

The AikidoCenter of Los Angeles



道の為、
世の為、
人の為
合気道

The Aiki Dojo

Direct Affiliation: Aikikai Foundation – Aikido World Headquarters
Los Angeles Sword and Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai
The Furuya Foundation

August 2016

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Message From the Teacher by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

The month of August is a bitter sweet one in that we have all the excitement of summer but also the reminder of the tenuousness of life in the anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

As martial artists we are constantly aware of this line that exists between life and death as exemplified by the duality of existence as seen in this summer month.

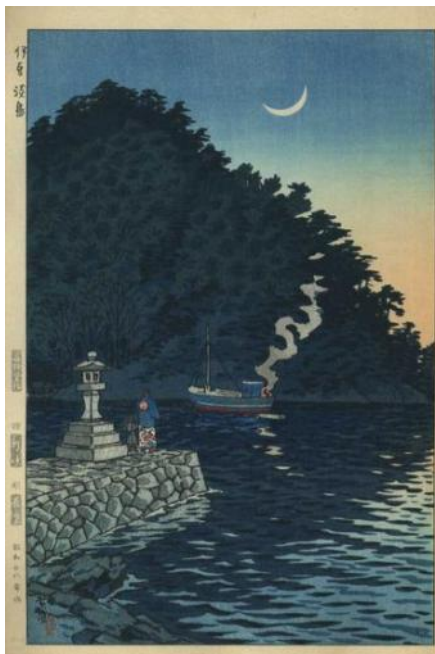
To understand the fragile border between life and death in Buddhism is called *mujō*. *Mujō* is the understanding that nothing in this life is permanent – we are born, we live and we die.

With this understanding a samurai accepts this ultimate fate but in accepting their death they learn how to live.

When we think about the atomic bombings that led to the end of World War II, it is easy to think about the tragic loss of life, but in realizing their suffering we can learn how to live. Author Haruki Murakami wrote a piece that I feel sums up this idea of *mujō* and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

He wrote:

As I mentioned earlier, we live in the fleeting and insubstantial world of "mujō." This life into which we are born slips by, and soon, without exception, fades away. Faced with the overwhelming power of nature, humans are helpless. Awareness of the insubstantiality of experience is one of the core ideas of Japanese culture. But at the same time, we also have within all of us a positive mind, a respect for things that have passed away and a quiet determination to go on living with vigor in this fragile world filled with dangers.



Mijikayo yo
Asase ni nokoru
Tsuki ippen

The short night;
In the shallow remains
The crescent moon
– Buson

In the summer, the nights are shorter and thus daylight comes much earlier. Like the duality between life and death there is a simultaneous sadness and happiness that exists as the night comes to an earlier ending only to bring the excitement of a new day and a new sunrise.

Not just as martial artists, but as humans too, we possess this duality. It is in the *budo* training that we receive which simultaneously gives us the perspective of death and the possibility of life.

Please use your time wisely and don't let the summer slip away.

Upcoming Events

August 9-12th:
Karita Sensei visit

August 27th:
Intensive Seminar

September 5th:
Dojo Closed: Labor Day

September 24th:
Intensive Seminar

September 24-25th:
Ito Sensei teaching at
Castle Rock Aikido in Colorado

October 29th:
Intensive Seminar

October 30th:
Children's class Halloween Party

Can You or Will You

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

A good student can be thought of as someone who does the right thing at the right time. To do the right thing at the right time in Japanese might be defined as *atarimae hinshitsu* (当たり前品質). *Atarimae hinshitsu* or more commonly referenced as just *atarimae* is one of those Japanese words that is a little bit difficult to define because it is more of mindset than it is a word. *Atarimae* is something that is supposed to happen in the most natural way. Someone once explained to me as, “the obvious consequence” of something and the example they used was that when you pick up a pen to write, you just write without thinking if the pen has ink in it or not because naturally the pen should have ink in it.

In 2014, the world got a glimpse of the Japanese mindset of *atarimae* after Japan’s national team was defeated in the first round at the FIFA World Cup by the Ivory Coast 2-1 at the Arena Pernambuco in Recife, Brazil. After Japan’s Blue Samurai team lost, the Japanese fans stayed behind and, armed with blue trash bags, cleaned their sections of the stadium. The internet exploded as people posted pictures of these Japanese fans picking up trash. Most people thought that the Japanese fans were just being gracious losers. However it was not the graciousness of losing that propelled the Japanese fans to clean up after themselves but rather *atarimae*. The Japanese fans’ mindset was that they made the mess and it was only natural that they clean it up and I would bet that it wasn’t even something that was planned out in advance. Japanese people are supposed to clean up after themselves and thus it didn’t matter that they were in a foreign country because it was *atarimae* or the only natural thing to do.

