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*What's in a Name?, Part 2* by Michael J. Hacker

What's in a name? Continuing with last month's introduction to technical terminology, I'd like to present another example.

*Shihō nage* (also called *tenkai kote gaeshi* or "rotating forearm return" by some schools) is a technique commonly practiced in aikidō dōjō world-wide. Often translated into English as "four-direction throw," *shihō nage* would seem to suggest that you can throw your partner in any of four directions. This translation is a bit limiting, though, as a touch of linguistic context is missing.

The Japanese often number things, when in actuality they mean *all* things. Although *happō bijin* literally translates to "eight-direction beauty," it really means that someone is "everybody's friend" (not necessarily in a positive sense). *Banbutsu* doesn't literally mean "10,000 things," but rather "*all* things."

Following this trend, it should be easy for you to see that "shihō" doesn't *only* mean "four directions." The implication is, of course, that *shihō nage* works in every conceivable direction.

Why not just say "every direction" in the first place? Well, that would make things too easy, of course. Besides, this concept isn't really foreign to the English language at all. For instance, when someone says "the four corners of the globe," do they really mean to suggest literally what they said?

Allow me to pose a question to the reader: Does this information change how you think about or understand this technique? If you have a native or near-native level of Japanese comprehension, did this meaning always occur to you?

As always, I welcome questions and suggestions from everyone. Contact me via the website or through e-mail!

*Michael Hacker began his study of Aikidō in Japan in 1990, and has been very fortunate to get his hands on many skillful teachers in his short time on the tatami. His primary Budō influences are Donald Moriyama, Amano Shigeko, Saito Morihiko, C.E. Clark, and Stan Connor. He has also had limited exposure to Kōdōkan Jūdō, Mugai-ryū Iai-Hyōdō, Shōrin-ryū Kishaba-juku Karate, Hapkido, Tae Kwon Do, Tai Chi, and various Chinese martial arts. Among his other loves are song-writing, his Chet Atkins nylon-string, techno-geek stuff, his world famous Bad Budō video collection, studying languages, and Swan (if he knows what's good for him). Michael is a student at the Jiyushinkan in Tempe, Arizona.*