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The Aikido Center of Los Angeles LLC

道の為、世の為、人の為 合気道

The Aiki Dojo

Direct Affiliation: The Aikido World Headquarters, 17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan
International Aikido Kodokai, Rev. Kensho Furuya Foundation
Los Angeles Sword & Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai
Nanka Yamanashi Kenjin Kai Southern California Yamanashi Prefectural Association
Los Angeles Police Department Martial Artist Advisory Panel

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Donation

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Volume XXV. Number 3.

April 22-23. Annual O'Sensei's Memorial Seminar.

Special Guest Instructors:
Yasumasa Itoh Sensei, 6th
Dan, & Kei Izawa Sensei,
5th Dan.

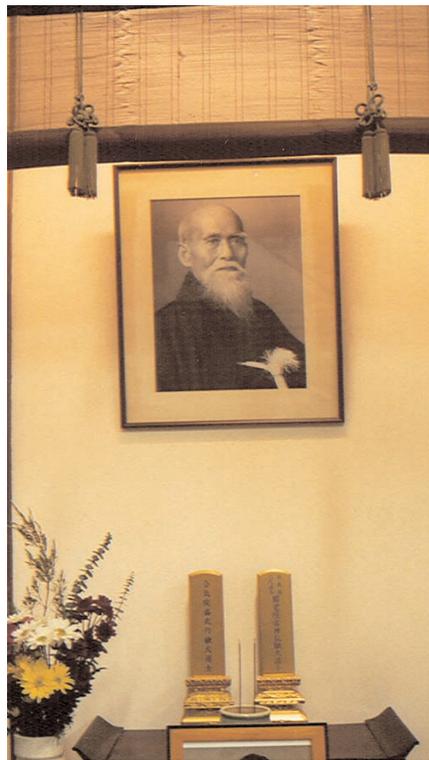
Our Annual Memorial Service and Seminar for O'Sensei is coming up soon on April 22-23. Please sign up now by emailing to aclafuruya@earthlink.net.

This year we are welcoming back Kei Izawa Sensei from Boulder, Colorado, from his Tanshinkai Dojo, and welcoming for the first time, Yasumasa Itoh Sensei, 6th Dan, who is one of the most senior student of the late Mitsunari Kanai Sensei of the former New England Aikikai. Itoh Sensei now heads his newly established Tekkojuku Dojo in Boston, Massachusetts. This is be a great reunion between Izawa Sensei, Itoh Sensei and Furuya Sensei who are all former students of Kanai Sensei.

This year, Itoh Sensei will be introducing many of Kanai Sensei's Aikido techniques developed in the later part of his life including many types of Koshi-nage.

Everyone is cordially invited to attend. from all dojos of any affiliation. Please sign up early as space is limited. Seminar Instructors include:

Yasumasa Itoh Sensei, 6th Dan
Rev. Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan
Kei Izawa Sensei, 5th Dan
James Doi, 5th Dan
Ken Watanabe, 5th Dan,
Tom Williams, 4th Dan
David Ito, 4th Dan
Gary Myers, Iaido 5th Dan



April 26, 1969 is the Meinichi Memorial Day of the passing O'Sensei, The Founder of Aikido. A service will be conducted at our Annual Memorial Seminar. O'Sensei watching over our dojo in the tokonoma, a place of honor. Please join us at this special commemoration.

Masatake Fujita Shihan Honored At Budokan January 9, 2006

At the annual Kagami Biraki New Year's celebration at the Budokan in Tokyo, there were several honorees receiving the Budo Achievement Award in each martial art. Masatake Fujita Shihan was honored as this year's recipient

Background: Masatake Fujita was born in 1937 in the city of Shinkyo in Manchuria. In 1960, he graduated with a degree in Political

Science. At the time he entered the university, he was also accepted as a student at the Aikikai Hombu Dojo. In 1967, he was employed by Hombu Dojo. Positions he has held are: Head of the Aikikai Hombu Dojo Administrative Office, Head of General Affairs, Board Member of the International Aikido Federation, and Assistant Chair of the Metropolitan Tokyo Aikido Federation. Currently, he is a Shihan of the Aikikai Hombu Instruction Department and Managing Director of the All Japan Aikido Federation. He holds the rank of 8th Dan.

Acceptance Speech:

The Way, Trueness & Tradition.
Transmitting the Way Correctly:

On this occasion, with the support of Aikikai and the Board of Directors of the Budokan, I receive this Budo Achievement Award. As a Budoka, I am deeply thankful for this undeserved honor. Here, I would like to express my deepest heartfelt gratitude for the instruction over many years from Ueshiba Morihei O'Sensei, the Founder of Aikido, from 2nd Doshu, Kisshomaru Ueshiba Sensei, and from our present Doshu, Moriteru Ueshiba Sensei and, in addition, to my senior instructors at Hombu and many branch dojos, and many thanks to all my colleagues all over the country.

This year, is just my 50th year in Aikido. I myself am astonished that I have continued without giving up over so many years.

I was born in 1937 in the city of Shinkyo in Manchuria, now present day Choshun City. In 1947, I was taken back to Japan and settled in Sapporo, Hokkaido, my father's hometown. From grade school through high school, I lived in Sapporo. During my middle high school days, I entered competitions in swimming. In 1956, in order to enter the university, I went to Tokyo. Continued:

O'Sensei Memorial Service & Seminar April 22-23.

Please sign-up or make your reservation by emailing to aclafuruya@earthlink.net or by sending in your seminar fee.

Space is limited so please RSVP early.

We will conduct a Memorial Service for O'Sensei & the late Mitsunari Kanai Sensei on Saturday, April 22.

Special Guests Teachers:
Yasumasa Itoh Sensei, 6th Dan, Chief Instructor Tekko Juku Dojo, Boston, Ma.

Kei Izawa Sensei, 5th Dan, Chief Instructor, Tanshin Juku Dojo, Boulder, Co.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

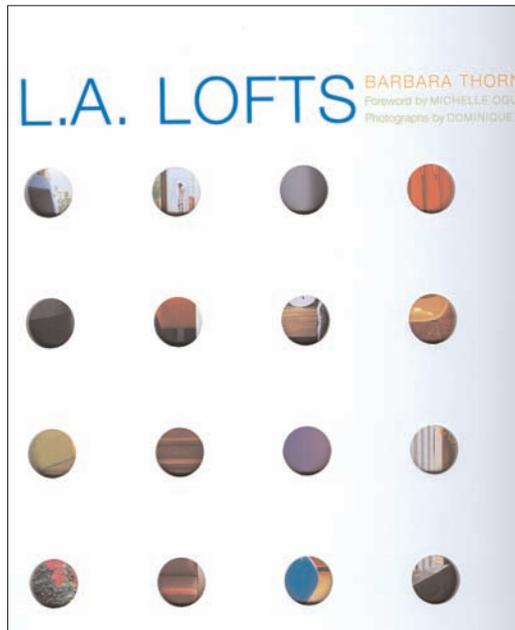
Masatake Fujita Shihan Honored Continued:



At that time, with a Letter of Introduction from my father, I visited the Aikido Hombu Dojo with the intention to meet the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba O'Sensei. So impressed with O'Sensei, I immediately became his student. . . .

Continued in next month's issue.

"LA Lofts" On Stands In Mid-June. Premiere Book Signing July 15!



The long-awaited LA Lofts will hit the stands on mid-June this year. On July 15, the authoress, Ms. Barbara Thornton will present a Premiere Book Signing in the Dojo.

The book is a large coffee table size book which defines the LA loft scene for the first time. After viewing over 370 lofts in the Southern California area and narrowing it down to the best of 37 lofts, the final copy selects 20 of the most beautiful, creative and original lofts in Southern California with particular emphasis on the Downtown Los Angeles loft scene and the Dojo is featured as one of the select few. The die cut cover and beautiful photos are up for the Book Design Award.

The book is \$50.00 per copy and will be on the stands in June. The Dojo will be ordering copies asap. The book signing in the Dojo will invite many of the top people in architecture and interior design as well as community leaders and developers in Downtown Los Angeles which has become the center of rapid urban develop in recent years.

Everyone is invited and we will be busy preparing the Dojo for the big event. The Dojo itself looks remarkable and is said to be the most outstanding of all of the examples. Some lofts had spent millions in



Sensei, Barbara Thornton, the authoress, and world-reknown photographer, Dominique Vorillon on the day of the photo shoot in July, 2005.

interior design. One loft spent 2.7 million. The book will be distributed internationally and Barbara will be three weeks in London to promote the book before returning to Los Angeles for the opening-book signing in the Dojo.

**"LA Lofts" Premiere
Book Signing.
July 15. In the Dojo.
Everyone is invited!**

The Practice Of Bowing:

01-14-06: Hello again Sensei, I have seen your post on bowing before and gained a great deal of insight from it. I do not remember if you covered it as being eyes up or eyes down while bowing. From what I have been taught through my Sabumnim, the only time you are supposed to look at someone when you bow is in a confrontation. I have seen several instances on TV (our greatest resource; our greatest bane), whether it be sitcoms or actual martial arts specials, where the martial students bow with their eyes up while going onto the mat. Is this proper bowing? After seeing this so many times I keep wondering if I am doing it right myself (eyes down or closed while bowing onto the floor).

Will, New York, New York

Response: Today, people have all kinds of interpretations about bowing, especially in the various martial arts. Rarely do I see proper bowing wherever I go these days and rarely do I see anyone give a proper definition to bowing. I think because of the mis-interpretation of bowing and lack of proper



Our Dojo Garden In Downtown LA Featured In West Magazine:

On February 15, we had a photo shoot of our garden by West Magazine, a new supplement of the Sunday Edition of the Los Angeles Times. The article should appear around the beginning of March, 2006. Please your eye open for it!

The Los Angeles Downtown Arts District, The Citizen:

The Dojo will also appear in the upcoming March Issue of The Citizen, a new newspaper covering the Downtown Arts scene. Our Dojo is also designated as a distribution point for the publication.

From Ze'ev Erlich Sensei, Israel. On Modesty:

01-25-06: Modesty is something that I appreciate. When I see people demonstrate Aikido or Iaido, is amazing to see how some people are so modest while other people are so full with pride, trying to show off like a peacock. When I see Doshu demonstrates a waza, I feel that his ego is of a modest man. In Iaido it is so clear... Some people are so satisfied with their look and the sound of their sword...

What I like is quiet people, quiet waza, quiet suburi. It has to be an expression of an ego-less heart. I think that in Japanese art it is extremely important for artists to create their art without ego, with no thoughts of pride, success, money and so on. Such thoughts will pollute the thing they create.

Indian traditional music and dance is often performed in temples with not profit at all for the performers. People can just come and enjoy splendid art without paying money. It is done for the gods, it is done for the community, it is an expression of an ego-less heart.

How can I teach a student with a behavior of a peacock to be humble? Thank you Furuya Sensei for writing about this subject.

Response: Most of us do not like "peacocks" in the dojo - because they seem not to express the ideal attitude in the dojo of humility and modesty. As beautiful as the peacock is, I heard that they are actually difficult, ornery birds and very hard to get along with. . . . just like the other two legged peacocks without the colorful feathers stick

ing out of their rear-ends. . . In the dojo however, our practice is not criticism but the more difficult practice of acceptance.

Despite the overly ostentatious feathers and the bad personality - "like a peacock" as they used to say, - peacocks served a very valuable function in the palaces and castles they were kept in in ancient times. Peacock immediately start squawking loudly when anything or anyone disturbs their environment. Peacocks made the very best "watchdogs" in ancient times and served a very valuable function.

Bowing Continued:

understanding of bowing, we see so much confusion.

The Ogasawara Family which was originally a school of archery was also a school of manners and dictated the formal methods of bowing from ancient times to the present. Bowing differs upon the circumstances and time in feudal times, today, it has become more simplified. In the tea ceremony as well, the proper methods of bowing have been preserved.

Formally, before one bows in martial arts, one already takes the proper ma-ai, so, in case, of an emergency, there is always time to react. The eyes are always slightly lowered. The are not kept wide open but they are not closed as well. Generally, in a half-closed position, one looks about 4-6 feet in front of him. In some formal occasions, the head is lowered to the floor. Although one cannot see the other person, one uses his sense to perceive his position.

When we bow, our head never comes up before the senior. In a match, the head comes up at the same time as the other person.

The posture is always straight and the bow is always dignified and respectful. When I see someone bow properly, it is always very beautiful and strong. Most of the time, the bow is done in a sloppy manner - either too grovelling and weak or with bad form and these are ugly and do not convey the spirit and meaning of the bow.

Although the bow is an ancient Asian custom and in Japan, it was influenced by the feudal ages, the bow is not simply a show of authority or recognition of authority. A proper bow shows respect of one's self as well as the other person. Continued:



**Technical
Aikido
Chapter 5
Ukemi
Continued
From Feb.
Issue
Mitsunari Kanai
8th Dan**

The error of putting down the knee before falling is compounded, after falling, by rolling forward and standing up directly in front of the opponent. This is proof that one is acting independently of the opponent and is in a relationship diametrically opposite to the martial situation, where one is completely involved with the opponent, and where one's actions, to be correct, must acknowledge, and be based on, this interdependence. (The only exception is when practice is restricted by space limitations of a Dojo.) Rolling back while kneeling down and putting down the buttock in front of the other is a position exposing "Shini-Tai" (a "dead body" or "defenseless body") and, therefore, is a position in which you are unable to protect yourself.

As long as Nage or Uke base their approach to practice on an independent relationship with each other, the assumptions underlying their practice will not be consistent with the assumptions of a martial situation. Because Aikido, as a martial art, is based on these (and other) assumptions, one cannot ignore them without compromising its essential nature. Nonetheless, many people have done exactly this, and are practicing an adulterated form which should not be called Aikido because it has been drained of its essential character as a martial art. Approached from such a perspective, Aikido becomes reduced to a barren play, in which one can never produce or grasp anything from the real Aikido.

Therefore, when taking ukemi, do not step back with the leg which is closest to the other! And, do not put down the knee when falling!

What then is the correct way to take Koho Kaiten ukemi? You must take a big step back with the outside leg and bend that knee without folding the foot so that the bottom of the foot continues to touch the mat. Then put down the same side buttock and do Koho Kaiten by rolling back over the inside shoulder, and then, after rolling over, stand up in Hanmi, take Ma-Ai and face the other.

Depending on the particular technique received from the Nage, it can be appropriate to roll back over the outside shoulder (while still stepping back with the outside leg).

In any event, to perform such correct ukemi, you must utilize the elastic power of the legs sufficiently. In Aikido, the "elastic power" (or "bending and stretching power") is a basic method utilized to produce power or to soften power received from an opponent. In the case of backward ukemi, for example, only by using the elastic power of the back leg after the back roll, can you create the momentum for standing up.

You must use the Achilles' tendon and the hamstring muscle (as well as all other muscles and tendons below the hip) as a part of creating power when you are being thrown, just as you use them when you are throwing.

Zenpo Kaiten Ukemi (Front Roll Ukemi)

Step forward with the outside leg, i.e. the leg which is further away from the Nage. If, for example, the right leg is the outside leg, extend the right arm forward while pointing its fingers inward and curve the right arm. Then make the outside of the curved arm touch the mat smoothly and roll your entire body forward through, in order, the right shoulder, the curved back, and the left hip.

To complete the roll and rise to standing position, fold the left knee and position the right knee in a bent but upright position. Upon arriving at this one knee kneeling position, by using the momentum of the rolling, put your weight on the ball of the right foot and do Tenkan at the same time standing up and positioning yourself at Migi Hanmi to prepare for the next move. Complete the movement by taking a sufficient Ma-Ai which prepares for the next move of the opponent. Therefore, when one practices this Zenpo Kaiten movement the goal should be to make it low and far (i.e. lower in height and further in distance).

Reprinted from email by Michael Huben from another internet website.

Kanai Sensei's Ukemi:

01-05-06: Happy NY to all and thanks, Lou, for reminding me of those hard but fun classes - we would line up single file around the edge of the dojo and make lines, hurling ourselves into the air to clear two, three, four, maybe five of our fellow classmates... we sure did learn how to roll. When

**Highly Recommended!
Progressive Aikido:
The Essential Elements
By Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba**

An essential book for your Aikido practice And highly recommended from beginning to the advanced levels. This is also an important book for all assistant instructors. Please add to your library and study well. Sensei

it was your turn to be among the huddled masses, we all squashed together as closely as possible - often the person trying to clear us didn't make it!

Sensei had a very hard work ethic, which was part of the fun. We all tried our best every move of every class - of course, when there were eight or twelve of us (a big class was fifteen then) the feeling was different. And there was absolutely no slacking off - you were far too visible! But as I say, that was part of the fun. Sensei knew his students very well, challenging each of us to grow as aikidoists.

His ukemi was spectacular and gorgeous - he WAS the original Air Jordan. He hung impossibly suspended in air, or leapt for distances none of us could reach (until, I think, Steve Carrabino came along. To me, Steve's ukemi most was like Kanai Sensei's).

I also want to talk about falling on the outside foot - it's important to know that in those days we didn't break fall. We rolled out of every throw - forwards, backwards, we never stopped the flow with that landing. (I remember first seeing break falls down at NY Aikikai, where a black belt named Angel had some of the most gorgeous ukemi ever)

So if you're not break falling, you need to begin your roll as you're falling. In the case of going backwards, that meant fall to the outside foot and then you're ready to roll over the proper shoulder going backwards.

Sensei was like a panther in this - lightning fast to his feet and in for the attack without hesitation.

When you took ukemi for him, you were thrown before you'd gotten off the mat from the previous throw. THAT was KI.

So - a Happy NY again to all. Work hard, as Sensei used to say. Sharon Mann.

Bowing Continued:

In Buddhism, the bow expresses egolessness and Buddha-hood.

For Japanese, the bow is most commonly an expression of "thanks." Japanese even bow to a cup of tea, to the sunrise, to a beautiful mountain or sky, to the sword, to the dojo. . . Japanese bow to everything and this is always a sign of respect and thanks. Recently, I was watching a travel documentary on Japan and some tourists were climbing a long staircase reaching the top of a mountain where it was famous to view the sunset. When the tourists arrived and saw the beautiful sunset, they automatically bowed to its beauty. This is very typical of Japanese bowing custom. . . .

When you come into the Dojo and bow, when you bow at the mats and when you bow to O'Sensei's photo and to your teacher and classmates, you should always bow with dignity and power and beauty. When I see half-hearted bows or simple nods of the head, I always think it looks very sloppy and think that this person lacks awareness and experience.

In many martial arts in this country today, I see that people bow with the eyes straight forward looking at the other person. They think that if they take their eyes off the other person, they will be vulnerable to attack. I think this is a modern American version of bowing. In my own opinion, I think this comes from misunderstanding the nature of the bow and lack of proper education or proper training. . . .

01-16-06: Dear Furuya Sensei, I hope you don't mind, I printed your post regarding bowing and I put it at the dojo for my students to read. Thank you very much for these words and explanation. Ze'ev Erlich, Aikikan Dojo, Rehovot, Israel.

01-16-06: Sensei, Thank you for such a wonderful explanation of bowing. I have printed your email out, and plan to pass them on to those in my Iaido class tomorrow. Shannon

01-18-06: Moshi moshi Sensei and group, First of all: Best wishes for the New Year to everyone !!

Many thanks for the digest concerning the "bowings" and the additions. Recently I have started with cleaning the dojo before we start

with the lessons (we rent our dojo at the local public gymnasium). Unfortunately most of the students don't see any benefits in it, nor do they see the necessity of it. I find it very hard to convince them why we should clean the dojo, I assume their reasoning is "we pay for it why should we have to clean it ourselves?". It is like you have stated before, in the West we are not familiar with the correct attitude in a dojo. It can not be rationalized easily either. It is more a feeling we have to develop, an attitude we have to learn. Here in Europe we are maybe (just maybe) even more rational than in the United States, the more rational mankind is the harder it is to let them understand what a dojo really is (for as far as I myself has understood it).

I believe your addition concerning the bowing can contribute in the development of this correct attitude of my students, I hope I will forward your digest with its additions to the students. Many thanks for your words, looking forward for a lot more. Best regards, AIKIDO-DOJO AIKIKAI AALTER Sven De Schryver

Addendum To Bowing:

Many thanks for all of your kind letters on the explanation of bowing. If I had known it would be this popular, I would have done a better job for you!

Yes, please circulate it to your friends, if you like. I am honored. However, can you please make the following edits before you pass it out:

1. Second paragraph, second line - should be "from," not "form."
2. Please add the following to the end of the explanation to finish this article a little better.

Please add at the end:

More than respect, bowing expresses thanks. When you bow to the dojo, it does not feel respect at all. When you clean your dojo and take good care of it, then your dojo feels respect. When you bow to the dojo, you are saying to the dojo, "Thanks for being here for me."

When you bow to each other in the dojo or at any time, you are saying to the other person, "Thanks for being here for me." When you want to show your respect to the other person, you become a caring and considerate friend and classmate to him. This is respect. Continued:

When you bow to O'Sensei's photo, you are saying, "Thank you for being here for me."

When you bow to your teacher, you are saying, "Thanks for being here for me." When the teacher bows to the student, he is saying, "Thanks for being here for me."

To express thanks, we can freely bow to everything in our lives - the beautiful mountains, the beautiful ocean and streams, the beautiful sky, the beautiful person who stands before you, your partner in practice, even the stranger on the street - because everything in your life is here for you. Many thanks, Sensei.

01-18-06: Sensei, late is my reply, but many thanks again for the in depth explanation of bowing. Will, NY :)

Mu Kudoku-The Practice of No-Benefit:

I think if your students, like many people, believe that cleaning is low-class work, I think that they will refuse to do it. . . Also, if they think that it is "work with no-pay," they may not want to do it either. This is a common attitude everywhere these days. . . .

In our logical thinking today we think, "Why do something if there is 'no benefit?'"

We always have this same problem in the Zen temple. We have to say to our Zen group, "There is no benefit to Zen meditation, your wishes are not granted, you do not get a promotion in our work, no good luck, no riches, no miracle cures for disease, all of your problems do not disappear. Zen sitting is only done for the sake of Zen sitting, there is no benefit, you do not even achieve enlightenment or gain great wisdom."

Of course, everyone then argues, "If there is no benefit or reward, why do it?" Or, "If I can't get enlightenment, why do I sit in meditation?"

This is always the most difficult point to understand in our Zen meditation study classes.

Sawaki Roshi often said, "The only reason to sit (in Zen meditation) is because you love to sit. There is no other reason than this."

We live in a very economic and "rational" world today, of course, we only think of what is "best" for ourselves and often this

No-Benefit Practice Continued:

means, that our efforts should be directed to benefit ourselves. Of course, this makes sense, you have to work to rent or buy your home, pay the bills, have money for food and on and on. . . Of course, we work to get paid in order to live. There is nothing wrong with this and this is perfectly natural. This is the real, material world we live in.

There is also another world we live in at the same time and this is what we call the "spiritual world." We often think that the "spiritual world" means to sit in meditation or under a magical waterfall or talk about the "higher" things in Life, to chit-chat about God or Buddha or even the principles of harmony and the inner most teachings of Aikido. It is easy to talk about the cosmos, Universe and Nature and Life and how to be good and what is wisdom - However, all of this is not the spiritual world at all, I am afraid to say. Even all my talks here is not "spiritual" or a part of the "spiritual world" at all. Just talk!

We are in the spiritual world when we are in a moment of selflessness. At the moment we think and care for others and put them above ourselves - this is the spiritual world. Even to care and save of the life of a little kitten, to help an elderly, to care of the sick, to act without concern or care for one's own benefit or profit is the spiritual world. Of course, it is most obviously seen is "good acts" for others. But even sweeping the front of the dojo and cleaning the mats and keep the dojo clean is "spiritual practice" because there is no benefit, no reward, no glory or fame and no money. We do everything for ourselves ultimately, but the spiritual world is to leave this self-centered world we create for ourselves - even for a moment.

Much of Aikido practice, like many traditional arts, have this instilled within the content of practice - cleaning the dojo, bowing to O'Sensei, bowing to our partners, treating each other with kindness, putting others before yourself, doing something which is not motivated by self-centered ideas. Helping an elderly lady across the street motivated by a feeling of compassion and caring is a spiritual act. Helping a lady across the street because, deep in the back of your mind, you think that she may reward you or give you some money is not a spiritual act, it is an act of our "normal" materi-

alistic world where we do things to survive for ourselves. . . . Can you see the difference? Do you do something nice for your friend because you expect something in return? Or do you do something for your friend because it is an expression of love and caring?

In the real world, we practice Aikido so I can become strong, I can throw others down, I will be famous and popular, I can make money, I will get a higher rank than my classmates and on and on. . . . In this world, it is easy to be disappointed if Aikido does not meet our expectations. In the spiritual world or Aikido as a spiritual practice, we practice Aikido simply because we love to practice Aikido. . . . That is all! As spiritual practice, we are never disappointed and we can continue to practice Aikido through all kinds of obstacles, disappointments and hardships. . . . it is a act of "love" as O'Sensei says, it is not an act for profit and gain.

When I am about to start a new work project, I always first clean my office and clean off my desk, - it feels good to start on a "clean slate" when everything is in order. This is why you feel so good after you bathe and put on fresh, clean clothes. It is always a different feeling from when you are dirty and wearing dirty clothes - can you understand this Just like the air after the rain - everything feels fresh and clean. It has such a positive effect on our mental state - just as a clean, orderly living space compared to a messy, dirty one.

The dojo too - when everything is clean and in order, it feels so good to practice. . . . In Japanese custom and in the dojo, when the space is clean and immaculate, the "gods" feel welcome to enter. In the old days, one always could see the uchi-deshi sweeping the front of the dojo before practice, and they always tell how they used to wake up early in the morning to clean the Aiki Shrine and get everything in order before O'Sensei arrived to do his morning prayers. . . .

There is no benefit to clean you dojo - but cleaning the dojo makes you feel good and helps you to concentrate on your practice - this is not a material benefit, but it is important for your mental state in practice - I think that ultimately this is a very valuable benefit indeed.

Often, we put Aikido into the same category as other martial arts - Aikido is protect our-

selves, it is self-defense and on and on - even how we think of Aikido, it is always about "me, me, me." In Aikido, as we begin to think of it as a part of our "spiritual training," we do not think, "How do I protect me," we think "I am saving the life of others."

No benefit and no reward acts such as sweeping and cleaning the dojo become 'selfless' acts which are an important and essential part of our real spiritual practice in Aikido.

01-20-06: Response: Greetings Sensei: I absolutely enjoy reading your post. I briefly wanted to comment on a few points mentioned in your writings below. Societal class attitudes have been around for thousands of years. You stated a common place attitude in which I agree, people do not want to do something that they feel they are not going to benefit from. Your direct quote was " Why do something if there is no benefit?"

When I first became intrigued with Asian Philosophy many years ago, it changed the way I viewed things, everything. I think that "benefit" is a broad term and that many things that we do as we journey through life we do for all the wrong reasons, in some way connected to "benefit". I guess that the measure of what one considers a "benefit" lies with the individual. I propose that when we are still and seeing is not seeing and knowing is not knowing, it is at that point that we have reached enlightenment and the benefit was the subtle culmination of our life's intentions that lead us down a path to being able to exist outside of the construct which encompasses linguistic imagery to help us understand our environments.

Sensei, I am a novice compared to you, but is intellectually and spiritually stimulating to ponder your words and reflect on my prior teachings! In response to your stating that Zen Meditation has no tangible benefit. It makes me contemplate the stillness of meditation itself. Is this serene stillness not a gift that most can not attain, the benefit? It is not easy to quite our thoughts and remove ones self from this reality we all share. So, I propose that the benefit is the journey to a better and simpler understanding of ones self and a stronger connection with "Okami". Thank You Sensei, Gayle M. Snell

Response: In sitting, there is not benefit - period! None!



Sifu Harry Wong:

Don't Break The Elastic!!

In April, Maya Angelou was interviewed by Oprah on her 70+ birthday.

01-19-06: Oprah asked her what she

thought of growing older.

And, there on television, she said it was "exciting." Regarding body changes, she said there were many, occurring every day...like her breasts. They seem to be in a race to see which will reach her waist, first!

Maya Angelou also said this: "I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be tomorrow."

"I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights."

"I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life."

"I've learned that making a "living" is not the same thing as "making a life."

"I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance."

"I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw some things back."

"I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision."

"I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one."

"I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone."

People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back."

"I've learned that I still have a lot to learn."

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Sensei's Notebook: Musubu - To Connect

Musubi is an interesting concept in Japanese culture, it is not simply a word but it is an entire mentality and culture. When O'sensei adopted this term as in Take-Musu Aiki, he was adopting or expressing an unusual and unique aspect of Japanese spiritual culture.

We translate "musu" in Take-Musu Aiki" as "creating" as in "Martial (Military) Creating Aiki." Musu does not mean "creating" in the sense of making or manufacturing but as in "producing" as in "giving birth." The Sinified reading of musu is "san" which means "pregnant" or "with child." Musu harks back to the prehistoric age of Japan. As the Japanese gods of Izunami and Izunagi dipped their spear into the chaos and as they brought their spear up these energies "coagulated" into the islands of Japan. . . . this "solidifying" or "coagulation" is also



A Whale Of A Story

01-15-06: Submitted By Kaye Sera: Whale Rescue-A Story of Blessing

If you read the front page story of the SF Chronicle on Thursday, Dec 15, 2005, you would have read about a female humpback whale who had become entangled in a spider web of crab traps and lines. She was weighted down by hundreds of pounds of traps that caused her to struggle to stay afloat. She also had hundreds of yards of line (rope) wrapped around her body-her tail, her torso, a line tugging in her mouth. A fisherman spotted her just east of the Farralone Islands (outside the Golden Gate) and radioed an environmental group for help. Within a few hours, the rescue team arrived and determined that she was so bad off, the only way to save her was to dive in and untangle her-a very dangerous proposition. One slap of the tail could kill a rescuer. They worked for hours with curved knives and eventually freed her. When she was free, the divers say she swam in what seemed like joyous circles. She then came back to each and every diver, one at a time, and nudged them, pushed them gently around-she thanked them. Some said it was the most incredibly beautiful experience of their lives. The guy who cut the rope out of her mouth says her eye was following him the whole time, and he will never be the same.

"musu." From the Chinese point of view - "musu" is Yang (positive) energy - "heavy" and "coming together" emerging from Yin or negative energy which is "expansive," "light," and "rising" - the nature of primordial chaos in Japanese mythological history.

Oddly, when Japanese make one of their favorite foods and snacks - the rice ball, the process of taking rice and slightly compressing it together into a "ball" with one's hands creates a "musubi," or "rice ball." "Musubi" is also a "knot" as in two cords being "tied" together or, we can say, "coming together." The idea of "coming together" into something or compressed into something is also this idea of "musu," as well as its original idea of giving birth. For us Westerners, a knot is simply a knot bringing two strings together. For the Japanese, knots (coming together and tightening into a knot) has some kind of mystical or magical qualities in their minds and this alludes back to their idea of "creation" as we have been discussing.

Musu in Takemusu Aiki is not simply "creating" but giving birth to something "new" for the first time as in giving birth to a child, and, at the same time, it means, two things coming to together or compressed together into something - a knot, a rice ball. . . . for us, in the West, this is a rather odd concept and perhaps cannot go much further than a fancy bow on a Christmas gift. . . but for the Japanese, the "special" knots on all sorts of packages allude to the "purity" of the first moments of birth and "coming together" - an auspicious moment of friendship. . . . When one receives a package in Japan or a "Japanese style" gift, there is always a traditional knot which "purifies" the gift. . . . All of this, in the most unusual and almost inexplicable way. . . is a part of Japanese culture and the Japanese mentality. . . and all of this can be seen in Take "musu" Aiki, which is not simply "creating" but "giving birth" to something new and original in one's art. . . . This is an interesting topic which I often see discussed from the Western point of view, but I think there is much more here and definitely, there is a need for more research and study.

Musubi & Ai: Concentration & Unification In Aikido:

One of the unique aspects of Japanese culture which, I think, Continued:



01-21-06: Sifu Shi Miao Shan, Sifu Kisu, Sifu Stanley Sung, Sifu Harry Wong, Sensei, Sifu Eric Lee, Shin Koyamada and Carolina at the Dojo for a get-together.

Jim MacDonald Stars On Popular "Without A Trace" Episode:



Jim MacDonald appeared on a recent Without A Trace episode on February 2, 2006 on Channel 2.

"Odds or Evens:" Jack goes to Tokyo to find a dishonor-

Marine who went missing after he served a five-year prison term for raping a young woman. Cast: Anthony LaPaglia, Poppy Montgomery, Marianne Jean-Baptiste, Enrique Murciano, Eric Close, Roselyn Sanchez, Joshua Gomez, Scott Holroyd, Nick Chinlund, Mary Beth Fisher, Mandy June Turpin, Keiko Agena, James MacDonald, Theo Rossi, Eamonn Roche, Tony Lee, Sean McDermott, Tripp Pickell, Junichi Kuwamoto, Mitsuyuki Oishi.

Sensei's Note: Although not mentioned in the credits, this episode also features Hiroki Matsukata, one of the top veteran movie and tv stars in Japan. He is currently in the top rated tv series, Hagure Keiji, "The Stray Detective-School of Compassion." He is the son of Jushiro Konoe, who was one of the top chambara movie stars from the 40's thru the 70's. What a treat to see both Jim MacDonald and Matsukata Hiroki in the same show!

Deepest Condolences

Our deepest condolences to Nick Kiritz on the passing of his father on January 30, in Los Angeles. Our sympathies and best wishes to the family.

Congratulations! Santiago Building Bigger Dojo:



Santiago and Susanna are expecting baby #2 in October or November. Santiago plans to visit the Dojo sometime in April and in September if his schedule permits. Many congratulations and many Best Wishes!



Jim Basset Returns To LA.

Jim Basset returns to Los Angeles after an eight month teaching assignment at the University of

Michigan. Jim is a Sanders Fellow of the University of Michigan, Taubman College of Architecture + Urban Planning. Welcome Back to the Dojo! So many students were asking about Jim in the Dojo and was sorely missed.

ACLA students are Dojo News! Tell us about your plans and special occasions!

Wedding Bells In July



James Takata will tie the knot with Ms. Jen Welsh on July 1, 2006 in the Bay Area. Many congratulations and best wishes.



Belated Congratulations!

Eric Russell ties the knot with Rochelle Leigh Ballard on December 22, 2005. Many belated Congratulations and Best Wishes. They will move to Washington, DC for several years and then return to Los Angeles where Rochelle will establish her own law offices. We look forward to Russel's return to the Dojo. Many apologies for this late announcement. They currently reside in Oakland where Eric works for Cliff Bars. Eric received his Dan grade from Sensei while training in Los Angeles and continues his affiliation.

From Our Old Student, Steve Tarango:

Thank you Sensei, As one of your former students I hope to be of some value to your group. It is great to see the Dojo flourishing. I have never forgot the lessons you taught me and I am now passing them on to my children. Respectfully, Steve Tarango

From Todd Harwood:

Dear Sensei, . . . After I went to Japan and visited the Hombu Dojo in November I was very inspired to continue my training but it has not quite worked out as I had planned. At first it caused me a great deal of mental stress but I have since come to grips with the limitation that I have at this moment. I do practice the basic movements that I had learned in the preceding months before I was hurt. Continued:

Letters & Correspondence:

01-06-06: Brian Mulchy, New Student

Introduction: Dear Sensei, Thank you for the lecture given at the meeting a few days ago. It is because of things like that, I choose aikido. Please know although my study has been through various books, old as the Dharmapada, new as O Sensei's biography, I really appreciate all history lessons I can learn. As a new student I would like to tell you that I wish to know the meaning and purpose of every symbol in the dojo. From the bottle near O Sensei's photo to the knot of rope displayed near the front door. In whatever way I can learn this, please inform me. It will make my bows more sincere.

I also feel that you should know about me a little. I studied tai chi and northern Shaolin with a Korean doctor I worked for in Texas. I met him seeking treatment for a digestive disease I've had since I was a kid. As the job goes I had the most pointless function there. I answered the phone and everyone who called spoke an Asian language. I had to go get him for everything. After hours, he would teach me a few basic stances when his wife wasn't making him home for dinner. Currently I am a television cameraman. I shoot for National Geographic, Discovery and all the other networks, my professional history if you'd like to see :

01-09-06: From Chakpori Tibetan

Medical Institute: Most Reverent Sensei Kensho Furuya, Our warmest greetings from Darjeeling. We gratefully acknowledge the gift parcel you had sent us. It will be most useful for us.

We are most unfortunate that Rinpoche passed away. Many people's lives have been touched by Rinpoche. The work he had started is now entrusted to us to carry on. It is our determination to see that it flourishes and develops into what Rinpoche had envisioned. Although with limited resources we try our best. Please keep us in your prayers. Yours in Dharma, Tashi G. Trogawa

01-09-06: Steven Shaw From Colorado:

Sensei, Yesterday, as I was stacking the mats, I had a realization. In my dojo, as in yours, I have a mat reserved for O'Sensei, but I also have one for you. I always put these two mats down last when laying the mats out, and put them away first. I stack them in the corner of the gym at Community

School for the Gifted, so that they are out of the way. What I realized is that the two mats on the bottom, O'Sensei's and yours, were supporting all the rest of the mats. It became a perfect metaphor for training. All my development, and those of my students, are supported by O'Sensei's teachings, and your transmission of those teachings. Thank you, for supporting so many learners.

In my education courses at CU, we often talk of the supreme responsibility a teacher has, and you have related your understanding by always pointing North. Yesterday, I was overwhelmed by your dedication and unwavering strength. . . . There will never be enough words to convey my eternal gratitude. Best, Steven.

01-11-06: What Is Budo?

Hajimemashite Sensei, Thanks for imparting your wisdom. When I'm asked by friends "What is Aikido?" I often compare it against other "jutsu" before they transformed into sport-like (or "do") versions to survive the post WWII era. I had such inclinations because a lot of people don't quite understand why we don't participate in competitions. I often tell them that it goes against the basic principles of Aikido which is "harmony or non-contention" and it is not a "sport" it is a "martial art". I now realized that I should have given it more thought because that would have led me to answering "It is Budo." Domo arigato gozaimashita. Regards, John Tolentino

01-12-06: 2nd Doshu Kisshomaru Sensei's

Memorial Service: Dear Sensei: The memorial service last night for Second Doshu was very beautiful, and I am glad that you allow us to participate. . . .

01-12-06: Studying Iaido:

Dear Rev. Furuya, What an enlightening post! It is so nice to come across somebody w/ such an open heart willing to share. Over the years I have run into many people in Iai/Batto Do that think they are Gods, & think they should be worshiped. It is such a shame that when you run into people like this, and you cant even ask them a question, because they will take it out of line, when one is just curious. I've run into Sensei of Iai/Batto Do that just treat their students like dogs, that talk to people any kid of way. I think this is not the way of Budo. Do we not learn that we should be compassionate, & kind? I think many have trained so long that they forget what it is to be like to want to learn; Get old, & grumpy, but still wanted to be treated w/ respect from their students, but yet not show the same respect in return. I have also noticed some people get so hung up on titles, & use

them inappropriately, like as if it was their name, signing w/ it, however we all know, those of us that have trained for a significant amount of time, that it is wrong. I have also come across many Kuchi Bushi over the years on the internet, that just treat so many people w/ disrespect, & talk down to others w/ less experience. Should we not talk to people, as we wish to be talked too? Many people hide behind a keyboard, writing trash but when asked to train, they do not want to meet. Some others try to uphold themselves like they have such great morals, and/or man of God, but in private, they will act totally different. There is a word for it, two faced, or putting up a false front. There are many people in the US that are propagating Budo, or what they think they are propagating Budo, but are not only fooling others, but themselves, as well. Their time will come, when it is time to meet their maker. I do thank you for allowing me to join your group, but do not know how much longer I will be sticking around, as I should be spending more time training then typing, & try to loose some of this weight. Thank you, & look forward to your response. Sincerely, David Somers

01-13-06: Punching: A few of the senior students at our dojo have been discussing how training could and should move beyond basic attacks.

At the moment we practice our techniques against a tsuki where the tsuki is a good honest attack, directed correctly and with a reasonable amount of power.

However we do not tend to advance beyond this type of attack by introducing further dynamics such as snapping back the punching arm or immediately following the first punch with a second and a third. Also there is the difference between a 'jab' and a 'proper' punch that will cause real damage.

I seem to recall Sensei mentioning that he had been teaching techniques against multiple attacks and I wonder whether Sensei or anyone else would be kind enough to run through how this type of practice is carried out? Many thanks, Ambrose

01-19-06: To Ze'ev: Dear Ze'ev I am not a student at ACLA - I am student at Cambridge Aikido Club in Cambridge, England (<http://www.cambridge-aikido.com/cambridge-aikido-main.html>). It is a wonderful club with excellent teachers and great students and I have been

training for 6 years now though my attendance during that time has been irregular mostly due to many, many, many sleepless nights with our 3 beautiful children that were all born over the last 6 years ;-)

But in my time at the club I have witnessed it's difficulties with some nights only being me and one of the teachers and at best for a while we had 4 or 5 on the mat. Now it is doing well again with usually over 12 on the mat each of the 3 lessons we have a week. However it has given me an insight into how hard it can be to keep a dojo going - even one as old as ours now in it's 42nd year.

I am going to be emigrating to Vancouver, Canada, probably in Spring 2007 and then I hope to be able to visit Sensei Furuya as often as I can manage.

In the meantime if you would like to visit England then you are always more than welcome to come and stay with my family. We have a small house so if you have a family and visit then my parents live nearby and they have a larger house and very much enjoy meeting people from around the world. They used to host students coming to Cambridge to learn English and have many friends now all over the world. I recall two very nice gentlemen from Israel came for a month or so one summer.

Of course, though I am not a student at ACLA, I do feel that I am a student of Sensei Furuya, through this forum, his daily message, his books and his book recommendations I have learned an enormous amount that has changed me significantly for the positive. Best wishes, Ambrose

01-26-06: Ego: This is a topic I think I am always discussing here in this group. I seem to be locked in an eternal conflict with ego and pride. The only way for me to describe it is that it is like a daily race. Every day my ego and my heart are entered in a 100-yard dash. The winner will usually manifest itself by what comes out of my mouth or how I will act in a given situation. The problem is that my ego seems to be a world class sprinter and my heart is struggling to make the high-school track team. What is very interesting as I get older and become more aware, however, is that even though my heart tends to come in second most of the time, it finishes close enough to give me pause to think about ego's victory speech. I guess the

bottom line is that I have to accept the fact that these two need to share time on the podium, but hopefully as I grow, my heart will get a few more wins Jason, Aikido of Center City

01-28-06: A most humble and gracious thank you. Many years ago I lived in Japan and had hoped to study Aikido at that time. Unfortunately the work schedules and language barrier presented challenges that at the time proved to be greater than the commitment needed. Instead I studied at a traditional school of JuJitsu.

Recently the opportunity has re-presented itself in my area and I have started at the beginning with Aikido. Looking for both the technical side and the Principled/Spiritual side of the art, I have your book Kodo on the nightstand and when choosing a discussion group yours fit better than others that focused on purely technical aspects.

Again I thank you for your kindness and appreciate the time you spend with this community. Robert A. Eggleston

01-28-06: Sensei, I live outside of Seattle Washington on the first ridge heading up into the Cascade Mountains. If you were to look at a map of the greater Seattle area I am located halfway between the towns of Carnation and Duvall and then 5 miles east off of State Route 203.

Having lived in major cities, this is so much more restful to my soul. The sound of traffic is never constant in the background, I can see the stars at night without them being drowned out by the city. My biggest concerns out here are the Deer eating in my garden and the occasional nuisance from Bobcats and Cougars. This is not to say that life is idyllic, I have stressors like most people. I am just blessed in some areas. Thank you for your interest
Robert A. Eggleston

01-30-06: The Japanese Custom Of Clapping: Dear Furuya Sensei, I am a new comer to your Aikido group and have very much enjoyed your thoughts and the other members responses. Thank-you for sharing.

In your latest topic you mentioned "clapping". Would you be willing to repeat here what you stated on the other website or forward the link to me so that I may research it myself.

My first Sensei was a direct student of the late M. Kanai Sensei. My sensei was a very spiritual person, was a devout Catholic, and although he had no formal education, he read extensively.

When we clapped at the opening of class, he would clap 3 times, not the usual 2 or 4 times as some dojos. His belief was the following: he felt that if there were 2 claps and 4 claps, then O'Sensei was "in the middle" (a direct quote). My Sensei also felt that 3 claps alluded to the Holy Trinity.

I would very interested in your thoughts. Thanks for listening. Yours in aiki. Mark E. White

Sensei's Response: Please see article, Sensei's Notebook in this issue.

02-01-06: Memorial Seminar In April: A friend just forwarded information to me about your upcoming seminar. I think it's wonderful that you have decided to honor Kanai Sensei. Good luck with the seminar & congratulations on having your dojo/loft being honored as well. Julie McKeon

02-01-06: Hard - Soft: Many years ago I studied a pretty hard style of JuJitsu in Japan. The style was such that I did not continue it when I left the military finding no practical use of that style in civilian life.

Now, 20 plus years later I have the opportunity to study Aikido and am challenged in every class. The challenge is not different from most new students from what the senior students and the sensei explain to me. I am fortunate in that my sensei had been to the same area of Japan and is familiar with my past learning.

Here is the challenge. A technique is demonstrated and then we will pair off into ukemi practice to walk through the technique. I will usually assume Uki first so that I can review the technique again. When I step into Nage's role two things happen:

1. The walk through is very slow as I find myself fighting wanting to flow into the JuJitsu of 20 years ago. It is kind of like a Kata Karma where I am fighting that Kinesthetic Memory and Learning.

2. I want to force and use my strength through the technique. Now I understand that this is not that uncommon. When I finally get myself past number one where I am

moving my body in the basic correct movements of the technique I am immediately wanting to use my strength and not the technique to complete the exercise with Uki. The strength is getting in the way of the finer points of the technique where the technique really takes over.

Now overcoming number one will be a lot of repetition of unlearning the old style of movement. I am humbled after all these years that my Japanese Sensei was so effective in teaching me. It is more challenging in that Kata is not a normal part of aikido to assist in this endeavor.

My current Sensei has asked me to do the technique as if I were doing it on my 2 year old daughter. I am right now finding this juxtaposition very great.

What are some techniques that you recommend for us Bulls that find ourselves in China Shops to be soft instead of forcing our way through? Robert A. Eggleston

02-04-06: Art & Martial Arts: Hello Sensei, As I was working on a painting today a thought struck me. Perhaps it is something worth thinking about. It seems that most of the great martial artists are also great visual artists. Musashi would be just one example. There is a correlation between the two. I think that art helps to tame the martial heart, and martial art helps to tame the wandering mind. Often we want to get everything as fast as possible. I want to get my big mac, my newest CD, my this or that. And yet, in art there is no fast way to get this. To complete a painting takes many many hours to do. And even then is it really done? heh. You cannot just move your hand in a certain gesture and get it "perfect." Even the great DaVinci would take months or years to even "semi" complete works. So my theory is that art helps to remind the martial artist that it takes time and patience to achieve any smidgen of competence in anything you are willing to do. And martial art, while more physical reminds us that we must take action (not always aggressive) in order to accomplish something. I only wish that some day I could be half as good as daVinci or Musashi. heh. Anyways, I hope that everything is going well on your end.
Will, NY

Sensei's Response: From ancient times, Confucius recommended that the "scholar-sage" be expert in martial arts but in poetry and music as well. Confucius was especial-

fond of music as a way to "refine" the soul and mind.

In the Samurai society, a samurai was educated in poetry, painting, tea ceremony and the Noh drama as well as his martial arts training. . . His training and education was not considered complete unless he was skilled in the refined arts as well.

Although Musashi was the most well-known, there are many works of art, paintings, etc. by warriors, warlords, Daimyo and Shogun. Yagyū Jubei and Yagyū Renyasai was particularly well-versed in poetry.

I think these arts among the Samurai - such as poetry, Noh and the tea ceremony, helped to develop their focus and mental concentration. During their first calligraphy class the other day, my students were impressed with the amount of mental focus required in holding the brush and forming the characters. . . .

Today, I do not see martial arts pursuing these refined discipline and skills so the quality within the human being is different, I see.

02-07-06: From Veracruz, Mexico: Dear Sensei Excuses by not writing before but is that it broke down my PC. I desire that this year be full of health for you and its students. Roberto and me are working very hard to be able to be with you in the month of April together with some of our students. Receive a hug with the affection of all the students of Veracruz Aiki Kai, Your's faithfully, Dr. Alvaro Meza

Correct Sword Work In Aikido Practice:

02-19-06: I hope that Aikidoists will begin to study "Aiki" sword from a greater sense of the bokken as a real sword as opposed to a carved stick. Many years ago, I introduced the correct method of parrying the sword against another attack. . . and the response was, "I see your point and I think it is correct but it is too much trouble to learn that way, we will just continue as we are doing even though it is wrong. . . ." I have had this same response more than once. . . . I think we like to fancy ourselves, like O'Sensei, using the sword in Aikido, but most of us have no idea how to use the sword or how the sword really works. I heard that once an uchi-deshi asked O'Sensei, "Why do not teach us the fundamentals of swordsman-

-ship?" And O'Sensei replied, "You have to go learn that yourself." What this means is that O'Sensei's swordwork was so advanced that he expected his students to be familiar with the basics of sword and endeavor to catch up to him. I think among the first generation of martial artists studying under O'Sensei were all quite adept in sword fundamentals which was a part of most people's military or martial training in the early days around the turn of the century. Among the numerous martial arts master around in the early days, only one Iaido master, Haga Junichi, was invited to demonstrate his art in Hombu Dojo.

I do not your your style of Iaido which you mentioned in your email so I cannot really make any fair comments or judgements on what you are learning. In most schools of Iaido, there is a common basic, shared technique called "uke-nagashi" or "ryuto" as you mention. In Musō Shinden Ryu, the hips must be twisted and the saya pulled back (saya-biki) very strongly, in order to release the sword from the saya and deflect the oncoming blade, What is important here is to deflect the blade with the "mune" (back of the blade) several inches beyond the habaki (collar). I almost never see the sword blocking with the edge in formal training.

When we follow the correct fundamentals of sword, the techniques also correct themselves. Perhaps, as in my early experiences, some people fancy to practice virtual sword but are not really interested in, or not ambitious enough, or do not care to practice reasonable sword work. As my calligraphy teacher taught us just the other day: "If your understanding and attitude about the character is correct, you will naturally write it correctly. If you are incorrect in your understanding of the character, it will never come out right." My calligraphy teacher told me that this was the first thing he was taught by his father and grandfather who were also calligraphy teachers.

It is common Aikido practice today to make the "kiri-oroshi" or "shomen" cut in a timing of "two" - or "up and down." It always seems to be a "one, two" count, although the basic cut itself in executed in one breath so it is actually a "one count" cut. . . . I think many people altered this basic cut into a "two count" pattern because it makes it easier to execute the techniques. When someone comes with a one count cut, it is a different story. . . . **Continued in the April Issue:**

Musubi & Ai Continued:

one must be aware of is that Japan was a relatively primitive society when it decided to imitate Tang China which was in its golden age and culture and art flourished. Suddenly adopting the rich culture of China, and importing dozens of artists, scholars and craftsmen from both China and Korea, Japan leaped into a new age of culture and enlightenment. Oddly, its old primitive customs were not abolished but survived, frozen in time as it were. Today, we see a Japanese society and culture, not blending, but bring both the modern and ancient world together side by side. With its ancient culture as well, there is also this side by side imposition of the original "prehistoric" culture of Japan along side its adopted culture adopted from the continent.

The concept of "musubu" comes from the old prehistoric Japan as an early, primitive agricultural society where the "sun" or Amaterasu Ohmi Kami is not male as is usually the case in most such similar societies, but female. . . The sun which always represents the "positive" or "male" or Yang energy, here in Japan is represented as "female," is the influence of this early agricultural society where both the "sun" is equated to the "mysterious power" of "birth" and "creation" representing harvest, productivity, and growth. This is a clear example of this concept of "musu" representing both the "positive power" of Life as the sun and, at the same time, the productive power of the female, as in fertility, growth and production.

I think that O'Sensei must have had a tremendous grasp of this concept to relate "musu" as in "creation" to "ai" in Aikido, meaning "blending", both share the meaning of "connecting" and "coming together." I imagine that O'Sensei may have been very influenced by the fundamental teachings of the Omoto Kyo which are founded on the Genesis of the Old Testament as its source of inspiration. The idea of the creation of the universe and man by God, again, is imposed, side by side, by the idea of creation (production) of the sun, Amaterasu Ohmi Kami, and its female aspect of fertility and production (re-production).

In this way, Aikido is "misogi" or "purification" as in "presence of the gods" In the Japanese mind, gods are only present in "purified" areas very similar to Mircea Eliade's (Univeristy of Chicago) concept of "sacred time and space." It is this state that

"creation" takes place or "musu" as in Take Musu Aiki.

Perhaps, I am carrying this idea too far for my readership here. but I am exploring this area in my own studies into the philosophy at the base of Aikido and O'Sensei's teachings and, at this moment, sharing a few bits of ideas with you for your interest. This is a far

more complex and deeper study than I am going into here and I see a clear need for much more study and research. Luckily, when I was in Iwama with 2nd Doshu and doing so much housecleaning of O'Sensei's former residence, I wrote down the names of all of the books O'Sensei had been studying during his retreat there. . . A few days later, I was in Kanda, the old book section of Tokyo, and managed to find all of these books in the old books stores. I took me three days and I was scolded severely by Doshu for missing practice! Although these books are very difficult, 30 years later, some of my studies are beginning to bear fruit and a tiny light is appearing far down this path. . . . I will share more with you in future posts here.

As a side note, in another website, I was sharing some knowledge about the Japanese custom of "clapping" - another odd and unique concept in Japanese custom and was severely criticized and this disturbed me very much. I think in our Western culture, there is a distinct and clear boundry of religion and "state". . . however, it is very different in Japan and in the East in general where religion is a very integral part of one's daily life and there is no such boundries or segregation between religion and our personal lives. I think that we in the West, or America, misunderstand this concept, there is this concept of "separation of religion and state" in our culture here, but this is in regard to our civil liberties not our personal or inner lives. . . . I think we must understand this clearly here before further discussion can take place in a positive way.

Today, Aikido must be assimilated and presented in a way which is both nourishing and enriching to the lives of many different people all over the world, all of different cultures, ideas and environments, much different from Japan. Of course, Aikido does not expect everyone to become Japanese in order to learn Aikido. This is ridiculous. However, I do think that it is important to grasp a clear understanding of the roots of Japanese culture to the degree that we can

rect sense . . . I say this because of the preponderance of such a great deal of assumptions, cliches, stereo-types and myths which abound on the internet regarding what Japanese culture really is. . . . We must look at some aspects of Japanese culture as unique but rather than use this as a way "to become Japanese" we must see how such unique knowledge or wisdom or whatever you want to call it can be applied to our own understanding of O'Sensei who was a very unique, and, at the same time, a very "Japanese" person, a remnant of the tail-end of Japan's premodern age. O'Sensei was a product of the end of the Samurai age, in a society which had been isolated from the world for 268 years and was suddenly breaking out into the international arena of the modern world. . of course, there are many aspects of his personality, thinking and background for his thinking which for us, in this age, can often times define easy explanation. . . Therefore, as an armchair scholar, I would like to introduce you to such "unique" aspects of this culture and society which have influenced and formed his thinking. . . .

Although the idea of "musubi" or "musu" appears in many primitive cultures, as Japan was, it is not a widespread idea in our modern world of today. Anyways, for my readers here, please enjoy and share your thoughts. . . . As my Zen master always used to say at the end of any conversation, sermon or lecture, "just let it go!"

Note: For more interesting topics of discussion on Aikido practice, please join our Yahoo group and visit me each day at our website.

Todd Harwood Continued:

I try not to look being absent from the Dojo as a stop age in my learning but a pause. I know nothing can take the place of actually getting on the mat with fellow Aikidoists but I am doing my best to keep the principals of Aikido fresh in my mind.

I also appreciate the addition of my picture and the note that I sent you in the newsletter, thank you.

I hope to see you all soon and I hope you had a wonderful New Year.
Todd Harwood

Reply: Get well soon and best wishes!

Welcoming New Affiliate Dojos:

Littleton Aikikai
Littleton, Colorado
Steven Shaw

Brugos Kodokai
Brugos, Spain
Under Santiago Almaraz

Four Seasons Dojo
Granbury, Texas
Michael Schmidt

Zen Felsefi Savas Sanatlari
Topluilugu, Turkey
Dojo #1 - Ankara, Turkey
Dojo #2 - Istanbul, Turkey
Muhlis Partal

Our Good Friends In Aiki:

Tanshinjuku
Boulder, Colorado
Kei Izawa Sensei, 5th Dan

Chushinkan Dojo
Buena Park, CA.
James Nakayama Sensei, 6th Dan

Aikido Ai
Whittier, CA.
Frank McGouirk Sensei, 6th Dan

Tekko Juku
New England
Yasumasa Itoh Sensei, 6th Dan

Sensei's Thoughts:

Looking Towards The Future:

Now that the long battle for our lease is settled, it is time to get ready to look to the future. The first step, I believe, is to take care of all the clean-up and straightening up of the Dojo which I have wanted to do for a long time now. Once we can get our Dojo organized, then I would like to focus on training as usual and developing future instructors. I really want our Dojo to be a model dojo of Aikido. It is not necessary to dabble in politics nor do we need to seek fame and prestige. We need to focus on the essentials and heart of Aikido as taught by O'Sensei and 2nd & 3rd Doshu.

