



No.228 August 2014

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dojo: <http://yoshinkan.info>

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

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

July Report

New members 5

Total number of adults training 66

Total number of children training 42

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 25th & 26th July

Jun-Shodan	Vladimir Roudakov	6 th Kyu	Pedro Gouvea	5Y1 step	Matt Carpenter
	Janna Malikova	7 th Kyu	Thomas Murden	S1 step	Dean Jones
6 th Kyu	Charles Dekaoirte		Ross Macpherson		Stephen Cuthbert
	Pol O Sleibhin	9 th Kyu	Sushankar Khandabhattu		

Events in August

1. 19TH ANNUAL DEMONSTRATION ON SUNDAY THE 24TH

- ♦ 11.30am Start packing up at the dojo
- ♦ 12.00pm Start setting up at the venue
- ♦ 12:30pm Children's Rehearsal
- ♦ 12:30pm Doors open
- ♦ 1:00 ~ 3:30pm The 19th Demonstration
- ♦ 3:30pm Awarding ceremony and taking a photo
- ♦ 3:45pm Remove all the mats and clear the venue by 4.00pm.
- ♦ 5:30pm Dinner Party

2. Adults' Rehearsal for the demo

- ♦ 23rd August Saturday 1:00pm~ **at the Dojo**
- ♦ Everyone is expected to attend the rehearsal.
- ♦ Please note that there is no rehearsal on the demo day at the venue.

3. Children's Rehearsal for the demo

- ♦ 23rd August, Saturday 10:00am~ **at the Dojo**

4. This Month's Holiday

- ♦ Dojo's Holiday: 25th Monday & 26th Tuesday

A little more knowledge for learning Aikido

Annual Demonstration

August, the month of our annual demonstration, the biggest event of the dojo through the year, has arrived. It is an opportunity for the senior belt students to display our achievements over the last year since the last demonstration and it is also a great chance for the white belts to learn and experience various techniques in a short period. I, being responsible for running this dojo, will be very pleased if all the students can take a part in this exciting event.

I remember clearly, the annual demonstration of Headquarters, in my second uchi-deshi year in which I was quite proud of myself, taking many ukes for my senior uchi-deshis. General students of the headquarters then knew which points to focus on to enjoy watching Aikido demonstrations practically, seeing them both from shite and uke sides separately. They focused on the quality of Aikido techniques in detail to check how strong, sharp and graceful they were on the shite side, of course, but they also gave a close attention to uke's side –how uke was taking each of these strong techniques and judged if they, themselves, would be able to take that kind of severe technique without getting injured. When they saw an uke receive one of the hardest techniques and still get up to attack the shite with a full spirit in Jiyu-waza style, they praised not only shite but also uke more to acknowledge the skill of uke with high respect and evaluation. Although taking uke for senior uchi-deshis was an absolutely hard job it was a very satisfying work to be recognised and well accepted as a highly skilled uke.



The annual demonstration of headquarters was not just for the students of the Headquarters' dojo but for the Yoshinkan Aikido students all over Japan as well as Aikido practitioners from other Aikido styles who looked forward to observing the top of the Yoshinkan style. The top was Master Gozo Shioda then, of course, and the top uchi-deshis were also included to represent the style—Takeno Shihan and Chida Shihan were the top two at the time. General students who lived far from Tokyo had strong admiration for these instructors and they valued the demonstration highly since they had only an opportunity once a year to watch their techniques directly (there were neither DVD nor youtube then.) The tension and the focus of audience through the whole venue got stronger as the time neared closer to their demonstrations towards the end. The level of tension was raised so high, you even got goose bumps from the atmosphere.

What the audience looked forward to in Takeno Shihan's demo was not just his techniques but their interest also went to his uke every year—who his uke was, how many times he is going to smash his head and if he was going to survive till the end of demo without being knocked out. Takeno Shihan usually chose a fresh and young uchi-deshi with a few years experience and we, young uchi-deshis, had to accept his nomination to be his uke without any excuses. It was the same as a death sentence for us and a great fear that caused some dramas. Several episodes about being nominated to be his uke expressed how much we truly feared—one took to moonlight flitting the night before demo and the others wrote their wills being that desperate. In my second uchi-deshi year having heard all the terrifying stories, I began avoiding Takeno Shihan, trying to shut down my spirit around him, when the demo season got closer in the hope of him forgetting about my presence. No, this type of shallow strategy did not work... Yes, I was chosen...Do you think that I was picked out of other young uchi-deshis because I was a good uke and hence I should be proud? No, it was nothing to do with my skills of uke but purely because my body size appealed him. You know, using a taller or bigger uke makes Shite look much stronger, displaying a good show. I did curse my mother for giving me a nice tall body for the first time in my life...

Well, the death penalty day arrived and I was proud of myself having had enough guts to be at the venue without fleeing. I stood in front of Takeno Shihan getting all the attention with a great deal of interest from the experienced Yoshinkan practitioners. He said, "Katate-mochi." I grabbed his hand and I was blown over sideways at the same time smashing my temporal region heavily—Sokumen-irimi-nage. This was the only technique I recognised from this demo as my head was clear then. The rest was a blur. Yet, I did get up although I did not know where I was any more and just kept attacking him as if I were a three-year old child who had a temper. I was crushed severely and lost my breath at some moments. My vision got distorted badly when I smashed the back of my head awfully hard and I saw the ceiling falling in front of my eyes (this is how it looked.) It was just a sequence of getting up and receiving damage endlessly, so I felt. Fortunately, I was still up when Takeno Shihan stopped my desperate attack and terminated his demo.

When I got back to my seat worth more dead than alive, the students of Headquarters showed me great admiration. Because I was high after smashing my head too many times I felt on top of the world. With the extreme excitement from the sense of achievement, I went to see my father whom I had invited to watch the demo for the first time since I had begun Aikido training. He was the main person I wanted to get praise from and I expected him to be proud of his son. I believed my achievement of taking uke for the No.1 Yoshinkan Shihan (Master is not counted) in the second year of uchi-deshi proved my strong spirit and consistent diligent training and that should have impressed my father. As I found my father he threw one sentence at me, "You, so weak." For him who did not know Aikido or the system of Aikido but was familiar with the competition style like Judo or Karate, my performance was totally dreadful, being smashed completely each time I appeared on the mats to take uke many times



for other senior uchi-deshis. Moreover, as I was taking uke for the woman's self-defence program too, I got thrown and squeezed by a small female that made my father think I was the weakest through whole program, since I had no shite to demonstrate techniques at all! Looking at his son was a purely embarrassing experience for him. What a misery...

Well, although it was a painful incident for me, the perspective of my father from an outsider's view gave me an idea of how an Aikido demonstration looked through a visitor's eyes and it was quite important to know for me to hold my dojo's demonstration in future. In Japanese culture focusing on learning just basics in early days is regarded as of high value in any field. It is applied in the Aikido world too, of course, and I was not able to perform shite at the demo for as many as five years but as uke only for this long period. In the sixth year of my uchi-deshi life I was finally allowed to perform as a shite, yet it was not even Jiyu-waza but Kankyu-waza to show basic techniques at different speed which was rather unattractive. Two years later in my eighth year, I had the very first chance to show my Jiyu-waza in front of the audience. I did feel eight years was far too long to stay at the bottom of the line without being allowed to display one's Aikido freely, even though I understood learning basics was thoroughly important to be a professional martial artist.

Here, for my dojo's demonstration, I make sure to design the programs so that even beginners can perform something attractive according to their level and they can be proud of themselves so as to invite their families and friends. For instance, if only white belts perform "Kamae-niyoru-Atemi & Shumatsu-dosa" it looks rather weak but when everyone performs together it looks spectacular with a great impact. The programs with any weapons and Chukyu-waza may seem to be difficult for beginners to learn but they contain only about eight techniques each that even white belts can learn and perform reasonably well on both shite and uke sides, if they train in a focused manner for one month. Any of these programs offer a satisfactory standard to watch impressively from the eyes of visitors, I think.

Anyone can participate in the Kyogi-enbu and any level of students has a chance to win awards equally. Until a few years ago, the awards for Jiyu-waza were limited to the top three results from the judges, but it ended up that the seniors and the same people kept winning the trophies. I know that the trophies are not everything but it definitely encourages students as a reward for their hard work. So, I thought of a way to offer the opportunities for anyone to win an award –mark all the pairs on the day just as the same as before, then divide them in four blocks from the top to bottom, and award the top of each block to acknowledge their performances being excellent as the top of each group. Well, the top of all will definitely get the "The Best Overall Award" without relying on luck but purely because the pair displayed the best performance, and the rest of pairs may win the awards too with the combination of performance and luck. In this way, anybody has a chance to be awarded and it is nice to be recognised with a trophy.

I am certainly confident that Brisbane Dojo's demonstration, which I organise as a result of many years of both positive and negative experiences at the Headquarters, is enjoyable for any level of student and they can be proud of themselves as they exhibit attractive and entertaining techniques in front of their important people –partners, families, relatives and friends. No one should ever receive a comment like I did, "You, so weak!" Well, it is then up to each student to be able to perform successfully or not, depending on how much effort they have put into for the preparation towards the demo. We shall all enjoy the day in harmony and in unity as the family members of Brisbane Dojo.

Osu!

Michiharu Mori