



Kyudo (Zen Archery): The Way of the Bow Laurajeane "LJ" Stewart

Abstract:

Kyudo (Zen Archery) is a moving meditation that, with practice, becomes a metaphor for one's life. Zen Archery is considered the highest body practice that comes out of the Samurai tradition. It requires discipline of the mind, body and spirit. The basic Kyudo form is a means for gathering energy to the heart, then releasing that heart energy with focus and precise intention, with no attachment to the results.

When taken up with patience and attention to detail, Kyudo is a dynamic way to focus the mind and open the heart. One of the traditional Japanese Arts, Kyudo is considered the highest discipline of the Samurai. Kyudo form itself teaches us to gather energy to our heart, then release that heart energy with clear intention, without attachment to the results. The precise movements, specifically of the hands,

strengthen the Heart Meridian as our Kyudo practice deepens. We will demonstrate the basic form.

Observers will experience the gentle flow and continuity of movement in the heart of stillness, witnessing movement without tension and the effortless release of energy. Participants will leave being able to paint a Golden Rainbow with their own heart energy.

About the Author:

Originally from NYC, LJ Stewart attended York College CUNY, then the Swedish Institute for Massage and Allied Sciences, where she later joined the faculty in 1984. Her first employment in hands-on health care was in a chiropractic facility in 1979, and LJ became a certified Touch For Health instructor in 1983. She has been practicing full time as a Touch For Health kinesiologist, and Licensed Massage Therapist nearly 30 years, during which time she has been widely recognized as a groundbreaker within her profession. For many years, LJ worked alongside any number of inter-disciplinary practitioners, including, but not limited to: chiropractors, osteopaths, medical doctors, and physical therapists. For the last decade, she's been employed in the Outpatient Physical Therapy Department of Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital in St. Johnsbury, VT in addition to her private practice at the Barnet

Tradepost Wellness Center, built by her in 2005. The Barnet Tradepost Wellness Center is the first Complementary Care facility in the Northeast Kingdom, a tri-county region of Vermont. LJ is joined there by acupuncturists, a breath coach and a Tibetan healer. Classes taught at the Tradepost are Touch For Health, TaiChi, Kyudo, Kenjitsu and Yoga.

LJ Stewart began her practice of Kyudo (Zen Archery) in 1994, after a long search for a moving meditation. In awe of the simultaneous balance of tension vs. relaxation, and the metaphor for which Kyudo practice translates into everyday life, LJ became a Kyudo instructor in the *Hekki Ryu Bisshu Chikurin Ha* Kyudo Lineage in 1998. She was named to this position by Kanjuro Shibata Sensei XX of Kyoto, Japan, the official bowmaker and archer to the Japanese Imperial Family at that time. LJ continues to practice and teach Kyudo, and is honored to help perpetuate Zen Archery teachings in the west. LJ has also spent time with the Shibata family in Kyoto, at the invitation of the current Kanjuro Shibata XXI.