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koshin-ha chito-ryu association newsletter

about the newsletter

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From the Editorial Staff

The editorial staff has been hard at work on the spring issue of the newsletter, and we think we've got another winner.

We have several new articles in this issue that we hope will become regular features, such as a recommended reading list written by Rick Sbuscio Sensei, and an interview with one of our members. One recent suggestion is a column for announcements so that our members can share important events, such as weddings, graduations, etc. Although we were not able to incorporate this section in the current issue, we'd certainly like to add it in the next.

On a sad note, we recently bid farewell to one of our seniors. Shihan Alec Mackenzie, Senior Assistant Instructor at the Frankfort dojo, passed away on February 21, 2008. He was a dedicated student and teacher, as well as an exceptional friend, and his passing is a tremendous loss for all who knew him.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and if you have any announcements, questions, or ideas for future editions, please contact the editor at faranizamani@yahoo.com.

And thanks again to everyone for all your support!

The Editorial Staff



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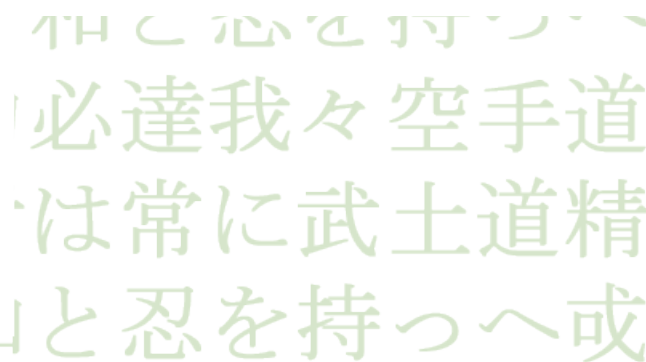
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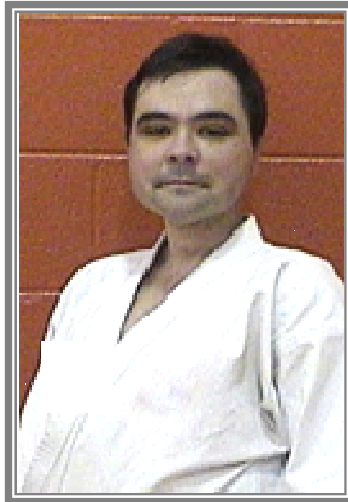
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James Alec Mackenzie



June 16, 1961 - February 21, 2008

On February 21, 2008, The Koshin-ha Chito-ryu Karate Association lost one of its most senior members. James Alec Mackenzie, Shihan, was many things to many people. A son, brother, boss, co-worker, attorney at law, karate student, karate teacher, and certainly many others I have not mentioned, but most of all he was our friend.

He was a true gentleman, humorous, sharp witted, kind and extremely trustworthy. He was the type of person anyone would have been proud to have as a friend. He always had a smile, and anyone who knew him would certainly remember his contagious laugh. There is no doubt he enjoyed life and he brought joy to many other people's lives, something many people would consider the greatest of human gifts.

Anyone who knew Shihan Mackenzie knew how humble a man he truly was. He would never have boasted about his own knowledge and skill, but I can personally vouch for how knowledgeable and skillful he was in something that he loved very much: Karate. Shihan Mackenzie was truly a Clark Kent. When he changed into his Gi, this mild-mannered person possessed speed and power far beyond what most people would have considered him capable. Although over the years I have heard many people comment on how mean or tough someone was in Karate, I never heard that about Shihan Mackenzie. Most people greatly underestimated him, and it usually cost them when they engaged with him on the training deck.

I met Shihan Mackenzie back in the early 1980's. At that time, he was practicing Chito-ryu Karate in Louisville, Kentucky, under Sensei Danny Francis. By this time, he had already practiced Wado-ryu Karate and other martial arts, but within a few short years, he was training with my teacher in Frankfort, Kentucky.

By the time I met Shihan Mackenzie, he was already a brown belt in Wado-ryu Karate. With no complaints and no ego at all, he put on a white belt and began training with us. At that time I was already in the black belt ranks and so from that time forward,

I was constantly and continually involved in his training. While some people come into a class with natural abilities, Shihan Mackenzie did not, and he worked extremely hard for everything he accomplished. I remember our teacher, George Van Horne, Hanshi, stating many times how impressed he was at how Alec was constantly continuing to improve. Shortly before Van Horne, Hanshi, died, I remember him commenting to me how impressed he was that Alec had stayed all of these years and how exceptional Alec had become. While some students would come to class when they felt like it or only show up once a week, Shihan Mackenzie was there virtually every time the doors were open and even came to me for extra training. I spent more time training one on one with him than I did with any other student I have ever had, with the exception of my sons. Shihan Mackenzie also made it a priority to continue his martial arts education by traveling many times with me (more often than any other student) to assist me in teaching, or to train by my side with other senior martial artists.

As Shihan Mackenzie advanced, he became an exceptional teacher in his own right. He constantly and consistently gave of his own training time to assist other students, and even when he had a heart attack several years ago, it only slowed him down for a short period of time. I remember both Sensei Scott Dunn and myself reminding him to take it easy, and he would quickly comment, "I'm fine." Over the years Shihan Mackenzie far exceeded any expectations my teacher or I ever had for him. Alec became my most senior student, finally reaching the level of Roku-dan (6th Degree Black Belt) in Chito-ryu Karate, an accomplishment that few people ever reach.

If I had to say one thing to describe Shihan Mackenzie's life, I would have to say he was a shining example of perseverance. No matter how hard the training got, he kept going and never complained. Although he suffered several health problems from his childhood onward and some would say the odds were stacked against him, I would say he took what he had and built on it. In his short life of 46 years, he impressed many people with his numerous accomplishments.

It seems that at times like these, no matter what we say about a person such as Shihan Mackenzie, it is never enough. Words can't convey how special this man truly was, not only to me, but to many other people as well. Although we have all lost a great friend, our lives have all been richer for having had the opportunity to share time with this special person, and I know Shihan Mackenzie would have felt the same way about the time he spent with us.

- James L. Davenport, Hanshi, Kentucky Budo-kan, Frankfort, KY

In Memory of Shihan Alec Mackenzie, Rokudan

It is with a great sense of pride, yet with a heavy heart, that I take up the pen to write about the passing of a great Shihan in the Koshin-ha organization, as well as a great friend to myself and to many others. James Alexander Mackenzie, known to all of us as Alec, passed away on February 21, 2008, at the young age of 46. He had struggled with a variety of health problems during his life, including diabetes and congenital heart disease, and in the last couple of years had experienced some setbacks in his health from which his body just couldn't recover. His spirit, however, could not be conquered, as anyone who ever had the honor to train with him knew.

Shihan Mackenzie achieved the advanced degree of Rokudan in our organization, a tremendous achievement, based not only on his skill but also on his teaching abilities. Again, any of us who had the opportunity to train with Shihan Mackenzie always got excellent instruction, as well with his passion to deeply understand the art he had practiced for thirty years.

Shihan Mackenzie began training in Shotokan karate while in high school in Louisville, Kentucky, later switching to Wado-ryu, before taking up Chito-ryu under Sensei Dan Francis in Louisville, and then in Frankfort, Kentucky, first under Hanshi George R. Van Horne, and then under Hanshi James Davenport. Along the way he had also studied judo and jiu-jitsu. Although his skill level was high, those who knew Shihan Mackenzie understood that it was his heart, his *kokoro*, that made him a true warrior. Shihan Mackenzie embodied what it meant to be a true martial artist. He was disciplined, and cared deeply for this art of Chito-ryu. He immersed himself in the practice of it, and he studied its history as well. He continually searched for ways to deepen his knowledge of the applications of kata and technique, and he felt it was his duty to pass that knowledge on to others.

But karate was not his total life. Outside of the dojo, Alec was a true gentleman, and a true friend. As the saying goes, he never met anyone he didn't like, and Alec put others at ease quickly, and gained their friendship easily. And once gained,

Alec's friendship was truly trustworthy. He could always be counted on to do his part and then some, whenever asked.

Shihan Mackenzie may not have been blessed with a natural talent for karate, but he surpassed expectations because he worked hard and overcame any obstacle in his path with a quiet, determined spirit. He showed this same spirit with the obstacles life placed in his path as well. He had battled various health conditions since he was a child. His parents were told he wouldn't survive to be a teenager, and certainly not to adulthood. Yet he did. In the last couple of years, when his health began to wane, he also underwent other hardships, including the loss of his apartment, and most of his possessions, in a tragic fire. Yet he continued to train, to teach, and to study, and he did so without complaint, and without fear. Shihan Mackenzie always lived out the proverb, "seven times down, eight times up." No matter what knocked him down, he would always get back up one more time. And he would have a little smile on his face when got back up.

Shihan Mackenzie's passing has dimmed our little corner of the karate world, just as Hanshi Van Horne's passing did in 2006. It is right that we should grieve our loss of these great karateka and true men. But let us temper our grief by remembering our experiences with them in and out of the dojo. As the pastor at Alec's funeral said, let us be the first ones to say, "You didn't know Hanshi Van Horne or Shihan Mackenzie? Then let me tell you about them, because you have truly missed out ...". Let us develop the *kokoro* they showed throughout their lives, to take on hardship without complaint, to approach life with quiet determination and optimism. And let us learn to seek what they sought – to learn deeply of this art of karate, to apply its principles to our lives, and to try to be as good a student, as good an instructor, as good a person, as they were. In this way, we can truly remember them, we can truly honor them, and we can carry on the work that they started.

- Joseph Rectenwald, Shodan, Yoshinkan Dojo, Florence, KY

The Way of the Warrior Student

By Julia Thaller, Nidan, Yoseikan Pittsburgh North Dojo, Pittsburgh, PA



Traditional karate has always been closely associated with the Japanese code of honor, **Bushido**, or “the way of the warrior”. The spirit of bushido is alive and well in the Koshin-ha organization. In this article, I would like to provide beginning students with some insight into a more personalized meaning behind the long-standing traditions and conduct of karate and how they are applied in the dojo and in real life. For those who are more experienced, I hope it rings true to your karate experience.

Martial arts, as its name describes, is martial; it is militant, warlike, and befitting of soldiers. It was inevitable that in many cases the true teachings have been watered down and categorized into simpler fields, such as sport styles or self-defense classes. Although these groups may succeed in their respective areas, the true martial arts have a much richer and well-rounded curriculum to train the mind, body, and spirit.

The difference between traditional karate and these variations is the lifestyle that accompanies it. You could have easily signed up for an aerobics class that only lasts a few months, and you could skip the classes you didn't feel like going to and not have to think twice about it. Karate is not like that. It can be a lifelong pursuit, and it doesn't end with a blackbelt; that is where it begins. **Shodan** is only the “first level”, and it takes years to reach that point. Therefore, to gain skill and become proficient you need to think of it as a real commitment of your time and effort. Above all else, no matter where you are and what you are doing, you should always see yourself as a **karateka**, a student of karate.

To get the maximum benefit of martial arts training, both the inner and outer warrior needs to be developed. Good techniques are not sufficient without the proper mindset to use them. In any kind of challenge, whether physical or emotional, a strong heart and clear mind is always essential to obtain a favorable outcome. While there are many important traits of an outstanding martial artist, the following categories represent some of the most essential and applicable attributes a beginner should learn in order to become excellent.

1. Respect

Rank: Those who have earned the title **Sensei** (literally “one who comes before”) have dedicated their lives to the martial arts. That much is obvious when you see their passion for karate and understand the sacrifices they made in order to gain that knowledge. This includes the classes reliably taught each week, despite sickness, injuries, work, no matter how much they feel like coming in or not. They make themselves available showing us everything we need to know in order to fine-tune our movements and our minds.

There is another Japanese term, **Giri**, which means “burden or obligation towards another.” It is a burden because it represents a debt that cannot ever be fully repaid. With years of sincere training, the benefits of your Sensei's instruction become clear. A feeling of gratitude emerges, and while it may be impossible to repay them for what we have gained, the best we can do is show respect and attempt to pay them back through our actions by training hard, perfecting techniques, being loyal to and assisting our Sensei.

Your **sempai** (mentors, those of higher rank to you) also deserve respect as they have put in many hours of hard work to understand the art and increase their skills. Not only that, but many of them will personally help train you and look out for you. That said, respect is a two way street and you also deserve to be treated with respect from those senior to you. As you go up in rank, you will have **kohai** (those of lower rank) who will look up to you as role models, ask questions and advice, and it then becomes your responsibility to take care of them, support them, and push them so that they develop into fine students.

Etiquette: While some of these courtesies are unique to Japan, much of the etiquette is related to norms that everyone should be familiar with. Titles are one example. Just as you would call a boss or a professor by their title (Mr. or Mrs.), learn the proper titles of your seniors and address them in that way to show respect.

Interacting with a higher rank should always be done respectfully. You might want to think of how you would act around some authority figure in your life. Basic rules include not interrupting them when they are talking, doing what they ask you to do, not goofing around in their presence, and of course speaking politely with them. Even if you develop friendships with higher ranks, as a kohai, you must always maintain martial respect and courtesy.

In the dojo, students should try to be helpful whenever they can. Examples include sweeping the floor before and after class, helping higher ranks carry equipment, or volunteering at clinics, events, and other karate related activities. If there is something that needs to be done, volunteer to do it first. If a higher rank is already doing it, offer to take over. This is especially true of tasks such as cleaning. There is no circumstance where your Sensei should be cleaning up some mess while his students stand by doing nothing. While kyu ranks may only be able to offer their help with these seemingly small things, it does make a difference. Black belts will also help where they can, by making themselves available to teach class, teach students one-on-one, or manage other dojo needs and activities. Every rank has a role to play, and it is important to know what your place is and what is expected.

As I said, this is an expectation in our society that should already be familiar. People in and out of karate deserve to be treated with respect when it comes to things such as being responsive (calling or emailing people back, or answering a question when you are asked one), helping others, following up with someone you know has been having a rough time, paying dues on time, etc. It seems obvious, but having a responsible, positive, and constructive attitude will distinguish you, not just as a martial artist, but also a reliable and responsive person.

2. Awareness

Connected to Responsibility: This goes hand in hand with everything mentioned above. In order to act appropriately in a situation, you need to be aware at several levels. The most basic level is **embusen**, meaning awareness of your surroundings. In the dojo, this means making proper space to perform a kata or taking care not to run into the person in front of you. It can also mean avoiding a dangerous situation on the streets. But awareness also applies to etiquette in making sure that the things you are responsible for get done. If you know what is expected of you, then you shouldn't need to be reminded to do it. For example, when your Sensei comes on deck, you should be alert enough to bow when he/she enters. It's not a surprise; you know they will come on deck at some point, so expect it and wait for it. The same thing goes with the rest of your training. If you know what you are to do, then do it. And if you don't, please feel free to ask any black belt, and they can help you.

In your personal training: As you train, you need to be aware of what your body is doing. Not only do you need to understand it in order to move correctly, but when you start working with a partner, his or her safety is now in your hands. If you space out and lose focus, you may hurt them. Even if you know what technique you are doing, is your FULL attention on it? We have the ability to think about many things at once. There is a Japanese saying, "If you chase two rabbits at the same time, you catch neither." Your FULL attention must be placed on the present moment. When you have more than one thought, things get sloppy and dangerous. It is actually harder to think about one thing than many things, and even harder to think of nothing than one thing. During meditation, training, and ultimately in application your challenge is to keep your mind in the state of **mushin** ("no mind") where you are absent of all thoughts and simply exist in the present moment.

Conduct: When you are at attention, your mind is clear and you are ready to fight. That is not the same as standing perfectly still and thinking about how much your nose itches and whether or not you can get away scratching it without your Sensei seeing it. You aren't asked to be focused at attention like that for every minute of class, but during the times you are (before performing basics or before a kata) it is important to be strict on yourself and resist the urge to fix your hair, squirm in your stance, scratch your nose, etc. Why? Because it shows that your mind is on something else other than the task at hand. Why does that matter? You are practicing getting your mind into that place I mentioned above where you are focused in the present moment on ONE thing alone. If you ever get into a fight, that is how you want your mind to be. Most people freeze up and forget everything when pressure is put on them, but the more you train with your mind in this undistracted zone, the easier it will be to return to it, and if you ever do get in a fight, it will help you not to panic. Additionally, in your personal life, it is easy to get distracted with the flurry of thoughts and emotions that surround different aspects of life. Having the awareness and ability to focus and discipline your conduct will lead to a better mindset to bring clarity to the situation and make your decisions more constructive.

3. Spirit

Fighting Spirit: This is something some of us are born with and others need to work on, but deep down everyone has it. This is the "fight or flight" survival mechanism that kicks in when danger is present, giving us the motivation to fight back. While your life isn't actually threatened while in class, you need practice your kata as though it is in order to draw out your fighting spirit and get used to experiencing it. For some of you, your challenge is let yourself feel it. When you feel awkward doing a **kiai** (yell, literally "concentrated spirit") or you resist putting everything you've got into it – why is

that? Don't be afraid of the spirit inside. You were drawn to the martial arts for a reason, so express it! Good technique is important to have, but a fierce fighting spirit is likely to make a bigger difference in a life-threatening situation.

Spirit and the Ego: If you were to give 100% of everything you have into your karate and then get corrected because, say, you weren't moving your hips enough, it's easy to feel bad and interpret that as something like "even my best isn't good enough". THAT IS NOT TRUE!! If all it took was giving it your all to be perfect at something, life would be too easy. Humans don't work like that. However, the more you put all of your effort in, the easier it will be to get better. Understand that you are offered constructive criticism. It is nothing offensive and it shouldn't be taken as a hit to your personality.

This is true in life, too. Although some of you live lives being talented in everything you do, you will encounter challenges, and the better you are at separating your performance vs. your ego, the better off you will be. Your mind will be clear to see the problems that actually exist and open to fixing those mistakes.

Of course, the opposite is true as well. When one person begins to think of themselves as being better than others, it creates a divide in the dojo that is not conducive to learning. Feeding your ego with these thoughts will set you up for a fall. As Kyoshi Valentino says, "Ego is a fear based compensation that blinds us from seeing the truth about where your true strengths lie and where we need to grow". It may be true that you are good, but if you only focus on that, you'll never get better. And if you're happy telling other people (directly or indirectly) that you're better than them, then you have failed to respect your fellow students. Be humble. Arrogance will get you nowhere. But be true. Telling yourself you're not as good as everyone else is just as twisted as telling yourself you're better than them. Know yourself, both your strengths and weaknesses. Chances are everyone in your dojo already knows your strengths and weaknesses without you having to dwell on them, therefore a better use of time is helping one another to improve as karateka and humans.

4. Attitude

Social Behavior – The attitude you choose to put forward in class will help determine the outcome of your efforts. Keeping your mind focused on the drills in class will give you a different result than talking to your partner the whole time about last night's episode of *American Idol*. This is not to say that you have to forfeit social interaction and keep a blank face through every minute of class. Karate can be social activity, yet we should try to familiarize ourselves with the social interactions between warriors while in class. And while people tend to make friends with their peers after years of sharing sweat and blood and hard work, it shouldn't become a distraction in class. There is a time and a place for everything. Leave the outside world to the times before and after class. This isn't like high school gym class where you can stand around and chat with your friends. Class time is short relative to everything else we do; therefore the best use of time is focusing on karate.

Class modes – Speaking of proper times and places, you should learn to develop different mindsets for different training modes. There is a lot to learn in our style, and to fully understand it all, the pace of class will vary time to time. Some classes will have a slower and lighter pace with lengthier explanations of proper technique. During those classes you should put your mind to understanding the concepts being taught. Ask questions and take notes.

But then there are other times when class is fast and hard. Those ones focus on strengthening the will and spirit. When it gets really fast you may stop thinking about technique and that's okay. You may hear your mind saying "I can't go this fast! My kicks suck! I'm so tired, I can't do this anymore!" and the challenge is to hear that voice, but not follow it. Quiet your mind and as you progress in rank you will experience '**mushin**' or no mind, meaning that your body and mind come together and moves as one without you having to think about it. There is no longer the play-by-play in your head; you simply 'are'.

