

NEWSLETTER



No.210 February 2013

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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January Report

New members 5

Total number of adults training 56

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 25th & 26th January

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 6 th Kyu | Kerry Nicholson | 5Y7 step | Brent Weston | 2Y8 step | Peter Hills |
| | Justin Roopalu | 4Y5 step | Sam Gray | 2Y3 step | Cameron Blake |
| 8 th Kyu | Sean Keogh | 4Y1 step | Lawrence Monforte | S5 step | Greg Smith |
| | | 3Y4 step | Kaido Mori | S1 step | Darsy Darssan Lisa Milne |

Events in February

1. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 15th 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 22nd 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 23rd 1:00pm~

2. This Month's Holiday of Adults' class

- Dojo's Holiday – Monday 25th

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

Shodan

It has taken me over 10 years to get to my shodan grading! Over this time I've obviously not been consistently training and had about a 8 year break for various reasons. I know there are others at the dojo that have similar stories and I believe what makes this special is not the fact that we stopped but the fact that we came back!

While I had my 8 year break the dojo was a place that I would often think about and promised myself that I would eventually return. I often think why, and I believe Sensei summed it up in his December newsletter. He talked about the evolution of the Brisbane dojo; how the students pushed him to evolve and develop new skills, how we as his students are teaching him as much as he is teaching us and how we are all better Aikido partitioners for having each other.

I believe this is, in a word, spirit.

The spirit to evolve, the spirit to share, the spirit to become better people, the spirit of working together, the spirit to understand that this is a never ending journey of discovery. It's the spirit of Aikido.

I believe this is why I came back and why I continue to train. I believe that training my Aikido spirit will help me evolve my Aikido skills, but it will –just as much – help me evolve as a person.

I appreciate the subtleties of what I learn from everyone that I train with and the time people are willing to spend with me to help me evolve. But particularly I have to thank Sensei, Shuko and Kaido for welcoming us all into their family and sharing the skill and spirit they have spent most of their lives developing.

OSU

Joel Delaney





Sandan

As I sit at the computer thinking of the contents of which to fill this article, I am conscious that people are busy, their time valuable and that their time reading should be insightful; they should come away from their investment of time with some knowledge that will improve their lives or training in some way... Otherwise, why read? Therefore I find myself asking, 'what is it that I would like to read about if I was the reader? Or, what is it that I would like to take away from this?' As a result, I won't write on Aikido technique or the like as I am still travelling that journey myself, stumbling at many potholes in the road along the way; and Sensei is really the only authority on this for us! Having said this however, I will write on my feelings, realizations and struggles leading up to 3rd Dan that many others may also be experiencing and wondering if it is just them. Through this I hope I can alleviate some unnecessary stress or anxiety that may be hindering your training and help you to progress at a faster rate than myself. Having said this however, I apologize ahead of time if I digress too much and waffle-on in an overly theoretical and abstract manner.

At the end of 2011 my family and I moved to the Sunshine Coast. Although the lifestyle is great, the move meant a change of work and a fear that training is going to suffer as a result. Training did suffer due to the amount of time needed to establish myself in a new job, the physical distance we now lived from the dojo and striking the work/training/family balance. Consequently, I worried that I would lose all those years of training through a less frequent training schedule - stupid as it may sound, change always seems to open the door to your insecurities and self-doubt. Additionally, I scheduled a knee operation to happen in the middle of 2012. Nonetheless, as I am always told - to which I hardly ever listen, to my detriment - 'every cloud has a silver lining'. So now I will move us from the oppressive gloominess of this cloud of change, which should have been bright and positive, out into the luminescence of the 'silver lining'.

Firstly, I will deal with my concern over lost progress due to the lessened training schedule. As the weeks rolled on through 2012 and the training in the dojo was much less than in the past I was left feeling that my Aikido ability was regressing. As a result I found that I needed a way to maintain the 'feeling' or sensitivity that you gain over time training in Aikido - this perhaps is the key to what we talk about in the dojo as 'harmony' and the way towards the ultimate level of Aikido as demonstrated by Sensei: the ever elusive 'Aikiwaza'. I managed to find two strategies that work for me, permitting me the capability to keep what I currently had whilst providing the opportunity to progress. They work in tandem. The first strategy is an **Increased attention to intensity through fluidity**; a focus on attention to detail without compromising speed of technique delivery - i.e. less time 'over-thinking' and breaking down individual techniques when on the mats and more time feeling, just feeling. The other strategy is the **cognitive application of Aikido principles to everyday life situations**- always keeping Aikido in my mind where possible off the mats. A little more time viewing certain Yoshinkan practitioners on YouTube always helps keep it in mind too!

The 'increased attention to intensity through fluidity' is simply economizing our training time - getting more out of the time you have on the mats. When on the mats we often fall into the trap of statically analyzing and discussing every aspect of our technique in the pursuit of perfection without feeling the technique as one movement, response or solution to a potential threat/problem (we get so rapt up in ourselves as Shite forgetting that without Uke we would not even need to move). This I have found is detrimental to my training for a few reasons. The main reasons being that constant ('constant' is the operative word here) pauses, stoppages and adjustments (which are not given naturally in any fluid situation) throughout a

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technique takes time away from actively and fluidly training and prohibits my ability to 'feel' Uke and the force he/she is providing, the force I am trying to direct/control. This also leads us to think that each technique is a carbon copy of the one that came before and those that will follow, i.e. each shomen uchi ikkajo osae ichi you have ever done will be exactly the same as those in the future. This I have found is a false and misleading sentiment and can lead to an 'auto-pilot' type attitude void of any feeling. Each instance on the mat can be paralleled to the world in which we live. The world is not perfect and we do not live in a vacuum. Therefore, we need to accept that each attack, each moment on the mat is unique and can't always be preconceived or reproduced. As the world throws similar, yet uniquely different, problems at us on a daily basis, we apply the experience we have to these novel, yet familiar, situations all the while taking into account the idiosyncratic nature of problems, naturally adjusting ourselves to accommodate and relying on our instinct and reactive impulses to supply us with appropriate solutions. This is the same when we consider the different body shapes of differing Ukes, their differing speeds, and differing manner in which they may attack. However, as our responses to daily challenges are not always perfect, neither are our techniques. Now I am not suggesting we take a mediocre attitude to our training, or that near enough is good enough. I am merely suggesting that one of the difficulties that I have found most challenging to accept is that it is OK (please correct me Sensei if you disagree) to not do exactly the same technique, exactly the same way against differing Ukes at differing times. In other words, its OK that your shomen irimi nage will differ between Ukes and even between attacks by the same Uke. But the key, for me, has been to accept this and allow myself to try to react instinctively more than in a preconceived manner - with more attention to an 'intense fluidity with an appropriate and acceptable end result - the technique is effective!

In the second point, that has aided me to keep training when I am not at the Dojo, is the 'cognitive application of Aikido principles to everyday situations'. When we try to keep aikido in the forefront of our minds, opportunities to apply aikido principles to everyday situations amazingly seem more frequent. An easy example of this might be to apply Aikido principles to a shopping trolley full of groceries at the supermarket to control its momentum much the way you might move in a katate-mochi jyu waza. This type of thing has really helped me to keep Aikido in the forefront of my mind in the absence of training and maintain the 'feeling' of Aikido. Through this I hope that one day I can become sensitive enough to fully understand 'Aikiwaza' along the lines that is taught to us by Sensei.

Again, I apologize if I have waffled on in an overly abstract manner. But my intention was simply to give you all an insight into what's going on behind my eyes and hopefully help others in the Dojo to progress faster than I have, as we are truly blessed to be able to train in such a collaborative environment free of egos. For this I thank Sensei and Shuko san for establishing such a first class Dojo and fostering such a magnificently positive and enjoyable place to improve and enrich our lives through the study of Aikido. Also, a big thank you to Lawrence for all his help leading up to 3rd Dan - you walk well in Sensei's shoes mate! And to everyone else that has helped me over the years of training. Thank you for your patience and time!

Osu!

Ryan Slavin