



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 and Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai
The Furuya Foundation

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Kinga Shin Shun,
or "Humbly greet new Spring"
brushed by Bishop Kenko Yamashita

Upcoming Events

January 29th:

Instructor's Intensive

February 18th-21st:

Aikido Celebration 2011

February 26th:

Instructor's Intensive

March 6th:

Sensei Memorial

March 26th:

Instructor's Intensive

April 22nd-24th:

O'Sensei Memorial Seminar

Letter From the Editor

by Mark Ehrlich

Editor, The Aiki Dojo

On behalf of all of us at *The Aiki Dojo* and ACLA, I want to extend best wishes to all of our readers, students, and friends for a happy, healthy, and prosperous new year. We appreciate everyone's support this past year, and I look forward to a 2011 that demonstrates more productive networking, training, and growth for ACLA and its branches.

The holiday season always passes quietly at the dojo. Los Angeles mostly consists of transplants whose annual exodus back home

leaves the city rapturously peaceful in time for Christmas. Our infamous traffic actually abates; one can drive from one end of the city to the other within minutes even in the middle of the day, a feat all but unheard-of the rest of the year. For every to, however, we have a fro: in this case a few weeks of sparsely attended classes. Sometimes, even our locals decide to take a break from training between Christmas and New Year's Day, a habit which used to frustrate Sensei to no end (and probably has our teaching staff feeling less than cheerful nowadays, as well).

Continued on page 2...

A New Year's Wish

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

In the Chinese zodiac, 2011 marks the Year of the Rabbit. Rabbit years tend to bring more placid times with opportunities for effortless growth or time to catch your breath after the ferocious Year of the Tiger. With growth in mind, I would like to focus the dojo's curriculum on improving *ukemi*. Developing good *ukemi* is, I think, one of the secrets to getting good in Aikido. Famous teachers like 2nd Doshu, 3rd Doshu, Osawa Sensei, Yasuno Sensei, Isoyama Sensei, and many others (even our own Ken Watanabe) all have something in common; they were all good *ukes* before they became good teachers or practitioners.

Ukemi is the giving of one's self to perform a systematic series of movements as a response to when you attack someone and they execute a technique on you. In other words, you are learning how to receive the throw or how to take the technique. Taking *ukemi* properly means that you are safe from the beginning to the end of the movement. Therefore, in order to be safe you have to learn how to coordinate your movements with the person who is trying to perform the technique on you. This is different than giving up, giving in, or yielding. Those things are passive and *ukemi* is the epitome of activeness. When

you are taking *ukemi*, you are learning how to follow your partner's movement, which in turn teaches you timing, spacing, and body control. Newer *ukes* always overcompensate by moving too soon or too late, because they are moving based on what they think they *should* do; rather, they need to match how their partner is *in fact* mov-



ing. The best *ukes* become a mirror of their partner's movement and, essentially, the two become one. Over-thinking and over-compensation lead to the movement becoming fake and leads to delusions not only for the *uke* but for the *nage* as well.

On a certain level, the movement is contrived anyway, but it is contrived for our benefit to teach us how to move and synchronize with each other's movements. Superficially, we are attempting to match

our movement with our partner's; not to be at odds with them, but to become one with them. On a deeper level, in that one moment when we take the fall or succumb to the pin, we become the people we always wished we could be: giving ourselves to another unconditionally with no desire in our hearts to resist or reciprocate. *Ukemi* gives us the opportunity to shed our egos and practice compassion. Therefore, taking *ukemi* for someone manifests what I believe O'Sensei created Aikido to be. He knew that the only real victory we can win is the victory over ourselves, and that the road to self-enlightenment is paved with compassion and selflessness, a path that begins with *ukemi*. To be good at *ukemi* is to be without ego and to give ourselves to another for their benefit; it's what I suspect O'Sensei was referring to when he talked about Aikido and it's link to universal love. Maintaining compassion, selflessness, and love while being thrown or pinned: this is Aikido.

It is my hope that we all do our best to train more regularly and work on improving our *ukemi* skills this year in order to move closer to what O'Sensei envisioned Aikido to be and toward being the people that we all want to become. May you have a happy and prosperous 2011.

Letter From the Editor *continued from page 1...*

With our Kagami Biraki, however, the mat gets full once more and even a few students we've not seen in a while return for the day and perhaps through the end of the month. This year, the Year of the Rabbit, marks a time of growth and change, so in that spirit I'd like to ask that our students resolve to get One Hour Richer: if you train only once or twice a week, this year try to attend at least one more class per month than you usually do. Changing up your training schedule in this manner can significantly boost your learning curve and muscle memory, and you might find you actually enjoy the added time and camaraderie on the mat and the deeper insights you'll get. You've read Sensei's sign posted in the dressing room for years (and read about it in these pages too), so I'll just say that, besides the enlightenment Sensei spoke of that comes through training, giving yourself the gift of one hour more per month will positively impact the dojo as well: your fellow students will benefit from training with you, your teachers will benefit from having you to teach, and the dojo will foster deeper relationship-building, becoming more of the community and family that Sensei always envisioned. If we all do this, I think we'll become rich beyond our wildest dreams – in the ways that really count. I hope you'll join me.

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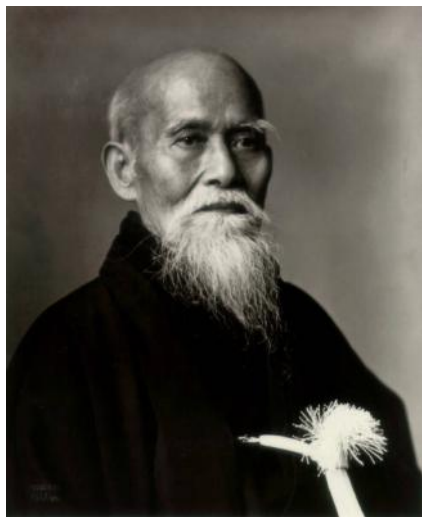
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Questions/Comments?

We welcome all questions and comments. Please send us a letter or an e-mail and our team will do our best to come up with an answer. We reserve the right to edit questions and letters for clarity and length.

Please e-mail submissions to:
info@aikidocenterla.com



Aikido Celebration 2011 is an organization composed of Aikido dojos and students throughout the state of Hawaii and the mainland USA dedicated to the public celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first and only visit made to Hawaii by Morihei Ueshiba Sensei, the Founder of Aikido. A commemorative seminar and banquet with Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba and Waka Sensei Mitsuteru Ueshiba will be held President's Day weekend - February 18th-21st 2011.

In addition to classes taught by Doshu and Waka Sensei, Seijuro Masuda Sensei, 8th Dan from the Aikikai Hombu Dojo, and Yoshimitsu Yamada Sensei, 8th Dan from the New York Aikikai, will be special guest instructors at this event.

The seminar will take place at Mc Kinley High School where O'Sensei gave a demonstration at in 1961.

Current Schedule (subject to change):

Friday February 18th:

- Evening rededication ceremony of Honolulu Aiki Dojo

Saturday February 19th:

- 9:00 - 10:00 AM: Waka Sensei
- 10:15 -11:15 AM: Doshu
- 1:15-2:15 PM: Senior Instructors
- 2:30-3:30 PM: Masuda Shihan

Sunday February 20th:

- 9:00 - 10:00 AM: Waka Sensei
- 10:15 -11:15 AM: Doshu
- 1:15-2:15 PM: Senior Instructors
- 2:30-3:30 PM: Yamada Shihan
- Evening Banquet

Monday February 21st:

- 9:00-10:00 AM: Doshu
- Demonstration after class



Registration is currently under way.

Visit their website for more information, registration forms, and payment details.

www.Aikidohawaii2011.org

New Year's Greetings

by Gary Myers, Iaido Chief Instructor

I would like to express happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year greetings to Ito Sensei, to all the members of ACLA and their families, to all our branch and affiliated dojos, and to all of our friends in Japan.

In Japan, New Year's Day is the most important holiday, and everyone partakes in the celebrations. On January 1st families and friends gather and eat special foods presented on special serving pieces, and people dress in traditional celebratory clothes for visits to the temples. Almost like Santa Claus, everyone awaited the arrival of the legendary *Takara-bune*, the Treasure Ship. The Treasure Ship was piloted by the *Shichifukujin*, the seven gods of good fortune and filled with the *Takara-mono*, the Treasures. Each region has special ways to celebrate; however, there are common symbols of the New Year, such as *kadomatsu*, *shimenawa*, and *kagami mochi*, which are prevalent all over Japan. One of these New Year symbols is the *daruma ningyo* – the round, weighted, paper-mâché dolls that are sold at shrines and temples. These dolls are painted all red except for their eyeless faces. The dolls originate from the legend that Daruma, the patriarch of Zen Buddhism, meditated for eight straight years, no longer requiring the use of his arms and legs – hence, the round shape of the dolls. The phrase *Nanakorobi yaoki, jinsei wa kore kara da* (“Seven times down, eight times up, life begins now.”) is associated with these dolls. Because the dolls are bottom-weighted, you can push them over but they will bounce back into an upright position. So, literally, you can push them over seven times and they come back upright eight times. Figuratively the phrase evokes perseverance or determination: no matter what obstacles you face that might knock you over, you'll bounce back in order to accomplish your goals. Our saying, “If at first you don't succeed, try, try again,” is a close equivalent to the Japanese saying.

Each new year, people buy *daruma ningyo* and paint in an eye to represent the goal they are trying to accomplish for the new year. When that goal or wish is accomplished, the other eye is then painted in and the *daruma ningyo* is burned at year-end. A new, bigger *daruma ningyo* is purchased at the beginning of the subsequent new year.

How appropriate a symbol for the new year. All of us, consciously or unconsciously, see the new year as a new beginning to accomplish things we didn't get done in the prior year or to set new goals for ourselves. Whether we make resolutions for ourselves, or businesses impose new year-end goals, we all have objectives we want to achieve in the coming year. During our efforts to achieve those objectives we are faced with obstacles that knock us off our path and sometimes off our feet. Like the *daruma ningyo*, we need to upright ourselves when these obstacles knock us down and reset our determination to see through to our goals and wishes. This is



easier said than done. Nonetheless, it is essential for all of us to realize that rarely do we obtain our goals without some resistance, either internal or external. Many times, the internal obstacles are the hardest to bounce back from because they are the ones that are always there, lurking under the surface of our consciousness. We end up sabotaging ourselves, not reaching our goals, and wondering what happened. It feels easier to blame outside influences and say we can't control them than to face our own foibles.

Understanding our reactions to goals is a step in understanding how to achieve them. If we view them in a negative way, the tasks necessary to accomplish them become harder. If, however, we celebrate those successful steps that lead up to the goal, it makes the project easier. Another obstacle is to treat a goal as a want or expectation. Our wanting or expecting things to happen rarely makes them happen. Expectations lead to disappointments, which lead to misunderstandings, which lead us down the wrong path. Lastly, it is also important to be certain everyone involved understands what the goal is and why it is important to achieve it. Without that consensus, the path to the goal will be diverted.

As we worked to establish the Furuya Foundation as a non-profit this past year, we probably all felt a little like Daruma-san, being knocked around in the process. The obstacles knocked us back or down, but we got up, found a solution to each problem, and continued forward until we achieved our goal. That is why we have to appreciate the positive things that occur and bounce back from the negative, just like Daruma-san.

Happy New Year to everyone!



The Aiki Dojo

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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.

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

初夢



Hatsuyume

What did you dream about in your first dream of the New Year? More specifically, what did you dream about on the night of January 1st? To the Japanese the contents of the first night's dream are very important. The first dream of the year in Japanese is called *Hatsuyume*. *Hatsu* means "first" and *yume* means "dream". Traditionally, whatever you dream about in that first night's sleep is believed to foretell your luck in the coming year.

As the superstition goes in Japan, it is considered especially auspicious if you dreamed about Mount Fuji, a hawk, and an eggplant on the first night. Having a dream with each one of these elements is seen as being very good luck. It is known as *Ichi-Fuji, Ni-Taka, San-Nasubi*. The origin of this ritual is unclear, but it is thought that Mount Fuji is Japan's greatest mountain top, the hawk represents strength and intelligence, and the Japanese word for eggplant, *nasu*, also means "to achieve something great". Some believe that the origin of this trio was because they were considered the favorites things of the Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Incidentally, there are up to three more symbols that were added over the years: fan, tobacco, and blind massage (acupressure) therapist or *Yon-Sen, Go-Tabako, Roku-Zato*. However, the first threesome is considered the original lucky combination.

Welcoming the Rabbit

by Jason Markowski, Aikido 2nd Kyu



2011

I would like to wish a Happy New Year to everyone at the dojo and to all of our friends that have supported the dojo this last year. It has, in retrospect, been one of the best years of my life. I made the decision to commit as much time as I could to training and, in the course of the year, I traveled to Hawaii to participate in Takamizo Sensei's annual seminar, I began participating full time in the children's class (which by the way is as much fun as it is exhausting), and most importantly I trained with three senior white belts as they struggled with all of the rigors of preparing for their shodan examination.

I was very inspired by their determination and dedication as the weeks then months passed and I think I learned a lot as well. I most definitely learned that, though shodan preparation is quite the journey, it is actually just the first step in a lifetime of learning and wish them the best in their training and lives. It was my greatest pleasure to watch them receive their black belts and I look forward to the next round of senior white belts that are about to take the plunge this year and hope their experience is as joyful as mine was.

I think the most important aspect of the year was that in spending as much time at the dojo as I did, I had the opportunity to witness the amount of dedication that Ito Sensei has put into making the dojo a community as well as a place of learning. The restructured children's class is amazing and I encourage everyone to come and see how much fun the kids and adults have. As far as the shodan preparation went, I was intrigued not only by the instruction Ito Sensei provided to all the black belt candidates, but also that in the end, it became a journey that culminated for each of them in spiritual growth and a bond of friendship that will last a lifetime. I hope that this next year is as beneficial to him as he was to the dojo last year.

I have learned much about myself this last year and am excited to see what the new year will hold. 2011 is going to be a great year. It is the Year of the Rabbit.



Kisshomaru Ueshiba, 2nd Doshu Memorial Service



Congratulations to Our Friends!

Wesley Shimokawa
Promoted to 7th Dan



Linda Lee Vecchio
Promoted to 7th Dan



Kevin McGough
Promoted to 5th Dan



Christopher Li
Promoted to 5th Dan



Happy New Year*by Reverend Kensho Furuya*

Wishing everyone the very best of a Happy New Year.

Recently I discovered that a small cafe where I occasionally have my morning coffee in Little Tokyo is now closed in the morning hours. A war halfway around the world, it seems, can effect one's morning coffee; even a small restaurant in Little Tokyo is greatly effected. I am always amazed at how closely we have all become connected to each other in ways far beyond our wildest imaginations or perceptions. We are never alone. Everything we do, no matter how insignificant our actions may seem to us at the moment, can change the entire world in some way. We think we are free to do whatever we like and we believe this is our right. Yet, in everything we do, we must think about the effect our actions will have on others and how they will change or touch the lives of others.

Recently, I upgraded my computer and I now have the capacity to get a new laser printer and perhaps add a color inkjet printer as well. They are so affordable now and greatly improved in quality. My first thought was to improve my capabilities to do our monthly dojo newsletter and even realize a cover in color, one of my long-time dreams. I can save a great deal of time, energy, and money by printing the

newsletter myself. Yet, although many might call this a "no-brainer" decision, it has become an agonizing decision to make. By printing the newsletter myself, I will lose my relationship of 20 years and great friendship with our printers. How many times they have helped us out when we had not enough money, how many times they have always gone beyond the call of duty to see our newsletter printed on time, and, because everyone is printing their own work at home nowadays, how much business they have lost over the recent years! I think my newsletter does not constitute a great deal of their business and we, at the same time, need to save money and time ourselves, but which is more important? Our relationship with the printers, who have been so nice and supportive of the dojo, or saving a little money and time and energy in my work? It is not as easy as it sounds. Of course, I would like a new printer and have such a nice convenience in the dojo and it is perfectly justified in many, many ways, but loyalty is a higher principle than saving a few dollars, I believe, and would I put a few dollars over friendship? After all, I may still get a new printer for my own work, but I will not print our newsletter on it.

I don't recommend this approach to everyone. Our world today is governed by money, and you will believe me when I tell you that you need to save a dollar wherever you can. But you can clearly see that even

today, I myself will always be poor and unsuccessful with my old-fashioned thinking. I sometimes kind of admire people who can just do anything without the slightest care or thought for others, even for their closest friends. But for me, as an Aikidoist and teacher, I just can't do things that way.

We all pray for peace on this New Year's day, but what is prayer? We pray to God, gods, or Buddha, but where is he? Is he in some distant paradise or in our very own hearts? Ultimately, our prayers may be heard by others, but only realized in this world by our own efforts and sacrifice. I think we are bringing a lot of last year into this new year. But whether this year becomes better or not depends on our own deeds and not the actions of others. As much as we are connected to the actions of others, they, in turn, are connected to what we do ourselves. One small kindness can ripple across the world and touch a place or someone quite beyond our own thinking. We don't have to see it because we know it to do so.

Happy, Happy New Year!

Editor's Note: Sensei originally posted this article, in slightly different form, to his daily message board on January 1, 2002.



O'Sensei Memorial Seminar April 22-24, 2011



Special Guest Instructors from Aikikai Tanshinjuku in Colorado:

Mariquita Izawa Sensei



Kei Izawa Sensei

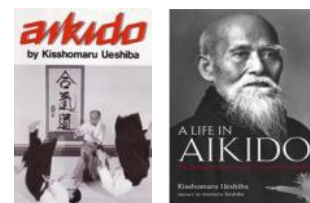


Everyone is invited!

Recommended Readings:



by Ueshiba Moriteru



by Ueshiba Kisshomaru

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

6:30-7:30 PM Open

Saturdays

9:30-10:30 AM Open
10:45-11:45 AM Weapons*

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

* These classes are not open for visitors to watch.

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

Aikido 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 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.



Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

Saturdays

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

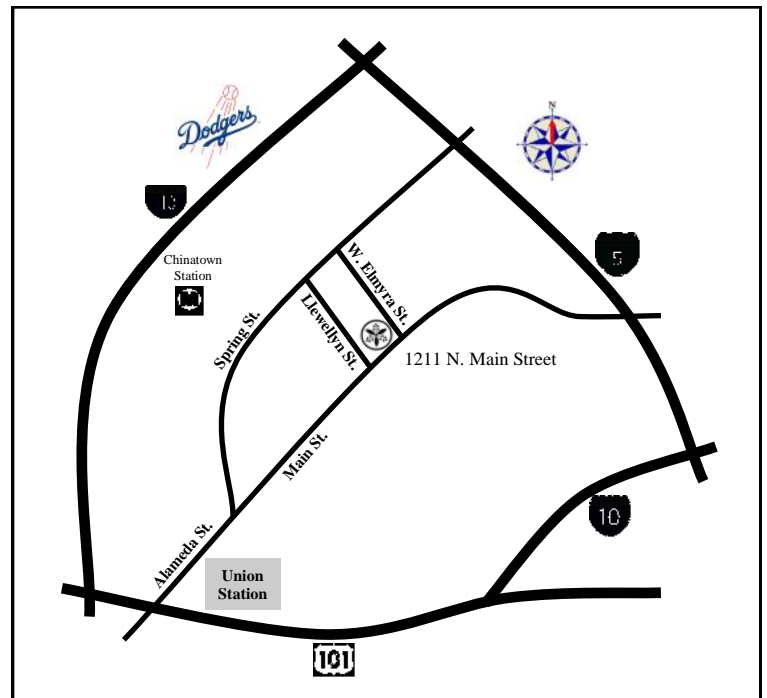
Sundays

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.



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.