

NEWSLETTER

No.248 April 2016

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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March Report

New members 3 Total number of adults training 54 Total number of children training 45

Results of Sogo Shinsa on 18th & 19th March

Jun-Yondan	Kaido Mori	5Y12 step	Ryan Slavin	2Y1step	Dean Jones
Jun-Shodan	Andrew Crampton	2Y6 step	Dominic Hogan	S4 step	Roland Thompson
6th Kyu	Anika-Jovi McCarthy	2Y5 step	Jocelyn Fergusson	S3 step	Wikrom Tang
9th Kyu	Jason Henry	2Y4 step	Vladimir Roudakov	S2 step	Viktor Ovcharenko
	Dessy Gunawan		Janna Malikova	S1 step	Kerry Nicholson
			Stephen Cuthbert		

Events in April

1. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Thursday 21st 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 29th 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 30th 1:00pm~

2. This Month's Holiday

- **Holiday:** 25th April Anzac Day
- **Dojo's Holiday:** 2nd May

A little more knowledge for your Aikido training

Thoughts on what the most effective Aikido technique is

This was the very first day I participated a class as a new uchi-deshi (I moved into the Headquarters dojo to work and train) after I had trained about ten months as a general student, when I was still wearing a white belt. The instructor who took the class was Takeno Shihan, the top uchi-deshi then. Well, it was meant to be very lucky to have an opportunity to be taught directly by the top exponent of the Yoshinkan style, other than Master, which all of Yoshinkan students, both domestic and international would envy. I, however, had an experience of feeling so close to death, at the age of only nineteen.

The ninety minutes morning class was called Seneshusei-geiko where all the uchi-deshi trained, along with students who were keen to receive more intensive training and had paid extra. Well, my partner was Takeno Shihan for the whole one and half hour class and we trained Katate-mochi Shiho-nage (1)(2) only; nothing else, no basic movements, no breaks. I am sure he had a clear intention of teaching a young new uchi-deshi a lesson in how severe Aikido training could be. Although we took turns to be shite and uke, as though it was a normal class not a punishment which appeared like a normal class, to my greatest surprise, he performed each technique with full strength; no mercy, on just a ten-month white belt. When the abilities of shite and uke are clearly different, the training style of Aikido can be very cruel. His techniques were simply brutal, smashing the back of my head severely hard, and my technique was absolutely nothing for him, as if he was given a rest. Reminding you that tatami mats in Japan were quite solid, if my head was a water melon it would have exploded at once and red flesh would be splattered all around. The repeated damage I got from every single one of his techniques was far too severe and I felt groggy. It was only my determined spirit that kept me going, up and down countless times in a semi-conscious state. I remember I even screamed crazily, losing myself. I truly thought I was going to die; the end of my life. I still do not know how I survived. This was the unforgettable day one of my uchi-deshi life.

First and foremost, Shiho-nage itself is a killing technique. This one is certainly dangerous; bending one arm to lock the shoulder tightly and drop the head backwards with the lock straight down to the ground. You can kill someone easily if you perform it fully against an ordinary person onto concrete ground in the street. When I learned Shiho-nage for the first time I got a scare, understanding its power. Although I had trained in boxing and had fights, only at the level of high school students, I never felt a real scare from getting punched. My coach regarded my right straight punch being powerful, but I knew it was nothing if I fought against a boxer in a heavier weight division. As I experienced more fights and training in boxing, I realised I had no chance if I was grabbed

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or wrestled by a man superior in physical size and strength. With this knowledge in fighting I felt Aikido techniques like Shiho-nage, Irimi-nage, Irimi-zuki which could smash opponent's head onto the ground brutally, were absolutely dangerous. Even a small sized man can exercise a damaging blow with Aikido techniques, not to mention if a man was big with more power.

I know that I have written the following episode many times but I would like to add my thoughts to it. A writer of a martial arts magazine questioned Master Gozo Shioda as to what the strongest Aikido technique was. I was at the scene and I thought of Shiho-nage at once, as I had the experience of being nearly murdered. In fact, if it was not in the dojo but outside on the concrete, I was definitely dead. Also I had some close calls from Takeno Shihan again during his demonstrations that cause me to thank the tatami mats deeply, as I slammed my head heavily from Irimi-zuki or Irimi-nage. I was very interested in Master's answer; which technique he was going to choose. Then, as you know, he said, "Become a friend with an enemy who has come to kill you." I was totally puzzled at his words. It was like a Zen riddle.

Well, I considered his words. He also said on another occasion, when he was asked what to do if he was troubled: "Shall welcome the trouble with a smile." Hmm, let's think what happens if one smiles at a man who is intending to kill you. Can we become friends with him? I think you would still be killed anyway. Another person who read Master's words analysed/understood them as: a person should become so virtuous and noble so that it is obvious that he is not ordinary and the killer would hesitate to kill the person due to his virtue/nobility. I doubt that since I do not think a killer would mind whether the target was virtuous or not. Then, I sought an answer in what he demonstrated through his Aikido. Being his uke gives you a feeling of pure joy. Grab him with full strength and in a flash, your body is uprooted completely. You have no idea what happened at all but as you stand up, a feeling of happiness fills your body and naturally you smile with joy. Then you would beg to be thrown again after the pleasurable sensation. This is how you feel when you receive the finest and most exquisite technique. Subsequently, looking at uke's joy, shite feels pleasure and both become happy in harmony; such a weird world... Well, if this is the case, the way to become a friend with an intending killer is to let him feel the Master's level Aikido technique and erase his malicious purpose, filling him with marvel. So, reaching the ultimate level of Aikido, in other words performing Aiki-waza freely, is the answer to what the most effective or strongest Aikido is, I think.

The key to enter the world of ultimate Aikido, I think, is the ultimate harmony with one's uke or opponent. There is only one way to attain the ultimate harmony: we always need to train in a humble mind state, removing our ego, and keep trying to harmonise with our uke both mentally and physically, no matter which techniques we practise and whomever we face to during each class. To improve Aikido techniques, it does not depend on how one moves but how one reads the training partner's speed, power, timing and feeling and how one harmonises with them (in other words, balance them out, blend in, fit together...) When one performs *his* best technique spending all his might, it leaves nothing but a sense of displeasure with his uke, as it is the same as though he had forced pure ego and selfishness on his uke. If we can reach the level where our body senses the opponent's body conditions in detail (size, power, age, flexibility, quality of muscles, bone frames, etc) and his mind state as soon as we touch him and perform the completely *right* technique for him, then we may be able to become a friend with an intending killer. Well, there is no special trick other than to make steady effort to reach the ultimate level.

I assess in myself that I am getting better to read and harmonise with my uke's on the mats in the dojo, but I cannot say I am good at harmonising in my daily life, yet. I still give my wife discomfort occasionally whenever I fail to harmonise with her. I wish to become a master of Aikido, a master of harmony, who can please his wife all the time. How wonderful a husband aren't I to think like that?! I am sure that when I can be a friend with an intending killer then I can be friends with my wife, even when she is in a furious state too. "Aiki that is to say life," together with my wife, we shall explore to prove this saying is true.

Osu!
Michiharu Mori