

May 2015 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

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Spring Seminar, Annual Meeting and Tournament

By Dwight Scales

The Spring Seminar, Annual Meeting and Tournament will be the weekend after Mother's Day, May 15 and 16th. Black belt testing will be Friday, May 15th, seminar, tournament and annual meeting will be the following day, May 16th – all in Toledo Ohio. As we determine times we'll add to the notice.

Please check your records to determine who is eligible for Dan rank testing and get their names to me as soon as possible. If you are not sure if and when someone should test, please use the following criteria: Sho-dan – over three years, Ni-dan – over 2

years after sho-dan San-dan – over 3 years after ni-dan, Yon-dan - over 3 years after san-dan, Go-dan – over 3 years after yon-dan, Roku-dan – over 5 years after go-dan. Let's make sure recognition is given when recognition is due.

Last year we included a small tournament along with the seminar and annual business meeting. It had been some time since we held a tournament and I hope everyone enjoyed themselves. I am asking for any and all feedback regarding last year's tournament. We want this year's to not only include more participants but be more interesting.

Please send comments and suggestions directly to me: dwight.scales@imageschools.com or feel free to call: 419.304.1666.

Update; We are looking forward to seeing all of you. We will have the actual times for the various sessions in next month's newsletter. They will be similar to what we have had in the past - the first session featuring white belts, the second green and brown, the third black belts.

Prices will also be the same - \$10 if you plan to attend one session, \$15 for two, \$20 for all three.

Tournament fees - \$5 for one event, \$7 for both kata and kumite.

I thank those of you who have sent suggestions regarding the tournament. All are greatly appreciated. As a result we are considering the addition of a weapons demonstration. We need participants. Please contact me.

We have not received any applications for promotion consideration. Dojo leaders please do not overlook anyone.

All GKK members must wear their GKK patch. There will be a five dollar charge if they do not.

Yamakura Shihan Trip to Japan

Shihan Yamakura will visit Japan from July 13, 2015 through July 26, 2015.

July 13; Leave Detroit Monday afternoon arriving Narita Japan the next afternoon due to time and day change. Will stay in Tokyo.

Next day will start from Nihonbashi, wings of Kirin, the symbol for starting point of Japanese people. Take bullet train to Kyoto, observing Mt. Fuji from the window of the train.

Shihan Yamakura will stay in Kyoto for next three days to take care of personal visits, available tours, Kyoto museum, Butokuden, Nishiki market, Kiyamachi night life, Movie village, Heian shrine, Kiyomizu temple, Rockgarden and the Gold/Silver pagoda temples.

July 17; Gion festival.

July 18 and 19; will attend the Seigokan Karate tournament in Hemeji for good will tour. Some may enjoy visiting Hemeji castle. There is a village nearby which has a Samurai festival in May.

July 20 and 21; will visit Nikko region, stay in hot spring inns. Nikko sightseeing, including Edomura, replica of Edo period.

July 21; will be in Kashima shrine, the Budo god. Next three days are free time, may visit Kamakura for sitting Buddha. Sumo, if we can get tickets, is in Nagoya. Then back to Osaka, for Tenjin festival, Osaka castle, then fireworks at night, swords purchase in Kyoto, visit Ninja village, observe jujitsu class.

All these are not confirmed yet except Seigokan visit, so there might be some changes coming.

This is not group trip so there is no special rate. All must be individually scheduled and booked.

Shihan Yamakura will answer any questions regarding this trip. Anyone can join part or all these days. The exchange rate may change a little later. Currently cheap yen is increasing the purchase power of the dollar 100yen=\$1.00 or better.

A JR pass can be purchased in US prior to leaving, for one week or two weeks. This covers most of transportation. Subway, bus, taxi are extra. Accommodations are around \$100 a day. Foods costs are relatively the same as in the US.

The Early Days

By Jack Coleman

It was the early 1950's and war was still raging in Asia. Meanwhile, some American servicemen were returning home with a working knowledge of various martial art styles. Okinawa, Japan, Hawaii, and Korea opened enrollment in the formerly clandestine training so long kept solely for those in the Orient. For example, General Curtis LeMay of the United States Air Force arranged for karate-do demonstrations for our overseas troops. As a stateside result, the first Izumikawa Goju-Ryu School was initiated during the mid-fifties in Toledo, Ohio. Opening its doors to the public in 1959, it developed a small but dedicated following. Included in this introduction is one of the individuals that became the foundation for what eventually evolved into the Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai. Additional contributors will be addressed in following articles.



John Frederick. No single individual offered more to our budding organization in the sixties. Beginning his training as a teenage boy in 1960 he demonstrated tireless enthusiasm for the art. One of the original Funakoshi Dojo group, John rose in ability and rank receiving his shodan grade in 1963. John was instrumental in the establishment of the University of Toledo Karate program in 1965. Acting as assistant instructor, he taught one hundred and fifty new students a session and gained valuable experience. John also served when the Bowling Green University program started one year later in 1966. John eventually reached the grade of san-dan in the U.S. Goju-Kai Karate-do Association. John, like a select few of our members, holds black belt credentials in additional systems. He was awarded sandan in the Shotokan/Japan Karate Association in 1970 by Shojiro Sugiyama of Chicago, IL. Besides his martial arts accomplishments John received a degree in accounting from the University of Toledo. John now resides in Georgia with his family and serves as an administrator for a prison system there. (Note: In the nineteen seventies, san-dan was a high rank for a non-Oriental in the USA)

Mr. John Frederick was kind enough to add his memories of the early days as follows:

First, thanks for the very kind words. I believe I started in June 1960 - I had just turned 16 and was able to drive alone to the South Toledo YMCA for my first class. I was nidan when I moved to Taylor Michigan - I had graduated and took a job in Detroit Mich. at a big-eight CPA firm. My present job is CFO at West Central Georgia Regional Hospital - Forensic Psychiatric Hospital.

My "story": A very strange event happened one day in the 7th grade. Another student had his brother's cool book and was showing it off on the playground. To this day I remember staring at the pictures and vowing to one day be one of those individuals in those pictures. The book was Nishiyama and Brown's; *Karate: The Art of "Empty-Hand" Fighting*.

Per the high school administrators, I was viewed as a troubled "at risk" kid who had lost his dad at age 12, was an under achiever sleeping through classes, and whose only goal was to reach age 17, drop out of school, join the Marines, and to go to Nam.

In 1960, having turned 16, I found a local karate school in the phone book (the only karate school listed), got up the courage to call, and talked to a Jack Coleman who suggested I come watch or participate in a class.

I joined Jack Coleman's school on Giant Street and often walked the 2.1 miles to and from class. It was a nice walk to class, a very painful walk after class. Classes were extremely physical, high repetitions with total effort and commitment (one technique one kill), with each class ending with attitude adjustment through sparring at the end of class - as a white belt that means pain and bruises - making the walk home very long and painful.

I grew up through those classes. I learned to focus, strive, achieve goals, respect others, and have humility as fights prove nothing and large egos need to be avoided. Most importantly I learned that if you lose your temper, you've lost the fight.

I later earned sandan in JKA (Japan Karate Association), testing in Chicago under both Sensei Nishiyama and Sensei Sugiyama and am a Life Member of the JKA. I currently hold sandan with the JKA, ITKF, and AJKA.

I continued teaching at my own school, along with having been the former Chief Instructor at the University of Toledo, Bowling Green State University, South Toledo YMCA, the Sylvania, Ohio JCC, Oregon City Schools, and Dade County Community College N.C.

I still practice daily. I am teaching Personal Protection Workshops for Women with my wife at various community organizations and colleges.

As I look back and remember the sweat, tears, pain, and snap of a good technique during the past 55 years, I never met or saw a sensei that more deserved my respect and admiration than Jack Coleman - his love for the art and sincere desire to teach the true meaning of karate to each student has yet to be equaled. I only hope that I've been able to pass along our art along with the love for the art that he was kind enough to share with me. Karate is so much more than fighting.

So What Do You Say?

By Rich Stamper

I know several karate practitioners who have traveled to Japan or Okinawa to train. I know several karate practitioners who hope to someday travel to Japan or Okinawa to train. Why go there? Sure, practicing at the hombu dojo and feeling the aura of the place is understandable, and wanting to experience the culture makes sense, but beyond that, what is the draw? Bragging rights? Would the training we receive from Yamakura Shihan be any better or more legitimate if he lived there instead of here and we went to Japan to train with him? Why travel to Japan or Okinawa to train? So what do you say?

Reply to Last Month's ; "So What Do You Say?"

