

# The Process of Forming Aikido and Japanese Imperial Navy Admiral Isamu Takeshita: Through the analysis of Takeshita' s diary from 1925 to 1931

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**Abstract :** From this study, that Aikido did not appear out of nowhere, fully formed, in the mind of the founder. Rather, Aikido had a definite starting point in the Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu that Ueshiba learned from Takeda, and it slowly changed from there. Ueshiba found himself in an emotional dilemma, making him unable to decide whether to leave Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu and Takeda or not, until at least the second declaration by his support group, Aioi-kai. Furthermore, many of these changes came either from lessons that Ueshiba learned from teachers in other martial arts, or from experimentation with applied techniques. If we accept, not only that Aikido had a starting point, but that, at one time, it also grew and changed, then why should we believe that it is static today? Isn' t what matters that we continue the process of evolution through experimentation?

**Key words:** Morihei Ueshiba, Kenji Tomiki, Daito-ryu, Jigoro Kano, Yagyu-shinkage-ryu

## Introduction

The author has considered this topic because aikido has developed, not into a modern combative sport, like judo in Japan or fencing in the West, but into a performing art like a dance performed by pair. One of the reasons for this is that aikido instructors in Japan have sometimes asserted that aikido is not a sport but a Japanese budo (martial art). They have also argued that Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969) invented aikido or that Ueshiba is the founder of aikido, and that there is no Competition in aikido and consequently, aikido is unique in this respect. The history of aikido in circulation today has been spread mainly by discourses in books written by Kishomaru Ueshiba (1921-1999), Morihei' s son and successor. He published a fine biography of his father in 1977 based on abundant information gathered. Unfortunately, however, his interpretation of historical materials followed his own convenience. In other words, it is clear that it was in Kishomaru' s best interests to establish a kind of myth that deified his farther as the founder of aikido, given his position as the successor. What he needed was to downplay the influence from Morihei' s teacher Sokaku Takeda, a master of Dato-ryu jujutsu or Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu, while emphasizing contribution from other martial arts and other persons, as well as his own individual ascetic practice. Kishomaru' s effort succeeded to some extent. Many people have come to understand aikido, not as a combative sport or traditional Japanese art, but as "the way of harmony", as in the book title "Aikido: the way of harmony" by John Stevens.

The main reason why aikido has not been introduced into the curricula of junior and senior high schools in Japan is that the main schools of aikido, with the exception of the Japan Aikido Association, do not

have a competition system like judo. Thus there has been no demand for physical education teachers who can teach aikido. Eventually, the scientific approach toward aikido and its techniques has deteriorated, leading in turn to the current lack of historical researchers. In addition, there is the issue of the iemoto system in aikido, a kind of feudal system of licensing teachers by a school that practices a traditional art. Generally speaking, in a study of various kinds of iemoto in arts, a researcher sometimes faces difficulties in obtaining sources because a head family sometimes cannot curb its desire to monopolize them and don't always want to show something disadvantageous to the interests of the art. We may find the reason why there have been so few historical monographs in aikido produced in Japan from those two points.

What is the situation outside Japan? One typical example is in the famous concise book "Abundant Peace: The Biography of Morihei Ueshiba Founder of Aikido" [Stevens, 1987]. The author references two preceding biographies by Kishomaru Ueshiba [Ueshiba, K., 1977] and Kanemoto Sunadomari [Sunadomari, K., 1969], as well as additional interviews. However, despite the inclusion of a bibliography, it is unfortunately impossible to determine the source or interview referenced. On the other hand, we can say that the author did not commit any errors because the book's lack of rigor stems from his position as a believer of Ueshiba and the nature of his work as a book for ordinary and aikido people in the West. Thus we see that it is important to study the history of aikido not as a believer but as a historical researcher. We should examine the whole of aikido not as something invariable that the founder decided, but as a martial art that can be improved.

For example, the substantial question of whether or not there is competition in aikido is not a question of a reality but a question of people's attitude to aikido. As long as they recognize that aikido is one of the combative martial arts (not competitive sports), it must be reasonable to analyze techniques, to classify them and cases of fighting, and explore methods to improve their implementation. We can consider many methods of kata, or pre-arranged practice, under various conditions, like all schools of aikido do. But without the challenge of a competition or real fight, the methods of kata often begin lack seriousness and, in the end, devolve into a kind of exhibition from the perspective of the traditional spirit of Japanese martial arts. The modernization of techniques will be accomplished by the introduction of a method of competition into a kata system or ordinary system in aikido, namely, introducing a method of verifying techniques in both kata and competitive training. Another element of modernization in aikido will be the modernization of the organization, which I can't examine any further now. Needless to say, however, we should accept that people can choose a method of practice in aikido. They can enjoy aikido as meditation or as a way to train "ki" (energy) as well as enjoying competition.

There is much ambiguity in the cradle of aikido history. My standpoint is scientific. The purpose of this paper is to verify historical facts concerning the origin of aikido history mainly through the diary of Admiral Isamu Takeshita (1860-1949). He was the key person in the establishment of contemporary aikido through his support of Ueshiba, an obscure martial artist circa 1925. In my past article "The Martial Arts Diary of Isamu Takeshita and aikido founder Morihei Ueshiba circa 1926" (Shishida, 1992), I came to the following conclusions. First: Takeshita's diary (1925-1928) which is referred in that article was the abridged diary of references made by myself to martial arts from the original diary. Second: Takeshita was born in Kagoshima, Kyushu, in 1869, promoted to Admiral in 1923, and died in 1949. In December 1925 Takeshita met Morihei Ueshiba, the eventual founder of aikido, who was a senior instructor of Daito-ryu-jujutsu, and became a supporter of the development of Ueshiba's martial art from there onward. Third: Takeshita was much impressed by Ueshiba's skill at their first meeting and continued to learn his martial art for two weeks. The name of martial art Ueshiba taught at the time was called Daito-ryu-jujutsu. Fourth: After more than two years practice, he founded a support circle called the

Aioi-kai, and the school declared a name change into Aioi-ryu-aiki-jujutsu in February 17, 1928.

This paper extends my 1992 article with additional points of view. I will examine here the following three items through deciphering Takeshita's diary from December 1, 1925 to July 18, 1931.

Changing the name of Ueshiba's martial art, Relation to Kodokan-Judo and Relation to Yagyu-shinkage-ryu are reviewed. As mentioned above, Takeshita said in his diary on February 17, 1928. "Practiced in the morning. From today, the Aioi-kai declared it would use the name Aioi-ryu-aiki-jujutsu from now on." We can understand from this that it became actually independent from the Daito-ryu-jujutsu. However, this declaration was not effective in solving Ueshiba's agony over his betrayal of Sokaku Takeda, Ueshiba's master in the Daito-ryu-jujutsu. Takeda sometimes visited him even after that so as to demand an explanation as to why Ueshiba did not pay the commission of 3 yen per person as agreed to when Takeda qualified Ueshiba in 1922 to teach Daito-ryu-jujutsu on his behalf [Editorial Department of the Aiki News, 2002, 269]. However he did receive 30 yen from each pupil, when the starting salary for a college graduate drew 35 yen around 1928 [Editorial Department of Aiki News, 2006, p.179, p.101]. This was just a problem to be resolved in private, as the name change was a one-sided declaration by the supporters represented by Takeshita. Ueshiba's tactics seemed to be to avoid the master when he visited.

Takuma Hisa, a student of both Takeda and Ueshiba. began training in aiki-jujutsu first with Ueshiba in 1933 and then continued it under Takeda starting in 1936. Since 1926, Ueshiba was living in Tokyo, but in around 1935 he would make frequent trips to Osaka, where he taught Hisa and other students at a small dojo, where Hisa held the position of Director General of Affairs in the Asahi newspaper publishing company.

In 1936, however, according to Hisa, Takeda appeared unexpectedly in the front of dojo and declared to Hisa and Ueshiba's other students that he was Ueshiba's teacher and that he would now take over their instruction, which he promptly began to do. Hisa politely invited him in the dojo and asked him to attempt his techniques to the tough guys who trained well under Ueshiba with Hisa. Takeda defeated each of them with great ease. Hisa and others were stunned by his performance and decided to become disciples [Editorial Department of Aiki News, 2002, p.124]. When Hisa reported to Ueshiba about Takeda's visit anticipating his joy, Ueshiba turned white and only nodded. Ueshiba rented a new house to live with his disciples and was happy to take root in Osaka. However, he did not call on Takeda to pay his respects and did a disappearing act [Editorial Department of Aiki News, 2002, p.186], [Shishida(Ed.), 1982, p.2].

Hisa also expressed the difference in skill between Takeda and Ueshiba, "Master Takeda did not take his pupils and attempted his techniques to anyone, even any tough guys, while Master Ueshiba always took a few pupils with him and made them take a break-fall when he demonstrated." We can not help but understand the clear difference in skill between them. That will be the fundamental reason why Ueshiba tried to avoid Takeda. Furthermore, there is no way to explain the nonpayment of the commission. We can understand Ueshiba's feelings; it was unbearable to lose his social position and face before many of his disciples and his supporters. Since Takeda's last instruction to Ueshiba in 1931, avoiding Takeda was the only way to live his life safely.

Takeda's instruction gave Hisa the chance to compare the techniques that he had been taught for the previous three years (1933-1936) by Ueshiba with those taught by Takeda. His conclusion was that they were the same---meaning that Ueshiba had not by that time significantly modified or evolved what he had been taught by Takeda. In later years, Hisa was adamant about Ueshiba's and Takeda's techniques being identical. He stated this clearly at a round table talk, "When Tomiki came to Osaka to teach aiki-bujutsu to the Asahi people<sup>2</sup>, the techniques that both master Ueshiba and Takeda taught were the same. Definitely the same. Master Ueshiba should say that he was taught them by master Takeda. He should say that it was Daitoryu. But he never said that. Mr. Tomiki (who also traveled from Tokyo to Osaka to teach Ueshiba's

system at the Asahi dojo) knows this, doesn't he. But Ueshiba never said it." And Tomiki answered, "Definitely not. 'I [Ueshiba] established everything...[smiling mysteriously]'. However old martial artists would often do that way." [Shishida (Ed.), 1982, p.1]

Ueshiba also caused confusion about the naming of his system and the point in time at which the term "aiki" was added to both Daitoryu jujutsu and to his own system.

Tomiki said at the round table talk, "Master Ueshiba gave us the impression that the name of aiki was established by Takeda and Ueshiba working together or by himself. ... He gave us the impression that the term aiki was added into Daito-ryu jujutsu from Ueshiba's age, like Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu." [Shishida (Ed.), 1982, pp.1-2]

On the other hand, Kishomaru Ueshiba also strongly suggested in his book of aikido [Ueshiba, K., 1982, p.556] that Ueshiba used the term aiki first and advised Takeda to add it to Daito-ryu jujutsu. "The founder Ueshiba intended a stage incorporating the three concepts of 'Ki', 'Shin [mind]', and 'Tai [body]' in one. This was based on 'Kisei [voice from ki]', 'Kiai [spirit]', and 'Kisoku [breath]' of 'Kotodama [mysterious dignity of the soul dwelling in speech]'. He intended this incorporation after he explored the spirit that supported his martial art, while he devoted himself to the study of Kotodama, to which he was attracted. As his way developed, he suggested to Takeda that he should add a spiritual element to Daito-ryu-jujutsu still being a usual bujutsu [aimed only at victory]. Takeda accepted his proposal and introduced the term aiki to Daito-ryu-jujutsu. As a result of that, Daito-ryu-jujutsu changed its name into Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu in 1922."

However, as I have already investigated, K. Ueshiba's description strongly took on the character of a conjectural judgment. Documents of 1913 by Nenokichi Sagawa, a pupil of Takeda, elucidated this point. Through the use of statements such as "to use aiki". [Shishida, 1992, p.5.], we can understand that the term aiki was already in use during the period of Daito-ryu-jujutsu, though the name of Daito-ryu-jujutsu changed to Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu in 1922. How should we think of the following descriptions of Takashita's diary under such context? Takashita said in his diary June 14, 1929:

"After lunch, I strolled around Akabane and Mita areas. From 5 p.m. we had a konwa-kai, a gathering for a friendly discussion, at Takahashi's dojo or hall. There were about 20 participants. From today we decided and declared that the name of our martial art would be Aiki-bujutsu."

