

## About KIAI

KIAI is the newsletter of 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).

Contributions to this newsletter are welcome and encouraged. Please send them to the address above. If there is a topic that you would like covered in Training Matters or anything else that you would like to see in KIAI then please let us know.

## Wellsprings on the web

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

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

Previous editions can be accessed [from this page](#).

Photographs taken at the T.I.A.E. Seminar held in Poole at the beginning of November have been put in the Wellsprings Picture Gallery. [Follow this link to view them](#).

## The Tatami

Over the holidays the jigsaw mats have been thoroughly cleaned with disinfectant. To ensure an even wear of the mats and so hopefully extend their lifespan we will be using them **red-side up during 2012**.

## What's on in January

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> NO TRAINING**

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> Keiko-hajime**  
(first training session of the year)

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> Bukiwaza** (weapons training)  
9.30 – 11.00 at Phoenix Martial Arts.

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

## Congratulations!



CONGRATULATIONS go to **Jonathan Pattison, Tom Harker and Paul Robinson** who all passed their tests at the grading held in December. **Jonathan**, front row first from left, was awarded the grade of **3rd kyu** while **Tom**, back row second from right, and **Paul**, back row first from right, were awarded the grade of **5th kyu**.

Tom, Paul and all you other Wellsprings Aikidoka who are working towards 4<sup>th</sup> kyu together with those of us who are vertically challenged might take inspiration from the [4<sup>th</sup> kyu test of Deana](#) from Aikido of Florida.

## Training Matters

Jigoro Kanu, founder of Kodokan Judo is widely credited with creating the modern practice gi. Old photographs show it's development during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It reached it's current form around 1913. Kano is said to have devised the judogi for “reasons of dignity and safety”.

Kano was also responsible for the kyu and dan grading system that is widely used in the martial arts today. It was designed to reinforce the student's progress. A few years after he introduced his grading system Kano gave belts as a symbol of rank. Black belts were given to advanced practitioners to help new students recognise those who could give them help and advice.

Photographs from the 1920's show O'Sensei and his students wearing Kano's judogi with hakama. While he readily adopted the judogi for training, the Founder was less keen about adopting the dan grading system. The dan grade system began to be introduced by O'Sensei only after WWII and was not fully implemented by the late 1950's.

It is thought that coloured belts were first used by Mikonosuke Kawaishi. Kawaishi taught judo in Paris before and after WWII. The use of coloured belts quickly spread across Europe and the U.S.A. but not among the martial arts in Japan. In Japan today you will still usually find only black and white belts.

T.I.A.E. uses coloured belts to indicate kyu grades. The following table shows which colour is associated with which kyu grade in T.I.A.E.

Kyu Grade	Belt Colour	
6 <sup>th</sup>	White	
5 <sup>th</sup>	Yellow	
4 <sup>th</sup>	Orange	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Green	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Blue	
1 <sup>st</sup>	Brown	

Whilst Wellsprings Aikido is a member of Takemusu Iwama Aikido Europe we do not test separately for 6<sup>th</sup> kyu. We combine the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> kyu syllabus requirements into the test for 5<sup>th</sup> kyu. [View T.I.A.E. syllabus online.](#)

The colour of your belt indicates the progress you have made so far and, for kyu and dan grades alike, how much further you still have to go! As Dave Lowry states “*outward symbols have little bearing on the inner development that is the goal of all Japanese Budo.*” and “*it is pretentious to make much ado about one's belt color or rank.*” Gaining the belt that you covet won't solve your problems, it won't make you friends or more popular and it won't give you the respect of others if your behaviour otherwise doesn't warrant it.

When you go and train a different style of aikido you would do well to remember that the colour of your belt indicates what is expected of you. A 'lower' graded person will expect you to execute the technique first and to be able to show them what they are supposed to be doing. A 'higher' grade will expect you to be able to take ukemi commensurate with your grade. For these reasons you are advised to wear a white belt when you begin training with another organisation until the Sensei says otherwise. That will save you the embarrassment of having a more junior grade having to show you how to do a technique and potentially save you from getting injured because you are unable to take the ukemi that would be expected at that dojo by one of your grade.

While the kyu and dan grading system is used by aikidoka around the globe the practice of wearing coloured belts is not. In many dojo you will still only find black and white belts. Watch out – that white belt you are training with could be a 1<sup>st</sup> kyu!

There are a number of ways to tie your belt. Choose one that creates a flat knot at the front and that isn't crossed or folded at the back to ensure the most comfortable ukemi! Here is one method (the one used by Mark Sensei ) [Follow this link to see someone demonstrating this method on YouTube.](#)

## Step-By-Step Guide To Tying Your Belt

 <p>1. Place the belt against your centre with your right hand.</p>	 <p>2. Holding the belt in position with your left hand wrap the belt around your waist.</p>	 <p>3. Wrap the belt round the waist once again.</p>
 <p>4. Ensure the layers of the belt sit on top of one another. In particular make sure the belt is not crossed or folded at the back.</p>	 <p>5. Adjust the belt as necessary so that the free ends are roughly equal in length. Fix the belt with the left hand.</p>	 <p>6. Take the right-hand end of the belt and pass it up behind both layers of the belt.</p>
 <p>7. Make a loop with it and then, angling the end slightly to the left, tuck it down between the two layers of the belt.</p>	 <p>8. Take the left-hand end up in front of the belt, pass it through the loop you have just created and then, angling the end slightly to the right, down between the two layers of the belt.</p>	 <p>9. Pull both ends of the belt to tighten the knot formed.</p>
 <p>10. This will have created a flat knot whose two ends are about the same length.</p>		

We came across this MOTTO, written by Koretoshi Maruyama of Aikido Yuishinkai, recently on the [Aikido Journal Online blog](#). Koretoshi Maruyama Sensei encourages his students to read these words aloud each morning and night to keep their subconscious in a positive state of mind. You might like to try it too.

### MOTTO

I am mind itself.

If I hold positive thoughts in my mind, good things are likely to happen.

Holding negative thoughts in my mind works against my best interests.

Therefore, even if my body suffers physically, my mind remains optimistic.

Even if I encounter obstacles, my mind is never defeated.

Daily I fill my heart with thoughts of joy, gratitude and hope.

I face each new day with a bright and optimistic spirit,

which I express in word and deed.

I have faith in life, and life responds in kind.

### FOUNDER'S PHILOSOPHY

( [from the Aikido Yuishinkai website](#) )

Words have a power of their own. The power of the spoken word was recognised in ancient Japan as 'kotodama', or word spirit. To speak a word is to encourage it to come true. Your life energy responds to sounds and thoughts, as expressed in the spoken word. When you fill your daily life with positive words and thoughts, your life is filled with the power of Ki. In this way you can keep mentally and physically healthy, and have a positive influence on others as well. Words have real power, and can produce practical results in your life.

## Breath with Movement Part 1 of 8

Over the course of 2012 Mark Sensei will be introducing into the training sessions some exercises which combine breath awareness with movement. The purpose of these exercises is to tone up muscles and stimulate the flow of energy throughout the body. The first exercise is known as 'hold up heaven and harmonise'.

- i. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, shoulders relaxed and arms hanging loosely at your sides. Your gaze is straight ahead.
- ii. As you inhale slowly raise your arms out to the side and up overhead to bring the fingertips together above your head.
- iii. As you exhale lower the arms slowly down in front of the body keeping the fingers gently touching and the palms facing toward you.



- iv. Return your arms to the side of the body.
- v. Repeat this movement 4 to 8 times keeping your shoulders, arms and fingers relaxed throughout.