

The Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai

- A Gathering of the Shorinjiryu Family
- Largest Group of Shorinjiryu Practitioners Worldwide
- Exchanging, Knowledge, Spirit & Friendship

Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai Shorinjiryu Shimbun

Modern Kata, Is It Evolution or Desecration?

by Peter Deasy, Sandan

When we perform a kata taught to us by our Sensei, do we do it exactly as we were taught? The answer to this is a definite no. The reasons are many.

They start with your body type. If your instructor is of a different body type to you then you will not execute the individual techniques as he or she did. Therefore the kata has been modified.

If you have explored different martial arts during your training they will influence your technique and your understanding of the kata.

Further as we continue to practice our kata we improve with our techniques, and we begin to explore the application of each move. A very senior instructor once told me that for each move in a kata there are many applications (the obvious, the hidden, the alternative etc.). So if we explore the different applications, the kata takes on a different meaning. We would perform the kata in a different manner to the way we were taught.

Each kata has been handed down from instructor to student hundreds of times since they were first created. It is natural for each instructor to emphasize the techniques in which they excel. A result of this is that each instructor has added to the kata his or her interpretation of the application. This began with the creator of the kata.

Another major force of change to kata is the aging process. As we age, we find ourselves restricted by injuries, loss of flexibility and other factors. This forces the karateka to make changes to ensure that they can continue to practice. Their stances get higher, some movements are shortened and with this the kata changes for them. However usually the older karateka are usually senior instructors and therefore their students adopt their changes without realizing that the changes are not the original kata but a version being taught by an older practitioner.

I have watched my instructors over many years. In some kata I have

witnessed many changes. Are these changes the result of aging, better understanding of the technique or are they the evolution of kata?

Some people would say that to change the kata from that which was taught by the head of their style is desecration. However, when you consider that each person is different and exercise different opinions due to their ethnic, religious, educational and life experience, would it not be logical to expect them to perform a kata in a different way to their instructor. It could be argued that the creator of each kata expected students to change the kata to suit them and their current level of expertise. This makes kata a living entity that continues to evolve as people add their interpretation to the meaning and application and therefore would not be considered desecration.

However, where kata has been changed for aesthetic reasons for public competition there is a great danger

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Tentative Calendar of Events for 2003

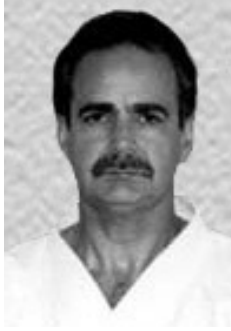
Happy New Year	January 1st
Referees' and Score Keepers Clinic (Brooklyn, NY)	February 9th
Spring Regional Tournament (Brooklyn, NY)	March 8th
All Shorinjiryu Karatedo Symposium (London, Ontario)	March 15-16
7th International Shindo Budo Kwai (St. Jerome, Quebec)	May 25th
Summer Regional Tournament (Brooklyn, NY)	July 12th
Referees' and Score Keepers Clinic (Brooklyn, NY)	April 27th
Referees' and Score Keepers Clinic (Brooklyn, NY)	Sept. 21st
17th Annual International Shorinjiryu Shinzen Shiai (Queens, NY)	October 12th
Winter Regional Tournament (Brooklyn, NY)	Dec. 13th

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From the Desk of the President

by Myron M. Lubitsch, Kyoshi



After sixteen years as Senior Vice President and Chief Arbitrator of the Kyokai, we are saddened to report that Kyoshi John A. Mirrione has resigned his position. Kyoshi Mirrione has been a pillar of strength, inspiration, mediation and knowledge. While he apparently feels that the distance between him and headquarters is too great for hands on involvement, he still will maintain his membership and that of his organization. Through his Herculean efforts and his devotion to the betterment of Shorinjiryu Karatedo, the Kyokai has grown into the international organization that it is today. What he does not know is that he will still be tapped for information and ideas. Moving into his position is Shihan Dan Hayes a long time Shorinjiryu student dating back close to thirty years. He, too, is a storehouse of knowledge and experience and the Kyokai will benefit from his new position. We wish thank Kyoshi John for all that he

has done in the past and wish him the best at the same time we wish Shihan Dan success.

As trite as it may sound, where has the time gone? Another year has come and gone and the Kyokai has become even stronger. The number of individuals who requested admission to the organization has increased, tournament participation has increased and a sense of greater camaraderie has been fostered.

This past year's 6th Annual Shindo Budo Kwai hosted over 300 participants and the First St. Patrick Day Seminar was successful.

The Sixteenth Annual Shorinjiryu Shinzen Shiai hosted well over 300 participants and is still the only strictly Shorinjiryu tournament in the world. This year a number of instructors were promoted and awarded advanced honorifics. The names are listed under the "sunshine section." We were honored to have Hanshi Shunji Watanabe attend this event. This was the first time in ten years that he attended our event. He performed and dem-

onstrated kata and kumite to the delight of the students, audience and senior instructors. As an aside, this was the first time in ten years that I attended his event in Baltimore.

We have embarked upon a highly ambitious program to codify a number of kata, especially for advanced students. If a consensus can be reached for this plan, as it is not meant to chisel the movements in stone, the advantages would be a more cohesive system while still adhering to the motto of "Spiritual Development of Individuality in Mind and Body."

As the days have past for hard armor with its concomitant broken fingers and toes, the use of groin kicks with its obvious repercussions and the allowance of head contact, the Kyokai has made changes that have benefited the growth of Shorinjiryu Karatedo. Meaningful growth should not be feared.

On behalf of the Kyokai, I wish to express to all a joyous holiday season and a very Healthy, Happy, Prosperous New Year.

Special Comments

Kyoshi Myron,

A quick note to say "Thank you"! Everyone had a fantastic time, both at the competition and the banquet! Yes, the drive was a challenge Monday morning, but we all got back home, a little tired, but safe and sound, thank God!

You are indeed a super host, and your team is to be complimented as being outstanding!

EXCELLENT TOURNAMENT!

Renshi Manny Hawthorne

Kyoshi,

I thought everything went well at your tournament. You had a very good turnout and everything ran smoothly. I did not see anyone get hurt (I am not counting Danny Hayes's student Jim, since his injury was self-inflicted) and I did not see any un-sportsmanlike-like behavior.

You are fortunate to have so many helpers. They are critical for a well-run tournament.

Sensei Page Crispus

Merry X-Mas and happy New Year 2003 to all Shorinjiryu practitioners and instructors, and wish that Shorinjiryu will grow three fold in 2003,

With respect,

Shihan Atul Yoshi

From the Desk of the Vice President

by John A. Mirrione, Kyoshi



Dear Karateka,
What makes Shorinjiryu Karatedo so unique? In this article, I want to review with the reader some of the reasons why our karate style is so different from the others. While I am fully aware that most of our read-

ers are already acquainted with the material about which I will write, I have this need to put it in writing. Please be patient with me for I am an old timer who has much trouble adapting to new ways.

In the mid 1960's when I was fortunate enough to find Shorinjiryu, there were no books on the style. My teachers, through example, showed me what made us so exceptional and outstanding as a martial art. We punch with the fist in a vertical position, employ Tai and Ashi Sabaki (body and foot movements), practice Yakusoku Kumite (prearranged fighting forms) and kata, breathing techniques, full con-

tact Shiai with follow through techniques, hitting hard Kendo body armor with the heel of the foot making it a most deadly weapon.

We punch vertically because it is safer and much faster than the horizontal punch. We breathe rather than kiai because it allows us to do multiple techniques with maximum power. We learn Yakusoku Kumite so that we practice the techniques and methods we have learned, without all the risks of real combat. We practice Tai and Ashi Sabaki so we can escape and attack using the acquired momentum to seize the advantage. We wear a clean white gi for practice because we are a pure style and we also practice Nitten Soji (daily cleaning). We practice our kata without music because when our kata is performed properly they have a wonderful rhythm all their own. Our style of karatedo is combative in nature and designed to eliminate our opponent as quickly and effectively as possible using our body and mind to generate as much power as possible to win decisively.

Today on the open tournament scene, we see multi-colored gi, musical forms, acrobatic moves, sponsorships in the way of multiple patches up and down the legs and arms, foam hand and foot protection in a variety of colors, and parents who coach their children during competition and then argue with the judges when the decision is not to their liking. The winners of these events are usually the ones with the best choreography of moves and those who land the most blows with minimum contact and scream (kiai) the loudest in the process. I cannot leave out the 3rd degree ten-year-old nor his 10th degree grand master teacher (who looks to be around thirty years old) wearing a red belt. For that matter, at one tournament that I visited there were more 10th degrees in attendance than in all of Japan's history.

I know that sometimes the pressure is great for us to change so that we become more mainstream in order to win, however, to the victor may go the spoils.

Sunshine News & Congratulations

Congratulations to all those who received promotions:

6th Dan

Shihan Dan Hayes
Renshi Emanuel Manny
Hawthorne

5th Dan

Renshi Janet Bayer
Renshi Jim Griffin
Renshi Peter Hiltz
Shihan Gilles Labelle
Renshi John P. Mirrione

4th Dan

Tashi "Big Al" Gonzalez,
Tashi Dennis "Blood" Dorn

3rd Dan

Sensei Anne Aylward
Sensei Peter Deasy
Sensei Lesley Griffin
Sensei Oscar Ozzy Salvatierra

2nd Dan

Nidan Ruth Deasy
Nidan Maurizio Milana

1st Dan

Shodan Michelle Bielski
Shodan Judy Bodor
Shodan Angel "Dusty" Garcia
Shodan Mahmoud "Moody" Imam
Shodan Trevor Maher
Shodan Cyril Montoya
Shodan Doreen Rosario-Rosas
Shodan Mark Slingo
Shodan Shaun Terry
Shodan G. Dinesh

Kohai Shodan

Kohai Shodan Eddie Christian

We welcome Dez Paroz of Australia to our organization.

We welcome Sophia Mirrione to the world.

We welcome Mark Richard LaRosa to the world.

Good luck to Renshi Peter Hiltz on his new Ake No Myojo Budo's dojo, Carroll County YMCA

Good luck to Renshi Troy Lester on the opening of the new Kenryukan Home of the Warrior Dojo.

Shodan Angel "Dusty" Garcia for taking over the Kenryukan's Kibo-No-Niwa Dojo from Tashi Dennis "Blood" Dorn who will be opening a dojo in Florida.

One of the nicest statements made to me was by an adult student who attended one of the Regional Tournaments at the Imperial Dragon Kenryukan Dojo, "every time I come here I feel that I am at home." Thank you for that wonderful comment Claire.

The Pot Calling the Kettle Black: Revisited

The following are responses to Shihan Daniel Hayes' article in the Summer 2002 Shimbun.

The question arises: When and why are protection used and by whom? What kind of hand and foot protection can be used? In the past, the soft, white hand and foot protection were allowed in the event of someone wanting to fight with an injury. I have always been against the use of any protection. When we went from Shiai with old type fiberglass (Kendo Armor) Bogu to the now used padded Bogu, this, I was told, was the protection that we needed to further develop as a martial art system. Now we are

looking for more protection, padded hands and feet to hit padded Bogu. I am from the old school of Kenkokan Karatedo and believe in the art of Bogu Jujitsu. It took a great deal of skill to hit the Anzen Bogu without serious injury to you and win the match with an Ippon. In the early days, there were no time limits or no half points, just a winner and a loser based on how hard and technically correct your contact was. My concern is if the next generation of practitioners can uphold our tradition of being a strong karatedo

style. Given the current state of Martial Arts that I have witnessed and the talented Shorinjiryu players of today, perhaps we have nothing to worry about. Perhaps, my generation's time has passed and it is time to progress into the 21st Century with the use of soft, white hand and foot protection. The next generation will tell tales of when they were not permitted to wear hand and foot protection to hit the padded Bogu.

John A. Mirrione, Kyoshi

If you are interested about input about sparring equipment, here is my perspective.

A long time ago we allowed only shin/instep protection. The foam boots and gloves were not allowed. A padded knuckle protector was allowed for the junior divisions, much like those used in the World Karate Federation (WKF). In fact if you are looking for a standard for hand protection you might as well follow the WKF's lead, because all the martial arts suppliers will be looking to make their existing products to that standard.

If Karate ever becomes an Olympic sport, the WKF is leading the way and has already standardized kata based on the big 4 -Shotokan,

Goju ryu, Wado ryu and Shito ryu. It won't be long until they come up with standardized Non-Contact Kumite (what we call shiai) rules.

In the world of Contact Karatedo, the Russians developed a hand cover for the World Koshiki Karatedo Federation (WKKF) to diminish the cheese grater effect of rubbing your knuckles along the air holes on the Supersafe headgear. I own a pair of these, they are elastic cotton, like a tensor bandage, and have no padding whatsoever. Not too many people have these, because Hanshi Hisataka has not decided if he likes it or not.

Perhaps it is sensible in the era of legal suits that foam head protection be allowed, or even foam head pro-

tection with a clear mask or cage which is becoming more and more popular in martial arts advertisements in magazines and websites. I hesitate to recommend the use of the Supersafe headgear, mostly because it is so darn expensive. I heard rumors that a company in Australia has made it's own cheaper version of Supersafe headgear, but I haven't heard the details about price and quality. Have you heard anything?

I believe you will hear something like this from a number of old timers... "In Shorinjiryu you protect the target, not the weapons."

Allen Yuen, Sensei

I read with interest the excellent article by Renshi Dan Hayes in the latest Shimbun and would like to express my thoughts on this very complex subject.

I, too, have memories of busting knuckles on bogu but thankfully the more modern bogu surfaced not long after I commenced training in Shorinjiryu. The training regime under my Sensei, Shihan Phil Hooper, was always intense and I have to admit that my current students know very little of that type of training. I guess you fight as you practice and practice as you fight and the changes to the rules of competition to protect the combatants have softened our approach to training for competition. We still have frequent intense bogu training sessions, but head contact, in particular, is reduced to touch contact

from the original knockout techniques. I totally agree with the modern protection of the fighters and the days of blood and guts competition are best left in the past. My neck problems are a constant reminder to me of the "good old days"

In contrast to your experiences in the USA, I would have to say that the competition in Australia is nowhere near the standard of even 20 years ago where we were honored to be able to witness and compete with Shihans Laurin, Hooper, Campbell and Gatty in International or Domestic competition. I have refereed in most Koshiki competition in Australia since 1985 and the standard has slipped significantly. We still produce some good and some excellent fighters but they are thinner on the ground than 20 years

ago. I am biased but the Shorinjiryu training prepares fighters better for bogu competition than most.

We, in Australia, looked at the issue of protection of the fighters years ago and one of the better moves was to wet suit rubber mitts, which effectively protect against cut knuckles and the possibility of blood related diseases. These mitts prevent cuts but offer no other protection or advantage to any fighter and still allow for realistic technique. The sound of the technique on the bogu is also retained which is a great help in judging competition. The days of minced hands are long gone but correct technique is still required to prevent bruising etc. Hope this helps.

**Best Regards,
Jim Griffin, Renshi**

Renshi Hayes' article in the most recent Shimbun newsletter really intrigued me and has again challenged me to think about karatedo. I am currently going through a lot of changes in my professional life and so have not had the time to sit and really reflect on my training and karatedo in general.

First, let me state that I very strongly believe in tradition. I believe that we as a society have moved away from traditional values and as a result suffer on a daily basis. When I was in the classroom and most recently a dean in the NYC Public Schools, I saw a tremendous shift away from what I perceived and was taught were traditional values. Most noticeable is the lack of accountability by many adults. This lack has become new "tradition" and is passed on to many of the youth who do not understand nor choose to accept responsibility for their actions.

Now, if I can step off the soapbox without getting hurt, I believe that we as a system and a family need to look very closely at what our philosophy is. "The Spiritual Development of Individuality in Mind and Body" is at the very core of our system. Karatedo cannot and will not mean the same thing to all practitioners. In fact, karatedo will have different meaning to the individual practitioner at different phases of his life. For example, I, too, have been known to go out into my yard and practice on my makeshift maki-

wara until my knuckles are raw and bleeding. However, that was not an option for me as I began the interview process for my new job. It was not feasible for me to meet with the superintendent of my district with my knuckles looking as though I fought with the Jets defensive line. This was not a matter of being embarrassed about my training but certain things are expected professionally from assistant principals. I did, however, speak a lot about my training and its influence on my development as a person during the interview process.

We all progress differently and have different strengths and weaknesses. Those students who believe that they would like to explore training with the Anzen Bogu should be allowed to do so. They must understand the consequences and responsibilities of their actions before their Sensei allows them to do so. Others, however, should not be omitted from competition or training because of a desire to protect themselves. In reality, no one is going to be able to put on a cup or hand guards before engaging in combat. Training and competition help practitioners gain the confidence necessary for them to protect themselves if they do get into a situation where force becomes necessary.

For Shorinjiryu to continue to develop as a system we must learn to adapt. I believe that this is precisely what Kaiso Hisataka meant

when he developed our philosophy. Shorinjiryu means many things to many people. During shiai we adapt as we learn about our opponent. During kumite we adapt to move with our partner. In kata, we have all adapted and developed different interpretations. This is the beauty of our style and philosophy. As individuals develop they explore and test their boundaries. Knowing your limits allows you to progress. We must learn from the past and keep our practitioners healthy and allow them to develop their minds and bodies individually and within their limits.

I do not know if we will ever answer the question surrounding the use of the Anzen Bogu. Whatever the answer, we as a system must continue to adapt. I believe that Renshi Hayes has brought a greater issue to all of our minds: The meaning of our philosophy. And with continued open dialogue, Shorinjiryu will continue to survive, grow and improve with each new generation.

I have two weeks before I start my new job as an assistant principal. I know that this will be enough time for my hands to heal and tomorrow I continue training on the makiwara until my knuckles are raw and bleeding. This is a decision that I made as an individual because I know that this is a good time for me to push my limits and continue to develop as a karateka.

**Yours in Karatedo,
Neil J. McNeill, Jr., Shodan**

Policy Statement

The response to the query regarding Shihan Dan Hayes article was quite interesting and enlightening. Those who did respond to the article advocated the use of certain types of hand gear. What is clear is that the Kyokai must move into the modern era and put aside some of the policies of the past. We have seen the Australian gear as well as other types. Within the Kenkukai school, a particular hand wrap has been used for a number of years. This wrap was recently tried in the Kenryukan and the Kenryukai schools and in trial use these wraps appeared to be appropriate to their purported use.

During the last Shinzen Tourna-

ment, this wrap was used by a substantial number of contestants and was made available for sale by those who wished to buy it. We have had no complaints regarding its effectiveness. The Kyokai will accept this type of wrap in future events, as it appears to protect the knuckles, wrist and part of the hand. However, the Kyokai cannot be responsible for any injury incurred by the use of such equipment.

These wraps will be made available for sale at tournament sites, in specific dojo and/or directly from the Kyokai.

The following is a partial restatement of certain other requirements:

- The use of shin/instep protectors shall not be prohibited.
- The policy regarding the use of foam dipped hand and footgear is still in effect.
- Mouth guards are mandatory during shiai.
- Headgear is also required during shiai and will be supplied.

It must be remembered that the purpose of the wrap is primarily to protect against injury during competition. Students are encouraged to practice on the bogu during regular class without hand protection in order to learn how to punch properly.

Karate Myths and Facts by Brian Berenbach, Renshi

Karate has been popularized in many ways recently. From Bruce Lee to Jackie Chan, Jean-Claude Van Dam and Steven Segal, we are inundated with martial acrobatics on TV and in the movies. Wherever we go we see storefronts advertising Tae Kwon Do and karate as frequently as drive through fast food places. Why the kiddies can even have karate birthday parties now!

In this article I will attempt to clarify some of the misconceptions about karate, its origins, its purpose and its practitioners.

Myth: All that stuff you see on TV and the movies, and all those Tai Kwon Do studios are about Karate.

Fact: Not true. In order for a martial art to be karate it must have a pedigree back to either Japan or Okinawa. Tai Kwon Do, a Korean sport, was introduced as late as the 1950s to the Korean army as a way of training soldiers. Korean immigrants then popularized it in the United States. Sorry to disappoint you, but Jackie Chan, Bruce Lee, and all the other Chinese martial arts entertainers do Kung Fu, NOT Karate.

Karate developed on Okinawa and was an offshoot of Chinese Kung Fu and the indigenous Okinawa Te. The Chinese form was originally developed to allow monks to

defend themselves against unarmed muggers. In 1609, the Japanese Satsuma clan invaded the Ryukyu Kingdom with a Shogunate sponsored military force. Weapons were banned and the local population starting with Kung Fu, modified it ultimately into Karate as a way of unarmed defense against heavily armed Samurai warriors. This is why today Chinese martial artists appear to be very light and fast with relatively weak techniques.

Myth: Karate is a fighting sport like kick boxing.

Fact: Karate is a martial art; a complex technical discipline. It originally had absolutely no sport aspects to it and fighting was discouraged because of the risks involved. It was designed for life and death situations, and the techniques were too dangerous to use in a sport environment. After World War II, the Okinawan and Japanese masters were literally starving to death. They opened their doors to the public, and evolved sport fighting as a way of increasing enrollment. Interestingly enough, there is not a single style of Karate that requires tournament combat for promotion. Promotions are based solely on technical competence, and it is possible, although unlikely and not recommended, to go all the way

thru black belt ranks without ever having competed in a tournament. It must be remembered that Karate was designed for breaking through armor, and the techniques, when properly applied, can cause serious injury or even death. For this reason, any fighting done at a tournament sponsored by the Shinzen Association is done wearing body armor that cannot be penetrated by the heaviest blow. When I studied in Japan, we rarely sparred. It was just too dangerous and even infrequent sparring resulted in broken arms and legs.

Myth: Karate is for ruffians, teenagers who like to fight and undesirable

Fact: The exact opposite is true. In Japan and Okinawa most of the high-ranking instructors are university professors. Learning goes on past the prime, and the 60 and up crowd can easily participate. Karate is a complex discipline, with both mental and physical aspects to it. The primary mechanism for learning is the Kata, or "form", a set of pre-arranged moves commonly known as the dance of karate. The idea is the same as that of touch-typing. By practicing combinations over and over, they become automatic in emergency situations. In Shorinjiryu we practice graceful and appealing

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Karate Kids

On Oct. 13, 2002 two South Florida teenagers traveled to New York to compete in The 16th Annual International Shorinjiryu Shinzen Shiai. This traditional Japanese style karate tournament is organized each year by Kyoshi Myron M. Lubitsch and held at John Adams High School in Queens, New York. Competitors from India, Australia, Russia, Canada, Japan, South Africa, and the Continental United States are invited to compete at this most prestigious event.

After a flawless demonstration by Japanese Karate Master Shunji Watanabe some 275 competitors competed for honors in Fighting, Forms and Japanese Weapons.

James Zito, a 15 year old Blue Belt from Highland Beach, earned a 2nd Place trophy for Kata (forms) and a 3rd Place trophy for Shiai (fighting).

Adam Gibbons, a 16-year-old White Belt from Boca Raton, took a 3rd Place trophy for Shiai (fighting) and a 4th Place trophy for Kata (forms).

Both of these teenagers have been studying Shorinjiryu Kenkoku Karatedo under the tutelage of Sensei John A. Mirrione, a 36 year veteran of the Japanese Martial Arts and resident of Boca Raton.

Sensei Mirrione is proud of his students who excelled in their performance and also displayed respect and modesty in their accomplishments.

A Learning Experience by Mahmoud Moody Imam, Shodan

“I was robbed”, “the judging was horrible”, “I lost because they didn’t like me”, etc. These are all things we hear when someone does not do well at a tournament. Maybe you were robbed, but when you win when you win, you are not cheated and for some strange reason nor is anyone else.” When you lose the judging is always horrible, just like when you win the judging is phenomenal. No one ever losses because they are not liked. There are too many competitors for the judges to have a personal vendetta against you.

Judging is hard work and every judge tries to do his or her best every time. The Shorinjiryu Shinzen as a whole does a good job of running safe tournaments. Safety is the number one concern at a tournament, then there is learning, and after that it is fun.

These are the priorities of the organizers of the tournaments, and these should be the priorities of the competitors. The tournaments hosted by the Kyokai are fun, and there is always something there for everyone to learn from.

Winning and losing are not listed because they do not matter. The organizers are not concerned with who wins and loses and the competitors should not be concerned with winning or losing either. As a competitor you have two things to do at a tournament. Do the best you can, and try to learn something. A tournament is just a big class that you get to share with other karateka from other dojos. If you do your best and you learn something you have no reason to be upset at a tournament.

If you are upset at a tournament then it should be for only one

reason. You did not do your best. I sincerely doubt that anyone can stay for an entire tournament and not learn anything. If you did not do your best then you should be upset with yourself. You should not make excuses and you should not blame other things like the judging. Be upset with yourself for an appropriate amount of time, like twenty minutes, and then get back to your life and training.

What you do at a tournament is not a measure of your worth as a person. It also is not a measure of your worth as a karateka. I think we train in the martial arts for peace of mind and to become better people. As long as we train with these two things in mind, winning or losing at a tournament is irrelevant, and it is just another step in the path of self-improvement.

The Kyokai’s New Web Site

The Kyokai has a new website! Well, its not really that new, just a bit different! We’ve done a number of things to it, and will keep adjusting it to meet the Kyokai’s needs. Check it out at www.shorinjiryu.org.

Under the Shorinjiryu tab, the Shorinjiryu Links section includes all known Shorinjiryu schools. Your Kyokai is the only Shorinjiryu organization open to all dojos regardless of political affiliation, and we strive to keep it up to date (thanks to all contributors!). Let us know if you know of changes! Under the Shinzen tab, the Glossary has been updated to include both English to Japanese and Japanese to English, the Bushido Award section now includes the Peter Murray Spirit Award winners, and we’ve instituted a Bulletin Board section (see the pretty flashing sign!). The Bulletin Board is your forum to advertise things of interest. Let us know of

your upcoming events, promotions, etc. Tell us what’s happening! The Members section has been updated also but needs your input and contributions. Let me know if it is correct! Think your picture would be rejected on a driver’s license? Send us a new one!

Under the Events tab, the Calendar of Events is there to list your events (kind of makes sense, eh?). Send us some! We’ve added a pdf version of the shiai scoring sheet, and posted the latest tournament results. We’ll post yours’, too, if you send them!

Check out the Photo Gallery! We’re posting pictures from October’s Shinzen Shiai, and some from May’s Ed Taylorson Memorial Tournament in Baltimore.

We love pictures!

Under the Member Services tab we list a number of things the Kyokai can do for you and your school. Whether converting your

documents to pdf for publication or consulting about tournaments and events, we can support your efforts. In an effort to continue the success of standardization of forms exemplified by the standardization of Ananku Kata, we’d love to discuss kata and kumite. Looking for Bogu and the newly approved hand wraps? Look no further! We’ve got them.

Check out Equipment Sales!

Got a few extra minutes between classes? Check out the Games tab.

We’re also looking for a few good webmasters. Know Javascript? Are you a kick-butt graphics designer? If so, and you’d like to help, contact the webmaster at webmaster@shorinjiryu.org to discuss our ongoing projects. The Kyokai website is there for you to commune with the larger Shorinjiryu community. Use it!

An Open Letter

This letter is addressed to all Shihan and Sensei as it pertains to the direction and future of Shorinjiryu Karatedo, for which we are responsible. Given our varied positions, be it Shihan, Kyoshi, Renshi and/or Sensei, we are directly or indirectly given the responsibility for the further developments of Shorinjiryu.

As such, our involvement in karatedo can be seen as our being labeled as masters and ambassadors.

A Master and/or an Ambassador must fulfill a duty in accordance with the profession or otherwise, and in our case, Shorinjiryu karatedo. Therefore this provokes the questions, "What is our mission statement"? "What must we do to fulfill our objectives in our given responsibility"? "What path must we clear and provide for the continued journey"? I submit:

- 1) Promote Shorinjiryu karatedo,
- 2) Offer a contribution to society through karatedo,
- 3) Promote a healthy culture and environment,
- 4) Exercise a positive lifestyle,
- 5) Help the students enhance and develop attributes of; physical and mental wellness, in turn, the student becomes a positive, contributing member to society,
- 6) Have the student become proficient in self-defense.

The above listed, are very important and honorable responsibilities, and to meet their expectations is not an easy task by any stretch of the imagination. To carry out the task, we have as our most valued asset, our train-

ing and experience. Each of us in our own lives has had many different karatedo experiences, good or bad. If we could separate and identify them, they would be either positive or negative in nature. The difficulty is when we come to accept the negative experience as a kind of "right of way" (so to speak). The negatives become as being the tradition or rule of law for the continuance and further developments in Shorinjiryu karatedo. I'm not suggesting we abandon all the past rules and rituals, but depending on the nature and reasoning, some activities do not serve the objectives to succeed in our mission. Yes, doing push-ups, sit-ups, pushing oneself in exercise is for sure, required training to become better athletes. To the contrary, doing strenuous and/or challenging activities that could lead to physical or mental injury must be identified, researched and if found to inhibit a risk, must be stopped!

To draw a comparison, I bring to mind the example or scenario of, "Peer pressure". As teenagers, we have all been intimidated or approached by a peer(s), be it for smoking, fighting, bullying or whatever. The nature and/or reasons, no matter what the case, is the same. I.e. To be cool, to be seen as being tough, to be accepted, be the same, or in some cases, just to follow.

The Medical Science profession has proven beyond a doubt that smoking is hazardous to your health and is the main cause for some forms of cancers. The world has listened, and is taking neces-

sary steps to reduce the number of smokers and the opportunities for being exposed to second hand smoke. This same body of science has issued statistical evidence proving that head contact in sport is a leading cause of injury that can result in serious permanent physical and / or mental damage. We should take note, and be so directed when designing the future for Shorinjiryu Karatedo and our students. At least, we should seriously question the reasons why we continue to allow head contact (especially for children)!

I would like to suggest that we follow a simple personal questioning process. The process is to repeat the same question five times, "WHY do I allow head contact?" and give answers after each. Afterwards, go through the same questioning process, but from a different angle, asking, "WHY would I not allow head contact"?

For myself, the most compelling reasoning why I would not allow head contact is because I would be illuminating the risk of a proven cause of injury, while not in any way deterring from the student's further Karatedo development. With this letter, I would like to let it be known to all, that after many years of questioning and witness, the London Shorinjiryu Kenshin Karatedo School will not participate and/or endorse any Karatedo event where head contact is permitted for children.

Health & Peace,
Manny Hawthorne, Renshi
December 11, 2002

Karate Myths and Facts by Brian Berenbach, Renshi

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

two person forms called “kumite”. In my classes I have a lot of parents who do the two person forms with their children. There are very few activities where parents and their children (8 and up) can participate on an equal footing, Karate is one. I even have had parents who had to formally bow to the children because the children were of higher rank!

Myth: Karate teachers are brutal and beat up their students.

Fact: The karate kid it isn't! Trained (with a pedigree) karate instructors require patience, compassion, and the ability to communicate with people of all ages. People sometimes study karate because

they are timid and have anxieties. It is important to nurture such students and encourage them, not have them leave after one lesson. Oh, and don't forget the lawyers waiting to sue!

Myth: Karate encourages aggression and fighting.

Fact: Movies and TV glorify fighting without showing the aftermath. In class students are taught the reality of causing injury in an unsanitized brutally honest way and, afterwards, recognize how fighting is truly a last resort. By performing forms with their partner, and, optionally fighting in a safe, controlled tournament environment, those few individuals who need one

can find a positive, safe outlet for expressing themselves. But, Karate as a martial art is mostly technique and forms, while fighting is an afterthought.

Now, all the above having been said, I must still warn the reader that it is caveat emptor! There are a lot of unscrupulous, unlicensed instructors out there ready, willing and able to take advantage of a parent wanting their child to learn self-defense. So, if you are interested in participating in the martial arts, I would suggest that you shop around, take your time, possibly watch a class or two, and... enjoy!

Modern Kata, Is It Evolution or Desecration?

by Peter Deasy, San Dan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of desecration. Modifying a kata so that it is more acceptable to the majority of kata judges is not in the spirit of Karatedo. Kata was once judged for the technique and the demonstrated understanding of the applications. Kata in the modern tournament is judged to a generic standard. As a result the meaning and spirit of the individual kata can be lost. Technique is given a lower standing to outward form. Movements are deleted or modified to look better in the eyes of the judges. This, in this author's opinion, is not in the spirit of Karatedo.

In this modern era, a style of karate is not seen to be successful or preferred if it is not successful in the sporting arena. To modify our kata solely for the purpose of fitting in with the opinions of judges from other styles will lose the individuality of Shorinjiryu Karatedo and it will become just another generic style of karate. Perhaps for us to maintain the traditional spirit of our style we should look to a blending of sport and traditional karate. In this I would suggest that both sports and traditional kata be taught in the dojo. The students should be taught kata that will be

successful in the tournaments so that they can compete equally with the other sports karate. However I believe that to remain true to the spirit of Karatedo we should only grade with traditional kata tournament is judged to a generic standard. As a result the meaning and spirit of the individual kata can be lost. Technique is given a lower standing to outward form. Movements are deleted or modified to look better in the eyes of the judges. This, in this author's opinion, is not in the spirit of Karatedo.

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Commemorative Video

We are pleased to announce that the superb commemorative video created by Renshi Vincent Capers

Jr., *The Chronicle of Shorinjiryu* is still available. This video details the past 3 plus decades of Shorinjiryu

in North America and is a must for serious students of Shorinjiryu. Please contact us with your order.

“80 / 20” by Dan Hayes, Shihan

A recent letter regarding “standardization of forms” from Kyoshi Lubitsch seems to have created quite a stir. I must admit that I was also concerned by its inference. As usual, I believe that opening this can of worms can only make us stronger in the development of Shorinjiryu both technically and organizationally.

Doku Ji Gyo Seiki (Spiritual development of individuality in mind and body) has always been our motto. This motto has been the key to our strength and weakness. We strive to cater to the individual and maintain the techniques and spirit of our esteemed predecessors. Similar to our recent issue regarding hand gear, the potential effect on the development of Shorinjiryu’s future both terms of competency and attrition is at question. The issue is, of course primarily determined within the individual dojo. There has always been concern within the second and third generation Sensei that the motto is, can and will be used to deviate from the essence of what is truly Shorinjiryu. This would also cause us to lose that which makes us unique and superior. In looking at the Shorinjiryu of Hisataka Kaiso in Japan, we can see first hand the effects of this distortion. I can remember many incidences in tournaments where Watanabe Kaicho, Morita Komon would look at each other in disbelief and confusion over a form performed with a name that seemed to resemble something known to them but was in no way a Shorinjiryu form. Is this a way to pass on a tradition as honorable as Shorin-

jiryu? Do we really think that this is what Hisataka Shinan had in mind when he created the motto?

It is difficult to understand this concept as a Westerner. We are told that karate is an exacting science. Its demonstration is about control and precision. Yet we are told to develop our own style. This paradox is not unfamiliar to those who have experience with the Japanese culture through the arts. Think of this, it shows superior character to be more humble. So I bow lower than you to show that I am better than you at being more humble than you. Bizarre by Western standards, is it not? “Develop your own style but do not change the style.” This really does not sound much different, does it?

In order to help with the interpretation of this seemingly paradoxical dilemma, our teachers have developed what they call the 80 / 20 rule. As Watanabe Kaicho has explained it to me, it simply means that I should develop my own style of teaching and practice that is correct for my body and personality within the framework of Shorinjiryu of his teacher. As an example, he has stated that 80% of the style should remain intact while allowing for a 20% divergence from his direct style of teaching. This does not mean to change techniques, targets, or sequences within a given form or exercise, but to move in a way that is conducive to my personal style. This sounds great. So I have the freedom (after ikkyu) to explore and develop my personal theories within the construct of Shorinjiryu and be part

of its future development. This is also a great responsibility. Consider that Shinan, Kaicho, Kyoshi and others have devoted their entire lives to the development and proliferation of this art. Now, I may change the course of these men’s lives work with my little experience. Is that a responsibility I want to take? Some accept this responsibility too soon, too light heartedly. Remember the pebble in the pond?

The next problem is the degeneration effect. If I teach my student the style I have developed, with my 20% divergence, am I in keeping with tradition? Am I helping to maintain the integrity and history of the Shorinjiryu of Hisataka Shinan as he had intended? And, so on, and so on, etc.? Now apply the formula in geometric progression. Within two generations you will have no Shorinjiryu.

My suggestion is to we all pay very close attention to our first (Watanabe Saiko Shihan) and second generation (Lubitsch Kyoshi, Mirrione Kyoshi, Hayes Shihan) teachers as they hold the key to our answers and we hold the key to our future and their legacy. Teach strict adherence to our teacher’s way. Teach exactly what you have been taught, even without understanding at times. Develop on your own and in given time you will know what is right for you, as will others for them. Always remember that you represent something far greater than yourself and someone is always watching. Te Ho No Shimasu (we teach/learn by example).

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