



Northern Virginia Ki Aikido (NVKA) / Virginia Ki Society (VKS)
Newsletter for October, 2021
www.novakiaikido.org

This Week's Topics

- I. Dojo calendar (incl. upcoming events and children's class message)
- II. Clarity: Entropy and Bodymind (short essay)
- III. Upcoming events
- IV. Weekly Shokushu: The Way to Union with Ki
- V. Book of the month
- VI. Question (click link to answer): [What's your favorite part of Ki Aikido?](#)

---> No responses to report from last month's question.

Dojo Calendar

Current Classes (Adults)

- Monday, 7:15 pm - 9:00 pm
- Wednesday, 7:15 pm - 9:00 pm
- Thursday, October 14 and October 28, 7:15 - 9:00 pm (*Intermediate/Advanced: for 4th kyu and above*)
- Saturday, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Current Classes (Children)

- Saturday, 10:00 am - 11:00 am

****Note:** All adult classes are now contact classes, including ki testing and techniques. The children's class will be no contact for the time being.*

Message from Children's class teacher, Marion Sensei:

We restarted our children's program the first Saturday in June. We have class from 10:00 - 11:00 am every Saturday morning. With all our students under 12 years old, and therefore unable to be vaccinated yet, we use masks, have no contact, and keep a 3 foot distance. Although we still can't do many things (no throws, ki tests, and some of our favorite games), we are still having fun and enjoying being on the mat together. We do stretches, hitori waza, ukemi, jo, bokken, games, and shadow box techniques. We had some returning

students (one who turned 13 in July and has moved on to the adult classes), and we have several new students, who have been learning to roll, knee walk, and use weapons. We are very pleased that the children's class is back.

Upcoming Events

- EKF Zoom Training: Saturday, October 9 (8:00 am - 9:00 am EST) and Thursday, October 14 (6:30 pm - 7:30 pm EST)

Clarity

Entropy and Bodymind

There is a theory on the origins of life that goes like this: Life (on Earth) originated because of its precise proximity to the Sun. The intense energy of the Sun forced the subatomic particles floating in space to organize themselves into the atoms and molecules and structures that we know as life in order to simply withstand and survive that energy. Too close to the Sun and the energy overwhelms, too far away and there's not enough intensity to force that organization. This relationship is Ki, and these life forms occupy what is known as a low entropy state of order.

Objects or forms are composed of individual elements, like molecules. Entropy is the measure of disorder or randomness (i.e., chaos) in a system -- it measures how many different ways we can rearrange the individual elements and keep the object the same. Left to the elements, the Universe naturally tends toward high entropy. (Just leave your house alone for a month or two and see the dust and dirt emerge)

We can understand entropy through an example from physicist Brian Cox. Say you're on a sandy beach. On one side there's a mound of sand. You can mess with the sand and move it around in trillions of permutations and no matter what you do, that sand will most likely still be a mound when you're done. Over time, the wind would most likely blow that mound into another mound. The mound of sand has a high entropy state of order. This state of chaos describes the vast majority of the Universe.

On your other side there's order: a sand castle. But, now when you mess with the sand and move it around or even when the wind blows, that sand will most likely no longer be recognizable as a sand castle (e.g., it will erode over time from wind and elements which will most likely not blow or arrange it to form the shape of a sand castle). This sand castle is said to have a low entropy state of order. Such order may only exist in the Universe in those relatively rare places of perfect proximity to an intense energy source.

All living beings exist in a low entropy state of order, but this fact is often obscured by reactive behaviors (e.g., thoughts, emotions). The Four Principles of Mind and Body Unification describe our most basic and fundamental state of being: bodymind/Consciousness or oneness. But, we are constantly pulled away (experientially) from that state through triggering events.

The most intense and painful trigger is shame. As we noted in last month's Book of the Month section: "We associate shame with death (e.g., being 'mortified'). To the egoic or False Self, shame = dying because when the ego is diminished our minds do the math and extrapolate this diminishment going all the way to zero (i.e., annihilation or, more apropos, dis-integration = death)."

Physical and spiritual death (i.e., death of bodymind) leads to a state of high entropy, the most immediate and clear example of which is cremation (e.g., the mound of sand). Death or diminishment of ego, which that part of us fears and defends against *as a matter of survival*, paradoxically unveils our stable, low entropy state. In other words, we may *want* shame and vulnerability in order to cultivate *well-being and life*.

To illustrate, comedian Dave Chappelle tells the story of how he bombed (i.e., "died") at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, New York City. The audience has a reputation of being unkind to performers they don't like, literally booing and chasing them off stage. Before that night, this was his greatest fear. But, then when it happened he thought to himself, "My greatest nightmare is happening right now and you know what? It's not that bad. I mean it sucks. But, *I'm fine.*" He says he's been fearless on stage since that night.

In spiritual training, including Ki Aikido, we may practice allowing -- yes, welcoming -- the disordered, chaotic, intense energy of perceived threat and attack (e.g., death and dying).

Just as the intensity of the Sun's energy may force life to organize itself, so too can the most searing relational attack (i.e., Uke) force us to organize our inner selves entirely around our one essential, elemental state of being. For many who have experienced relational trauma -- and, that's everyone, *to some degree* -- Ki Aikido is less a choice than something we are compelled to do, both on and off the mat.

In summary, as the Borg says in Star Trek: The Next Generation, "Resistance is futile." Forgiveness (i.e., for "givenness") may be the way *of life* in the Universe.

Upcoming Events

EKF Zoom Training

From an email from Rich Fryling Sensei, Head Instructor NYKA:

Both the September 25 and September 30 classes have been rescheduled for **Saturday, October 9 and Thursday, October 14, respectively.**

Have a wonderful week!

Rich

EKF Saturday Class (October 9th, 8:00am EST)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88631792662?pwd=dkdkbE1zSTRwU1FxU2RERIRsbGdvQT09>

Meeting ID: 886 3179 2662

Passcode: October09

EKF Recording Class (October 14th, 6:30pm EST)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84040435455?pwd=eSticDJjNTBUQ053aHI3UW0zd1oyUT09>

Meeting ID: 840 4043 5455

Passcode: October14

Shokushu Reading

Read the "Clarity" essay above for an exploration of this reading.

3. THE WAY TO UNION WITH KI

The absolute Universe is one. We call this Ki. Our lives and our bodies are born of the Ki of the Universe. We study thoroughly the principles of the Universe and practice them.

We are one with the Universe. There is no need to despond. No need to fear. The way we follow is the way of the Universe which no difficulty nor hardship can hinder.

Let us have the courage to say, "If I have a clear conscience and a calm spirit, I dare to face courageously any obstacle I may encounter."

Book of the Month

This is a space we will periodically use to highlight a favorite book that has helped deepen our understanding and practice of Ki Aikido. This month's book is *The Zen Way to the Martial Arts* by Taisen Deshimaru.

This book has an introduction by Aikidoist George Leonard, who wrote a previous Book of the Month *Mastery*. It is structured in two ways: his direct writings and also in parts as an interview, with Deshimaru (TD) discussing the many aspects of Zen as it relates to martial arts. For example, he discusses the concepts of "here and now" and "no thinking" which are akin to Koichi Tohei Sensei's "move on the 'ee' in 'ima.'" From p23:

"In sports, time exists. In the martial arts there is only the present. In baseball, for instance, the man at bat has to wait for the pitch, he has time; his action is not instantaneous. The same is true of rugby or football or any other sport. Time passes and there is time, if only a fraction of a second, to think about something, while waiting. In the martial arts there is not time to wait. Victory or nonvictory, life or not-life, are decided in no time. You have to live now, it is now that life and death are determined, wholly."

There is also a chapter on mind and body oneness and sections on Ki, true self, breathing, and letting go, to name a few. Here's another excerpt that is particularly relevant to this month's newsletter (p97-98):

" *What is fear?*

TD: Fear?

Yes, fear. Are people afraid because they don't have enough ki?

TD: Yes. There's no reason to be afraid of anything. People who are afraid think only of themselves, they're too egoistic. You must let go of your ego, then your fear will go with it.

Fear comes from going *against*.

Even in a fight one's consciousness must be with that of one's adversary, one must always go *with*, not against. There is a great koan.

One has to *become* the situation, not separate oneself from it. A real egoist can never be brave. The true, traditional martial arts training strengthens ki, destroys egoism and fear, moves the student beyond dualism, and develops mushin [not mind] consciousness, consciousness that has forgotten the self.

It's not necessary to want to win; only then can one win.

Abandoning the ego is the secret of right living. In life as in the practice of the martial arts it is important to strengthen the will and develop strength and skill. But the main thing is to strengthen the spirit and find freedom. Mushin...nothing."

Member Feedback

We would love to hear from you with any suggestions, concerns, questions, etc regarding anything dojo-related. Please don't be shy. Is there anything you're liking or not liking about the dojo? Is there anything you wish was different or don't want to change? Want to tell us what you LOVE about the newsletter (or would like to change)? Just want to chat? Please feel free to send us an email at vkdojo@gmail.com with anything on your mind. The door is always open!

THANK YOU! We hope to see you back on the mat soon.

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