

# The Aikido Center of Los Angeles

## 道の為、世の為、人の為 合気道

# The Aiki Dojo

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

April 2013

Volume XXXII Number 4

### In This Issue...

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

**How to Get the Most Out of Any Class**  
by David Ito.....Page 2

**Sakakibara Kenkichi**  
by Gary Myers.....Page 3

**Generation Next**  
by Edward Ecolango .....Page 4

**Aikido is Fun**  
by Noah Massabki.....Page 4

**Passing on (and) Knowledge**  
by Rev. Kensho Furuya.....Page 7

**Class Schedule** .....Page 8

**Dojo Map** .....Page 8

#### Letter From the Editor

by Mark Ehrlich  
Editor, The Aiki Dojo

As the days grow longer and warmer after an unusually cool, wet winter here in Southern California, I find my spirits rising with the mercury in the thermometer. Our dojo's young *sakura* have shared and shed their delicate beauty, and we see more students training more regularly now that the weather feels just right for training. More families have brought their children to train with us, and our adult students make slow, steady progress in their technique and etiquette. The scent lingering in the air may originate from the roots stirring in the earth, but in my heart it stirs the roots of hope, which slowly unfolds as I see hints of the future in the faces that surround me.

The duality of past and future always loom large every April at the dojo. We will conduct our annual seminar again this year and look forward to training alongside old friends and new ones. We will honor the memory of O Sensei with the help of our friends from Zenshuji Soto Mission. And we will continue to focus on the fundamentals as Sensei taught them to us, day after day, and by doing so spreading Aikido and its benefits to a wider audience. Drawing from our collective past, we hope to build for our future for the benefit of all.

Past and future share the spotlight in this month's issue of *The Aiki Dojo*, as well. I to

Sensei offers some advice to those still finding their way in their training that will hopefully help everyone get more out of their practice. Myers Sensei, for his part, casts a backward glance at the history of swordsmanship to



Photo of Sensei from 1969 at Hombu Dojo's memorial shrine for O Sensei, shortly after the death of the Founder

share with us the story of one of its pivotal figures – himself caught between an abandoned past and a present that he no longer fit. We hear the voice of the future of ACLA in the form of two students from our children's class and a young man from our adult class: the children, brother and

sister, share their impressions of dojo life on Sunday mornings, and Edward Ecolango allows us to glimpse the mat from the perspective of someone who feels the presence of Sensei every day, yet never met him in life. And as always, we let Sensei get in the last word and bring out from the archives for your education his ruminations on passing on, and passing on knowledge. I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter as much as we enjoyed putting it together. (Note: If any other children's students wish to contribute, please feel free to submit your pictures or articles if a responsible adult gives you permission to do so.)

If you'd like to attend our annual O Sensei Memorial Seminar, you can read all about it on our Web site. You'll find the schedule, instructors, and pricing information at your fingertips. I certainly encourage everyone to come and enjoy training, good food, and fellowship. Until next time, take care. I look forward to seeing you – all of you – on the mat at the seminar!

### Upcoming Events

**April 26-28th:**  
O Sensei Annual Seminar

**April 28th:**  
O Sensei Memorial

**May 25th:**  
Instructor's intensive

**May 27th:**  
Dojo Closed  
Memorial Day

**June 29th:**  
Instructor's intensive

**July 4th:**  
Dojo Closed  
Fourth of July

## How to Get the Most Out of Any Class

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

I always find it funny and I get a bit of a grin whenever someone asks me, "What else can I do to improve my Aikido besides come to class?" I don't smirk because I am trying to belittle them – I smile because I used to think about that very same thing. I would love to give them some short cut, but I haven't found one. However, I will share what Sensei told me when I asked him that question: "The only way to get better at Aikido is to do more Aikido." I will admit that, at the time, this wasn't the answer I wanted and I am sure some of you don't think it's what you want, either. Since I have become a teacher, Sensei's words ring truer today than ever before. In order to get better at Aikido by doing more Aikido, I have come up with a few guidelines to help students get the most out of each and every class.

### *Don't be late*

In this world of multitasking, e-mail, and text messaging, we can easily become over-stimulated and overwhelmed. Our hectic lives push us from place to place and we end up dragging that craziness into the dojo. It's a fact that when we place our nervous system in distress we can't learn, and this situation also affects everyone around us. Coming late to class is the surest way to have a terrible class. Remember that training is for our self-development and that as such we would do well to place just as much importance on it as we do on sleeping or eating. Do yourself a favor: show up to class a little early and prepare yourself properly so that you can have a great class and get the most out of your training.

### *Take a moment to clear your mind*

After you change and warm up, take some time to calm your mind down by sitting quietly with your eyes closed. Sit comfortably and practice your deep breathing while you let go of your day. Five minutes of doing this would be ideal, but even taking the time for just 10 deep breaths can help to calm our minds down. Choose a corner or one of the edges of the mat so that you won't be in the way of others warming up and so no one will bother you. Take some time to leave the hustle and bustle of the rest of your life outside where it belongs, or as Sensei used to say, "Cut off your head and leave it outside." Also, if you see someone sitting quietly with their eyes closed, please leave them alone so that they can clear their thoughts.

### *Train before or after class*

Generally, Sensei favored doing the movements in their entirety when he taught class, but sometimes he would break down the movements to emphasize different mechanisms of the technique.

Spending time before or after class to work on some of these details, such as our footwork or some other aspect that has plagued us in class, makes for time well spent. Sensei used to tell this story about how he and a friend would practice *ai-hamni nikkyo* over and over for an hour every day, not only to develop their technique but their wrist strength and flexibility as well. Since our school



*When you hear someone getting corrected, all you need to do is think, "It applies to me, too."*

follows a very traditional method in that we generally practice the same basic things over and over and usually stick to a set of techniques for a few months, you can easily figure out what has been taught recently or that probably will get taught and pick out something that you need to develop.

### *Be open and learn*

I can't tell you how many times I see students doing their own thing in class. I always wonder if they do things differently because they don't know or because they just feel obstinate. There is some distance between doing something incorrectly because we have trouble grasping the movement and doing something different because we want to do it our own way. The difference boils down to a matter of ego. A million reasons exist that justify why we should do it our way but only one reason that proves why we should not – we come to class to learn. If we didn't come to learn, then we need to check our motivation to train and maybe go someplace else, because as Sensei always said, "I don't want to waste your time and you don't want to waste my time." However, if we *did* come to learn, then we should try to do what the teacher shows us, regardless of the technique or the teacher – we might just learn something new, figure something out or, despite our best efforts, learn and improve. The old adage, "If you always do what you've always done then you'll always get what you've always gotten" comes to mind; so why not give it a try?

### *Embrace the silence*

In our dojo, Sensei heavily subscribed to the belief that training in silence enables students to concentrate fully on learning. This approach stands as probably one of the hardest things for people who come to ACLA to understand and accept. From a lay person's point of view, silence might feel cold and uninviting but nothing lies farther from the truth. To me it feels kind of refreshing that we can come to a place that deliberately removes all distractions so that we can focus entirely on learning. We have all heard the cliché that describes Aikido as a form of moving meditation, but that tells only part of the story. In meditation, as in Aikido, we try to clear our minds of useless thoughts and distractions; Aikido, however, poses the additional challenge of accomplishing this clarity while our partner tries to attack us. Therefore, in order to shift that paradigm, we need as few distractions as possible. Silence serves as our most effective tool in dealing with almost all distractions.

*Continued on page 5...*

## Sakakibara Kenkichi

by Gary Myers, *Iaido Chief Instructor*

Ito Sensei recently gave me a newspaper clipping from *The Japan Times* dated June 1992. Sensei must have clipped this from the newspaper back then and saved it in his files. The clipping featured a rare photo of Sakakibara Kenkichi, a famed swordsman of the Meiji era, which someone found in the archives of the Mori Photography Laboratory in Tokyo. Seeing this clipping made me want to find out more about him so I did some research, and I want to share it with you.

