

# NEWSLETTER

No.299 July 2020

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

**Dear students, parents, and carers,**

We sincerely hope that this newsletter finds you all well and sound. As informed in the June Newsletter, we are reopening the dojo on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July, at last! We thank you deeply for your patience and the support you have been giving the dojo. We are very happy that we can provide the dojo's services to our community again.

Please be advised that new COVID-Safe rules are placed in the dojo. In terms of the hygiene rules: please do not attend any classes if you are sick; hand sanitise on entry and wash hands before and after each class; the dojo mats will be cleaned with disinfectant solution each day. The other thing is about social distancing, there is a 4 square metres per person rule. The dojo area is 180 square metres and we can have 45 people on the mats at once. But the changing rooms are much smaller and limited numbers are allowed: three persons at a time in the male changing room and two persons at a time in the female changing room. So, if you do not wish to wait for the use of changing rooms, we recommend you change your clothes before you come to the dojo. Also, we will ask visitors to keep their distance while they watch or wait, and therefore there will be a numbers limitation in the lounge too.

We are looking forward to seeing all the familiar faces on the mats soon.

We wish all of you to stay well and safe.

Best regards,

Michiharu Mori and Shuko Mori

## A little more knowledge for your Aikido

### A fresh start of Aikido Yoshinkan Brisbane Dojo

Our dojo was established in 1995 and it had to close for over three months for the first time in its twenty-five years history. Since we are restarting in this month of July, I thought it was a good opportunity to reset myself and reconsider the purpose of training in the dojo.

One of the best places to train one's body is a gym which offers physical exercises and its main purposes are developing one's muscle strength or gaining fitness. On the other hand, a dojo, martial arts school in English translation, is generally regarded as the place to train martial arts as well as to discipline one's mind and body. So, the difference between a gym and a dojo is the training of one's mind. For instance, no one would bow to their weights or barbells with gratitude before they use them in a gym, while we teach our adult students and children to bow any weapons upon taking them to use in order to show one's respect. We know that the weapon is just a piece of timber, not even human, but we learn the mindset of being grateful to use that piece of wood since we cannot learn certain techniques without it. We also pay the same respect and gratitude to the dojo itself, the hall where we need to carry on training. Obviously there is no need to mention our training partners,

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but we are thankful to even inanimate objects, which are vitally essential to learn Aikido both physically and spiritually. “OSU”, the special term used in the Japanese budo world, implicates the sense of respect and gratitude whenever we use it, and its literal meaning is “to force oneself to persevere.”

You probably have heard of a famous samurai, Tesshu Yamaoka, who lived about two hundred years ago. He was an expert in swordsmanship as well as a politician, a Zen master, an enlightened thinker and a calligrapher. He was also called “a last Samurai” which is an expression Japanese people use to admire a great man. He left an interesting message about Budo training, “Even in training, there is no other path to seek. Only sweep away the dust of mind.” When the dust piles up in the mind, the eyes get clouded, preventing the ability to see things clearly and therefore one makes mistakes and misjudges. But this interpretation is just an aspect. I believe that he sought a way to perfect his spirit as a human being, not being just a master of swordsmanship. Well, I can relate his thinking a lot to my teaching as it teaches about the mind’s dust. Dust is something minute and light and it is easy to clean. Yet, if we leave it for a time without cleaning, then it piles up. Once it is piled up, it gets stuck and stains, which cannot be cleaned easily any longer. Some examples of our mind’s dust are such things as miserliness, want, hatred, self-love, grudge-bearing, anger, greed, arrogance. Although I am not a great person like Tesshu Yamaoka, I too find myself cleaning dust from my mind whenever I am standing in the dojo, sweeping away my faults, especially anger and arrogance. This cleaning procedure also helps me maintain a peaceful relationship with my loving wife 😊.

The significance of the dojo’s existence is definitely different from other sports. Through hard physical training in the dojo, in Aikido in our case, we discipline our body and mind, learn the mind of respect and gratitude, and clean dust from our mind which has accumulated daily at work or school or home. In our dojo, all the students arrive at the counter firstly where they greet and put their membership card out before they move on to the changing rooms. Although it is only a few minutes at the counter, we can see that you bring in with you feelings from both good and bad memories of the day; happy, exciting, sad, irritated, angry, stressed...The great thing is seeing a person who came in moody or depressed leaves the dojo with a beautiful smile, refreshed with a happy and appreciative “OSU” to me upon exit after the class. At this moment, the full satisfaction and joy in running a dojo fills up my heart. I am happy knowing this person’s heart and mind was cleaned to a certain extent and therefore he/she can go home in a better state. I enjoy this feeling immensely which makes my day so fulfilling.

This year is Brisbane Dojo’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Well, I take this Covid-19 challenge to be a great opportunity to restart the dojo with a refreshed mind and a determination to devote myself to the significance of the dojo. To all the Brisbane Dojo’s students, please lend your support to build a worthy and fulfilling place together. OSU!

Osu,

***Michiharu Mori***