

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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64th Annual Nisei Week Japanese Festival Aikido & Iaido Demonstration. August 6

From Ze'ev, Aikikan Dojo
Rehovot, Israel

Pray For Peace & The End Of War:

07-30-06: Dear Furuya Sensei, How are you? How was the seminar? I am using here a computer at my student's house. I don't have a computer at home now and I was not on the Internet and e-mail for many many weeks... Please forgive me for not writing and e-mail. I will write to you a letter... . . .

There is war here. Some of my students and friends are fighting in Lebanon now. One of my fellow Aikidoka got badly injured (a bullet in his head) but he is recovering now. He will be fine, though it will take many months...

We all pray for peace and for a quick end to this situation. My dojo is active as usually - 7 days a week. It is important for me to maintain regular schedule in this situation. Please take care and pray for peace and safety of our Aikidoka out there... Yours, Ze'ev.

Sensei's Note:

Dear Ze'ev: We are all worried about you and the safety of your family, students and all of your people and country. Please take good care of yourself and please keep in touch. I do not know the politics but war is such a terrible thing and such a waste of many good lives. I pray for the speedy recovery of your student and an end to all of the war and violence. Many best wishes always,
Aikido Center of Los Angeles
Rev. Kensho Furuya & Students



During July 15-16 Seminar: Itoh Sensei, Furuya Sensei, Yonemochi Sensei & Itoh Sensei.

Nisei Week:

It was a very cool and pleasant Sunday afternoon, when we put on our annual Nisei Week Aikido & Iaido Demonstration. This year, David Ito mc'd much of the presentation. Iaido was performed by Gary Myers and Mark Ty. All of the Aikido participants showed very strong, clear Aikido emphasizing much of Aikido basic techniques. Although not the flashy type of demonstration people expect these days, for myself, I thought it was one of the best demonstrations ever. The audience was very receptive and enjoyed the event very much. Many thanks for everyone's participation and support. Participants were: Gary Myers, James Doi,



Annual Nisei Week Aikido Demonstration. August 6.



Maria Murakawa, 2nd Dan, demonstrating Shiho-nage with David Ito.



Tom Williams, 4th Dan, demonstrating Three-man randori.

Mark Ty, David Ito, Tom Williams, Jim Macdonald, Bill Allen, Maria Murakawa, Bill D'Angelo, Anatoli Savtchenkov., Rey Espino, Kay Sera, Jake Gularian, Ty Tanita



Mark Ty demonstrating Tanto-dori Knife Technique with Jim MacDonald.



Rey Espino, 1st Dan.



Anatoli Savtchenkov, 1st Dan.



Mark Ty executing Kokyu-nage



Tom Williams showing Irimi-nage.



Ty Tanita, 2nd Kyu, Children's Class.



Tom Williams executing Koshi-nage.



Maria Murakawa demonstrating Irimi-nage with David Ito.



David Ito, 4th Dan



Bill Allen - Kokyu-nage.



James Doi, 5th Dan.



Kay Sera, 1st Dan



Ty Tanita, 2nd Kyu.



Jim McDonald, 3rd Dan.

Iaido Demonstration



Above: Mark Ty demonstrating Hasegawa Eishin Ryu. Below: Jake Gularian executing Shohatto.



Anatoli Savtchenkov, 1st Dan.



Bill Allen, 1st Dan.



Mark Ty & Gary Myers performing Toyama Ryu Kunitachi.

Upcoming Seminar

Hiroshi Isoyama Shihan, 8th Dan Seminar

November 11-12, 2006

Hosted by
James Paulson Sensei
&
Isoyama America Aikido
Academy, Santa Clarita

For early registration,
Please see Sensei.
\$175.00 per person.

We are tentatively planning to go
as a group from the Dojo, please
join Izawa Sensei, Itoh Sensei, &
Furuya Sensei to attend this
Seminar with Isoyama Sensei.

Isoyama Shihan is the Chief
Instructor of the Ibaragi
Dojo & Caretaker of the Aiki
Shrine in Kasama City
(formerly Iwama)

Reprinted from the JAACL
Pacific Citizen. August 4-17 Issue.

An Identity Shift

By Caroline Aoyagi-Stom

Ellen Yamamoto not only discovered she was adopted, her identity as a JA was shattered when she learned she was actually Korean American.

Ellen Yamamoto, 59, was rummaging through some old photographs when she came across a black and white photo of her sitting and smiling on her father's lap. Faded and a bit yellowed now, she noticed the writing on the back of the photo didn't

seem quite right. The original wording had altered by her mother.

Curious, she dug out her birth certificate from Shizuoka, Japan. Soon she discovered even more discrepancies, raising some serious questions about her birth.

In a search for answers she called up an old family friend and confronted her relatives. Sadly, her parents Francis and Nobu "Mari" Yamamoto had passed away years ago and could not answer her questions. But soon, without too much prying, the truth about her birth and her real family were laid before her eyes, a truth that had been kept secret by all of her relatives.

For the past 59 years, Ellen has lived her life as a Sansei mother of three boys. But now at the age of 60 she has discovered that she is adopted and not of Japanese ancestry but is Korean American.

"For 50 years I was Ellen Yamamoto. But now I discovered I'm not JA but 100 percent Korean," she said. "Everyone knew I was adopted. I was the only one who didn't know."

For the past year, Ellen, a retired account executive living in Pasadena, Calif. has been trying to adjust to her new-found Korean American identity. It's a task made even more difficult by an upbringing that engrained the Japanese culture into her.

"I speak Japanese fluently," said Ellen, who was raised in both Japan and the United States. "Everything in the house, everything is Japanese. Japanese culture is engrained in me."

"I've been eating a lot of Korean food, buying Korean groceries, and watching Korean TV with subtitles," she said with a chuckle. But "it's almost like it's too late" to learn a new culture, she noted sadly. "But I'm proud to be 100 percent Korean."

The unravelling of a secret adoption

Francis was a MIS soldier stationed in Korea during World War II. It was here that he met Ellen's adoptive mother, a full-blooded Korean whose real name was Bae Kuja. Eventually she would take on a JA identity and the name of Nobu after adopting Ellen.

Although the adoption was a shock, Ellen soon learned that the woman she had been

raised to think was her aunt, her adoptive mother's younger sister, was her birth mother.

Halla Huhm (nee Bae Yoonja), had had a bitter divorce from Ellen's birth father, spurred by accusations that he had committed adultery. A struggle over their only child ensued. Single and divorced, Ellen's birth mother made the difficult decision to give Ellen to her sister and brother-in-law so she could have a better life in the U.S.

"She decided to give me a new life. . . so her daughter would have a better life," said Ellen, who learned she was born in Seoul, South Korea and that her real name is Inae Kim. "I never knew I was her daughter."

Ellen's birth mother eventually remarried and moved to Hawaii where she went on to have a successful career as a Korean dance master. But she would have no more children. Ironically, in 1979 Halla made a visit to Southern California where she spent time with Ellen and her three boys, all the while assuming the role of Ellen's aunt.

In 1994, Ellen's real mother died of breast cancer, never able to acknowledge Ellen as her daughter. Since her adoptive and real mothers had had strained relations for several years since the late 70's, Ellen never visited her mother while she was sick nor did she attend her funeral.

As Ellen pondered time lost and feelings of regret, she held a weathered, black and white photo of her at the age of one with her real mother kneeling beside her, both smiling at the camera.

"I understand why they kept it from me. I understand about the adoption. But in 1994 I was almost 50. I should have been given the opportunity to ease her pain," she said.

Her adoptive parents eventually had a natural child, Ellen's younger brother Fred. Francis passed away of cancer in 1979 and Nobu died in 2003, both never revealing the secret of Ellen's adoption.

Discovering her Korean roots:

Continued in our next, October issue.

Note: Ellen's second son is our own, David Ito, 4th Dan, who is one of our finest black belts and instructors in our Dojo.

Yonemochi Sensei Seminar. Part II.



Yonemochi Sensei explaining kote-gaeshi with Jacob Sisk.

Seminar Memories

**Yasumasa Itoh Sensei, 6th Dan,
Tekko Juku Dojo, Boston, MA.
Translated by Kei Izawa Sensei**

Soon after returning to Boston from the seminar of Yonemochi Sensei, I received a visitor with Taekwondo experience who wanted to see our classes. Apparently he had come to watch classes while I was gone so this was his second class in our dojo. This individual asked me why Aikido had so much ukemi training and why this was necessary. He explained that they also have ukemi in Taekwondo but never so much. I immediately responded that ukemi was essential to build up your own body and that it was essential for training.

This individual never came back again after that day. As Yonemochi Sensei explained, training in basics is the foundation of Aikido. There is no need to explain to those that practice Aikido that ukemi training is so important. I understand that nage can be a lot of fun. But in Aikido, we first borrow someone else's body to be able to practice throws and after that it is our turn to lend them our body so that the partner can train in throwing. Let me give you some advice. Perhaps there are many ways to train but it is important that when you are the uke, you just do not let the opponent move you around but that you try your hardest to follow or move even further than the moves of your nage. If this is accomplished, nage will have to move even faster and bigger. As such, if one learns to enjoy uke as much as one enjoys nage, you can truly enjoy working out (by polishing each other) with your partner. I believe

this is one of the true greatness of Aikido. The ukemi 'waza' which has been polished by mutual hard training is nothing more than the 'ma'ukemi(true ukemi) as taught by Kanai Sensei.

I had the opportunity to ask Kanai Sensei what was the factor that he became enchanted to Aikido. He explained that when he was 17 and practicing judo, he passed by an outdoor TV set that was showing a martial arts demonstration. He saw someone repeatedly being thrown but that the individual would get up again and again as if nothing had happened. Kanai Sensei said that he could not forget that TV scene for the rest of his life. Kanai Sensei recalled that, later when he became an uchideshi, the person throwing was no other than O Sensei and that the uke was Tanura Sensei.

Seminar Echoes

Leonard Manoukian, 3rd Kyu

Our recent seminar, more than anything, served to bring into sharp relief many aspects and elements of Aikido which I've been introduced to in my short career as an Aikidoka. There were lessons to be learned on many levels and no-one could have taught those lessons better than the instructors on hand!

In terms of the direction of Aikido as budo, your teachings were echoed by Yonemochi Sensei who made it clear that all eyes must be on Hombu Dojo and the Doshu. Yonemochi Sensei's emphasis on "breath power" and Ki has sparked an interest in

the subject matter and only the other day I obtained a copy of a book the Second Doshu had written on the subject ("The Spirit of Aikido"). In any event, it was fascinating to see a seventy four year old exhibit such relaxed power over a three day period.

In terms of individual practice, time and again, we were reminded to pay close attention to the basic, building block, techniques and perfect them without straying too far. These lessons can, and should, form the bedrock of any students training. Yonemochi Sensei went so far as repeating this point in every class he instructed. What was most interesting was the manner that, through his curriculum if you will, he showed that all basic techniques flow in and out of each other.

It was also wonderful to see Yonemochi Sensei, who has dedicated an entire lifetime to Aikido, be just as enthusiastic and joyful about its practice after all these years. This only re-enforced the notion that Aikido know no age boundaries. What made his classes that much more enjoyable were his interaction with the students on a first-person basis. Instead of simply correcting the students, his hands on participation brought another dimension to our learning.

Itoh Sensei and Izawa Sensei's instruction, as usual, was strong, energetic and thoughtful. They always challenge as well as inspire. Itoh Sensei's "applied Aikido" technique was an interesting variation. Izawa Sensei seems to have an affinity for throwing techniques. What they bring to any seminar is a wealth of experience that allows them to instantly measure a student's



Yonemochi Sensei explaining Kokyu-Ryoku through Kokyu Dosa.



Leonard Manoukian continued:

strengths, thus enabling them to guide the student in absorbing the techniques. Finally Sensei, a word of thanks must be expressed to you. Without your guidance, none of this would have been possible. For that I thank you. Best regards, Leonard Manoukian"

Impressions:

Maria Murakawa, 2nd Dan



The recent seminar with Yonemochi Sensei, Izawa Sensei, and Itoh Sensei made me realize what a blessing it is that our dojo, which is half way around the world from Hombu Dojo, still practices the basic techniques which Yonemochi Sensei stressed the importance of so much during the seminar. There is so much more to learn from a simple basic technique than ten different fancy ones. I've found out over the years of practicing aikido that as we practice the same techniques regularly, there is still so much to learn within each movement, that there is always something there I have yet to comprehend. I felt Yonemochi Sensei's teaching to be direct and simple, yet internally for me, I think difficult to grasp, such as when he was explaining kokyū-ho. I think this is what makes aikido worth practicing. The fact that it is challenging, and because of this, I believe practicing aikido has the ability to tap into a person's true potential.

