



The Bulletin is a source for CATSDS students and instructors to share their thoughts and ideas in a "bulletin board" format. Enjoy!

Thank You...

The students of the Center for Aikido and Tang Soo Do Studies would like to thank Sensei John Sabo and Sensei/Sabom Nim Vernon Medeiros for making the long journey to the annual Expo in Colorado Springs, CO this past May to remind us of Budo/Mudo. See page 26 for a group photo!

Also, thank you Sensei/Sabom Nim Medeiros for your recent visit!

News

For those of you who missed out, Sensei/Sabom Nim Medeiros visited us from August 14th through August 20th. It was a very instructive six days, going over the finer points of yielding and various other advanced concepts.

We had two of the Aikidoists volunteer for editorship responsibility: Brad Pier and Ken Larsen. It is hoped that they were inundated with paper reviews!

Recent Promotions

Sensei Medeiros would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Valerie Powell and Jude Miller for passing the 1st Kyu testing that was held when he was here in August (yes...when he was here August 14th through the 20th)!

Sabo Sensei and Sensei/Sabom Nim Medeiros are looking forward to 1st Dan testing for Robyn, Valerie and Jude next summer in '08. They would like to add that if the three of you keep up your training regimen, you will succeed. Keep up the diligent training!

Upcoming Events

September 3: Labor Day
Enjoy the day off!

September 23:
First Day of Autumn

October 31: Halloween
Boo!

November 4:
Daylight Savings Time Ends
Turn your clocks back one hour.

November 12: Veteran's Day
Remember those in the Armed Services.

November 22: Thanksgiving
Be thankful...

November 28:
Master Lee's Memorial Workout
Remember Master Lee!

December 22: First Day of Winter

December 25: Christmas
Share the Christmas spirit!

Editors: Brad Pier
Ken Larsen
Designer: Jane Parenteau
Web Master: Hal Render

Students' Thoughts

This Summer

By Peter Cathcart

Aikido Practitioner, 7 Kyu (12 yrs. old)

I have done many things this summer. These are some of them: I have started training in Aikido. The reason I joined Aikido was because it is more relaxing than Tang Soo Do. The most relaxing choice is to stay home, but that is boring. One thing I learned in Aikido is a rolling technique. When you roll, you always roll on a diagonal (from one shoulder to the opposite hip). This summer I have also been traveling. I went to places like Kansas and Lamar, CO to visit relatives. The most interesting thing I did was I got a puppy. She is a Border Collie mix and is only four months old. Her name is Bailey. These are some of the things I have done this summer.

Art of Aikido

By Joshua Cathcart

Aikido Practitioner, 7 Kyu (15 yrs. old)

Art is what separates humans from animals. The ability to create and enjoy art is a gift from the gods. Aikido is one of the countless arts we study. When studying Aikido you must be able to see what the other person is doing and you must be able to deduce what they are going to do next. Then the Aikidoist has to blend with the motion and redirect the energy in a less harmful direction. This sounds very easy but the more energy a person gives you the more you have to redirect. This can be as little as a slap to the face or as much as a kick to the temple. Ueshiba Morihei began developing the art of Aikido in the

1920s, and it has since spread to many parts of the world. This art takes many years of practice to before you understand the basics. From there you can learn that there are many ways you can redirect energy and then the ways to redirect energy will seem limitless. The art of Aikido has many ties to Jujutsu and Judo but one of the differences is that in Aikido you use ki, which is your body's energy or breath to redirect the other persons energy and not resort to painful moves that can be damaging to the body. Aikido is one of the many arts that can be studied to help connect the mind, spirit, and body into one thing and by learning this art you also learn how to defend yourself.

Life

By Taylor Hickerson

Tang Soo Do Practitioner, 8th Gup (13 yrs. old)

What is "Life"? Life isn't something you can really define. Living isn't really describable either. Living life is just one of those things you have to do in order to know what it is. I'm always told live life to the fullest. Most people don't actually do that though. They don't because as you get older things tend to get more complex. But if you think about it, life really isn't that complex. It's pretty simple, but being who we are, we complicate it and make it harder than it has to be. We stress ourselves out, overwork ourselves, or don't work enough.

The average person starts their life off pretty normal and well off as an ecstatic child free of all worry. As you get older

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things begin to get harder and then they reach that level where tasks are difficult. You learn your alphabet A through Z and then you learn how to make words. Those words turn into harder words with more than one meaning and so on and so forth with grammar and usage etc. It's the same thing with math. You learn your numbers one through one hundred. Then you learn addition and subtraction. As you get older you learn multiplication, division, algebra, etc. And things get more and more difficult. My point is, no matter what things get harder and more complex. How you deal with them is another story.

When your life gets harder and fuller*(*fuller- meaning more activities and a tense schedule) you begin to stress out- sometimes, not always- but for the people who do, they begin to be more "aah!" like, i.e. they are very unhappy looking and irritated most times. Some people choose to do something and find something they might like to try that might help them relax more, e.g. Tang Soo Do. I train and practice Tang Soo Do because I like the world of the Orient and the Martial Arts and I like to learn new things. I was told that Tang Soo Do helps the body to relax while making yourself strong and more aware. Not only have I learned to somewhat defend myself, but I find myself at ease more often.

The older you get, the crazier life gets. There are tons of ways to make your life better. It's as simple as that. Just handle it in an acceptable manner and do what is the most important first. Priorities first and everything else comes later. Necessities first and Wants and Needs later. Do what

will help you benefit or better you instead of what you want to do. "Work hard now and play later", I'm always told. "Those who play now while you work hard will pay for it later while you get to play", I also hear. That makes perfect sense; just whether or not you believe is what matters. Put those quotes to the test and you'll soon find out.

Stepping onto the Path

*by Joel Schibbelhute
Aikido practitioner, 7 Kyu*

I just started Aikido a little over a month ago. I've wanted to take up Aikido for years, ever since a friend gave me a book called "Aikido and the Dynamic Sphere". This book fascinated me with the depth of philosophy of Aikido and the mystery of Ki. But it always seemed like there was never the opportunity to get started. But thanks to a good friend who was also interested in Aikido, and who took the bull by the horns and found the Center, I've finally started. As they say, better late than never.

One reason why Aikido interested me was that it seemed to be a way of harmony and peace, rather than a way of struggle. The unfortunate perception of some martial arts, which may or may not be justified, is that they are all about struggle, and beating the pudding out of others. I believe I've found my way to Aikido because I don't need any more violence in my life, but I could use more harmony and peace. It's only been a short time that I've been coming to the dojo, but I already have great admiration for the level of

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commitment that I see in all those present, the respect given to the Senseis, and to the Art itself. I also greatly appreciate the willingness of everyone at the dojo to graciously help beginners.

I came across a collection of writings of O-Sensei Morihei Ueshiba called "The Art of Peace". I'd like to share one with you; "The Way of a Warrior is based on humanity, love, and sincerity; the heart of martial valor is true bravery, wisdom, love, and friendship. Emphasis on the physical aspects of warriorship is futile, for the power of the body is always limited."

What the Heck is Aikido?

