

Sample chapter



15. *Shiho Nage*

(Four Corner/ Directions Throw)

NIHO NAGE
(TWO CORNER/DIRECTIONS THROW)

This very popular technique, present in nearly every style of aiki and ju-jutsu, is very old and very dangerous. It has caused more deaths than any other technique in the history of aiki. That's the story, anyway. I doubt that accurate statistics were kept in 1600. The deaths supposedly resulted from uke's head crashing conclusively into a less than pillow-like surface.

Shiho nage's legendary prowess easily justifies the seemingly awkward movement of stepping under uke's arm. Longevity offers myriad experiences, thus this old technique has a great number of variants.

To start, let's look at one method of throwing in four directions. We use North, South, West, and East as markers with North being the direction which tori faces. Careful, however, since East and West may seem to invert once uke changes attacking side. We can also refer to the four directions as 12 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock. Students still get confused, however, so I usually ask students to throw "to uke's rear", "to tori's rear", "to the open side", or "to the closed side." This is easier for the novice tori, but for the reader, looking from the outside, North, South, East, and West will work just fine.

NORTH (toward uke's rear)

This is sometimes referred to as the tenkan or ura version.

Uke attacks tori's left wrist (fig. 474), as he will in every example. Tori tenkans, circling his left arm horizontally (fig. 475). Tori's gripped arm is the manipulator of the technique while he places his gripping hand (right in the pictures) in position for security. If tori tries to use his gripping hand to pull uke's arm around, he will meet with resistance. Tori completes the tenkan and drops uke to uke's rear (fig. 476, 477).

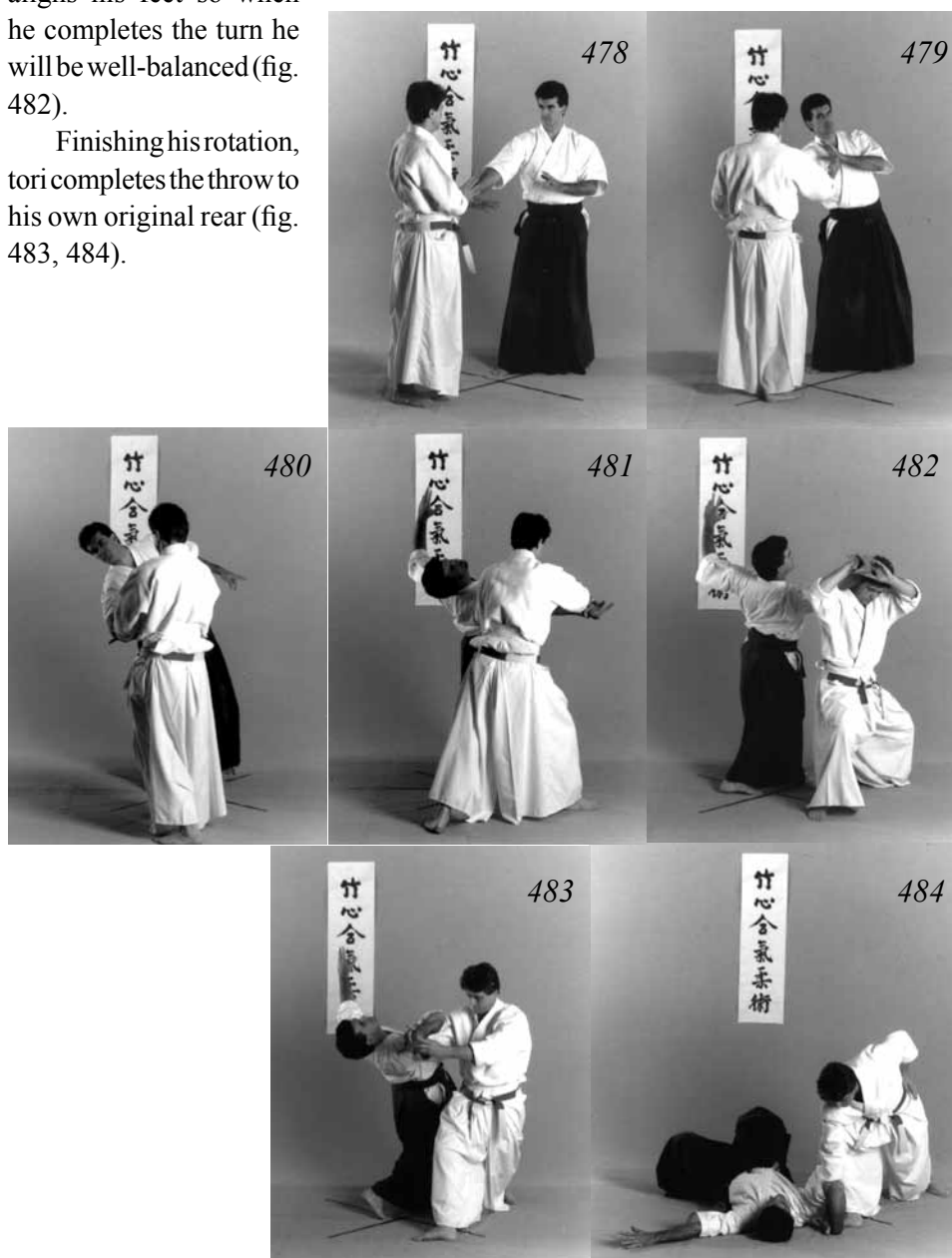


SOUTH (toward uke's front)

This is sometimes referred to as the irimi or omote version, and also serves as the basis for **EAST** and **WEST**.

Tori steps forward with his right foot to fake a strike to uke's face (fig. 478, 479). He then steps back with his left foot to off-balance uke (fig. 480) while taking hold of uke's wrist. With his right foot and left forearm, tori enters in front of uke, rotating him and extending his own gripped forearm in a horizontal circle (fig. 481). Stepping under uke's arm (moving his foot first, then hips, and his head last), tori aligns his feet so when he completes the turn he will be well-balanced (fig. 482).

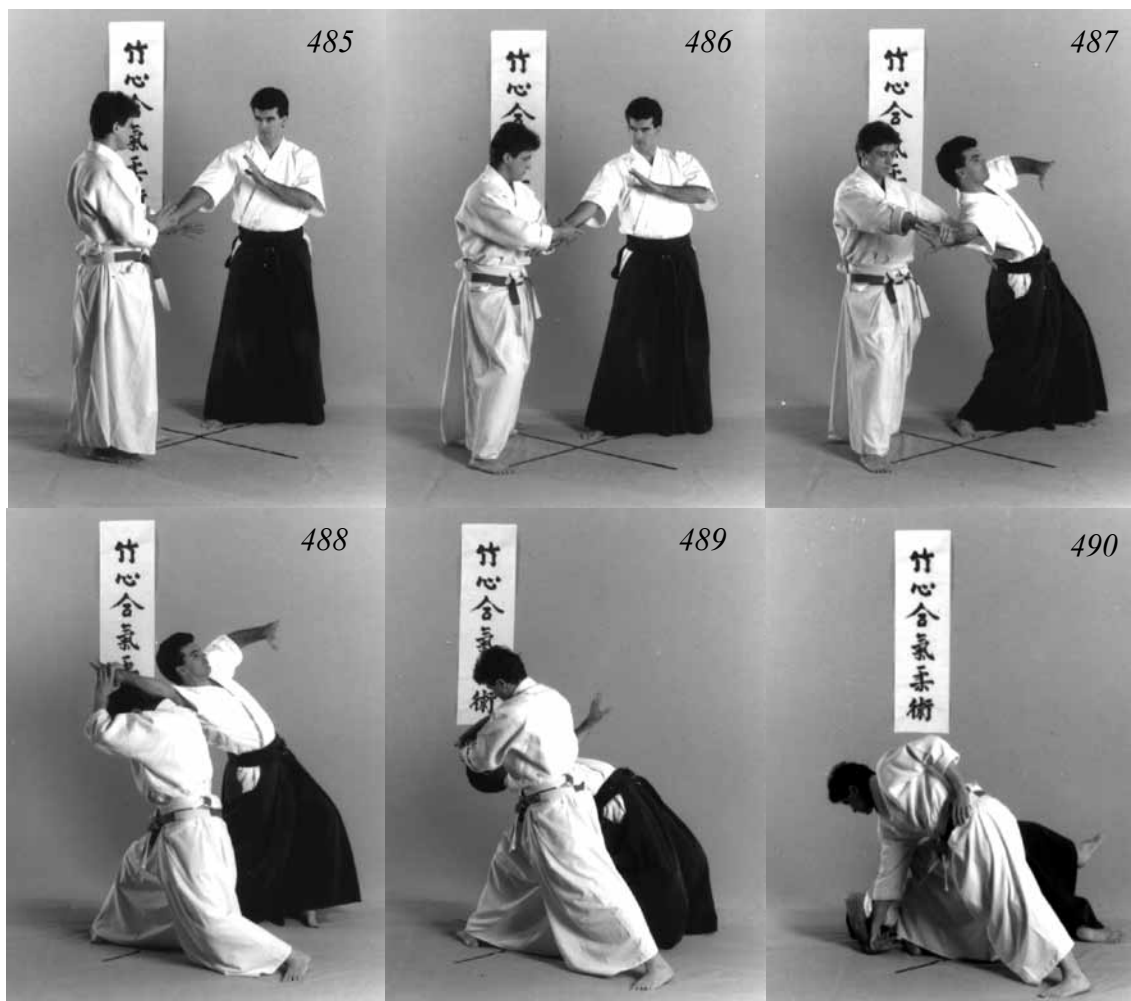
Finishing his rotation, tori completes the throw to his own original rear (fig. 483, 484).



WEST (toward the closed side, or gripping side)

I refer to this one as “short-side” or “closed-side” shiho nage so that no matter which hand uke attacks with, this method of throwing can be clearly delineated from the others.

In this example, tori steps to his left with his left foot and rotates his left forearm in a horizontal circle (fig. 485, 486). A further rotation of the hips and arm extension may be necessary to off-balance uke (fig. 487). Tori’s pressing uke’s pulse with his thumb can help. Tori steps under uke’s arm and rotates his body so that uke’s arm remains horizontal (fig. 488). Tori completes the throw to uke’s right side (tori’s original left side)—the side at which tori’s and uke’s feet “closed” at the beginning of the waza.



EAST (toward the open side, or free hand side)

I refer to this as “long-side” or “open-side” shiho nage. Tori begins in a manner similar to the **SOUTH** lead-in, by stepping toward uke’s inside and faking a strike (fig. 491, 492). Notice, however, that tori makes a more circular step in this version so that when he retreats to off-balance uke (fig. 493), it is at a greater angle than in the **SOUTH** version. To turn uke more than 180 degrees, tori extends his gripped arm in a horizontal circle (fig. 494) and steps under uke’s arm. Rotating his hips to face uke’s original left (the open side of their original stance configuration), tori steps underneath uke’s arm, turns clockwise and completes the throw (fig. 495, 496).



Note that tori, in the examples, always finishes with his inside foot forward. This is a very strict tenet in many aiki styles as this makes it more difficult for uke, once he is on the mat, to pull tori down into or over him. Other styles prefer a step back or forward putting tori’s inside foot to his rear. Their philosophy is that this action adds power to the wrist lock or arm lock involved.

Given these directional and foot position variants, we can examine finishing variants, that is, how tori effects the actual throw.

You have entered into the throw and you are about to put uke on his back

1.

In method 1, you extend uke's forearm to his rear (fig. 497). You then suddenly pull back on his hand for a quick and unpleasant wrist lock (fig. 498). He'll often fall without your guidance, but you can always point him down if he doesn't get the idea.



2.

In number 2, you extend uke to his rear (fig. 499) and then point his wrist downward (fig. 500). Your goal is to severely off-balance the guy before you aim him to the mat (fig. 501).

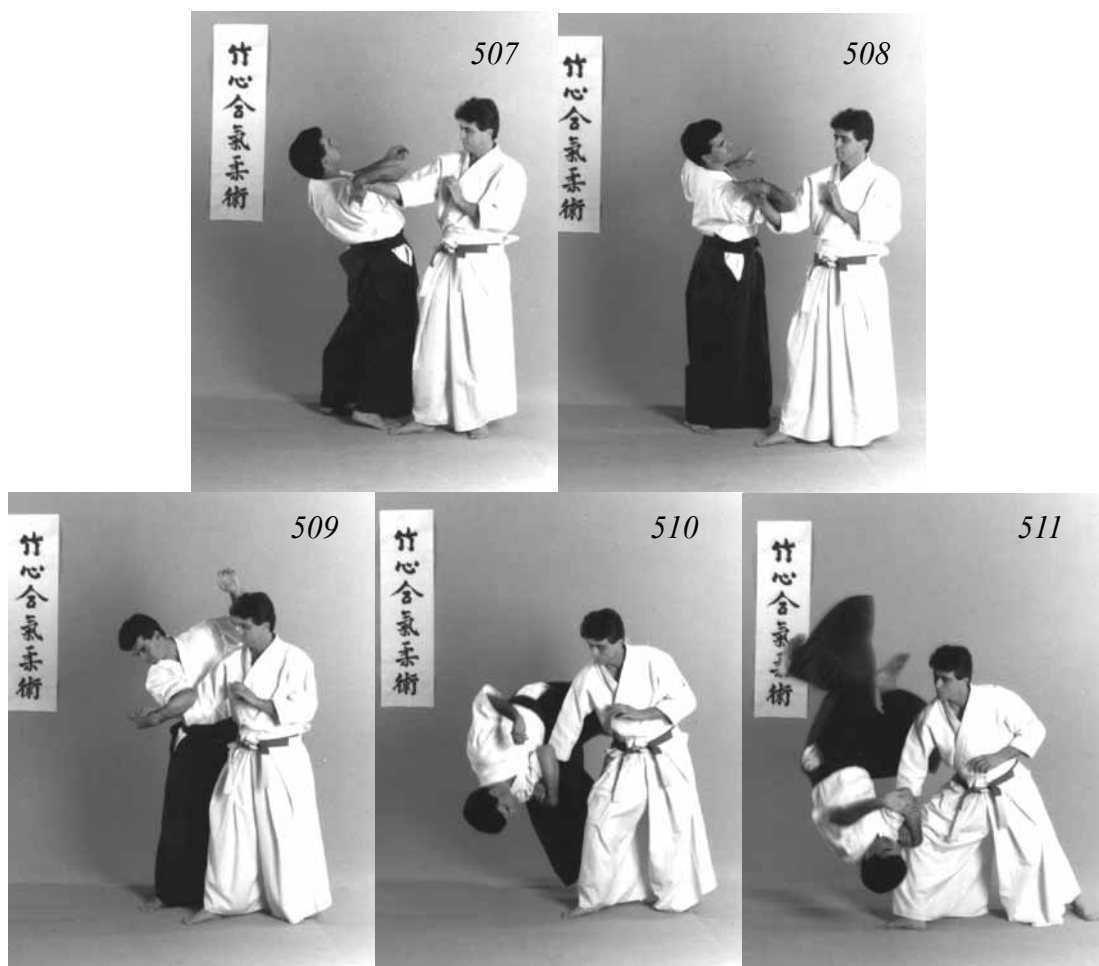




3.

You cast him away (fig. 502, 503) and then change direction. You point downward and can use your forearm and elbow for leverage (fig. 504, 505). You control uke all the way to the floor, usually ending in a holddown (fig. 506).





4.

The angle of your arm does not allow uke to sit back into the fall. Instead he is cranked around into a big breakfall. Careful of his shoulder, elbow, and wrist. The fall may take some practice. Obviously, a street application would tend to break or sprain your opponent's joints should you apply this quickly in an upright position.

If necessary, drop your weight, locking uke into his base (fig. 507), then loop your arm in front of you and extend (fig. 508, 509). As you drop your hand down (fig. 510) uke's arm coils vertically, forcing him into a breakfall (fig. 511).

5.

You don't *point* uke down, you *pull* him down using your entire body weight. Sudden and dangerous for uke's head. This version should be credited to the late John Saviano of Rhode Island.

Arch uke (fig. 512), then drop suddenly to both knees (fig. 513, 514).



A subtler sub-version of 5 (and a Don Angier invention) is to arch uke's back, point his wrist to his rear "off-balancing point" then suddenly collapse your own weight-bearing leg an inch or so. Uke feels as if he is being yanked from below. (See 9).



6.

Six (below) along with **7** and **8** (following) illustrate shiho nage without stepping under uke's arm. Some schools may categorize these differently because of the absence of the taki step. This type of shiho-nage appears frequently in Henry Robert Vilaire's instruction of Kaze-arashi-ryu. For illustration purposes, I use ikkyo/ude otosu odori as a starting point (fig. 515-517).

In number **6**, tori reverses ikkyo and turns uke's wrist toward his outside over uke's shoulder (fig. 518, 519). This is done by tori dropping his left elbow under uke's wrist and rotating his hips clockwise. As uke's arm is circled over his shoulder, he will arch backward. Tori applies a shiho nage with one or both hands. Once uke is arched, tori drops him (fig. 520, 521).

515



516



517



518



519



520

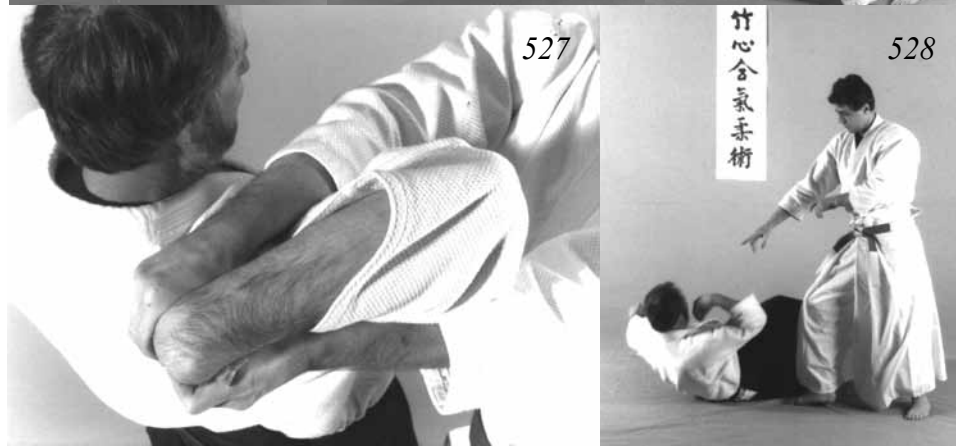


521



7.

Seven looks very much like **6**, but with shoulder leverage and a two-hand application. From ikkyo (fig. 522), uke's arm is reverse further from his body in an *ude garami* (arm coil) version of kote gaeshi (fig. 523-525). With two hands, tori bends uke's hand toward his elbow joint, arching him (fig. 526, 527). Tori can step in to throw or throw with a turn of his hips (fig. 528).



8.

From ikkyo/ude otosu odori, tori applies a sankyo/kote hineri lock (fig. 529). **Eight** starts from a kote hineri (wrist twist) grip maintained by tori's outside hand throughout the ikkyo portion and reversal of uke's arm. Thus, **8** is a sankyo/kote hineri version of 7.

From kote hineri grip (fig. 530), tori rotates his hips clockwise (fig. 531), maintaining the lock and arching uke (fig. 532). The throw can be done with a simple extension of tori's arms (fig. 532, 533).





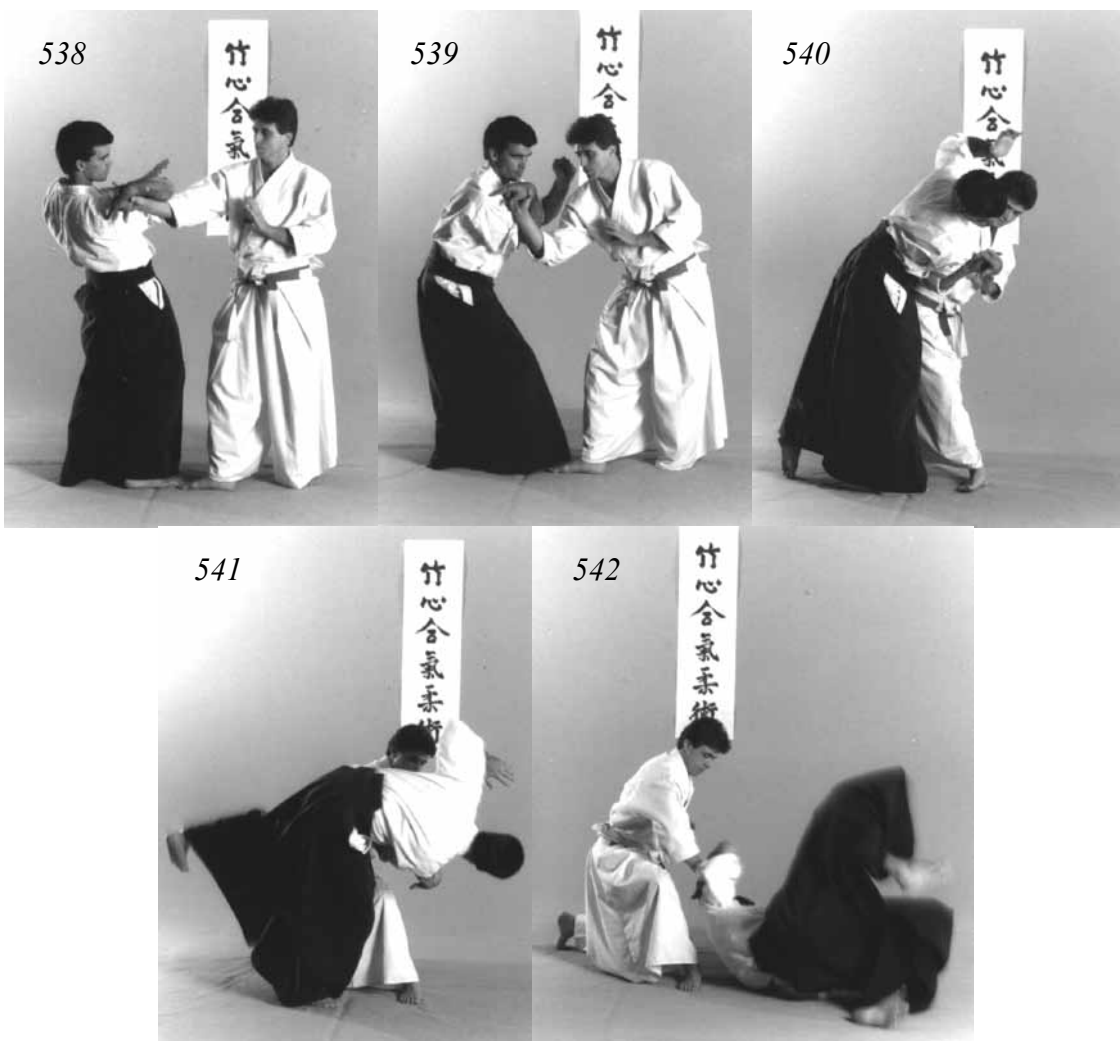
9.

This subtle little variant is especially good for subtle smaller people and was shown to me by Soke Don Angier. In it, tori slips his shoulder under uke's upper arm (fig. 535). This is similar to 7 but from a more conventional entry. The throw is accomplished by tori's beginning to genuflect on one or both knees (as in 5) but changing his mind once uke is on his way down (fig. 536, 537). The movements are nearly invisible if done correctly, so neither uke nor anyone watching can figure out why the opponent became so suddenly cooperative.



10.

