



## Report of October

New members 1      Total number of adults training 58      Total number of children training 76

### Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 20<sup>th</sup> October

<u>Jun-Shodan</u>	Aaron Stewart	<u>3Y6 step</u>	Eagle Kao	<u>S4 step</u>	Aarjaun Burch
<u>4<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>	Wes Farrell	<u>2Y12 step</u>	Myles Frost	<u>S3 step</u>	Tom Bannah
<u>5<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>	Akiko Nicholls	<u>2Y11 step</u>	Matt Carpenter	<u>S2 step</u>	Amy Hughes
<u>6<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>	Adam Sawyer	<u>2Y2 step</u>	Alastair Wilkinson	<u>S1 step</u>	Helly Conroy
<u>9<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>	Ruofan Dong		Christopher Swinton		Joseph Stuart
	Peter Wei				

## Events in November

### 1. Self-defence Class & Demonstration

#### ◆Self-defence class; Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> November

1:00pm~2:30pm

- ◆The class is not for public but only for the members.
- ◆Although there is no class fee, students' fund is collecting some money for the BBQ party held after the demonstration.
- ◆BBQ Party will be held after the demonstration and everyone including your family and friends are welcome to join us.

#### ◆Demonstration; 2:50pm~

- ◆All of the black belts and Mori Sensei will display their demonstrations after the class. You can invite your family and friends for the demonstration.

### 2. Getsurei Shinsa

- ◆ 17<sup>th</sup> November, Saturday 1:00pm~
- ◆ Shinsa training starts on 10<sup>th</sup> Saturday.

### 3. This Month's Holiday

- ◆ **Dojo's Holiday** 26<sup>th</sup> November, Monday

## Sharing the Feeling of Black Belts

### Balance

On the first class after my third Dan grading, someone asked me, "so do you feel any different now?" I kind of didn't have an immediate answer in my mind, so my instant response was, "I don't think I feel any different..." After pondering over this question for a few days, I came to the conclusion that, I really don't feel that much different.

When I first started practising at the dojo, I would look at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Dan seniors and think, "man, their techniques looks effortless..." So my previous assumption was always that when I'm 3<sup>rd</sup> Dan, I would be able to have this big smile on my face while I toss people around without breaking a sweat, and people would bounce away when they accidentally bump me in the shopping centre or something (:P)

One question for sensei...do people bounce off you when they bump into you in the shopping centre??? (It requires a lot of courage to ask this question, so don't laugh at me when you see this article...)

Anyway, I guess my expectation was always that some point in time, the techniques would become effortless for me. Perhaps not to the point that people bounce off me, but at least I'd be able to execute the techniques without having to think about it, right?? And it would be effective too, right?? And I would be able to "sense" the uke's attack coming, right?? Oh, and I should be able to feel the joint on the uke's body locking up, right??

Let's just say that "point in time" hasn't arrived yet. If I don't pay attention to the details enough, the techniques still wouldn't work. Yet if I tense too much my arm muscles would come into play and then the hip power isn't applied. If I don't relax enough while waiting for the uke's strike, my body would feel like stone and my foot work would be sloppy. Yet if I relax too much I'd lose focus and I'd get hit.

Perhaps I just haven't progressed as rapidly as others, but all the way up to the present, training at the dojo is like balancing two mindsets. For example, it might be "focusing of the mind" on one end of the



scale, and “relaxing of the body” on the other. Or it could be “paying attention to details” on one end and “observe the whole” on the other.

Even swinging the sword is hard work. Grab too hard and you don't apply your body into the strike. Grab too lightly and you might injure you wrist and have to type with one hand (which happened to me recently...sigh).

But the positive side to all this is, through this constant battle with balance, I think both my mindset and techniques have improved through the years. Although it's not effortless at all (recently I'm getting worried...maybe it'll never become effortless for me), but it definitely is more effective, once I do manage to remain somewhat focused.

And this realisation also helps in other aspects of living. I think such mind training helps in control (because you always have to control your mindset to be focused). As in, with practice, you gain more control over your own feelings and mental reactions. For me, I get to control my temper more easily and I do not get stressed as easily when there's a lot of deadlines coming up.

So for anyone who's experiencing the same concern that their techniques are not effortless, don't worry, you're not alone. Just remember that it's as much mindset training as techniques training (perhaps the mindset is even more important than techniques, from my limited experience anyway). And rest assured that as long as you stick to it with, you will become better at it, and the improvement continues, perhaps forever. As for those of you who's techniques are effortless, don't tell me, or I'll get jealous (just kidding...please share with me how you manage it).

I have all of you to thank for passing my third Dan grading. A special thanks to Lee for being my partner for the jun-3<sup>rd</sup> Dan grading, it's a tough one, and having a partner that knows all the techniques really helps. And also Myles for ukeing for me for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dan grading, whenever my gradings looks good it usually is due to a good uke (:P).

Thank you Sensei, for opening this dojo in Brisbane. I think training in this dojo feels different from training at other places. As soon as you walk onto the mat, you breathe more easily, you stretch more easily and most importantly, you tend to totally forgot about things that's outside the dojo (work, study...etc).

Training forms and ukemi's at home just don't feel the same; neither does training at other dojos. I don't know what is it, whether it's the hall's high ceilings making the air crispier, or the mat giving the body an extra bounce. I'm willing to believe it's to do with collective effort. Because Sensei trained diligently everyday in this dojo and every student follows his lead in pouring all their efforts onto the mat every time they train, the atmosphere of focus and hard-work remains in the dojo. And every time we enter, the atmosphere affects us and makes us focus easier. Perhaps, this is the essence of a true dojo. I am thankful to have entered such a dojo.

Osu.

*Albert Lu*