

The philosophy behind Aikido

The most unusual aspect of Aikido is that although it is primarily a self defence art, it takes as the basis of its philosophy the idea of being in harmony with the opponent rather than being in conflict. The ideology behind Aikido is not to think of defeating the enemy but rather to be in harmony with him, spiritually and physically. This is why Aikido is sometimes called the 'art of non resistance' or the 'non fighting martial art'.

Aikido is more than an art of self-defence. Into it are woven elements of philosophy, psychology and dynamics. As one learns the various techniques one will at the same time train one's mind, improve one's health and develop self-confidence. Through the physical practice of the self-defence techniques the student comes to appreciate and understand the mental and spiritual aspect of Aikido. During the practice sessions, partners work out in harmony with each other, learning when and how to yield, how to lead and guide another person's movements and how to down an opponent through non-aggressive techniques.

Aikido movements and techniques

The movements of Aikido emphasise a flowing flexibility and the maintaining of balance. The aim of the aikidoka is to be in complete control of his or her mind and body, and to maintain a calm, alert posture. The continuous and flexible motion, which originates at the waist, is like the performance of a dance; a graceful spherical motion.

Much of the beauty of Aikido derives from the coordinated motion of the entire body, with each movement of a part of the body contributing to the integrated sequence of movements. Most of the joint techniques, such as those applied to the wrist or elbow, flex the joints in the direction of natural bending. They are in harmony with natural flexing, and although such techniques are painful and effective if resisted against, they result in no permanent joint damage.

A more detailed look at Aikido

Aikido has, in a similar manner to other martial arts, developed and evolved even further from its original roots but still retains the concepts necessary to form its basic starting point. There are many schools of Aikido and many schools of thought each stressing their own emphasis of what they believe is important to the practice of Aikido. The subsequent diversity, which occurred within the art of Aikido, was inevitable; and it is widely believed Ueshiba himself would have welcomed this. Some of the 'original' students that studied under Ueshiba have gone on to form their own distinctive styles within Aikido, which can be referred to in their own right.

'Types' of Aikido

The teachings of the four main categories below reflect examples of these differences, at least in their early stages. These are Ki Aikido, Tomiki, Traditional and Yoshinkan. Ki Aikido, founded by Tohei sensei, has an emphasis on the development of internal energy through controlled breathing and harmonising exercises. It has been described as 'soft' Aikido. Tomiki Aikido focuses on competition sparring and kata, it therefore excludes some techniques that would easily cause injury. Perhaps it would be fair to say that it has evolved to cater for the 'sporting and competitive' element. Traditional Aikido basically tries to adhere to that of Ueshiba's teachings.

Many organisations claim to practice Traditional Aikido, amongst them are the British Aikido Federation, **the Kai Shin Kai** and the United Kingdom Aikikai.

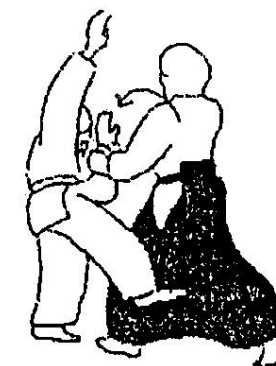
Yoshinkan Aikido, founded by Shioda sensei, is one of the oldest styles of Aikido and has a more rigid approach to basic training. This stemmed from necessity when it was first taught to the military/ police, which involved large numbers of students. It concentrates more on effective blocking and striking in a linear movement and less on circular blending movements.

Glossary of Japanese terms used in Aikido

Ai	Principle of harmony with others
Arigato gozaimasu	Thank you (very polite)
Bokken	Wooden practice sword
Budo/bushido	Code of the Samurai
Dame	'Don't do that' , incorrect
Dan	Black belt ranking
Domo arigato	Thank you
Domo arigato gozaimashita	Thank you very much; directed at sensei at the end of the class, referring to everything that he has taught
Dojo	Training hall
Gi (keikogi)	Practice suit
Hakama	Divided skirt worn over the gi
Hanmi	Posture/stance
Hara	Your centre (physical and spiritual, lower abdomen)
Hidari	Left
Hijime	Start or begin
Irimi	Entering
Kamae	Ready posture
Kamiza	A small shrine, often at the head of a dojo
Kata	Set form of movements
Keiza	Sitting, but up on toes
Ki	Spirit or energy
Ki no nagare	As a flowing movement
Kokyu	Breath power' , co-ordination of ki and breathing
Kyu	A rank below dan grade
Ma ai	Correct distance between partners
Migi	Right
Mushin	'No mind'; state of awareness characterised by the absence of distinctive thought
Omote	Front , moving in front / forward
Ritsurei	Standing bow
Sempae	Senior student



Shiho Nage



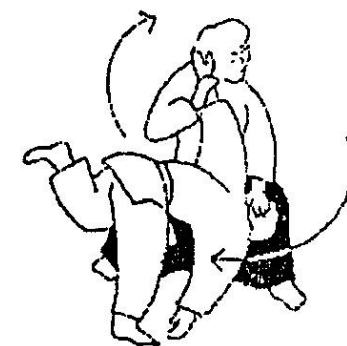
Kote Gaeshi



Irimi Nage



Tenchi Nage



Kaiten Nage

Glossary of Japanese terms cont...

Partner exercises

Hi shin undo	Back stretch
Kokyu ho	Extending power, breathing out
Suwariwaza kokyu ho	Exercise as Above but sitting
Tai no henko	Blending tenkan exercise

Postures and groups of technique

Tachi waza	Performed with tori and uke standing
Suvari waza	Performed with tori and uke sitting performed With
Hanmihandachi waza	tori sitting and uke standing

Ai hanmi	Basic posture, partners in same stance
Atemi waza	Striking / hitting techniques
Gyaku hanmi	Basic posture, partners in reverse stance
Kansetsu waza	Joint manipulation techniques
Katame waza	Hold down techniques
Nage waza	Projection/throwing techniques
Osae waza	Pinning techniques
Ushiro waza	'From the rear' techniques

It is important that students understand and can demonstrate in a grading the differences expected from *irimi* and *tenkan* variations.

Irimi (or omote)	Entering across the front of your partner from hidari hanmi (left) or migi hanmi (right)
Tenkan (or ura)	Turning to the outside (rear) of your partner from hidari or migi hanmi

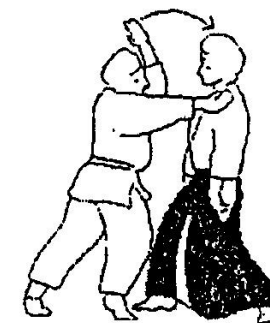
A more subtle interpretation of *omote* and *ura* will come later, perhaps!



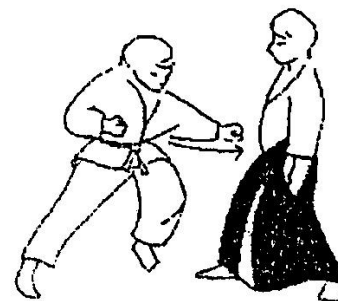
Shomen Uchi



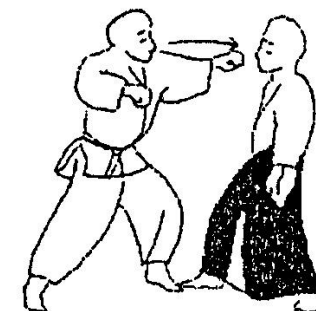
Yokomen Uchi



Kata Dori Shomen Uchi



Chudan Tsuki



Jodan Tsuki

Glossary of Japanese terms cont...

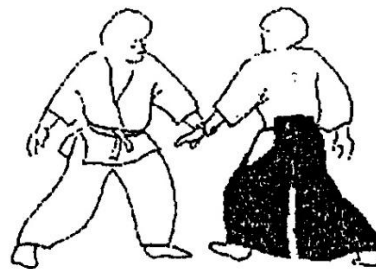
Techniques performed by tori

Ikkyo	First principle – <i>pinning technique</i>
Nikkyo	Second principle
Sankyo	Third principle
Yonkyo	Fourth principle
Gokyo	Fifth principle
Hijishime	Sixth principle (<i>elbow lock against joint</i>)
Aiki otoshi	Body drop
Aikinage	Harmony throw
Iriminage	Entering throw (<i>body</i>)
Jyujigarame	Crossed elbow throw
Kaitennage (Soto and Uchi)	A rotary throw. N.B. Variation to be initiated from the outside and from the inside (<i>under</i>)
Katagatame Kokyunage	Shoulder lock and throw
Kokyunage	Breath throw
Koshinage	A throw in which uke is thrown over tori's hips
Kotegaeshi	Wrist (<i>technique using outward turn to</i>) throw
Shihonage	Four directional throw
Sukumen	Underhead breath throw
Sumi otoshi	Corner throw (<i>drop</i>)
Tenchinage	Heaven and earth throw
Udegarami	Elbow lock and throw (<i>figure four lock</i>)

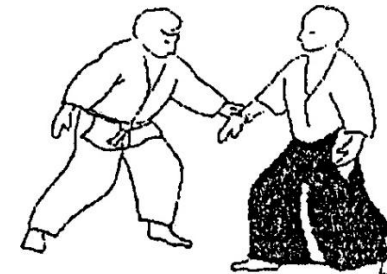
Advanced strikes

Giri	Kick (jodan, chudan, gedan)
Gyaku yokogiri	A roundhouse kick
Gyaku yokomenuchi	Reverse strike to side of head
Katadori shomenuchi	Grab and strike
Shomenate	Rising strike to head (throat)

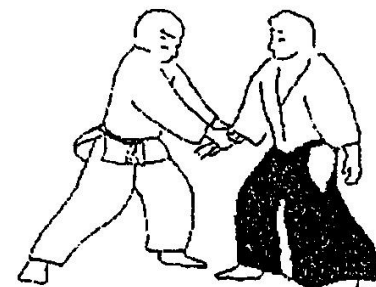
Pictograms of Attacks and Techniques



Ai Katate Dori



Gyaku Katate Dori



Morote Dori



Ryote Dori



Kata Dori



Mune Dori

Kai Shin Kai senior grading syllabus

5th kyu (Yellow belt) – minimum 30 hours of training

- i) Selection of exercises from:
Taisabaki, Tsgui ashi, Ayume asji, Torifune, Tai no henko
Ukemi, Shikko, Suwari waza kokyo ho
- ii) Techniques from Ai katate dori (irimi and tenkan):
Ikkyo, Nikkyo, Iriminage, Kotegaeshi.
- iii) Ninnin dori using Ai katatedori.

4th kyu (Orange belt) – minimum 60 hours from 5th kyu

- i) Selected attacks from 5th kyu syllabus.
Plus techniques from:
- ii) Ai katate dori, Chudan tsuki, Gyaku katate dori, Shomenuchi,
Yokumenuchi.
Attacks leading into Ikkyo, Nikkyo, Iriminage, Kokyunage,
Kotegaeshi, Sukumen, Shihonage, Tenchinage, Sumi otoshi, plus others
as requested.
- iii) Ninnin dori using above attacks,
or
Weapons: Bokken suburi: nos. 1-4. Jo suburi: nos. 1-5.

3rd kyu (Green belt) – minimum 60 hours from 4th kyu

- i) Selected techniques from 5th and 4th kyu syllabi.
- ii) Plus techniques from:
Kata dori, Kata dori shomenuchi, Ryote dori, Ushiro ryote dori, Ushiro
ryo kata dori.
Attacks are to lead into Sankyo, Yonkyo, Mai otoshi, plus others as
requested.
- iii) Ninnin dori using above attacks,
or
Weapons: demonstrating Bokken suburi and Jo suburi.

