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THE MESSAGE TO READERS

On May 2, 1959, I, Shizuo Imaizumi, entered the gate of the old wooden building of Aikikai honbu dojo, located at Shinjuku, Tokyo to have permission to learn Aikido. So this May is my 60th anniversary of Aikido training. Looking back upon my bygone days, the residence of Uyeshiba family was adjacent to Aikikai dojo through a hallway. So O-Sensei Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969), although he had already retired from regular instruction, often appeared from his residence to a dojo and demonstrated Aikido while talking. A schedule of Aikido classes at Aikikai honbu dojo consisted of 5 classes a day from morning to evening on weekdays and one morning class on Sundays. Kisshomaru Uyeshiba (1921-1999) had been managing the Aikikai organization as “dojocho” or “chief executive” in addition to his daily early morning instruction. Koichi Tohei (1920-2011), the brother-in-law of Kisshomaru Uyeshiba, had been teaching Aikido as “shihan-bucho” or “chief instructor.” Morihiro Saito (1928-2002) had been teaching Aikido at one class on Sundays although he was teaching Aikido weekdays at Iwama dojo on behalf of O-Sensei. Please keep in mind that this spring is O-Sensei’s 50th anniversary because he passed away on April 26, 1969.

As a feature story of this newsletter, I made a choice of the title: “An Introduction to Descriptive Aikido” because the article I am about to write will unfold both basic preliminary exercises and fundamental Aikido techniques in series. It goes without saying that the pioneers of modern Aikido, after the World War II, were both Kisshomaru Uyeshiba and Koichi Tohei. In order to spread Aikido, the first book by Kisshomaru Uyeshiba was published in August 1957, and the first book by Koichi Tohei was published in September 1959. I was lucky to be able to buy those books at Aikikai honbu dojo in 1959. I will mention in details about those books later.

Finally, I would like you to know the latest information on change of the name of “gengo” or “the Japanese government ordinance” from “Heisei” to “Reiwa,” effective May 1, 2019. Why has that happened? In August 2016, Emperor Akihito, the son of the late Emperor Hirohito (now called Emperor Showa), announced his desire to abdicate the throne to Crown Prince Naruhito. Article One of the Constitution of Japan prescribes: “The Emperor is the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people [of Japan].” In other words, Emperor Akihito cannot abdicate the throne by his own decision because no Article in the Imperial Household Act has been described on the retirement of the Emperor. In fact, the retirement of the Emperor has never happened since 200 years ago. In June 2017, the Japanese government made the Special Code take effect so that Emperor Akihito would abdicate the throne within three years. The next process the Japanese government had to do was to make a decision of the new “gengo” that should be announced before Crown Prince Naruhito would ascend the throne. The “gengo” of “Heisei” (1989-2019) was selected in January 1989 right after the decease of Emperor Hirohito, and that will be used by Emperor Akihito as his posthumous name. On April 1, 2019, the Japanese government announced the new “gengo” of “Reiwa” that was selected from Japanese classic named “Man’yoshu” or “A Collection of a Myriad Leaves.” On April 30, 2019, 85-years-old Emperor Akihito officially retired by holding the abdication ceremony at the Imperial Palace, Tokyo. Next day on May 1, Crown Prince Naruhito ascended the throne in place of Emperor Akihito at the ascension ceremony, and the “Reiwa” era in Japan started. I hope you understood the national structure of Japan regarding imperial household.

AN INTRODUCTION TO DESCRIPTIVE AIKIDO

By Shizuo Imaizumi

To begin with, I would like to explain to you why I am about to write an article under the title of “An Introduction to Descriptive Aikido.” One of reasons is that Aikido students today seldom read any Aikido-related book because they can have access to a visual Aikido information such as a video cassette tape, a DVD or online streaming services rather than they read an Aikido book. When I began Aikido training in May 1959 (see the cover page of the message to readers), a book was just the thing for me in a market. The advantage in reading a book is that you can come to know an author’s thoughts deeply. As concerns myself, although Kisshomaru Uyeshiba and Koichi Tohei have gone out of this earthly life, rereading their books for writing this article reminded me of having been instructed Aikido by them at Aikikai honbu dojo.

Budo originally has unwritten rule, that is, any techniques in Budo should be transmitted from a master to a student through the direct instruction at a dojo like a Zen transmission, without relying on a written material. However, many Zen books have been published around the world and that trend continues even now. I think that Budo books also should be published as many as possible so that the knowledge of Budo can be preserved from generation to generation. Unfortunately, a Budo-oriented student does not read a Budo book, especially a text-related book for his or her reference.

Before this article reaches the main subject, I would like you to know the following conditions of my “tool-role-rule” policy of writing about that.

First, the tools are three books by Kisshomaru Uyeshiba and three books by Koichi Tohei.

“AIKIDO” by Kisshomaru Uyeshiba, published in August 1957,
Kowado Publishing Co., Tokyo (out of print) [henceforth, AKD-KU (1957)]

“AIKIDO GIHO” by Kisshomaru Uyeshiba, published in January 1962,
Kowado Publishing Co., Tokyo (out of print) [henceforth, AKDGH-KU (1962)]

“AIKIDO” (English version) by Kisshomaru Uyeshiba,
translated from “Aikido” and “Aikido Giho” by Kazuaki Tanahashi and Roy Maurer Jr.,
published in September 1963, Hozansha Publishing Co., Ltd., Tokyo (out of print)
[henceforth, AKD (Eng.)-KU (1963)]

“AIKIDO” by Koichi Tohei, published in September 1959,
Toto Shobo Publishing Co., Tokyo (out of print) [henceforth, AKD-KT (1959)]

“AIKIDO” (English version) by Koichi Tohei,
translated from “Aikido” (no translator’s name mentioned, probably Hawaii Aikikai),
published in July 1960, Rikugei Publishing House, Tokyo (out of print)
[henceforth, AKD (Eng.)-KT (1960)]

“AIKIDO NYUMON” by Koichi Tohei, published in March 1967,
Toto Shobo Publishing Co., Tokyo (out of print) [henceforth, AKDNMN-KT (1967)]

Note: The word “giho” means “technical method,” and “nyumon” “a guide.”

Second, my role here is both a guide and a reviewer, but not a translator. As I mentioned above, two English version of “Aikido” by Kisshomaru Uyeshiba and Koichi Tohei have already existed, but those books are out of print unfortunately. Although most of you don’t possess those old books, a few of you may have them in hand. Although I myself use the four books of Japanese version as mentioned above, I include a source of information under each passage by using a code like [AKD-YY (19xx), pp. xx] of each book. I select topics as a reviewer and paraphrase or summarize them into English by my disposal.

Third, I must set up some rules for my writing as follows:

- (1) I use the easy-to-read format for your convenience when I write technical movement.
- (2) I add my personal comment, advice and a checklist for your reference.
- (3) I use Japanese technical terms in my writing.

The following are samples of basic terms you may find in my article. Therefore, it is desirable for you to know those words before you read my article.

hidari (left) = (h-)
migi (right) = (m-)
hanmi (a posture with one foot forward) = (-h)
hidari-hanmi (a posture with the left foot forward) = (h-h)
migi-hanmi (a posture with the right foot forward) = (m-h)

kamae (a posture)
gamae (a posture)
hidari-gamae (a posture with the left foot forward)
migi-gamae (a posture with the right foot forward)

irimi (to move forward)
tenkan (to change the body’s direction to an opposite or side way)
mae (forward)
ushiro (backward, behind)
yoko (side)
uchi (inside)
soto (outside)

nage (a thrower)
tori (a person of acting a winner’s role of against an opponent)
uke (a person who attacks “nage” or “tori” and takes “ukemi” or “a fall”)

undo (an exercise)
taiso (an exercise)
dosa (an exercise)
tandoku dosa (a sole exercise)
sotai dosa (an exercise of executing with a partner)
henka (a change)

jodan (an upper level)
chudan (a middle level)
gedan (a lower level)
koshi (a lower back or a waist)

Now I have set up the conditions of my “tool-role-rule” policy of writing. So I would like to begin with the topics of this spring issue: “kihon junbiho” or “basic preliminary methods) created by Kisshomaru Uyeshiba and “aiki taiso” or “aiki exercises” created by Koichi Tohei.

KIHON JUNBIHO (BASIC PRELIMINARY METHODS)

The following is a compiled article of “tandoku dosa” or “sole exercise” from two Japanese books by Kisshomaru Uyeshiba mentioned above. As my purpose is not to translate a book, but to introduce to you how to do, I compile part of his books so that you can practice exercises in any order of them you like. I also include “a checklist” and “some advice” for your reference.

1. TAI NO HENKA (POSTURE CHANGING)

The word “tai no henka” literally means “body changing” implying a directional change of your standing position. This is a basic movement that is helpful in the practical use of Aikido technique by turning your body at will. When you move your arms and legs through each movement of “tai no henka,” your whole body should be full of vitality [ki]. You also imagine that you are guiding your opponent’s mind and body. It is important that you see everything surrounding you with your immovable mind and act in accordance with its circumstance.
[AKD-KU (1957), p. 103]

The following are four methods [created by Kisshomaru Uyeshiba] to change from one standing position to a new one respectively.

THE FIRST METHOD FROM A LEFT POSTURE

- (1) Stand in “hidari-gamae” or the posture with the left foot forward (hidari-hanmi). Thrust and keep your left hand positioned on “chudan” or “middle level” and your right hand on “gedan” or “lower level” near your “koshi” or “lower back” naturally.
- (2) Pivot on your left foot for turning the body 180 degree (1/2 circle) clockwise and draw your right foot backward. After turning your body completely, you still keep your original left-hand posture, but you should thrust both palms of your hands upward at the height of your chest.

[AKD-KU (1957), p.104] [AKDGH-KU (1962), pp. 60-61] [AKD (Eng.)-KU (1963), p. 30]

THE SECOND METHOD FROM A LEFT POSTURE

- (1) Stand in “hidari-gamae” as mentioned in the first method.
- (2) Step your right foot forward and stand in a mihi-hanmi posture. As a result, you now stand in a mihi-hanmi posture, and you thrust both palms of your hands upward naturally, but this time your right hand is ahead of the left one.

[AKD-KU (1957), pp.104 -105] [AKDGH-KU (1962), p. 61] [AKD (Eng.)-KU (1963), p. 30]

THE THIRD METHOD FROM A LEFT POSTURE

- (1) Stand in “hidari-gamae” as mentioned in the first method.
- (2) Pivot on your left foot for changing the body 90 degree (1/4 circle) rightward and step your right foot sideward. As a result, you face to the right and stand in a migi-hanmi posture.
- (3) Although both palms of your hands are thrust upward, your right hand is ahead of the left one this time.

[AKD-KU (1957), p.105] [AKDGH-KU (1962), p. 61] [AKD (Eng.)-KU (1963), p. 30]

THE FOURTH METHOD FROM A LEFT POSTURE

- (1) Stand in “hidari-gamae” as mentioned in the first method.
- (2) Pivot on your left foot for turning your body 270 degree (3/4 circle) leftward and draw your right foot forward. As a result, you face the left and stand in a migi-hanmi posture. Although both palms of your hands are thrust upward, your right hand is ahead of the left one this time.

[AKD-KU (1957), p.105] [AKD GH-KU (1962), pp. 61-62] [AKD-KU (Eng. 1963), p. 30]

Next, the first method from a right posture through the fourth method from a right posture is simply the reverse of the above four methods from a left posture respectively.

[AKD-KU (1957), p.105] [AKDGH-KU (1962), p. 62] [AKD (Eng.)-KU (1963), p. 30]

A CHECKLIST OF TAI NO HENKA (POSTURE CHANGING)

beginning posture/direction movement ending posture/direction
(The arrow sign like ↑, ↓, ←, → shows a bird’s-eye view of the direction of your motion.)

NO. 1 from a left posture

the left foot forward (h-h) (↑) the left hand forward	turn 1/2 circle clockwise drawing the right foot backward	the left foot forward (h-h) (↓) the palms upward
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NO. 2 from a left posture

the left foot forward (h-h) (↑) the left hand forward	step the right foot forward	the right foot forward (m-h) (↑) the palms upward
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NO. 3 from a left posture

the left foot forward (h-h) (↑) the left hand forward	turn 1/4 circle rightward stepping the right foot sideward	the right foot forward (m-h) (→) the palms upward
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NO. 4 from a left posture

the left foot forward (h-h) (↑) the left hand forward	turn a 3/4 circle leftward stepping the right foot	the right foot forward (m-h) (←) the palms upward
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NO. 1 from a right posture the right foot forward (m-h) (↑) the right hand forward	turn 1/2 circle counterclockwise drawing the left foot backward	the right foot forward (m-h) (↓) the palms upward
NO. 2 from a right posture the right foot forward (m-h) (↑) the right and forward	step the left foot forward	the left foot forward (h-h) (↑) the palms upward
NO. 3 from a right posture the right foot forward (m-h) (↑) the right hand forward	turn 1/4 circle leftward stepping the left foot sideward	the left foot forward (h-h) (←) the palms upward
NO. 4 from a right posture the right foot forward (m-h) (↑) the right hand forward	turn 3/4 circle rightward stepping the left foot	the left foot forward (h-h) (→) the palms upward

SOME ADVICE

The practice of “tai no henka” or “posture changing” is an important learning element. The reason is that you cannot confront with your opponent without knowing how to deal with your own body and mind at will. Therefore, you should practice those exercises repeatedly.

No. 4 method is mainly used when you practice “ushiro waza tekubi-tori” techniques in Aikido. Some of you may feel strange when you imagine your opponent in front of you. Therefore, when you practice No. 4 method above, you should imagine that your opponent (uke) attacks you from behind, not from the front.

2. KOKYU NO HENKA (BREATH CHANGING)

The word “kokyu no henka” literally means “breath changing.” This is a sole exercise to train to extend your full energy [ki] completely without delay in accordance with your posture changing. In Aikido the word “kokyu” or “breath” is used from the viewpoint that the power with mind and body coordinated must accord with the airtight breath [like “kiai” utterance] from a whole body. That is why the power extending from a whole body is called “kokyu-ryoku” or “the power of breath.”

[AKDGH-KU (1962), p. 62] [AKD (Eng.)-KU (1963, p.31)]

HIDARI KOKYU NO HENKA (LEFT POSTURE BREATH CHANGING) – MEN-UCHI IKKYO UNDO

Stand in “hidari-gamae” or the posture with the left foot forward (hidari-hanmi) in which your left hand is thrust at “chudan” or “middle level” and your right hand is at “gedan” or “lower level” near your ‘koshi” or “lower back” naturally.

- (1) Stepping with the right foot forward (migi-hanmi), raise both hands with circular motion from the current position to the height of your eyes. When the posture ends with a migi-hanmi posture and with both hands raising, the center of your body remains on the left foot, but the foundation of your body must be put on your “koshi” definitely. Then turn 180 degree (1/2 circle) counterclockwise before you step with the right foot forward. At that time both hands simultaneously lower from the height of your eyes to your “koshi” naturally.
- (2) After that, stepping with the right foot forward, swing both hands upward again to the height of your eyes.
- (3) After that, stepping with the right foot 90 degree (1/4 circle) leftward and stand with a migi-hanmi posture. Both hands moves as same as the previous handling. Then turn 180 degree (1/2 circle) counterclockwise as you did above.
- (4) Finally, stepping with the right foot forward, raise both hands at the height of your eyes. During the whole movement above, your ‘kokyu-ryoku” or “the power of breath” is extending through your arms.

[AKDGH-KU (1962), pp. 62-64] [AKD (Eng.)-KU (1963), p. 31]

Next, “migi kokyu no henka” (right posture breath changing) is simply the reverse of the above “hidari kokyu no henka.”

[AKD GH-KU (1962), pp. 62-64] [AKD-KU (Eng. 1963), p. 31]

A CHECKLIST OF KOKYU NO HENKA (BREATH CHANGING)

(The arrow sign like ↑, ↓, ←, → shows a bird’s-eye view of the direction of your motion.)

<u>beginning posture/direction</u>	<u>movement</u>	<u>ending posture/direction</u>
HIDARI KOKYU NO HENKA		
(1) the left foot forward (h-h) (↑) the left hand forward	step the right foot forward	the right foot forward (m-h) (↑) the palms outward (height of eyes)
continuously, turn 1/2 circle counterclockwise		
(2) the left foot forward (h-h) (↓) the hands at height of “koshi”	step the right foot forward	the right foot forward (m-h) (↓) the palms outward (height of eyes)
continuously, turn 1/4 circle leftward		
(3) the right foot forward (m-h) (→) hand at height of “koshi”	step the right foot forward	the right foot forward (m-h) (→) the palms outward (height of eyes)
continuously, turn 1/2 circle counterclockwise		
(4) the left foot forward (h-h) (←) the hands at height of “koshi”	step the right foot forward	the right foot forward (m-h) (←) the palms outward (height of eyes)

MIGI KOKYU NO HENKA

(1) the right foot forward (m-h) (↑) the right hand forward	step the left foot forward	the left foot forward (h-h) (↑) the palms outward (height of eyes)
continuously, turn 1/2 circle clockwise		
(2) the right foot forward (m-h) (↓) the hands at height of "koshi"	step the left foot forward	the left foot forward (h-h) (↓) the palms outward (height of eyes)
continuously, turn 1/4 circle rightward		
(3) the left foot forward (h-h) (←) the hand at height of "koshi"	step the left foot forward	the left foot forward (h-h) (←) the palms outward (height of eyes)
continuously, turn 1/2 circle clockwise		
(4) the right foot forward (m-h) (→) the hands at height of "koshi"	step the left foot forward	the left foot forward (h-h) (→) the palms outward (height of eyes)

SOME ADVICE

First, practice both the left- and right exercise separately. After you are familiar with both exercises, try to combine both exercises. For example, if you starts with the left exercise, you starts with the right exercise from the finishing position of the left exercise by adding the counting number like 5, 6, 7 and 8 instead of 1, 2, 3 and 4 so that you can come back to the starting position of the left exercise. In other words, you may find your mistake of footwork unless you can come back to the starting position of direction in a hidari-hanmi posture.

AIKI TAISO (AIKI EXERCISES)

Koichi Tohei developed Aikido-style exercises named "aiki taiso" or "aiki exercises" that was introduced to a public for the first time through his first Aikido book in September 1959. The following is a compiled article from his two books mentioned above. Several exercises similar to the exercises created by Kisshomaru Uyeshiba were selected from many "aiki taiso" by my disposal.

1. MEN-UCHI IKKYO UNDO (IKKYO EXERCISE)

This exercise is the basic exercise for "men-uchi ikkyo" technique in Aikido. When an opponent strikes you on the head, in no time, you grab him by the arm and push down toward his side without colliding with the power of his attacking arm.

Stand with the left foot forward (hidari-hanmi). Do the following movement continuously.

- (1) At count One, extending ki from both arms, swing both hands upward from the height of your "koshi" or "the lower back" to the height of your eyes, the palms outward. At the same time, move your "koshi" forward.
- (2) At count Two, move your "koshi" backward striking down both hands to the position of your "koshi." At that time, clench both fists from the side of both small fingers.

[AKD-KT (1959), pp. 36-37] [AKD (Eng.)-KT (1960), pp. 62-63] [AKDNMN-KT (1967), pp. 56-57]

KI TEST

- (1) When you raise both arms upward at the height of your eyes, your hands should not move backward when being pushed from the front. As you swing both arms upward by drawing a semicircle, the power of your hands should be flowing the side of both small fingers in accordance with the principle of centrifugal force. When the power of your arms is extending like that, your arms don't move backward and are not bent inward easily.
- (2) When someone pushes your "koshi" from behind, you should not stagger forward. If you relax your arms completely and swing them upward with keeping your one point in the lower abdomen, your "koshi" doesn't need to move easily even by being pushed from behind.
- (3) Even though someone pushes your chest area from the front gently, you should not move backward easily while you keep your one point in the lower abdomen.
- (4) When both hands stay at the height of your "koshi" at count Two, your hands should not move upward even when being pushed them toward your shoulder. When you relax your arms completely, the weight of your arms is underside. Therefore, your arms don't easily move upward.

