

NEWSLETTER

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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

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April Report					
New members 4		Total number of adults training 59		Total number of children training 45	
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 29th & 30th April					
5th Kyu	William Kitchin	9th Kyu	Greg Burley	S5 step	Roland Thompson
6th Kyu	Thomas Murden		Jack Donnelly	S4 step	Wikrom Tang
				S2 step	Kerry Nicholson
Events in May					
1. Getsurei Shinsa			2. This Month's Holiday		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Friday 20th 7:15pm~• Steps, Friday 27th 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 28th 1:00pm~			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Labour Day: 2nd May• Dojo's Holiday: 30th May		

Coffee Break

Shinmyoken and Musoken (心妙剣と夢想剣)

One day, a woodsman was working hard, cutting wood with his axe. Then, a wood sprite appeared in front of him and began to annoy him disturbing his work. The woodsman kept working impassively but soon he thought in his mind that the sprite was such a nuisance. At the moment he thought it, the sprite said, "You thought I was such a nuisance." Even though the woodsman felt some surprise at these words, he remained indifferent. Yet, because the creature started to pester him with more malicious actions, a dash of murderous intention came up in the very corner of his mind. Then, the sprite made fun of him, saying "You are no match for me, no way you can kill me." It was a clear challenge for the woodsman and he thought to scare the sprite a little.

He brought the axe down close to the sprite but avoiding it on purpose. The wood sprite didn't stir an inch, reading the woodman's mind, and looked down on him with a loud laugh. This made the woodsman furious, and he swung his axe down, aiming at the sprite sharply this time. It moved just enough to avoid the axe, as if it was nothing. He got a shock at the sprite's skill and he became serious about attacking the nuisance with a clear murderous intention. He struck the axe again and again at the sprite, and despite the fact that his aiming was perfectly accurate, his axe cut nothing but air. The woodsman realised that it was just a waste of time as the sprite had the ability to read people's minds without a single mistake. He got back to his work and ignored the annoying creature totally. As he concentrated on cutting the wood whole-heartedly he totally forgot about the sprite. The next moment, the head of axe flew off the handle accidentally backwards, forming an arch as it flew. The sprite was behind him but he knew the nimble creature would avoid it easily. To his greatest surprise, he saw the axe blade pierce the sprite's skull and the wood sprite vanished instantly.

Right, I am sure you thought, "what is this fable for Sensei?!" This story was told around the Edo Era in Japan, to teach Samurai who studied swordsmanship what true deadly sword technique was. There are two types of ultimate states in swordsmanship; Shinmyoken and Musoken. Shinmyoken is the very top stage an ordinary man can reach and Musoken is the very top stage a genius can reach. The woodsman was a very skilled professional in handling the axe and the attacks he performed were all extremely precise, sharp and powerful. He calculated every move, angle, strength and such, learned through his experience as he read his enemy's movements. This is the sword skill of Shinmyoken. Then, after he gave up his murderous intention, he focused on his work being free from

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all distracting thoughts and that was when his axe naturally hit the dead centre of the target. This is the state of Musoken. Obviously, Musoken is the higher state than Shinmyoken and Samurais used this fable to teach the true level of being a master of swordsmanship, where a man attains an absolute world of no thought while handling the sword. Instead of thinking about the strategy of sequences of strikes, he sees beyond, despite a perfect analysis.

When I read this Samurai's teaching through a fable in a book, I did not feel it was realistic. However, after I became an uchi-deshi and gained some opportunities to listen to the real episodes about Master Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei, directly from my Master, Gozo Shioda, it changed my impression of the story. I felt it to be something closer to my real life and I got more interested. One of the episodes resulted in me imagining O Sensei to be a wood sprite, not the young version but old with a white beard. He sometimes asked his uchi-deshis to strike him with a bokken, to train his skills of warding off irregular attacks. One day, an uchi-deshi was tempted by an evil spirit and felt like he wanted to trick O Sensei. Though his attacks were usually straight forward, just trying to attack his master single-heartedly, he thought of hitting the spot where the Master would move, to avoid his head-on attack. So, he faked his attack line as if he was hitting O Sensei in the centre but swung down his bokken to his right with full strength, where O Sensei usually dodged. The bokken flew down and the wind made a howling noise. O Sensei did not move an inch and was smiling at his tempted uchi-deshi happily. He obviously read the mind of his disciple. This sounded unbelievable, but it seems that he had the same ability as what the wood sprite had. Well, just to warn you, my students, I am an ordinary person and I am not either the sprite or O Sensei. Don't ever think of trying me, please...An ordinary man won't be as generous as the genius, remember.

O Sensei used to teach Aikido to military officers. One day, he visited the army base with his uchi-deshi, Gozo Shioda. As they passed the army shooting range, O Sensei stopped walking and gazed at their training intently. Suddenly, he spoke loudly, "Such a poor aiming would never hit me!" He made sure his voice was loud enough to reach the soldiers. Gozo Shioda was very troubled and tried to lead his Master away quickly, to escape the scene. But the angry officer could not let them go and proposed a challenge. He forced O Sensei to sign a document to say O Sensei would accept his death as his own responsibility. As everyone knows the result, yes, he somehow dodged the bullet and threw the officer with an Aikido technique. This is a legendary tale of O Sensei.

For a long time, I was half doubtful about the story. However, I now think it was maybe possible when I consider the story from the perspectives of Shinmyoken and Musoken. O Sensei described the way he could avoid the bullets. He first saw a white line coming toward him and when he dodged the line he heard the sound of bullet's passing through that spot. I think the white line he was able to see was the thought of the shooter which was focused on the target intently. When O Sensei was gazing at the shooting training, he was examining and judging the skills of shooter carefully and concluded that his skill was extremely precise; the level of Shinmyoken. Then, he assaulted the officer on purpose to hurt his pride, though knowing the real value of his shooting skill. Else, he would not have abused anybody as he was known as a man of peace and love, being very religious, I think. He provoked the officer, drawing his strong emotion to make sure his thought of aiming would appear strongly. As O Sensei planned, the powerful thought aimed at his heart from the officer became visible as the clear white radiated line, which made it easier to dodge the line. If the officer was really a poor shot, he might have shot somewhere totally different from his aiming, then O Sensei might have been killed or injured. Even though O Sensei had an extraordinary ability in Aikido, this episode would not have happened if the officer had not reached the level of Shinmyoken.

The young Gozo Shioda, who saw this incredible challenge, could not stop telling people about this event with his Master. Numberless people heard the tale and were amazed. A man among these people suggested to Gozo Shioda that O Sensei should challenge his friend who was an expert

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hunter. Since Gozo Shioda was so proud of his Master, believing in another heroic story, he went to see the hunter straight away and brought about an engagement of challenge. The skill of hunter was outstanding. He did not target the birds by his eyes. He rather felt the movement of leaves and branches as they swung in the wind and shot a spot where his senses guided him, without seeing the target directly. The birds shot down, were all hit through their eyes, a hundred times out of a hundred. His level was not of the Shinmyoken but Musoken; not what an ordinary man could achieve. He was definitely a tough opponent for O Sensei, thought Gozo Shioda. Still, he had no doubt in his Master's winning. Since O Sensei was the one who overpowered a frightening soldier, a hunter should not be his match.

He got very excited about reporting this arrangement to his Master. Master listened to his story describing the way the hunter shot the birds in detail. Then, to his surprise, Master said, "No good, no chance," and turned down the challenge. Master knew there was no chance of reading the hunter's mind to avoid the bullets, when he had no thoughts but only sense. Well, O Sensei saw the reality instantly by just listening and that was because he was also a man who had reached the level of Musoken, I think.

Well, now about us, no, about me. I am a professional Aikido-ka, training for more than thirty years. But I know I am not a genius of martial arts like O Sensei was. I am quite realistic and I do not dream of becoming the man of Musoken. I understand that the level of Shinmyoken is something even I can reach though, through accumulating a volume of diligent training and experience. Yet, the skill of O Sensei which enabled him to dodge a bullet is an envious ability that any male, particularly martial artists, would wish to have. It would be so cool!

Remember everyone, do not try me. Don't think of shooting me to try out my ability, please!!! I will die without fail...

Osu!

Michiharu Mori