

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

The Aikido Center of Los Angeles LLC

The Aiki Dojo

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

\$2.95
Donation

March 1, 2003

Volume XXII. Volume 3.

James Doi Promoted To 5th Dan At Kagami-Biraki

James Doi, one of Sensei's most senior students, began Aikido at the USC Aikido Club under the direction of Sensei in 1968. Sensei travelled extensively after graduation and James joined another local dojo during this time and rejoined Sensei at the opening of our current Little Tokyo Dojo.



James lives in Torrance with his wife, Jo Beth, and is a chemist by profession. James trains five days a week and also practices Iaido. James writes the following essay:

In everyday modern life, we are flooded with all sort of things vying for our attention. TV commercials use flashy graphics, quick cuts (no longer than 3 seconds) and increased volume to get our attention. In this age of cable, video tape and TiVo, if the viewer is not interested within nanoseconds, then they will go to the next channel and will be lost forever to the advertiser. "The very squeaky wheel must get the grease." Subtlety and contemplation are not particularly desirable values nowadays.

Bruce Lee wrote about what he called "show" and "go" techniques. "Show" techniques were literally for show and "go" techniques were for actual usage.

Flashy, attention-getting "show" martial arts fit modern consumer tastes. "Modern" martial arts must use the "NEW AND IMPROVED!!!!" school of marketing because they are businesses first and martial arts second.

Many years ago, Master Hsu gave a gung fu seminar in the dojo. He first demonstrated a technique the way "that it would be done in a movie", a very impressive, graceful and powerful series of movements that took no more than two seconds.

New Year's Party March 23.



Our ladies of the Dojo at our Annual Dojo New Year's Party.

This year, our New Year's Party was held at the new Tony Roma's in Alhambra with about 40 members attending. Everyone had a lot to eat and a lotsa fun. This party was also a celebration for James Doi who was promoted to 5th Dan recently. Many thanks to those who attended and had a great time!

O'Sensei's Memorial Service & Special Practice April 26.

Aiki Kaiso Tsuito Hoyo Oyobi Tokubetsu Keiko

Practice 8:00-11:00am.

Memorial Service by Rev. S. Kojima: 11:00-11:45am.

O-Doki Luncheon: 12noon.

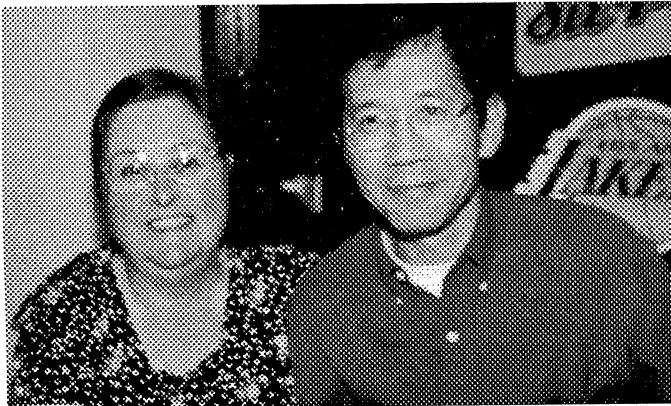
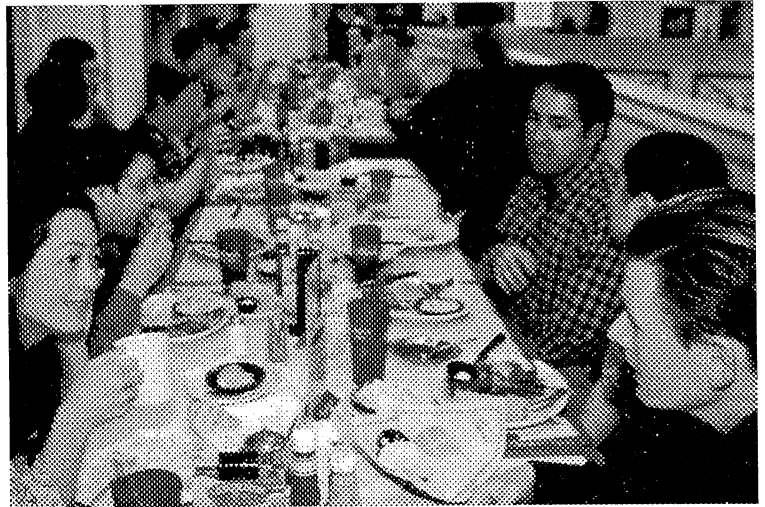
Members: \$10.00. Non-members: \$20.00.

Does not include luncheon. Place to be decided.

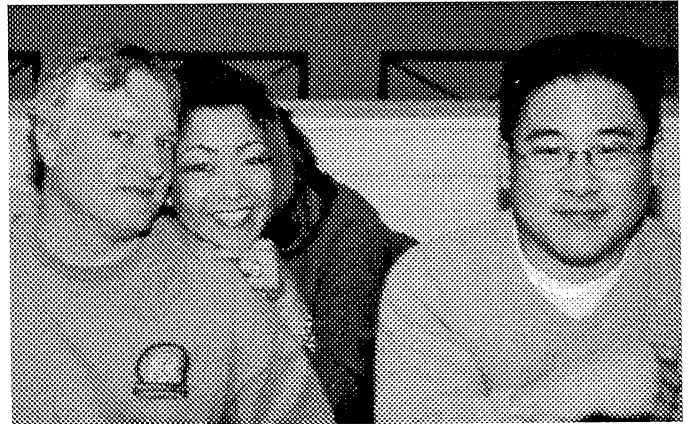
All students and members of other schools are welcome.

(No Iaido today.)

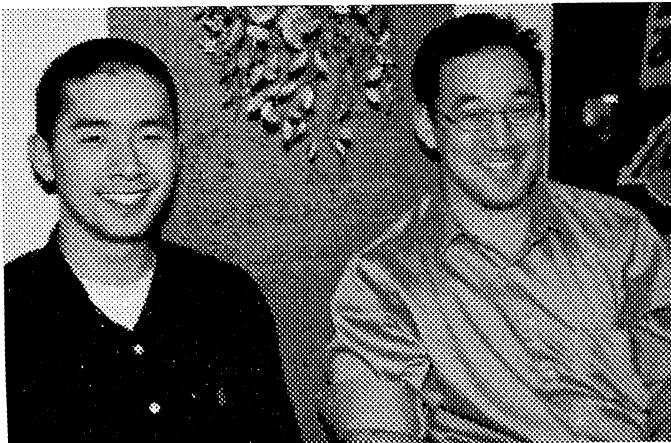
New Year's Party & James Doi's Promotion Celebration. March 23.



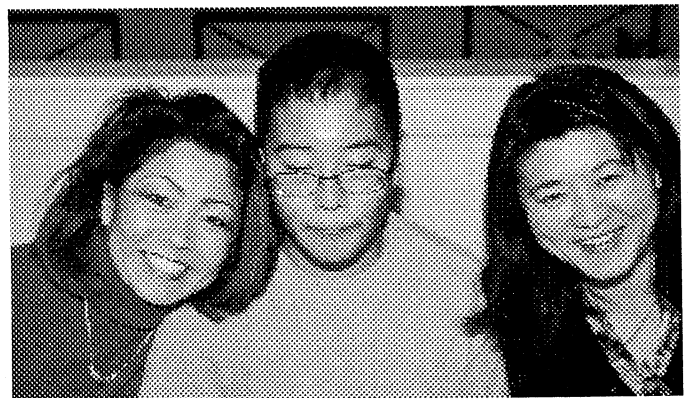
James Doi and the Mrs.



Bill Allen, Carol Tanita and David Ito.



Mark Ty and Ken Watanabe. Below: Cheryl Lew & Norm Lew.



Carol, Nicholas, & Kaoru. Below: Raymond, Maria and Jake.



James Doi Continued:

He then demonstrated what he described as the "real" technique. It appeared that he simply took a couple of steps forward to his opponent and stopped next to him. It took less than a second, but was not a particularly "fast" movement nor particularly eye catching. For the next two hours, he explained what he had done in the "real" technique. The detail, subtlety and depth of content in this short example was absolutely amazing.

In Musashi's "A Book of Five Rings", he would describe a sword technique and end the passage with a phrase such as "You must research this well" or "You must consider this carefully."

Traditional Budo is extremely subtle and complex, and must be "considered carefully." By subtlety, complexity and depth of content, I mean something like a classic work of literature, music or cinema. At first viewing or reading, an interesting story is told. At second readings, aspects and features are found which add to and enhance the basic story. On subsequent readings, nothing is lost, but even more subtleties are continuously found which add to the richness of the work.

Traditional Budo is like good literature, at first view, a technique is inherently interesting because of its power and effectiveness. Intermediate study discovers the mechanics and timing that make the technique work. Continued and deeper study will find more and more details (placed in the technique by centuries of refinement.)

Traditional Budo (and traditional Aikido) demand reflection and careful consideration of technique. The beauty of the art comes not only from the variety of techniques but from the depth of the techniques.

Any owner of any electronic device knows that it will become obsolete and nearly worthless within six months to a year. The full potential and value of the device is never realized because something "newer and better" comes along. Not enough time is ever devoted to optimize the device usage.

In contrast to electronics that have a 1 year "product life", the sword and swordsmanship in Japan were refined and optimized over centuries. The sword has no moving parts, nor does it have any laser sensors or microprocessor controls. Its value and usage comes from sword makers' craftsmanship and its owners' skill and training. Sword making and sword techniques were developed and refined over centuries by many brilliant individuals that researched and considered all aspects of sword carefully. The study of the sword brings the modern student into contact with the artistry of historical craftsmen and swordsmen long dead.

Before Sensei published "Kodo", he published a collection of articles by and about him, entitled " "Kagotsurube" which means "basket well bucket". This is a reference to a line from a Kabuki play; "bodies falling as water would pour forth from a basket-like well bucket." Quoting from the Introduction; "At the same time "kagotsurube" represents the epitome of what can be achieved in martial arts; a wicker-like well bucket for all intents and purposes, is in reality, a completely absurd and totally useless item." Later he writes; "We are practicing an art which really points to the highest of what man can achieve as far as his personal spiritual and physical development but, at the same time, if we are not carefully observing and studying ourselves, it can be considered as a comically futile effort."

Studying Budo in this age of Predators, Uzis and Sarin seems pretty futile if our objective is some sort of individual "self defense" ultimate military superiority. As "individual weapons systems", Budo are clearly both obsolete and not cost effective. Anyone with a modern 9 mm handgun (such as the ever popular Glock models) with laser sighting and two hours of practice is far more lethal (defined as deaths per minute, DPM) than a classic swordsman with decades of study. When asked by someone that knows nothing of martial arts, for reasons to study Budo, the easiest to say reasons for study are things such as physical exercise and "self defense", while true, such reasons are pretty weak.

Centuries ago, feudal Japan knew that even crude firearms were in many ways technically superior to swords, but the sword was far, far more important to the individual and society than just as a weapon. The cultural, spiritual and aesthetic benefits of the sword really are "the soul of the samurai" and central to Japanese culture.

When someone asks me why I have practiced Aikido for such a long time, I would like to say that I am "practicing an art which... points to the highest of what man can achieve as far as his personal spiritual and physical development", but I know it would not make sense to them, besides, it would take too long to explain and they would lose interest.

Upcoming Special Events:

March 3rd. General Meeting. Everyone is invited. Please attend. 7:00-8:00pm.

March 7. Fridays 6:30-7:30pm are now Open Beginning Aikido Classes for everyone.

March 8. Iaido Intensive. 6:30-8:00am. Breakfast meeting follows.

**March 15. Jo Seminar 7:00am-9:00am
No Iaido today.**

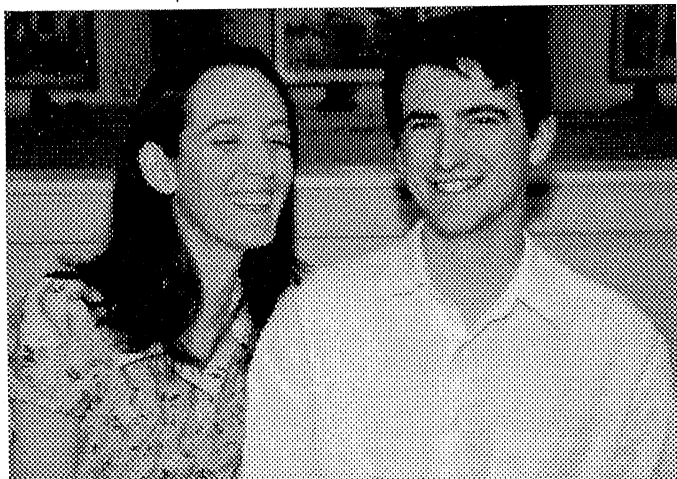
March 23. Four Dojo Friendship Workout. Chushinkan Dojo in Buena Park. No 10:15am class today.

March 29. Aikido Intensive. 6:30-8:00am. Breakfast meeting follows.

April 25. Sensei's Birthday.

April 26. O'Sensei's Memorial Service & Special Practice.

New Year's Party Con't.



Mike Vance & Judith.



Kay Sera, Arthur Dowling, Steve Andersen



Kirk Thomas and friend.

Children's Class (6-16 yrs.)
Every Sunday 9:00-10:00am

Four Dojo Friendship Workout. March 23.

SPECIAL EVENT: This year's workout will be hosted by James Nakayama Sensei of the Chushinkan Dojo in Buena Park. At 7212 Orangethorpe Ave #8, Buena Park (714) 523-2255

Schedule:

9:30 am to 10:15am James Nakayama, 5th Dan, Chushinkan Aikido Dojo

10:15am to 11:00am Henry Oshiro Sensei, 4th Dan, Orange County Aikikai

11:15am to 12:00pm Frank McGouirk Sensei, 5th Dan, Whittier Aikikai

12:00pm to 12:45pm Kensho Furuya Sensei, 6th Dan, Aikido Center of Los Angeles

As usual, this will be followed by a potluck luncheon (provided by Chushinkan Dojo - of course, any contributions to the potluck are welcome too!). In the spirit of our previous workouts, all students of Orange County Aiki Kai, Aikido-Ai, and the Aikido Center of L.A. are welcome to train. And of course, there will be no fees for this friendship training!

O'Sensei's Memorial Service & Special Practice April 26.

Aiki Kaiso Tsuito Hoyo Oyobi Tokubetsu Keiko

Practice.

8:00-8:45am Ken Watanabe, 4th Dan

9:00-9:45am James Doi, 5th Dan

10:00-10-45am Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan

Memorial Service by Rev. S. Kojima:

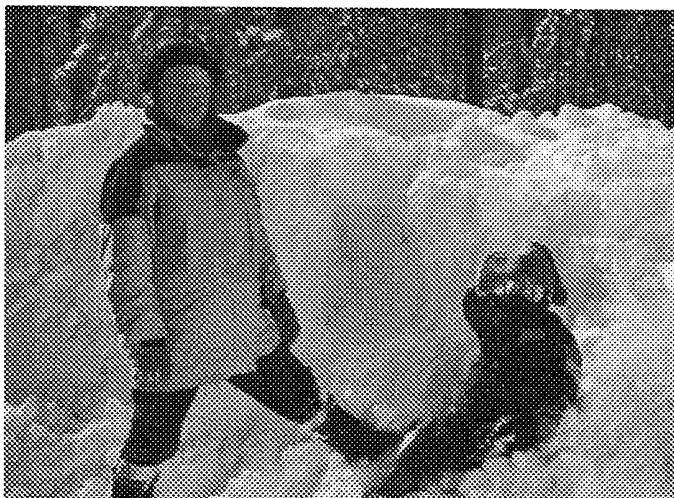
11:00-11:45am.

O-Doki Luncheon: 12noon.

Members: \$10.00. Non-members: \$20.00.

Does not include luncheon. Place to be decided. All students and members of other schools are welcome. (No Iaido today.) Fees go for flowers to O'Sensei. We hope that everyone will attend our special practice and Memorial Service to O'Sensei and we would also like members of other dojos to join us. It will be a wonderful event to get together on this very important day. Thank you.

Fan From Massachusetts:



February 10, 2003

Dear Sensei:

I hope this little note finds you well and in the sunshine of California today. As you know from a couple of my emails I enjoy your website very much and have gleaned many lessons from your book. Your stories, advice and parables can be absorbed on so many wonderful levels. My Tae Kwon Do teacher has it right now and is enjoying it very much. He just moved into teaching last summer in our school and hopes to bring some of your thought to class. He is a 2nd degree. I am very fortunate to have found this fairly traditional school by word of mouth because there isn't much of another way to run across it. Our master has 46 years experience, and is just tremendous.

Your frequent musings on the "busy-ness" of society rings true in our home. As a mother I see a "mobile-motherhood" that has developed over the last few years. Many moms are so busy running around in their vans with their children whose schedules could compete with the highest level CEO. They have no or little time for friendships for themselves or their children. I have even felt like the two car family is a detriment to society. If we were home our children would play in their fancy neighborhoods on their \$4,000.00 playsets that sit empty in the back yards while they have 3 scheduled activities in one day. Families would have more money in the bank because bored housewives would not be spending their husbands salaries on junk from wandering aimlessly at the mall. 7 houses down a mother invited me to join a health club 20 miles away so our sons could play together. I am not spending \$500.00 and driving 1.2 hour for my son to play with a same age child that lives on our street. Ridiculous! Instead we go out to our woods and follow deer and fox tracks. It is a fight each day to remain sane amidst the false competitiveness of family life these days. Oh how I share your frustration! I am at a point where I do not wish to spend any money on anything unless I absolutely need it. All radio and tv commercials entice us to spend and be anxious if we do not. I keep giving stuff AWAY to the

charity box in the parking lot. Food, replace worn out clothing and of course books (ha ha) and my TKD tuition @ only \$40.00 a month is all I want to buy. It must be WORSE in Los Angeles with the trappings of show business.

My husband sees the same thing in his technological world. Everyone is wired to a computer, laptop, palm pilot, or cell phone. Fathers are expected to work 50-70 hours a week and travel at a moments notice away from their families and stay away for days or weeks while the wife is at home going nuts with the children. He is strong enough to say NO. I see single women working the same way and then end up with no time to pursue relationships for husband and family. The technology companies of today are becoming the "mills" of the early industrial era. We have major problems which must be solved somehow. There are moments when I even completely understand why the fundamentalist Muslims hate us and want to bomb us. Am I outraged, obviously. I guess I just need to cast this out to you as a priest with a heart.

Buddhism is supposed to help people. . .perhaps we need more Buddhists in the USA. Despite my obvious angst I am fortunate to have a happy life with a good husband and happy intelligent child. I want you to know that I appreciate your human honesty that you display in your musings. Despite being a priest you are not up on a pedestal away from your own feelings. I hope that your students recognize this and see how lucky they are to have you set this type of example for them to follow. Giving the culture of California you must be a very strong person to have survived out there. In your humbleness I know that you did not wish to be "famous" or a center of attention but with your book, poetry website, etc. you have reached further than you probably ever thought you would. You have been given a big job by the universe and have responded admirably. I pray that I will be worthy of what I am reading. I hope you know that you have a lot of friends out there who feel as you do. . . you are not alone. Thank you, we all pull each other along as we hold the many tensions of living. We must continue to be like those ducks I saw on the ocean paddling away underneath the waves that carried them and the rain that ran off their backs! Just float gently over the waves, up and down, up and down, paddling furiously externally and being centered internally.

I started reading about AIKIDO because somewhere there was a story about a Master who met with an angry and aggressive man on a train in Japan. Somehow he got this person to sit down, put his head down and find a moment of peace. I was one of the most inspiring stories I ever read. In your own way your book and site has provided a place for me to do that and I thank you, thank you. I will continue to read it and try very hard to listen. If you ever come back to Harvard, you are welcome to visit my home for I will cook you a big lasagne or New England turkey dinner. Respectfully,
Lisa J. M. Gambuzza, Pepperell, Mass

David Ito's Grandmother Passes:

Sensei, I just want to let you know that my Grandmother recently passed away. Here is the obituary as it appeared in the Santa Barbara News Press. David

YAMAMOTO, Nobu (Sensei/Teacher), 1901-2003

Yamamoto Sensei, beloved teacher of Japanese sumi-e (ink-brush painting) and Chinese calligraphy at SBCC's adult-ed, peacefully passed away at Cottage Hospital just ten days after suffering a stroke. She had been engaged in a favorite occupation, giving her unique message of peace, understanding, and universal love to the world at a tai'chi seminar. The day before, she had been re-emphasizing the virtue of dedication to and the practice of her ancient Oriental arts in what was to be her last class in a series of almost thirty years. Her passing came only two weeks short of her 102nd birthday.

Sensei (Nobuhiro at birth) was born in 1901. She was raised by a caring nursemaid, her constant companion for many years. Though privately tutored in subjects from the arts to classic regal demeanor, she was a rebel, who was later to become one of the first "women libbers" in a country steeped in the tradition of male domination. In an age when most women stayed at home she traveled to China, Korea, Manchuria, and spent two years in the United States, studying music, dancing and drama.

Back in Japan, she became the first woman to play golf in that country. The men who thought this sport was their private preserve could not argue with the tiny dynamo who stood so tall at less than five feet.

Impressed by Korean culture and unhappy about the Japanese treatment of Koreans under their protectorate, she opened and personally operated a studio in Korea for up to 20 young girls at a time, providing food, shelter, clothing, and schooling. In a Japan where Koreans were unwelcome, she marched her girls in their native dress down the Ginza, donning Korean garb herself and prancing at the head of the column. Her studio went on for many years. She was the founder, owner, and manager of a theater that grew from those humble beginnings. Her shows featured her top students, performers from Japan, and Sensei herself. She was a major draw. Now she is being recognized as having started the first National Theater of Korea. Among her many student is Masami Kuni, thought to be the father of Japanese Modern Dance.

In 1945, she married a Japanese-American soldier, Francis Ryozu Yamamoto, in Tokyo. Their two children, Ellen and Fred, were born in Japan, where their second daughter, Yoko, was adopted. The family moved to the United States in the mid-1970's, and shortly after joined their son, Fred, a student at Brooks Institute, in Goleta. Sensei's first experience in the SBCC's adult-ed program began with an English language course. After observing an art class, she decided to apply for a teaching position. Her many years of studying and practicing sumi-e and calligraphy (since age three) led to her long teaching career which she claimed was her life and would never end. In truth, there will never be an end to her universal teachings. She referred to the next dimension as "that place on the other side of the mountain. I haven't seen it yet, but I know that it will be beautiful."

Sensei carried a radiance wherever she went. People stared at this proud figure, with her gym instructor's posture, dressed in multi-layers of patterns and colors of Oriental garb, as she smiled benignly at all. It was impossible not to be affected by her presence which dominated the scene around her. She claimed to have "drank the sun" at an early age, and certainly her figure, stance and surrounding ambiance demonstrated this to be true. She remained connected to the Universe and now is reunited with It.

Sensei is predeceased by her husband, Francis, and survived by her daughter, Ellen Yamamoto and, her grandsons, George, David and Mark Ito of Pasadena, son, Fred, of Goleta, and daughter, Yoko Yamada of Tujunga.

A fund in honor of her memory has been established at The Foundation for Santa Barbara City College for the specific benefit of the Continuing Education Division, Adult-Ed Art Programs. Mail monetary tributes to: The Foundation for SBCC, Attention: Yamamoto Memorial Adult-Ed Art Fund, 721 Cliff Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93109.

A celebration of her life is being held on her birthday, Sunday, March 2, at Wake Center from noon to four.

Our deepest condolences from all members of the Dojo and Sensei. We also offer our deepest condolences to Kazuo Sato, late husband of Tatsuko Sato former President of the Southern California Yamanashi Kenjinkai.

It is wise to come early to the Dojo to get changed into one's uniform quickly and warm-up adequately before class. Sit down and quiet yourself two minutes before class starts.

From Salamanca, Spain:

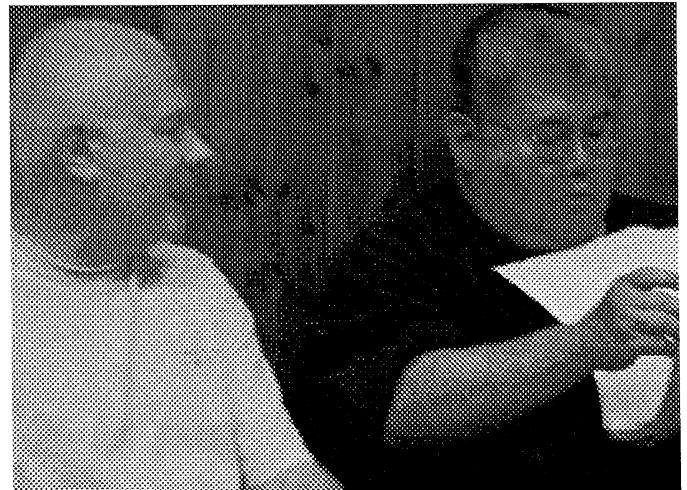
02-04-03: Dear Sensei: I send you our new web address, this web it's make it for some of my students. I hope that you like it even it's in Spanish.

www.usuarios.lycos.es/kodokai

I will write a article one in a month in this news-web, so If some of your studets wont write something for this web, they can do it, I think that it's a good way to keep in touch your dojo and this dojo. And a good way, to the studets to know more about others studets of Aikido.

I know that I don't write you as often that I wish but, I can hear you, and remember you everyday I wear my Hakama to teach or practice Aikido. Always, Santiago, Kodokai

John Stevens Sensei Visits Dojo. Feb. 25



John Stevens Sensei, noted Aikido teacher and scholar, visited Sensei once again to discuss Zen paintings and scrolls. Stevens Sensei works with Shambala Publications in selling Zen paintings on the internet and has just brought over a collection of 80 scrolls for sale. He supplied Sensei with another scroll and shikishi by Nakayama Hakudo Sensei and a very rare one by the Founder of Judo, Jigoro Kano.



During John's last visit in October, 2002.

Letters:

01-24-03: **Tokyo, Japan.** Sensei, I will definitely stop by the Honbu dojo and try to find one of the books you recommended. Thank you. I've been interested in Buddhism for a number of years now. My undergraduate degree is in Classical Tibetan language and Buddhism. So I'm most familiar with Tibetan Buddhism, but through meeting my wife, who is both Japanese and Buddhist, I've come to Japan and developed a deep interest and as of yet a shallow knowledge of many schools of Japanese Buddhism. I must admit that my knowledge of Soto-shu is limited, the emphasis on zazen is most of what I know. Do you have any advice to help the undisciplined mind commit to sitting meditation on a regular basis?

I've been in Japan for a little over two years now, and I really enjoy living here. I'm from Madison, Wisconsin. My name is Irish, though like many Americans, I'm a mix of about five European ethnicities.

Seeing your website makes me almost wish L.A. was my hometown. We plan on returning to the States at some point, and I don't know how good the Aikido dojo in Madison is. I can't emphasize enough how much I am enjoying the Aikikai Aikido training in Itabashi Ward. I hope I can find another dojo half as good when I eventually go back to the States. I know you must be rather busy, and I appreciate the time you take to converse with me. Thank you, (kore kara mo yoroshiku onegaiitashimasu). Quinlan Paris

01-27-03: Dear Reverend Furuya, When ever you make fun of your self, or emphasize beliefs through self criticism, it leaves me with an uneasy feeling. I wish you well on you book projects. You must have considered that the time spent on this forum to be a contribution to the arts. Books only seem permanent. I have tried for years to buy a reasonable priced English copy of Mifune's "Canon of Judo". Finally got to read it off a closed library shelf. Understanding the translation however, turned out to be another thing.

"Life & Death" My query is of the original meaning of the Japanese phrases translated as "the sword of death and the sword of life". Is "the sword of life" standing a hairbreadth's from being struck, poised to strike the enemy should he attempt, or striking down one to save many, or something entirely different. Are any of these meanings traditional ones from Japanese culture? Both explanations were offered to me by different persons. The first being a native Japanese person and the second a occidental student who spent time in Japan. Yours, Wesley Yoshikawa

Sensei's Reply: I do not understand your "uneasy feeling," it is my nature to often kid about myself, and self criticism, along with self-reflection, is an essential and fundamental discipline in the spiritual life. This is not only limited to Buddhism, but to many, almost all, faiths, religions and spiritual practices. Please do not feel uneasy about me or my writings. I try to be as honest as possible and express my feelings as clearly as possible without thought to who I might

offend or alienate. This is also my personal training to express my most inner and most immediate feelings more clearly. . . . My intention is certainly not to make you uneasy! Quite on the contrary, it is you, the reader, who are always a constant and alarmingly faithful source of uneasiness for me! I do hope I can make more progress in getting these books out but I have no intention of halting this Daily Message, I just don't have confidence that I can devote as much time to it as my book projects become more busy.

Regretably, the English translation of the Canon of Judo leaves much to be desired as do many books introduced to the English speaking peoples around this time. Attempting to find a one on one word correlation and come out with exactly the identical meaning is far too unrealistic and naive. Please try to find a rather rare book by Arthur Waley on translation, it is excellent and in 50 years has not been surpassed in explaining translation as art. Arthur Waley first translated the monumental Genji Monogatari and many literary works both from the Japanese and Chinese. I have always admired him as a true scholar and artist!

For a discussion of "Sword of Life, Sword of Death," you might want to break open my Kodo because I refer to it obsessively here and there in the book.

I should like everyone to appreciate that in trying to understand someone, it is quite advisable to more or less, "stand in his moucasins" for a moment. It is quite true in this case as well. This quote does not have an earlier source and must be, I conjecture, from Yagyu Sekishusai's own genius. I do not think he meant it in its most literal sense but to be taken just as it stands and used as a device to deepen and intensify our mental processes. . . . Indeed, it is meant as one of those inexplicable Zen koans.

We continually stand, whether fighting or not, in the midst of this sword of Life and sword of Death in everything we do, every minute of the day. The swordsman is to see this clearly in all of his actions - but, as in real Life, there is almost never a clear-cut reason, rythme or solution - it is just it as it is. And that is all!

We should not look for equivalent words in our language nor should be simply take wild stabs at it and hopefully hit the mark someway. It is like throwing the bow and holding on tightly to the arrow!

And, of course, like the Canon of Judo, we should not lose what we are searching for by merely matching equivalent pieces of the puzzle from one great puzzle to the next.

Need Current Student Membership Information:

There is a new form in the Dojo which we would like all members to fill out so we can update our student membership information. The information is strictly confidential for only Sensei's use. Please fill out this form the next time you come to the Dojo. All students, new and old, must fill out this form. Thanks for your kind cooperation.

**Sensei welcomes all inquires about Aikido
Dojo email: aclafuruya@earthlink.net**

**Children's Class
Every Sunday Morning
9:00am Sharp -10:00am
Protect the health of your children!**

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

www.aikidocenterla.com

01-28-03: **Selecting A Sword.** Dear Furuya Sensei, My name is David Fountain, and on November 14 when I visited your dojo. Thank you again for having me as your guest. I have decided to move to Los Angeles in six to eight months, and attending classes at your dojo.

I am writing you today because I am wondering if you can answer some of my questions. I would like to buy equipment that meets the specifications of your Iaido dojo and my current dojo. Currently I am taking classes in Aikido in Olympia, WA and Z.N.K.R. Iaido in Tacoma. Up to this point in time I have been using a bokken and a borrowed hakama in my Iaido classes. I would like to buy an Iaito, hakama, and obi in the near future, but I don't want to buy anything I will have no use for when I move if I can avoid it. Do you think that this is possible? I would like to hear your thoughts on this situation. I don't know much of anything about the similarities and differences between Muso Shinden Ryu Iaido and Z.N.K.R. Iaido. At my current dojo Yoshikawa Sensei is not very concerned about people's equipment being uniform. My main concern is with buying an Iaito, although I may as well get as much that is interchangeable as I can.

Thank you for your time spent with my letter and the time you put into your daily messages that so many of us enjoy. Sincerely, David Fountain, Olympia, WA

Sensei's Reply: Selecting the proper sword for one's self is extremely important for one's training. Very briefly, one must consider the proper length, weight, curvature and shape of the sword for yourself. Too long or too short, too heavy or too light will greatly effect your training and progress. The style of the sword is also different according to your school and style. Even the mountings or furnishings vary with each style, school and period in history. In this country, there are many swords and training swords not made by trained and apprenticed artists and most of these lack the proper quality and strength for training. The way the scabbard is made, the handle wrapping, and fittings are all made by trained experts. If you cheat on the quality of the sword or if you are cheated with bad merchandise, you will only lose money, time and opportunity. As much as possible, try to get the best sword possible for your training. This is one thing that you just can't cheat on or you will only cheat yourself. I have seen many students try to practice with less than proper swords and it has only proved to be a waste of time from the very beginning. Please be very selective or please get the advice of your teacher. I personally select each sword for all of my students and I have a reputation of being very picky and demanding with my supplier, but this is the only way and ultimately I am respected for it. Many times, the supplier asks my advice in the manufacture of his swords.

01-28-03: Dear Reverend, I purchased and read Kodo some time ago, then loan it to a friend. Well, you know how that goes, it is now in general circulation along with my copy of the video "tampopo" and other enlightenments. I am in many instances unable to say "no" and hope that my loners continue to be appreciated by many others.

Thanks for the reminder, I will flatten my hook. In the late forties, early fifties, my father would occasionally take me fishing in places where there seemed to be no fish. He once explained without presenting a reason that having fish to fish was immaterial to fishing. I recall sitting very still, under a tree shaded from the sun, facing a mirror like dark green bay. Alternately casting bait into its depths until the air cooled and the chill drove us home. In those moments, Life is

as good as it gets. Other times we camped off the southern coast of the "Big Island" of Hawaii, lines out beyond the surf, pounding against the jagged black lava cliff-line, casting for Ulua. There is nothing like a "strike" in the pitch black of the night. The copper bell clatters, we are shocked awake and then dash to the poles, oblivious of danger at the edge of the cliff.

The first is somewhat like practicing Budo. A serious endeavor in a place where "there are no fish". And then there is combat, and all that it must be. My closest experience was waiting for levy to Vietnam while on military duty. The war ended before my call came.

Actually, I was not offended, and thought you would be glad to hear about my feelings, sort of as acknowledgement that you administered "the whack on the back of the head to wake one from the dream of life". Shows how poor my attempt to communicate with you is. When previously writing, I did not recall the source of "Katsujinken, Satsujinto" and in my library I have a recent English translation of Yagu's writing. I will also look there, keeping in mind your advice. Do you have access to the Japanese edition of "Cannon of Judo"? While still expensive, it is more reasonable priced. Sincerely, Wesley Yoshikawa

02-02-03: **My Unknown Student!** Dear Rev. Kensho Furuya: Even though I have started my path in martial arts about six months ago, I have always felt a yearning toward martial arts, the spiritual life and the old ways. I follow the path of Master Funakoshi taught by Brain Fey O'Sensi in Pinellas Park, Florida, director of the SKJF. It is the traditional study of Shotokan and Kobudo.

You may ask "why is she writing me?" Well, I am 35 (almost 36) mother of two and wife of one. I felt the need to personally thank you for your direction you have provided to me with your book KODO Ancient Ways. (This book has been lent to me by my Supervisor at work whom I believe studies Aikido and Iaido, but we never fully discussed what he studies.) Unbeknownst to you, in many ways, you (through your book) have become a Sensei to me. The writing and experience you provided, are practiced by me in my life, whether at work, home or Dojo. I do not claim to understand but a small fraction of what is written, but I believe that as one grows spiritually and mentally, the continual reference to your book will bring new meaning at different levels. I know for this to be true for me. The book is useful for any shoto-juku student and I too will reference your book for anyone who reveals the need for guidance.

I do humbly apologize for any errors that I may have breached in protocol. This is not my intent. Thank you once again, Reverend Furuya, for your shared words and views of wisdom. Best Regards, Laura A. Burke

02-03-03: Will your videos be coming out in DVD format? If not yet- I think if it would be very nice if u can get them converted. Ostad Chan.

Sensei's Reply: Yes, a very good idea!

02-03-03: Dear Sensei, . . . I was up 'til 1:00 am last night reading your daily messages. I really appreciate you and your efforts in trying to teach us and preserve the art of aikido. I have to say that as I practice, I have more and more appreciation for the art. It is many layered, deep and beautiful. Thank you. Kay Sera.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

www.aikidocenterla.com

02-04-03: **Study Class Again?** Dear Sensei, First, I want to thank you for the opportunity to train at your dojo. I really enjoy training there, and appreciate the time and sacrifice that you and your assistant instructors put in to running the dojo and teaching. Today I was reading some of your past messages on the web site (as I do every day) and happened to reread your message from 4/ 28/ 02, in which you touched upon the great deal of misinformation in circulation concerning the martial arts. A study class used to be offered at the dojo but was discontinued before I was able to join. I would really like to learn more about the history of Aikido and the history of Japanese Swordsmanship. But my fear is that I would spend my time reading and studying materials that would be counter productive if I were left to myself without some solid guidance. I was wondering if there was a possibility of the study class being resurrected. If that is not a possibility, what would you suggest I do? I am an avid reader and would gladly read through a list of books you recommended. I realize that you are very busy, and if you don't have time to address my question right now that is okay, maybe you could address it at the next dojo meeting. Thank you again for your instruction and the opportunity you have given us to train. Sincerely, Patrick Kyle

02-05-03: **Nakayama Ryu Aikido.** Good afternoon, Sensei. Good to hear from you and pleased to make your acquaintance. I'm from the Nakayama Aikidokai. I'm trying to remember all the subtleties that differentiate between the different schools of Aikido. In a nutshell, I can say that these are broad categories of what we practice:

iai katta, five kumitachi with a partner and ki no musubi no tachi, about five jo techniques, "translating" the five kumitachi with a jo, plenty of ukemi waza, ki hon dosa, shihon nage, kotegaeshi and ude-gaeshi, five osai waza, kan setsu waza, sutemi waza, taoshi, nage waza. We also practice on occasion with naginata, yari, tanto, hanbo, roku shaku bo. If we're really lucky, a day is dedicated to calligraphy.

If my romaji isn't quite proper, I'm always willing to correct. I've had one year of beginner's Japanese at the U of Calgary, ergo whenever I hear a Japanese syllable ending with "ee", I think it's of the "i" strain of hiragana/katakana.

Also in the Nakayama "train of thought", obi are simply for holding up swords, not a display of rank. I wear a blue obi because I like the colour. *shrug* I'll be sure to let sensei Skoyles know of your appreciation.

02-07-03: **Words From Kodo.** Rev. Furuya, Thank you for the words in your book... "make your worst move your best", pardon the paraphrase. I was doing my most unfavorable kick last night and this just "popped" into my head. The rest of the kicks were more focused. At my level though all my moves are my worst so I can pick any one! Think of the challenge! Your messages sound like "Five Rings", he dreaded flashiness also and martial arts have survived until today. Things have changed...things have not changed. Be well and safe, forge on. Lisa JM G. 9W

02-07-02: Dear Reverend, Thank you for your encouragement. I enjoyed your February 5th page; the part about the Zen scroll. Great example of Ri in Shu Ha Ri.

I had occasion to speak with a judo instructor last weekend and he said that the practice of judo in Japan no longer matched the forms published in any judo book. Not just the kata, but the individual waza.

I guess that the way of winning in competitions has changed the form of techniques. While judo is not my current endeavor, I asked him to demonstrate a throw on me. Expecting to feel his strength, I did not but found myself sweep off my feet. Perhaps the form of the waza has changed but it seems that principles still applied. Seems obvious at first, but at the time illuminating. Somewhat like the Zen scroll. Although some of us lament the passing of the practice of kata, if the principles are maintained that should be enough. Even Kano sensei wrote that he expected judo kata to adapt to changing times.

I read an article translated into English of an interview with Iwata Norikazu sensei who talked about his experience with Ueshiba sensei. http://ejmas.com/tin/tinart_hellsten_1002.htm He recalled that Ueshiba was a very special person, that no one could reach him. Elsewhere I read that Ueshiba sword kata was unconventional. One could state that like the Zen scroll, his art was that of principle not perfection of form. Sincerely, Wesley Yoshikawa

02-09-03: **Deaf Aikidoists Society.** Hello fellow Aikido practitioner, If you have a deaf or hard of hearing student in your Aikido dojo please inform them about a website on deaf or hard of hearing aikidoists from around world. The website is at: <http://www.deafaikidoistsociety.com>. I would like very much to hear from deaf or hard of hearing practitioners of Aikido, or even hearing Aikido practitioners that have an interest about deafness, sign language, and the deaf or hard of hearing Aikido students. Also, I am especially interested in contacting Aikido instructors or senseis/advanced students that know sign language.

FYI, I have been practicing Aikido since 1998 and I do have a hearing loss. I am fluent in sign language and can communicate with a deaf person that knows sign language if necessary. It's my hope to meet other deaf or hard of hearing Aikido practitioners or have them highlighted on my website. It is my hope that even Aikido can transcend even the boundary of silence.

Please forward this letter to others so that they may benefit from contacting me for further information or any questions regarding Aikido and deafness. Thank you for your time and patience reading this email letter. Warm regards, Mike McConnell

Sensei's Reply: Thank you for the mention of our Dojo in your website.

02-10-03: Dear Sensei, Thank you so much for your nice e-mail. I very much appreciate you thinking of me. My life is going along okay. Work is interesting but not too demanding, though I have some studying to do for certifications. I have been taking class three days per week at Aikido Shobukan Dojo and teaching twice per week at Georgetown, and have been able to bring in another teacher to Georgetown to give the students an opportunity to train three days per week.

I have been continuing my zen practice daily, but admittedly it has been sort of a holding pattern. It is a good and necessary part of my life, but since I began this job I have not been delving into it as deeply as I had been before. That is probably why I have not written you recently with additional zen questions. Please know that I will write when I come up with specific questions. Also, I will continue training. I cannot stop.

Continued:

How is your dojo, and how are you doing these days. I still love reading your daily messages on your website. I hope all is well. Please take good care of yourself. Nick

02-23-03: Reverend Furuya, My name is Robert Draper and I recently saw you on the Discover channel. I was trained in Judo and ShintoYoshinryu Jujitsu. How similar are the techniques in these styles compared to those in Aikido and how quick of a transition could be made if a person was to switch to Aikido from Jujitsu? I also noticed that you are a member of the LAPD Civilian Martial Arts Advisory Board. I am a federal agent and work in South Central and do you provide law enforcement discounts? Thank you for your time. Robert Draper, Southern California Division, Mail Theft/Violent Crimes, (323) 586-1972

02-23-03: Hello, My name is Jared Sayilik and I am 18 years old and live in Fresno California, I will be graduating high school in May and decided I wanted to pre-determine at least one aspect of my life's journey before I went to college, so I made a decision to choose a martial art that I would spend the rest of my life both learning, and hopefully later in my life, teaching. My choices were narrowed down (after MUCH research) to 3 arts, these being Aikido, Ba-Gua and the Indonesian art of Pentjak Silat. As you can see I have decided to pursue Aikido... I saw a documentary based on Samurai and other Japanese warriors on the discovery channel, this is what led me to try and contact your school (assuming that I am e-mailing the correct school). Any information about classes, class fees or anything helpful that's pertinent to them would be great (I am very serious about attending these classes, I have considered taking a year before college to do this comfortably), thank you for your time and consideration, JCS

02-24-03: Great, I'll have to get on the ball, but there are a few things I'm left curious about, these being, how long would it take me to learn the basic movements of your Aikido teachings, at least so I could better myself if I could no longer attend classes (I ask not because I am impatient but because my funds will be limited and I will definitely have to make use of them for college). Also, in the Iaido classes, exactly what do you teach, is it your own style, or is it something I might be a little more familiar with, like the school of the Shinkage-Ryu? Thanks again, Jared Sayilik

Sensei's Reply: Move on, my friend!

02-25-03: **Inside Martial Arts on Discovery Channel.** Dear Sensei, You mentioned the "Inside Martial Arts" program, and I thought that you may be interested to know that it is the program that introduced me to your dojo and started me reading your daily messages. I am a Karateka and a Shodoka who has found a great amount of insight in you writing. One of your comments on focus regarding Iaido was of great import to my own studies of a karate kata I was working on, and it also helped me get over a hump in my shuji. You remarked once about being considered mean and how it hurts you. I think your open insistence on your students following the instructions give (in the program) is what made me look up your dojo on the Internet, and also strongly contributed to my continued reading of your daily messages. Sensei, I don't think many people have the moral courage to be openly honest these days, and so if you are open and honest and it rubs people the wrong way, that is their problem.

Respectfully, Raymond Young, Yonkyu Nihon Shuji

Please bring a friend or family member to the Dojo to join our practice. We must always try to develop our membership!

Dojo Health:

From the John Hopkins Medicine Newsletter: Health After 50:
Detailed information is posted on the Dojo Bulletin Board.

A Practical Anti-Aging Plan:

1. Get moving.
2. Don't smoke!
3. Follow a healthy diet.
4. Use supplements wisely.
5. Drink enough water.
6. Avoid excessive exposure to the sun.
7. Reduce stress.
8. Challenge your mind.
9. Limit alcohol consumption.
10. Cultivate satisfying relationships.
11. Consider preventative medicine.



Many thanks to Carol for arranging our New Year's Party!

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

Searching For the Eternal In A World Of Change

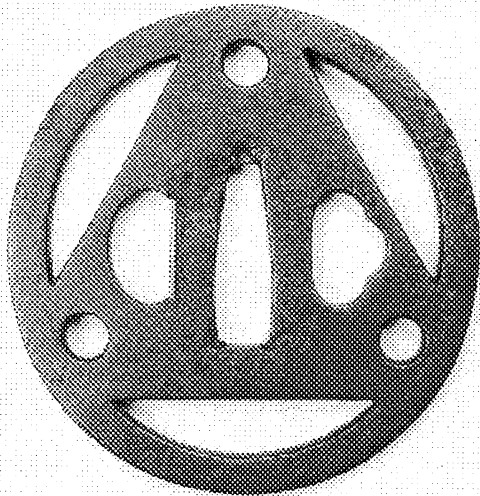
Ancient Japanese would view our world today as "Ukiyo" or the "floating world." This is the pleasure oriented transient world where all things come and go and we just go along for the ride. "All things change" as they say. Perhaps, the only constant rule of the world is that everything will eventually change. Because nothing is permanent, we feel we don't have to care about anything. Values of commitment, loyalty, perseverance, patient, etc. are all wasted in such a world - because all the values we respect and hold dear belong to a more stable permanent world. . . . which we can never seem to grasp.

In Aikido we speak of spontaneity and formlessness yet, even this has a constant rule - indeed, this has its own form, just as it has its own Nature.

Like water whose nature is constant change follows its own nature as a constant rule - despite the constant world of change - this is, in itself - the eternal form which never changes.

In Aikido, through change, we seek realization into what is unchanging in this world. Our practice must always remain constant and follow the strict rule of thumb.

When we begin to understand this, we finally touch what is eternal. The eternal is what is Order - seed of harmony



The above is an example of the Yagyū "Sansei-Sangaku" (Three Start Three Angle) tsuba. This is also known as the "San gaku" of "Three Teachings" tsuba of the Yagyū Shinkage Ryu secret teachings. The stars represent the infinite universe. Yet the Universe represented by these stars fit into the eternal form of the triangle. This is the unchanging form of the Universe, we try to touch in our training.

