



# The Aiki Dojo

道の為、世の為、人の為、合気道

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## Our Japan Trip!



## Care and Camaraderie by David Ito Aikido Chief Instructor

Lately, as a dojo we have been doing a lot of traveling together visiting other dojos in other countries. For me this is one of the most enjoyable things about Aikido, but up until this Japan trip, I didn't really know why. Upon reflection, I realized that a dojo is a community of people who care about each other.

Often times, when we think about *budo* or the martial arts, we often think of it as an individual pursuit. Nothing could be further from the truth. Whether we like it or not, none of us can get to where we need or want to go by ourselves – we need teachers and training partners to help support us on our path.

The art of Aikido is no different. In Aikido it is crucial that the *uke* and *nage* work together in a spirit of mutual cooperation on the journey towards not only Aikido technical mastery but also towards self-mastery. In our dojo, this spirit of mutual cooperation doesn't begin or end at the edge of the training mat or even at the dojo door – we are trained to embody Aikido's spirit of mutual cooperation or being mindful of others into our everyday lives.

Although these trips are about Aikido training and demonstrating how well we are trained as students of our dojo and Aikido, what is more important are the bonds of camaraderie that are created with your travel companions.



One such moment of mutual concern or camaraderie came on the last night in Japan, for the students from Spain, while we were having our farewell party. We were all enjoying Japanese *izakaya* or small plate foods and drinking and everyone was reveling in the stories about the trip. As I looked around, I noticed that almost everyone had a huge smile on their face as they enjoyed the

company of the people sitting around them. At that point one of the students from Spain came to me and wanted to discuss my upcoming travel plans. He said, "I was looking over your travel itinerary and I noticed something that could be done better." I was so surprised that this student who had been acting as our navigator the whole trip was still working despite the fact that they were leaving the next morning. Most people don't care about things which don't directly concern them so I was surprised that he cared so much about my well-being to bring something

like this to my attention. That is, I shouldn't be so surprised, it showed how well he was trained.

That's when I realized that these trips are about how Aikido teaches us how to be mindful of others, which causes us to care about one another's happiness. When someone cares about us, we in turn want to care about them and that is what creates camaraderie. Thus we can only reach up to our highest levels with the



support and help of others and that is why a dojo is a community.

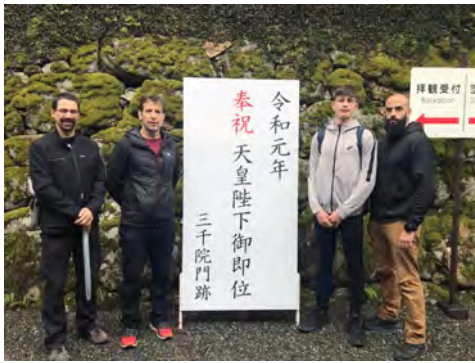
The Dalai Lama once wrote, “Whether we like it or not, we’re all connected, and it is unthinkable to be happy all by oneself.” These words are so true and can be thought of as the crux of why we train.

Someone once said that Japanese culture could be summed up as “being mindful of others.” When we train or when we travel, we do so as a group or moreover as a community. Within a community, everyone looks out or cares for one another – we have a shared investment in each other’s success or happiness. To train is to realize that everyone is suffering and thus we learn to care for our training partner and the people we find in our company but hopefully we also learn to extend that care, concern and camaraderie farther out to encompass the whole world.



In order for a dojo to succeed, every person needs to think about one another or the whole thing will fall apart. Understanding the mutual desire for other’s well-being creates a sense of care which creates camaraderie as everyone on the journey lets go of their egos and becomes mindful of the people they find themselves with. When everyone is working together, the shared concern and mutual letting go creates something truly magical that can be shared by all the people involved.

I am glad that everyone had a wonderful time training and traveling around Japan and I am thankful and appreciative for how well our students worked together. I also wanted to say a special thank you to Hiro Tateno for all his help and support. This trip would have been much more difficult without his selfless help and wonderful camaraderie. It was a pleasure to travel with everyone and I had a great time. It makes me happy that our students showed what it means for a student to be “well trained” and I think Furuya Sensei would be proud of how we conducted ourselves. Until next time!•



## Old Becomes New

by Javier Garcia Chief Instructor, Aikido La Gomera Aikikai



Although that was my third time in Japan, it was completely different from all the other times, as I felt it as a symbolic representation of a meaning of "Ai" for me. In Japan, people from all over the world gather together around the idea of sharing the love and compassion of Aikido. Sometimes it felt weird to share what I know with people much wiser and experienced than me, but I wanted to contribute what little I knew in order to make the trip better for everyone.

cided with the changing into the new era Reiwa from the old era Heisei. Realizing both of these auspicious occurrences made this trip very memorable and somewhat humbling. Many of the places we visited I had already been to, but I enjoyed discovering new details and seeing the amazed faces from the first-timers when they saw the things that I had already seen and that had touched me when I experienced them the first-time. Japan is a place of great heritage that is filled with splendid places and very kind people – those are just a few words that I hope can summarize in a small way the wonderful experiences I had.

