

## Aji Of Giho

Aji is a Japanese word. We use this word for food, AJI GA YOI. = Taste good. But we use Aji in another way (I cannot find a good English word for that.).

After a long and hard practice, you will be able to do all the giho rightly and freely (as you like). It will take at least 30 years to reach this level. However, everyone is different. Old, young, tall, short, big, small, strong, weak...

So even if you try to do all the giho in the same way, very correctly they become slightly different. The giho is very correct but slightly different, however very natural and beautiful...with enough confidence and composure.

No one can object against such giho. That is Aji of giho.

I want you to reach this level.

Iwata Norikazu

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(Translated by Yuriko Terao)

I can't finish writing about Aji of giho, even if I try very hard.

I have to make more efforts to write about it.

The other day, an actress, Kiyokawa Nijiko san, she is dead now, said. „We have to be patient for 5 years. We may feel we understand all after the 3-year patience, but we need 2 more years. The 2-year patience is really important.”

When I apply her words to iaido, even if we practice very hard every day for five years, we can't learn giho very well. Even if we practice very hard, it will take about 10 years to do waza correctly and freely.

When I was 43 years old, I realized Oe sensei's giho was very important. I commuted between Kochi and Kagawa on Sundays. I was the only one student with four teachers. I was really fortunate to have such great teachers. But when I think over my iaido at that time, I was just doing correctly. Mori Shigeki sensei told me to use tanden power not physical strength, but it took three years for me to do so.

After all, it took about twenty years for me to have confidence about giho. At the latter half of the twenty years, I started to take some notes about the main points of the lessons. I collected them into a single volume. That is the Red Book.

I rewrote that five times.

I just briefly explained about 45 hon of Oe sensei's.

I couldn't elucidate the special features and the details of each waza. The Red Book is superficial. I never thought of Aji at that time. I devoted myself to learn Oe iaido. I tried to master Oe iaido even a little. I started to learn Oe iaido when I was 5 dan Renshi.

Then while I was becoming 6 dan and 7 dan, I wrote the Red Book.

At the end of 7 dan, I finished writing the Red Book.

Then I got 8 dan, and about 10 years later I became Hanshi.

I practiced very hard as far as my job permitted, but when I look over, I never took Aji into my mind then.

After I became 70 years old, I started to realize the importance of right tradition, and started to feel gratitude toward my teachers. Such feeling became stronger and stronger, and I started to realize Koryu was really deep and difficult.

People from all over Japan started to ask me to teach.

I realized the importance of Oe iaido strongly, so I tried to teach Oe iaido very rightly. After I became 70 years old, I had a good fortune to publish my ideas about iaido in Kendo Nippon.

I started to think about Aji of waza abstractly.

When I saw the old great iaido teachers at Kyoto Taikai and other Taikai in the various districts, I started to think about Aji of waza. I cannot forget the great enbu of the old teachers at Kyoto Taikai.

- Kashima sensei (Kamikage Ryu Soke). He was very good at kendo, too.
- Kimura Sanzo sensei (The head family of Hoki Ryu in Kumamoto Prefecture)
- Okada Morihiro sensei (Shined Ryu). Iaido Hanshi. He is also a great kendo teacher.
- Suzuki Yosuke sensei. He was Okada sensei's student, one year older than I. He was the champion at All Japan Taikai.
- Hashimoto Masatake sensei. A graduate from Tokyo University. He is Mori Shigeki sensei's junior.
- Kono Hyakuren sensei. His books produced many great iaido-ka. He is a benefactor of today's iaido people. He built Eishin Ryu in Osaka. He was 20th Soke.
- Sano Shigenori sensei. He is from Kanagawa Prefecture. His Noto was really wonderful. He threw kisski into koiguchi at a stroke. It was really I marvelous, his noto was the best in Japan.
- Nomura Jokichi sensei. He was a soldier. He worked for Kochi Regiment. He learned by Yamanouchi Hoke sensei. Hokiyama Namio sensei, Hukui Harumasa sendei, and Oe sensei.
- Nakayama Hakudo sensei.
- Hashimoto Toyo sensei. He was Hakudo sensei's student.
- Ueshiba Morihei sensei (Aiki Jutsu).

I was really lucky to see such great teachers' enbu.

All of these teachers flickers and brace myself.

Their Aji of giho was sinking deeply into my mind.

Every food has Aji (taste). Some food has good Aji and some has bad Aji. We taste them in our mouths. Aji of giho sinks into our minds deeply by appreciating and putting it into practice. We chew our food and taste by our tongue, but it is very difficult to get Aji in giho.

According to the level of our iaido, our valuation (judgement) becomes different. The people who cannot understand the giho cannot value it. The people who do brilliant enbu, who do right traditional giho, who have confidence and composure, can value (judge) enbu. I believe only the people who have confidence and composure in their all giho can demonstrate vividly and can value (judge) the others rightly.

When we do Koryu, we must think of the opponents. We must know the opponents well. We must know both our ability and the opponents' ability. We must judge the opponent's capability, and we must know ours. Our capability should be more than theirs. Then we can have confidence and composure. We can do enbu with Aji.

- Traditional giho.
- After a long and hard practice, we can do just as we want to do. The waza should be ours.
- We can do enbu with confidence and composure.

These three conditions are necessary to get Aji in giho. I think when we reach this level, giho may change slightly, according to our ideas. Even if we try to do each waza in same way, it will be different.

Our ideas toward the opponents are different. The idea about every movement of the opponents and ours are slightly different. So it is very difficult to say „the difference” right or wrong. Is the difference very natural or our own style?

Nakayama Hakudo sensei learned from Hosokawa Masayoshi sensei but changed Shoden Ukenagashi and Chuden Oroshi. He studies the others Koryu and kata very deeply, too. He trained and trained very hard. He did enormous efforts in other areas, too. Thinking of his great efforts, I feel he expressed his idea a little in his iaido, based on his experience. The change is his Aji.

Please make all possible efforts, then you will understand Aji.

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I asked him about the Red Book.

Y: Do you really think that book is superficial?

I: Yes. Just explanations about the waza.

Y: But you rewrote 5 time, didn't you?

I: Yes. I tried to explain waza very hard. I sent the manuscript of the Red Book to Yamamoto Takuji sensei. He rejoiced and sent the manuscript to some iaido-ka. Mori Shigeki sensei rejoiced, too. He wanted to write a book, but he couldn't.

I will write about Iwata sensei's history briefly as it is confusing. He learned in Kochi from about 43 to 48 years old. He started to take notes. He was around 44 or 45 years old. Soon after Kochi he learned in Matsuyama for about 5 or 6 years. (Mori sensei)

He started to have confidence. He was around 65 years old.

The Red Book was published. He was 70 years old.

He started to think about Aji. He was over 70 years old.