

NEWSLETTER



No. 144 August 2007

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Report of July

New members 3

Total number of adults training 64

Total number of children training 74

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 28th July

Jun-3rd Dan

Albert Lu

7th Kyu

Kaido Mori

3Y4 step

Eagle Kao

Jun-3rd Kyu

David Shepley

8th Kyu

Gerry Kassman

S1 step

Tom Bannah

7th Kyu

Akiko Nicholls

Michael Peluso

Events in August

1. 12TH ANNUAL DEMONSTRATION ON SUNDAY THE 26TH

- ♦ 9:00am Start packing up at the dojo
- ♦ 10:30am Adults' Rehearsal
- ♦ 12:00pm Children's Rehearsal
- ♦ 12:30pm Doors open and warming up
- ♦ 1:00 ~ 3:30pm The Demonstration
- ♦ 3:30pm Awarding ceremony and taking a photo
- ♦ 4:00pm Remove all the mats and clear the venue.
- ♦ 6:00pm Dinner Party

2. Adults' Rehearsal for the demonstration

- ♦ 25th August Saturday 1:00pm~ *at the dojo*
- ♦ Everyone is expected to attend the rehearsal.

3. Children's Rehearsal for the demonstration

- ♦ 25th August, Saturday 10:00am~ *at the dojo*

4. This Month's Holiday

- ♦ ~~Dojo's Holiday 27th Monday & 28th Tuesday August~~

Sharing the Feeling of Black Belts

Why I Value a Red Belt over a Black Belt

Firstly, my thanks to everyone I have trained with and in particular to Matt, Lee and Greg who have patiently tried to improve my Aikido over many years. Also, my sincere thanks to Sensei and Shuko for all their instruction, guidance and patience.

To reach the milestone of Shodan is extremely satisfying personally. However, my primary motivation for training in Aikido is the children's classes run by Shuko which have greatly assisted the development of my daughter - Lainey. I think she would be different child without having trained in Aikido.

My journey in Aikido started when Lainey's pre-school teacher confirmed what my wife and I had suspected - Lainey was not at the same stage of physical development as other children of the same age. After some professional assessment, we ended up with the diagnosis of Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD).

In DCD, a child's brain and muscles aren't communicating properly and physical activities become very difficult. Things improved after some months of professional therapy, but we were advised to continue some type of physical activity that was focused on developing coordination and improving muscle tone. The goal being to keep improving the communication between brain and muscles.

We initially tried gymnastics, but Lainey hated it and to be honest the gymnastics instructors were only interested in the children who showed promise as future gymnasts. The remaining students were just there to make up the numbers and pay the costs.

I considered a martial art, but found most martial arts either would not accept children who were 6 years of age or expected children to train in adult classes. While looking for something more appropriate, by chance I spoke with Jason Economidis who had his son at the same preschool as Lainey at the time. Jason recommended we take a look at the children's classes at the dojo where he trained.

So I spoke to Shuko on the phone and then went along to view a children's class. It definitely looked very promising, but Lainey was very unsure. So I said I would go on the mats with her if she would start training. Shuko said that I needed to be training in the adult classes to be useful in assisting with training the children's classes, so my Aikido journey began.



Having trained in a number of martial arts as a teenager, I was pretty overconfident and did not think I would find Aikido too difficult. I expected an initial few months would be needed to pick up the key points and marry it up with what I had learnt in other styles. After a few months, I came to the realization that this was not going to happen and it was going to be a hard road – which it has been ever since. I also started to think that I suffered from DCD as well. I must have developed this condition in the twenty years of doing very little physical activity as I was certain I was quite coordinated in my youth. My muscles and brain appeared not to be communicating with each other when it came to Aikido.

I cannot speak highly enough of the children's classes offered by our dojo. As well as the coordination required to perform Aikido, the warm up exercises that Shuko uses at the start of class are excellent. Many of the exercises such as spider crawl, horse galloping and crab walking are right out of the physiotherapists' playbook for developing coordination and muscle tone.

The training in Aikido has also resulted in the children and young adults who attend being among the most likeable I have met. They are confident and well mannered without having lost the good humour of youth. The new children tend to start off a bit mischievous and unfocused, but with Aikido training and some firm discipline from Shuko and Jenny Bannah, you can see them slowly improve in their Aikido and as people.

Over the last 4 and half years, I learnt a lot from children's classes. Having to assist another instructor with teaching Aikido to the children and then ,when Shuko judged I was ready, instructing a subset of the children on my own really tests your knowledge and understanding of Aikido. This often resulted in my coming to the realization that I did not understand what I was teaching nearly as well as I thought I did.

Lainey has progressed to red belt (5th Kyu) and has purple in her sights. Thankfully, things have dramatically improved and she has overcome most of the DCD problems. A good portion of this improvement I put down to training in Aikido. So for me, while achieving Shodan provides a great deal of personal satisfaction and shows a great deal of perseverance on Sensei's behalf, I was far more satisfied and impressed by my daughter achieving her red belt.

Chris Neucom

In my three years of practicing aikido I feel I have only performed real aikido techniques on three occasions. On each occasion the technique was so effortless and beautiful that it felt like water flowing and cascading over rocks in a stream.

The first time was when I was practicing irimi-nage before class. I whipped uke around, folded him over backwards and slammed him into the mats. He was a big bloke, around 100 kg, and I had just peeled him inside out. He got up with a very accusing look, I smiled, he smiled, and then we both burst out laughing.

The second time occurred when Jason Economidis showed me how to do a katate-mochi kokyu-nage. It took me a couple of goes to get it right, but when I had his arm locked properly, I saw his shoulder drop slightly. Then by just moving my hip I flipped him about a metre into the air.

The third time was when Sensei showed me how to do hiriki-no-yosei ni properly. When I got my hands and feet moving correctly it was like my energy flowed from one direction to the opposite direction without any resistance.

There have been other moments but these I remember quite vividly. I also remember the early days of my training when I couldn't do a landing roll to save myself. It took me a long time (approx two years) to learn not to land flat on my back, nor to land on my head, or to land with my face on someone's knee. At my first demonstration my brother commented that I looked like a meteorite crashing into the earth. Two weeks before my second demonstration I sustained a broken nose in practice because I couldn't block a shomen-uchi strike.



I feel I have come a long way from my initial venture into the dojo, however the hard work and pain of learning has been worthwhile.

I have uke'd for some seriously good aikidoka. I have felt the beauty of real technique being applied on me and I have had some amazing instruction from people in the dojo. For me, real aikido technique is not about just stepping through the moves. Rather it is about getting uke all locked up and having complete control over their body.

Every night when Sensei does his technique in front of class I'm impressed by how graceful and effortless it looks. I have felt his techniques and been awestruck by how clean and crisp and powerful it is.

One day I hope to be of a similar standard. One thing is for certain, I have enjoyed the Way of Aikido so far, and I plan to follow the path for a good number of years to come.

I would like to thank all the black belts for helping me over the last three years. Not only have they been incredibly helpful but they have made our dojo an incredibly enjoyable place to train in.

Particular thanks must go to Brent Weston for picking me to be uke for the in-house dojo demonstration two years ago. He trained me to the point where I would survive his techniques.

Thanks also to Richie Diehm and Jason Economidis for the fantastic effort they've put in over the years in helping to me to improve. Thank you to Emmanuel Economidis and Daniel MacDonald for being the hard men of the dojo. Your techniques will never be forgotten.

Most of all, I would like to thank Sensei and Shuko for setting up the Aikido Yoshinkan Brisbane Dojo. It is the most amazing place. I admire the traditional Japanese atmosphere, the friendliness, the training, the discipline and the inspirational level of instruction. It is a great feeling when everyone gets together each night to practice aikido.

Train hard and train with fighting spirit. OSU!

Chris Swinton

Obtaining Sandan is a milestone in my Aikido development, which is an experience much appreciated. Having said that, it is not about thinking how good/strong I became, instead as I progress in the learning curve, it is a self-realisation of weaknesses. In another word, as an individual gain more knowledge of a subject matter, one will only discover how much he/she actually didn't know previously and the potential improvement can be made. Therefore, it is important to train with utmost focus constantly to ensure accuracy and really understand the essence behind it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank sensei and Shuko for their quality dojo, especially sensei's effort in nurturing my Aikido skills all these years.

Eric Kwok