



No. 112 December 2004

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Report of November

New members 3

Total number of adults training 63

Total number of children training 50

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 20th November

<u>Jun-3rd Kyu</u>	Chris Davis	<u>8th Kyu</u>	Jack Goener	<u>3Y7 step</u>	Lee Stemm
	Brett Hampson		Christopher Swinton	<u>2Y11 step</u>	Eric Kwok
	Mark Wilton	<u>9th Kyu</u>	William Harper	<u>2Y9 step</u>	Douglas Buchanan
<u>6th Kyu</u>	Viet Cao Ma		Shayne Craddock	<u>2Y7 step</u>	Matthew Watson
<u>8th Kyu</u>	Peter Read	<u>4Y4 step</u>	Emmanuel Economidis	<u>2Y4 step</u>	Albert Lu
	Jaime Bowtell	<u>3Y10 step</u>	Brent Weston		

Events in December

1. Sogo Shinsa

- ♦ Saturday, 18th 1:00pm~
- ♦ Shinsa training starts from 4th Saturday.

2. Kids Class Holiday

- ♦ No kids class will be held for the last two weeks in December and for the first week of January. The last day of this year's children's class is on 18th Saturday. The first class in the new year is on 13th Thursday.

3. This Month's Holiday of Adults' class

- ♦ The dojo is closed from Saturday the 25th of December till the 3rd of January.

♦ DECEMBER & JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Coffee Break

"Dodging bullets"

I wrote about O' Sensei's 'dodging bullets' episode in the October newsletter. The episode was stuck in a corner of my head for ages, as I just could not work out how a human being could dodge bullets. Being the realist that I am, I do not believe in fantasies or supermen. So, I have been always thinking of this episode in a realistic way and finally I have obtained a practical explanation for this episode. This article may not interest you, but please excuse my temptation to write down my current view.

To start with, I'd like to quote the episode from "A memorial of Gozo Shioda" written by Hideaki Ishihara, rather than tracing my fuzzy memory.

At that time, O' Sensei often visited Toyamagahara Army Base to teach soldiers Aikido taking his disciple Shioda with him. One day, their were two army officers training their guns aiming at a target located about a little longer than ten metres ahead at a firing range where O' Sensei always passed by. As O' Sensei saw them practicing he suddenly said, "Can't kill a pig with that kind of dull shooting. Such a waste of bullets." Because he said it in such a loud voice they heard it and became furious saying, "You wretch! What did you say!" Both of the sides didn't yield to and O' Sensei signed an agreement that said, "Have no objection to whatever happens to me." And O' Sensei stood at the target having one of the officers with his gun at the ready who was in a towering rage. "Bang", the gun echoed. O' Sensei swayed in left and right and dashed for the officer in an incredible speed, and then flung him away.

This is how the episode was described in the book. Even though there is a popular view that O' Sensei was possessed by the supernatural and therefore he was able to see the lines of fire, I would like to consider the episode from an ordinary viewpoint.

Firstly I would like to mention about an accepted opinion in Japan that good martial artists are all cowards. Because they are cowardly they are never satisfied with their skills and train more severely to secure their skills. If this general theory was right, O' Sensei must have been a very cowardly man by nature. And at the same time, lots of his experiences and materials tell us that he was a person of character. I cannot see the reasonable necessity in O' Sensei's criticising words "Can't kill a pig, just wasting of bullets" to



men who were training sincerely, when we know he was a person with integrity but with cowardice. These words sound like more from street gangs or punks. I assume that these rude words were unnatural for O' Sensei and therefore I believe that there must be some sort of intentions behind them.

I had to consider the background of this episode carefully. O' Sensei had been visiting the army base regularly to teach Aikido. He wasn't visiting there whenever he wanted but he was following the schedule of the army curriculum. That meant he always passed the firing range at the same time of the same day and most probably the same army officers were practicing their shooting as scheduled. He watched them practicing as he was passing through the range and judged their levels of gun skills at a highly advanced level, I suppose.

He thought out the possible ways to dodge their bullets. This judging based on their accurate gun skills that never missed the target. After watching them training many times and making sure of their abilities, he plotted very carefully, being a coward person. For others, like the disciple Shioda, it all looked as if it were a sudden incident, but for O' Sensei he might have spent half a year, one year, or even longer measuring their abilities and his own to put the plot into effect.

The plan was carried out. He insulted those officers who were peerless marksman whose every shot found the target and made them angry on purpose. The more furious they became they would have targeted his face or heart to kill him by a single shot. At that time, a general citizen insulting army officers deserved death. For O' Sensei, he wanted to narrow the target to a smaller point to dodge the bullet. Why O' Sensei, who was a person of character, abused the innocent officers? The answer was because he wanted to narrow the target. This is my view.

When the line of fire was absolutely set there was a higher possibility of dodging the line. Well, the line was set but now there was a matter of timing. The distance between them was a little longer than ten metres away, as written in the book. So, I stood at the spot a little longer than ten metres from the wall in our dojo and pictured the scene in my head.

Well, it is impossible for humans to see the fired bullet with the naked eye. If it were possible, it would've been too late to make a motion after one saw a bullet coming. No human can move fast enough to dodge a bullet after he saw it was approaching. The key at the instant of fire is at the trigger. Then, we should give our utmost focus on the trigger to catch the moment of fire, as we can see the forefinger pulling the trigger at the instant one shoots, and at the same moment we should dodge the set line. The stance had to be fixed beforehand having our right foot forward out of the centreline and leaving our left foot on the centreline but with the body faced forward. At the same timing as the forefinger moved to squeeze the trigger we should twist ourselves round to our left. Using this stance, we should be able to dodge the bullet line aiming to our face or heart with a minimum movement.

Now, the 'dodging bullets' episode became more realistic than just a fairy story. The trick was that O' Sensei said that he was able to see the bullets or the fire lines which left all of his followers in total puzzlement. I understand that this episode shows how thorough O' Sensei was in making preparations and lured the officers into a trap to try out his true ability. At the present time, I believe that the episode was not about "dodging bullets" but about his art of strategy. Sun Tzu (a great military strategist of ancient China who wrote a famous book "The art of warfare") left the legendary phrase, "Know the enemy and know yourself, and in a hundred battles you will never be defeated." Surely it was, as a result of the accurate measurement of the opponents' ability and knowing his ability entirely, O' Sensei was able to dodge the bullet. The episode was not by the supernatural but by a marvellous practical martial artist.

After all, what I realised afresh was what a divine martial artist O' Sensei was, whether the episode was supernatural or practical.