

羅府合気道学院古屋道場



AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES NEWSLETTER

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Nihon Iaido Kenshinkai. Los Angeles Sword & Swordsmanship Society

January 1, 1997

Volume XV. Number 1.

Happy New Year 1997!



謹んで新年を
お慶び申し上げます
1997年1月1日

Peace on Earth

The Aikido Center of Los Angeles
The Los Angeles Sword & Swordsmanship Society
Rev. Kensho Furuya, Resident Chief Instructor

Year of the OX

**1901, 1913, 1925, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985,
1997, 2009.**

The Ox is yin. Ox is the second sign of the Chinese horoscope.

*Oxen have the following characteristics:
Integrity, Strength of purpose, Stability, Innovation,
Diligence, Eloquence.*

*Ox sins include:
Stubbornness, Bigotry, Plodding, Standoffish, Bias,
Vindictiveness.*

Oxen are worker beasts. As the ox is in nature, so it remains in the symbolic horoscope, the creature who works hard, gets results and has little patience with those who don't. Ox people are always most capable. They have fine imaginations for dreaming up new schemes and methods and can usually put them directly into practice.

So far, this Ox fellow sounds pretty nearly perfect, doesn't he? Stable, hardworking, creative and practical. What more could a human being wish for? Well, how about a little flexibility? Some tenderness? A tad of fancy? Unfortunately, these are not the Ox's strong points. Oxen, as their name implies, tend to be thick, heavy, slow and exasperatingly stubborn.

Reprinted from The New Astrology. Suzanne White. St. Martin's Press. 1986.

Special New Year's Issue

This Special New Year's Issue features several essays from our Membership. We hope you enjoy reading them over the Happy Holidays. Happy New Year and see you on the mat in 1997.

The Aikido Center of Los Angeles

Sensei's New Year's Message:

Looking to Our New Year: 1997

First of all, I would like to extend my warmest Best Wishes for the New Year to all my students and friends and pray for your good health and success.

With the publication of "KODO Ancient Ways," 1996 was quite a busy year for us. But, as my old students know, this is nothing new. Every year seems to be a busy one for us.

As much as I promise once again for 1997 that this year will be much less active. I suspect, in the back of my mind, that the New Year will also be quite hectic. Despite this, more than ever before, I want to spend more time in the Dojo with my students and spend more time to see to your training. Many changes are occurring in Aikido throughout the world and I think this is a time when we must be strong within ourselves. To be strong does not necessarily mean to have financial strength, political strength or the strength of numbers. This has nothing to do with the power of money or personal agendas or taking over or manipulating others. As for our Dojo, strength means that we are all unified - that we are all One - in heart and in spirit. In 1997, I hope everyone will try their "damn hardest" to work together and support each other to grow in a positive and creative way through Aikido's teachings.

In addition to the book, 1996 also represents the re-institution of our Executive Advisory Board which now includes some white-belts as well as black belts and instructors. Also, I have selected a group of Personal Advisors to help me on various matters regarding our Dojo. I hope with their help, I can run the Dojo more smoothly for you and with greater wisdom. In 1997, we will see how they get it together and organize themselves; I beg for everyone's help and cooperation on their behalf to help them organize themselves to work for everyone's

benefit in the Dojo.

In 1997, I hope to finish the second book, "The Tao of Aikido," I have already started on a new book which will serve as a companion volume to KODO.

Along with my instructors and uchi-deshi, I hope that everyone will enjoy this New Year and find something in Aikido that will bring something good into your life.

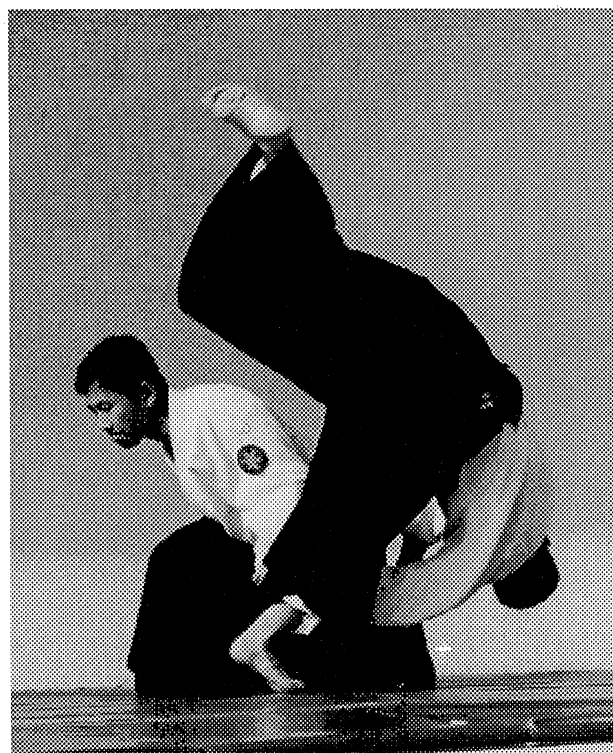
Now is a good time to count our blessings. Although we are not a very big Dojo, I believe we have a lot to be thankful for. As much as I complain and moan about this and that in the Dojo, everyday I give thanks for the wonderful Dojo we have and all the many good students who are studying under me. It's really hard for me to ask for anything more in my life than this. I think about how to teach you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I hope that you too feel grateful for all that you have in Aikido. Again I give thanks to all my teachers to whom I owe so much.

I have nothing to ask of my students for 1997 outside of your continued training and hard work in Aikido. So many good talented people in the Dojo - I only crack the whip once in a while because I often wonder if you yourselves do not realize how much you have and how much you have yet to realize within yourselves through Aikido.

Finally, I would like to give my best regards to James Doi who celebrates his 30th year in Aikido this year. James first started Aikido under me at the USC Aikido Club in 1967. We got separated in 1970 when I graduated, but he somehow managed to return to the Dojo in 1988 when he found out I was teaching in our present location. I am so grateful that he returned and he has been a constant asset and a loyal Aikido student. As a teacher in his own right, I hope everyone will benefit from his Aikido technique and from his honest, forthright, and compassionate character.

Support the Dojo and be faithful to Aikido and its teachings. Let's practice Good Aikido together.

30 Years of Aikido Congratulations



**Dr. James Doi, 4th Dan
celebrates his 30th year
of devoted Aikido,
1967 to 1997 . . .
Heartfelt Congratulations
& Many, Many More
Years of Aikido**

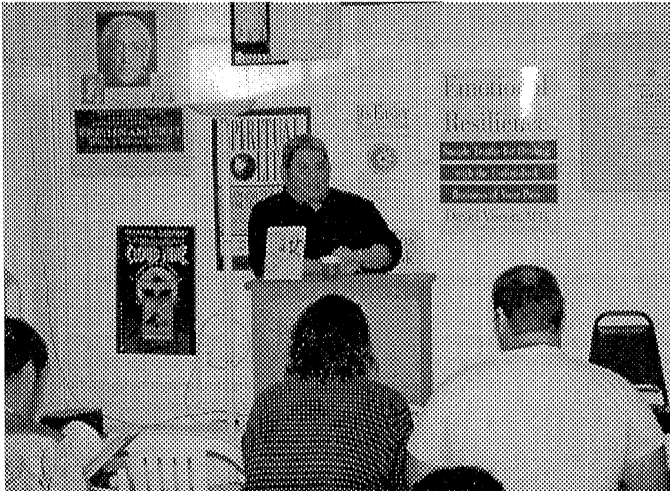
Happy New Year and Many Thanks for your continued support and loyalty,

In Gassho,

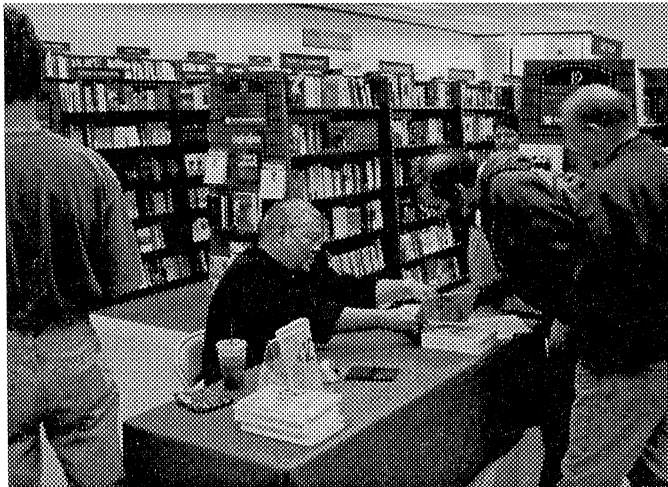
AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES

Rev. Kensho Furuya

Bodhi Tree Bookstore Book Signing. Oct. 27th.

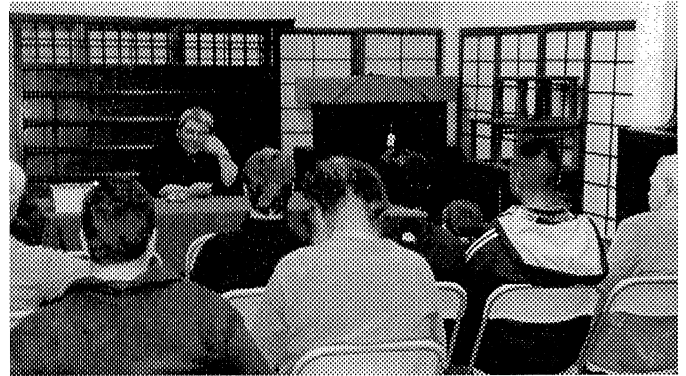


Barnes & Noble Book Signing. Nov. 3rd.

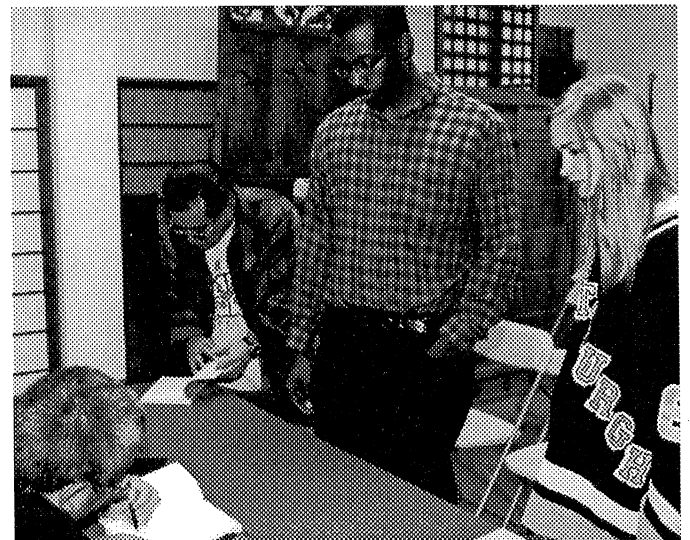


A Happy
New Year
To All Our
Friends

Book Signing & Iaido Demo, Yoshino Japanese Antiques, Dec. 7th.



On a beautiful Saturday afternoon, we had a very successful book signing at Gary Myer's Yoshino Japanese Antiques in Old Town Pasadena. About 20-30 showed up and many copies of Kodo were signed. Among some of the guests were Jack Arnold of the Daiwa Dojo in Burbank and several of his students. The event started off with a demonstration of Iaido followed by a book signing in which Sensei spoke and answered questions from the audience. Iaido participants in the Demo were Gary Myers, Ken Watanabe, Kenny Furuya, Curtis Westfall and Cheryl Lew.



Signing books for many fans at the Yoshino Japanese Antiques Booksigning. Gary Myers sponsored and organized the very successful event. Many thanks to Gary for also providing the egg nog and delicious Christmas cookies.

Many guests commented on how beautiful his store is. Con't.

Our Annual Dojo Christmas Party, Dec. 8th, at the Miyako Inn.



Everyone filled with food and smiles!



Curtis Westfall (center) with his family (left) at our Christmas buffet. With Rev. Kathy Nolan (behind) from Mt. Tremper, New York, from the Woodstock Dojo and Valerie Nerres, who recently moved to the area from New Jersey. Valerie commutes almost daily to the Dojo from Laguna Beach!

This year's Christmas Party was very nice because many members brought their kids. We are not saying that there are big eaters in the Dojo, but those who came a little late went home a little hungry!

More about the Party in the next February Issue.

Everyone had a great time at our annual Christmas Party at the Miyako Inn this year. Nearly 70 members attended the buffet which was followed by a few karaoke singers - better stay with Aikido!

The menu included-
sushi, baked ham,
salmon croquettes, te-

riyaki beef, chow mein, tempura, salad and a beautiful Christmas cake was donated by the hotel. Many thanks to the Miyako Inn for all of their kind service to make our party a great success. Many thanks to everyone who attended.

Our Annual Dojo New Year's Party

January 25, 1997
6:00pm - 9:00pm

**EVERYBODY
WELCOME!**

*Details on Dojo Bulletin Board.
There will be a very special Celebration for
Sensei this year, please try to attend and bring
your family and friends. \$35.00 per person.*

Learning From The Martial "Reul (Rule)."

By Curtis Westfall, 2nd Dan

The October 23, 1996 edition of the Wall Street Journal featured an article entitled "It's such a bummer That Kung Fu Monks Kicked Their Habits." The article detailed the plight of Belgium's Daniel Reul (and scores of others like him), who had spent his life savings to journey thousands of miles to, and spend a year, at Shaolin temple, China, in search of martial arts enlightenment. Once there, Reul and others of his ilk were disillusioned to find that the ascetic monastic discipline and martial arts prowess featured in the 1980 movie "Shaolin Temple" no longer exists.

Instead, according to Reul, the "temple isn't for meditation, it is for making business." Apparently, a carnival of tourist traps and cheap martial arts schools now choke Shaolin's rugged mountain valley. Mr. Reul's hired master rarely showed up for training on time. After a few weeks, the master let his hair grow and donned a Harley-Davidson T-shirt, causing Reul some doubt about his asceticism. Nor surprisingly, the dispirited "Reul dropped his master and began training himself. He meditates in the mornings beside a mountain waterfall. But the place isn't as pristine as in the temple's brochures. The water is strewn with shampoo bottles, dirty socks and a pair of old underpants."

This article, and Reul's plight, struck me on a number of levels.

First, Reul's experience seems to typify the inevitable conflict between true martial arts and commercialism. Is it possible for the teacher to be true to his art while pursuing the business of making money? Can a martial arts master duplicate his martial prowess as an entrepreneur? Does the teacher somehow cheapen his art by selling it to the public for general consumption? Of course, these rhetorical questions may not be easily answered. But they are worthy of careful consideration and debate. An old martial arts parable is applicable here. You may

heard about the new student who asks the master how long it will take to attain Shodan rank. The master tells the student that it will take five years. The student, unhappy with the response, tells the master that he will practice very, very hard, and be utterly devoted to his training. The master says that in that case, it will take ten years. This process is repeated several times, with the student repeatedly trying to convince the master that he will practice harder and harder, but each time the master advises that it will take even longer to attain black belt. The obvious point of the story is that if you always have one eye on your goal, you can never truly focus on what you are doing. Shaolin illustrates the point of this story in real life. By concentrating on trying to turn a quick profit, the Shaolin masters have lost touch with the essence of the very thing from which they seek to profit.

Second, we must be ever mindful of the importance of nurturing and preserving traditional martial arts. The article suggests that Shaolin's martial arts excellence was developed hundreds of years ago, and readily preserved through the centuries. And the article maintains that Shaolin remained a well-kept secret until the movie about the temple was released in 1980. Since then, only sixteen years have elapsed, but somehow hundreds of years of training and excellence have been lost. It is unsettling, indeed, to realize that centuries of tradition can be frittered away in a few short years.

Third, the article brings to mind the "grass is greener" paradox. Though the article is silent on this point, we must presume that Reul had some exposure to martial arts prior to arriving at Shaolin. Why did he want to leave his teacher? Of course, there can be no question of the importance of searching out and locating a qualified teacher. But perhaps even more important is realizing one's good fortune when you find a skilled teacher. Sometimes a pot of gold isn't waiting at the end of the rainbow. Instead, as Reul found out, all that awaits may be another's discarded dirty laundry.

These thoughts may be summarized as follows:

We musn't take our training for granted. Some people don't have the good fortune of having, or realizing they have, a gifted teacher. We must fiercely guard, and always work to heighten and foster our training environment. And we must understand that when training tradition shunned for the lazy, dispirited, easy way, even the most reknowned martial arts traditions may be quickly undermined.

Let us all keep these realities ever present in our consciousness, and approach our training with renewed zeal, commitment and responsibility.

New Student from New Jersey

**By Valerie Nerras, 5th Kyu, Aikido Schools of
New Jersey**

There is no place like home. On October 29, 1996, I had the opportunity to return home to attend a seminar with my sensei, Rick Stickles, Chief Instructor of Aikido Schools of New Jersey. The Seminar was hosted by Hal Lehrman Sensei's dojo, Aikido of Park Slope, in Brooklyn, New York. Stickles Sensei has practiced and taught Aikido for more than 20 years having travelled extensively giving demonstrations and seminars also serving as apprentice and instructor at the New York Aikikai under Yamada Sensei, 8th dan.

Lehrman Sensei also has an extensive Aikido background having also taught at NY Aikikai for more than 20 years and is Stickles senpai. Stickles and Lehrman are long-term friends and their admiration and respect for each other was obvious. I knew I was in for a very special experience. The emphasis of the seminar was on the basic techniques and principles of traditional Aikido.

Sensei also presented many bokken techniques and how they translated into empty-handed movements. The elegance and grace with which sensei demonstrated the techniques was inspiring to me. In my opinion Stickles sensei is an excellent instructor, he kept the tone of the seminar both relaxed and very

productive. I'm thankful that I was able to participate in this seminar and it was great fun to once again see and practice with friends from my home dojo.

UC APPLICATION ESSAY: "My Challenge"

By Kristine San Luis, 4th Kyu

It is important for the University to understand the context of each applicant's accomplishments, both academic and nonacademic. Describe any unusual circumstances or challenges that you have faced and the ways you have responded.

I used to regret having to go to Aikido class. First of all, I was a female, Filipino at that, entering a traditional Japanese, male-dominated institution. I felt so small and incompetent when compared to them. I did not see why I had to attend class, it was just my dad encouraging me to go. He said it would be a good experience for me, but I thought otherwise. I felt so low and felt that no one there respected me. The Sensei (chief instructor), I had a feeling, did not like me. Whenever he instructed class, I felt his strict eyes watching, just waiting for me to do something wrong.

The Sensei's presence made me dread Aikido. I would go to class, feeling sick to my stomach and had such a negative outlook whenever I entered class. I saw no hope for improvement in my situation and just wanted to give up.

My dad told me that the Sensei was just testing my sincerity and desire to learn and in order to see if I had the right attitude to pursue Aikido. At times, I felt that it was not worth it at all. But, despite all of this, I decided to attend Aikido as often as possible. At first I thought it was a pain to attend class so often, but as time passed by, I grew accustomed to it. Secondly, I went to class because I figured that I had nothing better to do. But later on, Aikido class began to take on a whole new meaning for me. Aikido challenged my mental and physical capabilities, and with each succeeding class, Con't.

My Challenge continued:

I felt more involved. Soon I no longer needed the extra nudge from my father to go to Aikido class, I instead insisted on going.

The more I attended Aikido class, the more I learned about myself, the Sensei, as well as the other students and instructors. I realized that I was paranoid in thinking that the Sensei was focusing on me, just waiting for me to make a mistake. I learned that he was merely studying my potential, helping me to improve my technique. When I think about it, it gives me much reassurance and confidence knowing that the Sensei was paying so much attention to me.

I learned, in terms of the other students and instructors, that we all form a team, and together, create a feeling of harmony. We work with each other, helping one another to improve our techniques. By doing Aikido, we help to expand our mental facilities, but at the same time, teach one another a lesson in teamwork and harmony.

Aikido class has been a great learning experience for me. It has given me something to look forward to and has put new meaning in my life. I have met many interesting people, and their kindness towards me helped me get through each rigorous class. The instructors noticed my improvement and even the Sensei recognized all the effort I was putting into Aikido class. At times, I was even given the honor of demonstrating in front of the class with the Sensei.

I know now that I am still not the best student in my Aikido class and that I have a long way to go. But what gives me pleasure is the feeling of satisfaction after I have proved myself to the Sensei as well as to the other instructors and students. I do not go to Aikido class just for the sake of getting a black belt. Instead, I do because Aikido is something I enjoy. I worked hard to get where I am today, and as a result, I appreciate Aikido even more.

The struggles that I have gone through due to Aikido have shaped who I am today. Due to such hardship

I have grown and matured. I no longer look at things in the same way and have a different perspective of myself. I have developed discipline as well as humility and have grown in a way I never thought possible. I have made so much progress, overcome so many obstacles, and have finally faced my fears concerning Aikido. When I look back, it is hard to believe that there was a time when I actually dreaded going to Aikido. What is ironic about all this is, that the thing I dreaded most is what I now most enjoy.

Bow Down

By Kenneth Furuya, 2nd Dan

A friend of mine who has been training in *Minyo* (Japanese folk songs) and *shamisen* (a Japanese musical instrument) in Japan for the last three years shared with me how difficult the training was because of her own perceptions and established beliefs. She told me that initially training under her sensei was very frustrating. Constantly questioning the traditional beliefs and teachings of her sensei, my friend would always get angry because she thought that she was right. It was not until she got rid of her preconceived ideas and judgements, did she start to understand her teacher.

Much like my friend, I too have a rebellious spirit. My own inclination to resisting authority has caused those around me much heartache and grief. My outbursts and antics have gotten me kicked off the mat and expelled from the Dojo on several occasions. Each time, I would be very frustrated asking myself, "What did I do wrong?" Always trying to blame everyone else, I did not think or like to blame myself. Afraid that I pushed my teacher to the point where he would not take me back, I would always call the black belts and ask, "Is it o.k. with Sensei to come back to the dojo?" Each time I would feel very bad for disappointing my teacher realizing how selfish I had acted.

Many times I actually thought I was right; but, after a detailed explanation of my behavior and how it affected my teacher or those around me, I Con't.

Bow Down continued:

felt very ashamed for my selfish behavior. Many times we think we are right; but, when we take the time to think about others, it no longer feels right, just selfish.

Many students like myself butt heads with their teacher or with the traditional Japanese teaching system. We always think about ourselves. However, as students of Aikido we need to forget about ourselves as much as possible and just have faith in the old teachings. Many people do not like to humble themselves towards others. It is our own insecurities that gives us the inclination not to bow down our own will.

My teacher told me something recently that has been stuck in my thoughts ever since. He said that it is not important whether you are right or wrong, you should apologize for the inconvenience you have caused everyone. Even if a student has done something wrong, if a student can sincerely apologize for inconveniencing everyone, then the teacher will always accept that student. I have been taught that martial arts is not forgiving. But in this case, the tradition of always giving the student the benefit of the doubt is most forgiving. All you have to do is bow down.

The Art of Aikido from the Past

Dr. James A. Doi, 4th Dan

There are many ways to describe the difference between art and science. One of the differences is the way that they are passed from individual to individual, generation to generation.

In science, important concepts and theories are associated with the people who first described them. In chemistry, many types of chemical reactions are named for people who first "discovered" them. Non scientists won't believe this but, scientific concepts, theories and discoveries have the style and personal imprint of the scientist who first wrote

about it. There is a book entitled, "The Double Helix," by James Watson who was one of the people awarded the Nobel Prize for determining the structure of DNA. He tells a personal story of the discovery. This historical account is fascinating, but totally irrelevant in the understanding of DNA molecular genetics. The history is interesting, but is quite unnecessary in order to fully understand and use the concepts of molecular genetics.

Works of art cannot be understood in the same way that works of science are. A work of art cannot be separated from the artist or their place in history. Some time ago, I was in the art museum in Berkeley and saw a minor Van Gogh painting of a vase of flowers. Previously, I had seen illustrations of Van Goghs and of course, I saw the Kirk Douglas movie. The painting was amazing. The physical presence of the work was actually frightening. The presence of the artist was overwhelming. The essence of the work could not be separated from its physical form, no photographic reproduction could convey the meaning of the painting. The situation is even worse for a performing art. Films or recordings can't truly duplicate the moment of performance. Only students who have mastered the art that was taught can pass it on to another person.

Aikido can best be defined as a martial art, not a military science. The full meaning of Aikido cannot be transmitted by pictures, diagrams or videos, it must be individually experienced and cultivated. This knowledge must be personally passed from teacher to student. This is why lineage and a sense of history is so important.

Most Americans know very little about their ancestors. The average American would have a very hard time giving any information on anyone beyond their grandparents or great grandparents. This was, in some ways, intentional. Our grandparents or great grandparents came to the United States probably in order to seek opportunities which were closed to them in the "old" country. This "reinvention" of oneself tends to cause one to forget the past. This is one of the things which characterizes an American.

This freedom of the past is liberating and energizes the spirit, but it also discards the great lessons of the past.

There are Aikido dojos which don't have a picture of O'Sensei. This is symbolic of some sort of "re-invention" of Aikido. Trying to separate the art form from the artist is impossible, trying to separate Aikido from the lineage of O'Sensei is impossible. It is like a xerox copy of the Van Gogh I saw; it becomes a very poor reproduction of the original.

'We are fortunate to be learning and experiencing "true" Aikido. It is not easy to understand nor does it fit our ideas of what it should be. It is genuine and far more beautiful and profound than could be imagined. This learning can only exist because of an unknown link through time to O'Sensei.

Comments on Eleven Years of Iaido

Gary Myers, Iaido 4th Dan

November 24 & 25th mark two very important dates in my life. The first date is my wedding anniversary; the second date is when I began studying Iaido at the Aikido Center of Los Angeles. This past year marks twelve years of married bliss and eleven years of Iaido practice. I only remark on the years because there are few things in this world that I have been that committed and devoted to.

Generally, you hear people say that commitment, trust and communication are essential ingredients for a successful marriage. I think those factors also apply to practicing Iaido or Aikido. First, a commitment must be made to practice diligently. You must be willing to commit your time and your full energies in trying to make your practice better. These are precious and limited commodities for all of us, so we should make the most time we can for practice and make the most of our time practicing. The student/teacher relationship is also much like a marriage which cannot exist without trust. You have to have trust in your teacher that he or she is in-

structing and advising you properly. Likewise the teacher is placing trust in you that this instruction is received properly and not abused. This is especially true as you continue to advance in your training. The third factor is communication. Now this factor may seem strange to the casual observer of Iaido, but there is always communication (or should be) in the mind of the person practicing Iaido. One should always be thinking and saying to themselves "I do this now, the sword is to be in this position, now, I slow my movement down, now." There is quite a bit of communication going on in Iaido.

Even though it's been eleven years I can still remember my first visit to the Dojo. However before studying Iaido, my initial impression of Japanese swordsmanship, like most people, came from the samurai chambera movies that were playing at the theaters at the time. That was in the age I call b.v., before videos of such movies were prevalent. After sitting through *Sanjuro*, *Sword of Doom* and the *Zatoichi* and *Lone Wolf and Cub* series many times, it is little wonder that most people approach practicing Iaido with that unrealistic and fantasy world point of view. My first realistic view of Iaido came from reading and rereading Warner and Draeger's book, Japanese Swordsmanship. I had wanted to study Iaido almost a full two years before actually starting but put it off for various reasons. Call it luck or destiny but the Aikido Center of Los Angeles was the first number I called. I made an appointment to meet Sensei so he could interview me. I slipped out of work and met him at 2:00pm. As soon as I walked into the Dojo, I knew I was in the right place.

The following January, my wife Sami and I won the JACCC's Grand Prize drawing of a trip to Japan. It was quite a thrill to win since we had never been to Japan before. We planned the trip for October of that year. Sensei was very supportive and said that if I practiced hard enough that I might be able to take the shodan test in Japan while I was there and he would make the arrangements for me. In those days besides the three scheduled classes, there was an extra voluntary class on Monday evenings which

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Sensei would monitor and provide helpful hints. I don't think I missed any classes between then and when we finally went to Japan. To make a long story short we had a wonderful three weeks in Japan capped off by my taking and passing my shodan test administered by Mitsuzuka Sensei, who is one of Nakayama Hakudo Sensei's students and featured in the above mentioned book. But enough of my nostalgia.

It's difficult to write about how Iaido has positively changed my life since it is so much a part of it. From a career standpoint it is most likely that I would not be in the Japanese antique business if I did not study Iaido. Studying Iaido has given me an appreciation of other aspects of Japanese art, culture and tradition that otherwise I would have not had exposure to. Studying Iaido is a way to preserve Japanese cultural heritage which also transfers to appreciating and preserving other objects of Japanese culture. I feel that in a very small way, both in studying Iaido and being in the antique business, I am making a contribution in preserving that cultural heritage.

After eleven years of studying Muso Shinden Ryu, I am barely scratching the surface. That's why I find it strange that many people get bored with Iaido so quickly. I believe many cannot get beyond the rather plain physical aspect of the art. It looks so easy to them that when they finally try it and find that it isn't easy, the frustration sets in and they give up. It seemed to me that if you weren't frustrated, you weren't trying hard enough. I had someone come into the store the other day who studies Aikido and asked me about Iaido. Their statement about Iaido was, "Oh, that's where all you do is pull out the sword out of your belt, right?" "That's right." was my response. Most people do not realize the amount of mental focus, and thinking that has to take place just to get the movement correct. I know I didn't when I started. Iaido has certainly helped my mental focus. Without a doubt I am more focused than I was before. I can concentrate on something now without my mind bouncing around as it did before studying Iaido. I remember Sensei giving a

figurative translation of Iaido, as being in harmony, or in tune with the present. He also said that your Iaido reflects your frame of mind.

There have been physical changes that result from studying Iaido. I have also seen some physical changes in the way I walk and hold my posture. My shoulders are certainly lower than there were before studying Iaido (although I still have a tendency to raise them when tense). These are all positive changes as a result of Iaido. Since everything does have a negative side, I experience some arthritic pain in my toes these days. Your body just has ways of informing you that you are not as young as you used to be.

Sensei has given me the opportunity to assist in Iaido instruction which I find to be both aggravating and very gratifying. It's rewarding to see that light bulb click on when someone suddenly understands a technique. It's a very good feeling. It is equally frustrating when the bulb doesn't light. I do think teaching has improved my own Iaido because the correct techniques are being reinforced in my own mind just by watching others. There is still a long way to go in improving my own Iaido and my ability to instruct others. I am enjoying the journey even if I don't know the what or where the final destination is.

Hidden Virtue

By Kensho Furuya, 6th Dan

This New Year's essay is dedicated to Julie, one of our new students, who attends our morning class. Julie had only been with the Dojo a very short time and one day after morning class, she seemed to be just standing in the Dojo garden. When I asked if there was something wrong, she just replied that our cleaning towels were dirty so she had taken them home and washed them. She was in the process of hanging them up on the trellis again. No one asked her to do this but she did it out of kindness and thought nothing more of it. Strange to say, this embodies the highest ideal of the warrior - hidden virtue - to do something without thought of reward

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or compensation or a personal agenda. Of course, not many people will volunteer to do this "dirty job" because the towels get filthy and stinky and who wants them in their clean washing machine at home? This essay is to thank Julie for such a great kindness and showing exemplary Aikido Spirit.

Everyone should try to do at least "one good deed a day." I learned this a long time ago and have practiced it everyday. Perhaps, in my own case, "one good deed a day" is not enough but this is something I truly believe in. One good deed can become many, many good deeds.

My ancestors have been faithful Buddhists for many hundreds of years. As a matter of fact, one of our family treasures is a sacred scroll received in the 1700's from the head of a famous temple in recognition of many contributions to the religion. My grandfather immigrated to this country in 1919 and, of course, he had no idea what to expect and he couldn't speak English at all. A Presbyterian minister gave him his first meal and found him a job in a soda-water factory. There is an old photo honoring him on Page 182 in KODO. To repay this small kindness, my grandfather vowed to raise all his children as Christians. This is why, when I was very young I found myself in the local, neighborhood Christian church, not the Buddhist temple. I remember my grandpa even telling me that one day a Buddhist priest of his temple came to the house and told him and my grandma that, if they didn't convert back to Buddhism, they would burn in hell forever. But even this did not deter my grandfather so we stilled stayed with the same Christian church.

I don't remember very much in those days. I only remember the Biblical verse, John 3:16, and my days in the church Stamp Club. The minister, the late Dr. Donald Toriumi, was the head of the club. I always remember him as a great minister and friend.

At one Stamp Club meeting, I well remember Dr. Toriumi asking if anyone had a particular stamp he had been looking for. He had been searching for it for a long time but just couldn't find it and needed it

to complete a set in his album. I remember that no one even looked up at him to acknowledge his request but just continued with their own business. I looked in my album and found that I had the stamp he was looking for. It wasn't a very important stamp, it wasn't even very pretty. All I remember was that it had a funny bird on it and I think it was orange. I pulled it out and went to the head of the table and gave it to him and didn't think much of it at all as I returned to my seat and continued with my own collecting. About fifteen minutes later, Rev. Toriumi came up to me and gave about one hundred of the most beautiful, multi-colored stamps I had ever seen. At the time, I couldn't even understand why he was doing it because all he said was "thank you for finding that stamp for me." All good deeds are in some way rewarded but most important is to do it without thought of personal gain. I am sure that in 1919, when that minister gave a 19 year-old Japanese immigrant a free meal, he could not imagine how much Good he put into motion over the many decades to follow. I never thought of such a great kindness from one tiny stamp. Julie made me think of these things which happened almost forty years ago but all I can give her is this little essay and my heartfelt thanks.

Many, many other students in the Dojo practice "hidden virtue" and that's what makes our Dojo so special. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

It's All A Gift!

Be a friend, give a friend a copy of **KODO Ancient Ways**. It makes a nice gift as a token of friendship or for a birthday or for any occasion. They will enjoy it and never forget it! A good way to introduce someone to the Dojo is with a copy of KODO.

NOTICE: All uniforms orders are handled by Kenny Furuya. Please order early and all uniform orders must be prepaid. Our supplier is almost always in back-order so orders often take a few weeks to fill. Please order early.

In Appreciation

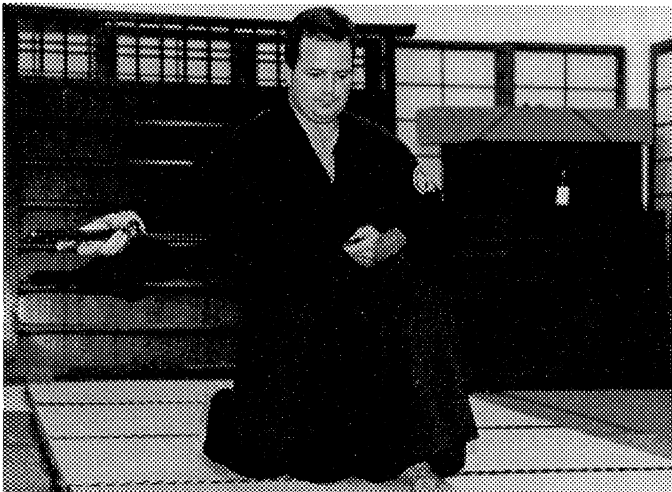
Many thanks to Patrick Auge Sensei of the Yoseikan Budo Dojo in Rolling Hills Estates for his generous donation of \$100.00 to renew his subscription to our Newsletter. We really appreciate his friendship and support.

Dear Furuya Sensei:

Thank you for continually sending your Newsletter to us. We opened this dojo two years ago and we have been blessed with great students. Your thoughts have been bringing support to my teachings. Please accept this modest contribution as well as an order for KODO. Sincerely, Patrick Auge.

Much appreciation goes to Reverend Shin'etsu Fukushi of Kyuhozan Kotokuji Temple in Gyoda City, Saitama Pref., Japan, for his donation of \$100.00 to the Dojo on Dec. 5.

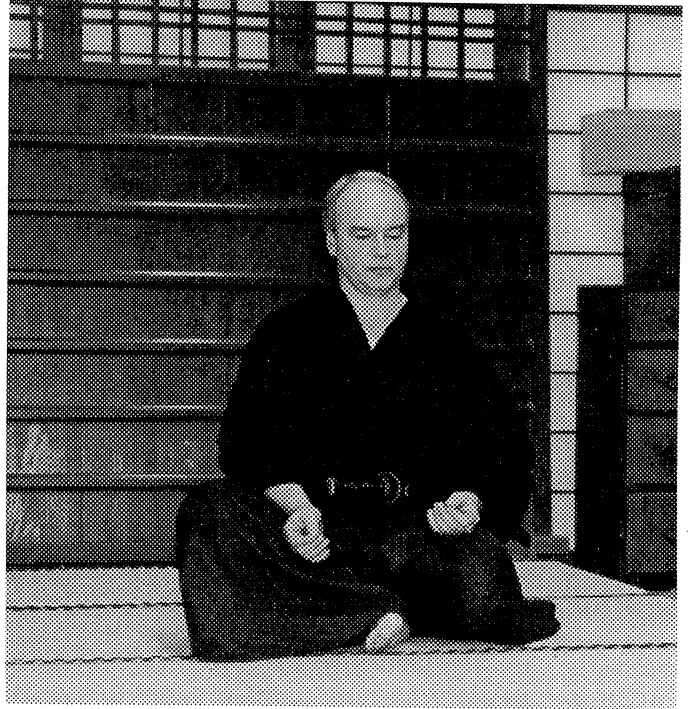
We also appreciate the donation of \$40.00 from Rev. Dr. Kathy Nolan of the Zen Mountain Center in Mt. Tremper, New York, who visited and practiced with us on Dec. 7-8. She is also a student of Harvey Konigsberg Sensei of the Woodstock Dojo in New York. Also to Mr. Guy Urata of Oxnard for his gift of \$40.00 to the Dojo on Dec. 7. at our Christmas Party. Also to Norman Lew for his donation of lights and electrical equipment for the 2nd floor and for the outside entrance. And to Larry Armstrong for his wonderful photo work and donation of photos to the Dojo Newsletter.



Curtis Westfall demonstrating *Gyakuto* from the Muso Shinden Ryu laido.

laido Demonstration continued.

At Yoshino Japanese Antiques Booksigning.
December 7, 1996.



In fine form, Gary Myers, laido 4th Dan, demonstrating Hasegawa Eishin Ryu laido. Gary celebrated his 11th year at the Dojo this December.



Ken Watanabe, 3rd Dan, demonstrating his usual great form and power.

Kenny furuya, 2nd Dan, demonstrating Muso Shin-den Ryu laido - *Seichuto*, showing good form and concentration.

