel better. Just like it does for adults, myself included. They take their bad day at school and come into the dojo and blend. Suddenly they feel better.

One of the kid's favorite games is dodgeball. We get out two belts as field markers and one of the bouncing balls and then try to get these kids out. They have to tai no henko and

two step around the ball and they do it. They have such fast feet that a lot of the time I'm jealous and I want to get in the middle and see how long it would take me to get tagged out. Probably not that long. I don't blend half as well as they do.

If I was in the middle I think 3 scenarios would play out. 1) I get hit the first throw. 2) I would jump over the ball and be disqualified. 3) I'd last a few throws before the ball would nick me and I'd be called out. There is no way I could last 15-20 throws tai no henkoing around them like these kids do. They blend so well.

Even if they are slow they blend naturally right around the ball. Even if they are new, they know the rules of the game. Tai no henko, two step around the ball, they do it and blend.

I wish I were a kid again. I wish I had trained in Aikido when I was a kid. When someone would say something annoying to me I could just think two-step and blend with it. When my parents told me to go do something, I could just blend with that and two-step myself off to go do what they said. I didn't know about blending.

In any case, the kids in the kid's class are lucky. They have great teachers. They are young. They attend the Aikido Institute, and most of all they get to practice Aikido at school in gym class. Every time the teacher pulls out a ball and divides them in two they get a chance to blend. They aren't just thinking dodge, dodge, throw the ball. They get to think blend, blend, tai no henko, ...two-step.

JONATHAN NAPIER-MORALES

## A RARE ISOTOPE IN TIME

There is a moment that exists like a rare isotope, a moment when I can say something to a new uchi deshi with complete continuity and they believe me.

Last Monday as we waited for Sensei to arrive for morning class, a big rig pulled up in front of the dojo taking four parking spaces including the one that Sensei traditionally takes in front of the dojo. This was my opportunity.

I tell Jonathan to ask the driver if he is here for the antique store. I present Jonathan with a talk track that shows empathy for, and engages the driver.

Jonathan readies himself, goes out, and rapid fire says "You here for the antique store can you move some sensei can park here."

The Driver obliged and we were impressed. I was simply impressed that Jonathan went out and asked the guy to move. Tim was impressed with the way Jonathan talked to the driver.

What I observed from this is there is more than one way to effect change and that different angles will render different views of that change. A little esoteric for a parking space?, sure but at quarter to six in the morning the world is a different place.

If you are left wondering did Sensei park in the spot Jonathan opened for him? Well that my friends is for those that can walk on the rice paper and not tear it, we try that at quarter to seven.

DARRIN TINSLEY



*Even when called out  
by a single foe,  
remain on guard,  
for you are always surrounded  
by a host of enemies.*

*Moribei Ueshiba*