

November 2015 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

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Rich Stamper Lifetime Achievement Award

Paraphrased from Yamakura Shihan's Speech at the 2015 Organizational Meeting

Goju-Ryu Karate Do Kyokai, May 16, 2015. The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to Rich Stamper in recognition for a lifetime of outstanding contributions and to express our sincere appreciation for his extraordinary effort.

A lifetime is a long time. It is not an event, week, month or even a year. It is many years. Mr. Stamper has been doing continuously without any return for his effort. So many people have been touched, consoled or just being a friend by him. Mr. Stamper has always been there to help us, the GKK, out. This in addition to his many, many achievements.

Shihan Yamakura's Visit to Seattle and KinNamiKan Promotional Results

By Carol Gittins

The Pacific Northwest hosted Shihan Yamakura during the last week of June. During that time, Shihan taught three classes and presided over promotional testing. Sensei Bill Giller from Skagit Valley and Sensei Tom Baldrige of Bellingham participated in the classes at the KinNamiKan in Seattle. The material covered by Shihan included ido, all of the GojuRyu kata and, during the Thursday class, UechiRyu's Sanchin, Seisan and Sanseiru kata. Another evening event was dinner at the Gittins' home, which allowed the members of the KinNamiKan to talk to Shihan at length and ask many questions and to hear about karate philosophy and history.



During the Saturday class, Stephen Hampsten and Andrew McLane successfully tested for roku-dan.

Stephen has trained in the martial arts since the 70's and was head instructor of the Greenlake dojo for 10 years. His specialty areas are pragmatic applications of the martial arts, including bunkai; research into martial arts history and kata; and weapons.

Andrew began training with Sensei Boyd Gittins in the 90's at Seattle Central College. Later he was head instructor of the Greenlake dojo when it reopened. Andrew's specialties are aikido applications, use of ki, and bunkai analysis. Both Stephen and Andrew accept the responsibilities and obligations that accompany their new rank.

This year, Shihan's sightseeing adventures included a trip to Chambers Bay Golf Course where the US Open Golf tournament was held (unfortunately, his visit occurred two days after the tournament ended and one day before the course reopened to the public); the Underground Seattle tour; and a visit to a reflexology center.

The karateka of the Northwest are grateful that Shihan Yamakura took the time to visit them, and they hope he will return next year.

Ju Seminar

Photos Courtesy of Matt Loisel

Roger Lewis; On the 26th of September 2015, twenty GKK yundansha karateka arrived to attend a seminar hosted by Kyoshi Ed Myers and his lovely wife at their wonderful Black Swamp DoJo, in Whitehouse, Ohio. Kyoshi Rich Stamper was on hand and taught us an introductory course on the Ju aspect of GoJu Ryu Karate-Do. Attendees came from as far away as Canada and all across the US from the states of Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, New York, and Pennsylvania. There was excitement in the air that morning, and I could tell we were in store for a unique learning experience.



The first session started with an introductory lecture from Kyoshi Stamper on what Ju means to us as a concept. GoJu Ryu, Japanese for "hard-soft style." It features a combination of both hard and soft techniques. Chojun Miyagi named his art after a favorite poem he studied in a famous martial arts book called the *Bubishi*, also known as the Bible of Karate. "We have all diligently practiced "Go" Ryu our entire Karate careers, from the very first lesson we received," said Kyoshi Stamper. We all know that Ju means soft, but what does it really mean? The word Ju is in JuJitsu. JuJitsu translates to the Gentle Art, so when we say Ju do we mean gentle as well? No, Chojun Miyagi called his style Go-Ju, Hard – Soft. "Ju meaning soft is the other half of our style but very seldom do we train in its concepts" explained Kyoshi Stamper. We were asked to ponder this during the seminar.

The rest of the morning we worked on sensitivity drills. The exercises were focused on learning how to recognize an opponent's intention, flow with his energy, and to move and redirect that energy so as to place ourselves in a position of advantage. Kyoshi Stamper explained to us that "Ju means soft, but that does not mean it is weak." It means to accept, go along, or simply avoid energy by just getting out of the way and not being there. "NO BE THERE!" a real secret to not getting hit in the first place.

