



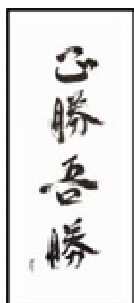
ABUNDANT PEACE AIKIDO & T'AI CHI

Connections

Editorial

May 2011

Spring Course Calendar



I am torn between two of my enthusiasms tonight. With the sun expected to shine this weekend, I have spent some of my day and evening getting the motorcycles ready to go...it seems like forever since I went riding!

Our aikido community has been beset by some injuries among our senior members; we wish them well, and hope for a speedy recovery and in result a speedy return to keiko. Our beginner T'ai Chi group is progressing very quickly, having reached the second "cross hands" in the set. We congratulate them on their advancement and progress.

April was a busy month for our Sensei; along with two of our senior students he traveled to Missoula to attend the Seminar with Ikeda Sensei. He asked that I express his appreciation to those students who took over the essential teaching role, enabling him to benefit from this opportunity. Indeed we will all benefit, as we will focus on these principles in the weeks to come.

Stuart

Special Training

Aikido students of all ranks are invited and encouraged to attend our Special Training session, which is scheduled for Friday, 6th May 2011 from 6:30 to 9:30 PM. The focus this month is the principles taught at the recent Ikeda Sensei seminar. Join us for a fascinating and fun workshop, exploring his many drills and exercises for developing musubi (connection) and kuzushi (balance breaking) to greatly deepen and improve our Aikido. Students of all ranks are encouraged to attend!

Corporal Francisco Gomez Memorial Library

February marked the first anniversary of our Library; that is a significant milestone, one we should all be proud of. That said, this



benchmark is also an opportunity to take stock of what we have built, and to resolve going forward that we will not allow the momentum to recede, that together we will take this to the next level. In recognition of this Anniversary I challenged each member of our community to do two things sometime in the next six months; first, borrow something from our Library and read it, and second, make a donation of a book or other media. I include this challenge again, to ensure it does not get forgotten or overlooked.



Promotions

We congratulate those of us who were promoted in March of 2011:

Kids

Yulia Y. Jr 14th Kyu

Adults

Martin M. 9th Kyu

Andrij N. 9th Kyu

Adnan O. 9th Kyu

Curran G. 9th Kyu

Abby N. 6th Kyu

Congratulations!

Emergency and Preventive Self Defense.

Discover simple yet very effective ways of emergency and preventive self-defense in this one day program. You will learn basic skills that you will be able to immediately use to make yourself safer, and more capable of handling any situation. This program offers a no-nonsense and practical approach teaching effective techniques that do not require size, strength or special skill. Self defense is a life skill; become safer in your home, on public transit, on the street, in your vehicle, or at any time you may find yourself in a dangerous situation.

Sunday, 15 May 11, 2:00 to 5:00 PM, \$75

Why Tai Chi?

Tai Chi is a component of traditional Chinese medicine that is believed to increase strength and promote calm and harmony by improving the flow of the internal energy throughout the whole body. Tai Chi has a calming and meditative effect that makes it particularly helpful for reducing stress and anxiety. Many people who have done Tai Chi regularly have experience the improvement of general well-being.

The benefits of practicing Tai Chi are unlimited. Tai Chi can be used as a preventive health measure, to maintain good health and/or to help with a specific disease. Here are some of general areas of the benefits that are most commonly recognized and most thoroughly researched: Blood Pressure, Hypertension, Heart, Musculature, Posture, Breathing, the Lymphatic System, and Balance.

The following are some examples of medical conditions that may be alleviated or possibly avoided by practicing Tai Chi:

- Mobility, Balance Problems
- Diabetes
- Parkinson's disease
- Asthma
- Post Traumatic Stress
- Strokes

Reprinted from www.spd300.com



Announcements

David Goldberg Sensei will host a four day Bridge Seminar from May 12th to

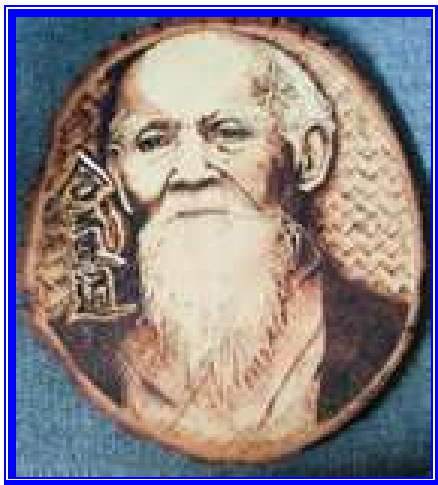
15th, at the River of Life Centre in Fort Washington Pennsylvania. Some of us are making this trip; speak to Stuart, Shawn, or Marcel if you want to know more!

