



# AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

940 E. Second Street #7  
Los Angeles, California  
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May 1, 1992

## Special Dan Promotions

The following Special Promotions are made on the occasion of the Founder's Memorial Service on April 26, 1992. Congratulations.

### 2nd Dan

Mr. Victor Rodriguez  
Ms. Mitsuko Yoshimoto  
Mr. Yasushi Matsuki

### 1st Dan

Mr. Henrique Morimura

## Regular Promotions

(Effective as of May 1, 1992)

### 1st Kyu

Mr. Andy Kissel

### 2nd Kyu

Mr. Mark Sprintz  
Mr. Joe Quinn

### 3rd Kyu

Mr. Kenneth Kai

### 4th Kyu

Mr. Kevin Sonico

### 5th Kyu

Mr. Ray Yagami  
Mr. Larry Moncado  
Mr. Dean Hess  
Mr. Mark Hess

### 6th Kyu

Richard Castillo

## TRAINING SCHEDULE

### Beginning & Open Classes

Monday & Wednesday 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 LA Branch Battodo Federation

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

## Calendar of Events

May 2nd & 3rd.

Aikido Demonstration at the Children's Day Festival at the Japanese Village Plaza, Little Tokyo. From 2:00pm.

May 25th.

Memorial Day. Dojo closed.

June 20th, 21st.

Chinese Martial Arts Seminar with Master Adam Hsu. (Tentative dates).

July 4th.

Independence Day. Dojo closed.

July 11th & 12th.

Aikido & Iaido Demonstration for the Lotus Day Festival in Echo Park, Hollywood. Early afternoon.

July 12th.

Aikido Demonstration for the Obon Festival at the Pasadena Buddhist Church in Pasadena. From 5:00pm.

July 18th & 19th.

Obon Aikido & Iaido Demonstration for the Zenshujji Soto Mission, Little Tokyo.

August 2nd.

Nisei Week Aikido and Iaido Demonstration. Japanese Village Plaza, Little Tokyo.

## Summertime in the Dojo

As usual, our dojo becomes very busy in the summertime with many demonstrations throughout the community.

During these demonstrations, we need everyone's help. Blackbelts must prepare for the demonstration itself. We need other volunteers to carry the mats, watch the equipment, pass out dojo flyers and answer questions after the demonstration. In other words, we can use everyone's help. Also it is good to watch your fellow students demonstrate their skill.

Please help during the busy summertime months.

## Message from Sensei:

As usual, I am very busy at this time, but this is nothing new to everyone especially my older students. On March 24th, I went to Japan on business and to make arrangements for Yagyu Sensei's visit. This has become very complicated but I am sure he will come in October of this year. I returned to Los Angeles on April 1st after a hectic schedule.

On April 6th, the wife of the Bishop, my Zen teacher, passed away and the funeral was held on April 13th.

Finally, we finished the month with the Founder's Memorial Service by offering incense to his memory.

We see a lot of students come and go in the dojo. One reason is that Aikido is much more difficult than it looks. I often receive the comment that Aikido looks very easy to do but when the new student first enters the mat they are so surprised how even the simplest movement is so difficult and complicated. One should try to remember his own first day on the mat when he first joined the dojo and didn't know anything about Aikido. Everyone should try to help each other especially in the case of new students. But, this is difficult too. We help each other by setting an example. Please do not talk so much, please do not try to show off how strong you are or how much you know. You will only appear foolish. Show Aikido by your own movement and show Aikido by your own example.

I remember I had one student who was quite new but he was not so bad in skill and came everyday to practice. He always tried to teach the other newer students whenever he spotted them coming on to the mats. All he did was talk and talk and eventually became so confused himself that he could no longer do Aikido anymore. Don't confuse the issue by talking but keep your mind on what you are doing and only concentrate on getting in a good practice.

At the end of class, if you feel that you have had a good practice, most likely, everyone around you had a good practice too. You must always be sensitive to this. If, at the end of class, you felt that you didn't do anything at all and your mouth is dry from talking too much, most probably, everyone around you had a miserable time and the next time they see you on entering the mats, they will try to run away. You must always keep in mind to practice so that everyone has a good practice. It is impossible for only one person in class

Message from Sensei continued:

to have a good practice. It is always everyone or no one at all. Each student must create for himself and others the atmosphere of good training in the dojo.

**To learn from the teacher is a personal matter, but don't take it personally.**

When I teach students, many people say they feel humiliated or insulted. Some get angry. As far as I am concerned, that is good. Good medicine is always bitter to the taste. However, when you take it personally, it is only your ego working and that is something you must be aware of and try to control. In Zen, if you fall asleep in the meditation hall, someone will strike your shoulder with a stick. It is not called "punishment," it is called, "encouragement." You may say that it is only a game of words but that is not necessarily so. When you accept it as "encouragement," it hurts but feels good later. When you accept it as "punishment," it hurts and feels worse later. This is the big difference and this is why we like to say it is like a good but bitter medicine. The taste is bitter but you eventually get well.

When I am correcting you during practice I want you to hurry up and be quick. Why? Not because I am impatient or because I have others to teach. I do not want to give you time to let your ego start working but make you concentrate on the "learning" itself. I don't care what answer your ego has created for me.

In entering the traditional Japanese dojo, one often sees a small sign, "Watch your feet." We have a similar Western expression, "Watch your step." However, in the Japanese version, it means to watch everything, arms, legs, body, head, neck, etc. In the dojo, we always try to be very careful. Why? Because we are not careful in our daily lives. Nowadays, we are understanding that we must be more careful in our lives from day to day. Why? Because we are running out of fresh, clean water, breathable air, rich forests, etc. Please look around you.

The Founder always said that Aikido is "misogi-waza" This means that Aikido is a "purifying technique" to cleanse yourself. Everyday, you take a bath and brush your teeth and change your clothes. Everyday, when you come to Aikido, you clean your mind and spirit through practice. To forget the Founder's teaching is to forget the very essence of what Aikido is itself. This is why we always remember the Founder's Passing.

## I AM 44 YEARS OLD

In April, I turned 44 years old. To most people, who are 44 years and older, I cannot say that I am very old. Yet, I still notice many differences. My birthday is on April 25th which is one day before O-Sensei's Memorial Day on April 26th. For many years, I never celebrated my birthday out of deference to O-Sensei but nowadays birthday parties are very precious to me, especially when I spend them with my students.

In my early days of teaching, I spoke of my days in Aikido as fresh, new experiences and now, I think back over many decades and try to "recollect" vague memories of the past. That sounds a little too melodramatic but, at 44, one can afford to be melodramatic without too much condemnation. This is yet another difference.

When I was young, we always said that a good home life and a good job would always keep one on the straight and narrow. Without these, one could never fully mature. Today, our home lives and jobs are no longer the source of our maturity and growth but, for many people, the source of our problems and anxieties. We no longer have a "strong family unit" or a "secure job" in our lives or in our society. They are only memories of the past and just a dream for the future. We turn to the church or temple, but still we cannot find what we are looking for. More than that, we cannot find what is important for our lives. There is one thing, however, that has only changed very little in the last three decades. That is our dojo. For me, it is a strong, secure place. It is a place to grasp the fundamentals of life. It is, for the most part, a peaceful place. I don't want the dojo to become a refuge for human refuse but it can be thought of as a place of internal growth as well as a dojo to practice Aikido. When we speak of our lives, our aspirations, our goals and how we should live our lives, we are, at the same time, speaking of the spiritual side of our Aikido training.

It is hard to say how much Aikido has influenced my life obviously it is a major part of myself as an individual. I don't want to make predictions or guarantees, yet I believe Aikido benefits all who train in the art correctly. "To train correctly" is always the key words. Training foolishly or insensitively is simply wasting one's own time. To train correctly means to proceed further even if it is only inch by inch.

At 44 years, I have come to learn how precious life can be.

## Training Hints

When one enters the dojo one should try to get the most benefit from his training. This ensures steady progress, correct understanding of the techniques and produces the most enjoyment. Here are several hints that everyone should keep in mind on the mats.

Never compete in strength. The one who executes the techniques correctly is training correctly. On the mats, techniques may not work effectively because we have not learned them properly yet or we are practicing with a senior student who is guiding us through the technique. People who compete in strength often exert more strength than is necessary. This always causes injury to oneself.

Be careful where you practice. Don't bump into other people or the walls.

Try to become a good training partner. Become skillful in your ukemi and make the practice enjoyable for your partner. Become the student that everyone wants to practice with.

Keep your uniform clean and neat. Observe personal hygiene.

The dojo is a quiet place and the atmosphere is serene and serious. Enjoy the quiet and peacefulness.

Always welcome new students and give them a hand in getting to know the rules of the dojo.

Practice with as many different partners as you can during the class session. Don't practice with the same partner all the time.

Be helpful and thoughtful to others.

Keep the dojo immaculately clean and neat. Always help with the daily chores. Don't be the first one to finish.

Get in personal practice with your partner before and after class.

Respect Aikido and its Founder.

Respect your teacher and be loyal to the dojo.

Shawn Pak, Chiropractor

WESTERN AVE. FAMILY MEDICAL CLINIC

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*Special Discount to Dojo Members*

## Many Thanks

Many thanks to Ken Watanabe for helping with the 7:30pm class on weekdays.

Many thanks to Mark Moore for making our entrance way to the dojo more beautiful.

Morgan Weisser, 1st Dan, is congratulated for great work on TV with the program "Stay the Night" and other theatre plays.

Many thanks to members who attended the Founder's Memorial Service and sword seminar. Thank you.

## Announcements

A new shipment of bokken are coming in from Japan. They are \$20.00 each. On a first come first served basis.

We are looking for more students to participate in the Morning Classes from 7:30am to 8:30am on Mondays and Fridays. Everyone is welcome.

Master Hsu will be coming on June so please mark your calendars. He will be reviewing Chen Family Tai-chi Chuan and introducing Shing-yi Fist. Don't miss it.

Also, on May 23rd and 24th, Master Hsu will be participating in an International Internal Systems Competition at the San Francisco High School in San Francisco.

We are looking for articles on Aikido or the dojo from the students. Please submit your articles to Sensei.