



No.152 April 2008

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Report of March

New members 2

Total number of adults training 65

Total number of children training 64

Results of Sogo Shinsa on 29th March

<u>Nidan</u>	Matt Carpenter	<u>9th Kyu</u>	Nelson Ha	<u>2Y10 step</u>	Greg Dickenson
<u>Jun Nidan</u>	Myles Frost		Chin Ha	<u>2Y4 step</u>	Christopher Swinton
<u>1st Kyu</u>	Manfred Beyrer		Terrence Ha	<u>2Y2 step</u>	Aaron Stewart
	Urs Battig		Alistair Harvey	<u>2Y1 step</u>	Greg Beerling
	David Shepley		Nancy Westerman		Aarjaun Burch
<u>3rd Kyu</u>	Megan Erikson		Arnaud Jacquelin	<u>S5 step</u>	Helly Conroy
	Adam Sawyer		Wade Farrell		Tom Bannah
<u>Jun-3rd Kyu</u>	Wes Farrell	<u>4Y11 step</u>	Jason Williams	<u>S3 step</u>	Mark Coleman
<u>6th kyu</u>	Anthony Williams	<u>3Y10 step</u>	Eagle Kao		Francis Hollingworth
	Kris Anderson	<u>3Y7 step</u>	Sam Gray	<u>S2 step</u>	Lawrence Monforte

Events in April

1. Getsurei Shinsa

- ◆Saturday, 26th 1:00pm~
- ◆Shinsa training starts from 18th Friday.
- ◆Because Anzac Day falls on the step grading Friday in April, the step grading is shifted to Thursday the 24th during the second class time.

◆Please register for your grading tests by Wednesday the 23rd.

2. This Month's Holiday

- ◆Anzac Day 25th Friday
- ◆Dojo Holiday 28th Monday

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

Shodan

Whew! Which feelings do I start with: nervousness; humility; amazement; worry; joy; self-doubt; fellowship? I've been through them all and more over the last 15 months. Gratitude would be a good place to begin. I am so very grateful to everyone who has helped and supported me – in the dojo and out. Thankyou to Sensei – not only for his inspiration, but also for his endless patience, good humour with my mistakes and his faith in me. Thankyou to Shuko sensei for letting me help with the kids' classes and for being patient when I had no idea how to do their techniques.

Of course, a huge thanks goes to my husband, Darren and son, Zhian. They have been so supportive and understanding of my days and nights of training and my constant pre-occupation with getting techniques just right (or as right as I can).

Finally, thankyou to everyone in the dojo – especially those who've pushed me, encouraged me, and been patient with my errors and doubts.

I first stepped onto this path about fourteen years ago as a beginner in Townsville. Darren and I started together and even dragged my two step-brothers along. The four of us doubled the number of people in that dojo. We were taught by Scott Roche sensei; who had done some of his training at the Honbu Dojo under Sensei Gozo Shioda.

Scott lived an hours' drive away from Townsville, so we could only train twice a week. Since we only had a couple of sessions each week, Scott was determined to drill us well on the basics. We spent a good twenty minutes at the beginning of each session doing nothing but kihon dosa (with long periods of standing in deep stances while Scott sensei fixed someone). We did almost every technique in tachi-waza and suwari-waza (my knees were younger then). He only held gradings about three times per year so it was three years before Darren and I reached 1st kyu. But man, we had strong thigh muscles!

That was when our lives changed onto a different track. Darren and I decided to start a family (I was two months pregnant when I did my 1st kyu grading), then Scott moved away and the dojo pretty much folded. We were busy with a baby and our own business and no longer had time to train anyway. Somehow, ten years slipped by and, although we often spoke of how great it would be to go back to training, we couldn't quite work it in.



Finally, in January of 2006 we moved to Brisbane and, after settling in, began to consider the idea of training again. First I coaxed (and pushed) Zhian into kids class. Then I offered to help Shuko on the days she was short-handed. That led me to realise how much I'd forgotten and how much was different and new in the Brisbane dojo. Eventually, I took the plunge and joined regular classes in about November of 2006.

Oh my! What a challenge on so many levels! I was so unfit and felt so uncoordinated. I didn't wear my brown belt to begin with. I felt I wasn't anywhere near as good as I should be/could be and I didn't know many of the techniques the other brown belts did. I felt I had a lot of work to do before I was worthy of being 1st kyu again. I'm still not used to being 10 years older than I was last time I trained. The mat's a lot harder this time around, I'm sure. The hardest thing, though was letting go of my own insecurities and my desire to prove I could remember the techniques. I had to stop assuming I knew and just open my mind to each lesson as it came. It took me a couple of months to get the hang of that.

Every once in awhile, during class, Sensei would laughingly tug at my white belt and shake his head at me. I appreciated his faith in me, but (in case you hadn't guessed) I'm a bit of a perfectionist at times and I just wanted to be at least as centred as I was previously.

Finally I put the brown belt back on and began to think seriously about shodan. Those step-gradings came as a surprise, but I'm extremely grateful for them now. There were so many little things I had forgotten or had learned slightly differently. It was great to go through each set of techniques in such detail and really hammer them home. I'm actually looking forward to doing them all again in the steps to Nidan because I know I missed lots of subtleties the first time around.

My first step grading was in May 07 and I was so nervous I could barely breathe. It was my first grading in 11 years. Even after it was over, I couldn't believe I'd done it. After that, they got progressively easier (except for the one with the hijishime technique I stuffed up). I did get worried that I was jinxing my partners, though. Jim (1st step) hasn't come back, nor has Mark (3rd step), and Koray (2nd step) doesn't train often, either! Richard and Chris pushed me through my Jun-shodan in January 08 with an interesting combination of patience and frustration.

In mid-January, when we were told we would be moving to Hervey Bay, Sensei offered to let me do shodan in February – which scared the life out of me at the time. I still hadn't learned all those jodan-tzuki and shomen geri techniques. But I dug in and trained as hard as I could until, I'm sure, the guys in the lunchtime classes with me got sick of those techniques.

And now here I am. Shodan. Amazing. Hopefully it's just the beginning, too. It will take me a while to get out of thinking of myself as a brown belt. I need to grow into this new stage. There is still so much to learn (which I'm glad of). My major goals now are to use less strength and to really try to feel and understand how to blend uke's power with my own. Could take me awhile.....

This last 18 months has been one of huge personal growth for both me and Darren. Aikido has been a constant in my life that has both caused and helped with that growth on all levels. I have learned to be more accepting of my own and others' limitations. I've learned to be more centred – both physically, mentally and emotionally. I'm now less dependant on what others think of me and I have better perspective on the current, extremely life-changing circumstances my family is going through with jobs and finances etc. It's been easier to accept the changes that have come, find a way to harmonise with them and move ahead.

I still have a long road to travel and I do hope I can keep aikido in my life for a long time. But even if my circumstances change again and I can no longer train, my time at the Brisbane dojo will have made an indelible difference to who I am and who I will become in the future. Aikido will be in my life, in some form, forever. It is a Path and shodan is only the first step.

Osu!

Aarjaun Burch