

Gambaru Gazette

Official News Letter of the New Zealand Kendo Federation

Issue #2 May 2001

E d i t o r i a l

A lex Bennett

Hi Kendo mates! Well, here it is! Issue number Ni of the Gambaru Gazette! I would like to thank all the contributors for their wonderful articles and information. The response has been fantastic, and I now truly believe that the Gambaru Gazette is here to stay, and will continue to progress with NZ Kendo as it grows old like Graham and Ken.

I wanted to include some information about the recent NZ Champs, but unfortunately I was not sent an official report...Nevertheless, one of the intrepid Nelson kendoka was so kind as to send me an article about his experiences at the champs. Such contributions are what make this newsletter a great read, and helps NZ kendoka communicate with each other. Keep them coming in please.

On a different note, a number of clubs have asked me about the huge stash of keiko-gi and hakama that I have acquired. Indeed, if you read the last issue of Gambaru Gazette, you would have seen the article

that I posted concerning this great fortune. They are all stored safely in my humble abode in Kyoto. So, how do you get your hands on them I hear you asking yourselves? Well, it's going to cost a little more than a self addressed stamped envelope. I will not distribute them to individuals, but if your club needs some gear please contact me via e-mail;

budobaka@mbox.kyoto-inet.or.jp

Please stipulate exactly what you need and I will send it to you. All I ask is that you pay the postage. I will pay for it this end, and let you know the damage. Then, please send a cash-cheque to my parents in Christchurch.

C/o Bruce & Linda Bennett

107 Slater Street, Christchurch

Tel- (03) 3859-223

Of course the gear itself is totally free. Thanks once again to the Daito Lions and my Aussie mate Lockie Jackson for letting us in on the find!

Finally, before I get back to the final preparations for my PhD presentation coming up in the next few weeks, please check out the letter which I've included in the back of this issue concerning

KENDO WORLD, the worlds first ever English language magazine devoted to Kendo. This is keeping Hamish Robison and myself very busy. BUY IT!

Cheers mates,

Alex

P r e s i d e n t ' s M e s s a g e

Graham Sayer

The 2nd edition of Gambaru Gazette is here already. I'm happy to report that the 1st edition was a huge success. AKC we have been giving out copies to visitors and prospective members lets them see that there is a Kendo community here in NZ not just a few clubs here and there.

Even though there will be a report on the recent Auckland 2001 National Champs somewhere in this edition I would like to say that I never imagined that we could have created such a fantastically exciting atmosphere from 23 competitors, one time keeper, two scorers, and six reasonably well dressed Shinpan. Right from the 1st to 82nd battle over the 2 days there did not seem to be a dull moment. The 2 *jigeiko* sessions helped to conclude each day on a high. At the

beginning of the event there was a little talk that \$60 entry was a bit high for competitors (including lunch and free sports drinks). That calculates out at about \$3.75 per hour. Sure beats going to the movies and that's an average of \$5 per hour! Thank you Auckland for a great weekend and setting a standard for future Nationals.

We are still a few weeks off confirming the dates of the "Wellington Camp" In Auckland for 2001. At this stage it will be the 18th/19th or 25th/26th of August. We will confirm to you all through the key person email list and your club representatives. The idea of having a club representative meeting at least 3 times a year is working well, I have also introduced a "key person" email list in order to enhance communications throughout the Federation. Should you wish to be included on this list please email me at graham@saycoholdings.com.

Another date to be watching out for is this year's Poneke Challenge. Confirmed dates will be announced from Rembuden's organising committee in the near future.

Keep practicing with the right heart.



Upcoming NZ Events



Announcing the Second Poneke Challenge

**Friday October 12th – Sunday
October 14th**

Yes, it will soon be that time of the year!!!!!! Poneke is back and ready to be bigger and better than our fabulous inaugural event in November 2000. This year Sensei Terry Holt, 7th dan (founder of the famous Mumeishi 3's tournament upon which the Teams event is modelled) may attend Poneke Challenge! A UK and an Australian team may also accompany him. Moves are afoot to gain as much international interest in Poneke as possible.

**Events for 2001 are the same as
last year**

**Women's Individual Open (Cup)
Kyu Grade Individual Open
(Cup)
Teams Event Open (Cup)
Senior Grade Individual Open
(Poneke Cup)
Open Grade Kata Competition
Fighting Spirit Awards**

Tentative Schedule:

Friday evening: Registration and goodwill gi-geiko

Saturday: Competition and goodwill gi-geiko

Sunday: Competition, International cup competition/s and gi-geiko

Further information/ registration details and costs will be sent to your dojo mid-2001, but remember, diary the dates for October!



Update from the *Auckland Kendo Club*

Here's an update on a recent seminar in the Auckland Kendo with 2 visiting Sensei.

In February we were lucky to have both Nagayama Sensei and Ohara Sensei visit our Dojo after 10 days in Australia and then returning to Japan before heading south again.

Nagayama Sensei - 7 Dan Iaido /
Jodo / 6 Dan Kendo Ohara Sensei -
7 Dan Iaido / 6 Dan Jodo

The schedule for this visit was to as always help our Iaido and Jodo with a limited but very helpful injection of Kendo as well. We trained with the Sensei over a 5-day period and as always their teachings and ability to make us develop and challenge ourselves was tested time and time again.

Nagayama Sensei had 2 practices in Kendo with us and we videoed one session allowing the Sensei to give individual comments to us all, which were extremely useful. People of all grades were able to take these points and practice them in the next sessions developing ongoing skills or just refining there Kendo.

We had as usual at the end of the Seminar a grading for all the 3 Styles and at this point we would like to congratulate Fletcher Porter again for becoming the youngest member in Australasia to gain 1 Dan in Jodo. Following that we added another 1 Dan to the Iaido ranks and many Kendo kyu grades. Ralf Maddison who won the Kyu

grade Shiai in Wellington last year past kendo 1 Dan along with Philippe Gianni who doesn't do things by half's and passed Shodan in both Kendo and Jodo.

Currently the Dojo is gearing up for the National Championships and the tasks surrounding this event. We have also planned a trip to the Waikato Club in April to have a Kendo session with them.

In a nuts shell that's about it - lots happening and even more to try to remember - next time.



Update from the
Christchurch Kendo Club

?



Update from the
Hutt Kendo Club

Sue and Liz started a **new club** recently with a stunning 22 beginners and 9 others watching. The inevitable problem starts as we have no bogu, but are hoping to get some money from the Hillary Commission to buy a couple of sets. However that obviously will only help some of the predicament we

are in.

If you know of anyone with old bogu they might like to donate to a burgeoning club in New Zealand, we would find the cost of transporting it over. Sooooo, please ask around and let us know.

Moreover I understand that you recently advertised that you have access to cheep hakama and keikogi, we will be encouraging our beginners to buy these. Graham told me to talk to you directly about the purchase of the hakama and gi. Perhaps you can let me know about what is on offer, prices etc. Thanks.

Oh, by the way, it seems highly likely that Terry Holt will be coming over for Poneke Challenge.

Alex- Liz and Sue, let me offer my congratulations on the formation of New Zealand's newest club. I'm sure the Hutt Kendo Club will grow into force to be reckoned with, and a valuable contributor to NZ Kendo. Good Luck!!



Update from the *Nelson Kendo Club*

I guess the main reason for Nelson being off-line is the departure of Neil Lee from the Club. Neil is alive and well in Aus selling rice or something- in his haste to leave NZ he forgot to submit any stuff to you and also forgot to give me the Gazette files. However, I am the new contact for Nelson by e-mail and to confirm my e its reesbs@clear.net.nz.

The Nelson Club is having a very busy time with more members than ever. We currently have a strong kids section with 7 young people training regularly and some showing very good prospects. Sam of course gained his 4th Dan at the last foreigners' camp and we are very proud of him. Every one else is training for the Wellington Camp in Auckland.

No deaths, no births yet but one due later in the year to Shane and Sally!

Only one of our club went to the champs- John White, but for a 2nd kyu I think he would have given a

good impression of the club.

We'd love to relieve you of some of your truckload of gi and hakama.....

We still train Tues and Thurs 4-45 on at the Ngawhatu Hall, Stoke, Nelson. People can call me on (03) 545 1631 for training details.

Error in last Gazette- Steve Ungham is in fact Steve Ingham.

Nelson continues to be a strong club, a bit detached from everyone else but keenly following Sam's excellent training and growing in spirit and numbers. I think our showing at the last Poneke Challenge was fantastic and our 2nd place shows we mean business! Look out everyone at the next Poneke challenge and we hope to have a stronger presence next time.

With our growing number of kids we are really short of small bogu and if anyone has any spare we would appreciate being considered. Also does anyone have any copies of the AJKF children's training guide(s) or has anyone thought about different training for kids in NZ?

I'm drying up so hope that helps for now and we'll try and get some more club info for the next edition.



Update from the
Rembuden K endo Club
(Wellington)

?



Update from the
Waikato K endo Club

Dojo report:

1. Marleen and I are going to be parents in November. I think this the biggest news in our club at this moment. All our members and friends from other clubs are also very excited about this. Of course, no more detail can say at this moment. *Alex-Congratulations!*

2. Our captain has changed from Michael Potroz to Kenji Sakimoto from May 2001.

Our basic philosophy of choosing captain or any members in the executive team is focus on members' learning. All of us appreciate Michael's contribution in

the past two years. Michael has also passed what he has learned from being a captain to Kenji. Kenji is a thoughtful and generous person. He is pleased that he can be our team captain in his probably last year in New Zealand. (Of course, every member in our club is crossing our fingers for him and hope he can find a job after he graduates from Computer Science Department next year.)

3. Another good news for New Zealand Women Kendo society is that we have 8 female members this year! 5 of them just born this year (beginners). All of them are smart, beautiful and charming. Besides of the new male beginners, Marleen and I are very happy to have so many new female beginners.

Just a recall of Graham's joke in NZKF Champ, Marleen now can be a good advertisement that showing a pregnant woman can also do Kendo! :)

2. Club contact details:

Postal address: PO Box 4329, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Phone number: 64-7-8561488

Sam Tsai: samtsai@hnpl.net

MarleenCharng:

marleen@seed.net.tw

Training timetable:

Tuesday: 6.00pm - 7.30pm Beginners

7.30pm - 9.00pm Seniors

Saturday: 3.00pm - 4.30pm Beginners

4.30pm - 6.00pm Seniors

Training place: SOE Gym, Gate 4, Hillcrest Road, Hamilton.

(Ps. SOE = School of Education)

By the way, Jeffrey Ke built a website for us. The url is: http://home.kimo.com.tw/waikato_kendo/

I think this website is very helpful. We just got a mail from a person living in Wellington asking about whether there is a Kendo club in Wellington or not. I have forwarded his mail to Martin Lee. Jeffrey is a student in Computer Science Department. I have already had a talk with him. He is happy to help other clubs if anyone is interested about building a simple website.

That is all for now! I do have some feelings about NZKF Champ want to share.

But I need more time to write it.

Please do not wait for me.

I will try my best to write it up before Issue 3.

Sam

Martial arts and business

Ken Wells

Auckland Kendo Club



There are numerous similarities between developing oneself through martial arts training and developing oneself in the business arena. Over the years I have had an opportunity to do both. I have found that the skills and attributes, which I have had to develop in order to progress in my martial arts training, are also those that have been necessary in my business life. This has been particularly true while running my own company since you have to rely on your own ability and strength of character to get you through the tough times.

The table below sets out the similarities that exist, in my opinion, between a martial art such as kendo and management practices in business.

Martial arts	Business
Accept all challenges and challengers	Don't be intimidated by a competitor's size, they will be vulnerable somewhere
Persist, struggle on, never give up	Persistence is particularly important in a sales role. 90 % of business is gained after the 4 th refusal but only 10 % of salespeople are still hanging in there
Through meditation we learn to remain calm, or at least give the outward appearance of being calm, in times of stress and adversity e.g. when we are fighting an opponent or in gradings	Remaining calm is critical in important sales meetings or in conflict situations with staff, colleagues, unions etc.
Respect all people no matter what grade or level of expertise	All people are important to us in business, including staff, suppliers and clients
Focus on our opponent but be aware of what else is happening around us	Concentrate on the task at hand but use the "helicopter" quality to take a wider view of our business
Face up to areas where we need to improve our technique and ability	Don't ignore business deficiencies or run away from business problems, tackle them immediately and confidently
Be courteous and respectful of others at all times during our martial arts journey	There is no place for rudeness in business, even in times of conflict
Suppress the ego as	A sense of humility

an inflated ego will blind us to our opponent's strengths and make us vulnerable to his attack	is vital when dealing with people at the various levels of business. Arrogance as well as being a weakness also causes unnecessary conflict
Continually strive to improve our technique and our performance	If we are not constantly striving to improve our business we will be over taken by those people who are improving theirs
We must develop strategies to overcome our own weaknesses and to exploit those of our opponents	Every business must have a strategic plan that is regularly reviewed. If we fail to plan we plan to fail
We must develop ways to harness our fears and anxieties e.g. in tournaments or gradings	We should not allow ourselves to be intimidated by events or people, we need to keep things in perspective. There is nothing truly life threatening in the business world
Higher grades should always encourage and develop lower grades by setting a good example and providing a safe but challenging environment	All managers should be constantly helping their staff grow by being positive role models and by encouraging them to take on greater challenges
In martial arts our confidence grows as we overcome internal and external obstacles and we come to have faith in our ability to succeed	As we succeed in certain parts of our business we become confident enough to tackle other more demanding areas

If we don't control the opponent then he controls us	If we are not in control of the situation then we are out of control and the situation controls us
We are taught that our martial arts training is a journey not a destination	We must be constantly focussing on the day-to-day activities of our business even as we look into the future. We must remember that we can always improve no matter how good we think we have become

I believe that, above all, martial arts and business are both all about self-discipline, effort and passion. Anyone can progress to a high level in kendo for example if they continue to apply themselves to the training. Similarly, anyone can succeed in business if they are passionate about it and have the self-discipline to make the required sustained effort.

Gambatte kudasai!!!

Ken Wells



Reflections on the NZ Kendo Championships

John White.

Nelson Kendo Club

I have to say that the NZ Kendo Championships held in Auckland recently was a great spectacle. I was in awe when observing the amount of talent and skill utilised in the tournament.

Being a relative beginner in Kendo, going to this event was a real eye opener in respect of what can be achieved by a kendoist who trains hard and fights bravely. I saw more clearly why a kendoist, who maybe a particular grade, has that grade, by simply watching the way they fight and conduct themselves throughout the entire competition. It was also a good opportunity to meet other practicing kendoka and have the chance to fight them during the competition or by having a session of gi-geiko at the end of the day. I have always believed that you can appreciate the bigger picture and have some idea where you stand in the scheme of things when you attend a national event whether it be a seminar or shiai. I would simply like to say thank you to everyone who encouraged and helped me during the

competition. And a special thanks to the senior grades from the Auckland Kendo club. My kendo has greatly improved from your advice.

Also I would like to say Hi to all the people from the Wellington and Waikato clubs. One of the highlights of the shiai was the teams event when the Waikato club, prior to their fights, huddled together and screamed out WAIKATO!! that's what I call team spirit!

I look forward to seeing you all at the August camp.

Take care and train hard!

John White- Nelson Kendo Club.

Hello Alex, this is John White from the Nelson Kendo club. I actually saw an e-mail from you by chance at one of our trainings and thought why not type something about my recent experience at the NZ Kendo Federation Championships held in Auckland for the "Gambaru?" (not sure on spelling) magazine. So here it is. Before I type it, is it possible to get a hold of this magazine in Nelson? I would like to hear what other kendoists from around the country and overseas have to say. Thanks for your time.

Alex- John, thanks very much for your contribution. It sounds like you had a stimulating time in the NZ Champs. I wish I could have been there.

In regards to your question, the fact that you are now reading this (hopefully) means that the Nelson contact has received this issue by e-mail as a PDF file. It is up to the contact in each club to print the file out and distribute it to the members. As this issue and the last have about 20 pages, it may be difficult for the contact to get everybody a copy. All that I hope is for even one copy to be made available to club members so that it can circulate within the club, and be photo-copied by any member who wants their own copy. Other than that, anybody who wants to receive the Gambaru Gazette by e-mail, please let me know by contacting me at; budobaka@mbox.kyoto-inet.or.jp. I can then send you a copy directly.

Cheers,

Alex



Kiwis in



Kyoto

Andrew Pedersen

Christchurch Kendo Club

For anyone fortunate to have the opportunity to train Kendo in Kyoto, it's a great experience. I've been living in Kyoto for about eight months now and have been able to observe and train with many good Kendo practitioners from all over the area. Being a foreigner in Japan has had both its ups and downs but has given me more opportunities than I would of otherwise had being Japanese. A big white foot in the door so to speak. Of course the language barrier and cultural differences can be a major headache at times, whether it be making friends or asking advice from seniors. I haven't quite got used to the Kyoto summer yet (is it possible?) with an average high of 32 degrees, which makes for fun times, especially when you train in the basement of the Kyoto University Gymnasium.

Living and training in Kyoto can be a lot of fun, providing you don't get

taken out by over zealous taxi drivers with a thirst for blood while cycling to and from the Dojo. Your Shinai can be an effective tool for clearing pedestrians out of the way when cruising down the sidewalk if your bell doesn't work. If you actually make it to the Dojo the training is always good. I've been training at Kyoto University (courtesy of Alex) and there's a real sense of unity about the club. They always have a lot of energy and enthusiasm, and that makes it so much easier to keep your own enthusiasm going.

In addition to training at Kyodai, I've been attending a weekly practice at a primary school run by two retired police instructors. I was actually introduced by my girlfriend's father to the Sensei, who was an old acquaintance of his, which proved to be a lucky break. And shortly, I'll have the opportunity to attend training at the Imperial Palace with the Imperial guards, which will be quite exciting. My Japanese Kendo friends often tell me how lucky foreigners who practice Kendo here are.

On the downside, making friends initially can be pretty difficult as for many club members it's their

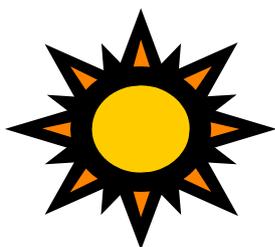
first experience dealing with a foreigner. Sometimes they can seem quite cold for the first couple of months, but there are usually one or two outgoing members that will try to welcome you and make you feel more relaxed. It might be that they're not sure where to place you in the hierarchy of the club due to your age, and how long you've practiced Kendo. I've heard similar things from other foreigners in Japan practicing Budo, complaining that no one talks to them when they turn up to training.

When I arrived in Japan the summer was just coming to a close but the temperatures were still through the roof. It was the humidity I felt more than anything, especially during training. I heard that the humidity in Kyoto and other parts of Kansai is particularly high compared to the rest of Japan. Training in that heat can be a bit of a nightmare and it's such a relief when it finally cools down that you find you can train much harder.

At the risk of sounding like a travel guide I would thoroughly recommend to anyone interested in Kendo to come to Kyoto, or for that matter anywhere in Japan, and learn from the source. Presently

there are four Kiwis training in Kyoto: Alex, Hamish, Blake and myself. Alex and Hamish are here for the long haul but Blake and I are looking at coming home in autumn to share what we have learnt here with our club back home. There are so many opportunities for foreigners to take their Kendo to a higher level and make good friends and contacts because the Japanese are so willing to impart their knowledge to spread Budo globally. It can sometimes be difficult at first getting on in the Kendo community, but is more often than not very rewarding. Just make sure you don't come in the height of summer.

