

SHOTOKAN RYU KASE HA INSTRUCTORS ACADEMY

SRKHIA Newsletter 9/04

Dear karateka,

As another one season, summer, passes by and a new one, autumn, follows, in the same way another cycle appears in our budo practice journey. I am not talking of a start of a new cycle, simply because a start means that something has stopped before. But budo practice is a continuous flowing process, where one cycle follows the other, without stopping. It is important to keep in mind that unlike the western approach in knowledge and development, which follows a rather linear mode, the oriental one follows a circular or rather spiral way. In this way as one cycle follows the other in our practice, on the one hand we better apprehend things we already know, while on the other hand we learn new things, which will be apprehended in future cycles and will add value to our capability. In this way development follows a spiral pattern towards the top. But where is this top? How should I realize that I am there? These are big questions each of one requires a lot to be said. So for the moment there is only one thing to say, keep on practice.

I just want to add some practical things. You may have seen some changes in the Newsletter's structure, as well as new material coming forward. Mike Fedyk sensei, member of the Shihankai, will provide, through a series of articles, valuable advice on training principles. I would like, on behalf of everybody to thank Mike for his contribution and ask from every member to contribute the Newsletter, by providing inputs on relevant matters.

Coaching and Training Principles

by Fedyk Michaylo 6dan, Shihankai member

(Note: This series of articles have first appeared in ESA Newsletter)

Hello to Everyone,

In this introductory article my aim is to capture the interest of everyone that is presently involved with coaching karate or indeed has such future aspirations.

As the coaching file develops my hope is to create a portfolio of information that will have a positive effect on the standard of coaching within the ESA. Ultimately it will help to fulfil the desire of our late founder member Sensei Steve Cattle 6th Dan in his quest to continually improve the standard of all karateka of the ESA.

If you are not a coach the information featured in this and forthcoming articles will be beneficial to your personal training development, a greater understanding of Coaching and Training Principles will most certainly help you to achieve personal goals in a safe and positive manner. It will also raise awareness and help to create a better understanding of the complexities coaches are faced with in what on the surface appears to be an easy job.

In this first article I would like to emphasise how important knowledge of Skill Development is in particular for new karateka and also when teaching advanced unfamiliar techniques to experienced karateka.

For those of you who attended the lecture at the ESA residential course Lilleshall 2000 this article is a repeat format of the information discussed.

Coaching & Karate

- Understanding correct teaching / coaching input at early stages of learning new skills is very important.
- A steady build up of skills in a sequential order (sub routines) is a key element of skill progression.
- The skill of the coach is not just about having the personal ability to perform / demonstrate a technique, it is more about having the ability to recognise the different ability levels of students. This will enable the coach to devise an appropriate break down of the skill into smaller elements enabling a steady progression to a satisfactory standard.

Example of bad coaching.

- Shouting at someone who isn't able to perform a technique that to you the coach seems very simple and is personally an autonomous action.

This is the point at which the coach needs to identify what the problem is and break the skill down into smaller elements. Practice on each skill breakdown must be made until a satisfactory level has been achieved, only then should practice of the next breakdown take place.

A continuation of this method should take place; the practice of each skill breakdown will enable a steady progression to an associative and autonomous level of skill application.

A theory of skill acquisition

1. FITTS (1964) 3 Phase.

Fitts theory is about a systematic view of how motor skill acquisition takes place. He based his theory on laboratory observations of people in a learning situation. Discussion with sport coach's, teachers and other skilled instructors helped him to formulate his theory.

The theory is still to this day quite a plausible explanation of how skill acquisition might occur. (Sharp 1992: p11 - 13)

The theory is based on three key phases.

◆ COGNITIVE

This is the initial stage of learning, it is vital to the development of the individual, and if steady progress is made at this stage advancement to higher levels of skilled performance should prove not to difficult. Understanding of what is required is a very important factor. The information given by the coach should be kept at a very basic level. If complex instructions are given at this stage it will be beyond the present capability of the novice performer and may well lead to confusion and technique error. Fitts identified this stage of skill development as the creation of an executive programme, where the processing of information in the brain will go through various stages as described by Martenuik (1976) in his theory on information processing.

The basic sequence of the executive programme includes.

- a. The - perceptual mechanism,
- b. The - decision mechanism
- c. The - effector mechanism.

◆ ASSOCIATIVE.

An intermediate stage where errors are reduced by elimination of skill movements that no longer serve a purpose or may hinder progression. Feedback plays a major role in the skill development, a change from visual / verbal feedback to internal / kinesthetic feedback starts to take precedence. Consolidations of correct or near responses take place.

New sub routines are called for as the skill complexity develops; this is where smoother movement and timing of the action will be visible to the coach, indicating skill and learning progression.

◆ AUTONOMOUS.

Movements are less subject to conscious control. The movements appear to be completed as if on auto pilot mode.

The efficiency and consistency of performance is greatly improved.

Skills require less processing and may be carried out automatically whilst learning other new skills or activities.

External feedback and reward is less important for progress due to the fact that the individual at this stage is more capable of performance self-analysis.

This theory through my own experience as a sport student and coach holds well. I think that for the novice student to a particular sport all three phases are quite relevant.

For a professional athlete transfer of acquired perceptual skill may help to reduce time spent at the first phase, phase two and three will still be necessary in order to gain skill acquisition in a different sport.

FITTS 3 phase learning theory.

Performer characteristics

Performer coaching needs

Cognitive Phase

Needs to understand the task.

Individual attention required.

Huge attention to the task.

adjust style of coaching to

Decision making problems;

meet the needs, i.e. via

as in what task to attend first.

Demonstration, verbal / visual

Lack of co-ordination.

instruction.

Error ridden performance.

Cues relevant to the individual.

Needs to stay motivated.

Simple skill routine practice.

Self concept & expectation is

Keep information to a minimum.

important.

Eliminate distractions.

Associative Phase

Better understanding of task.

Able to build on previous skills.

Gross error elimination.

by using more complex cues.

Co- ordination improvement.

Complex skill breakdown into sub routines.

The need for verbal / visual feedback is reduced, intrinsic / kinesthetic feedback is used.

Specific feedback.

Use of more complex cues.

Timing / duration of session important for specific tasks.

Consolidation of correct responses

Autonomous Phase

Timing & efficiency improved via less conscious control of actions.

Attention to fine detail of technique or strategy.

Self-analysis.

Self contribution i.e. self

Skills require less processing.

motivation & mental rehearsal.

Reference

Sharp, B. (1992) Acquiring Skill in Sport. UK: Sports Dynamics.

Fitts theory of skill acquisition is just one of many but perhaps is the most accepted format. In the next newsletter we will have a look at the theories of:

- Adams (1971) -Closed Loop Theory
- Schmidt (1975) - Schema Theory
- Martenuik (1976) - Information Processing Theory

In the meantime try this simple test that I was once asked to do as part of my coaching modular assessment.

Practical Exercise

Applications of a throwing action with a tennis ball, using the weakest throwing arm.

Exercise Objective.

To understand the position of a learner at the cognitive stage.

The ball was firstly thrown with the strongest (right) arm a number of times into a hanging net or you could throw it against a wall and then thrown a number of times with the weakest (left arm). The purpose of this exercise was to enable some comparison of the differences experienced during these actions and identification of skill learning difficulties when using the weakest arm.

Understanding of the various theories associated with skill acquisition was also part of the objective in this test concentrate on Fitts 3 phase theory..

Now list a comparison of throwing actions for the

Left Arm

Right Arm

Feelings.

Thoughts.

Learning.

Phase.

Try to answer these questions

- 1 a. What phase of learning were you at for both arm actions?
 - b. Feelings & needs i.e. activity practice, feedback, instruction.
What do you think would help you to improve?
2. What does a learner require from the coach at the cognitive stage?
3. What sort of programme was being developed i.e. motor or executive?

In the next issue I will reveal my findings /answers.

If you have any particular questions related to coaching / training principles please send them in and as each newsletter is produced I will try to answer your questions.

Budo Themes: Menkyo Kaiden by S. G. Drossoulakis, 4dan, member SRKHIA

Do you know that one of the major innovations Jigoro Kano has introduced to judo and it was spread then to the whole spectrum of gendai (modern) budo arts, is the dan ranking system? As strange as it sounds the koryu (old) budo system did not had such a hierarchical ranking system. Why? For many I would say reasons. Keep in mind that in koryu teaching was much more restricted in terms of students, as well as to who was eligible to accept instruction. Therefore instead of the dan ranking system, the menkyo kaiden system was used.

"What is a menkyo kaiden? A menkyo kaiden is a document handed down by a sensei to a single student, which the sensei believes is most capable of carrying on the teacher's art. Of course there are questions related to the subject, such as, what are the actual responsibilities of the person that holds his sensei menkyo kaiden? are there multiple menkyo kaiden, which meaning an instructor may have awarded menkyo kaiden to many students? does each student create one if the didn't receive one? These as well as other relevant questions I will try to explain today.

The menkyo-kaiden as described by Richard Kim sensei, a well known martial artist and author, in his book "Weaponless Warriors" (page 25) is **"a certificate of full proficiency in an art, usually given to a student deemed most suited to carry on the art of his sensei. A master customarily issued only one menkyo-kaiden in his lifetime."**

From a linguistic point of view, the word *menkyo* means "license", while *kaiden* means "initiation in all the mysteries and secrets of an art." In past times a master or soke of a particular ryu ha, kept his art or at least certain parts of it in secret. The master would reveal some or all of his secrets, before he died, to one or quite a few

individuals, his son or more rarely daughter, or a few senior students. To prove the veracity of such a transfer of knowledge, as well as the fact that this knowledge has been absorbed, the master issued a *menkyo-kaiden*, proving that the secrets of the art had been passed to the named person.

It was customary for a master or soke to pass only one *menkyo-kaiden*. Of course if you consider the meaning of the *menkyo kaiden*, "*licence for initiation in all the mysteries and secrets of an art*", it is possible and had happened, that a sensei could do this to more than one student, however tradition dictates that the sensei pass on only one *menkyo kaiden* of his own. The issue of more than one *menkyo kaiden* has become the case of splits in the lineage of koryu schools, every part claiming the authenticity of succession.

The person who received the *menkyo-kaiden* held the privilege and responsibility of carrying on the art. Other contenders for the master's art were to respect the follower and holder of the *menkyo-kaiden*, in the context that it was their sensei wish. In a certain way, the *menkyo-kaiden* is a means of assuring the correct passing of information from one generation to the next; the master decided which individual would carry on his art, and that individual was given the privilege and responsibility of continuing the tradition of the art onward to the future. In many times students, for their own reasons, have split off of their sensei line, to start their own lineage in martial arts, because they did not receive the *menkyo-kaiden*, which in their opinion they deserve (any similarity with today world is a coincidence or a proof that history repeats itself, as you prefer it).

There have been also cases that a master has received the *menkyo-kaiden* of more than one master. In this case he customarily passes all these plus his own to one individual who appears to be the greatest hope to carry on the tradition. On the other hand, the oriental culture, being as secretive as it is, often causes a master to choose to die with his "secrets", thus depriving the future generations of the glorious past. In such cases the *menkyo-kaiden* ends with the master who did not pass it onwards

While *menkyo kaiden* was traditionally passed to only one as it has been mentioned, another honor, called the *mokuroku-sensei*, was passed on more frequently. It was verification by the master, that the student has learned all what was necessary in the curriculum of the art and was certified as capable of representing the master's art in just about any circumstance. The difference is that the *menkyo-kaiden* is the master's foremost hope for his art and the *mokuroku-sensei*, although very accomplished, may not be the master's foremost hope for his art.

The way a master handed down his *menkyo kaiden* was not a standardized one and varied among the various ryuha. In general each master creates the *menkyo-kaiden* and passes it on to the student of his choosing in a manner which the master feels is best. A celebration may be the tradition in one dojo but not in another. It may be hand delivered to the student or it may be rolled and handed to the student with the instruction not to open the scroll until after the death of the master.

Today the *menkyo kaiden* system is used by very few ryuha in Japan, since the vast majority has adopted the dan ranking system. In a certain way, with the current expansion of the martial arts worldwide, it could be almost impossible to maintain this system. However in certain old schools, with a lineage dated back for 200, 300 or

even 400 hundred years, although they have adopted today the dan ranking system, they maintain a menkyo system through which the sokeship is passed from one generation to the other.

SRKHIA News

Kase sensei illness:

Sensei's situation is improved on a steady pace. In early June, he underwent a medical examination and his general condition was found really improved. In early July he had a lumbar scanner and his vertebral abcess was found completely cured. His blood analysis was fine too. Kase sensei is now preparing to undergo a bypass operation, potentially in October, in order to take care of his cardiac insufficiency. Since then, and for a certain time as well, he needs to take rest.

Updated information may be found at the SRKH Mullheim dojo web site www.shotokan-ryu-kase-ha.de

Reports

Unfortunately I have received nothing from various seminars which have been conducted during summer months. I think it's a pity not sharing your impressions or new experiences, from a seminar, with other members. At least it will work as a motivation factor for people to plan attendance of various seminars not only in their region but further as well. This may help to develop a new tourism branch, that one of "karate tourism" or "budo tourism" if you prefer it.

Recommended Courses:

As a new training period is opening many courses are organized in various places. If you want to be informed about courses in different countries by any or a particular instructor you must visit www.kamikazeweb.com and then follow the links for events. Our colleague Frank Schubert has a quite updated data base. In any case you may want to pay attention to the following information.

Bruno Garnero, 5dan and member of SRKHIA will start his teaching schedule with a training on "internal regeneration exercises" (includes breathing and other exercises as well), on Wednesday 15 September 2004, in Paris, Espace "Solara" ,29,rue du Château d'Eau, 75010, from 19h30 à 22h30. For more information or to arrange for a private course with Bruno (1h to 01h15) contact Bruno Garnero etudes.recherches.bg@club-internet.fr or tel: 06 61 40 31 93.

On 18 & 19 September the club Taiji Kaze in Cherbourg, France, organizes a course with Bruno Garnero sensei, 5dan and member of SRKHIA. Garnero sensei will teach Kototama Kiai respiration techniques, SRKH karate, Kyudo - traditional archery, and special breathing exercises for internal regeneration. For more information contact Martine Deeves, secretary of the club, tel: 02.33.54.38.08 or williammartinedeeves@wanado.fr , preferably before September 6.

Bruno Garnero will also conduct seminars in Bordeaux, on 2 and 3 October and in Lorient on 23 and 24 October 2004. For more information or to arrange for a private course with Bruno (1h to 01h15) contact Bruno Garnero etudes.recherches.bg@club-internet.fr or tel: 06 61 40 31 93.

Dick Fieret will organize monthly seminars on Kobudo and Kobujutsu on 18/9, 16/10 & 27/11, in Terneuzen, the Netherlands. Also a seminar on Karate and kobujutsu under the instruction of Dirk Heene, 7dan Dick Fieret, 5dan and Gertjan Fieret, 4dan, will be held on 14 November 2004 in West Kappele in the Netherlands. More information Dick Fieret 0031 115 696383 or 695072, e-mail dfieret@zeelandnet.nl .

The Pershore and Redditch Karate Club is organizing a seminar on 26 & 27 September 2004 in the Forest of Dean, under Williams Slater sensei, 6dan, Beasley Geof sensei, 5dan and Barron Paul sensei, 5dan. If you are interested to be there please contact Slater Williams slater@karate.wanadoo.co.uk .

The Scottish Shotokan Academy organizes a course in Glasgow, Iain Nicolson Recreation Centre, Chryston Rd Chryston, Glasgow Lanarkshire, G69 9LE on October 9th & 10th 2004, with Dirk Heene sensei, 7dan and member of the SRKHIA Shihankai. If you are interested to be in Glasgow on that days please contact Paul Sammy, Scottish Shotokan Academy Secretary, paul.sammy@ScottishShotokanAcademy.com for further information.

If you want to combine holidays with budo training, Dave Wilkins, 5th Dan SRKH, will run a course with Derek Ridgeway, 6th Dan Shito Ryu, in Tenerife - Monday 1st November to Thursday 4th November with specially reduced rates at a 4 star hotel in Playa De Las Americas. For anyone interested, email Dave Wilkins, www.leicesterkarateclub.co.uk for more details.

Last but not least; if you want to train with Dirk Heene sensei, at Honbu Dojo Limburg, throughout the year, you are welcome to stay in the dojo (sleeping bag is necessary). Price per day: 7 euro including: 2x training a day; use of showers, sanitary, kitchen. Buffet-restaurant is 5 minutes away.

Be reminded that all Newsletters may be found in www.shotokan-ryu-kase-ha.de , Pascal Petrella's dojo site on SRKHIA. The site includes many other useful Academy information as well.

Before closing I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to contribute to this Newsletter by providing, beyond information on upcoming courses, articles, seminar reports etc. Be reminded that this is not my Newsletter, it is our Newsletter.

The next Newsletter will be edited in the first week in October 2004. Stay strong, train hard and sincerely, enjoy life and remember: *"Those who train when they are young will rise to greatness. Those who train in maturity will preserve their vigor in old age. Those who train when old will live eternally."* (Issai Sato, early 1800's)

Oss
Spiros G. Drossoulakis