

Aikido Essence

(José Carlos Escobar – Shidoín, 06/2016)



For years Aikido has been practiced in a large number of countries around the world and yet, after O'Sensei's death –Aikido's founder–it has been furthered and practiced insufficiently, at the expense of the full achievement of its objectives.

- On one hand, too much emphasis has been put on the activities used in practice that have been mistakenly called "techniques" since AIKIDO HAS NO SUCH THING AS "TECHNIQUES": its practice is made of movements by means of which it is necessary to develop a work that will help the mutual development of practitioners in regards to their Human potential. This is better understood when we take a good look at the terms all practitioners use and know.

ACTIVITY / WORK ("KYO" AND "NAGE")	TECHNIQUES (WAZA)
Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo, etc.	Swari waza
Kokyu ho, Kokyu nage, Irimi nage, Shi-ho nage, Kote gaeshi, etc	Tachi waza Kaeshi waza

This is better understood through the following comparison:

MARTIAL ARTS

心 SHIN (heart)
技 GI (technique)
体 TAI (body)

AIKIDO

氣 KI (life energy)
心 SHIN (heart)
体 TAI (body)

These ideograms indicate the pivots on which the teaching and practice of Martial Arts and Aikido turn. The first one, the *shin-gi-tai* pivot (left column) is used by Martial (fighting) arts practitioners and sportspeople. It emphasizes the *shin* (mindset and motivation) necessary to cultivate the art and to achieve a victory over an adversary. It concentrates on the technical aspects (*gi*) the fighters or competitors will need in a tournament or combat where they will have to put the physical resistance of their bodies (*tai*) to the test.

However, the *ki-shin-tai* pivot of Aikido (right column) puts particular attention and priority to a force referred to as *ki* ("an energy connected to the Universe"), a form of energy discovered by Aikido founder Morihei Ueshiba, which lacks technique (*waza / gi*) since, being part of the *Cosmos*, it is alien to any form of human instrumental elaboration. Hence instead of courage, strength, resistance, and violence to deal with conflict, Aikido practitioners reconnect with themselves and join the Universe throughout the adequate (dynamic) work of their bodies (*tai*) and by applying Aikido movements aimed at the care, well being, and development of all practice partners who play the role of being "opponents" but are nothing more than the forces to be overcome to achieve self-development. Such "opponents" also pursue their own parallel growth and development given there is no such thing as "attack-defense" in Aikido and they also must carry out an activity / work intended for mutual development.

The concept **GI** (technique, way to defeat someone through lethal punches, kicks, etc.,) is fundamental in all previous arts since their main objective was to defeat the enemy. Instead, the **Ki** concept of Aikido (as well as the development of **ki no chikara**, which is its augmented strength) is essential because its objective is the mutual development of all practitioners and the collaboration and absolute respect to the qualities that make us better human beings.

- Uke's work and his/her development have been absolutely forgotten and ignored. Without it practice is incomplete for both NAGE and UKE and leaves NAGE with a selfish role, contrary to the essence of Aikido. NAGE's role has been over-emphasized and has let him/her as the prominent figure in this game, leaving UKE aside. THERE ARE NO SPOTLIGHTS in Aikido.

This fact has resulted in a unilateral, egotistical and even violent practice. This was the case when people saw themselves as enemies but it is totally inappropriate in Aikido. This issue is exceedingly important since Aikido has been given the impression that there is always a winner and a loser during practice, someone who is always "in control" of another one who is oppressed and abused, which is opposite to O'Sensei Ueshiba's thinking.



- As it has been pointed out (Escobar: 2000) the work in Aikido has to aim: (a) to understand exactly what that energy called KI by the founder is, since it is the essence of the Aikido, and (b) how is it that it be augmented so that it can be strengthened (something known as KI NO CHIKARA).

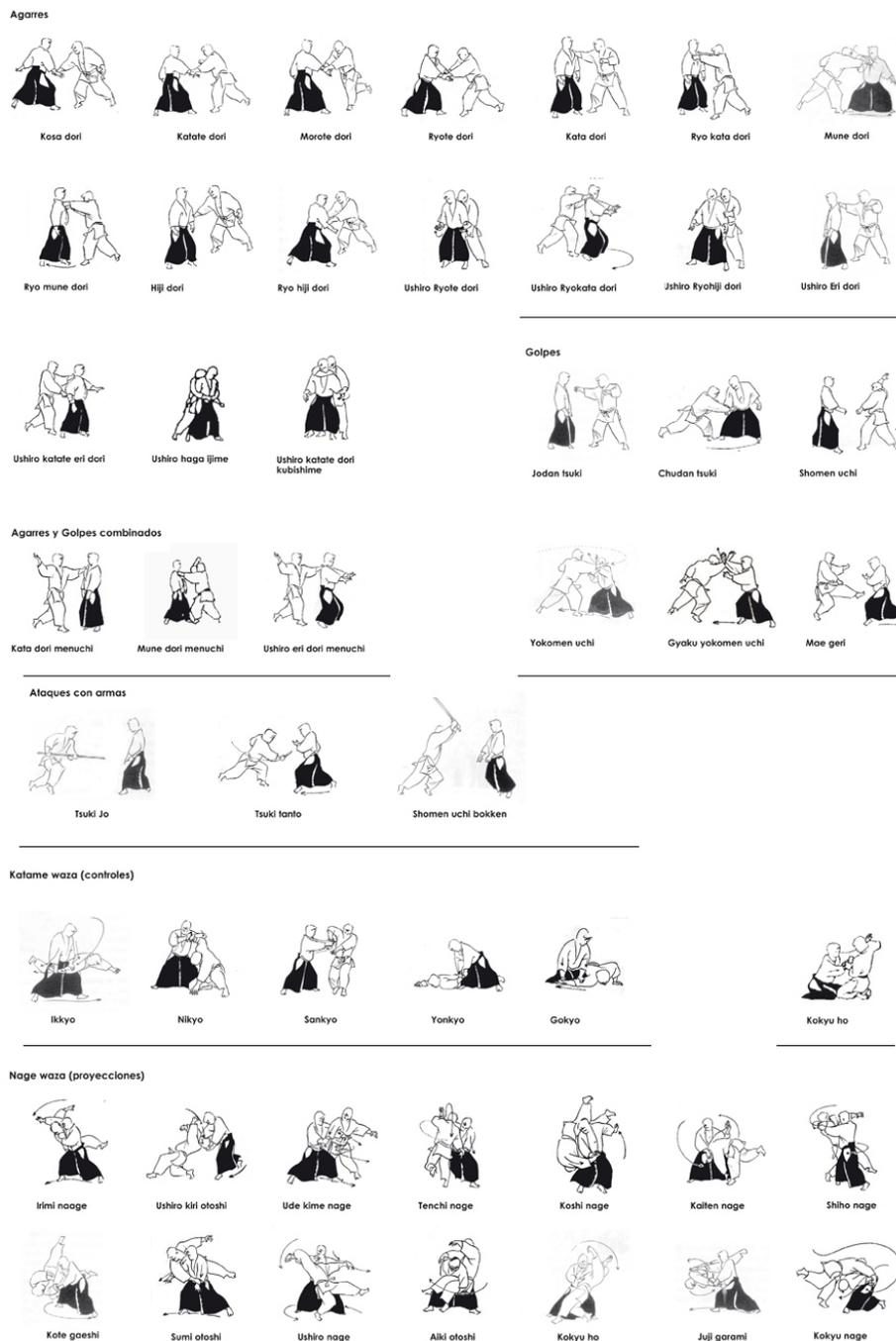
This energy must be perceived, recognized, applied and multiplied by BOTH practitioners (NAGE and UKE) because failing to do so makes them lose their chance to develop their KI NO CHIKARA.

But this is possible only when people practice TANDEN, and develop their essential sensitivity (KOKORO) which takes them to the dynamic coordination and union of heart and body (SHIN SHIN TOITSU) as an inextricable unity that is not appropriately represented in usual illustrations / modelling of instructors.



Artists cannot make accurate representations of Aikido's movements if their instructors do not teach well. This happens because they overlook or ignore practice in the way shown and originally taught by the founder of Aikido and that implies instructors never reach the practice level called TOKUBETSU GEIKO not to mention KI NO NAGARE practice. They usually cover Kihon, Shu-den, and Gi-ho ways of practice contained in the regular program followed by most organizations.

- Three out of four kinds of instruction and practice have been seemingly left out (TANDEN GEIKO, TOKUBETSU GEIKO and KI NO NAGARE) and Aikido has been left just with the general kind of practice (called IPPAN GEIKO) which consists of the series of movements that have been promoted as the official training / teaching program in books and magazines throughout the years in the Aikido world:



IPPAN GEIKO (general practice, elementary level)

Due to all this the philosophy inherited by the founder has been forgotten: AGATSU, MASAKATSU, KATSU HAYABI. These terms are well known to Aikido practitioners all around the world but they lack the corresponding theory developed by Kurita Shihan so they do not apply them to practice thus hindering the aimed growth and development: a higher HUMAN development and the success of our species.



- The practice of Aikido has not received enough attention and focus as a formula for HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, a constructive development aimed to help HUMANITY to take a step forward in its civilizing process so that we can learn to live with others in a different way so as to help us to soften the HOSTILE RELATIONSHIPS that have whipped and destroyed the Human species throughout history.

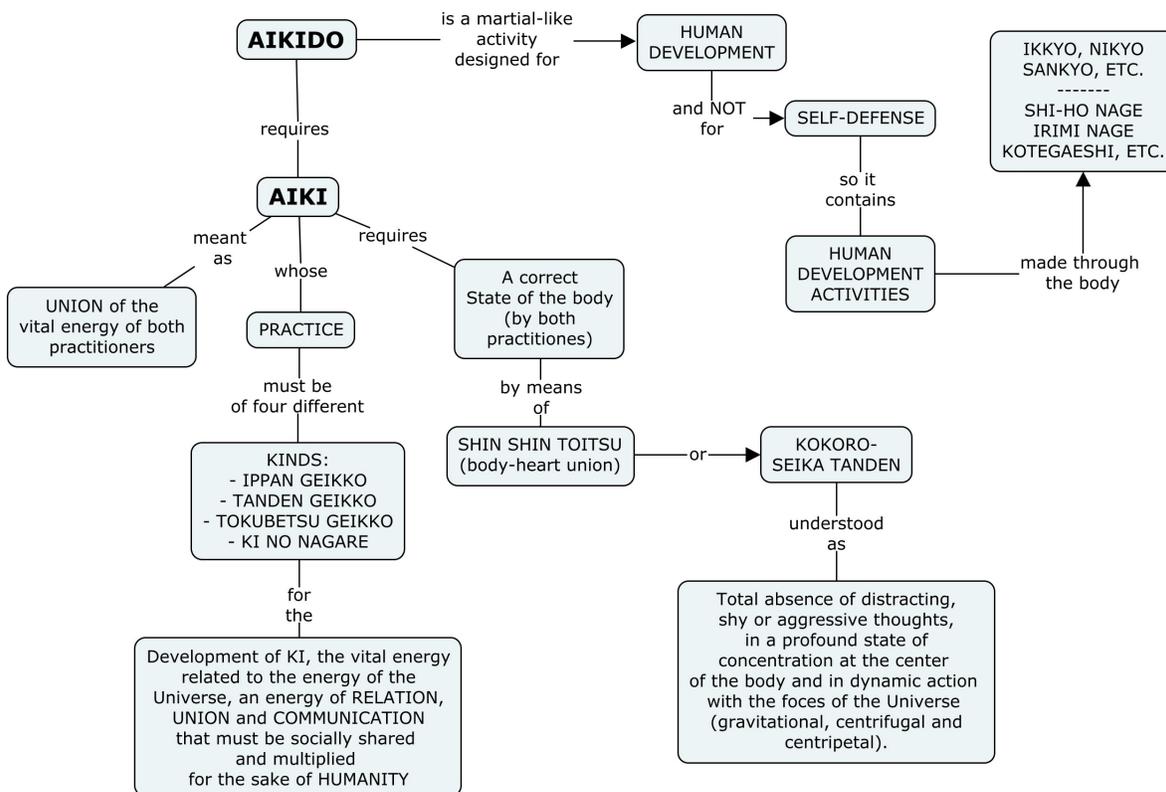
Aikido IS NOT A MARTIAL (FIGHTING) ART, a SPORT or an entertainment activity. Aikido is BUDO, a development system whose ultimate goal is to achieve one HUMAN GRANDEUR that may lead practitioners to SUCCEED in life.

Aikido seeks for the improvement of human beings, the development of their ultimate potential, a responsible and conscious behavior and a way of life likely to occur in the 21st century that may lead Humanity a step forward in its civilizing process. So to taking Aikido merely as another Martial Art is a SETBACK. It must not be confused or mixed with any sport, fighting art and self-defense system. (KURITA YUTAKA Shihan, after 30 years disseminating Aikido in Mexico).

THE ESSENCE OF AIKIDO

Kurita Y, Shihan's Teachings

KURITA JUKU AIKI
 Established by Shihan Yutaka KURITA, 8th. DAN
 (to disseminate the HUmane Aikido of O' Sensei)



SUCCESS AND HUMAN GRANDEUR

