

Featured Senior Instructor, September 2009



Brett Jackson

Hilltop Aikido, Dublin, California
Division 1

I started Aikido back in 1987 when I was in my early thirties. That was after witnessing a few folks practicing the art, and I thought to myself, "Whoa, that's interesting!" For the first few years I practiced under Kawahara Sensei's umbrella with some of his senior students, Scott Macphail, Bob Moline, and Lincoln Chew. That was my Aikido early childhood education (a rather late childhood since I was already in my thirties!). In 1992 I moved to Singapore and began training with Chang Sensei. Chang Sensei took me through to my second dan and taught me (among other things) how to teach Aikido to children. That was my Aikido teenage years. I would still be there today were it not for family reasons which led me here to the US. After moving to Pleasanton, CA in 1999, I joined Pat Hendricks Sensei's dojo in San Leandro, California, and I've been here ever since enjoying my Aikido adult years. Aikido is always with me now as takemusu with the present moment.

I recall fondly the classes I've had from all the great teachers I've seen -- it's like tasting new exciting exotic dishes. The ones that come to mind right now (in no particular order and I hope I get all the spelling right!) are senseis: Kawahara, Ishiyama, Akira Tohei, Yamada, Inaba, Kanai, Chiba, Shibata, Bookman, Kato, Shiohira, Abe, Chang, Seki, Yokota, H. Osawa, Endo, Masuda, Fujita, Arikawa, Akai, Kobayashi, Witt, Doran,

Nadeau, Hendricks, Hitohiro, Saito, the second Doshu, and the current Doshu. I thank all of them for their dedication, generosity, and leadership.

I've been teaching Aikido to children for four years now at the CACC (Chinese American Cooperation Council) in Pleasanton, California. Enrollment is on a year over year basis. I've got three classes a week with a total of 36 students from ages 6-14. I'm hoping the CACC will expand and that I'll be able to teach an adult class at some point. In the meantime, teaching children is fulfilling and challenging enough! It's a great responsibility in fact to teach children, as these young people are more impressionable than adults. One has to be very careful to teach children in the right way, to be worthy of this privilege, to make sure you don't hurt them, that they don't hurt each other, and that they don't hurt others off the mat with what they've learned. I've got my own daughter in one of my classes. I find that Aikido is a wonderful art form for (many) children. I try to make it interesting and engaging on many levels (which is what Aikido is anyway). I tell them the three principles are: 1. Don't make enemies; 2. Be alert at all times; and 3. Get some skills.



My most Memorable Aikido Experience

As for outstanding memories, I've had a few. I have to reach deep into my memories to recall attending BC Summer Camps with Kawahara Sensei -- the chance to do nothing but practice and talk Aikido for an entire week! In the mid 90s, I recall the times Chang Sensei took us to Hombu dojo for a week of training and testing (where I received my ni-dan). We also participated in the All Japan Aikido demonstration. Very rewarding for me was the entire time period I was Chang Sensei's uchideshi in Singapore! I recall vividly too some of the telling, candid stories Chiba Sensei has told at the seminars of his I've attended! More recently, Pat Hendricks Sensei hosted this past June a seminar with Hitohiro Saito Sensei which was very enjoyable.

All the best and thanks for listening!