

Kaifukan's 4th Anniversary - 4/30/2005

Linda Goldstein

Kaifukan Dojo celebrated its 4th anniversary on April 30th. We had a fun party, with loads of great food and lively conversation, a little beer and wine, and lots of laughter. Maeda-Sensei and his gracious wife, Jeanne, were incredible hosts, making our evening a wonderful time! It was another chance to get together with my dojo brothers and sisters and their families, but it was also much more. It was an opportunity to honor our dojo and sensei, and to express how much they mean in our lives. Perhaps it was more a birthday celebration than an anniversary.



Though I wasn't there in the very beginning of its birth (I joined a couple of months later) it's been my pleasure to watch Kaifukan grow over the years. We had many people join who didn't "stick," and it was sad to see them drift away. Maybe they didn't find kendo to be what they were looking for, but I think more often they found the way to be too long and demanding. Those who came to Kaifukan, and stayed, have found the magic I discovered. It's more than exercise, or fighting, or even an excuse for a party every few weeks.

Kendo is really a way of life. Everyone knows that martial arts teach discipline and respect. Of course, we learn that at Kaifukan. Sensei expects no less than our best efforts at all times. We begin by learning the forms of respect and the basic movements of kendo, and over time they grow into more, into a deep sense of honor towards our Sensei and the dojo and striving to improve.

I am the old lady of the dojo, both in age and in time spent at Kaifukan. It makes me philosophical perhaps. Whatever reason, over the last few weeks I have been reflecting on kendo in my life. Kaifukan, led by Sensei, has become a way to challenge myself to higher ability, in the dojo and out in the world. I see this in my fellow students too, as we joyfully hit each other, young kids and oldsters, male and female. No anger or ego; just trying to do the "right" kendo.

For a person, a birthday is a time to celebrate life and reflect upon that life. Kaifukan is alive because Maeda-Sensei was willing to sacrifice the years needed to teach us, his students, the way of kendo. May we celebrate Kaifukan's 4th birthday throughout the year, by doing our best! Domo arigato gozaimasu, Sensei, for guiding us along the road of kendo!