
Aikido of Phoenix Newsletter

January 2012

FROM TERESA MASTISON SENSEI

I wish you all the very best in 2012 and hope you have joy in abundance.

Some things to remember:

If you don't go after what you want, you'll never have it.

If you don't ask, the answer is always no.

If you don't step forward, you'll always be in the same place.

Happy New Year!

FROM JOHN SCANLIN SENSEI

"Contemplate the workings of this world, listen to the words of the wise, and take all that is good as your own. With this as your base, open your own door to the truth. Do not overlook the truth that is right before you." -O'Sensei

"When your eyes engage those of another person, greet him or her with a smile, and they will smile back. This is one of the essential techniques of the Art of Peace." -O'Sensei

Happy New Year, everyone. I hope your holidays were all you wanted them to be. Thanks to all my students for working so hard in 2011 and making it a fantastic year. We accomplished a great deal. Thanks also to Teresa and Fred Senseis for another successful Christmas party. I had a wonderful time! Congratulations to Kianna, Jim, Martin, Kestrel, Sempai Daniel, and Nora for winning the awards. Winning an award is the result of a great deal of hard work and dedication. You all should be very proud. Here's a New Years resolution: let's all get together, regardless of where our dojo is, workout and get to know each other better! After all, we all belong to the same organization, Aikido of Phoenix, regardless of where we practice.

This past month we concentrated on working with the Jo (short staff). The jo that we use today is thought to have been created by a 17th century Samurai named Muso Gonnosuke. The story is that Muso suffered a defeat when fighting legendary swordsman Miyamoto Musachi. Muso was fighting with a Bo (long staff-about 6 feet long) and Musachi, using both a long and short sword, parried and blocked the staff in such a way that Muso could not use the Bo effectively. Musachi spared his life and Muso retreated to a mountain to meditate about his defeat. He had an inspiration about this and designed a staff that was shorter and thinner than any that was used at this time. This weapon was the jo staff and was much faster and allowed the user to get much closer to his opponent. Supposedly, he was then able to defeat Musachi (although this part is doubted.)

There are only 2 parts to a jo, the *kissaki* (tip) and *ishizuki* (end) and these parts are interchangeable, depending on how the user is holding it. The Jo became a popular weapon in Japan. Many farming tools in old Japan were fashioned into weapons. In several martial arts weapons like the Jo were crafted from farming tools. The Jo staff could be made pretty quickly from a tree branch, and this is one advantage stick fighters had that swordsmen didn't. When it came time to fight, a Jo staff could be made easily and cheaply from materials at hand. The Jo was adapted by O'Sensei to teach the principles of Aikido. His use of this weapon is called Aikijo. We use Jo-Tori (Jo taking), Jo Jiuwaza (throwing with the Jo), Jo Suburi (Jo strikes), and Jo forms (Jogi one and Jogi two) in our dojo today.

Upcoming seminars- Arizona Aikido with George Ledyard Sensei on Feb 10-12, 2011, and Aikido of Scottsdale with Skip Chapman Shidoin on Feb 17-19, 2011. Further details are available.

Congratulations to all invited to test already this year, and congratulations to all students for providing a great Aikido year!

Keep the spirit strong!

FROM LUCY MAILLOUX SENSEI

Happy New Years from Snedigar! As we start 2012, it is always a good idea to take some time to reflect on 2011. What did you do well last year and what would you like to focus on for this year? I am a huge fan of maintaining an Aikido journal, and this has allowed me to maintain my focus and grow as an Aikido practitioner over the years. So what should you record in this journal? I have jotted down notes on techniques that I may have found to be difficult, or perhaps I noticed a hip motion or turn of the wrist that I was not executing. In addition, I make notes on application of techniques I may have noticed from others, or principles that I may have read that made sense to me.

"Opponents confront us continually, but actually there is no opponent there. Enter deeply into an attack and neutralize it as you draw that misdirected force into your own sphere."

Morihei Ueshiba

People start martial arts for various reasons, and it is important for you to understand what your reasons are. Many people seek out martial arts as a means of creating more power in their lives. Power, of course, can be defined in many ways. Some people are seeking self-empowerment in the form of self-improvement, self-discipline, or self-esteem, while others may be seeking power or control over others. Martial arts can be a very good place to discover power. However, more often than not what people end up learning is not true power, but force.

In Aikido, your objective should be on generating power. People tend to think that the fastest way to power is through force, not true. Short-term power can be generated through force, however, that power is one-dimensional and usually doesn't last. This force is what also has a negative impact in the application of technique. It could be argued that the Japanese discipline of Aikido is, in fact, the endless endeavor of physically harnessing maximum power with the least amount of physical exertion. Overwhelmingly, the power people learn to generate in Aikido is a form of personal power within themselves as opposed to a power over others. Power over others is almost always a product of people exerting force, not harnessing power. Indeed, people's misconception of what power is often leads to the very opposite outcome of what people seek.

A properly executed Aikido technique should require very little force (if any) but should simultaneously possess a tremendous amount of power. A great way to measure your Aikido technique is simply to ask oneself, "Am I exerting force?" If so, you need to re-evaluate your physical position (moving from your center, extending ki, etc.) and your mental intent in order to generate more power. In Aikido, there is rarely any situation in which a martial arts technique cannot be increased in power by improving one's extension rather than increasing their amount of force. There is an inverse relationship, in Aikido, of force to power, which is, the more force you exert in Aikido, the less power you will actually have.

You may notice that when I demonstrate techniques in class, I keep my hands open, and make it a practice not to close my hands or allow my fingers to become rigid. I do this to demonstrate that the power of each technique is not found in the hands and arms but within your extension and ki. It is feasible to assume that the power originates in the hands, the perceived place of "control." We are used to controlling things like our computers or our cars with our hands, so it is natural to assume that this, too, is where Aikido's power originates. However, Aikido's power comes from the intent and positioning of the practitioner and it manifests physically and projects from your "hara" or center.

This is why Aikido is an effective martial art for people of all stature and gender. Power is about generating energy and building on the commitment to the technique. Maintain the connection, adapt, flow with the movement and learn to differentiate between power and force, and that is where your power will be found.

Challenge yourself to do great things and do not allow obstacles to stand in your way. Wishing you much success in 2012.

KIDS' CORNER

Happy New Year! It's always fun and relaxing to take a break from the regular routine, but it's always exciting for me to see everyone back on the mat after a break. I hope you enjoyed yourselves over the holidays and I wish you all the best in 2012!

This is a good time to remind everyone to put forth your best effort in all that you do. Remember that whatever you do on a consistent basis is what you are going to do when it counts. I'd like you to change the phrase "practice makes perfect" to "practice makes permanent". This phrase can be applied to everything you do from sports, music, handwriting, to how you treat others, or what kind of friend you are.

Think about consistency as you begin this new year and resolve to put forth your best effort all the time. Make the most of your time with whatever it is you're doing (Aikido, music, sports, homework, etc.) and you'll make progress because you are focused and determined.

I hope 2012 is a wonderful year for you and if you give your best effort you can be assured that it really will be!

DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY WHEN YOU PAY FOR CLASSES EACH MONTH.

This shows the city that our classes are doing well as well as being sure that everyone who is on the mat is covered by the city's insurance.

RANK PROMOTIONS

Hachikyu (green) - Jared Anderson, Willie Tul, Ellie Takeuchi, Tyler Maloney, Alyson Neaves, Erica Neaves
Shichikyu (orange) - Nathan Colonna, Jared Alexander, Jacob Kaufman-Warner
1st Stepping Stone - Jacob McSweeney
Rokkyu - Daniel Sampedro

DOJO NEWS

MESA: There will be no classes on Mon., Jan. 16 as the center will be closed for Martin Luther King Day.

SOUTH CHANDLER - ADULTS: There will be no adult class on Mon., Jan. 16 as the center will be closed for Martin Luther King Day.

2011 CHRISTMAS PARTY and AWARDS CEREMONY

A huge thank you to everyone who attended our annual Christmas party and awards ceremony. It's always a pleasure to see students and their families from all three of our locations outside the traditional dojo setting and when we all get together we make a rather impressive group. Almost 150 people were in attendance!

This kind of gathering is always worth the effort. It looked like the group activity ("The Quest") really helped to break the ice and the energy it created filled the room with a wonderful feeling of positive ki. Thanks to everyone who participated. You really helped to set the stage for a wonderful evening!



Teams had to make a human choo-choo train with sounds, motions, and at least one passenger.



Teams had to bring up 3 members and do the Can-Can dance.

After our group activity students were recognized and honored for all their hard work and dedication throughout 2011. Each child received a special certificate of recognition as well as acknowledgment on stage by all who were present. The adult students actually voted for their special awards. Many students were nominated and considered but after all the votes were counted the following students were 2011 award recipients:

Most Improved Student:

Chandler Dojo - Nora Kohli
South Chandler Dojo - Martin Camacho
Mesa Dojo - Kianna Rupp

Student of the Year:

Chandler Dojo - Daniel Horn
South Chandler Dojo - Kestrel Glascoe
Mesa Dojo - Jim Magda

The evening was topped off with a visit from Santa where he heard the wishes of anyone interested in talking to him.



To see all the pictures taken please visit this site:

http://lightdance.smugmug.com/Aikido/AOP-Christmas-2011/20855038_BgBv3W

I would like to thank Clement Singarajah, adult student at the Chandler dojo, for taking all the pictures. Awesome job, Clement!

Again, thank you all for attending our special event.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CITY OF CHANDLER'S MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

Chandler Multicultural Festival
22 S. Delaware St.

Saturday, January 14, 2012

11 A.M. - 4 P.M.

Chandler's 17th Annual Multicultural Festival highlights the cultural diversity of our community through music, dance, art, storytelling children's area and more. Free admission. Visit the City of Chandler's website for details - www.chandleraz.gov.

2ND DEGREE BLACK BELT TEST at Chandler dojo

On **Wed., Feb. 1, 2012** the Chandler dojo will be testing Sempai Daniel Horn for his 2nd degree black belt test. All students (kids and adults) are invited to attend. You will see a great example of the many open hand techniques as well as weapons, kick defenses, ground defenses, and multiple attacker techniques. The test will begin shortly after 7pm and will last approximately 45 mins. You do not have to stay for the whole test, but we ask if you come late or leave early to do so quietly.

ARIZONA AIKIDO WINTER SEMINAR

This year the seminar will be held **Feb., 10-12, 2012** at Longview Elementary School, 1209 E. Indian School Rd. in Phoenix, AZ. The Featured instructor will be George Ledyard Sensei, 6th dan and a direct student of Mistugi Saotome Shihan, who is a direct student of O'Sensei. You can register online at www.azaikido.com and to get full details.

AIKIDO OF SCOTTSDALE SEMINAR

Aikido of Scottsdale will be hosting an Aikido seminar on **Feb., 17-19, 2012**. The special guest instructor will be Skip Chapman Sensei, 5th dan and chief instructor of Jersey Shore Aikikai. For more information and to register visit www.AikidoOfScottsdale.com.

MATSURI - FESTIVAL OF JAPAN

The 28th Annual Festival of Japan

February 25-26, 2012

Heritage and Science Park,
Downtown Phoenix

Saturday & Sunday 10 AM ~ 5 PM, free admission

Featuring exhibits, demonstrations, arts and crafts, children's activities, bonsai displays, Japanese food, and 3 stages of live entertainment.

MAT FUND UPDATE

Our Mat Fund amount is now up to \$1392! We had \$13 added from water sales, \$100 leftover from the Christmas party money, and one student whose name is on the list for old mats paid for two mats. Thank you all for your support. A little bit at a time and we'll soon be at the \$2380 we need to place our next order of 10 mats.

We will continue to sell water bottles for \$1 at the Chandler dojo until we reach our goal of replacing all the old mats. If you'd like to donate water for us to sell please let Teresa Sensei know.

As we order new mats we put the old ones up for sale (\$50 each) and at this time the remaining 15 mats have all been claimed. If you have your name on the list to purchase the old mats please consider buying them now instead of waiting until we place our order. The Mat Fund will grow quicker and we'll be able to order sooner if you prepay for the mats. Please see Teresa Sensei if this is something you'd like to do.

**REMEMBER TO FOLLOW
US ON FACEBOOK. STAY
UP-TO-DATE, GET
ACCESS TO PHOTO
ALBUMS OF ALL OUR
SPECIAL EVENTS AND
GET REMINDERS FOR
AoP ACTIVITIES.**

FRIENDS OF AIKIDO OF PHOENIX

Do you have a business/service/product that you would like to promote? Do you know a business that you would recommend to your friends? We are always interested in helping each other by sharing information and/or making recommendations about businesses. If you know of a business or want to share information about your business please let Teresa Sensei know and she'll get the relevant information into the next newsletter.



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