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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



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## June 2009

# Volume XXVII Number 6

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## **Upcoming Events**

**June 27**: Instructor's intensive

> July 4: Dojo closed

July 12: Zenshuji Obon demonstration

> July 25: Instructor's intensive

July 25: Teaching Beginners 101 seminar

> July 24-August 2: Students from Spain visit

> > August 1: Promotion testing



Mark Ty throwing Jason Markowski

#### **Training Means Caring** by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

I am always continually amazed at how well the events go at our dojo. Everyone comes together to make our guests truly feel welcome and cared for and this makes me feel very proud. Japanese culture is largely based upon the concept of the host and the guest. It can be seen in virtually all interactions, from dining at a restaurant to shopping at a department store. We can trace this host and guest dynamic back to that of the tea ceremony. In tea ceremony, the host tries to think ahead and ensure that every detail is taken care of so that the guest feels comfortable and at home. The sincerity of the interaction is the host's attempt to show what truly lies in his heart.

Quite often we host people at the dojo for seminars and parties and act as tour guides

as well. Accompanying people around is called osewa (お世話). which means to take care of or to assist. Many of our guests have never been to Los Angeles and it is nice to show them around so that they see everything without wasting time. Every event is always a tremendous amount of work, which requires at least six months of planning and preparation. Our latest event was no different: to our guests everything went seamlessly and without disruption, but that was hardly the case and if you ask the people who assisted me, they will tell you otherwise. At many times, it felt frantic and overwhelming, with many last-minute changes. This undoubtedly happens every time the dojo has an event. So why do we go to such great lengths to look after others if it is so much trouble? We do so because this is part of our training.

### Teaching Aikido 101

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

#### **Teaching Methods: 3 Types of Changes**

In just the few decades I have been training in Aikido, there have been many changes in teaching methods. There are three types of changes that have occurred. The first are natural changes which have occurred through the natural evolution and continued devoted practice of the art. This is the most inevitable and most preferred type of change.

The second change is due to circumstance and situation. These changes occur out of necessity or practicality. Some of these are good and some not. For example, some schools are not able to practice daily or have a suitable practice

area because of the lack of students, support and money. This is simply a practical disadvantage and cannot be helped. It is not a good situation but we try to do the best with what we have. Again, there are areas where there are many ardent and aspiring students but no qualified instructor is available. One who has a dojo open every day and a good practice area should always feel grateful because many serious and earnest students simply cannot enjoy such an advantage.

Because of difficult circumstances or just out of plain and simple laziness, some instructors lower their standards or change the form of practice to attract students and increase their dojo income. This is not a good practice. This is always a difficult situation where we must carefully balance our integrity and honor with the necessity of money and students in order to operate a school and keep it running. Despite difficult times, I believe that we must keep our resolve and not compromise our standards in any way. Unfortunately, this is not happening in Aikido and the martial arts in general.

The third change is due to personal willfulness and is the least desirable of all. In this case, we have turned teaching into a personal vehicle for our own personal advancement and to satisfy our own egos. This is no longer teaching; we are simply trying to impress others or ourselves, thinking that we can do it by using Aikido. These instructors try to entertain their students or try to put on a performance for them. Of course, this is a symptom of our present society where we have confused entertainment and the education or the process of self-cultivation, where we have sacrificed content for superficiality. This is the worst, most fatal situation of all.

#### Teaching Methods: Instructor's View, East and West

Here I feel that it is necessary to qualify myself. I think I may have to do it quite often from now on and I do not look forward to the task. Basically, methods here and in Japan are about the same today. As recently as 10 or 20 years ago, they were not.

In the West, it seems, we use art as a means of self-expression. We control the medium and use it according to our desires to illustrate our thoughts or ideals. As in everything, we bend art to our will. In the East, the artist himself becomes the medium and the channel through which the art is expressed. In many ways, the artist bends to the medium of the art. It is quite a different approach from the West. Al-though it does not produce the broad range and almost aggressive feel-



Sensei teaching class in the old dojo

ing of Western art (Eastern art is much more passive in the broadest terms.), the submission of the ego or will to the medium itself has a great pacifying and purifying effect. This is one of the important goals of the artist himself in the East. Art is not only a form of expression but a spiritually cleansing and purifying process.

#### The Purpose of Teaching

One must continually ask, every day, what is the purpose of Aikido. The true answer is not easy to swallow. Is the purpose of teaching to express our own thoughts and opinions on the subject or is it to teach, instruct and/or guide the student? Perhaps, it is easy to compromise the question by answering: "A little of both." And perhaps, that is the best answer of all. However, at our

level, I believe it is important to control our own egos and concentrate on instructing the student in the best way possible for his own good rather than our own. In my opinion, teaching must be an act of service to others without thought of personal gain.

Don't directly seek the reward of teaching. Just teach for the sake of others and not yourself and see how you are eventually rewarded indirectly.

#### The Concept of Tradition

In teaching, tradition is important. We are trying to hand down O'Sensei's teachings and art to the next generation. This is how Aikido then becomes a living, eternal art of which we are a part. This is very difficult to understand in this day and age. Hopefully, our students will carry the art to the next generation and the next.

However, this is very much like making a Xerox copy of a copy, of a copy, of a copy. The image becomes increasingly vague; therefore, it is an obligation to maintain the art as pure as possible without the distortion of our own personal views.

After years of practice, teaching and experience, the art becomes more a part of us. It will naturally become a form of self-expression. This must be a *natural* process, not a forced or artificial one.

#### What Do You Teach?

Usually we teach to impress others or prove something to ourselves. This is incorrect. When teaching, there should only be one thought in mind – what should the students learn, what do the students need? This is not a recommendation, this is an obligation. The best policy is to concentrate on the basics. It is a good review for the teacher and something the students can never give enough attention to. In actuality, a teacher's worth is proved by how well he can accomplish this. I often hear, "The basics again? How boring!" This only means that this person has not penetrated the deeper meaning of the art.

The worst sin of a teacher is superficiality, negligence and laziness.

*Editor's Note:* Sensei originally published this article in the May 1, 1993 issue of his *ACLA Black Belt Association* newsletter (Vol. 1, no. 2).

### **Aikido Center of Los Angeles**

#### www.aikidocenterla.com

#### Training Means Caring continued from page 1...

*Osewa* is a way to show gratitude and respect and to repay past favors. We care about our guests' well-being.

True hospitality entails not only throwing a great party but also anticipating the needs of others. Everything from the class schedule to the restaurants gets carefully planned. The trained martial artist has good intuition, and one way to develop your intuition is to practice anticipation. People can act very quirky and have many likes and dislikes. Trying to accommodate them is an enormous task to accomplish let alone get it 100% right. If you develop the skill of anticipation, though, your intuition will naturally develop in tandem. You will just know. Think about math and how at first it felt tedious to learn the rules, but now you add, subtract, and multiply rather easily and with little thought.



Larry Armstrong doing Ikkyo with Ruben Martin

Anticipating your guest's needs and performing osewa require the proper attitude. It is better to

have the right spirit than to have the right foods or drinks. A majority of the time you will never get it 100% right, but it is in the striving to get everything correct where you will find the heart and spirit of the host. This striving, however, is not a one-way street; guests will appreciate your efforts and strive to be good guests. They will see by your efforts what intention you hold in your heart.

Sensei once told me that a good teacher can read what is truly in the heart of his students. He will know their intentions and spirit even if they try to hide it. Once long ago when I was a beginner,

> Sensei told Ken Watanabe that I had a bad temper. He was correct; although I never showed it, not even once. Sensei knew. He could read it based on the way I interacted with the other students. The essence of a good guest is not much different. The spirit of the host is conveyed by how much effort he puts into the details of the event. The spirit of the guest sees the burden of the host and returns the favor by being a good guest, and so each develops mutual consideration for the other. We strive to prepare everything ahead of time, take into consideration the unexpected, and calmly adapt to any circumstance. This is the heart of the host and part of our training. This was Sensei's greatest trait. In Japanese it is referred to as kokoro ire, to put your heart into it. Being the host, however, does not mean we become mere servants. When we serve others we understand ourselves better. Sensei once said, "Students get everything handed to them on a

silver platter – yet they have no awareness that they must, in turn, serve others with this same silver platter." The goal of every event is for everyone to enjoy themselves. Everyone did a marvelous job. Thank you all for putting your hearts into our seminars and events. Thank you for being great hosts. Your efforts help bring true tranquility on the mat.



# Aikido Off the Mats

by Paul Major, Aikido Shodan

When people ask me about Aikido, or why I study Aikido, I'm often found lacking a distinct answer that satisfies them. Yes, I think it's an effective martial study, and I certainly get a workout during training.

So could you beat someone up, I've been asked, along with other such questions. No, I say, beginning my study in Aikido was committing myself to never fighting again in my life, if I can help it.

"So what's the point?"

It's a challenging question – what do we take away from our practice in Aikido? I think that for different people Aikido brings something different into their lives, and the hope is that the training that takes place on the mat will transfer into life outside of the dojo. Recently I was exposed, in a very direct way, to how Aikido has been shaping my life.

My grandfather has become plagued with health problems, and is now in a hospice-care type of situation. Taking what opportunity I could, I left the state to be with my grandparents and help with their care. To see someone you love in the latter stages of his life, in need of constant care for even the most basic tasks, is an eye-opening experience. All of us there had to be constantly aware of my grandfather's needs. Coping gracefully and gently with his pride as I and others took care of cleaning, dressing, and caring for him illustrated the real heart of what we say on the mats: *Onegaishimasu*. I lend you my body, please treat me with respect.

Practice in the dojo demands constant attention to our partners. As nage we are executing technique, but also directing the placement of uke. We could throw our uke into a wall or another person, but instead we try to give them space to receive the technique safely. As uke we want to stay safe but allow nage to execute the technique that has been shown, and not put up an unnecessary fight. So, in my experience, there seems to be a sort of inherent mechanism in Aikido training for learning how to be considerate towards and constantly aware of others.

When I had first started my training, I thought Aikido would make me preternaturally aware of my surroundings and give me some sort of 'edge' in my level of perception. Instead I'm finding there's something much more subtle and important beneath the art: developing a caring heart.

On a different note, I would like to take this opportunity to say what an honor it has been to watch our new students progress and our regular students maintain their practice. It is the people of the dojo, perhaps not even Aikido or Iaido in and of themselves, that keeps me coming back.

## Aikido Center of Los Angeles



Letters

To Ito Sensei:

We have arrived safely to Honolulu.

Moriyama Sensei enjoyed meeting all of your students. You have a very good core of students to help you. Thank Mark, Shaun, Paul and yourself for all the driving during our stay. Also, I heard from Mel and Moriyama Sensei that during the Saturday and Sunday tours, Mark was an excellent tour guide. Your hospitality was tremendous. You and your organization took very good care of Moriyama Sensei and us. Also, thank you for spending your valuable time waiting with us at the Emergency Room. Five hours is a long time to be there.

Let me know when you are coming or your students. Also, if you need any type of information for a visit to the islands for practice or just a vacation. I would be totally happy to assist you.

Thank you again and I know we will be seeing you in the islands again.

Paul Yamaguchi, Aikido 5th Dan Pearl City Aikido Dojo

Hello Ito Sensei!

I have to thank you for your hospitality during our stay in Los Angeles at Reverend Kensho Furuya Sensei's dojo. During our stay, I often felt like I was a student of the dojo.

It has been my pleasure to be able to train with everyone as one dojo; many of your students are very good. Your students have demonstrated a huge desire to learn and above all a great regard for other people. The work of your uchideshi was really good; I congratulate them all.

Congratulations also for the way you run the dojo, I'm sure it is not fun, and less so as a Chief Instructor! Thank you for taking us to dinner, and of course the invitation to the seminar, and for teaching us how to eat with chopsticks! Please thank all the people who washed our keikiogis, to the people who made an effort to speak Spanish with us, and to those who we didn't know who made thoughtful gestures, such as the gift baskets.

I apologize for having to borrow a keikiogi jacket to be able to train due to an oversight of mine. Please forgive any other mistakes I made; I hope I have done the right thing at all times and did not offend anyone, if so I apologize, and especially of course in the hope of returning to see everyone soon. Certainly the dojo is really nice. Thank you very much for everything.

Ruben Martin, Aikido 2nd Kyu Aikido Kodokai

#### Aloha mai e Ito Sensei!



I may not be able to attend the Memorial Seminar, but please know that I am with you in spirit this weekend. We will have our own O'Sensei Memorial Seminar on Sunday, with outdoor weapons training at Laupahoehoe Point, followed by afternoon classes

at our Hilo dojo. I've attached a photo of Laupahoehoe Point – we will train near the water on the green lawn area by the redroofed building at left – and I'll greet the sun before class in special memory of O'Sensei, Reverend Kensho Furuya Sensei, and all our teachers on this path of Aiki who have gone before.

Please pass on my Aloha to the dojo, and please have a safe and vibrant seminar!

A hui hou,

Heraldo Farrington Aikido of Hilo

Dear Ito Sensei,

I would like to add my sincere thanks to you, Myers Sensei, Izawa Sensei, Itoh Sensei, and all the instructors and students of ACLA for putting on such a great memorial seminar. Every one of the instructors who presented at the seminar gave wonderful classes, and I was very impressed by all of the students. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank Almaraz Sensei who let me come with him to practice.

In summary, the entire week was excellent. It has been a great honor to train in your dojo with you, all the instructors and students; without their assistance, dedication and efforts, this week would be nothing but a long trip. Needless to say, I was very nervous about going to train with you because I don't speak the language very well, but it becomes easy when you meet an excellent group of people. The environment was spectacular and everyone was very hospitable. It has been a complete training trip; I was able to practice Iaido and Aikido every single day for several hours and I have returned home with many techniques, corrections, explanations, and much work to do.

I wish that sometime you, the other instructors and students have the chance to visit Salamanca. You are always welcome. Thank you so much for the gifts, food, and good training. I will always remember this trip to ACLA and I hope I have the chance to come back again. I would like to apologize for my mistakes including my bad English, and thank you all for being so patient and allowing me to enjoy your dojo.

Salim Suliman, Aikido 1st Kyu Aikido Kodokai



Ito Sensei and the members of the ACLA,

I would like with this letter to dedicate gratitude towards everyone at the ACLA, especially those who help run the dojo. I could list all the names but I believe that listing everyone I want to thank would occupy your entire newsletter. I will specifically mention Ito Sensei and Myers Sensei. They have spent much time and effort so that the seminar would run successfully. This visit has made me reflect on the power of the figure of Reverend Kensho Furuya Sensei and the legacy that he left in the form of this dojo. And I believe that the steps that are oc-



Ito Sensei and Ken Furuya with members of Aikido Kodokai

curring are good and follow Sensei's tradition, and although the Chief Instructors have the responsibility to lead the dojo, the students play an equally important part, since their actions reflect the spirit and present the face of the dojo. I am certain that Sensei would be very proud of all the work carried out during this seminar by all of you. Congratulations to all.

Santiago Almaraz Garcia, Aikido 4th Dan Chief Instructor, Aikido Kodokai

Ito Sensei,

The days that I spent in Los Angeles were something very special and unforgettable. I was very impressed by how much attention your dojo gave us, treating us like your own students. Many thanks for everything.

Personally I found your dojo very impressive when I arrived, and my experience got better during the seminar while learning Aikido from all the Senseis. I liked the many students I met, and felt that every day I learned many things that I could improve upon. I hope that your students can visit our dojo sometime and give us a chance to return your hospitality. Ito Sensei and Myers Sensei, thank you very much.

Felipe Chamorro, Aikido Shodan Aikido Kodokai

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No portion of this publication may be copied or reproduced without written permission from the Publisher. I'd like to thank you for the gratifying experience that I had during our trip to LA. It was not only an opportunity to practice

Dear Ito Sensei and students of the ACLA,

with all of you, to attend Ito Sensei's classes, and to attend the seminar taught by great teachers; it was most of all a sense of feeling of being at home because of the constant attention we received both inside and outside the dojo by all of you. The interest you showed in practicing with us all the time, the lunches and dinners that we shared, the special classes that you taught for our benefit, and many other things. Thank you, Ito Sensei; thank you, Myers Sensei; thank you all.

Pablo Madruga, Aikido 1st Kyu Aikido Kodokai

Dear Ito Sensei,

I want to express my gratitude for your treatment during our stay in Los Angeles; thanks for putting up with me. Thanks to all the teachers who taught classes at the seminar, which I found very interesting, as well as the regular classes we took during the week. This trip has been a pleasant experience for me.

I want to especially thank you for the care you showed towards us, and the special classes that you taught for us, and I'm sure they will help improve my Aikido greatly.

Many thanks also to all the ACLA students for their hospitality. They made our stay in Los Angeles very comfortable, and I am very grateful for their kindness and hospitality. I enjoyed my stay very much. Finally my thanks to Almaraz Sensei for giving me the opportunity to enjoy this great experience. Thank you all.

Gabriel Bernal, Aikido 2nd Kyu Aikido Kodokai

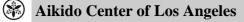
# **Teaching Beginners 101**

Saturday, July 25 10:45 AM-12:45 PM

Beginning student teaching methodology:

- Assessment
- Program progressions
- How to teach ukemi and progressions
- Dos and don'ts

Everyone is invited!





Moriyama Sensei



Paul Yamaguchi





Melyvn Naidas

Makisig "Rico" Imperial

think Sensei, as was so often the case during his lifetime, said it best:

Perhaps our dojo will never have great recognition, but as long as students come to enjoy their practice every day, I will be very happy. Although we may be surrounded by misfortune and unhappiness, I believe Aikido, more than anything else, cultivates the power of faith and perseverance and encourages us to keep going in the face of any obstacle. This is the first teaching in our dojo. I see so many people come and go looking for this or looking for that and I feel so sorry for them. Many times I am saddened because there is nothing I can do. I cannot force people to learn Aikido nor can I force them to stay and practice and yet I am powerless to teach them that what they are looking for is right in their hands. Some students come and practice and make good progress and then say, "Oh, I am not getting anything." They move on continuing an endless struggle. I hope my students will stay and continue their training and learn how to use their strength to overcome the many obstacles life presents us. This is the power of life or faith or whatever you may want to call it. This is the hidden meaning of Aikido. Please continue to practice and you will discover a beautiful power which will sustain you in your darkest moments.

-Sensei, ACLA Newsletter (Vol. 2, No.7), p. 1.

May all of us, guests and students and teachers alike, discover that which will sustain us in our darkest moments; may we also find that which will elevate us to our highest good. Until then, I hope to see you on the mat.



Moriyama Sensei's Visit by Mark Ehrlich, Aikido 2nd Kyu

I want to express my appreciation to Moriyama Sensei and his Pearl City Aikido students (Paul Yamaguchi, Melvyn Naidas, and Makisig "Rico" Imperial) for coming to visit us late last month. They showed great zeal for Aikido and generously took time to share the insights into this often difficult art that they have gleaned over many years of study; collectively I believe they possess over a century of experience. What's more, they completed their visit despite illness and injury and kept their spirits high. I know it was an experience neither they nor we will soon forget.

What left an even greater impression on me, however, was how many of us attended the entire week of training. Having come off our annual O'Sensei Memorial Seminar just a few weeks before, and having a special class schedule that ran rather longer than our typical classes, I would have understood if attendance had been a bit spotty on some days. I felt proud of the dedication to training and to proper etiquette that you all showed as you did your best to come to every class, train hard, and practice some things that you might not have seen before. You showed Moriyama Sensei and his students respect and helped them feel welcome, and I thank you for your efforts.

Seeing so many of us come day after day, I have felt an upwelling appreciation for the legacy that Sensei left us: not only his incomparable technique which lives on various recordings and his students today, but also, and perhaps especially, his dojo, which opens the door every day of the week to give students a chance to train. I've thought long and hard about this and wanted say something eloquent and stirring, but in the end I

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#### **Aikido Center Recommended Readings:** of Los Angeles: We are a not-for-profit, traditional Aikido Dojo dedicated to preserving The Spirit of 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 by Ueshiba Moriteru Editor-in-Chief: Mark Ehrlich by Ueshiba Kisshomaru Photographer: Larry Armstrong

# ♦ Publications by Reverend Kensho Furuya ♦

"Top Rated" Karate Illustrated

"Impressive Scope" Aikido

"Exhaustive" Aikido Journal

"Best in the English language on the market today.

Budovideos.com.

detailed explanation

of all of the fine points.

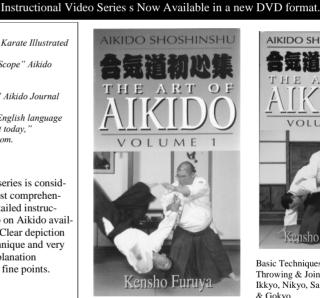
## **Kodo: Ancient Ways:** Lessons In The Spiritual Life of the Warrior

KODO Ancient Ways by Reverend of the Dojo. by Kensho Furuva

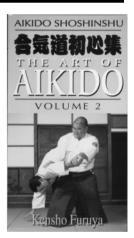
Kensho Furuya Highly recommended for all students

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

Today



The Art of AIKIDO



**Basic Techniques** Throwing & Joint Techniques, Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo & Gokvo





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

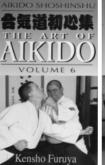


AIKIDO SHOSHINSHU

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.



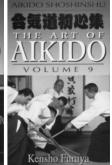
Tsuki: Strikes & punches Yokomenuchi: Strikes to the side of the head & neck.



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



Atemi-waza: Striking Defense against kicks. Tanto-tori: Knife defense. Aiki-ken: Sword Training.



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

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# Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE

<u>Sundays</u> 9:00-10:00 AM Children's Class 10:15-11:15 AM Open <u>Mondays</u> 5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals 6:30-7:30 PM Open <u>Tuesdays</u> 6:30-7:30 PM Open <u>Wednesdays</u> 5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals 6:30-7:30 PM Open 7:45-8:45 PM Weapons

> <u>Thursdays</u> 6:30-7:30 PM Bokken

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

9:30-10:30 AM Open 10:40-11:40 AM Open

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

\* This class is not open for visitors to watch.

# **Meditation Class**

Saturdays: 12:00-1:30 PM

(This class is open to the public and is free of charge.)

### 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. The Furuya Foundation and ACLA 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.

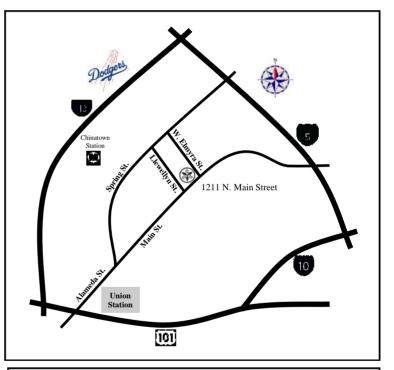
# Iaido training schedule traditional japanese iaido swordsmanship

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.



# 🛞 Finding Our Dojo 🛞

We are located at 1211 N. Main Street Los Angeles, CA 90012 **Tel: (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 anytime during any of our Open or Fundamental classes. Please come early.