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The Aikido Center of Los Angeles LLC

The Aiki Dojo

Affiliation: The Aikido World Headquarters, 17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Rev. Kensho Furuya Foundation

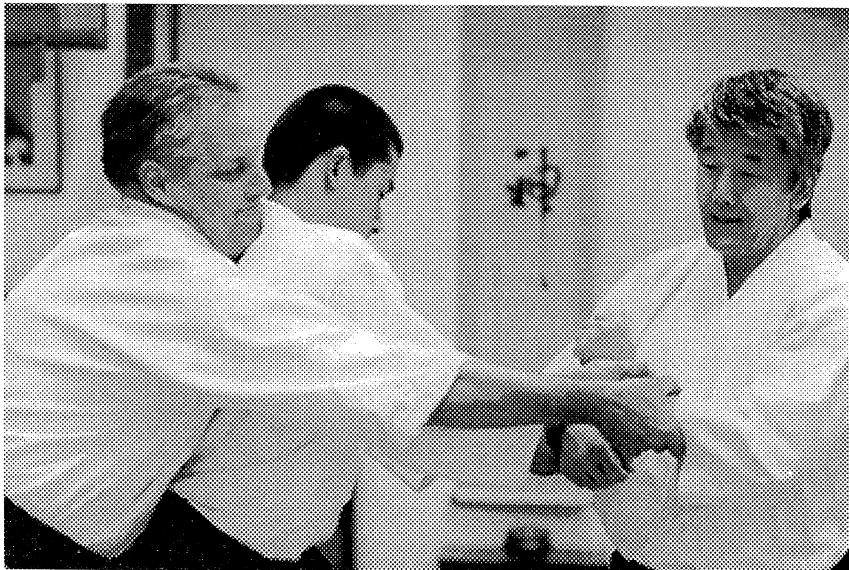
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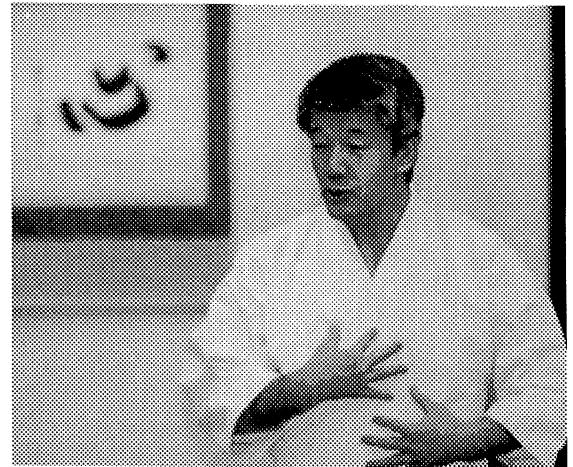
April 1, 2002

Volume XX. Volume 4.

O'Sensei's 34th Memorial Service April 26th.

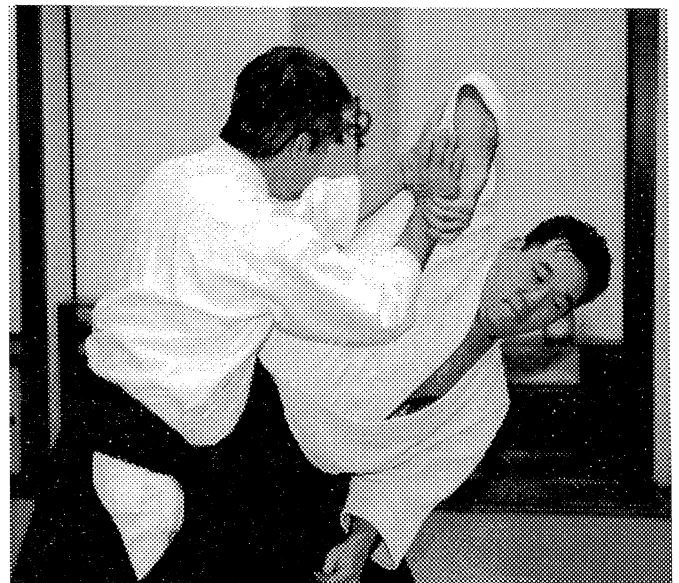


Weekend Seminar With Hiroshi Ikeda Sensei.

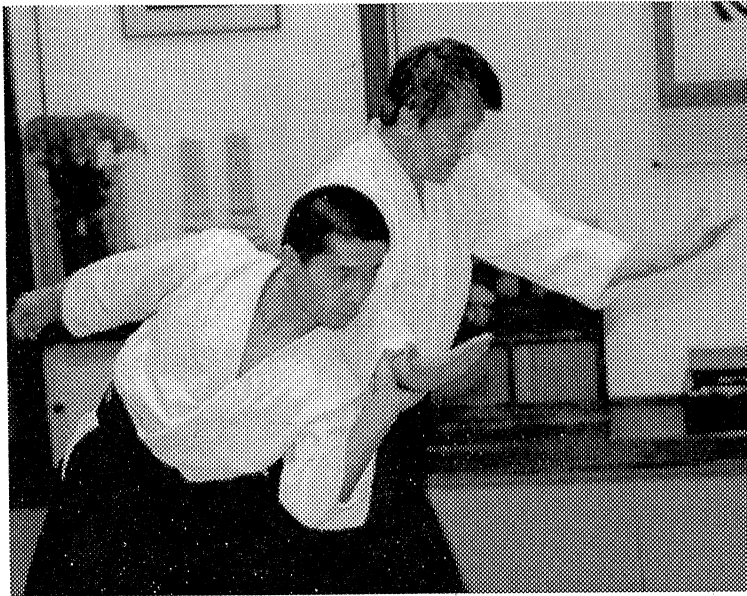


On March 15, 16, 17th, we spent a wonderful weekend hosting Hiroshi Ikeda Sensei, 7th Dan, Chief Instructor of the Boulder Aikikai, at his first seminar in our Dojo. Ikeda Sensei's flight arrived a little late on Friday afternoon, due to some mechanical trouble with the airplane, so he arrived just in time to check into the hotel and arrive to the Dojo to conduct a special practice of Black Belts and advanced students. Everyone immediately enjoyed his warm and instructive class emphasizing a concentrated and focused movement centered in the hips. Dinner afterwards was at Ma Jya Guan's, a Chinese Islamic Restaurant which turned out to be a tasty and unique experience for Ikeda Sensei. Afterwards, Ikeda Sensei and Sensei enjoyed a long talk deep into the night.

Saturday morning, the Dojo was filled with eager students for the first class from 10:00am-12noon and again at 3:00pm-5:00pm. Much of the same areas were covered with katatetori, again emphasizing strong movement in the hips with proper extension of energy in the arms. Ikeda Sensei enjoyed lunch of dim-sum in Chinatown nearby the Dojo. In the evening, we enjoyed dinner at Nic & Stef's in downtown. Because of an early flight back home before the night snow, our Sunday class was held from 10:00am-12:00noon, and a quick



Special Ikeda Sensei Seminar Issue:



Demonstrating with Mark Ty.

luncheon in Korea town before heading off to LAX.

Due to short time in Los Angeles, Ikeda and Sensei had many to discuss but did not have the time and agreed to get together soon.

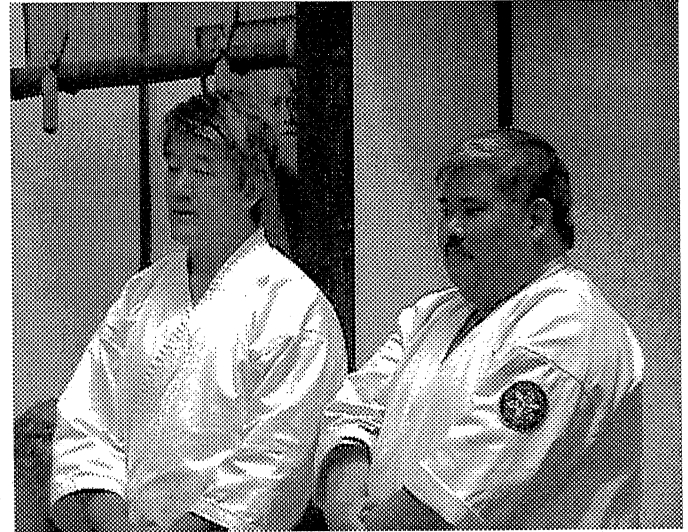
Ikeda loved the old Japanese style Dojo and expressed that this type of Dojo does not exist in Japan anymore. He mentioned that the students practice was at a high level of skill and all the students were courteous and eager in practice. He mentioned that he enjoyed the practice very much.

Gathering input from the students, I think everyone enjoyed the seminar very much. For many in the Dojo, it was the first time to experience an Aikido seminar and instruction from another teacher from an outside dojo. Most of the students loved his explanations and clear examples of Aikido principles as well as his strong, fast technique. Everyone was impressed with his warm and kind spirit and generous hands-on instruction.

Sensei was very happy to have Ikeda Sensei visit the Dojo. A project that began last year in April when Sensei met Ikeda Sensei for the first time in Los Angeles. This seminar is a culmination of almost one year of planning and preparation. Sensei hopes to continue a strong and close relationship with Ikeda Sensei and was impressed with his open-mindedness and clear thinking and strong proficiency in the art. They both share many common interests in Japanese swords and sword guards, Buddhism (Fudo Myoo) and Miyamoto Musashi.

Sensei would also like to thank all of the students who helped so much in the preparation of this seminar. Especially to Ken Watanabe and Mark Ty who gave up many weekends to work and clean the Dojo. Also to many students who helped prepare the Dojo the day before the seminar.

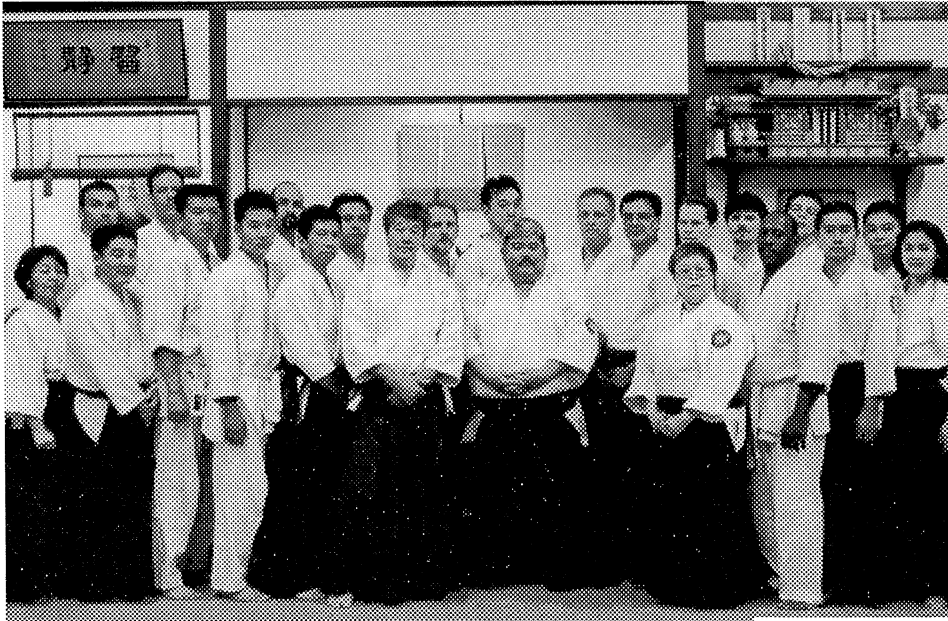
We all would like to thank Ikeda Sensei and hope that he will come to visit us again very soon in the near future.



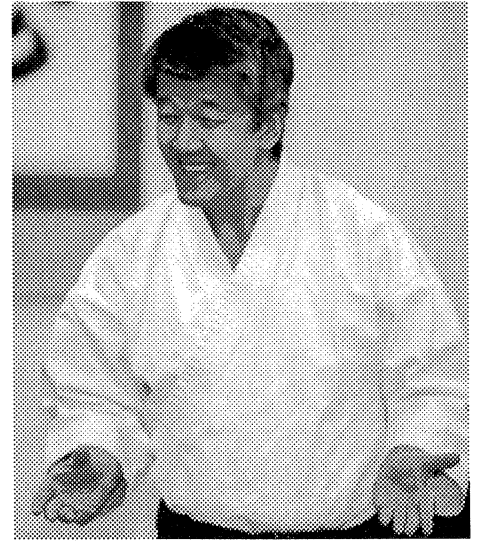
Ikeda Sensei and Furuya Sensei during Seminar.



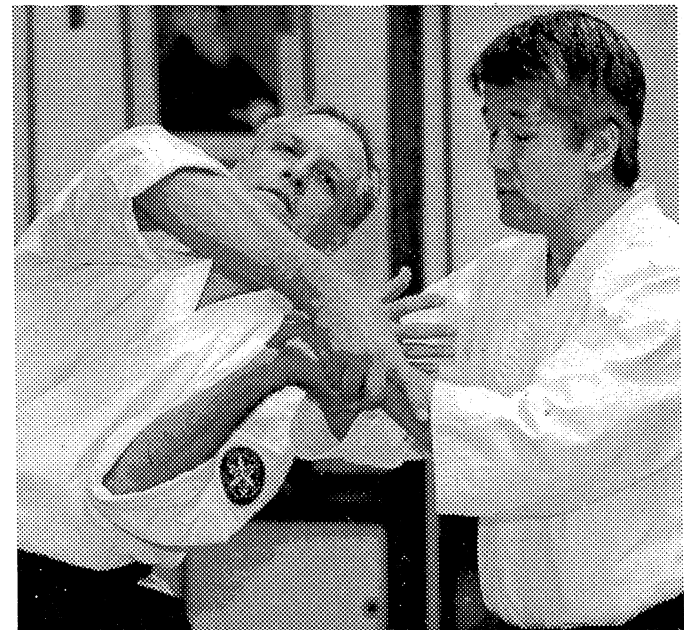
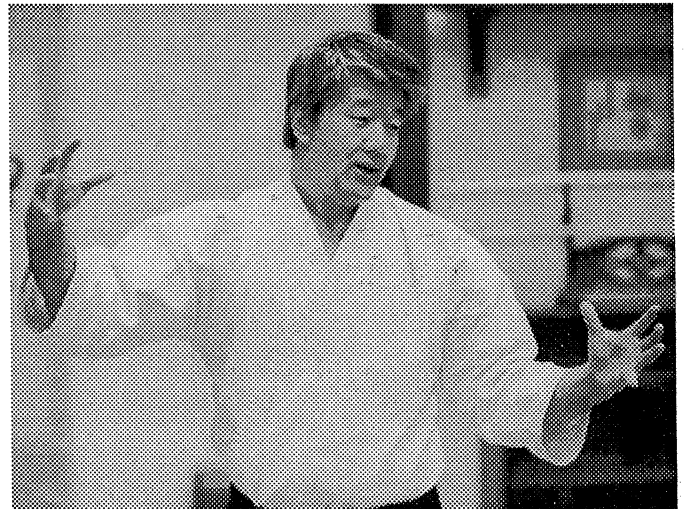
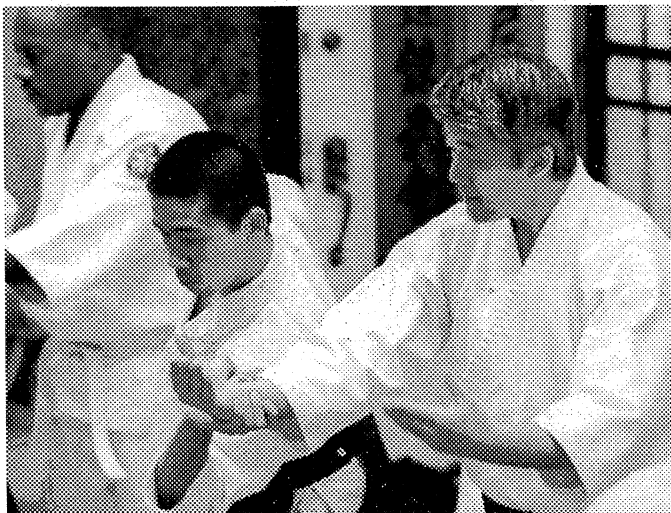
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Some of the participants in Ikeda Sensei's recent seminar.



Everyone enjoyed Ikeda Sensei's warm, entertaining and very clear teaching style.





Mark Ty executing Ikkyo on Ron Drones.



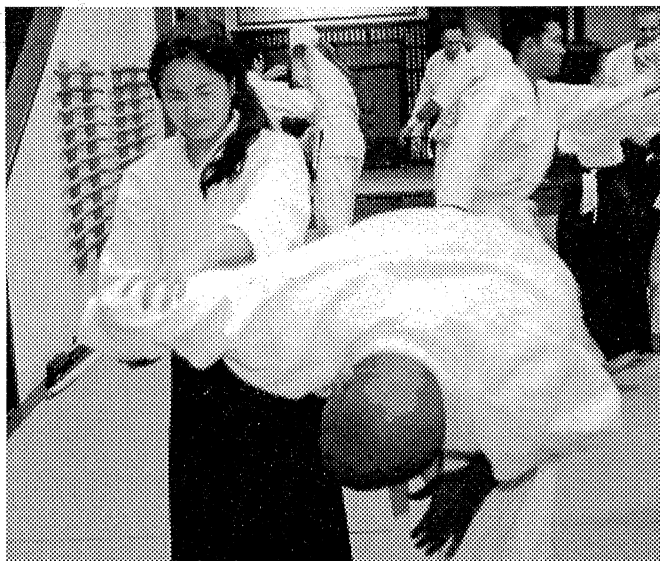
Nichia from the Seal Beach Aikikai practices with Ken Furuya



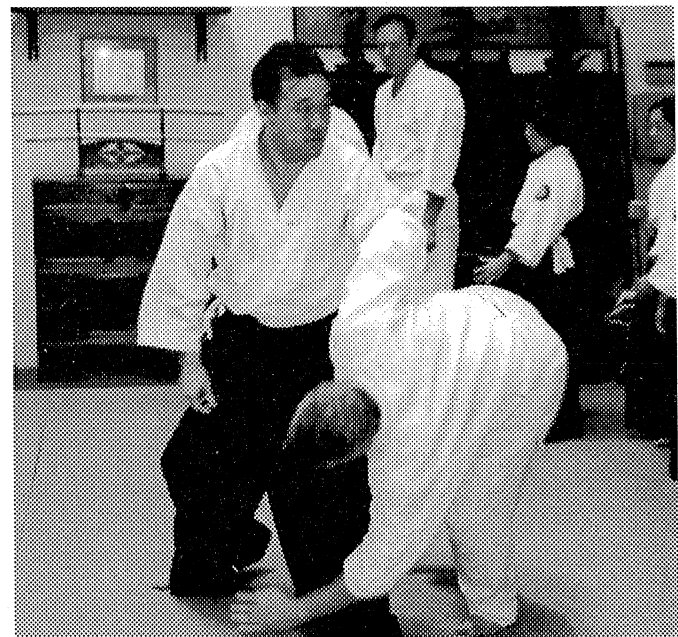
Lisa Ito practicing Irimi-nage.



Kats Shiomi from the UC San Bernardino Aikikai practicing.



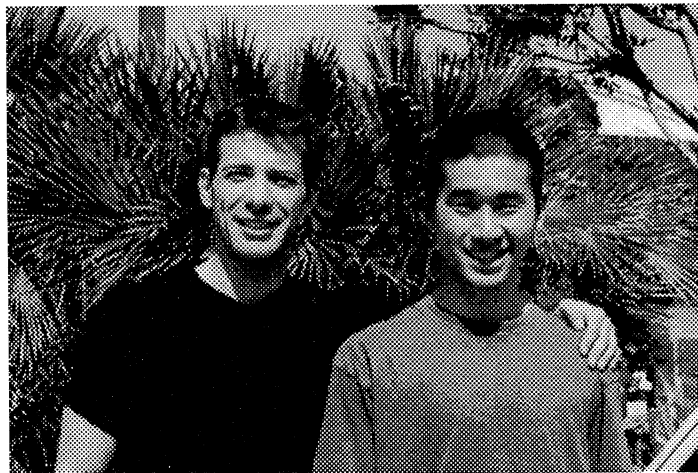
Maria Murakawa practicing with Leslie Delano.



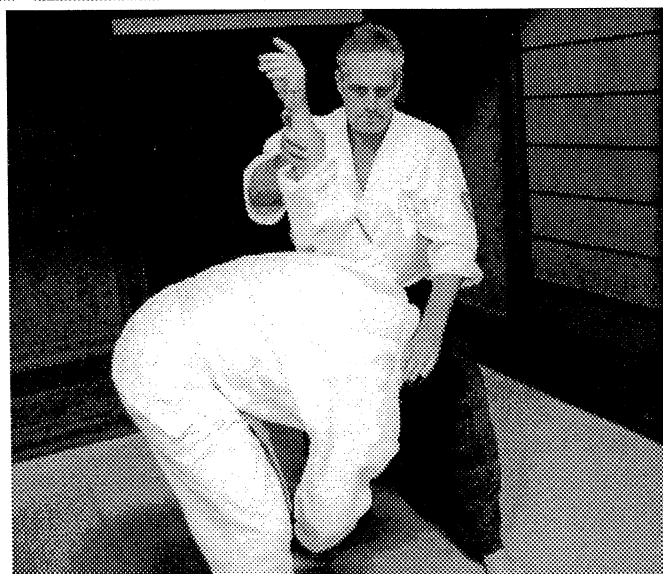
Ken Watanabe practicing with Bill Allen.

Santiago Almaraz, Salamanca Kodokai Dojo For Training. March 4-26.