[AKD-KT (1959), pp. 36-37] [AKD (Eng.)-KT (1960), pp. 62-63] [AKDNMN-KT (1967), pp. 56-57]

2. ZENGO UNDO (FRONT-BACK EXERCISE)

Stand with the left foot forward (hidari-hanmi). Do the following movement continuously.

- (1) At count One, swing both hands upward like the first part of "ikkyo undo" as mentioned above.
- (2) At count Two, strike down both hands like the second part of "ikkyo undo" and keep both hands at the height of your "koshi." After that, pivot on your tiptoe 90 degree (1/2 circle) clockwise and stand with the right foot forward (migi-hanmi).
- (3) At count Three, swing both hands upward as mentioned above from a migi-hanmi posture.
- (4) At count Four, strike down both hands and keep both hands at the height of your "koshi." After that, pivot on your tiptoe 90 degree (1/2 circle) counterclockwise and stand with a hidari-hanmi posture.

When you swing upward and strike down both hands at counts One and Two, your Ki power is easily extending forward because you face your front from the beginning. However, when you turn your body backward, you must pay attention to keep your one point in the abdomen. If you lose that condition while turning completely, you are apt to become off-balanced. Therefore, you must learn how to switch your mind and body together in the same direction. In other words, if you remain your mind behind at count Two, you cannot keep your one point in the lower abdomen.

[AKD-KT (1959), pp. 37-38] [AKD (Eng.)-KT (1960), pp. 63-64] [AKDNMN-KT (1967), pp.57-58]

3. HAPPO UNDO (EIGHT-DIRECTIONAL EXERCISE)

Stand with the left foot forward (hidari-hanmi). Do the following movement continuously.

- (1) At count One, execute "ikkyo undo" up and down with a hidari-hanmi posture. Turning 180 degree (1/2 circle) clockwise, wait with a migi-hanmi posture.
- (2) At count Two, execute "ikkyo undo" with a migi-hanmi posture. Stepping with the left foot 90 degree (1/4 circle) leftward, wait with a hidari-hanmi posture.
- (3) At count Three, execute "ikkyo undo" with a hidari-hanmi posture. Turning 180 degree (1/2 circle) clockwise, wait with a migi-hanmi posture.
- (4) At count Four, execute "ikkyo undo" with a migi-hanmi posture. Stepping with the left foot 45 degree (1/8 circle) diagonally leftward, wait with a hidari-hanmi posture.
- (5) At count Five, execute "ikkyo undo" with a hidari-hanmi posture. Turning 180 degree (1/2 circle) clockwise, wait with a migi-hanmi posture.
- (6) At count Six, execute "ikkyo undo" with a migi-hanmi posture. Stepping with the left foot 90 degree (1/4 circle) diagonally leftward, wait with a hidari-hanmi posture.
- (7) At count Seven, execute "ikkyo undo" with a hidari-hanmi posture. Turning 180 degree (1/2 circle) clockwise, wait with a migi-hanmi posture.
- (8) At count Eight, execute "ikkyo undo" with a migi-hanmi posture. Keep standing with a migi-hanmi posture.

Return to the starting position, stand with a hidari-hanmi posture again, and then repeat this set of "happo undo" once more.

When you practice "happo undo," you should do each movement slowly and accurately in accordance with the explanation of each count as mentioned above. After that, you try to execute those with much faster pace. At that time, you must extend Ki at each direction fully. [AKD-KT (1959), pp. 38-39] [AKD (Eng.)-KT (1960)], pp. 64-65 [AKDNMN-KT (1967), p.59]

A CHECKLIST OF HAPPO UNDO

beginning posture/direction

movement

ending posture/direction

(The arrow sign like ↑, ↓, ←, → shows a bird's-eye view of the direction of your motion.)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| (1) the left foot forward (h-h) (↑)
the hands at height of "koshi" | step the left foot
forward | the left foot forward (h-h) (↑)
the palms outward (height of eyes) |
| continuously, turn 1/2 circle clockwise | | |
| (2) the right foot forward (m-h) (↓)
the hands at height of "koshi" | step the right foot
forward | the right foot forward (m-h) (↓)
the palms outward (height of eyes) |
| continuously, turn 1/4 circle leftward | | |
| (3) the left foot forward (h-h) (→)
the hands at height of "koshi" | step the left foot
forward | the left foot forward (h-h) (→)
the palms outward (height of eyes) |
| continuously, turn 1/2 circle clockwise | | |
| (4) the right foot forward (m-h) (←)
the hands at height of "koshi" | step the right foot
forward | the right foot forward (m-h) (←)
the palms outward (height of eyes) |

- continuously, turn 1/8 circle diagonally leftward
- (5) the left foot forward (h-h) (/down) step the left foot
the hands at height of "koshi" forward the left foot forward (h-h) (/down)
the palms outward (height of eyes)
- continuously, turn 1/2 circle clockwise
- (6) the right foot forward (m-h) (/up) step the right foot
the hands at height of "koshi" forward the right foot forward (m-h) (/up)
the palms outward (height of eyes)
- continuously, turn 1/4 circle diagonally leftward
- (7) the left foot forward (h-h) (↖) step the left foot
the hands at height of "koshi" forward the left foot forward (h-h) (↖)
the palms outward (height of eyes)
- continuously, turn 1/2 circle clockwise
- (8) the right foot forward (m-h) (↘) step the right foot
the hands at height of "koshi" forward the right foot forward (m-h) (↘)
the palms outward (height of eyes)

4. KOKYUHO UNDO (CHANGE-DIRECTION EXERCISE)

The purpose of this exercise is to learn how to lead the power of your opponent who grabs you by the wrist. The method of leading the power of your opponent in accordance with the correct movement of your mind and body is called "kokyuho" in Aikido.

- (1) Stand with the left foot forward (hidari-hanmi) and thrust your left hand bending your left wrist with fingers inward and with your left palm downward. At count One, move your "koshi" or "the lower back" closer to your thrusting-left hand, and then, without moving that hand, start turning your "koshi" clockwise. When your "koshi" is about to pass the wrist area of your left-thrusting hand, step with the right foot backward so that you can turn your back completely. At that time, the palm of your left hand faces upward thrusting it forward and your right hand is positioned at the height of your "koshi" naturally.
- (2) At count Two, lower your left hand and then thrust your right hand at the same time. Stepping with the right foot forward, move your "koshi" closer to the wrist area of your thrusting-right hand, and then start turning your "koshi" counterclockwise. When your "koshi" is about to pass the wrist area of your thrusting-right hand, step with the left foot backward so that you can turn your back completely. At that time, the palm of your right hand faces upward thrusting it forward and your left hand is positioned at the height of your "koshi" naturally.

Next, stand with the right foot forward (migi-hanmi) and thrust your right hand. After that, do the exercise as mentioned above. This is simply the reverse of the above exercise.

[AKD-KT (1959), pp. 39-40] [AKD (Eng.)-KT (1960), pp. 65-67] [AKDNMN-KT (1967), pp. 59-62]

KI TEST

- (1) When you stand with the left foot forward (hidari-hanmi) and thrust your left hand, even though someone tries to push your wrist area toward your body, your arm and body should not move backward easily.
- (2) When someone tries to push your “koshi” area from behind at this posture, you should not move your body forward like staggering.
- (3) After you turn your body completely and thrust your hand forward with the palm upward, even though someone tries to pull your wrist area backward toward your “koshi,” you should not move your hand easily. Also, when someone tries to push up your wrist, you should not move your hand upward easily.

[AKD-KT (1959), pp. 39-40] [AKD (Eng.)-KT (1960), pp. 65-67] [AKDNMN-KT (1967), pp.59-62]

A CHECKLIST OF KOKYUHO UNDO

beginning posture/direction

movement

ending posture/direction

(The arrow sign like ↑, ↓, ←, → shows a bird's-eye view of the direction of your motion.)

