“One does not need buildings, money, power, or status to practice the Art of Peace. Heaven is right where you are standing, and that is the place to train.”

Morihei Ueshiba “O Sensei”
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ONEGAI SHIMASU!*

Dear Friend:

Welcome to the University of Chicago Aikido Club, and thank you for joining us in our training.

The heart and soul of aikido is the training which takes place on the mat, often without a great deal of verbal instruction. Yet there is a body of information which aikido students need to have in order to train optimally, and questions often arise for which students legitimately seek answers. This handbook has been produced to provide much of that information and to suggest sources where you may explore more deeply if you wish.

Our booklet has been modeled on a handbook published by the Aikido Club of Stanford University. We are grateful to Frank Doran Sensei for permission to incorporate some of the materials from that publication. We are also grateful to Mitsugi Saotome Sensei for permission to include excerpts from his writings in the Appendix.

Aikido practitioners exhibit much variation regarding many matters--ways to transliterate Japanese terms, points of dojo etiquette, even basic definitions of the art. We hope that students will read the statements of this handbook with flexible minds and be respectful toward different formulations and usages when they encounter them among other senseis and dojos. And, in keeping with the intellectually open spirit of The University of Chicago, our dojo welcomes aikido practitioners of all backgrounds and orientations, and tries each year to provide a diversity of instructional styles and approaches.

See you on the mat!

Sincerely,

Donald N. Levine
Faculty Adviser

*See Glossary, Appendix
Why Aikido?

Where It Came From

Aikido has its origins in the centuries-old traditions of the Japanese martial arts. It is a form of budo—a way of life that seeks to polish the self through a blend of rigorous physical training and spiritual discipline.

The term aikido was coined in 1942 by Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969), who had spent many years practicing traditional martial arts, including the techniques of the sword, spear, and staff. Master Ueshiba became known as one of the most powerful warriors in Japan, but after a while he began to have doubts concerning the apparent rationale of the martial arts and the character of most of the martial artists of the time. The arts appeared to be directed solely toward the goal of fighting and winning over others; the martial artists wished only to gain top honors and reputations, regardless of the costs or consequences. It seemed a never-ending cycle of winning and losing, where the strongest today would be defeated tomorrow by someone even stronger.

To resolve his conflicts regarding the martial arts, Master Ueshiba studied various spiritual and philosophical disciplines of Japan with the same vast energies he had previously brought to the martial arts.

Eventually he came to believe that the true meaning of the martial arts was to protect. He concluded that every living creature has the inherent right to grow and develop without interference and that the mission of the martial arts was to safeguard this right and to forestall destructive conflicts. This spirit of protection extended even to an aggressor. The martial arts of the time were unsuitable for this. What was needed was a new martial art. The time came when Master Ueshiba was able to reconcile and synthesize his physical skills with his spiritual understanding. The result was aikido.
Aikido offers a way to empower the human spirit by attuning us to the natural rhythms of the universe. Its movement is the movement of the universal energy forces. The motions of aikido reflect the ebbs and flows, the curves, waves, and spirals found in nature.

Of prime concern in aikido is the force of gravity. The practice of aikido trains students to relax and align their bodies so that the weight of the various parts falls or is directed to a common center in the lower abdominal area. This allows the individual to gain support from rather than oppose the force of gravity.

This centering is as much a mental process as a physical one. Practicing aikido teaches one to coordinate and unify the mind and body so that one can function unaffected by an outside negative force or influence, whether it be a physical attack or some form of mental aggravation.

The movements of aikido are designed to keep a physical attack from interfering with this unified state, and the techniques which evolve from these movements use centrifugal and centripetal forces to bring an attacker under your control.

The basic posture of aikido is triangular; its movements are spherical. Even when the direction is straight backward or forward, the bodily movement is rotational. When the spherical movements of aikido are properly executed, the forces exerted by individual parts are joined around a stable center. As a result, each individual part is supported by the whole, and the whole is able to react to the force applied to any individual part, much as a windmill responds to the slightest pressure against any one of its vanes.
What It’s Good For

**Self-understanding**--Freed from the pressures which accompany all forms of competitive sports, aikido enables you to focus on your personal responses to physical challenges and your ability to relate constructively to others. In the words of aikido's founder, “The only true victory is the victory over the self.” Aikido training thus provides a protected space in which to learn about your potentials for pettiness and nobility, for anxiety and calm, for distraction and concentration.

**Mental relaxation**--Physical tenseness breeds mental tension. Thus, when one learns to relax the body, there is a corresponding relaxation of mental tension which allows the mind to be properly centered or focused.

The techniques of aikido--avoidance, control, neutralization--are characterized by a relaxed body, calm mind, integrated breath, and extension of natural energy. When mind and body are jointly relaxed and centered, a superior form of functioning begins to manifest itself. One becomes less reactive to those everyday irritations which interfere with efficiency and enjoyment. In addition to offering an outlet which helps you recover from stress overload, aikido teaches ways to keep otherwise stressful stimuli from getting you agitated in the first place.

**Physical fitness**--Aikido’s emphasis on an alert mind and a calm body also enhances general good health. The effect of aikido in reducing emotions like anger, enmity, and resentment strengthens the body’s immune system. So does its extensive practice of rolling, which also provides deep stimulation to the inner organs and thereby regenerates them. Unlike many other physical disciplines, which cultivate special parts of the body, aikido tones the entire body. Its wide range of movements provides aerobic, flexibility, strength, and endurance conditioning.

**Aesthetic enjoyment**--Aikido movements are flowing and graceful. They are a pleasure to behold and, after the inevitable awkwardness of beginners, to perform. The harmonious coordination of movements among two or more individuals produces enjoyable choreographic effects.
Good company--People who train in aikido relate to one another on and off the mat in a friendly, supportive way. The training community can become an important source of social stimulation and support.

An ethical approach to self-defense--In its practical application, aikido is an art of self-defense against an unprovoked attack. Using aikido properly, an unjust and violent aggression can be neutralized swiftly and cleanly with demonstrable control over all the aspects of attack and defense--so that effective self-defense becomes possible without the necessity for inflicting serious injury.

Spiritual integration--Many students of aikido stress its function in promoting spiritual harmony: harmony within the individual, with our fellow human beings, and with transcending spiritual energies, however one chooses to think of them.
The Dojo and Its Culture

What is a dojo?

Do is a Japanese term (Tao in Chinese) that signifies a path or way of living that is understood to be in harmony with the universe.

A dojo is a special place (jo) dedicated to cultivating practices and habits which enable one to follow a do. Metaphorically, one could say that a university is a dojo dedicated to cultivating the life of the mind. More commonly, dojos involve practices which train body and spirit as well as mind to function harmoniously with one another and with transcending purposes and energies. Originally, the term designated a place for Buddhist meditative practice; today it also refers to places where martial arts practiced for the sake of spiritual improvement are taught.

Entering and leaving the dojo and class

Since the dojo is regarded as a special place, we treat it with special respect. In aikido practice, we show particular respect to a section of the dojo called the shomen (“head”), which contains some symbolism representing the spirit of aikido, often including a picture of the Founder of aikido. When you enter the dojo, bow to the shomen, then remove your shoes or sandals and move in quietly.

A few minutes before class, all students line up and sit in quiet meditation. This practice is short and simple. What you do is sit quietly for a few minutes and let go. Let go of the hurry and worry of your busy world and allow yourself to be silent.

Sit seiza--back straight, chin pulled in slightly to align the spine, knees two to three fists apart, big toes touching or crossed, hands resting on your thighs or folded at your center. Then, let go. Allow your breath to breathe you, your heart to beat, your ears to hear what there is to hear, your body to feel what there is to feel.
When the meditation period ends and training begins, rise and greet your partners with warmth and kindness, allowing the stillness of meditation to be with you in your practice.

The opening and closing ceremony of each class consists of a formal bow directed to the shomen, two claps in unison, another bow to the shomen, and then a bow between the sensei (instructor) and the students. The bows directed to the shomen symbolize respect for the spirit and principles of aikido, and gratitude to the Founder for developing this system of practice. The two claps [omitted in some dojos] symbolize unity (musubi): you send out a vibration and receive back the echo of vibration, thereby connecting your spirit with the spirit of universal consciousness. The vibration which you send and the echo you receive are dictated by your own spiritual beliefs and attitudes.

After the bows of the opening ceremony, students and instructor say “Onegai shimasu.” For the student, this means, “Please give me your instruction”; for the teacher, it means “Please receive my instruction.”

Following the bows of the closing ceremony, the students say “Domo arigato gozaimashita”—“you have my respect and gratitude for what you have just done.” The students then thank one another for training with them, in a group circle and/or individually.

Whenever you step off or onto the mat, and whenever you leave the dojo itself, please make a standing bow to the shomen.

Please plan your day so that you can be on the mat at least 15 minutes before class time. Your own warm-up, based on your body’s individual needs, will make each class much more enjoyable and valuable.

If you arrive late, please wait at the edge of the mat until invited into the class by the instructor. Bow to the sensei, step onto the mat and bow (seated) to the shomen. It is understood that at times lateness cannot be avoided, and it is unnecessary to give an excuse. Simply take a moment to change over to your “mat consciousness.” Once on the mat, take a few minutes to warm-up your body and tune into the class. When the class sits down for instruction, please sit also. You may join in when they next rise to practice.
If you have to leave the mat before class ends, excuse yourself to your partner and the sensei, then bow out. No explanation is necessary. Your mat experience and time are yours. If you leave the mat and return during the same class, there is no need to wait to reenter, and no need for permission.

Etiquette During Classes

On the mat, it is customary to address whoever is teaching as “sensei.” During class when the sensei demonstrates a technique for practice, you should sit quietly and attentively in seiza. After the demonstration, bow to your sensei, then bow to a partner, say “Onegai shimasu,” and immediately begin to practice. When the end of a technique is signaled, stop immediately, bow to your partner, and quickly line up with the other students.

If for some reason it is necessary to ask a question of the sensei, go to him or her--never call the sensei over--and bow respectfully (standing). When receiving personal instruction, sit in seiza and watch intently. Bow formally to the sensei when he or she has finished. When the sensei is instructing another, you may stop your practice to watch. Sit formally and bow when he or she has finished.

Respect those more experienced. Never argue about technique. You are here for practice; do not pressure your ideas on others.

If you know the movement being studied and are working with someone who does not, you may lead your training partner through it. But do not attempt to correct or instruct your partner if you are not of appropriate ranking. Keep talking on the mat to an absolute minimum. Aikido is experience.

Likewise, never stand around idly on the mat--you should be practicing or, if necessary, seated formally awaiting your turn. Do not lounge around on the mat before or after class. The space is for students who wish to practice.

Do not eat, drink, or chew gum on the mat at any time or off the mat during practice. Do not drink alcoholic beverages before coming to class.
You are welcome to sit and watch a class at any time, but the following rules of etiquette must be observed:

- Sit respectfully, never with legs propped up on the furniture or in a reclining position.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while class is in progress.
- Do not talk to anyone while they are on the mat and class is in progress.
- Do not talk or walk around while the instructor is demonstrating or lecturing.
- At the opening and closing of class, if possible, join the ceremony from the side of the mat. Remain seated until Sensei has signaled everyone to begin practice at the beginning of class, or has left the mat at the end.

Care of the dojo

The responsibility to keep the dojo clean is a communal one. In our society we tend to think of cleaning as a “chore,” as demeaning work performed by others. It is important to our training that we transcend such ideas. To see work that needs to be done and to do it is advanced training. The development of character and humility is equally as important as refinement of technique.

Please help clean the mat before each class. It only takes a few minutes for several people to sweep or damp mop the mat each day. In this way we have the sense of a fresh start for all our training.

Care of your person

We train in close contact with each other. A shower before class has made many training partners easier to work with. Please keep your finger and toenails short and clean. This many not seem important to you, but experience has shown that we suffer more annoying injuries from long nails than from any other cause. A nail clipper is provided in the dojo.
For the same reason, please remove all jewelry before training; rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and watches can be the cause of injury to you as well as others.

As with personal cleanliness, the condition of your dogi and belt and the manner in which you wear them demonstrate your attitude as much as do your actual skills on the mat. A dogi should be washed after two wearings if you sweat heavily, and if it has been able to dry out between workouts. The intimacy and close contact required during aikido training make it not only congenial but pleasurable if your dogi and body are clean and free of sweaty odors.

Put your name on your dogi in indelible ink as soon as you get your dogi. Normally, the name you wish to be called is written on the left shoulder/sleeve. While on the mat, your dogi may become ruffled or disarranged. When rearranging your dogi, turn toward the wall, away from the rest of the class. Never bow with your dogi in disarray. Keep the belt tightly knotted and in front of your center.

When you are first starting out, you may train in some other clothing, but not in street clothes. Rather, you should wear loose fitting clothing such as sweat clothes. Remember not to wear anything with buckles or other sharp objects that could scratch or tear the mat or injure your partner. Normally, you should purchase a dogi after you have trained for about a month, but if doing so would represent a financial hardship, you can make arrangements with one of the senseis or a club officer.

**Safety and injuries**

As in all athletic activities, aikido injuries commonly come from two sources: failure to warm up properly, and accidents. Failure to warm up and stretch before intense training means that your muscles will be tight and vulnerable to strains. It is advisable to arrive early for class and perform some slow stretches. Some aikido classes begin with 15 minutes of stretching and warm-ups. If you think that your sensei will not provide such warm-ups, be sure to arrive at least 15 minutes early to stretch on your own.

Always stay alert to the positions of others on the mat, especially on those days when the mat becomes crowded. It is your responsibility to see that you do not ram into anyone,
that you do not place yourself in a spot where you might get fallen upon, and that you do not throw your partners where they are likely to incur accidents.

The pins and throws used in aikido are designed not to inflict injuries. However, if some part of your body is getting consistently sore or bruised, let the sensei or more advanced students know, and perhaps we can see what you are doing that is causing the trouble. If you injure yourself in any way, please let the sensei know immediately. A first aid kit is available in the dojo.

Responsibilities in training

It is the responsibility of each member to cooperate in creating a positive atmosphere of harmony and respect. Aikido is not competitive, and a competitive attitude is not appropriate in the dojo. The strength of aikido lies not in muscular force, but in flexibility, timing, and control.

It is the responsibility of each member to respect the physical abilities of his/her partner and cause no injury. Everyone has different physical abilities and different reasons for studying; please respect your training partner and yourself.

It is the responsibility of each student never to use aikido techniques to harm another person or as a means of displaying ego, either in the dojo or out.

It is the responsibility of each member to follow sincerely and to the best of his/her ability the direction of the instructor. The class instructor has complete authority on the mat.

If you have problems continuing to train

Please discuss any concerns or unhappiness about your training experience with one of the instructors or senior students. If you decide to drop out of aikido for any reason, please tell us. We are sincerely interested in making your aikido experience a positive
one. We have been training in aikido for a long time, and have dealt with a multitude of processes within ourselves and others. By communicating to us, you help us to learn and improve ourselves as well as give us valuable feedback. If your personal needs can best be fulfilled elsewhere at this time, we will honor your leaving just as we honored your arrival. In that event, by leaving graciously you honor the student within your teachers.
Ranks and Testing

Many Japanese arts assign ranks on the basis of different levels of proficiency and experience. This is true for calligraphy, flower arranging, and the tea ceremony as well as martial arts other than aikido. Black belt grades are referred to as dan; the grades before black belt as kyu.

Rank gradations promote the aikido spirit when they are used to heighten awareness of one’s areas of strength and weakness, and of one’s level of responsibility to others. They contradict the aikido spirit if they become a focus for pride or an excuse for poor manners or snobbish behavior toward fellow aikidokas of less advanced ranks.

Promotional exams provide an excellent opportunity to take stock of one’s attainments and to become aware of areas of practice on which one needs to concentrate. Aikidokas often experience the special work involved in taking a test as a way to repay their dojo for the benefits they have received from it.

When you have the required hours and techniques, and after being recommended for promotion by the instructional committee, fill out an application for the rank you wish to be tested for. If your application is accepted, you will be scheduled to test at a specified date.

The etiquette of test-taking varies from dojo to dojo. The following guidelines are widely applicable:

1. When your name is called, immediately perform a sitting bow; stand and approach the shomen, then sit in seiza position facing the shomen. The examiner will then call your uke, who will sit to your right just behind you.

2. After your uke is seated, lead your uke in bowing, first to the shomen, then to the examiner, then to each other.

3. After the examining instructor calls a certain technique, perform it continuously, alternately left and right and, where appropriate, irimi and tenkan, until the examiner calls a different technique. Once you have started, do not stop; follow through, even if it means changing to a different technique.
4. Following the test, adjust your dogi, bow to your uke, then bow to the examiner and to the shomen, and return to the edge of the mat.

The examination requirements for this dojo are listed on the next page.
University of Chicago Aikido Club
Time and Technique Requirements for Kyu Promotion

Note: Centering may be tested for during class, prior to the formal examinations.

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Centering Tests

Exercises

1. Standing with feet parallel

   test from side: front & back, with inside handblade inside shoulder pushing toward center, pulling up at wrist, and under chin

2. Extending arm

   test for unbendable arm, weight underside

3. Sitting seiza

   test at side with both handblades at upper chest, and knees, hands, chin

4. Koho Tento Undo

   (rolling back and forward)

   at count of 2, push alternately at back or front at moment of arrival

5. Sitting down and standing up

   test at moment of arrival, from back at waist, at chest when down

6. Shomen Uchi Ikkyo Undo

   push back at waist when up;

   push under elbow while arm is dropping

   same as above

7. Zengo Undo

8. Happo Undo

   same as above

Levels of testing

A. make contact, wait until testee is settled, just push

B. test immediately

C. test quickly and in random directions

D. test with full ki

Kyu test requirements*

6th kyu: ##1-3, level A

5th kyu: ##1-4, level B

4th kyu: ##1-8, level B

3rd kyu: ##1-4, level C

2nd kyu: ##1-4, level D

1st kyu: ##1-8, level D

*These levels may be tested for during class, prior to the formal examinations.
**Glossary of Aikido Terms**

**Aikido:**  
**Ai** Connecting, harmonizing.  
**Ki** Life force, vital energy.  
**Do** Way, path (= Chinese “Tao”).

**Ashi**  
Leg.

**Atemi**  
Strike or blow; techniques used to distract or unbalance the attacker.

**Bokken**  
Wooden training sword.

**Budo**  
Lit., “the Way of War,” *budo* refers to modern derivatives of *bujutsu*, the classical combat arts of Japan. The group of disciplines called *budo* uses the teaching of martial technique as a means to cultivate the mental, physical, and spiritual powers of individuals, producing human beings and citizens at peace with themselves and others and with nature. See Appendix.

**Bushido**  
The Way of the Warrior (*bushi*). The unwritten code whose firm ethical principles governed samurai conduct.

**Dan**  
Step, grade; black belt rank.

**Deshi**  
Student, disciple.

**Dogi (or -gi)**  
Budo training uniform, traditionally white.

**Dojo**  
Training hall; a place for the strengthening and refinement of body, mind, and spirit.

**Domo Arigato Gozaimashita**  
“Thank you very much for what you have done.” (Spoken by sensei and students at the close of an aikido class.)

**Doshu**  
Lit., “way leader”; a designation for the leader of a discipline or group. In aikido, the first *doshu* was Morie Ueshiba; the second *doshu* was Kisshomaru Ueshiba, the Founder’s son. His grandson, Moriteru Ueshiba, serves as the current *doshu*.

**Fudoshin**  
Immovable mind. The quality of remaining unperturbed in the face of threats and danger.
-gaeshi  To reverse.

Hakama  Wide-skirted pants worn over the dogi, it symbolizes the samurai background of aikido training. One interpretation of the symbolism of its seven pleats (five in the front, two in the back) suggests that they represent the virtues of budo: Jin: benevolence; Gi: honor or justice; Rei: courtesy and etiquette; Chi: wisdom, intelligence; Shin: sincerity; Chu: loyalty; Koh: piety

Hanmi  Lit., “half body”; a posture in which one foot is advanced one step and the body weight is distributed equally on both feet. A relaxed triangular stance, it is stable yet flexible enough to move quickly in any direction. All aikido techniques begin with, move through, and end with this stance.

Hanmi Handachi  Techniques practiced with nage sitting and uke standing.

Happo  Eight directions.

Hara  Area just below the abdomen. Viewed in Japanese culture as the center of life energy, physical and spiritual. Aikido movements should originate from this point.

Henko waza  Techniques by which nage alters the direction of a throw when uke resists moving in the intended direction.

Hiji  Elbow.

Irimi  Entering; moving into and through the line of attack with no thought of escape.

Irimi-nage  Technique where nage enters linearly behind uke, seizes uke by the collar or neck with one hand while entering under the chin with the other arm and spiraling downward for the throw.

Jiyu Waza  Free style practice.

Jo  Wooden staff.

Kaiten  To revolve or rotate.

Kaeshi waza.  Techniques for seizing control of a movement when one is being thrown. From gaeshi, to reverse.
| **Kamae**  | A posture or stance of readiness. Within each stance there are different positions for the hands or weapon:  
|            | Jodan--high position,  
|            | Chudan--middle position, and  
|            | Gedan--lower position. |
| **Kata**   | Shoulder; also (different kanji), a series of prearranged movements, performed individually or in pairs, designed to teach basic forms and principles of martial techniques, used in aikido only for practice with bokken and jo. |
| **Katana** | Samurai sword; worn through the sash, blade up. |
| **Katate-dori** | One-hand grab to the wrist (same side). |
| **Katate-kosa-dori** | One-hand grab to the wrist (opposite side).  
| (also: katate-dori-hantai) | |
| **Keiko**  | Practice session; training; study leading to reflection and refinement. |
| **Ken**    | Japanese sword. |
| **Ki-ai**  | The release of spiritual and physical power in the form of a sudden piercing scream originating in the hara. |
| **Kihon**  | Basic form of a technique. |
| **Ki-no-nagare** | Fluid form of a technique. |
| **Kohai**  | A junior training partner. |
| **Kokyu**  | Breath power; the coordination of ki flow with breathing. |
| **Kokyu-dosa** | Seated kokyu exercise. |
| **Kokyu-nage** | Lit., “breath throw”; a term used loosely for a number of techniques that have no specific names. |
| **Koshi**  | Hips, waist. |
| **Kote**   | Wrist. |
| **Kote-gaeshi.** | A technique for throwing attackers by reversing the direction of their wrist. |
Kubi  Neck.
Kubishime  A grab that attempts to choke the attackee's neck.
Kyu  Ranks before black belt.
Ma-ai  Proper distance between uke and nage (literally, “harmony of space”).
Men  Face, head.
Misogi  Purification. A term for various ascetic/meditative practices designed to purify body and spirit, such as cleaning, fasting, sweating, and keiko.
Morote-dori  Two-handed grasp on one arm.
Mune  Chest.
Mushin  No mind; a mind without ego. A mind like a mirror which reflects and does not judge.
Musubi  Opposites are but different images of the same reality. Musubi is the process of their unification. It is the movement of the spiral. Related to the word for "knot."
Nage  A throw; a person who throws.
Omote  To the front.
Onegai Shimasu  “I make a request.” (Spoken when one wishes to practice with a fellow student or teacher.) See Appendix.
O-Sensei  Great Teacher. Title used for the Founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969).
Randori  "Free exercises." Often used to signify multiple-person attacks, it signifies any form of practice in which nage does not know what attack will be coming.
Rei  To bow; salutation.
Ryote-dori  Both wrists grabbed from the front.
| **Samurai** | Military retainer; one who has the duty and responsibility to protect society (from the verb, “to serve”). |
| **Seiza** | Formal sitting posture. |
| **Sempai** | Senior student. |
| **Sensei** | Teacher; one who gives guidance along the Way (literally, “born before”). |
| **Shihan** | Title for a master teacher who has been ranked at least to the grade of sixth dan. |
| **Shiho** | Four directions. |
| **Shikko** | Samurai knee-walking. |
| **Shinai** | A split bamboo practice sword. |
| **Shodan** | Holder of the first grade black belt. |
| **Shomen** | Front or top of the head; also the shrine which houses the picture of the Founder and the spirit of aikido (not a religious symbol, but a spiritual one). |
| **Shugyo** | Austere training; the work of education to refine and purify the quality of life. |
| **Suburi** | A single movement using the bokken or jo, repeated again and again. Often used as a purification/meditation exercise. |
| **Sumi-otoshi** | Corner drop throw. |
| **Suwari Waza** | Techniques beginning with both uke and nage seated, and executed from the knees. |
| **Taijutsu** | Aikido techniques done without weapons (lit., “body arts”). |
| **Tai-no-henko** | Basic blending practice (lit., “shift of body”). |
| **Take-musu Aiki** | Enlightened aikido. Spontaneous production of appropriate technique for a given situation on the basis of thorough understanding of aiki principles. Term used by the Founder to describe more advanced levels of aikido where rigid form begins to disappear. See Appendix. |
**Tanto**  Wooden knife used in training.

**Te**  Hand (and arm).

**Tegatana**  Hand blade. Sword edge of the hand, between little finger and wrist.

**Te-kubi**  Wrist.

**Tenchi**  A position of the hands, one up and one down (lit., “heaven [ten] and Earth [chi]”).

**Tenkan**  Turning to dissipate force.

**Tsuki** (pron: “s’ki”)  Thrust, punch.

**Uchi**  To strike.

**Uke**  One who initiates an attack and then takes a fall.

**Ukemi**  Technique of falling; the art of protecting oneself from injury.

**Undo**  Exercise.

**Ura**  To the rear.

**Ushiro**  Back, behind, rear.

**Waza**  Techniques, arts.

**Yokomen**  Side of the head.

**Yudansha**  Black belt rank holder(s).

**Zanshin**  Lit., “residual mind”; the concentrated attention that remains after one has completed a throw and readies one for the next action.

### Numbers

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Aikido Bibliography

Fact Books


What beginners want to know but rarely get told--on matters like dojo lore, vocabulary, ranking and exams, attire, weapons, exercises, and “mat survival.”

Principles and Applications


Exposition of the Japanese conception of hara, a foundational notion in aikido.


Applications of aikido in various areas, from basketball to psychotherapy; authors include the Founder and his son, George Leonard, Robert Nadeau, John Stevens.

André Protin, Aikido, un art martial, une autre manière d'être (Paris: Editions Dangles, 1977)

Searching examination of the cultural roots, philosophic foundations, and contemporary human significance of aikido.


A overview of the fundamentals of ki development through exercises, meditation, and breathing methods, followed by illustrations of ki development in the arts of aikido, calligraphy, massage therapy, the game of Go, Noh drama, and the tea ceremony, with reflections on the application of a "ki perspective" to daily living.


Evocative, original interpretations of aikido by one of the great shihans, with extraordinary drawings and pictures--a poetic gem, in every sense.


Exposition of ki principles and how to apply them to promote stress-reduction, fitness, and harmonious living.

Eloquent statement on the history and philosophy of aikido, by the son of the Founder and current head of the World Aikido Federation.

Printed for private distribution in 1938, this instruction manual by the founder of aikido includes more than 400 photographs of Morihei Ueshiba from that period.

The first half of this book contains the outstanding systematic exposition of the theory and principles of aikido.

**Technique**

Designed as a training manual, with special attention to katate-dori ikkyo, katate-dori shiho-nage, ryote-dori koshi-nage, katate-dori kokyu-nage, and shomen-uchi irimi-nage.

Basic principles, exercises, and techniques of the Ki-Society approach to aikido.

A short manual of basic techniques of Iwama-style aikido.

The first and still most extensive systematic presentation of the various techniques of the mature art developed by Morihei Ueshiba, including special sections on weapons techniques and group attacks.

Over 1,000 photographs illustrate basic principles and techniques. The book stresses the proper attitudes with which to approach aikido practice and how to apply the wisdom of aikido to daily life. Teachings by the Founder embellish the text.

Basic techniques described and illustrated by a disciple of the Founder who established a separate, “Yoshinkan” School of aikido, which stresses its combative applications.

Gozo Shioda and Yasuhisa Shioda, *Total Aikido: The Master Course* (Kodansha International, 1996)
A training manual of Yoshinkan Aikido with detailed technical descriptions of techniques and exercises.

Portrays breath-meditation as well as basic techniques executed by one of the pre-war disciples of Morihei Ueshiba, Rinjiro Shirata.

The second half of this book contains detailed descriptions with line drawings of more than a hundred aikido techniques.
Basic movements, throwing techniques, pinning techniques, and weapons-taking techniques, succinctly depicted.

Generous representation of aikido movements and techniques, lavishly illustrated.

**Asian Martial Arts:**

**History and Philosophy**

Paul Crompton, *Tai Chi for Two: The Practice of Push Hands*.
(Boston: Shambala, 1989).
Elegant exposition of principles and practice of push hands, in ways that exhibit strong parallels with aikido.

The pioneer scholarly survey of armed and unarmed fighting techniques. Vol. 3, ch. 8 provides an excellent account of aikido.

Survey of eleven Asian countries, with special appendices on Chinese traditions.

Inspired exposition of the benefits of martial arts training for mental functioning and personal growth.

Well-illustrated manual of Daitoryu Jujutsu, which includes techniques not familiar to all aikidoka.

Beautifully illustrated introduction to aikido and other martial arts, understood as disciplines for enhancing psychological and spiritual development.

Classic essays by a 17th-century Zen master for the benefit of Samurai swordsmen.

The first book-length biography of Morihei Ueshiba and the story of his struggles to create and establish the art of aikido.

A modern interpretation of enlightened warriorship informed by Tibetan Buddhism.
An enlightened interpretation of the philosophy of karate that reveals many potential affinities with the spirit of aikido.

Douglas Wile, *Lost Tai'chi Classics from the Late Ch'Ing Dynasty* (State University of New York Press, 1995)
A direct translation of some of the Tai'-chi classics, free of commentary, containing much information on posture and internal work applicable to any martial art.

**Serials**

*Aiki Journal* (Formerly *Aiki News*). A quarterly focusing on aikido and aiki jujutsu, including both historical materials and contemporary practices. Published since 1974. Address: 50-B Peninsula Center #317, Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274  $29.75/year.


*Journal of Asian Martial Arts*. A scholarly quarterly that deals with martial arts traditions from India, China, Korea, Japan, Philippines, and Indonesia. Published since 1992 by Via Media. Address: 821 West 24th Street, Erie, PA 16052.  $32/year.
APPENDIX A
SELECTED TEACHINGS
OF AIKIDO MASTERS

Morihei Ueshiba

Aikido

As ai (harmony) is common with ai (love), I decided to name my unique budo “aikido,” although the word “aiki” is an old one. The word which was used by warriors in the past is fundamentally different from that of mine.

Aiki is not a technique to fight with or defeat the enemy. It is the way to reconcile the world and make human beings one family.

True budo is a work of love. It is a work of giving life to all beings, and not killing or struggling with each other. Love is the guardian deity of everything. Nothing can exist without it. Aikido is the realization of love.

Budo

Budo is not felling the opponent by our force; nor is it a tool to lead the world into destruction with arms. True budo is to accept the spirit of the universe, keep the peace of the world, correctly produce, protect and cultivate all beings in nature. The training of budo is to take God’s love, which correctly produces, protects and cultivates all things in Nature, and assimilate and utilize it on our own mind and body.

True budo is the loving protection of all beings with a spirit of reconciliation. Reconciliation means to allow the completion of everyone's mission.

A mind to serve for the peace of all humanity is needed in Aikido, and not the mind of one who wishes to be strong and practices only to defeat an opponent. There are neither opponents nor enemies for true budo. Therefore to compete in techniques, winning and losing, is not true budo. True budo knows no defeat. “Never defeated” means never fighting.
Enemies

In Ueshiba’s budo there are no enemies. The mistake is to begin to think that budo means to have an opponent or enemy; someone you want to be stronger than, someone you want to throw down. In true budo there is no enemy or opponent. True budo is to become one with the universe.

In aikido we do not train to become powerful or to throw down some opponent. Rather we train in hopes of being of some use, how ever small our role may be, in the task of bringing peace to mankind around the world. In this hope we become one with the Universal.

When an enemy tries to fight with me, the universe itself, he has to break the harmony of the universe. Hence at the moment he has the mind to fight with me, he is already defeated. . . . Those who have a warped mind, a mind of discord, have been defeated from the beginning.

Training

You must continue in your aikido shugyo (austere training) ever more diligently. In doing so, you should not be negligent in devoting yourself to training and to attempting to improve. At the same time you must constantly reflect on what you have done. As a result, you will have developed and attained a balanced body that is one with your mind.

Take-musu Aiki

Aiki has a form, and does not have a form. Aiki is a life which has a form and still flows with change; it expresses itself by changing itself. A form without a form is a word and a poem which expresses the universe limitlessly.
Mitsugi Saotome

The Unity of Aikido

So often people study aikido, but they don’t study Aikido. They study ikkyo or shihonage or iriminage thinking, “This is the correct ikkyo. This is the correct shihonage.” This is nonsense. Instead of separating the techniques for study, we must study to see their similarities, the same application of principle, the same philosophical result. There is no perfect ikkyo, but any ikkyo is correct if executed spontaneously, sincerely, and in harmony with a particular situation. For in each situation, the degree and direction of force is different, your position is different, your feeling is different, therefore the application must be different.

Respecting Differences

Blind loyalty is most dangerous for it is all too easy to twist the ideas of loyalty and righteousness with the lever of human greed and selfish ego. A selfish ego has no respect for differences. It orders, “Everybody think like me, everybody look like me.” How would you really feel if every face were only your image, if every mind affirmed your thoughts? People talk of harmony, but have no respect for a different idea or a different way. The study of harmony is to learn to respect the differences and to study the unity found within those different points.

Love

The most important part of budo training is to understand the enemy. If you understand, you cannot hate. In only this way can you discover the true path of harmony. This is not the weakness of sentimental love, but the strict power of universal love. Love must never be weak for often the function of love is to discipline and give pain. Sometimes there is no other choice but to destroy a sickness.

If your heart is filled with hatred or the desire to win over another, to watch the other’s suffering, these thoughts will lie like death, decaying within your spirit and you will never understand spiritual power. The true martial Way, Budo, is the Way of adjustment, not destruction. It is social misogi. It seeks to correct a problem, not to judge or destroy a life.
Aggression

If you don't have aggression, you can't survive. . . . If somebody attacks you and you have no aggression, you cannot defend yourself, right? But, when an attack comes, you harmonize. There is this kind of balance in many systems. Aggression is a way of managing a system with feedback and adjustments. . . .

The problem with aggression is that people see it as a sickness, a craziness, something egotistical and unbalanced. On the mat, if you try a technique using too much aggression, you lose your balance, your center. So, people think aggression is no good. But this is wrong. If the aggression is adjusted by feedback, there is harmony. This is AIKI.

Growth

People feel safe being told: this is correct, this is not correct; but it is not that simple. A teacher can only give you a hint; he can only show you the Way, not travel it for you. You must discover Truth for yourself. Both instructors and students need to assume a more scientific attitude in their training. Ask a shallow question, receive a shallow answer. No deep questioning, no painful searching; no true growth.
Onegai Shimasu

*Onegai shimasu* is the request we make each time we bow to a partner.

It’s a request for our partner’s attention, to study their balance and ours. So that we can each discover the security and stability that is possible in movement.

It’s a request for honesty in attack. So that we can learn to be honest in our response, both with ourselves and with others.

It’s a request for patience with both our weaknesses and our strengths. Because we need to experience both.

And it’s a request to meet our anger and frustration with compassion. So that we can learn--out of the experience of compassion in the face of rage-- to love.

We make these requests each time we train.

Observation

Observation is an active, not a passive skill. It is a skill that can be developed through training. To a martial artist, the ability to clearly *see* (not to be confused with *look*) and instantly evaluate a movement or situation, is critical. You will find that much of the teaching of aikido is done non-verbally. That is to say the instructor demonstrates a movement(s), and the student has the responsibility to perceive the movement and try to repeat it. Part of the teaching is to break your dependency on others to explain everything to you. Martial arts movements cannot be learned by intellectualization or conceptualization--but rather by doing. Unlike the Western concept of teaching, the burden is not on the instructor to teach you, . . . but on you to seek out the truth of the teaching yourself. The greatest gift your instructor has to offer is simply the demonstration of his/her art--and the opportunity for you to observe and take that art and make it your own.

Cycles

Like all of nature, we all operate on natural rhythms. Most probably, your advancement in aikido (and the rest of your life) will go in cycles. It’s easy to train on the upswings, but can be difficult to persevere during the downtimes. If you only train during the uptimes, and not the downtimes, you reinforce a pattern in which you function well when
it's easy and poorly when it’s hard. In the whole of your life, this can be rather destructive, perhaps disastrous. . . .

Consider what would happen if you trained well during the high times, and continued as well as possible through the low times--[this would] raise the quality of your peaks and valleys equally. Then your highs will be higher and your lows will be higher, and you will learn how to count on your skills when the going gets difficult. The natural result of this consistent training is that tomorrow’s low is higher than yesterday’s high! This can be a rather pleasant surprise.

Stay with it. Train on a steady schedule and allow yourself to discover your greater capabilities. Put in some time every day for your aikido, even if you can't make it to the dojo. Aikido will give you its greatest gifts in the later years of your life, when you need them most. Remember that this is an art which continues to improve with age. Stay with your training, and you will, too. And don't fool yourself into thinking that it's easier for anyone else.

Uke-Nage Relationship

Uke has the task of giving his/her partner an “honest” attack to work with. On the face of it, this seems quite simple. Actually, it is not. An honest attack is more than holding as tightly as you can, or striking as forcefully as you can. An honest attack is an aware attack. Aware of your partner's situation!

Many students of aikido have a difficult time in reconciling the difference between total resistance/full power attack and “falling down” for your partner in a condescending response to a weak technique. Keep in mind that the essence of your practice should always be to practice AI-KI (harmony of energy). Give your partner a sincere and truthful practice that will bring them to the edge of their capabilities and extract their maximum performance, . . . but without undue strain.

The relationship between Uke and Nage is like a cart with wheels. Tighten the hubs of the wheels too much and the cart will not roll. Too loosely and the wheels will wobble and provide no stability. Think of the movement of your techniques as the movement of the cart; tighten the hubs of the wheels just to the point where they begin to bind, . . . then back off slightly and the wheel (technique) will run smoothly.

Commitment

It will take at least a year for you to get a taste of what aikido is like. This may be a difficult statement to understand, but it is reality for all the martial arts (the fine arts as well). When you receive your black belt, . . . far from having arrived somewhere, you discover that you have just begun serious study of the art. Prior to that, you are like a person who is learning a new language. The movements are the letters of the alphabet.
How you put the words and phrases together is your expression of yourself through your acquired skills.

So, it takes a year to get a taste, and a minimum of three times per week of consistent dojo training to grow into the art, *if* you do some daily supportive work on your own. Solo body movements, staff and sword exercises, breathing, stretching, and meditation can be considered supportive work. If you travel or have breaks in your training often, this work can keep your growth going. It is fine to take a leave of absence, even valuable from time to time. It takes consistent training on the mat, however, to know when a rest period is called for.
Respecting Differences

Blind loyalty is most dangerous for it is all too easy to twist the ideas of loyalty and righteousness with the lever of human greed and selfish ego. A selfish ego has no respect for differences. It orders, “Everybody think like me, everybody look like me.” How would you really feel if every face were only your image, if every mind affirmed your thoughts? People talk of harmony, but have no respect for a different idea or a different way. The study of harmony is to learn to respect the differences and to study the unity found within those different points.

--MITSUGI SAOTOME SHIHAN
1. The University of Chicago Aikido Club is a registered student organization established under the rules governing sports clubs at the University.

2. Membership in the club is open to all students, faculty, staff, and alumni of the University, as well as all spouses. Aikidoka of any organization are welcome to become members of the club. Membership may be secured by completing a membership registration form and paying a one-time registration fee, which entitles the member to one copy of the Club Handbook. During every quarter in which a member trains, quarterly dues are payable by the second week of the quarter.

3. Decisions about Club policy, instruction, and budget are to be made by a Club Executive consisting of Club officers, the faculty advisor, and regular Club instructors. The Club Executive may bring any policy matter to the entire membership for consultation. The Club Executive will meet as often as needed.

4. Members are expected to follow the guidelines for conduct set forth in the Club Handbook. Failure to follow the guidelines or to pay dues in a timely manner will result in an appropriate response from the Club Executive.

5. The club is affiliated with the Aikido Schools of Ueshiba, headquartered in Sarasota, FL and headed by Mitsugi Saotome Sensei. ASU members with the rank of sixth kyu and higher are expected to pay the annual ASU membership fee. Affiliation with ASU is not a requirement for membership in the club.

6. The Club officers will normally be elected by the Club membership at the end of the spring quarter. The Club officers and their responsibilities are as follows:

   President
   A. Convening meetings of the Club Executive.
   B. Making arrangements with instructors.
   C. Representing the Club in meetings with the sports club administrator.
   D. Ensuring that the other officers are properly discharging their responsibilities.

   Vice-President
   A. Supervising special club projects.
   B. Attending to prospective and new members.
   C. Arranging publicity for Club events.

   Secretary
A. Maintaining an updated membership list.
B. Sending out mailings as needed.
C. Procuring Club written materials.

Treasurer
A. Collecting dues and other fees.
B. Dispersing Club funds.
C. Keeping an account of the Club treasury.
D. Preparing the annual Club budget.

Dojo Steward
A. Seeing that the dojo room is open on time.
B. Organizing the cleaning of the mat before classes.
C. Opening and closing the cabinet, and putting out items needed for classes.
D. Overseeing Club property.