

***Awase*** is the newsletter of the  
Aikido Institute of Davis, a dojo where you  
can learn the arts of Aikido and Tai Chi.  
Please visit our website at  
[www.AikidoDavis.com](http://www.AikidoDavis.com) for information on  
membership & class times.

## The Martial Arts Journey

*Hoa Newens Sensei*

To excel in martial arts,  
Drill the basics ad infinitum,  
Diligently train in advanced techniques,  
Perfect the forms with minute detail,  
Enhance techniques with speed and power,  
Explore multitude of variations, and  
Adapt to multiple changing situations.  
In time, one gradually approaches excellence.  
On the threshold of invincibility though, doubt sets in,  
Making one feel incomplete and mastery seem far  
away.  
Perfect forms and perfect timing still fall short of  
mastery.  
The gnawing question is, who is the master?  
To master martial arts,  
Reverse the flow and return to the source.  
Drop the many and focus on the few,  
Reduce motion and internalize contents,  
Sense training partners' energy,  
Listen and adjust.



In due time, forego form to distill essence,  
In stillness, let the essence return to its origin,  
There, discover the abode of the original mind.  
Finally attain completeness. Or rather, emptiness.  
Thus through martial arts human beings interact  
And help each other find their true selves.  
The journey is long and arduous, and there is no  
shortcut.

## The Art of SODOTO

*Donny Shiu*

See One, Do One, Teach One (SODOTO) is a useful learning and teaching strategy. This process comes from the medical model. The students typically first see someone put on a splint, then put on a splint, then teach someone else to put on a splint. The process involves them in seeing the skill modeled, doing it themselves, and then teaching the skill to another student. Maximum learning results when the learner goes through all three of these activities. This is very applicable to learning martial arts.

Learning by receiving instruction verbally, visually can be passive. Due to the physical nature of martial arts, one must do. You can't learn how to swim if you don't get wet. Being tested on the techniques and teaching the skills learned enhance retention of the material.

The "explainer" of a concept or skill moves that concept from short-term memory to long-term memory. When teaching, you have to think about it, formulate in your mind, rehearse how you want to explain it, do it, and adjust your responses to the learner's questions and level of understanding. Engaging in this process serves the "explainer" as much as it does the learner; therefore, teaching is to share and to learn.

Recently, I was able to seize the opportunity to assist senior instructors with teaching. I am humbled by being given this privilege. At the same time, I embrace this duty as part of my learning. In order to TEACH more, I must seek to SEE more, DO more. Learn to teach; teach to learn. Always a student, it is a continuous cycle.

Teaching or sharing is far from ego, it comes with responsibilities. The responsibility is to know what I am talking about. Since I don't, I have a lot of work to do. Please be patient with me as I practice the art of SODOTO.



*Christine Palmer and Clelia Clark.*

## Connection

*Christine Palmer*

In our Aikido practice, we are constantly reminded to stay connected, to be actively engaged with and aware of our training partners. Even when we are no longer directly touching, this connection must continue, extending our ki across the distance. This connection is a gift in both directions, allowing you both to train to your full potential. But that connection can reach even farther, serving as a reminder in life outside the dojo to connect with your surroundings to keep balanced and responsive in your daily life.

Remember to connect!

## A “Useful” Martial art

*Mitch Peters*

### My one year anniversary

*Naomi Hayashi*

I started Aikido beginners course with Toru last October, and it has been a great year. I especially appreciate the following two things.

First one is that I could continue coming to Aikido practice being healthy and free of injury. During our beginners course, Sensei told us that we needed to set our own goals to practice Aikido. I set my goals to stay out of injuries and improve my joints flexibility. I’ve been living with autoimmune disease, and some of my joints are stiff from frequent inflammation. I take medication to control inflammation, but sometime the pain makes me difficult to stay positive. Through Aikido practice, I have learned that: instead of beaten up by the illness, I need to blend better with it, and take the initiative as well. Preventing injury and Improving flexibility will continue to be my goals for next year.

Second, because of Aikido, I have met many people in one year including all of you at Davis dojo and people from other dojo. It was bit overwhelming to meet so many people at seminars, but it was fun practicing with interesting people with different energy and style. In Japan, we have a proverb called “ichigo ichie” (一期一会: treasure every encounter, for it will never occur). The time of meeting with a person could be the first and the last time in our life, so we should cherish the time and be sincere to the person. It also implies that we need to do our best on every occasion as it maybe the last chance to do so. I look forward to meeting more people through Aikido and treat those opportunities as such.

I would like to thank our Sensei for his guidance and inspiration, and everyone at dojo for practicing with me patiently and supportingly. I hope to continue practicing Aikido for long time.

