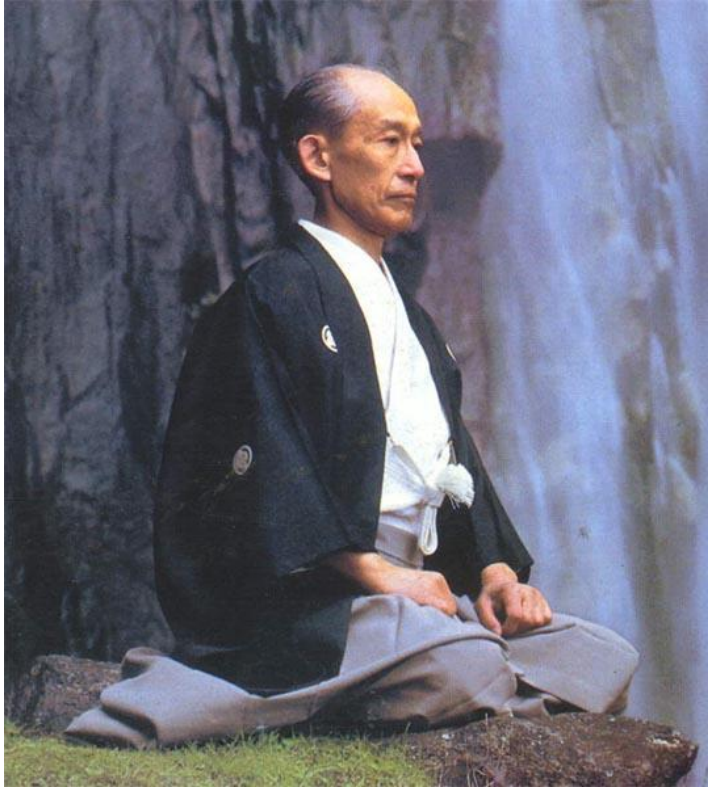


## Featured Teacher, September 2019



### **Kisshomaru Ueshiba**

Aikido, Nidai Doshu

I was born in 1921 as the fourth child of the founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba, and his wife Hatsu Ueshiba. When I was six years old the family moved from Kyoto Prefecture to Tokyo, where my father rented a house and established an 18-tatami training space. At that time, I did not practice regularly, but was informally taught some basic techniques such as Ikkyo and Nikyo. I was to know the suffering and horrors of war through most of my childhood, beginning with the invasion of Manchuria in 1930 until the end of World War II in 1945.

In 1931, thanks to the patronage of dignitaries and supporters, particularly that of Takeshita Isamu, Admiral of the Imperial Navy, my father established the Kobukan (Imperial Warrior Hall), an 80-tatami dojo in Wakamatsu-cho, dedicated to full time practice of aikido. The building also served as the family residence. It is in this dojo, around 1936, that I formally started practicing aikido. I also studied kendo, as well as Kashima Shinto-ryu kenjutsu, and my ability to wield the sword prompted my father to use me as uketachi during the frequent demonstrations

that he gave in front of the military and political elite of the country. Much of the instruction in weapons that I received from this period onwards came from my father.

On April 30, 1940, the organization of the Kobukan dojo was restructured to become the Zaidan Hojin Kobukai, a non-profit foundation. At that time, I was a student at Waseda University, but also in charge of the administrative affairs of the dojo. Once the Kobukai was established, my father retired to his Iwama dojo and left me to manage the Tokyo headquarters. By 1945, the American bombings had destroyed the majority of the houses in the Wakamatsu-cho area. There were several occasions where I fought to extinguish fires caused by the raids. The dojo survived, but with significant damage to the roof. Aikido practice had ceased and the Kobukan served primarily as a shelter for about 30 families that lost their homes to the bombings. For a time, the Kobukan was used as a dance hall for occupation forces. It required a great deal of patience on my part to deal with the damage and the looting. The last of the refugees did not leave until 1955. Three years after the war ended, when aikido classes resumed at the Kobukan, it became my purpose that aikido, both in its technical curriculum and spiritual message, should serve as a bridge to bring people of all nations together. When my father died on April 26, 1969, I became the second Doshu of Aikido.

## My Most Memorable Aikido Experience

In 1967, the old wooden dojo, now called the “Aikido Hombu Dojo of the Aikikai Foundation”, was destroyed to make way for the Ueshiba family home, and the new dojo was built on the adjacent parcel. Upon the completion of construction in January of 1968, my father, with a voice full of emotion, said, “You did well”.

### **Publications by Kisshomaru Ueshiba:**

*A Life in Aikido: The Biography of Founder Morihei Ueshiba (2008)*

*The Art of Aikido: Principles and Essential Techniques (2004)*

*Best Aikido: The Fundamentals (2002)]*

*The Spirit of Aikido (1987)*

*Aikido (1985)*

### **Resources for this “Spotlight” article:**

- <https://www.guillaumeerard.com/aikido/articles-aikido/biography-of-kisshomaru-ueshiba-second-doshu-of-aikido/#ref30>
- <https://www.guillaumeerard.com/aikido/articles-aikido/history-of-the-aikikai-hombu-dojo/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kisshomaru\\_Ueshiba#targetText=Kisshomaru%20Ueshiba%20\(%E6%A4%8D%E8%8A%9D%20%E5%90%89%E7%A5%A5%E4%B8%B8,aikido%20after%20his%20father's%20death.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kisshomaru_Ueshiba#targetText=Kisshomaru%20Ueshiba%20(%E6%A4%8D%E8%8A%9D%20%E5%90%89%E7%A5%A5%E4%B8%B8,aikido%20after%20his%20father's%20death.)