

NEWSLETTER

No.307 March 2021

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

Facebook: <http://bit.ly/dojofb>

February Report					
New members 3		Total number of adults training 48		Total number of children training 42	
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 26th & 27th					
5th Kyu	Gregory Zavialov	S2 step	Danielle Gravolin	S2 step	Martin Fernandez
Events in March					
1. Sogo Shinsa			2. This Month's Holiday		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Friday 12th 7:15pm~• Steps, Friday 26th 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 27th 1:00pm~			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dojo's Holiday: Monday 1st March• Note: We are not closed on 29th Monday though we usually close after Shinsa because of Easter Holiday starting soon.		

Coffee Break

The colour of the logo and name embroidered on black belt

Black belt is something absolutely special for people who train martial arts. Although anyone can purchase a black belt freely from martial arts suppliers it has no true value of black belt in it. I remember when I was still at the Yoshinkan Headquarters in Japan, an aged male student who was a still beginner told me happily that he bought a black belt. I felt it was very odd and he told me why. He bought it as a security item to hang it outside his window to prevent burglars from breaking into his home. He looked quite satisfied. I was pretty surprised to learn such a new way of using martial arts black belt.

The black belt of Yoshinkan Headquarters was embroidered in gold-brown colour officially at the beginning of my uchi-deshi life, one side had "Yoshinkan in *kanji*" and the other side had one's family name. I assume that this is still the official black belt that the Headquarters uses.

There was no other colour choice at that time until Chida Shihan suddenly began to wear a black belt embroidered with a red thread. It was a shock for all the students at the honbu dojo. You know, the world of martial arts is quite simple with a white dogi and a belt which depends on your level but no personal choice. Changing the colour of thread on the black belt from the standard gold-brown to the red, which was a rather flashy colour, appeared to be very fashionable for us.

I was attending the riot policeman/uchi-deshi course at that time. Towards graduating the course when we were to receive a black belt becoming Shodan, we ten members of the course had important meetings consecutive days. What colour to be embroidered on the black belt was the topic. This was quite a delicate issue and it was a serious matter since it was about a political faction. There were two top Shihans at that time. Takeno Shihan had the traditional gold-brown thread black belt and Chida Shihan's belt was the red one, as I wrote. Since students who followed Chida Shihan began to wear the red name black belts it became obvious who you were following: the Chida Shihan faction or the Takeno Shihan faction.

NEWSLETTER

Well, we, 22nd Course members, were taught by Takeno Shihan five times a week and once a week by Chida Shihan. So, we were supposed to be in Takeno Shihan faction, yet the red colour on the black looked trendy and cool. After much trouble about it, we decided to make both belts and wear the gold-brown one when Takeno Shihan took the class and the red one when Chida Shihan did, absolutely two-faced diplomacy.

Two years after our graduation of the Course, Takeno Shihan quit the honbu dojo and established his own dojo, Yamanashi Yoshinkan, in his hometown. All the students of Yamanashi Yoshinkan wore/wears the gold-brown name black belt. At the honbu dojo after he left, Chida Shihan was promoted to become the top Shihan. Naturally, his faction got dominant and the red name black belt became standard. I had to follow the flow as the youngest uchi-deshi then, so my gold-brown name black belt got never used after.

Through my uchi-deshi life at the honbu dojo, I was instructed by Takeno Shihan until second Dan level and he taught me the speed and power of Aikido. Then, I was instructed by Chida Shihan until fourth Dan level where he taught me the theories and principles of Aikido. Then, I earned the experiences of Aiki by Master Gozo Shioda until 5th Dan. At this stage, I felt I was able to be independent while I could keep improving my Aikido from all the memories of experiences input into my body. This was the timing I wished to change my black belt, something new to start a new life.

Generally, achieving a black belt level is treated like a goal and people are satisfied. I understand this feeling as earning a black belt requires lots of training, time and effort. Yet, 'Shodan' means in Japanese the "first step." You know, it is recognised only as a first step to climb, far from a goal. Similar to this idea, since I was to start a new life from zero in a new country, I thought of using a white thread on the black belt to refresh myself, just like a white belt for beginners. It was to warn myself to never become arrogant but keep the mind of "back to basics" mentally and physically.

Therefore, I award Brisbane Dojo's students with names embroidered with white thread on black belts when they become Shodan in the hope that they keep training hard with humble minds. I will be very pleased if our senior students use their black belts as a reminder to train their body and spirit with a beginner's mind whenever they see themselves wearing their black belts in the mirror.

I thought you would enjoy to know the meaning and the background of our current black belts.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori