



No.171 November 2009

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

October Report

New members 2

Total number of adults training 64

Total number of children training 61

Results of Getsurei Shinsa on 24th October

5th Kyu	Jocelyn Fergusson	5Y4 step	Emmanuel Economidis	2Y4 step	Mark Coleman
6th Kyu	Peter Hills	4Y4 step	Lee Stemm	2Y1 step	Joseph Stuart
9th Kyu	Rebekah Webb	2Y11 step	Aarjaun Burch		Jamie Baker
		2Y9 step	Alastair Wilkinson	S3 step	Julian Ladd
			Ryan Slavin	S1 step	Matthew Ryan
					Marek Coleman

Events in November

1. Self-defence Class & Demonstration

- **Self-defence class; Saturday, 28th 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 \$10 participation fee. (will be used for BBQ party)
- Although there is no class fee, students' fund is collecting some money for the BBQ party held after the demonstration.
- 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 13th 7:15pm~
- Steps, Friday 20th 7:15pm~
- Shinsa, Saturday 21st 1:00pm~

3. Children's Shinsa

- Saturday 21st 10:00am~
- Rehearsal starts from 9:30am.
- Children can come in any time after 9am to practice beforehand.

4. This Month's Holiday

- **Dojo's Holiday** 23rd Monday

5. A guest student from Japan

- Manabu Nakatsuyama Nidan black belt (a friend of Take-san who used to live in the old dojo for a year) will be visiting our dojo from 16th to 20th to train with us. Please enjoy training with him and show Brisbane dojo's kind (hard?) hospitality.

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

"Hey, how hard is that concrete floor?" This was all that Richard had to say with a smile after I slid part way off the mats, face down on the hard floor with my right arm locked behind my back. It was my first experience as his uke during lesson one of the October 2005 Introductory Class. I had approached the introductory course with an open mind but if I am to be honest it was turning out to be much tougher than I had anticipated. I suppose you might say that I was at a fork in the path.

First of all allow me to express my sincere thanks to Mori Sensei and Shuko San for their ever-present support and encouragement throughout the last four years. The one constant throughout my time at the dojo has been the dedication on display every time I walk through the front door at Ferry Road.

Like some of you, I came to the Aikido Yoshinkan Brisbane Dojo through my eldest son who began training in the Spring of 2004. I remember thinking that few other activities would be so welcoming of a complete novice so a year later, after way too much thinking, I thought that I would try Aikido myself.

On leaving home after finishing school many years ago my father said this to me – "Don't be afraid to have a go at something new". It was good advice that has regularly given me the inspiration to take new directions in life. Well perhaps Dad may not have had Aikido training in mind, but nevertheless his words ran through my head as I joined five others for the introductory course conducted at that time by Richard and Brent.



Although I had participated in many sporting activities prior to trying Aikido, I soon found that I was very much out of my depth. Everything was difficult. Just sitting in seiza for the five minutes prior to the beginning of class seemed to me a test of my endurance and what now seem to be quite simple techniques were beyond my comprehension. For the first time in my life I felt “old”.

Well I don't feel old anymore. After probably six months of regular training and through the patient guidance of Sensei and the efforts of the senior students of the dojo, a few things began to fall into place and I became more accustomed to the training regime. Soon I was able to do things that I would never have thought possible of myself.

Although I took quite some time to make progress, there were some immediate benefits. Typically I would arrive at evening class with a head full of thoughts of my day at work. However because Aikido demanded my full attention I was forced to put the recent past behind me so as to focus on the present. The result was that I was able to leave the dojo in a peaceful state of mind no matter how much my body ached. For me Aikido training is an ideal way to wash away the stress of the day.

Naturally my progress has not always been steadily upward and I have often felt unmotivated and sometimes lacking in spirit. If I am to congratulate myself at all it would be for simply training on through these difficult periods. Most of you would have been told by a senior student to relax during training. In my case this has been a recurring instruction delivered by probably every black and brown belt with whom I have trained. I often still struggle with this very basic concept and this is my constant reminder that I am really only just at the beginning of my Aikido story.

While there are many difficulties experienced during training and in preparation for grading at any level it would be wrong to focus on these. There are so many benefits that make the hard work worthwhile. For me these benefits are present in many forms - physically, emotionally and socially. There are times of great satisfaction when you finally come to terms with a difficult technique or even one of our basic movements. Coupled with the fraternity of our dojo and the improved fitness and flexibility gained from Aikido these rewards are more than sufficient to keep me returning for evening classes.

It has taken me some time to grade to the rank of Shodan and I have often been in the position where my fellow students have accelerated past me to where I now find myself. Through this experience I have learned to humbly accept my circumstances and rank. Perhaps my greatest lesson learnt has been to let go of the idea that because you are older you have all of the answers. My age means just one thing at the Dojo – I must accept instruction and advice from students who are almost always younger than me – even the members of the kids class who correct me when I mix up my instruction to them.

I must acknowledge now the efforts of every one of my training partners who have helped me along the way and particularly during the six weeks of intensive training in the lead up to my Shodan grading. Rather than feeling deflated after all of my techniques were harshly examined, I have always left training feeling uplifted by the confidence I gained through hard training and the encouragement of those around me.

To my grading Uke Matt, I offer my sincere gratitude for your advice and assistance in the weeks leading up to my grading and naturally for your generous help on the day.

I have left the most important thank-you to the end. Without the support of my family this would never have happened. Achieving harmony between family, work and Aikido is often difficult and I must thank my wife Assunta and our sons Michael and Will for the regular sacrifices made by them so that I may take time away to train.

As for the concrete floor Richie? Well the pain in my arm locked behind my back made the floor feel like a cool breeze following a hot day. I am happy to say I chose the right path.

OSU!

Robert Austin