

For the New Student

In Budo, if you are always successful, you have no reason to continue your study. So, I think that, in Budo, you have to fail sometimes and to *know* that you fail. The next time, you have a new chance to do things better. In competition, you don't have that new chance; when you lose, you have to wait for another championship. But, in Budo training – Aikido training –, there is no competition. You always have a new chance. In Aikido, we always want to make the ideal movement. Somebody comes with a very good, earnest attack, and you try to make the *ideal* movement. Of course, it doesn't work. So you do it again – again trying to make the ideal movement. You fail again. In Aikido, we want to make the most beautiful technique, and we fail. Still, the purpose is to make the most perfect technique. That's what we have to remember – but we forget it very easily. There was a painter named Hans Menling who never signed his paintings. He just wrote, "It's my best." ... I think that Aikido is the same: you try to do your best – not *the best*, of course, but *your best*.

Christian Tissier, interview in Aikido Today Magazine, vol. 9, number 5.

Welcome to the Triangle Aikido Dojo. The *dojo's* Japanese name is *Choshinkan*, which means **transcending mind hall**. Our dojo was begun under the guidance of *Shihan* F. Toyoda, founder of the Aikido Association of America. Toyoda *sensei* passed away on July 4, 2001, but we continue to honor his spirit and dedication to *Aikido*. Although we are no longer affiliated with the AAA, all of our instructor ranks are recognized by the Aikikai Foundation, the organization started by the founder of *Aikido*.

As a new member, you will find that there is much to learn: physical skills, Japanese vocabulary, and a different way of approaching conflict. Often, new members are confused and frustrated; this manual is intended to help you with that confusion. In it you will find a basic Japanese vocabulary, some information about *dojo* etiquette and about our test requirements and procedures. If you find that, after reading it, you still have questions, please feel free to talk to me, or any of our ranking students. (In our *dojo*, a 'ranking' student wears a blue, brown or black belt.) We may not have all the answers, but we have a sincere desire to help you as you learn *Aikido*.

Our philosophy in the *Choshinkan dojo* is that learning *Aikido*, while it requires a certain amount of discipline and effort, should be fun. We try to maintain a healthy balance between an easy and relaxed attitude on the mats, and the discipline and order that is necessary for successful training.

As a student, you have several responsibilities to yourself and the *dojo*: a committed attitude to training, helping other students with chores in the *dojo*, and regular attendance are a few of them. If we all apply ourselves to the study of the art of *Aikido*, then the members of the *dojo* will find it easier to make progress in their training, and the *dojo* will prosper.

Once again, please feel free to ask questions and express any concerns that you may have; without good communication, the *dojo* will not be able to meet the needs of all of the members.

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