

AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES

NEWSLETTER

940 E. Second Street #7
Los Angeles, California
90012

(213) 687-3673

December 1, 1989
Volume IV. Number 12.

SENSEI'S GREETINGS

Reverend Kensho Furuya

First of all, I would like to wish everyone the best of the Holiday Season and a very Merry Christmas.

Perhaps, it may seem strange for a Buddhist priest to wish everyone greetings for this Holiday. It is not. It is an important custom in this country and it is the way I have been brought up all of my life. Also, it is a good custom. There is no need for me to change this habit. Zen is concerned with how we live our lives from one moment to the next. It does not deny or confirm other beliefs but works in harmony with them. As a matter of fact, I was speaking to another priest who has been in this country just a few months for training. He said, "I can't wait to have my first Christmas in America!"

This year has gone by so quickly. It has been a very busy but productive year for me. Unfortunately, my new responsibilities as a priest has kept me away from the dojo more than I would like, but this is only the initial period of intensive training which will end with the New Year.

I am not a great martial artist or teacher. But, throughout history, many great martial artists have eventually turned to religion. It appears outwardly that martial arts deals with "taking lives" and religion deals with "saving lives," but, in dealing with the problem of "life and death," both martial arts and religion are very similar. This is especially so with Aikido, I believe. There is an old saying in martial arts, "the sword that preserves life, the sword that takes life (Katsujinken satsujinto)." This is the great problem of all martial artists. True martial arts, like religion, deals with "saving lives." "Saving lives" is true martial arts and the ultimate purpose of Aikido training. When I speak of religion I hope that everyone understands that I am not pushing one religion over another. In terms of "religion," I am speaking of your personal "faith." I think it is difficult to realize this personal faith in the typical bureaucratic and commercially oriented organized religions of today. Faith is achieved in your daily life when you begin to see your life as an art form and see your life from the standpoint of your Aikido training. Have a happy holiday season. Thank you.

Rev. Kensho Furuya

MASTER HSU CHI SEMINAR ON NOVEMBER 11th-12th.

We were very happy to have Master Hsu Chi of Taiwan visit our dojo and conduct a most successful and interesting seminar for members of the dojo on November 11th and 12th. About twenty-five students participated. Master Hsu taught six hours in Saturday and three hours on Sunday. On Saturday evening, we held a Welcome Party at the Hop Li Seafood Restaurant in Chinatown. We will plan another seminar with Master Hsu next year.

MESSAGE FROM MASTER HSU ON THE 1st ACLA SEMINAR

By Master Hsu Chi

Eleven years ago, shortly after I first arrived in this country, I was invited to a performance where, for the first time, I met Aikido sensei Daniel Furuya. Many first-rated Asian martial artists who lived in the U.S. were there. Most of them knew each other, some quite well. But I was new. Aside from the Chinese kung-fu sifus, I didn't find very many familiar faces.

I sat in the front row waiting for the event to start. Next to me was a Mr. Furuya. No one formally introduced us so we politely nodded and chatted, not realizing that this was the beginning of an eleven-year-long friendship.

After I stomped on stage (performed my Ba Ji Chuan) my dear neighbor, Daniel, expressing surprise and pleasure, was highly complimentary. To tell the truth, I wasn't really moved by this nice treatment. I thought he was just being polite.

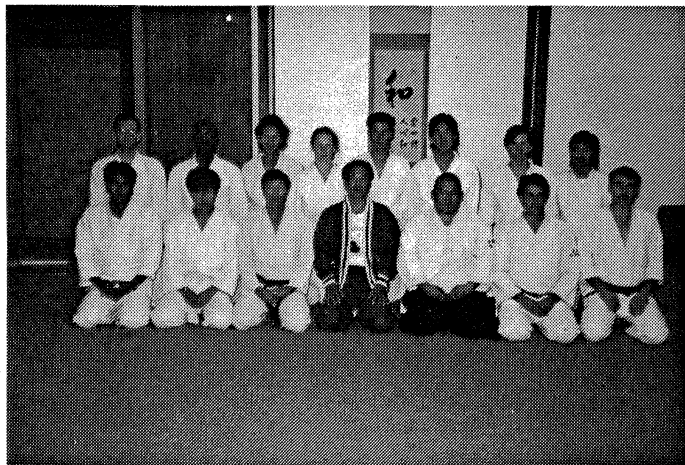
Afterwards, due to his persistence, I finally agreed to appear in my first cover story on Inside Kung Fu. Though he was a senior staff member of the magazine and thus it was a part of his job, I began to realize that between us we shared many similarities of attitudes to the martial arts, philosophy and temperament. In fact, we had much in common beyond the superficialities of our mutual interests.

