



# AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

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## Yasuo Kobayashi, 8th Dan, From Japan Visits the ACLA

### A 22 Year Reunion for Kobayashi Sensei and Furuya Sensei

Yasuo Kobayashi Sensei from the Aikido Hombu Dojo in Shinjuku, Tokyo, and his own Aikido Kobayashi Dojo in Kodaira, toured the United States from February 13th through the 25th. On February 20, he visited our dojo and taught a special evening seminar. The first class was attended by 40 members and the second class was attended by 41 members. He was very well received and the seminar was a big success. Kobayashi Sensei was attended by several of his students, Igarashi Sensei, 6th Dan, and Mr. Saito and his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Saito were on their honeymoon. Furuya Sensei was presented with a special "Friendship" plaque at the end of the seminar.

Kobayashi Sensei originally planned to bring 27 students from the Meiji University Aikido Club, however, this was cancelled due to the Gulf War.

For Furuya Sensei, this was a special occasion. It was his first time to meet Kobayashi in 22 years since his training at Hombu Dojo.

Kobayashi Sensei will be coming to the dojo again in the future. He will also be sending instructors from Japan to teach at the dojo. We look forward to his next visit.

### Our Condolences to Yamada Sensei on the Passing of His Mother

We would like to express our deepest sympathies to Yoshimitsu Yamada Sensei, 7th Dan, of the New York Aikikai and his family on the recent passing of his mother in Japan.

#### ACLA Newsletter

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**February 26th & 27th.** Mitsuo Hataya Sensei from Japan. Practice for the Battodo Los Angeles Shibu.

**March 4th.** Battodo Practice for the Los Angeles Shibu.

**April 26th.** O-Sensei's Memorial Service. 7:00pm. Conducted by the priests of the Zenshuji Soto Mission. Everyone is invited.

**April 27th.** Seminar with John Stevens Sensei from Sendai, Japan. He is the author of many books on Aikido.

**May 11th-12th.** Weenkend Seminar with Seiichi Sugano Sensei, 7th Dan, New York Aikikai.

**August 11th.** Nisei Week Aikido & Martial Arts Demonstration at the Japan America Theatre.

### From "The Zen Teachings of Homeless Kodo:"

#### Our Inertial Lives

Sawaki Roshi: A strange creature, the human being; groping in the dark with an intelligent look.

Human beings strive only to avoid boredom.

A lot of things in this world attract you. But once you do, or get them, they're worthless.

Uchiyama Roshi: If I broach the subject of the essence of your life, you might feel as if some old, moldy clothes were being given to you. But when we reflect deeply on the essence of our own lives, we will realize this is not an old, moldy subject, but that our lives as we live them are. Why? Because we get up through inertia, eat breakfast through inertia, encounter our acquaintances through inertia, watch television through inertia, read magazines through inertia, and go to work through inertia. We spend most of our time in this way.

How do we find our live worth living at all? We are always running after one thing or another so that we won't have to consider this question. When we play *ma-jong*, we find the significance of life in winning a game. When we go to a department store, we find the

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significance of life in shopping. If we can't afford to buy things, we find the significance of life in imagining that we could. When we watch baseball, we find the significance of life in hoping our favorite athletes will win. These activities are merely diversions. No matter how clamorous the times in which we live, we should sincerely reflect on the meaning of life.

**Sensei's Commentary:** In many years of teaching Aikido, there are two things which I notice about human beings including myself especially. We always want what we don't have. And, we go to a lot of trouble to waste valuable time that we should be using to do the things that we are suppose to do with that time.

In one particular project at the Temple, I was worried about whether we could really accomplish it without too much time, energy, and manpower. Everyone seemed to be confused about the matter and there were too, too many "chefs in the kitchen." I went to the Bishop and asked his advise. He said, "Don't worry. Over half of what we do is just a waste of time and worthless anyways!

I was quite surprised at his statement but when I began to think about it more, I realized how true it was. We do spend a great deal of time and energy just fooling ourselves. I think when we reach a point in our lives when we stop fooling ourselves, most of the time, we have come a long way along.

The Bishop didn't mean "to give up" and just not care about anything anymore. I think he meant that we give too much importance to what we do ourselves and it is, for the most part, just a self-delusion. In reality, we are not that important! At the same time, we worry too much about what other people are doing. And, between the two, we have no time to see what is really going on or what we really need to do.

