



# ABUNDANT PEACE AIKIDO & T'AI CHI

# Connections

Editorial

June 2010

Meditation in Motion



May is winding to a close, and with all the cold and rain we have been denied the opportunity to take practice to the park! Hopefully June warms up, and we can once again the sun in our faces as we add the outdoor dimension to our aikido or t'ai chi practice.

Our spring t'ai chi Beginner course ended on Sunday, May 30<sup>th</sup>; please join me in congratulating them on this significant achievement, and hopefully in welcoming many of them to our community as they deepen their study. It must be mentioned that this has been an unusually dedicated and diligent group; they have all attended very regularly, and worked very hard on their own. In result, they have progressed more quickly than usual, for which they must be commended.

The comings and goings of summer will take each of us in a variety of directions; rest assured that every effort will be made to ensure that class schedules will remain unchanged over the summer months!

Stuart



See Sensei Brad for T'ai Chi and self defense CD's, as well as for any clothing needs, or training weapons requirements. Bokken are in stock and available for purchase today!

## Corporal Francisco Gomez Memorial Library

The Corporal Francisco Gomez Memorial Library continues to grow, thanks to so many kind donations from members. New material arrives weekly, so check back frequently, with either of our Librarians, to check out "what's new"! Remember, we will happily accept all help and donations!



## Promotions

We congratulate those who were promoted in May:

### Kids

- Kristiana S. 14<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Emily S. 14<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Andrew S. 14<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Leo M. Jr. 13<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Cassidy D. 12<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- J.D. G. 12<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Nikola K. 12<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Airk M. 12<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Ethan T. 12<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Julia S. Jr. 9<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Stephanie T. 9<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Tamara K. Jr 7<sup>th</sup> Kyu

### Adults

- Bruce S. 9<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Jan J. 8<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Mat J. 7<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Shawn C. 4<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Steve G. 4<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Bobby S. 4<sup>th</sup> Kyu
- Tyson W. 4<sup>th</sup> Kyu

# Congratulations!



NEW YORK (Reuters Life!) - It happens every spring. Along with April showers and that red, red robin, Tai Chi devotees return to the public parks. They reappear like lilacs - men and women, dressed in loose clothing and cotton shoes, gliding in silent unison through their ballet-like exercises. "There's more energy in the air outside, especially early in the morning or evening," George Kormendi, the program director of the New York School of Tai Chi Chuan, said in an interview. "So sometimes I'll bring my students outside to the park," said Kormendi, who has been teaching Tai Chi, indoors and outdoors, for 20 years.

Literally translated as "Supreme Ultimate Fist," Tai Chi Chuan is an ancient Chinese martial art based on the idea that in softness there is strength. The short form of the popular Yang style of Tai Chi consists of 37 postures. With names such as "Grasping Sparrow's Tail" and "Fair Lady Works with Shuttles," these "forms" are performed in a slow and continuous sequence. The entire exercise can be completed in seven to 10 minutes. "The slow movement trains our awareness of energy and use of force," Kormendi explained. "To follow it and get out of the way without resistance. So we meet another person with a calm mind and without emotion."

(continued on page two!)

Great news; early morning aikido keiko continues on Mondays and Thursdays, from 6:00 to 7:30 AM. Mat fee is \$10.00; join us if you can!



## Announcements

**Aikido Summer Camp plans** are changing, as it we have not yet been confirmed as able to attend. Five registered, but at this point it seems unlikely that we will be able to go as a group; a number of us have withdrawn in the hope that we can attend in 2011... we shall just have to register early, next year!

**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** will be held on Friday, 25 June, 6:30 to 9:30 PM. We will study movements and strategies to successfully deal with an attack involving a stick, crowbar, or bottle. Elements will include maai (distance and timing), irimi (entering); neutralizing and immobilizing will also be covered. "Sticks", "clubs" and "crowbars" will be provided!

**Noodle Night.** Our spring t'ai chi class will enjoy the third and final social event of their program, at 6:00 PM on Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, at Moon Garden Restaurant on 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue. All members are encouraged to attend and share in this special celebration!

New at [www.abundantpeace.com](http://www.abundantpeace.com) >> 1) **kumijo video**; 2) **belt tying made easy, on the kids aikido page**; and 3) **t'ai chi group practice video**.

## Story of O Sensei

Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969), to whom Aikido practitioners refer as "O-Sensei," was one of the world's most celebrated martial artists. His gift was to marry effective martial technique with a deep spirituality. A master of many martial arts, he brought out of budo (the martial path) a deep philosophical element. His influence on philosophical thinkers as well as martial artists has been profound.

O-Sensei traveled widely in Japan, perfecting his art by talking with other visionaries and by successfully engaging in physical challenges. His reputation as a man of budo grew. Many students were drawn to him. Many became *uchi deshi* (live-in students). The *uchi deshi* system was a common Japanese way of learning - similar to, but not exactly the same as, Western apprenticeship. The students lived on the same premises as their teacher and became involved in many aspects of their teacher's daily life.

Aikido is an art of spiritual transmission. Although O-Sensei was a religious man, I do not mean to suggest that what O-Sensei transmitted to his students was a religion, but that he was moved to help people discover deep reference for life and "the

spirit of living protection for all creation." O-Sensei's *uchi deshi* were expected to tend to his needs twenty-four hours a day. Whether he needed to practice a technique in the middle of the night, to travel to another city to teach, to have someone massage his sore muscles, to welcome a visitor, or to farm, *uchi deshi* were expected to be ready to help him. In this way, they could see how the principles of Aikido extended into all facets of life. For his students, O-Sensei was a model of Aikido.

Philosophical treatises and abstract philosophy seldom inspire people to act - but human examples of honorable living can instill hope and inspire action. People take as their aims what seems possible and good. If someone lives a virtuous life, others can see that such a life is possible. Mother Teresa and Gandhi are examples of humble and unselfish living, and stories of Jesus, Buddha, and Mohammed have helped people throughout the ages to frame their lives so that they can understand how to make them better. In this way, O-Sensei, too, inspires many people.

Many of O-Sensei's students took up the challenge to spread Aikido philosophy. In so doing, they have introduced it to an increasingly international audience. O-Sensei's students are now the leaders of Aikido around the world. But, they are growing older. Their recollections of O-Sensei have been handed down to their students, serving to inspire them. In what has become an oral history, our glimpse of O-Sensei's vision of Aikido comes from the recollections of those who were around him.

O-Sensei's lessons were not always the same for every student. Instead, he matched his lessons to what he perceived as a student's interests and abilities. Accordingly, his live-in students as well as students who trained more briefly under his authority came away with different perspectives of the art and different stories about their teacher. It is through the many stories of O-sensei that we see how he interacted with the world, how he behaved off the mat when he was with friends and family, how he was as a teacher, and as a public spokesman, how he handled responsibility, what angered him, and what he thought was important. This kind of portrait of O-Sensei provides a more realistic understanding of his vision and of his art.

Aikido is a transformative art. Seeing Aikido's martial techniques through the broader perspective of O-Sensei's life reveals the art's principles and how they apply to everyday life. The application of these principles is what O-sensei demonstrated for his live-in students. One of the things that caught their attention is that O-Sensei was about a compassionate and kind teacher as well as a powerful and ferocious martial artist. It is this combination of contradictory qualities that makes O-sensei a fascinating and inspiring person.

Another thing that they realized is that to learn the deeper lessons of Aikido is to

transform one's self into a person with a larger and more powerful capacity for living well. O-Sensei presented his students with the model of the person who lived with courage, sensitivity, and virtue.

**Susan Perry**  
[Remembering O-sensei](#)

**Susan Perry is the editor-in-chief of Aikido Today Magazine, an international publication that she started in 1987. She has practiced Aikido since 1978 and holds a fifth-degree black belt. Perry also holds a Ph.D. in philosophy and taught philosophy in the California State University system for ten years. She teaches Aikido with her husband at their dojo in Claremont, California, and gives seminars throughout the country.**

## Meditation in Motion

For Valerie Sannino, a 60-year-old receptionist with two herniated discs, exercise was just about impossible until she discovered Tai Chi. "My spine doctor suggested it," she said. "Now I can move more freely, my sense of balance is much improved and I'm not in constant fear of hurting myself. "I'm grateful for these exercises," she added.

Research has shown that stroke patients who practiced as little as six weeks of Tai Chi improved their balance. Another study found that healthy seniors improved standing balance after only four weeks. "This is good stuff," said Dr. John Kelly, spokesperson for the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine. Kelly, an orthopaedic surgeon and associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania, said the 2000-year-old exercise can improve the balance, increase the flexibility, reduce the stress and boost the strength of the 21st century practitioner. "I'm happy to promote it," he added.

Kelly says it's particularly good for older people. "As folks get older they lose their sense of balance. Tai Chi promotes balance. More and more data shows that balance training prevents hip fractures, which are almost always caused by falls," he said. Patrick McNulty, an actor and director in New York City, has been doing Tai Chi since 2001. "It's been really terrific in terms of reducing stress," he said. "It works your whole body. You get quite strong, core and legs. But you don't look like a muscleman."

Even for the non-practitioner enjoying the park on a lovely spring day, just to watch these students, calm, disciplined and engrossed in the sheer grace of the sequence, is relaxing. Tai Chi has been called "meditation in motion."

As the return of spring confirms and the I Ching (Book of Changes), one of the oldest Chinese texts, states: "Nature is always in motion."

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