



No. 119 July 2005

**AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO**

## Report of June

New members 4

Total number of adults training 81

Total number of children training 65

### Results of Sogo Shinsa on 25<sup>th</sup> June

<u>Sandan</u>	Lee Stemm	4 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Jaime Bowtell	9 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Amy Hughes
<u>Nidan</u>	Matthew Watson	5 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Layla Harrington	4Y8 step	Richard Diehm
	Douglas Buchanan	6 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Nicholas Scholz	4Y5 step	Emmanuel Economidis
	Eric Kwok		Patrick Kua		Jason Economidis
1 <sup>st</sup> Kyu	Chris Neucom	7 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Jamie Baker	4Y2 step	Miki Diehm
	Heather Wood		Aaron Stewart	3Y11 step	Jason Williams
	Frankie Wood		Matthew Pethig	2Y11 step	Albert Lu
	Kanako Yamaguchi		Tomonori Suzuki	2Y7 step	Shelly Hope
	Matt Carpenter		Taj Deniederhausen	2Y4 step	Vladislav Neklyaev
	Matthew Jukes		Nathan Harding	2Y1 step	Eagle Kao
	Brett Hampson	9 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Jeremy Hagop	S5 step	Murray Davis
	Lloyd Gainey		Manfred Beyrer	S2 step	Greg Beerling
2 <sup>nd</sup> Kyu	Mark Wilton		Mark Davies		Myles Frost
3 <sup>rd</sup> Kyu	William Harper		Adrian Stuart		

### Events in July

#### 1. Getsurei Shinsa

- ◆Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> 1:00pm~
- ◆Shinsa training starts from 16<sup>th</sup> Saturday.

#### 2. This Month's Holiday

- ◆Dojo's Holiday 25<sup>th</sup> Monday

## Coffee Break

### Report of Dojoko demonstration

Whenever I receive a request to do a demonstration from outside organizations for example Karate championships or this dojoko type, I feel like I have been challenged to make the name of Brisbane Yoshinkan sink-or-swim. Although my mental attitude towards these demo's is so serious, the issue does not actually have much impact on the expansion of the Brisbane Dojo; there are neither phone calls of enquiries nor new members from the demo. But I feel that it is my responsibility to distinguish Aikido as a great martial art here in Australia. Shortly after I moved to Brisbane back in 1995, I had the shocking experience of being asked if Aikido was a martial art when I introduced myself as an Aikido instructor, while Yoshinkan Aikido in Japan was recognised as a distinguished martial art.

I personally do not like mixed martial arts matches and it did not appeal to my interest when I heard about the dojoko event. But I agreed to do my demonstration for them willingly since the young couple who were organising this event were nice people and I wanted to aid their challenge of new business with my little influence, as I understood how difficult it is to start something new from my own experiences. They requested me to do a demonstration using some weapons. Since I knew that the stage and effects were going to be very showy for this kind of event, using Bokken (wooden sword) would not have the right effect to do Ken-soho, so I decided to use a dummy sword which had a shiny blade to attract the audience more and do a Yonin-dori (against four men) demonstration with four Bokkens, to respond to their request.

Well, I thought of using the dummy sword simply because it was more appealing to the audience and I did not think that I was going to learn much from practicing Ken-soho with the dummy sword. I tried Ken-soho using the dummy sword seriously for the first time in front of the mirror and I was shocked as to what I found out, myself being an amateur in swords. The way of swinging Bokken and the way of swinging swords are thoroughly different. I always believed that I was practicing sword but just using the wooden made one. However, the way I was swinging Bokken was exactly as if I was swinging a stick. The sword is something to cut through but not to hit through. To cut through a thing, angle of the blade and the balance of timing and strength have to be very accurate, while hitting a thing works by



just strength. I appreciated very much the opportunity this demonstration gave me, for letting me realise this and increase my ability of mastering the sword. Another challenge I forced myself to have was demonstrating Yonin-dori (against four attackers) with four Bokkens as I mentioned, that I have never seen anyone else try anywhere except Master Gozo Shioda. I was getting more certain about my ability to deal with four attackers at a time about a year ago or so, but this was a great ambition for me to try against four Bokkens. The dojoko demonstration gave me some great challenges to overcome.

So, the demonstration day arrived. Checking my body condition carefully I got into Jason's (Economidis) car with the other ukes headed for Gold Coast where the venue was set. As you know, music is a must-have-thing in the car. I used to listen to hard rock music to raise my tension, no matter if I liked it or not, before the demonstrations, when I was younger. Jason, knowing my favourite musician, instructed me that Bryan Adams was not the musician a Budo-ka (martial artist) should listen to. Bryan Adams was the coolest star for 'teenage bad boys' in Japan when his debut single "Cuts like a knife" was out, in a poster he appeared in a cool rider's jacket and black jeans with an electric guitar, when I was around 15 or 16 years old. Not knowing many Western musicians I still listened to him very much after I moved to Australia. But I guess according to Jason's advice, he is not the type for martial artists to listen to. I replied "Osu!" to Jason, as he was senior in the Western music. I was looking forward to finding out what kind of music was going to start after he passed the bundle of CDs to Brent in the rear seat; heavy-metal rocks, punk, rap music, etc. The music tore out from the speaker was an American country music like a folk song (Sorry if it was wrong). "Is this the music for martial artists?" I wondered. It did not suit to my image of martial arts but they were seniors in the Western music I thought, just obeying seniors saying 'osu' is the fate of martial artists. I was trying to convince myself that the American country music was good music too, on the way to the venue. After we arrived at the venue, there was more music sounding so loudly. The music was nowhere close to country music or pop music, but it was a Japanese cartoon song (!) that I watched when I was in year 2 or 3. The cartoon was about the founder of Kyokushin Karate, Masutatsu Oyama, called "Life of a Karate idiot". I could not help myself laughing at the fact that this cartoon song was the one chosen by the director of the dojoko to be suitable for the event. I ignored the music and looked down at the ring where my challenge was going to happen, feeling like a feudal warlord scouting a battlefield. But! The loud sound of the cartoon song was bothering my rising tension..... I never thought of encountering this song in a foreign country far away from my home country at this most highly charged moment.....

Far behind the scheduled starting time when we were getting tired of waiting, the beat of a Japanese drum blared out and a spotlight in the dark illuminated the MC and Karate demonstration. It was a good show and the audience enjoyed it but personally I wanted to see the proper, serious Karate instead of fighting actions, which I believe actors should do, but not martial artists. Then matches started. I saw the first and second match and they jogged my memory of the same fights I saw when I was a kid; roundhouse punches not like professional boxers, bang into each other battling hand to hand, push over and jump on top of the opponent and give raining blows. I saw the same scenes performed by kids. There were no professional techniques but amateur fights for which all the audience around the ring was whooping in joy. The crowd were drinking, smoking and eating in a vulgar manner. Girls in bikinis were walking around their hips wriggling. Of course this was a show more like a cockfight in a show tent and it was nothing like traditional Japanese Budo demonstration which is pure and sacred since it originally started as a votive offering to God in appreciation of his blessings and protection.

The time we should be on came closer. Under this unusual atmosphere which we had never experienced before, I wondered how my ukes were feeling. Just then I heard Richard and Brent behind me saying, "Practice like live performing and perform like practicing", the phrase I wrote in that months newsletter. I knew their feelings well, as I was the same before. But in the last few years I gain my calmness when I do my demonstrations without being nervous, and I thought this demo was going to be my touchstone to find out if I really had gained the mind state of true calmness under these extraordinary conditions.



Another test I had to go through was if I could attract the dojoko audience by just pure Aikido, as it was as if a classical music band had to perform in a punk rock concert. Master Gozo Shioda's demonstration I remember was always enjoyable and humorous to entertain the audience but at the same time he was still very severe to his ukes. This style of demonstration is suitable to our annual demo type, which I can talk happily, explaining about techniques. But not for the dojoko type demo. The one I aimed for this type was the demo performed by Takeno Sensei back in 1993. As soon as he started his technique the crowd became in complete silence and all the focus of each audience was gathered on him. I would be really pleased if I ever could create the same atmosphere I had experienced, for my demonstration too.

The demo started. The confidence convinced by good training gave me an entire peace in my mind. The theme song of the dojoko (not the cartoon song, but the original song for the dojoko) was roaring loud first but I felt its volume got smaller as my concentration was increasing. I began Ken-soho and because my senses got so heightened I could sense the subtlest movement of my body and the delicate motions of the sword. Then, my senses ordered to fix each motion as I moved whenever it sensed a faint difference in any movements. It was a good start.

When I faced Richard for my first Jiyu-waza I felt my surrounding got dark and only my uke emerged extremely clearly in the dark. I recognised two consciousnesses appeared in me, the one totally focused in techniques and the other one enjoyed looking at the scene very calmly, and these two senses being well united controlled my performance. I was very pleased with my Jiyu-waza that the power of Aikido harmony was thoroughly exerted in motions of the forces clashing with each other so heavily. The next was my challenge, Yonin-dori with four bokkens. I knew it was going to be difficult in such a small ring being only seven metres in diameter and having as many as five people on it. I had not much room to move around and it was not enough space in between people, no matter how well I fielded ukes. (In fact Emmanuel was pushed out of the ring and having Jason's (Williams) huge body made the space even narrower.) But I was still determined to do my best in a limited condition and found some issues that I could work on to improve Yonin-dori.

You can watch the demo in DVD that Richard brought in for the dojo library. One thing I want to say about the DVD is that it just does not show the power and force of the actual demo, which we felt in the ring. Every movement and technique looks too easy and light and the impacts ukes received on their bodies are not displayed in it. I am not very sure if I attracted the attention of the audience or not as I was focused on my techniques but you can listen to the realistic impressions from people who were at the venue including my dear ukes, Emmanuel, Jason E, Richard, Jason W and Brent. There were a few hiccups about the DVD because of the pretty girls in bikinis; a mum who wanted to show my demo for her boys got a bit of surprise not expecting pretty girls in it, and there was an opinion from a senior student who felt it was insulting to my serious demo. I appreciated this deeply and was very pleased at this senior's special feeling for my demo, and I also had a good laugh at the fact that the video man was enjoying looking at the pretty girls while we were all under a lot of pressure. But anyway it is a good record of us, six of Brisbane dojo men, performing a great Aikido demonstration.

Well, our 10<sup>th</sup> annual demonstration is coming even closer. I would like to ask each of you to train steadily and do your best to prepare for it, to achieve a great demonstration suitable for our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I, myself, build on advances through my daily training to show my best demonstration ever that I can boast to the world. Let's show our Aiki Spirit!

OSU!

*Michiharu Mori*