



# Aiki Budo Centre Newsletter

## (June 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

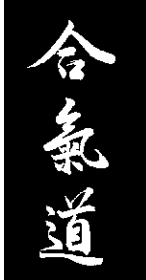
**Friday**  
Weapons Training to be announced

**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)

Summer is rapidly waning and I gather from the number of people who have subtly been asking after our newsletter that it's about time that I started cracking the whip at my cracker-jack editorial staff...(I won't actually hit him as he tends to whine!) to actually produce something!

Big happenings over the last few (several?... many?) months.

We had our first aiki marriage! As you can see from the picture above; the bride was radiant (as she should be) and the groom was cute as a button too! Since this event they along with a number of other brown belts have a bit more spring in their steps as they are all a couple of strips of tape lighter.

Congrats to them all, as well as to all those who tested for various levels of orange. The tests were **all very impressive!**

We all survived and learned from visits from Terada Sensei, Parker Sensei, and Chizuko Sensei. Which gives me a nice segue to pass along major congratulations to all those involved in the Chizuko Sensei clinic. I was especially impressed with the security staff who managed to successfully penetrate Sempai Steve's clever grapefruit disguise!

In conclusion; let's all have an equally successful autumn and hope that Sempai Jim's new belt starts to look a tad less perky!

## Tumbling Stones along the River Bottom

By Hiro Ishihara

During the recent seminar in April, Parker Shihan taught us many things. I remember his teaching on the fine-tuning of techniques and Dojo manners. From his teachings, one phrase made a big impression on me. That was his saying “practice, practice, . . . practice.” This reminded me of a story I learned as a child.

The stones on the riversides are usually very smooth and rounded. Some stones are even shiny. I remember that as a child I used to look for a perfectly shaped, smooth and shiny stone for my treasure when I went to riversides. There are a lot of stones along riversides, but none of them are the same.

In my science class, my teacher explained to me how those stones along the riversides became rounded. At the beginning, none of those stones were rounded or smooth. The stones were carried from the upper streams by water. As they were carried downstream, they tumbled along the bottom of the rivers. It was this tumbling motion in the water, which made those stones nicely rounded and smooth over the years. It took many, many years, hundreds or maybe even thousands of years.

Whenever I learn something new such as an Aikido technique, I always remember this story of stones along the riversides. Especially when I feel awkward with new moves, new postures or I feel I have no idea what I am doing, this is the story I remember. I keep telling myself that it will come to me with repetition. I keep telling myself that I am a tumbling stone along the river bottom. This story usually helps me to stay positive about learning new techniques. I try to use this story to encourage myself to practice more rather than feel bad about the awkwardness. Of course, it is easier said than done. I know that.

I am not exactly sure how I made this connection between the story of the tumbling stones and my learning experience. Perhaps one of my teachers encouraged me to visualize myself as a tumbling stone. If I want to make it nice and smooth, I need to keep tumbling.

When I started attending the children’s Aikido class, this concept became very clear to me. I have witnessed many kids start with an awkward front roll. Weeks later, they grew more comfortable with their rolling. Weeks later again, they began to roll smoothly, just like tumbling stones getting smoother as they tumbled more and more. It is interesting that the concept of tumbling stones can be readily visualized in Aikido class. Everybody is tumbling around on the mat. Everybody practices the same techniques, but nobody executes the technique in exactly same way.

Of course mere thoughtless, careless repetition will not yield good results. You may still get smoothness from repetitive efforts but the result may be oddly deformed such as odd-shaped stones along the riversides. I don’t know what exactly causes these odd shapes. In terms of learning skills, I believe that it is the lack of proper teaching, which causes deformity in skills. Without proper guidance or teaching, one may pick up bad habits easily.

Everybody knows that we cannot expect perfection from the beginning. I believe that we cannot expect improvement without repeated practice. No matter how good a teacher may be, we cannot expect improvement without repeated practice. Good teachers can help us to improve our skills in proper ways. Good teachers may even help us to accelerate our learning speed, but not without our own efforts and repetition.

By the way, my last name “Ishihara” is constituted from two Chinese characters. “Ishi” means stone, and “Hara” means field. No wonder I liked the story of stones along the riversides. It is just like my family signature.

To submit articles for the newsletter either give them to Jon Oaker or e-mail them to [cat.halloaker@sympatico.ca](mailto:cat.halloaker@sympatico.ca)

## Hello from Japan

Hi,

I hope everyone is well. We definitely are. Since we arrived at Narita Airport one month ago, we have had a great time. I just wanted to tell you about what we have done so far.

First, and most importantly, the food. On the first night we were here, our hosts, Steve and Yves-Eric, took us out for "sashimi". Sashimi is raw sea residents. They ordered a platter of stuff that came with most of a fish on it (along with other sea creatures). When it arrived, Yves-Eric said that the fish might still move a little. That's how fresh it was. Thank God it didn't, I probably would have screamed and then not been able to eat anymore food. I almost forgot, on the sashimi night we also ate chicken cartilage. It was really weird. Not weird tasting because it didn't really have a taste but the texture was unlike anything I've ever tried to eat. Now in no particular order, I will describe the other Japanese food that we have had.

"Ramen" is noodles. The way we had it was in a broth with seaweed and pieces of pork on top. It was good but very filling. I couldn't finish it.

"Shabu-shabu" is boiled meat. When you get there they bring you a pot of boiling water, sauce, or oil. We had water. You order the meat and/or veggies that you want and they bring it to you raw. The veggies are put in the water to add flavour, make it more like soup. So you get to hold on to a piece of meat with chopsticks while swirling it around in boiling water. Sounds pretty simple, doesn't it? Shabu-shabu is good, but not my favourite.

"Yakiniku" is grilled meat. Similar to shabu-shabu in that you cook it yourself. They bring you a grill with hot coals under it. The meat is raw and you grill it yourself. After it is grilled, you can dip it in sauce and eat it or you can make a "lettuce taco" with it. A lettuce taco consists of rice, sauce, and meat all wrapped in a lettuce leaf. Yakiniku is my absolute favourite so far.

In addition to Japanese food we have had: McDonald's, tacos, pizza, KFC, Thai, and instant noodles. Also, the chips have some very weird flavours: taco, pizza, hamburger, shrimp, and I'm sure many others but I don't remember.

The best drink we've had so far is called "calpis". When it is said out loud, it doesn't sound very good (cow piss) but it is. Yves-Eric told us that most "gaijin" (foreigners) don't like it but that is the only thing that we drink at The Royal Host - which is where we get our tacos.

In addition to eating, we are learning the train system quite well. Except for those people who have a bike or car, everybody takes the trains. As a result, we are learning some of the Kanji for the stations. That helps a lot but we still have to compare the "squiggly lines" on our paper to those on the fare map.

We have done some aikido as well. It is very different training here because it is so incredibly humid. Halfway through the warm up everybody is pouring sweat. It is a lot of fun though. The training is harder, which is good. It forces the techniques to be done for real which actually makes them easier to do because everyone commits to their attack.

We went to the movies a couple of weeks ago. We saw the Matrix Reloaded, for the second time because movies come out much later in Japan than they do in Canada. It cost 1800 yen (about \$20) just to get in. Everything is so expensive here, it's crazy. The pizza is pretty insane too, not just the toppings either. For two medium pizzas (about the size of a small pizza in Canada) it cost about \$65! About the only thing that is cheap here is a basic McDonald's hamburger, 59yen.

On the job front, we have been working for school called "Star Light English Club" for about a week. It is a good job in that it pays 3500 yen/hour (that's about \$40) + transportation, but it requires travelling all over Tokyo so it is very exhausting. On any given day, we could work for 6 hours which means leaving between 7:00 and 8:00 in the morning and not returning home till after 10:00 at night. So, we are still looking for more steady work (one location all the time).

I think that about covers it. Again, I hope everybody is well.

Take care,

Therese

### ADMINISTRATIVE STUFF

Some new responsibilities have been assumed

Doug Glover: Membership

Susan Butler: Attendance

Catherine Glover: Advertising

**Turning a Dream into Reality** by Candice Lawrence

Chizuko Matsuo Sensei's visit to AB North was inspirational, enjoyable and fun. It was a dream come true. When I first watched her brief demonstration at my first Aikido clinic in 1999, I began to believe that maybe I could actually do this thing called "aikido". I knew that I wanted to learn more from this extraordinary woman. I also believe in turning dreams into reality.

