

## The Art of Aikido

Martial Arts is one of the contributions of Asia to the world. Who can forget Bruce Lee and the fact that he was first and foremost a martial arts athlete before being a movie star? Even until now martial arts is still a big hit with the increasing popularity of Asian movies like crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon and more recently the House of the Flying Daggers.

The Chinese are the first people that come to mind when it comes to these things but the Japanese are just as athletic with a rich heritage of body contact sports that can be found in their history. The modern Japan still gives honor to these things by holding tournaments and promoting such sports abroad,

One of these is Aikido. It is interesting to note that the word comes from three Japanese words from which one can derive the meaning of the one word. Ai means joining, Ki means spirit and Do means way. From this we can understand why Aikido is beyond just the physical skills of its students especially since its proponent Ueshiba focused more on the spiritual and philosophical development of his students.

In Aikido, one is not taught violence instead one is taught to be in harmony with the opponent to be able to defeat. This might seem odd but it actually works. In approaching an opponent, the aim of the Aikido practitioner is to be one with the opponent to be able to attack him where he is weakest and in doing so diver or immobilize him but never to kill.

This is where Aikido becomes an art. Art is something beautiful to watch and something positive and Aikido is all that. At least one of the people involved in the fighting strives for harmony and harmony can only be achieved if there is grace in the movements. The moves maybe calculated but there is an air of finesse in doing these movements, not a womanly finesse but just a finesse that emanates peace. The art of peace as what they call in Aikido is one of the most positive influences of Aikido to its students and to everyone who choose to know about this Japanese martial art.

Some of the techniques in Aikido include the following. Ikkyo is the first technique. Using this technique you control an opponent by using one hand in holding the elbow and one near the wrist, this action is supposed to make you pin your opponent down in the ground. Nikyo the second technique is when you do an adductive wristlock that enables you to twist the arm of your opponent that will in turn cause enough nerve pressure.

The third technique is Sankyo which is a pronating technique that directs

upward-spiraling tension throughout the arm, elbow and shoulder. There are many other techniques but the first three should get you started.

In studying Aikido, it is important to remember that along with building physical strength to be able to defeat your opponent the mental capacity should also be developed. Just like in any art, it takes a lot of practice and discipline to perfect the art of Aikido. The important thing is the one who wants to get into the art should have determination to give honor to the art by performing it in the best way possible.