

GTKA SHIMBUN: September 2000
There is no secret only practice, practice
and more practice!
Our goals must be to obtain the
unobtainable!

This Newsletter represents a collective effort by certain senior students which were approached and were in turn given free reign to talk about what they willed. If there were any people left out it is only because the editor did not have the time to contact everyone. Rest assured there shall be other chances in the future, so prepare your pens and minds. Observe the similarities and the differences, which exist in the following expressed opinions as well as the choice of subjects. The similarities effectively point out that we are all participating in a single tradition, whereas, the differences point out that we all approach the tradition differently. This is as it should be. Respecting the art and yet not being consumed by a non-creative dogmatism.

Reports

Trip to the Netherlands Nimejgen Dojo, June 2000: (by Poon Chan)

From June 1st to June 8th 2000, I was in Nijmegen with my daughter Leslie visiting Sensei Lex Opdam. We started from Montreal (Maribel Airport) at 8:00 pm on May 31st and arrived at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport on 8:00 am Amsterdam time June 1st. Lex was supposed to be at Schiphol to pick us up around 9:30am but his train from Nijmegen was delayed and didn't get there until almost 10:40am. We then took the train back to Nijmegen (and once again was delayed) and got there around 1:45pm. Blair and Robin Krugwig also came in around 2:20pm from Stuggart, Germany for the weekend. We waited for them at the train station. The four of us stayed in a lovely vacation house in the village called Ooij (pronounced as oy) about 7km east of Nijmegen. Lex's students chauffeured us when they were available and the rest of the time we rode to Nijmegen by bicycles.

I went to four of the classes and our Dutch karate cousins impressed me a lot. Sensei Opdam's students trained diligently and is a credit to their Sensei. I did some basic Wingchun "chisou" (sticky hand) with them a couple of classes and showed them the Renshoku kumite of Tenchi kata. And yes, Stefan is now a proud father of a baby boy (Timmy). The baby was 6 days old when we dropped in for a

visit. The new parents were tired but happy.

On June 4th, Sunday, Lex took us to the City of Arnhem (only a 10 minutes train ride) to visit the open air museum and then it was time for Blair and Robin to go back to Germany. We said goodbye at the train station in Arnhem and headed back to Nijmegen. The next day, Lex, Leotine, Leslie and myself took a train to Amsterdam for the day. I took them out for "dim sum" in Amsterdam's Chinatown (it was not bad "dim sum" there) and off we went to visit the Anne Frank's house and the Van Gogh Museum. We were back at Nijmegen around 8pm for a lovely dinner at a local Greek restaurant.

June 9th came quickly and we said good bye to Lex and his student Gerald Pikkemaat at the Nijmegen train station at 7am that morning. We rode back to Schiphol Airport and flew to London to continue our vacation in England. Gerald had arranged for us to stay with his friends Wouter Graaskamp and Pien Rosmalen in Amsterdam on the 14th of June before our flight back to Canada. We didn't realize the hotels in Amsterdam area were all booked up because of the Euro 2000 football tournament.

We landed at Heathrow Airport at 12:30pm. My cousin Mary and her husband Bernard picked us up and went back to their place in West Drayton (suburb of London). We stayed in England for 5 days and had a wonderful time with my cousin and her family whom I hadn't seen for 30 years.

We touched down at Maribel Airport at 10:45am on June 15th. The plane was right on schedule. Yves was right at the gate waiting for us. We were back in Orleans around 1:30pm.

We had a wonderful time in Holland and England. I am looking forward for the next trip.

Grading:

On August 8th, GTKA has another new Shodan. This time it was Emily Hine. Emily joined us 5 years ago after training for two years at my good friend Kim Marshall of the Canada Goju Dojo in Winnipeg. Emily turned 17 in June this year.

Articles

Self-defense and the Law
by John Chamberlin

Part II: (Please refer to the GTKA Shimbun: February 2000 for the first installment and the sub-sections of the penal code relevant to this article and self-defense.)

In sub-section (2), we are being told that we may cause bodily harm and even kill if we are under the reasonable belief that our assailant intended to kill or severely injure us. This situation creates an even greater dilemma for us. Most of us do not want to hurt anyone, and the idea of killing someone is even more abhorrent. However, there may be situations where one clearly has no choice. The dilemma lies in determining when either scenario would be justified. For example, if someone attacks you with a knife, after actually threatening to stab you with it, and presses the attack even though you have attempted to dissuade and disarm him/her, you might successfully argue that you had to kill or cause severe bodily harm to that person in order to defend yourself. This situation, however, leads us to another problem for the martial artist: a court of law, either criminal or civil, may hold you to a higher standard than someone who is not trained in a martial art. Don't forget that, unlike an individual with no training, as a martial artist, especially as you reach the higher ranks, you are always "armed". You are armed with the knowledge of your martial art as well as the experience that you have gained in using it in the dojo. A prosecuting attorney could, therefore, attempt to argue that you had the training necessary to merely disarm your assailant and that you did not have to cause bodily harm or kill.

The prosecution could bring in an expert witness, your own instructor for example, to testify to your abilities. In your defence, you would have to convince the court that you had no other choice but to execute the defensive measures you took.

Let's return to sub-section 34(1) of the Code to look at the words "...without being provoked...". The suggestion here is that an individual might attempt to start a fight by goading a would-be adversary into striking first. The provoker could then attempt to argue that s/he was merely acting in self-defence and is thus not guilty of assaulting the assailant. Obviously, you should never provoke an attack. To do so would be more of an act of aggression as opposed to self-preservation, and in all likelihood would be illegal. If you are attacked, although your attacker would be guilty of an assault, you might also find yourself charged and have a difficult time convincing a judge that you were merely "an innocent by-stander". In short, if you're feeling at all tempted to try out your skills in the streets, you might want to sit down with someone like your instructor and talk it over.

In conclusion, there are many situations that could arise that are extremely dangerous and this article is not suggesting that you not defend yourself for fear of legal ramifications. In the final analysis, you alone must be the judge of the danger you perceive yourself to be in. But, if you think about what self-defence truly means and have an understanding of what the law empowers you to do, you should have no problem exercising your right to defend yourself in a responsible manner.

The Kata puts the art in the art of Karate

by Dino Ovcaric

In the tradition of Funakoshi Sensei, the art of Karate does not mean the ability of technical excellence, which can be developed by physical training, but an ability of attaining a spiritual goal which can be obtained through the practice of the Kata, so that the player plays against himself and succeeds in conquering himself. The Kata demands complete concentration and maximum effort from its practitioner.

The understanding of the movements is a must in order to successfully attain oneness with the Kata. You may train for a long, long time, but if you merely move your hands and feet and jump up and down like a puppet, you will never have reached the heart of the matter, and you will have failed to grasp the true essence of the art of Karate-do. Kata's are difficult because you are 100% in control of your actions. It is said that the Kata is 100% mirror image of the performer's attitude. Art is something of beauty, take your Kata's seriously, show it in your motions.

On Attitude In the Dojo

by Paul Morris

When I was asked to write a short article for the newsletter I thought at first of writing about some martial art technique or application, but then I decided that first of all I really cannot claim to be an expert martial arts technician and secondly that mastery of technique is really just a secondary benefit arising from something far more important. What I'm talking

about is the attitude the student brings to the dojo. It makes no difference if the student is young, old, male, female, big or small, a white belt or black belt, to obtain any real and lasting benefit from training in the art of Karate-do requires the right mind set.

The student must foremost have a desire to learn. This must translate into a mature and attentive

attitude in class, focus on the techniques being practiced, and maximum effort. When I see a student taking it easy by relaxing a stance, or talking to their friends when Sensei is speaking, I know they do not really have the necessary desire to learn.

Secondly, the student must have the right reason to learn. By this I mean that if you want to learn fighting techniques so that you can bully others or brag about your skill, then you are not deserving of respect or rank.

By all means be proud of your achievements but if your skill is greater than that of another student, instead of bragging how much better you are than they, use your knowledge to teach the other student thereby giving back to the dojo.

As an instructor, the first thing I look for in a new student is his or her attitude. If they have come to the dojo for the right reasons and with a genuine desire to learn then 90% of the job is already done. If they do not really want to learn or they have the wrong motivations then it is hopeless to teach them until their attitude is corrected, and that can come only from within the student.

As a student myself, I try to maintain my own correct attitude. I admit I do not always succeed, but by critically examining my motivations and making a conscious effort to improve my attitude I am at least moving in the right direction.

