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Aikido Center of Los Angeles, LLC, 1211 N. Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012, Tel: (323) 225-1424 www.aikidocenterla.com



# 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 & Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai Furuya Foundation

#### December 2008

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#### <u>December Calendar</u>

December 6: Christmas party December 13: Osoji clean-up December 20: Testing December 24-26: CLOSED December 27: Intensive cancelled December 30: Last practice of the year December 31-January 2: CLOSED January 3rd: First practice of the year January 4th: 2nd Doshu memorial January 10: Kagami Biraki party

#### Volume XXVI NUMBER 12



#### Happy Holidays!

In the Dojo by David Ito Aikido Chief Instructor

First of all, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Secondly, I wish Yonemochi Sensei a speedy recovery and good health for 2009. Finally, I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and support this past year.

Since Sensei passed away in March of 2007, we have walked a long and hard road, and the complex inner struggle we felt at the loss of our teacher became exacerbated by moving into our new dojo this past March. Without everyone's support and hard work, the dojo would have failed; thank you for helping us succeed.

The traditional Japanese calendar name for the month of December is referred to as *Shiwasu*, and consists of the kanji for *priest* and for *run*. The literal meaning of "priest's run" refers to the Shinto priests' unusually hectic December schedule, compared with their otherwise tranquil lifestyle throughout the rest of the year. Today, *Shiwasu* refers to people's efforts to ring in the new year with a clean slate, but remains probably the busiest month of the year in Japan: people try to settle their affairs before New Year's Eve by paying their debts, performing *Osoji* (cleaning their houses and businesses), and throwing or attending *Bonenkai*, or forget-the -year parties.

Life moves very fast and the years go by in what seem like moments. Family, job, friends, and life urgently clamor for our attention. Today more than ever, we can easily think of ourselves as too busy for practice, because so many things in life sound like a good excuse not to train. We have to find a balance, however, and that means finding a place in our hectic lives for our training.

Training in Aikido offers one of the few generally accessible paths to personal growth. I believe, as did Sensei, that Aikido is completely egalitarian. The more you put into your Aikido training, the more you will get out of it, both in and out of the dojo. Therefore we must work hard and train as much as we can. Sensei used to say, "You should pick up your sword every day." I think he meant that if you don't use it, you lose it. Please do your best to find balance in your busy lives.

I hope you have a wonderful holiday season.



#### Osechi Ryori: Traditional Japanese New Year's Food

The Japanese consider the New Years holiday the most enjoyable time of the year. Families come home and usually remain together for three days. The highlight of this time of the year is eating all the traditional foods called Osechi Ryori. The food is prepared before New Year's Eve and is eaten for three days beginning New Year's day. This tradition dates back to the Heian period when the imperial court celebrated the changing of the seasons. Japanese people adapted this custom and started cooking Osechi Ryori to leave food for Toshigami or Year God, which visited their homes at this time to leave blessings. In modern times, Osechi Ryori is prepared before the New Year to give people a

break from cooking over the holidays. The foods are presented in three-tiered boxes called *Jubako*.

Osechi dishes each have special meanings: *Kazunoko* (herring roe): *Kazu* means number and *ko* means child, which symbolizes fertility.



#### **Upcoming Events**

December 6: Christmas party December 13: Osoji...End of the year clean-up December 20: Testing December 24, 25 & 26: Dojo CLOSED December 27: Intensive cancelled December 30: Last practice of the year December 31-January 2: Dojo CLOSED January 3rd: First practice of the year January 4th: 2nd Doshu memorial January 10: Kagami Biraki party after practice

*Kuromame* (black beans): Symbolizes health.

Gomame or Tazukuri (small sardines): Symbolizes a bountiful

harvest because the kanji has the characters for rice paddy and to make.

*Kombumaki* (boiled herring or salmon and seaweed): The combining of the fish and seaweed signify a joyous New Year or weddings.

*Datemaki* (fish paste cakes): Correspond to academic success or knowledge because they look like scrolls.

*Kamaboko* (fish cakes): These are red (pink) and white and epitomize the New Year's colors.

