

羅府合氣道学院古屋道場



AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

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Affiliation: The Aikido World Headquarters - Aikido So-hombu Dojo Aikikai, Tokyo, Japan
The United States Aikido Federation Eastern Region, New York, New York
The All Japan Swordsmanship Federation, Tokyo, Japan (Official Los Angeles Branch Dojo)
The Los Angeles Sword and Swordsmanship Society - Kenshinkai, Los Angeles, California
Rafu Token Kai - Japanese Sword Study Society

July 1, 1994

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DOJO WELCOMES GREATER LITTLE TOKYO ANTI-CRIME ASSOCIATION Self-Defense Seminar Conducted on June 11th.

On June 11th, the Dojo conducted the 1st Self Defense Seminar to 12 members of the Greater Little Tokyo Anti-Crime Association including Satoru Uyeda, President, and Brian Kito of Fugetsudo in Little Tokyo who coordinated and organized the event. The seminar started at 3:00pm and finished at 6:00pm and covered basic self-defense rules and three basic techniques of nikyo-tenkan, kotegaeshi and sankyo and numerous releases and take downs.



Participants were Satoru Uyeda, Brian Kito, Jay Kawato, Randy Imoto, Sam Kozono, Lori Ota, Ken Kumagai, Michelle Kato, Ken Fuji, Hiroshi Yamauchi, Nobu Watanabe, and John Aguilar.

Assistants to Sensei were: Bill Gillespie, Ken Watanabe, Kenny Furuya, David Ito, Ismael Araujo, Andy Kissel, Rick Parents and Gabriel Zorilla. Many thanks for your help.

MASTER ADAM HSU CONDUCTS SEMINAR #5 ON SPECIAL FATHER'S DAY SEMINAR - JUNE 19TH.



One of our most welcome guests, Master Adam Hsu, visited Los Angeles again from June 18th to the 21st. His Special Seminar was held on June 19th, Sunday, on Father's Day. This is Master Hsu's 5th Seminar at the dojo and he is always enthusiastically welcome by all the members.



MY TRIP TO JAPAN

By William Gillespie, 2nd Dan



Bill during practice in the dojo.

For those of you who wondered where I was from May 13th to June 6th, I had the good fortune to travel to the Far East on business. Most fortunately, my travels included an eighteen day stay in Tokyo, Japan.

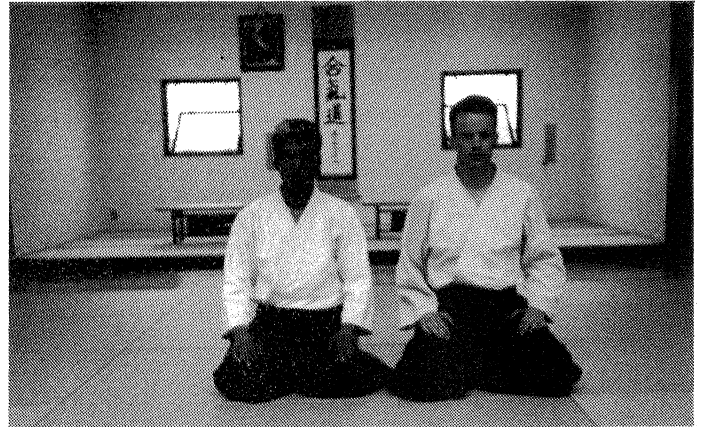
I had previously visited Japan and travelled around the countryside, but this time work required me to stay in Tokyo and I utilized this opportunity to visit our friends at the Omiya Dojo. Of course, I had an extraordinarily enjoyable and memorable trip.



View of Omiya City in Saitama Pref., Japan.

I arrived in Japan on the weekend of May 20 and was eager to contact Ichizuka Sensei and the Omiya Dojo members through Mr. David Smith and to practice Aikido. I was able to attend my first practice at Hombu Dojo on that Sunday morning. I made the early morning trip, from my friend's apartment in Harajuku, on the Yamanote Line and walked to the Dojo from the Shin-Okubo Station. It was only two years since I had been there so I did not get too lost!