Alex- Very good advice, believe me!!



Diary of a Kendo Bum **Blake Bennett**

Christchurch Kendo Club

I arrived in Kansai International Airport on a very cold Friday night, wearing my NZ Kendo blazer, carrying my bogu and a suitcase. I knew nothing. My Japanese was

non-existent, and I had no idea what to expect for the next 6 months.

Some friends of the family met me and took me to Kyoto city to my brother's house. That's where I was staying for the rest of my time in Japan. Or so I thought! I had been in Japan not one week, when I was put on a plane bound for Miyazaki. Miyazaki is a city at the top of Kyushu Island. Its Kendo greats include people like Masahiro Miyazaki, previous World Champ and All Japan Champ.

When I arrived in Miyazaki Airport, a man named Koyama Yukitaka Sensei was standing at the gates waiting for me. All he said was "Blake? Lets go!" Hard man! That wasn't the half of it! Koyama Sensei's Kendo is incredible. As is his Naginata. He is a great teacher whose basic philosophy is never say die (Kill maybe, but never die!). As the coach of a local Junior high school his attitude rubs off on his students in the Kendo club who have amazing technique and passion for Kendo.

He had organised for me to stay at some student's houses for my period of stay. That was a bit of a

challenge, as I stayed with 7 different families, but what an experience! I met some amazing people, and made some life long friends, all through Kendo.

During the daytime when I wasn't training, Koyama Sensei hooked me up with a job at 'HAKKODOU', a local Bogu shop. This is an experience that I will never forget. I learned a skill that very few people know, Kote Shuuri (Kote repairing.) I fixed Kote belonging to my Sensei in Miyazaki, I fixed Kote belonging to various members of the Kendo public, I even fixed a pair of Kote belonging to my employer! I enjoyed it so much that I have made plans to continue when I am back in New Zealand. (Blake's Kote Repair Co.)

While I was there, a local TV news program approached me. They asked if they could film an average day for me working in the Bogu shop and training with a Junior high school. How could I say no! The filming they did at work went fine. The reporter asked me a few questions and I tried to answer them as intelligently as possible! (But failed miserably!) The next lot of filming they did was at the

school Dojo, and this wasn't so easy! Koyama Sensei decided to put my Kendo to the test by giving me a special kind of Kakari-geiko. He asked me to stand in the middle of the Dojo floor, as he organised the male Kendo players into groups of threes. I had to do Kakari-geiko with three people at a time, countless times! This wasn't just for the camera though, as it was very similar to my 'WELCOME' Kakari-geiko! And strangely enough, my 'FAREWELL' Kakari-geiko!

When my month in Miyazaki had come to an end, it was by no means the end of my experiences. Instead of returning to Kyoto, Alex had arranged for the both of us to attend a Martial Arts seminar in Tokyo. This was the 13th 'International Budo Seminar', Alex's eighth time and my first. Once again, not knowing what to expect, I was a bit nervous. But I felt right at home when I was introduced to a group of Kendo 'grunts' such as myself! However, the unique thing about the Budo Seminar is all the different kinds of Budo and Budoka were in attendance. This became clear when I found myself in the Dojo watching people practicing Judo, Karatedo, Kendo, Aikido,

Shorinji Kempo, Jodo, Jukendo, Kyudo, Naginata and Iaido. All being taught by some of the best Sensei in Japan. With all these types of Budo, and the high level teachers, it is a main feature of the Seminar to participate in different kinds of Budo to what you specialize in. For example, as a Kendo player I could choose to study a bit of Aikido, or Shorinji Kempo, or even Kyudo.

During my stay in Miyazaki, I was given a Ju-ken, (wooden rifle with attached bayonet) from the people at my work. I figured that because I had a Ju-ken, I may as well try Ju-kendo. It certainly was not what I was expecting. Yet come to think of it, I didn't really know what to expect! For those who are not familiar with Ju-kendo, the only points are Tsuki. One point on the body by the heart, and one point on the throat. Ju-kendo is not played with the body straight on like Kendo, it is more side on like Naginata. But similar to both Kendo and Naginata, there are Waza (techniques) such as Harai Waza etc.

The seminar also held lectures on various Budo topics like the history of the Japanese Katana, sports

massage, the history of classical martial arts and so on. The lectures were given in Japanese and English, although I slept through most of them to the great disgust of my brother who was working as an official and interpreter for the seminar. *Alex- Blake, it wasn't the sleeping that was so bad, but the dribbling on the desk!*

As soon as the Budo Seminar had finished, Alex and I packed our Bogu bags and headed off to Kyoto University where a bus was waiting. The Kyoto University Kendo Club had organised a training camp for five days. It was held in a place called Mimasaka, which happens to be the birthplace of Miyamoto Musashi.

We trained in an impressive Dojo named, surprisingly enough, the 'Musashi Dojo'. The format for the trainings was one I was not used to at all! The aim of the camp was to kick start everyone's 'Kendo drive' and make the average training seem like a piece of cake! I.e. The trainings were designed to be hell on earth.

When we arrived on Monday afternoon, we were all given 1 hour to get unpacked and ready for the

first training. We started with a warm up and suburi. Then put amour on and started doing sets of 100 strike Kirikaeshi. This lead to Kihon and Waza, then we started Kakari-geiko practice. After Kakari-geiko, they we nice enough to give us a 10 minute break before we did a further 15 minutes of Kakari-geiko followed by Jigeiko for 1 more hour. That was the half the day. The rest of the day consisted of Shiai practice, Jigeiko and yes, more Kakari-geiko! In total, we trained **8 hours a day for 5 days.**

After the first day, my arms were a bit sore. After the second day had passed, I was having difficulty putting my own Men on! When the third day rolled around, I could hardly lift my Shinai! And the fourth and fifth days are a blur! As I said, the aim of the camp was to get everyone kick started for the year, and to show how doing a 2-hour training isn't that hard at all.

By attending the camp with the other students, it broke a lot of the ice. And showed that I could (just barely) do the hard yards as well. On one day, every single Kendo Dan grade was represented at the camp from Shodan through to 9th

Dan!! (Nishi Sensei is a 9th Dan and the Shihan of Kyoto University Kendo Club). There was also an 8th Dan, and a number of 7th, 6th 5th 4th Dans etc... The trainings at Kyoto Uni. are the hardest I have ever experienced because of the intensity that the members train at, and the content of the trainings. But at the same time, they are some of the most enjoyable trainings I have ever had due to the amazing energy the students put into their Kendo. When every person in the Dojo is putting 100% into their practice, it creates an atmosphere that makes you forget how tired you really are! It's an atmosphere that shows the dedication they all have to improve their own Kendo, yet at the same time do their best to help out each other's Kendo too.

Next on my list of experiences is training at the Kyoto police. When I asked Alex what trainings were like there he replied, ` its like the difference between a training with a high school first XV and the All Blacks! ' Something to look forward to! Also I have been given the opportunity to train at the Imperial Palace Kendo Dojo. Something that very few people get to do let alone an 18 year old from little old New Zealand!

In two months I have been to Miyazaki to train with some future Kendo champs, learned how to repair Kendo Kote, been to an International Budo seminar and tasted some of the different Martial Arts out there. I have been to a grueling University training camp and have been offered the opportunity to train with the police and imperial guards of Kyoto. Who knows what's install for the next 4 months!?

A Helping Hand From Uncle Kotay

*Dear Uncle Kotay,
I was wondering about the meaning behind the pleats in the Hakama. Why do we have to spend so much time folding our \$\$\$#? \$ Hakama up? And if the pleats are so important, is it okay to sew them in, or send our Hakama to the dry-cleaners and get them to do it?*

*Yours sincerely,
Pressed for time*

Well pumpkins, this is a very good question indeed! I work along the philosophy that everything you do in Kendo has, or should have meaning. Of course, this goes for the equipment that is used in Kendo, from the handsome Kote right down to the little plastic spatula in the Koshi-ita of the *hakama*. Indeed, the *hakama* is a very noble piece of attire that looks great in the Dojo, and goes just as well in multicolored luscious silk for eveningwear! In fact, the *hakama* can be donned for almost any occasion, and has come in many sizes and shapes throughout Japanese history. Men's *hakama* underwent a variety of changes over time: the legs were widened, pleats were added at the waist, and they were bound at the ankles with a cord threaded through the hem. Ooh Pumpkins can you imagine?!



During the Heian period (794–1185), court women wore loose-fitting crimson *hakama* with their formal court ensemble, or *junihitoe*. *Hakama* were worn by the court women of the Kamakura (1185–1333) and Muromachi (1333–1568) periods with *kosode* (a type of long-sleeved kimono), although for a time they went out of fashion as formal wear. In the Meiji period (1868–1912), the *kosode* and *hakama* combination was the school uniform for girls. Traditional formal dress for men consists of *hakama* and a jacket known as a *haori*, usually imprinted with the man's family crest. Today *women receiving a degree at university often wear hakama*.



Those folds you referred to, my little Kendo dumpling represent key virtues of which we aspire in Kendo. Each fold represents a virtue and each 'node' on the shinai mirrors the same virtue.

Fold One: This is Jin- Humanity

Fold Two: This is Gi- Obligation

Fold Three: This is Rei- Courtesy

Fold Four: This is Chi- Wisdom

Fold Five: This is Shin- Trust

The back fold of the *hakama* represents Makoto- Sincerity



Thus and so pumpkins, those dandy little creases have profound meaning for your study of Kendo. You should take the utmost care in folding your *hakama* at the end of each training. Sooo many people just roll it up and stuff it in a bag. Absolutely tragic pumpkins! TRAGIC! If Uncle Kotay caught somebody doing that, I'd get very angry. And you wouldn't like it when I got angry pumpkins!

SUE LYTOLLIS'S YONDAN

GRADING

Hutt Kendo Club

My understanding of the above is that these folds embody many of the reasons for which I study Kendo. I hold the respect of humanity dear, a sense of love for fellow peoples, a desire to respect them and to show courtesy to the dojo, the instruments I use (weapons, armour) and the people who train me and with whom I train. I hope to become a better person by attempting to absorb the wisdom of Kendo, thus developing wisdom in myself. I feel gi, or obligation to the tents I have learnt and a desire to pass them on in the way I practice in my life, or by teaching/assisting others in their study of Kendo. Achieving trust and thus truthfulness (Makoto) is perhaps one of the harder virtues, as being truthful/sincere can be difficult to do yet it is essential in order to develop as a better person. As I progress in my Kendo I consider that I gain a deeper understanding of the meanings of these virtues. This opens up new vistas of wisdom for me to attempt to apply in my daily life.

Thank you pumpkin Sue. Couldn't have said it better myself. On that note darlings, put this mag down and go and fold your *hakamas*. Take pride in carefully folding each pleat at the end of training, and spare a moment to ponder their meaning. Do it yourself and **NO CHEATING!** Dry cleaning indeed! Remember, Uncle Kotay has spies everywhere, and my wrath is a threat, promise and a guarantee if you don't look after your gear! Absolutely shameless...

This is Uncle Kotay signing off for another issue. Feel free to write in and ask me anything pumpkins.....

Until then, train hard and prosper!



Going around Central America

Hiro I mafuji

Christchurch Kendo Club

I had a chance to go to Mexico, Panama, and Republic Dominica from the 25th of April to the 4th of May. Why? You may ask. The volunteers can have 3 weeks off and are allowed to go some countries around Central America for their work profit. Anyway, on the 25th of April, a Japaniwi (Japanese + Kiwi) Kendo-ka left Guatemala for Musha Shugyo (visiting to other places to train oneself).

What I always think when I visit to other countries is that the kendoists are eager to practice kendo. If they do not have teachers, the enthusiasm for kendo is even stronger. For me who deadly loves kendo, it makes me happy and also it gives me energy to train myself. Exactly what I felt when I was in NZ.

The clubs that I visited do not have students who have more than 2nd dan, except some Japanese. There is only one club that has three 3rd dans, which is Panama. The Panamanian club has close

relationship with the Japanese school and apparently there are always kendoists working as teachers. Even though, they do not have their own dojo, they practice here and there regularly. The other two dojos in Mexico and Dominican Republic do not have teachers now, even though the Dominican dojo had a volunteer like me for 2 years until last year. They are dying for teachers.

The level of these three counties is very different. Surprisingly, the dojo of Dominican Republic has the best quality of kendo. Before the trip, I thought that the Mexican had, but it was not the Mexican. I do not know it is because they leaned a lot from the volunteer or they are natural born kendoists. When I think the reasons, one thing was definitely different between the Dominicans and the others. That is “they know what they want through kendo.” They are looking at “strong” kendo not “skilful” kendo. In any schools with no teachers, it is very important for them to know what kendo they want to acquire. This is a tip especially for us, who study kendo outside Japan.

Mexico

As you may know, kendo in

Mexico is not small. About 8 dojos exist and Japanese sensei(s) visit there every year. Besides, they are one of the biggest kendo farms in the American continent. These facts had made me believe that the level of kendo was really high in every dojo, and those who practice kendo was staunch. Anyway, 2 tiny cute ladies were waiting for me at the Mexican airport. They have got 2 dan and teachers of their club. We spent the afternoon for a bit of sight seen in Mexico City. At 8 o'clock p.m. we started kendo.

There were 2 training sessions at their dojo, the gym of Polytechnic. At the first night, I was only watching their basic training quietly. The level of the dojo was not so high, but there were 12 people at the dojo training hard with strong kiai. I did Jigeiko in both sessions with every one of them and felt their soul towards kendo through shinai.

At the second night, I took training. Because I did not confuse them by teaching new things, I taught them the importance of the left-hand grip and the distance. It is easy to teach not to grab shinai from the side but they do not know why. Because tsuka (the grip of shinai) is around,

unlike a real sword, it is easy to grab shinai from the side. The reason that we cannot grab shinai from the side is we use shinai as a real sword. We cannot cut through anything with the wrong grip. Therefore, I showed them how weak the wrong grip and the wrong position of the left hand through Tsuki practice and one handed-kirikaeshi. Please try one handed-kirikaeshi at your dojo. It is very difficult and makes you realize how much you have depended on your right hand.

By the way, I went to see pyramids, when I was in Mexico. Most of them have been repaired so they are not actually the same when they were found. But still you can be impressed by its history and the power of the pyramids. If you have chance, please visit one of them. It gives you ancient power.