*Ebi* (shrimp): Symbolizes long life. *Kurikinton* (sweet potatoes and chestnuts): These are gold-colored and mean wealth. *Daidai* (orange): *Daidai* means generation to generation and is a symbol of fertility.

*Konbu* (seaweed): *Konbu* is similar to the word for joy or *yoro-kobu*.

Tai (snapper): Symbolizes an auspicious event.

*Ozoni* (New Year's soup): The *mochi* or rice cake symbolizes long life.

*Otosu* (alcohol): This sake drink drives away evil spirits and longevity.



#### Akemashite Omedetō Gozaimasu: Happy New Year

Pronounced: Ah-kay-mah-she-tay Oh-meh-deh-tow Goh-zah-eye-mah-sue

あけましておめでとうございます

New Year's in Japan is the equivalent to Christmas and Thanksgiving in the US. Japanese are mainly Buddhist, but about 2% of its population is Christian. However, Christmas is gaining a following in Japan as a gift giving holiday. The Japanized English form of Merry Christmas is pronounced *meri kurisumasu* and is written in katakana as  $3 \eta \eta \eta x \tau x$ .

The days prior to the end of the year you would say, "Yoi Otoshi O," which means "May a good year greet you." After January 1st, you would say *Akemashite Omedetoo Gozaimasu*, which means "Happy New Year." You can say this until January 7th, but not before January 1st.

Akemashite is derived from Akeru which means the dawning or the opening. Omedetoo means to congratulate and gozaimasu is added for politeness.

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**Notes From The Mat** 

by Tom Williams, Aikido 4th dan Chief Instructor Hacienda La Puente Aikikai



As we head into 2009, I find myself approaching my 21st year of practicing and 14th year of teaching Aikido. What really stands out to me is all of the people that I have met in the course of my Aikido training. There are people I met on my first day in the dojo whom I still see occasionally.

You hear how martial art training builds self-discipline. But unless you are very disciplined to begin with, you probably won't last long in the dojo.

I am finally beginning to understand the importance of ikkyo. I

#### Hawaii

by Paul Major, Aikido 1st dan

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, we visited our good friend Heraldo Farrington and went with him to a seminar taught by Mariko Takamizo Shihan from Hombu dojo. This was the first time I have ever been to Hawaii. Hawaii was beautiful and the people were very welcoming. I have never seen so much lush green vegetation coupled with the picturesque ocean. It was indeed just like the postcards. I want to thank Sogi Sensei and Yoshida Sensei for putting on a great seminar and for being so kind to us.

The classes taught by Takamizo Sensei were excellent. She stressed *Kihon*, or basic, techniques and demonstrated many beautiful throws. I couldn't believe her strength. I enjoyed her descriptions of the techniques as well as her teaching style. Takamizo Sensei would go around the mat giving people pointers and letting people throw her too. I thought this was valuable to the students.

Four days of training was hard, but I was able to make it through without collapsing in exhaustion. The people were very friendly,

#### **Happy Holidays!**

by Alvaro Hernandez Meza, Aikido 2nd dan Co-Chief Instructor, Veracruz Aikikai



This has been a year of successes especially in our Aikido practice and life. It has meant the integration to the ACLA where the true Budo and tradition are kept. As part of that relationship, we had the honor to be visited by Kenneth Furuya, Ken Watanabe, Larry Armstrong, Bill Allen, and Paul Major over the course of the year. Their teaching has been a great support to our dojo. wonder how it will be in another 15 or 20 years. I could try explaining it, but I'd rather show it on the mat.

It takes more than a love of Aikido or even good technical skill to be a good teacher. Teaching has a unique skill set that requires several years to develop. There are relatively few great teachers.

Sensitivity before power; control before speed. Relax more and feel how the energy is being transferred.

Kokyu dosa is a great time to review the principles of the techniques from the day's class. Everything is contained within the kokyu dosa exercise.

Regardless of how I am feeling before class, I always feel good afterwards.

"Perfection is achieved not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away." -Antoine de Saint-Exupéry



which brought a real family atmosphere to the training not to mention the delicious potluck; I am still dreaming about the awesome Korean BBQ!

After the seminar, we visited the North Shore and enjoyed shave ice and lots of beautiful snorkeling. I had to resist the temptation to quit my job and move to Hawaii. I want to thank Takamizo Sensei, Sogi Sensei, and Yoshida Sensei for a truly enjoyable experience.

During the last 13 years, we looked for a true teacher and guide to show us the way. Finally when we met Sensei and he took us in as students we knew we were on the right way. When he passed away, we felt deep pain and sorrow, but it gave us a stronger relationship with his senior students and as brothers we keep his teachings and memories alive with honor and pride.

We thank you for continuing support us as a branch dojo and we take this responsibility very seriously. We will work hard to earn this place and reach a good level of practice. I wish that the next year will be full of successes and joy for you all and I hope our relationship gets stronger.

#### HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



**THANK YOU!** by Santiago Garcia Almaraz, Aikido 4th dan Chief Instructor Aikido Kodokai

This year Doshu visited Madrid, Spain to teach a seminar, and it was very similar to when he was in our country four years ago. The primary emphasis of the semi-

nar was to understand and to assimilate the basics of Aikido so that we could develop solid and coherent principles. The seminar concentrated on *tai sabaki* and from this displacement, Doshu developed and explained all the main techniques in Aikido. Sometimes I wonder that because our Aikido is be so bad that whenever visits to us he is able to remember all the things we should be doing.

The reason for Doshu's visit is not to impress us with spectacular throws or difficult techniques, but rather to stress the basic movements of Aikido; ura, omote, kotegaeshi, etc., which are not at the mercy of fashion and are not practiced very much by most students. When I think about Aikido in a pure sense, I remember Furuya Sensei and his insistence on practicing the basics, which in turn developed my appreciation and understanding of the basics. I feel very appreciative and proud to be part of this dojo and it makes me feel lucky to have known such a great teacher

#### like Furuya Sensei.

With this pride, on the other hand I believe that it is our hour to give back to the dojo and Sensei everything it and he have given us. Sometimes we think that by attending class a couple of days a week or paying our dues that it is sufficient to keeping Sensei's memory alive, but in my opinion I believe that is a very poor attitude and that we must do more. I am focusing on the senior students who should contribute something other than just coming to class or paying their dues. If we limit ourselves to this the school will suffer and we will not progress and with time the level will decline and our techniques will too and everything will be worse.

I may not know as much about Sensei as some of you, but I am certain that I know that he was a knowledgeable person and he was always studying and learning for his students. However, things have changed and he is not here to guide us. Many of his senior students are working very hard and assuming many responsibilities so that we can enjoy this wonderful dojo. We need to support them and help them make this task easier as well as be thankful for their efforts. I know that things are hard without Sensei but all of you are so lucky because you have people that are working hard every day and sacrificing parts of their lives to keep the dojo going.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



#### Hacienda La Puente Aikikai Hacienda Heights, California Chief Instructor: Tom Williams

#### Aikido Kodokai

Salamanca, Spain Chief Instructor: Santiago Garcia Almaraz www.kodokai.com

#### Veracruz Aikikai

Veracruz, Mexico Chief Instructors: Dr. Jose Roberto Magallanes Molina Dr. Alvaro Rodolfo Hernandez Meza http://www.veracruz-aikikai.com

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#### Congratulations Nicholas Tanita!

Nicholas has achieved the rank of Eagle Scout with Troop 217







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**Veracruz Dojo Visit** by William Allen, Aikido 2nd dan

At the end of October, Larry Armstrong and I went to the Veracruz Dojo at the kind invitation of Jose Roberto Magallanes Molina Sensei and Alvaro Rodolfo Hernandez Meza, who oversee the Veracruz Mexico branch. Though we were there for only a short while, the schedule was full and productive, and we managed to accomplish quite a bit. The students of Dr. Magallanes Molina and Dr. Hernandez Meza were very enthusiastic, demonstrated great attitude toward Aikido training, and practiced quite vigorously in all of the classes.