Through our years of contact Daniel gave me much encouragement. And the biggest was certainly when he left the magazine and started to build his own dojo. He hired a traditional Japanese carpenter to design it, studied with him, and then worked with him in building it. If you can tell a person by the way he dresses, I

Page 2.

MASTER HSU continued.

would like to say you can tell a master from his school. To my knowledge, the Aikido Center is the neatest, most enjoyable, and most truly traditional dojo I have seen outside of Japan.



Master Hsu and participants in his first seminar at the dojo. November 11th-12th, 1989.

Daniel always said I could use his dojo for workshops, training, and practice. He also tried to get me to give a workshop for his own beloved students. He told me students can only learn Aikido and Iaido from him. Even Aikido and Iaido have many different styles. If you always follow one master, you can become narrow-minded. So he invited other Aikido sensei to teach his students. Certainly, inviting me to share Chinese martial arts is another giant step ahead. Many people would find this unacceptable. I truly admire his vision and courage in building his dojo and guiding his students.

When checking our schedules to set up a workshop date, we got so excited we decided not to wait until next year. So on November 11 and 12, Veteran's Day weekend, I found myself sitting in Little Tokyo (Los Angeles Japantown). And this time the same old friend sitting beside me was not only Aikido sensei Daniel Furuya but also Zen Buddhist Priest Kensho Furuya!

None of us got a long weekend off but rather worked as hard as soldiers in battle before a retreat. According to my agreement with their sensei, I shared Tai Ji Chuan, the Grain Leaf Sabre, general ideas about the kung fu way to fight, and even discussed my research trip to China with the students. Some of them had already read the English version of this trip in Black Belt and the Japanese version in Wu Shu Magazine.

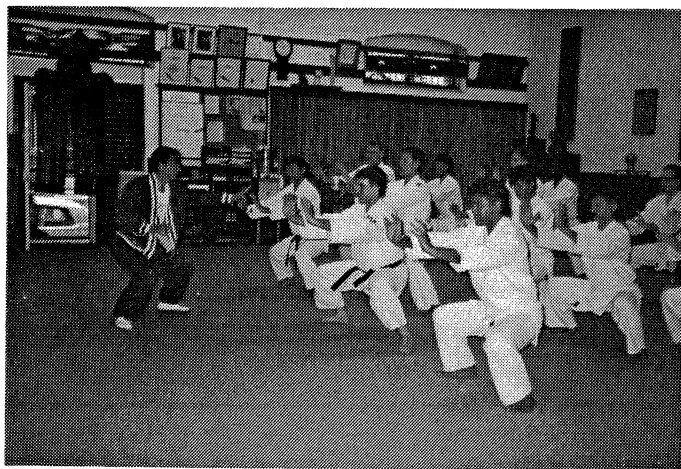
Sensei Furuya and I decided that the amount and

learning abilities, interest, and attitude. Though I had confidence in them, I was still surprised that they could sustain such a high level of concentration through the long hours of work and fatigue.

I shared with them some of the original Chen style Tai Ji Chuan which is still practiced by the older generation in Chen Village - the birthplace of Tai Ji Chuan. Then we used Tai Ji as an example to explore the real usage of Chinese kung fu and see how it differs from other Asian martial arts - and even from kung fu movies!

The Grain Leaf Sabre has participated in the history of cultural exchange between China and Japan. Briefly, this sabre was brought back by the Chien Tang Shi (scholar monks sent by Japan to the Tang Dynasty, 618 A.D. - 907 A.D.). In the Ming Dynasty (1368 A.D. - 1644 A.D.), Japanese pirates attacked and defeated Chinese troops and their most powerful weapon was this sabre, already called the samurai sword. This shock motivated Chinese martial artists to study Japanese sabre techniques. The famous General Chi Ji Guang, whose soldiers finally defeated the pirates from the sea, so admired the enemy's sabre technique that he not only adopted the weapon for his troops but also enlarged its size and added Chinese sabre techniques to its usage. Later on this type of sabre - its shape looks like a grain leaf - was named Miao Dao. As it was passed down, each generation polished and improved its technique. It was used in battle as recently as the Sino-Japanese war and is presently practiced in Northern China.

About half of the workshop participants had samurai sword training but all of them practiced the Miao Dao form, technique, and even usage. Besides Chen Tai Ji and Miao Dao we even found some time to practice the Ba Shi - Eight Postures Fundamental Training.



Master Hsu explaining the fundamentals.

I have great admiration for Sensei Furuya's students.

Page 3.

MASTER HSU continued.

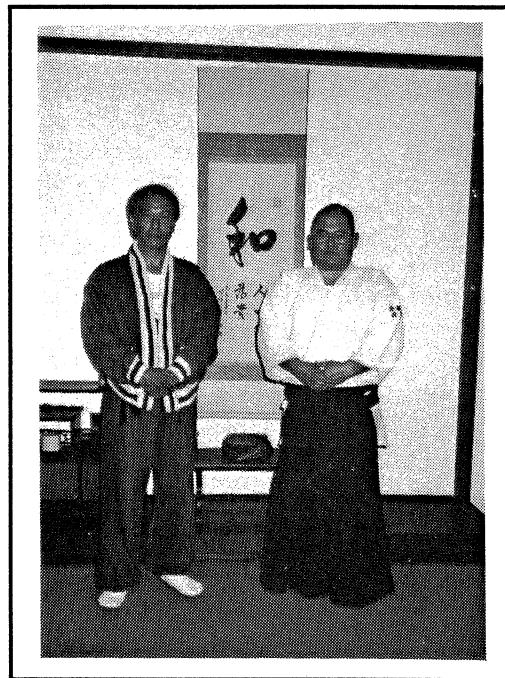
They are the real winners because their level of ability made it possible for me to share so much of the Chinese martial arts with them. But we shouldn't forget that one's underlying basic attitude is even more important than physical ability. I could easily see that due to my friend Kensho Furuya's influence, all his students were open-minded, humble, curious, and eager to learn. It is my belief that these traits extend beyond my workshop or the martial arts and are the basis for mature, progressive, responsible, cultured citizens.



Master Hsu explaining the fine points of Kung Fu technique to ACLA students.

As we all know, in modern times self-defense is only a small part of martial arts training. Much more important than training a fearless fighter is training a better person who will contribute to others and be open to further self-improvement. Based on this, may I congratulate Sensei Furuya and all his students for their hard work and fine accomplishments along this path.

Master Hsu Chi



Maater Hsu Chi and Sensei in the dojo after the very successful seminar. The scroll in the "shomen" reads "Wa" or "Harmony."

**Dojo Correspondence:
From Ms. Hanna Widmer,
Amsterdam, Holland**

"To Furuya Sensei and the Aikido-ka of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles:

Let me thank you all for the enjoyable training I've joined as a guest from Amsterdam the other evening. It was a great pleasure to me having visited your dojo. The special welcoming sphere of this place has made me feel very comfortable and receptive even though I've shown up with a knee-injury which I had brought from the East Coast, there seemed to be no danger to my knee here. The dojo's supportive encouraging made it easy for me to relax and get ready to challenge myself in a constructive way. So that evening I've discovered ways how to deal quite well with my new knee handicap, the beginning of a positive process.

Also the beauty of the hall, the care of each detail awakened my joy and respect to this place, during my personal warm-up. May winter be another good training period to all of you."

Hanna Widmer

Page 4.

TO BECOME AWARE OF RELINQUISHMENT

**Reverend Hakujin Kuroyanagi, Zenshuji Soto
Mission.**

Reprinted from the Kokoro no Kate. Volume #5.

There is a popular proverb; "It is most obvious that death will come. But, there is nothing more uncertain as to when it comes." I think this is absolutely true. Life is transient. At the same time, no one knows when to expect the end of life. This gap between the reality and the selfish consciousness gives us a great deal of uncertainty of pain and fear. Therefore, we cannot truly face this reality. Buddha's teaching begins here. Buddhism is a way for us to become aware, in order to live in this impermanent existence without fear.

