

## To Regain Daily Life

Aikido Doshu  
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On April 8<sup>th</sup> 2020, Aikido Hombu Dojo started to refrain from holding practices and closed the offices. After one month without a sign of people's presence at the dojo, the Emergency Declaration was extended, and we had to continue to refrain from practice. Although I was prepared for it, I was still full of disappointment.

During this period once a day my feet carried me to the dojo to open the windows to allow for fresh air to flow. It has fallen completely silent. The 105 tatami mats combined with the wooden floor panels make a space the size of 120 tatami mats, and more than ever before I felt how wide it is. The two pictures at the front of the dojo of the Founder, Morihei Ueshiba, and Kisshomaru Ueshiba Second Doshu, motionless, stoically, observe the current state of affairs.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Showa Era (1931), with the help of donations the Founder built the Aikido-dedicated "Kobukan Dojo". During repeated fire bombings of Tokyo in World War II, Wakamatsucho, where the dojo is located, was in the situation of being burnt down. "I cannot allow the precious dojo, the care of which has been entrusted to me by my father, the Founder, to burn down" thought Kisshomaru Second Doshu, and he shook off the embers that came flying and desperately held fast in his responsibility to protect the dojo. There can be no mistake, that one dojo in the burnt area survived the destruction of war must have been the incident to encourage the reconstruction of Aikido after the war. Of course, during the war practices were not held, and in the post-war period Hombu Dojo was opened as an Evacuation Shelter. While there has been reconstruction on the structure since then, the spirit of these two men still fills the dojo.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, people around the world must refrain from gathering to practice. For the Aikikai Foundation this is an exceedingly painful time we have had no choice but to endure.

On May 26<sup>th</sup> the Emergency Declaration of Japan, including Tokyo, was lifted. However, this does not mean that the corona virus has been resolved, as relaxing measures may allow for infection to once again spread.

On June 1<sup>st</sup> the Aikido Hombu Dojo will finally reopen for practice. However, as indicated on our homepage, we cannot hold practices in the same manner as before. Consistent countermeasures, prudent care, and ingenuity are required to avoid the "Three Densities." Until the day the COVID-19 pandemic is controlled, we must create a new daily life in the dojo with compassion for all through the cooperation of everyone.

Once, after the war, Kisshomaru Second Doshu thought "Aikido is especially necessary today." In that same way, in times such as these, Aikido brethren throughout the world must come together to overcome. And while feeling the desires of the Founder, Morihei Ueshiba and Kisshomaru Second Doshu, by any means necessary I strongly hope to survive.