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The Bulletin



Issue 10

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Editors Comments

The Bulletin is an open forum for the Students and Instructors of the Center for Aikido and Tang Soo Do Studies to post their personal thoughts and opinions. This is actually a requirement for membership in our school in order to further engage members in the intellectual aspect of their training. This also serves to enlighten the instructors as to what is going on in the students mind. For the most part, these postings will pertain to the individual's personal journey, experiences, or observations in and around their chosen martial arts training.

Please feel free to read, enjoy, and most of all, learn a few things.

Happy New Year!

Some Upcoming Events for 2010!

January 16th Starting at 1:00pm

Fountain Valley Martial Arts is hosting an Escrima (Filipino Stick) seminar. All are welcome to attend. Ask an Instructor for details.

February 18th 7:00pm – 9:00pm

The Center for Aikido and Tang Soo Do Studies Demonstration at the US Air Force Academy.

March 27th 2:00pm – 4:00pm

CATSD Longmont Branch Tang Soo Do Expo - Both Aikido and Tang Soo Do are encouraged to attend. Please save the date on your calendar!

Editors

Sabom Tim Speaks

Sabom Jude Miller

Sensei Ryan Goettsche

Students Thoughts

Circles & Parallels

By Greg Johnson

It was about 1981 when I met and befriended a boy named Ryan Goettsche. He was my same age and our fathers ran in similar circles and were best of friends. I vaguely remember talking with Ryan about martial arts in 1987 when I joined a small Tae Kwon Do school in Woodland Park. I had not been able to keep up with the high school track team, I tried to pole vault but I was not heavy enough to bend the pole, and my school would not sponsor the other sport I had interest in, soccer. I went in search of another physical, mental, and spiritual pursuit outside of school. I found what I was looking for in the martial arts. Tae Kwon Do is very linear in its techniques and for the first couple of years I was impressed with the fancy kicks and punches I learned to do. I felt pretty proficient by the time I was in college and had fun helping a friend teach a junior class in Gunnison Colorado. I remember defeating many imaginary assailants in my forms and breaking 5 boards at a time without a second thought. I found, to my dismay one night in Colorado Springs while home on break in 1991, that my "proficiency" in the martial arts was very poor when challenged by 3 gang members. I remember sitting in the E.R. thinking, "maybe I should be studying something other than Tae Kwon Do". A few years later I found myself living in Durango Colorado studying a very circular art called Aikido. I loved it from the beginning, I knew it would not teach me how to beat off the gang members in short order but I knew that it was teaching me about me and how not to be there when the gang members showed up. I did not study Aikido long before my instructor left town in the middle of the night, not to be seen again. Durango is a small town and does not have any other Aikido instructors so I just

thought about Aikido for the next 10 years. I ended up in Oregon for six of those years and thought of getting back into Aikido often. I would practice rolling occasionally and stretching out my wrists for good measure. I always seemed too busy in grad school and then with the career and then with kids. I remember catching up, through a couple of e-mails, with my old friend Ryan, I remember us talking about living parallel lives. At the time he had been married about the same time I was. He had two children just like I had and he was also caught up in a career. We also discussed training in Aikido. He had started a couple of years before I had and had stuck with it. I was envious and I was motivated to get back into the art that I knew I belonged in. Hence I began this circular journey in my life, we moved back to Durango, where there is no Aikido instructor, and lived for three more years thinking about Aikido and doing a couple of backward rolls here and there for good measure. When career and life led us back to the Front Range once again, where I started this tale, I could not wait to find an Aikido school to begin my study again and to introduce my son to the martial arts. I looked on line for dojo options and came across The Center for Aikido and Tang Soo Do Studies. Low and Behold, who should be the instructor, non other than Sensei Ryan Goettsche! There was no question at that point where my son and I should study Aikido. I had completed one large circle. I am thrilled to now be studying once again the smaller circular movements of life in a great dojo with some very fine people.

The Time of Year to Shiver

By Sam George

Well here it is that time of year that makes me shiver. Nothing like starting a workout with cold gear that has been sitting in the trunk of the car. The first foot that is put into the pants makes me wonder why this didn't cross my mind earlier in the day.

