

NEWSLETTER



No.167 July 2009

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Report of June

New members 7

Total number of adults training 70

Total number of children training 53

Results of Sogo Shinsa on 26th & 27th June

3rd Dan	Evan Chapman	4th Kyu	Choi, Sukchul	9th Kyu	Mark Beverstock
Shodan	Eagle Kao	6th Kyu	Brenton Bills		Robert Melvin
	Jamie Baker		Daniel Treanor		
	Dennies Delos Santos		Ricky Truong	3Y6 step	Matt Carpenter
	Urs Battig	7th Kyu	Simon Foley	2Y8 step	Aarjaun Burch
	Adam Sawyer	8th Kyu	Megan Preece	2Y4 step	Lawrence Monforte
1st Kyu	Julian Ladd		Richard McCabe		Francis Hollingworth
2nd Kyu	Matthew Ryan	9th Kyu	Emma Benson	2Y3 step	Greg Beerling
	Marek Coleman		Justin Scott	2Y2 step	Mark Coleman
3rd Kyu	Oliver Bradshaw		Dale Pangonilov	2Y1 step	Amy Hughes
	Jun-3rd Kyu		Jiro Sumitomo	S5 step	Kaido Mori
	Murray Booth	Peter Hills	S3 step	Kris Anderson	
	Ryan U Cabuang				

Events in July

1. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 17th 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 24th 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 25th 1:00pm~

2. This Month's Holiday

- Dojo's Holiday 27th Monday

A bit of knowledge for Aikido

Demo, my challenge

Now the June sogo shinsa has gone, our annual demonstration has come within the range. I guess the feeling towards the demo varies with individuals – some people are excited while others feel rather disturbed. I hope that everyone positively overcomes the individual challenges you may set for the demo and welcome the demo day to enjoy as our Aikido festival held only once a year. I believe that the day should be very meaningful for all the levels – people who have less than one years experience to more than five years training or even more than ten years.

You may think that I would never get nervous or anxious about the demo because I should be confident in my Aikido having been a professional sensei with twenty five years experience. That's a big misunderstanding if you think in that way. Every year I feel I am challenged and pushed to the verge of my ability, and though I sometimes feel a great achievement as if I reached the summit of a confronted mountain, but other times I feel I failed to reach the top of the mountain shedding bitter tears.

However, after a few years when I look back at this type of bitter-feeling-failed demo's I realise that they became the seeds of distinct progress in my Aikido since I reflect on the negative cause of the unsuccessful demo and deeply think of how to improve my training by changing my thoughts/ideas. On the other hand, when I am satisfied with my demo with great pleasure I struggle to find a way to improve my Aikido and get stuck at that level for several years. So, when your demo satisfies you then you can praise yourself for your hard work through the previous year and simply be happy, and even when your demo gives you big disappointment then you can take it as a great chance to progress your skill by leaps and bounds. In either way you can look forward to the demo coming on the 23rd August as there is nothing to lose but everything to gain.

Well, I shall write about my challenges and experiences in the demo's hoping that they will give you some ideas for setting your own goal for the annual demo. The most spectacular part of the demo is tasu-dori (techniques against multiple attackers), I think, and the tasu-dori of Master Gozo Shioda was a masterpiece –jumping up and down between people, he surely looked like a falcon, the symbol mark of Yoshinkan Aikido. He told the secret of tasu-dori really simply at one of the Headquarters' annual demos, "Assume there is a big rock falling on you. If you stay you will be squashed, so you should not be there. This is the theory of tasu-dori." Master said it so easily as if it was too natural, but ordinary people tend to freeze on the spot and receive the whole disaster. Even though Master's words were not enough for ordinary people like me to dissolve the secret of tasu-dori I had to study the theory using the words as a hint.



Generally tasu-dori is performed using only two or three ukes looking at any demonstrations including other styles but Master demonstrated around eight to ten ukes. Black belts who have practiced tasu-dori have experienced that when the number of uke increases even one more (one→two, two→three) you see a big difference and get trapped so easily. I, myself, never thought of performing tasu-dori against more than three ukes until I received an offer to perform a demo for a meant-to-be-major event called 'Dojo KO' on the Gold Coast back in 2006. The request was for me to demonstrate something that was spectacular to watch. So, I came up with the idea of four-man tasu-dori with each uke holding a bokken (wooden sword).

Well, performing in front of a big audience mainly from other martial arts you could not afford to fail by being stuck in the middle of four men. (I remember when my senior uchi-deshi 'C' took his 5th dan grading test at the Headquarters and I was his tasu-dori uke with a bokken. He was badly caught in the middle of three men and I actually kept cutting him at his back and shoulder from behind many times! How embarrassing it was in front of all the general students.) To make sure my tasu-dori was going to be fine I had to construct the proper theory of tasu-dori that had no chance to fail. I sat down on the mats and simulated four-man tasu-dori using tanto's as ukes. Then, I discovered a pattern/rhythm that occurs usually in the people's flow of the movements. The theory became clear in my head but I did not want to try out with my ukes since I did not wish to make the demo look fake by practicing beforehand. Therefore my first four-man tasu-dori was in the actual demo on the day. Honestly, it was scary but I also enjoyed the feeling of being challenged like having a real match. The result was reasonable considering the fact that the venue had such a small circular ring which prevented me moving freely. You know that you need more space when you are handling not one but four who keep coming back like zombies. In the real situation you can finish it off one by one onto the hard concrete but you cannot do it on the mats, unfortunately!

In the same year during the dojo demo in November I tried five-man tasu-dori as my challenge and this was the moment I had an abnormal experience that my visual field suddenly got broader and brighter, and each movement of five ukes got slower like in a slow motion mode. This demo became my turning point for tasu-dori that I grasped the knack in my body. Having five men attacking you and each person carrying about twenty kilos more than your weight, one mistake of handling an attack can be fatal losing the rhythm of uke's flow. Performing a demonstration gives us an unusual level of tension and stress and it drives us into the limit mentally and physically, and this is why a chance of developing or reaching the new world is hidden.

At the last year's 13th annual demonstration in August, I meant to show six-man tasu-dori at the end of my demo, that's how I planned it anyway. But just before my tasu-dori, I was showing aiki-waza having six ukes holding me from all the directions and I combined all the strength into one by neutralising individual power. Because this technique visually looks nothing difficult or too easy having not much movement though it is highly advanced in fact, I asked Jason W who had a much bigger body than mine to try the same thing. So he came forth and tried the technique having six men around him. He could not do it, as I planned, since this technique was one of the most advanced aiki-waza. After I successfully proved to the audience that the technique was not so easy as it looked by Jason's trial, then I shifted my demo to the tasu-dori thinking I had six ukes ready for me. But then, when they began surrounding me I realised there were seven men. Of course, as I did not ask Jason to leave he joined in! I was in confusion having a mild panic. I was prepared for six but never simulated seven in my head. You may think that if I can handle six people there is no difference with seven. That's very wrong! As I mentioned at the beginning of this article people who have experienced the tasu-dori will understand that one attacker more will give you a lot more difficulty and pressure, and the chance of getting caught raises a lot higher as the frequency and speed of attacks increase heaps more. I did not think I was ready for seven. But I could not ask Jason to leave due to my pride of being Sensei.

This is the greatness of the demo, the experiences we cannot get through in our daily training. Though I was not confident at all to manage seven-man tasu-dori it ended up as my best tasu-dori ever, I thought, by checking it on the DVD afterwards. But it means, now I am challenged how to overcome the best demo I felt, for this year's demo. After all, my rival is always myself. Well everyone, please be excited to welcome our 14th annual demonstration as our biggest festival for the year.

Osu!

Michiharu Mori