

NEWSLETTER

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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

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March Report					
New members 1		Total number of adults training 45		Total number of children training 40	
Results of Sogo Shinsa on 22nd & 23rd March					
Godan	Ryan Slavin	3rd Kyu	Caitlin Baptist	5Y10 step	Matt Carpenter
Jun-Nidan	Janna Malikova	5th Kyu	Martin Fernandez		Lawrence Monforte
1st Kyu	Ana Cuthbert	9th Kyu	Michael Mader	3Y2 step	Murray Booth
2nd Kyu	Jonathan McConnell			3Y1 step	Cameron Blake
				2Y10 step	Roland Thompson
Events in April					
1. Getsurei Shinsa			2. This Month's Holiday		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Monday 15th 6:00pm~• Steps, Friday 26th 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 27th 1:00pm~			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easter Holiday: Friday 19th ~ Monday 22nd• Anzac Day: Thursday 25th		

Coffee Break

Aikido, the art I like and appreciate

In recent years, not only Aikido but all traditional martial arts seemed to have steadily lost popularity, I think. The trend is shifted to so-called MMA which is more so for show and money than discipline and fulfillment.

Hence, I thought of studying their way of fights and watched many clips of UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship,) the largest MMA promotion company. The most common pattern of their matches from what I have watched was: 1) close in on each other's space and both punch, 2) one finds a moment to tackle to bring the other down to the ground, 3) ground grappling techniques either reverse joint technique on arm or neck choke technique, or lastly, taking a mounted position and showering hammer punches on the opponent's face or head in order to finish off the match. I understand that this method of beating the opponent is stable and solid. They are absolutely strong fighters, I can see.

My son who works in the security industry tells me that he has seen some new security officers with MMA style training backgrounds. The problem is that they cannot use their training in their job despite their confidence in their strength. Not surprised though, they are not allowed to punch, tackle or sit on the patrons (at concerts or other) showering them with punches. So, they are like a tiger without fangs at work. Luckily, my son loves his job, having found out how amazingly useful basic Aikido techniques as Sankajo and Yonkajo are.

I have read MMA fighters commenting on Aikido YouTube videos, "Aikido is useless" or "Come and fight with us, if you think Aikido is so effective!" and others as such. I think these comments are quite irrelevant since they are not comparable objectives. For instance, if we compare martial arts to cutting tools, the saw is used to cut something hard like timber and steel, and the knife is used in more various scenes to cut something smaller. We cannot compare them to say which is better as their purposes are completely different. People simply need to decide what kind of tools they prefer according to what they do; the big

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saw for outside work or the sharp knife for kitchen work, for example. They need to practise and improve their skills to maximise their use, but there is no need to devalue the other, as they are not comparable in the first place.

I trained boxing during my high school time, as I mentioned before. We had competitions several times a year, just for high school students. Since I lived in the countryside of Japan the number of boxers was few. Once I won a cup by winning just two matches. At the beginning of my boxing time, I was eager to win the matches and participated in as many competitions as I could. But eventually, I began to question myself about why I had to punch someone with whom I had no grudge or hatred, nor even knowing him, and I felt sheer nonsense in doing this. I realised that some people have this natural inclination, but I just could not keep punching someone without a reason in me.

I think it is about being suitable or not to one's personality and ability, and I like and prefer Aikido for my career. Aikido is about training one's own skills and ability but not having a purpose of winning or beating someone. You might have realised too that techniques with the intention to beat or hurt the opponent become very unpleasant as the intention travels to your body. When a technique is performed based on the Aikido rationale - trying to harmonise with the opponent's movements and power - both *shite* and *uke* feel very pleasant, almost joyful. Applying a just right technique to *uke* consists of both *shite* and *uke* sharing the same good feeling, not an ounce of a 'defeating intention'. This is the ultimate Aikido technique and spirit. I believe this is what Master Gozo Shioda described as, "Becoming friends with the enemy who came to kill you is the best Aikido technique," Because Aikido practitioners train hard in aiming for this kind of peaceful state, it does not mean techniques are soft, we can develop the state of being calm and centred in any troubles we may encounter. How fascinating the martial art Aikido is!

Well, it is really about what you like or not, and I do not like some of the manners performed at MMA; on the media day before the match, fighters glare and abuse each other with their faces close enough to almost kiss. This is simply for the purpose of boosting the excitement; when a fighter knocks down his opponent he climbs up the rope, or the fence of the ring and lets out a roar of triumph that I think is not a good model for kids. It is so different from our way of respecting the opponent in the way of traditional Japanese Budo. I think that is the beauty of Budo and I personally prefer this manner.

The other day, when I was talking about MMA with one of the students he said, "I don't like hugging each other with a male both sweating hard in the raw." I surely agree with him. It is about what you like and what you prefer, I suppose. I wish more people would prefer and appreciate our art to have their lives more centred and harmonious.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori