

NEWSLETTER

No.301 September 2020

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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August Report					
New members 0		Total number of adults training 39		Total number of children training 35	
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 28th & 29th August					
4th Kyu	Portia Woolley	7th Kyu	Gregory Zavalov	2Y8 step	Louis Chatfield
6th Kyu	Bernadith Woolley		Gillis Carruthers	2Y1 step	Van Morris
		9th Kyu	Christina Zavalov		
Events in September					
1. Sogo Shinsa			2. This Month's Holiday		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Friday 18th 7:15pm~• Steps, Friday 25th 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 26th 1:00pm~			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dojo's Holiday: Monday 28th August		

A little more knowledge for your Aikido training

Shu-Ha-Ri (守破離)

You may have heard of the Japanese term “*Shu-Ha-Ri*.” This is a Japanese philosophical concept used in any arts such as martial arts, performing arts, tea ceremony/art, or flower arrangement/art. It is about a master-disciple relationship and the stages of learning to mastery.

‘Shu’ is a stage of learning fundamentals faithfully taught by one’s master repeating the forms without any interpretation of one’s own. ‘Ha’ is a stage of making changes and innovations after acquiring lots of disciplined training and experiences while keeping the foundation strong that one has built. ‘Ri’ is a stage of creating one’s style entering a new level, departing from the forms completely.

I have reflected on my Aikido journey from the *Shu-ha-ri* perspective recently. When I became an *uchi-deshi* aiming to be a world-class professional Aikido-ka, I resolved to obey my master and his instructions thoroughly with no resistance at all. I knew it was not my natural character for I was a person who wanted to make everything in my own way, having a nasty ego. Speaking of this rebellious character, I realised later after I married that this personality was the cause of my poor school record. One day, when I was telling my wife about this characteristic of my personality (my wife had good marks at school) she pointed out that it was a typical characteristic of a person who could not have good marks, due to not absorbing things obediently from teachers...if only I knew that before I would have changed my manner... Anyway, it was my destiny that I had to force myself to give up my ego to survive my *uchi-deshi* life and master this high-level art, Aikido.

The very first thing I had trouble with in learning Aikido was that all the instructions over the same technique varied widely from my eight senior *uchi-deshi*. A senior said, “Turn to right” while B senior said, “Turn to left.” Being told different things was confusing, but it was ok. The problem was I had to be scolded each time they thought I was not listening to them. This was very much the dojo culture in which I learnt. No matter how hard I was doing my best to follow an instruction obediently, it was wrong from the eyes of seven other *uchi-deshi* and I was yelled at all the time. This reality was not easy to handle but very annoying for a teenager unexperienced at life. As I was determined to achieve my *uchi-deshi* life I had to solve the problem. Fortunately perhaps(?), I had a cunning personality too which helped me to create a

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chameleon-like performance. I learned and remembered each senior's preferred style and copied the 'correct' performance for each of them, irrespective of whether I liked the style or agreed. I pretended as if I were completely obeying the instructions of a particular senior while that person was in front of me and I did the same for every senior immediately each time another one approached. In this way, I was able to satisfy all of them and at the same time I talked myself into believing that I was lucky to learn various types of techniques.

The top senior *uchi-deshi* was Takeno Shihan at the beginning of my *uchi-deshi* life and he was in charge of teaching riot policemen and new *uchi-deshi*. Naturally, he was my main teacher in the beginning of my Aikido, and I was desperate to survive under his absolutely harsh techniques and commands while trying my best to learn. At that time in the 1980's, there were only two Shihan, Takeno Shihan and Chida Shihan in the Headquarters, and all the students including those from branch dojos were split into two factions reflecting the characteristics of their Aikido styles. What students called them showed their personalities and styles; "Yakuza Takeno" vs "Buddha Chida" and "Razor Takeno" vs "Axe Chida." Students evaluated that Takeno Shihan's Aikido was very sharp and Chida Shihan's Aikido was heavy. I personally thought Takeno Shihan's Aikido was powerful and instinctive while Chida Shihan's Aikido was solid and logical.

There is a Japanese saying, "You have to sit on a rock for three years" to accomplish anything, in English "Perseverance prevails." This theory of three years definitely proved to be right in my *uchi-deshi* life. The foundation of Aikido was hammered into my body by Takeno Shihan in the first three years. At that timing, he left the Headquarters for opening his own dojo in his hometown. Then, I had Chida Shihan, who succeeded to the top Shihan, to teach me his logical style of Aikido; he thought I was shameful to be mimicking the previous top Shihan without understanding the principles of Aikido behind the technique. This lasted for another three years. At this point, when my body was converted into an Aikido body which could take any types of dangerous techniques, Master Gozo Shioda recognised me as his *uke* at last. Here, I began learning *Aiki*. I had many opportunities to feel his sublime Aikido that became my foundation of *Aiki*. Yet, again this did not last more than three years as he became ill and retired. At that point, my father and I agreed that I should go overseas to establish my own dojo which was planned from the first moment I started my Aikido journey.

All my training at the Headquarters was the stage of "*Shu*." After I opened my dojo, I entered "*Ha*" stage, developing and improving techniques for grading syllabuses to suit Australian students in this modern time based on my knowledge that I earned through the "*Shu*" period. My Aikido level also developed through teaching bigger and tougher-built Australians for the last 25 years. Therefore, I thought I had entered "*Ri*" stage by now. However, as I was reading the concept of "*Shu-ha-ri*" more on the internet recently, I found that "*Ri*" is the stage when you reached the level of creating a new style, like Master Gozo Shioda established Yoshinkan or Kouichi Touhei made Ki Society. "*Ri*" is the stage only very limited and talented people can reach in fact.

Oh well, I am still in the middle of the second stage of learning Aikido. Surely, mastering a path is not an easy journey at all! I shall keep training and continue moving forward steadily in my Aikido journey. OSU!

Michiharu Mori