

NEWSLETTER



No.108 September 2004

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Report of August

New members 6

Total number of adults training 68

Total number of children training 49

Awards of 9th Annual Demonstration

Jiyu-waza

1st Award

Richard Diehm & Michael Bannah

2nd Award

Matthew Watson & Rosie Bannah

Renzoku-waza Award

Lloyd Gainey & Sho Hatai

Aubrey Bannah Award

Shelly Hope

Miki Yoshida

Julie Walsh

Rosie Bannah

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 28th August

Jun-Sandan Miki Yoshida 9th Kyu

Jun-Shodan Ken Carse

Jun-3rd Kyu Matthew Jukes

Tzen Paredes

5th Kyu

Brett Hampson

Mark Wilton

Lloyd Gainey

3Y8 step

2Y8 step

2Y4 step

Viet Cao Ma

Ben Glass

Sachiko Senda

Henry Yeh

Brent Weston

Douglas Buchanan

Shelly Hope

Matthew Watson

2Y2 step

S5 step

S4 step

S1 step

Paul te Braak

Albert Lu

Sam Gray

Nicholas Leitch

Eagle Kao

Alastair Wilkinson

Tyrone Whelan

Events in September

1. Sogo Shinsa

◆ 25th Saturday, 1:00pm~

◆ Shinsa training starts on 11th Saturday.

2. This Month's Holiday

◆ Dojo's Holiday 27th Monday

A bit of knowledge for Aikido

Congratulations on the completion of your great demonstrations

I wonder what kind of impressions and thoughts you have had after the completion of our 9th Annual Demonstration.

I had been watching the scenes of everyone training hard every single day on the lead up to the demonstration. White belts were practicing the Kihon-dosa Renzoku and Renzoku-waza intensively every day which lifted their level amazingly high. Kihon-dosa Renzoku is demonstrated by Senshusei (apprentices of live-in students and Riot Policemen) at the Headquarters' annual demonstration. This means that Kihon-dosa Renzoku is practiced by semi-pros (apprentices of aikido instructors, riot policemen and students in international instructors' course) only in Japan. In fact, not many general students know the Kihon-dosa Renzoku in Japan. But here in Brisbane Dojo, even white belts can demonstrate it properly.

Renzoku-waza demonstrated by white and brown belts is in our brown belts' grading syllabus at our Dojo, which you never see in other dojos. This is a method of training to prepare for Jiyu-waza and it is composed of the very basic seven techniques out of hundreds of Jiyu-waza techniques placed in the right order. The idea of creating this syllabus comes from a bitter memory I have as a general student of the Headquarters. That was just after I received my 2nd Kyu for my first brown belt's grading (I skipped 3rd Kyu), one of the black belts asked me to train some Jiyu-waza with him and I found myself in great shame knowing nothing about Jiyu-waza techniques but only Kihon-waza (basic techniques). This sour memory led me to think to put the Renzoku-waza (continuous throws) method in grading syllabus even from 9th Kyu level. I believe that while training towards the demonstration what white belts did was truly great training for their knowledge and skills.

Teaching and practicing Renzoku-waza with white belts in the first classes must have been a good opportunity for brown and black belts to raise their level as well, since they had to learn each technique more precisely by teaching beginners. When seniors practice Jiyu-waza they tend to choose their favourite techniques but training Renzoku-waza with beginners should have given them a good balance of variety in their techniques.

For this year's demonstration, as a trial, I gave a subject to senior students for the senior black belts demonstration to study and imitate the techniques of Takeno Sensei who is well respected among our seniors. I always think of a method to raise the level of all of my students through the annual demonstration each year. This year, I intended seniors to learn a way of studying techniques deeper using the demonstration of other instructors as a model.

One of my ways of studying techniques was watching videos of other instructors in detail repeatedly when I was an uchi-deshi (live-in instructor of Headquarters). Studying techniques in videos was necessary to obtain something from the demonstrations because watching a live demonstration does not give us much information technically—i.e. Feeling Takeno Sensei was powerful or Chida Sensei was elegant is fine but it is hard to take something out of these feelings. Here, studying videos became important to learn the instructor's movements accurately in slow motion and also allows you to rewind to check a certain movement.

Using the ability of this great machine in full, we can learn various points of techniques; the way of entering and timing for different techniques, distance between uke, which leg should be forward for a certain technique, which spinning power is used (diagonal, vertical, horizontal), combinations of diverse techniques (up, down, spin, one-breath timing or circular movement), etc. After we learn from the videos we need to try them out on the mats in the real world and we usually find ourselves far from what we have learnt from the videos. Then, we go back to videos again to check the accurate timing, angles, the way of closing distance, etc. By repeating these steps we can steal the techniques to own ourselves.

For example, a Kokyu-waza, each senior instructor at the Headquarters showed their own styles, difference in timing and angle, and that means each technique has a different meaning and theory. There are heaps of characteristics and habits in each Jiyu-waza demonstrated by different instructors; having Kokyu-waza as a main technique of his Jiyu-waza; using Kokyu-waza to perform an Irimi-zuki effectively; using Kokyu-waza to throw around uke up and down combinations like Kokyu-waza, Sudori (duck under), Kokyu-waza, Irimi-zuki; using all sorts of techniques evenly, inside turn and outside turn, up and down, right spin and left spin; so many varieties indeed. At a certain period when I was uchi-deshi I tried to imitate each of my senior uchi-deshis by studying their demonstrations in videos. This experience is my great wealth in Aikido.

I saw many people training through 9-10 years of my uchi-deshi life at the Headquarters. There are about two hundred new members joining in every year and there are uchi-deshis with more than twenty years of experience. I also saw many people including young uchi-deshis quit Aikido. Out of the good and bad examples of those people, I learned some different ways to improve my Aikido.

One of bad examples I saw among many of them was creating one's own style at an early stage like in 2nd or 3rd Dan when one does not have enough experiences yet. What I mean by one's own style is that breaking

techniques in easier form by using one's strength or cutting movements in short without following a form of techniques based on a theory. The problem that these people who create their own styles at early stage had to face was reaching a limit of one's own style. At the beginning of their own styles, techniques seem to work very well and feel so much improved. But the techniques not based on principles lose the effectiveness when one gets older losing their muscle strength or when one faces a person who has more physical strength. I have seen many examples of those people from both uchi-deshis and general students.

This fact led me think the way I should take. The way I chose to master the art was obeying the instructions of my senior uchi-deshis totally and imitating their techniques leaving my ego and pride aside while I was training at the Headquarters, up to 5th Dan. Imitating techniques, however, has a limit and therefore the individuality comes out naturally regardless of how hard I try to copy. In this way, I don't become self-centred even though I have my own individuality. This theory hasn't changed in me even now, here in Brisbane Dojo. You probably think I have my own style of techniques but what I'm trying to do is all about trying hard to do the same techniques of my Master Gozo Shioda Sensei by copying the image of his techniques. This is my way of mastering a martial art and I believe this is the fastest method to improve one's skills.

Well, we have finished our 9th Annual Demonstration. Now, we have a task to improve our level to show better demonstration for the next one, 10th Anniversary Demonstration. We don't compete with each other but with oneself in this martial art. How we train and polish our techniques and spirits daily through this coming one-year will lead us to the satisfactory result. The training towards the next goal has already started.

Osu!

Michiharu Mori