

What's on in March

**Saturday 3rd - T.A.I.E. Seminar in Allander,
Sunday 4th Scotland** with Tony Sargeant Sensei

**Saturday 10th Bukiwaza (weapons training)
9.30 – 11.00** at Phoenix Martial Arts with guest instructor Richard Small Sensei

Saturday 17th Aiki Jo Seminar in Tauton with Richard Small Sensei

**Saturday 31st Iwama South Coast Aikido Club
fundraising seminar in Poole.**

Check out the [online diary](#) for more details of these and future seminars and events.

2012 Aikido Taisai

Make a note in your diary for our annual Aikido Taisai which will be held on **Saturday 28th April at Phoenix Martial Arts from 2pm – 5pm** (registration from 1.45).

Paul McGlone Sensei, 6th Dan, and Pete Reynolds, 4th Dan, have graciously agreed to teach again this year.

The Taisai is an opportunity to get together with fellow aikidoka and celebrate our love of Aikido. Taisai are held by aikidoka around the globe at this time of year. Entry to our Taisai is by donation, as is the custom in Iwama, and all profits after costs are given to a charity making a difference in our community. This year our chosen charity is the [Bournemouth and Poole Transverse Myelitis Support Group](#). There will be more about the taisai appearing on the website over the next few weeks and in the next edition of the newsletter.

About KIAI

KIAI is the newsletter of Wellsprings Aikido. It is sent to all our members and to any of our friends who wish to receive it. If you would like to be added to or removed from the distribution list then please send your email address to enquiries@wellspringsoftheeast.co.uk.

Contributions to this newsletter are welcome and encouraged. Please send them to the address above.

Previous editions of KIAI are available [on the website](#)

Wellsprings on the web

www.wellspringsoftheeast.co.uk

Please, Please, Please, don't use our Google Ad as a bookmark! Every time someone clicks on the ad we get charged. Since Google have changed the way they display their ads (inline with search results and not so obviously an ad.) our advertising costs have soared. Good for Google but not for us! While we would love to believe that 7 or 8 people in the area are looking to join an aikido club each day we think it unlikely! It's more likely that people are using the ads like a bookmark (or someone is maliciously clicking on the ads). Google Ads has been by far the most cost effective way of advertising our club but if we can't get the costs down we will have to review how we use the system. In addition, once our daily budget is exhausted our ad no longer appears meaning potential new members won't be able to find us.

How do you recognise a Google ad? It has a pale background and the words "Ad – why this ad?" in small print on the far right hand side.

Training Matters

The previous edition of Training Matters introduced the subject of flexibility. In it we considered the importance of physical flexibility for our aikido training and our everyday life. We learnt how O'Sensei worked to maintain his flexibility right up until the end of his life. We discovered how trying to improve our flexibility by force is counterproductive and may lead to injury.

In this edition we consider flexibility in relation to ukemi.

A good degree of flexibility is necessary for good ukemi. It isn't so important when it comes to performing a technique although the technique will be smoother if you have good body movement.

Most of us in our training primarily focus our energy and attention on performing techniques. But O'Sensei repeatedly emphasised the importance of ukemi training to his students. For O'Sensei it was through ukemi training that you progressed in Aikido and good ukemi was ukemi that matched the waza (technique) as exactly as possible.

Here are the instructions that O'Sensei gave to Saotome Sensei (as recorded in Saotome Sensei's book "Principles of Aikido):

1. Do not try to anticipate what is to come. An overcalculating mind will obscure the body's responses and cause it to lag. This will force you to take unnatural ukemi, which in turn will be reflected in technique training, hindering your improvement.
2. Observe your partner's movement and catch his intention. This is part of ukemi training.
3. Do not forget the relevance of ukemi training to everyday life. All prominent people who achieve something of value in everyday life have absorbed the principles of ukemi. The journey through life is beset by many hardships. Success comes to those who resolve their difficulties with the flexibility and openmindedness of ukemi. Those who force their ukemi in an unnatural manner in practice will see no

positive results from their training in their life.

4. It is simple wisdom to avoid injury and strive for the goal of your choice, whether in the dojo or in everyday life.
5. An open and supple mind, a flexible body, modesty, and sincerity—these are the necessary elements in the art of ukemi. Without them, ukemi training fails. Without ukemi, waza training will never come to fruition.

Saotome Sensei explains: *"...in short, uke is responsible for creating the conditions that allow nage to learn. If uke has no sense of the effects of a technique, no resilience, or no responsiveness to nage's movements or if he is fearful or awkward at falling, nage will not be able to study the techniques effectively...Developing good ukemi is the shortest path to acquiring skill in Aikido."*

Kenji Shimizu was 4th dan judo when he started aikido training with O'Sensei. He felt he did good ukemi but he was repeatedly scolded by O'Sensei. Kenji eventually realised that he was doing his ukemi not the ukemi that O'Sensei was leading him too i.e. he was not blending/following O'Sensei but rather was, as most of us do, doing a breakfall that he had prepared earlier.

"I only took my ukemi as I pleased. Yet I was made to become aware of the fact, that my body didn't move as one with o-sensei's body. When I think about it now I feel ashamed, that I thought it would be good just to take a showy ukemi."

Though it is hard to learn a natural ukemi, an ukemi without force, you have made a huge progress in your technique whenever your body understands a little bit more about it." Kenji Shimizu

"Each throw has a fall that perfectly matches it. The more flexibility you have in falling, the closer you will be able to get to receiving throws without trying to change the fall into something you are more comfortable with." Jeff Sodeman

"Giving up control to the nage is one of the hardest things to develop. If at some point in the

technique the uke decides when to take the fall, what kind of fall to take, what direction to fall then they've take control back and are no longer receiving the throw, but (while it may be very subtle) are now throwing themselves." Jeff Sodeman

If ukemi is different for every technique and if we are not rehearsing the actual falls that we will use later on when we are taking ukemi, what is the point of break-fall practice in our training sessions?

What we are actually doing in our ukemiwaza practice is improving our falling technique to minimise injury during our training and to develop emotional resilience.

We are born with a fear of falling. It is our only unlearned fear. Once we have learned to stand on two feet our reaction to a loss of balance is to reach and grasp with the hands to stop ourself from falling. This is fine if there is a rail or tree handy to grab but leads to sprains, strains and broken bones if there is not (think of all the broken arms and wrists we see when we have a prolonged icy spell). To fall safely we need to overcome this instinct to stick out an arm. Another reaction to falling is to tense our muscles. When we improve our falling technique we learn that we can fall without getting hurt leading to emotional resilience.

In a Dutch study a group of 60 - 81 year-olds took part in twice-weekly Nijmegen Falls Prevention Program sessions for a period of 5 weeks. At the end of the program the researchers found that the participants had improved their falling technique and had significantly reduced their fear of falling. After one year the participants had experienced 39% fewer falls than the control group and there was only 1 major injury in the test group compared to 5 in the control group.

"It is important to experience naturally strong techniques. If you cannot do ukemi soft and flexible, it is most likely, that you cannot execute a technique soft and flexible. The natural ukemi in aikido also makes you understand life." Kenji Shimizu

How does Aikido help us to understand life? Well

through our training we develop a flexible approach to life, we become resilient and we gain an understanding of commitment (mental, physical and emotional). Here are the thoughts of a couple of O'Sensei's students and a quote from the Tao Te Ching.

"In Japanese, the word nage means "to throw," and the word uke means "to accept." The nage is the one who gets to throw the uke, who agrees to be the fall guy. The uke has to accept the basic premise that whoever attacks is already defeated; by attacking, he has already lost. You learn more in aikido as an uke rather than as a nage, because you learn to accept what is going to happen to you with full commitment." Terry Dobson, It's a Lot Like Dancing...an Aikido Journey.

"Mastering ukemi means noticing the signs of your environment, which enables you to deal promptly with the circumstances. The bamboo for examples moves according to the relative strength of the wind, and when the wind stops, the bamboo returns to its original state. That is completely natural and it is alive." Kenji Shimizu Sensei

"If you don't want to be broken, bend... Bend sincerely and wholeness will return to you." John R. Mabry in "The Little Book of the Tao Te Ching"


"Aikido techniques are often executed with circular movements accompanied by a body twist, as well as upward or downward bending-stretching motions, to dodge an opponent's attack. The techniques include both centrifugal and centripetal movements, although the former are more common. Since training in these techniques involves muscular stretching and contacting, these techniques help to improve blood circulation and internal organ function. Repeated training of joint techniques helps the body become more supple and resilient, keeping the back from becoming stiff or weak. For this reason Aikido is recognized as extraordinarily efficacious in improving health and in preventing geriatric weakness." Kenji Shimizu

All Kenji Shimizu quotes:
www.tendoryuaikido.nl/wiezijnwij_en_5_2393384715.pdf

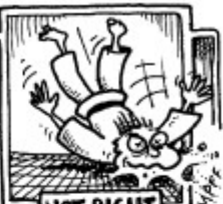
THE WAY OF THE EXPLODING PEN

FUDEBAKUDO HARMLESSLY COMES DOWN TO EARTH REGARDING

UKEMI-WAZA AND BREAKFALLS



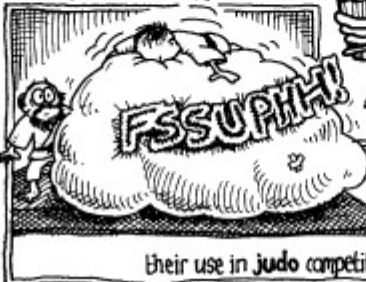
RIGHT




NOT RIGHT

Many martial arts teach methods of introducing an adversary to the ground, abruptly. In order to prolong the usefulness of your training partner during this learning process, it is helpful if they are familiar with the rudiments of *breakfalling*.


Some schools of aikido develop *ukemi-waza* (body receiving technique) to remarkable degrees of grace and control. A practical result of this is the ability to fall over whilst holding a pint of beer* without spilling a drop.
*soft styles use cocktails instead.



Although rapid-inflation frontal air-bags are known to reduce the risk of injury, their use in judo competition is not widespread.



The Shaolin monks of Yungchan perfected the "feather fall", leaping off the bell-tower and landing noiselessly on the gravel courtyard below. They did this by only jumping when no-one was listening.



www.fudebakudo.com

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“When people are born they are supple,
and when they die they are stiff.
When trees are born they are tender,
and when they die they are brittle.
Stiffness is thus a companion of death,
flexibility is a companion of life.
So when an army is strong,
it does not prevail.
When a tree is strong,
it is cut for use.
So the stiff and strong are below,
the supple and yielding on top.”

Tao Te Ching v.76 trans. Thomas Cleary

“Excessive emphasis on the material in *budo* stifles the life energy. Flexibility of movement is lost. *Budo* is for purification of the spirit, not for piercing someone with a sword.”

“Aikido techniques make the joints of our bodies more flexible and pliant [and that softens our spirits as well]. Next our six sense organs [eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin and mind] must be purified.

Aikido came into being for the purpose of misogi [purification of body and mind]. It is a divine sword, a magic blade that cuts to the heart of things and slices through all entanglements. It clears the path for us so we can find the truth.

Aikido is the great Way that protects and nourishes all things, from heavenly beings down to tiny insects.”

O'Sensei trans John Stevens

Misogi is good for you!

Earthing

In 1969 Matteo Tavera, a French agronomist, published *La Mission Sacree*. Tavera saw it as the “Sacred Mission” of all living things to participate in electrical exchanges between the earth and sky. In return for fulfilling this obligation the organism received the right to health and life. He wrote:

“As often as possible expose any part of your body skin to the earth or grass or natural water, lake, stream or ocean. When in your garden use non-insulating shoes, or even as you sit and read or do other actions, stay grounded.”

Non-specific inflammation is considered public enemy number one these days – bigger even than that other baddie cholesterol. Research has found that inflammation is associated with an excess of positive ions. The earth is a huge sink of negative ions and when our bodies come into direct contact with the earth these negative ions move into our body to neutralise the positive ions, a process known as earthing/grounding. In other words, earthing reduces inflammation.

Modern building materials and plastic/rubber soled shoes insulate us from the ground preventing the flow of negative ions into our bodies. (David Wolfe has described the common shoe as perhaps the “world's most dangerous invention”. The closest thing to an “ideal” shoe is the simple, softsole leather moccasin. Leather is a conductive material when moist.)

Health care providers at the forefront of research, such as cardiologist Dr S. Sinatra, are recommending that we walk barefoot or put our bare feet in contact with the ground (on grass/soil/sand/rock/concrete but not asphalt which is an insulator) for 20 – 30 minutes a day (watch a [3 minute YouTube video](#) in which Dr Sinatra outlines the benefits of Earthing on the cardiovascular system). You can learn more about Earthing on the [Earthing Institute website](#) or read “Earthing – The most important health discovery ever?” by Clinton Ober, Stephen Sinatra and Martin Zucker.

Ober et al write:

“Water-wise, wading or swimming in the ocean is a great recreational form of grounding. Salt water, rich in minerals, is highly conductive, and actually several hundred times more so than freshwater. Conductivity depends on the concentration of minerals in the water.”

So misogi, especially in the sea, is great for discharging those excess positive ions. But that's not all. The cold of the water is also beneficial!

The Secret of His Success

Fans of James Bond will tell you that 007 regularly partook of cold showers (also known as “Scottish” showers). Proven benefits of taking a cold plunge or shower include:

- a strengthened immune system
- a boost to the circulation of the skin and improved the complexion
- increased sperm count and testosterone levels for men and raised oestrogen levels in women
- the release of dopamine and serotonin, the neurotransmitters that keep us feeling happy and help ward off depression.
- the experience of a natural “high” caused by the rush of endorphins (the body’s natural pain killers) that get released when the skin comes into contact with cold water.
- reduction of pain and inflammation

There is no need to stay in the water for very long, 30 seconds is sufficient and no more than 5 minutes if the water is very cold, the idea is to give the body a short, sharp, shock – not hypothermia! And don't try this if you are:

- a pregnant woman
- a heart disease patient
- prone to irregular heart beat, or
- have high blood pressure

If you are still thinking that a cold water dip is a bit extreme then consider that cryotherapy, involving spending 3 minutes at a temperature of -140°C, is now included in the training regime of professional rugby players. Now that **is extreme!**

Resistance is futile!

“Saotome's technique was good enough that he could completely resist a junior student's attempts to get a wrist lock on him. One day, noticing Saotome's behaviour, O'Sensei asked Saotome to resist him. When the wrist lock failed to move Saotome, O'Sensei leaned forward and bit into Saotome's hand, causing the student to cry out in pain.

O'Sensei proceeded to explain that Saotome's approach was meaningless in the context of martial arts. If a technique fails to work, tori must use a different technique. Uke's responsibility is to resist enough to assist tori in understanding the technique, not so much that the technique itself fails. Tori is not attempting to apply the techniques irrespective of circumstance or uke's ability to resist. No technique can be made to work in every circumstance.”

O'Sensei anecdote from:

www.stanford.edu/group/jujitsu/documents/ukemi.pdf

Hoa Newens Sensei

Last month we informed you of Pat Hendrick Sensei's promotion to 7th Dan. Soon after we learnt that Bernice Tom Sensei, Hoa Newens Sensei, and Kim Peuser Sensei, all members of the Takemusu Aikido Association (T.A.A.) to which T.I.A.E. Is affiliated, were also awarded nanadan (7th dan) by the Aikikai. Congratulations to them all.

Aikidoka in the UK had the good fortune to train with Hoa Newens Sensei when he came to the UK at the invitation of T.I.A.E. in 2006 and in 2007.

Tony Sargeant Sensei holds Hoa Newens Sensei in high regard as did the late Tim Buswell Sensei. It was on Tim Sensei's recommendation that our friend and training partner Jon Leslie, from Poole Aikido, visited Hoa Newen Sensei's dojo in California. Jon writes: “It was a great experience spending time with Sensei Hoa. I found his teaching style clear and concise and his aikido amazing. The respect he has from his students and the spirit and ethics held within the club, was nothing short of inspirational.”



Grading

The next grading session is scheduled for 20th April. If you meet the criteria specified in [the syllabus](#) and would like to test for your next kyu grade then please inform Mark Sensei.



Better than chocolate?

Mark Sensei will be placing an order with [Nine Circles](#) shortly. If you or the Easter

Bunny would like to buy anything then please let Mark Sensei know by 11th March. Remember that **the prices shown on the Nine Circles website do not include VAT or postage.** However we get a small discount on weapons and clothing, but not on gift, sale or other items, which goes some way to offset these charges. And by placing a collective order we save again on postage.

WANTED Training Partner



DANGEROUS septuagenarian who has no fear of falling is looking for a buddy for some extra-curricular weapons practice.

**REWARD
Improved weapons technique.**

Contact Lew