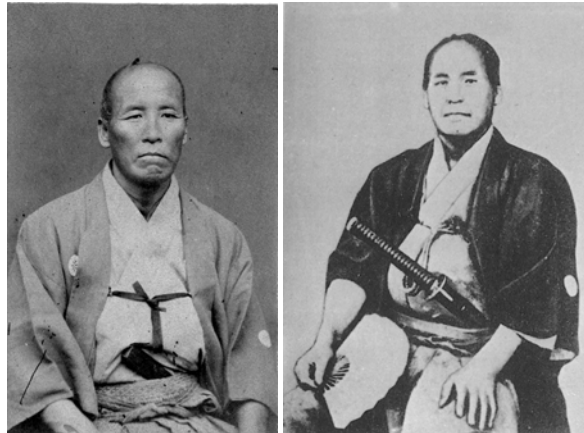
Sakakibara Kenkichi was a contemporary of Yamaoka Tesshu. They both lived in a time of turmoil and dramatic societal upheaval. Most of us are familiar with Tesshu through Sensei's teachings and his collection of Tesshu's calligraphy scrolls. Tesshu was just as famous for his calligraphy as he was for his swordsmanship, as pointed out in John Stevens's fine book, *The Sword of No-Sword*. Sakakibara Kenkichi, however, enjoys less renown, other than among Kendoists who are students of its history. Both men played instrumental roles in the transition of swordsmanship from Kenjutsu to Kendo, but each did so in his own fashion. The difference between the two men narrowed down to their ability to adapt to the changes and challenges that the new society of the Meiji period presented to them.

Sakakibara Tomoyoshi was born in November 1830 in Otsuka village, the first son of Sakakibara Masataro. Vassals of the Tokugawa for centuries, an ancestor of the family had served as one of Tokugawa Ieyasu's most loyal generals. Tomoyoshi took his adult name of Kenkichi and began his study of the sword at age 13. He studied under Otani Seiichiro (also known as Nobutomo), the 13th headmaster of the Jikishinkage Ryu and one of the premier swordsmen of his time. A keen student, Kenkichi excelled in swordsmanship but did not receive his *menkyo*, or teaching certificate, until 1856, when he was 25. He would have received the certificate much sooner but he and his family, like many *samurai* families of that time, were poor and did not have the money to pay for his certificate or the celebratory banquet. Otani eventually paid for everything on behalf of Kenkichi.

Otani Seiichiro was one of the major participants in the transition of Kenjutsu to Kendo. Many sword fencing instructors had begun the conversion to the tapping or touching techniques of *shinai-geiko*, the precursor to Kendo. Sakakibara and Otani were not advocates of this new style; they felt that swordsmanship must have its basis on a decisive cutting blow, just not tapping. Nevertheless, Sakakibara did allow for the use of a *shinai* in his training and Otani Seiichiro, being very broadminded, did not totally dismiss other forms of swordsmanship. In fact when the shogunate martial arts school, *Kobusho*, was trying to standardize the Kenjutsu *kata*, Otani recommended using Itto-ryu rather than Jikishinkage Ryu

since it was more like the old style of sword.

Another story of Otani deals with another swordsman from Kyushu named Oishi Susumu. Oishi was a *shinai-geiko* advocate who favored the new style. He had a *shinai* that was extra long (eventually they standardized the size) and he had a one-handed thrust move that delivered a devastating strike reportedly very hard to defend; he would have found this move difficult to execute using a real sword. Oishi would travel to various dojos and chal-



Two portraits of Sakakibara Kenkichi: at left in his later years, and at right as a young man

lenge the headmasters at the schools in acts of *dojo arashi*, or dojo storming. He would easily defeat most of the dojo masters unfamiliar with the thrust, who would experience not only the shame of the loss and damage to their reputations but also a loss of students due to their defeat. Oishi would exploit this and blackmail the teachers into paying him to leave their dojo alone. Otani Seiichiro disliked Oishi's extortion tactics and eventually challenged him to a duel. Otani decided to use a *shinai* because he did not want to hurt Oishi. The challenge ended quite quickly with Otani

landing a single blow to defeat a humiliated Oishi.

Otani also arranged for Sakakibara to become an assistant instructor at the *Kobusho*, the shogunate-sponsored martial arts school. Kenkichi then married Taka, who was the daughter of a *hatamoto* (hereditary vassal of the Tokugawa), and whose mother was the sister of Katsu Kaishu, the famous statesman and founder of the modern Japanese navy. Kenkichi worked very hard and eventually became the chief instructor in 1858. The *shogun* Iemochi respected him and Kenkichi eventually became part of his guard, receiving about 300 *koku* per year. He served Iemochi well, but in 1866 the young *shogun* died suddenly. Rather than seek employment with the new *shogun*, Kenkichi established his own dojo in the Kurumasaka section of Edo during a time when forces supporting the shogunate were fighting the Imperial forces. Sakakibara did not actively fight with *shogun* troops against Imperial forces; he remained neutral, willing to protect anyone the shogunate assigned to his protection. When the Imperial forces won and the shogunate abdicated in 1868, Sakakibara moved with many of the Tokugawa family and their associates to Shizuoka, where he became Captain of the Guard to protect Kamenosuke Tayasu, a prince who would have been next in line for *shogun*. He remained in Shizuoka until 1870, but Shizuoka had a small population and could not support many who moved there, so Sakakibara returned to Edo, now called Tokyo, to re-establish his dojo. But making a living with the sword proved difficult in the new age of the Meiji period. He could not afford to build a house so Katsu Kaishu had one built for him. The old *samurai* ways had become passé and few students presented themselves. Sakakibara held to the old ways even to the point of not cutting off his topknot as most of his contemporaries did.

*Continued on page 6...*

## Generation Next

by Edward Ecolango, Aikido 4th Kyu

I often wished that I had met Sensei, contemplating what it would be like to have been his student. Hearing stories of his strict and traditional teaching methods, sometimes I reconsider. Other times it feels like I have already met him, that I knew him; I think I have a good idea of what he was like, but in all reality it is probably due to having watched his instructional DVDs many times. How could I possibly know someone I have never met? I kind of relate this to actors who want to know the ins and outs of their role, so they study film regarding their model or figure, they research the character, and then recreate or embody that persona for a short while. And yet during practice on and off the mat I feel much, much more strongly that it is not just a photographic replay from memory or my own false perception of how he was, or how he would feel about my practice; the feeling here seems much more tangible. Articulating these thoughts into words finally gives me much more scope on exactly what "it" is in my training.

The truth is Sensei remains very much here with us today, not just in his books when we read them, his articles when we publish them, his videos when we want to brush up on our practice: he continues on through his students who diligently carry on the way he taught, sometimes with the exact verbiage he would use, often-times without words. This is his system, and this is his dojo.

Last month, after Sensei's memorial service, the older students one by one shared their stories about him, joyously recalling and recounting, remembering the anniversary of his passing. The retell-

ing of these students to newer students, Sensei's *magodeshi* ("grand-students"), builds not only our general knowledge of ACLA's founder, it also reminds us of the traditional aspect of our training. Sensei himself studied under Second Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba, the son of the Founder. It seems likely that Sensei and Second Doshu probably shared similar experiences of telling and retelling stories of O Sensei and his teachings, not only with each other but with other, newer students as well. This sense of lineage, the passing down of lessons, the inheriting of tradition resonated very strongly with me; I felt proud to be there hearing those stories, and hoped to continue learning these teachings.

What does it mean to be Sensei's student? Can I still be his student even if I am just a "grand-student"?

I personally feel this will be the perspective of potential new students who bow in and enter our dojo. This is what I thought when I was brand new to the dojo and what I think even now, more than 16 months into my training. I still wonder about these things. The only words of advice I can offer are not from me (I would never dream of giving new students advice; I save that for the more experienced.), they are in fact the last words from a scroll Sensei hung in the *tokonoma* before he passed: "Be strong, be humble, and always keep going."

My only hope for the future is that all his original students, now our teachers, stay their course and continue to help me and other *magodeshi* learn how truly to become Sensei's students. I have felt it and I have faith in the future.



### Aikido is Fun

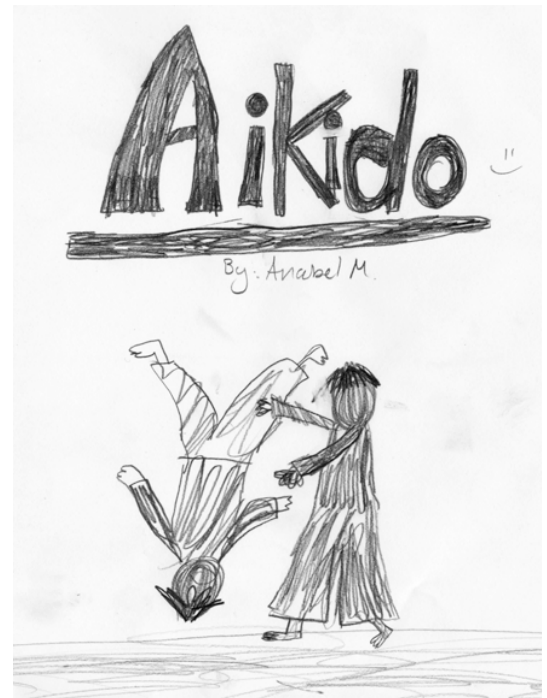
by Noah Massabki, Age 7 – Aikido 6th Kyu

Drawing by Anabel Massabki, Age 12 – Aikido 6th Kyu

I am really enjoying Aikido because its changing me a lot. Running laps really tires me out and we should put some walking into it. This all started when my Dad encouraged me to try Aikido, I said yes and so did my sister Anabel. It was very especially difficult for me in the beginning because I was new and not paying more attention, so I missed some exercises which now are my favorites. After my yellow belt it felt a little easier and I cried just once and the floor feels softer.

Sometimes I act like a wet noodle when I partner with Anabel because I am testing her. Every exercise has a meaning for it and I like the games at the end of class but you have to deserve it if you did good on other exercises. The swinging bamboo [*the shinai – Ed.*] is a little challenge for me, and when it doesn't swing I just jump over it.

When Ito Sensei is around, that is a sign that there is going to be some new belts announced. I am glad I did not promote. I want to do a good job so I can skip the purple belt because I will look silly in purple but I will wear it anyway and won't take comments about it. I am really proud of my friend Cole because he is on his orange belt and so is my friend Logan. I will practice Aikido for my whole life because it's fun and entertaining and I might as well stay a green belt.



**How to Get the Most Out of Any Class** *continued from page 2...**Save your questions for before or after class*

Everyone wants to learn. Otherwise, why come to class? Aikido numbers among those pursuits that we can understand intellectually but that we can't learn by thinking. We can only learn Aikido through experience, or in other words, by doing it. As a matter of protocol, we forbid asking questions during class, not because we want to create some sort of cult or blind dogmatic followers, but because questions amount to talking, and talking in any form distracts and detracts from the learning environment. No doubt some of us have valid questions, but many times people talk for other reasons aside from learning: to get a rest, to feel heard, to impress others with their intelligence, or countless other reasons. If you have a question, ask the teacher, assistant instructors, or your classmates after or before any class, and I know that they will eagerly share their experience and knowledge with you. Remember that in all things timing is everything and silence is bliss.

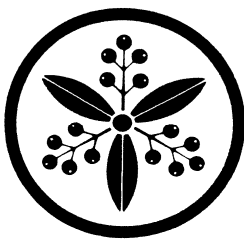
*Don't be so hard on yourself*

Self-judgment poses one of the biggest obstacles to training. When we compare ourselves to others we have already lost and this behavior gives the surest indication that we have yet to experience life in the present moment. The only thing we need to do to develop (which also happens to be the hardest thing we will ever do) is to feel comfortable with who and where we are right now. Don't worry about what others do or concern yourself with who seems better or worse than you. Remember that ideas of perfection amount to a trap that we all easily fall into when we judge ourselves or others. Go easy on yourself and remember that patience really is a virtue.

*Always think that the teacher is correcting you*

In traditional Japanese arts, many teachers don't directly teach students, which forces students to become hyper-observant since the only way they will learn comes from stealing the teacher's secrets. We call this "stealing the secrets" *nusumi keiko*. Whenever I take a class, I always act as if the teacher has corrected me even if they corrected someone else, and it amounts to the single best tip I could give anyone about how to steal the secrets. This approach allows me not only to check my own behavior or movement but also to learn something that I might otherwise overlook. Having an attitude like this keeps us more open to whatever gets taught by whomever teaches. When you hear someone getting corrected, all you need to do is think, "It applies to me, too."

You might have noticed that some of the tips in this article addressed how to prepare ourselves to learn, while others focused on the proper learning environment. We need to have three things for learning to happen: proper instruction, proper environment, and proper attitude. When we take the time to prepare ourselves for class, we create the best possible mental environment for us to learn. When we focus and help to create a distraction-free learning environment, we help others learn too. The proper attitude comes much easier as a result of the proper preparation and maintaining the proper learning environment mentally and physically. While having a proper environment and attitude lies solely within our power, proper instruction typically sits outside of our control. But an old martial arts admonition advises us that, "When the student is ready the teacher will appear," which I take to mean that, once we make ourselves ready to learn, we can see everything as learning. I hope that some of these suggestions help you to get more out of your classes on your road to getting better by doing more Aikido.



