

**World Shorin-Ryu Karate-Do Federation USA Inc.**

**Newsletter November 2019**



## Year 2 of our current 3-year theme for Internationals 2019!

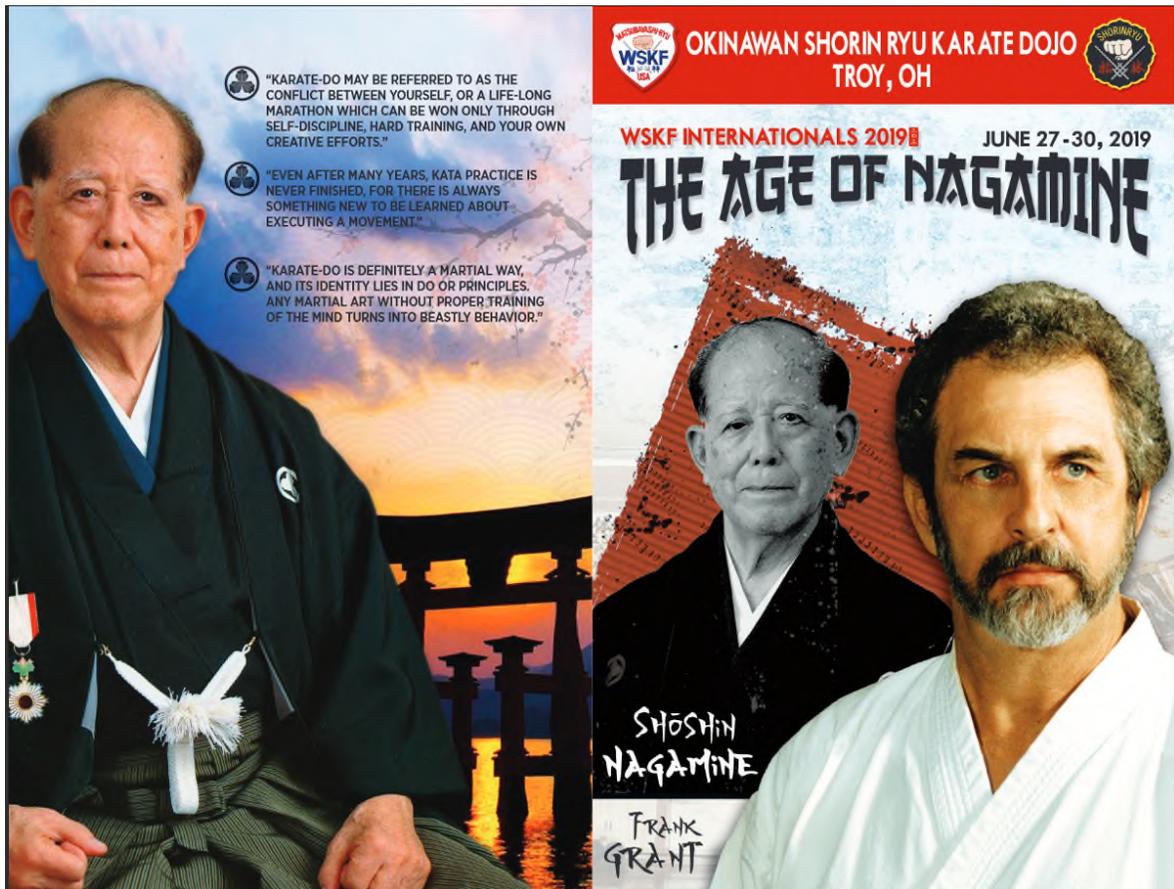
### The Age of Nagamine!

#### What a great event!

Internationals kicked off with Instructor's training on Thursday June 27, 2019. Instructor certification is a requirement to teach Matsubayashi-Ryu Karate-Do under the WSKF. A number of topics are covered to help ensure that WSKF instructors are fully informed on educational techniques and the foundations of the WSKF programs. For example, CPR & First aid training are encouraged for all Black Belts as we want to be able to provide care for all our students if needed. This was followed by Black Belt promotions Thursday night – displaying the results of years of training under the teachings of Hanshi Grant as taught to him by O-Sensei Nagamine.

Friday after the dojo owners met to share experiences and ideas, students began to train in the afternoon. The focus was on the five steps to understanding Karate-do, followed up by a dynamic session on Yakosuku Kumite, the practical implementation of the things we train in kata every day. Speaking of dynamic, Sensei Dometrich blessed a few students with Kobudo training – her mantra? Waza. Waza. Waza. Technique is the key, and understanding the application of the technique opens whole new worlds. Finally that evening was Kyu rank promotions – nerves were on edge, but they battled through!

