



August Report

New members 2

Total number of adults training 55

Total number of children training 46

20th Annual Demonstration Awards

◆ Jiyu-waza

The Best Overall Jiyu-waza Award

Kaido Mori & Andrea Troncoso Salas

Excellent Jiyu-waza Award

Andrew Crampton & Bastian Hartmann

Mark Barometro & Jacob Holloway

Vladimir Roudakov & Stephen Cuthbert

◆ Aubrey Bannah Award

(Four-men Jiyu-waza)

Matt Carpenter

Vladimir Roudakov

Viktor Ovcharenko

Bastian Hartmann

Events in September

1. Sogo Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 11th 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 25th 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 26th 1:00pm~

2. Children's class Holiday

- Children's classes are closed from 19th Sep to 5th Oct. Class resumes on Thursday 8th Oct.

3. This Month's Holiday

- Dojo's Holiday - Monday 28th September

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

Yondan

It has been roughly nine years since I first entered the Dojo and was hooked on Aikido, even now as I write and reflect I feel a strong emotional tie to my time in the Dojo. I have met very nice and interesting people, trained hard and made some life long friends along the way. There is a certain South African and Kiwi but I try to look past that and accept them for who they are ☺ But to all the people who I have trained with over the last few years thank you and I value all the memories I've had to train with you.

Once Sensei had told me that a Dojo is a place to study life. My interpretation of this is that we train in Aikido and techniques but what is behind these are what are so very valuable. I believe that through learning these techniques and training in them again and again dealing with factors of fatigue, doing the techniques as correctly as your memory allows and constantly striving for perfection of your technique are some of the important building blocks to better understanding life around us. I feel as not only reflection on outside factors is important but also internal reflection is also very important. We need to know where we are on a map in order to navigate the world around us. The main thing that blinds us is our ego, whilst it may seem to be in our service it is quite the opposite and holds us back from reality we need to see and only shows what we want to see. It is also unfortunate that it is a tricky thing to track because when we think we are clear of it that is when it is standing behind us holding that fake picture over our eyes!!!

When I train I try to think that I can always do better, do the technique better, train harder, move faster and the list is endless. I also try to make this a reflection of my life; can I be a better husband, a better father, a better friend, and a better son. (Yes is the answer to all these... A big yes!!!)

Harmonising with people's attacks in the Dojo can be the same as harmonising with people's "attacks" (for lack of a better word) in the world. People who cut in front of you in traffic or drive slow, these are excellent opportunities to practice harmony for me, even though I definitely fail at times. Aikido is designed for a person who is attacked to subdue and enemy with as little effort as possible with massive effect. In life if someone is

NEWSLETTER



driving slow in front simply wait for an opportunity to overtake and do it, the need for anger is nil as you are simply adjusting to the flow of the traffic, which changes constantly and randomly. We can spend our time fighting, inflicting damage and taking damage but the negative consequences of these hugely outweigh the positive. If someone is behind you and in a hurry simply let them pass and go on their way, they are happy and you are happy!!

Acceptance of the situation is also a point I would like to make in order to reflect on life application of Aikido. Acceptance of the moment is important because when engaged in doing a technique if our mind is a moment to slow or to fast to where our body is actually up to the technique will be unsuccessful because we are too worried about the past or the future. If driving we may have a map or an idea of where we are going but we need to focus on the road so we do not crash!! I've had a couple of crashes in my life so this is something I must definitely work on!!! ☺

Aikido is something I take very seriously and respect greatly as it has helped shape my life in many positive ways through positive and negative ways. One very important and final point I would like to share is that no matter what your level in Aikido, your coordination level, your strength, your natural ability and the million other things that can be listed is that everyone's path is different but it leads to the same place. This is something Sensei also shared with me, which I am so very grateful for because it means that all of us training whether we can do a technique as well as we would like have the ability to find the principles behind them. Through sincere effort and hard training no matter your 'Skill Level' we can all achieve the essence of harmony and peace in our lives, which I believe, is the fundamental point of life in order to achieve happiness.

This newsletter is a reflection of my experience and if any one has had different experience or a different thought then I would love to listen and to learn.

Through these years I have trained with amazing people many of whom I will not name, as there are too many!!! Cameron recently achieved his second Dan and training with this guy for the last few years has been a great pleasure and his attitude and temperament are things I highly look up to and try to achieve myself. Slavinator you are one of the strongest people I know and also you are someone I look up to!! To Emanuel, you have beaten me up for 8 of the 9 years and it has been something I have enjoyed every time!!! But being taken under the wing of one of Sensei's Veteran students when I was still a teenager and our history of training is something I cherish deeper than I can explain. (By Veteran I didn't mean old.... my bad) Sensei, Shuko and Kaido thank you for showing me a way to live that has saved my life ☺. Kaido you will grow into a great Sensei one day please do your very best to achieve that train hard and learn all you can from every body. Finally and what I have learned to be the most important thing is a big thank you to my wife Mai and to the little addition to my life my daughter Nyomi. My two girls thank you for giving me reasons to love deeper than I can understand, you two are the reasons I have not been at training as much but how I have loved the time with you and how irreplaceable it is. Even though living with you Mai is even stricter than my time living in the Dojo. (Seriously guys I sneeze and I'm cleaning the house!!) hehe.

I encourage everyone to train with all their heart because I believe it is the only way to find the valuable treasures that Aikido has hidden. I hope I can further increase my skills and better control my ego in order to discover more about the values of our art. If any one would like to train with me before or after class please ask and I would love to!!!

OSU!!!

Lawrence Monforte

NEWSLETTER



Yondan

13 years

When registering for my 4th Dan grading, Sensei and I realised that it was 13 years to the month since I had completed my first grading, 9th kyu.

Sensei asked me if when I started, I had any notion that I would still be training after 13 years. (Paraphrasing I can't remember the exact question). But I do remember answering that at that time I thought getting a black belt would be cool, and that was my only goal.

Well it was a good goal, and in just under 2 years I got it. And then I got through my first round of steps and before I knew it I was bowing onto the mats as a 2nd Dan. At this point I'll pause the story and say that I think this is when I started to realise that what aikido meant to me was not fixed and would always be evolving. I guess this is also around the time that the idea of reaching a finish line was replaced with the idea that training would always be a part of my life.

I think my reason for starting aikido was a simple one. I wanted to study martial arts, and looked into several types. I had read a book on aikido "Total Aikido – the Master Course" (on reflection I had no idea what I was reading about), but in the back of the book was an address and number for the Brisbane Dojo. I looked it up, rang and visited the dojo ready to train. No beginner course, no watching a class first, I walked in, signed up and hit the mats, and have kept hitting the mats or more accurately the mats have kept hitting me with the help of Sensei and my fellow students. Why did I stick with Aikido all these years? Simple because I watch Sensei's Demos and said to myself, "until I can do that I don't need to learn anything else". I understand the demonstrations differently now.

I think about that time and just the unrelenting enthusiasm that embodied me, and what seemed like the entire dojo, training jiyu-waza with Richie before first class and after second, with the two classes in-between. Training every night of the week, grading every month. This lasted about 3 - 4 years and at that point, life stepped in. We all have those moments where we need to focus on other things. I learned a big lesson though. Having any extended break will really impact your aikido, although maybe not in the way you think. I personally found that although my head would know the timing and feeling, my body had started to lose the conditioning I was accustomed to during aikido movements. In short I had to make up ground before I got to where I was before. Breaks are sometimes necessary, but if you plan to move forward in aikido don't let your breaks get to extended, just my two cents.

So after 13 years what have I learnt? That Gozo Shioda's words "Aikido and life are one" are as true today as whenever he said them. I think I always get asked if I have ever had to use it? My answer is now the same, everyday. Really, I'm not being philosophical or hippy about the whole thing. I am, I think a realist, and yes sometimes it gets me a strange look. But let's look at what we are really learning from aikido. We're learning how to move and be sensitive to the moment in relation to the world around us. If I understand Sensei correctly (and I may not) Aiki-waza is for example is something you feel, you develop the sensitivity in your body through years of training to connect to the balance in uke. (All be it knowing this and doing it are two different things, but I can dream). So I simply believe that if we are practicing this on the mats, we will, if only subconsciously start practicing this in life. And so after all this time I think this is the reason I see aikido in everything I do. This idea has worked for me on multiple levels, but on the mats I try to be consistent in my approach, which is to "Train like I'm grading and grade like I'm training".

It goes without saying, that without Sensei and Shuko being the dedicated team they are, all our lives would be much poorer. They have provided all of us our little community for 20 years, Thank you.

NEWSLETTER



A big shout out to my follow 4th Dan's Ryan and Lawrence, it was a real pleasure to go through my preparation with both of you, and also thank you to Cameron, Murray, and Kaido. Well the 20th demo is upon us and I'm excited to share it with all of you. See you on the mats.

Osu!!

Sam Gray

Shodan

First of all, my humblest and sincerest thank you to Sensei, Shuko and Kaido.

Secondly, thank you to all the students of the dojo. With a special mention to all the Yudansha who have helped and challenged me, and all those who have trained with me as we progressed through the Kyu and Brown Belt levels.

In my humble opinion our dojo here in Brisbane is a rare and special place. When I first did my introductory course 4 years ago, I never really thought about how far I would go with it. In fact it took another year before I started training regularly. Having a little experience with other martial arts styles, I progressed at a moderate rate. The Black Belts of the dojo were always helpful and I have learned something valuable from every single one in some way.

As well as the techniques I have learned (of which now at Shodan I am only just beginning to really 'feel'), I began to understand just how important humility and loss of ego were in my training. These aspects of training at Yoshinkan Brisbane Dojo were not always as explicitly articulated as our techniques, but it was demonstrated in the actions of its students. They have learned all these things through continued instruction from Sensei.

It is not the dojo itself, its walls and mats and bokken. Nor is it the style of martial arts or the style of aikido that makes Yoshinkan Brisbane Dojo a rare and special place. Through continued training here I have realised that we are blessed with a Sensei who lives and breathes an art. Someone who continues to refine himself through refining his art, sharing a life with his wife and son and the dojo that shows all their beliefs in everything they do. A way of living which in some way affects all those who come to the dojo.

Despite what you might think at this point I don't think that Sensei is Superman (sorry Sensei), perhaps he may resemble some of the samurai out of my favourite Manga (definitely the good guys Sensei I promise!) All I know is it is very rare to find a teacher of any kind who is as true to their art as Sensei is and this is the foundation of a great dojo. I am very happy to call myself a student of Yoshinkan Brisbane Dojo.

Wow, I wrote too much. I did want to keep it short.

Look forward to training with all of you.

OSU!

Stephen Cuthbert