*By Fred Hunt
Aikido Practitioner, 7 Kyu*

So I'm at dinner with Joel (a fellow practitioner) and our wives. We start talking about self-defense, exercise, the importance of stretching and slowing down the aging process. Joel says maybe we should look into taking Aikido lessons. Aikido? Sounds like a martial art, I'm in! So I start my search for lessons on the web and come across the Center for Aikido and Tang Soo Do studies. Well I know Tang Soo Do is Korean Karate. If they teach this Aikido thing AND Tang, then I can probably switch to Tang if the Aikido thing doesn't work out. We begin communicating with the Center and set up an evening to go by and watch a lesson. Sensei George is in charge and he invites us in. After he rings the bell, there's quiet, reverence, lots of stretching and then bodies sailing across the room. Cool! I'm

still not quite sold but I like the stretching, the pace and the moves. The next night I go and watch a Tang class with Kyosa Nim Miller and Speaks. Yes, I am definitely interested in this! But, I told Joel I'd attend Aikido with him so I sign up.

I attend my first lesson with Sensei Roberts on Sunday night. Pretty much an average looking guy, but man he moves well! Maybe there's hope for me. A couple more lessons and Sensei George reveals that at higher levels we get to play with swords. Okay, so they're wooden, but still swords! Nice! I'm liking this Aikido thing even more. Then there's talk of something called Ki. They imply they harness a universal energy, center it in their being (1 ½ to 2 inches below the navel) and then "extend" it through different parts of their bodies. Okee dokee!

During a lesson a 2nd Dan student demonstrated a Ki exercise on me for another student. Holy Crap! No WAY he moved me effortlessly like that! Hmmm, maybe there IS something to this Ki thing. Then Sensei George pulled that Ki thing on me, moving me to mat as if I was weightless. Dag! Anyone who's seen us standing side by side, well let's just say there's a slight size difference. Sensei Render, well his Ki seems like a beacon flowing in all directions making him at once planted like a tree and flowing like water. This Ki thing is cool! Then it seemed most everybody could throw their Ki around at will. What the heck?! I want Ki! When do I get mine?

It turns out I have to develop Ki myself. I have to find and maintain my center so

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I have a place for it. I have to breathe properly. I also have to learn to relax and that could be tough. I've tried the meditation thing before with no success. But the Aikido technique to meditate seems clearer and makes more sense to me. Maybe I can get there. I've been told occasionally that I have extended Ki, but it's difficult for me to tell when it happens. I guess I'll have to keep practicing this Aikido thing so I can get proficient at extending Ki. I guess I'll be around for awhile.

I just have one question: When do I get to play with swords?

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*By Spencer Van Horn
Aikido Practitioner, 6 Kyu (14 yrs. old)*

Ever since I've started Aikido, I have gotten stronger mentally and physically. I have gotten mental strength by making better decisions and by not being afraid to stand up for myself. I have gotten physically stronger by being more fit and active and by doing the stretches and techniques we do in Aikido class.

My First News Letter Article

*By Glenn Weeks
Aikido Practitioner, 5 Kyu*

Well, to start off I thought that our training with Sensei Medeiros was great! I really liked the amount of support that showed up and of course, Sensei's colorful commentary.

But I especially liked the "Soft Training" which to me, helped me focus less on my partner and more on my technique. I find that sometimes I struggle with certain ukes and I tend to get caught up in a battle rather than the lesson. It becomes a contest which eventually turns into frustration.

I found that my technique was more the focus and I could easily see my corrections which, I think, helped me much more. I noticed that one senior, whom I was practicing with, was more softer but their manipulation of my center was so strong and direct that I found myself chuckling; totally different feel from their previous engagements. I did make mention to this person who I thought was as surprised as I was to this softer approach to Aikido training.

Well that is my take on things, and I hope you enjoyed it.

The Ki of Beginner's Mind

*By Ken Larsen
Aikido Practitioner, 4 Kyu*

With the stresses of daily life, the tension can become extreme, but because of its slow and deceptive build-up it starts to "feel" like that's how it's supposed to be. In class when we stretch before practice I feel this enormous weight released and finally start to feel relaxed. Over the last week, Rendo Sensei has challenged us to practice just five minutes of breathing each day. Because of my particular schedule, I tried to just get a few breaths

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in when I could. I have felt more relaxed and have felt like things are slowing down. Maybe not actual events but my perception of "I have so much to do and it has to be done right now" feelings. I also talked to Ryan-San during a class and he told me some of the things he does outside of class to practice Ki extension. WOW, that kid is good. I have tried some of these things and it feels good. The thing I've noticed with myself is just being mindful of my center and keeping my weight underside. I now remind myself about 17 billion times a day to take a mindful breath and think about Ki extension and weight underside. I think the more I do it, the more of a habit it will become. I predict that in approximately 764 years I will be in that frame of mind all the time.

I just try to bring a "Beginner's Mind" to the practice. In Zen practice the beginner's mind refers to the joy of learning something new and bringing that joy with you every time, even though it may be something that you have done for a long time. This joy then radiates from you to others and back to yourself. Whether it is intentional or not I have seen this in our instructors, as well as, Sabo Sensei and Medeiros Sensei during the last seminar. I can see the joy they have in teaching Aikido and that is transferred to us, the students, as well. Even though I don't know much about Aikido, it's always great to be around people who are passionate about what they teach and I thank you for that.

Things I Am Going To Do This Month

*By Paul Giaquinto, Jr.
Tang Soo Do Practitioner, 1st Gup
(8 yrs. old)*

My birthday is this month and I am going to Mr. Biggs to celebrate! I am going to get all kinds of presents like the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles movie and video games. I am going to go on a picnic with my baseball team. School starts this month and I am going to fourth grade. Also Sunday school starts this month too. I have a new piano teacher starting this month. I am going to play flag football and still go to Tang Soo Do classes. I am a busy kid!

Why It Is What I Want To Do

*By Brian Brogren
Tang Soo Do Practitioner, 2nd Gup
(17 yrs. old)*

My future career goal in life is to become a city or state Police Officer. Whenever I tell someone this, they always tend to have different views of their own. For example, some will tell me that "you just want to be a cop in order to have power and a sidearm." Others may say, "It is a dangerous career and I may be shot or killed." I know that being killed is a very big possibility and I never shun away the idea that it may happen. I do realize that I am not invincible, just like everyone else, but one trait that is in my favor is that I train in Tangsoodo, and that, may just be enough to save my life.

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Then there is the idea that I just want power and a sidearm, not true. Being a police officer, in my eyes, is being part of something bigger than myself, and being part of a community. I want to be in that community to be able to help others. Just like in our pledge, "in order to unite and cooperate with others to ensure a more peaceful society." I want people to know in this world that they are not alone in a time of need, but can look forward to someone coming to the rescue. Now with that, people may also say to me "that if you want to help people, why don't you become an EMT or a Fire Fighter?" My response simply to that is to say that this is the way I want to help others, not one of those jobs. I can see myself being successful in this line of work. It is just the way I want to do it.

Now don't get me wrong, I don't want to go out and shoot people left and right and kill them, but I may have to in order to save my own life. Although I will always try my best to protect the attacker, just like in Tangsoodo. To explain this a little more in depth, let's say that this man and I are standing at gunpoint to each other. I must realize that I have a family to go to, and so does he. So my main objective is to stop him from doing harm to others, without killing him, and to go home and see my family again. I do know that death might occur and I have to prepare myself for that, but I want to make sure that nobody innocent will get hurt.

There is also another reason why this is what I want to do, and that is to stop communities from being torn apart. Some things that can tear a community apart are drugs, crime, abuse and fights, and I want

to be one of those people out there trying to stop it. With that note, people also tell me "that stopping one or two people every day is not going to do much", and yes that has some truth, but let me ask you this. Can you imagine a society with no law enforcement, no rules? Think about how many people won't be afraid to go kill somebody, or go steal something, or just simply, do wrong to others. Some may be affected by their conscience, but others may not even think twice. Now I know that the laws I am enforcing are not my own, but of a higher power. I know that I am sort of like a grunt to the government, but all I want to do is be able to help out.

There is yet one more drawback to being a police officer, and that would be the low pay. There will be things in life that I would really like, but to me helping people pays for itself. To see the look of relief on somebody's face would be more than enough to see a bigger paycheck. To look on the optimistic side of things however, maybe Police Officers will be paid more in the future to come. So I hope that these reasons have explained why this is what I want to do.

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*By Robyn Gray
Aikido Practitioner, 1 Kyu*

I have pretty busy days, and a lot of the time my mind is not on the principles of Aikido, but recently I've found a way of expressing and practicing them when they do pop into my head. I turn on some music. I grab a hula-hoop and practice moving the hoop all around me. I extend out and turn with it, move and practice some techniques with it,

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breathe and relax while I hold it around me. Even though it weighs practically nothing, I envision weight-underside as well. It may seem rather strange – A HULA-HOOP – but this accompanied mostly with nightly reading (trying to understand the energy within me) and positive thinking has seemed to stir something inside me. It has helped me these past few weeks, and for that I am grateful.

Aliens and Aikido: Interplanetary Enlightenment or Bad Juju?

By Dave Margrave
Aikido Practitioner, 1 Kyu

(Edited)

We often hear the question: should extraterrestrials be permitted to practice Aikido? Alien sympathizers argue that O Sensei was conflicted over this topic, and carefully skirted it in all his published writings. Nonsense. O Sensei pointedly and consistently said that “Aikido is for **all humankind**,” not “**all humanoids**.” He said Aikido is for the “**all the world**,” not for “**all the worlds**.”

A well-reasoned article on communicating with aliens asserts that Aikido practitioners are far better equipped to handle ET's than the military.¹ Granted, this is true, but that's not to say that ET's belong in our dojos. And when was the last time they invited us to one of **their** dojos?

One Aikido commentator suggests that practicing with aliens is a good way to expand one's skills.² An Aikido dojo newsletter finds alien attacks entertaining.³

I say, let the aliens practice with their own kind. Would you trust your body to somebody who makes crop circles and mutilates cows? Why should I practice shiho-nage (the “four corner throw”) with someone who lives in an eight-corner universe? Why practice with someone who just might, for all I know, throw me into the fourth dimension, abduct me to the mother ship for twisted medical experiments, and then **erase my memory of the entire incident**? Don't assume that this hasn't already happened to you. You wouldn't remember it anyway!

Let's give up the politically correct baloney. Why do some people think it's great fun to ridicule people who **are** from France, and then tell us to be nice to aliens who just **pretend** to be from France? I say let 'em hone their cones in their own dojos.

Besides, we have to protect the art from “assimilation.” Remember when a phone was a phone, and not a “land line” or a “cell phone”? Now that “Venusian Aikido”⁴ has become all the rage, we hear talk of “Terran Aikido” – as if there were different Aikidos for every humanoid species. Shall we allow Aikido to sink to the level of Hip-Hop-Kido, Replid-Jutsu, Fang Soo Do, Quack Fu, Elf Fu-Dung and Bull-jitsu?⁵ Never. ET go home!

1 <http://www.iknowiknow.org/archives/000254.html>.

2 “Even if you've never studied a specific response to being attacked by a three-legged, five-armed alien, Aikido should enable you to defend yourself even in novel situations.” <http://www.aikidofaq.com/misc/index.html>.

3 “Ever wondered how to defend yourself against half a dozen one-eyed three-armed aliens brandishing quark-tipped laser-whips when you are drunk, blindfolded, and handcuffed?” <http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~muzface/Aikido%20School%20Notices>.

4 Google it. Over a hundred entries.

5 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fictional_martial_arts

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My "Roger Ebert's" Take on "1 Giant Leap"

By Gihan Fellah

Tang Soo Do Practitioner, 1st Dan

There is a movie available that came out in 2002 that I recently had the privilege to watch. It's name is "1 Giant Leap" and it is my firm belief that every adult could benefit from taking a few moments to sit back, pop in this DVD, turn up the volume, and dive into this movie. It is a unique film that combines audio, video imagery, and the philosophy of many world cultures to include Senegal, Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, India, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, America, and Europe. This film is the product of Jamie Catto and Duncan Bridgeman that features known actors such as Dennis Hopper, and artist such as Robbie Williams and Michael Stipe (REM).

This movie explores some common ideas such as art, religion, and prejudice, in a new and interesting manner. One line from 1 Giant Leap is "I am the sum total of my ancestors. I carry their DNA. We are representatives of a long line of people..." Ideas expressed in this movie shed light on how different cultures share both commonalities and complete differences. Another line is "TV is enough, is providing artificial friends and relatives to lonely people. What it is, is a recurrent family that comes back week after week after week and they're wittier and better looking and much more interesting and richer than your real friends and realities." Some interviews are not appropriate for children to listen to though, so you may want to watch it first and then share

the movie with your young ones by fast forwarding over those parts. You'll know what I mean when you watch it. Over all I highly recommend it. Their "MySpace" site is www.myspace.com/1giantleap which is where you can get a sample of the music from the movie.

Does this movie relate to martial arts? Everything relates to the martial arts. Once you practice the art, the art becomes your life. Everything you see, feel, think about, and experience all find connections to the world we live in the art we practice. This movie may even expand your mind a bit more. Enjoy!

<No Title>

Ryan Goettsche

Aikido Practitioner, 2nd Dan

My mind slips from time to time but if I remember correctly, Sensei Medeiros was talking one time during class about a student who came from a jujitsu background and didn't believe in Ki. Long story short, he came at Sensei determined to tie him up and put the hurt on. Sensei just extended Ki and tenshinage manifested. The student flew back and never knew what happened. After that moment, he believed and began to work on making his Ki powerful. They would talk about how you have to make every movement in life purposeful and filled with Ki. That has been something that Sensei Medeiros has always talked about in our school and has passed down to our instructors, Sensei Render, Sensei George and Sensei Roberts. If it weren't for Ki, there would be no Aikido.

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Ki is not just one of the principles of Aikido but is truly something that should be a part of your being. You have to truly believe in it and have the desire to make it strong but without solely focusing on that desire. It is something that takes time to polish like the river running over the rocks. If your desire is too strong it will wash away like a flood over the rock. But that's the beauty of it. You just have to pay attention to it and let it grow while training. You work on making your Ki strong and after time passes, you look back and can see and feel the changes all around. Your body is more relaxed, your mind is clearer and you can feel the energy within and without. Ki is a very hard thing to describe and there are many years of head-scratching wondering what it is you're supposed to be doing or feeling. It comes and goes in waves like a sine curve, up down, up down. The peaks and valleys of the waves range in depth along the course but the gap starts to shrink until hopefully one day it's just a straight line of energy. Everything is energy as science is now understanding so why shouldn't we be able to tap into what makes everything...what it is?

There are so many exercises that we can do to help cultivate our Ki and they don't have to be performed on the mat. Time should be dedicated to practicing the principles of Aikido when you are not in the dojo as Sensei Render has asked with the breathing exercises. I have been trying to work on my Ki during times where I can

focus on it but not lose concentration on other occurrences. A great time for me to do this is while driving to and from work. I have a 50 mile drive to work one way so I am fortunate to be able to take advantage of the time. I sit in my car seat and think about the road below the car, trying to feel the tire treads gripping the road. I think about the road I have just traveled and the road ahead. I think about the fields on each side of the road and I think about the sky above. So I'm working on extending in all directions, keeping my mind open all around while still in the moment of the traffic. I sit with my arms and hands extended over the steering wheel imaging touching cars ahead while imaging touching the grass in the fields to the sides, the clouds above, the road below and the cars behind. Sensei Medeiros talked about doing these things and they are great. I go into work in a better state of mind and get home in one as well. That's just one exercise but the main point is, cultivate your Ki when you can. Believe in it and nurture it. Like I seem to always say at the end of a paper, I know that I've still got a long way to go but I'm trying and will continue to work on developing it. For me personally, that's one of the best things to come out of my absence. The realization that it is so very important for the health of the mind, body and spirit of all things to be filled with Ki and constantly strive to help it grow. Because if you do it and help somebody else to do it and they help somebody else to do it...it is a beautiful thing.

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<No Title>

By Brad Pier

Aikido Practitioner, 2nd Dan

A Man works with several other men in a work crew. They all bring a lunch box, and eat together at the jobsite. One man pulls out a tuna fish sandwich every day, and complains to his fellow lunch partners, "tuna fish, tuna fish, every day it's the same lunch. This goes on for many months. One day one of his fellow workers gets tired of his complaints and after the usual refrain of "tuna fish again!" the man asks, "Why don't you have your wife make you a different sandwich?" The man said to his friend, "I make my own lunch!" How many of us make our own lunch?

We create our own reality. The way we see the universe and ourselves in it is a reflection of our thoughts and beliefs.

Training in Aikido, for me, has sometimes been a struggle to create the reality I want. I train with others and sometimes think, "Wow, this partner is better than I am." At that point, they are.

The Idea of Mushin, or mind of no mind is interesting to me. When I release all my thoughts of how a practice or technique should "go" and just let it happen the way it is. It feels right to me. My partner and I have created the reality of one moment, one technique and one joining of spirit, mind and body.

The Dojo is a special and sacred place to me. When I step onto the mat, my thoughts are of blending my energies with that of my partners, and the universe. Things are black and white, and I seek the connection of others making our realities together.

Helpful Tips

Here are a few tips to make writing and publication easier:

- 1) It is helpful to spell check your work. Take it easy on the editors!
- 2) Single space your work and be sure there is only one space after periods. When Jane flows the text in, the formatting changes. If you absolutely want something highlighted, put the text in bold.
- 3) Editing the papers entails more than simply reading the paper and sending it on for formatting. The editor is the double check for spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. While the editor should not rewrite the paper, the person with that responsibility should clarify wording if necessary, simplify sentences, add paragraph breaks, etc. If in doubt, consult the author and collaborate on changes that may be needed. The editor should make the final article clear, concise, and readable.
- 4) Every paper should have a title and author name.

Instructors' Thoughts

Chu

By Sensei Rob Roberts – Aikido Practitioner, 1st Dan

During the time of the last expo, there was a man there who put forth the question of the significance of the pleats of the hakama. Depending on which interpretation you subscribe to, there are between 5 and 7 virtues that the pleats of the hakama represent:

Pleat Number	Generally accepted meanings for Kendo	Morihiro Saito	Inoue Masataka	Mitsugi Saotome
1	Jin = Mercy	Yuki = courage, valor, bravery	Chuu = loyalty	Jin = benevolence
2	Gi = Righteousness	Jin = humanity, charity, benevolence	Ko = justice	Gi = honor or justice
3	Rei = Etiquette	Gi = justice, righteousness, integrity	Jin = humanity; compassion	Rei = courtesy and etiquette
4	Chi = Intelligence	Rei = etiquette, courtesy, civility (also means bow/obeisance)	Gi = from giri; or honor	Chi = wisdom, intelligence
5	Shin = Trust	Makoto = sincerity, honesty, reality	Rei = respect	Shin = sincerity
6	Makoto or Chu-Kou = Loyalty/Allegiance (respect for your parents)	Chugi = loyalty, fidelity, devotion		Chu = loyalty
7		Meiyo = honor, credit, glory; also reputation, dignity, prestige		Koh = piety

Jin (mercy, humanity, and benevolence), Gi (righteousness and honor), Rei (etiquette and respect), and Chu (loyalty), are the four virtues which remain constant through all of the interpretations of the meaning of the pleats of the hakama (though their pleat positions may change from one interpretation to another).

Of these, loyalty was tested during this time. We should be grateful for any tests of these virtues.

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History Channel Series

*By Kyosa Nim Jude Miller
Aikido/Tang Soo Do Practitioner,
1 Kyu/2nd Dan*

I received an email on 7/18/07 from Mr. Parenteau about a new series on the History Channel about martial arts called Human Weapon. Sabom Medeiros had suggested that we check it out since we might learn something. The basic premise is that two hosts, an MMA fighter named Jason Chambers and an ex-football player/wrestler named Bill Duff, go on several pilgrimages to learn about various martial arts. A new Art is explored in every episode. At the end of the episode, one of the hosts must "survive a fight against a Human Weapon". This "Human Weapon" is a very experienced practitioner in the Art that is explored during the episode.

So far, I have only been able to watch the first episode. This episode covered the art of Muay Thai, and the two hosts headed to Thailand. The first scenes have the hosts arena and gyms to observe and learn of the sport version of Muay Thai. At first, the hosts seemed shocked by the brutality of the sport, but set to "adding to their bag of tricks" (their own words) by learning the techniques of Muay Thai. The hosts witness firsthand the state of poverty that exists for the students who belong to the Muay Thai schools/gyms. It is mentioned that most fighters retire in their mid to late 20's due to the beating that the body takes from competitions.

From here, the hosts head to the country side to learn more about the origins and history of Muay Thai. They meet a master

who shows them an ancient technique (similar to a double upset punch to the chin), and the symbology behind the motion (A deity presenting a ring). The two hosts thank the master for showing them a new technique, and they return to the city to explore another gym. At this gym, the hosts show the newly learned technique that they had learned from the country side. The instructor present stated that the technique is no good for sport Muay Thai because it is too slow, and therefore would have no practical use in the ring. The concept of "sport" versus "traditional" would soon be explored more in-depth.

The hosts now headed to the nearby jungles (of Burma I believe) to seek out another master and variation of Muay Thai. For me, this was the most interesting and telling part of this episode. The Muay Thai practiced by this group in the Burmese jungle seemed much different than the Muay Thai practiced in the gyms of Thailand. One of the main concepts focused on was that of "entering" and attack. The hosts took this to mean "aggression", but I saw it more akin to the Aikido concept of irimi. By "entering", the practitioners here were able to take their partner's center from my viewpoint. Later on, the master of this school spoke about the difference between the old ways versus the newer sport ways. He said that the "sport" had taken the old Art and stripped it down to almost nothing for use in the ring. I found this to be very telling, as I can see this in all "martial" sports, no matter the nation or culture. These practitioners in the jungle looked good in their practice. They moved different from

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the sport fighters found in the city. To me, it looked more familiar, as some of the motions were very similar to ones that I have seen in Aikido and Tang Soo Do. However, I cannot yet comment on the philosophical similarities between these Muay Thai arts and the arts of Aikido and Tang Soo Do. Based on comments made by the hosts, I am not sure that they heard the master's intended message. They thanked the master and the school for their assistance (in a very casual and almost rude manner, IMHO) and headed back to prepare for their contest against the Muay Thai champion/"Human Weapon".

Jason Chambers was chosen to match against the champion. From my view, the champion was being very kind and polite during this match. It looked very obvious that the champion was going light and casual, while Mr. Chambers struggled mightily. The host "survived the fight against the Human Weapon" purely because the champion allowed him to do so.

To me, it appeared that the schools and gyms were very kind and polite to the hosts. It is almost as if they acted like the hosts were "typical Americans who do not know any better", and they let any perceived slights pass. The hosts seem primarily interested in adding techniques to their repertoire so that they can become more complete "fighters". In other words, it is my belief that they only see the grossly obvious techniques for use in combat, and that they believe the highest aim of the Arts is to become invincible. Aims such as longevity, personal refinement, servitude and the cultivation of peace

are not mentioned by the hosts during their journey in Thailand. Personally, I do not train to be a weapon of any kind. The values of our school promote peace and longevity through honest training and great personal effort. We should not concern ourselves with becoming invincible, because training in Do should show us that we are all the exact opposite of this. I was able to learn from watching this Human Weapon program. I saw a small gathering of individuals who were trying to keep their old Art alive by training and developing themselves in it. I saw that this group was not concerned with sport or selfish conceits. They were striving for something else, and this something else seemed familiar to me. For me to comment further, I believe I would need to learn more of this group's customs and practices.

San Diego Martial Arts Quest 2007

By Kyosa Nim Tim Speaks

Tang Soo Do Practitioner, 2nd Dan

Recently, I had the pleasure of journeying to San Diego California on a martial arts quest of epic significance. On the last day of the journey, as I was sitting on a picture perfect beach in La Jolla Cove, basking in the sun, and watching the blue waves roll in; I was gently brought into a state of contemplative thought. My first thought was WOW! This wasn't some metaphorical journey occurring only in my mind, I was actually on a martial arts quest in a strange, beautiful, far away land. OK, so it was only a short plane ride away, but imagine if you had to do it

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on horse or in a buggy. The second line of thought that occurred to me was this: Martial Arts are about life, and as Steven Tyler of Aerosmith once said, "Life's a journey, not a destination." Perhaps this is not the most earth shattering revelation to some of you reading this, but bear with me, we all learn at our own pace. Luckily for me, I was able to meet and train with several accomplished martial arts practitioners much further along the martial path than I, that have further inspired me to keep training for many years to come. Please allow me to share some of these experiences with you.

So, as I sat there on the beach, reflecting on the previous 5 days of training, my stream of thought about martial arts and life continued. As martial artists we endeavor to protect life, extend life, and just generally try to live a better, more fulfilling life. We seek to accomplish this through the consistent practice of self-discipline and introspection via our perspective chosen art form(s). Moo Do, or the Martial Way, is a particular life path of continuous self-improvement toward the unobtainable goal of perfection. The idea being, that through strict practice of self-discipline, one can gradually overcome the less desirable inclinations and habits that we inherently have as human beings, and move on toward enlightenment. Perhaps my journey to San Diego had furthered me along this path, or perhaps I'm just a foolish, crazy man, and I'm too far gone to realize it. Either way, here the saga begins.

After an exciting time through Nazi-land (a.k.a. the Airport), Mr. Miller and I arrived

late Saturday the 24th of March, and made our way to our 5 star hotel, seeking rest before we would begin our Martial Arts Quest. Yes, I'm exaggerating about the 5 Star status of our hotel. The first night we were mistakenly given a room with only one bed. After a quick game of rock, paper, scissors, around one in the morning, I took the floor and Mr. Miller took the bed. As it turned out, the bed was so terrible that I ended up getting the better deal. I only tell you about these useless details to highlight the remarkable fact that I actually felt pretty good when we woke around 6:30 that morning. Perhaps it was the extra oxygen at the low altitude, or perhaps it was being giddy as a schoolboy with excitement. All I know is it was fortunate, because we had a 9:00AM appointment to keep with John Sabo Sensei that we didn't want to miss.

Training with Sabo Sensei early Sunday morning was my first martial experience in San Diego, and a fine introduction to our quest. Speaking of people who are further along in their Martial Journey than I, John Sabo Sensei has been training longer than I have been alive! Sabo Sensei was very kind to me considering I came dressed in a funny blue Karate uniform. I appreciated his rock-solid Aikido and generous candor about the various techniques that he demonstrated. At one point he had us doing this double tenkan maneuver that I found particularly difficult and Sensei commented that I looked like I was concentrating very hard. Indeed I was, something like a monkey doing a math problem, or at least that's how I felt. Aikido is very hard to do, particularly when you're not an Aikidoist. Nevertheless,

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I learned a lot about some of the fundamentals of Aikido from Sensei that morning. I particularly liked his moving in off the line to avoid a punch to the face, which he insisted on being a real punch. Sensei likes his attacker committed.

Later after class, we went out to breakfast with Sabo Sensei and his student Russell San. It was a nice little old-fashioned 50's style diner. I had some good French toast and even better conversation with Sensei. Whatever your opinion is about the French, they sure figured out how to make toast. Sensei graciously shared with us some of his stories and life experiences while we mostly sat and ate. Apparently he spent a few years working as a "Conflict Coordinator" in a downtown San Diego nightclub. I will no longer view the job description "bouncer" in the same light. After breakfast, Mr. Miller and I said bye-for-now to Sensei, and we were off to our next endeavor.

Before we knew it, we were whisking up the freeway at death-defying speeds in search of the El Camino Memorial Park, the cemetery where Grand Master Lee's grave was located. It was amazing to me how fast you could get around in a city of such enormous size. Interestingly, the cemetery is located near Miramar Marine Air station, the one from the movie Top Gun. Immediately that song "Highway to the Danger Zone" popped into my head as we were traveling up the freeway, at the posted speed limit of course. Despite the nonsense in my head, we arrived safely at the cemetery and began to search for Master Lee's grave marker. It shames me as a man to admit we had to

stop and ask for directions, but it was a large cemetery, bigger than I could ever imagine one could be. We were eventually escorted to the gravesite by a very nice lady, and left to our quiet contemplation. We spent a few moments clearing away some grass and pine needles from the head stone so that we could clearly see "Beloved Husband and Father, Jong Hyan Lee...Master In the Art of Tangsoology." What a statement to have as a stamp on a man's life. Perhaps it would have no significance to a person who doesn't practice Tangsoology, but to me it represented a life achievement of the highest importance. One of the greatest revelations from this quest was that Grand Master Lee's great impact on his students, and their students, continues to be felt today. Throughout the week, it would become even more apparent that the spirit of his teachings lives on through those who continue to practice Tangsoology.

After we visited Master Lee's grave it was off to brave the large cluster of humanity known as Costa Mesa, a suburb of L.A. I was looking forward to welcoming a new life into this world, my nephew Jesse Thomas Guagliardo. My sister had popped him out about a week earlier, so he was fresh from the factory, figuratively speaking. I think it is important as human beings that we recognize the significance of both life, and death. Perhaps we should even celebrate them both equally, but death seems to be so unpleasant with all that's unknown about it. As I sat in my sister's living room holding a new bundle of joy and potential, I couldn't help but wonder what he would pursue in this life. Maybe he would be a martial artist

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someday, maybe even an Aikidoist or Tangsoologist?

The following day Mr. Miller and I returned to San Diego to resume our Martial Arts quest. We immediately made our way toward Santa Clara Point, a small peninsula near Pacific Beach, in order to stake out the area and determine our prospects for later filming. Santa Clara Point had been one of Master Lee's favorite locations in San Diego, and was where he had filmed his combinations that some of us have seen. Thus, Santa Clara Point would have great nostalgic value if we could film ourselves doing Master Lee's combinations in the same location almost 30 years later. After thoroughly casing the joint, we were off to the next thing.

That evening we made our way out to the city of Santee, another suburb of the greater San Diego area, in order to introduce ourselves to the members of the Tangsoology Institute. We were fortunate to meet Mr. Burke, the instructor for the evening, as he was opening up the dojang, and had a nice conversation with him. He invited us to stay and watch class, which despite some of the minor technical differences, was a typical beginner/intermediate Tangsoology workout, i.e. Warm-ups, forms, marching, one-steps, etc. After class, we talked with Mr. Burke some more about Tangsoology, the training curriculum, and our personal martial arts histories. I was impressed to learn Mr. Burke had been training for 20 years with Master Casey Mahon, the head instructor of the Institute of Tangsoology. Mr. Burke was very gracious and said he would put in a good word for us to

train with Master Mahon, who would be teaching classes Tuesday and Thursday. This would be great news if Master Mahon invited us to train so I was pretty excited. Mr. Burke was also kind enough to point us to Master Conniry's school where we spent the remainder of the evening watching their advanced class and talking about their Tangsoology lineage. For those of you who don't know, Master Conniry was one of Master Lee's most senior students.

The next day we were up early and off to Bernice Tom Sensei's Aikido dojo in the Ocean Beach part of town. I could really smell the cool sea air that morning as we stepped out onto the curb in front of the dojo, a converted motorcycle garage. The inside of the Dojo was fairly large and adorned in what I imagine to be traditional Japanese fashion, a large wooden shrine to O sensei at the front of the training area. I suspect I confused a few people initially when I said I was a Tangsoodo practitioner who wished to train in Aikido for the day, and stepped on the mat wearing a blue karate uniform. Nevertheless, after the first waves of skepticism subsided, we were off and training in Aikido. The techniques sometimes varied slightly from what I've experienced from Medeiros Sensei, but it was the typical experience I usually have doing Aikido. In other words, I generally have no idea what I'm doing and rely on kindhearted Aikidoists to help me along. Regardless, it was a good class and learning experience. Unlike Mr. Miller, I was lucky enough to fall on soft mats in a place which we had been warned for the lack thereof (by Sabo Sensei).

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After Bernice Tom's Dojo, Mr. Miller and I went a few blocks away to Ocean Beach, where what's touted as the "West Coast's longest pier" stands jutting out into the great Pacific Ocean. The waves were large and tumultuous as we walked out onto the pier. The air was cool and full of the smell of the salty sea air. Most sane people were wearing jackets, but we were from Colorado, shorts and T-shirts would suffice. As it was, there were few people around that day. I suppose the waves were too violent for surfing and the air too cold for sun bathing. As we reached the end of the pier and looked back at the shore, I felt somewhat disoriented with the massive waves rolling underneath us. I couldn't help but wonder how good a swimmer I was and how I would fair swimming to shore in such cold, violent waters. Not a purely academic thought, as it turned out later, Sabo Sensei said someone had been mugged and forced to jump off that very pier. I don't think he was joking.

Later that Tuesday evening, we had a date with Marty Katz Sensei. Medeiros Sensei and Sabo Sensei warned us that his classes were very fast paced. I was not disappointed. Even more to my delight, Sabo Sensei showed up and was invited to teach the first half of the two hour class by Katz Sensei. Marty Katz Sensei said they used to do this in the old days - Medeiros Sensei had mentioned this to us as well. It was a very fun and memorable experience to train with these two accomplished Aikido practitioners at the same time. I felt very privileged, tired, and dizzy after the whirl-wind class. I slept very well that night.

The following Wednesday morning came very early however, as Mr. Miller had an appointment to train at the renowned Chiba Sensei Aikido School at 6:30am. According to Sensei Medeiros' advice, I was not to train, but to go along as a witness to his pain and suffering. Really, it didn't look at all that bad from the comfort of the couch on the sidelines. Mr. Miller took his repeated break falls from Paine Sensei skillfully, making it look easy from my ignorant vantage-point. However, Mr. Miller might tell you a different story if you ask him, having been the one on the receiving end of the techniques. It was a good experience for both of us, and I had definitely worked up an appetite for breakfast watching Mr. Miller train so hard.

Wednesday afternoon we were invited to visit Mr. Emerson, a senior student of Master Mahon's. As we joined him at his place of business, an Optometry office, he treated us to some videos of various students testing and demonstrating Tangsoology. The videos of a couple of senior students demonstrating Master Lee's higher forms were particularly impressive. After the video's we spent some time talking about our various Tangsoology experiences, and the similarities and differences between our two schools. Mr. Emerson was a very gracious host and I learned a lot about the Tangsoology Institute from our conversations with him.

Later that evening, we showed up at Master Conniry's Dojang to watch the advanced Tang Soo Do class again (we were invited). Master Conniry wasn't present this evening, but his

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senior student, Master Nygaard, was kind enough to share his Tangsoodo experiences with us. We talked with him for a while before class about his connection to Master Lee, as well as ours via Sabom Medeiros. He told us that he had always been a student of Master Conniry, but had done his first couple of belt testings in front of Master Lee in the late '70's. He also made it a point to demonstrate some of the combinations and forms that Master Lee had developed. They referred to Master Lee's forms as "Master Lee's Kicking Forms," for the obvious fact that they have a lot of kicking in them. I was impressed to see them still practicing aspects of Tangsoology, even though they were an ITF school. Several pictures of Master Lee hung about the dojang, paying homage to this lineage.

The following Thursday morning, thanks to a hot tip from Mr. Emerson, Mr. Miller and I were able to track down Mr. Jose Melendez, one of Master Lee's students who had promoted Sabom Medeiros to Chodan in 1987. He was teaching yoga and fitness classes at the Santee YMCA, not too far from the Tangsoology Institute. As we asked around the Santee YMCA for where we could find Mr. Melendez, it became apparent that he was a very busy man to try and get hold of. Every person we asked said something like, "oh, Joe, he's the busiest man I know." Thus, we waited around about a half hour until he was finished with his aerobic kickboxing class, just to have about 5 cherished minutes with him before he was off to teach yet another class. Nevertheless, it was worth the wait. After we informed him that we were students of Vernon

Medeiros visiting from Colorado Springs, Mr. Melendez was very friendly and happy to see us. With his Puerto Rican accent, he said something along the lines of "oh, Burnon, how is he doing these days" and we gave him a brief summary of Tangsoology in Colorado and Maryland. He shared with us that although he doesn't practice Tangsoodo anymore, he takes the same intensity he learned from Master Lee into his classes he now teaches. When talking with Mr. Melendez, it struck me most of all how powerful this man's presence was, despite his slight stature. Mr. Melendez isn't very big, but he appears to have the physique, fitness and energy level of an athlete in his twenties. I wouldn't venture to guess his real age.

After our brief meeting with Mr. Melendez, we headed back toward Santa Clara point to review some of our combinations and forms on the beach facing Mission Bay. Along the way we stopped by and looked in on Kenyon's Karate Studio, ran by Master Fred Kenyon's son. I was sad to see no momentous to Master Lee or Tangsoology at this dojang. It was a purely Soo Bahk Do school. Master Fred Kenyon had been another of Grand Master Lee's students so I guess I was expecting to see some tribute to that lineage. Oh well, we took some snap shots of the building, and were off to have fun on the beach. It was tricky to maintain balance on the soft sand, but I think we amused some of the people cruising by in their sailboats. It didn't matter; later that evening would be a real treat for me. Master Mahon had indeed invited us to come and train with him at the Tangsoology Institute in Santee. We were

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mainly reviewing that morning because I didn't know what to expect when we'd arrive at the Institute, but I should have. It was Tangsoology of course.

Master Mahon was teaching a beginners class when we arrived that evening, but he asked Master Burke to bring us around back to dress and warm up. Once the advanced class began, we were off to the races. Master Mahon ran a fast paced and exciting class of marching, forms, kicking drills, flying kicks, and basically all the stuff we Tangsoologists hold dear. After class, we spent some time comparing notes with Mr. Burke on the form Rohai (Lohai) and some of the Ho-Sin-Sul (self-defense) applications within that form. Master Mahon talked with us for approximately 2 hours after the rest of the students had left that evening. He shared with us his history with Grand Master Lee up to the present, as well as that of some of Master Lee's other senior students that were still around. One in particular he mentioned was Master Meech, one of Master Lee's first students who sponsored him to come to the United States from South Korea. Apparently Master Meech is like a real life action hero. He currently trains sky marshals how to defend airplanes against would be terrorists. The way Master Mahon talks about Master Meech, you would be a very unlucky terrorist to find yourself on the plane with that guy. Master Mahon was a proverbial fountain of knowledge and experience, as well as an all around good person. When we were about to part ways, he was kind enough to give us a recommendation to check out La Jolla beach, for which I am most grateful.

And so, as I have already stated, our last day in town was a day of contemplation. Well, maybe not the entire day. We did have a near brush with the Law at the Mexican boarder, but they let us go by virtue of not being Mexican. Despite that, I had a few quiet hours on a beach in La Jolla Cove to quietly reflect on the weeks Martial Arts Quest. I realized that I was so affected by the whole experience that I couldn't even put it into words at the time. It was something like an overwhelming sense of well being and accomplishment, a peaceful state of mind that I seldom experience in my busy existence. Mr. Miller and I had managed to interact with people connected to our instructor's martial arts lineage in San Diego, and come away changed in a very positive way. The stories of people and places that Sabom/Sensei Medeiros has shared with us over the years took on new depth and richness as we met those same people, and stood in those same places. I imagine that as I continue to meander through this life, I will find myself looking for more and more opportunities to have these kinds of experiences.

Finally, after reluctantly departing La Jolla beach, we prepared to spend our last night in San Diego. Fortunately, we had dinner with Sabo Sensei to look forward to that evening, or I might still be sitting on that beach right now. Sabo Sensei treated Mr. Miller and I to an excellent barbecue rib dinner, and we shared with him some of the events that had transpired over our stay in San Diego. He seemed glad that we decided not to cross over into Mexico earlier that morning, and I got the impression that Tijuana was no place for

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blundering Colorado gringos. When dinner was over, Sensei took us back to our fancy hotel (ha, ha), and we talked a while longer about things such as were to get the best rental car deals in town, to how this life's journey was merely preparation for the next big adventure. We also talked about Sabo Sensei maybe coming out to visit us in Colorado, but this would be a remote possibility since he doesn't fly, and the driving distance is ridiculous. Eventually, reluctantly, we had to say good bye to Sensei. Thus, our Martial Arts Quest ended much as it had begun, eating and talking about life with Sabo Sensei. As they say, all good things must come to an end, and I believe talking with Sensei was a fitting end to our San Diego Martial Arts Quest.

<No Title>

*By Sensei Sam George
Aikido Practitioner, 2nd Dan*

What is it about something that I try to do on a daily basis that is so hard? The excuses that come up are many. Time: I don't have the time to take a few minutes a day to devote to myself! Oh, I guess I will do this later, when things are just right. Oh, I don't have a place to do this right now. Oh, I have to go to 7-11 right now. Oh, the grass is really dry right now, I better water it. I will do this at the last minute, because that is how I always do things. I am so tired right now because I stayed up too late last night trying to avoid this assignment. The excuses are endless.

What am I truly trying to avoid? You can truly make yourself sick to the stomach with worry. Resentment can become a line for my brain to follow for days on end. Maybe on a broader scale, I just hate somebody telling me what to do. At the moment of being asked, I say, "Sure...no problem. That sounds like a really good idea." Then later, I go and say to myself, "What did I think I was agreeing to?"

The only way I can control a situation when being asked to do something is by not doing anything. This is an act of defiance. This also reinforces a self image of what a lousy person I think I am. This is a really good way to beat myself up. Stop, Stop, Stop, Stop...

Relax: what is my body doing? Is it tense? Oh yeah.

Breath: Does it feel better to breath? Oh yeah.

Extend Ki: am I the size of a pea? Oh yeah.

Find your center: Oh yeah, I remember where it is.

Connection: Am I connected with anything except my brain? Now I am, and it feels better.

The five principals are a way to deal with stress, beating myself up, and becoming self absorbed. The list goes on and on. Sensei Render asked all of us to breathe five minutes a day. Maybe we can save ourselves from ourselves.

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Attitude Is Everything

By Sensei Hal Render

Aikido Practitioner, 2nd Dan

As a grown-up human being, there are many things competing for my time: work duties, family responsibilities, household chores, church events, and so on. In the past I used to feel happy juggling these various activities, and I felt that the number of "things" in my life made it more interesting and more enjoyable. However, lately I have felt more pressured for time and more stressed, although the actual number of "things" in my life has not changed appreciably. So, what has changed?

For example, I have taken my six-year old son, Owen, to school nearly every morning for most of the last year. Despite the routine of doing this for several months, I look forward to it every day. It is a special time in my day that I get to spend with my son, just the two of us enjoying each other's company.

Going to work is a sharp contrast for me. Although I have a job that offers work I enjoy and co-workers who are friends, there are many days when the act of getting in the car to go to work is the hardest thing I do all day. This was not always the case. Indeed, in the past I have had jobs (including the current one) for which going to work was something I looked forward to. I saw my work as challenging, interesting, and enjoyable, and I was excited to make the journey every morning. For some reason this has changed, yet the actual content of the work has not.

So what has changed? Clearly, it is my attitude. I think the difference is almost entirely in my perception of the activities. I perceive taking my son to school as a choice, as an opportunity for Owen and I to have some time together. Going to work, however, I see as a chore, a journey to a destination that I am forced to make, and so is something to be dreaded.

How do I change this situation? How do I make something I used to enjoy something I will enjoy again? The answer is simple to say, yet hard to do: I have to change my attitude. I have to focus on the things about my job that I enjoy, and I have to remind myself that my job is one that I trained for and sought out after a series of other, less satisfying jobs. I have to find things within my job that excite and challenge me, and not focus on the more tedious, dreary aspects of any routine activity.

So what does this have to do with Aikido? It should be obvious. Practicing Aikido, like going to work or walking a child to school, is a regular activity that can easily be perceived as an obligation rather than an opportunity. Although I think we all enjoy going to class more often than not, there are likely few of us who have not had periods in our studies where going to class was seen as something to do grudgingly, if at all.

If or when you hit those stretches, you have to keep foremost in your mind that it is an opportunity to study Aikido. I have wanted to study martial arts since I was a kid, and when I first read about Aikido, I decided it was the art I most wanted to

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study. My experiences in Aikido have proved this to be true. Coming to class every week is a great opportunity, and we must always keep this uppermost in our minds. Yes, Aikido can be difficult. Yes, Aikido can become tiresome and routine, but only if we let it become that. Aikido practice is the same as when we started, when going to class was the highlight of the week.

My challenge to you in the coming weeks is to fan the flames of your interest in your art. Go back to when you were a beginner and try to recapture what it was that interested you in the first place, and try to put yourself back in that frame of mind. Find something in your practice that engages and excites you, that makes you want to go to class. And then see what happens.

Traditional vs. Commercial Martial Arts Schools

*By Sabom Nim Mike Parenteau
Tang Soo Do Practitioner, 2nd Dan*

You may have noticed that we do not have a very large group of students. There is a very good reason for this and it has to do with the concept of Traditional versus Commercial Martial Arts Schools. To start, I think some definitions are in order:

Traditional: The dictionary defines this as, "...based on or relating to a long established custom or belief, often handed down."

Commercial: The dictionary defines this as, "...relating to the buying and selling of goods or services."

Sabom and I have had many discussions in the past as to what constitutes a "traditional" school. I think there are some arguments that suggest that we are NOT a traditional school. However, for the sake of argument, I'm going to say that we are traditional as we are not an eclectic mix of martial arts as commonly seen on TV in mixed martial arts matches.

So, now the question is, "What is a Commercial School?" Expanding the above definition, a Commercial Martial Arts School is one that is in the business of selling the Art they teach, in an often times loosely defined structure. Now... what do I mean by that? I look at it like this:

- 1) There is little class structure. People can be seen milling around or talking when they should be training.
- 2) Typically, instructors tend to be high school kids wearing 4th Dan black belts. You cannot tell who the head instructor is in many cases.
- 3) Because the instructors are young, they typically cannot explain deeper concepts to those they are teaching.
- 4) Instructors are not seen as such and little respect is given to them. In addition, simple courtesy is not extended from student to student and the class is more of a machismo exhibition. Bowing is something done as a necessary evil, albeit poorly.

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- 5) Finally, Commercial Schools will say their classes are "Martial Sports", i.e. not unlike something you would see at an Olympic Tae Kwon Do match.

With those definitions in mind, let me share with you something I read in my local newspaper. A local martial arts school was highlighted and a mother was sharing her thoughts on why she thought this particular school was special. She said something to the effect of, "I like how the instructors tell my child that this is a sport." Here in lies part of the problem. Now granted, you could argue that this individual is not categorizing his school as a martial arts school, but a martial sports school. However, I think this takes away from the long history of the art practiced, in addition to adding an issue I've had for years. Currently, Commercial Martial Arts Schools tailor their classes towards children. This has given the perception that martial arts is a kids' activity and that it is ok for parents to drop their kids off to the "babysitter." Don't get me wrong...I like kids. But I think there is a time and place for kids to be introduced to Martial Arts training from a traditional school, where:

- 1) Courtesy and respect are taught, i.e. character development.
- 2) All of the students know who the instructor is.
- 3) There is no "back-slapping" or no talking during training. I don't go up to my instructor and say, "Hey Vern... what's happen-in' man?"

- 4) The rich history of the Art is explained and shared. Dodge ball and "Duck, Duck, Goose" are not played.

- 5) Commitment is expected to further the learning process.

These are but a few examples of what I think the differences are. Now, I must explain that not all Commercial Schools are this way, but many are. Here in lies our chance!

So...next time someone comes through the door, explain what makes our school different and maybe it will pay off.

Modern Japanese Budo Arts and Koryu Japanese Arts: Is One System More Superior to Train in Than the Other?

By Sensei/Sabom Nim Vernon A. Medeiros – CTSDS Founder

As of late I have been reading several articles on Koryu.com. According to several articles I have read there is major concern among the authorship that any person or group practicing old style arts of Japan or any instructor teaching any ancient art (Koryu) must possess historical legitimacy. Several authors site particular reasons for teachers and serious students (present and future students) to adhere to codified formulas and traditions (lineage, authority and methods of instruction) in order to keep the Ryu pure. If one is to earnestly undertake training and teaching in these ancient ways.

Instructors' Thoughts

What prompted my necessity to read about old style Japanese martial arts was brought about by Dave Lowry's book, "In the Dojo", a 2006 Shambhala publication. What caught my attention was the fact that Mr. Lowry draws a clear distinction between modern budo arts and ancient or Koryu arts of Japan when ever he referred to the subject to illustrate the differences between "real" dojos and "questionable" dojos.

After reading several articles on Koryu.com (including Dave's, The Classical Japanese Martial Arts in the West: Problems in Transmission) it is clear why Dave draws these distinctions. Koryu.com's authorship draws them as well and Dave is part of this group.

During the 1990's a publication called "Furyu" started dispensing articles about this topic and the author (Wayne Muromoto) was very clear as to the differences between old (Koryu) and modern Japanese budo forms. The modern martial forms I am thinking of will be confined to Aikido, laido, Judo, Karatedo, Kendo and Kyudo.

What I gleaned from the Koryu group's writings is Koryu (because of their long history and association with a clan line) arts are the real deal and modern budo forms lack battle worn useful substance and legitimacy (documentation and genealogies). What a bunch of fahooey! The reality is no present day follower of Koryu arts live under the same set of circumstances that Samurai lived under. In other words no one has to offer up their head should they dishonor someone or themselves, there are no Daimyo's to serve. So why are Koryu practitioners so elitist about their Ryu? I

really do not understand it!

Are modern budo forms lacking the historical and technical connections to old style schools? Koryu practitioners obviously think this is the case!

According to what I have read Ancient art forms of Japan (Classical) are considered bujutsu practices not budo practices. Okay! So why should this fact allow an elitist mentality to develop among old school martial artists? Many of us who choose to practice modern budo forms are not inept in our training practices or at any disadvantage because we have no clean connections to ancient clan lines or lack a license or a Soke's permission to teach.

Okay! If older forms are referred to as Bujustu, and present day Koryu artists practice kata that were for the warrior classes of old Japan, then how is this training so different from modern Budo kata? Do these Koryu styles help to keep some long lost Daimyo in power? I think not! Generally speaking, does Koryu training further clan business interests, whatever that might be, including waging war on some neighboring provinces? NO!

My feeling is older forms of Bujutsu evolved into modern Budo forms and are now offered to a societal class (meaning anyone can join, all that is required is commitment and effort.) Allowing anyone so motivated to explore a form of training that has roots in the past but now must be applied to cultivate individuals to become peaceful members of a "GREATER" society. I think this is the most telling attribute of modern budo forms. Modern Budo is open to all... all are invited, and while it is possible to

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have these modern forms polluted by dishonest teachers (with dishonest business practices) the modern forms will survive intact because we are obligated to the art rather than any single person or clan lineage. I once spoke to a group of Tang Soo Do practitioner's (1993) and told them bluntly "...this tournament is not Moodo (Korean pronunciation for Budo) in action, it is a platform for aggression, violence and greed." Clearly there is confusion even in modern Budo circles.

Why Koryu practitioners believe themselves to be unique or closer to the source is puzzling. Maybe this is the reason Koryu are so concerned with licensure and permission? It is this approach that keeps the mist swirling about our heads. Modern budo requires the same effort, the same commitment, and the same loyalty, that Koryu requires of its members, but the difference is we are not elitist about our involvement with a modern Budo art. Remember what is interesting about the modern forms is that all of them came from the "old ways".

My closing point as a present day martial artist, whether we practice modern forms or ancient forms, in effect "ALL" of us are "MODERN DAY" practitioners. I repeat; Koryu followers do not serve a Daimiyo, nor do they have their heads at risk, therefore they delude themselves into thinking the "old" ways are superior to modern forms.

A Zen adage comes to mind: (my interpretation)

To do good,	(internal moral compass)
To do good for others,	(applying all that I have learned for the greater society)
To do good for myself.	(Living life in an unselfish way)

I think by my own practicing (and teaching) of Modern Budo forms I am putting into motion this Buddhist saying that my Ensemble Instructor liked to start each class with. I may lack the teaching license but 20 years later; I am still obligating myself to the Budo arts. After all, Modern Budo forms are to promote peace, not war.



Group photo - May, 2007