

NEWSLETTER



No.208 December 2012

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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November Report																										
New members 3		Total number of adults training 64		Total number of teens & children training 54																						
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 16th & 17th November																										
Jun-Sandan	Ryan Slavin Lawrence Monforte	8th Kyu	Blake Carney Niklas Pettersson	4Y8 step	Matt Carpenter																					
Jun-3rd Kyu	Vladimir Roudakov Janna Malikova	9th Kyu	Matthew Brophy Sean Keogh Kent Windress	3Y1 step	Dennies Delos Santos																					
4th Kyu	Lu Jiang			2Y2 step	Cameron Blake																					
5th Kyu	Dean Jones			2Y1 step	Mai Bui																					
				S4 step	Matt Hede																					
				S3 step	Greg Smith																					
Events in December			3. This Month's Holiday of Adults' class																							
1. Sogo Shinsa			♦The dojo is closed from 23 rd to 26 th , and is open on 27 th & 28 th , and is closed again between 29 th –1 st of January.																							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training starts, Friday 30th Nov 7:15pm~ • Steps, Friday 14th 7:15pm~ • Shinsa, Saturday 15th 1:00pm~ 			♦DECEMBER & JANUARY																							
2. Children and Teens Class Holiday through X'mas and New Year's Day			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>M</td> <td>T</td> <td>W</td> <td>T</td> <td>F</td> <td>S</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30</td> <td>31</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </table>			S	M	T	W	T	F	S	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29																				
30	31	1	2	3	4	5																				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No children & Teens' class will be held during school holidays. The last day of this year's kids class is on the 13th December Thursday. The first class in the New Year for Kids class is on 31st January Saturday and Teens class is on 30th January Wednesday. 																										

2013 YEARLY PLAN

JANUARY	26 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
FEBRUARY	23 rd	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
MARCH	23 rd	Saturday	Sogo Shinsa
	29 th – 1 st April	4 days	Easter Holiday
APRIL	27 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
MAY	25 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
JUNE	29 th	Saturday	Sogo Shinsa
JULY	27 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
AUGUST	25 th	Sunday	18th Annual Demonstration
			No Getsurei Shinsa
SEPTEMBER	28 th	Saturday	Sogo Shinsa
OCTOBER	19 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
	26 th	Saturday	Senshusei (Hajime) Class
NOVEMBER	23 rd	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa Children & Teens' Special Event
	30 th	Saturday	Special Class & Demonstration
DECEMBER	21 st	Saturday	Sogo Shinsa



A little more knowledge for your Aikido

Brisbane Dojo style Yoshinkan

I have added a new technique to Brisbane Dojo, “a sequence of Tanjo movements.” A student asked me if this technique was taught at the Headquarters and the answer is no. This is something I had to develop.

Actually, many techniques that we practice at Brisbane Dojo are not trained at the Headquarters; they do not train techniques against Jodan-zuki, Shomen-geri and Yokomen-geri; Aikiken, Tanto-soho, Jo-soho and Ken-soho are all original at the Brisbane Dojo only. This sounds if I have been creating new techniques in my own way after I quit the Yoshinkan Headquarters. Basically, it always began to respond to my students’ requests and I developed them with much consideration using only my Yoshinkan knowledge which is all I’ve got, as I never trained in another martial art intensively. Therefore I believe that what I developed are all still Yoshinkan style techniques but with the taste of Brisbane Dojo.

Well, I would like to explain how each Brisbane style technique was developed in order of time. Firstly, about Ken-soho. I realised that Japanese people naturally had a rough idea of how to use swords from watching lots of Samurai dramas and movies, copying their moves as we played using toy swords when we were little or having some lessons in Kendo at school as we grew. On the other side Australian people, of course, had almost no contact with swords and they did not know even how to hold it to start with. Bokken (wooden sword) in Yoshinkan was used only for Kihon-dosa Renzoku and Ken-dori Jiyu-waza but they never trained Ken-soho (attacks and movements) or basic techniques against Bokken. So, general students had very little experience of using the Bokken as they never needed to practice during classes except when they had to go for their black belts grading because Ken-dori Jiyu-waza was in the syllabus. Uchi-deshis, when I was working there were given an opportunity to learn Yagyu Shinkage-ryu (swordsmanship) from its master once a month. So, I had some sort of foundation in swordsmanship and I added Yoshinkan Irimi (entering at an angle) movements to create our Ken-soho. I recall the scenes on the wide veranda of my first and very old flat at the beginning of my immigration period and I asked Shuko to hold a Bokken too to strike me to develop the movements with lots of trials, and we heard the passing cars beeping the horn to tease us. Well, I am sure the young couple stood out on the clear view veranda upstairs fighting with wooden swords.

The next was Tanto-soho. The original Tanto-soho was a series of ten patterns in pairs and was trained only by uchi-deshis and Senshusei (students of Riot Policeman’s course); five from seated position and five in standing position. So, I extracted each movement from it to form a sequence of eight solo movements and took seated movements out from the pair movements as there was no need to practice from the seiza position in an Australian context. Besides, I made up “Aikiken” from the form of my original Tanto-soho. “Ken” from Aiki-ken means ‘fist’ and it represents punches and attacks. I took away tanto from Tanto-soho and kept the same movements using empty hands to perform basic punches and attacks and that was because I thought Aikido practitioners should train attacks more to perform strong Aikido techniques against them.

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I added all those original techniques to our grading syllabus for everyone to practice them intensely and I thought that students must have been satisfied with enough new skills to learn by then. Clearly, I was wrong. Here, I received a request to teach them Jo-soho next. Well, we hardly practiced using Jo in Yoshinkan though we had Jo throwing techniques. Aikikai owns its Jo-soho that O' Sensei (Master Morihei Ueshiba) devised and the video of O' Sensei performing his Jo-soho has been well known in the Aikido world. I never saw my Master, Gozo Shioda, perform Jo-soho which suggested Jo-soho was not yet practiced when he was training under O' Sensei. I could not teach O' Sensei's Jo-soho as I never learned it. I could have copied it from observing his video clip but would not be able to reach the level of teaching. So, I decided to develop my own using my Aikido knowledge that would enable me to teach confidently. Well, the point was what we should learn by wielding Jo. There were two elements involved in Jo movements; one is the form of attacks and the other is the form of throwing. The forms were not only about arms but foot work as well of course and I concluded all the necessary movements we needed to know for both attacks and throws into twenty one forms. This Jo-soho is made in Australia, as now you know, but it is trained and demonstrated by some Aikido students in Japan too from watching my YouTube clips as they think it is very cool.

Now, I had completed making soho's using all of the traditional Japanese weapons – Ken, Jo and Tanto – I was relieved thinking there was no need to create any more. In July this year, however, one of my students had a request to teach him self-defence techniques against a walking stick as well as how to use it freely as a weapon. A walking stick could be anything like a baseball bat to a steel pipe as such, I thought. Again, I had to summon all my knowledge to design a series of forms.

Musashi Miyamoto said that the forms of attacks humans perform in a real fight are very limited, only five at the most, from his experiences of actual battles with real swords. I held a Tanjo and thought how I would attack somebody naturally in reality. The easiest motion would be striking downwards obliquely which is our Yokomen line and if I missed it then I would slash upwards in a sequence. Then, I would prod at his face if cutting motions failed. They are the first three forms I thought people would perform with a handy stick when they are furious. The fourth attack in our Tanjo-soho is the Shomen-uchi line which is rather unnatural generally but we need to practice the line for Aikido movements. After these basic attack forms I composed the movements from six Yoshinkan Kihon-dosa's. Here, the Tanjo-soho had almost completed.

Well, the way I designed these original soho's with Ken, Jo, Tanto, empty hands and Tanjo sounds pretty easy and simple but they were not in fact. I had to think through them in various ways for weeks and weeks going through the process of cut and try repeatedly. I usually start teaching them with kids and teens to see and consider from teaching somebody and looking at their performance. It is more like an experiment to try out my draft to modify. So, our teens and young adults from kids' class have progressed very well responding to my high expectations. One more process before I complete new technique is showing it to my wife to be checked as she has been walking the Aikido life with me and having quite deep knowledge in Aikido and also she is one of the living witnesses who saw the Aikido of Master Gozo Shioda directly. I designed Tanjo-soho just in time to demonstrate it for the "Fight for Life" demo organised by Peter Hills. I showed it to my wife the day before the demo and she mentioned that the sequence of movements did not flow because of the kamae posture of Tanjo-soho and it got modified at once.

The opportunity for demonstrating at "Fight for Life" event brought me the gift of new skill for our dojo and I had one more benefit from the event. It was from watching the movement of Taekwondo instructor handling and blocking both front and side kicks. Well, as you know, Aikido basically does



not practice kick skills and therefore we usually do not have a certain form of techniques specifically for kicks. That was because Aikido was devised and practiced by samurai's and their main weapon was the sword as you know. When you have swords at the first condition you would never think of an attack with a leg since it would be chopped off in no time. Aikido techniques were useful only when their distance got closer where they could not pull out their swords. In the modern world, however, we do not carry swords around as a matter of course and martial arts such as Karate, Taekwondo, kickboxing etc focus on kicks as their powerful attacking means.

It was a natural course that Australian students wanted to know what Aikido could do against kicks and wanted to perform techniques against kicks at our annual demonstrations. When there was no certain set of basic techniques against kicks and letting them be designed by each student it got too free giving the impression of being more like Karate, wrestling or street fighting style but not Aikido. Here, I had to compose a standardised way of handling kicks and of possible techniques properly set in the Yoshinkan style. I had absolutely no knowledge about kicks or techniques against kicks as nothing related was taught at the Headquarters. I had to research and think. Though there were various forms of kicks they could be categorised in three patterns basically; front, side and roundhouse kicks. The roundhouse kicks were not something we needed to worry as they could be avoided easily as long as we keep a certain distance and performers had to be extremely advanced to make it effective.

I had to apply the Aikido principle, harmony, which can neutralise or redirect the power of kicks but not crashing or killing the power of the opponent. I set two patterns of movements; one for front kick and one for side kick. Moving forward at angle using Aikido's Irimi motion and using one's hand in a circular motion to block the kick slightly touching opponent's leg is the movement against the front kick that does not kill the power but neutralises the kick. And the movement against the side kick is using the same Irimi motion where the power of the kick is not the strongest and blocking it with hands at the thigh and shin by absorbing its power gently and then bouncing it back.

Honestly talking, though I was teaching these two patterns at my dojo I was not perfectly confident as my major area was not about kicks. I was a little worried that it was as if they were from just a desk plan. To my relief, the Taekwondo instructor at "Fight for Life" demonstrated exactly the same two ways against front and side kicks (except no circular motion of the hands for front kick.) It convinced me that our way of handling kicks was absolutely practical even from the professional kickers' aspect.

Well, I was an uchi-deshi at the Headquarters and received a high rank of 5th Dan at that time but I could not see how to advance my Aikido further without hitting the wall. It was after I opened the Brisbane Dojo that I began to gain a deep understanding of Aikido principle, theory and also the characteristics of the Yoshinkan style by the necessity to respond to the requests from Australian students. This would have never happened if I stayed at the Headquarters. My Aikido path was reopened thanks to my dear Brisbane Dojo students. "A master is a disciple, a disciple is a master," as Master Gozo Shioda said. It is so true. Thank you so much everybody, for nourishing me to advance my Aikido skills. I owe you indeed. We shall cultivate Brisbane Dojo to keep raising its level with everyone working together.

OSU

Michiharu Mori