



# AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

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March 1, 1992

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 7th. Seminar - "The Fundamental of Aikido."  
All day seminar. Local dojos invited.

March 8th. - Promotion Awards Party for Children's  
Class - 8:00am - 9:00am.

March 21st. Black Belt Meeting - 12:30pm.

April 19th. Easter Sunday observed. No classes.

April 25th. Dojo clean-up day.

April 26th. Memorial Service for O-Sensei.  
1:00pm - 4:00pm - Special Class - "Fundamentals of  
Swordsmanship."  
4:00pm - 4:30pm - Memorial Service for O-Sensei.

## Message from Sensei:

First of all, I would like to thank Victor Rodriguez and Ken Watanabe for helping out in the evening classes while my cold is getting better. Curtis Westfall and Bill Gillespie are trying hard to keep the morning classes going and I appreciate their efforts as well.

We have several members who are candidates for the Black Belt examination and they should try to come to practice more often and work a little harder on the Black Belt requirements.

In this respect, students are encouraged to stay after class a while and practice together after clean-up is finished. Coming to the dojo a little earlier and practicing before class is also good. The dojo is usually open from 5:00pm to 5:30pm. If you happen to come a little earlier and the dojo is not open, please ring the bell.

On February 20, the ladies of the dojo treated me to a Valentine's dinner at the Regency in Chinatown. Eve-

## Training Schedule

### Beginning & Opening Classes

Monday-Wednesday-Friday Mornings  
7:30am - 8:30am

Monday thru Friday Evenings  
6:15pm - 7:15pm

Monday-Wednesday-Thursday Evenings  
7:30pm - 8:30pm

Saturday Mornings  
10:15am - 11:15am

Sunday Mornings  
10:30am - 11:30am

### Advanced Classes 3rd Kyu & up

Tuesday Evenings  
7:30pm - 8:30pm

Saturday Mornings  
11:30am - 12:30pm

### Muso Shinden Ryu Iaido Los Angeles Branch-Battodo Renmei

Saturday & Sunday Mornings  
9:00am - 10:00am

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**Message from Sensei continued:**

had such an event and I thought it was very nice. The ladies who attended were Mitsuko Yoshimoto, Monika Alvarez, Chris Prejean and Esther Tudor. Thank you very much.

Robert Tam has been transferred to New York by his company. He will be leaving in April and we will all miss him very much.

In the meantime, Kevin Chiu went back to Taiwan for one more month and will be returning to the dojo in April.

In February, many new students joined our group. They are all very welcome to the dojo.

### **Silence Is Golden**

For most people who come to the dojo often during the week, the dojo becomes a central focal point for their social activity. We, as students, come for practice but we also come to see and chit-chat with our friends. For the most part, it is a very good thing that everyone can make friends, be friends and create a good, friendly atmosphere in the dojo.

In most dojos, the teacher is central figure in all of this social activity. In our dojo, it is not. Unfortunately, I am not such a social animal. And usually, I am either very, very busy or very, very tired. One of the two. From as far back as I know, I am famous for being a "party-pooper." I admire teachers who go out drinking with their students every night and I wish I could do the same. But, I don't drink. . . . Especially, in Japanese society, it is during these drinking parties that strong loyalties and relationships are created between the teacher and student. This is something that I just don't have a talent for.

However, there is the other side of this coin. When these social considerations begin to breakdown or some misunderstanding is created "among friends," this also effects the dojo in a negative way.

In the dressing room, outside the dojo, at the restaurant for lunch or dinner, we all talk about Aikido, we talk about the dojo and we talk about the people we practice with. When we begin to talk about other people in the dojo, trouble begins.

This is just a fact of life. As my Zen teacher would say, "That is the way human beings are. That's human nature."

If I had my way, I wouldn't allow any talk in the dojo. Yet, everyone talks and what is more interesting than a juicy bit of gossip about one of your own friends.

Everyone is encouraged to make friends and create a good atmosphere in the dojo. There is no question about that. Yet, everyone must realize there is a big responsibility everytime you open your mouth. Please be careful about what you say about others and if you can't say anything nice than don't say anything at all. More people have been embarrassed by opening their mouths than by closing them. Indeed, it is easier to stick your foot into your mouth when you keep opening it than if you keep it closed. The bottom line is "Silence is, indeed, golden." Please keep in mind, we are in a dojo.

**March 7, 1992**

#### **Seminar "Fundamentals of Aikido"**

Katame-waza: Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo.  
Bokken & Jo  
Nage-waza: Irimi-nage & Shihonage.

**April 26, 1992**

#### **O-Sensei's Memorial Service & Special Seminar - "Fundamentals of Swordsmanship"**

**1:00pm-4:00pm Seminar**  
From live sword to bokken.

**4:00pm to 4:30pm**  
Memorial Service for O-Sensei  
By Ministers of the Zenshuji Soto Mission

*Sponsored by*  
**Aikido Center of Los Angeles**  
**Conducted by Kensho Furuya, 5th dan.**

**Participation Fee: \$25.00**  
**Please bring you own bokken.**



## ANCIENT WAYS

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

### Journey for Peace Speaking Before the United Nations

I hope you will permit me to indulge myself and speak about my trip to the United Nations with my Zen master. It was a terrific learning experience for me, and I would like to share with you some personal impressions.

On November 21, 1991, the Reverend Bishop Kenko Yamashita, 81, accompanied by me, spoke before the United Nations. This speech, "Zen and Peace," was sponsored by the United Nations, Japan's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japan Travel Bureau and the Nippon Club of New York. The project was a culmination of one year's planning between my colleagues in Japan, myself in Los Angeles, and members of the United Nations in New York.

#### Distinct Honor

Originally I was to attend as the bishop's personal translator because we thought he might use religious and philosophical terms which were too esoteric for the normal translator. As it turned out, however, my status was changed to "Special Guest Speaker," to the United Nations, and I, too, had the distinct honor of addressing this illustrious audience.

Compared to the presentation of my teacher, my speech amounted to only so much gibberish. Indeed, my first concern was to look after my teacher and prepare myself to translate his speech for him. Although he had an especially prepared speech which was duly translated beforehand, at the moment he began, he completely ignored the prepared speech and went off on his own in his usual manner. That was the most difficult spontaneous translation I have ever done in my life. He spoke for about an hour and answered questions from the audience of more than 200 guests.

Afterwards, not only were we greeted

by United Nations representatives, but by many celebrities who also attended, including Dick Cavett, who is one of my aikido students; Riyako Matsuda, a noted movie star from Tokyo; and also Tagayasu Den of Tokyo, founder of the internationally famous Ondekoza Drumming Troupe. We stayed four days in New York before returning to our temple in Los Angeles, very tired but very relieved that a difficult job was carried off well.

#### Signs of Respect

In martial arts, there is a teaching, "Martial arts begins and ends with respect." In recent times, however, this practice has become more an elaborate greeting to the audience than an honest show of respect to the opponent. Someone once asked me, "Why do we have to show respect to someone we want to destroy?"

The very strict protocol that the United Nations staff observed reminded me of the spirit of the samurai and the strict etiquette that martial artists of an earlier generation observed. As you enter the United Nations building, you are immediately faced with a painting reaching the ceiling almost three stories high. The work of art is entitled "War," and depicts a battleground with people suffering and dying. As you leave the building you are faced with an equally magnificent painting entitled "Peace." This expresses the wish that those who enter wearing the "face of war" will leave wearing the "face of peace."

The United Nations emblem is familiar to most people, but not many people realize that it was once modified. The original artist put the United States at the center of the emblem. Due to a "matter of protocol," the emblem was redesigned so that no country occupies the center, yet all continents are represented in the design. The original aisles

between the seats have all been modified so that representatives enter the main hall through the same door and proceed down the same type of aisle. All the chairs and desks, down to the pad and pencils, are of the same size and quality. No one is placed in an inferior or superior position.

As a matter of fact, when you enter the main hall for the first time, you are always requested to observe the ceiling lights. My first impression was that it looked like the underbelly of a spaceship. Actually it is a very complicated structure of lights designed so that no one occupies the spotlight. The light shines equally on all members whether they are seated toward the side or in the very middle of the hall.

There is also no discrimination between large or small countries, powerful or weak nations, or rich or poor governments. Each year, the representative seats are chosen by random lots.

Because everyone can enjoy this type of equality, dialogue or negotiation can take place among all the nations. However, to achieve this atmosphere requires the greatest attention to detail and the strictest observance of each person's attitudes, backgrounds and philosophies.

#### Attention to Detail

The same sensitivity and strict attention to detail are also involved in the martial arts. If our minds are undisciplined, we can never achieve this sensitivity. We can never perfect ourselves as martial artists or human beings.

Fighting, war, and murder are all facts of life. Yet when it has reached the dimensions it has reached today, violating every corner of our society with senseless violence, simple fighting skills are no solution. Ultimately we fight to

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## ANCIENT WAYS (Continued from page 52)

achieve peace in our lives and in society. If we forget that martial arts teaches the deepest respect for human life, then martial arts is only a game, and fighting only perpetuates more fighting.

To become attached to the sound of applause, your admirers, the promotion paper with fancy writing, or trophies and cash prizes for defeating your opponent, has nothing to do with the reality of our lives. We place importance on these things because we are unhappy with ourselves; we are unhappy with ourselves because we don't know who we are.

Without knowing who we are, how can we identify the real opponent in our lives?

For a martial artist, fame and fortune are considered deadly poisons; yet today, they have become the rewards of our training. They appeal to our natures' destructive aspect because they hide the real problem within ourselves.

During the UN presentation, one member stated, "We live in a very materialistic and selfish world where it is only 'me, me, me.' I believe it is impossible to suppress the ego as you say." The bishop replied, "It is not to suppress the ego but to see your 'real' self. Dogen Zenji, a Zen master, once said that 'to forget the self is to become enlightened in all things.' It is impossible to eliminate the ego; even the Buddha understood this, and said just to make your desires smaller."

I believe that dreams are important in our training because they encourage us to strive harder. Yet our dreams must never become a form of self-delusion.

So how do you conquer yourself? How do you perfect yourself? What is the true goal of your training? Why must you suppress your ego, when it is your ego that is carrying you forward? I think that everyone asks these questions.

The bishop told this story to another questioner at the United Nations. "Once there was a man who told his wife that he loved her and respected her very much, but when he thought about it seriously he concluded that he loved himself more than any other person in the world. The wife replied that although she loved and respected her husband very much, she loved herself most of all. This husband and wife didn't know what to do, so they decided to consult the Buddha. The Buddha said, "I love both of you very much, but when I think about it, I love myself the most." This is human nature. How can you change it? The bishop explained, "Because everyone loves himself the most, we must love each other."

I am sure that it sounds strange to speak of martial arts and love in the same breath. Yet, Morihei Ueshiba spoke all the time of love being aikido's essence. If we say "love your opponent," this may sound strange, yet isn't this a fundamental Christian ethic in how we are raised in this country?

If we consider our training in a new light, and look at the purpose of martial arts from a more universal standpoint, I believe that we would all like to enjoy a peaceful world. No one has a solution for peace, yet if we each observe ourself and our opponent, if we learn to reduce our ego enough to show deep respect to the enemy confronting us, as we were first taught in the martial arts, then perhaps we will gradually begin to understand what peace is all about.

This trip to the United Nations was a turning point in my martial arts career. At the same time it gave me a greater sense of what martial arts ultimately means to me, and has given me the opportunity to be with my Zen master just as I used to follow my teacher around in the early days of training. It was a beautiful day for me in many respects, and one I shall never forget. ★

## CHILDREN'S PROMOTIONS

Effective as of March 1, 1992

### 3rd Kyu - Blue Belt

Allen Chen  
Douglas Lew  
Kristine Lew

### 4th Kyu - Blue Belt

Noboru Ito  
Robert Lew  
Sean Ito

### 5th Kyu - Orange

Alvin Chin  
Matthew Burns

### 6th Kyu - Orange

Audrea Kakita  
Alex Tso  
Mari Matsumori

## Children's Ranking System by Belts

1st Kyu - Brown  
2nd Kyu - Brown  
3rd Kyu - Blue  
4th Kyu - Blue  
5th Kyu - Orange  
6th Kyu - Orange  
7th Kyu - Green  
8th Kyu - Purple  
9th Kyu - White  
10th Kyu - White