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The Aikido Center of Los Angeles, 940 2nd St. #7, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Tel: (213) 687-3673. Website: [www.aikidocenterla.com](http://www.aikidocenterla.com).

# Aikido Center of Los Angeles

## The Aiki Dojo

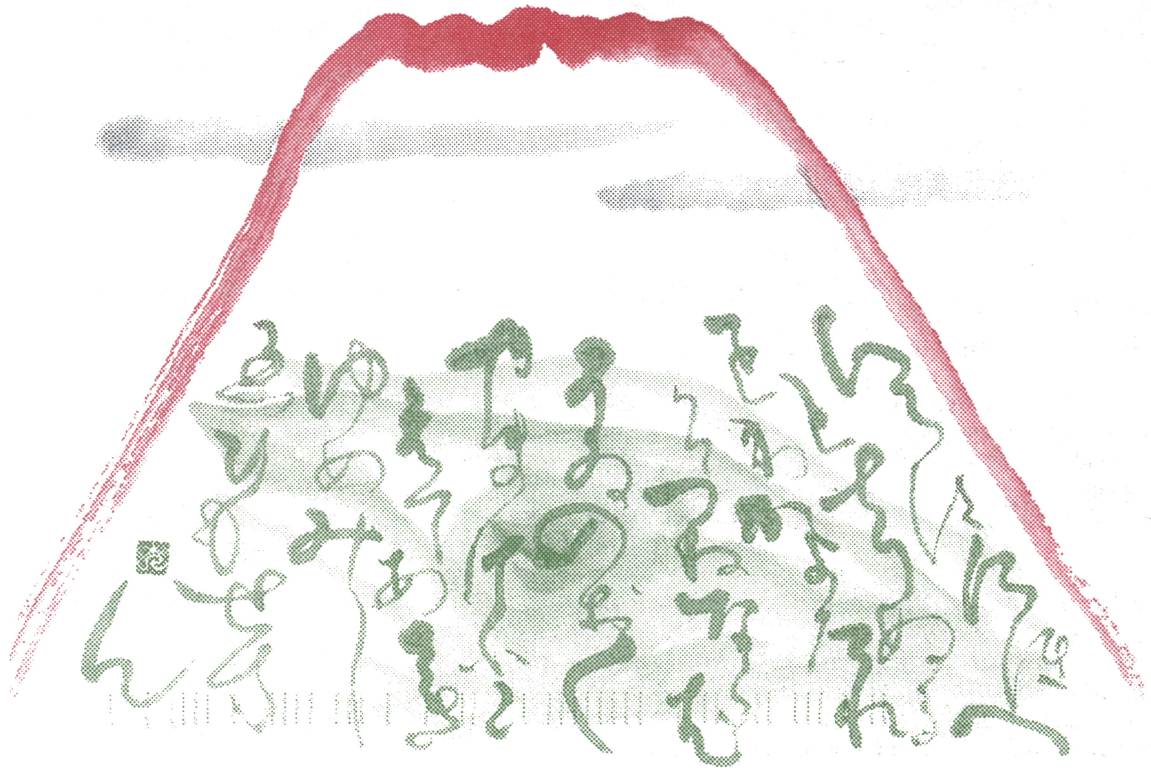
Affiliation: The Aikido World Headquarters, 17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan  
Los Angeles Sword & Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai Headquarters  
Office of the President: Nanka Yamanashi Kenjin Kai Southern California Yamanashi Prefectural Assoc.  
Member Los Angeles Police Department Martial Artist Advisory Panel

\$2.95  
Donation

December 1, 2001

Volume XIX. Volume 12.

Merry Christmas  
Peace On Earth, Goodwill To All



Best Wishes & Season's Greetings  
From All the Members of the  
Aikido Center of Los Angeles

## From Sensei: Merry Christmas Greetings:



I would like to offer my warmest regards and Season's Greetings for the Holidays and the Christmas Celebration. We have just entered a new millenium and we all had hoped for a new age of peace and prosperity but we have already experienced a horrible tragedy and perhaps now we have entered a long war. It seems that in every age, we are always challenged to our limits. Yet, whatever happens, life goes on - I believe this is the mysterious and great power of life itself.

Despite the prospect of war, we still look forward to our Christmas Holidays and celebrate the birth of Christ. We are still hopeful this will be a new age of great things to come.

What this means is that the world does not necessarily dictate how we live, we ourselves determine how we live in our own world. Even if the whole world is on fire all around us to our very feet, we can still choose to live in peace. In Zen, it is said that even as the sword is ready to strike your head off, one step and you enter the the Gates of Paradise.

Even in Aikido, we can choose it to be a world of competition and struggle and survival of the strongest or we can choose an Aikido which opens up a world of nurturing and growth and personal development as all beings around us flourish and prosper.

In everything we do we should try to nourish and cultivate this power of life within ourselves and those around us. Aikido gives us this wonderful opportunity.

We are really blessed with a nice Dojo and a great studentbody of wonderful people. A blessing is a gift in a way and all gifts come with a debt of responsibility. We should try as much as possible to preserve the teachings of O'Sensei and remain true to them. No matter how much the world changes, even if the world is completely on fire, we should remain true to our Aikido and ourselves. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Rev. Kensho Furuya

# Merry Christmas!

Rev. Kensho Furuya Foundation

General Membership

Yudansha Kai Black Belt Association

Kenshinkai Iaido

Children's Class

## Season's Greetings

From Our Affiliated Branch Dojos

*Kodokai Salamanca*  
*Santiago Almaraz, 3rd Dan*

*Hacienda La Puente Aikikai*  
*Tom Williams, 3rd Dan*

*Wyoming Aikikai*  
*Tom McIntyre, 2nd Dan*

*Bahamas Aikikai*  
*Seymour Clay, 2nd Kyu*

*International Martial Arts Academy*

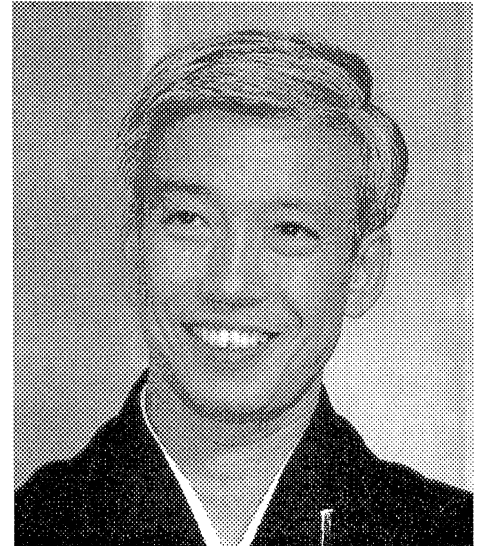
## Newly Affiliated Branches

*Jalisco Aikikai, Mexico*

*Aikido de Guadalajara*

*Aikido de Puerto Vallarta*

## 3rd Doshu At Anniversary Celebration of Aikido Hombu Dojo & Aikikai.



3rd Doshu, Ueshiba Moriteru Sensei, grandson of the Founder of Aikido, Ueshiba Morihei O'Sensei and son of 2nd Doshu Ueshiba Kisshomaru Sensei.

3rd Doshu, Ueshiba Moriteru Sensei, presenting his greetings before 1,700 guest at the 70th Anniversary of Hombu Dojo and the 60th Anniversary of Aikido.

### 2002 New Year's Schedule

January 1st. New Year's Holiday

January 2nd. Practice begins.

January 5th. 2nd Doshu's Memorial Service.

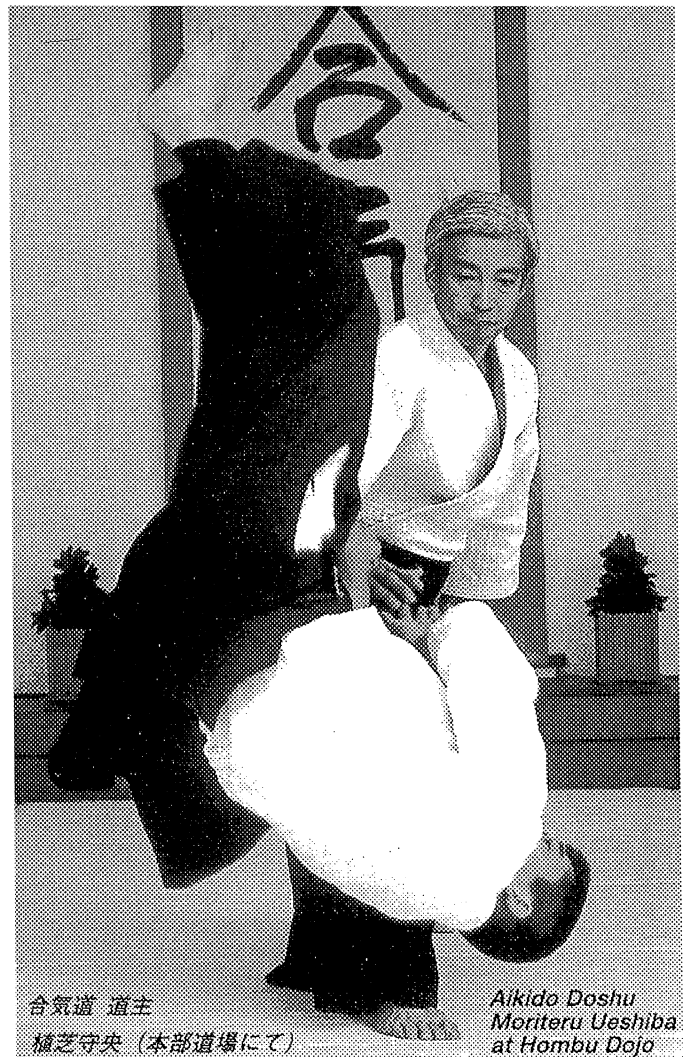
January 20th. Kagami-Biraki.

February 20th. Late Bishop Kenko Yamashita's Memorial Service.

March ( ) Cherry Blossom Festival, Monterey Park.

March 9th. Annual Joint Practice. Aikido-Ai, Whittier.

March 16-17th. Seminar With Hiroshi Ikeda Sensei, Boulder Aiki-kai.



合気道 道主  
植芝守央 (本部道場にて)

Aikido Doshu  
Moriteru Ueshiba  
at Hombu Dojo

## 2001 In Review:

Jan. 2nd. Training begins.

Jan. 6th. 2nd Doshu's Memorial Service.

Jan. 14th. James Takata Film Premiere  
In The Dojo.

Jan. 27th. Joint Practice With James  
Nakayama Sensei, Chushinkan Dojo.

Feb. 3rd. Frank Doran Sensei at Aikido-Ai,  
Whittier, Meeting.

Feb. 18th. Master Adam Hsu Seminar.

Feb. 20th. Late Bishop Kenko Yamashita's  
Memorial Service.

March. 5th. Frontline News Interview With  
Sensei.

March 21st. Demonstration at Pasadena  
City College, Pasadena.

March 31st. Demonstration at Pico Aliso  
Impacto Project, East Los Angeles

April 19th. Hiroshi Ikeda Sensei Meeting.

April 20th. Triade Company Cable  
Interview.

April 21. Annual Dojo Clean-up.

April 22nd. Cherry Blossom Festival  
Demonstration, Monterey Park

April 26th. Founder of Aikido, MORihei  
Ueshiba O'Sensei 33rd Memorial Service in  
the Dojo.

April 28th. Evergreen Baptist Church  
Culture Day Demonstration.

May 20-22nd. Naoji Karita Sensei Meeting.

June 1st. Discovery Channel Taping for  
Cable TV.

June 23rd. Iaido Video Taping.

June 25th. KCET Life & Times Cable TV  
Interview Taping.

June 28th. Children's Hospital Installation  
of the Buddha Ceremony.

July 13th. Asahi Shimbun Newspaper  
Interview with James Takata by Eiki Yano.

July 14th. Pasadena Buddhist Church  
Obon Aikido & Iaido Demonstration.

July 15th. Lotus Festival Demonstration,  
Echo Park, Hollywood.

July 30. Russell Wong Meeting.

July 5th. Annual Nisei Week Aikido  
Demonstration.

July 12th. Nisei Week Japanese Culture  
Lecture: Life and Art of Miyamoto Musashi.

August 14-20th. Beth Mizuno from  
Washington, D. C.

August 19-21st. Naoji Karita From Tokyo  
Meeting.

August 30- Sept. 9th. Spain Seminar at the  
Kodokai, Salamanca, with Kenny Furuya  
and Mark Ty.

Sept. 14th. Premiere of On The Inside:  
Martial Arts of Japan, Discovery Channel.

Sept. 22nd. Operation Sparkle Clean-up  
Little Tokyo Project.



**Oct. 13th. Joint Aikido Practice with Aikido-Ai, Chushinkan Aikido and Orange County Aikikai.**

**Oct. 14th. Nanka Yamanashi Kenjinkai Annual Memorial Service.**

**Oct. 20th. Special Practice with Patrick Cassidy Sensei, Aikido of Fresno.**

**Oct. 28th. Grand Opening of Tea Room at Gary Myer's (Kenshinkai) Yoshino Japanese Antiques.**

**Dec. 2nd. Annual Christmas Party.**

**Dec. 9th. Kenshinkai Iaido Annual Christmas Party.**

**Dec. 31st. Year End Practice.**

## Friends

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote:

Many people will walk in and out of your life,

But only true friends will leave footprints in your heart

To handle yourself, use your head;

To handle others, use your heart.

Anger is only one letter short of danger.

If someone betrays once, it is his fault;

If he betrays you twice, it is your fault

Great minds discuss ideas;

Average minds discuss events;

Small minds discuss people.

He who loses money, loses much;

He who loses a friend, loses much more;

He who loses faith, loses all.

Beautiful young people are accidents of nature,

But beautiful old people are works of art.

Learn from the mistakes of others

You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

Friends, you and me....You brought another friend....

and we started our group....our circle of friends....

and like a circle.....there is no beginning or end....

Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift.

*Submitted by Russell Wong, New York*

## Kodo For Christmas

A volume of KODO Ancient Ways or one of the Aikido videos always makes a very nice Christmas gift for a good friend or family member. The Dojo has a good supply at the moment. Be thoughtful and support the Dojo at the same time. Many Thanks.

*Aikido Center of Los Angeles*

# Aikido Seminar

Hiroshi Ikeda Sensei

7th Dan, Boulder Aikikai

March 16, 17, 2002

## Seminar Schedule

(Schedule is subject to change.)

March 16, SATURDAY

10:30am-12:30pm

1:00-2:30pm Lunch Break

3:00pm-5:00pm

March 17, SUNDAY

9:30am-11:00am

11:00am-11:15am Short Break

11:15am-12:45pm

12:45-1:00pm Photo

*Everyone is welcome.*

*RSVP by March 1st.*

*To: [aclafuruya@earthlink.net](mailto:aclafuruya@earthlink.net)*

**\$100.00/person both days.**

**\$65.00 one day.**

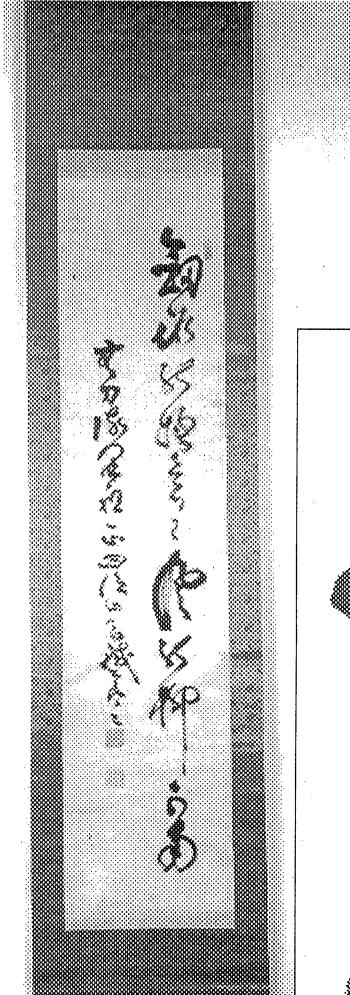
Sorry but the Dojo has no seating space for observers.

All fees must be paid by March 1, 2001.

Seminar will be limited to 50 participants.

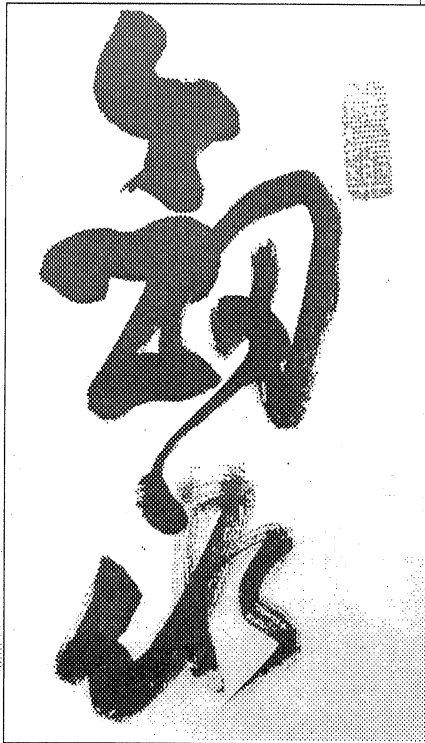
Please sign up early.

## The Dojo: Yamaoka Tesshu



*Kenjitsu no Gokui towa kaze ni yanagi kana - The Secret essence of Swordsmanship is the gentle breeze in the willow.*

*Muto Ryu Kaiso, Sei Yon-i, Tesshu Koji - Written by the Founder of the No Sword School, of the 4th Imperial Rank, Tesshu.*



Ex: Furuya Collection.

At the very highest level of practice we can reach something quite transcended and beyond our normal expectations. But I would like to say, "In order to see the stars, one must look up at the stars." We should always strive for the highest level of the art. This means that we must excel not just what we like or gives us immediate satisfaction or pleasure, we must excel in everything we do. This is the true meaning, I believe, of practice.

We want to be strong and we want to command the respect of others but generally, we turn it into the typical play for power. I doubt if we can ever achieve anything true to ourselves if we simply play politics with those around us. This simply forcing our will upon others. To achieve the state of merely *a spring breeze gently blowing through the willow branches*. What kind of martial arts is this? This is we must find out for ourselves through our own efforts in practice. Please keep up your training.

## Friday Dojo Study Class:

Learn more the Aikido roots and traditions, martial arts and Japanese culture in our Dojo Study Class held throughout the year in the Dojo on every 1st and 3rd Friday from 6:30pm-8:00pm.

## Yagyū Sword Guard: Saihai Ni Horai No Zu.



This Yagyū sword guard represents a military baton used by ancient Samurai generals on the battlefield to command the troops. It is accompanied by the horagai which is a large conch shell used as a trumpet by *shugensha* or mountain ascetics who undergo many tough religious practices deep in the mountains. Many times these sacred mountains are snowed in for most of the year and inaccessible by normal people. This is an interesting and unusual combination of designs but one of great importance in the Yagyū sword guard tradition. I think it represents the oneness or compatibility of military arts and spiritual practice.

As much as spiritual practice can be materialized in reality through our martial arts training, our martial arts or Aikido training must be refined and elevated through spiritual endeavor. Both are inseparable and necessary for each other's existence. Without this unity, martial arts simply becomes a method of killing or brutalizing others and spiritual practice merely becomes idle speculation or self-delusion.

This guard is extremely rare and only a handful are in existence. Made by masters of the Yagyū Family, this guard dates to 1660's, just after the passing of Yagyū Renyasai. Unlike other sword guards of this period, it is made by the old method of laminating layers of iron which has been refined by hand from sand ore. This is an extremely laborious process but the oldest method of obtaining iron ore for the production of blades. It is the finest iron ever produced by the secret methods of the Owari masters. This example is considered a masterpiece in excellent condition and preserves all of the secret marks of the Yagyū School. Each Yagyū sword guard, as does this one, represents a secret teaching of the Yagyū Shinkage Ryu of swordsmanship.

Sensei has gleaned the ancient teachings from such rarities as this over the years. Sensei has been studying the Yagyū guards for over thirty years now and is considered an authority in the field in this country. He occasionally gives lectures in the Dojo in our Study Class.

## Non-Sense

By Rev. Kensho Furuya

"Non-Sense" in Aikido: This is just a silly pun of mine this morning. I refer slightly to much of the real nonsense which goes on on the mats and more deeply to the lack of focus in training. "Non-sense" means "none of the senses" used when learning. Some students only use their eyes, watching but not really hearing what is being said. Some students seem to be listening but not really seeing what is going on. And some even seem to not be listening, hearing, seeing or anything and rather get up and go through the motions without doing anything. As I have mentioned so many times before, there is a lack of focus.

Focus means, in this respect, to bring all of your senses together in a concentrated effort into the present moment and onto the particular event right at this moment. And when I say "senses," I don't mean the usual "five" senses that most people refer to, I mean all eight or nine senses which you naturally possess, several of which you have allowed to wither away due to misuse or lack of use.

In Zen, it is referred to as "mindfulness." This is to be mindful of everything happening in the moment. I don't like to use this term myself because many times, I see a student being "mindful" but it is not really connected to the moment, but simply filled to overflowing with all kinds of personal misconceptions and delusions, and this sense of fullness brings on the sensation that I am "mindful," much like a full pail garbage (begging to be emptied).

Of course, one of my favorite Zen stories deals with this very beautifully. A monk requested an interview with the master to certify his recently acquired enlightenment, the result of ten years of hard and difficult training. As he sat down before the master, before he could say anything, the master inquired: "When you entered my room, did you put your slippers to the right or left of the entranceway?" The young priest was so surprised because he had been focusing on what to say to the master that he simply did not recall what he did with his slippers. He returned for ten more years of training. It is said on his second interview, he was certified. He concentrated on being, "mindful."

In the tea ceremony, every movement must be focused and concentrated and executed with ki. Even picking up the bamboo tea ladle, one must use focus and concentration. There is a large jar in the ceremo-

## Renewal Time!

### Dojo Membership & Subscriptions

It is this of year, all students need to renew their Annual Dojo Membership Fees. All of your dues and membership goes to supporting the Dojo and is always greatly appreciated.

Due to continually rising costs of printing our Monthly Dojo Newsletter, The Aiki Dojo, we constantly need to revise our mailing lists. If you wish to remain on our Mailing List throughout the year, please send in your subscription renewal fee or let us know your continued interest and support. Many thanks for your support. Thank you.

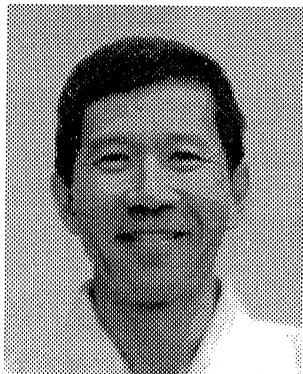
ny which contains cold water called a mizusashi. Before the hot water is added to the powered tea in the bowl, the lid of the mizusashi is removed and placed leaning on the side of the container. In case the water is too hot, cold water can be added to adjust the temperature of the tea. In practice, this always used to kill me. It is very difficult to lean the lid against the side of this round container. Usually it is sitting on a lacquer board which is extremely slippery, the lid itself is ceramic and of an odd shape and not easily balanced. And, you are nervous in the middle of making tea for everyone! Of course, you don't set the lid down because it must be clean as it is the container for cold water, but it is very easy to set it down flat just for a few moments. My teacher says that if you don't use ki, the lid will not stay put, if you focus yourself, you can make the lid set against the jar very easily - but you must focus or it will slip and fall - very embarrassing! My feeling that this is perfectly designed to teach focus.

up and do something completely different - what are they thinking? Of course, there are the students who don't observe and stand up and do something completely different - this is natural - they are completely not paying attention at all. We must hear, see, "touch," even "taste" the technique! We must use the sense called "mind," the sense called, "soul," the sense called, "intellect," and the sense called, "heart." We must even use the sense called "love," to bring us closer and closer to the art. All of this must be focused into one effort, into a single act into this present moment - only then can learning take place - only then can you call yourself really - complete, really whole! Of course, how can you call yourself whole and complete, when at this moment, "I am not using my mind, I am not hearing, I am not paying attention."

A teacher might demonstrate the technique but there is much more there beyond the simple movement, beyond the simple verbal instruction. . . . Have you ever heard of the term: "Read between the lines?" Much of Eastern teaching is like this. In traditional instruction - teaching always, always reserves the opportunity for seeking and learning, it is not simply a mass of directions. Sitting there with a reverent face does not do it, you must have passion and focus in learning or you are simply not in the game. This is "non-sense."

I often see students in class watch the techniques intently and stand up and do something completely different - what are they thinking? Of course, there are the students who don't observe and stand up and do something completely different - this is natural - they are completely not paying attention at all. We must hear, see, "touch," even "taste" the technique! We must use the sense called "mind," the sense called, "soul," the sense called, "intellect," and the sense called, "heart." We must even use the sense called "love," to bring us closer and closer to the art. All of this must be focused into one effort, into a single act into this present moment - only then can learning take place - only then can you call yourself really - complete, really whole! Of course, how can you call yourself whole and complete, when at this moment, "I am not using my mind, I am not hearing, I am not paying attention."

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## James Doi Simple & Elegant. 35 Years of Aikido

In everyday usage, the word elegant implies a rich or luxurious quality, however in science and mathematics, elegant is used with a very precise meaning.

Elegant is used to describe a particularly well done proof or solution to a problem. An elegant proof or solution is, of course correct, but it is also the most simple and rigorous way to the answer.

Simple is used in this sense to mean the quickest, most direct method. It does not mean unsophisticated. Simple means the greatest effect with minimal effort. Simple means extreme refinement of technique. While effort is minimized, all issues are rigorously addressed.

Examples of elegant proofs unfortunately require extensive background in the particular problem in order appreciate the beauty of a solution. However, the following story is simple example of this sense of elegance. A famous mathematician was a young child when his school class was assigned "busy work". The assignment was to add up all the numbers from 1 to 100. His teacher was surprised when the student came up with the correct answer in a few minutes. While most people would use the "brute force approach" of; "1 plus 2 equals 3, 3 plus 3 equals 6, 6 plus 4 equals 10, etc.", the mathematician chose an alternative approach. He realized that 99 plus 1 equals 100, 98 plus 2 equals 100, 97 plus 3 equals 100 and so on until 51 plus 49 equals 100. The answer is 49 times 100 plus 50 plus 100 which equals 5050. The answer was correct. The method was simple and direct. The technique was quick. The solution was elegant.

Although it is somewhat of a cliché now, another example of an elegant solution is the ying/yang symbol. It is a simple visual way to express complex concepts of duality, interconnectiveness and harmony.

When I observe a well executed Aikido technique, the word "clean" always comes to mind. If it is "clean", it is without extraneous movement, the timing is precise and the power is just right, not too much and not too little. The technique is elegant.

The Latin root of the word elegant means to choose or select. The present day usage conveys a sense of refined or tasteful selection.

One of the results of being associated with anything thing for a long time, as I have been associated with Aikido, is that I can observe the consequences of my early decisions and choices.

I first met Sensei in the late 1960's. He taught a student club at USC when he was a senior. When he graduated and moved to Boston, the club was then taught by another instructor.

For the next 15 years or so, I practiced Aikido at various dojos in

Southern California.

In the 1960's and 1970's there was a comedy troop known as the Firesign Theater that had a tag line: "Everything you know is wrong!" (it was funny at the time, why is a mystery to me now). The Aikido that I had practiced since my first introduction by Sensei many years ago felt like the tag line.

As all of Sensei's students know, the proper irimi nage that Sensei teaches obviously works. All through the 70's I never saw an irimi nage that I really thought would be effective. In the mid 1980's I met a Japanese instructor who had been a student of Tada Sensei at the Waseda University club in the 1960's and 70's. His irimi nage clearly was real and it would work.

The complete realization that "Everything I knew (about Aikido) was wrong!" was when I returned to Los Angeles in the late 1980's and started practicing at ACLA.

While I can claim to have practiced Aikido for thirty years or more, in reality only about half that time counts for anything. If it were only a matter of time spent training, then my wasted time would be unfortunate but correctable. Unfortunately this is not the case.

Non-English speaking immigrants who come to the United States as adults typically always have accents no matter how long they have lived in this country. While children under the same circumstances will speak English with absolutely no accent in a matter months or years. The point is that there are certain "window of opportunity" time periods in one's life when certain skills must be acquired.

I was told once that if one doesn't acquire proper ukemi skills by 30 years of age, one never will. It doesn't mean that it is impossible, it just means that it is really difficult. I heard that when I was thirty five. My Aikido will always have an odd 60's California accent.

By being ACLA students, you have made a good first choice about Aikido. All this is an inelegant way to say that Aikido is elegant. To see and try to be a part of the elegance of Aikido is what has motivated me for a very long time.

## Ken Watanabe Will I Ever be 'Good' in Aikido?"



I've been practicing martial arts under Sensei for a little over thirteen years. I have a 4th degree black belt in aikido and a 5th degree black belt in iaido. I've received the very best martial arts instruction and have received first-class training these past years. You would think that I consider myself pretty damn good, strong, skilled, or whatever. After all, I am one of Sensei's senior instructors. Well, I have secret, and that secret is that in Con't.



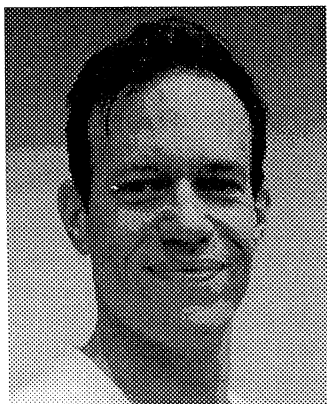
**Ken Watanabe continued:**

my practice, I don't consider myself that good at all!! When I started aikido, I would look at the senior students and think, "Wow, I wonder if I can get as good as them someday?". I wondered to myself, "Am I ever going to catch this?". So, I practiced and practiced, trying to catch onto the technique and get "good" in aikido. I wanted to be strong, be able to use aikido to defend myself, and basically try to be a little tougher than my previous wimpy self. Well, surprise, surprise, surprise, I'm STILL trying to do just that!! I think the question I ask myself now is, "How the Hell did Sensei do THAT?!!", everytime I get thrown down.

I think everyone can relate to that fact that no matter how hard you try to execute the technique as perfectly as possible, it never feels perfect. In my own little mind, there's always something in my technique that could use improvement. Seriously, I don't think I've ever executed a technique as perfectly as I'd like to. In fact, when I began aikido, I was relieved to be able to catch the general movement of the technique and survive the class without passing out! Today, maybe I'm a little stronger than before, or my timing and spacing is better. Perhaps, my knowledge of the technique has improved. Furthermore, I have several years of experience to fall back on. However, in my mind, I'm basically still trying to get "good"!!

Of course, I'm much better now than when I was a white belt, and when I think back to when I did my black belt test, I realize now that I hardly knew anything about aikido back then! However, even with all this experience I still always think to myself, "Oh, that wasn't too great", "I could've done that a LITTLE better", or, "My timing was off, #\$\$&!!". Now, > this might be somewhat discouraging in the fact that somebody who's practice for several years like I have can feel like this. But I think this feeling is what can make you, and it makes me, really think about your practice, how you can practice smarter, and trying to perfect the technique.

Of course, as I gain experience, I have to realize that under Sensei, I HAVE improved. When I think back to my younger days as a 1st or 2nd degree black belt, back then I hardly knew anything about aikido compared o what I know today. But the funny thing is, I still feel the same way about my practice. All I can see are the mistakes I'm making. I can always make it better. I can improve on it. Will I ever be "good" at aikido? Maybe someday, I will be.



**Jonathan  
Altman  
Real Practice  
In Reality**

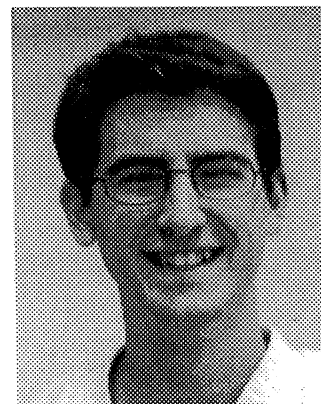
In the American legal system, justice is supposed to be the residue of two adversaries zealously representing opposing sides. Whether this works in practice remains open to debate, but it is unquestionably the law, and thus I

always face an opponent at my job. Many are very angry, or pretending to be so. There are insults, profanity, and threats; surprise victories and unforeseen defeats; undeserved credit and unfair blame. It

is sometimes difficult to avoid the pull of one's own imagination: "How can I handle the case if he is so unreasonable?" "If he lies to the Judge, how will I act?" "What if my client doesn't think I'm tough enough - or too tough?" Unfortunately, if one becomes swept up in apprehension, the possibility of seeing and reacting to the world as it really is disappears.

After only a short time training in Aikido, it is, I think, difficult to measure the benefits or meaning of practice. Nevertheless, I have noticed that, on the mat, problems created by living in the world of my imagination become instantly clear. If I worry whether or not I can do something, then I am not paying attention to doing it, and may not be paying attention at all. If I am thinking about possible success or failure in any aspect of practice, then I am not thinking about practice itself. And most fundamentally, if I cannot keep my mind on what I am doing (as opposed to what I wish I could do or am afraid I cannot do), I may get hit in the head by someone who can.

It is often said that one should practice Aikido not just on the mat, but everywhere. Like all excellent advice, this is easier said than done, but I believe a natural consequence of practice is that, consciously or not, a sense that "I've got to pay attention or I'm going to get hit in the head" begins to infiltrate other aspects of one's life. Lately I find that when a client is upset or opposing counsel is furious or my colleagues wonder why I spend time at practice instead of billing hours, I respond to them more as they actually are in the world, and less as they appear in my imagination -- in much the same way that I try to respond to uke's attack, not to my fears about uke's attack. I am not talking about a sea change - this is a subtle thing, and, as with my Aikido, there is a very, very, very long way to go -- but I believe I have seen a difference. And even if that is all the difference I ever see, my practice will have been worthwhile indeed.



**Michael  
Vance  
Faith In  
Practice,  
Practice of  
Faith**

Something that has interested me in my training is the role which faith plays in our practice of aikido, and as a corollary, the trust implicit in the relationship between student and teacher. I humbly offer these thoughts in the hope that they may prove interesting to someone.

I come from a background which is rooted in rationalist thought--raised an atheist, a heavily science and engineering-based academic career, and an interest in philosophy that was largely geared towards Western ethics. For me, faith was a foreign concept, even a hostile one at times. So it came as somewhat of a surprise to me when I realized how much of a role faith had in my training.

Aikido is a practice that largely consists of an understanding that can only be achieved through actual effort and training in technique. It is

### **Michael Vance continued.**

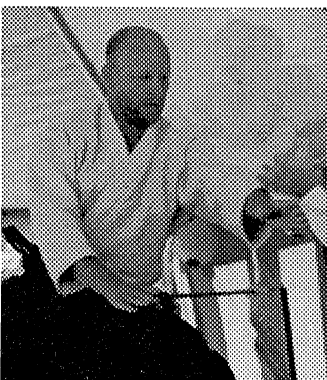
impossible to arrive at an intellectual understanding of aikido through rational analysis and then execute technique properly. If your interest is in such things as self-defense, it can also be very difficult at first to understand how a particular technique would be useful in an actual fighting situation. Furthermore, if you practice aikido with other goals in mind--a calmer, more centered perspective, etc.--it can also be very difficult to visualize a clear path from your present self to where you want to be through practice.

When you decide to begin training, you do so with a faith that discipline in practice over the course of many years will produce some positive result in yourself. The process itself may be mysterious and at times opaque, but you place your trust in the teacher and his methods, and remain faithful to his instruction.

This relationship of trust also interests me greatly. The student places a tremendous amount of trust in the instructor. He gives him his time and energy and in return expects, at the very least, to not be hurt maliciously or be a victim of an opportunist. While I am not a teacher, it seems to me that the trust placed in him creates a great responsibility to teach and guide the student, and that this reciprocation of trust becomes the basis for learning. The teacher also places his trust in the student that his teachings will not be wasted through neglect or lack of effort. This continues the reciprocation of trust.

Faith manifests itself in another way, the subduing of the ego. When a sempai chooses to execute tenchi-nage with greater force than you've ever experienced, or adds a painful wrist compression to nikyo that you did not expect, the kohei has faith that this is not merely spite or aggression, but a lesson that the student is expected to learn. We may be tempted to anger or disappointment, but our faith in our instructors and practice should lead us away from that and to instead reflect on what lesson the instructor was attempting to teach us.

Our understanding of faith through practice is broader than aikido itself. It has not only enhanced my training, but also allowed me to better understand the faith of others, whether that faith is religious or otherwise. It would be good if our training led us a step closer to O'Sensei's vision of a world without conflict.



### **James MacDonald To Be Or Not To Be?**

For the past few months I have been unable to train because of a back injury. What I thought would heal in a couple months was much more serious than I thought. A herniated disk. I'm

not used to things not healing. From hernias to torn knee cartilage to strains and common pains...they all eventually go away. At least, that's what I thought. I think that's why this is so frustrating. I feel like my body has betrayed me. Who once was a friend is telling me I can no longer count on him. This body, who has seen me through thick and thin, is saying 'enough.' 'Slow down.' I hate slowing down

So to come to practice and not be able to take ukemi has been particularly frustrating. The fact is, at this point I don't know if I'll be able to do Aikido anymore--at least not at the level I was practicing at before my injury. I've been trying everything...lower lumbar injections--those are no fun--swimming, physical therapy...nothing seems to help much. One doctor did say it might just go away after a while. That's my favorite scenario. The jury's not in on this one. I just need to wait and see.

Aikido has always been a great mystery to me, as is life. As I get older the only thing that brings me peace is knowing that something much larger is at work than myself. I am a different person because of Aikido. Training as much as I did made me realize we can only do or try our best in life. That's it. We try our best and go on. And only each person knows what his best effort is. So I'll try my best to get better. Or better yet, I'll try my best and be happy with whatever happens. How many times I've thought, 'how fortunate I am,' while kneeling on the mat hearing Sensei describe a technique. How fortunate.



### **Santiago Garcia. Merry Christmas!**

This year in our Dojo, happened many things, some was good and others less as the usual life. The Dojo recover was slowly after the fire, the 19 of October 2001 but bit by bit we got to wake up quickly and walk again, this was possible

with the help of many, many people, as the students, familiar, friends and the support to the students of ACLA and Sensei Furuya too.

This year that we left in our Dojo passed many new students some from Spain and other from out side, as Julié Talamón from Paris (France), Nao Hamada from Tokyo, (Japan), Paul Basmajiam California (USA) or Jose Luis Marquez, from Mexico, I would like to say thanks to all this students to practice with us, we learnt much of all of them, and I hope that they learnt something from us.

The Kodokai Dojo have been work for different demos, and this year record a special report about Aikido in our Dojo for a local TV, this year we did too, some interview for a newspaper and magazines, many people in our city have been interesting in Aikido this year.

And of course, the most important date this year, the seminar of Kenny Furuya and Mark Ty. In our city, Salamanca the 1 and 2 of September. The exams for Dan, of two of my students Kike and Toño, this was a important time in this visit. I use this small article to say thank you very much to Kenny And Mark and specially to Sensei Furuya, because his support and thrust to the realization of this seminar here, MUCHAS GRACIAS!.

The next year I wish that the ACLA and Kodokai Dojo keep this good relations, and keep this sprit of harmony between us. I will try to work harder to transmit to my students this idea, and that they practice with constancy and the motivation of the first day of practice. Merry Christmas from the Kodokai Dojo, Salamanca, Spain



## **Kaoru Tamura Returning To Aikido**

In January I went back to aikido after six or seven years, and I'm enjoying it. The idea of resuming aikido came up this way: last year I met and worked with a lot of people who were unfamiliar with Japan or Asian culture, and I began to feel

like I was beginning to "lose touch" with my own heritage. The end of the year arrived without my being able to resolve this feeling of unease, and as we do every New Year's eve, my family and I were watching the Kohaku Uta Gassen ("Red-vs.-White" Battle of the Music All-Stars) over Toshikoshi Soba (Year-Crossing Noodles). This year's host for the show was a young Kyogen master, who went on stage wearing a beautiful "uguisu" (tea green)-dyed hakama. I was very impressed by the stately bearing of this young actor, and it reminded me that there was a black hakama sitting in the back of my closet gathering dust.

I dug up my old hakama and thought about resuming aikido, but... once you've been away from it for so long, it's hard to find the spring-board to go back to it. So I tucked this thought and the hakama away in the back of my mind and went about my usual business, when I happened to come across a feature about the Aikido Center on the cover of Downtown News. It was sheer serendipity, and that same week I went back to the dojo. Things had not changed much at the Aikido Center, except that Mitsuko didn't bark as I entered the door. But, I saw the a lot of the same people from some six, seven years back, which told me that the Center must be a good place.

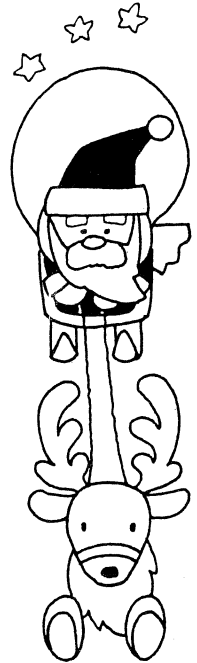
So far the practice has been difficult but fun, and I feel like there is a supportive learning environment. Often I can think up all kinds of excuses for not going to practice: I'm tired, I'm sleepy, I'm scared of getting injured, I don't feel like practice, etc. Then I think: "Now, it wouldn't be much of a "kunren" or "shugyo" (training) to go only when I felt like it" (but it's still often an effort to keep up...). Paradoxically, I often feel less tired and lazy after practice. It's refreshing to look at the splash of water at the gate, all the plants and the water in the chozu as you enter and exit the dojo.

Also, the people are nice at the dojo. I learn from how the people at the dojo treat each other with respect and civility. When practice gets hard, it helps to look up the internet site, or to talk to other people who've been through it before. They understand or have passed through the same difficulties, and their advice and support help me to keep up with practice.

The strange thing about aikido for me is that it seems to have an uncanny way of punishing pride and self-will. That is, when I am thinking: "I could do this," "I know that," "I don't like this," "I like that," etc., then I get injured, humiliated in some really daft way, get criticized or yelled at. On the other hand, practice seems to go better when I go with a healthy dose of reverential fear and trepidation... Sometimes all kinds of unnecessary (often negative) thoughts are going through my mind during practice, and a phrase floats up in my mind that I must have heard or read somewhere: "Just do aikido and

## **Steve Shaw Learning the Moment**

Come friends, let's bow in. It's time for our training to begin. Stretch. Reach Out. Release all pain and see The path to reach peace and harmony. It's on the mat, in this sacred space, So pure, it stares you in the face. Nikyo, Sankyo, Tenkan, Irimi It's up to us to open our eyes and see The perfection, the mastery of the moment. Displayed by our teacher, he's solid, confident. Of the instruction passed along the way. Through the lines from O' Sensei. We are lucky, that much is true. We have consistency, me and you, A model for us to follow, guide us along the way. "O negai shimasu," we all say. Then up we go, into action we spring. Feeling the Uke and what they bring. Not too hard, too soft, too slow, not too fast, The connection is master, make it last. From this we will see . Applications beyond infinity. It's there, just beyond our doors, Our lives, our streets, in our stores. It's everywhere, for all to know, The universality of Aikido. So pure, so good, simplicity, Tranquil, endless energy, I'm grateful. I'm peaceful. There's no doubt. It's already time to bow out. Thank you for all you have done. Honoring the mats has just begun. All of it, I'll never express. After all, sometimes, more is less. It's all there in the open hand. I'll spend my whole lifetime to understand.

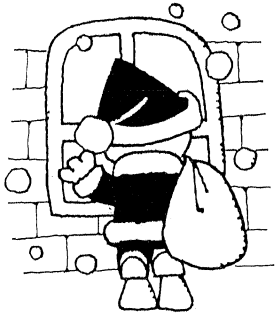


### **Kaoru Tamura Continued.** everything else will fall into place."

My father claims that I am less "seikaku ga warui" (have a bad personality, have a chip on one's shoulder) when I am going to practice regularly; so he encourages me to keep attending aikido. At the dojo I often find it disconcerting to be corrected because it's hard to bend my will; even when I know I'm wrong, correction often stirs up my left-wing rebel instinct and I grouse and whine mentally (like being at a convent school)... Then I put a lid on it, and try to conjure up the nice image of the stalk of wheat that bends its head when it is full -- but it's so much harder said than done. It's hard to soften a stubborn head, especially when it's on your own shoulders. Gaman...! (Patience!)

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[www.aikidocenterla.com](http://www.aikidocenterla.com)**

## Jonathan Tien More Balance & Ukemi:



I started training at the dojo at the beginning of July last year. At that time, I was unsure whether I would stay in the Los Angeles area, or relocate else where in search of a better future. Now, a year and a half later, I am still here and enjoying all my times and experiences at the dojo. Time sure flies.

Training continues to be both challenging and rewarding. I have discovered that I would often "hit a

wall" during my training and no sign of improvement is visible. And it is during these periods of time that training can become mundane and a source of frustration. At times, I would feel that I have all the energy in the world in class and most techniques seem to be easy to grasp. In contrast, there are simply times that nothing is working and I feel like I should go back to learning how to roll. While thoughts like this derives from a sense of frustration, I realize just how important it is to stick with the basics and perfect one's fundamental skills.

In a class a while back, sensei stressed to us that it is imperative for students to pay close attention to the smallest details of a technique. While the instructor will demonstrate a technique and explain the fine points of its execution, a student should still be so attentive that we are able to "steal" its secrets instead of simply mimicking the movement in a general way. However, being able to understand the movement precisely is difficult enough. Therefore, being able to actually knowing how to make your body move the same way takes persistent and repetitive practice.

I have also been trying to constantly remind myself to find the right balance during training. I use to think of balance as simply the ability to maintain steady footing while executing a movement. Now I realize this concept is perhaps too narrow since it neglects the rest of the body. In order to achieve the proper balance to maximize the force of a movement, every single part of one's body must be considered. This includes (just to name a few) the distance and angle between the two feet, which ways they are pointing, the position of one's hip, the level of the shoulder, and shape of your arms.

Another major challenge I have been facing is learning how to take ukemi better. It has literally taken a year for me to feel some noticeable improvement. Nevertheless, I know it will probably take much longer than it has before I can become fully competent.

The recent terrorist attacks has touched all of us in a personal way no matter if any of us knew anyone that were actually killed or injured. While I believe retaliation is necessary for various reasons at this point, I also believe that it is the time to do some serious soul searching and reexamination of our actions, both on a day-to-day basis and collectively as a people. After all, what have we done to deserve such hate? Unless we are willing to look into ourselves and take responsibility for our own malice, our days of terror may never end.

In the past year and a half, I have made so many close friends in the

dojo and the dojo has helped me to grow as a person. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for everyone's friendship and guidance. I wish you and your loved ones a joyful and safe holiday season.

## Carol Tanita My First Year In Aikido:



It is just a little over a year since I started to train with Furuya Sensei. It is so amazing to me how fast the time has gone by. I feel like it was just yesterday that I was still struggling to learn how to forward roll (which I still have not quite mastered yet), and now can somewhat backward roll. All of the things I have observed and learned this past year has helped me to appreciate the importance of repetition and practice. Regardless of how many times the

same move or technique is taught, I gain so much from just watching. Miniscule details that I had not noticed before, becomes so obvious the next time. And of course the practice helps to refine the move a little more each time. Each time I am corrected by Sensei, or any of the Black Belts and Senior students, I am so grateful, because I know I have so much to learn and improve on my technique. When I attend the different practices, sometimes there are different Black Belts who may teach our class, and even if it is the same move we do day-in and day-out, their presentation and explanation gives a different aspect to the technique and helps to give me a better understanding of the particular move. If my schedule would permit it, I think I would like to be at every practice my body could handle.

At this point, I suppose that I should have a goal in mind, but my only goal is to practice "good" Aikido, the way Sensei would like us to learn it. I suppose that receiving a "Kyu" rank shows progress and improvement, but my real desire is to be able to move fluidly and understand the connection between the different movements. I am sure that there are other dojos that teach "good" Aikido, but it seems that the techniques that we are taught in our Dojo is close to the pure forms that have been taught from our Aikido forefathers. How else can the same techniques be handed down and taught all these years and survive the test of time? In watching our visitors to the Dojo from other parts of the world, even as a beginning student, I can see how good our Sensei has been in keeping with the traditional movements of Aikido. When watching guests demonstrate or train in our Dojo, many of our beginning students seem to have better technique than the visiting Black Belts and Senior students. Training hard is not just what makes a good student. Understanding the tradition and history of the art is important as well. Maintaining the tradition and cultural aspects of Aikido as our Sensei sees it is what makes our Dojo such a joy to be in. A Dojo does not have to be big nor rich to be a great one. A Dojo like ours is a great one because of the leadership of a teacher who cares for the student's growth and well-being. It is with great pride and honor that I am allowed to be affiliated with our Dojo. Thank you Sensei for teaching us with great guidance and patience. I am looking forward to great new year in training in 2002.

**Editor's Note: Many thanks to all who submitted articles.**



## Zen And Japanese Swordsmanship

By Mark Ty, Aikido 2nd Dan, Iaido 2nd Dan

With its introduction into Japan, Zen has had a profound influence on Japanese culture. Zen has made an impact on Japanese arts such as the tea ceremony, No drama, and Japanese painting. One of the most important arts that Zen has touched is the art of Japanese swordsmanship. The role of Zen in Japanese swordsmanship has been to fill the mental and spiritual void that previously existed in the art.

The shift from the Kamakura to the Edo period represented a transition from war to peace. With this shift came a change in attitudes. Bravery on the battlefield was no longer the primary concern of the samurai. They began to emphasize the mental and spiritual aspects of swordsmanship over physical technique alone. Physical skill alone was insufficient, as it often led simply to mutual killing: "When the contestants are of equal caliber and proficiency the game as it is generally played finishes with an ai-uchi, which, when it is carried on with real steel, means killing each other." (Suzuki 172). The complete mastery of swordsmanship required a mental and spiritual discipline to complement technique: "Even though you know principle, you must make yourself perfectly free in the use of technique. And even though you may wield the sword that you carry with you well, if you are unclear on the deepest aspects of principle, you will likely fall short of proficiency. Technique and principle are just like the two wheels of a cart." (Takuan 25). The Zen emphasis on intuition over intellectualism provides a solution to this lack of a mental and spiritual discipline.

The immovable mind does not mean that one becomes so absorbed in something that nothing else can break their concentration on that point. On the contrary, it means that not allowing his mind to be taken by anyone or anything: "Glancing at something and not stopping the mind is called immovable. This is because when the mind stops at something, as the breast is filled with various judgments, there are various movements within it. When its movements cease, the stopping mind moves, but does not move at all." (Takuan 21). This concept comes from the Buddhist doctrine of having no attachments. In *The Unfettered Mind*, Takuan refers to this idea in his discussion of the "abiding place." This "abiding place" is any place where the mind stops to dwell upon (Takuan 19). As an example, Takuan explains how it is all too easy to be absorbed by the opponent's sword. In trying to defend against a strike, it is common to concentrate on meeting the sword at the position one first notices it moving. Thus, one's mind stops at that point, and he is defeated by his opponent. Instead, one should sense the attack, but not let their mind be taken by it:

Although you see the sword that moves to strike you, if your mind is not detained by it and you meet the rhythm of the advancing sword; if you do not think of striking your opponent and no thoughts or judgments remain; if the instant you see the swinging sword your mind is not the least bit detained and you move straight in and wrench the sword away from him; the sword that was going to cut you down will become your own, and, contrarily, will be the sword that cuts down your opponent. (Takuan 19)

There are many other potential sources of attachment. One may

become attached to such ideas as the preservation of his own life or. In fact, one may even be distracted by his own weapon: "The mind can be taken by the sword. If you put your mind in the rhythm of the contest, your mind can be taken by that as well. If you place your mind in your own sword, your mind can be taken by your own sword. Your mind stopping at any of these places, you become an empty shell." (Takuan 20).

The consequences of allowing one's mind to be taken are fatal for the swordsman. These attachments telegraph his intent to attack or defend: "Since the mind has no form or shape, it is basically invisible; but when it clings and lingers, the mind is visible as such in that condition. . . . The human mind also manifests visibly when it is attracted and fixated by things. . . . When the thought is within, the impression appears outwardly. When you are watching an opponent, moves carefully, if you let your mind linger there, you will lose at martial arts." (Yagyū 106).

Another Zen concept in Japanese swordsmanship is the freely-moving mind. Although this concept seems to contradict the idea of the immovable mind, the two are, in fact, not only related, but complementary. Takuan explains this idea in his description of the Thousand-Armed Kannon. If the Thousand-Armed Kannon focuses on one of its arms, it will not be able to manipulate the other nine hundred and ninety-nine, rendering them entirely useless. But if it avoids this, it can make use of all one thousand of its arms (Takuan 22). Thus, it is vital for the Thousand-Armed Kannon to keep its mind freely-moving.

In *Zen and Japanese Culture*, Suzuki defines this freely-moving mind as the original mind. He contrasts this with the delusional mind, which is the one that has been "intellectually and affectively burdened." (Suzuki 110). The delusional mind prevents the swordsman from moving on and leads to his downfall: "It thus cannot move on from one topic to another without stopping and reflecting on itself, and this obstructs its native fluidity. The mind then coagulates before it makes a second move, because the first move still lingers there" which is a *suki* [opening] for the swordsman "the one thing that is to be avoided with the utmost scrupulosity." (Suzuki 110). Thus, the delusional mind is preoccupied with an existing thought and has no time for anything else. In contrast, the original mind (also referred to as the no-mind) is just the opposite; it is free to take in everything. This is illustrated by Takuan's example of a tree and its leaves. As long as one's attention is drawn to a single leaf, one will not be able to see the rest of the tree: "When facing a single tree, if you look at a single one of its red leaves, you will not see all the others. When the eye is not set on any one leaf, and you face the tree with nothing at all in mind, any number of leaves are visible to the eye without limit. But if a single leaf holds the eye, it will be as if the remaining leaves were not there." (Takuan 22). Echoing the earlier comment from Yagyū Munenori, Musashi comments on the necessity of this freely-moving mind: "Generally speaking, fixation and binding are to be avoided, in both the sword and the hand. Fixation is the way to death, fluidity is the way to life. This is something that should be well understood." (Musashi 20).

How does one achieve this freely-moving mind? According to Takuan, one does so by not concentrating the mind in any one particular part of the body. The freely-moving mind is not confined to one place, but is allowed to diffuse through the entire body: "If the mind moves about the entire body, when the hand is called into action,

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**NEWSLETTER**

**Zen & Japanese Swordsmanship continued:**

one should use the mind that is in the hand. When the foot is called for, one should use the mind that is in the hand. When the foot is called for, one should use the mind that is in the foot. But if you determine one place in which to put it, when you try to draw it out of that place, there it will stay. It will be without function." (Takuan 32). By allowing the mind to fill the entire body, one will be able to react much more quickly than they otherwise would: "Seeing with the mind is considered basic. It is because of seeing from the mind that the eyes also perceive. Therefore seeing with the eyes is subordinate to seeing with the mind. Next after that is to see with your body, feet, and hands. Seeing with your body, feet, and hands means that you do not let your body, feet, and hands miss the quiescent sword of an adversary." (Yagyū 93). Because it occupies the whole body, it does not move from place to place. In this sense, it is an immovable mind. And yet, because it is not confined to one area, it is free to react, and is thus, freely-moving.

However, one cannot artificially force the mind to spread throughout the body. The very thought of trying to remove the mind from a particular place will, in fact, cause it to be bound up (Takuan 34). How does one solve this problem? The answer is that there is no immediate way to do so; one must simply have patience and allow the process to occur by itself over time: "The mind that thinks about removing what is within it will by the very act be occupied. If one will not think about it, the mind will remove these thoughts by itself and of itself become No-Mind. If one always approaches his mind in this way, at a later date it will suddenly come to this condition by itself. If one tries to achieve this suddenly, it will never get there." (Takuan 34).

This concept is symbolized in the Yagyū Shinkage-ryū teaching of the "water moon." According to this teaching, the moon is reflected in puddles, lakes, and other bodies of water. No matter how many bodies of water there are, the moon still produces the same reflection: "Again, it is like one moon reflecting itself in hundreds of streams; the moonlight is not divided into so many shadows, but the water is there to reflect them; the moonlight remains ever the same even where there are no waters to hold its reflections." (Suzuki 116). In addition, the moon makes no conscious effort to produce these reflections. Similarly, the freely-moving or original mind acts without any conscious intentions.

Yagyū Munenori, head of the Yagyū Shinkage-ryū and teacher to Tokugawa Hidetada, gave some more practical advice on how to achieve this free mind. At an elementary level, the mind will attach itself to something when it is allowed to wander:

The sense of this expression is that when you strike a blow of the sword, if you think to yourself that you have scored, then the mind thinking you have scored stops and stays right there. Since your mind does not come back from the blow you have scored, you become careless and get hit by the adversary's (second) sword. Your initiative turns out to be for naught, and you lose by getting hit with a counterblow. (Yagyū-95) Therefore, at this beginning stage, it is necessary for one to train his mind to not wander and return to him. "When you strike a blow, do not keep your mind on where you hit; after striking, bring your mind back to observe your adversary's condition. Once he is struck, an opponent's mood changes . . . if you are inattentive, you will get hit. . . . Bringing back the mind means bringing your mind back to your body, not letting it tarry at the point where you have struck." (Yagyū-

95). Once one has trained his mind not to attach itself to other things and to return to him, he can move on to a more advanced level. At this stage, one should, in contrast, allow his mind to move freely: "At the advanced level, the message is to let your mind be free to go wherever it will. You release your mind after having made it such that it will not stop and linger anywhere even if it is set free." (Yagyū 83).

These two concepts of the immovable mind and the freely-moving mind lead to most important idea of all: no hesitation. Because the mind is not stopping on any one object, it has no time to deliberate. This is akin to the spark emitted from a stone when it is struck (Takuan 26). As soon as contact is made, the spark is immediately released. There is no interval between the two events. It is not the speed with which the second event follows the first that is important, it is the connection between the two: "It would be a mistake to understand this simply as celerity. Rather, it underscores the point that the mind should not be detained by things; it says that even with speed it is essential that the mind does not stop. When the mind stops, it will be grasped by the opponent. On the other hand, if the contemplates being fast and goes into quick action, it will be captured by its own contemplation." (Takuan 26-27).

Takuan gives a more concrete example of the importance of not hesitating in his advice on negotiating multiple attackers. One needs to be able to proceed onto the next opponent without lingering on any particular one: "If ten men, each with a sword, come at you with swords slashing, if you parry each sword without stopping the mind at each action, and go from one to the next, you will not be lacking in a proper action for everyone of the ten." (Takuan 21). But if one hesitates and concentrates on a single attacker, then the results are disastrous: "But if the mind stops before one of these men, though you parry his striking sword, when the next man comes, the right action will have slipped away." (Takuan 21).

There are many misconceptions about the freely-moving mind. Often referred to as the no-mind, it is perceived as doing something over and over again until one is able to perform that action without thinking. Although it sounds similar, this is different from the freely-moving mind of Zen. No-mind is not being so single-mindedly focused on a given task that one is too self-absorbed to be aware of anything else. This can be accomplished simply with the repetitive practice of any action. On the contrary, no-mind means not being pre-occupied with anything else so that one can react to anything: "We often translate this as the Empty mind, but it is not the empty mind of a fool or the same as an empty gun. It is the empty mind that holds everything, can see any movement, however slight, can deflect the opponent's sword however fast, and can cut him down however strong." (Furuya 111).

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**Aikido Center of Los Angeles**  
**NEWSLETTER**

## Letters:

10-15-01

### Regarding Our Joint Practice:

Dear Kensho Furuya, It was my pleasure to be there yesterday. I enjoyed being there and really was impressed with your dojo. It is beautiful. It was also nice to see James Doi again. It's been a long time since I last saw him. Hope we can get together again in March. Henry Oshiro, Chief Instructor of the Orange County Aikikai

10-15-01

Furuya Sensei, I truly appreciate your efforts in putting together the workout. Great idea! Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves very much. I'm glad we had the chance to sit and talk. I think it's wonderful that we'll be continuing these get-togethers in the future. I'm looking forward to them. . . .

James Nakayama, Chief Instructor of the Chushinkan Aikido Dojo, Buena Park.

10-19-01

Good morning Sensei, Thank you for the join practice on the Oct-13. Now I know why you are so famous, you know how to reach people sensei. . . . looking forward to visit you again at your dojo. I am sure a lot of students there on that day went home and They all have a good impression about you and I think you ready deserve it. I am only visit your dojo two times and notice that You are a very giving person. You always worry about other people and reminded everyone to go eat and enjoy the foods and both Times you barely eat anything, you just sit there watching make sure everyone having a good time. You have a lot of qualities sensei, You not only good but you also kind and generous and have a big heart, no other sensei can come close to you. . . . please take care of yourself! We need you to be healthy. Again thank you for every thing . . . .

PC

10-23-01

Dear Furuya Sensei, My name is Evan Kendall. I desire to become a student of yours—a real student, not just of a martial art, but a student of True Knowledge. I am unclear about the practice of making requests. You say that in the Japanese martial arts tradition one must request nine times before being admitted as a student. I guess that means that this is my first request because you do not know me yet. Allow me to introduce myself.

I am 29 years old. I am married to a wonderful woman named Mikka Gutierrez, who just so happens to have a Japanese mother. I live in Silverlake, not too far from the dojo. In my brief life I have traveled to Europe, the Middle East, West and North Africa, and Mexico. I have studied and earned a Masters degree in the field of Writing. I work in the entertainment industry, for a movie director. It is becoming less and less of a secret as I begin to grow into myself, but I am a poet—or, at least, I am trying to become a poet. More than anything, though, I wish to become a student of Aikido. I also have a keen interest in frogs.

I first read O Sensei's „Art of Peace%o at the beginning of the year. I looked up places to study and located your website. I wrote down the hours you are open to visitors and I came by—but the dojo was closed to visitors. I turned away. Does that qualify as my first request? Using my mobile phone I called the dojo and heard on the answering machine that there were new hours. I was not daunted.

I came back a second time about a month later, in April. Imagine, there I was in the alley, excited because I saw some students milling about outside. I met a student; I think his name is Jeff. He told me that that day was not a good day to visit because it was a special day and the dojo was being cleaned. I believe he mentioned something about it being the anniversary of O Sensei's passing, though I cannot say with certainty.

Rather than be disappointed, I was excited. I thought it was an omen that I had come on such a special day. I believed that it should be difficult for me to gain entrance into the dojo, after all, I am but a half-inch worm. But I have a half-inch worm's spirit, so I went home determined to return a third time.

On the third visit I was permitted entrance. I spoke with one of the instructors and asked if I could observe. He asked me a few questions and I just watched the class. I do not know what you look like, but I think you taught part of the class. I simply sat there and excitedly watched, but more importantly I breathed. I inhaled the air in the dojo trying to make it familiar. I do not know if I succeeded, but I hope to one day.

If I remember correctly, that last visit was in the summer, before July. In July I left my job to become a school teacher. The experience was harrowing. I survived as best as I could but the pay was too little. I left that position recently and returned to my job working for the movie director. I tried to write you a letter seeking advice, but after it was written, I deleted it. Not the right time.

What's different about today? Today I experienced something negative and I am trying to make peace with it. I pulled up a copy of O Sensei's „Art of Peace%o to remind myself of things I believe are important. I went to your website and read the recent Daily Messages, as is my habit. And I read that it takes nine requests to be permitted to study. If you toss in one other attempt I made at writing you a letter, this could be considered my sixth request. But it is up to you, since you have not witnessed the attempts. I will keep on asking permission to be your student until I die, move out of town, or am accepted.

Why have I not simply come in and signed up? This question is the most problematic. My job with the movie director gets out at 7 p.m. five days a week, usually Monday through Friday, though sometimes I have to work on Saturday instead of a weekday. The office is in Santa Monica. Unless I can make arrangements to leave early once or twice a week, it will be impossible for me to make it to class on time. What this means is that I will be able to come to class only once or twice a week, and usually only on weekends. Given the constrictions on my being able to attend class, I humbly ask your advice. Are you interested in having me as your student, or should I wait until I can begin attending class with more regularity?

By the way, the negative experience I had today is this: I wrote a letter to one of my former students, an 11-year-old boy who I think is special. He is motivated to learn in a way that far surpasses the other students I had. I simply wanted to start a correspondence by mail to see if I could help him in his studies as a mentor of sorts. I told him he had to get his father's approval. Today I spoke with his father and he does not approve, which makes me truly sad. I understand that we live in a world where there is tremendous fear and mistrust but it, s not the world I want to live in. I see nothing but good coming from me

**Aikido Center of Los Angeles**  
**NEWSLETTER**

trying to help so I am saddened by the father refusing to allow his son and me to communicate.

Finally, if you have not read a book called „The Alchemist“ by Paulo Coelho, I recommend it. I would be curious to discuss some its message with you. I hope you do not consider my letter to be too disrespectful. I want to be open and honest but I do not yet know much about the traditions which I hope to learn.

I humbly await your response and your decision about my candidacy. Sincerely, Evan Kendall

11-01-01

Dear Furuya Sensei,

I know you're not going to respond to me. This letter is my second request and it is automatic for you to refuse, according to tradition. I tried to skip steps by claiming that writing letters to you and not sending them, and showing up at the dojo and not meeting you, qualified as requests. It has been confirmed to me that I was wrong. I have too much ego sometimes. I mean, really, here I am writing you a letter. Is that not an expression of my ego?

It may be, but I prefer to understand that I am following the tradition of seeking instruction. Even though I've spent many years in school, I don't think I've ever had a teacher except for one, and that lasted only a semester. I don't know what it means to trust a teacher without understanding him or her first. But, then, I recognize that I have no idea what I am going to learn from you. I will look hard on the mats of your dojo for what you have to teach, but not until you agree to having me as a student. I admit that I go slowly. I am in no rush because where else have I to go but death? I'm in no rush to get there, and, frankly, it has never been as embedded in the culture as the

## **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. In general, because of the potential dangers to self and to others, no member of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles should be using ephedrine or any other so-called performance enhancing drugs. Use of such substances is completely counter to the spirit and the internal discipline intrinsic to the practice of the traditional martial arts.*

guage of respect in Japan is. I only hope I don't offend you by coming across as lacking proper reverence. I see you as a speaker of a language I want and feel the need to learn. It's not a language of words and it cannot be learned from a book. It can only come one movement at a time. Thank you, Evan Kendall

10-16-01.

### **Important Question About Practice From Singapore:**

Dear Sensei Furuya, I am practicing aikido currently (5th kyu). I took it up primarily for health reasons because I lack exercise and being a very petite girl (1.58m in height), it served as a form of self-defence too. A friend recommended your book KODO Ancient Way to me and I am reading it now. I have not finished the book and I am not reading it in sequence. Read those articles that appealed to me, so far it has been very enlightening and inspirational.

Well, my purpose of writing to you is to seek your advice. Recently I attended Hong Kong Aikido Association 30th Anniversary seminar (it is my first oversea aikido seminar) and I was very excited about it and didn't know what to expect of it. Many a times I was told by my Sensei that according to O-Sensei teaching, (please correct me if I am wrong) we should partner as many aikidoka as possible. For eg, to perform Ikkyo, we have to try to feel 1000 different hands so that we can understand the essence of the technique. Hence I took it very seriously and tried to partner as many different people as possible. Some are very helpful and teaches me along the way, but some were less helpful. I felt a little upset and it was a very humbling process and I thought to myself, maybe I am not cut out for learning aikido or for that matter, martial art. But again, I don't want to give up because everytime I am on the mat, I am very happy. I am with friends and at the same time it serve my purpose of wanting to exercise. I have injured my back through bad ukemi and had been seeking chinese treatment like acupuncture for quite a while but seems like the problem relapse again. Hence I was wondering if I should be practicing aikido. But I don't want to give up just like this, it is liken to a weakling succumbing to a little setback. It is not the aikido spirit.

I am working full time now but I am also studying for my degree in psychology partime in the eveings (3 times a week). It has been very tough on me and many a times, I really felt like giving it all up. Some of your articles not only talks about aikido but also on other aspects of life. I find them very useful and a source of encouragement. Thank you. Sensei Furuya, pardon me for writing to you directly and also my poor command of English. I hope you understand what I have written. I wish you good health and happiness. Yours Sincerely, Jo Lee, Singapore.

**Sensei's reply:** Please refer to my Daily Message of October 19th. Seniors are always responsible for the juniors. In questions of protocol, seniors are right. In compassion, juniors are right. Please write again and let me know how you are doing. Many thanks and go duck in your training.

10-09-01.

### **Likes Kodo & Discovery Program from Washington:**

Furuya Sensei, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Daylen Toyne, I am a student under John Townsend at the Tao Zen Academy of Martial Arts in Poulsbo Washington. I have read Kodo at his request and found it to be one of the most "enlightening" books ever. I also saw the documentary on the Discovery Channel which you were a part of, it was very interesting. . . .



## Welcome To The Aikido Center of Los Angeles



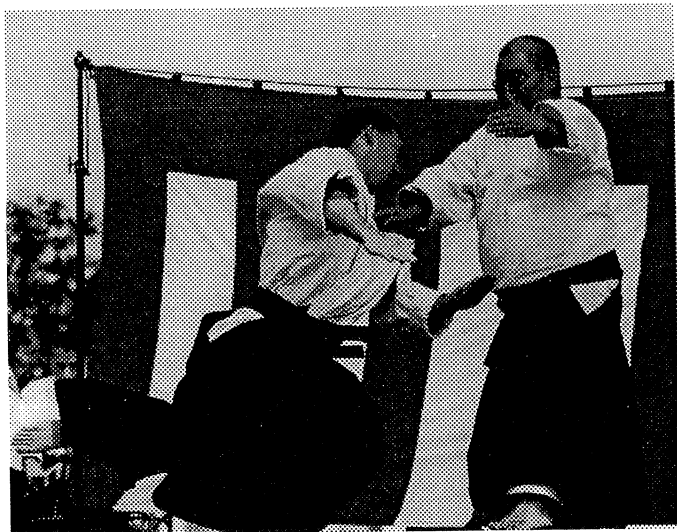
Aikido Center of Los Angeles

## 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](http://www.aikidocenterla.com).



Reverend Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan

### 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.

Official Dojo T-Shirts, ACLA Patches & Dojo Mugs

### Japanese Swords: Purchase, Appraisal & Restoration

Expert appraisal on Japanese swords. Complete services for restoration of Japanese art swords and custom-ordered Iaito training sword. Services include polish, handle wrapping, scabbard lacquer work, special orders. By appointment only.

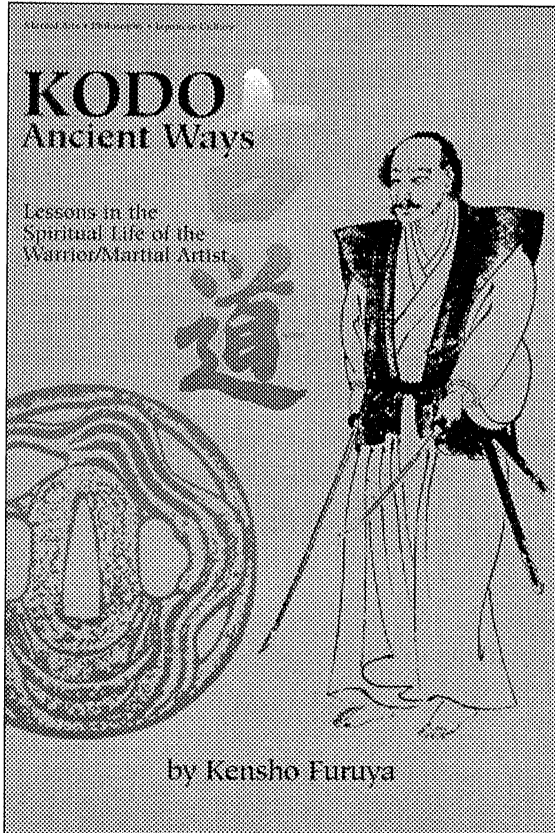
**JAPANESE SWORDS & BOUGHT & SOLD**  
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## Japanese Swordsmanship: Muso Shinden Ryu Iaido & Toyama Ryu Battodo

We offer instruction in the traditional art of Iaido, the art of the Sword. Serious students are always welcome. Iaido 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.

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



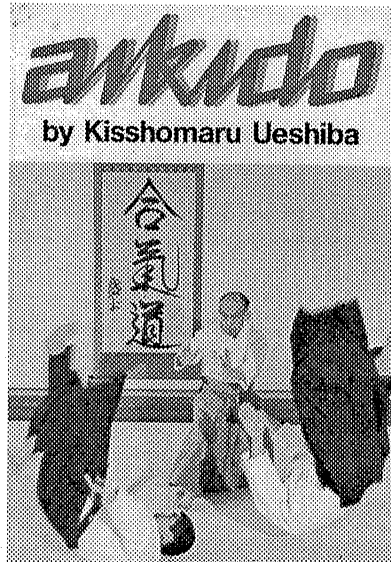
**KODO**  
Ancient Ways:  
Lessons in the Spiritual Life  
of the Warrior-Martial Artist

Rev. Kensho Furuya

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Foreign postage: \$5.00 S&H

## 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.

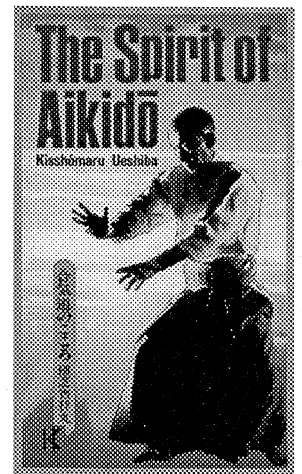


**ACLADOJO NEWSLETTER**  
Published monthly by the Aikido Center of Los Angeles. Annual subscriptions are available for a donation of \$36.00 which will be used towards printing costs and supporting the practice of the students.



**KIHAN AIKIDO**  
Fundamental of Aikido

By Doshu & Dojocho 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."



**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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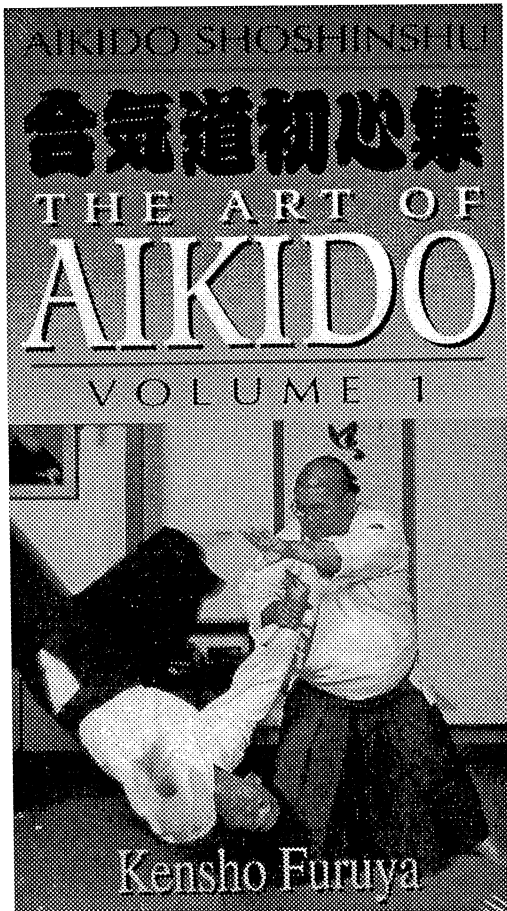
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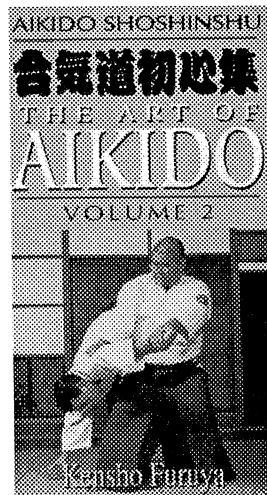
# The Art of AIKIDO

## Aikido Instructional Video Series in Nine Volumes

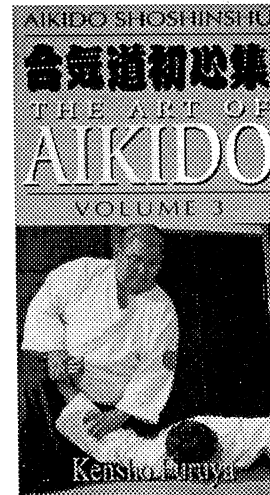
*"Top Rated"* - Karate Illustrated, *"Impressive Scope"* - Aikido Today, *"Exhaustive"* - Aikido Journal *"One of the Best"*



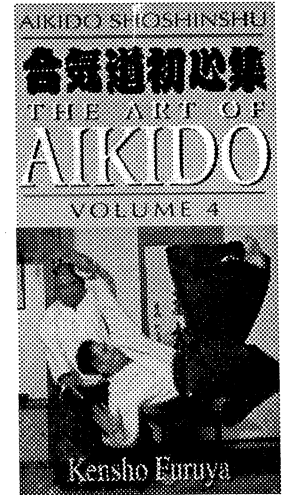
This video series is considered to be the most comprehensive and detailed instructional video on Aikido available today. Rev. Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan, Chief Instructor of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles, is a student of the late Kisshomaru Ueshiba Doshu of the Aikido World Headquarters. He began his 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.



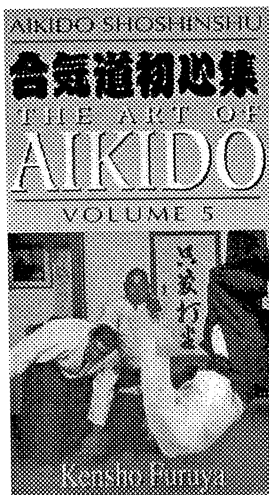
Basic Techniques  
Throwing & Joint Techniques  
Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo & Gokyo



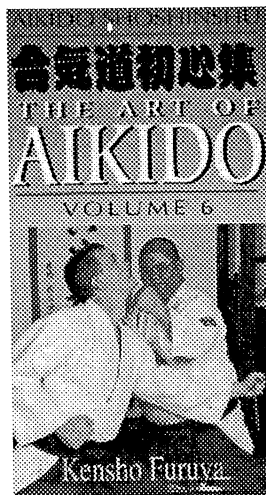
Ukemi-Breakfalling  
Basics Continued  
Free Style Techniques  
Tenshin. Ki. Breathing.



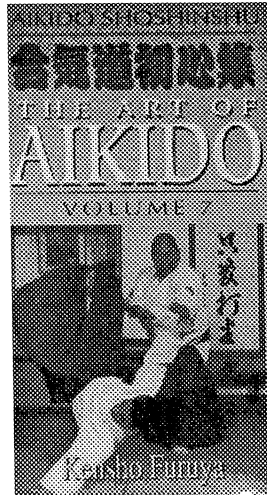
Katatetori Ryotemochi:  
Ryotetori: 2-hand.  
Reigi-saho: Etiquette.  
Koshinage-Hip throws.



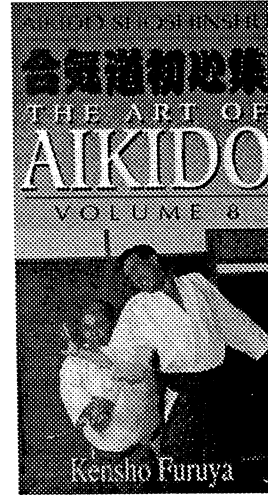
Suwari-waza. Gokyo.  
Hanmi-handachi. Kokyu-dosa.  
Katatori: Shoulder.  
Multiple attackers.  
Five-man Freestyle.



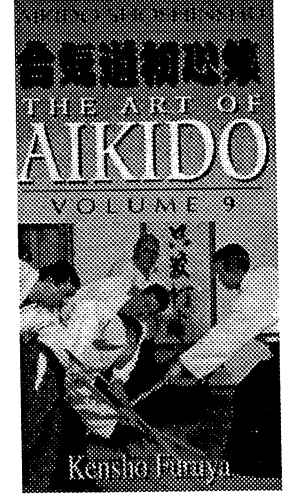
Tsuki: Strikes & Punches  
Yokomenuchi: Strikes to the side  
of the head & neck.



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**

**940 E. 2nd St. #7, Little Tokyo,  
Los Angeles, CA 90012**

**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.*

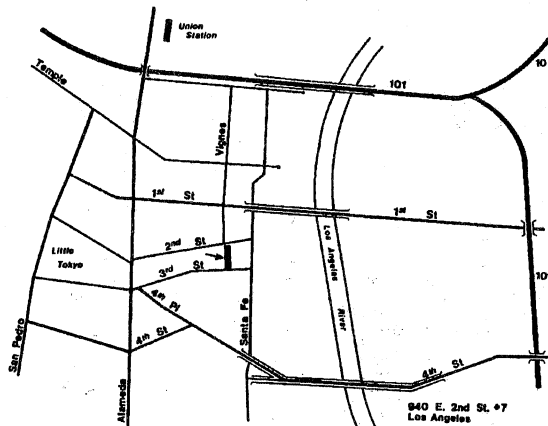
## Intensive Iaido

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.