**The Aiki Dojo**  
Official publication of  
the 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.*

1211 N. Main Street,  
Los Angeles, CA 90012 USA  
Telephone: 323-225-1424  
E-mail: [info@aikidocenterla.com](mailto:info@aikidocenterla.com)

Publisher: David Ito • Editor-in-Chief: Mark Ehrlich

**Copyright © 2013. All Rights Reserved.**

Published by Aikido Center of Los Angeles

*No portion of this publication may be copied or reproduced without written permission from the Publisher.*

**Questions/Comments?**

We welcome all questions and comments. Please send us a letter or an e-mail and our team will do our best to come up with an answer. We reserve the right to edit questions and letters for clarity and length.

Please e-mail submissions to:  
[info@aikidocenterla.com](mailto:info@aikidocenterla.com)



A woodblock print by Utagawa Kuniteru of Sakakibara's exhibition.  
 Depicted, from left to right: Ogawa Kiyotake, Nomi Tejiro, Akamatsu Guntayu, and Sakakibara Kenkichi

### Sakakibara Kenkichi continued from page 3...

Sakakibara's dojo was a gathering place for *ronin* swordsmen who would eat, drink, and talk about the good old days and the hard times they faced. He decided to put on a sword exhibition with his fellow swordsmen to try to foster an increased interest in fencing. He put on a Kenjutsu match exhibition in conjunction the seventh year memorial of *shogun* Iemochi's death. In the past, swordsmanship was the exclusive domain of the *samurai*: the general public could not wear swords, learn swordsmanship, or even watch matches. Sakakibara decided to open the exhibition to the public for a small entrance fee. The match was well-attended and several influential people decided to help fund future events. Sakakibara then petitioned the new government to allow these future exhibitions. He was granted permission on April 11, 1873 and quickly staged the first government-approved exhibition in Asakusa district a few days later on 15 April. The matches lasted for 10 days and enjoyed great success. The popularity and success of the exhibitions attracted others to do the same thing. Soon about 20 such exhibitions operated around Tokyo at the same time. This proliferation worried the government that the interest in sword fencing might incite swordsmen to form an antigovernment army. They prohibited sword exhibitions in Tokyo in July of that year, so Sakakibara decided to take the exhibitions on tour. He did exhibitions in many of the prefectures surrounding Tokyo. The exhibitions had a fair-like atmosphere to them, where other items were sold in addition to the demonstration of swordsmanship. Leading swordsmen of that time debated as to whether the exhibitions denigrated swordsmanship, but there seems little doubt that they helped keep swordsmanship in the public eye, which resulted in parents enrolling their children in Kendo classes.

The government lifted the ban on Tokyo sword exhibitions in 1876 after prohibiting the wearing of swords in public, but Sakakibara had decided that he would no longer manage or participate in the exhibitions. He turned that duty over to his assistant, Tejiro Nomi.

Sakakibara re-established his school at Kurumazaka in Tokyo. A particularly strict teacher, it was said that there one could almost always find a couple of people lying on the floor with concussions as a result of Sakakibara's *shinai* landing on their heads. The story goes that students would deliberately knock their heads into the building's pillars to get accustomed to his *shinai* blows. His dojo attracted many students, even foreign ones, such as Thomas McCluthie, a clerk at the British Consulate, and Dr. Erwin von Baelz, the German doctor who introduced modern German medical pathology to Meiji Japan. One of his best live-in students was Takeda Sokaku, teacher to O Sensei. Sokaku had trained with other sword masters but it was under Sakakibara's training that Sokaku's skill received the best honing. His nickname was *Aizu no kotengu*, or "the Little Tengu from Aizu."

On November 11, 1887, Sakakibara and other prominent swordsmen performed a sword and helmet cutting exhibition in front of Emperor Meiji at Prince Fushimi's palace in Tokyo, an event considered the highlight of his career, seeing as he had permission to demonstrate in front of the emperor. To demonstrate their cutting skills, several of the top swordsmen tried to cut a Myochin helmet; all of them failed except Sakakibara, who cut halfway through the helmet using a sword made by Dotanuki.

Sakakibara was a man who torn between two cultures: the one he felt the most comfortable with and that no longer existed, and the one he lived in that he couldn't fully accept. Although he tried to run businesses he was never a successful businessman; he was a *samurai* who could not change with the times. On September 11, 1894, Sakakibara Kenkichi passed away at the age of 65. He is buried at Saioji, Suga-cho, in the Shinjuku part of Tokyo. Despite all of his efforts, he had a difficult time adjusting to the rapidly changing society of the Meiji period. Although some said he died a frustrated man, we should not undervalue his contributions to keeping swordsmanship alive through a difficult time.

## Passing on (and) Knowledge

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

Life is so unpredictable, isn't it? Many many years ago when I was very young, I saw my grandmother ambitiously reading the Japanese newspaper and casually happened to ask what she was looking at. She casually replied, "The obituaries. I read them every day."

"Yuck!" I reprimanded her, "That's gross!" I thought it rather morbid that one should have such an overt interest in something like people's passing.

Nowadays, I find myself glancing over the same section myself and recall my comment to my grandmother. At the time, she only smiled at me, knowing that I couldn't possibly understand her motive at my early age. I think that she also knew that someday I would be doing the same thing myself and would accuse myself of such a morbid interest. Yes, we eventually – no, inevitably – come to an age when our friends, classmates, and colleagues begin to disappear and we look to the daily obituaries to see who has gone next and who is already waiting for us on the other side.

It was quite a surprise when I first saw that an old friend of mine had died after a long illness. The second, third, and fourth friends also came as a shock; nowadays, it almost seems a matter of course, "Oh really, what a surprise!" I might say to myself in quite an unsurprised manner as I glance over the daily epitaphs.

"What a long way I have come . . ." I can say to myself, ". . . but how time flies!" also comes to mind. With such mixed emotions, I feel sad and rather disappointed in myself that the passing of an old friend, who I haven't seen in 20 or 30 years, gets noted in those black and white lines, and yet the feeling of shock and sadness has nonetheless worn thin. I don't think it is because I have become a colder person; I only think that I know that my name will eventually appear here too one day, and I won't be around to see it.

I must say to my young students, "Time flies!": a sad truth we only come to realize when time has flown! Practice hard today, like there is no tomorrow, because eventually – no, inevitably – "no tomorrow" comes to us all.

Follow your teacher, follow your teacher! I haven't seen Third Doshu for many years and I can only catch glimpses of him in videos and newsletters but I can tell, even from my great distance, that he emphasizes the basic *ikkyo*, *nikyo*, *sankyo*, and *yonkyo* techniques nowadays. Recently, when one of my students returned

from the Philippines, I asked what Fujimaki Sensei from Hombu Dojo, also visiting there, had taught in his seminar. "*Ikkyo, nikyo, sankyo, yonkyo*," he replied.

"What are students practicing in the dojos there?" I asked.

"*Ikkyo, nikyo, sankyo, yonkyo*. . . ." he replied again.

I think the students in the Philippines must be very sincere and are doing well. They practice whole-heartedly what they are taught,

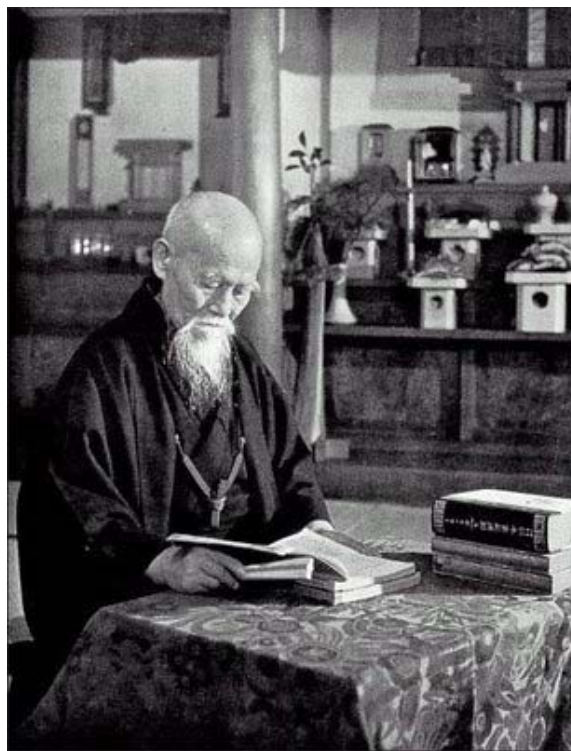
just as they are taught. This can only lead to a good result. It is much different here in this country. We always want to interpret, change, alter, and distort, and for some reason, we can never accept anything for what it is, only for what we can make it.

