

Aikido Glossary

**these translations are based on a consolidation of information (obtained orally and through research) and are not from a fluent Japanese speaker; if you have more accurate translations for any of these terms, please share and they will be incorporated!*



ai

harmony; unison; oneness; joining

aikido-ka

a practitioner of aikido

ai-hanmi

matching ('harmonious') stance w/ partner

atemi

a defensive strike directed at an attacker for the purpose of unbalancing or distracting

awase

blending; synchronization that implies connection



bokken

wooden sword

budo

'Way of War'; a term referring to martial arts in general and Japanese martial arts specifically

bukiwaza

a mode of training with weapons

dan

black belt rank

“dame”

'bad' or 'incorrect'

deshi

student

do

'the Way'; a path or practice

dojo

'Place of the Way'; place of practice

dojo cho

a title for the head or leader of the dojo

Doshu

the title for the 'Leader of the Way'; the founder's son, Kisshomaru Ueshiba (1921 – 1999) was the second Doshu, and his son, Moriteru Ueshiba, is the current Doshu



道

"domo-arigato-gozaimashita"

"thank you very much" (very formal; in a more casual context, just "arigato-gozaimasu" is more appropriate)

-dori

(also *tori*) to grab; from the verb *toru*; added to the end of other words (i.e. katate-dori)

gaeshi

turn, flip or reverse; also 'kaeshi'

gassho

'uniting the palms'; a gesture with palms together at eye-level

gasshuku

a retreat; camp; a gathering for intensive training

gedan

lower position

gi

training uniform (also 'dogi')

gomen nasai

'I'm sorry,' or 'pardon me'

gyaku

opposite or across; eg. 'gyaku hanmi' or 'gyakute dori'

"hajime"

'begin!' 'go'

hakama

traditional trousers derived from samurai



custom; worn by black-belts in most aikido schools

hanmi

triangular stance derived from sword work; the basic stance in aikido

hanmi handachi

techniques done w/ nage sitting and uke standing



hara

a person's center of mass, located about 2 inches below the navel; traditionally thought to be source of ki

harai

sweep

hasso

figure 8 movement, or applicable to 8 directions; related to the terms 'happo' and 'hachi'

henka

variation

hidari

left (direction)

hiji

the sleeve at the elbow area; eg. 'hiji dori'

ikkyo

first technique

irimi

‘entering the body’; entering movement

jiyu waza

a freestyle mode of training, usually with one attacker who may attack with any strike/grab

jo

wooden staff about 4'–5' in length

jodan

upper position

–jutsu

technique, art, method, spell, skill or trick

kaiten

spinning; to revolve or rotate

Kaicho

a title for the leader of an organization; often used by sensei who start their own independent organizations

kamae

stance; position

kami

spirits; ancestry (from Shinto theology)

"kanpai"

"cheers"; said during a toast

kangeiko

'cold practice'

kata

1) a form; a prescribed pattern of movement 2)
the 'shoulder' (e.g., kata dori)

keiko

training; practice

ken

sword

ki

energy; vital life force; spirit; (Chinese = chi)



kiai

'ki harmony'; a shout delivered during execution of a technique for the purpose of focusing one's energy

kihon

fundamental; basic

kihon waza

techniques done from a basic (static) position

ki no nagare

flowing techniques, done in motion

kohai

a person junior to oneself

kokyu

1) breath power. 2) a spiraling motion of the hand(s) used to extend ki through the hand blades

kokyu-ho

a technique characterized by a contraction and then expansion coordinated with breath

kokyu-nage

used generically for various throws done by applying kokyu through the hand blades

kote

the area of the arm from the back of the hand to the elbow, which refers to a section of samurai armor



kote-gaeshi

'turning over the kote'; wrist-turning technique

koshi

the waist; area of the small of the back between the hips

koshita

the piece of the hakama that covers the koshi

kumi jo

jo partner practice

kumi tachi

bokken partner practice

kuzushi

the breaking of balance

kyu

white belt rank; any rank below shodan

ma-ai

proper distancing with respect to one's partner

migi

right (direction)

morote-dori

2-hands-on-1 grab

mune

the area of the solar plexis where the gi crosses

musubi

‘tied together’; a connection between partners such that one’s movement seems to affect the others

nagare

‘flowing’; in motion

nage

1) the person executing the technique; also referred to as *tori* in some lineages and arts. 2) a throw

ninin-dori

2 ukes grabbing one nage, usually one on either arm

"Ohayo-Gozaimasu"

'good morning'; used before 10:00 am

omote-waza

techniques in the front; in front of (center line)

"Onegai-shimasu"

'May I?', or 'Please, let's..' etc. (no exact translation);

said to one's partner when initiating practice

O-sensei

'Great Teacher'; used to refer to Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of aikido



randori

ran loosely translates as 'chaos'; in aikido practice, *randori* is a kind of freestyle, or 'all-out' mode of training with multiple attackers, where focus is placed on the pattern of movements while multiple bodies are converging, as opposed to completing individual techniques on each attacker



rei

bowing; an expression of humility

renzoku

continuous

ryote-dori

double wrist grab (one hand on each)

ryu

a school; style

sensei

teacher

seiza

traditional Japanese seating posture
wherein one sits on the heels and the
bottoms of the feet



senpai

a person senior in hierarchy, or older, to oneself

shikko

'knee-walking'; a shuffle movement on the knees

shihan

one who has been recognized as being at a level of
mastery; one who sets a model for technique

shiho

four directions

shodan

1st degree black belt; lit. 'beginner'

shodo

'the way of writing'; Japanese calligraphy

shomen

1) the front or top of the head. 2) the 'head' of a dojo, usually marked by scrolls, items for kami offerings, flowers, and a picture of O-Sensei

soto deshi

'outside student'; a student that does not live at the dojo

suburi

basic striking/thrusting (solo) weapon practices

suwari-waza

techniques done in kneeling/shikko position



tachi

a type of Japanese sword; sometimes used generically for 'sword,' as in kumi-tachi

tai-jutsu

'body arts'; empty-handed techniques

tai-no-henko

a basic tai-sabaki exercise using tenkan while being

grabbed katate-dori; done at the beginning of most classes

tai-sabaki

body movements; blending exercises

Tai Sai

an annual celebration of the life of O-Sensei at the end of April, when he passed

takemusu

spontaneous (without thought) appropriate response

tanto

a wooden knife/dagger

te

hand

te-gatana

'hand sword'; the hand blade

te-kubi-shime

an ushiro grab where one hand goes around the neck as in a choke, or holding a tanto, and the other grabs the corresponding wrist

tenchi

'Heaven and Earth', or referring to the polarity of these

tenkan

a 180° turn or pivot on front foot or on one point

tsuki

'thrust'; punch

uchi

1) 'inside', as in *uchi deshi*; 2) a strike, as in *shomen uchi*

uchi-deshi

'inside student'; a student who takes residence at the dojo

uke

the person on the receiving-end of the technique

ukemi

receiving; the art of receiving technique and managing safety while falling

ura-waza

techniques behind --referring to partner's center line

ushiro

positioned behind the back

waza

techniques; a mode of training

yamabiko

'mountain echo'; initiating partner's movement by feigning attack; calling partner forth

yokomen

side of the head

yudansha

a black belt holder (any rank); also used plural

zanshin

unbroken spirit; a concentrated connection that remains with one's partner even after a throw has been completed

Counting in Japanese

ichi	1	ni ju roku	26
ni	2	ni ju shichi	27
san	3	ni ju hachi	28
shi	4	ni ju ku	29
go	5	san ju	30
roku	6	san ju ichi	31
shichi	7	san ju ni	32
hachi	8	san ju san	33
ku	9	san ju shi	34
ju	10	san ju go	35
ju ichi	11	san ju roku	36
ju ni	12	san ju shichi	37
ju san	13	san ju hachi	38
ju shi	14	san ju ku	39
ju go	15	yon* ju	40
ju roku	16	yon ju ichi	41
ju shichi	17	yon ju ni	42
ju hachi	18	yon ju san	43
ju ku	19	yon ju shi	44
ni ju	20	yon ju go	45
ni ju ichi	21	yon ju roku	46
ni ju ni	22	yon ju shichi	47
ni ju san	23	yon ju hachi	48
ni ju shi	24	yon ju ku	49
ni ju go	25	go ju	50

....etc. (this is sufficient for dojo use.....)

* Note: The number 4 by itself is 'shi,' but when saying 'forty,' 'four-hundred,' or 'fourth' etc., it is replaced with 'yon.'