

August 2011 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai



New GKK USA Director Email Address

by Dwight Scales

I've set up another e-mail address devoted to GKK material. The new e-mail address is: GKKdirector@toast2.net

Heubner Twins Promotion

by Ken Maunz

The twins first started karate at seven years old. During their training they were in and out a couple of times. They earned their green belt while training with Rich and Jean Stamper, and spent about 3 years with me.

The girls ran track, and kept great grades in school. They turned eighteen in April, took their Shodan test May 7th and will also graduate high school in May. For two young 95# ladies they are tough and hard working. With their likable nature on they go to college. I'm happy to be part of their life. Kudos on Shodan and everything you ever do.

Best always to Alex and Alyssa from Ken.



Summer Specials

by Angie Monday

Men's (gym style) shorts-
Men's tank shirts-
Men's polo shirts-

lg/ex/2x -black-
lg/ex/2x -black or royal blue-
lg/ex/2x- black or sand (tan)

w/ the words Goju Ryu Karate Do Kyokai \$19.00
w/the words Goju Ryu Karate Do Kyokai -\$12.00
w/ GKK logo- \$25.00

Women's tank tops-
Women's (gym style) shorts-
Women's polo shirts-

med/lg/ex- black-only -lg/ex/pink
sm/med/lg/-black
med/lg/ex/ in black & yellow

w/ the words Goju Ryu Karate Do Kyokai \$12.00
w/ the words Goju Ryu Karate Do Kyokai \$22.00
w/ GKK logo \$25.00

Ball caps in black or white with GKK logo \$15.00
Water bottles w/GKK logo \$1.00

+ shipping cost

e-mail angie.monday@yahoo.com with your order
Make checks out to GKK please Thank You

Improving Your Knowledge of Character

by Mark Cramer

Bear in mind, I am by no means an expert on the subject of the written Chinese language or its Japanese kanji counterparts. However when I was teaching high school Honors World History, I taught a unit on Ancient China, and I gave my class an assignment to write 25 sentences in Chinese characters. In order for my students to complete the assignment, I gave them a vocabulary list of Chinese characters. In order for me to grade the assignment competently, I had to learn the characters on that list. To do this properly, I turned to Mr. Lee. He was an older gentleman who taught Chinese in our school. He was born in China prior to the Communist revolution, and when he taught the characters to his students, he also taught a story about the character's meaning and development.

Chinese characters and their Japanese kanji counterparts are pictograms and ideograms which have an inherent meaning. Consequently, it doesn't matter what language the writer speaks; there is meaning in the character. For instance, I was told that the character for *to ask* is a mouth in front of a gate. Mr. Lee explained, "In olden times, you would go to the gate of a house and ask your question."



Once you understand the meaning of the character, it doesn't matter if you pronounce it *wèn* or *ask*. You know meaning of the symbol. The story explains the meaning of the character, and it also serves as a mnemonic devise that helps you to remember the meaning. To this day, that is how I recognize the Chinese character for *wèn* or *ask*. I must go to the gate, open my mouth, and ask my question.

In this unit on China, we were studying the lives of Lao Tzu and Confucius. Consequently, the character of Dao (Do in Japanese) was on the students' vocabulary list. The character can be translated into English as *Path* or *Way*, but there is an implicit meaning in Chinese (and Japanese) which is not found in those English words.

Mr. Lee's story about the implicit meaning of the character *Dao* (or *Do*) was particularly revealing. He told me that "There is a face of a man. Above the face, there is long hair implying that the man is old. With age comes wisdom, so it is the face of a wise man. Next to the wise man is a foot. This means that you should walk in the path of wise men." I've always liked that explanation. *Do*, as in Karate-Do, is a path that leads to wisdom.

When Mr. Lee told me the meaning behind this character, he also gave me a copy of a lesson from a book that he used in his Chinese language class. This lesson included Mr. Lee's hand written notes. Somehow, I remembered where I had placed this lesson; it was in a book on the history of Karate-Do. For the purpose of this article, I retrieved the book from its place on the shelf and located the lesson that Mr. Lee had given to me many years ago. I discovered that the story from the textbook was nearly identical to the story that Mr. Lee had told. Moreover, the book also showed the evolution of the character over time. By looking at the characters below, I believe that you can see the pictogram of the face and long hair in front of a foot.



Newer and Old Style Characters
(The first is the same as the character for Do in karatedo)

So, who is this wise man that we are supposed to follow? Since we are all students of Goju-Ryu, I would suggest that we are supposed to follow the wisdom of Mr. Chojun Miyagi. He was the founder of our style of Karate-Do, and he was also one of the greatest instructors of Karate-Do who ever lived. When we investigate Mr. Miyagi's beliefs on the meaning of *Do* or *The Way*, we find some interesting results. His beliefs on the subject are summed up in the following maxim of Goju-Ryu: "*The way of Goju-Ryu Karate-Do is to seek the way of virtue...* Therefore the ultimate strategy is to win, not by battle, but by virtue... Heighten one's own virtue, master the strategy of winning without fighting, and seek the ultimate secret." [1]

Perhaps each of us should 問 ourselves a question. Am I following the 道 of Mr. Miyagi – the 道 of virtue?

[1] Higaonna, Morio: *The History of Karate*: page142

"When a thing is funny, search it carefully for a hidden truth".....George Bernard Shaw

I believe there is an underground movement here in America most likely led by the National Organization for Women. It is a plan where the very young are subtly trained for the eventual overthrow of all male authority. It is so clever and diabolical no one notices except for all the little girls in America. The first step is to get all the little ones hooked and trained until that moment when they will be called upon to rise in unison. Little female Manchurian Candidates. Code name; Polly Pockets™

Polly Pockets are little figurines with a huge assortment of outfits and accessories. By making the outfits too small and sticky, great effort is required to put them on and take them off. The hidden goal of Polly Pockets is to develop frightening finger strength in little girls. The clever designers of the plan make hundreds of little jackets, pants and dresses so young girls will train endlessly changing the outfits until an eagle like grip is developed. An entire nation of little creatures with the ability to claw and rip anyone who gets in their way is slowly being nurtured.

My granddaughter's Polly collection has steadily grown. The more mature Polly-kas put their well used sets in rummage sales to keep a steady supply in circulation for the newbies. The used ones are better suited for the new recruits as the clothes are a bit stretched and less sticky. The Polly-dan needs brand-new ones to progress. Mastery depends on an ever increasing level of difficulty.

We were in Wal-Mart the other day. "Let's go the toys", my granddaughter said as she grabbed my arm. I winced in pain. I understood this was not a request as her talons dug into my forearm. Like a strung out addict, this was serious. We reached the Polly Pocket section to find several little girls, eyes glazed over, waiting to get at the Pollys. An older girl, twelve maybe thirteen, was looking over the selection. The little ones knew better than to get in her way. Just like tiger cubs waiting for a piece of the kill, they knew their place in the hierarchy - the senior must have her fill first otherwise the youngster risks being mauled. The senior's highly developed forearms were a sign of supremacy.

Barely back into my truck, I was told to open the package so the training could resume. I thought perhaps I am imagining all this until I saw the back of the package; little pictures of different outfits and characters one could collect. To the unaware, the posed characters looked innocent enough. But, as a trained martial artist, I saw right through the ploy. The arm positions were techniques and the pictures formed part of a kata. With each new package, more techniques and kata segments would be revealed. An outstretched arm with fingers pointed forward. A nukite if ever I saw one. Just because a tiny toy purse was hanging on it didn't disguise its true martial application. Clever, these devils.

When we returned home, the training continued. I was "asked" to "play." Fearing for my life, I complied. My fingers ached and my forearms swelled like Popeye's until I could take it no more. "Poppy, you're not playing", she said disapprovingly. Weakness is not tolerated by the budding Polly-ka. "Seven times off, eight times on", she chanted as she dressed and re-dressed the figurine. Finally, her mom showed up to take her home. "I'll be back", she said in a mini-Arnoldesque voice, steel-blue eyes looking through me. I nodded. Best to stay on her good side.

But I can be clever too. I kept the package and memorized the techniques and movements. I will figure out defenses against the attacks and be prepared for the day of the uprising. And, I no longer train my forearms with weights. I now have a Polly and a small box of outfits in my dojo which I use instead. I may not have youth on my side, but wisdom is with me. If you can't beat them, join them. My forearms no longer fit through my shirtsleeves and I am able to hang from rafters by pinch gripping them.

So, I have started my own style. I teach a small, select group of boys the secrets I have learned and hopefully they will teach others. I can't claim credit for all the counter techniques. I borrowed a few from the "G.I. Joe Doll with Kung-Fu Grip" which I had stashed away from the sixties.

I know this is a daunting task; I don't have the financial resources of a toy manufacturing giant and if word gets out, I am sure a corporate hit squad will silence me. After all, it is common knowledge that all employers are evil.

OK, enough with the silliness.

After World War Two, the practice of martial arts was banned in Japan. How would one continue? The best way? Hide in plain sight. Don't change a movement, just rename it and come up with an almost effective, benign application. Defense, not offense. Minimal use of force. Emphasize beauty of form. Use enough coats of paint and the underlying details are lost. And unless a great deal of work is done to remove the paint, those details remain buried. We come to believe that we are almost at the door of truth - all we need is a little more practice to make it work.

The most believable untruths have an element of truth in them. Like recycling, ethanol, windmills and high speed trains, if one doesn't look too closely the concepts seem practical. And, after awhile the concepts are no longer questioned. After awhile, the questioner of the accepted becomes the fool. Rather than re-looking at something to see whether it works, anger or dismissal is the response.

And, when presented in the just right way and for a long enough time, anything seems believable.....even something as silly as a Polly Pocket conspiracy.



Thanks for the Memories

1968

Tulane University Karate
Club

The Mayonnaise Jar and 2 Cups of Coffee

Author Unknown

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and the 2 cups of coffee .

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was. The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous 'yes.'

The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

'Now,' said the professor as the laughter subsided, 'I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things---your family, your children, your health, your friends and your favorite passions---and if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house and your car. The sand is everything else---the small stuff.'

'If you put the sand into the jar first,' he continued, 'there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff you will never have room for the things that are important to you.'

Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Spend time with your children. Spend time with your parents. Visit with grandparents. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your spouse out to dinner. Play another 18. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal. Take care of the golf balls first---the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.'

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled and said, 'I'm glad you asked.' The coffee just shows you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend.'

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