



Ultimate Aikido: Secrets of Self-Defense and Inner Power

Author: Yoshimitsu Yamada (with Steve Pimsler)
Genre: Aikido and Other Martial Arts
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This incredibly well-written and easy-to read book sees one of Morihei Ueshiba's greatest students, Yoshimitsu Yamada, set down his knowledge of Aikido for the reader.

Ultimate Aikido is the second book written on the way of harmony by Yamada, an 8th Dan who trained directly under the founder of Aikido and was Head of the USAF, the governing body in America, at the time of its writing. As one would expect from a teacher of his standing and a book of this type, his text offers a from-the-ground-up syllabus of instruction, starting with the basics.

One of the book's great strengths is the way in which its illustrative photographs work in tandem with the text, a factor noticeable throughout. Moreover, and unlike many other books of this type, the author's words do not come through a translator, but are his own, and this is noticeable in the style and feel of the text; *Ultimate Aikido* feels 'warm'. As one would expect, the first section sees the author instruct on the fundamental principles of the art, including posture, ukemi and etiquette, all of which are accompanied by photographs, often from different angles. This high level of detail is improved still further in the second and larger section on techniques, wherein photographs, again from various angles, are mixed with accurate sketches illustrating the direction of forces involved. In addition, the extensive range of these techniques – some are shown in three different variants – ensures that the reader is receiving both quality *and* quantity.

So, if you are after a good, all-encompassing book on Aikido from the roots up, this one is definitely for you. My sensei has through his career trained in Aikikai and Yoshinkan and this is reflected in the Aikido I am trying to learn from him. As such, I try to look for the evidence of the universal principles of the art in the books I review, and this one has been *the* most inclusive and readable Aikido book I have ever had the pleasure to come across. Ultimately, though, perhaps the most important thing about *Ultimate Aikido* is that its author trained at the source: he trained with Ueshiba.

10 sausages out of 10

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