



The Aikido Center of Los Angeles

道の為、世の為、人の為 合気道

The Aiki Dojo

Direct Affiliation: Aikido World Headquarters, 17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Los Angeles Sword and Swordsmanship Society Kenshinkai
The Furuya Foundation

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Upcoming Events

- February 23rd:**
Instructor's intensive
- March 9th:**
Sensei Memorial Service
- March 30th:**
Instructor's intensive
- April 27-28th:**
O Sensei Annual Seminar
- April 28th:**
O Sensei Memorial
- May 25th:**
Instructor's intensive

Letter From the Editor by Mark Ehrlich Editor, The Aiki Dojo

It gives me great pleasure to announce the arrival into the world of our Aikido Chief Instructor's son, Michael Susumu Ito. Born on January 24, 2013 at 11:36 a.m. (PT) and weighing 4 pounds and 7 ounces, he came earlier than expected. However, young Michael has shown a lot of spirit and continues to grow and thrive, much to the delight of his family. All of us at ACLA could not feel happier or more thrilled for Ito Sensei, and we all wish him, his wife, and their new son the best as they embark on the wonderful journey that families take together. It seems quite an auspicious beginning to this new Year of the Snake.

This issue, we acknowledge the dynamic energy that Snake years portend by looking at our foundation – our roots, if you will – and glimpsing the path ahead that will lead us, we hope, to an uplifting destination. We've included an overview of the lunar year as well.

Ito Sensei compares the Way of Aikido with the Way of Tea, and through that examination shares the heart of these (and indeed all traditional) arts, martial or otherwise; we need to appreciate this heart and follow its lead if we would develop significantly in our practice. Myers Sensei offers a look at two giants of The Way of the Sword and how their mindset, which required students to abandon their ego

and thoughts of victory, may have proved more challenging than any technique. Two of our students give their take on training in interesting ways, one informed by his reading of *Kodo: Ancient Ways*, and the other by recalling his transition from *mudansha* to *yudansha* and how that has changed his perception of himself and his teacher over time. And last but not least, Sensei visits us again from the archives to help us understand a pillar essential to the highest form of training: loyalty between teacher and student. This issue sets the stage well, I think, for the year to come, and I urge you to read, reflect, and read again the thoughtful messages that our contributors have delivered this month.

I rarely do this, but the excitement has gotten the better of me, so I have to share a little of what the future holds, at least for the newsletter. Next month we commemorate the sixth anniversary of Sensei's death with what already looks to be a very special issue. We welcome all contributions to the effort; in fact, I'll take this

moment to remind everyone that we *always* welcome contributions from our readers.

As we move through this year and into the next, we'll have another milestone to celebrate: ACLA will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2014, a moment that would have given Sensei much satisfaction, I believe. I look forward to seeing what comes next for us; I hope you do too. Until next time, take care, and I hope to see you on the mat!



Hajimemashite, *Michael-chan!*

Heart and Soul

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

Sen Rikyu is credited with the creation of the art of tea ceremony. There is a story that illustrates the depth and breadth of his skill as one of the greatest masters of the Way: a tea grower invited Sen Rikyu to his house to partake in a cup of tea. The tea grower was a novice at tea ceremony and during the service he nervously knocked over the tea whisk. Upon receiving and drinking the tea, Sen Rikyu declared that it was the finest cup of tea he had ever tasted. On the way home, one of Sen Rikyu's students asked why he thought so highly of the cup of tea given the grower's bungled performance. Sen Rikyu replied, "He invited me to his home to enjoy a cup of tea, not to show off his skill. I was touched by the sincerity in his heart to simply serve me a cup of tea." In this story, Sen Rikyu describes the essence of tea ceremony training: to serve one's guest a delicious cup of tea.

As we look deeper into Sen Rikyu and tea ceremony it helps to understand the meaning of his statement. Once a student asked Sen Rikyu, "What is the essence of tea?" He replied, "It is nothing more than this: first you heat the water, then you make the tea. Then you drink it properly. That is all you need to know." The puzzled student retorted, "That is easy." To which Sen Rikyu stated, "If you can do all that, then you will become my teacher." This declaration reveals the teaching that the simplicity of the steps requires a true heart and correct intention. The steps may seem simple, but they can become complicated when we lose focus on the meaning of training – to put our whole heart into the service of others.

Training in Aikido shares this characteristic with tea ceremony, and other arts; in fact, we can argue that all training comes down to learning how to benefit others. We can conclude then that at the

heart of all training lies compassion. Training enables us to act with repose and compassion, which in turn reveals our humanity. Sensei once said, "If you think Aikido is about beating people up, you are sorely mistaken." I think he meant that in our training we can, with proper focus, become better people by learning how to serve others.



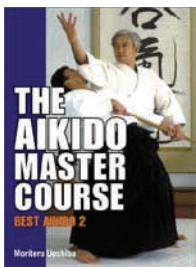
Sen Rikyu

When I say *serve*, I mean to benefit others, but when most people hear *serve* they instantly think "subjugation", which misses the point. The lethality of our art demands that we exercise diligence in our training and purpose in our movements. Should we ever deploy Aikido technique in an encounter outside of practice, our humanity will reveal itself through the mercifulness of our actions and our regard for our opponents. We realize that they attack us out of ignorance, and our training allows us to help them by showing them the compassion of Aikido. It is akin to moving benevolently past a child who strikes at you because she is upset. You do not perceive her as a threat because you know that she does not fully understand what spurred her actions.

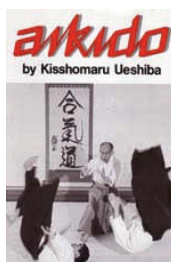
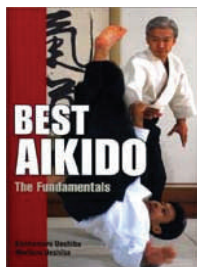
No matter which arts we practice, they all strive to benefit humanity and do so by creating compassion through putting others first. In tea ceremony, the practitioner puts her whole heart into making a delicious cup of tea for the other person. In Japanese dance, the dancer puts his entire being into the movement for the enjoyment of the audience. Aikido works no differently as we aim not to destroy the other person but to show her compassion.

The paradox for our training in a lethal martial art amounts to preparing ourselves, not to use it someday, but instead to have the sincerest heart to choose not to use it. The path of Aikido, like all arts martial or otherwise, celebrates life. Only when we can see the suffering of others eased by our actions can we see the beauty and strength in things like dance, calligraphy, tea ceremony, or even the lethality of Aikido.

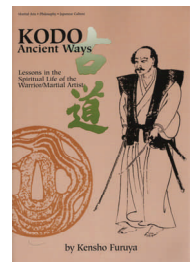
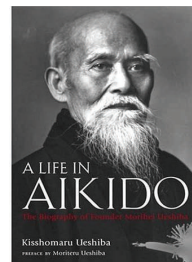
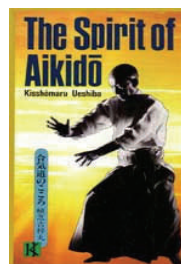
Recommended Readings:



by Ueshiba Moriteru



by Ueshiba Kisshomaru



by Kensho Furuya

Sekiun and Ichiun

by Gary Myers, Iaido Chief Instructor

Several months ago we featured an article about Yagyu Tajima no kami Munenori. This month we focus on two unique swordsmen, Harigaya (Hariya) Sekiun and Odagiri Ichiun, who were contemporaries of Munenori. Like Munenori, Zen Buddhism strongly influenced the swordsmanship they taught, but that is where the similarity ends. In most respects, their lives ran as the polar opposites to Munenori's life. Neither swordsman garnered favor or patronage by people in high places, as the Yagyu did from the Tokugawa *shogun*. Nor did they seek out fame or financial gain through their swordsmanship; in fact, they distinctly avoided such trappings. Their swordsmanship, dubbed "The Sword of the No-Abiding Mind", was unique in that they did not emphasize technique, as did most schools of the time. Their school's longevity was relatively short compared to other well-known schools, lasting no more than 70 years. Both Sekiun and Ichiun were considered the greatest swordsmen of their day.

"The Sword of the No-Abiding Mind" school was founded by Hariya Sekiun (1592-1662), who began his study of the sword at age 13 and during his lifetime reportedly engaged in 52 duels. Born in what is now the Ueno area of Tokyo to a *samurai* family, he remained a *ronin* (master-less *samurai*) his entire life. He was over six feet tall and very powerfully built, and it is said that he studied 12 different swordsmanship traditions, the most well known being a form of Shinkage Ryu under Ogasawara Genshin (one of the four disciples of the sword saint Kamiizumi Ise no kami Hidetsuna).

Genshin was a retainer to the Toyotomi, so when they were overthrown by the Tokugawa, he fled to China. While there, he taught Shinkage Ryu to Chinese warriors and studied various Chinese weapons, including a type of spear called a *hoko*. He eventually incorporated some spear techniques into his swordsmanship, calling them *hassun no nogane* ("the eight-inch extended reach"). When he returned to Japan, none of his fellow swordsmen, including pupils of Shinkage Ryu, could defeat him.

After Genshin returned from China, Sekiun studied under him, and chroniclers relate that he quickly mastered the secrets of Genshin's new sword style. Sekiun then established his own quite successful school, which boasted close to 3,000 students at its peak. However, at the age of 50 Sekiun, no longer feeling fulfilled in teaching this technique of sword, began to study Zen Buddhism with vari-

ous priests and eventually studied exclusively under his devoted friend and admirer, Kohaku, a priest at the Tofuku-Ji temple.

While studying Zen, Sekiun came to the conclusion that no matter how technically proficient the student, most swordsmanship schools offered only three basic outcomes: 1) one will be defeated by a superior swordsman; 2) one will defeat an inferior swordsman; or 3) swordsmen of equal skill will mutually annihilate each other, called *ai-uchi*. Sekiun tried to reconcile these outcomes with the enlightenment he gained from Zen, so he earnestly began to study swordsmanship under the precepts of Zen Buddhism because he felt strongly that there was application to the art of swordsmanship that had not fully been explored by other schools. He felt that "sitting in the seat of Heavenly Reason" freed him from the technicalities of swordsmanship and what he considered the professional, technical "trickery" as taught by other schools. When he felt he had fully incorporated these concepts into his swordsmanship, he went back to his teacher Genshin and requested a match. Even though Genshin tried every one of his secret techniques, Sekiun easily defeated him. He described his defeat of Genshin's technique in this manner: "It was like a sliver of bamboo consumed by a great



Kamiizumi Ise no kami Hidetsuna

inferno." Shortly after this duel, he decided to establish a new school in 1640, based on enlightenment through Zen. Kohaku suggested that the new school should be called *Mujushin Kenjutsu*, "The Sword of the No-Abiding Mind".

Sekiun did not seek any fame or fortune with this masterful style of sword. In fact, the large number of students he previously taught drastically shrunk to about 13 students. He did not like what he called worldly types, people who sought out fame and fortune, arguing they were no better than lowly beasts always trying to obtain material gain at the expense of others. His first rule of swordsmanship was not to rely on technical tricks. His second rule was not to think about achieving victory over an opponent; approach the match with the goal of mutual annihilation. By freeing one's mind from such thoughts, the swordsman was no longer attached to the concepts of victory. This freedom gave mind and sword the ability to move and counter any attack, which in turn gave the swordsmen the conviction that they were without peers when it came to swordsmanship. In addition, "The Sword of the No-Abiding Mind" introduced the concept that a match could have the outcome of *ai-nuke* – mutual escape from killing or hurting each other even if both were of equal skill.

Continued on page 6...

The Key to *Ki*

by Edward Ecolango, *Aikido 5th Kyu*

All beings support Yin and embrace Yang and the interplay between these two forces fill the Universe. Yet, only at the still, between breathing in and breathing out, can one capture these two in perfect harmony. – *Lao Tzu*

I recently read the chapter “The Power is Already Within You” in Sensei’s book *Kodo: Ancient Ways*. My experience generated many thoughts, some of which I share here as part of the process of gaining understanding.

With anything in life I find that the more I try and control something, the less control I actually have. (Something like, if you love something you should let it go . . . but perhaps that’s a bad example.) A metropolitan Los Angeles example would be: the more you try and struggle with traffic by weaving in and out finding the fastest lane, the more you exhaust yourself in trying to control the situation, and to no avail - you are still in traffic, you wasted your gas and are now probably angry. This is the way it is with *Ki*. *Ki*, a flow of energy in everything and present everywhere, seems hardly controllable, in my opinion, at least at this point in my training. When harnessed, perhaps it can be an ally with a lifetime of understanding; but first how it must work is fundamental knowledge before we can graduate to how we can “use it”. Even the statement of using it perhaps isn’t completely accurate, as *Ki* is there and always there; maybe more accurately we can say the conditions must be correct within us to harness *Ki* with any effectiveness. Such is life: hardly are we in control but many times the conditions become correct for things to unfold as they should. This is something we perhaps cannot teach, yet sits literally in the middle of this thing we practice called Aikido.

Sensei wrote that when we are not thinking about forcing *Ki* or using *Ki* is when the *Ki* flows most strongly. So relax and let things happen on their own. If it were very important in the training, I suppose it would be at the very beginning of class before *tenkan* exercise! But it is during our warm up, when we are breathing and when we are relaxing, finding our centers, when we close our eyes to focus and feel out, this is when we are building our sensitivity to *Ki*. This is just one example where it becomes subtly incorporated into our training.

At the end of class we practice *kokyū dosa*, by definition of the technique we are using breath or timing or a sort of synchronization. Some might even go as far as to define it as harmony, but in some cases reference to it as a “power throw – *kokyū nage*” occur. We are trying to develop this technique at the end of the every class; isn’t there more to it than finding a clever way to throw the person down? The techniques we do the most in class must be crucial to our furthering and enlightenment on this vast subject of Aikido. So blending, *Ki*, harmony, breath power, energy . . . it all becomes much too much for me to process and comprehend! At the end of it all we only have to remember one very important thing: just breathe.



2013: Year of the Snake

2013 looks to be very prosperous but variable year. 2013 is the Year of the Snake according to Chinese astrology. The Year of the Snake follows the Year of the Dragon, and so it is thought that whatever began in the Year of the Dragon will be more fortuitous in the Year of the Snake. The main characteristic associated with the Year of the Snake is movement, but like with all snakes you need to be cautious and extremely careful. The movement of the snake is flowing and their slithering movement has a wave like appearance (~~~~). Therefore, we can speculate that 2013 will have a lot of flowing movement, but fraught with a lot of ups and downs. So the Year of the Snake calls us to exercise care in our planning and diligence in our endeavors. Another characteristic of a snake is that they also out grow and molt their skin which symbolizes that 2013 can also become a year of rebirth.

Ukemi and Trust

by Jason Markowski, Aikido Shodan



A year and a half ago, I assisted three *shodan* candidates in training for their test. I served as their *uke* for six months and took their *ukemi* during the test. At the end of their test, as I watched them, I had mixed feelings. I felt proud of them for their accomplishments. I also felt proud of myself for all the effort I had put in, yet I could not help feeling left out. I believed that at the very

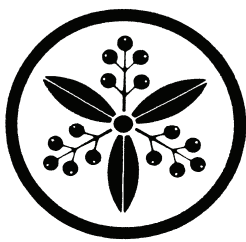
least, I was their equal. I struggled with these feelings for the next few weeks. I had always told myself that rank was never something to worry about, that in the immortal words of Mr. Miyagi in *The Karate Kid*, 'Belt mean no rope to hold up pants'. All fun aside, I never worried about rank; I trained for the sake of training, feeling that my *sensei* should be the only person in the dojo who needed to be concerned with my progression in rank. But after the test, I found that I was fixated on acquiring my black belt. I watched as my friends trained and saw that there was a little more finesse in their technique, like a switch had been turned on when they put on their *hakama* for the first time and trained. They seemed more focused and I wanted that same edge.

I have been told that I think too much, and in this case, I know it to

be true. I worked at my feelings from every angle. It took me a while before I realized that my fixation stemmed primarily from my competitive nature. I could not stand being left behind. When I finally came to this realization, I felt my pent up frustration at the situation evaporate. I was always taught that with competition comes winning and losing, but that regardless of the outcome, good sportsmanship was key: with the proper attitude and a willingness to learn from mistakes even a loss can be a victory. I had been so attuned to my friends' progress that I failed to see my own. I had just spent six months training solely on *ukemi* and my Aikido was the better for it.

A year later, I happened to glance at our bulletin board as I came into the dojo and I saw that a new candidate list was up. I was filled with excitement as I read the list of names and when I didn't see my name, I had a moment's pause but other than that was fine. I trusted Ito Sensei in his consideration of potential candidates. I took a moment, as I changed in the locker room, to reflect back on my feelings from a year before and how I felt about my exclusion on the current list, and though, honestly, I knew I still wanted it, it was alright if it came later. My name would appear on the list when I was ready.

After bowing in on the mat, a black belt stopped to congratulate me for making the candidate list and when I told him I was not on the list, he walked over to the board and after a moment he excused himself and went up into the office. Ito Sensei came down a few minutes later and put up a new list with my name on it and apologized to me for the oversight. I admit that I snuck a few glances towards the bulletin board during class that night. What I have learned since then by taking my black belt test boils down to trust. Over the months after my friends' tests and the roller coaster months leading to mine, I learned to trust in my sensei that he would lead me down a path that he had walked before me, and also to trust in myself.



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We are a not-for-profit, traditional Aikido Dojo dedicated to preserving the honored values and traditions of the arts of Aikido and Iaido. With your continued understanding and support, we hope that you also will dedicate yourself to your training and to enjoying all the benefits that Aikido and Iaido can offer.

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Questions/Comments?

We welcome all questions and comments. Please send us a letter or an e-mail and our team will do our best to come up with an answer. We reserve the right to edit questions and letters for clarity and length.

Please e-mail submissions to:
info@aikidocenterla.com

Sekiun and Ichiun *continued from page 3...*

Much of Sekiun's personal life was documented by Odagiri Ichiun, the school's second *soke*. He wrote that Sekiun usually carried a long sword with a blunt edge, because if challenged he would most likely injure rather than kill his challenger. However he did carry a sharpened *wakizashi* because, as he put it, "With my temper it is better to wield a blunt sword . . . but I do carry a sharpened *wakizashi* knowing that one day I might have to use it for my own *seppuku* [ritual suicide, sometimes performed at the command of one in power such as the emperor, a *daimyo* or feudal lord, and so on]."

There is a story about Sekiun in his later years that counters his blunt sword theory. Three young men came to his village to challenge the great swordsman to a duel, but when they called on him and saw him at age 60, they thought him too old. Thinking that that they could gain a reputation by defeating Sekiun, they challenged him anyway. Sekiun politely refused the request and they returned to the town. They boasted to everyone who would listen that the old man was too scared of them and washed up as a swordsman. The townspeople convinced them that they must have challenged the wrong person because that certainly didn't sound like the person they knew. So they went back and asked if he was truly the great swordsman Sekiun, which he affirmed. They challenged him a second time and again he refused them and told them to go away. Not taking no for an answer, they returned the next day. Sekiun, seeing no alternative but to accept their challenge, equipped one of them with a helmet and a real sword. He took up a short wooden *bokuto*. The young swordsman advanced but was immediately struck on the helmet with what looked like a very light hit. He staggered to a nearby tree, and sat down against it. His friends rushed over to revive him but they could not.

Around that same time, Odagiri Ichiun (1629-1706), then 28 years old, started studying with Sekiun. The legendary story of their meeting goes something like this: Ichiun was looking to have a wooden (some stories say bamboo) sword made with a steel bar imbedded in it. Sekiun was at the time making a living by carving wooden objects. The reason Ichiun wanted the *bokuto* was that he had killed someone and had since discontinued to wear a real sword. He was convinced that the family of the man he killed was seeking revenge, so he asked Sekiun to make a *bokuto* with the steel bar in it to make sure that he could defend himself and still show his superior swordsmanship without killing anyone else. Sekiun told Ichiun that he felt the young man's thinking was flawed, but he would make the wooden sword if Ichiun would study Zen with the priest Kohaku in the interim. Sekiun told Ichiun that it would take one year to make the *bokuto*. Ichiun thought that was a long time, but he did not question Sekiun and over the next year studied Zen with Kohaku. When he returned to retrieve the sword, there were two *bokuto* waiting for him, and Sekiun told him to go over and pick out the one he preferred. When he hefted both *bokuto* they both felt like they weighed the same; however, one sword had the steel bar, and the other weighted inside with a hard wood. Sekiun had also learned that the person Ichiun had killed was a bully and that family had not sought revenge. It was then that Sekiun declared Ichiun was ready to study "The Sword of the No-Abiding Mind".

Ichiun studied very hard over the next five years, applying the lessons of swordsmanship from Sekiun and his practice of Zen with Kohaku. When Ichiun felt he had attained mastery of the sword, he challenged his teacher to three matches. In each of the three contests, the outcome was *ai-nuke*, neither man injuring the other. Sekiun immediately gave Ichiun a scroll recognizing that he had fully learned the principles of "The Sword of the No-Abiding Mind". Sekiun also performed a special Buddhist service in Ichiun's honor.

In 1662, about three years after Ichiun obtained his mastery scroll, Sekiun passed away at the age of 69; Kohaku presided over his burial services. For the next six years, Ichiun retired from teaching anyone sword and he again immersed himself into Zen Buddhism. But many of his acquaintances kept asking him to begin teaching sword again, so he acquiesced and resurrected "The Sword of the No-Abiding Mind". Ichiun was considered by many of the top swordsmen of the time to be even better than Sekiun; many said he was the greatest swordsman of his generation.

There is a story of about Ichiun thwarting a would-be attacker. Ichiun was sleeping and a swordsman felt this was the perfect opportunity to attack him. The attacker crept into his room and was about to attack when Ichiun turned to him and asked, "What are you doing?" The attacker just froze and Ichiun turned and went back to sleep. The attacker, knowing that there was no opening for attack, fled.

Ichiun was more a Zen master who taught swordsmanship than a sword master who studied Zen. His philosophy was that everyone should live their lives to the fullest, every minute of every day. To highlight this, Ichiun fell seriously ill and was told by a priest that his illness was incurable and that he had only months to live. Rather than be melancholy or curse his fate, Ichiun established even more structure to his learning and he spent most of his waking hours trying to improve his skill as a teacher. After spending some months in this regime his health improved and he fully recovered, living many more years.

Much of what we know of Sekiun, Ichiun, and the tenets of "The Sword of the No-Abiding Mind" were documented by Ichiun in his *Mushusin Kenjitsu Sho* and by Ichiun's successor, Mariya Enshu. Enshu was the third and last known *soke* of the school. The three main principles of the school were 1) the school did not rely on technique; 2) give up all desire for fame or gain, all egotism, and self-glorification; and 3) give up any idea of victory and strike with the idea of *ai-uchi*, mutual annihilation. Many have wondered why the school did not survive longer, even though it produced two of the greatest swordsmen of their day. There has been conjecture that the sword style was more directed to one-on-one duels than multiple combatants, but the essence of the school was most likely harder for students to comprehend than the technical path of other swordsmanship schools. It was easier for students to understand and study technical movements and maintain their material attachments than it was to travel the path of enlightenment and sacrifice to understand "The Sword of the No-Abiding Mind".

Understanding Loyalty

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

The other day, a magazine came to the dojo. It deals with the “business” aspects of martial arts. Nowadays, I hear, this type of magazine is the biggest seller in martial arts, outdoing those devoted to traditional martial arts or techniques. In the front part, there was a letter from a reader complaining about an earlier article dealing with “loyalty” of the students. However, this was not loyalty in its very finest sense, this was loyalty to the teacher in the sense of “Stay here and continue to pay your dues”, or “If you leave, I lose money!” The angry reader wrote something about, “Yes, there is loyalty of the students to the teacher, but what about loyalty of the teacher to the students?”

Such a total lack of understanding and appreciation of martial arts on both sides. Loyalty comes from a strong bond between the teacher and student. In my own experience, students come and go so freely, yet I am always here. I was thinking about this in my dreams as I was freezing in this cold, cold dojo all night. No way to keep even a little warm, I can feel myself catching a slight cold this morning. Why am I here freezing for my students? Why I am not in a warm, comfortable bed with decent heating at least? When I was young, I could endure anything no matter how hot or cold the dojo became, but as I get older and more tired, it gets harder and harder. Freezing here in the dojo all by myself, I consider this “loyalty” to my students! What student is freezing for me at night? I have asked many times, to have a bed put into my office so I don’t have to sleep on the floor or in a chair, hmmm – that was almost two years ago! Students today don’t listen, or don’t care, or don’t think about these things. I think when I was younger, I thought of it as a part of my training to sleep on the hard floor but now it just effects my health because of the harsh cold against old, tired bones.

Students will always come and go. It is so hard to become truly committed to most students because you never know how long they will stay. Usually, they are here today and gone tomorrow. I don’t know why these teachers and students even worry about “loyalty” – no such thing hardly exists today. Teachers are only worried about money and fame, and students are too spoiled and run around to different dojos and teachers like they were shopping for bargains and never seem to find the best deal. Today, I guess, students think they can learn enough in one or two years and then feel ready to teach and be called, “Sensei.” It has nothing to do with “being” a *sensei*, it is just a selfish desire for fame and prestige. I rarely see students who devote themselves for years on end as students under a teacher. In my dojo, I see how they most “naturally” become teachers – this is the only thing that makes me feel good – as opposed to, “Hey, I want to teach.”

You never know when you become a teacher – those around you who make this decision. And finally, there is no greater honor and sense of achievement than when the teacher himself finally encourages and recognizes that you are ready to accept students. . . . Eve-

ryone today is in such a hurry, that only a few enjoy this experience.



Loyalty - Chujitsu

What do teachers have to do to get students? It is no longer enough to be good and a competent teacher – we must be charming and user-friendly and bow our heads to the students and make them feel good. I guess I come from a different age. Students are so spoiled today – no wonder they cannot learn anything! And teachers . . . terrible! All they talk about is money; it drives me crazy, although probably this is only because I am one of the poor ones!

This morning, you are not listening to a teacher, I guess, just a very cold, grumpy, old man. After all these years, this is what I have become. In my youth, I had so many dreams and worked so hard to build a wonderful dojo for my students. Nowadays, I just want to keep my tootsies warm! This cannot be enlightenment, so it must be failure. In Japanese

chess – they have a saying which they borrowed from martial arts: *Makete tozen, katte guzen!* (“It is only natural to lose, you only win by luck!”) As I freeze here this morning, I realize that I am not a winner. Keep warm!

* * *

The bitter cold morning,

You are so hard to beat,

Bring a strong opponent,

At least I have a chance with him.

Nothing worse than being cold and alone,

Even the kind thoughts of my student so far away cannot keep me warm,

So nice *tatami* for my students downstairs, and only a hard floor for me,

Who can complain about my loyalty to you?

The loyal student devoted to his training,

Only his hard training downstairs can warm this cold room so well!

A teacher cannot ask for more than such a treasure,

Today, running around here and there, where did you lose your heart?

It is so cold, I suspect that it is no longer there. . . .

Editor’s Note: *Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his daily message board on February 10, 2003.*

Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE

Sundays

9:00-10:00 AM Children's Class
10:15-11:15 AM Open

Mondays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals
6:30-7:30 PM Open

Tuesdays

6:30-7:30 PM Advanced*

Wednesdays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals
6:30-7:30 PM Intermediate
7:45-8:45 PM Weapons*

Thursdays

6:30-7:30 PM Bokken

Fridays

6:30-7:30 PM Open

Saturdays

9:30-10:30 AM Open
10:45-11:45 AM Advanced*

*6:30 AM Instructor's Intensive: last Saturday of the month by invitation only.**

* These classes are not open for visitors to watch.

Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

Saturdays

7:15-8:15 AM Beginning
8:15-9:15 AM Intermediate/Advanced

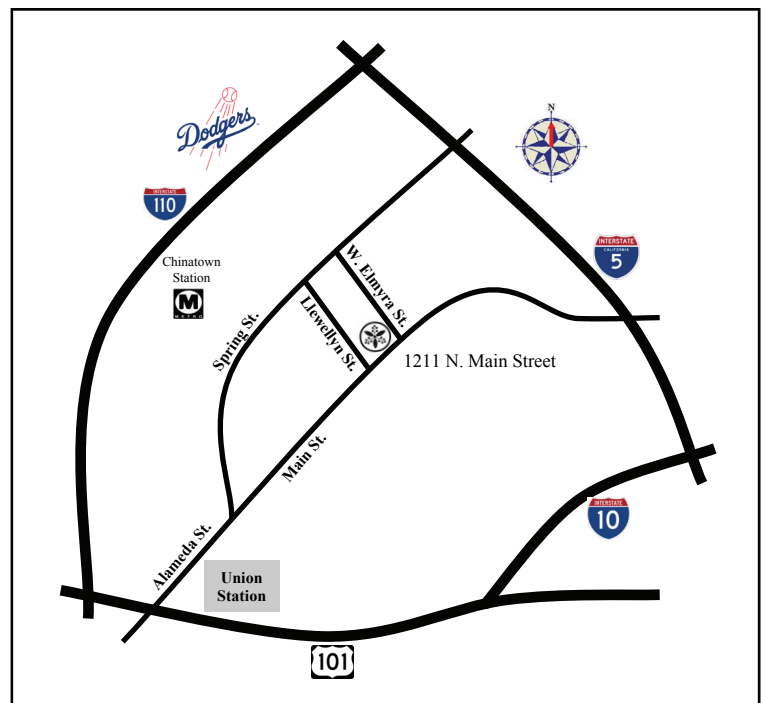
Sundays

7:45-8:45 AM

Thursdays

6:30-7:30 PM (Bokken Practice)
7:30-8:30 PM

No classes on the last weekend of the month.



Finding Our Dojo

We are located at
1211 N. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Telephone: (323) 225-1424
E-mail: info@aikidocenterla.com
We are across the street and one block northwest from the Chinatown Metro Station.

The entrance is on Elmyra Street.

No appointment necessary to watch classes or join:
You are welcome to visit us any time during any of our Open or Fundamentals classes. Please come early.

We are directly affiliated with:
AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Aikido Hombu Dojo - Aikikai
17-18 Wakamatsu-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, JAPAN
We are committed to the study and practice of the teachings of the Founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba and his legitimate successors, Kisshomaru Ueshiba and the present Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.

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