This is the time to calm the mind, not make it scream holy #####!

The December rush at the post office this year was not as busy for very obvious reasons. The main concern this year was getting caught between two pieces of heavy equipment. Most of my body got out of harms way. I think that in the process of getting out of the way my back didn't flow with the movement. The month was filled with periodic back spasm and visits to the guy that whacks my back. The work was more difficult because I was afraid of getting hurt again because of all of the movement involved with loading and unloading trucks. My attendance at the dojo was terrible. I think I fell into a self-preservation mode. That's all for now.

Pinky Finger be Damned

By Brent Bloem

Meditations on Violence: A Comparison of Martial Arts Training & Real World Violence by Rory Miller investigates the disconnect between a martial artist's imagined effectiveness in violence vs. a martial artist's frequent effectiveness in violence. Until reading Meditations, I thought self defense would be easy—especially after years of training. But, as one reviewer, Kris Wilder, author of The Way of Sanchin Kata suggests, “Miller...wipe[s] away any fantasy you have about fighting”. Certainly, as Wilder notes, Miller does just that, and I now question whether I can or cannot successfully defend myself.

One unsettling point, Miller suggests, is that training doesn't guarantee or reliably increase the odds. These days training is often designed on conjectures about violence. After all, few have encountered combat, enough success, let alone enough of it, to train efficiently. More often than not, training concepts are based on hearsay, imagination, assumption and cooperation. In effect, imagining what combat is like without experiencing

it is like a two dimensional man living in a two dimensional world trying to imagine what a three dimensional object would look like. How effectively can two-dimensional man perceive that which he hasn't experienced? Violence is alien to me, so I question my experience.

Another of Miller's points is that training can hinder a martial artist's self defense. He argues, in part, knowing many techniques imparts few advantages in the initial moment of confrontation. The culprit of the phenomenon is that thinking is a hindrance. A martial artist sifts through his or her vast learning to settle on an initial response; but, the untrained's singular response is to hit, and if the fear is great enough, to flail ceaselessly. Thinking equals time being assaulted. Unfortunately, when an assault can end brutally in mere seconds, sifting through options might leave a martial artist sifting through a puddle of blood for his or her teeth. In the dojang alone I think too much, so do I have too many options?

The final inhibition is what Miller terms, “The freeze.” His “freeze,” or what others know as shock, usually happens after, but can also happen before, one is hit. In either case, freezing results in being awestruck. For most, being assaulted isn't ordinary so, processing it and moving from an unaware defender to a mindful retaliator requires time. But not all scenarios are that easy. Imagine briefly of a worst case scenario where one is ambushed with an annihilative blow. Freezing time would increase, and seconds spent transitioning into retaliation are valuable. After all, when an aggressive hitter is launching 4-8+ punches per second, the strikes and tempo of a no-holds-bar assault are not the hits and the tempo of a sparring match. So, here too, I feel less secure of my abilities than ever before.

After reading Meditations on Violence: A Comparison of Martial Arts Training & Real World Violence, I doubt my capability of dealing efficiently with a predator. Since training has lost its ancient battlefield reality check, training can slow

initial response time, and training doesn't safeguard against shock, the odds for success aren't stacked in a martial artist's favor. Unfortunately, the time a martial artist doesn't want to perform miserably is when he or she needs to perform masterfully. Sadly, perfect performance doesn't usually happen. Where will one perform on the spectrum from failure to perfection at any time? In light of that idea, ponder these aphorisms from Miller's book: There are those who prey on the fact that you are playing by a set of rules that they ignore. Will is as important as technique. You don't get to pick what kinds of bad things will happen to you. And last, that the fancy finger lock your jujitsu instructor taught you won't work on a guy who wants to die to get to you, pinky-finger be damned.

A Fork In The Road

By Spencer Van Horn

Sometimes in life you end up in a difficult position that could not only change your life, but other's as well. Choosing the wrong path could affect how you think, feel, and process information. It is important that you select the right trail, so that you don't get lost...so you aren't forced to back-track. You must follow the signs to lead you to your goal.

