

SHOTOKAN RYU KASE HA INSTRUCTORS ACADEMY

SRKHIA Newsletter 10/03

Dear karateka,

It has happened, I suppose, to every one of us that comes along with the question "how can I become expert?". Always in such cases the answer is "training, training, training". But have you ever wondered if that is enough? We all know people that have spent hundreds of hours in training but they have never overcome a certain level, while others have. So it seems that training is not the recipe for success but an ingredient of it. And I would like today, since it seems that all of us know this ingredient and since I am not absolutely sure about the whole recipe, to talk about another important, I think, ingredient, openmindedness.

Open mind is a very important element in the process of knowledge. Funakoshi Gichin has demonstrated this by not sticking to the given knowledge but rather using it as the platform to further develop the art. He took the important parts of the rich Japanese budo to enrich the poor okinawan art of Tode and to transform it in a budo art. Kase sensei developed his way by building upon knowledge inherited to him by his instructors. Many times great masters are gathered to exchange ideas, principles, concepts. What they do is "shoshin morotte", finding again and again the first beginner's open mind. And they receive power and inspiration to continue the endless journey of knowledge hunting.

Therefore in our recipe for success, the ingredient of training should be mixed with that of "shudo mushuten", following the endless way of a student; always keep an open mind. Anyway knowledge is a lifetime process.

Kase sensei illness:

As you have been informed by my separate mail there is a health problem concerning Kase sensei. Sensei has been infected by a bacterial infection with fever. He has been through therapy with antibiotics but the result is that currently, although his situation improves, he feels very weak. He is under continuous medical attention and doctors have suggested him not to teach until March 2004. He is under the good care of his daughter Sachiko, but he needs rest.

We all look forward to sensei's recovery and return to teaching.

Newsletter will keep you informed about the evolution of the situation.

Budo Themes: Stages in training and practice

In budo practice many have been written and said about the approach of how to develop from novice level to mastership. Although all agree that sweat, blood (sometimes) but no tears are necessary every instructor has his own recipe (otherwise so many schools, ryu, ha etc were not required). As we all may agree knowledge cannot come with mass volume at once; it is rather gained in stages. In this context development of martial arts knowledge is attained, in general, in three stages, namely keiko, tanren and renshu.

Keiko. This is the first stage and quite simply means training or practice. During this period the focus is on the development of the physical aspect of training. Power and speed are developed along with technique. Basic techniques and kata are learned by repetition in a fast and slow mode, by breaking down the kata into its component parts, by understanding how the techniques work in a fighting situation. With this

practice the practitioner develops his physical abilities in power and speed, apprehends technique, develops coordination between technique and movement, begins to understand the principles of Maai (combative distance), Ma (timing), Metsuke (correct use of the eyes) and Seme (pressing or pushing), in order to control an opponent. This study takes from five to six years of regular practice. Overlapping with it, from about the fifth or sixth year, the practitioner will begin the practice of Tanren.

Tanren means to forge in the same way that a katana sword blade is forged, with hard work and sweat and many hours of dedication, folding together the hard and soft elements in the body, mind, and movement just as the sword gains its strength out of hard and soft steel. The practitioner increasingly practices without concern for the correctness of the movements (though they must remain correct and effective), repeats kihon and kata uninterrupted with a feeling of Shinken Shobu (a fight to the death with a real sword) and incorporates all elements learned at the previous stage to his jiyu kumite practice, with the focus in efficiency of his technique. During this phase posture improves, movements become more natural, techniques become more effective, timing is improved, the fighter is becoming better controlled and less predictable. As confidence increases and Kigurai (bearing, demeanour) develops, training moves into the next phase called Renshu. Renshu. Ren means to polish, to perfect by continued practice of both keiko and tanren. It also means to polish the spirit and character through the requirements of detail and interpretation. To demonstrate a compassionate nature that can pass on knowledge without egotistical pride and arrogance. This will lead to the level of Renshi meaning a person whose performance and character is polished by training (in certain organizations this is a grade awarded after the rank of 6th). Following this stage, actions seem to be slower and softer, appearing to a bystander as less effective; however the technique comes from a refined efficiency, not applying force until that very moment technique actually touches the opponent and kime is applied; the body remains relaxed but spirit and mind is constantly aware and prepared. It is only after demonstration of the simplicity of the correct action has become natural and apprehension all of these stages by direct experience has been achieved, that the practitioner may reach Kyoshi (teacher level).

