

NEWSLETTER

No.243 November 2015

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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October Report					
New members 5		Total number of adults training 59		Total number of teens & children training 45	
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 30th & 31st October					
Jun-3 rd Kyu	Bastian Hartmann	6 th Kyu	Ken Livingston	5Y1 step	Ryan Slavin
	Sushankar Khandabhattu	7 th Kyu	Joseph Byrne	S2 step	Roland Thompson
4 th Kyu	Thomas Gilbert		Jim Gordon	S1 step	Wikrom Tang
	Vaughan Gray	9 th Kyu	Joseph Jr Byrne		Andrew Crampton
Events in November					
<u>1. Self-defence Class & Demonstration</u>			<u>2. Getsurei Shinsa</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-defence class; Saturday, 28th 1:00pm~2:30pm• The class is not for public but only for the members.• Everyone who wishes to participate in the self-defence class needs to register at the counter with \$15 cash participation fee. (will be used for BBQ party and drinks)• BBQ Party will be held after the demonstration and everyone including your family and friends are welcome to join us.• Demonstration; 2:45pm~• All of the black belts and Mori Sensei will display their demonstrations after the class. You can invite your family and friends for the demonstration.			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training starts, Friday 13th 7:15pm~• Steps, Friday 20th 7:15pm~• Shinsa, Saturday 21st 1:00pm~		
			<u>3. Children's demonstration, new colour belts awarding ceremony and X'mas Party</u>		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saturday the 21st 10.00am~• A grading demonstration by all the children starts at 10am.• Awarding ceremony, some games and X'mas party are planned after the demo.• Dojo will provide some soft drinks and a small X'mas gift for each child.• Please bring a plate with you.		
			<u>4. This Month's Holiday</u>		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dojo's Holiday 30th Monday		

A little more knowledge for your Aikido Training

Bushido

The other day, one of the students asked me what 'Bushido' is. I answered, "Our black belts clean the dojo's bathroom and the sink after completing all the classes each day. This is an example of Bushido." He was quite surprised at my answer. I understand that it sounded pretty strange as it might have been interpreted as 'cleaning the toilet is Bushido.'

I assume that the image of Bushido for many people in Western countries is 'a way of the tough and strong male' since I often see pictures or photos of bearded wild men wielding Japanese swords when Bushido is explained in martial arts magazines. The very basic teachings of Bushido can be described in these three words, 「尚武」 「廉恥」 「剛健」 (pronounced as 'shoubu' 'renchi' 'gouken') although there are several theories depending on regional background. 'Shoubu' means devoting oneself to train military arts diligently, 'Renchi' is about the mental attitude to discipline one's mind to be always clear, clean and calm as well as knowing what shame is and never do the act of shame, and 'Gouken' means to keep oneself tough and strong both mentally and physically. These three concepts together were the fundamental education to become a proper samurai, and samurai children were raised strictly in this manner. It seems that the 'renchi' part got missed out quite a bit in Western understanding because the concept was not something familiar to them when they studied Bushido. As a result, they focused more on the other two concepts of being tough and training military arts severely that increased the misunderstanding of what Bushido meant, I suppose.

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Cleaning dojo's bathroom after training is the attitude of exercising '*renchi*.' I need to briefly explain the background of samurai culture a bit more to start with, for you to understand the concept of '*renchi*.' The top of classes in Edo society was samurai. They were the authorised people to carry swords, yet, it did not mean they were authorised to kill anybody they liked, using their swords. The swords were used officially when samurai's were ordered to achieve their duties for their domain or domain lord and only if they needed to use them, except that it was a generally accepted notion that samurai's were to fight when they were dishonoured. For samurai's, a sense of honour was highly valued and therefore if they were insulted in any way, or if someone insulted their lord or family, they fought for their honour despite risking their lives. Once their sword was pulled out of its case, most of the time it meant a death. Since even if one managed to kill the other samurai to defend his honour, he was responsible for the act of killing which then resulted in killing himself as a matter of honour, so called "Harakiri/Seppuku." Being allowed to kill oneself in a protocol of Seppuku was an honourable way of finishing his life, compared to being killed as a punishment. Carrying a sword, being a samurai, meant death was always very close to them.

Because they were prepared to die any moment being a samurai, they made sure to live a very disciplined life-style to maintain a clean life so that no one could dishonour his name for how they lived, even after death. They trained military arts strictly and studied hard to widely broaden their knowledge. Their thoughts were high in morals, their behaviour always well-mannered and they gave care to their appearance and kept their personal belongings clean and tidy. They had to discipline their lives severely to maintain their honour and they never did anything that might have shamed their name. Acting in an indecent manner was pure shame and would dishonour them. In Christian thinking, I hear, people lived right and well because they wished to go to Heaven after their death, while a samurai lived strictly right to protect his honour for ever, even after his death.

I question myself if I am prepared to die any moment without being ashamed of my life. Have I been too easy on myself, losing a disciplined life-style? Is my mind always clean and calm? Is my body in shape as an Aikido samurai? Are my belongings all tidy and am I not shaming my name for my descendants...? Well, Bushido teaches us, even in this modern century, the value and beauty of practising a disciplined life. Cleaning the dojo's bathroom and sink which the students have used before leaving the dojo, a sacred place where people cultivate oneself through a military art, is an act of following Bushido, I think.

Before I end this article I would like to add one episode that is pretty classic. One of my favourite Japanese writers has a famous samurai as his ancestor, and because of that he was raised very strictly under the rule of Bushido by his father. Being a child, he did not understand the aspect of ethical part but he understood the importance of training martial arts to build strong spirit and body. He was ordered to learn Kendo (using a bamboo/wooden sword to compete with each other) in a strict manner, not as an activity to have a fun like other children did. His father always told him that training martial arts was not only about in the dojo but he should be on guard around the clock, wherever he was. As his father looked so sure about what he was teaching, the boy believed his father had mastered a sense of awareness to deal with any sort of danger at any time. One day, he decided to see how gracefully his father would defend himself from a sudden attack. He took a full-sized adult wooden sword and crept into his father's study, where his father was facing towards his desk. Contrary to what he expected, his full-strength blow smashed his father's head cruelly, knocking him out unconscious. He was so scared of what happened and worried about what kind of trouble he would be in from his devil-like, frightening father. His father, however, said nothing to his son and never accused him of this act.

Well, I do not think his father ever imagined that what he was teaching his son would come back to him in this painful kind of way. We should all be aware that raising your son strictly, especially teaching him a method of practical martial art, can be a disaster. As I was saying similar sort of things to discipline my son, the story hit me in a realistic way and gave me a warning to not trust my son blindly. I may find him with a bokken standing behind me one day, and he is a full-sized grown-up now...

Osu! **Michiharu Mori**