

NEWSLETTER



No.107 August 2004

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Report of July

New members 2

Total number of adults training 64

Total number of children training 50

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 24th

<u>Jun-3rd Kyu</u>	Myles Frost	<u>6th Kyu</u>	Aran Dall	<u>2Y3 step</u>	Matthew Watson
	Mark Frost		Brett Hampson	<u>2Y2 step</u>	Julie Walsh
<u>4th Kyu</u>	Tzen Paredes	<u>7th Kyu</u>	Nicholas Scholz	<u>2Y1 step</u>	Albert Lu
<u>6th Kyu</u>	Mark Wilton	<u>9th Kyu</u>	Niko Duncan	<u>S4 step</u>	Craig Sargent
	Lloyd Gainey			<u>S2 step</u>	Lili Ottaway

Events in August

1. 9th Annual Demonstration on 22nd August

- ♦ 9:00am Start packing up at the dojo
- ♦ 11:00am Adults' Rehearsal
- ♦ 12:00pm Children's Rehearsal
- ♦ 12:30pm Doors open and warming up
- ♦ 1:00 ~ 3:30pm The Demonstration
- ♦ 3:30pm Awarding ceremony and taking a photo
- ♦ 4:00pm Remove all the mats and clear the venue.
- ♦ Dinner Party at the evening

2. Adults Rehearsal for the demonstration

- ♦ 21st August, Saturday 1:00pm~
- ♦ Everyone is expected to attend the rehearsal.

3. Childrens Rehearsal for the demonstration

- ♦ 21st August, Saturday 10:00pm~

4. Getsurei Shinsa

- ♦ 28th August, Saturday 1:00pm~
- ♦ Shinsa training starts on 23rd Monday.

5. This Month's Holiday

- ♦ Dojo's Holiday 30th Monday & 31st Tuesday August

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

Sensei has told us that with age strength declines, but kokyu ryoku only gets stronger. I remember when I first started Aikido, October 14th 1996. My original membership number was #78. I remember why I started. While those reasons still remain they are just the outer shell of my current reasons for training. Now I realize why after almost eight years I'm still here and committed, spirit - this ineffable, seemingly untouchable characteristic of life.

I remember training for my brown belt with an ex-student. He towered above me nearly twice my weight and very, very strong. When I trained with him I got the feeling he was only training for himself. He threw me like a rag doll. Not only was it painful but humiliating as well – as I could not stop him from throwing me hard. We give ourselves to our partners, allowing them to throw us and he threw me without any respect. With another student also much stronger and heavier than me, while training he was throwing me with his pet technique – he could utilize all his strength and weight- he dumped me so hard that my body bounced twice on the mats. After he did this and saw what happened to me he laughed to himself, again pain and humiliation. But this time I glared at him with all my hate, and while he still has thrown me hard since, he has never laughed nor thrown me without such careless thought. While I say hate, it was also tinged with something cleaner – a harnessing of spirit. There are even more painful and humiliating cases, so why am I still here? I'm

still lighter than most men and they are still strong. I think it is because my spirit has grown, and of course the good training out ways the bad a thousand to one.

I still remember the first kote-gaeshi Sensei did on me when I was still just becoming able to ukemi. My body was taken absolutely in control of, but with such kindness and on such a perfect line. I hit the mats and stood up smiling. That was maybe seven, seven and a half years ago and I can still feel that throw in my body today. Now sometimes when I throw someone and the line is right, the power is right, I see them get up after this throw and smile. This is satisfaction. Not a feeling that I'm powerful or my technique is perfect but because we achieved some kind of harmony. This harmony that I am learning on the mats also spills out into the rest of the areas of my life. I feel able to complete the things that I want to achieve in my life and I think that Aikido plays a large part in it. So achieving 3rd dan has meant some pain and embarrassment but it has also lead to strengthening of character and the polishing of my spirit. I would not change a thing; through all of the good and the bad times I have become what I am today, strengthened by hard training and expanded by building on my knowledge of technique.

“Cultivate your spirit silently never forgetting that you are but a fool.” From a poem by Saikontan-supposedly the origin of the Yoshinkan name.

Thank you to every one who trains; the dojo for me feels like an extended part of my family, coming to training is something that I look forward to. A special thanks to Richard for being my Uke and training with 100% spirit and only 4 hours sleep! And of course thank you to Sensei for all the years of hard work and total commitment he has given to us and to Aikido. So I will end in the time-honoured tradition of saying a heartfelt OSU!!