Being receptive to the different types of learning will help to round your training out so that you can have good technique while being fast, strong, and spirited.

I hope that all of you find the time we spend together training to be as refreshing as I do. This is a chance to leave your mental baggage at the door, forget about whom you are 'out there' and let yourself be who you are on the inside. It's the time to make our minds and bodies strong with confidence and spirit. We expand the views of ourselves as we learn what we are capable of. Karate brings up the opportunity to improve many aspects of life, so make sure to open your eyes and enjoy it for all it's worth.

In conclusion, I hope that my writing will help assist you in understanding the reason why we behave the way we do in class and how it affects your life outside the dojo. We have excellent instructors and it is only fair to be the best students we can be. Thank you for reading, and good luck in your training

Kobudo as Part of Your Martial Arts Training

By Julie Sbuscio, Nidan, Allegheny County Budo-kai, Pittsburgh, PA



I have noticed that whenever I tell someone that I study Okinawan weaponry, they almost always respond with, "Why?" especially if they are not a student of weapons themselves. Throughout the years, I have found many various answers to this question, some easily explained and some much more in depth. Some of these reasons include distancing, body connection, proper fighting, and the ability to use practical weapons.

Distancing is one of the most important areas of study when training in the martial arts. Kobudo actually provides a sense of distancing that most cannot get through empty hand arts alone. In kobudo, we study many different weapons, all having different ranges. Weapons include long weapons, such as the bo, and shorter weapons that can be thrown, such as the sai. The typical kobudo student learns how to handle the very diverse weapons through constant practice. Through practice they learn the target areas and striking distances for each weapon. It is this practice that helps martial arts students learn how to adjust to a variety of fighting ranges. To better understand this theory, one must think of their body as a weapon. Their fist is a lot farther from the center of their body than their elbow, and their leg is even farther than that. By learning proper distancing, that person learns how to best utilize every part of their body.

Body connection is sometimes described as the connection of the different parts of your body to act as a whole, providing a rhythmic execution of the techniques you are performing. The more a person perfects their body connection, the smoother, faster, and more powerful their techniques become. By studying kobudo, a person can actually practice proper body connection through the use of the various weapons. In kobudo, weapons are controlled by using the center of the body. Generated power comes not from the arms or shoulders but instead from the connection that the arms have with the center of the body. As with everything, the more a person practices body connection through different activities, the better they will understand it.

The art of fighting was once described to me as a game of chess. A person makes a move and it is then up to their opponent to be able to counter that move with blocks and strikes. This goes back and forth until one of the opponents is caught without a move. In chess this is referred to as checkmate. By studying weapons,

"Without learning a weapon art, you can not be truly proficient in combat. Weapons give you new insights into space, timing, force and territory."

Don Draeger
Martial Arts Pioneer

martial artists are further able to learn how to use the other person's movements to their advantage. I have observed many fighters, some of whom had no concept of the chess comparison at all, and these fighters were often not the best at kumite. On the other hand, I have seen people who study other martial arts, then begin kobudo, and greatly improve their style of fighting. By studying kobudo, a person improves their sense of strike/counter-strike. It improves their back and forth fighting because in kobudo, bunkai is critically studied. Bunkai literally means "to separate and analyze" and this is usually done for the movements of kata. By learning and practicing bunkai, a person becomes more confident in their defenses and attacks.

However, using kobudo to aid in fighting it does not limit students to only fighting with weapons. The whole of fighting is a learned behavior, and this behavior is not abandoned just because different tools are being used. If the bo is being studied by a person, they are more likely to best utilize a simple stick or an umbrella during a fight than someone who does not study the bo. They know just the right targeting, techniques, and distancing to use with this unordinary weapon. Common forms of weapons that most people carry are pepper spray and small knives, but one problem with such weapons is that they truly look like a weapon.

If a person pulls out a knife or pepper spray, it tells their attacker that they are a potential threat to them and gives them the opportunity to disarm their victim. It may also cause undue suspicion from law enforcement officers, who now view the victim as an armed assailant. By using everyday objects, an attacker can be fooled into thinking that their victim means no harm to them. By studying kobudo, a person becomes aware of how simple objects around them can be instantly transformed into weapons that they are already familiar with.

From kobudo, a person can learn to understand complex things such as distancing and timing, as well as actual fighting strategy. If these behaviors are already learned through another art, then kobudo can be used to strengthen them. Practical weapons are typically only learned through the study of kobudo alone, but they are undeniably important to improving fighting skill.

Principles of Internal Power Applied to Punching

By Terry Valentino, Kyoshi, 7th Dan, Yoseikan Pittsburgh North Dojo, Pittsburgh, PA

Although there are a number of elements involved in applying force in a punch, such as intention, unified movement, correct use of breath, rising or sinking,



and rotation, the focus of this article is the use of Shime as an element in the overall delivery of a punch. The concept of Shime (applying muscular tension) during a punch is often misunderstood or inappropriately applied. Shime often is interpreted as tensing ALL of your muscles at the instant of focus or contact with a target. When done in this manner, the shock one

feels in their body at the completion of a punch is mistaken for power, when it is really just the effect of slamming on the breaks to a ballistic movement. For Shime, or muscular tension, to truly translate to power directed outward, it must be applied in varying degrees throughout the body.

All of our muscles have an agonist/antagonist partner muscle that moves our bodies in the opposite direction, such as the relationship between biceps/triceps. These and all other muscles of our body can only contract or relax. If you do what many people call "focusing a punch" and tense all your muscles, you will be both pushing forward and pulling backward at the same time. The directional movement of a punch forward or backward will be determined by the relative tension/relaxation of the opposing muscles. Sanchin kata is an example of this principal being applied as a strengthening exercise.

Sanchin kata is a resistance exercise because it makes the muscles work against each other and strengthen. Strong contraction of the agonist and antagonist muscles produces the slow labored extension characteristic of this kata. This method of tensing everything upon completion, however, is not what should be done when punching. Punching power at the advanced level has more to do with relaxation than contraction. To have advanced/internal power, muscular tension should be kept to a minimum. Only the muscles necessary to extend the movement and those required to hold posture need be tensed. A punch done with only the muscles required to extend the arm and rotate the torso will often look weak because there is no "breaking" shock at its completion, only extension. However, the impact of this type of punch on an opponent's body feels deep and heavy.

The concept of minimally applied tension also extends to a karateka's stance. The purpose of a stance is to create a "ground path" for the extension and/or receiving of force. For that reason, indiscriminant use of leg contraction will actually destabilize the stance and detract from its best potential to communicate force. The stance and posture should allow maximum skeletal alignment to reduce the need of muscles to support the power. This way, the bone alignment and connective tissue receive and support the load, thus allowing relaxation of the musculature.

In order to help my students to understand this concept and feel it within their own bodies, I have them do an exercise with a soft 5 lb shot- type ball (I got mine at Walmart). They stand in seisan dachi in front of a wall, holding the shot in their palm, fingertips up at pec height in the manner of Shime no Kata. I instruct them to push the ball as fast and far as possible while keeping karate form and not turning it into a track and field type throw. What they notice is that the most powerful throws involve only those muscles needed to support the push. Consider the possibility that a punch is just a fast push...if you don't tense up at its completion. A slow punch pushes, while a fast punch pierces.

If you have ground-to-target connection through skeletal alignment, there is no need to tense up opposing muscles either during the push/punch, or after the throw/push/punch is complete, other than to hold position if one so desires and to prevent hyperextension. The consequence of moving in this manner allows for devastating power, often at short range, as well as increased speed and responsiveness, which is characteristic of high level skill. This method of body utilization is more effective than the 'tense on completion method,' although it is beyond the ability of most lower kyu ranks to effectively employ and needs to be introduced carefully. However, it should be the method advanced students constantly strive towards.



2007 Fall Clinic // Allegheny County Budo-kai

By Rick Sbuscio, Yondan, Allegheny County Budo-kai, Pittsburgh, PA

On Saturday, October 13, 2007, the Allegheny County Budo-kai hosted the 2007 Fall Koshin-ha Chito-ryu Karate Clinic and Banquet. The clinic was attended by more than 40 karate-ka from all over the country. The fast-paced, four plus hour clinic included each of the "foundations" of karate: kihon, kata and kumite. The day concluded with a great banquet highlighted by Renshi Valentino receiving the title of Kyoshi.

The first hour of the clinic consisted of basic techniques led by Kyoshi Hedderman. Kyoshi kept us moving the entire time, sprinkling the sweat with instruction on correct body connection, technical precision and using your hips to generate power. At the end of this session, Kyoshi Valentino led the entire group in the improved San Ju Waza.



The second hour was devoted to kata and kata bunkai. As in previous clinics, participants were given the option of training with various senior instructors. Hanshi Davenport taught Koshin Nidan and Koshin Sandan, Shihan Arnold taught Rohai and Kyoshi Valentino taught Sanshiryu. Every participant, no matter what rank, gained valuable insight into their personal kata training.



The third and fourth hours were devoted to kumite strategy, ground fighting and hand gun defenses. Kumite strategy was taught by Hanshi Davenport and Kyoshi Valentino, while Shihan Hedderman taught the ground fighting and hand gun defense sessions.

The clinic was concluded with Kyoshi Valentino and Shihan Hedderman teaching the entire group the new Tai Sabaki Ichi techniques. A new requirement for green belts, this set of body movement defenses provides a solid understanding of foot work as well as teaching some very practical self-defense combinations.

The four hours flew by before we knew it. Every participant left with all the things that make a clinic memorable. Everyone got a good work out, strengthened existing knowledge and learned something new to enhance their skills. Everyone who attended is sure to be looking forward to similar, high-quality clinics from the Koshin-ha Chito-ryu Karate-do Association in the future.



Q & A with Sensei David Tollis

by Fara Nizamani, 5th Kyu, Seattle Koshin-ha Chito-ryu Dojo, Seattle, WA

1. How long have you studied martial arts?

I started in 1989 at the local community college in Rochester, NY. The style was Shotokan Karate, and my instructor was David Ballassone who held the rank of Yondan. In 1992, I switched to Chito ryu style of Karate under Dr. Jesse Brown, because my original instructor had a stroke and was no longer capable of teaching Karate.

2. How did you become interested in martial arts?

I have been infatuated with the martial arts since I was a child (Chuck Norris, Bruce Lee, etc.) My father actually studied Chito ryu Karate for a short time when I was 10 years old, and he would teach me some of the moves he was learning. I remember 30 movements was one of the sequences he was trying to show me. However, I was never afforded the opportunity to really study Karate seriously until college.

3. What other styles have you studied?

In July of 2001, I was asked by Kyoshi Hedderman if I would be interested in helping Sensei Tony Hedderman and him perform a Koseido Ryu JiuJitsu demo for the DNBK. I was honored and accepted. I will always remember my first class. It was the weekend after the September 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S.A. I was driving down to Pittsburgh and no one was driving on the highway and no airplanes were in the air except for the occasional jet fighter plane. It was quite eerie. I am now a Shodan in Koseido Ryu JiuJitsu (1st Degree Black Belt) and can honestly say it has been the best experience in martial arts that has happened to me. Koseido Ryu JiuJitsu is a very old style of JiuJitsu; there aren't any flowery movements. It is a practical, no nonsense martial art.

4. What rank(s) do you hold, any/all styles?

Yondan in Chito Ryu Karate.
Shodan in Koseido Ryu JiuJitsu.

5. How long have you been the Chief Instructor of your dojo?

Since 1993, so 15 years.

6. Why did you decide to start your own dojo?

Dr. Jesse Brown was moving to New York City for work and asked me to take over the Karate school.

7. What's the best/most difficult part of it?

The best part is seeing students that you have trained as they progress through the ranks. The most difficult part is seeing students you have dedicated so much time to and worked so hard with throughout the years quit the martial arts.

8. Approximately how many students do you have?

I have 6 students with rank ranging from 2nd Degree Black Belt to 8th Kyu.

9. How do you balance martial arts with other responsibilities?

This has been extremely hard over the past few years. When I was younger with no real responsibilities, all I did was train and teach. Now that I am married, have a young child, and a job career with increasing responsibilities, my training has been very sporadic, to say the least. I am grateful that I have a wonderful assistant, Todd Samolis, who takes over for me when I am traveling and can't make it to class. I just do the best that I can with my present life responsibilities.

10. What's your favorite kata?

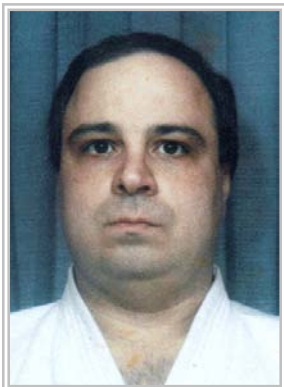
My favorite kata I would have to say is "Passai Dai".

11. Any "no-one-would-ever-believe-this" martial arts moments?

A few years back, one of my younger students had an "accident." Everyone in class was surprised, and I told all my students that from now on, if they had to go to the bathroom, please raise your hand and ask to be excused from class. After class two of my most senior students joked with me that I was just too much of a tyrant in class.

Recommended Reading

By Richard Sbuscio, Yondan, Allegheny County Budo-Kai, Pittsburgh, PA

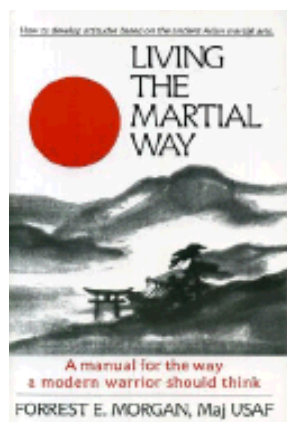


As with many karate-ka, I can frequently be found prowling the martial arts section of my local book store in search of “literary treasures”. During my 35 years in karate, I have always felt that an integral part of my training was reading any books that enhanced my depth and breadth of knowledge. Because of this, when asked to write an ongoing recommended reading column for the Koshin-ha newsletter, I jumped at the chance. The books that I review in this column are generally ones that I have enjoyed and felt worthwhile. My reviews are in no way the “last word” on these books, but are simply the opinions of one karate-ka. Comments on my reviews or suggestions for books are more than welcome at r.sbuscio@verizon.net.

Living the Martial Way

Forrest E. Morgan, Major USAF (Retired)

ISBN 0-942637-61-5 and 0-942637-76-3



Living the Martial Way is truly a “must read” for any martial artist who wants to develop the warriors mindset. The subtitle, “A manual for the way a modern warrior should think”, describes the book perfectly. Major Morgan, a black belt in Tae Kwon Do Chung Do Kwan and Hakkoryu Jujutsu,

thoughtfully combines his opinions on the three aspects of the “martial way”: The Way of Training, The Way of Honor and The Way of Living.

In the section, *The Way of Training*, Major Morgan delves into what it takes to truly train as a warrior. He guides the reader through the steps necessary to develop what he describes as the warrior mind-set as well as your personal fighting doctrine, strategy and tactics.

The section, *The Way of Honor*, tries to answer two key questions:

- What is honor?
- How does honor relate to our martial arts training?

Major Morgan describes the foundations of honor and how we might best put honor to work in our lives. Additionally, he strips away the negative aspects often used when discussing honor as part of the martial arts.

