



November Report																																	
New members 4		Total number of adults training 55		Total number of teens & children training 47																													
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 21st & 22nd November																																	
Jun-3d Kyu	Pedro Gouvea	9th Kyu	Bastian Hartmann	4Y7 step	Ryan Slavin																												
4th Kyu	Viktor Ovcharenko		John Lam	4Y2 step	Kaido Mori																												
5th Kyu	Charles Delaporte Andrew Crampton		Tobias Gordon	2Y12 step	Cameron Blake																												
6th Kyu	Sai Kiao	4Y12 step	Sam Gray	S4 step	Dean Jones																												
		4Y11 step	Lawrence Monforte		Stephen Cuthbert																												
Events in December																																	
1. Getsurei Shinsa			3. This Month's Holiday of Adults' class																														
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training starts, Friday 5th 7:15pm~ • Steps, Friday 19th 7:15pm~ • Shinsa, Saturday 20th 1:00pm~ 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦The dojo is closed from 25th to 28th, and is open on 29th & 30th, and is closed again from 31st December to 4th of January 2015. 																														
2. Children's Class Holiday through X'mas and New Year's Day			♦DECEMBER & JANUARY																														
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No children's class will be held during school holidays. The last day of this year's children's class is on Thursday the 11th December. The first children's class in the New Year is on Thursday the 29th January. 			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> <td>31</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			S	M	T	W	T	F	S	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
S	M	T	W	T	F	S																											
21	22	23	24	25	26	27																											
28	29	30	31	1	2	3																											
4	5	6	7	8	9	10																											

A travel to Poland

I visited Poland through the first weekend of October to hold two days of seminars and to display a demonstration in a program among other martial arts instructors, after being invited by the European Federation of Yoshinkan Aikido. The seminar participants were not only from Poland but also from Germany, Ukraine and the Czech Republic, and the total attendance figure totalled 100 adults and 80 children. It was a quite big gathering owing to the high ability and the great efforts of the organizer, Grzegorz Krzywicki 5th Dan of Bugeikan Yoshinkan Aikido in Poland and not due to me being famous or anything, unfortunately. They were keen to find out what kind of Aikido this unknown Sensei was going to display and teach and I too was interested to see what kind of level these European Aikido practitioners were going to demonstrate.

According to Sensei Gregory, the instructors of these countries take turns to invite different Yoshinkan Senseis from overseas to hold seminars almost every year. At each occasion they gather across borders in union to improve their Aikido skills and to support one another. So, the participants do know each other pretty well forming more like a family of Yoshinkan Aikido overcoming the background of their deadly history in past centuries. I thought it was just beautiful that Yoshinkan Aikido helped these people to create such a strong and friendly bond.

In January this year, I got an email from Gregory asking 'Mori Shihan' to visit Poland for his 20th Aikido anniversary. Well, my wife who knows my thoughts perfectly well sent an email of declining his invitation back straight away. He, however, did not give up easily and kept negotiating with me sending emails back and forth, seeking any possibility. Although his original plan was a European tour for three weeks what I could offer was only for a weekend, limited to the first weekend of October. Contrary to my assumption that he would give up as my condition was too limited, he still asked me to come for the weekend. As soon as I accepted his invitation he sent me an e-ticket for the flight. Yes, he was quick. There were no more excuses I could make.

NEWSLETTER



Now, I was responsible for the success of the seminars and the demo to fulfil expectations of Sensei Gregory, representing Aikido Yoshinkan Brisbane Dojo. Well, he bought the flight ticket for me which meant he spent a few thousand dollars already before receiving any profit over the seminars and he was going to pay for my accommodation, meals and some instructing fees. I felt some sort of pressure to satisfy him, his students and all of other European students with my Aikido. My biggest concern was my physical capacity to go through the heavy schedule (four seminars and an official demonstration, inviting the public at a major sports centre on the first day and five seminars on the second day) which I requested him to set, asking him to plan as many seminars as possible in two days without any sightseeing or leisure activities, since my whole purpose was teaching Aikido. However, when I asked for the heavy schedule, I did not realise how far Poland was! I did not know I needed to spend whole two days travelling to reach there, besides eight hours of jet lag meant I would be exhausted before the seminars took place and the demo was scheduled straight after the four seminars on the first day. I did want to show my best performance, yet I was not confident with my stamina knowing I am not young any more. So, I simply added more exercise to my daily routine to build tougher body and gain more fitness; jogging, sprinting, chin-ups, push-ups, sit-ups and weight lifting for one and half hours four times a week... This was something I would not have done if I did not have this Poland event. For that reason I thanked Gregory deeply to have provided me a motivation to strengthen my body.

I thought through what I should teach for European students to fulfil my duty. As you know, I have been adding various techniques to Brisbane dojo's grading syllabus. Yet, it does not mean I invented Aikido techniques but I rather filled the area where the techniques against more realistic attacks used in today's society were missing, applying the same traditional Yoshinkan Aikido (I did not create any new Aikido techniques or invent a new Aikido style. I simply applied all the well trained Yoshinkan Aikido techniques against more common attacks like face punches and a back hand punch in both boxing and kung fu style, and some major kicks used in karate and kung fu, and these are used the most on the street fighting.) I believe that the present Aikido practitioners need to practice in the realistic way, not clinging to an idea of the traditional way is the best. We do not carry Japanese swords samurai used to do when the original Aikido was invented, you know. As a consequence, to train Aikido techniques against these punches and kicks during the classes we find it necessary to practice these attacks too. This is the Brisbane dojo style I have set now. So, I had brought this Brisbane style to Europe. Well, the most Yoshinkan instructors, especially from the Headquarters, usually spend quite a lot of time teaching kihon-dosa and kihon-waza (basics, basics, basics...) at the seminars, and I think this is purely boring though I know the importance of it. The students at my seminars were very pleased and excited to find out they did not need to do any of these boring stuff but punches and kicks followed by techniques against them, more like a self-defence class.

What impressed me about these European students the most was their absolute seriousness towards Aikido. Each of them had a solid attitude of 'I am not going to miss anything from him.' They trained each technique I offered whole-heartedly to master without wasting any time and demonstrated respect and full obedience without making any excuses or reluctant response whenever I corrected their techniques. I was also surprised to see the standard of their Aikido levels, being so high. It was obvious that their strategy of inviting worldwide instructors every year to hold seminars has been very effective. They also kept the very traditional Yoshinkan style which is the powerful techniques based on the strong Aikido line that is the type of Aikido I appreciate. I certainly admire their diligent nature of working hard that has been maintaining the essence of Yoshinkan, in spite of the distance, differences in culture and language.

Even children were very well trained too. I was amazed to see about ten kids aged around ten years old among fully grown-up adults participating in all the seminars, nine hours in two days! All of them were extremely focused and keen to learn, yet showing great enjoyment. They corrected their mistakes immediately whenever they were pointed out which was quite advanced level to do even for adults. But, they were still children and had a moment of losing their concentration. Then, the Polish instructors were so quick to give them punishment of push-ups –they had to count loudly as they did in a very much army style. I said to an instructor, "It is a quite severe punishment," then he replied, "No, it's not punishment. It is a gift for them," and he smiled. Adults encouraged them saying you were soldiers to lift their motivation. Well, it is totally a different culture from Australian's.

Now, about my demonstration. It was so interesting, or thrilling... I was well prepared in my head how I was going to show my Aikido –the orders, patterns and variety of techniques against weapons or other attacks– to capture the audience's attention. Ken-soho to start with to draw attention from its sharp and serious mode and then Ken-dori Jiyu-waza which has a relatively higher degree of difficulty out of any other Jiyu-wazas. Tanto-soho next, then tanto-dori Jiyu-waza which can demonstrate various techniques against a knife, the most

NEWSLETTER



standard weapon on the street. Then techniques against kicks that we hardly see at any styles of Aikido demonstration. After the self-defence techniques are shown to prove how Aikido can be effective, then the most advanced Aikido level, the Aiki-waza; against one person, two, four and up to six. Then, the three men tasu-dori with a bokken each to end the demo. They were all clear in my head and I was confident to make the audience satisfied.

To perform these high-level techniques the role of uke is significant. You know, the purpose of demonstration is showing the techniques most effectively to the audience but not like beating up somebody on the street. Hence, I usually choose uke's carefully; considering the levels of their *ukeing* skills to avoid any severe injuries (I do not wish to hurt anybody, I am a nice person!), the size of ukes to extract the impact of techniques, or the reaction speed of *ukeing* to create a flowing rhythm and so on. However, in Poland, I had no options. When Sensei Gregory asked me how many uke's I needed, I replied "six." Then he brought three Polish men and three Ukrainian men whom I never met before of course, although they were in the seminars before the demo. I had no idea of their levels, experiences or characters behind. All I knew was they were all wearing black belts. So, I got them lined up according to their ranks and decided to use them from the top. We were given no time at all for a rehearsal to go through even a technique. I felt it was difficult but I assumed my ukes would have felt more difficult with some fear, not knowing what kind of person I was, what sort of techniques I would do or the plans of the demo itself.

My turn had arrived to complete the program after the several demonstrations of various martial arts. The crowd was abuzz, having kids running around and making noises at the start. I began Ken-soho, as I planned. I exercised my spirit into each swing, leaving a moment of concentration at the end of each movement, that attracted the audience and it got much quieter as I went. The initial action was successful. Then the first uke came to me. I handed him the bokken and began Ken-dori. The very first technique simply to take the sword off from him (Shiraha-dori) got a bit of struggle because though the blade side of bokken was cutting his body in the middle he did not easily let go of it holding the rubber handle very tightly, as he did not know this technique and a wooden sword did not cut him like the real sword would have done. Well, my heart beat got faster here. A few bokken-dori techniques were ok but when I started Jiyu-waza with him, only at the third technique he somehow let the bokken go this time and I naturally caught it, which ended the Jiyu-waza! Just with three techniques... Here, I broke into a cold sweat and my head panicking. I could not remember my plan any longer and as I saw the second uke came with a tanto I just performed tanto-dori with my head being absolutely blank.

Anyhow, I kept going whenever a different uke stood in front of me, performing whatever my body wanted to do. At least I remembered to perform some Aiki-waza against one, two, four and six ukes that seemed to be successful to amaze the audience. Finally, three men tasu-dori with a bokken each. I usually manage to create a flow with a certain rhythm between me and ukes just like playing music as I move around after some throws. This time, however, even after several throws I could not play harmonious music with them who were all trying hard to fulfil their duties but with different level of motivations and skills, and due to my lack of ability I failed to produce a beautiful rhythm. So, I gave up playing and decided to kill them all instead to terminate the chaos; I took a bokken away from one of the ukes and slashed the other two ukes against their bodies. The audience loved this ending with cheers and applause. Well, now as you know the story behind, you can check and enjoy more looking at this demonstration by visiting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUZS3W6wRYw>.

To my great relief, there were no happenings on the second day and I completed all of my five seminars with satisfaction. As I was leaving the venue, one of children who attended all the classes ran after me and said in English, "Thank you very much for teaching me." Well, the most of Polish people did not speak English, not even at the hotel where I stayed. This boy, around ten years old, tried to express his appreciation in the language understandable for me and his words with a beautiful smile blew my fatigue away. I felt absolutely happy and deeply appreciated the opportunity to visit Poland. He will be fully grown in ten years time and I would love to meet him again when I have a next opportunity to visit European Yoshinkan Aikido, believing he would be still training the art he is loving now.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Sensei Gregory and other European Yoshinkan instructors to have given me this great experience to meet new people who shared the same interest with great enthusiasm and commitment, and to enhance the world of my Aikido.

Osu!

Michiharu Mori