Furuya Sensei had given me a gift to bring to Doshu Ueshiba Kisshomaru, The Founder's Son and Successor, and graciously wrote me a letter of introduction. I turned them in at the front desk, and gave the uchi-deshi my Yudansha card, paid the 1,500¥ mat fee (about \$15.00 US) and slipped upstairs to change.



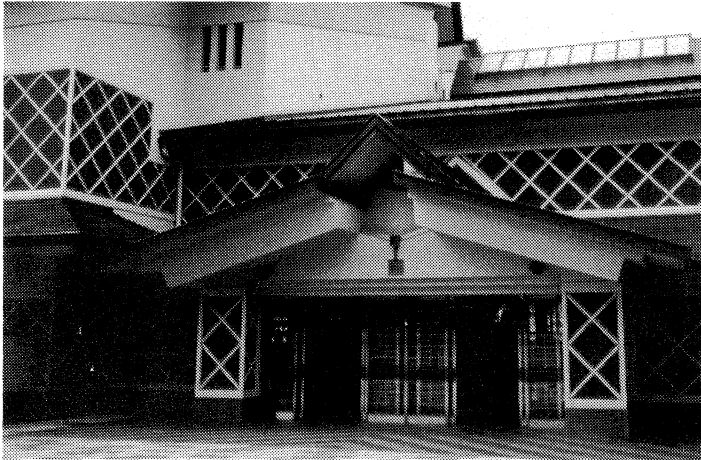
With Moriteru Ueshiba Sensei at the Omiya Dojo during a Special Seminar.

Class was taught by Waka Sensei (Young Master) Ueshiba Moriteru. It was vigorous with lots of suwari-waza, and very familiar. I stayed for the next class too. Should you get the opportunity to go to Japan, you will be tremendously encouraged to find that the Aikido we learn from Furuya Sensei fits into any class taught there, because it is so similar to that taught by the Doshu. Some of the foreign students' Aikido was rather strange. Just as with my last time practicing at Hombu Dojo, I left Japan with a tremendous appreciation for the training I have received from Furuya Sensei.

Thereafter, I practiced as often as my work schedule permitted. It was usually two or three classes a day. I also was certain to attend all of the Doshu's classes from 6:30am on Mondays and Wednesdays and at 7:00am on Fridays. I took classes from many different Sensei. Besides the Doshu and Waka Sensei, my favorites were Miyamoto Sensei, Ohsawa Sensei (the son of the Sensei who taught Furuya Sensei) and Arikawa Sensei (Furuya Sensei took his uchi years ago). The classes are usually very large. Overall, the students practice with tremendous enthusiasm and it is very exciting to practice with so many high-ranking students; I also got to practice with several current uchi-deshi. I even got to practice with Ichizuka Sensei from the Omiya Dojo and saw him at the Doshu's Friday night class. He graciously took me out for dinner and drinks twice. He was so generous; I had a great time and remain very grateful to him. He is a very good person. In all, I saw old friends, made many new friends and look forward to returning someday.

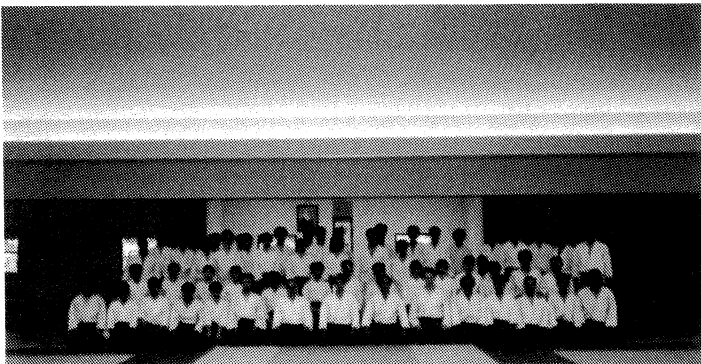
Without a doubt the highlight of my trip was the time I spent with the people from the Omiya Dojo. In addition to my time with Ichizuka Sensei, David Smith

MY TRIP TO JAPAN continued:



The Omiya City Dojo where Ichizuka Sensei conducts his classes.

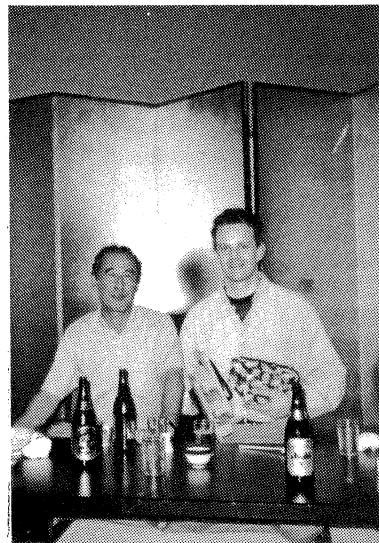
and I drove up from Tokyo after Saturday practice at Hombu Dojo. Not only did I get to go to Omiya and participate in their practice under Ichizuka Sensei, but they took me out for a delicious dinner and gave me many nice gifts. It was all done with such heartfelt generosity and hospitality that I was truly overwhelmed and speechless. Fujita Sensei and his wife kindly allowed me and David Smith to stay in their home on Saturday night. We stayed up until 2:30am drinking beer, eating again and discussing Aikido and life. Fujita Sensei is a very good man and his family is very nice. You should see the garden at his home!



Members of the Omiya Dojo during Moriteru Ueshiba's Seminar.

That Sunday, Waka Sensei came to the Omiya Budo Center which is a large beautiful center for all of Omiya's martial arts and for a special practice for the Omiya Dojo. Ichizuka Sensei kindly introduced me to him. I was honored, but stunned. thereafter, we all had an excellent, enthusiastic practice. Then, after many photographs, we all went out for a dinner in honor of Waka Sensei. There was a lot of good food, drink and testimonials in honor of Waka Sensei.

I even managed to make part of mine in Japanese. I hope it wasn't too painful for the listeners! It was a tremendous time and a once in a lifetime experience for me. After Waka Sensei left, the Omiya members gave me many generous gifts. We took more photographs and Ichizuka Sensei, Mrs. Ichizuka and Fujita Sensei took me to the Omiya Station to return to Tokyo. We said our good-byes and I asked them to come back to Los Angeles soon. We all laughed and said, "soon."



With Ichizuka Sensei

I will never be able to adequately return the kindness and hospitality that was extended to me by Ichizuka Sensei and all the Omiya Dojo members. I hope that they come back and visit soon and that more members of our dojo have the opportunity to go to Japan and visit them. It was extraordinary.



Members of the Omiya Dojo at a party after the Seminar.

I want to also thank Furuya Sensei for the truly authentic training that he has provided to me and for his efforts with our relations with the Omiya Dojo. Without them, I would not have been so accepted at Hombu Dojo and my visit to Omiya would never have happened. I encourage all the members of the Dojo to practice enthusiastically and to visit Japan and especially the Omiya Dojo.

PROMOTIONS

Effective as of July 1, 1994

2nd Dan
Ismael Araujo, Jr.

1st Kyu
Michael Amparano
Rey Espino

3rd Kyu
Jose Araujo
Bruce Ino
Kristine Lew
Cromwell Ty
Mark Ty
Geneveve Ty

4th Kyu
Meynard Ancheta
Kaoru Tamura
Michael Cervantes

5th Kyu
Michael Dancy

6th Kyu
Ricardo Villaverde
Kazunobu Toji
Seiji Haga
Ernie S. Caballa
Calvin Jew
Kevin Divico

In learning, accumulate day by day.

In living, simplify day by day.

In practice, purify day by day.

Nisei Week

*The Annual Nisei Week Aikido
Demonstration and Open House*

will be held at the dojo on

August 14, 1994.

10:00am-3:00pm

Japanese Sword Study Class
Friday, July 1st, from 7:30pm.

Budo Study Class
Friday, July 8th, from 7:30pm.

Black Belt Aikido Intensive
Saturday, July 30th, from 6:30am.

Membership Drive

Please support your dojo by introducing your friends and associates to our practice. We need to increase our membership before the summer months.

Thank you for your kind attention and cooperation in this matter.

ACLA

Dojo T-Shirts & Patches

ACLA Official Dojo T-Shirts and Patches are available for a donation to the Dojo. The supply is limited so please purchase early.

Dojo T-shirts: \$15.00 each. All sizes.

Dojo Patches: \$5.00 each.
To be worn on the upper right hand sleeve.

Official Dojo Team Jackets & Uniform Bags

NOW ON ORDER

We are now taking orders for our Official Dojo Jacket which will be custom embroidered with our dojo logo and name in six beautiful colors.

Designed by Land's End as: Traditionally the most popular team style. We've upgraded our version by using a special new 3-ply nylon, tough, weather resistant, yet cotton soft to the touch. With a subtle not shiney texture that bespeaks quality, and accepts embroidery beautifully.

Every detail of this jacket is first class, right down to its "no-fail" YKK zipper. It has a windcutting stand-up collar, easy moving raglan sleeves, full zip front, welt front pockets. And yes, an ingeniously vented back that dissipates perspiration, cools you down when you're active. Machine wash. Imported.

MEN'S: Sizes: S 34-36, M 38-40, L 42-44, XL 46-48, XXL 50-52.

WOMEN'S: Sizes: S 6-8, M 10-12, L 14-16, XL 18-20, XXL 22-24.

Jacket color is "Sun Yellow."

Jackets must be ordered in quantity, so please order early with our first order. \$65.00 for members. \$85.00 or more donation to the dojo for supporting members and friends.

Send in your remittance with your name, mailing address and size.

Also, we have embroidered Official Dojo Uniform Bags made of sturdy, long lasting 12 oz. cotton canvas in black. 26 1/2" x 11" x 11". Custom embroidered with our logo and dojo name. \$35.00 each to members. Supporting members and friends: \$50.00 donation to the dojo.

Support your dojo!

Congratulations



Wedding Bells ring for

Dr. James Doi &
Ms. Joan Marie Brooks
on July 2, 1994

*

Mr. Ted T. Takeuchi &
Ms. Olga Marina Amezquita
to be wedded on
August 13, 1994

The warmest and sincerest congratulations and a long life of Happiness and Good Health.

NEWS ITEMS:

Dojo welcomes back Bill Gillespie from his trip to Japan in May who also visited the Omiya Dojo in Saitama and the Aikido World Headquarters in Tokyo.

We also welcome back Dr. Cheryl Lew who trained at the New England Aikikai under Kanai Sensei.

Sensei's article is published in the current issue of Dojo Magazine entitled, "The Traditional Dojo Revisited: The Sacred and the Profane" featuring our dojo. Sensei's article to follow in the next issue is "Aikido and the Mysterious Power of Ki."

Aikido and the Mysterious Power of "KI"

By Rev. Kensho Furuya

Nowadays, everyone in the martial arts talks about "ki." "Chi-kung" or Chinese Kung-fu emphasizing the power of "ki" or "chi" as it is pronounced in Chinese is ever popular today. In recent years, we begin to hear the term used in Western sports, psychology and medicine. I imagine that in a few years, the term, "ki" will be found in our own Webster's dictionary. But when this comes about, how will they define ki? This is the big problem today as well as for the future.

Although many speak of it, how many of us actually truly understand what this mysterious power of ki is? As an Aikido teacher, I hear, discuss and read many articles concerning ki but only a few have really impressed me, and fewer yet have really hit the point about what this mysterious "stuff" called ki is.

I am not the final authority on ki, yet one essential point I have come to realize over the years is that ki has a long history of at least four thousand years in classical Chinese thought, from the Confucian and Taoist traditions. And, adding the Buddhist tradition or interpretation from the 5th century BC onwards, the literature alone discussing ki would take a lifetime of study and reflection. Looking at what everyone is saying today, it is easy to surmise that most misinterpretations come from either a lack of adequate study or, too active an imagination.

Although it has been 25 years since the passing of the legendary Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba, many still remember the numerous feats which seemed to defy human ability, strength and imagination.

In the 30's or 40's, in an early demonstration, it is said that he moved 20 eighty pound sacks of rice called "tawara" to the opposite side of the stage in a matter of minutes by thrusting them each with a 14' spear and lifting them over his head. One witness commented that he had heard of such a feat in the ancient history of Japanese martial arts but did not realize that there was anyone who could perform it today.

In another account after WWII during the 1950's, it is told that in a demonstration for the US Military Police in Tokyo, he alluded three armed MP's who had their guns drawn on him. The MP's related later that at the moment Master Ueshiba moved, if they had pulled their triggers they would have shot each other.

In the late 60's, before his passing, it was a common scene during class and demonstrations at the Aikido World Headquarters in Shinjuku to see ten or twenty strong men trying to push this tiny man, the Founder of Aikido, over. With the slightest, effortless movement, they would all topple over and he would be left standing there smiling all alone. We attribute this to the power of his "ki" or vital energy.

On one occasion, the famous Takamiyama, one of the first well-known American sumo wrestlers, visited the Founder. Declaring that no normal person could withstand his onslaught or attack, he tried to push him over and completely failed. Takamiyama's only comment was, "Impossible!" At that time, the Founder weighed approximately 105 pounds at a height of about 5'1" to Takamiyama's current weight at that time of an enormous 445 pounds.

Stories of the Aikido Founder's feats utilizing the mysterious power of ki are too numerous to relate in just one short article. But, his fame still fascinates aspiring martial artists today.

The kanji or Chinese ideograph for the term, "ki," is made up of two radicals. The character is formed by writing the radical for "gas" above the radical for "rice." This alludes to the steam rising above the pot of cooking rice. The rising steam appeared to the ancient Chinese as a state between the material and non-material. Today, it is a common belief to interpret ki as a mental state or some type of mystic psychic power. Of course, ki somewhat borders on this and to say this is not true would be inaccurate. But, to say this is true would, I believe, be not correct and somewhat misleading. I think this is where everyone seems to fall into a trap thinking that because two things appear slightly similar they must be the same thing.

Many of the Aikido founder's feats seem to border on a kind of super-human mystical and psychic power to the inexperienced or uninitiated observer

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but to the practicing Aikidoist, it only appears to be the highest level of what a martial art should be.

In my younger days, I heard that an Aikidoist had to be, at the very least, at the level of a strong 3rd degree black belt or higher or it would be too dangerous to take the Founder's ukemi. An inexperienced student would risk the possibility of a concussion or broken arm. One apprentice related that being thrown by the Founder was like being "swept up in a giant vacuum cleaner and spit out of a ferocious tornado."

The Founder often spoke of "Ki-shin" or "returning to god." I think he means to "return to Nature" or "return to the primordial source of Nature." How do we do this? How is this related to the power of ki? The Founder also spoke of the techniques of Aikido as "misogi-waza" or techniques to "purify one's self." We might interpret this, in basic terms, as becoming one with or unified with Nature. The Founder thought that Aikido was the way to return back to Nature's fold. Humans, in this modern age, have become much too self-centered and self-serving and have abandoned the infinite wisdom of Nature. The Founder believed that this incredible power called ki was simply the power of Nature itself which we once had but lost somewhere along the way or misplaced it somewhere in this mass of modern technology and finance which we have submerged ourselves in. During the European Renaissance, we thought of and glorified ourselves as creatures created in the image of God and, regrettably, nowadays, modern scientists have come to think that the cockroach may be earth's most enduring creation. What a change in thinking! I believe the Founder endeavored to recover the wisdom of Nature and the wisdom of the past age which has somewhere been misplaced and restore it back to mankind.

The ancient Chinese spoke of "Tai-chi" or the grand ultimate or essence of Nature. This was governed by the two extreme poles of Yin and Yang or the positive and negative forces to put it rather too simply. This process was then manifested in the infinite, spontaneous and constant interaction of the basic five elements of fire, wood, metal, earth and water. To the ancient Chinese, this is what made the "world go 'round."

However, this entire grand process was governed by what was called "ri." Ri (or "li" in Chinese) means "order" or "measure" or "reason" but not logical reason in the Western sense but reason in the context of what is morally right and wrong and what is most natural in Nature. Nature, to the Chinese, had an ethical sensibility. According to Chu-shi, the orthodox neo-Confucian whose interpretation of Confucian eventually became the official school of both the Chinese Imperial and much later the Japanese feudal Tokugawa governments, declared that "Ri or Nature's order or form is "Ki" or energy itself." In other words, form is energy itself. Einstein proved this mathematically.

This is not directly the Aikido Founder's interpretation itself but does lead us to understanding a little more of what he is trying to say and teach us.

