
Training by Michael J. Hacker

We often speak of training in Aikidō. But to what kind of training are we referring? Study? Research? Observation? Repetitious drilling? The English word "train" alone seems a bit inadequate to describe all of the facets of learning that take place in the dōjō [and elsewhere].

I want to keep this month's article brief and allow you to draw your own conclusions. I will, however, give you the breakdown of several Japanese words I have heard used to refer to various aspects training. Along with them, I will present you with a couple of examples of how each kanji in the word is used in [more or less] colloquial Japanese.

Let's start off with a few English words to establish a base:

Train —

- To coach in or accustom to a mode of behavior or performance.
- To make proficient with specialized instruction and practice.

Study —

- The act or process of studying.
- The pursuit of knowledge, as by reading, observation, or research.

Drill —

- Disciplined, repetitious exercise as a means of teaching and perfecting a skill or procedure.
- A task or exercise for teaching a skill or procedure by repetition.

Research —

- Scholarly or scientific investigation or inquiry.
- Close, careful study.

Obviously, there is a certain amount of definition overlap. Each refers to learning, but each also has its own particular approach and flavor. For instance, special research study would likely be much more academic in nature than a repetitious drilling practice designed to imprint principles into your body.

That said, let's dive into some common, hopefully relevant, Japanese terms.

keiko 稽古 - training, drill, practice, rehearsal

- kei 稽 - think, consider, bow low
 - ◇ keikogi 稽古着 - training uniform [consider-old clothing]
 - ◇ mitorigeiko 見取稽古 - observation [see-take-keiko] (I have heard kengaku 見学 - [see-study] more often)
- ko 古 - old, ancient
 - ◇ koshiki 古式 - old style, ancient ritual [old-ceremony/style]
 - ◇ kobudō 古武道 - ancient martial arts [old-martial-path]

tanren 鍛錬 - a process of forging and polishing

- tan 鍛 - forge, temper, train, drill, [instill] discipline
 - ◇ tanzō 鍛造 - forging [forge-build]
 - ◇ tantetsu 鍛鉄 - wrought iron [forge-iron]
- ren 錬 - forge, temper, refine, polish, train
 - ◇ renbei 錬兵 - military drill [forge-soldier]
 - ◇ renkinjutsu 錬金術 - alchemy [forge-gold-art]

kunren 訓練 - training

- kun 訓 - teachings, precept
 - ◇ kyōkun 教訓 - lesson, precept, moral [teach-precept]
 - ◇ kun'iku 訓育 - education, discipline [teach-upbringing]
- ren — see above

renshū 練習

- ren — see above
- shū 習 - learn
 - ◇ gakushū 学習 - learning, study [study-learn]
 - ◇ gakushū 悪習 - bad habit, vice [evil-learn]

(Continued on page 2)

kōshūkai 講習会 – short course, training conference

- kō 講 – lecture, study
 - ◇ kōhyō 講評 – criticism, review [lecture-criticize]
 - ◇ kōkyū 講究 – specialized research [lecture-investigate]
- shū — see above
- kai 会 – meeting
 - ◇ kaigō 会合 – meeting, assembly [meeting-together]
 - ◇ Aikikai 合気会 – Aikikai [aiki-association]

gasshuku 合宿 – lodging together

- gō / ga(tsu) / ai 合 – together, fit, be appropriate
 - ◇ Aikidō 合気道 – Aikidō (duh)
 - ◇ nia(u) 似合 – to be suitable, well-matched [resemble-together]
- shuku 宿 – lodging, inn
 - ◇ Shinjuku 新宿 – Shinjuku area of Tokyo [new-lodging]
 - ◇ shukuhaku 宿泊 – lodging, a place to stay [shelter-overnight stay]

kenkyū 研究 – research

- ken 研 – hone, sharpen, polish
 - ◇ kenshūsei 研修生 – special research student [sharpen-cultivate-student]
 - ◇ makenshi 磨研紙 – sandpaper [polish-hone-paper]
- kyū 究 – investigate thoroughly
 - ◇ gakyūteki 学究的 – scholastic, academic [study-investigate-ic]
 - ◇ kenkyūjo 研究所 – laboratory [hone-investigate-place]

These are just a few examples of words you might hear in reference to learning or training of some sort. Try connecting some of the dots yourself and see what you come up with... it might make for an interesting discussion.

Michael Hacker began his study of Aikidō in Japan in 1990, and has been very fortunate to get his hands on many skillful teachers in his short time on the tatami. His primary Budō influences are Donald Moriyama, Amano Shigeko, Saito Morihiro, C.E. Clark, and Stan Connor. He has also had limited exposure to Kōdōkan Jūdō, Mugai-ryū Iai-Hyōdō, Shōrin-ryū Kishaba-juku Karate, Hapkido, Tae Kwon Do, Tai Chi, and various Chinese martial arts. Among his other loves are song-writing, his Chet Atkins nylon-string, techno-geek stuff, his world famous Bad Budō video collection, studying languages, and Swan (if he knows what's good for him). Michael is a student at the Jiyushinkan in Tempe, Arizona.