

KAIFUKAN DOJO 7TH ANNIVERSARY

by Joette Comstock



In the kanji characters of *Kaifukan*, 'kai fu', means sea breeze. On May 31, 2008, dojo members and their family came together to celebrate the 7th anniversary of Kaifukan Dojo at Bellows Air Force Station beach park. The setting was perfect for a Kaifukan gathering with the onshore sea breeze under a blue sky reflected by the blue and turquoise ocean. Maeda Sensei and Jeanne were honored as our special guests.



A few weeks prior we had lost the use of the dojo that Kaifukan called home for nearly 7 years. We spent the next few weeks settling in to a practice schedule that worked for most. Saturdays found us in an



open grassy field for iaido and kendo.



Weeknight kendo practices were held at a location in Downtown Honolulu. Maeda sensei dubbed us "gypsy samurai" or "ronin". But we were grateful to be able to continue our practice. On this day not only would we celebrate the anniversary, it was good for our morale.



To celebrate an anniversary means to celebrate the past and all it has brought to the present and will hold for the future. It symbolizes unity, honor and gratitude. Unity, because we all have a share in the past and will have in the future. We honor Sensei and Jeanne for all that they have done for Kaifukan, as teacher, mentor, and supporter. We honor our Kaifukan family, as well as, senpai and kohai before

us. And we are grateful to know that Kaifukan will go on.

Kaifukan gatherings are usually held at the Maeda home. Jeanne and Maeda Sensei are always welcoming and gracious hosts. This time, they were treated to a beach party as our special guests. The Dixon family – Charles, Lynne, Maddie, Carlito, and Dyami – arranged access to the military side of Bellows Beach. They arrived at the break of dawn to stake out a place and to set up a tent, wind-breaks, tables, chairs, mats, and grills. Carlito and Dyami were on the look out for us as we arrived and guided us to the picnic area.



We were blessed with good ‘beach’ weather. Lifeguards evacuated the beach due to a shark sighting. It didn’t last too long as the shark must have sensed the Kaifukan fighting spirit and left the area.

Under the canopy of ironwood trees, several grills were going with beer-soaked brats, hotdogs, shrimp, steak, and Maddie’s *ono* kalbi and chicken. Our potlucks always offer an amazing array of foods that speak of the cultural diversity within the group.

The children watched with large eyes as the anniversary cake was presented. Maeda Sensei

in his *kaishaku* (beheading) stance performed the cutting of the cake, perfectly.

We thank the Dixons for arranging access to the beach park and for setting up the picnic area for us. Linda Goldstein is a master organizer, handling the menu and communication.

Thank you, Maeda Sensei, for generously giving us the last seven years. We are truly indebted to your commitment to us. We look forward to celebrating many for anniversaries in the future.