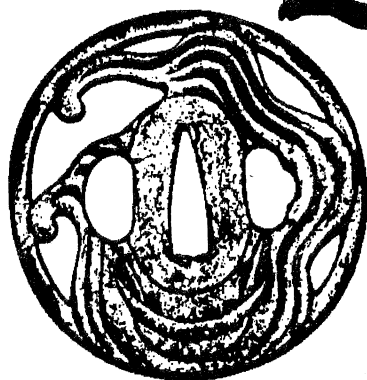


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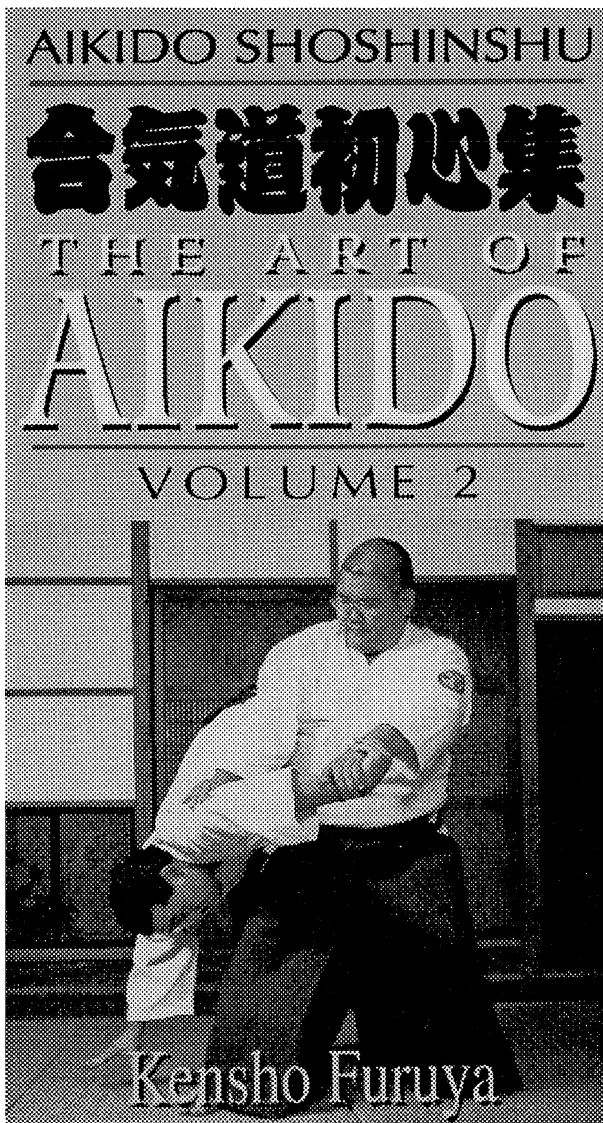
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"While obviously valuing technical precision, Furuya Sensei offers deeper lessons about the art on such topics as the quietness with which we should approach practice, the inspirational function of calligraphy, the importance of consistent training, and the incorporation of Aikido into one's lifestyle. There are sections on such frequently ignored topics as stretching, folding the hakama, promoting safety, overcoming fear in practice, breathing, and bowing. In my opinion the series presents a well balanced overview of Aikido. . . This is a thoughtful and professional series of impressive scope. A worthwhile investment." **Susan Perry, Editor-in-Chief Aikido Today #44, Vol. 9, No. 6.**

"First rate!" **Inside Kung Fu Magazine.**

"The best I have ever seen!" **Aikido student, New York, New York**

"Furuya's latest project has been the production of a comprehensive nine-volume video series called "The Art of Aikido." The tapes cover a wide range of subjects from warm-ups, fundamental movements, basic and advanced techniques, atemi, aiki-ken and jo, defenses against kicks and knives, as well as lectures on history, etiquette and the principles of Aikido. . . It is hard to find fault with this new video series since it has been put together in a professional way in every respect even down to the beautiful packaging with individual full-cover photos. Anyone interested in an exhaustive introduction to the subject of aikido or those studying the Aikikai style of the art will derive great benefit from these tapes." **Stan Pranin, Editor-in-Chief, Aiki Journal, April 1995.**

His lectures interspersed among the dynamic spherical motions of the art, help to clarify the spiritual and religious dimensions of this art. . . . (The videos) show glimpses of the spiritual core of martial arts for he himself combines both aspects. . . . **Dr. Taitetsu Unno, Smith College, Eastern Religions. The translator of "The Spirit of Aikido" & Aikido teacher.**



Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE

BEGINNING & OPEN CLASSES

Monday thru Friday Evenings
6:30pm-7:30pm

Monday & Thursday Evenings
7:50pm-8:50pm

Tuesday & Thursday Mornings
7:00am-8:00am

Saturday Mornings
10:15am-11:15am

Sunday Mornings
10:15am-11:15am

ADVANCED & INSTRUCTORS' CLASSES

Wednesdays
8:00pm-9:00pm

Saturday Mornings
11:30am-12:30pm

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

Saturday Afternoons
12:45pm-1:45pm

Sunday Mornings
9:00am-10:00am

Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE SWORDSMAN- SHIP

Tuesday Evenings
7:30pm-8:30pm

Saturday Mornings
9:00am-10:00am

Sunday Mornings
8:00am-9:00am

Every third Saturday of the Month
6:30am-8:30am



SPECIAL MONTHLY SEMINARS

BLACK BELT & INSTRUCTORS' INTENSIVE SEMINAR

Every Last Saturday of the month
6:30am-8:30am

Instructor's Meeting follows.

IAIDO INTENSIVE SEMINAR

Every 2nd Saturday of the month.
6:30am-8:30am

General meeting follows.

BUDO & SWORD STUDY CLASS

Every 1st Monday of the month.
7:30pm-8:30pm