

NEWSLETTER



No. 196 December 2011

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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November Report						
New members 7		Total number of adults training 61		Total number of teens & children training 45		
Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 18th & 19th November						
4th Kyu	Mackenzie Lange	8th Kyu	Luca Fiori	4Y6 step Matthew Watson		
7th Kyu	Dean Jones	9th Kyu	Darssan Balasingam	3Y6 step Ryan Slavin		
	John Rolfe		Lu Jiang	2Y4 step Murray Booth		
	Joshua Rolfe	Andrea Troncoso Salas	S2 step Justin Charell			
8th Kyu	Majid Momeny	5Y2 step	Brent Weston	S1 step Mai Bui Cameron Blake		
Events in December						
1. Sogo Shinsa						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training starts, Friday 2nd 7:15pm~ • Steps, Friday 16th 7:15pm~ • Shinsa, Saturday 17th 1:00pm~ 						
2. Children and Teens Class Holiday through X'mas and New Year's Day						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No children & Teens' class will be held during school holidays. The last day of this year's kids class is on the 8th December Thursday. The first class in the New Year for Kids class is on 28th January Saturday and Teens class is on 25th January Wednesday. 						
3. This Month's Holiday of Adults' class						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦The dojo is closed from 24th to 27th, and is open on 28th & 29th, and is closed again between 30th -1st of January. 						
◆DECEMBER & JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2012 YEARLY PLAN

JANUARY	28 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
FEBRUARY	25 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
MARCH	24 th	Saturday	Sogo Shinsa
APRIL	6 th – 9 th	4 days	Easter Holiday
	28 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
MAY	26 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
JUNE	30 th	Saturday	Sogo Shinsa
JULY	28 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
AUGUST	26 th	Sunday	17th Annual Demonstration
			No Getsurei Shinsa
SEPTEMBER	22 nd	Saturday	Sogo Shinsa
OCTOBER	20 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
	27 th	Saturday	Senshusei (Hajime) Class
NOVEMBER	17 th	Saturday	Getsurei Shinsa
	24 th	Saturday	Children & Teens' Special Event Special Class & Demonstration
DECEMBER	15 th	Saturday	Sogo Shinsa



Coffee Break

Master Gozo Shioda

I deeply appreciate how lucky I was to be an uchi-deshi of Master Gozo Shioda as my uchi-deshi life under him was truly valuable.

Actually, I did not know about him before I joined Yoshinkan even though he already held the highest acknowledgments as being a Japanese martial art master for his godlike technique. But when you did not know his fame or background he looked to be just an ordinary, weak and withered man. The reason I joined Yoshinkan Headquarters in preference to the other styles was because Yoshinkan offered "Senshusei-geiko (known as the Riot policemen's course or Hajime class)" which was famous for its extremely severe training - it was not because of Master Gozo Shioda as I did not know who or what he was.

There were two top senior uchi-deshis (Sensei's) at the Headquarters when I joined. Both of them were around forty and it was the prime age where they had a great balance of maturity and youth (not being old) physically and intellectually. So, I assessed that they were the top Aikido-ka in Yoshinkan out of all the practitioners throughout the country including the Master as well.

The first time I saw the old withered man perform a technique was at the Kuroobi-kai (once a week of black belts only class taken by the Master) and I was truly astonished to see those two top uchi-deshis were beaten by him as if they were babies. I thought that the old man retired ages ago and visited the Headquarters just to kill time. No, that was very wrong. He was an absolutely active Aikido-ka who had the highest level of Aikido techniques in power, speed and effect. It is hard to explain how strong he was but I can explain in this way. Riot policemen held the black belts in other martial arts and they were very well trained to fight for real. They were big and tough. But they had no chance against those top Yoshinkan Sensei's and the difference in their abilities of fighting was very obvious. Then, these two horrifying men had no match for the old man and they could not stop themselves from screaming like a child when they were pinned and locked. It was absolutely amazing to observe with my young eyes.

The boxing coach I was learning from at my high school used to be strong when he was young but he became an ordinary middle-aged man with a jelly-belly and was hardly able to jog anymore. He was like many sports coaches who had lots of knowledge in particular sports and used to be good at it but lost the real ability to play as they got older. Masters in martial arts seem different and I never forget my amusement in seeing the reality that an old man over seventy was undoubtedly powerful. We, riot policemen and I, whispered to each other watching the top two instructors screaming in front of us, "The real master of a martial art truly exists in this modern world. Well, there might be more masters of ancient martial arts in Japan. We should be careful with old men. Let's offer our seats to them nicely." You know, you see unbelievable great masters of martial arts in movies and comics and think, "No, it's not real." Wrong! I saw one in reality with my eyes open. Well, we should be careful not to treat any old men disrespectfully when we travel around the world, especially in Asian countries, never know.

Well, I cannot write enough of how amazing his techniques were but I would like to share some episodes about what kind of person he was. He was known as a very charming, mischievous and innocent person. The audience all got very attracted by his innocent smiles and laughs as he expressed his enjoyment so happily in locking and throwing his students like a small child got a wonderful toy to play with. You know when you see a child is smiling and laughing joyously you feel so happy too by watching him/her. It was the same that the audience naturally got happier by seeing an old, wrinkled, small man played around with his big friends so brightly. I have never seen any other old man as charming and attractive as he was.

One episode shows how childish he was. Being his driver was the uchi-deshi's job which we had to share, though I never needed to do as I had no experience in driving then. All the uchi-deshis mentioned the same trouble they had from the Master. The first priority of being his driver was not about driving him safely but driving in the way he was happy with was the main thing. As an uchi-deshi drives, he starts jiggling his legs impatiently and that meant he was not happy. He never liked other cars running in front of him and he thundered out, "Take over!" whenever he thought it was good timing to do so. If his driver missed it then he got very grumpy. He was like a child who had to win the first prize all the time. He kept grumbling over and over for a week how his uchi-deshi was not skilled at driving when he could not win the



race (?). I got alerted being a new uchi-deshi on how careful I had to behave to be sure to satisfy my Master after hearing all the failure stories from my seniors.

Since the Shioda family and the Yoshinkan Headquarters had good connections with public people and organisations we held parties many times through the year. Master Gozo Shioda was friendly and sociable, not like other martial arts masters who were more closed and serious, and he walked around at the party venue talking to anybody he saw in a cheerful manner. It was great to see my Master was so humble and open to anyone but the trouble began when the entertainment time started.

It is very common to have singing at the parties and once someone started singing my Master started to dance to it! His dance was very funky moving his hands, hips and legs oddly as people surrounded him clapping their hands to encourage his show. For me it was the biggest culture shock to see an old man dancing funny as I was brought up in such a serious family and I never heard a joke from my grandfather. As I watched wincingly my Master danced, to my surprise, he approached me closer. He held out his hand to me as if a gentleman asked a lady to dance with him. I had to give my hand to him and he pulled me into his dancing - now more like a waltz, to the right to the left leading my body to harmonise with his movements. The spectators at the party got excited with cheers and hoots, and at that moment he stepped sideways widely in a quick motion. As I followed his step he swept my leg that was a Judo technique with Aikido timing. My body flew in the air, flipped over and landed heavily on the floor. The technique was so beautiful that I did not know I was thrown but I was flat on the floor before I realised. The whole audience gave him great applause and he was in triumph. He was such a cheeky, mischievous old man whom you could hardly find in the real world.

He also had his favourite song for his performance at the parties. It was a famous children's song called 'Momotaro.' It is about a brave boy's story who was born from a peach and he wiped out all ogres in his village that were troubling the villagers. The old, withered man over seventy still loved this hero story. He adored the hero of justice who had absolute power to beat up bad guys and evils. When the Master was a young man around the time after the World War II, the American soldiers who got intoxicated with their victory behaved rudely violently and lawlessly in Japan. Police had no authority over them and he had to become a hero to knock them out using his Aikido fighting.

Well, his boy-like heart loved the hero song. Once the party hit the peak, uchi-deshis began singing 'Momotaro' having all the other participants clapping their hands with the beat. Then the Master would stand up and start dancing again to the beat. The story in the song finishes explaining the boy's background and now he arrives at the ogres' island. "An ogre attacks Momotaro from behind," the song goes and my senior uchi-deshi hits my back, "Now!" So, it was the youngest uchi-deshi's job to follow the story in the reality. I had to dash at Master to attack from his back and now the song sang, "Beat up the ogre from the back with Aiki-nage!" As soon as I touched him he bounced me off forward turning his back with the force. The technique has no mercy even though the venue had the concrete floor but he was the hero to beat up the evil. As I hit the ground very hard I had to listen to the next phrase. It went on, "Give Irimi-zuki to the ogre from the front," and I rushed myself to get up from the floor attacking him again. Of course, Irimi-zuki got me a clear hit and I thudded heavily on my back. Now the audience was so happy with the Master's great performance giving him the loudest applause. He was at the height of his satisfaction while his uchi-deshi had to risk his life even outside the dojo. People just loved his innocent and cheeky character so much though they did not realise there was selfless sacrifice from his young uchi-deshis behind the scenes...

The founder of Yoshinkan Aikido was very strict and severe on techniques but he was such a cheerful, broad-minded, charming and beloved person. This is the honest expression of him from the eyes of his uchi-deshi who served him closely. I thought you, who study his art, would be interested to know more about him. I hope you enjoyed reading the article and felt him closer to you.

Osu!

Michiharu Mori