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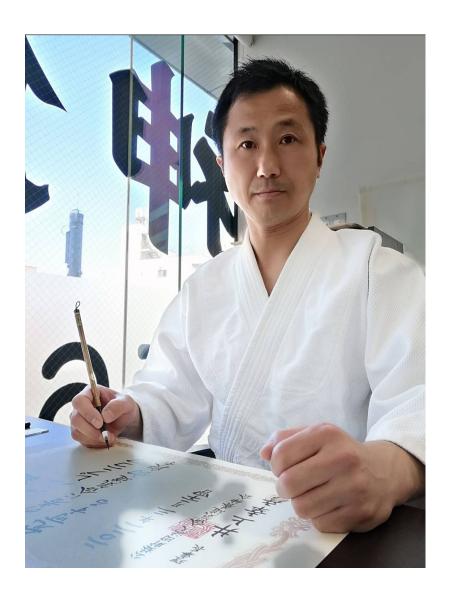




Dear AYF members,

Since the last newsletter Japan has gone through the so-called 3rd wave of Covid-19 and, with the 4th, encountered the state of Emergency declaration for the 3rd time. As we alternate joy and sorrow with ups and downs of the infection rate, mother nature did her work. After February the weather was stably warm, bringing early and gorgeous spring, when spring flowers started to bloom almost at once. It was the second time we we had to give up 'Hanami (sakura viewing)' picnic in order to avoid crowds, but it didn't seem to bother the trees. Blooming sakura was all the same thrilling at the beginning, breathtaking at the full and theatrically stunning as flowers fell. We do wish that travelling becomes possible again soon and you could visit Japan to witness it too.

We would like to begin this newsletter with Noriki Dojocho's greeting.



I hope you are staying healthy and safe during these unusual times.

Looking at the status of infection with the new coronavirus in the world, it seems that the situation is still severe even though vaccination has started. Also, it seems that the Yoshinkan Aikido dojos in many countries are still unable to practice at the request of the government. In Japan, vaccination of medical staff has been almost completed and vaccination of elderly people has begun. There are many dojos that have not yet been trained in Aikido depending on the area. Honbu dojo is barely continuing to hold classes. However, as the number of infected people is increasing, there is a possibility that a state of emergency will be declared again and training may be stopped. The situation is still uncertain, but let's overcome this difficult situation with the patience that we have trained through a long-standing Keiko.

We, Honbu dojo's staff are looking forward to seeing you all.

This newsletter's topics will be;

- 1. The test syllabus renewal and the compulsory techniques video release announcement
- 2. Spring campaign's success
- 3. On-line seminar report
- 4. Higirikan closure announcement
- 5. AYF worldwide on-spot reports
- 1. The test syllabus renewal and the compulsory techniques video release announcement

From April we entered the new fiscal year 2021 and the test syllabus was renewed, as published <a href="here">here</a>. With the syllabus renewal we made a series of video with the new compulsory techniques demonstrated by Noriki dojocho. The first ones are already uploaded, and the rest is coming soon <a href="here">here</a>. This time it is accompanied with tips that make it easier to grasp the important points of each technique.

### 2. Spring campaign's success

Just like many other Yoshinkan dojos all over the world, Honbu too is being severely affected by the social distancing life-style and suffering from decreasing membership. However, as the pandemic overstays our welcome, having been troubling people for more than a year, this spring Honbu was blessed with the noticeable growth of interest, frequently receiving phone calls and visits of those who intend to observe or do a trial class. We decided to help the happy tendency by holding a free trial and dogi campaign in April. As a result, we gained a dozen newcomers in just a month! Another change we noticed is that a considerable number of members now attend the day-time class, originally designed mainly for retired people and those few whose work hours were adoptable or irregular. But with Corona people's work style drastically changed. Remote working is no longer rare and for a certain part of the members attending day classes became more convenient, because it leaves the

evening time available for their family and home activities.

All this encourages our hope that what we do is needed, in spite of the overall fearful attitude towards sports and martial arts practice due to the pandemic.

## 3. On-line seminar report

Starting from February, Noriki dojocho, Shimizu shihandai and Sigihara shidoin have been conducting on-line lessons for Yoshinkan Aikido München, which hosts and administers all the Zoom meetings. The following photos were from March sessions.



Noriki dojocho with Shigihara shidoin as Uke



Shimizu shihandai



Shigihara shidoin

Thanks to the initiative of the host, this seminar was launched and is still going on. Since we have had some practice, Yoshinkan München and Honbu are ready to invite all international AYF members to take part in coming sessions. We'll meet at 10:30AM München time on Saturdays, May 15th, 29th, June 12th and 19th. The details are published on the <a href="host's website">host 's website</a> and <a href="Honbu's Facebook">Honbu's Facebook</a>. The capacity is limited, so please hurry and contact <a href="Ms. Aya Yamasaki">Ms. Aya Yamasaki</a> for login info!

#### 4. Higirikan closure announcement

We regret to announce that Higirikan, USA, led by Masatoshi Morita sensei, 8th Dan has been closed due to the health issue and the pandemic related difficulties.

#### 5. AYF worldwide on-spot reports

This time there will be 4 articles. Two of them are "Shimbukan: Aikidoka's of Russia and Japan united together" by Anastasiya Zhiliaeva (on behalf of Shimbukan's representative Evgenii Shimanovich Shihan), Shimbukan, Russia and "Carrying the Torch" by Jamie Corlett sensei and Tim Dean sensei, Jinyūkan, Canada. The other two are on special occasions; one sad and one happy.

On April 14th Mitsuru Yamashita shihan, 7th Dan, Sanbukan, USA departed this life. Toru Hashinokuchi, one of his close students and a friend, wrote a brief story of his long and eventful life for this newsletter.

Lastly we'd like to report the happy 80th birthday of Takeshi Kimeda sensei, 9th Dan, Aikido Yoshinkai, Canada. The article was written by his senior instructor, Chris Johnston, who has been training under Kimeda sensei for over three decades.

We ask for forgiveness if by any chance the arrangement of covering these two incidents in one column offends anyone. As significant as both figures are for the Yoshinkan history, we felt it was imperative to share their life stories with the AYF international community. From these articles you'll learn about their great contributions to the spread of Yoshinkan Aikido in and beyond their regions. But you'll also notice, when it's through these heartful sentences of the devoted followers, you'll feel as if you know these great sensei's personally. With this, we expect, your feelings deepen, making the bonds with Yoshinkan family stronger.

Thank you for the attention.

AYF foreign affairs

Autobiography of Yamashita Shihan
by Toru Hashinokuchi



Yamashita Mitsuru Shinan was born in Los Angeles on April 10, 1942, to parents originally from Hiroshima, Japan. After his birth, Yamashita and his family were transferred to the Manzanar Internment Camp, where he lived until WWII was over.

His father was Judoka, often bringing Yamashita to Judo and Karate dojos, but never forcing him to join the classes. As a youngster, Yamashita wasn't sure why his father did this and had no particular interest in martial arts at the time.

One day, during high school, Yamashita was sick and stayed home. He listened to the radio and heard, "A tiny Japanese man is effortlessly throwing big men around in martial arts matches! This is called 'Aikido.'" Yamashita was stunned and intrigued: thus began his Aikido journey. He immediately searched everywhere for an Aikido dojo, and finally found one that was run by Virgil Crank Sensei.

Sensei Crank was teaching "Yoshikan Aikido". Yamashita joined the dojo and after only 6 months he knew what he would be doing for the rest of his life: teaching Aikido

Several years later, Sensei Crank left for the Vietnam War and Yamashita had to take his place until Sensei Crank returned.

But Sensei Crank didn't come back.

Yamashita considered leaving the dojo, but his students wanted to learn more from him. The students told Yamashita that they wished to take the black belt (Shodan) test under his guidance. Yamashita was 3 dan (3rd degree black belt) at the time, and he reminded the students that he didn't have the correct syllabus for Shodan from Sensei Crank. Being an excellent problem solver, Yamashita created a Shodan test that covered all key Aikido techniques up to the 3 dan level. This quickly became the standard Sanbukan Shodan Test.

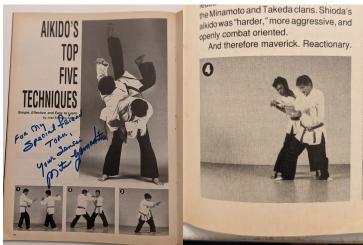
The Shodan test at Sanbukan dojo is extremely difficult and lengthy. Yamashita used to say "This test is the most difficult black belt test in the world." In the 60 year history of the Sanbukan dojo, approximately 6,500 people challenged for the Shodan test, but only 26 people passed. This number is unbelievably low compared to other martial arts. This rigor and these high standards have made the Sanbukan dojo and Yamashita proud.

In addition to his Aikido rank, Yamashita earned a 2nd degree black belt for Tang Soo Do under Chuck Norris. He also studied Judo, Brazillian Jiu Jitsu, boxing, Muay Thai, and Aiki Jujitsu under Don Angier. Sanbukan Aikido techniques are uniquely infused with the essence of all of these martial arts, creating a form of Aikido unparalleled in its versatility and adaptability.

Yamashita taught for approximately 60 years, directly instructing at least 30,000 college students and approximately 10,000 individual students during private lessons and group classes at the Sanbukan Dojo.

In the past he was interviewed on TV, and has appeared in the well-known martial arts publication, "Black Belt Magazine". He has also been in countless videos and has performed demonstrations in the US and Canada.





Before he passed away, Yamashita was teaching Self Defense based on Aikido as well as boxing classes at local colleges. Yamashita died on April 14th, 2021. He was 79 years old. The Aikido and martial arts communities mourn the loss of this dedicated, innovative, irreplaceable teacher

#### Shimbukan

Aikidoka's of Russia and Japan united together

## by Anastasiya Zhiliaeva

Shimbukan Dojo is located in Saint-Petersburg, Russia. Started as a small club for students, now Shimbukan club has several dojos in the city, leaded by elder students of 6th dan holder Shihan Evgenii Shimanovich, the founder of the club. Shimbukan provides trainings for students of all ages, from little kids to adults who already have experience in other martial arts. Years after foundation Shimbukan Dojo turned into the place with friendly atmosphere where students exchange their experience in Budo and help kids to find their way in Aikido. Our club regularly participates in national Aikido competitions and we are proud to say that we had raised several Champions among children and adults. Also, four times a year Shimbukan holds club competitions where all students can try their skills and test the ability to stay focused on your partner and technique in the tense atmosphere of contest.

When we think about the history of our Dojo, we remember the words of our Japanese Sensei Masazumi Matsuo, who told that Aikido is like a big tree with lots of branches and leaves that are represented as Dojos in many countries worldwide. And, as we can add, the roots of this tree are deep in Japan.

The history of Shimbukan club started when Evgenii Shimanovich passed an instructor examination to one of Aikido Yoshinkan founders, 10<sup>th</sup> dan holder Kiyoyuki Terada Sensei in 2003. At the same time Terada Sensei gave to a newborn Aikido club the name Shimbukan, meaning "genuine Budo". We are holding this title with gratitude and are very proud of having strong bounds with Japanese Aikido. Starting from 2003 we annually held Terada Sensei's seminars and were happy to welcome his oldest student Masazumi Matsuo for five-months internship and work in our dojo in Russia in 2005.



Kiyoyuki Terada Sensei and Shimanovich Sensei

Nowadays, when Terada Sensei is no longer among us, Shimbukan Dojo keeps this tradition of international exchange. Twice a year Shimanovich Sensei invites Masazumi Matsuo Sensei and Chizuko Matsuo Sensei and organizes seminars in which students of all ages can dive in the budo life for a couple of weeks. Summer event takes place in Sevastopol, Crimea. During this time Aikido students polish their technique and learn new techniques under the guidance of Japanese and Russian senseis. During the leisure time students may accompany senseis in exploring magnificent nature and historical sites of Crimea. These seminars are always a unique experience of communication between Senseis and students outside Dojo's tatami.

Masazumi Matsuo Sensei and Chizuko Matsuo Sensei also come to the biggest annual event of Shimbukan Dojo - Aikido Festival dedicated to the birth of Ueshiba Morihei. The festival is held in Saint-Petersburg, homeland city of Shumbukan club, in late November-early December as a series of trainings for students of all ages and levels that lasts for about ten days. This is a great opportunity to perform techniques with the guidance of Senseis, to reflect on our own technique and to refresh our feelings of Aikido as Matsuo Sensei always shows us new sides of Aikido Yoshinkan.

