

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

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

The Aiki Dojo

Affiliation: The Aikido World Headquarters, 17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Los Angeles Sword & Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai Headquarters
Office of the President: Nanka Yamanashi Kenjin Kai Southern California Yamanashi Prefectural Assoc.
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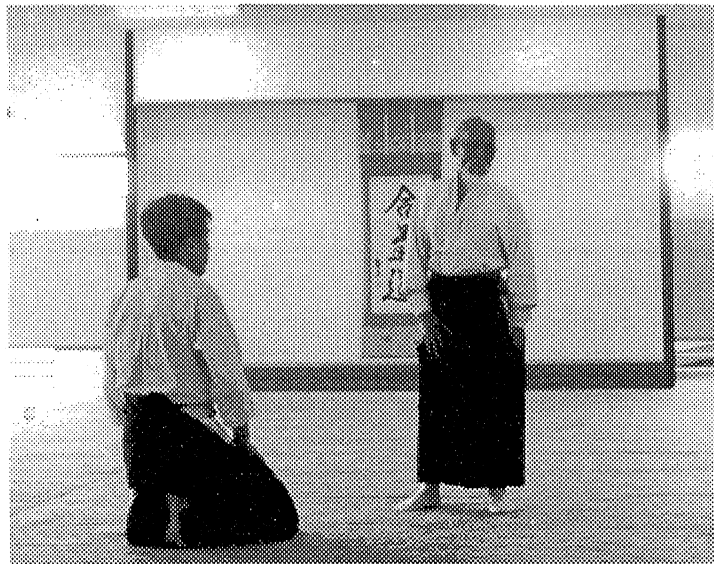
\$2.95
Donation

March 1, 2001

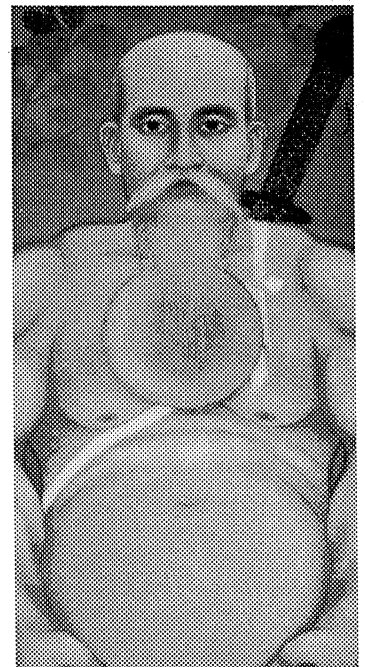
Volume XIX. Volume 3.

Aikido Kaiso 33rd Memorial Service & Masatake Fujita Seminar May 5-6th.

Our Dojo will conduct the 33rd Anniversary Memorial Service for O'Sensei on May 6th and, in honor of the occasion, we will host Masatake Fujita Sensei, 8th Dan, from Hombu Dojo, Tokyo, Japan, on May 5-6th. We welcome Fujita Sensei to our Dojo in observance of this important & solemn day.



Fujita Masatake Sensei taking ukemi for O'Sensei at Hombu Dojo. 1969.

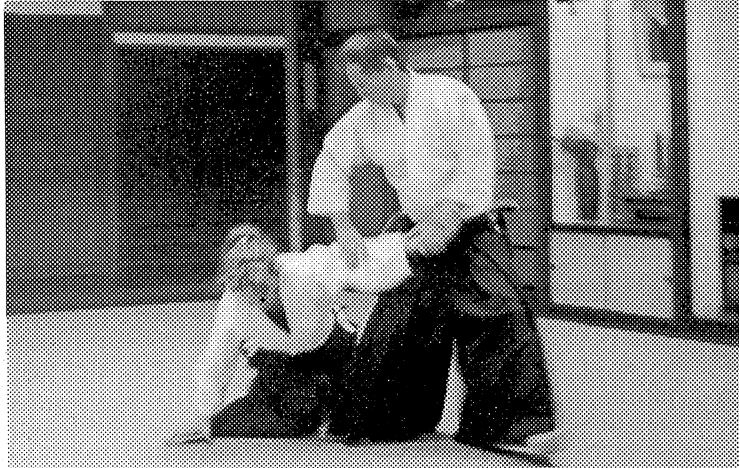


O'Sensei conducting 6:30am morning class at Hombu Dojo. Front center, Mr. Sonoda, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time.

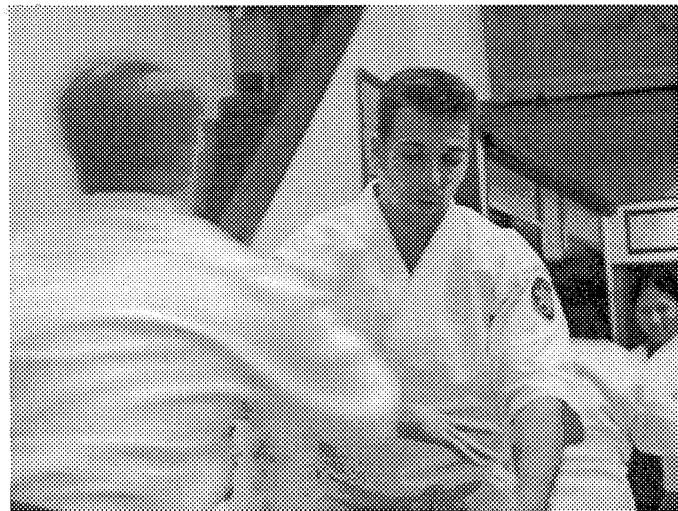


During one of O'Sensei's last demonstrations. Fujita Sensei.

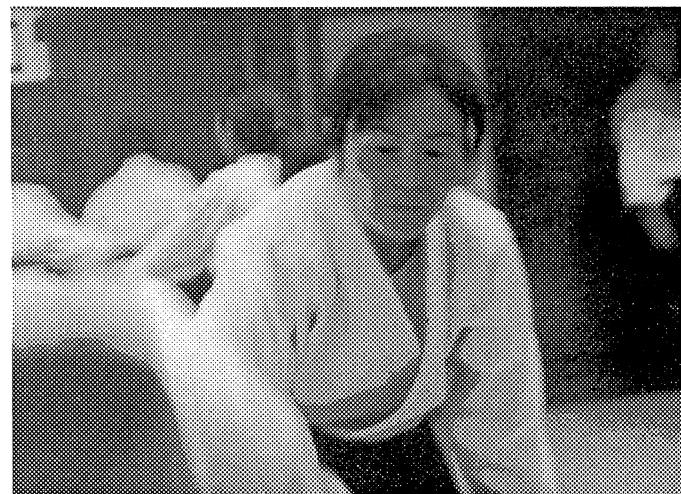
Joint Practice With James Nakayama Sensei, 5th Dan. Jan. 27.



James Nakayama, 5th Dan, of the Chushinkan Dojo in Buena Park, Ca.



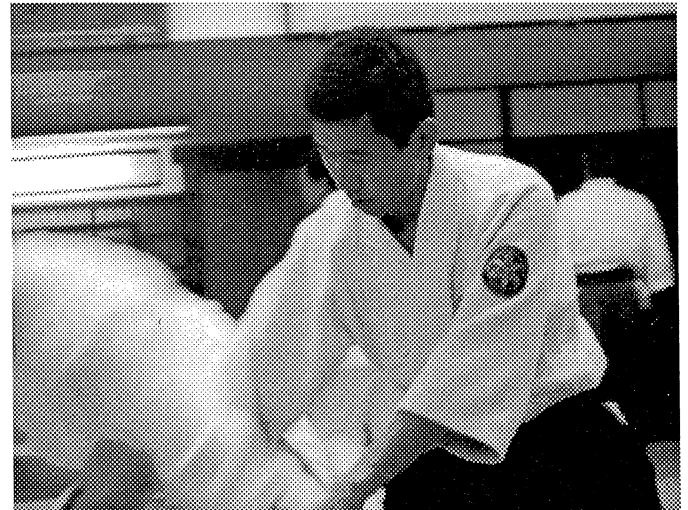
Nic Nolic practicing with Chushinkan member.



Lisa Ito practicing hard as usual.



On a beautiful Sunday morning, we started off our New Year with a Special Joint Practice with James Nakayama Sensei of the Chushinkan Dojo in Orange County. Nakayama Sensei always helps out with our annual Higashi Obon Martial Arts Festival in July and has been a good friend of the Dojo for many years. Everyone enjoyed his class and practicing with members of his dojo. Afterwards, we all enjoyed a dim-sum luncheon in Chinatown.



