



Report of August

New members 2

Total number of adults training 64

Total number of children training 69

Awards of 13th Annual Demonstration

◆Jiyu-waza

1st Award

Christopher Swinton & Lawrence Monforte

2nd Award

Greg Dickenson & Ryan Slavin

◆Renzoku-waza Award

Francis Hollingworth & Matthew Ryan

◆Aubrey Bannah Award

Michael Bannah

Helly Conroy

Lawrence Monforte

Adam Sawyer

Events in September

1. Sogo Shinsa

◆Saturday, 27th 1:00pm~

◆Shinsa training starts from 13th Saturday.

2. Kids' class Holiday

◆Kids' classes are closed from 20th Saturday to 7th of October. Back normal on 8th Wednesday.

3. This Month's Holiday

◆Dojo's Holiday 29th Monday

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

Sandan

When I first started Aikido many years ago I had so many problems trying to do basic movements. There were so many instructions and movements to think about I just couldn't put them altogether. So many parts of my techniques would go wrong in those early days of training. I realized back then that I needed to reduce the amount of things I had to think about during training.

I decided that when I trained I would only concentrate on just one or two aspects of the technique. Some times I would just keep working on my centre line for several months. I would not think about anything else. Unfortunately by training like this in class meant the other parts of the technique during training would be forgotten about. On many occasions and it still happens, senior students would often correct really simple parts of the techniques. This didn't worry me too much. I knew if I just kept on working hard everything would eventually fall into place.

Finally all that hard work paid off when I did my Sandan grading. All the small things I had been working on over the years all came together for the first time. I did not have to think about anything other than listening to Sensei call the techniques. It all felt so natural. My grading was not super fast and it was not perfect. This was not a surprise to me because I have not graded for 2 years. What it did have was harmony. When I say harmony, I don't just mean harmony with my partner but harmony with myself. My goal has never been about trying to reach a higher rank. It has always been about improvement and being able to train the mind and body so Aikido is a natural part of my life. It has also been about enjoyment, helping teach and learning from all the students in the dojo. I know there is still a lot of hard work to do to keep improving. By working hard on the basics and always watching and listening to Sensei and listening to advice from the senior students I know I will be able to keep improving on all aspects of Aikido.

I would like to say thank you to all the past and present students for all of your help you have given me over the years. To all the current Sandans and Yondans who were white, brown and black belts when I first started 9 years ago, I say thank you. You guys have been extremely helpful over the years, particularly in those early days. What I have been able to achieve over the years wouldn't have happened without your help and patience. Thank you to Sensei for creating such a great atmosphere in the dojo and for teaching me more than just a martial art.

No ending I would like to say a special thank you to Jason and Emmanuel Economidis for all of the advice and help you have given me over the years. I have watched the two of you closely ever since I started at the dojo and I have



learnt so much. Not just about techniques, but also about having the right attitude, commitment and helping all who walk into the dojo.

OSU

Matthew Watson

Shodan

Well, I can't really believe that Sensei has given me a black belt to grow into. I share that achievement with the people that helped me attain it – first, of course, Sensei and Shukosan, and then Aaron, Chris, Richie and my like-minded sister (who does all the hard things before me!) – Aarjaun, Lawrence – who never refused to be my uke, no matter how many people had smashed him before me! And Amy, who is so much tougher than I look and Tommy Bannah, who is the opposite...(just kidding Tom!)

It is glaringly obvious to me that I still know very little about Aikido, and not as much as I thought I did about myself – for example, where is my centre? (I really don't know...!) And it is strange for me to feel so passionate about something that I can't properly describe or explain to people. But I am. The principles of Aikido and those of life seem interchangeable to me.

I heard somewhere a long time ago that “the leaders of an organisation determine its culture” and nothing is a truer example of this than our dojo. I look at Sensei and Shukosan (almost every day) and I am constantly amazed at the leadership and guidance they lovingly provide to anyone who turns up and makes the effort to train with us.

They can be gentle or hard, depending on what the person or situation requires and they truly embody harmony and respect.

Sensei wrote recently that the people that may not necessarily be to our liking are our great teachers of harmony and I totally and wholeheartedly agree with this.

I think the only battles we really ever fight are essentially with ourselves. Our reactions to others and the world are ours to own. Nobody forces you to react a certain way to a situation, that is up to you, and I think that nothing can train you better in that sense than Aikido.

Once we realise that our reactions to life and others are ours to own, then you start to think well how should I react to this and that? Practicing Aikido seems to call for a mobilisation of the body and a focus of the mind that makes you more present than you would have otherwise been. One of the great gifts that Aikido has for me is that it brings all the scattered pieces of myself together into one being for that hour or two hours that I am on the mats.

I can't even begin to express how honoured I am to be a part of the Yoshinkan Aikido Brisbane Dojo. I am an arrogant person and standing on the mats at our dojo is the closest thing I have learned so far about humility and respect. There is no hiding on the mats, from ourselves or others. Our true selves are exposed and we have the chance to learn and grow in a truly loving environment.

Sensei is so right when he says that the dojo is the place where we can learn life, harmony and cultivate our spirits through training aikido.

I live a four minute motorcycle ride from our dojo and I am aware daily of how lucky I am to be so close to such a special place. I am so grateful that many of my training partners travel much further to train and help make this place what it is.

Thank you so much to all my dojo crew that look after me on and off the mats.

Osu!

Helly Conroy