

# Samurai News from Honbu



HAPPY NEW YEAR 2006!



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## Sensei's Corner

By Toshishiro Obata

### Happy New Year!

We started off this New Year's with a demonstration at Weller Court. Participants were Robert Nosaka, Chuck Light, James Huang, Stephen Fast, Masaji Saito, Yoko and Kaiso. On the first weekend, we had 35 participants in Keiko Hajime. We did reviews for techniques and went over new techniques. I highly recommend those more advanced students in a close proximity to participate. The dojo space is very large, so we can accommodate more students. We had Aikido and Shinkendo students practicing at the same time in different areas.

The Honbu demonstrated at the Kyokushinkan Karate tournament in January. Saito Sensei, James Haung, and Michael Shu demonstrated at the demo. My daughter Yoko did Nito-Ken tachi-uchi with me. I did tameshigiri on mats and bamboo at the end. Sonny Chiba and Dolph Lundgren were in attendance at the demonstration – they very much enjoyed it. Pictures weren't allowed for this year's demo but we now have a copy of the 2005 demo on DVD. Please contact me if you would like a copy.

We will also be demonstrating at the Reagan Museum in February 24<sup>th</sup>.

Lou Sensei's dojo is currently in renovation and will double in size. Congratulations, Lou Sensei! I'm very happy. I will hold a seminar there in April, and attend the Sakura Matsuri Demonstration.

Matsuoka Sensei (a CDC Doctor) is asking that everyone be careful with catching colds and the flu this year, especially when traveling.

Instructors and students, please be careful during training. Safety is the most important aspect of training.



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# Oshogatsu 2006

January 1, 2006 Kaiso led a New Year's demonstration at Weller Court in Little Tokyo. The court was filled to capacity with people eating, drinking and watching demonstrations. Free shots of sake were offered to all. After an excellent Taiko drum demonstration, the Shinkendo participants took the stage.

James Huang, Chuck Light, Masaji Saito, Robert Nosaka, and Stephen Fast began the enbu with tanrenkata. Tachiuchi was next, including two-sword techniques with Kaiso and Yoko. This was followed by a consistent crowd pleaser-tameshigiri. Chuck Light and Robert Nosaka did some excellent cutting of tatami, while Kaiso finished the show cutting green bamboo held expertly by Yoko. The crowd cheered enthusiastically, and I think a wonderful New Year's day was had by all.

Jisen Shinkendo!



The Honbu members area ready for action



Photos by Shatto Light

# Oshogatsu continued...

Photos by Charles O'Donnell





Photos by Charles O'Donnell



# KEIKO HAJIME 2006

By Matthew Lynch, Intro by Stephen Fast

Keiko Hajime 2006

Friday January 6 marked the beginning of three days of Shinkendo and Aikido training for the 2006 Keiko Hajime. Obata Sensei led participants from all over the country through a myriad of techniques and his latest ideas on teaching martial arts.

Each day included alternating sessions of Aikido and Shinkendo. In addition to the regular curriculum, techniques using two swords were taught, including tachiuchi. Food and drink were on hand every day, but you usually had to be quick as Sensei was always ready to get back on the mat to teach.

Saturday's classes ended with a huge, delicious dinner that included a variety of meats, vegetables, rice, noodles with scallops and plenty of beverages to wash it down with. I don't think I'd be alone in saying that Saturday night I left the dojo with not only a feeling of camaraderie, but also strong positive energy and a raised spirit.

Sunday training started early with a little Aikido and ukemi to get the blood circulating. This was followed by some Shinkendo review and an extended Suburi session. Finally some photos were taken and last goodbyes. While some went straight home via trains, planes, and automobiles, others went to Disneyland for some final Southern California entertainment.

Thank you to all who participated, and to the Obata family for hosting such an enjoyable, memorable weekend.

## "Keiko Hajime 2006 a Grand Success"

What a great time we all had at Keiko Hajime this year! Many members, beginners, intermediate and instructors came together to train together and begin the New Year at Honbu Dojo. The spirit of camaraderie filled us with energy, and even Obata Kaiso was swept up in the enthusiasm. When a student asked how early to be there the next morning, Kaiso said "You're a martial artist, what do you think? We can't be any earlier than when the building opens..."

On a personal note, I want to thank all the people I trained with. The variety of experiences, depth of skills, and eagerness to work together was truly humbling. I hope I lived up to your fine examples. A special thanks to Michael Mason, sole representative from New York this year. Their dojo is almost ready to reopen, and sadly Sensei Lou could not join us, but Michael-san did a fine job making his sensei and fellow students look impressive by his good example.

I also very much loved watching the many different students interact during breaks and dinners. The friendships were inspiring, even though at one point I ended up with a very Anime-looking pair of pigtails, thanks to Yoko Obata and some mischievous Arizona cohorts...

All in all the seminar was a grand success and as always, left us all eagerly awaiting the next one.

Until then, thank you all for coming!

-Matthew Lynch



**Mike Mason from NY and Trevis Crane from Illinois**



Please don't get confused with Nito-Ken!







**Thanks to the Atlanta, Georgia members!**



The next Shinkendo seminar will be held in Universal Studios, Knott's Berry Farm, and Disneyland. Come All! ..... just kidding

Photos by Kristen Hedger