

September 2011 Newsletter

Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai



Yamakura Shihan Visit to Israel - Celebrating GKK Israel Five Year Anniversary

by Nimrod Astel - GKK Israel

On the last week of July 2011, we hosted Yamakura Shihan for our annual gasshuku. Shihan arrived in Tel Aviv, Israel on a Saturday afternoon and classes started the following day.

This was Yamakura Shihan's first visit to our country as well as the first introduction to our members. It was important for us that everyone felt comfortable and relaxed so Shihan would see how we normally run our programs before we dive into deeper water.

In our dojo we have three kids groups separated by age and level and one adult group. We therefore ran all four classes one after the other so Shihan could assess their level as well as our instructor's performances.

After classes were finished, Yamakura Shihan worked with five members who were shodan candidates. Shihan assessed their kata and gave each one pointers to work on.

On Tuesday, July 26, we had an afternoon workout in our local park. Parents and families were invited as well. Promotions were held for those who could not join us for our intensive training camp. Afterwards at our dojo, Shihan held an advanced class with our black belts to work on kata, after which we all had a home cooked BBQ dinner.

On Thursday morning, we all drove up north for a two day training camp. We stayed at a local inn and had a great social time as well. Classes began on Thursday afternoon. The first class with Shihan was open to all ranks. Then, while the kyu ranks continued to practice, Shihan moved with the shodan candidates and black belts to a different room for an advanced class.

The following day started with an early morning Sanchin class, focusing on the energetic aspects of the kata. Soon after, a self-defense combat survival class was conducted by me, emphasizing dynamic and aggressive work against multiple and armed attackers. We then moved to our promotions room where testing for all ranks was performed. All kyu ranks - adults and kids alike - did very well. I'm very proud to announce the following new dan ranks;

Yondan - Mr. Assaf Josef, Mr. Nimrod Astel, **Nidan** - Mr. Chen Niv, Mr. Itai Avivi,
Shodan - Mr. David Halperin, Mr. Ofer Feldman, Mr. Yoram Avrahami, Mrs. Na'ama Arie, Mr. Shraga Lapidés



Shihan's visit was an extraordinary experience for all of us. We learned a lot and had a great time doing so. This time with Shihan enabled us to deepen our knowledge and understanding of the art as well as strengthen our bond with the organization. We are all grateful to Yamakura Shihan for flying halfway across the world to teach and guide us. Also, we wish to extend our sincere gratitude to Stamper Kyoshi and Myers Renshi for assisting us in the preparations for Shihan's visit.

A special thank you and appreciation from me goes to my assistants Mr. Chen Niv and Mr. Shraga Lapidés who contributed greatly to the success of this visit, as well as to all of our dojo members who worked so hard and to their families for their continuous support.

Looking forward to the next time.....

Work Habits

"The chains of habit are generally too small to be felt until they are too strong to be broken.".....Samuel Johnson

Most of my former co-workers hated teaching new employees. I was sent the trainees who everyone had given up on and were deemed unable to learn the job. And while I sometimes wondered how they made it through the hiring process, I never failed to make them competent. Screw ups kill in the chemical and petroleum industry. The cardinal rule I preached: develop good work habits. Establish an unbreakable routine which will trigger a response. Don't park your butt back in a chair while you are pumping a chemical - stay on your feet because you will eventually realize you are standing for a reason. Establish a routine to the point where if you break it a warning bell goes off in your head. Disaster is always around the corner in industry.

I suppose I'm fortunate in a way. I started lifting weights when I was very young and many of the work habits I first learned stayed with me. Lifters do several things which transfer well into karate training.

First, the big one - a training schedule. Never skip a workout. Never, never, never. Set up a schedule and do not allow anything to interfere. I once told my wife that the only reason she should interrupt a workout is if the house is burning down. I train karate every other day and add weight training with every other karate workout. Consistency is the key.

Oh, don't tell me that is easier said than done. I worked twelve hour rotating shifts and I know. But, consistency means shorter workouts. If you throw 100 kicks a day, every day, it adds up to 36,500 a year. If you throw 300 kicks every other day, that translates as 54,750 a year. Play with the numbers a bit and it starts to become amazing. No time? At one kick every three seconds, which is a leisurely pace, it adds up to five minutes of kicking practice to do a hundred.

Short, consistent training will produce much better results than sporadic, lengthy workouts. Again, do the math. There are 3,600 seconds in an hour. I used to train six hours a day in the Air Force, but it dawned on me the bulk of the time was devoted to discussion. Less talk more train. It is fine and dandy to attend class, but don't confuse class time with training. The two are different animals. The lone boxer doing morning runs understands. Many karateka miss the concept.

Second is a core group of exercises. Most serious lifters will do a squat of some type, along with a pushing motion and a pulling motion for the upper body. Peripheral exercises may be added or deleted, but the main focus should be on three big exercises. I applied that concept to kihon. It struck me as logical that if I did fifty of each of our standing basics every workout, I would maintain and build martial skill. Do the standing basics religiously and you can be assured of steady, all around skill development. Keep all the parts honed and sharp and all that remains is fitting them together. Having a fixed, unwavering set of exercises coupled with a less structured set works out kind of nice. It is like making yourself eat all the vegetables before moving on to the dessert. Kata is unbalanced and when used as a skill developer, it falls short. No, I am not criticizing its practice, I'm just pointing out where it fits in the order of priorities. Many work the kata because of promotion priorities. I am more concerned with being able to hit hard and accurately. As long as I get this base core of techniques done, I consider my workout as essentially accomplished.

Third is a home training area. One of the things I consider mandatory is a place of my own to train. I hate to be dependent on another's schedule or set times when I can use a facility. Having a training area that is open twenty-fours a day, seven days a week means training falls on my shoulders. I cannot blame anyone other than myself if I don't train. And, if I try skipping a workout it eats at me until I get dressed and just do it. Training gets easier when it becomes habit, and easier yet when all one has to do is walk several feet to the dojo. Maybe that is why Miyagi had a garden dojo.

I used to keep weights under my bed when I was a kid and drag them out to lift. I'm fortunate now. I have a functional basement weight area and dojo. No more frostbitten toes or Easy Bake Oven sessions in my old garage. I feel like I am in the lap of luxury now. The best thing about training in private is efficiency. It is all work, no chatter. But, the big thing is I form the work habit.

I understand that many simply cannot train in solitude. For them karate is a social thing. But after many years of this self-reliant type of training, the habit is so ingrained it is unbreakable. One needn't become a recluse, just learn to accept the routine and discipline. No one becomes a master musician if they always wait for the band to show up.

Fourth is record keeping. Most lifters will keep detailed information on how many sets, reps and pounds lifted during a workout. By keeping a record of one's karate practice, it becomes easier to pinpoint weaknesses. I once tracked nearly every training variable for over a year and a half to figure out why I was going downhill. The main culprit was lack of sleep which unfortunately I had little control over. But without the training log, I would be stabbing in the dark hoping to solve the dilemma. Again, I developed the habit of keeping a training journal which allowed me to step back far enough from the trees to see the forest.

I am essentially a lazy person. I can come up with more reasons to not train than a six year old can for not going to bed. But the work habits keep me on the straight and narrow. I have pre-created counter arguments against skipping a workout. I know ahead of time what I will do, when I will do it, where I will do it and how long I will do it.

The work habits defeat my worst enemy....myself.

Visalia Karate-Do Summer Shinsa

by Dan Taylor



On August 25th 2011, Visalia Karate-Do held its Summer Shinsa. Fifty-three students participated. Twenty-six students were promoted.

First place trophies were awarded to the top students in each of the five divisions. Additionally, the Dojo Budo award for exemplary character was presented to Anthony Guerrero and Kyle Travis.

Demonstrations included: junbi-undo, kihon, kihon ido, kumite and bo-jutsu. Particularly impressive was a complete class participation in a demonstration of the progressive development of kumite from the beginner to the advanced.

A good time was had by all.

Did You Know ?

by Rich Stamper

Surely

Surely you have something to say that would benefit the rest of us - a training tip, a personal discovery, an observation, maybe the winning lottery numbers. And surely you know that all dan ranked members are to submit something to the Newsletter annually. We need to share our collective knowledge and experience. So.....surely you will write an article soon. Surely.



Thanks for the Memories

1976

Kid's class: Far back row, right - Dave Pinniger

The Character of Goju-Ryu Kata Implications for Experienced Practitioners

by Rich Stamper

Chapter Nine: **In The Beginning – Applications**

Applications – You Gotta Find Them - -

Many of us desire to understand the movements in kata. What may be unfair is that we've been lead to believe that someday someone will show them to us.

"The applications of the movements in kata will be revealed to you later". Ever heard that? The way many of us perceive that statement is that someday, when we're deserving, we'll be shown. But we tend to believe that someone else will show us. That's not necessarily the case as you may have learned, and being shown need not be a requirement. The revelation is best when it comes from within. The meaning and applications are often revealed to us through personal discovery. We may have to search for the applications to find them, but discovery from within is the best teacher. I have been to seminars in the past where the instructor demonstrated applications of various movements and afterwards I tried to remember all the stuff I was shown, but lost most of it. I'd say to myself: "Self, he showed us twenty things, now what were they?" As time passed, they were all forgotten. Been there?

What I have learned is that if I discover an application for a movement and practice it a little, I remember it. If I practice the application a lot it will be there when the time is right for its use. When we use our creative intelligence to solve a problem the solution somehow burns itself in place for use in the future.

To understand a kata we have to consider its basic theme and interpret the individual movements within that context. Similar movements from different kata will likely have different applications based upon the theme of the individual kata. Saifa is evasive like a bullfighter, Seinchin is in close, grappling, like a Sumo match. The general theme dictates the applications. We have to study a kata with an eye toward discovering its message and overall theme. We must guard against interpreting a particular movement as one discovered in a different kata. Each kata has its story to tell and we need to see what's in front of us.

When you read a novel you don't know its message at the start. Only at completion do you know the story and are able to understand the message. We need to be able to read the kata like a novel at first to grasp the theme. Then we need to read the kata like a text book to determine the individual applications. We do not need someone else to read and explain our textbook to us.

I do believe that karate has been set up in such a fashion that its truths are only revealed to those dedicated to its study – not to those dedicated to its practice – an important distinction here. The study of karate is available to all of us, but appears to be hidden by the way karate is often taught. Sort of like a Zen riddle – we're shown something but can't see it for what it is.

In the distant past I was shown kata applications that just didn't work. The explanation I was given was that with practice they would work. Well, the people that showed me these applications couldn't make them work either. So I just went away confused. Later I learned that the people who showed me the applications that didn't work were told the interpretations by someone else. They just accepted without question or verification. The sad part is that they continue to teach applications that don't work because they are so rigid they cannot accept the reality of the situation.

I have learned some applications of kata movements from others I've studied with. In those cases it's been like a revelation when the application appealed to me at some inner level and was almost as if I discovered it myself. It was a "eureka" sort of thing – now I understand! This is understanding, not just learning, and spending time with others who also study kata has been very beneficial to me.

In many areas of our lives, we tend to limit ourselves. Maybe we shouldn't depend on others for what we can do for ourselves. We shouldn't limit ourselves because of the misconception that someone else has to read our textbook and explain it to us.

So...study your textbook. The applications will be revealed to you. And let's see if I can show you how to learn how to learn from them. Yes, that says learn how to learn.

Ya gotta find 'em – but I'll try to show you how.

By the way, you taught you how to ride a bicycle. That's why you'll never forget.

M. Yamakura
Ed Myers
Dwight Scales
Greg Dodge
Deb Crawford
Bill Handren

Chairman
CEO
USA Director
GKK Marketing Director
USA Business Manager
Newsletter Editor

3763 Old Creek Road, Troy, MI 48084
11568 Reed Road, Whitehouse, OH 43571
1940 Bobolink Lane, Toledo, OH 43615
2430 Georgetown Ave., Toledo, OH 43613
5705 Northlake Road, Springfield, IL 62711
115 West North Street, Dwight, IL 60420

chairman@goju.com
ceo@goju.com
GKKdirector@toast2.net
marketing@goju.com
sharpda71@msn.com
yokagawa2002@yahoo.com