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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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| July Report | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| New members 2 | | Total number of adults training 70 | | Total number of children training 42 | |
| Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 26th & 27th | | | | | |
| Jun-Shodan | Darsy Darssan | 6th Kyu | Wikrom Tang Sandra Cantreras | 8th Kyu | Shanoon Alhassan Wesley Drake |
| 4th Kyu | Kent Windress | | | | |
| | Viraphong Phounesana | 7th Kyu | Mark Cocquio David Abbott | 9th Kyu | Maxim Petrovic |
| 6th Kyu | Emil Pop | | | | |
| | Emmanuel Pop | 8th Kyu | Jared Mifsud Rhys Knight | S3 step | Tony Starkie |
| | Tim Bishop-Kinlyside | | | | |
| Events in August | | | | | |
| <u>1. 18TH ANNUAL DEMONSTRATION ON SUNDAY THE 25TH</u> | | | <u>2. Adults' Rehearsal for the demo</u> | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ 11.30am Start packing up at the dojo◆ 12.00pm Start setting up at the venue◆ 12:30pm Children's Rehearsal◆ 12:30pm Doors open◆ 1:00 ~ 3:30pm The 18th Demonstration◆ 3:30pm Awarding ceremony and taking a photo◆ 3:45pm Remove all the mats and clear the venue by 4.00pm.◆ 5:30pm Dinner Party | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ 24th August Saturday 1:00pm~ at the Dojo◆ Everyone is expected to attend the rehearsal.◆ Please note that there is no rehearsal on the demo day at the venue. | | |
| | | | <u>3. Children's Rehearsal for the demo</u> | | |
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ 24th August, Saturday 10:00am~ at the Dojo | | |
| | | | <u>4. This Month's Holiday</u> | | |
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Dojo's Holiday: 26th Monday & 27th Tuesday | | |

A little more knowledge for learning Aikido

The secret of circular movement –from goldfish

Watching Kung Fu movies featuring Jackie Chan there are heaps of different Kung Fu styles – drunken boxing (at least from human form) to various animals (monkey, snake, tiger, eagle, etc.) I do admire that Chinese people make every effort to insatiably absorb anything to utilise them. But I wonder how effective their forms are from the aspect of professional martial arts. One of my students is good at mimicking and he demonstrated snake, tiger and eagle kung fu forms but my question only grew bigger. One day, while I was surfing the internet watching video clips of all sorts of different martial artists, I finally found one kung fu instructor through youtube whose movements were absolutely reasonable and practical yet very beautiful to watch. Good demonstration in any form of martial arts always makes me feel so pleasant and clear my mind. Since I have been intensively involved in the martial arts field for a long time I believe that I have eyes to distinguish or I simply can tell if it is a genuine or a false performance (more like a show sometimes) of any martial arts. The genuine one makes me feel happy bringing smiles to my face but false ones makes me feel unpleasant and sickening no matter how skilful and knowledgeable they talk.



Well, when kung fu artists diligently pursue their techniques so much we, Aikido practitioners, should not be too lazy about studying to deepen our art, I thought. Although I tried to think hard to take in something, some sort of hint or knack, from other living creatures I did not have an ability to learn in that kind of way. So, I had to rely on my Master, getting back to my roots of Aikido, which is what I always do whenever I become stuck on my Aikido path. Here comes my old Aikido book written by Gozo Shioda that I bought more than thirty years ago when I was a teenager.

There was an episode that is unthinkable from this modern age in the book. It said, for the purpose of his Aikido training he bought two German shepherd puppies which grew into the size of 1.5m long and 50kg in weight. These dogs were raised without having contact with Gozo Shioda to make sure they were not tamed by him. He waited until they were fully grown and began his training against them. The method was pretty cruel. Once a week he starved the dogs to make them violent and then let them free in the yard. There, Master went out and attacked the dogs by kicking their side to provoke them to the maximum. Of course, two dogs got mad at him and attacked him back fiercely. Here, he created the best situation to practice *taisabaki* (turnings and shifting of one's body to avoid or block attacks). How stupid, wasn't he?! Still, he obviously survived this training without losing his life. Besides, he would have been sued by an animal welfare society in our times. He continues on writing in his book saying, "you teenage readers, should not try out this kind of training as it is far too dangerous for you. You need to wait until you reach the level of 5th Dan in Aikido at least." Well, I do hold 7th Dan rank now but I do not think I wish that much to improve my *taisabaki* skills if I have to use his method...

This episode is not quite what I was looking for as my Master did not study from the dogs but rather used them to train his agility and to improve his *taisabaki* skills though it is an interesting story. Then, he recommends that readers observe and study goldfish closely. Ok, goldfish...though it is not as cool as a tiger or an eagle as such compared to Kung fu. Well, the difference about the ways to absorb ability from animals between Kung fu and his way were that Kung fu artists acted as different animals using their specialty to either attack or defend when Gozo Shioda took in what he studied to change and improve his movements. Great, he did not decide to act as goldfish...it would have been far too weak as a martial artist, I suppose. Let's see how he studied goldfish. He places about fifteen goldfish in a small fishbowl to let them swim freely and gives a light tap to the bowl. They get a scare from the vibration and scatter instantly in all directions without crashing into each other, all of them in such a small area. No matter how many times he tried the result was the same. Why? What is the secret of their movements to change their body directions in a flash? He got an inspiration that their movement was the secret of *taisabaki* used in Aikido.

As a teenager when I read this for the first time I had no interest in this part at all. Why on earth I had to study goldfish to be strong?! Goldfish had nothing to do with a naïve teenage boy who wanted to be strong at fighting. However, it has been more than thirty years since then and the teenage boy has grown up to a middle aged man, and now I am mature enough to understand the perspective of my Master. One evening during my Aikido class a student reminded me of this goldfish study part. It was impressive to see the



student used exactly what it said in the book: she turned around her head first whenever she needed to spin or change in direction and her body moved so smoothly in great balance that enabled her to perform techniques faster than anybody else could do. I have heard that dancers move their eyes firstly to look at the direction their body is turning to, but I did not think they were actually spinning their heads first to spin their body in a faster motion while keeping their centre. In a way this method is pretty similar to Aikido principles. After I saw her way of turning I tried it myself, turning my head first intentionally, performing Shomen-uchi Kote-gaeshi (2) which has three major turning elements. The first turn in 135° after receiving uke's shomen-uchi got much stronger entangling uke's body into my own spin more powerfully. The next 180° turn was so light feeling as if my body was a spinning top and the last 180° to throw uke by kote-gaeshi was so smooth without my own strength yet the strength of technique was doubled. Well, that was the moment I felt the power of the goldfish's secret.

I think that once we master the way of using our head into a spinning motion effectively, any turns and spins for not only basic techniques but also for Jiyu-waza become much faster and stable that means the technique itself gets faster and more stable. It also improves the way we can manage Tasu-dori dramatically when we need to keep turning around to dodge and apply techniques to multiple attackers in a much faster motion yet without crashes, just like how Master Gozo Shioda used to demonstrate and whose movement was amazingly agile.

The secret of Aikido is the circular movement that involves lots of turning/spinning. The way I recommend to practice turning is aiming to spin one and a half circles from the kamae position that I sometimes ask you to do during basic class. When you turn using the force of back foot kicking the ground your maximum angle is 360° starting to lose balance or not having enough momentum after a quarter turn because your central axis waivers from the kick at the start. On the contrary, by using the goldfish turn, turning your head first and then body axis next, it is more stable and easier to maintain strong kamae posture until you reach 540°. When you keep practicing this turning method moving your body parts consciously, head-axis-leg in order, your body absorbs the secret of goldfish naturally that allow you to turn and change in direction much faster. Then you need to apply what you have mastered from the turning practice deliberately to basic technique to start with, then stepping up to Jiyu-waza and Tasu-dori. You will be surprised to find your techniques performing much faster and sharper.

Well, mimicking the goldfish's turn is much easier than copying the movements of monkey or drunken person as such that anybody can take in. The secret of goldfish is just a hint to progress your Aikido skills to get one step closer to our Master Gozo Shioda.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori