

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



The Aikido Center of Los Angeles LLC

忘れられた心を探す合気道 合気道場

The Aiki Dojo

Affiliation: The Aikido World Headquarters, 17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Rev. Kensho Furuya Foundation
Los Angeles Sword & Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai
Nanka Yamanashi Kenjin Kai Southern California Yamanashi Prefectural Association
Los Angeles Police Department Martial Artist Advisory Panel

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Donation

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Happy New Year

Our 30th Anniversary: Sensei's Greetings For The New Year 2004



First of all, on behalf of the Dojo, all the students and myself, I would like to wish everyone a very wonderful Happy New Year and our very Best Wishes from all of us.

This year is very busy for us because we are celebrating the 30th Anniversary of our Dojo and, at the same time, the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Southern California Yamanashi Prefectural Association of which I have been President for the last eight years. I think this an auspicious landmark in the history of our Dojo. I hope everyone will continue to train hard and work together well in harmony and friendship and in the spirit of Aikido. For myself, I am seeing my 45th year in Aikido, a little over 80% of my time on this earth.

I am very happy and proud of the growth of our Dojo and my students. Certainly we are not a large organization, but we share a warm, comraderie in friendship among students and a unity in spirit which I rarely see elsewhere.

Most people look at the traditions of Aikido was obsolete and dead. They are only stifling to those who do not understand the real meaning behind these traditions. Our code of conduct and standards of behavior and insistence on mental focus and clarity embody wisdom which has been refined and polished over many generations of great masters and teachers for almost one thousand years. We are fortunate to be in an age to directly receive O'Sensei's teachings in this long history and traditions which will continue long after we are all gone. We must make our little share of history the very best that all future generations can follow and respect

Continued.



Samurai Two-Hour Special Debuts On History Channel. December 8.

The two-hour special which debuted on the History Channel was well organized and well presented with most of its material taken from Japan. Sensei's interview was focused primarily on the sword and martial arts. Ken Watanabe and Gary Myer's kumitachi and Iaido demonstration was very well presented. Of course, 800 years of Japanese history can hardly fit into a 2-hour presentation and its focus was to highlight the movie, "The Last Samurai," but despite this, it was not a bad program.

ACLA To Demonstrate January 4th Japanese American Nat'l Museum New Year's Program.

Our Dojo is honored to participate in this year's New Year's Program for the Japanese American National Museum at 3:00pm. Everyone is invited to attend this event.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

www.aikidocenterla.com

Happy New Year & All Of Our Best Wishes 2004

*Aikido Center of Los Angeles
Kensho Furuya Foundation
Nihon Iaido Kenshinkai
ACLA Yudansha Kai -
Black Belt Association
All Our Affiliated Dojos*

Rev. Kensho Furuya, Chief Instructor

Dojo Featured In Sushi & Tofu Magazine For February:

We will be featured in a special edition on Martial Arts in the February issue of Sushi & Tofu. It is free on stands throughout Little Tokyo. They have a circulation of over 150,000 issues per month.

Children's Hospital Compass News Honorable Mention For Sensei:

There was an honorable mention for Sensei in their December issue covering the renovation of the hospital Chapel. Last year, Sensei donated an image of the Buddha for Buddhists who visit this sanctuary for individual contemplation or a peaceful moment.

30th Anniversary Special Guests: Johnny Mori & Jake LaBotz To Perform At Celebration.

We are very honored to have special guest performers on our 30th Anniversary Celebration at the New Otani Hotel. It is our great pleasure to have Johnny Mori, veteran performer, musician, and master of the Japanese taiko, as one of our honored guests and who has also consented to perform at our event. Jake LaBotz, country blues singer, composer and actor will also perform.

Everyone Invited!

Double Celebration

*Nanka Yamanashi Kenjinkai
So. Calif. Yamanashi Prefectural
Association
Our 100th Anniversary, 1904-2004*

The Aikido Center of Los Angeles
**Our 30th
Anniversary
Celebration**

*Date: April 28, 2004.
From 6:00pm*

*Place: Hotel New Otani
120 S. Los Angeles St.
Los Angeles, CA. 90012
(1st & Los Angeles Sts. in Little Tokyo)*

*All are cordially invited to attend our 30th
Anniversary Celebration of our Dojo and
Furuya Sensei's 45th Anniversary in Aikido.
Please email in your reservation at:*

aclafuruya@earthlink.com.

*All branch dojo and friends, old students and
new, are all invited to join our celebration.*

Deepest Appreciation To Madam Fujima Kansuma:

Many thanks to Kansuma Sensei of the Nihon Buyo Kansuma Kai of Japanese Classical Dance for her generous donation to the Dojo

Annual Dojo Christmas Party December 7. At the Smoke House.



The beautiful lady members of our Dojo at our X'mas Party.

Many members gathered at the Smoke House in Burbank for another wonderful Dojo Christmas Party. After the great food and the best garlic cheese bread in Los Angeles, gifts were exchanged. Many thanks to Carol Tanita, Cheryl Lew and others for all of their help in organizing the event. Many thanks to all!



The Importance of Teaching Children's Class: Ken Watanabe, Uchi-deshi



In our children's class we have children whose ages range from six years old to teenagers in high school. Every Sunday, at 9:00am sharp, with their shoes arranged neatly in front of the entrance, the children sit seiza, in a perfectly straight line, posture straight, ready for class. Their name is read during roll call and their reply is an energetic,

"HAI", followed by a sitting bow. After the class bows in, we stand up and begin the warm up exercise, which is followed by ukemi practice. The children practice their forward and backward rolling, tumbling countless times either in a straight line back and forth, flying through the air over a couple of classmates crouched on the ground, or circling the perimeter of the mat. The class then

continues with a combination of Aikido technique and exercises designed to test their balance, coordination and timing. Exactly and hour later, class ends with the children bowing to the tokonoma then thanking the instructor and each other for practice. Easy, huh?

It's said that teaching children is difficult. They say that children can smell fear on you, they will try to test the limits of what they can get away with, and you will have to develop eyes in the back of your head. All of this IS true and when you multiply one child by about fifteen or twenty, well, you get the picture.

Senior students and assistant instructors may regard teaching the children's class as a scary, hair-raising chore, or some kind of low-class assignment. After all, what "lean mean fighting machine" wants to be demoted to teaching kids martial arts anyway.?

"The kids are too small..." "They'll never catch on." "I'm not good with kids."

These all seem like legitimate excuses to get out of teaching the class. After all, instructors want to be the boss, they want to show their strength, and they want to show what expert they are. However, teaching children is more than lording over of a bunch of kids.

For students that eventually want to become instructors, teaching the children's class is excellent training. The novice instructor, under the guidance of a good teacher, can learn a lot by teaching this class. There may be many skilled practitioners of the art, but just because you can throw someone down hard doesn't really make someone a good teacher. It is necessary to have the proper knowledge and technique, but teaching is totally different from simply being strong or skillful. Teaching is a separate skill in itself. Furthermore, apart from having the skill to execute the technique, the instructor needs to know how to actually teach what they know and transfer their skill to the student. It's not like giving them a handout and telling them to come back. It's more than making them do this technique and that technique every time they come in. Teaching is more than just showing the Aikido technique.

Con't.



New Year's Greetings: Gary Myers, 5th Dan Kenshinkai Iaido

A Happy New Year to Sensei, all the students of the Aikido and Kenshinkai (Iaido) sections and everyone reading the newsletter. First, I want to thank Sensei for another year of patient guidance in my Iaido practice. This year is almost completed

and the busy holiday season is upon us. It seems each year seems to go by faster than the last. Our schedules seem to get busier as we try to jam more things into it.

Rather than do my usual "state of the Iaido class" write-up, I thought I'd broach another topic. The term multi-tasking has crept into our everyday vocabulary and lives. Several weeks ago I saw the term used in the L.A. Times to describe someone eating and working on his computer at the same time. Multi-tasking is a word originally used in computer terminology which describes the computer processor working on two different applications at the same time, or concurrent processing. More and more we are using computer terms to describe human activities which is a natural result of our reliance and contact with computers. After all, I am writing this article on a computer now. But the interesting thing about the term, "multi-tasking" is that it has become a perceived necessity as our society's pace becomes quicker and quicker. Where in the past, the phrase "trying to do two things at once" had a negative connotation, people now strive to be multi-taskers and are even proud of themselves when they think they are.

We all guilty of multi-tasking at one time or another. But are we more productive by multi-tasking or is this just an illusion? Our technologies have provided us with all kinds of productivity devices; pda's, and cell phones being the most abundant. Cell phones like computers are a blessing and a curse at the same time. Some of the scariest multi-taskers can be found on our freeways. So far I have seen: (besides the obvious cell phone usage), women applying their make up, men shaving, people reading: books, newspapers, Thomas Brothers Guides, legal contracts (got to get those billable hours in), watching television (not the passengers, mind you, the driver), eating full course meals, and getting dressed. And they're not just doing these at the crawling pace of rush hour traffic, I've seen people doing these things travelling at 75-80MPH. I don't have any statistics of accidents caused by multi-tasking, but I imagine it's quite a few. So why the obsession with multi-tasking? Some believe that it's more to do with the realization that we're mortal, and that the finite time clock keeps ticking away. We try to make the most of the time given to us, so we fill that time with more activities to make it appear to be more meaningful. I hear people say, that being stuck in traffic is down-time (another computer term) and you have to make the most of it. Return those calls you didn't get to in the office, review that contract that needs comments in the car on the way to work. Generally, multi-tasks are things that could or should have been done earlier, but for some reason got put off until the last minute. Those cosmetics that used to be applied in the morning before getting into the car are now being done on the road. What happened to that time that we use to set aside to do those tasks before getting into the car?

A lot of people have convinced themselves that they can do these things concurrently and still do them well. Heck, if computer can do

it, can't we? Again we are trying to mimic a computer's capabilities of concurrent processing. Computers are programmed to do it, but we, humans are hardwired differently. Although we can try to do two things at once (besides walking and chewing gum) the reality is, there is a compromise between the two activities. We begin to believe that we are really saving time because we've managed to complete what we're doing. But the reality is that we aren't doing these activities at the highest level we can. We begin to fool ourselves into believing that what we've just accomplished has not only saved us time but done well. But the reality is that we only do our best when we are focused and concentrating at the task at hand. Isn't putting your full concentration into something infinitely more meaningful and rewarding in the end? I look at Japanese art and crafts daily and the thing that impresses me everyday is the appreciation of the mind of the artists and craftsmen that created these pieces. What comes through is the calm mind and focus that these artists had when they created them. In their single-minded nature they have produced something meaningful and lasting in their lives and ours. I doubt many were multi-taskers. Which finally brings me to Iaido. Iaido is something that requires your full and utmost attention and concentration. It is that aspect of Iaido, to be in harmony with the present that makes it so meaningful. You cannot and most certainly should not multi-task while doing Iaido. One of the benefits of Iaido is to develop this focus and concentration, which helps in other aspects of your lives. My New Year's wish is that everyone approach Iaido practice with this refreshed single-mindedness. A Happy and Prosperous New Year to everyone!



CHANGE: Dr. Cheryl Lew, 4th Dan

Over the last couple of years, as part of my professional educational development training, I have been studying in graduate school the notion of CHANGE, especially with regard to how one responds to "changing times" and "changing external events." Change is a prevailing theme everywhere in our contemporary lives. How does this

relate to my ongoing studies in Aikido and Iaido?

Recently, we have read and heard Furuya Sensei's responses to students from all over the world as these individuals write to him about the validity of the changes or apparent changes that they see in their own training and in their own observations. We hear Sensei rightly lament the widespread loss of concern and attention to tradition, to correctness, to mindfulness in training, in favor of "change." What sort of change is this? And is there a place for change in our study of traditional Aikido and Iaido?

What I have found so fascinating in my seminars on "educational leadership" is that the readings and discussions on CHANGE take a very different tack from what most Aikidoists out in the world appear to promulgate. That is, the philosophy of CHANGE leadership and so-called SERVANT leadership is based on the premise that the deep change which allows one to withstand and prevail over adverse external circumstances is all internal. One of my professors constantly iterates: "You lead from who you are!" The change that he talks about is within ourselves: to have integrity and faithfulness; to manifest patience, industry and courage; to have modesty and simplicity. The ultimate achievement in CHANGE leadership is the emergence

Change: Dr. Cheryl Lew continued:

of character and excellence as one becomes Other directed, i.e. egoless. Indeed, with the emergence of these factors, one experiences self-actualization, a flow of energy and spirit. Only in this sense of inner transformation is CHANGE legitimate and valid.

I suppose I should not have been surprised to realize that these were not new messages for me. I had been studying these concepts from the time I first stepped into the Dojo to begin the practice of Aikido and eventually Iaido a decade ago.

Let me reflect back on just a few of the myriad of lessons I have attempted to learn. First, "take bigger steps" even if it feels unnatural. If you keep trying to lengthen your steps and slide on the balls of your feet, the power of the technique eventually emerges. Second, "relax; focus on the correct movements, not on applying strength." Next, "tighten the obi to hold the sword in its proper place; if you release the blade completely with your left hand, the cut will be full and powerful." "You must shape your body and movements to the keiko-gi, obi and hakama you wear, not the other way around." In the years of practice, whenever I worried about being too short, too fat, too weak, having short legs, or that I could not possibly move the saya in the obi if the latter was tied tightly, I could never progress. When I began to simply try to do as I was told to do, instead of rationalizing a "better" more intellectual way to execute the technique, then I found (amazing to me) that I could begin to make some improvements. When I tied my obi as tightly as possible, I found that the sword moved more smoothly in the correct plane and that the draw-cut actually happened—at least once in a while!

What was the difference? Where did the change take place? I think the answer is that Aikido did not change; certainly Iaido did not change. But I changed dramatically. The practice was no longer about ME, but rather about being faithful to the art and practice. It was about being concerned to preserve the art as it has been passed down to me in unbroken lineages through Furuya Sensei: from O Sensei through the second Doshu; and amazingly to me, a lineage of Muso Shinden Ryu Swordsmanship derived from the Omori and Hasegawa Eishin Ryus all the way back to the early Edo period. I am only a vessel for the transmission of the art. To the extent that I can transform myself internally to be as transparent a vessel, then the purity of the art will be expressed. Not easy to do.

In any case, when I began to reflect on my medical education studies in the context of my Dojo training, the books I had to read and the papers I had to write became simply an extension of my ongoing internal training and change, rather than a burden. When I get my grades back from my professors, I see that intense concentration in Iaido also results in perfect 10s!

My profound thanks to Furuya Sensei as my teacher and to the other students and members of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles for good practice. Greetings for a Joyous and prosperous New Year.

Ken Watanabe continued:

In the class, you will have children of various ages, strengths and skill levels, but no matter how young, old, strong or weak, martial arts always begins and ends with etiquette. As an instructor, you really begin to see the value of the manners and the sense of order within the class in creating the proper atmosphere for learning. When the child-

ren come in and out through the door, they must bow nicely to the front. When they take off their shoes, they must always be placed neatly facing outwards. When their name is called they must answer, "Hai!" in a strong, energetic voice. These, and other points create a sense of order within the class. The kids know that class will always begin at 9:00am and run for exactly one hour. They know that every class will begin with warm-up and then go into rolling practice. They know that no matter what happens outside the dojo, when they come to class, they can expect a safe place for training and practicing with their friends.

Teaching this class, or any other class for that matter is not a one-man job. The instructor will find out the teaching the class requires the help of several assistants. In the class setting, the assistant can provide a two-way-street in regards to practice. In addition to the help one gives when they are in the class, the senior students who assist the teacher also receive valuable training in regards to teaching. Furthermore, the children themselves get valuable ukemi training from practicing with the assistants. The assistants can learn a lot from helping out the class, such as how to teach the technique, how to conduct a class and other aspects of teaching, but one aspects of teaching you can get when you instruct or assist the children's class is caring about the students.



In my experience, caring about your students and their progress is equally as important as your skill in the technique, or in teaching. If you really care about your students you will do your best to teach them well. This includes all of the things mentioned before like skill and knowledge of the technique as well as the skill in actual teaching. YOU will naturally want to improve your own self for the sake of your students. You will want them to become good and that will make you a better teacher and Aikidoist in the end

Teaching the children's Aikido class is lots of hard work, yet very enjoyable and rewarding. It is hard work in the sense that you have to be totally honest with the kids when you teach them. It is hard work in the sense that you will have to be totally on the ball when you are on the mat with them. It is difficult in the sense that you cannot just teach the kids any old thing you dream up or something just randomly thrown in. In the class, you have a wide range of ages, abilities, talents, and temperaments. Yet, the satisfaction of watching the children grow in skill and physical strength, as well as learning the proper etiquette of the dojo is a reward that cannot be measured by dollar signs.



3rd Doshu's recent seminar in Osaka. December, 2003.

Greetings: Ze'ev In Kyoto

In Kyoto again. My first day here was in 1992. It was Autumn and Kyoto was filled with the wonderful smell of *kinmokusei*. It blooms in October. Very small white flowers with gentle fragrance. Five days later I found Koyama sensei's dojo, Kyoto Aikikai. I stayed with him until 1999. In that year I came back to Israel and opened Aikikan Dojo. Now about 50 adults and about the same number of children practice here.

When six of my students here in Israel were about to be graded to shodan (black belt - 1st Dan), I offered them to be examined in Kyoto. They immediately agreed. We all bought tickets and made reservations. I thought that they will train at Kyoto Aikikai for about two weeks and then will be examined.

When I called Koyama sensei to inform him that we landed safely, he was very happy. He said: "Your students will be examined tomorrow morning". We arrived at the dojo at 09:30 in the morning. In less than 10 minutes, Koyama sensei and my students were practicing together as if they were together for years. Sensei joked with them, took ukemi for them, gave them a lot of instruction, and then when he saw that they are relaxed, he said: "Lets do shinsa (exam)". so Erez, Shmulik, Timur, Eran and Dori gave sensei a great performance of all they worked very hard to attain. Koyama sensei was pleased.

On our third day, Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba Sensei gave a seminar in Osaka. We all attended the seminar. Koyama sensei introduced us to him and he was glad to hear about our activity in Israel.

Every day began with *asageiko* (morning class). Then we went to see temples, gardens, museums and sometimes just relaxed time in charming Kyoto. Koyama sensei took us to traditional restaurants, and to many long walks in Kyoto and Uji. He gave us four special classes - just for us, and he invited us to train every evening at his dojos. One of our memorable classes was at the Rehabili-Aikido Class. It is a special aikido class at the Municipal Sports Center for the Handicapped. Koyama sensei teaches there twice a month. People with disabilities enjoy Aikido with the assistance of Kyoto Aikikai volunteers.

Now, in Israel. We are trying to digest this fantastic experience. People at the dojo say that the new shodans really came back different. I agree with them I am very glad that the first black belts at my

dojo made this great effort and went to learn directly from Koyama sensei. I think that together with the black belt, they also received something which is beyond words. Something for life.

Happy New Year my friends in Los Angeles at Aikido Center LA.
Happy New Year 2004 Kensho Furuya Sensei. Yours, Ze'ev Erlich Israel. (Aikikan Dojo)



Doshu teaching Nanami-san at the Osaka Seminar.





Ze-ev visits Zen garden in Kyoto. December 2003.



**New Year's Greetings,
The Happy Fisherman:
Santiago Garcia
Almaraz, 3rd, Dan,
Aikikai Salamanca,
Salamanca, Spain**

A north rich man was horrified too see a south fisherman peacefully lying down, against his ship and smoking a pipe.

"Why don't you go out to fish?" asked the rich man, "Because I'm fishing enough for today," answered the fisherman.

"And so, why did you fish more that you need?," the rich man insisted. "And, why do I need to do it?" answered at the same time the fisherman.

"You would win more money", was the answer. "In that case you could put a new motor in your ship and you could go to deep waters and you could fish more, In that case you could win enough money to buy a nylon fishing net And you had more fish and more money, And in a few month or years you have two ship... even a little fleet, And you will be rich, almost like me."

"And what can I do them?" asked the fisherman.

"You would sit down and enjoy your life, and relax," answered the rich man.

"So, what do you think I am doing in this moment?" answered the fisherman self-satisfied.

Everybody have many things to do everyday, some of them are very



Kodokai members in Salamanca Spain. Happy New Year!

important and some are less important and a big part of them are lost time. To know the different between this things is very difficult work, but as Sensei said, "Happiness is always our own choice." So I hope that this year we should put more attention in the very important things, in our daily training in our daily lives, and don't waste our time. My very best to all my students, friends and instructors of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles. Santiago G. Almaraz



Ms. Yuko Yoshihi, 1st Dan, visiting from Hombu. November 2003.

New Year's Greetings From the Veracruz Aikikai:



Now that the year is about to end and a new one to begin, I have been thinking how AIKIDO has taken me to make new friends wherever I have had the chance to travel judging the dog shows, either be RIO DE JANEIRO in 2000 where for the first time visited a different Dojo and did not know what to expect especially after seen different martial arts been practiced in different rooms, kicking, shouting, banging the floor, etc. But oh! what a surprise by the time the AIKIDO class started almost all other arts were done and a silent place. Let us peacefully practice in harmony.

Same thing happened in SAN ANTONIO where a Nidan led the class to mainly beginners and was accepted to practice with them and even show one movement. After class in both places some of us went out for dinner, had a cold beer and talked about AIKIDO as a beautiful art with the softness of the breeze or the intensity and strength of the storm, conversations that takes us to say

It is an ART where for the first time you meet someone and trust him immediately so he can work his technique with you. and is an ART where you may feel your partner emotions through his grab or entrance or attack, permitting you to work with the flow and rhythm of the move.

This year after meeting you the one before, have been in MONTREAL, Guatemala and had a visit from TOM WILLIAMS and wife in our DOJO and lately traveled to San Salvador where I found a Nidan professor from Colombia but studied in VENEZUELA and now teaching in Salvador, very nice young fellow, agile, fast and in good harmony with the students. I tried to practice with them next day but the traffic was awful and he never made it to the class till almost done but he phone me and ask me to lead the class which I honorably did feeling like the.....

AIKIDO AS A MARTIAL ART HAS BEEN THE AMBASSADOR FOR PEACE and FRIENDSHIP WHERE EVER YOU GO . THE VERACRUZ AIKIKAI WISHES YOU AND ALL YOUR STUDENTS AND AFFILIATIONS PEACE AND HEALTH THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON AND HOPE THAT THE NEW YEAR BRINGS YOU NEW AIKIDO FRIENDS WHEREVER YOU GO,

Visit Our Website Daily!
www.aikidocenterla.com
For Sensei's Daily Message

New Year's Greetings From The Puerto Vallarta Aikikai:

My heartfelt wishes to you and to everyone at ACLA for a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year full of life's blessings. I would like to share with you, if I may, a story I read in this week's Puerto Vallarta Tribune:

ARE WE WEALTHY OR POOR?

One day a father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose of showing his son how poor people live. They spent a couple of days on the farm with what would be considered a very poor family. On their return from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?"

"It was great, Dad."

"Did you see how poor people live?" the father asked.

"Oh yes," said the son.

"So, tell me, what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father.

The son answered: "I saw that we have one dog and they have four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night. Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon. We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight. We have servants who serve us, but they serve others. We buy our food, but they grow theirs. We have walls around our property to protect us, they have friends to protect them." The boy's father was speechless. Then his son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are."

Too many times, we forget what we have and concentrate on what we don't have. Makes one wonder what would happen if we all gave thanks for the bounty we have instead of wanting more. Each new day is a gift signifying a new beginning, a rebirth, leading to the celebration of the New Year. Many thanks Sensei for all You have done on our behalf. HAPPY HOLIDAYS! With gratitude always, Raffi Badalian, Puerto Vallarta Aikikai.

Aikido Friendship Association:

11-20-03: Dear Sensei, Thank you for all your kind gestures, your encouragements and blessings are so helpful to our group in many ways. Last Saturday morning class, I had a chance to bring to the class your Kodo, it was a nice chance to show to our students what I have been talking about. I heard about your next Kodo with 365 episodes, and I am so anxious while waiting, especially those teachings are so rare to find. We are in the process of renovation our dojo and we really need to have a good mat since the old one is so used and. We are taking break-falls and koshi nage ...etc... and they got alot of impacts so we would like to have a new mat. We don't know where we could get the consultations except we once again need your opinion on this. What is the proper way to build the mat and where can we get the materials? Please accept our gratitude in advance since every time we need your opinion like this we are learning a great deal of knowledge. Best wishes always, Sincerely, Nhan Ly, Aikido Friendship Foundation, Garden Grove, CA.



New Year's Greetings: Bill Allen, 1st Dan

It has been a little over two years since I began training at the Aikido Center of Los Angeles. Throughout that time, the instruction has been excellent, and I really enjoy training with the other students. Everyone has been supportive and helpful, and I look forward to learning and training even more in the coming year. So, I offer my deepest thanks to you and the assistant instructors for the fine training I receive, and to the other students who are such helpful and inspiring partners.

In the chill morning
Heart and sinew awoken
Veiled by the bamboo

Warmest evening ends
The quiet brush of damp cloths
All is in order

Best wishes for the coming New Year, and many congratulations on the 30th anniversary of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles. Sincerely,
Bill Allen

From Toronto, Canada

12-02-03: I would like to thank you allowing me to train at your dojo on my visit to Los Angeles. I came to your dojo on the last day of my trip about a month ago. You probably remember an Aikidoka with very large sideburns who's mother interrupted the last class to pick up. That's me. The training I received at your dojo was most excellent. Your students are courteous, disciplined, and centered. I am glad to have the opportunity to train with so many senior students in the environment where they began. I will not miss the opportunity to visit the next time I'm in Los Angeles. In respect and gratefulness,
Andrew Defries

From Volcano, Hawaii:

Aloha Kakahiaka e Sensei! Thank you, very much, for your prompt (and inspiring!) reply regarding my questions about zazen and misogi. I have just finished my morning zazen of 30 minutes -- we'll see how close to 50 minutes I develop after six months! I will maintain my daily misogi breathing as well, and I remain grateful for the opportunity to train along this Path with the help of so many others. I look forward to someday visiting your dojo in Los Angeles: the closest I have come so far is the alley outside, around one o'clock in the morning, last October, when I had to pick up my brother at the downtown train station. My father was ill with terminal leukemia at the Veteran's Hospital in West Los Angeles, and while I never had the time to train in LA, I did manage to get to the station early in order to find your dojo. I remember looking at an un-remarkable, brick-faced building in the heart of the ware-house district, while a group of people argued loudly over some dispute just a half-block away . . . but the sign proclaiming "Aikido," plus my awareness of the daily training that occurred within, and the sudden realization that you were likely asleep upstairs, made me "see" the temple, the monastery, the dojo, beautifully set in the heart of the City. I guess it is easier to imagine the sacredness of spaces away from the "corrupting Metropolis" --

and I am grateful for my training which occasionally allows me to see past the illusion of appearance, and to feel the "heart within."

Anyway, I hope to someday return to your dojo, and actually see the inside! In the meantime, I promise to develop my zazen and misogi, and I look forward to your interview on The Samurai program on The History Channel next Monday evening. Mahalo nui loa, Mon
Heraldo Farrington

From Poland:

Hi! I found your website during surfing internet and I thought that you can help me in some way. I'm training Aikido in Warsaw where I live and learn but I'm seriously thinking about moving for a year or two to US. I have a friend in California so I probably will move there. My main problem is to know what possibilities of training aikido are in California . . . with best regards, Arek Urban

From The Phillipines:

Sensei good morning. :) I'm Boni from the Philippines. I emailed you becoz I think you are more than capable to answer or enlighten me on my inquiry on the subject of Reasons for studying or practicing Aikido.

I always have the passion for martial arts when I was in the elementary the only martial art I was exposed to was Karate so I studied Karate, I didn't even know it then that Karate has so many styles or ryu as we call it. I always have this dilemma before (even until now to be honest) that there is still something more out there other than Karate. Ofcours I've seen Kung fu movies. It took years for me (until my high school) to encounter or know about Aikido. To tell you the truth sensei I only knew Aikido when I saw the movie of Steven Seagal :) I didn't even know it then that it was Aikido. I immediately admired him (seagal) and was craving to practice what he did in the movies. well, to make the story short I eventually did find a teacher and dojo after researching the name of the art Seagal was showing, finding out its origins and asking around my classmates and etc. (at first I even referred to Aikido as Taekido! hehe) To be direct to my inquiry my reasons were really to be unique among my peers who were either practicing Tae Kwon Do or Karate. In other words to stand out, to kick butts! (just like Seagal) pls don't tell anybody sensei i would be very embarrassed hehe :) I was very surprised that what I saw in the movies where very much different in the dojo (Ki Society). But I continued to practice becoz what I saw as advance techniques in Karate was just basic to Aikido or so I think. well, eventually after having been discharged from our military academy here I and came back home I still practice Aikido but I wanted more which maybe my sensei sensed my yearning that he brought and introduced me to his senseis which he still practice from. This they introduced me to my present club, the club "43", which "no control" "all the Way" philosophy were practiced. to sum up I practice Aikido along with other arts to make me combat ready which eventually I was able to test it with snatchers and muggers. And this subject of "right reason! for studying the Art Aikido" came up which somewhat confused! me. was I within the wrong reasons in undergoing such study sensei? If you don't want to respond to this sensei I totally would understand. Good day sensei. Boni Tongson

*One good deed a day, however small, is 365 good deeds a year.
3,650 good deeds in ten years, 18,250 good deeds in 50 years. This
is quite a great achievement for anyone in their lifetime.*

Sensei's Responds:

To inquiry about more realistic and harder practice:

Thanks for your private message. This is a very hard question to answer and I think you might have been inspired but what I said in another thread regarding practice. I do have to agree with the above people when they say that it depends on the dojo and who you are studying under. Some dojos practice a "softer" Aikido and some prefer a much so-called "harder" style.

I can only give you my personal ideas and opinions in this as I teach in my own dojo. Although I prefer a softer more flowing, strongly connected style, I believe that what I teach my students must, first of all, be correct technique and must work both on and off the mats. There is no black and white method to teaching or practice. I think a beginning student must go slowly and learn the basics very thoroughly, I think advanced students and black belts must never lose the awareness of correctness of practice and technique. If the practice is too soft and slow, one does not adequately train the body to move well and does not develop strong tai-sabaki. If one practices too hard, it is easy to become too stiff and hard. Being limp is no good, but being too crude and rough is not good Aikido either.

Fast or slow, the attack must have integrity - at least make contact so the student knows and learns how to move off the line of attack and neutralize the opponent's force and establish his own position.

The most boring but the best way to practice, I believe, is simply to practice the technique over and over and over countless numbers of times. As the student begins to become more accustomed to the movement and the technique and gains confidence in his strength and ability to take ukemi, it is possible to begin to gradually increase the intensity of the practice. I need my students in the dojo daily, or at least, often enough so I can gauge the degree and level of their training constantly. . . . If you push too hard, the student gets gun-shy and too stiff, if you don't push enough, they get lazy and arrogant. All practice is balance, balance, balance!

There are too many aspects to this to discuss here. Generally, over all, there is much too much chit-chat in the dojo. Discipline should be a little stricter - we have moved away from this and I see much too much free time, playing around and chatter. This all disturbs the focus and attention one needs to practice. Also, overall, students are too spoiled - the practice is a little too hard, and off they go to the next dojo. Less talk, more practice, and more stick to it, thick or thin. . . . all in the context of the correctness of practice and technique. These are my three links. . . . Hope this helps. Gads! I hope I don't get into trouble here, these comments are generally for my own students only. . . .

From Nick Simpson:

Furuya Sensei, I saw a programme on satellite television roughly one and a half years ago, just before I started practicing aikido. It was all about the evolution of martial arts and warriors, in particular Japan, the ninja caste seemed to get a lot of airtime (go figure) but there was some footage of a dojo that practiced aikido and iaido and it showed several of the students cleaning the tatami. I'm fairly sure that this dojo was in LA and I have been wondering if it was perhaps your dojo and your students that were shown? When I looked at your dojo's website it certainly reminded me of the dojo I saw on tv. Perhaps I'm reading too much into this but I'll go crazy if I don't find out.

Sensei's Reply:

Yes, that was my dojo. I have done a number of these programs for History, Discovery, A&E, Life & Times, etc. They come in and may interview you for several hours but the few seconds they finally show is totally up to them and their marketing strategies and what they think will sell. I wanted to show the students cleaning the dojo as they always do because the director wanted to see what training was like in a dojo. At the time, they objected to showing this because they had no idea why cleaning would have anything to do with training at all. They were more interested in high kicks and throws and flash. I was surprised they left it in their final cut. I think maybe because they thought that it was so "unusual." Oddly, it is the segment showing students cleaning the dojo after practice that brought much interest from the general public, much to their surprise.

I am not too proud of these appearances and they never seem to leave in what I myself think is important about Aikido or training. Mainly, I do this because I always feel that Aikido gets too little "air" time compared to most other martial arts. I am amazed at how much interest there is in Aikido but how little information is actually reaching the general public. I have come to think that we Aikidoists do a lot and talk a lot among ourselves but rarely get outside of our own little circles. Anyways, I never get inquiries about my own dojo, but many inquire about dojos in their own neighborhoods and cities. Maybe in this, it does some good!

FYI, I did another program on the Samurai for A&E but I do not have the air times as yet. It should be coming out very soon towards the end of December. Many thanks for your interest.

. . . . Many thanks for your vote of confidence and kind words. We had this discussion before in another thread in this website so I feel very defensive about doing these projects anymore. I always feel that Aikido should get out more into the general public so this is the best that I can do. I realize that there are still so many people out there who know nothing of Aikido and are searching for schools in their areas.

There was another program which aired last night, entitled Extreme Martial Arts, and apparently this was very popular. A while back they asked me to do this but I refused this particular program. They asked me, "Can you do any techniques where you are suspended in air?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You know," they asked again, "like in Matrix! This is what we are looking for. . . ."

Usually, the perception our dojo gives the general public is that Aikido is very traditional and embodies the spiritual aspects of the art within its practice and that Aikido is very beautiful, yet an effective and real martial art. Many times, when they come to do these interviews, it is very hard to break this idea that all martial arts are like Shao Lin or ninjutsu. . . .

The current trend of martial arts in general today is this type of performance art with a lot of acrobatics and "flash" as they say. It is very visual and entertaining, like the movies, but often lacks the virtue of "usage" and "application" as a real martial art. In the movies, it is important to "sell" the technique visually to the audience, and this often sacrifices any "real" aspect of how the technique actually works. Oh well.

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Nick Simpson:

Well, it was a long time since I saw that programme Furuya Sensei and I have forgotten all the ninjutsu and other flashy stuff they showed, but the footage of your students cleaning the mats stayed with me.

I started aikido a couple of months after seeing that programme and now 15 months later I'm having a conversation (albeit virtual) with the person responsible for that rather interesting footage. It's funny how life works out, isn't it?

Sensei's Reply:

Oh my, what a small world, indeed! I think, at the time of the taping, as I mentioned, the film crew and director were surprised that I would include such footage in a segment on martial arts. However, they said that they wanted to see how a traditional dojo was run and what were the essential aspects of training. And cleaning the dojo is one of the important aspects of training in a dojo.

I mentioned "flash" in another segment regarding this type of show and it is something that we cannot escape from, I imagine. TV and the entertainment business deals in what sells and what makes money. Showing students cleaning the dojo was the opposite of flash!

When I said "flash," however, I didn't mean spectacular and wonderful technique or an expression of true mastery of the art. It is something quite different. As an example, in filming laido sequences, they asked to hold or position the sword this way or that so the camera can get a better shot. It is not how correct the technique than it is how best to shoot it and how good it looks on film. I gave them problems when I refused to move from the correct position of the sword. . . .

A good friend of mine studies another art in Japan and while visiting me happened to meet a very good friend of mine who was one of the highest ranking teachers in his art. He was lucky to get a private lesson but was very surprised. His teacher in Japan emphasized the beauty of the kata whereas my friend emphasized the correctness of the kata as a martial art technique. In many cases, he had to correct my friend's sword: "no, the sword is too high, it is actually lower to block this attack." Or, "no, the sword is held this way in order to block such and such an attack" and on and on. . . . We can move a sword around as in a dance but it is not necessarily martial arts technique, it is more artistic and expressive movement. In the other segment, I was rather talking about the popular trend for kata (without consideration of application as a viable technique) as opposed to actual martial arts technique. Well, I glad that such a segment encouraged you to join Aikido practice. For me, just to be chatting with you here, makes it all worth the trouble. Many thanks!

Ted Ehara:

From the "Samurai" Program thread
Kensho Furuya wrote:

The current trend of martial arts in general today is this type of performance art with a lot of acrobats and "flash" as they say. It is very visual and entertaining, like the movies, but often lacks the virtue of

Furuya's Law:

*Study Aikido like you would study the wind,
which can only be seen when it is moving.*

important to "sell" the technique visually to the audience, and this often sacrifices any "real" aspect of how the technique actually works. Oh well. . . .

In the Extreme Martial Arts (XMA) program on the Discovery Channel, they noted that if you were well grounded in the basics, you could go on to do flashy techniques. It was also noted that you needed the flash to get more points from the judges in competitive kata tournaments.

Is there any place in Aikido for flashy techniques? During a public demonstration it might help capture the audience's interest. Perhaps there no place in Aikido for such flash.

Once you feel confident in an Aikido technique, should you go on to try an advanced version? What is the difference between a basic version and an advanced version of the same technique? Is there a difference? Any thoughts on this matter?

Sensei's Reply:

I don't think Aikido has reached that point (I hope not, certainly not in my lifetime!) but many martial arts today are moving towards a "performance art" style in which the object is to impress the viewing audience with "flash" and fancy moves. If you look very carefully, you will notice that they move very fast, but there is no meaning of the movements nor do they even resemble a real, viable martial arts technique. Many older generation masters are lamenting such a development in their own arts. But, in performance style tournaments, demonstrating and competing in "kata," one can draw a lot of people and make a great deal of money - it always boils to that doesn't it?

In real martial arts - we "hide" the techniques. We never, never show what we are doing. Even O'Sensei said this very often: "I never show my technique, it is hidden - you have to steal it from me!"

We execute the technique but conceal it at the same time. Making the movements so obvious and showing off what one can do is simply exposing all your weapons to your opponent - what kind of strategy is that? What kind of martial art is that??? Today, I think, martial arts is moving away from a path of self-enlightenment or discovery of the true meaning of martial arts, but merely a venue to superficially satisfy an inner need to express ourselves or show off. It is in this way, that martial arts is dying. . . . or, at least, evolving into something which is no longer a martial art. . . . Maybe as a way to express one self is ok, we all need this - but we must not confuse this with martial arts training. I apologize for being so critical about this point, but it is a matter of great concern to me and very close to my heart. Many thanks!

. . . Sorry, I didn't say that or, at least, I didn't mean that. I am only making a distinction in modern performance-oriented martial arts of today which emphasizes "flashy" movements for dramatic, visual effect for the entertainment value of the viewer and in modern competition and which de-emphasizes its martial value as a defensive or offensive martial technique. In Aikido, we may try to be "flashy", I suppose, but, at the very least, the technique has to work well or it is of really no value. . . . In competitive performance martial arts popular today, it doesn't make a difference if the technique works or not, as long as it looks good and the judge gives you points for "dramatic" effect.

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... I wasn't really trying to speak in general terms but addressing the original question of "flash" in terms of the recent Discovery program called "Extreme Martial Arts" in which they showed people competing in modern kata competition in which dramatic, visual effect was more important than usage.

... Yes, thank you. This is what I was trying to convey. I hate to make comments on or comparisons with other martial arts but I know that many Kung fu sifus are lamenting the popularity of wushu which emphasizes the acrobatics and flash of the martial arts movement causing the usage or application of the technique to be greatly de-emphasized.

Recently, in Japan, the new Taiji form was introduced, as reported by a friend and Taiji instructor in Tokyo, by masters from China and many of the instructors were just shaking their heads. Apparently, this form will be introduced as the new competitive form for Taiji in the Olympics to be held in China. The comment was that there was so many somersaults and acrobatics involved and one can only do this form if one starts gymnastics training as a young child. Many of the teachers of older styles of Taiji, such as Chen Family Taiji lament that much of the application of Taiji techniques has been lost over the years with over-emphasis on the form (kata) of Taiji.

One can imagine that Aikido can possibly become more "form" oriented as attacks and responses, as mentioned in the above essay, become more "formalized," mechanical, and choreographed.

Already, I see a trend in many dojos where the attack never reaches the target (partner) nor does it contain enough impact force to be considered a real attack. Of course, there is always an important consideration of safety in our Aikido practice but, this is not an adequate reason to lose the virtue and integrity of the attack in practice. The execution of Aikido technique differs vastly when the attack is limp with no effort to make contact and an attack with above-moderate force aimed to reach the target with real power. If one increases this to a degree of practice, where the partner attacks with full force with the intention to make contact with impact, the technique is vastly different again.

I think that we, as responsible Aikidoists, must always keep in mind that the integrity of the technique is dependent on the virtue of the attack. I am not saying that we must create an environment of dog-fighting, but in the most reasonable way, be ever conscious to make a good attack in our daily practice and maintain Aikido technique at its highest level of effectiveness and efficiency.

If we crystallize the form of practice or sink too far into a "dead" or unimaginative routine of training, we are in danger of compromising Aikido greatly, I believe.

I already see Aiki sword training becoming too routine and almost too "form" driven. Many do not make proper cuts or even hold the sword properly, nor do we practice against a "live" technique or attack. In such an atmosphere of "live" practice, how much our senses, awareness and mental focus are brought to the highest level of function. In this, I see such great "beauty," not flash, in the expression of the unity of power and focus in a living art - as I understand it.

Daniel Pierson:

Kenso Furuya, I would really like to train with you someday!

Sensei:

I think this is my last input here, I don't want to spend so much time on "flash." I think it is too inherent in our popular culture today that, as I have mentioned often, we are losing our sense of what is a martial art.

I think (at least in my case), a professional basketball player makes far more money than a professional Aikido instructor. Why? Because he is paid to win the game and, at the same time, perform before the general public who will pay a lot of good money for tickets to see an exciting competition. What makes sports so exciting is that it is also made to be entertaining and visually exciting to the spectator.

We don't know when we have to use our martial arts in a real situation, it can happen at any second and we have to be prepared and aware every moment of our lives - this is a part of our training. When our lives are in danger and it is absolutely necessary to use our skills, we have no time to call our manager, sign a contract, rent a hall, sell tickets so that, if we win or lose, we still make money. If we are concerned about what is a real martial art, we have to bring ourselves to the question of life and death - indeed, our own life and death and this, I think, is an extremely personal and private matter. No one can decide or solve this but your own self to your own self.

When we really have to use our martial arts, it will happen when there is no one around to help us or cheer for us, we will, most likely, be all by ourselves against our opponent or opponents. I certainly won't show him my weapons until the last moment when it is too late for him. Aikido is a dynamic life art and something which must be very personal and private because it involves our minds, bodies, emotions and our inner spirit and takes us to the brink of our own lives and final moments - not really something for display or show nor can it be sold for commercial merit.

Perhaps, eventually, Aikido will evolve into a performance art or sport because this is the only way most martial arts can make money, develop interest and survive in our society and culture today. I will not be around for this.

If Aikido is a true martial art, - a real martial, it will always remain as a highly evolved, sophisticated physical and spiritual discipline and as such, will always be something very personal and private to each of its practitioners, I believe. A martial art which addresses the matter of our own lives (and deaths) and our spiritual enlightenment (or salvation) can never, I hope, ever be downgraded or compromised into a form of entertainment. I think this is my last input here, I don't want to spend so much time on "flash." I think it is too inherent in our popular culture today that, as I have mentioned often, we are losing our sense of what is a martial art.

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Letters & Questions:

11-16-03: Furuya Sensei, I just thought I would send a little offering of my poetry, bad as it is! Hope you are well and that this offering finds you rested and in good spirits. Michael C.