Before I became a minister, I was sent from Japan as a trainee to the Zenshuji Temple. On the very first day I visited the temple, I was invited to the Bishop's room. As soon as I sat down comfortably on the sofa, Bishop said to me, "I have heard that you have brought enough money with you from your Institute to subsist your stay here for 6 months. Give it all to me right now." I was surprised at what he had said, because, at that time, I really had a considerable amount of money. To a person such as me, he sounded just like a burglar attempting to rob me. He looked directly into my eyes as if examining my mental attitude as a trainee, and his following words made me realize that he was not joking. "You seem to expect to gain something from your experience here. You appear to me that you intend to take back your accomplishments when you return to Japan. All this will be in vain if you proceed to think in this manner. All you have to remember is to leave everything here." Suddenly I understood the words Bishop hurled at me. It was a very important point to remind me in continuing my practice of Zen Buddhism, which states, "Do not confuse your mind with unnecessary attachment to the past or the future. Just be aware of the now and the present moment, and let your body and mind work freely."

This incident reminded me of a short poem by an old Japanese man, a pious Pure Land Buddhist follower, who sang:

"I came forth into this world 70 years ago without owning anything. Now again I am allowed to go back without taking anything with me."

He says happily that all you can do is leave everything. Since good things such as fortune and fame, even unpleasant things like hatred, envy, sadness and so forth cannot accompany us at death. Yes,

indeed our life is filled with everything that must be relinquished when death comes. Nevertheless in our lifetime, it is also true that we are apt to think that there are many things that must be acquired and re-possessed. This is the origin of fear and confusion, not only about death, but also about our daily routines. That is why I felt fear upon hearing the Bishop's hint. Because I realized that instant he was telling me in a direct manner that this awareness will clear your mind of any delusive attachment, which can easily become a burden, and free one's mind from confusion.

If one struggles to acquire a prized possession such as material things by greed, this item will not satisfy one's craving simply because it will bring about a fear of its insufficiency. In opposition to this, if you freely shared this possession with others, it now appears to be endlessly abundant. Every human being that can perceive life in these terms, and who daily upholds this practice of living in the present now can rightfully be called an enlightened one.

Reverend Hakujin Kuroyanagi

(Note: Reverend Kuroyanagi is one of Sensei's teachers in training and arranged all the details of Sensei's Ordination Ceremony in October.)

OMNI MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

On November 18, 1989, Mr. Robert Burger of Omni Magazine from New York interviewed Sensei and visited the dojo for an article scheduled to appear in Omni Magazine in February or March of 1990.

JAPAN EXPO '89 DEMONSTRATION NOVEMBER 26, 1989

A very successful demonstration of Iaido and Aikido was held at the Japan Expo '89 at the Los Angeles Convention Center on November 26, 1989. This demonstration was sponsored by Fumio Demura Sensei of Shito Ryu Karate at his Invitational Karate Tournament during the Expo. Many of the top karate masters in this country, such as Sensei Kubota, Yamazaki and Higaonna, also appeared in the demo.

Dojo participants were: Douglas Firestone, Kazuho Nishida, James Graves, Mitsuko Yoshimoto, Yasushi Matsuki, Morgan Weisser, Sukko Lee and Mark Francis, with assistants; Andrea Guild and Chris Prejean.

Page 5.

DOJO SCHEDULE

December 1st - 7th.
Sensei will be in Rohatsu-Sesshin (Intensive Zen Training).

December 10th.
There will be no classes today. There will be a special Tea Ceremony for members of the Sei-An-Kai to held at the dojo.

December 25th
Christmas Day. There will be a special Holiday morning class from 10:00am to 11:30am.

No evening classes today. Please don't drink and drive carefully.

December 31st.
Special New Year's Practice from 11:30pm to 12:30am (New Year's). Please bring your bokken (wooden training sword and pot luck snack for a simple celebration afterwards.

January 1st.
Holiday. No classes today.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Please note that the Children's Class is now from 8:00am in the morning every Sunday. The schedule was changed by a majority of the parent's requests. Parents are encouraged to bring in more new students for the class.

The Open Class on Sunday is now from 10:30am to 11:30am.

We have new, updated flyers for the dojo. You are welcome to pass these out to your friends, neighbors and prospective students. Thank you.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

*Praying for peace, good health and
happiness in the New Year.*



Rev. Kensho Furuya

**Aikido Center of Los Angeles
Sotoshu Hokubei Betsuin Zenshuji**

**Aikido So Hombu Dojo - Aikikai
United States Aikido Federation Eastern Region
Zen Nippon Battodo Renmei - West Coast Branch
Nanka Token Kai (So Calif. Sword Society)
Japanese Sword Society of the United States
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kai
Nihon Token Hozon Kyokai**