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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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## December Report

New members 1

Total number of adults training 56

## Results of Sogo Shinsa on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December

<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Kyu</b>	Matt Hede	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Vladimir Roudakov	<b>4Y5 step</b>	Matt Carpenter
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Dominic Hogan		Janna Malikova	<b>3Y7 step</b>	Ryan Slavin
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Vinicius Fernandez		Michelle Yeh	<b>2Y3 step</b>	Peter Hills
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Kyu</b>	Dean Jones		Lu Jiang	<b>S3 step</b>	Justin Charell
	Sunny Yeh	Andrea Troncoso Salas	<b>S2 step</b>	Cameron Blake Mai Bui	
	Vincent Yeh		<b>S1 step</b>	Joel Delaney	
	Joshua Rolfe				
	Darssan Balasingam	<b>5Y3 step</b>	Brent Weston		
		<b>4Y7 step</b>	Matthew Watson		

## Events in January

### 1. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 27<sup>th</sup> 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~

### 2. This Month's Holiday of Adults' class

- Australia Day – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>
- Dojo's Holiday – Monday 30<sup>th</sup>

## **JOURNEY TO JAPAN – by Francis Hollingworth** **OCTOBER 2011**

This journey to Japan was participated in by Michael Bannah, Adam Sawyer and Francis Hollingworth.

Our journey commenced on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2011 when we departed the Gold Coast Airport for the flight to Japan. Prior to this departure we were happily sitting at the airport waiting for boarding when we had our first humorous moment (at least humorous for Michael and myself), when Adam was checking his departure time from Japan back to Australia on 1<sup>st</sup> November. The humorous part was when I pointed out that his return flight details were actually for the 22<sup>nd</sup> November and not the 1<sup>st</sup>. Needless to say there was a sudden panic from Adam as we were only 20 minutes from boarding, needless to also say Michael and I found this to be hilarious and could not stop laughing for the next 10 minutes. The situation was sorted out before we departed, but did not stop Michael and myself from having a running joke for the next week with a periodical comment of 'enjoy the next month mate', or 'did you want help looking for work before we left'. All jokes aside, it did make for an interesting start to the trip and Adam, sorry but this was funny.

Once we arrived the tone of the journey was set pretty much straight away as we checked into the hotel in Shinjuku, then had some dinner followed by a night of drinking and venturing around Shinjuku. It was an interesting night of exploring and showing some of the, hmmm let's just say interesting parts of Shinjuku (Kabukicho) to Michael. Although for those who have been to this area it has changed quite a lot in the last 12 months, they have in some ways actually made the area look cleaner, however, the increase in the amount of non-Japanese guys hassling and haggling westerners to go into bars is very prominent. Last year you could actually walk along the main road



before entering Kabukicho area, now they are waiting for you before you even cross the main road from Shinjuku station. But the advice to anyone heading over is simple, ignore them, no matter how pushy they get or how cheap their offer is for drinks, because once you're in the bar the price will suddenly change and there will be sudden extra charges that if not paid, you'll not be getting out. Luckily I learnt this many years ago whilst there with the military.

After this first night out we all headed to the Honbu dojo at about 1pm the next day for the afternoon class with Sonoda Sensei. Both Michael and Adam were quick to realise that the mats at the Honbu are extremely hard compared to those at the Brisbane dojo. We all ended with an interesting class comprising of about 90% suwari-waza work. After this class was when some interesting events started.

At first some of the black belts including Shodans, Nidans, even a couple of Sandans were partaking in jiyu waza practice when Michael was asked to join in, Michael being Michael jumped at the chance. Michael at first played the part of a good uke, even if they were trying to hurt him (with no success). Then it was Michael's turn, unfortunately they were not quite up to the same level and for those that know Michael, he was actually only at about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  pace. As they were aware that we were students of Mori Sensei they tried with every attack to either attack with extreme aggression or grab extremely hard and not let go, unfortunately this just made it easier for Michael to actually throw them, not to mention it also meant they would hit the mats a lot harder. The only exception was Uchikawa (Senior Uchi Deshi), although he really got hit hard by a sudori that he wasn't ready for, then came up and literally ran into an iriminzuki, his ukemi was really good and even though you could see it hurt him, he got up as though nothing happened and continued, pretty much as a good Uchi Deshi should be able to.

Some of the others really had serious trouble getting up and it wasn't as though Michael was trying to hurt them, they just weren't up to it. (But it did make for great viewing). The only issue with this was that we became very big targets in all the other classes we attended at the Honbu Dojo, but this was ok as there wasn't much success in their efforts, this I believe we owe to the great training that we receive at the Brisbane Dojo. This class was actually only a couple of days later, on Tuesday night. The class was with Chino Sensei, Chino's way of teaching is not always for everyone. What I mean by this, is that he will demonstrate, then you will train for about 2 minutes, then he stops and shows it again 2 minutes later, then pretty much this just happens for the whole class, so not really for everyone, so again shows why we are lucky to receive the type of training that we do.

On the Wednesday night of the first week we went to Renshinkai Honbu Dojo to train, for those who are not aware Renshinkai Aikido was formed by Chida Shihan, who used to be the head of Yoshinkan. They were very welcoming, even to the point of offering to have someone meet us at the train station and escort us to the dojo. The first night of training here was with Tsuganazawa Sensei who has actually visited Brisbane Dojo quite a few years ago. We were all quick to realise that this was going to be very different, not bad, just different. I actually really enjoyed this difference, as it gave me another chance to learn something new and be able to relate it back to what/how we are taught at the Brisbane Dojo. I have mentioned this before in a past newsletter that I believe seeing and especially taking part in classes from other styles and dojo's helps to advance your own understanding and skill level within Aikido. The next day we trained again at Renshinkai Honbu, this time it was a kenshu class taken by Chida Shihan, this was awesome as it ended up being a near one on one class, as it was just the three of us, one of Chida's English speaking student (Laurence) from America and Chida Shihan. This definitely gave us a new perspective of finding your centre.

On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October we attended the All Japan Yoshinkan Aikido Demonstration, same as last year's except no international students/dojo's this year due to the earthquake events earlier in the year. Again it was interesting to see the level of training and abilities from other dojos. In some cases it was ok and in others not so interesting. Michael got to see a demonstration by Takeno



Shihan that he is well known for, i.e. his ukes got hurt. The female uke was the first, she actually couldn't stand and had to crawl off the mats, the male uke barely made it through also. Unfortunately the female uke ended up in an ambulance ten minutes later and was taken to hospital. This didn't really impress us much and Michael found it quite sickening, which we totally agreed with, but it's not the first time this has happened and I believe it probably won't be the last.

After the demonstration we were having a few drinks with everyone before leaving when I went up to talk to Jim Dawes (Ando Sensei's) Uchi Deshi. As I was talking to him Ando Sensei came over and invited us to dinner, which was also his 55<sup>th</sup> birthday dinner. Naturally we went (not something you really say no to), on the way out I got a quick chance to catch up with Teppei (Senior Uchi deshi at Honbu) he only just arrived back two days before from the Ukraine and Poland with Soke Shioda. This was a little funny, as I introduced Michael to him and his first response was "so you're the one who's been hurting our black belts", to know Teppei it was said in jest. But it did show that Michael had definitely made a mark on the black belts at the Honbu Dojo. We then went to dinner, and boy what a dinner, real Japanese style. The easiest way to describe the night would be to say, if you could get half way through your glass before someone filled it, then you were doing really well, so really we only had one glass all night. Only problem was, that the glass never got emptied.

This made for an interesting next day as we had an invitation to train at Sonoda Sensei's dojo by Sonoda Sensei and then to have dinner afterwards. We made it, and the training was good, learnt some interesting things. Then afterwards we all went to dinner, I say we as Tomoko, who started Aikido in Brisbane a couple years ago also came with us as she is now training at the Honbu. Sonoda took us to a very local restaurant that could be best described as a small family local restaurant. Have to say the food was awesome, very different to what you'd find in mainstream restaurants and again there was quite a bit of liquid consumed, which in our case was probably only topping us up from the night before.

The next day being Monday we headed off again to train with Chida Sensei, this time was at a different location then their Honbu, so we headed off to the stations, luckily again they actually had someone meet us at the station to escort us to the class. Again, another very interesting and extremely detailed class that both Michael and I enjoyed. After this we headed back to the hotel to try and get some rest from the previous three days of near nonstop activities as we still had one more class on Tuesday night at the Honbu Dojo and this last class we were also going to be training with Soichiro. For those who are not aware of who Soichiro is, he lived here in Brisbane at the dojo about 10 years ago and last visited with his wife and first child about four years ago.

This last class was by far the best class we attended, mostly because of Soichiro being there. It was even a little funny at times as there were no students in this class that knew Soichiro except Michael and myself, so there was quite a few Honbu students that once he started to move were very interested in trying to look at his belt to see who he was. Have to say, Soichiro definitely has not lost any speed, which made it even more interesting for Michael and myself. At the end of the class we stayed behind for a while watching some of the black belts practise jiyu waza, wasn't all that interesting until Soichiro and Michael started, that literally got everyone's attention and by the end had everyone applauding.

After this we left to have something to eat and a couple of drinks, so we headed to what Michael and I ended up calling our local. The bar staff at this place in Shinjuku were very much getting use to seeing Michael and myself there eating and more so, drinking. It was great just sitting eating, drinking and catching up with Soichiro. However, we did have to cut the night a little short as Soichiro needed to catch the last train home, this was nearly 1am so we were all pretty well intoxicated by then, some more than others. This was quite funny trying to watch each other and Soichiro stagger to the station, but we did make it in time.

# NEWSLETTER



The next few days, which were also our last days in Japan, were spent pretty much doing the touristy things. The only other event of the final days was dinner for my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday on the Thursday, this night was spent with Tomoko, Teppei, Michael and of course myself. The night was almost uneventful, pretty much just dinner and drinking, except for dinner being sharply interrupted by what we found out the next day to be a 4.9 earthquake. This was not the first time for Tomoko, Teppei or myself, but it was the first time Michael had actually got to experience one. It is quite funny to see how majority of the Japanese people just stop wait for the earthquake to finish then continue on as though nothing happened

In summary it was a great trip with friends with me and friends in Japan. I always enjoy visiting Japan and would recommend it to anyone to at least go there once to not only experience the sites but experience the difference in training. Again with all going to plan (i.e. my shoulder actually getting better in time) I will be heading over again late next year, so if anyone wants to come over then let me know and start saving. I can help with organising if need be and if there is enough of us we may even be able to get some discounts.

OSU!!!

**Francis Hollingworth**