

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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In This Issue...

- Message From the Teacher**
by David ItoPage 1
- Hardships Create Jewels**
by David ItoPage 2
- The Basics are There**
by Ken WatanabePage 3
- Is Aikido a Traditional
Martial Art?**
by Rev. Kensho FuruyaPage 4
- In the Community**.....Page 6
- Class Schedule**.....Page 8
- Dojo Map**.....Page 8



Morihei Ueshiba
1883-1969

Upcoming Events

- April 15-17th:**
O Sensei Memorial Seminar
- May 28th:**
Intensive Seminar
- May 30th:**
Dojo Closed: Memorial Day
- June 25th:**
Intensive Seminar
- July 4th:**
Dojo Closed: 4th of July
- July 30th:**
Intensive Seminar
- August 27th:**
Intensive Seminar
- September 5th:**
Dojo Closed: Labor Day

Message From the Teacher by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

Morihei Ueshiba passed away 46 years ago but his strong influence can still be felt today. Aikidoist respectfully refer to him as O Sensei which means “great teacher” and he is even venerated with this title by non-Aikido people as well.

A lifetime of studying came before O Sensei could create Aikido and with it he became a prolific martial artist because of all of his, but that is not why people call him “O Sensei.” It is commonly said that if a teacher can create even one good teacher then they can consider themselves a success. Morihei Ueshiba is referred to as “O Sensei” because of all the great teachers that he was able to produce.

Today, Aikido is practiced in more than 130 countries by millions of people. All these people worldwide and benefitted from the teachers that O Sensei created.

Therefore, each of us has benefitted from not only O Sensei’s hard work but his greatness too. Each of us is then, in a sense, a *mago-deshi* or grand-student of O Sensei’s.

Filial piety is a big concern in Japanese culture. It is supposed to be the responsibility of the family members to remember their ancestors and their passings. If we can trace our lineage back to O Sensei then we owe it to him to show him the proper respect by honoring his passing.

Aikido has started to see a resurgence in popularity in Hollywood with shows like *The Walking Dead* and *Man in the High Castle* which means more people are becoming exposed to O Sensei’s philosophies.

With each generation spawning more and more *mago-deshi* it is easy to see why Morihei Ueshiba was such a great teacher worthy of the title of O Sensei.

Hardships Create Jewels

by David Ito, Aikido Chief Instructor

In the 1970s a group of researchers at Stanford University conducted a series of experiments to see if they could determine if there were any correlations between delayed gratification and success – it was dubbed the Stanford Marshmallow Experiment. A child was sat at a table with a marshmallow right in front of them on a plate. The testers then told them that they would be leaving the room and explained that if they did not eat the marshmallow while they were away then they would get a second marshmallow when they returned. Some could wait, but the others that couldn't which resulted in some hilarious ways kids acted when nobody was in the room. What they found was that the children who were able to wait for the second marshmallow ended up becoming more successful in life than those who ate the single marshmallow.

What the Marshmallow experiment tells us is that to become successful one must delay gratification.

Martial artists can relate to this experiment because they understand that the greatest enemy of every warrior is complacency. When one becomes complacent they readily orientate themselves towards what is easiest or the most comfortable and thus let their guard down. That is why the enemies of every good martial artist is a soft comfortable chair or a warm comfy bed. If one is comfortable then one is complacent and when one is complacent then they lose their edge. In the book *Musashi* by Eiji Yoshikawa he writes a fictional account of why Miyamoto Musashi was always unkempt and never bathed. In a moment of complacency while taking a bath, Musashi was attacked and almost killed. We don't have to go to these extremes but we understand the motivation. In times of battle we must have an edge and this awareness enables us to be ready for any attack. In life or in the dojo, having an edge makes us strive for self-betterment and keeps us focused on developing ourselves. One can easily see how being able to stave off pleasure for purpose might be what separates good martial artists from the bad ones.



The best martial artists are always at least a little bit uncomfortable. Being uncomfortable forces us to be more attentive. It is hard to be complacent and diligent at the same time. That awareness keeps us diligent and enables us to stay honest, grounded and humble.

It is human nature to constantly seek out pleasure and avoid suffering. To purposefully put ourselves in a state of unrest is not natural, but then again martial artists are not ordinary people. Martial artists are people who seek to continually improve themselves and are willing to pay the price to improve and be successful. We pay that price by forcing ourselves into places of discomfort so that we may continually improve ourselves.

Shortly before his death, Miyamoto Musashi wrote out a set of life principles known as the *Dokkodo* (独行道) for his favorite disciple Terao Magonjo.

1. Accept everything just the way it is.
2. Do not seek pleasure for its own sake.
3. Do not give preference to anything among all things.
4. Think lightly of yourself and deeply of the world.
5. Be detached from desire your whole life.
6. Do not regret what you have done.
7. Never be jealous.
8. Never let yourself be saddened by a separation.
9. Resentments and complaining are appropriate neither for oneself nor others.
10. Do not let yourself be guided by the feeling of lust or love.
11. Do not seek elegance and beauty in things.
12. Be indifferent to where you live.
13. Do not pursue the taste of good food.
14. Do not hold on to possessions you no longer need.
15. Do not act following customary beliefs.
16. Do not collect weapons or practice with weapons beyond what is useful.
17. Do not fear death.
18. Do not seek to possess either goods or fiefs for your old age.
19. Respect Buddha and the gods without counting on their help.
20. You may abandon your own body but you must preserve your honor.
21. Never stray from the Way.

From Musashi's list, we can see how concerned he was with this concept of delayed gratification and complacency.

To turn away from complacency requires a discipline that is usually self-imposed. If it is externally forced upon us we run the risk of becoming resentful or suffer from fatigue and quit. Regardless if it is internally or externally imposed, we must choose to accept those sets of circumstances even if it might be uncomfortable for us. We choose to use the discomfort, obstacles and difficulties as fodder for our success. Some people call this "forced success" where there is no other way to go but to succeed. Many times when Furuya Sensei talked about the hard times in training he would say, "Cry in the dojo, laugh on the battlefield" which in Japanese is *dojo de naki, senjo de warau*.

Continued on page 7...

The Basics are There

by Ken Watanabe, Iaido Chief Instructor



Experts are usually not impressed by fancy words or fancy techniques. In fact, the highest compliment a student can receive is “Kihon ga dekiteru” which means “The basics are there”. The simplest things done in the most expert manner, in the most natural ways are what we aspire to. That is how important the basics are. An Aikido expert can tell a student’s level simply by observing them do the simple, boring, repetitious *tenkan* exercise that we all take for granted.

As part of their training, Buddhist priests memorize many sutras. These sutras can be very profound; so much so that their meanings are not easily understood. Yet, even though the priest chanting might not fully understand the sutra’s meaning, the sutra is still chanted. It takes several years of diligent practice for priests to understand the full context and meaning of the sutras.

Aikido training is the same way. In proper Aikido training, there are techniques we practice that seem useless in a self-defense situation or are contextually confusing. After all, Aikido has thousands of techniques: throws, joint locks, and pins; techniques against armed opponents, multiple opponents; sword and staff techniques; reversals, and counters. We can practice for several years and still not practice every single Aikido technique.

Yet as spectacular as some of the advanced techniques might appear and as fun as they might be to practice them, it is actually the basic techniques that are the most beneficial. That is why we practice them over and over in every class to the point where we get tired of practicing the same technique. It is easy to grow bored and think, “This again?” as we practice a seemingly basic technique for the umpteenth time. It is easy to yearn for the something different and think, “When were we going to get to the good stuff?”

There are several techniques that my teacher Kensho Furuya Sensei taught to us that seemed to have little if any practical use in a self-defense situation and I remember that those were the same techniques we would practice every day. His reasoning? Those were the techniques his teachers taught in almost every class.

In Sensei’s own experience practicing as a student and as a teacher, he understood how important these basic techniques were to a student’s development. The basics are important and this is the reason for repetitively practicing these basic and boring techniques over and over even though we are not aware of why we need to practice them. Many of these seemingly simple techniques feature, someplace in their Aikido DNA, an essential point present in every Aikido technique. These very simple techniques contain some sort of important lesson or a skill that is necessary to master Aikido. Yes, some of these techniques seem overly simple or impractical, but by mastering them we demonstrate that we have discovered a very important piece to the Aikido puzzle.

As simple as a technique might seem, when an expert demonstrates them, the basic technique becomes an advanced technique. What I mean is that the expert demonstrates that seemingly benign basic technique to a level that it becomes an advanced technique. To get to this level there are no short cuts. The only way to reach this pinnacle is through practice and to do these seemingly boring basics movements thousands of times.

With the correct mindset and attitude, we can begin to understand Aikido, not only with our intellect like memorizing a stream of words in scripture, but understanding Aikido with our bodies and from our experiences. Like reciting a complex sutra, simply memorizing profound words does not automatically confer profound wisdom; mimicking an advanced Aikido technique or throwing our partner down hard giving the illusion of expertise does not confer an advanced level.

The secrets of Aikido that we are seeking are already contained within these basics. It is only through practicing them correctly, diligently and repeatedly do these techniques reveal their true meanings. Like a sutra preserving the teaching of The Buddha, these basics contain the teachings of O Sensei, the Founder of Aikido. They are like a genetic code handed down from generation to generation insuring that Aikido continues as long as there are those willing to follow them. So like the priests reciting the sutras, we must practice the techniques until we realize them.

Is Aikido a Traditional Martial Art?

by Reverend Kensho Furuya

Someone asked me the other day, "Is Aikido a traditional martial art?" I asked this very same question myself many, many years ago. I think this is a very misunderstood point about Aikido and its place in the history of martial arts and subject to continual misinterpretation and distortion.

I think it is very important to look at Aikido, and other "modern" martial arts as well, in its historical context. As you well know, the feudal age or the "Age of the Samurai" ended with the Meiji restoration during the reign of the Emperor Meiji in 1868. This not only ended the Feudal age in Japan which began in the early 11th century, a period of about 800 years, but it also ushered Japan into the "modern age" of Western technology, trade and thinking. Several years later, a *Haitorei* or government edict was issued prohibiting all civilians from wearing swords and suddenly the samurai disappeared from Japanese society completely.

At the end of the feudal age, the samurai class had already suffered many years of deterioration and decay. Generally we mark the beginning of the end of the samurai class in the early to mid-1700's, with the rise of the merchant class, as the samurai class were transformed into bureaucrats in an age of relative peace and the quickly emerging commercial society. The Genroku Period marks the height of merchant class culture and art and, more or less, the quick downward slide of the samurai. We can say, the samurai class began its gradual decline from this period onwards until the Meiji Period, a period of just under 300 years.

Peace was established by the Tokugawa Shogunate and the capital was moved to Edo in the 1600s. In the early 1600's, as early as 1623 as a matter of fact, there was already a warning issued to the samurai to improve their martial skills because their skills were in an alarming decline.

Essentially, the martial arts were thrown out into the garbage can along with the samurai swords when the *Haitorei* was issued. Around this time, Western tourists bought the long treasured samurai swords for about three to five cents as souvenirs to take back home as a memory of their trip to the Orient. Most martial arts schools disappeared and many of the martial arts masters slid into dark obscurity. The martial arts entered a particularly harsh decline as an outdated product of the feudal period with everyone's attention turning towards the West and modernization. At this time, the samurai, the sword and the martial arts became the antithesis of what was to come.



Jigoro Kano, Gichin Funakoshi and Morihei Ueshiba

In the early 1900's, however, there was another movement starting – that in the rapid absorption of everything Western, some felt that the Japanese were beginning to lose their own identity and culture and there was a revival for the "old" things Japanese. The Japanese had developed their own navy based on the British and Russian models and a new type of Japanese soldier was developing for the first time. However, it was felt that this new Japanese soldier should, of course, have his background in traditional martial arts and values.

It was around this same time that some martial artists believed that, if the traditional Japanese martial arts were not cleaned-up and revived, they would be lost forever. This is where we see many great martial artists emerging that were trying to redefine, refine, throw out the decay and degradation, and re-create the best of what was left of this long tradition. The idea here was not to create

something totally new as we think today, their idea was to revive the very best of the old traditions.

This is the point which, I think, we fail to appreciate. When such great martial artists such as O Sensei were studying the martial arts, one must realize that the martial arts were in a great state of disuse, misuse and decay. It had been this way for almost half a century

with the end of the samurai class in 1868. I think it must have been very difficult for someone like O Sensei to satisfy his great aspirations and talents during this time because there was really not much out there worthy of merit. Jigoro Kano, the founder of modern Judo essentially took the best of all he could find in many of the old systems to synthesize into what we now call "modern Judo." We think, in this light, we can appreciate O Sensei's very desperate and difficult search for the very best in martial arts.

To these still "old world" Japanese such as Kano and O Sensei, unlike today, the idea was not to create something "completely new," the idea was to clean-up and revive the old ways before they were completely extinguished in these modern times.

When Aikido was first introduced into this country in the late 1950's and early 1960's, I remember Aikido being "introduced" as the "most modern" martial art, the art where you can "throw a person down with one finger!" Even today I think this has also led to much misinterpretation and misunderstanding in Aikido.

If we look at Aikido and its techniques and practice, we see, not something very new and modern, in my opinion. What I see is a synthesis of the very best of the old traditions in a very new age.

Continued on page 7...

Hardships Create Jewels *continued from page 2...*

There is another Japanese saying that is apropos for discomfort, *kannan nanji wo tama ni su* or “Hardships create jewels.” Sensei’s dojo on Second Street was like a human pressure cooker that epitomized this theory that discomfort makes one stronger. The dojo was set up in a way that forced the students to not only be aware, but to think ahead at all times. We had to think ahead because there were no bathrooms, no lockers or showers, the dressing rooms were incredibly small and the roof leaked when it rained. That meant we had to be able to foresee any issues *before* they arose. Also, we had to be diligently aware at all times because of all the antiques situated around the dojo and also because Sensei’s dogs were sleeping at the edge of the mat. One false step and someone could get bit. More than dogs or no bathrooms, probably the hardest part about the dojo was that there was no heating or air conditioning which made the heat in the summertime unbearable and winters excruciating painful. I am not sure which was worse, no ventilation when it’s hot in the summer or almost frozen Japanese straw *tatami* mats in the winter mornings.

Due to the fact that the dojo was fraught with all these impediments which made the training harder or more uncomfortable, I think I really benefited from the hardships despite all my grumbings back then. We learned to be diligent and to think ahead and we also learned how to preserve through the tough times. Looking back, we really did learn first-hand how to “Cry in the dojo, laugh on the battlefield.”



Woodblock of Miyamoto Musashi by
Utagawa Kuniyoshi

About 20 years ago Sensei was asked, “Would you rather teach in heaven or in hell?” He wondered out loud, “Hmm, what do you think?” A student blurted out, “Heaven.” Sensei said, “No, hell.”

Everyone in the room kind of gasped at his answer. He explained, “The people in heaven would be comfortable and complacent, there would be no need for them to fight. On the other hand the people in hell would be suffering and fighting like crazy to get out.”

It is so easy to rest on one’s laurels especially when we experience even the smallest amount of success and are in heaven. After all, why would anyone choose to suffer? As martial artists, we understand that success can only come when we choose purpose over pleasure or to put ourselves through hell. We choose to be at least a little uncomfortable so that we may force ourselves to be more diligent. The only way to transcend our current level and possibly achieve success is by being more diligent. Our adversary isn’t the difficulty, the struggle is merely a sign that we are ready – ready to grow, ready learn and are ready for battle. We will always experience struggles along the way in whatever it is that we choose to do, but the obstacles that we surmount are really there to make us stronger. Complacency is the enemy of all martial artists and that is why every good martial artist should be at least a little uncomfortable because discomfort is diligence and the journey toward success is never easy.

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The Aiki Dojo

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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 will also dedicate yourself to your training and enjoy all the benefits that Aikido and Iaido have to offer.

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In The Community...

ON THE VERANDA: WASHOKU SHOYU (SOY SAUCE)



SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2016
1 - 3 PM • TEA HOUSE • \$30

Explore Japanese cultural culinary arts in an intimate setting. This informative and insightful workshop features master shoyu maker, **Yamasa**. Yamasa, founded in 1645, specializes in the manufacturing of soy sauce and various seasonings. Learn about the history of shoyu and experience the tasting of various soy sauces created by Yamasa.

