

NEWSLETTER

No.290 October 2019

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: yoshinkan.info Facebook: facebook.com/BrisbaneYoshinkanAikido/ Twitter: twitter.com/YoshinkanAikido

<u>September Report</u>					
New members 5		Total number of adults training 51		Total number of children training 32	
Results of Sogo Shinsa on 27th & 28th September					
Jun-Nidan	Roland Thompson	9th Kyu	Gregory Zavialov	4Y3 step	Murray Booth
Shodan	Van Morris		Portia Woolley	2Y9 step	Dean Jones
1st Kyu	Tfer Newsome	10th Kyu	Samuel Baptist	2Y8 step	Greg Burley
	Caitlin Baptist		Bernadith Woolley	2Y6 step	Louis Chatfield
Jun-3rd Kyu	Martin Fernandez	5Y12 step	Matt Carpenter	2Y5 step	Duong Thai
	Danielle Gravalin			2Y1 step	Vaughan Gray
4th Kyu	Shane Baptist	5Y4 step	Kaido Mori		
<u>Events in October</u>					
<u>1. Getsurei Shinsa</u>			<u>2. Hajime Class</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Thursday 17th 7:15pm~• Steps, Friday 25th 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 26th 1:00pm~			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saturday 19th 1.00pm~• Please note that there is no usual class.		
			<u>3. This Month's Holiday</u>		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Queen's Birthday – Monday 7th• Dojo's Holiday - Monday 28th		

COFFEE BREAK

Sharing some of my old uchi-deshi memories

There were three ways to become an uchi-deshi at the Yoshinkan Headquarters. Firstly, a current dojo student who was young and loved Aikido wished to be an uchi-deshi and was requested by the Headquarters. Secondly, a university Aikido club student (Yoshinkan Headquarters had some Aikido clubs in universities and communities) who had a smart brain and was good at Aikido was scouted by the Headquarters. Thirdly, a pure beginner coming from a country town visited the Headquarters to show his interest in becoming an uchi-deshi. No.1 was the most common way: Inoue, Kushida, Sakurai, Chino, Nishida..., and No.2 were Chida, Nakano, Ando and No.3 were Takeno, Obata... (Honorifics omitted) and myself.

Uchi-deshis of methods 1 & 2 were very well accepted by the staff and instructors right from the beginning having established good relationships in years before they started as an uchi-deshi, while those in the No.3 camp were total strangers to the people at the Headquarters. It was just natural and very understandable that they were very cautious about who we (No.3 people) were and did not care whether we continued or quit. People in the No.1 & 2 groups basically had a very serious-minded personality, but No.3 character represented by Takeno and Obata were more Japanese yakuza-like both physically and mentally rather than martial artists.

Takeno Shihan once told me that he was nick-named as "Razor Takeno" by general students as his techniques were extremely sharp yet I never heard anybody called him so, but only "Yakuza Takeno." I think 'Razor' was self-proclaimed and the truth was 'Yakuza'. But, either way, it was the fact that everyone was very scared of him. One day, when I was serving a cup of tea for Master Gozo Shioda's guest in his room I happened to hear their conversation. Master was telling him, "I was so troubled when I first saw Takeno. Had no doubt he was a Yakuza." Well, even Master was troubled, I thought... Further, Mr. Obata, though I personally never met him before, was a man of physical power and vitality who loved fighting, so I heard. He quit the Headquarters after seven years of uchi-deshi life to leave for the US. He opened a dojo called "Shinkendo," his own style that he combined Aikido and Iaido, in Los Angeles where he taught. At the same time, he became a Hollywood actor

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and he often performed as a Japanese Yakuza in their movies. I remember that I was surprised to find him as the boss of the villains in the "Ninja Turtles" movie when I was watching it with my son when he was little.

Now about me. I also turned up at the Headquarters on a sudden visit from the countryside and asked to be their uchi-deshi. I was wearing trendy clothes for a young boy from my country town - a flashy Hawaiian shirt and baggy pants that were my best clothes! Well, I now know I was not wearing a proper business suit that would have been more suitable in that kind of occasion. So, it became common knowledge within the Headquarters that people from the country wishing to be an uchi-deshi all had no common sense but were rather crazy with yakuza-like appearances (Takeno, Obata and myself).

Around the time when I joined the Headquarters, they just opened a new dojo in Shinjuku Tokyo, and I was training here most of the time at the start. Because it was still new there were not many students yet and I often ended up training with my senior uchi-deshi one on one. It was extremely severe each time; more than you can imagine. Throws, locks, pinning and even verbal words were exceptionally cruel. I was deeply impressed with the severity of Japanese Budo and because of this I honestly lost confidence in my survival throughout this time as a result. Luckily, my body somehow sustained itself and I survived; thanks to my parents for giving me a tough body. Besides, I was quite used to being with a yakuza-like person anyway; again, thanks to my father who also looked like yakuza and on the inside was actually more like one! Yet, one day, I had a really miserable day and thought of quitting to go back home. I rang home. My 'loving' mother answered the phone and said, "What do you want?" Great!!! I recall realising at that very moment of hearing my mother's words that my home was worse than the Headquarters for me... You know, having the opposite of a 'mother-like' mum helps you sometimes!

Nine years had passed, and I was about to leave the Headquarters to open my own dojo overseas. One day, I was having a casual chat with one of my senior uchi-deshis and I found out some new information. Around the time when I was having the hard training in the Shinjuku dojo the fixed members of uchi-deshis were stationed there. These were 'No.2 group' uchi-deshis who were the typical and most standard martial artists with very serious characters and sturdy bodies; their full focus was only in Aikido. To their eyes, I looked frivolous and impudent wearing stupid, fancy fashion, and perhaps they believed I was never suitable to be an uchi-deshi. So, they agreed to crush me into pieces to force me quit! No wonder the techniques were far more severe, which were surely not appropriate for a beginner... Since I had no idea what they were meaning at the time, nor realised their intention, I was simply impressed with the dynamic impact of Aikido. Hence, my reaction to their deadly techniques was very wrong, I kept getting up with a big smile saying, "That's painful!" instead of whimpering in a miserable state. The senior uchi-deshi who was chatting with me said he seriously had a killing wish when he saw my smiles! At the stage of nearly finishing my uchi-deshi life, I finally discovered that the dreadfully severe training I had to go through was not because of Yoshinkan spirit but because of my light-headed, flippant appearance... Well, I learned a lesson that one's appearance is very important, and it surely matters, since I was literally almost killed because of it!

I am aware that some of you think like I was born an Aikido-ka. Not at all! I suffered a lot through my uchi-deshi life to achieve and reach the level where I was good enough to be independent to establish my own dojo. Well, I just thought of sharing my old memories for you to enjoy reading. Hope you had some laughs!

OSU!

Michiharu Mori