



ABUNDANT PEACE AIKIDO AND TAI CHI

Connections

Editorial

June, 2009

One Way of Practice



I for one am very grateful that warm weather seems finally to have arrived; some of our classes have even been a touch warm! We've managed a class or two at Lions Park, and I for one am back to enjoying tai chi in the park near my home...not to mention coming to class on the motorcycles!

May saw a benchmark or two; our beginner Tai Chi class reached the end of the set, and the start of true tai chi training; we enjoyed a morning class and breakfast on the Holiday Monday; and, we celebrated our 13th Anniversary with paintball and potluck! As well, the Aikido program has seen an influx of new students, somewhat unusual for this time of year; please join me in welcoming them to our community.

Another benchmark that touches us all is the decision by Brad and his family to re-open their animal shelter, Autumn Hollow. This is an ambitious venture, done solely for the good of the creatures they take in, and they are always in need of help and support; this can take a number of forms, so if you are interested in helping them with this project please talk to Sensei Brad.

Stuart Krause

"Commencement"

Abundant Peace Aikido and Tai Chi School is proud to congratulate the Spring 2009 Beginner Tai Chi Class on completing the 108 moves of the Yang Style Set; this is a noteworthy achievement! This enthusiastic and talented group worked very hard and very well, together, to reach the end of the beginner program in under the allotted time. Well done and congratulations to each of you!



The Ten Essentials

The ninth of the "Ten Essentials" of Tai Chi practice, as taught by Yang Cheng Fu, is "Continually and Without Interruption".

"Strength in external martial arts is a kind of acquired, brute force, so it has a beginning and an end, times when it continues and times when it is out off, such that when old force is used up and new force hasn't yet arisen, there is a moment when it is extremely easy for the person to be constrained by an opponent. In taiji, we use intent rather than force, and from beginning to end, smoothly and ceaselessly, complete a cycle and return to the beginning, circulating endlessly. That is what the taiji classics mean by "Like the Yangtse or Yellow River, endlessly flowing". And again: "Moving strength is like unreeling silk threads". These both refer to unifying into a single impulse."

Reprinted from www.yangfamilytaichi.com

The quality of one's Tai Chi form practice is dependent upon many factors. One important ability to cultivate, for instance, is that of letting your attention drift softly down to the level of the "felt sense" of the body. Through performing the movements gently with a relaxed attention focused on the bodily felt sense of stretching and expanding, the conscious analytical faculty of the mind is abandoned and the intuitive "natural mind" given space. (At the moment that the "analytical mind" begins to speak, the natural intuitive modality of the mind is compromised.)

"Hey...I'm really feeling it now...This is good practice...This is the way it should feel..." These bits of internal dialogue are the weeds in the garden of practice. To attempt to rid one's practice of these ongoing voices is a difficult task. By giving these voices any attention at all, including "Uh...don't think about that...or that...or..." you are feeding them energy and maintaining their root in your mind. A wiser way to deal with this situation is to move around comfortably, stretching and extending gently, with an attitude of relaxation and loosening and warming up. As the practice moves along, longer blocks of time will pass without the interruption of conscious monitoring of what's going on at the moment.

To attempt to "feel yourself feeling" the right way during practice is another way of missing the point. The point is to accept the experience as it occurs, without any desire to "hold on" to the positive moments. As you advance, you will develop the knack for ushering in this experience. You will not panic when a moment of quality in your practice fades away. You will develop an appreciation for these gems of practice and be content.

"By Michael R. Pekor; Reprinted from www.patienceaichi.com"

Morning classes continue, every Monday and Thursday, from 6:00 to 7:30 AM. Nothing feels as good as early morning misogi outside, under the sun, and the mat fee is only \$10.00, so join us if you can!

Announcements



Our next aikido seminar opportunity at Aikido of Missoula will be with Saotome Sensei from 25 to 27 September, 2009. Any students planning to go should book their hotel rooms early, as this is a busy weekend in Missoula.

Aikido special training is on Friday, 12th June, from 6:30 to 9:30 PM; the theme is: "Street Defense". We tend to separate our training and experience on the mats from our everyday life; for this special training session, we will practice in street clothes, discuss "real world" encounters, and in doing so help to "anchor" our training and make those skills more available when needed. Students; please choose your street clothes wisely; use items that do not have metal buttons or other accoutrements that might injure your partner, and stick to clothing that you are willing to sacrifice!

The Spring 2009 beginner Tai Chi Class, having achieved the "end" of the 108 move Yang Style set, will celebrate this milestone with their third noodle night on the evening of Saturday, 13th June, with a location TBA!

We will once again hold a "mat cleaning and dojo care session" on Saturday, 20th June; our schedule will be:

1:00 PM to 3:00 PM: Aikido Class

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

4:30 PM to 5:30 PM: Tai Chi Class

We have set this schedule so as to make it convenient for both aikido and tai chi students to attend; remember, we are indeed fortunate to have such a wonderful training place, so let's pitch in and keep our Dojo in top shape!

Finally, remember to keep an eye on our web site, www.abundantpeace.com for a detailed listing of workshops and seminars.

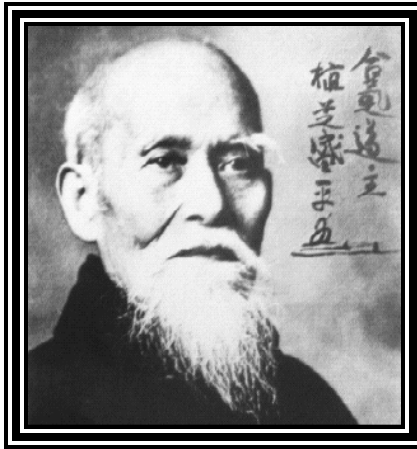
Happy Anniversary

A small, enthusiastic group of students ventured to Quest for Adventure, near Gibbons, for an afternoon of paintball adventure; this was in celebration of our 13th Anniversary on Saturday, May 30th.



Following paintball, there were games and potluck supper at the school; as always, there was plenty of fantastic home cooked food, and great companionship to share.

On this special occasion, Brad has asked that I convey his thanks and appreciation to each of our students, both past and present, for their own unique contribution to the fabric of our school, and for being part of our community.



Quote from O Sensei

"A true warrior is always armed with three things: the radiant sword of pacification; the mirror of bravery, wisdom, and friendship; and the precious jewel of enlightenment. Aikido is the principle of non-resistance. Because it is non-resistant, it is victorious from the beginning. Those with evil intentions or contentious thoughts are instantly vanquished. Aikido is invincible because it contends with nothing."

-Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei-

Promotions

Kids

Darien W. Jr. 14th Kyu
Patrick F. Jr. 14th Kyu
J.D. G. Jr. 13th Kyu
Cassidy D. 13th Kyu
Tamara K. 9th Kyu

Adults

David J. 7th Kyu
Jordan M. 9th Kyu



CONGRATULATIONS!

Happy Spring!

Spring is a time of fresh starts and new beginnings; and, with so many new students having joined our school, this newsletter is a great opportunity to review proper training etiquette. There is an old saying that states "martial arts begin and end with respect", and it is with respect and humility that we must approach the true etiquette of martial training. To do otherwise would lessen each of us, and to adhere to these simple guidelines is also a part of "polishing the spirit". These are a loose collection of points, of equal import.

Dojo Etiquette

Please try to be punctual; if you do happen to be late, perform the appropriate late bow-in procedure, and do not enter the tatami mat area until recognized by Sensei.

If you must leave before the scheduled time, please inform Sensei in advance, and leave the mats only after informing Sensei and properly "bowing out".

When you practice, be alert; careless practice lacks value, and increases the risk of injury to yourself or your partner. Leave socializing until after class; chatting when on the mats is distracting, and wastes not only your own training time but that of others as well.

Do not hesitate to inform Sensei and your partner when you cannot continue to practice, for reasons of illness, injury, or fatigue; you are the caretaker of your own body, so you must take care of yourself. If you must leave the mats for any reason, notify Sensei before doing so.

For safety and comfort, keep toe and finger nails trimmed, remove all jewelry, and empty your bladder before class. Keep your uniform and body clean, and, if you sweat heavily, carry a cloth on your person.

Aikido training involves close contact; if you are ill with a cold or flu, please stay off the mats to avoid passing your sickness to others. Much can be learned even by watching a class, so if you are not feeling well feel free to come by and watch.

Cultivate awareness of your surroundings; this will not only help avoid unnecessary collisions between students, but is excellent training in its own right.

The etiquette around bowing is important within our Dojo; you will receive guidance from Sensei as well as from Senior Students in this important tradition, and every student should feel free to ask these questions whenever they feel unsure.

Finally, training with joy and sincerity, while demonstrating care for your partners!

Stuart Krause

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 gift for loved ones! These are available from Sensei Brad, for only \$20.00, so get your copy today!