From my humble view, I can already see that Third Doshu is an excellent teacher and will develop many, many fine Aikidoists throughout his career. Future generations are so lucky if they follow him closely and with sincerity. Don't change it, just practice Aikido as it is. Your mastery of the art will already change it – when Aikido becomes your own, and not before.

Making knowledge our own creates a responsibility to share that knowledge responsibly, and reminds me of a little story I want to share. Recently, one my students installed a new browser to replace the old one I have been using on my computer. I am very computer challenged and only know how to do my

daily message, correspondence, and my monthly newsletter. I don't have much time for anything else and really do not know much more of what my computer can do. Up in the corner of my new browser, there is a search engine called Google which my student just introduced to me. With it, as most everyone knows (except me), you can look up almost anything. Well, I started to look up certain things related to Japan and spent several hours on it and finally decided to try "*Yagyū tsuba*". What a pleasant shock! There were actually 10 pages of references. Going through each hit however, I was more shocked to see that almost all the information posted was very inaccurate. How sad! Not even one useful reference at all. . . . If we are going to disseminate information all over the world like this, we really have a responsibility to be accurate and truthful. This kind of misinformation will only cause more ignorance, deception, and misunderstanding. Too sad indeed!

**Editor's Note:** Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his daily message board on June 30, 2003.



*O Sensei reading in his study*

# Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE

## Sundays

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

## Mondays

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

## Tuesdays

6:30-7:30 PM Advanced\*

## Wednesdays

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

## Thursdays

6:30-7:30 PM Bokken

## Fridays

6:30-7:30 PM Open

## Saturdays

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

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

\* These classes are not open for visitors to watch.

## *We are directly affiliated with:* **AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS**

Aikido Hombu Dojo - Aikikai

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

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

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



Find us on  
**Facebook**

# Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

## TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

## Saturdays

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

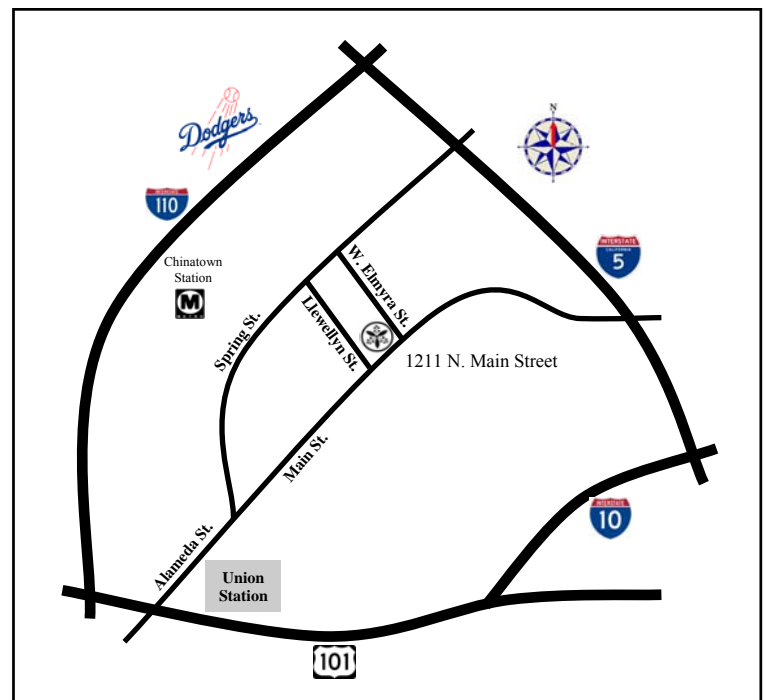
## Sundays

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

Telephone: (323) 225-1424

E-mail: [info@aikidocenterla.com](mailto:info@aikidocenterla.com)

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

**The entrance is on Elmyra Street.**

**No appointment necessary to watch classes or join:**

*You are welcome to visit us any time during any of our  
Open or Fundamentals classes. Please come early.*