We have our O'Sensei Memorial Seminar and the LA LOFTS books signing coming up. Please help out and help our Dojo to develop and preserve the teachings of Aikido. Many thanks for all of your continued support and commitment. In Gassho, Sensei

Affiliated Branch Dojos

Aikido Kodokai
Salamanca, Spain
Santiago Garcia Almaraz

Hacienda La Puente Aikikai
La Puente, California
Tom Williams

Wyoming Aikikai
Sheridan, Wyoming
Tom McIntrye

Bahamas Aikikai
Grand Freeport, Bahamas
Seymour Clay

Jalisco Aikikai
Jalisco, Mexico
Eric Jaracho

Aikido of Guadalajara
Guadalajara, Mexico
Raul Blackaller

Aikido of Puerto Vallarta
Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
Eric Jaracho, Raffi Badalian

Association D'Aikido Pour Demain
Paris, France
Cyril Danan

Aikikan
Rehovot, Israel
Ze'ev Erlich

Valladolid Aikido Dojo
Valladolid, Spain
Felix Ares

Veracruz Aikido Dojo
Vera Cruz, Mexico
Dr. Roberto Magallanes
Dr. Alvaro R. Hernández Meza

Marco Giuseppe Marangoni
Monza, Italy

Welcome To The Aikido Center of Los Angeles



Aikido Center of Los Angeles

Visiting Our Dojo:

Our dojo is dedicated to the practice of traditional Aikido as taught by the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba and his legitimate successors, the late 2nd Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba and the present 3rd Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.

You are very welcome to visit our beautiful, hand-crafted, traditional Japanese Dojo during posted training hours. All practicing Aikidoists are welcome to train with us or observe our training. Interested students and visiting Aikidoists are always welcome to join our practice. We are directly affiliated with Aikikai Hombu, Tokyo, Japan. Please make inquiries by email: aclafuruya@earthlink.net.

Please Visit Our Website:
www.aikidocenterla.com
Aikido-laido-KODO@yahoo



Rev. Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan

The Kensho Furuya Foundation:

Mr. Ken Watanabe - President
Mr. Gary Myers - Secretary
Mr. Mark Ty - Treasurer
Dr. Cheryl Lew - Senior Counsel
Mr. Jonathan Altman - Legal

The Furuya Foundation is dedicated to preserving the Dojo and its continued operation maintaining the highest standards of practice and the work of Furuya Sensei in research and education in Aikido, the traditional Japanese sword & related arts and their history, culture and traditions. Your donations & contributions are welcome.

Japanese Swords: Appraisal & Restoration

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We offer instruction in the traditional art of Iaido, the art of the Sword. Serious students are always welcome. Iaido demands a strong commitment of time, honor, perseverance and integrity. It is a spiritual art with a history and tradition of over fine hundred years. It is an art which is rapidly disappearing in our modern world today. We welcome all interested students to join our training. You will learn the proper etiquette and handling of the Samurai sword and its usage as a real weapon. This is not sword play, movie stunt action or performance-competition. This is a real, traditional martial art discipline.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

www.aikidocenterla.com

Mission of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles:

We are not-for-profit, traditional Aikido dojo dedicated to preserve the honored values and traditions of the art. We are continually focused on maintaining the highest standards of the art in a Dojo which, itself is considered a work of art. With your continued understanding and support, we hope that you will dedicate yourself to your training, enjoying all the benefits Aikido can offer.

Recommended Readings:



International Aikido Kodo-Kai.

We do accept all Branch Dojo affiliations with any dojo who practices and wishes to follow the Aiki Kai Hombu Dojo training, rules and standards. This also includes commitment to 3rd Doshu and the Ueshiba Family as the Founding Family and Originator of our art. You are welcome to make inquires by email or letter. Our purpose is to help others in the correct practice of Aikido and to spread the correct transmission and understanding of O'Sensei's teachings.

**Visit our official website daily at www.aikidocenterla.com
Become a member of [Aikido-laido-KODO@yahoo.group](mailto:aikido-laido-KODO@yahoo.group)
For Sensei's Daily Message and current news & postings.**

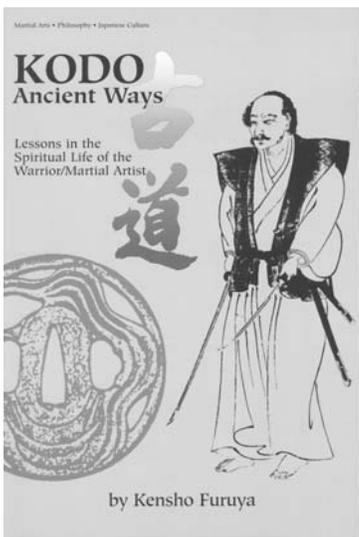
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Publications By Furuya Sensei:



Kodo: Ancient Ways: Lessons In The Spiritual Life Of the Warrior

By Kensho Furuya

\$16.95 plus tax.

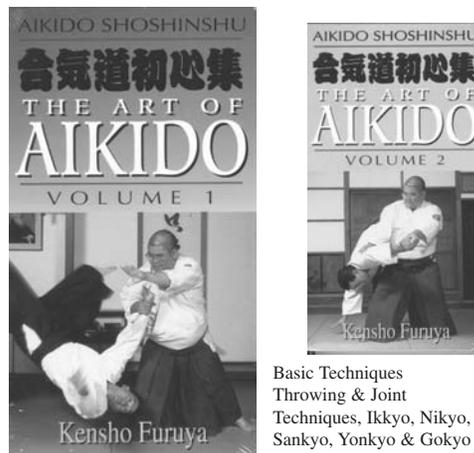
Highly recommended for all students of the Dojo. Please request for your autographed copy by Sensei.

The Art of AIKIDO

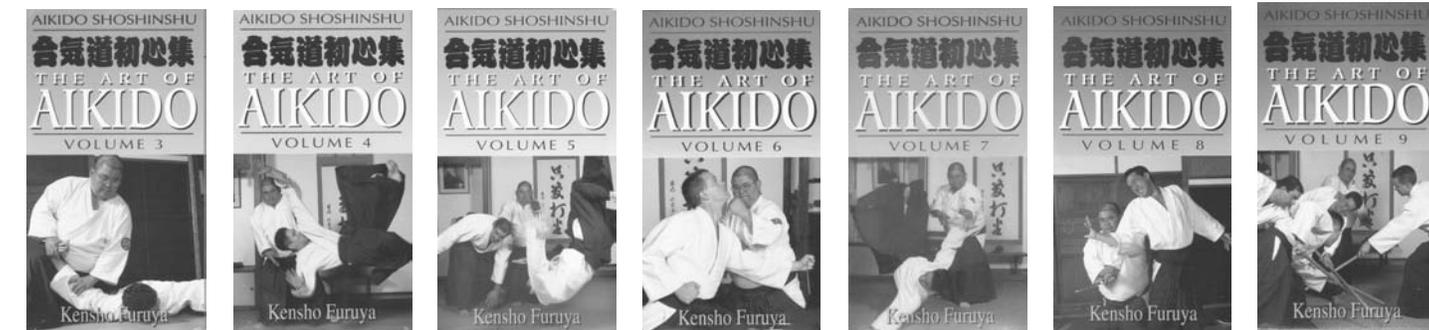
Instructional Video Series s Now Available in a new DVD format.

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This video series is considered to be the most comprehensive and detailed instructional video on Aikido available today. Clear depiction of each technique and very detailed explanation of all of the fine points.



Basic Techniques
Throwing & Joint
Techniques, Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo & Gokyo



Ukemi-Breakfalling Basics Continued
Free Style Techniques
Tenshin. Ki. Breathing.

Katatetori Ryotemochi:
Ryotetori: 2-hand.
Reigi-saho: Etiquette.
Koshinage-Hip throws.

Suwari-waza. Gokyo.
Hanmi-handachi. Kokyudosa.
Katatori: Shoulder.
Multiple attackers.
Five-man Freestyle.

Tsuki: Strikes & Punches
Yokomenuchi: Strikes to the side of the head & neck.

Shomenuchi,Ushiro Katatetori
Kubishime: Chokes from behind.
Ushiro Ryotetori, Ryohijitori, Ryokatatori.

Atemi-waza: Striking Defense against kicks.
Tanto-tori: Knife defense.
Aiki-ken: Sword Training

Jo: Basic long staff Fundamentals.
Complete 1st Degree Black Belt Examination

