

Beyond Physical Aikido Techniques

Gaining mere physical knowledge and technical skill is not the goal of Aikido practice. We must work to improve our characters and raise our consciousness to higher levels. The study of Aikido cannot be a selfish study. Our Aikido study must help develop our sensitivities toward others and our concern for them in our daily interactions, both in and out of the dojo.

Such understanding must accompany our technical development. If we are ignorant of the effects that our actions have on the minds and body of our partners, we will never realise the true purpose of practice, let alone effective techniques. This is why it is so important that we never practise in a way that we cause pain and injuries to our partners. This is our moral responsibility.

As for the wearing of the Hakama, currently its meaning has degenerated from a symbol of traditional virtue to that of a status symbol for the Yudansha. Most of them think of the Hakama as a price for display as the visible symbol of their superiority and rank. This type of attitude makes the ceremonial bowing to O'Sensei (with which we begin and end each class) a mockery of his memory and his art.

I personally feel that knowing the physical Aikido techniques without understanding the principles and purpose will make Aikido just another Form of fighting. I believe the purpose of Aikido is to better people's lives and to help their spirits blossom and become strong. Ultimately to make better people to make a better world.

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