

NEWSLETTER



No. 176 April 2010

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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March Report

New members 2

Total number of adults training 58

Total number of children training 46

Results of Sogo Shinsa on 27th March

Jun-2 nd Dan	Aarjaun Burch	7 th Kyu	Robert North	2Y8 step	Lawrence Monforte
Shodan	Kris Anderson		Roger Yang		Francis Hollingworth
1 st Kyu	Murray Booth	8 th Kyu	Kin Hoong Chen	2Y7 step	Kanako Yamaguchi
	Choi, Sukchul	9 th Kyu	Kerry Nicholson		Mark Coleman
3 rd Kyu	Peter Hills		Peter Nilsson	2Y3 step	Dennies Delos Santos
	Jocelyn Fergusson				Kaido Mori
4 th Kyu	Tony Starkie	5Y11 step	Richard Diehm	2Y1 step	Robert Austin
5 th Kyu	Daniel Gort	4Y7 step	Lee Stemm	S5 step	Matthew Ryan
6 th Kyu	Steve McKewin	4Y1 step	Sam Gray		Marek Coleman
	Jessica Chou	2Y12 step	Ryan Slavin	S3 step	Oliver Bradshaw
7 th Kyu	Joseph Filitoga	2Y10 step	Alastair Wilkinson	S2 step	Jim Stanley

Events in April

1. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 16th 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 23rd 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 24th 1:00pm~

2. This Month's Holiday

- Easter Holiday 2nd Friday ~ 5th Monday
- Anzac Day 26th Monday

A bit of knowledge for Aikido

Uke

During my first year as an uchi-deshi at the Honbu Dojo I was training with riot policemen and other new uchi-deshi in the 22nd Senshusei course and it was coming closer to the end of the course at the ninth month when we began learning more practical techniques.

One day, when the chief instructor of the course, Takeno Shihan, was going to demonstrate a technique for us, he called my name with gravity while we were all in the seiza position. I stood up without a second and bowed to him saying "Osu!" Then he gave me one word, "Kick." What a nightmare! You know that in Aikido training the relationship between *shite* (who applies technique) and *uke* (who receives technique) is absolute and if *shite* tells *uke* to kick then there is no other option but to offer a kick, knowing though that the *uke* has no chance of avoiding a technique. Unless *shite* tells *uke* the name of technique *shite* has the right to perform any techniques they like against their *uke*. Takeno Shihan was the person who would happily smash his *uke*'s head into the mats without mercy and would apologise to them with a delightful smile and this manner attracted many general students. He was very popular among the students for his beautiful smiles and powerful techniques but for young uchi-deshis who always had to receive those devastating techniques, he was a pure demon.

Well, I had to give him a kick. I prepared myself and lifted my leg up towards him. At the moment I moved I saw him gliding towards me in *irimi* (entering at angle) and his palm suddenly appeared closer within my vision. *Irimi-zuki* was coming to my chin and his power would've exploded in my body smashing the back of my head heavily onto the mats, since he was demonstrating how powerful an Aikido technique worked as a street type technique. Guess what happened. I, who trained boxing for three years before I started Aikido, reacted against my vision before my thought and my face was moved to the side. So, it means my action caused Takeno Shihan to perform an air blow. At the moment I did that I shouted in my head, "OH, NO~~~~!" Despite my greatest regret and fear other course-students gave me applause, clapping their hands in joy for avoiding the demon's technique. Takeno Shihan smiled bitterly and moved on as if it was nothing at that time but



I saw a flame of anger in his bitter smile. Later on, in the office after the class as I anticipated, I was scolded and disciplined severely. I was not surprised.

At the beginning of my Aikido training I was very confused with its training style, *kata-geiko* (form training.) The Japanese martial arts I experienced at an early age were Kendo and Judo that were based on the competition style. The training in the other Western sports I played including boxing was also for a winning purpose. I think everybody has similar experiences as me. The style of Aikido training, however, is completely different. Aikido uses the ancient method of Japanese martial arts called *kata-geiko* to improve one's skills in the art. Without understanding this fact and training with the habit of sports that players gain the skills through the games (the common sense of sports), Aikido practitioners in both *shite* and *uke* sides get in each other's way and prevent each other from learning more efficiently. Therefore, I would like to explain about the proper way of being *uke* to progress your Aikido skills more effectively.

First of all you need to understand what the *kata-geiko* is. It is the training method to perform a certain set of movements either by yourself or with both *shite* and *uke* to learn a technique together, and it means that the relationship between *shite* and *uke* is never as opponents but as training partners.

I often see a scene at the dojo that *uke* grabs *shite's* hand forcefully during *hiriki-no-yosei* (1) practice to challenge whether *shite* can move them or not, but this is wrong because the *sotai-dosa* (movements in pairs) is not about competing. The correct way of *uke* for *hiriki-no-yosei* (1) is; 1) the grip has to be strong using the entire palm glued tightly to *shite's* wrist, 2) although the grip is tight *uke's* joints (wrist, elbow, shoulder) must be relaxed and flexible, 3) grabbing the *shite's* wrist with the intention of pulling – this means that you do not pull *shite's* wrist with full strength but initiate the flow of pulling forth, and in that condition, if *shite* pulls then *uke* will pull back to equalise the balance and both cannot move, and if *shite* pushes forward then *uke* will follow in the direction of *shite's* move as that is the direction of *uke's* flow. Though *uke's* joints have to be relaxed it does not mean losing your entire strength and pushing your weight down on *shite's* arm but it means that you do not create repulsive strength that gives *shite* a heavy load. This way of grabbing and following *shite* is used in all techniques.

Once you've learnt the correct way of grabbing being the *uke* then now you need to feel and learn how *shite's* force travels to your joints and whole body. For instance, when *shite* moves forward in *hiriki-no-yosei* (1) *uke* can learn how the advancing force travels through your palms, wrists, elbows, shoulders and body. Some students seem to misunderstand that being *uke* is as if they are given a rest time and that idea is such a waste of one's precious training time. Since *shite* proves the mechanics of how their force, either forwards, backwards, upwards and downwards runs through your body, you should not miss such a great opportunity of learning and that will give you lots of clues as to performing an effective technique when you swap to being *shite*. By understanding *shite's* movements more thoroughly, being *uke* you will sharpen your Aikido sense that leads you to the ultimate level of Aikido, *Aiki-waza*.

Uke in *Shumatsu-dosa* (1&2) is the best training method to learn how to harmonise with *shite's* movements with the right timing, when *uke* in *hiriki-no-yosei* (1&2) gives you understanding of how *shite's* force transfers to your body. The *uke's* grip for *Shumatsu-dosa* should be soft and loose and because the grip is loose you need to focus on *shite's* movements to not lose the grip keeping your palms very sensitive. By sensing *shite's* movements and force through your palms as well as using all of your other senses, you try to move with *shite's* flow with the right timing without disturbing the movements or bumping into *shite's* body. Concentrating to use all of your senses in this way you will sharpen your senses, and therefore you will be able to read the techniques and movements of *shite* during *Jiyu-waza* when the techniques come at random. If you can read *shite's* moves and power correctly the chance of getting injured or the amount of damage will be hugely minimised. If you would like to keep training Aikido for a long period without suffering from injuries, then you'd better start changing the way you train *Shumatsu-dosa's uke*.



The basic techniques are designed to be practiced in the *kata-geiko* style as well. By both *shite* and *uke* following the designed movements correctly they can learn safely how Aikido techniques work – principles, skills of locks, characteristics of Aikido movements and flow. For example *Katate-mochi Shiho-nage* (1), the very first technique all the beginners start with; the attack is limited in one hand grab with pulling force to be initiated by *uke*, *shite* can perform only *shiho-nage* lock but no other technique, and if *uke* pulls the *shite's* wrist in the wrong way then *shite* cannot perform a correct technique. It means that if *uke* keeps challenging *shite* by doing something out of designed *ukes'* movements, then *shite* has to keep changing the technique to suit *uke's* force and moves, and we can never train a technique properly. In a real fight if we ever need to use an Aikido technique we can apply any technique just right to beat the opponent depending on how they attack and move. In our training using the *kata-geiko* method, we should not forget that we complete a technique correctly in the cooperation of both *shite* and *uke*. *Shite* is not the only side learning Aikido techniques but taking *uke* is also very important to learn the techniques. When *uke* feels the *shite's* movements are not quite right then they can learn the wrong way that they should not copy. The person who improves their technique fast is also good at taking *uke* and their way of *uke* does not make *shite* feels disturbed or heavy.

The heroic (?) story that I escaped Takeno Shihan's *Irimi-zuki* is of course very wrong thing to do. To get the best out of *uke* training, we should feel each technique in either good or bad examples. I missed a great opportunity of learning that particular technique by avoiding it as the technique is never the same in power, angle and timing. Both receiving great techniques and bad techniques become our valuable property. In fact, because of this experience I had from Takeno Shihan I changed my way of performing *Irimi-zuki* that the hand which goes to the *uke's* chin slides up from the *uke's* chest to make the hand appear from the blind spot, giving less chance for *uke* to avoid the technique.

I believe that the training in the *kata-geiko* style continuously and consistently for a long time builds the practitioner truly strong in a comprehensive way and more than training in competing styles, since the technique movements get imprinted in one's body deeply and one also has to practice various techniques in different situations, not practicing one's favourite techniques only.

Well, now everyone knows that the *uke* time is not the resting time. Taking *uke* is the best time to enhance your senses and think about the principle of Aikido, the flow of force, the relations and transmission of force through bones and muscles. Bruce Lee said, "Don't think, feel!" I think, however, we need to "think and feel" for Aikido.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori