



No. 117 May 2005

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

## Report of April

New members 7

Total number of adults training 71

Total number of children training 58

## Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 23<sup>rd</sup> April

<u>Jun-Nidan</u>	Douglas Buchanan	<u>3Y 12 step</u>	Lee Stemm	<u>2Y9 step</u>	Albert Lu
<u>6<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>	Jaime Bowtell	<u>3Y9 step</u>	Jason Williams	<u>2Y3 step</u>	Vladislav Neklyae
<u>9<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>	Aaron Stewart	<u>3Y3 step</u>	Evan Chapman	<u>S4 step</u>	Murray Davis
		<u>2Y12 step</u>	Matthew Watson	<u>S1 step</u>	Myles Frost

## Events in May

### 1. Getsurei Shinsa

- ♦ Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~
- ♦ Shinsa training starts from 21<sup>st</sup> Saturday.

### 2. This Month's Holiday

- ♦ Labour Day 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday
- ♦ Dojo's Holiday 30<sup>th</sup> Monday

## Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

I can still remember my first class of Aikido. I knew it would be difficult as other martial arts I have done before were very different. Soichiro was doing his best to encourage me, but all I could think of was how little I knew and how bad I was. Nearly 2 and a half years later I have learned a lot and I now know that I know even less than I thought I did at the start. I have fewer illusions now that I will master any of the gazillion techniques any time soon.

The past 2 years have been quite challenging for me. You see, I generally deal with the world by trying to understand it, but with Aikido, it seemed that we were told to do things without explanation. That was difficult and different to how I had been taught before. But after several months of learning, I slowly came to some understanding of certain more simple things which we do in Aikido. I know I don't fully understand anything, but I think I understand at least a part of why we do some of the things we do. It's interesting and encouraging to know that even some of the seemingly trivial things we are expected to do all have a purpose and meaning, even it is not immediately obvious, so I would encourage you all, that even if you do not understand why you are asked to do something in the dojo, that you can have faith that there is a reason for it.

Finally, I have really appreciated Mori Sensei's instruction and patience with me and give my heart felt thanks in his willingness to share his hard earned knowledge and skills with me. I would also like to thank all those who have trained with me as you have all helped me to develop my own skills, be you a black, brown, or white belt.

*Craig Sargent*

Well, I've had a pretty long break due to injuries, operations, and moving house twice, in the time since I last trained almost 20 months ago. There are many new faces, however the atmosphere and dedication to training had not changed.

What I lacked in fitness was made up with enthusiasm. It was great to be back, except for the soreness I experienced for the first month or so. Apart from Sensei's great training and Shuko's smiling welcome, there is a feeling of belonging. As I have moved far North I may have never returned had it not been for Richard constantly ringing and saying "When are you coming back?" I am glad he persisted as it is great to be back even though it can be a long drive if traffic backs up, as this is the best training dojo I have been associated with.



After only 3 months of being back at training, Sensei suggested it was time for me to try for my 3<sup>rd</sup> Dan, so after much thought and anxiety I decided to do the grading. After my nerves settled I actually was glad to have taken this big step. I was happy to learn that I had passed. I now look forward to growing into my grading. My special thanks to Richard for encouraging me to return, also to my uke Jason who made me look good.

*Frank Barletta*

## A bit of knowledge for Aikido

### **“Practice like live performing and perform like practicing”**

It was a cold winters day in December 1985 when I tried my first brown belt (Shokyu) grading test at Honbu dojo. Shinsa (grading test) at that time in Honbu dojo was truly nerve wracking because as many as: Master Gozo Shioda Kancho Sensei, Inoue Shihan, Takeno Shihan and Chida Shihan were all moving around the dojo checking examinees from various angles. The worst of all was that during both the Migi-hanmi Kamae and Hidari-hanmi Kamae, Kancho Sensei always came right in front of you and checked from the lowest position, toes, through knees, hips, arms, hands and at last of all he pierced your eyes. When you were forced to be in such an unnatural posture such as Kamae for quite a long moment, in an extremely nervous condition you almost lose your sense of balance and you were still glared at badly by Master! No one could stand in peace but just managed to stay standing.

The moment when Kancho Sensei stared straight into my eyes came during my Kamae posture at my first Shokyu grading. Then, I was not too sure what I meant to do; stare back to show my spirit but it could be seen as rude, but then refusing eye contact could be considered as weak spirit by evading Kancho Sensei's eyes. I hesitated a moment but decided to stare back severely hoping he would go to the next examinee sooner. Only one thing what was good was it gave me time to get better blood circulation in my feet that would help me to perform the techniques better while he was staring. In those days, no one was allowed to loosen their legs from the Seiza position during two - three hours Shinsa. As you never had a chance to shake your legs before your grading you usually had to start with numb feet or pins and needles in your feet. Anyway, looking back, the shinsa then, I think was very, very severe; shivering with the winter cold in just a gi (Japanese winter is not like Brisbane), having no chance to loosen your legs before your grading, being surrounded by four stern instructors, and still being stared by Master.

Well, there are quite a few people who say that they cannot enjoy Aikido because they have to go through two events, grading tests and demonstrations. I always reply to these complaints saying these events are a good opportunity to train your mental strength but I do also understand their feelings that intense strain and pressure is too stressful. Myself, I was extremely nervous by being stared at by Master during the grading test as I have written. Besides, when I demonstrated Aikido with some talking for the first time at the age of twenty-five I was so nervous for a week before the demo and kept mumbling frantically to remember what I wanted to say. I am a squib too.

However, the squib now does not get nervous any more at the demonstrations. I've got a knack now. When I need to talk to three hundred people in an audience, I don't talk to the three hundred people as it makes me feel uneasy but I talk to the person who is most enthusiastic to listen to me. Then this is just a usual conversation we make one by one but not one by three hundred. When I perform the techniques I cannot see the audience, speaking honestly, as I am a coward. What I can see is only my uke. If I describe it in a smarter way, because I have a complete concentration on my ukes and techniques the audience becomes nothing to do with me and therefore I don't become nervous. Since you don't need to talk for your grading tests or demonstrations like I do to explain Aikido verbally, you



don't need to worry about others but can focus on your partner, then I am quite sure that you don't feel stressed or nerve-breaking any more...Don't you agree?

I watched a Japanese TV talk show the other day. A musical actor who was the same age as me appeared on the show as a guest. His nickname is "Mr. Perfect". As the nickname tells he is the person who performs his show perfectly each time in a strictly professional way, imposing on him a severe daily training regime. I thought it would be very interesting to hear what he was going to say as everyone who has attained great proficiency possesses something extraordinary compared with others. After a bit of chat the interviewer asked him if he ever got nervous for his shows. He said "No." Then he said, "Because when I practice I practice as if it was the live show and I perform the show as if I was practicing." I thought it was a real witticism. The words he said sounded as if it was nothing, but it is not an easy thing to do at all. We may not be nervous if we can really follow out these words but doing so requires a deadly strict attitude towards oneself. Only a pro could do that, I thought. Ordinary people like us enjoy easy training and want a good performance just on the day we have to show. I am the same and these words made me think a lot over my attitude towards my daily training. I couldn't help myself grunting in admiring him who was truly the first-class professional.

Well, those who become nervous over gradings or demonstrations, how about following the witticism and train severely as if it is a live performance and enjoy gradings and demos as if it is training, like this top star.

OSU!

*Michiharu Mori*