Jason Palmer

Everyone's Aikido journey starts with finding out about the art. I remember first encountering the word “aikido” during orientation week in my first year of university, when one of my high school colleague told me that there is an aikido society in the University of Queensland and asked whether I would consider signing up. Having absolutely no idea what aikido is, I asked him, “What's A-Ki-do?” My friend replied by telling me , “Ai-ki-do is one type of martial art where you get to throw people around.”

Like all boys, I got excited when I heard the word “Martial Art”. However, throwing people around (nage) had not been my idea of Martial Art back then. Being a big fan of animation and manga since

primary school, my idea of Martial Art had always been people perform all sorts of impossible looking movements and been able to break anything at will. And somehow I always had this idea that you must start Martial Art training when you are still young (young as in 6 years old or something, maybe I got this idea from seeing the little Shaolin monks demonstrate), or you cannot become proficient. So naturally I did not take up aikido back then.

After three years of undergraduate studying, I began developing the usual habits of university students. As in, the degrading physical condition due to lack of sleep, bad diet and of course, lack of exercise. And it was at this point when I decided I have had enough. Enough of waking up everyday, doing things just for the sake of doing things. Enough of being busy everyday but not doing anything that I feel is really important.

So I decided to play with a game plan. I want to live my dreams. I told myself that no dream is impossible unless you give up. And with this plan in mind, I started doing things and developing skills to achieve my goals.

Now of all the dreams I have had ever since I was a child, one of them was Martial Art training. I decided that since no dream is impossible, no age is too old to start right? Coincidentally, at the same time, a friend of mine is training at the Yoshinkan Aikido Brisbane Dojo. Being an excellent descriptor, he gave me a detailed account of the art and what the masters are able to do. Things like performing nage when grabbed by three people, using one finger to perform nage and most importantly dedication and a sort of religious believe of what it is capable of.

It sounded somehow too amazing to be true...so I decided to do a bit of research on Aikido. What I found out won me over. The emphasis on cultivating body, mind and soul through training, of developing a sense for your surroundings, and the ultimate ideal of "being one with the universe" (aiki). Yes, this is what I am looking for. So when Shuko san asked me whether I just wanted to watch or start training right away during my first visit, I told her I want to become a member straight away. Thus began my Aikido training.

For the first few weeks of training, I really felt awkward. As you know, you don't go around the street walking with hand and feet in unison (very robot like...). And I remember the first time I try to do shumatsu-dosa ni, the circle I performed was so bad that I almost fell over.

But despite all that, I enjoyed the sessions. The seniors who taught me conveyed the basic principles of aikido, even though it's just a beginner's lesson. For me, this is really important, because I like to know the reason behind things. In just a few weeks' time, I decided that this is something I would want to continue with if the circumstances allow. It's not just the fact that it allows

you to perform amazing things (with a lot of training obviously), the thing I like most about aikido is the fact that it's not just about physical training, but you really need to use your brain and try to apply the principles to get better.

I guess that's the thing I try to keep in mind during every lesson. To not just copy the way sensei does his techniques, but to think through (or even to try and feel) how the technique works, how to apply the basic principles such as moving your partner's balance by locking the uke's wrist, elbow and shoulder. The most amazing thing is that every time you do a technique, you find out something different, and it really helps in understanding the art.

A lot of people asked me how I felt before my shodan grading. My view is that since I see every lesson as vitally important, and because I've decided to keep on training for as long as I can, I don't particularly view grading as that big of a deal. I mean, I know it's important since it allows you to practice all the core techniques that are relevant to your skill level and allows you to practice performing under a serious environment, but since I'm trying to do my best in every lesson, grading is not really that different from a normal class.

This is a big bonus for me, since I always do badly in exams if I get nervous. With this "view exams like normal class" attitude, I tend not to focus as much on the end result, but rather on trying to stay focused and concentrated at all times, and simply try to perform my best.

I don't know whether I picked up this logic of thinking from doing school exams or from learning aikido, maybe it's a bit of both. What I do know is that this philosophy has helped me get through some difficult times by allowing me to step out of the stress of the moment and focus on getting things done.

I would like to thank all the seniors in this dojo who routinely give up their own training time to help beginners like me. You guys really demonstrated the spirit of aikido to me. I also would like to thank each and every one of you who trained with me, it's always good to have people with whom you can discuss and practice the techniques with. Without the help of you guys, I would never get any better. And most of all, I would like to thank Sensei and Shuko san. You taught by setting examples for us to follow, by living the life of a true Budoka. I am blessed to have such a mentor.

I look forward to more training with all of you.

OSU

Albert Lu