

NEWSLETTER

No.303 November 2020

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info> Facebook: <http://bit.ly/dojofb>

October Report					
New members 5		Total number of adults training 49		Total number of children training 37	
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 30th & 31st October					
3Y5 step	Joel Delaney	2Y12 step	Greg Burley	2Y9 step	Duong Thai
3Y2 step	Vladimir Roudakov	2Y11 step	Dean Jones	2Y3 step	Van Morris
	Janna Malikova	2Y 10 step	Louis Chatfield	S5 step	Tfer Newsome
Events in November					
1. Self-defence Class & Demonstration			3. Children's grading-demonstration Saturday 14th 9.30am~		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-defence class; Saturday 21st 1:00pm~2:30pm• The class is not for public but only for the members.• Demonstration; 2:45pm~• Some refreshments after the demo.			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior group 9.30-10.15am• Junior group 10.20-11.00am• Small children's group 11.05-11.30am• We are sorry for no Christmas party this year due to the Covid restrictions.		
2. Getsurei Shinsa			4. This Month's Holiday		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Thursday 19th 7.15pm~• Steps, Friday 27th 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 28th 1:00pm~			Dojo's Holiday 30 th Monday		

A little more knowledge for your Aikido training

Demonstration can be a serious fight

Thirty-five years ago, one snowy night in January in Japan's cold winter, an uchi-deshi from England ran away from the dojo's dormitory through a window while everyone else was deeply asleep. He was an elite uchi-deshi who was expected to spread Yoshinkan Aikido in England after a few years of heavy training at the Headquarters. He completed the Senshusei Course (Riot policemen's course) well and everyone believed he had a tough spirit with a young and solid body. Since he displayed his high ability through the course he stood out well enough for Takeno Shihan to appoint him as his uke when he was invited to demonstrate for a weekend classical martial arts (Kobudo) convention, which meant to be a great honour for uchi-deshis. It was the night before the demo when the English fellow escaped.

A little more detail about Takeno Shihan can help you understand the English guy's fear. Takeno Shihan had extraordinary long arms, and these were his unique weapons. He took an advantage of his long arms when he applied techniques like Irimi-zuki which he made sure that his uke hit his head hard on the ground with his arms reaching almost to the ground. As a result, most of his ukes at the demo had concussions and some were knocked out fully. Thus, his junior uchi-deshis literally prayed God for not being called to be his uke whenever a request of demonstration was made to the Headquarters. I still remember clearly at the start of my first year uchi-deshi life when one of my senior uchi-deshi showed me a video of Takeno Shihan's demonstration. It was a horror. The expression on Takeno Shihan's face was that of a demon's with savage eyes and he kept bouncing his uke's head violently where you could tell his intention was to knock him out.

Honestly, the shite-uke training method is absolutely unfair when you think about it. The 'applying-techniques- person' and the 'receiving-techniques-person' are set from the beginning and the uke side has no right to refuse any techniques. Although many people criticised Aikido demonstration as being a fake show even back thirty years ago, and now in the present time like before Aikido is still criticised for

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the same reason. However, beck then just as I do still today, I knew they were absolutely wrong! Since I had a rather bigger build for a Japanese male I was targeted too by Takeno Shihan after I graduated the Senshusei Course. It was supposed to be a great honour for a young uchi-deshi to be an uke for the top Shihan of the Headquarters, but I was utterly fearful, for there was no security that I would still be alive after the demo.

The climax of annual demonstration of the Headquarters was always Master Gozo Shioda's demonstration of course. Yet, Takeno Shihan's demo was the most popular highlight that all the audience was looking forward to. They loved his dynamic performance and held a great deal of interest over whether his uke was going to be standing on the mats at the end of his demo. The first time I had to take his uke in my first uchi-deshi year I felt like a condemned convict waiting for execution. Really. I am not exaggerating. There were about three thousand in audience gathered from all over Japan at the venue and all the eyes were fixed on us.

When shite, Takeno Shihan, and uke, me, bowed to each other our serious fight began. Shite's job was to apply his best deadly techniques and uke's job was to receive them obediently without being knocked out. My goal was not to be killed and not to lose consciousness. I believe that you can call this type of demonstration as a serious fight. You know, uke was neither allowed to avoid any techniques, even if you could, nor to fight back. In this sense, an Aikido demonstration can be even more severe than a usual fight! In this fight, my job was to grab his hand, as simple as that. I ran at him trying to grab his hand and in the next moment my view rolled just like if you were riding a roller coaster. The first technique was his favourite technique, Sokumen Irimi-nage, and because it was so powerful my body rolled sideways in the air. All I had to do was to stand up and run at him again. His other favourite Irimi-zuki, came next. I saw my toes suddenly appear right in front of my eyes where they should not have been, and the next thing I saw was the ceiling, which bent awkwardly and it fell to my face. It was my view anyway when I hit my head with absolute force. As I hit my head I felt the softness of tatami mats at the demonstration venue and I thanked them as I knew I was gone if it happened on the hard tatami mats at the Headquarters dojo. I kept my consciousness and I had to force myself to get up and move again. I did not know how long it lasted but luckily I never stopped moving.

I remember Chida Shihan, one of my senior uchi-deshis, told us his weirdest experience. At one demonstration, he was ukeing for Master Gozo Shioda and he lost his consciousness somewhere during the demo. And the next moment he was abruptly awakened and remembers urinating in a toilet at the demonstration venue. You know what, he kept ukeing without his consciousness. He said he had no memory at all from a point during the demo until he woke up in the toilet. Funny or scary? I did not know.

People who criticise Aikido demonstration as a fake show do not know this reality. I see Aikido video clips with titles of using "vs" on YouTube. Although there is no winning or losing in Aikido demonstration, I understand that it is a battle of shite 'vs' uke without winners. In this sense, Aikido demonstration is a quite unique form of match. Not only shite needs good skills to display a great demonstration but uke also needs high skills to achieve his/her duty. It seems that this is an incomprehensible idea for MMA players or other combat sport martial artists, and that is why they criticise Aikido. Yet, I can assert that taking the uke from certain Aikido-ka is truly a life-threatening event. Well, here I wished you to understand how serious Aikido demonstration can be for your deeper understanding of Aikido.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori