

# NEWSLETTER



No. 127 March 2006

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

## Report of February

New members 11      Total number of adults training 72      Total number of children training 70

## Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 25<sup>th</sup> February

<u>Jun-4<sup>th</sup> Dan</u>	Brendan Stuart	<u>9<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>	Helly Conroy	<u>3Y1 step</u>	Eric Kwok
<u>Jun-Shodan</u>	Matt Carpenter		Phil Esteban	<u>2Y6 step</u>	Sam Gray
<u>Jun-3<sup>rd</sup> Kyu</u>	Mark Davies	<u>4Y11 step</u>	Emmanuel Economidis	<u>2Y4 step</u>	Eagle Kao
<u>4<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>	Mark Coleman		Richard Diehm	<u>2Y2step</u>	Murray Davis
	Greg Scanlon	<u>4Y8 step</u>	Jason Economidis		Myles Frost
	Jim Stanley	<u>4Y4 step</u>	Frank Barletta	<u>S5 step</u>	Kanako Yamaguchi
<u>6<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>	Jeremy Hagop	<u>3Y8 step</u>	Matthew Watson	<u>S4 step</u>	Heather Wood
<u>8<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>	Carlo Mills	<u>3Y7 step</u>	Evan Chapman		Frankie Wood
		<u>3Y3 step</u>	Albert Lu	<u>S2 step</u>	Mark Frost

## Events in March

### 1. SogoShinsa

- Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~
- Shinsa training starts from 11<sup>th</sup> Saturday.

### 2. This Month's Holiday

- **Dojo Holiday** 27<sup>th</sup> Monday

## A bit of knowledge for Aikido

I cannot remember if it was around early last year or the year before last year, I had an enquiry from a security guy asking about private lessons. I asked him to come over to talk with me directly about his necessity for taking up private lessons.

He came to see me and explained the situation and why he needed to learn Aikido. One night while he was on duty he was attacked by a few young people. Since he had trained Karate he fought back using his Karate punches. One against some, however, being so outnumbered, and because it was so difficult to give specific damage to people who were freely moving by using punches only, he was totally pommelled with his security dog. Therefore he wished to learn a practical Aikido that was able to give promising damage by joints-locks of opponents.

Since his situation was understandable with an appropriate reason to take private lessons, I told him that I would be willingly teach him. However, what he said next was that he wanted to see me again with his friend who was big and burly to take the lesson together.

Anyhow, he came with his Maori friend behind him and started to talk again. He said he tried out Kung-fu before. The Kung-fu instructor tried to teach him how to disarm a knife that he thought was not realistic at all from his view based on his work experiences as a security guard. So, he suggested testing the instructor's technique by attacking him with a marker-pen instead of a knife. If the instructor missed disarming his knife, then he would receive the drawing marks on his clothing that would be cuts if it were knife. It means that he challenged the instructor, after all. In conclusion, the instructor's clothing got lines all over his body and that meant he cut the instructor into pieces.

I was listening to his story standing next to Shuko and then I slowly realised by implication that he wanted to challenge me. As all the talk was going on in English of course, I was always behind in comprehending what he was saying. If it was all in Japanese I would have interrupted his talk and got him to play with me, you know I am a short tempered person by nature. But I was not confident enough of my English that I was understanding his story correctly or not! I do not know if it is a good thing or not for my life, but I always have to check the situations and details with Shuko before I make any decision on almost everything. I have to admit that this way always produces better results. Short temper is no good...

While he was talking I was getting prepared to take the challenge in my mind thinking how Aikido deals with these small feints and light, dribble-like knife attacks, looking at the man holding a pen in his hand in front of me. However, Shuko, who was actually talking with the guy, happily decided when he should be back for the first private lesson, told him to teach disarming techniques during the first class and let them go home without a hint of hesitation.



The following week came and the day of the first lesson arrived. It is said in the Japanese martial arts world that we should never make any allowances for challengers who come to one's own dojo because they would come back again to keep trying if they did not have enough damage to yield. "Beat the challenger with a single blow without hesitation." As I agreed with this instruction I was ready to give him a good blow once he signed the form.

