

羅府合氣道学院古屋道場



AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES

NEWSLETTER

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Dojo Aikido Demonstrations

July was a record month for demonstrations. The dojo is deeply grateful to everyone who participated and helped out during this busy month.

Thanks to the following members:

July 11, 1992 at the West Covina Community Center. Jeff Wheeler (Iaido), Steven LeHockey (Iaido), Victor Rodriguez, Ken Watanabe, Yasushi Matsuki, James Doi, Mitsuko Yoshimoto, Mark Moore, Andy Kissel, Kenny Furuya, David Ito, Monika Alvarez and Sensei.

July 12, 1992 at the Lotus Festival in Echo Park, Hollywood, and later at the Pasadena Buddhist Church. Jeff Wheeler (Iaido), Gary Myers (Iaido), Vistor Rodriguez, Yasushi Matsuki, Mitsuko Yoshimoto, Ken Watanabe, James Doi, Mark Moore, Richard Elorriaga, Kevin Sonico, Kenny Furuya, David Ito, Monika Alvarez and Sensei.

July 18 & 19, 1992 at Zenshuji Soto Mission. Victor Rodriguez, Yasushi Matsuki, Mitsuko Yoshimoto, Richard Elorriaga, Mark Moore, Ken Watanabe, Kenny Furuya, James Doi, and Sensei. Also, the ACLA Children's Class and the Zen Gakko group.

July 25 & 26, 1992 at the Higashi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, Little Tokyo. Gary Myers (Iaido), Jeff Wheeler (Iaido), Brian Kanegawa (Iaido), Yasushi Matsuki, Ken Watanabe, James Doi, Kenny Furuya, Mark Moore, Davbid Ito, Richard Elorriaga, and Mitsuko Yoshimoto who executed a spectacular three-man randori.

Nisei Week Aikido Demonstration

August 8, 1992, 4:00pm

Japanese Village Plaza

NEWS ITEMS

Congratulations to Hieu Nyuyen on the recent birth of his daughter, Melanie.

Many congratulations to Victor Rodriguez and Monica Alvarez who will be joining hands in matrimony this month. The wedding will be held in beautiful Santa Barbara. They met in the dojo. Let's wish them the very best of good health and a long life together. Good Luck! *Omedetou-gozaimasu!*

Hataya Mitsuo Sensei and six members of his dojo will be visiting Los Angeles from August 3rd to August 10th. This is his third annual tour to Los Angeles with his students. Let's give them a big welcome.

Kenny Furuya is starting a Women's Self-Defense Class on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00pm to 5:00pm and on Saturdays from 2:00pm to 4:00pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please invite your lady friends. Special Introductory rate is \$45.00 per month for the Self Defense Classes.

Sensei's latest "Ancient Ways" column is out in Martial Arts Training in the September 1992 Issue on the stands. It is entitled, "The Trouble With Training." Included in this issue.

Many thanks goes to Ken Watanabe and Kenny Furuya who helped Sensei in the Zen Gakko Ice Cream booth at the Obon Carnival at Zenshuji on July 18th and 19th. It was a hot day and lotsa work.

We welcome back Joe Quinn who has been away for several months.

Jeffrey Meek, the star of the new series on Channel 2, Raven, (Wednesdays from 9:00pm) will start training again in the dojo when his series is renewed. It is listed in the top ten of summer hits. Good Luck!

Please submit your news items to the Newsletter early.

Despite his words, he was frantically teaching us with all his heart at every moment. Only the unwary or foolish missed the opportunity of his teaching which is exactly how he wanted his teaching to be, as I think about it now. I believe only those who were clever enough to "steal" it were deserving of it in his mind. In Japanese, we call this, *de-ai*, or "encounter" between the teacher and student.

Few people know that the well-known television celebrity, Dick Cavett, is an expert magician. On one occasion when I went to New York to instruct him in Aikido, he introduced me to his magic teacher, Tony Slydini, at a party. Among magicians, Slydini is considered one of the greatest magicians of our time. He has the reputation for "recreating magic" which means that he revived magic which uses no gadgets or gimmicks but is based entirely on manual skill and psychology. Slydini amazed us all at the table making lighted cigarettes and silver dollars disappear and reappear at will. All of us witnessed him swallow a lighted cigarette which he somehow produced again out of his mouth ten minutes later. Even Dick Cavett was amazed! Slydini is quite an elderly man and he was accompanied by his student, a young talented man named Mark who sat quietly by his teacher's side. I created an opportunity to talk to him, interested in how it was learning from a great master such as Slydini. I wondered if it was similar to our Eastern traditions and I am always interested in various training methods. Mark told me the following interesting story.

Mark said, "It is very difficult, almost impossible, to become Slydini's student yet all of the first rate magicians today have been strongly influenced by him at one time or another. Slydini is an exacting teacher who demands perfection literally bordering on the 'magical.' The first interview is the most difficult obstacle. During the initial interview, Slydini observes your skill and technique. After a few minutes, he might say, "You have wonderful technique and great skill which you should continue to polish." This means doom. You have failed. Slydini continues by saying to go home and work harder! If, after a couple of minutes, he begins to criticize and belittle your technique saying this is wrong and that is bad and that you are hopeless and untalented. This means success! Because he follows this by saying to come again tomorrow because you need so much more work to do and there is no time to lose!

Although this episode was several years ago, I know Mark was having a tough time working part time and

studying everyday with his teacher and taking care of all his elderly master's needs. I hope he is enjoying success by now.

Just think. A foolish person might have been offended by his harsh criticism and left Slydini on the spot missing a lifetime of opportunity. Whether Slydini knows it or not, he taught in the manner of the great masters and martial artists of centuries ago in the East. I am always grateful to Dick Cavett for introducing me to such a great modern master as the magician, Tony Slydini.

It takes wisdom on the part of the student to judge the wisdom of his teacher. If abuse and humiliation is simply abuse and humiliation, it is obviously wiser to simply leave and continue your search for another teacher. However, if what seems like abuse and humiliation is actually necessary criticism and teaching in its most aggressive and dynamic form, it is, in my own opinion, better to grin and bear it until one understands the total message. This is not an easy thing to do and perhaps the greatest challenge of our martial arts training.

The Japanese classical theater of *noh* developed in 15th century Japan under the patronage of the samurai warrior class. Indeed, the *Kita* and *Kompira* schools of *noh*, two of the five important schools of *noh*, were developed by warriors themselves. Of course, the plays reflected the taste of the samurai and one of the most popular plays is known as "Shakyo" or "The Stone Bridge." This play is well known because of the spectacular, long white mane of the lion worn by the main actor. The "Bridge of Stone" is the bridge of "perfect wisdom" and the story tells of a mother lion and her cubs. As the story goes, to verify that her cubs have the strength and courage to live in this tough world, she hurls them down a steep cliff. Those that brave the cliff and climb up to her, she saves and those that don't have the power to meet the challenge of the cliff, she leaves at the bottom of the ravine to die. The samurai of the times loved this story of the harsh, seemingly cruel, teaching of love and compassion. Traditional Japanese martial arts often follows this tradition.

Seemingly cruel tests and heartless instruction from our teachers (in its honest and truest form) are designed to ultimately toughen us up. It can never be an ego trip. If this form of teaching lacks the deepest sincerity and profoundest compassion, then it is only an ego game of destruction and selfishness.

In dealing with great teachers and masters of the art, we are often overwhelmed by their presence or personalities. We shouldn't try to segregate or discriminate which part is their ego or which part is the teacher's greatness. We don't often meet these great teachers who are like bright lights illuminating the Way. But, with the wrong attitude or point of view, we can see this light as too overwhelming and unbearable and feel the need to escape. Often, great men are very lonely people because of this.

On the other side of the spectrum, we meet so-called instructors of low caliber who try to sell or force themselves upon us. Pushing their wares and wallowing in self-delusion, nothing more needs to be said here.

Talking too much about ego, it is too easy to get trapped in our own words or our own egotistical ideas. A Zen master once said that all human beings are being pushed and pulled around by their egos all their lives. We can only transcend our egos through correct training.

"Transcend" is a bad word here. We should understand that we never get rid of our egos no matter what we do. To declare to everyone, "I am unselfish, I have no ego," is the height of egotism.

When I began my training under my Zen master, Bishop Yamashita, one of the first things he said to me was, "You will find me to be one of the most selfish people in the whole world. I only think about myself and what I want. Don't be disappointed or surprised by my actions." I was so surprised and shocked when he said this to me that I didn't know what to think. I always think he is "pretending" to be selfish and I never consider him a selfish person. Is this his ego or his grandness as a teacher?

Another monk from Japan had an equally shocking experience with him. When he first arrived from Japan, he came to the temple and made his formal greetings to our Zen master. Bishop Yamashita looked at him and asked, "I think you must have brought a great deal of money with you from Japan." "Yes," the monk replied, "I received a great deal of money from my father for emergencies." "Good," replied our master, "Hand it all over to me, I'll take care of it." The monk confessed later that he thought the Bishop was a terrible thief and he was greatly shocked to have to turn over all his money to him.

Sometime later, our Zen master explained to the

young monk: "You came to America thinking you are here to get all you can and take it back with you to Japan. In addition, you just want to have fun and enjoy your power and money while you are here. That is why I took all your money. You are a monk. You don't need money. Only think of working hard while you are here and leaving something behind before you go back! I'll return all your money when you are ready to go home so you can give it back to your father."

We are often shocked at what our Zen master says and does, yet we always learn a wonderful lesson from him. I think this illustrates that we cannot judge the methods of training our teachers utilize too quickly.

When you are training, put everything aside and just concentrate on your training. In everything we do, we should concentrate with everything we have, mind, body and soul. Even if it takes a lifetime, we should try to find the right teacher for ourselves. In ancient times, we hear of priests making long and dangerous trips across the sea to hear a few words of a great teacher. Young samurai travelled all across the land searching for masters in their quest for perfection of their art. Once we are lucky enough to find our teacher, we should treat him like a precious treasure.

Once a prospective student called my dojo wishing to enroll in Aikido. I explained everything to him but when he heard the address of my dojo he said, "That is several miles from where I live, don't you have anything closer?"

Dr. Shawn Pak, Chiropractor

Make an appointment with him for your aches
and pains.

Member of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles

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