



No.180 August 2010

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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July Report

New members 3

Total number of adults training 65

Total number of children training 43

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 24th July

Jun-3rd Dan	Matt Carpenter	2Y12 step	Francis Hollingworth	S3 step	Choi, Sukchul
4th Kyu	Roger Yang	2Y9 step	Murray Davis		Jim Stanley
5th Kyu	Joseph Filitoga	2Y7 step	Dennies Delos Santos	S2 step	Genevieve Sargent
6th Kyu	Sergey Kinchin	2Y1 step	Kris Anderson		Adrian Stuart
8th Kyu	Cameron Blake Keegan Beauchamp				

Events in August

1. 15TH ANNUAL DEMONSTRATION ON SUNDAY THE 22ND

- ◆ 9:00am Start packing up at the dojo
- ◆ 10:30am Adults' Rehearsal
- ◆ 12:00pm Children's Rehearsal
- ◆ 12:30pm Doors open and warm up
- ◆ 1:00pm The 15th Demonstration
- ◆ 3:30pm Award ceremony and photos
- ◆ 4:00pm Remove all the mats and clear the venue.
- ◆ 6:00pm Dinner Party

2. Adults' Rehearsal for the demo

- ◆ 21st August Saturday 1:00pm~ **at the Dojo**
- ◆ Everyone is expected to attend the rehearsal.

3. Children's Rehearsal for the demo

- ◆ 21st August, Saturday 10:00am~ **at the Dojo**

4. This Month's Holiday

- ◆ **Dojo's Holiday: 23rd Monday & 24th Tuesday**

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

“Suzuki, a way of life!” “Aikido, a way of life!”

I often hear sensei say that something is “not the Yoshinkan way”. Just the other day in training it was said about a certain technique being used in preparation for the demonstration. After a lot of thought on why sensei stresses this point I have come to the conclusion that in order to obtain purity and perfection in our technique we must follow strictly a tried and tested method and adhere to the spirit and philosophy of that method, in our case it is Yoshinkan Aikido. Metaphorically speaking, I guess it's important to follow a single path without confusing or obscuring the way with alternate options – or other martial arts. Now this makes perfect sense in the dojo, but this has got me thinking about how we can transfer this principle to our lives outside the dojo and to what end. After all, we only spend a small portion of our lives at the dojo, so what is the point if we can't transfer our learning to the outside world? Therefore, in order to do this I guess we must see Aikido not simply as a martial art, but as a way of life. Just imagine what a powerful thing our training would become if it was to be transferred to every sphere of our life! Therefore, with the risk of sounding altruistic and idealistic, it is this that I would like to explore with you now.



To begin, I suppose we need to look at what it is we are doing and for what purpose. I understand everyone trains Aikido for different reasons, and that our aims may change as more time is spent at the dojo. However we are all aiming for a sense of accomplishment and achievement irrespective of the level. And we can all do with an element of harmony in our lives. I began Aikido as a disillusioned martial artist looking for a martial art that both suited me physically and philosophically. I am glad to say that I have found it! Yoshinkan Aikido allows me on a basic level to expend energy and relieve tension through exercise and attain a sense of confidence with the ability to defend myself. But on a higher level it lets me pursue harmony in myself and in my interactions with others. I hope you all find that which you are looking for at the Brisbane Yoshinkan Aikido Dojo.

In the beginning I guess I was attracted by the whole 'put on an Aikido *gi* and try to be a samurai' thing. I am glad to say that this has given way to a more profound reason to keep training. I understand that we can not be samurai in today's world, other wise we would all join the police force or the army or something of the like. However, that which we can do is take the essence of what it means to be samurai I suppose. By this I mean to serve others to the best of our ability. Both in and out of the dojo I attempt (but not always successfully I might add) to apply this attitude of service in my Uke and in my different roles as a schoolteacher, father, husband and citizen. I believe Aikido – more specifically, Yoshinkan Aikido from sensei – has allowed me to do a better job of this. Now I understand that I am only part way into a long Aikido journey, but let me try to explain.

In my work as a high school teacher you can imagine how trying it gets at times dealing with adolescents. Training in Aikido has given me another way to approach confrontation from students. Instead of simply butting heads and playing the authoritarian in classroom management I can now apply a more harmonious and caring approach that shows students that I am not their enemy, but their key to improvement in their lives. Now isn't this the philosophy of Aikido – to control a situation and where possible 'take the fight out of the opponent' in the most beneficial way for both parties? Now I don't expect you to think that I achieve this all the time, but with Aikido I do manage it more often than if I wasn't training and therefore have become a more productive teacher and positive influence on young people at the school where I work.

On a personal note, and the most important note of all, Aikido has aided me in becoming a better father and husband. However, as a father and husband I must say it feels like I fail more times than I succeed – imagine what type of dad/husband I would be without Aikido! Its no wonder my wife Cindy tells me to go to training so much! As a dad I have come to understand through training in Aikido that to get the most out of my kids I need to give them a positive role model. This is demonstrated every day by sensei. I believe sensei wishes us to be the best Aikidoka we can be and therefore he always gives us the best example for which to strive. In this sensei exhibits the characteristic I mentioned earlier: to serve others for the benefit of all. Therefore, if I want my kids to become strong yet flexible, confident and harmonious people, then I need to try my best to mentor them through giving them this type of role model. Aikido aids me in this. Training at the dojo not only gives me strength with flexibility and suppleness of body but of spirit too. As my Uke ability improves so does my body condition and harmony and as a result so does my conviction for bettering myself, not only for myself, but also for the benefit of others. Again this rubs off on my kids through role modelling what is right and wrong. Once more, I don't pretend to get it right all the time, but much more often than if I wasn't training and had never been exposed to sensei's example.

So I guess what I'm trying to say is that my path of Aikido under sensei so far has not simply given me the ability to defend myself - albeit this is a handy skill – it has enhanced every sphere of my life, and I thank sensei greatly for this every time I train. For me, training at the Brisbane Yoshinkan Aikido Dojo has added an element of humanity to a martial art that many from the outside looking in may fail to understand. Finally, the way I see it at this stage of my training (and feel free to correct me if I'm wrong) is that if you are training only for self defence or fitness that is great, but try to find ways to link what we do in the dojo to that which we do outside the dojo and consequently bring more success not simply to our training but to our life!

Osu!

Ryan Slavin

NEWSLETTER



Firstly, a huge thank-you must go to Shuko. From my first children's class 6 years ago to the present day, Shuko's patience and guidance throughout my training has helped me become the student that I am. I was the kid who couldn't roll properly and even my own dad gave me two weeks at most, but with Shuko's encouragement and my determination I persisted. Thanks also to all the people who helped me in kid's class throughout my training.

I feel very privileged and honoured to learn Aikido under Sensei Mori. We are all very lucky to train under him at such a wonderful Dojo. I have learnt such a great deal from him and he inspires me to always do my best and always aim to improve. Every single time I train, Sensei is always showing me ways to improve my techniques and hope this continues as my journey in Aikido continues.

It has been my dream to gain my black belt, but I was adamant I wanted to truly "be a black belt", not just have it handed to me. It needed to be earned through hard work and persistence. I have achieved my dream, but truly earning my black belt will continue at least for the next couple of years.

I'd like to say a big thank-you to all the black belts who have helped and advised me on my journey over the years, especially Adam, Francis, Michael Bannah, Kaïdo, Robert Austin, Michael Austin and Mark Davies. My sincerest thanks must go to Lawrence Monforte, for his guidance over the years and for being my uke in my black belt grading. From the first time I met Lawrence in kid's class, he has always encouraged me to follow my dream and he has been a wonderful mentor to me, on and off the mat. He has given up a great deal of time and effort on my behalf to improve my skills as a student of Aikido. He continues to do so and for that, I am truly grateful.

Thank-you to my Mum who has always been there for me, supporting me, encouraging me and always believing in me.

My final thank-you must go to my "Old Man", my Dad, Tony. He has given up so much time and done endless driving to get me here. He has always encouraged me to do my best. I couldn't have trained so often without him.

Aikido has changed my life and it has made me the person I am today.

Finally, there is no way I can write this without mentioning "the headband". I have copped a lot of flak for my use of the aforementioned headband: - "Bjorn Borg", "Hippy", "Spanish Footballer", the list goes on. 6 years ago, I never thought I would have the need for a headband in training, but then again, who would have thought I would have still been here 6 years later, let alone a black belt. The headband will continue to be part of my training no matter who I cop flack from (*cough* Sensei and Shuko).

My journey has now only just begun.

OSU!
Julian Ladd

NEWSLETTER



Well eight years of training and what do I get, my adult black belt, how cool is that.

The first six years I trained in the kids class and I learnt many things. I learnt how to roll, to stand in Kamae, basic techniques, and weapons.

Kids class has many coloured belts that gave me something to aim for with all the different belts and their techniques. The classes were also very fun with all the games in between the techniques. The grading system was also good with grading twice a year, this gave you enough time to learn and you had to be patient to succeed.

I've been really lucky to be able to train at such a great dojo; when I was just about to go for my green belt, about three weeks before the grading I broke my arm and they still let me grade; I passed although I couldn't roll with my cast on.

At the end of the six years I was a kids brown stripe. This is when I had to start training for my kid's black belt (considered the same as adult 3rd kyu), the techniques at the time were similar to adult Jun 3rd kyu. This is also when I started adult's class and tried to train whenever I could.

I'd like to thank Lee and Richard for their help when I trained for this belt as they helped me a lot. Receiving my kids' black belt was great, but when I saw the grading for 2nd and 1st kyu and how many new techniques I had to learn, well that was fun.

By the time I was 1st kyu it was September 2009 and I had steps to go. It took me 7 months to complete my steps and it felt like it went fast. I had yet more gradings to go to my Jun Shodan and Shodan. I was lucky that I had done some of the techniques in kids class that were in Jun Shodan, as that helped me in my training, but I still needed to work hard to get them right.

With Jun Shodan complete I had two months until Sogo Shinsa with 150 techniques to learn, and I needed to make sure I knew them. School cut the first month a bit short but I made sure I was at class enough to learn all the new techniques I had to know.

Then the Sogo Shinsa month came and I had to balance the exam block at school with Aikido, by the last day to decide if I'd grade I made my choice and signed up to grade. I think it was my best grading yet and I'm proud of what I did.

So that's how the eight years to my black belt went, and I can't wait for the next eight.

So in closing I'd like to thank my family for encouraging me to do my best, especially Dad, as I could be pain in a butt at training sometimes.

I'd also like to thank Shuko and Sensei for teaching me this fantastic martial art and thank you to everyone I've trained with as you all helped me to get this far.

All I need to do now is start on the next eight years with my next step.

Osu

Marek Coleman