

KANAI SENSEI'S SEMINAR - PERSONAL THOUGHTS BEFORE THE SEMINAR

On June 6 and 7, 1987, Kanai Mitsunari Sensei will be conducting his second seminar at our dojo. Many old timers have met him before and are anxiously awaiting his arrival again. I hope that the newer students will also be excited about his seminar and benefit a great deal from it. I studied under Kanai Sensei in 1969 when I was attending Harvard University in Cambridge and I consider him one of my first important teachers.

Although we have come a long way, as yet we are still a very small and very new dojo. Every member is an important part of the dojo and it is necessary that everyone work together to make these seminars a meaningful experience and to make Kanai Sensei, as well as others Sensei passing through, feel welcome and want to come again.

It is important to understand that these Sensei come here, not for the money, but for their duty to spread and develop Aikido. For this reason, we must show our sincere appreciation.

ETIQUETTE DURING SEMINARS

Rules of etiquette should apply to every moment of the day and not just for special occasions. However, when we have a guest, it is nice to be on our best behavior as a way of expressing our appreciation and our hospitality.

1. Introduce yourself briefly and make a polite greeting to the Sensei when you arrive and when you leave the dojo. Please say, "Thank you," after practice when you are leaving the dojo.
2. Be dressed and on the mat at least ten minutes before class begins. It is very distracting to have late comers making noise during the first quiet minutes of the class.
3. Wear a clean uniform. All tears in the uniform should be repaired.
4. No horseplay or talking during class.
5. Try to sit seiza while he is teaching. If you have some special problem with your knees, please make your excuses to Sensei quietly and briefly.

6. Practice hard and try to absorb everything he says.

7. Welcome guests from other dojos and be polite to them.

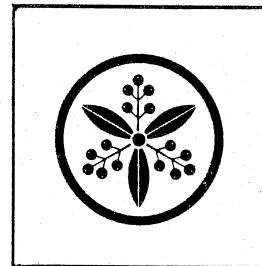
NEWS ITEMS

Sensei appears briefly in an article on Iaido in the July issue of Black Belt magazine. The article was written by Mr. Robert Elsasser, a student of Mitsuzuka Takeshi Sensei. Sensei also appears in the May 4, 1987 issue of U. S. Japan Business News, in an interview with Mr. Dick Cavett, our student, while he was filming in LA. The article was written by Ms. Mitsuko Yoshimoto.

On May 2, 1987, our dojo demonstrated for the Children's Day Festival held in the plaza of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in Little Tokyo. It was the first demonstration for our children's class and was very well received by the public. Demonstrating from the children's class were Daphne Bush, Malcolm Quon, Ahren Arase, Ryoji Yamada, William Benedict and Terrence Braggs. Our regular students were Mr. Douglas Firestone, Ms. Kathy Heinemann, Mr. Kazuho Nishida, Mr. Brian Reverman, Mr. Rick Cushing, and Mr. Tony Gonsalves.

OUR DOJO CREST

The dojo crest which you see on our newsletter and stationery is called the *nanten* plant or in English, *nandina* or *nandina Japonica*. It is a common shrub in Southern California; so common, in fact, that it goes mostly unnoticed. It has pretty light green leaves which turn bright red and yellow with the seasons and has little red berries. If one takes a little time to actually notice the *nanten* plant, one finds that it is actually quite beautiful. Our dojo is much the same as the *nanten*. *Nanten* is also the name of a very famous Zen priest who lived during the 19th century. He carried a large stick made from the *nanten* tree. Whenever he taught his students, he would say, "Whether you answer right or wrong, you still get hit by my *nanten* cane!" Priest *Nanten* was also the Zen master of Admiral Nogi who later defeated the Russian fleet in the Japanese-Russo War in 1903. When the Emperor Meiji passed



away, Admiral Nogi and his wife committed *junshi* or ritual suicide to follow and serve the Emperor in the afterlife. *Nanten* means "Southern heaven" and in Chinese folk beliefs it is the gate to paradise.

YELLOW PAGES AD

Our yellow pages ads have saved the dojo in the past by bringing in students. Much of the ad is paid for through additional contributions by the students. However, some contributing students have left the dojo and we are falling short every month, although the dojo pays for more than half of the ads. If any student cares to make an additional monthly contribution for whatever amount, it would be greatly appreciated. Please see Ms. Kathy Heinemann who is taking care of the ads. Contributions from a couple of dollars and up are greatly appreciated.

A FEW WORDS FROM SENSEI - THE THREE CORNERED WORLD

The Three Cornered World is a novel by Natsume Soseki, one of the great authors of Japanese literature during the turn of the century. This novel illustrates Soseki's views on art. The following are excerpts:

"An artist is a person who lives in the triangle which remains after the angle which we may call common sense has been removed from this four-cornered world."

"There is no escape from this world. If, therefore, you find life hard, there is nothing to be done but settle yourself as comfortably as you can during the unpleasant times, although you may only succeed in this for short periods, and thus make life's brief span bearable. It is here that the vocation of the artist comes into being, and here that the painter receives his divine commission. Thank heaven for all those who in devious ways by their art, bring tranquility to the world, and enrich men's hearts."

"It is enough that you are able to take this view of life, and see this decadent, sullied and vulgar world purified and beautiful in the camera of your innermost soul."

"Perhaps, now that I come to think about it, it is that since the poet is given to worrying more than the ordinary man, his senses have become much more acutely tuned. It is true that at times he experiences the most exquisite joy, but he also has far more than his fair share of immeasurable grief."

"The whole area is yours, but since it is just like a painting or a poem, it never occurs to you to try to develop it, or make your fortune by running a railway line there from the city. You are free from any care or worry because you accept the fact that this scenery will help neither to fill your belly, nor add a penny to your salary, and are content to enjoy it just as scenery. This is the great charm of Nature, that it can in an instant, discipline men's hearts and minds, and removing all that is base, lead them into the pure unsullied world of poetry."

PERSONAL NOTES:

The above are some of my favorite passages from this novel and they express very well a Japanese perspective of art which is closely related to our daily lives. Often, we view art as a way to express or own opinions or feelings through a particular media such as painting, sculpture, film, writing, etc. Unfortunately, art, in many ways, has succumbed to today's commercialism and materialism. In the Japanese mind, art must be lived and becomes an integral part of daily lives. It is neither good nor bad; it is both good and bad becoming a source of both joy and suffering. Art is not rational as similarly much of our own lives cannot be explained rationally or intelligently.

It may be difficult to understand how art, which is not subject to rational analysis, finally brings about an order to something as complex as our own lives. When we see everything from the perspective of our tiny, very brief lives, the world around us looks so bewildering. Although our appreciation of Nature may only come in short spurts or in a brief moment of our thoughts, that one moment, seeing Nature in its infinity, may bring great peace of mind and anchor our feet firmly into the ground.

The Founder of Aikido often spoke of *kishin* or "returning to God." "God" refers to Nature here. Sometimes, our practice becomes too self-confined or self-concerned with our own interests. So, occasionally, for even a moment at a time, we should try to look at ourselves from the broader view of Nature.

Excerpts from *The Three-Cornered World*, by Natsume Soseki. Perigee Press, New York. 1965.

SAIGO TAKAMORI: THE LAST SAMURAI
Saigo Takamori was one of the great warriors of the last century and often called, "the last true samurai." He was an important figure during the Meiji Restora-

tion and was elected as the first Foreign Minister of Japan. He later led the Satsuma Rebellion against the new government when he discovered that they were abolishing the samurai class. The rebellion ended in failure and Saigo committed *seppuku* (*hara-kiri*).

Saigo had great strength, was a skilled swordsman and a student of Zen. At one point in his career, he was captured by the enemy and imprisoned and tortured for over one year but his spirit did not break. As a young samurai, he served in Kumamoto castle. One day, he was bringing a cup of tea to the lord of the castle. The other young samurai, who were very envious of Saigo and wanted to get him into trouble, tried to frighten him hoping that he would drop the cup of tea. As Saigo was carrying the cup of tea in a tray respectfully held above eye level, the other young samurai jumped out and shouted at him. Saigo calmly turned around, carefully put the tray on the ground and said, "Boy, did you scare me!" Even as a Foreign Minister, at the height of his career, Saigo led an extremely austere life and had only one kimono to his name. While his kimono was being washed and hung out to dry, he did not receive any visitors or he would meet them wearing only his underwear. Saigo was a very popular hero and warrior and left the following words about life.

MAXIMS OF SAIGO TAKAMORI

"One who wants neither life, nor name, nor rank, nor money, is hardly to be controlled. It is only such indomitable men who can carry great affairs of state through adversities to completion.

"Do not have dealings with men; make your dealings with Heaven. In this way, confronting Heaven, put forth your whole endeavor. Never lay blame on other men, but consider where your own sincerity falls short.

"In matters great and small tread the way of righteousness, apply complete sincerity, and never once use trickery. Many resort to it when they meet an obstacle, thinking that if just this one obstacle can be got round, they will be able to carry on somehow. But the disasters attendant on trickery inevitably arise, and the project always fails. The path of righteousness may not seem the shortest at first, but one who treads it quickly achieves success."

"The Way being natural to the Universe, man as a follower of the Way should make it his purpose to revere Heaven. Heaven loves others and myself in the

same way, and with that heart which loves me, loves others also."

"One who follows the Way meets difficulties in the course of things, but however grave the situation, he never cares at all for success and failure or whether he will live or die."

"People think these days that if they only have sufficient cleverness, things will turn out as they wish, but I find it most dangerous to trust to cleverness."

"Deceiving others and plotting in secret, even supposing it to succeed is the depth of depravity in a wise man. Behave towards others with justice and humanity. Without justice one can never be a hero."

"After setting right a mistake, it is best just to think: 'This mistake was made by me.' Then putting the matter away and not turning back, pass on at once. To feel mortified over a mistake and worry about how to gloss over it, is as useless as to try to mend a smashed teacup."

". . . live one's life in self-control. As a rule men succeed by self-control and fail through self-love. Study the lives of the men of this and other ages. When a man sets about something, he generally completes seven- or eight-tenths of it, but rarely completely succeeds with the remaining two-tenths. This is because, at the beginning, a man fully restrains his egoity and respects the work for itself. Results begin to come, and his fame increases. But then his egoity stirs, the prudent and restrained attitude is relaxed, pride and boasting flourish. In the confidence born of his achievements so far, he plans to complete the work for his own ends. But his efforts have become bungling, and the end is failure - all invited by himself. Therefore restrain the self, and be careful not to heed what others do or say."

"What is admired by the world and posterity is simply one moment of complete sincerity. Even if it does happen that the world praises a man of no sincerity, it is praising a mere fluke. But where there is great sincerity, then, even if none know that man in his own day, surely in after ages there will be those who know him."

TECHNICAL CORNER - NIKYO

Nikyō means "second teaching" and is the second basic technique of *katame-waza*. (Please refer to *News-*

letter Vol. 2, No. 2). This technique is also referred to as nikajo (second technique) or kote-mawashi (wrist-rotation). Nikyo is often a very painful technique for beginners so care should be taken to gradually build up the strength and flexibility of the students' wrists. Also, as the technique is applied, many students try to turn away from the technique creating greater pain and possibility of injury. As the technique is applied, the uke should move toward his partner and downwards with the direction of the nikyo. The nage (person applying technique) should pin the uke securely dropping him as low as possible. Position your feet to the side so the uke cannot grab them and throw you over.

KATATETORI AIHAMMI NIKYO IRIMI

Irimi style nikyo is very much like ikkyo irimi with the exception of the final pin (Illustration 1). Be sure

to securely hold his wrist and elbow as you bring your uke downwards to the ground.

KATATORI NIKYO TENKAN

As you step back (Illustration 2), be sure to draw your hips back strongly as well and cut down against

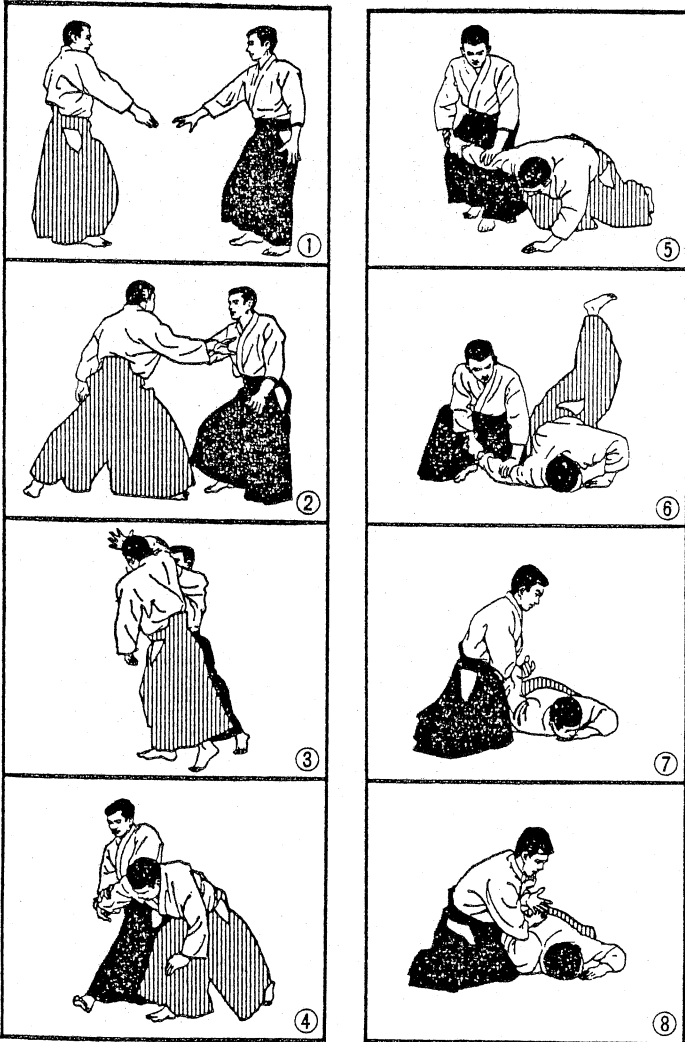


Illustration 1

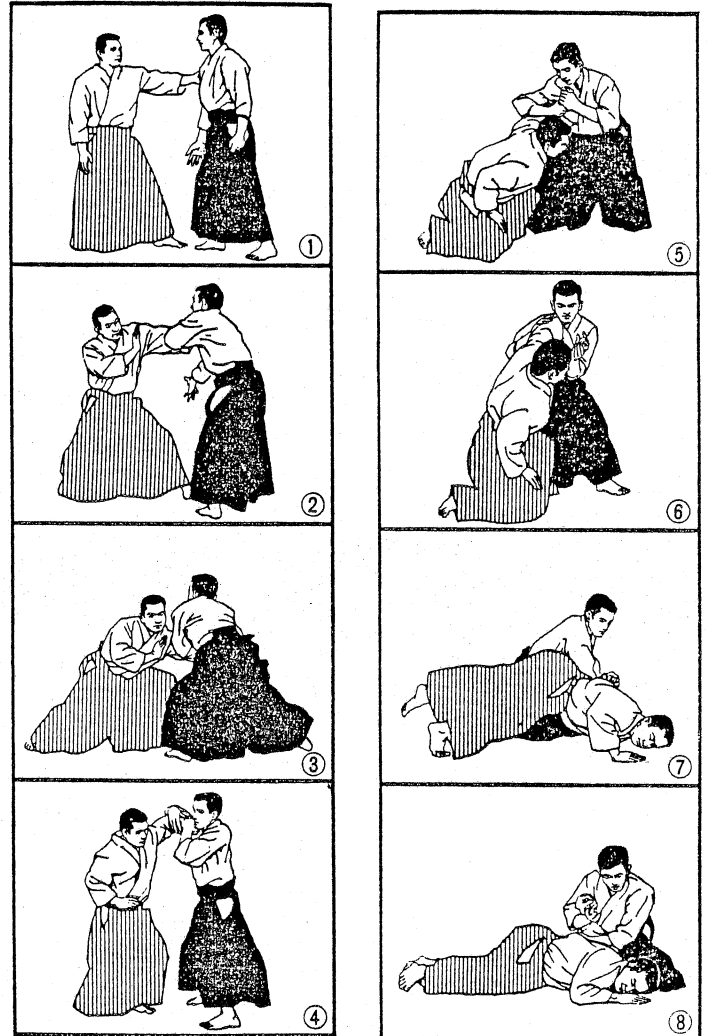


Illustration 2

his arm with your handblade (teगतana) to bring the uke well off balance. As in sequence #5, hold his wrist securely against your shoulder and do not allow it to slip down as you apply the technique. Your elbows should be held close to your body as you apply the technique. Position your feet at the side of uke's body so that he will be unable to grab them and topple you over. Keep your stance very stable and your hips low. Applying the nikyo tenkan technique has the same feeling as cutting downwards with the sword.

USHIRO RYOTE-TORI NIKYO IRIMI

Applying nikyo irimi as the opponent grabs both wrists from behind (Illustration 3).



Illustration 3

FRIENDS OF THE AIKIDO CENTER OF LA

Students and friends of the dojo who may wish to make a contribution to the dojo of any amount, at any time and for any occasion, may fill out the form on the next page and send it in. All of the contributions will go towards continuing our newsletter and covering our yellow pages ad which is a very big but necessary expense for the dojo. Those who wish to become "Friends of the ACLA" may also check the appropriate category.

AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES
940 EAST SECOND STREET #7
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 687-3673

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"Friends of the ACLA" membership categories.

___ \$15.00/month - California resident.

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