Saturday was the official kickoff to the weekend, a dedication to Hanshi, followed by warm-ups and special meditative breathing techniques with Kyoshi Harris. Just like a regular class, after warmups the day started with Basics – and building on how the understanding of breathing, relaxation and focus can



enhance Basics. Fukyugata Ichi – was next. The techniques learned in this kata are carried through in all other katas and are the cornerstone of Matsubayashi-Ryu and Grand Master Nagamine’s teachings. This then led to our understanding of how all the kata influenced Fukyugata Ichi – see the article later from Sensei Bentle on the “Kata Letters” for more insights. Classes continued throughout the day.

Training, camaraderie, Training, food, Training, sleep, food, Training.....and then, a wonderful banquet Saturday evening to celebrate the progress of individual accomplishments. A final closing class on Sunday and then a look forward to continued improvements, and the next step in 3-year theme.

Coming up this summer, Year 3 of our 3 year training theme!

WSKF Internationals – in St. Pete Beach, Florida!

*The age of Hanshi Grant!* Without whom, this organization would not be.

We Love and Appreciate you Hanshi!

For more details go to: <http://www.shorin-ryu.net/internationals.html>



## **Karate-Do and Brain Based Learning**

By  
Sensei Dale R. Pike

### **Relevant History and Act One of the Instructional Phases**

Exercise removes toxins which build up in the brain. Exercise is the single most activity that one can do to improve brain function. Specific physical exercise for the development of the brain is less specific, in the western hemisphere, as to which exercises actually stimulates intelligence. In the Eastern Hemisphere though, exercises were developed which were derived from the battle field, intermixed with meditative concepts, and developed into the martial arts. In the Ryu Kyu kingdom, (Okinawa) their indigenous martial art called “ti” or “te,” transcended into Karate-do. Karate-do is a physical exercise that develops mind, body and spirit...and it also physically develops the brain.

The early masters seemed to understand the correlation between karate and the brain, even if they could not articulate which parts of the brain were developed by which exercises. The foundation of the correlation, though was completely understood. One such Okinawan karate master, Anko Itosu, petitioned for the inclusion of karate-do into the curriculum of the Okinawan school system in 1907. Bringing karate out of secrecy, and into the lives of all school children of this Island country, developed the students’ brains and bodies.

Modern day masters of karate utilize the most relevant research available to fuel the instruction of the classes they teach to today’s practitioners. In learning specifically how the brain works it becomes very clear that the practice of karate-do is brain specific in the development of the whole practitioner. The next few pages will demonstrate how the practice of karate-do builds a healthy brain. Concepts specifically and uniquely practiced in karate-do, their applications, and their correlations to brain development, will be the focus of this study.



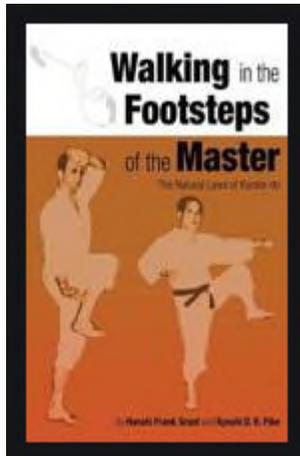
### **Repetition**

In Brain based learning, repetition increases memory and subsequent intellect by causing the brain to connect learned activities between the synapse firing of the connected dendrite and axon. When these action potentials are engaged through repetition, several pathways of thought become associated with each other. The performance of a physical action causes the neurons to fire electrical signals (action potentials) which forms a network of cells, which is often referred to as a “super highway” of thought. Repetition of an action causes an increase of myelin around that network.

This added myelin causes a faster processing, leading to increased efficiency of that movement and attachments of other axon-dendrite connections. Thus, the super highway of thought connected action practiced through repetition makes you smarter and internalizes those actions. This we understand through modern brain research. But did the old masters of karate-do recognize this when they designed their training methods?

Hanshi Frank Grant, a modern master of Matsubayashi-Ryu Shorin-Ryu Karate-Do, and 10<sup>th</sup> degree direct disciple of Grand Master Shoshin Nagamine believes in the necessity of repetition.

