

## New Year's Greeting - January 2, 2006

In celebration of the new Year of the Dog, and in recognition of Maeda-Sensei's hard work teaching us during the past year, Kaifukan students met at his home on January 2, 2006, to offer our sincere thanks and good wishes for the new year. This was Linda's and my fourth year to celebrate Oshogatsu with Sensei and Jeanne, and this celebration was the best so far (and they have all been wonderful!).



Sensei encourages students to bring their spouses, parents, children and grandchildren, and even significant others, which is quite a change from some of the dojos I've attended. I have had cold and impersonal senseis in the past, and frankly didn't enjoy training with them. We at Kaifukan are very lucky to have a Sensei who does care, and who expects and demands good and appropriate behavior both at the dojo and in all aspects of his students' lives. By keeping his students' entire families involved and participating in dojo open-house events and parties, he is quietly demonstrating that he wants to build students who help and teach others, who train hard, and whose character is above reproach.

Jeanne brought out dish after wonderful dish, while Sensei kept the adults refreshed with refreshing beverages. Despite Sensei's orders that no one should bring anything to the party, several of us brought sake, which helped to keep the event flowing. (The only time we are allowed to disobey Sensei is when he tells us not to bring food and drink to a party!) As always, it was very interesting having the younger students meet with sempai at a social event outside the dojo. Mudansha are, of course, the life-blood of Kaifukan, and I enjoy finding out just why each student has become inspired to start or continue training in martial arts. We have students who have had training at other dojos & in other techniques, some have been lured by a movie or another student, and still others arrive to learn more about Japanese culture. But we have all assembled at Kaifukan as a family, an ohana, to learn how to become better than we are right now.

Towards the end of the day, Sensei asked everyone to share their resolutions. Each

student had good intentions for improvement in 2006. Many resolved to increase their commitment to Kendo and Kaifukan Dojo, and since then there has definitely been better attendance at practice and more enthusiasm. May we all keep it up throughout the year!

To those students who could not come to the open house, I highly recommend that you try your best to come to future events. Not only will you enjoy yourself, but you will also leave with a stronger commitment to Kendo, Iaido, Kaifukan, and Sensei. Hauoli Makahiki Hou!

Ken Goldstein - 2006