After this short travel to genuine Aikido we come up with tons of new ideas and discoveries, that we are eager to try in our Dojo in the next months.



Aikido Festival in Saint-Petersburg

The event became even more exciting since 2013 when Matsuo Sensei came to Saint-Petersburg with Japanese students for the first time. Once there were 9 students who came with Matsuo sensei to try Russian hospitality! Now Aikido Festival is not only an opportunity of improving technique, but also a place of international exchange, both in Aikido and cultural fields. Students of Shimbukan club organize a leisure time of guests as introduction to Russia and Saint-Petersburg, taking guests to ballet, museums, temples, city walks and restaurants with local food. Saint-Petersburg is a very beautiful European city with countless of museums and impressive atmosphere of imperial period of Russia. Just a walk in the city center where you are surrounded by picturesque architecture, various monuments and temples, small rivers with graceful old bridges easily becomes an unforgettable memory! Some guests even say Saint-Petersburg resembles Kyoto for them. In 2019 one of Matsuo sensei's students - Daiki Fukuhara - came to Saint-Petersburg for one year to practice Aikido in Shimbukan dojo and study Russian language. He took a leadership of children groups and always participated in the trainings of black belts. Daiki also successfully participated in All-Russian Aikido Yoshinkan Competition in Moscow where he won the third place.



Students of Matsuo Sensei and Shimbukan members in Yekaterininskyi Palace

Of course, such cultural exchange works in both sides. Almost each year Shimanovich Sensei comes with students from Shimbukan Dojo to Kamakura Gasyuku – the biggest workshop of Aikido Yoshinkan Seiseikai in Japan. Besides the workshop student have a possibility to participate in trainings in different Aikido dojos. Thanks to Matsuo sensei and Shimanovich sensei our students had an opportunity to take part in trainings leaded by Noriki sensei, Ando sensei and other senseis in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka.



Masazumi Matsuo Sensei, Chizuko Matsuo Sensei and Shimbukan club members in Kamakura Dojo

Also, Simbukan club was honored to participate in All Japan Yoshinkan Aikido Demonstration and Aikido demonstration in Urayasu. In 2020, just before pandemic, team from our dojo was lucky to participate in world competitions for children that are organized by Tsuneo Ando Sensei. The view of hundreds of young Aikidoka students performing waza on tatami at the same time was a real miracle. We believe that experience inspired our students to train even more. And with no doubts, our team became an example for other students of our club who would like to go to Japan next time. Of course, during all these visits Shimbukan members, guided by Japanese senseis and students, little by little understand Japan and Japanese lifestyle. Each trip to Japan uncovers new sides of this mysterious country and helps to understand the origins of Aikido.



Masazumi Matsuo Sensei, Evgenii Shimanovich Sensei and Shimbukan team at International Competitions for children in Urayasu

We hope that such intercultural exchange can enrich not only technique, but also a way of thinking of Aikido students and connect people of different nations on the single path of self-improvement.

Luckily, even now, when the world is divided and partly paralyzed by pandemic, we have an opportunity to continue trainings and take part in local competitions not only to keep the level of technique, but also to improve it. However, we keep hoping that the pandemic will be over soon, borders will open and we can once again meet our foreign friends on the same tatami.

#### **Carrying the Torch**

by Jamie Corlett and Tim Dean, Jinyūkan, Canada

In 2021 with the encouragement of Steve Nickerson Shihan, deciding to pass along his Halifax dojo location to Jamie Corlett Sensei and Tim Dean Sensei, Jinyūkan was forged.

合気即生活 (Aiki Soku Seikatsu: Aikido is life). For Jamie Corlett, becoming dojocho was natural extension of his Aikido life. "This is very inspiring and something I continue to read, say, and meditate on often even as I go into my 24th year of learning Aikido."

It all began in 1997 shortly after arriving to Canada from the UK, I was 7 years old and my family and I were new in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I was a very hyper young boy and I needed something to burn off my energy, my parents found an ad in the local newspaper about a martial art named Aikido. They reached out to the instructor, Steve Nickerson Shihan, having opened the Makotokan Dojo, just arrived in Nova Scotia after being relocated from Ontario where he was taught by Jim Stewart Shihan and Alister Thomson Sensei to name a couple.

After a few classes Nickerson Shihan had noticed something peculiar about me. He asked my parents one night "is there something you need to tell me regarding Jamie?" after a slight pause my parents responded "yes, he has ADHD and needs to burn energy off and learn self discipline."

ADHD is "Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a disorder marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development."

After that for the next several years I went to 2 classes a week until Nickerson Shihan moved to Greenwood, Nova Scotia in 2001 and opened a second location, to

which I trained 4 classes a week in both the children's and adult's classes.

In March 2004 at the age of 14 I received my Junior Shodan in the children's class and thus making me the first Junior Shodan in Yoshinkan Aikido in Eastern Canada, and in July of 2005 I became a Junior Nidan.

During this time, I was transitioning into high school and having lots of guidance from my parents and Nickerson Shihan, whom I see as my second father. I decided to wean myself from my ADHD medication using the techniques and lessons which I learned from practicing Aikido. I would like to say that I continue to not have to use medication to this day.



From there I have continued to train with Nickerson Shihan gaining as much from him as I possibly can, along with the top ranked instructors that he brought in to help all the students at Makotokan grow over time, and in February of 2006 I became an AYF licensed Shodan.

In 2015 I decided to travel to Japan for a 2 week 'vacation' and visit the Honbu Dojo where I proceeded to train in all the classes I could and get instruction from Noriki

Dojocho, Chino Sensei, Shimizu Sensei, Shigihara Sensei, Uchikawa Sensei, and Yanagihara Sensei. While i was there I was able to witness Uchikawa Sensei and Yanagihara Sensei most inspiring Yondan test. After watching the test and being in and around the Honbu Dojo I was very motivated and trained almost everyday, if I wasn't training in the Dojo, I was practicing Kihon Dosa everyday and in November of 2016 I achieved the rank of Yondan.

Then came 2020 with the Coronavirus and the world came to a stand still causing a lot of Dojo's to their doors some for the final time. During this time, we saw a lot of our Aikido community coming together and offering Zoom classes, interviews, webinars, creating groups on social media and some just reaching out to others whom they have never talked to before or even knew just because of these offerings.

Here in Nova Scotia, we have been luckier than most. Through all the trials and tribulations of being in a lockdown and the downturn of the hospitality industry, of which I use to be apart, I found myself in a unique situation, I was free from the stress and everyday commitment of going to work. I was able to spend 6 months with my wife and son everyday and I used that time to it fullest. Together as a team we were able to help my son get ready for the upcoming school year everything from reading, writing, counting, spelling his name, teaching him to ride a 2-wheel bike, and anything else he wanted to do. At this time, I also decided to start him on his Aikido journey and shortly thereafter he achieved his yellow belt. It was a very touching moment for me as I was honored to have my Sensei, with whom I trained with for 24 years with very little time missed, be the one who presented my son with his certificate.



I would not have been able to have this positive mindset during this pandemic without knowing Aikido. Learning to 'pivot and shift' when an incoming force is coming towards you and redirecting the negative energy and emotions that Coronavirus has brought with it."

For Tim Dean, the achievement was that of an unknown goal.

"My introduction to martial arts was at the age of 7 years when my parents enrolled me at the local judo dojo located in our neighbourhood. My memory of that time is a little faded these days but shortly after grading to the second level, my family moved to the east coast of Canada. Here, I was disappointed to find out that the town did not offer any martial arts training opportunities. I never forgot the joy I received when I was training. Life got in the way and fast forward 35 years. My first child has just been born and my wife, knowing of my fondness and memory of training, noticed that a small Aikido dojo was located near to our house. I had never heard of Aikido but stepped on the mats in September of 2007. I became enthralled with the atmosphere and energy being emitted by all.

Steve Nickerson Sensei's energy, love of Aikido, and style of training encourages one to obtain a deep-seated desire to continue returning to the dojo.

As I progressed through the ranks, I was able to notice a difference in the way I approached life, both physically and spiritually. After almost eight years on the mats, I attained shodan and was now part of the teaching rotation for the adult class, sempai for the youth class.

Through this time, I found that was taking on more responsibility within the dojo, my friendship with Steve Nickerson Sensei continued to evolve. At one point, our dojo changed location and with sensei living far from the dojo, it was at this time that I stepped up and inserted myself to look after the new location in his absence.

As life goes on and priorities change, sensei sat down one evening with Jamie Corlett sensei and myself to make an offer that would change our futures. My gratitude to Steve Nickerson Shihan is immeasurable as he offered his Halifax dojo to Jamie sensei and myself. Both of my children are now aikidokas and I have provided only one challenge to them, 'Do better'. I cannot wait to see how they progress."

Throughout our days, we find ourselves always talking about or referencing Aikido in someway and how it has changed our outlook on life.

仁 Jin - Benevolence 勇 yū - Courage 館 kan - House

"House of benevolence to others, and courage to bring calm mind and inner strength."

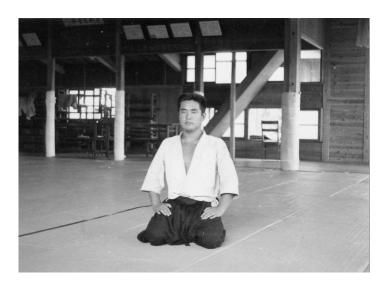
Jinyūkan will continue to spread Yoshinkan Aikido and the spirit of harmony.





Osu!

Kimeda Sensei Birthday Celebration



Kimeda Sensei was just 18 when he began studying Yoshinkan Aikido at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo. He initially wanted to join the karate club but it had been shut down due to an incident the previous year. So it was that he ended up joining the aikido club which was, at that time, affiliated with the Yoshinkan Hombu Dojo through Kushida Takashi Sensei. It was Kushida Sensei who initially took the young Kimeda under his wing and groomed him within the Yoshinkan. It was not long before Kimeda Sensei caught the eye of Shioda Kancho and by the time he graduated he was the captain of the aikido club and had been awarded 3rd Dan.

Shortly thereafter, in 1964, Kimeda Sensei left Tokyo, venturing out to North America where he would begin to lay the foundations for Yoshinkan Aikido. He first arrived in California, but spent only a short time there. He then moved on to Michigan and finally settled in Ontario, Canada.



After returning to Tokyo and living and training at the Hombu Dojo, he came back to North America again, this time finally settling in Toronto, starting a family and beginning the process of building Aikido Yoshinkai Canada. It was afterpic2 this point that he was also instrumental in bringing both Kushida Sensei and Karasawa Sensei to North America.

Almost 60 years later, Kimeda Sensei is still teaching and sharing his insights as the Chief Instructor of Aikido Yoshinkai Canada. He has been instrumental in bringing virtually every top instructor to Canada to share their own experiences with his students and continues to grow and learn as a martial artist. He holds the rank of 9th Dan and has brought literally hundreds of students to the black belt level — a number of whom are now some of the most senior instructors throughout North America. After such a long and respected career it is not surprising that he has touched Yoshinkan practitioners on almost every continent.



This spring, Yoshinkan practitioners and teachers from all over the globe came together virtually to take part in Kimeda Sensei's 80th birthday celebration. Of course, withpic3 the current restrictions on gathering due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the event could not be marked in person. Still, well-wishers sent video greetings and photos from years gone by to help mark this special day. The videos and photos were edited and presented to Kimeda Sensei in a subdued but safe celebration. They ranged from the serious, to the musical, to the comical. Once all of the submissions were put together, there were some 45 minutes of video for Sensei to enjoy. As he watched, he was quite moved by the sheer number of people who participated and sent their good wishes. There were many spontaneous comments

such as: "How did you find that person!?" and "Oh! I remember them!" Overall, Kimeda Sensei was extremely touched by the sincerity and love that the world-wide community expressed to him. It was a moving experience to witness.

If anyone is visiting the Southern Ontario region and would like to experience the legendary teacher in person, Kimeda Sensei is still quite actively teaching at his dojo in Hamilton, Ontario. Feel free to get in touch at www.aikido.ca.

Submitted by

**Chris Johnston** 









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