



# 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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**Hideo Yonemochi Shihan**  
June 16, 1930 - September 10, 2012

### Upcoming Events

**October 28th:**  
Children's Halloween Party

**November 22nd-23rd:**  
Dojo Closed: Thanksgiving

**November 24th:**  
Instructor's intensive

**December 1st:**  
Dojo Christmas Party

**December 15th:**  
Dojo clean up

**December 24th-26th:**  
Dojo Closed: Christmas

**December 29th:**  
Instructor's intensive

**December 30th:**  
Last practice of the year

**December 31st - January 1st:**  
Dojo closed: New Year

塚も動け  
我が泣聲は  
秋の風

*tsuka mo ugoke*  
*waga naku koe wa*  
*aki no kaze*

**Shake even the grave!**  
**My wailing is**  
**the autumn wind!**

—Basho

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

The above *haiku*, written by the great master Basho upon learning that his good friend and fellow poet Issho had died, captures the feeling that ran through our dojo last month when we learned that Hideo Yonemochi Shihan, Aikido 8th Dan, had passed away. We offer our deepest condolences to Yonemochi Sensei's family, friends, and students.

This month's issue stands as a humble monument to his memory, from grateful students and friends. Please listen to the autumn wind.

To understand why, you need just a few facts: Yonemochi Sensei first met our teacher in the

1960s, and the two men struck up a deep friendship which lasted nearly 40 years until Sensei's sudden death in 2007. At that difficult time, Yonemochi Sensei helped our dojo to survive, and his efforts allowed ACLA to continue on and to thrive.

We can never repay him for his kindness, but we will always remember his gentleness, discipline, and generous spirit, and we will cherish the memory of his friendship always. I hope you will take this opportunity to reflect with us on the memory of a man who did his best and lived his life by the highest principles.

I only met him once, but I knew that he inspired me; he still does. Thank you for everything, Yonemochi Sensei. May your spirit find peace.

## What Friendship Means

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

On September 10, 2012, Hideo Yonemochi Sensei passed away. Yonemochi Sensei and my teacher had been friends since 1969, when they both worked in the banking industry here in Los Angeles. They shared a special friendship which spanned from Los Angeles to Tokyo for over 36 years.

I always admired the warmth and depth of their friendship; their kinship seemed something one might find between younger and older brothers. Several times a week, they would spend hours talking on the phone; they spent twice as much time talking whenever Yonemochi Sensei came to Los Angeles. They always talked in depth about martial arts, and Yonemochi Sensei often teased Sensei until they both burst out laughing like schoolboys on a playground. The way they treated each other, anyone could see that they really cared for one another. Each time when they parted, Yonemochi Sensei would chide Sensei about his weight, and Sensei in turn would rebuke Yonemochi Sensei about smoking and both would resolve to be better when they met again. Even the way they reprimanded each other happened in such a caring way that it seemed to express a sincere concern about the other person rather than a scolding.

When it came to Aikido, both men staunchly advocated basic techniques and loyalty to Hombu Dojo. Yonemochi Sensei even wrote out a curriculum of techniques that he considered appropriate Hombu basic techniques to make clear to the younger instructors at our dojo what he considered the "basics." I remember sitting in awe and watching Yonemochi Sensei as he would easily throw black belts 40 years younger to the ground and would then laugh when they, in turn, couldn't even move him.



*Yonemochi Sensei throwing Santiago*



A little over five years ago I asked Sensei, "What should we do if something happens to you?" He responded, "Don't worry. Yonemochi Sensei will take care of the dojo." A few months later Sensei passed away and our dojo fell into a tailspin of confusion and emotions and we felt totally lost. Yonemochi Sensei came out the next month and, sure enough, Sensei was right: Yonemochi Sensei literally saved our dojo from extinction. He set up the structure of the dojo and the hierarchy and taught us how to run a dojo. What an incredible and humbling experience, I felt, that someone would help us for no other reason than friendship and a desire to help the students for whom his departed friend cared so much. The distinguished scholar Samuel Johnson wrote that, "The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good." This statement describes Yonemochi Sensei perfectly. Our dojo survives today because he cared about his friendship with Sensei and not about any personal gain.

Today in this digital world of social media and virtual networking, I wonder out loud if we have lost what it means to befriend someone truly. When Sensei passed away so many of his so-called friends jumped ship, possibly looking for another, more advantageous relationship. Some of the ones who didn't immediately leave asked, "What's in it for me?" But there was only one who said, "What can I do to help?" and that friend was Hideo Yonemochi Sensei. We only need to look at Yonemochi Sensei as the best example of what friendship really means: someone who selflessly acts for the well-being of another through thick and thin. I feel humbled by this great man's sacrifice for a friend and his selfless act for a group of people who could do him absolutely no good. May he rest in peace. For my part, he will forever remain in my heart and in my prayers.



