

Featured Teacher, December 2019



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My first contact with Aikido was in the Aikido-Club of the University of Mainz in 1994. As a teenager, I had trained Taekwondo for several years, but felt it was not the right martial arts for me. So I tried several Budo Arts of the University sports program: When I entered the gym, a group of karate students was practicing in one corner, all wearing their coloured belts and there was lots of laughing, chatting and they were having fun. On the opposite side, I observed a very different atmosphere: a group of Aikidoka were sitting on a square of green tatami, all dressed in black and white, all silent, concentrated and waiting for their Sensei to begin. This atmosphere immediately attracted me then and has to this day. I soon became hooked to Aikido and started training at University as well as at the Dojo of Jirka Friedl Sensei, so I could train every day. In 2001 I went to Duesseldorf and trained at the Dojo of Asai Shihan for nearly 12 years. When I had to move again in 2012 because of a new job, I got to know Anita Köhler, 6. Dan. She was a student of Christian Tissier Shihan and a very well known Sensei of his style in Germany. I loved training with her. Her teaching skills were incredible and I was fascinated by her ambition to constantly develop herself and her Aikido skills. I joined her Dojo and later on I worked for her as children's teacher. Unfortunately she died in 2018. As I still felt I needed guidance in Aikido, I took a sabbatical and went to San Leandro, California to the Dojo of Pat Hendricks Shihan as an Uchi deshi for 7 months. Pat Hendricks Shihan accepted me as a

student and gave me so much support and help in Aikido I cannot say thank you enough. She encouraged me to open my own Dojo, which I did when I returned to Germany in spring 2019.

I opened my Dojo in summer 2019 and from small beginnings have already come great things: 9 kids are training with me now and I am confident that the group will grow over time. It is such a joy for me to train with “my” kids and watch them develop their Aikido skills as well as their personalities. I am convinced Aikido can teach children a lot of valuable things for their lives.

My Most Memorable Aikido Experience

My most memorable Aikido experience was my shodan test. I did it in the Dojo of Asai Shihan: I thought I would never do a black belt. And I was convinced that that it is not important for me to do tests. But after a long period of being 1 Kyu (5 years) I decided to give it a try. I never spoke to Asai Sensei about that, but I showed him through my way of training that I want to get ready for this, one year long. And I recognized that he had recognized it. One day he decided to test me, I didn't know the exact date before. It is not the usual way Asai Sensei does tests. What I remember is that it felt like a festival: for every new technique I had a new uke, it felt like the whole Dojo was celebrating my test. This experience liberated my Aikido training, I never imagined that I could feel so free in my Aikido movements. This experience liberated my Aikido training, I never imagined that I could feel so free in my Aikido movements. It also had an effect on other areas in my life where I had been stuck for some time: I changed my not beloved job, I moved to a new city to discover new possibilities of live. Through my black belt I was able to go “ki no nagare” with life and its challenges.