

Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai

SHIMBUN

Volume 25, Issue 1 - SUMMER Edition June 2018



Greetings From The Desk Of.....The President

Summer and Winter Season Arrives

As the summer season arrives in the Northern Hemisphere and the winter season in Southern Hemisphere, all I can say is "pew", this has been a very busy six months

There have been various tournaments to clinics conducted in virtually every category possible.

These clinics have been the study of basic techniques, advanced techniques, refereeing, score keeping, judo, weaponry, you name it, Shorinjiryu has it.

The Shinzen - A Champion of Common Ancestry

For over thirty years, the Shinzen has championed the belief that as a family bound by a common ancestry, we should not hold back information from each other.

Clearly, that is the case. We do share, and that only benefits the growth of our unique system.

Students visit member schools freely which fosters harmony within our closely knitted organization.

Kenryukan Traditions

A Kenryukan tradition is that attendance/participation in our regional tournaments are free to all Shinzen Black Belts!



We all recognize that there are variations within the system, adaptations of kata, kumite, weapons, even variants of tournament rules.

This is good, as one can accept what is valuable and/or interesting for their particular school. This further exemplifies the beauty of our martial art and what makes it accessible and most importantly, SUCCESSFUL!

The Cornerstone of the "Shinzen"

The cornerstone of who we are is defined in the word Shinzen - friendship.

As one of my black belts always tell our students when they participate in a tournament, whether it is their first contest or their thirtieth - "make a new friend".

As we work to get back to our regular circulation, more information will be published.

Myron M. Lubitsch, Hanshi
President



Shinan Kori Hisataka
22 April 1907 - 14 Aug 1988

JOINING THE KYOKAI

The Kyokai is open to all like-minded schools and students descended from Shinan Kori Hisataka. Schools may be asked to submit proof of lineage, to include documentation or video of forms practiced.

Contact Hanshi Lubitsch at:

join@shorinjiryu.org

SHORINJIRYU SHINZEN

KYOKAI OFFICERS

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"Karate Training Into Our Senior Years"

by Jim Griffin, Kyoshi

It has become apparent to me over the past few years that we are getting older. I know, a statement of the obvious, but I mean we as Karateka and as a group.

The "young" guys and girls are now pushing 50 and the older ones are well into their 60's and beyond. Take a look at our Shinzen Kyokai and you will notice the senior ranks are increasing due mainly to the fact that we are generally healthier and living longer and therefore we are able to continue our Karate studies much later in life.

This proves the value of learning a Traditional Art as opposed to many of the fads that are around today, we can train into our middle and old age and continue to practice our Karate where the non-traditional fighting systems can only last for you as long as your body can hold up. In other words, once you are too old to fight you are done.

Yes, it's great to test yourself in the ring and all the older Karateka have had their fighting careers but have now moved on to the discipline that sets us apart, our Kata.

I only have to look at my Dojo where only 2 of my students are under the age of 40 to see where we are going. Maybe, the fact that I'm older attracts older students whereas the younger people may go to a Dojo where they can be taught by a younger person.

Most likely.

Shorinjiryu Kenryukan Karatedo - Brooklyn, New York



Cont'd ~ Karate Training Into Our Senior Years

To be honest, when I was a younger man, all I wanted to do was to fight and Kata was something you did as an afterthought. How this has changed! I love Kata and want to improve my Kata so I spend a lot of time on Kata and I'm sure this is the case for most of the Seniors.

We still train hard in the Dojo and are able to mix it with some of the youngsters but Shiai isn't our main focus anymore.

I can foresee our Shinzen Shiai in the not too distant future having to cater for an over 60's division to be added to the existing over 50's division.

Food for thought?



"Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai"

The Largest Group of Shorinjiryu Practitioners Worldwide

A Gathering of the Shorinjiryu Family

Exchanging Knowledge, Spirit and Friendship

Greetings from the Kenyujokai Karate Club

by Tony D'Avino, Kyoshi

We Look forward to a great summer and outdoor training and we also congratulate our latest green belt, Tim Gatto. Omedeto Tim.

While thinking on what to write for our Shimbun, my thoughts went to last years' Shinzen. As I officiated various rings, I noticed that many of our students who were competing, were not breathing..... or breathing correctly.

To the uninitiated, that may sound contradictory. They were "breathing" but not Kokyu. If ever there was a "secret" in Karatedo, Kokyu is the secret!

As many a Sensei would agree, their most often given command in class is " BREATHE"!!!!...

All martial arts use some sort of breath control in their practice. Our particular version has us "retain" the breath for a short time,

to facilitate the flow of Ki energy, to stimulate the proper flow of the proper endomorphins and other bodily chemicals, and, to massage the internal organs.

This particular aspect of Kokyu refers to adding power to our techniques. "Kiai" refers to the joining of the mind, body and spirit through breath control, to unleash power that is greater than any of the individual components.

But Kokyu has other aspects...breathing sustains life. Kokyu also teaches the student how to absorb blows when hit. Kokyu comes into play in Zazen..as a way to attain Mushin. By concentrating on the Tanden and counting breaths, the student attains the proper "non grasping mind", Mushin...and is ready for combat.

There are also different combinations of short and long breaths that allow the breathing patterns to fit in with various combinations of techniques.

So, all of you out there..... "JUST BREATHE".



"A Birthday Celebration"

Kaicho Shunji Watanabe, Hanshi 9th Dan

I was asked to write a letter about my 80th birthday party in May, but I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for making such an incredible memory. Gratitude is a word that is underwhelming in the fact that it cannot express the feeling I have for the members and family that made the evening a tremendous surprise.

Words simply cannot express the gratitude I feel toward everyone that was able to participate in my surprise birthday party. I was genuinely surprised, not just by the event, but by the number of people that travelled great distances to make this very special evening.

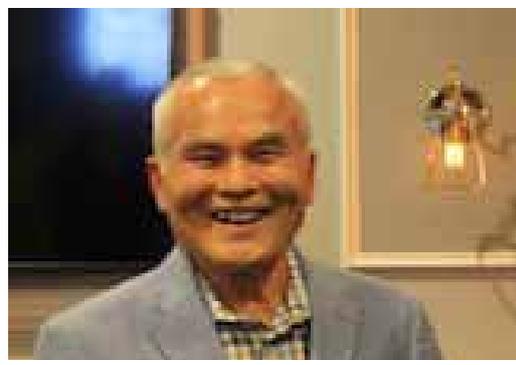
Shihan Daniel Hayes and members of the Island Budokan Karate Dojo traveled from Long Island, as well as, Hanshi Myron Lubitsch and members of the Imperial Dragon Hombu Dojo in Brooklyn, who made the several hour drive for my party and Hanshi Doug Roberts and members of the Canadian Shorinjiryu Kudaka Karate-Do Federation travelled even further to attend.

I was also very grateful to spend the evening with the Taylerson family, who helped my dojo many years ago. Sensei Jason Romer and the Seishinjuku Karate Dojo had sent a tremendous sculpture from Australia since they could not attend. Hanshi Michel Laurin and the Shorinjiryu Shindo Budo Kwai Dojo sent a wonderful video with many well wishers from Canada.

Many of my family members from Japan also sent video messages played during the party wishing me a happy birthday. I want to also thank Japan Karate Center members and their families for helping organize such a fun night. Thank you to those who organized and planned the event. I know it took a great amount of effort to make the night memorable.

I am truly humbled by everyone's kind words, and gifts I received. I cannot thank you enough for your generosity.

It is with great pride that I am fortunate to have the people in life that support this old tradition of training in the martial arts.



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"SELF CRITIQUE"

By Page Christis, Shihan

As I moved through the ranks in karate, the further along I progressed the less feedback I received from my instructor. I was expected to "self critique" and make appropriate adjustments. This way of thought is completely different than how instruction is conducted in western society. In the U.S., teachers are expected to prepare a lesson plan, which include objectives, an overview of the material, the timeline for instruction and a means to measure whether the objectives have been met. In western society students will blatantly ask their instructor, "What am I expected to know and what is on the test?" In the dojo, my Japanese karate instructor, Kaicho Shunji Watanabe expected me to "read his mind".

I was very fortunate and had a phenomenal sempai to help guide me along during my formative years in karate. He was very good at dissecting techniques and developing drills to master those skills.

As a senior student or instructor it is imperative to master all skills and techniques fundamental to Shorinjiryu. Everyone is always watching! Lower rank students are looking to you for guidance. They don't know any better. They think how you demonstrate a technique or skill is correct and will mirror your actions. It is therefore imperative that we teach the "correct way".

Technology has now made it quite simple to record yourself executing techniques. Use the video recorder on your cell phone to capture your performance. That recording can then be easily transferred to your computer. It is much easier to scrutinize your technique by viewing yourself on a large monitor. You can then make adjustments to your technique as needed.

Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate as taught by Shinan Kori Hisataka is a very unique Okinawan style. It is crucial that you "pass on" how this style is different and the logic behind the differences. If you don't, this style will be lost to future generations.

The vertical punch is an integral technique in Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate. But what truly makes the punch different from other styles is the "heel-hip-turn" executed during the punch. The thought process behind incorporating the heel-hip-turn is the utilization of the whole body to increase the power of the punch. In addition, the punch is executed with the assistance of the other arm.

When the fist is chambered prior to the punch, the opposite hand is extended outward. When the punch is thrust forward, the opposite hand is forcibly brought back to your side assisting in the rotation of the upper body (heel-hip-turn). The utilization of both arms increases the power of your punch by using more muscle mass.

The rational being that the use of two arms are stronger than one. This also follows along with Issac Newton's Third Law of Motion, for every action (force) in nature there is an equal and opposite reaction.



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Cont'd ~ Self Critique by Shihan Page Christis

One of the unique fundamentals of Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate is kokyu (breath control technique). Emphasis is placed on holding one's breath (tightening your core) while executing a strike or withstanding a strike. Other Okinawan styles emphasize just the opposite breath control. They exhale (tightening their core) while executing a strike.

They also use "kiai" which refers to a short shout yelled while performing or attacking. They believe that kiai will startle or intimidate an opponent.

Kokyu is a basic underling core principle of Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate but is easily forgotten unless a conscious effort is made to incorporate it in every practice. It is readily apparent when someone is not practicing correct kokyu: 1. They count out loud while you are delivering a strike towards them, 2. You hear them breathe out while executing a strike, 3. They become out of breath or start turning blue in the face while performing numerous large muscle group (aerobic) drills.



Sometimes the easiest thing to learn is the most difficult. Other Okinawan styles teach nekoashi dachi (cat stance), but I am not familiar with any other styles teaching tanshiki nekoashi (single cat step) & fukushiki nekoashi (double cat step). The ability to move quickly forward, backward and laterally is vitally important in Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate.

It does not matter whether you are attacking or defending yourself; you still have to be able to move fast. The first line of defense that is taught is to escape out of the reach of your opponent. If you are not quite fast enough, the second line of defense is to rely on your blocks to avoid getting struck. The thought process behind quick escapes is that it is best to avoid contact with your opponent. If you have to rely on your blocks to defend yourself, you might get injured.

The ability to kick effectively and efficiently is not an easy task. A strong kick starts with a solid base of support. Your support leg must remain firmly on the ground. You must not rise up on your toes.



Cont'd ~ Self Critique

by Shihan Page Christis

It is also essential that you kick with your whole body (hips) not just with your leg. In order to kick with your hips, you must allow your support leg's heel to turn slightly inward during the execution of the kick. You must also raise your knee preferably above 90 degrees whether you are kicking high or low. The ankle must remain tight (with no movement) no matter whether you are kicking with the heel or the ball of your foot. If you allow any movement of your ankle, you are giving up a considerable amount of power from your kick.



A good drill to test your kicking technique is to practice mae geri, yoko geri and mawashi geri from the ground (suwari waza). Sit in a modified seiza position with your toes bend under. Kick normally. This drill can be accomplished by either kicking in the air or against a heavy bag.

Your kicking form should be identical to when you are standing upright. You should still be kicking with your whole body (hips) and not just with your leg. This drill forces you to raise your knee to kick rather than allowing you to swing your leg

Shinan Kori Hisataka had his students practice this drill frequently. He also emphasized the practice of tsuranuki (striking through your target) rather than sundome (focus techniques). The rationale behind practicing tsuranuki has to do with muscle memory. Remember the old adage, "you never forget how to ride a bike".



When a movement is repeated over time, a long-term muscle memory is created for that task, eventually allowing it to be performed without conscious effort. In a stressful situation you will react in the same manner that you practiced, so the practice of tsuranuki is essential.

Several years ago, an adult student from another Okinawan style competed in shiai at Baltimore's tournament. This student did not practice striking the bogu (chest protector) or makiwara board. He previously only hit karate shields (hand held plastic pads). During the competition, he fractured several bones in his hand/wrist. His injury required surgery, which resulted in missed time from work. The injury was a result of his forearm and hands not being conditioned to withstand the impact on a hard surface.

Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate focuses on realistic, practical training. Students repeatedly hit and kick the bogu and makiwara boards. They practice attacking and defending themselves while stationary and moving, in both non- stressful and stressful situations.

Conditioning the body, and mind is crucial in being able to meet any demands you might encounter.

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Cont'd ~ Self Critique

by Shihan Page Christis

Another core component of Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate is kumite, a prearranged pattern (form) with one or two partners. Kumite in other Okinawan styles refers to sparring (fighting), a means of testing one's skills and techniques; which in Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate is called "shiai".

Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate's kumite is a means of testing one's ability to move which entails learning the appropriate distances to reach your opponent while striking and being able to escape an attack while incorporating correct stances, techniques, breath control and maximum power.

But in order to get the most from kumite, partners must actually aim for each other. One person attacks as the other escapes as they continue the pattern.



They must work together and make the training as realistic as possible. They are wasting their time if they aim away from each other. No one has to move in that scenario

Posted on the wall in my gym is a quote from the movie, A League of Their Own, which is very appropriate to the study of Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate.

It states, "If it was easy, everyone would be doing it!"

No one said that the study of Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate was going to be easy. It is quite the opposite and, I believe much more difficult to learn than other Okinawan styles.

But, there is sufficient rational justification to warrant the implementation of all the differences of Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate compared to other karate styles.

Page Christis, Shihan

Ookami Karatedo Club Hosts Kaicho Watanabe Seminar in London, Ontario

An amazing accomplishment for the **Ookami Karatedo Club** as we hosted this year's Kaicho Watanabe seminar in London.

A huge thank you to Kaicho Watanabe, Hanshi Doug Roberts, Hanshi Bob Cussler, Kyoshi Dan Hayes, Kyoshi Hiroshi Hisataka, Kyoshi Jean Eric Gibeau, Shihan Page, Renshi Kristine Miller, Renshi James Taylor, Renshi Joanne Champagne, along with all of the Yudansha from our Kudaka dojos plus Sensei Aron Polmateer and Sensei Brett Watson for their support today.

So honoured to have such a huge number of senior ranks from all over the Province, Country and World attend our weekend full of Shorinjiryu Karatedo. ARIGATO!



Ookami Karate Club - Hosts Kaicho Watanabe Seminar

Shorinjiryu Kenjiyukai

by Christina Daniels, Sensei



Greetings from Central New Jersey Karate in Edison, New Jersey!

We were so pleased to see as many Karateka as we did for the celebration of Kaicho Watanabe's birthday in April. Our students who were not able to attend should know about the breadth of one man's influence on others as a result of his diligence.

Because of Kaicho's single-minded focus on karate-do, he has created a model for others to emulate and share. Karate is a journey without completion, and it is one that requires attention, devotion and practice.

Shihan Peter and I try to impress on our students the importance of incorporating some training into every day. Our students, and we do not have the benefit of a dojo to attend daily - merely a space to practice together twice a week. Therefore, we must carry our dojo in our hearts and practice in the spaces of our lives.

I have sometimes thought that our circumstances separate the wheat from the chaff faster than other schools. However, I now believe that those of us who love karate cannot help but think of it and work on it daily. Those people who attend class, but do not have the passion, will become apparent in time and drift away.

It has become our philosophy: Let us focus on those who love Karate and practice daily (and let's face it, we know who they are). Let us share the message and the meaning of karate, as we have been taught, with those who truly care - so that Shorinjiryu as Shinan imagined it, can be preserved and continue.

We look forward to seeing all of the Shorinjiryu family at our next event and wish a happy and meaningful summer season to all.



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Shinzen Kyokai SHIMBUN Submissions

The Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai Shimbun accepts submissions on any Shorinjiryu related topic. Submitters do not need to belong to the Kyokai.

All submissions will be reviewed by the Editorial Board and the Kyokai reserves the right to reject manuscripts that market a product or service, are not in alignment with the Kyokai philosophy of non-interference with member schools, or that advocate one school over another.

Submissions should be in English, however foreign language submissions with English translations will also be accepted. The Kyokai reserves the right to make grammar, formatting, and other minor edits to improve the readability of the work.

Submit articles as Microsoft Word, Text, or Open Office formatted Word documents. Submit and identify digital photographs individually, in addition to including them in your document

The Shimbun publishes bi-annually by the beginning of Summer and Winter. Submissions are due by June 30 and December 31. Late articles may be held until the next edition.

Tony Fletcher, Renshi - Publications Director (tonyfletcher@bigpond.com)



Courtesy Kyoshi D'Avino



Kyoshi Dan Hayes and Students

Cont'd ~ "Specialist"

by John Mirrione, Hanshi



Growing up on the streets of Brooklyn I was no stranger to fighting. I took a liking to shiai competition; however, I did not do well in kata competition. In fact few would actually stand out in my mind among my classmates of equal rank to have excelled in kata at that time

My training priority was about to change as a result of an experience I had in class one evening. I was selected to spar with another green belt that did well in kata but not shiai. Much to my surprise he almost beat me because his techniques were well placed and efficient. This was an eye opener for me and forced me to change the way I trained.

I spoke to sensei about this and he told me that I could do well in kata if I just gave it more time and effort. I followed his advice and began coming to additional classes and staying after class to get help from my seniors. On occasion sensei would give me tips and guidance. He told me that I needed to stretch more and do my kata over and over again so my body not my mind remembered the moves. In this way I could put more effort in concentrating on the technique.

As time went on I began to do better in kata, however, I did not do as well as I did in shiai competition. This was so troubling to me that I felt compelled to ask about it. Sensei told me to increase my practice and that it would all balance out in time. As time went by, I became more confident with my techniques and found that my shiai practice became more natural. Tournament results began to change. I was finally winning in both kata and shiai, however, first place wins eluded me. Sensei started to increase my practice of yakusoku kumite putting more and more emphasis on it.

After promotion to brown belt, I was introduced to weapons practice by Sensei Tamon Kashimoto (Shorinjiryu kata champion), my second Shorinjiryu teacher. This was one more element of my karate training that would make me feel more comfortable practicing my karate. Learning how to move a weapon utilizing both my feet and body made the difference. Weapons training I found aided both kata and shiai techniques and vice versa.

The complexities of Shorinjiryu karate was now all coming together. I eventually came to understand that all aspects of Shorinjiryu training complement each other. Furthermore, besides those three elements we must venture into all aspects in order to become a complete martial artists and not just a specialist.

John A. Mirrione, Hanshi
Shorinjiryu Kenkokai karatedo

"Specialist"

by John Mirrione, Hanshi

While training in Brooklyn, New York under the guidance of Sensei Minoru Morita (one of the senior students of Shinan Kori Hisataka), students were sure to have each class different and more interesting than the last. Sensei's focus was on making each student qualified to defend themselves in any situation. In our small dojo in Brooklyn, New York, shiai practice took place in almost every class

Sensei Morita's reputation in the area was formidable. No one dared to challenge him, however, he knew that there was a possibility that a student could be challenged and the reputation of the school could be in jeopardy. He required his students to attend inter school competitions which were held frequently. We traveled to competitions along the east coast where we were required to enter the shiai contests. Of course we practiced kata, however, shiai was given the most attention.

Each school tried to outdo the other and each teacher took enormous pride in taking home the most wins. Students fought with the old style Bogu (chest protection) which took its toll on their hands and feet. Everyone wore their injuries like badges of courage.

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Shindo Budo Kwai - Adults 2018 Winter Camp



History in the Making

"Katas"

Are They Useful In Sparring

by Michel Laurin, Hanshi

That is the question of the century for many practitioners. I keep reading martial artists debating on the practicality or efficiency of the practice of katas in martial arts. Well, the older I get, the more I realize I know nothing, however I can't help but to give my opinion on the subject anyway.

What is a kata (form)? Some will say it's a combination of movements used to transmit fundamental, advanced, and even secret techniques to students from one generation to another. Others may say that it is a choreography that looks more like dancing than martial arts.

