



Editor's Note

By Chris Earl

Thanks to Atsushi Takahashi and an anonymous fireman for newsletter content this month!

Deadline for the January / February issue is January 20th 2002. Submissions can be handwritten, on diskette as Microsoft Word or text file or you can email me at cearl@odyssey.on.ca

Next Test Dates

Carling Heights

Adults: Thursday January 31st, 2002 (to be confirmed)

Upcoming Events

Children's Party! Saturday December 15th 2001

Ando Tsuneo Shihan @ Seidokan Feb 22-24th 2002 Fees: Advanced registration \$30 per clinic, \$60 day (Sat/Sun) \$140 for weekend

Location: Seidokan Dojo, 42 Mill Street, Ontario. Contact: 905-873-3080 or on the web at <http://www.HaltonHillsAikido.com>



Congratulations to Derek Bindner and Steve Chau for surviving their Nidan test!

My First Aikido Seminar

by

Atsushi Takahashi

Around new years 2000, I was feeling less than fit and decided to join a 24 hour gym. In the four months that I was a member, I ended up going only three times. Working out in a gym wasn't my sort of activity. One day, I happened to be walking around a Barnes and Noble bookstore and I spotted a book on a display with two empty martial arts uniforms attacking each other. The book was entitled, "Angry White Pajamas" and written by Robert Twigger, an Oxford graduate who decided to take the Tokyo Riot Police Aikido course. While flipping through the book, the first chapter reminded me of the time I spent living and working in Tokyo. I believe the book caused some to take offense but I thought it was written with tongue so firmly in cheek that it was hard to take seriously at all. While reading the book, I remembered some friends talking about what a wonderful philosophy aikido has and decided to try it out.

I went to an open house at the "Choshinkan" dojo in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and was immediately fascinated by the flowing, graceful blending and throwing I saw. It was nothing like karate or judo I had studied as a child. I returned for the next beginners' class and had my first Aikido lesson on May 15, 2000. The first three lessons are one-on-one with an experienced student. I learned the secret Aikido handshake, the concepts of the unbendable arm and the unliftable body as well as some basic ukemi.

About two months later, I went to my first Aikido seminar in Greensboro, about an hour away from where I lived. The dojo I joined was part of the Aikido Association of America (AAA) and the founder, Fumio Toyoda-shihan was to teach with a special guest instructor Yasuo Kobayashi, an eighth dan from Japan who studied directly under O-sensei. I barely

knew left from right (I still don't) but I managed to enjoy the seminar. The first evening, there was a "Meet the Shihans" function and people were encouraged to ask questions about Aikido or anything they wanted. Kobayashi-shihan's English was limited so Toyoda-shihan translated. Somebody asked Kobayashi-shihan, "Do you have any interesting anecdotes about Toyoda-shihan when he was an uchi-deshi (live-in student)?" There was some doubt as to whether Toyoda-shihan would translate without changing the content so my own instructor, immediately volunteered my services as a translator. The story was that the young uchi-deshi Toyoda-san was an excellent aikidoka and his technique was strong both in the dojo and outside. In fact, when Dosho Kishomaru Ueshiba found out that he was "testing" his techniques outside, Kobayashi-san was sent to escort his colleague and prevent him from getting into trouble outside the dojo. I was told that Toyoda-shihan made some "corrections" to my translations the next night when I wasn't around.

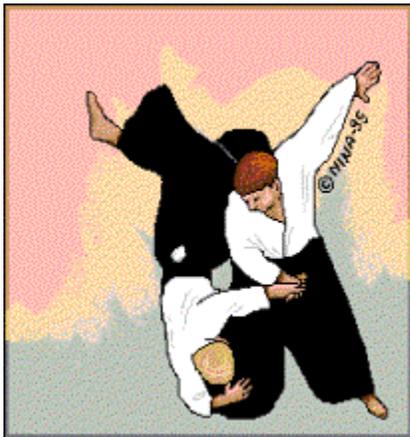
The next day, I met Toyoda-shihan in the cafeteria and he asked me to come and sit with him. I talked to him in Japanese

for a while and he said he had something very important to tell me. He left Japan about 20 years ago much as my dad had. In addition to teaching Aikido, part of his organization was involved in promoting Japanese culture and tradition. He said it was very hard to maintain the culture so far away from its source. He said it meant a lot to him that these Americans were reaching out to learn aikido and helping carry on Japanese traditions, even though they "look like penguins" walking around in hakama. He said passports are just a form of ID and the cultural identity is important to maintain. He looked at me, very seriously, and in Japanese, said, "I'm counting on you to carry on the Japanese culture and traditions." He then bowed deeply and sincerely to me. I was very surprised because in Japan, age and social status are extremely important and bowing so deeply to someone younger and less experienced cannot be taken lightly. What has made this event even more

poignant is that Toyoda-shihan passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on July 4, 2001, less than a year after giving me this task. I have been to a few seminars since the one in Greensboro but none have been as memorable.

I have since moved to London and joined the Aiki Budo Centre to continue this quest to learn more about my heritage, improve my aikido and to perhaps learn to differentiate left from right. I miss my friends at the dojo in North Carolina but I feel very welcome by my new friends in London.

Yoroshiku onegai shimasu.



Ten Ways to frustrate a Fire Fighter.

10. Park your car in front of a Fire Hydrant. If your car is between the hydrant and the fire, the hose might be routed through the side windows (we won't wait for you to open them for us).

9. Paint the Fire Hydrant in front of your house green to match your lawn. Thanks anyway, but that ugly yellow is easier to spot when smoke is blanketing the street like a thick grey fog.

8. Mask the Fire Hydrant in front of your house with bushes, plants, trees, or other green vegetation. Better than green paint! Greatly enhances snow build-up. Springy bushes around hydrants greatly increases difficulty of snow removal. Extra bonus points for planting thorny long stem rose bushes!

7. Request that the City move the Fire Hydrant on your front lawn into someone else's back yard. It was there before you moved in. No, the City doesn't move them around so that everybody has a turn!

6. Shovel the snow from your driveway onto the fire hydrant.
Bury it really deep, so that the heat from your house burning to the ground is needed to melt all the snow.

5. Pile garbage, yard waste, leaves, and discarded furniture around and on top of the hydrant. Every fire fighter loves a good game of hide & seek.
For an added challenge provide yellow rain coats to any young children watching the action.

4. Call the Police to file trespassing charges when Fire Fighters or neighbours keep the fire hydrant clear of snow.
"Your hydrant" is only a figure of speech.

3. Park your car in a fire route.
Be sure to testify in court that it was only for a minute.
Look annoyed when the truck sirens interfere with your cell phone calls. "What ambulance?" (Really! That's what they said!)

2. Ask every Fire Fighter going into a high-rise building with alarm bells ringing. "Is there really a fire?" Or "Should we leave the building?" We'll let you know after we look. You shouldn't need to ask.

And sadly, the easiest way to frustrate a Fire Fighter...

1. Remove the battery in your smoke detector for use in the TV remote control. If it's that important to you, call 911 and we'll see if we can spare someone to come over and change the channel for you!



For those of us struggling through Jo Solo # 1 this might give you a smile! Thanks to www.aikidofaq.com!

Aiki Budo Centre North

**Carling Heights Community Optimist Centre
entrance off McMahan St.**

Tuesday	6:15 p.m. to 6:55 p.m.	Children
	7:00 p.m. to 7:50 p.m.	Adults – Beginners and 9 th kyu
	7:55 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	Adults – 8 th , 7 th , 6 th kyu
	9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	Adults – 5 th kyu and above
Thursday	7:00 p.m. to 7:50 p.m.	Adults – Beginners, 9 th and 8 th kyu
	7:55 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	Adults – 8 th , 7 th , 6 th and 5 th kyu
	9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	Adults – 5 th kyu and above
Saturday	9:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m.	Children
	10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Adults – Open class
	11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon	Adults - Weapons

Aiki Budo Centre South

**Extreme Martial Arts
2454 Main St., Lambeth, Ontario, Canada
Phone: (519) 652-9888**

Monday	8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	Adults
Tuesday	12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.	Adults
	6:15 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.	Children
	7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Adults
	8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	Adults
Wednesday	7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Adults
Thursday	12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.	Adults
	7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Adults
	8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	Adults
Saturday	9:15 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.	Children
	12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.	Adults