

The Aikido Center of Los Angeles, LLC, 1211 N. Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012, Tele: (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

September 2008

Volume XXVI NUMBER 9

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### **In The Dojo** by David Ito

Recently, someone asked me if Aikido was a sport. I told him, "Yes and no," because it is a little bit more difficult than just a simple yes or no. The general explanation about the difference between sports and Aikido most commonly heard is that sports involve competition and that in Aikido there is no competition. However, this explanation only scratches the surface.

On the basic level of practice both sports and Aikido are involved in what Sensei described as *Renshu*, or the physical aspects of training. This level is present in every martial art. However, for many who practice Aikido as a sport, this is where the training begins and ends, and is where competition resides.

Competition is fine when used as a training tool, but what ends up happening is that the tool becomes the focus and large part of the curriculum. The same thing happens with testing: we begin to teach for the test,

which succeeds only at limiting the student. A carpenter does not only have a hammer in his toolbox, nor does that one tool define all his actions. He uses that tool in conjunction with other tools to build a beautiful house.

While practicing the techniques over and over, we reach a point where the techniques end and our minds begin. When I say "minds," I do not mean *thoughts*. Our old ways of knowing clutter our thoughts, and these ways have conditioned us to react in a certain manner. This reactive mind is usually where sports-minded practitioners end their training and it becomes evident in their personality, lifestyle, and attitudes. Sensei once told me that you can learn everything you need to know about martial artists by watching their technique, because our inward persona manifests itself in our outward character. By taking your training further, you reach a point in which the mental aspects of Aikido turn a corner and become deeper, meaningful, or perhaps more spiritual.

*Continued on page 4 ...*

### End of Summer Party

September 13, 2008  
Saturday  
4:00 PM

Potluck!

*Bring your favorite dish*

*Please sign-up*



## Letters

Sensei Furuya,

I just wanted to thank you for your book, *Kodo: Ancient Ways*. Your style held me. If your teaching skills are like your book, a martial arts person is in the “way” indeed. Once again thank you, Sensei Furuya.

Sincerely ,  
Timothy Stun  
P. S. Good luck with your new Dojo

Dear Ito Sensei,

I just wanted to drop you a brief note to say hello from New York City. All is well here, but I miss my friends and teachers at the dojo. Please give my greetings to all of them. I expect to be back in Los Angeles to visit in the next month or two, and I look forward to seeing you all then. In the meantime, all my very best!

Jacob Sisk

Hello,

I apologize for my timing but I only discovered today that Reverend Kensho Furuya passed away last year.

I know my feelings following the loss of my first Aikido instructor, Alan Pirie Sensei, he passed away during training one evening in 1995. Pirie Sensei epitomized the very essence of Aikido/Budo and will always remain an inspiration.

I also recall some years later buying a copy of Furuya Sensei’s book, *Kodo: Ancient Ways*, and then going out and buying three more copies as thank-you gifts to three senseis after I was awarded my *shodan*. The inspiration of the book is timeless.

I remember e-mailing Furuya Sensei to thank him for providing such a work. I never met the gentleman yet I offer you my condolences for his passing.

At the loss of such men, no matter how humble, we gain from knowing them and their priceless legacy.

Kindest regards,  
George McMaster  
www.ai-ki-do.co.uk  
Hull, East Yorkshire, United Kingdom

### JAPANESE LESSON

# 日本語

## Onegaishimasu: Please do me this favor

Pronounced (*oh-nay-guy-she-mahs*)

おねがいします。(Hiragana form)

お願いします。(Kanji form)



Omizu O Onegaishimasu

*Onegaishimasu* is probably one of the most widely used words in the Japanese language. It does not have a literal English equivalent. It generally means “please do me this favor or wish.” The word *onegai* is the polite form of the verb *negau* or “to pray or wish.” *Shimasu* is the polite form of *suru* or “to do.”

It is used mainly when you ask for something. At a restaurant, you would say, *Omizu O Onegaishimasu*, which means water please. At the dojo, you say *Onegaishimasu* when you ask your partner to train with you.

An etiquette note: To display good manners during class, get close to your partner, bow and say *Onegaishimasu*. It is bad manners to scream *Onegaishimasu* across the mat while waving to a potential partner far away. Also, sometimes non-Japanese speaking people say “*mas*” instead *Onegaishimasu* of but this extremely impolite short form is rude and does not make sense.



### Dojo Etiquette Reigi Saho



### Excusing Yourself During Practice

At times, it might be necessary to disengage from practice to rest, use the restroom or fix your uniform. These things are acceptable and everyone should go at their own pace, but there are some points of etiquette that need to be observed in order to maintain an environment conducive to learning.

If you need to use the restroom, please inform the instructor first. Bow off the mat and quickly use the restroom and bow back on to the mat and resume training. Using the restroom is not the appropriate place to rest or catch your breath.

If you need to sit out and rest, please inform the instructor that you would like to rest. Informing the instructor enables him to monitor you in case of an emergency. Sit off to the side of the mat closest to the bathroom and sit either in seiza or crossed legged. Please do not sit with your legs pointed at the tokonoma or stand in the corner. When you feel ready to resume practice, find a partner, do a seated bow and begin practicing. There is no need to inform the instructor that you would like to continue.

It is good manners to keep your belt tied in a square knot and your uniform straightened. From time to time you may need to

adjust your uniform. Go to the edge of the mat, turn away from the mat and straighten your uniform quickly. Your partner should go to the opposite side of the mat or same side depending on the size of the mat or how crowded the mat might be. Your partner should sit seiza facing the mat while waiting for you, not out in the middle of the mat. This poses potential danger to everyone. Once you are finished, go to your partner, bow and resume practice.



Drinking water during class is usually not an acceptable practice. Sensei used to forbid drinking as a tool to test your fortitude. If you came prepared by properly hydrating before class and seemed in shape, then he believed that you are well trained and would not need a drink. Secondly, excusing yourself to drink water usually accompanies wandering around or hanging out while you drink. This cuts into your training time and destroys your focus and distracts others. Next, keeping water bottles near or on the mat can cause accidents and can ruin the wood floors or antique *tansu* chests. Please keep your water bottles in your bag and do not leave them around the dojo.

However, if you would like a drink, please inform the instructor and excuse yourself off the mat to get a drink. Please do not drink too much because this will cause cramping. Bow off the mat and quickly get a drink and bow back on to the mat and resume training.

Many of these rules do not exist in martial arts schools today. Many of these methods are left over from old traditional martial arts training and are designed to build character by following the rules of etiquette and disciplining yourself with strict training. As Kanai Sensei said, "Above all, *Reigi-saho* is an expression of mutual respect in person-to-person encounters, a respect for each other's personalities, a respect which results from the martial artist's confrontations with life-or-death situations."

## Branch Dojos

### Hacienda La Puente Aikikai

Hacienda Heights, California  
Chief Instructor: Tom Williams

### Aikido Kodokai

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

### Veracruz Aikido Dojo

Vera Cruz, Mexico  
Chief Instructors:  
Dr. Roberto Magallanes  
Dr. Alvaro R. Hernández Meza  
http://www.veracruz-aikikai.com

### July 26, 2008 General Meeting Minutes

by Paul Major

On July 26th, 2008 the Aikido Center of Los Angeles convened for a general meeting.

Our Chief Instructor David Ito specified the new ACLA testing procedures and outlined the dojo's internal management structure. Mark Ehrlich is the dojo manager and Paul Major is the dojo secretary. He also expressed our wish for the improvement in the health of Mr. Hideo Yonemochi Shihan; a highly valued instructor, friend to our late Sensei, and Director of the International Aikido Federation. There was also discussion about next year's plans for our grand opening/35th anniversary seminar.

Ito Sensei also encouraged the continued training both in terms of physical technique and etiquette, and general points were made as to proper care and procedures in cleaning and caring for the dojo.



# QUESTIONS & Answers



Question: Can you get a staph infection while training in the dojo?

Answer: Yes, it is very possible to get a staph infection while training at

the dojo. This summer has been hotter than most summers, which means that students will be sweating more. Aikido can be very physical, which can lead to cuts and scrapes. These two things coupled with poor hygiene can lead to a staph infection or an MRSA skin infection. Staph are common bacteria carried on the skin of many seemingly healthy people and the most common cause of skin infections in the US. Many of these types of infections are minor starting as pimples or boils, which can be treated with antibiotics. However some can be very serious and can cause severe infections. Skin-on-skin contact, open cuts or scrapes, contaminated clothes or equipment and poor hygiene are all risk factors for contracting a staph infection. MRSA can live in fabrics for up to 90 days. Proper hygiene and cleanliness is the best prevention.

Here are some ways to prevent staph infections:

1. Practice good hygiene by showering as soon as you can using soap and water. This includes your feet.
2. Wash your uniform regularly and dry in a dryer. Wash your uniforms with hot water and bleach and dry on hot. Don't hang dry your uniform. FYI...this will cause your uniforms to deteriorate faster.
3. Keep cuts and scrapes covered with a bandage and secured with athletic tape until healed.
4. Wash your hands and feet with a soap and warm water after class. Its a good idea to use a hand sanitizer after class not to mention to wash your feet with antibacterial soap as soon as possible.
5. Don't share personal items such as towels, uniforms or clothes.

If you feel that you have a staph infection, please contact your doctor immediately.

## In The Dojo Continued From Page 1...

The Dalai Lama said, "You can be spiritual and not be religious, but you cannot be religious and not be spiritual." When I say "spiritual," I do not mean *religious*. In Aikido we approach the spiritual by allowing the art to infuse our daily lives, following what in martial arts is commonly called The Way. This level of practice is what Sensei called *Shu-gyo*, or a more spiritual practice. This thing we call The Way can help us transcend the physical aspects of our training and give our practice more meaning in our lives. Aikido challenges us to let go of ourselves and to make the jump toward becoming better people. As you train, you somehow transform, and the lessons you learn in Aikido become incorporated into your daily life, sometimes even without your knowledge. As a result you become a better person. At this level of practice, the goal of the teacher is for the students to think that they developed this way on their own.

This is why Aikido cannot be categorized as a sport. Our training in Aikido focuses on the effort to become better people through Aikido training. Aikido addresses more than what you do on the mat or when you come to the dojo. It takes the view that when we train, we are rehearsing for our daily lives outside of the dojo. When we train, we can change our bodies, our character, the way we think, and the person we are spiritually. This spiritual dimension of training allows us to carry over the lessons from Aikido into our daily lives. Ueshiba Kisshomaru, 2nd Doshu said, "The way is in your daily practice."



## Our Dojo Crest 紋

This is our dojo crest or, *mon*. This symbol of our school is on our dojo patch. The middle is a flower called *Nanten* or Southern bamboo. The circle represents a Buddhist calligraphy circle called an *Enso* which represents enlightenment. Below is a May 10, 2005 post by Sensei explaining the significance of the *Nanten* plant.  
-David Ito

In today's world, we always want to notice what stands out or looks like something new and interesting. Rarely do we notice what is plain and simple. Something perfectly natural always goes by unnoticed. . . . Have you ever noticed the emblem on our dojo patch? It is the *Nanten* plant, also known as Nandina or Southern Bamboo. Sometimes, people ask me, what is this because "they have never seen it before." I always laugh at this, because it is everywhere but we never take a moment to notice it. When you see it closely for the first time, you will see that in its own simple way, it is actually quite beautiful. This is why I picked it for our emblem in the first place. A truly good human being is hardly noticed by anyone because he is good. This, I believe, is true goodness. . . .

Please continue to practice hard, in our own plain and simple way!

-Reverend Kensho Furuya





Outside the tea room and weapons racks



Picture of O Sensei in the *tokonoma*



One of our *kamidanas*



Aikido calligraphy above the tea room



Our *tokonoma*

Pictures by Larry Armstrong

## Dojo: Perspectives



Student name board, or *Nafuda Kake*



Hallway to the dressing rooms and display of Japanese armor or *Yoroi*



**“Kansha”  
Appreciation**

One of the most important elements in tea is appreciation. It is the practice of appreciation of all things that brings us close to the spirit of tea. We appreciate our guests, the opportunity to make tea for our guests,

the room, the utensils and the tea itself. We bow to show our appreciation for everything and, in this way, we are able to enjoy the moment for its full value.

Today, people are too concerned about themselves to think of others. We create suffering and misunderstanding. When governments do it, we create wars and poverty and starvation. It is because of our lack of appreciation for nature, that we have destroyed the clean fresh air, the pure fresh water and the beauty of our environment. We want it back, but it will never return in our generation. What a loss!

We don't appreciate those around us. And, when they leave, we feel sad and lonely and wish they would return. Tea teaches us how to appreciate even the smallest things. Don't make bowing just a formality, but try to bow from your heart. It is very hard at first, but as we practice, we find that it gives us a good feeling inside.

Some people may think it strange that we even bow to the tea container and the tea ladle. But, it is because we can use these things, we can make a nice cup of tea. It is only natural to thank them. Maybe it is difficult to understand at first but I think that when we can bow to a small piece of bamboo used as a tea ladle, I think we can begin to see the spirit in all things big and small. This is the spiritual practice to tea.

Thank you.

Rev. Kensho Furuya  
December 1, 1992

*Editor's note:* this article was written by Sensei when he was the editor of the *Tea Ceremony Journal* for the tea ceremony class



David Ito with Heraldo Farrington  
(On vacation in Hawaii)



**Best Wishes!**

**Michael Van Ruth  
has relocated with his family  
to Surprise, Arizona**

**We will miss him!**

### *September Events*

September 1st (Labor Day)  
Dojo Closed

September 13th  
Promotion testing

September 13th  
End of summer party

September 15th  
Deadline for article submissions

September 27th  
6:30 AM Intensive practice  
~No Iaido~

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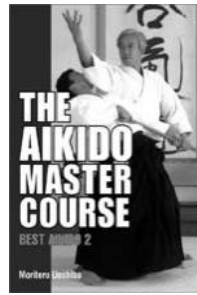
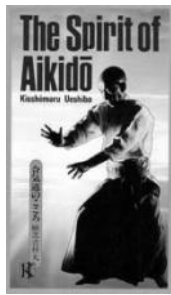
Any contributions to the newsletter is welcome and appreciated. Please share something that you think others might gain from or that you feel could be meaningful. We are always looking for new and interesting content.



### Recommended Readings:



by Ueshiba Kisshomaru



by Ueshiba Moriteru



### 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

Editor-in-Chief: David Ito  
Assistant Editor: Mark Ehrlich  
Photographer: Larry Armstrong

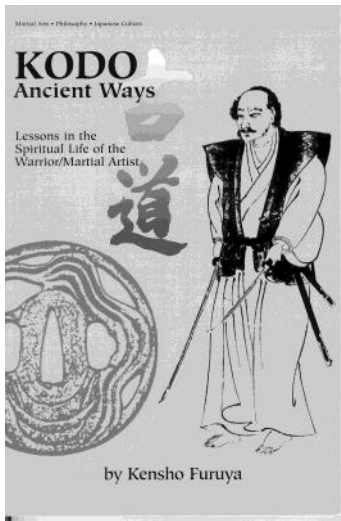
“You can’t get much done in life if you only work when you feel good.”

-Jerry West

### ◇ Publications By Reverend Kensho Furuya ◇

### 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

Instructional Video Series s Now Available in a new DVD format.

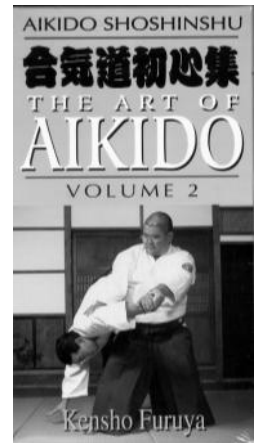
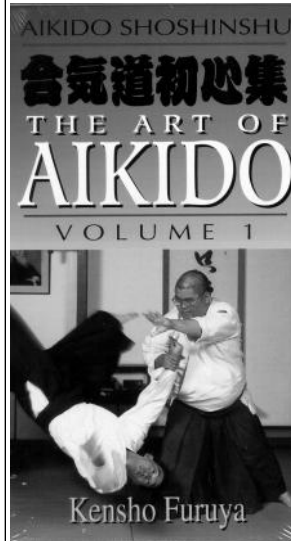
“Top Rated” Karate Illustrated

“Impressive Scope” Aikido Today

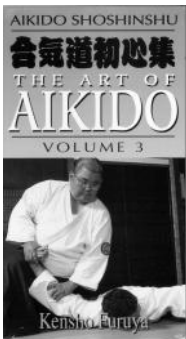
“Exhaustive” Aikido Journal

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

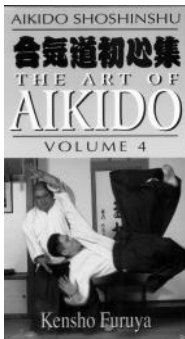
This video series is considered the most comprehensive and detailed instructional video on Aikido available today. Clear depiction of each technique and very detailed explanation of all of the fine points.



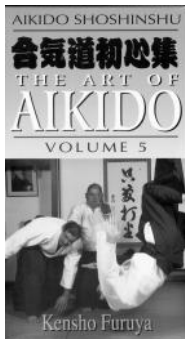
Basic Techniques  
Throwing & Joint  
Techniques, Ikkyo, Nikyo,  
Sankyo, Yonkyo & Gokyo



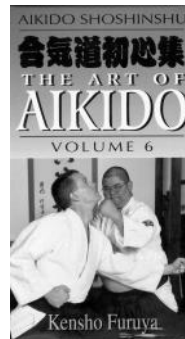
Ukemi-Breakfalling Basics Continued  
Free Style Techniques  
Tenshin. Ki. Breathing.



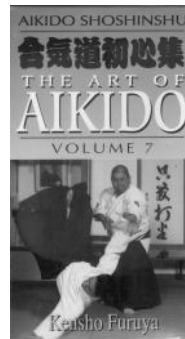
Katatetori Ryotemochi:  
Ryotetori: 2-hand.  
Reigi-saho: Etiquette.  
Koshinage-Hip throws.



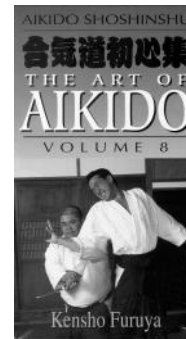
Suwari-waza. Gokyo.  
Hanmi-handachi. Kokyudosa.  
Katatori: Shoulder.  
Multiple attackers.



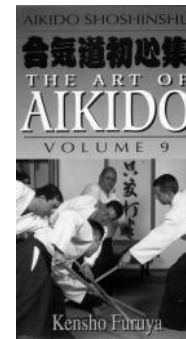
Tsuki: Strikes & Punches  
Yokomenuchi: Strikes to the side of the head & neck.



Shomenuchi, 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 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  
7:45-8:45 PM Weapons

### Tuesdays

6:30-7:30 PM Advanced (3rd Kyu & up) \*  
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

### Saturdays

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

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

\* These classes are not open for visitors to watch

## CHILDREN'S CLASSES

6 to 16 years old

Sunday Mornings 9:00 -10:00 AM

*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  
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www.Aikidocenterla.com

### Saturdays:

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

Sundays: 7:45-8:45 AM

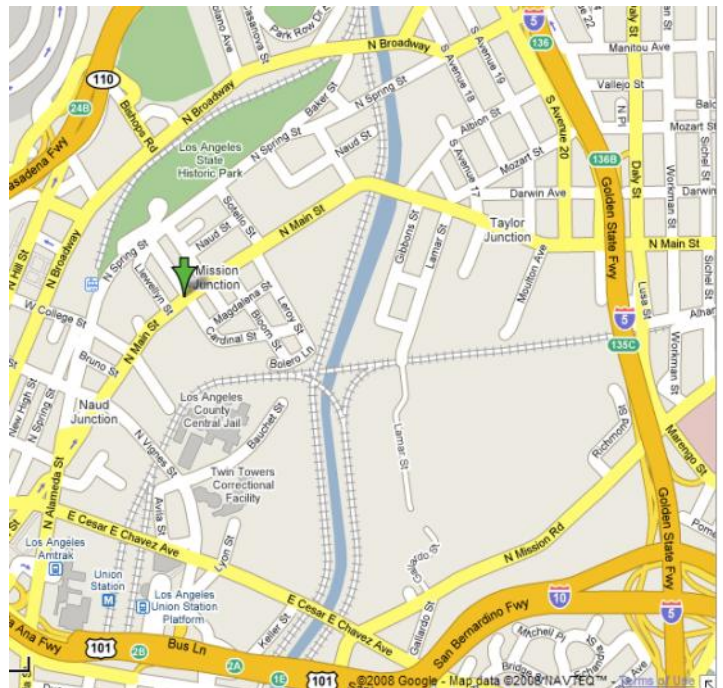
Thursdays: 6:30-7:30 PM (Bokken Practice)

*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 or Beginning Classes. We do not allow the public to watch our advanced classes. Please come early to sign up.



## Finding Our Dojo:

We are located at  
1211 N. Main St.

Los Angeles, CA 90012.

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

**The Entrance is on Elmyra Street.**