



Report of August

New members 1 Total number of adults training 61 Total number of children training 75

Awards of 12th Annual Demonstration

◆Jiyu-waza

1st Award

Joseph Stuart & Michael Bannah

2nd Award

Jaime Bowtell & Tom Bannah

◆Renzoku-waza Award

Robert Austin & Megan Erikson

◆Aubrey Bannah Award

Alastair Wilkinson

Eagle Kao

Michael Bannah

Tom Bannah

Events in September

1. Sogo Shinsa

◆Saturday, 22nd 1:00pm~

◆Shinsa training starts from 8th Saturday.

2. Kids' class Holiday

◆Kids' classes are closed from 22nd Saturday to 6th of October. Back normal on 10th Wednesday.

3. This Month's Holiday

◆Dojo's Holiday 29th Saturday: Due to Sensei having a private reason for his religious activity, but we are **open on the 24th Monday** instead.

A bit of knowledge for learning Aikido

Brisbane Dojo's unique grading syllabuses

In December 1985 at the Headquarters, I happily passed my first Shokyū grading test (to become a brown belt) despite my strong strain that I had never experienced before. Being a teenager and a fashion-conscious person I was, I did not like my look with a plain white jacket, pants and a white belt that was so flat and dull. It did look too uncool! Passing the Shokyū shinsa meant that I was permitted to wear a brown belt and that joy for me was more than you could guess, I felt the joy of freedom of the people in East Germany when West and East Germany were united. It was not just an issue of white changing to brown.

I indulged myself in great joy and I was looking at myself wearing the brown belt in the mirror located in the dojo, thinking of my past nine months since I joined in and felt a huge satisfaction. Then, a black belt approached behind me and gave me kind congratulations and also an *invitation* to do Jiyu-waza for my celebration. He threw me over and over, and beat me completely. What a way of celebration I thought feeling a sort of culture shock from the way of Aikido tradition. Now, his turn was over and he asked me to throw him in Jiyu-waza style. It sounded as if he had a very fair attitude, but the new brown belt never had trained Jiyu-waza in the last nine months. So, I asked him how and he replied bluntly, "Just throw me freely." It sounded easy but I never practiced any Jiyu-waza type techniques up to then. Only the throwing technique I knew from the Shinsa syllabuses was Shomen-uchi Kote-gaeshi (1&2) with locks in the end and that meant they were not suitable for Jiyu-waza. To my great bitterness, I had to give up my right of throwing him. This was my ability at the beginning of my brown belt after nine months of intense Aikido training.

What do you think, everyone, that a new brown belt cannot perform even one Jiyu-waza or Renzoku-waza after nine months of Aikido training? I'm sure you cannot understand why for those who have been training at Brisbane Dojo. You might think I am a lot better in Aikido than what Sensei was at nine months experience.

Shinsa in Aikido is an absolutely important method to improve skills. It is not too much to say that the quality of Shinsa syllabus decides the level of each dojo, I think. The example of myself after nine months of training at the Headquarters was not an exceptional example but showed the very standard level of students there as we did not have Jiyu-waza nor even Renzoku-waza in Headquarters' syllabuses up to Shodan. So, all the white and brown belts never practiced Jiyu-waza style throws at all not only shite side but also uke side, until they became the level of testing for Shodan (black belt).



Usually, the affiliated Yoshinkan dojos use the Headquarters syllabuses without modifying at all for their students. When I set up my own dojo, however, here in Brisbane, I was determined to raise the level of my dojo to the top class in the world that even Headquarters' students would envy with amazement, I reconsidered the Shinsa syllabuses of the Headquarters thoroughly.

As a result of my consideration, using the Headquarters syllabuses as foundation I designed our Shinsa syllabuses from my own experiences at the Headquarters at the beginning and I added more Shinsa subjects from the need and requests of Brisbane Dojo students. The followings are brief explanations of reasons and purposes of each grading syllabus for you to understand them more deeply.

9th- 4th Kyu –Through these gradings, you can learn all the basic locks of Aikido and by having Renzoku-waza that is the originality of our syllabus; you can practice a throwing technique as well as getting used to Zenpo-kaiten-ukemi. This idea came from my awful experience of becoming brown belt I introduced.

Jun-3rd Kyu –General students at the Headquarters never train Kihon-dosa Renzoku and Kanren-waza and these techniques are trained only by Senshu-sei (international instructor's course students and riot policemen) and uchi-deshis to learn the direct relation between Kihon-dosa and techniques. Because I wanted my students to understand the importance of Kihon-dosas before they become brown belts I put this uchi-deshi training menu in Jun-3rd Kyu syllabus.

Shokyu (Brown belts grading)

During this brown belt's period aiming for a black belt closer, I put Renzoku-waza, my original subject, that consisted of very common seven Jiyu-waza techniques in a certain order. So, brown belts can get the feeling of Jiyu-waza without a panic of choosing techniques, at this stage of graduating from beginner's level. This is very important period for your Aikido training that you need to complete your basic Aikido skills fixed in your body, especially the essence of Kamae and Zanshin.

Shodan step 1~5 and Yudan step 1~12

The step gradings are very original and unique to our Brisbane Dojo. You can grade every month when you are a white belt and just waiting three month in Shokyu level, but you need to wait about a year after you reach 1st Kyu to be a black belt, and even worse once you become black belts, two, three, five and longer years. As many people easily lose their focus and motivation when the next goal is too far away, I added step gradings on top of the usual rank gradings to give short goals. Besides, by taking step gradings, you improve your skills so much through focusing small numbers of techniques each time, as it is almost impossible to practice enough of more than one hundred of basic techniques and Jiyu-wazas against five or more various attacks in just two weeks of the shinsa training period. It is not too much to say that by having these step gradings we have raised our dojo's level tremendously. I am certain that no other dojo's general students train Tasu-dori and Jiyu-wazas more than you do in our dojo thanks to our Yudan twelve steps.

Jun-Shodan, Jun-Nidan, Jun-Sandan, Jun-Yondan

All the "jun-"shinsa syllabuses are Brisbane Dojo's originals.

Jun-Shodan Like Jun-3rd Kyu, Tanto-soho (knife attacks) in Jun-Shodan is trained by uchi-deshi and senshusei only at the Headquarters. There are some differences in their Tanto-soho style and ours. They have five attacks in pairs both sitting and standing positions when we have eight attacks in solo movement, five standing positions in pairs and I added six tanto-dori techniques (dismarming techniques). I extracted the solo movements from the pair movements so that students could practice the basic knife attacks better by themselves and I excluded attacks in sitting position as Australian people tend to have knee problems very easily.

Jun-Nidan I created Ken-soho (sword attacks) for our students to learn ken movements more before they become Nidan. Uchi-deshi at the Headquarters learn "Yagyū Shinkage Ryu" style sword art calling an instructor to teach us but no general students ever learn sword movements other than ken-dori practice for the preparation of Yudan gradings. I could not teach "Yagyū Shinkage-ryū" as I did not have enough knowledge and skills but I designed Ken-soho using the basics of the sword art combined with Yoshinkan foot work. So, you can call it Brisbane style.



Jun-Sandan The first compulsory subject is Aikiken in solo movements both sides. I personally thought the way of training at the Headquarters was lacking in attack training, especially tsuki (punch). I believe that it is impossible to learn strong Aikido techniques without hard, real attacks. So, from this belief, I made Aikiken, empty hands attacks, out of Tanto-soho movements. The second compulsory subject is Ken-soho version 2. I designed this kata (form training) simulating the fight that samurais used to do using the real swords. The distance between your opponent is now wider from 2m (ken-soho in Jun-Nidan) to 6m and that is very difficult to judge the timing of one's attacks and blocks. You feel a lot more reality by practicing this kata. The third compulsory subject is jo-soho. Many students had seen O'Sensei doing jo-soho in old videos and I had lots of requests to teach them jo-soho. But, Yoshinkan did not have jo-soho, talking honestly. Therefore, I analysed my jo Jiyu-waza movements and extracted twenty-one movements that were related to Aikido movements. It is designed for you to be able to use jo freely in attacks, foot works and redirecting jo force to do Aikido techniques when you train jo-soho well.

Jun-Yondan Kata-mochi-yokomen-uchi is very old attack style trained at the Headquarters that we, even uchi-deshis, almost never trained. I did want to keep this training kata in Aikido, otherwise it might've disappeared. I'm pretty positive that no one except in our dojo trains these kata any more. Tanto-soho Renzoku was made by me, again. As there is ken-soho Renzoku why not using tanto as well, I thought. Tanto-dori in Jun-Yondan is a lot more complicated version than those of Jun-Shodan's as I combined the attacks and kihon-dosa.

I believe that no other Aikido dojo has this kind of various, complex shinsa syllabus in the world except Brisbane Yoshinkan and I am very proud of them. But now, more request from students that they would like to learn techniques against kicks. I learned only one technique, Irimi-zuki, against a kick, the technique made Steven Seagal famous and this was the only technique the Headquarters taught in their teaching subjects. I know this was not enough to teach here in Brisbane.

So, again I had to think it through from my experiences. I understand that there are only two types of kicks on the street, either front line or side line kicks. Well, you might think there are jumping kicks or turning kicks as well. But, have you really seen those types on the street in your life? I do not think they are realistic attacks that students need to practice. By the way, the side kick was my favourite when I was a boy.

Anyway, I picked some techniques that were suitable to kicks and made sure uke could take ukemi safely, and then I consulted Shuko on these ideas (as she is one of the living witnesses who saw Master Gozo Shioda's techniques directly and knows the level of the Headquarters and each uchi-deshi, I judge my thoughts and techniques through her eyes sometimes.) Now, my new syllabus having about twenty Aikido techniques against kicks have completed and will appear from this September Sogo Shinsa. Please, everyone, look forward to it and enjoy. I wish the students who have attained the 4th Dan to keep taking the step gradings repeatedly regardless of whether their 5th Dan is closer or not, to maintain their Aikido skills and knowledge.

Anyhow, I'm sure that there are hardly any grown-up husbands and wives who study kicks and techniques seriously and opinions change over them night and day, in the wide world. The scene suddenly appears in my head and makes me laugh with feeling of a bit of embarrassment.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori