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# 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  
Reverend Kensho Furuya Foundation

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## Reverend Kensho Furuya



Furuya Sensei at Hombu Dojo  
Circa 1960s



Reverend Kensho Furuya 1948-2007



Furuya Sensei Circa 1960s

*Editor's Note: This issue is dedicated to the memory of Reverend Kensho Furuya*

### Inspiration Doesn't Always Come From Above

**By Kenneth Furuya, Aikido 5th Dan  
Aikido Chief Instructor**

The last year was full of trials and tribulations. Fighting with the real estate developer who destroyed our beloved old dojo has really taken a toll on a lot of us. When I lack inspiration, which has been quite often in the past year, I try to think of Sensei, his many lessons and all that he has done not only for me, but for all of us. I think about Yonemochi Shihan and all that he has done for our dojo since Sensei's passing. I think about 2<sup>nd</sup> Doshu and think about how difficult it must have been for him after O'Sensei passed on. This is the thought process that I utilize for motivation. In spite of two monumental events in the

history of our dojo, the passing of our teacher and the destruction of our old dojo, the students continue to walk through the front door and train. Over the past few weeks we have received many articles from our black belts and I have read every one of them. Reading each of their pieces has truly inspired me.

I started taking a look around the dojo, a good look. Our temporary dojo has ugly yellow walls. It is dark and small with a little over twenty tatami (mats). When we first moved into the space, we thought to ourselves that no new students would join such a makeshift dojo. They continue to come through our doors and join. They see something within the students and instructors left behind by Sensei. Over the past year,

students have made great progress and the instructors have taken their training to another level and have stepped up to continue Sensei's legacy.

March is the month where we finally start to pay rent on the new dojo. I think it is only fitting that we have Sensei's memorial service in our new dojo. Over seventy tatami have been delivered. It is literally a matter of days before the new dojo will be filled with the sounds and smells of hard training. A new chapter in our lives has begun and it is a bright one, a chapter filled with hope and inspiration as we look to the future. To the men and women of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles, I want to express my gratitude. Thank you for all that you have done. Thank you for inspiring me.

**By James Doi, Aikido 5th Dan**

In 2006, a few days after my father died, I was working in my parent's garden. He was quite weak towards the end of his life, but he tried to tend to his garden even towards the end. While I was trimming shrubs and cutting grass, I began to see my father's personality in all aspects of the garden. It was designed in such a way that it was easy to maintain. It was designed and arranged by some one who actually had to take care of it. He worked as a gardener for fifty years taking care of other people's gardens, so he designed his own garden for ease of maintenance and economy of care.

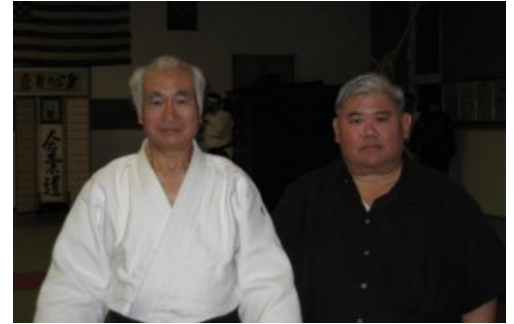
Plants were arranged for esthetics, but also were arranged for very practical reasons, they were placed for just the right amount of shade and ease of access for watering and pruning. Seemingly random stones and bricks were actually carefully placed as guides for the water hose to move freely when one was watering the plants. The stones also protected the potted plants from being knocked over by the hose as it was being pulled though the garden. All sorts of little things that I hadn't noticed before became significant to the care of the garden once I actually started working in it. All these things

were clearly recognizable to me as the work of my father. His personality, his way of thinking, the way he fixed problems, his "spirit" and his "art" were all in his garden. I could "feel" his presence when I was caring for his garden. I took great comfort in this. His presence was not some sort of metaphysical energy, yet was a very real manifestation of his personality.

Even one year after Kensho Furuya Sensei's death, I still feel his presence when his students teach. The dojo is very much like being in my father's garden because of Sensei's presence. After Sensei's death, all of his senior students have been teaching and their individual styles have been emerging. However, because of the precise way that Sensei taught, the Aikido now being taught is consistent and uniform. Sensei always made a point that he was teaching Aikido in exactly the same way that he was taught and that is the way that his students are trying to teach. We (his students) are actually getting a glimpse of O'Sensei's Aikido because of this. In a real sense, we are still being taught by Furuya Sensei.

Even after the short time of one year, now there are students who knew Sensei and many did not. However, everyone is in a very real sense being taught by him and is studying his Aikido. This is a great gift and a great responsibility. The "spirit" of Sensei's Aikido must be learned, mastered and passed on.

I feel that this first memorial ceremony is not so much just to recall Sensei's memory, but rather it is to fully acknowledge his continued presence and to honor and thank him for his teachings.



Sensei and Isoyama Shihan

**By Mark Ty, Aikido 3rd Dan**

I can't believe it's already been a year since Sensei passed away. In some ways, it still feels like yesterday that he was here teaching classes. After quite some delay, it looks like we're just about ready to move into the new dojo soon. As we prepare to do so, I think it's a good opportunity to reflect on what Sensei tried to teach us and what his legacy truly is.

The design of the dojo is truly unique and demonstrates Sensei's deep knowledge of Japanese culture. But as much as Sensei loved our old space and hated leaving it behind, I seriously doubt that's what Sensei himself would have wanted to be most remembered for. It distinguished us from other schools, but it's not what really made the dojo special. Above all, Sensei tried to teach us to be less self-centered and show us how to be aware of, show true respect for, and work in harmony with others.

We shouldn't make the mistake of being so caught up in preserving the face of the dojo that we lose that spirit. Keeping Sensei's dojo alive isn't just a matter of continuing to operate the Aikido Center of Los Angeles; It takes more than a name. If we want to call ourselves his students, we must always remain true to the character and values that he tried to instill in us.



Sensei and Ueshiba Kisshomaru, 2nd Doshu

**By Gary Myers, Iaido 5th Dan  
Iaido Chief Instructor**

No one was more happy to see 2007 end than I was. It was one of the most sad and anxiety-filled years of my life. Sensei's passing in March was followed by my father-in-laws in April. Then in the last three months, both of my brothers and I had cancer scares, from which we are now recovering. I mention this only to point out how life throws us some curves that we either negotiate or we crash into. It hardly seems possible that it's almost a year since Sensei's death. But when I think about how much I miss his corrections, his jokes, his friendship, it seems like a very long time. I can't adequately express how much I miss him.

The times I miss the most were the times when he would go out to dinner with Sami and me. There he could relax and we would discuss current events, old movies and current books we were reading. Those were special times from which the demands of the Dojo and being "SENSEI" could be left behind. He often said that being a true teacher was a very lonely profession which required a lot of sacrifice. He felt there always had to be a certain distance between teacher and student. This distance was a necessity in the teaching process and often not understood by students who felt that getting close to the teacher was essential to learn what made the teacher tick. So the times when he would allow someone to get a little closer were special ones.

Sensei always felt that he would not live to a ripe old age. He said that he had maybe ten years left, but unfortunately that was not the case. There is no doubt that he made the best of the time that he was with us. His contribution to the martial arts and Aikido in particular will be felt for years to come. The consolation we take is that we feel his presence every day.

Through the teaching of his senior stu-

dents, through the architectural features of the old and new dojo and through his book and videos he shows us his presence.

It has been a difficult year for us all, especially Kenneth Furuya as the Chief Instructor and David Ito as Dojo-Cho. Through them and all the members who have contributed their time keeping the dojo running I see the spirit of Sensei manifested in those efforts. There is still a lot of hard work left to bring the new dojo to fruition and even more work for the Furuya Foundation to carry on Sensei's vision for the future of Aikido, Iaido and traditions of Japanese culture.

**By David Ito, Aikido 4th Dan  
Dojo-Cho**

I was a student under Sensei for 17 years and a single day. Before Sensei passed away, Jacob, James and I were chatting with Sensei about a family of bees that had swarmed his house. Jacob made a joke about exterminating the bees with a bokken to get Shodan and in that instant Sensei was gone. I still can't believe he is not with us and not a day goes by that I don't miss him. It still feels like he is going to walk through the door at any moment and scold me. There is a saying that in order to know someone, you should walk a mile in his shoes. As I embark on my own journey as a teacher this first year, I feel like now I understand him a little bit better. Sensei always talked about the life of a teacher being a hard one. I understand what he was talking about now.

It is a difficult balance to manage the spectrum of being too nice and being too harsh. People mistakenly believe that being someone's friend precludes them from being corrected. I really don't want to correct people even though it may seem like I get some type of gratification from doing so. It is quite the contrary. I want people to like me and I am generally easy going, but every time I correct a student it is pains-

takingly for their benefit.

I found this post-it note in Sensei's office dated 6-26-04.

*"All students seem 'bad' if a teacher holds them up to impossible standards and expectations. But, a student shouldn't be disappointed by this. If the student challenges these expectations, he cannot help but carry himself further. If he thinks 'I am challenged' he will only defeat himself in the end."*

I am sometimes jealous of the students because they have someone to guide them and to correct them. There is someone to go to for the answers. Now that Sensei is gone, it feels as if there is no one to guide and correct me. I try to maintain the humble mindset that I am still learning and that I am not devoid of correction no matter what. Hopefully, this keeps my ego in check and enables me to keep growing.

I wanted like Sensei to create an environment where people could come and escape the toils of the outside world. I want them to want to transform themselves into better people and for the dojo to be this place that could help them shed their egos. Since Sensei's death, I have been truly inspired by the efforts and dedication of our students, many of whom never met him. I cannot tell you how this has inspired me and keeps me going. It is a true testament to Sensei's teaching that we all unselfishly stayed together and helped to keep the dojo going. Thank you all for helping me preserve the teachings of Sensei and the world he tirelessly tried to create.



Sensei and David Ito in front of the dojo during a summer picnic.



## Beyond Aikido

by Mike Van Ruth, Aikido 1st Dan

Many of Reverend Furuya's students can testify that our training went beyond that of just Aikido. Even going to lunch with Sensei, cleaning the dojo, or when we were receiving and entertaining esteemed guests were lessons. I have a story outside the dojo that revealed to me the impact that the type of training I received from Reverend Furuya had on my personal life.

While I was at the Cal State Long Beach getting my degree in Ceramic Fine Arts, training under the Chair of the Ceramics department, Tony Marsh. Tony Marsh also graduated from Cal State Long Beach. But before going to graduate school at Alfred University in New York, he went to Japan to train under Tatsuzo Shimaoka, who trained directly under Hamada. Shimaoka is now himself a Japanese National Living Treasure. Tony spent three years in Japan and on his last year he trained under Shimaoka as his personal assistant.

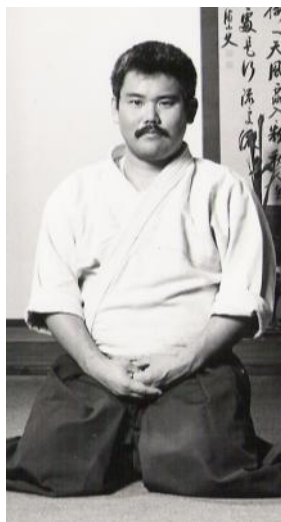
Each summer Tony and I would take a commission to create an art piece for a corporation's office building. The project that summer was a large multi-tile wall piece for the lobby of the AT&T building in Cerritos, California.

We spent one afternoon applying glaze to the tiles for that piece. Tony was in the spray booth applying the glaze while I assisted. I handed tiles back and forth to him, and got him a towel to dry his hands, and tools he needed for the process. Tony isn't a big talker while he is working. We may have said three words to each other the whole time. As he worked, I was always two steps ahead of him. When he was done with a tile, I had another for him. After he rinsed off his hands, there was a towel waiting. He never had to ask for anything. I already anticipated his needs and had it ready before he even knew he

needed it.

At one point, he finally stopped to speak. He said, "I don't want you to take this as an insult, but the way you work is very Japanese." He commented that with assistants he had in the past, he constantly had to give instruction, asking for this and that. They wouldn't pay attention to what was going on. He spoke about his last year in Japan, when he was Shimaoka's personal assistant. He would have everything prepared in advance so when he entered the studio, Shimaoka was ready to work. He would have to anticipate every need and be ready to respond. Tony was curious to know where I would have picked up this "non-western" way of working.

I thought about his comments. It made me realize the impact of the training I received from Reverend Furuya Sensei. His method of teaching from an outsider looking in may have seemed harsh at times. Sensei's special way of constant correction forced students to focus intently, paying attention to every detail in the ever present moment. It is one thing to teach the physical techniques of Aikido, but quite another to train the warrior mind and spirit. May we never lose that intensity and keep that sharpness of mind.



Sensei in the 1980's

## By Shaun Menashe, Aikido 4th Kyu

I do not have 10 years of training, tons of anecdotes and stories. I cannot regale with others and reminisce about years passed. I can only say that in the six months I trained under Reverend Ken-sho Furuya Sensei, I trained with no regrets

I came to this dojo broken down and I suppose very eager to learn. The environment and energy of the school and the dedication and tradition professed by the teacher were awe inspiring. The garden, the armor, the scrolls, and tatami all their own special place in a complex web that ensnared the willing student.

Sensei was a very special man. When he was in the room I forgot my flaws. I felt a sense of direction and I was a better and happier person when I went home.

It is these very feelings that garnished immense dedication and loyalty to Sensei and the dojo. I tried so desperately to be someone that Sensei could depend on and trust and this reverence became my guiding light.

I tried to use these attitudes as a mechanism of change in my daily life. I tried to emulate the attention to detail, the respect for others, the dedication of hours spent drafting the shortest e-mail, the care taken before a lunch with your teacher, the pride in completing the smallest and most mundane task, and the genuine smile on my face from the silliest joke. I try to replicate this every day.

I commuted to the dojo every day that I could. I drove 70 miles round trip at least four days a week. I spent two hours plus in traffic just to barely get to practice by 6:30 PM. I scrounged together every penny and put it towards gas money and snuck out of work every chance I had. Anything and everything

*Menashe Continued On Page 9...*



## Daikaku

By Jacob Sisk, Aikido 1st Dan

I spent most of February in Seoul, visiting my wife's family. One thing I really like to do in that place is to take a day and wander with no direction, taking delight in whatever I find. One day I did this and after a while came to a neighborhood I hadn't heard of with a wide boulevard lined with trees and surrounded by alleys. It was right in the middle of an extremely active part of the city. Looking out over the street, I saw a broad peaked roof above the lower houses within the neighborhood but dwarfed by the high-rises and office buildings surrounding it.

I was drawn to it like a magnet. I found my way into a network of alleys parallel to the avenue and there, behind a gate was a beautiful, quiet Buddhist temple. The temple was in a gated courtyard, one large building with an adjacent bell. It was a humble and serviceable temple; you could see a community center inside where they fed the elderly or taught pottery classes and rows of doors on the upper floors. Perhaps it was a kind of monastery. It was supremely quiet and totally empty but it felt packed full of people, of life. It was very clearly a holy place. It was like it was in some other dimension than the cacophonous, crazy city surrounding it. The quiet, humble, holy little temple was part of the bones of the electric, life

-filled world around it, but wholly other, distinct, different. Not unlike a dojo I once knew in an alley behind Little Tokyo.

None of my wife's family or friends had ever heard of the temple, so I brought her back to show it to her. When she saw the sign above the gate she gave me an odd look and said "Jacob, this temple is called Daikaku. That was your Sensei's Buddhist name. It is a very strange name for a temple!"

"Daikaku" or great awakening, I am told. The moment of enlightenment. Also the name of a famous temple in Kyoto that someday I'll go visit. 10 out of 2599 temples in South Korea are named "Daikaku."

I feel like the whole world has been hinting Sensei's teachings to us this last year after his passing, and the manner of his death was his final act of trying to awaken us, his students. Maybe all of the world is a dojo once your teacher wakes you up a little. The world comes to us as much as we come to it (as David Ito keeps trying to show me) and Sensei's name and the feel of what it was like to be around him in his school had loomed up at me out of nowhere, far from home and unexpected.

So I am not surprised that out there are little corners of the world like our dojo, even sharing our teacher's name, and also struggling to impart the same important, pressing, relevant and valuable lessons that Sensei shared with us on whomever is willing to learn. There will never, ever be another Reverend Kensho Furuya Sensei but he partook in the fullest sense of a noble and ancient tradition and I think that now every good school will feel like his dojo and every good teacher will speak with an echo of his voice.

Like all of us, I profoundly miss Sensei, both the man and the teacher, every day. But the world is filled with strange,

peaceful, important little corners that are, in some way, all named "Daikaku", just as Sensei was. In this sense he is still here, always was and always will be. It was so sweet to realize it!

I thank and honor Sensei for this.

By Roberto Magallanes,  
Aikido 1st Dan  
Chief Instructor Veracruz Aikikai

When I met Furuya Sensei six years ago I was about to take my shodan exam and was asked to write something about Aikido. So I told Sensei that would like to write something about Aikido for daily life, but honestly did not know what I was talking about.

After five years of exchanging e-mail, reading his writings and being with him during his seminars, his unexpected sudden death has shown me that Aikido is for daily life. Watching the seniors students working hard daily to maintain the dojo. Working to preserve the old dojo in the new location shows that Sensei has passed away but has not gone. His spirit has been with us and is keeping us all doing our best to expand and maintain good and true Aikido as he used to say.

I try to follow his teachings in my daily life as professor at the dojo, university, at home and while enjoying my life, family and friends more. Thank you Sensei (still) for your daily life teachings.



Helen Hsu and Sensei

**By Steven Shaw, Aikido 3rd Dan**

When I first came to ACLA, one of the aspects that really impressed me was the discipline of all the students. Specific jobs, specific applications, the attention to detail of the smallest of tasks resonated with all the students. I felt as though the training never ended. The care one took in wringing out a towel after cleanup was the same care demonstrated during kote-gaeshi. Sensei always spoke of how Aikido shouldn't start and end at the door of the dojo. It was something we carried with us every moment of our lives, so why should our attention on the streets, in our jobs, behind the wheel of a car, or on the mats be any different?

I was training with Mariquita Izawa who was promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> Dan recently, and I asked her how long she'd been training. I was humbled by her experience. She minimized it by saying that she'd taken time off to raise her children, but as a father, I know Aikido is intrinsic in parenting. The need to flow with our children and provide support and guidance permeates all we do. Izawa Sensei is always remarking that Aikido is for life. It's not something we master and then move on from to do something new. It is a path we walk everyday of our lives. One of the inspiring lessons from this path is that everyday brings new challenges from which we learn. It doesn't matter if we've been on the path for a day, or

thirty years, we are always learning and always growing, and thankfully we walk together to make sure we aren't wandering.

In the past year I have wandered and walked with purpose through many trials: I started a new job, I fathered my second daughter, I've faced the financial pressure of being the sole provider for the family on a teacher's salary, I've worked through a three month layoff in training, and of course mourned the passing of Sensei. Through it all I have felt a strong connection with Sensei. I never felt alone, and though at times it was rough, I could hear the lessons of Sensei not only in my mind, but also coming out of my mouth as I began to pass on his legacy.

With Izawa Sensei, we are now training in the Lafayette YMCA, and at a school in Louisville. We have Aikido Monday through Thursday, and I teach Iaido Monday and Wednesday. I've even started a Japanese Sword Club at Monarch High School on Tuesdays after school. At the Y, we have thirty tatami mats for training, and I am vigilant about their cleaning. I have taught the students to clean with the grain of the mats, and to wring the towels the way I would hold a bokken. The mats are also used by a Judo club, and I have insisted they clean the mats after every class in the same fashion. When I clean the mats, Izawa Sensei frequently remarks that Furuya Sensei was very meticulous.

It makes me smile because I know Izawa Sensei can see the legacy through me. I know I am bringing honor to Sensei's memory, and that's the greatest thanks I can give.

The transitions in the past year for ACLA have been trying. The move, the temporary space, and the demanded blossoming of new leadership have all been opportunities for growth and development.

These challenges and how we respond to them define us as humans and as Aikidoka. I know that around the world in Spain, Mexico, Los Angeles, New York, Silicon Valley, and even Colorado, we carry on Sensei's legacy. For every person we meet, they are meeting Aikido and Sensei's teaching. Though a daunting responsibility, I know Sensei's legacy lives on within each of us.

**By Kay Sera, Aikido 1st Dan**

One thing I remember Sensei talking about in his e-mail posts was the sense of loss he felt when he lost some of his teachers over the years. I think he was reminiscing about Kanai Sensei. It was a little hard to relate to at that time but I'm sure we all deeply feel that loss now. When I read that I thought of the early death of one of my piano teachers eight years ago. He was 45 at the time. Although I'm a terrible piano player, this teacher opened my eyes and ears to stuff I had no way of seeing or hearing on my own. It's like you don't realize what you don't know until someone with so much more knowledge and experience can point it out to you and push you beyond your limited world and your comfort zone. It was at times agonizing.

In class, I often think about Sensei and miss him terribly. I often imagine what it would be like with him standing there demonstrating the techniques. It was always very special to me when he taught class. As we did our warm ups directed by the senior black belt and I could hear him sort of swishing down the staircase behind us, I would think "Yes! He's teaching today!" His classes were well thought out, extremely well demonstrated and his interaction and scoldings were, in retrospect, well placed. Aikido is a gift and I felt it was his mission to transmit this gift to his students. I felt he really loved and cared about us and knew us more than perhaps we realized. I think that is a sign of a great teacher. To lose a great





## Remembering Sensei

By Jeff Wheeler, Iaido 3rd Dan

I have been fortunate to have been an Iaido student of Furuya Sensei for nearly seven years. As time draws close to marking the first year of his passing, I find that I'm spending increasingly more time recalling memories of Sensei and recognizing what a powerful influence he has had in my life.

From the first time I met Sensei in the late 80's it was immediately apparent that he was one of those increasingly rare and uncommon human beings among us. The context for his life wasn't centered on the rat race and culture of modern Los Angeles, but more closely reflected the deep values and personal discipline of one devoted to living arts. Sensei was a dedicated scholar and traditional teacher who worked tirelessly to instill, nurture and demand the best of his students. Whether he utilized encouragement, his delightfully wry sense of humor or harsh rebuke, it seemed he always taught with intention and the true caring of his heart. Looking back as his student, some of the most valued lessons I attribute to Sensei extend far beyond the challenge of striving for perfection in the execution of Iaido.

Just as important for me were the personal lessons. Lessons that had more to do with the internal struggle of the spirit. Lessons Sensei taught about respect, determination, perseverance, humility and dependability. Lessons about conscious attention to detail, awareness of the needs of others, accountability, service to the dojo and an appreciation for the sacrifices of one's teacher & the teachers before him. Lessons in spirit and example that I am grateful to carry forward in my heart and my life.

I like all who knew him, miss Sensei terribly. His voice no longer echoes in the dojo, but in each of our hearts now.

Sensei's spirit still challenging each of us to move forward, demand nothing less than the very best of ourselves and honor his life by preserving and passing on the arts and values he devoted himself to teaching us.

Norm Lew, Aikido 3<sup>rd</sup> Dan

Like many member of the Aikido Center, I find it hard to imagine that it has been a year since Sensei's passing. I don't think any of us could have thought it possible that he would not be with us today. Even now when I hear the sound of a keyboard clicking away it reminds me of Sensei sitting in front of his computer composing one of many news articles or responding to the letters and e-mails he would receive. I can sometimes imagine him sitting beside the tatami with arms folded with a slight grin on his face asking why I haven't been coming to practice more often, he was always expecting more from his students.

Many of us will remember Sensei as being a very demanding and an imposing figure, but also as a very thoughtful and caring person with a great sense of humor. I can remember on more than one occasion when he would crack a joke in the middle of class or take a moment to inquire about the health and wellbeing of one's family.

Before Sensei's passing, I think many of us, myself included, took him and his teachings for granted. I think there was much we failed to understand about our training. Only now can we look back and appreciate what he had to offer and what he expected from all of us. Even though Sensei may no longer be with us, I believe his spirit and memories will continue to help us to move forward.

On March 6, 2006 we will mark the one year anniversary of Sensei's passing yet we must also note a new beginning for the Aikido Center. In some cases when

a martial art school loses their head instructor a power struggle may ensue within the hierarchy and the school eventually disbands. Fortunately for us it is quite the opposite. If not for the senior members who took on the added responsibility of maintaining the daily operations and Sensei's vision for the dojo we might have found ourselves in a different situation. The entire membership should also be credited for their loyalty and dedication by insuring that our school continues to thrive and Sensei's legacy continues on into the future.

By Tom Williams, Aikido 4th Dan  
Chief Instructor

Hacienda La Puente Aikikai

Breathe in, breathe out: the natural rhythm of life. Something so simple sustains us from moment to moment until a lifetime has been lived.

Expansion, contraction: the way of the universe. Something is given, something returned.

Stillness within movement, movement within stillness.

Student, teacher: lesson offered, lesson practiced. Refined and integrated, until the lessons become part of who we are.

\*

*You can blow out a candle, but you can't blow out a fire.*

*Once the flames begin to catch, the wind will blow it higher.*

Peter Gabriel  
Biko



Reverend Kojima and Sensei

**By William Allen, Aikido 2nd Dan**

In a year, a lot of things happen, and the flow of time slows and quickens, but that is just life going on. Personally, Kensho Furuya Sensei's death is a darkly monumental event in this tapestry of time and life. Extraordinary martial skill, a deep knowledge of Japanese art and culture, an unbending sense of honor and loyalty to his teachers and forebears, devotion to practice, and an almost neurotic perfectionism combined uniquely within this man. He was, perhaps, the greatest teacher I will ever know, and I will always be grateful for everything he was able to pass on.

I recall the evening of Sensei's death very clearly. It is really true that he was in an unusually good mood that night, that there was an advanced class in session (being taught by Mark Ty), and that he passed out of consciousness instantly while he was laughing with his students. It happened so suddenly that we did not even realize Sensei was gone until the doctors at the hospital told us. That evening, many of Sensei's students began to appear at the hospital. Reverend Kojima came from Zenshuji, and it was a great comfort that he knew what to do. At that time I recall looking about the chapel where we were all gathering and wondering when we were going to have class again. I felt so petty for thinking such a thing at that time.

But we did have class again, and just a day or two later. What else could we

do? Now I realize it was exactly what Sensei had trained us to do. As I stated before, Sensei's death hit me quite hard, and it signifies a time of great transition for me, and for everyone involved with the dojo at that time. But when I really think about it, regular practice, like breathing, must continue, and in continuing become nothing memorable or remarkable. We don't give a great deal of thought to our breathing, we just do it, and in so doing we live. So it is with practice. When we continue to practice, we carry on Kensho Furuya Sensei's legacy, which means that we also carry on the legacy of O'Sensei and 2nd Doshu, which is the legacy of Aikido. As we practice, life continues to unfold, and great and small events occur. Along with all of that, changing our minds and bodies, polishing our spirit day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, practice continues.

This year, at Kensho Furuya Sensei's first memorial service, please try to think about everything that Sensei did to pass on the legacy of Aikido, and how you will continue that legacy in your own practice.

**New Year, New Dojo**  
**By Paul Major, Aikido 1st Dan**

The new year at ACLA will see us moving into our brand new space. I've found myself conflicted by the experience. I am really pleased with the new space and how everything will eventually turn out. Yet I have spent a lot of time reminiscing lately about Sensei and our old dojo. The move into the new space will only shortly follow the memorial service for Sensei, and his passing was very difficult for me. Sensei used to mention that after a battle the Samurai custom was to 'strap on the helmet' tighter – to continue preparing and training even

after great upheaval or change. I suppose this also means I shouldn't lose myself to too much sentimentality. I must train as much as I can and look forward to our future dojo with pride and helpfulness. I suspect that's the best way to honor the teachings that Sensei struggled to imbue in me over the past three years. The new dojo is really Sensei's last gift to us, so it's important to me that I do what I can to honor that space and the people in it. I am constantly inspired by the tenacity of the students and instructors here at the ACLA. Despite the numerous entanglements typical with a big move, they have proceeded with great perseverance and fortitude. Furuya Sensei, Myers Sensei, and our dojo-cho David Ito have shown their leadership in myriad ways already, and I am personally very grateful. I think the new dojo is going to be an amazing space for them to teach and train.

On a separate note, Jacob Sisk was my partner during our Shodan examination, and I'd like to take this opportunity to wish him well on his journey to New York. Someone with his intellect and kindness should go far there (and quickly) – but we will certainly miss him! Please come back and train with us soon, Jacob!



Sensei on the 3rd floor of the Dojo



Master Adam Hsu and Sensei



*Menashe Continued From Page 4...*

to be at our school, to be face down in the tatami staring at the weave, dripping in sweat, bruised and battered, and to get instruction from Sensei. I gave up every thing I could to be there and I am so happy and lucky that I did.

Although our teacher has come and gone, this spirit still remains and this path is still open for those who wish to travel down its endless road - to become strong inside and out.

As one of the last students of Reverend Kensho Furuya, I will fulfill the promise I made to always practice hard. This dojo, the students, the memories, the techniques are Sensei's legacy. As students new and old, we must carry on and train, overcoming any hardships to preserve the legacy of our teacher. This dojo was built by sweat and tears and will be maintained by no less. I am so thankful that we have such wonderful and strong students that carry on in the same fashion and so indebted to the dojo leadership for giving us a place to train and carry on the ideals of our teacher and founder.

**By Maria Murakawa,  
Aikido 2nd Dan**

I can hardly believe it's been a year since Sensei's passing. I always thought of Sensei as an inspiration to me but I never thought the day would come so soon where I would be inspired by his memory, because he is no longer here. So, my memory of Sensei is that he lived a complete life, fully dedicated to the path of Aikido, and enviously so. I can say I have never met anybody more passionate about his calling than Sensei, and I wish to someday find my true path as well. Learning Aikido has helped bring discipline, courage, and patience in order to overcome obstacles in my life. I'm so grateful to this day that through Aikido I had come to know Sensei and honored to have been his student. I miss him and will remember him.

## Announcing The Grand Opening of The Aikido Center of Los Angeles

1211 N. Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Grand Opening Saturday, May 3, 2008**

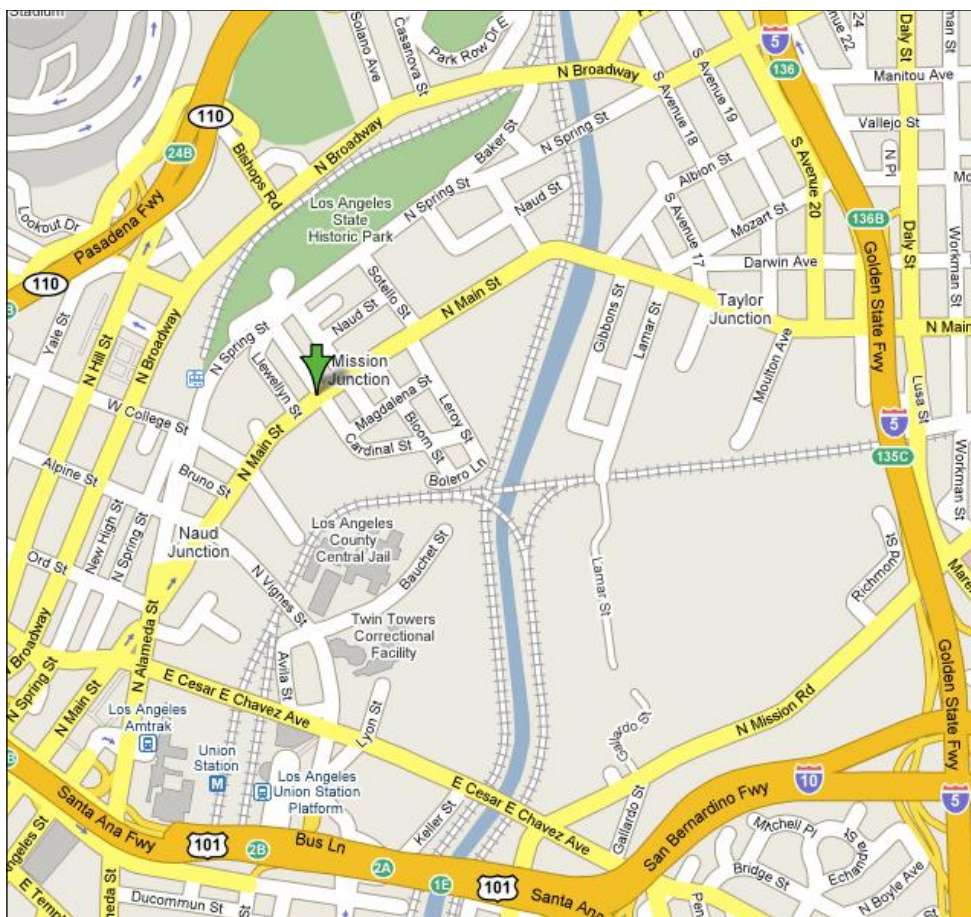
**Grand Opening Seminar  
with Hideo Yonemochi Shihan, 8th Dan**

**May 2-4, 2008**

**RSVP by e-mail: [info@aikidocenterla.com](mailto:info@aikidocenterla.com)**



Hideo Yonemochi Shihan is a direct student of O'Sensei and began studying Aikido in 1953. He currently serves as the Executive Director of Aikido World Headquarters, as the Director of the international department of the Aikikai Foundation, and teaches at several dojos in the Tokyo area. Yonemochi Shihan was a good friend of Sensei and currently oversees our dojo.



**By Ken Watanabe, Aikido 5th Dan**

My first memory of Sensei was back in 1987. There was a demonstration in the middle of Japanese Village Plaza. I forget how I found out about this demo. I think I stumbled upon it while walking through J-Town. By this time, I knew I wanted to learn aikido. I just didn't know where to go, so it was fortunate I happened to find the demonstration that day.

I watched the students' demonstration thinking, "This looks kind of fake." I remember watching one of the black belts execute an ikkyo pin, taking their opponent down by holding onto their arm. I kind of knew about aikido and was familiar with the clichéd explanations behind its fundamentals. Not that it helped me, but I also may have seen some Steven Seagal movie.

By the time I saw this demonstration, I remember Sensei had already gained weight. When he walked onto the mat after the students had demonstrated, I thought, "What's this guy going to do?"

I don't remember much about his demonstration, but I do remember Sensei's randori portion of the demo. One second he was standing there and the next, four or five students were rushing him. He moved here and there throwing his attackers all over the place and although the falls may have looked a little perfunctory, there was no denying that the stu-



Sensei and Ken Watanabe

dents were really trying their damndest to catch him.

Because of his demonstration, my mind was set; I was going to learn aikido. Perhaps aikido was fake, but there was something to this martial art that can make a man like Sensei move against multiple attackers and not get caught. If he can do it, there was no doubt in my mind that I could.

Nearly twenty years later, all of us are still trying.

**By James Takata, Aikido 2nd Dan**

I've been trying to write this article about Sensei for nearly two weeks. I have to admit, I'm having trouble organizing my thoughts. While I want to give you all something structured and formal, I find myself reflecting on and, in a sense, reliving the past year. I find myself going in circles, doubling back as one memory leads to the next. My apologies if this article is a bit disjointed - it's the only way I know how to approach it.

After the initial shock of Sensei's death, and the flurry of activity in the weeks and months after, memories and thoughts of him appear often, and sometimes unexpectedly. Here are a few things that I miss about Sensei: the clack-clack of his keyboard as he typed on his computer; the incongruous sounds of some TV show as we warmed up; the sound of his door opening and the sound of his steps coming down the stairs; the electricity and urgency in the air when he was teaching; his laugh; his jokes at my expense; his inexhaustible store of knowledge about seemingly everything.

Sensei made great efforts to honor and remember his teachers. There will have been much talk of his unflinching devotion to the memory of O'Sensei and 2<sup>nd</sup> Doshu, so I won't go into detail here. Suffice to say that by any standard his

devotion was remarkable. However, in a way, it is not.

What I mean is, if you can understand the great love and respect one can have for his teacher, then you know it is not remarkable to remember and honor him on the day of his passing - it is natural.

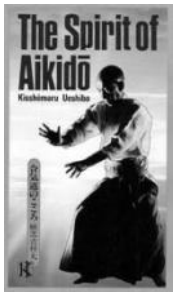
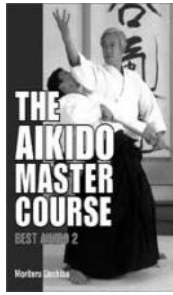
Sensei often wrote of how much he missed his teachers. He expressed sadness and loneliness that was unknowable to me then. Now, I finally understand what he meant. How can a year have passed already? I miss my teacher more than I can say. Foolishly, I assumed that Sensei would be with us for a long time to come. Out of ignorance, I believed that the Dojo would be there forever.

Sometimes I can hear Sensei's voice imploring us: "Hurry up, there's not much time!" I don't think he wanted us to rush, but to have urgency in our practice and our lives. When we spend seven extra seconds looking for a partner and finding a space, that's time that we could have been practicing. Add that up over the years, and it's precious time that we'll wish we had spent better.

I think I read that message of time spent wisely every time I was in the dressing room in the old Dojo. It was a simple typed message in a black frame, which read: "It is said that a million dollars cannot buy back one minute of your life. Please use your time wisely and carefully. One hour of practice is one hour closer to your enlightenment. Please commit yourself to your training."



Recommended Readings:



**Aikido Center of Los Angeles:**

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

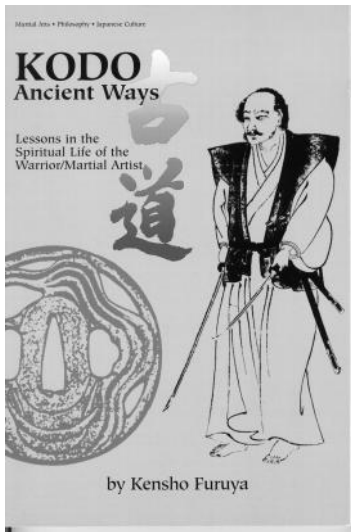
The Aiki Dojo Newsletter  
Editor-in-Chief: David Ito  
Photographer: Larry Armstrong

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[www.Aikidocenterla.com](http://www.Aikidocenterla.com)

**Publications By Reverend Kensho Furuya:**

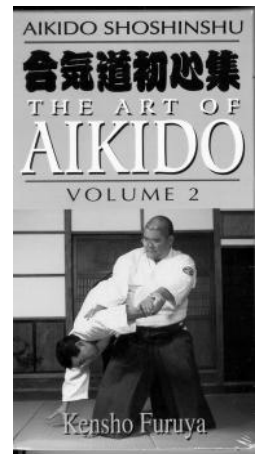
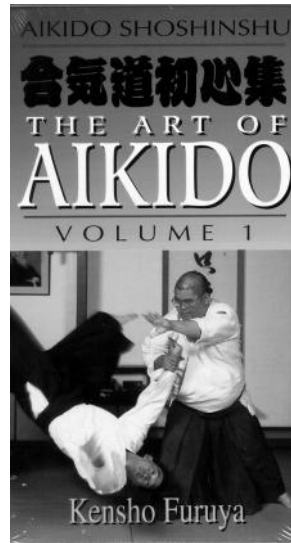
**The Art of AIKIDO**  
Instructional Video Series s Now Available in a new DVD format.



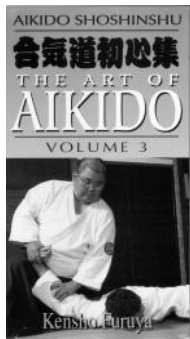
**Kodo:  
Ancient Ways:  
Lessons In The  
Spiritual Life of the  
Warrior**  
By Kensho Furuya  
Highly recommended  
for all students of the  
Dojo.

*"Top Rated" Karate Illustrated*  
*"Impressive Scope" Aikido Today*  
*"Exhaustive" Aikido Journal*  
*"Best in the English language on the market today."*  
Budovideos.com.

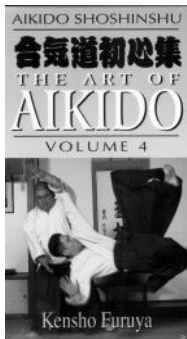
This video series is considered the most comprehensive and detailed instructional video on Aikido available today. Clear depiction of each technique and very detailed explanation of all of the fine points.



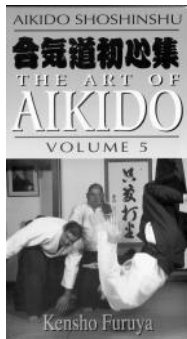
Basic Techniques  
Throwing & Joint  
Techniques, Ikkyo, Nikyo,  
Sankyo, Yonkyo & Gokyo



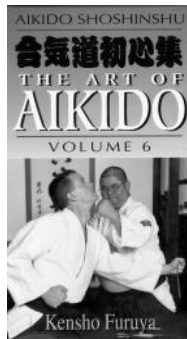
Ukemi-Breakfalling  
Basics Continued  
Free Style Techniques  
Tenshin. Ki. Breathing.



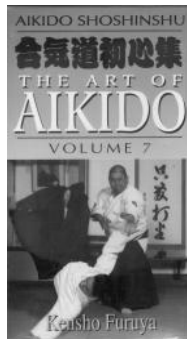
Katatoritori Ryotemochi:  
Ryotetori: 2-hand.  
Reigi-saho: Etiquette.  
Koshinage-Hip throws.



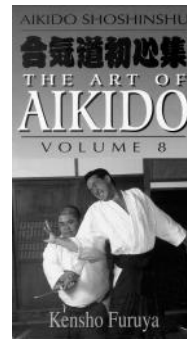
Suwari-waza. Gokyo.  
Hanmi-handachi. Koryudosa.  
Katatori: Shoulder.  
Multiple attackers.



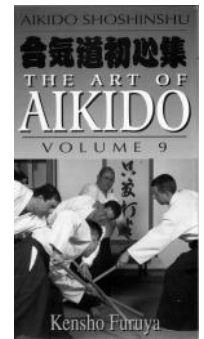
Tsuki: Strikes & Punches  
Yokomenuchi: Strikes to the side of the head & neck.



Shomenuchi, Ushiro  
Katatoritori Kubishime:  
Chokes from behind.  
Ushiro Ryotetori,  
Ryohijitori, Ryokatatori.



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



Jo: Basic long staff  
Fundamentals.  
Complete 1st Degree  
Black Belt Examination



# Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

## TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

### 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  
7:30-8:30 PM Weapons (3rd Kyu & up)

### Tuesdays

6:30-7:30 PM Advanced (Black Belts)

### Wednesdays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals  
6:30-7:30 PM Open  
7:30-8:30 PM Weapons (3rd Kyu & up)

### Thursdays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals  
6:30-7:30 PM Bokken (Shodan & up)

### Fridays

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

### Saturdays

9:30-10:30 AM Open  
10:30-11:30 AM Advanced (3rd Kyu & up)

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

**Sundays:** 7:45-8:45 AM

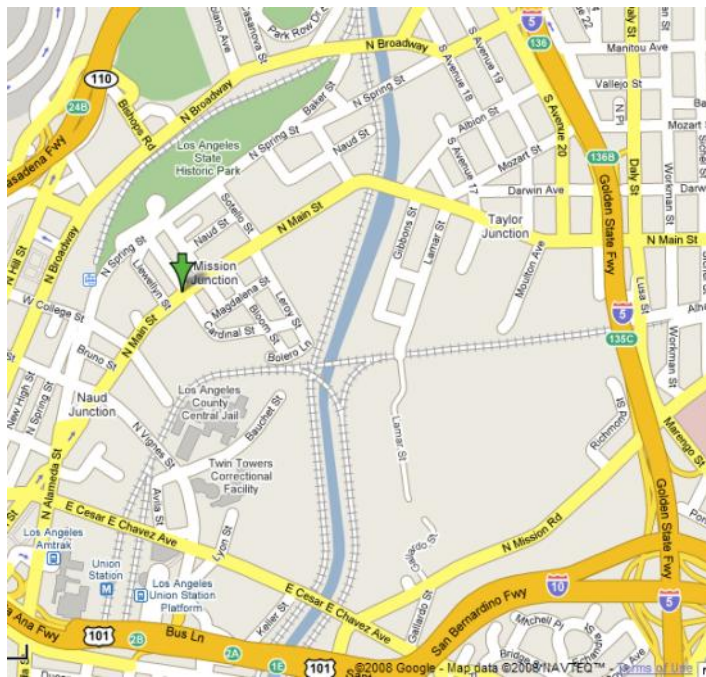
**Thursdays:** 6:30-7:30 PM (Bokken)

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

**Private Classes Available.**

## No Appointment Necessary To Join:

You are welcome to visit us anytime during our Open and Beginning Classes. Signing up for classes is very easy and only takes a few minutes. Welcome!



## CHILDREN'S CLASSES

*6 to 16 years old*

**Sunday Mornings 9:00 -10:00 AM**

*Sign-up anytime for on-going classes.*

*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.*

## Aikido Center of Los Angeles

1211 N. Main Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Tel: (323) 225-1559

Email: [info@Aikidocenterla.com](mailto:info@Aikidocenterla.com)  
[www.Aikidocenterla.com](http://www.Aikidocenterla.com)

## Finding Our Dojo:

We are located at  
1211 N. Main St.

Los Angeles, CA 90012.

We are across the street and one block down from the Chinatown Metro Station.

**The Entrance is on Elmyra Street.**