



# ABUNDANT PEACE AIKIDO AND TAI CHI

## Connections

Editorial

May, 2009

Why Slowly?



Spring is here...sort of; warm days are interrupted by the sudden return of snow and cold; but, at Abundant Peace Aikido and Tai Chi school, we continue, undaunted, on our individual path to enlightenment!

April was another busy month; we began with a successful "Noodle Night", to celebrate two things... first, the Spring '09 beginner Tai Chi class reaching the first "cross hands", and the

Fall '08 class reaching the third! We also managed a full slate of classes, even through the Easter Long weekend, and had our first ever "spring social event" for the Aikido class...which turned into a celebration of Sensei Brad's birthday.

Finally, near the end of the month we once again gathered to clean and repair the mats as well as generally care for our dojo...many thanks for those who took part.

To close, let's hope that spring arrives in full, so that we can once again enjoy some training outside, under the sun!

Stuart Krause

### 13th Anniversary

Abundant Peace Aikido and Tai Chi School will celebrate our 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year; we had so much fun last year, with our paintball war, we have decided to do it again! For those interested, we will gather near Gibbons at an excellent outdoor paintball facility... the same spot we used in 2008, beginning at 10:30 AM on Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup>. After hours of paintball action, we will gather back at the School for games and a potluck supper. Family, kids, and friends are all welcome Keep an eye on the Notice Board for further details, and keep that day open for our celebration!



### The Ten Essentials

The eighth of the "Ten Essentials" of Tai Chi practice, as taught by Yang Cheng Fu, is "Match Up Inner and Outer".

*"What we are practicing in taiji depends on the spirit, hence the saying 'the spirit is the general, the body his troops'. If you can raise your spirit, your movements will be naturally light and nimble, the form nothing more than empty and full, open and closed. When we say 'open', we don't just mean the arms or legs; the mental intent must open along with the limbs. When we say 'close' we don't just mean close the arms or legs; the mental intent must close along with the limbs. If you can combine inner and outer into a single impulse then they become a seamless whole."*

Reprinted from

[www.yangfamilytaichi.com](http://www.yangfamilytaichi.com)

Tai Chi Chuan is the physical interpretation of the philosophy of Tai Chi. It has Yin and Yang components. Tai Chi Chuan is composed of "Gong" or training and "Chee" technique. Gong refers to internal power and chee refers to martial art.

Tai Chi Chuan is a martial art and very efficient as such because it applies internal power to each technique. Therefore, when one is practicing Tai Chi Chuan, one is practicing the development of internal power or what is commonly called Qigong. This is why the practice of Tai Chi Chuan yields so many benefits. It has benefits from both martial art and qigong.

Intent is what's necessary. It is the commander of all movement. It is said in the six harmony theory that when the intent is there, the chi is there and the power is there. A movement without intent is nothing. Intent without movement is nothing too. An intent combined with movement that is not applied to an opponent is nothing. When intent combined with movement is applied on an opponent, something is achieved.

A beginner who moves from movement to movement without paying attention to each movement's function is not considered to be practicing Tai Chi Chuan. The fact is that, when one practices Tai Chi Chuan solo form with intent and power, the speed will be slow.

When one is practicing Tai Chi Chuan slow, one focuses on the "Yin" or "Gong" component. When one practices Tai Chi Chuan fast, one focuses on the "Yang" or "Chee" component. The Tai Chi Chuan classics said that a practitioner can master the art of Tai Chi Chuan only when one has mastered both Yin and Yang.

*"Reprinted from [www.gstaichi.org](http://www.gstaichi.org)"*

**The Judo Club will be holding a full-day training clinic on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>; they need the facility all day, which means both Tai Chi and Aikido classes will be moved to the Lions Park...weather permitting!**

# Announcements



Our next aikido seminar opportunity at Aikido of Missoula will be with Saotome Sensei from 25 to 27 September, 2009.

Aikido special training is on Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 to 9:30 PM; the theme is: "Review of Ikeda Sensei's spring seminar" with special focus on Centre, Connection, and Breaking Balance. This is "can't miss" training for all aikido students!

The Spring 2009 beginner Tai Chi Class has already reached the "2<sup>nd</sup> Cross Hands" in the Set; they will celebrate this milestone with their second noodle night on the evening of Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, location TBA!

Finally, remember to keep an eye on our web site, [www.abundantpeace.com](http://www.abundantpeace.com) for a detailed listing of workshops and seminars.

