

The Aikido Center 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

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Morihei Ueshiba's 48th meinichi or annual memorial service.

Upcoming Events

May 17-29th:
Hiro Tatenos visits the dojo
from Tokyo, Japan

May 27th:
Intensive seminar

May 29th:
Dojo closed: Memorial Day

June 3rd:
Pasadena Matsuri BBQ
for Tomi Okuno

June 24th:
Intensive seminar

Message From the Teacher
by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

Our greatest enemy is a comfortable couch.

Someone asked me, "Do we really need traditional martial arts?" It may seem unnecessary in a civilized society with all its technological advances that there is no need for traditional training. I would argue that today, more than ever before, we need traditional martial arts training.

The month of May in old Japanese used to be called *sanaetsuki* (早 苗月). *Sanaetsuki* literally means "Early rice planting month."

One reason why they named the month of May to remind them to plant the rice early was because rice is a labor intensive crop which requires a lot of manpower to cultivate and harvest. If one waited too long then they might come up short and thus not be able to survive the harsh Japanese winter.

As things become faster, convenient and more disposable, it is easy to become complacent.

However, with this complacency comes a lack of discipline. This discipline is of a spiritual nature which compels us to be better people for the sake of being better without any reward. A tea ceremony teacher once wrote, "When society prospers, the spirit becomes impoverished."

We are enjoying the most technologically advanced and physically comfortable time in the history of man. It is easier than ever to have a careless and disposable mindset that has very little consequence.

I would argue that this is precisely why society needs traditional training. We enjoy such great opportunity. We need something to remind us that we might not survive if we become complacent or flippant with our lives. That things is traditional martial arts training. Please don't waste your life sitting on the couch.

Push Yourself

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

Furuya Sensei was one of those teachers who demanded so much of his students, but much of what he taught us was not conveyed by words. Sensei wasn't one of those pedantic people who told us how he wanted us to be at every moment – the crux of his most important teachings weren't in what he said. One of the many things that Furuya Sensei communicated to me nonverbally was that within every situation there exists an opportunity to push one's self.

On several occasions, I got a glimpse of how Sensei improved himself. Despite being a teacher, Sensei was an ardent student and who relentlessly pushed himself to improve.

One such time was when I was driving Sensei up a northbound street which stretched for at least five miles. I was barely familiar with downtown Los Angeles. I was engrossed with trying to drive him in a way that made him comfortable which consisted of carefully and slowly driving and always avoiding the freeways. As we approached the first intersection, the traffic light started to change colors. Sensei said, "Speed up!" just as I was applying the brakes. I didn't want the car to jerk so I just continued to heed the light and stop. He outwardly groaned and said, "Ugh now we're going to have to stop for every light." He reprimanded me about my slow driving and lack of awareness. As he chastised me, he concluded, "You are supposed to time the lights so that they are all green and we can drive without stopping."

Another time, I got the opportunity of helping Sensei do a mass mailing of post cards. Some people relish in the idea of getting to spend some alone time with Sensei. Those people know not what they are asking. There wasn't any idle chit chat nor was there any pearls of wisdom haphazardly given out by him. The environment was tense as Sensei showed me exactly how he wanted the labels affixed and scolded me if there were any crooked ones. I watched him out of the corner of my eye and saw how much he focused on putting on just one label. He was so focused that watching him made me lose focus. Just then, Sensei yelled out, "Watch what you are doing" as I put the label on crooked. In an exasperated tone, he said, "Now I have to re-print that label!" as he scraped the misaligned one off the card. At one point, he said, "You are hopeless" and told me that making sure the labels are put on perfectly is part of his training and that I was messing up his work.

I used to think that Sensei was just some strict task master, which is only partly true. His attention to detail seemed to border on the obsessive, but I now know that it was more than that. Sensei was what the Japanese call *kichoumen* (几帳面). *Kichoumen* is a personality trait in which a person is very methodical in their approach to everything that they do. It is not just an obsessive need to align things but an innate need to be disciplined in the things they do.

In the past, I thought that Sensei's tendency for perfection was some sort of cruelty that he was saving up for me. Today, I realize that I was getting a glimpse into Sensei's life and how he pursued his own private training.

Life happens and from moment to moment, we are buffeted by forces that we may not be in control of. We cannot control anything which exists outside of ourselves. I have since learned that we can, however, control that which arises inside of us. We can control what we do, what we say and, most importantly, what we think.

Thus, when we are confronted with any situation, we are ultimately only in control of ourselves.

The other day, my son was asleep on me and my leg started to itch. The itch started to become almost unbearable. I started to allow it to get to me and I started to suffer. I remember getting mad and looking for someone to blame. Then after a few seconds of writhing in agony, which seemed like hours, I remembered something from my Aikido training. I remembered that I could use my breathing exercises to not only center my physical body but to balance my mind as well.

It almost sounds cliché, but I re-established my breathing and tried to center myself by putting my mind in my abdomen. I breathed and thought, "How long can I remain composed before succumbing to the need to scratch?" I looked at the clock on my phone and set a goal of abstaining from scratching for five minutes while I focused on my breathing and set my mind to letting go of the need to scratch. After a couple of minutes, I totally forgot that I had the need to scratch and the itch had at some point, without my knowing, totally subsided.

It was then that I realized what Sensei was doing when he tried to time the lights or when he meticulously put the labels on straight. He used to say, "The Way is in training." What Sensei meant was that within every situation exists the opportunity to not only learn but to also push one's limits.

Each person is an individual and we all have our battles and the things that we suffer from are a construct of many different things. What is common to all of our plights is that we choose the way in which we perceive that situation.

If we perceive something negatively as some sort of misfortune, we run the risk of succumbing to our suffering. Conversely, if we approach situations with idea that it is an opportunity for growth or discovery then we can use that situation as a tool to improve ourselves. Both situations have the same presentation, but can be looked at from opposite directions.

Aikido training teaches us that each and every situation presents us with an opportunity. A chance to rise or fall goes hand in hand with how we act, speak and think. How we choose to view it dictates the road we will travel and each of those roads has a consequence.

Sensei never told me what perspective to have, but I realize now that he showed me with his actions that within every situation there exists an opportunity to not only push myself but to change as well. Today, I do my best to try and see the lesson in everything that I do and I also try to push myself at every opportunity.



What an Experience!

by Ramon Herrero Fernandez, Aikido Shodan
Aikido Kodokai

Thank you to everyone for a wonderful trip and great training. I want to thank Ito Sensei and Watanabe Sensei for all their kindness and teachings. I wish to also specifically thank my teacher Almaraz Sensei for giving me the opportunity to visit Los Angeles with him.

For a person who comes from another country and does not speak or understand any English, I can say that the way the senseis taught the classes were wonderful. Their examples were clear and understandable which clearly conveyed the information despite not understanding the language.

All the teachers were very knowledgeable, but each different in their own way and one can see the dedication in the way they not only teach but in the way they actually *do* Aikido.

On a personal level, the treatment I received was very good and I felt the human warmth and closeness akin to a close knit family. For that I am very grateful.

A few months ago, it was a distant dream to come to Los Angeles that finally came true and I am happy to say that it did not disappoint.

Thank you all again for teaching us and giving us your time. Gracias!



Many, Many Thanks

by Ana Vaquero Carballido, Aikido 5th Kyu
Aikido Kodokai

Thank you all for welcoming me. I am grateful for all the warmth and kindness that I received while visiting the Aikido Center of Los Angeles.

This was a unique experience and I want to thank Almaraz Sensei for the opportunity to come to Los Angeles. However, the trip was very special because I got to train with Ito Sensei, Watanabe Sensei and all my new friends at the Los Angeles dojo. I feel that training in Los Angeles gave me the opportunity to practice in a way that made me feel close to everyone and not just as a visitor.

Thank you all for transmitting your Aikido experiences and for your dedication to Aikido and the dojo. I have looked with the eyes of Aikido and I have seen through to the heart of the Dojo. Thank you all for your kind corrections, explanations, and tips – the personal work begins now.

Explaining in words my experience in 10 days is complicated. There is only one way to know with the Spanish word, "Vivirlo!" which means "To live!"

Thank you all for your unconditional kindness and dedication. It truly touches my heart.

May our journeys continue and may we all meet again.



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.



In the Eye of the Beholder

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

In my friend's discussion group, there was a comment about this *tsuba*. For all intents and purposes this is just an average *tsuba*, actually rather plain and many would comment that it is also a little "ugly" and definitely "crude." I think in a group of *tsuba*, no one would give this one a second glance. I often see *tsuba* like this tossed into the "garbage pile" of *tsuba* at sword conventions.

Actually, this is a 1st generation Yamakichibei and quite well-known. Scholars have studied and referenced this guard in books for the last century. Whereas no one would pay \$50.00 for something like this here in the United States, in most circumstances, but this particular piece recently sold for \$30,000.00 in Japan!

We always look at things from our own perspective today and we are usually intelligent enough to make the right choices. We do this in Aikido as well. One thing, I would like to point out is that the "samurai aesthetic" and point of view of the ancient masters is far, very far different from the world we are brought into today and their sense of the world or world view is also very different.

This *tsuba* does not have the artistic technical skill and technique of later artists and there is no gold or intricate design element which attracts the eye. Simply put, there is no "flash" and the obvious "appeal" that an untrained eye can understand or appreciate. Aikido

and many of the traditional martial arts are very much like this *tsuba* as well.



When we study *tsuba*, we begin to appreciate the wonderful quality of the iron in this example. The design is simple but, to a trained connoisseur's eye it has an appeal which clearly illustrates the age in which it was made. The wonderful, unrestrained freedom of design, combined with the excellent quality of iron cannot be duplicated today. The one tiny openwork flower is perfectly placed to give the *tsuba* balance yet it shows a quality of life and movement unlike later artists who revel in perfection of technique and lack internal inspiration. When such a *tsuba* like this is placed on a sword, the entire sword shows the pride and great inner strength of the samurai. It is truly a remarkable masterpiece.

Even after 40 years of collecting, I have never come close to such a masterpiece as this. Such *tsuba* and their makers inspired *tsuba* artists from the 1550's when it was made throughout the history of Japanese art.

When we can appreciate the quiet eternal beauty then we can catch a glimpse just slightly into the mind of the warriors who first created the martial arts that we practice today.

Editor's Note: Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his Daily Message on February 27, 2005.

Pasadena BBQ Matsuri

Presented by
the Miss Pasadena JCI Committee &
Pasadena Nikkei Seniors

Saturday, June 3, 2017 · 5:00 PM
Pasadena Buddhist Temple
1993 Glenrose Ave. Pasadena, CA 91103

Event Emcees:
2017 Miss Pasadena JCI
Tomi Okuno
&
2016 Miss Pasadena JCI /
2016 Nisei Week Miss Tomodachi
Julia Kiyomi Tani

Entertainment by
local Ukulele player
Ryan Lee

Silent Auction &
Opportunity Drawing

Food prepared by
Chef Ron Dyo

Join us for a fun evening of
Obon Dancing
with friends & family!
Come dressed in your hapi coats
and yukatas.

LET'S STUDY JAPANESE!



Fuji School

244 South San Pedro Street Suite #501
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213-788-3305
Oh-fuji.com



A Grateful Trip

by David H. Mateo, Aikido Shodan
Aikido Kodokai

Time seems to fly by. I had always wanted to go to visit Los Angeles and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles. I took a break from training as my life underwent many major changes. After life had settled down, I was determined to get back to training at Kodokai dojo in my hometown of Salamanca. Before I knew it, it was time to accompany my teacher on his yearly trip to Los Angeles. It was a trip of a lifetime to go and visit the Aikido Center of

Los Angeles and practice and learn there especially since I had never traveled outside of Spain before. Training in Los Angeles was an experience of a lifetime and I got to take classes from Ito Sensei, Doi Sensei and Watanabe Sensei who were all students of Furuya Sensei like my teacher. I was worried how the students and teachers from Los Angeles would treat us. I was welcomed with open arms and everyone helped us to become part of the classes and feel like we were part of the dojo. I very much enjoyed all the classes and I felt extremely privileged to visit Sensei's grave site and pay my respects to him. Being at this memorial service and seeing his grave stone reminded me of when he died and how difficult it was for all of us that day. I am deeply grateful to Almaraz Sensei for giving me this opportunity to accompany him and I am indebted to the students and teachers at the Aikido Center of Los Angeles for their wonderful hospitality and warmth – they are truly people of unequalled skill and humanity.

58TH ANNUAL Zenshuji OBON Carnival
JULY 9TH & 10TH, 2016
11AM - 8PM
OBON SERVICE AT 1:30PM BOTH DAYS

Cultural Activities
Bon Odori
Tea Ceremony
Flower Arrangement

Eat & Shop
Farmer's Market
Produce/Flowers
Food & Drinks
White Elephant
Raffle & Prizes

Entertainment
Children's Games
Taiko Drumming
Folk Dance & Music
Shorinji Kempo

Zenshuji Soto Mission
123 S. Hewitt St, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (213)624-8658 www.zenshuji.org
Metro Gold Line: Little Tokyo/Arts District Station
Check our website for updated parking information

Bamboo Instrument Making Workshop



June 4th, 2017 (Sunday)

Echo Park Film Center

1200 N. Alvarado St, Los Angeles, CA 90026

Cost: \$10.00 per family

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles is proud to bring the shakuhachi (bamboo flute) master, John Kaizan Neptune from Japan and present a bamboo music instrument making workshop for kids. Participants can learn the craft of making a bamboo instrument and also enjoy playing it with master John Kaizan afterwards.

For more information: jflalc.org/kaizan-workshop

Strength vs. Energy

by Ken Watanabe, Iaido Chief Instructor

When people think of martial arts, the concepts of power, strength, and speed come to mind. As martial artists, we want to be strong; we wish to be undefeatable. This sometimes means training hard to build up our physical strength and stamina so we can prevail over our opponents.

As we advance, we might begin comparing ourselves to other students. It's only natural in a martial art to think about who is stronger; sizing ourselves up against other students. During the sizing up process however, we maybe we use a little too much strength to throw or pin our partner which might create the illusion of effectiveness, or maybe if we resist our partner when they are throwing or pinning, it somehow makes us feel stronger. After all, strength wins the day, right? Or, does it?

Physical strength, of course, is important. We need to be strong enough to handle the rigors of hard training and to practice the techniques as correctly as possible. We need to be able to give our partner an effective attack in order to help them perfect their techniques. We also need to be strong enough to handle being thrown and pinned over and over again for our practice partners. Yet, as much strength as we believe we need during practice, ultimately, the goal in Aikido training is to cultivate and develop the proper use of our energy.

In Aikido and higher levels of other martial arts, it's not so much how physically strong a practitioner can become in as much as how they develop the energy in the technique. We practice, trying to develop a strong technique; we get tired, we get winded, or we ache afterwards. We may get strong from practice, and we might be satisfied with this level, but what happens when our strength is gone? What do we do when get tired? From this point where we feel have nothing left we must rely upon the technique and using the energy properly instead of trying to use physical strength.

Energy in Aikido is not an easy concept to grasp. Energy is different than strength. Strength usually is associated with being physically strong while energy is more about one's mental state. When using strength most people can only focus it in a localized part of their bodies, putting their strength and concentration on a small area. However, when we rely on using our energy, it's possible to fill our entire body and posture with a sense of power, allowing our concentration and presence to be everywhere.

For some students, it is easy to rely on strength to throw or pin their partners or in a sense it is easier for them to push or pull using their muscles. Instead of physical strength, when we are using our en-

ergy properly, we are extending our concentration outward in the movement, and focusing our minds properly; in short, practicing correctly. What was originally practice for harmonizing with your opponent's attack degenerates into a simple shoving match.



When practicing the basic techniques, the proper way to use energy is already mapped out in the movements. Within the basics, our stance, posture, balance, proper footwork, and creating a round circular movement all help develop this proper energy. Practicing these basics is designed to train the students how to develop their energy, read it, align themselves with it, and finally blend with it. At the same time, practicing correctly also helps your partner's energy come forth. Thus, when we practice, it's not only to throw or pin our partner, but a way to develop

the energy both in ourselves and within our practice partners.

Egolessly refining and mastering the basics creates the ideal condition with which we can begin to see how to develop our energy and use it properly in the techniques. Aikido practice has no time to waste with the concepts of winning or losing, strong or weak. This is why Aikido has no competitions. When we are concerned with winning and losing, it becomes all we think about. It preoccupies our minds and winning becomes the end all be all goal of training. When learning an art like Aikido, competition only distracts us from our true practice.

Developing our energy is not just a matter of going faster and stronger and throwing our partners down hard with all of our might. There are better ways to hurt people. When using the right energy, a technique can even be effective when practicing slowly and gently. Proper energy doesn't rely on pure physical strength, but the result of many things coming together in the technique and working in harmony.

Having the proper energy means having the proper concentration. Energy means clarity in the movement. Energy means many things are working together within our physical movements. Energy is part of, yet, goes beyond pure physical power. Together this combination of movement, concentration, timing, and spacing is part of this energy. It is the result of many parts coming together, like puzzle pieces, to create a picture. Energy in Aikido is not something that can be meditated upon. Neither can it be something forced through by pushing or pulling. It's not something that can be easily explained, reasoned, or intellectualized, but only experienced and realized through regular training. It is not something that can be realized overnight, but requires years of training to realize. It is not a promotion that is awarded, but a level the student must try to reach using every sense at their disposal.

Do you have enough strength to develop your energy?

I'm Mad But I Don't Know Why!

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

The other day I was reading something about how a student got criticized by his teacher for a mistake he made. The student admitted that he knew it was wrong so he decided not to tell his teacher about it but was surprised that the teacher got angry when he eventually found out.

Making this type of mistakes often works this way. We get scolded but we really never stop to understand why we were scolded in the first place. More often than not, we think, "I am mad, but I don't really know why!"

Many years ago, a student came into the dojo and asked, "Sensei, why is our dojo sign down?" I was very surprised and told him that no one had taken it down.

I went to go look and sure enough it was gone. My neighbors said they took it down to

shoot some pictures and that they would put it up when they were done. I was surprised that they, at least, didn't at least ask permission or say something before they did this. I asked that our sign be put back up immediately. This took a while so I decided to see what was going on and realized that they had actually no intention to put it up again. They had thrown it into the large trash bin and were trying to fish it out again when I came out and then they got mad at me.

No one wants to be criticized; it is always a bad feeling, especially when we are trying to have some fun. In hard work or on a serious project however, sometimes critical judgment is important to make sure the job is done very well. I was once watching a program called "Master Class" about a class of young geniuses learning the cello being taught by a great master. So much yelling that I think most people would be surprised. I was smiling the whole time, thinking, "Those young people are so lucky to have such a great teacher who cares like that."

I remember there was a movie of young kids being trained in the Chinese opera. The training seemed like they were being tortured by their teacher. My friend, a great Kung-fu teacher, told his students, "Go see that movie because that is how it used to be!" Of course, today we do not go to such extremes. But in the old days, training was very, very hard, – the severity is probably at such high levels of intensity today that the training is something that we cannot imagine.

Maybe today, the teacher is not allowed to push a student like before. The student then should push themselves. It is good to be comfortable in class – but it is not good to get too lazy and too self-satisfied either.

O'Sensei, from the teachings of the Omoto Kyo, believed that life is like a work of art. Our lives are like creating a work of art. In art, it is very interesting. To evaluate a good piece of art – we are very negative – we try hard to find what is wrong with it first of all. Once we have analyzed all the negatives – if there are any – then we can easily enjoy all the good points. This is how we evaluate and appraise good art. If we look at only the good points first, we get "blinded" and can no longer see any of the negatives.



The front of the old Aikido Center of Los Angeles.

In practice too, the teacher will only criticize the bad points. How come the teacher doesn't say anything about all of our good points? That is because the teacher already expects us to be good as we are. Secondly, if we only know our good points, we can never progress in our practice. When we take a test in school and we make mistakes and lose points – we focus on the mistakes so we don't make them again. Once we correct all of the mistakes, it is easy to move forward.

So everyone must understand this concept naturally – there is a "negative" side to training. Like the dentist – how come he only sees cavities in my mouth? There is really nothing to get mad about if someone says it is wrong – to know what is wrong and be able to correct it before it is too late or any damage is done is a really truly a great blessing.

No one wants to be told that a tiny screw is loose after you pushed the button and your multi-billion dollar space rocket has already fired off the pad!

In China, there is a famous story of a student who became very sad when his teacher would no longer scold him severely. This man later became a great minister and hero but only after the teacher had pointed out all his bad points.

Editor's Note: Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his *Daily Message* on February 12, 2005.

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
 6:30-7:30 PM Weapons

Fridays

6:30-7:30 AM Fundamentals
 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

Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

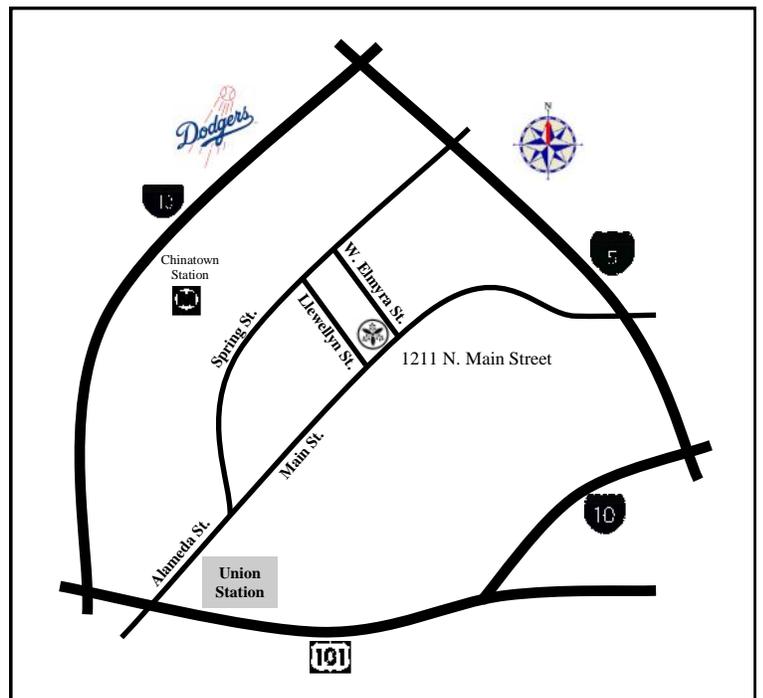
Saturdays

8:00-9:00 AM Open

Sundays

7:45-8:45 AM Open
 6:30-7:30 PM Weapons

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.



The Aiki Dojo

Official publication 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 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.