



AYNSW July 2009 Newsletter

Hello everyone.

Here is the **AYNSW** Newsletter for July.

Grading Results

Below are the grading results for the month of June. Everyone tried their best; congratulations to all. The next grading will take place Sat.Aug.22nd from 2:00.

8th Kyu Junior

Marley Kuruvita
Jai Kuruvita
Julian Soady

6th Kyu Junior

Leanna Shteinberg

3rd Kyu Junior

Petar Dosev

1st Kyu Junior

Albert Smytchek

8th kyu Senior

Rachel Francois
Astrid Lorange

7th kyu Senior

David Tsai
George Karagiannis

6th kyu Senior

Andy Lam

5th kyu Senior

Matt Cole

4th kyu Senior

Karma Sherpa
Rene Christen
Kirsty Bryant

3rd kyu Senior

Iftekher Chowdhury
Andrew Wong
Paul Doessel

City Dojo Classes

AYNSW has just been informed that the NSW International Training College (NSWITC) is closing at the end of July so there will no longer be lunchtime classes there effective immediately.

AYNSW and NSWITC apologize for any inconvenience.

School Holidays

This is just a reminder that the Kids classes follow the same schedule as the NSW school term. There will be no Kids classes from Monday July 13th to Monday July 27th. The Kids classes resume Tuesday July 28th. Those on monthly memberships will have their accounts put on hold during that time.

Takeno Sensei Seminar Photos

Please check out the link below to photos from the Takeno Sensei seminar and demo. A very BIG THANK YOU goes to Matt Williams for taking the 500+ pics.

<http://gallery.me.com/processdigital/100014>

AYNSW New Classes

Please remember that the schedule changes permanently from this month:

Mondays 7:30-8:30 Intermediate Class (Brown belt and above)

This class meets the growing demand of our ever-expanding senior belts population and will focus on techniques within the 3rd kyu and above syllabus. This class is restricted to 3rd kyu (Brown Belt) and above only.

Fridays 6:15-7:45 90-minute Regular Session

This extended class is for those who want a longer training session to wind down the week. This is open to all levels. * Please note this will be the only class on Fridays; there will no longer be the 7:30-8:30 session.

AYNSW 4th Year Anniversary Demonstration

July 9th of this year marks the 4th anniversary of the opening of Aikido Yoshinkai NSW. To commemorate this day we will hold a demonstration at the dojo on **Saturday July 25th from 1:00**. Basic through to advanced movements and techniques will be displayed and will feature an explanatory demonstration by Founder and Chief Instructor Darren Friend Sensei. This demonstration is free and open to the public.

Malaysia Seminar Report

Tom Seeto of AYNSW attended the Malaysia seminar with Inoue Hanshi and Chida Sensei last month. Below is an interesting firsthand account of how the weekend went. Thanks, Tom!

“1st International Aikido Masters Clinic” with Inoue Kyoichi Hanshi, 9th Dan (former Yoshinkan Head Master), and Chida Tsutomu Sensei, 8th Dan (former Yoshinkan Chief Instructor)

In mid-June 2009, I was privileged to have attended the 3-day ‘1st International Aikido Masters Clinic’ that was organised by Takashima Saburo Sensei, 5th Dan, and some of our Yoshinkan friends in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (Takashima Sensei accompanied Inoue Hanshi at the seminar hosted by AYNSW in Easter 2008, and was also featured in Vol 20, No 9 of Blitz).

The Clinic was held under the auspices of DEN – in Japanese Kanji, DEN means “Legend, Passing Knowledge”. DEN is a group that has been setup by Takashima Sensei “to promote aikido the self defence system and also to promote peace and harmony amongst people.”

It really was a last minute decision for me to go. Everything was organised in a blur. But I would not have missed the opportunity to “steal” from Hanshi, Chida Sensei and Takashima Sensei! (O’Sensei was said to have told his students that he would not teach them anything, but they were free to steal his aikido.)