Space is limited, buy your tickets today. Reserve your spot today. Tickets available at: <http://www.jacc.org/fiestamatsuri/>

Zenshuji Temple introduction to Zen Meditation

Starts on MAY 12th, 2016
4 Thursday evenings (5/12, 19, 6/2, 9)
7:15 – 8:30 p.m.

This class series provides an introduction to Zen meditation for beginners. It is open to people of all faiths.

The classes teach you the basic principles of Zen and Zazen meditation, and discussions of how to practice Zen in daily life, that is, how to find inner peace anytime, anywhere.

Each class includes zazen meditation, beginning with 10 minutes during the first class, and working up to 30 minutes at the end of the series. Some class also includes walking meditation.

The classes are led by Rev. Shumyo Kojima, a Soto Zen priest who is the head minister of Zenshuji.

The registration is limited up to 12 people. Cost: \$60 for the series (\$30 for temple members). Register by calling Zenshuji (213) 624-8658, or by email to: webmaster@zenshuji.org. Include your name and contact information. Payment may be made at the first class. Scholarships are also available. No one is turned away for lack of funds.

Zenshuji Temple
123 S. Hewitt St., Los Angeles, CA 90012
www.zenshuji.org



Rev. Shumyo Kojima



FIESTA MATSURI

Sunday, May 1 • 11 am - 4 pm JACCC Campus



Where *Kodomo no Hi* and *Día de los Niños* meet at JACCC. A multi-ethnic celebration for children and their families including arts & crafts workshops, games, food and performances on the plaza

Fiesta Matsuri combines the Children's Day celebration of two communities - the Japanese *Kodomo no Hi* and *Día de los Niños* from Mexico. Both holidays celebrate the growth, happiness, and success of children.

This fun-filled day not only fosters an appreciation for Japanese American tradition but also connects participants to the diversity derived from multiple generations and ethnicities. With workshops and activities designed for children of all ages, Fiesta Matsuri hopes to engage families with culture and community. Through collaboration, it also serves to create new ties and promote understanding among a diverse group of people.

For more information: <http://www.jacc.org/fiestamatsuri/>

Is Aikido a Traditional Martial Art? *Continued from page 4...*

In O Sensei's final stage of development of Aikido, I think he introduced many of his very own ideas at his greatly advanced level of understanding and enlightenment. I think, at the very early stages, O Sensei really brought to us the very best understanding of the arts which would have, without him, silently disappeared into history.

In final point, we must take into account that Japan itself is the rapidly changing even today. Every year, Japan seems to change more and more and this has effected Aikido as well. Today, we all emphasize Aikido as a new and modern art and we do encourage great personal innovation and creativity, but nowadays, we see everyone creating their own art in Aikido, from great masters to popular amateurs. This is not something bad per se but we must always look back to make sure that we aren't changing it for our own benefit.

I alone, see Aikido as a "very" traditional art and I see O Sensei as a "great teacher" who has preserved the very, very best of an 800 year old tradition that would have been lost without his great genius, talent and compassion in this this ever changing, modern world.

Please look for yourself, at the many traditions O Sensei's has preserved in Aikido's practice and form. It really doesn't look like a modern art at all, in fact, it looks quite old fashioned to me. In fact, O Sensei's has made specific rules so that Aikido will not change (hopefully) into a modern art such as Judo and other martial arts. If so, Aikido would, as other martial arts today, be zooming towards the style of competitive sports, the Olympics, spectator-ism and gross commercialism. I think much of the "new" innovativeness and creativity and modernism in Aikido today in something that we have brought to Aikido ourselves, not O Sensei.

When the new, grand Hombu Dojo was finally built in 1967 from the old rickety 100 year-old house that held Hombu Dojo from its very beginning, O Sensei looked at the grand new three-story concrete building and really didn't like it. I think he preferred the old, Japanese style mansion where Aikido had its roots in Tokyo. Indeed, I feel that O Sensei was a man of the past who opened up a great future for us all but not necessarily a man of the future himself.

Of course, these are all my own opinions from my own studies and are not popularly shared by many today. Also, I have only presented to you a brief and broad overview of my studies and there are many more factors and points of interest not discussed here for want of time and space. So please understand this. But, I do hope that these ideas might help people to understand Aikido a little better. I think in the future, as our scholarship in Aikido greatly improves, we will begin to see Aikido in its true light.

Editor's Note: Sensei originally published this article, in slightly different form, to his daily message board on September 13, 2002.

Seminar Schedule**Friday, April 15th:**

6:30-7:30 PM: David Ito

8:00 PM: No host dinner

Saturday, April 16th:

6:30-8:00 AM: David Ito

8:15-9:15 AM: Ken Watanabe

9:30-10:30 AM: James Doi

10:45-11:45 AM: Memorial service

6:30 PM: Seminar social

Sunday, April 17th:

7:30-8:45 AM: David Ito

9:00-10:00 AM: Breakfast

10:15-11:00 AM: Ken Watanabe

11:15 AM-12:15 PM: James Doi

12:30-1:15 PM: David Ito

Schedule subject to change without notice.

\$100.00 for entire seminar

O Sensei Memorial Seminar**April 15-17, 2016****The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles**

The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles (ACLA) admit students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The Furuya Foundation and the Aikido Center of Los Angeles do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Aikido TRAINING SCHEDULE

Sundays

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

Mondays

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

Tuesdays

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

Wednesdays

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

Thursdays

5:15-6:15 PM Fundamentals

Fridays

6:30-7:30 PM Open

Saturdays

6:30-8:00 AM Intensive Seminar* †
 9:30-10:30 AM Open
 10:45-11:45 AM Open

* These classes are not open for visitors to watch.

† Intensive seminar is offered the last Saturday of every month and is open to any Aikidoist regardless of school or style who is at least proficient in forward and backward ukemi.

Iaido TRAINING SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE IAIDO SWORDSMANSHIP

Saturdays

8:00-9:00 AM

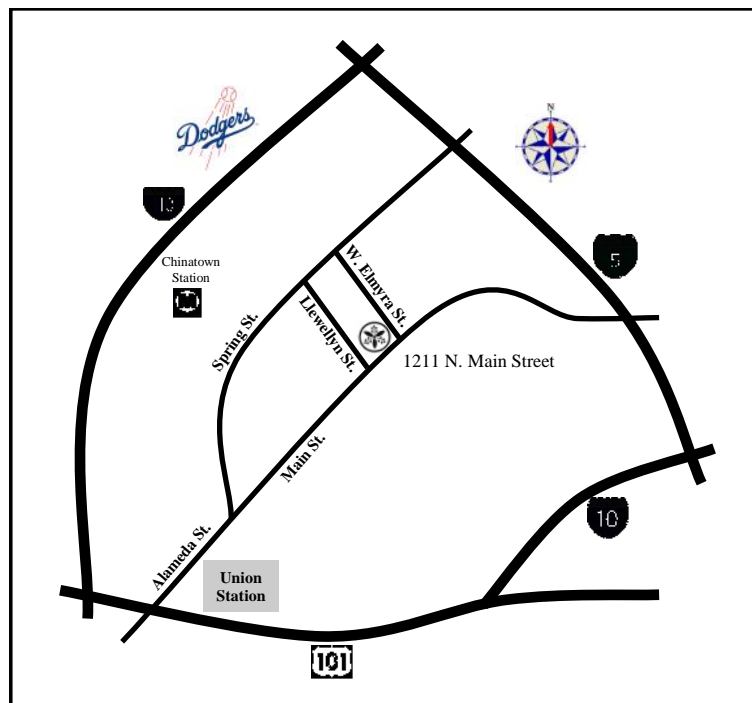
Sundays

7:45-8:45 AM

Thursdays

6:30-7:30 PM

No weekend classes on the last weekend of the month.



The Aikido Center of Los Angeles has been awarded
**Hombu Official Recognition by the
 AIKIDO WORLD HEADQUARTERS**

公益財団法人 合気会

Aikido Hombu Dojo - Aikikai Foundation

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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The Aiki Dojo
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Editor-in-Chief and Publisher: David Ito



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.