

AIKI EXTENSIONS

YEAR IN REVIEW

OUTREACH TO YOUTH

MODES OF AIKI THERAPY

TRAINING ACROSS BORDERS

*JERUSALEM

*LONDON

*RAMALLAH

*ZURICH

*IRAQ



PLUS

AE EXTENDS TO ETHIOPIA

NEWSLETTER



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OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, Aiki Extensions has changed from a loose network of professionals mainly in North America to a force for social change spread around the globe. It has embarked on projects of transformation that no one conceived possible as recently as 2003. From an annual budget hovering around \$6,500, it has averaged budgets of \$65,000 in the past biennium. New members have joined from Greece and Romania, Israel and Egypt, Bolivia and Trinidad, Iraq and Denmark, Scotland and Palestine, England and New Zealand. Supporters appeared from new parts of the aikido community and from without: Jews and Arabs hungering for peace in the Middle East, alumni of aiki-extensions style training programs, Ethiopians hoping to build a more civil society, philanthropists in the United States.

This issue focuses on three themes that grew with gusto over the past twelve months in the extension of aikido practice: reaching out to young people; practicing modes of therapy; and building bridges across borders.

REACHING THE YOUNG

Teaching Aikido to Children (Aviv Goldsmith, Virginia)

Youth Outreach Coordinator Aviv Goldsmith organized the first Aiki Kodomo Kenshukai (Teaching Aikido to Children) in his Fredericksburg, VA dojo early April. Forty-four senseis and sempai, representing diverse styles and associations, came from around North America to learn new and mat-tested ways to enhance children's aikido classes. Participants received a resource binder with curricula and other kid-centric information.

The workshop addressed a range of issues: safety, warm-ups, developmental learning stages, ukemi, games, drills, weapons practices, and techniques for working with the very young and with teens. Starting off each day with laboratory learning, children of Aikido in Fredericksburg got on the mat



for two "live" classes. When children were not present, participants jumped in and pretended to be kids. Presenters included AE members Michelle Keip, Jack Richford, and Goldsmith himself.

The workshop closed with a round the circle sharing of experiences and insights. Comments recorded by

Michelle Keip included "I came empty and I leave full," "I came with anxiety and terror about teaching children and I leave with insights and courage," "I feel like I made a good long-term investment this week," and "I will improve the quality of instruction".

A second AE Aiki Kodomo Kenshukai is

planned for 2008 in the San Francisco area. Contact: aviv@aikidoinn.com

San Juan Bautista Peace Dojo (Bill Leicht, Bronx, New York)

AE Member Bill Leicht, with Milton Román of Urban Visions, Inc; Rev. María Isabel Santiviago, Vicar; and Ira Steinberg of Bond Street Dojo, opened on April 20 a Peace Dojo under Iglesia San Juan Bautista, Episcopal, in the South Bronx, NY. SJB Peace Dojo joins the PS183 Peace Dojo, now in its third year, in teaching young New Yorkers assertive alternatives to bullying and victim behaviors.

Leicht's Peace Dojo melds aikido, meditation, council circle,



verbal conflict resolution, and "original play"—a blend of proven effectiveness in transforming aggressive and passive responses to conflict. Participants in the SJB Dojo receive instruction from students of the PS183 Peace Dojo and graduates of former "Bronx Peace Dojo."

Ação Harmonia Brasil (Jose Bueno, Sao Paolo, Brazil)

A country of cultural diversity, natural wealth, and happy people, Brazil also manifests an infamously unfair distribution of opportunities. Seeking to repair some of that inequity in the favelas (shantytowns) of Sao Paolo, Jose Bueno's Ação Harmonia Dojo carries out in the poor communities meets two goals simultaneously offers a path to young people who grow up in environments marked by misery and violence. It also affords adults ways to engage in creative involvement with pressing social problems.

Ação Harmonia Brasil (AHB), which turns 12 years old this month, has signed a contract with the City Hall of Sao Paulo to offer weekly aikido workshops to poor public school children. Staffed by new volunteers, AHB hopes to reach three hundred children by working with 30 to 40 kids per class, twice a day, five days a week. In the meantime, Jose Bueno has been demonstrating the principles of aikido in large companies with the aid of children. Contact: bueno@aikidoharmonia.com.br



Seven Tepees (Neil Mick, San Francisco)

AE's Pilot Project for the Aiki Corps Volunteers program started running in January 2006 at an outreach program for promising inner-city youth in San Francisco. Co-founded and directed by AE Advisory Board member Judge Daniel Weinstein, 7 Tepees operates a year-round academic, mentoring, and counseling program as well as a summer camp (<http://www.7tepees.org>). Pilot volunteer sensei Neil Mick reports with enthusiasm about his biweekly classes: "The kids are very dedicated. The most important thing that they learn is the value of respect."



On May 6th, the 7 Tepees dojo will participate in an intensive kids' gasshuku (seminar), organized by Kayla Feder of Berkeley Aikikai, and Robert Kent of Aikido West. Appreciating the worth of the 7 Tepees program, the organizers will provide partial scholarships for this overnight event. "The kids are very excited about the seminar," said Neil. "This gasshuku should be a shot in the arm for the 7 Tepee's dojo." And a taste of the possibilities of AE outreach and aiki corps initiatives to boot. Contact: neilmick@hotmail.com

MODALITIES OF AIKI THERAPY

Aiki Therapy in Groups (Scott Evans, Ankara, Turkey)

Longtime AE member Scott Evans has been invited to conduct a four-day workshop at the International Congress of Group Psychotherapies in Bergama, Turkey this May 31–June 3. The Congress format will focus on experiential learning rather than lecturing: therapists in attendance will participate in other therapists' workshops as clients. Participants in Scott sensei's workshop will attend



three-hour sessions on each of the four days to learn about his ALTER conflict management/aikido training program—a distinctive blend of aiki training, meditation, and Native American council—by participating in its therapeutic activities. Other presenters will be coming to the Congress from eight European countries and the US. Contact: scottsan1@hotmail.com

Aiki Therapy for Special Needs Children (Tamar Sadan, Jerusalem)

Tamar Sadan is a therapist for school children in Jerusalem. These children battle emotional and physical problems in varying degrees. Tamar uses “aikido therapy” to help them.

Tamar received her BA in psychology from Hebrew University. Rather than pursue an MA she entered a two-year program for dance therapy at a community college in Israel. Her instructor knew she studied aikido and suggested aikido as a method of therapy.

In class, Tamar has students begin with forward rolls. Not only are they confident with this, they are proficient. One of her students, Raphael, has a smile consistent of those with Down’s syndrome, yet he looks more like O’Sensei training with joy. Other children’s hyperactivity leads to friendly skirmishes

breaking out again and again. Tamar has the patience of a lioness dealing with her cubs.

Tamar Sadan’s teaching is a profound example of how aikido can help heal the world. She has created a safe place for children at risk. It would be impossible to describe adequately all of the ways that this extraordinary therapy has benefited the children. Simply put, they experience the same broad range of physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits as any other aikidoka born without debilitating illnesses. All the while they are growing up in the Middle East learning non-violent ways of relating. Contact: tamarsk@walla.co.il

Aikitherapies at AEC6

Modes of aikitherapy were featured at the Sixth International Conference of Aiki Extensions (AEC6). Presenters included Guenter and Hanna Buck of Baden-Wuerttemberg; and US members Robin Cooper, Paul Linden, and Erika Rein.

Using a model of AD/HD as a neuro-modular dysfunction affecting attention processing, Guenter and Hanna Buck demonstrated their aiki approach to helping people with AD/HD traits, including vulnerability to addiction. From using aikido-based techniques in clinical work with both young people and adults suffering from problems of emotional regulation and self-

monitoring, they have gone on to apply such techniques to males in leadership positions who also suffer from such problems. They further reflected on ways that aikido could be used to support people – particularly managers – with “shadow symptoms,” even those who still achieve success at the workplace.

Robin Cooper emphasized that using labels such as “the disabled” to describe individuals violates the principle of “people first” language. After polling the group, Cooper was delighted to find that almost all conference participants had accommodated

individuals with disabilities in their dojos. She drew on their experiences to facilitate a discussion on fears and barriers standing in the way of the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities.



Guenter Buck demonstrates a technique with participant Erika Rein

AE Board Member and ever-popular presenter Paul Linden presented briefly on the idea that aiki methods of healing and wholeness embrace education as well as therapies. Linden showed his technique of throwing tissues at participants and ways to monitor and reduce the fear/startle arousal. In another session, he illustrated how aiki-derived bodywork affects how he teaches

aikido. He led katatetori shihonage ura practice, focusing on how attention, particularly through the eyes, can be unified in movement. He also showed how relaxing the muscles of the jaw and throat can result in smoother whole-body movement.

Erika Rein works for a performance and creative arts program that serves people with developmental disabilities in Petaluma, CA. She reviewed her year of experience in taking students with various disabilities to Richard Strozzi-Heckler’s 2-Rock Dojo. Many of the challenges in teaching this

population, Rein recounted, are the same as with any other group, only more so: students need many repetitions, and retain their learning at a low rate; they are easily frustrated and distracted. "Who does what and on which side" proves a huge challenge. Fear, especially fear of being powerful, often gets in the way. Many people with disabilities have experienced forms of abuse, and are unaccustomed to being strong and powerful. The challenges these

students faced during aikido class presented great possibilities for learning: developing body and spatial awareness; arriving at a sense of center, ground and presence; opening to power; facing, being direct, moving toward an object, a partner, a future. This was so rewarding for all involved that Rein encouraged aikidoka working with people with disabilities to extend this great art into these communities.

TAB AFTER ONE YEAR

In April 2005, a special seminar—historic for the aikido community and for the Middle East—brought together nearly one hundred aikidoka from areas whose populations had long existed in chronic conflict: Greece and Turkey, Bosnia and Serbia, South and North Cyprus, Israel and Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq. Web site visitors have been presented with a number of reports on the event (www.aiki-extensions.org/tab.html) and enjoy access to a moving, professionally produced DVD of the event. Contact: Dan@aiki-extensions.org .

Those who participated were so altered by the experience that many resolved to carry forward the spirit of TAB Cyprus in various ways. These outgrowths have become so fruitful that the AE Board of Directors has approved the formation of a new structure to keep them in motion and growing. This consists of a Steering Committee (Don Levine, Richard Strozzi-Heckler, and Jamie Zimron) and an advisory committee (Robin Cooper, Philip Emminger, Ala'a Hijazi, David Lukoff, Neil Mick, James Wolff, Atif Amin Eytan Ben Meir, Kurt Bartholet, Wesam Faraj, Miles Kessler, Mark Walsh). Their bulging portfolio includes four domains: 1. continuing TAB seminars; 2. Salaam Shalom Aikido initiatives; 3. aiding aikido communities in Iraq and Palestine; and 4. developing a experimental "Peace Dojo" in Ethiopia.

CONTINUING TAB SEMINARS

JANUARY 21, 2006 WAS A MAGIC DAY IN TABVILLE. The Jerusalem TAB seminar drew five dozen participants, including a dozen Arabs and some forty Israeli Jews. Classes taught in diverse styles, from Don Levine and Assi Moualem to Miles Kessler and Eytan Ben Meir, kept participants moving. The program included AE demos by Don Sensei (focus, adapt, rebound, reframe) and a screening of the Cyprus TAB DVD. Miles Sensei



closed the day by organizing conversations about what the day's Training Across Borders experience meant personally, an experience which only a year

ago seemed wildly impossible. Eytan Sensei



observed poignantly that political tensions had kept him from close contact with Arab neighbors that he so enjoyed in his youth and that the one-day seminar had been "a dream come true."

The London UK Extensions seminar also drew some sixty participants from many parts of England and Scotland and, more astounding, from across the borders of diverse aikido organizations. Those present agreed that aikido has been divided for too long, and that the practice offers unexplored potential to help persons and communities. Workshops – led by Shihan Ezra and Senseis P. Smith, P. Cooke, Q. Cooke, and S. Whittaker – explored ways to extend aikido into personal

relations and areas like business and security. Training featured the AE signature Round Robin Keiko. Participants also watched DVDs of the TAB Cyprus seminar and Aço Harmonia Brazil, and donated income from the event to the latter.

And in the spirit of TAB, Kurt Bartholet will once again hold a summer camp in Zurich, July 15-22, described as “An Aikido exploration of relationships beyond culture, nationality and religion.” Contact: <kurt.bartholet@teamotion.ch>

SALAAM SHALOM AIKIDO

In January Don Levine and in April Jamie Zimron visited Jerusalem and nearby to support the development of the initiative that began with éclat in Cyprus and was advanced so vigorously by Miles Kessler and colleagues (see [www.aiki-](http://www.aiki-extensions.org/salaamshalom.html)

[extensions.org/salaamshalom.html](http://www.aiki-extensions.org/salaamshalom.html)). During her visit, Zimron and local Salaam Shalom Aikido leaders explored a new format for the SSA initiative. Rather than insist on joint training in the same dojo, the emerging model is to link an Arab and a Jewish dojo within a half hour or less from one another. This model is being advanced by a kindred organization with which AE is developing ties, Budo for Peace, a nonprofit directed by rokudan karatedoka Danny Hakim <www.budoforpeace.org/>. The arrangement is being implemented in the Northern Galilee by members Hanna Jiryis and Julian Ravel.

AIKI SPIRIT INVADES IRAQ

Wessam Faraj presides over the Iraqi Aikido Association, a group that the AE TAB Committee has gladly agreed to assist. They envisage a slow but steady expansion of their work that will encompass five new dojos, an expansion encouraged by the recent promotion of three of their members to yudansha ranks. All they need is mats... and AE-TAB is trying to help them secure mats for three news dojos in Baghdad and two in the suburbs. Ahmed, talented art director and graphic designer <www.dpciraq.com>, guitar player, recently anointed yudansha, and fount of sizzling aiki spirit. Funds for the first set of mats were received in Baghdad in April 2006 among huzzahs and dancing. They will ground a new dojo led by Bashar Khawam. Bashar describes his condition as: “I’m sitting in dangerous zone and my old dojo is too far from my house.” So sure, why not just open a new one? Contact: <bnr_aiki2@yahoo.com>



AIKI COMMUNITY BUILDING: PALESTINE



AE visitors have hustled to encourage the growth of a quality aikido community in Palestine. The Budo for Peace model developed spontaneously as the Shuafat dojo in East Jerusalem became essentially a Palestinian Arab dojo. After a year of support, seven serious students were awarded well-deserved fifth kyu ranks by a committee consisting of senseis Jamie Zimron, Miles Kessler, Dekel Shem Tov, and Shehede Abu Remaileh.

In April Jamie Sensei spent two weeks in Israel and Palestine, teaching a class also in Ramallah, where Don Levine had taught a class on the day following the January elections. The Palestine

Aikido Federation has set its sights on dojo sites in many parts of the land.

AE Plants Roots in Ethiopia

In November 2005 a site for seeds of an aikido community in Ethiopia opened up at the Awassa Youth Campus (AYC) in the capital of the Southern Region capital, AYC is a community hub for youth, many who were orphaned by AIDS. AYC offers extracurricular programs in art, sports and music, and is home to One Love Theater, a traveling troupe that brings HIV/AIDS awareness into communities and Landmine Risk Education to UN refugee camps.

The campus draws support from a Chicago-based organization, the Awassa Children's Project (ACP), on whose Advisory Board AE President Don Levine sits. Learning that ACP was envisioning a facility with mat space, Levine encouraged the Board to dedicate that space as an aikido dojo and peace education center, to be called Awassa Peace Dojo. The Peace Dojo plans to supplement a program of two keiko classes daily with nonviolent communication training and conflict resolution resources. By wonderful coincidence, an organization devoted to conflict resolution among local groups, the Mercy Corps, moved its office next door to the campus just as it was about to open.



Key to the project is Tesfaye Tekelu (pictured above, center), a young Ethiopian who trains

youth in gymnastics, circus, and theater arts, and manages budgets for the AYC. After studying aikido through books and videos on his own, Tesfaye attended the TAB seminar at Cyprus. His work and that of his colleague Meshu is supported by American aikidoka with links to the Awassa program, by a number of Ethiopian donors, by a



grant from the Awassa Children's Project, and by Aiki Corps volunteer Mark Walsh. In June, Jamie Zimron will visit the dojo and administer their first kyu tests. The planners hope to see the Campus grow into a prototype for other youth campus' in communities in troubled regions of Africa and beyond. They work with a nonprofit based in Los Angeles, the Ethiopian Institute for Nonviolence Education and Peace Studies (www.eineps.org).

The Awassa Peace Dojo was inaugurated in February with remarks from dignitaries, aikido intro/demos, One Love Theater acts including a skit called The Aikido Kid, and ceremonial planting of a Tree for Peace by noted Ethiopian environmentalist Mengesha Workeneh and US Chargé d'affaires Vicki Huddleston.



Aiki Extensions Newsletter

Front Cover: **Iraqi aikidoka carrying mats to their new dojo in Baghdad.**

For comments, information, or submissions, write Dan Kimmel at <dan@aiki-extensions.org>.

Subscription and membership

Newsletters are sent free of charge to all AE members and associate members. They are sent to subscribers on payment of costs. To become a member or subscriber complete the questionnaire at:

<http://www.aiki-extensions.org/membership.html>

A. Regular Member.

Qualifications: Nikyu rank or above. Engagement in some activity congruent with Aiki Extensions objectives.

Benefits: Listing in Directory, copy of Directory, listing on website, AE-related links listed on website, automatic registration on AE-News listserv, invitation to join AE-Chat list-serve, communications with clusters, access to AE forums, newsletters, other publications, eligibility for AE grants, priority seating at AE conferences.

Dues: \$50 per year, payable by March 1.

B. Associate Member

Qualifications: Interest in the work of Aiki Extensions.

Benefits: Copy of Directory, automatic registration on AE-News listserv, invitation to join AE-Chat list-serve, access to AE forums, newsletters, other publications.

Dues: \$30 per year, payable by March 1.

C. Non-Member Subscriber

Anyone may view the website, subscribe from there to the AE list-serve, and receive AE publications on payment of costs.

AE Listserves

AE-News is the official listserv for announcements about AE activities. All members and associates are registered. Posting to AE-News requires administrative approval.

http://www.aiki-extensions.org/join_news.php

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