In order to do the right thing takes training and experience. One cannot be expected to pick up the trash unless they have been trained to do it regardless if they agree or understand why. In the beginning of training most students exhibit *atarimae* in a mechanical perfunctory way. When something is dirty or needs to be cleaned up, a higher ranking person or the teacher directs them to do it. The student might not even be aware of it and thus has to be told to carry it out. After a while, the student learns to anticipate and is able to carry out the action without being told. Later on, the student becomes the senior and develops an almost sixth sense as to when something needs to be done or, rather, it becomes natural and this is when it becomes *atarimae* – it gets done because it needs to get done naturally with the littlest of ease.

When I was a student, Furuya Sensei used to get a lot of visitors from out of town and we would sometimes have to take them sight-

seeing or to have a meal. I used to hate to have to entertain these guests because the environment was very stressful and we had to be on our toes the whole time while trying to make it look natural and not forced. As “well trained” students we were supposed to show our guests a high level of hospitality where we were supposed to be attentive and well behaved. The guests were to never see us loose our cool or see us “fall asleep” in our diligent hospitality.



A while back I was having dinner with some students and a guest from another school that came to practice that night. We went to a local Thai food restaurant that was close to the dojo. The students from our dojo that attended were all black belts under Furuya Sensei and had been with the dojo for at least 15-20 years. One of the students had dinner with Sensei often and was a regular at this restaurant. He asked if it was OK to order for the group and we all agreed. The student asked the guest a few hushed questions and then ordered the food while he poured tea for everyone. When the food came, the student served everyone all the while chatting away about the particulars of Los Angeles and things like the real estate market and historical patterns. The evening flew by and we all parted ways a few hours later. The next day, the guest called me to thank me for dinner and piled heavy compliments upon the student who took care of eating arrangements. He said, “I just want to say, your student was truly a gentleman. I was blown away by his manners and hospitality.” It took all I had not to laugh out loud. As if he was processing it out loud, he said, “He must

be from a really good family or is he is in politics or in the entertainment industry?” As he pressed further he finally asked, “Where did he learn to be like that?” I explained that when we were students, we were trained that way and we were expected to behave that way around guests. The reason why I almost laughed out loud was because the student that the guest was gushing over was, in my opinion, not even that well trained. Sensei always used to scold him for talking too much, forgetting to fill the tea or for having bad table manners.

Lao Tzu said, “In nature nothing is rushed, yet everything is accomplished.” *Atarimae hinshitsu* can be a representation of that saying. As martial artists, what we do on the mat pales in comparison to what we do off the mat. A good student does the right thing at the right time because they are trained to. Constant and consistent training brings mastery and with mastery comes a certain sense of calmness or more importantly a naturalness in one’s behaviors and actions. The pen just writes just as the student does the right thing at the right time as well. In Japanese the process of learning is referred to as *shu ha ri*. *Shu* is the mastery of the form, *ha* is the breaking of the form and *ri* is the freedom from the form. In true mastery there is a freedom that exists where one forgets the form and just does – that is *atarimae*.

BUDOKAN

HOME COURT FOR ALL



Budokan of Los Angeles, a Project of Little Tokyo Service Center
A multi-purpose sports complex to be built in Little Tokyo

An exciting **RAFFLE DRAWING** benefitting
The Budokan of Los Angeles project



Let's
Go
Places



WIN a 2017 Toyota Highlander Hybrid

Each tickets is \$10.00

Raffle ends November 23, 2016.

The drawing will take place at Seoul Sausage Restaurant (right across the street from where the Budokan will be) on Monday, November 28, 2016.
Winners need not be present to win.

For every raffle ticket sold by the Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles, the dojo will receive \$4.00.

Please contact Gary Illiano at gary.illiano@runbox.com to purchase tickets or email the dojo for more information.

For more information about the Budokan or the raffle, please contact the Little Tokyo Service Center at BOLA@LTSC.ORG

Want to dance in the Nisei Week Ondo & Closing Ceremony or Grand Parade?



Join us this year as the Nisei Week Japanese Festival celebrates its 76th anniversary
August 13-21.

2016 Ondo Dance:

Soran Matsuri (Song by Yoshimi Tendo)

Hoshi no mai (Song by Megumi Date)

Choreographies by Hanayagi Rokufukumi

To help the public prepare for the Grand Parade (August 14) and Ondo street dancing/Closing Ceremony (August 21), free public dance practices are being held from 6:30 - 9 pm on Tuesday July 19, Thursday July 21, Tuesday July 26, Thursday July 28, Tuesday August 2, and Thursday August 4 on the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center Plaza

Please bring one set of naruko (wood clapper) to each practice.

Questions should be directed to Miles Hamada at (323) 620.0662 or mileshamada@yahoo.com.



NISEI WEEK
Japanese Festival

2016 Nisei Week Japanese Festival

*Calendar of Festival Events as of 6/24/16
Dates and times subject to change.*

July 17 (Sun) Festival Opening Ceremony

July 23 (Sat) Baby Show

Centenary United Methodist Church, 9am – 3pm

August 14 (Sun) Grand Parade

Little Tokyo, 4:00 pm

August 20 (Sat)

Nisei Week Japanese Festival/JACCC Plaza Festival

Nisei Week Rubik's Cube Open

JACCC Plaza, 8:00 am

Day-Lee Foods World Gyoza Eating Championship

JACCC Plaza, 2:00 pm

August 21 (Sun)

Nisei Week Japanese Festival/JACCC Plaza Festival

Ondo and Closing Ceremony

1st Street, 4 pm

For more information visit: niseiweek.org

Inspiration and Perspiration

by Ken Watanabe, Iaido Chief Instructor

We all begin training in martial arts for many different reasons. Some of the reasons why we begin training are to get in shape, to learn self-defense, to gain confidence, or maybe we simply enjoy martial arts. What makes us do anything? Sometimes it's forced upon us and other times, we motivate ourselves.

In my own experience, I wanted to practice Aikido before I knew exactly what it was. I knew enough about it to know I wanted to practice it. Of course, after practicing and teaching for many years, I now know I actually knew absolutely nothing about Aikido.

Back then, there was no Google, Wikipedia, or YouTube, but luckily I saw an advertisement for an Aikido demonstration that was scheduled to be held during the Nisei Week festival in Little Tokyo. At the demonstration, the students demonstrated first doing some basic Aikido techniques, which to me, seemed like they would never work on anyone. There were no strikes, no judo-like hip throws, or anything that, to me, resembled a conventional martial arts style technique. As the students demonstrated, this overweight gentleman wearing a *keikogi* and *hakama*, whom I assumed was the teacher, narrated. There was a lull which seemed to signal that it was his turn to get on stage, I skeptically thought, "What is this guy gonna do?"



The teacher demonstrated various techniques with a sense of ease using one of the students then all of a sudden four students quickly lined up, bowed, and rushed the teacher who moved ever so effortlessly around the mat and threw them down one after the other, not once stopping or getting caught. After watching that demonstration against multiple opponents, what I later learned was called "randori", I thought, "I don't know if Aikido is fake, but if Aikido could make him move like that then I could move like that." The Aikidoist who moved so expertly against multiple opponents turned out to be Reverend Kensho Furuya who ended up becoming my teacher.

In short, watching that demonstration inspired me to join Furuya Sensei's dojo and begin my Aikido training. Seeing someone like Sensei move against multiple opponents like that convinced me, although I certainly had my doubts about Aikido, to trust Aikido and its training.

Of course, inspiration is just the beginning. Many times the idea of doing something can be much better than the reality of doing it. The "real" training happens when that spark of inspiration dies out

and is replaced by discouragement and self-doubt. When the enthusiasm we feel as beginners dwindles to almost nothing and the mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of the art don't fit our previous expectations then we either quit and move onto the next thing, or steady ourselves and say, "I'm going to do this," and we continue practicing.

As Aikido students, O Sensei as well as his students have inspired us to try to reach their level of mastery, but at the same time it's easy to lose our larger selves and let our smaller selves take over. It is as simple as becoming fixated on things like videos to the point that we lose ourselves in them. Much like looking at a mirror, we can narcissistically become engrossed with our own reflection. Likewise, watching a video we start to believe that we are somehow as good as the person on the clip and project ourselves onto it. We are not being inspired by them but deluding ourselves into thinking that we are them.

Many students take the idea of inspiration and change it into a quest for something new and different. Perfecting the basics, of course, is not exciting at all. It takes a lot of work, commitment and thoughtfulness. A lesser student might look to a different way of doing a technique that's flashier with more "flair"; a fast-track to expertise. This may be satisfying for a short while, but without the proper experience, this mindset hinders progress, replacing valuable

basic skills with fast tricks and easy outs. Looking for the easy way – little loopholes in the way to do a technique which is not training and is definitely not practice.

It's one thing to be motivated to work harder but it's another to watch a video and go in the opposite direction believing that watching a video clip can somehow make us better. Instead of increasing our efforts, we fool ourselves into thinking, "I'm good, now," and then our training starts to slack off as we believe the little lies we tell ourselves. Our egos can trap us into this delusion.

It's one thing to be inspired, but inspiration must be accompanied by common sense and reason. When the student is more experienced, inspiration is accompanied by practice, experience, skill, craftsmanship, technique, aesthetic sense, and many other factors that contribute to one's level of mastery.

Inspiration is easy. It is just the first step when we undertake any kind of endeavor. In the martial arts, through proper training the student develops the skills and knowledge to become self-dependent. Inspiration is nothing without the student's perspiration. Inspiration just turns our heads, but we must be the catalyst to move ourselves in that direction.

Masters of Budo Lecture Series

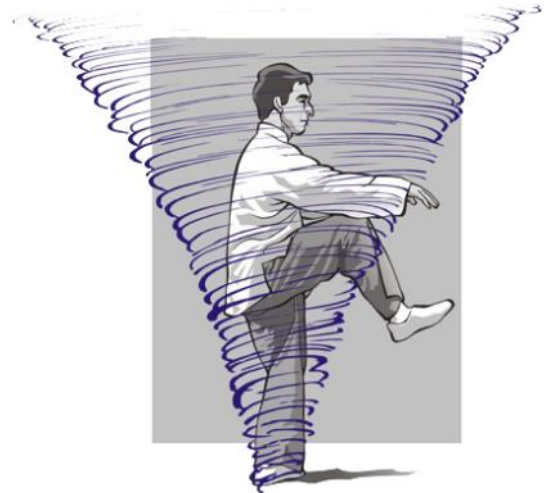
Sponsored by the Furuya Foundation



Understanding the Japanese Sword

With Naoji Karita Sensei

August 9th
6:30 PM



Axis and Balance in the Martial Arts

With Naoji Karita Sensei

August 10th
6:30 PM

Naoji Karita Sensei is a Tai Chi teacher with over 40 years of experience and he is also a second generation Japanese sword polisher.

These lectures are free and open to the public to attend.

Lecture location: 1211 N. Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

For more information contact: Aikidocenterla@gmail.com



The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles



The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles (ACLA) 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 the Aikido Center of Los Angeles 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.

Our Neighborhood, Our Food: Urban Radish

by Maria Murakawa, Aikido 3rd Dan

Neighborhood grocery store – anti big-big box – gourmet enclave extraordinaire.

That's how I would describe this delicious little outpost located in the Art's District, a stone's throwaway from our dojo in Chinatown.

Ever since it's opening in 2013 Urban Radish has been a welcome addition to a neighborhood lacking in grocery store options, and has become another destination to the area's burgeoning food scene. Housed within graffiti covered corrugated tin walls blending with the industrial feel of the neighborhood it is a surprisingly inviting market interior which houses a collection of food picked locally, sourced globally, and curated lovingly. Fruits and vegetables are from local farms, all labeled from whence they came. Pasture raised meats and fresh seafood from the butchery, breads from area bakeries, and even a bulk bin section insures you can find everything you need for your pantry.

If you feel adventurous try perusing the aisles where you can find an interesting array of condiments and sundries such as local tomato jam to chocolate chili laced peanut butter, rose petal jelly from Italy, Art of Tea loose leaf tea, McConnell's ice cream, hemp protein powder, honey and granola from a home kitchen, and a shelf dedicated to a fantastic selection of chocolate bars.

If immediate gratification is key, head over to the eatery, where a variety of prepared foods await. One night there might be Za'atar roasted chicken with a Lebanese pilaf, roasted brussels sprouts with lemon and bacon. Another night you may find lamb kofta balls with tahini sauce, curried cauliflower, and maple glazed butternut squash. Celebrate hump day as Wednesday night is jazz night. A band plays in the patio, a variety of sustainably sourced meats are available to cook up

on the grill, and a bottle of wine from the very reasonably priced liquor section all make for an enjoyable evening out. The grill menu is also available on weekends, and highlights are the Signature Hamburger, with it's

five spice rubbed thick tender patty nestled between two equally soft brioche roll halves, and the Classic Grilled Steak- choose the boneless rib-eye with an herb butter glaze – a surprising indulgence you can imagine eating at a bistro in Paris. There are also fish and poultry options, as well as a healthy dose of vegetarian dishes – try the Grilled Polenta with Wild Mushroom Ragout – made from locally ground polenta from Grist and Toll, it's a hearty dish meant to stand on it's own. If small plates are your fancy, there is an offering of sides and salads which can be ordered in sets of three. One day there was a watermelon heirloom tomato salad with feta, perfect for the summer, along with other reliable standbys such as German potato salad, beluga lentils, and a massaged kale salad with citrus. The cheese and charcuterie case contains

an artisanal assortment from all over the world, and the best part is eating them off of a board assembled with care by hand, which also includes a baguette, and condiments such as olives, dried fruits, nuts, and jams. Come also for breakfast and grab some fresh scones and croissants from a local bakery, or indulge in the omelet bar. Drop by for lunch and have a Parisian style ham and cheese sandwich, or a quiche Lorraine, and take a luxurious European style siesta, if even for an hour.

Morning, noon, and night Urban Radish offers a welcome respite for the urban city dweller, office worker, and slow food lover. It's a much needed gathering place of food with a purpose, in an environment that fosters neighborhood conviviality and support of sustainable living. It's the sort of mom and pop store we are lucky to have in our neighborhood.



Urban Radish
661 Imperial St.
Los Angeles, CA 90021
213.892.1570
Open 8 AM – 10 PM
7 days a week
Free parking!

To Know One Good Teacher

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

Sometimes we see someone who looks strong and seems to have all the advantages over others, but appearances can be deceiving.

This lesson is always painfully learned, sometimes over and over again, isn't it? We should not discriminate or judge by appearances alone instead we must always look to the heart of the matter. This holds true not only for practice, but for the art of Aikido, the people we meet and everything for that matter.

We always appreciate natural talent and strength. Some are blessed with it and some are not. It is like having good looks like a movie star or being beautiful like a model. Some have it, some don't. (I know I don't!). However, although these qualities may appear to be a great advantage – it doesn't necessarily mean that we can judge a person by these things alone. This is the meaning of going to the heart of the matter.

One time, I had a student who always got away with the worst things. One time I asked him how he could do such things to others and he said, "Everyone thinks I am good-looking. All I have to do is smile and I can get my way!" One time I had a student who was very talented. He was so talented in everything he did that he started to feel that he really didn't have to listen to me – or anybody else for that matter. Later, he had many problems in his training and in his life and eventually he quit. What a big shame!

Sometimes a "good" student is harder to teach than a "bad" student. A so-called "good" student may be young, strong and talented but difficult to teach because they are too confident in themselves and too prideful. A weaker student is sometimes easier to teach because they really know they need the instruction and practice earnestly to get better and stronger. This "need" and aspiration to learn is the most important matter to understand in learning.

For me, a good student is someone who understands me in respects to teaching. I feel free to correct them and give them advice freely because I know they want to learn and they know that I am trying to help them. They never get angry no matter what I say. Sometimes I test them by saying something too strongly or discouraging but they are steadfast and still very committed and remain unfazed. Some students are hard to teach because I constantly worry about hurting their feelings or saying something that might upset them or make them angry. I am only trying to help them but they are very sensitive to criticisms or comments. For this type of student, most people say that it is better not to say anything. How frustrating this can be sometimes!



Just as the teacher opens his heart to teach the student by giving the benefit of his knowledge and experience, the student must also open his heart and mind to receive the teachings as well. Today, I rarely see such commitment in students – they are always running from here to there, they have no time to get to know even one teacher well enough to learn anything worthwhile. A little bit here and a little bit of instruction there – it is like a buffet – there is a great deal of variety and quantity in all one can eat. But generally the quality and taste is not very good. In the best restaurants, everything is served ala carte and everything must be enjoyed one by one. It is the same with teachers and learning in many ways.

This time of the year is the anniversary of my Zen master's passing. As much as I knew him, I wish there was much more time to know him better and learn a bit more from him. I always feel very sad about this. Most of my teachers have passed on and I haven't found a new teacher yet – but I am getting older and more tired so I feel very lonely sometimes because my teachers are no longer here.

I feel that to really know one good teacher is a great thing for me.

Once, a long time ago, there was a student-priest who could never get anything right. Each time he went for an interview with his teacher, he always got it wrong and the teacher always said, "no!" After so many years, he became very discouraged and finally said to himself. "I am really determined to understand my enlightenment. The next time I go see my teacher, if I don't get it right, I will kill myself for sure!"

The next time for his interview came and as he entered his teacher's room, before he could say anything, the teacher took one look at him and spoke, "Congratulations! I see you have finally achieved it!"

I have always liked this story. Can you imagine how long the student struggled to reach this point? Also can you imagine how long both the teacher and student had been together for the teacher to know his student so well like this? How wonderful it is to me. Take it from me – treasure your teacher! I hope you believe that I don't say this for myself at all.

***Editor's Note:** Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his Daily Message board on February 21, 2002.*

Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE

Sundays

9:00-10:00 AM Children's Class

10:15-11:15 AM Open

Mondays

6:30-7:30 AM Open

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals

6:30-7:30 PM Open

Tuesdays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals

6:30-7:30 PM Open

Wednesdays

6:30-7:30 AM Open

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals

6:30-7:30 PM Open

Thursdays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals

Fridays

6:30-7:30 PM Open

Saturdays

6:30-8:00 AM Intensive Seminar* †

9:30-10:30 AM Open

10:45-11:45 AM Open

* These classes are not open for visitors to watch.

† Intensive seminar is offered the last Saturday of every month and is open to any Aikidoist regardless of school or style who is at least proficient in forward and backward ukemi.

Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

Saturdays

8:00-9:00 AM

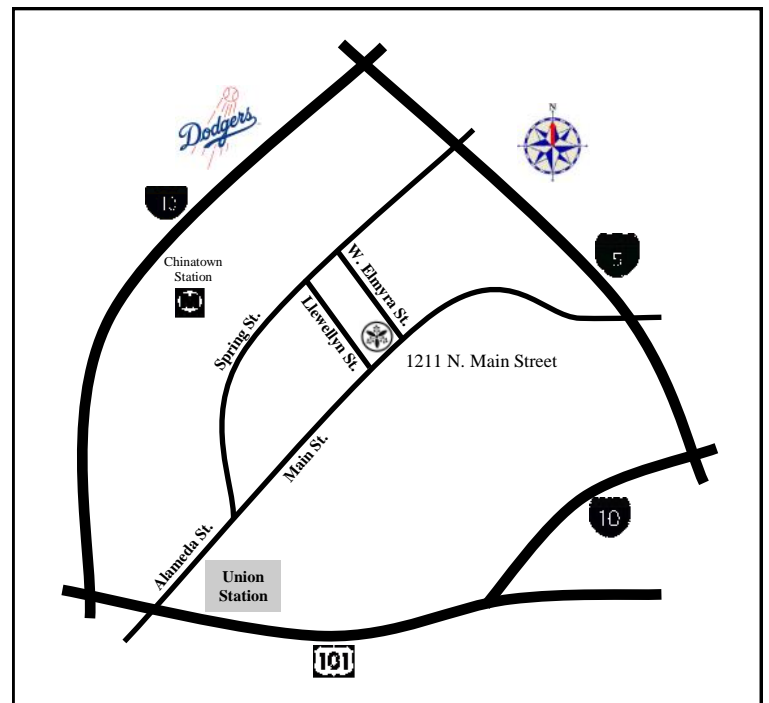
Sundays

7:45-8:45 AM

Thursdays

6:30-7:30 PM

No weekend classes on the last weekend of the month.



The Aikido Center of Los Angeles has been awarded
Official Hombu Recognition by the
AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS

公益財団法人 合気会

Aikikai Foundation – Aikido World Headquarters
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.*



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The Aiki Dojo
Official publication of
the 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 will also dedicate yourself to your
training and enjoy all the benefits that Aikido
and Iaido have to offer.*

Editor-in-Chief and Publisher: David Ito



Finding Our Dojo



We are located at

1211 N. Main Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Telephone: (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 any time during any of our
Open or Fundamentals classes. Please come early.*