## Dojo Etiquette

A few members have asked why we need to take care of the dojo; after all, the school is a "business", and should there not therefore be people hired to see to these routine tasks?

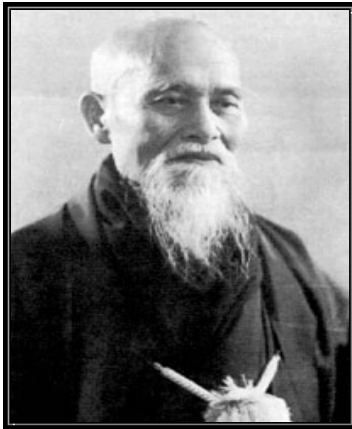
In the Western or North American model, those people are correct; we are clients, and the school a business, so we simply pay our fees and received our instruction... just like golf lessons, or piano instruction!

To follow that philosophy is also to deny yourself in a number of ways. The most obvious of these is that, in working together to care for our training place, we interact on a level other than that of fellow students, and in that interaction develop a stronger sense of community and friendship.

Caring for the Dojo is much more than that, however; in the true martial tradition, one who wanted to follow the path of Budo would surrender to that study, live in the training facility and perform routine and often menial tasks, in exchange for lessons. In the aikido world, the ultimate expression of this relationship is termed "uchi deshi", or literally translated, "inside student or inside disciple". This was the path followed by the Head of ASU, Mitsugi Saotome Shihan; for many years he lived with O Sensei, and received hours of instruction each day.

This is a unique relationship; in addition to instruction in the Art, the "uchi deshi" forges their character through humility and, in the act of surrendering the self, begins to achieve a true understanding of the true path of Budo; finally, the ego is suppressed, and there is a spirituality that grows from this evolution.

Our "dojo care sessions" give the student a chance to touch that ancient tradition, even in a small way; if you allow yourself to make that little connection, you may be surprised at where that connection takes you.



## Quote from O Sensei

"The real Art of Peace is not to sacrifice a single one of your warriors to defeat an enemy. Vanquish your foes by always keeping yourself in a safe and unassailable position; then no one will suffer any losses. The way of a warrior, the Art of Politics, is to stop trouble before it starts. It consists in defeating your adversaries spiritually by making them realize the folly of their actions. The way of a warrior is to establish harmony."

**-Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei-**

## 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!**

## Promotions



### Kids

Jasper W. Jr. 14<sup>th</sup> Kyu  
Stefan S. Jr. 14<sup>th</sup> Kyu

### Adults

Joseph T. 8<sup>th</sup> Kyu

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

## Slow, or Deliberate?

In my own aikido training journey, I have tried of late to focus on the tremendous benefit of "slowing down"; I have written of this in the past couple of newsletters. More recently, I had a transformational moment in my Tai Chi practice, purely in result of slowing my physical pace; this led to further reflection on the true meaning of "slowly" as it applies to training, and the realization that it is not so much "slow" as it is "deliberate".

This transformational moment grew from a "simple" weight shifting exercise; as we shift our bodies from side to side, Sensei Brad challenged us to shift our weight to the left, by sinking our weight down the right leg and into the earth... to create a weight shift by



connecting to the earth, rather than by generating it ourselves. Impossible! That was my first impression of this challenge, and I proved myself right; try as I might, I could not find the effect he had spoken of.

All that changed, when I began to slow down my physical pace; I unexpectedly found myself shifting my weight to the right, then allowed my weight to settle down the right leg... and suddenly realized my weight was shifting to the left! I repeated this simple motion for several moments, slowly; probably proving to myself that what I had just experienced was not accidental! As I explored this experience, I considered again the tremendous value of moving slowly, and what that really means.

When we learn something new, the value of "slowly" is very simple. This allows a new motion or technique to imprint itself on our muscle memory; further, as we work with our training partner, slow motion permits our centre being to be aware of our partners' energy. As time passes, we can increase the tempo, without losing what we have learned; once again, any increase in tempo must be done "slowly".

To think only of speed is insufficient; we must delve deeper, and learn to move with all "deliberate speed"... whether fast, or slow, our actions must be considered, studied, and filled with intent. Once again, I challenge each of you to start by slowing down, and then to focus on making every movement, every technique, deliberate, purposeful, and sincere.

*Stuart Krause*