

WSKF Newsletter



1st Quarter

January, 2025

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2** Message From the Chairman WSKF
- 3** Message From the President WSKF
- 4** Enso: An Infinite Journey
- 5** 2025 Karate Retreat
- 6** Dojo Updates
- 9** Past & Present - Bunkai
- 12** The Heart of Karate
- 12** The Power of Eye Contact
- 13** Letter From the Editor - Soliciting Your Feedback

Upcoming WSKF Events

- 1/17 – Black Belt Class – Troy, OH & Zoom
- 2/21 – Black Belt Class – Troy, OH & Zoom
- 2/22 – KoK Class – Troy, OH & Zoom
- 3/21 – Black Belt Class – Troy, OH & Zoom
- 4/18 – Black Belt Class – Troy, OH & Zoom

New Year's Message from Jack McPeck, WSKF Chairman:

On behalf of the WSKF Board and its Officers, I wish all WSKF members, families, supporters, as well as our WSKF dojos a very happy and rewarding 2025. We now bid farewell to an amazing year... *continued on page 2*

OKINAWA OR BUST a message from Jeff Leistner, WSKF President:

The latest update for our upcoming 2025 Okinawa trip is the "tentative" date for the trip is October the 17th thru the 26th... *continued on page 3*



Sensei Curwell & Hanshi Grant, Dayton Ohio, February 1977 – Submitted by Kyoshi Peter Cronig

Past & Present Series - Bunkai

- Republishing of Kata no Bunkai – Frank Baehr – From July 1988 Federation Newsletter
- “Bunkai is the story of the kata and you are the main character.” - Kyoshi Jeff Bentle
- “The definition of bunkai is to analyze or disassemble.” – Lori McPeek
- “Bunkai... should be the analysis of each technique as three areas of combat.” - Kyoshi Dale R. Pike

New Year's Message from Jack McPeck, WSKF Chairman

On behalf of the WSKF Board and its Officers, I wish all WSKF members, families, supporters, as well as our WSKF dojos a very happy and rewarding 2025. We now bid farewell to an amazing year that included:

- o Successful 2024 Internationals
 - Honoring six new Black Belts
 - Advancing four black belts to San Dan
 - We awarded \$2000 in college scholarships through the Frank Grant College Scholarship Fund.
 - Developed a new Instructors Certification program that raises the quality of our teachings. In 2024 we had our largest group of instructors graduate the certification course.
- o Inducted Sensei Ansei Ueshiro into the Budo Hall of Fame
- o Inducted one new Kuro Obi Kai and nominated four members.
- o We performed three federation Fund Raisers earning over \$4200 (Bourbon Bash, Easter Breakfast Quiche Sale, and Great American Train Show). Acquired funds will go towards activities during 2025 Okinawa Trip.

Along with all of the hope and promises the New Year brings, it also brings us plenty of exciting opportunities to learn and grow together in Karate. Some key 2025 WSKF projects and highlights include:

- o Acquire government 501 (c) 3, non-profit status for the Shorin-Ryu Museum. (This will help to qualify the museum for public, private and government grants and donations)
- o Bourbon Bash and other WSKF fund raisers
- o Karate Retreat. Three days in and among rolling hills in central Ohio. More details and cost to come as they develop. Proceeds from this event are to go to our 2025 Okinawa Trip.

I'd like to take this opportunity to discuss the 2025 Okinawa trip. Firstly, in late October, Jeff Leistner, President WSKF, and myself traveled to Okinawa representing the WSKF during the Karate Memorial Celebration. During the celebration, which was attended by thousands of karate practitioners from around the world, we met and trained with WMKA leaders, and leaders from other organizations and karate styles. Our two-week trip was capped with a 2-hour private breakfast meeting with Sensei Yoshitaka Taria, President of WMKA. Our goal with this trip was to pave the way for a WSKF trip to Okinawa, and I'm happy to announce that we were well received, and plans for our 2025 trip are well underway.

Secondly, I'd like to announce the theme for our 2025 internationals. "Enso: An Infinite Journey," Our 2025 Internationals will be in Okinawa, taking us back to where Karate began. Dates and details are being worked out and finalized, however our trip will be in October, which has been designated as Karate Month by the Okinawan Government. We will have multiple classes and plans to visit beautiful and historic locations, and have excursions to famous karate master's shrines and monuments.

Lastly, I would like to remind us all of our important mission. As an organization going forward and making the most of 2025, it's important to remember that Hanshi Frank Grant created the WSKF in 1970 as part of his promise to Master Nagamine to take Matsubayashi-Ryu Karate to the "Next Step." Since that time and until his passing, Hanshi Grant's sole focus, and life mission was building the quality organization we have today. The WSKF is a premiere Matsubayashi-Ryu organization, and is highly respected in the USA, in Okinawa, and around the World. Before his passing five years ago, Hanshi Grant asked each of the Board members and many of our WSKF Officers in person, to continue in his life's mission to build Matsubayashi-Ryu and the WSKF and to always hold true to Master's Nagamine's teachings. I believe we have done that and I know we will continue to do so. I want to thank the WSKF Board, its Officers, and all of its members for their

dedication, hard work, and support. Again, I want to wish everyone a very safe, prosperous, and rewarding New Year.

OKINAWA OR BUST!

A message from Jeff Leistner, WSKF Chairman

The latest update for our upcoming 2025 Okinawa trip is the "tentative" dates of October the 17th thru the 26th. October was chosen because the weather is not quite as hot as the summer months, it will be off season for Okinawa tourism, and October is traditionally Karate month. We are working towards a ten-day venture, including travel days, that encompasses two weekends, which we believe will help with less time away from work and school.

I am currently requesting quotes from three different travel agencies that focus on Okinawan culture, history, and budo.

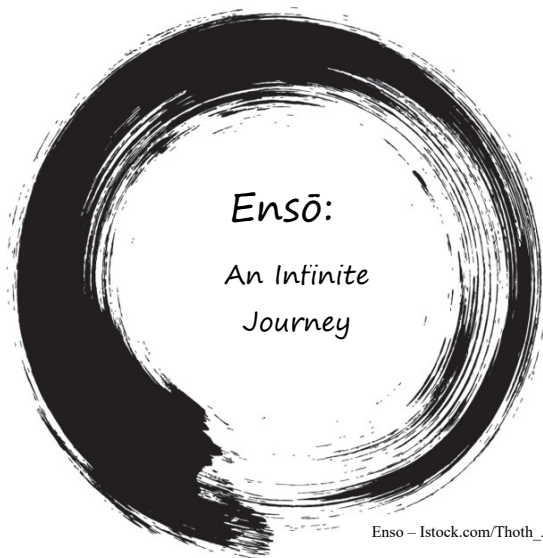
I urge anyone interested in this once in a lifetime trip to get started working on their finances for the trip. The federation has completed some fund raising and we have fundraising scheduled for this year to benefit any member attending the trip. Also, each dojo should be doing their best to accommodate their students by doing the same. Once we have a better idea of the expected costs, we will share the information.

Some highlights we will be factoring in the trip are a two-day training camp and testing at the Karate Budokan with some outside WSKF masters teaching a session. A group visit to Shuri castle, a group visit to the aquarium, additional sightseeing, training sessions with some of the Matsubayashi-Ryu masters in their dojo, and a group visit to a museum with the experience of training with a Goju-Ryu master and much more.

Remember your family and friends are welcome to tag along and enjoy this once in a life time experience as well.

I will update the WSKF board of directors and each dojo as things progress.

Together as the strong WSKF group that we are this will be epic! Don't miss it!



*A Brief Explorataion
of the 2025
Internationals Theme*
Evan McPeek

When the WSKF board asked for international's theme ideas this symbol popped into my head immediately. The circle you see above is one depiction of ensō. I had seen it before, but I didn't really know the depths and facets of its meaning. I simply thought of it because it's a circle, and, in my mind, a 2025 trip to Okinawa would be like closing the circle; a return to where our Karate began. But one of the neat things about circles is how they continue without a discernible beginning or end. You could start drawing a circle from any of the infinite available points, and you would always make the same gestures to complete the drawing. This nature of the circle makes it an ideal depiction of our martial arts training; we all began from a unique place, and each of our journeys are equally unique, but the more we zoom out, or the longer we've been drawing our circles, the more they begin to look the same. The ability to travel smoothly and infinitely along a circle reminded me of Hanshi Grant's story about when he asked Grand Master Nagamine when do you stop learning, and the master replied "How long is infinity?" Remembering this quote made me want to learn more about the traditional ensō.

Ensō can be translated as "circular form," but it is often identified as "zen circle." It is part of Zen art and teachings, and it has almost as many meanings as a circle does points (that's infinite, if you haven't picked up that part of theme yet). A few of these are enlightenment, emptiness, the state of no-mind, freedom, minimalism, strength, elegance, perfection, and the universe. I think that if you explore each of these meanings you could easily see how they could connect back to our karate training. As I researched ensō for my proposal I came across many different depictions. I was particularly drawn to those like the example above, where the circle doesn't quite appear closed, and much to my surprise there was a lot of extra meaning packed into that depiction.

The open circle is thought of as incomplete, or as I would say, a journey still in progress. By being left open, things may move in and out of the circle as development continues. This movement and development is important to the ideal of perfection. The space inside the circle is simultaneously everything and nothing; it is the universe, but also emptiness. It is the state of no-mind. Until it is closed the circle is not complete, or in other words, it is imperfect.

Our 2025 internationals will be a return to Okinawa. A return to where our Karate began several times; once when Hanshi Grant visited and made his promise to the master, once when Grand Master Nagamine formalized our system, and countless other times when the individual kata and techniques were imported or developed. It will be a continuation of each of our journeys. It will be another step along the infinite path up the mountain towards perfection. It will be another chapter in our infinite journey. I hope to see you along the path.

Wikipedia – *Ensō* - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ens%C5%8D>

3-Day Karate Retreat In the rolling hills of Centerburg, Ohio

2025 is going to be a great year for WSKF members, families, and supporters. Many activities and events all capped off with our planned Okinawa trip in October which will be our Internationals. We have a three day karate retreat scheduled in June for the 27th - 29th out in the rural countryside of Centerburg, Ohio at the Martial Arts and Family Fitness Dojo. Details and cost are being worked out, but some activities planned are karate classes, kobudo, promotions, swimming, cookout, visit by special guests, and professional grade fireworks. On Sunday, there will be a special presentation from Hanshi Jack McPeck and Hanshi Jeff Leistner regarding their 2024 Okinawan trip, and they will provide details of the Okinawa Trip/ 2025 Internationals. Stay tuned for additional information!

Dojo Updates

Goho Seishin Dojo

Kyoshi Chad Sheets

“We lost our prior training space last fall so we are nomadic at the minute, but still training!”

From the editor: The dojo is wherever we make it!

The Martha's Vineyard Dojo

The North Atlantic Shorin Ryu Karate Association (NASKA)

Kyoshi Peter Cronig

Happy New Year WSKF members.

This year 2025 marks our 55th anniversary (1970 - 2025) for the Martha's Vineyard Dojo, The North Atlantic Shorin Ryu Karate Association (NASKA). January 18th will be my 51st year training in Shorin Ryu Matsubayashi Ryu and as member of the WSKF.

Our dojo had a great 2024. We had a few more students join our school. We continue to train hard and promote the teachings of Master Shoshin Nagamine, Hanshi Frank Grant, Hanshi McPeek, Hanshi Harris, Hanshi Leister and Hanshi Olin. My student, Heather Beeman, was promoted to Go Kyu on June 3, 2024. We were able to attend the 2024 Internationals in Troy and my student Cord Bailey was promoted to Ik Kyu on June 21, 2024 and received our dojo's student of the year. I'm very proud that our dojo was again able to help raise money for the Frank Grant Scholarship Fund during the auction at the Internationals. Our dojo will continue to strive for excellence in Shorin Ryu Matsubayashi Ryu and the WSKF.

During my stay in Ohio before the Internationals I was able to visit and spend time with Hanshi McPeek, Sensei Lori McPeek and Sensei Evan McPeek. I was able to train at their Dojo in Centerburg, Ohio. They have built a really beautiful dojo. Everyone was very gracious and class, as usual, was the best. Who would expect anything different? We also went out to dinner with Mr. Jeff Brooks. The restaurant was unbelievable; the food was spectacular. Thank you Jeff, it was amazing. I thank the McPeek family for the gracious hospitality.

The other night at class Cord opened the 1976 hardcover edition of Master Nagamine's book. Inside was an original newspaper article about our dojo from March 9, 1977. I have sent the article along so that everyone can see what was going on at the Martha's Vineyard Dojo during that time. Our dojo was about 7 or 8 years old. Our original Sensei was Sensei Richard Curwell. He and a group of our students had traveled to Dayton Ohio and trained at the Troy Street Dojo in February of 1977. A few of the students went up for Kyu ranks. Sensei Curwell went up for his San Dan promotion, and was promoted on February 5, 1977. I was at the University of Miami at that time so I could not make the trip. Being 1977, our school and the WSKF organization were fairly young. Hanshi Grant at the time was a Go Dan. Hanshi McPeek and Hanshi Harris were already San Dan's. So, even though our dojo was very young in comparison to other dojos, we were extremely proud of the fact that Sensei Curwell had achieved this rank. Our students Mark Davis and Penny Huff had both been promoted to Shodan the year before on February 7, 1976. Sensei Bassett, who later became our dojo's Sensei, was promoted to Shodan on July 31, 1976 along with Robert Martell. So as a dojo, we were pretty proud. The article was written 48 years ago and after reading it I saw at least one mistake and I didn't want our WSKF members to think that our dojo was being pompous. The writer

had called Sensei Curwell Renshie. I don't think a San Dan would have been called Renshi in 1977 or even today. The other thing I noticed is that the writer mentions his promotion (Sensei Curwell) allows him to give promotion tests so that the Dayton trips to Sensei Frank Grant, the top man in this country, may no longer be needed. I don't know what was said at the time or what the rule was. Now for each of our students who goes up for Shodan those promotions were always held before the WSKF board. I don't want anyone to think Sensei Curwell was speaking out of turn at that time. Other than that, I think it was a good article.

Congratulation to Evan as the new Editor and Happy New Year to everyone.

Sincerely,

Kyoshi Peter M. Cronig

8th Dan

The Martha's Vineyard Dojo (NASKA)



**Congratulations Go
Kyu Heather Beeman**

*From the Editor:
Apologies, the article
isn't very easy to read;
the email seems to have
compressed the
resolution. I'm sure
Kyoshi Cronig would be
happy to share!*

THE GRAPEVINE, MARCH 9, 1977 PAGE SEVEN

Curwell Earns 3rd Degree Black Belt: Vineyard Karate Students Travel To Ohio

"The ultimate aim of Karate lies not in victory or defeat, but in the perfection of the character of its participants." --Fussakoshi-Gichen.

Matsui Bayashai-Ryu, a school of North Atlantic Shorin-Ryu Karate, teaches a strange concept. You learn to fight so not to fight. You study the ballet moves of

Curwell all received the rank promotions for which they had long been working.

Shorin-Ryu Karate ranks its participants by colored belts. White is the most basic, then green, brown, and black with stripes of the next ranking color showing degrees along the way. In Dayton, John Parker earned

America. The club claims a national enrollment of almost 3,000. Of those, Curwell estimates 32 people hold his rank. He says that possibly 5 rank higher.

His promotion allows him to give promotion tests so that the Dayton trips to Sensei Frank Grant, the top man in this country, may no longer be needed. Curwell studied with Grant when he first got serious about learning martial arts.

Renshie Curwell also learned in Dayton that he has been appointed vice president of the International Shorin-Ryu Federation. His appointment is something Curwell mentions only after detailing the progress of his students, and he mentions it with overpowering humility. Plans call for a trip by Grant and Curwell to Okinawa, the home of Shorin-Ryu.

The federation is new. Representing the first attempt to regulate and organize this school of karate, its members expect new interest in their style. Historically Shorin-Ryu has always been taught verbally, teacher to pupil, through the years. Shoshin Nagamine, the school's master, recently published a book detailing the style's principles. Curwell hopes the federation will prevent "quickie" schools from "springing up every-

ing glossed-over versions of the new book.

As DeFeo, Hough, Klingensmith, McDowell, Parker, and White began working out at their Lake Street, Vineyard Haven dojo, or gymnasium, last week, Curwell talked about karate. Matsui-Bayashai-Ryu might be expected to translate to some fierce samurai warrior cry. It doesn't. Literally, it means Pine Tree, symbolically, long life approaches its meaning.

Curwell spoke with strength and softness about "Katas" — dance-like battle pantomimes that are an important part of his and his students' training. A kata consists of combinations of powerful kicks, punches, and defensive blocks.

Says Curwell, "Katas are the meat of karate, the building blocks of it. Before you can understand anything at all,

Shorin-Ryu students do not fight in exhibitions like other clubs. If a student finds himself forced to fight, however, he makes a deadly opponent. Curwell says, "Then, it is a fight to the death."

Within days of returning from Dayton, Curwell's students once again began the punishing process of preparing for their next promotions. After nearly an hour of extreme exercise, Curwell and his class knelt on the wooden floor of the dojo and meditated. Minutes earlier in sweat-darkened gis (the cotton suits worn by the class), they had been punching phantoms, kicking imaginary opponents, and shouting out cadences in Okinawan. Magically their breathing faded from the chopped gulps of their threats to the faintest forest breeze. Kneeling, strong and silent, they wore pine trees.

The quiet was extreme. Then



Richard Curwell, karate expert.



Richard Curwell's karate class works out.

battle so that you may better understand the great part of life spent out of battle. You brutally train your body and so teach your soul.

The Vineyard men and women studying in Richard Curwell's karate class understood it well enough. They proved it recently when they drove 18 hours straight to the club's North American headquarters in Dayton, Ohio. One hour after arriving, they were vigorously working out. The students making the trip and

his first grade brown belt; Larry DeFeo, green; John Klingensmith, white; Scot McDowell; Grant White, white; Bob Martell, black; and Mark Davis, who now teaches in Providence, black. Penny Hough, a black belt holder, made the trip but was not up for promotion. Curwell made third degree black belt (there are 5 black belt degrees) becoming a "Renshie" or Master.

Curwell's promotion makes him one of the highest ranking Shorin-Ryu disciples in North

He is a teacher and student at the same time as he guides and discovers with his students the source of that deep-running, cold river of energy.

you've got to understand yourself. To understand yourself you have to understand the katas. Katas will teach you Zen."

Clearly what the students at Curwell's dojo are learning is not street fighting and barroom tricks. Matsui-Bayashai-Ryu was never intended to be a fighting system. Curwell says; it is a way of life.

The emphasis on philosophy, on the internal forces rather than the external confrontations of fighting, should not lead one to believe that Curwell and his people are pushovers. According to Curwell, possessing and understanding fighting ability helps to make fighting unnecessary.

Curwell stood, settled, and said: "That was the warm-up."

A three-minute break later, the actual class began. As fit as they all are, the students' bodies must surely have been used up by the exercises. What force, what energy allows them to go on, sometimes, repeating the night's work five nights a week, springs somewhere in each student? Curwell takes them inside themselves. He is a teacher and student at the same time as he guides and discovers with his students the source of that deep-running cold river of energy. The people in that dojo are learning much more than how to throw a punch.

E.S.

Martial Arts & Family Fitness Dojo

Centerburg, Ohio
Hanshi Jack McPeck

It's a new year! We have been here in Centerburg for two years. Our new dojo is located in the country on a rolling 5 acre treed lot. The dojo is 99% finished on the inside. This past year we concentrated on the outside of the dojo. Old vinyl siding removed, new siding was added and finished in a "Yin-Yang" motif. A "moon" window was added to the front of the dojo as well as a large back-lit "Karate-Do" sign that can be seen from the street. Electric lights and service were added outside. A large concrete flood wall was also constructed around two sides of the dojo requiring over 300 bags of concrete. This year we will finish the outside with a Tori Gate entrance to a Japanese Garden with a Koi pond and passageway to the dojo.



Since the 2025 Karate Internationals will be held in October in Okinawa, our dojo is proud to announce that we are hosting a 3 day karate retreat. The WSKF retreat is tentatively set for June 27th-29th. The karate retreat will include training classes, seminars, cookouts, and swimming as well as professional grade fireworks show. More details and cost will be announced soon. All proceeds from this event will go to the 2025 Okinawa or Bust Trip Fund, to help defray participants' costs.

Past & Present

In the Past & Present section we republish an article from an old WSKF newsletter. We also ask current students to give us their thoughts on the same topic today. The present ideas are not on the past article, but simply on the same topic. For the first edition of Past & Present, we asked students for their thoughts on Bunkai. Their thoughts are published alongside Kata no Bunkai from Frank Baehr in 1988.

If you enjoy this section, please check out our next edition on “Self-Defense.”

Kata no Bunkai

(The meaning of the Katas)

by Shihan Frank Baehr

Toronto, Canada

Originally Published July, 1988

Although Western students always like to have everything presented “on a silver platter,” the Oriental teacher usually deliberately shies away from explaining the meaning of the moves in the katas.

Understanding the meaning is one of the most important aspects of studying kata. Yet, if you are given an interpretation by a teacher, this is the one you will accept as the explanation and argue its merits “to the death.” The idea of the kata is not to limit you, but to give you the tools to use your own imagination and ingenuity to their fullest extent, rather than having to battle the usual handicaps encountered by anyone who has not learned to develop, and ultimately master, the required unity of mind and body. As your understanding of a kata deepens with constant and dedicated practice, you should develop the meaning from within yourself. This is the reason why Oriental instructors have the (to us westerners often very annoying) habit of answering our questions with: “Just keep practicing and don’t ask questions!”

If you come up with an explanation yourself you are more likely to truly understand it, while an interpretation suggested by a teacher tends to be accepted, rather than understood. The Westerner expects the teacher to “teach” while the Oriental teacher regards himself more as a guide to helping the student to teach himself. My own approach to teaching Karate is more Western in this respect and I tend to analyse and explain too much at times, mainly to keep the beginning student interested and “off to a good start.” I often wonder, though, if I am not cheating the serious students out of the triumph and satisfaction of discovering these things for themselves by “spoon-feeding” them too much. Since I, myself, was taught exclusively by oriental teachers I have experienced the initial frustration and ultimate feelings of joy and accomplishment connected with the Oriental methods and sometimes feel guilty about robbing my students of this experience.

On the other hand, I also feel that the students will not become bored as easily when they are taught to attach a concrete meaning to what they are doing. In my opinion it is impossible to do a good job in performing a kata when you are not constantly aware of the meaning of the moves, while it will be almost impossible to “do a kata the wrong way,” if you keep the meaning of the moves in mind.

There are a number of approaches to attaching a meaning to the moves in the kata. Some instructors (e.g. Master Morita in Hawaii) prefer to practice bunkai in the dojo in a cooperative or non-adversarial way. Attackers and defenders both “survive” every attack and every attack and counterattack is blocked, so that everyone in the performance gets as much practice out of it as possible. This approach stresses the aspect that, after all, we should all help each other to improve as much as possible.

Others, myself included at this point, regard the kata as no different from an actual “life and death” battle. Spiritually you save your own life with every block and take your opponent’s life with every counterattack. The effect is a harder technique, but you have to be more careful and not get carried away in the dojo, or you may hurt your fellow students seriously. Usually the explanations I give will reflect this philosophy.

I cannot judge which approach is better, and while the second makes more sense to me at my present stage of development, perhaps the other reflects a higher level of understanding of what Karate is all about. Another way of looking at it may be that the second approach is in keeping with Karate’s historical origins, while the first may be more indicative of where we would like Karate to go in the future. I leave it up to each one of you to choose the one you feel is right.

The explanations presented by your teachers are possible interpretations. Many other variations and even totally different explanations are possible and are probably just as valid as those found here. To illustrate this point I often give several alternatives myself just to show how varied the interpretations can be. I would like to encourage, especially the more advanced students, to break away from the restraints of the meanings given by their instructors and to find their own interpretations. Finding new, and often unorthodox, explanations is a measure of your deepening understanding and developing freedom in karate.

When you try to develop your own explanations keep in mind that things are not always as they seem. Apparent blocks could be used as effective strikes, while “obvious” strikes could easily also be used as blocks. Free your mind of the rigid thinking which defines a technique as a “block” or a “strike” and apply the movement as the situation requires, rather than what your limited mind thinks it is! An example for this could be the final move in Pinan Shodan. It is a very obvious high block and some may wonder why the kata should end with a block, rather than a “killing” counterattack. You can resolve the dilemma in two ways:

1. After being blocked very effectively twice in a row, the attacker comes to his senses and gives up the attack, thus ending the battle. This interpretation is quite possible since you are now very close to the attacker and the effects on him of the sudden close eye-to-eye contact could be very powerful.
2. The apparent high block is not a block at all, but a forearm strike under the opponent’s chin which puts him out of commission and thus ends the battle.

The point is that here we have two drastically different approaches, both of which are perfectly valid. Your mind must be free and open enough to accept them both.

Here are a few more hints to keep in mind when you try to explore the meaning of the katas:

In my “violent” approach to katas, every sequence going in one direction will end with a “killing” counterattack which effectively puts the attacker out of commission, so that you can safely turn to deal with another opponent without worrying about further attacks from the previous one. As regrettable as this approach may be, I feel it is the only way you can afford to deal with a number of attackers who mean to do you serious harm.

In some cases using “double” techniques, e.g. simultaneous middle and low block in Pinan Sandan or Naihanchi, there is a temptation to regard them as two simultaneous “active” techniques. However, it was Nagamine-Sensei’s contention that the human brain is not capable of dealing with two different attacks simultaneously and that such techniques should therefore be regarded as a single technique with an unorthodox reaction arm movement, at least until such time as the movement becomes so deeply a part of you that conscious thinking is no longer involved and the subconscious mind only is involved in your movement. In other words, only if all movements become as commonplace to you as breathing and the beating of your heart, then you could possibly deal with two simultaneous attacks.

Don’t be afraid to experiment and to explore alternatives. If you have a new idea, try it with some of your fellow students. The ultimate test for any technique is whether it actually works, or not.

Kyoshi Jeff Bentle

Bunkai is the story of the kata and you are the main character. It's not enough just to know Fukyugata-ichi. It must live through you as you live the bunkai. You are not alone. Your opponents are real. Look for them. See them moving around you. What color are their eyes? Is your leg block just a leg block? Does it block the kick or attack the leg? How do they defend against you? When you perform the kata again, do your opponents attack in the same way? What happens between ichi and ni? San and she? Do you always win? Learn to listen. You cannot always see the attack. Some kata fight in the dark. You do not always know the attack is coming. What does it feel like the instant you do? Bunkai is a good teacher.

Lori Mcpeek

The definition of bunkai is to analyze or disassemble. When we learn bunkai as a lower rank student, it is to help us see how the different movements we are performing in the kata relate to various attacks. Bunkai helps the student to get a deeper meaning of the karate and its movements. It also helps to teach a student the kata as a fighting form and not just empty movements. In karate class when we perform bunkai to a kata, we are taking each technique or movement of the kata and analyzing what attack that technique is countering. Usually we start with a very simple or basic attack. Our next step is to expand our thinking and ask ourselves what other types of attacks might this movement be countering. Bunkai is a good practice to help us to be ready for real life self defense situations should we ever need it.

Kyoshi Dale R. Pike, 8th Dan Black Tiger Dojo

Humbly, I submit the following ideas on kata bunkai as it pertains to the system of Matsubayashi-Ryu, Shorin-ryu, karate-do. The starting point for such a study, I believe, should be the analysis of each technique as three areas of combat. The same un-altered movement, for my study, must work the same for techniques that subdue or contain the attacker, that which break or break-down /harm the attacker, and those that terminate the attacker, rather than being killed, myself. I like to study these three categories of combative expression as; tuie-jutsu (which includes grappling, joint manipulation, meridian striking throwing and choking techniques) kopo-jutsu (which consists of dislocations, skeletal manipulations, and bone breaking) and karate-jutsu (which is how I categorize lethal striking, kicking, and breaks that terminate the life-force). For my analytic study, each technique of each kata, should answer all 3 of these categories, without altering the movement of the waza, before I consider that I know that movement.

The second aspect is to look at the kata in its entirety, to understand how the technique also work together in small units. This study then transforms from looking at individual movements to doublets, triplets, quadruplets of movements strung together. Since kata teaches us to defend ourselves against multiple attackers, a bunkai should consider when the techniques transfer from one opponent to the next.

And, finally I need one sentence for the third aspect. Bunkai of kata, should be studied and practiced within the historical and traditional perspectives of the kata; as a bunkai study is not the creation of a new kata.

The Power of Eye Contact

Rob Johnston

Eyes, feet, hands. Whether it be someone taking his or her first karate lesson or an advanced black belt- It is a phrase we hear throughout our karate journey and an important fundamental principle of our style. We first see with our eyes, move with our feet, and react with our hands. Ideally, each piece of Eyes, feet, hands should flow seamlessly, within an instant of each other. The “Eyes” piece was recently brought up by my Sensei in a class, and it made me want to take a closer look.

We can do many things with our eyes in karate. While success in martial arts is more than winning a staring contest, an intimidating glare can give you an edge in a potential confrontation. Your gaze can signal to your opponent that you are determined warrior, and if he would like to proceed with a confrontation, he is in for a tough fight. You are also able to determine your opponent’s stance, demeanor, and possibly even ability level.

Another important aspect of using our eyes is the concept of looking without looking. One can use an opponent’s eyes as a focus point to reference an opponent’s movements. Just like a rifle’s crosshairs track a moving target, your opponent’s eyes remain a point of reference as they move. This means that you can use the eyes of your sparring partner to track the movement of their shoulders, chest, arms, and hands.¹

The importance of eye contact cannot be understated. With fierce eyes staring down your opponent- he may think twice and decide not to engage you, preventing an altercation before it starts. Moreover, a determined, no nonsense look can really throw your opponent off his game.

¹ The Importance Of Eye Contact In Martial Arts: Using Your Gaze To Read Your Opponent - Evolve University

The Heart of Karate

Elizabeth G. Walters

Training in Karate is a daily commitment. Through countless hour of perseverance, it becomes an admirable quest for self-control. We work by creeds with integrity and we live with patience, understanding that achieving goals is a strenuous task. Martial arts can be a kindness to oneself aiding in a sense of justice recognizing that the capability of power differs greatly from the abuse of it. Karate requires intense effort and responsibility only bravery and confidence allow one to excel strongly in this art. Through practice and determination, self-defense becomes one's greatest ally, both mentally and physically.

Letter from the Editor

Evan McPeek

Firstly, I'd like to thank everyone for taking the time to read this newsletter, as well as this particular section. The WSKF newsletter is for us, members and students of the WSKF. It is my hope that the newsletter serves as a dialog starter; a place for all members to share their thoughts and experiences for the benefit of the federation as a whole. As such, I would request that each dojo take the time to print out a copy and keep it somewhere for anyone interested to be able to read it.

Secondly, I'd like to solicit your feedback. Again, this newsletter is for all of us, and we want to maximize its benefit. Not everything inside needs to have "training value," but we do want everything inside to have value. So, I'm asking you to provide me with your ideas and input. What would you like to see in the newsletter? One page 1 there is a table of contents; the articles in **bold print** are intended to be standard items in each quarterly newsletter. Anything not in bold is a member submission, or a one time item. Space permitting, all member submissions will be published; if we ever start to run a little too long, I'll save member submissions for future editions. Please send your ideas or request to newsletter.wskf@gmail.com. A few ideas that have already been floated are karate trivia, quotes from Hanshi Frank Grant, and martial arts book reviews. If you love any of these ideas, or you have any others, I'd love to hear from you.

Thanks again for reading!