

NEWSLETTER



No. 191 July 2011

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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June Report					
New members 2		Total number of adults training 65		Total number of teens & children training 37	
Results of Sogo Shinsa on 24th & 25th June					
Jun-Nidan	Dennies Delos Santos	3rd Kyu	Roger Yang Ira Seidenstein	9th Kyu	Jamie Povis
Shodan	Peter Hills	Jun-3rd Kyu	Simon Foley	3Y6 step	Lawrence Monforte
	Jocelyn Fergusson Genevieve Sargent		Brandan Cheng		3Y4 step
2nd Kyu	Cameron Blake	4th Kyu	Matt Hede		Ryan Slavin
	Justin Charell	5th Kyu	Mackenzie Lange		Francis Hollingworth
	Joel Delaney Mai Bui		Lisa Milne Izaiah Fergusson	2Y11 step	Kaido Mori
Events in July					
1. Getsurei Shinsa			2. This Month's Holiday of Adults' 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">• Dojo's Holiday – Monday 25th		

Sharing Sensei's experience & knowledge for Aikido life

Annual demonstration

Now the June Sogo Shinsa is over, the dojo's biggest event of the year, the 16th Annual Demonstration is fast approaching. Some students are looking forward to it with excitement, some students are willing to avoid it if they can and new students have no idea. I hope everyone takes the demonstration as a great opportunity to learn more Aikido skills, train harder, and improve their level. After a few months of hard training, please welcome and enjoy the demonstration day as our festival of the year.

I think that everyone has various experiences about demonstrations not only on the mats but off the mats too. I have countless experiences both from Japan and Australia – some are very serious, some are interesting and some are almost comical. As I have written some serious versions before, I would like to share some funny stories this time.

Some years ago, I was working busily to set up the mats and other equipment for our demo at Somerville House. Then, a father of a kid's class student approached me and asked "Can I take a photo?" I was one of the "Senseis" at the Headquarters (although being young) and we were highly admired by all the general Yoshinkan students especially from students who lived far away from Tokyo. As a result, I was asked many times if it was ok to take a photo of me from many students at our annual all Japan Yoshinkan demonstration. This custom was still in my body and I naturally stood up stopping my hands from work and posed with a smile saying, "Yes, it's no problem," when I was asked "Can I take a photo?" Then he replied "Thank you" happily and off he turned on his heels leaving me in a pose behind. Well, now you know that he meant if it was ok to take his child's photo during the demonstration. I was so embarrassed and looked around to make sure no one else saw this dumb situation. I still recall the memory with embarrassment and I wonder if it was my English or the experiences of being a Sensei at the Headquarters that was the cause of this stupidity. Now I am very careful to judge what one really means when I hear "Can I take a photo?"

Hakama (black pants) is the formal wear used in Aikido, Kendo, Iaido, Kyudo and Kobudo, the arts derived from samurai swords. Not everyone can wear a *hakama* in Yoshinkan Aikido, it is reserved for only those black belts who have passed the 3rd Dan grading. Although 3rd Dan black belts are allowed to wear their *hakama*'s anytime, even when they train during general classes, no one actually wears them in daily classes since it is a bother to wear each time and is not easy to move actively. Only the people who are wearing them during classes are over 3rd Dan uchi-deshis (Senseis at the Headquarters). So, when you see someone wearing a *hakama* during classes it meant they were Senseis and it was a huge status symbol to be able to wear a *hakama* at the Headquarters. I was most pleased when I passed 3rd Dan grading and obtaining the right to wear the *hakama* feeling as if I reached the level of a professional Aikido practitioner. That is (was?, not too sure now) the rule at the Headquarters. But here at Brisbane dojo, I let all the black belts wear *hakama* for any formal demonstrations



knowing that gives them the feeling of privilege and pride. These samurai pants are the symbol of our pride in practicing a samurai art. However, a few years ago at one of our annual demonstrations, as every black belt was dressing in their *hakama* I heard several girls from the kid's class saying, "Ewwww~, boys are wearing black skirts~." They were disgusted at looking at big men dressing like a woman. Though I laughed at their conversation I could not hide the shock of the fact that the samurai pants appeared to be women's skirt for Western people.

Every year, ten selected riot policemen enter a special course at the Headquarters. They achieve the course in nine months and then they return to their teams being recognised as professional Aikido black belts. During the course they have two demonstrations as part of their training curriculum. One is the All Japan Yoshinkan Demonstration that I mentioned earlier. Though this is the biggest annual demonstration for Yoshinkan Aikido the riot policemen in the course do not have much chance to show themselves but can only show the basics like kihon-dosa-renzoku (continuous basic movements) and some basic techniques because they are still white belts in August when the demo takes place. The other demonstration is held after they acquired black belts in December and this is the one that is very important for the riot policemen. They are from the Tokyo metropolitan and they visit Kyoto Police for a week to teach Aikido and arrest techniques just before their graduation of the course. They perform a demonstration at the end of this instruction course as an opportunity to show their spirits and powerful techniques as the police leaders.

This is an experience from the 22nd special course's riot policemen which is the course I also took. I heard the episode from Takeno Sensei (known as Razor Takeno for his official nickname and as Yakuza Takeno for his hidden nickname) who led the police students to Kyoto.

"Life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot. – Charlie Chaplin" I understand these words as "A tragedy is only one step from a comedy" or "There can be two sides of the same coin." This experience is the proof of this theory. On the very last day of the instruction course, they began the demonstration in front of a huge audience of Kyoto policemen; basic movements, basic techniques, intermediate techniques, applied techniques and Jiyu-waza. All the programs went perfectly well with a great impact of power. The very last program was the demonstration by Takeno Sensei and his *uke* was chosen beforehand who was the best among all the riot policemen. 'T' was extremely excited and fired up for receiving Razor Takeno's deadly techniques. He rushed in towards Takeno Sensei with his hardest Shomen-zuki (front punch) and was blown away by Kote-gaeshi. The next was Irimi-zuki and slammed the rear of his head badly, then ude-garami... The Kyoto policemen became deathly silent in amazement and held their breath in thrilling sensation. 'T' who crashed his head so badly almost losing himself but roared loudly to keep him conscious. He got up again and dashed towards Takeno Sensei. This time it was Takeno Sensei's favourite technique, Sokumen-irimi-nage, that burst away 'T' without fail. As he stood up he felt something cold running from his nose and realised his nose was bleeding from hitting his head too often. He wiped it with his gi sleeve and roared even louder to show his spirit as he attacked Takeno Sensei once more.

Takeno Sensei, on the other side, looked at 'T's face to see if he was ok to keep taking uke as he stood up after slamming his head damagingly and saw two thick streams of snot from both his nostrils. Then he got surprise in seeing 'T' spread them over his face with his sleeve in a violent motion. Without recognising Takeno Sensei's taken aback expression 'T' with shiny snot all over his face closed in him, and that was purely horrifying. Even Yakuza Takeno winced at the scene and it took his bloodthirsty atmosphere away. Everyone from the course witnessed the scene and it was no surprise that 'T' became the legend among the riot policemen for years and years.

Additionally, 'T' who was in an ecstasy of self-satisfaction for keeping his spirit strong though his face was covered with blood found out the shocking reality afterwards. He thought he was extremely cool with an honourable injury being a tough policeman representing the Police, but the fact was that he played a role as a clown unfortunately. His cheeky training mates all teased him by acting and copying the scene at the party later on and they had great laughs. Poor him!

Well, our 16th annual demonstration will be held in two months time. We all, including me will perform as best as we can. I am looking forward to observing each demonstration that everyone offers; some will be purely excellent, some will be entertaining to watch and some happenings may occur...to give us some laughs!? We shall produce legends from our devoted performances, either in serious one or amusing one.

Osu

Michiharu Mori