



AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

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MASTER HSU SEMINAR

Master Hsu Chi (Adam Hsu) conducted his second seminar at our Dojo from March 30th through the 31st. He emphasized Chen Family Style Tai-chi Chuan, Pa Qua, form and applications, and reviewed many points from his last seminar two years ago. Twenty members of the Dojo participated.

Master Hsu arrived on Friday, March 29th and stayed in Los Angeles through April 2nd and visited several martial arts publication companies such as Black Belt magazine. He will be producing a series of instructional films on Kung Fu.

During his stay we had long conversations on the future of martial arts in this country, Japan, Mainland China and Taiwan.

In Mainland China:

Master Hsu recently composed a forty page treatise on the present state and future of martial arts in China and sent it to the very top heads of state in the Communist Party. He fears that reaction to his comments may not be well received because he was very critical of the present state of affairs. The country is poor and it is all one can do to feed oneself. It is hard to make anyone move in the government which has crystalized even more into a complicated and inflexible bureaucratic state. Every year he visits Mainland China and talks with the very top martial artists around. Without any drastic changes made to the governmental system, Master Hsu fears that the quality and level of Chinese martial arts will continue to crumble.

In Taiwan and Japan:

Taiwan has become just as expensive as Japan. A cup of coffee with no refill is about \$4.00. A steak dinner averages around \$100.00. Taiwanese and Japanese still emulate the American lifestyle and Americans themselves. Everyone wants to be like an American. They believe that to do this, they have to concentrate on money, money, money. Master Hsu recently visited Taiwan to get loans from old friends and successful classmates to build his school in Oakland. No one was willing to invest in anything without quick profits and returns. He returned to America emptyhanded.

In America:

The level of martial arts and the quality of the students is drastically falling. Students don't have the patience and devotion as they did in the olden days. Teachers look at martial arts more as a business than anything else. Master Hsu talked about how other teachers were telling him how to make money to build his own school even telling him that his teaching method was all wrong! "Don't teach too much," they said, "You have to learn how to sell the product!" Master Hsu was amused.

Master Hsu drove to LA on Friday and returned Tuesday afternoon.

At present, Sensei is arranging a seminar for Master Hsu in Japan with the hope that the income will contribute greatly to the realization of his school.

Master Hsu will be visiting the Dojo again next Year.

Yagyu Sensei To Our Dojo

We have received the approval that the 23rd Head Grandmaster of the Yagyu Shinkage Ryu of Swordsmanship has consented to visit our Dojo and Los Angeles. This is his first and only trip outside of Japan. He will be coming in the spring of next year so preparation begins from now. A visit by this level of VIP usually takes one year of preparation so I hope there will be members in the dojo to help with this. Yagyu Sensei's ancestors were the official fencing instructors to the Tokugawa Shoguns. This is also the fencing style mastered by the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba, from Nakai Masakatsu. Yagyu Sensei will bring several of his students to teach the techniques of the Yagyu Shinkage Ryu and he will also explain many of the terms and techniques and their inspiration from Zen. This is a historical moment in the development of martial arts in this country.

O-Sensei's Memorial Service

April 26, 1991, from 7:00pm, at the dojo, we will have the 23rd Anniversary Memorial Service for the Founder of Aikido. This is one of the most important events of our Dojo. Please attend and offer incense to O-Sensei.

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How To Do O-Sensei's Memorial Service

The meaning of the memorial service each year is to remember loved ones who have passed on. We remember and do honor to the Founder of Aikido in this way by thinking about the sacrifices he made, his suffering and his enlightenment which gave us Aikido today. After 23 years, not many people remember him today, we are too worried about ourselves. But, this is a very special and important day for our dojo.

The ceremony:

The priest will say a few words like an invocation. Then the Heart Sutra will be chanted. Afterwards, each person offers incense. Put your hands together in Gassho and bow. Put in a pinch of the powdered incense in the incense bowl in the center with your right hand. Gassho and bow again and return to your seat. The entire ceremony takes about fifteen to twenty minutes for the entire process. It is very simple. Afterwards, the priest may say a few words in English to you.

The Heart Sutra called the Maka Hannya Haramitta Shin-gyo (Sutra of Wisdom Beyond Wisdom) is a very popular, well known, Buddhist text. The text on the following Page is the Romanization which is chanted followed by a rough translation in English for your information.

