

# Technical Aikido

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# Preface

AIKIDO is...

At the core of the practice of AIKIDO, more than anything else, is a continuous hard training and disciplining of one's body and mind in order to develop wisdom. In the event of a confrontation, beast-like behavior aimed solely at protecting oneself and injuring the opponent must be avoided at all costs. To develop the determination to resolve a confrontational situation with omniscience and omnipotence (that is, using not merely technique but applying the entirety of one's abilities and wisdom) is BUGOKORO (BUDO's spirit/mind). One must realize that AIKIDO is neither more or less than the expression and embodiment of this BUGOKORO.

YAMATOGOKORO is what AIKIDO Advocates

Because AIKIDO includes the elements of BUGI (combat techniques), it is inevitable that, at times, the AIKIDO practitioner must face the possibility and the reality of confrontational circumstances. If one seriously and continuously probes into the reality of coming face-to-face with an opponent in a show-down situation where one's very existence is at stake, that is, where one's survival means the opponent's defeat or vice versa, and if one were to fully and openly recognize the inter-relation between oneself and the opponent, it would lead one to discover the most logical and efficient fighting techniques.

It is nonetheless true, however paradoxical it may seem, that in pursuing the perfection of this principle, one will eventually arrive at a harmonious state, born from the insight that no matter how strong one is, one cannot continue to exist if one tries to fight against all existence. This is the "Way" (or process) to reach harmony as advocated by AIKIDO.

One should bear in mind, however, while trying to understand or attain the principle of harmony, that without going through the internal transformational process that begins in the state of confrontation and only after working through a critical process eventually arrives at the state of non-confrontation, there can be no BUDO.

Under normal conditions, living things live in groups, not alone. A basic feature of social existence is the development of relative descriptions or comparisons, for example, strong versus weak. Each being tries to use its individual qualities to best advantage in light of its relative strengths and weaknesses. The process that eventually led to BUDO began with efforts to compensate for weakness by developing specific qualities (for example speed, or strength, or size, or facility in using weapons). Therefore, under normal conditions, living in the world leads at times to confrontational situations, and developing increasingly effective techniques for facing such confrontations eventually leads to the realization that there is always someone or something bigger or stronger than oneself. Ultimately one realizes that the

most effective defense is to merge with and become part of the opponent. This is how the principle of confrontation evolves into the principle of non-confrontation.

YAMATOGOKORO is the idea that the reason for developing martial arts is to protect those who are unable to protect themselves from aggressors. The proponent of this philosophy devotes himself to developing BUDO in order to protect the security of peaceful people from the victory of cruelty and violence. This idea is at the heart of AIKIDO.

It should be understood that AIKIDO includes a philosophy and ideas that go beyond martial arts defined as the practice of combat techniques. Therefore, martial arts is included within AIKIDO, but AIKIDO goes beyond martial arts. AIKIDO stands for the idea that BUDO, the principle of confrontation, and the principle of non-confrontation can be synthesized without compromising any of their fundamental essences. However, it is sad to note that much of what is called practice has compromised these elements. What follows is a technical description of the physical principles which must guide true AIKIDO practice if it is to achieve total, rather than partial, realizations of this art.

## Chapter 1 - Training Methods

One of the most basic, chronic, and perhaps inevitable problems in practicing AIKIDO, is that AIKIDO training can be reduced to an easy going exercise based on excessive compromise between the practice partners (NAGE and UKE). This problem arises because AIKIDO practitioners often base their practice on sincere but ill-founded philosophies and theories. Examples of the many incorrect interpretations of AIKIDO as applied to practice include emphasizing an idea of an "AIKIDO style" ambiance, expressing an "ideology" of AIKIDO, and misconstruing the concept of "harmony".

Because of the importance of correctly understanding the meaning of harmony in the specific context of AIKIDO, I will give a brief explanation. Keep in mind that I will cover only a tiny fraction of the meanings and aspects of AIKIDO's harmony.

First, it is important to know that harmony is a central component of AIKIDO. Most fundamentally, it means harmony with the entire universe, with all existence. In terms of mind and body, harmony simply means that one should equally emphasize each, rather than focusing on one or the other. But in physical terms, harmony has a technical meaning referring to a certain way of using one's entire body in every movement. Applied to a confrontational situation (including training), it is this technical meaning of harmony one must realize in oneself and with the opponent, and create a situation that brings the opponent into harmony with oneself.

Harmony does not mean just getting along with people on the basis of a lowest common denominator, or creating agreement without regard to rules in order to avoid confrontation and maintain an easy going or overly comfortable environment. Harmony, as used in AIKIDO, does not involve compromising, diminishing, or diluting opposing things and their individual essences. Such an approach waters everything down, sacrifices the essence of things, erodes standards of behavior and attitude and thereby diminishes each individual. Rather, AIKIDO's harmony brings different -- even opposing -- elements together and intensifies them in a way that drives everything toward a higher level.

It is often pointed out that AIKIDO permits men and women, adults and children, and old and young to practice together. This is true. It is equally true, but not as frequently noted, that within AIKIDO there is also room to practice in other ways, for example, to use very hard practice to develop martial techniques. AIKIDO's breadth and inclusiveness does not mean that its practice is easy, or that those practitioners focusing on developing hard fighting techniques are less important, or less legitimate, than those interested in other of its aspects.

The result of these errors, I suspect, gives rise to the first major problem in AIKIDO training, which is that many AIKIDO practitioners have been unable to establish a training method based

on the most fundamental understanding of how to use the body to produce, apply and receive power.

What follows is a theory and explanation of how to correctly use the body. It seems to me necessary to articulate in detail this logic of AIKIDO. It is intended that this articulation of AIKIDO's physical principles should replace the abstract explanations typically advanced by many practitioners of AIKIDO and other martial arts.

The AIKIDO practitioner must understand how the physiology of the body, the very structure of the body, gives rise to rules or principles of how the entire body should most efficiently and optimally function. Correctness of a body movement is judged solely by this criteria: whether the movement, in light of human physiology, utilizes with complete economy all the parts of the body organized in the most efficient possible way. Understanding such a fundamental theory of body utilization must precede explanations of the specific techniques of AIKIDO.

Any system of body movement must be based on human physiology. The martial arts in general have rules which further define the implications of the human physical structure in the context of combat situations. AIKIDO, which is aimed at the broadest approach to martial arts, should have an even more precise set of principles.

A specific technique based on these principles will utilize every part of the body, organized and sequenced so as to optimize the generation of power. If this is done, the technique will be correct and will "work". Failure to understand and apply it makes techniques ineffective.

One must understand that AIKIDO training should be solely based on this uncompromisable principle of maximum efficiency arising from human physiology. Armed with this understanding, the practitioner may readily determine whether techniques that may look free flowing and correct are based upon the true principles of AIKIDO training. Incorrect techniques are all too common due to failure to understand this principle.

The failure to understand the principle of efficient body movement has other implications, for example, that the main groups of techniques characteristic of AIKIDO (throws, holds, strikes, and thrusts) lack a theoretical consistency and therefore appear overly distinct from each other.

It should be understood that I am not proposing to constrain AIKIDO in a rigid mold but, on the contrary, I am suggesting that it is necessary to break out of a rigid mold already in existence, a mold made up of formalized bad habits. The results of these bad habits are easily observable in much of what is today called AIKIDO practice.

There is a second major problem in AIKIDO training, one which arises in the relationship between NAGE and UKE.

Very often training is conducted in a kind of fake confrontational mode without either actually fighting or training in earnest. Because of this, the practitioner typically fails to realize an increasing dependence on the opponent's cooperation. This unwholesome over-cooperation corrupts the relationship between NAGE and UKE and, while it may create seemingly dramatic results, it ruins the opportunity to improve one's techniques or train one's eyes.

Because the fundamental principles of AIKIDO training have not been clearly established, NAGEs frequently are not applying good and correct techniques that will really throw the UKE; nonetheless, it appears UKE is being thrown. In such cases, the UKE has implicitly agreed to act as though the technique is working regardless of its actual effectiveness (effectiveness is determined primarily by whether the body is used correctly to generate power). Because of this, the issue of whether the technique will work or not has been reduced to utter irrelevance.

Although it should be obvious that a corrupt relationship between UKE and NAGE has profoundly negative implications for a martial art, this kind of training is very common. Everyone should clearly understand that as long as people engage in what is, in reality, a fake practice in which they are doing nothing more than merrily playing at being martial artists, the true AIKIDO will never be learned or understood.

The entirety of the relationship between NAGE and UKE is called SOTAI KANKEI, and is based upon the basic principle of acknowledging that their relationship is fundamentally confrontational. Each of the training partners must abandon thoughts of independence from each other and must accept that the fundamental issue is how to make use of the AIKIDO knowledge to deal with the UKE through the use of effective, correct techniques based on AIKIDO's principles.

It is absolutely imperative that each technique employed is real, that is, that each technique handle the opponent by using one's body structure (and each of the five principal parts of the body) in a dynamic and optimally efficient way.

If people were to understand these points, and could use them as the basis for their AIKIDO practice, the door to understanding would open. It is through this door that the practitioner must pass in order to learn how to execute the true AIKIDO in a rational manner taking into account all aspects of the body's principles and SOTAI KANKEI. Without this, the practitioner will be doomed to patching together makeshift and incorrect techniques.

Note on terminology: The words UKE, opponent, other, and partner are closely related, but each has a specific meaning. If one is being attacked, or in a confrontational situation, the word "opponent" (or AITE) is most appropriate. The term "other" is like opponent, but adds a connotation of including everything other than the self, e.g. the concept of MA-AI or the distance between the self and other. When we are describing the practice of techniques, including taking UKEMI, then it makes most sense to say "UKE". Finally, there is the term

"partner" which is most appropriate when describing exercises (as opposed to techniques), for example stretching the back, or practicing TENKAN movements.

## Chapter 2 - Definition of AIKIDO as a Combat Technique (BUGI)

It is important to know that AIKIDO includes a philosophy and ideas that go beyond BUDO. BUDO is a subset of AIKIDO, but AIKIDO is not a subset of BUDO. Therefore, developing AIKIDO technique as a complete form includes, in addition to the principles of combat that will be discussed here, other elements such as KI (and its constituent elements), KOKYURYOKU (breath power), and spiritual functions. These aspects will be addressed in a future work. For the moment, it is more critical to clarify the issue of the physical elements of AIKIDO techniques, for these provide a necessary foundation upon which to build an understanding of more abstract elements.

BUGI means combat techniques to deal with an opponent who initiates a confrontation. More than that, BUGI's techniques aim to dominate the opponent physically in order to achieve control over him. BUGI has methodology, rules and principles. BUJUTSU is a system to organize and continually improve all aspects and elements of BUGI.

The BUGI of AIKIDO is characterized by the application to combat techniques of two fundamental principles: the Principle of the Unified Body, and SOTAI KANKEI (the confrontational relationship between oneself and the opponent). Application of these physical principles allows one to more effectively utilize any technique.

BUJUTSU NO HOUSOKU -- the principle of BUJUTSU requires that all techniques and movements, and all elements of BUJUTSU and BUGI be applied with total precision and accuracy. Their effectiveness is determined by whether they are applied at the right time, in the right way and with the right amount of energy.

For example, BUGI includes the elements of speed and power. Power is the emergence of energy which is used to achieve a goal. Speed can create power and power can substitute for the lack of speed. Speed can create real destructive power, for example, when a hurricane wind blows a straw to such a velocity that it penetrates a wall. Conversely, even if moving slowly, a power of sufficient force can push through the same wall. Effectiveness depends on whether they are applied correctly in light of particular conditions.

Thus, BUJUTSU NO HOUSOKU can be expressed as determined activity to deal a confrontational relationship in order to place oneself in a more advantageous situation given certain conditions. BUJUTSU NO HOUSOKU is an inevitable consequence of achieving and maintaining control over an opponent using minimally required amounts of:

Movement

MA-AI and  
power.

This BUJUTSU NO HOUSOKU is the basis for AIKIDO techniques, and, similarly, by keeping them in mind, very precise definitions and descriptions of AIKIDO techniques can be generated.

There are three key requirements for accurate AIKIDO techniques:

maintaining one's correct and proper posture,  
entering into SHIKAKU and  
consciously using the body to avoid direct confrontations with the opponent's movement.

The first requirement for an accurate technique is proper posture. Proper posture allows one to generate all the power that one possesses, execute movements accurately and rapidly, and also maximize one's attacking or defensive power.

The second requirements is to enter into SHIKAKU, that is, the opponent's "opening", "blind spot", or "dead angle". Although the opponent's dead angle is the opponent's weak point which can be attacked, it is simultaneously much more than this, i.e. it is a place where one can maintain one's own safety.

The third requirement is to use the body in a way that avoids collision, that is, a direct opposition of power against power, or movement against movement. To be most efficient in dealing with a confrontational relationship, one must use the opponent's power or movement and the minimally required amount of one's own movement and power to make the situation develop in the way one desires, that is, to one's own advantage.

Direct opposition of power or movement necessarily increases the required effort, and therefore wastes energy. In addition, when two sources of power or movement come into direct opposition, the one with stronger force will win, an outcome contrary to the objectives of AIKIDO's combat techniques. The ability to control movement so as to avoid clashes with the opponent requires repetitive and continual practice over an extended period of time until this approach becomes a strongly embedded habit.

If AIKIDO practitioners would devote themselves single-heartedly to focusing on these elements, BUJUTSU NO HOUSOKU would automatically and naturally spring up and grow.

Another note to the preceding discussion is that BUJUTSU, in addition to being based on fundamental and unalterable principles, has another aspect which is simultaneously free, unrestricted, and able to adapt to any circumstances. Within this, there is room for KICHI (quick wits) that do not necessarily fit into any pre-determined principles.



Those who train sufficiently so as to develop and master BUJUTSU NO HOUSOKU will also generate KI and its elements, which include KAN (intuition), and KICHI. This allows one to deploy mental and spiritual elements which are described, for example, as “leading KI”, the “feeling” or “knack” of BUDO, and the ability to “see” the opponent’s movement (even in a case when the opponent is behind one’s back).

KICHI, however, has a higher and lower expression. Its higher form can only develop as a result of a high level of training aimed at creating consummate skills based on fundamental theories or principles. Those who have really mastered BUJUTSU NO HOUSOKU can deploy such a high form of KICHI.

There is another and different example of a technique similar to KICHI which could be possibly (although roughly) included as BUGI. This is SUTEMI (the sacrifice trick) in which one attempts to extricate oneself from danger by making a surprise move to startle the opponent.

Although this technique follows some of the principles of BUDO, it ignores some other critical elements, such as posture and balance. SUTEMI technique can be classified as one of the combat techniques, but because it does not include all aspects and elements of BUJUTSU, it should not be included as a complete technique. This is precisely why SUTEMI is not included in AIKIDO.

The reason why AIKIDO so fully expresses BUBI (the aesthetics of the martial arts) including many aspects such as precise techniques, sense of stability and elegance, is that it incorporates all the essential elements of BUJUTSU NO HOUSOKU.

Based on the explanations and viewpoints described above, now I would like to enter into the subject of technical theories.

## Chapter 3 - Principle of Body Movement (UNTAI NO GENRI)

Much of the language typically used in descriptions of AIKIDO technique reflects an over emphasis on footwork. Some common expressions reflecting this overly restrictive viewpoint include feet/leg movement (HAKOBIASHI), footwork (ASHISABAKI), and treading (ASHIBUMI).

The critical aspect of a technique is not in the movement of the feet and legs. This is because when a body movement exceeds a certain speed, it is impossible for the feet and legs to follow and keep pace. (Movement in the darkness where it is necessary to feel ones way along is an exception to the rule.)

Body movements naturally originate in the KOSHI which is the largest mass in the body. (The KOSHI should be understood to include the entire hip area of the body, including the buttocks.) The center of the KOSHI is the TANDEN, and TANDEN is also the center of the entire body.

In order for the human body to constantly maintain good balance, the KOSHI and the head (which is the body's second largest mass) must be correctly aligned. When the weights of the head and KOSHI become misaligned, the posture can be re-balanced or corrected (very subtly in many cases) by moving and realigning the KOSHI and legs in a new position.

Executing complicated body movements is made possible by this cycle of moving the weight of the KOSHI and the head, destabilizing the posture, and realigning these weights by moving the legs and hips to a new, stable posture.

It is important to begin to understand the relationship of the head and KOSHI. However, because their relationship can become very complicated, a detailed explanation will be postponed until later. For the remainder of this discussion, we will define KOSHI as including both the head and the trunk, that is, as the whole weight of the upper body that rests on the KOSHI.

The entire upper body weight rests first on the KOSHI but then splits into two halves that extend through the legs and eventually rest on the two feet. Thus, when the KOSHI moves, the body weight will automatically shift. This results first in movement of the legs and feet, and then in movement of the whole body. If the weight shift is slow, the reaction of the two legs will be slow as well. Conversely, if the weight shift is fast, then the response will also be fast.

Whether one realizes it or not, the ability to move freely in any direction is made possible, and is triggered, by movement of the KOSHI which generates momentum and in turn is followed by

movement of the legs. If one wishes to make refined movements, it is important to be conscious of the function of the KOSHI and fully utilize it.

Basic forward and backward movements can provide some examples of this process. First, consider forward movement. Begin from CHOKURITSU SHIZENTAI, i.e. a standing natural posture where the weight of the KOSHI is resting on the two legs in a balanced way. If one moves the KOSHI forward, one's body weight would crumble forward (unless the head is pulled backward to balance it). In order to control this destabilization of the body weight, one leg will tend to move forward. A smooth repetition of this sequence creates a smooth forward movement (ZENSHIN UNDO).

Conversely, if from CHOKURITSU SHIZENTAI one were to pull the KOSHI backwards, the body weight would crumble backwards unless one leg moves backwards. The repetition of this is backward movement (KOTAI).

Similarly, if from CHOKURITSU SHIZENTAI one were to shift the KOSHI to the right side, the body would crumble towards the direction of the KOSHI shift. In order to maintain one's balance, the right leg must move toward where the KOSHI has shifted. Furthermore, if the other leg then follows, it would create a side shift movement.

Let us consider a second example, starting again from CHOKURITSU SHIZENTAI. If one twists the KOSHI to the left, it becomes evident that the KOSHI can move only up to a certain point without beginning to pivot the feet. Continuing to twist the KOSHI further to the left, beyond this point, causes the tip of the toe to begin to move in the same direction as the KOSHI's movement.

Eventually, once the KOSHI twists and the feet pivot as far as possible, the toes and the KOSHI will wind up pointing in almost the same direction. (Note that the "direction" of the KOSHI is defined as the direction the TANDEN is pointing) This is especially true for the back leg (in this example, the right leg). Consequently, the whole body turns to the left and automatically creates the left natural posture (HIDARI SHIZENTAI).

Let us consider a third example beginning from a SEIZA (sitting straight) position. From SEIZA, one begins to rise by first sitting on one's toes and then, keeping the knees on the floor, stretching the KOSHI. From this position, move the KOSHI forward and step forward with the right leg so the knee assumes an upright position.

One can easily stand up from this position by stretching the backbone and the back muscles, and creating a posture in which three parts of the body form 90 degree angles: the inside angle of the upright knee, the inside angle of the knee on the floor, and the outside angle of the sole of the foot (which is already aligned vertically on its toes) and the heel (including the Achilles tendon). If the tips of both toes are pointing in the same direction as the KOSHI, then

by simply straightening the rear leg and thereby extending it, one can easily and quickly rise to a standing position.

Once standing up, one's basic posture should be as follows: the right knee should be slightly bent and the lower leg (below the knee) should be aligned vertically. The rear leg should be stretched so as to function as a support stick (SHINBARI BO). Finally, the upper body (with a stretched back) should be aligned properly on the KOSHI such that the two legs evenly support its weight. This form is the strongest standing posture, and is especially critical at the final moment of a technique when one projects the maximum output of power into the opponent. Therefore, when one has just finished executing a technique, one should be in this posture.

Another feature of this posture is that if the front leg takes a long stride (and therefore there is sufficient distance between the front and back feet), it is easy to immediately lower one knee to the floor into an equally formidable and strong posture. Thus, when one wants to use a dynamic technique that employs a quick movement from a standing to a (one knee) kneeling position, it is important that there be an adequate span between the feet. If this is done, one will be able to correctly perform the movement required by this type of technique.

In all these examples, we see that all body movements are triggered by a KOSHI movement which, in turn, causes a weight shifting, and then, if balance and stability are to be re-established, necessarily leads to a compensating movement by both legs and feet. This is the principle of body movement (UNTAI NO GENRI).

## Chapter 4 - Relationship between Joints and Power, and How Power is Produced

### Part 1

We will now examine the relationship between the body's joints and power, and how correct use of the body's joints produces power.

In examining this subject, we can begin to understand the expression of AIKIDO on the physical level, and by focusing on the nature of the body, understand the concept of unification of mind, body and spirit

The concept of unification has suffered because it has usually been a very vague concept. In the past, emphasis on the mind aspect of unification (mainly "how-to-use-KI" ideas) has been used to compensate for the fundamental contradictions and appearance of disunity of AIKIDO's widely varied collection of attacks, joint techniques and throwing techniques

However, as I hope is becoming clear through the previous discussion, it is my belief that by analyzing the workings of the body, a clear and effective logic can be defined and established for AIKIDO practice.

If we use the logic of the physical body as a basis for clarifying what would otherwise be the vague concept of "unification", we can begin to clarify one's understanding, and escape the ambiguities in most In order to gain this much deeper understanding of AIKIDO, you must learn to use your "entire-self" in AIKIDO practice.

Expressed in physical terms, using your entire-self means that you must use your entire body in performing each movement or technique. Moreover, since the joints are the structures that connect the various parts of the body you must use all of the joints of your body. To do this you must understand the function of the joints of the human body.

There are three important functions of the joints:

First, appropriate and flexible joint movement can soften or avoid a collision with an opponent's power.

Second, joints can create flexibility. Each individual joint has a range of motion, but in order to maximize total body flexibility, one must make all of the joints, including the hip joints, adjust from moment to moment..

The more joints that can be adjusted in a coordinated way, the more the body will be totally flexible.

Third, joints can produce power. Muscles create power, and multiple muscles and their associated connective tendons are attached to each joint. When multiple muscles are used in an organized way, the power created necessarily must be proportional to the number of muscles used. This power is manifested through a movement of the joint to which the muscles are connected. If this is true of one joint, then it is better to use two joints than one, and three joints than two, etc. The more joints one uses, the greater the power one can generate and transfer to the opponent

## Part 2

When multiple muscles are used in an organized way, the power created necessarily must be proportional to the number of muscles used.

Let us further examine this concept by taking a conventional CHU-DAN-I-TSUKI (Mid level thrust) attack as an example.

When you try to thrust an object with proper MA-AI (distance), you open both legs slightly wider than SHIZEN-TAI (natural standing posture) and lower your hips. From this stabilized posture, you place your right fist to the waist, extend your left hand straight forward, and then quickly pull your left hand to the left waist.

By using the reactionary power from this rapid pulling motion of the left fist, you strike your right fist forward from your right side at waist level. Just before the right elbow fully stretches out, you twist the fist inward. You hit the object at the moment when you simultaneously tighten your fist and body muscles. At this moment, you keep power in your body by holding your breath.

In analyzing this thrust, it becomes clear that, in addition to the reactionary power from left fist pulling and the twisting power of right fist, the only joint that is effectively used to convert body movement to power is the right elbow joint (and, to a lesser extent, a slight hip twist).

This basic CHU-DAN-I-TSUKI can be explained further as follows: the tension power of multiple muscles surrounding the elbow joint is converted to the speed of the striking motion and this speed, in turn, is converted to striking power. This striking power (or colliding power) is transmitted to the target object when you support the striking power with your own stable body.

However, this basic CHU-DAN-I-TSUKI is not a perfect posture from the point of view of physical dynamics. In fact, if this imperfect posture can be maintained when you strike an object, it means that the reaction from the power which is transmitted to the object is small, and therefore the amount of power transmitted is likewise small.

As long as one maintains this conventional approach to the use of the body to generate power, one can never grasp a logic of AIKIDO. In other words, this approach is a limited, and, more importantly, a non-AIKIDO way, of using the body and generating power. It is a non-AIKIDO way because the final movement is not connected to KI or the release of power.

Moreover, less joints and muscles are used because of the limited use of the KOSHI. Also, holding the breath while moving means power will be held in the body by tight muscles. Conversely, the release of the breath allows the muscles to relax and, by increasing flexibility through relaxation, permits more muscles to participate in the movement. Therefore, release of the breath means relaxation of the muscles, release of power, and release of KI.

I will explain this further. This CHU-DAN-I-TSUKI is done by using one elbow joint, and by utilizing a small hip twist and the body weight. However, the hip twisting and the body weight shifting are not effectively applied because the amount of body weight shifting is so small that it does not require the back foot to be aligned and employed in the creation of the movement. It is

the use of the back foot to create power and stabilize the body weight, enlarge the size of the hip and leg movement, and augment the movement through the use of weight shifting that allows one to create a release of power.

To do this technique so as to embody the logic of AIKIDO, one would proceed as follows: If one starts from HIDARI HANMI (left HANMI), the movement should start by twisting the hip to the right. Subsequently, when twisting back the hip, this hip rotational power should be transferred to the shoulder joint rotational power, then to the elbow joint rotational power as well as the arm stretching power. Finally, simultaneously using the speed of this movement to generate power, while applying a snap to the wrist, and putting all the body weight on the left foot, one uses this left foot (which becomes the back foot) as a spring board, to push off from. Thus body weight shifting, rotation of multiple joints, and speed are converted to generate impact power as one strikes the object.

The technique of breathing also illustrates two approaches to this technique. Holding the breath tends to keep the muscles tight (rather than relaxed). But, if the breath is released at the moment of the strike several things are achieved, among them, that the muscles are thereby relaxed and therefore capable of generating greater power. Release of the breath correlates with the release of power, as well as release of KI.

The back foot (left foot) must be straight enough to be a "strut" at the moment of impact. For the right arm, the elbow must be facing down and the palm side of SEI KEN (basic fist) must be facing up and the arm must be extended straight.

If the posture is maintained correctly, this CHU-DAN-I-TSUKI can logically yield a much greater instantaneous power than the conventional CHU-DAN-I-TSUKI . In addition, it permits you to maintain sufficient balance despite the reactionary power generated by the impact.

Twisting or reverse-twisting of the hips as an initial starting movement converts the speed of the elastic or rotational motion of the entire body's joints to power, and, accompanied by a good take-off (using the rear leg as a spring board) also converts the force of gravity into power during the body weight shifting. Finally, it converts in an orderly manner, compression of body air to power as KOKYU RYOKU (release of breath). This is the most practical and AIKIDO-like way of producing power.

If the above described striking method (I call it FURI TSUKI from JODAN, i.e. "Swinging thrust from JODAN") is further developed or perfected by training, the exact same motion can be applied to the AIKIDO throwing techniques or joint techniques.

To explain further, it is important to realize that the lower half of the body utilizes two types of movement to produce two different kinds of power. One movement is the horizontal plane rotational movement called KOSHI twist and reverse-twist, and the other is horizontal plane forward movement created by body weight shifting when the foot moves forward.

This power, produced by the lower half of the body, is transmitted to the shoulder where a vertical plane rotational movement of the shoulder joints generates centrifugal force which is then transmitted through the elbow's stretch and twist, and further converted to the power of the wrist snap. Thus different types of power are also produced in the upper half of the body.

Although different types of power are produced in the upper and lower body, it is important to keep in mind that the lower body, in general, produces power from movements in a horizontal plane, and the upper body produces power from movements in a vertical plane. This theory can be applied directly to a technique like IRIMI NAGE. It is absolutely necessary that you organize your thoughts along these lines and apply them to your technique.

I stated earlier that, theoretically, power generated from a movement is proportional to the number of joints involved. However, in reality, when a number of unique kinds of power,



produced in diverse parts of the body, are put together, their combination actually generates more than the simple mathematical sum (or total value of power), of each power produced by each joint and its associated muscles. This can be called a synergistic effect.

To utilize one's own body to produce this synergy is the key point of AIKIDO's way of using the body.

As I hope this explanation makes clear, I believe an effective logic, which surpasses past concepts, can be established for AIKIDO practice.

If this logic is used as a basis for analyzing movement, the ambiguity of AIKIDO explanation of the past can be solved; it is no longer necessary to rely on so called "mental" aspects of AIKIDO to explain it. Only after AIKIDO can be logically explained on the physical/body level is it then possible to extend the explanation to the mental and spiritual levels and proceed toward a clear explanation of KI.

As long as ambiguity exists regarding the proper use of the body it is not possible that our investigation into the many aspects of AIKIDO will result in a real understanding of KI. Without clarification of the physical dynamics of AIKIDO, an explanation of KI will be doomed.

Only when an AIKIDO technique contains the characteristics of AIKIDO, consistent with the above-described logic, can we clearly state it is AIKIDO. And because of the existence of this logic in AIKIDO, AIKIDO's application to the use of weapons is possible and, beyond weapons techniques, limitless expansion of technique is possible. This is what makes possible the bright hope of the continuous development of AIKIDO.

## Chapter 5 - Ukemi

### Part 1

In this chapter, I will not address the complexity of defense in general; rather I will limit my discussion mainly to the relationship of Uke to Nage (the “other” or “partner”) by focusing on how to fall and/or how to be thrown. Even in this limited examination, we must recognize several key issues.

First, one must understand the proper mental attitude appropriate to those who maintain and pursue the true form of “Bu” (martial arts). In developing the correct approach to ukemi, one must learn to master the ukemi techniques appropriate to any kind of waza (techniques) received from the Nage. This implies both receiving the full force of the Nage's technique, and also making the Nage's technique more refined or "polished".

