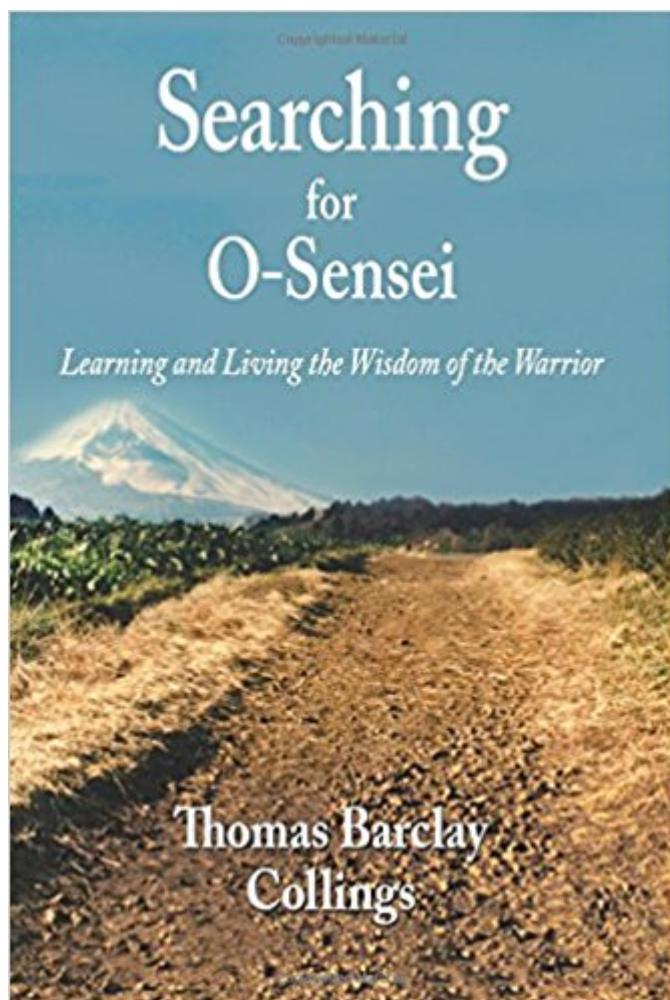


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Searching For O-Sensei: Learning And Living The Wisdom Of The Warrior



Synopsis

Whether or not you have an interest in martial arts, you will find your heart and mind stirred by Searching for O-Sensei: Learning and Living the Wisdom of the Warrior. With an engaging blend of honesty, humor, and compassion, author Thomas Collings shares his long journey of dramatic encounters with martial arts and Zen masters throughout Japan and China. Return with him to the "mean" streets of New York City where this most unusual Zen street cop must use the ancient wisdom of his teachers to survive violent situations, and resolve life or death conflicts. Searching for O-Sensei is both an engrossing memoir and a profound exploration of teachings by the martial arts legend and spiritual teacher Morihei Ueshiba, who infused tactical skills of the warrior with life changing spiritual insights. A lifelong fascination with mystical traditions of Asia takes Collings on adventures which offer a rare glimpse into the lives of several extraordinary 20th century Asian masters. After years immersed in Asian Zen, sword, and martial arts study, the author finds himself back in New York City as a law enforcement officer during the height of the crack cocaine epidemic. His daily encounters with addicts, drug dealers and parole violators test the depth of his warrior skills, wisdom, and commitment to the spiritual principles embodied by his teachers. Ride along with a peace officer caught in a violent world, using wisdom gained from "budo" training and the teachings of O-Sensei, to bring awareness and clarity to the "fog of war" that engulfed many drug infested neighborhoods during the 1980's and 90's. The reader shares in a wealth of examples how these principles can manage volatile situations and aggressive behavior. Collings also examines the exhibitionistic and "performance orientation" of modern martial arts, offering ways in which O-Sensei's "battlefield awareness" approach can refocus training on more practical skills for protection and defusing violent situations.

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Customer Reviews

Tom Collings has been trained in martial arts for forty nine years, receiving his 6th degree black belt from Moriteru Ueshiba of Hombu Dojo, Tokyo in 2007. He moved to Japan after earning his first black belt in 1976, spending several years studying aikido, sword, and Zen. He has subsequently returned five times to Japan and China for further research. He continues daily training in live blade iaido, aiki budo, aikido, tai chi-qigong, zazen and mindfulness meditation. His background includes uchi deshi (resident martial arts student) Buddhist monk, NY State Police instructor, peace officer, parole officer, mental health & drug counselor, supervisor at an adolescent detention center, and part time monastery pot washer (his area of self described "mastery".)

Thank you Collings Sensei for writing such an enjoyable and great book, it opens windows to a past unknown by many, a past seldom discussed, an important past to know, specially to the new Aikido generations. I had the pleasure of attending a seminar with Sensei Collings in the East Coast, his class was great, but the stories he shared with us after Keiko were awesome! To my delight, Saito Sensei's especial Doctor story is included in this book, you don't want to miss it. This book is the journey of a young man discovering Budo and his path in life. I wish there were more Sensei like Sensei Collings, willing to challenge you and grow as a person. I learned a lot reading this book, it left me wanting for more. It may be the wisdom acquired through years on the mat and the way he shares it, or his experiences as a "Peace Officer on New York's mean streets", or just the way Colling's Sensei is that you feel you are talking to a close friend that has been away on a long journey. The book has a little bit of everything. The book is great, the section of what training was with famous Aikido masters, many of them no longer with us, was awesome. The part describing his experience at Iwama with Saito Sensei was just great. The book is 337 pages long, it is a fast read. It contains eight chapters, plus a Glossary of Budo terms and references. Here is a list of the book's chapters:1) Finding the path2) Searching for O'Sensei in Japan3) Searching for O'Sensei in Iwama4) Searching in China5) Back in America - Living Budo6) In the shadow of the twin towers7) Modern warriors and peace makers8) Training and teaching with integrity9) Glossary of Budo Terms10) ReferencesI ordered a couple for friends and my old Senseis. Enjoy it!

One of the most enjoyable and informative books on the Aikido experience I have had the pleasure

to read. I own and have read dozens of aikido books and this one ranks very near the top. Unlike many aikido books, it is not a how-to based tutorial. Rather, it is a biographical sketch of one man's aikido odyssey. And what an adventure it is! Sensei Collings made life choices that created opportunities few Americans will be able to replicate. He trained with most of the notable figures in Aikido history and his remembrances of those times give us a glimpse into a world no longer accessible. We need more aikidoka from that era to share their experiences as well. As a Marine, I lived in Japan a total of eight years. Unfortunately, aikido was not part of my world then. Having read this book, I now feel the loss of what might have been. Having read this book, I am at least able to vicariously experience it through the eyes (and words) of a master teacher and master story teller. Every serious martial artist (of any style) can benefit from reading this book. Every Aikido practitioner MUST read this book. Domo Arigato Gozaimashita Sensei Collings...

This is probably my 2nd or 3rd favorite expose on martial arts, period (OK, I forget how many books by Ellis Amdur I've read...but right behind all of them). Unflinchingly honest, not too didactic, and written in a very readable style - I would recommend this book to anyone who does martial arts in general, and Japanese arts in particular. The author does a very good job of not only bringing to bear the technical aspects of aikido, and where they do and don't apply, but also the modern reality of violence in general, which far too many MA books just leave on the shelf. How it affect the psyche, the one's around you, and how quickly it can be snipped out, are all fair game in this book. If you care about honesty in the martial arts, get this book.

This is an amazing book that describes the path of Aikido Training in the eyes of Sensei Collings which all students of Aikido would benefit from his insight. As a past student of Sensei Collings, and the many lessons he taught me in Aikido it is definitely a must read not only for the person who is studying Aikido but also for enlightenment in everyday life.

Amazing stories from someone that has explored and applied the principals learnt on the mat into his life. Obviously very few senseis left on planet earth that match his resume and depth of knowledge regarding Aikido and budo in general. Reading the book makes you feel like you are stepping into the main character of the book and you kind of wish to be training in that period of Japan with all these great beings. Many humorous and inspiring stories. A MUST read for all martial artists. Can we get a sequel? Thank you!

Feel blessed to have known the few Aikido teachers in my brief life thus far, and Sensei Collings book gives much insight into his unique teaching style and how it is possible to bring the subtle and illusive concepts of aikido/ meditation into actual living. The book is a fresh, humorous and informative book for the aikido practitioner or not and reads easily with many places to stop and have a good belly laugh, while simultaneously letting you feel the invigoration felt in presence of amazing Sensei and real life situations. LETS TRAIN!!

As close as one can get to meeting O-Sensei and his direct Aikido lineage. Sensei Collings is the real deal, not only is he a great practitioner, he is a pretty darn good story teller. Highly recommend this book regardless of aikido experience!

I had the unique pleasure of training in Aikido with Sensei Collings when he paid a visit to my Dojo & enjoyed the informal well written manner of his story telling. His insights & experiences are both though provoking & require serious considerations...Thank You.

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