

January 2016 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

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Best Wishes for the New Year

By Motoo Yamakura

Thanks to all school leaders, officers and members for your work and support during the past year and for the upcoming year. We had a nice year. Our yearly tournament and seminar went very well. I appreciate those who travel to our schools to give seminars. Keep up the good work.

Teodoro Morca

After more than 60 years of exploring the dance of life, Maestro Teodoro Morca died peacefully Nov. 21, surrounded by his loved ones.

Biographical details of Morca's life were not available at press time, but he told reporter Teresa Dovalpage he would be 81 years old in September in the Tempo story this summer previewing his "Teo Morca: Sixty Years of Non-Stop Dance" held Aug. 7 at the Harwood Museum's Arthur Bell Auditorium.

"I fell in love with regional Spanish dances before I knew flamenco," he told Dovalpage. "I saw 'Ana Maria y su Baile Español' in Los Angeles when I was a teenager. Their show included flamenco, but also castanets, jota and many other folkloric dances. I was so inspired when I saw them ... I thought, 'What a life! They are here today and they will be in another city tomorrow. I want to do that too.'"

An astounding student of life via the art of "the dance" – this flamenco master devoted practically waking hour living, breathing, eating and exploring individual creativity through dance.

A teacher, coach, author, choreographer and, above all, flamenco performer, Morca garnered national and international awards and received several fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1974 he offered the very first All Flamenco Workshop Festival in the United States. One of the founders of the Albuquerque Flamenco Festival, he also explored ballet and classic and regional dances.

In "Becoming the Dance: Flamenco Spirit," a 2008 collection of essays and articles he published in various dance journals over the years, Morca says from "the beginning I seemed to feel intuitively that I wanted to 'become' the dance ... I kept hearing the word 'art' and began to feel that only by becoming completely in tune ... would I someday 'feel' what art was."

He first encountered flamenco in his teens in Los Angeles. Later in the early '60s, he went to Spain and felt he'd finally come "home."

"My soul was plugged into flamenco," he wrote. "I did not try to become Spanish, for I felt that flamenco transcended Spain. The feelings and emotions that I felt were universal love. I felt at one with flamenco, it was me."

Morca expounded on "duende" – a Zen-like equivalent of an undefinable human essence that really can only be experienced to be truly known.

"As a student of dance – flamenco dance — it is a search for a oneness with yourself that will awaken your talents to 'become the dance,' to experience the pain and ecstasy of birth of your dance, the addiction of duende."

Morca readily compared duende with the Oriental "Do" or way of being.

"Yours must be an open, ever-searching mind into the art, the way, the ambiente, the purpose, the beginning, the end, always with an enlightened intuition to truth, your truth. 'How long must I study? — Until you die.'"

True to his word, Morca studied the dance until he died, just as he often said, "I don't intend to go to my grave carrying any secrets ... I want to give them all away!"

Morca is survived by his wife Almaya Lujan of Taos, daughter Louisa Morca Bush, son Teo J. Morca Jr. and granddaughter Maghan Powers.





Yamakura Shihan, 1st.Row, 4th from left. Teo Morca 2nd. Row, 3rd. from left



Rich Stamper, front row, center. Teo Morca, 2nd row, 5th from left

GKK Annual Dues

By Ed Myers

Hello GKK members, Dojo Leaders and National Directors. It is once again time to collect the annual dues and update the active member list. Dan ranks are \$25 and Kyu ranks are \$15. Dojo Leaders are to send this to your National Director. For example, Frank Matt (Dojo Leader) of the Corinth Goju Dojo in New York will send their dues and active member list to the USA Director, Dwight Scales. The National Directors are to send the active member list (in Excel or word) and dues to Ed Myers (CEO). This is all due by April 1st."

Dojo Etiquette and the Obi

By Anthony Lugo

"Respect benefits the one showing it far more than the one receiving it", Grand Master Ansei Ueshiro

In most martial arts schools, if not all, one of the first things taught is proper dojo etiquette, or reishiki, which refers to the example of good etiquette or correct behavior in a martial arts dojo. Etiquette is the way of showing respect to fellow students, to the dojo, to the sensei, and to all other senseis throughout history whose dedication and skills have been passed down to us as the art we now study. Interestingly, demonstrating proper etiquette is really for ourselves. It's a small symbol of our efforts at self-mastery and our pride in being an active participant in something so fascinating and enjoyable.

When my brother Joe and I first started training under Professor Ernest Hyman, a student of Grand Master Aaron Banks, one of the very first things we were taught was proper dojo etiquette. Throughout the years of training under Professor we quickly learned he has a pet peeve about proper dojo etiquette. This is why proper dojo etiquette is one of the very first things students learn at Harlem Karate Institute. I recall being taught by the higher ranks about forms of addressing individuals in the dojo, bowing to the shomen before entering and exiting, bowing to black belts and to your opponent at the beginning and end of a match or practice. We were also taught the ritual of putting on our karate gi and tying our obi; which in my opinion was fascinating! After class we would all gather together for a few minutes to ask questions and discuss different topics about karate and the martial arts. I recall a discussion we had with Professor one night, about karate gi and obi, which has stood with me since. He mentioned when he walks into a martial arts school or martial arts event he can tell a great deal about the individuals by their karate gi and obi. The first thing he looks at is their obi. Someone asked "why?". He said the knot on their obi screams out to him if they are trained in proper dojo etiquette. It was interesting to me why he felt this was so important. Through research, I have found that tying your obi is more than just a habitual act. It serves as a spiritual reminder of how paying attention to small details can affect your whole outlook on karate...and also life.

