

January 2012 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

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GKK Visit to Nippon Dojo, Franklin Kentucky

by John Herrmann

First and foremost I would like to say thank you to everyone who took the time and incurred the expense of their trip to visit with us here in Franklin; Mr. Ken Maunz, Mr. Dave Shaneman, Mr. Dwight Scales, Mr. Kim Barrington, Mr. Jim Jackson, and Ms. Diane Jackson, Ms. Angie Monday, Mr. Charles Camp, and Mr. Xavier Camp.

We had 2 great training and educational sessions, one on December 2nd from 6pm to 9pm, and the other on December 3rd from 9am to 4pm.

We all learned and shared some interesting techniques, kata bunkai, various interpretations of kata meaning, and some new exercises. I was very proud of all my students, from white belt up through blackbelt, they all attended at least one session. They got to see there really is an extension of our dojo outside of Franklin. I asked them after the weekend for their comments and everyone stated they had a great time though things were done a little different from the way we do them, some said that they spoke a little differently from us down here in Franklin.



The Kyu rank students had Mr. Kim Barrington for the sessions and I want to thank him for the time he spent with them. They all said they learned a lot during that time. Brown and Black belts got a really good look at higher level kata movements, techniques, and bunkai, and the blackbelts specifically received some great training on the upper level katas, Seisan, Kururunfa, and Superunpei. What was very interesting was the slight differences from one school to another and their respective interpretations of a kata, individualism and how we learn to learn kata...



After the training sessions we all went to one of the local Mexican restaurants in town for dinner. I was really proud to promote 2 of my students based upon the recommendations from all our guests. Mr. Paul Bagwell was promoted from Shodan to Nidan, and Mr. Lucas Farley was promoted from Ichikyu to Shodan, congratulations to both of you for the excellent work.

Once again I would like to say thank you to everyone who attended, it was truly a great time and a great learning experience, and there is always an open invitation to any and all GKK members to visit.

Road trip

by Jim Jackson

The weekend of December 3rd, GKK members from Toledo, Ohio and Springfield, Illinois traveled to the Nippon Dojo in Franklin, Kentucky for a two day practice event. From Toledo were Ken Maunz, Dwight Scales, Angie Monday, Diane and Jim Jackson, and from Springfield, Dave Shaneman, Kim Barrington, Charles and Xavier Camp.

The Nippon Dojo resides in a large room in a former school building, providing ample space for practice.

In Friday's session Mr. John Herrmann, along with Mr. Andy introduced us to Goju stick ball, a conditioning drill they use for punching development. The drill requires each person to have a stick, very similar to one used in escrima. Participants with the sticks form a circle facing each other. Another person takes a medicine ball and enters the circle. The person in the circle tosses the medicine ball towards each individual with a stick at about a six foot distance between the two. The person with the stick holds the stick with both hands parallel to the ground and attempts to hit the medicine ball back to the person in the circle. Not as easy as you might think. With the medicine ball weighing twelve pounds you must strike the ball with proper hand / arm alignment or your hand will fold back over or under your wrist at the strike. Also, one had to ensure the ball was returned on the proper target line or it would roll over or under the stick, continuing at you. I found it took a pretty good strike to get the ball back to the person who tossed it.

Mr. Herrmann demonstrated a soft block technique along with an introduction to the B.A.R. (Body Alarm Reaction) principle. Sensei Andy nicknamed the soft block "The Old Sh@#” move. You hold your arms up in a defensive posture and block / strike the attacker - a defensive and typical unprovoking position to an attacker... or so it may seem. The technique is extremely effective as Mr. Dwight Scales can attest. Mr. Dwight threw several wheeling punches at full strength to Mr. Herrmann's head. Mr. Herrmann blocked the strike using the bone edge of the forearm. The block generates ample impact to the strikers arm with little exertion from the blocker.

The Friday session also included bunkai instruction and Kihon Ichi drills from Mr. Maunz and Mr. Shaneman. The Saturday session was a full day of katas, one steps, sparring and special interest instruction. It started with the group performing kyu rank katas under the observation of Senseis Maunz, Shaneman, Herrmann and Scales. Mr. Shaneman directed the group on fast feet, slow hands drill using Gekisai Ichi kata.

The group was separated into smaller groups for instruction and practice on various areas such as, kyu and dan rank kata, sparring, specific drills to enhance kata performance, pressure point striking and joint manipulation demonstrations. I want to thank one of my travel partners for volunteering me as uke for Mr. Herrmann's demonstration on pressure point striking and joint manipulation. I could see their total enjoyment with my discomfort (haha). Given the opportunity I strongly suggest you request a demonstration of these techniques on YOU! Have some fun creating your own memories.

The day ended with dinner at a local restaurant which was followed with a visit to Mr. Herrmann's home. Their hospitality was over the top. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves into the early morning hours.

This article would not be complete unless I made mention of the road trip. For those who know of the road trip tales of Miss Angie (Junk yard dog) and Miss Diane (Time on target), rest assured these tales are true as I had the bruising for proof. One good note, this trip we were fortunate not to have Miss Angie attack any Navy Sailors. (A little history, during one of the road trips we stopped at Burger King. Miss Angie was holding the door for few Navy sailors, and as they passed by her she tripped them.)

Everything I Need to Know About Karate, I Learned in Master Yamakura's Dojo

by Carol Gittins

If you can't make the technique work, practice it more.
Pay attention to the small details because they are important.
Study the history and cultural context to achieve understanding and competence.
Learn to bow and understand what it means.
There is breathing, and there is Breathing.
If you can't make the technique work, you're doing it wrong.
Have faith and imagination—visualize the result you wish to achieve.
Observe your students to learn your weaknesses and shortcomings.
Learning to use ki is like digging a ditch with a teaspoon.
Keep an open mind—just because you don't understand it doesn't mean it's not valid.
If you can't make the technique work, analyze it again.
Stay in the now but prepare for what's to come.
Keep working until you own the technique.
How you ask a question can shape the quality of the answer.

Springfield, Illinois Promotions

by Kim Barrington



Photo courtesy Jim Bolt

On Nov 21st, the Springfield GoJu Karate Club held a promotional. A lot of students showed up to help out and give support to those who tested. It was a good workout. I would like to thank Charles and Xavier Camp for helping me run the promotional. Without their help, it wouldn't have run as smooth. Charles helped even though he was testing He pulled double duty. I'm so proud of them and all their hard work.

Promoted ; Charles Camp - 5th kyu - Green 2 stripes, Cody Miner - 6th kyu - Green 1 stripe, Chenise Cottreau - 6th kyu - Green 1 stripe, Jim Bolt - 7th kyu - Yellow, Nate Wirsing - 7th kyu - Yellow, Jordon Jones - 7th kyu - Yellow, Charles Kunz - 7th kyu - Yellow, Austin Grant - 7th kyu - Yellow, Adam Kunz - 7th kyu - Yellow, Tyler Too - 8th kyu - Orange/Yellow, Jacob Bolt - 9th kyu - Orange

GKK / Goju Apparel

by Angie Monday

Shown is me wearing a Goju hoodie and Ken Maunz with a GKK sweatshirt. We are selling each for \$25.00 plus shipping which will be about \$6.00 or \$7.00 dollars.

Thank you angie.monday@yahoo.com



Thanks for Your Newsletter Contributions

by Bill Handren

Thanks to the following present and past members, and guest contributors for their help with last year's Newsletters. Please keep up the good work.;

Nimrod Astel, Kim Barrington, Jack Coleman, Mark Cramer, Greg Dodge, John Henderson, Frank Matt, Ken Maunz, Angie Monday, Ed Myers, Gail Oblinger, Dwight Scales, Rich Stamper, Jeffrey Sullens, Dan Taylor, Ray Walter Michael Galose, Patrick Hickey, Greg Kvaska, Patrick McCarthy, Mike Ritter, Des Tuck, Steve Wilson

"Distraction is a physical culturist's worst enemy."