James Doi, 4th Dan.

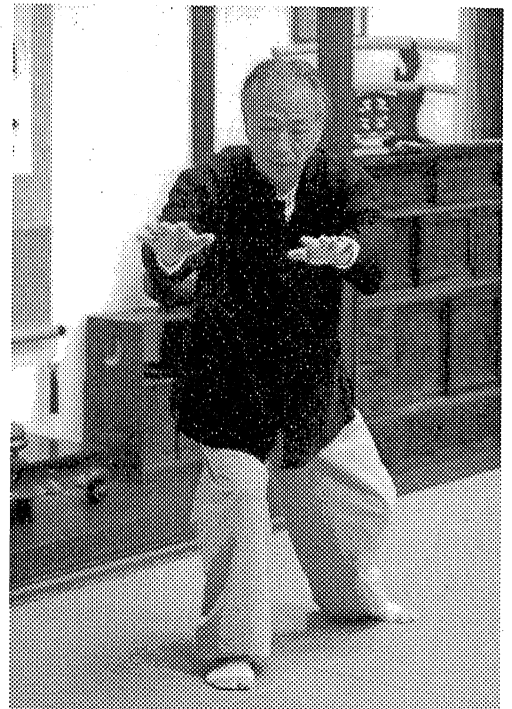


Nakayama Sensei conducting our first Joint Practice of the year.

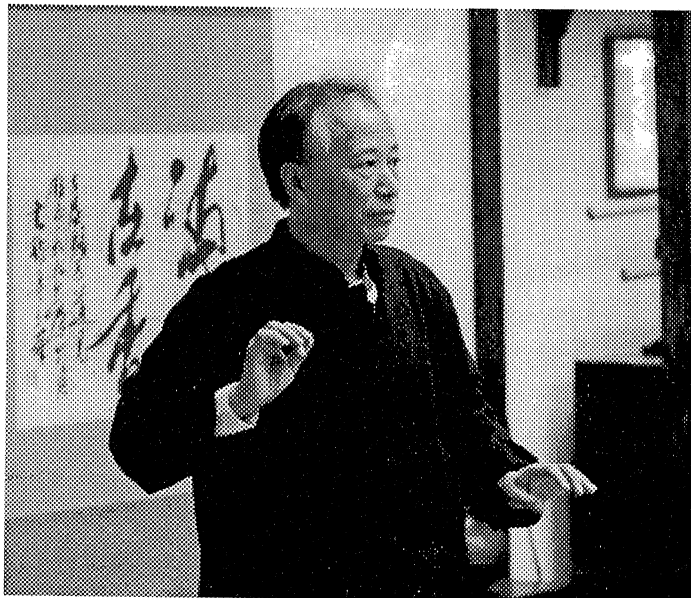
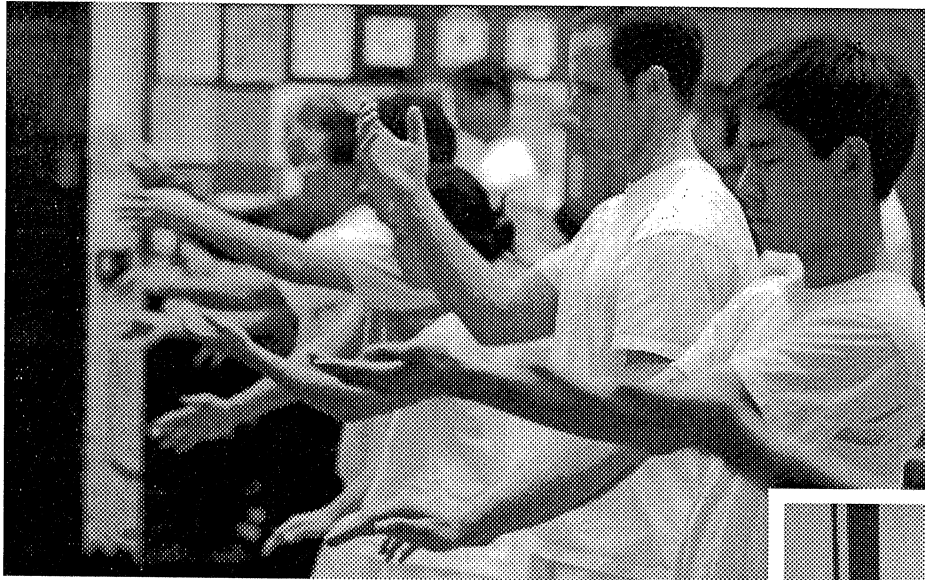
Master Adam Hsu Seminar From Taipei, Taiwan. Feb. 18.



Master Hsu and Sensei are old friends from 1978. Members of the seminar.



About 26 students attended Master Adam Hsu's Seminar on Sunday with about 6 outside participants from the Kung fu and Taiji community. Master Hsu continued his theme from his last seminar on Internal Kung fu and Chen Style Taiji. Master Hsu arrived on Feb. 13, and stayed through Feb. 20. He spends the rest of his tour in the Bay Area before returning to Taipei, Taiwan on March 5th. This is his 12 seminar in our Dojo. We will welcome him again on his scheduled trip in August. Many thanks to Master Hsu!



Memorial Service for Kenko Yamashita Roshi. Feb. 17.



We observed the late Kenko Yamashita Roshi's Memorial Service on Feb. 17, conducted by Rev. Shumyo Kojima and attended this year by the Bishop's daughters, Hiromi and Reiko Yamashita. It is a very quiet and nostalgic moment for Sensei who remembers his teacher very fondly. A few of Sensei's students also attended the service.

With Deepest Gratitude To Master Adam Hsu

On the occasion of his most recent seminar, Master Adam Hsu, upon his departure from Los Angeles, made a most generous and kind donation of \$500.00 to the Dojo. This is quite rare and extraordinary but Master Hsu is a very rare and extraordinary person. We really appreciate his kindness and guidance as well as his wonderful instruction, friendship and support. Many, many thanks and best wishes always to Master Adam Hsu.

Special Year End Practice In Salamanca, Spain

Santiago Garcia Almaraz

The last December the 22th., we had the Shugyo, our special practice into the river to purify ourselves. This year is our 3rd Shugyo. Like other years, the practice is into the river of our city and this time the temperature of the water is about 2°C.

We started at 5:30 A.M. with a little Aikido practice in the Dojo. We began for basic Aikido principles for an hour, and then we took up our bokken and jo and went to the river, two or three kilometers outside the city.

Close the margin of the river, there was a good place for the practice some movements of Aikido and some bokken and jo techniques. Then, we continued into the river (the hardest part) where we practiced some breathing exercises and suburi with the bokken.

With the sunrise, we returned to the Dojo for finish the exercise. There, we practice some meditation. (before this, we had a great breakfast, hot and big breakfast to recover forces). I want to acknowledge the people who participated in the practice for their efforts like year out, and I wish to everybody that they have a good practice for this year 2001, and I hope that the Shugyo purify their practice, and I want to animate students for the next year. Thank you very much.

Sensei's Message:

Regarding Bokken Training:

Email sent to all students on 02-08-01.

Students: Since we started the Friday Bokken Class we have had much interest and this is very good. However, I also see some misinterpretations arising and I would like to discuss these with you so that you understand a little more about this kind of training.

I have started this class before on several occasions but these classes have usually ended with lack of participation because most students find that bokken training is not what they imagined it to be. First of all, I should say that it is hard and difficult and because it is such a dangerous weapon, it takes a great deal of commitment to understand its complexities. It requires a great deal of patience and perseverance. Swordsmanship was the most cherished art of the samurai warriors for over 800 years. Throughout many generations of great masters, it has been refined to a highly sophisticated art so you must appreciate that it is not a game or leisure sport.

Bokken training is a part of Aikido training, not separate from it. Doing bokken without adequate practice hours in Aikido is a big mistake and will only bring you to disappointment. Secondly, because we are using a weapon, the etiquette and safety measures are much more strict than during regular practice. Violations of safety rules can easily lead to a request to leave the mat.

Because we are using a weapon and trying to understand it as a martial art, at the same time, trying to make it a safe art for you to practice, it necessarily requires you to be very much aware, on-the-ball, and right in the moment. One slip and there could be a bad accident. You must participate with your whole mind and body - without this commitment, we are wasting each other's time and energy.

Finally, you must attend regularly. Some of you are busy or have many commitments and cannot make bokken class regularly - this only means that you don't belong in this class because you don't have the time. This is part of the commitment. Something has to be sacrificed. This sounds harsh but this has been the cause of the discontinuation of previous classes. Everyone started to miss, and many fell behind or couldn't keep up, etc, etc. and pretty soon, it was not feasible for the class to continue. you must commitment yourselves and stay together and progress together. If you are too busy, then you need to wait until your class opens up. Just like myself, I am dying to continue my calligraphy class but I am so busy that I cannot attend regularly. So I have to make sacrifices to keep my priorities. Please do not look at martial arts like exercises programs you see advertised on television. I don't know what other schools teach, but here, I want to approach martial arts as a "fine art." I see no difference from learning Aikido, Iaido or sword than from learning the violin, cutting diamonds or finding a cure for cancer. Learn to enjoy the Dojo as a great opportunity for learning and study and try to merge into a great and long tradition.

Looking Past My Nose

Gary Myers, Kenshinkai Iaido 5th Dan

This past month Sensei has given me the opportunity to observe and teach without practicing due to my recent surgery. While I miss practicing more than you can imagine, it has been an excellent teaching experience for me because 100% of my focus has been on your movements and techniques rather than mine. I wanted to write down some of my observations while they were still fresh in my mind. (These days they don't stay fresh for long.) Here are a few observations which may be helpful in training.

Feel and Real are Different

Many believe that they are doing the techniques right only to be constantly corrected. What is happening is that you feel and think your body is moving correctly when in reality it is not. In some cases its ego (I feel it, s right how could I be wrong!!) and in others you have not yet sensitized your mind and body to communicate with each other. There should be more sensitivity and communication in your body, s movement and your mind. You have to recognize the feeling when you are corrected and try to replicate it. Let's take for example dropping the sword tip in suburi, (which is one I'm trying to correct as well). You cannot see the tip in back of you, but you can feel your wrists hinge or the left hand go above the right on the top of your head. Those movements impact the sword tip. You have to be sensitive to your body's movement at all times. Use all your senses to reinforce the correct movement. Not only sight also hearing should aid you in doing the proper technique. Is there a swoosh sound when you cut, where do you hear it? Is it at the target or beyond? These are things you have to be aware of.

Doing 90 in the Slow Lane, Doing 25 in the Fast Lane

There seems to be an overall feeling of rushing through the techniques rather than letting each element have its own timing and rhythm which leads into the next movement. Part of the problem is that most are going too fast right from the beginning, almost all of us go too fast. Unfortunately this speed only increases and we end up truncating the full movements. The feeling should be that you feel the power build and then released at the proper moment. Most of us look like all the power is expended just to get up then the movement looks weak when power is needed the most. We also seem to go faster when we should be going slower and vice versa.

Too Tense from the Waist Up, Too Weak from the Waist Down

It is almost second nature that we feel that power is a contraction of muscles and in some cases it is. But a problem that many students have is that you become too tense in the upper body and shoulders. Rather than increasing power you are diminishing it by restricting your movement and not allowing the power to flow to the monouchi, the last six inches of the sword. Also in noto practice, there is a tendency to raise the left shoulder and bow the left wrist out, further restricting the left hand and arm in saya-biki. The place to put tension is into your center and keep your upper body relaxed as possible.

Mr. Roboto

This topic applies to the more senior students. It's natural to compartmentalize the movements as you begin to learn them. But as your iaido becomes better you have to learn how each movement blends into the next and make those transitions as smooth and as powerful as possible. When we first learn each movement we tend to approach it as a separate act, with a beginning, middle and end. That's OK in the



Gary Myers has been in Iaido under Sensei for about 14 years.

beginning as you first learn but what happens is that the movement looks too robotic and too jerky. It also gives you too much opportunity to let the sword die. What you should strive for is a movement which flows into the next, building the power

Posture

Essential to good technique and power is good posture. Most people start with good posture only to have it breakdown during the course of the technique. The spine should stay as straight as possible throughout the technique. There are two major contributors to bad posture, the head, neck and spine are not in a straight line, and you press the hips forward too much. Don't tilt your head forward too much, tuck the chin in and you will maintain a straight spine.

Imagination

Please understand that this doesn't mean we're not creative in coming up with new incorrect movements. What is meant is that there has to be an imaginary opponent. Your reaction, timing, spacing, and position of your sword is a reflection of your opponent. Of course, imaginations can sometimes have negative effects. What you don't want to do is fall into your own imaginary world that takes you beyond the here and now. Which leads to the next topic...

Purpose

Iaido is a martial art yet some students, movements look as if there is no purpose to them. As stated in the prior topic, if you don't imagine an opponent's movements, you can fall into doing a sword dance. You are moving to some prescribed arrangement with a sword in your hands, but there's no sense or feeling that you are preserving your life with your sword. Even as we bow in and out, there should be a sense of an alert mind ready for the possibility of an attack. Your eyes have to be seeing peripherally as you bow they should not be looking straight down. Your eyes have to be focused on the target as you move.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles
NEWSLETTER

Continued:

Respect for the Sword

We all have to increase our sense of respect toward the sword. Even though most of the swords are mogito we have to treat all swords (including bokken) as a live blades with real edges. It is up to each of us not only to put life and power into our swords it is necessary to control that power and respect it. Don't rattle your swords in the saya. Be careful how you move the sword bowing in and out. Be aware of how you are holding the sword at all times and where you walk if swords are on the mats. These are points of etiquette that should be second nature to most of us by now.

Concentration

A technique's interval of time averages about 15 to 30 seconds (depending on the technique) which seems like a very short space of time. Yet in those short spaces the lapses of concentration are too numerous to count. It is too easy to have your mind wander, or worse, blank out as you are doing the technique and lose your concentration. Not only does your mind wander your body does as well. One way of preventing this wandering is self-talk. Everyone talks about a "mind's eye" to visualize what you are doing, but you also have to develop a mind's ear. It is important to always talk to oneself as the technique is being done. Repeat to yourself what has been taught to you by Sensei all through the technique's duration. When corrected that should be the first thing to tell yourself to do. Even after you successfully grasped the correct movement you should still talk to yourself about your movement and its relationship to your opponent.

Don't be Starved for Attention, Strive for Sensei's Inattention,

Of course this topic is mistitled because Sensei pays attention to all of our progress in iaido. What is meant is that you should strive to be corrected only once per problem. Once corrected you should never to be corrected for that particular fault again. Iaido is not a place to be an "attention junkie."

Don't let your Ego Block your Training, Trust your teacher

Last but not least, you have to open your mind to learn. If you are making the same mistakes over and over again, you have to ask yourself why. What is preventing me from grasping the correct technique? Remember that besides the imaginary opponent there is a very real opponent to learning which is your ego. It's my personal opinion that inherent in the people drawn to iaido is a trait of contrarianism and noncompliance which you have to overcome. You also have to let go of preconceived ideas. The "I know better because I read a book and it says you should do it this way" syndrome only hinders your learning. There was a nineteenth century German philosopher who proposed that we all have an "apperceptive mass" which is the accumulation of our experiences to date. That's why it's recommended that you should approach iaido with a "child's mind" unincumbered by your own misconceptions and misinterpretations. Your own apperceptive mass is blocking your way. You have to trust Sensei's teaching and guidance and make it your own. You are not giving up your personality, or your mind or your sense of self. You are allowing the proper movement to come into your training.

Much of these observations you have heard before in one form or another; and not all of them apply to any one individual. When I look at these observations many of them deal with concentration, a sense of being focused in the moment, being alert, and having a positive, willing attitude to learn. Hopefully in these observations we can elevate the level of our iaido. Gary Myers, 5th Dan.

Special 2001 Seminar
Masatake Fujita
Shihan, 8th Dan
From Hombu Dojo

May 5, 2001
10:00-11:00am Open
11:15-12:15pm Open
2:30-3:30pm Advanced
2nd Kyu & Black Belts

May 6, 2001
9:00-10:00am Open
10:15-11:15am Open
11:30-12:30pm
O'Sensei's Memorial
Service
2:30-3:30pm Advanced
2nd Kyu & Black Belts

Please sign-up early.
\$95.00 per person. (After April 28: \$125.00)

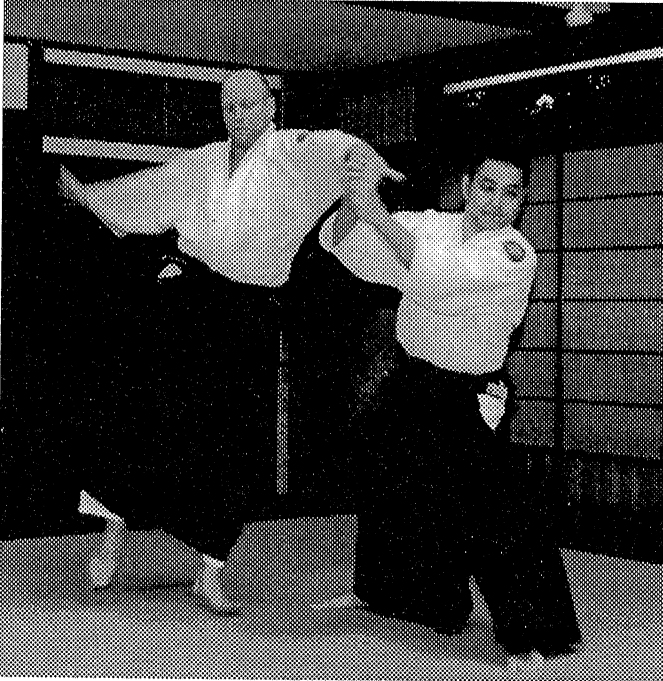
Everyone Welcome!

Aikido & Iaido
Demonstration

Pasadena City College
Asian Cultural Night
March 21, 2001, 7:00pm

Correctly Dealing With Criticism

Kenneth M. Furuya, 4th Dan



Early on in my Aikido and Iaido training, I was corrected, criticized, counseled, and scolded many a times from not just Furuya Sensei; but, also from the senior black belts. The criticism didn't stop when I received my black belt either. Actually, it seemed to get worse. I could not understand why people would not just leave me alone. "Wasn't my progress faster than anyone else, anyway?" I would ask myself. I remember Sensei telling me on many occasions, "if you think Aikido is just throwing down people hard, then you are sadly mistaken!" Well I was very stubborn and it took me a very long time and many a lecture too finally start understanding what Sensei was trying to teach me. Looking back, when I first started training I really had no concept of martial arts etiquette and respect. When criticized, I was openly defiant and just downright disrespectful. Most students then and now do not usually exhibit that type of behavior in our dojo. Though I do witness students get dejected when criticized. This is what motivates me to discuss correctly dealing with criticism, because we often do not.

I would hope that students could learn from my past mistakes and not have to continually make the same ones as I so often did. Not only in martial arts, in life if you could deal with criticism correctly you will progress much faster and with less heart ache (of course this is assuming the criticism is coming from a reliable source). Over the years I have heard students say things like, "Sensei hates me," "Sensei is mad at me," or "Gary (Myers) has it out for me." I always thought when people made remarks like those mentioned above that their comments were very strange or selfimportant. As if Sensei or Gary were plotting to make this particular student's Aikido or Iaido training difficult or miserable. In any type of training careful analysis and fault finding is absolutely essential to improving. I have always found it amusing that people will pay a lot of money for lessons in golf, piano, skiing, etc. and absolutely love the fact that their coach or

Upcoming Special Aikido Demonstrations

Pasadena City College:
March 21, 7:00pm

Cherry Blossom Festival:
April (Dates to be announced.)

Rosemead Methodist Church:
April 28, 12noon

Lotus Festival:
July 8-9

Pasadena Buddhist Church Obon Festival:
July 14-15

Nisei Week Festival:
August 4-12

teacher will criticize their swing, playing ability, and/or technique. Yet, in martial arts we students in general do not love being criticized. In fact, it seems most students do not like it at all. Now, in no way am I suggesting that the next time you are being criticized in the dojo that you should have a big beaming smile across your face. Though a shift in your paradigm may be in order. For instance, when I am criticized or corrected whether it is on my technique or behavior, my attitude is one of appreciation. Of course, if it is a matter where I upset my teacher because of something that I did or said I am not happy. However, I am appreciative of the fact that I can learn from this and that an opportunity has risen where I have the chance to improve upon myself. Whenever I make a mistake, whether or not anyone catches it or not, I always ask myself the same questions. "What could I have done differently?" "What could I put in place so this doesn't happen again?" This process is an essential part of training.

Criticism often hurts because we know its true. Yet, often times we would rather delude ourselves into thinking that it isn't true. It is much easier to blame circumstance or someone else. It is much more difficult to initiate change within oneself. So often times we choose the easier path. But, that path is a road to frustration, because we never come to terms with who we really are or what we can become. Aikido is not just a mirror that give us a clear reflection of who we are. It also shows us the way towards self-improvement as human beings. When criticized in the dojo no matter how harshly, have faith and appreciate that it is one step closer to realizing the potential that others see in you.

Editor's Note: Kenny wrote two drafts and I have published them both because they are both well written. It may be a little redundant but it is totally my responsibility. I hope you enjoy them both.

2nd Revised Draft:

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Kenneth M. Furuya, 4th Dan

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2nd Revised Entry from the February Issue:

Training in Newness

Steven Shaw, 6th Kyu

Aikido is very densely packed with seemingly limitless applications that transcend both physical and mental planes of consciousness. From the most basic techniques, I can spend hours contemplating the many openings that were presented in class, and to the openings which they lead. It amazes me how in the middle of training I'll get a glimpse of the unparalleled depth of the art form. I see Samurai on battle fields with drums feeding their emotions and their hearts. A lift of a partners arm reveals striking places, and freedom to escape their attack and disperse their energy.

When I first started taking Aikido, I was teaching at a non-public special education school with severe to moderately emotionally disturbed inner city youths. There was much anger in them, stemming from their frustration with their own inability to comprehend basic reading, writing, and mathematics. Everyday I would leave drained, emotionally from their verbal bombardments, and physically from containing and de-escalating their uncivilized violence. The more Aikido training I received, the more I was equipped to deal with their daily onslaughts. It became easier to deflect their verbal abuse, and because of this reduced the amount of physical abuse. By the time that I switched jobs to a less demanding teaching position (if there is one?), I loved Aikido, and the art of the sword.

Training with a bokken is the most rewarding, yet demanding art I've ever encountered. In a flash, everything is gained, or lost. Yet, the bokken gives me a focal point in the tip. All the mental games I play with myself in Aikido, seem to fall away. I stop thinking about where my foot is, or how I'm supposed to move, I just do it. It may not be right, most of the time it isn't, but I'm not in my head. The head is not where I want to be when there is a hard object, sharp or not, coming at me fast. Nor in Aikido, I hate being stuck in my head. It is my number one enemy of personal progress. I just have to remind myself to stop thinking. There are so many things to think about: where do my feet go, what are my hands doing, where is my energy going? It can be overwhelming.

One thing that always puts me in my head is when I'm late. I have turned around and driven home on several occasions because I knew I was going to be late getting on the mats. If I'm not there to bow in, the whole training session seems off. It just doesn't feel right if I miss anything. When I don't feel right, I start thinking my classmates are annoyed they have to deal with someone who isn't feeling right. So, I am either there on time, or I turn around and go home. It's just not worth all the headache.

But I am just a white belt, a very white belt, and the real training and instruction come on the mats of the dojo. It is a beautiful place, and I am thankful for the patience and wisdom of my Sensei, and his students. We train in one of the most amazing places I've ever been. It is rich with beauty, peace, and growth. It is important to add as much of these qualities to our training, and protect the sanctuary of the dojo by shedding whatever negativity we may be carrying. Training is beautiful, and we must preserve its integrity.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles
NEWSLETTER

Special Correspondence:
KODO & A New Life:

01-22-01 Dear Reverend Furuya: I wanted to write and thank you for your selfless generosity in sharing your thoughts and words as you walk the path in this world as a spiritual martial artist. Your book is a much read and loved part of our library, as are your daily thoughts posted on your web site.

I was inspired to write after I read back over January and discovered your New Year's day entry. Though I am not your student, my prayers and thanks went to you at the new year because of how hard I know teachers of your caliber work all year long. Also because of the special role reading your book played in my at home study over the course of the past year.

My own teacher's lessons are so filled with the universal truth that you speak of and relay in your writing that it makes me feel less homesick for my dojo and class to read your book when my classes are not in session or I am unable to attend.

This made the discovery of your book last year particularly poignant for me because when I read your book the first time I was eight months pregnant with my son, and first child. Obviously, my training was significantly changed to accommodate the needs of an expectant mother and I was removed from my regular class to take part in a special class combining all the things I would need for my Martial Art pregnancy.

As an advanced student on the verge of my black sash, there were many mental and spiritual challenges to suddenly dropping out of the intensity of regular training. Although I had fellow students who kept me abreast of the in-class lectures I was missing, no one can paraphrase the magnitude or the 'Ki' of a spontaneous training lecture.

I fully and gratefully accepted that it was not meant to be for me to be in that part of class, and that my 'class' had become my daily sparring with myself, redirecting the energy of the countless fears and emotions that go along with becoming a mother. But it took time and guidance from my teachers to do it with any semblance of spiritual grace.

You see, our school trains in all seasons, indoors and outdoors. In the summer as I was becoming bigger and slower, my classmates were training in the river water and mud of spring, and the radiant sunshine and pine fragrant air of our Maine landscape. I missed going to class terribly, but came to understand that there were some wonderful surprises involved with being a martial art mom to be.

Due to my efforts in the class style assigned to me through stretching, meditation, and chi gung, I did not experience the back aches or the swollen ankles that most women receive during their pregnancy. Also, my mood swings were very mild and dealt with in a martial art way utilizing breathing and meditation. But the true indication of the positive effects of my special training during my pregnancy is my son himself.

I chose not to take a birthing class like La Mazz because I planned to do the breathing I had been training for years instead, and to deal with the pain of birth using all the skills I had been training as a spiritual martial artist. My labor lasted for 30 hours before the doctors decided to do a caesarean section. I didn't allow pain medication until the

24th hour and then only the mildest form. Two of my female teachers were with my mother and husband in the labor room. The rest of my friends, teachers and my Sifu came to wait in the waiting room. I was humbled and honored that they waited through the whole marathon to finally meet the newest and youngest student at the dojo.

He was born 5 minutes before midnight and he had the unusual strength to hold his head up to look around at the new faces he was seeing for the first time. Though I had a section delivery, I was never 'put to sleep' and was awake for the whole process, the first part of my son that I saw was a little fist striking straight up to the sky. I thought it was a fitting introduction for such a young future student.

Twenty minutes after the birth, I was rolled out of the operation room to join everyone waiting with the baby, (whose father had whisked away while they finished my stitches). After a few moments, my Sifu stepped forward and presented to me my black sash. Though I tried to remain calm on the outside, evidently the monitors still attached to me gave me away because a nurse came dashing in to see what happened because I'd set a heart rate alarm off on the monitor outside!

I was overwhelmed with humbleness, gratitude and awe! What a full day! The gift of the birth of my son forever entwined with the beginning of my life as a black sash!

Five months later my son is still unusually strong, also deciding at six weeks of age that standing up was preferred over being cradled. At five months he is trying to take steps, (with a spotter attached, of course) and his grip, especially on hair and mustaches, is astounding. He rarely cries, and has a smile that gladdens the weariest soul.

Your book Kodo continues to play an important part in my training since it continues to be part of my regular reading, along with the writing of Kisshomaru Ueshiba's -The Spirit of Aikido, and John Stevens translations of -The Art of Peace, and his new biography of Morihei Ueshiba, The Invincible Warrior. It has been a tremendous help in continuing to ease the homesickness of class since I have a long way to go before I am physically back to speed or left with uninterrupted training time to spare away from the full time care of an infant.

He will only be this little once, and it is a pure and magical experience. Which leads me to the reason I have given such a long and detailed introduction before making my humble request. As I look forward to reading Kodo to my son, I am wondering if I mailed to you our copy of the book if you would be interested in signing it for him? Well, for our whole family really, my husband and I have long admired your work, your skill, and your knowledge of this beautiful living art of peace, but most of all you are to be known to our son as one of the modern heroes of our time as a teacher who has worked so hard to share the heart and spirit of the art of ai-ki-do with so many, and continue to do so.

My husband has emailed you before, so you may recognize the address, thank you for taking the time to read our family story and consider my humble request. May I also respectfully ask that my story not be placed on the web page due to its personal nature. Gratefully and Sincerely, Katherine Gerardi

Editor's Note: Many thanks and please allow me to share your beautiful letter with my dear students.

About Downtown:

Voicing Against Film Crews & Rave Parties In Our Artist District Neighborhood

01-18-01

Hi! We've been busy!

1. Central Area Commander Captain Maislins has a meeting penciled-in for us at either 1130 am or 100 pm on February 14, 2001. This is his earliest opening! Let me know which is better. The Rave problem is the principal topic. We may want to bring other problems into the discussion. We may also meet with other staff members at Central.

I took the liberty of calling our group of LARABA "volunteers" the Safety Sub-committee. (Also Norm Solomon wishes to join us. We are working on the other committee to deal with the new homeless problems.)

2. Qathryn, Valerie, and I attended a Board Meeting of the EIDC/ LA Film Office. I think they were surprised that several of the "public" showed-up. There has never been public input at this level before. Three residents of the Windsor Square area spoke more or less angrily about their frustrations with film production in their neighborhoods. I spoke of some of our concerns about the hazards and inconveniences-also too angrily to be most effective. A "homeless" resident of the City East area also related his concerns. A committee may be formed to look into our problems. The Executive Board will decide how to do this. We hope to get someone on that committee.

My feeling is that nothing will happen. This is the same babble we've gotten in the past. They will take our time and energy discussing trivia and avoiding action on the important issues. If they notify us of the Executive Board meeting or show other signs of responding to our requests for information or action, I will be surprised.

I spoke with David Hirano after the meeting. He works with City contracts. He says that the EIDC as a private corporation cannot issue permits without the authority of a City Agency. The agency in charge of film permits is - The Police Commission! I met with them twice and they deny their involvement! My phone number is 213 613-0240. THOMAS A. GUITION III at tagre@mindspring.com
LADAD (Los Angeles Downtown Artist District)

01-26-01

From Thomas A. Guition, LA Downtown

Good Afternoon, I just had a call from Tony Lee at the Police Commission Investigations Division. He gave a training at Central on the 24th. Now the LAPD-Central area should understand the permit process and recognize the proper forms. Other Areas will also get training. They also know where to call with questions. Detective Lee said that the officers were concerned and aware of our problem. They were responsive and appreciated the assistance.

He informed me that the owners of the 370 E. 3rd St. property will NOT be renting their lot for events in the future! They plan to begin construction for Sci-Arc in the very near future. (So now we get construction noise and dirt!) The letter of apology that he read to me over the phone seemed sincere and properly concerned. Ariel Trinidad (of Dynamic) was pleasant and helpful when I talked with him immediately after the Rave. For the record, Detective Lee says: 1. there was a fire permit, 2. there was NO permit from the Police Commission or Central, 3. there was NO film permit- although there may have

Salamanca, Spain Aikido Seminar September 1-2, 2001

GUEST INSTRUCTORS:

Kenny Furuya, 4th Dan
Mark Ty, 2nd Dan

Hosted by the Salamanca Kodokai
Santiago Almaraz, 2nd Dan

Another Letter:

How I Found The Dojo:

02-18-01: Sensei, The last time I went to * * * * Aikido was in June of 2000. I sat on the bench watching their bokken class because a student of mine, by accident, had broken my big toe. When the class finished, one of the black belts began talking and showing different things with his bokken. I told him that I was moving to the West side, and asked him if he knew of anywhere I could train. He listed some places, but didn't really endorse any of them and from previous encounters he must have remembered my passion for the sword. Then, as he looked around as if protecting secret knowledge, he said, "If you want to really learn sword, and Iaido, you should go to Furuya Sensei at the Aikido Center of Los Angeles." I was over come with this feeling of, "That's where I should go." He was right. Every moment that I spend in your dojo are stepping stones toward awareness, humility, and understanding. I thank you from the depths of my being for your wisdom, patience, devotion, and dedication to the arts and your students' understanding of them. Many thanks

Editor's Reply: For some reason, our Dojo is always a very big secret with everyone, especially the Aikido community at large. Maybe it is better this way since we have always tried to stay away from the negative aspects of politics and big business. To maintain a sincere Dojo as best we can, it is important not to fall into the trap (and trappings) of success, popularity contests and material wealth but to always be a "sanctuary" where people are welcome to truly study and learn and derive the benefits of Aikido training and its wonderful heritage. It is said: To follow the Way (*Do*), we must part with the way of the world. To follow the way of the world, we will never find the Way." As students of Aikido, we should always remain, as best we can, true to the Path of Aikido. I hope all my students will understand me, bear with me, and join me in this eternal quest. Many thanks for your letter.

01-26-01 Thomas Guition continued: been a request for one, some semblance of a film permit was present late in the incident, and/or spoken of earlier when they were "applying" for permits, 4. a "mobile field force" (of LAPD)was present, although out of sight. No fines or penalties were even discussed. I asked (about them) and he says they still don't really know who was responsible. Tag

01-28-01: Hi, everyone, I just received confirmation from the film co. that we will be receiving a check for \$1,000. for the noise of the film helicopters, made out to Laraba. Thanks, Valerie.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles
NEWSLETTER

Correspondence:

01-26-01

Reverend Kensho Furuya: My name is Alex Bonilla, and before I write anything else, I want to apologize for this unsolicited e-mail. How do I begin....

Well... I just read your book entitled KODO "Ancient Ways," and I must say that I was, and still am, very impressed with your words. A lot of your words spoke directly to me, some pointed me in a different direction, and others still brought me a better understanding of my own ideas.

Whether it was your intention or not, your words carried meanings at different levels. Some of these levels I understood (somewhat) others were a little over my head but I still didn't dismissed them. I learned a lot from your words.

This e-mail is not just a thank you note however (by the way thank you). Maybe I should tell you a little about my self before I continue. I've always wanted to learn martial arts but was never really interested in martial arts. When I was a boy, like all other boys, I was impressed and of course entertained by martial arts movies (mostly Saturday Kung Fu theater). I never enrolled in the local dojos that taught the popular martial arts like Karate or Tae kwon do (I have nothing against these arts). I wasn't really interested in them, yet I loved to see exhibitions. I was told that maybe I was lazy...

Years later, I joined the US NAVY and ended up in Okinawa (this is where I'm writing from). While here, I was fortunate enough to find Aikido. I took Aikido for a year until my work schedule and university classes proved too time consuming. I always regretted having to pause my training (pause because I plan to return). I have kept reading on the subject and many others concerning martial arts, Asian philosophy and the like. It is not the same but some how it has helped to fill the gap stopping Aikido left in me. Now, I finished a degree but unfortunately I am also leaving Okinawa.

This situation brings me to the main point of this e-mail. On my way to my next duty station I will be in L.A. for a day and a half, and although there are many attractions to see on our (me and my family) first visit to L.A., I feel that I rather go to your dojo and thank you personally. This may sound strange.... Well, actually it is strange, but I wanted to make sure it was OK with you. You see, one of the reasons I didn't enroll in any martial art school I when I was a boy was because I always felt that the teacher student relation was not present. When I came to Okinawa and I saw Miyagi Sensei in action, I felt different. After talking with him, I was hooked. Leaving was very painful because I felt like I betrayed him. I never felt like that to another teacher, until I read your book. I feel that I have learned a lot from reading your words, so I wanted to thank you and let you know how much you taught me.. Don't misunderstand me though. I am not talking in a cult type of way. It is just that I feel that there is too much of a coincidence that I read your book about a month before I am to go back and even spend a day in the same city as you. Your book was published about 10 years ago, and I bought it about a year ago. I don't read it until a couple of months I leave, and I will have the time and be close to your dojo. You tell me what you think of this huge coincidence....

I don't know your schedule, and I hope you don't feel strange about

the whole thing. I know this day and age people, even Aikido instructors, are subject to crime. However, I assure you I do not mean you any harm. I just feel that I owe you something.

Well, I guess after this long e-mail and taking your time I should at least tell you when it is that I am arriving to L.A. I arrive to LAX on Feb. 24th at 3:00 pm and leave the 25th at 10:30 pm. Of course I really don't have all that time because of baggage claims and hotel rooms and all but If it would be possible I would like to visit you at your dojo. Thank you for your time and sorry for the length of this e-mail.

01-26-01

From studying "Kodo, Ancient Ways" I can understand why he writes this. It is deeply inspirational, educational and informative. It is the sort of book that needs to be read over and over. Joseph.

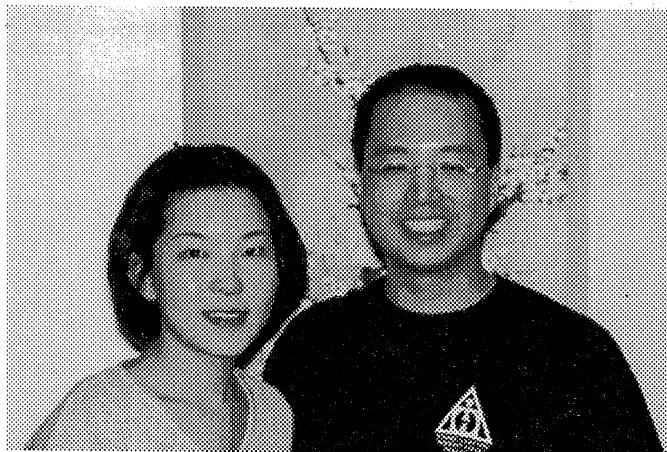
01-28-01

Sensei, I have finished reading KODO. If I may, I found the book exceptional. It is very well written and I found it particularly timely in my martial arts path. I am 45 years old and have been teaching jujutsu and aikido at Dartmouth College for just over 11 years. I found the book inspirational. Thank you.

Thomas Pristow, Aiki Budoin at Dartmouth College
70 Locke Road, Bath, New Hampshire 03740

01-28-01

Dear Sensei, Thank you very much for the e-mail. I'm enjoying your book very much! You offer outstanding advice and relate many interesting stories. Your book seems more like it should be studied than simply read, so I'm trying to take my time and not miss too much of what you offer. I'm particularly enjoying the notes on the side of each passage. A whole lot contained in a few words. I'll keep reading and I'm looking forward to seeing you at practice. Thank you again. Sincerely, Michael V.



Mr. & Mrs. John Shin from the New Jersey Aikikai.

01-30-01

Dear Furuya Sensei, This is John Shin, from Toronto, emailing. Thank you for your kind welcome, when we visited your dojo, during our stop-over in Los Angeles. I was very happy to meet you, and talk with you, as I read your website daily. I look forward to visiting you again, someday, and participating in practice, if this is allowable. Thank you very much again. I look forward daily to your insights. Sincerely, John Shin (From New Jersey).

Aikido Center of Los Angeles NEWSLETTER

02-09-01

I'm writing to you today to thank you for your insightful and wonderful messages. I have been on the "journey" now for about ten years. I studied everything for judo to kung-fu but never did i find a place to where i felt like myself , till now. I've been practicing and studying Kendo at the San Diego Kendo club for over a year and I love it. It's hard for me to describe it, but I feel so much at home and myself when I practice Kendo. I take my studies very serious. And I share alot of the same view you have about the teacher/student relationship. I don't want to take up alot of your time. But I just want to let you know that your message has reach myself. Thank you very. John Trammell of San Diego

02-09-01

Hello Sensei Furuya, As I haven't been in class this week, I just wanted to let you know that my enthusiasm for Aikido hasn't disappeared (actually its increased). Unfortunately this week is the end of the Winter Session and I literally have had stacks of essays with the denseness of a small telephone book to grade. On another note, I just wanted to tell you how much I have enjoyed your class and teaching. Aikido is very difficult and quite taxing on my wrists and knees but I enjoy all that I am learning. This experience is such a striking contrast to the unfortunate experience I had 16 years ago with a militant karate instructor that was reminiscent of the bad teacher in the Karate Kid. This man had too much misdirected macho energy. This experience actually dissuaded me from trying martial arts again until now. I will be attending classes soon. Jason E.

02-10-01

Hello Sensei- I trust all is well with you. I ended up purchasing your first 3 videos from a retailer (Ken's trading company). They have been very useful so far. It has been hard to come to practice regularly because of work---but I am trying to make aikido a part of my regular daily activity. The hardest part about the practice so far is my concentration level. But I am enjoying it tremendously---and I already notice that my concentration in other walks of life has improved dramatically. Kind regards, Alok

Visit Our Website Often!

Be sure to visit our website often for the latest Dojo news and upcoming events. Also see Sensei's Forum for letters and correspondence from all over the world to our Dojo. Also, a special feature is Sensei's Message. Tell your family and friends!

www.aikidocenterla.com

New Dues Policy

Monthly dues are due at the first of the month. If you cannot be in the Dojo by the 1st, please mail in your dues directly to the Dojo.

Monthly Dues: 1st of the Month.

Late Fees:

If not paid by the 5th: \$20.00

If one month dues are missed:

First & Last Month's Dues required to rejoin Dojo.

Leave of Absence:

Leave of Absence notice is required for absences more than one week. This is strictly required for Black Belts. For Black Belts: Months counted as late will NOT be counted as attendance towards their Dan promotion. No exceptions. Attendance at monthly seminars, meetings, events and Budo Study Classes will also be counted towards your promotion.

02-18-01

Dear Reverend Furuya, I spoke to you on the phone a couple of days ago about attending your class. I went this saturday and just wanted to thank you and your students for allowing me to observe. What most inspired me was the respect and dedication that they, your students, had towards their dojo, towards each other, and towards their learning. I was happy and relieved to see such earnest and profound dedication towards one's practice. I have not seen this type of dedication by a group since I left university in 1995 and I've missed it deeply. In my professional environment it is rare to find this kind of sincerity, loyalty and simplicity. I confess it was beginning to disillusion me. I am excited by having joined your dojo . . . and am deeply grateful for the opportunity be a student again among other students in such a place of discipline and integrity. Thank you. . . .

02-20-01

Hello Sensei, I just finished devouring your wonderful book. Very inspirational! I really enjoyed it and am sure that I will go back and reread many of the articles. Intellectually it gives me a renewed sense of "let's go!" I especially enjoyed the many stories of old, fables and legends not to mention the articles of your personal experiences, meetings and insight on how to approach training. In my limited teaching experience I feel the greatest thing that I can give my students is to try to inspire an enthusiasm for learning. Your book is quite inspiring. I have always been fascinated with the pure absurdity of the paradox, dilemmas of the ego and the necessity of conflict. Reminds me of the many Alan Watts books that I read in graduate school. It appears that there are many similarities between the martial artist and the fine artist. Emphasizing the gain inside the work instead of externally -- process over product. I feel very lucky to have such a humble yet profoundly insightful teacher. I look forward to reading your next book and my aikido training. Thanks for signing my copy, Jason E. A quote for you by Thomas Merton: "Don't try too hard. Don't be too much concerned about your own perfection and progress from day to day. Once you become aware of yourself as seeker, you become a possessor. You're lost. But if you are content to be lost, you will be found without knowing it, precisely because you are lost. For you are at the last nowhere, which is where God is."

LA Downtown Art Studios Tour Scheduled June

We will be scheduling our Aikido & Iaido Demonstration, including Dojo Open House, Sale and Display by Yoshino Japanese Antiques and a ceramics sale by Mike Van Ruth. Next year, they are including a "Critics Choice" bus tour.

New! Dojo Email Express:

Join our new Dojo Email Express and get all the latest news in the Dojo. Just email to Sensei at aclafuruya@earthlink.net.

Affiliated Branch Dojos

Kodokai Salamanca

Santiago Garcia Almaraz, 2nd Dan

Hacienda La Puente Aikikai

Tom Williams, 3rd Dan

Wyoming Aikikai

Tom McIntrye, 2nd Dan

Bahamas Aikikai

Seymour Clay

International Martial Arts Academy

Aikido Center of Los Angeles
NEWSLETTER

Welcome To The Aikido Center of Los Angeles



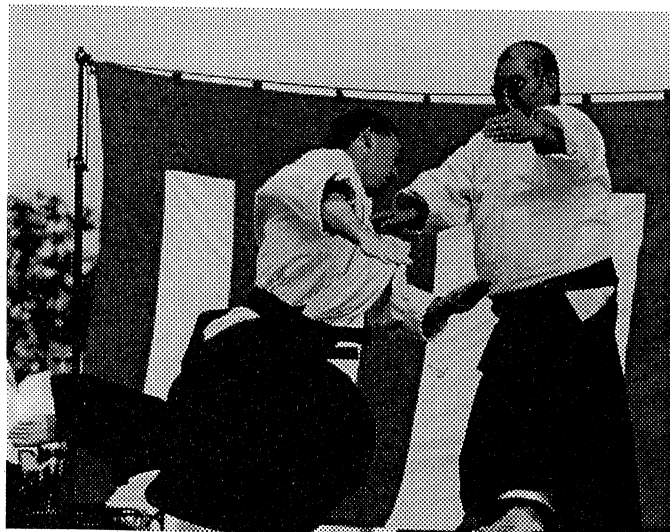
Aikido Center of Los Angeles

Our Dojo's 27th Year, 1974-2001.

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

Dojo Supplies

Official Dojo Jackets

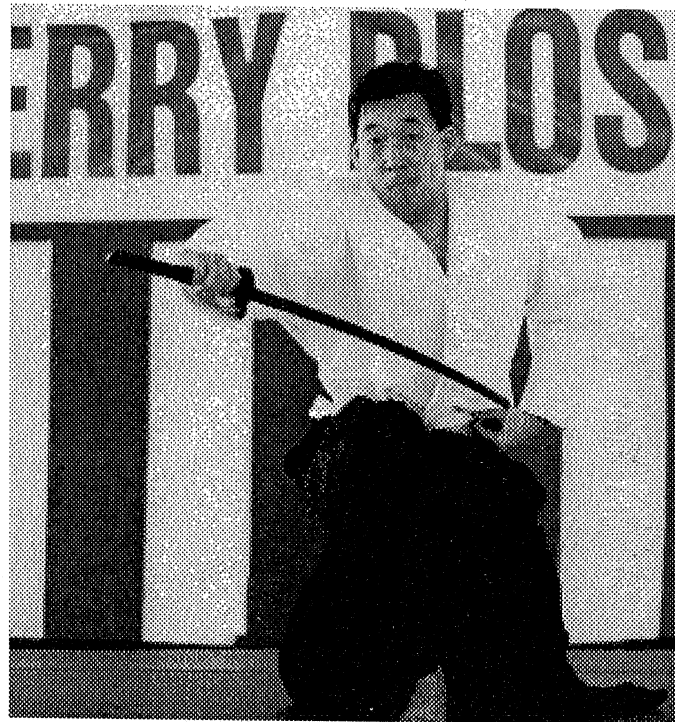
Now available on a custom order basis. Designed by Land's End, nylon in bright yellow with the embroidered Dojo logo. They are very comfortable and great to wear for demonstrations. \$55.00 each.

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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.

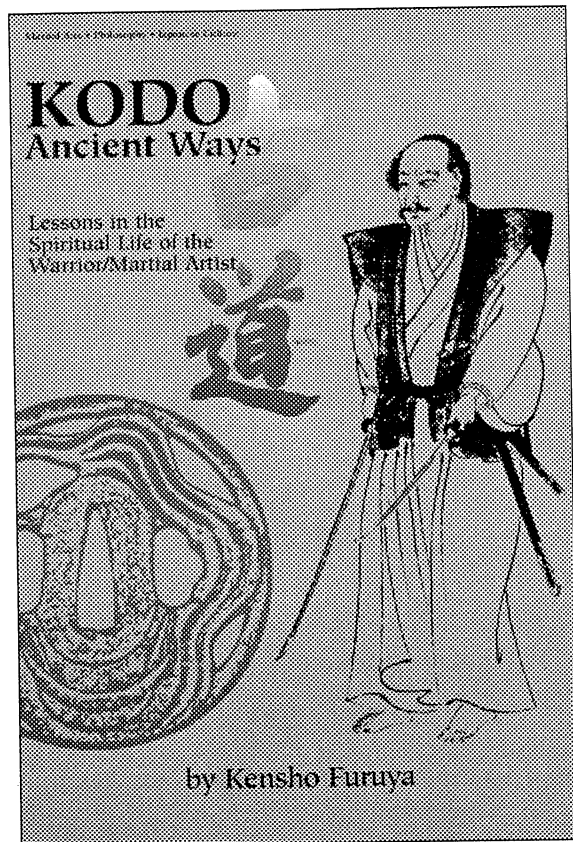
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We offer instruction in the traditional art of Iaido, the art of the Sword. Serious students are always welcome. Iaido demands a strong commitment of time, honor, perseverance and integrity. It is a spiritual art with a history and tradition of over 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.

*Furuya Sensei's Bestseller
Highly Recommended For All Dojo
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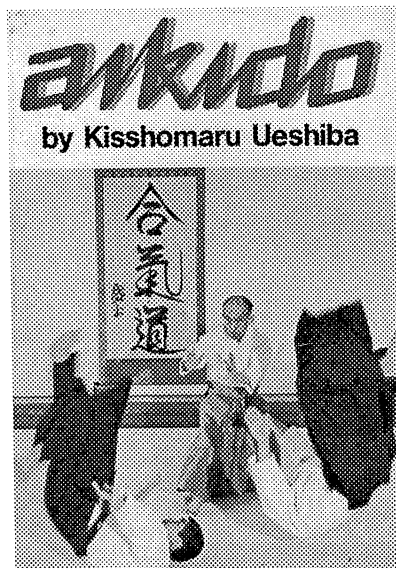
KODO
Ancient Ways:
Lessons in the Spiritual Life
of the Warrior-Martial Artist

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 Studies:



Highly Recommended Reading:

AIKIDO

By Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba

Doshu's book is one of the best books available today on Aikido technique. Strongly recommended.



KIHAN AIKIDO

Fundamental of Aikido

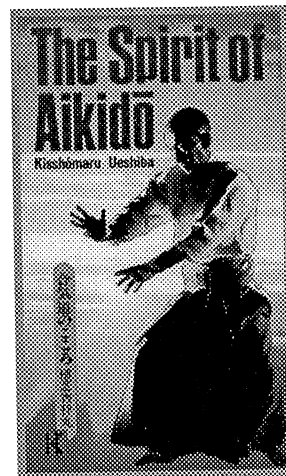
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The latest reference book on Hombu Aikido by 2nd & 3rd Doshu with excellent photos on all of the basic techniques. Referred to as the "Aikido Bible."



ACLADOJO NEWSLETTER

Published monthly by the Aikido Center of Los Angeles. Annual subscriptions are available for a donation of \$36.00 which will be used towards printing costs and supporting the practice of the students.



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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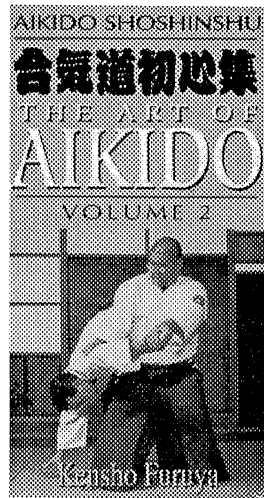
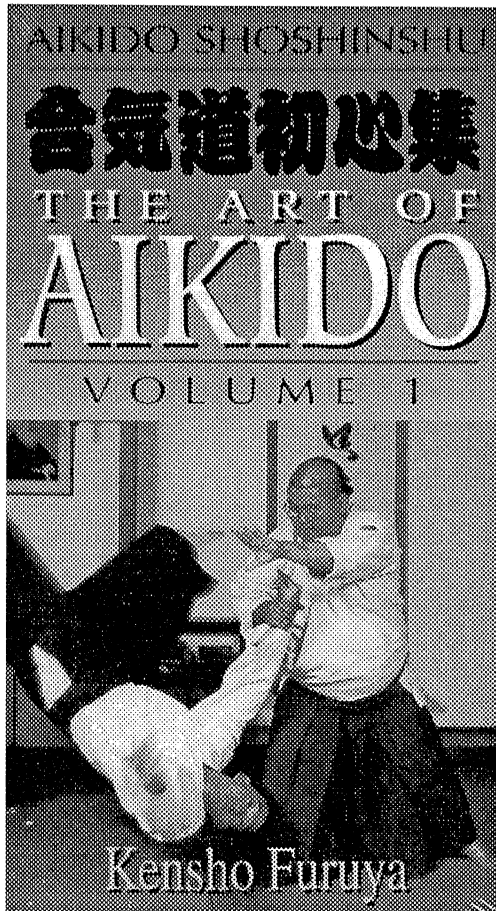
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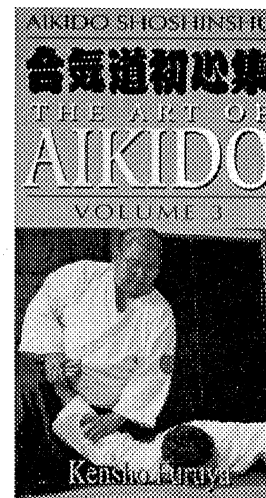
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Aikido Instructional Video Series in Nine Volumes

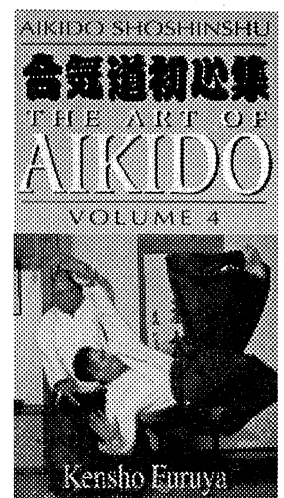
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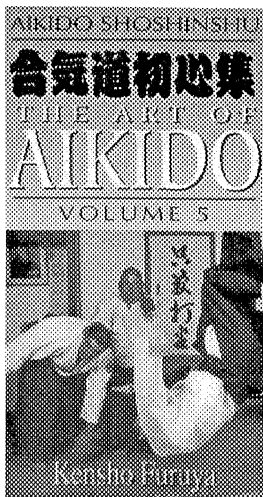
Basic Techniques
Throwing & Joint Techniques
Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo &
Gokyo



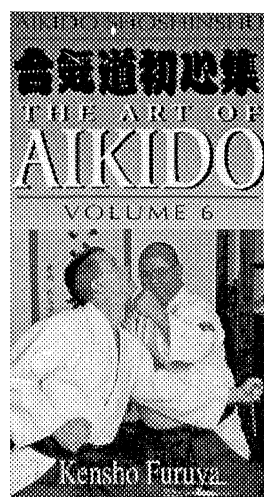
Ukemi-Breakfalling
Basics Continued
Free Style Techniques
Tenshin. Ki. Breathing.



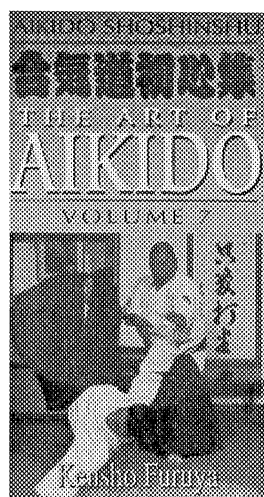
Katatetori Ryotemochi:
Ryotetori: 2-hand.
Reigi-saho: Etiquette.
Koshinage-Hip throws.



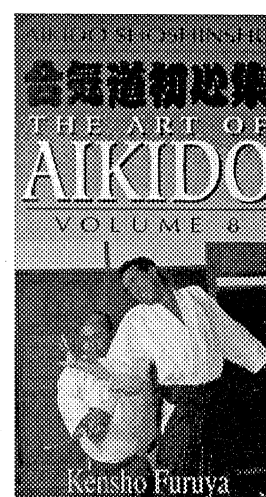
Suwari-waza. Gokyo.
Hanmi-handachi. Kokyu-dosa.
Katatori: Shoulder.
Multiple attackers.
Five-man Freestyle.



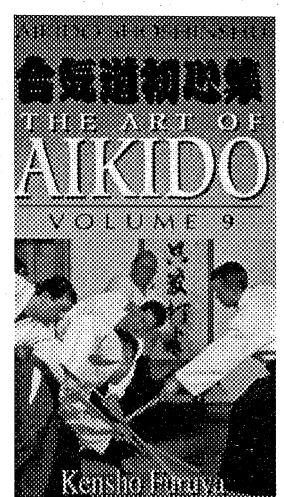
Tsuki: Strikes & Punches
Yokomenuchi: Strikes to the side
of the head & neck.



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

Adult

BEGINNING & OPEN

Monday thru Friday Evenings

6:30pm-7:30pm

Thursdays: 12noon-1:00pm

Saturday & Sunday Mornings

10:15am-11:30am

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

5 - 16 yrs old

Sunday Mornings:

9:00am-10:00am

AIKIDO & BUDO DISCUSSION GROUP

Every 2nd Wednesday of the month.

7:45pm-9:00pm

Group Study & Discussion

Aikido philosophy, Japanese art & culture, martial arts, & Japanese sword appreciation. Everyone is welcome.

Affiliation

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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 Doshu and the current Moriteru Ueshiba Doshu. All Dojo members are members of Hombu Dojo Aikikai.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

940 E. 2nd St. #7, Little Tokyo,

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Tel: (213) 687-3673

www.aikidocenterla.com

Iaido

TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO

SWORDSMANSHIP

Saturday Mornings

8:00am-9:15am

Sunday Mornings

7:45am-8:45am

2nd, 3rd, & 4th Wednesdays

7:45pm-8:45pm

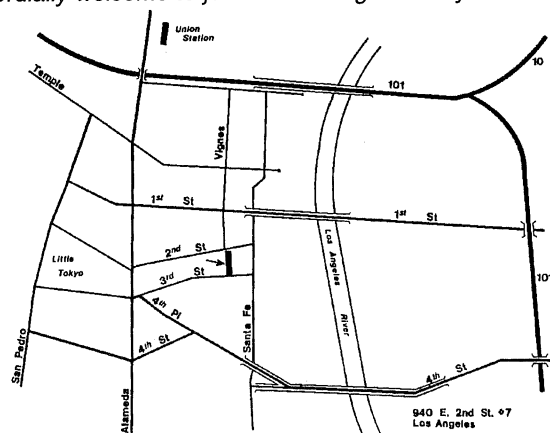
IAIDO INTENSIVE SEMINAR

Every 2nd Saturday of the month.

6:30am-8:30am

About 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.