Therefore one must understand these requirements while maintaining a serious attitude, as manifested in displaying correct manners to the Nage.

The following are simple descriptions of ukemi techniques; however, one must not forget that the basics of learning ukemi require one to practice executing all types of ukemi with a flexible body, a sharp mind, and an accurate judgment of the situation. Also it is essential to abandon an overly dependent relationship to the Nage; that is, a relationship based on a compromise of the principle that Uke and Nage are connected by a martial relationship.

There are several implications of this relationship. For example, Uke must not fall unless Nage's technique works. Also, Uke's technique must not depend on the assumption that the Nage will be kind, or that he will fail to exercise all his options, including kicking or striking the Uke if openings exist.

In training, one must polish one's own technique as well as the technique of one's partner, but at the same time one must maintain an attitude as serious and strict as if facing an enemy. This

is the basis for a relationship that moves to higher levels based on a mutual commitment to polishing each partner's Aikido.

#### Koho Kaiten Ukemi (Back Roll ukemi)

The basic requirements of Koho Kaiten ukemi are to be able to take a back roll without hurting yourself when being thrown, and further, to always recognize that the most dangerous element in a martial situation is the person whom you are confronting.

You must practice with the understanding that the bottom line of Bujutsu (martial arts) is to protect yourself from the opponent(s) in any circumstances and at any point in time. This imposes certain technical requirements on the techniques of ukemi.

Failing to understand these requirements can create disastrous consequences for the current practice of Aikido. One can observe this in a commonly seen way to do Koho Kaiten ukemi.

In this case, the Uke begins his Koho Kaiten by stepping back with the inside leg (i.e. the leg closest to the Nage), bending the knee until the knee is touching the floor (in a kneeling posture). The Uke then puts the buttocks down on the mat and first, rolls backward and then rolls forward while touching the same knee on the mat and, finally, stands up.

Doing the backward roll in this way shows an insufficient awareness of the acute dangers inherent in performing all these movements directly in front of the opponent. What are these dangers?

First, you must realize that stepping back with the inside leg means you are exposed to a kick. Furthermore, to lower the inside knee to the ground after stepping back in this way shows a potentially fatal carelessness due to the exposure to a kick, and also to the loss of mobility inherent in this position.

The error of putting down the knee before falling is compounded, after falling, by rolling forward and standing up directly in front of the opponent. This is proof that one is acting independently of the opponent and is in a relationship diametrically opposite to the martial situation, where one is completely involved with the opponent, and where one's actions, to be correct, must acknowledge, and be based on, this interdependence. (The only exception is when practice is restricted by space limitations of a Dojo.) Rolling back while kneeling down and putting down the buttock in front of the other is a position exposing "Shini-Tai" (a "dead body" or "defenseless body") and, therefore, is a position in which you are unable to protect yourself.

As long as Nage or Uke base their approach to practice on an independent relationship with each other, the assumptions underlying their practice will not be consistent with the assumptions of a martial situation. Because Aikido, as a martial art, is based on these (and

other) assumptions, one cannot ignore them without compromising its essential nature. Nonetheless, many people have done exactly this, and are practicing an adulterated form which should not be called Aikido because it has been drained of its essential character as a martial art. Approached from such a perspective, Aikido becomes reduced to a barren play, in which one can never produce or grasp anything from the real Aikido.

Therefore, when taking ukemi, do not step back with the leg which is closest to the other! And, do not put down the knee when falling!

What then is the correct way to take Koho Kaiten ukemi? Basically, you must take a big step back with the outside leg and bend that knee without folding the foot so that the bottom of the foot continues to touch the mat. Then put down the same side buttock and do Koho Kaiten by rolling back over the inside shoulder, and then, after rolling over, stand up in Hanmi, take Ma-Ai and face the other.

Depending on the particular technique received from the Nage, it can be appropriate to roll back over the outside shoulder (while still stepping back with the outside leg).

In any event, to perform such correct ukemi, you must utilize the elastic power of the legs sufficiently. In Aikido, the "elastic power" (or "bending and stretching power") is a basic method utilized to produce power or to soften power received from an opponent. In the case of backward ukemi, for example, only by using the elastic power of the back leg after the back roll, can you create the momentum for standing up.

You must use the Achilles' tendon and the hamstring muscle (as well as all other muscles and tendons below the hip) as a part of creating power when you are being thrown, just as you use them when you are throwing.

#### Zenpo Kaiten Ukemi (Front Roll Ukemi)

Step forward with the outside leg, i.e. the leg which is further away from the Nage. If, for example, the right leg is the outside leg, extend the right arm forward while pointing its fingers inward and curve the right arm. Then make the outside of the curved arm touch the mat smoothly and roll your entire body forward through, in order, the right shoulder, the curved back, and the left hip.

To complete the roll and rise to standing position, fold the left knee and position the right knee in a bent but upright position. Upon arriving at this one knee kneeling position, by using the momentum of the rolling, put your weight on the ball of the right foot and do Tenkan at the same time standing up and positioning yourself at Migi Hanmi to prepare for the next move. Complete the movement by taking a sufficient Ma-Ai which prepares for the next move of the opponent. Therefore, when one practices this Zenpo Kaiten movement the goal should be to make it low and far (i.e. lower in height and further in distance).

## Conclusion: Develop Eyes to Differentiate False and Truth

Aikido is...

At the core of the practice of Aikido, more than anything else, is a continuous hard training and disciplining of one's body and mind in order to develop wisdom. In the event of a confrontation, beast-like behavior aimed solely at protecting oneself and injuring the opponent must be avoided at all costs. To develop the determination to resolve a confrontational situation with omniscience and omnipotence (that is, using not merely technique but applying the entirety of one's abilities and wisdom) is BUGOKORO (Budo's spirit/mind). One must realize that Aikido is neither more or less than the expression and embodiment of this Bugokoro.

YAMATOGOKORO is what Aikido Advocates

Because Aikido includes the elements of BUGI (combat techniques), it is inevitable that, at times, the Aikido practitioner must face the possibility and the reality of confrontational circumstances. If one seriously and continuously probes into the reality of coming face-to-face with an opponent in a show-down situation where one's very existence is at stake, that is, where one's survival means the opponent's defeat or vice versa, and if one were to fully and openly recognize the inter-relation between oneself and the opponent, it would lead one to discover the most logical and efficient fighting techniques.

It is nonetheless true, however paradoxical it may seem, that in pursuing the perfection of this principle, one will eventually arrive at a harmonious state, born from the insight that no matter how strong one is, one cannot continue to exist if one tries to fight against all existence. This is the "Way" (or process) to reach harmony as advocated by Aikido.

One should bear in mind, however, while trying to understand or attain the principle of harmony, that without going through the internal transformational process that begins in the state of confrontation and only after working through a critical process eventually arrives at the state of non-confrontation, there can be no Budo.

Under normal conditions, living things live in groups, not alone. A basic feature of social existence is the development of relative descriptions or comparisons, for example, strong versus weak. Each being tries to use its individual qualities to best advantage in light of its relative strengths and weaknesses. The process that eventually led to Budo began with efforts to compensate for weakness by developing specific qualities (for example speed, or strength, or size, or facility in using weapons). Therefore, under normal conditions, living in the world leads at times to confrontational situations, and developing increasingly effective techniques for facing such confrontations eventually leads to the realization that there is always someone or something bigger or stronger than oneself. Ultimately one realizes that the most effective defense is to merge with and become part of the opponent. This is how the principle of confrontation evolves into the principle of non-confrontation.

Yamatogokoro is the idea that the reason for developing martial arts is to protect those who are unable to protect themselves from aggressors. The proponent of this philosophy devotes himself to developing Budo in order to protect the security of peaceful people from the victory of cruelty and violence. This idea is at the heart of Aikido.

It should be understood that Aikido includes a philosophy and ideas that go beyond martial arts defined as the practice of combat techniques. Therefore, martial arts is included within Aikido, but Aikido goes beyond martial arts. Aikido stands for the idea that Budo, the principle of confrontation, and the principle of non-confrontation can be synthesized without compromising any of their fundamental essences. However, it is sad to note that much of what is called practice has compromised these elements. What follows is a technical description of the physical principles which must guide true Aikido practice if it is to achieve total, rather than partial, realizations of this art.

### Conclusion

I surely think it is worthwhile to admire, appreciate and praise the beauty of Aikido's movement and the beautiful, harmonized stability produced by its advanced techniques and highly trained skills. Because it looks beautiful to the eyes of spectators and has an artistic side through which a person can display his own philosophy, Aikido has gained widespread recognition and has spread broadly in society.

Because of Aikido's unique factor, which is that Aikido's techniques avoid confrontation and create unity and harmony, Aikido has been accepted by the world and praised by many people as the beautiful Budo of Wa (the martial art of harmony). Also, there are people who, as if responding to a social demand, go so far as to think of and seek Aikido based on a view that the technical beauty of Aikido is the essence of Aikido.

Although the movement of Aikido looks very beautiful to the eyes, one must not lose sight of its true essence. We tend to be caught up with its beauty. But because we are too attached to this beauty, we tend to lose the essence of Aikido and the direction its practice should take. I wish people to know that Aikido's beauty as a form, which surfaces externally, is only a

by-product of its practical effectiveness in coping with the fighting relationships of attack and defense that arise inevitably in our current social system.

The reason why I seek practicality rather than beauty in Aikido is that I want to observe the essence of its fundamental substance correctly even when manifested in how beautiful it is. I have spent my entire life and an enormous amount of energy so that I will not fail to recognize the Way of Aikido. I have been doing it only for this.

If one can look hard and purely at the essence of Budo, one would recognize without fail that Aikido is not a fancy kind of sport. I wish that people would not forget that to look hard at Aikido through the eyes of Budo, which is based on the principle that the rational and practical substance of a thing is its most beautiful aspect, is of critical importance in learning Aikido, and comprises the greatest part of its practices.