

Kaifukan's 10th Anniversary

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Kaifukan Kancho
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On May 29, 2011 Kaifukan celebrated its 10th anniversary at the carport of my humble house, decorated beautifully with balloons and tape-ribbons.



It was the smallest anniversary among the ones we have had in recent years. But it felt just right - like wearing your favorite pair of old shoes that fits comfortably. I enjoyed every minute of the anniversary get together, feeling relaxed and contented celebrating with my wife, students and their families.

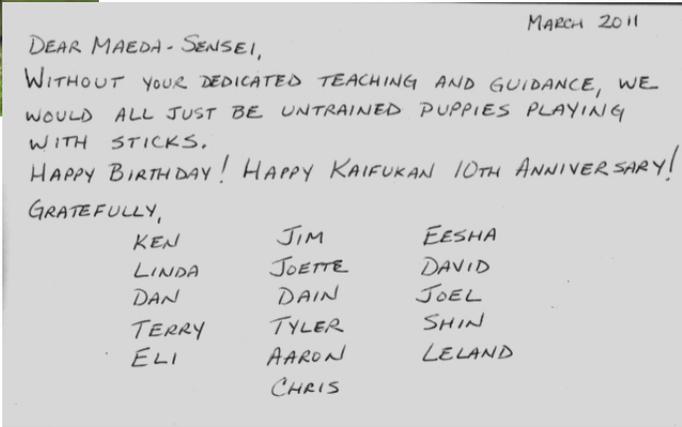
Jeanne has supported all the Kaifukan activities from day one - precisely speaking, from the prep days prior to the day one - and never seems to get tired. That is because, although she doesn't practice kendo herself, she fully understands our philosophy and therefore, she believes that Kaifukan fosters a true sense of appreciation and brings unity among all students and people. This is, indeed, my core belief - that human beings should feel and care for each other to realize love and peace in our society and the world. As I constantly remind you the objective of Kaifukan kendo is not simply becoming good at swordsmanship. Kendo is merely the means to develop oneself into a respectful human being. But it is a uniquely important way in that it constantly reminds you to do the right thing, or else the consequence is a 'hit' on your head. Doing the right thing in our daily life is our ultimate goal to become a truly respect worthy human being. I deeply appreciate my students for they embody this core Kaifukan belief. And we have embarked on this path together for the past 10 years.





A few weeks prior to this day all the students surprised me with a presentation of a camera as a commemorative gift on this special occasion and for my birthday in Feb. They knew that I was looking to buy another

camera since the one I used to make photo records for Kaifukan had finally broken down. The card, shown above & the message on the right, which accompanied the gift was so cute and humorous that I had to put it in here.



Now at the party, my better half wore a cotton summer kimono called *yukata* to warmly welcome our dear friends. I thought she looked beautiful. While I am on the subject of clothing, I must mention Joel's attire as well. Joel wore a Japanese kimono and hakama, too. You know he has his *mage* (Japanese hairdo) looking samurai hairstyle, which I would say looks more like a Chinese terracotta warrior from the Ching Dynasty. He also carried both his *tachi* and *kodachi* around



his waist, wore western shoes, and was smoking a cigar. What a mismatch! Nevertheless, he almost resembled the Japanese historical character, Sakamoto Ryoma, who, with some handful of young revolutionaries, ended the feudal samurai period in Japan (Edo period) and made the Meiji Restoration Era (start of modern Japan) possible. Joel certainly made the party colorful single-handedly, just like Sakamoto Ryoma's presence must have done. I really appreciated his spirit to make this auspicious occasion very festive by presenting himself in his special outfit.

Jeanne and I received a lot of leis, hugs and kisses. Boy, we felt loved! Now the

cake is a must to have. But before the cake cutting, I am always blessed with Dan's famous limerick. They are always funny, humorous, one of a kind and this time was no exception. What a witty poet he is! We also had a presentation of a short movie made and narrated by Terry. It comically depicted how the students felt like the "Three Stooges" under my harrowing instruction. Sorry! I didn't know



KaifuKAN this year HAS turned to TEN
To toast SENsei we ALL have a YEN
To his GREAT itch to TEACH
Let us STRIVE each to REACH
Try as WE might we CAN'T get his MEN

that I was that bad - not that I can do anything to let you feel any differently from now, though.

The special event saved for this memorable 10th year celebration was to attempt '*tameshigiri*,' which is to actually cut the '*tatami*' mat with the real Japanese sword. I had thought of

doing this before this day many times in the past, but we never managed to do it. Finally I decided this 10th anniversary is a good time. Many years ago, right after I started our Iaido-Bu on Ken's request, Ken & Linda bought me a whole box of '*tatami*' mat for '*tameshigiri*.' I know they must have spent more than two hundred dollars for that. I appreciated their gift, but I felt I simply couldn't turn a two-hundred-dollar *tatami* mat into shredded pile of trash all by myself.

I had wanted to save this for some special occasion to share this unique chance to test out our actual swordsmanship skills we honed from our practice session. So I waited for some special occasion and I felt this opportunity was the golden time to share it with all of you. My biggest regret was that Ken couldn't make it to the anniversary party and to our special event due to sickness. I would like to express my sincere thank you to Ken for making this all possible and to Linda for preparing the *tatami* rolls. We all had a great time.



I will cherish and always remember this day as my first day toward the 11th Anniversary next year and many, many more anniversaries to come. I look forward to celebrating our 20th Anniversary together with all of us in good health, lots of aches and pains, honors and humiliations, praises and scoldings, but always together as one Kaifukan family. Thank you all!