Around 1 O'clock, we broke for lunch for about an hour to rest and prepare for the next session. We were treated to a light meal that hit the spot (Thank you very much Mrs. Myers), and we enjoyed relaxing in their backyard gazebo while meeting and chatting with new people, connecting with old friends, and buying the latest GKK swag from Ms. Angie Monday.

The next session concentrated on turning the tables and going on the offense. Kyoshi Stamper gave us detailed instructions on how to correctly execute the legendary Ch'ong punch and kick. To actually learn how to do a Ch'ong punch you have to experience it first hand. We formed a circle and bravely and sometimes timidly received our first Ch'ong punch from Kyoshi Stamper. My personal observations were that I did not get a bruise as expected, but the underlying muscle were sore for a few day, indicating the penetrating nature of the Ch'ong punch and kick. The rest of the session we proudly beat on each other to perfect our technique. What looked and seemed like child's play was in fact very challenging because it required the karateka to relax. Without relaxation, it is impossible to develop the sensitivity needed to sense your opponent's energy and react naturally.



For many of us who have trained in Go Ryu for many years, the seminar provided a revelation of the aspect of Ju, and a new level of understanding was achieved. After a long day of training had come to an end, we gathered and were all awarded the coveted pink certificate of Ju concepts, with instructions that “Big Softie” status would only be achieved after an additional 100 hours of training.

A select few of us were light-heartedly awarded the highly prized pink belt as recognition of our efforts. The pink belt was not just an amusing souvenir but also a constant reminder that Ju does not mean weak and that there strength in the gentle aspect of GoJu Ryu.



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Ken Klafi: On Saturday, September 26, Stamper Sensei provided instruction on the soft style of Goju. The event was hosted by the Black Swamp dojo and the entire Myer family treated the visiting karateka as honored guests. The seminar topic was admittedly difficult to learn and even more difficult to teach but Sensei met the challenge gracefully and eloquently with comparisons to everyday life and casual movement. The relaxed atmosphere and descriptions made understanding these concepts easy even though we all were challenged to avoid our known and comfortable "hard" training.

We were amused by our collective attempts to embrace soft movement but the seminar was clearly one where all participants enjoyed the lectures, demonstrations and practice. Personally, the camaraderie of

practicing with new friends and old acquaintances alike gave extra value; the challenge of learning the soft style aligned all levels of practitioner to one and everybody helped their partners with observations and feedback on the effectiveness felt as a recipient. Side note to all of my partners: my left shoulder has recovered nicely.

On a personal note, I can say that there were a lot of participants I have not had the pleasure of meeting until Saturday and I extend my gratitude and well wishes to all of you. I enjoyed this seminar immensely and have actually found myself practicing while walking down a hallway and walking toward my car in the parking lot. So far, my sanity has not been questioned but this could possibly reflect citizens surrounding me simply being politely quiet or disturbed to speechlessness. I look forward to providing Sensei with additional entertainment as I demonstrate the skills I will have learned from my practice. Domo arigato gozaimasu, Sensei.

Our thanks go out to Myers Sensei for offering the use of the Black Swamp dojo and his assistance with the seminar. We truly appreciate it

Shindo Kan Promotion

By Dwight Scales



Matt Loisel, Dwight Scales, Alex Rivers

On Thursday, September 24th, a combined promotional between the Shindo Kan, Black Swamp and Golden Dragon Dojos was held. Alex Rivers (Shindo Kan) was promoted to shodan



Corinth New York Dojo Promotion

By Frank Matt

The Corinth New York dojo promoted its last student Carla Denn to Ni Kyu from our start up school. We are moving to a larger location at the Adirondack Sports Complex in Queensbury New York.

Carla and the others that participated in the promotion worked and performed outstanding, they were pretty much flawless.

Congratulations to Carla she worked very hard .

I will be planning a seminar sometime next year and will get planning and schedule set and post it after the first of the year.

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Ed Myers
Dwight Scales
Eric Naujock
Bill Kane
Deb Crawford
Angie Monday
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