Sugano Sensei's Seminar

Sugano Seiichi, 7th Dan, from the New York Aikikai will be conducting his 2nd seminar at the Dojo on May 11th and 12th. He is a direct student of the Founder and the Chief Instructor for Aikido in Australia and in Belgium.

Please bring your bo and bokken. The fee is \$45.00 for one or both days. Please sign up and pay early to reserve your space for the seminar.

Seminars are difficult to arrange, we need everyone's participation.

Thank you.

Aikido Center of Los Angeles

Correspondence:

From CPL John E. Hughes
March 17, 1991

My name is John Hughes and I'm 25 years old presently serving in the US Marines Corps and stationed in Hawaii. I am married and have two children. For a number of years now I have been developing an interest in learning martial arts. As a Korean linguist in the Marine Corps, I have had the opportunity of being exposed to the Oriental culture and way of life. I am a very religious person and I have the desire to continually improve myself. I am also lazy by nature and I'm not extremely aggressive. I am easily intimidated by size, strength, knowledge and abilities of others.

Yesterday I purchased a copy of MA Training and read through it hoping to kind some piece of wisdom that would help me. It was interesting reading but most of the information was for those already involved in some form of martial arts. I know nothing of any form of martial arts. Today, I again picked up the magazine and happened upon your article entitled, "Making Our True Selves." I hadn't noticed this article yesterday! As I read your work I felt truly inspired to put behind me all of my inhibitions and pursue the beginning of my martial arts training. My first question is, what do I do first?

Part of my reluctance in the past is that commercialism of something so powerful couldn't possibly be in line with the true martial arts philosophy. When business, and all the self-serving habits thereof, and that which is important come together I have always turned the other way. I have had the fear of being taught by someone who cares only about the money he is making. I also have feared that the really true instructors would be out of my price range. My dilemma is such that I know not where to turn.

After reading your article I knew that you would be a worthy source from which to gain the wisdom that I seek. Being a Marine and a family man, my time from myself is limited but I firmly believe that great things can be accomplished with the time that I have, if diligence and real effort are employed. I desire to learn more than how to defend myself. I desire to improve my whole being. I just want to do it the right way from the start. I don't want to be the victim of someone else's weakness. I'm sure there are many qualified instructors who exemplify the true spirit of martial arts. My problem is finding the right place to start.

I appreciated your article immensely. It showed me that there are those who speak and write with wisdom. That encourages me! I would appreciate any guidance you could give me if you have the time. Your words have given me hope that my training can become more than just a desire. Respectfully, (Continued Page 4.)

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This is the sutra which the priest will recite at O-Sensei's Memorial Service. A rough English translation is also included.

MAKA HANNYA HARAMITTA SHINGYŌ

Kan-jī Zai Bō-satsu. Gyō jin Han-nyā Hā-rā-mit-tā jī.
Shō ken gō ○ on kai kū. Dō is-sai kū yaku. Shā-rī-shī.
Shiku fū ī kū. Kū fū ī shiki. Shiki soku zē kū. Kū soku
zē shiki. Jū sō gyō shiki. Yaku bū nyō zē. Shā-rī-shī zē
sho Hō kū sō. Fū-shō fū-metsu. Fū-kū fū-jō. Fū-zō
fū-gen. Zē-kō kū chū. Mū-shiki mū jū sō gyō shiki.
Mū-gen nī bī zes-shin nī. Mū-shiki shō kō mī soku
Hō. Mū-gen kai nai-shī mū-ī-shiki-kai. Mū mū-myō
yaku mū mū-myō jin. Nai-shī mū-rō-shī. Yaku mū-
rō-shī jin. Mū-kū shū metsu dō. Mū-chī yaku mū-
toku. Ī mū-shō-tok-kō. Bō-dai Sat-tā. Ē Han-nyā
Hā-rā-mī-ta ○ kō. Shin mū kei-gē. Mū-kei-gē kō.
Mū ū kū-fū. On-rī is-sai ten-dō mū-sō. Kū-gyō
nē-han. San-zē-shō-buttsu. Ē Han-nyā Hā-rā-mī-tā ○
kō. Toku ā-noku tā-rā-san-myaku-san-bō-dai. Kō
chī Han-nyā Hā-rā-mī-tā. Zē dai-jin-shū. Zē dai-
myō-shū. Zē mū jō-shū. Zē mū tō-dō-shū. Nō-jō
is-sai-kū. Shin-jitsu fū-kō. Kō setsu Han-nyā Hā-rā-
mī-tā shū. Soku setsu shū watsu. Gyā-tē gyā-tē. ●
Hā-rā gyā-tei. Hara sō gyā-tē. ● Bō-jī sowa-kā.
Han-nyā shin-gyō.

MAKAHANNYA HARAMITTA SHINGYŌ

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, doing deep prajñā pāramīta,
Clearly saw the emptiness of all the five ○ conditions,
Thus completely relieving misfortune and pain.
○ Shariputra, form is no other than emptiness, emptiness
no other than form;
Form is exactly emptiness, emptiness exactly form.
Sensation, conception, discrimination, awareness, are
likewise like this.
○ Shariputra, all dharmas are forms of emptiness, not born,
not destroyed;
Not stained, not pure, without loss, without gain;
So in emptiness there is no form, no sensation, conception,
discrimination, awareness;
No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
No color, sound, smell, taste, touch, phenomenon;
No realm of sight . . . no realm of consciousness;
No ignorance and no end to ignorance . . .
No old age and death, and no end to old age and death;
No suffering, no cause of suffering, no extinguishing, no
path;
No wisdom and no gain. No gain and thus
The bodhisattva lives prajñā pāramīta
○ With no hindrance in the mind. No hindrance, therefore
no fear,
Far beyond deluded thoughts, this is nirvana.
All past, present, and future Buddhas live prajñā pāramīta,
And ○ therefore attain anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.
Therefore know, prajñā pāramīta is the
The great mantra, the vivid mantra,
The best mantra, the unsurpassable mantra,
It completely clears all pain – this is the truth, not a lie.
So set forth the Prajñā Pāramita Mantra,
Set forth this mantra and say:
Gate! Gate! ● Paragate! Parasamgate!
● Bodhi svaha! Prajñā Pāramita Sutra.

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Correspondence continued:

Dear Mr. John E. Hughes:

Thank you for your letter and your kind words. You have raised several interesting points about the practice of martial arts in this country and I believe that your letter will benefit many people with a similar situation such as yourself. Therefore, I hope you don't mind if I reprint your letter in this Newsletter.

First of all, you ask, "What do I do first?" Find a good teacher and a good dojo. That is first and foremost. But even before this, you need determination and strong desire to study martial arts. If you are seeking "true" martial arts, you must realize that it is not a game or sport. It is a matter of your own life and death.

Martial arts has nothing to do with size, strength, personality, race or whatever. Any one can do it if they have the correct determination and use their energy wisely. Without a good teacher to guide you, you will just be wasting your time, effort, money and everything else. You will just be playing out your own dreams and delusions. You may be "lazy," but you must realize that what has to be done, most be done. You may not be "aggressive," but you must realize that you must do what has to be done. You may be "easily intimidated," but you must have the courage to do what has to be done and get it done. This is the important point. This is the essence of training. To see what this is very clearly, is what we call, "wisdom." Just to sit on your rear-end and talk and think about it, has just as much meaning as patting yourself on your head.

To be a family man and practice "true" martial arts is very difficult. To be very honest, you can only go so far as far as your level is concerned, but you can go far enough to benefit from the training mentally, spiritually, physically and in many other ways. There will always be a consideration of time and money, your job and your family. In ancient days, martial artists were "married" to their art alone. I don't know if our society today can handle such an entity as this today. This takes great sacrifice which people today are not accustomed to. I am not a very modern person and choose to follow the way of the ancients. In that respect, I don't fit in very well in today's society. At the same time, however, many masters today have families and kids and have done very well. I don't think it is very easy however.

You also bring up the subject of "commercialism." This is also a difficult subject. In the olden days, teachers and students trained and farmed together and were self-sufficient. At the very least, the

students provided for their teacher. Today, it is not so. Students pay dues thinking that that is all they have to do. In my own case, all that money goes towards the monthly rent and utilities. What is left to live on? I think money spoils teachers. I have seen it happen so many times. Also dojos that become businesses under whatever cover or name or pretense are also not very good in my own opinion. Yet, there is the reality of trying to survive in this society and world today which is based on money, and money alone. Today, for the most part, students don't understand the meaning of "appreciation" and "thanks." I know some teachers are just out for the money and profit of running (not a dojo) but a "store." But, on the other hand, I also know many teachers who take money from their students simply because they receive nothing else from them. There is no sense of "thanks," no "kindness." Honestly speaking, students take, take, take and give nothing back. One time, I told a student, "you should be more thankful." He replied, "I'm sorry, I don't know how to say thank you." In exchange for teaching, a "thank you" is enough, yet, I have yet to see an honest "thank you" come from the mouth of a student as yet, I am sorry to say.

I don't think you should worry about how "commercial" a dojo is. You should worry if the dojo exists just for the sake of money alone or is the dojo trying to get money in order to survive and continue its work of practice and teaching. Here, there is a big difference. At the same time, the teacher gives up a lot for his students, so the students shouldn't expect to practice for free but see a little to his teacher's comfort. We have less and less devoted teachers today than before because it is simply too hard to make even a meager living at it. The only people hurt by this, are students who want to devotedly study martial arts.

My last advice to you is the same as the first. Find and good teacher and a good dojo. I know of some very good teachers but the dojo is not good, sometimes his students make it difficult to practice well. These dojos have too much politics. Often I see splendid dojos but then the teacher is not very good. You need both, a good teacher and a good place to practice.

Good luck in your quest.

"The Zen Teachings of Homeless Kodo" is now available at the dojo for \$12.00 a copy donation. Only ten copies available.

MESSAGE FROM SENSEI

Right now, we are suffering from a lack of manpower in the dojo and we need everyone's help to keep the dojo running smoothly. As older students leave the dojo, the younger generation of students should begin to take on more responsibilities.

Monthly dues must be collected more quickly at the beginning of the month. Our membership has decreased over the last several months and we are doing nothing to keep in touch with these people. In March, we were short by \$4,000.00. We were also short on Master Hsu's Seminar by \$276.00. We still have an additional \$3,500.00 to pay back to Pacific Bell. In June, we need to buy new tatami and the cost of the tatami and carpenter work to install the mats may come close to \$5,000.00 to \$6,000.00. Outstanding loans incurred during the construction of the dojo six years ago come to about \$45,000.00 remaining.

We have Sugano Sensei coming in May and we cannot afford to incur losses here. Nisei Week is in August which is an important event for the dojo as well as the downtown community. Since last year's demonstration was so successful, Nisei Week has requested a \$500.00 donation from the dojo. I think they forgot that I was also hosting twenty two guests from Japan at the time. Next year, Yagyū Nobuharu Sensei will also visit us and this will be an important event.

People from all over the world tell me what a great dojo we have, I think only members of the dojo alone don't understand this until they go away. I have never seen a dojo with such potential and aspiration and so much apathy at the same time.

Unfortunately, we have had to cut a few classes and I am afraid we may have to cut more or go on a six or five day schedule. We do desperately need more new students in the dojo, everyone should help in this respect.

This has happened before and members of the dojo have rarely listened to me. I am afraid that if we have the same problems this month and the next, we will be bankrupt and the dojo will close permanently. This will be a big shame but now there you have it, right here, in black and white.

Respectfully,

Kensho Furuya

Notice

The Iaido class on Tuesday evening is temporarily closed until further notice.

The afternoon classes on Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00pm to 2:00pm will open again soon in the near future.

We also need help for the Children's Class on Sunday mornings from 8:00am, especially from those ni-kyu and above.

Collection of monthly dues will be handled by Sensei alone or his designated assistant.

Many Thanks

Many thanks to attorneys, Mr. William Gillespie and Mr. Curtis Westfall, who both help us with legal matters in the dojo.

Many thanks to Mr. Ron Hill for the donation of beautiful flowers in the front garden.

Many thanks to Mr. Sam Onate who faithfully keeps my old cars in running condition.

Many thanks to Master Hsu whom drove down to conduct a seminar with us.

Robert Masuda recently went to Japan and had an opportunity to practice at the Aikido World Headquarters in Shinjuku, Japan.

Seminar with John Stevens

April 27, 1991 at the Dojo

Fees must be collected in advance. \$35.00 per person. Please make your reservations now.

Japanese Language Classes

Japanese classes will be starting May 4, 1991 in the dojo. Every Saturday for 2 hours from 1:00pm. \$25.00 per month per person.

You need the textbook, notebook, pen and pencil.