I was happy to see that women and young girls had the opportunity of learning from one of Yoshinkan Aikido's best, a positive and excellent example of one of the finest Senseis that I have had the pleasure of meeting. Saturday's sessions included a variety of techniques, as well as basic exercises which form the foundations of movement for the beginnings of katata mochi ni techniques, energy comes in via Uke pushing your wrist, you pivot in response to the energy, bringing Uke around. We were taught a few of Terada Sensei's favourite techniques, and also honed our skills in Ikkajo, Nikajo, Sankajo and Yonkajo techniques.

Sunday's session was especially useful, with Chizuko Sensei focussing almost entirely on self-defense techniques that women could use in real life situations. For example, she taught us ways to respond when someone comes up and grabs you from behind, or puts his arm around you, or tries to grab your arm or shoulder. Sunday's session was much more free-flowing as we learned how to use our timing, instincts and hone our reflexive responses to unwanted advances from those who may seek to harm us. I have heard positive feedback from almost everyone about her easy manner of teaching, her aikido abilities, and her desire to share her knowledge with all.

We were fortunate to have her with us for an entire weekend, and I was happy to see that many of the men who chose to come on the Monday evening, also enjoyed themselves immensely. Monday's session was also an excellent workout, and refining of a variety of techniques, including one of my favourites, ushiro waza eri mochi irimi nage (well I think that's the name?) Sensei?

I am impressed by this woman's spirit, strength and openness to new challenges.

This 6th Dan Sensei came over to Canada from Japan, at the invitation of a woman she barely knew, to teach aikido. On the mat, and off, Chizuko Sensei possesses a rare gift. She is a born teacher. I learned almost as much about Japanese cooking, language, eating with chopsticks and how to drink tea "properly" as I did about aikido! More importantly, I learned that new friendships can be formed between

two people from vastly different cultures, simply by a desire to communicate, and a willingness on the part of both people to open their hearts and minds to learning about and from each other.

Chizuko Sensei recently graded to 6th Dan. She has devoted a large part of her life to the study of aikido. To this day, she still receives instruction from Terada Sensei once every week, has been doing Aikido for over 30 years, runs her own Dojo in Japan, and teaches 6 days per week. She is continually learning from someone who was there as O'Sensei's student, only 3 removed from the originator of Aikido, bringing us closer to the fountain from which this knowledge came. These are amazing credentials for any visiting Sensei, and deserve great respect. Thus it was unfortunate that she was not on the original roster of Senseis scheduled to teach at the most recent Aikido Festival in London. Thankfully, due to a last minute change in plans, Chizuko Sensei did get an opportunity to teach on Sunday morning of the Aikido Festival, And what a treat indeed!

She has inspired me beyond words, and I am hoping that this is the beginning of a new "tradition", that other dojos take up the challenge of inviting her to North America, along with other high ranking female and male instructors. New aikidokas learn by example from their seniors, that ability is measured by power, indomitable spirit, focus, patience and practice, period. Gender, size and age are irrelevant in the final analysis. Chizuko Sensei demonstrated that for me, in so many ways.

I have another dream. Some day, maybe when Kes is my age (which is a long time from now-okay stop laughing!), there will be clinics where both men and women will be invited to share their aikido knowledge with eager and open minds, hearts and bodies. I don't know about you, but it is far more impressive for me to witness and learn from someone who cannot rely on size and strength to execute a technique. Learning from a variety of different styles of instruction exposes people to more diverse approaches to learning and teaching. I believe that this diversity is refreshing and helps prevent mental rigidity from developing, an equally important factor in anyone's aikido (and life) development. This develops new neural pathways of learning, a factor borne out in neuropsychological, quantum physics, and other scientific research. Mental rigidity leads to an inability to learn in new ways, and unwillingness to learn outside the box, and from different people.

Aikido is and should be, in the words of O'Sensei "for everyone". Chizuko is living proof of that.

