

"Connections"

Newsletter of Abundant Peace Aikido and T'ai Chi

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Editorial

As our summer winds to a close, we reflect on our summer activities and begin the transition into the fall season. Although we continue to see warm days, there is no doubt that the coolness of the morning or evening hours signal that the change of season is upon us.

Dojo activities continued without interruption during the month of August; although Sensei was away for a portion of this month, the senior students pitched in to ensure that classes were available as per the normal schedule. Sensei asked that I extend his thanks and appreciation to those students who assisted by teaching class during his annual break.

September will be an exciting month for our community with two seminar opportunities on the schedule; please make the most of these opportunities to connect with a unique and advanced training situation; to connect with aikidoka from other communities; and, to support our communities and others as they work to organize these very special opportunities to train. It will also mark the beginning of our fall session of beginner T'ai Chi.

I look forward to training with you this fall.....

-Stuart K.-

"Energy Precedes Form"

Promotions

We congratulate the members of our Aikido Community who were advanced in rank during the month of August.

ADULTS: 9th Kyu, Karina N.; 6th Kyu, Donna P. and David M.

Benefits of T'ai Chi

As we learned more about the people in the classes we attended we discovered that they had all experienced some tai chi benefits ranging from recovery of muscle control after surgery to promoting recovery from cancer operations.

Others experienced less startling tai chi benefits - they were simply able to walk more easily had more stamina and generally enjoyed their lives more.

We wondered how on earth something so slow and graceful that seemed to involve little effort as tai chi could have that effect.

And one of the first things we learned about tai chi was that a lot of it was really Qi Gong - and that the benefits of tai chi are attributed to Traditional Chinese medicine or Western body mechanics.

The good news is that you can believe either explanation - you get the tai chi benefits either way.

-reprinted from www.everydaytaichicom-

Remember to take advantage of our Corporal. Francisco Gomez Memorial Library, established for all to enjoy.

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.

They also 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

Dojo Announcements

Cyndy Hayashi Sensei will present her annual seminar on the weekend of 7th and 8th September 2012, at our Dojo. This event is presented each year, hosted jointly by Northern Alberta Aikikai and Abundant Peace Aikido. The first session will take place on Friday, 7th September 2012 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM; there will be a social event held at a local restaurant thereafter. The seminar will conclude with two sessions on the Saturday; this fabulous opportunity to experience is open to and suggested for all ranks!

Tameshigiri (Cutting) Practice will be held on the afternoon of Sunday, 16th September 2012, commencing at 2:00 PM. Instruction will be available, as will suitable cutting swords for those who have not yet acquired one; we will combine the cutting practice with a "pot-luck" meal later in the afternoon. Look at the Dojo for a poster that will outline the details of the location, and of the meal. Again, this event is open to students of all ranks.

The Annual Saotome Sensei Seminar will once again be held at Aikido of Missoula on the weekend of 28th through 30th September 2012. This annual event is our best chance to train under the guidance of the Senior Shihan of ASU, and one of very few direct students of O'Sensei that still teaches actively. Seminar details are:

Friday 28 Sep 12:	6:00 to 6:45 PM, Registration 7:00 to 8:30 PM, Keiko
Saturday, 29 Sep 12:	10:00 to 12:00, Keiko 3:00 to 5:00 PM, Keiko 7:30 to 10:30 PM, Potluck
Sunday, 30 Sep 12:	10:00 to 12:00, Keiko 2:30 to 4:30 PM, Keiko

The seminar cost is \$130.00 USD; accommodations are extremely limited at this time, so we have booked a few rooms to ensure we had places to sleep. If you are interested in attending, please let Stuart or Tim know, to reserve a bed for yourself. This has always been a well attended event by our community; let's honor that tradition again this year!