



ABUNDANT PEACE AIKIDO & T'AI CHI

Connections



Editorial

This summer has gone by like lightning, at least for me; and, although I've had a couple of short breaks, work has occupied most of my days...and kept me off the mats and away from training for a second consecutive month, something that I will finally be able to correct as we move into the month of August.

One of the short breaks that I was able to enjoy was a trip into the mountains, even if only for three days. This trip was on horseback, not the tame nags they have at the various tourist trail rides, but working mountain horses. Now, I am far from an experienced rider, and have not sat in the saddle for at least twenty years...so this type of trip was hard on the body, to say the least.

The country we travelled through was absolutely incredible, and as the horse did most of the work I was able to concentrate on my response to the movements of the animal. As I did this, I was struck by how easily the lessons of aikido and t'ai chi are applied. I focused on applying principles of weight underside, relaxing, and connection, and found that in the moments I was able to properly apply these, the otherwise rough experience of riding a horse became more comfortable, even enjoyable!

So, lest anyone in our school think that we are simply "learning to fight", I offer this latest example of how we learn so much more than that, and how the principles and skills we learn at Abundant Peace will carry over into every aspect of our lives, in a way that is positive and powerful.

I look forward to getting back to training!
Stuart

Please note: early morning keiko is cancelled for the remainder of the summer but will resume in September, immediately after the Labor Day Weekend!

August 2010

Corporal Francisco Gomez Memorial Library

The Corporal Francisco Gomez Memorial Library continues to grow, thanks to so many kind donations from members. Check back often, either with one of our Librarians, or on the Notice Board, to learn about "what's new"! Remember, we will happily accept all help and donations!



Promotions

We congratulate those who were promoted in July:

Kids

- Kristiana S. Jr. 13th Kyu
- Emily S. Jr. 13th Kyu
- Andrew S. Jr. 13th Kyu
- Leo M. 13th Kyu
- Hanna S. 13th Kyu
- Paige O. 13th Kyu
- Kristiana S. 13th Kyu
- Emily S. 13th Kyu
- Andrew S. 13th Kyu

Adults

- Robin P. 9th Kyu
- Scott R. 9th Kyu
- Nicole M. 6th Kyu

Special mention goes to Nicole, who at the age of only 14 is the youngest member of our school ever to attain 6th Kyu rank: while testing against Tim O!

Congratulations!

Summer Retreat 2010

The summer retreat held recently at Star of the North was a very rewarding experience. Firstly, the setting is perfect for achieving a sense of being "away from it all". Five participants and Brad were involved. Saturday began with breakfast (more than enough to keep us going until lunch) and settling into our surroundings. Then the work began.

Our Tai Chi sessions were focused on structure, using our bones, joints, and connective tissues to support us, letting the muscles fall away. Why did they get so sore?!? Once we had a good sense of structure, we worked on allowing the energy to flow into the ground and return to us from the ground. This generated a great sense of stability.

This experience has pushed my Tai Chi to a new level. I feel more connection with the ground, and the greater strength and stability has allowed my set to slow down. I am currently taking about 32 to 35 minutes to do a set.

Thank you, Brad, for organizing this opportunity!

Judith

Find the Tiger Within

Now available; "Finding the Tiger Within!", a CD on personal safety and protection. This CD is filled with strategies and principles on the mental and preventive aspects of self defense, as well as physical techniques when confronted. This is a no-nonsense presentation, and contains information that everyone can benefit from: the "life skill" of personal protection. It also makes a thoughtful Christmas gift for loved ones! These are available from Sensei Brad, for only \$20.00, so get your copy today!



Announcements

Saotome Sensei has announced the dates of his next Seminar at Aikido

of Missoula; it is scheduled for the weekend of 24 to 26 September 2010. Make plans to travel with us and experience the amazing talent of our Most Senior Shihan!

Aikido Special Training is cancelled for the Month of August, in favor of Gasshuku.

Aikido Summer Gasshuku will take place on Sunday, 8th August 2010 from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM. Gasshuku means "living together" and is something offered twice each year. On that day, we will explore Randori, dealing with multiple attackers, and we will also study Groundwork.

Schedule

Session One: 9:00 AM to NOON

Lunch: NOON to 2:30 PM

(if interested, join us at a local restaurant!)

Session Two: 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM

Dinner: 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM

(dinner included, with aikido videos!)

Session Three: 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Aikido, derived historically and technically from the battlefield strategies of Samurai Warriors, always pre-supposes multiple attackers, as well as the use of and defense against various weapons. Gasshuku will focus on the strategies, movement and mindset necessary to deal with a multiple attacker scenario.

