



No. 183 November 2010

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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## October Report

New members 8

Total number of adults training 66

Total number of teens training 44

## Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 23<sup>rd</sup> October

<b>5<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Ira Seidenstein	<b>9<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Peter Ternouth	<b>S5 step</b>	Murray Booth
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Shay O'Farrell				Jim Stanley
	Justin Charell	<b>2Y12 step</b>	Lawrence Monforte	<b>S4 step</b>	Genevieve Sargent
	Mai Bui	<b>2Y9 step</b>	Dennies Delos Santos	<b>S1 step</b>	Peter Hills

## Events in November

### 1. Self-defence Class & Demonstration

- **Self-defence class; Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1:00pm~2:30pm**
- The class is not for public but only for the members.
- Everyone who wishes to participate in the self-defence class needs to register at the counter with \$10 participation fee. (will be used for BBQ party)
- BBQ Party will be held after the demonstration and everyone including your family and friends are welcome to join us.
- **Demonstration; 2:45pm~**
- All of the black belts and Mori Sensei will display their demonstrations after the class. Families and friends are very welcome to observe.

### 2. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 12<sup>th</sup> 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 19<sup>th</sup> 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~

### 3. Teens new colour belts awarding ceremony and X'mas Party

- 20<sup>th</sup> Saturday 10:00am~
- Teens' class X'mas party will start after the ceremony and some games. Dojo will provide some soft drinks and a small gift for each child.
- Please bring a plate with you.

### 4. This Month's Holiday

- Dojo's Holiday - Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>

## Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

### **Nidan (2<sup>nd</sup> Dan)**

Three years ago, I was lucky enough to have the time, during the lead up to my Shodan grading, to train day and night classes. I was totally focussed on training and grading. A couple of my fellow students had just graded before me and I was eager to catch up. So much so that, when Sensei graded me to Shodan, I immediately began thinking: how soon I can get to Nidan? Fourteen months, max, I naively thought. There are 12 steps between Shodan & Nidan, plus Jun-Nidan and, of course, the Nidan grading itself. Great, I thought. 14 months for sure, then it'll only be 3 ½ years to Sandan after that. Yay.

Life has a way of teaching you lessons, if you recognise them when they come along.

My husband, Darren, changed jobs at about the same time as I did my shodan. He started a new business: a Pack & Send Franchise. He really couldn't run it on his own and we've worked together before, so I joined him – bye-bye day training. In the mean time, to make ends meet while the franchise got off the ground, I started up bookkeeping after hours – so there went half of my evening training sessions, too. Sigh.

I was feeling quite sorry for myself at this point. My dream of Sandan in 5 years was slipping away. It felt like I would never get enough time to learn the new steps or consolidate the old. After 3 (whole ☺) months of being Shodan, I still didn't feel 'blackbelt-ish'.



In fact, for the first 6 months or so after Shodan, I felt hopelessly inadequate. The Shodan syllabus seemed enormous when I was training for it, but then I started doing steps toward Nidan. Every step had two or three techniques I'd never even seen before. Plus there was the uneasy feeling that I was supposed to know what I was doing now; that I should be able to help all the junior belts; remember everything and do it fabulously (I've always had – probably unrealistic – expectations of myself). On top of that, I was re-learning techniques I thought I knew: learning advanced methods to really make them work well; unlearning bad habits.

Someone once told me that you 'grow into your belt' in Aikido. I get that now. After about a year of feeling frustrated with myself and my progress, I stopped for a moment and thought about my expectations and what I really wanted from aikido.

I decided I wanted to learn.

This might sound stupidly obvious, but think about it. We are trained from a young age to be competitive. It's actually quite difficult to let go of the need to compete and compare yourself to others. It's even harder to just open yourself up to learning for its own sake; to improving just for the sake of improving - not to be better than anyone else.

I realised, though, that I had to let go of that competitive need, or aikido was destined to become just another stressful thing I had to perfect in order to 'be good enough' and 'succeed'.

I started coming to class with nothing more than learning in mind. From Sensei, of course, but also from anyone else who'd offer advice – black belt, brown or white. It's not always easy to accept such advice and it's still tough not to compare myself to others, but I enjoy training a whole lot more now.

Anyway... here I am, 2 ½ years after Shodan, a Nidan.

And guess what? I don't feel very Nidan-ish. Still some growing to do, I guess.

I think the point I'm trying to make is that aikido is a journey. It's a 'Dao'; a 'Path'; a 'Way'. It's not a race to see who can grade first and it's not a competition against others in the dojo to see who can make it to Shodan or Nidan first.

My advice, if you want it, that is....Stop comparing yourself to others. Stop competing with others. Stop trying to impress others. Enjoy the ride. Open your mind to the idea of just being at the dojo to learn. Learn from everyone. Every person there has life experiences you don't have. Everyone has a view of things that is unique. Even if you don't particularly get on with someone, you can still learn from them. It might just be that you learn how to harmonise with someone you don't like. That, in itself, is a massively important life-lesson.

So, if you're ever training with me, please feel free to tell me when it 'feels wrong' or isn't working. I need to know or I'll never get it right. I will do my best to listen and learn.

Thank you to everyone (especially Sensei) for your teaching and patience. I hope to keep learning for many years to come. About aikido; about others; about myself.

Osu

Aarjaun Burch

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## **Shodan (1st Dan)**

I must have been about 12 years old whilst waiting to play basketball at the local sports centre when I saw my first glimpse of aikido. I remember waiting by the door eager to shoot some hoops when I was captivated by a group of people wielding wooden swords, knives and sticks. My first thought was, "Why are they all wearing black skirts?", and my second thought was, "I had better not upset any of them!"



When I was 18 and waiting for my A-Level results (which ultimately decided my future and university course) I decided I should take up a martial art. I had plenty of spare time and I wanted to get fit and be able to defend myself. I looked for the men and women in the black skirts, but sadly the club had been disbanded. As a result I didn't really know what style I wanted to try, there are so many types of martial arts- Judo, Karate, Jiu Jitsu, Kung-Fu, Hapkido, to name but a few. I decided I would take a karate class at the local sports centre. I remember during my first class, the instructor decided we would do some sparring with one another. My first partner was an older lady, a black belt, and I remember she was very short (compared to me!). I was fully kitted out with gloves and shin and mouth guards, and then this lady said, "hit me!" I made the mistake of saying, "I don't want to hit anyone, especially a woman!" So she punched me square in the face! And that was the end of karate for me.

Eventually I found out I had achieved good results in my A-Levels and was to start studying for my chosen course at my favourite university. During the third year of my degree course I decided I should look into martial arts again – I wanted to learn a martial art that would not involve small angry people! And, after lots of searching I found the men and women in black skirts and found out the martial art they practiced was called aikido. I signed up to the university aikido club for a semester and loved it!

After university I was working all over the UK, often driving up to 1,500 km a week. After a year and a half something had to change. So I packed my bags and moved to New Zealand. There I found an aikido dojo where I started to train again. I was still very fresh having only completed two semesters worth of training while at university. I enjoyed the training, albeit it was a very small dojo with a small number of students. The dojo's chief instructor didn't want to be affiliated with any one style of aikido (since he had multiple Dan gradings from several of the main styles of aikido) and as a result no one ever graded. Once again work began to take over my life and training sadly had to be cut back to a bare minimum.

Luckily back in March 2008 I moved to Brisbane after being headhunted by my present employer. As I'm sure most of you will know Australian Customs and Quarantine are fairly keen to talk with you when you have ticked 'yes' on your Customs and Quarantine card to 'do you have any weapons.....' and 'do you have any wooden artefacts....' Of which I had ticked yes to both having brought my Bokken, Tanto and Jo with me from New Zealand.

It was at this point I was ushered away and taken to a bench far, far away from everyone else, to have my bags inspected. I remember this guy come over to me and with an Irish accent ask me, "So what type of martial arts do you do?" My first thought was have I landed in the right country! But I answered very politely in my best English accent 'Aikido'. He then proceeded to ask me about the style and how long I have trained for, etc, and then before allowing me to leave told me he trained in aikido at a dojo in West End and I should definitely come down and check it out. On a scrap of paper he wrote down the dojo's website address and his name – Greg Dickenson - and sure enough I did come down and check it out! And I'm so very pleased to say I'm still here!

I cannot explain in words my gratitude towards everyone in the dojo who has helped me in my training. I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Sensei and Shuko for their never ending support and kindness. I had to leave my friends behind in England four years ago, however I feel incredibly lucky to have made so many good friends through the dojo. Friendships I know will last for years to come. I would like to extend special thanks to my family and close friends outside of aikido who have always fully supported me throughout my training – although perhaps not always knowing what I'm talking about, they have always been there and that is very, very much appreciated. Thank you!

Osu!

Ollie Bradshaw