



October Report

New members 3

Total number of adults training 60

Total number of teens & children training 41

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 18th & 19th October

Jun-Nidan	Peter Hills	9th Kyu	Bhavish Uttamchandani	4Y3 step	Lawrence Monforte
Jun-3rd Kyu	Vincent Yeh		Hieu Nguyen	3Y8 step	Kaido Mori
4th Kyu	Wikrom Tang		Charmaine Kai	2Y6 step	Cameron Blake
6th Kyu	Mark Cocquio			2Y5 step	Adam Winlaw
8th Kyu	Laura Allen		4Y7 step	Sam Gray	S5 step

Events in November

1. Self-defence Class & Demonstration

- **Self-defence class; Saturday, 30th November 1:00pm~2:30pm**
- The class is not for public but only for the members.
- Everyone who wishes to participate in the self-defence class needs to register at the counter with **\$15** cash participation fee. (will be used for BBQ party and drinks)
- BBQ Party will be held after the demonstration and everyone including your family and friends are welcome to join us.
- **Demonstration; 2:45pm~**
- All of the black belts and Mori Sensei will display their demonstrations after the class. You can invite your family and friends for the demonstration.

2. Getsurei Shinsa

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

3. Children and Teens demonstration, new colour belts awarding ceremony and X'mas Party

- **Saturday 23rd 10.00am~**
- A small demonstration by all the children and teens will start at 10am.
- Awarding ceremony, some games and X'mas party are planned after the demo.
- Dojo will provide some soft drinks and a small X'mas gift for each child.
- Please bring a plate with you.

4. This Month's Holiday

- **Dojo's Holiday 25th Monday**

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

I was told that I have to write an article for the newsletter and otherwise I would not pass the grading. I looked at some old newsletters, the title is about the feeling of a new black belt. I am neither excited, nor thrilled nor proud of myself. The belt I wear or the certificates I receive have no say. However, I do not want to write about myself or a thank you letter. In this article I express my perspective on harmony at the dojo.

Most people have a purpose for doing a martial art. Some of those general intentions are: lose weight, exercise, martial art is about attitude so learn some attitude, stressed at work so release stress after work, and good for mental and physical development so send kids to learn martial art. A genuine objective is to learn because of interest in budo. I walked in to this dojo with a purpose of learning Yoshinkan from a Japanese master. If Aikido is a martial art then it should not be about harmonising your opponent. The ultimate purpose should merely learning and not harmonising. Do you need to learn a martial art to harmonise with someone or yourself?



Who do I have to harmonise with? My partner and I are in harmony at home over the past six years. I am perfectly in harmony with my five months old German shepherd puppy. I do not need to throw or pin-down someone in order to harmonise them or myself. However, if I am physically confronted then the best way of harmonising is running, fast and far. This is because the person or the animal confronting is not in the mode to harmonise. It seems that the word harmony is suitable only at the dojo.

Every Asian martial art emphasises on harmony. Usually, they say, 'oh your movements are not coordinated'. If you don't move according to your partner then there is no coordination. If you are not calm and assertive then your solo movements are not being coordinated to each other. We cannot practice martial art without a partner. There is always a uke in a martial art dojo.

The person who executes the technique should react according to the uke's energy level. For example, if uke comes with 50% of his energy and you throw him back with 75% then he will come back either fast or with an aggressive attack. There is an inconsistency between uke and shite, implies no harmony. On the other hand, if you throw the same uke with half the energy he produced (25% in my example), uke will come back with lower energy, thinking you are weak. There is an imbalance between uke and shite, which means no harmony. Do we know our uke's energy level? I leave it as a question because that is not the topic. However, if you see Shihan in action after an advanced class you may observe his use of different energy for different students in different days. If shite matches his energy with uke's then there is harmony, but there is no uke outside the dojo.

Martial artists are not fighters. We learn the art without hurting fellow students. The word harmony comes in handy at the dojo. No student is better than other and we help each other. However, if the roots of the martial arts are forgotten then the martial art becomes just a dance. I do not know about dancing but they talk about harmony in dancing. Also, musicians talk about harmony in music. I believe the harmony they discuss is different from the harmony at a martial art dojo. I would argue that uke is not supposed to harmonise with shite. Uke attacks that is somewhat similar to a real attack. Shite have the opportunity to throw or pin-down the uke without causing pain to the uke. However, uke must be reliable because we learn a martial art and the techniques are deadly. The techniques we learn at the dojo cannot be directly applied in a real fight. You just have to modify the technique and react instantly without thinking. That is why we have a self-defence class each year November at the dojo. Sensei explains the use of Yoshinkan techniques for self-defence purpose. Aikido is NOT about harmonising your partner. Harmony is at the dojo; please do not harm your partner who is helping you to learn budo.

In this article, I discuss my view on harmony in budo. I took a path: 'expert of everything, master of none'. Another version of this saying which I prefer, 'often times better than a master of one'. An Asian version of this saying is sometimes true, 'many talents is no talent'. I take this opportunity to thank all students at the Brisbane dojo who helped me to obtain a Dan grade in Aikido. We have a good teacher who is strict, knowledgeable, enthusiastic and sometimes funny. Thanks to Sensei and his family!

Osu

Darsy Darssan

I can't remember the exact year, but I first walked into the Yoshinkan Brisbane dojo around 2002. I'd watched the demonstration earlier in the year, and finally gotten around to doing the beginners course. Someone had told me that the Yoshinkan dojo trains with "good spirit", and although I don't think I knew what that meant, it sounded like a good thing. I turned up feeling enthusiastic and optimistic. When I



walked through the door, Mori Sensei was behind the counter, and he stared at me with a look that cut right through my soul. It was like he knew everything about me, and he was most certainly not impressed. I suspect some people must be wondering what in the world I'm talking about, but if you read through some of the old newsletters you'll find out more. I wasn't sure if I should turn around right then and there. I felt certain that I was in over my head. Next to him was Shuko-san, smiling and pleasant. I was so confused, I didn't know what to do. I trundled on and did the beginners course, and was keen to continue after it finished, but at the time I was a student with little money and a million excuses. I sometimes wonder how things would be different now if I'd found a way to keep training back then, but pretty shortly afterwards other things in life drew me to north Queensland, so I probably wouldn't have lasted.

I looked for a dojo near the small town I moved to. Call me fussy, but I was never happy with anywhere I found. I'd dabbled with a style of jodo before moving, so I tried to regularly run through the kata by myself. All that really did was slow the rate that I inevitably got worse at it. Through an amazing coincidence, I wound up meeting someone who had also trained the same style of jodo. There can't be that many people in the country who do, so we were both surprised. Unfortunately, when we got together to train we discovered that my misinterpretation of the kata was different to his. Since we were both rank amateurs, both probably wrong, and had no sensei nearby to ask for correction, we felt it was better not to train together at all rather than reinforce bad habits.

There was a big lesson in this for me. In my previous dabblings I'd been told by many people that it's important for a martial artist to really know what they're doing before starting to teach. Now don't get me wrong, neither I nor the other guy were trying to teach each other, but it was clear to me from this how easily incorrect technique can slip in without an expert around. In a lot of ways a martial art is like an oral tradition, where a culture doesn't write down their history but passes it from teacher to student through the generations. Of course with a martial art writing it down doesn't do much good, you have to learn by practicing. With writing you can be very precise about the way you explain something, and those words can remain unchanged for centuries. But with an oral tradition, if somebody gets it wrong, or doesn't remember something correctly, that error is passed on. Eventually all the errors accumulate over time. So in the west we generally teach children as quickly as they're willing to learn, with the idea that the real lesson is written down and relatively unchanging. In an oral tradition people aren't taught something until their teacher is confident they can understand the lesson, can be trusted to nurture the knowledge, and is able to pass it on themselves without introducing errors. I think we can see a lot of similarities in martial arts, where beginners aren't yet able to understand the finer points. We need to learn the basics so that we can understand the subtleties later.

After years of this, only training by myself and gradually training less and less, I had the opportunity to move back to Brisbane. There were a lot of reasons to move, but in the back of my mind I was thinking I'd be back near the Yoshinkan dojo. Initially the job was in Cleveland, but I knew eventually the site would be moving near the city. So even though I was almost two thousand kilometres closer to the dojo, I still waited a couple more years before coming in. Finally my work moved to just down the road, and I got back to the dojo to do the introductory course again, maybe eight years or more since I'd first done it. Remembering how Sensei had looked at me last time, I steeled myself for walking through that door again. I told myself, "These people don't muck around, you'll have to take this very seriously". I also had all the usual doubts in my head, "You're not up to it, Dom. Mori Sensei is going to see it straight away, just like he could last time." I wasn't really sure what I would do if I lost my nerve, so I tried to get through the door and commit myself before I could think about it too much. When I walked



through the door, there was Mori Sensei and Shuko-San. They were both smiling, and welcomed me in. I'd been so worked up, I think you could have knocked me over with a light breeze.

So now I find myself writing an article with the theme "sharing the feeling of black belts". Well, the most prominent feeling I have is gratitude. Perhaps there are some martial arts geniuses out there that can spend years training in solitude to become masters, but I'll never be one of them. To have the opportunity to train with so many dedicated students, under such a fine teacher, is a rare thing. It's only with the help of you all that I have been able to learn any aikido. From the priceless insights we receive from Sensei, the tips handed down from the senior students, right to training with beginners (where I frequently discover how my technique falls apart when somebody won't politely go along with it), there really is something to be learned every day. You all have my thanks. I know I've written this before, but I really would have to name everybody. I only hope I'll be able to give something back to the dojo. This is not to mention the generosity people have shown me off the mat. For example, everybody who has given me a lift to the station after class, saving me from waiting an hour for the next train, has genuinely saved me some sleep (in rough order of frequency: Tony, Greg, Darsy, Richard, Gareth, Wes and David). That might sound silly, but it makes all the difference by the end of the week, and has been the deciding factor when sticking around for second class a number of times. It all adds up.

The other feeling I have is that coming in to the dojo still feels a lot like it did when I was beginning. Not the fierce looks from Sensei, what I mean is it still feels like there's an overwhelming amount to learn. I've heard others say that shodan is really just the point where you can start learning, rather than any kind of mastery. I certainly don't feel like an expert in anything, so I can see there's a lot to that. Speaking to a friend at work recently, he was asking how the grading went, and went on to ask "So, what's next?" His tone implied that, having polished this off, I'd have to find a new challenge to occupy myself. What else could I say? "Nidan."

Osu!

Dominic Hogan

One of my first memories of aikido was when Kaido and I were around the age of five, playing/throwing with some of the seniors after first class (Richie, Brice and Brendon just to name a couple) and it was awesome. Almost as good as the feeling of walking on the mats wearing my senior shodan. I remember after I received my children's shodan that same feeling of complete ecstasy.

The night of my shodan grading was intense, not only because I was nervous about the grading but the fact that I have been training for this moment since I started Aikido many years ago. Whenever I looked up at Sensei at the dojo as a child I saw a person who enjoyed aikido as a martial art, I wanted that same enjoyment. Now I have my senior shodan the feeling is different. I'm not sure why it is but I do know that it is a 'good different' and I am willing to find out the next phase of what Aikido holds.

So to everyone I have trained with over the last twelve years in particular my partner in crime; Mr. Kaido Mori (^>^), I would to thank you all for your guidance, understanding and tolerance especially Sensei and Shuko san with all my strange and quirky questions.

Osu

Steven Bannah