

## **The Sacred Geometry of Takemusu Aiki**

Daniel M. Palacios

Dojo: *Aikido Northwest* (Portland, Oregon)

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Takemusu Aiki means “*the life-generating force capable of unlimited transformations,*” and it is one of the spiritual pillars of Aikido. To access Takemusu Aiki, one must devote many hours of practice, and do so with keen awareness and curiosity. In this way, in the execution of regular partnered Aikido techniques, a dynamic flow emerges—one of limitless opportunities, of timeless joy, of connection with the life force. I consider Takemusu Aiki a spiritual concept in Aikido because its emergence from sincere and devoted practice sets it apart from other arts where the goal is to perfect a certain form. In the Takemusu Aiki flow, new forms continuously and spontaneously manifest themselves. The ability to access Takemusu Aiki is one way to gauge one’s progress toward mastery in Aikido beyond proficiency in the basic forms. To me, in the Takemusu Aiki state one transcends the ordinary plane of existence.

For some time, I have been interested in the mystery of the emergence of Takemusu Aiki from the regular practice of Aikido techniques. How could someone not be intrigued by the joy of limitless, instantaneous creation? It has been said that Aikido is a form of moving meditation, and while I do not disagree, I think the partner cooperation required by the practice adds another dimension. This added dimension is the polarity or duality implicit in every uke-nage interaction. It has also been said that Aikido is a way of harmonizing with life energy. The setup is the uke-nage duality, which through various forms executed by uke and responded to by nage, momentarily resolves/dissolves into oneness before the process starts all over again. While it may be easy to overlook this subtle and momentary transformation of duality into oneness for the more external and showy aspects of the physical practice, it is nothing short of alchemical and deeply satisfying. The value of Aikido as a practice in conflict resolution is well known and I will not dwell on that here. My interest is in how the techniques

of Aikido, which are deeply rooted in traditional Japanese martial arts, result in the manifestation of universal principles available to humans in many cultures for millennia.

This exploration begins with the square, the triangle, and the circle. In his lectures, O-Sensei would often draw these forms as a way to create a simple visual metaphor for conveying the key concepts inherent in Aikido. The triangle symbolizes uke's attack, the onset of movement; the circle represents the nage's continuous blending with the attack through spiral movements; and the square represents the resolution of the technique, momentarily static, solid, stable. These symbols were O-Sensei's two-dimensional roadmap, his attempt to express more esoteric concepts like Takemusu Aiki to his students, especially at the time.

Yet, these basic forms and their symbolism are universal. I think that in his mystical creation of Aikido, O-Sensei was accessing universal principles that we know today as "sacred geometry." Based on the square, the triangle, and the circle, recurring geometric forms are found in the pictorial representations, art, and architecture of every ancient culture. Most famously, Greek philosopher Plato theorized that the classical elements of the world were made of five solids, the cube, the octahedron, the tetrahedron, the icosahedron, and the dodecahedron—three-dimensional representations of the basic two-dimensional shapes (triangles, squares, pentagons). The five Platonic Solids represent the five basic elements: earth, air, fire, water, and the universe, respectively. Correspondingly, they are also ascribed to five spiritual values: reconnection of energy to nature; cultivation of acceptance and compassion; perpetuation of balance and stability; creative thought and expression; and mystery and meditation. Regarding the dodecahedron, Plato stated that it could be "used for arranging the constellations on the whole heaven" in reference to the connection between the twelve faces of the dodecahedron and the twelve signs of the zodiac.

It is interesting that the sphere is not one of the Platonic Solids, although the icosahedron is the one closest. Also, the progression of regular polygons that form the Platonic Solids that is formed by adding a corner eventually results in an infinite polygon, that is, a circle. O-Sensei's teachings were full of references to the heaven, the universe, and the classical elements. But he also spoke of the most powerful force in the universe: LOVE! Love is often

represented by a circle or by the symbol of infinity, perhaps because having no beginning and no end, it cannot be captured by a single regular polygon or Platonic Solid.

Modern science to the rescue: the torus (a donut-like shape) is the form that energy flowing between two polarities takes. While not necessarily visible to the human eye, the torus is found in everything from atoms to galaxies, including earth's magnetic field. Energy flows through the outer and inner surfaces of the torus in an endless spiraling pattern. The energy fields created by the human heart, the human brain, and the human aura are all toroidal in shape.

This fractal existence of the solids across scale is the reason that O-Sensei said that “the universe and the human body are the same thing.” In O-Sensei's inspired creation of Aikido, the ultimate manifestation is that which emanates from the HEART, because ultimately his message was the promotion of peace and human unity. In his moment of enlightenment, O-Sensei realized that the source of budō is God's love – the spirit of loving protection for all beings. Through the forms of Aikido and in the state of Takemusu Aiki, we can access this love and dissolve duality. In Aikido, O-Sensei left us the tools for the ascension of humanity to a higher realm. Domo 🙏.