



# MOMOTARO

AIKIDO NEWSLETTER FOR KIDS VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1 - SPRING 2009

## The Tale of Momotaro

Once upon a time an old couple lived in the hill country of Okayama in Japan. The old man went everyday into the mountains to cut wood, while his wife went to the river to wash their laundry. One day the old woman was washing clothes by the riverside when a great, golden peach came floating down the river! It looked so delicious that she decided to roll it home to surprise her husband.


When the old man came home, the old woman cut the peach open. To their great surprise, a small boy leaped from inside the peach! Instantly, they loved the little boy because they had never had any children of their own. They decided to call him Momotaro, which means, "peach boy".

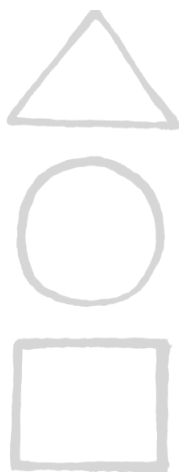
The old couple raised Momotaro well. He grew big and strong. One day he told his parents that he would leave to make his fortune. He wanted to rid the land of the horrible ogres that inhabited Ogre Island.



Though the old woman was sad to see her son leave, she fixed him some delicious *kibi-dango*, dumplings made from millet, for his journey.


As Momotaro hiked to Ogre Island, he made friends with a monkey, a dog, and a pheasant, giving each of them a dumpling for their companionship. He was glad for their company when he arrived at Ogre Island. Momotaro and his companions found that the gate to the Ogre's fort was locked, but the pheasant flew inside and found the key. Once the pheasant opened the gate, Momotaro and his friends fought fiercely with the evil ogres. The pheasant pecked their eyes, the dog bit their legs, and the monkey clawed their backs. Finally, the ogres surrendered their horde of treasure, and Momotaro returned to his village a hero. Momotaro and his parents lived happily ever after.

Momotaro is Peachtree Aikikai's mascot for personal growth and achievement. 



## The Shape of Aikido

"Aikido" translates literally as the "way of unifying the fundamental energy of the universe". It sounds a little like Obi-Wan's "Use the force!" from Star Wars, doesn't it?

Aikido uses three basic principles or shapes to unlock mental, physical, and spiritual power for peaceful resolution of conflict. Triangular movements deflect aggressive force and penetrate an attacker's weak points. Circular movements redirect the attacker. The square provides a solid, stable center. The sum of this geometric formula is aikido, which the founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba, called the Art of Peace. 



Left to right: Carter Chen, Sean Feeser, Imogen Martin, Eric Tebbel, Colin Lewis, Yebin Chae, Bess Gassman, Alexandra Burger, Calvin Gassman, George Kacharova. Photo by Keith Taylor.

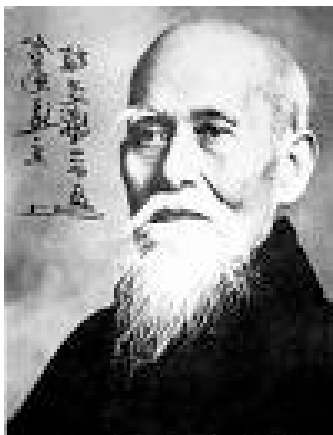


Peachtree Aikikai Chief Instructor Blue Spruell demonstrates *randori* in Romania.  
Photo by Vlad Ratiu.



Jeff Lindsay, center, instructs Colin Lewis, left, and Imogen Martin, right.  
Photo by Keith Taylor.

合気道



*To injure an opponent is to injure yourself. To control aggression without inflicting injury is the Art of Peace.*

- Morihei Ueshiba

## Sensei Says

The Chief Instructor of Peachtree Aikikai, Blue Spruell, began his Aikido training in Japan in 1988 and has over twenty-five years of experience in Japanese and other martial arts. He holds fourth degree black belts in aikido and iaido and *shido* instructor certification awarded by Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba and the United States Aikido Federation. In addition to aikido and iaido, Blue also holds a fifth degree black belt in kyudo, the Japanese longbow. Blue is a trial attorney. He owns and operates his law practice in civil litigation, The Outlaw Firm, in Decatur, Georgia, and lives with his wife Mitsuko and children, Sayer and Miya, in Atlanta, Georgia.

*If you can do it today and you continue to train then there is no reason why you can't do it always.*

- Mitsunari Kanai

Assistant Instructor Jeff Lindsay started his aikido training at Peachtree Aikikai (formerly Dogwood Aikikai) over seven years ago and earned his shodan in 2007. He is assistant instructor in the iaido and children's classes at Peachtree Aikikai, as well as the Peachtree aikido program at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he is a graduate student finishing his Ph.D. in psychology. Jeff lives in Atlanta with his wife Claire and their new daughter Mirah.



"PEACHTREE"

Illustration by Miya Spruell

## Ai-kid-o

### Top 10 Commonly Heard Kids' Class Phrases

By Lorne Feeser

10. You call that a straight line?!
9. Keep your butt in!
8. Work with someone you haven't already worked with!
7. Long stance! Longer!
6. Mae ukemi, juppon!
5. Sean, wake up!
4. Go, go! Pick a partner and get to it!
3. Who knows what this technique is called? No one?!
2. Talking does not improve this technique!
1. Bend your knees!

And the number one commonly heard phrase in the kids' classes is . . .

1. Bend your knees!



## Teaching Aikido to Children

*IS very challenging for many instructors. It's amazing that such little people can strike such fear in the hearts of so many big black belts. Games can be fun from time to time but I think the best way to teach kids aikido is simply to teach them aikido. Aikido is fun to do whether you are eight years old or eighty. It's good to see the interest being generated in children's aikido. The focus and attention being given to the youngest members of our aikido community is very heartening. After all, they are our future.*

- Peter Bernath

## Common Zense

### *The Master and His Sons*

Long ago there lived a great master of *kenjutsu* who was known all over Japan for his skill with the sword. Once, when another great master visited him, the host wanted to show his guest the lessons that he had taught his three sons. The master winked at his guest and placed a heavy metal bowl on the corner of the sliding door in such a way that the bowl would fall on the head of the first son who opened the door.

While chatting and drinking tea, the master called to his youngest son who did not come at once and, being late, opened the door in a hurry. The bowl fell and hit his head. The knock was a hard one, but before the bowl could fall to the ground, he drew his sword and, in one stroke, cut the piece of metal in two.

“This is my third and youngest son, Saburo,” said the father. “He is the baby of the family and he still has a long way to go.”



Another bowl was placed above the door and the second son was called. He entered without hesitating and only caught the bowl at the last moment: it almost landed on his head.

“This is my second son,” said the master, “he still has much to learn but he is improving every day.”

The master called to his oldest son who came immediately. Before opening the door, he felt the presence of the bowl and its position. He slowly opened the door, put his hand through the gap to catch the bowl, and continued opening the door with the other hand. Holding the metal bowl to his chest, he entered the room, shut the door behind him, and replaced the bowl. He politely greeted his father and their guest.

“This is my oldest son,” said the host smiling, “he has learned my teaching well and one day he will undoubtedly be a master of *kenjutsu*.”



*It may seem difficult at first, but everything is difficult at first.*

- Miyamoto Musashi

## Kyu Promotions

### March 28, 2009

Congratulations on stellar tests!

Sayer Spruell - 5<sup>th</sup> Kyu

Carter Chen - 6<sup>th</sup> Kyu

Lorne Feeser - 6<sup>th</sup> Kyu

Colin Lewis - 9<sup>th</sup> Kyu

Colleen Wong - 9<sup>th</sup> Kyu

George Kacharova - 10<sup>th</sup> Kyu

*Progress comes to those who train and train. Reliance on secret techniques will get you nowhere.*

- Morihei Ueshiba



Sayer Spruell demonstrates *taisabaki*.  
Jayesh Chokshi, uke.  
Photo by Keith Taylor.



# Aikido Brain Teaser

## JAPANESE WORD SEARCH

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## Upcoming Dojo Events

*April 17-18 - Spring Seminar*

Peter Bernath Shihan, Guest Instructor

*June 19-20 - Atlanta Friendship Seminar*

Yoshimitsu Yamada Shihan, Guest Instructor

*July 11 - Kyu Testing*

*December 5 - Kyu Testing & Holiday Party*



Mitsuko Spruell helps Alexandra  
Burger with her *ukemi*.  
Photo by Keith Taylor.

## About Peachtree Aikikai

Peachtree Aikikai is a traditional dojo for Japanese martial arts, dedicated to the teaching and preservation of aikido and iaido. Peachtree Aikikai is affiliated with the United States Aikido Federation under the direction of *Shihan* Yoshimitsu Yamada, a direct student of Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of aikido. Peachtree instructors are internationally ranked in black belts through the United States Aikido Federation and its headquarters in Tokyo, Japan.

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

**www.Peachtree  
Aikikai.com**