But my morale was absolutely broken down... He, being a very tactical opponent, simply did not turn up! What a false alarm... Oh, come on...

Well, I just would like to explain some tactics using Aikido techniques for your reference, anyway. All the techniques we train against tanto (wooden knife) in our training method are in the situations when an opponent tries to cut through one's body with heavy strength to kill us. We do not usually train against light attacks like the pen-man was doing which cause only slight injuries but not major. So, let me tell you my thoughts of the technical side of Aikido against these type of attacks.

I do not know much about Kung-fu but understanding from what I've seen in movies and books, it is a style of martial art that throws many light punches and kicks. I assume that the Kung-fu instructor was too focused on blocking each small attacks as that is what Kung-fu can do but that led him in to the pen-man's trap, being drawn all over the body.

To the contrary, the characteristic of the traditional Japanese martial arts is described in these phrases; "Hit-to-kill single blow" and "Let own flesh to be cut but cut through the enemy's bone". This is the fundamental principle of Japanese Budo, cutting through a man into two pieces in a single sweep with the utterly sharp Japanese sword. In the way of fighting of ancient samurais they do let their flesh get cut to close the distance between their enemies to be able to cut through them with all their might in a single sweep.

For instance, boxing fighters start throwing light jabs guarding their faces and close the distance gradually while traditional Karate fighters are set with no guards on their faces in a half-crouching position being prepared to take some damage to their faces or bodies, and move into enemy's arms with no guards aiming a single straight punch that is not just a hit but a dig into the enemy's body. It is a dig, not just the level of causing pain or light injury, but that that destroys the internal organs and bones of enemies. This is the characteristic of the genuine Budo Karate but not the modern sports Karate.

Well, now let's see how Aikido would fight against this pen-man. The very first thing we should check is which hand he had his pen (meant to be a knife, of course). Here, let's say if he had it in his right hand as generally more people are right-handed. Then, we give him our left arm; use our left arm as a shield even though it may be cut in some way. If you set a condition of being spotless it will be a big mistake that will lead to the same result of the Kung-fu instructor, being drawn the marks of light cuts all over.

As soon as we face this pen-man, we move forward without hesitation or giving a moment to the closed position where he needs to use his knife (pen). At the moment he tries to move his knife to attack we block his arm (chop/uchi movement with the strength of almost knocking down his arm) with our left hand, don't aim the knife, from the side in a crossed line. Then, we strike either his face or temple hard with our right hand (not punching but striking that gives a wider range of damage when a punch has more pinpoint effect). After giving certain damage to his body, we do not need to worry about the knife any more at all. Now, we have three thousand Aikido techniques to choose from. You can break his arm/elbow/shoulder or knock him down throwing him backwards, whatever you like to cook him. You can use any technique that flashes into your mind. The point is that you get trapped if you are focused on his knife and think too much of how to disarm it. Lets give opponents some of our flesh but cut through their bones. This is the way Aikido as a genuine Japanese Budo should fight, I think.



This way of fighting is exactly the same against any punches or kicks. We should not be caught up in focusing on hands or legs but simply go closer into an opponent's arms without being afraid of getting some damage. Knife, kicks, punches; they are all more effective when you keep certain distance between the opponents. What we need to do is close the distance without fear and then we are free to use any of our favourite techniques. It is important to not fight on an opponent's ground but lead him onto our own ground.

The most essential issue above all is in maintaining a calm mind that enables us; to observe an opponent with a clear mind without flinching, not to be focused on a particular spot or technique but judge on the whole, to harmonise with an opponent's movements. After all, it is dependent on our minds that control our bodies whether we can actually apply Aikido techniques or not regardless of how skilful you are. So, we do need to train our minds sincerely to keep it clear as we train the physical aspect of Aikido too. By writing this article, I have reaffirmed this truth for myself.

For this month's article, I have written an example of how Aikido works on the street that I am often questioned about by beginners. I hope this has given you some more realistic perspectives on Aikido.

OSU!

Michiharu Mori