

August 2017 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

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Boyd Gittins Receives Kyoshi

By Carol Gittins

During the 2017 gasshuku in Seattle, Shihan Yamakura awarded Mr. Boyd Gittins the designation of Kyoshi for his teaching and contributions to the GKK.

Mr. Gittins, a seventh degree black belt, began his training in the martial arts in 1967 at Washington State University. This training with the Jundokan-affiliated karate club was interrupted by military service in Vietnam and by the 1968 Olympics where he competed in the intermediate hurdles. After graduating with bachelors and masters

degrees in physical education, Mr. Gittins trained with the GojuKai until he joined the GojuRyu KarateDo Kyokai. In addition, he has studied boxing, judo and aikido.

From 1977 through 2016, Mr. Gittins taught martial arts for the Seattle Colleges. During his tenure, he developed numerous black belts, including one, Mr. Andrew McLane, roku-dan, who opened his own dojo. Mr. Gittins also taught self-defense for "Taking Charge," a pilot program for the VA designed to help female veterans cope with PTSD. This program had excellent results with many of the participants resuming normal activities.

Now co-regional director for the GKK, Mr. Gittins has created a study guide for instructors of the martial arts, with an emphasis on karate. Mr. Gittins is also producer, videographer and video editor of all the videos shared by the KinNamiKan, including the bunkai videos and videos of the northwest region's gasshuku. Previously, Mr. Gittins served as newsletter editor for the GKK.

In summary, Mr. Gittins is highly deserving of this "teacher of teachers" designation because of his willingness and ability to share his years of martial arts experience.



Mr. Boyd Gittins, Mrs. Carol Gittins, Shihan M. Yamakura, Ms. Zorri Eliraz.

Visiting Other GKK Dojos...

Zorri Eliraz, Aum-Dojo, Israel



We are all part of the GKK. But what does it mean to most of us that are not taking any active part in the organization? Is it only some official institution which certifies our karate ranking? Has it any meaning in our training and growth? Well, for me it is a world wide web of people that have a common interest with me, an interest that nowadays is very central in my life. It's a web of people that are connected to the same lineage of knowledge. For me it is some kind of family. I have my core dojo family, with my brothers and sisters that train with me very frequently. And then I have a lot of uncles, aunts and cousins all around the world... But, due to the distance, there are so many that I didn't have a chance to meet yet... So, my way of getting to know more of my family, is through the internet. We have our facebook GKK group, which isn't very active yet and has only part of the members in it (and if someone knows of people which aren't there yet, please let me know). And there's this newsletter, which hopefully is being read by a lot of people...

A few months ago I wrote two small articles, sharing my thoughts and feelings. And Sensei Carol Gittins, from the Meadowbrook Dojo, reached out to me after the second one. We started to write to each other and we had some really interesting stuff going on there. I strongly felt that I wanted to meet her. And she kindly invited me to come over .

So last month I found myself flying all the way from Israel to Seattle, just to meet her, her husband Sensei Boyd Gittins and their dojo. We choose the dates according to Shihan's visit over there, so I would enjoy getting to train with him too. It was a real adventure. I didn't really know her, and had no clue if we would get along. How would it be to spend 10 days over there? But since I love to get out of my comfort zone, I was really excited!

And this trip was totally beyond all expectations! Thanks to their warm welcome, I really felt at home in their house. Of course, we spend some of the time training, especially during Shihan's visit there. But we also did a lot of shopping, cooking, walking around, talking and just sitting together quietly, listening to the inner and outer sounds. We found a common rhythm which we could all flow and be happy with. It felt effortless... On a very personal level, it was totally perfect for me ...

Training with them was an amazing experience. It felt at the same time very familiar and very new. The katas are the same, the basic movements are the same... Yet so many small differences made me discover a whole new world. For example, in our dojo we do group katas either with someone counting by the number, or finding a common group pace to perform the kata together (and we really do everything we can in order to remain in perfect timing together). In their dojo, many times we were instructed just to perform the kata at the same time but not necessarily together. For me it was really

challenging... It was confusing to have people all around me at a different place in the kata. I had to totally focus inwards in order not to be distracted or influenced... And indeed I learned a lot from this experience! Another example is the pace of Sanchin kata. In our dojo we perform it as slow as our breathing permits. In their dojo, it is performed at a much faster pace. Well, this gives a totally new perspective on Sanchin kata! And those are only two small examples. There were so many others... It is not about "who is right", there's no such thing. It's about trying different things. So it was sometimes challenging, but I discovered some totally new stuff.



For me it was also very inspiring to train with women. In our dojo, I'm currently the only active adult woman, and it was great to train with all the women in the Meadowbrook dojo. It was also great to get to know a woman Sensei and be inspired by her ...

So I got to meet some of my distant GKK family members. And now I know I have a home in Seattle. And I'm sure that they know they have a home in Israel.

It was a very enriching experience that I strongly recommend to anyone: go and train in other dojos! Get to meet part of this wonderful family!

My deepest gratitude to Sensei Carol, Sensei Boyd and all the Meadowbrook people for this amazing experience!
(If anyone wants to write to me, here's my email: zorri@aum-doj.com)

Congratulations to our two new Renshi's. Renshi Shraga Lapides and Renshi Chen Niv.



Renshi, Kyoshi, Hanshi, Shihan, Meijin

By Rich Stamper

I recently read an article in Fighting Arts magazine which began with the following quote “Wealth and rank attained through immoral means are nothing but drifting clouds”. Confucius.

The article discussed titles such as Renshi, Kyoshi, Hanshi, Shihan, and Meijin; and their requirements. It stated the titles derived from rank in the army and were later applied to budo.

Further, it commented on the appropriate use of such titles. It said they were never used in publicity material. It also stated the holder never referred to one's self by the title as doing so would be a breach of etiquette and reveal the ignorance of the speaker. It said if one had the depth to be awarded such titles there would be a basic understanding of Japanese etiquette and custom. It said the manner in which titles were used is an indication of authenticity – or lack thereof. A martial arts instructor is always referred to as Sensei, never Renshi, Kyoshi, etc. it said.

In the listing of titles, it said Hanshi is a requirement for the higher titles of Shihan and Meijin.

The requirements presented in the article closely agree with the ones of the GKK as far as time-in, rank, examinations, character, accomplishments and so on. This is to be expected as our requirements were taken directly from those of FAJKO about forty years ago.

The article went on to lament the prevalence of such titles nowadays and questioned their validity in many instances. Yep. Perhaps we live in a time of good fortune where martial arts masters are available on every street corner. Or something is.

I do believe rank and titles have lost a lot of their one-time significance. I do believe organizations whose entire requirement for higher rank involves writing a check have cheapened the whole system. Yet, I will acknowledge that to be competitive in the commercial martial arts business, the instructor needs higher rank than the guy in the next dojo, and certificates are easy to create. The general public has no clue.

The article was somewhat of an advertisement written by the magazine staff for an affiliate that now offers an organization to validate such titles, as well as to educate us to their legitimate requirements and usage.

Turns out I know some of those to whom the article alludes – those of questionable authenticity and/or ignorance of protocol and etiquette – and they are all very proud of their humility.

Still and all, there remain traditional martial arts dojos, and true karateka who adhere to the training of the past, and there should be a great deal of well-deserved satisfaction in that.

It's reported that Miyagi Sensei never awarded a black belt. Rank was meaningless to him. Perhaps we've come full circle

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