

NEWSLETTER



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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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March Report

New members 3

Total number of adults training 56

Total number of children training 57

Results of SogoShinsa on 22nd & 23rd February

Shodan	Greg Smith Matt Hede	4th Kyu	Michelle Yeh Vincent Yeh	5Y9 step	Brent Weston
3rd Kyu	Vladimir Roudakov Janna Malikova Lu Jiang Simon Nordon Andrea Troncoso Salas	5th Kyu	Sunny Yeh	4Y2 step	Lawrence Monforte
		6th Kyu	Sean Keogh	3Y6 step	Kaido Mori
		8th Kyu	Graham Sanders	2Y9 step	Peter Hills
			Viraphone Phounesana	2Y4 step	Cameron Blake
4th Kyu	Dean Jones	9th Kyu	Emil Pop	2Y3 step	Mai Bui
			Emmanuel Pop Bill Yong	S1 step	Tony Starkie

Events in April

1. Getsurei Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 19th 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 26th 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 27th 1:00pm~

2. This Month's Holiday of Adults' class

- Anzac Day– Thursday 25th
- Dojo Holiday– Monday 29th

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

Shodan

Osu. My name is Choi. It's my honour to share my very limited experience in training for Shodan grading.

After I finished Jun-Shodan grading, my busy school work prevented me from a lot of training. On one of these days I dreamed of training within steep and rugged mountains, and Sensei trained me in person. The dream was so vivid and I instantly realised that it was a call from the Dojo Spirit. The next day, I visited the Dojo and the Sensei welcomed me warmly as if I have been training without any break. Sensei generously advised me to train for Shodan grading during my school break. I was very excited with this opportunity. On the other hand, I was also worried because I have not trained for a long time and there are so many techniques I needed to cover. There were less than 10 days of training left before the grading. How can I possibly remember all the techniques in the short period of time?

After a few days of focussed training an answer came to me. I heard my inner voice saying "Leave everything". "Leave everything to the Dojo spirit". "Just focus on harmonising the mind and the spirit and leave everything to the Dojo spirit". I tried to reflect deeply within myself what this message means and where this thought came from? Suddenly, peace came to me and I found myself smiling.

I found that during every training session the harmony helped my techniques come to me without effort. I was able to FEEL Uke's energy and coordinate accordingly, rather than trying to memorise all the techniques as I would in preparations for a school exam. Thanks to the wisdom I have gained from the Dojo spirit I have completed my Shodan grading and I am now able to write this letter.

Throughout training for Shodan grading, I have learned invaluable lessons...: "In our daily life, harmonising the mind and spirit can help us pursue the dreams in our life". According to old Asian sayings, for us to train today at the same time and in the same place, we would have had to have trained together in three previous lives. Therefore, I am blessed for this precious meeting for us to



train in our Dojo. Until the time that I train with everybody in my dream in the steep and rugged mountains with Sensei.

OSU !!!

Choi, Sukchul

A little more knowledge for your Aikido

A hint for mastering Aiki-waza

It was just after I received my 3rd Dan while training as an uchi-deshi at Headquarters that I was finally allowed to take uke for Master Gozo Shioda. One day among these days at a Kuro-obi-kai (black belts only class) Master asked me to grab his wrist as hard as I could. I followed his order and grabbed the old man's wrinkly thin wrist with all my power showing my arm shaking as proof that I was at my limit of strength. I did not expect him to be able to do anything as his body was restricted by my whole strength through his wrist. However, at the next moment as I saw Master's hand changed its angle horizontally and his body moved slightly sideways my feet were lifted and I was blown away hard.

It was my very first experience of Aiki-waza. I honestly had no idea what happened to me. I tried hard to grab his wrist using all of my body strength and the next moment I was thrown hard sideways finding myself flat on the floor. Normal Aikido throws from joint locks or Judo techniques such as a sweeping foot or carrying on the back taking the opponent's balance were all within my understanding and they were visible. But, Master's technique was absolutely beyond my apprehension and it was purely magical.

I used to love reading Japanese history books as a child and there were always masters of swordsmanship or old magical martial artists guiding and helping out main characters. I thought, experiencing my master's technique, he must have come out from those books. In old days when the culture of samurais was thriving there were maybe many of these extraordinary masters existed, I thought.

I suppose we who train Aikido all wish to acquire the technique of Master's level if we can. I, who have passed through the entrance of my Master's Aiki-waza world can say that we do not need to be special to master this kind of magical technique, though this conclusion is at my current stage (I may say something different in future, you never know) .

When I began to learn Aiki-waza I had no idea where to start. I studied and researched its mechanism, theory, principle and logic. But none of them helped me in the end. Aiki-waza was something that could not be achieved by thoughts from the brain but only by feeling from the body which accumulated through a long period of daily training, although the process of research and lots of thinking was also needed. All the procedures of learning Aikido from the beginner's level is the only way to master Aiki-waza; starting with Kamae and Seiza-ho to train one's centre line to be fixed, repeating basic movements thousands of times to train one's body into becoming an Aikido body, sensing and feeling how strength and force travels to one's body and to the partner's body through basic techniques, learning the right timing both to apply and receive techniques in the fast motion through Jiyu-waza training, and all this training ensures that Aikido movements sink into one's body and the body starts moving as a reflex to apply any Aikido techniques as soon as a contact is made. Your body will start giving you the answer without you thinking how to break your uke's balance as they grab you hard, not from your knowledge but the feeling from your body.

It does not happen overnight but it needs time, years of good quality training. Steady training through mastering each syllabus in order given as a task to grade up one step at a time is the simple solution to sink necessary Aikido movements into one's body. Also, one thing I always considered and focused on through all the process of progressing was "tuning/harmonising/adapting/adjusting to uke."

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It is not just about uke's movements and strength to harmonise with but also with uke's mind/movements/state. I always tried to sense and feel uke physically and mentally to apply my technique or to receive their technique.

A legendary samurai called Kiichi Hogan who lived around the 12th century left these words to describe the ultimate secret of martial arts, "Welcome it when it comes, let it go when it leaves. Harmonise it when it is confronted." This theory is truly the essence of Aikido and is absolutely indispensable to advance Aikido skills to reach the ultimate level like the great masters.

I understand that everybody wishes to improve their technique but when your focus is on yourself trying hard to make a technique work from your own body movements which I see often on the mats it will give an unpleasant impression to your uke and limit your level, narrowing your ability of techniques. In Aikido it is not yourself first but the presence of your uke comes first. It all depends on your uke how you move and how fast, how you apply strength or how you reduce strength, and each different uke as many as you have experienced expands your ability and skill to apply all sorts of different level techniques. This way of training gives a great advantage to improve your level faster than other people who would just train without a focus to train with.

Well, this was a short article to explain briefly a way of acquiring Aiki-waza skills from my perspective and experience and I hope this will help anybody who wishes to reach that level.

Osu,

Michiharu Mori