The usefulness of something, like its beauty, is often in the eyes of its beholder. I have heard people refer to Aikido as not being as effective for self-defense as other martial-arts. “If you want to learn how to fight, go study Krav Maga, or Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.” But what makes a martial art “useful?” Is putting a drunk in the hospital because he attempts to punch you useful? Is responding to physical threat with brutality “useful?” A person may be able to use reasonable force to protect themselves, but that doesn’t give them a “green light” to inflict great bodily injury or to use force disproportionate with the attack.

I began thinking about the usefulness of martial arts when I saw a recent news clip showing a male law enforcement officer on the side of the road repeatedly punching a woman in the face as he straddled her on the ground. The woman was resisting his attempt to take her into protective custody for a mental evaluation. He obviously felt the need to use force to get her compliance. But the way he did it earned repeated showings of his actions on news channels, public outcry, his resignation as an Officer and a 1.5 million dollar settlement to the woman.

Not to Monday night quarterback his predicament: he was in an unenviable situation. He was on the side of the freeway with an alleged mentally troubled person who posed a potential risk to herself, the officer, and drivers on that road. He needed to take action to ensure the safety of all. She resisted his attempt to detain her and as the struggle went to the ground, he resorted to strikes to the face as his way to get control. As well intentioned his actions may have been (giving him the benefit of any doubt), the resulting video was not very flattering. Whether or not this use of force was justified (officer thought he needed to stop her from jumping in front of moving cars?), it was a media embarrassment for the officer and the department. I would say that whatever martial skill this officer was employing (boxing?), although effective, it was not useful for his situation.

Aikido's lack of brutality and redirection of force is one of its great strengths. Not every self-defense situation necessitates punching a combatant into submission or dislocating and breaking limbs. For many situations, Aikido's less violent approach is much more practical, more socially acceptable and should result in less liability to judicial proceedings that may result when a perceived unreasonable amount of force is used.

As I think about our rules of self-defense and apply them to this situation, the officer probably got three out of four correct. He didn't give her a reason to fight, he was there to his job (even if he did it poorly.) He fought to protect life, and he appeared to fight with all he had. But, did he treat her the way he would want to be treated, or the way he would want his wife, mother or daughter treated. Perhaps he used the only skills he knew well and trusted. Maybe he could have benefited from a more useful martial art.



*Hoa Newens Sensei and Markus Bauer. Thank you Markus for your visit, your vigorous training energy, and your powerful Kiai!*

*Picture Courtesy of Guy Michelier.*

## Sine Qua Non

*Martin Dubcovsky*

There are things in life without which we are not.

Some of these are obvious, and physical. Water. Oxygen. Food. Without them we cannot survive for long at all. Availability of these natural resources or conditions is what allows life to flourish. Scarcity of these resources drives competition for survival. Wars have been fought for water or access to fertile lands.

Beyond staying alive, there are things in life without which we are not. For some people it can be family, it can be a sense of purpose, it can be coffee. Whatever it is, it lies at the core of our definitions of self. So much so that if it were removed we would no longer be ourselves. Our life would become empty, and we would as surely die as if we'd been denied a breath of air.

However I chose to define myself, whatever I place at the core of my being, that very thing is what will draw me into conflict. We fight wars for our families, and for purpose, and yes, even for coffee.

But sometimes what is and is not a core element is unknown to even ourselves. It remains unexplored, and unquestioned. And it is not until that strand of spider silk tugs on our heartstrings that we realize that yes, we need this thing.

If we do not wish to be provoked into meaningless battles, then we must be proactive in uncovering what our defining elements are. Separating the important from the essential. Discarding from our self definition any superfluous thing. Shrinking our sense of self to the truly indispensable.

Never give anyone or anything a reason to hurt you. Fight to protect life, not to hurt.

## Upcoming Events

**Aiki Ken Seminar – October 18<sup>th</sup>:** Hoa Newens Sensei will teach a special 4 hour class covering the aiki ken curriculum. Please join us for this special event

Date and Time: Sat. Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 10am-3pm

Cost: \$60 (includes lunch)

**Advanced Class – November 23<sup>rd</sup>:** Special Sunday class 10-11:30 am for 2<sup>nd</sup> Kyu and above.



*Above: Hoa Newens Sensei teaching a seminar at Aikido Institute Oakland on August 16th. The Seminar was followed by a sandan test for Dave Lewin, pictured below.*



*Pictures courtesy of Guy Michelier.*



### Congratulations

**Kori Farrell and Toby Hargreaves  
who tied the knot on Sept 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014!**

**Note from the editor: All formatting, spelling and grammatical errors are unintended and the sole responsibility of the editor—My apologies!**

**Martin Dubcovsky**