I hope to one day be at least halfway proficient in these techniques and finally find one which I can call "my best technique". Well,

that might be a long way down the road, but at least this seminar with Yonemochi Sensei inspired me to find it, and keep up my training in Aikido for a long time to come.

Ichi-Go Ichi-E:

David Ito, 4th Dan



I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all the hard work and effort.

This has been the third time that I have had an opportunity to spend time with Yonemochi Sensei and every time, I come away with a clearer understanding of Aikido. Also, with every class, his Aikido leaves me with great respect, astonishment and amazement. Yonemochi Sensei emphasized the basics and clearly defined what constitutes Aikido technique. However, this weekend's seminar taught me a different lesson, one that occurred off the training mat. Usually when most people think of "training" in a martial art, namely Aikido, they think of it as beginning and ending inside the Dojo and only occurring on the training mats. Nothing could be further from the truth. Aikido is a vehicle, like all martial arts, toward a higher realization or a greater understanding of one's self. Furuya Sensei has often talked about martial arts training being a moment-to-moment awareness and the disasters of compartmentalizing it into the hour of training inside the Dojo. Until this seminar, I thought I knew what he was talking about. The seminar was, for all intents and purposes, a big success and many people had a wonderful time. But, there were lots of

things that were rushed, blundered or simply left undone. These seemingly transparent small loose ends demonstrated, egotistically, a lack of attentiveness and consciousness on my part. I was there but I was completely unaware. I could go through a laundry list of things done incorrectly or left undone, but what was done wrong is not as important as the implication or the intention of that wrongdoing. For instance when we did not clean up after the last day of the seminar, Yonemochi Sensei quickly pointed it out. It is only noticeable to someone who is trained and it showed lack of training and a lack of attentiveness on our part. How embarrassing it must have been for Furuya Sensei because it showed lack of discipline. I should unquestionably know better. Innately, I suppose, it is our nature to look for the shortcut or easy way out, but martial arts is about discipline and that means seeing things to their prospective conclusions, no matter what it takes. It is about completing the task with the proper mindset and adhering to the protocol of the situation. The forethought, preparation, order, and execution around us are a mirror into the order inside of us. In the future, I will strive to be better. It is said that in martial arts and in life that you have one opportunity. In Japanese they call it "ichigo, ichie." "One chance." Do not waste yours.

Our Deepest Condolences:

"Mako" Makoto Iwamatsu, 72, actor, passed away on July 21. A good, old friend of Sensei's.

One Nice Evening With Yonemochi Sensei

Jim MacDonald, 3rd Dan



Needless to say, I was a bit nervous about going out to dinner with Yonemochi Sensei and Sensei. It was just the three of us, and, as you may know, my Japanese is not very good. . . . as in, I don't speak the

language, not past the couple of terms we use around the Dojo. I know there is a certain protocol in entertaining any guest that comes to visit our Dojo, but I knew the pressure would really be on in making sure everything was done right with Yonemochi's visit. I think our Dojo is unusual in the concern it takes in welcoming guests. I have come to see it as a part of our training, and I work hard to understand this protocol when guests visit.

So on Thursday I washed my SUV and headed down to the Dojo to pick up Sensei, and from there we would get Yonemochi Sensei. When I first arrived, Sensei looked at the SUV and said, "Aaaahhhh...where's your other car?"

"I thought this would have more room." I said. I was wrong. Sensei was worried that Yonemochi Sensei would not be able to get in because the truck was too high. Trying to remain calm, I reassured Sensei that we would be able to get Yonemochi into the truck. "Let's go! Let's go!" Sensei quickly said. As we drove I thought about Yonemochi not being able to get in the truck. By the time we got to the hotel I'd imagined I was driving a monster truck that no normal human being could ever climb into. What was I thinking?! Then Sensei said, "There he is! There he is! Pull over."

I looked over to see a Japanese man standing on the curb wearing a sports shirt, shorts, black socks, holding a bag. Sensei was pointing to turn into the hotel so I quickly pulled the truck into the unloading area. I jumped out of the truck and ran over to Yonemochi Sensei. I bowed, he bowed, I bowed, he bowed, then I smiled and led him toward the truck. He said hello to Sensei and I helped him into the truck. Whew! No problem. I got back in the truck and took a breath. Sensei had told me that he was concerned that Yonemochi was tired, so Sensei had changed his plans from dinner at a west-



ern restaurant in Pasadena to the Tempura Bar at the New Otani Hotel, which was closer and would be better for Yonemochi's stomach because simply he was more accustomed to Japanese food. I gathered that Sensei was explaining this to Yonemochi, because Yonemochi kept saying, "Hamburger! Hamburger!" Sensei looked at me and said that Yonemochi wanted western food.

"I'm already messing up." Sensei said. It was interesting to see Sensei trying to make everything right for his teacher as we often try to do for Sensei. For a split second, I glimpsed back in time. I saw Yonemochi Sensei taking care of his teachers and those teachers taking care of their Senseis; a chain weaving back to O'Sensei and beyond, unbroken and supported by the links before it. This is definitely one of the biggest lessons I have learned at the Dojo, that of taking care of those who have come before us, be that a teacher, parent, grandparent or an old family friend. I don't think this is emphasized in the western culture, but it seems to be ingrained in the Japanese. It's a beautiful tradition and one I will continue to honor.

We drove down into the narrow basement parking garage and found a spot after winding around a couple times. As soon as we pulled in Sensei said, "Get his door. Get his door!" I jumped out of the truck, leaving it running, but I was way too slow. Yonemochi Sensei was halfway across the parking garage with Sensei in tow. Sensei yelled, "Hurry up!" as I tried to compose myself. I shut the doors and ran to catch up. Shoot! I'd left the keys in the car with it still running. I quickly turned back around. God, I hope I didn't lock it. That would be perfect, the three of us after dinner standing, staring at a locked, parked, running truck, Yonemochi Sensei laughing and Sensei handing me the yellow pages so I could look for another Dojo. I ran back Continued:

Note:

The following essay is a result of a question on our Yahoo group in regards to Yonemochi Sensei's talks on Kokyu Ryoku, ki power, and how it can relate to our Iaido practice as well. Please enjoy this article.

Projection of Kokyu Ryoku

07-28-06: Projection of Ki Energy: In msg 2920 Bill Allen wrote: "When Yonemochi Sensei was describing kokyo-dosa, he said (I am paraphrasing Izawa Sensei's translation here), "Relax, believe in your ability to do it, then let your ki flow from your center to a point which is far beyond yourself and your opponent."

I have heard that this is what professional dancers do, extend themselves (their Ki) beyond the ends of their fingertips. Is this done in Iaido as well? extending the ki beyond the point of the sword, or should all of the ki be focused into the monouchi? Thank You, Dennis Long

Sensei's Comments:

Yes, you do this in every Iaido class without fail. In order for you to understand Iaido clearly, I use the language of the sword. If you start to explain Iaido in terms of Aikido or anything else, it can become a little confusing. . . . Also, it is a common trend to try to explain "a" in terms of "b" or "c" these days. I do not know why we cannot explain "a" in terms of "a."

The sword itself is a "projection" beyond your hand (and fingers). What is important is to fill this with your consciousness or "spirit" or "ki" energy. This is why we focus our "power" into the tip of the sword which describes a "big circle" which I keep talking about in class as you can remember. The circle is the "fullest" projection of ki and is equivalent to projecting "ki" energy "beyond." What is important to understand is that ki energy is projected "beyond" but not to the point where the body loses its center or one loses one's correct posture. For example, if you "apply" this to the sword and you hyper-extend your arms with the sword in suburi - this is incorrect. The sword is extended to its "fullest" point as the tip describes a full circle but the arms only extend to their "natural, fullest" extension of the arms without compromising one's posture or thrusting your arms and shoulders

forward. Usually, we pull in the arms and sword because of too much tension or stress in the shoulders. We call this "blocking the energy." In other words, we extend or project the tip of the sword to its fullest circle of movement within the context of the natural extension of the arms and within the context of one's correct posture, being well centered.

When we use the word, "extend" in Aikido and Iaido, most people "hyper-extend" compromising their own posture and center and this is incorrect. "Extend" has the connotation of "stretch out," and "project" has the more accurate idea of "pouring forth." "Pouring forth" is literally how it is described in Japanese in discussing "ki energy."

As you begin to understand how to focus "all of your energy" into the tip or kissaki of the sword totally - you are, at the same time, understanding how to project your energy "beyond the tip of the sword."

When you begin to understand this "projection" of power to the tip of the sword in suburi, describing this "full circle," you must then begin to understand this in the first cut of Shohatto. If you can master these two cuts, we can say that you have mastered 65% of all sword work.

In Aikido, "extending beyond" or "projecting beyond" is always, without exception, within the context of correct posture, correct center, and correct use of the arms and legs (ie: body) without tightening the body too much and pulling in one's body or hyper-extending body or limbs beyond their natural extension from the center.

In both cases of Aikido and Iaido, this understanding of the "full circle" of movement - neither "less" or "more" is, I think, the most effective and clearest way to understand how to use the sword or move the arms in all techniques. And projection of energy must always be understood within the context of one's center which describes the circle.

I hope this is clear. I have clumsily stressed each point several times in this essay for your understanding. . . .

Finally, in Iaido, please keep focusing on describing the "full circle" with your sword in suburi. As you begin to master this, all other understanding will become clear to you. Always try to understand the sword in terms of the sword - not in terms of swim-

ming, peeling oranges, other martial arts, cooking, or climbing mountains. . . .

Addendum:

"Projecting beyond" is important. We utilize the "circle" in order to preserve the "center" of movement. "Moving in full circle" is the same as "extending beyond" or "projecting beyond" in actual practice, although it may not

appear to make sense verbally or intellectually in one's head.

“Pushing Forth” & “Pouring Forth:”

In the Taoist teachings, there is a phrase, "the empty vessel is naturally filled." "Pushing" and "pouring forth" is actually a kind of "hoben" or "teaching by skillful means" (In Sanskrit: "upaya"), in which to lead to student to be constantly be conscious or aware of this ki energy and how it moves, but there is no "will" which can be exerted to force or cause it to happen. If you understand how the sword moves in this "full circle," your energy will naturally come to "fill" it - meaning the "pouring forth of ki." A popular example is the water hose - you cannot "cause" the water to gush out, but you can undo all of the kinks and twists to allow the water to flow out easily and strongly. . . . By utilizing this "full circle" of movement, correct posture and center - all of this "aligns" the body and spirit to move as it should. Ki moves of itself - this is a difficult concept to comprehend in the West because we focus on the "soul" as a source of our "will." In the West, we seem to feel that Ki is a matter of personal will which comes from the "self" - this concept which persistently arises in all of our thinking. . . . "Ki" as is understood in ancient Eastern thought is that part of ourselves which is, not of the self, but that of Nature or the Universe itself. In Shushi-gaku, it is defined as "ki soku ri," or in other words, "ki is the natural order (law, reason, motivating force) of the Universe. Therefore, as we align our bodies and energies into its natural (original) "correct" form, we are, at the same time, aligning ourselves with Nature or the Universe and in this state, our ki or energy naturally flows the strongest.

In Iaido - it is called, "zetsumyo ken" or the "miraculous sword" in which the sword

expresses all enlightenment, ie: knowledge of Nature. Takuan, in his brilliant record to Yagyū Tajima no Kami, the "Fudo Chinshin Myoroku," refers to this as "fudo-ken," the immovable sword," or "fudo-shin" or the "immovable mind" meaning "that is which is at the eternal center (- of the Universe, - which describes the circle).

In Aikido, this circle and expression of Ki is taken back by O'Sensei to the primal state of creation as Izunami and Izunagi stir the chaos with their spear (circular movement) and creates the world by coagulating "material" into its "in" and "yo" aspects.

Anyways, forget all of this and go back to suburi - that is where it all starts and ends!

KODO 2 Input:

06-23-06: Sensei, I am so glad you asked this question because I gained so much from one of your daily messages that it would mean a lot to me to see it in your book. It was many years ago and I have no idea where to find it in the archives, but the day I first read it I printed it and framed it, and I have looked at it every day since. These are your words:

"Practice, practice, practice, but with proper effort, right concentration, correct focus and positive mental attitude. In physical training, reach for the heavens. In spiritual training, keep your feet planted firmly on the ground. Strength is nothing without serenity and nobility of character. Spiritual awareness is nothing without compassion and painful reflection. The higher you go, the lower you should bow your head. Even when you are down, keep your head high. Set the highest standards for yourself. Accept the humblest efforts of others. Success is not measured by money. Money is not the secret to happiness. Seek happiness on the inside. Extend your compassion to others around you. Find God in everything. Buddha's compassion is everywhere. Understand Aikido through devotion not intellect."

