

# NEWSLETTER

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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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<b>March Report</b>					
New members 7		Total number of adults training 53		Total number of children training 45	
<b>Results of Sogo Shinsa on 23<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 24<sup>th</sup> March</b>					
<b>Nidan</b>	Andrew Crampton	<b>9<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Hermann Chen	<b>2Y9 step</b>	Janna Malikova
<b>Shodan</b>	Kerry Nicholson	<b>5Y11 step</b>	Ryan Slavin	<b>2Y4 step</b>	Viktor Ovcharenko
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Kyu</b>	Van Morris	<b>5Y5 step</b>	Lawrence Monforte	<b>2Y2 step</b>	Kent Windress
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Ana Cuthbert	<b>3Y12 step</b>	Murray Booth	<b>S5 step</b>	Louis Chatfield
	Tfer Newsome	<b>2Y12 step</b>	Stephen Cuthbert		Charles Delaporte
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Jonathan McConnell	<b>2Y9 step</b>	Vladimir Roudakov	<b>S4 step</b>	Duong Thai
<b>Events in April</b>					
<b>1. Getsurei Shinsa</b>			<b>2. This Month's Holiday</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training starts, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm~</li><li>• Steps, Friday 27<sup>th</sup> 7:15pm~</li><li>• Shinsa, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~</li></ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anzac Day 25<sup>th</sup> Wednesday</li></ul>		

## Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

### Shodan - The feeling of Thanks

In all honesty I don't know how I ended up here.

I don't actually know why I ended up starting aikido. My friends would (and still do) ask why I do aikido and apparently "fun" is not a complete enough answer. I don't know how to describe it because there is something else, as the words haven't come to me yet. It's not something I can really put into words. I had this thought a while back while I was at a day class, feeling the heat just hang in the air and impending grading training poking my empty brain, while my friends were at the air-conditioned cinema. I didn't doubt that I wanted to be there (which you probably could tell by my extensive complaining) but I couldn't explain why. I like the hard work. I like pushing myself. I like the calm and the laughter. While I don't appreciate the humidity nor the sweat, I figure that it's a fair trade off. I guess I haven't had the epiphanic moment everyone else has had to have a better answer to why we train and to that I say: I guess I'll just have to keep training ٩(๑)۷

When first starting I remember not paying attention and instead watching what the general class was doing, wanting to do that instead. Maybe I just wasn't paying attention to the right thing when the epiphanic moment came along. Right is close enough to left anyway.

Consider it growth that I mostly knew what I was doing this last grading and didn't have to do the hard thing to tell left from right.

Shoutout to Sensei for letting me grade early. Not to mention that all the training sessions were related to areas that I needed to work on (you the MVP) and just general appreciation to your ninja skills. Also, shoutout to Shuko for being so awesome. Speaking of awesome, shoutout to all the black belts (even annoying ones) for helping me not be stupid understand the techniques and being ukes. (Note that I am not naming names as I am grateful to all and I would probably forget someone which would be a travesty.) Cheers to the brown belts for training with me for so long and thanks to the white belts for maintaining the spirit of the dojo. Sibling, thanks as well for being good competition and pushing me to do my earlier gradings. Thanks to the father for teaching me, and mum for being supportive.

*Lily Crampton*

## Coffee Break

### ***A trip to Ukraine ~part II (more Aikido version)***

Until I was invited by Bogdan Chayka Sensei of Aikido Yoshinkan Senshin I did not know much about the Ukraine at all, having had no contact. So, I googled and found the site titled "Speaking of Ukraine..." There, the very first thing it mentioned was being the No.1 country for having good-looking females and males in the world. After that, the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident that I did not realise was in the Ukraine; the Ukraine is big in agricultural industry, having the black earth belt which naturally results in having great food; it is famous for its beautiful cityscape, and so on.

Whenever I was telling people that I was going to Ukraine, I added the most curious information for men, having the most beautiful ladies in the world. Then, one of my female students told me, "Sensei, you can look at them but don't get involved. You are married!" I laughed as I did not even think that at all. Anyway, yes, I observed people walking the streets there and found every woman I saw was very good looking. And it means being beautiful is just average there as long as they lived in Ukraine, I realised. For me, the beautiful scenery of the streets in the historical old city, Lviv, was more impressive. I walked a lot through the city with Bogdan to have meals. Once he said, gazing at me standing on the elegant stone-flagged street, "Sensei is standing in my city, like a dream," and he looked so happy. I was a little embarrassed and thought the words sounded like I was his sweet-heart, yet I was very grateful for his genuine hospitality.

In 2014 when I visited Poland I taught seminars and did a demonstration for the public. I asked Gregory, the head of Aikido Yoshinkan Bugeikan in Poland, to pick six ukes for me from the seminar participants. Bogdan was the sixth uke, and he *uked* Aiki-waza and three-man tasu-dori for me. This was the first time for him to feel my Aikido. In the following year in 2015, he visited Japan to attend the All Japan Demonstration of Yoshinkan and he had a chance to watch other Japanese instructors' Aikido. Then, he decided to invite me for he liked my style of Aikido the most, in spite of having had some Japanese instructors asking him to invite them. I was very pleased and humbled by his remark. When Master Gozo Shioda was in charge of the Headquarters, overseas instructors visited him to request an instructor dispatched from the Headquarters. And Master was the one who decided who was going to which dojos. I was quite surprised to know the current reality that visiting overseas dojo was getting more a business by establishing one's faction and giving away high ranks.

I have always been concerned about how Aikido as a martial art is reviewed and regarded by people generally. In fact, I see many poor Aikido instructors performing miserable techniques uploaded on Youtube. Some of them hold high Dan ranking though without suitable skills to do so. I do not worry too much about other styles of Aikido but when it comes to Yoshinkan and recognising it is losing its quality, I am alarmed. Since the time I was teaching at the Headquarters, although I had no doubt about the power, force and effect of Aikido, I did not think other forms of training in Aikido were good enough. When the most common attacks on the streets today were boxing type punching we trained only against Shomen-zuki (stomach punch) and never trained against any other types of punches or kicks but more for grabs which I thought were biased. I developed a sense of crisis that Aikido was going to be lost being regarded as a non-realistic martial art. As a consequence, I have been constantly reviewing, changing and adding to our training curriculum with more various attacks and techniques suitable to them at my dojo, not making up new techniques but applying the traditional Aikido skills to suit a realistic manner. I am aware that some senior students get confused and troubled whenever they come back to train after a break, as they are confronted with something new for them all the time. Please forgive me for this trouble but accept this as evidence of Brisbane Yoshinkan's Aikido ever evolving.

Well, back to the Ukraine. Even though the period was short, and number of students were not many, I tried to teach Brisbane style Aikido as much as I could: various attack practice, practical techniques, Yudan-step techniques and Aiki-waza that are not usually trained at other Aikido dojos. On the first day of the seminar, I

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explained the importance of practising attacks and learning how to block and direct them too to train realistic Aikido techniques against them. No matter how great Aikido techniques you can perform, if you fail to block the opponent's attack at the first place, then you are done with no chance. We need to know and train attacker's side too when we say Aikido can teach self-defence. In addition, I wanted to change the general belief about Aikido which is very limited, such as it has to start with Shomen-uchi (front-strike) or that someone needs to be grabbed to do a technique, all coming from training only basic techniques but no self-defence style techniques in the classes. Atemi (any attacks such as punch, kick, hit, strike, using any parts of body. Back attack was Master's specialty) is a part of Aikido that we can use freely as we need, not only joint locks and throws are Aikido.

Another thing I intended to make sure was letting them feel the effectiveness and power of Aikido. So, I did the self-defence class for the second day seminar. In the morning before the seminar, Bogdan introduced me to one of his students who was 4<sup>th</sup> Dan, even higher than Bogdan's rank. He was a very muscular guy who did lots of gym training. Bogdan requested me to use him to be my uke for the seminar. He asked me how Aikido could work on big guys as he had trouble making it work on his friends who also had a strong build from gym too. I was very happy to hear that knowing I could give him the answer through his body during the seminar. You know, while basic techniques are designed to train safely, self-defence style techniques can be nastily dangerous, giving uke extreme pain. As he had a nice muscular body that I admired, each technique exercised was effective fully. At the end of seminar, I was very satisfied with it and wanted to thank my uke and ask him to do uke for the third day too. But I could not find him and he was gone. Bogdan told me that he remembered he had something to do and left saying Bogdan, "I now understand Aikido works." Oops...

I had a kids' class to start with on the third day. Bogdan requested me to give a demonstration at the end of the class. I, of course, was happy to do but the question was who could be my uke. There were only two black belts there at the time including Bogdan, and the other black belt got his wrist injured the day before from self-defence techniques. Well, his request was to show Ken-dori, tasu-dori as such but the reality showed there was only one uke... Anyway, I began demonstrating Shomen-uchi Jiyu-waza and then wanted to show Ken-dori Jiyu-waza to explain that the movements were the same. Yet, Bogdan looked exhausted from the first Jiyu-waza, puffing badly. Then, he told me he was sick from catching a cold and could not do any more. Dear me, my demo lasted maybe less than one minute... I lost all my ukes!

The three-day seminar was not long enough to teach all my knowledge of Aikido, of course. I was, however, very impressed with the enthusiastic and serious attitudes of all the students there to learn Aikido from me. Even children demonstrated a great manner of willing to train hard and listening to whatever I was instructing followed by a loud 'Osu!' Since they were lacking in detailed explanations of why and how each technique works, knowing movements and forms but not understanding the reason and mechanism behind them, they had lots of doubts and questions. Therefore, they were very keen to absorb anything I taught. I did some Aiki-waza too, on Bogdan especially, so that they experienced what Aikido could really offer in the advanced level. I hope I was able to leave something that they could work on to keep improving their art of Aikido. I deeply thank all the students who attended my seminars in the Ukraine and I am looking forward to seeing them in future.

I believe that Brisbane Yoshinkan style Aikido should spread more over the world for the sake of Aikido. Regrettably, it is not happening yet. Uploading video clips on Youtube is not enough and I began Facebook too as I wrote, but this is not enough either. I hope Aikido practitioners who liked our dojo's style by watching our video clips will come to Brisbane to train together here at our dojo, like Bogdan will. Besides, it will be great to see more of our dojo students open up their dojos in the world. There will be one soon in New Zealand, right Andrew? And, I will keep traveling anywhere in the world whenever an opportunity occurs.

Osu!

*Michiharu Mori*