

# NEWSLETTER



No.143 July 2007

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

## Report of June

New members 2

Total number of adults training 59

Total number of children training 74

## Results of Sogo Shinsa on 23<sup>rd</sup> June

Sandan	Eric Kwok	3 <sup>rd</sup> Kyu	Lawrence Monforte	4Y8 step	Brent Weston
Shodan	Chris Neucom		Francis Hollingworth	4Y5 step	Jason Williams
	Christopher Swinton	Jun-3 <sup>rd</sup> Kyu	Urs Battig	3Y12 step	Albert Lu
Jun-Shodan	Ryan Slavin	4 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	David Shepley	3Y10 step	Evan Chapman
1 <sup>st</sup> Kyu	Amy Hughes	5 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Megan Erikson	3Y8 step	Douglas Buchanan
	Helly Conroy		Wes Farrell	3Y1 step	Daniel McDonald
	Tom Bannah	7 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Marcel Yawiko	2Y10 step	Matt Carpenter
	Greg Scanlon	9 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Adam Sawyer	2Y7 step	Greg Dickenson
	Joseph Stuart		Gerry Kassman	2Y6 step	Michael Bannah
2 <sup>nd</sup> Kyu	Jamie Baker		Michael Peluso	S2 step	Aarjaun Burch
3 <sup>rd</sup> Kyu	Robert Austin	4Y9 step	Lee Stemm	S1 step	Koray Karanfilci

## Events in July

### 1. Getsurei Shinsa

♦Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~

♦Shinsa training starts from 21<sup>st</sup> Saturday.

### 2. This Month's Holiday

♦Dojo Holiday 30<sup>th</sup> Monday

## A bit of Knowledge for Aikido

### Annual Demonstration

My first demonstration of Aikido was at the Headquarters' annual demonstration when I was nineteen years old as a Senshusei student (one year intensive course with Riot Policemen and international instructor's course students) demonstrating Kihon-dosa Renzoku in front of an audience of three thousand. As may be expected of Senshusei, ten riot policemen and four applicants for uchi-deshi, the total of fourteen students, had to synchronise every movement with utmost attention, and I was very nervous.

In the following year, my first year of being an uchi-deshi, although I had just come back from India completing my task of instructing Indian Police, I was chosen to take eight ukes for my senior uchi-deshi Sensei's and that was simply because of my tall height that appealed to them to have a more showy demonstration. You know, when uke's body is longer shite looks better. They liked me very much for their own fame!

The demonstration of All Japan Yoshinkan Aikido which all the affiliated Yoshinkan dojo students gather happens only once a year. Everybody was looking forward to Master Gozo Shioda Sensei's demonstration of course and also the demonstrations by uchi-deshis that displayed the model techniques to provide them their training goals. They looked at us earnestly either with adoration or criticism. Under their curious eyes this youngest uchi-deshi who kept coming back to the mats to be uke for A Sensei straight after B Sensei and again and again for other Senseis caught the audiences' eyes. We usually received great comments only when we demonstrate good techniques being shite but I got lots of praise for taking beautiful ukes. However, I had to take uke for Takeno Sensei towards the very end of the demonstration. I totally lost my sense of balance, not knowing which way was up and down or right and left, being knocked down violently and hitting my head hard. Then, strangely enough, I got an even greater applause for not being unconscious but being up after the devastating demonstration. This was my debut at the demo being an uchi-deshi.

Around this time when I participated in the demonstration for the first time, the video became popular when each household was able to afford to own one. This was my second year after I left my home town in the countryside for the enormous city, Tokyo, aiming to become a professional Aikido-ka. As I was very proud of myself taking so many important ukes of senior Sensei's, I showed the video tape of my beautiful ukes to my family to give them some idea how hard I was training. My parents said a very short comment, "You've been beaten only..." To my great disappointment, my beautiful ukes appeared to be being completely beaten to my parents who did not know anything about Aikido. As a result, my image of being a weak man was firmly fixed within my family, including my grandmother, big brother, big sister, little bother and little sister. How shameful...

The demonstration that is fixed in my memory most rigidly is the 10<sup>th</sup> annual demo, not for the best but for the worst. It was a nightmare for me. As it was our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary demo I was very spirited and focused towards the demo. I prepared my body spending about one year prior to the demo placing additional exercises and strength training on myself to perform my best techniques suitable for our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



However, the problem started when ten of my Aikido students came from Japan. They came all over to Brisbane just to celebrate and participate in our demo staying in Brisbane only for two or three days, and most of them were leaving for Japan the very next day of the demo. I hadn't seen most of them for ages since I left Japan and thus, I wanted to spend my time with them as much as possible. As a result, we ended up staying out in a pub up to one or two in the morning after our training, drinking a lot with lots of chatting about Aikido, two days in a row just before the demo day. By the time I got to bed was usually after two thirty in the morning and I had to get up at five every morning due to my other task, holding a morning service for my religion. When I look back, it was just silly of me not thinking of the consequences.

When the demo day arrived, I was very tired, as you expected. I felt my body was so heavy and I had to drag my legs up the stairs of Somerville House to set up the mats many times, feeling as if I were an old man. I just hoped I would be ok by the time my demo time arrived around three in the afternoon. Unfortunately, life was not that easy and I had to start my demo with a very dull body and very cloudy brain from the exhaustion. The demo was so flat and boring that didn't display high energy, amazement or excitement and that reflected on the audience, no matter how hard I tried to lift it up.

A few days later, one of senior students who could not be happy with my demo knowing my ability asked Shuko, not me, what was wrong with me. So, she explained that my condition was no good having not enough sleep because I was out late with Japanese guests for two days in a row having lots of drinks. When he heard this he got bit irritated and looked sternly, muttering "taking beers for two days?" I am sure that he could not believe what I did, taking lots of beers just before the very important demonstration day. If I were his son I would've been beaten by his big arm like Popeye's to learn a lesson. Lucky, he was not my Dad!

But, the person who was most depressed by my poor demo was me, of course. I looked for my faults. I knew that my body condition was the main reason of my failure but I also felt there was something else I could improve too. The style of my demo is the same way as what Kancho Sensei (Master Gozo Shioda) used to do, demonstrating advanced Aikido skills with explanation. My demo at the 8<sup>th</sup> annual demo was the very first one I felt happy with and I decided to maintain the style. So, I did the same sort of demo at 9<sup>th</sup> and it was successful too. But by the 10<sup>th</sup>, the audience got bored looking at the demo which they felt they had seen before. I realised that I should not have stayed at the same, easy spot but had to keep advancing.

A modern convenience like videos and DVDs weren't there in old days. When masters demonstrated their incredible techniques once a year, people had to brand the scene on their minds, even if they were the same techniques displayed every year. Each technique was precious and they were desperate to remember each of them. People looked forward to the demo to have fresh amazement and admiration. But the modern times are different. People do watch the demo recorded on DVD hundreds of times as much as they like until they get bored, relaxing on the sofa at home. People do expect something different, something new and more exciting in the following year. This is a huge pressure that masters did not have in the old days but at the same time this is a great grindstone to develop our ability. It meant that the rival was always oneself and had to compete with oneself. Thanks to DVD, we are forced to advance our techniques every year.

So, my aim for this year's demo is performing better than the 11<sup>th</sup> annual demo, of course. As my demo at 10<sup>th</sup> was the worst and I regretted it so much, I made sure my demo was convincing for everyone last year. I was very satisfied with it and had wonderful comments. You may think I would've been relieved or got puffed up over my ability, but no. I started to feel the bigger pressure since the following day of the last demo knowing the next one was coming up in a year's time. I have to challenge myself last year to have a successful 12<sup>th</sup> demo.

Well, everyone whoever participated in the last year's demo, look at yourself from last year watching the DVD and try hard to beat yourself. People, who are going to participate in the demo for the first time, do your best to challenge yourself next year. Shall we all train hard to produce the best outcome on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August.

Osu!

**Michiharu Mori**