

NEWSLETTER

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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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June Report					
New members 2		Total number of adults training 48		Total number of children training 38	
Results of Sogo Shinsa on 22nd & 23rd June					
Jun-Sandan	Murray Booth	1st Kyu	Van Morris	7th Kyu	Hermaan Chen
	Cameron Blake	Jun-3rd Kyu	Tfer Newsome	9th Kyu	Shane Baptist
Jun-Nidan	Stephen Cuthbert		Ana Cuthbert	5Y6 step	Lawrence Monforte
Shodan	Charles Delaporte	4th Kyu	Jonathan McConnell	3Y4 step	Michael Bannah
	Greg Burley	7th Kyu	Martin Fernandez	2Y11 step	Vladimir Roudakov
	Louis Chatfield				Janna Malikova
Events in July					
1 No Shinsa			2. This Month's Holiday		
• Due to the demo training			• No Holiday until we finish the demo!		

Coffee Break

Promoted to 8th Dan

On 8th June, I received the news that the decision of my 8th Dan promotion was approved unanimously by the High-Rank Grading Committee at the Headquarters of Aikido Yoshinkan Federation.

I was filled with deep emotions that I had reached this far, but only for a second, and then the next moment my first formed words leaked from my mouth, "Sorry Shuko." You know, 8th Dan costs? It is as much as about 120 times more than 9th Kyu fee... Yes, one side of me was pleased without doubt yet the other side of me was feeling very sorry for my wife who looks after all the finances. My biggest emotion for getting promoted to 8th Dan was solid gratitude to my wife more than anything who has been consistently supporting me without fail. This is the truth. And to my dojo students, I will be more than happy if you feel proud that you have a high-rank 8th Dan instructor as your Sensei and that you can be happy to tell your family and friends for your own pride.

I left my hometown straight after my graduation of high school for Tokyo's metropolis to become a professional Aikido-ka. On the way to Tokyo, travelling by car from the west coast to the east side coast of Japan, I saw Mt. Fuji - the highest mountain in Japan - for the first time. It was absolutely gorgeous and grand. I was still a susceptible adolescent with a pure heart, so I was deeply moved by the scene and got extremely excited. However, embarrassing as it is to say, I felt that Mt Fuji represented my severe path of the Aikido journey before me on which I was about to embark, and I made a resolution to never give up until I reach the summit of Mt. Fuji. You know, I was still naïve. At the time I did not know what the summit meant in my Aikido path, but I know I was determined to work hard, looking at the grand appearance of Mt. Fuji.

I knew my path ahead was not just hard but unbearably hard since I was aware what I was going to sign up for, "Senshusei Course (Riot Policemen's Course)." I read about the course in a book that wrote "even tough and sturdy men like riot policemen threw up badly from the deadly training." I was full of anxiety over whether I was able to cope with this kind of severe training. In another book I read around the same

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time, there was a verse, “Man leaves his hometown with high ambition. If no achievement, never return even after death.” I told myself that I would never fail once I left my home too.

Having received the rank of 8th Dan brought this old memory back fondly and I wondered how much I have climbed up and what level of Mt. Fuji still faces me as I am now at the age of fifty-two. For the instructors outside Headquarters like myself, 8th Dan is usually the highest rank we can achieve. Although Master Gozo Shioda held the title ‘*Soke* (head of the family, grand master)’ his last rank was 9th Dan. So, only the instructors who hold high positions at Headquarters may be promoted to 9th Dan but all other instructors can hardly receive it, I think.

Besides, at this occasion, I think about other direct uchi-deshis of Master Gozo Shioda. There were ten seniors, two uchi-deshis of the same year and five juniors in the nine years while I worked at Headquarters. Thirty-four years has passed since I joined Yoshinkan, in that period, some passed away, some left Yoshinkan making their own styles, some were excommunicated and some simply quit. Now, only two senior uchi-deshis, Takeno Shihan and Ando Shihan, currently run Yoshinkan Dojo. No junior or the same year uchi-deshis from my time remain. Continuing on a same path seems not an easy life, I suppose.

I gained ranks up to 5th Dan at the Headquarters in Japan and obtained the rest here at Brisbane in Australia. I feel I learned all the basics of Aikido in Japan and with the foundation I gained I developed and matured my Aikido in Australia. I experienced lots of Master’s Aiki on my body being his uchi-deshi and tried hard to copy it with all my ability during my uchi-deshi years, but I only reached the level where I had a glimpse of it. After I opened the dojo in Brisbane I was forced to face the reality that it was not easy to make techniques work on those big and heavy people (though normal size for Brisbane men); a totally different situation/condition compared to the Headquarters. I had to study and develop my Aikido with lots of thinking to keep me a decent Sensei. This made me understand Aikido principles more deeply and led me into the world of ‘Aiki’. This progress would not have happened if I had stayed in Japan. Thus, I can say that what I am now is the result of being raised and cultivated by Brisbane dojo students.

Also, the reason I have been developing and adding more techniques to our training menu - like Jo-soho, Ken-soho, Jodan-zuki, shomen & Yokomen-geri techniques that are not trained at the Headquarters - was to fulfil the demands of my students. I had to make improvements in the way we train to be suitable to our modern society. All these challenges from the dojo students have polished my skills and pushed my Aikido level up. Exactly as Master Gozo Shioda said, “A master is a disciple, a disciple is a master.” My master in Australia has been all of you. Therefore, I owe you for my 8th Dan promotion and I am deeply and sincerely grateful to you all.

Well, as I wrote, I do not know what level of Mt Fuji I saw thirty-four years ago for the context of my Aikido life now. But what I know is that though I thought I was going to climb it by myself at the age of eighteen, now I know that I am not climbing it alone, but with all of my dear Brisbane dojo students. I will devote myself to work hard to keep getting closer to the summit steadily with everyone by my side.

OSU,

Michiharu Mori