



Around the Dojo

We are Off to a Great Start

Watanabe Hanshi

This year of 2008 seems to be busy with events and exciting prospects for the future. It is only May and I/we have been to Australia, hosted a clinic and two tournaments. The Canadian tournament is on the horizon and we are attending in higher numbers this year with the newly adopted training method of Koshiki to add to our regime. This year as last is a great opportunity for growth in all areas and I humbly thank you all for embracing my Sensei's teachings and my commitment. Our relationship with the Australian Shibu is a prime example of what is manifest from our efforts and aspirations. We can only get stronger from our consolidated efforts as is realized by our recent trip "Down Under".

While in Australia for the second time I was fortunate enough to see more of the country on our training tour. The beauty still impresses me almost as much as the warm

feelings and hospitality of all, especially our hosts Jim and Leslie Griffin. All of the students were very accommodating and respectful and it made our trip delightful. I was very happy to see that our karate is improving with all of the students via the help of their sincere seniors; Jim *Shihan*, Max *Shihan* and Des *Renshi* and many more. I would also like to take this moment to thank Danny Hayes *Shihan* for his assistance in all matters, both training and administrative during this trip. His help was invaluable and enjoyable.

I would also like to express my apologies to the Federation and our guests of the 2008 Maryland Hombu SKWHWF tournament. I realize the timing was difficult for many and notice was short, but it was important to have this small yet great event and I thank all of you for doing your best to make it happen.

Federation News

Daniel Hayes *Shihan*

I would like to mirror Watanabe *Kaicho* in his recognition of so much that was accomplished in the past year. From the movie with Michel Lauren *Kyoshi* to the Australian Shibu and all in the midst of our newly formed Federation structure and training is quite impressive. We have hosted more than three clinics, three tournaments, been overseas and across the continent and to other countries. We have codified much with much collaboration and are making many steps toward being recognized both internally and externally as a professional and viable World Federation. That is due to the Kodansha, Yudansha and Mudansha, all members pulling together and focusing on our goals and processes. So like *Kaicho*, I and all of the Sensei out there would like to

personally thank you all for your efforts.

The dinosaur of the past, "there is too much to do" is becoming extinct. A student recently came to me to relay his thoughts... he said, "Sensei, this is great. Not only can my family get more involved but now there are so many opportunities I do not have fight my schedule so much. That takes a lot of pressure off! This is great!"

Our goals of competency and community involvement play directly into our unity and growth. We are broadening our student base and our younger generation is stepping into our future more competently than before and it is wonderful to see. That being said let me once again offer my congratulations to

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Upcoming Events

- May 25, 2008 - Canadian Tournament, Montreal Canada
- June 7, 2008 - Open Clinic - Long Island, NY
- August 16 - 17, 2008 - Advanced clinic and Yudansha Testing - Baltimore, MD
- October 12, 2008 - International Shinzen Shiai - Brooklyn



Over the past 12 months, the Australian Shibu of the SKWHWF has gone through a process of assimilating so much that is new to us. Following the example of Hanshi Watanabe, Shihan Dan Hayes, Shihan Page Christis and Sensei Richard Alicea from their visit to our shores in March 2007, we have been practicing refined ways of standing, walking and turning, as well as a variety of different forms of kata and kumite.

While this has been a challenging process, we are all truly excited to be able to get closer to the original teachings of Shihan Hisataka, and those of his key student, Hanshi Watanabe. We feel privileged to be able to learn from such a gifted, dedicated and humble man.

In April 2008 we again welcomed Hanshi Watanabe and Shihan Dan to Australia for another National Training Camp (3 day clinic), along with Senpai Zorrien Jomo. Over

this time, we had the opportunity to further refine the way we stand, walk and turn, as well as practice tanshiki kumite, yakusoku kumite and kata. We were also privileged to have Hanshi Watanabe share much insight into his training with Shihan Hisataka, and aspects of karate philosophy. Many of our number are busily learning as much as they can about Bun Bu Ryo Do, Ikken Hissatsu, Karate ni Sente Nashi and other important concepts.

We hope that our visitors enjoyed their short visit as much as we enjoyed having them. Of course a visit to Steve Irwin's Australia Zoo was a highlight for them, and a highlight for all of us was watching Senpai Zorrien put into practice a variety of self-defense techniques from the carnivorous Australian marsupial, the Drop Bear, a close but deadly relative to the Koala.

