



AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

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DOJO SCHEDULE FOR JULY

(June 14th.) Sensei to present Aikido demonstration for Exceptional Children Foundation.

(June 21st - 23rd.) Sensei to San Francisco for 1991 Chinese Martial Arts Championship and Masters Exhibition. To Meet Master Hsu Chi.

July 3rd. Sugano Sensei to visit Sensei.

July 4th. Holiday. 10:30am-11:30am class only.

July 6th. Aikido Demonstration for the O-Bon Celebration at the West Covina Buddhist Church. 30 minutes.

July 7th. Lecture on Japanese Sword Guards and the Samurai Concept of Beauty. The first in a series of lectures on Japanese culture, art and aesthetics. 1:00pm - 3:00pm.

July 14th. Aikido Demonstration for the Zenshuji O-Bon Carnival at Zenshuji. From 3:30pm to 4:00pm.

July 21st. Iaido demonstration for the Pasadena Buddhist Church O-Bon Festival. By the ACLA Iaido Section Members.

Due to lack of man-power this year, the Nisei Week Demonstration is cancelled. We will resume it next year again. In a way, it is a shame because we should maintain these traditions and contribute as much as possible to the community.

In July, we have many invitations to demonstrate Aikido and Iaido at Obon Festivals around the Los Angeles area. As much as possible, we should participate in these as part of our community service. O-Bon is the Japanese style "Festival of the Dead" and is celebrated with many festivities.

NEW TRAINING SCHEDULE

In this issue, we would like to announce our new training schedule and invite everyone to take advantage of the additional classes. Furuya Sensei has taken a leave of absence from his duties as a priest and will be teaching all of these new classes personally. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Beginning & Open Classes

Mondays thru Fridays
6:15pm - 7:15pm

Monday-Wednesday-Fridays
7:30pm - 8:30pm

Tuesdays & Thursdays Afternoon
1:00pm - 2:00pm

Saturdays & Sundays
10:15am - 11:30

Advanced (3rd Kyu & up)

Tuesdays (Sword)
7:30pm - 8:30pm

Thursdays (Jo)
7:30pm - 8:30pm

Saturdays (Ki no Nagare)
11:45am - 1:00pm

Children's Class

Saturdays & Sundays
8:00am - 9:00am

Page 2.

Schedule Changes

The Tuesday and Thursday afternoon classes have resumed and we are now considering early Monday classes during the weekdays. These classes will be personally taught by Furuya Sensei.

Advanced classes will emphasize weapon training in preparation for the visit of Yagyu Nobuharu Sensei next year. Yagyu Sensei is the 23rd Grandmaster of the Yagyu Shinkage Ryu of swordsmanship which is one of the roots of Aikido. He is making an exclusive visit to our dojo. These classes are for 3rd kyu rank and above. Please bring your own bokken (wooden sword) and jo (long staff) to advanced classes.

We are also adding one more day for our Children's Class. Classes will be on Saturdays as well as Sunday mornings from 8:00am to 9:00am. Everyone is encouraged to tell their friends and bring them along. Parents are also encouraged to participate.

We are increasing our training schedule to make better use of our dojo. We have one of the finest dojos in this country and it should be used to its fullest benefit. Our dojo is a representative of the Aikido World Headquarters - Aikikai and a member of the United States Aikido Federation. Furuya is one of the highest ranking Aikido instructors on the West Coast and one of the very few professional instructors. He is a direct student of Grandmaster Kisshomaru Ueshiba, the current head of Aikido today. During our current membership drive, please encourage your friends to begin Aikido training.

Where To Find A Good Dojo?

During my recent trip to Japan in June, I visited one dojo and one of the assistant instructors made this interesting remark to me. He said, "Whenever our teacher scolds us for not practicing hard or not being serious about our training, he always uses your dojo as a good example." I was proud to hear this but I think this assistant instructor was a little tired our hearing our name all of the time and was a little peeved. Normally, we go to Japan to see what a good dojo should be like. Nowadays, I think they must come to our dojo to see a good example.

Message from Sensei:

Why I Practice Aikido

Recently, several senior members of the dojo criticized me by saying that my Aikido training is "too hard." One even said, "You're too tough, I can't take it." They all quit while I was away in Japan and who knows what they are trying to do now? Despite what they have said behind my back, passing notes all around and making telephone calls, I don't really want to make any comment or judgement on them. I don't believe they have very much conviction or devotion to Aikido and this leads me to believe that they were really never my students at all. I know they have caused much confusion among members of the dojo who really want to practice in peace without any silly problems and, for this, I apologize very deeply.

In order to give greater opportunities for the senior students to teach junior students and gain experience as teachers of Aikido, I purposely backed away from teaching in the dojo and devoted most of time to my own training as a Zen monk over the past two years. Unfortunately, rather than gaining experience, learning responsibility and trying to develop our dojo as part of their own careers, they only became too over confident in their own abilities. My purpose, as a professional Aikido teacher and student of the Grandmaster, is to develop the next generation of teachers and pass on my dojo and all that I have to them. I don't think I did my job very well in this respect. I should have supervised them much more closely. I would like to say that I am "too trusting." Although I have failed in this respect, I will only start again to develop new students. This is not the first time I have failed and most assuredly not the last, but I will continue to teach and if I could develop even one good student in my lifetime, I will feel that I have been able to do at least a fraction of my life's work.

Criticizing me that I am "too tough" is not an insult in my mind. I rather take it as a compliment. When I look at my students, I know that they are not going through the tough training that I had to endure in my younger days. At the same time, I cannot boast at all when I think of the hard, bone-breaking training that my teacher endured in his younger days. In fact, with each generation the practice seems to get easier and easier and I don't know if this is a healthy situation.

Page 3.

of developing the Aikido technique. Most people believe that Aikido came out of his "sudden enlightenment." No, it did not. Aikido was the product of many, many long years of hard work, tough training and study by the Founder.

After O-Sensei's death, one of the old timers at Hombu Dojo made this comment to me which I will never forget. He said, "In the future, there will be individuals who will appear who will have the same or greater genius and talent than O-Sensei but there will never be anyone who practiced as hard as O-Sensei did to develop his art."

Since O-Sensei's time, Aikido has been greatly refined. O-Sensei gave us the heart and body of the Aikido. His son, Grandmaster Kisshomaru Ueshiba, has taught and developed Aikido all over the world and has made this mysterious art accessible to everyone. Now, under Moriteru Ueshiba, O-Sensei's grandson, the technique of Aikido is being further refined. For us, we are lucky, it is simply to follow and master the teachings. Everyday, we should practice with the heart of gratitude and be thankful to the Ueshiba family for what they have given us.

When O-Sensei passed away on April 26, 1969, all of his top students were at his bedside. O-Sensei's last wish was for everyone to support his son, Grandmaster Kisshomaru Ueshiba, and continue to develop Hombu Dojo. Within a few years, all of them left to start their own schools and develop their own reputations. I don't have much respect for these people. Yet, who can criticize them. I think they will do well for themselves but I don't think they will ever be truly great teachers. One great master stayed faithful to O-Sensei's wishes and supported Hombu Dojo and Kisshomaru Ueshiba Sensei to his very last day. This was Master Kisaburo Ohsawa, 9th dan, who passed away just last month. We had a memorial service for him on June 4th. I regret his passing very much. (Please read about him in the June issue of our Newsletter.) He was one great inspiration to my Aikido. Throughout his entire lifetime, he never publicized or try to sell himself. Very quietly from behind the scenes, he was always an immovable pillar for Hombu Aikido. I don't want my dojo or my students to ever forget his name. He was one of the greatest Aikido masters I have ever known.

When I get discouraged about my training or about my students, I always think of my grandfather. He has always been my inspiration for over thirty years of Aikido training.

I received permission to go to Hombu Dojo and study directly under O-Sensei in 1968. However, it was the same year I received a grant to attend Harvard University and so I put off my trip for one year to attend Harvard at the urging of my parents and professors. It was during my stay at Harvard that I was able to train under Kanai Sensei. My plans were to go to Japan in the following year, 1969. I was to leave for Japan in June as soon as school let out. Regretably, O-Sensei passed away in the later part of April of that same year; I missed him by a month and a half. Despite this, I was very much encouraged to go by my grandfather. It was only later that I found out that he had terminal cancer. He was to have an operation immediately at the beginning of the year, but he believed that if he had an operation, I would cancel my trip so he and my grandmother keep it a secret and waited until after my departure for Japan in June to enter the hospital. Unfortunately, it was too late by then.

My grandmother told me that she promised him not to tell anyone in the family for fear that it would disrupt my training in Japan. He told her: "Shugyo (training) is more important than life and death." She said that she had to brace him up while he pruned all the trees and trimmed all the bonsai plants. He also replanted the front lawn to dichondra to ease her work load when he was gone. He went out and made all his own funeral arrangements including buying his own burial marker. He did all this in secret while dying of terminal cancer so as not to interfere with my training and make it easier for my grandmother when she would be all alone. Nowadays, examples of this kind of devotion and self-sacrifice are rare.

Finally, on his deathbed, my father broke his promise of secrecy and called me in Japan and told me to hurry back to see my grandfather. I remember Doshu and Ohsawa Sensei saying, "Come back to Hombu as soon as I can, you are always welcome. In the meantime, build a dojo in Los Angeles and continue teaching." It was a tearful parting.

From 1969 through 1985 we worked hard to see the dojo we have today finally materialize. And now, the work has only begun. . . .

Page 4.

I invite everyone to renew their efforts in their training and continue their Aikido practice. Please come and train with me.

Correspondence:

June 7, 1991

Dear Sensei:

Hi, how are you?

I am working very hard at this camp. I am studying math and handwriting and reading. I am doing alot better here. I am following the list of rules you gave me. Thank you. I miss the dojo very much. I wish I was there right now. When I come back I will do better. Because I have relaxed here.

Since I have been here I have learned to be patient. Up here the teacher tells me "You will not make it in life if you are not patient."

I went camping and sailed here. And I have been doing alot of reading. I can't wait till I come back. I really enjoy Aikido very very much!!! I will be back soon. I would like to be an Aikido teacher some day. But for now, I have alot to learn. I will see you soon.

Paul Williams

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It is free to active members of the dojo. Non-members may subscribe for an annual subscription fee of \$25.00 per year.

Fur further info: please call: (213) 687-3673

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**Black Belt Exmiation
August 3, 1991**

The following candidates may take their black belt examination on August 3, 1991, Saturday, from 12:00pm - 1:00pm. Please prepare yourselves.

Mr. Brigido Anaya
Mr. Ron Hill
Mr. Henrique Morimura
Mr. Ismael Araujo
Mr. Curtis Westfall

Requirements for Examination

Hanmi-handachi Ushiro Kata-tori Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo. Irimi & Tenkan

Five Techniques:

Katate tori
Kata tori
Yokomen-uchi
Tsuki
Katatori-menuchi

Suwari waza Shomenuchi Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo, Gokyo. Irimi & Tenkan

Five Tanto-tori (Knife techniques)

Kokyo-dosa

**LECTURE ON EARLY IRON
JAPANESE SWORD GUARDS**

On July 7th, Sunday, from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, there will be a lecture on Japanese sword guards called *tsuba*. This lecture will focus on the appreciation of Japanese sword guards and their relationship with the Samurai warrior concept of beauty and their view of the world as expressed through this art form. Over one hundred tsuba will be on display.

This lecture is open to the public and everyone is invited. \$5.00 per person. Senior citizens are free.

This is part of a cultural and art lecture series sponsored by the Aikido Center of Los Angeles.