



Ohana

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Shugyo Tassei Kigan Shiki

By Beverly Kehoe

It's 4:23am on January 18, 2008. The snowstorm is laying down powdery drifts on the back roads and it's about 25°. My shoulders tense; I command myself to breathe as I search for inner calm through the icy windshield. "At least I am heading south," I think as I skid to the airplane that takes me to Washington DC and the Eastern Ki Federation's 5th Annual *Shugyo Tassei Kigan Shiki* with Curtis Sensei. I make my flight, move with ease through the DC metro system and give myself plenty of time for the taxi ride to the Northern Virginia Ki-Aikido dojo. But with wrong turns and a slightly confused driver, I arrive at a dojo with barely a minute to spare to change into my *gi*. Not *shugyo*. Barely *keiko*.



Curtis Sensei is already dressed and sitting patiently at the edge of the pristine new tatami. I feel the warmth of Hawai'i in his smile and bear-hug greetings. The Maui dojo is where I discovered Aikido with Suzuki Sensei and Curtis Sensei; it feels like a homecoming even though this dojo and these students are not so familiar to me. I feel somewhat abashed—I know Curtis Sensei can take in with a single glance the hours (or lack of...) training, breathing and meditation I've put under my belt since our last encounter in June. At the same time I am encouraged to have actually made it to the mat. It's the New Year. We are celebrating 'growing and developing together.' When Shaner Sensei beams his attention my way I am reminded of how these two men embody the concept of 'teacher' as one who 'dispels the darkness.' My two favorite *yudansha* (after Suzuki Sensei of course!)

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Shaner Sensei

The Meaning and Purpose of Taigi

Many people misunderstand Taigi or “Arts with Ki.” Taigi is not the “absolutely correct” or “epitome” of how to perform Ki-Aikido. **Any** performance that follows the principles of the Universe could be called a performance “with Ki” or “Taigi.”

Taigi was developed by Our Founder, Soshu Tohei, to help us understand more deeply and in new ways the basic principles of his teaching. By mimicking his exact movement in our training, we might come to experience arts with the kind of precision and familiarity that he exuded and demonstrated all the time. We were thus taught to imitate his every movement exactly in our training of *Tsuzuki Waza* (“Continuation Exercises”). For example, the formal Taigi times were determined by having us *uchi deshi* time Soshu’s performance with a stop watch during our Friday Instructor’s Classes at the old Haramamchi HQ near Shinjuku. Soshu performed the Taigi with an uke and the time was justly recorded. The compulsory Kitei Taigi was added later and is, by comparison, performed at a slightly slower pace. The arts are performed the same, but the *seishi* (living calmness) extended at the end of each art is slightly longer. Why? Because Soshu Tohei was trying to get all of us to slow down even more and feel more deeply the unbroken **connection** between uke and nage (*Fusoku Furi*)!



Photo by TR Smith

The purpose of Taigi, Soshu says, is to learn to “Control Yourself First.” If you yourself are not balanced, relaxed, and full of Ki, then how can you lead others as *nage* or in daily life? And so, these are the three judging criteria: balance (you are “Keeping One Point”), rhythm (you are “relaxed completely”), and largeness (“Ki is Extending” naturally).

Finally, Soshu Tohei had another purpose in developing the training tool of Taigi. He knew that he had trained himself to see others clearly. It is as if Soshu knew what we *deshi* were thinking about all the time. How could this be? Because Soshu does not live in separation with his students, he lives in **connection**. He can “see” or “know” our state of mind, due to his level of intimacy. This intimate knowledge helped him to teach his *deshi* one-on-one, especially in the context of *otomo* training.

Taigi, in turn, requires that others learn “to see” like this. Taigi judges needed to be developed so that they too could “see” and “observe” and “teach” as Soshu did. Iwao Tamura Sensei was the first Chief Taigi Judge as he was deemed by Tohei Sensei to be his best teacher; he was Sensei’s most experienced and senior student. That honor came with a big responsibility. Taigi Judges must learn to see the condition of the mind by observing closely, intimately, every single movement and gesture. Mind leads body. Therefore, our overall performance can be observed watching bodies in motion that are, in turn, a reflection of mind. The role of teachers of Taigi and the role of judges of Taigi is thus to help students better understand the condition of their own mind. Again, the purpose of Taigi is to “Control Yourself First.” ①

Post Word Camp Seminar 2008, Greenville, SC

By Jennifer Kirchner

It never fails to amaze me how the Universe always seems to be watching, waiting and preparing for me, even though I may not always believe it. Recently, I had been feeling as though I was abandoned down a long dark tunnel, where I must sit and wait until the door opens up for me again. But after our Post-World Camp and Taigi seminar in Greenville, SC, last November, I've come to realize yet again that the Universe is exactly as it should be and that I am exactly where I need to be at this stage in my life. All I have to do is calm my mind enough to realize it.

Before leaving for Florida last May, I was eager to train at every opportunity. I was constantly finding ways to get special permission to train at seminars that I wasn't supposed to attend because I wasn't a high enough rank. However, after arriving in Florida, I somehow managed to forget all that. During the seminar, I was constantly saddened by how easily I had let my training and eagerness slip. I felt so guilty for my lapse that I apologized to my Taigi partner, Chris McKinney, after Saturday afternoon's class.



Jennifer training with Case Sensei


It has taken nearly a week for Shaner Sensei's teachings from the seminar to truly sink in. During his first talk, Shaner Sensei talked to us about the need for patience, discipline, and awareness. He began discussing patience—having “compassion for self.” I have realized that this is just like I was taught Ki Breathing. When my mind strays to other things, I shouldn't mentally kick myself and send negative Ki. I just have recognized that my mind has strayed and simply go back to focusing on breathing and sending Ki forward.

Naturally, after realizing that my mind has strayed, I must practice discipline, “requiring me to stay.” Now that I'm so far away from all the established Ki Society dojo, it has become clear to me that self discipline is what I need most, so I don't allow myself my training to lapse again. The funny thing is that self discipline has always been one of my worst skills. Now is my opportunity to hone it.

Most difficult of the three is awareness. For me, awareness isn't just about self honesty and candidness, it's also about calmness. Tohei Sensei writes in the *Shokushu* “Like the calm, still surface of the water that reflects the moon and a flying bird, true living calmness is the condition of our mind that reflects all things clearly.” This serves as a reminder to me that if I look too hard at myself, prodding and probing at my weaknesses, I may become obsessed and sad. Instead, by becoming more calm and reflecting all things clearly, I will become more aware.

Moving forward from last year's focus on Ki no Kenko to this year's focus on Taigi, Shaner Sensei talked to us about staying connected. As soon as I sat in my car and drove away from my parent's house to Florida in May, I cut my Ki because I believed so strongly that I was now disconnected. But that is just what Tohei Sensei has been trying to teach us through Taigi. When we come together, we are connected. And when we part we are still connected. My training is now one long Taigi. I must stay connected and extend plus Ki when I'm in Raleigh or Greenville, and I must also stay connected and

extend plus Ki when I'm away in Florida. Although my Sensei will not be watching my techniques every time I train, if I stay connected and practice the four basic principles, the rest will come naturally. And now, I am no longer training just for myself. Just days before I left for this seminar, a co-worker told me of his interest in and eagerness to learn Aikido and meditation without knowing that I train. Naturally, upon realizing my need to continue training again, I asked my co-worker to please train with me, and told him that I would teach him what I know. I am grateful that he has agreed to train together with me.

In doing this I realize that I am connected to the universe and that the universe is connected to me. I am also still connected to each of my senseis and training partners even though I am many miles away. All I have to do is realize it. *Onegaishimasu!* 

Ukemi: Our Most Practical Self Defense

By Christina Larson

My teacher has said, again and again, "*Ukemi* is the most practical self-defense I teach." Of course, living in Minnesota, I'd think that the back fall would be my most likely defensive tactic (to protect myself when slipping on icy sidewalks, of course). But it's not what saved my neck last fall during my final bike commute of the season.


I was bicycling home from work, exhilarated by the speed of my bike as it hummed over the pavement, savoring the beautiful evening, and generally enjoying myself. As I approached a red light, passing a long line of cars waiting to turn right, one of the waiting cars pulled out into my lane immediately in front of me. Instantly, I realized there was no time to accelerate or stop. My mind flashed, "I'm not going to make it. I'm going to hit..."



Christina, still smiling after her crash. Look closely at the folded up tip of her right brake lever.

"I'm not going to make it. I'm going to hit..."

The next thing I knew, I was standing on the pavement with my bike at my feet. All movement had stopped. My next thought was, "I think I'm okay. Everything still works. I'd like to sit down now!" My bike lay at my feet, the handlebars twisted at an odd angle. The car had stopped and I knew that help would be on the way. Yet I had no idea what I did between the time I realized I was going to hit the car and my choosing to sit down. I knew I had collided with the car, but how I went from riding to standing was a mystery to me.

The answer revealed itself through a trail of minor bumps, cuts, tears, swelling, and bruises that traced a line from my right shoulder to my left hip. My helmet, jacket, and body all bore witness to what I had done. Without even realizing it, I had taken a forward roll on the asphalt. I wasn't quite quick enough to protect my head and face completely—I flattened part of my helmet and got a cut on my chin that required a few stitches—but my trained reflexes saved me from a bone-breaking face plant or belly flop onto the pavement. No broken bones, no traumatized joints, no muscle sprains, no concussion. Just a few stitches and some truly amazing bruises. Pretty good for someone who rarely has the opportunity to practice jump rolls over bicycle handlebars & car bumpers! 

Christina Larson trains with the Minnesota Ki Society where she is currently co-teaching a class called Falling Safely: how to take a header off your bike, board or blades without losing teeth. She can be reached at <larsonchristina@gmail.com>

Reflections on Beginner's Mind

A personal story of events surrounding the EKF seminar in Raleigh, NC

By **Chizuko Suzuki**

Editor's note: On February 15 & 16, Case Sensei and Raleigh Ki-Aikido hosted an EKF General Seminar with Shaner Sensei. Chizuko Suzuki joined us as she was facing significant personal challenges. She has generously offered to share with us her experience of the seminar and the events leading up to and since the seminar.

AA Opening with Breast Cancer

After Shaner Sensei welcomed the group on Saturday morning, I walked to the front of the room.

Me: "Hello, my name is Chizuko."

Everyone: "Hi, Chizuko!"

Me: "I'm an alcoholic!" (Everyone laughed) "Thank you so much. One of my dreams finally came true. I always wanted to say that. Well, I'm not an alcoholic, but I had breast cancer diagnosed three days ago." (Dead silence)

This was my opening speech at the seminar in Raleigh. The theme of the seminar was "Kaisho and Beginner's Mind: Where is Your Mind?" When I woke up at 5am that Saturday morning, I realized that I had been experiencing how important it is to have a beginner's mind in my daily life lately. So I started writing my thoughts to share at the seminar. I asked Shaner Sensei to give me ten minutes. Since he had already known about my breast cancer, he kindly accepted my request. The following is a mixture of my speech and afterthoughts.

What is "Beginner's Mind"?

We say, "Don't forget beginner's mind" in Japanese. I think that it has two meanings.

1. Try not to forget the feelings such as humble intention, determined will, strong motivation, deep devotion, and a fresh mind you had when you first started training.
2. When you think that you have become good at whatever you are learning, that is the most dangerous time since "self-satisfaction" makes you unable to grow or develop. It is a warning for over confidence. When the cup gets full, you have to empty it. It can also mean "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

I have been working for the Medical Office at the Japanese Embassy for 21 years. I thought I was getting good at taking care of patients, but I have been learning a lot of new things after I got breast cancer, especially from the surgeon's young assistant. She is very caring and patient. She always ends the conversation with a nice personal touch. We can practice having beginner's mind anytime and anywhere if we sincerely seek.



Chizuko translates Pierce Sensei's Okuden certificate.

The importance of observation and trained eye

I'm also learning from many people how to give advice and how to comfort. There is no doubt that they have very good intention, but many are not truly "seeing" the person they are trying to help. I saw this many times during our training in Raleigh. For example, Zimmerman Sensei was experiencing a "bump"

when practicing *tenkan* with Kelly Sensei. Shaner Sensei pointed out the problem. Kelly Sensei practices *Iaido*, and is very proficient with the sword. As a result, he naturally extends Ki through his partner's whole arm. Therefore, Zimmerman Sensei needed to extend his Ki further in order to move together and not collide.

This sort of collision often happens when we try to help or understand other people. We think we are helping or understanding but may be pushing "our idea" based on our value. The more we feel resistance, the more we push. It is "*shoga no ai*" (small-self love) not "*taiga no ai*" (big-self, universal love). They may raise their eyebrows or voice, but we don't notice it. We think "they" are the problem. We don't observe others well. We don't extend our Ki strongly enough to move together.

One day I was having lunch at a cafeteria in the doctors' building. Obviously there were many doctors and nurses. The two doctors sitting next me suddenly stopped talking. Two seconds later, they rushed to one of the girls in front of me, and started to perform the Heimlich maneuver on her. She didn't need to raise her hands or ask for help. Those well-trained doctors could sense there was something wrong with her right away. They were truly aware. They were seeing clearly.

***Ichigo Ichie*: 一期一会**

I introduced this saying at the seminar. It literally means "one meeting in a lifetime" (from 一 (*ichi*), meaning 'one', 期 (*go*) meaning 'time' or 'lifetime', and 会 (*e*) meaning 'meeting'). You see this sign at the tea house. In *sado* (tea ceremony training), you are supposed to serve tea as if the opportunity is once in a lifetime. Therefore serve tea wholeheartedly.

To me, this saying means "I may not see this person again, therefore I will appreciate him or her as much as possible." I have a painful memory. My father died of stroke when I was 16 years old. I regretted that I had not told him how much I loved and respected him. Just one week ago, we had a fire in our condo building. My neighbor, Mike, and his dog died in the fire. You never know whether you will see a person again.

You always have a choice

I never thought that I would have breast cancer, because none of my family or relatives had it, Japanese women get it much less than American women do, I don't eat much fatty food (unlike Bobbie), and I exercise regularly. However, the fact is every 3 minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer, and every 13 minutes, a woman dies from it in this country. I'm one of the estimated 220,000 who would be diagnosed with breast cancer this year.

Just like many other cancer patients, I will never forget the moment when the surgeon came into the room to give me the diagnosis. I could tell that I had breast cancer because of her sad face. I was shocked at first, but immediately I felt that I was so lucky to have these excellent doctors who insisted that I have the surgery. I was almost going to choose to wait for at least six more months, possibly one more year. The type of tumor I had is not deemed aggressive, and lymph nodes are not affected. I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and now I have a couple of scars and need long term treatments including radiation. Nevertheless, I truly feel so lucky from the bottom of my heart. I have hands and legs. I can see, hear and walk.

I usually call my mother in Japan a couple times a month. When I had a benign spinal cord tumor last year (yes, I was having bad years two years in a row), I didn't tell her about it. I avoided calling her

since I was afraid that she might sense there was something wrong with me. I finally told her about the surgery when I went to Japan last December.

After I came back from Raleigh I realized that if I feel sad, my mother would sense it, so I shouldn't feel sad. Thanks to all the positive Ki from many people at the seminar, I chose to be happy and lucky, and could call her without mentioning the cancer. To my surprise, it turned out to be one of the best conversations we ever had.

Every cloud has a silver lining

I lost my beloved 19-year-old cat two years ago. I got a spinal cord tumor removal surgery last year. My close Korean neighbor who spoke perfect Japanese passed away because of a car accident last December. He used to call me, "Chizu-chan." I was diagnosed with breast cancer four weeks ago. My condo building caught fire, killing Mike and his dog one week ago.

First of all, I deeply believe I was able to overcome these hardships thanks to the Aikido training mind. I was doing Oneness Rhythm Exercise and Tai Chi while waiting for tests and surgeries. Secondly, we learn a lot when we experience a hardship.




The silver lining of all of those small tragedies is the kindness to be found everywhere. Whenever I felt that I was alone, I was proved wrong. It has been quite overwhelming to receive so many heartfelt e-mails, cards, and calls. My neighbors, friends, colleagues, and even acquaintances extended their support and concern to me. Through these hardships, I have become much closer to many of them. I just received Japanese sweets from Mrs. Ambassador, and beautiful flowers from the gardener at the embassy. Not too bad for a woman who came from Japan with two suitcases not knowing anybody in this country. Whoops, this is *shoga*.

Tohei sensei: "Who is your teacher?"

Me: "Shaner Sensei."

Conclusions

Don't underestimate one small Aikido seminar. It may change your life much more than you think, just like the one in Raleigh did for me. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Mayumi-san and all members of Raleigh Ki-Aikido for the wonderful seminar and beautiful flowers. Thank you very much, my EKF friends. You are more like a family to me. Thank you very much, New York Ki-Aikido members for the lovely card. Thank you, Jon-san, for asking me to write this—though I had to sacrifice my beauty sleep Thursday night. This helped me enormously to reduce the pain of loss of my neighbor, Mike, and his dog. Special thanks to Shaner Sensei for remembering all my tests and surgeries, and calling me and praying for me each time. Lastly, congratulations, Pierce Sensei. What an honor to touch and translate your Okuden certificate! You are one of the most humble people I have ever known. I have a feeling the cherry blossoms at the Tidal Basin will look much more beautiful this year than ever before because I will enjoy them as if this will be the last time. *Ichigo ichie*. 

Chizuko Suzuki trains with Northern Virginia Ki Aikido. She can be reached at <vkschizuko@hotmail.com>

Member Profile: Terry Pierce Sensei

Pierce sensei is the Senior *Yudansha* in the Eastern Ki Federation. He is a full Ki Lecturer, a full Qualified Examiner, and holds the rank of Nanadan (7th degree blackbelt) in Shinshin Toitsu Aikido and Okuden in Shinshin Toitsudo. Pierce sensei has been a loyal student of Tohei sensei for nearly 50 years. His experiences and accomplishments are extensive and wide ranging. All of us in the Eastern Ki Federation benefit greatly from his depth of knowledge and his generosity in sharing it.


Pierce sensei began studying Aikido in 1960. In 1963, Pierce began studying under Yoshimitsu Yamada, Chief Instructor of New York Aikikai. In 1965 he co-founded the New Jersey Aikikai in Merchantville, NJ, and in 1968 he became the Chief Instructor of the South Jersey Aikikai on Long Beach Island, NJ. When Tohei sensei resigned as World Wide Chief Instructor of the Aikikai to teach Aikido through the Ki Society, Pierce sensei founded the New Jersey Ki Society in Riverton, NJ.



The last time Tohei sensei came to the East Coast to teach was in the early 1980s. Most of Pierce sensei's students in New Jersey went to New York classes on the weekend, but Pierce sensei made the commute every night while Tohei Sensei was there. Tohei sensei even came to the New Jersey dojo to teach at the kind request of Pierce sensei. In 1983, while studying at Ki no Kenkyukai in Japan, Pierce Sensei was appointed a Leader in the Ki no Genri Jissenkai—a program in the Ki Society dedicated to helping people practice Ki training in their homes, especially Ki breathing, Ki meditation, and Kiatsu. Today, Pierce sensei continues to be a leader in this area, consulting on the design of the Eastern Ki Federation's Ki no Kenko program.

In the most recent recognition of his years of training, service, and teaching of Ki Principles, Pierce sensei was awarded Okuden in Ki Development. The beautiful rice-cloth certificate, which was presented to him on behalf of Tohei Sensei at the recent EKF seminar in Raleigh, NC, acknowledges Pierce sensei's mastery of the four basic principles in daily life. In an extraordinary (yet typical for him) display of selflessness and dedication to spreading this art, Pierce Sensei accepted his certificate and at once drove his car throughout the night to West Chester, Pennsylvania. In West Chester he supported his long-time students, Orwat Sensei and Lindblad Sensei, in "Setsudo" as they lead an open public workshop and spread Soshu's teachings.

The theme of the most recent EKF seminar in Raleigh was Beginner's Mind—the quality modeled for us ideally by EKF's Senior I. Pierce Sensei has recently moved to North Carolina where he is now teaching morning classes at his new company while frequently visiting and supporting the EKF Authorized Ki Societies in Boone and Raleigh. We hope that given his transition to North Carolina C, soon he will be starting regular classes in the Winston-Salem area with the hope of adding a third Ki Society in the state. WOW, Lucky People!

From everyone in the Eastern Ki Federation, we would like to offer our heartfelt congratulations to Pierce sensei for his most recent award and recognition. 

“Shugyo” continued from page 1

Curtis Sensei begins the weekend by telling us that he doesn't know what he will be teaching. He doesn't seem very concerned about this uncertainty, so I decide not to be either. His voice extends to the farthest reaches of the dojo. He takes in every student. Curtis Sensei shares one of Suzuki Sensei's favorite phrases, “just let go,” as he demonstrates effortless arts. It is so simple when Curtis Sensei says it, does it, helps us to experience it. And when I try to hold onto it, whooosh! evaporation!

After a break, the mat fills with decades of Aikidoists. The chatter slowly escapes into waves of quietude. Three lines of black and white sit in seiza simplicity and orchestrate a space that pulses into calmness. If I have forgotten why I love Aikido I am hushed once again by this silent respect: *Ai*-love; *ki*-energy; *do*-path.

Sensei begins to show how to *just...shift*. We grab our partner's wrist as we have hundreds of times before. We hold to show where the tension lies. We are reminded to *just...shift*. Why are we creating such difficulty, Sensei laughs. Then he asks the question, “What is the purpose of our study?” The replies sometimes echo like catechism answers: ‘to become one with the universe.’ Then Sensei asks “What is the difference between purpose and goal?” “Why do we insist on goals that don't serve our true purpose?” he prods us.

When we try to do something there is usually a goal involved, and we are often disappointed. “Let go of the outcome!” he tells us. It gets me thinking about why I am in this dojo. What outcome am I ‘trying’ to achieve? To be recognized as a “Black Belt Martial Artist?” To gain mastery over my enemies? To find inner peace? To roll around on the mats for physical exercise? Curtis Sensei reminds us of the importance of the ‘side disciplines’ of Aikido (breathing, meditation, *sokushin no gyō*) as a path to illuminate true purpose.

Curtis Sensei then suggests that teachers can help us in our pursuit of purpose...if we allow them. When we accept a teacher, he tells us, it is our responsibility to follow our teacher's instructions *without editing*. I find myself thinking about what this *really* means for me and for my own practice. Then I laugh at myself—I'm editing already! Sensei reiterates strongly, “Just do as the sensei says.”

Then Sensei asks me directly, “Can you just accept the teacher's teaching?” I begin to ramble on a long, complicated, edited answer. He chuckles and says, “The answer should simply be ‘yes, Sensei.’” I nod and repeat, “yes, Sensei.”

Five minutes later, Curtis Sensei shares a story with us about being challenged by Maruyama Sensei to practice 1,000 *ude mawashi* every day for one year. When another *yudansha* asked Maruyama Sensei why he told Curtis Sensei to do this, but not anyone else, Maruyama Sensei answered “Because he'll do

Poppele Sensei's Notebook
Friday, January 18
Instructors Class

We teach to be one with the Universe—to follow the will of the universe. But how can we know the will of the universe until it reveals itself? You need to “Let go.” Of what? Of selfish mind. Of agenda.

Having an agenda limits us, our experiences, and our choices. The challenge is that we think our selfish mind is **us**. But selfish mind is an illusion—it is a construct.

When we say your **mind** gets stuck we mean your awareness and intention is stuck. “Keep One Point” means go to a place with **no preference**. Success and failure are the same. The part of us that wants to succeed and develop **is** selfish mind. Have **no** preference. Just be present. Just realize your non-separate condition.

Instructor's Responsibilities:

- 1) Be a living representation of oneness of mind and body (keep one point *at all times*)
- 2) Show others how to do the arts.
- 3) Help others clear their blocks so they can do the arts themselves.

Student's Responsibilities:

- 1) Have a beginner's mind (this is a tall order!)
- 2) Be willing to follow the teacher's instructions **without editing**. ☺

it, and you won't." Then Curtis Sensei looks straight at me as he asks the class, "Will you do that?" Of course I answer, "yes, Sensei!" Yikes! Tricked!

After the Friday night session, a handful of us staying at the same hotel carpool into the maze of highways that twist around the dojo and spit us out into Lee Highway or Route 63, I'm not sure which. The GPS gizmos tell us one way, the road signs say another. Confusion reigns. Drivers follow the caravan into spirals that will never get us to our goal of a cozy bed. I wonder about the purpose of this driving around in circles.

I room with Catherine, a new student from New York City. She has questions about Ki Breathing—the cadence, process, practice. Perhaps Curtis Sensei will provide some illumination, I suggest. Knowing that Sensei always finishes his seminar with a question & answer session, I make a mental note to ask him about it.

The next morning I woke up thinking about my "assignment" from Curtis Sensei. Okay, I thought, here goes. After 100 *ude mawashi*, I stop. Curtis Sensei told us he took 2 months to build up to 1,000 each day. I figure 100 is a good start. Or perhaps I'm just editing again. I do, however, have renewed hope that the two miles to the dojo will be taken on a direct path. No so! We spin and careen with the abandon of a young, brash uke until seemingly by chance we find Eskridge Road. We arrive at the dojo with just minutes to spare, once again. Not quite shugyo, but closer.

On the tatami, I see Doetsch-Kidder and Poppele Senseis pacing themselves through *ude mawashi*. I stand behind them and swing through another 150.

The students expand to the edges of the tatami for Oneness Rhythm Taiso. The music begins, hands raise to chest height and then drop as the one point drops. Though we all hear the same music, each person creates a different rhythm. Editing again. Sensei starts us at the very beginning. When we allow our hands to swing like a pendulum, past our thighs, we can maintain proper rhythm but when we bring our hands to rest on our thighs, we tend to stop the rhythm—stop the Ki. Case Sensei and I practice together—past our legs, touching our legs—until the rhythm is the same. Finally, a moment with no editing.



Saturday night my hotel compatriots are entrusted with getting 3 cars worth of Aikidoka to the Doetsch-Kidder residence for a Middle Eastern buffet. I feel as if we are practicing the concept of 'half-half-half' as we get ever closer to their home without ever reaching it. The GPS says one thing, the directions and road signs say another. Finally the 'uke' truck at the rear takes over as 'nage' and redirects the assault on the Northern Virginia byways. Our host extends Ki through the cell phone, leads with confidence, and guides the cars to the center of *his* universe. Following his guidance, without editing, we finally arrive. Drinks and falafels all around!

On Sunday morning the drivers get us to the dojo on time (that is, before Curtis, Shaner and Gardner Senseis). *Shugyo* at last! Already preparations for *Sokushin no gyo* are underway. Bells and benches checkerboard the tatami. Doetsch-Kidder Sensei and Christina Larson are doing their *mawashi* again. I

join them and up to 500 *ude mawashi*. Curtis Sensei notices and asks, “How many did you do?” I hedge by answering, “Twice as many as yesterday, Sensei!”

During my years on Maui, *sokushin no gyo* was practiced with Suzuki Sensei as *osa* and Curtis Sensei as *kagura*. I still expect to see Suzuki Sensei at the right front position as I find my place. *Sokushin no gyo* is my favorite practice in Aikido. I love throwing everything into each cycle, forgetting about the next minute until the next minute, then giving it all once again.


Curtis Sensei leads the sound—To-Ho-Ka-Mi-E-Mi-Ta-Me—as Shaner Sensei encourages every student to excellence, attention and focus. The cadence builds until the chant rushes past breath into pure essence: **TO(hokame)-E(mitame) TO! E! TO! E! TO! E!** And then haaaaaaaaaaaaah...into some void. Curtis Sensei breaks the silence with *Norito*. The tones, sounds, cadence of that chant is an authentic ‘transmission’ from ancient Shinto, through Suzuki Sensei, through Curtis Sensei, to each student in the room. Curtis Sensei then stands before the Shomen and extends *Ki Barai* in celebration of the New Year. He cuts with *kiai*—‘EE-YAY-EE!’

Following *Ki Barai*, we had a traditional *omiki*. For *omiki*, every student lines up according to rank, beginning with Pierce Sensei and Gardner Sensei. I find my place next to Daniel, another Mauian moving to Vermont. White-belted students build the rear flank. Curtis Sensei and Shaner Sensei then pour a ritual glass of sake for each student, to thank and encourage them in the coming year. The two senior *yudansha* exude a camaraderie of Plus Ki built over decades of Aikido dedication.



We circle around for a question & answer session. As a courtesy to my roommate Catherine, I ask Sensei to go over *Ki Breathing*. He looks at me askance as if to say: why are you asking this, haven’t you already spent years seeing breathing demonstrations? Then he smiles silently, brings me in front of him, and asks me to breathe. It is jagged, noisy, forced. I know this. I have forgotten. He reminds me to take the breath to infinity, to take the breath to nothing, to make the breath silent. He transmits this to me singularly while in the midst of a hundred people. And then I seem to find the way to *just...shift*. “You see,” Curtis Sensei says to me, “you *do* know.” The question wasn’t for Catherine after all.

Poppele Sensei, student of Ohana (the newsletter and the concept) creates an *ude mawashi* support email group. He, Doetsch-Kidder Sensei, Christina, Niko (Poppele Sensei’s student back in Minnesota) and I are taking on 1,000 *ude mawashi* every day for one year. The next week I work up to 1,000, cruise and then fall back. Yikes! I practice stacking firewood in 20° sunshine. Does that count? I start up again, then down. Again. I practice rolling back up to standing, breathing, relaxing, extending, swinging my arms as I drop my one point into *ude mawashi*. Sometimes it’s easy, sometimes it’s not, but it’s always pretty simple.

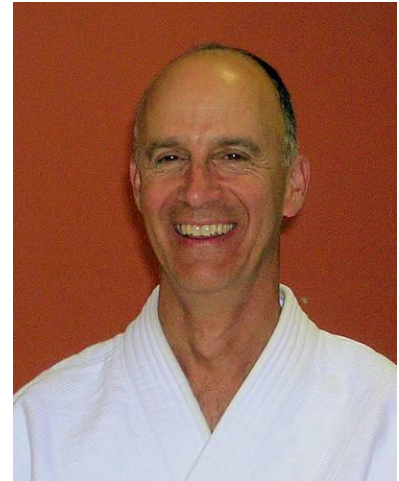
Swing, drop, count, breathe: I practice this goal in hopes of moving toward clearer purpose. And because I still hear Curtis Sensei’s encouragement: “to do this practice will change your practice.” 

Beverly Kehoe lives and trains in Vermont. She can be reached at <bev@madriver.com>. Interested students may also join the 1,000 Mawashi Google Group by visiting <http://groups.google.com/group/1000-mawashi>

Ki in Business: Purpose vs. Goals

By Steve Zimmerman

At the *Shugyo Tassei Kigan Shiki*, Curtis Sensei spoke to us about the difference between purpose and goals. When we do something that serves our purpose, the activity does not depend upon a future outcome. Since the activity is aligned with our purpose, its value exists in the present moment. Goals however, have a future orientation. We pursue an activity in order to accomplish something that we hope will happen in the future. We experience purpose in the present, while goals lean toward the future.




Tohei Sensei wrote in Our Motto “To unify mind and body and become one with the Universe is the ultimate purpose of our study.” At first it might seem that this could also be expressed by saying “To unify mind and body and become one with the Universe is the ultimate goal of our study.” Without getting caught up in translation and semantics, the two statements are profoundly different. Stated as purpose, this expression means that the meaning of our actions can be found in the degree to which we are fully present in them. Regardless of our level of training, if our activity or experience orients us toward unification, then it serves our purpose. Alternatively, we might take the approach that our current activity supports a goal, such as becoming one with the universe eventually. In this case our focus on the goal will likely take us out of the present moment, and that in itself is contrary to our purpose.

Goals have become a high priority in our culture, and although Curtis Sensei points out a profound distinction between purpose and goals, goals do have their place. In our Ki-Aikido training we often set goals, especially with respect to testing and belts. Setting a goal, such as earning the rank of Shodan, has a way of focusing our training. So how do we reconcile the two? Goals themselves are neither plus or minus. But often we allow our focus on goals to conflict with our purpose. Let’s look at the example of preparing for Shodan, the goal to prepare for a testing date in the future. If that goal motivates you to deepen your commitment to your training, then the goal **might** serve the purpose of our training. However, if in the course of that intensified training you focus so much on the future test that you are not mindful and aware during your present training then the goal becomes an obstacle. If we become attached to an outcome, we lose the joy and connection to be found in each moment of training. We then move on to the next goal, the next belt, with the hope we will eventually experience the connection we seek.

Business takes the focus on goals to a whole new level. In my business we often set goals, and then spend considerable time and energy figuring out how to meet those goals. So when Curtis sensei pointed out this issue, I began to wonder if this distinction also applies to business. Many businesses have a mission statement. A mission statement should be a statement of purpose, but often it is simply a goal. Here is an example of a goal oriented mission statement: “Our mission is to become the largest widget manufacturer in the US.” Franklin Covey gives us an example of a purpose driven mission statement: “Enable greatness in organizations and individuals everywhere.” The goal version of a mission statement lacks purpose and refers to a future event. You can usually shift from goal to purpose by asking the “five whys.” Beginning with the stated goal, ask “why do you want to become the largest widget manufacturer?” When that question has been answered, ask why again. After five why’s, you

usually get to the root, the true purpose. If the fifth why brings you to “so that we can make as much money as possible,” then keep asking why.

Assuming that your business has a clear purpose driven mission statement, then what do we make of goals? We must begin by ensuring that our goals align with and server our purpose. The mission statement gives us a reference point, enabling us to be certain that the goals align with our purpose. Without the “true north” of a mission statement, goals can take a business off on many tangents which do not support true purpose. Goals provide important focus for a business, and since the business itself is not an individual seeking oneness, goals do not get in the way of presence and purpose. Goals can also provide motivation, but unless the employees participate in gains from meeting those goals, their commitment will either be shallow or short lived.

For those of us training in Ki-Aikido, every activity, from brushing our teeth to eating an orange to performing *kokyu nage* provides an opportunity to experience the purpose of our study, here and now. In business, goals provide an effective way to set direction and create motivation. Without a clear purpose and specific goals, a business can go off course. As Alice warned in Alice in Wonderland , “If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.” 

Steve Zimmerman Sensei is the founder and President of Zimmerman Marine, Inc., and the Head Instructor of Five Rivers Ki Aikido in Gloucester, VA. He can be reached at <stevez@zimmermanmarine.com>

Eastern Ki Federation Promotions

Shaner Sensei and Pierce Sensei extend their congratulations and thanks to the following Eastern Ki Federation members for their extraordinary commitment to training and service for all our benefit.

Eric Harrell Sensei has been awarded the rank of **Rokudan**


Mark Stone Sensei has been awarded the rank of **Godan**

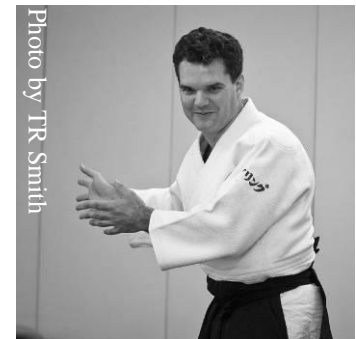
Russell McCulloch Sensei has been awarded the rank of **Godan**

Ileana Shaner Sensei has been awarded the rank of **Yondan**

Mayumi Case Sensei has been awarded the rank of **Yondan**

Richard Fryling Sensei has been awarded the rank of **Yondan**

Matt Doetsch-Kidder Sensei passed his exam for **Nidan** at the EKF Seminar in Raleigh, NC 



Setsudo

Selfish people have never understood and traveled the way of the Universe in the past. Therefore when we realize the principles and way of the Universe, the Universe gives us the responsibility to spread them to the world.

Do not think that you cannot help another. What you learn today, you can teach another the next day. The world is full of people who have lost the way of the Universe and suffer from mental illness. Let us do our best to explain the correct principles of the Universe to them.

-Koichi Tohei

Surfing on Ki

By Charlie Ochoa

I began surfing in the 1980s when I lived in Southern California. Since moving to North Carolina I have gone to Myrtle Beach and the Outer Banks a few times to go body surfing. As a student of Ki Aikido, I am now finding parallels between Ki training and surfing in the ocean:

- Ki, like the ocean waves and currents, is all around you—either accept the ride and feel the energizing power, or reject the ride, fight against the waves and feel tired.
- As in Aikido, when you have a good connection (between you and the wave, or between *nage* and *uke*), the energy flows and the “power of the ride” is amazing.
- As in Aikido, if you try to force a ride or if you are afraid of accepting a ride, you bump. This is when injuries are likely to occur. In surfing, a bump can look like being bent in half then slammed head first into the sand.
- You must be *seishi* to surf—relaxed without collapsing. With an “unbendable body” you can feel your connection to the wave.
- You can not force the wave to take you for a ride. If you connect with the wave it will offer you a ride and you can accept it. Like the wave, Ki is offering you the connection; you can accept it.
- You must extend Ki to the tips of your fingers and toes to connect to a wave and accept the ride it is offering.
- Like the Ki of the Universe, the ocean is always there, and always in motion. Every day the power is there for you to connect with.
- When you being *uke*—either surfing in the ocean or following you *nage* in Ki-Aikido—you must be fully in the present. You can’t be reminiscing about the past or anticipating the future.

Before I learned to enjoy body surfing in the ocean, it was just a lot of water to me. After I learned to feel the energy in the water, and accept the rides that were offered, I found a really exciting and energizing world. I can not control the energy, no point in trying. Like the ocean, Ki of the Universe is always there. Through Ki-Aikido training I am learning to feel the energy and power of the universe, both in the dojo and in my daily life. As a result I am not tired, wore out, whipped, or otherwise drained at the end of the day. Rather, I feel alert, energized, peaceful and relaxed. That is a good feeling, the more you get, the more you want, and want to share it. Just like a beautiful day at the beach. ☺

Willpower

An old Oriental saying tells us, "When our willpower is in harmony with the Universe and focused upon a stone, it can pass through it. In such a state, the mind can command the wind, rain, and thunder."

But from where does our willpower come? Those who understand and answer this question are those who accomplish important tasks.

When we coordinate mind and body by stilling the waves of our mind to imperceptible, infinitely decreasing ripples, we can send forth our great willpower that can move the Universe.

-Koichi Tohei

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“Most people pursue waking up in the way they go after a new car, or a mate, a college education, or becoming CEO, as if it’s the same thing. But this is not the same. Those are temporary goals. There is nothing wrong with getting new cars and becoming CEOs, or whatever else pleases you, but don’t confuse the two. Achieving those things, we use skills that can be learned, whereas awakening does not result from education, a gathering of knowledge. This is the very highest art form: the art of letting go of ‘doing’ and dropping into resting in awareness itself. This ‘shift’ I have been talking about is the perfect and complete unification of all aspects of life, of truly knowing and experiencing at the same time; suddenly, waaa! It all comes together.”

Christopher Curtis Sensei holds the Aikido rank of Nanadan (7th), Okuden Ki rank, and is the Chief Instructor of the Hawaii Ki Federation. He teaches regularly in Hawaii, throughout the mainland U.S., and has been appointed by the Ki Society Headquarters as the official representative of the Ki Society in the Netherlands and Germany. He is the author of “Ki-Aikido on Maui”, which was published in its third edition in 2001, and is used as the official training manual by all HKF teachers and students.

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