

NEWSLETTER

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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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January Report					
New members 0		Total number of adults training 41			
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 25th January					
5th Kyu	Hermaan Chen	5Y9 step	Lawrence Monforte	2Y4 step	Louis Chatfield
7th Kyu	Danielle Gravolin	5Y8 step	Matt Carpenter		Andrea Troncoso Salas
		4Y1 step	Murray Booth	S1 step	Van Morris
		2Y7 step	Dean Jones		
Events in February					
1. Getsurei Shinsa			2. This Month's Holiday		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Friday 15th 7:15pm~• Steps, Friday 22nd 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 23rd 1:00pm~			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dojo's Holiday: 25th Monday		

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

Sandan

I'd like to start by giving a huge thank you to Sensei and Shuko-san for all their hard work and assistance over the years. Not just for all the help they've given me personally (especially when Sensei has to repeat himself like 3 times to answer 1 question I have before I finally understand) but also to every student. To me it isn't just Sensei and Shuko-san who make this Dojo so special, but the whole group of senior students that really add to it. Having known these people for the past many years I'm sure they too have received the same help and support. A good part of what they give comes from Sensei and Shuko-san's example. In saying this I'd like to thank not just the senior students but all the students for their help and uke during class. A special thanks to Kaido for all his help leading up to the grading and uke on the day. Lastly and certainly not least an extra special thank you to my amazing wife Andy for her constant support both in life and in training.

As each Dan grading requires practice in all techniques, they seem to me to be a recap of my progress so far. In earlier times I had thought as you progress the training would be more a sharpening of your technique rather than continuing to learn, like during the kyu grades. Now I feel this is totally wrong, with the path ahead seeming even longer than it was during my Sho-dan training.

What I think about and focus on however has changed. During this grading I felt what I needed to mostly work on was my basics. In earlier gradings the points to fix seemed to be smaller, relating to little specifics of each technique, such as moving uke's hand more like this or cutting down like that. They helped in that specific point but I didn't translate it at the time to other techniques. Now it mostly feels like the point I need to correct is a basic movement or concept which I must work on. Once I notice I'm doing it wrong in one movement I feel the same flaw in most of my other

NEWSLETTER

techniques. While this does make training more interesting, seemingly every technique showed a different basic I need to improve. This left a pretty big list of things to fix in every technique I was doing and seemed overwhelming. In the end I decided to focus on one basic that stood out the most in each technique and tried to improve that as best I could. Like my previous Dan gradings this one too seemed to bring me back to the start rather than to an ending.

What stood out the most for me during this period was to focus on my basic body structure. I'm believe I'm starting to feel the structure during basic movements and this connection during techniques. Because of this I could feel how much better a technique was if I could use this structure or work out how to improve little bits of my technique when I wasn't. While adjusting of course took practice, I felt it didn't take as long as I had thought. Like my body was already pretty close and small changes in my structure could bring things into alignment. This gave seemingly big results. I now think it isn't from any natural ability but from practicing the basic movements and trying my best to get techniques to work while keeping a good structure. At least for me when I started, and even more recently than I'd care to admit, while I could understand the idea of the basic movements and how they relate to the techniques I couldn't quite feel what they were improving other than practicing moving my body. At times practicing to keep straight didn't seem to give me stronger technique either, as it felt awkward to put my weight into it or move. Now I'm starting to see that importance.

Even though I couldn't feel it, my body was starting to align from the beginning. Slowing moving towards a more correct position which eventually at some point allowed for me to feel how to use it. The same with techniques, where maybe I used to feel not as good keeping straight, practicing to do it like this forces you to find the correct alignment. Trying to do it with what feels stronger at the time wouldn't let you progress to doing it a stronger way and not using the common structure of our Aikido.

The best advice I could give from this grading would be to focus on your kamae and basic movements. Even if you don't feel it now, I think the more you focus on them and keeping a good structure during techniques the faster you'll get there. I think the sooner you can start developing this feeling, the sooner your technique will be given a huge boost. Now I am busily trying to improve my kamae and basic movements as it feels like I've only just started to understand these aspects and have to catch up. With so much to work on I'm eagerly looking forward to continue my training. See you all on the mats soon.

OSU!

Cameron Blake