



Philipp Storf  
O SEN KAN / Aikikai Dornbirn

## **Shodan Essay/ On Aikido**

In this Shodan Essay I will not quote existing texts about Aikido. I want to write down my own thoughts about Aikido at my current level and primarily what Aikido has been doing for me and my life so far.

I am still at the beginning of understanding Aikido and do not know if I'll ever understand it. But more important for me is what kind of feelings Aikido triggers in me. Before I started Aikido I was still searching for a mental and physical challenge. Today, after three and a half years of intensive training in O SEN KAN with my Sensei, Jürgen Schwendinger, I have the feeling that I have reached another stage of my journey.

One reason why Aikido excites me is that it combines martial arts and spirituality. I have been passing through various Aikido stages, let me call them plateaus. On my current plateau I still can not perform each technique perfectly yet I have the feeling that I start grasping the principles of Aikido. Through my hard work and through the teaching methods of my Sensei I was able to develop step by step.

I feel so much more centered than at the beginning of my journey. My movements have become more precise and more fluid. My power is stronger and I was able to develop a better understanding of 'Mai'. My martial awareness got sensitized and I learned to handle different attacks.

As Uke I have learned what it means to neutralize energy and to be light. As Tori how to be grounded and powerful and how to control the attacker.

Among many other things, it is the relationship of Uke and Tori that fascinates me very much. For many people it might look strange and they don't understand what we do in Aikido but to me this special relationship bears the wholeness of this martial art in it.

Spiritually and mentally Aikido offers for me at least as much as physically. Aikido provides a way to escape from the increasing superficiality and fast pace of society and leads to a discovery of ourselves. It decelerates me from the busy lives we have outside the dojos. During the classes I am fully forced to be in the present moment. Only intense training and constant work will lead to understand the depths of this martial art.

Only through true commitment, mental and physical effort, and leaving the comfort zone again and again you will achieve this depth. I apply Aikido principles in other areas of my life, be it family, partnership, friendship, profession or faith.

The greatest wealth Aikido has brought into my life is the intense teacher student relationship with my Sensei Jürgen Schwendinger.

Through the martial process in his classes he always brings me to my physical and mental limits and sometimes beyond. I'm of the opinion that this process made my personal growth in Aikido possible.

In my Sensei I see a great teacher, a role model for Aikido teachers, an authority and a true friend who has become part of my family. Teacher student relationship means to me living values like love, honesty, loyalty, commitment, and to be there for each other.

**It is my wish to take this opportunity to express my deepest thanks to my teacher.**

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