

NEWSLETTER

No.250 June 2016

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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May Report					
New members 1		Total number of adults training 62		Total number of children training 43	
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 27th & 28th May					
Jun-Shodan	Roland Thompson	8th Kyu	Jack Donnelly	3Y4 step	Cameron Blake
	Simon Nordon		Dessy Gunawan	2Y7 step	Joel Delaney
	Andrea Troncoso Salas	9th Kyu	Louis Chatfield	2Y5 step	Stephen Cuthbert
5th Kyu	Thomas Murden			2Y3 step	Tom Bannah
8th Kyu	Greg Burley	5Y7 step	Jason Williams	S5 step	Kent Windress
		5Y3 step	Ryan Slavin	S3 step	Kerry Nicholson
Events in June					
1. Sogo Shinsa			2. Children's Grading Tests		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Friday 10th 7:15pm~• Steps, Friday 24th 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 25th 1:00pm~			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saturday 18th 10am~		
			3. This Month's Holiday		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dojo's Holiday: 27th Monday		

A little more knowledge for your Aikido

A way of learning

When I finished my Senshusei Course (attended by a group of elite riot policemen and uchi-deshi apprentices to train Aikido severely and intensely) to become a professional Aikido instructor, I saw that all the other riot policemen left the honbu dojo (Headquarters) happily with a huge smile, free from the hell-like training. Honestly, I truly wished I could go with them...

The other day, when I was browsing the internet about Aikido or Yoshinkan, I found an online bulletin board service where both old and young Yoshinkan students share their thoughts and memories. One of them wrote a list of all the Yoshinkan instructors in 1980's with their current state information. The big-name instructors, who own their dojos or styles now, were all uchi-deshi then and some participants of the site admired the strength of Yoshinkan at that time. I laughed at a comment, "I cannot believe these men had their desks next to each other in the small office. I would not be able to breathe." Well, I was in the office as a new apprentice among these legendary instructors and I did have difficulty breathing smoothly.

I was always under enormous silent or verbal pressure from them, both at the dojo and at the office. I, being a young delinquent from countryside, had to be extremely careful with my attitude and words so as to not ignite their anger. One time, the very next day after the riot policemen graduated and left the honbu dojo, I was sitting at a dining table in the dojo's kitchen to have a lunch. To my astonishment, Takeno Shihan, the top of these fearful instructors then, walked in and sat right in front of me to have his lunch. "Why? Why do you have to sit there?" My food lost its taste and my pleasurable lunch time became torture, while the main instigator of pressure sat so very close.

After a few minutes, while he had his lunch and with a bitter expression on his face, he said, "Mori has to be retrained from now." What?! I shouted in my head, "You know, I have just finished the hell-like training for nine months with the tough riot policemen!" My spirits sank instantly with his words. Being sulky, I breached my good manner of using chopsticks and stabbed the last piece of my lunch, a sliced orange. (Chopsticks are the tools to pick up food but never used to stab in Japanese manners.) Well, the moment I stabbed the orange piece, its juice splashed out fast and flew towards Takeno Shihan's face, to my greatest fear. Even though it was a less than a second, the event played in slow motion in my head and I prayed hard to God to stop the juice! As if it was aimed on purpose, it hit Takeno Shihan's eye! I yelled my apology in no time but I believed I was going to be killed. He was Yakuza Takeno, as everyone called him, and he would not have any mercy. He let out his deep threatening voice but in a whisper, "ouch..." as he closed his stinging eye. But no more than that. He was a perfect gentleman. I was very surprised but also more scared at his gentleman like attitude...

NEWSLETTER

How is he going to retrain me? Is he going to add more to it in revenge? I was absolutely frightened in anticipation of the unknown torture I was going to face from the next day...

The next day had arrived. I expected the type of training I had on the first day of uchi-deshi life, pairing up with one of my senior uchi-deshis and being thrown like a rag as well as experiencing the feeling of my head nearly getting split. It was, however, completely different. Takeno Shihan directed other uchi-deshis to correct my poor techniques and teach me intensely at every class I attended, as I partnered with general students to practice. That was all right you may think, but the reality was not that simple. As a result of Takeno Shihan's order, whenever I was training, all the other uchi-deshis kept visiting me, hovering in orbit like hyenas and never left me alone. And here, I encountered a big problem.

I had seven senior uchi-deshis above me at that time and each of them had different types Aikido. When all of them came to teach me in turns it created contradiction. 'A' uchi-deshi changes a movement in a certain way and while I am keeping 'A's instruction, 'B' uchi-deshi comes along and abuses me for doing it wrong and fixes it. Then, 'C' uchi-deshi visits me and mentions how poor my technique is as he corrects me again while I am following 'B's instruction! I was forced to change into seven different ways of performing techniques. The bad side of Japanese craftsmanship culture was the way of teaching. They don't teach but they scorch apprentices every time they pick something to correct. I got frustrated and very angry at this unfair situation.

I suppose everyone has had a similar experience that different things are taught by different senior students at our dojo too, though our black belt students are kind and gentle. It is very nice of them to teach you, but you get confused thoroughly. Who is right and who is wrong and what shall I do, you wonder... I exactly know that confusion. I blamed my senior uchi-deshis in my mind as they gave me more confusion, instead of improvement of my Aikido. I even stopped replying to them obediently being too sulky. Yet, an inspiration occurred suddenly and I understood.

I realised that I had neither respect or gratitude to my seniors for sharing their knowledge for me. It was due to my shallowness and arrogance that I could not appreciate what they were teaching for me. The techniques each of my seniors had attained were based on their accumulated experiences and knowledge through years of hard training and training with diverse people. The techniques naturally varied, depending on their body size, types of muscles, physical strength, personal characters, way of thinking, attitude of pursuing Aikido and so on. How could not I feel thankful for their generosity to share all this precious information with me, I thought. If 'D' uchi-deshi spent five years to reach that level and taught me what he believed was best, then I was learning as much as five years of concentrated knowledge and the same for other instructors. In a simple thought, I realised that I could learn skills of so many years' worth of training if I was able to absorb all the mastery of my seven seniors, even though when my own Aikido history was only for one year. The very first step for it was to be humble and to respect each of my senior uchi-deshis.

It was not about who was right or which was correct, but it was about accepting all the diversity and mastering all of the variations. Once I had this realisation, my training became much more enjoyable. As my attitude was positive, it was a lot easier to harmonise with each senior; when I saw 'A' was approaching I performed 'A's technique and if 'B' was around I made sure I showed 'B's way of doing techniques. Then the chance of getting scolded reduced rapidly and my skills of Aikido progressed in accord. "Welcome it when it comes, let it go when it leaves." The words Master Gozo Shioda used to describe the secret of Aikido was very true. The attitude of rejection and repelling does not produce or change anything but things change with a good outcome if one can be harmonised with every situation. That was what I learned from this experience.

I am not a humble person by nature but have a tough ego. Knowing my nature well enough, I have to discipline myself intently and consistently. I should always remember what I learned in my early twenties and keep reflecting on my attitude, for my growth of Aikido as well as for my spiritual development.

Osu!

Michiharu Mori