Occasionally, the road gets bumpy or rough, but sometimes the best path isn't the most direct one. You may have to avoid some dangers. How you avoid them can bring you to another fork in the road. Choosing the right path isn't about comfort ability. The path may be hard to follow, might give you the urge to turn back and take a different trail; an effortless trail that may, or may not lead you to your goal.

There's also the temptation of going down the path you want, but it isn't the path that you need. Sometimes what you want isn't the best thing for you or the others around you. Going down a path

that you want, or a path you think is right can also lead you to a dead end, to where you can't continue this path, and have to go back.

Life is still going to have its ups and downs, no matter what happens on that trail. You, me, and others must follow what's right, and avoid the forks in the road.

Patience

By Glorianna Speaks

Another year has passed us up so quickly; Christmas is here again biting at our heels. Houses covered in bright lights glowing reds, purples, blues, greens, multi-colors or just plain white. Lights standing so quiet and still, twinkling away to music or to their own beauty. Candy canes in all their sweetness aligned up a driveway. Santa or a snowman stuck in the yard waving to us so joyfully. Christmas trees shining brightly from a window as if to say look at me. It all sounds and looks so peaceful doesn't it?

Well, step into a mall and all that peace and quietness goes right out the window. As I am shopping this year I see so many people's faces stressed out; shoving each other to get to that perfect present for their child, grandchild, mother, father, girlfriend, boyfriend, husband or wife.

This is the time of year where goodness should be brought out in people, a time where we should want to respect each other a little more. Actually we should be compassionate all year round to each other every single day. Just about everyday I see a person walking past someone who could have needed assistance -- someone who is struggling with a door to a building or just needs guidance. We should help the women in the grocery store that cannot reach the crackers on the very top shelf. It just takes a moment to help someone. Yes, I understand there are days when a person really does not feel like being sympathetic. I have those days

myself. I just remind myself I am the one with the issue, and not the individual who needs assistance.

The look in a person's face that I just helped out is so worth it. The small gesture that took a few minutes might even make their day. So, the next time we see someone in distress, take a moment to lend a helping hand. You will be glad you did.

Also, driving on the roads is a total nightmare this time of year. Drivers are continually following too close; cutting in front of each other, not letting other vehicles merge into their lanes. Instead of acting aggressive, wave that excited driver into a lane. Maybe they will do the same for the next person who is trying to change lanes. I spot more wrecks this time of season due to people's hastiness, drinking and driving, or just not paying attention to what is going on.

I have noticed this year in our neighborhood there are double the Christmas lights on houses; decorated trees shining so happily. I am wondering if this has anything to do with our slow economy. I have talked to some of my patients and friends and they have also commented on the weak economy. People are just not spending as much as they would like this season. So, instead of flying to see their families or take their yearly Christmas Vacation they have decided to indulge in some color and fun in their front yards.

Holidays are supposed to be peaceful, joyful, patient and loving... not chaotic. Well, that is what I hear. I expect I will never understand why people who do not get along insist on gathering for the Holidays. If you do not get along with your families or friends, why would you get along on Christmas, one of the most stressful days of the season.

To me, this Holiday is a time for each of us to enjoy each other, be kind to each other and love one another. You might even get a paid day off from work.

Many years ago, I learned not to worry and stress out over the holidays. Whatever happens, happens. The ham that burned and tasted burnt, the turkey that was frozen in the middle and sliced up and put in the oven to cook the rest of the way. Or the pumpkin pies that boiled over in the oven and filled the entire house full of smoke. Yes, I did have a meltdown. Did the meltdown solve my problem? No. I am realizing through my Tang Soo Do studies that I need to acquire patience and understanding. A skill I know that will take me an enduring time to master.

Life

From July 5, 2009 to Now

By Justin Buchanan

Let's see, since I have been in Mr. Miller and Mr. Speaks Tangsoology class, in my opinion I have learned a lot. It's pretty hard to explain my thoughts on training as far as where I stand down my martial path. I mean, it just started.

If I tried to explain how Tang Soo Do has had an effect on my life, and how my life has been since I have been here, I would probably start where it never ends. I would recognize the fact that my martial training will be with me for a long time, if not a lifetime. I believe you should always finish what you start. I believe this principle should be incorporated into one's everyday life. I do have a strong belief in this principle, but if I were true to myself then I would not meet up with these standards. I do try to finish what I start in my everyday life, and strive for perfection, but sometimes that's just not the way the pieces fall.

I have made mistakes in my life like everyone else and just quit. I didn't want to deal with whatever problem that happened to present itself. I believe the person I was in high school had to do with many of the mishaps in my life whether it had to do with people, jobs, school, or respect

toward family members. I didn't make smart choices about things when I lived in North Carolina, and it created problems for all of the people that were close to me. I knew I needed to change if things were at all going to get better.

That's when I decided to move to the beautiful state of Colorado. I was tired of childish, careless high school buddies. I wanted to go somewhere with my life and look for higher meaning. I pictured this start out here in Colorado and the results so far haven't turned out bad. I'm training, I am spending time with the opposite side of my family, and college will start for me in January. Since I have been here, I have changed physically as well as mentally. At first, I didn't even think about making Tang Soo So a part of my life. All I wanted to do was find a hard working job or some sort of general labor and so far I've worked for two different landscaping companies and a pizza company. I had strong intentions of proving my worth to all of my friends and family when I came out here, and I still do. This was my fuel, and things were moving; but I didn't know which direction to start off at.

I think Tang Soo Do is helping me put my life on track, and giving me the confidence, focus, and discipline I will need to further my life, and in a positive way. Earlier this week during class (confusing as usual) Mr. Miller stated his opinion on how people tend to lean more toward the physical side of martial arts, and that you should blend training with your life instead of looking at Tang Soo Do as a two hour activity you do a few times a week. I would have to agree with Mr. Miller on this one.

Training Tang Soo Do is very physical, but since I have been training I am becoming more aware, I have more respect toward people, I have more discipline, and I acknowledge that I DON'T know everything. I am trying to be more open-minded and figure out how to expand the idea of the dojang, and not just think of it as the four walls that make up the school. I think I have made a good start

for my life here. I try to recognize other people's achievements as well as mine because I realize the world doesn't revolve around Justin. I try to live my life to the fullest every day, and hope for a bright future here in Colorado. I will continue to train, and improve myself in all ways possible. Life is good...

Being a New Student

By Curtis Tygres

Being a new student to Aikido I have learned it is sometimes difficult to learn new ways. It is difficult to learn new movements, move my body in different ways with different goals and using different techniques and moving my mind in another direction. But at the same time I am reminded of being like a child. I remember as a child I didn't really concentrate on doing specific activities, I just did them.

Like if I wanted to run, my legs just ran and my arms keep balance. Like kicking a ball, I would just kick it where I wanted it to go. Or, like climbing a tree involved seeing the path to the top and going. Since I have "grown up", I have forgotten those basic principles and began to rationalize and set a goal and form a plan. Which is ok in its own right, but at the same time a lot of the naturalness was lost and now it must be relearned. I believe in, for my own self, it may have been lost because of fear and negative thoughts. "What if I do it wrong?" "What if I get hurt?" "What if I fail?" I realize I must put these thoughts aside and simply do, not only with my body but with my mind at the same time. Trying to get back to that "childish" way of thinking is harder than I thought. Trying to change is hard, but allowing change to happen is easier. I have learned you have to just flow and also go with the flow.

Instructors Thoughts

The Greater Good

By Ryan Goettsche

Positive thoughts create positive results. This is something that is starting to be talked about more and more these days from modern day spiritual gurus to the corporate board rooms. Of course that's all for profit and reputation. There is nothing new or secret about it as some books would tell you. Positive thought is at the core of Aikido philosophy. Project positive energy or ki and the unification of the individual ki to the universal ki begins and the truth of the universe opens up and we learn that there truly is no negative energy. We only manifest it through our own ignorance.

O'Sensei speaks of it in his writings and poems; "It is essential that waza always be in accord with the truth of the universe. For that to take place proper nen is necessary. If one's nen is connected to the desires of the small self, it is erroneous. Since training based upon erroneous ideas goes against the truth of the universe, it invites its own tragic consequences and eventual destruction." To train for oneself is negative and will prevent the mind, body unification which waza perfects. Aikido is not just another method of self defense but a method of self-realization and self-perfection for the perfection of the world and the universe.

Tohei Shihan and Kashiwaya Sensei speak of positive ki as well. At a seminar with Kashiwaya Sensei, I remember him writing on the whiteboard about positive projection and how this positive thought makes the brain work harder. Just as how exercise promotes a healthy physical body, mental exercise promotes a healthy spirit and assists in the unification. Daily training provides both. I remember when I first began training, there were many classes where Sensei Medeiros would lecture while we sat in seiza. That was the whole class to Sensei, trying to keep the blood flowing to your legs

and feet, listening and working out the verbal teaching in your mind. I remember going home exhausted and wondering why...we didn't do techniques. There were also many classes where we physically trained very hard and I would go home invigorated and not wake up sore the next morning. So Aikido training is many different things at many different times, but the training must always focus on positive ki. Knowing that there is negative energy being created in the world such as war, poverty and illness should not allow your own thoughts to dwell on them, but recognize that the world is not perfect. But, to also know that if you project strong positive ki, it may help others to project the same and a utopian society is truly possible.

We all came to Aikido for different reasons and when we first stepped on the mat we humbled ourselves to what the art was about to present. As Maida Sensei said; "It's simple...not easy but simple." We train in Aikido with many, many things to think about both during training and afterwards and it can make us frustrated at times, it can make us angry but make us happy as well. Every time negative thoughts such as anger and frustration fill your body, STOP and in that moment, think about why you allowed those feelings to manifest. Then relax, breath in deep to your hara, hold in the positive air letting it nurture positive ki and exhale the negative manifestations you created. Do this daily at work, home and during training. There is no need to create negativity since there is already so much out there. Help to promote the truth of the universal and the benefits are infinite.

Concepts behind the Practice and Application of the Arts Outside of the Studio

By Sabom Jude Miller

Convenience is not a sustained state in most people's lives. The many changing circumstances of life can often make training in a martial art an inconvenient endeavor. But as my instructor tells me, "Training is not about convenience; it's about inconvenience!" Most recently in my own life, my work situation has not allowed me to train at the studio as much as I would prefer. This is where I must truly apply my Arts by practicing it in my every day ventures. The Arts are not something that an individual partakes in for two hours twice a week. The Arts are not simply a physical activity. The Arts must be practiced and demonstrated in all facets of the practitioner's life. All of existence is a dojo/dojang, and every circumstance is an opportunity to practice.

The Arts can be practiced and refined in one's own mind, or in one's dealings and interactions with other people on a daily basis. The Arts are not limited to just physical practice. Because the Arts can be practiced anywhere, we as practitioners should practice the Art everywhere. The Arts involve all core aspects of a practitioner's self. To me, this makes great sense as the Arts can be practiced for an individual's entire earthly life span. While it may not be possible to practice all aspects of your chosen Art at once, one can always find a way to focus on at least one at any given time. For example, a practitioner may sustain a serious injury that prevents physical movement and practice of an Art. The Art can still be practiced on a mental, intellectual, and spiritual level until the body heals.

I have found that while the Arts can be practiced individually, in most cases it is still preferable to train with a group when the opportunity is afforded. This way, the Arts can be shared with others and continue on through the generations. Training with a group also enables the introduction of more ideas and insights. The practitioner is also able to experience varied energies (i.e. everyone has a different "feel" to them when practicing) that enhance their progress. When one cannot practice with a group, it is important for

the practitioner to develop and cultivate all core aspects of the self and not just the physical.

Students of the Arts must strive to enhance their awareness of surroundings and environments outside of the studio. Additionally, practitioners must develop their understanding of people's actions and intentions. This is truly an aspect that can be practiced anywhere at any time. I re-call Sabom/Sensei Medeiros stating "Your Ki will protect you!" In order to extend ki, an individual must also extend their awareness.

Etiquette is a branch from the same tree that branches awareness. I have learned that the etiquette learned from training is monumental in not only the concept of "self-defense", but also in social harmony. One can avoid needless confrontation and promote social harmony by being polite, and embracing those around themselves with compassion and respect. This is why the practice of the Arts always begins and ends with a bow.

I see a natural progression to this thought in stating that this is how the Art is practiced in everyday life outside of the studio. The Art can be practiced and applied in a practitioner's everyday travels through their dealings and interactions with every person they encounter both inside and, more importantly, outside of the studio. In my opinion, it would be a great error to limit one's scope by only practicing and refining their Art physically within the confines of our studio.

On The Shoulders of Giants

By Sabom Tim Speaks

I've heard it said somewhere that we all stand on the shoulders of great men. Actually, I think this is a variation of a quote of Isaac Newton who said, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Perhaps he had heard another variation from someone else as well. Who knows? Either way, I think this means that all of the

stuff we have today in the way of science, technology, art, philosophy, and even religion, are the result of the individual hard work of great individuals who came before us laying down the first building blocks of their particular area of chosen expertise. Our modern martial arts have developed via the same process.

Furthermore, everything we are capable of achieving today going forward, both as individuals and a society, is a result of those very same building blocks of knowledge forming nothing less than the foundation of our known universe. This represents a very large body of knowledge to be sure. Yet we human beings have much left to learn and explore in all areas of human understanding, including the martial arts.

It is necessary, in order to make progress in any given area of human knowledge, to understand the fundamentals upon which you are about to build. For example, studying the building efforts of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, or Mayans might illuminate underlying principles of geometry within architecture that is common throughout the world. In our modern world, architects build our largest structures, often using steel adorned with glass, based on similar geometric principles. The new materials have enabled them to explore shapes other than pyramids however. Yet, unlike in architecture, the material upon which classical martial arts are expressed remains the same, the human body. This is true unless you consider modern warfare as an expression of these same martial concepts played out with bombs, guns, and remote controlled attack drones.

Nevertheless, the principles are similar. In order to advance one's understanding of martial arts techniques you might study various styles and methods that have developed over hundreds and thousands of years of martial combat. Or you could simply study a few modern martial arts that are the culmination of these things anyway. For example, a person may wish to study the history, principles and

philosophy of Aikido and Tang Soo Do in order to understand the precursor martial arts before them.

Since we are severely finite beings having extremely limited time to study, focusing on a few arts is probably the limit. That's assuming continued progress and refinement of one's chosen art is the ultimate goal rather than the felling of opponents. Assuming this is true, and you wanted to have a deeper understanding of the philosophy of Moo Do that has developed as a guide to greater personal refinement through martial training, you might study Taoism, Confucianism, and especially Zen Buddhism, as the building blocks of this type of thinking.

Ultimately, understanding the history of the ideas and concepts of the martial arts is necessary to build the foundations for advanced study and development of a person's chosen art. If nothing else, it keeps the practitioner from re-inventing the wheel where greater minds have already laid down complete systems of martial arts as methods of personal development. Recognizing those great men and women who came before us in this endeavor to advance the arts is part of this important study. Studying their accomplishments and perhaps even the methods by which they obtained their insights amounts to standing on the shoulders of these "Giants" in the hopes that we might see even a bit farther.

Two Arts in One

By Kyosa Gihan Fella

Habits and muscle memory can be a difficult thing to remove or set aside. This is true whether it relates to detrimental habits such as smoking and drinking, or to beneficial habits, such as training in a martial art. After spending many years training my body to move a certain way in Tang Soo Do, I now have to learn how to ignore natural tendencies to "sit" in a back stance while training in Aikido.

Sabom Miller and Ryan Sensei have been very beneficial in that they explain why I should not do a back stance in Aikido because certain movements in Aikido will just not work while in a back stance. Just when I think I am doing a movement somewhat correctly in Aikido, it is brought to my attention that I am doing a soo do (hand chop), rather than just extending ki through my hands; a front stance or often a back stance, rather than proper hanmi. I am thankful that these errors are brought to my attention and explained why this or that is not working. In many ways training in these two disciplines have complimented each other. For example, learning how to use weight underside in Aikido has helped me have stronger stances in Tang Soo Do. Extending Ki in one art has made me more aware of how I direct Ki in the other art. Also, the years spent training in Tang Soo Do, have assisted my understanding of the movements and techniques in Aikido and in how they work.

There are a few members of The Center for Tang Soo Do and Aikido who have taken the training of two arts to a new level. They have combined them into one, called "Aikitang." I am still not sure how I feel about this recent development. It is an interesting concept that has been used in the past for other martial arts. As Sabom Nim Medeiros often stated in the past, the only thing constant is change. As for my personal training, I prefer to keep both arts separate for the time being. In this way, I believe I can better focus on each art independently and further my understanding of what each art has to contribute.

The "Eyes" Have It

By Sabom Mike Parenteau

Herman Melville, the American novelist who wrote Moby Dick, said, "The eyes are the gateway to the soul." There is a lot of truth in this. The eyes can communicate one's state of mind, emotional state, whether someone is engaged and focused or whether someone is uninterested. The

eyes also allow us to take in a lot of information about any particular event and transform that information into something we can think about and analyze. I believe this is called "perception". There will be more on this later.

One Sunday morning, Ms. Fella, Sabom Miller, Sabom Speaks and I, were filming some of our forms at Rampart Park in Colorado Springs. After a couple of hours of filming, we started to head back to our vehicles. A lady in her 50's, came by and couldn't help but notice our blue tops and asked what we were doing and what martial arts style we practiced. As Sabom Miller and Sabom Speaks were sharing with her our school information and our mission for the day, one interesting observation she made was (I'm paraphrasing), "My son used to do Tae Kwon Do, and the people he practiced with had "stern" eyes. The four of you don't have that. You don't have that competitive glare."

What I took away from her kind comment was what we as a school have tried to personify. We are not looking to learn to fight or be confrontational. We practice our art to become better people and to learn self-defense. Funakoshi Sensei said that karate was, "...character development." I believe this is what we are learning to do when we train diligently and with sincerity. Sabom has said on a number of occasions that, "anyone can punch and kick and hurt someone." Isn't that true? The very concept of Moodo is to "stop spear", i.e. not be involved with mindless conflict. We can, however, recognize that conflict exists and try to put positive energy back into the world with our willingness to do good.

Our new acquaintance, who took time out of her day to talk to us, shared her observations and gave us something to ponder and be glad about. Our new friend "perceived" what we were doing and then formulated a question to either confirm or deny what she saw. In the span of time that Sabom Miller and Sabom Speaks explained our story, you could see her smile with understanding as her analysis was confirmed. We DON'T have that glare.

In my mind, this short experience speaks well for our school's methods in how we study our art(s). This was confirmed for us as we had a third

party observer give our group an honest assessment. The eyes have it...

2009 - a brief overview

by Sabom/Sensei Medeiros

Wow! A lot has happened since the 2009 New Year rang its bell loud and clear signaling that the Center for Aikido and Tangsoodo Studies was creating a calendar of scheduled events for all its members to participate in.

To begin there was a seminar in my opinion that was offered by the Castle Rock Aikido School on January 30 through February 1, 2009 that would have been historical to attend. This was a seminar with Haruo Matsuoka Sensei. For those of you who may have forgotten or do not know of Sensei Matsuoka, he was Steven Seagal's long time student and assistant instructor.

The passage of time has a way of wearing down rock and relationships, so goes with Matsuoka Sensei's relationship with his previous instructor. Suffice it to say that money does change people and too often they forget what they started and what their obligations are to their old friends. Matsuoka Sensei is a good example of a sensei's dedication to O' sensei's gift to the world.

Note: I do not refer to Steven Seagal as an aikido sensei any longer. My reason is simple; to be a good teacher or student of aikido you must continue to practice honestly and sincerely. Being a big movie star and a hot shot philanthropist are useful I suppose. Oh, and it helps to be reborn or a reincarnate to truly be worthy of being a celebrity. I also find it odd that the Aikikai had promoted Steven Seagal to 7th dan yet Matsuoka is still 5th dan. This illustrates for me why I distrust large associations and true dedication and sacrifice is often overlooked or worse; ignored. Modern Budo stylist should never overlook, ignore or dismiss the earnest efforts of their fellow human beings who seek to bring positive influence to a global world that is enamored with revenge, violence and killing! Confucius said; when a person seeks vengeance, dig two graves.

Students did however expend the necessary effort to support Kashiwaya Sensei's seminar. This

was the first schedule event that the Center students visited. Students went to Denver to experience Shihan's vast knowledge of Aikido in general and Shin Shin Toitsu in particular. The event was sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Ki Society. The seminar was held at Denver Ki Aikido, a local dojo Headed by Instructor Susan Chandler during March 7 & 8, 2009. Kyosa Gihan Fella took some nice pictures and Sensei Goettsche took the children's group to train with Shihan.

Later that same month the 9th annual Aikido Summit in Colorado was celebrated on Saturday, March 28, 2009 at the Denver Buddhist Temple. This summit was a satisfying event for all who attended and Jack Hoyt came out of Aiki retirement to witness that workout! The all-day event had seven instructors share their unique expertise. The Aiki-Tang Brothers had the unique pleasure of experiencing first hand Ikeda Shihan's Aiki-power. If you made no effort to attend...well, you missed it! If you are lucky, maybe the summit will be offered in 2010.

The group ventured forth to attend a joint seminar with Mary Heiny Sensei, 6th Dan & Hiroshi Ikeda Shihan at Boulder Ki Aikido. Again the Aiki-Tang Brothers had the unique pleasure of experiencing first hand Ikeda Shihan's Aiki-power as well as Heiny sensei's unique softer style.

Summer came and so did Sabo Sensei. He had driven all day Friday from Phoenix, Arizona in order to attend a special seminar in Boulder, Colorado. Kashiwaya Sensei was in Boulder town to instruct classes for his Mid-land and Rocky Mountain Ki society membership during July 24 - 26, 2009. Sabo Sensei was accompanied by the Aiki-Tang Brothers. Sabo Sensei said he appreciated Kashiwaya's Aiki-lessons, but wished that the Ki Society students were more engaged with the greater purpose of why Shihan teaches Aiki principles. Sabo Sensei felt that the Ki Society students are too bland about their studies and that they needed to enjoy their training regiment and learn to workout harder. Sabo Sensei was scheduled to teach at three schools during his visit; Castle Rock Aikido, the Center for Aikido and Tangsoodo Studies and The Boulder Ki Society. All who attended Sabo Sensei's seminars got a good workout!

August was a key time for the Aiki-Tang Brothers to escort Mr. P to visit San Diego, California, home to my first Aikido Sensei, John Sabo of the Jugensoku School. The trip was a *quest of sorts* to visit *Aikidoists*, Tangsoologists and the Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwan annual convention. There was even time to visit Shimabukuro Shihan. He is a fine Koryu stylist that Mr. P. and I had the pleasure years ago to meet at a local Lafayette Colorado karate school. The Aiki-Tang Brothers enjoyed their visit and wished they could have stayed longer.

There had been an increase in new students who had the necessary time in grade. Testing was finally coming around on October 17th, which then culminated with a Halloween seminar with Saotome Shihan of Aikido Schools of Ueshiba. The seminar intrigued Sabom Speaks as he was allowed to receive firsthand knowledge from Saotome Shihan.

What a busy year! Mr. Arnold of the Fountain Valley Martial Arts was present at our October testing and several times during the past year The Aiki-Tang Brothers have been seen at Mr. Arnold's school share their knowledge with a fellow Tangsoology Instructor.

Will 2010 be as busy as 2009? I cannot say, but I do know there are plans already being considered. Let us all do our best to support our school and its Instructors and each other with our continued involvement with our own personal development. Sabo Sensei always reminds students to always keep training.