

NEWSLETTER

No.309 May 2021

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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

April Report New members 3 Total number of adults training 44					
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 23rd & 24th					
6th Kyu	Cameron Hunter	4Y6 step	Cameron Blake	3Y4 step	Vladimir Roudakov
7th Kyu	Christina Zavialov	3Y4step	Janna Malikova	S4 step	Danielle Gravolin
Events in May			2. Special Class on Saturday 15th 1pm~		
1. Getsurei Shinsa			• Police Aikido Techniques		
• Training starts, Friday 21 st 7:15pm~			• Not quite self-defence, not attacking but more “Active-type” style, not waiting to be attacked.		
• Steps, Friday 28 th 7:15pm~			3. This Month’s Holiday		
• Shinsa, Saturday 29 th 1:00pm~			• Labour Day: Monday 3 rd		
			• Dojo’s Holiday: Monday 31 st		

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

Shodan

Hmmm... Thoughts of a black belt huh? I never really thought I'd get to be writing this.

I came to find martial arts very late in life and then by accident. I recalled seeing people in “white pajamas” in West end in the late 90s as I studied nearby and walked past frequently but thought it would never be a thing a teenage girl like me could be doing. Way too scary!

Fast forward to 2015 or so and I started hunting for something for my son to do as a way of improving his motor skills and fitness. I recalled a someone telling me about a dojo in West End and investigated later discovering it was the same one I'd seen decades previous.

Pez did one class and Shuko-san in her wisdom said, come back in 6 months, he's too young... so we did... almost.... On the day we were to go back we went to the park and he skinned his knee before class even started. No seiza for some weeks. Third time lucky!

Perry started training sporadically, and I struggled to keep him motivated. I thought perhaps that the only way to know what I was asking of him was to do it myself. Van was also making that decision around that time and encouraged me to join her. I'd always battled with the motivation to go to the gym and thought perhaps this will be a more engaging form of exercise and having seen many kids class I thought I knew what was what.... More fool me.

Adults class was a completely different experience, and that I was completely un-coordinated to boot. Many challenging and thought provoking classes followed. One particularly painful memory was a black belt early on saying “I don't know what you are doing... but it's not Aikido”.... Ouch. So much to learn and re-learn. Humility to start with and shutting up and listening being the hardest for me (sorry Greg) and getting over my own disappointment with my lack of progress.

I tried to train as often as I could working around family and work commitments. 2-3 days a week was often all I could manage to start with. Perry and Xan spent endless nights in the lounge. I thank them for not killing each other as often as they might have. Slowly I got through the gradings, injuries, and unexpected pauses. At the beginning of gradings I remember being terrified as the black belt explained the protocol and almost all the details fell away after it started. Slowly it sank in and fear was replaced with excitement. My friends and husband made a joke of my not being free because it was always grading training or grading week. I was solidly and

NEWSLETTER

happily committed. I don't have an elephant memory like some I could name and the Kyu gradings have mostly been forgotten. Thank you to all my ukes for helping me through those early gradings.

I found endless challenge both mental and physical. I learnt how to start to train my mind and my body to do things I thought impossible for me, from rolling to sitting in seiza for long periods and surviving a Hajime class.

Whether it's through accident, or through injury, or through exhaustion, I had to learn to listen to my body and stop training when I needed to. I slammed my knee into the concrete when I tripped and broke it or broke something! I was off the mats for three months while I recovered. It came back to haunt me over Christmas and it probably will again. Harmonizing with others in the dojo is often spoken about, but harmonizing with what your body can do is probably the first thing to grasp.

After years of prodding and cajoling from everyone at the dojo Michael finally stepped onto the mat in 2019. I'm pleased he did, because he quickly became even more driven to train than I. But that is his story to tell when he gets to Shodan...

There is lots of feedback around getting the black belt. Lots of people say congratulations and others don't know what it means, but those who do understand say "and now you really get to train!"

Before beginning Aikido training started I would wake up in agony each morning from early onset arthritis. After training regularly I've been pain free, except for yonkajo ☺, for some time. I've learnt to try to listen and learn, take advice, learnt new levels of patience and to try to teach others, and to check for understanding and modify instruction accordingly. I've learnt to try to harmonise with my partners. These skills have carried over to my career and I'm extremely thankful for those learnings, and more importantly change in spirit.

I discovered a community of people I probably couldn't have ever met outside of the dojo. I'm pretty sure I couldn't live without them now either. We got to try that last year and it really didn't go so well I'm sure you agree. Video classes are good, but training with everyone in person is irreplaceable.

Sensei and Shuko-san are the rocks around which this group of Aikido-ka gravitate. Without their skill and patience and commitment there would be nothing. Likewise without the decades of training at the dojo there wouldn't be so many black belts on different stages of the Aikido journey to learn from, and practice with. For all this I'm truly grateful, and I'm eager to keep training as hard as I can to contribute to that tradition.

Getting to the end I think, yeah enough already Tfer!

Thanks are order to all those who've helped me train. Duong in particular for the endless support, and confidence in my efforts. Van, Andy and Cameron, Greg, Louis, Andrew, Matt, Yana and Vlad, Stephen, Murray, Marty, Wikrom, Lawrence, Ryan, Danni and Dean... everyone!

Finally thanks to Perry for the inspiration and motivation to train, and Xanthe for her patience as she waits through yet another unannounced double class. Thanks to Michael too for putting up with all the nights of abandonment for the years before he joined.

Thank you seems insufficient for Sensei and Shuko-san somehow, but for now, thank you.

I promise I'll think of better words next time.

See you all on the mat! Osu!

Tfer Newsome