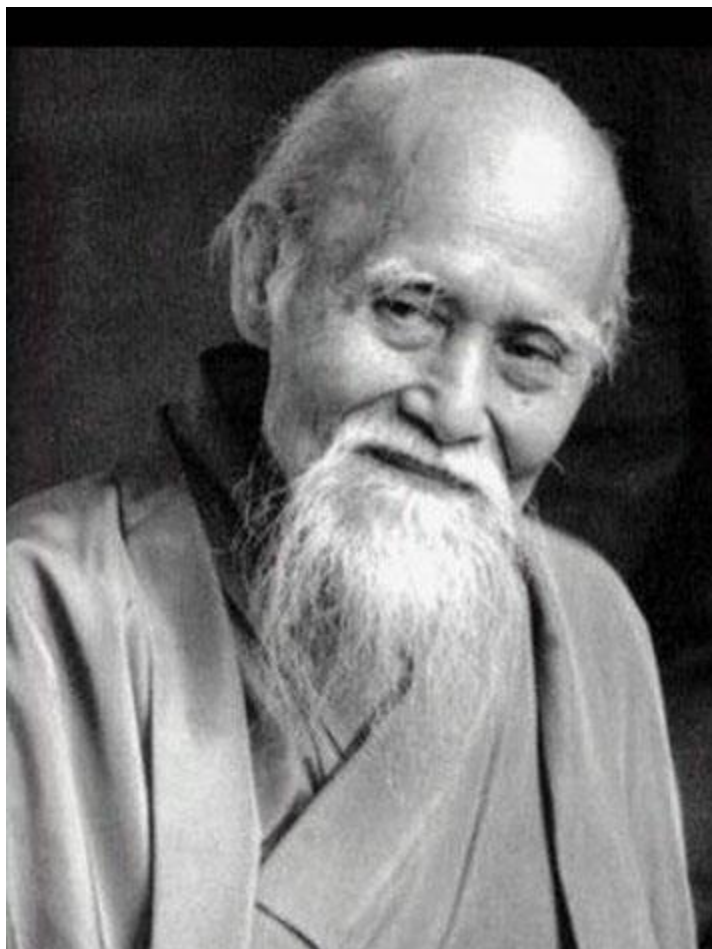


Featured Teacher, September 2018



Morihei Ueshiba

Aikido Founder

As a young man I studied a number of traditional Japanese martial arts, including Gotō-ha Yagyū-ryu under Masakatsu Nakai and Kitō-ryū (a precursor to modern Judo) under Takisaburo Tobarī. I was called into military service in 1903 and served during the Russo-Japanese war where I acquired skill in bayonet fighting. After leaving the military, I studied Kodokan Judo with Kiyochi Takagi. In 1915 I met Takeda Sōkaku, master of the Daito-Ryu school of Aiki-Jujutsu and began study with him. I received a teaching license from him in 1922. In 1919 I met Onisaburo Deguchi, the leader of the Omoto-Kyo Shinto sect. His spiritual teachings profoundly influenced me, and with his encouragement I made Budo my life's work. In 1923 I opened my first dojo and named the art Aiki Bujutsu.

In 1925 a naval officer challenged me to a Kendo match. I consented but remained unarmed. The officer, a Kendo teacher, was offended at this and lashed out furiously. I escaped his repeated strikes and thrusts until, exhausted, the officer finally conceded defeat. Afterwards I retreated to my garden where *I felt the universe suddenly quake, and that a golden spirit sprang up from the ground, veiled my body, and changed my body into a golden one. At the same time my body became light. I was able to understand the whispering of the birds, and was clearly aware of the mind of God, the creator of the*

universe. At that moment I was enlightened: the source of budō is God's love – the spirit of loving protection for all beings ... Budō is not the felling of an opponent by force; nor is it a tool to lead the world to destruction with arms. True Budō is to accept the spirit of the universe, keep the peace of the world, correctly produce, protect and cultivate all beings in nature.

In 1926 I moved to Tokyo where I was given the opportunity to teach politicians, high-ranking military personnel, and members of the Imperial household. In the Shinjuku District, I built a training hall which eventually became Aikido Hombu Dojo.

I left Tokyo in 1942, during the worst fighting of World War II, and moved to a small farm that I had acquired in Iwama. It was there that I had a vision that *The Way of the Warrior has been misunderstood. It is not a means to kill and destroy others. Those who seek to compete and better one another are making a terrible mistake. To smash, injure, or destroy is the worst thing a human being can do. The real Way of a Warrior is to prevent such slaughter – it is the Art of Peace, the power of love.* In Iwama I founded the Aiki Shuren Dojo and the Aiki Shrine, devoted to the "Great Spirit of Aiki", and formally designated this teaching as Aikido, the Way of Harmony.

My Most Memorable Aikido Experience

Is happening everywhere, now...