

**2009 Japan Martial Arts Association Distinguished Service Award for Aikido
given to Anno Motomichi Sensei, 8th dan,
Chief Instructor of Aikido Kumano Juku Dojo in Shingu, Japan**

Anno Sensei's essay, published in Aikido Shinbun, February 10, 2009

I am sincerely grateful to receive the Martial Arts Distinguished Service Award from the Japan Martial Arts Association. This is an honor I do not deserve. It is entirely due to the support and guidance I have long received from Doshu and all the members of the Aikido community. For this I express my deepest gratitude.

As I recall, when I began the study of Aikido in 1954, it was a chaotic time. We had not yet emerged from the confusion following the end of the war, and neither the nation nor the people of Japan had a clear goal in mind.

Born in 1931, I had two older brothers, but they fell in the war, and it was only after the war ended that we were informed. I lived with my grieving parents in a quiet farming village. I was always thinking I wanted to study something meaningful, to which I could dedicate myself.

One day, at the paper manufacturing plant where I was employed, I heard that an amazing martial arts teacher was coming from Tokyo to Shingu, and that it was possible to receive direct instruction from him. Without hesitation, I enrolled as a student--of Aikido.

To be honest, at that time I had no knowledge of Aikido, and I had no idea what sort of person the martial arts teacher from Tokyo was. From that time to this day, for over fifty years, I have lived my life following the path of Aikido. The fact that the martial arts teacher from Tokyo was Aikido's founder, Ueshiba Morihei Osensei, brought a sense of purpose and determination to my life.

As you know, the Founder teaches Aikido as the path of *kami*. In particular, he had a deep reverence for the Kumano *kamisama*, so he would visit Shingu from time to time. On occasion, he would stay for a longer period and give personal instruction to us young Aikido students.

Currently I am in charge of the Kumano Juku Dojo (in Shingu City, Wakayama Prefecture), having succeeded the former chief instructor, the late Hikitsuchi Michio Sensei. I am applying myself day and night, together with all teachers and students, taking as a "motto" the faithful transmission, to the next generation, of the techniques and spirit conveyed directly by Aikido's Founder.

In conclusion, I would like to express again my gratitude to the Founder Osensei, the second Doshu, the current Doshu, and all teachers and students, offering these words of appreciation as a prayer for the increasing growth and development of Aikido.

--Anno Motomichi Sensei
translated by Linda Holiday