



## Report of February

New members 7

Total number of adults training 56

Total number of children training 57

## Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 28<sup>th</sup> February

4 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Wayne Harris Jiro Sumitomo Oliver Bradshaw	8 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Ryan U Cabuang Choi, Sukchul	3Y1 step	Myles Frost
6 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Murray Booth	9 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Nicholas Korpela	2Y2 step	Francis Hollingworth
		4Y2 step	Lee Stemm	2Y1 step	Lawrence Monforte
				S5 step	Adam Sawyer
				S2 step	Kaido Mori

## Events in March

### 1. Sogo Shinsa

- ◆Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~
- ◆Shinsa training starts from 14<sup>th</sup> Saturday.

### 2. This Month's Holiday

- ◆Dojo's Holiday 30<sup>th</sup> March Monday

## Coffee Break

### One of my uchi-deshi days' episodes in Malta

People who have read "Angry White Pyjamas" always ask me if it was a true story. I cannot say either yes or no as it was written from the author's own perspective. He joined one year after I resigned from the Headquarters and I am pleased that I was not there while he was writing the book, as I am worried about how he would've written about me - though it might have been very interesting. Well, I would like to write about the uchi-deshi world just a little this time in my newsletter article.

In the uchi-deshi world just a year difference is absolutely fatal, not just for Aikido but for everything including our private lives. Senior uchi-deshis can have junior uchi-deshis at their beck and call for 24 hours.

A senior uchi-deshi had a habit of giving lectures to beginner uchi-deshis as he forced them to drink sake (Japanese alcohol) after daily classes at night time up to one or two in the morning. He said that there were no uchi-deshis who quit the dojo because of Aikido but did because they were fed up with all the other nasty elements of uchi-deshi life. Then, he loved saying, "I never quit, no matter what, as I love Aikido so much." I agreed that Aikido was so fascinating that severe and strict training could not be a reason to quit. But, listening to his stories, I had realised the reason all the other uchi-deshis left between him and me was HIM! Marathon of preaches every night and forced to listen to his bullying and boastful stories truly got me mentally and physically, for just a graduate of high school at the age of 18 -19. He was the biggest challenge for me to survive my uchi-deshi life to master Aikido.

This senior uchi-deshi was a very moody and temperamental person and the gap between being in a kind mood and a nasty mood was huge. He was very smart and sly and was very observant of small things. As he was quick to notice everything he was always annoyed at the stupidity of his junior uchi-deshis, and he gave them many sarcastic comments and a good telling-off. I was determined to overcome him to complete my uchi-deshi period. I simply had to focus on recognising things before he did and worked around before he got upset, and I always focused on reading his mind so I did not say the wrong things while he was in a bad mood.

It was about 3 to 4 years later around the time I thought that I sort of learnt how to harmonise with his character, he and I were sent to Malta with one Judo instructor and two Kendo instructors as part of cultural exchange program. Malta was the second foreign country I had visited after the trip to India at a young age and I was very excited. On the other hand, I was very nervous about travelling with HIM, thinking of 24 hours for 7 days with him was fearful and my ability to be in harmony with him was going to be challenging.

Well, the trip started in narrow economy seats in an airplane for as long as 25 hours. On my left seat my senior uchi-deshi was spreading himself freely and the Judo instructor was on my right side feeling sorry but could not hide his giant body. His humongous body did not fit within his seat but it



was violating my space. Can you just imagine how draining the trip was by having absolute mental stress on your left and physical pressure on your right for 25 hours in such a small area?

We finally arrived in Malta and I was released from both pressures. Though I was so worn out the beauty of the scenery in Malta overtook my exhaustion and the youthful excitement filled me up. I wished it was a trip with my girlfriend (Shuko, of course) but not with my nasty senior uchi-deshi. The faces of street and brick-built houses were the old European style and they were very exotic for Japanese. Many Christian churches were towering and so beautiful yet always having cannons on their exterior walls was very symbolic telling their history.

A meeting to explain the schedule during the stay was held at the Malta Cultural Exchange Association and we found out the first main event was a welcome party for us on the night. We went to a hotel to check in and went out again with two members from the Association (one was a middle-aged man and the other was a Mediterranean beauty) for a brief sightseeing. Whenever we were out my job became my senior's personal porter as well as a personal video cameraman to tape him with gorgeous scenery or him with beautiful people, and I wasn't even allowed to join in everyone's conversations.

When we all went in a café and while we were enjoying our drinks he abruptly murmured to me "hey!" under his breath. I wondered what it was and asked him. Then, he suddenly began abusing me in front of everyone saying, "You, such a useless thing! When I say 'hey' you should sense what it is and should reply with the current time." I was amazed at finding out such a new rule and said "Osu!" in a silent disgust. At the moment I shifted my eyes back to the video camera he said "hey!" again. Instantly, I answered the time as I had just learnt and then lifted my eyes up to see him, finding him with a cigarette in his mouth waiting to be lit. I failed again and he of course abused me even worse. Repeating this type of trouble all day was so depressing and I was feeling so down. I cursed him badly in my mind thinking "how I could bother with your emotion all day like your lover," but one word that always came out of my mouth was "Osu!"

The time went on and we went back to our hotel to prepare for the welcome party. I changed into a suit and when I was tying a necktie he again said something incomprehensible. "Mori, you are getting a cold, aren't you?" I replied "Yes???" thinking hard what he meant as I was very fine. "You have a cold!" his tone of the words got stronger this time. It sprang to my mind this time though I thought he's got to be kidding but answered him, "Yes, I've got a cold. I'll stay in my room tonight." Do you get it everyone? He walked around with a Mediterranean beauty all day and saw many incredibly beautiful women on the streets whom he could never meet in Japan. Consequently, he expected a chance of meeting more pretty girls at the party who might be interested in him. He did not wish to bring an extra guy who was young and good-looking (I did not say this personally) and was an absolute disturbance for him. What a tyrannical world the relationship of uchi-deshi was! Though I was so hungry I put myself into the bed and tried to sleep with my stomach rumbling through the night. On the very next day everybody except my senior in the tour group worried about my condition and I had to say "Thank you, thank you. I'm a lot better today."

You can guess how the rest of the trip went from just the first days episodes. Though Malta was so beautiful the trip itself contained no fun or enjoyable elements for me – I could not remember what I ate or how they tasted at all as I was focused on my senior's movements and words all the way along. He used to preach to me about the relationship of uchi-deshis at the night-time telling-off and it was so true that the apprentice uchi-deshi was a slave to his senior uchi-deshi. In addition, his favourite phrase after he got mad at me each time was, "You know, I'm telling you this all for your growth."

Well, there is nothing particular to mention about Aikido through this trip. I'm sorry if anyone was expecting to read about a fancy Aikido technique or thrilling street fights using Aikido. But, this was the reality of uchi-deshi life to be able to learn and master genuine Aikido. I hope you enjoyed having a glimpse of uchi-deshi life from this travel report.

OSU !

**Michiharu Mori**