*Yonemochi Sensei and David Ito enjoy a cup of coffee at a café around the corner from Hombu Dojo in 1997.*

## Celebrating Old Friends

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

In Chinese, there is a saying, "Every day, new."

Sometimes, I think my older students who see me every day may get tired of seeing my face all of the time and probably get bored with me because I am always saying, "Do this, do that!" I think it is true that familiarity breeds contempt, and we take for granted what we think will always remain available to us. Sometimes, they see me so often, I think that some of my students don't even hear what I am saying and I have become invisible to them.

In recent days, many students have come from afar for our dojo's 30th anniversary celebration and for me, it is also refreshing to see so many faces that I haven't seen for such a long time. At the same time, I see in their eyes that they feel happy to see me and this, to me, has become such a great pleasure – perhaps, I can even say, my greatest pleasure. To have students and friends of 30 or 40 years: there is no greater, and rarer, treasure in life.

Yesterday, Yonemochi Sensei arrived from Aikikai Hombu Dojo. I have not seen him for the last five years, but he is a teacher that I have known since the late Sixties, so it is a friendship or connection which has lasted over 35 years . . . such a great pleasure to see him again. Now, he is 74 years old and one of the most senior ranking members of Aikikai Hombu Dojo and one of Hombu's most senior officers – yet he still has taken his time from his busy schedule to fly across the sea to see me and visit with us. How happy I feel!

I have known Yonemochi Sensei since 1969 and my respect and appreciation for him only continues to grow and grow. He is not the type of person who has tried to promote himself or has tried to make himself successful and famous. Like a true student of the Way, he has committed his life to serving the Ueshiba family and the Aikikai Foundation as O Sensei's final wish. A life in service of others, especially for a cause such as Aikido, is, by far, greater than a life which only focuses on our own egos and personal agendas. Why has he come so far in the Aikido world? Because he is a totally trustworthy and reliable person. I hope all of my students will learn from this great teacher; he can give us all a lesson which only so very few in this world can possibly teach. Many people cannot see or understand this, I know, but only because their vision of the greater aspects of life and of this world has become much too small and self-centered.

Yesterday, the two of us spoke about another old friend of mine at Hombu Dojo, Ikeda Teru, who is 90 years old and still works a full day in the office at Hombu Dojo, six days a week. She commutes from her home to Hombu Dojo each day. It takes two hours by train, so each day she spends four hours on the train. What is also amazing is that she never sits while on the train; she stands two hours both ways – four hours on her feet. When asked why, she replied, "I don't need to sit, let the younger people sit!" In contrast, when I talk with people here nowadays, all I hear is "Me, me, me!" We have become so obsessed with ourselves that we put ourselves first above everything else. How boring I feel this is; I don't even know what to say to such people sometimes. We only think of how to promote ourselves. . . .

*Continued on page 6...*



*Sensei, Kansuma Sensei, and Yonemochi Sensei at our dojo's 30th anniversary celebration in 2004*



*Sensei, Fumio Demura Sensei, Actor Russell Wong, Yonemochi Sensei, and Sifu Harry Wong*



*Yonemochi Sensei teaching at our annual seminar*



*Yonemochi Sensei helping Mark Ty with some kanji*

**Remember the Man**

*by Mark Ehrlich  
Editor, The Aiki Dojo*

So many of us have benefitted from Yonemochi Sensei over the years: his teaching, friendship, or both have touched our lives in ways that even now we might not realize. These two pages give Yonemochi Sensei a chance to leave us with a sense of who he was.

We do not as a rule reprint articles from previous issues of the newsletter, but in this special case I have excerpted sections of Yonemochi Sensei's New Year's greetings to us in 2007. Each picture, though, offers a thousand words to say one thing: Goodbye and Godspeed.



*Rinnoji Temple at Nikko, 2007  
(photo courtesy of Hiro Tateno)*



*Yonemochi Sensei with Arikawa Sensei  
(photo courtesy of Takeshi Kudo Sensei)*



*With Mark Ty and Jacob Sisk, 2006*



*With Carol Tanita*

***“Through the correct instruction and fine personal character of Furuya Sensei, I am very pleased that so many people with the Aikido Center of Los Angeles can enjoy Aikido practice every day.”***



*Kotegaeshi with Bill D'Angelo III*



*Kokyū dosa with James Doi*



*Sendai (photo courtesy of Hiro Tateno)*

*“I have many beautiful memories of practicing with everyone in Los Angeles . . . and I am looking forward to practicing with you again next year. Together, we shall pour out our sweat on the mats in training.”*



*O Sensei Memorial Seminar, 2006*



*With Councilwoman Jan Perry and Sensei at ACLA 30th anniversary celebration, 2004*



*O Sensei Memorial Seminar at ACLA – class is in session*



*Sankyo with Paul Major*



*Old friends at ACLA*

*“To learn Aikido, the most important point is to practice the same fundamental techniques over and over again. I believe this is the true way to progress in Aikido.”*



*A seminar with Yonemochi Sensei in 2003*



*Kokyu dosa with David Ito*



*Yonemochi Sensei throwing Mark Ty*



*Sensei with Yonemochi Sensei, Ichihashi Sensei, Kanazawa Sensei, and other Hombu Dojo instructors pose at a demonstration in Long Beach, California.*

### **Celebrating Old Friends *continued from page 3...***

When I look around Aikido today, it is so competitive. Even with our 30th anniversary celebration, many of my fellow teachers did not send greetings and one person even sent me a “virus” using the name of another Aikido teacher. So malicious and so sad, that there are people in Aikido like this. Yet when I talk with people at Hombu Dojo, they always focus on caring for others and thinking about others. It is not about who is better or who is stronger; for them, it is always about how much we care for the other person. Yonemochi Sensei, with his long history at the Hombu and in Aikido, never seems to want to talk about himself, only about everyone else. When I call my friends at the Hombu, they also never speak of themselves but only talk about the other person and how wonderful this is and that is. No wonder everyone stays so young and healthy!

I am also so grateful for Yonemochi Sensei’s coming. . . . We should not become so self-obsessed, but rather more caring, as people. I think it is “Every day, new” that keeps everyone so young and vital and healthy at Hombu Dojo, even after 80 or 90 years. We are very honored to have his special presence with us tonight at our 30th anniversary celebration. He has taken time from his busy schedule and many important duties at Aikikai Hombu to be with us. I hope everyone in our dojo will forever appreciate his generosity and kindness towards us to share his time and teach us.

Some of my students have come to the celebration for training and I sincerely want them to develop their technique and I also have asked them to ask me all of their questions and concerns. At the same time, I hope they see Yonemochi Sensei and understand how a life of giving and practice of Aikido can bring a person to the highest level of a caring and sincerity as a human being. And in Aikido, as in life, I think this stands as the greatest, most precious achievement of all. . . .

**Editor’s Note:** *Sensei originally published the above as two consecutive articles on his daily message board on April 27 and 28, 2004.*

## Yonemochi Sensei Memorial Service September 12, 2012



### *Farewells From Around the Globe*

*On September 12, 2012, ACLA students came together to conduct a memorial service for Yonemochi Sensei. At left, a group of ACLA students pose with Reverend Shumyo Kojima after our service in Los Angeles. Above, Santiago Garcia Almaraz, Chief Instructor of Aikido Kodokai affiliate, offers incense from his dojo in Salamanca, Spain.*

## AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES OFFICIALLY AFFILIATED DOJOS

### INTERNATIONAL



#### Spain

**Aikido Kodokai**  
Salamanca, Spain

Chief Instructor: Santiago Garcia Almaraz  
www.kodokai.com



### UNITED STATES

#### Arizona

**Aikido Renbukai of Arizona**  
Surprise, Arizona

Chief Instructor: Michael Van Ruth  
www.aikidorenbukai.com

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

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### Questions/Comments?

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

Please e-mail submissions to: [info@aikidocenterla.com](mailto:info@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 Advanced\*

## 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.

*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.



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# Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

## TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

## Saturdays

7:15-8:15 AM Beginning  
8:15-9:15 AM Intermediate/Advanced

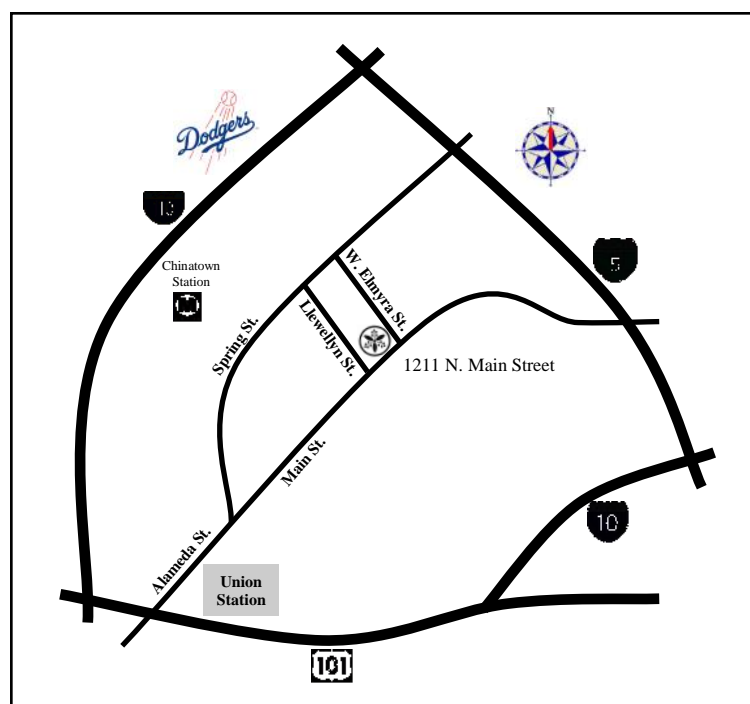
## Sundays

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.*



## **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.*