A good example to use here is the image of water. Water has the unusual capacity to take on many forms such as ice, liquid and steam. Water as a puddle in the street has no so-called "power" at all and soon dries up and disappears. However, if we take that same water and compress it and control it we can direct the water with some force like water being dispersed from a fireman's hose.

On other words, if our power is scattered or, as Aikidoists say, "not centered." We lack adequate power or we are not using our full power. The practice of the Aikido techniques trains us to centralize and harness our ki in our own individual centers called "hara" or "tanden," a point a little below the navel or what kinesiologists call the human "center of gravity." When our ki is centralized and concentrated in our tanden, we then harness its unlimited force.

How to utilize this power properly is also the goal of practicing the proper Aikido techniques. If our same fireman's hose is twisted and bent, the force of the water is greatly diminished because of too much resistance or too many obstacles to allow for its uninhibited flow caused by all the twists and bends. By keeping the hose untwisted and unbent, the water flows freely at its most powerful. This is much the same in humans. Learning to centralize and harness the ki in our center of gravity is important. But how to allow its free flowing throughout the body and using it to its fullest advantage is the second step in training one's ki.

In the Japanese language, the word for illness or

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sickness is "byo-ki." Byoki literally means "stale" or "stopped up" ki. It is natural for the ki to flow throughout the body and disease is caused when this ki gets stopped up someplace in the body. Again, we can think of it as a twist in our fireman's hose. It seems the ancients understood the importance of the free movement of ki in the body. The flow of ki or how and where the ki is supposed to flow is also the basis of the ancient practice of medicine in the East. Although some Westerners might argue whether there is really such a thing as ki at all, anyone studying Eastern medicine, such as acupuncture or moxibustion or shiatsu pressure point massage must accept it as a point of fact. Aikido technique as the Founder taught it cultivates our understanding of the centralization and usage of the power of ki.

All techniques in aikido require one to be centered, balanced and calm allowing the ki to settle or collect in the lower abdomen or the tanden. This is the centralization process. The smooth circular motion of Aikido techniques also enhance the flow of and make use of this power. According to the Aikido Founder, "There is no Aikido technique without ki." When we emphasize physical technique or muscular power exclusively, we are definitely not using the potential of minds and bodies to the fullest.

Finally, the ultimate step is "to forget about ki." This is the final stage where we have become completely one with ki or Nature and we no longer have to think about it consciously. It is naturally concentrated; it is naturally flowing, and it is naturally put into full usage. Some people call this stage, enlightenment. I can't say what it is exactly, I am studying this myself in my dojo everyday, but I know few people achieve it. Yet, at the same time, isn't this what all aspiring martial artists must strive for in their art? As mysterious and fascinating as we find this thing called ki, it is indeed the essence of life and what we are working with every minute of our lives. It's realization and understanding comes through correct, proper training and practice. Please continue to practice hard.

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by
The Aikido Center of Los Angeles
Rev. Kensho Furuya

IMPORTANT DATES FOR JULY 1994

July 1st. Sword Study Class from 7:30pm. Rafu Token Kai. All Welcome.

July 2nd. West Covina Community Center Demonstration from 1:30pm. Aikido & Iaido.

July 4th. Special Holiday Morning Class from 10:00am-11:30am. Aikido video from 11:30am -12:00 noon.

July 8th. Budo Study Class from 7:30pm. Topic of discussion: Sun Tze's The Art of War. All welcome.

July 9-10th. Lotus Festival Demonstration in Echo Park. Dates & times to be scheduled. All black belts to participate.

July 16th. Intensive Iaido Seminar from 6:30am. Monthly breakfast-meeting to follow.

July 16th-17th. JACCC Children's Aikido Seminar at the dojo. Dates and times to be determined. Black belt volunteers needed.

July 23rd-24th. Higashi Hongwanji Demo from 3:30pm-4:00pm. Aikido & Iaido.

July 24th. Pasadena Buddhist Church Demonstration from 6:00pm-7:00pm. Aikido & Iaido Sections.

July 30th. Black Belt Intensive Seminar from 6:30am-8:30am. Important Monthly Black Belt Meeting follows.

August 14th. Nisei Week Aikido Demonstration and Open House at the dojo from 10:00am-3:00pm. Everyone is requested to participate. Invite your friends.