



Report of January

New members 5

Total number of adults training 60

Total number of children training 32

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 27th January

<u>4th Kyu</u>	Francis Hollingworth	<u>3Y12 step</u>	Eric Kwok	<u>2Y9step</u>	Myles Frost
<u>5th Kyu</u>	Rob Lawrence	<u>3Y7 step</u>	Douglas Buchanan	<u>2Y7 step</u>	Matt Carpenter
<u>7th Kyu</u>	Lawrence Monforte	<u>3Y1 step</u>	Sam Gray	<u>S5 step</u>	Aaron Stewart
<u>8th Kyu</u>	Megan Erikson		Eagle Kao	<u>S3 step</u>	William Harper

Events in February

1. Getsurei Shinsa

- ◆Saturday, 24th 1:00pm~
- ◆Shinsa training starts from 17th Saturday.

2. This Month's Holiday

- ◆Dojo Holiday 26th Monday

3. New Class times for Children's Classes

- ◆Wednesday class 4.30-5.30 is starting from February while Thursday and Saturday Classes stay the same.
- ◆All the children can attend one or two classes a week in any of these three classes, Wednesday, Thursday or Saturday.
- ◆Children's classes are closed during school holidays through this year.

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

Aikido what a ride!

As Innoue Sensei once said I've just bought my ticket to the train station Nidan. This is a concept that he gave us at his semina in Melbourne a few years ago. Those that were there may remember this idea. The premise was that your grading reflected your destination rather than your rank; this statement may have been a result of the gradings he'd just witnessed. Never the less this is a sentiment often expressed by many in the dojo both senior and junior, "was my grading good enough", "do my techniques reflect my rank". My personal view is that even if you feel you fall short of the mark. Sensei has graded you and passed you, and I trust his judgement before mine. When I take that idea to the mats any self-doubt I have vanishes, and my focus is on training harder and trying to become more of an example in the dojo. In doing this I'll try to repay the dojo and the faith Sensei has put in me.

A few months ago just after the hajime class I was talking to Sensei about the training in general. He suggested that I should try to treat every senior class as a hajime class and consistently push my limits. I've been trying to do this over the last couple of months and have found that in general my time on the mats has lifted; this really isn't a surprise of course the more you put in the more you get out. What has surprised me is that its forced me to focus only on the moment of training in front of me, and be single minded and whole-hearted with the task at hand. This I feel has made me a better student, and in turn I hope it will lift my Aikido. By changing the mind-set I take onto the mats, by training for the dojo and not for me, I've discovered another level to my Aikido. This is for me the most valuable thing I learned from my journey to Nidan and most important lesson I take with me on my journey to Sandan.

In finishing I would like say that I feel privileged to be a part of this dojo. Having recently trained in the U.S.A. and also based on my experiences in Japan, I can say (Humbly of course) that in my view we truly do have a world class dojo, I'm proud to be a member of this very special place. Of course my views are just that and if you asked me about this in another 4.5 years my views might be different again. At any rate I'd like to thank all my fellow students for all they teach me from beginners to seniors. Namely I'd like to thank Emmanuel, Jason E. and Brent W., for their constant encouragement and for the bloody good fun I always have with them. Richard and Eagle for their friendship, and of course Sensei and Shuko-san, what can't I thank them for. See you all on the mats.

Osui!!!

Sam Gray



Around August 2003, I saw an Aikido leaflet about the annual demonstration in Uni. I had heard about Aikido before through a lot of my friends. Some of my close friends that we used to do crazy things together had started to learn Aikido as well. It was a shame that I could not do it with them as it would be more fun and entertaining, so I felt a bit left out. (I am not longer in Taiwan I am in Australia).

When I saw the demo ads in Uni I was so exciting that there's an Aikido dojo in Brisbane. I didn't go to that Demo, because I didn't want to watch it, I just wanted to do it and I couldn't wait until next week to join when the demo period was finished.

I walked into the dojo and I saw a man in counter, I spoke to him that I wanted to do Aikido, he handed me a leaflet and explained to me the schedule of the class and the cost of training, and wanted me to sit on the bench, I said, "No. I want to do Aikido today," he thought I wanted to train a class and told me how much it was. I said no again, "I want to join Aikido today and please tell me how much the monthly fee is," that man looked at me with uncertainty and than said you needed to register as a member..., I gave the man my wallet just to show him how committed I was to start today. He gave me a look not believing how committed and asked me if I had a gi, I said, "Yes, I've got them in my car and I can start right now."

This was the first day how I joined the Aikido family, I have joined Aikido with no doubts. When I am in the Dojo I trust everything as a truth, a truth that just like a sunrise from the east, there is no point to ask why, I will just do it and keep doing it. The Dojo is like a holy place to me, a piece of land that totally clears my mind and nothing can go wrong when I am in the dojo, and if anything happens there would be a reason. Therefore, still no need to ask, just shout "OSU". Every time I arrive at the Dojo I feel that I am revived by this holy place, I very much appreciate this place and I will cherish every moment when I am in the dojo.

PS. By the way that man in the counter was Sensei, I found out when I was on the mats for the first time and saw him lead the bow to Shinzen.

Eagle Kao

I first wrote a newspaper article in February 2003. This was for my Shodan Grading. I now write this for my Ni-Dan Grading. Being that it is for the Soga Shinsa December 2007 it is almost 4 years between these two Gradings. As Sensei reminded me "...probably the longest time spent at the level of Shodan by any of his students..". So I was not unhappy when he requested/instructed me that I get my Ni-Dan before the year was out!

Life gets busy for some, if not most of us, so the application to my Aikido has being a little disjointed sometimes over the last 4 years. But I suppose the only thing I have to say here is that I still enjoy Aikido as much now as I did 4 years ago; actually a little more when I think about it, only because I feel that my skill level is a little more accurate and I enjoy the essence of the power somewhat more, and this gives the ability to put the practice of Aikido into reality.

Life is all about enjoying the path that we choose for ourselves in life. ***We are where we are because of the decisions that we made yesterday.*** One of my life's journeys is studying the art of Aikido, and I, like you, are blest to be able to receive the tutorials from a great Instructor like Mori Sensei (a thankyou to Sensei for your teachings and humble existence). The Aikido journey is one that has many small rewards, such as feeling the power of a technique when applied, or training with great people who are like minded, getting pounded to the ground, and gaining a sense of accomplishment, but it is a continual journey that will go as long as you let it.

As some of you know I like the harder edge to the Aikido Art. I like the short, sharp, dynamic and effective techniques that can be transferred into devastating street savvy moves. I also like feeling a strong technique, and also giving out a strong technique. For me I enjoy learning Aikido in a bit more or a brutal mentality; I enjoy the hard training that this Dojo provides and I believe this is a

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part of why the Brisbane Dojo is a Strong Spirited one. This Dojo works for me and I get a lot of satisfaction from Aikido in searching for these effective trainings. Everybody has a different approach and outlook for themselves from Aikido, and that's good, but there are a few things that I would like to share with all:

Train hard, and want to be trained hard with!

If you don't then you won't grow.

Smile when you get smashed!

Believe me it helps in so many ways for your own growth, including getting accustomed to the pain and also learning to relax into the techniques.

Learn to enjoy the pain!

You grow greatly when you go through much pain in this Art, learn to relish it and welcome it. Know that feeling discomfort the day following a training session is a good thing and take pride in having the ability to deal with it - this builds spirit and personal integrity.

Always be hungry!

Want to learn.

Want to be effective.

Want to be strong in yourself.

Want to feel pain.

Want to Uke to attack you hard, and resist you so that you can learn to use the techniques properly & effectively.

Be a strong Uke for your partner.

Want to have poise.

Ability vs Effort

"Never be disappointed with your ability, but you can be disappointed in yourself for not putting in a 100% effort."

Your ability will grow and develop with practice; your effort can always be maxed out.

Thanks to all that trained with me leading up to my Ni-Dan Grading and also beyond. A special mention to Eagle for partnering with me for the days event.

Cheers all and OSU!

Daniel McDonald

Feelings of 4th Dan

I have now written newsletter articles for Shodan through to Sandan and the only real feelings that are different or more acute are related to the obligations I feel I have. They are to provide leadership within the dojo, be a steward for the dojo's standards, a representative of Sensei and also to assist technically where required.

To dwell more than that would be padding it out. I thought I would share the experiences I have had through my training so that all students realise that nobody starts as a Yondan. I came to Aikido for very basic reasons, I was not searching for a dojo or a Japanese martial art or anything as interesting as that. I went to the dojo as my nephew was training. I had just moved to Brisbane from the coal fields of Central Queensland and Emmanuel said I should go and have a look. While watching, Max Volau (early student of Sensei's) ordered me onto the mats, I said I was simply there to watch and he said training was better than watching. I started training immediately with a lot of apprehension. There was so much to take in: language (Sensei was very new to Australia, so there was little or no English spoken during training); the directional changes (different from other martial arts I had been exposed to); the left handed application; and of course ukemi.



My early gradings were not of fantastic standard in the Fish Lane dojo. I remember grading in the early days with Adam Smith (my partner for most gradings until Shodan) and also Ken Black. Sensei would be marking the kamae stance and I would feel the energy being drained from my body and my knees would start shaking. The rest of the grading was agony as all my energy had been sapped by Sensei. Gradings were an interesting element of Aikido, as there was so many concerns going through your head: why did Sensei choose Adam to be first Shite, was it something I had done; why did some people seem to only turn up to train during grading weeks; would I be able to remember everything (and if I remembered it could I do it) and of course the pressure of renzoku-waza. An interesting addition was the inclusion of steps between the Shokyu and Dan gradings. There were many students reaching Shodan and leaving (thinking they had climbed the mountain and not wanting to wait for the next grading over a year away). The inclusion of the steps were two-fold: to keep people interested between the Dan gradings and also to hone specific techniques by training repeatedly with different attacks. These, in my view, have been an outstanding part of our dojo and in developing the depth. My Shodan grading was with a visiting Japanese student Ken Noya. I remember watching him smash my partner Adam Smith earlier in the grading day during jiyu-waza. I asked Emmanuel whether I should go easy (I was first Shite) and hope Ken reciprocated or go hard and leave him without enough energy to smash me back. The advice unsurprisingly was to go hard and wear him out. I did this and as a result was one of my more memorable gradings. The grading I am most proud of (not video-taped of course) was my Jun Sandan grading. The Jun (or probationary style) gradings are Sensei's creation and are not part of the Headquarters syllabus. These, in my view are a stroke of genius – they give you the much needed weapons training and start the tasu-dori (two-man) and sanin-dori (three man attack) training. Also in this vein, are the jo and tanto kihon-dosa katas and the more formal ken-dori kata that Sensei has introduced. These are of his creation and have added another dimension to our training.

I remember my first training session of kotegaeshi and thinking how unnatural it was and how petrified I was as my body did not want to go that way. Finally I asked Emmanuel to throw me, rather than me trying to uke for it and that seemed to work (luckily).

A few of the most prominent memories of the Fish Lane dojo were: the noise as you entered due to the floors upstairs being wooden and ukemi's by big men sounded ten times worse than they sound in the Ferry Road dojo; the sound of Sensei's thongs being kicked off at the bottom of the stairs as he was coming to commence the class; the dojo hard men like Greg Symonds, Jeff Walsh and David Rogan who would hit you square in the face when doing the atemi for shihonage (it took many hits before I realised the angle required to protect myself – slow learner); and the caning a group of lazy, talkative brown belts got from Sensei. It was akin to a hajime class and it was clear he was unhappy with our lack of discipline (he never was one to talk much). I remember being scared to attend a second class due to the reputation it had for hard and unforgiving training, I think I started attending second class after I became a brown belt.

As everyone knows, demonstrations are a very important part of our Aikido lives and over the years there have been many demonstrations I have participated in. The first demonstration I was involved in was as cameraman for a Karate championship opening ceremony. Shuko-san translated for Sensei in preparation to ensure the ukes (Max, Emmanuel, Takashi and Adam) were ready. Sensei's instructions were that if anyone were injured seriously the next uke would run quickly to the mats while the remaining two were instructed to drag the injured party off the mats. I was only the camera guy and I was petrified. During the filming (check the video out) I can be heard moaning and groaning as if I were in the thick of it. As first reserve I was hopeful no-one actually got hurt. The first annual demonstration I attended was in 1998 and I did a demonstration with my wife who was training at the time. I also did a renzoku-waza with my niece – not exactly a very active participant. The senior black belts started giving demonstrations at Shodan (remembering it was still relatively early days and this was an impressive rank within the dojo), I finally reached Shodan and the rules changed to Nidans only giving demonstrations. It seemed to be elusive to me to be able to give a demonstration – I persevered and finally gave a demonstration when I reached Nidan. I think it was at this time that I also started uke'ing for Sensei. In demonstrations I have been lucky enough to be Sensei's uke in Melbourne (at Takeno and Innoue Sensei's seminars), at the Sunshine Coast for their 20th Annual Demonstration, for

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Karate tournament openings, Dojo KO, every annual demonstration since I started and in Japan at the 50th Annual Demonstration. All demonstrations were very memorable for differing reasons – the worst (and to a degree the best) of which being at the Takeno Sensei seminar opening ceremony in Melbourne. I was attacking Sensei (I have spent nine years trying to hit him) when I saw him dip (thinking he was doing sudori) I pre-empted and started the zempo-kaiten ukemi thinking Sensei would flick me over with his body hitting my legs. Unfortunately he was doing kokyu-nage and I fell straight on my neck in a vertical position. I learned very quickly not to pre-empt, as uke you attack and respond to an applied technique. I was taken to hospital the next day with two compressed discs in my neck (C4 – C6). This took about six weeks to recover from and I missed the remainder of the seminar. The best moment was being an uke in front of over 1,000 aikidoka from around the world in Tokyo at the 50th Annual demonstration. The last points for demonstrations are what I think of as the rites of passage as you progress: the toe technique (where Sensei drives his big toe between your meta-tarsals) and the finger to the throat. These look (and are) violent and painful techniques, but as an uke you wish for them (you never ask for them) as this is a signal from Sensei that he believes you are ready. I have also been lucky enough to win five awards at the annual demonstrations.

Another very influential part of my training has been the years training that Soichiro spent at the dojo. He was an absolute inspiration training every class and every night after class with Sensei. This training was severe and I watched his skill level increase each month. By the time he left I was truly in awe of what he had achieved during this time. He returned to Japan to complete his Yondan grading and he was clearly a cut above in his group. Seeing him leave was one of the saddest moments I have had at the dojo. We called him the third Economidis brother we were that proud of him (and hoped some of his technique would rub off on us).

One of the more disappointing times I have had at the dojo was when a former student wrote an article about me (not naming me specifically) and saying, in his opinion I was a bully. This concerned me greatly, as the dojo has been my second home for so many years, I couldn't stand to think that my fellow students would think I would impose myself on them. With the support of Emmanuel, Brent, Jason Sainsbury and Sensei I quickly got over it. It has however left a lasting impression.

I have been lucky enough to train in Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney, Sunshine Coast, Melbourne, Perth, London, Tokyo and Yamanashi during my time. There have been many and varied partners and Sensei's, all who had a hand in my training and learning.

We have seen many people come and go through our dojo and will continue to see this. Almost all of these people have found our dojo welcoming, of outstanding quality and filled with people falling over themselves to help. I love the Brisbane dojo for the people, the quality of training, the training ethic, the community feel, the apolitical nature, the constant learning and humility, for the fantastic (and close) friends I have made and the availability of Sensei and Shuko-san for advice, for a chat and to keep us challenged and humble.

There are truly too many people to thank due to the many influences people have had. I will simply say I am immensely proud of the depth of our dojo, the fantastic people we continue to attract and keep, the reputation we have world-wide, the constant amazement at our brown and white belt abilities and the stable base we have of older students (trying hard to stay one step ahead).

Yondan is a step in my journey. I often say I am nine years into a 50 year course as that is how I see it. The rank is immaterial as long as I stay true to Sensei and my training partners. At this level you may know a few more tricks, but I learn as much from the students as I do from Sensei.

Osu!

Jason Economidis