

# Aikido WORLD

Journal of the Aikido Association of America



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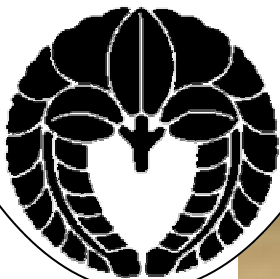
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# Seminars and Events

## **Aikido World**

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## **Reflections on the 2004 Zenshinkan Memorial Seminar**

*By Corey Guilbault*

Always bittersweet, the Zenshinkan Memorial Seminar is an occasion I look forward to every year. In addition to great training and the chance to see old friends, the seminar's intention—training-as-tribute to Toyoda Sensei and former Zenshinkan dojo cho Haupt Sensei—is always cause for reflection, bringing to the mat deeper feelings than our day-to-day training might.

I suppose an article on a seminar would be remiss not to at least touch upon the Aikido training itself. As always Sato Sensei brought his energetic Aikido and easy-going sensibility to the mat, leading classes in open-hand technique, weapons techniques, kumijo, and jo nage. There is always a building logic to Sato Sensei's sessions, and I enjoyed watching it unfold during the classes—simple movements leading first to basic techniques and then on to more expansive, involved and unusual adaptations; all the while remaining true to the fundamental concept involved in those initial movements.

Toyoda Sensei always lived bigger than life, and what he accomplished in such a short time is beyond measure.

He arrived in the United States not speaking English, with only a suitcase and a little money. From there he went on to found national and international Aikido organizations that together number more than 200 dojo worldwide, and lived to see the completion of a new international headquarters training facility in Palatine, Illinois.

As we entered the new millennium, Toyoda Sensei continued to build upon and stress what have become the hallmarks of his instruction: powerful, effective technique, clear instructional methodology, the im-

In typical seminar format, we trained Friday evening, all day Saturday and on Sunday morning. And in typical seminar style the mat was crowded with students old and new, of all ages and ranks, enjoying the thumping, bumping, flying, slamming, torquing, pinning and rolling of AAA Aikido.

But there are two moments that stand out each year at the Memorial Seminar. The first is Saturday night's dinner and the second, Sunday morning's memorial service.

The dinner begins as many seminar dinners do; students crowd around tables, enjoy much-needed refreshments, eat well and talk about everything from old samurai movies to the new techniques they saw that day. ("Did you get that 'pass by your belly' thing we did with the jo?").

But as the meal concludes and the dishes are cleared, the spirit in the room changes. One by one, attendees stand up to share stories and memories of their relationships with Toyoda Sensei and Haupt Sensei. These tales and anecdotes range from the comical (especially some

*(Continued on page 3)*



*Fumio Toyoda Shihan*

portance of instructor certification and training, and the spirit of Budo which must inspire and motivate all of our activities.

Toyoda Sensei was determined that we be at the center of the growth of Aikido, supporting and respecting the art's origins in Japan, while at the same time creating our own expression and strong art here where we stand.

Toyoda Sensei left his family and students with a remarkable legacy and with a remarkable dream to carry on. His teaching will have effects for generations to come.

AAA and AAI proudly move forward under the legacy of the man whose dream created them and has driven them so successfully.

Zenshinkan Reflections...  
(Continued from page 2)

of the imitations that inevitably surface), to the nostalgic (a familiar key phrase that opens a rush of memories), to the downright sentimental.

As I watched everyone laugh, or silently nod their head, or drift away for a moment into their own private memories, I was again struck by the importance of today, every day, here and now. All of these stories that were being told, at the time they originally happened, were just day-to-day passing events. They were “todays” that have now become something very special.

I suppose we all take for granted the comments, scolding, laughter, and vast learning that touches us day in and day out while we train. But sometimes that day-to-dayness suddenly, and dramatically changes.

In an instant, what we came to expect each day with the sunrise simply ceases to be there the way it was. And what you remember from that moment on is everything you’ll have of that original time.

If ever there was a charge to sponge up every moment and give yourself completely to the experiences of today, the sudden vacuum left by death is it.

During all those stories and memories at Saturday’s dinner I walked away with a greater appreciation for that dinner itself. It was a chance to sit there and reflect, but also to experience what was happening then and there. I’m betting that some day, some of us will tell stories about telling stories at that dinner.

Come to think of it, I’m doing that right now.

Sunday morning’s training came, and despite the inevitable bumps and bruises,



Photos courtesy of Laura DeGraff



the mat was again well attended. The session began with a simple ceremony led by AAA Eastern Regional director Glen Matsuda Sensei, whereby each student took a moment to light a small piece of incense and to pay respect through a series of bows to O’Sensei, Toyoda Sensei, and Haupt Sensei. The occasion passed quietly as each of us took our turn.

While sitting after my turn and waiting for everyone else to have their time, I reflected on the significance of incense to the occasion: Burning incense begins with a bright, dynamic flame that illuminates the things (and people) around it. But always, this fire burns all too briefly. Once it is extinguished, it is, in one sense, gone forever. But not really. It has merely changed into something else.

From where that flame once burned now rises the scent of the incense, slow and steady, filling the room with its presence and reminding us continually of that brilliant moment of fire.

For each of us, Toyoda Sensei’s and Haupt Sensei’s fire burned dynamic and bright... but all too briefly.

But like incense, we are always reminded of them; in our daily training, in our daily life, in stories told around dinner tables and in quiet moments of reflection...

...and of course, amid friends, on the mat, for three days of joyful training during a beautiful June weekend, in Worcester, Massachusetts.

*Corey Guilbault is sandan and is dojo cho at Aikido of Norwalk/Yanagi Aikido Dojo in Norwalk, CT.*

## Teaching Committee Seminar in Arecibo, Puerto Rico

By Glen Matsuda

I had the opportunity to conduct a Teaching Committee seminar held August 13-15, 2004 in Arecibo, Puerto Rico hosted by Juan Torres of Aikido del Norte. The seminar was attended by Juan Torres and his students from Arecibo, Miriam Cedres and her students from Levittown, Bolivar Ramirez and his students from Mayaguez, Carlos Esquilin from Nippon Budo Kai Kan in Juncos, PR, Oliver Ramos, 7 children, Fred Mautz from Denver, 2 students from ASU, 3 from San Juan Aikikai, 1 from Kobayashi Dojos in Argentina, 2 karate instructors, and 5 judo students.

On Friday there were 37 students and we covered katatetori tai sabaki toshu irimi and applied it to katate tori kokyunage and ryotetori tenchinage, irimi and

tenkan. The next session covered katatetori ikkyo, nikyo, sankyo, yonkyo and gokyo, omote and ura both standing and suwari waza. Then we practiced yoko ukemi for ushiro type falls.

On Saturday, there were 44 students and in the morning, we covered some taiso, tai sabaki against bokken and then bokken dori. The afternoon session covered jo suburi and all five kumijo

Saturday evening a group dinner was held at El Buen Café restaurant in Hatillo and was attended by 27 people.

Sunday, August 15 was attended by 34 students and kumitachi 1 through 4 were covered. Then a half-hour discussion was held about the future of Aikido in Puerto



Rico, emphasizing the need for all students to attend class, to support their dojo and dojo cho, and the other dojos in Puerto Rico. There was input from Juan Torres, Miriam Cedres, Bolivar Ramirez, Oliver Ramos, Fred Mautz, Elizabeth Foster and Esteban Martinez. Esteban translated when needed.

Following the meeting there was an additional practice for the 3 AAA dojos and senior students attended by 18 people. The katatetori and yokomenuchi tai sabaki test requirements were reviewed. We also looked at how to teach mae ukemi. We practiced ryokata dori kokyunages. Then we spent 35 minutes on randori.

Since I was able to combine this with a short vacation before the seminar, this visit to Puerto Rico was fun and memorable.

*Glen Matsuda Shihandai, godan, is the Eastern States AAA Representative, and a member of the AAA Teaching Committee. He is the dojo cho of Shishinkan Dojo in Nanuet, NY.*



Photos courtesy of Glen Matsuda



## Aikido International Foundation

Presents

**Outdoor Retreat Seminar with David Rose Sensei**

*October 8-10, Rose's Retreat, Grand Junction, MI*

**Tactical Aikido Seminar with Frank Gallo Sensei**

*November 19-21, Ryoshinkan Dojo, Palatine, IL*

See <http://www.aaa-aikido.com/aif/events.html> for more information

## Remembering Toyoda Shihan

By Alan Okada

*Cast aside the pessimism that holds that regardless of how much one individual may try, the great forces of the world do not change. If only one person becomes a better man, the universal is at least better by that one person. One little light can light ten thousand, which can become the power that illuminates the world. To create a better world we must start with ourselves.*

- Koichi Tohei

On Friday, the 25th of June, 2004, the Toyoda Sensei Memorial Seminar started. It was an interesting thing to witness. So many new faces arriving, having never met Sensei during his altogether too short a life, and the few, privileged, lucky few of us whose recollections of Sensei are still vivid and meaningful, all gathered together to remember, celebrate, honor, and validate this man's life and the light he brought to the world. To our world. Indeed, our very presence there affirmed our gratitude to his spirit, showing that we too had lit our candles, and that through us, his light still shines.

The practice took on an air of that feeling, to a degree. Not of the gravity and solemn grim countenance that often accompanies deep or heavy respect, but instead with a joy, freedom, and open camaraderie that reminded me of Sensei's

smile. Or rather of the joy that I felt on the occasions that Sensei would smile at me.

After the first session of training, we watched old videos of Sensei and traded stories over pizza and beer. It was like a rite of passage as the senior students there at the seminar passed on stories about Sensei to the next generation.

The next class started at 10:00 in the morning on Saturday, and in the style of our teacher, James Nakayama Sensei (Chushinkan Dojo) and Ken Macbeth Sensei (Kenshinkan Dojo) revisited kihon-waza throughout the morning. One of the strongest points of Toyoda Sensei's teachings was his creation of a system, or as he called it, a teaching methodology, that not only encompassed what to teach, but how to teach. In spreading his Aikido, Sensei took the time to teach his teachers the art of instruction, and therefore he ensured the quality of the Aikido that came from him was transmitted well. His talent in doing so is never more plain to see than when watching his most experienced students teach. Not just the techniques, but the etiquette and the majesty and the joy of the art can be seen through these teachers. There was an almost palpable energy or presence that Toyoda Sensei emitted, and the same can be said of the two instructors teaching at Sensei's memorial seminar. If the idea that the students are a reflection of the teacher, then Sensei's honor is in good hands.

Later on in the day, other long-time students of Toyoda Sensei were allowed to

teach and share with everyone that which they had received in Aikido from Sensei. It was interesting to see how differently his influence affected the lives of the people he touched.

On Sunday, class was held as usual and afterwards, a demonstration was done by the dojo cho in attendance; as had been the custom for many years prior. Both Aikido and Iaido were represented.

During the day on Saturday, Nakayama Sensei showed me how to light incense for Sensei. The ritual is exacting and deliberate, but aside from that, the purpose was intriguing to me. Instead of lighting the incense to mourn for the loss, your state of mind must instead be clear. Toyoda Sensei was a Zen priest and this training falls in line with that aspect of who he was. But it was interesting to me that instead of mourning for him, we focus and thereby further our training. It seems somehow appropriate.

Toyoda Sensei died young, but his gifts to the world extend far beyond his years. His leadership was a guiding light to us and here in the afterglow we celebrate together. It is clear that we too have found our own lights.

*I burn my candle at both ends  
Though it may not last all night  
Upon my foes and on my friends  
It leaves a lovely light.*

-Unknown

*Alan Okada is shodan and an assistant instructor at Ryushinkan Dojo in San Diego, CA.*



## Aikido Association of America Presents the Second Annual Women's Aikido Seminar

Join women from around the country for three days of training.  
Instruction by **Christine Dyer**, Yondan, **Elisabeth Menning**, Yondan,  
and **Laurie Erickson**, Sandan.

October 22-24 Ryoshinkan Dojo, Palatine, IL  
*Please check the web at [www.aaa-aikido.com](http://www.aaa-aikido.com) for more information*

**Western Region Toyoda Sensei Memorial Seminar held at Chushinkan Dojo, June 25-27, 2004.  
Instructors were James Nakayama Shihandai and Ken MacBeth Sensei.**

*All photos courtesy of James Nakayama.*



Students sandan and above were invited to teach: Kevin MacBeth (Kenshinkan Dojo) is nage, Derek Nakagawa (Aikido of Rossmoor) is uke.



Dojo cho demonstrations ended the seminar. Kevin Kelleher (Aikido of Escondido) is seen here with Lisa Connard.



Kokyū dosa marks the end of the first session.



Representing Ryushinkan Dojo, Alan Okada demonstrates with uke Kevin Mac Beth (Kenshinkan Dojo).



Students gathered to remember Toyoda Sensei at an early morning July 4 workout. Yudansha led the class with memories of Toyoda Sensei, or for those who did not know him, techniques they have learned since joining the AAA



Toyoda Sensei videos were the main attraction at a pizza party following Friday night's workout. For some it felt right to hear Sensei's voice in the dojo again, but for many, it was a first encounter with Sensei.

## From A Beginner's Mind: Impressions from the AAA East Coast Summer Camp

By John Hannon

Fourteen months and three kyu tests have passed. I'm sold on the entire thing. I've bought in. I've felt my life changing as I have dedicated myself to training. I've found a second home at Jikishinkan.

I'm either the best or worst person to write about the AAA East Coast Summer Camp. I've never been to an AAA event before. I'm completely partial. I'm an Aikido zealot. I'm a fanatic.

Fourteen months of arm twisting. Fourteen months of mat-slapping impact. Fourteen months of ups and downs—confusion followed by enlightenment followed by deeper confusion, and still, I'm head over heels over head over heels for it. I'm reading about it. I'm watching it live and digitized. I examine it when it's static. I'm swept up by its dynamics. I know it will take my entire life to gain even a partial mastery of its principles. Even so, these principles have informed my politics, the way I socialize. I've tried to apply them to my golf game, to the way I walk my dog.

Before bed, I brush my teeth with unbendable arm. I dream about Aikido while my center tosses and turns in the throws of subconscious ukemi. Throughout the week I'm pretty sure that I commune with the universal more often than my devoutly Catholic sister. I contemplate bokken kata one instead of the rosary.



Friends and coworkers think I've gone kind of nuts, but some are convinced enough by my fervor to give Aikido a try. I'm not really concerned about acquiring full converts. It's enough that they have decided to try it out. It makes me proud. It makes me feel like I've given them an opportunity to try something that they might enjoy.

Now the time has come to fulfill my first seminar/camp requirement so I can test for my blue belt (4th kyu) in September. I could have gone to a seminar earlier, but this one happens to be extremely convenient, only an hour away from home in Terrytown, NY, and perfectly timed at a month and a half in advance of my planned test date. It's serendipitous.

I make my reservations sans reservations. I'll stay in the dorms up at Marymount

College. I'll eat on the meal plan. I won't have to bring towels or a sleeping bag—they will be provided by the college. I will receive nearly 20 hours of instruction, packed into four days. That alone is nearly enough training to fulfill the hourly requirements for my next kyu test. It seems pretty intense though. I wonder how I'll hold up. Is it too much, too early? Maybe it is, but it's exactly what I want.

Classes will be taught by Andrew Sato Sensei, the chief instructor of AAA! RO-KUDAN! He won't be alone either. This dude, Nakayama Sensei, from SoCal, GODAN! will be teaching as well. There is no doubt that I am going to witness some sweet Aikido. I'm going to be learning from masters, but not from them alone. There will be lots of people there, from different places, from different dojo from around the country (maybe from around the world), Aikidoists of every rank—lots of flapping hakama to throw and to be thrown by. It will be a social event. There I will find fellow enthusiasts. People like you, gentle reader. People that understand this healthy obsession of mine.

I'm pretty sure everyone who attends will be excited, at least to some degree. Granted, maybe not all of them will be excited as I am. After all, many of them have attended camps before. Many have already had the opportunity to receive instruction directly from Sato Sensei and Nakayama Sensei. Sato Sensei and Nakayama Sensei are traveling all the time. For them, I suspect it could be just another weekend away from their homes and families, perhaps even a bit of a bur-



Photos courtesy of Chett Rubenstein

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den. Whatever the extent of their sacrifice, I find their commitment to the art extremely admirable. It only makes me more excited.

I arrive at Marymount College on Thursday afternoon with a few friends from Jikishinkan. I check in, confirm that my weekend is paid for, receive my keys and meal vouchers. A fellow fanatic from Jikishinkan and I will be rooming together for the weekend, but we've arrived too late to eat our first full meal at the cafeteria so instead, we settle for a granola bar apiece and go downstairs to the men's locker room to change for the first session.

In the gym we find a spot on the assembly of mats that have been borrowed from all of the closest affiliate dojo. Jikishinkan's are among them. I try to pick them out while I stretch, looking for any marks that I have become familiar with over the last year. One or two are easy to spot and that is enough to satisfy me. I've been closer to these mats than to any other floor in my life. I've practically rested my cornea on them while my shoulders were stretched to the limit of my pain threshold.

I recognize Sato Sensei from his pictures. He is shorter than I expected but I suspect that his stature only concentrates his power in a more compact form. There are



Photos courtesy of Chett Rubenstein

more hakama here than I have ever seen in one place before. The mat fills and the attendees' personal warm-ups settle into meditation or friendly conversation. Upper ranks from my dojo are talking with strangers, people they have trained with before at seminars and camps like this one, Aikido friends.

Two claps and Pavlovian conditioning takes over. We line up for the first training session of the weekend. During the bows I hear a bell in my head ringing. Am I actually salivating? Something changes. Where are my expectations, my speculations? They are all forgotten. The present demands my full attention. The bell in my mind fades away. Instruction has begun.

Unfortunately, at this point, recollection becomes difficult. I was far too absorbed by the entire event to take many mental notes, to chart any sort of timeline. I do remember that each session progressed in such a way as to allow a beginner like myself the opportunity to gain a basic understanding of each technique, and occasionally to discover a subtlety that I could try to apply in the future.

Generally, instruction proceeded in a familiar way. Just like at Jikishinkan, after warm-ups we began by observing and practicing the tai sabaki that would be used as the foundation for the techniques that were to follow. An initial technique was demonstrated and its key points were highlighted, then students practiced the techniques in pairs or groups. After the initial technique, variations or alternate techniques (either from the same or a different tai sabaki) were explored. Each session provided a healthy variety of ukemi, wrist controls, and projections.

I tried my best to circulate around the mat so that I could train with as many different people as possible. I trained with people of every rank and everyone I worked with was helpful, courteous, and friendly. Everyone concentrated on learning as much as they could and on adapting themselves to their partner's abilities. I was allowed to progress at my own pace,

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*East Coast Camp...  
(Continued from page 8)*

to make gradual improvements to techniques I had already experienced and to become acquainted with techniques I had never seen before.

Throughout the weekend, Sato Sensei and Nakayama Sensei alternated each 90-minute session. I felt that their teaching styles complemented each other very well. Sato Sensei provided brief demonstrations from a variety of different angles, keeping his explanations brief and concise before turning us loose to work our way through the wazas in pairs or groups. As we practiced, he circulated through the ranks and provided individual instruction to anyone who desired or required it.

Nakayama Sensei managed his classes differently. He was quick to notice general trends in the class' performance and paused class often to clarify subtleties of positioning and body mechanics. When properly applied, these subtleties demonstrated the conservation of energy and

momentum that makes Aikido a truly effective and compassionate martial art. Some felt that Nakayama Sensei didn't allow enough time to practice these subtleties, but I felt his style of instruction immensely informative.

As a critic, I am naive. Since this was my first seminar, I have no reference point from which to give much credibility to my opinions. I had no complaints about the instruction and found the balance of techniques that we practiced throughout the weekend to be perfect. In particular I was happy to get instruction in maegari (front snap kicks), randori (defense against multiple attackers) and koshinage (hip throws). The only technique that I remember not being touched upon was jujinage (entwining both arms in the shape of the Japanese number ten and throwing).

One of the best opportunities that the camp provided was the chance to observe dan testing. There were seven dan tests spread throughout the weekend: three shodan (first degree), two nidan (second degree), and two sandan (third degree) tests if I remember correctly. For a beginning Aikidoist watching yudansha demonstrate their skills is both entertaining and inspiring. Experiencing the range, power, and personality of kiai alone was fascinating, but witnessing competent and precise demonstrations of randori, hanmi handachi (techniques performed from seiza against a standing attacker) and kumitachi (paired boken katas) gave me something to strive for in my own training.

My expectations were not only fulfilled but surpassed. Was it too much

too soon? I would have to say no. A few seventh and eighth kyu from my dojo felt the same. It certainly was intensive and pushed the limits of my endurance, but I found that my body adapted itself to the heavy training schedule. I never became exhausted, but ended each day feeling like I deserved the rest. I began each day a little stiff, but loosened up more and more easily as the weekend progressed.

Besides the training I had several opportunities to speak with Sato Sensei one on one. These moments were, by far, the highlights of my camp experience. Despite his position in the association, he is very approachable and I recommend that anyone, particularly beginners, take the opportunity to speak with him.

During our conversations Sato Sensei spoke of AAA as a family, and the affiliate dojo as homes away from home. His words rang true for me because of my experience with Jikishinkan and with every student I trained with over the weekend. Sato Sensei turned my preconception of AAA's hierarchy upside down. A new analogy, an alternate structure grew from this simple turn. Instead of seeing myself on the bottom of a pyramid I found myself high in the branches of a family tree. Now this may seem simplistic, or obvious to the senior members of the organization or to anyone that has met Sato Sensei before, but for a beginner the distinction is liberating. This change of perspective makes a student feel not like an underling, but a representative of a generation, perhaps only one of many leaves of the tree, but appreciated nonetheless for the part one plays in the organism. Sato Sensei's sturdy frame and approachable demeanor seem all the more appropriate to his position at the trunk of this family tree, firmly planted and the channel through which we learn the teachings of his predecessors.

So beginners, by all means attend a seminar as soon as you are able, whenever you feel ready. Perhaps even before you do. Get to know your new, extended family. We'll all be happy to meet you.

*John Hannon is 5th kyu at Jikishinkan Dojo in Brooklyn, NY.*



*Photos courtesy of Chett Rubenstein*



## 2004 National Summer Camp

By Amy Galdamez

The 2004 National Summer Camp has come and gone, and what a memorable camp this one was. There were a lot of different emotions for me when I stepped on the mat at the start of the camp.

I couldn't help but remember what it was like to attend my first camp. It was the 2001 National Summer Camp in Chicago. My husband (David) and I had just been promoted to 7<sup>th</sup> kyu and really didn't know what to expect. I was really nervous about being a white belt attending such a big camp, but everyone was so welcoming and helpful. There were times that my lack of experience on the mat was obvious (pretty much all of the time), but I didn't let that get in my way. At the end of the seminar Sato Sensei approached me and gave me a goal to strive towards for the next seminar. I was to work on my ukemi and get over my fear of falling. At the time, this seemed like such a huge feat, but it had to be done.



Photos courtesy of Chris Wall

That camp in 2001 is what did it for David and I. We already liked Aikido and were committed to it, but we were just part of a school in Texas. It was then when we both realized that we were part of a much larger organization, and more importantly, we were part of a family. Sato Sensei expressed those words, but everyone demonstrated it throughout the camp.

I have attended many seminars and camps since that day, set and achieved many different goals, and have gotten over many fears because of my training. It's now three years later and I'm feeling some of the same emotions I felt during my first seminar. I have been off the mat for over six months due to health reasons,

and I decided that I would use this camp as a welcome back. Stepping on the mat was like stepping on the mat for the first time. I was nervous but excited all at the same time.

We bowed in for the Thursday session and started our warm-ups. As the session got started, my nerves started to settle down and I realized how comfortable it



was to be back on the mat.

Germanov Sensei was a guest instructor and I had heard so much about his Aikido grappling techniques. I was really looking forward to seeing how he incorporated the two. He started each of his sessions with a basic technique then built upon that base to show how it could evolve into a more complex technique. He moved so flawlessly through his techniques and executed each with energy, as he launched his uke with unspeakable power.



Sato Sensei on the other hand focused on kihon waza, henka waza, oyo waza then on to weapons. He was very smooth in his demonstrations and always made everything look so simple, with every slight movement feeding so easily into the next. When we split into our groups to practice what was demonstrated, I intended to be smooth and circular, but instead was jagged and choppy, as I awkwardly struggled to imitate what I had just watched.

Saturday was filled with dan testing between the sessions. As the evening session closed I started to become more and more nervous as if I was going to test, but instead David was testing for shodan. Watching him bow in I still couldn't believe it was really happening, and in Chicago. Sato Sensei started calling out techniques and everything was going well until hanmi hantachi. Sato Sensei called out two ukes and to see the look on David's face was priceless. Sato Sensei, realizing what he had done, dismissed one of the ukes and said to David, "Did I scare you?"

With guest instruction from Germanov Sensei and the opportunity to train with Aikidoka from all over the world, it was a very energetic seminar overall. I know my mind and body were exhausted, but I pushed through the pain and fatigue. It was great to be back on the mat, and the long period off made me appreciate how much I

really enjoy Aikido.

Looking back, it's so hard to believe that the very camp that marked the beginning three years earlier would be the same camp that David would start a new beginning as a black belt.

*Amy Galdamez is 1st kyu and dojo manager at Shinjinkan Dojo in the Woodlands, TX.*

## Southern Region Camp 2004 Raleigh, North Carolina

By Robin Smith

What does one say when Sensei requests one to write an article, and writing causes one more angst than trying to do a break-fall from the left side? Of course, "hai sensei, no problem!" It was easy to feel inspired by the hospitality of our friends in North Carolina and by a great seminar where Andy Sato Sensei instructed four days of aiki-fun to a very animated group.

Our gang from Kyushinkan dojo in Atlanta were a presence at the Southern Region Camp. We caravanned in three cars with 9 Aikidoka and our chaperone! The typical six-hour road trip turned into a ten-hour marathon withstanding rush hour, rain, and construction. Although we arrived late for the Thursday session, we were a presence to be reckoned with. Even so, Sensei didn't let us off the hook easily for our tardiness. Our "alpha uke," Marcos "Pooh" Mendez, paid dearly. Of course, he loved every minute of the "abuse"...known more appropriately as aiki-love.

For me personally, this seminar represented two milestones: one, more of a cultural discovery; the second, a turning point in my training. Being relatively new to the seminar circuit, I have found these events to be harrowing, especially as a kyu rank. The summer camp however was different, with everyone seeming more familiar, very engaging, and gracious. I came away with the feeling that I belonged to a larger family. I didn't find myself constantly searching for my dojo mates on the mat. The "camp" setting that Sensei created seemed to make everyone feel relaxed and open. And I found it to be a nice environment for intense, yet fun, training.

In addition to the AAA family, the experience of the summer camp brought our



Photos courtesy of Ned Danielew

dojo group closer. We left Atlanta as friends and returned as family. We have always been a close group at the dojo, with everyone inherently warm and friendly, connecting incredibly well off the mat as well as on. I was moved by the glowing synergy we had when we were all together. There was an awareness, a warmth, and an appreciation for each other that I believe left an impression with all of us.

Moreover, as a 3<sup>rd</sup> kyu Aikidoka, I am just beginning to discover the real beauty in the art. The complex simplicity is mind-boggling! I have finally begun to relish the fact that I can't do anything right, and regard my mistakes as growth instead of failure. However, as luck always has it, (and I'm sure no one can relate to this), I unfailingly screw up techniques whenever Sensei is watching. He must possess magical powers, seeing that when I would begin a technique, Sensei would be on the opposite end of the mat, and as I completed the huge blunder, he was always standing right

there, just shaking his head as if to say, "maybe you will get it someday Smith." How is it that he's always right there?!?

This weekend however, Sensei didn't shake his head and walk away, he corrected me, and corrected me, and corrected me! I'm sure the more casual nature of camp allowed him to be more attentive to everyone, but I took it as a sign that he believes I have some potential and there is hope for me as an Aikidoka. Wahoo! Ironically enough, he even used me to demonstrate kokyonaige with breakfall...on both sides, of course! How I pulled it off, I figure must have something to do with mushin? Whether intentional or just circumstantial, he instilled a small sense of confidence in me that keeps me coming back for more.

In summary, the camp was a blast. My only regret was not coming away with a picture from the perfect (out of protocol) photo op! Thanks anyway Sensei, you're a good sport!

*Robin Smith is 3rd kyu at Kyushinkan Dojo in Roswell, GA.*

## Central Region News

**John Bieszk Sensei, AAA Midwest Regional Director**

The National Summer Camp, hosted by Ryoshinkan Dojo, had an international flavor with instruction by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai and Bulgarian Aikido Association Chief Instructor Ed Germanov Sensei. A number of Aikidoka from Bulgaria and Croatia came to Tenshinkan in July for training under Sato Sensei and Germanov Sensei, and also attended Summer Camp. We all got to see Germanov Sensei's dynamic style of Aikido, and several new and effective techniques for tanto dori. Sato Sensei's clear instruction on tai sabaki and its importance in empty-handed techniques emphasizes the benefits of a solid basis in fundamentals for every Aikidoka. In addition, Sato Sensei showed many examples of empty-hand techniques and similar throws or pins using the jo, to give camp attendees many movements to bring home to their own dojos and training. Summer Camp 2004 was a very instructional and enjoyable event.

On July 11, Soshinkan Dojo had its 10th Anniversary Celebration. For this occasion, Sato Sensei, Germanov Sensei, Garza Sensei (current dojo cho), Romanzov Sensei (original dojo cho), and other area dojo cho took turns teaching a few techniques and then training with all Aikidoka present, to celebrate the efforts and achievement of Soshinkan Dojo in training for 10 years in Toyoda Sensei's Aikido. After training, much good food, drink and celebration followed. It was a memorial occasion on many levels.

### Upcoming Events:

- Oct. 8-10      **AIF Outdoor Retreat Seminar** at Rose's Retreat in Grand Junction, MI. Instructed by David Rose Sensei.
- Oct. 22-24    **2nd Annual Women's Aikido Seminar**, hosted by Ryoshinkan Dojo in Palatine, IL. Instructed by Christine Dyer Sensei, Elisabeth Menning Sensei and Laurie Erickson Sensei.
- Nov. 19-21    **AIF Guest Instructor Seminar** hosted by Ryoshinkan Dojo in Palatine, IL. Instructed by Frank Gallo Sensei.

## Southern Region News

**Ned Danieley Sensei, AAA Southern Regional Director**

The Southern Region Summer Camp in Raleigh, NC, was a big success, with 74 attendees from all over the south. Sato Sensei taught an excellent seminar, including an interesting examination of the connection between throwing from katate ryotetori and doing jo nage. There was a full complement of dan tests, and a cookout Saturday night that was enjoyed by all, despite the rather wet start. Start thinking now about joining us next year!

Upcoming events include a Teaching Committee seminar in Raleigh, NC, October 1-3 with Tajiri Sensei and Danieley Sensei, an AAA seminar hosted by Shinjinkan Dojo in Spring, TX, with Sato Sensei, and an AAA seminar hosted by Kyushinkan Dojo in Atlanta, GA, November 19-21 with Sato Sensei.

### Upcoming Events:

- Oct. 1-3      **Southern Region Teaching Committee Seminar** in Raleigh, NC. Instructed by Hiroshi Tajiri Shihandai and Ned Danieley Sensei.
- Oct. 15-17    **Texas Seminar**, hosted by Shinjinkan Dojo in the Woodlands, TX. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.
- Nov. 19-21    **Georgia Seminar** hosted by Kyushinkan Dojo in Roswell, GA. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.

## Western Region News **James Nakayama Shihandai, AAA Western Regional Director**

Greetings from the Western Region. This past June 25 - 27, Chushinkan dojo hosted the Annual Toyoda Sensei Memorial Seminar. Classes were led by James Nakayama and Ken MacBeth, and other attending AAA dojo cho. In the spirit of Toyoda Sensei seminars of past, there was a demonstration at the end of the seminar by dojo cho and senior dojo representatives. On July 4th, Chushinkan Dojo opened its doors to other dojo and participated in the nation-wide workout in memory of Toyoda Sensei. On that same day, students Dean Wells and Dale Forbes of Roshinkan Dojo in Spokane, WA were married. Later that month on July 23 -25, their instructor, Roger Mosconi, hosted James Nakayama in a seminar, with a Saturday night party at Dean and Dale's home. August 20 - 22, Ron Sims, dojo cho of Jyushinkan Dojo, held a going-away seminar for senior students Lara Anderson and Kirsten Sims. Lara is a Rhodes scholar heading for England and Oxford University. Kirsten Sims has started school at Gonzaga University in Spokane Washington. Fred Phillips, founder of Jinshinkan Dojo in Beaverton, Oregon has moved to the Netherlands and will be working for the Maastricht School of Management. Sean Caffee, nidan, is the new dojo cho of Jinshinkan Dojo.

### Upcoming Events:

- Sep. 26           **Hakamakai Meeting**, Chushinkan Dojo, Buena Park, CA. 10 - Noon.
- Oct. 16           **Jinshinkan Dojo**, Beaverton OR, is hosting a one-day workout instructed by James Nakayama Shihandai. Info at [www.chushin.com](http://www.chushin.com).
- Nov. 11-14       **West Coast Camp** held at Marina Center in Seal Beach, CA. Instructed by Hiroaki Kobayashi Sensei and AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.

## Eastern Regional News **Glen Matsuda Sensei, AAA Eastern Regional Director**

The Eastern Camp was held Aug. 5-8, 2004 at Marymount College in Tarrytown, NY and was taught by Andy Sato Sensei and James Nakayama Sensei. There were approximately 85 people attending. This event also allowed everyone to stay on campus in the dorm rooms. This added to the fun and community of the practice.

### MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

On August 13, 2004 Wil Calero and Chett Rubenstein made a presentation in Rye Brook, NY to a senior management team for Perot Systems. Perot Systems is the computer network consultants for UBS, a Swiss stock trading company. Wil and Chett spoke about the use of aikido for conflict resolution. They used the concept of irimi and tenkan and how it would look in interpersonal relations. The presentation was a huge success.

The seminar was led by Ron Donovan from New Hampshire. Ron leads seminars world wide. As a result of the presentation, several of the seminar participants joined Chett's dojo in Norwalk, CT and Ron started classes with the USAF dojo in Portsmouth, NH. Ron is aware of the Aikido Association of America and we are trying to maintain the relationship with him so that he can use other AAA dojos when he has seminars elsewhere.

Glen Matsuda led a teaching committee seminar in Arecibo, PR Aug. 13-15, 2004 and a Hakamakai meeting was held at Shishinkan Dojo, July 18, 2004.

### Upcoming Events:

- October           **Hakamakai** meetings
- Oct. 22-24       **Rhode Island Seminar**, hosted by Shoshinkan Dojo in Cranston, RI. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.
- Dec 3-5           **Puerto Rico Seminar**, in Bayamon, Puerto Rico. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.

# From Our Members

## Dojo Business: Branding Your Dojo

By Corey Guilbault and Chett Rubenstein

*This is the second in a series of six articles regarding managing a dojo.*

While it may seem at odds with the traditional aspects of the martial arts, whether you like it or not, marketing your dojo is critical to staying in business. There are a myriad of options out there for getting the word out, from advertising to public demonstrations to creative “guerilla” marketing tactics. Letting people know about your dojo can be achieved through a full spectrum of tools, but with all these options comes the opportunity to waste a lot of money. If your advertising is too generic it gets lost in the shuffle or ignored completely and that’s money out the window. Some advanced planning can help you make the most of your marketing budget even if it is very small.

### It’s all about brands

Marketing is about brands. Nike, Starbucks, McDonalds, and even the Aikido Association of America can be seen as brands. In short, a brand is a symbol.

Symbols, of course, stand for something. For Nike it is athletic empowerment; for Starbucks it is gourmet coffee; and for the Aikido Association of America it is a particular approach to Aikido set down by our founder, Toyoda Shihan.

When considering your dojo, it is good to think of it as a brand as well. Many brands come up with “taglines” they use to describe themselves. “Just do it” (Nike) and “Think Different” (Apple) are two examples. Other brands don’t use taglines per se, but organize all their marketing around a single proposition. Starbucks does not use a tagline, but most people know what that brand is all about.

Before you commit money to advertising your dojo, you will want to figure out what your “tagline” is – even if you don’t plan to use it in your advertising. This exercise is useful because it helps you focus your message and set yourself apart from other offerings in your community (which we cutthroat marketers call ‘competitors’). At Phoenix Aikido we use the tagline “Teaching the Way of Peace” and at Aikido of Norwalk/Yanagi Aikido we use “Traditional Training in the Way

of Harmony.” Notice the different messages these send.

What you do not want is a generic message. Thumb through the yellow pages or your local paper. Almost every martial arts studio says the same things; “Learn self defense,” “Improve concentration and discipline,” “Safe training environment,” “Such and such organization sanctioned,” or, “The only 80<sup>th</sup> degree black belt in the area.” To a prospective student looking for a dojo, these all look basically the same. So now they have to choose randomly or visit each school or try to find the best introductory price offer. Whichever road they choose, the chances of them finding the right fit are average at best.

To compete among all these generic offerings, you need a unique angle. You need to stand for something. Hence you need a “tagline” or point of differentiation – something your dojo, a brand, will stand for among all these other studios. Below are some thoughts on how to figure this out.

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## What Next?

By Heidi Cummings

A while back a friend of mine asked me a question, “Now that you’re shodan what are you going to do with it?”

Do? I didn’t realize I was supposed to *do* anything with it. So, I guessed, and told him second degree. Seemed like the obvious answer to me and to him as well because he then said, “No, that’s just a step, of course you’re going to do that. What is black belt for you, *to* you? What are you going to do with it now that you’ve gotten it?”

Oh...Now I see. Why, it’s as clear as mud. I looked at him, my mind revealing itself through my eyes, as a freshly mowed empty lot. Completely blank, and

not in a good meditative ‘Zen-like’ way either. I didn’t understand and told him so. Fortunately he explained and I listened.

I listened because he’s a third degree black belt in another art and about to be a shodan in Aikido and he also trains in yet another art and that’s probably not all. He’s also my friend and I like to think that I’ve managed to surround myself with people smarter than I am.

Beyond, “black belt is the beginning,” he said that now it’s time to go back to the beginning and relearn all the techniques. See what works and why and also see why sometimes certain techniques work on some people and fail on others. Then pick them apart and make them work for you – every time on everyone. Then it will become your Aikido, your under-

standing. I liked his answer.

It got me thinking, one of the things I thought about were those martial art films that I missed when I was growing up. Mostly, I guess, because I was too busy being a girl. It seems that somewhere along the line, American pop culture got this idea that black belt was the end. As if in one of those ‘well dubbed’ movies the revered sensei said, “Okay.... Now.... that you are black belt.....you must go and register your hands.....with the local authorities...” and that is the only thing we remember.

To me, when I hear “Black belt is the beginning” it’s like a high school diploma. We have learned how to learn. Now we have to actually learn.

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*Branding Your Dojo...*  
(Continued from page 14)

### **Consider Your Offerings**

Aikido is different from many other martial arts. There is an ethical component based on compassion for the attacker, which is unusual. There is no competition, no tournaments or trophies. Aikido also doesn't rely on physical strength or unusual flexibility to be effective. All of these things separate Aikido from other martial arts and are potential messages to use in your advertising efforts. Aikido sets itself apart from other martial forms, which is a good first step to setting your dojo apart.

Additionally, your dojo may offer other programs that help define the spirit of the place. If you offer Aikido, karate, kick-boxing and martial-aerobic workouts, your dojo may have more of a fitness and self defense angle to it. If you offer Aikido, Iaido and Zen, it may have more of a traditional Budo quality about it. If you offer Aikido, Shodo, Zen, Ikebana and Chanoyu, your dojo may have more of a cultural flavor to it.

Each suite of offerings will appeal to a different type of student - from the fitness and self-defense oriented, to the self-realization oriented, to the culturally interested. What does your dojo offer? What kind of person or groups of people does it appeal to?

### **Consider Your Prospects**

As important, and possibly even more so, is the type of student you want to attract. If a student is to stay with your program, this program has to fit their needs and ultimately, the long-term students are the ones that help a dojo mature and grow.

There are two types of prospective students – the uneducated and educated. The uneducated come to a dojo with little or no knowledge of the martial arts. They say things like, “Aikido, is that a form of karate?” For this prospect, an explanation of what makes Aikido different from other disciplines is important in helping them evaluate your dojo from the karate studio down the street.

The educated prospect is one who already knows about Aikido. Chances are they have studied a martial art already. Educating them about Aikido's differences is

still important, but will not require as much effort. Instead, this student will be more interested in learning about the spirit of your dojo. What makes it different than his/her previous experiences with the martial arts?

This is something to keep in mind when doing advertising. In general-public forums like the newspaper, you may have to focus more on educating prospects about Aikido itself. But for a student who visits the dojo, a brochure that talks a bit more about the spirit of your dojo might help them. After all, they have visited your school and seen Aikido first hand so let them learn about how you run the place.

### **Tie It all Together**

If you think about your dojo's offerings and the types of students it will most appeal to, you will get an idea of how to structure your advertising. Ideally, you want your dojo to come up with a tagline, which is your single-minded point of differentiation. You don't need to use the tagline as such, but it can become a guiding statement that informs all your communications, from advertising to your brochures and Web site. A clear guiding principle also helps your students work as advertising vehicles. If you can explain to them in a sentence what your dojo is about, they will be able to do the same for their friends.

