



Above: Dan Furuya demonstrates art of aikido; below, he shows form with Japanese sword

# 'Way of Harmony'

You've probably watched this scene on television numerous times: A man dressed in what looks like white pajamas and a black belt drives his hand through a stack of 18 bricks while letting out a bone-chilling scream.

He is demonstrating one aspect of the martial arts. It's spectacular and everyone applauds the stunt.

You won't see California First's Dan Furuya doing that. It's just not his way. Furuya has a third degree black belt in aikido (eye-key-dough), a non-violent, no kicking, no yelling, marital art form often referred to as the "Way of Harmony" or the "Way of Meeting the Spirit."

Virtually unknown outside Japan until after World War II, aikido is fast attaining worldwide popularity.

Unlike judo and karate, which are rather violent martial art forms, aikido involves no struggling and no blows, says Furuya, who operates an aikido school in a converted Hollywood airplane hangar in his spare time. The school was featured in a recent issue of *People Magazine*.

The theory behind aikido is that the defendand becomes attuned to the "ki" or spirit of the attacker. Instead of struggling against the attacker, he harmonizes with his movements and uses the attacker's own momentum to quietly overcome him."

The main objective is to achieve an understanding of yourself and your opponent, says Furuya.

"In aikido, the philosophy is not to disable

or destroy an opponent," he continues, "but to attain through training a self-realization above enemies, beyond life and death, and to achieve a long, happy life of peace and harmony.

Ideally, this "Way of Harmony" should carry over into daily life.

Furuya takes this philosophy to work with him as operations officer at the Los Angeles

office. Furuya joined the bank 10 years ago as a bookkeeper after graduating from the University of Southern California with a degree in Asian studies, religion and philosophy.

Aikido dictates that he concentrate more on the individual than on the problem, to decide how to maintain harmony with and for that individual, whether it's a teller experiencing difficulty on the job or someone attacking him with a knife.

"We must show compassion and respect for every living creature," says Furuya. "Otherwise, we can have no respect for ourselves."

Aikido teaches that the best victory is one made without a fight, be it physical or mental. The philosophy also stresses that the biggest victory we can achieve is over our fears, weaknesses and feelings of worthlessness.

"Armed with positive thoughts," says Furuya, "there is no enemy—just a situation which must be dealt with, without harm to either party."

The goals of aikido, which dates back to the ninth century, are not achieved in a day, a month or even a year, says Furuya, who has been practicing it for 20 years.

To see Furuya during an aikido workout is to see an artist at work. Every move, calculated and strong, is almost ballet-like in execution.

To talk with Furuya is to observe an emotional strength and sense the balance in his life.

Furuya's way is the "Way of Harmony." □

