

# Aikidosphere

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## **Aikido - Etiquette and Transmission - Preamble and Chapter 1**

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Editor's Note: We are extremely happy to present for the first time an English translation of Tamura Sensei's book Aikido - Etiquette and Transmission which has been available only in French. We are grateful to Tamura Sensei for his permission to produce this version. Major thanks also go to Stephane Benedetti, 5th Dan, Chief Instructor of Mutokukai Europe Dojo Mirabeau, and student of Tamura Sensei, who translated (from Japanese), edited and published the original version, which was published by Les Editions du Soleil Levant in 1991. Photos courtesy of (top to bottom): 1- N. Tamura, 2 - Marc Letissier, 3 ,4 - Akihiro Tamura.



### **Preamble**

The Japanese word shido can be translated as to guide, to orientate, to direct, to show, and to teach.

SHI: finger. The character is composed of the elements hand, spoon and mouth. It's the hand that takes the tasty food to the mouth and thus the fingers.

DO: the character has the same pronunciation as the do in Aikido, judo, etc. But it's written with an added hand as if one would grab someone by the hand to guide him. It expresses the idea of "giving a direction".

Formerly, judo was called jujutsu or yawara; kendo, kenjutsu or gekkenjutsu; budo, bujutsu

There was a time when Aikido was still aikijutsu.

The character jutsu is composed of to go and millet. It represents the course of one who wanders in the fields to find his way. As in assimilating a technique, one has to practice on and on. It is the same for any other human activity. Thus, the character jutsu expresses the idea of a method and art very intimately tied to learning.

At the time when Aikido was still aikijutsu, it was just a practice focused only on oneself. It sufficed to master it.

Today we have Aikido.

DO indicates a direction shown by the head. This direction is clear and each and everyone can engage in it. It is thus important for all of us who practice or teach Aikido to engage in this way with the intention to take others by the hand and guide them to be able to bring to life this ideal, such that the DO of the way and the DO of teaching complete and enrich each other.

To do this, one has to know clearly where to take the students, which method to use and on which point to focus attention. This is why I have let my pen run on the pages that follow.

## **Chapter 1**

### **THE TEACHER**

It goes without saying that the main issue when teaching Aikido is to be a good teacher. The teacher must work technically but must also strive to progress spiritually and morally. The teacher must correctly open the heart's eye and thus become a good example to his students. Here are some points to ponder:

#### **PASSION**

The technical and spiritual flaws of one's students must be corrected as if they were one's children, as if they were one's self, help them move forward in the right direction and dedicate body and soul to this task.

Know that nothing can be accomplished without passion.

#### **BE ONE WITH THE STUDENTS**

It is important to know the desires of one's students, what their needs are and what it is necessary to bring to them. It goes without saying that there has to be a deep love for this state of mind to blossom. One must unite one's spirit with one's students' to improve together while taking good care to practice with joy and intensity.

#### **DELICACY**

To teach is to learn; but to learn one has to teach sincerely. One has to teach with such a delicacy that makes each person happy and grateful to receive this teaching.

#### **GIVE AN IDEAL AND SELF-CONFIDENCE**

To teach is to give a technical and spiritual ideal and above all transmit to everyone the desire to attain it.

#### **GRATEFULNESS**

Rejoice on the technical progress, the physical and spiritual development of your students! Rejoice in the fact that the daily training has not brought lots of injuries and clashes. Be grateful that your role as teacher has allowed you to think, to study, and to progress technically and spiritually. Thank the students that have made your progress possible.

#### **DEVELOP POSITIVENESS**

It is preferable to vary the teaching, however without teaching everything and anything, and to avoid making the student feel either lassitude or boredom but instead to continuously make the student find new food.

It is good to give the beginner the desire to practice without disheartening him by the danger of injury or by excessive pain but instead by making him progressively more interested in the practice.

**GOOD RELATIONS AND MUTUAL SEARCH BETWEEN TEACHERS.** Teachers should get together to exchange their experiences and the result of their searches, without prejudice or taking sides.

It is ridiculous that people teaching the way of harmony and peace be feuding with each other. Problems of technical execution or relative strength are of no interest. What counts is not the strength of execution but the conformance to the principle.

The technique that only a strong man can execute has no general interest. It must not be forgotten that to each technique corresponds to many possible executions and that the conditions change with the attack of the opponent.

#### **CORRECTLY GRASP AND TRANSMIT THE PRINCIPLE OF AIKIDO**

One cannot say that the good teacher must only be the one physically strongest or technically best. It is by a teaching based on a correct and clear comprehension of the principle that one can guide students without wandering.

## **Chapter 2**

#### THE FINALITY OF TEACHING

Aikido is an ascetic discipline that shows humankind the way to perfect itself using ki-iku, toku-iku, tai-iku (formation and development of the essence: ki, of wisdom and virtue: toku and of the body: tai). Through this education which includes and unites the mind and the body, one goes beyond the notion of race and of national boundary to form a true human being.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE BODY

The movements of Aikido are flexible, as are those of nature, for they are full of kokyu-rokyu. They enhance physical power, improve health and the beauty of the body. In the same way, flexibility, resistance to effort, reflexes, speed etc. are developed and sharpened.

#### THE LESSONS OF BUJUTSU

By steeping one's self in the methods of "life preservation", one acquires self-confidence and tranquility and achieves peace of mind. At the same time, the will to undertake things, perseverance and organizational skills develop themselves.

#### MENTAL ASPECT

One must overcome the greatest enemies of budo: anger, fear, doubt, hesitation, scorn, and vanity, and develop a firm soul and great courage. One must be penetrated by the necessity of victory over oneself. It is through the repetition of daily practice that one vanquishes tiredness, weariness and comes to know a taste for effort, the importance of perseverance and the joy of winning over difficulty.

#### ETIQUETTE

Amongst a society that lends great importance to technique, strength and power, the rules of etiquette allow one to feel there are overarching values it is important to respect without effort. They are the sine qua non condition of a society's survival.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF AIKIDO AND ITS APPLICATION IN DAILY LIFE

The principle of Aikido applied through irimi-tenkan, ki, kokyu, the Me-Opponent duality, the multiple attacks, etc. teaches the sense of unity, harmony, love and peace.

Aikido expresses with the body the order of the universe. If the order of the universe is applied correctly to the body, technique and health naturally blossom. If the order of the universe is applied correctly to daily life, education, work and personality naturally blossom. If the order of the universe is applied to society, social harmony and relations between oneself and others naturally blossoms. Humanity, like one family, will then work for the recovery of the world, whose harmony is currently troubled.