The Bishop always uses this example as well. To stir the coffee to mix the milk and sugar we need a spoon. But once the coffee is stirred, the spoon which is useful, now becomes a nuisance to drinking the coffee. That is why we remove the spoon from the cup. Most of us, stir the coffee too much and always forget to remove the spoon in our lives. Most of the obstacles we run across in our lives, do not come from "other" people, they are all created by ourselves alone. Aikido is not to defeat others, it is to understand how we are useful and how

we are a nuisance to ourselves and others.

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I hate to answer the telephone. When I hear the questions some people ask me about Aikido or martial arts or what they are looking for, I am frightened. When I think where their minds are or where they are coming from, I am more frightened.

A while ago, someone called me up and said, "I am only 5' 7" and weigh only 150 pounds, I want to learn Aikido so I can beat up those bigger people in the bars. Of course, he wants to know if Aikido is effective or not as a martial art. But, I felt like asking, "What do you have against big people?" Or, "Why must you discriminate against bigger people?" Or, "Why do you have to pick on them? What did they do to you?"

However, I replied, "I teach Aikido but I don't teach people how to fight in bars. For that, go somewhere else." He didn't understand my answer and asked, "Is Aikido effective against an opponent?"

I said, "Aikido is effective against the opponent but first you must understand what or who the opponent really is." "What do you mean?" he asked. I said, "I don't think your enemy are people bigger than you in the bars, your worst opponent is in your own head." He said, "Do you have free weights?" I said, "no," and he hung up.

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Before, when we examine a Japanese sword, it is customary not to make any remark whether it is very good or bad. We already know by studying it whether it is good or not, so nothing need be said. Nowadays, we talk about swords too much. I notice when a sword is very good, no one says anything because everyone can see for himself that the sword can stand on its own merit. When the sword is not very good, we have to talk about it a lot to cover up the fact that it is not very good. Nowadays, we try to cover up everything by talk. Usually, when people start talking too much, I get suspicious. Like a bad sword, he is trying to cover something up. We should stop talking so much and try to stand up on our own merits where nothing need be said. If we keep trying to stand up on our own merits, we will find, after patience and effort, that we have many merits to stand on. This is part of the meaning of daily practice in Aikido. One day of Aikido practice is one day's merit. 30 minutes of Aikido practice is 30 minutes of merit. 10 minutes of Aikido practice is 10 minutes of merit.

Kensho Furuya

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## **TRAINING SCHEDULE**

### **Open Class**

Monday thru Fridays  
5:00pm - 6:15pm (Free Practice)  
6:15pm - 7:15pm

Mondays-Wednesdays-Fridays  
7:30pm - 8:30pm

Saturdays & Sundays  
10:15am - 11:30am

### **Intermediate: 4th Kyu & Above**

Thursdays  
7:30pm - 8:30pm

### **Advanced: 3rd Kyu & Above**

Tuesdays  
7:30pm - 8:30pm

Saturdays  
12:00pm - 1:00pm

### **Children's Class**

Sundays  
8:00am - 9:00am

## **Muso Shinden Ryu Iaido & Tameshigiri**

Tuesdays  
8:45pm - 9:45pm

Saturdays (Iaido)  
8:30am - 9:30pm

Sundays  
9:15am - 10:15am

## **Schedule Changes**

Please note schedule changes. Iaido has been switched from Wednesday evenings to Tuesday evenings to give Aikido students more opportunities to practice after the second class on Wednesday.

The dojo is open from 5:00pm now, not 5:30pm, to give students more time for free and individual practice.

Please maintain a regular training schedule. If you are going to be away for any length of time, please notify the instructos.

Please try to maintain dues payments at the beginning of the month.

## **Japanese Language Classes**

We will be starting a Japanese language class in the dojo. We are still determining the best time to schedule it. This class will emphasize conversational Japanese. Everyone is welcome to attend, a small monthly fee will be charged for the class. Please see sign up sheet on the bulletin board.

**For the best car wash in town, go to Kaz Nishida's Great Western Car Wash on the corner of Sepulveda and Venice Blvds. in WLA.**

For small ads in the newsletter, please see Douglas Firestone.