Panama

When I stepped out of the plane, the humidity welcomed me. It was hot! I thought "Oh, no! This is just like summer in Japan. It will kill me during training." That was night, by the way. Thank god, there was an air conditioner in a hotel room. I had a good sleep in the nice and cool room for the next day.

Here in Panama, there were also two training sessions during my stay. I did not take training at all, because there were 3 Japanese 3rd dans there. I just watched what the Japanese taught. They were not like the Japanese who want to be grand teachers in other countries. They seemed to be nice teachers.

As the Mexican, the Panamanian needs more Kihon and someone who can put them on the right track. Apparently the Japanese has just arrived in Panama, so I hope that they can lead the Panamanian to the right kendo.

Dominican Republic

Here it was even more humid and hotter than Panama. I had 3 nights and 4 days here and at all of the nights we had training sessions. I only had 4 or 5 hours at the Caribbean Sea.

The Caribbean Sea was too beautiful to express in words. If you have chance, go there and have a good look at the sea and some humans.

The level of kendo here was surprisingly very high. There was little to advice them. As usual, I just watched at the first day. They

knew what they were doing and what they wanted to do. Most of them have never been to Japan but they seemed that they had. All they have had was one volunteer to teach kendo for 2 years. I could not believe that having a teacher for only 2 years could give this much influence on kendoists overseas.

Most surprisingly, I saw one 2nd dan whose kendo was very beautiful. What I mean “beautiful” is that his form and synchronization of the body movements (Ki Ken Tai Icchi) were perfectly well done. There was one 1st kyu there who executed 2 handed tsuki on me. That was beautiful too. I saw some possibility in Dominican Republic.

Thus, I thought that they did not need technical advices, but much more the core of kendo. That is Kirikaeshi. As you may know, Kirikaeshi is the basic of the basics of kendo. It is not one of warming up exercises. If you do it correctly and thoroughly, you cannot believe how tiring one set of Kirikaeshi is. My favourite one is Kirikaeshi with 30 times, 50 times and 100 times of Sayu-men. Do 3 sets, 2 sets and one set respectively. And go back to 30 again. This is totally different from doing 100s suburi. It can lead you

to the door to the real kendo.

After having done this menu, they were exhausted after these Kirikaeshi and could not do anything afterwards. I got them to have some rests and did the final jigeiko with each one of them. Some people know that I have problems with my shoulders and cannot take chudan for a long time. Therefore, I took Nitou (use 2 swords instead of 1). In this way, I can change hands when one gets some pain. They liked it and enjoyed fighting with Nitou.

What I learned through the trip
That was a very quick trip so this could be the reason why these kendoists were very nice and kind to me. But still that was the same as what I felt in NZ; warm, cheerful and family like. Kendos itself is already wonderful, but by keep practicing kendo I could have many friends in many countries. Who could imagine this when I started kendo 20 years ago? I again learned how important to feel warmth and kindness.

Through shinai we can communicate each other so I felt that language is not important. Of course it is necessary to live

comfortably. But to feel humanity of others, language is not everything.

NZ is very lucky to have 5th dans and some people are actually in Japan training kendo. To learn without teachers, definitely you have to keep having desire and motivation. You can be never satisfied with your kendo. You have to make your goal very clear and work on it until you achieve it.

After the trip, I have started to find a place for Guatemalan kendoists. They are satisfied with their situation. Kendo in Guatemala is in danger and if I leave it as it is, it will die out. I love kendo. I want people to know how fantastic it is to keep doing kendo and how thankful it is to meet people through kendo beyond borders.

Viva Kendo, mates! Eh?



KENDO world

CROSSING SWORDS & BORDERS

Dear Kendo friends,

It is with great pleasure that we send you this letter to announce our intention of producing Kendo World, the world's first international English language publication dedicated to Kendo.

We believe that with the growing popularity of Kendo worldwide, it is becoming more necessary for the dissemination of philosophical, historical and technical information pertaining to Kendo in languages accessible to the non-Japanese Kendo community. We the editors of this undertaking are in a unique position of living and training in Kendo for many years in Japan, and are fortunate to have access to an unlimited treasure trove of Kendo information. With the creation of the Kendo World magazine, we hope to act as facilitators in collating and translating this information for the rest of the world, and in a small way contribute to a deeper understanding of Kendo in the international community.

At this stage we plan to have the first publication sent out in December 2001, and are preparing to publish four editions in 2002. We plan to use the response we get to decide whether it is possible to continue this project beyond 2002.

Naturally, we will strive to make Kendo World a publication of the highest quality even though our resources are limited. We sincerely hope that you will support us in our quest to make this magazine a great success and an integral source of information for the international Kendo community. We have enclosed an outline of what we propose to include and would be extremely grateful for any comments, advice, and assistance.

Take care, and good luck with your Kendo *shugyo*.

Yours sincerely,

Alexander Bennett PhD (5th Dan)
Hamish Robison BA (4th Dan)

KENDO WORLD MAGAZINE

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