Dojo Care will be done on Saturday, May 21st from 1:30 to 2:00 PM. All classes will be held at their usual time. Please make time to take part in caring for our wonderful training place!

The Second "Noodle Night" for the Spring 2011 T'ai Chi course will take place on the evening of Saturday, May 14th...the location is to be determined!

Many of our students had the opportunity to examine the outstanding iaito, batto, and heirloom quality tachi that are offered through Gold Mountain Forge, Sensei David Goldberg's other passion. There is great value in training with first an iaito, and then a live blade; there is also great joy in the ownership of something so beautiful. Please feel free to see Stuart if you have questions or would like to make an acquisition.

O Sensei's Wisdom



"In Aikido we never attack. An attack is proof that one is out of control. Never run away from any kind of challenge, but do not try to suppress or control an opponent unnaturally. Let attackers come any way they like and then blend with them. Never chase after opponents. Redirect each attack and get firmly behind it."

-Ueshiba Morihei, O Sensei-



The Tai Chi Principles

The T'ai Chi principles are more important than the movements for they are directly based on the laws of nature that shape us. Moving in slow motion while listening internally promotes calmness and sensitivity to the laws and rhythms of our universe. T'ai Chi starts out as physical; as we learn the movements, it eventually becomes more mental and meditative.

Relaxation is the first principle. Not at all weak or limp nor tight and stiff, this is an alert, vibrant condition that promotes fluid gracefulness while enhancing sensitivity, a prime requirement in our world of constant change. T'ai Chi coaxes the body into loosening and opening so that internal energy may flow freely. Blood circulation is enhanced as the capillaries open, for example. Tension is a blockage resulting from stress and/or trauma. Regular practice with mental concentration provides early recognition and amelioration of physical and mental tension.

Verticality of the spine is another important principle. Leaning in any direction means tensing the body in a losing battle with gravity. The top of the head is kept horizontal and the spine upright and open so the muscles along the spine may relax. The spine is a major energy path that deserves close attention. After the common cold, back pain is the most frequent ailment reported and it is often caused by tension due to poor posture.

The center leads the movement of the energy and the body. The waist area just below the navel is the central axis or hub of the body and the limbs may be thought of as spokes. Paying attention to the center on the physical level gradually leads to the meditative aspect of T'ai Chi as well. Breathing is deepened and enhanced by concentrating on the center.

Differentiate yin and yang and perceive substantial and insubstantial. Initially, this means to separate the weight completely in the legs. T'ai Chi is called one-legged boxing because of this emphasis on standing on one leg at a time. Obviously, this builds strength and balance.

Beautiful lady's wrist refers to a straight and relaxed wrist. During the form, the wrist is almost always straight in order to enhance the flow of energy. If a soda straw is bent or twisted, the flow through it is reduced. Precision of wrist position also requires concentration and practice to attain and thus builds awareness.

Medicine, meditation and martial arts are the three interwoven elements of T'ai Chi, providing a ladder of progression. Initially, emphasis is upon the health aspects. As the movements become second nature, the meditative elements emerge. Later, the martial art proves the principles on another level while helping us learn to deal gently with others.

Reprinted from www.taichicentre.com

Written by W.D. Connor

May Specials

May is a special month...remember, Mother's Day is on the 8th! In honor of that special day, we have available gift certificates for the fall T'ai Chi Beginner Program, as well as our Two Week Guest Passes. Try something different this year; skip the flowers, forget the chocolates, and give a life changing gift of health and wellness!

The Hakama

The wearing of the hakama in Aikido is often misunderstood; the most common of these misconceptions is that it was designed to conceal the movement of the feet. While that may to some extent be true, this is not the reason we wear this unusual garment. Very simply, O Sensei was a traditional man of his generation; he therefore would have viewed the dogi as akin to underwear, the display of which in training would have been considered extremely rude.

The hakama, originally a form of "chaps" worn by mounted warriors to protect the legs, evolved into a form of class dress and then into formal wear. It became a part of aikido training simply as part of the dojo etiquette, a practice we honor in our school. Plus, folding a hakama teaches patience!

