



AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES

NEWSLETTER

940 E. Second Street #7
Los Angeles, California
90012

(213) 687-3673

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SENSEI WILL RECEIVED SHUKKE TOKUDO SHIKI ORDINATION CEREMONY ON OCTOBER 22ND.

Furuya Sensei will receive the Shukke Tokudo-shiki ordination ceremony on October 22, 1989, at 1:30pm, at the Zenshuji Temple. He will become a Zen priest under the guidance of Reverend Bishop Kenko Yamashita, the head of Buddhist Churches in North American and President of the Los Angeles Buddhist Churches Association. Everyone is invited to attend. The dojo will be closed on that Sunday for this special occasion.

Shukke Tokudo-shiki is an ordination ceremony and literally means to "leave one's home (and worldly life) and enter the Way of the Buddha." Furuya Sensei will remain as our Chief Instructor and more actively pursue teaching us Aikido and swordsmanship but also devote the rest of his time to serving Reverend Bishop Yamashita and the Zenshuji Temple.

The Ceremony will begin at 1:30pm on October 22, 1989. The Ceremony is followed by the Eitaikyo or Perpetual Memorial Service and regular Monthly Memorial Service which Zenshuji usually holds on this day. The services will be followed by a reception for Furuya Sensei downstairs in the Temple. Everyone is invited to attend a specially prepared Japanese meal for the occasion. Everyone should dress appropriately with jacket and tie (or suit). Some students may wish to make a little contribution towards Sensei's first robes as a priest. This is considered very auspicious and lucky for the giver. Please help.

The Ordination Ceremony is a rare ceremony to see in this country, especially at the Zenshuji Temple. We wish to invite entire membership and hope everyone will attend this very special occasion and great honor for the dojo. We would also like everyone to hear Yamashita Sensei's sermon and meet him at the reception.

For further information, please see Mr. Douglas Firestone or Ms. Mitsuko Yoshimoto for details and instructions for the ceremony and reception. We will ask the students for help in setting up the reception hall on Saturday.

Thank you for your attendance.

MESSAGE FROM SENSEI:

As everyone must know by now, I will be ordained as a Priest this month on October 22, 1989 under the guidance of Yamashita Sensei. This is a great honor for me and one of the most important steps I am taking in my life. It is something which I had hoped to do for a long time now. I hope everyone will come and attend my ordination ceremony.

Just the other day, I was having tea with Yamashita Sensei and several other of the priests in the afternoon as we do quite often at the temple. Fukushima Sensei suddenly said, "You should become a priest." Then, Yamashita Sensei said, "Yes, you should right away." And, I immediately said, "Please. Onegae-shimasu!" I did not give it a second thought. Although one can say that it happened quite simply as this, it involves a great responsibility and it is an important life-decision. Somehow, I was prepared although I was quite surprised. I would never say, "Oh, let me think about it and I'll get back to you in a couple of days." Anyways, I am very happy and all the other priests seemed very happy too. I hope all my students will be happy too.

Yamashita related a story about when he was a young priest at a temple. He was in a big temple with many other priests and it was quite busy and active there. Next door, there was a smaller temple headed by a nun who had only a one or two students under her. Yamashita Sensei said that what impressed him so much was that this small temple was always so neatly cared for and always a quiet, serene place to visit. He was so impressed that this tiny nun could take care of such a temple (although it wasn't a big temple) with so little help and keep it so nice and clean. Only a few people came to visit this small temple, but whenever they came they found a tiny beautiful place to come to even if it was just for a few moments. This is what give him the determination to become a good priest. To become like this little nun who carefully took care of her temple without fail.

I sit every morning with Reverend Hakuji Kuroyana-gi and Reverend Shingo Honda at the temple and afterwards read the morning service with them. I am learning the etiquette and manners the priest must know. Occasionally, I have tea with the other priests but outside of that nothing "special" happens. Sometimes, Yamashita Sensei tells me a little story such as the one I just related to you. Every morning, I go to the temple and do a little cleaning here and there and sometimes cook lunch. I try to make everything look

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clean. I laugh that after so many years as a teacher I have returned to cleaning and scrubbing floors just I did in Japan as a novice Aikido student of Grandmaster Ueshiba. Somehow, by an odd fate, I have come full-circle back to square one. Although we can say that it is nothing "special" to this kind of training and no one will notice if the floor is clean or not, today or tomorrow; for me, it is very, very important. If all I do is cleaning during my new life as priest, it will be fine for me.