A thunderous wave crashes down,
A myriad of colored leaves falling to the ground
Try to catch one, just one but cannot hold
Perhaps that is the way of the ancients,
Life among the new, while trying to grasp the " old."

Furuya Sensei, My apologies for clogging your inbox with so many replies and messages! I do hope this finds you well and in good spirits as usual! After reading about Aikido from your words and the insights of others, as well as looking at other arts through websites, magazines, books and film. I have come to conclude that many people chase many ideas. Like falling leaves people that stray from one art to the next are trying to catch just one idea, one theory or one purpose. The crashing wave image is the power of the arts that cannot be harnessed just once, but is left for one to sit back and admire. The martial life sounds difficult, thereby taking hold of one idea may be difficult for many people. Life among the " new " represents the world today. As you often say, the traditions are the best way, from study of sword work to cooking rice. Trying to grasp the " old " demands a devote study and willingness to again as you say, " throw yourself into your training. " I hope my explanation does not take away from my poem. Single path, single leaf, falling waters, the nature of ki. Hope all is well Sensei! Always, Michael C.

11-18-03: Dear Sensei, Friends can be silent for awhile, right? Time is something very valuable to me lately - it seems I have too little of it. It turned out that my last practice was last Sunday. I can actually feel it in my bones - the tickle sensation and the restlessness. It makes me appreciate the gift of Aikido. Today my practice will be like a gift instead of a routine.

Can I ask you a question? On one of the Dojos I've visit I saw an interesting thing - a "painted head" (see photo attached). I was explained the meaning behind it and found it fascinating. I don't know its name or where can I buy one, but it kept echoing in my mind so I must try to find it. I'll be very thankful if you could help. Efrat P.S I hope you are well, I still read the "silly poem" thread and write my own (to the drawer...).

Daruma-San: Nana-Korobi Ya-Okii



Fall Down Seven, Get up Eight!

The "head" you saw is a popular depiction of Bodhidharma or Daruma-san as he is affectionately known in Japanese. Bodhidharma is the 27th Patriarch of the meditative sect of Buddhism who crossed over into China and introduced this Meditation (Ch'an) School in 520ad, which is known as Zen in Japan.

It is said that he meditated for "nine years facing a wall" so his hands and legs withered away and fell off. This is why he is not shown with arms or legs. In order not to fall asleep in meditation, it is said he cut off his eye-lids and thus the wide-eyed appearance. He has a beard which identifies him as a "foreigner" from India.

This well known folk art depicts Daruma-san as a toy. However you try to tip it over, it immediately stands upright again. He has come to mean, no matter how many times you fail, always get up and keep trying. He is popular among all who pray for success. One eye is painted in when you make your wish and the second eye is painted in when your wish is fulfilled, granting Daruma-san his sight. He represents good luck to all and is often seen at New Year's too! Good Luck!

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11-18-03: Dear Sensei, Yesterday i already received your gift of "The Art of Aikido, Volume 1" , somehow the postman dropped it off to my neighbor and he just brought it over to me yesterday .

First of all, I would like to thank you for such a kind and valuable gesture. The tape is so valuable to all Aikido practitioners , and your teachings in there are so detailed and complete on both technical and spiritual side. It is a great privilege to see your Aikido techniques and movements. I feel fortunate for those who can practice and learn under your guidance everyday, which is something very rare to find nowadays . And it is a nice feeling to see Mr. Ken Watanabe and other Aikidoka taking the falls, everyone looked so young, it makes me feel the time has gone by so fast . Please accept our sincere appreciation, and as always I wish you and Ken and others of your students always have good health , keep walking on the Path no matter what it takes . Best regards, Nhan Ly, Garden Grove

11-18-03: Sensei: Thank you for starting this wonderful conversation - I was re-reading all the poems tonight and was struck by the people all over the world who have dropped in for a quick cup of tea, and those who have stayed for some conversation. This is Aikido ...

Technique blossoming
from ever-deepening roots,
Spirit challenged,
so few to share this path,

then Silly Poems appear
to captivate and cheer,
calling people far and near
to make their stories clear...

I think I have already received my favorite Christmas gift! With gratitude & respect, Sharon Seymour, Prescott AZ

11-19-03: Thank you, Sensei. I truly believe in the philosophy of the Daruma. In Aikido it's mostly shown in my Ukemi - fall in order to raise again safely. In life it is showing in everything. I was told once that a man should be as a reed: bend down when the storm comes and the wind blows in order not to break like the big trees. When I was a teenager - in one of the gift shops I saw a stand with cards that had names and songs for each name in Hebrew . All of the songs were simple and were full of "everybody likes you" and "you smile all the time". When I looked at my name, it was so strange to find something completely different. It was something like "as the phoenix you'll rise from the sand, spread your wings and fly". I didn't like it then, I thought it was strange and melancholic. Only now I see the beauty of it. Thanks again for your help. I found several sites in which I can buy one. Yours - Efrat, Israel

Sword Length:

11-20-03: On the subject of sword length, when the 47 Ronin avenged their master, they were carrying swords that were 1/2 to 1 shaku longer than regulation.. They wanted longer swords even though they knew they would be inside a house.. why is this?? It seems they would want shorter ones for maneuverability issues.. Josh Wilson

Sensei's Reply: I am not sure how accurate this is since there are so many fictionalized accounts of this incident. Samurai, of course, had more than one sword in their possession and it is hard to access which they actually used and which were part of their collection.

I saw many of their swords first hand in Japan. I discovered one sword owned by Otaka Gengo about 20 years ago - it was quite short. However, Oishi Kuranosuke used a long sword and was considered quite expert at it A tsuba which belonged to his sword was discovered about ten years ago - it was quite large and could only fit a very large sword.

11-21-03: Dear Sensei, Thank you for your kind email. My Aikido training is really very poor. Perhaps after I retire from my day job I will be able to spend more time training in aikido again. Here is the story (what I can remember).

My first contact with Aikido was around 1971 at the YMCA in Hawthorne, during my freshman year of high school (I started ninth grade at age 12). I think Sensei's name was Tim. We did Aikido for the school year, and then my family moved. My family moved almost every year. The memories of that year were hazy, as I was still somewhat in a state of shock resulting from my parents' divorce in 1970. My father was not very impressed with Aikido, and his choice of self-defense method was the pistol (he did train me quite extensively in the use of guns while I was young, but I've never owned or used one since I moved out of his house). I have no idea what became of Sensei Tim. We never tested and never worried about rank.

In 1974, at the age of 15, I started college at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa. A visiting group gave an Aikido demonstration on campus, and I joined a group of students that started an Aikido club at the college. For the next two years, Aikido was the most significant thing in my life, and I trained all the time. My Sensei was a young man (shodan or nidan) named Steve who had learned Aikido at UC Santa Cruz. Sensei was also an actor at South Coast Repertory. In addition to the college club, Sensei and I also conducted Aikido classes at various places in Costa Mesa and Newport Beach, through community recreation departments. We also gave a number of demonstrations at schools. Eventually we shared the Japan Karate Federation dojo (where, I believe, Sensei Demura was teaching karate) in Newport Beach. I was happy doing Aikido every day with my Sensei for a couple of years. He showed me the films of O-Sensei, etc. I loved taking ukemi with him. He also did not care about rank or testing. He, as Sensei, always wore black belt; I always wore white. I was greatly honored to fold his gi and hakama for him. We also visited Orange County Aikikai. We also did jo kata, tanto and bokken training. And with classes we played those wonderful aikido games of the 1970's (do they still exist?) with no winner. I was also starting to visit a Kendo club in Costa Mesa. It seems there was much less "variation" to aikido in California in the 1970's than there is now.

Somewhere in 1976, things changed. I think Sensei got more acting work, and he had less time for teaching Aikido; and I also had a religious conversion experience and became involved with a Chinese Christian church that had a dim view of ki. I was asked to stop doing aikido. Sensei and I talked about this, and it seemed that it was time for us to go our separate ways. I came to know of a number of Aikido students in Asia that gave up Aikido, burned their certificates and burned or gave away their gi and hakama and belts after converting to Christian religion. Perhaps the Chinese Christians seemed to have a strong reaction against the Asian traditional views of ki/chi, Chinese medicine, and many Daoist, Buddhist and Confucian ideas. On the other hand, I also observe that their culture inevitably colors their Christianity. There was recently such a reaction in Orange County in



New Year's Greetings: 30th Anniversary Celebration James Doi, 5th Dan



The 30th anniversary of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles and Sensei's 45th anniversary in Aikido will come about this year and on this occasion we all congratulate and thank Furuya Sensei for his achievement.

In current times, it is amazing that any organization can maintain itself for thirty years. However, the remarkable thing is not just that the dojo has existed for thirty years, but that Sensei has been able in these years, to create a perfect space and environment to truly teach traditional martial arts.

A couple of years ago a film crew was interviewing several of the dojo's senior students and one of the questions was if they (the students) would build a dojo like the ACLA themselves. Everyone answered that no, that it would be much too hard to duplicate anything close to what Sensei has built.

The dojo is a beautiful architectural and historic space. However, other features are also built in. When the Da Camera Society had their Children's Concert at the dojo, I noticed the effect the dojo had on them when they came in. In the alley, the children were acting the way most American kids would act on a field trip, that is, they were talking and generally goofing around. As they entered the garden and came through the front door their behavior changed and they became quiet and extremely well behaved. The odd thing is that no one told them to act that way, they just naturally picked it up. Once, Sensei explained some of the traditional design principles that went into the design of the front garden. The psychological effect of the garden entrance is there by design.

The dojo is more than a beautiful physical place to train, it also contains a cultural, psychological and spiritual "infrastructure" which is the foundation for budo training.

By cultural "infrastructure", I mean ingrained, sometimes subconscious, attitudes and behaviors which necessarily predicate and allow traditional budo training and study. For a very simple example, the process of bowing when entering and leaving the dojo and when stepping on and off the mat creates an important sense of respect and formality that prepares one to train properly.

In Japan, this "infrastructure" was a given. The cultural protocols and attitudes that were needed were a natural part of the Japanese culture. This cultural background was developed over centuries. However, in LA, Sensei had to teach this aspect of Japanese culture and create this cultural "infrastructure" for his students by himself.

After having created a sublime physical space and a cultural "infrastructure", the dojo became a perfect space and environment to learn traditional martial arts.

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in a Catholic church shared by Latino and Vietnamese communities. The Latino community painted the interior of the church a warm yellow. The Vietnamese community was very upset because they said, "You make our Catholic Church look just like the Buddhist temples in Viet Nam!" It seems we humans spend a lot of time trying to become what we are not while rejecting what we think we are.

Back to Aikido. So, while with this Chinese Christian church (where I also met my wife), I could not go to the dojo. In 1997, the last great founder of this Chinese Christian church died at age 92. I and the leadership of the community in Berkeley felt that perhaps it was time for me to leave and establish my own church (not uncommon; sort of like dan students starting own dojo). I began a period of "discernment," of intense prayer, solitude, etc., while also exploring various possibilities, including ministry in a different Chinese Christian church. In my new religious life, I was free again to practice martial arts.

I trained for about six months, and then seriously injured my foot doing mawashi-geri (round-house kick). After recuperating, I thought I should try Aikido again. I found Aikido of Diablo Valley in Concord, CA, and visited and trained for a month or so, having a good time, but the travel was difficult. I also tried local taiji and qigong courses through local parks & recreation. I loved Aikido, but travel to a dojo just was not practical. We have had many nice discussions about your book "Kodo." Sensei is about 10 years younger than me. He trained from about age 5 in Hawaii with Sensei Chuzo Kotaka (of the same generation as Demura Sensei). I would love to spend more time training in Aikido, just because I love Aikido. My time of chatting with you by email and with the folks on AikiWeb really makes my heart yearn for practice of Aikido again. So there is the story of my meager Aikido training.

In a real sense aikido is my "first love" in martial arts, and was the best thing in my life during my difficult teenager years. Throughout my life the spirit of Aikido has helped me to bring peace in may conflicts. I would really like Aikido training to become more of a part of my senior years! Peace to you, Frank Hale



Carol Tanita, Steve Shawn and Stanley Sung at our X'mas Party.

My Experiences In Zen:

I don't want to say that Zen is related to Aikido. But I say, as most everyone well knows, that Zen has very deep relation to traditional Japanese martial arts, especially in the art of the sword and sword arts are so strongly connected to the basic structure of Aikido.

As a background note, my interest started very young when I started Kendo and Iaido and saw such a clear relationship between the sword and Zen. Unfortunately, at that time, there was very little information on Zen in books nor did I really know where to seek out good information.

Very early on in my Aikido training, I was introduced to Kisaburo Ohsawa Sensei (whom I have always admired as one of my teachers) and discovered that he was a student of Zen and it was through his strong influence on my Aikido that I pursued my Zen training further and further. It was sometime later, by some very odd coincident that I was introduced to the Reverend Bishop Kenko Yamashita who many years later, accepted me as his student and I was ordained. What was a great blessing to me was that Ohsawa Sensei's Zen master, Sawaki Kodo Roshi, was the same spiritual guide to my own teacher so I was able to pursue this lineage of instruction and wisdom even further.

In 1988, my Zen master and I had the great honor to speak before the General Assembly of the United Nations. Generally, religious leaders do not speak here but we were invited in a cultural context. My teacher spoke on Zen and Peace and I spoke briefly on Aikido and Peace. I would like to relate briefly my teacher's words because they talk about wisdom in relation to our practice and to the reality of our lives. He told this odd story:

There was once a famous thief who had a son who wanted to learn the "business." "Teach me how to become a great thief," asked his son.

The father replied, "If you want to learn the great secret of my skill then you must come with me tonight when I work!"

So the son accompanied his father and off they went in the dark of night. They climbed a wall and broke into the warehouse of a rich merchant. "Look into that big chest over there," the father told the son and the son opened the big chest and looked inside. Suddenly, the father came up from behind and pushed his son inside the chest and latched it so there was no escape.

"See you later!" said the father and took off. The son was so surprised and so angry at his father for such a cruel betrayal and dirty trick played on himself and he had no idea what to do.

After sitting there for a few hours, he heard some commotion outside and realized that the household had discovered the break-in and there was this great chaos all about him - he knew that he would be discovered, captured and have his head cut off.

He started to make a little scratching noise like a mouse from inside the chest. A maid opened the chest to see what it was and he suddenly jumped out and ran out the warehouse. Running around the corner of the house, he saw a well and threw a large stone in with a great splash and hid. The household thought that he might have jumped inside the well to kill himself and soon went away. When all was quiet, he slipped over the wall and made his way back to his home. Opening the door, he saw his father sitting there having some wine. "Why did you betray me like that!" yelled the angry son.

"You seem to be ok and have made it home safely, tell me how you escaped?" asked the father and the son related to him how he made noises like a mouse, threw a stone in the well to distract his pursuers and on and on. "There!" replied the father, "you have mastered the secrets of being a good thief."

James Doi continued:

The dojo is not traditional for traditions' sake. The dojo is not a museum display or a historical costume drama, like Colonial Williamsburg or a Civil War battle reenactment.

The whole purpose of "traditional" budo training is to teach very difficult physical and mental skills using methods developed over centuries. This traditional method is used because it has been proven to be the best way to teach.

I once saw a documentary about basic training for the Canadian Army, the narrator pointed out that basic training for every army in the world is essentially the same training as that given to Roman legionnaires, physical training and endless marching in formation. As illogical as it first appears, this has always been the best way to train an army.

Many clubs, schools or studios teach martial arts techniques. Many claim to be traditional dojos. There appear to be very few real traditional dojos and we are extremely fortunate to be members of this rare and endangered species.

Given the enormous economic pressures and the modern societal attitudes that are against a traditional dojo, it is remarkable that the ACLA survives and maintains its integrity. This is a great achievement. This is the achievement that we will all celebrate this year.

Congratulations Sensei on the Dojo's 30th Anniversary and your 45th Anniversary in Aikido.

James Doi

The Silent Answer:

My Zen teacher, the late Bishop Kenko Yamashita once told this story which is one of his favorites:

A traveller once stopped by an old man sitting by the side of the road and asked him, "How far to the next town?"

But the old man did not say anything and continued to stare at him blankly. The traveller asked again and again but the old man seemed not to understand and remained silent without a word.

Finally, the traveller gave up in disgust and began to continue onwards.

"About a half a day!" the old man suddenly cried out.

The angry traveller returned to where the old man was sitting and complained, "I asked you politely over and over but you refused to say anything, and now suddenly you shout this out. What is the matter with you?"

"Well," the old man replied, "how could I know how long it would take you until I could see the length of your step?"

Sometimes, we ask questions too prematurely. Many times we do not know the real question until we actually begin to do it for ourselves. We were in a big meeting about an upcoming project and as much as everyone asked the Bishop about this and that and what to do, he refused to say anything. Everyone became upset with him. Later,

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

www.aikidocenterla.com

back in his private office, he told me this story and said, "How can I answer any question when I do not know the answers myself until we actually begin to throw ourselves into the work!" They really do not want my counsel or advice, only my guarantee and assurance that everything will be ok. They do not have enough confidence to get into it by themselves, too worried about profit and loss. . . .

Three Bows:

In Zen, and in most sects of Buddhism in general, we make "sanpai" or three prostrations to the Buddha as a form of greeting. Sometimes it is done before very illustrious priest of high rank. One day during a conversation, my teacher said, "In my whole lifetime, only one person did "sanpai" to me." It is a kind of joke to mean that he is not an illustrious priest or very deserving. He went on to say that during a visit to India to view various important landmarks in the history of Buddhism, as he was boarding a bus, he noticed that a woman was on the ground crying and in such a terrible state.

He asked the bus driver and they said that someone had stolen this woman's prayer beads while she was visiting this holy site and she was so unhappy to lose them.

Without thinking it to be a big deal, the Bishop handed over his own beads to her and boarded the bus. He then noticed that there was a big commotion at the back of the bus and apparently the woman was in the middle of the road bowing and thanking him for the wonderful and unexpected gift.

What may be not much to you, can be very important to someone else. And what is very important to someone else, might not appear very important to yourself. We always have to think very carefully about everything we do and say. . . . Although the Bishop was not so attached to his prayer beads, it was a great gift for this poor old woman whose name he had never even found out.

Meditation:

One of the most often discussed topics in the Zen study group for beginning Zen students was "meditation." Actually, we do not like to refer to it as "meditation," because this word is too tainted carrying with it much too much baggage. Now, we just say, "sitting." Actually, it is simply to sit in the posture of the Buddha in meditation, but this word carries much more because it goes to the essence of the meaning of practice.

We are obliged to explain that sitting has no purpose or meaning and there is no result. You cannot achieve enlightenment through meditation nor is meditation a miraculous drug to cure your ails or a helping hand from heaven to save you.

"If there is no meaning to meditation, then why do we do it? It must have a purpose!" is the usual inquiry from students.

"No," we say, "there is nothing. . . . not even the thought of meditation!"

It is so confusing for many because "logically," we do something to achieve a purpose or goal. This is what we call our "calculating mind." the mind which figures our profit and loss, why and why not.

One Zen master said, "The only way to do Zen is to simply like doing zazen." If you do it for a purpose or goal, you will most likely be dis-

couraged or quit."

I suppose it is like my friend of the other day who "fell in love." I don't know why because it doesn't seem like a match at all but he is in love and that is all there is to it!"

In Aikido, I find that those who come in with very specific goals usually get discouraged quickly and those who practice Aikido just for the love of the art, continue on and on. In addition, those who do not make high expectation of themselves but want to go at their own pace in their own time, seem to last the longest too. I think it is here where we can find the secret to our Aikido practice, just simply practice because we love to practice and that is all. . . .

Angry Priest:

Quite a few years ago, one student approached me and said that he wanted to begin Zen sitting so I sent to him to the nearby Zen temple telling him to go there and ask to join their Zen sitting group. A few days later, in practice, he didn't say anything so I asked how he liked joining their group.

He said, "I didn't like it at all. When I said I was interested in Zen sitting, he was very nice. But when I told him that I also studied Aikido, he frowned and said that Aikido was no good and that I should quit. I was very angry and insulted at his words so I just left and never joined them.

I told my student that this is very odd behavior and that I will go to the temple and ask the same question and see what happens. I knew there was one new priest there recently but I didn't have the chance to meet him yet.

I went and met the new priest and also told him, "I want to join your Zen study group, I practice Aikido in the nearby dojo."

He said exactly the same thing, "Aikido is no good, you better quit and just do Zen sitting!"

I smiled at him and said, "Ok, I will go back and quit Aikido at once."

"No, no!" the priest cried out, "don't quit! I was just kidding you. Usually, when I meet martial artists, they are very arrogant so I just wanted to test your mind! I apologize!"

After we introduced each other, we began to laugh. It is such a small world. This new priest was also formerly an Aikido teacher, 3rd Dan, and we must have met many years ago at some time. He was first called to the Boston area to teach Aikido on the recommendation of N. Tamura Sensei of France to the Macrobiotic Institute in those days. But after a while when this young priest returned to Japan on personal business, he met a Zen priest and quickly entered a temple where he stayed for several years in training. In order to replace him, Tamura Sensei recommended the wonderful, more highly qualified M. Kanai Sensei who still leads this area today. . . . I met Kanai Sensei in 1968 while I was going to school in Cambridge. Such a small world. . . .

In Zen, often such dialogues take place. It is always easy to get offended if we hold too much pride within ourselves or too rigid in our thinking, usually we are just challenging each other's practice or level of training. Someone once said that asking a Zen master a ques-

tion is like jumping on a sleeping tiger's back. Easy to get on, but hard to escape after!

Question:

I received this question from one of the members here on December 3 and received permission to reprinted it here with my reply:

I am an admirer of your articles. It is good to hear regularly from an experienced sensei (aside from my own instructor). This is the first time I've written, however. I am curious: in a recent story, you described going over to a temple and, when told you needed to quit aikido first, you readily agreed and turned to leave. What was going through your mind then? I imagine you were not serious about quitting aikido. Did you say that just to avoid a problem, or to prompt him to begin to argue his side, etc.? I ask because it seems a fairly radical move. Thank you! -Paul Sanderson-Cimino

Sensei's Reply:

I knew from the beginning he was just testing me. . . . "Agreeing" to his conditions meant politely that I am "open" to anything in order to learn from him. Traditionally, this is a way to show sincerity. Because we both come from the same tradition and understand this "form," such dialogues can take place. . . . Like my student who didn't know what was going on or to a person who is to full of himself or over-confident, one would be immediately be offended and lose one's temper. . . . and this would mean a lack of focus or lack of openness to learn. . . . and, as in olden times, the student would be turned away. This is why they say in olden times, when one is going to learn from a teacher, one must become like a empty teacup or blank piece of paper. . . . A good teacher can see this in a student in just a few words. Today, we look at a lot of these teachings too literally or too superficially and often forget that there is a subtle transmission of knowledge here in our tradition of martial arts and Zen, etc. . . . These traditional methods of learning are extremely interesting, aren't they? Does these answer your question? Maybe we should share this on the thread? I wonder if others have that same question as yourself - I never thought of the point you made. . . .very good!

PS: If this teacher actually thought I was going to quit Aikido so easily or make his own Zen so all-important, I would instantly realize that he is a fool and leave immediately! Nothing to learn here!
Best regards,

Become A Fool:

I wrote this for my students and I thought I might share it with you. It is a kind of funny, odd story:

Baka Ni Nare! (Be A Fool!)

In today's world, we pride ourselves on how much we know and how much we can know by just entering the web and hitting a few buttons. Of course, it is a virtue to be well-informed and to be smart. No one wants to be called, "stupid." For some, this is the worse thing that could happen!

In traditional, old style training, there is a phrase I heard very often. For a long time, I did not understand or appreciate it. In fact, I thought it was kind of silly and unreasonable. As the years pass and I have much more experience teaching, I am beginning to realize the wisdom of such words and how important they are to apply to one's Life.

of such words and how important they are to apply to one's Life.

Maybe I was too smart for my own good, I don't know. . . . I never thought so myself. I often heard, "Baka ni nare!" Or, "Become a fool!" It doesn't really mean to be stupid or lazy or silly. More than this, it means "Don't be so smart!" In English, I think we say, "Don't be such a smart ass." Or "Too smart for your own good!" In practice, especially, there is great wisdom in this - you must be surprised that I say this! I heard this often in Zen and very often in the dojo.

The person who just comes for practice and enjoys practice for the practice itself always does very well in the long run. The student who thinks he has all the answers, or thinks that he is smarter than others is the one who always gets himself into trouble. Not into trouble so much with others, but with himself.

To become stupid means ultimately to become "pure," or "naive." It is important to practice with a pure heart - this is the meaning of "shoshin" or "beginner's mind." We all know, I think, that as soon as we think as have all the answers, we are already in deep trouble! As much as we know this, we still fall so easily into this old trap.

I know students who suffer so much because they think they have all the answers and prove themselves wrong or who think there is an answer to everything and cannot find the answer they want. For many things, there is no answer. Finally, you will discover everything you need to know in practice as your practice, no where else. In Aikido practice, you already have all the answers - it is not to grab at them, it is to realize them. . . . Many thanks,



**New Year's Greetings:
Real Learning:
Mark Ty, Uchi-deshi**

One of the most important lessons I've learned in the dojo is how to learn. Here in the United States, we often see learning as a pre-requisite to the doing. In order to do something, we must study it first.

But in Asia, the view of the relationship between the two is that it is the doing of the thing that leads to learning. Through continued practice, we get a better understanding of what we're trying to learn. Personally, I've been able to extend this lesson to many endeavors with great success.

As many people in the dojo know, I started law school this fall and have just finished my first semester. For our contracts exam, we were required to memorize all the rules. Some people used flash cards to study, but I decided to prepare by retyping my notes over and over. By actively writing out the definitions, I was better able to remember the rules when I finally did take the exam.

This idea is particularly relevant to martial arts. Following the proper method of practice greatly speeds the learning process. But I notice that many people waste so much time in class. For example, many people take their time between techniques in Iaido. Once they complete a technique, they take anywhere between a few to several seconds before they try the technique again. Or in Aikido, many people don't grab a partner right away, or they take their time finding a

Mark Ty continued:

finding a spot to practice. It may not seem like much, but in the long run, when you add up all those missed opportunities to practice the technique just a few more times, it does make a big difference.

Practicing properly doesn't require much of a change. You don't need to hurry and rush the technique. Just try to minimize the interval between techniques. For Iaido, do the technique again as soon as you finish the technique and return to your original position. Or if we're doing Noto, draw the sword again as soon as it goes all the way back into the saya. In Aikido, it's just a matter of getting ready as soon as you throw and before your partner attacks you again. Don't wait.

But this doesn't mean just mindlessly repeating the same movements over and over again; it's not like lifting weights where the only goal is to get in as many reps as possible. It's not exercise. We do need to think when we practice, but the correct time to do it is while you're doing the technique, not after. Just start practicing right away and try to concentrate on whatever points of correction you've been given. It won't always be perfect. But if you practice with a serious effort to avoid committing a particular mistake and you do it enough times, you will eventually find that you will have learned how to do the technique correctly after all. Looking forward to practicing with you all in 2004!

All Black Belt Candidates & Senior Students Recommendations:

1. *Please attend all intermediate & advanced classes. Maintain regular, consistent training schedule. Attendance is most important.*
2. *Please attend monthly early Morning Intensive. 6:30-8:00am. Early morning training is to honor O'Sensei's Memory and is required for all Black Belts.*
3. *Please attend and assist Sunday morning Children's Class. This is the best training to become a good Aikido instructor.*
4. *Please help with the opening and closing chores and keeping the dojo immaculate - ly clean, neat and in good order.*
5. *Please be a good role model for junior students. Be helpful and friendly but modest and humble. Demonstrate by your actions, not words and idle chit-chat. Be a good example both on and off the mat.*
6. *You must develop good, strong, correct technique. Concentrate and master the fundamentals inside and out.*
7. *Please always keep in mind that Aikido is not competition in any form, in strength, rank, power, prestige, position, or social status. Practice correctness over strength.*
8. *Beyond physical technique, Aikido means goodness. Good technique does not come without good character. Practice benevolence in all aspects of training.*

The Furuya Foundation:

- Mr. Ken Watanabe - President**
- Mr. Gary Myers - Secretary**
- Mr. Mark Ty - Treasurer**
- Dr. Cheryl Lew - Senior Counsel**
- Mr. Jonathan Altman - Legal Counsel**

The Furuya Foundation is dedicated to preserving the Dojo and its continued operation maintaining the highest standards of practice and the work of Furuya Sensei in research and education in Aikido, the traditional Japanese sword & related arts and their history, culture and traditions. Your donations & contributions are welcome.

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Salamanca, Spain
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**NEW:
Aikido
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Video:
Knife
Defense
Techniques**

By Kenneth Furuya and Santiago G. Almaraz. Salamanca, Spain. Extensive coverage of basic Aikido knife techniques and self defense strategies. 60 minutes. \$50.00 each.

**The Art of Aikido Video
Series Now in DVD**

Unique Publications has just announced the Sensei's The Art of Aikido video series is one of the first to be converted into their new DVD series. The new DVD's will be ready and available sometime in November. The new format will keep the original format in nine dvd's. They can be ordered through the Dojo.

International Aikido Kodo-Kai.

We do accept all Branch Dojo affiliations with any dojo who practices and follows the Aiki Kai Hombu Dojo training, rules and standards. This also includes commitment to 3rd Doshu and the Ueshiba Family as the founding family and originator of our art.

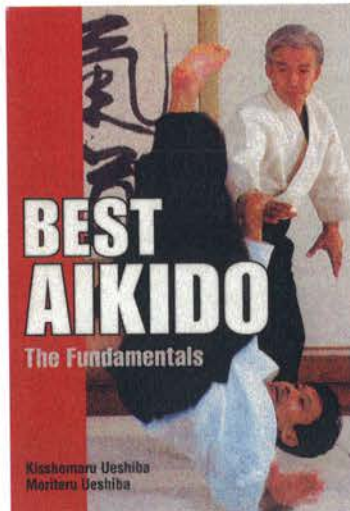
You are welcome to make inquires by email or letter. Our purpose in this is to help and aid others in the correct practice of Hombu Aikido and to spread the correct interpretation of O'Sensei's teachings to the best of our abilities.

Requirements for Affiliation:

1. Practice correct Hombu Aikido with good spirit and energy.
2. Do not dabble in politics or intrigues and get along with each other in the dojo and other dojos in a friendly way.
3. Follow O'Sensei's and Successors Aikido with honesty and commitment, pursuing your training with a Beginner's Mind.
4. No competition. No unsuitable commercialism.
5. No drugs. No abuse. No inappropriate behavior.

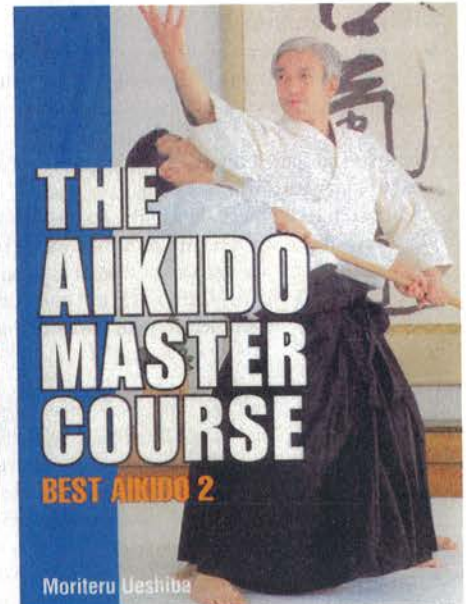
Our Dojo's Mission:

We are not-for-profit, traditional Aikido dojo struggling to preserve the honored, old values and traditions of the art. We are always dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of the art in a Dojo which, itself is considered a work of art. With your continued understanding and support, we hope that you will dedicate yourself to your training and do your best to support the work of the Dojo in every way you can. This is greatly, very greatly appreciated, Always, Aikido Center of Los Angeles, Rev. Kensho Furuya



**Doshu Ueshiba
Moriteru Sensei's
Best Aikido,
The Fundamentals**

Highly recommended reading by Sensei as today's best reference on Hombu Aikido. Please use this as a reference for your training.



**Doshu's 2nd Book Is
Now Available: The
Aikido Master Course,
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\$35.00 in stores.**

Sensei's Greetings continued:

Today, the popular trend is to remove all of the traditions, spirit and teachings of Aikido and replace it with one's own personal views on how the world should be and how we should think. More often than not, traditions are replaced with short-sighted, self indulgent ideas which are narrow minded and immature. . . . Only a few people can speak from great experience and wisdom - these are the people we respect and follow and call our teachers such as O'Sensei and Doshu.

Without respect, there can be no order or harmony. Ultimately, Life is not a question of our own personal happiness but the happiness all around us. If you are rich and happy, but your mother is suffering or all of your friends are having bad times, what is your happiness worth? In Aikido, we try to understand how to develop ourselves, at the same time, seeing the greater view of everyone's happiness as well. This takes great wisdom, not something we can easily understand ourselves. This is the meaning of practice, it is not something to indulge our own immediate wishes.

I do not want to pass on my own immature ideas and create my own "thing" but hand down the treasures of wisdom which I received from my teachers.

Change is inevitable but change must always be natural and in its own time. Although we strictly adhere to these old traditions, please see how our Dojo has continually evolved and grown. This is only the natural process of growth, slow and steady. Please continue as you are, no change is necessary. Best wishes for a Happy New Year!
Faithfully, Sensei

Aikido Center of Los Angeles
www.aikidocenterla.com

Welcome To The Aikido Center of Los Angeles



Aikido Center of Los Angeles

Our Dojo's 30th Year, 1974-2004.

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

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

Please Visit Our Website:
www.aikidocenterla.com.



Reverend Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan



Japanese Swordsmanship: Muso Shinden Ryu Iaido & Toyama Ryu Batto Iaido

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.

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.

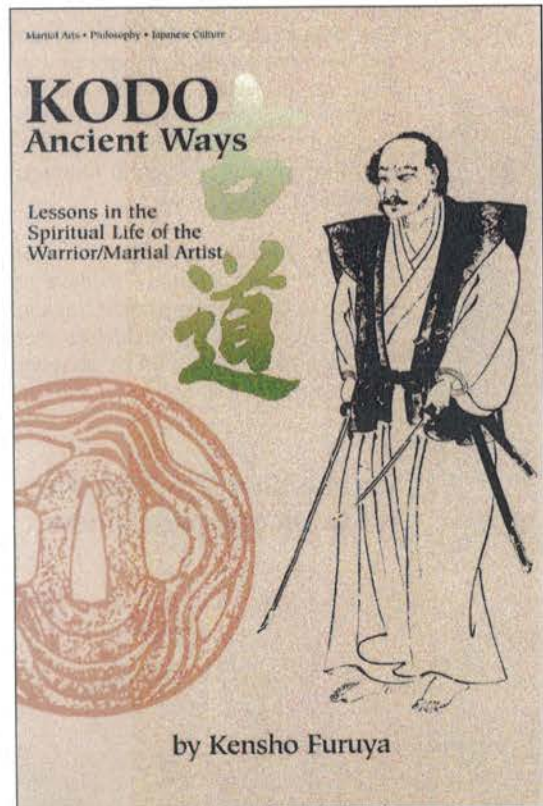
Official Dojo T-Shirts, ACLA Patches & Dojo Mugs

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.

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KODO

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

Rev. Kensho Furuya

Please place your orders through:
Aikido Center of Los Angeles,
940 E. 2nd St., #7, LA, CA 90012

\$16.95 + \$3.00 S&H
Payable to Aikido Center of Los Angeles
Foreign postage: \$5.00 S&H

Recommended Readings:

規範 合気道 基本編



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."

aikido

by Kisshomaru Ueshiba



Highly Recommended:

AIKIDO

By Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba

Other Readings Recommended For Students By Sensei:

Zen & Japanese Culture. D. T. Suzuki.

Anatomy of Dependence. Takeru Doi.

Anatomy of the Self. Takeru Doi.

Mind & The Sword. Hiroaki Sato.

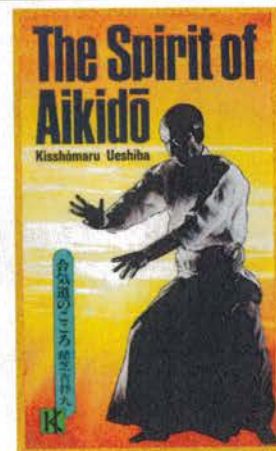
The Book of Five Rings. Musashi Miyamoto.

Records of Things Heard. Dogen Zenji.

*Refining Your Life: Tenzo Kyokun-
Lessons of a Cook.* Dogen Zenji.
Trans. Kosho Uchiyama.

The Unfettered Mind. Takuan.

A Flower Does Not Speak.
Zenkei Shibayama.



THE SPIRIT OF AIKIDO

By Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba

An important book on the philosophy and historical background of Aikido's development. Translated from the Japanese - *Aikido no Kokoro*.

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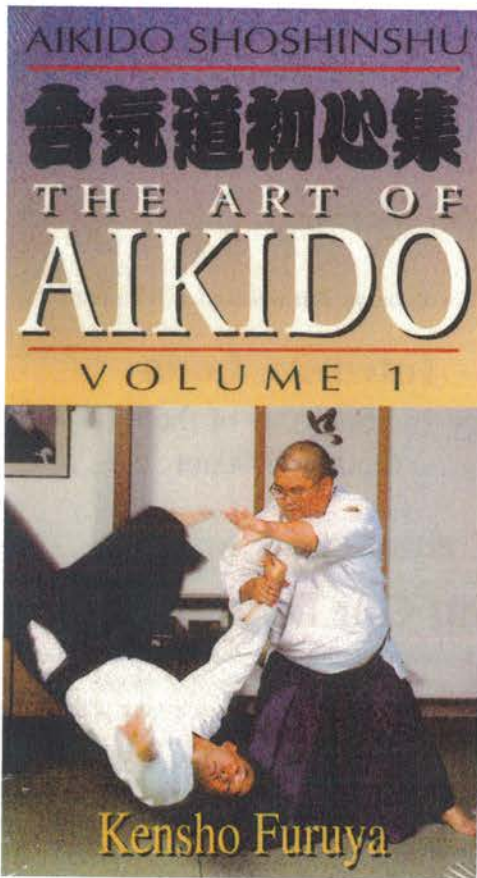
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The Aikido Center of Los Angeles
940 E. 2nd Street #7, Los Angeles, CA 90012
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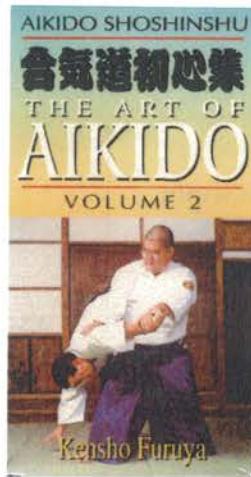
The Art of AIKIDO

Aikido Instructional Video Series in Nine Volumes

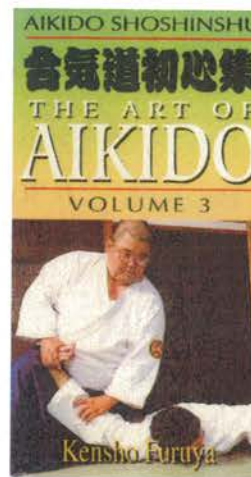
"Top Rated" - Karate Illustrated, "Impressive Scope" - Aikido Today, "Exhaustive" - Aikido Journal "One of the Best"



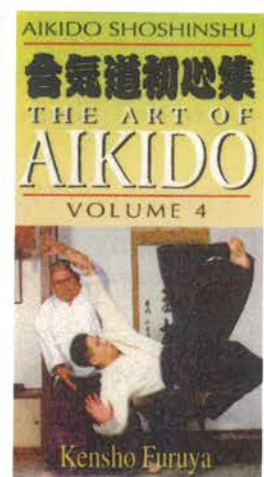
This video series is considered to be the most comprehensive and detailed instructional video on Aikido available today. Rev. Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan, Chief Instructor of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles, is a student of the late Kisshomaru Ueshiba Doshu of the Aikido World Headquarters. He began his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



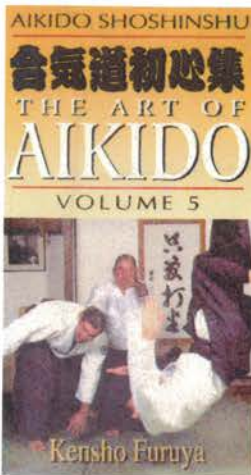
Basic Techniques
Throwing & Joint Techniques
Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo & Gokyo



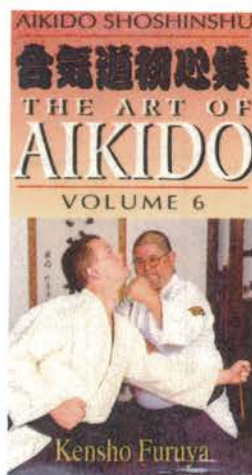
Ukemi-Breakfalling
Basics Continued
Free Style Techniques
Tenshin. Ki. Breathing.



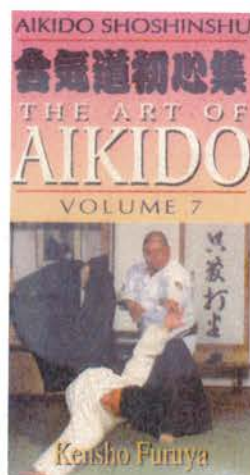
Katatetori Ryotemochi:
Ryotetori: 2-hand.
Reigi-saho: Etiquette.
Koshinage-Hip throws.



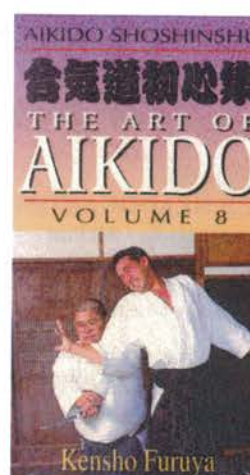
Suwari-waza. Gokyo.
Hanmi-handachi. Kokyū-dosa.
Katatori: Shoulder.
Multiple attackers.
Five-man Freestyle.



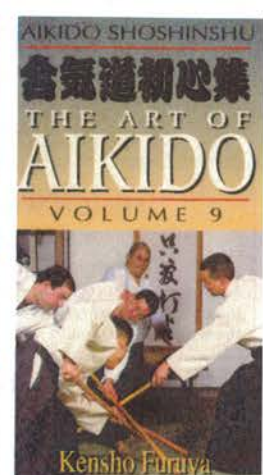
Tsuki: Strikes & Punches
Yokomenuchi: Strikes to the side of the head & neck.



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: 5:15-6:15pm &
6:30-7:30pm.

Tuesdays: Open Beginning: 5:15-6:15pm
Intermediate 4th & Up: 6:30-7:30pm.

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

Thursdays: Open Beginning: 6:30-7:30pm
Beginning Weapons, Bring Bokken & Jo:
7:45-8:45pm, 4th Kyu & up.

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

Saturdays: Open Beginning: 9:30-10:30am.
Open Beginning: 10:30-11:30pm.
Every 4th Saturday: Open Intensive Aikido:
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.

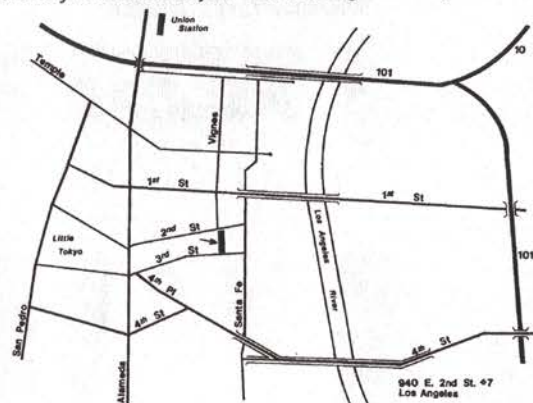
Intensive Iaido

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.