Principles such as irimi, marubashi, and zanshin will be covered; we will use sword to help us explore many of these elements. We will also explore "groundwork", tactics and techniques of protection on the ground.

The cost for this amazing training and life experience is only \$80.00 (dinner included), and it is open to members of all ranks, so please join us if you can!

Dojo Care Session. Although most of the mats are very new, the time has come to inspect them, tape up any small tears, and generally see to the care of our training place. This will happen on Saturday, 14 August 2010, as follows:

Aikido: 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Dojo Care: 3:00 PM to 4:15 PM

T'ai Chi: 4:15 PM to 5:30 PM

We have a unique and special Dojo and Community; each of us must assist in caring for both!

T'ai Chi Beginner Course for fall 2010 will begin on Saturday, 18 September 2010. If you are interested, or know someone who might be, let them know.

For New Members

We welcome all of our new members to our school, and to our community; we hope your time here will enrich your lives, the way it has for so many of us.



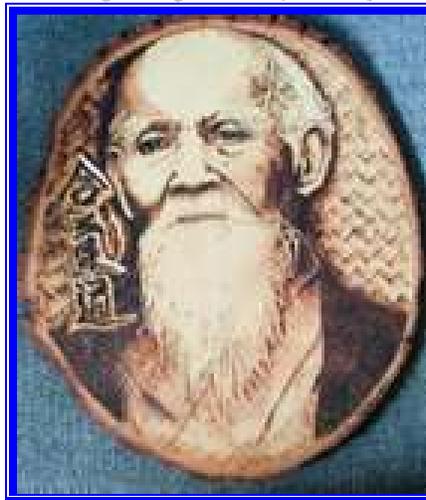
Your martial training experience will range from zero and up... no matter how much time you have spent training in the past, this is a new environment for you, and we want you to feel comfortable. If you have any questions, address them to any of our Senior Students...if they cannot answer, they will find out for you!

You will notice that the mats are always swept before and after our classes. This is done for the practical purpose of removing dust, etc from the mats, but is also done as an act of symbolic purification.

This is an important task that must be shared by all students, and must never be viewed as menial or demeaning. Sweeping is never assigned; students must take it upon themselves to perform this function. If you would like to learn more about this practice, ask any of our senior students!

New at www.abundantpeace.com >> 1) changes to the format of our calendars!

O Sensei's Wisdom



"If your heart is large enough to envelop your adversaries, you can see right through them and avoid their attacks. And once you envelop them, you will be able to guide them along the path indicated to you by heaven and earth."

-Morihei Ueshiba-

Notice: Sensei Brad will be away on vacation in the latter part of August; we need volunteers to keep our training calendar active. Please see Stuart and let him know the days you are available to assist!

Health Tip: drink two glasses of water when first waking to activate the body, one before each meal to aid digestion, one before bathing to lower blood pressure, and another before sleep for coronary health!

The Meaning of Training

Levels of Understanding

In Aikido, one learns by experiencing through the body. This alone would only result into physical experience, even after ten years of practice. If one continues practicing for many years, of course, the body becomes strong. However, the level of understanding can still be doubtful.

Everything is learned physically as a result of experience, but to display what has been learned, some verbal expression and other methods become necessary. Hence, one should find opportunities and try to learn various things outside of Aikido.

O-Sensei realized it in the Omoto religion. I don't think one could fully understand the discipline of Aikido without something like that. Learning by the physical experiences certainly is important, but I think it is also important to experience something new besides Aikido to stimulate one's thought and brain.

It is necessary to study basics things without being disturbed by one's own mood and ...feelings. The lesson method of Aikido is left to the decision of each instructor, and this is a good thing about Aikido. If strictly codified, the independence which is the merit of Aikido is lost.

Of course, balance is important, but I think it is better that one has a good level of skills, specifically posture, the sense of maai, directionality, the principle of the sword line, gaze and so on. It is often seen in enbu (martial art performance) that people just stand straight before a partner waiting for the attack. This is because there is no awareness of the sword line at all.

O-Sensei frequently talked about gravitation training. Gravitation training is for learning how to lead and go together with the partner's movement. One can learn this using katatetori.

Such basics can be learned through body movements. In other words, the principle of Aikido skills will be understood through the apprehension of body movements. Small details of each technique are different, depending on the individuals, but there is always a sense of maai and directionality in any technique. Therefore, as long as there is an understanding of the principle of the skills, it can be applied to all movements.

That understanding is indispensable to progress to a further stage.

Article Written By:

Seiichi Sugano Sensei, 8th Dan,
Shihan