

* **A Gathering of the Shorinjiryu Family**

Volume 23, Issue 1

* **Largest Group of Shorinjiryu Practitioners Worldwide**

Summer Issue

* **Exchanging Knowledge, Spirit, & Friendship**

July, 2017

Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai

S h i m b u n

Greetings From the Desk of the President

W hat an incredible half year!

I had the pleasure of attending the Winter Regional in February, the 15th Annual Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe-Ha Tournament in April, the Kenjiyukai Central Jersey 15th Invitational in May, East-Canadian Koshiki Championship in May, and the Spring Regional/Father's Day Tournament in June. Each one was unique.

My major takeaway from these events is that Shorinjiryu is alive and well.

Now, it is the summer season when many students take leave-of-absences from their respective schools. I hope that the majority of you will take the opportunity to use their time productively and continue to train.

We are pleased to report that after a few worrisome months, the venue for the 31st Shorinjiryu Shinzen Shiai has been set for Christ the King Regional High School. This will be our 13th year using this facility which is scheduled for Saturday, October 7, 2017. For those who have attended in the past, you know it is a beautiful edifice and the parking is great. We have contracted for a different location for our Awards/Dance and Banquet which will take place after the tournament.

There are a number of changes in the awards to be given out. All divisions except the children's beginners (white and yellow) will have 1st through 4th places. Of course, certificates of participation will be presented to all.

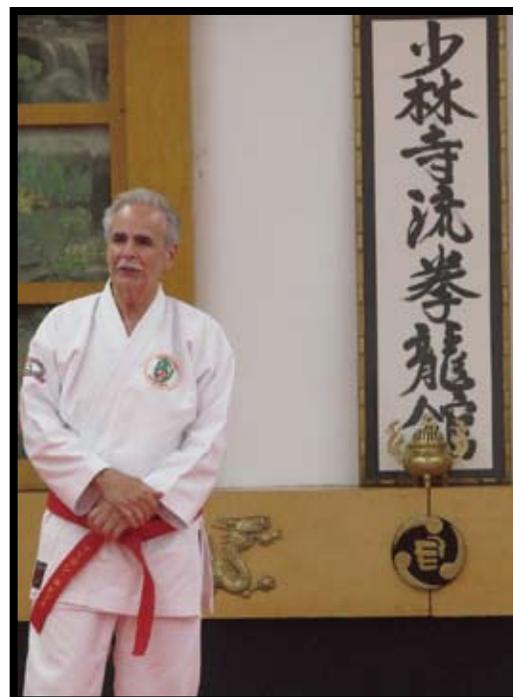
We will shortly place on YOUTUBE.COM a special video tracing the development of Naihanchin Kata. Look for Kyoshi Vincent's announcement.

I thank all those who submitted articles to this Summer Shimbun. I know how very busy many of us are during the summer season. Your time and input is valued and greatly appreciated.

I would like to wish each and every one of you a great, enjoyable, and safe summer. And, in the event that you hail from Australia, a great, enjoyable, and safe winter!

Myron M. Lubitsch, Hanshi

President of the Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai



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Joining the Kyokai

The Kyokai is open to all like-minded schools and students descended from Shinan Kori Hisataka. Schools may be asked to submit proof of lineage, to include documentation or video of forms practiced. To join, contact Hanshi Lubitsch at join@shorinjiryu.org



Shimbun Submissions

The Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai Shimbun accepts submissions on any Shorinjiryu related topic. Submitters do not need to belong to the Kyokai. All submissions will be reviewed by the Editorial Board and the Kyokai reserves the right to reject manuscripts that market a product or service, are not in alignment with the Kyokai philosophy of non-interference with member schools, or that advocate one school over another. Submissions should be in English, however foreign language submissions with English translations will also be accepted. The Kyokai reserves the right to make grammar, formatting, and other minor edits to improve the readability of the work.

Submit articles as Microsoft Word, Text, or Open Office formatted Word documents. Submit and identify digital photographs individually, in addition to including them in your document.

The Shimbun publishes bi-annually by the beginning of Summer and Winter. Submissions are due by June 30 and December 31. Late articles may be held until the next edition. Submit all materials to newsletter@shorinjiryu.org or directly to Sandan Marc at editor@shorinjiryu.org.



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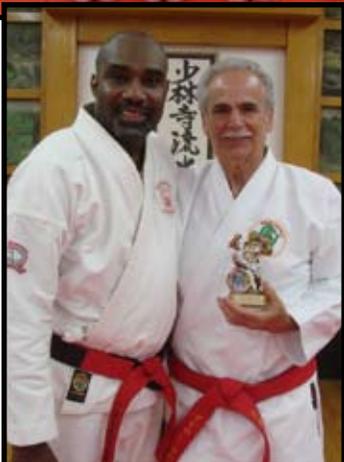
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2017 Shorinjiryu Spring Regional Father's Day Recognition Tournament

A record number of happy fathers and their karate kids enjoyed another fun, wonderfully competitive, and well run tournament experience.



