

NEWSLETTER



No. 130 June 2006

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Report of May

New members 5 Total number of adults training 62 Total number of children training 63

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 27th May

<u>Jun 4th Dan</u>	Richard Diehm	<u>4Y11</u>	Jason Economidis	<u>2Y8</u>	Vladislav NeklyaeV
<u>Jun-Shodan</u>	Alastair Wilkinson	<u>4Y4</u>	Lee Stemm	<u>2Y7</u>	Eagle Kao
<u>Jun-3rd Kyu</u>	Greg Scanlon	<u>4Y3</u>	Brent Weston	<u>2Y3</u>	Murray Davis
<u>6th Kyu</u>	Carlo Mills	<u>3Y11</u>	Matthew Watson		Myles Frost
	Robert Austin	<u>3Y5</u>	Albert Lu	<u>2Y1</u>	Matt Carpenter
<u>7th Kyu</u>	Helly Conroy	<u>3Y4</u>	Douglas Buchanan	<u>S4</u>	Mark Frost
	Joseph Stuart		Eric Kwok	<u>S3</u>	Chris Neucom
<u>8th Kyu</u>	Vince Cubito				

Events in June

1. Sogo Shinsa

- ♦Saturday, 24th 1:00pm~
- ♦Shinsa training starts from 10th Saturday.

2. This Month's Holiday

- ♦Queen's Birthday 12th Monday
- ♦Dojo's Holiday 26th Monday

A bit of knowledge for Aikido

It was the last year before I quit the Headquarters of Aikido Yoshinkan, I was sent to teach at an Aikido club called *Nerima Aikido Club*. This club was where I met *Take* who came to our Brisbane Dojo in 1997 for his first visit and stayed at the dojo for about a year to receive some intensive training. He also came to our 10th anniversary demonstration last year. As old members know about him, he is such a funny, happy-go-lucky man with muscular power that can even beat some strong Aussies.

Take was sort of a black sheep at the club when he started Aikido. The club was renting a Nerima Ward Martial Arts Hall for just half a day on Sunday which another Judo club was using in the morning. *Take* was then working in the self-defence industry and trained Judo in the morning and Aikido in the afternoon to improve his physical stamina for his work. Training two martial arts in itself was not a problem but his attitude showed that he believed Judo was a lot stronger martial art than Aikido, himself being a Judo-ka, did matter to the Aikido club members. Unfortunately, the skills of Aikido club members were not good enough to prove the power of Aikido for *Take* who had a rather brawny body with a lot more physical strength than other Japanese men. Just what they needed, a timely dispatch of an instructor from Headquarters for the purpose of raising the level of members. I, as you guessed, was the one to be sent to teach them. On the very first day I visited the club, the leader of the club introduced *Take* to me and after a hasty greeting he nudged *Take* saying, "You have a question for him. Ask him." He jumped at the offer saying with a confident air, "I've been training Judo for a long time. How do you deal with a Judo stance when one comes with his hands wide open trying to grab your collar?" He did not just say it but physically tried to demonstrate the question on me.

Somehow, I had an almost same situation only a few months prior at a Judo dojo of Saitama Riot Police. (I wrote about this episode in detail in a former Newsletter No 101 January 2004, please read it if you are interested). The situation was almost the same but the challenger was a lot bigger than *Take* last time. So, I knew the same tactic and technique was going to work. I threw him a slow *uraken* (backside punch) with my right hand towards his face; it had to be slow so he could see it. The purpose of a slow *uraken* was not to punch his face but to lead his block. If I hit his face with a fast strong *uraken* that would not give enough damage to beat him but would have made him simply mad and he would try anything to beat me with his full strength using Judo techniques. I did not wish that to happen. Before he pulled me onto his Judo ground I had to bring him onto my Aikido ring by leading him to block my slow *uraken*. As I planned, he whisked it with his left arm. Here, Aikido can exercise its effectiveness in its full potential; pushing my right hand against his left arm to hold it while my left hand grabbed his wrist as I diagonally stepped forward right, and my right hand onto his left elbow where I dropped my focused strength completely onto with a rotation of my right hand very sharply in a small circular motion. The completion of Hiji-osae was beautifully performed, with a huge thud leaving *Take* lying on his stomach.

Since this incident, he became a captive of Aikido; he quit Judo and started training at the Headquarters too. But, unfortunately, after half a year from this event, I quit Headquarters to set up my own dojo in Australia. Two years after I left Japan, *Take* quit Self-Defence Force and came to Brisbane with his compensation allowance to learn more Aikido. His purpose was only one, to be a strong Aikido-ka.



How can we be a strong Aikido-ka? Whoever starts training Aikido, everyone wants to be a strong Aikido-ka. *Take* came to Fish Lane Dojo full of enthusiasm because he heard that the training in Brisbane Dojo with tough and big Aussie guys could be the best training to be stronger. From my eyes, however, looking at the way he was training, I thought it was going to be quite difficult for him to make real progress because his technique was totally lacking in harmony and was his own self-satisfying technique.

The power of Aikido is executed in its maximum strength only when your movements are totally harmonised with uke's movements (any type and direction of force) and then you add your own focused strength onto the right spot at the right timing. That is to say, powerful techniques of strong Aikido-ka are created only when they are harmonised with their uke but never forces uke to harmonise with their own style and power.

How can we gain this harmonic force then? We train with different partners during our classes whose body sizes and characters vary so much. This is a great condition to cultivate your harmonic force; applying just right technique, not too much, not too little, onto these various people and trying to be a just-right partner for each shite or uke to make them feel satisfied.

Because *Take* was so narrow-minded to be stronger, the way he was training was as if he did not recognise his uke being a woman or a small person, or even a scared-of-him person but he applied techniques 120% full-bore. I, being a teacher, was so worried at the possibility of him hurting someone looking at how he was training. I and Shuko talked to him concerning his lack of ability in harmonic force and that it could cause troubles not just in Aikido but in his life itself. I explained the importance of harmonic force to him over and over again through one year of his stay but the term, harmonious training, sounded rather like soft training to him and he could not comprehend fully what I meant until he finally left.

What he gained from training in Brisbane Dojo through one year was simply more fitness and more strength. Actually his techniques got worse in a technical way but with more muscular strength. He never understood the fact that the techniques of Aikido-ka with just physical strength can be effective only when his opponents are smaller or weaker but not when his opponents are bigger or more powerful. The techniques with harmonic force can work on anyone no matter if his opponent is bigger with more strength. This is the power of genuine Aikido-ka. Unfortunately, *Take* had to go home without reaching the level of where he was able to become a truly strong Aikido-ka.

After he got back home in Japan he decided to become a manipulative therapist (mixture of massage, bone-cracker and moxibustion) and he had a part-time job in a clinic as he studied. One day, I got a sudden phone call from him. He said, "Sensei, now I understand what you were telling me. I was terribly scolded by my boss, my employer of manipulative therapy, about exactly what you were trying to teach me, about harmony with each person." I simply wondered what made him understand the theory that he never could get a clue of, and asked him why. He confessed that he broke a back bone of one elderly man while he was treating him, obviously because he could not control his strength just enough for the man. Aikido and treatment, of course they are nothing like each other, but this event made him realise that the harmony with his patient/opponent was the key to complete a task.

Some years have passed since then. Now he runs his own business by visiting his patients to give some treatment and it's going very well. He has various patients; some are selfish and nasty who always complain giving him unreasonable requests, some are old and need conversation more than treatments. He tries his best to harmonise with each person's wish by his skills and heart. I can hear Kancho Sensei's (Master Gozo Shioda) voice saying, "You see, Aikido can be used in our daily life and we can improve Aikido in our daily life. Aiki, that is life", looking at *Take's* Aikido life.

The year he spent in Brisbane Dojo training so hard simply to become stronger was finally being used to improve his life greatly. I sometimes hear this kind of episode more or less from some of my students too, what they learnt in my dojo helped them to achieve a more meaningful and contented life. You know, hearing this kind of episode is the greatest gift/blessing as being an Aikido teacher, more than looking at your progress in just Aikido techniques.

OSU

Michiharu Mori