This one daily message has really meant a great deal to me. I have referenced it often in my personal life and I think it would be a great addition to your book. Best wishes, Jason, Aikido of Center City

Aikido-Iaido-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.

Jim MacDonald continued:

hope I didn't lock it. That would be perfect, the three of us after dinner standing, staring at a locked, parked, running truck, Yonemochi Sensei laughing and Sensei handing me the yellow pages so I could look for another Dojo. I ran back back to the truck and the door was open. I turned off the engine and locked the doors and tried to find Yonemochi and Sensei who had disappeared around the corner.

Once upstairs, a quick walk through a Japanese Zen garden led us to the front desk, where they told us that the Tempura bar would be ready in a few minutes. Yonemochi Sensei wanted to smoke so we headed outside. Sensei had to open the door for him to go outside and I saw that I'd missed again. It seemed I was always one step behind. When Sensei teaches, I feel the same way. We will be doing a technique and all of a sudden he will stop us and show us what we are missing. I always think, why didn't I see that? Sensei seems always be one step ahead. But there is still hope for me. There was no ashtray, so I bolted inside and asked the man at the desk for one. He bowed and said that room service would bring one up. Room service?! But that will take too long. I need one now. Not ten minutes from now. Don't you know who that is out there, I wanted to say. Instead I slightly bowed and smiled and walked outside. I moved chairs for them to sit in and started to drag a five ton garbage can ash tray over to Yonemochi Sensei, when the man from the front desk came out with an ashtray. I dragged the can back to the corner and sat down, sweating. Yonemochi Sensei had bought the latest Aiki Expo magazine. He and Sensei were looking through it, smiling and laughing. Sensei pointed out a list of Japanese names to me. "That's Yonemochi Sensei," he said, pointing out a name.

"Who's above him?" I asked. "Third Doshu," Sensei said. Wow, I guess he really is the number two man at Hombu. Yonemochi Sensei looked at me and said, "Over seven thousand five hundred." "Over seven thousand five hundred people came to the demonstration?" I said. "No," he said, "Over seven thousand five hundred demonstrated at it." "You're kidding? That's really hard to believe." I sat quiet for a few moments, trying to imagine seven thousand five hundred Aikidoists all demonstrating the techniques. How amazing that would be to see. (Sensei's Note: Over 12,000 came to witness the annual demonstration.)

The host came out and told us they were ready for us. We were led to the tempura bar and seated. There was no one else there. Sensei had made special arrangements for the tempura chef to cook just for us.

I could go on and on about the food, but I won't because it would just make you hungry. I will say this, though, I was getting a little scared close to the end. After about seven or eight dishes I was beginning to wonder how much more I could eat. I'd eat something and think, well, this is amazing, this must be the main course, only to sit back and see the chef pull out another octopus or crab claw and masterfully slice, dip and fry the Japanese delicacy.

The best part of the night, though, was getting to see Sensei enjoy the company of an old friend and teacher. I was nervous that there might be some awkwardness between them, making the evening a little tense. Nothing could have been further from truth. They acted like old family friends, more like a favorite uncle and his nephew. There was an ease with the way they talked and laughed.

After dinner we went and had some coffee and dessert in the café. In the elevator, Yonemochi Sensei suddenly grabbed my forearm and started squeezing it. He gently pushed me as if he might start doing a technique. He laughed a little and said something in Japanese to Sensei and then dropped my arm. What had he said? I wanted to ask Sensei, but thought better of it. In between bites of cheesecake, Sensei told stories of the old days, when Yonemochi Sensei was training in L.A. in the 1970's. He told how nobody wanted Yonemochi to come to their dojo because he threw everybody so hard, and how Yonemochi Sensei got Sensei his first job at a bank. Sensei said he worked there ten years to the day. One day he came in and found a stack of golf magazines on his desk. "What's this?" he asked.

"Oh, you're getting promoted," his boss said. "From now on you must play golf on the weekends and entertain our clients."

"But I do Aikido on the weekends," Sensei said. "Oh, you'll have to stop that," his boss said. That was it. Sensei quit on the spot and went on to build our Dojo.

"I had to stay ten years so as not to shame Yonemochi Sensei," Sensei said. "Once I did

that, it was time to leave."

I asked Yonemochi Sensei what Aikido was like in the rest of the world, like Sweden, where he had just been, and he said that it was the same. I'm pretty sure the Dojos he's visiting are doing Hombu style Aikido. Why else have Yonemochi Sensei visit?

Continued:

Letters & Correspondence:

06-13-06: Sensei, I think this is one of the most difficult aspects of my training. The idea of "relaxed alertness" is one I struggle with constantly. I have noticed, however, that I have different faces for different people. Beginners, I hope, see me as relaxed and in control. A smiling face that leaves them wanting to practice with me again. If they are a bit more advanced, people may view me as tough to work with. Not because I am trying to jam or stop their technique, but because I want to train hard if I think they are up to it. I have a much more serious expression about me. When working with my seniors, I try to always maintain a look of humility, much as if I am taking ukemi for Sensei. An attitude of get up, do your job, and just be quiet! Finally, I think I am the most focused when I am working by myself. I seem much more willing to exhaust myself than my partners. In my suburi training, I am totally absorbed and I try to empty myself of energy until I feel as though I couldn't possibly do one more cut, and suddenly I am refilled! But I think in my own training what I have really been focusing on lately more than anything is awareness. I don't think I have ever in my training gotten through an entire practice from the first bow to the last with the proper awareness. I know this is probably a level that I should not expect at this stage but I don't even come close. My mind will drift several times over the course of training, and when I catch myself it is very disappointing. But I suppose to recognize it is a good first step. Someday I hope to get through a class as though Yagyū Munenori were watching me, and couldn't find an opening to attack! Laugh! thank you for your thoughts, Jason

06-19-06: As someone who only has minimal experience in other 'styles' of Aikido, having briefly trained at a Jiyushinkai dojo

Continued:

(www.jiyushinkai.org), and otherwise only being exposed to other influences through the odd student or two from a different method of training that comes to study at the dojo, I do not know if my opinion is very well qualified. As such I would encourage anyone reading this to understand that I am not making 'hard' statements.

The sense of loyalty to the 'classical' ideas of Aikido is one of the strongest factors that influenced my decision to join the Aikido Center of Los Angeles. My current feeling is that adhering to these ideals and concentrating on direct physical application of these techniques is essential to understanding any 'spiritual' or conceptual principles, so I am very cautious about 'styles' that immediately throw students into a language of spiritual concepts and/or do a lot of 'talking rather than doing'. Also my limited direct experience with exponents of other 'styles' has made me respectful but cautious of learning anything outside of this more traditional approach as taught by Sensei.

Part of my logic is: A parent, any parent within most any culture, would want to make sure their child above all others would understand the most important and salient points of their martial art if that child was to carry on the legacy of the art. Therefore it is my understanding of common sense to say that training specifically with Doshu in mind is one of the best things we can do to understand the art O'Sensei left for us. As people that read the articles on the website and newsletters know, Sensei works very hard to give his students this serious foundation.

George Ledyard Sensei's article makes mention of being tied to Aikikai Hombu Dojo as something sentimental, and I disagree with this. To treat that connection as superficial and/or as a mere political affiliation rather than as a sincere dedication to loyal study seems like 'missing the point', given the logic I expressed above, but that is of course only my view and it may or may not change with time. Thank you for the very interesting thread! -Paul Major

06-26-06: The Treasure of Learning: If something I have learned whenever I come to Los Angeles it is that one can learn without wear the uniform and other thing that if one does not practice the corrections of other years that to me Sensei Furuya does or any one of the instructors, I will waste my time and waste the time of Sensei and the instructor is but important.

And when I speak to learn not I refer only the technical aspect I refer in everything in general; of course you learn of the classes but also I learn of the attitude of Sensei in his organization, cleaning the Dojo, at the post office or in the lunch conversation, with him all this time is hours of practices.

My visit and training in Los Angeles usually are not very long perhaps 15 or 20 days reason why for my the class since already I have said extends much but that the hour of class. This time Sensei was worried so that it thought that it had not had sufficient class of Aikido or Iaido since very it was occupied with the preparation of the memorial and seminary of Sensei Itoh and Sensei Izawa, reason why in addition to the classes in the Dojo accompanied to him making different staff for the preparation by the seminary. And I must confess that this time for me has been of but the special ones, technical and full of learning from whom I have received in long time, each part of the preparation of the seminary, from the flowers for the Kamiza to the election of the restaurant was a task that stops Sensei had to be perfect is no place for the improvisation, each thing has its place, its time, its rate and order in the day, each election has his because, each step takes you the following one and without doubt it counts and of the way but subtle everything it is developed with naturalness like when one makes a technique of Aikido, without frights, everything flows with naturalness. Maybe some people can think that Aikido is single a set of techniques that serve to fold on the contrary, but every day I believe that I understand a little more this Art and for me a Martial Art is overall that educates to me and it folds me to me. Sensei thanks for your time. Santiago. Kodokai, Salamanca, Spain.

06-26-06: Invitation To Little Tokyo Historical Society: Furuya Sensei: I hope you are doing well. It's Amy Phillips from the Little Tokyo Service Center. I'm sorry I haven't contacted you in a long time. We've been following up on things from Ties That Bind in bits and pieces, but it's been tough because it's all volunteer time!

We will be mailing out the conference report. We haven't had much of a chance to follow-up with cultural heritage education, but a few people have been talking about forming a historical society specifically to compile and tell the stories of Little Tokyo. I really think you'd be great.

A site hasn't been confirmed yet (hopefully by the end of the week), but we're thinking of having an open meeting about the topic of forming a Little Tokyo Historical Society on Saturday, July 15. You are probably busy teaching classes, but I was wondering if you'd be interested in being part of the historical society effort and helping it get off the ground.

Please let me know what you think of the idea. It'll be challenging to start up yet another organization, but we have energy from a few new people who really care about Little Tokyo history so maybe we can all work together. Thanks, Amy Phillips

07-01-06: Three Sons Practicing Aikido: Hello, My name is Maleena Brown. I have 3 boys practicing Aikido -- Iain, age 12; Onyx, age 9; Evan, age 7. I hope to begin practicing Aikido once the kids can manage themselves better. I am concerned about being able to do ukemi -- my goal is to get my weight under control so I can do good Aikido, and become more flexible and healthy.

It has been an honor to take the kids to Aikido several times a week and mentally move my body the way the sensei does.

I've seen a lot of good progress in the last year, especially with Iain being more focused. The sensei used to say he rolled like an old man. We became vegetarians three years ago and Iain lost quite a bit of weight. Now he can do 50 forward and 50 backward ukemi before class begins and still has plenty of energy to finish class.

I am hoping that the younger two will progress as Iain has, gaining more focus and concentration and energy. I would like Onyx to become more smooth and flowing in his Aikido, he is too rigid and robotic in his motions. Evan naturally does the techniques but has trouble following the sensei's instructions and gets lost. I am open to any advice you may have and am honored to have contact with you, Furuya Sensei. -- Maleena :)

07-05-06: Enryo: Dear Reverend Furuya, Let me start by thanking you for daily messages, thoughts and insights. I've studied various martial arts for the past several years, but I find your comments on Aikido to be most insightful. I have only been practicing Aikido, myself, for about 18 months, but

Continued:

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I wish I had found it much sooner in my training. I can't even begin to convey how much it has changed my life and world view for the better. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for Kodo(1). I read at least some part of it everyday, and I find that it often helps to get me in the proper frame of mind for Aikido practice, or just about anything else for that matter. If I may, I would like to humbly submit a recommendation for Kodo (2). Namely, your posting on the concept of "enryo". If I'm not mistaken, this term refers to the concepts of optimization, efficiency, or using only that which is necessary to complete a task or achieve a goal. I found that posting to be most helpful for me, personally. Perhaps it is because of my Western upbringing, or previous martial arts training, which emphasized physical hardness and strength as a means to accomplishing a goal, that I have this problem.

