

Aikido Center of Los Angeles, LLC, 1211 N. Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012, Tel: (323) 225-1424 www.aikidocenterla.com



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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*A scroll from Sensei's collection that reads, "Ichigo Ichie"
- one time, one meeting.*

Upcoming Events

November 25-26th:
Dojo Closed: Thanksgiving

November 27th:
Instructor's Intensive

December 4th:
Dojo Christmas Party

December 11th:
End of Year Clean-up

December 24th-25th:
Dojo Closed: Christmas

December 31st-January 1st:
Dojo Closed: New Year's

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

If you are anything like me, no doubt you have mixed feelings about this month; on the one hand, we have just kicked off the holiday season with Halloween (Our dojo children's party, by the way, boasted lots of food, fun, and great costumes. If you missed it, do try to come next year. It's worth the trouble!) and now have my favorite holiday, Thanksgiving, coming up quickly, with Christmas-time riding its coattails to wind up the year. Which brings me to the other hand: where did all the time go? With each passing year, the old saw "so much to do, so little time" rings ever more truly in my ears.

In the interest of time, I'll cut right to the chase: thank you for all you do, because you – our readers, students, instructors, and friends – help make ACLA the place that it is, a place to challenge and let go of our preconceptions,

a place to push our bodies and open our minds, a place to continue the mission of Aikido as set down by the Founder and by Sensei. You all make a difference.

We have quite a community at ACLA, and in this issue we take a look at the responsibilities that building community entails. Ito Sensei examines the burdens that *sempai* bear to help their *kohai* develop, Magallanes Sensei of our Veracruz branch relates how they weathered a storm (literally) with the help of each other and of friends from afar, and we include two nuggets from Sensei's archives – one on the importance of etiquette to our training, and one on how the bedrock relationship, that of teacher and student, relies on letting go of expectations to experience what happens in the moment. And food guru Maria Murakawa rounds things out with another review of a local eatery you'll want to try out soon.

Have a safe, healthy, and Happy Thanksgiving, and I'll see you on the mat soon!

Hidden Responsibilities

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

The way is never exclusive. It is open to all to follow, but those who set out on the path perforce need the help of those who have passed that way before.

– Soshitsu Sen

This Thanksgiving, please take time out to give thanks for the reluctant hero, your *sempai*. She is the one who gives thought to your welfare and takes care of you, even though you might never have realized it.

The Japanese martial arts traditions typically form a *tate shakai*, or vertical society, which means that they adhere to a *sempai-kohai* hierarchy. This hierarchy is usually dictated by rank or seniority and it is said that, in Japan, no two people are truly ever equal; position, rank, seniority, and/or experience create the division between people's social standing. This separation, interestingly enough, was not created to oppress anyone. Rather, its existence cultivates relationships between a senior (or *sempai*) and a junior (or *kohai*). It is also does not intend to cause one person to think that he is better than another. The hierarchy inherently invests the senior with the responsibility to look after the junior. The senior shows the junior the way: if the junior makes a mistake, it is always the senior who gets scolded first. When the junior needs help or is in trouble, it is the senior who intervenes. It is also the senior's duty to provide for the junior; thus, the junior's only job is to work hard.

In tea ceremony this relationship becomes one of mutual consideration and is thought of as the host-and-guest mentality, which forms the basis of Japanese etiquette. The host resigns himself to provide his guest with the best possible experience. The guest realizes the host's efforts and does her best to make the most of her experience. This is called *ichigo ichie*: one time, one meeting. In realizing each other's efforts to make the most of the situation the two parties become one entity sharing the same experience. The senior derives no reward for his efforts, because with rank comes responsibility. The junior realizes the efforts of the senior and does his best to be a good student. This is also where the Japanese idea of *giri* comes into play, an obligation that one feels for another's efforts. *Traditional Japanese Culture and Modern Japan* has defined *giri* as "the caring for others from whom one has received a debt of gratitude and a determination to realize their happiness, sometimes by self-sacrifice." This is done quietly and subconsciously and goes almost unnoticed to the untrained eye.



Ichigo Ichie

As we scale the ladder of life and march the path toward our true inner selves, we can easily forget the burden others carry on our behalf. A long time ago, I once heard a black belt say after being scolded by Sensei for making a mistake, "That's easy for him to say, all he ever does is sit up there and watch TV." At the time, I agreed with him because when we arrived at the dojo at 5:00 p.m., Sensei would seemingly be just sitting and watching TV in his office. What I didn't see was that Sensei had been up and running since 4:00 a.m., working hard, and he used the TV to keep him company because he was all by himself. Behind closed doors he worked and worked – on the newsletter, arrangements for a seminar, planning for the future – but from our vantage point he was just sitting and watching TV. How insensitive of us not to realize his burden! I have come to understand Sensei much better after having run the dojo now for almost four years: there is so much work to do and there never seems to be enough time in the day to accomplish what Sensei did all by himself, which today requires at least five of us to do.

Someone years ago called Sensei's behind-the-scenes efforts, "secret work." I had no idea what this was and he explained that it meant all the work that Sensei would do to run the dojo that nobody knew about. Years later, I now understand this, but to me the term *secret* seems a misnomer; the word implies that you don't want anyone to know what you are doing. A better word, I think, would be hidden. Being secretive was not Sensei's intention. He was merely being Japanese about his situation in life. In Japan it can be deemed bad manners to broadcast your efforts or to shine the light on yourself. The Japanese value *kenkyo* (modesty), *enryo* (restraint), and *gaman* (perseverance), and it is frowned upon when people *monku* (complain). Sensei wanted the students to have nothing to distract them from their training. To him, practice was the most important thing, and everything else he would take care of for us. We benefited from his sacrifice.

Today many people work hard behind the scenes at ACLA so that others can enjoy Sensei's dream of having a beautiful dojo where people can come and train, seven days a week, year in and year out. Their burden goes relatively unnoticed, but they bear it cheerfully and we owe them more than we can ever repay. So this Thanksgiving, please remember Sensei and all his efforts to make this beautiful dojo, as well as your seniors who burden themselves on your behalf. They think of you, so please think of them. Finally, please accept the best wishes of Myers Sensei, me, and all of us at ACLA for a safe, healthy, and happy Thanksgiving for all of you and your families.

Aikido in My Life

by Roberto Magallanes Molina, M.D.
Chief Instructor, Veracruz Aikikai

I started studying Aikido 16 years ago after practicing Karate for 23 years. When it was time to take my shodan exam I had to write an article about Aikido; I told Sensei that I would have liked to write about Aikido for life, but honestly I didn't realize at that time how much influence Aikido would be in my life.

I had heard that Aikido was not only a martial art but a life art as well. Now, eight years after earning my black belt, I use Aikido practice during my classes and lectures to compare Aikido to life. We learn step by step with joy and suffering and patience and pain. We go down and stand up again and go back to take the next ukemi.

When my father died in the operating room at the hospital I was just 21 years old. I did not even think what it meant to me that he was gone; I had to keep on with my studies and life until I could graduate in Medicine. Later on I got married, had children, etc. I did not know there was something called Aikido. When our beloved teacher Sensei died it was the same thing: What comes next? Sensei's senior students made a commitment to keep on going with the dojo and continue with Sensei's dreams and goals and they have done a great job with pain, suffering, obstacles, but with joy as well, to keep ACLA going.



This past September, the State of Veracruz, and some other states in Mexico, suffered terrible flooding at the hands of hurricane Karl and tropical storm Matthew that devastated many families. Houses were lost because of the four- to eight-foot flood waters, and everything in them: furniture, books, photos, family histories, plus entertainment, toys, and tools – a terrible tragedy, although fortunately no life was lost. Six of our students were affected badly; one of them had to sit on the roof of his house for two days before getting retrieved by a rescue helicopter. I was affected too. I lost my entire library, all my medical instruments, and so forth, but remembering how the ACLA was rebuilt, I took your story as

an example of endurance, stood up from this painful ukemi, and did my best to give hope and support to my family and my Aikido students. Our dojo, thankfully, was safe since it is located above the flood plain elsewhere in the city.

Now is the time to start afresh and leave behind this tragedy, and, with *shinobu* and the solidarity that our Aikido family gave us, keep on going with our lives and our Aikido practice as well. In Buddhism, and Aikido as well, if you fall seven times you get up

eight, and so it is in life: we fall down, and stand up again. So Aikido and ACLA have been my inspiration and an example in my life.

Many thanks to Ito Sensei, Myers Sensei, and all the students at ACLA, as well as Izawa Sensei and the people who with his friendship and support helped us to make this experience less painful for everyone.

Save the date!
Dojo Christmas Party

Saturday, December 4th, 2010



**Please sign up on
the bulletin
board.**



Dojo Etiquette
Reigi Saho



Etiquette Means Preparedness

Etiquette is mindfulness – to watch constantly how you act and what you say and think in any and all situations, on and off the mats, is an important part of your martial arts training. To be caught off guard or in a weak moment or in a situation where you are acting improperly because you are not thinking, is the moment where you have “lost” yourself.

Editor's Note: Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his daily message board on October 19, 2006.



Our Neighbors, Our Food
by Maria Murakawa, Aikido 2nd Dan

Hashi: An Ancient Utensil, a Brand-New Place

Hashi means chopsticks in Japanese, and is also the name of a new ramen house in Little Tokyo. Located in the Honda Plaza, this particular site has changed hands four times in the four years I've lived across the street. The owners have cleaned up the interior, and even the strange glass-covered patio from the 80s looks more modern with new blinds, a Japanese-style noren, and blondewood furniture. The menu is Japanese-inspired, and the ramen is good:

it's definitely a place to hit up if nearby Daikokuya or Orochon are packed, which tends to be the norm these days.

Will it take the place of these restaurants? In terms of ramen the answer is no; go for the comfortable setting, the nice flat-screen TV to watch the game, and a plate of their Don-Katsu. I was so excited to see this on the menu, having



experienced Korean-style *katsu* a while back. It's basically the same as the Japanese style – a pounded piece of meat (in this case pork) breaded in *panko* (Japanese-style bread crumbs) and deep fried. I could instantly tell they were serious about their *katsu* since it came served on a mini wire rack, just so the underbelly of this big nugget doesn't get mushy. Served with shredded lettuce (what's called *okuchinaoshi*, which literally translates to "fixing the mouth", a sort of palate cleanser) and their housemade *tonkatsu* sauce, this dish truly satisfies. If you're a seafood lover, try the seafood fried rice. Seriously, it's good: the rice is soft and

fluffy, not heavy or greasy, and every bite will delight you with myriad bits of seafood dancing in your mouth – a harmony of fish, squid, and the occasional smoked mussel. Truly, it

stands as one of their best dishes.

Hashi
442 E 2nd St
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(In Honda Plaza)
(213) 617-0237

If you insist on trying their ramen, hurry on over for their grand opening special: a variety of ramen for \$5.99! You can choose from generous bowls of kim-chee ramen, yaki-ramen, miso ramen, and more. Hashi may be just what the neighborhood needed: it offers a clean, well-lit place, good food, and reasonable prices.

The Aiki Dojo



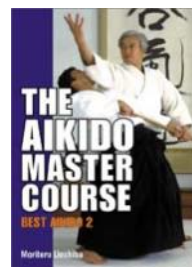
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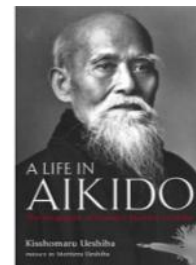
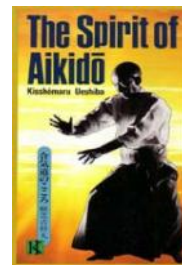
We are a not-for-profit, traditional Aikido Dojo dedicated to preserving the honored values and traditions of the arts of Aikido and Iaido. With your continued understanding and support, we hope that you also will dedicate yourself to your training and to enjoying all the benefits that Aikido and Iaido can offer.

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

Recommended Readings:



by Ueshiba Moriteru



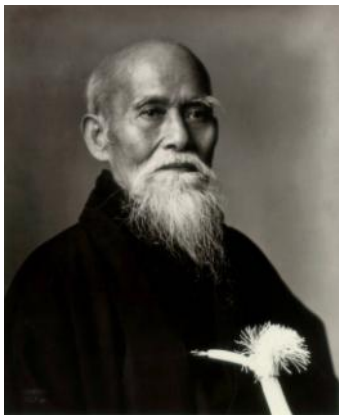
by Ueshiba Kisshomaru



Japanese American National Museum Demonstration



Photos by Larry Armstrong



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 Aiki-kai 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: Masuda Shihan
- 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: Yamada Shihan
- 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

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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

Great Expectations

by Reverend Kensho Furiya

Have you ever noticed that most things turn out not to be as we expect? We may talk to someone on the telephone or hear someone's voice on the radio and think we may know what they look like after a while when we get to know them, but when we finally meet them, face to face, they are usually quite different or appear different from what we imagined. Sometimes, you may go to a restaurant and order a dish and despite the description on the menu, it is slightly different from what you expected or imagined. I think this happens quite often in our lives, almost every day. I think, more often than not, our expectations are wrong. It is not very wise to rely on our preconceived notions, yet, most of what we do and think are based on exactly these same expectations and imaginings.

This same misapprehension happens often in our training. When a new student joins a dojo, he is many times disappointed if the training is not as he expected or does not meet his preconceived notions of what training should be like. Sometimes, during class, a student sees the instruction, but is usually more focused on her preconceived or prior understanding of the technique than what the teacher may be teaching at that moment. Who knows? It could be something completely different from the previous lesson. Teachers also suffer from the same notions. A student may join the dojo and

appear like someone who will really catch on fast, but, in reality, it is not so. Some students come into training and appear like they will have a hard time learning the techniques but actually catch on very quickly contrary to the teacher's expectations. The teacher must approach each student with a clear, unblemished attitude without expectations or judgments.

I think, most of the time, our preconceived notions or expectations are wrong because they are generally centered on what we want, and not what the situation really is. It

"Don't forget to show your gratitude to people important in your life."

is better not to rely on such ideas and pursue everything with a clear mind. Even if we think we know something backwards and forwards, it is still better to approach it with a clear mind, free of preconceptions or notions. This approach feels very hard to do because we always want everything our own way. Wanting everything our own way all of the time is, of course, a mistake from the very beginning.

I received a very beautiful letter the other day from someone I don't even know. Reading the daily messages, the person asked for some advice about training and I responded as I usually do. This was about a year ago. This letter said that they were very upset with my answer but tried to take my advice anyway and, as difficult as it

was, eventually understood what I was trying to say and everything turned out very well. Of course, I don't have all of the answers but I am glad that I could help out. I took this person to the very edge of the problem so that they would have to see the problem very clearly for what it was. Sometimes, we cannot see everything clearly until we go to the very edge of the cliff and the beautiful landscape appears. I often try to take my students to the very edge. Not easy! Much of the time, students misunderstand and become upset with me but this is the risk I take as a teacher. Some will try, some will not. It is not a matter of "my orders," or "teacher's demands," it is really a matter of one's faith in one's self. The teacher can only shine a tiny little light at the end of the tunnel, the one who must go through the long dark tunnel is you yourself.

By the way, I want to thank some of my students for all their work and efforts in keeping the dojo moving smoothly along. We forget to be grateful sometimes, so I want to make sure everyone knows my feelings once in a while. Don't forget to show your gratitude to people important in your life. Taking things for granted is another expectation or preconceived notion, like we just discussed.

Editor's Note: Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his daily message board on May 10, 2002.



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

Visit us on the Web at 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 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.*

* 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

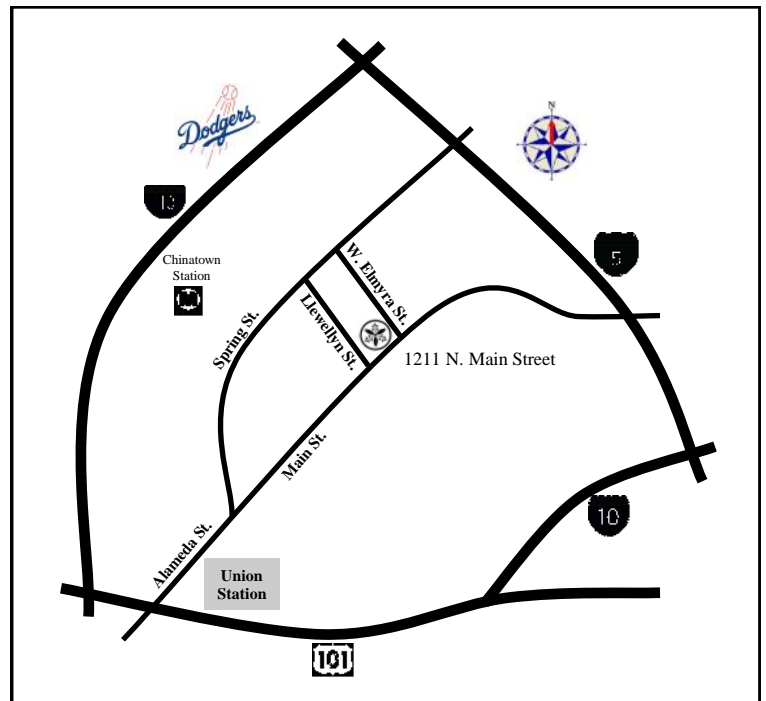
Sundays

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 So-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.



Finding Our Dojo

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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.