

# RenShinKan Dojo

## Annual Report

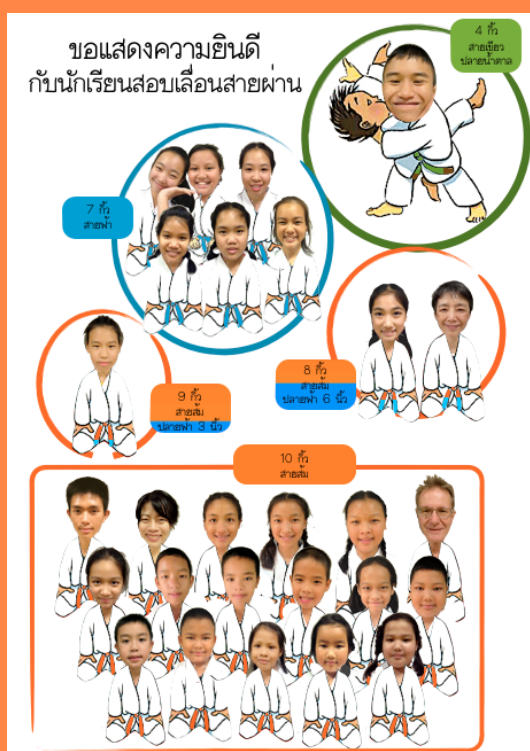
Sombat Tapanya

December 2016

Another year has gone by and it is time to send you our annual report along with our best wishes for the holidays. With this report I wish to summarize our activities this year along with the accomplishments that we have made and the challenges that we faced.



## Our Students



Currently we have 35 active students at our dojo. From the most recent belt promotion test on December 10, 2016 we have 15 who passed the various kyu levels. Eleven students now hold a 10th kyu rank, six hold 9th kyu, seven hold 7th kyu, three hold 6th kyu, two hold 5th kyu, and three are holding the 4th kyu rank which is the highest among our students at present.

The best news for this year is that we have received support for 20 kids from the Lanna Drug Rehabilitation Center which has opened up near our dojo. Lanna Rehab has invited me to be their consultant as a clinical psychologist and agrees to sponsor our kids as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility Program. They have decided to

start with 20 kids for three years and will continue as long as I am still involved with Lanna Rehab as consultant.

We went to recruit students from grade 4 at a near-by Wat Jomthong elementary school through a short talk and demonstration in the classroom. Over 25 students came and started training enthusiastically. Many of these children come from Shan migrant families living in our community. However, after three months and the first 10th kyu exam in which 10 passed and obtained their orange belt we started to see dropouts. Within six months we have only two remaining students, and their attendance has been erratic.

We learned from observation at the dojo, home visits, and conversation with parents that while a few students genuinely lost interest or found that aikido is not for them, in most cases it has to do with a lack of parent support. Very few parents came to observe their children in training, many of them are daily wage earners and work long hours so they could not come. Many don't care or don't understand the importance of aikido training and character development. They are only interested in academic success. Some families are also preoccupied with other more urgent concerns such as alcoholism, addiction, domestic violence and mental health issues that left them too emotionally drained to pay attention to the children.

Currently, we are revising our strategies in recruiting students with more stringent requirements and stronger assurance of family capacity to support them so that we have a better chance of retaining them. During the past few weeks a new batch of about 10 students from a different school start coming in for training again. We hope to increase them to 20 shortly.

## Special Events

In September we organized an event to open our 'Sensory Garden' with cooperation from a local environmentalist group 'Chiang Mai Green City.' Many families came to participate in several activities and mini-workshops such as Story Writing, Hand Puppet Making, Origami, Nature Walk and Bird Watching, and cooking with indigenous plants and vegetables from our garden. We had an aikido demonstration for the families which was well received. *Sensory Garden* is a small playground in front of our dojo equipped with a sand box, a mud kitchen, and a tunnel designed for small children to stimulate their senses through play and exploration.