Have we now closed the circle of knowledge? I am afraid no. As an ancient Greek philosopher has said "I am getting older, always being instructed (or educated)". It is this continuing process which will bring the person to the next level that of Hanshi, where enlightenment is reached. It is that stage where simplicity comes not from ignorance but from deep knowledge. It is the same principle that our ranking belt system signifies; white for novices, indication of their ignorance and simplicity of actions, becoming dark and ultimately black from sweat and dirt as a result of hard training, indicating a higher degree of knowledge, return to white, as frayed from continuous practice throughout the years, indicating the simplicity of actions as a result of deep knowledge.

Reports

SRKHIA GASHUKU 2003. The Academy's annual Instructors course (Gashuku) took place on 27 & 28 September in Müllheim, Germany. It was really a success, thus comprising another milestone in Academy's way ahead. 57 members were present at the course. Kase sensei, due to his health problem was not there, so Shihankai members took care of it. Dirk Heene

took the first two sessions on Saturday and Pascal Lecourt took the session on Sunday. Congratulations to Pascal Petrella, who did an excellent job in preparing the event. A report from the course will be given at a future newsletter; however I enclose for all of you a group photo of participants.

SHOTOKAN in Colombia. Oh yes; Marco A. Gomez held a course this summer in Colombia. Héctor Manuel Limas Cely, 4dan, attended the course and provides below a relevant report.

On the 11, 12, 13 of July in Fusagasugá- COLOMBIA- the well known Sensei Marco A. Gómez as representative for Colombia of the Instructors Academy Shotokan Ryu Kase Ha, did run a seminar of Traditional Karate. Among the goals, was to integrate the national Budokas, to raise the traditional values characteristic of Kase Sensei style, and to encourage and to increase its practice in the region.

At the meeting did attend the members of the Instructors School- EIS- from the A.K.S.R.K.H. Colombia, who did have the opportunity to participate in the program developed by Sensei Gómez.

At the seminar was instructed some of the technical basis that do characterize the style of karate practice by Kase Sensei like, the usage of the different types of Kamae; the usage of open hand techniques defending and attacking; the study of the different distances (O WAZA, SHU WAZA, KO WAZA); to work with the different types of breath (DONTOKU, NOGARE, IBUKI, IBUKI NOGARE, IBUKI SANKAI) applied on the technique execution; execution of katas in the different forms OMOTE, URA, GO ad URA GO; and also the practise of HEIAN OYO, a Kata developed by Kase Sensei.

With all this, Sensei Gómez did achieve the stimulation and did wake up the interest of Colombian karatekas towards the study and deeply looking into the KASE HA scheme. Another positive aspect that was achieved was the rapprochement of the European Karate towards Colombia. In my opinion it did allowed the expansion and did strength the SHOTOKAN RYU KASE HA fraternity, through the active presence of one of its members.

It is important to highlight the presence of Sensei Marco Gómez for the Colombian karatekas, in his condition as active member of the Academy, who through a serious interpretation of the principles of the SRKH, assures important successes of the Traditional Karate in Colombia.

We would like to thank on a special way the goodwill and support got from the members of the SRKH Academy Europe, through Sensei Marco Gómez and other instructors of the Academy.

OSS

HECTOR MANUEL LIMAS CELY
4 th DAN KASE HA

Note: Sensei Héctor Manuel Limas Cely was prepared by Sensei Marco Gómez in Colombia for his re-examination as 4th Dan. The exam did take place in Andorra July 2003 in front of Kase Sensei.

Recommended Courses:

As you have been informed Kase sensei has cancelled all his scheduled course until next March 2004. It's really pity but nothing can be done. However Academy's instructors remain active in spreading the godspell of Shotokan Ryu Kase ha (I have to admit that this expression belongs to my friend Alan but I like it). Information on these courses may be found in www.kamikazeweb.com/events for those interested in kobudo and kobujutsu, Dirk Fieret organizes for 8th running year, on 6th and 7th December 2003, in Terneuzen, The Netherlands, the annual karate and kobuzutsu course. Dirk Heene, 7dan and Julian Mead, 7dan kobudo will teach on this course. More information may be provided by Dirk Fieret, p/a Berliozhof 97, 4536 EX, Terneuzen NL. Tel : (0031) (0) 115- 696383 or 695072, Fax : (0031) (0) 115-612151, E mail <<mailto:dfieret@zeelandnet.nl>> dfieret@zeelandnet.nl Please be reminded that information relevant to courses, by SRKHIA instructors, will be given every month, in the same way, provided you have informed me accordingly. All received information relevant to courses, by SRKHIA instructors, are forwarded to Frank Schubert for insertion in the Calendar of events in his site, so it is always updated.

Membership status:

As I have mentioned in my previous Newsletter, renewal of annual membership, as well as acceptance of new members, will take place in January and February each year. Therefore the process has already started. About 40 members renewed their membership for 2004 on the spot during the Academy's Gashuku in Mullheim. For the rest you have to do the necessary arrangements by 28th February 2004.

Let me remind you that the membership fee is 60 Euro or 36 British pounds. Payments may be done, either by bank transfer to our account: Natwest Bank Ltd, Cheltenham Branch, 31 Promenade, Cheltenham, GL50 1LH, UK, Sort Code 60-05-16, Account number 16412087, Beneficiary Shotokan Ryu Kase Ha Instructors Academy (attention, in this case you transfer only British pounds), or by a bank cheque or international money order, made payable to Shotokan Ryu Kase Ha Instructors Academy and posted to our Treasurer, Alan Armstrong, 19 Jubilee Drive, Bredon, Tewkesbury, GL20 7QJ, England, preferably by registered mail (attention, cheques could be either 36 British pounds or 60 euros, whichever is more convenient to members). You must not forget to mention the name(s) and the year.

In addition I am collecting new applications which will be forwarded to Shihankai for approval in January so new members will have the appropriate time to for fulfilling financial obligations.

I am closing this section by mentioning Laurence Chemello, who is the first to renew her membership for 2004, in August. Thank you Laurence.

A Dojo directory?:

I would like to close this Newsletter with a proposal. In today's world distances have been reduced significantly. What some years ago seemed to be far away today is much closer. People travel more frequently for various reasons, business, leisure, etc. We all live in the global village; why not train in this village. And how you will find the proper dojo? Here it is. Academy may create a Dojo Directory, comprised by dojo where Shotokan ryu Kase ha is practiced. What is needed is, to send me the following information: Dojo name, Dojocho (chief instructor, not necessarily a SRKHIA member), Dojo Sponsor (an Academy member who recommends this dojo, only in cases that Dojocho is not an Academy member), Country, City, Address, Point of Contact (POC), POC phone no, POC gsm, POC e- mail (optional).

These information upon given to me will be filled accordingly and they

will be provided, upon request, to members. Additionally every six months, May and October each year, a relevant list will be distributed with the Newsletter. What do you think about that? Do you think it is worthy? Your responses will show.

Last but not least, are missing copies of our Newsletters? No problem.

Pascal Petrella's dojo site on SRKHIA

<<http://www.shotokan-ryu-kase-ha.karate-muellheim.de/>>

www.shotokan-ryu-kase-ha.karate-muellheim.de includes copies of all previous Newsletters, among with other useful Academy information. Thank you Pascal and the Dojo Mullheim.

The next Newsletter will be edited in the first week in November 2003.

Stay strong, train hard and enjoy.

Oss

Spiros G. Drossoulakis



Gashuku2003.jpg