

June 2019 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

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Thank You

By Dwight Scales

I would like to thank everyone who made the journey to Toledo for our Spring Seminar, business meeting and banquet. It would not have been a success without you.

I would like to especially thank Shihan for honoring us with his presence and knowledge. We are truly blessed to have you as our Chairman. Thank you sir.

During the seminars Shihan showed us the value of learning kata and allowing it to teach us. As he went through and observed each student's performance with a keen eye,

he critiqued, not to criticize, but to build up; the sign of a true teacher. Thank you, again, Shihan!

During our business meeting a key point brought forth by Sensei Stamper was that we, the GKK, are "Keepers of the Flame". That is, the GKK is the oldest Goju Ryu Karate organization in North America. It is our responsibility to "keep the flame" of traditional Goju Ryu pure.

My fellow karateka, continue to carry that torch that was lit back in 1959 by Sensei Jack Coleman.

Shihan's Seminars

May 18, 2019

By Paul Stetsko

In the all rank seminar, Shihan took us through kihon ido and shared with us some body alignment considerations that would make each move or series of moves more efficient and would generate more power. Shihan used kihon kata to work on our transitions between stances and to coordinate our hand techniques with our stances.

As a group, we ran through each kata slowly with Shihan talking us through what we should be focusing on within the kata. Those points were then incorporated into the katas. Each person was called on to demonstrate the kata as well as to demonstrate their favorite kata. Even those of us that have been practicing for longer than we'd care to admit, had some revelations and saw room for improvement.

In the black belt seminar, Shihan took us through each kata slowly, then to a count, then at our normal speed. In each kata he pointed out something that we should keep in mind while practicing that kata. Interspersed between katas we practiced sanchin kata to regulate our breathing. We broke up into groups of three and we all did sanchin testing. Each person was then called on to demonstrate a bunkai from a kata, first by demonstrating the portion of the kata that they were working from, then directing uke on what to do.

Each person in the seminar then practiced that series of moves. There were some very creative bunkai shown by all participants and that led to some spirited discussions. Shihan's message was that we shouldn't force moves to work, but be able to make them work on our partners.

Yakusoku kumite was next on the list. We started by having one person run through each one-step with the attackers coming quickly in a line. Then we moved on to having one person in the middle of a circle and the defender working free-style. That changed into an attacker from the circle kiaiing and attacking and the defender needing to either avoid the attack or defend and counter. This developed our quick responses to an attack that mostly came from behind and explored the differences in our defences between an attack coming towards us in a pattern we know, and one that is unexpected.

We wrapped up the session doing each kata as a group, then one person demonstrating for the group. Overall, it was an invaluable workout that stretched our bodies as well as some of our preconceived notions of what we have been practicing. I would encourage everyone to take the time and make the effort to attend Shihan's seminars.

Is There No First Strike in Karate?

Translations from Japanese Karate Websites

By Yumi Burg, Ni-dan, KinNamiKan Dojo

After a class discussion about karate, self-defense, and the concept that karate practitioners never throw the first punch (no first strike in karate), I decided to research the subject. I found two interesting websites that covered this principle of "Karate ni sente nashi (空手に先手なし)." According to these websites, this principle is very famous among karate practitioners in Japan, though I did not learn it when I was training there.

I have translated their content from Japanese to English because they don't have English versions on their websites.

The website of Daiwa Gojuryu Karate Jutsu says, "Without first move in karate."

「空手に先手なし」

一般には、自分からは仕掛けない、手を出さないという、自制の理念を説く格言のようである。自ら手は出さないが、襲い来る者に対しては先ず防衛し、しかる後に反撃することであろう。(大和剛柔流空手術)

This seems to be a maxim that preaches the principle of self-control. That it does not attack and does not put out hands from oneself. Although you do not punch or kick your enemy from you, you will first defend against an attack, and then you will fight back only if you need to protect yourself.

Another website of Nihon Karate Kyokai Meguro-shibu Setojuku says, "No first-hand from you in karate."

「空手に先手なし」

先ず耐える事を学ばせ、空手とは人を傷つける為のものではなく、内なる心を磨く為に修行する事が本来の目的であり、君子の武道である事を説いたものだと思います。(日本空手協会 目黒支部 瀬戸塾)

This implies you must learn to endure. Karate's purpose is not to learn to hurt people. From karate training, you build up not only your body, but also your heart. Be strong. You should mature mentally and physically, which is the policy of martial arts developed by Bodhidharma, the Buddhist monk from India who taught at the Shaolin Temple.

Cited websites: 大和剛柔流空手術 (Daiwa Gojuryu Karate Jutsu)
<http://daiwa-gojuryu.com/data/consideration/04/04.html>

日本空手協会 目黒支部 瀬戸塾 (Nihon Karate Kyokai Meguro-shibu Setojuku)
http://www5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~karate/html/sub_html.htm/study-karate/study_sentenasi.htm

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