



No.153 May 2008

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

## Report of April

New members 5

Total number of adults training 64

Total number of children training 62

## Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 26<sup>th</sup> April

<u>Jun</u>	Helly Conroy	<u>3Y8 step</u>	Sam Gray	<u>S4 step</u>	Mark Coleman
<u>Shodan</u>	Tom Bannah	<u>2Y5 step</u>	Christopher Swinton		Francis Hollingworth
	Kris Anderson	<u>2Y4 step</u>	Alastair Wilkinson		Jamie Baker
<u>5<sup>th</sup> kyu</u>	Wade Lacey	<u>2Y3 step</u>	Aaron Stewart	<u>S3 step</u>	Lawrence Monforte
<u>8<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>		<u>2Y2 step</u>	Ryan Slavin	<u>S1 step</u>	Urs Battig
	Eagle Kao		Aarjaun Burch		David Shepley
<u>3Y11 step</u>					

## Events in May

### 1. Getsurei Shinsa

- ◆Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~
- ◆Shinsa training starts from 17<sup>th</sup> Saturday.

### 2. Children's Shinsa (grading tests)

- ◆Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> 10:00am~
- ◆Children need to be at the dojo by 9.30am.

### 3. This Month's Holiday

- ◆Labour Day 5<sup>th</sup> Monday
- ◆Dojo Holiday 26<sup>th</sup> Monday

## A bit of knowledge for Aikido

### Aiki-waza

Since I wrote about Kihon-dosa to explain how you can improve your Aikido skills in March newsletter, I felt I should write about the advanced Aikido world as an extension of all the basics.

Aiki-waza is the variety of techniques performed by using *Aiki-ryoku* (Aiki force produced by centred line power and focused power) that has no set forms or names. Gozo Shioda Kancho Sensei in his late life taught these Aiki-waza's which were his ultimate accomplished techniques to *uchi-deshi's* and black belts of the Headquarters in a special class called *Kuro-obi-kai* (black belts gathering.)

Not many people at that time saw or felt Kancho Sensei's Aiki-waza's any longer. As I am one of them who received/felt these ultimate Aikido techniques as an *uchi-deshi* I hope I can pass them on to my students through my Aikido techniques and I wish to preserve Kancho Sensei's so called god-like techniques here in Brisbane for future generations. In future, I would like the world to recognise that Gozo Shioda's Yoshinkan Aikido is living in Brisbane Australia.

When I saw Kancho Sensei's Aiki-waza for the first time it was completely beyond my understanding. It looked physically impossible. I enjoyed looking at it simply because my senior *uchi-deshi's* (Takeno Sensei and Chida Sensei) were screaming like little girls. Though it was beyond my understanding, I knew I would not be able to become a first-class Aikido expert without mastering these Aiki-waza's and I studied desperately to work out how these techniques were executed during the *Kuro-obi-kai* held once a week.

*Uchi-deshi's* life starts from taking up the *Senshusei* course (known as the riot policemen's course.) In the course, you learn nothing fancy, only *kihon-dosa's* and basic techniques repeated hundreds and thousands of times to construct an Aikido body. Personally, I felt that the life of an *uchi-deshi* was like remodelling the body to make an Aikido doll by putting it into an Aikido mould both physically and mentally for 24 hours a day.



Up to the level of Shodan or 2<sup>nd</sup>-dan, I trained so hard to gain speed and power aimed at achieving powerful Aikido but that path came to its limit because Aiki-waza was not about speed and power. Though the stage of training for speed and power, without thinking too much, at the level of lower-ranked-black-belts is very necessary, we do need to move on to the following stage, since Aikido is not about training only the body itself like other major sports but about deepening the proficiency.

I had to contemplate the principles and mechanism of each technique to figure out how and why it was working. This is the time that you can start enjoying Aikido more with better understanding of the relationship between *kihon-dosa*'s and techniques; one's own flow of force through the front toe, knee, hips and hands as you move, how to use the weight put on the front toe, how your own movement locks through *uke*'s body. This was around my 3<sup>rd</sup>-dan and my level of skills rose rapidly by understanding the mechanism of techniques clearly. But here, the techniques I am talking about are only basic and applied or Jiyu-waza style techniques. I hadn't unlocked the secret of Aiki-ryoku yet.

The next step-up came around the time when I took 4<sup>th</sup>-dan grading. I began to get the knack of how to unite my body and *uke*'s body either through his one or two handed grabs on my wrist(s) –*katate-mochi* and *ryote-mochi kokyū-nage*. When *uke* grabs my wrist with all his might his body becomes like one piece or a block, stronger power becomes a harder block. So, it is a matter of moving the block. But, because human bodies do have joints (wrists, elbows, and shoulders) and they are loose, the block is broken into pieces as soon as *shite* moves and that means the flow of *shite*'s power breaks at the first part of *uke*'s body where it is connected but does not run through to the *uke*'s trunk. Here, the experiences gained through repeating *kihon-dosa*'s and basic techniques hundreds and thousands of times gave me the sense and ability to lock all the joints of *uke* by adjusting the angle of my wrist at the point it had been grabbed and I was able to keep the *uke*'s body as one block. Once you can keep *uke*'s body in one piece or as a block it is now a matter of just dropping it down bending your knees and lowering your body straight down without losing the lock. The *uke* who was spending all of his might loses his fixed support and falls hard onto his face.

This was the start of my Aiki-waza. This *kokyū-nage* worked on any men who had physical power but I wondered if it would work on a female who did not have much power. So, one day before the general class at the Headquarters, I asked a uni female student to grab my hand as hard as possible to try out my technique. I was not confident yet and murmured to myself, "Wonder if it works..." The uni girl who heard my murmur lost the guard misjudging this young *uchi-deshi*'s ability. At that moment, I got my lock fixed on her wrist and dropped my knee straight down. My whole weight travelled into her body through her wrists and shoulders. Guess what happened. She dropped onto her face and slammed it hard onto the *tatami*-mats. When she got herself up, she was bleeding from her face. What an awful tragedy for a young, charming woman! The impact of my technique did not come to my attention but I was shocked at the scene of a young woman bleeding from her face because of me. Surely, I believed she was going to take her *ukemi* wearing a black belt and never expected her to fall onto her face as she was not a beginner. I had to be responsible for this incident which had made a scar on the face of a naïve girl. All thanks to this Aiki-waza I won a wife to take the blame of what I had done. Mastering Aiki-waza gave me the best partner for my life. How terrific Aikido is!



Although I reached the entrance of Aiki-waza world at my 4<sup>th</sup>-dan level I hit a deadlock after that stage. Because I was still one of the instructors of the Headquarters then, all the students there respected me highly and they were too obedient to my techniques. Anything I did worked on them and I lost the sense of fair judgement on my techniques to improve my skills. Here, my turning point arrived. I quit Headquarters on receiving my 5<sup>th</sup>-dan to leave for Australia to open my own dojo.

I threw away the name and fame of being the Headquarters' instructor and started as a nameless Aikido practitioner here in Brisbane. It was very challenging as no students really knew how to take *uke* properly but just received the techniques. If the technique did not work well enough *uke* would not move an inch and there was no fake techniques possible and everything was real. This circumstance polished my Aikido skills extremely well and besides, because the bodies of Aussies were so tough and heavy I had to rely on my centred line power absolutely. As you know, my body size is the average of Australian women and my physical strength is not strong enough to throw heavy Aussie men at all. This severe condition strengthened my centred line power so much, as otherwise I would have lost the job of being an Aikido teacher.

I felt quite comfortable to perform one on one Aiki-waza freely around the time of when I received 6<sup>th</sup>-dan in 2001; I was able to throw or restrain an *uke* in any direction I liked once I got any connection point(s) between me and *uke*. But nothing like what I can do now at all. My current Aiki-waza level has developed since our dojo's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2005. I always had the sense and feeling of the techniques, especially Aiki-wazas, which I received from Gozo Shioda Kancho Sensei which were quite clear in my memory. Although the sense and memory of techniques was always in my body I was never able to visualise them as I was not able to see them while I was receiving the techniques. Thanks to human technology, a DVD (Gozo Shioda; Aikido of Tenchi) was released in 2005 and I was being *uke* quite a lot in it. Now, by watching Kancho Sensei executing Aiki-waza on me while I had the memory of how it felt, clearly completed the image of those techniques for me. This completion of the image gave me the ability to do Aiki-waza on multiple *ukes*. I was able to unite the separate multiple forces into one onto my centred line. This ability opened my Aikido world dramatically.

By reading this article, you may think I am very confident of my Aikido skills. No, that's not right. I myself only half believe in my Aiki-waza whether I have really acquired the skills or not. This Aiki-waza is something so uncertain, not like the joints-locks which are very visible and concrete, that I may lose the sense suddenly, or the ability may disappear without a caution, if I do not stand on the mats everyday. But what I can say is that by devoting myself in practicing Aikido-related-movements everyday, without doing any other sports or martial arts deliberately that involve obstructive movements for Aikido, grew my centred line bigger and thicker. This well-grown, thicker centred line assures my Aikido ability.

At last, let me interpret the principle of Aiki-waza as much as I can try. But, I need to mention this first that the students wearing white belts who haven't felt Aiki-waza yet may not understand what I'm talking about, but hopefully black belts level students will get some hints out of my explanation. A long time ago when Gozo Shioda Kancho Sensei was still well, he had a TV interview and he let a reporter grab his chest hard. He pointed at the reporter's hand on his chest and said, "Your mind is entering into me and I shall return this." At the same time, he bent his knee a little and the reporter fell down on his



back cleanly. Listening to this comment, I thought how obscure his explanation was, not making any sense of it, and I had no idea what he meant. In the end, he was a genius and everything was just his sense and feeling.

I, who is not a genius but have worked hard to earn my present level as an ordinary person, should try to interpret his mysterious comment to figure out the principle of his technique. When *uke* holds *shite*'s body hard it produces a strong connection point. *Shite* unites *uke*'s centre balance and his centred line on the connection point and this makes *shite*'s and *uke*'s bodies into one block. This process is "Your mind is entering into me," by Kancho Sensei. Once you can unite *uke*'s body strongly with your centre line through the connection point, it is easy now, just a matter of moving your own body that moves *uke*'s body together naturally. This is the part, "I shall return your mind." Do you get it, readers? Maybe, I'm not interpreting it but making it more confusing.

So, I'll explain it in my words. When you master establishing a centre line in your body by practicing *Kihon-dosa*'s devotedly you can create an axis not only in your body but where your connection point is, being grabbed by *uke*. Once you set an axis between you and *uke*, you can either rotate it or use a vertical or horizontal motion to throw the *uke*, faster you move the axis, the harder the technique works on *uke*. The connection point can be anywhere in your body but where *uke* can put all his might; therefore the points are usually wrists, arms, elbows, shoulders, fingers, chest or belt where *uke* can grab tightly. Once you can create an axis between you and *uke*, one on one, you can also set an axis between you and multiple *ukes* by uniting each of the separated strength into one axis. Once you can set the axis, it is so easy after that, move it without losing it. This type of Aiki-waza is when you are grabbed.

Another type of Aiki-waza is; placing your hand on *uke*'s shoulder(s) or arm(s), even not a grab but just putting your hand(s) on is enough, or grab *uke*'s chest or belt, then uniting your centred line and *uke*'s centre of balance on the connection point and put your whole weight on the point (focused power). You can imagine this technique, by putting a small 68kg (my weight for example) weight iron ball on your shoulder towards your centre balance, you can do nothing but fall onto the ground. This sounds very simple by theory but how you focus your whole your weight onto a point is very difficult.

I've tried to explain the advanced Aikido techniques, Aiki-waza, in this article wishing to offer some hints for all of my students to achieve a higher level. However, this is my current explanation of my sense and I may explain it in a totally different way in future, I never know. What I can say in the end is that I could not achieve my current Aikido level without having my Brisbane Dojo students and my wife at my turning points. They are my invaluable teachers to me and for that reason I offer my deepest gratitude to you all. Thank you indeed.

Osu!

**Michiharu Mori**