

Aikido Takayama Student's "Bill of Rights"

Aikido is a mind-body movement art with a distinctive cultural history and certain widely touted benefits. As there is no accreditation or certification process for teachers, anyone can claim to be a Aikido teacher: one who has learned from a video tape, taken a single course or weekend workshop, or even devised their own form. Prospective students have no protection from charlatans, no guarantee that the teacher they find is teaching authentic Aikido or that they will garner the promised benefits. We created this document to advise students of the things they have a right to expect from any legitimate Aikido teacher. It also points out to those who would be responsible teachers the obligations they owe to neophytes.

Aikido Students have a right:

1. To know the extent and nature of their teacher's study of the art (should be at least 5 years with "real teachers"-- not merely videotapes or books—and should have included some apprentice teaching and study of the art of teaching).
2. To know their teacher's connection through successive "generations" of teachers to an established lineage or authentic Japanese heritage.
3. To be introduced to an authentic form of Aikido, and to know the history of the style they are studying.
4. To know that there are many equally authentic and effective styles, but that some exercises claiming to be "Aikido," or claiming to have integrated Aikido with other arts are not necessarily equally authentic and effective Aikido.
5. To know that movement must exhibit certain core characteristics-- defined in the original Aikido classics-- to be genuine Aikido.
6. To know that Aikido can be dangerous if it is performed improperly, and that the teacher places the highest priority on fostering safe practice.
7. To pay modest, "going rates" for instruction, ranking and testing.
8. To be referred by their teacher to good books and other resources on Aikido, and to be informed about the activities of the larger Aikido community.
9. To be exposed to high-level performances, preferably above their teacher's level, by watching videotapes of recognized masters or by attending, Demonstrations, Workshops, Summer Camps etc.
10. To make steady progress and see benefits with diligent effort and regular practice
11. To expect appropriate, professional behavior from their teacher, without sexual pressures or interpersonal entanglements.
12. To know the requirements their teacher feels they would need to fulfill in order to become a Aikido teacher.