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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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April Report					
New members 10		Total number of adults training 60		Total number of children training 38	
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 2nd & 3rd May					
Jun-3rd Dan	Kaido Mori	7th Kyu	Olivier Alart	Y1 step	Emmanuel Economidis
4th Kyu	Mark Cocquio		Maxim Petrovic	4Y7 step	Lawrence Monforte
	Christian McFarland	9th Kyu	Greg Izaguirre	S4 step	Vladimir Roudakov
					Janna Malikova
Events in May					
1. Getsurei Shinsa			2. This Month's Holiday of Adults' class		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Friday 23rd 6:00pm~• Steps, Friday 30th May 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 31st May 1:00pm~			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dojo Holiday – Monday 2nd June		

A little more knowledge for learning Aikido

The significance of propriety in Japanese martial arts

Yoshinkan Headquarters used to offer a workshop for its instructors on the next day after the annual demonstration when most of instructors all over Japan gathered in Tokyo once a year. The purpose of the workshop was to standardise its techniques and maintain/improve the quality of Yoshinkan Aikido. At one of these workshops Inoue Shihan who lectured the class on the day began with a question which had nothing to do with techniques.

“Well everyone, what did you do with your clothes after you changed at the demo yesterday?” Everyone looked baffled at his question not knowing what Inoue Shihan meant. Then he continued, “Did you fold them neatly and place them in your locker?” People were still puzzled trying to recall yesterday’s memory. “Did you fold your dogi neatly after the demo then?” he went on. By this stage everyone looked awkward with embarrassment. Things were actually quite chaotic after the demo as we all had to change into formal clothes, suits and a tie, followed by rushing to attend the party and I saw most of people squashing their dogi into their sports bags. Even the instructors were no exception. He continued, “Clothes protect our bodies from the heat and the cold outside. Dogi protects our bodies from the impacts of ukemi and techniques. Every time you wear or take them off, please handle them with your respect and gratitude folding them neatly each time and placing them into your bag with care. I believe that this kind of propriety which may seem to be nothing is very important as a practitioner of Aikido as well as a martial artist.”

I was very impressed by his words. I deeply agreed with him that the world of genuine budo-ka (traditional martial artist) is based on propriety but not just outside appearance as a style but from the genuine mind of respect and gratitude that makes Bushi-do simply beautiful. I, being an uchi-deshi, was trained from right in the beginning to tidy up personal belongings and organise personal care neatly all the time, as I lived with other senior uchi-deshis, otherwise I was scolded severely. It was because of that fear at the beginning that I was always alert to make sure my belongings were all neat but soon it became natural as a rule of uchi-deshi life. Besides, it was not only my personal belongings but my Master’s belongings too that I had to look after as a young uchi-deshi. As Master took his jacket off I had to put it on hanger before he passed it, then pants,

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shirt, folding underwear in order and dressing him into dogi at the same time –all had to be done without breaking the flow of his movements reading his timing and keeping him in his pleasant feeling. Uchi-deshis were expected to do these things as if nothing being always alert to maintain everything in order in the course of day-to-day activities. So, when Inoue Shihan questioned if our dogi and clothes were folded neatly I had no issue at all as it was a habit, but there was no mind with the practice. I realised that I found no respect or gratitude in my heart towards these activities and I felt there was a lot to improve my inner aspect as a genuine budo-ka at this workshop.

All the martial artists use dojo to train one's art. If we are there to train just the skills of martial arts as to harm or fight with people then it is not Budo since "do" has to have the meaning of learning a way of life that includes the way of our mental attitude and mindset. Bowing in the dojo represents our respect; to the dojo before we step on the mats, to the shrine of martial god (it is more historical culture than a religious purpose,) to the photos of Aikido founders, and then we are allowed to start training. Training with our partners always begins and finishes with bows. Proprieties and manners are the biggest virtue of training martial arts. Although the forms of proprieties are valued highly, the spiritual aspect based on respect and gratitude is even more sublime and that is a universal value in human beings.

The motto of our dojo is the word that the master Gozo Shioda, the founder of Yoshinkan Aikido, left "A master is a disciple, a disciple is a master." I believe that our senior students all know this dojo's motto and look after their junior students with care and sincerity. I am the sensei at my dojo and I do my best to teach Aikido for my students and the students learn from me. At the same time, I am the one learning so much from teaching students since they display various aspects of techniques unknown to me. The word of Master is absolutely true and therefore we should never forget the mind of respect and gratitude towards each other.

Our senior students are always willing to help out beginners and seniors can learn from juniors immensely. Thus, seniors thank juniors for their being and never think it is a bother to spend time teaching them. Juniors, on the other side, should never take the senior students' kindness for granted but thank them with respect for being taught with care. For me, it was the words of Inoue Shihan that made me recognise the absence of my mind in the forms of any activities as a martial artist. For you, I believe that your bows at the dojo will have meaning if you can have your mind in it each time. This mindset of having genuine respect and gratitude in each behaviour makes the person's forms beautiful. I wish that all the students of our dojo cooperate together to create the world of respect and gratitude as a family.

More than ten years ago, one of my senior uchi-deshis visited our dojo personally. I still cannot forget the way he bowed to the dojo and to the weapons when he took them that grasped my heart for a distinctive beauty in his motion. I suppose that it was because he had his genuine mind of respect in his forms that appeared naturally and elegantly. I wished I were the same as a budo-ka (not achieved yet.) Just being strong in a martial art does not complete the person to be a budo-ka but his manner and behaviour in daily life is also counted. The beauty of budo-ka can be demonstrated only when the genuine mind of respect and gratitude is accompanied with anything he does both at the inside and outside the dojo. I am aware that I have so much to train and improve my inside to be a sensei of a Japanese martial art. Well everyone, we shall sincerely keep training our body and mind as a practitioner of Aikido.

Osu!

Michiharu Mori