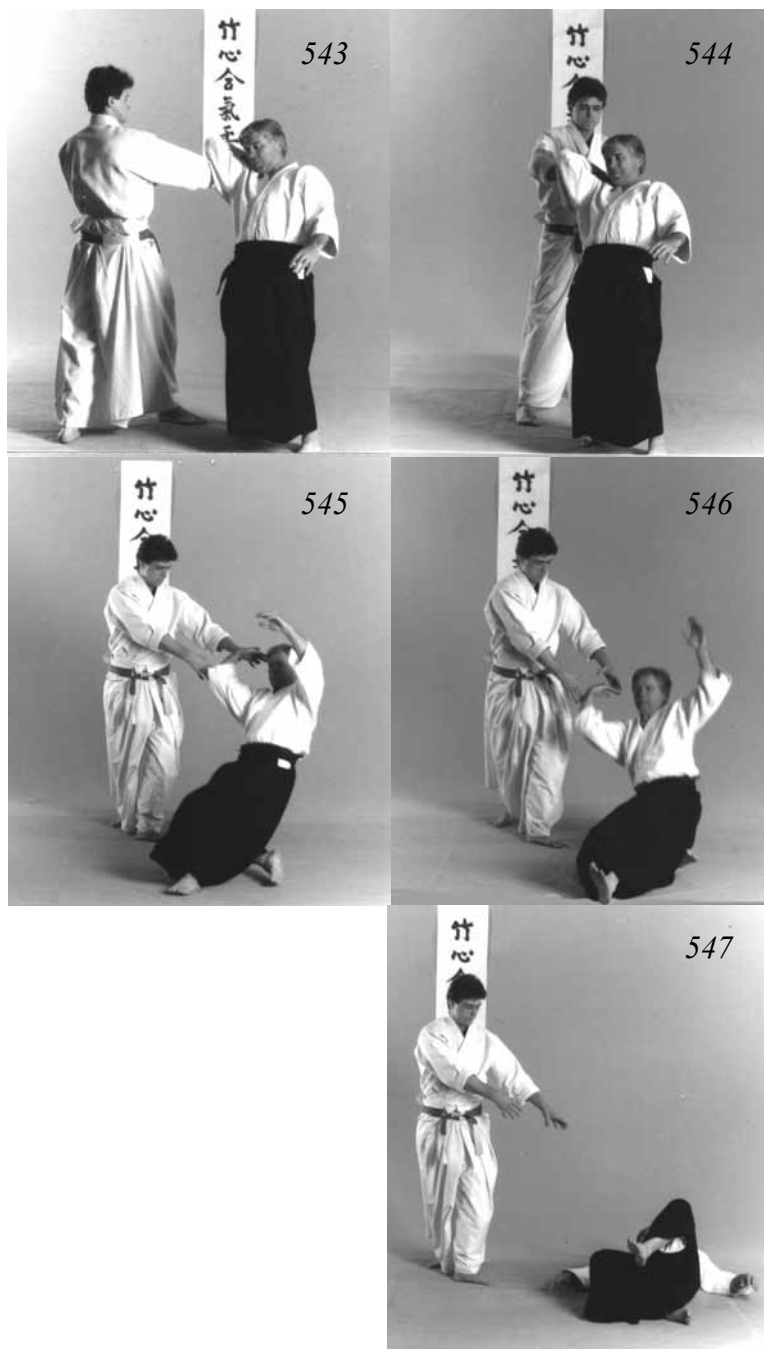
Uke may not be a cooperative person even when out-techniqued. Here uke resists the shiho nage by dropping his elbow (fig. 538, 539). But tori tenkans on his inside foot so that uke is momentarily behind him (fig. 540). I say “momentarily” because the torsion on uke’s arm sends him flying into a reclining position in front of tori (fig. 541, 542).



11.

Number **11** occurs when tori cannot get uke arched sufficiently to throw him (fig. 543). Tori steps in with his outside foot and spins behind uke (clockwise in the photos; fig. 544). Uke is dropped with a clockwise rotation of uke's hips (fig. 545-547) and/or a small step to uke's rear.

Neither **10** nor **11** is very pleasant for uke's wrist.



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*Portrait by Jose Fraguas
(c. 2009)*

Tony Annesi, a martial artist since 1964, has earned dan-ranks in Judo, aiki-ju-jutsu, and karate and has researched numerous other martial arts.

Annesi is the director of BUSHIDO-KAI BUDOYA, which markets martial arts videos, manuals, and other educational materials. He also serves as chief officer of BUSHIDO-KAI KENKYUKAI, an organization dedicated to the development of traditional martial arts in the modern world and specifically of the Takeshin Sogo Budo.

Annesi has written for INSIDE KARATE, BLACK BELT, INSIDE KUNG-FU, INSIDE KARATE, MASTERS OF SELF-DEFENSE, FIGHTER INTERNATIONAL and other publications. He is the author 8 Aiki-ju-jutsu Manuals, 6 Karate Manuals, and of *Cracking the Kata Code*, *The Road to Mastery*, *The Principles of Advanced Budo*, *Expressing the Budo*, *Sudden Attack Defense*, *Tales of the Dojo*, *The Dojo Files* and *Elevated Elementals*.

He has also written a book of short stories (*1969, The Loss of Innocence*) and a fantasy novel trilogy (*The Shngrilla Artifacts*).