



No.182 October 2010

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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September Report					
New members 4		Total number of adults training 65		Total number of teens training 38	
Results of Sogo Shinsa on 25th September					
Sandan	Matt Carpenter	6th Kyu	Ira Seidenstein	5Y12 step	Richard Diehm
Nidan	Aarjaun Burch		Peter Nilsson	4Y11 step	Lee Stemm
Jun-Nidan	Francis Hollingworth		Cameron Blake	2Y10 step	Mark Coleman
Shodan	Oliver Bradshaw		Keegan Beauchamp		Murray Davis
1st Kyu	Peter Hills	8th Kyu	Shay O'Farrell	2Y8 step	Dennies Delos Santos
	Jocelyn Fergusson		Indrawan Kumala	2Y5 step	Joseph Stuart
Jun-3rd Kyu	Tony Starkie		Justin Charell	2Y2 step	Kris Anderson
4th Kyu	Simon Foley	9th Kyu	Mai Bui	2Y1 step	Adam Sawyer
	Joseph Filitoga		Ian Templeton		Marek Coleman
6th Kyu	Rebekah Webb	Steven Slaveski		S4 step	Murray Booth
	Robert North				Jim Stanley
	Lindsay Crawford			S3 step	Genevieve Sargent
Events in October					
1. Getsurei Shinsa			2. Hajime Class		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training starts, Friday 15th 7:15pm~ • Steps, Friday 22nd 7:15pm~ • Shinsa, Saturday 23rd 1:00pm~ 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday the 30th 1:00pm~ • Please note that we will have no regular classes on this day. 		
			3. This Month's Holiday		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dojo's Holiday - Monday 25th 		

A bit of knowledge for Aikido

Senshusei-geiko (Hajime class)

Again, the season for the Hajime class (the proper name is Senshusei-geiko – specialised student's training) at Brisbane dojo has arrived. Senior students strongly encourage beginners to sign up for this special class with kindness, although with some grinning, saying it is a great fun class that happens only once a year, but seniors do not tell the beginners much about what is involved. Then, seniors continue saying by saying "I would love to do the class too, but unfortunately I have a special visitor or a wedding or some sort of special function this year". The seniors give their positions to the beginners unwillingly. Then, they look forward to hearing the stories in a cheeky glee how the new students survived through the two-hour fire storm. In the following week when the Hajime-class-students come back on the mats recovering from pain and sore bodies for a few days, seniors who encouraged them to participate in the class kindly ask how many koho-ukemis or push-ups they did or which kihon-dosa Sensei chose for them and so on. Then in the end, they always add a comment, "You were very lucky for doing the Hajime class this year. When I did it years ago Sensei was a lot stricter and crueller." This seems now to be the dojo's customary practice developed by seniors.



Well, I should explain what the Hajime class is to be fair for the new students who joined the dojo after the last Hajime class in the last year to prevent them from being deluded like a poor lost lamb.

Yoshinkan Aikido is recognised as a strong and practical style of martial arts by the Japanese martial arts organisation. The reason Yoshinkan developed the reputation was because of this Senshusei-geiko. The top squad of Japanese police, (riot police-men) was training in Yoshinkan Aikido in this special course particularly designed for them to maintain Japanese security. In the 1960's, the US intervened militarily in Vietnam, a picture of capitalism vs. communism conflict, and the Cultural Revolution in China began about the same time to defeat capitalism. These political battles rippled out to Japan and provoked riots against capitalism especially by rapid and radical university students. To put down these riots police needed to form a strong riot police team and requested Yoshinkan Aikido Headquarters to start a special training course for them in 1964.

The course was designed to toughen up the riot policemen thoroughly both in mental and physical strength through extremely severe Aikido training. The menu Yoshinkan Headquarters prepared for them was intensely severe. For instance, forearm striking: striking your forearm against your partner's forearm in Yokomen-uchi style both sides in full strength for hundreds and hundreds times. As a result, internal bleeding spread badly from wrist to elbow forming different colours; black in the centre and the colour gets weaker as it spreads, black-purple, purple, red and pink. When your body is not used to the damage you cannot lift your arms nor have any strength for a while but as you get used to the pain you become proud of the colours. When the ten members of the riot policemen as a group, all pretty big built for Japanese, get on a train going home they all pull up their sleeves to make sure their forearms are seen by everybody and grab the straps. All the businessmen around them become alarmed at the scene and try to avoid the eye contact with them in great fear, and this gives the riot policemen the triumphant feeling and great satisfaction for proving that they were tough and strong.

The bruises for martial artists are the evidence of hard training and therefore we call them the trophies. After about a month of training the bruises on their forearms become stained and they compete in the sizes and the colours of their bruises, and take a photo of their trophies proudly. The past riot policemen's trophy photos were up on the wall in the Senshusei room as their memorial plaques. By the way, as I have rather dark skin the internal bleeding can be hardly seen from the outside and it did not form the bruises easily. Therefore I hardly received my trophies and it appeared to be if I were taking it easy or being slack though I was training extremely seriously and heavily, and it left me the feeling the sting of defeat.

Another example of the hard menu is 500 times doing koho-ukemi (getting up from rolling backwards.) This is a great exercise that can train your body parts (neck, abdominals and legs) necessary for Aikido movements in one simple work-out, though 500 times are very, very hard for people who are not used to the movement yet. Although all the riot policemen chosen to take this course held a rank of 3rd Dan or over in either Judo, Karate or Kendo and they were confident in their stamina and fitness, they all suffered extremely badly from 500 koho-ukemis. When they trained this menu for the first time none of them could get up from the bed the following day and as they cannot lift up their bodies, the only way they can stand up is rolling down from the bed,



slithering their body to find a support and standing up using their arms. They literally crawl to the toilet swearing loudly.

Kihon-dosa's are an important program for the course too. They train only kihon-dosa's hours and hours and days and days at the beginning of the course. They are ordered to pause in the hardest position for a while, then their thigh muscles burn extremely hot and their whole leg shakes. If one collapses down losing strength in his body, abusing yells were thrown at him from the instructors without mercy. On the way home after the training, the ten robust men in a line drag their bodies leaning to a handrail climbing up the stairs at the nearest station of the Headquarters. The station staff know that spring has arrived again when they see the shiny and sparkling handrail being rubbed by Senshusei's business suit sleeves repeatedly (the course starts in the spring season.)

The contents of the class are quite simple. Firstly, half an hour of kihon-dosa's only to make the foundation of Yoshinkan aikido movements imprinted into the body. The next half an hour is used for simply repeating a technique as fast and correctly as possible for hundreds of times. The instructor of the class keeps calling "Hajime! (start)" as the fastest pair comes back to the kamae position and that's why this class got the nickname of 'hajime' class by overseas students. This training method is highly efficient to train the body to remember a technique to the instinct level and to react to an attack instinctively without a moment of thinking – though this training style is extremely exhausting. The last half an hour is spent as a muscle workout exercise; 200 push-ups, 500 koho-ukemis, etc. The menu can change each day and it's main purpose is strengthening the body parts necessary for strong techniques. Usually the class is held twice a day totalling about three to four hours a day for nine months in the Headquarters. The menu is almost mentally impossible to achieve if by oneself but by all the participants, ten riot policemen and a few uchi-deshi apprentices, uniting their minds through supporting each other makes spirits tough enough to survive the course.

This course builds riot policemen tough and strong as well as training uchi-deshi apprentices to become ready to work as professional Aikido practitioners. Yoshinkan is the only style that has been running this kind of course and therefore the course represents Yoshinkan itself earning the reputation of the strong and practical martial art.

Well, once a year of our Senshusei-geiko is coming in a months time. Participants, please enjoy the severe training. Non-participants, please praise the participants' courage and spirits, and enjoy sharing the stories of how they survived or hearing any interesting episodes from them afterwards. I, shall enjoy the supreme moment of icy beer after being a cruel instructor.

Osu!

Michiharu Mori