It has taken 20 years since our Master’s decision to create KIIA to fulfill his wish for the recognition and total independence of his art. IFK is now a legal entity offering our students a future. Thanks to dan grades, those who wish to do so can now become teachers with official diplomas issued by the French government, and thus contribute to the development of kinomichi in France and abroad. This official recognition allows for the opening of new dojos. Many of our license holders are unaware of the story of its development. We consider it important to tell it and to introduce the main participants in this success, their endurance and their total fidelity to our Master who personally entrusted them with the task, enabling them to come to this achievement.

It must be remembered that they were chosen by Master Noro in person. He personally watched their practice and their attitude, on a daily basis for some, sometimes in private. His deep knowledge of men proved right, leading to this final success. Let us now meet them through a series of interviews in this and forthcoming editions.

Patrick Loterman
Comité directeur
4ème dan UFA, Brevet fédéral
- Could you tell us about your experience and your meeting with Master Noro? What part has it played in your personal itinerary?

First of all, I would like to thank you all for your support in the development of kinomichi. A good health to you and your families, and special thanks to Comité Directeur and IFK bureau for this ongoing adventure.

The present IFK directors were chosen by Master Masamichi Noro and for some (me included) before KIIA was created in 2001. Our evolution has been parallel to his life’s work: aikido in the 60s and 70s, kinomichi in 79, and kishindo in 2009, leading to a dynamic closer to aikido, yet different as based on kinomichi.

My close relationship to Master Masamichi Noro began in my aikido days when I met him as a teenager. Studying under masters, I was honoured to study aikido with direct students of the founder, Morihei Ueshiba, among whom was Master Noro, a former ushideshi. I was also able to practice kinomichi with him and impregnate myself with the originality and subtlety of the techniques our master had codified as he developed his own perception of aiki arts.

This proximity was completed by my involvement in the association and federal networks. This involvement, which he wanted and required, has allowed me to contribute to the completion of his deep wish to see his art recognized as equal to the others. I have been an actor in this achievement which is also the result of a common willingness and work.

How does one become president of KIIA?

I became president of this instructors and teachers association in 2001. Master Masamichi Noro himself moved my application and I was elected unanimously by the members. I was largely and democratically re-elected until 2021 when I resigned in order to continue the trajectory of kinomichi development.

As Master Masamichi Noro would say to me, I am deeply convinced that the association must be led by sincere persons putting the discipline and the collective interest foremost. It is a tool to develop the art, not an end in itself.

Being its president is an honour which requires pledges of competence as well as humility. One must deserve the trust of others and not seek to fulfil one’s personal ambition.

The association, whatever its name is, derives its value from the attitude, the actions and the level of competence of its leaders. The president’s honour can only result from the direction of people with high aims. The opposite has no value. Thus, the collective and individual level of its members is essential.

The official object of the association is to help the circulation and development of the teaching of kinomichi. I was convinced I could help develop our discipline, and more fundamentally, contribute to more social progress.

How does one stay president for 20 years?

There were 2 stages:

2001-2013

Master Masamichi Noro, the founder, was deeply involved in all the decisions, as for instance, from 2005 to 2011 the construction of nomenclature (which I helped create) and the creation of monitorat (2008) which was to become Brevet Federal.

2013-2021

Recognition of kinomichi in Japan, where Master Noro was born, and in France where it was created. By doing so, after obtaining, on his demand, the “tronc commun” of the former Brevet d’Etat, we arrived, according to his wish, to the creation of dan grades and official degrees (DE-JEPS and DESJEPS)

Yet, due to misunderstandings by some, the registered trademark led to a lawsuit in 2013. I had to administer that conflict, out of which kinomichi came victorious.

This is behind us now and unimportant as we turn our eyes to a well-balanced future.
During that period, the democratic aspect was amplified through a total freedom of expression in the media and the nomination by high-level technicians chosen by Master Noro of a large number of instructors hitherto without a title.

All propositions were always collectively debated according####the modalities of 1901 associations.

I was always re-elected with a large majority almost unanimously. I had to deal with contradictors, never with opponents. No list was presented against me until I resigned in order to be more efficient in the development of kinomichi.

My commitment is proof of my belief in the cause and the success of the project I carried for 20 years.

From KIIA to FFAAA and to the creation of IFK

Since its creation in 2001 KIIA was always regarded as transitory. Master Masamichi Noro wanted the evolution of its object and its goal. KIIA never had an official status in the FFAAA. As an association, it was affiliated to FFAAA as any other dojo.

It proved useful to gather all kinomichi members and teachers under Master Noro’s direction. From this angle, it helped move proposals to federal authorities.

Master Noro’s notoriety as well as the competence and commitment of its leaders contributed to the credibility of kinomichi within FFAAA.

