



Aiki Tai Zen

Bringing the body and mind to balance

Aiki Tai Zen is a way to let the body and mind return to its natural state of stability, power, rhythm and balance. Through practice of a few core principles of Aiki and stillness of the mind through *Zazen* the body and mind are given the possibility to "remember" its state of perfection. Both body and mind have immense powers and potential of which most of us are ignorant or only vaguely aware. The first goal of Aiki Tai Zen is to awaken the student to this potential.

The body is truly amazing and may function quite well even under long time of imbalance. But eventually stress and lack of proper usage will make the body to react with functional problems, pain, sickness.

By learning straightening the spine, correct breathing, centering, correct concentration, awareness of body and its energy centers we can recondition the body from old patterns of movement that are dissonant clusters of habits developed over time from stress, fears, environment, need.

The mind too, is truly amazing and have the same need for proper usage to perform at its best potential. By learning focus, stillness, expansion and openness we can see ourselves more clearly and act in this clarity. We can begin to make better decisions that will lead to even better understanding and usage of ones potential.

By combining these practices body and mind will start on its path to a more coherent communication. They will start working together in a higher degree and effects of stress and other dissonant and damaging forces are reduced and can even be healed.



Aiki Tai Zen is created from the practicing of principles in aikido. It is not a martial art but as it is principles they may be recognized fully or in part in other practices of martial arts.

”Modern martial arts such as kendo, karate, judo and aikido go back directly to the marriage of Zen and Bushido, the medieval chivalry code of the samurai. At best they are budo. To translate these two Japanese words is challenging. Literally Bushido means ”the way of the warrior” (*bushi* ”warrior”; *do* ”path” or ”way”). Budo means ”the way of war” (*bu* ”war”). But the Japanese character *bu* also means to cease the struggle, to sheathe the sword. So the emphasis in Budo is not on *bu* but on *do*. Even *do* has a flavor, a deeper meaning that is hard for the westerner to grasp; for *do* is essentially goalless, and we of the West have long been seduced by goals, by getting ahead, by winning.” –Deshimaru Roshi

The physical, or body (*tai*) practice revolves around a few core principles from budo. How to move in balance, how to optimize your power without effort, how to centralize your body and draw strength from natural motion and how to work with *tanden*; the power/energy center of the abdomen. Initially we will teach the body some principles of motion through *ukemi*, *tai no henko* and *kokyo-ho* which are fundamental, especially in the practice of aikido. However, the Aiki Tai Zen practice goes deep into these principles and leaves much of the fighting techniques aside. There are other elements of the modern day martial arts practice that are removed such as weapons training, exams and colored belts. (In more advanced levels of Aiki Tai Zen weapons, *bokken* and *jo*, are re-introduced and then as help to further understand centralization and *tanden*)

The training is performed in silence (*zen*) and the student is working alone along side other students. Only the instructor speaks and only when necessary. In the beginning more talk, naturally. The silence has a purpose. It promotes focus and concentration and it challenges the student to go inward and any question that may arise must first be asked to the self. The body and mind knows all the answers but has forgotten them, has even forgotten that it once knew them. This is why we live in so much confusion about ourselves and the world around us. We are out of sync, incoherent from the inside and out.



There is also an element of meditation in the training (*Zazen*). At first to get the student used to listen inward in silence. Later also throughout the training session to assist the mind and body in their process of remembering and relearning. Effectively Aiki Tai Zen is meditation in motion.

The practice method can be described as "expansion inwards". As the student progresses the practice will include *Taisabaki*; the balanced three-dimensional, centralized movements of the body in space and time, *Awase*; deeper work with timing and fluid motion and *Kokyo-rokko*, the dynamic power and spiral motions.

At a certain level it would be appropriate to start practicing aikido for the student who wants to further the understanding of the principles and their roots.

This training is not a substitute for aikido. It is its own intention expressed. However, combined with aikido practice the two will complement and reinforce each other to a very high degree.