Under the leadership of Shihan Jim Griffin and Shihan Max Estens, Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe Ha Karate Australia is moving into a new phase of steady growth. We have six dojo operating along Australia's east coast, from Innisfail in Tropical North Queensland in the north, to Sydney in the south. A seventh dojo is shortly to open in the state of Tasmania (also known as the Apple Isle), and there are plans afoot for new dojo in the state of Victoria, and another in Queensland. If all goes well, we will have nine dojo operating in four states of Australia.

An open invitation is extended to all our colleagues in Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe Ha to visit us if you're ever in this part of this world. The friendship and respect we have seen extended in all parts of this school has impressed us, and we hope to return the same.

www.shorinjiryu.com.au

Federation News

(Continued from page 1)

Ian Rosenblatt, Patricia Skrzypek and Abigail Coleman on your recent promotions and demonstrations. Good luck to the soon to be tested Mudansha and Yudansha this August. Remember we are all testing every day and in every training session.

Thanks again also to Stephanie Coleman for her arduous work on this newsletter as the Editor. Please avail yourself of the opportunities this publication has to offer and consider how you might contribute to our next issue and the Federation as well. Also thanks to all of the officers and Sensei for setting an example for our future leaders.

OMEDETO TO ALL,

Dan Hayes - Fukuo Kaicho

New Goshinjitsu Classes

Senpai Zorrien Jomo and Boris Nadleman have been offering classes in Goshinjitsu at the local Lynn Bricks women's only gyms. In addition, they have added follow up classes at the Japan Karate Center on Saturdays.



David is a white belt studying with Senpai Ian Rosenblatt at the UConn satellite Island Budokan Dojo.

Having known Senpai Ian for many years now, I had been audience to many slideshows, stories, and lessons concerning the world of Island Budokan. When he offered to train myself and several of our mutual friends we all jumped at the offer. It was something different for all of us. For some it was the idea of perfecting the physicality of their body, gaining flexibility, strength, and understanding how to use it to gain as much power as is possible. For others it was an activity to release the stress of school that was enveloping them everyday due to the sedentary lifestyle of primetime programming they had reluctantly adopted out of a lack of options. For me, it was finally another chance to compete.

After leaving high school for a Division I school, I had also left the world of competitive sports. I had effectively found avenues of competition in small venues like the racquetball court and intramural sports, but the absence of the formal environment was still apparent. This was, for me, the allure.

Of course this eventually faded into merely a simple pleasure behind the scenes. All of the enticing attributes that were the initial allure for everybody blended together as one, and almost immediately the lessons and the history of the style became a driving motivator. The idea of the ability to

become great against the backdrop of a daunting physical challenge pioneered by the students before us pushed us to



be better. The notions of respect conveyed by Senpai Ian's teachings, which in many ways were lessons from childhood, but were also in many ways new avenues of looking at similar situations, began to allow for a better understanding of other people, and gave us more patience. As a whole, the discipline was a meditation, and the journey which we were all embarking upon, drew us all closer as friends.

The competition itself was no longer about us and our basic wants and need for competition, although it was enjoyed. Instead, it was a chance for us to help the other members of the dojo, both literally in doing the chores assigned and in the ways that we conducted ourselves. We all wanted to make impressions, and I suppose with this as our goal, we wanted to demonstrate Senpai Ian's value as a teacher. These may have been the farthest things from our minds at the onset of our teaching, but they were the greatest desires at the end. And now, months later, with new life adventures looming and frightening concepts appearing, the lessons of the dojo remain with us.

Kid's Corner - The History of Snow

by Julia Hoffmann

Julia is an 8 year old Gokyu in the Island Budokan Dojo.

Have you ever wondered where snow comes from? I used to. My friend told me. Now I know.



It all happened a million years ago when a young dragon named Montuko went to school for the first time. When he got there, he saw a unicorn named Jananzana. He went over to Jananzana and said "Hello, I am Montuko. Do you want to be my friend?" And Jananzana's reply was "No way". Montuko said "why"? Jananzana said, "You are a dragon and you are the only dragon." "So?" said Monkuko. "So, I am not going to hang out with you or else I'll be different like you." Said Jananzana.

Montuko's day did not get any better.

First he got a really mean substitute teacher. Next he got a 10 out of 100 in his math test. Also, nobody played with him at recess. So at the end of the day, he went straight home. When he got home, he ran outside crying. When his mother came outside she said, "What's wrong?" "It was the worst day of my life, nobody likes me all because of Jananzana." said Montuko. His mother told him to breathe in and out three times. HUUUUU, haaaaa, huuuu, haaaaa, huuuu, haaaa. And then something weird came out. "Whats' this?" asked Montuko. "I don't know" said mother. "I will make a doctor's appointment." When Montuko got to the doctor's office, he was very nervous; he didn't know what was happening to him. When it was his turn, Montuko found out that all that was coming out of him was frozen precipitation. (snow). The doctor said

it would go away in a few months. That night Montuko didn't know what to do. If he falls asleep the frozen precipitation would come out, but if he stays awake, he would do even worse on his test tomorrow. Finally, he decided to go to sleep. The next morning, Montuko was very cold. "The frozen stuff!" said Montuko. Turned out Montuko got a cold from all this, so he did not go to school for three months!

Fast forward twenty years.

So he grew up and got married and it would happen just the same each year. But then September 21st, he had 3 children and the same thing happened to them. They would be the only dragons and they too were teased by Jananzana's kids. Snow would come out of them. They would have kids and it would happen all over again. That's where snow comes from.

I started practicing Qi Gong in January of this year, attending a ninety minute class once a week at a local fitness center. Qi Gong is an ancient Chinese art, which teaches a person how to cultivate their qi, or internal energy, to promote the natural healing ability of their body. Both Qi Gong and the martial art T'ai Chi involve practicing a series of slow, flowing, meditative movements. The series of movements practiced are the same, with T'ai Chi being more focused on the self-defense aspect of the movement, while Qi Gong is more attentive to the healing aspect of the exercise. Practitioners of T'ai Chi and Qi Gong believe that illness stems from an imbalance in the flow of energy throughout one's body, and that the forms they practice help to correct that imbalance, achieving good health.

My instructor for the class is American named Brian Coffey, and when I met him he reminded me of a hippie from the sixties who never grew up. I learned later on that my first impression was very far from the truth. He had been in the military and then later was a computer programmer in the corporate world. By his own admission, he was a typical American, who had back problems and was quick to anger. If you met him now, though, you would see him as a very laid-back, accepting type of person.

Brian is a student of Dr. Tzu-Kuo Shih, founder and director of the Chinese Healing Arts Center in Danbury, Connecticut. Master Shih and his family have been practicing Qi Gong for six generations. Brian also practices T'ai Chi under the direction of Master William Ting, who teaches T'ai Chi, Qi Gong and Bagua at his Silver Tiger school in Mount Laurel, New Jersey. Both teachers are very experienced in their art. Brian and his wife Fran, under the guidance of Master Shih, perform weekend healing workshops in which you can learn not only how to heal yourself through balancing your own qi, but to also sense and balance other people's qi.

My first Qi Gong class was quite an experience. I first learned how to feel my inner energy, or qi, in my hands.

Soon after that I became skilled at holding that energy like a ball in my hands in front of me, and by the end of the first class I was radiating that ball of energy six feet around me. It truly amazed me to be able to feel that type of energy in my own body.

My typical class starts out with a lot of talking. Brian welcomes questions and loves to talk about the many aspects of Qi Gong, and very often my mind is overflowing with topics such as acupoints, meridians and many other Qi Gong concepts. Then we spend some time practicing the Qi Gong movements. These movements, although slow and gentle, can be very quite complex and hard to learn to do correctly. After the movements practice comes about a thirty to forty minute meditation session, in which you learn to relax so as to allow the energy to flow unimpeded throughout your body. Sometimes instead of the practicing the Qi Gong movements, Brian shows us an exercise in which to relax us or to clear bad qi from our bodies. After the meditation, class is officially over, but many times we stay another ten to twenty minutes just talking.

I've learned a lot from these talks: for instance, if you have bad qi that you need to get rid of (like anger or anxiety), you can direct the bad qi into a living tree, which can absorb it and disperse for you. You can also direct it into any wooden object also, but if you do, that energy will not dissipate, as the wood is not alive, and anyone who touches that wooden object could pick up your bad energy!

I feel that practicing Qi Gong has helped me in a lot of ways. The arthritis in my hands that have plagued me for the last few years has practically vanished. I am more aware of my balance; something which I hope will help to improve my Karate training also. I feel that I can relax myself now when I am nervous or upset.

I hope to continue my Qi Gong training for as long as I can. It is a fascinating art, and I would recommend that anyone interested in becoming healthier to try either a T'ai Chi or Qi Gong class.

New Dojo Opening

“Opportunities do not come on their own, we need to create them!”

Beginning May 3, the SeiRyuKai Dojo will begin offering classes at the Nubeena School Hall in Nubeena on the Tasman Peninsula. The Dojo is being opened by Sensei Barry Bishop and will be the first Shorinjiryu affiliated school in Tasmania! The school principal has agreed to provide the hall free of charge as he is looking at it as being a community service similar to the scouting movement. In addition, the school produces a weekly newsletter that is sent to all parents and they have agreed to give Sensei Barry a page. Sensei Barry is also advertising his classes by posting notices on the community notice board at the local shop. Everyone entering the shop passes the board and all community activities are pasted there.

Omedeto! We look forward to hearing updates from Sensei Barry, we are sure he will be a great success.

Meiyodan or honorary rank is generally awarded to those who support the Ryuha in a limited capacity, whether it is physically or technically, in an extended and/or sincere manner. It can also be awarded as recognition for accomplishments of merit that all benefit from either by example or directly. One example would be President Teddy Roosevelt who was awarded a Meiyodan by Jigoro Kano O Sensei for his contribution to the World and his character in addition to his limited experience in Judo training among other attributes. Another would be Minoru Morita *Shihan*. Morita *Sensei* was awarded a Meiyodan in Judo for his years of experience in Shorinjiryu Karate which afforded him the skill and technical knowledge to demonstrate a level of understanding and ability commensurate (aji no haru) a Dan ranking but not of age to compete for the rank. So it may be surmised that a Meiyodan is not necessarily a working rank but certainly one of value, often more telling than a “working rank”.

These ranks were developed to honor accomplishments and **contributions** as well as life experience. In another example, it would not be unusual to see a Ryuha honor a “friend” such as a company official for the support given. The Chief CEO of Honda may be presented a Meiyodan for the company’s grants to the Kodokan to support the organization. These practices are not uncommon in the west. We give honorary degrees for life or technical experience. The Nobel Peace Prize is another example. I am sure you can see that this is not as uncommon as it may have first seemed.

This turns my thoughts to another related topic regarding tenure as in Alumni in academic institutions. Many Alumni give back to said institutions because they realize the worth of their experiences gained during their years of study. Some help manage the Alumni organization or arrange fund raising or recruitment or any other manner of support.

As intimate or prolific as these institutions are, none impact one’s personal life as much as the dojo. None have the intrinsic value to life in such an all encompassing scope, yet offers solutions in such subtle and related ways. WE, as accepting members of this fellowship called Shorinjiryu Kenyukai and particularly those of Yudansha / Kodansha honors both past and present have an obligation (giri) to remain members in good standing as long as we benefit

from our experiences. Who can honestly say they no longer benefit from the lessons learned in the dojo? Who can honestly say they could have learned them in any other way? If so, why did you choose the dojo to learn? You accepted the life-long benefits and enjoy them today. Are you doing as much for your dojo, Sensei or Ryuha as you would for an institution that does not even know your name? Does this seem right to you?

I know many use the excuse (“reason”) that they cannot make the same commitment any more and are leaving so as to not be disrespectful to Kaicho or the Sensei. So then leaving the Ryuha entirely, with your knowledge and abilities is how you honor, respect and appreciate all that was afforded you?

Simply put, all one needs to do to honor and show appreciation is to remain loyal to the Ryuha or dojo. Contribute time, expertise, opportunity, financial support, organizational support. Do not wait until someone asks; do as you were taught in the dojo. Ikken issatsu, attack first and strong without warning, seize the opportunity and take the initiative to get involved to any degree. Come to the dojo once a month in gi to show kokoro. I can think of many, many things one who is not physically capable or is geographically challenged can do. The one thing I cannot bear to think of doing is turning my back on the one place that has meant and done so much for me and for so many.

So ask yourself, what can I do? Or offer to help the organization that has made such an impact on who you are today. I keep wondering about all those Yudansha I got to see again at Kaicho’s 50th reunion and all of the stories of how Kaicho and the Ryuha impacted them. All talked about how invaluable their experiences were. Each experience was ended with a remark about how much they missed it or wished they never left.

Well every day is a new opportunity. Kaicho is waiting, as are my students. We can all benefit from your experience both in the dojo and out. Your past is and can be our future. Your presence, physically or otherwise can only make us stronger. Your absence has definitely made the place you called your home weaker.

Now is the time...

COMING SOON

Keep your eyes out, in the works is the new

SHORINJIRYU KENYUKAI WATANABE-HA WORLD FEDERATION WEB SITE

Many thanks to Senpai Jason Romer of the Shishikai Dojo in Brisbane for taking on this endeavor.

Last year's black belt pre-test in Baltimore was a very life-changing experience for me. It all began one hot summer day in 2007 when I was pulled over by Kaicho and Shihan Page to talk after class. They told me that they thought I was ready to take the black belt pre-test that following September. Even though I was scared and worried at first, I knew that I would do fine since I received the approval of Kaicho and Shihan Page. The day's started to get longer and longer up until the biggest day of my life, September 9, 2007.

I remember everything from what had happened that day. I woke up with a big smile on my face. I remember saying to myself, "Let today be the day that I shine, and let me show everybody what I'm capable of doing." I will never forget that moment when I said that life-changing statement. Trying to calm me down on the car ride to the dojo from my home, all my dad said was "Just do your best, and don't get distracted by anything. I know you are competent of doing this."

Arriving at the dojo, I started to feel more and more pressure. I just wanted to get this over with. I've never been this much vexed in my life. Once the test started, I said to

myself, "This isn't that bad after all. It's just me doing my best karate with a lot of people watching. A couple hours later, the test had finished. Talking to some of the instructors, they told me that I didn't do that bad. Now I felt a lot more prepared for next year's Shodan test. I felt that I needed to study more terminology and that I needed to work on my tanshiki kumite and my bo-sai kumite. If I had to do it all over again, I would spend much more time reading books and studying Japanese terminology. The advice I would of given future students that are going to take the test in future years is to spend all there time wisely and to not waste their time. I felt that the training manual could have had a little bit more information, but it still helped me big time. Furthermore, I think that during class, we should spend time working on everything, not only kata or shiai. In addition, myself working with the current black belts helped me tremendously because they told me what I had to work on and what I already did well. Finally, attending the clinics also helped me because I learned the correct way of how to perform various techniques and katas. In a joking kind of way, I said to myself, "I'm going to go through the same pain next year when I take the test."

BLUE DRAGON DOJO UPDATE

On Saturday, March 29, the Blue Ridge Dragon Dojo had its first promotional testing session. Five students tested and Senpai Boris and Senpai Zorrien came down from Baltimore to do the testing. They also brought 4 bogu to present as gifts from the Federation to the new, fledgling dojo. Senpai Rob would like to express his heartfelt thank you to the Federation leadership for its generosity and support. Domo Arigato! The picture taken below shows all who participated in the testing that day, and two of the new bogu, modeled by Senpai Zorrien and Senpai Rob.



THREE VIEWS OF SPRING

By James Lynch

Movement within the stillness of night,
So still,
So moving.
Silenced by the shadow of a pine,
Quiet, soothing.

Tear drops blown from Oak,
budding blossoms danced and spoke,

Some will sneeze and cough and wheeze,
Some will run and dance and play
... some will stay inside today

Sprints rhythm is here to stay.

Can you guess?

Do you know who is featured in the picture right?

Answer in the next issue of
Around the Dojo



Did you guess?

Did you know who was featured in the poster in the last edition?

Answer: John Salasko *Shihan*

My Home

by Alexandra Daniels *Senpai*

Stale air has never tasted so mouth-watering. As I step into the dojo, my head - bowed low out of respect and not tradition - is saturated in culture, fear, and exhilaration. My feet slide over the tatami mat with assurance, with pride. Rough like a layer of hardened sand at the beach, with just enough give to slightly sink into; worn-in sand paper. Sand paper that has grazed the many walls of calloused feet that have clung, and pushed, and frayed its once coarse surface. The off-white coloring of the mat is soaked in years of invisible sweat and splattered with the bleached out color of blood. A pinkish red so light, so trivial, that one might not have noticed it had they not been present the day it sunk into the mat still warm, as it descended from the mouth of a fallen opponent. Two flags hang on the wall in front of me. An American flag, hangs proudly, but not arrogantly, next to the Japanese flag whose colors, white and red, mimic the floor of the dojo.

This is my home. This is my retreat where impossible has never been, and will never be, a word. Where determination takes you far past the place you thought it might. Where Japanese phrases are etched in black ink into every technique thrown. To my right, the makiwara board stands pompously still waiting, after 30 years to be broken. All that can be seen are the indentations left by knuckles of people of every age, dried blood clinging coarsely onto each piece of stubborn wood. To the left the Sai hang still, and only on occasion do they swing just enough to hit into their neighbor as the metal of one Sai caresses the metal of another and the sound rings harmoniously throughout the dojo breaking the silence; an interminable silence so extreme that only the inhale or exhale of breath should be heard as the pop of the Gi snaps the still air to life.

“Bowing In” is the biggest ceremony to Japanese Karate. It is done out of tradition, the highest belt, to the lowest. As I sit among my teachers in the front of the room, we are a black line, and facing us, colors explode with craving; each color grabbing, and pulling, and clinging to the one in front

of it. Desire seeps from these belts like the sweat dripping from the students’ faces. The black line looks calmly and serenely at the eager colors jumping with yearning, searching for the color that shines the brightest, the strongest, and the sharpest. “Mokuso” The words ring powerfully and deeply throughout the room – the consonants echoing and hitting the walls sharply. The colors calm down, their breathing slows, their eyes close; they kneel and wait for the queue to rise. They burst again, only to be yelled at for their impatience. I stand in the black line and remember how it felt.

The class begins. Colors whiz from one place to another. Snapping, popping, crying, hitting, pushing, cracking, fighting and then a rip, a rip that echoes through the room, a rip that can be felt, almost as if it were a rip through your torso. Leather torn apart and then a shout of “IPPON!” as the battle is won by a technique so strong it fell past its opponent.

This is my calm place. This is my serene heaven. This is the room that holds my sweat, my blood, my whole being. This is where I channel my initiative, my strength, myself, locked in the tight stitches of the coarse “sand-paper” floor. My techniques ring like the scream of Sai hitting Sai. The Japanese phrases, etched in black, hang proudly on the wall as well as on my mind, always repeating themselves, singing their way through my brain while teaching me valuable lessons. I own this ground. This ground has taken my beating. The dried sand holds and cradles my feet out of impulse and familiarity. The flags stare me down. They challenge my every move, always watching. The Makiwara board laughs at my mistakes, shudders at my anger, and feels my pulse as I confront his pretentious hard wood surface. When he sneers at me, I snicker back and mock his overconfidence. My Gi holds me down. Its weight is heavy with responsibility and consequence. And as I kneel in this interminable silence, I realize it is when we close our eyes that we see the most.

There was an Indian Chief who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly. So he sent them on a quest, each in turn to go look at a pear tree that was a great distance away.

The first son went in the winter, the second in spring and so on. When they had all come back he called them together and asked them to describe what they had seen.

The first said that the tree was ugly, bent and twisted.

The second said “no, it was covered with green buds and full of promise.”

The third son disagreed saying, “it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful. It was the most graceful thing he had ever seen.”

The fourth disagreed with them all and said, “It was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and full of fulfillment!”

The Chief explained that they were all right. They had each seen but only one season of the tree’s life and that all were necessary to know the tree.

Karate teaches, “re ni hajimete re ni owaru” (the beginning and ending are important in all things). So every day is a new day of training and living. Do not judge or quit karate because of one day or year as every day or year is but another view of the same. Each of these views being a necessary step in the growth of karate and you. It is so easy to look at the surface of things and judge what we do not understand or see. Love of karate is spawned from infatuation which is easy, but it is only a seed. This seed of infatuation needs to grow, suffer, appreciate, fail and succeed to turn into love. As Shakespeare wrote, “the course of true love never did run smooth.” So enjoy the pain and difficulties because in order to find the true treasure of karate we must labor hard and assiduously in our digging.

My First Tournament by Luka Jurakovski

Luka is a 14 year old white belt in the Island Budokan dojo.

The 14th Invitational Island Budokan Tournament was a very interesting experience for me. Much of what happened there was a complete surprise, mainly because movies portray Karate and Judo in a way that, in hindsight, is almost completely fictitious.

I had very little knowledge on how the whole process was going to work. Although we did have a practice tournament in the Dojo, there is a different sensation when fighting someone you do not know. It is a mixture of nervousness and fear. When I know someone I am fighting, I have some assurance that they are in control of their own emotions. But when it comes to the person I do not know, then there is a feeling of doubt. For example after my first fight (which I won) my opponent started to cry. Although she did not make a sound, tears were streaming down her face. There was some assurance that everyone would obey the rules and represent their Sensei in a good way, but when the fight starts these feelings fall away and are replaced with adrenalin, and sometimes pain. A form of mental tunnel vision occurred, where the person I was fighting was the only thing I could think about. Searching for openings and calculating my attacks, all in a split second. This was very exciting and personally my favorite part.

Performing Kata on the other hand, could only be compared to public speaking. Although my Sensei would not like to hear this, I got really nervous and blanked out. Hence my metaphor for public speaking.

The Black Belt fights were also very thrilling and a highlight of the day. Seeing people who trained for years fight each other was, to say the least, a great learning experience. To my surprise some blood was shed, from the fists of those who were fighting. The Tournament was that of many feelings, but when it all boiled down it was new, exciting and a very enjoyable experience.

Did You Know?

The following are translations of important terms provided by Watanabe *Kaicho*:

Mata kadai o etadaki mashita - appreciation of loss in the spirit of improvement

Nobi nobito - relax and flow / to physically relax and do not let the muscles tense slowing one down

Ochi tuski nasai - calm down / relax

Koseio ikasu - bring to life

Heck em - Japanese / Australian phrase meaning get away from me or I have seriously had enough of you.

Congratulations!

On April 17th at 9:41pm Sensei Marty Becker and his wife Pam welcomed their first grandchild, Olivia Rose who was born while they were visiting in Monterey, CA.

“Little” Olivia weighed 8lbs 14.4 oz. They are very proud to be grandparents, the only problem being the 2,700 mile trip to baby sit. They are very much looking forward to a visit from Olivia and her parents (son Josh and daughter-in-law Susie) in July.

It seems to me that there is a general misconception that “quality” is apparent from the beginning and that any new prospective student unable to meet our expectations (which most should apply to themselves) should be shunned or pushed out. This unfortunate and short sighted methodology is the cause for the demise of many a Koryu (ancient art or style). Waiting for the “right” person to pass on an entire history or system has left many beautiful and meaningful pieces of martial (and other) history to die with their progenitors or successors.

The quality we seek to teach and develop is like a seed that needs to be planted. It takes time and is rarely if ever perceived in its beauty or relevance until it is grown. A student who walks into the dojo and does not understand what you want or expect is there for that very reason. My Sensei did not kick me out of the dojo or ignore me because I did not practice with a broken collar bone until chastised. I do not eliminate my Senior students when they still, after years at my side, do not understand what I want. Each student has their own way and time. Each has a right to the same opportunities as the Sensei.

Most come to the dojo not knowing why. All probably come with a different purpose in mind than you have now, but probably not too different than you or a Senpai when they

first endeavored to take that step. Yet it seems we often hear, in almost a gloating fashion, “We prefer quality not quantity”...I call this rationalization. Much like those who gloat over winning a match by wazari and not recognizing the failed ippon or look at the ippon as justification of self worth without realizing that it takes two (and many more) to make an ippon.

Karate as a “modern” art has been developed and handed down by many Sensei for the same reasons as my Sensei (Hisataka Kori Shinan). This purpose was to teach the masses, to heal those in need and thereby the world through community. Karate is an art to make the weak stronger as even the strong are weak. In reading *Scientific Karatedo* we see reference to the birth of the Shorijiryu Kenkokan in 1945 as a vehicle to re-establish the broken Japan of WWII. Later Shinan spoke of his style as a means to world peace. How do we accomplish this by keeping our numbers small and teaching only a select or talented few?