I think we have to separate the open or non-traditional forms from the traditional katas. In my opinion, they can both be beneficial in different ways.

There is no doubt that one can become a good fighter without practicing katas. But I think that the question should be, could one become a better fighter with the practice of katas?

And in my opinion, I have to say definitely! I personally have experience in different martial arts and fighting sports such as: contact karate, non-contact karate, judo, boxing, and kickboxing. Through those years of competition, I kept practicing and teaching katas and honestly, several times I did ask myself the question: "Why?"

To begin, I do believe that a practitioner can become a good fighter by working on sparring techniques, pads, and free sparring. But by adding the practice of katas, the practitioner will become an even better, more versatile and complete fighter.



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Cont'd ~ "Katas"

Are They Useful In Sparring

by Michel Laurin, Hanshi

For one thing, you can't spar full-out everyday for several hours a day without risking injury. That's why you cross train by doing activities such as weight-lifting, running, etc. Katas simply become one more tool that will help your fundamental techniques. Working on a kata or several katas is a good workout, it develops stronger stances, improves cardio, balance, coordination, focus, and more. All of those are important to a fighter.

If you think about it, boxers, kickboxers, and mixed martial artists all practice katas in some way. I remember a long time ago while practicing at a boxing gym, my coach would have me repeat a series of movements (punches) in the air with specific footsteps. He would let me work on that series for a long time, then he would come back, look at me, and correct my form. I would then ask when I could step in the ring and spar? He would reply, "Your form is not ready," he would then teach me a different combination and again let me repeat it in the air over and over. This reminded me of katas a lot.

Then came the bunkai, the coach would get the pads and have me work my combinations, hitting the pads and avoiding his strikes while explaining the applications of the combinations and footsteps he had me repeat for hours. It was pretty much the same in kickboxing but adding the kicks to it. I worked with kickboxing trainers and champions that created several combinations of techniques in punching pads and then kicking pads, we would repeat those combinations everyday. It was not too much different from practicing basics and katas.

In the early 90's I was invited to spar with a famous kickboxing fighter, he was the heavyweight world champion at the time, so we spared for three rounds. We then became good friends and I spared and helped him for at least a year. He was always impressed with my kicks and form in general while we were sparring so he asked me what he could do to improve his form to become a better fighter.

The problem was that he only practiced for a short period of time before he went straight to professional fighting. He was an amazing fighter, very strong, and in top shape but he was lacking a foundation and that was stopping him from getting even better. Now some will say, well he was good enough to be a world champion without practicing katas. That's true but the question was how could he be better than himself? And I think the practice of katas would have helped him to achieve that

Now let's talk about one of the differences between traditional katas and open form.

I think it's the bunkais.

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Cont'd ~ "Katas" Are They Useful In Sparring

Practicing without understanding the application of what you're doing is limited. Also, a lot of the techniques that are taught through katas are meant for self-defence and not sport martial arts. So in that case katas are great tools to teach those self-defense techniques as long as we learn the applications (bunkai).

In conclusion I don't pretend to know more than others, I always consider myself more of a fighter than a kata practitioner but I always practice my katas and strongly believe they made me more versatile and that I would have not have had the same success as a fighter without katas.

I also, for the past 40 years, have been teaching my students the same way I learned and practiced and I am proud to say that they excel in both sparring and katas.

Have fun practicing your katas as they will allow you to keep practicing and improving way after your competitive years.

Martially yours,

Michel Laurin, Hanshi



修行 Shugyō

By Alberto Perez, Rokukyu

一期一会 -- ichi-go ichi-e

I started at the dojo thinking that I wanted to develop more spirit, focus and concentration. I wanted this because I had read that you improve those with karate, but I had no idea how it happens, I thought it was through the process of being observant and following orders.

When I started I understood 空手 as empty hand, and it made perfect sense that we used our hands without weapons. Through time I see it more as the hand that moves without the mind – in that way it is empty from control, the hand just acts on instinct and reflex. To attain that state is really the same state of mind as meditation where your mind is “empty” from distractions. If you think about it as “zen” then karate or the proper study of a martial art is an “active zen”.

I’ve tried different approaches to meditation through mindfulness, to vipassana (budhist) and now karate. To me this active zen aligns more with who I am and I can understand what pushed monks to move away from zen into active zen which not only takes care of the mind but also of the body. That reminds me of ying and yang, can’t make a strong mind without a strong body and vice versa.

Of course, the first months of class I was too busy trying to figure out how to stop feeling like an octopus with 8 hands and more like a human with 2 hands. For someone who had always been a “natural” at sports I felt super clumsy in the dojo and I felt it was a small, confined space. But, pretty soon we went through the concept of 一期一会 in the dojo, a concept I had ran across in a green tea ceremony and which resonated strongly with me. Once chance, one encounter.

This is the first and last time in your life that the situation is going to be exactly like this – so make the most of it. You can talk about doing mindfulness, but this is living mindfully and with purpose every second in a beautiful way. I wrote it in my office door several years ago and it is still there for me to read every day. I now only have 6 hands and feet and the dojo feels large.

To me the day we talked about 一期一会 represents the real moment that I started to understand how the physical training and spiritual training in karate were one and the same. It helped me to understand our motto of individual development in mind and body. By that point I was already addicted to trying to understand how to use the body more efficiently and being more aware of it for better karate and how that reflected on my daily life – and now I gained the connection I wanted to how the spirit grows by karate.

ありがとう for this chance.



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Sensei Jason Romer and his students - from the Watanabe-ha Federation Seishinjuku Dojo in Brisbane



Shinzen Brother-Hood

Shorinjiryu Koshinkai Karatedo Australia 2018 National Training Camp

by Jim Griffin, Kyoshi

On Sunday 29th April, members of Koshinkai travelled home following a long weekend attending the 2018 Koshinkai National Karate Training Camp. Flying in from Melbourne and the Blue Mountains with long drives from Coonabarabran, Bribie Island, Murgon, Brisbane and Sydney, Instructors and students converged on Coffs Harbour on Friday 27th April.

It was a full program of Kihon, Kata, Buki-Ho, Yakusoku Kumite, Goshin Jutsu, with some Shime and Kansetsu waza thrown in as part of the Yudansha gradings. We specifically revisited kata Seisan spending time to fully understand the technical aspects of this kata.

Of particular mention is the introduction of a new weapons kata taught by Kodama Sensei and introduced to Koshinkai by Shihan Des Paroz. Utilising the Eku (Oar), Shihan Paroz taught the group "Goeku no Eku" which will be a component of our Yondan grading requirements.

To top off an excellent training camp, Yudansha gradings were conducted. The following Yudansha promotions and Titles are announced:

Renshi Graeme Bowden	to 6th Degree Black Belt
Tasshi Marnie Roberts	to 5th Degree Black Belt
Dee Foster	to 3rd Degree Black Belt
Clinton Andrews	to 3rd Degree Black Belt
Deji Balogun	to 2nd Degree Black Belt
Leisa Dunmore	to 2nd Degree Black Belt
Sam Dennien	to 1st Degree Black Belt
Jaimelee Milliner	to 1st Degree Black Belt
James Quaglino	to 1st Degree Black Belt
Olivia Paige	to 1st Degree Black Belt
Terry Allen	to Shodan-ho

Renshi Graeme Bowden, 6th Dan	Awarded the title of "Shihan"
Sensei Leanne Sippel, 4th Dan	Awarded the title of "Tasshi"

Our thanks to the Chief Instructors, Kyoshi Jim Griffin and Kyoshi Max Estens for their leadership in the camp. To Shihan Des Paroz for the instruction of our new Oar kata. To Renshi Tony Fletcher for organising the camp and instructing alongside Tasshi Dean McKernan, Tasshi Marnie Roberts and Tasshi Leanne Sippel.

And lastly but not by any means the least, the Yudansha and Mudansha students who committed to attending the camp, putting their heart and soul into the training.



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"The Importance of Progression"

by Joshua Tuck, Shodan

Throughout our entire lives we progress gradually and slowly. School is a good example of this. In school we have grade levels that gradually progress in difficulty. The belt system in karate is an obvious example of this. Learning and practicing more advanced techniques as you slowly get better and understand more. This is extremely obvious but even more subtle examples exist.

It is said that it takes 3 years to learn to punch. This number may not be accurate for everybody but it does take a long time. The technique itself takes a long time to master with even green and purple belts still struggling to do it correctly.

The intricacies of the technique are not easy to see and takes a lot of practice and study to be aware of them and apply to your technique. This is why we have them progress slowly before all out shiai.

First we have them stay stationary while punching the air or a target. This allows them to get a feeling for their body in relation to the technique. Next we have them do tanshiki waza, where we add a single movement before the technique. After that we add a partner to execute the single movements against so we can better visualize executing the technique on a live opponent without any of the danger.

After tanshiki kumite we add more movements and complexity in fukushiki kumite. After all of these progressions they are ready for a live opponent in shiai.

Outside of the technique it takes a long time to progress to be able to punch an opponent. The bones of the human body are very hard and without proper conditioning you will most likely break your hand. This is why we slowly progress in intensity of knuckle conditioning.



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"Cont'd ~ The Importance of Progression"

by Joshua Tuck, Shodan

The first conditioning students are exposed to are knuckle push ups. Newer students are encouraged to use only use one fist at a time, just hold the push up position, or use their knees if they are un able to do them straight away. Next they punch the soft bags to make sure that their wrist is straight so they don't hurt themselves on harder targets.

After soft bags they progress onto the white bogu. The white bogu offers some safety for your knuckles, but will still hurt if you hit incorrectly. Finally you move onto the black bogu which is about the same hardness as human bone structure and offers no safety net for hitting wrong or unconditioned knuckles.



If we just threw a new student into a shiai match or using the black bogu they wouldn't have the necessary prior knowledge and prior experience to succeed.

Progression is important in this way. It allows to take what you already know or can do, and get better at you own pace.

"Naihanchin Kata"

by Vincent Capers Jr. Kyoshi

I started training in the early 1980's. The first kata I learned was Naihanchin. It took me several months to perfectly memorize the sequence of techniques. When I became a green belt, the class was preparing for a tournament. At the end of the class, everyone demonstrated their kata for the class. Hanshi Myron would provide comment and tips for improvement.

On this particular day, my concentration fell to the Black Belts. They all did something called Naihanchin kata, but it wasn't exactly the same kata that I took months to learn. Some of the differences were subtle, more emphasis on the kicks, bigger steps and faster turns than I had seen before. Other difference were outright modifications, extra triangle steps, extra chops, different openings, different endings. I watched, with my eyes wide open, absorbing every move, memorizing what impressed me the most.

That night I went home and practiced in private, imitating the Black Belts. The kata I learned was in a new light. I started to add elements from the Black Belts' form into mine. The extra chops, that was cool. Let's add them in. The extra triangle steps, add them too. I practiced this version of Niahanchin kata at home for two weeks. I was planning to show Hanshi Myron my invention the day before the tournament and I was going to get a glowing review and win first place in the tournament. I was very naïve.

In front of the entire class, I was berated for not practicing what Hanshi, himself taught me. The tournament came I did the boring, original version of the kata I learned. I still didn't understand why the Black Belts' form was different from mine. One day Hanshi told me that the Black Belts practiced kata in a way that suited their personality and physical capabilities. However, it was important that I practiced the same way I was taught so that the style will not morph out of control. I did as I was told.

A year or so later, I met Kaicho Watanabe, for the first time, at an open tournament. He performed Naihanchin kata. It was so different from what I was taught that I barely recognized it. I was totally confused at this point. Hanshi Myron, gave me a history lesson. He told me that Shinan Hisataka, taught each of his students differently. He based their kata on their mental, spiritual and physical being. Therefore, Kaicho Watanabe's kata should be different from Hanshi Myron's. Then, I finally understood.

Lately, the topic of standardization has been raised. Why don't we have a standardized set of kata? A great deal of time and effort has been spent on this topic. Last year, Hanshi Myron asked the leaders of each schools within the Kyokai to provide a video of Naihanchin kata, as it was taught to them – a survey. Hanshi Myron hoped that it would help us gain a better understanding of where we are and hopefully help us plot a course to where we would like to be. I had the honor of assembling the provided clips into a comprehensive video. Here is the link to the video on YouTube.

<https://youtu.be/csZ0pjWwrLU> Please take some time out and watch the video. Maybe watch a few times, then let us know what you think.

Vincent Capers Jr. Kyoshi

The Amazing Taiko Drummers Set the Shinzen Kyokai Shiai Alive

