



ABUNDANT PEACE AIKIDO & TAI CHI

Connections

Editorial

September 2009



This summer is nearly over, and it has been a busy time for our School. We have "bucked the trend" by seeing attendance and enrolments increase, an unusual occurrence in the summer months when everyone is often busy elsewhere!

Both the Tai Chi summer retreat and Aikido Gasshuku were very well attended, and enjoyed by those who managed the time. Morning aikido classes continued twice a week through the summer, as well as our ritual stat holiday class and breakfast, now a tradition enjoyed by many of us. And, as always we enjoyed a few classes outside and under the sun, a precious gift in this part of the world.

Greetings to new members, and welcome back to those who took a break over the summer; we look forward to training with you in the months ahead!

Stuart



Our next beginner Tai Chi Course will start on Saturday, 19 September 2009 at 4:15 PM. If you know anyone who might be interested in attending this program, please inform Sifu Brad. Aikido students; Tai Chi is an excellent way to develop core strength, stability, strong posture and unified motion!

Tai Chi & Your Health

Tai Chi cultivates health benefits beyond those studied by western medicine. Tai Chi conditions the sleeves between muscles and nerves, the films that separate and support the organs, the fascia. The acupuncture meridians of Chinese Medicine run through the fascia. By conditioning these boundary layers between tissues, Tai Chi reduces chemical cross-linking, cellular rust. Move it or lose it, the Taoists say. The turning of the trunk flexes the spine, producing some of the same benefits as twists in Yoga (improved spinal flexibility, release of tension on the peri-spinal muscles, alleviating imbalances that can lead to back pain while improving blood flow to the discs). And like Yoga, Tai Chi conditions the psoas, that deep muscle of balance that underlies the lower abdominal organs and mediates the relationship of the spine to the pelvis and legs. Proper Tai Chi practice places certain demands on the body: The sinking of the weight, over time, tells the legs to add muscle and bone mass, while the turning of the body, in conjunction with deep abdominal breathing, "wrings out" the organs, flushing blood out as they're compressed and allowing it to flow back in when the movement compresses another part of the torso. This flexing and un-flexing reduces pockets of stagnation in the various organ systems.

Physical strength peaks in the mid-twenties, declines modestly to age 50, and steeply thereafter. Studies show a loss of one-third of lower extremity strength by age 70. In advanced age, few people are able to stand on one leg for more than a few seconds. Premature decline need not be the case. Tai Chi exercises all the joints and major muscle groups in a slow, rhythmic, mindful way, priming the body for whatever demands the day may make. Leg strength increases with practice, which pays off every step you take, every time you stand in line, every time you climb a flight of stairs. Your joints stay loose and flexible, so everyday chores around the

house and garden don't take as much out of you. When you practice Tai Chi in the morning, it's just easier to move for the rest of the day, and concentrate on what you have to do. You waste less energy and attention on body static, so you have the stamina to ride out crazy days and long hours at work and still have something left for your family, your mate, your art. Tai Chi is for anyone who wants to move with greater strength, grace, and ease as they get older.

In the U.S., studies have shown that even people in their 70's and 80's can learn a simplified series of Tai Chi forms, and benefit tremendously: Study subjects show a marked decrease in injurious falls, reductions in blood pressure, and improved measures of balance and confidence. If Tai Chi can do this for geriatric beginners, think of what it can do for someone who starts a few decades sooner, and stays with it.

Reprinted from www.taichiacademy.com

Fall Course Calendar

Eight Pieces of Brocade. This is an ancient form of movement Chi Gong consisting of eight dynamic yet gentle exercises, designed to stimulate major acupuncture meridians, to restore a strong and balanced energy flow, to increase muscular strength, improve balance and aid flexibility. A great way to dissolve tension and release stress from the body!

Sunday, 25 Oct 09, 2:00 to 5:00 PM

Five Element Chi Gong. Chi Gong means working with your life energy; the 5 Element set is an ancient routine that includes holding postures with gentle movement. It restores balance between the five major organs in the body and is an ideal way to establish relaxation and mental clarity while cultivating chi or life force.

Sunday, 29 Nov 09, 2:00 to 5:00 PM

Both of the above courses are open to anyone; students of both aikido and tai chi are encouraged to attend, and if you know anyone who might have an interest, these courses are an excellent introduction!



Announcements

The weekend of 25 to 27 September will see a number of students travel to Missoula to train under the direct teaching of Mitsugi Saotome Shihan, the Head Instructor for ASU. The schedule is:

Friday, 25 Sept 2009

6:00 – 6:45 PM Registration
7:00 – 8:30 PM Keiko

Saturday, 26 Sept 2009

10:00 AM – Noon Keiko
3:00 – 5:00 PM Keiko
7:30 PM -??? Potluck

Sunday, 27 Sept 2009

10:00 AM – Noon Keiko
2:30 – 4:30 PM Keiko

If you intend to join us, you must book hotels and make travel arrangements right away, or risk being left out. Check out www.aikidomissoula.com for further details. **Senior students, if you are not going please let Sensei know if you are able to conduct classes during this period!**

Fundraiser for Autism: Our 1st Annual Roll-a-Thon! Please join us on Saturday, 21 November 2009 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM, to participate in rolling clinic and fundraiser for Autism Speaks, an organization that provides support to families and helps in research into the causes and treatment of this condition. We need your help; pledges and donations are welcome, participation by as many students as possible is the key, and we need an audience to cheer us on! Please join us in this worthwhile cause!

Kids aikido classes will resume their Fall schedule on Tuesday, 8 September 2009.

Hayashi Sensei Seminar. The "third annual" of these outstanding seminars will be held at our Dojo on the weekend of 18 and 19 September 2009; details are posted on the Notice Board at the Dojo! Ms. Cyndy Hayashi Sensei is a 6th Dan Teacher from California; her seminars are always valuable, and highly energetic!

Finally, remember to always keep an eye on www.abundantpeace.com for an up to date list of seminars, courses, and events. As well, coming soon to our web site will be a series of short video clips, showcasing some of the training available at our School.

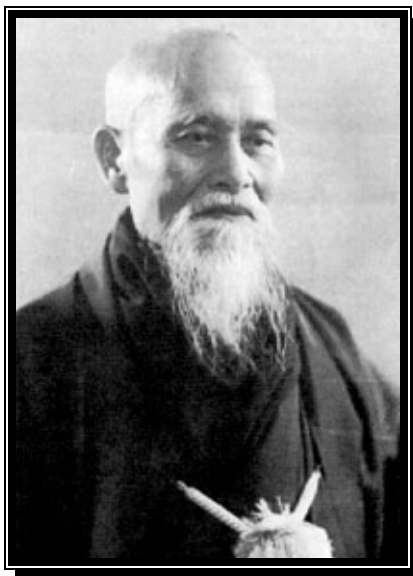
Promotions



Kids
Alex T. 14th Kyu

Adults
Shawn C. 5th Kyu

Congratulations!



Quote from O Sensei

"To practice properly the Art of Peace, you must: Calm the spirit and return to the source. Cleanse the body and spirit by removing all malice, selfishness, and desire. Be ever grateful for the gifts received from the universe, your family, Mother Nature, and your fellow human beings."

-Morikaei Ueshiba-

Find the Tiger Within

Now available: **"Finding the Tiger Within"**, a CD on personal safety and protection. Filled with strategies and principles of the mental and preventive aspects of self defense, it also includes physical techniques when the confrontation cannot be avoided. This is a no-nonsense presentation that 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!



Dojo Etiquette

It is common for people to ask about the practice of bowing in aikido. In particular, many people are concerned that bowing may have some religious significance. It does not. Incorporating this particular aspect of Japanese culture into our aikido practice serves several purposes: It inculcates a familiarity with an important aspect of Japanese culture in aikido practitioners. This is especially important for anyone who may wish, at some time, to travel to Japan to practice aikido. There is also a case to be made for simply broadening one's cultural horizons.

Bowing may be an expression of respect. As such, it expresses open-mindedness and a willingness to learn from one's teachers and fellow students.

Bowing to a partner may serve to remind you that your partner is a person -- not a practice dummy. Always train within the limits of your partner's abilities.

The initial bow, which signifies the beginning of formal practice, is much like a "ready, begin" uttered at the beginning of an examination. So long as class is in session, you should behave in accordance with certain standards of deportment. Aikido class should be somewhat like a world unto itself. While in this "world," your attention should be focused on the practice of aikido. Bowing out is like signaling a return to the "ordinary" world.

When bowing either to the instructor at the beginning of practice or to one's partner at the beginning of a technique it is considered proper to say **"Onegai Shimasu"** (lit. "I request a favor") and when bowing either to the instructor at the end of class or to one's partner at the end of a technique it is considered proper to say **"Domo arigato gozaimashita."** ("thank you").

Taken from the Aikido Primer by Eric Sotnak

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!

Morning aikido classes continue, on Monday and Thursday mornings from 6:00 to 7:30 AM. All ranks are welcome to attend, and the mat fee is only \$10.00!