



Mat Chat Winter 2009

Letter from an Anonymous Donor

To the Vancouver Ki Society,

We feel very lucky to have found a place with people who passionately share our enthusiasm, and responsibility, to grow and develop our children. Not only does being part of the Ki Society encourage our kids to be physically active, but more importantly, it helps them perform with confidence and a calm mind especially when dealing with difficulties. The teaching from Senseis fills their character with integrity and love for themselves and others, which is what we, as parents, hope for the most.

Please accept our donation to your Dojo Building Fund. As a family, we have come to the realization and decision that this investment will go much farther in ensuring the success of our children than RESP or any other education savings fund. It is much more assuring for our children to be able to succeed in their own life using their own minds than to have the money to pay for a university education that they may not be able to appreciate.

*Thank you for your life-long commitment to helping our children!
Anonymous*

Fundraising Update

As you know, the Vancouver Ki Society launched its Dojo Building Fund Raising Campaign in September. We are aiming to raise \$100,000 over the next few years to allow us to purchase land and build our own dojo.

We kicked off with two initiatives: the Monthly Savings Plan to invite members to add a regular donation to their monthly fees and a Coin Drive aimed at involving our younger members. Members and friends have contributed generously.

Meanwhile, Isaacs Sensei and Mike Knapp have been busying designing and leading business seminars to teach Ki principles and their applications to the work place. They have worked with three different groups to date and look forward to leading more sessions. These sessions are specifically tailored to meet the needs and interests of the audience. We look forward to offering them to other business groups along with sports teams or any groups interested in wellness and general health. For more information about these seminars, click on the Business Seminars page off the Programs tab of the VKS website. if you know of a group who may be interested in this training, speak to Isaacs Sensei. All monies raised by these events go into the Dojo Building Fund.

Mike has also been running a six-week introduction to Ki Development that was very popular. All of the registration fees for this program went also went into the fund.

With all these efforts in just three months of active fundraising we have generated over \$6700! Your response has been inspiring!

Our campaign continues with two more fundraisers: the Silent Auction coming up at the Holiday Class and Potluck and the Shop & Support Gift Card program. Many families have purchased cards and invited friends to do so, making our first order a substantial one! Many thanks to Diana Cheng for coordinating this.

We also want to thank the donors for our auction items: the Fadida family, the Frick family, the Lee family, the Mohr family, the Vazinkhoo/Cheng family, Thom Burlington, Alex Goldman, Adrian Zator, Sexton Sensei and Isaacs Sensei.

Our fund raising efforts will continue next year. We welcome your input about these initiatives and any other ideas you may have about fundraising. With your generous support, we will have a fabulous new home for our Aikido and Ki Development programs!



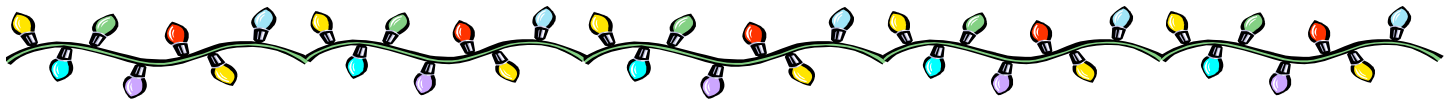
The Vancouver Ki Society is a non-profit educational service organization established in 1985 to spread Ki Principles

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My Journey to Shodan

By Lionel Philippe

Lionel Philippe recently tested for his Shodan (black belt in Ki Aikido) in Portland, Oregon. We at the VKS are very proud to introduce our newest instructor by letting him share his story of his journey these last 7 years.

I started with a clean white belt almost 7 years ago and now I find myself with a black one. What happened? During all those years I have cleaned it, trust me, but it went from white to blue then purple then brown and now it is black. Oh well, maybe I should stop cleaning it.

I remember after my first week of training being almost depressed realizing that I have been using only physical strength for 42 years. And now I had to unlearn this very old (the habit not me...) and ingrained habit. Already there started the slow process of entering into a new paradigm.

In the last 7 years, I have had to undo a lot of old habits and beliefs. I know for sure that this deconstruction process will always be in progress and may never end; it may be more subtle, but still there. "*Relax even more*" is becoming my daily motto.

Aikido - or being on the mat - is the furnace where your ego (your little me) is burned and melted. It is almost not distinguishable when you first start. It starts with a little heat here and there; not a big deal (that is good especially when it is cold out there), but the closer you get to the black belt test, the longer you are exposed to that heat and pressure.

Thanks to our Chief Instructors as they know well when to turn on the heat and put the pressure on. I found that bigger resistances appeared the closer I got to the Shodan test. It took me some time to accept it and slowly surrender bits of my old self (wonder if it is because I am French, you know... the Bastille...). Don't worry Senseis, there are still some pieces left (no... not pieces of the Bastille...)

I had a wonderful integration of the teaching 2 days prior to the Shodan test. This revelation was that the mind weights nothing and that I do not need to care much about the size of the body but just lead the mind that is weightless. I have heard that message many times in the last 7 years but never really got it (slow learner I guess...). But that day I understood it deeply and felt like it was absorbed by each cell of my body, not just by the mind. Now I just need to put it into practice...

Is the black belt the end? Is it where everything stops? Certainly NOT! Getting one's black belt is a great accomplishment (and it comes with a great black skirt. Men can wear skirts too...) but above all, it is a new beginning. I see it as an initiation or a ritual. Like a rite of passage from one life style to a new one.

I feel now, as I felt 7 years ago when I just started, that I am leaving a known territory to enter a new one. It is almost as if something inside of me has been reset. And that I am undertaking a totally new training.

