

September 2012 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

www.goju.com



New GKK Member

by Frank Matt

A son, Gabriel, to Suzanne and Josh Welch, born June 2nd. The newest member of our New York dojo. Congrats to them.

Perception as a Technique of Goju-Ryu

By Paul Babladelis

Perhaps some of the most advanced techniques of Goju-Ryu aren't physical techniques at all. Maybe they aren't something you do with or to someone else, but rather an adjustment you make to yourself. Stopping mental chatter is one example, expanding your awareness by "cutting off your head" is another. No, I'm not talking about anything that involves a sword or sharp objects. I'm talking about a shift in mental awareness.

Douglas E. Harding first published a classic work in 1961 titled, "On Having No Head." In this little book he suggests that most humans travel through life imagining a head on their shoulders and separating themselves from much of the essential human experience. Moreover, humans often chatter incessantly within this mental construct. Harding invites us to "cut off our heads" and perceive the world directly.

Anyone can try this technique and most catch on quickly. Look straight ahead and allow yourself to be aware of what you actually see, hear, and smell. Don't process this experience with words and let any intruding thoughts pass by without giving to them. The world opens up into a vast place, a wide angle view to both sides, up and down, with depth as far as you can see. A feeling of freedom comes when one can "cut off their head" and perceive in a way the Buddha pointed to when he said, "the clouds become my innermost thoughts." This contrasts sharply with someone living inside their head, absorbed in mental chatter, and barely aware of the sidewalk in front of them or people passing by.

What does this have to do with Goju-Ryu? Consider the tried and true concept, "look first, then follow with the hips and body." This is largely taught since most beginners simply learn kata and then perform it as a routine, never really considering where the next attack is coming from. To counter this teachers instruct them, "look first, think about what's coming next, don't just move without seeing what you're moving in to or away from."

An advanced practitioner who can skillfully use the "headless" concept described earlier doesn't really need to look first in order to see. They can shave precious milliseconds by eliminating the need to first turn the head and can instead use the whole body in a whipping motion to change directions. To be clear here, they need to see what they are moving in to or away from before initiating the movement, but if they are practicing with a wide awareness, they have no trouble perceiving what is going on in their peripheral vision even though their eyes are not facing that direction. This can be tested easily.

A favorite drill of mine is to hang a small foam ball from the ceiling and punch or kick it while one or two people stand nearby. The person punching or kicking should be able to hit the ball without directly looking at it and move around during the drill while keeping a wide awareness. The person or people standing nearby look for a break in consciousness of the person hitting the ball and attack at that moment. The goal is to execute good punches and kicks to the ball with focus, without losing awareness of the wider surroundings, and to defend immediately when one of the bystanders attacks.

Advanced techniques don't have to be complicated or obscure. The "headless" concept described here is simple to the extreme and just requires practice (any time of the day while doing anything) to get better and better at it. I've heard it said that Miyagi Chojun encouraged students to, "look eight ways," and from the stories we've been handed down in Goju-Ryu, practiced what he preached. Perhaps by following his example we can see a broader picture as we go through life.



GKK Around the World Canada

Chief Instructor: Sebastian Pirrone

Number of Programs: All in Province of Ontario

- 1: Hombu Dojo (LaSalle)
- 2: Zettai No Kodo Dojo (ZNK) (Windsor)
- 3: Hankatsuru Dojo (Windsor)
- 4: Shinkan Dojo (Leamington)
- 5: Amherstburg Dojo (Amherstburg)
- 6: Lakeshore Dojo (Lakeshore Dojo)
- 7: Windsor Y (Windsor)
- 8: AdieKnox Dojo (Windsor)

Highlights of our 2011 goals and accomplishments

- 1) Black Belt promotion to take place in 2011. Did occur. Saw one promotion to Shodan Grade. Congratulations to Paul Wentzlaff promoted to Shodan on December 10, 2011.
- 2) Standardize the Japanese kanji for Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai. Did occur—created by Japanese calligrapher ---it is beautiful
- 3) Standardize GKK Patch with new embroidery software. EPS format, TIFF format and PDF files created that are photo and web quality in both black and white and colour
- 4) Create and Introduce updated Tie. Vendor has been contacted for samples to be produced within next 30 days. We must commit to 50 neckties for an order; retail will be about \$40.00 Memo will come out on a pre-order basis
- 5) Create and update gojucanada Website, www.gojucanada.com. Website is back up, we are working on redesign and updated information
- 6) Produce T Shirts. Have been produced. Kanji in the colour red for the t-shirts.
- 7) Greater participation in regional, national, international events (seminars, tournaments and clinics)
Membership participation in the following events;
Regional/Provincial tournaments: Karate Ontario. International Tournaments: PKF: Brazil, WKF: Malaysia
- 8) Host bigger GKK events (seminars, clinics, travel to areas) We hosted Yamakura Shihan Seminars and Events 6 times in the 2011 year. We also hosted PKF and WKF level seminars in Leamington
- 9) Host regional tournament for children in programs Small tournament did take place Approx. 30 children, oldest being 11. Kumite only: (White through Green) 1st Alex Robertson, 2nd Hank Owen, 3rd Sammy Robertson (Brown) 1st: Fina Pirrone, 2nd: Remington Stacey, 3rd Zachary Stacey
- 10) Preparation for Japan 2012 trip Being reviewed in light of social and environmental issues in that particular region.

2012 Goals

1. Black Belt promotion to take place in 2012
2. Create and produce Certificate design
3. Create and produce name stamps, seals
4. Revisit organizational Canadian government guidelines and mandatory policy
5. View social media communication technology, (Facebook, etc)
6. Produce GKK Art for membership (marble kanji, etc.)
7. Greater participation in regional, national, international events (seminars, tournaments and clinics)
8. Host official GKK events (seminars, clinics, travel to areas)
9. Host regional tournament for membership
10. Review a Japan trip
11. Update 30th anniversary GKK in Canada Celebration (committee)

Did You Know

by Rich Stamper

Did you know "somebody ought to _____"? Often very good ideas are prefaced by "Somebody ought to". Leadership is not title or position, it is action and example. Perhaps somebody ought to _____. Are you that somebody? Could be.

Thanks for the Memories - 1975 Camp Bushi-do

Left to right: Mike Galose, Dale Szymanoski, John Dennison, Chuck Phillips



2012 Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Seiwa Kai Kata and Bunkai Training Seminar

November 16 - 18, Santa Monica, California

Chief Instructors: Seiichi Fujiwara, Hanshi, 8th Dan President & Head Instructor, Goju-Ryu SeiwaKai Chairman, JKF GojuKai Overseas Committee

Leo Lipinski, Kyoshi, 8th Dan President & Head Instructor, Goju-Ryu SeiwaKai Europe

Instructors: Vassie Naidoo, Kyoshi, 7th Dan President & Head Instructor - Goju-Ryu SeiwaKai USA
Desmond Tuck, Renshi, 6th Dan - California
James Pounds, Shihan, 6th Dan - Texas

Seminar Fee: \$175 by Oct. 31; \$195 after Nov. 1st & at door. Register Today!

For More Information: Vassie Naidoo, Shihan, 310-399-6955 or usagojuryu@gmail.com

"Keeping What I've Got", part one.

"I'm not as good as I once was, but I'm as good once as I ever was".....Unknown

Growing older is a double-edged sword. One should be happy to still be alive, but physical decline is inevitable. It starts happening at a relatively young age. A Navy SEAL candidate must be no older than twenty-eight to be accepted into the program. Recovery has already diminished at that young age. George Foreman was a senior citizen of the boxing world when he regained the world title at forty- five. But, there are ways to squeeze some extra life out of the years.

I was asked awhile back about weight training. The person wanted to "keep what he had", not necessarily get bigger or stronger. A simple question on the surface, but one which requires a good deal of explanation to be fully answered.

First, what does he "have"? As an example, suppose I want to know how strong his legs, hips and spine are. I have him do a squat with fifty pounds across his shoulders. Not a problem. I load the bar to seventy-five. Some difficulty now. At a hundred pounds of weight on the bar, it takes all he's got to complete the repetition. We can now say, more or less, that his strength level is a hundred pound squat for a single rep. If this person wishes to "keep what he's got", he needs to squat with a hundred pound weight, once a week for one repetition for the remainder of his life. In the future, he can then say, "I am still as strong as I was "x" years ago."

However, I would suggest one tape their health insurance card to their forehead before trying a maximum single in an exercise as technically difficult as the squat. Seconds count in the hospital emergency room. With the ankles, knees, hips, spine and shoulders all in motion, it is very easy to destroy a body part if technique is off.

Coaches realized how dangerous maximum singles are to athletes, so charts were developed to approximate an equivalent. For example, if we use a weight of eighty pounds and the subject can do a maximum of five squats, we can extrapolate that into an equivalent of a single rep at a hundred pounds.

This isn't entirely true. Moving weight becomes easier with improved technique. The human body discovers minute adjustments in a movement and corrects pathways to gain leverage advantages. This is why many weight trainees make seemingly huge strength gains for six weeks in an exercise - technique is improving faster than actual strength. But, for simplicity, the example is reasonable; test to find what the subject's strength level is and then maintain that level. To "keep what he's got", our subject should squat with eighty pounds for five reps once a week for the remainder of his life.

The point of all this is to show that lifting a pair of pink five pound weights isn't going to help one keep much of anything in the way of strength. A general guide line is; one to five reps build strength with little size gain, six to twelve reps build some strength and size, twelve reps and higher develop endurance with little strength or size gain. There are a few exceptions, such as the brutal twenty-rep squat, but for the most part the guidelines are fairly accurate. Some trainees do not fit these general rules.

But, what about kettlebells? Don't they defy the rules? No. When one jerks on a weight, very high loads are produced. To push a ten pound weight overhead requires a force slightly greater than ten pounds. To toss a ten pound weight fifty feet into the air would require several hundred pounds of thrust. The faster one swings the 'bells, the "heavier" they become. Force is measured by how fast a mass is accelerated. This is what is meant by "explosive" strength and is very difficult to gauge unless one is tossing medicine balls for distance or doing Olympic weightlifting. Explosive training is a bit tricky and can be dangerous.

Of course, doing one exercise, for one repetition, once a week is really stretching the concept. Doing six or eight multi-joint exercises every few days for eight or so repetitions will guarantee not only maintenance of current strength, but will allow strength and size increases if that is what one wants. Just add weight to the bar when you can. Due to its extreme time efficiency, I switched thirty years ago to the single set of ten or so exercises performed every four days. My squat and deadlift weights have doubled and my parallel dip reps have remained the same, except I am eighty pounds heavier now. Hopefully, it wasn't all fat.

It is important to understand these concepts because some have embarked on a strength training program, and seen little, if any, improvement. Another reason is to understand how near maximum training will maintain strength and muscle while light resistance training won't. Light resistance training is fine if one wants to maintain joint function, range of motion, muscular endurance and general well-being. Almost any type of training slows down the ravages of age.

But, if it can be moved easily, it won't "keep what you've got".

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