



No.217 September 2013

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

Facebook: <http://bit.ly/dojojb>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/YoshinkanAikido>

August Report

New members 2

Total number of adults training 65

Total number of children training 37

18th Annual Demonstration Awards

◆ Jiyu-waza

The Best Overall Jiyu-waza Award

Mai Bui & Simon Nordon

Excellent Jiyu-waza Award

Matt Carpenter & Murray Booth

Tony Starkie & Dominic Hogan

Darsy Darssan & Lu Jiang

◆ Aubrey Bannah Award

(Four-men Jiyu-waza)

Kaido Mori

Dominic Hogan

Darsy Darssan

Simon Nordon

Events in September

1. Sogo Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 13th 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 27th 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 28th 1:00pm~

2. Children's class Holiday

- Children's classes are closed from 21st Sep to 7th Oct. Class resumes on Thursday 10th Oct.

3. This Month's Holiday

- Dojo's Holiday - Monday 30th September

A little more knowledge for learning Aikido

Senshusei-geiko –Hajime class

The biggest event of the dojo through the year, our annual demonstration, is now over. I would like to congratulate every student who participated in the demo for the great performance and spirit you displayed. Although we feel like we can take it easy and rest for a while, the schedule for the rest of this year is very busy; Sogo Shinsa in September, Hajime class in October, another demo at the dojo in November, the last Sogo Shinsa of this year and Christmas in December. The rest of this year will rush past much faster than we think.

Well, I would like to write about Senshusei-geiko, as I do every year, to offer some ideas what is involved, especially for the new students. Senshusei-geiko means "training for intense-learning students" and the course was held at the Yoshinkan Headquarters every year. It was originally designed to train specific riot policemen in Tokyo who were dispatched to the Yoshinkan Headquarters to master the skill of the most practical and effective Aikido techniques in a short period. The reason why the riot policemen needed to learn the skill intensively goes back about fifty years.

We cannot imagine how Tokyo was like then, even only in fifty years' time, when we know how safe and peaceful Tokyo is now. The ideology of socialism and communism that pursued the ideal of an earthly paradise for the whole of the population gained wide acceptance as a more highly sophisticated system



of society, compared to the government of capitalism and liberalism, by the intellectuals. The uni students who believed they were also highly intellectual responded in concert with the tide. They caused various violent demonstrations against the government threatening the peaceful society. The riot police in Tokyo was assigned to bring them under control and they needed a practical skill to fulfil their mission. The top of Tokyo Metropolitan Police researched the way to train his important men effectively and found the Yoshinkan Aikido as the best means to accomplish the duty. The course Yoshinkan Headquarters offered to fulfil his request was the Senshusei-geiko.

The demonstrations that were performed by young violent rebels involved any types of easy-to-make weapons. They could have bottle grenades, timber blocks, steel pipes and rocks were most common. The riot police had to repeatedly engage in close combat with them over and again. Since Senshusei course commenced under this kind of social background it contained excessively severe training styles to train the students' bodies and spirits intensively. People who saw the scenes of their training began to call the Yoshinkan Headquarters as "hellish dojo" and it earned a very high reputation of the practical Aikido.

I recently found an interview with the then chief of Tokyo Metropolitan Police in a Japanese social journal talking about how he organised his men against the riots. "When a great numbers of demonstrators and a small numbers of riot squad were faced each other we had well designed strategy. The front line squad was composed of a rugby troop who tackled the demonstrators savagely with rapidity to disarray them. Then, we sent Aikido troops to the front next to disarm all sorts of weapons and arrested the violent demonstrators speedily using Aikido locks into police vans." The point he wanted to emphasise was that it was he who organised and arranged the rugby and Aikido troops from his idea to keep order in the country boasting of his achievement. But to me, it sounded as it was my Yoshinkan Aikido that protected the country's order and peace and I was so proud. Well, everyone has a partial eye on certain things...

I participated in the 22nd Senshusei course aiming to become a professional Aikido instructor. Since the course was going to start in April, in February I got permission to live at the Headquarters as an uchi-deshi to prepare myself two months prior to the course. I was very anxious about my ability, both physically and mentally, to keep up with others to accomplish the course. To ease my anxiety I tried to gather as much information as possible about the details of the training from my senior uchi-deshis. One told me that he had to halt at each movement of any Kihon-dosa (basic movements) picked on the day. He continued; "Your thigh muscles would start quivering with burning pain but if you rested losing your proper form you would be heavily roared at. You were expected to keep the position once your knee was bent in the lower posture otherwise only to fall forward reaching the limit of your body but never lift your body up to rest. But it did not mean you were allowed to fall, you would have been in more trouble by falling anyway." The time of each halt could be five to ten minutes, so he told me as if it was nothing. After hearing it, I did try it alone at the dojo finding my body hit the limit only within two minutes –five to ten minutes of the lower postured pause was simply impossible, I thought.

Another senior told me that there were 100 push-ups at least, followed by leg-up pause for five minutes minimum as one routine. Although I was training boxing at high school I did not train my abs very much as sit-ups did not agree with my body having a big tail bone sticking out that caused the breaking of my



skin easily. I tried the leg-up halt too but lasted only thirty seconds. He continued on, adding more examples of workouts; at least 500 times of nonstop koho-ukemi (backwards breakfalls) that cause your back skin to peel and bleed; Shuto-awase (striking your forearm against partner's forearm using hip strength) for a few hundred times that sometimes cause fractures, and so on.... Then, there was a routine of performing the same technique as fast as you could move while the course instructor keeps calling "Hajime! Hajime!" without stopping at all for about half an hour (yes, this is the reason the Senshusei-geiko is called Hajime class in Australia.) Hearing all these examples of the class I had no confidence at all and felt like rather going back to my peaceful country home.

Well, I thought there was another two months to go 'til the start. I had to think of some sort of countermeasures to build my body. I had to survive- It was my reality to overcome... I planned my workout routines increasing the intensity gradually in two months period to be ready for the course in time. I began with my weakest part of my body, the abs, doing leg-up pause whenever I had a chance to do so anywhere through the day, longer as I could do each time and that toughened my abs pretty well. 100 push-ups, halt Kihon-dosa practice to train my legs, Koho-ukemi as many as I could do without a break, jumping forward breakfalls to train whole my body and more... I had to think of something for training my forearms and I thought of hitting them against a 1L coca-cola bottle. But when one of my senior saw me doing it he said it was far too weak and taught me to keep striking every sign poles and power poles as I walked outside to the near station. "Are you serious?" I thought in my head but had to follow his instruction for my survival. You know, it was in Big City Tokyo where people were sophisticated with the latest fashion. Who on earth strikes at every pole frantically as one walked on the street? It was almost comical imagining the scene in my head thinking how stupid or crazy I would appear, though I was absolutely serious, fighting for survival.

Once the course started nine months flew rapidly. The training was absolutely severe proving the reputation of hellish training was true. It was something that I could never achieve alone but because there were my dear fellows (ten riot policemen and three other uchi-deshi candidates) who suffered the training together, that kept me going. Fourteen grown-up strong males all cried, screamed, groaned, cheered, laughed, joked, and supported each other intensely for as long as nine months that mateship we created brought us to the completion of the course. One's alone effort was not enough, but the power of company was the core of managing devilish training.

Once a year in October, here at our Brisbane dojo we hold a Hajime class which content is similar to Senshusei-geiko but only just one class of two hours instead of twice a day for nine months. You will achieve the class only because other fellow members of Brisbane dojo are going to do it together with you. You definitely gain huge confidence after you complete the class of heavy and intense training both in physical and mental aspects. I strongly recommend any of you to try the class as many students as possible to experience what is truly Yoshinkan style. I will do my best whipping of my body, which is getting older, too –Yoshinkan Spirit!

OSU!

Michiharu Mori