The subject of the declaration must have been the Aioi-kai because it was still active at least till around the end of 1929. The change from 'Aiki-jujutsu' to 'Aiki-bujutsu' might seem to be of little importance, but the usage of the word 'bujutsu' signifies its enhanced independency from the Daito-ryu-jujutsu because bujutsu is recognized as a superordinate concept to jujutsu. As for the name change of the support organization, i.e. the Aioi-kai, it was used in the diary till December 19, 1929. Thereafter, he used "Dojo-kai [a meeting in a dojo]" or "Dojo-shukai [an assembly at a dojo]" instead of Aioi-kai until at least July 18, 1931 according to my findings. However, at the moment, it remains difficult to judge, with the limited sources available, whether or not Aioi-kai was still in use.

## Relation to Kodokan Jodo

The first appearance of the judo founder Jigoro Kano in Takeshita's diary was in October 2, 1930. "The master [Ueshiba] met Mr. Jigoro Kano under Mr. Oki's guidance." Perhaps this was the first meeting between them. Kano seems to have observed Ueshiba's demonstration from that day to October 28, the day of Kano's letter of thanks for his visit [Ueshiba, K., 1977, p.205]. Tomiki also said, "Master Kano visited Ueshiba at his dojo under admiral Takeshita's guidance. That was a plain fact." (Shishida (Ed.), 1983, p.3.) The diary in March 1, 1931 said, "I went to the dojo at Ushigome-Wakamatsu town and managed to get around hundred and fifty guests to observe the master's demonstration from 2:30 p.m. Admiral Takarabe, general

Fukuda, general Machida, Mr. Jigoro Kano etc., were the main guests.” We can see that Ueshiba and Kano were no strangers to each other.

On the other hand, we can find restlessness in the Judo world through Chikatami Honda’ s’ remarks at a round-table talk after the first national tournament in the presence of the Emperor in 1929. This is made clear in the prominent voluminous book “Showa Tenran Shiai” [Dainihon-yubenkai-kodansha, 1930, pp.722-723] where it is mentioned that Honda said, “I have some thoughts about Kodokan-Judo. Briefly speaking, there is a person named Ueshiba who practices dangerous joint techniques. ... As vice admiral Todoroki said, there are techniques in recent judo that are not very effective in the case of a real fight like a fight in a trench. ... The following suggestion has been made: why doesn’ t Kodokan introduce these techniques; at least a chief secretary of Kodokan should check them for its useful information. ... I as well as master Kano have no objection to checking it, but I have no interest to become his pupil. There are plenty of valuable excuses to the criticism that Kodokan-judo is not efficient due to the fact that judo has no way to finish off an opponent.”

Honda, a chief secretary of Kodokan, Judo headquarters, seemed to think negatively of those techniques and Ueshiba. However, Kano thought highly of Ueshiba’ s skill and said even that this is true judo, once he observed Ueshiba’ s demonstrations, accompanied by Shuichi Nagaoka and Kyuzo Mifune, two of his best instructors according to Yoshio Sugino [Editorial Department of the Aiki News, 2006, p.197]. Soon after that, Kano sent two judo students to Ueshiba to study his martial arts in order to introduce it into the Judo system. Such attitude would have influence on senior judo practitioners. The diary states on December 11, 1930, “9 a.m. went to a dojo at Meguro. Tamio Kurihara and [blank space], senior instructors at the Butoku-kai special school for Japanese martial arts, visited there and observed the practice.” Kurihara was the champion of the first national tournament in the presence of the Emperor. We don’ t understand his true reason and thoughts for his visit. But negative impacts had been smoldering in the judo world, because judo practitioners were not able to fight with Ueshiba’ s pupils to compare their abilities due to lack of a free or competitive practice system like judo and kendo in Ueshiba’ s martial arts.

There is an incident in 1938 that reflects this atmosphere. After Kenji Tomiki, a strong judo practitioner and Ueshiba’ s senior student, wrote a long article titled ‘The future of judo and the Aiki-budo’ in the newspaper in Manchukuo, it was reproduced in a journal of judo dividing it into five parts. Strangely enough, however, the title was suddenly changed one-sidedly at the third time of publication with a brief comment informing about the dissatisfaction from subscribers [Shishida, 2005, pp.516-517]. Tomiki’ s intention in this article was the same as Kano’ s and Kano encouraged him to learn Ueshiba’ s martial arts to develop judo in the future. Tomiki said,

“I visited master Kano, 77 years old, to greet him, before leaving for my job in Manchuria, March, 1936. Master Kano said, ‘Old jujutsu, which Mr. Ueshiba acquired well, was something like Ueshiba’ s martial art. Even Tenjin-shinyo-ryu or others that I learned. But it is difficult to think of how to make a person practice these arts.’ When I answered, ‘That’ s true. But shouldn’ t I do research for this purpose? He said, ‘Try it, study it, though it is such a difficult problem.’ That was the last time we would meet in my life.” [Shishida (Ed.), 1982, p.5]

It is clear that the two had a common purpose. Tomiki became a disciple to learn Aiki-jujutsu or Aiki-bujutsu, and he thought that it could contribute to the development of both judo and Aiki-bujutsu. But Tomiki was not Kano and he received a lot of criticism from judo practitioners. Tomiki, judo 5th dan in 1930, was used as a partner by Ueshiba, and took many break-falls to set off Ueshiba’ s performance. Because of this, some observers got the impression that Aiki-bujutsu was stronger than judo. This had to be disquieting for judo people.

The Naval personnel had been encouraged to learn judo in its schools, Heigakko, or a school for training

up junior naval officers, Kikangakko, or engineering school, and Keiri gakko, or accounting school. The arrival of Ueshiba influenced such situations in budo education. Vice admiral Seikyo (or Masayasu) Asano, alumna of Takeshita at the Kaigun-heigakko, the naval academy, introduced Takeshita and other army officers, as both he and Ueshiba were adherents of Omoto, and he thought highly of Ueshiba's martial art. Therefore, many army officers were initiated into his school.

“Masamitsu Kinebuchi visited home from Edajima [at Kure, Hiroshima, where the Heigakko was located]. The purpose was to practice Aiki-bujutsu.” (January 5, 1930).

Kinebuchi was a judo practitioner through his life. We can find the result of his visit in following description.

September 6, 1929. “In the afternoon, visited master Ueshiba. He said he was quite delighted as he beat judo instructors at the Kikan-gakko at Maizuru.”

With respect to his taking delight, we can read the strain in his instruction. The relevant descriptions are as follows:

January 17, 1930. “A captain [an illegible word] and Mr. Seiichi Sato, both auditors and instructors at the Heigakko, visited a dojo and observed the class.”

February 13, 1930. “A letter by Kinebuchi about the Heigakko was received.”

October 7, 1930. “Judo instructors came and started to practice for two weeks.”

There is an interesting description, though the descriptions concerning techniques were almost nothing in his diary.

December 2, 1930. “9 a.m. came to the dojo and practiced. Taught [Minoru] Mochizuki some techniques to emulate judo.”

Ueshiba's success must have been the result of efforts to study judo and other martial arts as applied techniques. Minoru Mochizuki was a judo practitioner and one of the two students who Kano sent to Ueshiba to learn his martial art. The fact that even Takeshita, around 70 years old, taught him shows that at least Ueshiba's senior pupils studied those techniques. These descriptions surely show that Ueshiba had already studied those skills well as well as the basics of Daito-ryu-jujutsu.

Students of Kenji Tomiki learned those techniques as part of the koryu-daisan-no-kata as basics. However, it is difficult to see a series of those techniques in the textbooks of various aikido organizations. That means that they might have disappeared from Ueshiba's successors in the process of being handed down to new generations. We should at least understand how Ueshiba showed deep interest in counter techniques against Judo, while we should admit that there are aikido practitioners who value his performances after the second world war above that. No budo will spread without strength. Ueshiba's martial art spread through his shows of strength against strong opponents, as Kishomaru Ueshiba emphasized in various anecdotes in his biography of his farther. With reference to this, we can appreciate the meaning of the critical remarks of Gozo Shioda (1915-1994), the founder of Yoshinkan aikido.

“Current aikido has no core. It is empty in substance. People try to reach the summit without going along the substantial part. So aikido deteriorates into dance or something. Unless we thoroughly acquire the basics, we can not stand atop the summit.”

That reminds us that, at the time when Ueshiba caused a sensation in Tokyo, Aiki-bujutsu included real skills against other martial arts as well as theory.

## Relation to Yagyu-shinkage-ryu

Aikido instructors often referred to the relationship between aikido and kenjutsu or kendo as deeper and even closer than the relationship between aikido and judo. We can agree with their opinion based on practicing techniques of aikido. In fact it is easy to explain the relation between Shiho-nage in aikido and cutting with a sword in kenjutsu. However, it is not easy to explain what the kenjutsu in aikido is, because Ueshiba, especially since he moved to Tokyo in 1927, did not dare to explain where his martial art came from. Therefore, some instructors tried to practice what Ueshiba demonstrated or practiced and others tried to learn the kenjutsu that he learned. In Stanley Pranin's work devoted to interviews of numerous people concerned, we can find that there were two schools of kenjutsu by which he was influenced; Ygyu-shinkage-ryu and Kahima-shinto-ryu.

Kishomaru Ueshiba said that the founder did not prefer a disciple to practice kenjutsu at the beginning in aikido [Editorial Department of the Aiki News, 2006, p.16]. But in reality, Ueshiba seems to have been very interested in kenjutsu. Ueshiba became a disciple of Kahima-shinto-ryu in May 16, 1937, and invited the three instructors in his dojo.<sup>3</sup> But, according to Zenzaburo Akazawa, Ueshiba did not learn it by himself but carefully watched their instruction of Akazawa, and then Ueshiba studied with him after they left [Editorial Department of the Aiki News, 2006, pp.211-212]. Gozo Shioda also said that Kahima-shinto-ryu considerably flowed into the techniques of Ueshiba because he practiced eagerly [Editorial Department of the Aiki News, 2006, p.178]. From those facts, it is clear that Ueshiba was enthusiastic in his study of kenjutsu, but with a face-saving way in around 1937. However, it was different ten years earlier.

The purpose in this part is to examine the relation between Yagyu-shinkage-ryu and Ueshiba's martial art through its master Kosaburo Gejo. Yagyu-shinkage-ryu was the most prestigious school in kenjutsu during the Edo period. I directly heard from Tomiki that he had learned Yagyu-ryu from Gejo with master Ueshiba, so that asked for an interview with Shiho Otsubo, a disciple of Gejo, who was present at Gejo's instruction to Takeshita and/or Ueshiba, consequently, introduced these relationships in the book in 1985 (Shishida & Nariyama, 2001, p.23) as follows.

"Ueshiba often met Gejo at the Yagyu dojo and the place where Ueshiba was teaching. One day Ueshiba saw a "Fukuro-jinai", a sword covered with leather, and became interested in it. This was the first time he had ever seen Yagyu-shinkage-ryu. Gejo directly showed him many kata techniques except "Muto-no-kurai", techniques that could only be learned at the higher level. Ueshiba wrote Budo in 1938 and mentioned his practice of Yagyu-shinkage-ryu. It is clear he took hints about ma-ai from Gejo."

Concerning my description, however, Kishomaru Ueshiba said, "When my father lived at Kuruma-cho, Gejo attended practice everyday. Not that my father learned Yagyu-ryu from Gejo, but that the latter came to learn my father's martial arts."

Where do the facts lie? Gejo sometimes appeared in Takeshita's diary, as Gejo and Takeshita were close friends; Gejo was one year senior to Takeshita at the Naval Academy, though they graduated in the same year.

February 25, 1926, "From 10 a.m. I practiced Yawara [Ueshiba's martial art] for one hour. Mr. [Seikyo] Asano and Mr. Kosaburo Gejo came to the dojo. Mr Gejo was expected to join the practice from tomorrow."

The above is evidence that shows Gejo became his pupil. In fact, Gejo appeared sometimes in the diary, though about half of that were for observation like this; "Mr Gejo observed" (June 3, 1926), "Mr. Kosaburo Gejo observed." (June 6, 1926), "Mr. Gejo also came to the dojo." (April 9, 1927), "Mr. Gejo ... came to the dojo as usual." (April 25, 1927), "In the morning, Mr Gejo came to a dojo." (April 26, 1927), "I went to practice with Setsu. Gejo was present" (November 14, 1927), "Practiced in the morning. Gejo, Inoue, The master [Ueshiba]." (January 30, 1928).

In addition, there are other more interesting descriptions.

“At 9 a.m., Mr. Kosaburo Gejo showed katas of Yagyū-ryū with his two disciples at the Morimura dojo. At 2 p.m. went to duke Shimazu’s residence with master Ueshiba …” (May 8, 1927)

“Practiced at morning and afternoon. Practice for capturing a sword, a sword against a sword, [indistinctness] against a sword.” (February 7, 1928)

“In the morning, practiced. Observed katas of Yagyū-ryū by Mr. Gejo.” (February 18, 1928)

“10 a.m. I attended a ceremony to celebrate the 56th anniversary of the founding of the Yanagida primary school. Gave a lecture about the importance of health to pupils, after that gave an anecdote about the martial art of Yagyū-ryū.” (March 5, 1930)

It seems that it is not always obvious which facts in the diary show that Ueshiba learned from Gejo with Takeshita having seen those descriptions. In addition, we can now see Tatsuo Akabane’s study of Yagu-shinkage-ryū.

In 1926, Gejo was 61 years old while Ueshiba was 43. According to Akabane’s research, Gejo was one of best disciples of Genshu Yagyū, the 10th successor of Yagyū-shinkage-ryū in the domain of Owari or Nagoya. Gejo became a disciple of Genshu Yagyū, soon after in a match in kenjutsu he was defeated by Genshu. Gejo, since he met Ueshiba, was one of Genshu’s successors along with Gencho Yagyū and Kinshichi Kobe [Akabane, 2005, pp.2-3]. Judging from Gejo’s positions and age, it is difficult to think that Gejo became Ueshiba’s disciple just to learn Ueshiba’s martial art. In fact, Akabane surmises that Gejo changed Yagyū-shinkage-ryū into a style that regards tai-sabaki or moving around as important when Gejo taught Ueshiba accompanied by Shiho Otsubo. In Akabane’s article, Otsubo said that he learned aikido instead of teaching “Muto-no-kurai” 4 in shinkage-ryū to Ueshiba in 1931, and that Ueshiba was so keen to study the difference between ma-ai in kenjutsu and ma-ai in the case of person with bare hands against a person with a sword [Akabane, 2004, p.11].

Ueshiba and Gejo established a relationship of mutual master and pupil. Undoubtedly, there is Gozo Shioda’s remark: “I have never seen his own practice of Yagyū-ryū or Shinkage-ryū, though the master told to us that he practiced. I have never seen that he himself learned Yagyū-ryū or Kashima-shioto-ryū, though he invited a master of Yagyū-[shinkage]-ryū to learn …” [Editorial Department of the Aiki News, 2006, pp.178-179]. But Shioda would have never seen such a scene because his entrance into Ueshiba’s circle was May 23, 1932. We may conclude that Ueshiba was unable to make the decision to leave Daitō-ryū and Takeda until the declaration of the Aioi-ryū-aiki-jujutsu that became his support group, Aioi-kai, in May 17, 1927, or at least the declaration of the Aioi-ryū-aiki-bujutsu in June 14, 1929. Ueshiba needed excellent skills in other martial arts to build up his martial art and to become independent of Daitō-ryū jujutsu. But, as his organization grew increasingly firm, it must have become unpleasant by slow degrees to show himself as a pupil to a master of another school of Kenjutsu.

In brief, the fact that Ueshiba learned Yagyū-shinkage-ryū in this period can be concluded certainly from the following points. First: Tomiki’s remarks: he learned Yagyū-ryū from Gejo with master Ueshiba. Second: Otsubo’s remarks in my interview and Akabane’s research. Third: The fact that Takeshita showed interest in Yagyū-ryū in his diary. Fourth: Ueshiba’s enthusiasm to study kenjutsu in order to make his martial art strong and become independent from Takeda.

## Conclusion

The main points that have been made in the preceding chapters can be best summarized as follows: In 1922, Sokaku Takeda qualified Morihei Ueshiba to teach Daitō-ryū-jujutsu on his behalf. The name of the martial art Ueshiba taught in December, 1925, was called Daitō-ryū-jujutsu in Admiral Takeshita’s diary. Ueshiba changed his martial art from Daitō-ryū-aiki-jujutsu to Aioi-ryū-aiki-jujutsu in May 17, 1927, and then second changed again to Aioi-ryū-aiki-bujutsu in June 14, 1929. According to Takuma Hisa,

the techniques in around 1933 that both his master, Ueshiba and Sokaku Takeda, taught were the same, meaning they were both Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu.

Ueshiba's success must have been the result of efforts to study judo and other martial arts as applied techniques. Minoru Mochizuki was a judo practitioner and one of the two students whom Kano sent to Ueshiba to learn his martial art. The fact that even Takeshita, around 70 years old, taught him shows that at least Ueshiba's senior pupils studied those techniques. These descriptions surely show that Ueshiba had already studied those skills well, in addition to the basics of Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu.

Ueshiba needed excellent skills in other martial arts to build up his martial art and to become independent of Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu. Ueshiba and Kosaburo Gejo, a master of Yagyu-shinkage-ryu-kenjutsu, established a student / teacher relationship on February 25, 1926. But, as Ueshiba's organization grew increasingly firm solid, it must have become unpleasant by slow degrees to show himself as a pupil student to a master of another school of kenjutsu, even though he was enthusiastic in his study of kenjutsu.

It should be concluded, from this study, that Aikido did not appear out of nowhere, fully formed, in the mind of the founder. Rather, Aikido had a definite starting point in the Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu that Ueshiba learned from Takeda, and it slowly changed from there. Ueshiba found himself in an emotional dilemma, making him unable to decide whether to leave Daito-ryu-aiki-jujutsu and Takeda or not, until at least the second declaration by his support group, Aioi-kai. Furthermore, many of these changes came either from lessons that Ueshiba learned from teachers in other martial arts, or from experimentation with applied techniques. If we accept, not only that Aikido had a starting point, but that, at one time, it also grew and changed, then why should we believe that it is static today? Isn't what matters that we continue the process of evolution through experimentation?

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<sup>1</sup> Stevens states in the “Abundant Peace”, “I have made extensive use of the vast oral literature that exists, collecting valuable information from public forums and countless private discussions.” At the time of the publication of Stevens' biography, the main source materials on the life of Morihei Ueshiba were the biographies published by Ueshiba's son, Kishomaru in 1977, and the biography published by Kanemoto Sunadomari in 1969, both in Japanese. The main English sources at that time were the numerous interviews and articles published on the subject of the Aikido Founder in "Aiki News." It is regrettable that Stevens' does not cite his reference sources or name the persons he interviewed for his work.

<sup>2</sup> According to Hisa's remarks to Shishida, Tomiki visited the Asahi to teach aiki-bujutsu instead of Ueshiba for some weeks. Hisa offered a splendid house for this senior instructor.

<sup>3</sup> Kishomaru Ueshiba also remembered those facts. [Editorial Department of the Aiki News, 2006, p.18]

<sup>4</sup> The subject of the description “instead of “Muto-no-kurai” is Otsubo, while the subject of the previous quote in my 1985 book, “Gejo directly showed him many kata techniques except “Muto-no-kurai” is Gejo. Unfortunately, I did not make an interview note to Shiho Otsubo at that time, so I think I should leave the description as it is.