The 5th Aikido Fellowship Southeast Asia Seminar  
Bangkok, Thailand  
September 23 – 25, 2016  
Features:



Yoshimitsu Yamada  
Shihan  
8<sup>th</sup> Dan



Motohiro Fukakusa  
Shihan  
8<sup>th</sup> Dan

More details : [www.facebook.com/5thAFSEASeminar](http://www.facebook.com/5thAFSEASeminar)  
[www.thaiaikikai.com](http://www.thaiaikikai.com)

During 23-25 September, we have sponsored 5 of our top students to attend an international seminar in Bangkok with Yoshimitsu Yamada Shihan, 8th dan from the New York Aikikai. It was a memorable trip for them as most have never been to Bangkok or other large events such as this before in their entire lives.



In October, through our contact with a group called 'Go Organics' [<http://www.goorganics.co.th>] with its mission to cultivate peace through organic farming, we organized a two-day workshop 'Bio-intensive Gardening' with Peter Brandis, a specialist from Australia. We have prepared a plot of land to grow vegetables through this method and invite parents of our students to participate. A group of organic farmers from the surrounding villages also came. We hope to engage with the community through this activity in the future and encourage families of our aikido students to be more involved with gardening and self-sufficient lifestyle.



In our village, we have also initiated the construction of a children's playground with support from the local temple, the local elementary school, and community leaders.



เชิญชวนชุมชนร่วมใจสร้าง  
ลานเด็กเล่น  
ริมกำแพงวัดจอมทอง



อาทิตย์ 21 สิงหาคม 2559  
ท่าความสะอาด - เก็บกวาด  
อาทิตย์ 28 สิงหาคม 2559  
เทาทราย - ภูตัวหนอน

ชมรมเนโด้ย เด็กหองจวมตบถันและสภามณฑลชื้อนการบรรณการ

## Visiting Instructors

Since November 28 we have the good fortune of having a visit from *Akihiro Murakami Sensei, 7th dan Aikikai, from Hiroshima*. This is his second visit. Last year he also came and stayed with us for three months. This year he plans to stay for four months. We are deeply grateful for his vigor and relentless enthusiasm in sharing his knowledge.



We have had almost daily classes with him: morning class from 9-11 for instructors and evening classes for students on most days of the week. Mu Sensei, as we affectionately refer to him, rides his motorbike from the city area to our dojo, over a half hour away and back almost everyday. He also goes to teach at our CMU Aikido Club three times a week. His passion and dedication is contagious and has inspired many of our students to become more diligent and improved vastly in their skills.



Another senior sensei, *Nobuko Yasunaga, 5th dan from Fukuoka*, has also been staying with us at our guesthouse for three months around the same time. She has volunteered to teach our children's classes and participates in all our activities. Another goal that she has is to learn Thai language and culture. We have arranged to have a Thai teacher and a few volunteers to give her Thai lessons. She has added much enjoyment and inspiration to our students.

As a few students are approaching the goal we set for our '*Helping Thai Kids to Get Aikido Blackbelt*' and we become more assured of their commitment and perseverance we have started our discussion on the feasibility of sending some of them to Japan for more intensive training. During Kop's recent trip to Tokyo for her theatre work she went to train at Hombu Dojo and discussed with our friends who are aikido practitioners about the possibilities for hosting some of our students. We will hold a meeting with parents of students candidates soon to prepare them and ask for their inputs on the plan. We are confident that the success of our early students will motivate others to follow and persevere on this path.

## Our Foundation

Another big step that we have made this year is the establishment of the **Peace Culture Foundation**. With seven committee members comprising one child psychiatrist, two clinical psychologists, one social worker, one theatre artist, one business executive, and one community leader, our objectives are to advocate peace and prevent violence through aikido training and other related activities which may include community services projects, research and training seminar for children, youths, families, schools, and the general public. We will collaborate with other organizations and institutions and become involved in various projects at both local and international levels. Some of the organisations we have been in contact with are Save the Children International, Unicef Thailand, Consulate-General of Japan in Chiang Mai, and Chiang Mai Rotary. Recently, a Chiang Mai Rotary Club has assured us of its support to initiate a Peace Cultivation Project at a local school. Work for this project is in its preparation stage and is expected to be launched formally at the beginning of the next school year in May 2017.

We are looking forward to another exciting and enriching year!



## RenShinKan Dojo

155 Moo 10 Baan Waen, Hang Dong, Chiang Mai 50230 THAILAND  
Tel: +66 81 4055379 Email: renshinkan.chiangmai@gmail.com