At Aikido of Norwalk, our tagline “Traditional Training in the Way of Harmony” is meant to convey an ‘un-commercial’ approach to training. We do not offer special promotions, free trials, etc. We also use a very grass roots marketing program wherein each student is responsible for hanging fliers around the community. To date, we don't do any advertising in newspapers, gaining most of our growth from word-of-mouth and these fliers. Choosing this path has led to slower growth, a sacrifice we were willing to make, but which we have found tends to draw the types of students we want in the dojo. It is a direction that has worked for Aikido of Norwalk – especially in contrast to the multitude of more commercially-inclined martial enterprises in our area. In this sense, not only our advertising message, but even the way we advertise is in keeping with our brand's point of differentiation.

*What next...*  
(Continued from page 14)

Or, maybe it's like how I was trying to explain it to one of my Wednesday morning students. She and her husband are testing for yellow belt—in like three days—and she hoped she was going to do all right.

I told her she'd be fine and that taking a test was kind of like having a birthday. You take your test to show understanding of what you are now ready to really learn. How is that like having a birthday? Well, in September I turned thirty-nine (for the first time). My birthday marks the end of being thirty-eight. So, I can now tell you exactly what thirty-eight was all about because I've experienced every day of it. Now I'm ready to start practicing wearing thirty-nine out.

Yes, you can have what you think is a “perfect” test, but by the time your next test rolls around you'll have gained experience and improved many times over. And you'll have gotten better by examining yourself and going back to the beginning over and over again. (Just like with birthdays – right??)

*Heidi Cummins is shodan and an assistant instructor at Shinjinkan Dojo in The Woodlands, TX.*

Conversely, there is another school in the community which has been very aggressive in its advertising. They even do TV commercials! The programs they offer are wide-reaching and fitness/self defense based. Their tagline is simply “Physical Arts” – a definite sign of what the school is all about. They do quite well with this approach, proving that there is room for any angle. The thing to note is that neither of these marketing strategies tries to be all things to all people. Instead, each focuses on a particular audience they feel best equipped to satisfy.

What does your dojo stand for? Who is the type of student you want to attract? What needs can your program offerings satisfy? What do you want people to think of when they think of your dojo? What are your growth ambitions? (This last one is an important reality-check because some strategies have decidedly

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# Sports injuries

By Joel Augustin MD, M.S.

## Introduction

Injuries in Aikido are relatively common. It is remarkable that most people can practice without serious accidents. However fractures, dislocations, and severe sprains remain a problem.

This is the first in a series of discussion related to sports injuries in general. We will focus this time on the shoulder and will cover briefly two conditions.

## Shoulder injuries

There are three types of shoulder injuries: *Overuse*, which includes tendonitis and tears.

*Traumatic*, which includes fractures, dislocations, tendon ruptures, and sprains.

*Post-traumatic*, which consists of chronic instability arthritis.

## Background

After an initial injury, there are 4 stages:

- An inflammatory response with pain, swelling, redness and warmth. It lasts 48 hours to one week.
- A poorly organized collagen production. This stage lasts one to three weeks.
- A maturation phase, involves an organized restructuring of the tissue. It can last for six to twelve weeks.

With a continuous or repeated inflammatory response, fibrosis occurs.

## 1. Rotator cuff injuries

The rotator cuff muscles control rotation of the shoulder rotating the shoulder outwards and inwards. These muscles are put under a great deal of strain, particu-

## Suggested rotator cuff exercises

- 3- 5 workouts per week  
After warm-up, do strengthening exercises: **light weights (less than 5lbs.)**, 10-20 reps/set; 2-3 sets per muscle group, shoulder elevation, internal rotation, external rotation.
- Stretching: 30 seconds each
  - External rotation: hands behind head
  - Internal rotation: hands behind back
  - Adduction: arm across chest.

larly in Aikido. In a rotator cuff injury (tendonitis, tears, strains) pain is the most common presentation. The primary pain is deep, occurs at night and can be referred to the upper arm. Also stiffness in the shoulder joint can be present.

## What to do?

Rest and ice the shoulder for 2 to 4 days. When the acute phase is over and pain and inflammation settled down, apply heat. It is very important to see a sports injury professional who can advise on treatment and rehabilitation. The specialist or the primary doctor can prescribe anti-inflammatory medication, apply ultrasound or laser treatment, or give a steroid injection. If treatment is not working the specialist may order an MRI and recommend surgery.

## 2. Shoulder dislocation

This is the most common traumatic sporting injury and can occur in Aikido. The

most common type of dislocation is anterior dislocation. Anterior dislocation results from direct trauma to the shoulder or humeral head (breakfall, koshinage), or by excessive abduction and external rotation at the same time (shihonage if not done properly).

The symptoms are: sudden onset of acute shoulder pain, feeling of shoulder popping out. The dislocated shoulder may look deformed compared to the other side. There may be loss of sensation or feeling on the outside of the shoulder if the auxiliary nerve is damaged.

## What to do?

Go to the emergency room to have a trained medical professional to put the shoulder back in because of the possibility of permanent nerve damage. Typically after shoulder reduction, the arm is placed in a sling under a T-shirt.

## Suggested rotator cuff exercises

- 3- 5 workouts per week  
After warm-up, do strengthening exercises: **light weights (less than 5lbs.)**, 10-20 reps/set; 2-3 sets per muscle group, shoulder elevation, internal rotation, external rotation.
- Stretching: 30 seconds each
  - External rotation: hands behind head
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  - Adduction: arm across chest.

*Dr. Joel Augustin MD, M.S., is sandan and an instructor at Tenshinkan Dojo in Chicago, IL. He practices medicine at the Department of Family Practice, Loyola/Stroger/Provident Hospital.*

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narrower appeal in our contemporary culture—something to consider if you have rent to pay each month!)

By asking and answering these questions in advance of your advertising, you will be able to craft a message to the community that helps them make an educated decision. Whereas advertising is often seen as an annoying intrusion, done right it can become a “pre-customer service”, helping prospective students make informed decisions that ultimately allow them to find the right fit in an efficient manner. This serves to increase your

chances of attracting the caliber of student you want and these students, because they have found the right fit, are more likely to stick around after your 6-week intro course.

A future column in this series will explore the specific details of various advertising options but if you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact Corey at [corey@aikidonorwalk.com](mailto:corey@aikidonorwalk.com) or Chett at [chetttr@phoenixaikido.org](mailto:chetttr@phoenixaikido.org).

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