



AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

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June 1, 1992

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Calendar of Events

May 30th & 31st. Japanese Village Plaza demonstration.

July 12th. Pasadena Buddhist Church demonstration. Pasadena.

July 18th & 19th. Lotus Festival demonstration. Echo Park, Hollywood.

July 18th & 19th. Zenshuji Obon demonstration.

July 19th. Nisei Week Opening Ceremony. Tentative.

First week of August - Nisei Week.

MORNING CLASSES

Mondays-Wednesdays-Fridays
7:00am - 8:00am

Dojo is open from 6:30am

Everyone is welcome.

ACLA NEWSLETTER

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Harmony

The term Aikido is often translated as the "Way of Harmony." And, we often speak of harmony in regards to Aikido. Aikido instructors talk about it alot. Yet, what is harmony? This is something that we must ask ourselves in a very serious and conscientious way. It is not simply to quote from an old Aikido book or mimic something clever that you have heard before. It is a much more serious and profound problem that we must face in our practice and in our daily lives. It requires profound self-reflection

Who can really say what harmony is? I think it is different for each person. All of us like to think that we are harmonious people yet, everyday, we fight with our friends, our co-workers, our family, etc. We especially fight with ourselves in our own heads. Where is the harmony in our lives? It cannot exist unless it exists in our practice. I think this is what makes Aikido practice so valuable. But, within training it is so easy to go off the track that it always must be approached with a pure heart and a clear head. Equally important is to understand our own delusions. More often than not, we take our delusions to be truths and become hard-headed and stubborn. Know when you are deluded. You can know this when you understand the true form of practice.

People today want to understand first then apply themselves to practice. At one time, this desire for prior understanding meant to know the meaning of what one is going to put time and effort in. They want to first understand if this is a worthy cause or just a useless project. I think this is a reasonable concern. In recent times, people want to first understand what they are doing because they are only calculating profit and loss. They only want to know how much is to be made. Aikido is an art, it is a way of life. It is not a business and Aikido cannot be accomplished by money nor can it be predicted on a computer.

In traditional style martial arts and in the way we practice Aikido in the dojo, the process is much different and, I think, for most people, not easy to understand. Understanding comes naturally. It is not an end. It is part of the process of becoming.

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Continued:

One studies and practices hard and eventually comes to understand the art. Not visa versa. We want to understand first and then study. This is a selfish way which leads to misunderstanding because when we try to understand conceptually we onyl understand from a ego-centered, narrow point of view.

To first create a theory or concept and then try to fit everything (practice) into it, eventually leads to disaster. In Aikido, we come to understand the art within our training. Our understanding grows as our practice grows. Understanding is the growing process itself. It is not like an adding machine where you can enter all the figures and neatly come up with a total before you do anything at all. Unfortunately, life is not so simply designed.

How do we understand that our practice is correct? Our practice is based on the daily, normal activities essential to our lives. When it contradicts or attempts to transcend our normal life style, it is already separated from the art, from our lives. One finds in traditional training that the most essential acitvity does not seem to be the techniques of Aikido itself but all of those seemingly unimportant activities and chores surrounding but not directly related to it. Sometimes, it seems that the cleaning, the repair work, the building and maintenance and all those other little chores take precedence over actual technical training. Why is this so? It is because training and technique must never divorce itself from the reality of the moment to moment activities of our lives. It is important to continually look at Aikido from the standpoint of our daily life, not from theories, books or other people's words.

This is one of my favorite stories which I am sure you have heard before and I risk retelling it again. A young priest was studying under his master for many years but he never heard the master speak about Buddhism. Finally, the student couldn't bear it anymore and thought that, at this rate, he would never learn anything at all. He approached the master and asked: "Sensei, I have been here for many years yet you have not spoken one word to me about the teachings? I feel cheated."

The master replied: "In the morning, when we meet, don't I say 'good morning?'" When you bring me my meal don't I say 'thank you?' The proper manner of everyday living is the highest teaching

You haven't realized that I have been teaching you all along." In another story, once a priest approached his master and asked: "What is the essence of Buddhism?" The master replied: "I see that you have just come from your meal, go wash your bowl!" In the same way, our Aikido is found not only in the practice itself in the mats but in our daily life as well. We must be aware of this at all times and look at every activity in our lives from the standpoint of our practice. There is a famous saying: "Life is the dojo (school)."

When we simply concentrate on the techniques themselves, we give them values and judgements. They become tools for conceptualization and, knowingly or unknowingly, we manipulate or interpret them for our own convenience. This is human nature, we can't help it. This is what makes it so difficult. I remember a long time ago a prospective student approached me and said: "I have read several books on Aikido and understand the theory quite well, I just need to know a few techniques to go along with it." I said: "You have no business here!"

We are after truths, not confirmation of our own delusions. Or, at least, this should be our real goal. I don't know if these are universal or divine truths we discover in our training. I do know that they don't solve your problems and they don't solve the problems of the world. Nothing gets worse and nothing gets better. It is only that we become or express more of our true selves. And, expressing our true self is the essence of Aikido technique.

Continued.

USAF Membership

Our annual membership dues for individuals is due. Please fill out the United States Aikido Federation membership form and return it with \$10.00 to Mr. Ken Watanabe or one of the other black belts. This is optional but members with rank should become a member. Those who achieve black belt status are required to be a member of this organization and the Aikido World Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan.

We need to send in the fees immediately. We request your prompt cooperation and attention in this matter. Thank you.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

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Master Hsu continued:

for his troops but also enlarged its size and added Chinese sabre techniques to its usage. Later on this type of sabre - its shape looks like a grain leaf - was named Miao Dao. As it was passed down, each generation polished and improved its technique. It was used in battle as recently as the Sino-Japanese war and is presently practiced in Northern China.

About half of the workshop participants had samurai sword training but all of them practiced the Miao Dao form, technique, and even usage. Besides the Chen Tai Ji and Miao Dao we even found some time to practice the Ba Shi - Eight Postures Fundamental Training.

I have great admiration for Sensei Furuya's students. They are the real winners because their level of ability made it possible for me to share so much of the Chinese martial arts with them. But we shouldn't forget that one's underlying basic attitude is even more important than physical ability. I could easily see that due to my friend Kensho Furuya's influence, all his students were open-minded, humble, curious and eager to learn. It is my belief that these traits extend beyond my workshop or the martial arts and are the basis for mature, progressive, responsible, cultured citizens.

As we all know, in modern times self-defense is only a small part of martial arts training. Much more important than training a fearless fighter is training a better person who will contribute to others and be open to further self-improvement. Based on this, may I congratulate Sensei Furuya and all his students for their hard work and fine accomplishments along this path.

Adam Hsu

Afternote: Master Hsu's words are much too kind and generous. Recently, on April 30, 1992, Master Hsu published his first English language, quarterly Newsletter, The Celebrated Mountains Spring Breeze. Congratulations! The editor, Ms. Marie Anthony, was my guide and host last year when I visited Master Hsu in San Francisco and she has a long time wish to come with Master Hsu to one of our seminars. It was through her request that I republish Master Hsu's article on the first seminar. We hope Ms. Anthony will be a guest of our dojo in the very near future.

Master Hsu's Welcome Party

Everyone is invited to Master Hsu's Welcome Party on Sunday which will be held at the Empress Pavilion in Chinatown. Please refer to the Seminar Schedule. It will be about \$15.00 per person.

We will also be welcoming two other guests to the dojo who are coming from Japan to meet with Master Hsu and study under him at our seminar. They are master sword polisher and Tai Ji Quan expert, Karita Naoji Sensei and Mr. Luka Ozeki, who will accompany Master Hsu back to the Bay area and begin formal study under him. We promise to have a very exciting and busy seminar with Master Hsu this year.

Important Reminders

July 18th & 19th is the Zenshuji Obon Carnival. We will be demonstrating and also Sensei needs many volunteers to help during the weekend.

August 1st through the 9th is Nisei Week. Hataya Sensei and about 15 members of the Batto-do group will be coming again this year.

During the busy summer months, please try to keep up your training. Thank you.

Dojo T-Shirts

Our new dojo T-shirts will be ready around the beginning of July. They are real nice so please be sure to save a little money. The back of the shirts will have O-Sensei's wonderful calligraphy, *Agatsu*, which means, "Victory over one's self." This comes from O-Sensei's teaching, *Masa-katsu, agatsu*, or "The true victory is the victory over one's self." The front left area of the shirt will have original artwork by one of our dojo artists, Abel Perez, 1st Kyu. The shirts will sell for about \$12.00 each and monies will be used as a fund raiser for the dojo.

We are ordering one dozen Medium, 5 dozen Large and 5 dozen Extra Large. Don't miss out, order them early.

ABOUT MASTER HSU

Editor's Note: The following article was written three years ago by Master Hsu on the occasion of his very first seminar at our dojo. It is reprinted here for your enjoyment.

Eleven years ago, shortly after I first arrived in this country, I was invited to a performance where, for the first time, I met Aikido sensei Daniel Furuya. Many first-rated Asian martial artists who lived in the U. S. were there. Most of them knew each other, some quite well. But I was new. Aside from the Chinese kung fu sifus, I didn't find very many familiar faces.

