



# 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

January 2012

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*Nidai Doshu Ueshiba Kisshomaru Sensei's Annual Tsuito Hoyo Memorial Service*

### Upcoming Events

- December 31-January 3rd:**  
New Year's  
Dojo Closed
- January 4th:**  
Hatsu Keiko
- January 28th:**  
Instructor's intensive
- February 25th:**  
Instructor's intensive
- March 6th:**  
Sensei Memorial Service  
6:30 PM
- March 10th:**  
Sensei grave site visit
- April 27-29th:**  
O Sensei Memorial Seminar

### **Letter From the Editor** by Mark Ehrlich Editor, The Aiki Dojo

*Akemashita omedetou!* On behalf of all of us at ACLA, please allow me to extend our best wishes to you and yours for a very happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year. May all of you ride the Year of the Dragon towards your dreams!

I've always approached the new year somewhat pensively; as a holiday, it reminds me of the ineluctable momentum of time. Time, as they say, marches on, and for me at least, the farther I march along with it the more I feel as if I'm hustling along in quickstep instead of moving forward at a more relaxed pace. I enter each January keenly focused on how far I've come and what exactly I wish to achieve in the days to come, often with mixed results. I imagine everyone deals with a new year this way at least a little bit, and so perhaps for that very reason this issue of *The Aiki Dojo* may feel more thematic than most.

This month we examine the new year as a training milestone. We look back a bit, allowing our branch dojos in Arizona and Veracruz to describe the seminars they conducted this

past Fall for students and guests and which Ito Sensei and ACLA students attended. We share photos of our dojo's annual memorial service for *Nidai Doshu*, a tradition begun by Sensei which we carry on faithfully. We take a look at the process of correct martial arts training: the phases we must complete in order to achieve true learning, and the notion that practice gives us a chance to overcome our weaknesses proactively rather than to reinforce bad habits passively. Last but not least, we share an essay of Sensei's from the archives, which ponders the interconnectedness of Aikido training – how it not only affords us an opportunity to connect soul to soul (as it were), but also soul to action in daily life. It's deep stuff, and I urge you to read it and consider it carefully.

It pleases me very much to report that our student body is growing; more than that, our regular students have made great strides in developing their skills, and most importantly, their attitude. I cannot speak for him, but seeing the efforts they make every day so wholeheartedly and cheerfully, has me thinking that Sensei would approve. This thought makes all the work we do worthwhile; thanks for all you do to help ACLA thrive. Happy New Year, happy reading, and I'll see you on the mat!

## The Way of the Way

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

*Mastery of Aikido is only measured by the extent to which it has permeated into your daily life.*

– Reverend Kensho Furuya

Aikido is more than just a physical pursuit aimed solely at technical perfection for the destruction of others; it is a path of personal development, which integrates body, mind, and spirit. Like all traditional arts, Aikido training follows the path of *gaku-jutsu-do* towards mastery.

*Gaku* translates as *study* but, in this context, it refers to the act of studying in order to gain knowledge. When we begin our training, we earnestly study the techniques, philosophy, and history of Aikido, but this education isn't intended to make us

“smarter.” Rather, it is intended to be the beginning of our personal inner growth or, as the Dalai Lama stated, “The most important use of knowledge and education is to help us understand the importance of engaging in more wholesome actions and bringing about discipline within our minds.” *Gaku*, then, becomes a never-ending process of seeking a better and more in-depth understanding of ourselves through the diligent study of Aikido's techniques, concepts, philosophy, and history. The cultivation of this study brings to mind the forging of a sword, where our self-development or *gaku* mirrors the forging process.

*Jutsu* on its own can be defined as *technique* or *method*, but added to *gaku* it refers to the process of refinement or what we casually refer to as “training”. The ordinary usage of the word training in today's *gendai* or modern martial arts has lost its emphasis. In traditional arts, *gaku* with *jutsu* would be comparable to *shugyo*, which connotes a deeper, more profound, almost esthetic type of pursuit. In *jutsu*, we apply our study of the technical and philosophical *gaku* stage and test and cultivate ourselves further through tireless training. The more we train, the more we understand about not only Aikido, but about ourselves as well. At this juncture, we start to see that the training is molding us and that who we become results more from what we do than from what we think we know. The polishing of a sword requires countless repetitions made with painstakingly assiduous effort, and only with this hard work can its true nature become revealed; *jutsu* works exactly like this. By all accounts, *jutsu* makes an arduous journey, for as Miyamoto Musashi wryly observed, “It takes 10,000 days to forge the spirit and another 10,000 days to polish it.”

*Do* represents the way or path, and its usage suggests that Aikido training offers a way of life guided by the efforts of *gaku* and *jutsu*. Once integrated into our daily life, *gaku* and *jutsu* become mutually dependent concepts that unite with *do*. In Buddhist terms, *do* refers to the path of enlightenment, which brings a spiritual quality to Aikido; Aikido training, therefore, becomes a method of self-purification that connects us with the universe, known as a *Samadhi* experience. Buddhist scholar Robert Aitken referred to this experience as total absorption: we completely devote ourselves to what we are doing, moment by moment. The sword forged with *gaku* and polished with *jutsu* has the edge of discernment that we use to cut down our own ego and to reveal

# 学術道

*“Aikido lies at the intersection of gaku-jutsu-do, and we will find it nowhere else.”*

our true inner self. It is here that the opponent ceases to exist and we understand O Sensei's teaching of *masakatsu agatsu* or, “True victory is victory over the self.”

*Gaku-jutsu-do* is actually a single state where ideally we experience them

all together, but practically (for a long while at least) we find ourselves vacillating between *gaku* and *jutsu* with varying degrees of intensity. In the beginning we constantly try to find balance, leaning from one side to the other, one side more than the other, a little more than another, or none whatsoever. It takes dedication to study, willpower to train, and even more discipline to follow the Way; that is why Aikido is a journey and not a destination. *Gaku* without *jutsu* or *do* is worthless. *Jutsu* without *gaku* or *do* is meaningless. *Do* without *gaku* or *jutsu* is just a fantasy. Aikido lies at the intersection of *gaku-jutsu-do*, and we will find it nowhere else.

If we find *gaku-jutsu-do* hard to understand, it becomes even more difficult to embody: it takes a lifetime of dedication to reach the level where *gaku-jutsu-do* align in Aikido training. This is not meant to dissuade anyone, but when we finally understand it takes a lifetime, we will realize there is no time left and we will be called into action. We will know when we have reached the intersection of *gaku-jutsu-do* because Aikido will become integrated into our life in every moment and we will cease to see where the dojo ends and life begins. All that is required is that we aspire to *gaku-jutsu-do* and set forth putting the process into action. The way only requires consistent and constant practice; whenever I find myself discouraged, I become heartened when I recall how Sensei's words, “Just be patient and train hard,” always encouraged me and still do, which is why I share them again here. Best wishes for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year, and please do your best to train hard and correctly.

## New Year's Greeting - Second Chances

by Gary Myers, Iaido Chief Instructor

Happy New Year to Ito Sensei, all assistant instructors, all the members of the Aikido and Kenshinkai sections of ACLA, the directors of the Furuya Foundation, and to all our good friends both in the U.S. and Japan. My wish to you all is that 2012 is a year of health, happiness, and fulfillment.

New Year's resolutions are all fine and good, but typically our priorities are to complete or finally start the things that did not get accomplished in the prior year. We can look at the new year as a second chance to accomplish those things that either should have been done or were done incorrectly. We get the opportunity to reevaluate, to learn from past mistakes. The new year is the time to begin to eliminate the "would've, could've, should've" list of 2011.

Second chances are marvelous opportunities, of which, when offered, we should take advantage. Life doesn't always give us these chances; there are many times in which a "do-over" is welcome, but the opportunity passes us by or it never comes. For example, the old saw, "you only have one opportunity to make a first impression" comes to mind. Trust is another example: once a trust is broken it is next to impossible to make it as strong as it was originally. Forgiveness is a good mending tool but it requires forgetfulness to get trust back as it was.

In informal golf games there exist what are called "mulligans", that are the equivalent of "do-overs", in which you get a chance to hit a better shot than the prior bad one and it's not counted against

you. Mulligans are not part of the official game rules, in which each stroke must be counted against your score; in official tournament play there are no mulligans. Serious players never take a mulligan, because they know that it is against the rules to do so. Golf is a game of consequences for our prior actions both good and not so good. What is faced next is a result of the prior

shot, and while there is always the chance for recovery, the worse the prior shot the less likely is the recovery. It is also a game of honesty and integrity in which players call penalties on themselves. This is why it is said to mirror life, or ideally it should: in golf, you get rewarded for the good shots and penalized for the bad. You don't get second chances, but there is also the chance for recovery or redemption. It is this aspect of the game that was very much like old-time swordsmanship: mistakes could have dire consequences and second chances were few. A swordsman had to come prepared and take advantage of the other's mistakes.

Fortunately for us all, second chances do exist, which is why we need to take advantage of them when they are afforded. Practice is the environment where not only do we get second chances, but also thirds, fourths, and fifths. We get to have "do-overs" – a lot of them. That is really a special opportunity that students sometimes take for granted or about which they get complacent. If we think of practice as another day doing the same old things, then we are doomed to do the same things including the same mistakes. If we look at practice as the opportunity of a second chance, however, then it takes on the aspect of eliminating those mistakes and improving ourselves. This eliminating of the old mistakes and bringing in the new and improved is the hope of the New Year. It is our new Second Chance.



*"A swordsman had to come prepared and take advantage of the other's mistakes."*

## Kanai Shihan Techniques Workshop and Seminar with Yasumasa Itoh Sensei February 11-12, 2012

Yasumasa Itoh Sensei (6th Dan) was a long-time student of Kanai Shihan and is the chief instructor at Aikido Tekko Juku of Boston in Boston, Massachusetts. On Saturday, Itoh Sensei will review the basic techniques of Kanai Shihan with detailed explanations. On Sunday, there will be a workshop (for black belts or equivalents) with more advanced Kanai Shihan-style techniques that combine dynamic moves and throws.

Saturday and Sunday schedule: 10:00-12:00 PM and 2:00-4:00 PM (Lunch: 12:00-2:00 PM)  
*Schedule subject to change without notice*

Saturday seminar fee: \$35.00 Sunday workshop fee: \$50.00



for more information  
e-mail: [admin@aikikaitsj.com](mailto:admin@aikikaitsj.com) or  
go to [aikikaitsj.com](http://aikikaitsj.com)

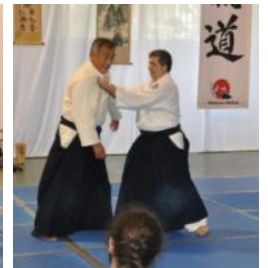
### Branch Dojo Celebrates Milestone

by Dr. Roberto Magallanes Molina, Chief Instructor  
Veracruz Aikikai, Veracruz, Mexico

From September 30 - October 1, 2011, Veracruz Aikikai held an Aikido seminar to celebrate the 15th anniversary of its founding at the 60 year-old Vetusto Sports Center, part of the Veracruz AC Social and Athletic Club. The venue was arranged and decorated by Majestic Chain, the Tiger Sports Advertising Agency, and Alliance Idea. All who attended benefited from three great teachers of this beautiful and ancient art – Kei Izawa Sensei (6th Dan, Chief Instructor Tanshinjuku Dojo, Boulder, Colorado, and Secretary General of the International Aikido Federation), Yasumasa Itoh Sensei (6th Dan, Chief Instructor Tekko Juku of Boston Dojo, Boston, Massachusetts), and our own ACLA Chief Instructor, David Ito Sensei – and received nine hours of instruction over the two days. Each teacher showcased his style and lineage; in this case, the lineage of Mitsunari Kanai Shihan and Reverend Kensho Furuya Sensei. We practiced various techniques with beginning, intermediate, and advanced students from different parts of the state of Veracruz, such as Xalapa (Aikido Tentokai, Kobukan Dojo) and Veracruz (Mexican Minatitlan Aikido Federation, Budokan Veracruz, and Veracruz Aikikai) and, on the 525 square feet of tatami, we learned together what the teachers showed us and thanked them for their care and corrections, in the harmonious spirit that characterizes this beautiful martial art.

On Saturday night there was a convivial dinner where the group Jar Ocho delighted our guests as well as members of the club's board of directors. The evening ended with delivering tokens of our appreciation to these teachers, giving gifts of our culture such as *totonac* vanilla and the tasty coffee of our region. Going beyond the historical center of our old city (and America's first settlement), we also enjoyed regional cuisine: succulent shellfish, traditional  *gorditas* and  *picadas*, and  *molcajete* of different meats, bringing fond memories of *Veracruzana* hospitality.

The organizers – Chief Instructors Dr. Roberto Magallanes Molina (2nd Dan, Veracruz Aikikai) and Dr. Alvaro Hernandez Mesa (2nd Dan, Veracruz Aikikai) – and their students made possible the realization of this event; many thanks for all your good work! We hope to see these wonderful teachers again next year in October 2012, and for a large seminar being planned for 2014, which marks the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first Japanese samurai in Veracruz, who embarked here on orders from the Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu to travel to Spain and the Vatican and convert to Christianity. Best wishes to ACLA from everyone at Veracruz Aikikai!





**Aikido Renbukai of Arizona's Beginners workshop**

I would like to thank Ito Sensei for teaching a beginner's workshop at our dojo last month. It was a huge success with about 20 people attending the seminar held over two days. He covered the basic movements and *ukemi* for *ikkyo*, *nikyo*, *ko-tegaeshi*, *shihonage*, and *tenkan* as well as the key components of forward and backward rolling. The seminar concluded with our dojo's Christmas party and everyone had a great time and made lots of friends.

– Mike Van Ruth



## Happy New Year from Aikido Renbukai of Arizona



あけましておめでとうございます。

### Happy New Year!

by Mike Van Ruth, Chief Instructor  
Aikido Renbukai, Surprise, Arizona

Many people that I talk to express a feeling of excitement about the coming new year, and I am no exception. I feel great things coming over the horizon.

My hope is to take this positive attitude and use it to reaffirm my commitment to training hard and developing the dojo here in Arizona. Like Sensei always used to say, "There is no time to waste." It is amazing how fast a year goes by.

I wish you all – ACLA students, friends, families, and readers of this newsletter – a prosperous and productive New Year.



## AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES AFFILIATED DOJOS

### INTERNATIONAL

#### Spain

**Aikido Kodokai**  
Salamanca, Spain

Chief Instructor: Santiago Garcia Almaraz  
www.kodokai.com

#### Mexico

**Veracruz Aikikai**  
Veracruz, Mexico  
Chief Instructors:

Dr. Jose Roberto Magallanes Molina  
Dr. Alvaro Rodolfo Hernandez Meza  
www.veracruz-aikikai.com



### UNITED STATES

#### California

**Hacienda La Puente Aikikai**  
Hacienda Heights, California  
Chief Instructor: Tom Williams

#### Arizona

**Aikido Renbukai of Arizona**  
Surprise, Arizona  
Chief Instructor: Michael Van Ruth

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**Kisshomaru Ueshiba**  
1921-1999

On January 7th, the dojo observed the annual memorial service for 2nd Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba. The service was officiated by Reverend Kojima and Reverend Toho who read the Heart Sutra while the students offered incense and reflected on 2nd Doshu's many contributions to the world and to Aikido. Kojima Sensei's sermon was on preserving traditions and teachings from generation to generation as represented by the *dai-dai* or bitter orange and the *kagami mochi*.

## Nidai Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba's *Tsuito Hoyo* Memorial Service



## Tsuyuki Sensei visits ACLA

Reverend Alfred Tsuyuki from the Konko Church of Los Angeles stopped by ACLA for a visit and donated two *sasaki* arrangements and a bottle of *omiki* sake to the dojo just in time for *osame keiko*. The *sasaki* arrangements, seen here on either side of the *kagami mochi*, ward off evil spirits and bring good luck to the dojo on New Year's Day. *Omiki* is a ceremonial sake offered to the gods on New Year's eve and then drunk at *kagami biraki*, or formal opening of the dojo, to symbolize good health all year long. They are sitting in front of a beautiful New Year's scroll that depicts a nightingale singing while perched on a branch of white and red plum blossoms to welcome in the New Year.



**Happy New Year and thank you for all your support!**



**The Aiki Dojo**  
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of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles

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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.

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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

## Finding Purity

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

When it comes time to make a crucial decision in our lives, it is really already too late. Commitment to how we live and where we want to take our lives must be determined in our hearts long beforehand, so when the critical moment comes, we know exactly what to do and can act spontaneously and immediately without any hesitation.

This may sound a little impetuous and rash but this is how the samurai lived long ago. Maybe we can't live like this in today's society where we calculate and speculate on everything we do. In old Japanese, this is called *akinai konjo* or "business spirit". Early merchants in feudal Japan, in opposition of the samurai ethic, used to say, "I will only bow my head to pick up a penny," or, "When it comes to taking something, I will even grab the discarded peel of an orange." We live like this today. We are very clever nowadays to measure profit and loss to the tenth degree in everything we do. We have become so very clever and smart, but perhaps, just a little too crafty (and underhanded)?

In the dojo, when a student is called or when one's name is called in any instance, one immediately says, "Hai!" in a good strong voice. At least this is how it used to be in most dojos. I don't know if other dojos do this today, but it remains an important practice here in my dojo.

When the "Hai!" is strong and immediate, without hesitation, the sensei can sense a "spiritual" or "mental" connection with the student. We are attuned together. Sometimes there is a slight delay – just the very slightest delay. Immediately, the sensei can sense the "calculating" mind of the student. The student is thinking, "Did Sensei call me?" (Student is sleeping, not paying atten-

tion, or forgot his own name.) Or the student is thinking, "If I answer maybe Sensei has a chore for me, what do I do?" (Student is lazy or has a hot date and can't be bothered with Sensei's little errands or wants to escape Sensei.) Or the student is thinking, "Now what did I do?" (Student is guilty of something (?), student forgot his duties and thinks he is in trouble.) Or the student is thinking, "Why does Sensei always pick on me?" (Student is feeling sorry for himself or recently jilted by his girlfriend.) Or the student in thinking, "Don't bother me now I am busy!" (Student is too self-absorbed.) And on and on.



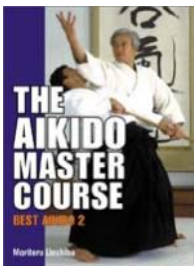
In everything in the dojo, an important but often neglected aspect of training is to maintain this mental connection with the teacher and to be constantly in tune and connected and aware. Once the student can understand how to make this connection naturally and spontaneously, he can naturally make this connection with everyone and everything around him in the world. This connection can only come about through a strong sense of awareness which we must determine in our heads from the very beginning. When we need it, it is already too late.

To accomplish this, we must continually determine in our own minds and hearts to be constantly aware and on the ball. Without this strong commitment and direction in our heads, we will always be a little slow and always, always late to the draw. Eventually, when the opponent attacks and beats us and leaves, we might even wake up!

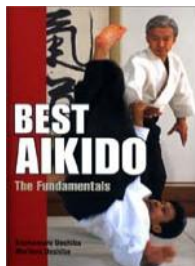
There is a purity in the actions of warriors and this is where their greatness lies. This awareness and connection we make with others, this strong sense of commitment and determination we create within ourselves, brings us to this purity.

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

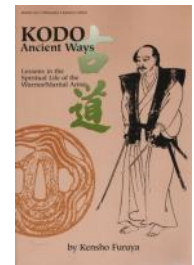
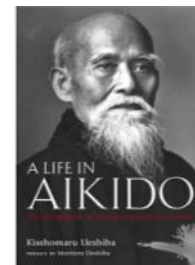
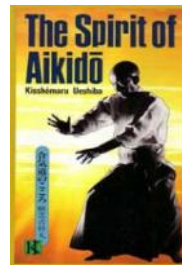
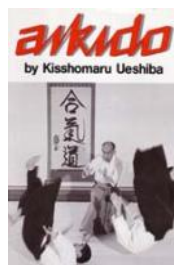
## Recommended Readings:



by Ueshiba Moriteru



by Ueshiba Kisshomaru



by Kensho Furuya

# 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 Intermediate  
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 Advanced\*

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

\* These classes are 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

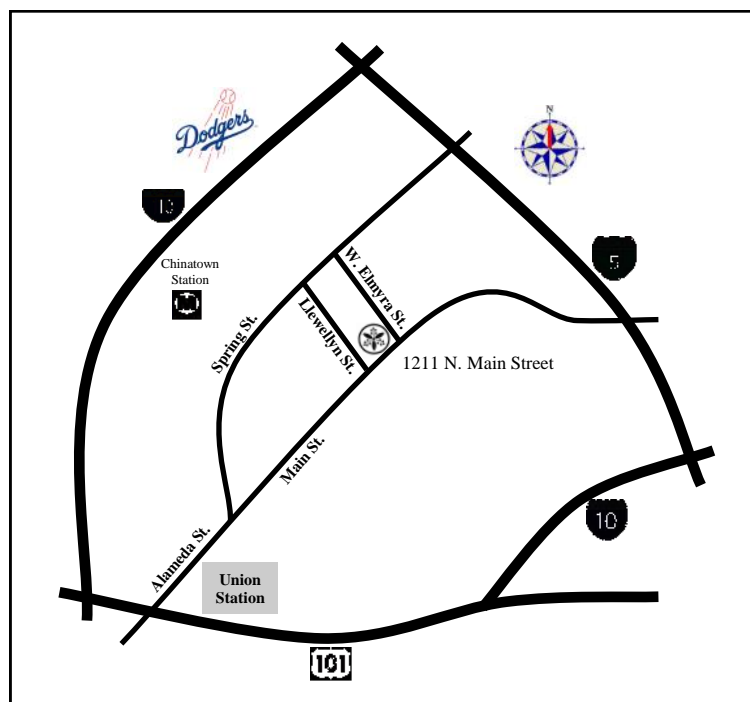
## Sundays

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.



## 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 (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.



## Finding Our Dojo

We are located at

1211 N. Main Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Telephone: (323) 225-1424

E-mail: [info@aikidocenterla.com](mailto: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.