

NEWSLETTER

No.314 October 2021

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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

September Report					
New members 0		Total number of adults training 40		Total number of children training 46	
Results of Sogo Shinsa on 24th & 25th					
Nidan	Louis Chatfield	7th Kyu	Mikiko Nakao	4Y7 step	Murray Booth
Shodan	Danielle Gravalin		Cassandra Baptist		Cameron Blake
Jun-Shodan	Martin Fernandez	8th Kyu	Carlos Ordens	3Y1 step	Greg Burley
7th Kyu	Wenchyn Chen				2Y12 step
				2Y4 step	Kerry Nicholson
Events in October					
1. Getsurei Shinsa			3. This Month's Holiday		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Friday 22nd 7:15pm~• Steps, Friday 29th 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 30th 1:00pm~			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Queen's Birthday: Monday 4th• Dojo's Holiday: Monday 1st November• Kids class restarts on Thursday 7th October		
2. Mini-Hajime classes					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saturday 16th 1pm~2pm & 2.15pm~3pm• You can attend one class only or both.					

Coffee Break

Close-cropped hair

It was the very first day of my uchi-deshi life. I was resting in the honbu dojo's dormitory after all the classes were finished in the evening and a senior A uchi-deshi rushed in angrily. He said, looking at my head, "Go to a barber right now and get your hair close cropped!" I suppose my hairstyle annoyed him all day long and he could not stop himself telling me off even as late as after eight at night when most shops were closed. I felt his stern will, not accepting my hairstyle as an uchi-deshi, although it was a sport cut which I thought was short enough.

The image of a close-cropped hair is generally not so good for Japanese people. Well, monks are the exception as they are respected highly for their high virtues. Yet, a close-cropped hairstyle is usually used to punish someone - like criminals in jail - or as a means of penalty when someone fails in achieving his task. Or, it is just to show one is disciplinant or indentured within an apprenticeship. In that sense, the demand from A uchi-deshi was quite right as I was a day-one uchi-deshi, in a pure apprenticeship. Still, to a teenage boy who loved fashion at that time, it was absolutely humiliating. However, there was no chance of getting away from this demand and I hesitantly went out into the city that night.

Tokyo was certainly a big city, and many shops were still open until very late. I found some barbers and hair salons open and chose a fashionable hairdresser, not a barber. I explained my situation to a hairstylist that I needed to get my hair close-clipped. Yet, I asked him to not use a hair clipper but to use his scissors to keep my hair as long as possible. He was appalled at my weird request and murmured that he never did a close-cropped hairstyle in this fancy shop. It was my least rebellious attitude that I wished to hold against the old custom of the uchi-deshi rules.

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My friends were all envious when I told them that I was going to Tokyo after graduation from high school. Living in the country we all looked up the big city, Tokyo, where we thought everyone looked cool and sophisticated. They were saying that I might become famous on TV shows from getting scouted by a talent agency. You know, we were all teenagers and quite light-minded. Even if not becoming a TV talent, we all thought I would be a cool looking guy by simply living in Tokyo. Well, my first occasion for returning to my hometown arrived in the New Year, this is a time when people visit their parents' places in Japan. My friends booked a welcoming-home dinner at a Japanese-style pub for me. I was sure that they expected to see a sophisticated city boy and wanted to listen to all the thrilling stories of living and playing in Tokyo. Instead, I appeared in an unstylish jersey (like old school sports uniforms) with a close-cropped head like a monk or a prisoner. They could not believe their eyes and none of my stories impressed them, as they were either uni students or business people and lived in a totally different world to me. Needless to say, I eventually stopped seeing them...

Although it was a humiliating for me to have the prisoner-like hairstyle, I had quite a cool experience because of it. When I was taking the Senshusei Course with Riot Policemen in the first year of my uchi-deshi life, they stayed at the honbu dojo dormitory (where I lived) for one month out of their nine months course. We spent time-off together even outside the dojo. One day, we decided to visit an entertainment district called Kabukicho to watch a then popular movie "Top Gun." There were ten of the Riot Policemen who were robustly built with short or sweptback hair styles, and we all wore the honbu dojo's set of jerseys. Of course we did not appear to be ordinary people and wherever we walked a clear path appeared in the middle of heavy crowds, like Moses parting the sea. The group of rugged men had obvious power and looked intimidating to the public. It was a pretty nice feeling.

It was after I received my 3rd Dan around the fourth year of my uchi-deshi life that my saviour appeared, Yasuhisa Shioda Sensei, Master Gozo Shioda's third son. He came back from England after 3 or 4 years of teaching Aikido. He was senior to A uchi-deshi and some other ones and had a certain power in many ways. So, as I still hated my 'prisoner' look, I asked him if this was the rule we had to obey. To my greatest delight, he did not care at all about such a nonsense rule and allowed me to have whatever hairstyle I liked. Yay! I finally obtained my freedom in my appearance!

Well, I just wished to share my old memory as your coffee break. It may not appeal to be a big matter to you, but it was for me as a young man at that time, who was looking for a good girlfriend for my future!

OSU,

Michiharu Mori