

History

O-Sensei Morihei Ueshiba

The Aikido Kaisei (founder), Morihei Ueshiba, was born in 1883 in Tanabe, a coastal town in southern Japan. From the time of his youth, he studied various martial arts, eventually including sumo, swordsmanship, spear technique, staff technique, and various styles of jiu-jitsu, particularly the Yagyu and Daito styles.

From youth, Ueshiba also appears to have been a deeply sensitive and spiritual person. Eventually influenced by the charismatic spiritual leader and artist Onisaburo Deguchi, he came to view his martial training as a means of personal purification and spiritual training.

The time of O-Sensei's life saw Japan involved in some of the most violent conflicts of the 20th century, culminating in the Pacific war. However, it was during this time that he founded Aikido and declared it to be a way of joining the peoples of the world together in peace. In this way, Aikido is truly Budo - a martial Way - rather than simply a bujutsu (martial technique) or bugei (martial art). When martial training is undertaken not simply as a means to conquer others, but as a means to refine and perfect the self, this can be said to be Budo. The famous motto of O-Sensei, "Masakatsu Agatsu," contains the essence of the spirit of Aikido: "true victory is victory over the self."

The Kaisei's incredible technical expertise and charisma brought him tremendous support from high-ranking military officers, government personnel, and the Imperial family during his life. Following his death in 1969, he was posthumously awarded an Imperial medal for his unique contributions. However, recognitions and honors aside, it was the universality of his insights, and his vision of the martial Way being open to all sincere persons internationally, which have led to the phenomenal growth of Aikido. The noblest philosophies and intentions of the samurai have become a part of world culture, and give spiritual sustenance to millions of persons of all cultures; this is largely due to the groundbreaking influence of Morihei Ueshiba.

Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba

Kisshomaru Ueshiba, Nidai Doshu (the second "master of the Way" of Aikido), son of Morihei Ueshiba, was born in 1922. From early youth, he trained under the guidance of his father. During the confusion of the wartime period, when allied fire-bombings reduced much of Tokyo to ruins, it was he who remained in the city and preserved the original dojo building. Following the war, as Aikido entered its golden age and began to attract public attention, he was instrumental in leading and organizing what would become the Zaidan Hojin Aikikai - the government-recognized, not-for-profit organization that exists today as the center of world Aikido. Upon the death of O-Sensei in 1969, Kisshomaru Ueshiba was named the second Doshu of Aikido.

From that time on, Doshu quietly went about the business of spreading Aikido internationally. The tremendous expansion of the art, and the now millions of practitioners, can largely be called

his creation. It was he who coordinated the sending of Japanese Shihan overseas, thereby founding and developing the seeds of large organizations in other nations. He also maintained the strong support of government officials and businessmen in Japan, and built new support of this kind internationally. His many publications of Aikido technique and philosophy have further spread Aikido's influence. The high educational and professional standards of Aikido, and the respect it has gained, are a result of these efforts.

In 1999 Kisshomaru Ueshiba died in Tokyo, having successfully transformed the vision of his father into an international movement.

Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba

Moriteru Ueshiba, son of Kisshomaru Ueshiba, was named the Sandai (third) Doshu shortly after his father's death; before that time, he had served as the Aikikai Hombu Dojo-cho (headquarters dojo director). Now taking over the leadership of the Aikikai organization, Doshu brings to his position an already full life of training and instruction. The Aikido world has high expectations that, under his leadership, Aikido will continue to grow and expand in fulfillment of O-Sensei's dream. In keeping with the *iemoto* system, he is expected to be succeeded as Doshu by his son Mitsuteru Ueshiba.

Fumio Toyoda Shihan

Fumio Toyoda Shihan was uchideshi under the late Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba, and trained also under Koichi Tohei Sensei, the former Chief Instructor at Hombu Dojo. As a professional instructor at Aikido World Headquarters, Toyoda Shihan had the opportunity to train and travel across Japan, eventually establishing himself in the United States. Committed to spreading the direct lineage of Ueshiba Aikido, Toyoda Shihan was actively engaged in developing the next generation of shihan-level instructors through his uchideshi training program, national instructor seminars, and other events. Quality, professional Aikido instruction is the key to the future survival and growth of Aikido; this effort became the hallmark of Toyoda Shihan's organizational activities.

On July 4th, 2001 Toyoda Shihan succumbed to a bacterial infection, dying suddenly at the age of 53. His posthumous Buddhist name is "Tenzan Gensho Rokoji."

"Ikkyoku shūchū, Takyoku bunsan" (Concentrate on a single point, spread out to many points.)

This phrase was Toyoda Shihan's personal motto.