



The Aikido Center of Los Angeles

道の為、世の為、人の為 合気道

The Aiki Dojo

Direct Affiliation: Aikido World Headquarters, 17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Los Angeles Sword & Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai
Furuya Foundation

August 2009

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Obon demonstration at Zenshuji Soto Mission

Upcoming Events

July 24-August 2:
Students from Spain visit

August 1:
Promotion testing

August 29:
Instructor's intensive

August 29:
Ukemi workshop

September 7:
Labor Day: Dojo closed

September 26:
Instructor's intensive

Up the Waterfall
by Gary Myers, Iaido Chief Instructor

My wife Sami and I love all types of antique Japanese textiles. Many years ago we bought an antique horse-trapping textile called *uma gake*. Few have survived, so finding one is challenging and many Japanese are unaware of what they are. Although we have had this piece for over twenty years we never displayed it, except for one time when I exhibited it in my store. So many people wanted to buy it that I felt bad telling them it wasn't for sale. Recently, we found a spot at home for it.

The horse cover is used in celebratory processions and it drapes over the horse. There are about three different types of these covers. One type ties around the horse's mid-section while others drape over the horse. The covers are highly decorated with different motifs. The fabric is usually made of heavy cotton and dyed in a method called *tsutsugaki*. If you want to see a representation of this dying style in the dojo, all you have to do is look at the textile that covers the exit door near the tokonoma.

Continued on page 2...

Obon Demonstration
by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

Our dojo has a long tradition of demonstrating Aikido for the community. Sensei was a part of the very first Nisei Week Aikido demonstration in 1979 and our dojo has demonstrated every year since then, participating in Obon festivals, Children's Day festivals, Cherry Blossom festivals, Lotus festivals, and Nisei Week, to name just a few. This was not about showing off or trying to become famous for Sensei, it was about giving back to the community and supporting the community in its endeavors. Sensei said, "We must support the community so that they will support us when we need it."

On July 12th, we demonstrated Aikido and Iaido at Zenshuji Soto Mission's Obon festival. To the average spectator, this was probably another benign martial arts demonstration in a sea of endless performances endured in near 100-degree temperatures. Yet to the many of members of the ACLA, this demonstration meant much more.

Continued on page 6...

Up the Waterfall *continued from page 1...*

It is a *futonji* or futon cover; most likely it was a wedding trousseau gift. The hawk in the pine tree motif symbolizes the fierceness of the samurai.

Tsutsugaki requires a great deal of labor and involves a rice paste resist-dyeing method that uses a *tsutsu* or tube nozzle to apply the paste. The *tsutsu* looks very much like a pastry cone used to apply icing to cakes; different size cone nozzles apply the paste in wide to narrow lines. The dye takes where there is no paste. By moving the paste from the areas, those areas may be left undyed or dyed with another color. So each piece requires repeated dyeing and pasting and color fixing if it is multicolored or even shaded. This multi-step, labor-intensive process explains why *tsutsugaki* pieces are so highly regarded.

Our *uma gake* depicts koi swimming up a waterfall, a popular theme that one sees most often on Boy's Day (now Children's Day). Our horse cover was most likely used in either a Boy's Day celebration or a coming-of-age ceremony. Koi have traditionally been associated with the drive to succeed. Often they are depicted swimming up a waterfall, striving to swim despite the force in the opposite direction. Legend has it that when a koi reaches the top of the waterfall, it transforms into a dragon and then takes flight and soars into the heavens. Often we feel like we are trying to swim up the waterfall. Life may seem like a constant struggle, taking all our energies to overcome the forces trying to push us in the other direction. Of course it's easy to give up and go with the flow, to take the path of least resistance. That might explain why we see more koi than dragons.

Many projects we take on may seem like forces are against us, pushing us in the opposite direction or preventing our advancement. We sometimes like to believe that these outside forces prevent us from achieving more; however, often we stand as the biggest impediment to our own advancement. For many years we tried to make the dojo a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. This was a goal of Sensei and one of the reasons he formed the



Uma gake

Furuya Foundation. Quite recently, the IRS finally granted us the tax-exempt, non-profit status of a private school. Unfortunately, the way we were organized in the past became one of the biggest obstacles to transforming into a non-profit organization. But we persevered, producing many pages of documentation to support our application. Thanks to the

hard work on the part of Ito Sensei, Mark Ehrlich, and Paula Levy (our counsel from Munger, Tolles & Olsen), we finally reached the top of the waterfall.

Of course, the first question now becomes, what does this mean to the dojo? The Furuya Foundation serves as the umbrella organization for which the Aikido Center of Los Angeles is now the heart. This was the reason Sensei wanted the Foundation to be formed; he wanted his passion for martial arts and the dojo to live on after he was gone. This new status comes with its own set of disciplines such as compliance rules, record keeping, and the highest accounting standards. This should be transparent to you, the members of the ACLA/Furuya Foundation. It will not be so transparent in the daily operation of the dojo, which heretofore has always been a bit more free-form. But just as we must have discipline and focus on the mats, so must we be in our record keeping and our accounting.

What we hope will be apparent to you, is that this new status will benefit you, the members. Will it mean you can write off your monthly dues as tax deductions? This is usually the second question asked. Unfortunately you cannot — dues, like other school tuitions, are not considered deductible

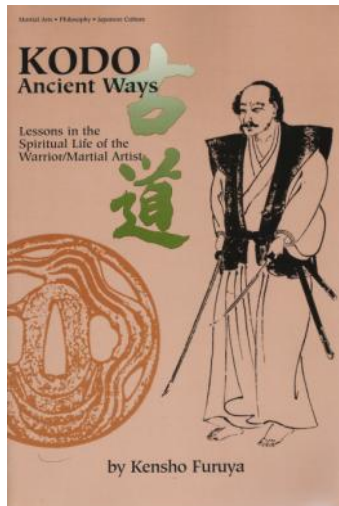
in this case. But contributions are deductible, and the dojo can legitimately have fundraisers, which in the long term will help provide a better financial foundation, which will help secure the future of the dojo. Over the course of the next several months, the board of directors of the Furuya Foundation will solicit your ideas of what programs you would like the dojo to pursue. Of course, we will continue to offer seminars, and we will conduct more demonstrations in the future like the one this month for the Obon festival at Zenshuji. The dojo exists for your benefit, so you, our members, have a say in its future programs.



Futonji dyed in the tsutsugaki method

◇ Publications By Reverend Kensho Furuya ◇

Kodo: Ancient Ways:
Lessons in the spiritual life of the warrior



by Reverend
Kensho Furuya

Highly
recommended
for all students
of the Dojo.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles:

We are a not-for-profit, traditional Aikido Dojo dedicated to preserving the honored values and traditions of the arts of Aikido and Iaido. With your continued understanding and support, we hope that you also will dedicate yourself to your training and to enjoying all the benefits that Aikido and Iaido can offer.

The Aiki Dojo Newsletter

Publisher: David Ito
Editor-in-Chief: Mark Ehrlich
Photographer: Larry Armstrong

Hacienda La Puente Aikikai

Hacienda Heights, California
Chief Instructor: Tom Williams

Aikido Kodokai

Salamanca, Spain
Chief Instructor: Santiago Garcia Almaraz
www.kodokai.com

Veracruz Aikikai

Veracruz, Mexico
Chief Instructors:
Dr. Jose Roberto Magallanes Molina
Dr. Alvaro Rodolfo Hernandez Meza
www.veracruz-aikikai.com

Aikido Renbukai of Arizona

Surprise, Arizona
Chief Instructor: Michael Van Ruth
www.aikidorenbukai.com

The Art of AIKIDO

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

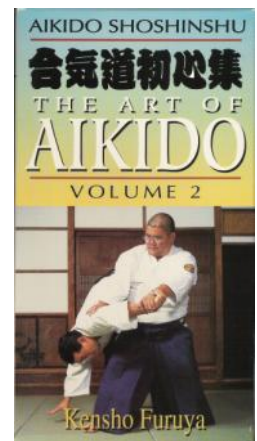
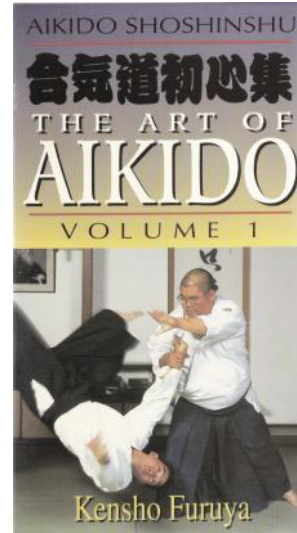
"Top Rated"
Karate Illustrated

"Impressive Scope"
Aikido Today

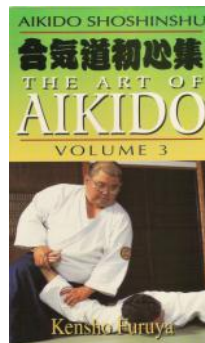
"Exhaustive"
Aikido Journal

"Best in the English language
on the market today,"
Budovideos.com

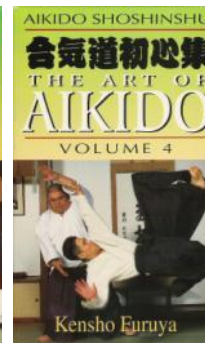
This video series is considered the most comprehensive and detailed instructional video on Aikido available today. Clear depiction of each technique and very detailed explanation



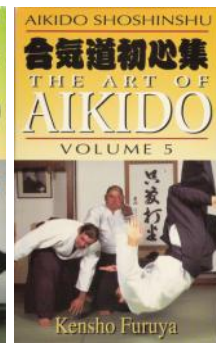
Basic Techniques
Throwing & Joint Techniques,
Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo
& Gokyo



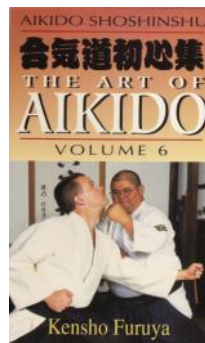
Ukemi-Breakfalling
Basics Continued
Free Style Techniques
Tenshin. Ki. Breathing.



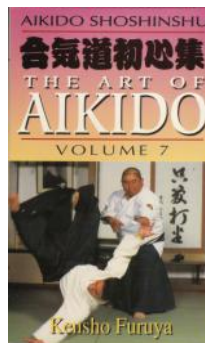
Katatedori Ryotemochi:
Ryotetori: 2-hand attack.
Reigi-saho: Etiquette.
Koshinage-Hip throws.



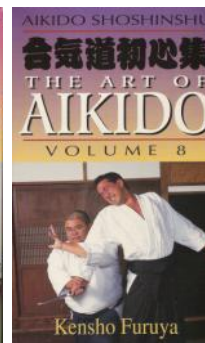
Suwari-waza. Gokyo.
Hanmi-handachi.
Kokyu-dosa.
Katatori: Shoulder attacks
Multiple attackers.



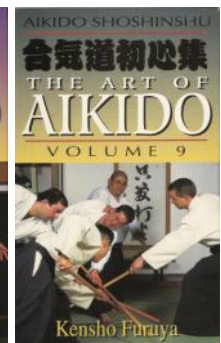
Tsuki: Strikes & punches
Yokomenuchi: Strikes to
the side of the head &
neck.



Ushiro Katatedori
Kubishime: Chokes from
behind.
Ushiro Ryotetori,
Ryohijitori, & Ryokatatori.



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



Jo: Basic short staff
Fundamentals.
Complete 1st Degree
Black Belt (Shodan)
Examination

Branch Dojos

Zenshuji Obon Demonstration



James Doi throwing Bill Allen



Jeff Wheeler demonstrating Iaido



Ito Sensei doing Ikkyo with Paul Major



James Doi, Jeff Wheeler and Dennis Long



James Takata doing shihonage



Shaun Menashe doing nikyo



Shaun Menashe and Raffi Massabki



Rey Espino with James Takata

The man behind the lens



Special thanks to Larry Armstrong who always makes us look good with his amazing photography!



Leonard Manoukian throwing kokyunage



Ken Watanabe throwing Rey Espino



Bill Allen throwing Jason Markowski



Maria Murakawa pinning James Doi

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Put Your Best Foot Forward

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

“You do not need to be a warrior to practice Aikido, but, at least, you should realize the Warrior’s Heart.” This simply means that you will pursue the journey of life and perfect your life as a great work of art. This path can be a lonely one, be careful!

To understand the heart of Aikido, one must understand the heart of others. Most of us think only of ourselves and this is the great obstacle!



Sensei demonstrating randori

Feet First doesn’t mean that I want you to plunge into something feet first without thinking! I would never ask you to be so unreasonable or foolish. It means to put just one foot — your best foot — forward! If you can put your best foot forward, I will put my best foot forward. This is my meaning of “Feet First.”

I continually challenge my students but my students never challenge me. Such simple movements! Pick them up so we can go on and leap forward in your training. If you are having a little trouble with a particular movement, any one of my assistant instructors will be glad to help you and work with you before or

after class. But so many students put no energy there — many prefer just to make the same mistake over and over again! I think it must be boring for you — as well as for me! Right after class and clean-up, so many just want to stand around and chit-chat with their friends when there is just so much to learn. Just wanting to idly chit-chat with Sensei doesn’t do any good at all and I won’t be a part of it. Start training, start practicing something and sure enough, Sensei will appear if there is a problem.

Some things that you do not understand, just take 20 minutes or so and work on them. If you work with a movement and practice it over and over according to the instruction, you will surely get it. Many things are not so difficult that you cannot understand them, you just haven’t given enough time to understand them or work with them. That is all. That is all there is.

“Pursue the journey of life and perfect your life as a great work of art.”

So much to learn, there is no time to waste. I suppose one might say that we should relax in all things, but in some things, it is okay to be urgent, it is okay to feel anxious. It is okay if you make Aikido an important and essential part of your life and treat it with urgency. This is good urgency: to learn, to develop one’s self, to realize the transiency of life, your own mortality, and that there is no time to waste!

You do not need to be lazy all of your life! Make something important and treat it with the necessary energy! Have passion in your life to realize something. Do not, in the dojo, walk around like zombies. Put your best foot forward! And Sensei will too. Then we can both go Feet First together! Ha!

Editor’s Note: This article originally appeared, in slightly different form, as a posting on Sensei’s daily message on the ACLA website on August 15, 2002.

 **Just Married!**



Congratulations!

Best wishes to Juliette Takimoto and Ken Watanabe on their May 24, 2009 wedding.

Sensei is featured in two issues of the Cultural News!



Visit <http://culturalnews.bravehost.com/> to read all the articles!



Our Neighbors, Our Food

by Maria Murakawa, Aikido 2nd Dan

Another way to satisfy your appetite is to head over to Fulfilled in Beverly Hills, home of *imagawayaki*, nuevo-Japanese-American style. *Imagawayaki* are traditional Japanese pastries, made with a pancake-like batter and filled with sweet adzuki beans that get cooked in a steel iron with several individual small round molds, giving them their distinctive hockey-puck shape. Served warm, they are a favorite festival snack of the Japanese, portable to take, fun to eat. Just as the Japanese in Japan add a Nihon-jin twist to Western foods such as hamburgers and Kentucky Fried Chicken, Fulfilled offers *imagawayaki* in different flavors catering to the American palate in a new way. The *imagawayaki* at Fulfilled are called *imas* and come in a variety of fillings — sweet as well as savory—with eye-catching names such as “Sweet Geisha” and “Green Ninja.” Since they offer a choice of five sweet flavors and three savory ones, choosing what to get can become a very difficult decision. Hence, the following flight of *imas* will guarantee you the best of what Fulfilled has to offer. Start with a savory “Spicy Samurai.” Armed with chicken apple sausage,



pepper jack cheese, green chilli, and fresh cilantro, the juicy sausage and gooey cheese is sure to leave you wanting more; it definitely kills all other savory flavors on the menu. Try the “Honey Yakuza” next: melted goat cheese cloaks Mission figs and walnuts, oozing with honey and a touch of black pepper; this variety makes for the perfect mixture of savory and sweet, definitely an *ima* you can’t refuse.

Fulfilled

9405 S. Santa Monica Blvd.
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
(310) 860-0776
www.fulfilledpastries.com

Finally, enlighten your palate with the richness of

Ghirardelli chocolate and crunchy peanut butter, in the form of the “Nutty Buddha.” Wash it all down with a Lil Misa’s Green Tea, preferably iced.

This concoction uses real green tea mixed with sweet adzuki bean paste, and you can add a dash of *shichimi togarashi* (a Japanese hot pepper blend) if you feel adventurous. Get there soon as strawberry season is in full swing, because they also serve *ichigo daifuku*, a Japanese confection, seldom seen in LA, in which a juicy strawberry is covered in either the traditional sweet adzuki bean paste or Nutella, then wrapped in a sweet mochi covering. A little bit of Japan nestled in the heart of Beverly Hills, and is definitely worth the drive!

Obon Demonstration *continued from page 1...*



Looking deeper, we find a dojo that has not demonstrated since Nisei Week in August of 2006 and that lost its teacher the following March in 2007 just before the festival demonstration season was set to begin.

Since Sensei’s death, I have turned down all requests for demonstrations. Reverend Kojima has always been very supportive of our dojo and this year when he asked, I felt it was time to emerge from the shadow of Sensei’s passing. The day of reckoning came and everyone did a wonderful job preparing and carrying out their routines. Each person demonstrated slowly, showing good form and composure, and nobody looked as if they were suffering from the long layoff. It made for quite a joyful day.

Shortly before we were set to perform, a student asked me, “Why do you want me to demonstrate? I am terrible and would probably embarrass the dojo in front of the audience!” I told him that we demonstrate to develop ourselves and not to please the audience. Sensei believed that demonstrating was an effective method of developing your Aikido skill. To the students, demonstrating becomes the equivalent to getting dental work done. Students have to come up with routines to demonstrate and execute them in front of an audience and that stress definitely makes it interesting. When you demonstrate you have to keep your

mind clear, control your breathing, navigate your opponent’s spacing, timing, strength, and attack, as well as execute the proper technique.

For those of you lucky enough to have participated in demonstrations with Sensei, you were probably amazed by his skill and knowledge. What you might not know is that Sensei never rehearsed his demonstrations. At first blush, this comes off as a pretty wild assertion or something which legends are embellished, but it is the truth. Sensei was a breathtaking architect of Aikido movement. Although in his later years he became rather heavy, he never lost the grace which he had spent decades developing. He moved with such ease and made Aikido look so effortless and, on top of that, he was magnificent at explaining Aikido as well. This made for a great presentation despite never preparing. I once asked Sensei about why he did not rehearse for demonstrations. He said, “I never rehearse, not because I think I am great, but because I use our demonstrations to test my own level. I must teach the classes and I don’t get to train anymore, so I need some way to see what I need to work on.”

I agree with Sensei that demonstrating is a good barometer of your skill level and that it is beneficial to your training but this demonstration was special. It marks a new beginning and a rebirth of our dojo. As we struggle every day to get back on our feet, it is nice to see that the dojo and its members are persevering and are supporting, and being supported by, their community. I would like to thank Bishop Akiba and Reverend Kojima and Zenshuji Soto Mission for allowing us this opportunity to return to the past and begin again.

JAPANESE LESSON

日本語

Otemoto: At your hand

Pronounced: Oh-teh-moh-toh

おてもと。

In the mid 1970s, the oldest known pair of chopsticks was excavated from the ruins of the Shang dynasty's capital city estimated around 1200 B.C. The old Chinese word for chopstick was *zhu*, but the modern word in Mandarin is *kuaizi* (and *faai jee* or *kuaizi* in Cantonese), which means *quick* or *fast*. The Japanese term for chopsticks is *hashi* 箸. The origin of the chopstick can be dated back to the Shang dynasty (1766-1122 B.C.); they probably arrived in Japan somewhere between the 3rd and 7th Century. Hashi make for a very simple, second-class multi-purpose lever that are excellent not only for picking up

things but also for twisting, pulling, pinching, and creating complex maneuvers using the dexterity of your fingers. Hashi made of willow wood are used on more formal occasions, while cedar hashi called *waribashi* are used for everyday dining. Some traditional arts use the hashi as a teaching tool. The phrase

written on the paper cover of a *waribashi* hashi (called

hashi bukuro) says *otemoto* (おてもと) or "At your hand." Hashi are generally not placed on the table directly but rested on a hashi *oki*. The *oki* generally matches the dishes on which food is being served. Many people devise elaborate origami *oki* out of the disposable hashi packaging.



Hashi oki origami

Many years ago, Sensei and I accompanied members of the Kodo drumming troupe from Sado Island around a tour of Los Angeles. I noticed that many of them ate with their hashi left-handed. I asked Sensei about this and he asked one of the members who told us that, "When you come to Sado Island to apprentice, they make you eat with your non-dominant hand and many never switch back." I always thought that switching was a magnificent idea in order to improve the dexterity and agility of your non-dominant hand.

Older forms of the hashi tapered at both ends so that humans could use one end and the gods could use the other, and they were typically made of wood to ward off evil spirits. Today, the hashi is a replica of the version Sen no Rikyu advocated for use in the tea ceremony and have become the ultimate in the epicurean dining experience all over the world.

Here is a list of poor hashi table manners and the Japanese phrases that describe them. Hopefully, no one will use them to describe how you use your hashi!

Mayoi bashi - Indecisively letting your hashi hover over community dishes

Utsuri bashi - Picking up and then putting down food without taking it or eating it

Koji bashi - Picking out your favorite parts of a dish

Sagui bashi - Stirring your soup to find your favorite ingredients

Neburi bashi - Licking your hashi

Sashi bashi - Stabbing your food with your hashi

Namida bashi - Generally your opposite hand accompanies food brought to your mouth with the hashi; this term describes when you allow food to drip without using your accompanying hand

Yose bashi - Pulling or pushing bowls or things with your hashi

Hiroi bashi - Passing food to other people using your hashi

Kuwae bashi - Clenching your hashi between your teeth or holding them between your lips

Seseri bashi - Picking your teeth with your hashi

Tataki bashi - Chewing on the tips your hashi

Tsukitate bashi - Sticking your hashi in a bowl of rice; it is deemed bad luck since this is how they offer rice in front of gravesites. **Never do this!**

Sashi bashi - Pointing at people with your hashi; it is considered extremely rude. **Never do this!**



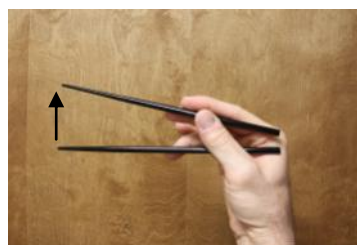
Hold hashi in both hands with thumbs and index fingers but not too close to the tip with the left hand.



Place one hashi against the side of your fourth (ring) finger and firmly in the groove between your thumb and index finger.



Hold the second hashi between your thumb and index finger while resting on the side of the middle finger. The same way you hold a pencil.



Move the top hashi tip up to open.

Note: Generally, the bottom hashi never moves!



Move the top hashi tip down to close.

Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE

Sundays

9:00-10:00 AM Children's Class
10:15-11:15 AM Open

Mondays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals
6:30-7:30 PM Open

Tuesdays

6:30-7:30 PM Open

Wednesdays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals
6:30-7:30 PM Open
7:45-8:45 PM Weapons

Thursdays

6:30-7:30 PM Bokken

Fridays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals
6:30-7:30 PM Open

Saturdays

9:30-10:30 AM Open
10:40-11:40 AM Open

6:30 AM Instructor's Intensive: last Saturday of the month.*

* This class is not open for visitors to watch.

Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

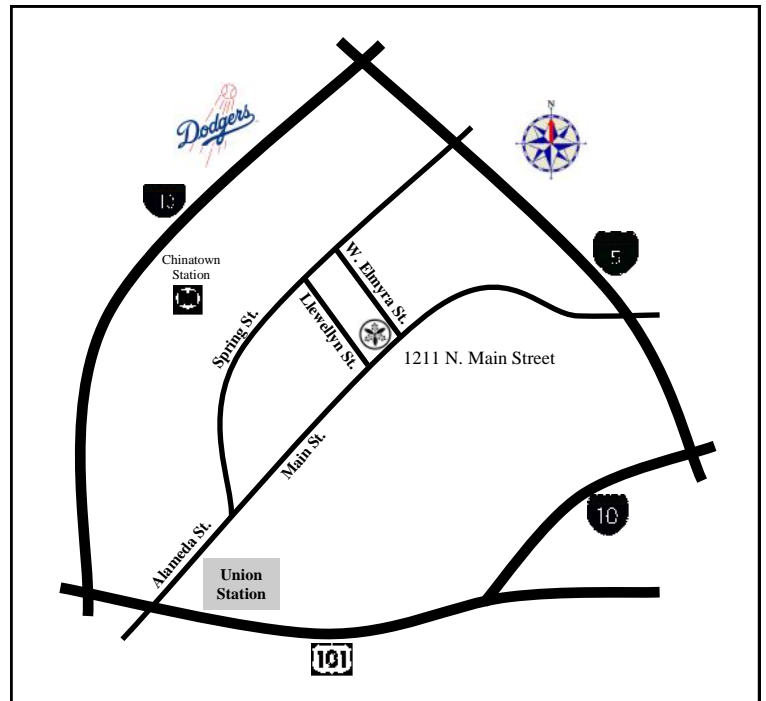
Saturdays:

7:15-8:15 AM Beginning
8:15-9:15 AM Intermediate-Advanced

Sundays: 7:45-8:45 AM

**Thursdays: 6:30-7:30 PM (Bokken Practice)
7:30-8:30 PM**

No classes on the last weekend of the month.



Meditation Class

Saturdays: 12:00-1:30 PM

(This class is open to the public and is free of charge.)

**We are directly affiliated with:
AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS**

Aikido So-Hombu Dojo - Aikikai

17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, JAPAN

We are committed to the study and practice of the teachings of the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba and his legitimate successors, Kisshomaru Ueshiba and the present Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.

The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles admit students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The Furuya Foundation and ACLA do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Finding Our Dojo

We are located at
1211 N. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (323) 225-1424

E-mail: info@aikidocenterla.com

We are across the street and one block northwest from the Chinatown Metro Station.

The entrance is on Elmyra Street.

No appointment necessary to watch classes or join:

You are welcome to visit us anytime during any of our Open or Fundamental classes. Please come early.