

The Aikido Center of Los Angeles, 940 2nd St. #7, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Tel: (213) 687-3673. Website: www.aikidocenterla.com.



The Aikido Center of Los Angeles LLC

道の為、世の為、人の為 合気道

The Aiki Dojo

Direct Affiliation: The Aikido World Headquarters, 17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan
International Aikido Kodokai, Rev. Kensho Furuya Foundation
Los Angeles Sword & Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai
Nanka Yamanashi Kenjin Kai Southern California Yamanashi Prefectural Association
Los Angeles Police Department Martial Artist Advisory Panel

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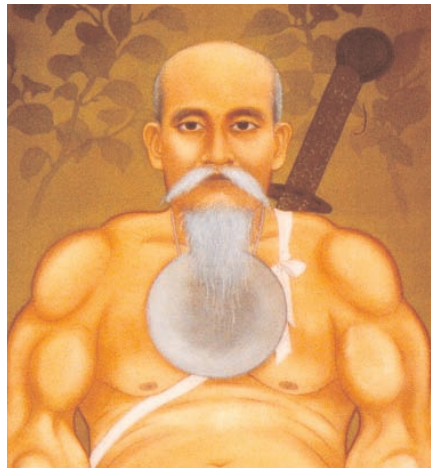
Annual O'Sensei Memorial Service & Seminar. April 22-23.

Special Guest Instructors:

Yasumasa Itoh Sensei, 6th Dan,
Chief Instructor Tekko Juku
Dojo, Boston, MA.

Kei Izawa Sensei, 5th Dan, Chief
Instructor Tanshin Juku Dojo,
Boulder, CO.

Sign-up or RSVP by emailing to aclafuruya@earthlink.net. All dojos and all affiliations are welcome. Fees are \$85.00 to April 10. \$100.00 to April 21. \$125.00 at the door. Space is limited so make your reservations early. We may not have space for late-comers if the mats get crowded. Please sign up early. Students with proper ukemi skills are recommended.



The image of Morihei Ueshiba O'Sensei, the Founder of Aikido.

Seminar Schedule:

SATURDAY April 22.

8:00am-8:45am Intro to laido:
Gary Myers & Mark Ty

9:00am-10:00am Kensho Furuya

10:15-11:15am Yasumasa Itoh

11:30-1:30am Lunch Break

1:30-2:30pm James MacDonald

2:45-3:45pm Kei Izawa

4:00-5:00pm Yasumasa Itoh

5:15-6:00pm James Doi

6:15-7:30pm David Ito

SUNDAY April 23.

7:00-7:45am Intro to laido. Gary
Myers & Mark Ty

8:00-9:00am Aikiken. Kensho Furuya

9:15-10:15am Kei Izawa

10:30-11:30am Yasumasa Itoh

11:45-12:30pm O'Sensei Memorial
Service & Memorial Service for
Mitsunari Kanai Sensei.

12:30-2:00pm Lunch Break

2:15-3:15pm Kei Izawa

3:30-4:30pm Yasumasa Itoh

4:45-5:45pm Tom Williams

Dojo Featured In Los Angeles Times West Magazine

On March 12, 2006, our Dojo was featured in a full two-page article on Downtown Los Angeles gardens in West Magazine, a new supplement of the Sunday Edition of the Los Angeles Times. Our garden is considered one of the most beautiful in the downtown Los Angeles community. The garden was designed by Sensei himself after gardens he saw in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan.

The Dojo was also mentioned briefly in an article in the Health Section of the Los Angeles Monday, March 13, 2006.

Congratulations! 25th Anniversary Of Our Aikido Dojo Newsletter

This month marks the 25th anniversary of our Aiki Dojo Newsletter which Sensei has been publishing every month without fail from the Dojo. This is probably the longest running dojo newsletter around.

Hideo Yonemochi Shihan, 8th Dan, Aikikai Hombu Dojo, Plans Visit In July

Yonemochi Sensei was recently promoted to Head Director of the Aikikai Foundation in Tokyo, Japan. We are planning his visit in July for another seminar. Details will follow.

Hiroshi Isoyama Shihan, 8th Dan, Ibaragi Dojo, Plans Visit in October.

We will welcome Isoyama Shihan, the Chief Instructor of the Ibaragi Dojo and Caretaker of the Aiki Jinja to our Dojo for Seminar.

Remembering Mitsunari Kanai Sensei



We will be remembering Kanai Sensei at our Seminar during the Memorial Service.

Photo: Mariquita Izawa

Izawa Sensei & Itoh Sensei



Izawa Sensei attending the opening of Itoh Sensei's Tekko Juku Dojo last year in Boston, MA. Both teachers will be at our special seminar

Using Excessive Strength In Practice:

Kensho Furuya

03-02-06: he other day, I was observing class and noticed that one of the black belts was trying to throw the student as hard as he could. . . . He was trying to throw the student to the point where he was losing his own balance and shoving his shoulders forward so much in the throw he had no posture and he certainly was not centered. In trying to muscle it into the student so hard, he was stumbling over himself at the end. This is really not necessary to employ so much power and I really do not know what he was trying to prove - only to send the message to the other person of look at me - I am stronger than you, I have a higher rank than you - I am better than you. . . . What does this all mean?

Welcoming Hiroshi Isoyama Shihan



Isoyama Sensei visited Sensei briefly several years ago while he was in Los Angeles and Sensei has been corresponding with him since then. We are greatly honored to welcome him to the Dojo again for his Seminar in October or November. Details to be announced.

Welcome!

Let's welcome Itoh Sensei and Izawa Sensei and all of our guests to our Dojo for our Seminar.

Many thanks for your support and help. Please try to absorb as much as possible from their instruction.

Aikido is not a competition of strength - are we not seeking to understand this idea of blending and harmony? Are we not trying to generate and project our energy from our centers? Are we not trying to find a sense of ease and freedom of movement in the technique? Are we not trying to stop recognizing everyone as an enemy who must be destroyed or injured?

In the technique, are we not trying to find our balance and center? We still have an obsession with power and strength and how to "overcome" the other person. . . . Where does this come from? Or do we simply misunderstand what is "strength" and "power?"

We really have to be watchful over our practice at every moment and continue to study the "Way" very carefully and with heart.

Continued:

Major Dojo Clean-up April 8 & 15.

We will coordinate a major Dojo Clean-up to welcome our guests for the April Memorial Service for O'Sensei and Kanai Sensei and to welcome our guests for the seminar. Mats need to be cleaned, the floors and wood should be polished. Hopefully, we can do some painting. We also need to re-finish the fence. Many volunteers needed. many thanks for your help and support.

Furuya Sensei's 58th Birthday Party. April 8.

We will celebrate Sensei's Birthday Party on April 8th. Sensei will be 58 on April 25. We celebrate his birthday early traditionally apart from O'Sensei's Memorial Service on April 26. Everyone is invited. Party destination will be announced later.

Easter Sunday On April 16

Dojo will be open for classes on Sunday. Everyone is welcome to come to practice before church.

"LA Lofts" Book Signing With Barbara Thornton On July 15 In The Dojo.

LA Lofts which features the Dojo in a beautiful photo display will premiere in Los Angeles in a Book Signing in the Dojo.

Bill Allen: New Dojo Attendance System On New Computer

Bill Allen has generously donated a new computer to the dojo and has set up a new system for taking attendance. The new system will record each day's attendance for each student, record the amount and date of monthly dues and the current rank of each student. We will have a meeting of all black belts to learn how the system works and so that everyone will know how to record the daily attendance. Many thanks for cooperation.

Naoji Karita Sensei: Best Wishes And Get Well Soon!

Our best wishes to Naoji Karita Sensei who recently suffered a heart attack and underwent by-pass surgery. Karita Sensei is a well known sword polisher who visits Sensei in Los Angeles several times a year. He was here in Los Angeles in March.

Excessive Strength:

03-02-06: Being a larger man myself (6ft and 225lbs), and coming from a hard styled background (Muay Thai, Kenpo, and Judo), it has taken a bit of an "adjustment time" for me to get into the swing of aikido. I still catch myself slipping occasionally, and trying to put muscle into the technique. Once you can let this idea of "power" go, the techniques actually do become easier to perform.

It's neat now, watching student who are newer than me learning basic techniques. You can still see them thinking "If this works without muscle, imagine how much better it will work WITH muscle.". Which of course is not the case.

Easiest way for me to address the issue of power and strength is that it is natural and human for someone to want to use power and physical strength in situations where they feel defensive (in life or in class). But a benefit of aikido training is learning to seek balance instead of seeking to display power. Shannon

Sensei's Reply: Thank you for your comments. Of course, there is physical strength in Aikido - it is physical strength utilized to its maximum effectiveness in combination with timing, spacing, blending with the opponent's power, moving off line of the attack and applying power which is generated from the entire body and soul in an integrated way expressing the ultimate of what martial arts seeks as its ideal.

When speaking of "excessive strength," I should be more specific in saying that I am referring to strength used in an ineffective way which requires "more" than the normal amount of strength necessary to effect the technique. In other words, it is the maximum efficiency with the minimum amount of energy. When we are moving ineffectively, we require "more" force to accomplish the goal, when we are moving effectively, we are using "just enough" power. It is the "more energy or force" required when we are moving in a compromised way, that is this "excessive" strength I am trying to discuss here.

If you are a bigger, stronger person, it is something you can use to advantage in practice and it is important to use your natural advantage to its fullest. A weaker, smaller person must find his advantage in another way perhaps, by refining his timing and

Living With Full Plates In Modern Life

Kensho Furuya

02-28-06: We carry much too much baggage - our plates are much too full so when we fall, it is always a big disaster - The full plate is the cause of the fall and what makes the fall a disaster in the first place. . . . it all seems so silly, yet it is something that most of us cannot avoid doing. . . .

I am always observing my students both on and off the mats. . . and generally when I see students too preoccupied, forgetful, disengaged, spaced-out, thoughtless about others, it is usually, among other reasons, a result of being too self-absorbed. There is a little too much, "me, me, me, me" in their heads and this is a result of a full plate of the head. . . .or, a head, perhaps, too full of "self." Of course, has nothing better to do than think of "me," but in the world we live in - "me" is not the only thing that we can think about. The fact that we can go above our own ego and self interests and consider the interests and well-fare of others, often above and beyond our own self-interests puts at the top of the evolutionary pyramid and it is why we proudly call our ourselves "human beings," a term which includes above all else, the meaning, with all of its nuances of definition, of "humanity."

The other day, one of the black belts came up to me before leaving and asked, "is there anything I can do before I leave?" I was so shocked because rarely am I asked that. . . Most people just take off, in such a hurry, that they never ask and often I think, "oh, he forgot to do that before he left - he is so forgetful - now I have to remind him the next day." Keeping after students like this is a lot of work. . . I often think that they can never realize independence and freedom - if someone always has to go around picking up after them like a mother takes care of a little kid. . . .

Freedom is not doing what you will - freedom is the choice one makes for himself to go ahead and do what he has to do without anyone telling him this and that or picking up after him or explaining the same chore or task over and over again. To be able to fulfill one's responsibilities and obligations on his own, by his own efforts and sensitivity and awareness is true freedom and independence. We can only achieve this or begin to see this when we finally empty our plates and begin to see other people in our lives. . .

Generally, the full plate person only sees what is on his own plate and never sees the opportunities others have to offer him. . . .

The odd Buddhist vision of hell is like this - everyone is sitting at a large banquet table filled with the most delicious food in the world and it is all you can eat. Tied to each hand of each guest in Hell is a large spoon to fill their plates with ease however, each spoon has a six foot handle on it. However they try, the long handle prevents them from filling their plates or partaking of all the delicious morsels. This is Hell.

Paradise is exactly the same with the same six foot spoons tied to each hand. However, in Heaven, each guest is using to spoon to feed the other person across the table so everyone is enjoying the food and filling their plates so full!

02-28-06: I think I understand what sensei is saying, and I am also enjoying the rest of your posts as well. I have a slightly different slant, however. My personal plate is more like a party platter right now! I am married with a toddler and an infant, a full time job, a heavy training schedule, and then a few years ago I decided to pile college on top! Needless to say I am blessed with a wonderful and very understanding wife. Anyway, my point is that though I may be a bit weary, okay Plain exhausted, I still don't really think my plate is full. I always feel as though there is still a great deal of time that I just fritter away. What I am trying to say is that I don't think your plate is too full unless you are allowing some of the food to spoil. As long as we are tending to everything on our plates to the best of our ability than why not toss another spicy shrimp roll on the side? They say the human brain has an infinite amount

"If you think, "I breathe," the "I" is extra. There is no you to say "I." What we call "I" is just a swinging door which moves when we inhale and when we exhale. It just moves; that is all. When your mind is pure and calm enough to follow this movement, there is nothing: no "I," no world, no mind nor body; just a swinging door."

-Shunryu Suzuki, "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind"

From Jim MacDonald, 3rd Dan

Sensei's Notebook: Correct Swordwork In Aikido Practice

Continued From March Issue:

As in Kendo, the cut can come at such a blindingly fast speed that you never see the cut coming at all. . . . Because of the strength and speed that "kiri-oroshi" can come at you, it is important to develop one's sense of "ki" to read the opponent's movement. At the moment, one recognizes that the attack is in progress - it is already too late, the opponent has attacked and already moved 15 feet away from you. . . .

My proposal here is a more practical, realistic perspective on our Aikido swordwork and I am working on this in my own dojo although it is a slow and frustrating process from me and my students. . . . Of course, we are limited in Aikido, because we do not use protective equipment for safety and we practice with bokken which are very dangerous when we started applying strength and speed into our cuts and techniques. . . . everything, like everything, constant practice is always the key.

Correct understanding encourages correct techniques which encourages correct understanding. . . . I think this is the reasonable and most fulfilling cycle of our practice. Many thanks for your comments and input,

02-09-07: Correct Sword Training: Aloha Kakahiaka e Sensei! Thank you for this insight into the finer points of bokken. Is it possible to incorporate this more correct parrying into various bokken kata without significantly altering the kata themselves? In other words, could you advise us to simply roll our wrists and change the angle of the blade without necessarily changing our grip, and/or the direction of the bokken? Please, if possible, could you elaborate? Mahalo nui loa!

Heraldo Mon Farrington, Aikido of Hilo

Yahoo Ref: When I am watching various sword kata and practice, I see a great deal of parrying. Generally, I think we assume that swordsmanship is like any other martial art consisting of blocking (parrying) and attacking (or cutting the opponent).

Most people parry with the blade edge. If we are practicing with wooden swords and do not see the relationship with the real

Samurai sword, we can do this. If we study the real sword, however, we realize that this is unsafe. By blocking with the edge, we cause chips in the blade called "hakobore" which hinder cutting or "hagire" or cracks and fissures in the blade which will cause it to bend or break on succeeding cuts or blocks. In real swordsmanship, the blocking is done with the thicker sides of the blade on the back (mune) or at the high point of the side ridge (shinogi). Sword techniques are designed to use these thicker, more massive surfaces for blocking. With the roundness of form of the bokken, various fukuro shinai and the modern shinai, the awareness of the edge of the sword is lost. If we are to study swordsmanship as "real" swordwork, this is one aspect we must study very carefully and conscientiously.

02-11-06: Thank you for your detailed elaboration on "keeping it real" in relation to bokken practice. Careful consideration of the Sword Edge is sobering, to say the least. And your follow-up message regarding "kiri-komi" provides an insight that many of us would never otherwise realize in our normal practice of aiki weapons. Thank you for your selfless -- and continued -- efforts on-line. Please have a wonderful Saturday! Heraldo Mon Farrington, Aikido of Hilo

Yahoo Ref: If you are working with a credible sword technique, paying close attention to the correct method of parrying and cutting will enhance the technique to bring it back to its original form. If it is a "simulated" or virtual technique, the technique itself will be drastically altered. Simply "turning the wrists" is not enough. Each technique preserves the correctness of the grip, kamae, cut and block. A virtual technique may not really consider the correctness of cutting and blocking from the very beginning.

In Aikiken, many people practice against a "two-count" shomen cut. In other words, the uke raising the sword above his head is one count and bringing it down in a cutting motion in the second count. This is a very convenient method because it allows the tori to move in and out of the opponent's space easily. However, the basic shomen cut in one count, not two. When the shomen cut is executed correctly, many techniques change drastically, as one can imagine.

Much of the time in such sword techniques, the ma-ai for real cutting is much closer than what we imagine practicing with bokken. Generally, with the typical ma-ai practiced

in bokken swordwork, we are too far to make an actual cut which cuts. The ma-ai is much closer in real cutting so that there is devastating penetration power. A real sword cut is known to split a person completely in half - in our typical bokken practice, we do not follow this ma-ai to execute such a cut.

As you can imagine, when the cut is stronger and the ma-ai is closer - we are already changing our practice drastically. As you can understand here, I am only advocating a more "correct" view of swordwork from a technical standpoint, regardless of style, school, or technique.

I think if one goes through his swordwork and brings it back to actual "real" sword technique, the practice, of course, will be much more enhanced and I think the movements will have greater meaning and significance.

As we go through the kata and various techniques, I think that sometimes, it really doesn't make sense to us - this is the point where we need to devote our sincere attention to in our practice.

02-19-06: Moshi, moshi Sensei, I was very pleased with your writing on using the mune and shinogi of the katana in parrying an attack.

In the Zen Ken Ren Iaido the third exercise (ukenagashi) also uses a parry to a kirioroshi from the left. This parry is done by pulling the sword while rising from a seated position to a standing one. The attacking sword is then blocked with the Ha just beneath the habaki. Which indeed I find very strange.

Also in chudan kamae while moving to either the left or the right the iaito is raised in a protective way, the Ha is again pointing upward, blocking the opposite (imaginary)sword.

I also study Yagyū Shinkage Ryū, yet I have not enough experience to find a correct answer to this problem.

Please advise in how to handle a correct protection, thanks in advance.
Best regards, Sven De Schryver, AIKIDO-DOJO AIKIKAI AALTER

(By the way: Aalter is situated in Belgium not in Sweden as stated in the ACLANewsletter from February. Just for your

Continued: -mation: Belgium is a very small country situated south of the Netherlands, north of France, on the west of Germany and to the east from the United Kingdom).

The "Eccentric" Nature Of Japanese Culture:

Kensho Furuya

Those who practice Aikido or Iaido eventually get involved in the intricacies of Japanese "culture." For some, it is a cultural oasis and the golden road to so-called "enlightenment" and for others, it is a thing of terror, apprehension and potential shame and embarrassment. Everyone has my sympathies! I must say that it is a life-long task to figure it out, I dare say that most modern Japanese today do not understand what

Japanese culture is and are inclined to accept it, or ignore it, or bow their heads to it. . . . Today, Japanese are engulfed in what is "American culture" and to throw this over the odd, unique character of their own national Japanese culture only produces more odd looks, quizzical shakes of the head and hands thrown into the air in hopeless surrender. . . .

The "not-not:" Although it is a "no-no" in our own English grammar, the "not-not" is a typical function of the Japanese language, especially in its "polite" form and often causes us to wonder, "Did he say "yes" or was that a "no?"

We normally say, "It will rain," whereas a typical Japanese person might politely tell you, "It will probably not - not rain." I find most of us are trampled by the typical Japanese "not-not" and this is not uncommon!

Especially, in Zen lingo, - "no" often means "yes." There is no word for "infinity," Japanese say, "no limits." "Mu" which means "nothingness" often means "everything" in the sense of "un"-measurable.

In Japanese, we politely never refer to the person directly. We might say, "Here's Bill!." In Japanese, we say, "Bill has appeared." Often, out of respect, Japanese often refer to the person in the "third person," often causing us to think, "who else is coming to the party?" Person's of respect are never referred to directly - almost always in the third person. It is well known that Japanese speak indirectly about more things

or never hit the subject on the head. For Japanese, it is a form of politeness. The Japanese has no "swear" words or "them's fighting words," this obviously evolved from a society in which a majority of the populace brandished razor-sharp Samurai swords. . . .

Japanese always bow and always say, "excuse me," even when no "excuse" is needed. . . . The Japanese language has more words which mean, "thank you" and "I'm sorry" than any other language which comes to mind. . . . For Americans, when someone says, "I'm sorry," the first question to instantly leap to mind is, "Ok, what did you do now?"

Why Japanese bow to everything is from an ancient primordial cultural view that all things contain "kami" or god, spirit, or energy. When Japanese drink tea, they bow to the tea - for the tea sacrifices itself to you for your nourishment and enjoyment and to the bowl because the bowl is making itself useful to you. The tea and the bowl has its own energy and life which is offered to you so you bow as a way to say "thank you". . . if the ritual "act of appreciation" is not performed, you may angry that god or energy. . . . It all seems overly complex but it practice it is quite beautiful when one becomes accustomed to it. New student might think it strange to bow to an empty space when entering and leaving the mat area of a dojo. . . . what we are doing here is defining "sacred space and time." This is hard to understand in a world which we have made, perhaps, too overly secular?

That all things have energy or god is a prevailing view of O'Sensei and those of his generation and age, and is a great part of the basis of our Aikido. . . .

Despite the "oddity" and "contradictions" we find in Japanese culture in the context of our own world view and culture, we come to make some kind of sense as we continue and go deeper into our practice. . . . If we explore our own Judeo-Christian view of the world, indeed, God is everywhere. . . .

The "not-not's," we just have to accept. . . . it is not an impractical way to look at things in this world. . . .

02-24-06: I saved this one for a while, waiting for a time when I had a few moments to savor the writings of my Sensei.

This was a most delightful sharing of information and I really enjoyed reading it! I am so very pleased that when one practices Aikido that they are bound to learn more and more about traditional Japanese culture. When you reference the part about there being no curse words in the Japanese language because "those would be fighting words" , and how most probably that was because everyone had very sharp swords, I cracked up, true but really made me laugh.

I am a new student to the practice of Aikido, but I do understand and appreciate the reason and practice of bowing and it is awesome to learn the many little details of how bowing plays a role in the practice of Aikido and the Japanese culture. For example I know of the Japanese Tea Ceremony, I have actually seen this done but, not growing up in Japanese Culture I had no idea about the bowing to the cup and the tea...soooo...very interesting, I really like learning these things of the Japanese culture. They are so personal to the culture but so full of meaning, honor and beauty!

I also did not know about the speaking in the third person, very interesting. I am actually scheduled to take my first Japanese language class this fall, so I guess I will learn more of this at that time.

Well...don't want to take all of your time, just wanted you to know that your writings are appreciated and inspirational! Gayle

Full Plates Continued:

storage space. I think maybe our plate can be like this as well but we must not use it as an excuse to neglect other courses and turn them into leftovers. When class is over I reach for the broom. This isn't adding something to my plate, it was already on there when I placed aikido on it years ago. To say I don't have time to sweep because there are too many things on my plate is to ignore the main course. It is still on my plate and I am still slowly digesting. I guess I have stretched the plate metaphor about as thin as it will go so I will just say that even though I am undertaking a great deal in my life, I always fell as though I probably waste just as much time. Maybe there is still a little room?

02-28-06: Robert A. Eggleston wrote: Full Plates are wonderful things. Unfortunately the only time that I have ever found them useful was when I was at a restaurant in

Full Plates Continued:

full plates of all the items on the menu in wax. It is great for me when my Japanese vocabulary is not very large.

Perfecting oneself through marital arts and warrior philosophy is a lot like that Full Teacup story with the Buddhist Priest overflowing the cup to point out that if our minds are filled with preconceived notions and beliefs that there is no room for new ideas.

As I study the concepts of Aikido and the philosophy of warriorship I am constantly having to review my life and see where room needs to be made. We are a society of possessions. We are bombarded with examples and messages that tell us that the wholeness that we seek is in attaining things. I have spent half my life to come to the realization that spirituality often works in paradox.

If you do not want to attract something to you do not fear it. Wholeness comes from having less not more.

I am very blessed and have a lot of things by world standards. Then I have to devote way too much time to maintaining those things and making those things complete where in reality they become whole and I do not. How much time do we spend on things that are just not important to who we really are?

This is a great moment to tell everyone to look at my sales on E-Bay. Unfortunately I am still challenging myself as to what to let go and free up my time and beliefs from those things. Robert A. Eggleston, Still working on mastering Clutter-Waza

02-28-06: Great post Robert! You seem to be at a similar place to me on the Way.

"Wholeness comes from having less not more." What a lovely expression and so very true. Yet doesn't that go against everything that society screams at us everyday?

As we plan our emigration from Cambridge, England to Vancouver, BC we see an opportunity to leave a lifestyle behind here and to begin afresh in Vancouver.

But boy it is hard to let go of those possessions that we foolishly believe are security is reliant upon. Strip me of all I have and the true self is not only as strong and beautiful as ever but actually able to shine.

Ah the words are so easy to say - the actions though..... Good luck with the E-Bay bonanza! Best wishes, Ambrose

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think your plate is too full unless you are allowing some of the food to spoil. As long as we are tending to everything on our plates to the best of our ability than why not toss another spicy shrimp roll on the side? They say the human brain has an infinite amount of

storage space. I think maybe our plate can be like this as well but we must not use it as an excuse to neglect other courses and turn them into leftovers. When class is over I reach for the broom. This isn't adding something to my plate, it was already on there when I placed aikido on it years ago. To say I don't have time to sweep because there are too many things on my plate is to ignore the main course. It is still on my plate and I am still slowly digesting. I guess I have stretched the plate metaphor about as thin as it will go so I will just say that even though I am undertaking a great deal in my life, I always felt as though I probably waste just as much time. Maybe there is still a little room?

02-28-06: Hello Sensei Your messages prompted me to re-read some chapters of "From the Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment" and this paragraph particularly resonated with what you have written:

"By throwing our life force into our work, every situation literally comes to life and that in turn generates clarity and vividness. When the situation is full of life, we become alive as a result. This means, then, that our life force has breathed a vividness into the situation. I feel very deeply that each of us must look clearly at this point for ourselves and then practice diligently with both our bodies and our minds."

Your mind is already closed in thought and you are 'dead' to that moment. If you are dead to that moment then you are dead to reality. You cannot breathe life into your current situation, whether that be on the mat in practice or off the mat in practice. Your life will have no vividness or clarity, and that naturally includes your Aikido.

Of course we can all make excuses. Oh how busy our life is these days. But I am quite sure that potential excuses were just as plentiful 100 years ago, 200 years ago, 1000 years ago.

When you are being attacked by a gang intent of taking your life you may be excused for being preoccupied with the biggest, ugliest one with the largest knife. But then more than ever you must be alive to each moment, with no discrimination, as it may be the small, apparently insignificant one who stabs you in the back.

Perhaps it is possible to have a full plate and to still be in the moment. But I believe the clearer your plate the easier it will be to find yourself in the moment. Thank you for reminding us of the importance of this. Best wishes as always, Ambrose

02-28-06: Hi Jason, That certainly is some platter you have there! Could I just have a little bit of your spicy shrimp r.....OUCH! Guess not ;-)

Referring back to my message I just posted as long as you can carry this impressive platter and still be living in the moment then your plate is not too full.

Can you play with your toddler and infant and as you play with them be totally absorbed in that play, not thinking about the course work you have to do for example? Can you listen to your wife tell you all about her day and be absorbed by her words and not be thinking about getting your stuff together to get to Aikido? Can you be sitting in your lecture and be utterly focused on that without thinking about the diapers you have to pick up on the way home?

A large platter doesn't by definition mean that you cannot always be in the moment and utterly aware. But it surely makes the challenge that much tougher.

For me it impacts the most on the time I have to remind myself of the importance of these matters. The time to read and really

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absorb what Sensei is saying. The time to sit down in peace and quiet and really read and absorb the Hagakure, the Tao Te Ching. The time to practice my weapons. The time to just do nothing!

I have 3 children aged 2, 4 and 5 so I know the challenges you face and the joys you experience. It is not anything I would ever change and there are times in your life when your plate just becomes full. But for many of us at most times of our life we do fill our plates with 'junk food' and being aware of this tendency is I think what Sensei is saying.

So I would say that just because there is space on your plate doesn't mean you should fill it. More likely you should work on creating more space on your plate, more peaceful times, more times to 'do nothing'.

But Jason I really know nothing so the above is probably a load of rubbish. Now, about that spicy shrimp roll..... Best wishes, Ambrose

02-28-06: Quote "Your comments are very judgmental" Not judgmental, true! I don't think it's just about Aikido students. Everyone strives for things in life. Thinks of status, things of power. We all work very hard to get those things. The more we want the harder we have to work for them. Sometimes we covet too many things and it interferes with what's more important in life. Thank you Sensei! I will strive to empty my plate and simplify my life. Kelly Allen, Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada,

02-28-06: This post by Zen Mind @ Yahoo troubles my spirit! It is my Sensei that you speak of so rudely, not only does he Not refer to himself as anything that he has not achieved, he is so accomplished academically and spiritually that he has far surpassed the need to explain himself in this way. For such as yourself many are not yet ready to receive such a gift of knowledge and most do not have the discipline and dedication that it takes to follow the path and live the life that my Sensei leads!

No one is perfect yet, it is you my friend who must first acknowledge and understand the gravity of ones accusations and the spoken and written word! These are not just writings on paper, your choice of words is a clear reflection of who you are and what's in your heart!

I understand the tone of your post to be as if

you are the one with problems. It reads harshly and defensive, as well the tone is more than disrespectful! I was offended that you attacked my Sensei in this way! Gayle, Aikido Center of Los Angeles

02-28-06: Hey Ambrose, The simple answer to your question about the ability for me to do all of these things and be completely in the moment is easy...Of course not! I really wish I could say I were but that is a level far above me current reach. I understand and even agree with your premise, but I think as with all things there must be some middle ground somewhere. What I am really trying to say is that even with all of these things I have going on I still have quite a bit of lazy time on the couch or whatever. So I have a hard time always trying to act like I am to busy. This is where that shrimp roll comes in. It is the study of the books you mentioned and many more. Or any pursuit that is better than loafing around. I don't know, I just feel like I will never have enough time in this life to get anywhere in my studies. Maybe instead of worrying about how much is on the plate we all need to learn how to spin them on those poles like those circus people! Anyway, thanks for the thoughts, Jason, Aikido of Center City

03-02-06: Sensei, I want to say how grateful I am for the topic of full plates. Do I agree with everything you say? Well I did not join this group to have my belief systems echoed back to me. I joined to provoke thought and reflection within myself. Growth is painful and to borrow from another; it only happens when the pain of not changing becomes greater than the pain of staying where we are at. Giving up those things that we hold onto is painful. I choose not to give away some things that I hold dear and others I need to ask myself are they still close to me as they once were.

Full plates cover material possessions as well as beliefs. Not a few weeks ago was there not lament that dialog on the list was sparse? Well, the plate sure filled up on this topic. In this country and in Canada there is a celebration of Thanksgiving that is centered around a full plate and giving thanks. All I can say is Happy Thanksgiving!!

Excessive Strength In Aikido Practice Continued:

and spacing at a higher level. I do not think a stronger bigger person must behave like a small, weaker person - each person must

his natural weapons effectively - but not in an inefficient or self-destructive way.

If a student moves effectively, using his power to the maximum in the most effective, integrated way according to Aikido principles, the opponent will feel and sense the power but in a completely different way than if we feel, "oh, he is just trying to throw me down hard."

When we feel the powerful throw of a skillful Aikidoist, we feel the power of the throw and sense his skill. It is quite another case, as everyone knows in practice, when someone is just applying "additional" force to throw one down harder than normal. This is the meaning of "excessive."

It is not necessarily a weaker person practices a "weaker" Aikido and a bigger stronger person practices a stronger Aikido. It is always amazing when a smaller person can create very powerful throws despite his size. It is also equally interesting when a bigger person creates strong, but soft, very blending type throws. . . This is what makes the art the "fine" art of what Aikido is. I hope this is understandable. . . .

03-02-06: You have made the distinction between strength and excessive strength very clear. Thank you for separating the two. I guess that I am very fortunate as to not have encountered someone who uses excessive strength. The yudansha at my dojo (Aikido of Norfolk) are examples of how you described "Feeling the power of the throw and the sense of skill". They will often go slower and softer for the benefit of us newer students. And the newer students, picking up on this, will often lose (over time) their urge to use force to compensate for lack of skill. There clearly is a difference between power and some throwing you to the ground for their own sense of accomplishment. Let's hope the student you spoke of never decides to switch coasts! Humbly yours, Shannon

Mu Sei Shi: The Unvoiced Poem:

The message of our training is like a poem, the words are heard but the message lingers elsewhere silently. . . . To go deep into the art of Aikido is to go deep inside one's self.

03-04-06: From Ze'ev, Aikikan, in Israel: Dear Furuya Sensei, How are you? I am sorry for my long absence from the Internet and E-mail... My wife went to Continued:

Petition Against The Sale Of San Francisco Japantown

Fumiko Amano

02-21-06: Hi. Sorry about forwarding this as bulk mail plus sending it so late...

I just got this email today from someone...I'm sending this only to the people who might be relate to this or forward this to the right people.

I don't know the whole story and can't say too much about it. All I know is the fact their historical area for Japanese and Japanese American in San Francisco is gradually disappearing and it is very sad.

More than ten years ago, I had a chance to interview the key people who were involved in re-building a Japanese community in 50s -60s and who were still a big part of the community up to date.

If I remember correctly, around 1950s Mr. Matsuo who ran a big entertainment company in Japan at that time brought a real Kabuki play to KABUKI THEATRE (now it's a film theatre). Both local people and Japanese entertainers from Japan partied 24 hours and actors and actresses from Japan were all staying hotels nearby to celebrate Japanese culture. I heard it was quite ordinary. According to the people who worked for Mr. Matsuo told me that when Mr. Matsuo first came to LA, he had to be guarded by three guards with guns. Bringing something big like that was such a risk taking thing at that time. Japanese wasn't that welcome and Yakuza (real one) was everywhere then. After the crazy party scene was gone, then, there built a peaceful Japanese community for the next 5-6 decades.

Although not that many people might know it, that particular area had lots of history to Japanese community and it took long time to build the area. I'm just thinking that it would be so great if there's some way to preserve the area...or at least save something in the area.

Since I no longer live in SF, I can't say too much except for this.

Please forward this email to someone and save the history of the Japantown.

02-21-06: If you haven't heard yet, San Francisco Japantown is up for sale. San Francisco's Japantown is only one of three remaining Nihonmachi in this country! My cousin Aaron Kitashima (Sox's

Grandson) would like your help in signing this petition to keep Japantown from being sold. My Aunt spent most of her entire life doing so much for our generation and culture, a big part of Japantown is what my Aunt is and was all about. Please sign the petition to help keep a memorable part of our Japanese heritage from being gone.

To: Mayor and Board of Supervisors of City and County of San Francisco, Kintetsu of America Corporation, and AMC/Lowes Theatre Corporation

We the concerned people of San Francisco's Japantown are outraged by the actions taken by the Kintetsu of America Corporation for their intention to sell all of all the property that they own in Japantown. Due to the large amount of property they own, we stand to lose nearly 3/4 of Japantown's property which includes the Miyako and Kintetsu Mall, the Miyako Hotel, and the Miyako Inn.

There has also been intention by AMC/Lowes Theatres to also sell-off the Kabuki Theatre, a major center of business to the Japantown community and to some of the major events such as the Asian American film festival, and the Day of Remembrance to remind everyone about the internment camps during WWII and the struggle for redress.

This turn of events had to come at the worst time while the neighborhood celebrates the centennial (100 years) of this special place that some consider "home" and to the creator of this petition a neighborhood that he has been raised in.

In history, Japantown has been an integral part of San Francisco. During its early years, the neighborhood stretched as far south up to Height Street and the Japanese American population was only allowed to live in this enclave. What promoted the near total destruction of this neighborhood were the redevelopment projects that enraged not just the Japanese American community, but also the African American community of the Fillmore neighborhood. Thus Japantown was downsized to a near three blocks east to west, and two blocks north and south.

There are only three existing Nihonmachi in the United States, which also includes Los Angeles (Little Tokyo), and San Jose (Japantown).

We expect that the City of San Francisco, the Kintetsu of America Corporation, and the AMC/Loews Theatre Corporation will take a serious look that losing nearly 3/4 of our neighborhood would be a devastating loss to the preservation of our neighborhood. If the properties are sold to the people for the wrong intentions, we will surely see that our neighborhood will surely disappear and be forgotten.

Sincerely,
The Undersigned

John Katagi: Get Well Soon & Best Wishes!

Thanks to the many of you who have been praying for me over the last two weeks, and apologies to those who were not aware of my situation. I've just returned home and am in contact with many of you for the first time in two weeks. Thanks most of all to God for his provision and intervention on my behalf, sustaining me through quadruple bypass surgery last Friday, February 17th.

As an update for those who may not know the general information: I went into the emergency room of St John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard on Saturday, February 11th with chest pains radiating to my left arm and jaw. I was admitted and the next morning confirmed that I had suffered a mild heart attack. Further tests and procedures would reveal that I had 4 blockages to my heart with the worst being @ 90%.

On Friday, February 17th, I underwent open-heart surgery where I had four bypasses performed. I've remained in recovery at St John's until my discharge this morning.

There are many who have shared with me the "close call" nature of these last weeks' events. I'm grateful that God has given me the opportunity to continue in life and in his work. The leadership of the Japanese American Christian Chapel is generously providing me with a month of convalescence to be restored completely. I look forward to being back in ministry by the first of April. Blessings to you all, PJ

Sensei's Reply: John Katagi worked for several years at the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo where I met him through many community events. John is a Methodist minister who spent some time in South America. He recently resigned from JANM and found a ministerial post to continue his religious calling in Oxnard, California.

KODO: Learning Is Only The Second Step

Translated Into Spanish
Santiago Garcia Almaraz, Kodokai,
Salamanca, Spain

APRENDER ES SOLO EL SEGUNDO PASO

Muchas De las tradiciones de las artes marciales han crecido y florecido en America desde 1960 pero no la tradición que subyace en el verdadero aprendizaje del trabajo en las artes marciales, puede ser útil examinar la relación habitual ente el maestro y el estudiante. El estudiante mira al maestro como alguien que ha cultivado unos conocimientos y esta dispuesto y capacitado para enseñarlos. El maestro mira al estudiante como alguien con capacidad para recibir sus enseñanzas e incluso, posiblemente superar su propia habilidad en el arte.

Todo el mundo ha escuchado historias de cómo los maestros del pasado sometían a sus estudiantes a duras pruebas de paciencia, fortaleza, y coraje. Un joven aspirante que deseaba recibir un entrenamiento de espada, por ejemplo, realizó múltiples tareas del hogar a su maestro durante dos años antes de que éste le permitiera recibir el entrenamiento. Ejemplos como este son extremos. Estas situaciones eran vistas como medios a través de los cuales los maestros valoraban el ego del estudiante antes de iniciarlos en los íntimos secretos del arte. Pero la motivación real que existe detrás de estos hechos es mucho más relevante para el éxito o el fracaso en el entrenamiento de un estudiante actual.

En el caso de las artes marciales, enseñar es mucho más difícil que aprender por una razón muy importante. En la mayoría de los casos, el estudiante rara vez se da cuenta que el aprendizaje sólo puede ocurrir cuando se dan las condiciones apropiadas. Los maestros del pasado preparaban a sus alumnos, física, mental y espiritualmente para que aceptaran y entendieran adecuadamente sus enseñanzas. Hoy, cuando un estudiante recibe el cinturón negro, sin embargo, solo significa que el estudiante ha dado el primer paso a aprender como aprender.

Los alumnos necesitan ser preparados antes de que el proceso de aprendizaje pueda producirse. Una vez que el alumno ha comprendido el estado mental y la conducta correcta, éste comienza entonces a progresar

en su aprendizaje en su aprendizaje según su habilidad y esfuerzo.

Aprender es solo una segunda etapa en el entrenamiento. El primer paso requiere que el estudiante se armonice consigo mismo y trate de comprender las condiciones adecuadas que le permitirán superar los obstáculos físicos y mentales. Si a un alumno no se le da la oportunidad de entender esto, la frustración se apoderará inevitablemente de él. El maestro puede perder un estudiante y el estudiante puede perder todo lo que las artes marciales tiene que ofrecerle. Preparar a un alumno para prepararse a aprender puede resultar la tarea mas difícil pero es un aspecto vital en el entrenamiento de las artes marciales. Los alumnos se aproximan normalmente a las artes marciales con la misma actitud que al resto de las cosas a lo largo de su vida. Así los alumnos se aproximan a las artes marciales con un cuerpo y una mente que se ha echado raíces en la confusión, el temor, la agresividad, el deseo y la ambición, algunos de los elementos que le han conducido a las artes marciales. Con la guía de un maestro y su propio coraje el alumno debe deshacerse de estas limitaciones. Los nuevos alumnos cometen frecuentemente el error de decidir de antemano como van aprender el arte marcial elegido. Atrapados en sus conceptos preguntándose: ¿Cuánto tiempo tardaré en ser lo suficientemente bueno como para obtener un cinturón negro? Preguntas como esta nos indica que el estudiante ya se ha puesto límites en el aprendizaje de un arte del que no sabe absolutamente nada. La única cosa que conoce y da por cierta es que lo que necesita es un Cinturón Negro.

Los alumnos deben ser instruidos desde el principio, antes de que cualquier entrenamiento comience, como aprender a cultivar una mente totalmente abierta y receptiva. No obstante, esto no es una tarea fácil. Si el maestro no realiza esto con el alumno o el alumno nunca lleva a cabo este aprendizaje, el rumbo habría sido fijado hacia el desacuerdo y la frustración. Los maestros de la antigüedad lo sabían y crearon formas y métodos con los que instruir a sus alumnos.

Hoy los estudiantes de artes marciales tiene lo que puede llamarse &mentalidad televisiva, desconectando o cambiando de canal cuando algo falla. En vez de plantar cara al reto que supone el entrenamiento, los alumnos se han acostumbrado simplemente a desconectar o a esperar que se emita un

mejor programa de televisión. A veces, los deportistas veteranos comentan lo maravillosos que es ser capaz de desconectar del mundo a través de la meditación. En esta línea, los alumnos de artes marciales usan a veces su arte como un tipo de narcótico que les permite desconectar de la realidad y entrar en su propio mundo de fantasía. El resultado de este tipo de actitud es desastroso.

Hay un infinito número de formas de entender las artes marciales, pero solo podemos comenzar nuestro entrenamiento conectándonos, no desconectándonos nuestras mentes. El camino del aprendizaje en las artes marciales puede ser extremadamente sutil y puede llegar de una variedad de formas inesperadas. Si el progreso se consigue en el entrenamiento, las barricadas no pueden crearse con egos.

Unvoiced Poem Continued:

India for a three weeks intensive study in Baharata-Natyam Indian classical dance. I was here with my son and barely touched the computer. SO... At last I had time and read all that I missed so much - your daily assays. There is something amazing that I wanted to tell you. The other day I wrote in my diary these words: "while driving today, as I was listening to the radio, there was a song from the musical "Hair" The was a line in the song that went like this:

" ...Silence
Tells me secretly
Everything
Everything..."

These words keep echoing in my mind since then. I can't help but thinking of all those moments of silence that I sometimes have, whether they are when I am on my own, or with friends or students. Also during Mokusou or Meisou. Those moments of silence taught me so much. We need enough silence in our life. On that very day Sensei, I later saw the essay you wrote about Museishi - The Unvoiced Poem. Incredible, don't you think so? What a coincidence. Take care., I always hope and pray you are in good health, Ze'ev.

Sensei's Reply: Thank you very much. I like your story very much. I am glad to hear that our conversations here can relate to your real life experiences. In order to keep it "real," I try to talk here about things which are happening at the moment in my own life.

Continued:

Letters & Correspondence:

02-14-06: Thank You Furuya Sensei: For many things over! I am a mere speck on the "Aikido" radar, just begining practice this year, but I can attest to the "Beauty and Ancient Grandure of our Dojo"! To make the discovery even more special, is to know that you built everything with your own will and hands...awesome!

Not only is the space wonderful and set in another time, but the spirit of our dojo is lingering in ancient time. With every story, I come to learn more and more. I once arrived early and thought it a great opportunity to just look around and explore all of the many things within the dojo to see, boy did I get my worldly feelings hurt....eeeeee

I was instructed that once I enter the dojo, I must basically begin working out not looking around. Ok, I got over it and when in this environment I must be able to separate myself from everything else but the study of "Aikido" and practicing. I selected "Aikido" because of my fascination with the Ancient Sumari and the passive spiritual nature of "Aikido".

My first month I basically tried various days each week until I settled into my first day of intended Aikido practice. Very sore I am after every practice, but I am enjoying challenging myself to focus and learn something very foreign to me. Last October I began conditioning for overall health maintenance and my attempt to practice Aikido. I work out at the gym four days per week, one of those days with a personal trainer. I have found that the use of the quads and hamstrings is major in the practice of Aikido. So, since I am not a spring chicken and totally a martial arts rookie (That is if jumping off the couch like Bruce Lee or Jackie Chan don't count....just kidding Sensei!) I am trying to graduate into practicing twice a week and remain injury free (muscle pulls or tears).

Thank you again for creating such a wonderful space and sharing it with all of us!
Gayle

02-16-06: Aloha Kakahiaka e Sensei! Thank you for such a timely reminder about "True Listening." Our dojo is having our annual Winter Camp this coming weekend, and once again, we will be hosting an instructor from Honbu Dojo. Occasionally in the past, I have overheard visiting instruc-

tors bemoan the fact that so many of the students, especially the yudansha, do not seem to pay any attention to what is being demonstrated. They simply do their "own aikido," again and again and again. This is quite discouraging to the instructors, and they can't seem to figure how to "get through to us." Perhaps we all must do a better job of "getting through to them" by True Listening?

The same might be said for True Looking . . . (with your permission?):

"Some people do not look. Some look but do not see. Some see but do not understand. Some understand, but do not pay attention. Some people pay attention, but do not remember. Some remember but do not apply what they know."

I remember a particularly humbling experience from last year's Winter Camp. The instructor had been demonstrating a simple throw (Ikkyo omote) from shomenuchi, which we all duly practiced. Then he called up a new uke and, as the instructor moved to receive the attack by initiating Ikkyo omote, the uke smoothly moved into a roll from what seemed to be a forward omote throw. Except that, as he rolled away, it was obvious that he hadn't yet been thrown and that the instructor had actually wanted to demonstrate a different technique.

The instructor whirled away, turning his back completely on the uke, and immediately selected a new uke -- me! I bowed, and jumped up, knowing that I would not commit the same mistake as the previous uke, whose aikido I happened to respect and admire, but who obviously had just made the critical mistake of taking his own ukemi. I launched into a determined shomenuchi, and found myself absorbing the ikkyo . . . and then turning away and starting a forward roll. Before I even touched the mat, I could feel the instructor disengaging and turning away, leaving me to bow out on my own as he searched for an honest uke. Luckily, his next selection proved to be Paying Attention, and we all were able to work on a new technique.

I remember being quite puzzled, and humbled, by my behavior -- especially when I had consciously seen, and understood, and paid attention. Yet somehow, from sitting seiza to attacking, I failed to remember, much less apply. Looking back, it makes me wonder what I completely missed seeing!

I remember being quite puzzled, and humbled, by my behavior -- especially when I had consciously seen, and understood, and paid attention. Yet somehow, from sitting seiza to attacking, I failed to remember, much less apply. Looking back, it makes me wonder what I completely missed seeing! Please have a wonderful day, Herald Mon Farrington, Aikido of Hilo

02-18-06: Sensei, I was surprised to hear you refer to your self as a soda machine in metaphor. I read your thoughts and it provokes deep thoughts and at moments like now inspiration.

Not a spiritual inspiration but at this time a motivational one. You see, it is 5:30AM Saturday morning and I am on vacation, it is 18 degrees outside and I have 20 miles to travel to get to Aikido practice. Add to that that if there is such a thing as a morning person, I am not it. It is in every sense of the word a good day to stay in bed curled up to my wife sharing the mutual warmth.

Instead I am reading your messages and preparing to be a good Uki and learn. I am excited by it but on a day like today, your words are like the warmth off the fire, all the more comforting.

One thought provoking thing to pass along. You were talking about listening and non-verbal communications. If you can find it there is an early Neuro-Linguistic Programming book that was actually a transcript of the class lectures that focused on rapport techniques and non-verbal communications. Frogs into Princes by Bandler and Grinder. I have not seen it stores in years but it is still available. NLP suffered from its own popularity as more people got into it like the martial arts and all kinds of ridiculous claims were made by supposed masters. . . .

Robert, In the Frigid North (Seattle)

02-22-06: Tragic Fire: Hello everyone, I just joined this group and I'm glad this is the first post I read. As I only joined batto-jutsu 5 months ago, it's something that really relates to me, so thanks for the inspiration. Also, i'm very glad about your dojo.

We had a nice little dojo, a charming wooden building set in a leafy block that just made it feel like you've stepped into a different time. Our sensei has also done HIS training in it, 30 odd years. It was a spiritual place for him, and even for me who hasn't

Continued: been there all that long.

However, someone set fire to it and it literally burnt to the ground. All the equipment, swords, daggers, staffs, naginatas, clothing, belts, and the shrine, all gone. I couldn't believe someone would be that spiteful and petty as to burn down a dojo.

02-23-06: I really enjoy reading all of the post, I learn something from each! Yet, this particular post rings with such clarity delineating core components of humanity that so many people are walking around without "Compassion, Understanding, Integrity, Honor and a sense of Duty".

As well it also reminded me one of my favorite quotes: "Be the change you want to see in the world", (Ghandi) Thanks for the many inspirational writings! Gayle

02-24-06: From Old Student, Kaoru Tamura: Hello Furuya Sensei, Sensei, Konnichiwa! Just wanted to say hello and send you an email greeting from Osaka, Japan. I spent a week doing interpretation work at a deposition; I have not had any time or opportunity to do much sightseeing, but it's interesting just to walk through the city and take in the atmosphere of the town and the people here.

This is the first time I've been back to Japan in decades, and I realize how much of an American I have become. Now I understand what you had said about the young Japanese people losing their old-world values. But in spite, most people are very courteous here -- politeness and "other-centeredness" are universal, and it goes a long ways; and having spent just a week to meet and work with the people here in Japan, I now have a better appreciation of the importance of reigi that was being taught through aikido. It has helped me to try to understand better the sensibilities of Japanese people, what they expect from others, and how to address them.

Anyway, recently I have been thinking about the ACLA, coincidentally coming across the beautiful Buddha in the chapel on a recent visit to the Children's Hospital, and also seeing a little clip about the Aikido Center on Channel 28 right before I left for Japan. I'm glad to see things are aikawarazu and going well for the Center, and I hope everyone is well. I miss Aikido! Wishing you and everyone good health and peace from Japan, Best, Kaoru

02-27-06: From Santiago, Salamanca, Spain: Dear Sensei: First all many congratulations for you 25 years of the publication of the Aiki-News!.

About my visit in April, I can't tell you right now if I can come or not because I have no the schedule of my work for that time but I will do everything I can, to be there. If at last I could go I will fine other dates to go visit you maybe in October, anyway I will write you to tell you the dates as soon as possible.

The Dojo is doing well, I have no great news the only great news is that we practice everyday and I try to remember all your teachings and advice in the Aikido and Iaido class. My best, Santiago G. Almaraz Aikido-Aikikai Salamanca (España) Kodokai Dojo

02-28-06: From Steven Shaw, Colorado
His daughter, Cyan, at 20 months:



Hi all, I couldn't resist sending this to you. Wow, do I love this girl, so pure. Best, Steven.

03-05-06: Dear Reverend, I am sorry to hear that you are feeling so under the weather today! Please know that my positive thoughts and ki are with you as you get better. I also wanted to take a moment to let you know that I very much appreciate your daily writings to the Aikido-KODO list! Your writings are very thought provoking and resonate with me on a number of levels. It is incredible that someone like yourself has so much positive energy and goodwill to share with everyone in these days -- even complete with strangers such as myself! Thank you -- thank you! In aiki spirit and best wishes to you, -Paul Laudeman

Unvoiced Poem continued:

I thought this subject went unnoticed until you told me this story, I am glad that you found it so interesting.

I think that sometimes we get too involved with words and ideas and opinions we are constantly gathering into our heads. Sometimes, it is good just to find some quiet time and without thinking about anything at all, let the mind alone and let it work on its own and enjoy the mind's own energy and creativity.

Many things in Life cannot really be expressed by words and our opinions and more often than not, with words we convey are the wrong idea or our words and opinions are too narrow and limiting that the hearer cannot really understand or appreciate what you are experiencing.

I think to catch the few words of a song like that, your mind must have been very quiet and still... I really like to hear about this.

In the 8th century, the emperor of China requested a famous scholar priest to lecture on the Diamond Sutra which is an extremely difficult and complex text of Buddhism. The priest made his appearance before the emperor, opened the sutra, remained quiet for a few seconds, and without a word, closed the sutra and bowed to the emperor. The emperor thought it was a joke and became extremely angry but a very wise minister in attendance began to applaud and praised the priest on such a wonderful exposition of the Diamond Sutra. This is a famous story. Because of the difficulty of this text, it cannot really be explained in so many words - to remain silent and demonstrate that it is "beyond words" displayed the excellent understanding of this priest. This echoes the well known Zen phrase - "beyond words and texts, directly from heart to heart."

The late Pope John Paul II wrote about one lady who wrote to him and complained, "I pray to God night and day, every day without fail but he never answers my prayers. Why doesn't he ever answer me?" John Paul replied, "God is answering you every minute of the day each day - if you take the time to listen to the wind, the birds in the trees. . . ."

Continued:

Aikido-laido-KODO@Yahoo.groups.

Please join us in our Yahoo group for daily discussions and the latest updates in our dojo. Your participation, questions and inquiries are welcome and greatly appreciated. Please have all your friends join us as well.

03-05-06: Question On the Heart Sutra:

Sensei, I hope you do not mind me asking a quick question of reference concerning Buddhism. A few months ago when you were speaking a great deal about the heart sutra I attempted to look it up in the Buddha's discourses but I was unable to find it. I have three large texts containing the long, middle length, and connected discourses of the Buddha. I searched by using the sanskrit name for the sutra but had no luck. Is the heart sutra contained in a text other than these three? If so, How many complete texts of the Buddha teachings are there? I hope this is okay for discussion here? Respectfully, Jason

Sensei's Reply: The following is one translation of the Heart Sutra from a Soto Shu (Sect) text. I do not think I ever discussed the Heart Sutra in so much detail but I did mention it as part of the Buddhist memorial service.

The main text of the Heart Sutra or Maha Prajna Paramita Sutta is over 3,000 lines. The following is one section of the main text consisting of 268 characters which is read almost everyday for priests and is considered one of the most meaningful and most "powerful" of all sutras in Mahayana Buddhism.

Comments: Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva is more popularly known as "Kannon" or "Kannon Bosatsu" in Japanese or "Kuan Yin" in Chinese. Prajna Paramita - is translated literally as "wisdom beyond (transcended) all wisdom."

". . . form does not differ from emptiness, emptiness does not differ from form. Form itself is emptiness, emptiness itself form." is one of the most famous lines and is often quoted in traditional Japanese martial arts texts. In Japanese, "Shiki soku ze ku, ku soku ze shiki."

"all five aggregates" are literally "accumulations" like "clouds" in the mind.

This is a decent translation of the text often chanted (read) in Zen Buddhist ceremonies:

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, when deeply practicing prajna paramita, clearly saw [X] that all five aggregates are empty and thus relieved all suffering. Shariputra, form does not differ from emptiness, emptiness does not differ from form. Form itself is

emptiness, emptiness itself form. Sensations, perceptions, formations, and consciousness are also like this. Shariputra, all dharmas are marked by emptiness; they neither arise nor cease, are neither defiled nor pure, neither increase nor decrease. Therefore, given emptiness, there is no form, no sensation, no perception, no formation, no consciousness; no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no sight, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind; no realm of sight... no realm of mind consciousness.

There is neither ignorance nor extinction of ignorance... neither old age and death, nor extinction of old age and death; no suffering, no cause, no cessation, no path; no knowledge and no attainment. With nothing to attain, a bodhisattva relies on prajna paramita, [X] and thus the mind is without hindrance. Without hindrance, there is no fear. Far beyond all inverted views, one realizes nirvana. All buddhas of past, present, and future rely on prajna paramita [X] and thereby attain unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment. Therefore, know the prajna paramita as the great miraculous mantra, the great bright mantra, the supreme mantra, the incomparable mantra, which removes all suffering and is true, not false. Therefore we proclaim the prajna paramita mantra, the mantra that says: "Gate Gate [Y] Paragate Parasamgate [Y] Bodhi Svaha."

03-06-06: Furuya Sensei, how almost every reply or a post that you write here is like a chapter in a wonderful book? Ze'vev

03-07-06: Sensei, I would just like to echo Zeev's sentiments and thank you for your response to my inquiry. I am always amazed at the time and detail you put into each answer. I hope I speak for everyone in the group when I express how much I appreciate what you do. Thank you, Jason, Aikido of Center City

03-07-06: I must also echo the same sentiment. I may not be very eloquent in my writing, but there are times when (as I am reading your posts) I think "Wow- he must really have some time to type such emails". I realize that you must have a busy schedule, and appreciate your taking the time to share your insights. Shannon, Aikido of Norfolk (Virginia)

03-07-06: Furuya Sensei I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the

information and wisdom you have been openly sharing on your wonderful website with all of us. Your encouragement and Budo related articles helped me get through a tough time of not being able to train. I am now going to be returning to training starting this Thursday, and my 10 year old (almost 11) son will be joining me. I am looking forward to returning to the mats. I again thank you sensei for being there to help fill the void left by being unable to train. Kelly Allen, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

03-06-06: Visiting Hombu Dojo: Ohayo Gozaimassu Sensei! Just a short note -- I'm currently traveling in Japan and don't have too much time between aikido classes and train stations. But I was just in Nagano City, visiting the Zen-ko-ji Temple, and I stopped at the Shichimi Store nearby. I won't be able to send back any omiyage until I return to Hawaii next month, but for now, here's a picture. Now I must prepare for the Doshu's class this morning, here in Tokyo, then I'm off to Kyushu. Please have a wonderful day! Heraldo Mon Farrington, Aikido of Hilo

Unvoiced Poem Continued:

I often read in both Eastern and Western literature that the "greatest song" ever written is that of the harmony of Nature. . . .indeed, a song without words. . . .

Sometimes, when I intentionally try to write something here, nothing comes out of my head which is not worth anything. . . . Sometimes, when I just let myself be quiet and examine myself and my daily experiences, many ideas naturally spring forth. . . . It doesn't particularly come from any one idea or thought, it just comes forward naturally. Maybe this is why my words do not make sense sometimes - I do not want to write something intentionally to try to attract or lure you here - it has to come from the experiences of our lives. . . .

While driving, being relaxed and listening to the nice music, it is a wonderful time to let your mind alone and allow it to flow freely on its own. . . . it becomes so sensitive to catch even a few words of music which have great meaning. . . . How the mind works freely on its own - is the "unvoiced poem" which we must constantly be sensitive too. In the tea ceremony, it is referred to as "matsu-kaze" (pine - wind) - the gentle breeze flowing through the branches of the pine tree. . . . Many thanks again for a wonderful story!

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Caring For Our Dojo Garden:

Fro some reason, our tiny Dojo Garden has become so famous recently and is the focus of much attention in Downtown Los Angeles as a Japanese style "Zen" garden. We need to keep our garden well groomed for the many guests who come to visit the Dojo. Please be careful with your uniform and weapons bags. when you have them slung over your shoulder, you do not realize that you are damaging the branches and leaves of the plants as your

pass by. especially when you are in a big rush coming into or leaving the Dojo. Please watch your bags a little more carefully. Many thanks for your attention in this.

Aiki Dojo Newsletter Monthly Mailings

If you have not received the Newsletter in the mail as usual, please contact the Dojo right away at aclafuruya@earthlink.net. Some members may have been dropped and some mailings may have been missent. Many thanks for your assistance.

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Aikido Center of Los Angeles

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Our dojo is dedicated to the practice of traditional Aikido as taught by the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba and his legitimate successors, the late 2nd Doshu Kisshomaru Ueshiba and the present 3rd Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.

You are very welcome to visit our beautiful, hand-crafted, traditional Japanese Dojo during posted training hours. All practicing Aikidoists are welcome to train with us or observe our training. Interested students and visiting Aikidoists are always welcome to join our practice. We are directly affiliated with Aikikai Hombu, Tokyo, Japan. Please make inquiries by email: aclafuruya@earthlink.net.

Please Visit Our Website:
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Rev. Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan



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The Furuya Foundation is dedicated to preserving the Dojo and its continued operation maintaining the highest standards of practice and the work of Furuya Sensei in research and education in Aikido, the traditional Japanese sword & related arts and their history, culture and traditions. Your donations & contributions are welcome.

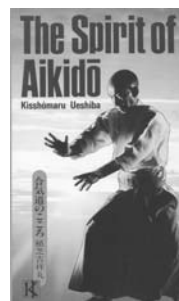
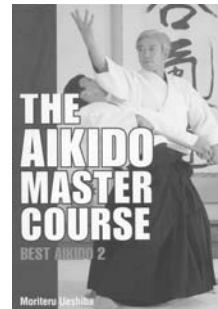
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Recommended Readings:



International Aikido Kodo-Kai.

We do accept all Branch Dojo affiliations with any dojo who practices and wishes to follow the Aiki Kai Hombu Dojo training, rules and standards. This also includes commitment to 3rd Doshu and the Ueshiba Family as the Founding Family and Originator of our art. You are welcome to make inquires by email or letter. Our purpose is to help others in the correct practice of Aikido and to spread the correct transmission and understanding of O'Sensei's teachings.

**Visit our official website daily at www.aikidocenterla.com
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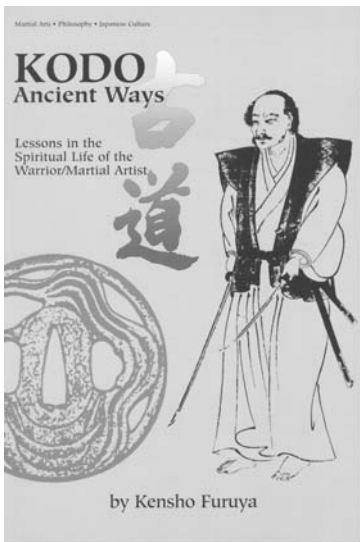
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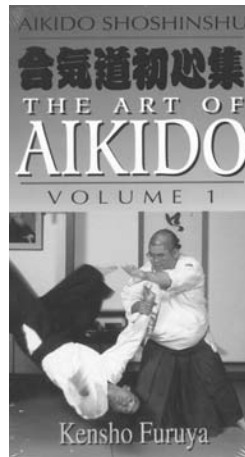
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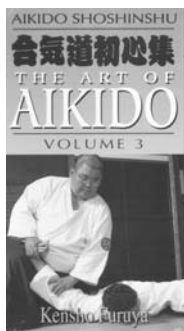
in the English language on the mar-

ket today," Budovideos.com.

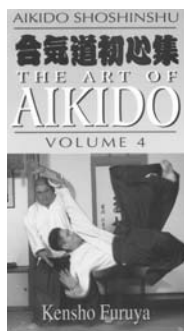
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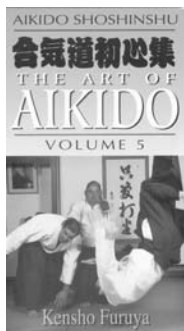
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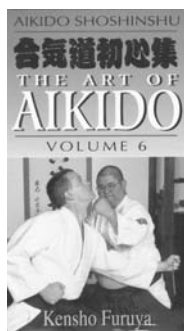
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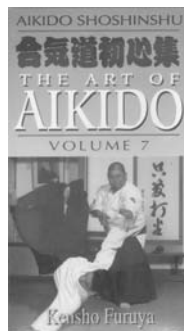
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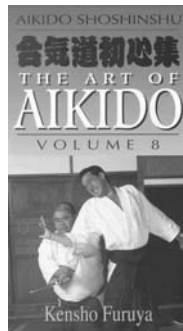
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