

AIKIDO

It has been said that Aikido is probably the most sophisticated, intriguing, individualized, and creative of the martial arts. Developed by Morihei Ueshiba (O'Sensei), after a life's work, study, and devotion to Budo, Aikido is indeed, all of these things. Aikido was the crowning jewel, the embodiment of what martial arts meant to O'Sensei.

Aikido has been defined as the way of spiritual harmony, a way of coordinating mind and body, a way of energizing both body and spirit. The word Aikido means method or way (do) for the coordination or harmony (ai) of mental energy or spirit (ki). There are many definitions of Aikido. Mostly, though, Aikido is an effective way of drawing together both the physical and metaphysical aspects of one's self, such that human beings may live together in harmony. This is not to diminish in any way the superior and penetrating vision of O'Sensei that perceived Aikido as the epitome of martial arts.

Aikido is a unique form of physical self-defense, derived from Japanese sword and spear fighting, jujutsu, aikijutsu, and other ancient and less known martial arts. From the very first moment of practice an emphasis is placed on focusing one's thoughts and centralizing one's physical actions.

Aikido differs from other martial arts in several ways. Aikido is strictly an art of **self-defense**. Aikido continues to be what the Founder intended it to be - a way of universal unification. Seminars and clinics are held annually in most dojos, and are precisely for improving oneself in physical technique and for discovering/understanding how Aikido can be part of one's daily life. Entirely reflexive and defensive, Aikido is beyond aggression. When techniques are applied by proficient Aikidoists they result in no serious injury. It has been said that Aikido is not a means of defeating one's enemies, but rather a means of finding oneself without enemies at all!

In Aikido there is a constant reference to the hara, or one's center. There is also a particular reference to ki and the internalization of these concepts and application in daily life.

The purpose of Aikido is to bring persons together in harmony, to diffuse conflict. This is accomplished through the utilization of Aikido as a martial art.