

Aikido of Phoenix

Satori Dojo Newsletter

WWW.AikidoOfPhoenix.Com

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武道直義

SENSEI'S CORNER

Konichiwa Deshi,

As we begin this New Year, I encourage each of you to review the last year. Evaluate the good and the bad. Through this you are able to continue to move forward in life. Make a decision to walk the path of a warrior with all the responsibilities and fruits that go with it. Much has been made recently of Bushido, or the warrior's code. It is the perfect example of how some things are timeless. I have found a great source that explains Bushido in simple terms. Read this and see if you are ready to walk the path.

Bushido,

"The Way of the Warrior", has come to be known as the samurai

武士道

code, but it is more than that. The name given is not "the code" or "the law" of the warrior, but rather, "the Way." It is not merely a list of rules to which a warrior must subscribe in exchange for his title, but a set of principles that prepare a man or woman to fight without losing his humanity, and to lead and command without losing touch with basic values. It is a description of a way of life, and a prescription to make a warrior-nobleman.

At the heart of bushido is the samurai's acceptance of death. "The way of the samurai is found in death," says the Hagakure, a 1716 explanation of bushido whose title means literally "Hidden in the Leaves". Once he is steeled to the fact of dying, he may then live his life without worrying about dying, and choose his actions based on principle, not fear. "If by setting one's heart right every morning and evening, one is able to live as though his body were already dead, he gains freedom in The Way. His whole life will be without blame, and he will succeed in his calling."

The samurai's position of high rank and enormous respect within the society was not a license to behave any way he chose. Rather, it was the result of the extreme discipline and the high standard by which he lived. Disciplining his entire life makes him capable of decisive action in battle, and surely, that was the original goal of "the way." His Zen practice freed his mind from distraction and enabled him to pursue perfection in all things from haiku to seppuku. By reaching perfection in all he endeavored, including kendo - "the way of the

sword" - he became an unbeatable warrior and an unstoppable force in society.

Inazo Nitobe, referred to samurai as "knights" and likened bushido in some ways to the code of chivalry. In the same way that a few chivalric ideals have persisted as behavioral norms in Western society, he suggests that the principles that formed the samurai permeated all facets of Japanese civilization. This is hardly surprising, since the samurai controlled the government for at least 676 years, arguably longer. Japan's transformation from a country in complete isolation in the mid-19th century to a world power in the mid-20th century may owe something to the samurai-bred abilities of discipline and focus. If bushido was the source of the samurai's approach to life, its ongoing influence is hard to deny.

There are seven codes of conduct for Bushido.

They are:

義	Justice
勇	Bravery
仁	Benevolence
礼	Politeness
真	Veracity
名誉	Honor
忠義	Loyalty

May we all have the courage to live as warriors this year and all years. Happy New Year!

In Oneness
Sensei

THE CHANDLER KIDS' CORNER

Happy New Year to you all! Although the holiday season is a great time to get together with friends and family, do different things, carry out family traditions and just enjoy the season it's always nice to get back to a familiar routine. I'm glad to see so many returning faces as well as all the new faces. Welcome to Aikido of Phoenix. Please ask if you have any questions about anything and we'll do our best to answer your questions and help you feel comfortable. I wish everyone a wonderful new year and hope it's one filled with joy and happiness for you and your family.

The month of December was shortened by a couple of classes and so the last two weeks we had an Ukemi (tumbling) Night and a Request Night. During the ukemi practice we introduced the big balls to help us with being round. It's just a regular therapy ball used for excising/physical therapy but it's a great way to "feel" your tumbles and feel safe in going around – just hug the ball and let yourself go over your shoulder. We had a great time using it to tumble. We also used it to play a new game we call Shikko Ball. We have some good shots in class despite the difficulty of throwing those large balls straight☺. It's fun to play in a way that is going to increase your strength as well as improve your awareness and give you practice in moving from your center.

During Request Night we practiced with the jo (a short straight stick). We learned how to hold it and maneuver it. Then once we got a feel for it we practiced a few techniques. The jo, or any weapon, is really just an extension of yourself and you have to practice it that way. Working with weapons is a great way to improve your open hand techniques as well as do something different and I will try to incorporate them into class more often.

The first few weeks of December the younger class focused on the aiki taiso (exercise you do alone) called tekubi kosa. From that exercise we did several techniques – kotegaeshi, zemponage and shihonage. These are a bit on the difficult side yet everyone did a good job. I love to see effort and this group gave their best.

In the older class we worked on the aiki taiso tekubi kosa, zenshin, kotai and funakogi. From these exercises we did quite a few techniques that help us move from our centers and extend our energy. It doesn't matter what technique you are working on you can always work on extending your energy. The best way to describe this that I have found is the empty vs. full fire hose. When empty the fire hose can be rolled up and carried by one person. When full of water (energy, ki) it may take several people to control it and it is certainly not bendable. Keep this in mind as you work on your ki extension. We want full fire hoses, not wet noodles☺

It's important to remember that whatever we practice in class is not intended to be "mastered". Everything we do – warm ups, ukemi, aiki taiso, techniques – is like small steps to becoming the best person you can be. Aikido is just another way of developing yourself. I hope you don't get frustrated because you are having trouble with a particular technique or skill because in the end it's not about doing the technique perfectly, it's about all the practice and hard work you put forth in striving to do the technique in the first place. What you'll discover is that while you practice to do the exercises and techniques you will naturally get better at everything. You must have faith that hard work and perseverance do pay off. Keep coming to class, keep practicing and keep doing the best you can. Here's to another great month of training☺

Teresa Mastison Sensei

GLENDALE GAZETTE

Greetings from Glendale. The holidays can be a wonderful time but can also be a very busy time that tends to interrupt our training as everybody goes about preparing and enjoying their celebrations. Many students were absent at the Glendale location during December and have returned now that January has arrived. Welcome back to all of the students and a special welcome to the new students who have joined us this month.

As I have noted in previous columns, I have secured the community center on Sundays at 2 PM for the adult students to have an open workout. This will be on an occasional basis subject to the needs of other organizations. Either Jurek or I will be there to open the building if anybody has an interest in having an open workout session. I will be setting up schedules each month for the following month. For January, we have the 11th, the 18th, and the 25th.

January 29th will mark the 5th anniversary of the opening of the Glendale location. For me it has been five wonderful years marked with many achievements by the students and the steady maturing of the dojo, both by the adults and the children. I feel very fortunate to have had this opportunity in my martial arts career and I consider it a privilege to have been able to lead this dedicated group of martial artists. Thank you all very much for your hard work and dedication. I look forward to many more years of growth and exploration of Aikido with all of you.

That's the news from the Westside.
Until next time...Sayonara!
Russ Fleegle Sensei

NEW PHONE NUMBER

Aikido of Phoenix has a new phone number. As of the printing of this newsletter, it will be in effect. Thanks!
480-699-2334

PROMOTIONS AND TEST CANDIDATES

Invited to test:

Hachikyu – Jesse Cakebread, Samuel Lopez, Guy Sheppard, Steven Santiago

CHRISTMAS PARTY A HUGE SUCCESS

The annual Aikido of Phoenix Christmas party was held Dec. 5 at the Glendale dojo. It was a good time had by all and we would like to give our sincerest thanks to the Glendale students for all their hard work in preparing the dojo for our gathering. It's not easy getting a place ready for a potluck dinner that's going to feed 200 people, but they did a great job and the place looked fabulous!

The party consisted of a potluck dinner followed by the awards ceremony. The awards ceremony consisted of the children in both dojos receiving certificates of recognition for their participation in Aikido for 2003 and several adults received special awards determined by both dojos voting. The results of that voting follows:

The winners for the Glendale dojo are:

- Uke of the Year – Laura Racokzynski
- Best Test – Joelle Radosevich
- Most Improved Student – Joelle Radosevich
- Student of the Year – Jerry White

The winners for the Chandler dojo are:

- Uke of the Year – Robert Vaughn
- Best Test – Jim Clark
- Most Improved Student – Gretchen Sherman
- Student of the Year – Lucy Morris

After the awards ceremony there was time for everyone to sit around and visit and watch the various festivities that pursued. Santa Claus paid us a special visit and handed out goody bags to all the children. There was face painting, a piñata, O'Sensei videos playing and Sensei painted names on bookmarks. We had quite a few raffle prizes to distribute too. Some of the prizes included zoo passes, movie tickets, video gift cards, Christmas CDs, gift certificates to Macayo's and Serrano's and a tanto donated by Jim Clark.

It was such a nice time and we hope everyone who attended enjoyed themselves. Thank you to everyone for providing delicious food and drink. What a

feast we had! Again, a huge thank you to the students of Glendale, all the other people who helped out in the planning, setting up, taking down and all those who helped out on the spot wherever help was needed. You all helped to make this a memorable event. Thank you!

Mastison Sensei and Teresa would also like to thank everyone for the very thoughtful and wonderful Christmas gift that they received from the students of Aikido of Phoenix. We received two tickets to the musical "Chicago", which is one of our favorites☺. We plan on attending a show in Feb. and we thank you ever so much for your generosity and kindness.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR NEXT YEAR'S PARTY

For those of you who like to plan ahead mark your calendars for Friday, December 3, 2004 for next year's Christmas party. It will be held at the Chandler dojo where we have already reserved all three of the multi-purpose rooms so we will have plenty of room to spread out and have fun.

AIKIDO VIDEOTAPES AVAILABLE

Mastison Sensei has completed several videos and they are now available in VHS or CD (for computer). Following is a short description of each tape and it's cost. If you are interested in obtaining any of these please see Teresa.

Officer Survival-Patrol to SWAT - \$20.00

This tape covers open hand defenses, weapon retention, knife defenses and much more. This was designed to supplement direct instruction for today's law enforcement professionals.

Go Kihon Aikido Waza - \$30.00

This tape was made with the goal of exposing students to five kihon (basic) techniques and their application to all the basic attacks.

Student Guide to the Fundamentals of Aikido-\$20.00

This tape was developed in an attempt to help you understand the basics of Aikido and dojo life. It covers ukemi (tumbling), etiquette, undos (hand exercises), aiki taiso (exercises you do alone), weapons, and history.

Kobudo - \$20.00

This tape touches on the fundamental of the weapons of Budo. We look at two common weapons as well as two that are rarely seen in most dojos. The weapons that are covered are the bokken (wooden sword), the jo (wooden staff), obi waza (belt) and the kuboton (small, key chain style stick).

WEAPONS FOR SALE

Qty.	Weapon	Wood	Price
2	Bokken	White Ash	\$40
1	Bokken	Red Oak	\$35
2	Bokken	Hickory	\$50
1	Shoto	Hickory	\$50
2	Tanto	Bocote	\$25
1	Tanto	Osage orange	\$25
2	Tanto	Hickory	\$17
6	Tanto	Purple heart	\$20
2	Jo	Purple heart	\$55
1	Jo	Hickory	\$45

Contact Jim Clark at the Chandler (Satori) Dojo

NEW SWORDS

Sensei has made arrangements again with a major sword distributor to buy a number of swords at a discounted price. The katana that has got the most attention thus far is called



the "Practical" katana. It has a forged steel blade and is made for serious cutting. This is a real carbon steel sword and not a stainless steel imitation. The price on the sword is \$225.00. You can see all the swords that are available right now by visiting our web site and clicking on Budoworks. See Sensei with any questions.

NEED TILE INSTALLED?

Darrell Wyatt has been in the tile trade for over six years and has worked with everything from ceramic to natural stone. He does installations of any size and also does repairs. He has competitive prices for quality craftsmanship. If you have any questions call Darrell at 602-570-7277.

WEAPON BAGS & UNIFORM MENDING

Need a good weapons bag at a good price? If so, contact Sonia Wells (480-241-8570). She has handmade weapon bags in a variety of shapes and colors to choose from. And if your gi needs some mending, you can also give Sonia or Lucy (480-241-8569) a call to mend, hem or make minor alterations to your gi and/or hakkama.

