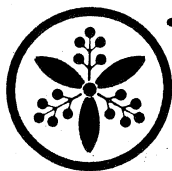


羅府合氣道学院古屋道場



AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

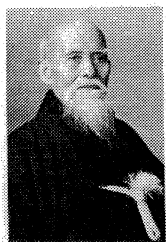
940 E. Second Street #7
Los Angeles, California
90012
(213) 687-3673

April 1, 1993

Volume IX. Number 4.

Special 30th Anniversary Celebration Edition

Aikido Founder's Memorial April 26th



On April 26th of this month, we will commemorate the Founder's 25th Anniversary of his passing. We will observe a few moments of silence in his honor before class on that day. Please attend your church or visit your loved ones who have passed on at the cemetery this month and say a prayer for him.

Sensei's Greetings

Dear Students and Friends:

This month, we are celebrating our 30th Anniversary and I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all my students and friends for your very kind and generous support and encouragement over the years.

We are really trying our best to uphold the highest tradition of Aikido and faithfully following the teachings of O-Sensei and Doshu. I am grateful that so many members of our community recognize and congratulate us for this. Thank you so much.

I hope that we can continue our work and that everyone will continue to practice Aikido and support our dojo. This is a very busy year for us as usual with so many activities going on, please practice hard and help out the dojo wherever and whenever you can.

Again, thank you for your support and encouragement.

In Gassho,

Kensho Furuya

53rd Nisei Week Aikido & Martial Arts Demonstration Set for August 8th

We have received approval from the Nisei Week Committee and the Japan America Theatre for our 53rd Annual Nisei Week Aikido and Martial Arts Demonstration to be held on August 8, 1993.

We have many special guests this year including 25 members of the All Japan Battodo Federation from Japan headed by Mitsuo Hataya Sensei, 7th Dan, and the President of the organization, Ryu Fushimi Sensei. Local masters include Fumio Demura Sensei, 8th Dan, from Shito Ryu Karate Itosu Kai; Hayward Nishioka Sensei, 5th Dan, from Judo and Masashi Shikai Sensei, 8th Dan from Kendo. These are all top instructors in the country.

The demonstration will be held from 12 noon to 2:30PM and admission is \$12.00 per person, general seating. Our Dojo conducted this demonstration at the Japan America Theatre in 1990 to a sell out crowd with over 500 people turned away at the doors.

Dojo Lease Renewed

Through negotiations with Sensei and our landlord, we have renewed our dojo lease for a record 12 more years. The landlords appeared very happy for us to want to stay and said that we were very good tenants. We all want to be part of Little Tokyo for a long time.

Thank You

Many thanks to everyone who has generously contributed to our Tatami Mat Fund Raiser; We appreciate your support and kindness.

Dojo News:

NEW GATE FOR THE DOJO

Mark Moore donated several days from his busy schedule to construct the beautiful new gate to the dojo.

JONATHAN WHITE EXHIBITION AT THE ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM

Jonathan White just returned from the St. Louis Art Museum after a successful exhibition of his works in May. Many congratulations on the success of his very beautiful paintings.

JET SETTERS

Dr. Cheryl Lew has just returned from a trip of several weeks to Boston. Vincent Sillas has taken off to Australia for several weeks. Mark Shprintz has just returned from a business trip in London, England, where he filmed a television commercial recently.

MITSUKO YOSHIMOTO'S JAPAN TRIP

Mitsuko left for Japan on March 17 and returns on April 7th. She will be visiting her parents but also plans to train at Hombu Dojo.

APPRECIATION TO YAMADA SENSEI

Many thanks to Yoshimitsu Yamada Shihan, Chief Instructor of the New York Aikikai, for his very generous donation to our Tatami Fund Raiser. The dojo really appreciates his loyal support and guidance over so many years.

FOR TV & MOVIE BUFFS

Two of our members have recently premiered on TV again. Jeffrey Meek's series, Raven, has come back to Channel 2 and a short hiatus and Nick Mancuso has begun a new series, Matrix, on PBS. Nick attended the dojo during the filming of his old series, Stingray. Good luck and congratulations to both of them.

You will be seeing a good friend of the Dojo, Fumio Demura Sensei of the Japan Karate Federation, appearing in Rising Sun, a new movie to be released sometime in December of this year.

Old friend, Dick Cavett was recently on PBS in an interview with Howard Stern.

Appreciations

Sensei received a commemorative calligraphy, "Aikido," written by Doshu's own hand in celebration of his 30th Anniversary in Aikido. The writing is now being properly framed as a scroll in Japan.

Yoshimitsu Yamada Sensei is going to have surgery on his neck for a pinched nerve. We wish him the very best and a very quick recovery.

Please see Steve Tarango about raffle tickets for our fund raiser. Also, James Doi has been doing a great job with all of our Fund Raising accounting and recording. Thanks.

MANY THANKS

Many thanks to the volunteers who helped with the Japanese Sword Exhibition at the Dojo on February 21st. Although we had a very beautiful exhibition, we didn't help our Fund Raiser very much.

Kenny Furuya
Rick Parents
Ken Watanabe
Jeff Wheeler
Joe Quinn
David Ito
James Doi
Brian Kanegawa
Andy Kissel
Kevin Sonico
Jonathan White

(Hope we didn't miss anyone!)

Also, much appreciation to those who helped with the Japanese Sword Guard Exhibition on March 21st.

The next event will be a lecture on Miyamoto Musashi, the swordsman on April 18, 1993. There will not be any special set-up requirements, but everyone is welcome to. Thank you.

Letters to the Dojo:

I have been reading your column in Martial Arts Training magazine for a while now. You have shed a light on many concepts and helped illustrate ideas that I found difficult to understand. Your articles have become a regular part of my training. . . .

Michael Turvey
London, Ontario
Canada

Hello! Everyone at the dojo. Just taking this little time to say "Hi" and hope that everyone is in good health and training hard. Sincerely, your fellow student,

Vincent Sillas,
From Sidney, Australia

Greetings to Sensei and My Training Partners:

I'll arrive before this card but I want you to know I'm thinking of the dojo. My job hasn't intruded on my sightseeing. The V. and A. and British Museums have fabulous Japan exhibits. See You Soon,

Mark Shprintz,
From London, England

I have always found your M. A. Training articles interesting, but today I am moved to say a special thank you for your "Ancient Ways:" Make Mistakes Correctly" essay in the May 1993 issue. . . . Please know, sir, that I very much appreciate YOUR insightful and well-timed wisdom, too. I do not doubt that your thoughtful words are of benefit to many. Thank you. Sincerely,

Harold Jeffries,
West Columbia, South Carolina

Kensho Furuya's 30th Anniversary Celebration
&

53rd Annual Nisei Week Aikido & Japanese Martial Arts Demonstration

Japan America Theatre
244 South San Pedro Street
Little Tokyo

August 8, 1993
Sunday from 12 noon

Please invite your friends.

Martial Arts Training Magazine

Have you read the most recent Ancient Ways columns?
Pick up your Martial Arts Training Magazine soon.

1. "What is True Strength?"
2. "Make Mistakes Correctly"

Coming soon: "Bend the Bamboo, Not the Wind"

The best way to make sure you don't miss any of the "Ancient Ways" columns is to get your own subscription.

The Spirit of the Samurai Lecture Series:

"MIYAMOTO MUSASHI" The Swordsman

April 21, 1993

Sunday from 12 noon.

\$10.00 donation is requested.

Thank you!

Tatami Fund Raiser Donors

Current list as of March, 1993

Dr. James Doi \$100.00
 Andy Kissel \$125.00
 Mark Shprintz \$100.00
 Joe Quinn \$100.00
 Bill Gillespie \$100.00
 Bill Gillespie \$250.00
 Dr. James Kurata \$100.00
 Brett Parks \$200.00
 J. F. D'Entremont \$150.00
 Ismael Araujo \$100.00
 Helen Chen \$50.00
 Anthony Camargo \$50.00
 Ken Watanabe \$25.00
 Chris Prejean \$100.00
 Dr. Hieu Nguyen \$100.00
 Dr. Cheryl Lew \$200.00
 Japanese Village Plaza \$100.00
 David Wisotzki \$50.00
 Oliver Brown \$100.00
 Dan Yoshimura \$100.00
 Gilbert Yamabayashi \$100.00, Rialto
 Dr. Ray Kuwahara \$200.00, Palos Verdes
 Yasushi Matsuki \$100.00
 Norman Lew \$100.00
 Tom McIntyre \$250.00
 Timothy Shimono \$50.00, Washington State
 Mitsuko Yoshimoto \$100.00
 Andy Kissel \$20.00
 Jonathan White \$50.00
 Madame Soyu Koizumi \$100.00, Orange Cty
 Lew Children \$100.00
 Dr. Cheryl Lew \$100.00
 Morgan Weisser \$100.00
 Rey Espino \$75.00
 Kathleen Nolan \$100.00, New York State
 Richard Eloriagga \$100.00

Ken Furuya \$10.00
 Kim Smith \$100.00
 Sean & Noboru Ito \$25.00
 Marco & Milena Mitrovici \$50.00
 Rev. Shinetsu Fukushima \$100.00, Tokyo
 Masao Takarada \$25.00
 Brian Kanegawa \$175.00
 Kageyama Children \$100.00
 Dennis Kojo \$10.00
 Yoshimitsu Yamada Sensei \$100.00, New
 York Aikikai
 Kevin Sonico \$80.00
 Madame Kyoko Arai \$100.00
 Yasuo Kobayashi Sensei \$80.00, Tokyo
 Dr. Nathan Rosenbloom \$10.00, Torrance
 Bernard Ng \$10.00
 Mike Amparano \$150.00
 Vincent Tso (Alex Tso) \$20.00
 Esther Tudor \$100.00
 Audra Kakita \$50.00
 Montebello Sozenji Buddhist Temple \$25.00
 Master Adam Hsu Kung Fu School \$100.00

On behalf of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles, members and myself, I would like to express my most heartfelt thanks for everyone's kind and generous support of our Fund Raiser to buy new tatami mats for the dojo. I would also like to offer a very special word of thanks to Master Adam Hsu and his students who are presently building their own new school in Chinatown and have much more important concerns than that of our own yet have thought of us. I wish him and his students every success in his efforts. I would also like to say "thank you" to so many of my friends whom I haven't seen for so long yet who have given their generous support.

The Aikido Center of Los Angeles
 Kensho Furuya



Ancient Ways

Make Mistakes Correctly

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

“Practice to perfection, so that your mistakes become a part of that perfection.”

Quite a few years back, I watched a performance by a great classical Japanese dancer. By accident, she failed to catch her fan when she threw it up into the air. She continued to dance without missing a beat, and at a later moment, she gracefully retrieved her fan and continued to dance. Her movements were perfection, and anyone who was not familiar with this dance may have thought that dropping the fan was part of the performance.

In contrast was another incident. Recently, during an important tea ceremony, the host removed the iron kettle's lid to pour hot water into the tea bowl. When he lifted the lid, he immediately realized that he had forgotten to prepare the hot water, and there was no way to make the tea. He became flustered and embarrassed, and it caused a commotion. We students had been assisting with the tea, and none of us had thought to check for the hot water either. Everyone ran to find some way to add hot water to the kettle. Neither the host nor the guests could settle down after that; it was not an enjoyable tea. (Perhaps I do an injustice to immortalize this incident.)

After the tea ceremony, I was there when the teacher severely scolded all of us for being inattentive, sloppy, and lazy; I think she also used the word “stupid.” It was a tough time for us, and now I always check the kettle before any practice or special event. We could try to justify that mistake because everyone was so busy with the other preparations, but actually, there was

no excuse for missing such a basic matter.

I think that the tea teacher, seeing our dejected faces after scolding us, felt some compassion; so she continued, saying, “I remember one time when the grandmaster of tea made such a simple but horrible mistake.” The grandmaster was performing the tea ceremony before a large crowd of important dignitaries, and when he sat down to begin, he realized that he had forgotten his *fukusa*, a small cloth used for the ritual purification of all the tea utensils. For the *chajin* (tea person), the *fukusa* is as important as the sword is to the samurai and should never leave one's side. Quite calmly, the grandmaster turned to the guests and said, “Excuse me, I forgot my *fukusa*,” and stood up and left the tearoom to retrieve it. Several minutes later, he reentered the tearoom and began to prepare the tea as if nothing had ever happened. Although we were severely scolded for our negligence, our teacher praised the grandmaster for his composure. It was not a prejudice, I believe; at the grandmaster's level, his mistake only becomes a part of his perfection and humanity. To practice a few years and think that we are skillful is only self-delusion. To become a master after many decades of training and still realize that we are human and subject to error becomes a part of mastering our practice. This is perfection in training.

“You haven't made enough mistakes yet.”

Most have heard the parable of the blind men who were ordered by their king to describe an elephant.

One wise man touched the ear and concluded that the elephant was wide, thin and flat. Another wise man touched the elephant's trunk and announced that the elephant was like a giant snake, and so on.

It is easy to laugh at the story, yet we should think about it much more carefully. Although we have eyes that can see, often we are more blind than those who cannot. We shouldn't criticize others so prematurely.

If perhaps we could slightly alter this ancient story and allow the blind man who touched the elephant's ear to continue “making mistakes” and touch the tail, the feet, the body, the eyes, etc., I am quite sure that with enough “mistakes” he would eventually figure out the animal's true shape.

There is another story of a famous priest who was required to write the title board to the main gate of a newly built temple. The acolyte brought the paper, ink, ink stone and water for his master to write his noble words. The master took his brush, and with several masterful strokes, penned the words in just several seconds. Rather pleased with himself, he showed the result to the young priest for his approval and praise.

“Hmmm. It is really not your usual best, is it, master?” commented the acolyte. Rather peeved at this remark, the priest tried again and again, but somehow he couldn't please the young man. Actually, the more he tried, the worse the situation became, and now it was impossible to get it right at all. After a long while and many attempts, the young priest left the room. The master, feeling a momentary freedom from the unmerciful eye of the

young acolyte, quickly made one more attempt to write.

The young acolyte returned just as he finished and immediately exclaimed to his master, "That's it! It is truly marvelous writing!"

"To prevent mistakes, study yourself well."

I mention Dick Cavett occasionally, and perhaps this seems like so much self-promotion, but this is not my intention. Not only is he a good friend and student, we have had many interesting experiences together which I like to share with you, as I do with my students in my own *dojo*. In many ways, in his own profession, Dick can be considered a master, indeed.

On one occasion in New York, I accompanied him to one of his guest appearances, and by odd circumstance, he was required to shoot a bow and arrow. The director said to practice before the actual taping.

Dick replied, "I usually do well on my very first attempt at anything, because I sometimes choke up when I try to do better on a second try. Try taping the first shot." By an amazing "coincidence," Dick's very first shot was a bull's-eye. I won't describe the succeeding shots, however, to save him some embarrassment.

I have mentioned the following story before, but I think it is appropriate to mention it again. It is about the famous 17th-century swordsman, Miyamoto Musashi.

In the audience of the Daimyo Hosokawa in Higo province, Musashi was requested to paint one of his famous pictures of Daruma (Bodhidharma, the patriarch of Zen

Buddhism). Later that evening, the alarm signaled that someone had entered the lord's private chambers, and all the guards rushed into the room to find Musashi huddled over a piece of paper. Surprised, the lord asked Musashi what he was doing there so late at night. Without a word, Musashi held up a piece of paper with the most magnificent depiction of Daruma. Musashi explained: "When you first asked me to paint, I held the brush like a painter, but I am not a painter, so it was a big mistake. This time, I held the brush like a swordsman, so you can now see my art!"

"Even when you do your best, there are still mistakes."

No one wants to make a mistake. When we make mistakes, we feel clumsy or stupid or wrong. Our mistakes bring trouble to ourselves and sometimes to others.

By our mistakes, we lose money, we lose our jobs, and sometimes, we lose our love. In sports, we can lose the critical game or match, or an important trophy. In martial arts, we can lose our lives by our mistakes. Worst, above anything else, we believe that our mistakes bring us personal shame.

We should not intentionally make mistakes. Yet mistakes are a fact of life. If I were to account for my every action, I am sure I would make at least three mistakes to every one correct action. If we think about it, we find our lives absolutely filled with mistakes!

I have noticed that teaching methods in martial arts have changed drastically over the years. Early in my career, my teacher always pointed out my mistakes in training, yet

when I did something halfway decent, he always seemed to be looking the other way.

Today, many martial artists teach in the opposite way—supposedly a more modern method. I think it is called the "touchy-feely good-buddy method." When the student does well, the teacher praises him up and down, and when the student makes a mistake, the teacher keeps quiet. Some years ago, one teacher gave me this advice, which I have never been able to quite understand: "Never correct the mistakes of your students; it's bad for business!"

"Respond to your mistakes correctly. A mistake is only another form of learning."

In my own *dojo*, when making corrections among the students, it is important to note their various responses. Many react constructively. Many others don't, and the mistake or the correction obstructs the learning experience. The teacher needs to understand this to communicate with his students. The student needs to respond correctly to his mistakes for the sake of his training.

Usually, the student takes the correction as a normal course of learning. He or she tries to understand the teacher's instruction and bring it into the movement. Some instruction is not immediately achieved, and has to be worked with over and over until the student corrects the bad habit or improves the technique.

Not all students react in this way. Some students react with shame, and feel sorry for themselves. Some deny that anything was wrong, and just turn off completely. Some ar-

(Continued on page 70)

Ancient Ways

gue and contradict. And many react with pride and their egos. I remember one student commenting that he was "perfect" and "never made a mistake." Another student shocked me by saying, "I am good; how can I make a mistake?"

A mistake is a mistake only when we don't pay attention to it. If we don't deal with mistakes, we are doomed to repeating them.

Before you get angry over being corrected, first try to understand what you are being told. What is being corrected? Where is the mistake? What do you need to do?

"Learning and teaching should never be a matter of ego."

If you don't understand what you

did wrong, ask your teacher to explain it more clearly; he will probably be overjoyed that you are listening for once, and taking your practice seriously. If he is just talking arbitrarily, and doesn't really know what he is saying, he will probably be upset and tell you to be quiet. If you are one of those talkers who chatter on and on and on in practice, he will probably tell you to "shut up" anyway.

I once made a comment about a black belt's technique during a class, and somehow he managed to shift all the blame to his mechanic who didn't fix his radiator properly earlier that day and thus destroyed his spiritual balance, and how that was why his technique was not up to snuff. No teacher is looking for excuses or how cleverly a student can pass the blame.

"Realize that you are the only one to blame for your mistakes."

Don't blame the art; blame yourself. But keep in mind that there is nothing wrong with blaming yourself. It only means that there is a lot of work for us to do. This must be the basic inspiration for our training; this is how to correctly make a mistake. If we take ourselves too seriously, the mistake becomes a terrible obstacle and a burden for ourselves; understand and avoid this at all costs, because taking our mistakes too seriously will lead to our own self-destruction.

"We do not fail because we make mistakes, we fail because we do not make mistakes correctly."

Even if your mistake may mean your death, you must still face it calmly and bravely. Most people have seen the kites shaped like giant carp flown on the Boy's Day festi-

val in Japan. The carp represents bravery in the face of death. It is said that when you place the carp on the cutting board, it is the only fish that doesn't struggle to get away, but lies there calmly, bravely awaiting its own end. Saigo Takamori, one of the last great warriors in Japan, once said, "Do your utmost and then leave the rest to Heaven." Ultimately, how we deal with our own errors, mistakes and failings in our lives is the spiritual practice of martial arts in the midst of reality.

"Perfect your worst failing."

Someone gave me this advice which I have found invaluable in my own training:

Take your worst technique and practice to make it your best technique. Then, take your worst technique and train to make it your best technique. Then, take your worst technique and make it your best technique, and so on.

I think that in real life, we are very much more like the blind men than we think. With just one touch we will *always* incorrectly identify the elephant. Indeed, in our own practice, we need to go through many, many more mistakes until we can finally see what we are doing.

And like the master priest who became too anxious and couldn't write well, we must remember to keep everything we do natural and spontaneous.

Finally, like the swordsman Musashi, we must do everything in light of our martial arts training, even our mistakes. Even that must be done correctly. ★

In 1993, Reverend Kensho Furuya celebrates more than 30 years in the martial arts. He is the chief instructor of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Branch of the All Japan Battodo Iaido Federation in Japan. A noted authority on aikido, iaido, swordsmanship, martial arts and Japanese swords, he has been a contributing editor for M. A. Training since its inception.

—Editor

Dojo Training Schedule

Beginning Classes

Mondays thru Fridays
7:00am to 8:00am

6:15pm to 7:15pm

Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays
7:30pm to 8:30pm

Saturday Mornings
10:15am to 11:15am

Sunday Mornings
9:30am to 10:30am

Advanced Classes

2nd Kyu & up
Bring Bokken, Jo & Tanto

Tuesdays
7:30pm to 8:30pm

Saturdays
11:30am to 12:30pm

Children's Classes

7 yrs to 19 yrs

Sunday Mornings
8:30am - 9:30am

The Newsletter is published monthly by the Aikido Center of Los Angeles under the direction of Kensho Furuya. It is free to active members. An annual subscription is \$30.00 donation to the dojo.

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Kenshin Kai

LA Branch All Japan Battodo Federation

Wednesdays
8:45pm to 9:45pm

Saturdays
9:00am to 10:00am

Sundays
7:30am to 8:30am

Los Angeles Japanese Sword Society

1st Friday of the Month
7:30pm to 9:00pm

IMPORTANT DATES

April 1st. New 12 Year Lease Begins.

April 9th. Dojo Closed. Good Friday.
7:00am Morning Class only.

April 18th. Lecture on Miyamoto Musashi
1:00pm.

April 24th. Black Belt Meeting from
12:30pm. Agenda: Nisei Week, raffle, fund
raiser & enrollment procedures. 1st & 2nd
Kyu grades should also attend.

April 24th. 30th Anniversary Reception
Dinner at the Grill de Lyon. 7:00pm.

April 24th & 25th. Black Belt Dojo Clean-
ing 9:30am. All Black Belts, please help.

April 25th. Sensei's 45th Birthday.

April 26th. Founder's Memorial Day.