

AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

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O-SENSEI'S MEMORIAL DAY

On April 26, 1987, we observed O-Sensei's "meinichi" or memorial of his passing on April 26, 1969. From 10:00am to 11:00am, Sensei conducted a special practice and from 11:30am, Rev. Nobuyoshi Fukushima, priest of the Zenshuji Soto Mission conducted a Memorial Service as students offered incense to O-Sensei's soul. Sensei and ten other students took Fukushima Sensei to luncheon at the Thousand Cranes Restaurant at the New Otani Hotel. Mr. George Tani from New York and Dr. Larry Yoshioka were guests attending the service.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF FUKUSHIMA SENSEI'S SERMON AFTER THE SERVICE

Nowadays, everyone hopes to achieve good health. It is not surprising that there are so many innovations that we categorize as "healthy" such as health foods, diets, yoga, aerobic dance and the list goes on. I have no intention to discredit any of the above mentioned methods but each, in its own sense, has its own good and bad qualities.

If we are too attached to health or being healthy, that too can be defined as a kind of disease. To quote one doctor, "If there are three doctors attending a healthy patient at one time, they have the ability to kill that healthy person." The doctor goes on to say, "modern medicine is also creating mass numbers of patients." This is the sin of modern medicine.

If you were to attempt to eliminate all illnesses or diseases, you would first have to eliminate the doctors, according to this doctor. I was surprised to hear this from a doctor. I wonder how the world would be if there were no doctors around. Anyone would think that this is ridiculous and an unnecessary idea. But this ridiculous statement by the doctor is, in one way, a constructive criticism of modern medicine. At the same time, this could also be taken as a warning to present day society.

Sickness is connected with the mind. It seems that we cannot deny the fact that to be healthy requires both the mind and body. Yagyū Tajima no kami, a famous swordsman of Japan, wrote about "katsujinken" (the sword that preserves life) in the *Heiho Kaden Sho (Family Secrets of Military Arts)* which can be called the swordman's bible. In it, he

wrote, "illness is when the mind is stopped." The statement means that when the mind is stopped, it is attached to one thing or another.

An old Chinese proverb states, "Running water will never become stagnant." If the water were to stop running, it would indeed spoil. This must also apply to us as human beings. If we were to keep our minds and bodies in constant motion, even in our old age, we would not be vulnerable to sickness.

The mind is something we should be able to understand but we don't. In modern medicine, the mind is defined as the frontal area of the brain. Generally speaking, the mind is discretionary and cognitory interactions. Dogen Zenji concluded that the mind is literally "kusa-ki" or "grass and trees." If we have a fixed notion that mind is discretionary interactions and perceptions, it is hard to understand why the mind is "grass and trees."

The mind is nowhere to be found but we make the mistake of having an understanding that it exists. If we were to break through this barrier of misguided understanding and see things as they really are, then it is true that the mind is "grass and trees" or "slate and rocks." In Dogen Zenji's enlightened world, there is no distinction between the mind and the material world. The intellectual aspect makes the distinction between mind and the material world, but true wisdom will recognize the mind and the material world as one. If all is one, then it is natural that the mind can be material and the material can be mind. That is why the mind is "grass and trees."

This world is in a constant state of flux and accordingly, humans also follow Nature in this fashion. Children grow, young adults mature to become older citizens and the older citizens pass away in the end.

Just because one is enlightened, it does not mean that the flowers will grow. At the same time, because you are deluded, it does not mean that the maple leaves will fall. Being enlightened or deluded, when it is cold, it is only cold. When it is hot, it is only hot. When you are born, you are born. And, when you die, you are simply dead.

Generally speaking, it is an accepted frame of mind that a healthy body is too good to waste by dying. As for the Dharma or Absolute Truth, our bodies are

considered as nothing. Dogen Zenji said that even if you become sick, you must continue practicing. It would be a worthless effort to not practice due to illness and also an attachment to one's body.

If we were to live our everyday lives with Dogen Zenji's strength of conviction, then sickness or illness will not exist. The important thing is how we deal with the mind. One should not leave an opportunity for sickness to invade one's self. This is what I wanted to say. Thank you.

Rev. N. Fukushima, April 26, 1987, at the dojo.

KANAI SENSEI'S SEMINAR IS JUNE 6-7

Kanai Sensei's seminar is soon approaching. Everyone should make every possible effort to attend. This is a very important event for us and a wonderful opportunity to study with this great teacher. The fee is \$40.00 for both days. Please register early.

KANAI SENSEI'S PLANNED ITINERARY

June 5, 1987

- 4:29pm - Arrival at LAX from Boston.
- 5:30pm - Check into New Otani Hotel.
- 7:00pm - Dinner for Sensei
- 9:30pm - Return to hotel.

June 6, 1987

- 8:15am - Take Sensei for breakfast.
- 9:30am - Arrive at the dojo.
- 10:00am - First Class.
- 11:30am - Second Class.
- 1:00pm - Luncheon.
- 2:30pm - Return to the dojo.
- 3:00pm - Third Class.
- 4:30pm - Escort Sensei back to hotel.
- 7:00pm - Take Sensei to dinner.

June 7, 1987

Same as for the 5th with the exception that there will be no third class.

June 8, 1987

Fishing trip.

June 9, 1987

Open schedule.

June 10, 1987

Sensei returns to New England.

There are many things to take care of and having volunteers in the dojo is important because our member-

ship is still not very large. If anyone would like to join us for the fishing trip on Monday, June 8, 1987, please see Sensei. In addition, the two weekends preceeding the seminar are reserved for clean-up after the first practice. Please see your senior students and assistant instructors for further information.

NISEI WEEK FESTIVAL DEMONSTRATION

On August 16, 1987, the dojo members will be demonstrating Aikido and Iaido in the Little Tokyo Plaza Mall in the Yaohan Complex for the Nisei Week Festivities. All members who would like to participate, please see Sensei. Everyone can demonstrate and everyone should start practicing for the demonstration well in advance. This is one of the biggest events in the Little Tokyo community so we should try to do our very best and put on a good demonstration. We will also need volunteers to pass out our dojo flyers. The demonstration will be held on the second floor of the Yaohan Mall on Alameda Street between Third and Fourth Streets. Please tell your friends to come and see our Aikido demonstration.

FOR BEGINNERS AT THE BEGINNING

ENTERING THE DOJO

In a very famous dojo centuries ago, the teacher used to hide behind the entrance to his dojo with a bamboo stick. If students entered looking very unalert or sloppy, he would strike them very hard on the shins. We don't do this anymore, but it illustrates the proper mental state of the student when he comes to practice. I know from my personal experience that sometimes we just don't feel like coming to the dojo for training. Our excuses are many. "I'm too tired." "I've had a bad day." "It's too late" "I can't get to the dojo on time and Sensei will be upset." "I practiced hard yesterday." "I'll practice hard tomorrow." I have heard them all. I have used them myself. Many years ago when I was a student, my teacher said that he would give a prize to the student with the best attendance. They checked everyone's attendance record and found that I did not miss one day for over two years. My teacher said, "Oh, it's Furuya so no prize because he always comes anyway." Although it is only a small incident many years ago, I am very proud of it today. Your very hard practice today will become wonderful memories in later years.

Many times, you may not feel like practicing but of-

ten I hear students say that they did not want to come but after practice they feel so much better. When you practice, even if you are sick, you will always feel better. One of my teachers worried that he may die sick in bed rather than on the mats wearing his uniform and practicing Aikido. This is why he was such a great teacher. Please don't misunderstand me that you must kill yourselves. But, you must practice hard. Practice is never a question of "liking" or "disliking." Practice is a way of life.

When you come into the dojo, everyone wants to become friendly with the teacher. This is human nature. So students always want to stop and chitchat with the sensei. But what, do you think, is the best greeting for the teacher? The teacher is happiest when students rush in early, say hello quickly and rush down to the mats and begin warming up or grabbing a partner and begin practicing. This is the best greeting for the teacher. When students want to stop and talk or hold tea-parties in the dressing room, the teacher immediately knows that their minds are not on training.



JAPANESE WORDS USED IN THE DOJO

1. **DOJO** - School or literally "place for training in the Way." In ancient times, it referred to a sacred altar. Does not mean school in our modern sense.

2. **O-SENSEI** - Affectionate term for the Founder of Aikido, Master Ueshiba Morihei.

3. **DOSHU** - Literally means "Custodian or Master of the Way" and is the title of Master Ueshiba Kisshomaru, son of the Founder of Aikido and present day head of the Aikido World Foundation.

4. **WAKA-SENSEI** - Means "Young Master" and affectionately refers to Ueshiba Moriteru Sensei, grandson of the Founder, and current Chief Instructor of the Aikido Hombu Dojo in Japan.

5. **SENSEI** - Means "teacher" and is a general term for all instructors and all persons of respect.

NEW BROCHURE FOR THE DOJO

The dojo has a new brochure which also includes our training schedule.

Students should help to circulate these brochures in nice places where interested students may find them. All students should try to help build up our membership. Please use the brochures freely but also realize that they cost the dojo precious money. All students are welcome to them.

A FEW WORDS FROM SENSEI

I have just finished the major portion of this newsletter on a special day, April 26th. We had a hard practice, Fukushima Sensei conducted a beautiful service for O-Sensei, we had a nice luncheon at the Thousand Cranes Restaurant and we conducted a very good demonstration for the Cherry Blossom Festival at the Japanese Village Plaza. Today was a busy day for me despite a very bad cold I have been nursing for the last several days. Also, I am thirty-nine years and one day old today. I realize that more than two-thirds of my life has been on the mat. Now I know why I am always so tired.

Although I have come a long way in Aikido because I have wonderful students and a beautiful dojo, my accomplishments are still quite humble. I still have a long way to go. Reflecting on my life in Aikido, I can honestly say that I have experienced many bad things as well as many wonderful things, but that is not the purpose of practicing Aikido. If I were to give any advice at all in consideration of my many years in Aikido, I can only say to my students that the most important thing is to continue practicing despite all obstacles and never get discouraged. There is much discouragement in Aikido but we cannot allow it to defeat us. If we lose to our own frustration we have lost to everything in the world. I believe that a man of great strength is not a man of great ability but

a man of great faith. We often want Aikido to somehow confirm our own beliefs but that is selfish. We should be open to learn what there is to learn. Students often want praise for their good points little realizing that the responsibility of a competent teacher is to attack the weak points. Students often believe that somehow Aikido is the means to achieve their personal goals. But isn't it true that Aikido must prepare us for the impossible situations and the unanswerable questions?

In Japanese, the character for "patience" is written with a character meaning "mind" with a character for "sword" perched above it. "Patience" refers to our lives. We live day to day with a very sharp sword perched above our heads ready to fall at any second. Some people forget about it and live their lives in ignorance until one day they are taken by surprise. Some people continually worry about it until they wear themselves out. Some people try to take the sword away and ultimately fail. There is nothing we can do about that sword but somehow we must continue to live our lives. The strength needed to continue living despite the sword hanging above our heads comes from Aikido and our daily practice.

During O-Sensei's Memorial Service, I prayed for the good health and success of all my students.

TECHNICAL CORNER - IKKYO

Ikkyo means "first teaching" and is one of the most basic and most important techniques in Aikido training. This technique is also called ikkajo (first item or technique) or ude-osae (arm pin). Ikkyo is the first technique of six immobilization holds known as katame-waza (pinning techniques). The others are nikyo, sankyo, yonkyo, gokyo and rokkyo. Katame-waza is differentiated from nage-waza (throwing techniques), such as irimi-nage, and nage-katame waza (throwing and pinning techniques) such as kotegaeshi and shihonage.

SUWARI-WAZA SHOMENUCHI IKKYO (IRIMI AND TENKAN)

Sitting technique using ikkyo against a direct frontal or shomen-uchi attack (Illustration 1). The illustration shows irimi and tenkan methods. This is one of the first techniques a beginning student learns. It is difficult for the student to move on his knees at first because he is usually unaccustomed to shikko or knee walking. Everyone has this problem so the beginning student must be patient and practice a little at a time until he can move comfortably and quickly

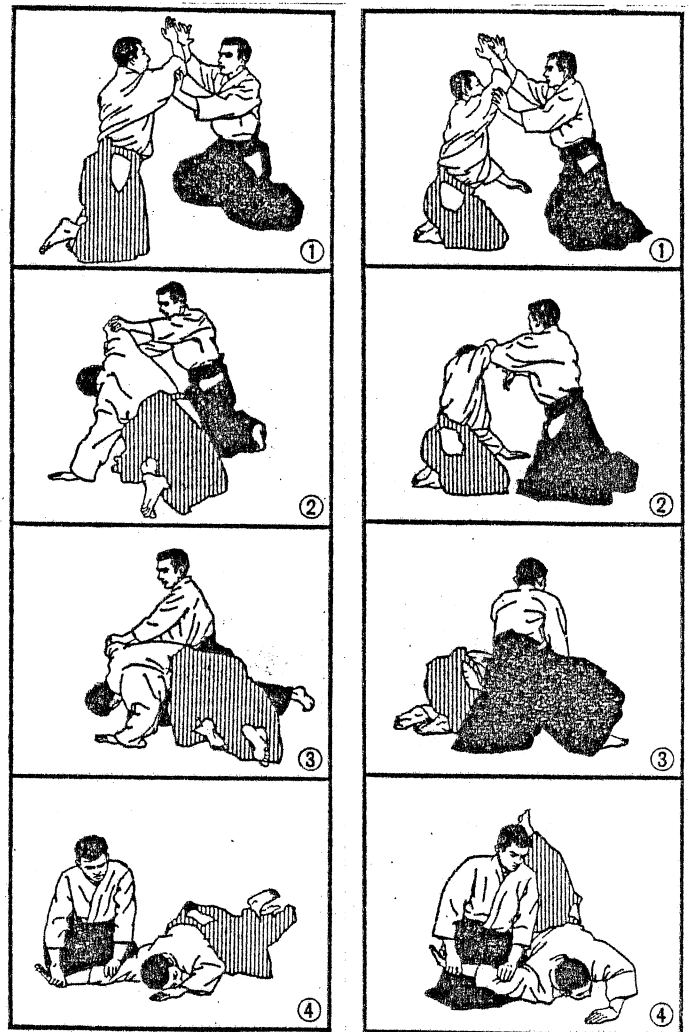


Illustration 1

without any problem. Suwari-waza is a very important method of training emphasized by the Founder because it develops strong legs and hip movement and also cultivates a strong center and sense of balance. Every student should practice this technique often.

It is important to move effectively on one's knees. At the same time, the arms should be well extended and move in a big circle. Do not try to put a great amount of strength in the arms but coordinate the movement of the arms with the movement of the entire body. When pinning the opponent at the end of the technique, do not use strength to unnecessarily inflict pain but press down with the entire body and immobilize your opponent with the power of your "ki." At the beginning, the ikkyo technique should be executed with large, expansive movement. As you become more skillful and can move more quickly, permit your partner to strike you harder and faster. Although

the circle of your movement may become smaller, you must always maintain your balance and posture. Your purpose is not to overcome your partner with your technique but to blend with his movement and lead his attack to the ground.

