



# 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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*O Sensei Memorial Seminar April 27-29, 2012*

### Upcoming Events

**May 26th:**  
Instructor's intensive

**May 28th:**  
Dojo closed  
Memorial Day

**June 30th:**  
Instructor's intensive

**July 4th:**  
Dojo closed  
Independence Day

**July 28th:**  
Instructor's intensive

**August 25th:**  
Instructor's intensive

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

Last month, ACLA hosted its annual O Sensei Memorial Seminar as we have done for some years now, and it pleases me very much to say it came off a great success. Attendees benefitted from the Aikido classes taught by Aikido Chief Instructor David Ito and by our senior instructors Ken Watanabe and James Doi; Iaido Chief Instructor Gary Myers also taught two *bokken* classes which boasted a mat area so full that students had to practice in alternating groups. Chief instructors from our branch dojos also demonstrated their teaching style during the seminar, which gave a nice balance to the event.

While the seminar has always commemorated the passing of O Sensei with a weekend of joyful, vibrant training, this year we broadened our focus to include the comprehensive teaching of and emphasis on Aikido as taught by Reverend Kensho Furuya Sensei, the founder of our dojo. By doing this we hope to propagate not only Sensei's formidable technique, but also the even more formidable spirit which allowed such technique to evolve after many years of diligent training.

Such diligence as Sensei displayed (and demanded) can seem overwhelming: we face so many bars set so very high that, before we even begin, we may feel lost or hopeless. I can offer a secret that has helped me during the many dark moments of my training – we make progress by simply doing our best, time after time. On the mat, my technique leaves much room for improvement; off the mat, I fail to clean quickly or quietly enough, or to help a junior student or a guest, or to hang the cleaning rags properly outside, or to water the plants in their correct proportion, or to do any of a million other things that comprise my training. Yet such gains as I have made over the years resulted not from talent, but from the resolve to do the best I can, and let the outcome happen in its own time.

So allow me to thank all the students who attended this year's seminar on a job well done: you came, you trained hard and joyfully at every class, you showed kindness and hospitality to our guests on and off the mat, and believe it or not, your Aikido – and your spirit – grew just a little bit stronger. Congratulations on your fortitude and discipline; I know next year we'll do even better. Until then, take care, and I'll see you on the mat!

**The Key**

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor



Everything comes down to this. . . .

**Just practice.**

That's it.



Nothing more is required, and anything less is unacceptable.

We are born, we live, and we will die. Those facts remain immutable.



Nonetheless, **WE** get to choose what we will do with our time here.

Most of us walk around with our heads in the clouds, dreaming or worrying about this or that.



99% of the time those thoughts don't even really matter.

Aikido training teaches us to come back down to earth and live our lives in the here and now.

Therefore, whatever it is **YOU** decide to do, *just do*. Nothing else really matters.



## The Mathematics of Practice

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

A young student came up to me a while back and said: "I don't think *ikkyo* works well as a fighting technique!" I only replied: "You need more practice," and didn't say anything else. I really don't want to answer such a silly remark.

Many aggressive, young students practice little and after a few months or years, begin to think, "I have mastered everything." Maybe if a student practices *ikkyo* every day during class, maybe he only does *ikkyo* about 10 or 20 times at the most, considering he is practicing other techniques as well during each class. If he practices *ikkyo* seven days a week in every class, maybe he practices *ikkyo* about 70 to 140 times or, at the most, about 550 times a month – not much according to my mathematics.

It goes the same way with *suburi*. I see students practicing *suburi* with a *bokken* but they only do a couple of hundred at a time during class. Most students do not practice *suburi* every day in class, even less at home. If they did 200 every day, I would say it is very good for the normal student. This comes to about 6,000 swings with the *bokken* a month. However, in general, I see most students only do a couple of hundred *suburi* about once or twice a month, if any at all. My old Kendo teacher many years ago used to do *suburi* 3,000 times a day, without fail, every day of the month. This comes to about 90,000 times a month. My teacher was a strong 8th Dan at the time. In proper ratio, how many times should we be doing *suburi* each day? Please do the math.

When I see students practicing *jo*, I see the same thing. Everyone's most fundamental *jo* thrust is so weak. Maybe students on the average do thrusting practice in a *jo* class about 10 or 20 times; how many *jo* classes are there in one week, or one month, or every year? Please do the math. No wonder their *jo* thrust is so weak!

One of my good friends is a well known Kung Fu teacher and he posed the same question to me about his long spear class. His student did about 500 thrusts and said that it didn't work. My friend commented, "Only 500? Maybe he should see after one million!" Yes, in Aiki Jo, as well, we should see our *jo* thrust after one million thrusts – maybe it will even slightly begin to resemble something like what O Sensei had in mind. To do one million *jo* thrusts, about how many thrusts with the *jo* do we have to make each day, if we were going to accomplish this in maybe one year, or two years? Please do the math.

Nowadays, students want to do "instant" martial arts, and teachers lie in wait out there to take our money and promise such things. Please! Do not insult me! Is instant martial arts something like instant *ramen*? How much does it cost? And how much will it cost you in the end ultimately? Please do the math!

Some people may complain that some martial arts take too long to learn and are too difficult, so they go to the newer, popular styles which guarantee that we can learn them quickly and that they are very simple and practical. Much of this is just a matter of presentation and the bottom line is almost always marketing without fail.

It only takes about two minutes to teach someone how to shoot for the hoop in basketball. Very simple and straight forward; nothing complicated or too hard to learn. Do this and do that, and there you have it! But ask a pro how long he has practiced in order to make the basket 9 times out

of 10. Maybe he started as a kid and practiced every day for many hours. He can probably do it in his sleep! You can watch a famous chef bake a fabulous cake on a TV program and it seems like it only takes less than 30 minutes. But ask a professional chef how long it has taken him to perfect the art of the cake to create a delicious masterpiece each time? In the same vein, it doesn't take long to learn how to play a piano: you learn the keys and the fingering and just read the notes. But actually to play the piano – this is a different story. Then actually to play the piano well: this becomes yet another story.

It is easy to teach even a little kid how to do *kote-gaeshi*, but to get him to master this technique and all the different ways it can be executed is another story entirely. Some teachers today will teach a student a technique, let her practice a few times and then move on to the next thing. The student may feel like she is really learning something and getting her money's worth. But, to get the student to learn the technique really well so she will never forget it may take many years. The student will also realize that she can only really understand the technique if she devotes many hours of training and that this may take many years.

Continued on page 7...



Sensei demonstrating jo-tori





2012 O Sensei Memorial Seminar



## Resolution

by Edward Ecolango Jr., Aikido 6th Kyu

If someone were to ask me why I joined Aikido, I probably would say I don't know. What I do know is that I am glad there was that something that got me started or it might have been just another thing I put off for a long while.

With over five months of training, all of my preconceptions about the dojo have been scrambled. I thought after studying up about Aikido, "getting it" would be easy; it wasn't. I thought I would be great at it right away; after all, I read *Kodo* right? Half the time I don't know my right from my left! I tried to hide how scared I was at first. I knew for sure that I would get beat up on the mat; nothing happened and the feeling passed. I am really starting to enjoy Aikido – but I don't want to jinx it. I hope I can keep this feeling of enthusiasm going about my training years from now.

I have never truly applied myself to anything. What a sad thing to say that dedication, fortitude, and resilience are not in my list of defining qualities. I am constantly plagued with feelings of being unaccomplished, that naturally result from failing to complete the things that I start. It is actually very easy to quit a task when the task gets past the new and exciting stage. Right when it starts to get tough and into the meaty portion of the undertaking, I would take the easy way out. Today I feel a bit different; with every class I attend and each *onegaishimasu*, I really truly feel like I'm growing a little bit.



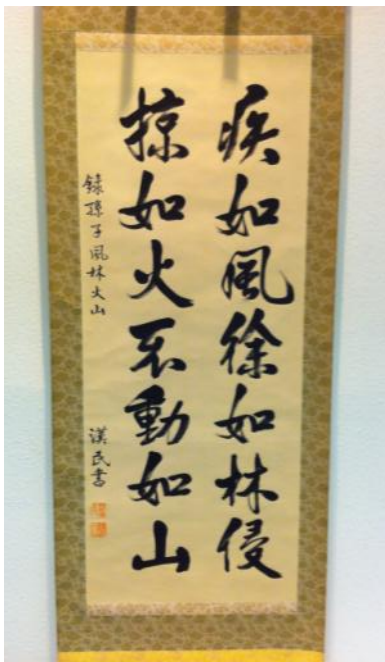
I read Ito Sensei's article about feeling sorry for "The Natural" and now I understand: because they can pick up something very quickly, they may grow tired or bored; then like a shooting star, they burn out just as fast as they started. Now I understand myself a little better and I have decided I will no longer feel sorry for myself. I don't have the luxury of wasting precious time to feel sorry and do nothing. So with a change in response I hope to change the outcome. I *am* learning something here.

As I think about the reasons why I joined Aikido, simple answers come to mind: I heard it makes you stronger, I was told it allows you to overcome opponents, I read about the people that practiced the art and I wanted to become like them. I guess I wanted to change something about myself.

From what I read in *Kodo*, the opponent I wanted to overcome was in fact myself. I joined to change my way of thinking, to create a new me. What I really want is to develop myself and realize my full potential and not just be another dropout. That is why I started Aikido in the first place.

I am sure everyone wants to change something about themselves; it isn't a unique reason to have joined Aikido. What really sets people apart is when they actually stick with the resolution to change and then realize suddenly that they are different now. Whatever your reason for beginning your practice of Aikido I hope we all stick to it. See you on the mat.

*Furin kazan* 風林火山: Wind, forest, fire and mountain



This scroll is from a couple of popular passages in chapter 17 of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. It reads, "Be quick like the wind, serene as a forest, as fierce as fire and immovable as a mountain" (疾如風徐如林侵掠如火不動如山). This statement gave rise to the *yojijukugo* or four character Japanese idiom of *furin kazan* (風鈴火山), or *wind, forest, fire and mountain*. This *yojijukugo* became the favorite war banner of legendary Sengoku period *daimyo*, Takeda Shingen, which he used to guide not only his battlefield efforts but all his policies as well.

In ancient times, the samurai used *furin kazan* as an expression for the ideal military strategy. In battle, they had to know when to attack and when to retreat and when to be patient and just observe. Knowing the appropriate action was the key to victory. In Japanese society today, *furin kazan* has come to signify "acting appropriately at the appropriate time."

## 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

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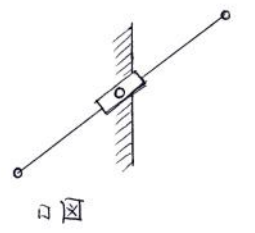
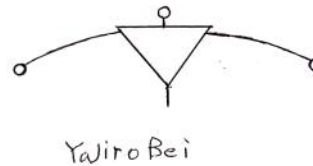
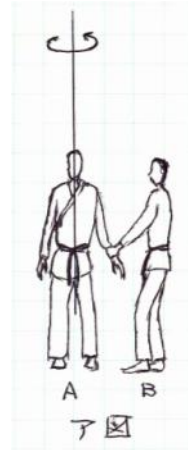
**Budo: Principles and Toys**  
by Naoji Karita



Do you know the toy called the *den-den daiko* (pellet drum)? When you rotate the rod section of the toy by holding it between your palms, the weights hanging at the end of the strings hit the *taiko*, or drum. In the same manner a man (A in the illustration to the right) stands straight in the body center line with his wrist firmly held by another person (B) and when A rotates his body around this center line, B is overwhelmed by the rotation and spins off from A as seen in the mechanical movement of the *den-den daiko*. This movement is usually practiced by one person

and is called *Suwaisho* in Tai-Chi. Many people think of this movement as a preparation exercise, but it is actually a very important principle movement in Tai-Chi. When a person correctly practices this movement, it is considered that she has vastly developed her skill. However, less than half of the Tai-Chi population realize this fact. There are many things around us that are found common to the principle of *budo*. It is truly a pleasure for us to find them, which I believe will help us improve our *budo* techniques. I would encourage *budo* practitioners to trust the teachings of Sensei and to brush up their *budo* study further.

The toy called *yajirobe* (balance toy) is designed for us to enjoy our sense of balance, and it is often used as a means to teach *budo* principles. The illustration to the right (I) shows a man trying to grab a fruit off the tree on the cliff. If he tries to reach out too far, he may fall from the cliff. If he does not reach out enough, he cannot pick the fruit. When this illustration is observed from overhead as shown in (II), his right leg is widely opened backward and with his left leg used as body axle, his left hand is extended to reach the fruit. This body balancing method shows that his right leg and hand work as fundamental body weights positioned in the back of his body, while his left hand is only lightly extended. In this posture, when left hand tip is pushed from the (A) direction, it can be pushed back toward (A) direction. Also, when the left hand is pushed from its side, it can be pushed back using the left leg as a body axle and the right leg for balancing. We are surprised to learn that people in the old days adopted this balancing technique in the principle of *budo*.

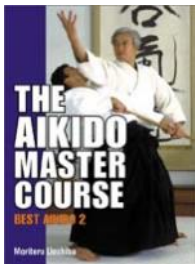


武道の原理 と 玩具

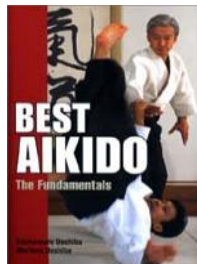
でんでん太鼓を知っていますか。手の平で棒の部分をつまみ回転させると、紐の先に付いている鐘ははかり太鼓を打ち鳴らす玩具です。人も同じように正中線を整えて立ち、(ア図) 手首をとりAの体の動かないように押さえてらう状態を作り、Aは正中線を回転するとでんでん太鼓のようにAを押しさすBは回転(飛)はされてはいます。これは太極拳では甩手(Suwaisho)と云って一人やる動作です。その為、これを準備体操と思っている人が多いのですが実は太極拳ではとても重要な原理運動で、これができるようになる技術が大変な事になる。100%その事に気付く人は太極拳をやる人口の半分もいないのです。秘伝の周りには武道の原理として共通するものが多く存在します。それを見付ける事は楽しい事ですが技術向上に繋がる事と信じて、より武道を学んでいる方は先生の教えを信じて研究に励んでください。これは弥次郎兵衛と云う玩具でバランスを見て楽しむのが、これも武道の原理として良く使われます。

イ図の絵は崖縁で木の実を取ろうとして居る処です。身さのりた過ぎると崖から落ちてはい、手が届かないければ木の実は取れない状態です。  
この絵を真上から見るとロ図のようになります。右足を後に大きく開き左足を軸とし左手で木の実を取ろうと手を延ばします。このバランスは右足右手は後ろに実にはり(重なる)左手は軽く延ばす「丁」の虚になります。この状態の時にAの方向に左手の先を押し、逆側にAの方向に押し返せば、又左手を横から押されたとしても左足を軸に右足のバランスで押し返す事も出来ます。このようにバランスを昔の人は武道の原理として取り入れている事に驚かされます。

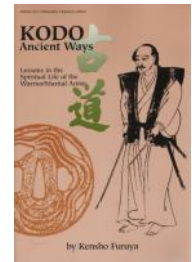
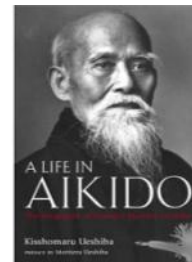
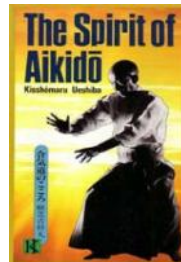
Recommended Readings:



by Ueshiba Moriteru



by Ueshiba Kisshomaru



by Kensho Furuya

**The Mathematics of Practice** *continued from page 3...*

We can learn the physical technique in just a few minutes, but to understand the subtle aspects of the technique is not easy. From just one technique, we learn something about our movement, posture, balance, focus and concentration, and being centered. We learn about energy and how to blend our energy with others. Eventually, we learn how the technique adds to our life and our knowledge, and can see one single technique on a greater and grander scale until one technique becomes all techniques. We are not simply talking about techniques but how to turn a simple technique into something of great value and meaning. We call this *do* or The Path. Most martial arts today, though, are a series of clever techniques – we want to be very practical and efficient.

To be practical and efficient and simple, we just go to the supermarket and buy a cake, the cheapest one on the shelf, whatever it is. In another way, we spend time, think about what we want, get all the materials together and bake a cake. This cake takes longer, costs more, and takes more time and energy to get – but it is something that we want and it is something about which we can feel happy. Do the math.

Many, many years ago in high school, I used to play chess. I was quite fanatical about it so I played every day, studied many books, learned principles and strategies, studied famous games by the masters, and on and on. I was quite crazy about it. My friend also played chess. He was very aggressive and practical about it and never “wasted” his time trying to study the finer points of the game; he just played taking whatever pieces he could and just barged ahead on the board. My way took much longer and was much harder to catch the victory. He was considered a “very strong” player but he never won. Do the math. . . .

**Editor’s Note:** Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his daily message board over two days on May 21-22, 2002.



**The Aiki Dojo**  
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 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 also will dedicate yourself to your training and to enjoying all the benefits that Aikido and Iaido can offer.*

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## AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES OFFICIALLY AFFILIATED DOJOS

### INTERNATIONAL

#### Spain

**Aikido Kodokai**  
 Salamanca, Spain

Chief Instructor: Santiago Garcia Almaraz  
 www.kodokai.com

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

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



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Chief Instructor: Michael Van Ruth  
 www.aikidorenbukai.com



Visit us on the Web at [www.aikidocenterla.com](http://www.aikidocenterla.com)

# 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

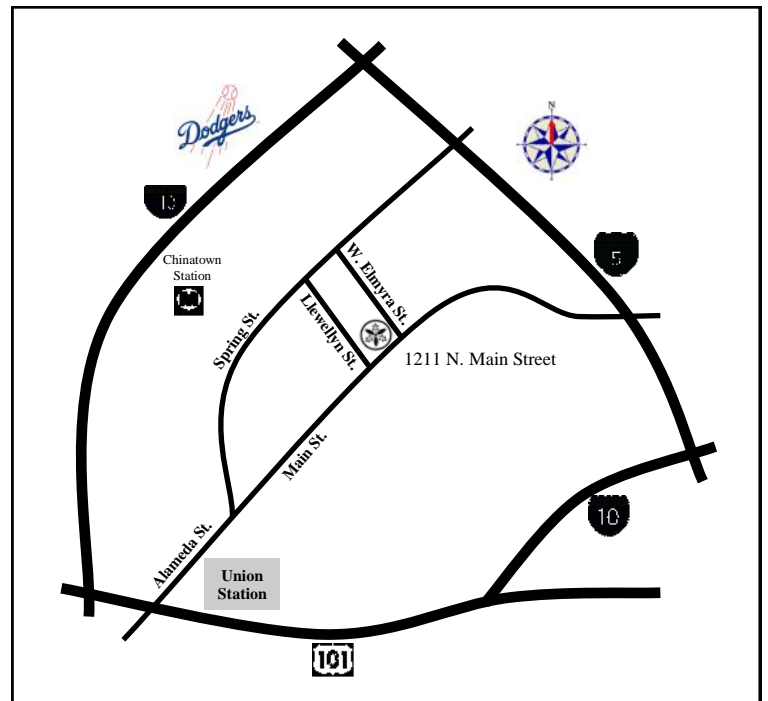
**Sundays**

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**  
 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.*