Kai Shin Kai senior grading syllabus cont...

2nd kyu (Blue belt) – minimum 70 hours from 3rd kyu

- i) Selected techniques from 5th to 3rd kyu syllabi.
- ii) Plus techniques from:
Hiji dori, Ushiro hiji dori, Jodan tsuki, Morote dori.
Attacks are to lead into Gokyo, Hijishime, Kaitennage,
plus others as requested.
- iii) Don't forget Hanmi handachi and Suwari waza variations!
- iv) Escape from being held by two ukes using Morote dori.
- v) Ninnin dori using above attacks,
or
Weapons: demonstrating Bokken awase and Jo suburi kata.

1st kyu (Brown belt) – minimum 100 hours from 2nd kyu

- i) Selected techniques from the 5th to 2nd kyu syllabi as detailed in the
relevant test papers.
- ii) Tanto dori.
- iii) Escape from being held by two ukes using Morote dori.
- iv) Ninnin dori with free attacks from ukes,
Or
Weapons: demonstrating Bokken awase (Ki musubi no-ken) and Jo
kata.

Senior gradings

The 1st kyu to sandan gradings are usually held in April and October. They have separate, specific test papers issued which cover the KSK syllabus and are judged by an appropriately qualified panel. Test requirements can be a sensitive issue. Interpret these as guidelines not requirements, thus allowing a panel some discretion, some humanity, even some mistakes. Your Aikido will not have changed!

It can be argued that Aikido is based on the swordsman's art, which is certainly true to a large degree; but do not forget there is a much wider philosophy involved. Many of the movements are indeed based on sword 'cuts' and this in turn will teach us how to make best use of centralised body movement, but it is wise to keep an open mind regarding 'how' you learn.

It is at this point that the idea of using bokken and jo as an integral part of Aikido development can be introduced. Ueshiba encouraged the use of these two 'weapons' to be adopted within Aikido, although bear in mind that they can be regarded as disciplines in their own right.

If this martial art appeals to you, remember this huge diversity within Aikido that can help you and your development. That is after all primarily what O-Sensei wished for and encouraged within his teachings.

An introduction to Aikido

Morehei Uyeshiba (1883-1969)

Aikido is a relatively new self-defence art, founded in Japan by Master Morehei Uyeshiba.

As a youth Uyeshiba Sensei, or O-Sensei (great teacher) as he was later called, applied himself to many arduous years of training in 'budo' or the Japanese martial arts. He mastered jiu-jitsu, the use of the spear and the staff and enjoyed a reputation as unbeatable with the sword.

O-Sensei also delved deeply into religion, studying Zen Buddhism and the Shinto religion. Although he became very strong and won many matches, he was troubled with the idea that winning at someone else's expense was not really winning. He came to realise that true self-defence is not winning over others, but winning over the discord within oneself. Though he was an acknowledged master, he began to practise movements, exploring them deeply, searching mentally, and sitting for long hours in meditation. As a result, Aikido was born, as a way to divert harm from one's self while not inflicting permanent injury on an aggressor.

As Aikido developed, it became clear that it was not only an effective means of self-defence, but also a way to interpret life through the study of the energy flow of the universe.

The meaning of the word 'Aikido'

Aikido in Japanese is made up of three characters or kanji. The first and most important is '**Ai**' which means 'to meet, come together and harmonise'.

The second kanji is '**Ki**' which means 'the spirit (of the universe) or soul'.

The third or last character is '**Do**' which means 'the way or path', as in Kendo or Judo, to signify that the study of Aikido does not involve only self-defence techniques but includes positive character-building ideals which a person can incorporate into his or her daily life.



Aiki Otosho



Sumi Otosho



Sukumen



Koshi Nage



Kata Gatame



Hiji Shime



Juju Garaminage



Ude Garami

Dojo Etiquette

When entering the dojo, traditionally students perform a ritsurei (standing bow) towards the shomen (picture of O-Sensei or 'the head' or top part of the dojo), as a mark of respect.

Before going onto the tatami (mat), ensure that your keikogi (gi) and obi (belt) are tied properly. Approach the tatami, remove zori (sandals) and bow towards the shomen. To perform a kneeling bow (rei), place the left hand then the right on the tatami in front of you so that the two thumbs and index fingers form a triangle.

When the sensei (instructor) enters the dojo and before he comes onto the tatami all members should line up in the sitting position. At the start of the class all bow with sensei towards the shomen, then return sensei's bow with the 'traditional' phrase 'Onegaishimasu'. Ideally, follow his lead through the warming-up exercises.

During class, ritsurei to your partner before and after practising. If sensei should instruct you and your partner individually, it is polite to bow afterwards. While the sensei is working with your partner you may kneel on the tatami.

Your partners are not your opponents, so take care of them whenever possible. Be sensitive to their abilities and remember that the understanding of Aikido's principles and techniques can be learnt whilst receiving and applying them; both as an uki and as tori.

When arriving late or leaving early, wait at the side of the tatami and then ask sensei's permission to join the class. If leaving early, ask sensei's permission first. Basic polite behaviour really!

At the end of the lesson, follow sensei's lead as for starting the class. When returning the bow it is polite to say 'domo arigato gozaimashita'. Allow sensei to leave the mat first.

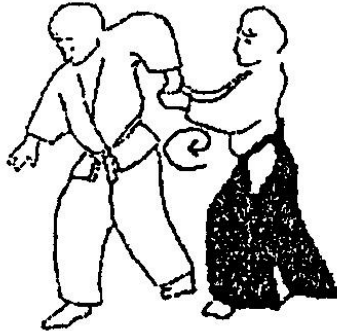
Glossary of Japanese terms cont...



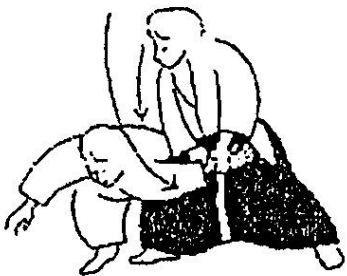
Ikkyo



Nikyo



Sankyo



Yonkyo



Gokyo

Sensei	Instructor / teacher
Seiza	Sitting posture
Tatami	Training mat
Tegatana	Handblade, the side of the hand
Tenkan	Turning
Ura	Rear , moving behind / rear
Yame	Stop, cease practice
Yudansha	Black belt holder (any rank)
Zanshin	Awareness , concentration
Zazen	Meditation
Zori	Sandals for your feet

Counting

Ichi = 1	Roku =6	Jyu =10
Ni = 2	Shichi =7	Ni jyu =20
San = 3	Hachi =8	San-Hyu =30
Shi =4	Kyu =9	Hyaku =100
Go =5		

Jyu-ichi (10 + 1 = 11) etc.

Ni-jyu-ichi (2 x 10 +1 = 21) etc.

San-jyu-roku (36) etc.

Basic exercises (Aiki taiso)

Ayumi ashi	Crossed step walking, in front or behind foot
Irimi tenkan	Entering move then turning outwards
Mai ukemi	Forward break-fall
Shihogeri	Four direction cut, basic sword movement
Shikko	Knee walking
Taisabaki	Body movement
Torifune	Boat-rowing style of exercise using kiai
Tsugi ashi	Forwards or backwards adjustment or follow up step
Ushiro ukemi	Backward break-fall

Glossary of Japanese terms cont...

Basic holds (Grip attacks)

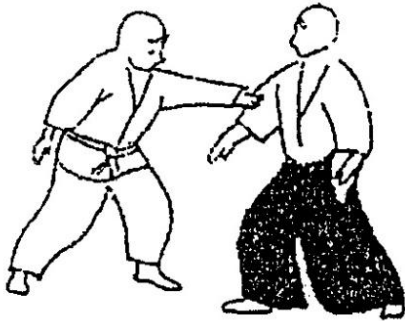
Ai katate dori	Grip wrist same side
Katatedori	Grip wrist same side
Gyaku katatedori	Grip wrist reverse or opposite side
Kousadori	Grip wrist opposite side
Hiji dori	Grab the sleeve or elbow
Kata dori	Grab the shoulder area
Morote dori	Grab or grip wrist with both hands
Mune dori	Grip or grab lapel or mid chest area
Ryo kata dori	Hold / take both shoulders
Ryote dori	Two hands take both wrists
Ryo katate dori	Two hands take both wrists

Advanced holds (Grip attacks)

Kubishime	To strangle or choke
Munedakishime	Bear hug (from behind)
Ushiro	From the rear (usually prefix to attack)
Ushiro eri dori	Collar gripped from behind
Ushiro katate dori kubishime	A neck choke from behind using one hand with the other hand holding the wrist.
Ushiro ryote dori	Both wrists gripped from behind
Ushiro ryo hiji dori	Both elbows gripped from behind
Ushiro ryo kata dori	Both shoulders gripped from behind

Basic Strikes (Atemi waza)

Tsuki	Punch or strike to body
Chudan tsuki	Punch to stomach
Gedan tsuki	Punch to groin
Jodan tsuki	Punch to head
Shomenuchi	Strike to the top of the head
Yokomenuchi	Strike to side of head



Hiji Dori



Ushiro Ryote Dori



Ushiro Ryo Kata Dori



Ushiro Kata Dori Kubishime



Ushiro Mune Kubishime

Kai Shin Kai senior grading syllabus cont...

Shodan (Black belt) – min. 200 hours & 1 year from 1st kyu

- i) Selected techniques from the 5th to 1st kyu syllabi, plus additional requirements as detailed in the test paper.
- ii) Escape from being held by two ukes using Morote dori.
- iii) Defences against weapons: Bokken, Chain, Jo, or Tanto.
- iv) Futari gaeki, a more spirited attack, against two ukes,
or
Weapons: Bokken kumitachi and Kumijo.

Nidan – minimum of two years from Shodan

- i) Similar techniques as in Shodan but to a higher standard of execution and understanding. Particular attention will be paid to posture, blending, control, zanshin and mushin.
- ii) Choice of own six techniques to higher standard.
Escape from being held by three ukes, two gripping, one punching or
- iii) Kicking.
Futari gaeki with one attacker armed with a tanto,
- iv) *Or*
Weapons: Bokken kumitachi, Kumijo, Ken tai jo.

Sandan – minimum of three years from Nidan

As above, but to a higher standard. The examination panel would expect to see progression and individual improvement since nidan.

Yondan and above

Currently these gradings are by recommendation and invitation only.

Glossary of Japanese terms cont...

Other elements

Ninnin dori	Practise with two ukes against named attacks
Sannin dori	Practise with three ukes against named attacks
Jiyu waza	Free-style techniques
Randori	Multi person random choice of attacks
Tanto dori	Defences against a knife (tanto)
Tachi dori	Defences against a sword (bokken)
Jo dori	Defences against a jo (staff)

Weapons

The use and handling of weapons, particularly the bokken and jo, forms an adjunct to a student's comprehension and understanding of the principles in Aikido.

Bokken suburi	7 basic sword cuts
Bokken awase	Partner blending practice
Kumitachi (bokken)	Advanced exercises with swords
Jo suburi	20 basic jo movements
Jo kata	Kata (e.g. 13, 22, 31 & 25 count forms)
Kumijo	Advanced exercises with jo partner
Ken tai jo	Bokken against Jo practice

Demonstration of the Bokken and Jo is an optional part of the senior gradings, instead of Ninnin dori or Futari gaeki.

NORTHAMPTON AIKIDO CLUB

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