



A brief history of Tomiki Aikido

The principles of Aikido are based on moving to avoid an attack and then restraining the assailant. The attacker's power is used against him and he is controlled to the exact degree required to neutralise the attack without inflicting undue harm. Aikido techniques are in the main based on twisting or turning the joints of the arm and throwing an opponent using the impetus of his attack. Some Judo type throws and open-handed strikes are also employed.



Sokaku Takeda taught Morihei Ueshiba Daiti Ryu Aikijujitsu

Aikido was developed in Japan by Morihei Ueshiba (1883 - 1969) in about 1925 after many years of research, practice and development. Many of the techniques that are found in Aikido date back more than 700 years to the Genji and Heike periods. Ueshiba developed Aikido from studies in Jujutsu at the Kito Daito and Shinkage schools, and pursued religious studies such as Zen Buddhism and integrated these into practice. Aikido therefore followed a similar development to Judo, Karate and Kendo all being derived from earlier arts.



Morihei Ueshiba



The training of traditional Aikido includes four main elements. Taiiku or body relationship. The development of physique that is produced through the practice of technique. Kiiiku or spiritual relations, to cultivate the power of the inner spirit. Toku iku, moral relation to keep the mind pure and clear, Chi iku, wisdom relationship the development of the mind through the practice of harmony. Aikido was designed so that its meaning becomes apparent through practice by the individual.



Morihei Ueshiba and Kenji Tomiki

One of Ueshiba's most promising pupils Kenji Tomiki (1900 - 1979) had been a keen Judo man from an early age. In 1922 he founded the Waseda University judo club and studied under a Jigoro Kano. By 1928 Tomiki had achieved 5th Dan in Judo under Kano. In 1926 pursuing his interest in physical education he went to train under Ueshiba. As the Head of Physical Education Tomiki was able to raise the profile of his Aikido.



Jigoro Kano founder of modern Judo

From 1936 till the end of the second world war he lived in Manchuria where he taught aikibudo (an early name for aikido) to the Kanton army and the Imperial Household Agency. In 1938 he became an assistant professor at Kenkoku University in Manchukuo. He went on to be awarded the first 8th Dan in aikido (1940) and an 8th Dan in judo (1978). After returning from a three-year internment by the Soviet Union, he taught both judo and aikido for many years at Waseda University. It was there that he formulated and expanded his theories concerning both kata based training methods and a particular form of free-style fighting which would put him at odds with much, but not all, of the aikido world.



Tomiki's plan to convert aikido into a sport led to a schism with the founder Morihei Ueshiba and the Aikikai around this time. Tomiki was urged by the Aikikai to adopt a different name for his art other than "aikido" if he intended to introduce a system of competition. Convinced of the need to modernize aikido, he stood his ground and persisted in his efforts to evolve a viable form of competition.

In 1952 he began to teach a "Practical Judo Exercise" at Waseda as part of the PE curriculum. In 1960 it changed its name Aikido and was taught at the Police Academy. During 1974 the all Japan Aikido Association was formed.



Kenji Tomiki founder of Sport Aikido



Kenji Tomiki and Hideo Ohba

Tomiki is perhaps best known in the judo world for his influence in the developing of Kodokan Goshin Jutsu kata. His work *Judo*, published in 1956, is considered a classic. The aikido appendix to the book is thought to be the earliest English language text on aikido.

In 1967, Tomiki opened his Shodokan Dojo, which he used as a testing ground for his theories on aikido and competition. In 1970, Tomiki retired from Waseda University, in the same year he presided over the first All-Japan Student Aikido Tournament. The basic rules for aikido tournaments had been worked out by this time in what would become an ongoing experiment to develop a viable form of



competitive aikido.

In 1974, he founded the Japan Aikido Association (JAA) from an earlier organization of the same name to promote his theories.

Tomiki set up a new dojo in Osaka on March 28, 1976 with the support of Masaharu Uchiyama. This dojo was intended to function as the headquarters of the Japan Aikido Association and Tomiki served as its first director. Professor Tomiki died on December 24, 1979 leaving his closest disciple, Hideo Ohba as head of the Japan Aikido Association (JAA).



Hideo Ohba

Hideo Ohba (9th Dan Aikido, 6th Dan Judo, 4th Dan Kendo, 3rd Dan Naginatado) resigned his post as a judo and police compliance and arrest tactics (taiho jutsu) instructor for the Akita Police in 1959. This resignation was prompted by a request from Kenji Tomiki, to join him in Tokyo at the prestigious Waseda University. In 1977 Ohba retired from Waseda University but that did not hamper his commitment to teaching Tomiki Aikido. Upon retirement he took a post at Kokushinkan University and then in 1980 he became an instructor at the National Police Academy. When Ohba Sensei joined Kenji Tomiki in 1959 at Waseda, the formation of the new 'Competitive Aikido' was still in its early stages. Recruiting Ohba to Waseda enabled Tomiki to gain the support of an accomplished budo practitioner with whom he had worked closely in Manchuria. Ohba had been his closest disciple, confidant and faithful friend. This combination of Tomiki's questing intellectual vision, coupled with Ohba's breadth of budo experience, teaching and performance skills, was to prove an enduring partnership of great benefit to the character of Tomiki's 'Competitive Aikido'. Such was Loi Lee's and Lesley Hepden's enthusiasm for his teaching, upon their respective returns to the UK, that they easily convinced their aikido friends that Ohba Sensei should be invited to the UK to teach. Through the good offices of Takeshi Inoue, this was finally achieved in March 1976.

He continued to pursue his passion to teach and communicate aikido until he finally retired to his hometown in 1985, his spirit undimmed. Ohba Sensei finally died peacefully attended by his wife in February 1986.

In 1959 Senta Yamada (6th Dan Aikido, 6th Dan Judo) (1924 - 2010) arrived in the UK to take up an appointment as resident judo instructor at the London Judo Society. Yamada had a similar grounding in judo and aikido as Tomiki. First learning judo under the direction of its founder Jigoro Kano, then at Kano's suggestion

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enrolling as an uchi deshi in Morihei Ueshiba's own dojo, in Wakayama-ken, to learn aikido. Later Yamada was to meet and study with Kenji Tomiki who impressed him with his vision of aikido closely matching the principles and practice of judo, a vision of aikido Yamada was to bring with him to the UK.

Tomiki Aikido synthesises the underlying foundations laid down by Morihei Ueshiba, taking techniques from the traditional arts, but with the additional advantages of improved teaching methods, in the form of Kata, making it more accessible to European enthusiasts. Furthermore there was the opportunity to test skill during competitions and through club based randori practice. This was the first introduction of Tomiki Aikido into the UK.



Senta Yamada

Tomiki Aikido has continued to grow, in Japan under the directions of Ohba San and then Nariyama San (9th Dan), Shishida San (9th Dan) Tadayuki Satoh (6th Dan) and others and is now practised throughout the world. Modern Aikido is no longer "old man's Judo": or as a synthesis or mix of many martial arts, it is a modern sport built around techniques unique to itself.

The British Aikido Association is continuing this heritage by approaching Aikido with openness and a broad understanding of Aikido and its continued development.

December 2015