



ABUNDANT PEACE AIKIDO & TAI CHI

Dojo News

Editorial

August 2008



This is only our second issue; the support received from our readers is much appreciated. Remember, this is our Newsletter; and your suggestions will always be welcome.

This has been a very active summer at Abundant Peace; we have had a very successful Tai Chi retreat weekend, and interest in the morning Aikido classes has been growing. Plus, despite more rain than usual, we have been able to hold both Aikido and Tai Chi classes at the Lion's Park; this is a great experience...despite the work of removing grass stains from your dog!

Welcome to our new members; we look forward to training with you in the months ahead.

Stuart Krause

Senior's Day



Saturday, July 4th 2008; Abundant Peace Aikido and Tai Chi School was asked to demonstrate Tai Chi at the largest Farmers' Market in Western Canada, which is right here in St. Albert! From Noon until 3:00 PM we held centre stage, demonstrating the various Tai Chi sets, and answering plenty of questions from the crowd. This was a great day for our School!

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, "wring 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



Saotome Sensei Seminar



For those interested, Aikido of Missoula will once again host a seminar with Mitsugi Saotome Shihan, on the final weekend in September. These events offer both the beginner and the more advanced student a chance to experience a very unique dimension in training, one that can accelerate their development on the Aiki path. The seminar calendar is:

Friday, 26 Sept 2008

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

Saturday, 27 Sept 2008

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

Sunday, 28 Sept 2008

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

The Seminar fee is only \$110.00; registration may be done at the door or at www.aikidomissoula.com. Last year, seven of us drove down in two vehicles...which was great fun! If you choose to attend, you need to book hotels fairly early... this is also the "Homecoming Week" for the local University, so downtown hotel rooms tend to sell out early. A list of downtown hotels is posted on the bulletin board at the Club.



Announcements

Aikido Special Training for the Month of August will be "Gasshuku"; this term is translated as "living together". Gasshuku will be a full day of Aikido training; we will begin at 10:00 AM, and finish at 8:30 PM. This is a great opportunity for serious students to accelerate their training, and a good chance to get to know your training partners. Ask Sensei Brad for more information!

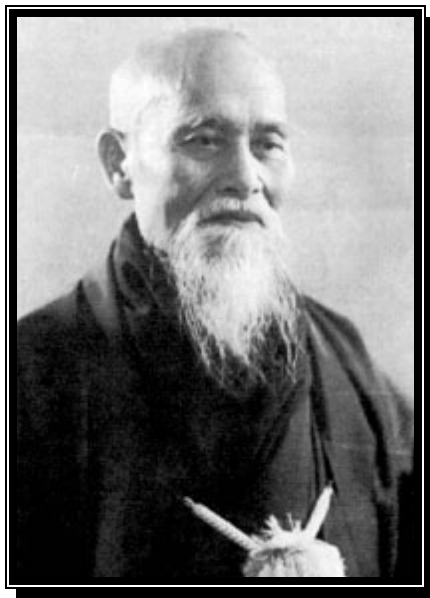
There will be no kids Aikido classes on Tuesdays or Fridays, during the months of July and August; kids are welcome to attend the mixed class on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:00 PM.

Promotions

Congratulations to the following students on their promotions:

Adults

Greg, 8th Kyu
Rebecca, 6th Kyu
Bobby, 6th Kyu
Steve, 5th Kyu
Gary, 5th Kyu



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."

-Morihei Ueshiba-



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

Beginning on Monday, August 11th 2008, we will hold Morning classes from 6:00– 7:30 AM on Mondays **and** Thursdays. All ranks are welcome to attend, and the mat fee is only \$10.00!