

NEWSLETTER



No. 158 October 2008

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Report of September

New members 5 Total number of adults training 63 Total number of children training 57

Results of Sogo Shinsa on 27th September

4 th Dan	Jason Williams Brent Weston	3 rd Kyu	Kris Anderson	5Y3 step	Emmanuel Economidis
Shodan	Lawrence Monforte Francis Hollingworth	Jun-3 rd Kyu	Wade Lacey	3Y11 step	Sam Gray
Jun-Shodan	Mark Coleman	7 th Kyu	Matthew Ryan Wayne Harris	2Y7 step	Aaron Stewart
1 st Kyu	Adam Sawyer	9 th Kyu	Bruce Truong Len Cassar Oliver Bradshaw	2Y5 step	Aarjaun Burch
2 nd Kyu	Kaido Mori		Brendan Lee	2Y4 step	Ryan Slavin
3 rd Kyu	Michael Tuppin			S5 step	David Shepley
				S4 step	Joseph Stuart
				S1 step	Robert Austin

Events in October

1. SEMINAR & DEMO BY SOKE YASUHISA SHIODA

KANCHO SENSEI ON 7TH & 8TH

7th Tuesday Brisbane Dojo Students

- ◆ 7.15-8.45 pm Seminar & Demo
- ◆ 6.00-7.00 pm class will be normal.
- ◆ If any Brisbane dojo students who have registered for the seminar and can not make it on the 7th can attend on the 8th Wednesday seminar.

8th Wednesday The Southside Dojo and

Aikido Institute students

- ◆ 6.00-7.30 pm Seminar & Demo
- ◆ 8.00 pm Welcome party at Spizzico, Italian restaurant.

2. Getsurei Shinsa

- ◆ Saturday the 18th 1:00pm~
- ◆ Shinsa training starts from 11th Saturday.

3. Hajime Class

- ◆ Saturday the 25th 1:00pm~
- ◆ Please note that we will have no regular classes on this day.

4. This Month's Holiday

- ◆ Dojo's Holiday 27th Monday

A bit of knowledge for Aikido

Training to read *ki* (atmosphere)

One day on the Honbu dojo day off of, when I was working as a first-year uchi-deshi, the dojo's phone rang. I did not wish to answer the phone as I was not yet used to the workings of the whole dojo system, but there was no one else around. If it was a general enquiry I did not have a problem but if it was someone very high in status like a police bureaucrat or an executive of the Yoshinkan committee or a politician I had no idea how to deal with it. You know, I was just a youth having just graduated high school and did not have much experience with society as an adult. So, just answering a phone call seemed to be a very heavy task for me and my heart was beating so loud when I picked up the phone.

What I heard was "Aah aah," in a very faint voice. I thought it was a crank call from a pervert at first. Though it was a relief that the phone call was not from someone very important, I felt annoyed. It was the Headquarters of Yoshinkan Aikido which was recognised as one of the top martial arts school in the world. The man kept saying, "Aah~, aah~" and now it sounded like an elderly person with dementia. Then I thought he must've got a wrong number as Yoshinkan was a severe training place for tough men and nothing to do with old men. However, at the moment I realised it was an elderly man, an episode from my senior uchi-deshi 'C' came into my head. He answered a phone call one day and heard a man saying "Aah~." So, he

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asked who it was in a hard voice and the man said, "It's me," in a very timid voice. 'C' was convinced that it was a crank call and when he was about to hung up, the man ordered him "Change to 'T' (a top senior uchi-deshi)." At this stage, 'C' finally realised it was Kancho Sensei (Master Gozo Shiota) and passed the phone to his senior uchi-deshi hastily in an absolute panic. I had a dim memory of hearing this episode in one of the drinking sessions. The memory returned just in time and I was able to deal with him in the correct manner, and I avoided the worst scenario of treating him as a sick old man. Therefore I still appreciate my senior 'C' for the story of his previous failure which saved my life.

Looking back at the episode now, I presume that Kancho Sensei was acting like a senile man deliberately on the phone to examine uchi-deshis' growth, ability, quality and suitability to be his uke, yet while he, of course, enjoyed the attitude of immature uchi-deshis, being a very cheeky person he was. For instance, when he took a bath Kancho Sensei did not do anything other than just be there. It is all the uchi-deshis jobs; to open/close the doors from/to his room to/from the bath room, strip/dress him, wash from his head to toe and spill enough hot water over him to make sure he is not cold. Through looking after his bathing we learn a rhythmic breathing with him. The rhythmic breathing gained by looking after him is the necessary element to be his uke for demonstrations. When you can read his intention either what he wants to explain or what he wants to display, you can find out by yourself what you are expected to do at each moment, while he will never explain for you. When uke is well harmonised with his intention he can demonstrate perfect techniques with appropriate explanations and uke can take the safest movements to not hurt himself and vice versa. When you cannot look after his daily routine well without being harmonised with his thoughts, you tend to misread his techniques and therefore there is more possibility of getting injured. Not only being his uke, when you can read his intentions more, you can understand the reason and mechanism of each and every movement he takes in his technique and that leads you to improve your own techniques enormously.

When uchi-deshis realise Kancho Sensei picks us as his uke by examining our ability to harmonise with him in daily life they would do their best to harmonise with his every movement. Kancho Sensei who had a loving character with a childlike quality recognised our desperate efforts and then gave us various trials. For instance, when he came back to his own room after taking a bath he, in his underwear only, would come into the room dangling his towel. He, then, would throw his towel to an uchi-deshi who was waiting in Kancho Sensei's room to dress him, as soon as he walked in the room. We were expected to catch the towel and hang it up on a towel rack swiftly before dressing him. It sounds like a simple job but there were two doors located in his room and we did not know which door he would use each time. So, when I had to wait in his room I had to concentrate all my sensors listening to any sound I could hear outside the room, to be able to react to a parabolic orbit of the towel which was shot as soon as either side of the door opened. Missing catching the towel was a big failure. Once I got used to these kinds of routines and patterns of Kancho Sensei's behaviours they were not a big deal any more, but I was quite troubled in the first few years of uchi-deshi life to try and read his mischievous actions as he was like a child full of mischief. He, definitely, was enjoying looking at new uchi-deshis' bewildered reactions and expressions while he waited for our growth.

The conversations we made with him were also part of the uchi-deshis' training. In Brisbane dojo's case for example, everyone has difficulty understanding my English. When I explain techniques during classes most of the senior students, perhaps above higher ranked brown belts, nod their heads vigorously understanding my points and can laugh at my jokes, but all the beginners are not sure even if I spoke in English or

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Japanese and look totally confused. This case is simply my English problem but there was a similar issue with Kancho Sensei too. He did not bring out the words very much other than "this" and "that". Uchi-deshis had to guess what 'this' meant and what 'that' meant and expected to give him correct responses. Apprentice uchi-deshis were always being scolded by giving him off the beam answers. After years of experience we could understand what he meant or what he wanted just from oohs and aahs, just like our black belts who can understand my broken English perfectly.

The intensive learning of how to read Kancho Sensei's intentions, feelings and movements outside the mats was a very key point to improve Aikido skills. By studying how to read and harmonise with Kancho Sensei we learnt how to apply the skills to harmonise with other people as well, and that is the essence of Aikido for both executing and receiving techniques.

You can learn these reading and harmonising skills without becoming uchi-deshis. I believe that taking uke of any basic movements with as many different people as possible is the best measure; concentrating on feeling how shite's strength and movements flow and travel to your body and how to harmonise with shite's movements without disturbing their flow of moves by reading shite's flow of intention. This is the best training of uniting and harmonising one's ki (atmosphere + feeling + motion) with other's ki. When you can read, understand and move with other's ki you can feel how you can flow your force into another's body most effectively at the moment when a contact point is produced. Taking uke for basic movements is not a break time but, remember, it is the best time to train your ability of reading other's ki.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori