

# NEWSLETTER



No.234 February 2015

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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## January Report

New members 4      Total number of adults training 55

## Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> January

<b>Jun-3d Kyu</b>	Andrew Crampton Comila Roebuck	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Neal Windress Tobias Gordon	<b>4Y8 step</b>	Ryan Slavin
				<b>4Y4 step</b>	Kaido Mori
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Ross Macpherson Lily Crampton	<b>9<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Joseph Byrne Kurt Teubler	<b>S5 step</b>	Stephen Cuthbert
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Sushankar Khandabhattu Samuel Herron		Jim Gordon Sebastian Gunadi		

## Events in February

### 1. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 27<sup>th</sup> 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~

### 2. This Month's Holiday

- Dojo's Holiday – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March

## **Sharing the feeling of Black Belts**

### **A Beginner in Yoshinkan**

I believe writing this article is more difficult than black belt grading. I have been learning Aikido Yoshinkan for 3 years. I did not imagine that I would continue Aikido for this long. I never set a goal in Aikido. I told Darsy that Brown Belt was enough for me. However, when I got the brown belt, I thought I could go for the black belt.

The first time I heard about Aikido was back in year 2007 in Melbourne. Seeing Darsy as a black belt in Karate and still going to Karate class every week I said to him that I also should learn Karate. He sent me a video clip and demanded that he wanted to learn the art in that clip. I saw "合気道" on the post. I wasn't interested in watching the clip because I thought Aikido maybe similar to Chinese Tai chi. I never learned Tai chi but saw groups of old people doing some kind of slow movement in parks. A few years later in Brisbane, one day Darsy told me that there would be an Aikido demonstration and he wanted to watch it. I asked him what Aikido was. He showed me another video on YouTube, A tall guy was moving like dancing and a group of people was flying like dancing after thrown by him. That was my first impression of Aikido. Later, Darsy told me that it was Aikikai, not even Yoshinkan style. "Was it real?" I didn't get an answer. We went to watch the demonstration. I felt it was not too bad although I still wasn't sure if the throwing was real. I asked him what is Osu because the way of their shouting like soldiers. "Similar to Hai (yes in Japanese) but stronger than Hai", Darsy replied. My second impression was that it was like military.

I joined the dojo after 5 regular classes with coupon. At the beginning it was really hard for me. I never did sports, neither martial art. I even didn't remember the names on the grading sheet until Jun-Third Kyu. Sometimes I was really annoyed after finding different people teaching me a technique differently, and more annoyingly they were all black belts! So whom should I listen to? Sometimes I just wanted to shout to them: "PLEASE TEACH ME THE STANDARD MOVEMENT!" However, after I started to understand a technique, I accept all their teaching and work out which one suits me. This process makes me happy because I realised that every Uke is different so I cannot just copy the movement. I need to feel the technique by myself.

Doing Yoshinkan brings a lot of benefits, which I cannot count, or measure. It relieves stress from work, keeps me fit, more importantly it helps me to build confidence in my life. Aikido strengthens my body as well as my mind. Although I still have many years to understand the Aikido philosophy, I believe that I become more assertive after learning Aikido. I have improved my multi-tasking and time management skills. I learned to balance among work, study, family and Aikido.

I felt excited about being a black belt. I like learning Yoshinkan but I am not hysterical about it. I have seen many people left dojo in these three years. We are all busy with family. We need to work hard to feed our family. However, I observe a few people are keep training for many years. I think they have good work-life balance. One day I may give it up for something more important in my life. As I mentioned earlier, I don't have a goal in Aikido. I

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don't know how long I will keep learning. Many people set up getting the black belt as a goal and stopped training once they achieved it, however, for me black belt is just a beginning. I like doing Aikido just as much as I like drinking tea, nothing fancy but I cannot imagine a life without it.

I would like to thank all my friends and seniors who helped me in the dojo. I really enjoy training with all of you. I thank Sensei and Shuko San for their continues support.

Osu  
***Lu Jiang***

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Four years ago I was looking for something to do, some sort of sport and came across Yoshinkan Aikido dojo in West end. First classes were not only physically but mentally and intellectually challenging. I thought It's something I could stick with.

It's great to come to dojo on any day and learn something new or to learn something new about a familiar technique, to meet fellow aikidokas who are happy to help and encourage, to feel the spirit of dojo fellowship. Thank you sensei for creating this place for us.

Osu,  
***Janna Malikova***

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"We should devote ourselves to being self-sufficient and must not depend upon the external ratings by others for our happiness." ***Bruce Lee***

While practicing for jun shodan & shodan gradings I was thinking alot where did all passion and inspiration for martial arts have started for me? What influenced it? How come many years later I'm still enjoying doing aikido as much or even more as my first karate class back when I was (I think) 10 years old?

Early 90s Russia was enjoying advantages of the freedoms they didn't have in 80s including legalised martial arts practice, vast amount of new magazines and a bit later, influx of foreign movies. Yes, public martial arts practice was banned in Soviet Union until late 80s, so to practice it legally you have to be in the army or special forces. But that didn't stop people from organising underground clubs as well as recopying various books by photographing them (on film) & reprinting in home photo laboratories. Once legalised in early 90s, it was a huge trend to post aikido move, karate kata (sequence), breathing exercise from Wushu (Chinese martial art) or biography of some legendary martial artist such as Bruce Lee or Masutatsu Oyama (founder of Kyokushin Karate) in any magazine somewhat related to health (even the ones that my grandma used to read). Growing up in the environment where weekend TV shows, movies in cinemas, video saloons (mini cinemas that were screening home translated foreign movies on VHS) and magazines were mass promoting martial arts is what probably forced me to ask my mum to sign me up for karate classes. I spent the whole summer doing karate twice a week, learning new moves in local college. The interesting fact: my first martial arts instructor was a lady (she had green belt). I don't remember many details of practicing karate but it encourage me to practice kicks and punches at home during the next school year.

With that many people all of sudden interested in martial arts it was inevitable that every newly founded gym had some sort of self defence, karate or taekwondo classes. Same went for school's extra curriculum activities. My school didn't have anything like that but the neighbouring school had taekwondo classes. I befriended two gymnast boys from the same apartment block and we decided to sign up for taekwondo classes there one summer. Imagine school indoor basketball court (similar size to annual Yoshinkan demo event). Now imagine one teacher trying to teach about 120 people! Yes, adults, kids, 120 of them are trying to repeat punches and kicks, copy attacks. One of the exercises was to "work on your punch" where you partner up with someone and punch them in the chest and then they will do the same to you. It was torture for me. We somehow managed to spend whole summer there, but the discouragement was massive and new school season was a good excuse to let it go.

At the same time martial arts movies exploded in popularity in Russia (and worldwide). First Jean-Claude Van Damme appearances, horde of ninja flicks were keeping kids entertained and inspired. Cartoons, computer games followed the trend by bringing fighting tournaments and martial arts theme to wider audience. At that point in

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time I noticed that I was more interested in less contact and more graceful martial arts such as aikido and capoeira (thanks to movies promoting aikido and capoeira). There were no aikido or capoeira classes in my home town, Khabarovsk, so next few summers me and my friends were trying to copy moves and kicks from the movies we watched or try few techniques from tiny aikido book with bad quality photographs I purchased from newsagent. My friends were former gymnasts so they were teaching me cartwheels and other handy moves. Kindergarten's playgrounds were the best place to practice as they were empty during the summer and there were plenty of sand and big spaces to practice. One day bunch of local tough guys went through and they noticed us practicing. First they were trying to challenge us up for a fight, but later on even tried to copy few moves. Luckily for us they eventually got bored and went minding their own business. That day I thought that maybe practicing martial art is not always about fighting.

During the next few years a lot of gyms with martial art classes I mentioned before became associated with gangs and mafia which discouraged us even more from going there than class with 120 people punching each other in the chest. In 1997 my classmate mentioned that I might be interested in the guy who was running self defence classes in one of the colleges. Me and my friends decided to give it a go. The following 6 month we were training 5 days a week (two hours a day) and apart from defence techniques and endurance exercises Sergei (the name of our teacher) was also teaching us about responsibility being martial artist and using your skills accordingly. He taught us basics of core body strength, energy flow and many other concepts we never heard of before. Unfortunately work commitments and Sergei relocation forced us to stop, but desire to learn more was reignited.

When I went to university, the physical education was compulsory. So I chose what most of the guys would choose - boxing. Although I wasn't a big fan of boxing and punching people or hitting punching bags, I learnt a thing or two about boxing as a martial art. One day two guys decided to have a sparring and one of them was from professional junior team. When the other guy dropped his guard and decided to go for a punch, the professional's boxer reflex kicked in and in no time the guy going for a punch was on the floor bleeding from his nose. We rushed him to uni doctor, but there was nothing to worry about. Later on, the boxer said that the reflex just kicked in and he couldn't do anything about it. That accident showed me how important it is not only to learn the martial art but to control your abilities.

Two years later I moved to Australia and spent next decade practicing capoeira - Brazilian martial art, that looks like dance with lots of moving and kicking, uses rhythm, musical instruments and songs, employs elements of acrobatics, sweeps and often used for entertainment and shows. There is a lot of negative opinions about capoeira as martial art. Some say that it is not really a martial art or it won't be useful in a street fight, but historically it was used in Brazilian army and craftily employed by street kids to protect themselves. Another interesting thing I learnt after travelling to Brazil is that martial art not always needs to be combat ready to be effective. A lot of masters in Brazil use their academies to get kids off the street, away from drug and crime scenes. I think that's where the real power of capoeira these days.

Eventually I started to search for some new challenges. Janna discovered Yoshinkan Aikido Dojo just two streets up from Capoeira academy. So, we joined beginners course back in August 2010 and had no idea that we will be preparing for our black belt grading 4 years later. Mori Sensei played a big part and was a major inspiration in that period. I would like to thank him and everyone who trained with me in Brisbane dojo for your time, inspiration and advice. I wasn't sure if after getting a black belt my perception of what to do next will change, but all the fears proved to be wrong once I got back on the mat. I feel that there is so much more to learn and black belt is just a beginning of the journey called Aikido. ...and martial arts in general.

Osu and I will see you on the matts,

***Vladimir Roudakov***

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After receiving my 2nd Dan, 2 years and 3 months had passed, I was given an opportunity to grade for the 3rd Dan in September 2014. I originally planned to grade during the June Sogo Shinsa, but I came down with a bad cold with a fever during the last week of grading training. I caught a cold, not because my body was worn out from the hard training but because I was too relaxed without a mental guard, taking the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dan grading too lightly with a thought of "I'm still young with heaps of time ahead, so there's no point in rushing." I took it easy and did not push

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myself. My father, Sensei, was not happy at all with my attitude, knowing I was having an intention to become a professional Aikido instructor like him, and he scolded me for my irresponsibility and easy-going attitude. He said that I would have been fired if I was an uchi-deshi at the Headquarters as I failed to fulfil the task of getting graded at the designated time. I learnt that the gradings weren't about the 2 weeks of grading training but it counted how much one had trained and learnt in the past years with what kind of attitude and motivation one demonstrated.

During my last year of high school in 2012, Sensei and my mother ordered me to start teaching children, saying I was old enough. I was certainly not ready, thinking I was still a young teen wanting to be just a student but not taking a responsibility of teaching. At first I didn't enjoy teaching the children since it was too stressful and frustrating. But I had to accept their decision since this was the path I chose, to be an Aikido sensei, not only because I could not run away from my parents! Ever since I was little I've been seeing my parents put their whole energy into teaching people Aikido and also helping them mentally. That made me decide to follow my parents' path, running an Aikido dojo as well as a Tenrikyo church where people come to study Aikido and also redirect their lives finding a meaning and a value of life.

These last 14 years I have been training, I've heard many people saying how wonderful this dojo is. Not only making the body stronger but also changing mentally in a good way. I have seen this happened with my own eyes that many people changed. For example, some people come to training and their expressions are all gloomy/dark from their private activities/work, but once they finish their training, they go home looking delightful even though they might be tired from training. Person S who came to our Dojo few years ago was a really anti-social and dark person. As time went by training with all sorts of people, grading and participating in demonstrations, he changed a lot from being anti-social to a person with more social skills and brighter personality. I remember him saying that training gave him more confidence to do presentations in front of many people for university exams. Seeing Sensei and my mother putting their hearts into helping people and changing them makes me respect them from the bottom of my heart.

In 2007, I began training in the adult's class. I may appear to be big now but then I was still short and skinny being only 11 years old. Yup, I was scared to train with all the black belts. I knew most of them since I was small, nice people but scary to train with, back then to me, everyone looked like giants. I remember on one of my first days of training, Emmanuel and Richard kept picking on me and saying how bad my Kamae was, and pushed me around. I also remember one of the black belts saying "Smash Kaido while he's still small before he gets big!" Gee thanks! But thanks to every one of you, my body got stronger and now I can manage taking *ukes* for anyone including Sensei.

I've had several minor injuries from training like a cracked rib, cut lips that were swollen for a few days, walking crookedly from somehow getting corked in my calf muscle, the Aikido Toe (from the old jig saw mats) and the loveable big black-purple-reddish Yonkajo bruise on the arm. These injuries always made me think that I have trained really hard and I liked them, you know they are the trophies so as Sensei says. Yet, the teachers at school certainly didn't think in that way. They knew I played tennis for school and clearly understood that the injuries were definitely not from tennis. Every injury I had, a different teacher always came up to me and asked worryingly if it was child abuse or a domestic fight at home. I wonder what kind of image they had in their minds of my father. Due to these injuries most of my grade mates out of 430 students knew my family ran a martial arts business and they thought I was a hardcore martial artist... During my 5 years of high school there were at least 1-3 people every year who came to test me out. All sorts of attacks, sometimes surprise kicks from behind but I was able to defend myself. All thanks to Sensei at home throwing objects at me that would hurt if I didn't catch it striking my body, if I let my guard down at home he always kicked my bottom or punched me in the sternum. This really did help my reflexes... This is definitely something I am going to keep it as a family tradition for my son.

I may still be an immature and an inexperienced 3rd Dan but I will try my best in gaining more experiences from training hard and teaching beginners with care. Not only remembering the techniques but I will also try to deepen my understanding about the details and the principles of each technique that will lead me to become a professional Aikido instructor in future. I would like to deeply thank everyone who have been training and teaching me for the many years passed and for many years coming ahead.

Osu  
**Kaido Mori**