

Grants Pass Training Experience

By Joel Clark

Driving the eight hours to Grants Pass is rough, but always worth it. I find that training with Soke Del Saito is exciting, educational and inspiring. However, more than anything, it is a humbling experience.

One of the things that I love about training with Soke is how much fun it always is. It does not matter what he is having us work on; he keeps it exciting. I am always surprised at how quickly four or five hours can go by when one is training with a teacher as exceptional as Del Saito. A fun experience is not the only thing I get out of training with him though. Soke's vast amount of wisdom and knowledge is palpable and I never leave one of his training sessions feeling the same way that I did when I walked into his dojo. He is one of the most inspiring persons I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. However, training with Soke is not only fun and inspirational, more than anything it is humbling. It is impossible for me to be around Soke without feeling very small and ignorant. I have been told that your brain is like a piece of paper and the things you do and know, or think you know, are like words on that piece of paper. It is hard to write down new things when your page is already full of your own words. In order to truly learn, one must come in with a blank piece of paper and be ready and willing to let the teacher fill it with his or her own knowledge. Clearing my page is never as easy as when I am training with Soke. Nevertheless, I always leave wishing I had more paper and time for him to write.

I feel very privileged to be able to travel the eight hours and train with Soke. As usual, his lessons are fun and an amazing training experience. I always look forward to the next opportunity that I will get to train with him again.