

NEWSLETTER

No.296 April 2020

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AikidoYoshinkanAUS>

Dear students, parents and carers,

We hope everyone is well and healthy. We are aware that many people are anxious under this stressful and challenging time. Although we believe that the role of the dojo is to help people destress and focus on their lives, the dojo was enforced to shut down. We apologise sincerely for not being able to provide the dojo's services to our students. We do not know for how long we have to keep our door closed but we will reopen the dojo as soon as the government authorities lift the rule when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we encourage students to keep training at home and for that reason, we have been uploading video classes on our Facebook. Please enjoy training with Mori Sensei. We ask all the children and teenagers to keep helping your family and cooperating with your family's need and disciplining yourselves. Please everyone, stay well and safe.

The below is a Coffee Break article from Mori Sensei and hope you can have some laugh.

Coffee Break

How cheeky and lovable character Master had

As I graduated my high school I left for a big city, Tokyo, where the Headquarters of Yoshinkan Aikido was located. The image of Honbu-dojō (Headquarters) that I, a high school aged boy, had was like a Zen temple. I believed people there were all of noble character who disciplined themselves severely through harsh Aikido training.

I joined in the Senshusei Course known as Riot Policemen's Course while I still had only a little idea about the Honbu-dojō and people who worked there. It was around one month after the course started when they held a party to welcome new riot policemen at the Honbu-dojō. It was for praising their hard work through the toughest month – the first month - and encouraging them for the rest of the course. VIPs such as the Director-General, the Deputy Commissioner, the Unit Chief of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department were invited. Being the youngest student with no life experiences, I sat quietly at a corner of the dojo and observed the flow of things.

One of my senior uchi-deshis was acting as MC and gave us a short greeting. Then, all the guests made speeches which went on for a good twenty minutes or so. After we made a toast finally, we were allowed to relax and enjoy ourselves. About one hour passed, I heard a great cheer arose at Master Gozo Shioda's table where all the VIPs sat too. Then, I saw Master, our top of most renowned in Yoshinkan, dancing with his hips moving in an obscene gesture and his head wrapped with a scarf. Moreover, Inoue Shihan, the second top, was the man singing and clapping with the beat to Master's dance. I was astonished to see the scene and I had great trouble accepting the fact that Yoshinkan's No.1 and 2 were co-performer of this entertaining show.

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Master was around the age of seventy and only the person I knew about the same age was my grandfather who was a school teacher. He was a scholarly person and loved reading. I understood the adults' world as the relationship of my grandfather and father who often enjoyed having conversations over knowledgeable topics like history or literary writings and authors. Well, what I was seeing in front of me by people whom I believed to be of Zen-dojo-like noble and serious character (so I believed) was very different.

The first song looked like a story of a prostitute from the way Master was acting. He (she?) visited each table as she danced sexily with her long hair (scarf) and asked to give her a glass of drink. Each womanly gesture my Master in dogi but wearing a strange scarf made was so bizarre that everyone laughed greatly while I felt so awkward. The next song was a famous children's song called "Momotaro" which was about a brave boy defeating the ogres. At the moment the song started, two uchi-deshis stood up and positioned themselves in front and behind Master. I supposed that this show was something very familiar to everyone from the way they cheered.

As Inoue Sensei sang and when a phrase said, "Against an ogre attacking from the front, here, Irimi-zuki!" So, the uchi-deshi attacked Master from the front and got knocked down by Irimi-zuki. Then, "Against an ogre attacking from the back, here, Aiki-nage!" was sang and as the other uchi-deshi hugged Master from the back he was blown away by Aiki-nage. The dojo shook with a rousing cheer. Facing to this totally new world I was greatly taken back. In the middle of massive applause, Master began dancing again like a girl to a folk music and, to my horror, he came towards me stretching out his hand. I hesitated to take his hand, of course. Then other senior uchi-deshis shouted at me, "Mori! Go! Right now!" and sneered. I had no choice but to stand up. Master took my hands and began a folk dance with me. Side stepping to right and left he led me in dance to the folk music with everyone clapping with the beat. At the next moment as I stepped sideway with a big hop, he swept my leg just like a Judo technique. Since it happened so unexpectedly in an exquisite timing that my whole body flew in air and flipped like a cartwheel without handstand. I landed heavily on the tatami mats, but I had no idea what happened. The mid-air flip gave me a sublime sensation that I still remember very clearly. All the audience who watched the expert's outstanding technique roared even louder with cheers in ecstasy. How cheeky that old man was! I was very amazed at him and I realised at the same time that the Honbu dojo was not a Zen-temple but a full-blooded and hot-blooded dojo.

I attended many parties in my uchi-deshi life and this entertainment show was our regular event whenever Master had a few drinks. Young uchi-deshis in suit were always the victims of the party and this is the way we learned Master's professional techniques too. This was all part of the uchi-deshi's disciplined life. There is a saying in Japan: "The childlike character is something that should be loved." Master Gozo Shioda was a legend in Japanese budo world and his cheeky childlike character was his biggest charm that people around him loved entirely.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori