

# 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

November 2013

Volume XXXII Number 11

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Autumn in Kyoto, off the beaten path: Kōmyō-in temple

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

I love the Fall season: the colors, the change in the air, the harvest foods it brings, as well as the building excitement of another holiday season, all combine to put a spring in my step and a smile on my face. Also, every year at this time I get to go to Hawaii and reconnect with good friends and train, which makes for a wonderful time – especially when in sight of the sunshine, the sea, and the beach. Seeing friends once a year helps me appreciate the friends at home whom I see regularly, and while these two groups seem very different, I value them very much the same.

In this month's issue of *The Aiki Dojo* we consider relationships in the martial arts tradition and the impact our actions, small though they may seem at the time, can have for good or ill on our relationships with our fellow students, teachers, and the like. Ito Sensei recounts a story wherein Sensei's orders ended up revealing a hidden benefit many years later. Maria Murakawa continues to share her deep relationship with food, this time considering the iconic hamburger (re-imagined). And Sensei himself decided to appear not once but twice this month. In "The Way of the World", Sensei shares some thoughts surrounding teaching and training

and the interconnectedness we all share. In "(Un)Real", he examines the philosophical straw man we call "reality" and calls upon us to identify the values by which we will conduct ourselves on and off the mat. It's a great issue, if I say so myself, and I hope you find its content helpful.

For our students, please keep in mind the many special events that will take place over the next several weeks. Lend a hand if you can – many hands make light work – and add a new dimension to your training. Speaking of training, let's keep our etiquette at the very highest levels; we've had an increased influx of visitors to the dojo, and we want to make sure we keep making a good first impression. Thanks for all you do in this regard.

Take care until next time. Happy Thanksgiving, and I hope to see you on the mat!

### Upcoming Events

**November 28-29th**  
Dojo Closed for Thanksgiving

**November 30th**  
Instructor's intensive

**December 7th**  
Dojo Christmas Party

**December 21st**  
*Osoji*: year-end cleanup

**December 22nd**  
Children's class Christmas party

**December 24-27th**  
Dojo closed for Christmas

**December 28th**  
Last intensive of the year  
Last practice day of the year

**December 29-January 3rd**  
Dojo closed for New Year's

**January 4th**  
Dojo re-opens  
*Kagami biraki* party





### A Big Favor

by David Ito, Chief Instructor

Every summer for as long as I can remember, our dojo has demonstrated Aikido at the various local Japanese festivals and community events. For several years there were weekends that we did up to three demonstrations a day for the entire summer. Our dojo began to get a good reputation as a professional group that demonstrated a high level of Aikido, and so we received a lot of invitations. Many of the demonstrations were coordinated by Sensei and he would invite many of the local high-ranking and famous instructors from other martial arts to demonstrate.

One year in particular a friend of Sensei's who is a famous Karate teacher from film and television demonstrated at the same festival just before our demonstration. Afterwards, he came by to talk with Sensei and we struck up a conversation. He said to me, "You are really good, have you ever considered doing work in movies?" Flattered, I replied, "No," and he gave me his business card and asked me to join his group. I felt so excited and had a big smile on my face. Just then Sensei walked up and asked me what we were talking about. I said with a tremendous amount of excitement, "He asked me to join his group and do work in the movies." Sensei looked at me stoically and said, "No, you are not allowed," and walked away. I felt crestfallen and I just stood there with, I am sure, a deflated look on my face. Crushed, I threw the card in the trash and followed after him.


I resented Sensei for his harshness that day for over a decade, until I met someone at a family party who works in that very same stunt group. This guy came by the dojo a number of times and was someone who is always on television and in different movies so I recognized him immediately. I introduced myself and struck up a conversation. During the conversation I noticed that he was wearing these long white gloves, the kind a lady might wear to a formal occasion with an evening gown. I asked him what happened and he said that on a commercial shoot there was an accidental explosion and he got third degree burns on his arms when he blocked his face from the fire.

Shocked, I asked him, "Do you get hurt a lot?" He said, "It would probably be a safe estimate that I have broken every bone in my body." I told him the story about Sensei prohibiting me from joining their group and he said, "He did you a favor." I protested, "But you're on TV all the time and I just saw that blockbuster movie you were in!" He said, "Yes, and I haven't worked in 18 months since getting burned. And some nights I can't even sleep because my neck is so messed up from working on that movie you saw." It was then I realized that Sensei had, in fact, done me a huge favor.

We refer to Aikido training as *okeiko* in Japanese. The word *okeiko* means "to reflect on the past" and is made up of two kanji characters: 稽 *kei* (to reflect) and 古 *ko* (past). Having a child of my own causes me to reflect a lot on my past and upbringing. It has been incredibly hard for me to realize that my parents and teachers made choices, albeit frustrating ones, which were in my best interest. Students, just like children, because of youth or inexperience sometimes remain unaware of the consequences of their actions and therefore make mistakes and seem unappreciative. That is why it is said, "Youth is wasted on the young." Sensei was only looking out for my well-being, and for the longest time I begrudged him for it.

With time and growth the reality of past incidents come to light and in this case they feel truly humbling. In the game of *Go* they say that one move can influence a move 100 turns later, but only a wise and experienced player can appreciate this; an inexperienced practitioner cannot see it, and that is why youth is wasted on the young. Now I appreciate the huge favor that Sensei did for me all those years ago and I regret that he had to bear my resentment for such a long time. As the leaves are changing this Thanksgiving it is always nice to reflect on the past and give thanks for those who sacrificed so much so that we could become the people who we are today. Thank you so much Sensei!

If any of you are counting, this brings the tally to two for the number of times that Sensei has saved my life thus far. . . .



Let's Celebrate the  
New Year at the Gardena Elks Club

# Dancing for the Dojo 2

A Benefit for the  
Aikido Center of Los Angeles  
The Furuya Foundation  
www.aikidocenterla.com

**Saturday**  
**January 25th, 2014**

Doors Open: 7:30pm  
Dance: 8:30pm - 12midnite

Music Performed By  
**Kokoro**  
Music with Soul

Information: **Dale Okuno** / daleokuno@gmail.com / 626.585.3500 x7220  
**Carol Tanita** / cntanita@mail.com / 626.281.8894  
Elks Club: 1735 W. 162nd St., Gardena

Limited Reserved  
Table of 10: \$350.00  
Individual Tickets: \$30.00

After January 1, 2014  
Table of 10: \$400.00  
Individual Ticket: \$35.00

*Complimentary Light  
Appetizers will be served*

The Furuya Foundation is a 501(c)3, Non-Profit Corp.  
Public Benefit EIN# 20-0026129

**PRE-SALE ONLY  
NO TICKETS SOLD  
AT THE DOOR**

## IMPORTANT DATES

**December 7th**  
Dojo Christmas Party

**December 8th**  
Ceramic sale

**December 24-27th**  
Dojo closed for Christmas

**December 21st**  
*Osoji*: year-end cleanup

**December 22nd**  
Children's class Christmas party

**December 28th**  
Last intensive of the year  
Last practice day of the year

**December 29th**  
Children's class cancelled

**December 29-January 3rd**  
Dojo closed for New Year's

**January 4th**  
Dojo re-opens  
*Kagami biraki* party

**January 25th**  
Dojo benefit dance

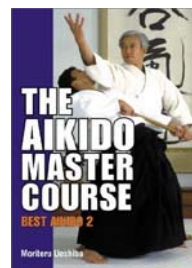


### Questions/Comments?

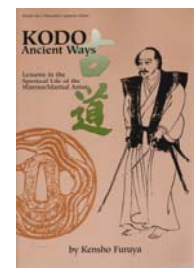
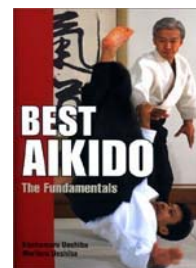
We welcome all questions and comments. Please send us a letter or an e-mail and our team will do our best to come up with an answer. We reserve the right to edit questions and letters for clarity and length.

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

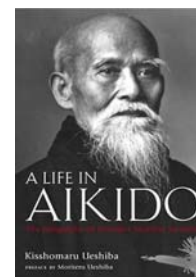
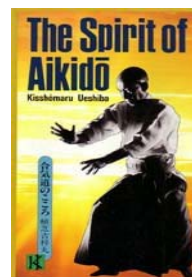
### Recommended Readings:



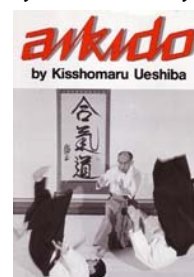
by Ueshiba Moriteru



by Kensho Furuya



by Ueshiba Kisshomaru



**(Un)Real**

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

Martial arts today, as it moves away from the traditional disciplines, focuses on what is popularly known as the “real” or “reality”. We aspire to the perfect martial arts system: totally “real” and totally efficient. As I heard recently, “We don’t want to waste our time with so many useless aspects of the traditional martial arts. . . .” So we have created “eclectic” martial arts which make use of everything. It is okay even to bite, pinch, do anything we want to beat the other person and win. We can even use a pencil, if necessary, to poke out our opponent’s eyes. Surprisingly and rather shocking to me, I heard one “reality” instructor recommend biting off the opponent’s testicles to win. In real martial arts, anything goes – and we love this efficiency . . . wrestle him to the ground, break his arm, kick him in the nuts. Nowadays, we are so obsessed with this. HmMMM – we even call this “freedom”, as in, “freedom of action”. How perfect!

I often wonder what people mean when they say “real.” What is this reality? We aspire to be so efficient in this new brand of “anything goes” martial arts. When we say reality – I think we mean that it is like our lives which we think of as so real! I wonder about this a lot, but I don’t think many people have thought about this quite enough. . . .

How real are our lives? When I observe most people around me, and I include myself, I can hardly call the way we live our lives so perfect and efficient. Every day, we make bad choices; every minute, we do not go by reason or logic but get led about by our emotions and desires. Actually, if we examine ourselves closely, I think most of us see that we are quite wasteful, inefficient, and we can hardly enjoy “anything goes” in real life.

If this “anything goes” concept of reality applied in real life, most likely, we would be robbing banks to become rich quickly and killing our neighbors to settle our disputes and arguments. But we can’t do this – the way we live (in real life) says “No!”

If we think about this new brand of “reality” martial arts, it is hardly “real” at all – only a fantasy of what we imagine “real” or “reality” to be. This must be the ultimate hypocrisy and the most profound paradox!

A few years back, I happened to watch a documentary which I stumbled onto while watching television. A somewhat elderly lady in a nice dress and hairdo with earrings and a necklace was sitting very comfortably in her nice, upper middle-class living room and rather matter of factly describing things of the greatest horror. Later, I discovered that this was an Academy Award winning documentary entitled *The Holocaust* and she was describing her life as a teenaged Polish girl who was swept away with her

family into the concentration camps. She lost her mother and father and brother, and most of her friends she saw die right in front of her eyes. She was describing four years of utter horror until the end of war when she was rescued. I mention this now because she said something which I found very profound.

She said she believed that *only those with a strong sense of imagination* could survive the concentration camps, while “Those who lived in the ‘reality’ of the situation all died, unable to survive such conditions which destroyed them mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.” She said that most of the time, she would imagine herself back at home with her parents, and going to school each day, and playing with her friends. She stated that this was the only thing that kept her alive.

I think this applies to our lives as well in the here and now. We really do not live by “reality” although we live IN reality. Much of “how” we live is based on the “unreal”.

We set up rules and ideals for ourselves by which we decide to live. No one can prove them (in “reality”, ha!), but it is the way we have decided to live. We do this for ourselves, even society does this so that we can live together and survive in reality.



We hurt or kill someone and the police come and take us away because it is against our accepted and agreed-upon laws. We must drive on the street in a certain way. We must work in our company by certain regulations and expectations. Even in our own family, we set up ideals, goals, rules and behaviors. All of this behavior expresses our aspiration to live in the “ideal” – this is not reality, but a world which we make up and aspire to. There’s nothing real about it, but it is how most of us live and this does

become the “reality”, as “unreal” as it is!

Whether society, or a policeman, or a school teacher, or our dad says so or not, we do not hurt others, we do not kill, we do not rob, and we do not lie, and on and on. It is not because this is the “most efficient” thing to do – it is because we choose to live this way – it is based on self-respect and knowledge or awareness of a higher power. Some call this God, some call this Allah or Buddha or whatever . . . for some, it is Nature. . . .

It is not a matter of whether we can prove it empirically or not, it is not a matter of whether this is “real” or not, these are ideals by which we live, aspire to and hope that others will also follow the same or similar ideals about life. In most cases, we must all agree on these made-up rules and enforce them or they don’t work – they don’t work without this “agreement” because they do not exist in the real world – they are the made-up ideals in which we can survive in this real world. . . .

*Continued on page 7...*



**Our Neighbors, Our Food**  
 by Maria Murakawa, Aikido 3rd Dan

Michelin chefs the world over have sung the praises of *umami*, the fifth taste, yet just as in life (and the practice of Aikido), you won't know what this taste really, truly is until you've experienced it for yourself. Which begs the question, is **Umami Burger** merely being trendy, riding the wave of the popularity of Japanese food in LA, or does it really capture the subtle flavor of *umami*, most prevalent in the basic stock of Japanese cuisine, made of dried shaved fish (*bonito*) and seaweed (*kombu*)?

Excited that Umami Burger, which started as a small but busy restaurant on La Brea Boulevard in Hollywood, had quietly made its way to my neighborhood in the Arts District, I set out to experience their version of *umami*.

The branch's namesake, the Arts District Manly Burger, unique to this location, is reason enough to pay a visit. If you crave a porky overload, this burger is for you: the beef *lardon* (French style "bacon bits") patty arrives sandwiched between buns toasted in bacon fat. Crispy braised pork belly, baconnaise, and beer cheddar cheese vie for space between the pillowy sweet bread, and later in your stomach. The burgers here, though, are not massive in size; they come compact, composed, and balanced in the clean fatty flavor of the meat (ground fresh every day), the savory cheese and sauce, and the sweetness of the house made ketchup and soft bun. To experience the quality of the meat, try The Original. The flavor of the meat shines through, and the parmesan crisp, shiitake mushroom (another example of *umami* flavor), roasted tomato (considered an *umami* flavor in Western cuisine), and house ketchup make for a tasty burger experience.

Truffle season has arrived: to enhance your *umami* experience, get the Truffle Shiitake Speciale Burger. Port onions balance out the pungent truffle cream, and tasting its infused truffle and shiitake

aroma, coupled with Irish Truffle Fries, will definitely get you your once-a-year truffle fix. These shoestring fries come doused in "truffle fondue", basically a cheesy aromatic cream with truffles, shiitake, shredded *lardon*, and chives. Another great side is the Smushed Potatoes, wherein double-fried creamer potatoes come with a cracked crispy crust of skin. Crack them open and prepare for a potato which seems to be injected with butter it's so soft and moist. Paired with a roasted garlic aioli, it really seems a great stand-in for fries, and just as addicting.



Truffle speciale burger



The middle of the original



Manly burger



Slash burger



The original



Smushed potatoes



Arts District Manly Burger



Irish truffle fries



Chocolate ice cream sandwich



The umami bun



PB+J donut

Other burgers are the Manly Burger, with beer cheddar cheese, bacon *lardon*, and smoked onion rings – a crunchy, cheesy concoction. The Slash Burger, named after the Guns'n Roses lead guitarist, came to the table resplendent in an ensemble of braised shiitakes, caramelized onions, house American cheese, avocado spread, and wasabi, with the ketchup spread on top of the bun garnished with a parmesan crisp. Though it looked amazing, I found it a bit too unwieldy because of all the ingredients.

For dessert they offer ice cream sandwiches, to go with the burger/sandwich theme. The PB+J Donut ice cream sandwich sounded intriguing but became less so as the donut is frozen solid with the ice cream. But who can resist peanut butter and jelly, especially with ice cream? Even better is the chocolate chip cookie with salted chocolate ice cream. These both presented simple flavors, yet a satisfying treat. *Umami* is a subtle, savory flavor which enhances other flavors, to make food taste delicious. Umami Burger, though not subtle, successfully employs the balance of all flavors to give a fulfilling burger experience.



**Umami Burger**  
 738 E. 3rd St.  
 Los Angeles, CA 90013  
 t. 323.263.8626  
<http://www.umami.com>



### The Way of the World

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

To live for one's self is most probably the most practical, realistic way to live.

To live for others is most definitely the most beautiful way to live.

To live with a caring heart for others will influence us every second of every day of our lives.

To live to throw others down or defeat them will probably affect us only for a few seconds only once in our entire lifetime.

It is useless to be strong and skillful without a caring heart for others.

To lose or win is only chance and the way of the world. It is typical to desire to win; it is realistic to know that we will lose. It is wiser

not to waste our time with such trivial matters when we can use our life and energies for much more worthy efforts.

After teaching my students for so many years, I have realized that there is much more to teaching than making someone strong and skilled. It all has to do with heart and life and righteousness. If our lives are not directed towards finding a peaceful way to live, we can never understand O Sensei's teachings or what is the spirit and true meaning of Aikido. However, we can never separate ourselves from the correct practice of Aikido itself. Whether we are walking, riding a fancy car, crawling on our hands and knees, or being pushed or carried along on the shoulders of others, the road must still be correct. . . . In this way, we can never separate ourselves from correct training or a correct understanding of Aikido.

When we think we can do anything we want in this world, we are only being silly. Think of your mother, your father, your sisters and brothers, your colleagues, your practice partners, your friends and loved ones, your neighbors. What we have to do in this world lies very clearly in front of us; all we can choose for ourselves is the Path we take; luckily, we have chosen Aikido. I think it is a kind of karma that we are blessed like this to enter O Sensei's world. Please don't miss this opportunity and apply yourself well to your practice and support the dojo.

**Editor's Note:** Sensei originally published this essay, in slightly different form, to his daily message board on September 25, 2004.



此の道や行く人なしに秋の暮 芭蕉  
Kono michi ya yuku hito nashi ni aki no kure

This road!  
with no one going -  
autumn evening.

—Bashō



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

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Publisher: David Ito  
Editor-in-Chief: Mark Ehrlich

(Un)Real *continued from page 4...*

Much of traditional martial arts is “not” real. There are many rules and ideals which we try to aspire to and realize in our own lives. We hope that these rules and ideals will enhance and give meaning to the “reality” of our lives, since without them things do not make much sense at all.

In Aikido, perhaps it seems more efficient to bite the leg or ear to win, but we do not do it. It is not “nice”; it is not humane; simply, it is not the way we want to live. We do not want to sacrifice our humanity, and we do not want to live at an increasingly base level of existence. In many things, it is not a matter of how efficient, it is a matter of how we want to live our lives and what we consider decent in life and what we consider evil or bad, or what will demean us.

In martial arts technique, we can punch our opponents hard and try to injure the kidneys or cause a concussion, we can break an arm or hurt their spine or cause permanent injury – so why do we not do it? Simply, although some may call this “real”, it is not the way we want to live and it is something that we do not want to think we can do easily. I, at least, am hopeful my life is here for better things to do and for which to strive.

Many years ago, I was attending a seminar at the Los Angeles Police Academy and there were many top instructors there. I was called to teach Aikido and I only taught them Hombu Aikido. One of the instructors grabbed this young female recruit and challenged her, “Try to get out of this!” She struggled and struggled but could not escape. The instructor advised her, “First grab my crotch and then bite my nose and I will quickly release you, this is the only way to escape. This is real technique!” “No, No!” she protested, and the instructor gave up and reprimanded her, “How do you ever expect to learn martial arts?” and walked away disgusted. She turned to me and said, “I would rather die than grab his crotch or even touch his ugly nose!” I laughed and comforted her, “Yes, yes, I think you are very clever and you are right! As ‘real’ as such a technique may seem, there are better ways to manage such a situation!”

Maybe some people will criticize this, saying that this and that is too tame or not efficient – for me, Aikido is the supreme martial art because it takes me to a higher plane of life and shows me great beauty and harmony in the world. It allows me to maintain my humanity, to take my humanity to a higher and higher level. I really don’t care how hard or fast someone can hit, it makes no difference in Aikido. How can one overcome the laws of harmony – however real or unreal someone may judge Aikido technique to be?

Oddly, I find what most people consider “real” is simply not “real” at all. What is “unreal” is certainly, many times, what guides us in this world of reality. . . . Please think about this.

**Editor’s Note:** Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his daily message board on June 7, 2004.

*ACLA*  
*Sends its*  
*congratulations and best wishes*  
*to*  
*Ueshiba Moriteru Doshu*  
*on his receiving the*  
*Medal With Blue Ribbon*  
*From the Japanese Government*  
*November 2013*

**LET’S STUDY JAPANESE!**



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

# 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**

6:30-7:30 PM Advanced\*

**Wednesdays**

6:30-7:30 AM Open  
5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals  
6:30-7:30 PM Intermediate  
7:45-8:45 PM Weapons\*

**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**

8:00-9:00 AM

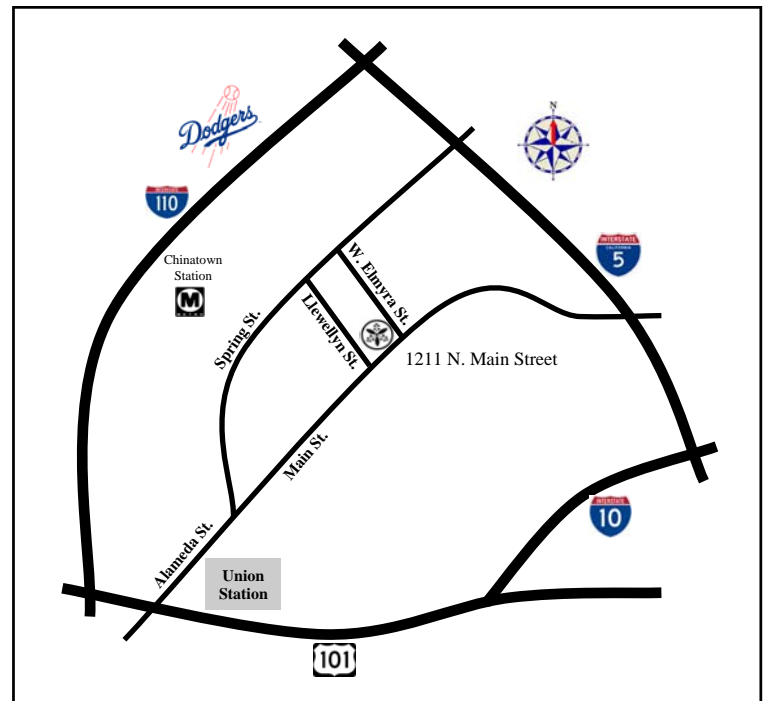
**Sundays**

7:45-8:45 AM

**Thursdays**

6:30-7:30 PM

*No weekend classes on the last weekend of the month.*



*We are directly affiliated with:*

**AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS**

公益財団法人 合気会

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.*

**Official Branch Dojo:**



**Aikido Kodokai**

Salamanca, Spain

Chief Instructor: Santiago Garcia Almaraz

www.kodokai.com

*The Aikido Center of Los Angeles does not recognize or is affiliated with any other dojo, school, or entity.*



**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.*