



Warriors for Peace

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## **The First Southeast Asian Aikido Friendship Gathering**

Last April 18 the 1<sup>st</sup> Aikido of Southeast Asian Friendship gathering was held in Bangkok, Thailand.

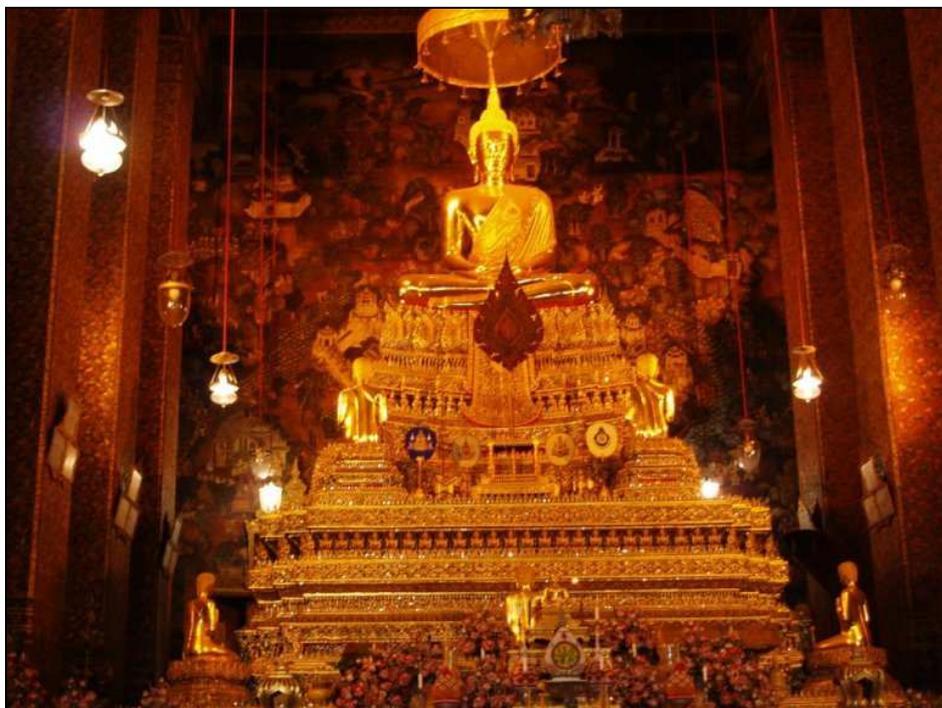
This idea has been initiated by Motohiro Fukakusa Shihan of Thailand. He said that this organization is intended to provide support for the grading/promotion of aikido practitioners in Asian countries without any shihan (high ranking instructor; teacher of teachers). He also emphasized that practicing Aikido hand in hand makes all members, dojos from Southeast Asian countries, closely bonded together in harmony and friendship.

There were eight participating countries were at the gathering. Philippines has four participating clubs including Kyokan Dojo of Bacolod, which also represented the Warriors for Peace.

The reason for joining the gathering is to introduce the Warriors for Peace Program to the Asian Aikido community. And surprisingly, there were a lot of interested individuals who would like to know more about the Warriors for Peace program.



The Bacolod contingents arrived April 16 around 0110 hrs at the new Bangkok International Airport. April 18, 2008 is the registration at Chaophya Park Hotel which is also the venue of the seminar. The group was able to tour around the beautiful palaces and temples in Bangkok while waiting for the actual seminar date.



The seminar proper started on April 19, 2008, 9:00 AM. There were around ten (10) high ranking aikido teachers from various Asian countries and some visitors from New Zealand, Romania among others. The seminar was fun especially meeting old friends from previous seminars.



The dojo (seminar/training area)



Old friends and new ones from Malaysia

The most promising part of the seminar was that the participants were able to practice with the great grand son of O'sensei, Waka Sensei. He was invited to join the seminar to practice with the participants. The young sensei was graceful and moved fluidly as he performed several techniques.



Fukakusa Sensei, the Head Aikido Instructor of Thailand and Waka Sensei, the great grandson of O'sensei, and Noel Fuentes of Kyokan Dojo – Bacolod.