Many students enter the dojo thinking that I will perform some kind of magic for them. Of course, they are always disappointed with me. Some students come to the dojo because they think I am a "great" teacher but I still have the same problems paying the bills, etc. and teaching the students as I did when I was a "not so great" teacher. So, for me, I don't really understand the difference between "greatness" and its opposite.

Some students come to the dojo, practice, help with the cleaning and go home. They do this everyday practicing hard and keeping the dojo clean. No one pats them on the head and says, "good." No trophies or prizes are handed out. This goes on everyday. Finally, one thinks to himself, "What do I get from all this?" And, he begins to struggle with this question. This is the beginning of his suffering which, indeed, takes place in all aspects of his life. And through this struggle, he destroys the meaning of his training and becomes confused and frustrated.

Quite some time ago, it was really difficult to take care of the dojo. One weekend, I knew I didn't have a cent so I stayed home and did nothing feeling a little sorry for myself. On Monday, I reached into my trouser pocket and found, to my great surprise, a twenty dollar bill and realized that I could have went out to see a movie after all during the weekend. I see many students like this who have everything they need to complete their training yet go around trying find out "what they need."

Several years ago, a student moved to another state and after a while came back to visit me. This young girl said that she was so surprised how unkept and dirty the dojo was where she went to practice and that no one ever cleaned it. She realized then how pleasant and nice it is to always come to a nice, well kept dojo. She told me it made her feel "clean." Another student went to another dojo and later came back saying that this dojo was open only three days a week which was very inconvenient for his work schedule. He told that he realized how nice it is to have a dojo that is open everyday where he can come anytime.

Through our simple training, we realize that we have everything we need from the very beginning. That is true happiness.

Yamashita Sensei says that a teacher and student can be compared to a tea-pot and a cup. The server brings the tea-pot close to the cup as the guest brings the tea-cup close to the tea-pot. In this way, the tea is not spilled. If we hold the teapot too far away from the cup, the tea will splatter all over the place. In the same way, the teacher brings the training as close to the student as possible as the student tries to bring himself close to the teacher. If the training is held too far away, it will be missed. Both sides work to come together. However, as the server raises the tea-pot, it is necessary to raise the tea-cup as well to prevent the tea from spilling. As the teacher continually raises the training, it is necessary for the student to bring himself higher and higher as well. The teacher pulls the student up as the student allows himself to be pulled up.

Special Announcements

One belated announcement, Mr. Kazuho Nishida, one of our instructors, was promoted to Ni-dan (Second Degree Black Belt) in July.

Mr. Tony Gonsalves, from Florida, passed his examination and is promoted to Sho-dan (First Degree Black Belt) as of October 29, 1989.

Congratulations!

New Training Schedule

Beginning Classes

Monday through Friday: 6:15pm to 7:15pm

Monday-Wednesday-Friday: 7:30pm to 8:30pm

Tuesday & Thursday 1:00pm to 2:00pm. (Add. Fee)

Saturday: 10:15am to 11:30am

Sunday: 10:30am to 11:30am

Advanced Classes (3rd Kyu and up)

Tuesday: 7:30pm to 8:30pm

Saturday: 11:30am to 12:30pm

Weapons Classes (3rd Kyu and up)

Thursdays: 7:30pm to 8:30pm

Children's Classes

Sunday: 8:00am to 9:00am

Iaido

Wednesdays: 8:45pm to 9:45pm

Saturdays: 9:00am to 10:00am

Sundays: 9:15am to 10:15am

Please note schedule changes. The Children's Class will change to 8:00am on Sundays in mid-October to the convenience of the parents. Thank you.

INVITATION

**Shukke Tokudo-shiki (Ordination Ceremony)
for
Mr. Daniel M. Furuya,
Under the guidance of Reverend Bishop Kenko Yamashita**

Time: October 22, 1989, Sunday at 1:30pm

**Place: Zenshuji Soto Mission
123 South Hewitt Place
Los Angeles, California 90012**

Reception after the Ceremony.

Everyone is most cordially invited to attend. Thank you.