Bradley J. Steiner

"There is nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept".....Ansel Adams

I know how to use a Single Lens Reflex film camera. I do not know how to use a digital SLR camera. When one understands the concepts of how a picture is produced on film, that knowledge translates to all film cameras. With a digital camera, there aren't concepts to learn, just steps to memorize. And when one memorizes, he or she will never "know". My digital camera has a 350 page manual. My film camera had 16. I could "learn" the 350 page manual, but it would be pointless. When this digital camera goes bad, I will have to buy another camera with another 350 page manual, little of which will be the same as the previous.

I worked for many years with people who never understood how the process worked in our chemical plant. They memorized the "steps" and when something unusual went wrong they couldn't figure out the problem.

And, so it goes with kata. Memorize the techniques but miss the concepts and one will forever be a beginner.

There are thousands of joint breaking techniques, yet there are only six ways to break all joints. If you understand those concepts, you can break any joint. The elbow break of Shisochin, the leg break of Sanseiru, and the elbow break of Sepai all rely on one of the six breaking methods - extension. You are extending the joint past its range of motion. It doesn't matter which joint I am breaking. The concept is the same. If the opponent thwarts your hyper-extension effort by bending his limb in its correct plane of movement, you switch to the concept of flexion by wedging your forearm inside the joint causing hyper-flexion.

When one understands a concept, there is no need for memorizing. You "know". And, you know forever. That is the beauty of grasping concepts. It is also the reason why many people can't make anything from the kata work.

Saifa teaches the four levels of evasion; simply get out of the way, get out of the way while placing yourself in a good countering position, get out of the way and strike simultaneously and finally, attack while evading. Where one fits in this chain of progression depends on his or her skill level. The white belt will simply evade, the advanced should hit while avoiding being hit. The techniques are irrelevant. The concept is paramount.

When I first saw Tensho, my favorite kata, thousands of techniques jumped out at me. Yet, the man doing it said he thought the form was dumb. To this day, I will see something I missed and a whole new concept emerges. Defense becomes offense, deflections become strikes, blending becomes escaping and combining becomes trapping. Are these concepts really there? Just as beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder, so do applications gleaned from the kata. If I say an application is in the kata and I can make it work against a determined opponent, it is valid. If your interpretations do not work, they are wrong. Warriors were not abstract intellectual thinkers. They were pragmatic.

I have been playing with a thing called Target Focus Training for a few years now. It is concept based, rather than technique based. And while it has no socially redeeming value, it does not cloud the issue of combat. Its focus is on destruction of a target. Surprisingly, when one views Goju from TFT's perspective, insights into the kata are found.

Geki Sai teaches concepts, although that may not have been what its creators intended. The kick / strike sequence teaches the concept of using combinations. Note how we go from low to high and back to low in the mae geri - empi uchi - uraken - tetsui uchi. The concept of not allowing an opponent to mount a defense emerges as he tries to defend against an ever changing height of attack. The concept of how the human body reacts when struck also emerges - the opponent's head comes forward after the kick just in time to be snapped upward by the elbow- the now semi-horizontal face is a target for an uraken - the forward crumbling groin is then hit with tetsui uchi and a final gyaku tsuki completes the sequence. When one fails to grasp the concept of how the opponent's body is reacting as you execute a movement, kata sequences are reduced to calisthenics.

If one has never seen how a nail is driven by a hammer, a teacher would most likely demonstrate by laying a board flat and drive the nail in with vertical strokes. Yet, a nail can be driven into a vertical wall or a ceiling. And the hammer can be used side-armed or even between the legs while bent over. You adjust as the need arises, but the concept remains constant - hit the nail squarely on the head. Kata sequences are similar - a concept is demonstrated, but the actual choice of techniques is determined by the situation. You grasp the concept demonstrated and other applications present themselves.

The rhyme and reason of concept constantly teaches.

It was daylight savings time last month. I pulled the stem out on my watch, wound the hands back one hour and was done. My wife handed me her digital watch. "Would you set the time for me? I've been trying and I can't do it." I said, "sure, no problem.....where's the manual?"

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