In our book, [\*Walking in the Footsteps of the Master; the Natural Laws of Karate-do\*](#), (Grant and Pike, WSKF Press, 2016) Hanshi Grant explains how repetition is paramount to a warrior's practice:



*“Our technique is based around repetition. Repetition develops greater confidence in the students’ technique. It builds keener awareness and visualization. The human mind will develop false confidence and false confidence in ineffective karate technique can be fatal. Repetition teaches us, trains the student to be disciplined so that we may become effective learners.”*

The correlation between physical exercise and repetition as brain building connections is certainly the focus of Hanshi Grant and the Masters before him. Grant certainly learned this concept from his master as even in his advanced classes with 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> degree black belt students, he begins their classes with the 12 basic movements and the first basic kata. Beginning, advanced and novice classes the same way not only reinforces the myelinic connections but brings together those connections with prior knowledge and stacking thoughts. This repetitive practice moves the thought-action related synapses from the hippocampus to the cerebellum transitioning the episodic memory to the procedural memory.

The more repetition, the more pathways are created. The more pathways, the more robust memories. In the brain, this process releases acetylcholine, which is the chemical neurotransmitter for memories.

In the Matsubayashi-Ryu Karate-Do system, Grand Master Shoshin Nagamine designed his system to revolve around 12 basic movements. These 12 movements are connected in to different sequence and variations to create the movements of our 18 kata. Each technique builds off of the previous technique. Each kata builds off of the previous kata as well. This unique type of stacking of learned-action based brain development involves multiple processes, which in turn develops the super highway of inter and intra related thought. This type of learning involves the “3-ring circus” processing in the Parietal lobe.

### **Visualization and Mushin**

In reality the practice of karate develops all four lobes of the brain because of its unique training. The temporal and occipital lobes are developed through the visualization of an imaginary opponent and the shadow boxing techniques practiced to subdue him; the majority of the learning is visual as we mimic the movements of the teachers until we can perform them physically without attentive thought. Then the analysis of the movement and applications can take place. The frontal lobe is constantly engaged during training as only logical reasoning and judgement are processing the imaginary attacks of the imaginary opponent become very real physical techniques of defensive and offensive fighting movements. The repetitive practice of Karate-do reprograms or trains the circuitry of the pre-frontal cortex to control the release of the neurotransmitters. This process develops a resistance to the release of Adrenaline and Norepinephrine and increases a release of serotonin. In the case of a surprise attack, the adept of karate has trained through repetition, to control the “fight or flight” and “action or fear” responses of the biochemical release of the in the brain. This is the chemical translation of what is termed in karate of mushin or “no-mind” In our book Hanshi Grant comments on this phenomenon:

*“There can be no resistance in your training. You must submit to it. Kata is there...it is a state of being. Kata exists. You must move in your kata like a river that seems to not be moving at all. It flows seamlessly and effortlessly. Psychologically the student must use mushin (no-mind). By training through repetition,*

*my student develops this state of no mind. You must not think while you train because a thought is resistance.”*

This concept of Mushin, keeps interruptive thoughts from entering the learning process, is the elimination or reduction of non-essential input.

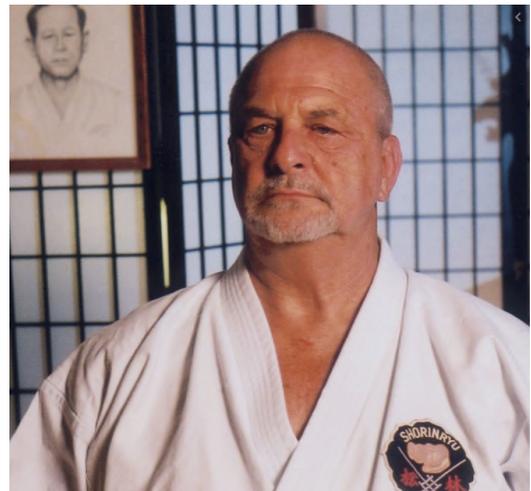
### **Growth Mindset**

The direct learning within the teaching of karate-do involves short term and working memory, with implicit memory. When the student first learns a technique, it is learned in the explicit learning, but through repetition it transcends into the indirect learning through priming, conditioning and increased skill from the repetitive practice. However, this learning method of karate-do could be more related to the practices of the implementation of the teaching strategies of the curriculum, especially within Matsubayashi-Ryu. All classes in all dojo, within the World Shorin-Ryu Karate-Do Federation (WSKF) follow a similar format. The classes are broken down into 3 parts within the class. These three components are: warm-up exercises and basic movements, kata and bunkai (application) and heavy exercises and meditation. Each class builds from the previous class, but someone can begin their first class at any time. By chaining and/or breaking apart the delivered material to the student in this way, the limited working knowledge expands. This allows the student the ability to process more concepts of new information and/or compound information in their explicit memory pathway.

A typical class in Matsubayashi-Ryu, especially within the WSKF is a parallel to the Jensen model of 10%- 80%- 10%. The warm-up and basic movement section is a mirror of the preparation of learners in a “sacred space” or “optimal environment.” The kata and bunkai (practical application) portion of the class is Jensen’s 80% ranging from “engagement to connections.” The heavy exercises and meditation ending of class certainly corresponds to Jensen’s “settle and rehearse/incorporate”, albeit in reverse order. Jensen’s model and research demonstrates through our modern understanding of how the brain works is a parallel to the ancient teachings of karate-do. Karate-do builds working memory the exact way Jensen describes; Priority, Relevance, Repetition, and Variety .

As Hanshi Grant further explains:

*“You have to be intelligent to study Matsubayashi-Ryu. Karate makes you smarter. It stimulates your brain. The brain must be stimulated, in older age especially... This is why I continue to challenge (my advanced students) I continue to teach them advanced concepts through our basic techniques to keep their mind working. Through training mind, body and spirit, a discipline develops, and longevity occurs.”*



This longevity that Hanshi Grant describes is not only within the lifespan of the student, but also in the learning ability of the student. Karate-do creates life-long learners because of the super highway of inter and intra related strands of axon and dendrite couplings, covered in a myelinated blanket of fast speed thought connections.



## Kata Letters, 2019

By: Sensei Jeff Bentle

I began working on our presentation for Internationals 2019 in the fall of 2018 by first reading the [Three Pillars of Zen](#) by Phillip Kapleau. I knew Master Nagamine was a devout Zen practitioner and I hoped to gain a better understanding of his mindset. My ultimate goal was to tell the story of the development of Fukyugata-Ichi, so with the "Three Pillars" under my belt, I re-read the Master's [The Essence of Okinawan Karate-Do](#). He doesn't mention his kata much.

I followed this up with another Kapleau book, [Zen Merging of East and West](#), [Zen Stories of the Samurai](#) by Neal Dunnigan, and [108 Adages of Wisdom](#) by Master Sheng Yen. Then I went back and re-read Nagamine's [Tales of Okinawan Masters](#). But again, he barely mentions Fukyugata-Ichi and offers nothing regarding what inspired it. Then there was the internet. There are numerous articles, some better than others. The most helpful was from a 1999 edition of "Dragon Times" entitled "The 1940 Karate-Do Special Committee: The Fukyugata Promotional Kata" by Charles C. Goodin, which Kyoshi Pike sent me. It provided background on the masters present at this meeting, in particular Nagamine and Miyagi. The author interviewed Nagamine and, as I was delighted to discover, he shared insights about the development of both Fukyugata kata. Nagamine seemed to downplay the significance of Fukyugata-Ichi, and although he did have certain goals in mind, he stressed it was mainly a kata for beginners. It covers the "eight cardinal directions" and begins and ends in the same spot, which he referred to as "positional coincidence." Several internet sites suggested the 21 movements and eight directions have some Zen or Buddhist significance, but Nagamine stated the number and directions were there only to bring balance and symmetry.



Of course...balance and symmetry are also Zen traits. I couldn't escape the idea that Fukyugata-Ichi was much more than merely an "easy" kata for beginners. It *feels* like the work of inspiration and introspection, of beauty and simplicity; adding or removing any part would destroy its sense of completeness. But despite what Nagamine said, I *wanted* to find a deeper meaning to the kata. And this desire really is just bad science.

According to Nagamine's own writing, at the time Fukyugata-Ichi was developed, Okinawans were not familiar with Zen Buddhism, because spiritual practices were *illegal* by order of the Japanese Imperial government. Up to that point, Nagamine's martial arts training had been based only in the physical aspects of karate. He didn't like it, but that's how it was. Even at this stage, he suspected there was something more, but at the time had no way to uncover it.

Then WWII shook the world to its foundation.

Finally I realized I would never find what I was looking for. I never met Master Nagamine, but I imagined that if we were friends sitting next to each other, and I asked the questions I so desperately wanted to ask, he would just smile and say something like, "You... more training." So, I did what he would have told me to do. I trained, and found kata wanted to speak. If it spoke to me, why not him?

Over the past several years, I've grown to view kata as an unspoken language. Each kata has a certain perspective on methods of self-defense, if not a unique personality. We spend a great deal of time correcting individual movements, all the while reaching towards perfection. But kata are more than the sum of their parts, just as sentences have greater meaning than the individual words that compose them. When you look at a kata as a whole work rather than a series of movements, you can determine patterns

that distinguish it from other kata. Kyoshi Devorah Yoshiko Dometrich describes this as the kata's "method." For example, we refer to Gambaru Sho as an illustration of Hanshi Grant's method. In other words, the creator of the kata wanted to communicate an underlying purpose to the practitioner. But kata cannot speak; how do you convey an idea without words? Even if Hanshi wrote a book entitled Gambaru Sho: Methodology and Practice, we would merely read about the kata. To gain practical understanding of kata, you must practice it. To gain insight into its character, you must practice it a lot.



Nagamine must have drawn on his own experience when developing Fukyugata-Ichi, with the echoes of his teachers ringing in his head. The idea of kata writing letters was more an act of desperation than inspiration, and I certainly couldn't presume to write them myself. Fortunately, Matsubayashi-Ryu is blessed with many highly skilled karateka eager to help. I asked the WSKF Board to assign the kata, and after a week or two the letters began to trickle in.

I had a few rules: the letters had to be handwritten, composed as if the writer *was* the kata, and addressed directly to Shoshin Nagamine. I actually wanted to see and feel the *kata* on the page, not the writer. This was a strange concept at first, and everybody had to think completely out of the box and use imagination. If what I received was any indication, though, they thrived on the concept.

I was blown away.

We train with each other on a very regular basis and have known each other for years, if not decades. I can recognize certain people by the sound of their gi alone, but I was wrong to think I *really* knew them, and I was wrong to think I knew the kata.

Most of the writers were worried about their penmanship. In fact, "worried" isn't quite the right word - neurotic is more like it. But for me, deciphering the handwriting was part of the charm. I had to study the Ananku letter in particular to figure out what it said, just like learning a kata. And when the words finally revealed themselves, I suddenly felt I was peering into some unknown place and witnessing a secret heart. What's more, Ananku referred to the student as female. I'm still not sure why this touched me so.

Rohai was a master teacher, a teacher of teachers, who shared an intensely personal side I didn't expect: family. This kata hinted at suffering and great personal loss as he and his sisters, Wankan and Wanshu, escaped from China to make a new life in Okinawa.

I'm not even sure the Naihanchi letter wasn't really written by Naihanchi. It embodied the true nature of the kata and evoked Motobu.

Wankan, a great warrior and master tactician, practically roared from the page in challenge and pride.

Wanshu's concern for the moral character and social responsibility of Nagamine and his kata made me step back and consider my own.

Gojoshiho wrote with deceptively playful elegance, like inviting a tame puma into your house. Sure, it's great to have a pet puma, until one day it decides you're lunch.

Chinto brought tears to my eyes. The elegant and precise penmanship somehow embodied my personal view of the kata. What really got me, though, was the sense of melancholy mingled with hope for future generations.

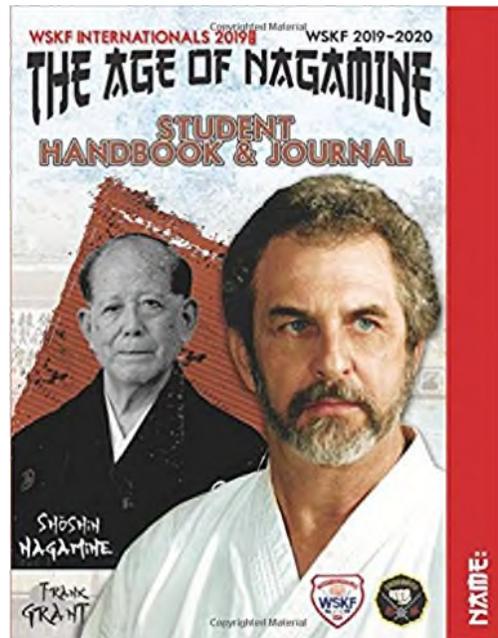
Passai could have been written by Miyomoto Musashi, because it read like a page out of The Book of Five Rings: richly deceptive, profoundly simple, enigmatic.

Kusanku was himself, challenging and cautioning the reader; something to aspire to, but too lofty to reach down to Fukugata Ichi.

The consistency of the letters was most enlightening. They were written by karateka from far-reaching geographical locations, but each challenged Nagamine to be true to form, technique and moral character. They were all different but yet somehow the same.

And then we gave them voices. We instructed the performers to interpret the letters as each kata, but they didn't know who wrote them. And then each kata came alive. If you saw the presentation, I hope you enjoyed it. We plan to produce a video version of it for publication next year. Thanks for all the very kind feedback, but all in all it was truly a team effort and I am humbly thankful to have been part of it.

Interested in reading the letters yourself? Seek them out by finding a copy of: [The Age of Nagamine: 2019-2020 Student handbook & Journal](#)



## What have I obtained from Karate?

WSKF Go Dan Promotion Essay

Sensei Jeff Slutsky

The study of Karate has been a major influence in my life. It has provided me a number of different benefits which have evolved over time. Having started just weeks before my 15<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1971, early on it taught me discipline, confidence and focus which I feel I have been able to apply to all aspects of my life. As a teenager, I benefited from not only the strenuous physical training but also mental elements of sticking with something even when it became extremely difficult. Prior to taking my first karate class, I hardly ever participated in physical activities. So, it gave me an understanding and appreciation of the value of physical exercise from both a self-esteem and health point of view.

As my training progressed, I started to compete in karate tournaments in both kata and kumite events. While I never was the best, I did regularly place in one or the other events and ended up with a bedroom full of trophies. This gave me a sense of accomplishment and comradery in traveling with my fellow students to the various events. Many friendships were formed within my own dojo and with other karateka from around the Midwest.

Once I was in college, with permission of Parker Shelton, I started a Shorin-Ryu club. As club President and instructor, I learned to handle the responsibility of the “business side” of karate and the responsibility of being the primary teacher for my students. I ran the club in similar fashion as dojo was run back home. We trained hard and attended tournaments on weekends. My students always did well and walked away with the hardware to show for it. Also, during the summer breaks, I helped managed the schools in Fort Wayne which gave me practical experience with a business, eventually leading in the direction of my career.

Once I moved from Fort Wayne to Columbus, Ohio, I no longer had a dojo to attend on a weekly basis. My karate training lapsed during that time but was never forgotten. With the instilled desire to still exercise, punch and kick, I trained in boxing for several years which helped reinforce my martial arts training.

The connection to Matsubayashi-Ryu was so strong that even after laying off for a number of years for various reasons, I was able to start back up after coming across the WSKF website. I attended my first WSKF black belt class that night and then once again began my regular training in Hillard. Though it took Sensei McPeck close to a year to “reteach” me, he was patient and I was stubborn enough to stick with it. Attending the monthly black belt classes added another dimension to my training.

Perhaps this all lead to the most fulfilling and significant events in my karate career. It allowed me to “give back” by helping Hanshi write and publish his book. The process I went through in helping to create [\*My Promise to the Master\*](#), gave me a means to “give back” for all that karate has given me. It was a very challenging project. Not only writing it, but also having to learn a new software program so that we could publish it ourselves. But it was my karate training, I believe, that instilled in me the notion that I can accomplish anything I wish if I’m willing to make the necessary effort and sacrifice.

There is no doubt that I have obtained a great deal from karate. I have evolved over the years. Learning how to deal with a personal attack provided me with a great deal of self-confidence, but it really is just a small part of the benefits I received from the study of karate. As Hanshi says, “I can teach you *karate* and I can teach you *karate-do*.” It’s the “do” part of that equation, that has provided so much more than I ever imagined.

# DOJO NEWS!

PAC Dojo – Dayton, Ohio –  
Kyoshi Glenda Olin

Over the past year, PAC students, parents and supporters have collected plastic caps for the Greene County Fair President to be used to make memorial benches. In just one year, PAC donated 25 bags for a total of 325 lbs. of caps.



Each year, PAC students, parents and friends volunteer to work at the Montgomery County Fair and the Greene County Fair to raise funds for the PAC Program. This year, PAC celebrated 20 years working at the fairs. Parents and older students work at the gates collecting money while the younger students collect tickets. PAC appreciates all the volunteer hours from everyone who helps at the fairs.



Yearly, Sensei Olin chooses a theme each year for the Holiday Workout. Last year students wore Holiday Hats. This year students trained in jammie pants.



In May, 2019 the Dayton, Ohio area experienced tornados that devastated several areas. To provide assistance to those individuals and families affected by the tornados, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Association) set up an office in the Harrison Township Community Center. This center is where PAC trains. Since Sensei Olin and her students were not able to train in the Center, the decision was made to train outside the Center in the grass. For 3 months, PAC students trained in 90+ degree heat. It has been a challenge, but the PAC students were troopers and trained. Sensei Olin and the higher ranked students took this opportunity to work on Naihanchi katas in the grass.



PAC students competed in competitions throughout the year in kata, kumite and kobudo. Competing with other martial artists in other styles, gives the students a chance to sharpen their Okinawan Karate, Kumite and Kobudo skills.



For a change of pace, PAC students enjoyed game night at the dojo, playing Shuto Bingo. Cards were made with pictures of belts, fists and other karate-related pictures. If a student covers the specified objects, they say Shuto and stand to execute a Shuto.

The Year of the Masters Internationals training was a great experience for the students. This year there were 21 PAC students attending. Students enjoyed the training, the experience interacting with students from other dojos and the Awards Banquet.



Congratulations to Chace for being the PAC Student of the Year and the WSKF Student of the Year.

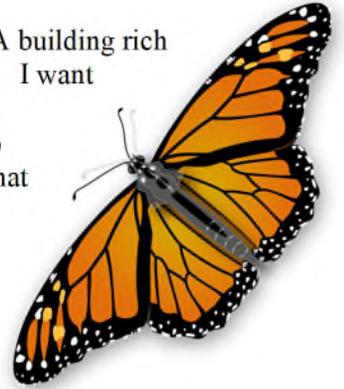


## Gōhō Seishin Dojo – Lake Villa, Illinois – Sensei Chad Sheets

Not much in the way of events this year, as timing and schedules have created an array of calendars where we all seem a little too busy. Time brings changes, and with changes one evolves.

After 7 great years we bid farewell to our dojo space on Cedar Avenue in Lake Villa. A building rich in history, and infused now with many, many hours of sweat, effort and enlightenment. I want to take a moment to thank (I'll go with groups as there are so many names):

- each and every student who walked through those doors or trained nearby, who contributed their efforts to the laboratory of learning that was that space and what I learned from them;
- Hanshi Grant and each and every instructor and coach that taught in the location, Matsubayashi-Ryu or otherwise, for their wisdom, insights and passion for helping others grow, including me;
- the landlord that continued to support us while we were there and has been nothing but positive in our transition;
- all my Sensei and karateka in Matsubayashi-Ryu for their support of positivity;
- my family, for all they do and who they are.



As one door closes, another door opens. We continue to train in a beautiful location, as one of our students opened their doors to allow us to continue to work as a group.

Training continues, and will continue, seeking out perfection. Additional spaces will be found when they need to be.

The journey goes forward.

## Matsunoki Martial Arts & Fitness Center, Greenville Ohio

This year has been a highly engaging year for everyone. A small group had the opportunity to attend the WSKF 2019 Internationals. The students expressed their appreciation of the knowledge and experience gained. They felt that they learned a lot about Grand Master Nagamine's life and his teachings that he passed down to Hanshi Frank Grant. They have a greater understanding of their roots and their close connection to the creator of our style.



The 2019 year also brought the opportunity for team building and personal growth for our AAU tournament team. After trying out and meeting set criteria, a small group of individuals were selected to travel and compete in AAU Karate tournaments including the State Qualifier in Cincinnati, OH; Regional Qualifier in Grayslake, IL; National Championship in Fort Lauderdale, FL; and Junior Olympics in Greensboro, NC. The team endured seven months of focused training with an emphasis

on individualized goal setting, heightened awareness of personal areas of improvement, and challenging themselves to exceed their own expectations. The team was victorious at all events, but more importantly they all walked away feeling more connected as a team and friends, and to value hard work and dedication.



Our club participated in several fundraising events and activities to raise money for the traveling team including car washes, candy bar sales, First Friday sidewalk bake sale, and Parents Night Out. Students also participated in yearly get-together events including our Halloween and Christmas parties.

The latest development and improvement for the dojo and the students is a move to a new location. The new location will provide a larger training area equipped with both a wood deck and separate matted sparring area. The students are super excited about having a hand in the preparation of the new space and look forward to a growing student population.







### **What I like most about Matsubayashi Shorin-Ryu**

By

Wesley Smith, Student of Sensei Lennie Wilson,

Have you ever wondered if something was missing from your life? That was exactly how I felt before I found Matsubayashi Shorin-Ryu. When I began my training as a white belt, I quickly realized that I had a lot to learn, and not just in the dojo. The great thing about Shorin-Ryu is that there is always something new to learn! A new technique, a new philosophy, or even a new way to ignite my spirit.

Just when I think I've got something figured out, my Sensei shows me that it can be improved and that helps make me even better. This style teaches me how important it is to know exactly what I am doing in each movement and the reason why so that I can see the value in every aspect of it. The kata in Matsubayashi-Ryu doesn't just teach me how to kick and punch, it shows me how to move effectively whether attacking or defending.

The challenge that I have found in Matsubayashi-Ryu is what makes me admire it the most, because it demands nothing but the best of myself and pushes me to reach new heights. It is a life-long journey, and possibly one that is never fully completed, but I love how it makes me learn how to grow not only as a karateka, but also as a person.

Editor's note: Thanks Wesley for your article. If those reading are interested in finding a local WSKF dojo, see you directory online at: <http://www.shorin-ryu.net/dojos.html>

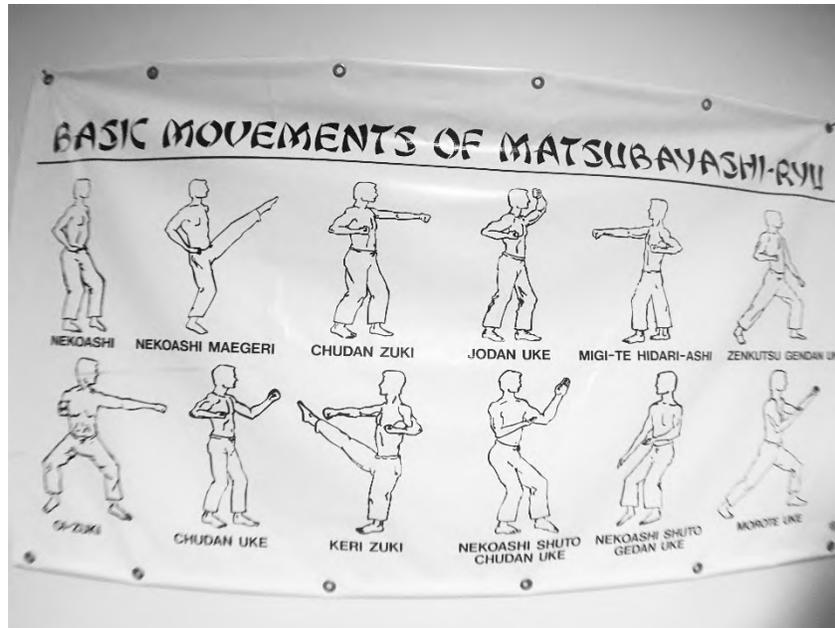
## Building From the Basics for a More Complete Karate

By: Sarah Hatch, Student of Kyoshi McPeek

Class. Day 1\*.

Neko Ashi Dachi - Cat Stance.

Squat. Eyes forward. Hands on hips. One leg in front of the other. Weight distributed 90/10. Step forward with your front foot. Bring your back leg forward to meet other leg; not too close. Repeat.



Class. Day 31\*.

Fukyugata Ichi - First Kata.

Stand at Yoi. Look to your left. Move your left leg out at a 90-degree angle from your body into an L-nogi. Prepare your block. Snap your hips to the left. Execute block.

Class. Day 91\*.

Yakusoku Kumite - Group B, Number 1.

Stand facing your opponent at Yoi. Block their Jodan-Zuki with a Jodan-Uke. Move into a Zekutsu-Dachi to block their Gedan Zuki. Finish with your own Jodan-Zuki. Use correct technique and distancing.

From the very beginning of our training we learn these basic steps and begin to put things together in patterns and sequences. As we progress, we inherently incorporate basic movements (blocks, strikes, stances) into all other parts of our karate including our kata and kumite. We tend to stop thinking about these as component parts and begin to think about them simply as “karate.” But how do we get there?

In our style, there is no need to learn more than 11 basics because our system utilizes them so wonderfully. Zenkutsu-Dachi (basic). Zenkutsu-Dachi with an imaginary opponent (part of kata). Zenkutsu-Dachi with an opponent in front of you (kumite). Fortunately, we do not have to learn this basic one way for our basic practice, another way for kata, and yet another for kumite. It's one movement executed the same way in a variety of contexts. Once you have this fundamental knowledge, it is easy to build on.

When we incorporate this learning, our karate begins to look and feel different. In my own practice, I have noticed more fluidity between these concepts. I am understanding that when my kata or kumite don't work as well as I'd like them to, it's likely because I've short-cut my basics. As a result, I can go back to my foundation and remember that there is not anything to "re-learn," but there will *always* be things to continue to practice and improve.

Sensei asked me to write about bringing all of these things (basics, kata, and kumite) together in order to make our karate whole. Because I don't fully understand this concept, it is difficult to articulate in these paragraphs. Certainly, our karate cannot be "whole" if we lack understanding of our basic movements. So, I invite you all to join with me and consider this as we move into a new calendar year. How can you incorporate the idea of a "whole karate" into your own practice? I know I still have much to learn. Renshū, renshū, renshū. Domo arigato.

\*All times are approximate and vary based on your students' readiness to learn.

