

**PROPER DOJO ETIQUETTE**  
**of the**  
**Kulshan Aikikai Aikido Club**

The Aikido Dojo is the place where we cleanse and enrich our mind, body, and spirit. A Dojo is to be filled with feelings of grace, respect, proper attitude, and positive mutual support. When you enter the dojo, you will notice that everyone works very hard and sincerely to maintain these feelings; therefore, feelings to the contrary should be left outside of the Dojo.

Aikido is not a religion. Aikido is the education and refinement of the spirit. You will not be asked to adhere to any religious doctrine; only to remain spiritually open. When we bow it is not a religious performance, but a gesture of respect to the same spirit of universal creative intelligence within us all. This gesture also sets our mind in a state of non-dissension, which is necessary for proper learning.

The following are some of the traditional forms of etiquette which are an essential aspect of our training in the Dojo and beneficial to our daily life. They should be practiced with sincerity. The number sequence does not reflect the order of importance. All are to be considered important. Your Dojo is a sacred home in which you train yourself to be proper citizens on Earth. You shall be responsible to train Aikido daily, on and off the mat.

- 1) Bow upon entering and leaving the training area of the dojo, in the direction of the designated front (shomen).
- 2) The opening and closing ceremony of each training is performed with a formal bow towards the shomen. Then with hands together, two claps, another bow to the shomen and a bow between the instructor and the students. The bow towards the shomen symbolizes respect for the spirit and principles of Aikido, and gratitude for the spirit of the founder, Morihei Ueshiba, for developing this system of study. The bows exchanged between the instructor and students or student and student symbolize mutual gratitude and humility.
- 3) Be on time for class and participate in the opening ceremony. Be on the mat a few minutes before class starts to warm-up and then quietly be seated in folded legs position (seiza).
- 4) All the students shall be seated in seiza upon the entrance of the instructor.
- 5) When class has already started; quickly change into your uniform (dogi), then be seated in seiza at the edge of the mat until the instructor gives permission for you to join the class.
- 6) The proper sitting position on the mat is in seiza. If you have a leg injury you may sit cross legged (anza); but never sit with legs outstretched, or lean against the walls or posts.
- 7) Be seated in seiza by the wall, when you are waiting your turn to train. Never stand idle on the mat during class when everyone is training.
- 8) The proper training uniform (dogi) shall only be of white jacket and pants. Belts shall be of white color, unless otherwise authorized. Hakama shall be of solid black or solid navy blue and shall be authorized to be worn.
- 9) At all times your training dogi shall be clean and mended. Your feet shall be clean before stepping onto the mat.

- 10) After every class your training dogi and other training tools shall be taken home, unless otherwise authorized. No personal articles shall be left at the dojo.
- 11) All training tools shall be treated with respect. Your weapons shall be in good condition and in their proper place when not in use.
- 12) No personal jewelry shall be worn on the mat during class that may cause injury. Trim your long finger nails and toe nails to minimize injury to yourself or to others.
- 13) No shoes, sandals, or slippers shall be worn onto the mat area.
- 14) No food, drinks, smoking, chewing gum, drugs, and alcohol shall be consumed on the mat or in the training area during class.
- 15) You shall attend to personal hygiene of hair, nails, body odor, and the appearance of your dogi conscientiously.
- 16) No one shall be permitted onto the mat if under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, in order to minimize any possibility of bodily injuries.
- 17) During training if your dogi becomes disarranged, you shall bow to your partner, and sit facing away from the shomen to arrange your dogi. Then stand, bow to your partner and resume training.
- 18) Except in the case of injury or illness, no one shall leave the mat area when a class is in session. You shall first ask permission from the instructor before leaving the mat.
- 19) You shall refrain from training, if you become physically ill or exhausted during class.
- 20) All dojo etiquette shall be applied, when you are at the dojo but are not going to train. You shall apply all due respect to your Chief Instructor, instructors, Dojo, and fellow members.
- 21) Learn from your seniors the proper method of folding the Chief Instructor's hakama and the placement of other personal items of your Chief Instructor.
- 22) There shall be no conversation of any kind while the Chief Instructor is demonstrating or explaining a lesson of Aikido to the class.
- 23) During class, when an instructor demonstrates a technique to the class or to you personally, sit quietly and attentively in seiza. After the demonstration, bow to the instructor then immediately resume your training.
- 24) Keep your conversation on the mat to an absolute minimum during your training. Aikido training is to be a meditative physical experience. Actions speak more loudly than words; thus, when asked a question by your partner, explain with your actions rather than words. You shall not correct nor instruct your partner. If you understand the movement of the technique, you may lead your partner through it. Respect those less experienced by not imposing your personal ideas onto them about the technique; let them discover what works for them.
- 25) You shall follow in accord to the best of your ability, the technique the instructor has taught to the class. You shall not attempt to move ahead to another point, assuming you know the present lesson and know the next point to be covered.

- 26) Stop immediately when a technique is signaled to end, bow to your partner and quickly line up with the other students.
- 27) Students shall not discuss or argue about the technique to be practiced on the mat. Immediately request that the instructor resolve the question.
- 28) Never call the instructor from across the dojo. If you need to ask a question of the instructor, you shall go to the instructor and bow, then request personal instruction.
- 29) When another student nearby is being instructed, you may stop your practice and sit in seiza to learn. Bow to acknowledge the instructions and resume with your training. Never interrupt another student's instruction, wait until the instructor is personally available.
- 30) No student shall compare one instructor's teachings with another; for any purpose. Every instructor has some unique lesson to share, be attentive and eager to discover it. Respect those more experienced in Aikido.
- 31) Regardless of rank it is inappropriate for any student to instruct or correct another student without the direct and specific permission and supervision of the instructor conducting the class. This is an essential lesson for personal development, and particularly among those who assist or instruct in other classes.
- 32) Students of any rank shall train with each other. Beginner students shall be eager and are encouraged to seek out and train with advanced students.
- 33) Pay close attention to your seniors (sempai), as it is through them you will learn the basics of Aikido. Pay close attention to your juniors (kohai), as it is through them you will learn and observe your understanding of the basics of Aikido.
- 34) You shall immediately approach with honor and welcome dojo visitors and other Aikidoka guests to our Dojo. Extend the invitation to train with us.
- 35) You shall express your care and concern for the new students to our Dojo, by treating each with understanding, consideration and courtesy. Share with them your joy in training Aikido.
- 36) It shall be every student's responsibility to educate and inform new students of the Aikido rules and etiquette of our Dojo.
- 37) Every student shall participate in keeping our dojo facilities clean and safe at all times. The cleanliness and safety of our Dojo reflects the personal character of our dojo students as well as our Dojo instructors. This is an important part of our Aikido Misogi (purification of mind and body) training and shall be attended by all before and after classes.
- 38) You shall attend to make sure that the outside of your dojo is pleasant with our environment, when approaching or leaving your dojo. Have pride of the place you study your Aikido.