

AIKIDO CENTER OF LOS ANGELES

NEWSLETTER

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please pick up the March, 1990 issue of Omni magazine. Sensei and the dojo are featured in an article entitled, "Road Warriors," by Robert Burger of New York. This is a nice souvenir.

In the current issue of Martial Arts Training (May 1990), Sensei's article also appears in his column, "Ancient Ways." Copies of both articles are attached to this Newsletter.

April 8, 1990, we will be demonstrating for the Hanamatsuri Festival in the plaza of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, 244 South San Pedro Street, in Little Tokyo.

On April 13, 1990, Friday evening, the second class will be cancelled. From 7:30pm, combined with the Nanka Token Kai or Southern California Japanese Sword Society, we will be showing two interesting videos. One video is on Japanese kabuto or ancient helmets worn with the armour. The second video is on swordsmanship. Refreshments will be served and you will be able to meet some of the local Japanese sword collectors.

April 25, 1990 is Sensei's 42nd birthday.

SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS

to

Yamada Sensei, New York Aikikai

We would like to offer our special congratulations to Yamada Sensei on his recent promotion to 8th dan by the Aikido World Headquarters in Japan.

STRIVE FOR JOY RATHER THAN PLEASURE

*How easily the wind overturns a frail tree.
Seek happiness in the senses,
Indulge in food and sleep,
And you too will be uprooted.*

Are you enjoying life? It is fine that a man can spend his time pleasantly every day. It is his privilege in his youthful days to have intimate friends, time to spend properly on entertainment and also money to do anything he likes. It is desirable that he should utilize this privilege to the full, but somehow I feel it a waste that he ends a day's activities by doing nothing but amusing things. Not only by having pleasures in life, satisfying himself with doing anything he wants to, but also by having such an experience as enables him to be very pleased with his life, if possible, I think he will have the feeling that it was good for him to have lived a full life.

The pleasure of living and the joy of life mentioned above may at first brush seem the same but they are in fact entirely different in content. Let us suppose, for example that there are two mountain climbers who both aim to reach the summit. One of them wishes to reach the summit with the least possible effort and thus goes by car to a point near the summit whence he is able to reach the summit without difficulty. The other climber takes the more difficult course and goes on foot and just manages to reach the summit. The first climber easily attained his goal but his pleasure in so doing is quickly forgotten and a feeling of emptiness remains. The second climber, however, reached his goal as a result of his efforts and his joy is thus all the greater and the experience will remain in his memory longer.

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Continued.

In this manner, pleasure and joy cannot outwardly be discerned by others but the individual concerned can clearly recognise the difference. It is fine that we sometimes take pleasure in living but should we not strive to live a life in which we can also appreciate joy?

Having fun or sensual pleasure is momentary and often followed by a feeling of emptiness. Moreover, we shall never have the feeling of satisfaction of having had enough, but the pursuit of pleasure will escalate until it spoils our mind and body.

In a world difficult to live in, it is probably natural that anyone would wish to receive as much as possible and giving as little as possible. However, if one only receives all the time, can one really appreciate the joy of living?

A life of merely receiving certainly seems pleasant, but it is a passive way of living and the positive joy of living will never be experienced. Therefore, we have to, first of all, differentiate the joy of living from the pleasure of living, and strive for joy rather than pleasure.

By **Kodo Matsunami**

MESSAGE FROM SENSEI

As our dojo grows and more members join us for training, it is very important for everyone to give more of themselves towards the smooth operation of the dojo. This is especially important in the case of our senior members. It is too easy to simply say or think, "Oh, the other person will take care of it; I don't have to do anything."

As you continue in your training, you must never forget the "first" lesson in Aikido. That is "reigi-saho" or the proper etiquette. It is through your proper manners that you can maintain harmony in the dojo and among a number of people. When you forget your

you can easily cause a great deal of misunderstanding or bad feelings.

One evening someone's wife called the dojo and asked for her husband. I answered the phone, looked down at the mat and didn't see him so I said that he wasn't here. A few minutes later, she called again asking the same question. I was a little irritated that she didn't understand or believe me the first time she called making it necessary for her to call a second time to bother me again. It must have been an emergency so she must have been upset because she couldn't reach her husband and she must have also wondered why he said he would be at the dojo and he wasn't. This caused bad feelings, misunderstandings and sense of distrust for all involved.

When this person enters the dojo, he never greets the teacher, he just comes and goes without saying hello or good-bye. This does not happen all the time but it happens often enough so sometimes I don't even know if he is here or not. Some people just shout hello to me from the first floor while I am on the third floor.

Many of you may think it is a simple matter to just say "hello" or "good-bye." But, even in this, many of you fail. Just the other day, I saw a film about the daily routine of the famous Kabuki actor, Nakamura Kankuro, and his two sons. Everyday when he goes to the theater, he must visit each of the other actor's rooms including the janitor's room to bow and make his mornings greetings and saying "O-negae-shimasu." To make this round each morning takes over one hour. For us, in this modern world, it seems like a great deal of trouble just to say "hello." This is probably why we don't do it anymore. This actor has also taught his two sons to do the same thing and they are so young that they can barely climb up the stairs to visit each room. Because each actor makes this simple greeting to each other everyday, they create a strong bond of friendship and familiarity. Each member begins to know each other and can read the feelings of the other person. Nowadays, people come and go and don't say anything. We don't know if they are happy, in a bad mood, or in trouble or what. That is why we don't know how to deal with each other each day. This is the source of a great deal of trouble, misunderstandings and hard feelings.

At the beginning of March, there was a sword show in Houston, Texas, and many dealers come from Japan. All of these dealers are competitors and some don't even get along with each other. But, they always give the proper greeting to each other and because of this, they are able to work together at times. Because of this form of etiquette, they never cross each other because it means a loss of face. This is what makes them so strong as a group. They can

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always work together. On the other hand, local dealers in this country compete with each other and often try to get the best of the other person. They can't work together easily, they are much weaker as a group because they work for themselves only and strive for the other's disadvantage. I am sure someone will be upset if I say this, but it is quite true. This may be what is happening in other areas of business and may be one reason why the Japanese have come so far economically.

Every morning, when I go to the temple, I clean my teacher's room, even arranging fresh flowers, and prepare the coffee. Everyone drinks coffee in the morning but I always make sure there is enough for my teacher when he comes. If not, I make a fresh pot. When he arrives, I bring him his coffee right away and give him my greetings for the day. I consider this my most important job. It is such a simple task but I found that I have come to know him better through this. I can tell if he is tired, or too busy, or in a very good mood, or preoccupied, or whatever. Then, I can arrange my manner accordingly. If he is busy, I am not going to bother him with tiny problems. If he is tired, I can try to make him more comfortable by being quiet and screening the telephone calls more, etc. This creates a kind of harmony, I believe, because we learn how to think of the other person. What more important Aikido training do we have, than this?

Not knowing or not being perceptive enough to know the feelings of the other person, there is no way to know how to deal with them. This is a daily, minute to minute, intuition which must be cultivated. This is especially so in the dojo as well as in the home and in society. We are always communicating, but, more often than not, it is one-sided communication coming from a one-sided attitude. In the instance of serving coffee, some one told me once: "Oh, I made coffee for you but everyone drank it up." Although I appreciated that person's kind intention, I also wondered why he didn't just simply make more coffee. It's not that much trouble. With your teacher or people you love or work with, it's not simply the excuse that everyone drank it up. Actually, it is simply common sense rooted in kindness and humanity for the people around you.

One student replied to me one day, "Oh, I'm sorry. It was a misunderstanding, a lack of communication. This is after explaining to him many times. I said, "It's not a misunderstanding or lack of communication, you weren't listening carefully." Perhaps, in some cases, we do misunderstand or not hear the information clearly. And, we often make mistakes. But, despite the mistakes we make and the unfortunate things that happen to us, we should never lose our mental awareness and concentration.

Over twenty years ago, when I was training at Hombu dojo, I practiced with one elderly gentleman who attended the 6:30am class every morning. I found out that actually, he takes a train from quite far away in another town and a one way trip is more the 45 minutes. Every morning, he wakes up at 3:00am, bathes, puts on his suit, gets his uniform and takes a bus to the train station, gets on the train, and comes to Hombu dojo to attend the morning class. He does this every day. He was an elderly man, at that time, in his mid-seventies. Maybe he's not around any more. At that time, I was so surprised, I asked, "Why don't you come to a later class! What a lot of trouble for you!" He was retired so he could attend any class during the day he wanted to or he could find a dojo close to his home where he could leisurely walk to.

He laughed at me and said, "I attend this class because it was O-Sensei's class when he was alive. Practice is important, but it is also important to deliver my morning greetings to my teacher, O-Sensei. When I see his face, my life is complete and somehow I feel assured no matter what happens. Now, I greet Second Doshu (Kisshomaru Ueshiba Sensei) every morning." At that time, I didn't quite understand what he met, but I never forgot what he said, and have always kept it in the back of my mind. Over twenty years have past and finally, I understand the greatness and depth of his words. A simple "hello" or greetings to your teacher is only the beginning. This small act will eventually permeate your whole life. It is the essence of our Aikido training. It is our training in humanity and becoming sincere, caring, human beings. Caring for others is fundamental message of O-Sensei's Aikido.

But, when I speak of terms like "kindness," "humanity," "love," etc., many instantly mistake this for self-indulgence or self-satisfaction. Some people say "hello" because it is the proper thing to do. Some people say "hello" because they want something back in return. There is a big difference in doing something for yourself and doing something for others. Our society, culture, and history have turned this into a huge, complicated, involved game we play with each other all the time. Always working for our own advantage in everything we do, we always think we are getting ahead, but, in actuality, we are just creating more conflict, more anger, more greed which just tears away at our bodies and minds and makes our lives shallow.

Each day, try to do something which is completely free of your own ego, which is completely free of self-indulgence or self-satisfaction. To offer someone a cup of coffee or tea, simply offer the tea to bring happiness to the other person. To expect something in return makes it an act of greed which can never bring joy to anyone.

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Nowadays, we have many new students joining our dojo. It could be because of the movies, it could be because of the Omni magazine feature article or whatever. For whatever reason, all the older students should try to help the newer students during practice and make them feel welcome and at home. This will only last as long as the movie plays in the theaters, I suppose. On one hand, I don't think a movie is the proper motivation for studying Aikido. Aikido in the movies and Aikido in real life are two different things. It's common sense but we often forget this point. I am quite sure everyone knows that "love" in the movies and "love" in real life are two different things. (Or have you forgotten this too?) I am sure that if someone expects to find "movie" Aikido in our dojo they may be disappointed; but, on the other hand, they may find something more valuable to lives. Try to help the new students to understand what Aikido is.

Thank you.

Kensho Furuya

Subscribe to the United States Aikido Federation Newsletter. \$20.00/year for six bi-monthly issues.

Uniforms are \$40.00 for adult sizes.
\$30.00 for children's sizes.

The dojo will have black vinyl uniforms bags for sale. There are embroidered with the dojo name in purple and your own personal name in gold on the side. Each is custom ordered. We are requesting a \$30.00 donation. Please see Douglas for your orders.

On April 1, 1990, Sunday, the Zenshuji Women's Group (Fujinkai) will have a chow-mein lunch for sale for \$4.00 donation per plate from 11:00am. It's delicious. Let's all go together to the temple of a chow-mein lunch.

TRAINING SCHEDULE**Beginner's and Open Classes**

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

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

Saturday
10:15am to 11:30am

Sunday
10:30am to 11:30am

Tuesday & Thursday Afternoons
1:00pm to 2:00pm
(Additional fee.)

Advanced Classes

Tuesday & Thursday
7:30pm to 8:30pm

Saturdays
11:30am to 12:30pm

Children's Classes

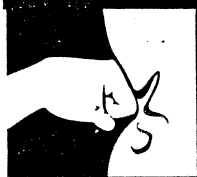
Sundays
8:00am to 9:00am

MUSO SHINDEN RYU LAIDO
WEST COAST BRANCH - ZEN NIPPON
BATTODO FEDERATION, TOKYO

Wednesday
8:45pm to 9:45pm

Saturday
9:00am to 10:00am

Sunday
9:15am to 10:15am



ANCIENT WAYS

In a Cup of Tea: Training Realistically and the Reality of Training

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

There is a famous story about a noted professor of religion who went to interview a well-known Zen monk. When they sat down at their very first meeting, the Zen monk began to pour the professor a cup of tea. However, he kept pouring until the teacup was overflowing and the tea was spilling onto the floor.

"What are you doing?" cried the professor, surprised at this strange behavior.

"Pouring tea," replied the monk calmly, "Your mind is like this teacup. It is so filled with your own ideas that nothing else will go in. Empty your mind so we can begin." The late Bruce Lee retold this famous episode in his last movie, *Enter the Dragon*, in the scene when he was teaching a young student to kick.

Looking into a teacup, we can see the reflection of the moon. But the moon in the teacup is not the moon itself. Of course, this is a simple concept to understand. Yet in our daily lives we often mix up what is real and what is just a reflection of reality.

Miyamoto Musashi, the great 17th century swordsman of feudal Japan, often told the story of the monkey in the tree, which reached for the beautiful reflection of the moon in the water of the stream, thinking it to be the moon itself. Human beings are as easily confused.

These days, many teachers speak of "realistic training" or "training for real." Of course our training must be well-tested and contain effective technique and skill. However, I think that when most people talk about real training, they mean the most logical, systematic, and direct form of practice. Real training, they believe, is what works and is realistic.

Many consider traditional training to be the opposite of realistic training. But,

the question remains "What is real?"

We have been asking this question ever since primitive man looked up into the heavens and saw the stars and moon. We still don't know the answer. Religion and philosophy can only give us a belief or sincere argument. Science can only measure what we see, and as you know, science is changing every day.

If only the real world were as logical, direct and systematic as our real techniques. Quite the contrary, our world is illogical. More often than not, it doesn't make any sense at all.

In martial arts, we may confuse ourselves by thinking that the real way is to follow the method which is most direct and effective. But, for example, what is the most direct and effective way to become rich? Who knows? Not me. In real life, questions are not answered so directly. Reality is not so logical as we wish it to be.

The moon in the teacup is not reality. It is just our personal idea for the moment, a concept of our reality. In Zen, we advocate throwing away the teacup, and looking up at the moon itself. But, even then, the whole image of the moon fits into our eye, so what we see is completely different from, let us say, reaching out and touching it. Standing on the moon or looking at it from thousands of miles away are two vastly different forms of the same reality. Few ever see both views in their lifetime.

Training realistically may only be another form of mixing up what we perceive through our senses and what we believe to be right. It is a process that takes place in our minds and in our imaginations. It is born out of the concept, "Oh, I think I can do it better."

We begin training by listening to our teacher's every word. We soon develop

a little skill and try improve ourselves and find more efficient methods of training to further our skill within ourselves. Gradually, we bring our own experiences and hardships in learning each movement and technique into play.

martial artist's training and the daily activity of his life merge into one.

As long as he is stuck in the world of "Now I am going to do this" or "Now I am going to become famous or strong," he is stuck in the world of his own concep-

**“Many consider traditional training
to be the opposite of realistic training.
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‘What is real?’ ”**

This is the natural progression of training. But, this only takes places as a continual, day by day, product of our practice. It is not a product of our minds or imagination. The wise person knows the difference between what simply comes out of his head (which is not real) and what comes out of his experience (which is real). This is the reality of training.

But more often than not, what we decide to be realistic training is simply a product of our imagination or our concept of a technique or movement which we then test against our opponent or teach to our students. This is an artificial process.

The reality of training exists within our day-to-day practice as we move precisely, develop the technique and develop our strength. It is created on the mats and in the dojo, not in our heads. The martial artist must forget about fame and fortune, developing his skill or becoming the best.

These are all concepts. Martial arts develops as the barrier between a

tualization. In Zen, there is a saying: "Take off your head, put it by your side and sit!" If you meditate with your head, you get stuck in all kinds of problems playing mind games with yourself. Instead, you must simply sit. Nothing more, nothing less.

Traditional martial arts is to forget the self and throw yourself, body and mind, into your own practice. There is nothing more and nothing less.

A young priest, who was having great difficulty in his training, went to the Zen master one day, crying: "What shall I do! What shall I do! I can't get anywhere in my training." The Zen master said, "Go have a cup of tea."

Today, I believe we conceptualize too much in an effort to create something new in our martial arts. This means, more often than not, that we have only scratched the surface of our art and have not penetrated its inner meaning deeply enough. Looking for something new can be the true spiritual quest to develop one's self or it can simply be the bored activity of the ego.

This is where we must be extremely careful-not to get confused in our training.

In training, don't think about martial arts with your head; put your head in your locker with your clothes. Put on your uniform, enter the training area, bow humbly, and throw yourself completely into your training. What more is there? Or are you training in martial arts to become rich and famous and ride a fancy car? Is that what martial arts is all about?

When Dogen Zenji, the founder of Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan, was training under his teacher in China, he was suddenly awakened in the training hall. A fellow priest meditating next to him had fallen asleep, and the teacher came by shouting, "You are not applying yourself, drop away your mind and body!" To let your body and mind drop away became the key to unlocking Dogen's training. It is much the same with martial arts. In our efforts to create real training, we have gotten stuck in mind games which we constantly, moment to moment, play with ourselves, neglecting what we truly experience on the mats.

And, what should we do when we get stuck in our heads? More mind games? No. More conceptualization? No. More new ideas? No. As the master simply said; let's go have a cup of tea. This is the ancient way. ★

About the Author: Daniel M. Furuya was recently ordained as a Zen priest under the Reverend Bishop Kenko Yamashita of the Zenshuji Temple and is now known as Reverend Kencho Furuya. He is the resident chief instructor of the Aikido Center of Los Angeles. He is fifth dan in aikido and fifth dan in iaido.

ARTICLE

ROAD WARRIOR

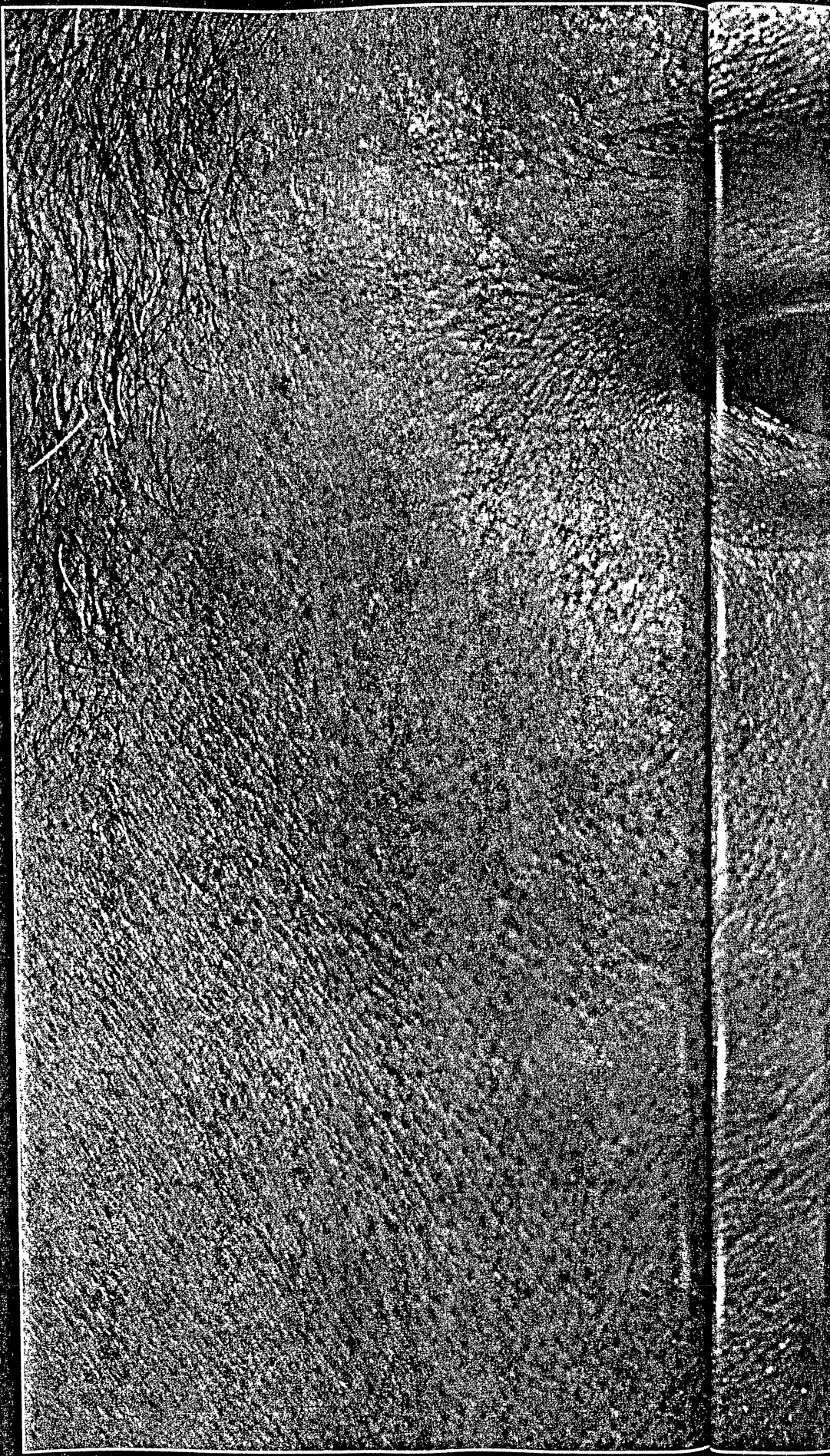
BY BOB BERGER

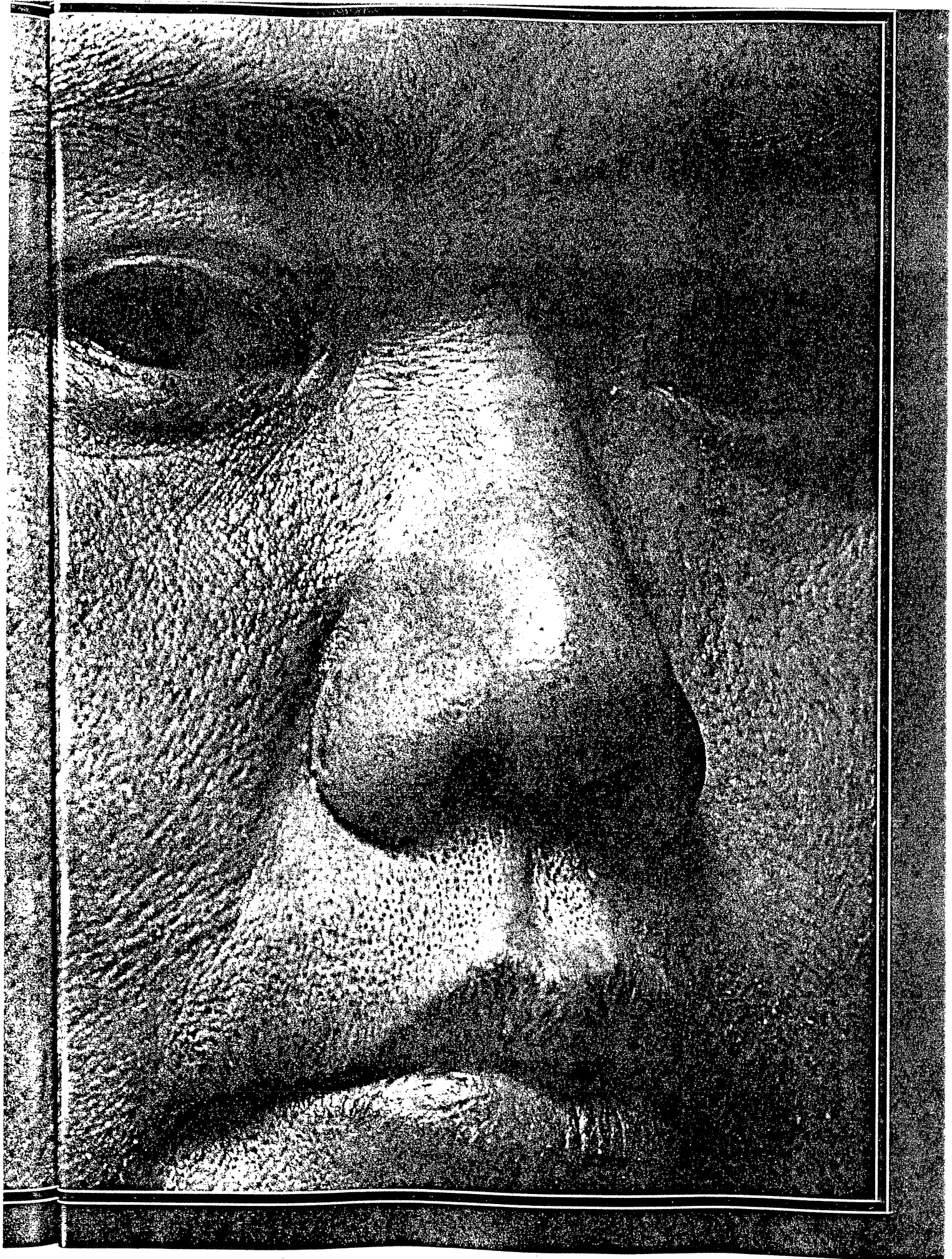
道

They say a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. My journey begins with a kick.

This is a wonderfully strange assignment: Crisscross the country, visiting different masters of centuries-old martial and mystical arts. I'm a little nervous about the prospect of 50 centuries of consciousness awakening, squashed into a one-week marathon. It could easily turn my mind—and body—to mush. I seek the invisible essence of energy called *ch'i*, *ki*, or *prana* (literally, "vital breath")—and to know how

PHOTOGRAPH BY
JOHN BENNETT





tzu, he had shown me the practical steps to reach the Tao, figuring the mystical side would take care of itself.

ZEN, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

Today is Zen day. I'm looking forward to this, getting up at the crack of dawn to do zazen (sitting Zen meditation). When I ask why so early, Reverend Ken-sho (Dan) Furuya, who is a Zen priest as well as a fifth-degree black belt in aikido, says, "They've been doing it this way for eight hundred years."

But now it's zazen time. I enter the zazen room. Ten people sit like zombies, facing the wall. I get a big fat cushion on which to elevate my posterior, cross my legs, and we're off! Forty minutes to go. Mmmm. Thirty-eight. Thirty-six. Thirty-three, my leg falls asleep. Thirty-one, I fall asleep. Thirty, I wake up from the pain in my leg. With five minutes left, my mind finally quits shouting abuse at me for torturing my limb—and, miraculously, I don't have a limb. I'm floating in silence, legless, armless. I feel great.

Afterward we sit down to the traditional breakfast they've been eating for about 800 years: rice gruel garnished with a pickled plum and two slices of a pickled radish. As I've worked up quite an appetite, I gulp down both slices of radish and am severely reprimanded. You're supposed to save a slice to use as a dishrag to clean your bowl. Waste

not, want not may be a lesson of Zen.

Furuya introduces me to the head monk, Reverend Bishop Kenko Yamashita, who's in his eighties. Furuya asks if I have a question. I ask the master how we can better face the Nineties, with its exponentially mounting future shock. Silence. "I don't know," Yamashita finally says. Suddenly he breaks out laughing. "I don't know!" he cries. I look at Furuya, who laughs politely. I start laughing. The three of us can't stop laughing.

Is this Zen? Did I just ask a koan and get the enlightened answer? Is laughter the answer—our sharing that laughter?

I think of sailing into the future, without answers, laughing courageously.

AIKIDO, LOS ANGELES

After Zen we go back to Furuya's school of aikido—a relatively new martial art invented by Japanese master Morihei Ueshiba in the Thirties.

Although Furuya advises the LAPD on controlling violent criminals, he stresses aikido's meditative aspects more than its martial nature. He is short, rotund, wears a crew cut and a merry smile like the laughing Buddha, and looks quite harmless—that is, until he puts on his black pleated trousers to lead a class of 40 respectful students.

I take the class. A white belt (there are only white and the more advanced

black belts in aikido) is invited to charge. Furuya grabs his wrist, guides him here and there, then puts his arm out and the guy flies onto the mat. It looks like bullfighting with Furuya as the matador—and the bull doesn't have a chance. The class pairs off to play bull and bullfighter. Furuya says, "When we define the world, we make assumptions that limit us." Apparently I'm defining my opponent, too; he's flipping me right and left. The white belt defines the situation as a contest between opponents and charges, according to Furuya. By changing that definition, Furuya can harmonize with the man's movements and neutralize the attack.

"I am open-minded; I do not define," he says with a smile. "I destroy the gap or distinction between myself and my partner." Furuya's graceful aikido is proof of the freedom and power that come from this absence of limits.

JUJITSU, ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA

Jujitsu is a Japanese system of pressure points and joint locks based on acupuncture meridians and transferring *ki*. According to seventy-two-year-old Wally Jay (Jay's a tenth-degree black belt, as high as you get), it's the grandpa of judo and aikido. Those disciplines just took the bad parts out.

In his Island Jujitsu Club, this kind and gracious senior citizen takes hold of my wrist. "Watch," he says, "no effort."

Wham, I'm slammed to my knees. Jay takes my finger and turns it slightly. "Nooooo!" I hear myself screaming.

Jay helps me to my feet. "There's got to be pain or you escape," he explains. I want to escape. Luckily, his thirty-four-year-old son walks in. Through the air he flies, joints cracking, body twisting. He's screaming, too.

Jay invites me to try jujitsu on his son. I experiment with a wrist lock. WHACK, and the son goes down like a sack of cement. A thumb lock. BAM, he's moaning on his back. All my frustrations are sadistically given vent; but I stop. The effectiveness of the techniques makes excess violence embarrassing. That is enlightening. "It's not how much you can hurt," Jay says, "but how little. You can control a man by altering his *ki*—with just a touch. I'll show you."

"That's okay!" I cry, hiding my hands and moving away. Jay laughs. "What's so funny?" I ask.

"That's the best way—to control without even a touch," he says. "That's the power of jujitsu."

T'AI CHI, SAN FRANCISCO

It's time for the slow motion of self-defense, t'ai chi ch'uan, literally "Supreme Ultimate Fist."

Everyone's seen this sort of ballet of slow, graceful hand movements and turns—hundreds of millions of Chinese perform it every morning in parks and