



# ABUNDANT PEACE AIKIDO & TAI CHI

## Connections

Editorial

November 2008

The Ten Essentials



This has been a busy fall for our school, as we transition into the fall season. This brings with it a new beginner class of Tai Chi students, as well as new students seeking enlightenment on the aiki path.

The highlight of the fall season was the trip to the Saotome Sensei seminar in Missoula, Montana, by seven students along with our Sensei.

Saotome Sensei gave us perspective by announcing that, for health reasons, this might be his "last seminar". There are many reasons for this, but the true lesson from his comments is very simply, *carpe diem... seize the day, live in the now.*

When it comes to training, or to life, we must always remember that tomorrow is promised to nobody; we must therefore treat each day with respect, and remember that we may never again be presented with the opportunities that lie before us at any given moment.

In that vein, several of us remained in Missoula, to take part in some regular classes; Raso Sensei, a skilled teacher in her own right, is also a senior student of Saotome Sensei; by remaining a few days after the seminar, we were able to benefit from her years of experience and understanding. As well, the warmth with which we were welcomed was a valuable and enriching experience of its' own.

Changes in my professional situation have kept me away from training, which I regret; I can only hope that the changes I am trying to implement now, will enable me to find the balance in my life I have sought for so long; on the up side, I take some solace in knowing that I now own more hakama than I own business suits... so perhaps there is some hope for me yet!

Stuart Krause

## Qi Gong

Another series of classes that are offered at Abundant Peace throughout the year are Chi Gong (Qi Gong) courses; refer to our web site for the schedule of these.

Qi Gong refers to a wide variety of traditional cultivation practices that involve methods of accumulating, circulating and working with Qi or energy within the body, Qigong is sometimes mistakenly said to always involve movement and/or regulated breathing; in fact, use of special methods of focusing on particular energy centers in and around the body are common in higher level or evolved forms of Qigong. Qigong is practiced for health maintenance purposes, as a therapeutic intervention, as a medical profession, a spiritual path and/or component of Chinese Martial Arts.



Qi means breath or air in Chinese, and, by extension, life force, dynamic energy, or even cosmic breath. Gong is work applied to a discipline or the resultant level of skill, so "Qigong" is therefore breath or energy work. The term was coined in the twentieth century and its currency speaks of a cultural desire to separate cultivation from superstition, to secularize and preserve these very valuable aspects of traditional Chinese health and martial practices.

-reprinted from [Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org)-

Why not try a course? You may find it adds tremendously to either your Aikdo or Tai Chi practice, as well as to your life!

We began our examinations of the "Ten Essentials" of Tai Chi practice, as espoused by Yang Cheng Fu, in our October issue; this month, we will present the second of these, which is to "hold in the chest and pull up the back".



This principle can be expressed as

*"the chest is slightly reserved inward, which causes the chi to sink to the cinnabar field, (dan 1 tian 2). The chest must not be puffed out. If you do so then the chi is blocked in the chest region, the upper body becomes heavy and the lower body light, and it will become easy for the heels to float upward. 'Pulling up the back' makes the chi stick to the back. If you are able to hold in the chest then you will naturally be able to pull up the back. If you can pull up the back, then you will be able to emit a strength from the spine which others cannot oppose."*

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

## Saotome Sensei Seminar



Eight of us travelled to Missoula, for what proved to be an outstanding Aikido Seminar with Saotome Sensei. This is not the first time we have made this journey, but this year was special in many ways. First, Saotome Sensei began by announcing that this seminar might be his last; it was clear he expected us to give our keiko a very concentrated focus, to take full advantage of what we were being offered.



Second, we must remember that Saotome Sensei was one of O Sensei's senior students; it is a rare gift to be able to touch, however briefly, the teachings of the Founder.

Speaking for the group, we all hope this seminar will not be the last time we are able to receive his instruction, but all of us are glad we went!

## Announcements

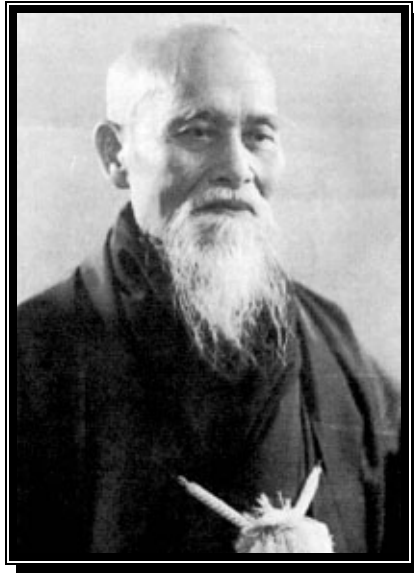
There is a workshop, "Ki in Daily Life" scheduled for the evening of Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008 from 6:30 to 9:30 PM; all students of aikido and tai chi, as well as guests, are welcome to attend.

Adult Aikido classes are cancelled on Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008; Kid's aikido will take place as scheduled!

There is a very special test on Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> November; Joo and Michelle will be testing for their 3<sup>rd</sup> Kyu! The more advanced the test, the more all of us can learn from observing, and it is important for as many of us as possible to attend and show our support for Joo and Michelle as they meet this challenge. Let's plan to go out after the test is over, to help celebrate their success!

There will be a "mat maintenance" session scheduled for Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2008 from 1:00 to 2:00 PM; all students are encouraged to attend and help out.

Congratulations to the Tai Chi Beginner course, on reaching the first cross hands; they will celebrate with their first "Noodle Night" following Tai Chi class on Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>; location is TBA!



## Quote from O Sensei

*"The Art of Peace begins with you. Work on yourself and your appointed task in the Art of Peace. Everyone has a spirit that can be refined, a body that can be trained in some manner, a suitable path to follow. You are here for no other purpose than to realize your inner divinity and manifest your inner enlightenment. Foster peace in your own life and then apply the Art to all that you encounter."*

-Morihei Ueshiba-

## Dojo Etiquette

All of our students are aware that our teacher, Brad Schultz, is addressed as Sensei, but do we all understand why, and when to use this honorific? To clarify, the word "Sensei" means teacher, in the most literal sense, and the kanji for Sensei is the combined characters for 'born' or 'live' and 'before', so the literal translation of this term is "lived before", which I think we can understand as meaning that our Sensei has travelled the Aiki path before us, and because of that learning is now our teacher.

Simple courtesy is the key; whenever we are on the mats, or still dressed in our dogi, we should use the honorific of "Sensei" when addressing the head of our school.

Use of this title is a sign of courtesy and respect, and is not servile or excessively humble; treat this tradition as an important part of our dojo etiquette, and as another chance to gain enlightenment in aiki!

Morning classes will continue this fall, from 6:00– 7:30 AM on Mondays and Thursdays. All ranks are welcome to attend, and the mat fee is only \$10.00!

## Aikido of Missoula

Following the Saotome Sensei seminar, a few of us remained behind, just for a few days, to attend regular classes at Aikido of Missoula, under the instruction of Raso Hultgren Sensei, 6<sup>th</sup> Dan.



Raso Sensei is a senior student of Saotome Sensei, and in the aftermath of these seminars spends her regular classes working through and interpreting much of the seminar material, which for the beginners in the group, and even for the more advanced, is very useful!

More than that, the warmth with which we were made welcome during our brief visit was truly unique, and points out the special nature of the Aikido community in Missoula.

## Poetry Corner

For this month, Rebecca L. wrote:

*kaiten nage turns*

*wheel spins wind, blows through  
silence*

*heaven resonates*

## Aikido in Toronto

Immediately following our return from Missoula, I was on a plane to Toronto for a week of meetings; this was a fairly full slate, but I was able to sneak out for an evening and attend two classes at Aikido Shugyo Dojo, in the heart of old Toronto, and housed in an old warehouse/office building.



This is a non-profit dojo, under the auspices of the Canadian Aikido Federation; I took part in a basic skills class, followed by an all ranks class. Both were interesting, and as always in the aikido world I was made very welcome! When you travel, find a dojo and attend a class or two; you won't regret it!