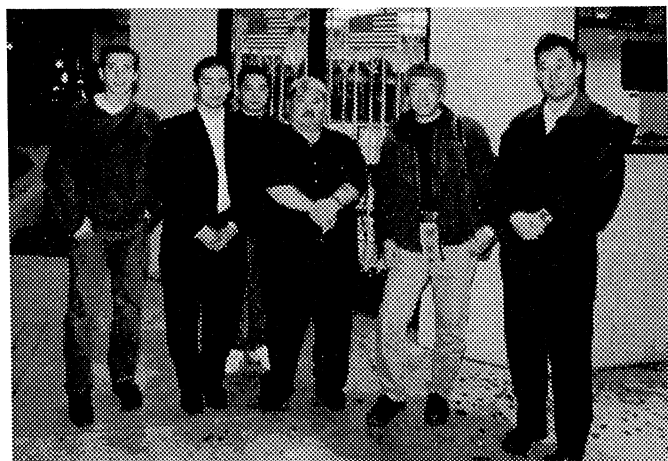
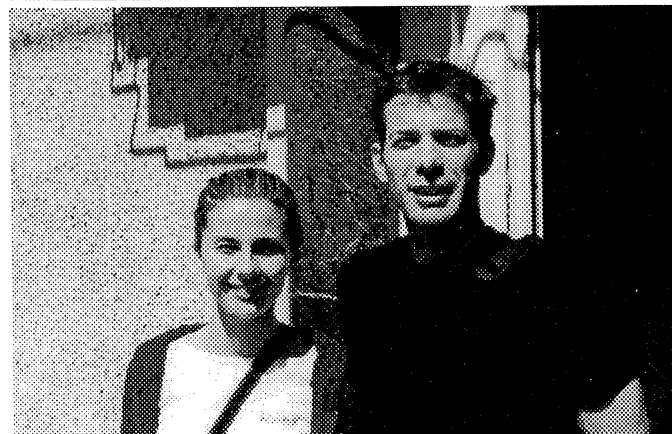
Ikeda Sensei Seminar



Santiago Almaraz, Chief Instructor of our Kodokai Branch, in Salamanca, Spain, visited our Dojo once again for training, staying a total of 28 days and participating on our 2nd Joint Practice at the Aikido Ai in Whittier and our Seminar with Ikeda Sensei. Santiago trained everyday in both Aikido and Iaido. After one week, Susanna also arrived from Spain. After Ikeda Sensei's Seminar, they both visited the Grand Canyon and Las Vegas for several days and returned for several more days of training. Santiago is already making plans for his next visit. He brought with him on this trip a copy of Cinturon Negro which features Kenny Furuya on the cover and also information from the Valladolid dojo who also wants to affiliate with us.



Tom Williams practicing Kaiten-nage during Seminar.



Santiago, Mark, Kenny, Sensei, Ikeda Sensei and Ken at dinner after the special Black Belt Practice, Friday evening.



James Nakayama Sensei of the Chushinkan at our Joint Practice.

Aikido-Ai Joint Practice March 9



Participants in our 2nd Joint Practice at the Aikido-Ai in Whittier. Guest instructors were Frank McGouirk Sensei, James Nakayama Sensei, Henry Oshiro Sensei and Furuya Sensei.



Santiago of the Salamanca Kodokai practicing in Whittier.

From Tennis Pro To Aikido:

03-21-02 Rev. Furuya, Hi, my name is Tom Veneziano. I'm a tennis pro and have an informational tennis site www.tenniswarrior.com. One of my readers who is also one of yours told me to go over and read your last article because it was exactly what I teach in tennis. The idea that tennis pros are doing the simple so well that students think it is complicated! After reading many of your articles, indeed the thinking you are applying as a teacher is the same as my tennis philosophy in many respects. I teach that the game is based on a 'feel' and that 'feel' makes the mechanics work correctly. You acquire that 'feel' by repetition. As you stated, "Even a thousand times, a million is not enough."

I am an anomaly for most teaching pros because of this approach. I know nothing about martial arts, but I can see I could learn more from the philosophy and apply it to tennis. Anyway, I just wanted to thank you for your teaching and enjoy the refreshing application articles that you wrote. Please come over and visit my site for a quick perusal. Thank you, Tom Veneziano

Our Friends In New York:

02-20-02: Dear Sensei, My name is Glenn Cunningham from Staten Island, NY... Back in 1993, when I first read your book "Kodo," I came with two of my students to visit you....You met with us and we talked most of the night.....I study Okinawa Gojuryu Karatedo with the Jundokan in Naha, Okinawa.....Maybe you remember us? Just wanted to drop you a line to say thanks again for writing your book...Recently I informed many of my students to read it and it has caught on like wild.....Then I tell them about when I visited with you and how cool you were.....One note is that NYC has changed drastically since Sept.11th.....The Dojo is packed though.....Remember I am A NYC Detective with the NYPD..... Just figured that you would want to know that you are touching other students in others Martial Arts! Yours in Budo, Glenn Cunningham
www.newyorkcityjundokan.com

From Our Friends In Israel:

03-07-02: Dear Sensei, Unfortunately, LA is a bit far from where I live. I wish I could attend your classes and be a deshi of yours. So as I enjoy so much your wonderful daily "words from sensei", I shall be your internet-deshi (i-deshi). Thank you.

Thank you for writing. Sorry I did not reply sooner, My computer did not work well. The interview with you became very famous here in Israel. Many people read it and talk about it. They all say it is great. Too bad you can't read Hebrew, since there are internet discussion groups with long and interesting conversations concerning your interview and home page.

I know you are not after publicity but you became really famous and beloved here.

I translated too essays from last month's "words from sensei" about Ukemi. Thank you so much for giving the permission to translate and have it on the free Aikido magazine.

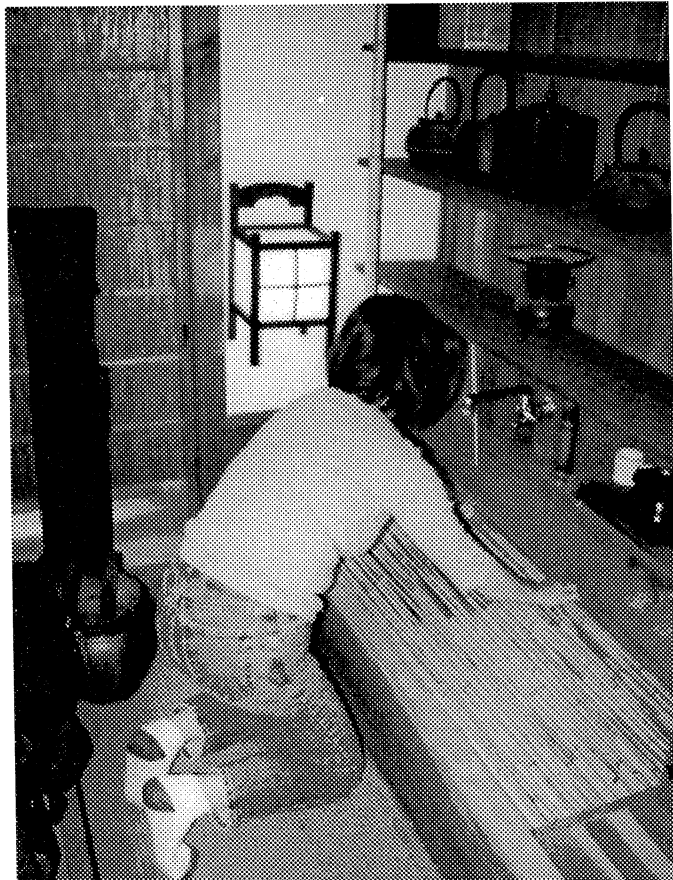
I hope that many people will buy your book "KODO" and I wish you luck with your next one. Wishing you happiness and health.
Yours, Ze'ev Erlich, ISRAEL

Pre-Seminar Dojo Clean-Up March 14.



Deepest Appreciation On Clean-up Job Well Done!

Many thanks to all of the students who helped with the Pre-Seminar Dojo Clean-up on March 14. It was a great deal of hard work but everyone worked together so well and the job was finished very quickly. What a great job everyone did! Many thanks. So many of our guests were impressed with our immaculate Dojo. Many thanks!



Carol Tanita doing delicate job of cleaning the Mizuya, currently used as our women's changing room.

Kenny Furuya Featured In Cinturon Negro.



Kenny Furuya is featured in the martial arts magazine Cinturon Negro which is circulated in seven different languages all over the world. During a Seminar at the Salamanca Kodokai last year in September.



Back Row: Jonathan Tien, Leslie Delano, Jim Basset, Bill Allen, Steve Shaw, Ken Watanabe, Kenny Furuya, Joe Healy, Mark Ty, Maria Murakawa, Ron Drones, Norman Lew. Front Row: Kaoru Tamura, Cheryl Lew, Maria Ferrari, James Doi, Sensei, Santiago Almaraz, Susanna, Carol Tanita, & Jerry Naito.

Questions: Uke & Ukemi

03-13-02: Hi Furuya Sensei, I know you are busy with your upcoming seminar. Maybe my question is a little complex so I understand if you don't have time to answer! We practice at 6:30am here in Vancouver, from monday to saturday (somedays we start at 7:00am). So you can imagine our group is small. For example today class was me, my sempai, C, and sensei. This is a real shame because sensei is a fine teacher from Hombu Dojo. Maybe you know him, Yoshio Ishimura? He was in Doshu's morning class since about 1980. He moved to Canada and keeps doing morning class with us. We are really lucky and we will follow him as long as he is here. But like I said, we are a small group. In general, students and young people don't like getting up early. For example, this year ten new students started at the beginning of term and they all quit. And the year before that, I was the only student who stayed out of 12. To be honest I didn't want to get up early either, but I felt something special about sensei so I followed him. Some people come and go. But usually it is just me, my two sempai, and sensei. Probably it will be this way forever. Both my sempai are amazing but they are older. They can take ukemi if they absolutely have to, but I really don't like applying vigorous techniques on them. Sensei is very kind and takes ukemi for all of us. His ukemi is beautiful but he also is getting older and I don't like smashing him around. So I have a problem where I don't want to 'go for it'. I am always holding back because I don't want to bash my seniors around. Of course they smash me around and I like that part! They haven't had a guy to throw around for years so I am glad to provide something useful for my seniors. But maybe I am not learning my techniques correctly because I never 'go for it'. For example my shiho nage and kote gaeshi are loosey-goosey. I don't know. I wouldn't want to insult my seniors by saying this to them. So my question is, are there pointers I can keep in mind to make my techniques correct even though I never get to push the physical limits? Sorry if this question is too long! Daryl

Sensei's Reply: 03-13-02

Thank you for your inquiry. Do you read my website?

I am sorry that I don't know your teacher. I was in Hombu in 1969, a little while before your teacher. I admire him that he practices at 6:30am in the morning but for most people it is impractical today. I have two 6:30am classes but it is hard to get students to attend. I am a priest so I am always up by 3:30am every morning.

Your case is very hard but very common and many students have the same problem. Generally, it is important to develop several "training partners" built up from the general membership with whom you know you will always get a good workout. This takes time and you may have to start with a beginner and built him up gradually until he can train at a good level and pace.

It is important to complete the technique in practice. The other day, I participated in a seminar and many of the students are not used to taking ukemi but just do the partially up to the ukemi. I thought this was a very bad way to practice. In my class, I asked everyone to take ukemi and everyone got too tired.

I believe that even if you have to go slowly and carefully, you should still complete the technique with the proper focus and concentration, as if you are throwing with power. Ultimately, it is your concentration which is more important than physical power.

03-14-02: Hi again Furuya Sensei, thanks very much for the informative reply. Tomorrow morning I will focus on completing my techniques correctly the way sensei has demonstrated. Yes I do read your website regularly. There was a program around 1998 that featured your dojo. When I saw your practice I knew I would do aikido. Recently my sempai C gave me your book Kodo: Ancient Ways and then I found your website. For me, the most difficult technique in aikido is bowing, if you know what I mean. Your columns help me improve my bowing a little bit every day. So thanks for everything and good luck at your seminar! Daryl

Question About Kodo:

03-18-02

Dear Furuya Sensei: I have been reading your book "Kodo, Ancient Ways" and find it very good. I noticed that many of the illustrations have captions except for the tsuba on the second to last page (in the article titled "What is a Black Belt"). I wondered if you would not mind sharing the significance of it being there and the meaning of the kanji inscribed on it.

The tsuba's significance is important to me as I enjoy and appreciate Japanese swords and their fittings and have seen tsuba with very similar kanji on it. Thank you very much for your time. Sincerely, Paul Guillory

Sensei's Reply: The tsuba is an illustration of a very famous Armoursmith tsuba, the original of which you can see in many sword books. The kanji invoke the "god of war" which protects all warriors and is at the end of the book to "bless" or "protect" my readers. There are several such invocations throughout the book to protect and heal all of my readers. It is my gift to those who take the time to read my little book, Glad you enjoy the book, always, Sensei

03-19-02

Dear Furuya Sensei: Thank you so very much for your email. I think it is terrific how you send out such great messages for your readers. Understanding that makes the book more meaningful to me. I wondered if I could bother you further on the subject of the tsuba. I was just curious if the tsuba carried the name of the "god of war" or a "prayer" or "invocation" for the god. I managed to (try) and translate 3 of the 6 kanji (I think I figured out "Minami-south," "Hatchi-eight," and "Dai-great"). I may have also figured out "Mu-without." The other kanji were not in my dictionary (I studied a little Japanese in high school and college). Is it possible that I am remotely close? Again, I apologize for inconveniencing you with all these questions. Please answer only if you have time. Sincerely, Paul

Sensei's Reply: It reads, "Namu Hachiman Daibosatsu." "Namu" means to "invoke" and comes from the ancient languages and has no meaning in modern Japanese. Hachiman Dai Bosatsu is devoted to all warriors and was the tutelary god of the Minamoto Family who first established the military government (feudal system) in Japan. "Bosatsu" is a "near-Buddha" or someone who does not take the final step into complete enlightenment but vows to stay here and save all other sentient beings before themselves. "Dai" means "great." Hope this helps, Sensei

Dear Sensei, Thank you very much!! It helps quite a bit! All of it is so interesting!! Again, thank you for all your help and for such a well written book. I look forward to reading other works from you! Sincerely, Paul

My Trip To Japan

William Allen

On my first trip to Japan several years ago, I knew only a handful of Japanese words, and my weak understanding of "katakana English" led to conversations like this:

"Don't you wanna see sewer?"

"Excuse me? Sewer?"

"Yes. City sewer."

"Um... Go to see a sewer?"

"Yes. Tokyo bassu sewer."

"Ahh! Tokyo bus tour!"

"Yes. Tsu-or."

In the intervening years, my wife, Machiko, and I have gone back to Japan several times. For a variety of reasons, conversational exchanges such as the preceding one no longer occur. In a way, that's too bad, because such incidents are a wonderful source of amusing anecdotes. On the other hand, being a "familiar visitor" provides different, perhaps more substantial, insights.

As an example, on a trip we made a few years ago, I started to become aware that, in Japan, there is less distance between human beings and the divine than there is in the tradition in which I was raised. This allows for many more things, especially things in nature, to be regarded as sacred. On the surface, Japan appears to be, and to a great extent is, a rather agnostic and technologically modern nation. One can make the mistake of thinking that spiritual reverence is an anachronism in Japan. The historic temples in Kyoto, Nara, and elsewhere, draw thousands of vacationing onlookers, both Japanese and foreign, who deposit their 100 yen coins in the temple coffers, take the family snapshot on the steps, and then move on. If one only looks at the comings and goings, one can easily miss what is happening. I did. Spiritual reverence, and its connection with the natural world is so obvious in the large temples and shrines that I did not see it. Perhaps I confused it with appreciation of the beautiful landscaping and gardening.

If you have a chance to visit Japan, go outside of the large cities, if you can, and look about at the "natural" world. Your eye will be pulled to an unusual landmark, perhaps a hill or a unique rock, or even a large tree. Walk to that place, and, nearly always, you will discover a small shrine nearby. Its placement is generally unobtrusive; perhaps it is behind a rock, or a bush. The shrine enclosure itself may be weathered and very old, but the ground around it is well cared-for. Typically, there will be a bottle of beer or some sake, and fruit or cakes left as an offering to that which the shrine solemnizes. The state of these offerings is usually new, indicating that someone has taken care of the site within the last few hours. The odds are that you will not see who has left the gifts and tidied up the grounds.

I discovered several such shrines within a few minutes walking distance of my mother-in-law's house, just by going to places that looked like they might be interesting. At first, each time I would discover one of these sites, it was surprising, and I felt as if I were trespassing. My in-laws reassured me that such was not the case, and I began to explore a little more extensively. I would climb a hill with a beautiful stand of trees arrayed around the crown, and tucked away in a quiet corner of the hilltop was a well-tended shrine. One must naturally pause, and feel the spirit of the place at such a moment. Once I became aware of this sense of connection between humans, nature,

and the divine, being on the grounds of a temple could become an edifying and solemn experience. And we would put a hakuyen coin in the coffer, maybe shoot a picture, and walk off along the path.

Our most recent visit was made in February of 2002. I had never seen Japan in Winter, so we decided to attend the 53rd Sapporo Snow Festival. The Snow Festival is an international event, and the main attractions are very large sculptures made from snow and ice. In the first two days of the festival, the weather was unseasonably warm, for Hokkaido, with daytime temperatures between 3 and 5 degrees Celsius, and nighttime temperatures hovering around 0. If you have forgotten the metric system, just remember that 0 degrees Celsius is the temperature at which water freezes, so the sculptures were not looking their best by the second day. All over Sapporo, signs apologized for the warm temperatures.

On our second day in Hokkaido, we made a day trip to the seaside town of Otaru, which is a 30 minute train ride northwest of Sapporo. Otaru is a quaint town, known for its canals, glassware, and, like most fishing towns in Japan, its fresh seafood.

Saturday, February 9, was the first day of a three day weekend in Japan, and it was expected that many, many people would be arriving in Sapporo. We checked out of the Sapporo Grand Hotel on February 8, and made our way to Josankei, an onsen (hot spring) town in the mountains to the west of Sapporo. Bathing in mineral springs is an extremely popular form of Japanese vacationing, and around 6 p.m., packed tour busses arrive at the onsen hotels, unloading dozens of couples, families, and groups. The hotel baths become crowded with people relaxing in the hot springs before taking their dinners. Not being part of such a tour, we made our way to the bath before 5 p.m. Some of the baths are outside, so that one can soak in the rejuvenating waters amid pleasant natural scenery. When I made my way to the outdoor bath, I found that snow had begun falling in large quiet flakes. I was alone in the bath for a long time, and it really was quite beautiful.

Thank goodness Machiko taught me about Japanese bathing before I ever went to Japan. There is one crucial concept to be remembered: the bath water must be kept clean, because it is for everyone. Most of the large onsen hotels have an area where one can clean and rinse oneself completely before stepping in to the bath, so it isn't too hard to figure out what to do in these places. If you find yourself in a smaller inn, there may not be such a distinct washing area with spigots and showers. In that case, a provided bowl is used to drench the body with water from the tub, the body is scrubbed clean with soap, and the bowl is used again to rinse with tub water. Never get into the tub until you are completely clean. Don't forget to leave the washbowl, stool, and floor area clean as well. The same rules apply when you stay in a Japanese home.

Isn't it interesting that the western maxim regarding bathing is "keep the water in the tub"? Several years ago, Japanese travelling abroad used to be dreaded by European hotel managers, because the bathrooms sometimes ended up with several inches of water on the floor.

On Sunday, we left Hokkaido, and headed for Machiko's home town, Karatsu. Karatsu is a town on the Sea of Japan, just inside the border of Saga Prefecture in Kyushu, about 60 kilometers southwest of Fukuoka. If you come down the coast road from Fukuoka, just as you cross into Saga Prefecture you enter the Niji no Matsubara - a forest

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of twisted pine trees that were planted several hundred years ago as a coastal windbreak. The Niji no Matsubara borders the northeastern end of Karatsu. Suddenly encountering this beautiful pine forest while driving has an immediate relaxing effect. My in-laws say that the pine trees produce positive ions, which balance the body. I tend to think that the shade has more to do with it, but I don't argue.

When you come out of the Niji no Matsubara, you are within Karatsu town. The town itself is very lovely. One section is at the end of a peninsula between the river and the Sea of Japan. A second part of the town, consisting of many modern establishments (and pachinko parlors) follows the express road from Fukuoka. A third part of the town is much older, and is known as the jonai, or the town within the castle walls. In the jonai, there are several old and famous Buddhist temples, a museum exhibiting local historical artifacts and works of art, the jonai Shinto jinja (shrine), several ryokan (traditional inns), and other sites of historic and civic interest. The people of Karatsu, or Karatsuko, have a great reverence for, and pride in, their town and its history.



Karatsujo is a small castle, and it is picture perfect. It looks like an old castle, but the existing building was constructed in 1966. There once was a castle in Karatsu that was actually used in the campaigns of Toyotomi Hideyoshi against Korea. That was Nagoya Castle, and it no longer exists.

One morning I discovered that there is a kendo class which trains in a building at the foot of the castle wall. On warm days, they train on the beach. I can't think of a more beautiful place to train. In talking with one of the students, I learned that there is also a judo class which trains there. He told me that he prefers kendo to judo, because in judo you have to be young to be good, but in kendo, it is always the old men who are unbeatable. He claimed he was not a fast enough learner for judo, and kendo was a better choice because even a slow learner could get good if he stayed alive long enough.

In addition to being a very scenic place, I believe that Karatsu has the best food in all of Japan. The seafood is always fresh and good; there are several rice, fruit, and vegetable farms surrounding the town and local mountains; the nearby town of Imari produces beef that is at least as good as the famous Kobe beef; and to the south of Karatsu, the cities of Kagoshima and Nagasaki make available their pork, sweet potatoes, noodles, and fruits, notably yuzu. Karatsu also produces a shoyu which is very dark, thick, and sweet. This shoyu is

very good with sushi and sashimi. There is also a local sake, or jizake, which is very clear and smooth. You have to be careful drinking it, because it goes down so smoothly that one can imbibe a lot in a short time. My father-in-law, before he died, said that he could never live away from Karatsu, because he had been spoiled by all of the great food. I have to agree. For a town with a population of 70,000, there is a disproportionate number of excellent places, and things, to eat.

A while back, I talked with a sushi chef in Los Angeles - who is from Saga - about the fish in Karatsu. He explained that Karatsu fish are very good, because there is a cold current from the Pacific Ocean that makes its way right to Karatsu. The fish living in the area get more nutrients than other fish in the Sea of Japan, and the cold water improves their texture and consistency.

One of the seasonal delicacies that is eaten in the winter is fugu, which has gained some notoriety in the USA lately. In case you haven't heard, fugu is the "deadly poisonous" blowfish. It's true that fugu has some poisonous parts, and must be prepared by an individual who has been specially trained to handle the fish. Another thing you may have heard is that it is illegal in Japan for anyone but Japanese to eat fugu. That is not true. What I can imagine is that a fugu preparer might not want to "waste" the precious fish on a foreigner who may be unable to appreciate its subtlety.

My mother-in-law ordered fugu from a local fisherman, who is also trained to prepare it. It was a very special occasion, in that one of her grandsons had finished medical school, and the other had just passed his entrance examinations for admission to medical school. It is hard to convey how important this is for the family. Many of the men in my father-in-law's family are doctors, and my mother-in-law's father was also a doctor. My father-in-law ran a well-known and respected clinic in Karatsu for 50 years. When he retired, my sister-in-law's husband, who was the family's adopted son-in-law (muko-yoshi), took over the clinic. It is expected that one of his sons, the two boys mentioned previously, will succeed him someday, and take over headship of the family by running the clinic. With both boys now on the path to becoming doctors, the continuity of the household seems assured, and this is, indeed, a reason to celebrate.

The raw fugu sashimi is very mild and fragrant. Fugu flesh is rather resilient, and is sliced paper thin. In addition to the sashimi, we also indulged in fugu shirako. If you don't know what shirako is, please get a Japanese speaker to translate for you. Finally, Mama cooked the fugu tail, and used it to season warm sake. This imparted a distinctive and mildly sweet taste to the sake.

Once the fugu had been consumed, a bowl of water, with, perhaps, a hundred small live swimming fish in it, was placed on the table. The fish are eaten thus: a straining ladle is used to scoop up a few fish, which are placed in a small bowl; sushoyu (vinegar and soy sauce) is added to the bowl, which makes the fish extremely agitated; the fish are then slurped up and swallowed. I did try some of these fish, and it was very weird. Having the little fish in one's mouth is strange enough. Once swallowed, though, they can be felt swimming around in the stomach for several seconds. I'm not sure why these fish are eaten in this way; I understand that they are a traditional seasonal food. I suppose one culture's fraternity initiation is another culture's seasonal comestible.

Con't.

Responses to Sensei's Recent Aikido Survey:

My informal survey about Aikido in the Daily Messages was very instructive and enlightening for me and after the passage of some time, I have decided to share some of the responses with you. I didn't know how to present these to you but after some thought I decided it is better to clump them together by person instead of collecting all of the responses for each question together respectively. In this way, you not only get an idea of how readers reacted to my questions but you get an idea of the student as a whole person - and understanding the student was my goal in this little project. Please enjoy.

1. What do you consider the most important aspect of your training and/or Aikido? The sharpening, or enhancement, of awareness. Aikido training requires one to become aware of one's physical condition, location, relative position, and balance. In addition, one must develop the intuitive awareness of the intents and energies of one's opponents to allow the techniques to work, and to avoid injuring oneself. The training requires that physical and mental awareness be developed as far as one can possibly develop them.

2. What do you consider the most important characteristics of a good student? A good student is one who keeps the dojo and training consistently in mind. If a student keeps the dojo in mind, then he keeps up with the activities and support of the dojo. If a student keeps training in mind, then he attends practice regularly, and is more receptive to instruction.

3. What do you look for in a good teacher? That the teacher cares how well the students are progressing and learning.

4. What makes a good dojo? That the students have a good and serious attitude toward training, that the senior students exhibit excellent skills and understanding of Aikido, that the dojo is clean and well maintained, that the sensei oversees everything, and takes responsibility to provide an environment that fosters learning.

5. Do you prefer traditional or more modern methods of Aikido? I don't know what the difference is. I prefer classes that concentrate on technique over those in which the instructor talks on and on about how something is supposed to feel.

6. Do you prefer a more original Japanese version of Aikido, or a more Americanized and updated style of Aikido?
Again, I have no basis for comparison.

7. What attracts you to Aikido? When I was 12 or 13 years old, I asked my parents to get the book "Aikido and the Dynamic Sphere" from the "Whole Earth Catalog". I read the book a lot, and tried to understand about the techniques and the mysterious ki. There were no Aikido dojo anywhere in Pennsylvania Dutch country, where I lived, so the book was my only connection. Later, as a graduate student, I moved to Hawaii, and attended an Aikido class conducted by one of my professors. This lasted three days, because another of my professors studied Aikido under a different foundation, and was a little angry with me for studying the "wrong" kind of Aikido. I didn't know right or wrong, and I didn't care about the bickering between the Uyeshiba traditionalists and the Ki Society practitioners. Rather than have Aikido politics interfere with getting my degree, I

quit the class, and forgot about Aikido for a long time. Last year the call to practice again returned. I don't know exactly what attracts me to Aikido, but everything I learn about Aikido drives me to learn more about Aikido. Every time I practice a technique I think, "Jeez, this is one I really have to work on." You could say that doing Aikido is what attracts me to Aikido.

8. How important is Attitude in training? Attitude is everything. Without it, you forget about training and go to do something else.

9. How much of the "spiritual" aspects of Aikido are most people interested in? I have read the account of O-Sensei's life, and how he became enlightened after a match with the Naval officer who practiced kendo. This account is interesting because I will never meet the founder, and I wonder what kind of person could conceive of an art like Aikido. I don't know how much of the spiritual aspects I am really interested in - I was never fond of going to church - and I find that I can't speak well for others in this respect. If I have questions about Aikido's spiritual essence, I would like to feel that I can ask them.

1. What do you consider the most important aspect of your training and/or Aikido? Learning to be present, with the experience. Learning what my center is.

2. What do you consider the most important characteristics of a good student? Right intentions, humility, reciprocity, the quality of being open and receptive, curiosity.

3. What do you look for in a good teacher? Humility, compassion, patience, (always, still a student)

4. What makes a good dojo? Spirit: The teacher, the students, the practice = the spirit. In our dojo, the quality of respect, discipline, and order create a certain silence conducive to learning.

5. Do you prefer traditional or more modern methods of Aikido? Aikido seems to excel at being absolutely contextual, transcending what is normatively either traditional or modern. Teaching and education (wisdom) transcend time. I imagine that, like most things, there is probably 'well informed aikido' and 'amateurish aikido' (which may tend towards 'traditional' or 'non traditional'). To choose either traditional or modern for the sake of apparent formal properties or preconceptions seems to be limiting.

6. Do you prefer a more original Japanese version of Aikido, or a more Americanized and updated style of Aikido?

7. What attracts you to Aikido? The spiritual component, the practice of compassion and awareness...and the beauty of the physical expression.

8. How important is Attitude in training?
It is central.

9. How much of the "spiritual" aspects of Aikido are most people interested in? For other people I could only guess, but for myself, it is essential and difficult to differentiate from the physical aspects...

I cannot speak for Aikido training, but I hope that Iaido will do. In response to your message of the 17th, I joined the Dojo to Con't.

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Continued: practice Iaido because I was and still am fascinated by the Japanese sword and the culture which created it. The second part is important, because the sword alone cannot do much. It must be used by a person, and the way and purpose of its creation and use are as important to me as the sword itself. To follow your questions as best as I can, I think a good student is one who can put himself aside when taking on the responsibility of being a student. In the old days the student came as a blank slate and the teacher gave as much of himself as he could, hoping that most of it would stick. I wish it was still so everywhere, but at least in the Dojo I think it is. A good Dojo should be inviting and foreboding at once. By that I mean that good people seeking enlightenment should find it a blessing, and those with too much pride and other plans should find it uncomfortable and want to go somewhere else. Perhaps that is just my view of the way things used to be many years ago, and so I want it to come again.

As for the traditional versus modern and Japanese versus American, for me it couldn't be simpler. If the Dojo was a portal to ancient Japan I would jump in at once. I hold Japanese culture infinitely higher than the American, the culture of two or more hundred years ago, before the Meiji Emperors and their precious "restoration". Perhaps I shouldn't hate them for starting Japan on the path of modernization, it would most likely have been conquered otherwise, but somehow I can't forgive them entirely. If I stray from what you wished to know, I am sorry. For the last two questions, I think that Attitude is one of the most important elements of good training, perhaps second only to Spirit, if they are not indeed the same thing. Sadly, I think most people today, especially in America, do not have the slightest knowledge of this, and if they were told, they could not understand it. Perhaps a select few could, but I despair for the great part of them.

Perhaps this has all been the rambling idealism of youth, but if so it is a kind of backwards idealism, hoping not for a new and better future, but seeking the lost greatness of the old times. Such has always been my curse... I hope this has been entertaining at the least,

I imagine my answers will not be too surprising, but I enjoy these sorts of questions so I thought I would send you my brief responses.

1. The development of the self through the discipline of training.
2. The willingness of the student to subjugate his ego to the teacher's instruction.
3. The ability to communicate the teaching directly to the heart of the student.
4. The dedication of the students and teacher to the diligent practice of the art.
5. Traditional.
6. Japanese.
7. Many things, but one that springs to mind is the opportunity to be around people who are continually trying to improve themselves.
8. Incredibly important--how can we hope to train well without a proper mindset as a foundation?
9. Spiritual sounds like a loaded word, setting people up for the never-

ending discussion of O'Sensei's particular religious interests. Without playing too many games, I think the underlying philosophy of aikido is very interesting. But sometimes our minds get too distracted by the intellectual discussion and we don't focus on the important of simply practicing.

I enjoy your daily message and since you asked, I decided to reply rather than lurk any further.... I am a San Dan here in Portland and train Ki Aikido. I teach in the kids program and have enjoyed my training since about 1980. I am 56, so I am not one of the youngsters. Thank you very much for the thought provoking notes you send each day.... Regards and Plus Ki,
KW. Portland, Or

1. What do you consider the most important aspect of your training and/or Aikido? If my training did not reflect the way I approach life outside the dojo, what good would it be? I can always practice seeing clearly, doing my best, and never giving up. Nobody can tell what I am doing, that I am practicing every minute.

2. What do you consider the most important characteristics of a good student? Being there as much as they can, while balancing the rest of their life. This is probably the real difference between now and the past. Most students have lives outside the dojo that demands attention and care. They have to be smart. Aikido is not an art for people who don't think.

3. What do you look for in a good teacher? A good teacher can measure your progress and can stretch you slightly beyond what you think you are and what you can do. Being thrown a little harder than you are comfortable with, and other challenges come to mind. A good teacher is always at your back, pushing and hoping for you development as student and a person.

4. What makes a good dojo? Spirit, feeling must be plus. Everyone can grow in this environment.

5. Do you prefer traditional or more modern methods of Aikido? Traditional to me means following the teaching exactly. Filtering or changing what you have learned is "usually" and excuse for not clearly understanding what you have been taught.

6. Do you prefer a more original Japanese version of Aikido, or a more Americanized and updated style of Aikido. There is nothing wrong with the Japanese training. However, the Japanese culture can cloud things in terms of politics and prejudice that really are not much help in learning the art. Understanding tradition also tells you where what you have learned has come from.

7. What attracts you to Aikido? This is a question that really has a time part. It might be more accurate to say, "What attracted you to Aikido?", then "Why did you continue?" and then finally "Why are you training now?" I came for the martial art, became challenged by the demands of training both mind and body, and I stay because I love teaching kids.....

8. How important is Attitude in training? This is the teachers responsibility. Training attitude is everything. You take this with you when you leave. Some of our kids are enormously successful now that they have gone on to college.

Continued: 9. How much of the "spiritual" aspects of Aikido are most people interested in? Since I train Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido, you have to come to grips with things that you can't see. Students that have no patience with this aspect eventually burn out. Training can only lead you to discover something larger than yourself. Not everyone is interested in Shinto-Buddhist-Confucian philosophy. However, truths are truths no matter your particular perspective. In my personal life, training has done nothing but deepen my spiritual beliefs.

Thank you for your teaching! I enjoy reading your daily reflections and your book very much. I have tried to answer your questions below:

1. What do you consider the most important aspect of your training and/or Aikido? In the process of training I am always reminded about the need to develop and harmonize my mind, body, and spirit and to relate with others in a way which will help them do the same. This process is continually ongoing and it challenges me to learn about myself and others.

2. What do you consider the most important characteristics of a good student? It seems that a good student should be attentive and receptive to learning, especially from the instructor, but also from others in training and from his or her mistakes. The student must persevere when training is difficult and not be content when it "seems" that he or she understands something. The good student will just keep practicing and trying to learn more.

3. What do you look for in a good teacher?

Our dojo is very fortunate to have many good instructors. Their teaching styles, although each different, are consistent and they continue to practice with us when then are not giving formal instruction. It seems that some of the instructors have a way of "teaching without teaching" if that makes sense. Just as important (or maybe even more important) than their technique, though, is their mind and spirit, their heart, "how" they teach "what" they teach.

4. What makes a good dojo? That is a very hard question to answer. Good instructors and students, well-attended classes, involvement?

5. Do you prefer traditional or more modern methods of Aikido?

I'm not sure I have a reference point to be able to answer this question, but perhaps I prefer the more the traditional methods. I believe the art should be taught and handed on as it was intended by O Sensei. And yet I heard that he may have said something about clothing the old with the new? In a sense, Aikido is "alive" in those who practice and reflect on the ways that have been passed on from the generations that have gone before us. Yet, our practice is "now" and so the methods of instruction present the art in a different context than that in which O Sensei taught... In our daily practice we link the past with the present and hopefully shape the future according to O Sensei's vision...

6. Do you prefer a more original Japanese version of Aikido, or a more Americanized and updated style of Aikido.

This question is very interesting, too, because it touches on the concept of culture. Aikido was developed by O Sensei in Japan; it is a Japanese martial art. I believe the original Japanese etiquette and terminology should be maintained. Aikido is practiced universally, by people all around the world, yet in the circumstances of various par-

ticular cultures. Because the etiquette and terminology is Japanese, one could go anywhere and train. The Japanese cultural heritage of aikido blends with the various particular cultural heritages and allows those who train to become one family.

7. What attracts you to Aikido? That is a very difficult question to answer.

8. How important is Attitude in training? Attitude is crucial.

9. How much of the "spiritual" aspects of Aikido are most people interested in? It seems that many people are interested in the spiritual side of Aikido, although maybe few people publicly mention that they are or would talk about it. Who can say much about that? If instructors present the spiritual aspects, though, it can help to train the mind and spirit.

Thanks for a warm talk. I particularly enjoyed your comments about how samurai viewed a meeting or introduction. In regard to your questions, here are my thoughts:

1. What do you consider the most important aspect of your training and/or Aikido? Difficult to say since I'm still so new. Nevertheless, I consider that real application is the best crucible. What I mean is Aikido's tradition as growing out of martial arts, arts actually developed against an opponent, for use on the battlefield.

2. What do you consider the most important characteristics of a good student? I'm a teacher also. And so this also answers the first question for me, the students I admire in my class inspire me to challenge myself in Aikido. These qualities include perseverance, but that is not truly it because the perseverance flows from a spiritual lightness, wanting to learn is just organic, not forced. How to achieve that is a catch-22, because by definition it is just there somehow. Perhaps some are just born under a lucky star.

3. What do you look for in a good teacher? A good haircut. Just kidding. But do you know the rub about the two barber town? (In a town of two barbers, who do you go to, the one with the good haircut or the one with the bad haircut?)

4. What makes a good dojo? A sense of unity and purpose about the practice and the art.

5. Do you prefer traditional or more modern methods of Aikido? I just know our dojo.

6. Do you prefer a more original Japanese version of Aikido, or a more Americanized and updated style of Aikido.

You've made me more aware of the "lost" art of martial arts. Who's testing the arts? Only soldiers and the police -- after that, the strange world of martial sports. At root, I don't care how Japanese the version is, I care how "original" (how vibrant the lineage) it is. (Still, I conceive that the two are inseparable.)

7. What attracts you to Aikido? The desire to make the knowledge as perfect as possible. At this time I conceive this to mean how useful the knowledge would be in a threatening situation.

8. How important is Attitude in training? What else can I choose to contribute?!

Con't.

Continued: 9. How much of the "spiritual" aspects of Aikido are most people interested in? Most are interested in anything "spiritual". So it actually is a big selling point for Aikido dojos, I think. But is it more spiritual than flower arrangement? In closing, Sensei, thanks for your dojo and, especially, for all the accompanying intangibles,

Sensei, here are answers to the questions posed on the web site. Sorry for the delay in responding.

1. What do you consider the most important aspect of your training and/or Aikido? At this point, I think the most important aspect for me may be the discipline of regular practice, which involves coping daily with the necessity to maintain concentration over time, as well as to ignore feelings of inadequacy - the sense that I cannot learn Aikido in any meaningful way because it is too difficult. Training to keep focused in the midst of these emotions is, I think, much of what drew me to Aikido.

I don't think I know enough about Aikido yet to describe its most important aspect, although for me its most important aspect is its existence as both a physically demanding martial art and a spiritual practice

2. What do you consider the most important characteristics of a good student? I would think an unchanging desire to learn, discipline, and respect for the art, other students, and one's teacher.

3. What do you look for in a good teacher? A knowledge of Aikido's inner meaning (as well as command of the techniques of course), willingness to teach, patience, and insistence that trying to learn Aikido is very important (a sense of humor is nice too).

4. What makes a good dojo? Good teachers and good students, of course. Also, I think it is important that a dojo not be too discouraging. This is not to say that students are never criticized, because of course that is necessary, but rather that a student, no matter how physically untalented or mentally distracted, knows that he or she can always return to practice so long as a sincere effort is made.

5. Do you prefer traditional or more modern methods of Aikido? I am not sure about this, because I don't think I've seen a lot of "modern" Aikido. My guess is that, depending on the teacher and the dojo, any style of Aikido practice can be valuable. I will say that most martial artists appear to regard O-Sensei as a kind of genius, and therefore it seems to me that methods which try to emulate or transmit his approach would be very important.

6. Do you prefer a more original Japanese version of Aikido, or a more Americanized and updated style of Aikido. Again, the concerns in my answer to number 5 apply, although I understand in the original Japanese style of teaching Aikido, there was almost no speaking about the techniques to convey how they are to be done, but that students were supposed to learn strictly from observation. Although I think there is much value to this, I also think that America general-

ly does not emphasize the importance of this kind of learning and so Americans are usually not so good at it. Therefore, I think verbally explaining the techniques can also be useful.

7. What attracts you to Aikido? Two things primarily: the desire to be more "present" as the term is often used in Zen training, and the hope of controlling and understanding fear, insecurity, anger, and other potentially destructive emotions. Whether Aikido training can really help with this, I don't know, but for whatever reason I think it can or has.

8. How important is Attitude in training? I think very important, because without a certain type of attitude, it is unlikely one will continue to train, and even if one does train, one is unlikely to get much benefit. If, for example, one's attitude is to learn self-defense so that one can be tough and intimidate one's friends or enemies, there is little possibility one will continue with Aikido because, absent a great deal of natural ability, it takes a very long time to become proficient enough to intimidate. If Aikido serves only as a form of exercise, there is also little chance of continuing because there is so much more to practice (ritual, clean-up, etc.). Even if a student is fascinated by the technique, at some point he or she will probably get interested in another martial art and move to that art's techniques. To maintain training, I think a student's attitude has to be Aikido is very important and that daily practice is important the way work, food, and sleep is important. It is just part of life.

Con't.

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Continued; 9. How much of the "spiritual" aspects of Aikido are most people interested in? I don't know because I find students seldom talk about this with each other (or at least with me). One's spiritual life is very personal. I think though that most people who practice study with some hope of improving or refining their spirit. I get this sense from two things: first, you hear people drop little hints while getting dressed or walking to their cars or even sometimes in practice -for example, they say something that suggests they are aware of, or interested in, the "meaning" of a technique, as opposed to simply how to do it; or they might say they studied Tae Kwon Do for a time, but it wasn't "spiritual." It's difficult to know what people mean when they say such things, but it does suggest that they are looking to Aikido for something more than exercise or self-defense.

Second, Aikido is so difficult that someone who only wanted combat skills would likely look elsewhere rather than practice for ten years and still be unable to make Ikkyo work.

1. What do you consider the most important aspect of your training and/or Aikido? **To develop myself into something better than I already am.

2. What do you consider the most important characteristics of a good student? **Humility, perceptiveness, loyalty, etiquette

3. What do you look for in a good teacher? **Respect for tradition, experience

4. What makes a good dojo? **Dedication from students, tradition, enthusiasm

5. Do you prefer traditional or more modern methods of Aikido? **Traditional

6. Do you prefer a more original Japanese version of Aikido, or a more Americanized and updated style of Aikido? **A more original Japanese version.

7. What attracts you to Aikido? **The potential to refine yourself through perseverance.

8. How important is Attitude in training? **It makes all the difference in the world.

9. How much of the "spiritual" aspects of Aikido are most people interested in? **Generally the spiritual aspect of Aikido isn't really emphasized due to the controversial nature it could cause in Christian America. But, good teachers are intelligent as to when and how it should be mentioned.

Sorry I am late, I have not been reading your messages as frequently as I usually do. My wife has just had our second child so we have been a little occupied :-)

I have often thought to write to you to thank you for your messages. They are wonderful daily reminders of what is important and help to guide me along the path, or perhaps more accurately, back to the path. However I haven't written because I am sure that you are overwhelmed with correspondence from around the world and with your duties in the dojo and beyond.

So I have seized on your invitation to both answer your questions and to also thank you for taking the time to write your messages. I also read Kodo before I go to sleep. I know reading is not enough, practice is all that really counts. As the Irish say 'Nodding your head won't row the boat'. But what you write reminds me of where the path really lies and what we must do to progress a long it. Anyway, enough babble. Here are my answers:

1. What do you consider the most important aspect of your training and/or Aikido? That through it I might one day achieve the only true victory of self-mastery. I am afraid that day still seems an impossible distance away but through Aikido I feel I have found a light to guide me a long the path. That my progress is so slow is an indication of the battles that I continually wage with myself.

2. What do you consider the most important characteristics of a good student? Beginners mind, the ability to make and keep a commitment, a desire to learn not just the physical but also the spiritual lessons that O'Sensei recognised as the greater part of Aikido.

3. What do you look for in a good teacher? Someone who teaches for the love of Aikido and desire to guide others along the path that they have found. An understanding that Aikido is more than a physical art.

4. What makes a good dojo? Having students and teachers like the above.

5. Do you prefer traditional or more modern methods of Aikido? Aikido is budo. It should be taught traditionally.

6. Do you prefer a more original Japanese version of Aikido, or a more Americanized and updated style of Aikido. I am taught Iwama style which I believe is a more original Japanese version. I think I would prefer this though having only trained for 2.5 years and not as yet been exposed to other styles I am perhaps not in a position to comment.

7. What attracts you to Aikido? Its beauty, grace and effortless power (though none of which I am close to mastering myself) and its seemingly infinite depth. As you understand more you realise how much more there is still to understand. Its spiritual basis of love and harmony. And finally though diligent practice its ability to guide me towards self-mastery.

8. How important is Attitude in training? It is vital. All the characteristics that I mentioned for a good student comprise the students attitude.

9. How much of the "spiritual" aspects of Aikido are most people interested in? In my very limited experience very little. I am afraid I am not familiar with the correct titles but our sensei who is in charge of the dojo makes absolutely no reference to the spiritual side. Of the other two senseis, one is more aware of the spiritual side but does not mention it during training. It is left entirely up to the student to investigate this. As a result I am not sure that many of my fellow students are even aware of the spiritual side. Those are my thoughts based on my very limited experience. In your message of January 16th you wrote: "But as a priest who cannot desire fame or prestige and as a mere "transmitter" of knowledge, I cannot take credit for Con't.

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Continued; anything really." If I might be so bold I would like to suggest that you can take an enormous amount of credit for being a "real" transmitter. Thank you once again for sharing your thoughts with us all around the world. All the very best. (From Cambridge, MA.)

02-18-02

First I would like to say I am presently reading the book "Kodo Ancient Ways: Lessons in the Spiritual Life of the Warrior/Martial Artist". I am thankful to have been directed to this book, it is making a deep impact on my self-realization. I am interested in learning what is considered as the full-time training schedule at the Aikido Center of Los Angeles, how many days per week, how many hours per day? I currently live In Detroit, Michigan, and may be moving west. I am also interested if there are any other dojos throughout the United States that you are associated with, or that are aware of the traditional teaching technique such as what I understand the technique at the ACLA to be. I thank you in advance for your time. your humble student, Michael D. Burke, E. Detroit, Michigan.

02-20-02

Dear Sensei, My name is Glenn Cunningham from Staten Island, NY... Back in 1993, when I first read your book "Kodo," I came with two of my students to visit you.... You met with us and we talked most of the night.....I study Okinawa Gojuryu Karatedo with the Jundokan in Naha, Okinawa.....Maybe you remember us? Just wanted to drop you a line to say thanks again for writing your book...Recently I informed many of my students to read it and it has caught on like wild.....Then I tell them about when I visited with you and how cool you were.....One note is that NYC has changed drastically since Sept.11th.....The Dojo is packed though.....Remember I am A NYC Detective with the NYPD..... Just figured that you would want to know that you are touching other students in others Martial Arts! Yours in Budo, Glenn Cunningham. www.newyorkcityjundokan.com

03-07-02

DEAR SENSEI. It was nice to hear from you ,as was been in you DOJO practice, please thanks MARK, FRANK, JAMES, RON etc. I am sending the AIKICALLI web so YOU may know more about our organization. I will write again, since I will start doing research in WHY AIKIDO IN DAILY LIFE, since I must write a thesis for my SHODAN TEST, and would like you to read it. If that is ok with you. Once again thank you for your hospitality.

Dr. Roberto Magallanes, Aiki Calli, Vera Cruz, Mexico

03-21-02

Dear Sensei, I just wanted to thank you for your writing on your website. I gain great inspiration from the ideas that you present. I've been teaching "professionally" for the last seven years in Pacifica, CA, and it seems like everything that I read from you has an application in my teaching. I try to quote you during class whenever possible for the benefit of my students. As we go down the teaching path, we run into the same obstacles as other teachers. You've been a great help in my teaching, Sir. I've even started writing a "Message from Sensei" page on one of my websites. Again, thank you Sensei.

Sensei Dave Bendigkeit, Dojo Cho - Shintaikido of Pacifica

PS: If you have any time, I'd appreciate your thoughts on my work.

You can see it at shintaikido.com <<http://www.shintaikido.com>>

There is a link to message from Sensei:

<<http://www.kiworks.com/message.htm>>

With respect and admiration.

Japan Trip continued:



There is so much more that I could write about my impressions of Japan, but I am forcing myself to bring this article to a close. I toy with the idea of living in Japan. Perhaps someday Machiko and I will move there. For the time being, however, I'll continue to enjoy the special status of being a familiar visitor.

Inquiry: Martial Arts & Religion

03-15-02

I became a Buddhist before I started training in Tai Chi Chuan, at the time I started I felt it necessary to learn a martial art that was self defensebased. As I worked at a homeless hostel and frequently encountered situations where more than a rudimentary knowledge of self defense would have been useful and prevented more suffering towards my challengers. Since I no longer work in this environment I am finding it difficult to find the motivation to continue studying tai chi chuan or any other martial art, from my Buddhist perspective and the particular lineage of Soto Zen that I am associated, there is no reference to the necessity of learning any martial art, in fact in part of the 58 precepts for a bodhisattva to adhere to, the possession or acquisition of weapons is advised against. Can you help shed some light on my limited understanding and help clear up the confusion I find myself in humbly yours, Gareth Ross, garethross@lineone.net

Sensei's Reply: From the standpoint of an ordained monk, I think if you practice Buddhism, you do not need martial arts. However, if you practice martial arts, I think spiritual training of some kind is very important - for some people. From the standpoint of an Aikido teacher, I think everyone should practice the art. Aikido brings action and knowledge together into one. The bottomline is to go with your inner feelings but just be honest with yourself. Good luck!

WARNING! No Ephedrine In The Dojo:

Recently there has been much publicity about the adverse effects and risks of the drug ephedrine (also called ephedra and ma huang) available over the counter in health food stores and in some over the counter "medications." People are often interested in using ephedrine for increasing apparent energy, weight loss and increased physical performance. There are no longer any legitimate medical uses for this drug and the potential side effects include sudden death, heart failure and stroke. Because ephedrine increases stress to heart muscle and may interfere with blood circulation to other important organs such as the brain, it should never be used in association with vigorous exercise. This drug may be "natural" but it is dangerous. Since the practice of aikido involves vigorous cardiovascular training, no student member of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles should be using this drug. Further, ephedrine interferes significantly with brain function and concentration. Therefore, any student practicing laido while under the influence of this drug represents a significant danger to himself and to the other students in the class.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles
www.aikidocenterla.com

Welcome To The Aikido Center of Los Angeles



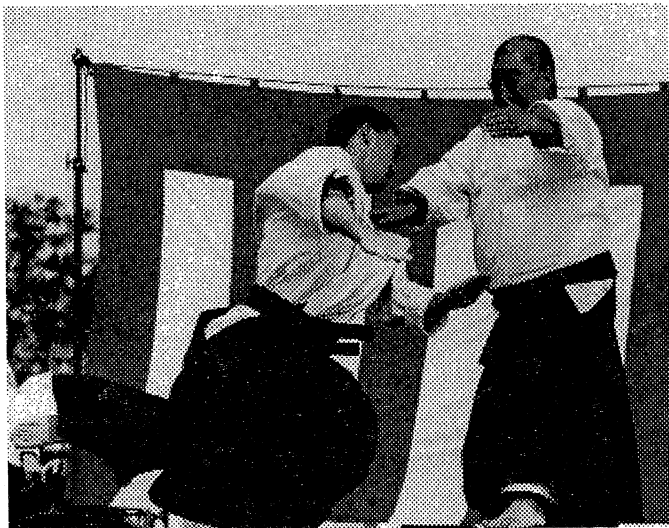
Aikido Center of Los Angeles

Our Dojo's 28th Year, 1974-2002.

Our dojo is dedicated to the practice of traditional Aikido as taught by the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba and his legitimate successors, the late 2nd Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba and the present 3rd Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.

You are very welcome to visit our beautiful, hand-crafted, traditional Japanese Dojo during posted training hours. All practicing Aikidoists are welcome to train with us or observe our training.

Please Visit Our Website:
www.aikidocenterla.com.



Reverend Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan



Japanese Swordsmanship: Musō Shinden Ryū Iaidō & Toyama Ryū Battōdō

We offer instruction in the traditional art of Iaidō, the art of the Sword. Serious students are always welcome. Iaidō demands a strong commitment of time, honor, perseverance and integrity. It is a spiritual art with a history and tradition of over one thousand years. It is an art which is rapidly disappearing in our modern world today. We welcome all interested students to join our training.

Dojo Supplies

Official Dojo Jackets

Now available on a custom order basis. Designed by Land's End, nylon in bright yellow with the embroidered Dojo logo. They are very comfortable and great to wear for demonstrations. \$55.00 each.

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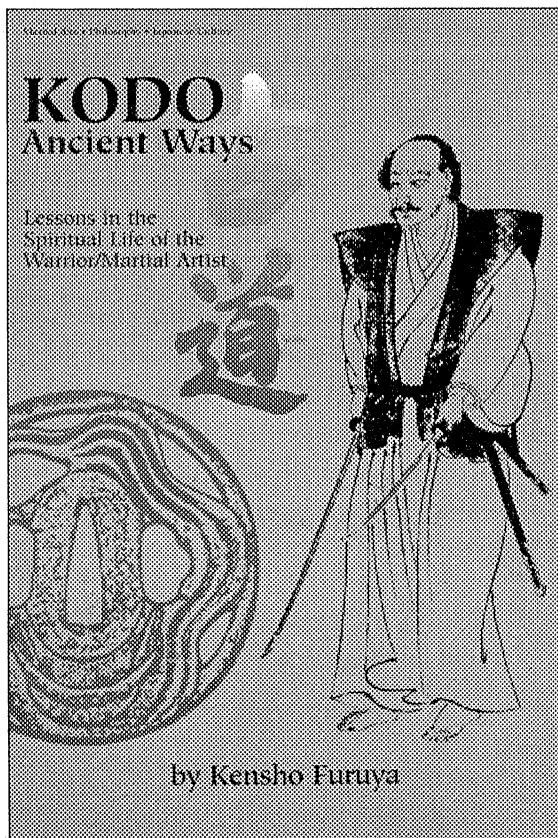
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Aikido Center of Los Angeles
NEWSLETTER

*Furuya Sensei's Bestseller
Highly Recommended For All Dojo
Students & Friends:*



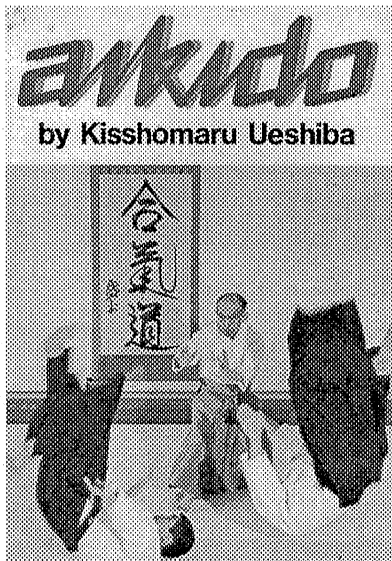
KODO
Ancient Ways:
Lessons in the Spiritual Life
of the Warrior-Martial Artist

Rev. Kensho Furuya

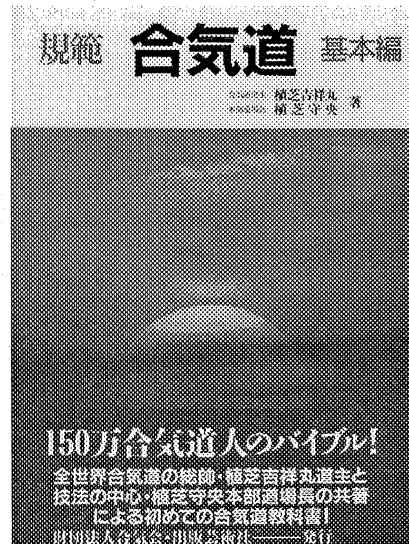
Please place your orders through:
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\$16.95 + \$3.00 S&H
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Recommended Studies:



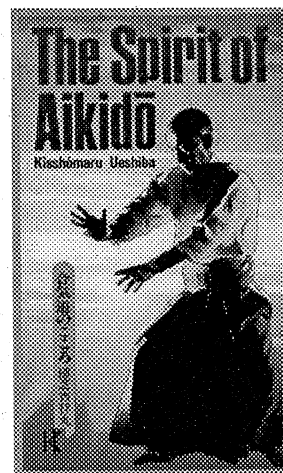
Highly Recommended Reading:
AIKIDO
By Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba
Doshu's book is one of the best books available today on Aikido technique. Strongly recommended.



KIHAN AIKIDO
Fundamental of Aikido
By Doshu & Dojochō Moriteru Ueshiba
The latest reference book on Hombu Aikido by 2nd & 3rd Doshu with excellent photos on all of the basic techniques. Referred to as the "Aikido Bible."



ACLA DOJO NEWSLETTER
Published monthly by the Aikido Center of Los Angeles. Annual subscriptions are available for a donation of \$36.00 which will be used towards printing costs and supporting the practice of the students.



THE SPIRIT OF AIKIDO
By Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba
An important book on the philosophy and historical background of Aikido's development. Translated from the Japanese - *Aikido no Kokoro*.

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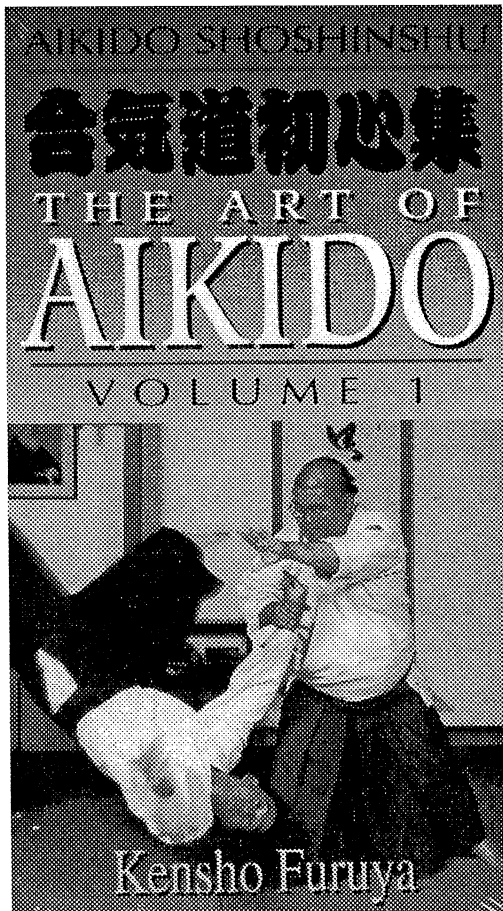
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The Aikido Center of Los Angeles
940 E. 2nd Street #7, Los Angeles, CA 90012
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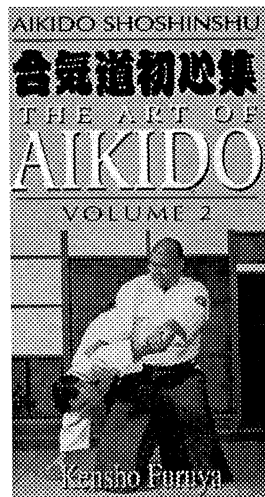
The Art of AIKIDO

Aikido Instructional Video Series in Nine Volumes

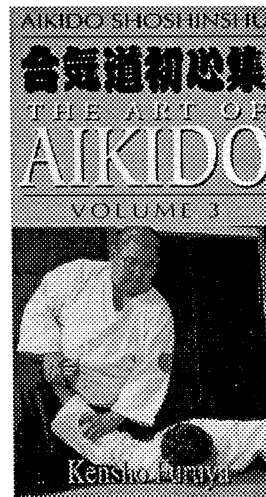
"Top Rated" - Karate Illustrated, *"Impressive Scope"* - Aikido Today, *"Exhaustive"* - Aikido Journal *"One of the Best"*



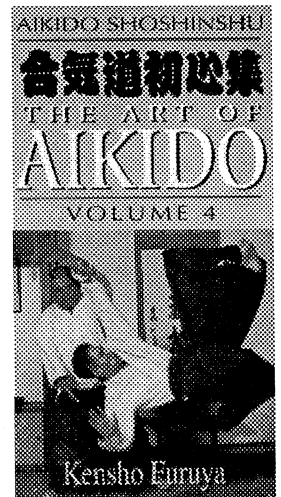
This video series is considered to be the most comprehensive and detailed instructional video on Aikido available today. Rev. Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan, Chief Instructor of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles, is a student of the late Kisshomaru Ueshiba Doshu of the Aikido World Headquarters. He began his training at the age of ten and celebrates over 40 years in Aikido. He studied in Japan in 1969 and the Aikido Center was established in 1974. Rev. Furuya is also an ordained Zen priest, a Brody Multi-Cultural Grant recipient, and was honored with a federal grant from the Carnegie Project of the National Defense Act to attend Harvard University in 1969. He is listed in the Who's Who and a board member of the LAPD Martial Artist Advisory Panel.



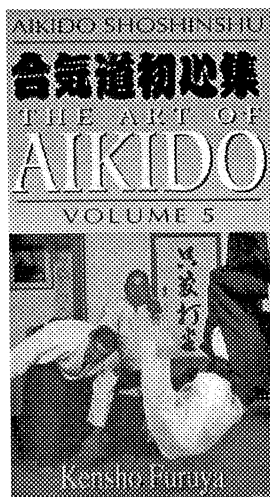
Basic Techniques
Throwing & Joint Techniques
Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo & Gokyo



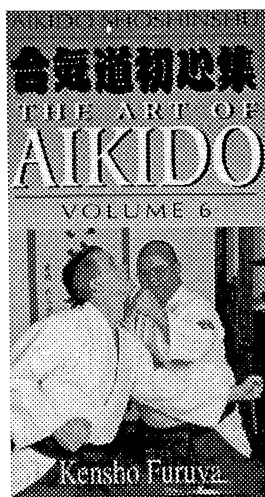
Ukemi-Breakfalling
Basics Continued
Free Style Techniques
Tenshin. Ki. Breathing.



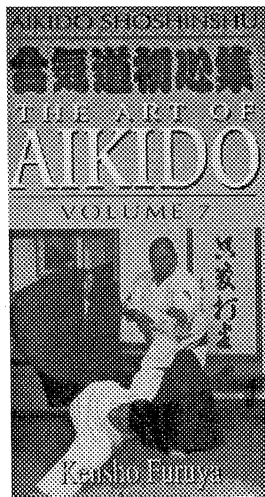
Katatetori Ryotemochi:
Ryotetori: 2-hand.
Reigi-saho: Etiquette.
Koshinage-Hip throws.



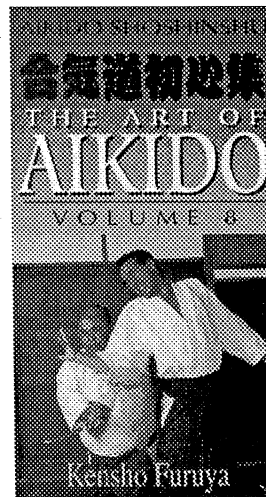
Suwari-waza. Gokyo.
Hanmi-handachi. Kokyu-dosa.
Katatori: Shoulder.
Multiple attackers.
Five-man Freestyle.



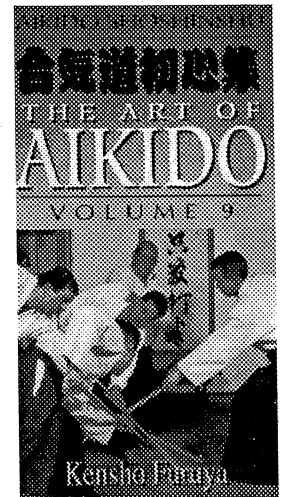
Tsuki: Strikes & Punches
Yokomenuchi: Strikes to the side
of the head & neck.



Shomenuchi: Direct strikes.
Ushiro Katatetori Kubishime:
Chokes from behind.
Ushiro Ryotetori, Ryohijitori,
Ryokatatori.



Atemi-waza: Striking
Defense against kicks.
Tanto-tori: Knife defense.
Aiki-ken: Sword Training
Fundamentals.



Jo: Basic long staff
Fundamentals.
Complete 1st Degree
Black Belt Examination

Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE

AIKIDO for ADULTS

Sundays: Children's Class: 9:00-10:00am.
Open Beginning: 10:15-11:15am.

Mondays: Open Beginning: 6:30-7:30pm.

Tuesdays: Open Beginning: 5:15-6:15pm.
Instructor's Advanced: 6:30-7:30pm

Wednesdays: Open Beginning: 5:15-6:15pm & 6:30-7:30pm. Intermediate-Advanced: 7:45-8:45pm.

Thursdays: Open Beginning: 12noon-1:00pm, 5:15-6:15pm & 6:30-7:30pm.

Fridays: Open Beginning: 5:15-6:15pm & 6:30-7:30pm.

Saturdays: Open Beginning: 9:30-10:30am. Beginning-Intermediate: 10:30-11:30pm. Every 4th Saturday: Open Intensive: 6:30-8:00am.

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

7- 16 yrs old

Sunday Mornings 9:00 -10:00am

Affiliation

AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Aikido So-Hombu Dojo - Aikikai

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

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 Moriteru Ueshiba Doshu.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

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Tel: (213) 687-3673

Email: aclafuruya@earthlink.net

www.aikidocenterla.com

Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

Sunday Mornings: 7:45am-8:45am

Thursdays: 7:45-8:45pm

Saturday Mornings: 8:00am-9:00am

No Classes on the last weekend of the month.

Intensive Iaido

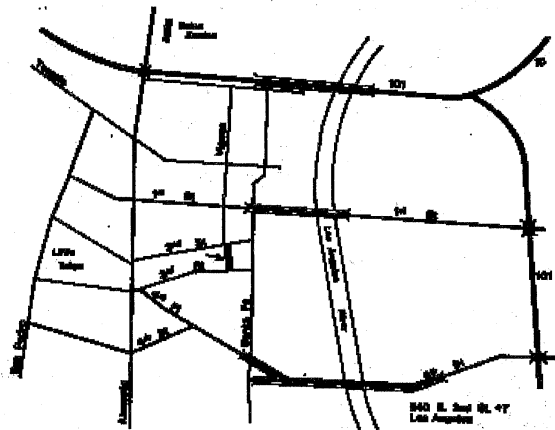
Every 2nd Saturday of the month.

6:30am-8:00am

Private Classes Available.

Finding Our Dojo:

We are endeavoring to maintain the highest standards of training while preserving the True Spirit of Aikido. We hope you will appreciate our efforts and undertake your training with devoted and committed energy. Your efforts, we believe, will be greatly rewarded. We welcome you to an ancient and profound art. We welcome you to our Dojo. Everyone, beginners and active Aikido students alike, are cordially welcome to join our training. Thank you.



We are convenient to most major freeways. Enter private lane at Vignes and 2nd Streets. We are one block west of Santa Fe Ave. and several blocks east of Alameda in Little Tokyo. The **Easiest Way:** From Alameda go east on 1st St and make right turn at Vignes. Do not turn on 2nd St. but go straight into the private lane. Look for the garden.