The creation of IFK is the logical continuity of the normalization process of kinomichi in the French federal system. IFK is an official body associated to FFAAA in France and the European Union. It contributes to promote the international Kinomichi federation via its international extension named International Kishin Ryu Association (IKA).

The aim of these national and international structures is to promote the training and technical improvement of the members and teachers of kinomichi. The goal is to train in all the aspects of the art the future generations destined to replace us.

I find a real appeal in France as well as abroad through foreign supporters, notably in Europe, the US, and Japan. I am personally very confident in the achievement of projects which are both open and worthwhile.

The future will result from our strong attitude in the discipline. My personal commitment is always stronger and I wish to share it with you by wishing you the best for this new year.

Interview done by Patrick Loterman

«But what is the difference between aikido and kinomichi?» I am often asked.

This question seems such an easy and elementary one, yet complex and trapped. What can I say? I find it difficult to answer, having myself practiced «Noro’s aïkido» for several years before following him in an experimental kinomichi that deterred many former students. For aikidokas, kinomichi uses the same techniques that were designed by Morihei Ueshiba, but in a more elegant, softer, more feminine style – can we even sometimes hear not without a certain condescension. Just a difference of style in a way. Isn’t that all?

In a video broadcasted on the Internet (1), during an internship in Japan (maybe, in the 1990s), Noro senseï, referring explicitly to his master (O senseï), named doubly the movements he showed – itten shiho nage, nitchi nikkyo, yonten kaiten nage -, thus signifying to aikidokas the technical continuity between aikido and kinomichi. However, if the aikido waza remained, instead the ki no nagare predominated: the flow of energy, a very fluid touch between the partners. Speaking to aikidokas, his lesson was clear: kinomichi creates “espace” (he said it in French) through the very contact with the partner.

Therefore it seems to me that the singular originality of the kinomichi is there: to have consideration for the other one, whatever he or she may be. His or her body and heart are of primary concern to me, and I must take care of them with fitted and concordant movements. Kinomichi teaches us to hold each partner in high esteem; none is negligible.
It is necessary to let the energy of each partner come and flow, to receive it in order to create with two, sometimes three, a space of dynamism and joy by gestures that unite our tensions, our fears, our vanities. Aikido techniques (aikido waza) are always existing, no longer to assure my power over the other in a dominating spirit, but to testify to him of my esteem by a mutually constructed benevolence, and not decreed from my own and single point of view.

We all know well that on the tatami we express affinities, consciously or not: we are looking for this or that partner to satisfy our preferences. But if Masamichi Noro taught us that whole kinomichi is contained in this “touch-with” exercise (ki awase or ki no musubi), which is the beginning and the end of it, then our whole practice is to cultivate that contact, even though it is necessary to taste all the vibratiles shades. Going too slowly means that we are bored when one has not even bothered to his own technique purified of all aggressiveness, to fulfill his master’s wish, since in Japanese the ideographic radical of this love is precisely shin (heart and mind), are the vocabulary of such a message of friendship.

Morihei Ueshiba said «aikido is love», playing on the homophony between ai (harmony) and ai (affection). Masamichi Noro meditated at length on this sentence that rocked my teenage years of novice aikidoka. And when, towards the end of his life, he taught us that kinomichi is ki shin do, the way of the energy of the heart, he finally managed, thanks to his own technique purified of all aggressiveness, to fulfill his master’s wish, since in Aikido the waza, methodically reviewed in terms of shin (heart and mind), are the vocabulary of such a message of friendship.
I will end up with a personal note. Masamichi Noro often said to me, «Philosopher, much joy!» I long believed that he wanted to dissolve a background of sadness that could inhabit me and meant that in Japanese philosophy was a school of joy. Today I interpret this in a completely different way: thanks to the experience of the tatami, wisdom consists in communicating joy to others. Dare alicui laetitiam, said Cicero. “Giving to others joy” should be written on the pediment of all dojos.

(1) In February 2022, this colored video in Japanese, but without any subtitles and shortened, is available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJdVkRO6Ta0

A black and white version remains but a silent one:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PbK4n0ff_M

The full version in Japanese is in private access:

https://youtu.be/JYn6xYi2SxU?fbclid=IwAR-1urnqiO0iO5qJas36u6LI-POMFD-Hdso5bP8wNWkZ-RXvHKB5YpBcr-SiA.

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**Message from our IFK Webmaster**

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Visit our site to discover:

- A presentation of Kinomichi
- The IFK organizational charts
- Dojos in France and their information
- The future stages
- Online applications
- Latest news
- Resources: articles, documents and videos, nomenclature, how to order your hakama…

The IFK website: https://kinomichi.org

Yours truly,

Lina Akouz, Lina Akouz, IFK webmaster