The Best of All Worlds: Exhaustive Training, Detailed Instruction and Dedicated Learning

By Mark Cramer

I well remember the "good old days" of karate training, and instruction was frequently poor. Karate had been introduced into Japan only four decades earlier, and instruction had been suspended during the war years. Combat took the lives of many of those who had trained in karate before the war, and the allied bombing took the lives of many more karateka in Japan. These factors led to a severe shortage of qualified teachers in Japan. Soshin Nagamine confirms this: "The reasons for the instructor shortage can be attributed to the comparatively brief history of karate in Japan, war damage, and the discontinuance of karate training during the war."¹

Consequently, when instructors from Japan first came to the United States a little more than a decade later, their knowledge level was limited. The end result of this was that basics and kata were often improperly taught, and exhaustive repetition only reinforced bad basics. Kumite was primitive and brutal by the standards of today, and you learned kumite pretty much by experimentation.

That is why there were plenty of times when little was taught during the typical karate class. However, there were few times when nothing was learned. Sometimes we learned to push ourselves beyond what we believed to be our point of exhaustion. Other times we learned to endure the force of someone else's technique. These were valuable lessons.

The author and Nishiyama Shihan 1985



By the mid-1980s things began to change in the U.S. I remember the first time that I attended a series of seminars taught by Hidetaka Nishiyama Shihan. Over a three day period, we trained exhaustively for twelve hours. Some karateka were unable to endure Nishiyama Shihan's level of training, and they dropped out of the seminar. However, Nishiyama Shihan taught in minute detail. Improper basics and improper movement was swiftly corrected. Those of us who endured his lessons learned a lot about the various strategies of kumite. (On November 3, 2000 in the Imperial Palace, the Emperor of Japan awarded Nishiyama Shihan the Order of the Sacred Treasure.)

Author and Fujiwara Shihan in 2012

I am presently 65, and Seiichi Fujiwara Hanshi is our chief instructor. Daily instruction lasts for six hours, and it is exhaustive. However he teaches thoroughly and makes corrections in minute detail. When you leave the seminar three days later, you are exhausted and you have learned a lot. (In Japan, the seminar lasts for a week.) Your kata and your kumite have improved tremendously. You take pride that you have endured the exhaustive training and have suppressed the urge to take it easy. At this point, you might turn to your partner in kumite and say "Oshi Shinobu."

Today, the best training is still exhaustive, and sometimes you get bloodied. It should be that way; after all karatedo is a Budo – a way of combat. The thing that seems different from the "good old days" is that the best shihans now teach in minute detail. The best students take those details home with them and practice them exhaustively until what was taught becomes part of them.



¹ Nagamine, Shoshin: The Essence of Okinawan Karate-Do, page 25

Thoughts on How to Have a Successful Dojo

By Bill Kane

Introduction: This is the third installment of concepts we try to utilize at the Ambler GKK karate dojo to help keep the program vibrant and growing. I continually say that it is the core of blackbelts that form the backbone of our program. These instructors are motivated, engaged and constantly looking for ways to improve our program. We leverage each other's ideas, build on shared concepts and support each other's growth on a regular basis. The students seem to recognize that camaraderie and want to be a part of that esprit de corps. That spirit tends to keep our pipeline full of good students. These are some of our practices.

Chapter 3: How to Maintain/Reinforce a Program – Concept 4-6 (Promotions, Learning Principles & Improvements)

- Be flexible but drive toward consistent standards
- Encourage/reinforce positive behavior
- Discourage negative behavior (be careful here)
- Allow greater privileges for higher ranks (motivator)
- Give instructors the chance to learn/practice
- Recognize individuals on a daily basis (make specific note/comment on their progress or personal situation)
- Assign a mentor black belt to each brown belt to get them ready for shodan testing
- Try to maintain a good balance of fun, work and challenge for all students
- Whenever possible, try to meet the student's needs.

Concept 4: Manage Promotions & Testing

An effective promotion policy is crucial to keeping students interested and progressing. We try to have the students focus on learning, rather than merely getting the next belt (promotion). We found some years ago, that character is at least as important as technique/ability in determining when someone is ready for promotion. As we stated in the "attract section", each student is an ambassador, and we especially want our black belts to represent and model what we feel is a worthy "true beginner".

There are multiple components that are the basis of promotions. Skill, technique, power, accuracy, consistency, spirit, dojo etiquette, focus, students mind, desire, etc. Just as a person won't qualify with a single strong quality; they won't necessarily be disqualified for a single deficiency.

We kept this in mind as we developed the following promotion policy about which we inform all new students and remind experienced students repeatedly;

Training Philosophy at the Ambler GKK Dojo

Kyu level testing is open to anyone who believes they have achieved the requirements of a particular level or just for the practice, but testing does not guarantee promotion. We will keep the open invitation policy until it begins to make testing groups too large or the practice gets abused.

The second way a person gets to test is to be invited by a black belt. This is usually done for lower belts who don't know where their abilities lie or for others that may lack the confidence to initiate testing. For those people, promotion is usually an automatic unless the person really falls apart. For all practical purposes, the testing has already been completed, just the ceremony remains.

When we test people, we look at several things. Obviously, technical aspects are important: technique, focus, speed, power, fluidity, application, timing, and coordination. I also look at less tangible aspects: attitude, attendance, application of abilities, attention to detail, leadership, eagerness to pass on the tradition, willingness to make adjustments (coach-ability). Superiority in anyone of these areas won't cause a person to get promoted any more than a deficiency in another will cause a person to not be promoted; it's the total package.

A good example of this is how we work with and promote students with disabilities. They may not be the most physically able, or have other challenges, but their great attitudes and willingness to participate can make all the difference[1]*.

One final point, these are only guidelines and each person's performance is considered independently. Students pay for karate instruction, not to be promoted. We will only promote a person who (in our opinion) upholds the responsibilities of that new higher level. Some sensei won't promote someone to blackbelt unless they intend to teach; it's their dojo, their prerogative. While I respect and count highly on the counsel of the contributing blackbelts, promotions are given by the GKK through me at Ambler dojo. A promotion is an endorsement, and we will only give the endorsement of the GKK to an individual who has demonstrated the good skills, knowledge, and character required for a given rank. Our position is not one of ego, but rather responsibility....

As for previous training, we don't expect a complete emptying of one cup before refilling it with the new way, but we like to see the incorporation of our techniques into their personal style. Nevertheless, we require blackbelts to teach the techniques and kata as we do them; a GKK standard. While Sandan tends to reflect the true competency of a school, Shodan is the point that most see as the visible mark on the wall...having 'mastered the basics.'

Concept 5: Consideration of Learning Principles

There are many things to consider during the teaching phase. Each person has a preferred way of learning, just as each instructor has a preferred way of teaching. So that this doesn't become a stumbling block, instructors should try to use different methods to get their points across. Are the students visual learners, have auditory preference, or are they more successful in doing/action focused activities? Watching and listening to a student will often give insight to their preferred method. Using multiple methods simultaneously benefits all learners.

Remember also that adults and children learn differently. For many youth these may be new experiences and forming new neural pathways, for many adults they are building on previous life experiences. This can be a good thing, or sometimes makes things tougher.

Here are a few ways to try and get your points across:

- Vary the presentation to reach the most people
- Alter the pace of class to keep it interesting and engaging
- Increasing the complexity to challenge the more advanced students
- Teach to student level, not instructors
- Drinking from a fire hose is not a good idea, measure your teaching level
- Reinforced learning, build on previous skills and experiences
- Build on concepts with varying examples
- Retrace learning (incorporate in earlier katas)
- Use rewards and admonishment (carrot/stick) in fair measured amounts
- Changed learnings by belt level (stances/timing)
- If the student isn't improving or they don't appear engaged, is there something we are doing wrong or can improve through teaching methods?

Concept 6: Constant Improvements / Manage the learning

Times are a changing. Your karate program should be also. Look for ways to improve your programs to incorporate those changes. Create email distribution lists to publicize class notes. Develop a website that contains dojo news or local highlights. Use cell phones or iPads to video performances; then discuss as a group. Buy or make training tools to enhance drills or exercises.

Here are some ideas to increase student attention and engagement:

- Make it fun- use games, relays, drills to keep the energy levels high and students engaged
- Strike 'X-ray' films that make noise and teach control and depth of penetration
- Kata to music teaches rhythm and cadence.
- Group kata in different directions teaches teamwork and develops peripheral vision
- Wool Sock night adds leg strength in katas and kihon ido drills
- Video Night shows students what they look like and adds credibility to your observations
- Vary the experience (drills, instructors, focus, demonstrations, partner drills, reverse roles- students teach/explain)
- Manage the pace of class
- Break class into groups by skill level more often during kihon/kihon-ido
- Challenge at appropriate level (goal/struggle/victory /thinking in different ways)
- Learn student's names and use them in class
- When weather permits, have an outdoors class
- Let senior student teach sections of class; it reinforces their learning and understanding, develops leadership, and you may see new ways to teach the same concepts
- Tying one end of a student belt at the knee and kicking over the extended end, will teach a proper kicking chamber
- Partner drills add practicality to techniques; vary sizes and ages of students for greater variety
- 'Bring a buddy' night can add to your new students and gives existing students a chance to add to the program
- 'Street clothes' night can add practicality to self-defense techniques
- Cloths-pins on gi's can improve technique focus and reaction times (protect their removal)
- Putting out candles with a punch (vacuum) can be fun as long as you can avoid wax burns and flaming gi's.

Find a good balance between verbal explanation/instruction and physical drilling of exercises and movement – too much of either may limit the learning. Challenge the brown belts to analyze the kata. (Homework). Have them work out the applications with a black belt before or after class. Once we determine the technique works, let them teach it to the class. (Black belts should already be doing this on their own)

In the next installment we'll be discussing...more!

[1] Note: Special needs students are always going to be a challenge; however, I think they bring something positive to the dojo. Other students see how we treat them and how hard they work, and most embrace the opportunity to work with and encourage these students further. I'm not completely comfortable advertising our program for special needs students, but recognize that quite often there is both value to the students and the instructors

Invest your Time - Set Yourself Goals

By Anthony Lugo

“When you invest your time, you make a goal and a decision of something that you want to accomplish. Whether it's make good grades in school, be a good athlete, be a good person, go down and do some community service and help somebody who's in need, whatever it is you choose to do, you're investing your time in that.”

The aforementioned is a famous inspirational quote by Nick Saban. I like this quote. Investing time in something that is worthwhile, that we believe in, that will either attribute to our own character or for the good of others, is time well spent and well invested. My son Aiden, who is 10 years old, started riding his bike on his own last year without training wheels. It took him time to gain the confidence he needed by starting to ride the bike on one training wheel, and some more time with no training wheels having one of us (his mother Melanie or myself) encouraging him while balancing as he rode the bike. I could say this was time well invested with the common goal of achieving good results. One summer morning while we were setting up for the annual yard sale Aiden came outside and said “Dad, I'm going to ride my bike by myself today.” He walked into the garage with this confidence (which I could see in his eyes), picked up his bike, brought it to the end of the driveway and just began riding it slowly on his own. I could see his proud little face as he turned the bike around heading back home. It was a very proud moment for us all. Investment of time with a goal and decision of something he wanted to accomplish.

New Series:

Why I stay with Karate...

Howard, Sandan: I've been a martial arts practitioner for more than 30 years and have often wonder why I stayed with it for so long. Thinking more deeply about this, my reasons are very similar to why I first began training, although the longer I stay with the practice, the longer my list of reasons has grown, including stronger philosophical drivers. In short, I keep training due to the many benefits derived, such as better physical fitness, mental fortitude, self-defense capability, a sense of achieving what I had previously thought not possible, a tool to help others achieve what they never thought possible, patience with myself and others and an increasing understanding of what is meant by “do not stand in the way of running water-let it flow over”.

Years ago I had a sensei that said, “Once you have spent 5 years in studying karate, you should not stop, because karate training has creates a physical and mental set-point, that if stopped would speed up the aging process”. He viewed training as a fountain of youth. Although I sense that my abilities today have declined somewhat, my concern about losing what I have gained is a far greater reason to keep training. Beyond this, our training at the Y is a cooperative endeavor and an equally strong draw for me because I truly enjoy the dojo camaraderie that has developed over the years.

Howard, Sandan

M. Yamakura	Chairman	3763 Old Creek Road, Troy, MI 48084	chairman@goju.com
Ed Myers	CEO	11568 Reed Road, Whitehouse, OH 43571	ceo@goju.com
Dwight Scales	USA Director	1940 Bobolink Lane, Toledo, OH 43615	dwright.scales@imagineschools.com
Eric Naujock	Webmaster	2146 Queensdale Ct., Maumee, OH 43537	webmaster@goju.com
Bill Kane	Program Development	7 Shalimar Lane, Maple Glen, PA 19002	wmkane@comcast.net
Deb Crawford	USA Business Manager	5705 Northlake Road, Springfield, IL 62711	sharpda71@msn.com
Angie Monday	Merchandise Administrator	6030 Davida, Toledo, OH 43612	angie.monday@yahoo.com
Bill Handren	Newsletter Editor	115 West North Street, Dwight, IL 60420	yokagawa2002@yahoo.com

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