



Aikido and Randori

Author: Scott Allbright
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Is this a square that can ever be circled? Here Tomiki 6th Dan Scott Allbright attempts to answer this and other questions.

'Sport is war without the shooting'. This, one of George Orwell quotes, is cited by the author in his 200 page book on Shodokan Aikido, and is indeed very apt when considering the style formulated by Kenji Tomiki, one of Aikido founder Morihei Ueshiba's very first students.

Tomiki Sensei's outlook differed from others in that he had also studied under Kano Sensei, the founder of Judo. To paraphrase, Mr. Tomiki suggested (not necessarily wrongly) that Ueshiba's style of Aikido was in some ways unrealistic, due to there never actually being healthy competition to see who was 'best'. As a result, he argued, students lacked 'battle experience' which may come back to haunt them if they tried Aikido in a real-life situation. As a result of this rift, Allbright's 'History of Aikido' is split into two sub-sections. The first talks of the founding of the art by Ueshiba and that handful of early students he taught (including Tomiki). The second section then continues to discuss the evolution of Tomiki's organisation, the Shodokan. The main body of the book continues to describe many techniques, with a great emphasis on Tomiki's brand of Aikido. Pictures and detailed instructions are included, with the glossary containing their grading syllabus up to 7th Dan(!).

Ultimately, then, this book is very specific to the style practiced by the author, but then again it's meant to be. Put another way: in volumes of this type the large section on techniques is normally succeeded by one detailing real-world use, which is very small here, but that's the point: **this**, is a sport. So, if you practice this variant, or are just interested in the concept, Allbright's book is worth reading. If you seek a more generally held philosophy on Aikido though, you'll need to look elsewhere.

6 sausages out of 10

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