



AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

940 E. Second Street #7
Los Angeles, California
90012
(213) 687-3673

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November - December, 1991

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The dojo would like to extend its warmest greetings and best wishes to all our students and friends during the Happy Holidays and the New Year, 1992.

*Aikido Center of Los Angeles
LA Branch - Zen Nippon Battodo Kenshinkai*

Rev. Kensho Furuya

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Open & Beginner's Class

**Mondays thru Fridays
6:15pm to 7:15pm**

**Monday, Tuesday & Thursdays
7:15pm to 8:30pm**

**Saturday Mornings
10:15am to 11:30am**

**Sunday Mornings
10:30am to 11:30am**

**Advanced Classes (3rd Kyu & Up)
Saturdays 11:30am to 12:30pm**

**Children's Class
Sundays 8:00am to 9:00am**

**Please note: No second class (7:30pm class) on
Wednesdays and Fridays.**

SENSEI VISITS THE UNITED NATIONS

From November 19th through the 23rd, Sensei accompanied his Zen master, the Bishop Kenko Yamashita to New York to speak before the United Nations on November 21st. Sensei presented an opening address and introduction and did a simultaneous translation for Bishop Yamashita's speech on "Zen Buddhism and World Peace." The speech was well received and considered a big success.

This was a culmination of one year's work between the Japanese government, the United Nations and the Zenshuji Temple in Los Angeles. It was indeed an international project. The essence of the Bishop's message was that we really don't know what peace is. Perhaps the experts in the United Nations knows better than himself as a Zen priest. But, we must create a beautiful, self-less world of our natural instinct to do good for one another. The Bishop's speech brought tears to many listeners' eyes.

Sensei attended to the Bishop during his stay in New York leaving on Tuesday morning, November 19th, and returning Saturday afternoon on November 23rd. Sensei met many of his New York friends including Mr. Dick Cavett and Mr. Hiroaki Sato, the translator of "Sword and the Mind" and about fifteen other books.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

I wish to thank everyone who took good care of the dojo while I was away in New York. I consider everyone who helped out in the dojo and continued to attend class an essential part of the success of my New York Trip. Many thanks from the bottom of my heart.

Kensho Furuya

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POINTS TO WATCH IN YOUR TRAINING

When a student begins to learn the various Aikido techniques, his first thought is it get the basic movement down and then progressively try to execute the movements faster and more effectively with his partner. We stumble alot because we forget parts of the movement or we have trouble making the technique work well with different partners. Sometimes, the movement itself seems too difficult or impossible. Most of the time, the movement seems meaningless.

But, gradually, as one practices the movement, it comes easier and easier. We don't notice it too much ourselves. But the teacher sees it very clearly. We usually think, "I'll never understand this technique." But, nevertheless, while the student is thinking this, as the teacher, I see great improvement.

If the student stops to think about the general direction of training in our dojo, he will see consistency in the techniques. All the movements are related and graduate successively from one to the other. This is important to keep in mind. Don't try to understand each movement or technique separately. Look at all the movements collectively or as different viewpoints of the same movement.

Posture is very important. Posture and balance must be maintained throughout the entire movement. We forget this easily. Proper concentration or "zanshin" is very important. Techniques are not physical movements alone, they are also expressions of how we think, what we are doing, are our attitudes about what is going on around us.

Students often look at techniques as procedures or formulas and get stuck on definitions, values and meanings. Techniques are really like living organisms; breathing, changing, growing, developing, and continually moving. That is why techniques cannot be defined verbally or theoretically. It is not something we dream up in our heads, it is the actually living process of ourselves from one moment to the next. To understand this means to bring order and beauty into one's life.

Don't think in terms of "strong"; think in terms of "correct." Strength without proper technique is brutal and only leads to chaos and misunderstanding.

Then, again, technique without strength, only leads to disillusionment and falsehood. It has always held true for the last two thousand years. This process can only be understood as the interaction between the teacher and student. It is always the product (and nothing less) of correct teaching materialized within correct training.

The hardest thing to understand about Aikido is that it is always a giving process. It has nothing to do with profit or receiving. It is all giving. Give yourself without expecting anything in return. This is hard to understand.

In regular martial arts techniques, we learn to control, or suppress or deceive the opponent. Indeed, an ancient classic says, "Warfare is 100% deception." Taking advantage of the opponent's weak points, we find a clever way to defeat or overpower him. Aikido is quite different. We give ourselves to the opponent by allowing him to do anything he pleases. Freely blending with the opponent's movement as he does as he pleases, is the secret of Aikido technique. In this way, the opponent is already defeated from the very beginning no matter how he moves, no matter how fast he is, and no matter how strong he is. In Aikido, we call this "blending." This is difficult to understand and takes many years of practice. Keep it in mind always!

SPECIAL THANKS

To Mr. Richard Eloriagga for taking care of the dojo in the mornings while Sensei was in New York.

To Mr. Norman Lew for doing such a good job with the Sunday Morning Children's Class.

To Mr. Ken Furuya for taking care of Sensei's house in Altadena.

Dojo Bonenkai

The dojo will celebrate the year end "Bonenkai" ("Forgetting the Old Year Party") on December 21, 1991 after the first practice. Everyone is welcome. Please see the black belts if you wish to volunteer your time or talents.

We will also be planning a New Year's Party towards the later part of January, 1992. We need volunteers and talented people. Please help. Thank you.

Travel Notes: Aikido Center of Los Angeles

by Scott Anderson

Last August, I visited a *dojo* in Los Angeles called the Aikido Center of Los Angeles (ACLA). The *dojo* is located three blocks from Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles. ACLA is housed in a large commercial property and is three floors high. They have the same outstanding ventilation and changing facilities as Bond Street, so you'll definitely feel at home.

I chose this *dojo* for two reasons. First, I had seen a public *aikido* and *iaido* demonstration given by the *dojo* as part of the annual Nisei Week Celebration. Second, the *dojo* welcomed visitors—their mat fee is \$7. They offer quite a few classes and scheduling one is not difficult if you're visiting on a tight schedule.

I took a class taught by Reverend Furuya Sensei who was once a student of Kiss-homaru Ueshiba. The instruction was very good. ACLA literature reports that the *dojo* is a representative of the Aikido World Headquarters Aikikai and a member of the US Aikido Federation. The political affiliation didn't signify too much with me but for someone else that affiliation may be important.

One of the things that struck me about ACLA was their demonstrated sense of caring for one another and for the *dojo*. For instance, since I was new, a senior (*hakama*) student was detached to show me the ropes and etiquette of the *dojo*. Furuya Sensei also assigned another student, who had just signed up, to someone else as "their student." This may be something we might consider doing at Bond Street.

After class, each member of the *dojo* greets and introduces themselves to everyone in that practice session, individually. Another interesting thing we might want consider is the cleaning of the *dojo*. The Aikido Center of Los Angeles apparently cleans the *dojo* between each class!

Reverend Furuya Sensei is a Buddhist priest and the *dojo* actively shares his commitment to Community. ACLA is very much involved in various cultural, religious and martial arts activities in the Japanese-American community.

This is a good place to practice. If you are interested, the Aikido Center of Los Angeles is located at: 940 East Second Street - #7, Los Angeles, California 90012. The phone number is (213) 687-3673.

If you have names of *dojos* that you'd like to recommend to the members of the Bond Street Dojo, please let your Newsletter know. ▼

The above article was published in the The Bond Street Dojo's Irregular Newsletter dated November 7, 1991. It was sent to us by the author, Mr. Scott Anderson who visited our *dojo* in August, 1991. Thank you very much.

THE ART OF TEA

As part of the Zen School which Sensei is taking care of at Zenshuji, a traditional Japanese tea ceremony class is being initiated on Saturday afternoons. Those who are interested in learning the art of the tea ceremony, please see Sensei. We already have about 20 people signed up so space is very limited.

TO BE VICTORIOUS OVER ONESELF, STRIVE TO DEVELOP A SINCERE HEART

By Morihei Ueshiba

Viewed from the truth of the Universe, Aikido must follow the principles of Nature. All principles are, in fact, "ways" or "paths." To understand such principles and then make them manifest is, in turn, called "ho" or Law.

