

# The Seidokan Communicator

## *Aikido for a Modern Way of Life*

### Fall 2004 Seminar in Tokyo

By Chris Koprowski

In October, Seidokan Aikido of Tokyo welcomed Doug Wedell Sensei, Chief Instructor of Seidokan Aikido of South Carolina, as guest instructor at our annual Fall Weekend Workshop. This marked Wedell Sensei's second visit to Tokyo; he was also accompanied by his wife, Kim. The seminar was well-attended by our regular students, originating from all over the world: Japan, France, New Zealand, India, the UK, and the U.S.

Over four sessions, Doug Wedell Sensei covered several themes:

In a session entitled "**Waveform Aikido**," he introduced the idea that we interact with each other as waveforms of influence rather than colliding particles. He had us explore ways to generate waves, get uke to ride the waves, and consider how high frequency short waves provide stationary stability. In one exercise, Sensei had us do a ki-test push on a partner who is doing tekubi-shindo undo. Just by shaking one's wrists (creating waves and vibrations), one can improve standing stability! And through "bouncing ball" movements (one imagines bouncing and catching a ball), we can create waveforms that allow us to blend smoothly with uke.

In "**Free Movement Aikido**," Wedell Sensei explained how a fundamental principle in aikido is to move freely in the unconstrained direction. He showed how this can lead to more efficient movements and resolve problems when one gets stuck. In particular, he focused on how staying free is critical to a successful randori defense. He showed us several inside and outside blends and how to get unstuck in randori by ducking under uke's grab! The session ended with aikiryoho (freeing the movement of Ki!).

In a "**Leading and Following**" session, we were taught several weapon and weaponless forms including part of a solo form Sensei developed called "Kihon Aikitaigi." It consists of a series of aikido and tai chi-looking movements that can be tested with a partner. We also practiced variations of tenkan (with and without a bokken), kumitachi, and jo movements. The underlying lesson was "to lead, one must follow."

In "**Agreeable Aikido**," Sensei showed us that once we establish a point of agreement with uke, we can then easily control the situation. He applied this idea to various control arts (ikkyo, nikyō, sankyō) as well as basic kokyūho. We also did a series of palm-to-palm exercises

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which demonstrated how we could lead and control uke with very little effort (after agreement is found). He also taught us a "painless" sankyō!

On the second day of the seminar, Mr. Yoshito Yanai took his nidān exam and passed! Congratulations Yoshi!!!

Some comments from students:

"I enjoyed this seminar thanks to the originality of Sensei!! I thought it was interesting to know how aikido is in the States...I particularly enjoyed the weapon forms."

- Ms. Mia Osawa, France/Japan

"Well, the seminar was really very useful in the first place, especially for a beginner like me as a two-day session gives a lot of drill and also a load of techniques to master. And the sensei was really very good. He was very friendly and open to questions. He really put complex things in a very easy to simple way. For example, the 'bounce the ball' technique. It was really amazing. Also, I really liked the way he taught us the 'raise...scan...blossom..' technique. It was easy to remember.."

- Satish Kumar, India

"When the particle tries to reach the wave form, a bouncing ball is generated from vibrations; In Oneness, who from Uke and Nage is then leading, and who is following? It is finally a question of mutual agreement, for both find their freedom in Harmony. Thank you / Good bye, Doug Wedell Sensei!"

- Emmanuel Reymond, France

We'd like to thank Doug Wedell Sensei and Kim for making the trip and for sharing so much with us!! Arigatougozaimashita!!

## A Japan Travel Log: Juxtaposing Opposites

*By Doug Wedell*

When Chris Koprowski, our man in Tokyo, approached me this summer about a return trip to Japan for a fall gashuku, I was of course happy to oblige. I told him though that this time I would be accompanied by my sage partner in life, my wife, Kim. Chris has lived in Tokyo now 11 years and has done a wonderful job building a dojo in a land replete with Aikido. He has also worked diligently to bring people out to Japan to expand the training experiences in his dojo. This list includes Senseis Joe Crotty, Larry Wadahara, Brad Bergeron, Frank Gulbrandsen, Dan Kawakami, Ross Robertson and Andreas Hessing. Watch out, you may be next on the list. If so, prepare yourself for a culture that has a lot to offer and a lot to confuse the Western visitor. Below I describe a few of my impressions gleaned from our visit to the land of the rising sun.

As I state in the title of this article, in Japan one can find side by side rather opposing and imposing cultural icons and trends. Japanese people have a love a nature, represented in beautifully tended gardens and parks. They also have an abiding love of technology and the latest fads. Thus, beside the beautiful garden might be a street covered in neon, with giant television screens projecting the latest in fashion. Japan is the home to traditions like Chado (way of tea), in which one strives to find stillness and peace within oneself. It is also home to mass transportation, which during rush hour attempts to answer such questions as how many human bodies can squeeze into a space the size of a telephone booth. The answer is far more than you would care to think. In Japan you will find the serene residing next to the brash, the holy next to the urbane, and quiet personal space amidst a mass of people. What holds the culture together is an invisible order that guides people to be imperturbable within the confusing bustle of activity, calm within the tempest, and helpful to visiting strangers.

The day after we arrived, we joined Chris and two dojo members (Paul and Akiko) for a trip to the Hakone region southwest of Tokyo. This was a wonderful way to clear the cobwebs of jet lag, hiking in the mountains and boating on the lake while the majestic peak of Mt. Fuji smiled down upon us. That day we visited a beautiful garden, had tea ceremony performed for us, and finished it off with a home-cooked meal at an Okonomiyaki (a type of Japanese pancake one cooks at the table).



After our day in the country, we trained for about 12 hours over Saturday and Sunday, not counting the wonderful meal we had Saturday night at the Izakaia restaurant or the Karaoke session that followed.



Then on Monday, Kim and I caught the express train to Kyoto. Staying in Otsu on Lake Biwa, we spent several days visiting temples, shrines, castles and palaces in Kyoto and also in Nara. The back streets of Kyoto, on the philosopher's path or near the many hillside temples were among our favorite places to visit. There we saw ancient and the sublime. We also experienced the aftereffects of a typhoon while in Kyoto and the shock waves from an earthquake centered in Niigata while dining Saturday night in Tokyo. Overall, we had a wonderful time and owe a large debt of thanks to our very gracious hosts. Domo arigato gozaimashita, Seidokan Aikido of Tokyo.





## Kawakami Sensei: Walking the Walk in Texas

By Steve McAdam

It was a fun-filled and enlightening weekend when Dan Kawakami Sensei visited the University of Texas Aikido Club in October. To a large extent, we got a primer on how to walk. Darn! I thought I had mastered that at age three, but it appears I have a way to go yet. The problem is, that although a journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step, that first step is the one I have trouble with.

Actually, it is simple. As Kawakami Sensei says, walk from heel to toe. OK, it sounds simple, but I learned that in practice, we do not always do that. Simple exercise: Uke firmly holds one end of a jo, while nage at the other end tries to move him by walking forward. There is a pretty good (or should I say bad) chance that nage will step forward onto his toe. What that does is throw the leading shoulder out from above the hips. Therefore, nage will have his shoulder ahead of his hips. It's subtle, but it is there if you look for it. And it really does make a difference. Now step the correct way; heel down then roll onto the toe. That brings the hips forward, with the shoulders above them where they belong.

And when doing kokyuhō tenkan, start by putting the lead foot right under the wrist that is being held. Then pivot around the vertical line running from that wrist down to that foot. If foot and wrist are not in a vertical line, you end up awkwardly trying to pivot around two different things (foot below, and wrist not directly above).

And when doing ushirodori zenpo nage, draw the rear foot up at the end (so your two feet are not spread too far apart). That brings the hips more forward and adds to the power of the throw.

Thank you Sensei for showing me that true victory is victory over defeat!

## Promotions

### Nidan

Barbra Rodriguez University of Texas Aikido Club  
8/29/04

Bronson Diffin Aikido Institute of Michigan, Seiwa Dojo  
9/23/04

## An Enkei-evangelist

By Chaim Noy

*Some say  
do an enkei for blending, and proceed to technique  
others say  
apply enkei only when nothing else works*

*But I'm an enkei evangelist  
I've fallen for enkei  
I know no aikido without enkei movement  
no aikido without enkei rhythm  
"enkeiaikido" I hum rhythmically, meditatively  
"enkeiikkyo enkeinikkyo enkeisankyo"*

*Let us spread the word of enkei across our arts and our bodies:*

*if you wish to work ever so softly,  
with only the tip of your fingers juggling uke  
if you wish to "work" on your posture,  
on your breathing, on maintaining onepoint  
or pleasantly sensing weight underside in elbows,  
waist or knees  
or if you wish to make room for your partner  
(that void from which friendships spring) –  
do an Enkei*

*Now tilt your ear and listen to these bouncing words  
hear Kobayashi's tamed roar: One-twooo  
sometimes: One-twoooo-threee  
in Enkei language  
the spiraling count never really ceases:  
sitting-seiza-One-twooo  
inside-gatame-never-still-One-twooo  
walking-rolling-One-twoooo-threee*

*Not a spice in aikido,  
enkei is that elusive moment that creates whole out of parts  
the reason...*

*so let us let go inside ourselves  
let us teach our ukes the language of enkei  
and conjugate enkei in our bodies*

## Friendship Festival in South Carolina

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, Seidokan Aikido of South Carolina sponsored its fourth annual Carolina Aikido Friendship Festival. This festival is held in the spirit of **Hyakuman Isshin, Million, One Mind**. Participants from five dojos practicing in the Carolina region got together and trained, sharing stories and fellowship over a picnic lunch.



## Technical Corner

### Waveform Interaction in Aikido

By Doug Wedell

I think that too often when people apply their intuitive physics to understand the world around them, they adhere to the idea that things get accomplished in this world through the collision of particles. This conception would seem to flow from Newton's third law of motion, "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." When applied to the art of self defense, this line of thinking leads people to view the attacker and defender as "big particles" interacting with each other by means of collisions. This type of intuitive conception will lead to execution of Aikido techniques that do not reflect the Aikido principles.

To iron out these difficulties, it is useful to see the world in terms of waveform interactions rather than particle collisions. Consider how waves work. A pebble dropped into a pond sends ripples out in all directions. Although the wave propagates outward, the particles themselves stay in place. Waves represent vibrations or oscillations of energy through a medium. They are diffuse rather than concentrated and can affect things far away instead of only proximally. Waves don't collide but rather combine. The power of the wave is that rather than collide with a particle, it simply envelops the particle and leads it along the motion path in a smooth continuous trajectory.

Waveforms are incredibly powerful. Just consider the simple act of talking to a friend. I generate vibrations in my throat that send oscillations through the air that shake up the tympanic membrane in the inner ear of my friend that sets off a electro-chemical chain reaction in the neurons of the brain that tells my friend "please pass the salt."

Accordingly he passes me the salt. An amazing amount of things can be accomplished through waveform interaction.

### Applications to Aikido Techniques

If you think about Aikido techniques, I believe you will find that they are all about generating waves. One must be relaxed so that the wave transmits through one's body in a fluid manner. By connecting lightly with the attacker, the waveform will then combine with the energy vector of his or her attack. The wave form simply envelops the attacker and leads the attacker to ride the wave and fall.

Although there are abundant examples of this, I think an excellent place to start looking at waveform interaction is with enkei nage. After all, enkei explicitly incorporates a waveform (circular) in the description of the movement. A problem that beginners experience with enkei nage is that any stiffness will disrupt the natural waveform. Such stiffness reflects a tendency to think of the movement as a type of particle collision. "You hold my wrist, so I'll pull and push you down with my wrist." As long as such collisions guide the movement, it is doomed to fail.

One way that I have found to help people get around this type of collision attitude is to have them imagine they are holding onto a small ball. Enkei nage is an example is a good art to start this exercise with. To execute enkei nage, simply step aside and bounce the ball down in front of your feet (figures 1-3). Imagine it bounces up and turn your hand palm up to catch it at the top of its arc (figures 4-6). Then with palm up, drop the ball down again (figures 7-8). Uke will ride this wave first in, then up, then down. The key to a fluid wavelike action is to remain very relaxed and maintain a calm center. Any stiffness will bring you back into particle collision and the waveform will be ruined.

### Katatetori Enkei Nage (With imaginary bouncing balls – Waveform style)



Enkei #1



Enkei #2



Enkei #3



Enkei #4



Enkei #5



Enkei #6



Enkei #7



Enkei #8



### Katatetori Ryotemochi Irimi Nage (With imaginary bouncing balls – Waveform style)



Irimi Nage #1



Irimi Nage #2



Irimi Nage #3



Irimi Nage #4



Irimi Nage #5



Irimi Nage #6



Irimi Nage #7



Irimi Nage #8

### Katatetori Ryotemochi Kotegaeshi (With imaginary bouncing balls – Waveform style)



Kotegaeshi #1



Kotegaeshi #2



Kotegaeshi #3



Kotegaeshi #4



Kotegaeshi #5



Kotegaeshi #6



Kotegaeshi #7



Kotegaeshi #8

A related art I like to use to illustrate the power of bouncing balls and waveform interactions is Katatetori Ryotemochi Irimi Nage. Here Uke has Nage's arm strongly controlled with two hands on one. Fighting is useless. Instead, one steps aside, Drops the ball straight down, moves in slightly and catches it palm up, then drops it down again. This is a simplified way of doing our classic irimi nage (as shown in the Dan Arts tapes).

A third art from this same attack that really emphasizes the bouncing balls and waveform is Kotegaeshi. After one steps in, one bounces the ball to the ground, catches it and bounces it again over the wrist. As uke touches the

ground, he becomes the ball and one bounces it once more to turn him over and apply the pin.

I think if you experiment with it, you will find lots of ways to use imaginary bouncing balls to help your waveform interactions. More generally, it is important that we interact with the world as if we are connected to those far and near through positive waveforms. Remember that waveforms are vibrations, so even when standing still, one must feel like a tuning fork, vibrating at some harmonious pitch that allows one to resonate with the world around. When you smile at another, the waveforms of light reflect that smile in the others mind and spark a return smile – positive waves!



## Happy Birthday Mrs. Kobayashi!



## Calendar

Thanksgiving Workshop at Aikido Institute of America; 2615 Colorado Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90041; Friday, 11/26 (3:00-5:00 p.m. & 7:00-9:00 p.m.); Saturday, 11/27 (9:00-11:00 a.m. & 1:00-3:00 p.m.); For more information, please call (323) 254-3372 or email [Aikitiger1@aol.com](mailto:Aikitiger1@aol.com).

Annual Bokken Shugyo Training held at Aikido Institute of America; Friday, December 31st, 2004; For more information, please call (323) 254-3372 or email [larrywadahara@verizon.net](mailto:larrywadahara@verizon.net).

Annual Misogi Barai/New Year's Training held at Aikido Institute of America; Saturday, January 8, 2005 from 7:00-10:00 a.m. For more information, please call (323) 254-3372 or email [Aikitiger1@aol.com](mailto:Aikitiger1@aol.com).

Annual New Year's Potluck Party held at Aikido Institute of America; Saturday, January 15, 2005 from 5:30-9:00 p.m. For more information, please call (323) 254-3372 or email [Aikitiger1@aol.com](mailto:Aikitiger1@aol.com).



## Gogo No Shugyo Seminar in Los Angeles

After the positive feedback about the Gogo no Shugyo workshop held in Michigan in May, a similar workshop was held at AIA in Los Angeles this October. The seminar was well attended and featured Mark Crapo Sensei and Janean Crapo Sensei from Michigan, along with Instructors from AIA.

Gogo means understanding or enlightenment and Shugyo means intensive training to polish one's spirit. Training without understanding is not particularly helpful. Conversely, understanding without putting that understanding into practice is useless.