Recent Black Belt
Promotions

*

KENRYUKAN

Renshi Yesenia Santiago-Persad

5th Dan

Renshi LeAsia Shabazz-Earth

5th Dan

Renshi Doro Konate

5th Dan

Tashi Jason Berenbach

4th Dan

Tashi Kevin Gutierrez

4th Dan

Tashi Henry Chicaiza

4th Dan

Tashi Angel Garcia

4th Dan

Sandan Marc Riley

3rd Dan



Congratulations

Shorinjiryu Gallery

Where The Power Comes From: Punching and Kicking in Shorinjiryu

By Brian Berenbach, Kyoshi

Being able to pass down karate techniques is challenging. Over time, techniques change and the teachings of the original masters are diluted or lost. Anyone who has ever played the telephone game will understand. It is sometimes played at parties and is a lot of fun. People stand or sit in a line or a circle. Someone whispers a message in the first person's ear. That person then whispers it in the next person's ear, and so on, until the last person receives it. That person then recites out loud the message that he or she has received, and, to everyone's surprise, it usually bears no relationship whatsoever to the original message.

Similarly there have been changes in Shorinjiryu techniques over time. When I left Kori Hisataka's dojo to return to the U.S. in 1971 I noticed that, as in Bob Dylan's famous song, "The Times They Are a-Changin'", things had been lost or changed. To make matters worse, the instructors, students of Kori Hisataka, who originally came to the U.S. to teach, did not, in most cases, have a very good command of the English language. I remember asking Yamazaki-sensei the best way to do yoko geri (side kick) and, without leaning he would, in slow motion, drive his kicking foot straight up and would say "push up". Enough to make one give up the study of karate and go back to baseball.

In Japan, because the students worked so hard at learning and were so single minded about learning the techniques, the instructors did not have to give much guidance. The idea was that by watching the instructors, and by striking hard surfaces (makiwara, heavy bag) students would learn by osmosis and experimentation what works and what does not. One senior instructor reported to me that his instructor would admonish the students when asked a question by stating "don't ask, just follow". This approach does not transfer well to western societies, where karate is a hobby rather than a way of life. You know, Monday soccer, Tuesday karate, Wednesday basketball, and so on.

What is the best way to punch and kick to get the most power? Sometimes dojos teach the techniques, and sometimes the students are expected to learn them on their own. But, the bottom line is, it all goes back to the laws of physics. Nothing mystical about it, which is why Shorinjiryu in old yellow page ads for the Brooklyn Academy of Music Dojo, used to be called "Scientific Karate-do".



To better understand the techniques and why the early Japanese students were so powerful, a brief physics lesson may be in order. Karate power is about Energy, Momentum and Collisions. First, an elastic collision is one in which the kinetic energy of colliding objects is conserved. That is there is no damage to either of the colliding bodies. A good example is the collision of two billiard balls. After one strikes the other, they both recoil without any damage having occurred. In figures 1 (elastic collision) and 2 (inelastic collision) below, m_1 and m_2 are the mass or weights of the colliding objects and v_1 and v_2 represent the velocity (speed) of the objects respectively.



Figure 1 Elastic Collision

The opposite of an elastic collision is an inelastic collision, where kinetic energy is not conserved (Figure 2)...

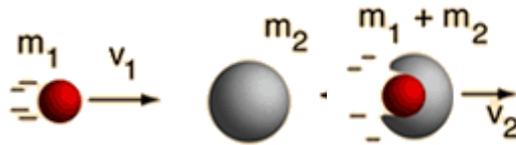


Figure 2 Inelastic Collision

We know that energy can be neither created nor destroyed. So in an inelastic collision what happens to the kinetic energy? The answer is, it goes into the deformation of one or both of the colliding objects. In figure 2 we can see the deformation of the larger object by the smaller one. We also know that kinetic energy is mv^2 , NOT mv , so the energy involved in a collision is tremendously increased by the high velocity of one or both of the colliding objects. The karate-ka can observe this by swinging a heavy bag and then striking as the bag is moving toward the puncher ($v_{actual} = v_{bag} + v_{puncher}$). Note how this increases the power of the punch.

So what can we learn from this brief physics lesson:

1. The faster the punch or kick the greater the power of the technique
2. It is important to ensure that the collision (strike of the target) is inelastic; the deformation of the target body is what causes the damage.
3. By tightening the muscles of the body on impact (focus or kime) instead of striking with just the hand or foot, the uke or target is hit with the mass of the entire body.

Shorinjiryu Gallery



Where the power comes from: Punching and Kicking in Shorinjiryu continued

Striking Techniques

Some karate styles that use snapping techniques (keage) get the advantage of 1 but miss out on 2 and 3. Shorinjiryu techniques are mostly thrusting (kekome) so karate-ka can get the benefits of 1, 2 and 3 through the use of proper techniques, as described below.



Figure 3 Elastic (left) and Inelastic (right) collisions

In Figure 3 we see Sensei Jason Berenbach demonstrating both an incorrect (left) and correct (right) way to punch. In the left picture his elbow is bent, so his arm acts as a shock absorber and absorbs some of the recoil, reducing the effectiveness of the punch. In the right picture, he follows thru and his elbow is not bent, so the arm cannot recoil, resulting in an inelastic collision and deformation of the heavy bag. Note also that he is using a front stance (zenkutsu dachi) which braces his body so that it cannot bounce away from the bag. In Figure 4 we see an elbow strike on a heavy bag. The full force of the body drives forward, with the elbow striking the bag with no recoil of the striking elbow or the body. The result is that most of the energy goes into the deformation of the bag, with the remainder going into bag recoil.



Figure 4 Empi (elbow strike) on the heavy bag

So when punching, the ideal is for the arm to drive into the target at high speed (not at the surface), with the elbow straightening at the end of the blow, focusing (kime) to couple the arm and body, and no recoil or backward movement of the puncher or punching arm. This forces most of the energy into deformation of the target. That, at least, is the “holy grail” of punching: when the karate-ka does it correctly, the punch will sink into and deform the bag, with the maximum power arriving just as the arm straightens, the body tightens and the stance prevents the punchers body from recoiling.

One word of caution, if the punch or kick is too slow, it will become a push, which will result in all the energy going into pushing the target back rather than deformation. That is why a kick should start at or near the floor or the buttocks to allow it time to achieve maximum velocity. Moreover, the punching shoulder has to be pressed down while punching to ensure that the shoulder is not dislocated, and the punch has to be vertical on arrival to keep the elbow in line with the body.

Kicking

The three basic principles described above also apply to kicking. That is, speed counts. As the kick finishes, the knee has to straighten after collision with the target. We see this in an old photo of the author (Figure 5), with full extension and kime. In figure 6 we see the knee initially higher than the target, then coming down and straightening at the end of the kick.



Figure 5 Sensei Berenbach demonstrating a kick in 1973.

Moreover, by pushing down on the knee, the heel moves straight into the target rather than arcing up and sliding along the surface. The challenge is to internalize the technique, so that the kick feels like a punch with the heel. This takes a lot of practice with a heavy bag, makiwara or bogu.

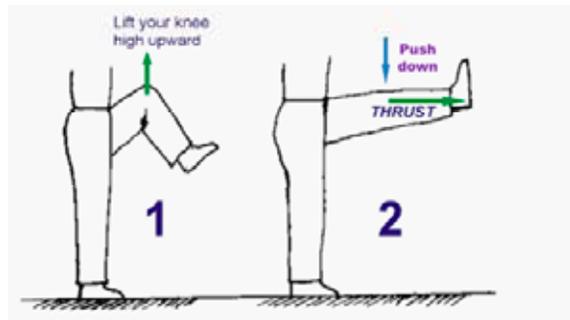


Figure 6 Straightening the knee in the front kick.

Summary

To summarize, the kicks and punches in Shorinjiryu are grounded in classical mechanics. For those readers with a scholarly bent, you can find more on the subject in the article “The Physics of Karate” in the American Journal of Physics: Vol 51, No 9 by S. R. Wilk, R. E. McNair, and M. S. Feld. By the way, if one of the names looks familiar, Dr. R.E McNair was the American astronaut who lost his life in the Challenger disaster in 1986.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to the reviewers who contributed to making the article what it is. They include Hanshi Myron M. Lubitsch, Shihan Page Christis, Shihan Tony D’Avino, Sensei Jason Berenbach and, of course, my lovely wife Susan.

To all my fellow karate-ka: may your kicks and punches be perfect!



Kyoshi Berenbach is the retired chief instructor of Shorinjiryu Kenryukan Stelton Dojo. Following a long and distinguished engineering career at Siemens Corporation, Kyoshi Berenbach is presently an adjunct professor at Georgia Tech University in Atlanta, GA.



Shorinjiryu Gallery



R A N D O R I I C H I

By Peter Hiltz, Renshi

I have been visited by the ghost of Shinan Kori Hisataka.

While we practice Randori Go and a routine called Masayuki Ni, and have done Randori Ni, I've never seen or heard of anyone doing Randori Ichi or San. As you may remember, about a year and half ago I put out a question regarding Randori Ichi and Randori San. Receiving no replies to my query, I sadly assumed that a piece of our history had been lost. Fast forward to about two months ago and I'm sitting at my computer wondering if there was any other avenue to finding these things when I looked down and noticed ancient, yellowed pieces of legal paper suddenly appearing, sticking out from the books on the bottom shelf of my bookcase. Wondering what this mysterious poltergeist-like occurrence might entail, I investigated and found, in the archaic calligraphy of cursive, in the language of the times – English – cryptic, high level directions for Randori Ichi, Ni, San, and Go.

Before assuming the accuracy of what I discovered, I ran it by two, who by basis of their studies and seniority, were in a position to verify the routines. One was able to identify the author and their school, and the other confirmed the routines. On a side note, my thanks again to them for their comments and expertise. The notes, like all messages from the spirits, are high level directions that seem to be intended as memory aids for students who learned the routines from human instructors. As you can imagine, the nuances are missing; I don't think there was any intent that they be complete enough to learn from.

We've started exploring Randori Ichi. It contains much repositioning as Tori is almost always shifting position to attack the front of uke and uke is almost always moving sideways to escape. My first impression is that it is excellent at teaching sideways escapes and I have to wonder if it was intended for newer students. It also seems to be a widely spaced routine calling for a number of lunge punches and other moves; the text does not indicate if there is a net linear flow or if the practitioners are moving around each other, effectively staying in one place. At this time we interpret it as staying in one place but covering a large floor space.

Two moves stand out for me. The first is a sliding step punch that seems very smooth and quick and the second is a front kick, side kick sequence that matches a pattern I've seen other styles practice. As a way of alerting my students to this sequence, possibly a reasonable threat given the ubiquitous nature of schools of that style, and giving them practice at defending against it, it is of sufficient value that I'm happy we've working on this routine.

When we're done we'll have something very close to the routine, but I certainly don't believe we'll have it as we would if taught by someone who learned it from one of the Seniors. With that in mind I welcome any input on it and if you know the routine we'd love to see your version. Regardless of our final version's closeness to the original, I see some value in learning it so we'll continue to add it to our catalog of Shorinjiryu.



Renshi Hiltz is the chief instructor of Shorinjiryu Ake No Myojo Budo Dojo in Eldersburg, MD. He is the immediate past web & printmaster of the Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai.



19 IS THE NEW 60

By Tony D'Avino, Shihan



Greetings from the Kenyujokai Karate Club!....Wishing our Karate brothers and sisters a happy, active, fun Summer.

Looking forward to our next Family gathering at this Octobers Shinzen Shiai!.

A recent survey, conducted by the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, found that children are most active at age 6. People aged 6 to 85 were surveyed. Contrary to popular belief, teenagers whose bodies are raging with hormones, and are supposed to be approaching their physical peak, and by all accounts should be at their most active state...are not!..The study found, that after age six, there is a steady decline in physical activity, across their entire lifetime.

The study noted the most drastic decline during childhood, starting at Elementary school, and continuing into High School. The study found that the average 19 year old, was as sedentary as a 60 year old adult, who typically starts to experience "restrictive movement problems", and other health related issues. The early start time for schools, too much sedentary sitting, short recess time, lack of sleep, too much T.V. time, computer games, phones, and other technology related items, are some of the reasons stated.

The results showed that children are most active from 2 to 6 p.m., or "after school". In 1969, I did a term paper on the effect of T.V. on children. According to Marshall McLuhan, the average kindergarten child had 8 thousand hours of T.V. , under his belt, before entering Kindergarten. I cannot imagine what hours are spent now, in our current time, by children.

Fortunately for practitioners of Shorinjiryu, we have not allowed ourselves to fall by the wayside. I started training in karatedo in 1964, this year marks my fifty third year of training. I am basically doing the same workout I did 40 years ago. This is the "gift" of Karatedo. To remain who we once were!...mostly. While my classmates from high school are getting hips and knees, replaced ,repairing shoulders, and are not able to be active, I still can enjoy doing the things I love to do!..good genes help!!



To paraphrase our favorite villain, Han, from *Enter The Dragon*.... "Gentlemen, I salute you...through long years of pain, sacrifice, and denial....**WE FORGE OUR BODIES IN THE FIRES OF OUR WILL!!!!**".

Shihan D'Avino is chief instructor of Shorinjiryu Kenyujokai Dojo in Babylon, NY



Shorinjiryu Gallery



NIJUSHIHO KATA

By John A. Mirrione, Hanshi



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his article is not about the origins of kata but rather my own personal experience with one versatile *Shorinjiryu kata*.

At a Shorinjiryu tournament, I overheard a fellow karateka mention that he was tired of seeing Nijushiho

Kata demonstrated time and time again. He complained that he would rather see a more advanced form demonstrated by a senior sensei. His comments stayed with me for some time thereafter.

After moving to the state of Florida and deciding to re-enter the tournament scene the first decision I had to make was which kata would I perform at my first event? Knowing that our style of karate would attract some attention, I wanted to be sure to select a kata that would best represent our system.

Setting aside the past comments I had overheard, I thought that Nijushiho Kata would be perfect because the karateka present had probably never seen this kata performed by a Shorinjiryu practitioner.

I was glad I did it because not only did the kata score well; it attracted the attention of the other contestants and the judges who asked many questions about our style and the kata. I was once again reminded of what a unique style of karate we are with our twists and turns and quick snappy techniques. The Shotokan and Goju styles were well represented with loud kiai and powerful techniques. My kata was relatively silent except for the snapping sound of my gi and the sound of my breathing. I guess it was quite a contrast for those present to witness. I was so proud of our style and the interests it generated, so much so, that I continued to compete for several years thereafter doing a different kata each time generating even more interests.

If you have ever seen Kaicho Shunji Watanabe demonstrate Nijushiho Kata you would be astounded by his fluent and powerful movement. His twists and turns seem so effortless and well balanced when combined with his masterful footwork. Well into his 70s you would think that he would be moving much slower. Each time I watch him demonstrate I come away feeling that perhaps I am not training hard enough. As the Technical Advisor to the Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai he is a great asset.

As most of you are well aware in the 1960s, Shorinjiryu Kenkokan Karate had for many years consisted of the practice of three main kata (Sanchin, Naihanchin and Nijushiho), however, the core of the training was yakusuko kumite and lots of shiai

二十四歩 NIJUSHIHO

practice. The three kata taught were to teach students three methods of fighting, linear, sideways and triangular. It was understood that continued repetition of right and left sides these forms would give students the foundation of hand and foot techniques to defend themselves in most situations. It was not until the 1970s when Hanshi Masayuki Hisataka published his book, Scientific Karatedo, that we found Shorinjiryu had even more kata in our system besides the vast number of yokusoku kumite. The Kata Happikan and Sankakutobi were included in the book as Shorinjiryu Kenkokan creations. The book became useful to many Karatedo practitioners because not all the kata were being taught in every school. Just a few students were fortunate enough to have a teacher who was able to teach the material to which many had just been introduced to. While all kata practiced must include all the technical principles like breathing, hip thrust, body drop, snapping motion, retraction of technique, and stamping foot this kata brings out all of these principles and much more.

Nijushiho's angular body and foot movement (tai and ashi sabaki) appeals to both intermediate and advanced practitioners and it was the last of the three forms taught in the 1960s. Some would say that it best represents the very essence of our system.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that several of our kata have corresponding waza (two person fighting forms). Nijushiho is one of them. Practice of the waza gives the practitioner an even better understanding of the techniques and how they work. It could take a long time to truly master its complex moves and better understand the meaning behind them but it will all be worth the time and effort.

What's your favorite kata ?

Hanshi Mirrione is the semi-retired founder of Shorinjiryu Kenkokai Karatedo who lives in Boca Raton, Florida



Shorinjiryu Gallery



Eleven Years

By Leah Kravets, Shodan

Kamashta Onegaishimasu” I say as I bow to shomen, the place of honor. I hear these words echo behind me by the rest of the students who enter the dojo. They utter the same Japanese phrase, “I am here. May I practice with you?”

“Shigo.” My Sensei (teacher) calls us to order. Before I go to my place in line, I quickly strip myself of all modern day commodities until I am left robed in the same white gi (uniform) all the other students are wearing. I am only distinguished from the other students by a belt reflecting many years of “development of mind and body”.

However, I know inside that I am still the same karate student I was eleven years ago. I may have new responsibilities as a black belt, but I am still here to learn; not only from those who continue to teach me, but also from those whom I teach.

Tate San Nen: it takes three years to learn to stand. The meaning of these words can only be discovered with time. Proficiency in karate requires years of repetition: opening routines consist of twenty punches and twenty kicks to your partner’s bogu (protector), and then a reversal of roles. To me, “Tate San Nen” only began to have meaning when I finally perfected my kicks. The only comment I had heard for years was “Your kicks are too short,” but it wasn’t until I started to teach lower ranks that I finally understood my mistake. As I broke down the technique into parts for the younger students, I realized that my own kicks lacked hip extension. Afterwards I remember my Sensei stopping class to give me a handshake when he noticed I fixed my kicks.

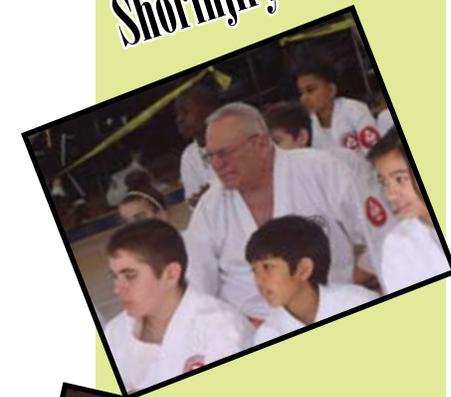


“She’s a good kid, but she’s not for karate...we’ll see” is what my Sensei said eleven years ago, towering over me- the innocent first grade girl holding the ends of her two French braids. Now I stand in line to the right of my Sensei, in front of over thirty students in white uniforms arranged by the color order of their

belts. Sometimes when I’m feeling nostalgic, I scan the students from right to left, seeing white belts darken slowly to brown, remembering my ascension from white to black and all of the colors in between.

“The brain is smart but the body is stupid” is constantly reiterated by my Sensei.

There have been times when I would have killed for a water bottle or a thirty second break. There have been times when I have felt my heart beat in every sore muscle in my body. But all of those times I told my brain that I could keep going. And I still keep going. I can run that extra block or I can stay up that extra hour for a paper. I always tell myself I can... and I do.



In Memoriam

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March 2, 2017 at the age of 81, Kyoshi John Salasko passed away.

He had health difficulties in recent years and was in and out of the hospital.

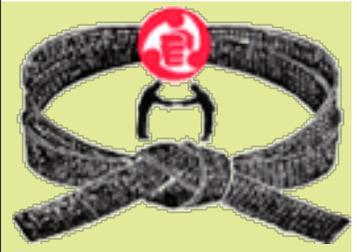
He returned home from his most recent hospital stay in order to be close to family.

Kyoshi Salasko was cremated near his home in Georgia and memorials and exhibits were held in New Jersey at the Nassau Inn in Princeton as well as at the recent Central Jersey Karate tournament.

This most sorrowful loss for myself and all of Shorinjiryu will be greatly felt for some time.

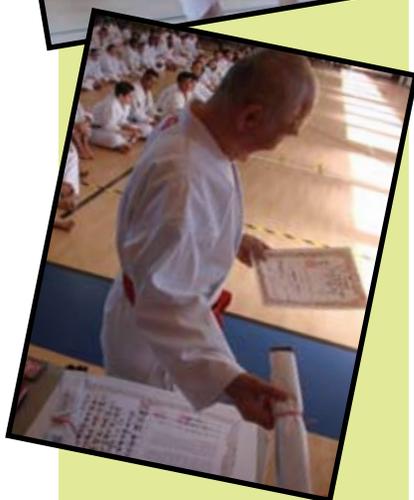
Peter J. McMahon,
Shihan

Shorinjiryu Kenjiyukai



Kyoshi John Salasko 1936-2017

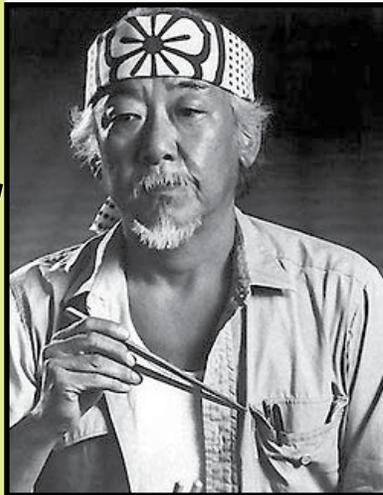




From the Editor...

LISTEN TO YOUR SENSEI: *Or Else Someone Gets Hurt or Gets Helped*

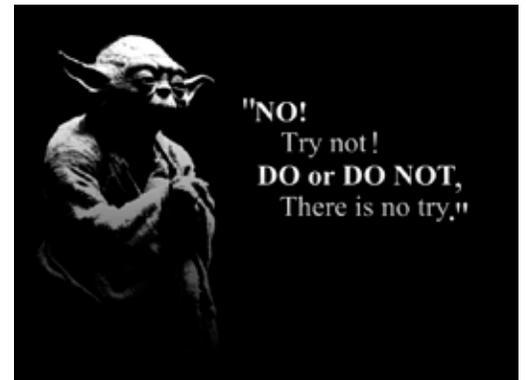
By Marc Riley, Sandan



When you think of great instructors, many of us are reminded of the wonderful individuals we encountered in our academic, athletic journey in school, or in the military. Even those mentors seen in movies like Yoda of *Star Wars* fame as the g.o.a.t. (greatest of all time). When I hear the dreaded word “try,” Yoda’s maxim, “Try not, do or do not, there is no try,” is often repeated by me to my students. I regularly write it on the board and hang signs with the phrase around my dojo. They are truly words of wisdom.

Most of my students have been

listening because I see them portray the phrase through their actions. One can expect this from a good relationship between an instructor, mentor, or coach and their student. Opps, I don’t want to leave out Mr. Miyagi either from *The Karate Kid*, who is a close second, I think mainly for his attitude and innovative teaching methods. I could go on with even more anime examples from shows like *Dragon Ball*, *Naruto*, and *Avatar*, but they are all similar. They are all seeking to show the honored and oftentimes legendary martial art sensei/deshi (teacher/student) relationship.



The sensei/deshi relationship is a special one. The instructor is not just imparting knowledge of kicks and punches, but they are the surrogate parent passing on life lessons as well to students. From a good martial arts instructor, you learn about yourself as much as the martial art being taught. Of course, the student must be ready and willing to learn. When the student is ready, the master appears.

During blocking drills recently, a student of mine did a hammer fist down on my shoulder and injured my collarbone when he was supposed to be doing an outside block to escape, deflect my punch, and counter the technique. I, along with the entire class stood astounded with disbelief as he chose not to listen to me. By deciding to do his own thing, and not what I just demonstrated and explained for several minutes, he broke cardinal rules by not only disobeying his instructor, but injuring his training partner as well. Everyone else did the drill properly. As I now fumed, nursing my dislocated collarbone, I still did my best to remain calm and to make this a teachable

moment. Some might say that it was only an honest mistake of a beginner, but not all mistakes can be overlooked. Especially an incident like this. It is the very reason we practice. Mind you, I was the one doing the attacking technique with oi tsuki chudan. This student was willfully being disobedient and had his own agenda. He was not ready to learn, but he was also not going to get away with such a faux pas. He was going to learn this day.

Chuckling goofily this student says, "I thought that I could do THIS (downward hammer fist) instead of what you told us (soto uke)." Really, this was his response! No doubt, I was truly perplexed and angered, as were the other students. With an arrogant and knowing smirk on his face, it was clear to me that he needed to understand that you follow directions your instructor gives explicitly or else someone will get hurt. Yes, in this case... me!!! Now an honest mistake (accident) is one thing, but to purposely deviate from the established and prescribed drill being taught is also going against a key stipulation of dojo kun... jujun (obedience) and it should not be tolerated.

It was not only providential that I had this student partnered with me, but in hindsight

a very good thing because I sensed something about his silly personality and figured not to pair him with another novice or else he could have hurt them. Students were in helmets & bogu as we went through the nuts and bolts of the drill in order to maintain safety. I still kept my cool when I knocked the crap out



of this defiant karateka by delivering a controlled shot to his head, torso, and a mawashi geri to his rear end (the only unprotected area)!!! I then proceeded to continue with our class, emphasizing jujun (obedience), but also trust between partners in my usual calm and even tone. I then took this student aside for about an hour following class and we discussed his actions and their consequences. He was only mildly contrite,

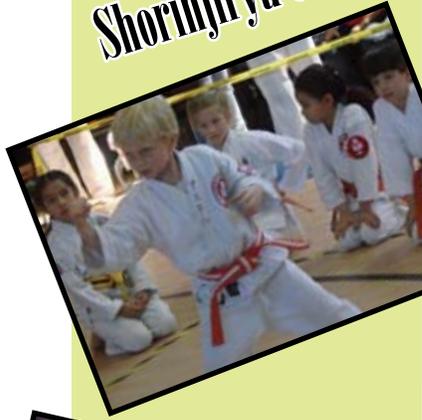
but still maintained the notion that it was not that big of a deal because sensei is tough and could take a hit. I contacted his parent immediately and informed her that in order for her son to continue studying with me, he would have to change his attitude and behavior for the better.

The mom insisted that I go upside his head again and said that was why she put him in martial arts in the first place to learn some discipline. I let her know that her son was already struggling with difficulties within himself and that a constant bit of whacking upside the head was not the ultimate solution to learning discipline. Sadly, the son chose to just give up and quit the class instead. However, I told him that he was always welcome to come back to train if he would make up his mind to change, listen, and obey. The lesson I was hoping he learned was one of properly taking in knowledge, helping him improve as a trusting student, along with the importance of attention to detail by following directions. This would not only help him in martial arts, but in academics, and life itself. Perhaps he will realize this one day before it is too late. You cannot change everyone unless they are willing to change and not continue to be so reckless. Moral hazard you know.

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I have been studying martial arts since 1967 and over the years I have had many teachers. I have seen martial arts culture, habits, and ways change as well. It used to be that the martial arts instructors were a lot like John Kreese in *The Karate Kid*. In reality, a good martial arts teacher is sometimes Kreese and sometimes Mr. Miyagi. You need a little bit of both, and a good instructor knows how much and when.

My first martial arts instructor was my dad. He molded a scared and sickly youngster with asthma into a black belt. I learned most of my important life lessons from him. He showed me that there was more inside of me than I thought.

He always had me running in the park, racing him to and from the car, as well as helping carry groceries for the elderly ladies in the neighborhood. This helped me outgrow my asthma and build my lungs, stamina, and endurance. You could say

that he is probably my most honored instructor. I have been fortunate to have had many other great instructors as well.

My other subsequent instructors have taught me many miraculous powers of internal and external martial arts. My current ones continue to teach me that age is not as important

I think what makes a great instructor is that they started as students and can actually transfer their knowledge to another student. A great teacher is a perpetual student and has an uncanny way of learning. They know what makes a student tick and how to process information. Great instructors know a student's personality as they would also know their own.

Like a bad student, the bad teachers are bad for any number of reasons also. I have had teachers that were bad because they just didn't care about their students, and were often selfishly drunk with the idea of being a high ranking black belt or having a certain degree/title, giving little care or effort to their true responsibility to their students. It should go without saying, but you should always avoid bad instructors, regardless of what they teach. Even if it is the coolest looking



as will and desire. All of my instructors have taught me different arts, but they all had something thing in common as well. They were both great students as well as teachers at the same time.



fighting fad or latest martial arts craze.

I make it a point to always share information with my students (children and adults) and parents about my background in martial arts, so that they will know that I didn't just start doing this last week or a couple of years ago. I encourage them to ask questions, and make sure we have an understanding regarding goals for themselves, their child, and what is expected of them as a karateka and or a parent.

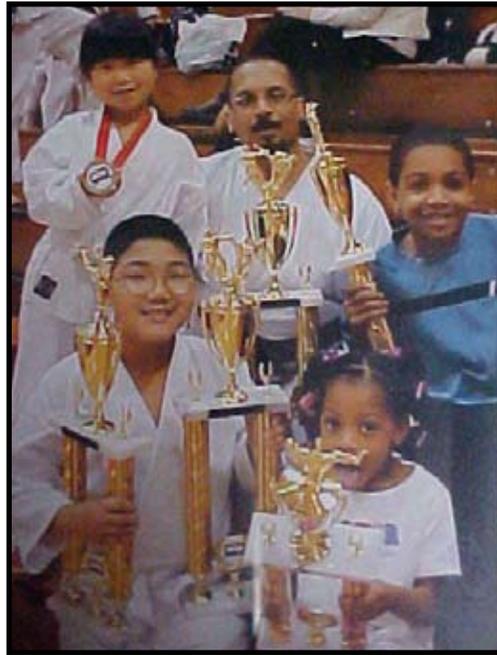
A large number of parents as well as their kids occasionally have a mildly warped perception of martial arts instruction because of stereotypes from movies and television. If the instructor is yelling, demanding, and strong-willed, then they figure that the teacher is good and tough. If that was the case, I think we all have known some loud-mouthed and pushy people in our lives that would therefore be considered great martial arts teachers by that vague standard. There are more subtle nuances to good

instruction than just yelling. Superior teaching is a dynamic process. There is loud and soft, fast and slow, stern and yielding.

The actual journey of the martial artist is a difficult one, and it should be. I recall a number of students that I have trained with and have been students of mine, and how many have fallen by the waysides for various reasons. I am reminded of something always said by my main Shorinjiryu instructor, Kyoshi Brian Berenbach and his sage advice that I still repeat to others and very often to myself, "The only way to make black belt is not to quit."

A good martial arts instructor is hard to find. When you find one, honor them by listening and following the life

lessons they give of being a good student. Right away, you will be expected to mentor, and to teach your kohai. An instructor is ultimately judged by their students' success. I think that I have done pretty well by most of my instructors and students over the years based on those that have gone on and graduated from top colleges, or entered the military, married, or have gone on to productive lives and professional careers. So listen closely to your instructor, because it can make a difference of hurting or helping.



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Sandan Riley is the chief instructor of Shorinjiryu Kenryukan Hachikenkai Dojo in Newark, New Jersey as well as a senior instructor at Shorinjiryu Kenryukan Stelton Dojo in Edison, New Jersey.



Remaining Schedule of Special Events 2017

**August
5th-6th**

**Panamerica Koshiki Tournament
Las Vegas, NV**

**October
7th**

**31st Shorinjiryu Shinzen Shiai
Tournament
NYC**

November

18th (tentative)

**23rd Island Budokan Invitational
Long Island, NY**



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