

NEWSLETTER

No.251 July 2016

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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

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June Report

New members 2 Total number of adults training 57 Total number of children training 38

Results of Sogo Shinsa on 24th & 25th June

Shodan	Andrew Crampton Roland Thompson	7th Kyu	Greg Burley Dessy Gunawan	5Y1 step	Lawrence Monforte
3rd Kyu	Neale Windress Vaughan Gray Charlott Crampon	8th Kyu	Louis Chatfield Jason Henry	3Y4 step	Murray Booth
Jun-3rd Kyu	Thomas Gilbert	9th Kyu	Andrew Keller Jae Rundle Atau Ishigaki-Gilbert	2Y9 step	Joel Delaney
				S3 step	Viktor Ovcharenko

Events in July

1. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Thursday 21st 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 29th 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 30th 1:00pm~

2. Hajime Class

- Saturday 23rd 1.00pm~

3. This Month's Holiday

- **Dojo's Holiday:** Monday 1st August

A little more knowledge for your Aikido

Senshusei-geiko ~Hajime Class

Once a year event, Senshusei-geiko known as Hajime class, is scheduled on Saturday 23rd July. Since we changed the month of our annual demonstration from August to October, Hajime class is moved too, from October to July this year. Anyone who has enough energy to spare mentally and physically or simply would like to take a challenge, please join in us. You will surely enjoy the challenge, in the end!

Senshusei-geiko means “training for intense-learning students” and the course has been running at the Yoshinkan Headquarters every year for fifty-two years since 1964. It was originally designed to train specific riot policemen in Tokyo who were dispatched to Yoshinkan Headquarters to master the skill of the most practical and effective Aikido techniques in a short period of nine months. Ten elites of young and strong riot policemen who held over 3rd Dan in either Kendo, Judo and Karatedo were chosen to be sent for the course every year. Even though they were the chosen warriors of valour, they screamed and cried from the pains and severity of Yoshinkan style training. When new comers visited the office of Headquarters to sign up as general students to learn Aikido while Senshusei-geiko was on, they heard all the screams and cries from the dojo – bad timing, eh? Naturally, they often changed their minds and left in a rush before they signed the form! I am sure the Headquarters lost many new students because of the Senshusei-geiko.

I happened to buy a book of Aikido when I was in my early teens. I was excited by finding out about a course that offered an extremely severe training that even robust riot policemen cried and vomited. I did not know it was the Yoshinkan style Aikido then, but I thought it must be a genuine martial art. Yet, I never thought I was going to join in the course and even teach the course years later. It was a mere

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accident that I ended up becoming an uchi-deshi of Yoshinkan Aikido and that was my best fortune I ever encountered. Life is pretty entertaining.

There were two main points to produce professional Aikido practitioners in such a short period. Firstly, training their lower bodies thoroughly to build the foundation of Aikido body by practicing kihon-dosa's intensively. Secondly, repeating basic Aikido techniques thousands of times to imprint the movements into their bodies so that they would be able to perform techniques automatically without thinking. According to general students of the honbu dojo, it was a common understanding that they should beat up a new uchi-deshi within the first three months of Senshusei course to satisfy their pride. As it got impossible after that period, and the Aikido skills of the new uchi-deshi totally overtook the general students' ability by his graduation of the course.

I opened Aikido Yoshinkan Brisbane Dojo in June 1995 with an ambition to build a real dojo that would match even the honbu dojo. Consequently, I offered Senshusei-geiko for my students at the beginning of my dojo. Not once a year like now, but it took place every month after monthly grading tests, and it was a compulsory class for all the students. Besides, I carried a pure Yoshinkan spirit without learning the relaxed attitude of Australians yet, my way of conducting the class was much more severe and stricter: Hajime class once a month forcing all the students to participate... To me now, it was a crazy idea. No wonder I kept losing students before they gained the ability of Aikido skills.

Well, I realised the problem and the times of Hajime class reduced to once every three months scheduled after Sogo Shinsa, and then to once a year as an experiencing event. The interesting difference I found between Japanese students and Australian students through the Hajime class was that Japanese people became full of doom and gloom as they were pushed to go through painful and severe training, while Australian people were able to enjoy the pains and challenges in high spirits as if they were having fun. One Australian student told me that he found a way to distract his mind, because kihon-dosa was too hard and too painful, he focused on a pore of the neck of the person in front him and kept gazing to observe a moment that a sweat swelled gradually and dribbled. He found himself enjoying it so much by discovering a new way of observing sweat! Another student, who looked almost at the end of his life towards finishing a Hajime class and I felt sorry for him, to my huge surprise, began enjoying Jiyu-waza training within ten minutes after we completed the Hajime class! I thought, either, he was a great actor showing so much suffering on his face which tricked me well, or he had a special ability of extremely fast recovery. I simply laughed at his toughness with great amazement.

The Hajime class at our Brisbane dojo offers a hard training in a happy and enjoyable environment. Believe me, I am much softer than before ☺. And, it is a great opportunity to create a stronger bond between students by sharing the same hardship. I am looking forward to seeing many students participate in the class willingly with passion.

Osu!

Michiharu Mori