The ancients went far to penetrate the deeper wisdoms, we have no time to bother with such things it seems in this day and age. Please keep up Aikido & Iaido training at all costs!

Introductory Sword Class

Every Thursday, 7:45-8:15pm

Affiliated Branch Dojos

Aikido Kodokai
Salamanca, Spain
Santiago Garcia Almaraz

Hacienda La Puente Aikikai
La Puente, California
Tom Williams

Wyoming Aikikai
Sheridan, Wyoming
Tom McIntrye

Bahamas Aikikai
Grand Freeport, Bahamas
Seymour Clay

Jalisco Aikikai
Jalisco, Mexico
Eric Jaracho

Aikido of Guadalajara
Guadalajara, Mexico
Raul Blackaller

Aikido of Puerto Vallarta
Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
Eric Jaracho, Raffi Badalian

Association D'Aikido Pour Demain
Paris, France
Cyril Danan

Aikikan
Rehovot, Israel
Ze'ev Erlich

Valladolid Aikido Dojo
Valladolid, Spain
Felix Ares

All Black Belt Candidate Recommendations:

Please attend all intermediate & advanced classes.

Please attend monthly early Morning Intensive. 6:30-8:00am. Early morning training is to honor O'Sensei's practice.

Please attend and assist Sunday morning Children's Class. This is the best training to become a good Aikido instructor. Strongly recommended for all Black Belt candidates and Dan Promotion candidates.

Please attend Aikido Study Class on Fridays to gain essential background knowledge in the traditions, roots, and philosophy of Aikido.

We're Getting Ready! 2004: Our Dojo's 30th Anniversary

We are getting ready to celebrate our 30th Anniversary of the establishment of our Dojo in 1974. Our Dojo was first established in Silverlake in a gymnasium where Sensei was studying gymnastics. The Dojo moved to Hollywood in 1979 when the old properties went up for sale and to Little Tokyo in 1984 when the Dojo required a full time training schedule. We should all help out in this project.

Building Our Membership

Students should make an effort to help build up our membership. This is always an ongoing project with the Dojo. Students come and go so there is always a natural attrition of the student body. Expenses, as you know, are always increasing year by year. We do not need to hard sell or drag them in by force but an enthusiastic awareness in each student is important in talking with friends and family members to encourage them to begin Aikido practice. An encouraging spirit to always help and build up our Dojo is important and part of our practice and being a good member of the Dojo.

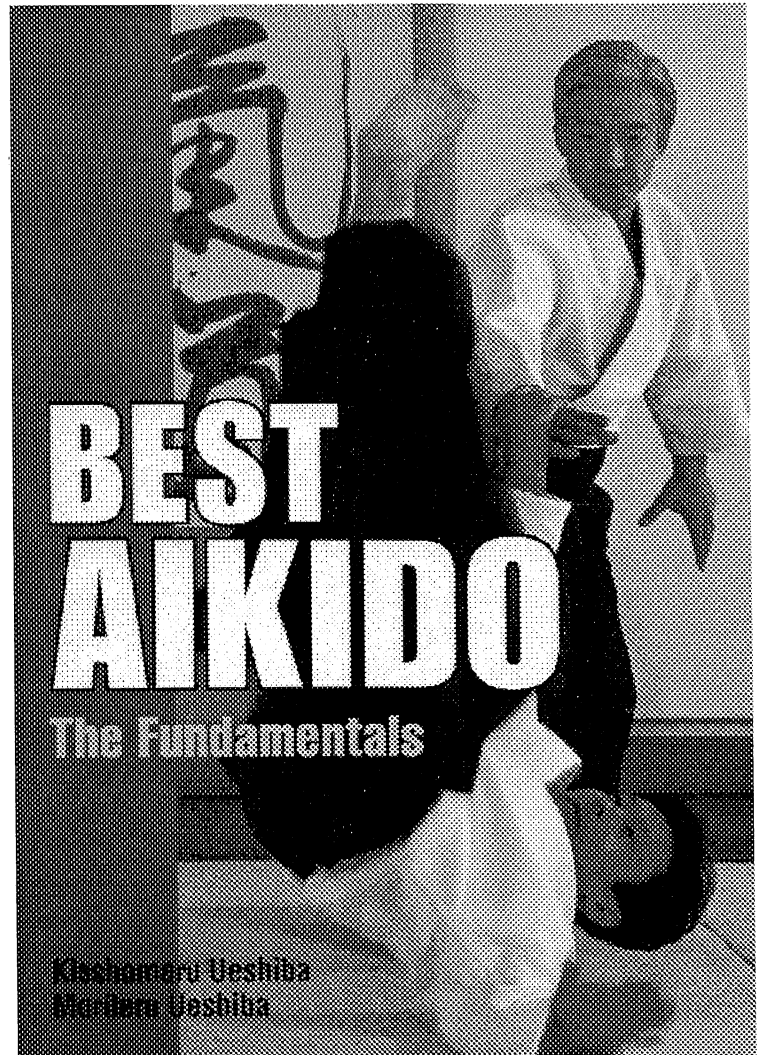
Rates Change From Jan 1st.

After over five years, we are forced to raise our rates to \$105.00 for adults and \$115.00 for Black Belt Holders. Children's rates will remain the same. Thank you for your support & understanding.

To Membership:

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

3rd Doshu's New Book



Highly recommended reading by Sensei as today's best reference on Hombu Aikido. Available online or at your local bookstore.



Welcome To The Aikido Center of Los Angeles



Aikido Center of Los Angeles

Our Dojo's 28th Year, 1974-2002.

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

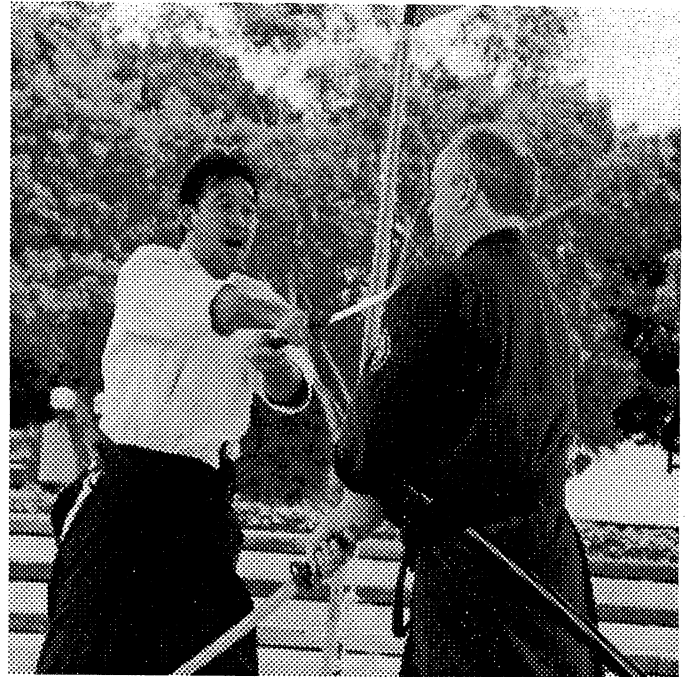
Now available on a custom order basis. Designed by Land's End, nylon in bright yellow with the embroidered Dojo logo. They are very comfortable and great to wear for demonstrations. \$55.00 each.

