

NEWSLETTER

No.308 April 2021

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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

March Report					
New members 1		Total number of adults training 51		Total number of children training 45	
Results of Sogo Shinsa on 26th & 27th					
Nidan	Greg Burley	5th Kyu	Samuel Baptist	2Y12 step	Louis Chatfield
Jun-Nidan	Duong Thai	7th Kyu	Cameron Hunter	S3 step	Martin Fernandez
Shodan	Tfer Newsome				Danielle Gravolin
4th Kyu	Perry Mader	4Y6 step	Murray Booth	S2 step	Michael Mader
5th Kyu	Charlotte Sargent	2Y12 step	Dean Jones	S1 step	Caitlin Baptist
Events in April					
1. Getsurei Shinsa			2. This Month's Holiday		
• Training starts, Friday 16 th 7:15pm~			• Easter Holiday: Friday 2 nd – Monday 5 th		
• Steps, Friday 23 rd 7:15pm~			• Anzac Day: Monday 26 th		
• Shinsa, Saturday 24 th 1:00pm~					

Coffee Break

Hakama

Hakama is a type of traditional Japanese clothing with an origin that may go back to sixth Century. In modern society in Japan, hakama is generally worn only at the formal occasions like weddings, and it is also regularly worn by practitioners of a variety of martial arts and priests of Shinto. Basically, the martial arts that were derived from samurai culture such as Kendo, Iaido, Jodo, Kyudo and Aikido wear hakama. Practitioners of Kendo, Iaido, Kyudo etc. do not wear dogi pants under the hakama so it is natural for them (even as beginners) to wear hakama from the day one, Aikido practitioners, on the other hand, do not usually wear hakama this way as we wear the dogi pants, just like Judo and Karate. In Aikikai you see more people wearing hakama as they are officially allowed to wear them when they reach black belt (Shodan) and you see less in Yoshinkan as hakama is only for over 3rd Dan.

Hakama in Aikido is a sign of rank as well as it is treated as a formal wear. In Brisbane dojo, I ask all the black belts to wear hakama in any formal events. Although hakama is allowed to be worn even during ordinary classes for over 3rd Dan black belts in Yoshinkan, you hardly saw/see anyone wearing hakama to train except instructors at the honbu dojo and other dojos. The reason is because we train Yoshinkan style Aikido. Simply, hakama gets in our way when we throw each other hard and fast, and we cannot train freely as we wish. So, no one bothers wearing hakama in Yoshinkan on a daily basis.

There was a huge disparity between uchi-deshi before or after 3rd Dan. Uchi-deshi before 3rd Dan was a trainee instructor with no hakama and uchi-deshi was promoted to a professional instructor only after acquiring 3rd Dan, and then we were allowed to wear hakama at every class. Hakama was

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not only a symbol of being a high rank but a “respectable Sensei” at the honbu dojo too. One day, I remember, a boy from kids’ class asked C Sensei, who was only one year ahead of me as senior uchi-deshi, why he was wearing a hakama and not Mori Sensei. His answer was “That’s because Mori is far from being good at all!” How nice of him! He wore his hakama simply because he started Aikido one year earlier than me!!! Well, you know, I was quite unhappy and upset with this answer, feeling I was evaluated cheaply by this boy whom I was teaching...You can imagine how happy I became when I was awarded with my 3rd Dan and began wearing a hakama during daily classes. Although I was so excited to wear the hakama during classes I found out how troublesome it was for a young uchi-deshi who trained more than he taught, and more *uke-ing* than *shite-ing*. Wearing it was hotter, harder to move, and it was a bother to fold it neatly every time after each class.

As I wrote about the colour of the name on the black belt in the last newsletter, I shall mention about the colour of hakama now. Generally, deep blue and black were the colours samurai wore. Indigo dye was very common (just like original jeans) to prevent from insects and had a sterilising effect. Thus, martial arts based on the samurai culture use indigo blue and black hakama too. In Yoshinkan, Master Gozo Shioda chose wearing the black hakama. Out of respect to him, we uchi-deshi and other black belts of the honbu dojo avoided the same colour and wore the deep blue one instead. Inoue Shihan who was originally sent to establish the Yoshinkan Aikido training in the Police Department wore the indigo hakama. Naturally, all the policemen who were taught by him wore the black ones out of the respect to him! Thus, at the Yoshinkan annual demonstration when students from all the other clubs and branch dojos gathered, it appeared to be disrespectful to Master Shioda for the honbu dojo students to see the police Aikido students wearing the black hakama, although it was out of the respect to their instructor. I thought it was funny in the end.

Well, in the case of the Brisbane dojo, I wear the indigo hakama being one of uchi-deshi of Master Gozo Shioda and most of the students wear the black. Yet, that is not because they avoid the indigo for me but because the black hakama is the only colour sold at the martial arts supplies here. I thought this was an interesting coincidence.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori