



August Report

New members 1

Total number of adults training 59

Total number of children training 43

19th Annual Demonstration Awards

◆ Jiyu-waza

The Best Overall Jiyu-waza Award

Lu Jiang & Andrea Troncoso Salas

Excellent Jiyu-waza Award

Lee Stemm & Sushankar Khandabhattu

Chris Smith & Daniel McGuire

Comila Roebuck & Mark Cocquio

◆ Aubrey Bannah Award

(Four-men Jiyu-waza)

Kaido Mori

Vladimir Roudakov

Lu Jiang

Stephen Cuthbert

Events in September

1. Sogo Shinsa

- Training starts, Friday 12th 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 26th 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 27th 1:00pm~

2. Children's class Holiday

- Children's classes are closed from 20th Sep to 6th Oct. Class resumes on Thursday 9th Oct.

3. This Month's Holiday

- Dojo's Holiday - Monday 29th September

Coffee Break

Senshusei class known as Hajime class

In 1990 during the Gulf War some US soldiers were captured and tortured by Iranian army that caught international attention at the time. After a cease-fire, I saw a TV interview by one of the captives and he said, "I was ok no matter how bad the torture was, as I was able to separate my mind and body that made me feel nothing, no pain. When they tortured my leg I detached my heart from the pain and I felt no pain." I was very impressed with his tough spirit and admired him for being a professional soldier, thinking he must have gone through an extremely severe training before he was dispatched to the war theatre. I, being young and arrogant at the age of mid twenty, somehow felt I understood what he meant from my experiences while training in the Senshusei classes.

Although the level of pain from the torture must have been nothing like martial arts training, I still thought that the agony from the Senshusei classes was similar to a type of torture. The burning pain in the legs from pausing at a hardest position of any kihon-dosa weighing my whole body on one leg for more than ten minutes, being not allowed to lift my balance up at all, was unbearable; the challenge of moving one's body up and down repeating a technique both being shite and uke as fast as you could push yourself for half an hour without a moment of halt, made my body and brain absolutely numb; training Suwari-waza only for four hours everyday for a week was a pure torture more than you could imagine, having no skin left on your knees but your flesh directly sliding on the mats with bleeding. Here, we, riot policemen and young uchi-deshis, had to master a way to split one's self from the pain to survive the course, as it is said in Zen "Suppress your 'self' and even a fire is cool." Anyone who could master this theory at an earlier stage got a relief from the fear of pain and gained confidence to complete the course without getting defeated. Mastering this theory may mean you have earned the mental strength.

People obtain significant confidence when achieving something difficult, overcoming one's physical pain and agony, and one feels that he will be fine no matter what kind of hardships and difficulties may challenge him in future. In fact, the riot policemen who completed the nine month Senshusei Course believed that it would not be possible to have more harsh physical experiences in the world than they had got through, and hence they were absolutely confident to manage any sort of severe mission. They were certainly positive about keeping their mind calm even when they had to face to any violent criminals like right or left wing terrorists or any brutal yakuza's, after they left Yoshinkan Headquarters returning to their duties. The course definitely offered to train both physical and mental aspects thoroughly.

NEWSLETTER



Around the time when the Gulf War broke out I was in the fifth year of uchi-deshi life that my position at the Headquarters was more on the teaching side than on the learning side after completing four of the Senshusei Courses. Thinking back, my state, around this period was not in a good form. As I was recognised as an instructor of the Headquarters and even sent over to teach riot policemen on my own, it was a matter of course to be bigheaded misjudging myself being great and strong which, I suppose, was quite natural being a young man. You know, I felt myself as a battle-hardened expert soldier after accomplishing that severe Senshusei Course four times, attaining the status of Headquarters' instructor.

One day during this period when I was still in my mid-twenties, I experienced a sort of story. Well, I had to visit a local dentist for a toothache. Usually, a young and beautiful female welcomes patients at reception with a happy smile and voice in Japan (well, I find this could be not the case here in Australia as I see so many of sulky girls at even Mac's) but this dentist had an old grumpy man in a white coat instead. He said, "What's the matter?" Of course I had a matter related with tooth visiting a dentist, I thought in my mind, but I forced myself to be nice to him explaining my condition politely with a smile. Then, he nodded toward an examining room without saying a word. There were no other patients waiting at the reception and I saw no one, not even an assistant, either in the examining room too. Just two of us, the old unhappy man and me, and I felt some sort of anxiety in my heart but hid it being a tough martial artist. I sat down on a treatment chair trying to convince myself that I had no fear against anything.

He began the medical procedure and to my surprise, his hands moved very skilfully in a brisk manner. I was pleased to find out he was quite an expert. As I started to hold respect towards him for his craftsmanship he told me he did not like giving an anaesthetic when the treatment required pulling out a nerve under the damaged tooth from the gum. He simply said, "Hold up your hand when it is painful," and continued his operation. I did sense a fear rising in my mind but erased it, believing in my absolute strength that I had gained from completing the Senshusei Course many times.

The doctor placed a something-sharp into my gum abruptly and began to stir it pretty roughly. I took it bravely at this first stage. I felt a piecing pain in the gum when the second shot of a different needle stabbed me, yet I held up. I believed showing the sign of feeling pain was a humiliation as a professional Aikido-ka. He inclined his head slightly in his bewilderment and pushed the needle little deeper and stirred again. Tears welling up in my eyes but I tried to separate the pain from my body remembering what the US soldier said. In response to my non-reaction, the old dentist put more power into his hand. I concentrated to practice the Zen theory fighting a battle with him. At last, the moment I lost my guts had arrived and a howl slipped out of my mouth which I never did even when a hardest Nikajo or Yonkajo got me down. It was a pure defeat for me.

At the moment the dentist heard my howl he raged at me realising I was being dishonest, yelling "I told you to raise your hand when you felt pain! Idiot!" He was furious. The reason for his explosive anger was out of pride that he was able to treat his patients with minimal pain even without giving an anaesthetic by carefully judging the state of his patients. So, my extreme endurance being a half-measure martial artist disturbed the professional's correct procedure. As a result, I had an unnecessary swollen cheek from the inappropriate treatment. He was so mad at me, on and on... Looking back now, how enormous his rage was, still amazes me. It was surely my mistake due to my shallow belief that putting up with the pain was the greatest Aikido-man-ship.

Aside from this, later on my life after the marriage, I actually learned that the depth of pain could go much further, when I saw my wife deliver our son. I realised how conceited I was being so confident to manage any sort of pain, believing the pain from the Senshusei class was the top of the pain lists. No, I was wrong. I would not have survived labour and would have only given up. You know, you cannot even ask your partner to stop the lock by tapping! After experiencing a delivery scene I hold my highest respect to all the mums for their absolute strength and bravery. Well, males are as not as strong as they may say or may appear in the end, I must admit, being a mature aged man now.

Right, next month, October, we will hold a Hajime class (Senshusei course style class) which is offered only once a year. It is a great opportunity to feel what truly severe training is and get an insight into the training at the Headquarters. You can also understand the reason why Yoshinkan Aikido has been highly evaluated in the martial arts field in Japan. I recommend any students, especially young ones, to participate in the class to experience Yoshinkan Spirit. And, after you have completed the class, you can test yourself by visiting a professional dentist for a major operation and ask him, "No need of an anaesthetic! Just operate on it!"

Osu!

Michiharu Mori