I sat in the front row waiting for the event to start. Next to me was a Mr. Furuya. No one formally introduced us so we politely nodded and chatted, not realizing that this was the beginning of an eleven-year-long friendship.

After I stomped on stage (performed by Ba Ji Chuan) my dear neighbor, Daniel, expressing surprise and pleasure, was highly complimentary. To tell the truth, I wasn't really moved by this nice treatment. I thought he was just being polite.

Afterwards, due to his persistence, I finally agreed to appear in my first cover story on Inside Kung Fu. Though he was a senior staff member of the magazine and thus it was a part of his job, I began to realize that between us we shared many similarities of attitudes to the martial arts, philosophy, and temperament. In fact, we had much in common beyond the superficialities of our mutual interests.

Through our years of contact Daniel gave me much encouragement. And the biggest was certainly when he left the magazine and started to build his own dojo. He hired a traditional Japanese carpenter to design it, studied with him, and then worked with him in building it. If you can tell a person by the way he dresses, I would like to say you can tell a master from his school. To my knowledge, the Aikido Center is the neatest, most enjoyable, and most truly traditional dojo I have seen outside of Japan.

Daniel always said I could use his dojo for workshops, training and practice. He also tried to get me to give a workshop for his own beloved students. He told me students can only learn Aikido and Kendo from him. Even Aikido and Kendo have many

different styles. If you always follow one master, you can become narrow-minded. So he invited other Aikido sensei to teach his students. Certainly inviting me to share Chinese martial arts is another giant step ahead. Many people would find this unacceptable. I truly admire his vision and courage in building his dojo and guiding his students.

When checking our schedule to set up a workshop date, we got so excited we decided not to wait until next year. So on November 11 and 12, (1989) Veteran's Day weekend, I found myself sitting in Little Tokyo (Los Angeles Japantown). And this time the same old friend sitting beside me was not only Aikido Sensei Daniel Furuya but also Zen Buddhist Priest Kensho Furuya!

None of us got a long weekend off but rather worked as hard as soldiers in battle before a retreat. According to my agreement with their sensei, I shared Tai Ji Quan, the Grain Leaf Sabre, general ideas about the kung fu way to fight, and even discussed my research trip to China with the students. Some of them had already read the English version of this trip in Black Belt and the Japanese version in Wu Shu Magazine.

Sensei Furuya and I decided that the amount and depth of teaching would depend on their learning abilities, interest and attitude. Though I had confidence in them, I was still surprised that they could sustain such a high level of concentration through the long hours of work and fatigue.

I shared with them some of the original Chen Style Tai Ji Quan which is still practiced by the older generation in Chen Village - the birthplace of Tai Ji Quan. Then we used Tai Ji as an example to explore the real usage of Chinese kung fu and see how it differs from other Asian martial arts - and even from kung fu movies!

The Grain Leaf Sabre has participated in the history of cultural exchange between China and Japan. Briefly, this sabre was brought back by the Chien Tang Shi (scholar monks sent by Japan to the Tang Dynasty, 618 A. D. - 90 A. D.). In the Ming Dynasty (1368 A. D. - 1644 A. D.), Japanese pirates attacked and defeated Chinese troops and their most powerful weapon was this sabre, already called the samurai sword. This shock motivated Chinese martial artists to study Japanese sabre techniques. The famous General Chi Ji Guang, whose soldiers finally defeated the pirates from the sea, so admired the enemy's sabre technique that he not only adopted the weapon

Dojo Supplies

It is getting difficult to get in uniforms from our supplier and there is usually a long wait. If you think you need a uniform now or in the future, please order early.

Uniforms are regularly priced at \$45.00. These are the lighter single weave uniform which are very popular in this country. A double weave uniform is always available from supplier. These are much thicker than the normal single weave uniform we use but it is much sturdier and lasts much longer. These are available for \$60.00 each. The double weave uniform is popular in Japan and at Hombu Dojo.

We also have a supply of bokken or wooden swords in. These are also difficult to get from our supplier. In addition the price has gone up. They are \$26.00 each now. Please purchase your bokken while we have a supply.

We still have a few bokken bags in stock. These are made in Japan in padded cloth with a brown striped design for one bokken. These are \$25.00 each. We still have a few larger bags in a blue design which hold several bokken or one mounted sword. These are \$30.00 each. There are only a few bags available.

Mogi-to or the practice sword for Iaido is still available at \$450.00 each but this price will be going up (like everything else in Japan) soon. If you are thinking about practicing Iaido now or in the future, please save your money and get one as soon as possible. They are ordered in blade lengths of 27" to 29 1/2" in length. The scabbard is in black lacquer and the handle is tied in black silk thread. We suspect the price will be going up to over \$500.00 by year end. At present, this particular Iaido sword retails in Japan for \$800.00.

Our Best Wishes

We have been printing an ad for Shawn Pak's chiropractic office in recent months to help him out in his new location on Santa Monica and Western Blvds. Very regrettably, his office was destroyed in the recent riots. Our best wishes and encouragement go to him to start up again. He is Sensei's personal chiropractor and very skillful. Please see him for your needs.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

Wedding Bells in the Dojo

Congratulations to Monica Alvarez and Victor Rodriguez who will be joined in matrimony in mid-August of this year.

We wish you many years of happiness and good health. Please make many new members for the dojo.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Black belts who have been promoted recently must turn in the paperwork ASAP for processing.

We need more black belts to attend the regular training classes and assist our new students.

MORNING CLASSES are now on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 7:00am to 8:00am. The dojo is open from 6:30am for individual training. Everyone is welcome.

MANY THANKS to Mark Moore for fixing up the front of the dojo with a new facade. It looks very beautiful. The design is after many old traditional residences in Kyoto, Japan.

On the fourth Friday of every month, the dojo will be having a get-together like dinner or something after the first class. Please see Mitsuko Yoshimoto for details. Let's all join in the fun!

Sensei recently lectured to young students at Montebello High School in Montebello. He also did the benediction at the Memorial Service for veterans on May 25th at Evergreen Cemetary.

The MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING (MA Training) magazine will be coming out soon. Sensei's Ancient Ways column is entitled: "The Trouble with Training." Please don't miss it.

THANKS to David Ito who took Kuma and Michiko to the vets for their annual shots and a good bath! They have never been so clean before! Sensei didn't recognize his own dogs.

MASTER ADAM HSU VISITS OUR DOJO AGAIN

Master Adam Hsu from Oakland, California, will be making his third trip to our dojo on June 20th and 21st and will be conducting a seminar on including Chen style tai-chi and Shing-yi. This will be one of his most interesting and informative seminars so please do not miss it.

This is a very rare opportunity to learn from a true master. Sensei has known Master Hsu since his arrival to the U. S. about fifteen years ago. Sensei's considers Master Hsu to be the most outstanding martial artist in the entire United States and for that reason invites him to our dojo every year.

MASTER HSU TRADITIONAL CHINESE MARTIAL ARTS SEMINAR June 20th - June 21st

SATURDAY, JUNE 20TH

9:30am - 12:00 noon

1:30pm - 4:30pm

SUNDAY, JUNE 21st

9:00am - 12:00 noon

12:30pm - 2:00pm

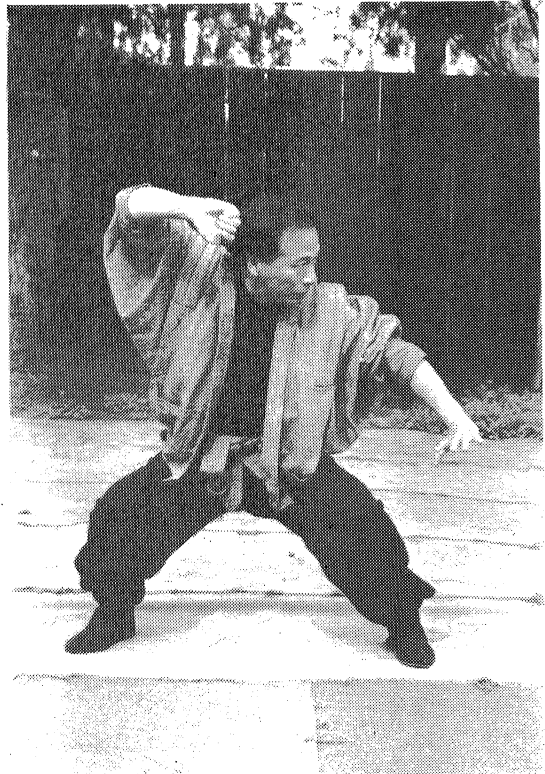
Welcome Luncheon At Empress' Pavilion
Chinatown

2:30pm - 4:30pm

Dojo Members: \$45.00

Non-members: \$75.00

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. Please sign up early.



Master Adam Hsu
Master Hsu will conducting a seminar at the dojo on
June 20th & 21st. Everyone is welcome.



Sensei visiting the Great Buddha in Kamakura.
April, 1992