



No. 139 March 2007

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

## Report of February

New members 7

Total number of adults training 69

Total number of children training 83

## Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 24<sup>th</sup> February

|                               |                |                           |                |                  |                     |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Jun-3<sup>rd</sup> Dan</u> | Matthew Watson | <u>9<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u> | Neil Jorgensen | <u>3Y2 step</u>  | Sam Gray            |
|                               | Eric Kwok      |                           | David Shepley  |                  | Eagle Kao           |
| <u>9<sup>th</sup> Kyu</u>     | Simon Herbert  |                           | Kaido Mori     | <u>2Y10 step</u> | Myles Frost         |
|                               | Wes Farrell    |                           |                | <u>2Y4 step</u>  | Greg Dickenson      |
|                               | Murray Evans   | <u>3Y9 step</u>           | Albert Lu      | <u>S4 step</u>   | William Harper      |
|                               |                |                           |                | <u>S3 step</u>   | Christopher Swinton |

## Events in March

### 1. Sogo Shinsa

- ◆Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm~
- ◆Shinsa training starts from 10<sup>th</sup> Saturday.

### 2. This Month's Holiday

- ◆Dojo Holiday 26<sup>th</sup> Monday

## 3. Children's Grading Tests

- ◆Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> 10:00am~
- ◆All the children who are grading need to be at the dojo by 9:30am.
- ◆Children who are not grading this time may come and observe other children's tests.

## A bit of knowledge for Aikido

### **Bad condition is the best condition to train.**

I think we can have good quality training when the class is crowded and we are very close to each other in pairs. The reason is that Aikido is not a sport but a martial art.

In sports, we make a suitable environment to enable fighters to fight smoothly where they can perform their techniques with full potential, focusing on their opponents only. Boxing, for example, a flat canvas enclosed by ropes without obstacles on the floor or in the air. On the other hand, the training of martial arts is based on the premise that there are no rules or special favourable conditions, just the same as on a battlefield. Battlefields can be at mountains, valleys, deserts, rocky grounds, all sorts of footings with both friend and foe appearing from four directions and we still need to execute the right techniques at right timing to survive. No excuses are allowed like "I could not concentrate because it was too hot" or "I lost my balance from unstable footing" or "I missed the timing because there was a man in my way", as it means imminent death on the real battleground. Samurais at the time of civil wars devised different ways of making bad conditions to train at the dojo.

For instance, they scattered soy beans all over the dojo to create a slippery surface in one of the Kenjutsu style. A diary from other Kenjutsu style shows that they trained in darkness with few candles in preparation for night time fights. Or, there was called 'Tachikiri Keiko' (standing all the way training). This was the hardest training method that *shite* had to face up to his training partners, the whole day and night, 24 hours without a rest at all, no food but water and about twenty to thirty dojo students took turns to be his partner. This was a challenge to the limit of humans both physically and mentally assuming the fighting time of the real battles. Martial arts training in the old days were truly severe.

I know that we do not need to bring the martial arts skills that we learned at the dojo to the battlefields any more, living in the present day. Therefore most of martial arts changed its nature to more being like sports, winning titles at competitions. I personally believe it is important to keep the

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taste of being a traditional martial art at our dojo, training us hard physically and mentally towards learning the essence of Aikido but not for the purpose of winning competitions.

The essence of Aikido is all about learning harmony in both physical and mental aspects. The harmony does not mean only between shite and uke but also harmony with conditions and surroundings by being aware or sensing what is happening all around you; always paying attention back and forth and around and harmonising with others' movements by adjusting one's own positions. If you find someone who is landing in the position where you meant to throw your uke, then you simply adjust the angle of your technique, both, yourself and your uke being in harmony without being frustrated or annoyed, and complete your technique peacefully without hitting each other or halting the technique. After you finish a technique, you run back to your position always paying attention to what's around you without bumping into others or disturbing others' movements. When you can master the ability of sensing around you and the ability to adjust yourself in harmony with what you sensed, then these abilities will assist or benefit you for your Aikido techniques as well as your life.

For instance, you will improve your ability to adjust yourself to either shite or uke's movements and strength in whole without each other's powers crushing, nor too much pulling or pushing, by either moving forward or backwards to your partner's momentum in a circular motion. This sensing ability is so effective when you start practicing Tasu-dori (free techniques against multiple attackers). People can usually focus on one person only right in front of them but by developing the ability of sensing you will be able to see and feel all the movements of the multiple attackers around you.

On the roads driving back home from the dojo, the probability of accidents will increase if your level of awareness is low but with your sensing ability that you've developed in the crowded dojo the probability of meeting accidents decreases remarkably, I think. In the last few years I've never used my horn at all and that is because my ability of harmony with my surroundings is improving a lot. I've realised that I did not need the horn if I can harmonise with traffic, other drivers and pedestrians without pushing my ego. I hear that there are quite some people who change their characters once they start driving and spitting 'S' words on other drivers so much. I believe that no martial artists, especially Aikido-ka, should be this kind of people. We can suppose the time when we are driving as our extended training time of awareness and harmonising. Even if a car is pushing its way with rudeness we do not push back but apply the Aikido principle, "Welcome it, when it comes. Let it go, when it leaves. Harmonise it, when you are confronted." In this manner you can have more Aikido training outside the dojo to improve your Aikido skills and at the same time your security does increase. "Aiki, it is life," as Kancho Sensei (Master Gozo Shioda) always said.

Well, I assume you can agree with my point now that the best training condition in Aikido as a martial art is the worst condition in sports being extremely humid, hot and crowded. Don't ever think it's too hard, but jump into the worst conditioned dojo and enjoy the challenging training, sending your thought to samurais in old days. Shall we look forward to the worst conditioned days to master the secret of Aikido, the power of ultimate harmony.

OSU!!!

**Michiharu Mori**