## Aiki Budo Centre Weapons Program

Starting in the fall, we will be introducing some changes to our Aiki Budo Centre weapons program. For the past year or so we have been focusing on Kaze Arashi Ryu bokken techniques with the assistance of Sensei Tim Miller. Kaze Arashi Ryu or Wind Storm Tradition is an old martial art derived from battlefield practices of the past. Aikido also has a weapons style that up until 2 years ago, was part of our grading system. All weapons techniques improve our understanding of the hand techniques we use in Aikido as these techniques evolved from weapons practice over many centuries. The principles of attack, grip, evasion and control can all be seen in the weapons program. Studying weapons techniques can be challenging and exciting on its own, but even for beginners, some weapons training will contribute to your understanding and application of Aikido.

At a beginners level (8th to 4th kyu), students are introduced to all the weapons we use. They learn how to hold a weapon at rest, how to draw the weapon to kamae or ready stance, one or more basic cuts, and putting the weapon away. Focus is on solo forms, and one or two techniques with a partner. Skills learned include understanding correct distance or ma-ai, moving in harmony with a partner and correct body movements. At the intermediate level (3rd to 1st kyu), students learn to be comfortable being attacked with a weapon. Focus is on defense and evasion while enhancing skills in timing and generating power in strikes. At the advanced level (shodan and above) students learn how to apply their skills in attack - counter attack and freestyle situations. Skills in technique, power, and timing are enhanced and applied in both static and dynamic situations.

Sensei Jaimie and myself are reviewing the weapons program and considering adding weapons techniques to our grading system. We would like some feedback from you before finalizing any changes we make. Up for consideration are the timing and number of weapons classes; separate classes for beginners and advanced students; the types of weapons included - long and short swords (bokken), knife (tanto), and wooden staff (jo); integration of weapons techniques into regular Aikido classes; and whether weapons grading should be optional or mandatory.

Please pass along your comments to me at [cearl@sprint.ca](mailto:cearl@sprint.ca) or see me after class.

Christine

## On Blending

By Jon Oaker

Recently I had one of those bizarre experiences where I found myself on the receiving end of griping by two people, both of whom had managed to tick the other off in basically the same yet opposite ways! (surprisingly this isn't that uncommon on the mat, in fact at points I have probably **been** one of the ranters!) The basis of the dispute was that one party was ticked that, in their opinion, the other lacked the necessary martial attitude required for training. On the other side was a complaint that their partner was a tight-\_\_\_\_, who sucked the joy out of training!

Cool... who's right? Both? Neither?

The reality that 'technique' is merely one aspect of aikido is one of the aspects of the art which appeals to me (and frequently frustrates the \_\_\_\_\_ out of me). Regardless of how diligently I may dedicate myself to basic movements and techniques, this is not enough. I must also learn how to adjust those techniques to deal with my partner/opponent and the energy that unites us.

Accepting the second factor (adjusting to our uke) becomes an obvious necessity when you're having an intense session of training shiho nage with, oh let's say sempai Candice and suddenly you hear "everyone take one step to the right"... and you end up looking at sempai Jim!... Adjust Quick!!!

Adjusting to energy is subtler, but just as important. If I apply a technique with too much speed one of three things happens; a sloppy technique, an injured uke, or I end up looking kinda doofy as I leave my uke behind. My technique and how I apply it need to be appropriate to the three part dynamic mentioned above.

Now let's expand our definition to include personality... Sadly, (for some; happily for myself) we are all very different. We are all different in how we approach things and learn.

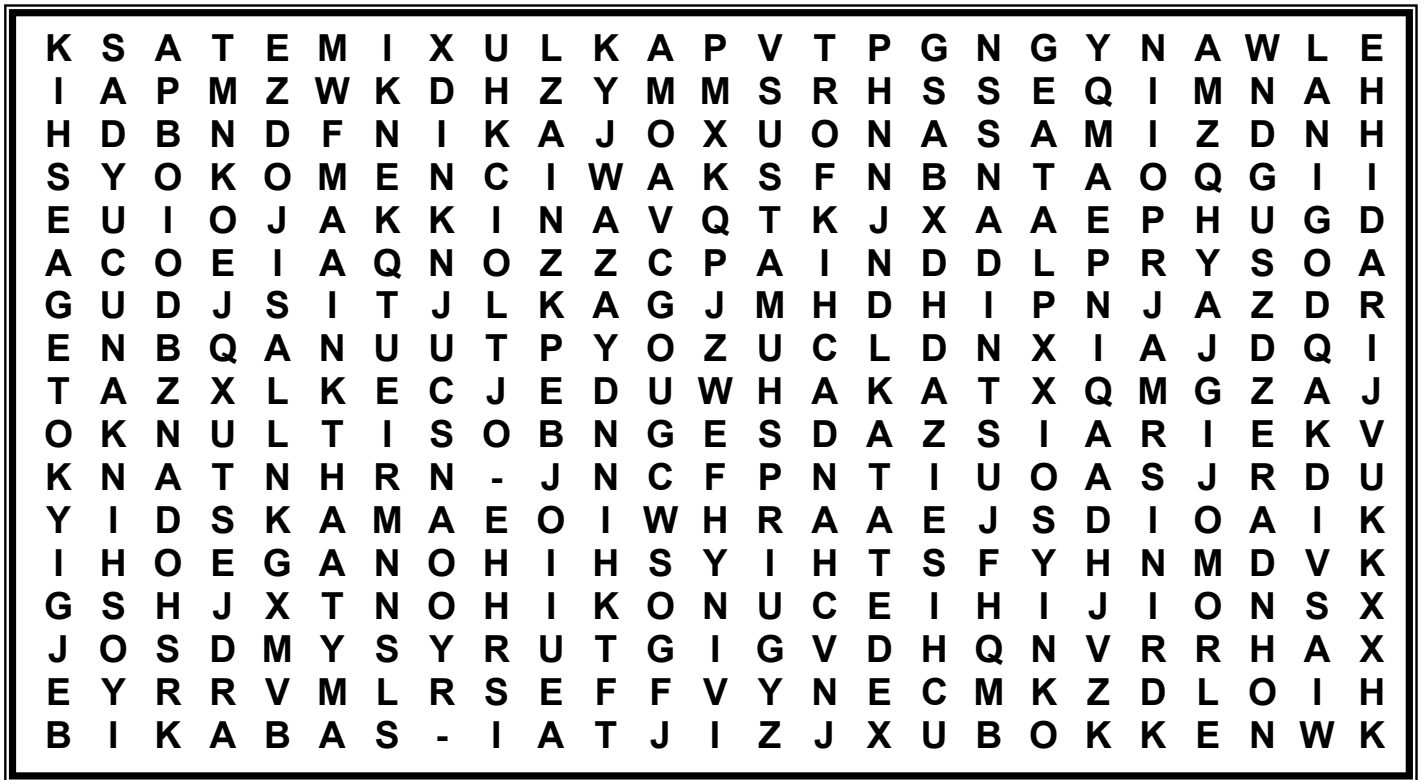
I can only assume responsibility for getting the most out of my training time that I can. This said, it is only respectful of me to not screw up someone else's training by either goofing about or being physically incapable (due to illness, injury, attitude, etc.). Like all things in aikido it's about balance and dealing with things as they are, rather than as we would like them.

Let's all have patience and learn from each other.

Osu

# Aikido Word Search

Created by Paul Lepine



NIKAJO  
 KIHON DOSA  
 NIKAJO  
 SHUMATSU  
 HANDACHI  
 KATATE  
 NIDAN  
 SEIZA  
 TENCHI  
 YOSHINKAN  
 DOGI  
 TERADA

O-SENSEI  
 IKKAJO  
 KAMAE  
 WAZA  
 HANMI  
 KOKYU  
 RYOTE  
 SHODAN  
 USHIRO  
 ATEMI  
 SANKAJO

KIHON  
 KOTEGAESHI  
 HIDARI  
 DOSA  
 IRIMI  
 NAGE  
 SHIHONAGE  
 TAI-SABAKI  
 YOKOMEN  
 BOKKEN  
 UCHI  
 HANMI

## Fees:

In acknowledgement of the sad reality that Sensei Jamie has a life, which occasionally impacts, on his aikido training adult fees can be given to Jon Oaker, Jim Howell, Jon Clifflen, or any black belt in a pinch.

## Cool Stuff

Jon Clifflen is in possession of all sorts of cool Aiki Budo clothing and other stuff that we are trying to sell. If you are interested see him. (We are trying to make a model out of him but he insists on pivoting instead of twirling!)