

## What's on in November

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> **TRAINING CANCELLED**

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> **T.I.A.E. Seminar**  
with Tony Sargeant Sensei and Paul  
McGlone Sensei in Poole.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> **TRAINING CANCELLED**

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> **Weapons Class**  
9.30 – 11.00 at Phoenix Martial Arts.

Check out the [online diary](#) for details of future seminars and events.

## T.I.A.E. Seminar in Poole

Many of you will be training during the first weekend in November with Tony Sargeant Sensei and Paul McGlone Sensei. For some of you it will be the first seminar that you have attended. Here are some hints to help you get the most out of your training during the weekend.

- Observe the normal code of etiquette at all times. In particular don't teach and don't get involved in battles of strength with your training partners (refer to Training Matters in the previous two issues of KIAI).
- Allow yourself plenty of time to get find the venue, register, get changed, get warmed up and sit in a couple of minutes before the seminar is due to begin.
- Remember to take your T.I.A.E. Membership book and present it when you register. Your membership book contains proof of your B.A.B. Insurance and without this you **WILL NOT BE ALLOWED ON**

### THE MAT.

- If you are training on both days you only need to register on the first day.
- When you register your membership book will be retained so that the attendance record can be updated and signed.
- Remember to collect your membership book before you go home!
- Go outside of your comfort zone and train with people you don't know. Try to avoid partnering people you train with week in and week out! Remember that you will learn most from training with the higher grades on the mat.
- If you are unsure of the correct etiquette at any time then follow the example of or ask one of the seniors on the mat.
- Tidy your uwagi (jacket) when you sit in to bow out and before any photos.
- And finally – REMEMBER TO ENJOY YOURSELF!

## Tidbits

*“It is difficult to provide the answers because they will often be different for each person and will relate to where they are with their skill level and spiritual understanding at any given time. If you try and act out high level understandings without sound foundations it is unlikely you will succeed, sound basic comes first.”*

*Tony Sensei in conversation with Richard Small*

## Training Matters

You will have noticed that a few weeks ago the orientation of the dojo changed. Whilst this has given us more training space (embu-jo) this was a coincidence and not the motivation for the change.

You may recall from your history lessons that here in England during medieval times Lords and nobles dined at the 'high table'. This was a table placed on a dias (a raised platform) at one end of the hall.

Something similar existed in Japan and in traditional dojos there is a shinden, an elevated space, against the front wall of the dojo where the founder of the art and visiting members of the Imperial family would sit. The front wall is known as the shomen (upper side) or kamiza (upper seat) and is the wall opposite the side with the entrance. This arrangement positioned the founder of the art furthest away from the door so offering him maximum protection from intruders and shielding his teachings from anyone looking in.

*“A kamiza can be compared to the family mantelpiece tradition familiar to American and European homes. As the mantel holds special pictures, artifacts, and memories of our family history, the kamiza serves as a reminder of the historical and cultural legacy that stretches out behind the teachings embodied in our martial art today.”* Stephen Hayes

A portrait of O'Sensei is placed on the shomen/kamiza in the position where he would have sat when he was alive. At the start and end of each training session we bow towards this portrait as a mark of respect to the founder.

Since we cannot alter the position of the door at Phoenix Martial Arts we have repositioned the shomen! In Japanese geomancy south and east are favourable directions and by happy chance our shomen (which was facing south) is now facing east.

At some point in your training you will probably find yourself in a dojo with a shelf high up on the kamiza wall on which there is a small wooden house and offerings of salt, rice, water and sake and branches of the evergreen sakaki tree. This is a kamidana, a small Shinto altar, set up to welcome the spirit of Kami. Shinto is the Japanese reverence for Great Nature.

Kami are the powers of the spiritual dimension which are believed to make contact with human beings through trees.

When there is a kamidana present a formal bow, hairei, is performed at the start and end of each training session.

Hairei comprises of two bows (nirei) followed by two claps (nihyakushu) and a final bow (ichirei). The first two bows announce you, the two claps gain the attention of the Kami and the final bow is a form of closing.

Clapping is an ancient purification and cleansing practice. It is also a way of showing respect. In Shinto it is believed that we communicate with the kami through sound. At the start of training clapping alerts the guardian spirits of Aikido to our presence and invites them to alight on the sakaki branches on the kamidana and observe and watch over our practice. Clapping at the end of training lets the Kami know that we have finished.

Any pictures of O'Sensei or Saito Sensei will normally be hung to the left or the right of the kamidana and not placed on the shelf itself. This prevents the mixing of the spiritual with the mundane.

*“The items on the kamidana “spirit shelf” are Japanese in origin, but they are equally relevant to us in the West as reminders of our connection to the forces of nature, our gratitude to our teachers – even those teachers we have never met – for handing the knowledge down to us, and our personal responsibility for discovering the keys to actualizing our potential in ways that will carry our legacy on to new generations.*

- *Tomyo candles symbolize the light we carry in our hearts*
- *The kagami mirror symbolizes a stainless heart, pure in its reflection of “what is”*
- *A dish of salt symbolizes willingness to sacrifice and gift others in order to grow*

- *The shinden wooden house-like structure contains a small ofuda plank talisman as symbol of the ancient spirit that guides our training*
- *Sakaki greenery reminds us of our place in the richness of nature*
- *Photos of living people usually do not go on the shrine shelf, but may be displayed beside the shelf in a martial arts dojo”*

Stephen Hayes

If you would like to learn more about the history and meaning behind the rituals, training costumes, objects and relationships that have such profound significance in Japanese martial arts an excellent resource is 'In the Dojo' a collection of lively, detailed essays by Dave Lowry.

## Wellsprings on the web

[www.wellspringsoftheeast.co.uk](http://www.wellspringsoftheeast.co.uk)

This newsletter is now available online (as .pdf). It's only accessible from the home page at the present but eventually will be accessible from the drop down navigation bar too.

## About KIAI

KIAI is the newsletter or Wellsprings Aikido. It is sent to all members of Wellsprings Aikido and to any of our friends who wish to receive it. If you would like to be added to or removed from the distribution list then please send your email address to [enquiries@wellspringsoftheeast.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@wellspringsoftheeast.co.uk).

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