



Guidelines for Aikido-practice

- 1) Fill yourself with *ki* before the move and extend that *ki* during the move, including the moment after the *uke* has been thrown or pinned. The more *ki* there is from both *tori* and *uke*, the better and more complete the technique will be – According to O-Sensei the technique is actually created by *ki*.
- 2) A basic principle about practice that has been largely forgotten is that each technique is repeated four times without stopping, without stepping back, and without breaking the *ki*-connection between the partners. An important result of this way of practicing is the appearance of a rhythm during the four moves. It is also important to let the partner complete their move. They should not be stopped or struck even if the move is incorrect or there is a *suki*.
- 3) During the move always maintain equal awareness of the partner's body from the tips of the toes to the top of the head. Pay attention not to concentrate only on that part of the body, the fist or hand which is attacking or defending.
- 4) Try to move your awareness and your mind to the *hara*; as though your eyes were in your *hara*.
- 5) The practice of Aikido is about ending the illusion of separation which we all have from the sense of limit and vulnerability that comes with the awareness of our body. Competition and comparison increase the sense of separation. Aikido is about connection (*musubu, tama-no-o, aiki*).
- 6) We should be aware of the special concentration needed for each of the three parts of each technique: the beginning, the middle, the end, which generally correspond to the triangle, the circle and the square.
- 7) Aikido-techniques are designed not to injure. *Atemi* is not meant to actually strike the partner, so we should not be afraid to do the techniques with our full energy. According to Hikitsuchi-Sensei in the purest form of Aikido one is never touched, so techniques should not become anything resembling tests of power or strength. There is no winning in Aikido. The phrase in Japanese that O-Sensei used in this respect is: *Masakatsu* (true victory) *Agatsu* (is victory over the self) *Katsu-Hayaibi* (leading us to be able to enter the state where there is no time and no space).
- 8) We must remember that the *Ai* of Aikido also means love; that Aikido reveals the unconditional love which exists throughout the universe, bringing us to the state of mind which O-sensei called "the spirit of loving protection of all that exists" (*Banyu-ai-go*), and to the knowledge that mankind is one great family within the greater family of pure principle and love which is the universe.
- 9) We must always remember that according to O-sensei, the success of the Aikido technique comes from the principle *saki-no-saki-no-saki*. Even during the period before the war, the *tori* called forth the attacking movement of the *uke*. He did not wait for and then react to it. Even before the war, O-sensei had already defined Aikido as a Budo of oneness...
- 10) Aikido is 50% *bun* and 50% *bu*.
- 11) We must try to always be aware of the wave aspect of every move.