Our responsibility is to take in as many students as possible to help spread the message, method and opportunity of Shinan’s dream and practice. We have a responsibility to **grow in numbers** as well as abilities and knowledge. That is what I expect and hope for.



Congratulations to our newly promoted Yudansha!

Ian Rosenblatt - Nidan

Patricia Skrzypek - Shodan

Abigail Coleman - Shodan Yushi

When the Baltimore Hombu Dojo unexpectedly lost their venue for the scheduled March 15th tournament, the last minute decision was made to move the tournament to Long Island. Because of the venue change, the turnout was expected to be very light but the members of the Island Budokan dojo were excited for the promotion of three of their students. In the end, the small, little tournament ended up with more than 160 competitors!

As usual, the Island Budokan family members pitched in to not only man the scorekeeping tables and registration desk, but also to donate food, drinks and baked goods, as well as some beautiful gift baskets to raffle off. Parents helped to set-up and clean-up, sell raffles, food and equipment and in general, make it an extremely successful day. As usual, the dojo donated a portion of the proceeds to the Long Island Ronald McDonald House. It was a fun and exciting tournament with plenty of good competition. Congratulations to Melanie Ramos of Kibo No Niwa and Jesus Rincon of Island Budokan, the Best Spirit Award winners. The Best Technique Award went to Doro Konate of the Imperial Dragon Dojo with William Singh of the GoKi Dojo as Runner Up.



The class abruptly stopped practicing. Here was an opportunity to not only employ their skills, but also to save the entire town.

SHORINJIRYU KENYUKAI WATANABE-HA WORLD FEDERATION

President—Shunji Watanabe
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 Treasurer—Tanelle Yenkevich
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 Newsletter Editor—Stephanie Coleman

Spiritual development of individuality in mind and body.



Kyudo - The Way of the Bow

by Stephanie Coleman

I have always loved archery. Growing up my brother and I had cheap bows and a target in our backyard. Later on we joined a local archery club. I have always enjoyed the concentration and patience required of the sport. During the clinic in November of last year we were lucky enough to have the opportunity to learn about the Japanese art of Kyudo. Sensei had arranged for a demonstration by the Toko Kyudo club. We only had a few minutes, a short stop during the many events of the day. But the beauty of the demonstration, the grace of movement fascinated me. Needless to say when the opportunity came for a hands on clinic, I jumped at the chance.



In December along with Sensei Hayes, Sensei Peter Guarascio, Sensei Richard Alicea and fellow karateka Bryan Curry, I participated in a “First Shot” clinic which was essentially a day long introduction to the art of Kyudo and the chance to actually shoot for a few hours. Japanese archery is very different from the Western form most of us are used to. The bows are much longer and instead of pulling back on the string or *tsuru*, you push the bow or *Yumi* out. Another big difference is that the *tsuru* is not drawn using your index and middle finger but rather by a groove in the thumb portion of a glove called a *Yugake*. The arrow or *ya* is typically made of bamboo. It takes a great deal of patience and concentration to learn to properly draw and release.

The group who took the class was composed of people with martial arts experience and those without any at all. It was amazing to see how much more in tune with our bodies and breathing those of us who practice karate and other martial arts were. It wasn't just a matter of being able to memorize a kata or sequence, or even a familiarization with Japanese language and culture. It was more a connection with our bodies, our minds, and our spirit which allowed us, to varying degrees, to center ourselves, control our breathing, and actually become a part of the kata rather than just attempting to follow a set of instructions.

There are many different Kyudo ryuha, each with its own purpose. The Toko Kyudo club is based on a meditative form. It takes awhile to realize that the point is not to hit a specific point or target but rather the act of becoming one with the *yumi* and *ya* and focusing all of your power from your *hara*. Hitting the target is incidental (although a good thing to do when practicing inside!)

One of the nicest things about Kyudo is that it does not require a great deal of physicality. It is an art that can be practiced at any age. And like all martial arts, there are so many levels of understanding that you could practice every day for the rest of your life, and still never lack for something new to learn.