The experience itself was deeply more touching than I expected. During this trip it was the 50th anniversary of O'Sensei's passing. We attended the Aiki-jinja Taisai event at Iwama Dojo which coin-

I can't thank everyone from Los Angeles enough – they always manage to make us feel comfortable, even in a far-away country. Of course, my deepest thanks to Almaraz Sensei, who works so hard at teaching us. This trip I saw so many wonderful things which made me want to train harder and improve my level so that I may be of assistance and treat people the way I was treated. •



## The Spirit of Japan

by Juan Jimenez Aikido 1st Kyu, Aikido Kodokai

I have always loved the traditional martial arts and I believe that the history and the culture of Japan have an inexplicable relationship to traditional martial arts. Therefore, I have always wanted travel to Japan to discover and get a better understanding of Japanese culture.

Our Japan trip was an amazing experience. Every person, every place and everything breathed this noble culture of the old noble warriors, and a feeling of wellness and temperance that defines the Japanese people. I could literally feel the spirit of Japanese culture in every breath I took in every place we went.

Our travel experience was an amazing and intense 10 days. It was my first time coming to Japan and training at Hombu Dojo. The Aikido classes at Hombu were very exciting and training at Doshu's class was incredible. Everyone I trained with or met while training in Japan treated me with respect and exhibited the graciousness and humility which typifies Japanese culture. The pinnacle my Aikido experience was attending the Aiki-jinja Taisai event at Iwama Dojo commemorating the passing of O'Sensei.

During the Golden Week holiday vacation in Japan, we spent some time enjoying the solitude and austere temples and shrines of Kyoto and communing with nature as we walked through the wonderful Japanese gardens. We stayed in a *minshuku* or guest house which featured a large *onsen* hot spring bath. I really enjoyed the traditional lodging, the hot springs which were open to nature and

the authentic Japanese meals.

Tokyo is a wonderful place which is a mixture of old and new. We all enjoyed walking around buying the latest electronics in Akihabara, but also visiting historic temples like Sensoji in Asakusa. We spent a lot of time walking around and buying souvenirs, but my favorite time was our last dinner together. We spent the evening eating, drinking and laughing. I knew I that I now have friends to visit in Japan and I want to return soon.



Japan is a country of beautiful surroundings with a wonderful mixture of things that are old and things that are new – very old temples and heritage and the latest cutting-edge technology. It seems paradoxical to have these two worlds in one place, but Japan seems to have a balance. This balance could be from their spirit *budo* which is part of every aspect of their society which seems to maintain a respect of ancient culture and traditional way of life.

Thank you to everyone who helped make my first trip to Japan possible. I appreciate how much work must have gone into planning everything. Every person I met made me feel very taken care of and attended to. I want to also say thank you to Ito Sensei and Hiro Tateno who took good care of me and a heartfelt thanks to Almaraz Sensei for allowing me to join them on this trip and for his teaching.

I will definitely come back to Japan!•

## Travel Opportunities

by Santiago Garcia Almaraz Chief Instructor, Aikido Kodokai

Mark Twain once said, "I have found out that there ain't no surer way to find out whether you like people or hate them than to travel with them." Traveling is a good opportunity to get to know your travel companions. Traveling creates an opportunity which can unite or separate us, make us happy or sad or create enjoyable or bitter memories. When we travel with people it is only a matter of time before our true self or the true "you" comes out. At that point everyone discovers who we really are.

This trip to Japan, we spent 10 intense days together in which we were lucky to see many things, visit new places and meet and train with different people at different dojos. The first week we trained at Hombu Dojo and attended Doshu's and Dojo-Cho's 6:30 am class. Those classes were enjoyably intense classes that prepared us for the long days that lie ahead.

We carved our way through many of the popular tourist neighborhoods in Tokyo and Ito Sensei and Javier shared their knowledge of the areas with us so that we could navigate the crowds more easily. Although we had a plan, Javier acted as navigator and showed us many different points of interest and further enriched our experience of Tokyo.

The second week, we went to Kyoto where there are over 2000 temples and shrines. Everywhere we looked in even the smallest corners we saw so many captivating things. Some of the places we had been to before, but we ended up discovering them all over again as we explored many parts of Kyoto. We stayed at hotel with an *onsen* or hot spring while in Kyoto. It was high atop a mountain and it seemed like it was a privileged location. The hot mineral waters calmed us and eased our bodies from the first weeks intense training. The wonderful meals were heartwarming and an opportunity to have fun and get to know each other.

Returning to Tokyo was a mad dash of sightseeing and souvenir shopping before we closed our suitcases and returned to Spain.



When we parted, we all longed to visit each other again and visit friends and find new and wonderful places to discover.

I wish to thank Hiro Tateno for all his help and support. I also wanted to thank the members of Kotokukai Dojo for the nice welcome dinner and their teacher, Nakano Sensei for also attending our farewell dinner. Those nights were unforgettable, and I will always remember the warmth and camaraderie.

I hope that everyone enjoyed Japan and this travel experience as much as I did. I am very grateful for everyone's involvement and the help which made this trip successful.



So much goes into making one of these trips come together. It is a lot of work that most never understand or see. However, it is also a lesson so that one day when it is your turn to do it for others, you will know what to do and how to do it.

Mark Twain's quote is true – we really do get to know someone so much more when we travel with them. However, what we learn is not good or bad. What we learn is more about ourselves and how to better care for ourselves and for one another.



Ito Sensei and I were talking at the farewell dinner about how these trips are about camaraderie. When we travel with the dojo, we learn more about each other and, hopefully, discover more about ourselves. Furuya Sensei's teaching dictates that in training we learn to compromise, collaborate, and help each other and that these trips are an extension of that training so that we could all enjoy ourselves. •



## **A Taste of Japan** by Juan Gonzalez Aikido 1st Kyu, Aikido Kodokai



I cannot believe how fast 10 days went by. There was so much to see and do in Japan. This was my first trip to Japan and the trip was an exciting and wonderfully unique experience. My favorite experience was training at Hombu Dojo and attending Doshu's class – amazing! My most memorable experience was playing basketball in Yoyogi park. My most favorite place was Kyoto. I loved visiting the temples and shrines and walking around in these very old places. However, the thing I liked the most was the food! I may be only 15 years old, but I was truly surprised at all the different gastronomy – Japan is a food lovers paradise. I am grateful to Ito Sensei and my father, Almaraz Sensei for giving me this wonderful experience. I will never forget my first trip to Japan!•



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## 行事 .....

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>June 8 (Saturday)</b><br>Steven Shaw Memorial Seminar<br>Denver, Colorado | <b>July 11-12</b><br>Zenshuji Obon Carnival Set-up               |
| <b>June 29 (Saturday)</b><br>Intensive seminar                               | <b>July 13-14</b><br>Zenshuji Obon Carnival<br>Dojo Volunteering |
| <b>July 4 (Thursday)</b><br>Special Holiday Class 9:30 AM                    | <b>July 27 (Saturday)</b><br>Intensive seminar                   |

The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles (ACLA) admit students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. •

## Aikido Training Schedule

### 合気道 時間割 .....

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Saturdays</b><br>6:30-8:00 AM*<br>9:30-10:30 AM<br>10:45-11:45 AM                    | Intensive<br>Advanced Class<br>Regular Class                       | <b>Wednesdays</b><br>6:30-7:30 AM<br>5:15-6:15 PM<br>6:30-7:30 PM | Morning Practice<br>Fundamentals<br>Regular Class |
| <b>Sundays</b><br>9:00-10:00 AM<br>10:15-11:15 AM<br>11:30 AM-12:30 PM<br>12:45-1:45 PM | Children's Class<br>Regular Class<br>Fundamentals<br>Open Practice | <b>Thursdays</b><br>6:30-7:30 PM<br>7:45-8:45 PM                  | Regular Class<br>Open Practice                    |
| <b>Mondays</b><br>6:30-7:30 AM<br>6:30-7:30 PM  | Morning Practice<br>Regular Class                                  | <b>Fridays</b><br>6:30-7:30 AM<br>6:30-7:30 PM                    | Morning Practice<br>Fundamentals                  |
| <b>Tuesdays</b><br>6:30-7:30 PM   | Advanced Class   |   |   |

NOTE: Visitors are welcome to observe our Morning, Fundamentals, or Regular Classes.

\*Last Saturday of the month is Intensive Seminar. By Invitation only.

## Iaido Training Schedule

### 居合道 時間割 .....

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Saturdays</b><br>8:00-9:00 AM Regular Class | <b>Sundays</b><br>7:45-8:45 AM Regular Class |
|--|--|



# The Aiki Dojo

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17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, JAPAN

### The Aikido Center of Los Angeles

has been awarded Official *Konin* recognition by the Aikikai Foundation, Aikido World Headquarters.

We are committed to the study and practice of the teachings of the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba and his legitimate successors, Kisshomaru Ueshiba and the present Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.

We are a not-for-profit, traditional Aikido dojo dedicated to preserving the honored values and traditions of the arts of Aikido and Iaido. With your continued understanding and support, we hope that you will also dedicate yourself to your training and enjoy all the benefits that Aikido and Iaido have to offer.

### The Aikido Center of Los Angeles

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