

March 2011 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai



Annual Dues 2011

by Ed Myers

“It is once again time to collect the annual dues and generate an active member list. Dan ranks are \$25 and Kyu ranks are \$15. Dojo leaders are to send this to your national director. The national directors are to send the active member list to Ed Myers (CEO) and the monies to Jean Stamper (Treasurer). This is all due by April 1 2011.”

Shuji Tasaki

by Des Tuck, Vice President / Secretary, Goju Ryu Karate-Do Seiwa Kai USA

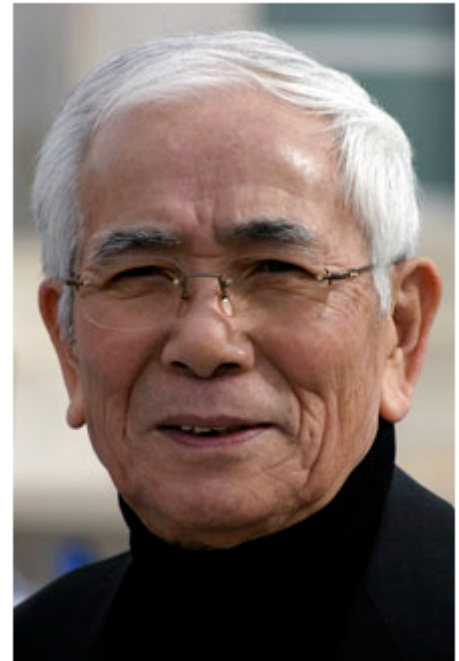
Shuji Tasaki Sensei, 9th Dan JKF Goju Kai, passed away on January 31, 2011, just a few days after his 78th birthday. Tasaki Sensei's ability as a Goju Ryu master was unquestioned. He started his karate training in 1951 under Gogen Yamaguchi Sensei, his only teacher, and when he left the Yamaguchi group twenty years later, he had been the senior instructor in the Tokyo dojo of Yamaguchi Sensei for many years.

In 1963, Tasaki Sensei won the first World Goju Kai Karate-do championship, in the days when “knockout, knockdown, break bones and finish them” matches were the way in karate tournaments. In 1972, Tasaki Sensei started his own organization, Goju Ryu Karate-do Seiwa Ka, which was known for its tough fighters, under the stern and demanding direction of their teacher. His insight and experience in karate-do were unique, and this was evident even in his waning years when ill health began to take its toll.

Under Tasaki Sensei's watchful eye, Seiwa Kai grew into a large organization, present in dozens of countries around the world on every continent. As demanding and uncompromising as he was with his seniors, he was intensely human and knew how to take care of his people. He gave, and expected in return, unquestioned loyalty, and was the embodiment of the Budo spirit.

Tasaki Sensei showed great love for and commitment to his students. His greatest pleasure was to travel around the world teaching them, and sharing his wisdom when his students came to Japan for training or testing. In November, 2010, even though he was in poor health and suffering from a painful back injury, he insisted on traveling to Mexico to teach at the first Mexico JKF Goju Kai seminar. This was his last trip to do what he loved most.

The world has lost a powerful force in Goju Ryu karate-do and he will be sorely missed.



A special thanks to Dan Taylor who asked Mr. Tuck to write this article for our Newsletter.

WUKF Pan American Karate Championships

by Mark Cramer

I recently spoke with Mr. Pat Hickey regarding the WUKF Pan American Karate Championships in early August. It is a non qualifying event (meaning that anyone may compete and that you do not have to go through your NGB). Competition includes yellow belts through black belts (unlike the WKF which is advanced only).

The cost of the trip would be about \$2500. the website is www.wukf-karate.org
It would be nice if we could get some GKK competitors to participate. Let me know if you know anyone who is interested.
Mark Cramer 419-517-3835 colette.cramer@att.net

USANKF National Qualifying Tournament

The U.S. Olympic Committee's National Governing Body for Sport Karate

Sponsored by Bedford Community Education GKK Karate

- When:** Saturday, March 19, 2011
- Time:** 9:00 TO 10:00 Late Registration
10:00 Competition Begins
- Where:** Bedford High School Gymnasium,
8285 Jackman Rd., Temperance, MI. 48182
- Directions:** Take I-475 and Exit Secor Rd North
Take Secor to Dean Rd. And Turn Right (East)
Bedford H.S. is at the corner of Dean and Jackman
See www.mapquest.com for door to door driving instructions.
- Events:**
1. Open Kata (All Divisions - Beginner, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced)
 2. Weapons Kata (All Divisions)
 3. Compulsory Kata (16+ Advanced Only) The WKF Shitei Kata list will be used.
 4. Kumite (All Divisions)
- Fees;** \$45 Up to four individual events. \$5 Additional for late fee registration after March 12, 2010
- Spectator Fee:** \$6 Adults, \$3 Children
- Order Of Events:** All Weapons Divisions
Youngest divisions first, followed by kumite, proceeding to the adult divisions
Team Friendship Match
- Awards:** Gold, Silver & (dual) Bronze Medals (1st - 4th place)
- Rules:** USA-NKF Rules. Rules may be downloaded at www.usankf.org
It is the competitor 's responsibility to know and understand the USANKF rules.
- Attention:** New Kata Rules;
1. Beginner and Novice competitors may perform only the following katas: Taikyoku, Heian - Pinan, Gekisai, Fukyu Kata, Kihon Kata
 2. In Open Kata divisions - contestants may repeat the same kata in every round, except in all Advanced divisions, of every age category, competitors must perform a different kata in the final (metal) round.
- Pre-registration:** Pre-register by March 12th to avoid the \$5 late fee.
- Send registration and checks (payable to GKK) to:
GKK Tournament,
C/O Mark Cramer,
4746 Penridge Rd., Toledo, Ohio 43615
- Day of Tournament Registration:** 9:00 to 10:00, Saturday March 19, 2010, \$5 late fee charged
- Information:** Mark Cramer 419-517-3835 colette.cramer@att.net
- Referees Contact:** Mark Cramer 419-517-3835 colette.cramer@att.net

Mushin, part two

"The two year old child is furious and coming at you with a hammer meaning to get revenge. Without thought, you take away the hammer. To do it with the big, angry twenty year old without thought, is mushin".....Rich Stamper.

I started reading *Watch My Back* by Geoff Thompson and could not put it down. Not an exaggeration. It was almost like he was writing to me. Mr. Thompson had also been looking for the elusive mushin and had huge self doubts about himself. However, he did what few are willing to do. He took a job as a nightclub doorman in the worst, most violent area in England to find the answers. He eventually became a living legend and one of the most sought out self-defense teachers in the world.

Mr. Thompson, like most of us, mistook the adrenaline rush that comes from confrontation as fear. However, he eventually came to realize it is simply a normal response by the body. Rather than fight it, he learned to control it and use it to his advantage.

Could this be my answer? The hopes that I would someday have the cool of a James Bond as I mindlessly dispatch several opponents certainly wasn't working. I was going in the wrong direction. I was trying to suppress a natural response and I disappointed myself every time. Of course, like any buffoon, I would have to self-experiment a bit with this. That is, to allow confrontations to happen, maybe even encourage them and see how the concept works. With a little practice, it became fairly easy to channel the adrenaline into an aid. I started looking for the rush each time. Using it. Welcoming it. Controlling it. Convincing myself I had a secret weapon which made me faster, stronger and more pain resistant.

The key is control, not elimination. It was about an entirely different mindset where one recognizes the body is preparing you by shooting a powerful drug into your system. A performance enhancer of sorts. It became a sort of Phineas and Ferb "wait for it" moment.

Mushin, or no mind may be a misnomer. Or it may be an exaggeration perpetuated by pseudo-masters of the arts. I suppose a person like Miyamoto Musashi could have reached it. After all, sixty fights to the death should have desensitized him a bit. But, we aren't Musashi. We are working folks who have families and responsibilities. Something much more workable is in order.

The Yerkes - Dodson Law is about arousal and how it affects performance. Too little arousal and we may do poorly. Too much arousal and we may do poorly. The law is usually illustrated by an inverted U. For simple or well learned tasks, performance improves with arousal. If, say, I was trying to set a world record in the deadlift which is the act of simply lifting a weight off the floor, I would want flat out arousal. I would want every fiber in my body psyched. There is no such thing as too much arousal for the act of lifting a maximum weight and standing up with it. It is a very rare exception to the curve however. A simple gross motor skill which is almost entirely strength based would do well with extreme arousal. I would not want that level of arousal if I were to perform a violin solo in front of an audience. I need to be somewhat aroused to put my heart and soul into the musical piece, but past a certain point my performance would be ruined.

To approach combat from the standpoint of mushin, or no mind may be the single most mis-interpreted concept in the martial arts. Control mind is more accurate. Adrenaline will most definitely improve martial art skills. There have been several times where I was very angry at people and when I did my workout I was faster and stronger than normal. But, past a certain point, the opposite happens.

Many wax eloquently about reaching mushin during kata. Most of us will eventually be able to pay very little attention to a task after awhile. I've made mental grocery lists while doing kata. But I do not consider this mushin. Wyatt Earp wrote about how his mind moved slowly although his body was moving as fast as it could during gunfights. A controlled, somewhat detached awareness. The time distortion was, of course, caused by adrenaline. But Earp still functioned well enough to prevail and I suspect this was due to maintaining enough control to hit what he aimed at. He knew from experience the physiological changes which would occur when the bullets started flying. And, knowing ahead of time allowed him to cope. Much like Musashi, I would expect Earp functioned better with each subsequent encounter.

So, can the karateka reach Mushin? I seriously doubt it unless he or she works in a world of life or death violence for many years. Perhaps the best we can strive for is the ability to control our arousal levels with a few simple techniques such as tactical breathing and mental rehearsal of violent encounters. Injecting stress into training is something the military has always done. It teaches how to work through chaos by immersing the trainee into high stress situations. Through training we can better handle the stress and the adverse effects are lessened.

The safest place I go is the dojo. We practice in a church and I am among friends. It simply isn't possible to create the environment where a life or death encounter will occur. The environment is sterile. Yet, there may be a blueprint of sorts to get us close to the ideal warrior state.

. First, the longer we practice our art, the more ingrained it will become. And the better ingrained, the more tolerant to stress it becomes. It will become reflexive to a certain point. Next, we increase the stress and eventually learn to function in that environment. The second part is the hard one. It depends on how far you are willing to push it.

Mushin only has relevance when one can produce the state in a life or death situation. Take a job as a bouncer in a biker bar? That would do it. All else is make-believe.

I received an email awhile back from a Dr. Kvaska, thanking me for the Newsletter. The name rang a bell. Sure enough, there was a photo in the GKK archives titled "1986, BGSU, Greg Kvaska." I asked Dr. Kvaska if I could run the photo in a future "Thanks for the Memories" segment and if he would explain the picture for our readers....



Thanks for the Memories

1986, Bowling Green State University, Greg Kvaska Jump Kick
by Greg Kvaska

We put on demonstrations around campus to try and market the club and increase membership. From what I can remember, we weren't all that interested in making more money teaching, but just loved the sport and culture and enjoyed sharing it. 'Karate' back then had a certain mystique America had recently discovered, and many red-blooded American men thought they could take a few lessons and become a One-Man Gang. Not surprisingly, once the macho guys realized how tough the practices were and how hard it was to become proficient, most with this narrow vision dropped out.

That said, Bill and I were not all 'pure'. We had the opportunity to provide a demo for a girls gym class, and for two young, broke, lonely guys, this sounded like a great opportunity to meet and impress chicks.

Bill narrated the demo and we went through the usual segments with basic striking and blocking, kata, kumite, and a staged presentation of self defense to show how the ladies could defend themselves with a few basic moves. The final act was a breaking demo with punches and kicks, culminating with my jumping (flying?) front snap kick to break a board held high by two students standing on chairs. I had made this kick many times before, but anyone who does breaking demos knows that not all boards are the same.

Anyway, with his usual flair, Bill set the stage, emphasizing how difficult this break was and had the young ladies on the edge of their seats. Pumped by the narrative - and the cute young blond in the front row - I took off running, leaped, kicked, 'crack'...and the board remained whole. So, if the crack was not the board, what was it? You got it - my right, big toe metatarsal joint. Bill, being the mastermind he was, explained to the ladies that these things rarely happen and he was sure I wanted another go at it. In reality, that was the farthest thing from my mind as I struggled not to shed tears in front of the ladies. I was willing to bow and leave...except for the young blond in the front row. So, despite better judgment, rapidly swelling toe joint, and increasing pain, I returned to the start position, bowed, took off running, leaped, kicked...and 'crack'...shattering what was left of my big right toe metatarsal. The board remained whole, the young blond shook her head, and I bowed to the board, to the ladies, to everything else in the room and limped off.

There's an obvious lesson in this, but more importantly, a great story of juvenile pride and stupidity. Epilogue: 40 years later the right metatarsal is 3 times the size of the left, I've run several marathons, been married for 36 years... and still wonder what might have happened with the young blond if I had only broken the board.

Did You Know?

by Rich Stamper

Did you know we have a GKK Annual Meeting coming up? We do - in the spring. Time for you to be thinking about what you would like to see presented at the meeting and let our CEO Mr. Ed Myers know. The GKK is your organization and your participation is important.

Member's Marketplace

Mr. Stamper has suggested we start a Member's Marketplace where we could advertise something we have for sale. Seems like a good idea. You can email me at; yokagawa2002@yahoo.com with item details and I will place it in the Newsletter.

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