Aikido is Ho, the wondrous Law of Takemusu Aiki received from Heaven.

Aikido may also be described as the way of harmonizing Heaven, Earth and Man. Aikido is the way of harmonizing all things manifest and hidden. It is important to know that the techniques of Aikido are to purify the spirit and body through training (*Misogi*). Aikido techniques represent the principles of the Universe, and are the essence of the Universe.

For this reason, mastery of Aikido enables understanding of the principals of the Universe and, in turn, allows one to learn about oneself. For example, one can become One with the Universe by fully entering within a single movement of a sword. Aikido has what is called Myohoken, or the Wondrous Sword of the Law. On the other hand, this Way of the Sword can develop into the mistaken way, if welded by an individual who is yet complete. What, then, makes for a complete person?

To be complete, a person must first have a sincere and compassionate heart, possess an immovable direction, observe proper actions and exhibit compassionate truth. Based on true good and beauty, he must strive to maintain these attributes. He must work to progress atop this foundation towards brighter wisdom and sensitivity. All of this, though, requires true sincerity. Continued.

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Morihei Ueshiba O-Sensei continued:

In other words, it is essential to proceed down the path of Harmony with hearts unified in the spirit of sincerity and mutual love. Development of such a sincere heart must begin by overcoming oneself.

Kenshinkai Swordsmanship

Our Iaido group is doing very well and we have decided to give our group an official name: Kenshinkai. "Kenshin" means "heart" or "spirit" of the sword (Ken).

Members who are interested in studying iaido and tameshigiri (cutting), please see Sensei. Membership is limited due to space restrictions in the dojo.

Training Uniforms

It seems to take a long time for our supplier to get in uniforms which we need for the students. If you need to order a uniform, please order well in advance. It is hard to predict when they come in and they seem to sell out immediately. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Membership Drive

We would like to build up our membership for the New Year. Please encourage your friends to join our practice. Word of mouth is, by far, the best advertisement for the dojo.

Also we need volunteers to take our Newsletter, every month, to local bookstores such as Amerasia Bookstore in Little Tokyo and the Bodhi Tree Bookstore in West Hollywood. If you live near these bookstores or go by them from time to time, please contact one of the Blackbelts to volunteer your time.

Let's try to build up our dojo membership. Thank you very much.

Individual Training Schedule

As many have noticed, we have had to cut our training hours temporarily. We no longer have the afternoon classes and the Wednesday and Friday evening second classes. As our membership grows again, we can institute these classes again at any time. Two reasons for this are: Sensei has become rather busy at the Zenshuji Temple at the moment and many black belts are busy at their own jobs.

The dojo is open early on weekdays from Monday through Fridays, so students are welcome to come early for practice by themselves. It is more interesting if you bring a partner to the dojo to practice with or meet your partner early at the dojo. You will find that you can learn much through individual practice coupled with regular class practice.

The dojo is usually open at 5:30pm but we can open the dojo from 5:00pm at any time. Everyone is welcome to practice at the dojo anytime.

Black belts are also very much encouraged to maintain regular training hours and help more with taking care of the classes.

WHEN SHOWING RESPECT TO OTHERS, NEVER BE OUTDONE

During practice, I have noticed that some people bow very deeply and say "thank you" very sincerely and some people just kind of nod their heads. If both sides nod their heads in agreement to say "thank you" or if both sides bow deeply to each other to say "thank you," this is fine depending on the situation. But, if one side bows deeply and the other just kind of nods his head, this is very bad among the students. If there is a question of "how" polite to be, always overdo it. Never let the other side outdo you. Some people say that there is no time to be polite. This is wrong. There is always time to be polite but we haven't trained enough and we don't know enough to understand this. This is very important to understand among your classmates.

In decorum, too much can become impolite and not enough can border on rudeness, part of your training is to achieve this perfect balance. Without this, you can never converse with or learn from the great masters of the art. Please keep this in mind, always.