



Dynamic Aikido

Author: Gozo Shioda
Genre: Aikido and Other Martial Arts
Publisher: Japan: Kodansha, 1968
ISBN: 0-87011-301-1
RRP: £ 9.99 (+£2.80 p&p)

In this ground-breaking beginner's handbook, one of the highest ranking and most respected martial artists of the last century offers instruction on 'the way of harmony'.

Though this publication is one of the older textbooks available on Aikido – it was published in the late 1960s – its high-quality content, small size and user-friendly format have allowed it to stand the test of time. Its author, Gozo Shioda, was arguably the greatest student of the founder of modern Aikido, being at the time of the book's writing a 9th grade black belt and chief instructor at the Yoshinkan school in Tokyo. After opening with an interesting 'History of Aikido', written by Hiroshi Takeuchi at a time when the founder, Ueshiba, was still alive, Shioda's book proper begins with the first of four sections. This sees the author divulge the vital principles of movement required in Aikido, before the second then offers an insight into its basic movements, including basic breakfalls and dojo etiquette, all invaluable information for new students. Importantly, though, as Shioda moves on, the third and fourth parts, concerning techniques and practical application respectively, gain the book a more universal appeal. Section three, by far the largest in the book, offers illustrated step-by-step instructions for many of the basic techniques of Aikido, including those from a sitting and standing position, before the last section moves on to illustrate how those techniques could be applied in a practical situation: by both men and women, in a 'real world' environment. Ultimately, then, and despite being published over forty years ago, Shioda's effort remains a very good read for new students. It is a consciously simple book that does not bog down the reader nor intimidate them, and will remain relevant long after one's first lesson.

From a personal perspective, this was the first book I bought on Aikido when I began my journey almost ten years ago, and it remains my favourite. Throughout my early years of training, when my fitter, more capable colleagues consistently flattened me seemingly every time I blinked, I knew I could always find solace in Dynamic Aikido's simple instructions and 'retro' photographs on the train home. In my opinion, it is the best book of its kind, or at least the best I have read.

10 sausages out of 10

RW Nov 2014

