

AIKIDO OF MUMBAI

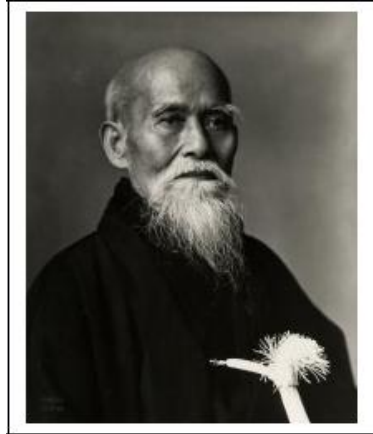


Beginner's Handbook
(a modification of earlier AOB)

Welcome to the Aikido of Mumbai dojo. The dojo is more than a practice space for martial arts. It represents a community of people pursuing the ideals of Aikido as put forth by the Founder of Aikido, Morehei Ueshiba.

This handbook is designed to be a useful source of information about aikido and our dojo in particular. It contains useful information about our mission, expectations for members, dojo etiquette, aikido terminology, testing requirements and other important information for someone new to Aikido. It is by no means exhaustive in its scope, but should be used as a reference for AOM students.

What is Aikido?



The Founder of Aikido,
Morihei Ueshiba 1883-1969

Aikido is a Japanese martial art developed by Morihei Ueshiba (often referred to by his title 'O Sensei' or 'Great Teacher'). On a purely physical level it is an art involving some throws and joint locks that are derived from jiu-jitsu and some throws and other techniques derived from kenjutsu. Aikido focuses not on punching or kicking opponents, but rather on using their own energy to gain control of them or to throw them away from you. It is not a static art, but places great emphasis on motion and the dynamics of movement.

O Sensei emphasized the moral and spiritual aspects of this art, placing great weight on the development of harmony and peace. "The Way of Harmony of the Spirit" is one way that "Aikido" may be translated into English. This is still true of Aikido today, although different styles emphasize the more spiritual aspects to greater or lesser degrees. Although the idea of a martial discipline striving for peace and harmony may seem paradoxical, it is the most basic tenet of the art.

excerpted from: <http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Pagoda/6968/aikido.htm>

The above excerpt is a quick sketch of Aikido. To answer the question "What is Aikido?" takes many years of study. As your experience with Aikido continues you should broaden your knowledge by learning more about its history and philosophy. This personal research is an important part of your training but should be a complement to, and not a substitute for, the physical training that takes place on the mat.

There are many good books and websites about Aikido and Aikido history. Some of them are:

Budo by Morihei Ueshiba

The Spirit of Aikido by Kisshomaru Ueshiba

website of the Aikikai Foundation in Japan - <http://www.aikikai.or.jp>

web version of a long published Aikido magazine - <http://www.aikidojournal.com>

Aikido of Mumbai Affiliations

Aikido of Mumbai is affiliated with the Aikido World Headquarters Japan through Aikido Aikikai Foundation of India (AAFI). Aikido of Mumbai is founding members of AAFI

Training in Aikido

At Aikido of Mumbai the goal is to provide the most authentic Aikido experience possible. Each aikidoka (one who practices Aikido) has their own relationship to their practice, but Aikido practice, like any authentic martial arts practice, is 'training' not recreation. While training should be an overall enjoyable experience it also demands discipline, concentration, respect and commitment. These attributes need to be present both physically and mentally, both on and off the mat. Training in Aikido is not a game or sport, it is *budo*. Aikido is an effective self-defense art whose techniques, if applied carelessly, can cause severe injury. It is natural to experience the excitement of learning new things. However, as our strength and confidence grow, it is imperative that we approach our training with gratitude towards our teachers, compassion for our training partners and with humility towards all we have yet to learn about this wonderful art.

You will undoubtedly experience highs and lows in your training. Moments of insight mixed with frustration, clarity marred by confusion, is part of the nature of Aikido training. Aikido, like life itself, does not come in a neat, easy-to-use package. This is part of the challenge of Aikido training. The result of a dedicated and thoughtful training can be new understandings about one's self and our interactions with others, and yes, even more questions. It is this depth to Aikido training that has occupied and fascinated so many aikidoka the world over for so many years.

Happily you will not be alone on your journey. Aikido training also fosters a wonderful camaraderie among the members of the dojo who are on a similar journey. You are also now a member of a group that extends beyond the walls of our dojo into the worldwide Aikido community at large. Many life-long friendships and opportunities for personal growth have developed under this wide umbrella of Aikido.

Reigi - Etiquette

Aikido training, having its origins in Japan, incorporates a strict sense of etiquette. While sometimes this etiquette may seem quaint or outdated in our modern world, it is important for a number of reasons.

The dojo is a place of learning and concentration. By following a prescribed order of behavior within the dojo it helps us recognize that we are participating in something unique and special, clearing the mind of our day-to-day concerns so that we may be open to the lessons of the class.

This code of etiquette helps to ensure that we are always conscious of the fact that our training partners are offering us their bodies with which to experiment and learn. The safety of our training partners must always be paramount in our minds when practicing Aikido. Bowing, showing respect and gratitude to our partners, reminds us of the debt we owe them.

In addition, paying rigorous attention to the subtle requirements of this etiquette helps us to develop a sense of 'zanshin' (which can be translated as 'the remaining mind' and conversely, 'the mind with no remainder'). Zanshin means to be completely aware and in the moment. Being sensitive to the needs of the others in the dojo, aware of the action around us, helps us develop the sensitivity and awareness needed for true self-defense.

Like many things that take place in the dojo one must learn by careful observation all the nuances of dojo etiquette. Below is a basic guidelines.

Proper Dojo Etiquette

1. Upon entering and leaving the dojo, make a standing bow.
2. When stepping onto or off of the mat, always bow in the direction of the shomen and the picture of the founder.
3. Respect your training tools. Gi should be clean and mended. Weapons should be in good condition and in their proper place when not in use.
4. Never use someone else's practice gi or weapons without permission.
5. A few minutes before practice is to begin, you should be warmed up, seated formally in seiza, and in quiet meditation. These few minutes are to rid your mind of the day's problems and to prepare for study.
6. The class is opened and closed with a formal ceremony. It is important to be on time and to participate in this ceremony. If you are unavoidably late, you should wait, formally seated beside the mat, until the instructor signals permission for you to join the class. Perform a formal seated bow as you get on the mat. It is most important that you do not disrupt the class in doing so.

7. The proper way to sit on the mat is in seiza. If you have a knee injury, you may sit cross-legged, but never sit with legs outstretched and never lean against the walls or anything else. You must be alert at all times.

8. Do not leave the mat during practice except in the case of injury or illness. If you must leave the mat for personal reasons, request permission before doing so. Although it is important to push your body to discover your limits, it is permissible to rest if necessary. Do so by moving to the edge of the mat and sitting seiza until able to rejoin the class.

9. During class, when the instructor demonstrates a technique for practice, you should sit quietly and attentively in seiza. After the demonstration, bow to the instructor and then to a partner and begin practicing the technique.

10. During class, practicing of techniques is normally done in pairs, with sempai taking four turns as nage and then four as uke. If there is an odd number of students in the class, a group of three may be formed, with practice proceeding by twos instead of by fours.

11. When the end of a technique is signaled, stop immediately. Bow to your partner and quickly line up with the other students.

12. Never stand around idly on the mat. You should be practicing or, if necessary, seated formally, awaiting your turn.

13. If for some reason it is absolutely necessary to ask a question of the instructor, go to him or her (never call out), bow respectfully, and wait for acknowledgement. A standing bow is acceptable.

14. When receiving personal instruction during class, sit in seiza and watch intently. Bow formally to the instructor when the personal instruction is finished. When the instructor is instructing another, you may stop your practice to watch. Sit formally and bow when he or she has finished.

15. Respect those who are more experienced. Never argue about technique.

16. You are here for practice. Do not force your ideas on others.

17. If you know the movement being studied and are working with someone who does not, you may lead the person through it. But do not attempt to correct or instruct your training partner if you are not of senior yudansha level.

18. Keep talking on the mat to an absolute minimum. Aikido is experience.

19. Do not lounge around on the mat before or after class. The space is for students who wish to train. There are other areas in the dojo for socializing.

20. The mat should be swept before class each day and after practice is over. It is everyone's responsibility to keep the dojo clean.

21. No eating, drinking, smoking, or gum chewing on or off the mat during practice, nor on the mat at any time.

22. No jewelry should be worn during practice unless properly secured.

23. Never drink alcoholic beverages while still wearing practice gi.

24. Respond to new situations with common sense.

25. Cell phones should be switched off during class.

Rules for Observing Class

1. Sit respectfully, never with legs propped up on the furniture or in a reclining position.

2. No eating, drinking, or smoking when class is in progress.

3. Do not talk to anyone on the mat.

4. Do not talk or walk around while the instructor is demonstrating or lecturing.

Different dojos may have different requirements and interpretations of etiquette. When visiting other dojos, whether to train or observe class, assume that the above guidelines apply. Observe carefully what is happening around you. It is always better to err on the side of being overly polite. The way you handle yourself says a lot about your training. You also represent our dojo as a *de facto* ambassador.

Rules for the Dojo

As stated earlier, Aikido of Mumbai strives to present an authentic Aikido experience for its members. As such, besides the traditional dojo etiquette mentioned above, there are practical rules that must be followed for the smooth functioning of the dojo and to insure a safe practice.

As quoted by Saotome Sensei:

Aikido is not a sport. It is a discipline, an educational process for training the mind, body and spirit. An Aikido dojo is not a gymnasium. It is the place where the way of the discipline is revealed. Physical technique is not the final objective, but a tool for personal refinement and spiritual growth. The correct attitude of respect, sincerity and modesty, and the proper atmosphere are essential to the learning process.

- from the ASU beginner's handbook

This dojo follows the traditional rules of proper conduct. Its spirit comes directly from the Founder of Aikido and it is the place of the succession of his teachings. It is the responsibility of each student to act appropriately and to honor those teachings.

- It is the responsibility of each student to cooperate in creating a positive atmosphere of harmony and respect.
- Having a clean practice area is important for training. Participating in keeping the dojo clean is a way to show gratitude for the training opportunities provided by the community of members. It is each student's responsibility to assist in cleaning the dojo.
- You cannot buy technique. The monthly membership dues provide a place for training and a way in which to show gratitude for the teaching received. It is each student's responsibility to pay dues on time.
- Dues paid entitle you access to all classes for which you are qualified. It is your choice to attend, or not to attend, class. There are no refunds for classes missed within a month for which dues are paid.

Rules for Safe Training

- It is necessary to respect the way in which the instructor of the class directs the training. Receive instruction and carry out suggestions for training sincerely and to the best of your ability. There is no room for argument on the mat.
- Come to class with a "beginner's mind". There are always deeper layers of subtlety to be discovered in Aikido practice. As your knowledge and skill increase it is natural to want to help others, as you have been helped. **Be careful about offering advice on the mat. The best help you can give other students is by being an example of a diligent student and a good uke.**

- It is the moral responsibility of each student never to use Aikido technique to harm another person or as a way to display his or her ego. It is a tool to develop a better society through the character development of the individual.
- There should be no competition on the mat. The purpose of Aikido is not to fight and defeat an enemy, but to fight and defeat your own aggressive instincts. Approach your training with humility.
- Everyone has different physical abilities and reasons for study. These must be respected. True Aiki is the proper and flexible application of technique appropriate to any changing situation. It is your responsibility to cause no injury to your training partner or yourself.

As in any social organization problems and differences of opinion will arise from time to time. If everyone is training in the true spirit of Aikido, one of harmony, these should be minimal. Clear and honest communication, as well as trust, is essential for a positive dojo atmosphere. If you experience a problem please speak to the Chief Instructor for help in finding a quick solution.

Helpful Japanese Phrases and Aikido Terminology

GENERAL TERMS

Ai	harmony or love
Ki	spirit or energy
Do	the way or path
Aikido	the path to a harmonious spirit
Kiai	a shout in which or by which one's energy is focused
Bu	war or warfare.
Shi	knight or scholar
Bushi	warrior
Bushido	the way or code of the warrior
Jitsu or jutsu	techniques or practices
Budo	the martial way
Bujitsu	the study of fighting techniques
Samurai	from the verb meaning "to serve." The warrior class of feudal Japan.
Hara	the lower abdomen. The center of energy & movement.
Haragei	the cultivation of Hara
Tanden t	he hara
Kotodama	meditation on the sounds of Japanese syllables
Zanshin	continuity of concentration, alertness
Shin	mind or heart
Mushin	no mind
Takemusu Aiki	limitless Aikido, spontaneous manifestation of infinite technique
Musubi	unification of opposites
Misogi	purification
Shugyo	practice as refinement and purification
Dojo	training hall
Shomen	the front of the dojo
Deshi	student, disciple
Sensei	teacher
O'Sensei	literally, "great teacher". Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido, is known to Aikido students as O'Sensei
Sempai	senior student, one who began Aikido before you
Kohai	junior student, one who began Aikido after you
Aikikai Aikido Foudation.	Japanese umbrella organization headed by a descendent of Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido.
Shihan	master teacher
Ichi	1
Ni	2
San	3
Shi	4
Go	5
Roku	6
Shichi	7
Hachi	8
Ku	9

J u	10
Kyu	white belt grades
Dan	black belt grades
Shodan	the first black belt grade or a holder of it
Yudansha	black belt holder(s)
Keikogi	practice uniform
Obi	belt
Hakama	black divided skirt/pants
Seiza	formal kneeling position
Rei	bow or salutation
Reigi	etiquette
Dozo	please
Onegai Shimasu	"I request the favor"
Domo Arigato Gozaimashita	"I am very much/humbly obliged to you."

WEAPONS

Jo	wooden staff approximately four feet long
Bo	wooden staff approximately six feet long
Tanto	wooden practice knife
Ken or tachi	Japanese long sword. Two handed, curved, single edged
Katana	the Japanese sword
Bokken	wooden practice sword
Shinai	split bamboo practice sword

BODY PARTS

Ashi	leg
Men	face or head
Shomen	top or front of head
Yokomen	side of head
Me	eyes
Kubi	neck
Kata	shoulder
Hiji	elbow
Te	hand
Tekubi	wrist
Kokyu	breath
Kote	back of the hand
Tekatana	little finger edge of the palm, hand blade
Mune	chest and stomach region
Do	trunk
Kuchi	mouth
Hara	lower abdomen
Koshi	lower back

PRACTICE TERMS

Keiko	practice
Waza	technique
Kamae	a stance of readiness
Hanmi	the oblique, T-stance used in Aikido. Literally "half-body".

Hidari	left
Migi	right
Gedan	lower level of the body
Chudan	middle level of the body.
Jodan	upper level of the body.
Tsugi-ashi	shuffle step entry
Ayumi-ashi	walking step entry
Okuri-ashi	transport step entry
Ai hanmi	both partners with their right or left foot forward
Gyaku hanmi	one partner with left foot forward, the other with right foot forward
Tenkan	turning around to the rear
Irimi	entering in a straight line
Tentai	pivot from one hanmi to the other.
Hantai	in reverse order
Uke	receiver — a person who receive a technique. It generally refers to the person who attacks and is thrown.
Nage	thrower- a throw or the person who does the throw.
Maai	the distance between uke and nage.. It literally means “Harmony of space.”
Kuzushi	unbalancing an opponent’s posture
Kokyu	breathing, breath power

PRACTICES

Ukemi	the art of taking falls, literally “receiving body”.
Sutemi	a sacrifice technique, in which nage falls down to effect a throw.
Aiki Taiso	Aikido calisthenics
Tai no henko	basic blending practice
Kokyo dosa or kokyu ho	partner ki practice done in seiza, practice for coordinating breath, ki & movement. Literally, “breath power exercise”.
Shikko	knee walking
Hanmi handachi	nage is kneeling and the uke attacks from a standing position. Literally, “half standing, half sitting”.
Suwari Waza	both nage and uke are kneeling
Taijutsu t	the unarmed Aikido techniques, body arts
Kata	prearranged attack/defense exercise
Suburi	individual practice of a single movement of the ken or jo
Atemi waza	striking techniques
Henekawaza	switching from one technique to another
Kaeshiwaza	counter techniques
Tanto dori	knife taking techniques
Tachi dori	sword taking techniques
Jo tori	staff taking techniques
Jiyu waza	freestyle defense practice, any technique may be used.
Randori	freestyle attack, any attack may be used
Kumi tachi	2 person sword practice
Kumi jo	2 person jo practice

ATTACKS

Attacks are often designated by naming the part of the body which is the focus of the attack and the action intended.

Tsuki	a thrust or punch
Mochi & tori (or dori)	a grab or hold
Uchi	a strike
Shime	a squeeze or choke
Kosa dori	cross hand grab
Katate tori	one-handed grasp on one wrist
Ryote tori	two-hands grasp, both wrists grasped
Morote dori & ryote mochi	two-handed grasp on one wrist
Shomen uchi	straight down strike to the top of the head
Yokomen uchi	45° strike to the side of the head
Mune tsuki (or tsuki)	straight punch to the stomach or chest
Kata tori	shoulder grab
Ryokata tori	both shoulders grasped
Hiji tori	elbow grab
Ushiro	from behind
Eri tori	collar grabbed from behind
Kubi shime	neck choke
Mae geri	front kick
Mawashi geri	roundhouse kick
Yoko geri	side kick

Thus Ushiro Katatetori Kubishimi refers to an attack from behind in which the attacker holds one of the defender's hands and simultaneously chokes the neck.

DEFENSES

The defenses are designated by naming the attack and then the action which constitutes the defense. Thus the name of one complete Aikido technique is Ushiro Katatetori Kubishimi Koshinage.

Nage	throw
Irimi	entering in a straight line
Omote	to the front of uke
Ura	to the rear of uke
Osae	a pin
Soto	outside
Uchi	inside
Gaeshi	reverse
Mawashi	rotation

There are six take down-and-pin techniques:

Ikkyo (kote osae)	#1. (arm pin.)
Nikyo (kote mawashi)	#2. Inward wrist twist. (wrist turning.)
Sankyo (kote hineri)	#3. Vertical wrist twist. (wrist twist)
Yonko (tekubi osae)	#4. Wrist pin, using pressure on the nerve. (wrist pin.)

Gokyo (ude nobashi)

#5. Similar to ikkyo but for knife disarming. (arm stretch.)

There are a number of throws with specific names:

Kote gaeshi	wrist twist
Kaiten nage	rotary throw
Shiho nage	four corners throw
Irimi nage	entering throw
Tenchi nage	“ten” means “heaven” and “chi” means “Earth”. The heaven - earth position of the hand has one hand high and the other low.
Juji garami or juji nage	entwined arms throw
Koshi nage	hip throw
Aiki otoshi	aiki drop, often against a rear bear hug
Sumi otoshi	corner drop
Ude garami	arm entwined lock

The largest number of Aikido throws have no specific names but are known under the heading of kokyu nage:

Kokyu nage	breath or timing throw. A throw which depends primarily on blending.
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RANK IN AIKIDO

Rank in Aikido should be seen as benchmarks of progress and not an end in itself. Obsession with rank can distract one from training in the true spirit of Aikido, which is the continued polishing and refining of one's character.

Criteria

Having the minimum number of days and years of training is a prerequisite for promotion, but it is not the only condition. Although it is necessary, it is not sufficient by itself. **It is a mistake to count the days and assume a rank will follow.** The major criteria for all dan ranks are as follows:

Character

Applicant must show integrity, spirit, dedication, loyalty, service, and contribution to the art.

Proficiency

Applicant must demonstrate technical skills, knowledge, and teaching abilities commensurate with the rank.

Training record

Advancement through the dan ranks is not unlike advancing through the University system. More and more "graduate work" is required for higher degrees. Training with one's seniors, attendance at seminars and camps, trips to Japan for training: all are examples of such graduate work. The Aikikai document "Hombu Dojo Grading System," says that "successful completion of summer and winter trainings will be taken into consideration". In the spirit of this statement, it is expected that those yudansha being developed as instructors will have exceptional records of attendance at camps and seminars taught by Aikikai instructors.

It is important not to isolate oneself within a dojo by failing to train with aikidoka from other dojos. This is analogous to staying current in one's field in any other professional endeavor. It is also important to train occasionally with members of the Examination Committee in one's division so that they have the ability to observe one's training prior to the day of an examination.

AOM grading examination requirements are available separately