From a left posture (stand with a hidari-hanmi posture)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| (1) the left foot forward (h-h) (↑)
the left hand forward | turn 1/2 circle
clockwise
drawing the right foot
backward | the left foot forward (h-h) (↓)
the left palm upward |
| (2) the left foot forward (h-h) (↓)
the left palm upward | step the right foot
forward & turn 1/2
circle counterclockwise
with the right hand forward | the right foot forward (m-h) (↑)
the right palm upward |
-

From a right posture (stand with a mihi-hanmi posture)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| (1) the right foot forward (m-h) (↑)
the right hand forward | turn 1/2 circle
counterclockwise
drawing the left foot
backward | the right foot forward (m-h) (↓)
the right palm upward |
| (2) the right foot forward (m-h) (↓)
the left palm upward | step the left foot
forward & turn 1/2
circle clockwise
with the left hand forward | the left foot forward (h-h) (↑)
the left palm upward |

SOME ADVICE

You should practice this “kokyuho undo” as mentioned separately. After that, you try to execute the first exercise from a left-foot-forward posture (h-h) by counting 1-2-3-4 without stopping at count 3. In other words, this becomes continuous until you stop executing it.

Next, you stand in a right-foot-forward posture (m-h) and then you try to execute the second exercise by counting 1-2-3-4 without stopping at count 3 in the same way as above.

CONCLUSION OF SPRING ISSUE

Both Kisshomaru Uyeshiba and Koichi Tohei have emphasized the need for practicing the fundamental exercises to Aikido students in their books respectively.

Therefore, I decided to write about Aikido-related exercises for this spring issue before I offer you Aikido techniques. My special emphasis at the moment is to say the importance of the fundamental exercises. When you practice essential Aikido techniques at a dojo, you, in my opinion, should practice those exercises before you seek the essence of the basic Aikido techniques deeply. You cannot deal with your opponent in your Aikido performance without being able to handle your mind and body at will.

Although I continue to present you more technical information through a series of "An Introduction to Descriptive Aikido," I have no intention to say that you must commit them because there are many methods to do in this world. The above-mentioned methods are part of exercises. Therefore, you should think that those are examples of exercises. What I really want to say here is to commit fundamental exercises you want to do personally.

First, you read technical information and try to move your own body. But it is important to keep an appropriate distance from the text so that you can avoid being restricted with the rules of a technique in a text without judging for yourself. In other words, when you use a text like this, you should first make your own effort to understand the context of text. After that, you should decide whether or not you continue to practice them by your disposal.

Next, you know a Japanese word "maai" or "proper space." The Japanese simply calls it "ma." In a principle of "ma," a certain latitude should be allowed in applying the information of text you have learned. For example, when I ask you a question: "The maximum length of my open hand from tips of a thumb and a small finger is 9 inches that is shorter than a foot ruler. By the way, where is the center of this foot ruler?" You may answer me: "Sensei, you must know that the center of a foot ruler is between 6 inches left and 6 inches right. There is no space between them." Although your answer is correct from a viewpoint of measure, I want you answer this question beyond your logical thinking. Think big. I expect you to insist on the following: "The center of a foot ruler is between 5.5 inches left and 5.5 inches right." Or "The center of a foot ruler is between 5 inches left and 5 inches right." The bottomline is that you must know the importance of "ma" (1-inch or 2-inch of central area or "ma" in this example). In other words, if you keep some "ma" in your daily life, the important element is able to come inside of that "ma" at any time. In the same way, an instructor and "yudansha" or "a black-belt ranking person" should give a beginning student a lot of latitude in his or her Aikido training process. A beginning student gradually fills that latitude through daily "keiko" or "practice."

Finally, let me repeat. I would like you to practice the fundamental exercises before you jump into practicing new Aikido techniques. You should learn from a simple proverb: "Haste makes waste." Or "Make haste slowly." In the beginning, you should strengthen your foundation like: "Slow but steady." And then you will be able to make your own judgement with composure when you compare your current technical skill with another student's one.

<To be continued.>