AIKIDO
Student Manual

Aikido Association of America
Aikido Association International

DEDICATION

This manual is dedicated to the Founder of Aikido,
Morihei Ueshiba O-Sensei (1883-1969)

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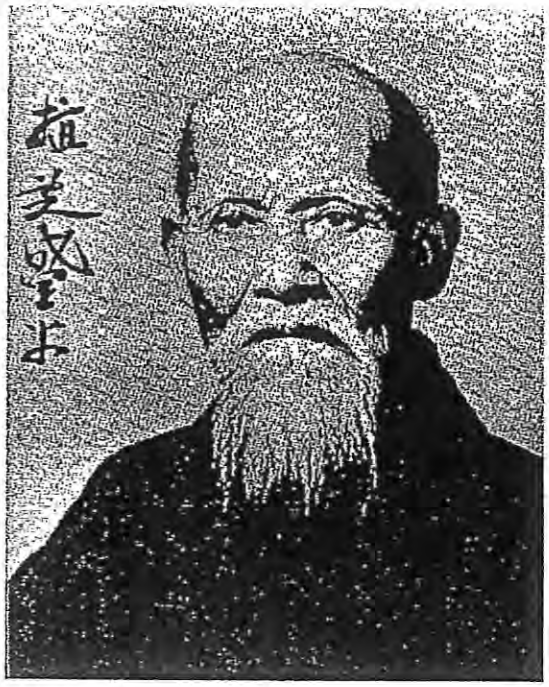
FOREWARD

By Shihan Fumio Toyoda
President and Chief Instructor
Aikido Association of America and Aikido Association International

In Japanese there is an expression, "numon", which means to enter through a gate. As an aikido student, you have entered through the gate of the Aiki Way, which means you have committed yourself to learning Aikido. If you have this sincere committment, also called "shoshin", or beginners' mind, then you are already halfway done your training. I would like you to understand the importance of this sincerity, for it is crucial. We say, "Sho shin kan tetsu": with the true commitment of your beginner's mind, pass through training to reach your goal.

In this spirit I hope you will become more deeply involved in our training program. This does not simply mean you must have commitment; we also, your instructors, are committed to working with you. Walking the Way together as true friends in this manner, I am confident there will be a positive result.

This manual is meant to be a guide to facilitate this process. Like all things, the manual is not fixed; we may in the future revise or change it to reflect the continued development of our training program. I sincerely hope that you will find it a useful asset for your training, and that it will contribute in some small way to the betterment of ourselves and our world through Aikido.



Aikido Kaiso Morihei Ueshiba O-Sensei (1883-1969)

INTRODUCTION

This Student Manual is designed to give beginner and advanced students alike a greater understanding of our Aikido training. Students come to Aikido for many different reasons, and each must have a clear idea of why they are training in Aikido and what Aikido is for them. While the manual cannot give that to the student, it is a basic statement of the history, principles and framework of Aikido training that the student will find useful in his or her development. It must be emphasized that merely reading this manual will not give an understanding of Aikido; only sincere training will do this. Without training there is no Aikido, and without training this manual is only empty words.

Emphasis in the manual is not on technical explanation. It does, however, explain clearly the types of training that an Association student undertakes, and the reasons for them. Etiquette is also explained; the dojo is often a perplexing place for the new student, and we believe this will make the sometimes confusing ritual of the dojo easier for the beginner. Finally, it is our sincere hope that the Aikido student will find in this manual a source of knowledge, encouragement and inspiration that will allow him or her to enter more deeply into Aikido training.

We would like to express our thanks to the yudansha of the Chicago-area Hakamakai, whose contributions to the production of this manual were invaluable.

I. AIKIDO - *Your Chosen Art*

"Aikido" - Calligraphy by Morihei Ueshiba O-Sensei

Welcome

Welcome to the study of Aikido. As an *Aikidoka,* an Aikido trainee, you have entered into a training that can offer many benefits for you and your life: self-defense skills, physical fitness, improved health of mind and body, confidence, and more. We would like to stress to you from the beginning that Aikido will be for you what you make it. Do not enter Aikido training with the attitude that you are to be "given" knowledge simply by showing up for practice or paying your dues. You must take knowledge. Learn actively. Watch, listen, and "steal" from your teacher and your senior students everything that you can. Be intense and hungry.

As a beginner, a great deal of knowledge will be thrown at you very rapidly in the coming months. We encourage you to cultivate what is called "beginner's mind": an attitude of openness, attentiveness and sincerity. This will make your initial months of training the most beneficial. This is the time, after all, to lay the foundations of your training. Advanced students, also, should not forget this attitude. Every day is a new day, and a new opportunity to learn.

What is Aikido?

The Japanese martial art of Aikido is a comprehensive system of throwing, joint-locking, striking and pinning techniques, coupled with training in traditional Japanese weapons such as the sword, staff and knife. Founded by Morihei Ueshiba early in the twentieth century following his own extensive study of various armed and unarmed martial systems, Aikido represents a potent distillation of centuries of Japanese martial knowledge. It is one of the most widely practiced *Budo,* martial ways, in the world.

However, Ueshiba (commonly called *O-Sensei,* or "venerable teacher") was determined that his Aikido be practiced as more than simply methods of fighting. The Japanese martial arts, influenced by the internal and meditative disciplines inherited from India and China, have often carried with them an emphasis on the development of internal as well as physical integrity. Wielding the life-taking sword with compassion and insight, the ideal warrior in Japanese thought is more than a simple killing machine; he is a model of uprightness, courage and loyalty, gladly sacrificing life (but never honor) in the name of principle and duty. Steeped in these traditions, O-Sensei conceived of Aikido as not only a means of vanquishing a foe, but as a means of promoting the positive character of the ideal warrior and ultimately of transcending dualistic conflict. For O-Sensei, Aikido was a path of self-development. He believed that it could be a means for anyone, of any nation, to follow the same path. Aikido is *shugyo:* an intense physical and spiritual training to perfect human character and develop true wisdom.

More than any technique, it is this spirit of *shugyo* which defines true Aikido training. While technical mastery is essential, without these philosophical principles Aikido would be nothing more than exercises and throws. As you train, keep these concepts in your mind. Eventually they must fall away as concepts, and become a part of you.

As a beginner, strive to practice the principles of Aikido - intense energy, relaxation, mental focus and calm - in everything you do. You will find that Aikido training is not confined to the dojo, but becomes the very act of living. This is what is meant by "Aikido in daily life."

II. AAA and AAI - *Your Organizations*

The Aikido Association of America (AAA) is the nationally-based organization that provides leadership, instruction, rank recognition and other services to your dojo, if you live in the United States of America; Aikido Association International, a sister organization, provides those services if you live outside the U.S.A. As Association affiliates, your dojo and instructor are recognized as legitimate sources for Aikido instruction, under the leadership of President and Chief Instructor Shihan Fumio Toyoda. As an AAA or AAI member (which you will become upon passing the 7th kyu promotion test and paying your annual membership fee) you also are recognized as a legitimate student of Aikido, and your membership will give you access to newsletters, seminars and other benefits to aid your training. The AAA is a vibrant, strong organization with over 100 member dojo in the United States; AAI encompasses dojo in eight nations other than the U.S.A. AAA/AAI are in turn affiliated with the Aikikai Foundation, the original Aikido organization founded by O-Sensei and headquartered in Tokyo, Japan.

The goals of our Associations are clear and straightforward:

1. To raise and maintain American Aikido at its highest possible level, using traditional Japanese and modern methods of teaching Aikido arts and philosophy.

2. To insure the successful transmission of Aikido to future generations through the development of professional, quality instruction.

Both Aikido Association of America and Aikido Association International are headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A. We encourage you to visit Headquarters to train whenever you are in the Chicago area.

Shihan Fumio Toyoda

As the President and Chief Instructor of our Associations, Shihan Fumio Toyoda is the force of organizational and technical leadership that drives our organization. The word "shihan" is translated to mean "teacher of teachers". This reflects Shihan Toyoda's responsibility not only to teach Aikido, but to instruct his students to be competent teachers themselves.

Born in Japan on November 8, 1947, Shihan Toyoda began his study of Aikido at the age of 10 at Chushinkan Dojo in Tochigi Prefecture, Japan. After earning his shodan at the age of 17, he was accepted as uchideshi (resident apprentice) at the Ichikukai Dojo in Tokyo, committing to three years of rigorous training in misogi and zen. During this time he also pursued a law degree at Senshu University.

After graduating from Senshu University, Shihan Toyoda lived as uchideshi at Aikido World Headquarters (Aikikai Hombu Dojo), and there began his career as a professional, full-time instructor. During this period he also taught at several leading Japanese Universities, among them Daito Bunka University, Seikei University, and International Christian University.

Beginning in 1971, Toyoda Shihan taught for two years at the Ki no Kenkyukai (Ki Society) as a Chief Instructor of the Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido of Koichi Tohei. His teaching responsbilities took him to South Korea and Hawaii, where he presented Aikido demonstrations and seminars to instructors and beginners alike.

During these early years and traveling and teaching abroad, Toyoda Shihan recognized the growing need for more full time, qualified Aikido instruction, and made a personal commitment to spread the art and philosophy of Aikido beyond the shores of his native Japan.

Beginning in 1974, Toyoda Shihan began to fulfill this commitment by personally spreading the teachings

of Aikido throughout North America. That year, he established the Chicago Ki-Aikido Society and began an intensive schedule of travel and seminar instruction.

"Tenshin" (Universal Mind) - Calligraphy by Shihan Fumio Toyoda

As Toyoda Shihan organized and taught in the United States, he became acutely aware of the deep political divisions existing within the Aikido world. He also noticed the rigid organizational control that Japan-based Aikido organizations exerted on international dojo. He observed dissatisfied dojo, one by one, sever their ties with Japan to pursue an independent and unsure future. Toyoda Shihan was convinced that this status was not conducive to the growth of Aikido, and could only lessen the quality of Aikido outside of Japan.

In 1984 Toyoda Shihan set about the formidable task of organizing and establishing the Aikido Association of America as an independent organization.

Toyoda Shihan's dream is now reality. AAA is an growing affiliation of over 100 dojo in the U.S., open to anyone expressing a sincere desire to practice Aikido arts. Overseeing the Association from the Chicago, Illinois Tenshinkan Dojo headquarters, and working closely under the direction of the Aikikai Foundation in Japan, AAA has come to assume a position of leadership in American Aikido. And, through Aikido Association International and Aikido International Foundation, a not-for-profit charitable organization, Toyoda Shihan has now extended his teaching beyond the shores of America.

Your Place in the Association

As an AAA or AAI member, you are part of an international community of Aikido practitioners. You are also considered a student of Toyoda Shihan, as well as a student of your own Sensei. We encourage you to attend seminars and other opportunities to receive instruction directly from Toyoda Shihan, the Teaching Committee, and other instructors. This will serve to broaden your training, and make you a more integral part of our community. You are the Association; without sincere Aikido students like yourself, we have no reason to exist. Along with the Association sanctioned seminars that will take place at your dojo or in your area, the following are major events you should be aware of, and which you will be eligible to attend:

Kangeiko: Intensive winter training seminar, held each year in Chicago.
Shochugeiko: Intensive 7-day summer training seminar, held each year in Chicago.
National Instructors' Seminar and Conference: Held each year in Chicago, U.S.A. Association policy requires all instructors to attend this seminar or one of the following instructors's seminars at least every other year, in order to maintain a valid instructor certification. Your are eligible to attend an instructors' seminar when you have attained the rank of second kyu.
East Coast Instructors' Seminar: held every other year.
West Coast Instructors' Seminar: held every other year.
European Instructors' Seminar: held every other year.

Finally, please remember that as an Aikido student your actions reflect directly on your dojo, your Sensei, Toyoda Shihan, the Association, and the art of Aikido as a whole. Take pride in your art and your organization, and strive to uphold the high moral and ethical standards of the martial arts at all times.

III. SENSEI - *The Teacher*

Your *sensei*, your teacher, is someone with whom you have entered into a relationship of mutual trust. You trust your sensei to teach you the art of Aikido to the best of his or her ability. In turn, your sensei is trusting you to practice safely and diligently, to learn wholeheartedly, and to conduct yourself in a manner that reflects favorably on Aikido.

"Sensei" literally means "one who is born before." This does not refer to age; your sensei may in fact be younger than you. "Born before" means that your sensei entered the path of Aikido training before you, and has already passed where you are going. Your sensei is a guide. You do not owe blind allegiance to him or her, but you do owe respect, patience and committment. Your sensei is someone who with his or her own body, possibly at the risk of life and limb, has learned this art and committed to sharing it with others. You sensei is your connection to the lineage of teachers stretching back to O-Sensei and beyond. Treasure that connection as the valuable thing it is.

Fumio Toyoda Shihan

When your sensei talks, listen completely. Watch intently. Not everything in Aikido training will be explained verbally to you; it is an unskilled teacher who feels the need to explain every detail of the instruction with words alone. Be patient, and train diligently. As your training progresses, you will gain the satisfaction of discovering for yourself aspects of our art. Once gained, that knowledge is yours. This is the transmission of knowledge ***isshin den shin***, from mind to mind.

Etiquette Toward the Sensei

Etiquette is not simply a dead tradition or custom: it is a living method of training in itself. Observe it mindfully. Following are rules of etiquette to be observed toward your instructor:

1. Address your instructor as "Sensei" at all times.
2. Bow to your instructor in greeting and when leaving or ending a conversation. When your instructor calls your name, answer "Yes" or "Hai" quickly and attentively.
3. When your instructor talks, listen and look at him or her directly. When you speak to your instructor, speak directly and plainly.
4. When walking with your instructor, offer to help carry bags or other things he or she may be carrying. Japanese tradition calls for the student to walk slightly behind and to the left of the instructor (this back left corner was the hardest place for a swordsman to defend quickly if attacked, and so the student would walk here to protect his teacher). While your instructor may not require you to observe this old custom, it is an excellent way to develop your awareness of proper *ma-ai* (distance), and to show respect. In any case, be alert at all times when in the company of your instructor. It is your responsibility to help and protect in any way possible.
5. Observe common rules of politeness and consideration towards your sensei, as you would toward any respected person.

IV. THE DOJO - *A Place of Training*

The word "dojo" can be translated as "place of the Way" or "place of enlightenment. It is obvious from this that something more than a mere gymnasium or training hall is denoted by the word "dojo".

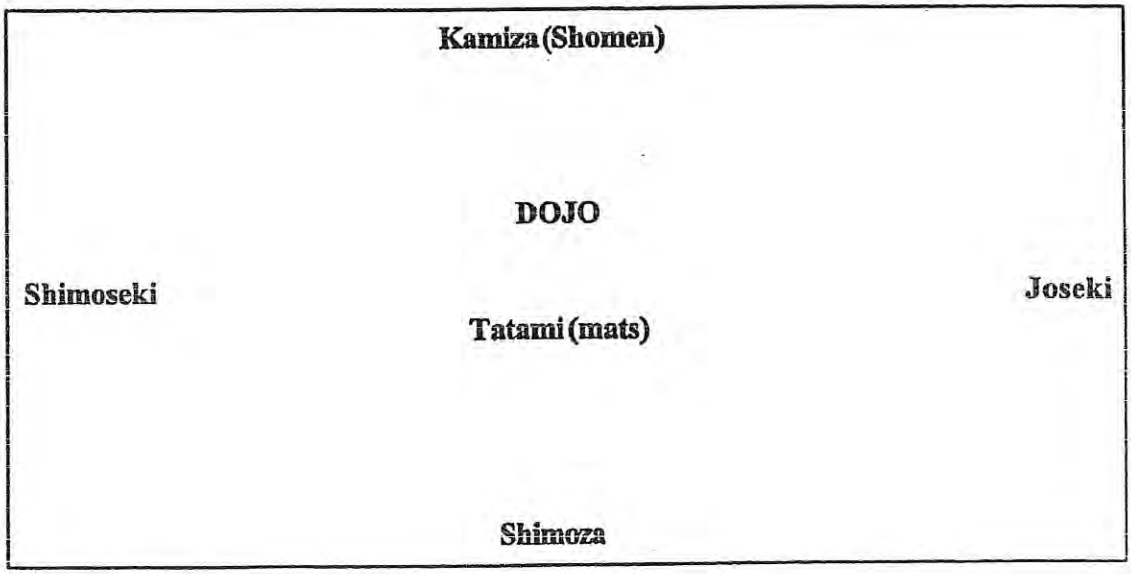
The Japanese martial arts dojo as we know it developed around the time the the *Bushi* (warrior class) first came into contact with Zen instructors and practice. The Bushi found in Zen Buddhism a philosophy suited to their day-to-day trials, and a training useful for developing the discipline of mind and body that warriors have always valued. Zen teachers also used martial analogies and references in their teachings for the pragmatic-minded Bushi. The soldier and the monk required the same qualities: fearlessness, lack of attachment to externals and to self, energetic striving, and the commitment to follow a course of action to its end. Both sought a state of mind free of all restraints, flowing without hindrance; both submitted themselves to severe training. As Zen became more widely accepted and finally patronized by the ruling authorities, its influence on the martial arts grew. In time, the martial arts came to be seen not only as fighting methods, but as methods to cultivate the self.

This tradition is reflected in the tenets of Japanese *Budo* (the martial ways). Aikido is Budo, and as such it has inherited this tradition. All of us as Aikido trainees strive to not only learn the techniques of self-defense, but also to forge ourselves into better persons. Even without a strong emphasis on Zen, the modern dojo is universally recognized as a place for the perfection of human character through the strict discipline of mind-body training. For this we are indebted to the Bushi and to the teachings of Zen.

A favorite saying of O-Sensei's was "Masakatsu agatsu" - true victory is self-victory. The dojo is the special place where we train for this victory over self.

Inside the Dojo

A typical dojo will have several features you should be aware of. In particular, certain areas of the dojo have meanings that you should know. The following diagram and definitions will be helpful:



1. Kamiza: Literally "god-seat", the kamiza is the "front" of the dojo, and the direction towards which you will sit and bow at the beginning and end of class. The kamiza in an Aikido dojo will usually have a hanging calligraphic scroll and a photograph of Ueshiba O-Sensei. It may also have a small shrine or kamidana ("god-shelf") in the Shinto tradition, floral arrangements, or other objects depending on the orientation of the dojo. The kamiza may also be called the "shomen" - the head or center.

2. Shimoza: The shimoza is the "low" wall, opposite the kamiza.

3. Joseki: The joseki is the "high" seat, the right hand side of the dojo as you face the kamiza. When students are lined up formally, they will sit in order of rank or seniority, with higher-ranked students on the Joseki side.

4. Shimoseki: The "low" seat, the shimoseki is the left hand side of the dojo as you face the kamiza. Lower ranked students and beginners will be seated on this side.

5. Tatami: Tatami technically are woven straw mats, the traditional floor covering in Japanese dojo as well as homes. Modern dojo usually use some sort of foam mats, which are easier to maintain and last longer.

Other things you will find in your dojo, of course, are office space, changing rooms and lavatories. Take the time to familiarize yourself with your dojo and its features.

Dojo Responsibilities

As a member of your dojo, you enjoy certain privileges. You also bear certain responsibilities in common with your fellow students:

Dues: It is wrong to think of the dojo as some sort of health club where you pay for your instruction and expect to get as much as you can. You do not pay for your instruction at a dojo: the teachings you will receive, which your sensei has learned with great effort and exertion over many years, are beyond any price. Your dojo fees simply insure that the facility itself can continue to exist viably. Pay your dues on time, without being asked. Do not put your instructor in the uncomfortable position of having to ask you for money. You do not hesitate to pay a doctor or other professional who provides services to you; treat your sensei with the same consideration. Late or negligent payment is a sign of disrespect not only to your teacher, but to the dojo and your fellow students.

Cleaning: As a member of the dojo, you will be called upon to assist in the cleaning and maintenance of the facility. This is not an attempt by your instructor to take advantage of your labor. It is on one hand a purely practical need, and on the other hand it is as much a part of your training as practicing actual Aikido technique. Get involved with the dojo. Put your hands and hard work into every inch of it - then you will truly feel a part of it. It is very nice to talk about high concepts like "victory over the self", but if the toilets are always dirty it is plain that our words are empty.

Etiquette in the Dojo

1. Respect the dojo, its instructors, and your fellow students: they make your training possible.
2. When entering the dojo, remove your shoes and leave them neatly on the shoe rack.
3. If a class is in session, move and talk quietly so as not to disturb it.
4. Bow when entering and leaving the training area.
5. Volunteer your services to keep the dojo clean. If you see something that needs cleaning, simply do it. If you cannot, tell someone who can.
6. Do not eat, drink or chew gum within the dojo.
7. Do not wait to be asked to pay your dues on time.
8. Always remain aware of fire safety and security. Be conscious of who enters and leaves the dojo, and for what purpose.
9. Strive to maintain a serious yet cordial atmosphere in the dojo.

V. AIKIDOKA - *Students of the Way*

As an Aikido student, you are extremely fortunate. Of all the persons in this world, you are one of the few to whom the qualities necessary to training - a healthy body and mind, financial resources, the time and opportunity, an instructor and facility - have come. We should reflect on how rare it is in this world for human beings to be able to undertake such a training of self-development, and we should express our gratitude through single-minded and intense training.

Your fellow students are your companions in training. Without them, you could not train. You will spend a great deal of time getting to know their bodies in practice. Take time to also know their personalities. Take an interest in your fellow students, and work together with them to understand and develop Aikido.

The Dojo Hierarchy

As an Aikido student, you occupy a certain place in the dojo hierarchy. At the top of this structure, of course, is your sensei. Beneath him or her are students of various levels. Those students that are your seniors are your *sempai*. Those beneath you are your *kohai*. The sempai-kohai system is pervasive in Japanese culture. Its intention is not to establish some sort of superiority; rather, an awareness of place allows each student to fully fulfill the roles expected of him or her.

Treat your sempai with respect, and support their efforts to help your sensei. Learn from them, for they also have been where you are headed. Each of them has learned from your sensei according to individual capability, and each may have unique knowledge or variations that others have missed.

Treat your kohai with encouragement and support. They are under your care. They depend on you to learn, and they look up to you, often blindly. Be careful to be worthy of the respect they give you, and do everything in your power to help them in their training. Above all, do not be overbearing, and be wary of their praise: remember *your* place, and cultivate humility.

Practicing with Others

The practice of Aikido necessarily involves others. While there are many exercises and practice methods that you may perform by yourself, the core of your training will involve practice in the defense against actual attacks from other students.

It must never be forgotten that the techniques of Aikido can be extremely injurious or lethal if applied incorrectly in practice. It is your responsibility to practice safely. This means never practicing a technique you have not been directly taught by your instructor. It also means practicing new techniques slowly, in a cooperative manner with your partner. Be aware that different people have different body types, styles of movement, and capabilities. Applying a joint technique to a small person in the same manner as to a large one is incorrect, and will needlessly injure. Develop your sensitivity to others, and give them only the amount of force and power that they are able to take safely at their level. You will be grateful for the same treatment. In this manner, both of you will safely grow in power and skill.

Etiquette Toward Other Students

1. Treat others as you wish to be treated.
2. Be the first to offer to assist your fellow students in any way during training.
3. Consider it an honor to train with your fellow students and to take ukemi for them.

4. Take it upon yourself to know each student, and to offer encouragement when needed.
5. Help beginners to become familiar with the dojo.
6. Practice always with sensitivity toward your partner's capabilities and limitations, as well as your own.

VI. THE TRAINING - *Daily Practice as Path*

The practice of Aikido is nothing special, and nothing mysterious. The "Way" of Aikido is nothing more than dedicated daily practice. Do not think that anything else will give you a knowledge of Aikido. Train day to day, patiently and consistently, and you will see a natural result.

Attitude of Training

It has been said that O-Sensei exhorted his students to "train joyfully". This is excellent advice. At all times you should extend a very positive, bright attitude in training. At the same time, however, you must maintain a core of deadly seriousness. Aikido is Budo - a martial way. As such it deals with extremes of violence and with the forging of better human beings. Aikido is not a way to magically avoid conflict through some mysterious process of "harmony." The spirit of Aikido is to face conflict squarely. Only then can we hope to transcend it.

When you train, remember always the potential for injury that lies within your movements. Be conscious of your openings and gaps in your awareness, and those of your partner. Walk and move with purpose, ready at any time to respond to whatever arises in your daily life and on the mats. Understand deeply that in this life we may die at any moment, and train with this awareness.

In Japanese there is an expression: *shinken shobu*. Shinken shobu literally means a fight with live steel swords. It implies a true, serious situation. Your attitude in training must be "shinken shobu". When your partner attacks you with a wooden knife in practice, you must believe it is a real knife. When you attack your partner in practice, attack truly. In this manner, you both will receive real benefit from the training.

Posture and Stance - Sitting and standing

As you train, you will notice the relaxed, upright *shisei* (posture) and *kamae* (stance) of your seniors. Strive to cultivate awareness of your own posture and that of those around you. The following are four ways of standing and sitting which you will use most often in Aikido training:

1. Seiza: Seiza is the familiar Japanese manner of sitting with legs folded under and the buttocks resting on the heels. The seiza position lends itself to the proper alignment of the spine and the development of proper breathing. It is in some sense the foundation of technique. When you sit seiza, be sure to extend through the top of your head; the result of this is that your chin should naturally move in, rather than jut forward over your chest. Spread your vision out, and be aware of your surroundings. Be careful also not to slouch, or to overarch the back. You may wish to roll the pelvis slightly forward to achieve this. Your sensei can correct your posture and give your further advice. It is common for beginners to feel discomfort in this position; be patient, and sit seiza a few minutes each day. You will rapidly become used to it, and may even come to prefer it to a chair.

2. Agura no Shisei: Sitting cross-legged. Rather than tucking one foot under the other, the so-called "tailor" position, agura is a position with the right-foot laying on the floor in front of the left. Those with little flexibility may find it difficult to bring the knees down to the ground, or to keep the back straight. Again, daily stretching and practice will help.

*3. **Shizentai:*** Usually translated as "natural stance", shizentai is simply standing with feet shoulder width. Settle yourself in your abdomen with proper breathing, and allow all tension to leave your upper body. Maintain a dynamic tension in your legs, ready to move at any instant. Again, align your spine and extend upwards through your head. Spread out your vision; do not hang your head downward.

*4. **Hanmi no Kamae:*** Hanmi is the "half-body" stance used in defense. Be sure that your front and rear feet are aligned properly as your sensei directs, and that your forward knee is slightly bent. Set your hips forward, and fiercely extend your awareness and determination in all directions.

Remember always that your posture reflects your state of mind. A slouched posture indicates a scattered, dull or fatigued mind; a tense posture indicated nervousness or hyperactivity. You will find that the cultivation of correct posture will actually change the state of your mind as well. Again, consult with your sensei for actual instruction on correct posture and its ramifications for technique.

Elements of Training

The following are some elements of practice which you will encounter in your dojo. Your sensei will impart instruction in the actual technical details of these elements.

*1. **Warmups and Stretching:*** For maximum benefit, warmup individually before the beginning of class, and stretch again afterwards to develop flexibility. Warmup exercises are to be done dynamically but relaxedly, breathing deeply. A longer period of warming up may be required in cold or damp weather.

*2. **Ukemi:*** Ukemi (literally "catch your body") is the art of safely receiving the force of techniques applied to you; this includes various rolling and falling techniques. Ukemi is often neglected by beginners, who find it difficult and who prefer to practice the techniques of self-defense. It must remembered that without good ukemi skills, Aikido dies. Without the ability to safely practice which ukemi gives us, we cannot train. Ukemi *is* self-defense; it is the ability to survive any technique. Devote your energy to mastering good ukemi. It is invariably found that the student who is a skilled *uke* (person receiving the technique and falling) also has the skill to become a skilled *nage* (thrower) - by feeling the dynamics of a technique applied to you, you will learn to apply that technique to others more effectively. Ukemi training will include the following:

Koho Tento Undo - Simple rolling exercise, to sitting, kneeling and standing positions.
Ushiro Ukemi/breakfall - falling backward and slapping the mat.
Mae Ukemi/breakfall - falling forward and slapping the mat.
Yoko Ukemi - side fall.
Mae Ukemi/rolling - simple forward roll.
Ushiro Ukemi/rolling - simple backward roll.
Mae Ukemi/side fall - rolling or flipping forward to land in the side fall position.

Variations on the above will include specific ukemi exercises and applications for specific techniques.

*3. **Wrist-stretching Exercises:*** These four exercises are customarily practiced at the beginning of class. Learn them well, for they are more than simple stretches. The manner in which you hold and apply pressure to your own wrists is the same way in which you will apply pressure to others in repsonse to an attack. Also, the various wrist movements have an application to tesabaki - hand techniques - used in defense. Practice these exercises constantly, and you will develop strong, supple joints.

*4. **Aikitaiso:*** These "Aiki exercises" are designed to teach proper body alignment and use. Their usefulness, if practiced correctly, cannot be overestimated. Aikitaiso should be practiced dynamically and crisply.

You should be able to recognize the application of these movements in various techniques. Aikitaiso exercises will include:

Funakogi undo
Shomenuchi Ikkyo undo
Zengo undo
Happo undo
Tekubikosa undo
Sayu undo
Sayu Choyaku undo
Udefuri undo
Udefuri Choyaku undo
Ushirotori undo
Ushiro Tekubitori undo (zenshin and kotai)
Tenkan undo

5. Tai sabaki Ho: These body movement exercises are at the foundation of your technical training. Practiced correctly, they will give you the ability to move freely and naturally in any direction when attacked. Techniques cannot be applied if taisabaki is insufficient or timed incorrectly. When practicing taisabaki, maintain your complete concentration on you opponent at all times, during and in between movements. Allow no gaps in your awareness or openings in your posture. Move irresistably and immediately control your opponent's centerline, matching his or her timing. Tai sabaki ho will include both Tai sabaki Toshu, or empty-handed exercises, and Tai sabaki with Bokken, or sword exercises. You should immediately see the relation between these two when practicing. You will learn the following forms of Tai sabaki:

Tai sabaki Toshu:
Against munetsuki: four distinct movements with atemi.
Against shomenuchi: four distinct movements with atemi.
Against yokomenuchi: three distinct movements with atemi.
Tai sabaki with Bokken:
Against munetsuki: four distinct movements with cuts.
Against shomenuchi: four distinct movements with cuts.
Against yokomenuchi: three distinct movements with cuts.

6. Waza: Waza are formal Aikido techniques. It must be remembered that all waza are pre-arranged forms; they are the vehicles through which Aikido is transmitted from teacher to student. It is up to the student, however, to give life to these forms, and ultimately to transcend them. They are not rigid and dogmatic - they are guidelines which will bring the student after extensive training to his or her own Aikido. No two students are exactly alike, and so everyone will naturally develop an Aikido that suits them. O-Sensei is reported to have said, "Aikido has no techniques." One meaning of this is that the student must not destroy Aikido by limiting it to this or that form; rather, the student should seek always to grasp the internal principles of Aikido, and to manifest them moment to moment. Through form, grasp the ultimate principle beyond form or formlessness: this can be said to be the goal of the martial artist. Your study of Aikido waza will include:

Kihon-waza: fundamental or basic techniques.
Oyo-waza: applied or advanced techniques.
Nage-waza: throwing techniques.
Katame-waza: pinning techniques.
Kansetsu-waza: joint locking techniques.
Atemi-waza: techniques of striking vulnerable points.
Ushiro-waza: defense against attacks from the rear.
Kaeshi-waza: methods of countering an opponent's technique.
Henka-waza: methods of freely switching from one technique to another, different technique.
Renzoku-waza: methods of switching from a technique to another variation of the same technique.
Buki-waza: weapons techniques (dealt with separately below).

Which can be further classified according to circumstance as:

Tachi-waza: standing technique.
Suwari-waza: seated technique.
Hanmi-hantachi-waza: seated technique, defending against standing attackers.
Jiyu-waza: freestyle technique.

The following are major Aikido techniques you will learn, with approximate English translations:

Ikkyo - First Teaching
Nikyo - Second Teaching
Sankyo - Third Teaching
Yonkyo - Fourth Teaching
Gokyo - Fifth Teaching
Iriminage - Entering throw
Shihonage - Four-direction throw
Kokyunage - Timing throw (literally "breath throw")
Kotegaeshi - Wrist-turning
Koshinage - Hip throw
Kaiten nage - Rotary throw
Jiujinage - Crossed elbows (literally, "#10" throw, since the Japanese character for 10 is the shape of a cross).
Kubinage - Neck throw
Udegarami - Entwining arm
Sudori - Disappearing
Sumi otoshi - Corner-drop
Aiki otoshi - Aiki-drop
Ganseki otoshi - Boulder-drop

Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo, Gokyo, Kotegaeshi, Shihonage and others also have specific pinning techniques associated with them. Most techniques have pinning or throwing variations.

Omote/Ura - Irimi/Tenkan

Many, but not all, Aikido techniques have variations that you will be required to know. The words *Omote, Ura, Irimi,* and *Tenkan* are used to designate these variations. *Omote* means "front", and *Ura* means "back"; thus, these two terms are primarily spacial designations. *Irimi* means "to enter", and *Tenkan* means "spinning change" or "to turn"; thus, these two terms designate body movement. While these two pairs of terms are sometimes nearly interchangeable, Association usage is to refer to pinning technique (*katame-waza*) as omote and ura, and throwing techniques (*nage-waza*) as irimi and tenkan.

A Word on Aikido Technique Nomenclature

The full names of applied Aikido techniques, as you can see on your Minimum Promotion Test Requirements sheet (pages 24-27), are composed of two parts. The first half of the name will generally indicate the attack, for example *katatekosadori,* cross-hand grab. The second half of the name will be the actual technique of defense used against this attack, for example *kotegaeshi.* The full name of the applied technique would thus be *Katatekosadori Kotegaeshi:* Cross-hand grab wrist-turning technique, which in this case happens to be a throw followed by a pin. Certain techniques will also have added to their name certain specfications, such as *omote* and *ura,* or indications of the context of their application, such as *suwari-waza.* While beginners will find this Japanese terminology confusing at first, it generally takes little time to become accustomed to it.

Aikido nomenclature is an attempt to apply terminology to something that cannot always be compartmentalized and labeled. O-Sensei himself never formally established one proper way of naming our techniques. Various teachers may therefore have their own versions of nomenclature. It must be stressed that a thorough familiarity with technique and its principles is our goal, and that names are simply a convenient and not always precise way of describing what we do.

7. Kogeki: Closely related to *atemi*, methods of striking in the performance of technique, are *kogeki:* methods of attacking. When you train with your partners you must have the ability and the skill to attack fully - otherwise, your partner will never gain the ability to defend against true attacks. Training methods of kogeki will involve the practice of strikes and kicks, as well as methods of grabbing and choking from the front and rear. Following is a list of the most commonly practiced attacks. Please note that these attacks may refer to both empty-hand and weapons applications, and that combination attacks are also practiced. Some attacks also have gyaku, or reverse, variations. Again, these are only guidelines; no list can show all possible attacks. The student must eventually be prepared for any attack, from any direction.

Strikes

Munetsuki: punch or thrust to the torso.
Ganmenuchi: punch or thrust to the face.
Shomenuchi: downward strike to the head.
Yokomenuchi: hooking strike to the side of the head (temple) or neck.
Maegeri: front kick.
Yokogeri: side kick.
Mawashigeri: "roundhouse" kick.

Grabbing/choking

Katatetori: same-side wrist grab.
Katatekosatori: cross-hand wrist grab.
Katateryotetori: both hands grasping one forearm.
Ryotetori: both hands grasping both wrists.
Katatori: grabbing the shoulder.
Ryokatatori: both hands grasping both shoulders.
Munedori: grabbing the lapel.*
Ryomunedori: both hands grasping both lapels.*
Kubishime: choking the neck.
Ushiro tekubitori: both wrists grabbed from behind.
Ushiro hijitori: both elbows grabbed from behind.
Ushiro katatori: both shoulders grabbed from behind.
Ushiro eridori: collar grabbed from behind.
Ushiro kubishime: choking the neck from behind.
Ushiro tekubitori kubishime: choking the neck and grabbing one wrist from behind.
Ushirotori: "bearhug" from behind; also refers to rear grabbing attacks in general.

** The terms "Munedori" and "Katadori", while specifically referring to different attacks, are often used interchangeably.*

8. Randori: Randori literally means "to seize chaos". This is the practice of defense against multiple attackers for which Aikido is famous. Randori is the ultimate test of your understanding of Aikido principle, and especially of your taisabaki. The strategies for randori will be imparted to you by your instructor. It must be stressed here that randori must be practiced safely: both uke and nage must "hold back" slightly to prevent injury. This means that nage will throw or move in such a way that the uke will be able to jump up to return and attack continously. It also means that nage will tire at this "endless" supply of attackers, and must eventually fail: the uke must not take advantage of this to attack and injure nage carelessly. Both uke and nage must appreciate the kindness they are showing to one another, and take full advantage of this excellent training opportunity.

9. Buki-waza: Buki-waza is weapons technique, in this case using three traditional weapons: the *jo*, or 4-foot staff, the *ken*, or sword, and the *tanto*, or knife. The skills learned through weapons practice - timing and distance, dynamic movement, kime or focus, intensity and energy extension, etc. - are invaluable to empty-hand technique. As you train you will see the close relationship between weapons and empty-hand training. Do not neglect weapons practice because it seems difficult or outdated. Its benefits are beyond measure, and it is part of our Aikido tradition. Weapons training must always stress safety; a wooden training weapon can injure or kill as easily as a live blade. Always treat training weapons as if they were real, and take pains to observe proper etiquette of handling and use. This will also help you to develop an attitude of seriousness and purpose in your training. Weapons training will include:

Jo
Stances and methods of holding.
Suburi: solo striking practice.
Kata: prearranged forms.
Kumijo: paired forms, jo against jo.
Jo against Bokken paired forms.
Jo dori: unarmed defense against jo attacks.
Jo nage: throwing with the jo.
Ken (usually using Bokken, wooden training sword)
Stances and methods of holding.
Suburi: solo striking practice.
Tanren uchi: solo striking practice against a target.
Kata: prearranged forms.
Kumitachi: paired forms, bokken against bokken.
Bokken against Jo paired forms.
Bokken dori: Unarmed defense against the sword.
Tanto
Methods of holding.
Suburi: solo striking practice.
Tanto dori: unarmed defense against the knife.

10. Internal Training: "Internal training" refers to the practice of *Ki Tests,* breathing exercises (*kokyu-ho*) and meditation (*meiso-ho*), as well as the practice called *kokyu-dosa.* These training methods are meant to cultivate the psycho-physical attributes necessary for the practice of Aikido as a budo, a martial way. Although listed last here, the practice of these internal training methods is of the utmost importance in Aikido training.

Ki Tests are methods of testing your postural and mental stability, degree of tension and relaxation, and understanding of basic Aikido technical principles. These tests may be given at any time; during a promotion test, they are generally administered during the performance of Aikitaiso exercises and the demonstration of basic Aikido postures; you will find these listed in the Minimum Promotion Test Requirements (pages 24-27) under the heading "Ki Tests and Exercises".

Kokyu-ho includes the following:

Okinaga: the breathing practice which involves deep, prolonged exhalations from the hara (abdomen) through the mouth, and controlled inhalations through the nose.
Kiai: the practice which involves explosive exhalations from the hara with vocalization, usually using the syllables "Ei!" and "Toh!".
Ibuki: the practice which involves explosive exhalations from the hara without vocalization.

Meiso-ho is a practice of meditation through which the student develops *kiai* (energy) and *joriki*, the power of focused concentration, through the cultivation of *samadhi*, a state of relaxed concentration transcending subject/object dualism. This method may initially involve the counting of breaths, or mindfulness techniques for developing a deeper awareness of mental processes. There are many types of meditation, but in order to have an application to budo, the method you use must stress wakeful awareness of yourself and your surroundings, rather than the development of trances or sleep-like states.

Kokyu-dosa is an exercise in which you will sit seiza facing your partner, and extend your arms. Your partner will grasp them, and attempt to resist your efforts to unbalance him or her. This exercise calls for the proper use of the hara and breathing, and will also help develop this proper use of the body, breath and energy. Another variation of this is *renzoku kokyu-dosa*, which involves continous movement.

Injuries and Illness in Training

Should you have any doubt as to your ability to train due to any physical condition, consult with your physician and with your sensei before practicing. Do not train when ill; should you become sick, notify your sensei of your illness.

Aikido students often will train before an injury is fully healed because they are eager to return to the dojo. While this spirit is commendable, it is actually detrimental to the training. Your body is your tool in Aikido training; if you abuse the tool, the training cannot continue. Be sure to train hard and often, but also learn your limitations and allow your body to adapt and recover.

Should you find yourself absent from the dojo due to illness or injury, ask your sensei what you can do to continue your training while gone. The stretching and wrist-stretching exercises, Aikitaiso, internal training methods, kogeki, weapons training and other subjects may still be suitable for you depending on your condition. If not, treat your injury or illness itself as training; with the spririt of shugyo, every act or situation in our lives can become practice.

Etiquette in Training

The following are rules of etiquette to be observed when practicing:

1. Remove all jewelry before practice; it can be hazardous to yourself and others.
2. Keep your toe- and fingernails trimmed properly.
3. Observe strict rules of personal hygeine; keep your *gi* (uniform) clean at all times.
4. If you are early for training, use that time to clean the dojo and to practice.
5. Five minutes before the scheduled start of class, line up and sit quietly practicing internal training.
6. When your sempai calls out "Shomen ni rei!" (bow to the front), bow. When your sempai calls out "Sensei ni rei!" (bow to the teacher), bow and say "Onegaishimasu!" (please be so kind [as to teach]).
7. If you are late to class, change quickly, bow upon entering the practice area, and then sit quietly off to the side until your sensei gives you permission to join class.
8. Bow to your sensei when called upon to assist in demonstrating a technique; bow again and sit down when done.
9. Bow when the instructor has finished demonstrating and directs the class to pratice.
10. When your sensei claps at any time during training, sit down in straight lines.
11. Should your sensei advise you on a technique during practice, thank him or her and bow.
12. Do not talk when your sensei is instructing or lecturing.
13. If you need to leave the training area during class for any reason, bow and thank your partner, and then ask your instructor's permission to be excused.
14. Bow to your partner when beginning or ending practice with that person.
15. At the end of class, your sempai will again call out "Shomen ni rei!" and "Sensei ni rei!". As you bow to your sensei, say "Arigato gozaimashita" (thank you very much). Your sempai will then call out "Hotagai ni rei!" (bow to your fellow students). At this point, you should bow to everyone with whom you practiced during that class.
16. When practicing, tap loudly with your hand should you feel excessive pain; this is a signal for your partner to stop, and is faster than saying "ouch" or "stop".
17. Never practice any technique you have not been taught.
18. Observe rules of safety at all times.
19. Report any injuries to your sensei immediately.
20. Do not teach Aikido techniques to non-students without permission. This is to prevent misuse and injury.

VII. RANK AND PROMOTION TESTING - *Progress in Training*

Rank in Aikido is awarded to indicate to you your progress in the art. This is a very subjective matter; progress for one student may denote something entirely different from what progress is to another student. In order to insure that a high standard is maintained throughout the Association, we have established its Minimum Promotion Test Requirements (see appendix) as a guideline to the awarding of rank.

As a student, do not forget that these requirements are minimum. This means that simply learning these techniques does not complete your knowledge of Aikido. Actually, the techniques listed as requirements are far from comprehensive. What they are is a collection of techniques that require the student to master a wide range of body movements and skills, which can then be applied to the whole body of Aikido technique. While we encourage you to use this list of requirements to structure your training, you must not make it the sole guide of your practice.

Rank is not something for you as a student to focus on too heavily. It is important, since we need some indication of competence and eventually of instructional ability. Still, the student that focuses too heavily on simply learning "the stuff I need to know for my next test" will miss the point of Aikido training, both technically and internally.

The Promotion Test

A physical promotion test is required by the Association for all kyu rank awards and dan ranks up to yondan. This is for several reasons. First, it is to prevent the abuse of rank. Without testing, the awarding of rank becomes subject to personal whim and favoritism. The promotion test system requires the student to display his or her knowledge in front of a test committee of qualified instructors, who then vote on the test results.

Secondly, the promotion test is a part of training. It is a barrier. The test for most students is a nerve-wracking affair, since it requires a public performance. You may feel tense or frightened when you test. The confidence you have gained in your training, however, should carry you through. The test is an excellent opportunity to bring the principles of the martial arts - courage, concentration, relaxation, intensity - to use. Promotion tests show you your true state and level.

Finally, the public display of the promotion test is necessary for the survival of Aikido. If we cannot display our technique, we cannot teach, and we cannot continue to gain respect and appreciation for the martial arts from the general public. The promotion test is proof that you can show your technique at any time. It is your statement of your status as an Aikido practitioner, and your public demonstration of the skill you have gained through your own hard training.

When you take a promotion test, you should remember that you are a martial artist. Even if it is your first test and you have only been practicing for a few months, you will be treated like a martial artist, and should act like one. This means throwing your whole self into the test, with concentration and dynamic energy. If you were to approach your test as if it were the last thing you were to do in your life, you would have the proper attitude. At all times maintain your posture and bearing. If you make a mistake, let it go by - do not be disturbed. Everyone makes mistakes, but it is your reaction to that mistake which will show the level of your training. Above all, do not give up. When your test is finished, do not think you are done once you have made your final bow. Stand up and walk strongly to your seat. Sit down, and maintain your posture - you are still being watched.

Actually, your test is never done - for your whole life. Take this attitude, and you will be ready any time.

Dan Rank

The test for a *dan,* or black belt, rank is one of the most difficult yet positive experiences you will have as an Aikido student. It has become the custom in some organizations and dojo to award black belt rank without requiring the student to test. The Association is strict in its policy requiring black belt candidates to undergo the testing process. An Association black belt test is grueling, but will give you the opportunity to display what you have learned through your own hard work.

The black belt has come to be seen, largely through movies and the media, as a mark of mastery or deadly skill. Actually, the word for a first-degree black belt, *shodan*, means "beginner" The black belt is simply a mark of your recognition as an Aikido student. In other words, you are no longer a guest in the dojo, but a legitimate practitioner. Be proud of your black belt achievement, but keep in mind what it truly represents. The Founder said, "Do not be in a hurry. It takes at least ten years to reach the first rung!" The path to mastery of Aikido, as in any martial art, is lifelong training.

The Test Committee

The test committee, or *shinsa iin kai,* is the entity that conducts promotion testing. Consisting of sandan or higher ranked practitioners and headed by a Teaching Committee member in your area, the purpose of the test committee is to insure that your promotion test is conducted properly, in accordance with Association policy. When the test committee convenes to administer your test, it is possible that its members may have widely different views on technical standards; however, as long as your technique is sound and exhibits a strong grasp of principle, it need not adhere exactly to any particular committee member's interpretation. There are many ways of doing Aikido, and Association testing policy respects this. In some situations where a committee is not able to meet, your sensei may conduct your promotion test directly. All dan tests, unless arranged otherwise with Association headquarters, must take place in front of a committee headed personally by Shihan Toyoda, who is the ultimate head of all test committees.

The Teaching Committee

As part of the Association's efforts to make quality training available to everyone, the Teaching Committee has been established. Teaching Committee members are senior students, ranked yondan and above, who have been selected to assist the Association's instructional efforts. A Teaching Committee member may head the test committee at your promotion test. Committee members also regularly offer sanctioned instructional seminars dealing with our Minimum Promotion Test Requirements and other topics, which you should make every effort to attend.

Etiquette in Promotion Testing

The following are rules of etiquette to be followed when you take a promotion test:

1. Be certain that you are familiar with the techniques and exercises for which you are responsible. Remember that all tests are cumulative.
2. Be certain that you have fulfilled all other requirements for your test, such as minimum time and training hours required, and seminar attendance.
3. Be certain that you have filled out all appropriate applications and have paid your test fee and AAA or AAI annual dues. If you are behind in your dojo dues, settle your account before applying to test.
4. When others are testing, offer to take ukemi for them. Be ready to be called upon to help in administering the test in any way.

5. When your name is called to test, answer "Hai!" clearly and move to the proper place. Sit down, bow to shomen, and wait calmly.
6. Follow the directions of the test committee without hesitation.
7. When your uke is called to assist in your test, bow in unison with him or her to shomen. Bow to your uke, and stand up. When your uke is dismissed, sit seiza and bow, then face shomen and await further instructions or the next uke.
8. When demonstrating technique, do not hesitate or pause. If you make a mistake, finish the technique if possible or at least move away and take a defensive stance.
9. Do not stop or give up. Move cleanly and quickly.
10. If the test committee stops your test to advise you, sit seiza and listen carefully. Bow when they are finished.
11. At the conclusion of your test, after you have bowed to your last uke and then to shomen, turn toward the test committee and bow.
12. Maintain your composure and bearing as you walk to your seat. Do not bend over or lie down, even if you are very tired. Should you feel ill, you may leave the mat. Otherwise, sit calmly and regain your breath.

Jyushinkan Dojo Adult Kyu Testing Requirements 2010

7th KYU: White belt with stripe

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Seiza:** Sitting kneeling position
- **Shizentai:** Standing natural stance
- **Hanmi No Kamae:** "Half-body" stance
- **Orenaite:** Unbendable arm
- **Koho Tento Undo:** Rolling back and forth from sitting, kneeling, and standing positions
- **Ushiro Ukemi, Rolling:** Rolling backward completely, from kneeling and standing positions
- **Mae Ukemi, Rolling:** Rolling forward completely, from kneeling and standing positions
- **Ukemi:** Ukemi for all 7th kyu techniques
- **Kokyudosa:** With pin
- **Bowing:** Bow with good form from standing and seiza
- **Etiquette:** Know basic dojo etiquette
- **Cleanup:** Assist with dojo cleanup

Level of training: Be able to recognize 7th kyu technique names and do the techniques without hesitation. Emphasis is on precise mechanics rather than fluid movements

Technique

- **Katatekosatori Kotegaeshi:** Static and dynamic, ura, with pin
- **Katatori Ikkyo:** Static and dynamic, omote and ura, with pin
- **Katatekosatori Kokyunage:** Static and dynamic, ura

Time and Events Requirements
Minimum 2 months and 20 hours of training

6th KYU: Yellow belt

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Ushiro Ukemi, Breakfall:** Roll back with double slap
- **Yoko Ukemi:** "Side fall" exercise from squatting, and standing
- **Empty Hand Strikes:** Shomenuchi, yokomenuchi, and munetsuki demonstration of basic strikes
- **Funakogi Undo:** Rowing
- **Shomenuchi Ikkyo Undo:** Raising arms to the front
- **Renzoku Kokyudosa:** Continuous side to side
- **General Ukemi:** Be able to take ukemi for 6th kyu techniques, following smoothly without hesitation, and falling safely
- **Cleanup:** Take initiative on dojo cleanup

Level of training: Shorter pauses than at 7th kyu, with proper kuzushi (unbalancing) and extension

Technique

- **Shomenuchi Kokyunage:** Ura
- **Katatetori Shihonage:** Static and dynamic, omote and ura
- **Shomenuchi Iriminage:** Tenkan
- **Katatori Nikyo:** Static and dynamic, omote and ura, with pin
- **Randori:** Walking/jogging, 3 attackers, ryokatatori, no throws

Time and Events Requirements
Minimum 3 months and 30 hours of training after earning 7th Kyu

5th KYU: Yellow belt with stripe

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Banzai No Kamae:** Shizentai with arms raised
- **Zengo Undo:** Shomenuchi Ikkyo Undo with pivot
- **Happo Undo:** Shomenuchi Ikkyo Undo 8 directions
- **Tekubi Kosa Undo:** Wrist crossing
- **Tekubi Joho Kosa Undo:** Wrist crossing, high
- **Kamae with Bokken:** Demonstration of five basic sword stances
- **Bokken and Jo Suburi:** Demonstration of basic strikes with sword and staff
- **Yoko Ukemi:** Side fall from forward roll
- **General Ukemi:** Be able to take ukemi for 5th kyu techniques, following smoothly without hesitation, and falling safely with back and forward rolls.
- **Weight Transfer:** Demonstration of weight transfer
- **Triangle Principle:** Explain the triangle principle

Level of training: Emphasis is on performing techniques with connection and sensitivity without any pause or hesitation

Technique

- **Shomenuchi Kotegaeshi:** Ura, with pin
- **Shomenuchi Ikkyo:** Omote and ura, with pin
- **Katatetori Sankyo:** Static and dynamic, omote and ura with nage waza (throwing) and katame waza (pinning)
- **Yokomenuchi Sokumen Iriminage:** Omote and ura entry, irimi and tenkan
- **Munetsuki Kotegaeshi:** Ura, with pin
- **Katatetori Kaitennage:** Uchi, static and dynamic, irimi and tenkan
- **Randori:** Walking/jogging, 3 attackers, ryokatatori, passes and pivot throws

Time and Events Requirements
Minimum 3 months and 30 hours of training after earning 6th Kyu

Jyushinkan Dojo Adult Kyu Testing Requirements 2010

4th KYU: Blue belt

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Ushirosori:** Bending backwards in hanmi
- **Maekagami:** Bending forward in hanmi
- **Sayu Undo:** Swinging arms left and right and hip drop
- **Sayu Choyaku Undo:** With side steps
- **Udefuri Undo:** Swinging arms side to side
- **Udefuri Choyaku Undo:** With pivoting
- **Ushirotori Undo:** Stepping forward and hip pivot
- **Ushiro tekubitori Zenshin Undo:** Stepping forward arms extended with bow
- **Ushiro tekubitori Kotai Undo:** Stepping rearward arms extended with bow
- **Shikko:** Knee walking with pivots
- **Taisabaki Toshu:** "Empty-hand body movement" for Katatetori, Shomenuchi, Yokomenuchi and Munetsuki attacks
- **Yoko Ukemi with partner:** Yoko ukemi from sokumen iriminage and shihonage
- **General Ukemi:** Take ukemi for yudansha, following smoothly without hesitation or anticipation
- **Visitors:** Welcome visitors to the dojo and make them comfortable

Level of training: Perform techniques with good timing

Technique

- **Yokomenuchi Shihonage:** Omote and ura
- **Ushiro Tekubitori Kokyunage:** Dynamic, Ushiro Tekubitori Zenshin Undo movement, 2 variations (standing and kneeling)
- **Ushiro Tekubitori Kotegaeshi:** Dynamic, 1st and 2nd hand, omote and ura, with pin
- **Katatori Yonkyo:** Static and dynamic, omote and ura, with pin
- **Ryotetori Tenchinage:** Dynamic, irimi and tenkan
- **Ryotetori Kokyunage:** Dynamic, sliding back pivot throw, 5 variations
- **Randori:** 4 attackers in a line, ryokatatori, pivot throws, face push, sudori in a pattern

Time and Events Requirements

- Minimum 3 months and 30 hours of training since earning 5th Kyu

Prior attendance at 1 AAA/AAI Seminar, AAA/AAI Teaching Committee Seminar or National Kangeiko in Palatine, IL

3rd KYU: Blue belt with stripe

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Tenkan Undo:** direct pivot and stepping variation
- **Early-arm breakfall:** Early-arm breakfall exercise from forward roll
- **Warm-ups:** Be able to lead the class in warm-ups

Level of training: Perform techniques with good timing and fluid movements

Time and Events Requirements

- Minimum 6 months and 60 hours of training since earning 4th Kyu

Prior attendance at 1 AAA/AAI Camp

Technique

- **Ushiro Hijitori Kotegaeshi:** Dynamic, 1st hand, with pin
- **Munetsuki Kokyunage:** Sliding back pivot throw
- **Katatori Gokyo:** Static and dynamic, omote and ura, with pin
- **Ushirotori Kokyunage:** Dynamic, Ushirotori Zenshin Undo movement
- **Ryotetori Kaitennage:** Dynamic, irimi and tenkan
- **Katate Ryotetori Nikyo:** Static and dynamic, aite and gyakute, omote and ura, with pin
- **Suwariwaza:**
  - **Shomenuchi Kokyunage:** Ura
  - **Shomenuchi Ikkyo:** Omote and ura, with pin
  - **Katatori Nikyo:** Static and dynamic, omote and ura, with pin
- **Bokken Kata I (Happo Giri):** 13 movements
- **Jiyu Waza:** Defense against any grasping attack, no pin
- **Randori:** Jogging, 3 attackers, ryokatatori, pivot throws, face push, sudori and passes

Jyushinkan Dojo Adult Kyu Testing Requirements 2010

2nd KYU: Brown belt

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Agura no Shisei:** Sitting cross-legged
- **Kata Ashiage:** Raising one leg, hand extended
- **Questions:** Verbal examination will be administered by test committee on the following topics:
  - Four Basic Principles of Aikido
  - What is Aikido?
- **Meisoho:** Questions regarding meditation training
- **Kokyu ho:** Questions regarding breathing training
- **Yoko Ukemi:** From koshinage
- **Early-arm Breakfalls:** From kotegaeshi
- **Visitors:** Greet visitors and answer their questions
- **Aikitaiso:** Teach aikitaiso with associated ki tests
- **Beginners:** Teach beginners breakdown of 7th kyu requirements and proper ukemi
- **Hakama:** Traditional folding of hakama

Level of training: Be able to add variations to primary techniques during exam

Time and Events Requirements

- Minimum 6 months and 60 hours of training since earning 3rd Kyu
- Prior attendance at 1 Instructor's Seminar

Technique

- **Ryokatatori Kokyunage:** Dynamic, stepping or sliding back pivot throws, 3 variations
- **Ushiro Katatori Kokyunage:** Dynamic, Ushiro Tekubitori Zenshin Undo movement, 3 variations (standing, one knee, and both knees)
- **Katate Ryotetori Kokyunage:** Dynamic, omote and ura entry, 4 variations
- **Ryokatatori Kotegaeshi:** Dynamic, with pin, 2 variations
- **Katatori Menuchi Iriminage:** 2 variations
- **Hanmi Hantachi Waza:**
  - **Katatetori Shihonage:** Static and dynamic, omote and ura, pinning and throwing variations
  - **Katatetori Sankyo:** Static and dynamic, omote and ura, pinning and throwing variations
  - **Munetsuki Kotegaeshi:** Ura
- **Ryotetori Koshinage:** Static and dynamic, 5 variations
- **Maegeri Kokyunage:** Omote and ura
- **Jiyu Waza:** Defense against any attack, no pin
- **Jo Kata I:** 22 movements
- **Randori:** 3 attackers, any attack, randori throws and passes, good positioning

1st KYU: Brown belt with stripe

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Tai Sabaki with Bokken:** Paired sword "body movement" against shomenuchi, yokomenuchi/gyaku-yokomenuchi, munetsuki/gyaku-munetsuki
- **Early-arm Breakfall:** From shihonage
- **Beginners:** Perform new student orientations

Level of training: Be fluent with all required kyu techniques and all variations

Time and Events Requirements

- Minimum 6 months and 60 hours of training since earning 2nd Kyu
- Prior attendance at 1 AAA/AAI Seminar since earning 2nd Kyu

Technique

- **Ushiro Tekubitori Jujinage:** Static and dynamic
- **Yokomenuchi Sudori:** Sliding under
- **Katate Ryotetori Kotegaeshi:** Dynamic, aite and gyakute, with pin
- **Munetsuki Sumiotoshi:** Omote Uchi and Ura Soto
- **Katatori Ganmenuchi Ikkyo:** 3 taisabaki, with pin
- **Tantodori:** Shomenuchi, yokomenuchi, and munetsuki attacks, 3 techniques each, with proper knife removal
- **Bokken Kata II:** 13 movements
- **Randori:** Defense against 4 attackers

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. These requirements are a minimum standard for the purposes of promotion testing; this is not a comprehensive listing of all the applications of technique with which you must be familiar.
2. In certain cases a particular variation of a technique is required and is noted above; you are encouraged, however, to demonstrate additional variations.
3. All tests are cumulative; you must be prepared to demonstrate exercises and techniques from all ranks prior to the one for which you are actually testing.
4. Requirements of attendance at Aikido Seminar, Camps, and Instructor Seminars are fulfilled only by AAA/AAI events.
5. All test candidates must complete the following prior to testing:
   - Dojo dues must be paid in full
   - Examination application form must be completed legibly and submitted
   - Examination fee must be paid

2004 Aikido Association of America and Aikido Association International
AIKIDO MINIMUM PROMOTION TEST REQUIREMENTS - DAN RANKS

Shodan – Black Belt, 1st Degree	
Two written essays required: **"What is Aikido?"** **"What is Shugyo?"**	*Technique* • **Munetsuki** - Free demonstration; minimum five arts • **Yokomenuchi** - Free demonstration; minimum five arts • **Ushirotekubitori** - Free demonstration; minimum five arts • **Ryotetori** - Free demonstration; minimum five arts • **Hanmi Hantachi** - Free technique • **Bokken Dori** - "Seizing the wooden sword:" unarmed defense against sword attack; minimum 3 techniques each against shomenuchi, yokomenuchi, and munetsuki attacks required • **Jo Kata II** - Second staff form; 22 movements • **Randori** - Defense against multiple attackers (4) *Time and Events Requirements* • Minimum **10 months** and **100 hours** of training since earning 1st Kyu • Attendance at **1 Instructor's Seminar** since earning 1st Kyu
Nidan – Black Belt, 2nd Degree	
One written essay required: **"Aikido History and Future"**	*Technique* • **Katatori Ganmenuchi** - Free demonstration; minimum five arts • **Shomenuchi**- Free demonstration; minimum five arts • **Hanmi Hantachi** - Free technique against two attackers • **Jo Dori** - "Seizing the staff:" unarmed defense against staff attack; minimum 3 techniques each against shomenuchi, yokomenuchi, and munetsuki attacks required • **Randori** - Defense against multiple attackers (5) *Time and Events Requirements* • Minimum **18 months** and **50 hours** as Assistant Instructor • **Valid instructor Certificate** and • **Attendance at 1 AAA/AAI Camp** since earning Shodan
Sandan – Black Belt, 3rd Degree	
One written essay required: **"Aikido Philosophy"**	*Technique* • **Jo Nage** - "Throwing with the staff;" free demonstration • **Kumijo** - Staff versus staff forms (5) • **Kumitachi** - Sword versus sword forms (6) • **Randori** - Defense against multiple attackers (6) *Time and Events Requirements* • Minimum **33 months** and **100 hours** as Assistant Instructor • **Valid instructor Certificate** and • **Attendance at 1 Camp** since earning Nidan

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AIKIDO MINIMUM PROMOTION TEST REQUIREMENTS - DAN RANKS

Yondan – Black Belt, 4th Degree	
One written essay required: **"Application of Aikido"** *Interview & Approval of Sato Sensei required*	*Technique* • **Kihon Waza** - "Basic technique:" five-minute free demonstration • **Henka Waza** - "Changing technique:" five-minute free demonstration • **Oyo Waza** - "Applied or advanced technique:" five-minute free demonstration • **Instructional Methodology** - Free demonstration of how to instruct Kihon Waza and Oyo Waza *Time and Events Requirements* • Minimum **45 months** and **250 hours** as Instructor OR • **42 Months** and **200 hours** as Dojo Cho. • **Valid Instructor Certificate** and • **Attendance at 1 Camp** since earning Sandan

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. These requirements are a minimum standard for the purposes of promotion testing; this is not a comprehensive listing of all the applications of technique with which you must be familiar.
2. Many techniques have omote (front) and ura (rear) variations which you must demonstrate.
3. Many techniques have applications against both static and dynamic attacks, which you must know.
4. In certain cases a particular variation of a technique is required and is noted above; you are encouraged, however, to demonstrate additional variations.
5. All tests are cumulative; you must be prepared to demonstrate exercises and techniques from all ranks prior to the one for which you are actually testing.
6. Requirements of attendance at Aikido Seminar, Camps, and Instructor Seminars are fulfilled only by AAA/AAI events.
7. All test candidates must complete the following prior to testing:
   - Dojo dues must be paid in full
   - AAA or AAI annual dues must be paid up to date
   - Examination application form must be completed legibly and submitted to your instructor
   - Examination fee must be paid

No application for promotion testing will be accepted by the test committee without the knowledge and consent of the candidate's instructor.

JAPANESE TERMS USED IN AIKIDO

This is an informal guide. Please be aware that many of these words express subtle ideas not fully contained in these English translations. Included here are primarily technical terms; words having profound philosophical meaning are not dealt with extensively.

Ai - meeting, joining, harmony
Aikido - the way of being one with energy
Ai hanmi - mutually agreeing stance (both *uke* and *nage* lead with same foot
Aikidoka - person who practices Aikido
Aikitaiso -mind-body coordination exercises
Atemi - strikes to vital areas, used as a part of Aikido technique
Awase - meeting or coming together
Ayumi ashi - normal stepping, as in walking
Bo - wooden staff, usually 72"
Bokken - wooden sword
Bokken dori - sword-taking technique; also called *tachitori*
Bokuto - wooden sword
Bu - martial
Budo - martial way
Budoka - a practitioner of *budo*
Bushi - warrior class
Bushido - way of the warrior
Butsudan - "Buddha shelf;" a Buddhist shrine, often placed at the front of a dojo influenced by Buddhist tradition
Cho - chief or head
Chudan - middle position
Dame - incorrect, bad
Dan - black belt ranks
Do - way or path
Dogi - training uniform
Dojo - place of enlightenment; training hall
Dori - sieze or grasp
Doshu - master of the way; currently Kisshomaru Ueshiba
Eri - collar
Fudo - immovable; e.g. *fudoshoin*, immovable mind; *fudo no shisei*, immovable posture
Gaeshi - reversal
Ganmenuchi - thrust to the face
Gedan - low position
Gi - training uniform
Giri - obligation to another
Gokkyo - fifth teaching
Gyaku - reverse or opposite
Gyaku hanmi - mutually opposite stance (nage and uke lead with different feet)
Hakama - divided skirt
Hanmi - half-body stance
Hantachi - half-standing (kneeling position)
Hanmi hantachi waza - techniques performed by a kneeling *nage* against standing *uke*
Hantai - opposite or reverse
Hara - the lower abdomen; the seat of correct breathing and of internal power
Hasso - a stance with the bokken or jo held vertically extending up from the shoulder
Heiho - strategy
Henka waza - "changing technique;" changing between various applications of a technique in practice
Hidari - left
Hiji - elbow
Hitai - forehead
Hito e mi - one layer of the body
Hiza - knee
Ho - method
Hoho - cheek
Hombu - headquarters
Ii - good
Iie - no (interjection)
Ikkyo - first teaching
Irimi - entering
Iriminage - "entering throw"
Isshin den shin - "from mind to mind;" the way in which knowledge is said to transmit from teacher to pupil
Jiyu - free (as in free technique)
Jo - short wooden staff (usually 50")
Jodan - upper position
Jo dori - jo-taking technique
Jo nage - throwing with the jo
Joseki - upper (senior) side of mat area; facing *shomen*, *joseki* is the right side
Joza - upper seat, where the instructor sits
Jujinage - crossed-arms throw
Kaeshi waza - counter technique
Kaiso - founder
Kaitenage - rotary throw
Kakarai geiko - group practice
Kamae - stance or position
Kami - diety, spirit, divine being; a Shinto term
Kamiza - "god seat;" shrine or front of the dojo, if Shinto-influenced
Kan - house or hall; also, intuition
Kata - shoulder; also, a form used in training; e.g. *bokken kata*
Katatori - grasping the shoulder or lapel

Katate - forearm area
Katate ryotetori - one wrist grasped by both hands
Katame waza - pinning technique
Katana - a type of long sword, worn edge upwards
Ken - sword
Kenshusei - "student who strives for mastery through polishing;" students committed to a more intense study of Aikido but who cannot afford the year-long, full-time commitment of an *uchideshi*
Ki - spirit, vital force, energy
Kiai - explosive projection of energy in the form of a shout or yell; also refers to the energy level or feeling of a person or thing
Kihon - basic technique
Ki musubi - linking one's energy with that of the opponent
Kiri - cut
Kirigaeshi - a suburi exercise of continuous *yokomen* and *gyaku yokomen* strikes
Kohai - junior
Kotai - movement to the rear
Kote - back of hand
Kotegaeshi- "back of hand out-turn;" a throwing technique
Kokyu- animating breath; also used to imply timing
Kokyudosa - breath or timing exercise
Koshi - hip
Koshinage - hip throw
Kuden - oral instruction
Kubi - neck
Kubishime - choking the neck
Kumitachi - sword against sword
Kumijo - jo against jo
Kyu - ranks below dan grade
Ma-ai - distance
Mae - front or forward
Meiso ho - meditation exercise
Men - head
Migi - right
Misogi - purification practices; often refers specifically to a breathing technique
Mochi - grasp
Morote tori - see *Katate ryotetori*
Mune - chest
Mune tsuki - thrust to the chest
Mushin - "no-mind;" a state of mind free from obstruction or attachment to thoughts or happenings
Nage - throw; also, the person executing the throw
Nikkyo- second teaching
No- an article indicating possession or connection; e.g. *chudan no kamae*: "stance of middle position"
Ni - a directional indicator; e.g. *shomen ni rei*: "bow to the front"
Obi - belt
Omote- front
Orenaite- unbendable arm
Osae- pin; e.g. *ude osae*: arm pin
O'Sensei - "venerable teacher;" refers in Aikido to Morihei Ueshiba
Oyo waza - Advanced or applied technique
Randori - multiple person attack (lit. "seizing chaos")
Rei - bow
Ritsurei - standing bow
Ryote - both hands
Ryotetori - grasping both hands
-San - suffix, expression of respect
Sankakutai - triangular stance
Sankyo - third teaching
Sayu - side
Seika no itten - the "one point;" see *tanden*
Seiza - formal kneeling position
Senpai - senior
Sensei - instructor (lit. "born before")
Shikko - walking on the knees
Shihan - teacher of teachers
Shihonage - four corner throw
Shime - choking or strangling
Shimoza - lower seat; place where students sit; the wall opposite from kamiza or shomen
Shimoseki - junior area of mat; facing shomen, the left side
Shinken - a live, steel sword; figuratively, implies seriousness and commitment
Shinken shobu - a fight to the death; figuratively, implies a situation requiring total abandon and concentration. The spirit of good practice should be shinken shobu.
Shinto - the native Japanese religion
Shisei - posture, body alignment
Shomen - front; the wall towards which students bow
Shomenuchi - overhaed strike to the font ofthe head
Shugyo - intense physical/ internal training to perfect character and realize one's true nature
Shuto - cutting strike with the edge of the hand
Sokumen iriminage - side of the head entering throw
Suburi - "empty swing;" individual striking practice with a weapon

Suburito - a heavy bokken used for suburi, and sometimes for kumitachi
Sumi otoshi - corner drop, a throwing technique
Suki - opening or weakness, mental or physical, in an opponent's defenses
Suriashi - sliding foot
Suwari waza - technique with both *uke* and *nage* in kneeling position
Tachi - a type of long sword; technically refers to swords worn edge downward
Tachitori - see *Bokken dori*
Taijitsu - unarmed body arts
Tai sabaki - body movement; e.g. *irimi, tenkan*
Tanden - (Chinese: *tan tien*); the "one point," the center of the body's gravity and source of spiritual power, located two inches below the navel in the center of the hara
Tanto - knife
Tanto dori - knife-taking techniques
Tatami - mat
Tegatana - "hand sword;" the manner in which the arm and hands are used in Aikido to move and strike
Tekubi - wrist (lit. "throat of the hand")
Tekubitori - wrist grab
Tenkan - "spinning change;" a turning body movement
Tenchinage - "heaven-and-earth throw"
To - sword; also, the article "and"
Tori - to grab or seize; also, the *nage* or defender
Toshu - without a weapon
Tsuba - sword hilt
Tsugiashi - slide step
Tsuki - thrusting attack, with fist or weapon
Uchi - strike
Uchideshi - "inner disciple;" students living in a dojo and committed to full-time training, 24 hours a day
Ude - arm
Ude garami - arm-entwining technique
Uke - one who is thrown (lit. "one who receives")
Ukemi - "receiving body;" the art of falling and receiving techniques without injury
Undo - exercise
Ura - behind
Ushiro - from behind or rear
Ushirotori - any rear attack; often refers specifically to bearhug. Other rear attacks include ushiroeridori, ushirotekubitori, ushirokubishime, ushirohijitori, ushirokatatori, etc.
Waza - technique
Yame - stop
Yoko - side
Yokomenuchi - a strike to the side of the head or temple
Yonkyo - fourth teaching
Yubi - fingers
Zanshin - "remaining mind;" a continued extension of concentration, energy and awareness at the conclusion of a technique and immediately afterward; the "follow through" of the technique
Zen - (Sanskrit: "Dhyana"; Chinese "Ch'an"); literally "meditation;" a school of Buddhism emphasizing personal, intuitive experience of reality, and having a strong influence on Japanese thought and the martial arts
Zori - sandals