

Dave's Roman-Japanese Aikidō Lexicon

<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/dji/home/aikilex/>

This is a tool for people who want to gain greater insight into the vocabulary of the art of aikidō. Its purpose is not to offer authoritative definitions of the many terms we use in the dōjō, but rather simply to list, in Japanese and romanized script, the words and word fragments which are the building blocks of that terminology. It has been, of course, necessary for me to include some indication of the meanings, and I've tried to give the most accurate and appropriate translations possible. It is my hope that this lexicon will help my fellow martial artists not only to grasp the deeper nuances in these terms and find semantic connections which have been obscured through the use of the roman alphabet, but in general to appreciate the linguistic heritage of their art. I invite all comments. If you'd like to receive a notice when the lexicon is updated, please drop me a line (see the web site).

Notational conventions and meta info

- LIT What follows in quotes is a **literal** translation of the word, or of the characters considered separately. This is to help clarify the meaning or origin of the term, but usually does not constitute a proper translation.
- (vt) Transitive verb
- (vi) Intransitive verb
- (n) Word formed from a verb stem which acts as a noun
- (NW) Not a Word. Shows the sense of a single kanji which is not considered an ordinary word in itself (at least not with the given reading).

- Periods are used to show which fragments correspond to which Japanese characters. However, not in every case is the romanized fragment shown the same as the stand-alone reading of its corresponding kanji. For example, the first kanji in *ik.kyō* is not *ik* but *ichi*. There is no simple way to characterize these differences without getting into Japanese phonology.
- Although I've avoided the issue of pronunciation, I will limit myself to pointing out that vowels with macron (ō, ū) are pronounced with a slight lengthening of the sound compared to other vowels.
- Entries with no markings are ordinary dictionary definitions or otherwise self-explanatory. Please be aware that the majority of these words are everyday words in Japanese and few are necessarily martial arts-related, much less specific to aikidō.

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Roman	Japanese	English gloss
ai	合	meet, together, join, blend, mutual (NW)
ai.ki.dō	合気道	aikido
ai.ki.dō.ka	合気道家	practitioner of aikido [†]
ashi	足	leg, foot
ate.mi	当身	LIT "hit body"
-bi.ki	引き	→ hiki

[†] This is a rather presumptuous-sounding term in Japanese, though most people use it innocently. In fact, 家(ka) implies a degree of professionalism which is probably appropriate, in a martial arts context, only for those who have reached a high level of accomplishment *and* for whom it is their primary occupation. Furthermore, such a term will rarely if ever be used to refer, directly or indirectly, to oneself.

bok.ken	木劍	wooden sword
boku.tō	木刀	wooden sword
bu	武	martial (NW)
choku	直	direct, immediate, straight, straightforward (NW)
dan	段	rank, grade, level
de.shi	弟子	student, apprentice (LIT “little brother”)
dō	道	way, path (NW); <i>tào</i> (Chinese)
dō.jō	道場	LIT “way place”
-do.ri	取り	→ tori
dō.sa	動作	action, movement
dō.shu	道主	LIT “way master”
eri	襟	collar
funa.ko.gi	舟漕ぎ	boat rowing (n)
-gae.shi	返し	→ kaeshi
-gama.e	構え	→ kamae
-gara.mi	搦み	→ karami
gas.shuku	合宿	overnight retreat/seminar/camp (LIT “lodging together”)
-gei.ko	稽古	→ keiko
-ge.ri	蹴り	→ keri
gi	着	clothing
-gi.ri	切り	→ kiri
go.kyō	五教	LIT “fifth teaching”
gyaku	逆	reverse
hakama	袴	hakama
han.dachi	半立	LIT “half standing”
han.mi	半身	LIT “half body”
han.tai	反対	opposite, against
hap.pō	八方	eight directions
hen.ka	変化	change, variation
hidari	左	left (opposite of right)
hiji	肘	elbow
hi.ki	引き	pull (vt)(n)
hine.ri	捻り	twist (vt)(n)
hō	法	method, way of doing, law, rule (NW)
hom.bu	本部	headquarters
ik.kyō	一教	LIT “first teaching”
iri.mi	入身	LIT “enter body”
ji.yū	自由	free, freedom
jō	杖	staff, stick
jū.ji	十字	plus sign, vertical cross (LIT “10 symbol”)
jutsu	術	art(s)
kae.shi	返し	return, turn back, send back; reverse (vt)(n)
kai.ten	回転	turning around, revolving
kama.e	構え	(take a) stance, face off (n)

kan.chū	寒中	LIT “in the midst of cold”
kan.setsu	關節	(bone) joint
kara.mi	搦み	tie up, entangle, arrest (vt)(n)
kata	肩	shoulder
kata	形	form, shape
kata.me	固め	harden, solidify, fix, stabilize (vt)(n)
kata.te	片手	one hand (LIT “one-side hand”)
kei.ko	稽古	practice, training
ken	劍	sword
ke.ri	蹴り	kick (vt)(n)
ki.ai	気合	focus or concentration of ki (LIT “ki coming together”)
ki.hon	基本	basic, fundamental
ki.ri	切り	cut (vt)(n)
kō.hai	後輩	one’s junior
ko.kyū	呼吸	breath
kō.sa	交差	cross over
koshi	腰	hip, lower back
ko.te	小手	hand (LIT “small hand”)
koto.dama	言霊	LIT “word spirit”
kubi	首	neck
kumi	組	group, grouping, combination, union (vi)(n)
kuro.obī	黒帯	black belt
kyū	級	rank, grade, level
ma.ai	間合	engagement distance/interval (also <i>mawai</i>)
mae	前	forward, before, in front
mawa.ri	回り	go around, turn, revolve (vi)(n)
mawa.shi	回し	turn around, rotate (vt)(n)
mei.sō	瞑想	meditation
migi	右	right (opposite of left)
misogi	禊	ritual purification
mo.chi	持ち	hold (n)
moku.sō	黙想	silent contemplation/meditation
mori.hei	盛平	the founder’s given (i.e. first) name
moro.te	諸手	both hands
mu.dan.sha	無段者	person below <i>dan</i> rank (LIT “no rank person”)
mune	胸	chest
musu.bi	結び	bind together, link, connect (n)
naga.re	流れ	flow (vi)(n)
na.ge	投げ	throw; thrower, throwing side (n)
ni.kyō	二教	LIT “second teaching”
obi	帯	belt
omote	表	front, facing
osa.e	抑え	hold down, suppress (vt)(n)
ō.sen.sei	大先生	LIT “big teacher”

oto.shi	落とし	drop (vt)(n)
ō.yō	応用	applied, applications
ran.do.ri	乱取り	LIT “chaotic grabbing”
rei	礼	courtesy, respect, gratitude, bow
ren.zoku	連続	continuous, successive
ryō.kata	両肩	both shoulders
ryō.te	両手	both hands
ryū	流	a style, a school (of thought)
saba.ki	捌き	handling [of something] (n)
san.kyō	三教	LIT “third teaching”
sa.yū	左右	left and right
sei.za	正座	LIT “correct sitting” or “straight sitting”
sem.pai	先輩	one’s senior
sen.sei	先生	teacher (LIT “born before”)
shi.dō.in	指導員	instructor
shi.han	師範	teacher, master
shi.hō	四方	four directions
shik.kō	膝行	knee walk, “samurai walk” (LIT “knee go”)
shi.me	締め	squeeze, strangle (n)
shiro.obī	白帯	white belt
shi.te	仕手	thrower, throwing side; protagonist
sho.dan	初段	LIT “beginning rank”
shō.men	正面	directly in front (LIT “straight face”)
sode	袖	sleeve
soto	外	outside
su.bu.ri	素振り	practice swing (n)
suki	隙	opening, undefended point
sumi	角	corner
su.ri	擦り	rub, graze, scrape, abrade (vt)(n)
suwari	座	sit (vi)(n)
tachi	立	stand (vi)(n)
ta.chi	太刀	long sword
tai	体	body (NW)
tai.no.hen.kō	体の変更	LIT “change of the body”
tai.sō	体操	exercises
tan.tō	短刀	LIT “short sword”
tatami	畳	Japanese straw mats
te.gatana	手刀	LIT “hand sword”
te.kubi	手首	wrist, hand
ten.chi	天地	heaven & earth
ten.kan	轉換	turn around, conversion, change
to.ri	取り	take, hold, take away; thrower, throwing side (n)
tsu.ki	突き	strike, thrust (n)
u.chi	打ち	strike (n)

uchi	内	inside, within
ude	腕	arm
ue.shiba	植芝	the founder's surname (LIT "lawn planter")
u.ke	受け	receiving, receiving side (n)
uke.mi	受身	receiving, passive, receiving side; falling down safely (LIT "receiving body")
un.dō	運動	movement, exercise
ura	裏	back, behind
ushi.ro	後ろ	back, in back, behind
waza	技	technique
yoko.men	横面	LIT "side face"
yon.kyō	四教	LIT "fourth teaching"
yū.dan.sha	有段者	<i>dan</i> -ranked person (LIT "have rank person")
za.gi	座技	LIT "seated technique" (same as <i>suwariwaza</i>)
zan.shin	残心	LIT "remaining mind"
zen.go	前後	forward and back, front and rear
-zu.ki	突き	→ tsuki

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