



September Report

New members 4

Total number of adults training 63

Total number of children training 50

Results of Sogo Shinsa on 26th September

Shodan	Robert Austin	6th Kyu	Jocelyn Fergusson	3Y7 step	Matt Carpenter
1st Kyu	Matthew Ryan Marek Coleman	7th Kyu	Emma Benson Mark Beverstock	2Y10 step	Michael Bannah Aarjaun Burch
2nd Kyu	Oliver Bradshaw Genevieve Sargent		Silverio Pangonilo Peter Hills		2Y8 step 2Y3 step
3rd Kyu	Wayne Harris	8th Kyu	Steve McKewin	2Y2 step	Helly Conroy Dennies Delos Santos
	Murray Booth Choi Sukchul	9th Kyu	Tomoko Urano	S5 step S4 step	Kris Anderson Mark Davies
5th Kyu	Brenton Bills	4Y3 step	Lee Stemm	S2 step	Julian Ladd

Events in October

1. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 16th 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 23rd 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 24th 1:00pm~

2. Hajime Class

- Saturday the 31st 1:00pm~
- Please note that we will have no regular classes on this day.

3. This Month's Holiday

- Dojo's Holiday 26th Monday

A bit of knowledge for Aikido

Hajime Training (Senshusei course style class)

On the 31st of this month we'll hold our annual Hajime class (Senshusei training, the class style trained by uchi-deshi and riot policeman.) Every year white belt beginners come to the counter to book their names for the class being encouraged by seniors, believing the class is going to be fun. Behind of the beginners I find seniors are smiling with glee. Seniors' advice, with grinning though, whenever they are questioned about the hajime class from beginners is "Put your name down anyway. It's an exciting, fun class," I hear. The words of seniors are not entirely true but I agree that it's worth experiencing at least once as a student of Yoshinkan Aikido.

Basically, Senshusei (specialised students) training is not the training for general students. When Yoshinkan Aikido was established it received a request to hold a special nine month course to train ten selected riot policemen every year. In addition to these ten riot policemen, Headquarters' students who wished to become an uchi-deshi (master's full time live-in student) had to take this course and only those who survived the nine months were eligible to be a Headquarters' instructor. The purpose of the course was not for enjoying Aikido like general students do but to build foundations to become a professional Aikido practitioner. Therefore the training style in Senshusei course was absolutely severe. Brisbane dojo holds this Senshusei style class only once a year to enable its students to have a glimpse of what severe training is like.

The contents of the class are quite simple. Firstly, half an hour of kihon-dosa's only to make the foundation of Yoshinkan aikido imprinting aikido movements into body. The next half an hour is used for simply repeating a technique as fast and correct as possible for hundreds times. The instructor of the class keeps calling "Hajime! (start)" at the timing of the fastest pair comes back to the kamae position and that's why this class got the nickname of 'hajime' class by overseas students. This training method is highly efficient to train the body to remember a technique to the instinct level and to react to an attack instinctively without a moment of thinking – though this training style is extremely exhausting. The last half an hour is spent as a muscle workout exercise; 200 push-ups, 500 koho-ukemis (backwards breakfalls), etc. The menu can change each day and its main purpose is strengthening the body parts necessary for strong techniques. Usually the class is held twice a day totalling about three hours a day for nine month in the Headquarters. The menu is almost mentally impossible to achieve if by oneself but by all the participants, ten riot policemen and a few uchi-deshi apprentices, uniting their minds through supporting each other makes spirits tough enough to survive the course.



All the participants approached the course with desperation because if a riot policeman dropped out he is fired from the police and if an uchi-deshi apprentice gives up he will never have another chance to become a professional aikido instructor. Yet, when everyone is so serious and desperate things go so funny sometimes.

I was in the 22nd Senshusei course (the current one is 45th) and our instructor was the most fearful man ever in Yoshinkan history whose official nickname was Razor T and the secret nickname was Yakuza T. We all checked his feelings through his facial expressions when he arrived at the dojo every morning and if he was in a bad mood we sunk into gloom as you would not know what to expect during the training when Yakuza was having a temper – we were already mentally stressed even before the class started. If we found him in a good mood we got the blues too as when he looked after the class happily he got all fired up and the class became extremely hard physically. In either way, we always had to suffer from the severe tension and pressure that T Shihan caused.

Among those days in summer time (summer in Japan is very humid, which makes sweat so much), we ran out of body fluid in the first sixty minutes (no water breaks of course) and our skin got so dry with only salt spewing in the last half an hour. My training partner for hajime techniques was a twenty-five year old guy being slightly plump from loving beer and he was very badly sweaty. When the day's technique was shomen-uchi or yokomen-uchi, whenever I blocked his strike his sweat flew in spray towards all over my face like spinning a soaked towel and you had to repeat this for more than half an hour which was mentally harder than anything. Disgusting!!!! Especially, when the technique was Kote-gaeshi uke's face was positioned right under the shite's face when they put the lock in the end and T Shihan often stopped us at that position to fix our postures one pair by one pair. Not sure T Shihan's did it on purpose or not but he spent quite some minutes longer than usual time fixing shite's way of locking uke's elbow and during these 3-4 minutes my partner's not-so-beautiful-man's sweat kept dripping straight to my face like a waterfall. You might think I could've turned my face but the highly tense atmosphere of the dojo did not allow me so. If I moved a part of my body unnecessarily for the technique, T Shihan would've scolded me in a burning fury. I simply had to persevere accepting the stream of oily sweats on my face and this was the moment I wanted to give up the course the most longing for my beautiful hometown! Although I am not a Mr. Clean I prefer to be clean. I never had any trouble accepting any sort of pain to my body but not an oily male's sweat on my face – might've been different if it was from an incredibly beautiful woman?

After the class while we were resting in the lounge we yelled at each other with laughs how much yucky, disgusting sweat we had to drink from each others' partners. The time in the lounge after the class was a moment we enjoyed and cherished being relieved from the heavy pressure of training and T Shihan. Spending as long as nine months in this kind of environment, I hear that the group of ten riot policemen developed a very close unity even after they went back to the police department. "The bond of fellow pupils is stronger than the blood relations," was said in old days. The pupils who trained in the same dojo (in the same style having a same master) never betrayed each other no matter what, understanding each other deeply and building genuine trust between pupils even stronger than that of family members.

I feel that the bond of Brisbane dojo's students is quite strong even from just general training but we can make an even a tougher bond through achieving together this exceptionally strict training, Hajime class. Then, we can enjoy our hiriki-no-yosei (3) training together after the class, carrying stubbies to one's mouth repeatedly. I am looking forward to it greatly.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori