



# Aiki Budo Centre Newsletter

(Feb-March 2003)

## Adult Class Times Aiki Budo North

### Monday

6:30-8pm Adolescents 12 & Older with  
Adult Participation

### Tuesday

7-8pm PUC/Beginners Class  
8-9pm Intermediate Belt Levels  
9-10pm Instructor Training

### Wednesday

6:30-8pm Adults Open Class

### Thursday

7-8pm Beginners Class  
8-9pm Intermediate & Advanced  
Level Class

### Friday

Weapons Training to be announced

### Saturday

10-11am Adult Open Class  
11-12noon Weapons Training

## Instructors

Jaime Sheppard	3rd Dan
Steven Chau	2nd Dan
Greg Gruninger	2nd Dan
Paul Lepine	1st Dan
Christine Earl	1st Dan
Candice Lawrence	1st Dan
Jon Oaker	1st Dan
Therese Pickersgill	1st Dan

*Class Cancellations, Photo's,  
Upcoming Clinics and more...  
Check us out on the Web!  
[www.aikido.on.ca](http://www.aikido.on.ca)*



## EDITOR'S NOTE

(by Jon Oaker)

### Upcoming Events

Man are there ever a mess of these! So many, in fact that you'll find a box of them on page 4.

### Other Business

Every Friday at noon Sempai Christine runs a weapons class. My understanding is that she teaches a mix of traditional Aikido weapons stuff and kenjitsu. This is a great opportunity for those of us unlucky enough to be pulling shifts that make this time available. Not only are weapons a gas but they are a great way to hone technique.

We have a line of highly fashionable clothing and accessories currently being handled by John Clifflen so if you are suddenly in need of a really cool T-shirt go find him to see what's available.

Congratulations to our last crowd of testees and have faith... spring is coming!

## **Full Circle**

By Hiro Ishihara

I have been with the Aiki Budo Center Aikido school for a year and half. I would like to share my brief history of martial arts experience and what it means to me with friends in this school.

I was born and raised in Tokyo, Japan. My first martial arts training started in my high school days. Though I was interested in hand-to-hand combat skills, I was too intimidated to get into Judo or Karate. I was not confident with my physical strength. Agility was the only trait I was confident in. In my mind, Kendo was the perfect martial art for agility. However, Judo was required in physical education in my high school thus I spent three years at high school studying both Kendo and Judo. Most of my Ukemi skills came from this Judo training.

After high school, I went to school in Texas, USA for my post-secondary education. There was no Kendo school in the area. There went two years without any martial arts training. Due to my language difficulty, I spent summers catching up in course credits for the first two years. In my third year, I decided to take a break and spent the whole summer back in Japan. It was then I was introduced to Aikido. I spent a couple of months during that summer studying Aikido at Aiki-kai honbu dojo. When I returned to school after the summer, I looked for an Aikido school. There was no Aikido school that I could find. I joined a martial arts school where people studied techniques similar to Aikido. The martial art was supposed to be a mixture of Okinawan Karate and Chinese Kung Fu. I spent three years studying this martial art.

Upon the completion of my schoolwork, I returned to Tokyo. It took me a couple of years before I resumed the study of martial arts again. With three years of training in Karate/Kung Fu, I chose to join a Wado style Karate school. However, my wife and I decided to move to Canada shortly after I joined this Karate school. After moving to Canada, I joined a Go-Ju style Karate school. About a year after I joined this Karate school, my wife and I had our first child, our son. At the time, I decided that I needed to focus on my job and family. I decided that I had no time for studying martial arts.

When my son turned to age five, my job and family situation were even more hectic than ever. My wife and I had three more girls, three years old and twin newly born babies by then. Though I was really happy with my job and family, I felt something was missing. I felt as if I was losing my self-identity and all that was left for me would be nothing but my children.

Since I was a teenager, the study of martial arts was the source of confidence and self-esteem, as well as physical wellness. I knew I needed martial arts back in

my life. After months of research, I found Aiki Budo Center. The keys to my study of martial arts are the skills taught in the class and the people who study them. I found the right martial arts school at Aiki Budo Center.

My journey of studying martial arts started over 20 years ago. Though I found Aikido within the first 5 years, my circumstances led me to study other martial arts. Over 15 years later, I found Aikido again. Full circle. This full circle is not the end of my journey of studying martial arts. This is the beginning of a new journey. Last fall, I took my son to his first class of Aikido. He had so much fun and is looking forward to the class every week. Now, Aikido became a father and son activity for us.

There is so much I have learned from the study of martial arts. Now I can help my son to start his journey in martial arts study. Through Aikido, I hope he will find the study of martial arts to be as resourceful as it has been to me.

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### **Upcoming Aikido Seminar**

Submitted by Atsushi Takahashi

Aiki Budo Centre will be hosting a seminar with **Hiroshi Tajiri** sensei (godan) on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2003 from 9-12 and from 2-4pm. I had the pleasure of training with Tajiri- The sensei while I lived in North Carolina. He has a great sense of humour and teaches a very dynamic, flowing style of Aikido. The style of Aikido he teaches was started by Fumio Toyoda-shihan and is called "Aikido Association of America." You can find out more about the late Toyoda-shihan and this organization by going to the AAA website at <http://www.aaa-aikido.com/>. I have copied Tajiri-sensei's biography from his website at <http://www.seibukan-aiki.com/>

#### **Hiroshi Tajiri-sensei, Chief Instructor Seibukan Dojo**

Raleigh, North Carolina

**Hiroshi Tajiri-sensei**, 5th dan, shihandai, has been practicing Aikido for over 30 years, beginning at the age of 17 at the Seibukan Budo Dojo in Kyoto, Japan. Tajiri-sensei moved to Chicago in 1973 and became an uchideshi (live-in student) of Fumio Toyoda-shihan (then the chief instructor of the Chicago Ki Society). He has continued to study under Toyoda-shihan and is currently one of the Aikido Association of America's senior instructors. He serves on the National Teaching Committee and has conducted numerous Aikido classes and seminars around the world. He is also a certified self-defense instructor and teaches law-enforcement personnel, including members of the North Carolina Highway Patrol, police department and correction department. He is also accomplished iaido, jodo and practices Zen meditation.

## Uke

By Phil Lantz

I sit here on a Tuesday night at the 8:00pm class thinking about writing something for the next Aikido newsletter; watching our students from White belts up to Black, and what I see before me brings to mind that Old Aikido saying, “better a good Uke than a good Shitei.”

So sitting here watching so many people work so hard, I think, “Should be a simple enough topic!” (I’ll do my best to keep this simple).

O Sensei, the founder of our art, said many, many things; but when it comes to the importance of being a good Uke, two jump out at me:

1) “the use of Aikido is to bring ourselves into accord with the universe.” And

2) “to learn Aikido is to learn to make one’s heart the heart of the universe.”



(Illustration courtesy Aikido FAQ)

Most of O Sensei’s written thoughts are about blending and harmony. This is the pinnacle of what our Art, and we also, can be. I don’t know how many times I’ve seen Black Belts being attacked and at the last moment move in and blend or flow with their assailant to control them. It looks so easy, like dancing, and yet I can’t help but think, (other than “that’s gonna hurt”), that they cannot achieve such a powerful efficiency with such a flowing grace and minimal energy unless they understand, intuitively, how important being a good Uke really is.

Inoue Shihan (9th Dan, Honbu Dojo) said that the Western mind comes to learning Aikido in 2 ways. Either we enter into learning with the fear that we will hurt someone as we learn the techniques or it’s power all the way. Either way, somewhere on your Aikido journey you’ll come face to face with this mindset and have to find out what is right for you. I have found that most people who are of the 1st mindset tend to deal with it around 6th Kyu to 4th. Those who like power and control, 2nd or 1st Kyu.

Which is better? I don’t know... However, I do know that being the best Uke you can will really help your training with either mindset.

The ‘fear of hurting someone’ type of person is generally aware of their own space and touch. In Aikido we spend quite a bit of time touching strange people. (I know! I’m one to call others strange?) But we do touch a lot and this helps us to trust, to relax, and ultimately to learn a form of flowing in our thoughts. Later, it will come in handy when you get to 6 – 4th Kyu, where you’ll come face to face with that power issue. If you work hard to be a Good Uke, that relaxed form of flowing thought will help you to take a seemingly mental obstacle and use it as springboard to better Aikido and Confidence. (As you can probably tell, I’m with this group!)

The ‘Power all the Way’ mindset also cannot afford to not work on being a Good Uke.

The Power person loves being shitei, (enough said). However, by the time they are getting close to 1st or 2nd Kyu they now have work on gentleness; blending and flowing with their partners.

It is considered a great compliment to make mention of how gentle a technique is applied by a brown belt (stripes optional). This shows how relaxed they are, how well they can read your body, how well they can connect with your energy. One who has achieved this rank without being a good Uke will hit a wall. One cannot blend and flow with the situation as necessary when one can only see the situation as needing control. Control is very single purpose, and situations generally aren’t. By working at being a Good Uke, one sees the situation and learns to take into consideration others. If one can see from the standpoint of others, then one can understand what is fully going on; when to assert control, and when not too. By working at being a Good Uke, the Power person becomes a more balanced person. Not only in Aikido, but also in life

Too often, people think being a Good Uke is nothing more than relaxing when being thrown or putting up with a little more pain. Though this is fundamentally true, there is a deeper lesson for all of us who take Aikido. A mental and emotional lesson that we gradually learn each time we come to Aikido. Just like putting a puzzle together a piece per day, it takes a while, but every once in a while a part of it comes together and we see a bit more of the big picture. I cannot stress enough the joy of this moment. Your Aikido rounds out, you see things anew as the first time, you feel more joy with the simplest techniques, it colours everything in your life, and you learn to do techniques from touch, not just sight.

Here are some things you can practice that will help in your search to be a good uke: Use your body to stretch out your mind. Don’t look at the warm ups as just that, use them. Breakfalls are a good regulator of how you’re doing. Ukes do a lot of breakfalls. Try this idea, I find it really helps; become rubber. Become so rubbery that your bum meeting your heels is a natural occurrence. Now, add breathing out your mouth as you go down and Breathing in through your nose going up. Remember, relax, you are rubber coming up too.

Another thing, Give it! Give it! Give it means, that if the technique calls for a push or pull then do so, and do it right. If you don’t, then you aren’t helping anyone to learn anything. But on the other hand, don’t get so hung up with applying force that Shitei must use muscle. Too often I see Ukes resist to the point where Shitei and Uke are using muscle to do a technique. In the real world, this is called Arm Wrestling! Being a Good Uke is about blending for both...

Third and lastly, Think realistically about the technique. Think, “how would a person in the real world physically react to this technique being done to them?” Then be that! If someone out on the street was having a technique done on them, they would probably pull away at a point in the technique where Shitei would enter. Lets say you don’t pull away so shitei has to use a little more muscle which makes it hard for them to keep a good Kamae. In this situation, nobody wins.

Aikido is about a Win/Win situation. How we all can learn and gain, and nobody loses. It’s not a perfect world but, this is as close as we may come to it. So make it the best for yourself and for others.....

But most of all, Be a Good Uke.

## But It's Not At All What I Expected

By Jon Oaker

I wish to propose a new physical law... Let's call it 'Oaker's first law of reasonable fantasy'. Basically it would state that in a properly run universe some stereotypes are so powerful that they should be exempt from reality. It should not be possible, for example, for a Hollywood sex siren to appear looking like my wife or mother (regardless of how drop dead gorgeous they may be ... *hi mom*), nor should it be possible for a suave leading man type to belch or get a zit. But most of all... martial artists should be cool!!!!

Last night I had one of those thoroughly debauched bachelor type evenings; the dancing girls cancelled at the last minute so I got to spend quality time with my VCR and fridge... Christopher Lambert... very cool guy with a very cool coat, running about chopping down monsters and back-flipping through barbarian hordes to rescue the suitably buxom heroine. Cool stuff, I don't think he even broke a sweat! Even though he rides a horse like someone crazy glued his butt to the saddle, he made it look like he was sedately walking his horse through the aforementioned hordes because he was just way too cool to hurry.

And then... gasp... reality! (man I hate mornings for that reason)... A thoroughly pleasant morning... a bit of training, watch my daughter swim, and then observe as sensei Miller tenderized a couple of our members...

### Women's Aikido Weekend

Featuring **Chizuko Matsuo Sensei 6<sup>th</sup> dan**

Hosted by **Aiki Budo Center**

#### Schedule of events:

Sat. June 14<sup>th</sup>: 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  
1:30 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.  
Sat. June 14<sup>th</sup> evening: pot luck, BBQ & swim  
Sun. June 15<sup>th</sup>: 10:00a.m. til noon  
Afternoon gathering

Cost: \$45.00 for the full weekend  
\$35.00 for Saturday (a.m. & p.m.)  
\$20.00 for Sunday

Open to women 12 years and up (under 18 with parental permission)

For more info or to volunteer to help; contact Sempai Candice at [ashika1@rogers.ca](mailto:ashika1@rogers.ca)

Cooooo!!... a modern day swordsman... You could almost picture him cleaving his way through a battlefield full of baddies, his movements a lethal blend of grace and power... cool!....

THE MAN DRIVES A STATION WAGON!!!!...

It's bad enough that he doesn't wear a floor length leather coat... but a station wagon?!

And then I got to thinking of all the highly trained and skilled martial artists that I have had the honour to either observe or train with over the years and how beyond all logic they somehow still manage to catch their toes in mat cracks. I've watched sensei's Sheppard and Hennessey, both skilled in a variety of martial arts and have yet to see them or any other martial artist practicing back handsprings. I have even (and this is the gospel truth) seen Terada sensei smile, wave, and then (Horror of uncool horrors) make a face at a child!

Sigh... there are things in life one should be able to depend on...

### Upcoming Events

Saturday March 15, 2003

**Hiroshi Tajiri Sensei Godan** (see page 2)

9:00 – 12:00

2:00-4:00

Cost; morning clinic 20.00 afternoon clinic

15.00 both 30.00

April 2<sup>nd</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup>

**Sensei Amos Parker Shihan**

April 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>

Yasuhiza Shioda 8<sup>th</sup> dan

(yes the name should ring a bell)

Seidokan dojo, Georgetown

June 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>

Aiki Budo Centre will host a women's aikido weekend featuring **Chizuko Matsuo Sensei**

June 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>

Weekend clinic with **Terada Sensei** at Western (Much more info to follow)