This new phase in my training is about letting go even more of the physical and being able to be more trustful in the principle of Ki, not just on the mat but above all, in my daily life. I have always said that I could have learned ping pong instead of Aikido if the foundation of the training was the same - how to remember ourselves who we truly are: One with the Universe!

In conclusion, I will say that Ki-Aikido is far more than just training our body and mind - it is, at least for me, really a way of living. This is a living spirituality that embraces my whole life.

Youth Aikido Testing

Congratulations to all students who recently tested:

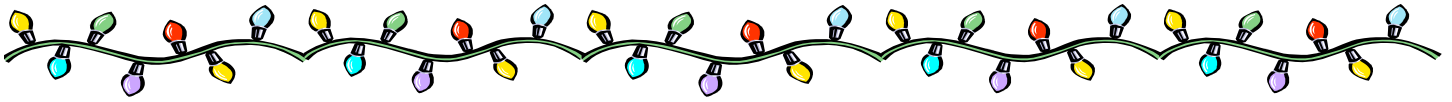
Allie – 8B	Denis – 7A
Hannah – 7B	Jaydon – 9C
Julien – 7C	Jonathon – 7B
MacKenzie – 9C	Ma'ayan – 7B
Maytar – 8B	Molly – 7C
Nicola – 3B	Paloma – 9B
Pierre – 6B	Sali – 8B

Adults Testing

Congratulations to all students who recently tested:

Aikido
Lionel - Shodan
Simon - 3B
Kiatsu
Laura - Year 1 Validation





KID'S CORNER

By Anthony Agtarap Sensei

Near the end of August, a group of eager VKS younger students and parent volunteers traveled to Cumberland for Valley Ki-Aikido's 3rd-Annual Island Kids Camp. Nasseem, Noosheen, Tanya, Brendon, Jaydon, Denis and Pierre headed over to meet up with Maite, Sachel, Molly, Julian, Hannah, Shaughn and Joshua. Our host was Michel Duhaime Sensei who provided us with the training space, sleeping accommodations, and his amazing cooking skills which successfully kept us well fed with nutritious and tasty meals throughout the three-day camp.

We not only trained a lot of exciting aikido but we all learned how to apply ki into our daily lives through classes such as calligraphy, arts class, basketball, and other fun games.

Another highlight of the camp was that three students from VKA were tested for their orange belts. Molly, Julian and Hannah passed with flying colors. The camp was truly an amazing success full of plus-ki. Special thanks must be given to Diana, Gwen and Eric, the volunteers that made this possible. It was my first time attending this camp and I plan on making this an annual adventure with my family.



Craft Time!



Agtarap Sensei still has it





My Trip to Adults Aikido Fall Camp 2009

By: Nicola

Nicola is our longest standing youth student. She started in our Children's Program and is now training in the Teens program. She recently just made her 2nd trip to train with "the big kids" at the Fall Aikido Camp in Portland Oregon. She shares her experience with us here.

A group of 10 Vancouver Aikido students recently attended a fall camp in Oregon. We all left from different locations on Friday afternoon, and ended up at the Portland dojo around midnight. The following morning, after a hardy breakfast, we started class.

Tabata Sensei taught all the classes up to lunch; warm up, Ki class and regular aikido classes. The main focus of his lessons was to think that "Ki goes all the way to your fingertips, and to move from there." It seems very simple, but when someone is holding your wrist it can easily be forgotten. The second message in his lessons was about mental discipline. He explained that it doesn't happen overnight, you have to work at it.

For lunch, we had delicious hamburgers and hot dogs. We also discovered that it was Tabata Sensei's birthday when they brought out a huge cake.

Next, Tam Sensei led a ki breathing class; she focused on not thinking in a linear way. She explained not to think that you're just breathing, your whole body is breathing and that ki is moving through you. After a few more classes that were taught by Tabata Sensei, we had dinner. When we were finally filled up, we watched a video of Tohei Sensei doing aikido in 1968. It is amazing how fast

and light his movements were.

Next, was a kiatsu class lead by Copperman Sensei, it was nice to relax after a busy day. At around 8 o'clock a lot of the adults left and the rest of us were left to do as we please. This is always a perfect time to finish any homework that you have. At 10 o'clock it was lights out (the rest of the adults arrived soon after.)

We woke up the next morning at 7 o'clock and warmed up with Copperman Sensei. Breakfast was delicious with eggs and cereal. For the rest of the day we did weapons training taught by Hart Sensei and then Sloss Sensei. At 1 o'clock, after lunch, we cleaned up the dojo and packed our stuff. We said our goodbyes and left. Surprisingly, we got home at 8:30!

All in all, it was a weekend full of fun and aikido. I find that adult's camp is different from Kids Camp because, first of all, there aren't 100 kids running around; it's just calm adults. Secondly, the classes are more advanced, so you learn more. Finally, after kiatsu class (Saturday night) you are pretty much free to do what ever you want, you have way more freedom. I think that we all could learn much more and advance our aikido by going to these camps and interacting with others.

Closing Notes for 2009:

- ❖ Please remember that Annual Membership fees are due. If you haven't paid already, please get your payment in as soon as possible. The fees are: Adult= \$50; Children= \$30.
- ❖ Important dates coming up:
 - December 12 Annual Christmas Party and Family Class
 - Dec 22 to Jan 3 Dojo Closed for Holidays – *no classes in session*
 - Dec 31 – Jan 1 New Years Eve Fundraiser
 - January 2 Annual Bell Misogi (9am – 10am)
- ❖ We would like to thank all the volunteers who helped the Vancouver Ki Society flourish in 2009. The instructors, students and parents continue to take pride in our little community which is evident in strength of our classes and the warmth of our dojo.

