

# Pinner Aikido Club

[www.pinner-aikido.com](http://www.pinner-aikido.com)



*Meaning of Aikido*

## AIKIDO: A Brief Etymology

The word **AIKIDO** is composed of three Sino-Japanese ideographs:

**ai**, meaning harmony or blending;

**ki**, indicating the universal life force or etheric energy of the universe; and

**do**, which means a road or path, and can imply a way or life.

Thus, among its many nuances is the meaning of a way of life in harmony with the natural life forces of the universe.



**AI** may be seen as a roof which shelters two other components. The horizontal line is the number “one” and also means a single unit. The square was originally a circle which was also used to indicate a group. the ideograph is a picture of single family group in its house. Thus, the meaning came to mean “**to match**” or “**to blend**” harmoniously like the members of a family under the same roof.



**KI** has two parts. The upper portion shows three lines that formerly rose vertically from the forth at the left. These represent steam rising from a surface. Without the lower portion this shape is still a ‘picture’ of steam rising from the water or earth. The lower part is the character for rice and displays the grains assembled on a central stalk. For the ancient Chinese, steam rising from cooked rice was the very substance of life because without taking in this ‘**breath of life**’ one would starve. Over time the meaning broadened and ki became a symbol of **vitality** or strength and came to be used in words implying **will**, intention, and **essence**. In oriental philosophy, it came to represent the fundamental energy of creation, the pervading energy of the universe, the very **life force** itself.



**DO** also has two parts. The right half shows two lines over another, perhaps eyes and a mouth. The bottom portion is the character for the “self”. When used independently, this combined shape is a picture of the head over the body connected by the “neck”. The curved part at the left with the long tail is actually the character for the foot. The complete character, then, shows the neck supported by the feet. ‘One takes one’s neck down the “**road**” with the feet’ is a story used by children to remember the meaning of this character. As the character began to be used philosophically, it took on the nuance of taking your life into your hands and committing yourself to a particular **path** or vocation. For over a thousand years this word has been used to symbolize the all-encompassing path of religious or moral commitment -- one’s chosen “**way of life**”.