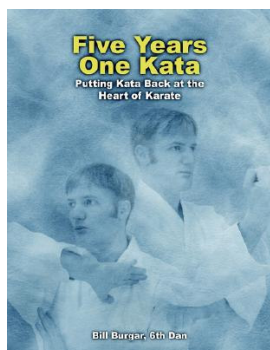
In the final section, *The Way of Living*, Major Morgan describes how an individual might live as a warrior. Included in this section are such topics as warrior fitness, religion as it relates to the warrior, and mastery of the martial way.

Overall, this book provides a “martial art neutral” method of analyzing your current level of warriorship and developing a checklist that allows you to grow as a well rounded martial artist. I would highly recommend this book as a must read for anyone who is working to define his or her martial skill set and wishes to create a roadmap to follow for future growth.

Five Years One Kata

Bill Burgar

ISBN 0-9544466-0-7



The book, *Five Years One Kata, Putting Kata Back at the Heart of Karate*, is one man's effort to try to duplicate how the martial artists of old might have experienced kata in all its facets. Bill Burgar, a sixth degree black belt in Shotokan karate, provides the reader

with the insights into what he discovered during his 5 year journey into the intimate details of one kata. In addition to describing his personal journey, Mr. Burgar provides the reader with a step-by-step guide that allows you to perform your own single kata study.

In the modern era of karate, it is not uncommon for karate black belts to "know" 15-30 kata. With his book,

Mr. Burgar tries to take a step back in time when many karate masters may have known only three or four kata, but knew them so intimately that these few kata could be used as an entire self defense system.

After selecting a kata to work with, Gojushiho, Burgar develops a unique method of training and developing bunkai for this kata. He looks at his kata, not in its entirety, but as sets of mnemonic drills (bunkai sets) used to better his self defense skills. These mnemonic drills are developed in response to common attacks called "habitual acts of violence." This method of training allows the practitioner to hone his skills against the most likely attacks that may be encountered.

For anyone, like me, who is looking for keys to unlock the "secrets" of kata bunkai, this is a great book. As with most books I have read on this subject, it does not provide all the answers. There are some aspects of this book with which I find myself agreeing, while there are other aspects that I am not sure make sense to me. But for anyone on a personal quest for the answers to kata bunkai, this book should certainly be on your shelf.

KOSHIN-HA CHITO RYU PROMOTIONS

Date	Location	Name	Rank
October	Frankfort	Hunter Smith	Orange
October	Frankfort	Jessie Benavides	Yellow
November	Frankfort	Michael Hines	Black II
February	Frankfort	Kara Harrod	Yellow
February	Frankfort	Jessie Benavides	Orange
February	Frankfort	Hunter Smith	Green III
February	Frankfort	Carlos Felix	Brown III
February	Lexington	Gene Sageser	Yellow
February	Lexington	James Levenson	Yellow
February	Lexington	Joseph Federspiel	Yellow
October	Louisville	Ryan Adams	Yellow
October	Louisville	Amanda Dreisbach	Orange

Date	Location	Name	Rank
December	Louisville	Jim Berger	Brown II
December	Louisville	Crawley, Galen	Green III
March	Louisville	Ryan Adams	Orange
February	PA North	Natalie Rogalla	Green II
February	PA North	Ashley Truxal	Orange
March	PA North	Maddie Gryger	Orange
January	PA North	Michael Valentino	Nidan
January	PA South	Michael Puhalla	Shodan
January	PA South	Conor O'Leary	Green III
January	PA South	Zachary Panian	Orange
January	PA South	Brian Friedrich	Yellow
September	Palm Beach	Benjamin Rembaum	Yellow
September	Palm Beach	Haydee Castro	Yellow
September	Palm Beach	Drin Mahmuti	Yellow
September	Palm Beach	Alexandra Gigante	Yellow
January	Palm Beach	Jason Dee	Green III
January	Palm Beach	Ryan Holzhausen	Green III
January	Palm Beach	Rachel Pomerantz	Yellow
January	Palm Beach	Richard Pomerantz	Yellow
March	Palm Beach	Al Maeyens	Brown I
March	Palm Beach	Richard Pomerantz	Orange
March	Palm Beach	Rachel Pomerantz	Orange
March	Palm Beach	Zachary Taylor	Yellow
November	Pittsburgh North	Madalyn Gryger	Yellow
November	Pittsburgh North	Kara Morgan	Yellow
November	Pittsburgh North	Ashleigh Phegan	Yellow
September	Pittsburgh South	Zachary Hughey	Green II
October	Pittsburgh South	Louis Friedl	Green III
October	Seattle	Yuto Akai	Yellow
October	Seattle	Robert Howard	Yellow
October	Seattle	Sasha Goldberg	Orange
October	Seattle	Juli-Ann Williams	Orange
October	Seattle	Jasmine Zhang	Green II
November	Seattle	Jason Wang	Brown III
November	Seattle	Frances Tung	Green I
November	Seattle	Jasmine Zhang	Green I
November	Seattle	Fara Nizamani	Green II
February	Seattle	Julie-Ann Williams	Green III
February	Seattle	Fanny Luor	Green I
February	Seattle	Robert Howard	Orange