Greg Pun Sensei of Vancouver, BC, Canada (who visited AYNSW a few months ago) and I had organised to hook up at the Kuala Lumpur airport for the one hour taxi ride to the hotel venue located in Port Dickson. Surprisingly after a lengthy trip for both of us and/or logistical challenges, we were pretty bright eyed and were quite chatty – I think we were both very excited about the coming event and were running on adrenalin.

Leaving the airport, the humidity hit me like a brick wall – it was a wintry Canberra morning when I left for Kuala Lumpur. Then it was necessary to switch gears and take-in the local sights, sounds and smells. Do as the Romans do and accept the differences and enjoy the same. Enjoy the local cuisine, especially the local seafood which is comparatively inexpensive.

Not sure about one of the local delicacies however – the local Durian is known as the stinky fruit for a good reason. While the Durian’s texture and taste are like creamy custard, its smell is truly an acquired pleasure. If you burp after eating Durian, you will be reminded of its smell. If you do something similar at the body’s other end ... well, I won’t go there! Suffice to note that those around you will know what you had to eat.

We also had a very special outing one night when Joe Thambu Shihan, 7th Dan, of Melbourne’s Aikido Shudokan, took everyone to Thamby Rajah Sensei’s dojo for a

tour. (Thamby Sensei is Thambu Shihan's uncle). I say "tour" because there is a lot of history attached to Thamby Sensei's dojo in Kuala Lumpur. He is known as the "Founder of Aikido in Malaysia" way back when.

So what about the clinic? ...

We used the hotel's ballroom for the clinic's sessions. It was pretty full to capacity although it varied between the 3 days – somewhere between 60 to 90 participants I'm guessing. Some people attended a day due to competing demands. On other days, members of Aikikai also attended the sessions – it appears Yoshinkai and the local Aikikai have a very good relationship and that's the way it should be, after all, Aikido is about harmony and peace.

The participants from Toronto, Canada, probably did the most travelling to attend the clinic followed by the lone participant from Ukraine.

Now rather than go into minute details of what we did for each session, please indulge me ...

During one of the session breaks, a kohai (the junior in a dojo senior-junior relationship) and I shared some remarks in which he noted the relatively easy pace of the session that we had just attended, and the focus of the lessons learnt. In essence, it seemed that the kohai was a little surprised (and disappointed?) that we were not smashing into each other and flying across the mat full of testosterone fuelled ukemi and waza.

In turn, I was somewhat surprised by his remarks and asked him what he understood by the expression "Aikido Masters Clinic".

The kohai looked at me puzzled like I was weird for asking as the masters – Hanshi, Chida Sensei and Takashima Sensei - were nearby having a bit of R&R. But it was not a rhetorical question on my part.

I explained to the kohai that at one level the "Aikido Masters Clinic" was about the masters who were present at the clinic and passing on the benefit of their Art. Such clinics and seminars that AYNSW has hosted are tremendous opportunities to experience the Art of each aikido masters – although the aikido is the same, the flavours of Hanshi's aikido and Takeno Sensei's aikido some how feel different.

How can this be? Well, I will need to attend quite a few more clinics and seminars before I can comment on this with real insight, enlightenment and understanding.

I went on to explain that at another level for me, the key issue was about my mastery of aikido – how am I mastering the Art of Aikido, my progress in the Art and how I am continuously improving (I hope).

At this clinic and, e.g., at the Takeno and Nakagawa Sensei' seminar which AYNSW hosted in Easter 2009, participants experienced another level of aikido that are not usually experienced at the dojo – you can only cover so much details and subtleties in an one-hour class at the dojo after all! Such clinics and seminars provide participants

an extraordinary opportunity to focus on very deep aspects of the Art that otherwise may not be possible to fully cover in normal classes. As always, we should train with an open heart and with sincerity and spirit.

In other words, at such events, I have the opportunity to accelerate my mastery of the Art. Having access to and the opportunity to learn from such masters is really a privilege. And we, as the next generation of aikido practitioners, have a responsibility to steal as much as possible from the masters before there is a generational change. (Sorry for this slightly darker observation.)

I think we should attend clinics and seminars and *not* expect them to be like a typical lesson in the dojo – otherwise, why attend such events?

In this context, I recall overhearing some remarks from a couple of black belts at Hanshi's Easter 2008 seminar in Melbourne, in which they expressed surprised enlightenment at the connection between a kihon-dosa and a technique that they would have done many times over at their dojo! This recollection is not meant to be a criticism of those black belts - rather it is an observation that there is so much depth to aikido, that there is always something to learn, be enlightened and excited about the Art.

Noting my remarks, the light bulb seemed to have been switched-on judging by the expression on kohai's face.

Of course, I also went to Malaysia to be a tourist and experience the local hospitality, and to have some fun with others who shared a love of the Art, especially the masters, at the resort Island of Redang.

While we look at the masters in awe of their Art, we sometimes forget that they like to party too and let their hair down, just like us mere aikido mortals. But be forewarned – the masters will drink you under the table. And Hanshi looked pretty good on the resort's disco floor (i.e. beach) too! I think the average Japanese aikido student would die for such company in a social setting so far away off the mat.

There were 20 who went to the island (not counting the locals who were on school holidays) – 11 Japan based, 4 from the host country, 3 Canadians, 1 from Ukraine and me. It was quite impressive that we were able to negotiate the different languages including English/Japanese/Cantonese/Mandarin. It was a good bonding session.

Twilight Aikido with Tai No Henko Ichi



L to R: Takashima Sensei, Inoue Hanshi, Chida Sensei, Tony Chung Sensei of Aikido Shorei Kan which jointly organised the event.

After the island resort, an older Japanese gentleman – Mr Yorikazu Nakao – and I separated from the group to make our way back to Kuala Lumpur. We spent most of the day together touring a regional city and trying to communicate with each other. His English was much better than my Japanese but I think we did quite well and really had a good day.

It turned out that Nakao Sempai (the senior in a dojo senior-junior relationship) is one of the old man of Yoshinkan – he’s been training for 36+ years. On return to Australia, I also gleaned that he named the Malaysian dojo that hosted the clinic and is a 6th Dan. So be aware of old Orientals – or at least be very nice. ;-)

Finally, we should be mindful that when we attend clinics in another country, not only are we ambassadors for Australia, we are also ambassadors for aikido and AYNSW. For example, while being a tourist in the regional city, Nakao Sempai and I ended-up in what appeared to be an amusement playground at first glance. How we got there was another story.

In fact, it was a walking tour of significant mosques around the world – they were scaled models of mosques (but very large, and exacting to scale). This walking tour was therefore quite significant for a devout Muslim noting that Malaysia’s official religion is Islam, and so the walking tour was to be respected (but not as a “playground”).

BTW - if you are the sole representative of your country, or city, or dojo, be prepared to make a speech on the first night of socialising. After a few drinks, it’s all part of

the fun and ice-breaking. It would go down really well if you can say something in the local language and/or Japanese, e.g., “Hello”. Being politically aware and correct is also good too, by saying something like: “So and so would love to be here and is bitterly disappointed that he could not come”.

Yes I am excited and looking forward to our next seminar or clinic opportunity ... whether in Oz or o/s. I understand Takashima Sensei is looking at Malta for the next Masters Clinic – presumably it will be about the same time next year. Stay tuned! And start saving.

Oh! For those who may be keeping tally with me, I now have Chida Sensei’s autograph in my copy of Angry White PJs. And ... also the autograph of one of the featured Senshusei in the book ... an opportunistic bonus! :-)

Osu!