However, after reading your posting on "enryo" something "clicked" in my brain and I began to allow myself to "lighten/soften up" my techniques without feeling like I was weakening my tactical position. While my own teacher and, several training partners have tried to convey this point to me it never really sank in until I read your posting. As a result of applying what I have learned from this concept, my techniques feel as though they are becoming more "natural" and less "forced". I also find that I am able to transition between techniques with greater ease and efficiency. Now the trick will be continuing on this path and to remember that very often "less is more". Good luck with the editing of Kodo (2). I wish I could be of more assistance to you in your editing process. Perhaps if you didn't write so many wonderful postings it would be easier:) Respectfully yours, Karl Arant

07-05-06: Giving: Dear Sensei: Thank You ... I just wanted to repeat a small paragraph you wrote that struck me very deeply: (Random Thoughts 4th July) ". . . . Where we lose ourselves for the sake of others - perhaps, this is true freedom that we must achieve as we were just chatting about. . . . We gain more by giving to others. The more we try to take, the more we lose! This is the spiritual life - not the life of profit and gain. . . . It is the life of the dojo - we must not forget - we are not practicing our art in a corporation or as a business in the business world around us . . ." Rev Kensho Furuya

07-11-06: Introduction: My name is Brian

Fayz and I have recently joined this forum group because of my interest in Furuya Sensei's book Kodo, Ancient Ways. I am from Detroit, Michigan and I enjoy my practice very much.

I recently saw a post on this forum by Furuya Sensei, and it made me realize how rude I had been by not introducing myself earlier. I joined the forum several weeks ago and at that time Furuya Sensei invited me to introduce myself to the group. I didn't feel I had much to say, so I didn't think much of making an introduction. I soon realized that even though the internet is a "different" form of communication than face-to-face conversation, it still deserves the same consideration and etiquette. Not introducing myself to the group would be the equivalent of stopping in to observe an Aikido class and standing in the corner not introducing myself. I apologize for my rude behavior. Thank you. Brian Fayz

07-16-06: Book Signing Welcome Party on July 15: We have a great time ... whenever we see you !! You are always a gracious host.. and Thank You for the wonderful book !! See you soon and take care !
Harry Wong

07-16-06: Sensei, Many thanks for inviting me. It was good to meet so many masters. Your dojo is beautiful also. Joel Bloom, Joel Bloom's General Store, Downtown Arts District.

07-17-06: Sensei I think this is a very good topic to add to your next book Kodo 2. It's such an important part of Aikido training that a large part of Aikidoka don't get. Expand on it for the book and it would make an excellent addition. Kelly Allen Winnipeg Manitoba

Point of Correction:

Practice is only productive if it is pursued with the proper state of mind. To achieve this mind is the first work of the student in training.

Although we clean the mats after every practice as a part of our training, yesterday after the Seminar everyone took off without spending just five minutes to clean the mats. . . . Although everyone was busy after the Seminar, I think that everyone was not so busy to clean the mats as a part of training. Still, we harbor too many selfish thoughts and think, "Ok, I got the techniques and training I wanted so - Bye!" No one thinks, "I practiced hard, now I must 'thank' the dojo

and the tatami for the wonderful opportunity to train," as we always do each day. We are too wrapped up in our selves and our own convenience to think beyond "me." Finally, this is "breaking the form" of practice - on such an important occasion as this seminar. To demonstrate that we continue our practice in "clean-up" even after practice in such hot weather would have been a fine opportunity to show Yonemochi Sensei that we are following the true Path of training. Instead, you left your teacher alone and embarrassed and making deep apologies to Yonemochi Sensei after the seminar for such a miss. Yonemochi Sensei agreed that such a miss shows that most people today do not have the "mind of the warrior" only the mind of the "consumer" who quickly leaves the store or market once his shopping is done. A true warrior "tightens the cords of his helmet after the battle" meaning that after the battle, it is the time to be most aware and most on the ball. In our dojo, please do not show me that the age of the warrior is dead and that the spirit of martial arts is dying. I think that your direction of training is now quite clear for the next time Yonemochi Sensei agrees to take time out from his busy schedule to visit and teach us. All training must begin and end with mental awareness and focus. Just learning the techniques, without the proper mind and spirit, is not true training, it is only modern consumerism and an expression of today's materialism and personal self-absorption. As Yonemochi Sensei stated so many times, Aikido is a martial art and can only be approached as a martial art, not play and not spectacle as we see so often today.

The greatest lesson of this Seminar came at the very last second of this Seminar - and no one caught it - at all! More training, definitely more training. . . . your goals in Aikido are still very far beyond your current reach and present comprehension. Thank you for your understanding. . . .

07-18-07: Little Tokyo Historical Society: Dear Rev. Furuya: Congratulations on a very nice event! I had a great time attending the reception this past weekend at the Aikido Center. I was very happy to get a chance to visit the center, and would like to visit again and talk to you more about how you operate the programs.

Oh, I will remind Bill to make sure to stay in touch with you re: the Historical Society. Thomas Yee, Little Tokyo Service Center, a Community Development Corporation

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Jim MacDonald Con't:

It had gotten late, and Yonemochi Sensei was tired, so we decided to leave. Once in the elevator Sensei said, "What floor did you park on?" Uh-oh. "I don't know," I said, trying to make a joke of it. "You don't know?" he said.

I pushed the first number on the elevator I saw. "It's here." I said. The doors opened and I flew out, praying that I'd lucked out and the car was around the corner.

"You don't know?" I heard Sensei echoing again from around the corner. Please God, be there! Just this one time. I pictured the three of us again, wandering the garage looking for the truck, Sensei finding a bokken sword in someone's car and banging me on the head with it as I tried to explain myself. But I was saved. I

rounded the corner, and to my relief, the car was there. We climbed in and head off into the night. As we drove, Sensei glanced out of the corner of his eye at me. Quietly he said, "You don't know where you parked, huh? That's very bad."

"I was just kidding," I said. He glanced at me again, squinting. I don't think he believed me. All that, and the seminar wasn't even to start for another two days. Lots to learn.

Sensei's Note:

Parents take care of their children and children soon take care of their parents. We take care of our friends as they take care of ourselves. A teacher takes care of his students and in turn students care for the teacher. This Caring for each other is the Natural Course of Nature and how we can live in this world in peace and Harmony.

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Letters Con't:

07-18-06: From the Author, Barbara Thornburg: Sensei, first of all thank you so very much for the lovely booksigning party. i was so honored to have such important guests. i hope you don't have too many books left over. i know \$50 is alot of money for most people to spend. There was so much happening! maybe I can stop by after work next week.. . . thanks again for everything. Barbara Thornburg

07-20-06: Sensei, Yes, it was a wonderful party, and a wonderful book. We have a great little neighborhood. Now if we could only take care of our homeless problem. Thank you, Joel-san

07-25-06: Thank you Sensei for your posts. I feel like you've given me homework that will occupy numerous years of study and practice for me to "understand" the depths of this subject. One area that is striking me now, is "Pouring forth". I've been trying to project (PUSH) my ki into the sword, but from these words, I'm feeling like I need to learn to allow my Ki to flow into the sword. n eternal search of the "big circle" Dennis Long (See article on Kokyu Ryoku)

Welcome To The Aikido Center of Los Angeles



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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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.

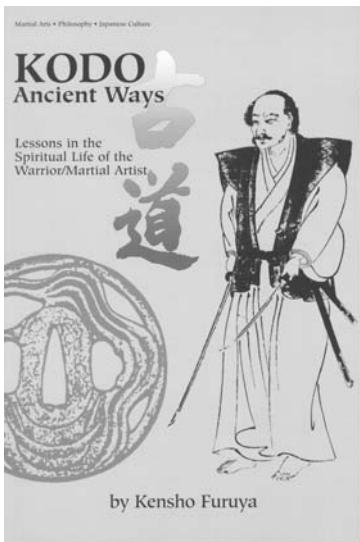
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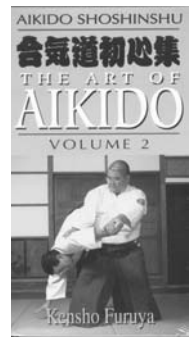
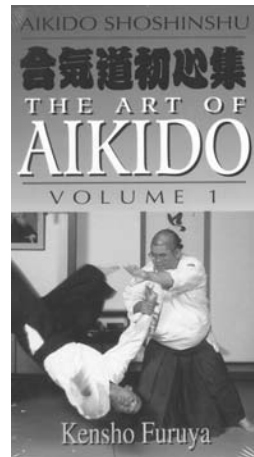
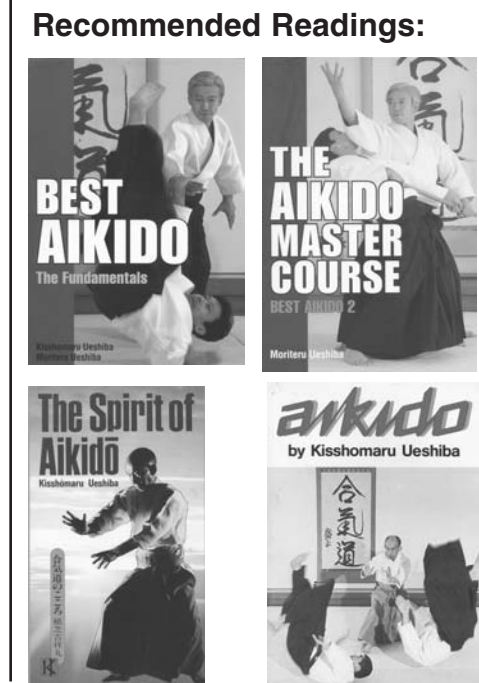
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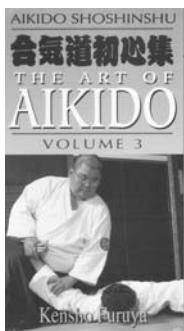
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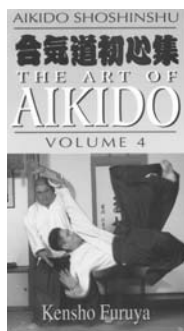
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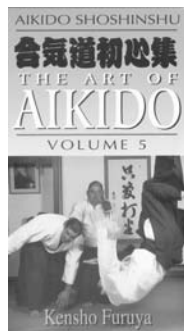
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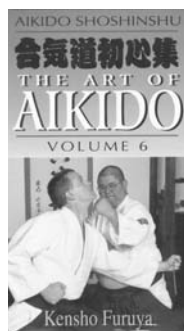
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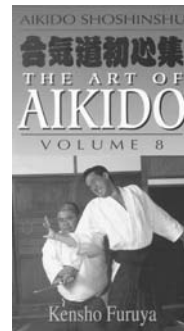
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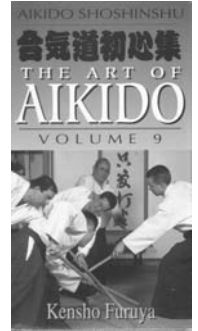
Tsuki: Strikes &
Punches
Yokomenuchi: Strikes
to the side of the head &
neck.



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



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



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

Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE

Sundays: Children's Class: 9:00-10:00am.
Open: 10:15-11:15am.

Mondays: Beginning Basics: 5:15-6:15pm.
Open: 6:30-7:30pm.

Tuesdays: Beginning Basics: 5:15-6:15pm.
Advanced Intensive 2nd & Up: 6:30-7:30pm.

Wednesdays: Beginning: 5:15- 6:15pm. Aiki
Sword & Weapons: 6:30-7:30pm (Bokken).

Thursdays: Open: 6:30-7:30pm.

Fridays: Open: 6:30-7:30pm.

Saturdays: Intermediate: 9:30-10:30am.
Beginning: 10:30-11:30pm.

Every Last Saturday:
Advanced-Instructors': 6:30-8:00am.
2nd Kyu & up or Sensei's prior approval.

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

7- 16 yrs old

Sunday Mornings 9:00 -10:00am

Sign-up anytime for on-going classes.

We are directly affiliated with:

AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Aikido So-Hombu Dojo - Aikikai

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

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

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

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Los Angeles, CA 90012

Tel: (213) 687-3673

Email: aclafuruya@earthlink.net

www.aikidocenterla.com

Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

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

Sundays: 7:45am-8:45am.

Wednesdays: 6:30-7:30pm (Bokken).

No Classes on the last weekend of the month.

Private Classes Available.

No Appointment Necessary To Join:

You are welcome to visit us anytime during our Open and Beginning Classes. Signing up for classes is very easy and only takes a few minutes. We accept personal checks, MO and cash. Please bring valid ID such as your driver's license and the name of your insurance company. Welcome!

Finding Our Dojo:

We are endeavoring to maintain the highest standards of training while preserving the True Spirit of Aikido. We hope you will appreciate our efforts and undertake your training with devoted and committed energy. Your efforts, we believe, will be greatly rewarded. We welcome you to an ancient and profound art. We welcome you to our Dojo. Everyone, beginners and active Aikido students alike, are cordially welcome to join our training. Thank you.



We are convenient to most major freeways. Enter private lane at Vignes and 2nd Streets. We are one block west of Santa Fe Ave. and several blocks east of Alameda in Little Tokyo. The **Easiest Way:** From Alameda go east on 1st St and make right turn at Vignes. Do not turn on 2nd St. but go straight into the private lane. Look for the garden.