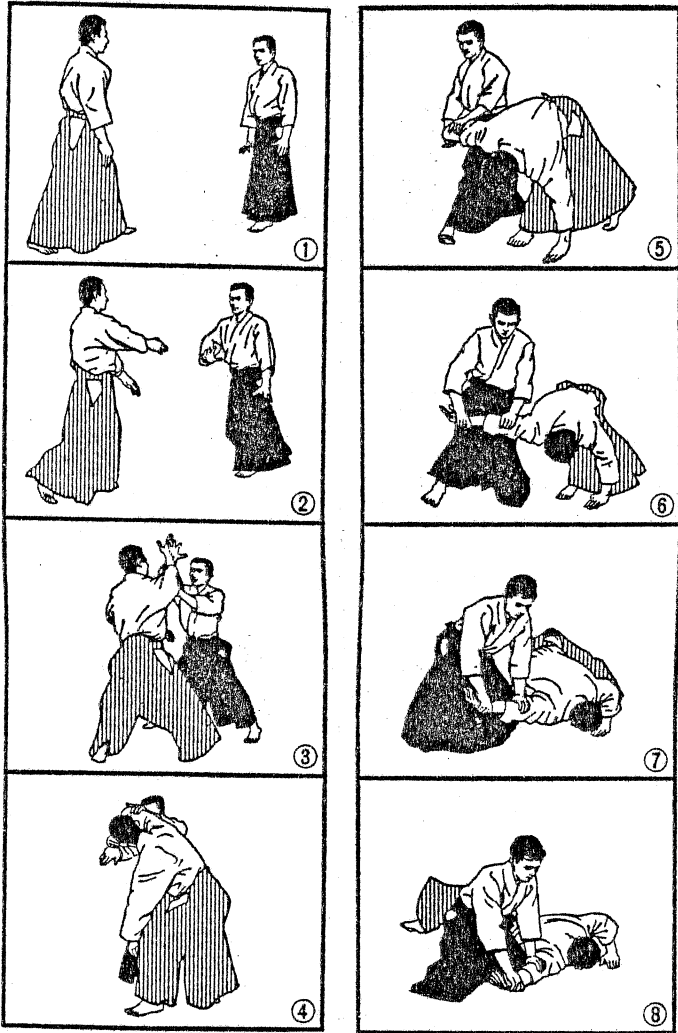


Illustration 2

TACHI-WAZA SHOMENUCHI IKKYO - IRIMI

Shomenuchi Ikkyo-irimi method from a standing position (Illustration 2). It is important at the beginning not to try to grab the attacking hand but to utilize your hand-blade, projecting your energy strongly towards your opponent and blending well with his attack. Do not over-extend your arms and lose your balance and posture. Try to feel the technique in your hips and legs rather than in the strength of your arms. If you move well and catch your opponent's timing at the beginning, you can easily bring your opponent to the ground.

TACHI-WAZA SHOMENUCHI IKKYO - TENKAN

Shomenuchi Ikkyo-tenkan method from a standing position (Illustration 3). Project your arms strongly towards your opponent and especially beware that the arm catching his elbow does not collapse but moves forward towards the opponent's face. This offsets his balance and allows you to move deeply behind him. The arms move in a big circle and must be well coordinated with the movement of your feet.

KATATETORI AIHAMMI IKKYO - IRIMI AND TENKAN

One hand grab (right on right or left on left) Ikkyo with irimi and tenkan methods (Illustration 4). Be sure to step to the opponent's blind side as you swing his arm towards his face. It is important not to collapse your arms but keep them well extended as you

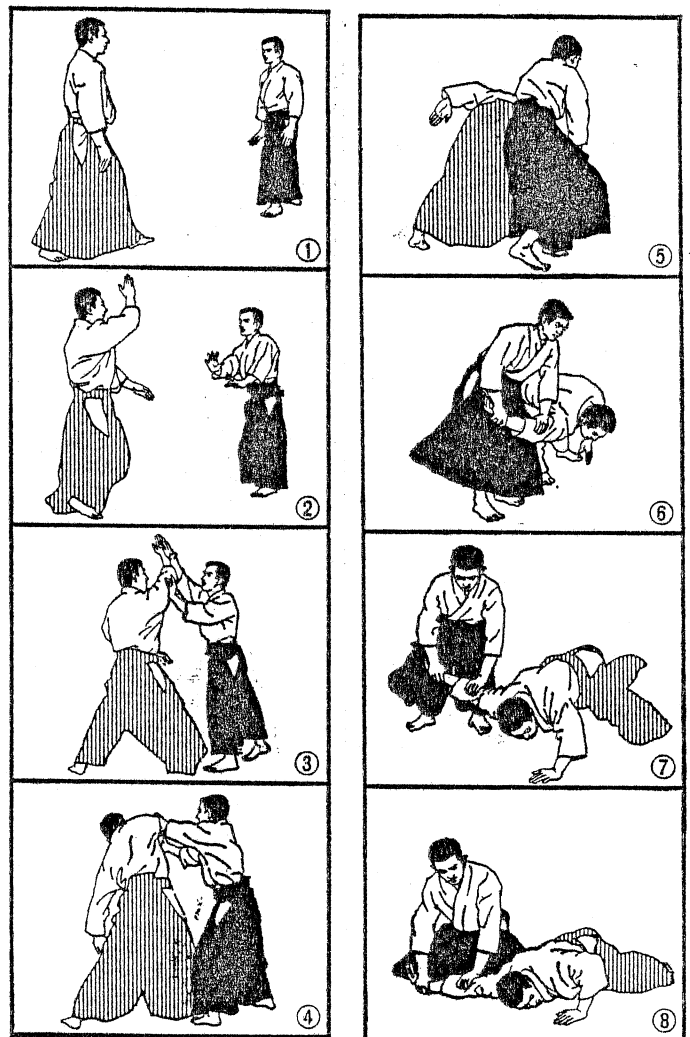


Illustration 3

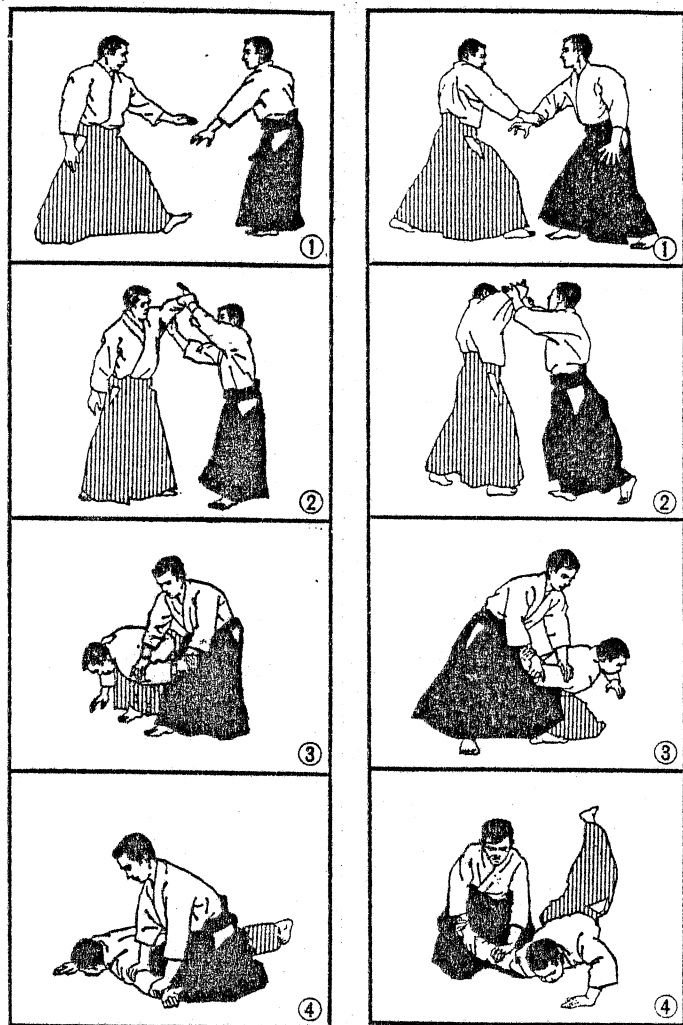


Illustration 4

**USHIRO KATATETORI KUBI-SHIME
 IKKYO - IRIMI**

Attack from behind choking with one hand and grabbing the wrist with the other (Illustration 6). As you raise your hands to move behind your opponent, bring them up in front of yourself and not from your sides. Move behind your opponent deeply. Bring your opponent's hand down as low as possible to the ground before you take the ikkyo hold on his wrist and elbow. Intermediate to advanced students starting from san-kyu or the third grade should practice katame-waza, especially ikkyo, from all ushiro attacks.

lead your opponent to the ground. Make the circle of your movement big. If you use excessive force against your opponent by trying to pull his arm downwards, it will be easy for him to counter and resist you.

KATATORI IKKYO - IRIMI

Shoulder or lapel grab (Illustration 5). Katatori Ikkyo technique is excellent to develop the movement and power of your hips within the technique. You must draw your hips back strongly as you step back to offset his balance. Also, your hips or your center of mass must be very low. It is important not to try to release his grip but press it into your shoulder and move with your whole body. Be sure you keep your opponent's elbow well bent as you move in.



Illustration 5

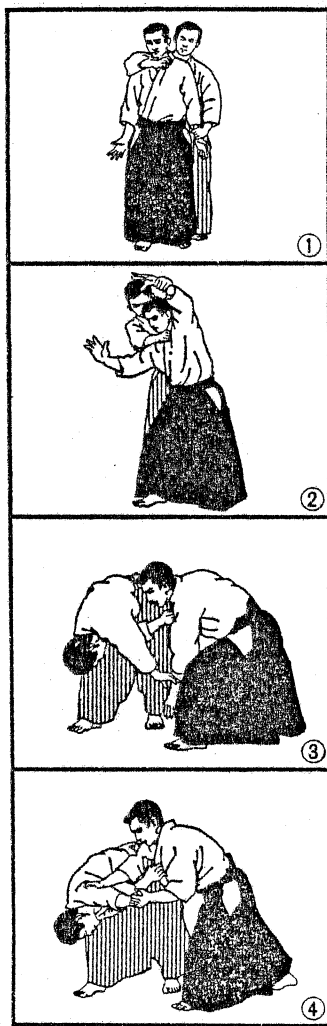


Illustration 6

MUNETSUKI IKKYO - IRIMI

Punch or thrust to the mid-section or stomach (Illustration 7). This involves the tenshin movement, stepping back at an angle to avoid the punch and catching his hand. You should move back quickly and never position yourself in the line of attack. Do not angle your movement so you are moving back into your opponent's range of attack. As you grasp his attacking hand, pull it forward slightly to bring him a little more off balance before you swing it back towards his face. At the beginning, try to create a large circular movement. As you advance, the circle of movement may become smaller. As you swing the attacking hand towards your opponent's face, make sure his elbow bends well. Especially in mu-

netsuki ikkyo, always maintain proper distancing to catch his timing. If you stand too close or too far away from your opponent, you may get caught off guard or he may change his mode of attack. Let him punch you and you will always be ready to move. If you are afraid of his attack, you will only make yourself awkward and slow. Stay calm and watch his every movement clearly.

TRAINING TIPS

Develop proper technique and movement and you will find that your technique is also becoming stronger as well. Some students emphasize strength and

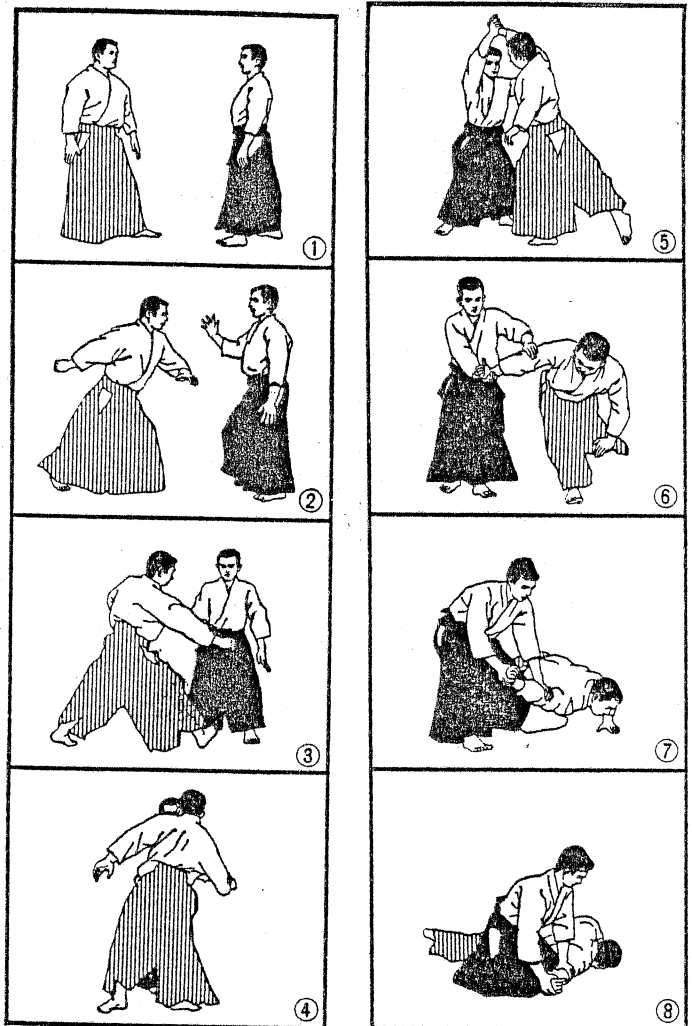


Illustration 7

later have problems moving effectively because they do not understand the technique. If the student learns the proper technique and the proper method of ukemi, the training becomes unlimited in scope and depth. Please do not forget this.

Also, senior students must teach the beginners how to take proper ukemi for each technique. This is the best way to avoid unnecessary injuries. Every technique has its own technique for ukemi. You must study this carefully. Also, training is wasted if the attack is not strong and accurate. You can make a strong attack without injuring your partner. If your partner is awake you will never be able to touch him.

The meaning of Aikido is hidden inside the technique. As you practice, you must continually try to find it out. Proper training is the best way to understand the essence of Aikido and the message of the Founder.

