

NEWSLETTER



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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

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February Report

New members 5 Total number of adults training 64 Total number of teens & children training 40

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 25th & 26th February

Jun-Shodan	Choi, Sukchul	8th Kyu	Matt Hede	2Y11 step	Mark Coleman
Jun-3rd Kyu	Rebekah Webb Mai Bui		4Y2 step	Matt Carpenter	2Y8 step
4th Kyu	Ira Seidenstein	3Y2 step	Ryan Slavin	2Y1 step	Murray Booth
7th Kyu	Vinicius Fernandez Shonelle Rutherford		Francis Hollingworth Lawrence Monforte	S5 step	Peter Hills S3 step

Events in March

1. Sogo Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 11th 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 25th 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 26th 1:00pm~

2. This Month's Holiday of Adults' class

- Dojo's Holiday – Monday 28th

A bit of knowledge for Aikido

A hint on Aiki-waza

It was my fourth year as an uchi-deshi (full time live-in student taught by Master Gozo Shioda) and I was getting more confident of my techniques with more understanding of Aikido after I received the rank of 3rd Dan. During Kuroobi-kai class (taken by Master Gozo Shioda for black belts students only for the more advanced Aikido level) Master asked me to apply Yonkajo on both of his wrists. I, the youngest uchi-deshi, giving him a technique was not a usual event at all and it was something that I had never done, as the relationship of master and disciple was very strict and absolute in the martial arts field. I did hesitate but I had second thoughts that it was a great opportunity for me to demonstrate to my Master how much I had improved in the previous three years of severe training.

So, I grabbed his wrists that were thin and wrinkly just as the wrists of an old man in seventies should be and without care to the old man I, as young as twenty-two years old then, put all of my might to his wrists. He, who was called a God of the Japanese martial arts world, wobbled about as if he was just an ordinary old man from a technique of nothing but the youngest uchi-deshi. I got excited at the fact that my technique was working on him and believed if I focused more I might be able to take him down. He said, "One more time." As I awaited his command I did so and I saw him reel again. He went on "Hoi, one more go!" I got carried away and I pressed his wrists concentrating all of my power with the intention of getting him down this time. The moment I thought he was going to fall over I saw his body got hardened in a straight beam and at the same time my feet were up in the air and blew away backwards in a beautiful arch. I landed on the mats hitting my whole back but got up swiftly in a total confusion to grab his wrists again following my Aikido training instinct. His hands were offered right in front of me again to let me hold and as soon as I focused my body power applying Yonkajo I was bounced back exactly the same way as the one before as if the scene was replayed. We repeated the scene several more times. Though I kept being blown away hard each time I was drunk with amazement and joy. Until then, what I knew about Aikido technique was about pain and force that restrained my body through joint locks. This was my first encounter with Aiki-waza. Then I realised what I had learnt spending three whole years of my life was just the entrance to Aikido and the inner core of the Aikido world laid thereafter and that looked enormous and beyond my imagination.

Well, now I can explain what Master did and what happened to me though it was total magic and confusion for me then. When a person presses something with one's whole might it fixes his body as a solid substance with all the joints being locked and that's me when I applied Yonkajo. Master fixed his own body creating a centre line along his spine just like a steel pole and by shifting his centre line upwards, the Yonkajo power I put got bounced back on me directly through both shoulders in an upwards force that made my body fly into air. The amazing force I felt from Master was not created from him but it was my summoned up force being young and strong rebounded. I am aware that



explaining Aiki-waza in writing may not make sense to you to comprehend but what I want to say is that the secret of Aiki-waza is the power created by the one's own centre line and our ultimate purpose of training Aikido lies in how to develop this centre line.

By training Kihon-dosa (basic movements) we learn basic steps and turns of Aikido to strengthen the legs and lower back. At the same time we need to focus on developing one's strong centre line by consolidating limbs and body and by moving the created centre line forwards, backwards and in turning motions without losing it. When we train Kihon-dosa with uke (partner) we should feel how one's centre line travels and influences the uke's body. And vice versa, uke should feel how shite's power of centre line travels within their body and by understanding this mechanism one can apply a technique more efficiently when being shite. The Aiki-waza which Master performed on me, reversing the Yonkajo, can be mastered through these basic movements.

When we train Kihon-waza (basic techniques; techniques formed in certain steps and angles strictly and without any individual arrangements) our focus should be more on our centre line not about the effectiveness of techniques. If you keep feeling your centre line as you progress each movement you can train your centre line to be stronger. The movements, without losing one's centre line appear to be very graceful and each movement is made without any wasteful energy, and that means one's technique is smooth, effective yet very powerful. Training Kihon-waza being both shite and uke gives us lots of chances to experience how force flows and travels at each motion in oneself and in the partner's body. When we can accumulate these experiences more sensitively the volume of one class training becomes very precious and one can progress the skills of Aikido a lot faster. I know that it is easy to have a rest when we are taking uke especially when we are tired but that moment becomes the difference between attaining the real Aikido and not. There are heaps of treasures and secrets of Aikido in our ordinary classes only if you can find them.

Actually, the ultimate training method of the centre line is in kamae posture (basic stance). I am sorry to say but so many students tend to rest when they are in kamae after they finish a technique diligently and their centre lines are quite flabby. From my experiences and knowledge that's the point where the most important moment lies. I feel so sorry as an Aikido instructor to see that.

Once we get used to holding a strong centre line in kamae then we need to maintain it while we perform Seiza-ho; kneeling down and up without losing the fixed centre line is a great training to strengthen it. Please do not move in a routine without thinking but always keep your attention in each motion you make. It is such an easy way of training one's centre line by very efficient means. The point to focus on, is your head position to retain in the alignment of your fixed centre line.

At last, I have to mention about the seiza position. Well, while you are in seiza most students are just sitting (or just suffering), I suppose. This is, again, a great training method to develop your centre line more rigid. The points to focus after you are set in the seiza position is 1) pushing your lower back forward, 2) holding out your chest, 3) feeling the spine get stretched in a rigid centre line. Remembering this sensation in your body and use it in kamae postures, basic movements, basic techniques and jiyu-wazas. We find our centre line in a stop motion firstly and then develop it more firmly through slow motions to fast motions, and this training will eventually but definitely lift us to reach the level of the Aiki-waza world where the power of centre line produces magical and graceful techniques.

I have written about Aiki-waza in this article because I wanted you to know the keys to achieve it, and they are surprisingly not in the fancy techniques but in the boring basics such as kamae, seiza, seiza-ho as the secret of the ultimate Aikido world. As one's rank goes higher one should return to the basics more to keep advancing, I think. Well, I wish all of the Brisbane dojo students a happy training aiming for the Master's level. I do stress that it is possible for all of us to achieve.

Osu!

Michiharu Mori