

# NEWSLETTER



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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info> Facebook: <http://bit.ly/dojofb> Twitter: <http://twitter.com/YoshinkanAikido>

## January Report

New members 5 Total number of adults training 56

## **Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> January**

<b>5<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Nana Hayashi Ryuta Hayashi	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Flynn Conroy	<b>2Y2 step</b>	Jocelyn Fergusson
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Vladimir Roudakov Janna Malikova	<b>2Y11 step</b>	Joseph Stuart	<b>S4 step</b>	Justin Charell
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Majid Momeny	<b>2Y5 step</b>	Murray Booth	<b>S3 step</b>	Cameron Blake
		<b>2Y4 step</b>	Peter Hills	<b>S2 step</b>	Joel Delaney

## Events in February

### 1. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 17<sup>th</sup> 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 24<sup>th</sup> 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~

### 2. This Month's Holiday of Adults' class

- Dojo's Holiday – Monday 27<sup>th</sup>

## **Coffee Break**

### **Supernatural powers?**

One day when I was putting up a dojo poster on the notice board at the West End Market, a young fellow approached me and asked if I could kick the ceiling. How interesting I thought. For him, being able to kick the ceiling was the way to judge if I was a skilled martial artist or not. To me, the skill of kicking the ceiling as a martial artist had absolutely no meaning even if I could do it. Well, that kind of big trick would be cool in an action movie but this kind of movement, jumping high to kick, can be avoided easily by an opponent and the kicker will be attacked by the time he lands in a real fight. Besides, a middle-aged man like me practicing how to kick the ceiling at home would be too silly, and it would be even worse if it was a success to kick the ceiling hard enough to break it, as I would be in big trouble with my wife.

The major image of Japanese black belts worldwide may be from Karate that Karate-ka breaking blocks and splitting wooden boards by kicks or punches. On the other hand, the image of a master black belt that Japanese people have is a humble elderly man with a noble character, never violent or aggressive, who can easily beat up a gang of young rogues with mysterious techniques.

Many people may know the name of Musashi Miyamoto, the most famous Japanese swordsman who lived about four hundred years ago. We hear that he won combats using real swords more than sixty times in his whole life and he never let the opponent's sword touch his body even once. This is absolutely superhuman. If you have seen a Kendo match (Japanese fencing using bamboo swords) you know that it is impossible to win without getting any hits from the opponent. Even the strongest kendo-ka will end up becoming disabled losing some body parts or getting badly injured, if not being dead, if they were to use real swords in the match, from what I see.

Why did Musashi survive more than sixty deadly combats being unscathed then? What he said was that he was able to perceive clearly the movements of the opponent's sword up to 1.5cm distance to his body. The speed of a blow with a real sword is one eightieth of a second and he was able to see it move clearly where the edge of the sword was. This means, I think, he was not just an expert of swordsmanship but he also had some sort of supernatural powers.

An historical Japanese novelist who himself holds a high rank in Kendo wrote that Musashi had special abilities – he was able to petrify his opponent by his glare and then slashed the opponent in two. He mastered the ability from the training called *Shugendo*, mountain asceticism influenced by Japan's ancient mountain

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worship and esoteric Buddhism, so the author says. But he also mentions that it was natural for his opponents to be petrified and self-trapped from fear when they felt Musashi's strong force, realising they were no match to him as a frog freezes when a snake targets it.

I do not know what is true but it interests me that ancient martial artists obtained some sort of supernatural abilities from real combats in the condition risking one's life. As I was impressed with the force of eye power Musashi seemed to use to petrify his opponents I tried to develop my eye force for a while years ago. Because I could not try out the mountain asceticism due to my work living in this modern society, I simply used Shinsa as my eye force training. I remembered Master Gozo Shioda looked into each student's eyes with a fixed gaze standing right in front of them during Shinsa and many students could not hold calm and lost their stability almost fainting. So, I decided to do the same to boost my eye force hoping it would influence my Aikido ability too, with a slight ambition to obtain some sort of supernatural power that would enable me to knock out an opponent by my glare...

One day during a usual Shinsa it happened. I looked into one of female student's eyes during her grading with my severe eye force, after checking her toes, knees, hips, hands and to her eyes standing right in front of her. Guess what happened. As I gazed her eyes with power she replied me with a most beautiful motherly smile as if she was smiling to her dear young son! She was a little older than me with a character of endless maternal love. Well, it was my complete defeat. After this incident I stopped looking into students' eyes during grading and soon I gave up my childish ambition. I could not become like Musashi overnight...

Musashi's story was from as far as 400 years ago and it is hard for us to judge what was true, then how about the stories from my master's master, the founder of Aikido Morihei Ueshiba, who lived until only fifty years ago. He also went in the mountains to carry out severe discipline like ancient martial artists did and one day he got inspiration that "Golden life energy from Heaven descended on me." Again, he too reached somewhere no ordinary person could. Later, he said that the movement of the sword seemed to be in slow motion to his eyes like a standing stick against a wall falling slowly. As he said so, all the episodes describe he was able to avoid any sword attacks at any moment. It was not only swords he avoided but my master Gozo Shioda said he saw 'O' Sensei (Morihei Ueshiba's other respectful name) dodge a soldier's bullet in front of his eyes. According to what 'O' Sensei mentioned, he was able to see a white beam emitted from the gun muzzle just before the bullet was shot and by avoiding the white beam the bullet always missed him. He developed the skill during World War II, he said. It is amazing to know how much ability human beings can develop from training/discipline in a extreme conditions.

Well, my master Gozo Shioda did not leave any supernatural episodes. However, it does not mean he was not an amazing martial artist. He was the perfect black belt master that Japanese people ever imagine, being a humble elderly man who was small and looked feeble yet performed absolute god-like techniques when he wanted to. He was admired as a God martial artist in the Japanese martial arts field. This means that his Aiki-waza, the extreme level of Aikido skills, is great enough to be called as god-like technique though he did not achieve any supernatural powers.

I think that the art of Aikido itself is already closer to some sort of supernatural power that a person can throw/restrain somebody with almost invisible technique in less than a second. In fact, recalling my memory, when I was teaching Aikido visiting some universities twenty years ago while I was still in Japan, one of the female university students said, "Mori Sensei, you are a sorcerer," after she was flipped over cleanly without feeling any pain and she even did not know there was a technique performed. So, I suppose we do not need to be disappointed that we cannot obtain special powers but we will be good enough to be called sorcerers from general people by performing advanced Aikido techniques. That's cool enough, don't you think?

Osu!

***Michiharu Mori***