Did you know that the first step in tying your obi, which is making sure the obi hangs evenly from your hands, is considered "The Balancing"? This act symbolizes the importance of balance, spiritual, technical and physical. But also serves as a reminder that excellence can only be achieved when physical training is balanced with theoretical studies. In classical karate, literary study and physical practice are united in the "Way". This is also known as the "pen and the sword", in Western philosophy. Fascinating, isn't it?

After you are balanced, the next step is to wrap the obi around you. This is called "The Wraparound". When wrapping the obi around your waist it should be placed below your navel (umbilical). By placing it below your navel, which is also considered your "center" or "hara", you're reminded that the proper practice of karate empowers you with the unique skill to give, receive and end life. Therefore, we must uphold the moral values that define us as a karateka and strive to bring them out in our every interaction during karate practice.

The next step, if you tie your obi the traditional way, is crossing the belt behind your back. Interestingly, as the obi makes an "X" behind us, it means that we are reminded to be prepared for those who might cross us behind our backs.

After crossing the obi behind us, now we bring the obi to the front again. The meaning of this is...what goes around comes around. We always reap that which we sow. Wow! This reminded me of a biblical term in Galatians. "A man reaps what he sows."

Now make the "X" again in the front of the body. This reminds us that what goes on behind our backs can go on under our nose too...Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer. Interesting! There is a similar quote to this in the "Art of War" by Sun Tzu.

The next step is "The Knot". Now, we bring one end up under the obi and the other down. This reminds the karateka of the two directions in which our mind can travel when we are not at peace with ourselves, and the importance of striving upwards in an effort to seek constant improvement, also known as "kaizen".

Lastly.... By tying the knot tightly we are reminded of the importance in tightening our resolve in all matters, fortifying our spirit.

And finally...At the end of this ritual we make sure the ends are hanging perfectly even.

And if they're not...Don't worry. Nothing in this world is perfect. Life goes on. It's the heart and thought that matters.

Fascinating! Isn't it? When I first encountered this ritual it amazed me. It reinforces that there is a meaning and a purpose for everything in life. Even the little things matter.

Thanks

By Bill Handren

Thanks to all those who contributed their articles and photographs during 2015. Your help is appreciated.

Big Red, Part One

“Learn to hit !”£\$ hard”.....Geoff Thompson

It didn't take long. Several punches into a heavy bag taught me body weight must be into punches or the bag doesn't move. The heavy bag became my mentor. My finest instructor. A lifelong partner.

But, being rather scientific, I wanted a formula from physics which distilled the concept. Force = Mass x Acceleration didn't really satisfy my curiosity. I figured the formula applies to the recipient of the punch, not the puncher. If the recipient's mass is rapidly accelerated, it made sense. What about the puncher? If the puncher's punch is accelerating, then the formula doesn't apply to him. The punch needs maximum velocity to be most effective.

Kinetic energy brought me closer to the answer. Kinetic energy=1/2 Mass x velocity squared. Now we're talking. Punching speed is the key. But instinct made me question. Speed without mass lacks displacement. In other words, a snappy backfist certainly hurts but it won't stop an opponent. A side thrust kick will send an opponent across the room because of displacement, yet its relative lack of velocity won't cause a knockout.

It took a physicist to provide the correct formula. The answer was momentum. Momentum = Mass x Velocity. Simply weight x speed. Without mass, the velocity of the technique has reduced effect. But all you dan grades already knew this, at least instinctively. A mae geri from neko ashi using the lead foot causes less damage than a full stroke mae geri with the rear foot. Greater mass has been linked. Link the backfist to the upper back and the strike becomes a baseball bat.

This doesn't mean high kinetic energy strikes are useless. They have the ability to cause damage to hard targets near the body's surface such as the collarbone. But the reduced momentum means much of the energy is dissipated at the point of contact. The slightest cushioning negates the energy. Take a ball peen hammer and hit a heavy bag with it. The bag won't move due to the small mass of the hammerhead but you know what the strike would do to a human head. A ball peen strike to the abdomen or pectoral produces minimal effect. If we compare martial arts, kempo would be a high kinetic energy art while muay thai would be a high momentum one.

The ability to throw a “hard punch” depends on how much mass one gets into the punch along with speed. Fine. Simple enough. Yet over the years, I have seen karateka who hit like children. Boxers use the term “arm punchers.” To teach the concept to a student requires simple explanations.

Our center of mass is located near our navel, give or take a few inches. In gyaku tsuki we rotate the torso into the punch and connect it to the center of mass through core tension. If we move the rotation point from the vertical center of our bodies to the lead leg, we introduce greater torque because of the larger radius. If we shift the weight forward as we do all this, we add more momentum. The more tricks we use to add mass and leverage, the harder we will hit.

Timing is crucial, but when a student knows what he is trying to accomplish, the task becomes clearly defined. Think hurling a medicine ball into a target. It is the kinetic linking of as much mass as possible to the arm or leg.

Simply stated; Get your body into the technique. Jack Dempsey considered the strongest punch to be what he nicknamed the “Jolt”. It was a jab with the entire bodyweight into it, landing the punch before the lead foot touches down – essentially the oi zuki from karate setting the stance after impact, never before.

But high momentum strikes take longer. Boxers say never lead with the right. Mas Oyama observed muay thai and commented the kicks were slow. Past karate masters surely observed this and included both types of techniques. No boxer would eliminate the jab from his arsenal but it is the high momentum punches which produce knockouts.

Yet there are karateka who never work a heavy bag. And one cannot develop the crucial timing unless bag work is a regular part of training. It isn't about resistance provided by the bag. It is about timing. It is easy to spot the weak hitter as he or she does kata; the limbs lack any connection to the center of mass.

A question remained; how to best learn the timing? Enter Big Red.....

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