



AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES

NEWSLETTER

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謹賀新年

Volume V. Number 1.
January 1, 1990

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

First of all, I would like to wish everyone the best of the New Year of 1990. I would also like to thank everyone for the many holiday gifts and greetings I received during the Holiday Season.

1989 was quite a busy year with many things happening and we can consider it, over all, a very good and successful year for the dojo. 1990 will prove to be a equally challenging and busy year for us.

In Japan, 1990 is referred to as the "second year of Heisei." It is the second year of a new era and, with this, there will be many changes. "Heisei" means "to manifest peace." As everyone knows, Japan is changing very rapidly. I think we see ourselves changing less rapidly in this country. But, we are changing, indeed. Change is inevitable.

I see Aikido changing very rapidly as well. Aikido is changing all over the world and especially in this country. Change is good, but, we must not forget that which does not change. This is the very foundation and roots of Aikido.

In farming, we cultivate the soil to make it rich and fertile. As long as we maintain the good soil and provide adequate water and protection from harsh elements, the plants or vegetables will grow of themselves. We cannot force them to grow nor can we direct in what direction they will grow. That is not our purpose. Our purpose is to maintain the proper atmosphere and conditions in which the plants will grow strong and healthy of themselves. We practice Aikido is very much the same way. We maintain a strong and fertile foundation or base, and we grow strong and healthy of ourselves, naturally. To artificially try to change the shape or size of the plant with foreign chemicals or altering the natural environment will only cause a distortion or aberration in its natural course.

For example, tomatoes are so big, round and red in the supermarkets nowadays. They are actually quite beautiful and they have been purposefully cultivated to look that way. But, I never buy them. Although they look so tempting to buy in the markets, their shape and beauty have been improved at the sacrifice of their taste. They have no taste at all!

Today, everyone wants "fast food." As long as it comes quickly and cheaply, who cares if it tastes good or is nutritious for you?

Nowadays, I see Aikido being taught with many beautiful words and gestures. In some cases, I see that the essence of Aikido has been lost just as we grow beautiful tomatoes with no taste.

In November, I presented a demonstration of Aikido at the Japan Expo at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles. An Aikido instructor from somewhere, a second degree black belt, came up to me to introduce himself. I recognized the name of his teacher. Finally, he asked me who my teacher was and "what type" of Aikido I practiced. When I mentioned my teacher's name who is the current Grandmaster of Aikido at the Aikido World Headquarters and the son and successor to the Founder of Aikido, he said, "Hmmm, I've never heard of him." I was more disappointed than surprised. It is like studying American history and not knowing who George Washington was. At least, we should know the names of our teachers and the name of the person who gave us Aikido. This is a custom and tradition which should never change.

Aikido is a precious gift from O-Sensei who underwent many years of bone breaking, back breaking training to refine it. This was further enhanced by his great enlightenment. It is an injustice for mere amateurs and novices such as ourselves to haphazardly alter it and distort it for our own convenience. This precious gift should be passed down from one generation to the next next. As it is cultivated in the fertile soil of our sincere training, it will grow naturally and strongly of itself. This is also a tradition which should not change.

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From this New Year, I hope my students will train hard to understand and absorb this Aikido tradition into their minds and bodies for themselves and for future generations of aspiring students.

I have taught for many years now and have been recognized as one of the veteran instructors of Aikido in this country. Recently, as you know, I was ordained as a Zen priest and became the student of the Reverend Bishop Kenko Yamashita. It is such a wonderful feeling to become a student again! Of course, we are always students throughout our entire training of Aikido. But, to once again be by the side of one's teacher is the greatest joy, I believe.

We do not have formal lessons and everyday I performed menial tasks at the temple such as cleaning my teacher's room, preparing his lunch or dinner and learning the duties and responsibilities of a priest. As I am serving tea to his guests or trying to prepare a tasty lunch, I begin to learn the meaning of practice again and how it is inseparable from the activities of our daily lives.

This is very important and something that we should not forget in our own Aikido training. I occasionally see students who rush in and out of class. They are in such a hurry but I don't think they know where they are going themselves. Some people think, "As long as I get strong in Aikido, that is all that counts." There is so much more to Aikido than just throwing someone to the ground. Indeed, if that is all that Aikido is, we should stop it because it would only be another form of violence. Aikido is our growth, Aikido is our life. Its practice is nothing other than the practice of our lives from one day to the next. As we begin to understand the art of Aikido, our lives, in some way, becomes an art in itself.

Wishing you a very happy New Year,

In Gassho,

Rev. Kensho Furuya

Candidates for Shodan Examination

For January 14, 1990

**Mr. Yasushi Matsuki
Mr. Richard Eloriagga
Mr. Morgan Weisser**

For July, 1990

**Mr. Mark Moore
Mr. Ron Hill
Mr. William Gillespie
Mr. Ken Watanabe**

New Year's Promotions for Iaido

**Mr. Douglas Firestone - 3rd Degree
Mr. Gary Myers - 2nd Degree**

Special Announcements for Iaido

In June, 1990, Rinpu Toyoda Sensei of the Mugai Ryu of Iaido, from Himeji, Japan, will be our special guest for one week.

In August, 1990, fifteen Master instructors from the Zen Nippon Battodo Federation will visit, conduct a seminar, and perform with us in the Nisei Week Festival.

We are also planning a visit of the the 15th hereditary Grandmaster of the Yagyū Shinkage Ryu, Yagyū Sensei, this year.

Details will follow.

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Congratulations!

New Year's Promotions

First Kyu

**Mr. Brigido Anaya
Mr. Henrique Morimura
Mr. Ken Watanabe**

Second Kyu

**Mr. David Schweizer
Ms. Keiko Tomatsu
Mr. Curtis Westfall
Ms. Chris Prejean
Mr. Kris Youngstrom**

Third Kyu

**Ms. Junko Sakai
Ms. Andrea Guild
Mr. Mark Francis**

Fourth Kyu

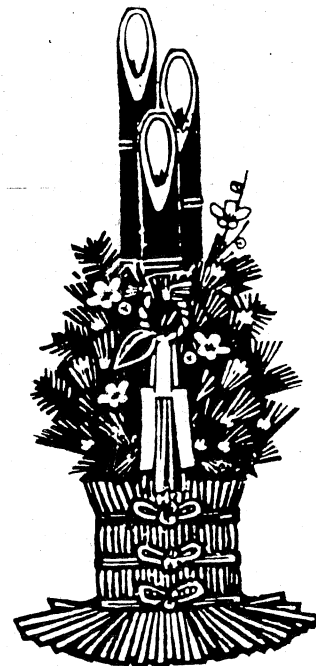
**Mr. Patrick Monahan
Mr. Kenny Osaki
Mr. Daryl Akamichi
Ms. Lorraine Rowan
Mr. Ray Kuwahara
Mr. Steve Tarrango**

Fifth Kyu

**Mr. Richard Newsome
Mr. Kevin Chiu
Mr. Norman Lew
Mr. Jon Waite
Mr. James Sims
Mr. Eric Rodriguez**

Sixth Kyu

**Mr. Michael Mitani
Mr. Ling Than
Mr. Andy Alvarez
Mr. Jeffrey Bey
Mr. Binh Dang
Mr. Carl Riley
Mr. Frank Tennyson
Mr. Edgar Viado
Mr. Greg Williams
Mr. Keith Perske**



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Training Schedule:

Beginning and Open Classes

Monday through Friday
6:15pm to 7:15pm

Monday-Wednesday-Friday
7:30pm to 8:30pm

Saturday Mornings
10:15am to 11:30am

Advanced and Weapons Classes

Tuesday and Thursday
7:30pm to 8:30pm

Saturday Morning
11:30am to 12:30pm

Children's Class

Sunday Morning
8:00am to 9:00am

Iaido:

Wednesday
8:45pm to 9:45pm

Saturday and Sunday
9:00am to 10:00am

Welcome!

Mr. Jim Graves has been promoted into our Teaching Staff. Please welcome him as a new Assistant Instructor of our dojo.

Please welcome Mr. Robert Banever and Mr. Ronald Waddy who have joined our dojo from others dojos.

Shoshinsha no shintoku:

Rules for Students

Please be on time for class. Please try to arrive a little early to quickly change into your uniform and begin your own warm-ups.

Please sit in quiet meditation for one minute before class when teacher enters mat area.

Please keep your uniform clean and in good repair.

Please be polite and friendly to all other members of the dojo.

Please be especially polite to guests and new students.

Please keep the dojo immaculately clean. Cleaning or "samu" is also a discipline to purify the mind as in Zen training.

Before you enter the dojo, your mind should be concentrated on practice.

Practice cannot be separated from the daily activity of your own life.

Your mind and body cannot be seen as two entities. Yourself and the world cannot be seen as two entities. Do not discriminate.

Training is, at the same time, merciless yet compassionate. Life is, at the same time, filled with suffering yet filled with happiness. It always appears this way because you are still stuck in the world of discrimination whether you want to recognize it or not. Only through your training can you transcend this.

Let your mind and body drop away and then throw your mind and body into your practice.

Don't take drugs and limit your alcohol and tobacco.

This is the method of training from past masters handed down through many succeeding generations from ancient times.



Mine Okubo

1990: The Year of the Horse

Horse-year people are very skillful in paying compliments and are quite popular. They are very cheerful people, but they talk too much. They are also very skillful with money and handle finances well. They are quick in everything they do and are able to grasp other people's meanings even before these people have a chance to think out what they want to say. They are wise and talented and are good with their hands.

Horse-year people are very decorative and showy in dress and manner. Although clever-looking, appearing as though they will never lose at anything they do, they are rather weak, especially toward members of the other sex; and if they are involved, whatever project they might be working on, they will fail at it.

Horse-year people are not noted for their patience. They are hot-blooded, but in their everyday work they can be dispassionate over what they do. In their affections they are stimulated almost to the point of being blind to everything else.

Horse year people like theatrical enter-

tainment and always go to plays and musicals, conventions, operas — almost any place where there are entertainers and large crowds.

Horse-year people anger quickly, and by showing their anger they lose whatever confidence people may have had in them.

They are terribly independent. They will not listen to advice, and as soon as they are able, they must strike out on their own, breaking away from family influence. During the first and second phases of their life, horse people will have much trouble, but during the third phase they will have a good life.

Tiger-year, dog-year, and sheep-year people would make the best marriage for those born in the horse year. The next best would be those born in either the dragon, snake, monkey, cock or boar year.

A bad marriage for horse people would be a marriage to people born in the year of the ox, rabbit, or horse. The worst marriage would be with one born in the rat year.

By REIKO CHIBA