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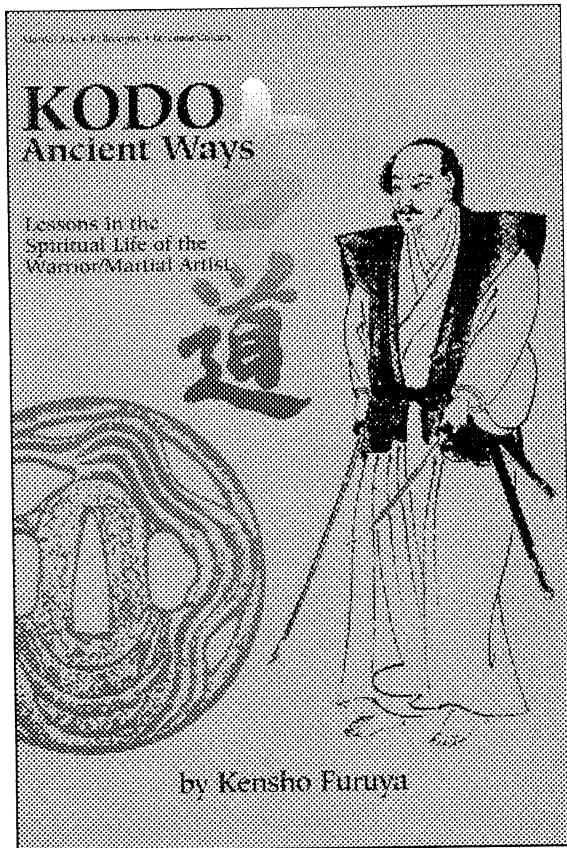
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KODO Ancient Ways: Lessons In The Spiritual Life of the Warrior-Martial Artist



KODO

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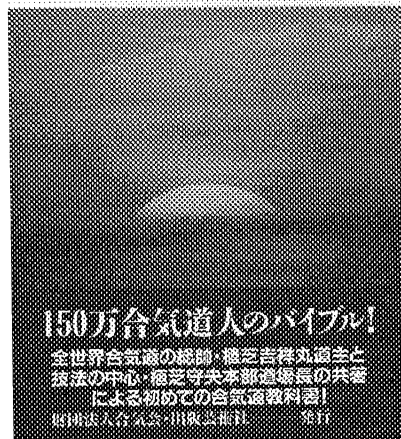
Rev. Kensho Furuya

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\$16.95 + \$3.00 S&H
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Recommended Readings:

規範 合気道 基本編



KIHAN AIKIDO Fundamental of Aikido

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

aikido by Kisshomaru Ueshiba



Highly Recommended:

AIKIDO

By Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba

Other Readings Recommended For Students By Sensei:

Zen & Japanese Culture. D. T. Suzuki.

Anatomy of Dependence. Takeru Doi.

Anatomy of the Self. Takeru Doi.

Mind & The Sword. Hiroaki Sato.

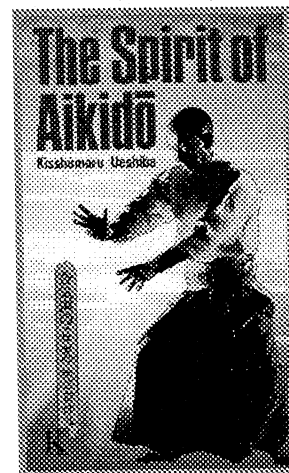
The Book of Five Rings. Musashi Miyamoto.

Records of Things Heard. Dogen Zenji.

Tenzo Kyokun-Lessons of a Cook. Dogen Zenji. Trans. Kosho Uchiyama.

The Unfettered Mind. Takuan.

A Flower Does Not Speak. Zenkei Shibayama.



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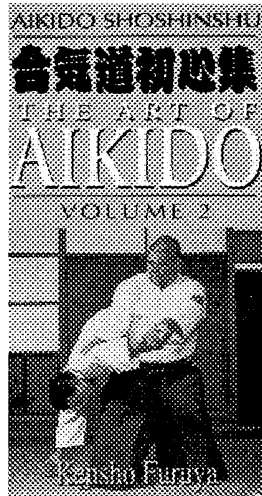
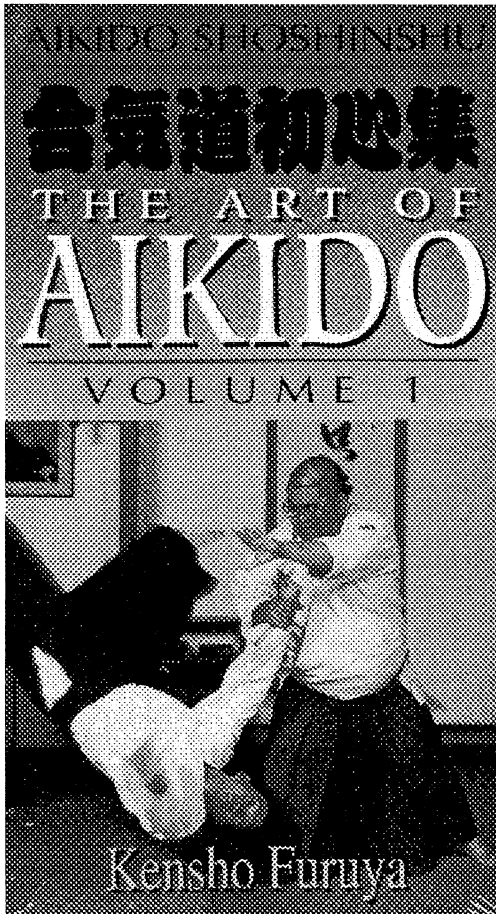
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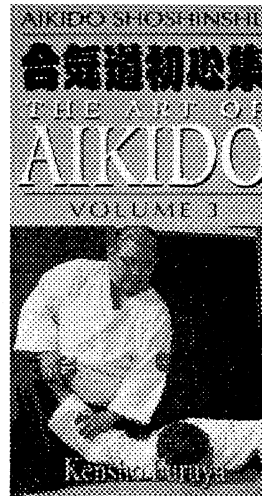
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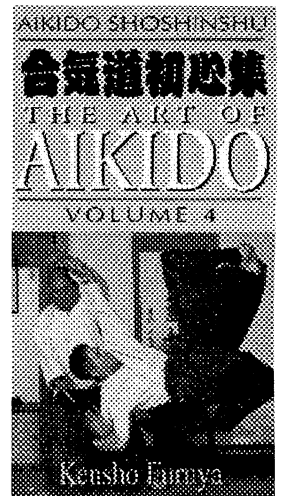
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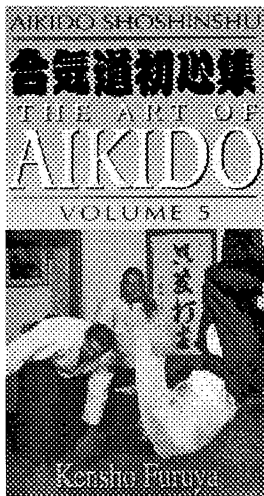
Basic Techniques
Throwing & Joint Techniques
Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo &
Gokyo



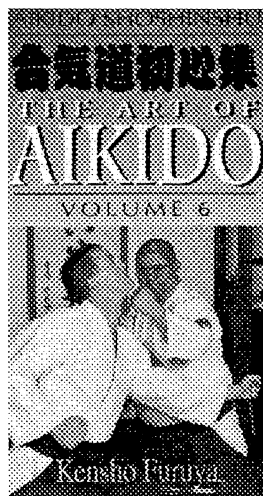
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Basics Continued
Free Style Techniques
Tenshin. Ki. Breathing.



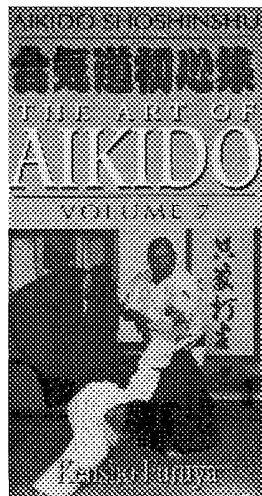
Katatetori Ryotemochi:
Ryotetori: 2-hand.
Reigi-saho: Etiquette.
Koshinage-Hip throws.



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



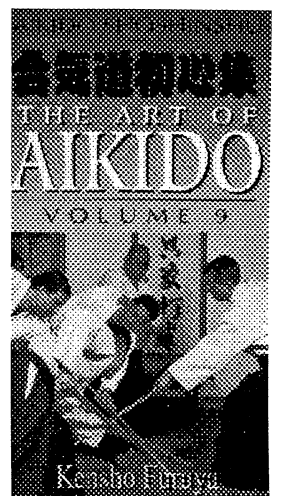
Tsuki: Strikes & Punches
Yokomenuchi: Strikes to the side
of the head & neck.



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