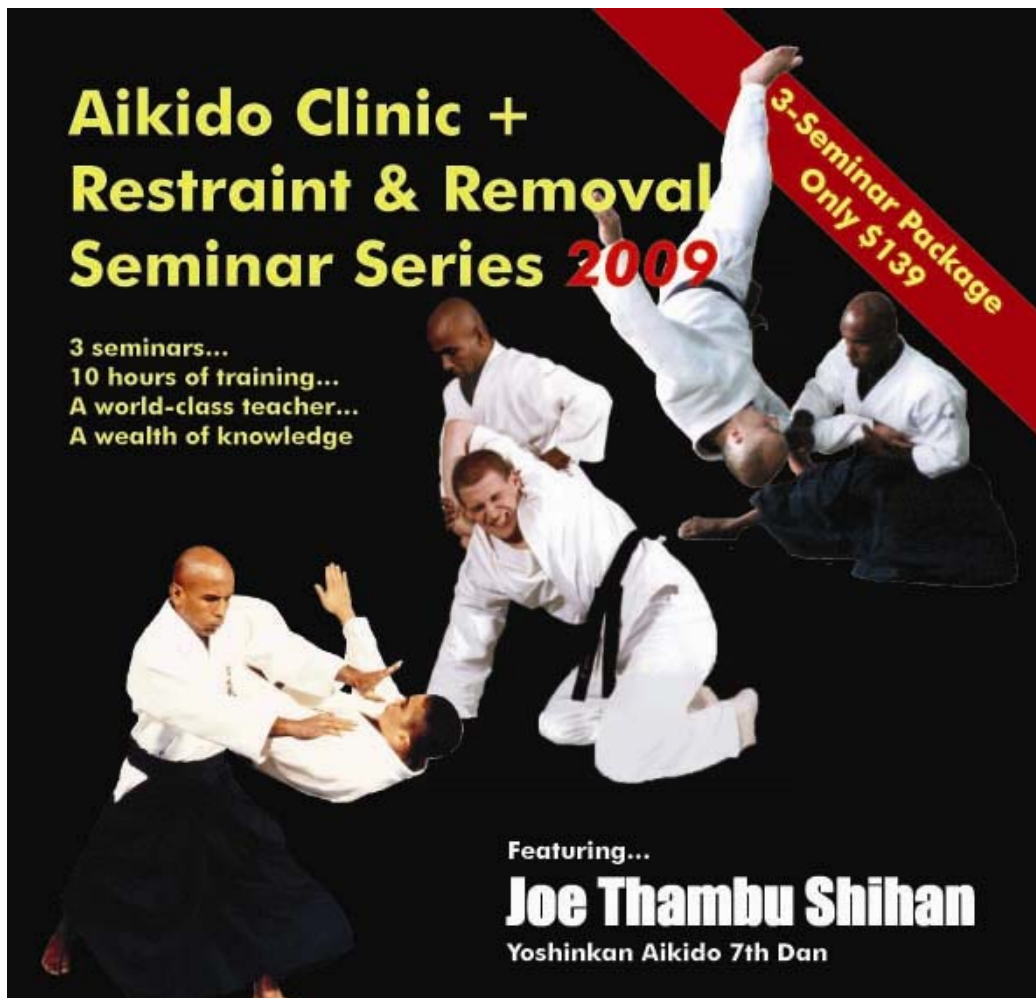
Tom

Joe Thambu Shihan 7th Dan Yoshinkan Aikido Clinic and Restraint and Removal Seminar Sydney 2009

Aikido Yoshinkai NSW is excited to announce that it will once again host **Joe Thambu Shihan** (7th Dan Yoshinkan Aikido) Founder and Chief Instructor of Aikido Shudokan in Melbourne, for his internationally renowned **Yoshinkan Aikido Clinic and Restraint & Removal Seminar**. For a full bio of Thambu Shihan please visit http://www.aikidoshudokan.com/australia_neo/?page_id=6

Date: Friday August 28th to Sunday August 30th.

Place: Aikido Yoshinkai NSW
Level 1, 72 Wyndham St.
Alexandria, Sydney 2015
(02) 9560-1434 aikido.yoshinkai.nsw@gmail.com



**Aikido Clinic +
Restraint & Removal
Seminar Series 2009**

3 seminars...
10 hours of training...
A world-class teacher...
A wealth of knowledge

**3-Seminar Package
Only \$139**

Featuring...
Joe Thambu Shihan
Yoshinkan Aikido 7th Dan

The poster features a black background with several white Aikido practitioners in various dynamic poses. A red diagonal banner in the upper right corner contains the text '3-Seminar Package Only \$139'. The main title is in large yellow and red font, and the featured instructor's name is in white at the bottom.

Fri.Aug.28th 6:00 - 9:00 pm \$60

Aikido Foundations

Explore the fundamental principles of one of the world's most dynamic martial arts with internationally recognized teacher Joe Thambu Shihan, 7th Dan Yoshinkan Aikido. Learn how to improve your performance in your art or style. Open to all martial arts styles.

Sat.Aug.29th 11:30-1:30 pm (Break) 3:00-5:00 pm \$90

Restraint and Removal Seminar

For nearly 20 years Joe Thambu Shihan has trained security personnel and armed forces in restraint and removal techniques. This seminar places the everyday concepts and structures of Yoshinkan Aikido and applies them into practical self-defense. This seminar is very popular amongst people working in the security industry, but is also extremely beneficial to anyone training martial arts.

Easy-to-learn techniques. Control and neutralize violent or resistant people within the constraints of "Duty of Care." Open to security personnel, police and martial artists of all styles.

Sun.Aug.30th 10:30-1:30 pm \$60

Aikido-Principle and Practice

Learn principles of movement and technique to perform aikido at an advanced level. Receive personal coaching from an internationally recognized teacher in the important practice principles that made Joe Thambu Shihan a leading aikido practitioner. Open to all aikido students from 3rd kyu level and teachers.

3-Seminar Package only \$139

Hansei (Reflections)

As we reach mid winter many people have been affected by different colds and flu that are making the rounds. I was knocked over by a particularly nasty flu and while I am still recovering I am at least back on my feet.

Within any difficulty there is always something positive to come out. In my case it was heartening to see how well the dojo could run without me. Many people stepped up and took on classes or just helped out in other ways. I was also touched by the emails and offers to help at home. I realized that our goal of creating a dojo that would help bind the community has been successful.

The experience I had over the past few weeks, lots of time spent in medical waiting rooms, made me realize how fortunate we are. My illness was an inconvenience. I was sick, but knew that I would recover. Even though there were some quite low points I was always certain that it would eventually pass, my body would rally, fight off the invaders and life would return to as it was. Unfortunately that was not a prospect for many people who spent time with me in the waiting rooms. There

passed before me an array of people who had been dealt pretty difficult hands in life. Wheelchair bound, in need of a carer, unable to even sign their own name, people who have to struggle just to get along with the basics of life. Those elementary things we do without conscious thought require so much more attention and energy for some.

We are lucky to have the physical means and freedom to practice aikido. In some countries martial arts practice of any kind is banned, in others the focus on getting in food to eat means there is no time for extra activities. We are indeed very lucky. With that should be an obligation to train as diligently as we can every time. Treat each class as if it was a test, treat your partner as a serious practice partner regardless of age, sex and ability. If we do so we are maximizing our return on training time and our partners will improve from the experience. Essentially we are a community that is bound by aikido. Supporting each other to improve leads to improvement of the group and the individual. Putting your partner first doesn't mean we take a step back, it is an investment in future training that will come as they improve.

DF

Regards,
Peggy & Darren

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Aikido Yoshinkai NSW instructors are accredited as martial arts coaches through the Martial Arts Industry Association (MAIA) under the auspices of the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS.) administered by the Australian Sports Commission.