



Aikido: The Complete Basic Techniques

Author: Gozo Shioda
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This is the third instruction manual written by Yoshinkan Aikido founder Gozo Shioda that I have read, and happily, this book has drawn in all the good bits from its predecessors.

Shioda Sensei, known to his students as 'Kancho' (Headmaster) was one of the first students of Aikido Founder Morihei Ueshiba, and was ultimately promoted to 9th Dan by him. In the 1950s Shioda received O'Sensei's permission by to open his own dojo, which he named 'Yoshinkan'. It has since evolved into one of the world's largest martial arts organisations.

Whereas the first of the author's books in English, *Dynamic Aikido*, could be seen as an introductory text, i.e. small, short and not overly complicated, the next book, *The Master Course*, was aimed at the more experienced practitioner and gave a far more in-depth break-down of the various techniques in the syllabus. This book fits in the middle. Originally written in Japanese as an in-house manual many years before the death of its author, it is a text of just over 200 pages split into 3 main sections, and is of a similar size and construction to *The Master course* as a result. The difference lies in the emphasis, which, as with *Dynamic Aikido*, is geared towards that of the beginner. Whilst section one, 'Basics', goes through kamae, break-falls and so on, the second, 'Basic Techniques', focuses on ten basic throws and pins from many attacks, with and without weapons and from both standing and sitting. The third section, 'Practical Techniques', (as the title may suggest) then offers pointers on using Aikido in a real-life environment. Best of all are the boxes marked 'Important Points' throughout the book, warning students of the rookie mistakes sure to make their technique unfeasible in the real world and/or fail them in a grading.

I have to declare an interest here. Though we lost the official link with Japan many years ago, the club in which I train is heavily influenced by the Yoshinkan, indeed we have a picture of Shioda Sensei next to the Founder in our shrine. As such, I'm naturally disposed towards liking this book. The written instructions and the overall layout are informative but not intimidating and include very good pictures of each technique being demonstrated, (almost always of the author himself). Ultimately, and at the risk of sounding a little 'partisan', I must say that I really find anything wrong with this book.

10 sausages out of 10

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