



The Aikido Center of Los Angeles

道の為、世の為、人の為 合気道

The Aiki Dojo

Direct Affiliation: Aikido World Headquarters, 17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Los Angeles Sword and Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai
The Furuya Foundation

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In This Issue...

Letter From the Editor
by Mark Ehrlich.....Page 1

Finding Treasure
by Mark Ehrlich.....Page 2

“Every Breath You Take. . .”
by Gary Myers.....Page 3

Why I Train
by Dale Okuno.....Page 4

What Does a Black Belt Really Mean?
by Kevin Hoffer.....Page 5

A Mystery of Budo
by Rev. Kensho FuruyaPage 6

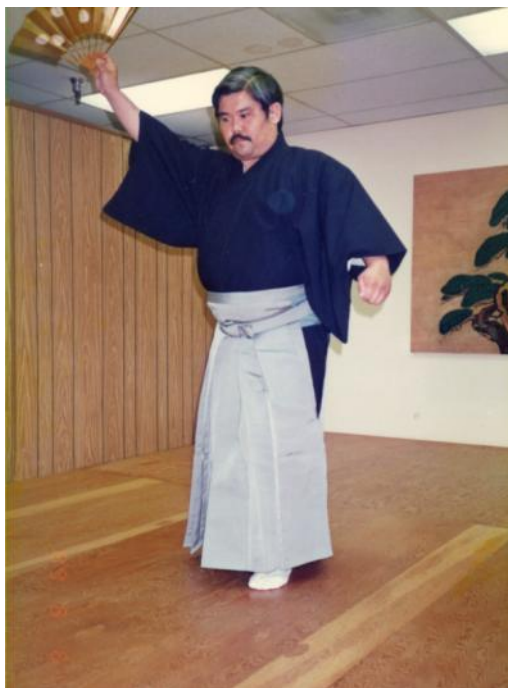
Class Schedule Page 8

Letter From the Editor by Mark Ehrlich Editor, The Aiki Dojo

It’s hot. Hardly surprising for late summer, yet every time I set foot inside the dojo, a wave of oven-like heat slaps into me, and I catch my breath as if in wonder that anyone would consider putting on a uniform weighing a couple of pounds and train in such intense heat. It’s just really *hot*, these days.

Some of us stay away during these times of intense weather, perhaps in the interest of protecting our personal comfort or simply because this time of year marks the beginning of the end of another season. Families take the last of their vacations before school starts, children finish camp or pack up to head off to college, and the sun settles down just a wee bit earlier than it did only a few weeks ago. Some of us, though, train on for whatever reason. Speaking for myself, as uncomfortable as it feels to train in extremes of heat and cold, I find I almost always learn something about the technique or about my resistance to the technique at such times. And for every answer I uncover, a million questions ride in its wake to keep me puzzled, humbled, and engaged. While it certainly doesn’t seem like a vacation at the moment, I think that such

training experiences, at their best, leave us with the benefits of any good holiday: we move forward refreshed, rejuvenated, and return to our daily lives with a perspective just a little bit different, a little more insightful, than we had before the break. After all,



like any experience, we can only get from it what we invested in the first place, so since we’re here, why not give it our best?

This issue of *The Aiki Dojo* focuses on just such a question. Gary Myers considers the very basis of input and output in martial arts by examining the importance of proper breathing. Dale Okuno and Kevin Hoffer, two of our new black belt students, share some insights they’ve

gained over the years and what training means to them now. I relate a story of a recent experience in which I had the privilege to meet someone who knows very well how proper training can change not only the lives of students, but also the lives of everyone they meet. Finally, Sensei would like to whisper some secrets from our archives on how intertwined attitude and training become over time. I hope you give it a good read, and join the conversation; we always welcome your submissions.

Until next time, take care, enjoy the rest of your summer, and happy training!

Upcoming Events

- August 25th:**
Instructor’s intensive
- September 3rd:**
Dojo Closed
Labor Day
- September 29th:**
Instructor’s intensive
- October 28th:**
Children’s Halloween Party
- November 22nd-23rd:**
Dojo Closed
Thanksgiving
- November 24th:**
Instructor’s intensive
- December 1st:**
Dojo Christmas Party

Finding Treasure

by Mark Ehrlich

Editor, The Aiki Dojo

Not long ago a very famous *Nihon Buyo* teacher, Madame Fujima Kansuma, called us through an assistant to ask if she might come pay a visit to Ito Sensei at the dojo after Saturday class. Although surprised, we immediately agreed, and afterwards puzzled over why someone as illustrious as Kansuma Sensei would want to come and see such a motley crew as us.

It turns out that Sensei had studied *Nihon Buyo*, or Japanese classical dance, under Madame Kansuma for some time and held her in the highest esteem, and that she had championed him in the Japanese-American community circles in which they both moved. Knowing this, we resolved to play the role of host to the best of our ability, and to do everything in our power to show this very important person that our own teacher had trained us well and that we had not forgotten what he had taught, or how he would have wanted us to receive her as an honored guest.

Saturday morning, we did our final checks; everything stood ready. When Madame Kansuma arrived, we greeted her outside and escorted her into the dojo, where the students all bowed respectfully and welcomed her as she, in turn, bowed and begged our pardon for any inconvenience with a heartfelt “*Shitsurei shimasu!*”

Kansuma Sensei stood at the entrance, a slightly built, elegant woman, and her energy, kind and gentle though it felt at that moment, easily commanded the room. I had the impression that here stood a teacher who took no nonsense and demanded the strictest discipline from her students, and who held them to the highest standards. Those of us who trained under Sensei detected this familiar edge immediately, and stood a little straighter, focused more closely on her every move and word.

For her part, Madame Kansuma drank in her surroundings and then homed in on Ito Sensei. Sensei offered her a chair, which she politely refused. Some tea? Perhaps some refreshment? She demurely waved off each in turn, but instead presented a gift to Ito Sensei in appreciation, she said, of his work at the dojo.

“You look very young,” she declared. Ito Sensei thanked her and told her his age when she asked. (For those of you who have never met Ito Sensei, it’s true; at this writing he’s something north of 40 years old, but he does have boyish features which can lead one to think of him as still in his twenties. Would that we all had such a problem as this!) Nodding, she announced that she was 94 years old, and quipped that she would visit us again when she turned

100. Like Ito Sensei, Madame Kansuma seems much younger than her age.

A moment later, she thanked us for our time and begged our pardon for the inconvenience, in Japanese and in English, saying, “I just wanted to meet you.” As I helped her into her car, I thanked Madame Kansuma again for the honor of her visit. She asked my name; when I told her, she grasped my hand and held me in a very steady gaze for an instant.

“I love reading the newsletter every month,” she said. “You touch my heart.” And a moment later, she and her assistant left.

I wish I could find the words to describe what I felt in the wake of Madame Kansuma’s departure. Let me try it this way: No one here possesses any skills or capacities that I would call extraordinary. Those who lead ACLA struggle day to day, feeling lost; occasionally we catch ourselves wishing that we knew more than we do, and that Sensei would come down the stairs as he used to do, berating us for our failures and correcting us for the future. But those days have gone forever.



Sensei and Madame Kansuma sharing a moment at ACLA’s 30th anniversary celebration in Little Tokyo

In the midst of our daily struggle, a great teacher – a teacher of my teacher, someone who at this writing still teaches her art after more than 75 years and who has practiced it for almost 85 years – paid us a visit and gave us a gift. As I see it, she actually gave us two: her coming gave us silent encouragement that, as lost as we may feel, we have at least kept within sight of the right way forward. She may not have intended this, but I have my suspicions, and she has my eternal thanks.

In the end, I suppose our actions betray us no matter what we do to fool people, even ourselves. If we tend towards selfishness, we will fail to think of others. If we tend towards laziness, we will sooner or later choose the easy way, even if it does not serve us. If, however, we have the intention to do the right thing with the correct mindset and try every day, however imperfectly, to do things this way, we will move toward something which holds no obvious benefit for anyone, but that a master (or a Madame) can easily perceive and appreciate.

Sensei often said that a good teacher can tell everything about students just by watching them train; he also said more than once that if you can find one good teacher in your life (or, as a teacher, one good student), then you should count yourself as very lucky. Looking back on my experience of this day, I think I’ve come a little closer to catching what he meant: good students and teachers are treasures. Next time, I hope that Madame Kansuma will stay for tea.

“Every Breath You Take”

by Gary Myers, Iaido Chief Instructor

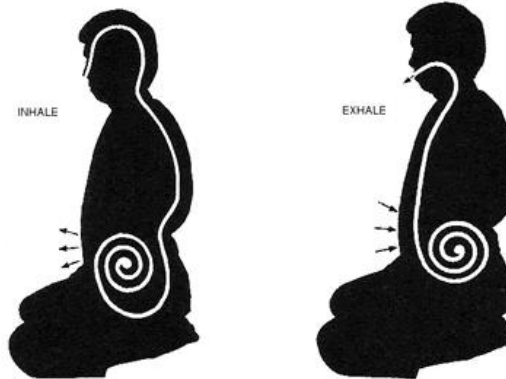
My apologies once more to the rock group The Police for borrowing their song title this time, but my reason for its use will become clear later. We take breathing (inhalation and exhalation) for granted because it is one of those autonomic functions. Breathing just comes naturally, unless we have some respiratory infection or pulmonary problem. In swordsmanship, knowing how and when to breathe is an important aspect of training because breathing and *ma-ai* are interconnected. Breathing properly is an essential component in swordsmanship, because it is very much a part of focus, awareness, posture, and the spirit of Iaido.

Sensei did not dwell on breath control, called *kokyu*, very much. He would simply say that most techniques should be done in one breath; and he also added that most of us would be gasping for breath if we tried it at that stage of our learning. One day, I asked Sensei about breath control, and rather than relating it to Iaido, he told me that his training as a priest also included knowing how and when to breathe. Of course, sitting *zazen* requires breath control, but another aspect of his duties as a priest was reciting sutras, which are a very important part of Buddhist services. One must know the right time to breathe and the depth of the breath so that the sutra can be recited properly. He said it was difficult at first to understand the right timing to the breath. I often think of this conversation when Kojima Sensei is reciting sutras at memorial services.

Different Breaths

We must first understand that there are different breaths that we take. A lot of people just breathe with their upper chest. Most would ask, “Of course, how else would we breathe, since that’s where the lungs are?” Chest breaths are typically shallow breaths, short in duration, that partially fill the lungs with air and only partially expel the breath. If we are out of breath or gasping for air, chest breaths are the quickest way to recover.

The deeper breaths are the abdominal breaths, in which the stomach extends out to allow more space for the chest diaphragm to lower and the lungs to expand during inhalation; then the abdomen pushes in, reversing the process to expel the breath and carbon dioxide. This type of abdominal breathing fills the chest with more air. By pushing in the abdomen, the exhalation empties the lungs to about 80%. Abdominal breathing has several benefits: first, it fills the lungs with more air, oxygenating the blood more, and removes more carbon dioxide; second, it reduces the pulse and blood pressure, allowing for a more relaxed overall feeling. Typically when we get anxious or worked up, the first thing we are told to do is to take long, deep breaths to calm ourselves. These should be abdominal breaths.



Recently at a medical checkup I was hooked up to a monitor that constantly read my pulse and periodically took blood pressure readings. During that time I was breathing with my abdomen. The monitor had a setting that would sound an alarm if my pulse went below 50 bpm. It kept going off and the nurse would come in to see how I was doing. I suggested that she should reduce the target to 40 bpm so that she wouldn’t have to keep checking on me. It has also been documented that many gurus use deep breathing to reduce their heart rates to some incredibly low numbers.

The third type of breathing is done with the *tanden*, the spot several inches below the navel which is considered the traditional source of internal power and energy. It is also the center of gravity for most people. In the *tanden* breath, the inhalation is pushed down and placed even lower in the abdomen, below the navel. This type of breathing is how Iaidoka should breathe before starting their techniques. We should practice this breathing outside of class, so that when we come to the dojo to practice, this breathing occurs very naturally and without straining.

Warming Up

Everyone should vigorously warm up before class to get our muscles moving and stretched properly. This means we should get on the mats as soon as possible. Of course, that means doing clean up efficiently and thoroughly without a lot of chitchat, and getting quickly changed into our uniforms.

When warming up and stretching, we should do exactly that: we should feel our pulse rate go up after a good warm up. Also, part of our warm up routine should be to work on our posture. If we are lethargic in the warm up, then most likely our technique will be lethargic as well. After we have fully warmed up, we should spend time sitting in *seiza* to work on breathing before the actual class starts. So, we warm up, get the blood pumping, and then sit and reduce our pulse through proper breath control. If we do this correctly, we will be in the proper physical condition and mental frame of mind to begin Iaido.

While sitting in *seiza* we should open our mouths and first push in the lower abdomen to exhale. We should inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth slowly and continuously. Do not use either the throat or chest to initiate the breathing in. It takes about 30 seconds of this type of breathing to rid our lungs of stale air and impurities. Eventually we will be able to breathe without having tension in the lower abdomen. Inhaling will not only fill the chest but the feeling is that the air is pushed down into the abdomen. Momentarily hold the breath, then push the air down without force and exertion. It is easier to do this if the muscles of the sphincter and the perineum are tensed. After doing these cleansing breaths about 4-10 times, close the mouth and breathe in and out of the nose also holding the breath in the *tanden*.

Continued on page 5...



Dale's daughter Tomi (pictured at far left) and son Derek (pictured second from the right) when they began training nine years ago

Why I train

by Dale Okuno, Aikido Shodan

I first started practicing Aikido in August, 2003, when I enrolled my two children, then only six and nine years old. I wanted to show them that even Daddy was doing Aikido, to lead them along by example. I was also interested in aikido as a martial art and felt that as long as I was going to be at the dojo while they trained, I might as well make use of the opportunity by working out and learning something myself.

I chose Aikido for my children for several reasons:

- 1) *Aikido is a Japanese art.* Learning it would deepen their cultural understanding of what it means to be Japanese. Becoming good at Aikido would, in a way, make them more Japanese.
- 2) *Aikido is an art that involves learning how to fall without getting hurt.* I'm sure that knowing how to fall without getting hurt helped keep me safe (I did Judo as a young person) in the many sports that I have pursued. Falling out of trees, bicycle riding, gymnastics, football, skating, and skiing are just a few of the activities in which one can get seriously injured by falling incorrectly. From the standpoint of safety, unless you live on a small island, I feel that knowing how to fall is probably more important than knowing how to swim.
- 3) *Aikido is a martial art that provides self-defense skills.* Karate didn't satisfy criteria #2 (above) and after learning a bit about Aikido, I felt it was superior to Judo and one particularly well-suited to women (Judo can be tough for women) as well as men, of course. I believe a woman who knows Aikido will be able to defend herself against most attacks better than with any other martial art. The opportunity to train under Reverend Kensho Furuya, a person who was 100% dedicated to the art and a true master, was a rare opportunity not to be missed. To be sure, our dojo today is still led by very accomplished teachers. I am, together with many new students, very grateful for the opportunity that lives on through their dedication and advanced teachings.
- 4) *Aikido is a discipline that develops one's inner self and character.* Humility, self-discipline, self-confidence, presence, and even learning how to have fun are natural and necessary in the pursuit of Aikido.

What's really interesting is that the reasons I enrolled my *children* in Aikido, the benefits I wanted *them* to get from practicing Aikido, *are the very benefits that I gain from practicing aikido myself.* Though separated by decades in age, the benefits of studying/training in Aikido are the exactly the same for a 50 year old as they are for a 6 year old!

Let's take a look at the criteria for my children, except applied to me:

- Japanese culture. I am Japanese culturally, but I am becoming more "Japanese" because Aikido (and perhaps our dojo especially) has Japanese values embedded in its values and training. My mother would be proud of my progress.
- Learning how to fall. While I don't approach sports as aggressively as I used to, I still mountain bike, snow ski, and climb ladders, so honing my "falling technique" is very worthwhile, especially since the stakes are higher if I fall! I would add that while young people are naturally more physically active, the added workout I get doing Aikido is good for my overall health.
- Self defense skills. I do like that I am developing skills to defend myself and others around me. Trouble doesn't avoid you because you're older.
- Spiritual and character development. Though our characters should be considerably evolved by the time we're adults, I believe we are never done working on ourselves. A saying I often repeat is, "The room for improvement is the biggest room in the world." Some may feel they've reached the end, that there is little room for improvement, but I know that for me the road will never end, that I'll be working on improving myself for the rest of my life. Aikido training is a wonderful vehicle for working toward that end that never comes.

This is why I train.



What Does a Black Belt Really Mean?

by Kevin Hoffer, Aikido Shodan

I have felt for a long time that a black belt means one is considered to have actually begun his Aikido training. That one has trained enough to undo much of her preconceived idea of what Aikido training is, and possibly even what martial arts training in general is. A black belt means one has been taught enough to begin to see much of the context in which Aikido stands. Enough knowledge or experience in the basics of Aikido, which means a teacher knows we have a common “language” in Aikido training to understand what the teacher is trying to show. By preparing for the actual *shodan* test, we learn how so many techniques are similar, and how they differ. How each movement relates to the specific technique, but how these movements all share things in common.

But recently I have come to the conclusion it also means that I do not have the luxury of excuses. If someone has not begun their training in earnest, then the mistakes and missteps that person makes can be attributed to not understanding etiquette, not understanding an aspect of training, or not understanding the role of the student. But by the time we have earned a black belt, we must have a grasp (even if still flawed) of the importance and rules of etiquette, of our responsibility to the dojo, and of the need for selflessness in training. (By selflessness, I mean both from a perspective caring for others while training, but also the continuous need to leave ego out of the equation while training and trying to improve my technique.)

I no longer have an excuse when it comes to understanding my expected role in the dojo. One of my struggles has always been re-

membering that although I am sometimes a teacher outside of the dojo, I have not been asked to teach in the dojo. I do know that it is essential that I try to help newcomers as best I can. But I must balance what I think I know (keep to myself), with what I have been told (things I should pass on). But not to show off things I think people are doing wrong, just because I have a black belt tied around my waist. It is absolutely my responsibility and duty to pass on things Sensei passed on to me in my time with him, as wholly intact as possible. As a representative of ACLA, I must pass on these things I’ve been told as they were told to me. (I do not need to invent anything. If I want to invent something, I can take off my little belt, hang it in a frame and go study or practice some other art.) I have no excuse to think otherwise. Of course, unintentionally, I will always color things I say and do with my own personal baggage. Because there will always be newcomers (hopefully), they will be watching me more closely now. They will likely assume I know what I am doing. I no longer have the luxury of saying, “Oh, I’m only a white belt, don’t imitate me.” Or, “This is what I think, but don’t listen to me, I’m just a *kyu* rank.” I will be watched and imitated whether I like it or not, just as I have tried to imitate all those who came before me.

By bestowing the rank of *shodan* to me, I have been publicly acknowledged for my skill and fortitude, with a clear dose of advice as to where my weaknesses are. Instead of waiting for the most improbable moment when all my flaws in technique have been worked out, I have been allowed to wear a black belt, and as such must continue to work on my weaknesses of technique on my own. I cannot claim I do not know where my weaknesses are. I have to guide myself as well. I know enough to see my own mistakes sometimes and must take responsibility for them. And work hard at fixing them.

“Every Breath You Take” *continued from page 3...*

Breathing and Vulnerability

In swordsmanship, it is commonly believed that when we inhale we are vulnerable. When we do *suburi*, typically we breathe in on *jodan no kamae*, when the sword is raised above our head. This breath needs to be a quick breath in, which means it is usually a chest breath. This is why the sword should not linger or get stuck in *jodan no kamae* as we are moving to strike. For example, in Toyama ryu *kumitachi*, the second technique demonstrates a counterattack when the attacker is breathing in at *jodan no kamae* position. In other sword positions, such as *chudan no kamae* or *gedan no kamae*, the breath is a *tanden* breath.

Most swordsmanship treatises instruct us to sense and attack if our opponent has a misplaced breath. This is why it is best for us to breathe when our opponent is too far away to attack. For this reason, inhalation should occur in the *toma* region, or further away. For *kumitachi*, the general rule is that we breathe in only when we are at a safe distance, and hold that breath until we reach the interval for attack; then we partially exhale, keeping some breath in our

tanden when we reach *issoku itto no ma-ai*, and we exhale more at the *kiai* and moment of the strike, breathing in again as we return to our original position.

In Iaido, the breath is always in the *tanden* throughout the technique so there is no opening that we give our opponent. Since we do not do a shouting *kiai* in Iaido, the breath is maintained in the *tanden*; the spirit of the *kiai* is felt internally. The general rule for Iaido is three *tanden* breathes: two slow breaths before the kata begins, and a third held in the *tanden* through the technique until *noto* is completed. This breathing is called *tanden soku* and is the essential breath used in Iaido. As we begin to sit in *seiza* or *tatehiza* position, two relaxed *tanden* breaths should be made. On the third *tanden* breath, we should hold the breath in the *tanden* and maintain it there until we have completed *noto*. For longer *waza* such as *gyakuto*, additional breathing may be required. It is best for individuals to experiment when to breathe during these *waza*, depending on their respective conditions.

As with most things in Iaido, breathing control requires practice, but with diligence, it will become as natural as . . . breathing.



A Mystery of Budo

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

We have a scroll decorating our dojo's tokonoma today: *Ju Yoku Go Wo Sei Shi / Jaku Yoku Kyo Wo Sei Suru*, or "Softness conquers hardness, pliability conquers strength."

Today, we are too obsessed with strength and power. I feel this exhibits an inherent fear of our own human weakness without realizing that weakness is a part of our human nature and humanity. We try to overcome Nature and everything in this world and then feel so weak and helpless because there is not much we can do about it. We do not try to be in harmony with Nature and flow with it. The ancients understood this, but we have lost this wisdom. . . . Even in Aikido, we try to use too much power in our practice, we indulge in too much politics and money, and all this makes us so hard and tough.

When Dogen returned from his training in China in the mid-1200s, everyone asked him what he brought back with him, because usually priests brought back golden Buddhas and precious scriptures and other artifacts to buy prestige and strong backers for a big temple. Dogen replied: "All I have brought back with me is my 'flexible mind.'" Instead of staying in Kyoto, the center of power, prestige, and wealth at the time, he moved into the far country and built his temple on the side of a mountain where it still exists and flourishes today. This embodies the true spirit of practice: to be humble and modest.

We discriminate between weak and strong because we do not understand "true strength" and "true weakness"! True strength and true weakness is exactly the same thing – there is nothing that separates the two. We discriminate between the two, thinking that weakness is bad, strength is good. This is only a duality which we have created in our minds. We must try to understand true strength and true weakness in our Aikido practice and not strut around the dojo thinking that we are tough and strong. It is so important to be devoted to our training with the correct mental state and with the correct effort.

The other day, I saw so many students not really practicing at all. Some were just pushing and pulling, shoving each other around. This is not Aikido practice. I saw some of them strutting around thinking that they were so good and only pretending to be modest. This is not Aikido practice at all. There is nothing worse than false modesty; nothing should be false on the mats!

In introducing a new perspective in training and working more with timing, off-setting the opponent's balance and creating a stronger projection of energy at the moment of contact, many are

having so much trouble. It is actually quite easy to understand but we are still too strongly clinging to the idea of *push* and *pull*. We are still holding on to the idea of "I am good" or "I am a black belt". It is so important for us to feel so important.

Yes, you are important – but acting important is not important. And being obsessed with the un-important makes you unimportant. Can you understand this vital point? Students should concentrate on catching the instruction and trying to practice it on the mat with their partners. It is not *Sumo* to see who can push the other the hardest. It is not a beauty contest either. It is certainly not a stage where you are the star performer!

Merely to glance at the instruction while we sit and think, "Oh, I know that!" and stand up and when we don't understand at all, cover up our false sense of "shame" by jamming the technique of our partner so he cannot do it either makes for such a waste of time! Or, when we can't do the technique, just shake our head with a sour expression to show to everyone around us or to Sensei that "Oh, I don't know this, after all!" Don't waste my time! Don't waste everyone's time!

This waste all comes from ego and shame. A true student recognizes that she doesn't know the technique from the very beginning; because of her Beginner's Mind, she is too anxious to try to do it. If she fails at first, she has no shame because she knows she cannot do it in the first place and is still trying. This student simply tries and tries and has no time to think about her shame or failure, because there is none at all!

Proud students always think, "Oh, I can't do it, so shame on me!" This thought stems from their clinging to the idea, "I can do everything and now I am shamed because I have failed." Shame has nothing to do with whether we can do the technique or not, it is only an expression of our ego

and huge pride within ourselves and the false expectations we have about ourselves. This is not practice at all: this emotion only indulges our own self-pity, pride, and ego.

In the calligraphy class I used to take, I knew nothing, so when the teacher gave us a character to practice, we just started to practice it. We all knew that it was our first time so we never thought ourselves as "good" or thought that we could do it. We just kept practicing over and over, hoping that our characters would eventually begin to look like the teacher's. We took all of his suggestions very seriously – anything to get the character to begin to look right. We knew our writing was not good, so we just kept at it; we had no shame or pride at all! Hahaha!



Ju Yoku Go Wo Sei Shi
Jaku Yoku Kyo Wo Sei Suru:
*Softness conquers hardness,
pliability conquers strength.*

Continued on page 7...

A Mystery of Budo continued from page 6...

There was another student there who was also a beginner and she always went around saying, "I am no good, I am no good!" But, in actuality, she thought she was very, very good! Haha! She would practice a couple of times, and if it was not perfect, she would be ashamed or embarrassed and become very disappointed. Immediately, because of her own shame, she would stop, simply lose interest in the practice, and quit. It was no matter to us if she didn't want to practice on her own but this was not enough for her. Since she didn't want to practice because her results failed to reach her expectations of herself, she also couldn't stand to see others practicing very hard in the class and would come over and bother everyone with distracting conversation, trying to divert everyone's attention to her. After a while, when everyone would begin to ignore her, she became more frustrated and would cause more commotion, actually trying to start fights with some of the others. It was very disturbing and I would always look at the teacher's face but he would only stand there and frown.

This happened almost every class! I thought it was very funny, since I was not the *sensei* here who had to deal with it and didn't have this responsibility! Actually, though, I felt so sorry for the poor teacher. Finally, I noticed that he started to compliment everything she did, whether it was good or not. Every time she would

write something, he would run over and say, "Oh, that is sooooo good!", and she would smile and continue to practice. Eventually, she became too arrogant because now she thought she was "really" good. This time, because she was "so good," she would come over to us and give us pointers or try to correct our writing whether she knew anything or not. Now the teacher was really frowning! Again!



When this happens in Zen practice or in an old-time dojo, the *sensei* might usually say, *Sunao ni nare!* – "Become more weak!" Or, in other words, lose your own concept of strength and goodness about yourself; it all amounts to little more than a false mental attachment.

For some in practice, I would like to say, "Become more weak!" But when I do this, everyone gives me a funny expression like, "Why? I am practicing to become strong, not weak!" Yes, that is right: you do not know true strength or true weakness at all! *Sunao ni nare!!!*

I received this scroll as a gift from a friend of mine who called it, "a mystery of Budo".

No mystery at all.

Editor's Note: *Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his daily message board on July 3, 2003.*

AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES OFFICIALLY AFFILIATED DOJOS

INTERNATIONAL

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Surprise, Arizona

Chief Instructor: Michael Van Ruth
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1211 N. Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (323) 225-1424 • E-mail: info@aikidocenterla.com

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Please e-mail submissions to: info@aikidocenterla.com

Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE

Sundays

9:00-10:00 AM Children's Class
10:15-11:15 AM Open

Mondays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals
6:30-7:30 PM Open

Tuesdays

6:30-7:30 PM Advanced*

Wednesdays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals
6:30-7:30 PM Intermediate
7:45-8:45 PM Weapons*

Thursdays

6:30-7:30 PM Bokken

Fridays

6:30-7:30 PM Open

Saturdays

9:30-10:30 AM Open
10:45-11:45 AM Advanced*

*6:30 AM Instructor's Intensive: last Saturday of the month by invitation only.**

* These classes are not open for visitors to watch.

Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

Saturdays

7:15-8:15 AM Beginning
8:15-9:15 AM Intermediate/Advanced

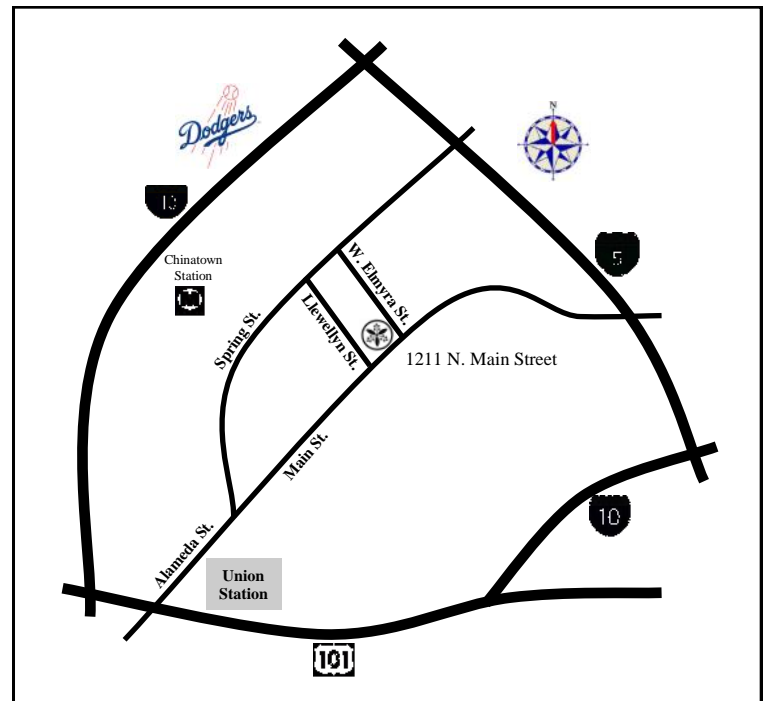
Sundays

7:45-8:45 AM

Thursdays

6:30-7:30 PM (Bokken Practice)
7:30-8:30 PM

No classes on the last weekend of the month.



We are directly affiliated with:
AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Aikido 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 and the present Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.

The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles (ACLA) admit students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.



Finding Our Dojo

We are located at
1211 N. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Telephone: (323) 225-1424
E-mail: info@aikidocenterla.com
We are across the street and one block northwest from the Chinatown Metro Station.

The entrance is on Elmyra Street.

No appointment necessary to watch classes or join:
You are welcome to visit us any time during any of our Open or Fundamentals classes. Please come early.