

Featured Dojo-cho, May 2006



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Division 3

I was born and raised in Hawaii. My father enrolled me in my first martial art, Judo, at the local YMCA. I can remember my first day as if it was yesterday. Anyone who has made a study of martial arts knows that it can be and is very addictive. The physical power one can develop is nothing short of amazing. The spiritual development, though much more powerful and beneficial in the long run, is not on the radar screen of a 7 year old boy. My pursuit of martial arts has lasted over 45 years.

My introduction to Aikido was through a high school friend. His neighbor was teaching in the training room of a local elementary/middle school. At this time in my life there were many distractions. Coupled with the numerous material arts interest I was pursuing, my Aikido training was spotty at best.

A chance introduction:

My parents moved from Hawaii to Los Gatos to retire. I followed a couple of years later to finish college. Through my father I reconnected with one of my old jujitsu instructors teaching in a school in Mt View. After just a few sessions Sig knew that I had lost my burning passion for jujitsu. We talked, and it was arranged for me to meet the Aikido instructor at the same school. Sig introduced me to Robert Nadeau. They say you can take the person out of Hawaii, but you cannot take the Hawaii out of the person. In

Hawaii I got to train under some of the world's best martial artists. What I remember oh so clearly that first night: the graceful power, commanding stage presence, and undeniable martial skill I had only seen a few times back home. I have been studying under Bob for over 30 years. Yes, Bob, this chance introduction was in January of 1976. I have been a part of the Aikido scene in the Bay Area for a long time. I met Kathy, my wife of 23 years, during keiko in Mt View. I have seen many changes, trained in many dojos and seminars throughout the world but that is another story.

I would like to share a few thoughts for your consideration and contemplation:

The waza of Aikido we are so attracted to is but only a portal to the world O-sensei operated from. Studying waza, properly coupled with self-exploration and self-development, helps create kind and considerate people. These are the ones that O-sensei wanted to study his Aikido. Students need to have the ability to execute "no doubt" techniques. But, when nage takes pleasure in inflicting pain and/or as uke in blocking techniques, we have created and fostered a very unhealthy and possibly abusive relationship, which cannot be tolerated in an Aikido dojo.

"The power of Aikido is hidden in its beauty." This is a quote from George Chun, karate master and member of the Black Belt Hall of Fame.

"That fighting in a dojo is like swimming on land." This quote is from an old time samurai movie.

Aikido of De Anza College.

This is a fully accredited P.E. course. We meet Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:30 - 9:00 pm. We often stay later to practice weapons and advanced techniques. I have been teaching here for over 11 years. I would like to extend an open invitation to come and play.

My most Memorable Aikido Experience

I was 16 when I first was introduced to Aikido. Though my introduction may seem a bit unorthodox, it was how I came to study most martial art forms. I was at a friend's party and after a little while, when no one was feeling any inhibitions, challenges started to place. I, being young, bull headed, and quick to accept such things, was asked to try and hit this guy. He'd had a little too much drink and

smoke so I thought I would just grapple and knock him down. No honor in knocking down a drunken old man. I charged and found myself flying through the hedge into the neighbor's yard. Everyone was laughing making assorted remarks. As customary I got a second shot. This time I turned into a bowling ball. I am sure the whole island heard the laughter. The year was 1969; his name was Ralph Gladstein, a senior student of Yamamoto.