

June 2012 Newsletter  
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

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**Bill Kane - 2012 Chairman Award**

by Zak Zaklad

Bill Kane is Renshi and Godan in Goju-Ryu Karate. He has been practicing Goju for 30 years and has been affiliated with the GKK for 18 years. He has trained and developed more than 40 black belts. Currently, the Ambler Dojo is one of the largest schools in GKK and has 18 active black belts and more than 40 active students.

Sensei Kane began his training in Goju-Ryu in 1981 under Sensei James Hagan. Together they began the karate program at the Ambler Area YMCA in 1984; he received his Shodan in 1985. In 1993, Sensei Kane assumed full responsibility for the

Ambler program, and joined the GKK in 1994. He was awarded Godan in 2001, and Renshi in 2002 by Yamakura Shihan.

He has hosted several visits from various members of the GKK over the many years. He has attended seminars in the Toledo area several times and brought a contingent to our 50th event.

He has represented us well in PA, is liked and respected, and benefits the GKK.

Sensei Kane and his students appreciatively and enthusiastically participate in GKK.

**Did You Know?**

by Rich Stamper

Did you know that our Newsletter is a great forum for your "opinion piece"? While GKK news and practice tips are the primary focus, your thoughts on martial art related subjects are welcome. So your opinion is? Share your thoughts.

**Letters to the Editor;**

Dear Mr. Bill,

Thanks for the informative and provocative essay on Recovery, a subject near and dear to my heart. I want to share some thoughts I have on the subject:

I think you are right on target when you talk of the value of simple movement. In the Food, Stress, and the Brain seminar referenced in last month's newsletter, that point was made very strongly. The idea of "exercise" means for many "civilians" is an alien and unattainable vision of pumping heavy weights in a gym or running a marathon. My wife is one of those people. What helped her is the knowledge that just moving your body on a regular basis is what's needed for health. She has become a walker.

For us karateka, the story is a little different. As you know I am a practitioner and teacher of Tai Chi as well as Goju-Ryu. A couple of years ago, a few of us had the honor of traveling to Novi for a seminar by Shihan on "Old Man Karate", about how karate training needs to change as one ages (I am turning 70 this summer). There were many valuable lessons for me from that seminar, including:

**1. Listen to your body.** this means if it hurts, stop doing it. do NOT play through pain. This is especially important as one ages, because recovery and healing is slower.

**2. Take more rests.** I have taken this to mean that during karate class, when I feel a need to sit, I sit - and try not to feel like I am shirking.

**3. Challenge is still important.** Finding ways to learn and grow is crucial, keep the beginner's mind.

I find my role as a karateka and teacher is changing, in accordance with those 3 principles. I am mindful of and grateful for my titanium hips, now 5 years old. I don't bounce, jump, or even jog; try to limit the shocks. But at the same time, keeping the core muscles strong is very important.

The one thing I disagree with you about is Tai Chi. It *is* magical. That is, it's stretching, strengthening, challenging mind, body, and spirit at the same time. Mr. Yamakura mentioned Tai Chi is one of the primary influences on Goju.

Bottom line is I'm moving more towards Tai Chi and limiting my Goju-Ryu as I age. This feels like the best way for me to stay healthy.

With regard and appreciation,  
Zak

# Breaking Mind Sets in Training

by Dave Shaneman

## Putting a square peg into a round whole.

When I began karate training many years ago, the standard was Sensei says, we do. No questions asked. Sensei's job was to show, it was our job to learn.

The theory was if we use enough practice repetitions or trained harder everything would fall into place. As I developed in teaching styles, I changed some thought processes;

### 1) Teaching with a Positive Attitude.

Always try to show a correct example, i.e., do it this way versus don't do this. Each time you show good versus bad, the mind records both options making a fork in the road in recalling how to perform a movement. Much like when you were in school trying to learn a spelling list. You would only practice spelling the words correctly. Otherwise, confusion would step in at test time. If you catch yourself correcting movements by saying don't do this, the mind does not record the don't, but only remembers it as another option. Remember how confusing it was when you were trying to learn weather / whether or where / wear or their / there ? The mind had too many options at recall.

Try to keep lessons in a positive mode. Show correct examples and use positive reinforcement. Look for what is being done correctly and build on that base. We respond to praise better than being yelled at. Try saying "focus on pulling your elbows back faster" rather than "you are not chambering the punches "or "put your foot down quicker" rather than "you are not pulling your foot back fast enough."

If you have a student who is not putting enough effort forward, rather than yelling at him to work harder, try standing next to him not say anything but just work hard. If you have students standing around before class loafing, rather than yell at them to get busy, try asking them to work with you on a kata or basics. If you are not training or working before class, you cannot expect your students to do so. Every time you catch yourself saying "don't" think of a way to change your comment in to a positive statement. There will be times that negative reinforcement is needed, such as safety issues or extremely poor behavior. Strive for an 85/15 percent ratio of positive comments to negative comments.

### 2) Teaching With Training Wheels.

Break the movements in to smaller segments a student can understand and perform with success. Break teaching down into segments; balance, physical movements and generation of speed and power.

You would not put a new driver into a sports car and turn them loose on the freeway without first breaking the driving skills down into smaller lessons that can be understood and done with confidence. You would first teach driving basics. Or as when we learned to write, we first used large block letters and moved to smaller more controlled print then on to cursive writing.

Design drills that focus on developing a particular skill. Rather than teaching a whole kata, take sequences out of the katas and run them as drills in class. This helps students practice the sequences or combinations that are difficult. For those who don't practice a particular kata yet, they will learn the parts of the kata before hand. When they get to that kata they will only have to put the parts together in sequence.

Focus on controlling the elbows, knees and breath. Where the elbows go, the body follows. The quicker the elbows hit the chamber and the knees lock into place the sharper your movements will be. For example: teach a blocking and punching sequence as a pre-lesson to sparring. The first movement in seiyunchin as a block for a kick and attacking with a reverse punch. Or, you can take sequences from kata and practice bunkai. Try creating drills from the sequences out of the katas. For example, the block, front kick, elbow and punch sequence from gekisai can be worked into a two person drill if you change the angle of the defense by stepping slightly off center and blocking as the attacker steps in with a lunge punch. Another example might be the way a movement is taught at a certain level as in Sanseiru. After the opening movements, wrist break and leg grab, do you step kick or double kick? This movement might be dictated by your skill level or physical ability. If you can perform one kick correctly, you might try to add the second kick.

If students are having trouble hitting or locking stances, try stepping into the stance first and paying attention to foot position, heel position and knee lock and position. Try running Gekisai this way; step first without any arm movement, then when the feet are set, proceed with the arm movements. This should be a one and two count. When the student develops a good solid stance, execute the block or punch. As the stances and foot work progress, shorten the time between the foot and arm movements. Remember, feet first.

### 3) Think, Prepare, Execute.

Think before you move, prepare your body to move, only then can you execute the move properly. For example, if you are going to punch; what kind of punch , what is my target, when is my target in range and available? Ready my body to punch, lower the hips, chamber the arm and move into position. Now, if everything is ready, execute the punch.

#### **4) Explore Kata**

Try to remove the mind set, "I've been training for twenty years and we have always done it this way". Much like being in school for twenty years and repeating first grade twenty times, have you really developed your karate or are you stuck in a rut? Try running kata at different speeds and power. Change angles of movements, let your body discover how it sequences together without prearranged stops. Think of attacks coming from different angles or heights. Defend from standing, falling and from the ground. Attacks do not always come from the expected areas. There are no rules for fights, bad guys don't have rules. Study other martial arts and learn their attacks and counters. An example is the first sequence from Seiyunchin; we tend to think of this as a defense from a wrist grab of an attack from the front. If you watch wrestling or judo, this can be a forward break fall or a bridge and roll from a rear mounted position. Look at movements as concepts rather than black and white movements. This is not meant as an attack on traditional kata or teachings but a way to explore karate at another level.

#### **5) Hip and Pelvis Placement**

Many times proper hip or pelvis movement or position is misapplied. This leads to unstable stances and loss of power. A couple of points to remember are the two basic positions for the pelvis. First, the rolled under tucked position, used in sanchin dachi and zenkutsu dachi where the pelvis is rolled under the body and upward towards the navel. Second, the pelvis is rolled back which cause the small of the back to arch as in neko ashi dachi and shiko dachi. One test or drill used to train for proper position is a drill where you stand with your back against a wall with your feet about one foot from the wall. Press your back flat against the wall as you try to tilt or roll your pelvis up and forward towards your navel, force the small of your back to the wall. You should not be able get your hand between the small of your back and the wall. This is the pelvis position used in sanchin dachi and zenkutsu dachi. While keeping your shoulders against the wall pivot your pelvis and hips back and down. The small of your back should come away from the wall and you can place your hand between the small of your back and the wall. This is the hip and pelvis position of neko ashi dachi and shiko dachi. As you move the hip and pelvis forward and back, think of how a cat arches and stretches their back. As you move though kata or basics, pay attention to your hip and pelvis position.

After the up and backward movement of the hips and pelvis comes the clockwise and counter clockwise movement or rotation of the hips during blocks, kicks and punches. This is easy to see during the execution of a reverse punch. The hardest movement to develop is the figure eight rotation of the hips and pelvis. This type of hip movement is used in judo and wrestling.

## **Training Event, Cumberland National Park, Kentucky**

by Ken Maunz

We will be having a camping, vacation, and training event at Cumberland Gap National Park, KY. The target date is Wednesday June 13th to Sunday June 17th.. Cost, guess about \$50. Hope to have 2 practices a day. Instructors will be myself and whoever else maybe talked into it. There is great hiking at the park, 15 miles of bike trails, mostly paved. There are also 125 miles of trails very close for ATV, 4 wheel, dirt bikes and the other stuff you can find to get dirty with. There is also a cave tour in the park. Also a lot of historical interest. The campground is a nice one with electric and non-electric sites about \$14 to \$18 per night. Several motels close.

Things could change a little depending on group interest. At this time it is a guideline. We currently have enough members interested to go ahead with plans, but we have room for any more who would like to attend.

Contact me at [kenmaunz@bex.net](mailto:kenmaunz@bex.net)

## **BlackBelt Promotional and Seminar**

by Frank Matt

It was a privilege to watch the blackbelt testing this year. They all worked their tails off. My congratulations to all. Mr. Ed Myers gave a great class on Safia kata. He brought a whole new way of looking at the kata. It was an excellent way of really seeing what we want to see and look at in our kata.

Of course, Mr. Yamakura ALWAYS has a message to teach. Each time he brings out the best in us. When I have the privilege to learn from him, I am humbled.

It is really awesome to know we have the guidance and instruction at our finger tips. Anytime we have questions, our leaders are there, either by email or in person.

I want to thank each and every one of our leaders for your dedication.

Just on a quick note - here in Upstate New York, we have had such an interest in our program, we have started another at a branch of the Saratoga Regional YMCA. One of my students, Anthony Lugo, is guiding those two classes. It's been quite an awesome ride so far in such a short time.

*"People, like nails, lose their effectiveness when they lose direction and begin to bend"..... Walter Savage Landor*

**F**ew things look sillier than a karateka attempting a high side or roundhouse kick when they don't understand the mechanics of kicking. I've seen advanced dan grades flail their arms like overweight helicopters as they try to gain height on kicks while actually working against correct hip movement which is the key.

Some body joints are better suited for limited movement while others are designed for mobility. Starting from the floor; Ankles - mobility, knees - stability, hips - mobility, lumbar spine - stability, thoracic spine - mobility, cervical spine - stability. It should be obvious, for example, if we bend the knee inward or outward, we ruin the knee. The same for repeated flexing of the lumbar spine.

In a previous "maize ball" article I explained how the head and shoulders form a triangle. To avoid a punch, the triangle moves as a unit without the neck bending. Getting hit in the jaw while the neck is flexed can result in a permanent injury. Movement centers around the thoracic spine

Below is a demonstration of the Romanian Deadlift by Nicu Vlad of Romania. This one exercise has taught me more about kicking than any other. Spine experts will tell you "lift with the legs." Nice in theory, but difficult in practice. The reason Vlad isn't hurting his spine is because he isn't bending it. To be more specific; his torso is rotating where the femurs insert into the pelvis. The spine is locked in a neutral position and does not flex. The powerful gluteal and hamstring muscles are doing the lifting. You will also notice the shins are vertical and the weight is held close to the legs throughout. In the center photo, the weight is actually pulled rearward generating extreme torso rigidity while reducing shear forces on the spine. Don't try this exercise with weight unless you have expert coaching



The Romanian Deadlift develops hip awareness along with the gluteal strength of a Clydesdale. My lifting and bending patterns drastically changed after mastering this exercise - a little too late perhaps. You can grasp the concept by standing with the heels eighteen inches or so away from a wall. Now, try to place the lower ribs against the thighs and touch the butt to the wall while looking straight ahead.

A second exercise to develop hip awareness is to stand with the feet shoulder width apart. Think of yourself as a plastic doll with ball and socket hips and a solid plastic torso. Any attempt to lean left or right should cause the opposite foot to leave the floor. This indicates you are bending at the femur / pelvis point and not the lumbar spine.

The third exercise uses a ballet barre, although anything handy to hold on to will work. While holding the barre and keeping the lumbar spine rigid, lean as you cock the leg and "stack" one hip over the other. Humans have an aversion to leaning. It is as if a "tilt" button gets pushed preventing us from fully opening the hips. The end result is the hips are not "stacked" above each other which is required for fluid kicking. You can clearly see Jhoon Rhee's stacked hips and straight line from the tailbone to the thoracic vertebra. He is demonstrating perfect hip mobility, lumbar stability and thoracic mobility. Little wonder he was once referred to as "the hardest kicker on planet earth."

You may be thinking, "why bother?" Goju isn't a kicking style and high kicks are poor choices against a determined opponent. But, tell someone you "know" karate, and they won't ask to see an uraken.

Ninety-nine times out of a hundred it will be a kick request. Kicking skill means you have paid your dues.

In the sixties, Bruce Lee was giving a demonstration at the Long Beach Internationals in California. As he criticized high kicking, the audience started booing. He quietly placed the microphone down, shot several lightning fast high kicks and re-started his lecture. Legend has it the audience went dead silent



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