We arrived in Veracruz on a Friday morning, and first met the students at Friday evening classes. The first class was the children's class, and the kids ranged in ages from seven to 16, and I had the honor of leading this class. Though I can speak some Spanish, I am by no means fluent, and it was our good fortune to have several people present to provide excellent translation. The children were attentive and well-mannered, and practiced with good energy. The majority of the class was boys, but about a third of the class was girls, and they worked quite well with each other, though the boys tended to practice with boys and the girls with girls. Given their ages, this is fairly normal. There was one area that I felt the children needed to work on more, and that was softening their ukemi, especially the boys. Though it is a great deal of fun to spin through the air and land loudly on the mat, the students do not develop the idea of protecting their bodies very

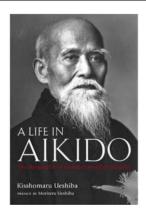
well if this kind of ukemi becomes the norm, so we spent a little time working on rolling without slapping our feet and hands loudly on the mat. We covered a number of basic projections against katatetori, and then went over a couple of coordination exercises that are normally taught in the ACLA Dojo in Los Angeles.

On Saturday morning, we went for a light breakfast, then attended several classes throughout the day. For the most part, the students exhibited the techniques quite well for their ranks. Sensei routinely used to cover technical details of basic waza, so that evening in the first adult class I tried to go over some of these points in ikkyo and nikkyo, and Larry did more of the same in his class. Later that eve-

ning, we went out to celebrate with the instructors and some of the black belts. It was a great deal of fun, and the food, like all of the meals we had in Veracruz, was excellent.

On Sunday morning, we had an extended adult class, and a short children's class, followed by picture taking and a celebration of the 13th anniversary of the Veracruz dojo. It was my pleasure to meet many of the parents of the children, and to discover the respect they had for the art of Aikido. I remember once that Sensei told me that the 13th anniversary of a dojo was special. He said that Kanai Sensei told him a dojo needed to be open for 13 years in order to begin to establish its permanence. (There was nothing magical about the number 13, it just takes that long.) So, recalling that, I would like to again congratulate Magallanes Molina Sensei and Hernandez Meza Sensei on meeting this important anniversary for their dojo.

Finally, on Sunday afternoon, Dr. Magallanes Molina took us to the airport, and loaded us down with some mementos and excellent Veracruz coffee. He was a most gracious host, and really took good care of us during our stay. I was very grateful for the chance to go to Veracruz and meet the members of one of our branch dojos, and I would like to thank all of the members of the dojo very much for coming to practice with us. Especially, I would like to thank Dr. Magallanes Molina and Dr. Hernandez Meza for their hospitality and kindness to us, and for all of their efforts on our behalf.



A Life In Aikido by Kisshomaru Ueshiba

Forward by Moriteru Ueshiba

Translated by Kei Izawa and Mary Fuller

In this engaging and compelling biography, the Founder's son Kisshomaru Ueshiba (the second Aikido Doshu) details the life of this remarkable man, from his early years as a youth in the turbulent Meiji era to his death in 1969. Incorporating many firsthand accounts and anecdotes as well as historical documents, the author weaves a fascinating narrative of the Founder's life, and with great fondness tells of his own memories of the man who would come to be known as O'Sensei – the great master. Ueshiba reveals much about the character and temperament of his father, painting a picture of a man of formidable commitment and spirituality, in both his practice of Aikido and his message of peace. Indeed, his dedication to his art was so strong that through his techniques he was able to attain *kami-waza* – an ability that transcends the human and reaches the divine. This book will appeal to any reader with an interest in the life of Morihei Ueshiba and a desire to discover the real person behind the legend.



Izawa Sensei throwing Mark Ty



Izawa Sensei throwing Andre Brown

#### Happy Anniversary Tekkojuku Dojo!

#### Boston

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

On November 8th, I travelled with Mark Ty and Jacob Sisk to Itoh Sensei's dojo to participate in Tekkojuku's 3rd anniversary seminar in Boston. The seminar was to not only to celebrate the anniversary of Tekkojuku, but commemorate the publishing of 2nd Doshu's book A Life in Aikido, which Izawa Sensei and Mary Fuller translated. The classes were taught by Itoh Sensei, Izawa Sensei, Paul Keelan Sensei, and Richard Stroud Sensei. All the instructors were long time students of Mitsunari Kanai Sensei who founded New England Aikikai and was good friends with Izawa Sensei and Itoh Sensei.

Tekko Juku dojo is very nice and they have a wonderful view of the city. All the students were very polite and friendly. Itoh Sensei demonstrated some explosive throws, which were characteristic of Kanai Sensei. Everyone, even the beginners, took such great breakfalls. I was amazed. Stroud Sensei and Keelan Sensei demonstrated what years of Aikido training looks like at a master's level. I only hope I can be that smooth when I have been doing Aikido for that many years. Izawa Sensei demonstrated many enjoyable throwing techniques. The day of training culminated with a delicious pot luck hosted by of the Tekkojuku students.

One of the best things about the seminar came when the students were toasting during the party. Everyone started to tell stories and reminisce about quirky former students, training experiences and interesting anecdotes about Kanai Sensei. This to me was the so interesting. I never met Kanai Sensei myself, but I used to listen to stories about the "old days" from Furuya Sensei. Everything I know about Kanai Sensei is from his videos, but these stories showed a different side of Kanai Sensei and really brought him to life. He still lives on due to the efforts of many of his long time students. It was nice to see people coming together to celebrate and renew their friendships over training and good food.

they taste good, but because they are the only animal fated to walk sideways. They cannot walk straight forward like all of us, but are fated to hobble along sideways with such oddshaped bodies, a hard shell on their back and too many legs. From where we are looking, how inconvenient to live like that!

In life, sometimes we must walk like crabs - it is not easy to go straight forward in our training, but often we get sidetracked and detoured, blocked and pushed this way and that just like the crab who can never go straight

ahead.

Yet, crabs seem to be happy and content despite this handicap and seem to thrive. With all the trials we suffer in life, we too endure and survive and get along however many curves fate may throw at us. Such is life. The road is never straight - as straight ahead as we would like to go - yet, we still thrive and do well and manage to find a little happiness in life.

In training, it is always "just a little bit," don't you think? We don't seem to make great leap after great leap but hobble along the best we can. This is just fine! I, too, just hobble along mostly sideways - like our tiny friend, the crab.

*Editor's note*: This article is a reprint of a posting from Sensei's "Aikido-Kodo-Iaido" Yahoo group dated December 25, 2004.

#### Reflections

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

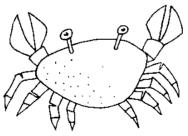
[Christmas is] a time to reflect over my work this last year and look forward to how to teach in the New Year, to refine and improve our training. What did I miss this last year? Where do I need to concentrate for next year? How can I develop myself? How can I develop the dojo? How can I continue to teach and guide my students? Every year I ask

myself and every year I try to do a little better job. These questions are never answered, indeed, the dojo and practice is always a work in progress, never-ending progress.

I think we can beat everything but time. In practice, there is something which changes as the days go by and there is something there which never changes. It is important, I think, not to compromise our beliefs and faith and stay true to the road.

The other day, one of my students was helping me to put away some old scrolls and I happened to pull out one scroll depicting crabs. I think my student thought it was rather a odd thing to paint a picture of crabs, so I took a moment to explain how they are thought of in the East.

To Japanese, there is an affection for crabs, not only because



#### Aikido Center of Los Angeles:

We are a not-for-profit, traditional Aikido Dojo dedicated to preserving the honored values and traditions of the arts of Aikido and Iaido. With your continued understanding and support, we hope that you also will dedicate yourself to your training and to enjoying all the benefits that Aikido and Iaido can offer.

The Aiki Dojo Newsletter Publisher: David Ito Editor-in-Chief: Mark Ehrlich Photographer: Larry Armstrong

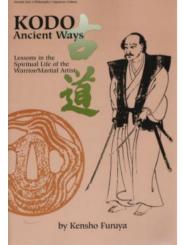
# Recommended Readings:Image: the second reading se

by Ueshiba Kisshomaru

#### $\diamond$ Publications By Reverend Kensho Furuya $\diamond$

by Ueshiba Moriteru

#### Kodo: Ancient Ways: Lessons In The Spiritual Life of the Warrior



By Reverend Kensho Furuya

Highly recommended for all students of the Dojo.

# The Art of AIKIDO

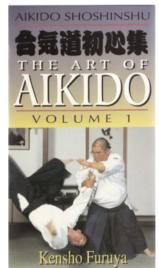
"Top Rated" Karate Illustrated

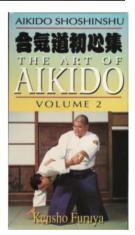
"Impressive Scope" Aikido Today

"Exhaustive" Aikido Journal

"Best in the English language on the market today," Budovideos.com.

This video series is considered the most comprehensive and detailed instructional video on Aikido available today. Clear depiction of each technique and very detailed explanation of all of the fine points.



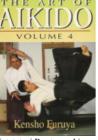


Basic Techniques Throwing & Joint Techniques, Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo & Gokyo

AIKIDO SHOSHINSHU **AGAUMUL** THE ART OF <u>AIKIDO</u> VOLUME 3

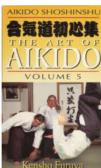


Ukemi-Breakfalling Basics Continued Free Style Techniques Tenshin. Ki. Breathing.

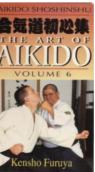


SHINSHU

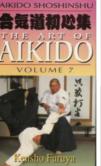
Katatetori Ryotemochi: Ryotetori: 2-hand attack. Reigi-saho: Etiquette. Koshinage-Hip throws.



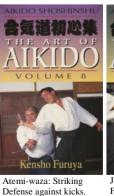
Suwari-waza. Gokyo. Hanmi-handachi. Kokyu-dosa. Katatori: Shoulder attacks Multiple attackers. Five-man Freestyle.



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

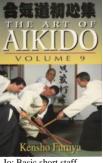


Ushiro Katatetori Kubishime: Chokes from behind. Ushiro Ryotetori, Ryohijitori, & Ryokatatori.



Tanto-tori: Knife defense.

Aiki-ken: Sword Training.



Jo: Basic short staff Fundamentals. Complete 1st Degree Black Belt (Shodan) Examination

# 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 Open 7:45-8:45 PM Fundamentals Wednesdays 5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals 6:30-7:30 PM Open 7:45-8:45 PM Weapons **Thursdays** 6:30-7:30 PM Bokken (Black Belts) 7:45-8:45 PM Open

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

> <u>Saturdays</u> 9:30-10:30 AM Open 10:40-11:40 AM Open

6:30 AM Instructor's Intensive: last Saturday of the month.\*

\* These classes are not open for visitors to watch

### **Meditation Class** Saturdays: 12:00-1:30 PM

#### We are directly affiliated with: AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS Aikido So-Hombu Dojo - Aikikai

17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, JAPAN

We are committed to the study and practice of the teachings of the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba and his legitimate successors, Kisshomaru Ueshiba and the present Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.

The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles 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. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

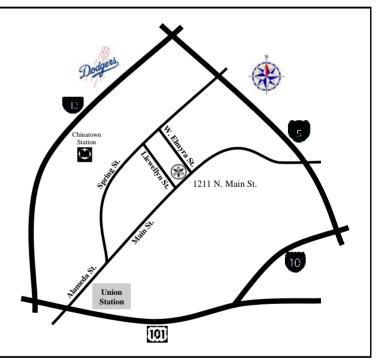
## Iaido training schedule traditional japanese iaido swordsmanship

Saturdays: 7:15-8:15 AM Beginning 8:15-9:15am Intermediate-Advanced

Sundays: 7:45-8:45 AM

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

No Classes on the last weekend of the month. **Private Classes Available.** 



#### 🛞 Finding Our Dojo 🛞

We are located at 1211 N. Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012 Tel: (323) 225-1424 Email: info@Aikidocenterla.com We are across the street and one block north west 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 anytime during any of our Open or Fundamental Classes. Please come early.